
MIMOSA 29
Mimosa spread her pages and flew away. Gestetner bumped along.
faster and faster, and spun his propeller until he took off too
THE END
A MIMOSA FANTHOLOGY, PART 2

A Mimosa Fanthology (Part 2)

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A Mimosa Fanthology (Part 2), a.k.a. *Mimosa* 29, was published in December 2002, and is available for either a printed fanzine in trade or via surface mail for US$5.00 (and please add US$3.00 extra postage for non-U.S.A. addresses). We will not have a Letters Column in the next, our final, issue, so no letters of comment, please. If you enjoyed this issue, we have printed copies of many back issues that are still available; please write us for more information on price and availability, or go to our web site to view some of them online.

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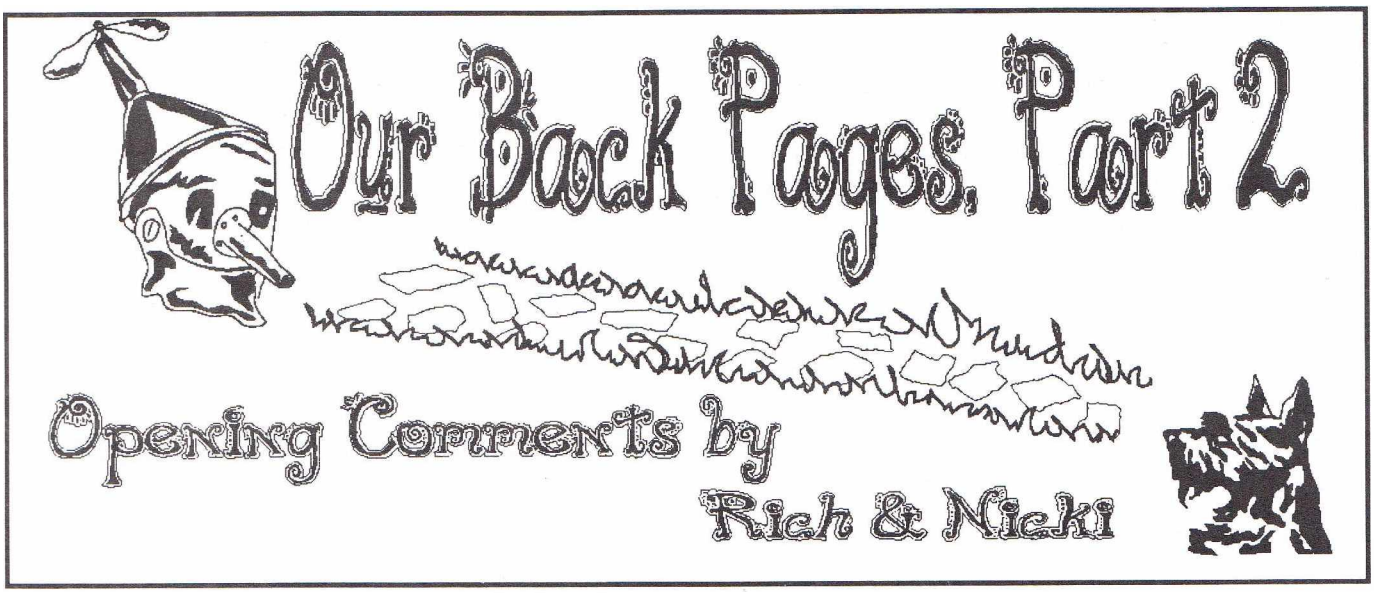


Welcome back, to the second part of *A Mimosa Fanthology*. What you're reading is a collection of some of our favorite articles from *Mimosa*, in this case from issues 17-27. The first 16 issues of *Mimosa*, all produced the traditional fannish way by mimeograph, had brought us three Hugo Awards, in 1992, 1993, and 1994, but by the end of 1994 we had thought we'd reached the point where we'd taken *Mimosa* about as far as we were going to, at least in production and appearance. It turned out we were wrong, however – an event on January 3, 1995 threw our lives into turmoil, and prevented us from publishing another issue for almost a year:

Date: Tue, 3 Jan 1995 21:15:06 0500 (EST)
E-mail to: FanFriends Distribution List
From: Richard Lynch

Not sure if this is the best way of passing on some news, but it's probably one of the quickest. About six hours ago, there was a fire in the townhouse next door to us. We smelled the smoke before we saw it billowing out from under the front door of the neighbor's place (10 feet across the small courtyard, facing our front door). The fire departments (several of them) arrived pretty quickly, but the neighbor's place was a total loss. In the process of putting out the fire, our home was severely damaged. The fire brigades had to chop open roofs, break down firewalls, etc. to make sure the fire did not spread.

The Fire Marshall let me back in our home, briefly. It was pretty discouraging. Ceilings and walls were down in all rooms. We're staying in a hotel now (the Holiday Inn in Gaithersburg). We are down to the clothes on our back for tonight, at least. It will be several weeks, perhaps months, before we can return home to live.

Oh well, life goes on...

Best regards for the new year for everyone,
from Richard and Nicki Lynch

It was a very bad fire. Three fire companies were called in, and it took more than four hours to put it out. The townhouse where the fire started was totally destroyed; ours suffered severe fire damage in the attic, on the back deck, and in an upstairs bedroom, and almost everything in the house had smoke and/or water damage. Luckily, nobody was injured and there was only one casualty, a large, friendly black Labrador Retriever who lived in the neighbors' townhouse and had no escape when the fire started. His remains were never found.

We never lived in that townhouse again; we sold it as soon as it was fully restored and bought the single family house where we live now. But that restoration, due to a series of interminable delays, kept us in an apartment (a

fourth floor walk-up) for a full year (the original estimate had been three months), without access to our mimeographs and printing supplies. By that time, the commercial printer who had reproduced some of our covers had offered us a deal on printing *Mimosa* in the format this issue appears. And so we never used our mimeographs again.

But even though the look had changed, *Mimosa* remained mostly the same in terms of content – there was still an emphasis on preserving the history of fandom, with first-person articles about fandom and things fans do. Above all, we've tried to keep *Mimosa* entertaining for the reader, and we hope we've always been able to brighten your day whenever you've read *Mimosa*. Hearing back from you has always brightened ours. ☼

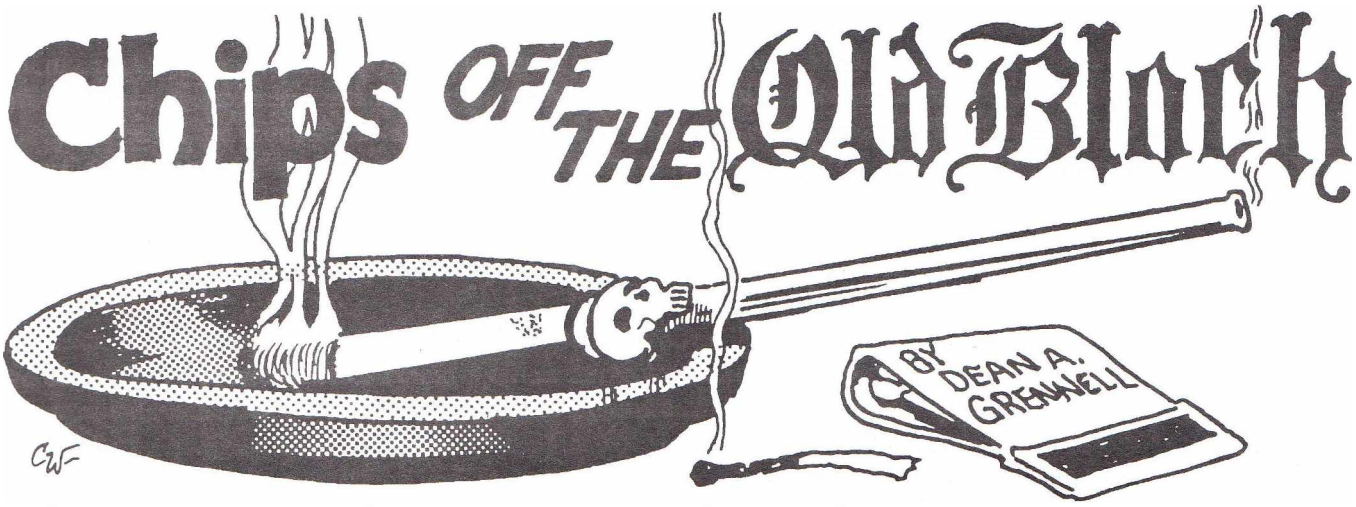
✎ We should mention that once again, this is an 'editors choice' fanthology – we selected articles for reprint that we thought were entertaining and well-written, and once again we faced some hard choices on which articles we'd have to omit to keep the page count of this issue under control. We again decided to limit ourselves to printing only one article by any contributor, and the articles that do appear here are accompanied by the same artwork from when they were first published.

Mimosa 17 was, published in October 1995, was the first of the 'new look' run of *Mimosa*s. We weren't sure how well it would be accepted with our readers, but the comments we got back were mostly supportive. Elst Weinstein wrote that "your production values have not diminished despite your conflagration woes," while Rodney Leighton, more to the point, advised us that "it would be more sensible to go with the printer and retire the mimeo to its proper place in history and antiquity." And so we did. The overall appearance was definitely better, and even though it was more expensive to print the fanzine that way, the savings of a week's effort in printing and collating was just too appealing to ignore.

Steve Stiles provided the cover for *M*17, an esoteric homage to the late fan artist Arthur Thomson which caused Vincent Clarke to write us that "I always have an uneasy feeling about Steve Stiles's stuff. He seems to work in some sort of trufan environment from which I'm excluded."

Unlike some of our previous issues and most of the subsequent ones, the contents of the issue didn't reflect any particular theme. It included the twelfth in Dave Kyle's continuing series of autobiographical remembrances, this time about worldcon banquets, and also the twelfth of Sharon Farber's "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life" series (probably our most popular continuing series), which had helped earn her four consecutive nominations for the Best Fan Writer Hugo. Ben Zuhl told of the origin of the Spayed Gerbil (the drink, not the rodent), while Ahrvid Engholm told of the origin of several Scandinavian "Silly Fan Games." Forry Ackerman wrote about worldcons of the 1940s, while Walt Willis described the short fan career of writer and political essayist Robert Conquest. Besides these, Michael A. Burstein contributed an excellent article about his experiences at the annual Clarion writers conference, and there were two articles (one of them by Esther Cole) in remembrance of one of fandom's best friends, Robert Bloch, who had died a few months earlier.

The other Bloch remembrance was by Dean A. Grennell, who was one of the most notable fans in the decade of the 1950s. Besides being a fanzine publisher and an excellent fan writer in his own right, Dean was also one of fandom's best photographers and also, as we'll see, a very competent woodworker:



I wandered into science-fiction fandom late in 1952, apparently having confused it with a gent's washroom. In those days, I resided in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and made my rather precarious living as a traveling salesman in sheet metal and heating supplies. The annual sheet metal convention was held in Milwaukee toward the latter part of a given January. By the time the SM con came along, I'd received enough fanzines to become aware that one Robert Bloch resided in Milwaukee and I was able to make arrangement to get together with him some evening when nothing demanding was on my schedule for the convention.

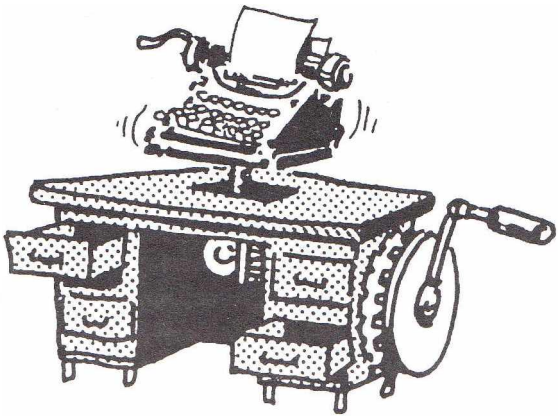
Thus it came to pass that Bloch was the first s-f fan I ever met. It's true he was also an s-f pro at the same time, but he was as much a fan as anyone who ever donned a helicopter beanie.

In those days, Bloch didn't drive automobiles although I understand he learned to do so after moving to the Los Angeles area, several years later. If he wanted to go from point A to point B, he usually took a Greyhound bus, seeming to prefer them over trains.

It was some time after that initial encounter in January of 1953 that the Blochs decided to move to Weyauwega, Wisconsin. I'm not certain but believe it was because he had relatives there. It was a tiny hamlet and I'd assume it still is; an unlikely spot to serve as home base for an author.

I made my tours of duty during the first four days of the week, calling on my local dealers on Fridays. I covered the lower eastern portion of Wisconsin and other salesmen covered the rest of our territory, on a three-week schedule. I didn't get into Milwaukee but I did make what I thought of as the Clintonville trip and that took me through the general vicinity of Weyauwega so it was a simple matter to stop at the Bloch house on the way back home. As you faced the house from the street, his office was in an upstairs room at the right front corner and it was furnished with a straight-backed chair, a desk supporting a typewriter, and some manner of chaise lounge or daybed over between the corner windows, plus several well-filled bookcases.

The right-hand end of the typewriter carriage was heavily encrusted with tars and injurious resins because Bloch kept an ashtray where the smoke would curl up past the end of the carriage. As a usual rule, he used a cigarette holder and I can't recall having ever seen him smoke without the holder.



Either the desk was short on the right rear corner or perhaps the floor sagged a bit at about that point; maybe it was a little of both. At any rate, the desk was prone to teeter back and forth in a manner Bloch found painfully distracting. Then, as now, I was into home shop woodworking – which Bloch most assuredly was not – so I volunteered to see about constructing a replacement for the nervous desk.

I made my rounds in a large Oldsmobile station wagon in those days and it was no great challenge to make up a few component pieces that could be hauled along on the trip and assembled on the site. At the right rear of the new desk, I included

a little rotary cam with a lever to adjust it, and a locking bolt to make it stay put. It worked, as do most of my brainstorms and, as with few exceptions, it wasn't at all pretty. But it did support the typewriter at a comfortable working height and it did not rock nor teeter by so much as a fraction of an Angstrom unit. Bloch professed himself well pleased with the artifact and continued to use it during his stay in Weyauwega.

Which means, if I can claim no other distinction, I built the desk on which the manuscript for *Psycho* was written.

I used to flake out on the lounge while Bloch remained at his desk, and recall once noting a spider spinning a network across the ceiling. I pointed and said, "I suppose you call him Jack Webb?"

"No, it's a female and I'm surprised you spied her," was his rapid riposte.

I believe Bloch started working on a television show while they still lived in Milwaukee. The show was called *It's a Draw!* and featured a rapid cartoonist whose name – if memory serves – was Sid Snow. At the start, by way of an example, Sid would sketch a man in armor next to an apparatus for distillation and you were supposed to interpret that as, "In the still of the (k)night." The gimmick was that Sid would dash off a cartoon as Bloch and his co-panelists strove to come up with the correct title.

The year came to be 1956 and one of the hot news items of the day was the upcoming nuptials of Grace Kelly and Prince Ranier of Monaco. The Blochs were in Weyauwega by that time and Bloch would travel to Milwaukee via Greyhound to do his stint on the show. There was a short layover in Fond du Lac before he caught the bus that took him to Milwaukee, and I'd stop down at the Greyhound depot to visit for a bit as he passed through.

On this particular occasion, I asked him if he'd heard la Kelly's honeymoon plans. Ever the perfect straight man, he cocked an inquiring eyebrow.

"She's going to Mount Ranier [...beat...] or, perhaps, vice versa."

Bloch proceeded to generate more raucous mirth than I though justified by the modest jape but that was one of his more admirable traits. The Milwaukee bus came fuming in, Bloch climbed aboard, and I went back home. Later in the evening, we tuned in his TV show and, rather early in the proceedings, the master of ceremonies made some passing reference to Grace Kelly.

Whereupon, Bloch and the other three panelists absolutely dissolved in madcap mirth and dribbled off the edge of the table onto the floor. The face of the master of ceremonies was a classic study in total befuddlement and it must have puzzled most viewers considerably. We, however, could tell Bloch's fellow panelists had gotten word on Grace's honeymoon plans, but the emcee remained in the dark about the matter.

Another time, Canadian friend Bill Stavdal was visiting and we'd tuned in *It's A Draw!* for his benefit. Bloch managed to work in a throwaway line: "I think it looks like Bill Stavdal!" Stavdal was totally, utterly mindblown.

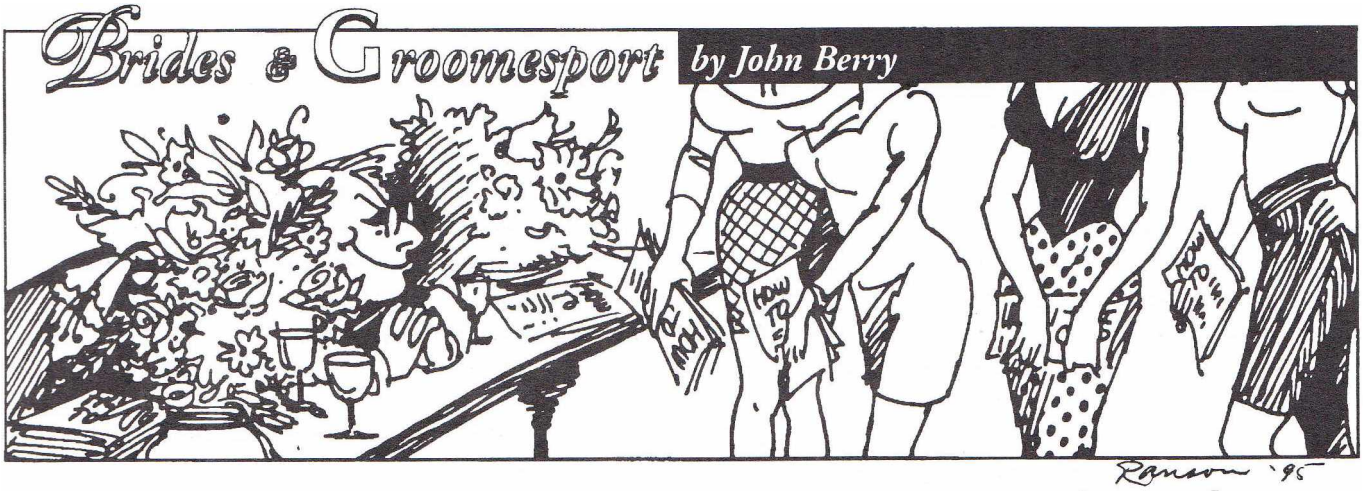
# # # #

A lot of years have passed since that time. We both eventually moved from Wisconsin to California, but for one reason or another, never seemed to see much of each other after that. I think I'll always remember Robert Bloch as I knew him back in Wisconsin – he was an inveterate humorist, a great writer, an even better friend.

And yes, I'll miss him a lot. ☼

✎ One thing we should mention about Robert Bloch is that he enjoyed and always had time for fandom. He was a recipient of *Mimosa*, and responded to every issue received by sending us a postcard containing a witty comment or two. There's probably a sub-sub-fandom consisting of people who have received Bloch postcards, we're guessing. Buck Coulson wrote us that "we have a fair number of Bloch postcards around here somewhere [commenting on *Yandro*]. I recall when our son was born, he sent us some advice for parents: 'Never feed the baby liquids. Dry food, dry baby.' And other such examples of Bloch logic." Steve George wrote us that "whenever I tried to explain to people why I published a fanzine and gave it away for free, I would tell them about my postcards from Robert Bloch. It always amazes me to think that one of my first letters of comment was from 'the guy who wrote *Psycho*'.""

One other notable humorist of the 1950s was featured in *M*17 – John Berry, a member of the legendary Irish Fandom for many years. He has also been one of the best, most entertaining fan writers, not only of the 1950s, but subsequent decades as well, as the following article shows:



I joined the army fifty years ago, and the night before I entered the grim portals of the Army Training Center at Worcester, my father gave me shrewd advice he had previously garnered in similar circumstances, and his priority warning was... "Do not volunteer for anything!"

So, approaching my seventieth year, my wife and I were staying at our daughter's house in Bangor, Co. Down. We were there nominally to supervise the activities of our three grandsons whilst she and her husband enjoyed a long sojourn in the Canary Islands. She is a florist, and just before they departed, she suddenly clicked her fingers.

"Oh, I've just remembered, I have contracted to attend a Bridal Weekend at a hotel in Groomesport. I must employ someone to supervise my floral display and take orders for weddings."

"Er, Kate," I prompted, "who do you expect to attend?"

"Mostly hordes of young girls preparing for their weddings...some of them will have their mothers with them, although father and boyfriends are normally scarce, as they probably have to pay for everything, and they cannot stand the strain and stress of the severe financial drain on their bank accounts."

"How long does it last?" I breathed. Close to seventy I might be, but still fully red-corpuscled and functional, and I panted at the thought of ogling young and innocent Co. Down girls who would actually be approaching me.

"Only twelve hours," she said, "12 noon to 8 pm on Sunday, and 4 pm to 8 pm on Monday evening."

"I'll do it!" I shouted.

She handed me a thick book full of coloured photographs of floral displays, and stating that she knew I was a 'very experienced writer', suggested that I should prepare a hand-out to be presented to each visitor to the display.

Actually, I do somewhat pride myself on my literary style, laced, as it always is, with humor and slight exaggeration. Her husband gave me a crash-course on computer technique, including instructions for using the printer. I carefully wrote everything down.

"But don't worry," he beamed, "if you become bemused and lose control of the computer, Philip will speedily put you back on course."

This was rather a blow to my prestige, as, on that very day, it was Philip's seventh birthday.

First of all, I wrote a rough draft of the article, using the stock phrases in the book but incorporating my own little story lines. For example, regarding the HAND-TIED SHEAF...the book stated that the bouquet consisted of flowers not arranged in display, as if the bride had quickly garnered them.

I wrote...

> 'This bouquet is a new innovation for the nineties, designed to portray a young, innocent blushing bride, arising on the morning of her forthcoming nuptials, and gazing wistfully through her bedroom window at a flower-decked meadow. With passionate abandon, realizing that her yearning for chaste surrender was nigh, she rushes out of the house in her night attire, bare of feet, and gathers an armful of dew-dappled blooms, roughly ties them with twine, breaking off each bloom stalk to a constant length. Cradling her spontaneous floral adornment, she returns to her room, her gentle tears adding a poignancy to the fresh flowers, the brutality of the snapped stalks symbolic of her forthcoming night of passion.'

Quite frankly, I was on fire. Eloquent phrases scorched from my pen – my imagination ranged far and wide over the whole marriage ceremony. I penned each item so that the bride, however experienced in wordly terms (you know what I mean), when reading my ~~one shot~~ epistle, would wish that she had retained her innocence, so that FIONA'S FLOWERS would carry her into an *ecstasy* of nuptial bliss.

I warily approached the computer, and eventually designed the heading: the words FIONA'S FLOWERS composed of small hearts, and on the left, a beautiful rose, and on the right a more graphic portrayal of Aphrodite. Unfortunately, whether or not this was a design feature, I knew that Aphrodite was devoid of pubic hair (this knowledge based solely on my vast study of ancient Greek statuary) and yet the computer portrayal was rather graphic in this respect. I carefully processed the computer window, selected a rampant eraser design from the display, moved the mouse cross to this square, and attempted to cunningly de-pube Aphrodite.

After my seventh attempt, I was rather pleased with the result, except perhaps for the suggestion that Aphrodite had undergone an appendix operation.

"You're obsessed!" I heard my wife shout. She had been standing behind me, and of course, my attention had been totally concentrated on Aphrodite, and I had not heard her enter the room.

I finished typing the publication, and with the assistance of grandson Philip, adept at using the computer printer, I had nine pages of unadulterated passion in my sweating hands, including other carefully selected illos from the computer display.

I walked towards Bangor along the main road, until I reached a shop where copying was done. Ten pence per A4 sheet...hmm...ninety pence per booklet... I concluded a deal which cost my daughter £25.00, but that included stapling..."ready tomorrow at twelve noon."

I collected them next day. The girl working the copier blinked her eyes, long lashes fluttering like butterfly's wings.

"I hope you don't mind," she confessed, "but I couldn't help reading the pages whilst I copied them. Who wrote it?"

"I did," I preened. "Why do you ask?"

She flipped through the pages of stacked copies, and tapped a paragraph on page 6...

'As I stated on page 1, I cannot be present at this Bridal Weekend, but my representative, John, is in attendance, and is very experienced in preparing brides for their weddings. He will be delighted to demonstrate the floral displays, and advise on all matters relating to the bridal party. As an extra service, John, who has wide experience in the field, will be thrilled to give confidential advice and comfort to young and innocent brides who are apprehensive regarding the physical side of the nuptials...a whole 'hands-on' service guaranteeing discretion and satisfaction.'

"Are you John?" she asked.

"Yes, my deah," I smirked.

"Oh," she frowned, "I though maybe John was a much younger man. Oh, well..I've retained one copy for my sister, who is getting married shortly – she'll probably come to the Bridal Weekend."

# # # #

The taxi stopped at the hotel entrance, and I took out the boxes of flowers and accessories from the boot and stacked them in the foyer.

I felt rather pleased with my appearance. I mean, it was necessary for me to cut a dashing man-about-town figure in order to represent my daughter and obtain some orders for her.

My son-in-law was a professional 'country and western' singer, and before he left for vacation with my daughter, he gave me permission to use any items from his wardrobe. Obviously, I rejected the Stetson as being ostentatious, but the long yellow jacket, green trousers and floral vest fitted me perfectly.

I could tell the taxi-driver was impressed, although his comment suggested he was touting for a large tip: "You look like an absolute Count," he observed, pocketing the twenty pence tip and grinding the gears as his vehicle kangaroo'd down the road.

I was supplied with two long trestle tables with clean white tablecloths on them. I arranged my displays in quite an attractive manner, placed my hand-outs where they would be immediately noticed, and looked round at my competitors. Actually, no one else was marketing flowers; the other dozen business catered for wedding dresses,

invitations cards, balloons, luxury automobiles, wedding cakes, etc.

At the entrance of the large room was a uniformed minion, who greeted the guests; a very pretty young girl gave each visitor a glass of white or red wine, and they duly explored the proffered marital requisites.

The young brides and their mothers seemed to approach my display rather warily, but I greeted them with a bow, kissed the potential bride's perspiring fingers, and gave them my hand-out, and they retired to a corner of the room, and read it, sipping their wine, but one or two downed the liquid in one long swallow.

During a break in the visitations, I caught the eye of the young girl dispensing glasses of wine; I opened my shirt collar and waved a hand in front of my face, tongue somewhere down by the third button.

Her eyes brightened up, and she brought a glass of white wine over to me, brimming to the top, spilling nary a drop.

After the initial interest there was a lull in attendance, and I willed the wine girl to look in my direction. Our eyeballs clicked, and she gave me another glass of wine, then yet another ten minutes later.

Then a most beautiful Co. Down girl entered with a young man. Her hair was jet black, she had brown eyes, and red pouting lips like Michelle Pfieffer. She dragged her boy friend directly across to my tables.

I gave her the hand-out, but she declined it with a white-toothed smile.

"I've read it already," she cooed. "My sister printed it for you."

"Well, done, my deah," I smiled. "Can I help you at all?"

She nodded... She looked at my floral display, said she would get FIONA'S FLOWERS to cater for the wedding.

"Tell me something, John," she said confidentially. "Do you think my boy friend looks effeminate?"

Honestly, it was a stupid question – the boy couldn't take his eyes off her heaving bosom. He was obviously hetero. Nevertheless, his long fair hair hung over his shoulders, and, *weeeellll*, his soft blue eyes *did* combine with his delicate facial structure, and the *slightest* suggestion of a moue played peek-a-boo with his lips.

Before my wine-sozzled mind was in gear, my lips had already delivered the thoughtless riposte: "It is not incumbent upon myself to comment on your friends physical appearance, save to ask if he is free on Tuesday night?"

The young man's sweat-covered upper lip and clutching fingers left me no doubt that FIONA'S FLOWERS had lost a £200.00 order.

Well before the allotted termination of the display, the wine-girl called a taxi at the organizer's request, and I had a vague recollection of being levered into it...

# # # #

The Bridal Weekend was also open for trade on Monday evening, between 4 pm and 8 pm, and I reluctantly arrived, hoping the time would quickly pass.

Unfortunately it didn't, because we vendors in the room agreed that one could not expect potential bridal parties to visit the hotel on Monday night. The fathers of the bride, who would have to finance the ceremony, had probably returned home after a hard day's work, and did not wish to dispose of their savings quite so arbitrarily.

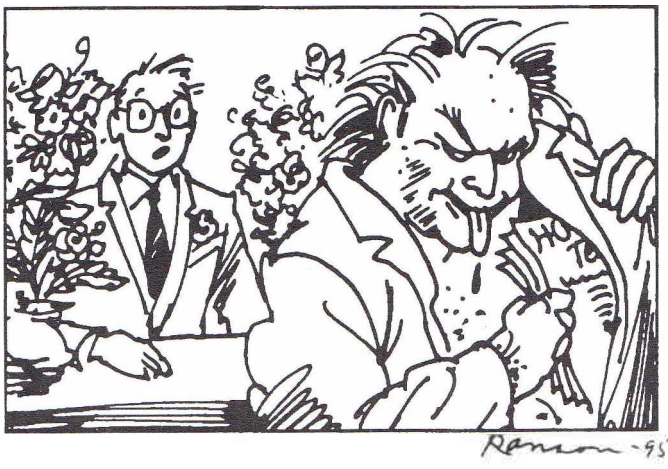
I noticed my pile of hand-outs was down to merely one copy, but my colleagues admitted that they had all taken copies to read, and all admitted it was nicely-written. The condom salesman asked if he could paraphrase it for his one hand-out.

Only one more person entered the room before we packed up and went home.

He was bare-headed, unshaven, and wore a long dirty brown raincoat buttoned down the front. He muttered something to the wide-eyed wine-girl, who pointed to me.

The woman at the wedding dress display next to my table whispered, "He's the local flasher."

He crossed to me, a leathery tongue rasped over his cracked lips. He scanned the table and picked up the remaining hand-out.



"Yuk, yuk!" he chortled as he crossed to the exit.

I couldn't help wondering – had I added an aura of sophistication to this rural Co. Down village? ☼

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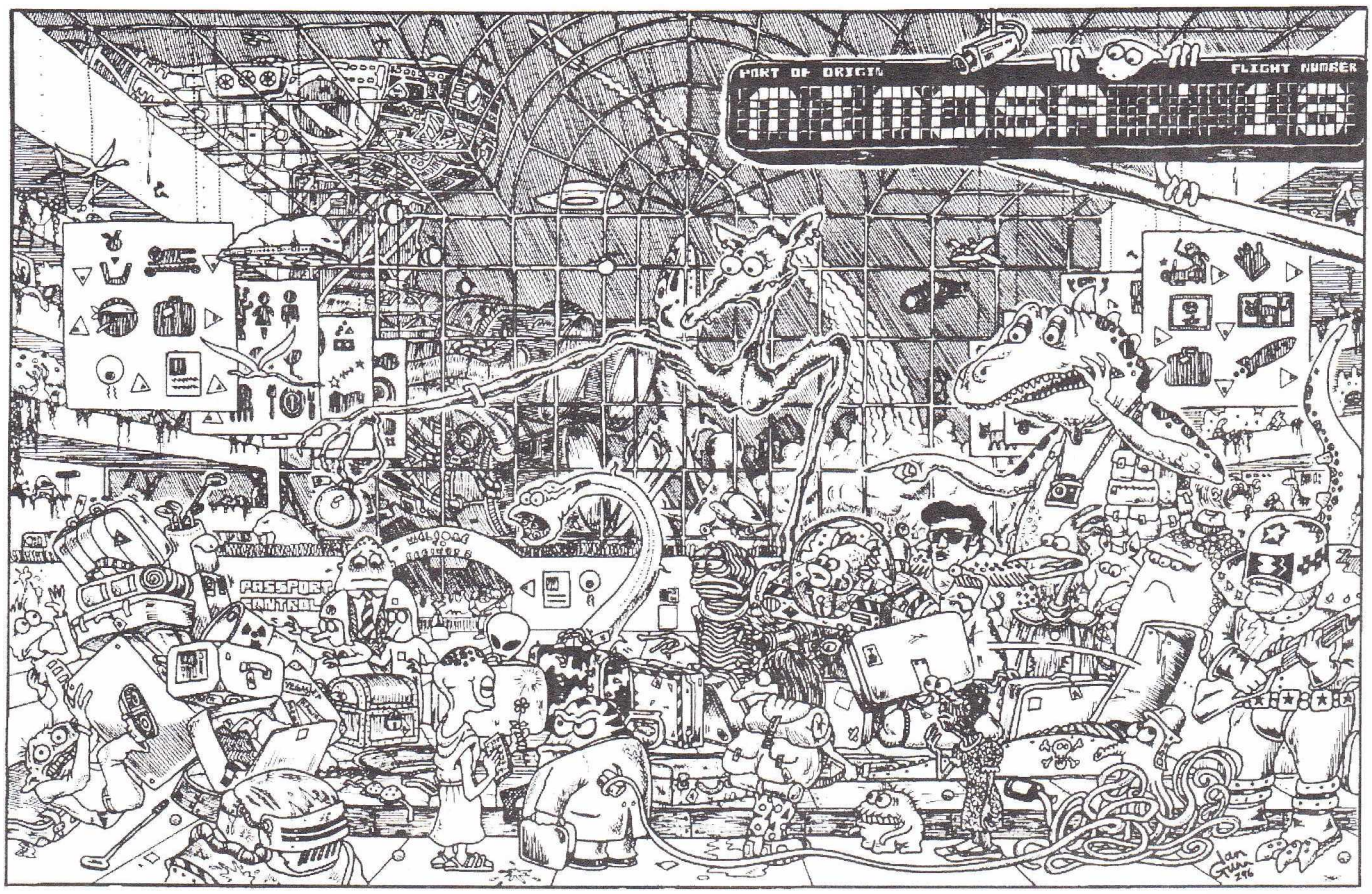
✎ John's article was warmly received, and harkened back to many of the pieces he'd written in the 1950s for the legendary *Hyphen*. Walt Willis, who was *Hyphen*'s co-editor, wrote that "I was accustomed to sorting out the fiction from the fact in John Berry's pieces about fandom, but it's more difficult when he is writing about the real world, even a village a few miles from my own house." And Gary Deindorfer wrote that "Irish John Berry's story is an Instant Classic, but then this is what I have come to expect from this fannish master of the exaggerated humorous anecdote. Long may he wave!"

Our next issue, *Mimosa* 18, was published in May 1996, and, in terms of content, was one of the best issues of the entire run. The wrap-around cover was by Australian fan artist Ian Gunn, whom we'd corresponded with for several years before we finally met him, for the only time as it turned out, at the Scotland worldcon in 1995; it featured a spaceport scene with a zany cast of characters including Elvis. Catherine Mintz wrote us that "I particularly liked the enterprising pickpocket – who could scarcely be described as light-fingered, since he is all tentacles – and the ideographic signs for where to find your luggage, your pet, and whatever the skull dripping liquid means."



Once again, there was no real theme to the issue, though it might well be described as a virtual time machine. Dave Kyle wrote about his memories of science fiction in the 1920s and Forry Ackerman described fandom in the 1940s, while both Vincent Clarke and Walt Willis described events from the 1950s; Fred Lerner wrote about New York fandom of the 1960s, Roxanne Smith-Graham related memories of growing up as a second generation fan in the 1970s, and Kev McVeigh contributed an article about British fandom of the 1980s. One of the best articles in the issue was by Steve Stiles, whose renown as a fan artist makes it too easy to overlook that he's also an excellent writer. His article for *M*18 described his 'secret origins' as an artist:

ART SCHOOL

BY Steve Stiles

There are those people who know my artwork, have seen it in the fanzines, and there comes a point when they just have to ask, "Steve, have you ever gone to art school?" and, yes, I *have*, and I immediately prove it then and there: "Look! See this? This is a *pencil*!" A thorough knowledge of tools is an unmistakable sign of good training (I particularly excelled in The Eraser, one of my favorite technical implements).

Early on, I didn't need any training, grasping the subtleties of the crayon almost instinctively, often using the pointed end rather than the flat one, seldom going beyond the paper and onto the linoleum – because I used heavy black borders; almost from the very start I was mad about doing comic strips. My pre-teen attempts dealt with masked cowboys, robots with tank treads, Jungle Girls in leopard-skin bikinis, and The Adventures Of Captain Brown (and his flying submarine, also with tank treads). Come to think of it, maybe this last strip was a precursor to "The Adventures Of Professor Thintwhistle And His Incredible Aether Flier," a strip I did with Dick Lupoff for *Heavy Metal* (still available from Fantagraphics Press); our steam-driven spaceship also had tank treads. I get one good concept and drive it into the ground... Captain Brown was an actual hektographed strip of about twenty copies, which ran three issues in 1953 that I distributed at the Yorkville recreation center, so even at age ten I was fumbling towards fanac and paying my dues.

A few years later I became an E.C. fan, fascinated by the exciting (and sometimes horrific) covers displayed in the local candy store. This was about the time when the usual political hacks were holding televised hearings and getting in cheap shots about Violence In The Comics Destroying Our Youth (sound familiar?). So my parents were hep to this filth; there on the screen was E.C. publisher Wm. Gaines whacked out on diet pill speed while some irate Senator held up a copy of *Crime SuspenStories* #22, the one with the axe, severed human head, the black dripping blood, all for the camera and the viewing pleasure of my mom and dad.

Which only reinforced my idea that being a comic illustrator was one of the more noble and worthwhile of human pursuits – damn, that cover was *good!* In the course of accumulating every E.C. ever published I learned that some of my favorite artists working for them had attended two schools: The High School of Music and Art and The School Of Visual Arts. Both were located in Manhattan, where I was, and both had excellent reputations. And so, in 1956, at age thirteen, I took the entrance exams at M&A, which partly consisted of drawing an arrangement of old shoes and flowers, as well as a review of my portfolio pieces – which included two issues of my first fanzine, *SAM*; that was a lucky break because my interviewers had never heard of a kid pubbing an ish and thought the whole concept incredibly creative. Four years later, the people over at Visual Arts had the same reaction to some of my other fanzines and awarded me a three year scholarship. I was blown away by the realization that fandom had actually helped me achieve my goals in the Real World! That's the last time *that* happened...

Music & Art certainly wasn't a full-fledged art school but rather a high school with additional emphasis on art and music classes. Even so, I had more opportunity to familiarize myself with a wider range of materials, from chalks and caseins to oils. And here I was studying in the same school that my heroes Harvey Kurtzman, Bill Elder, and John Severin – the guys at *Mad* – went to, so it was pretty heady. I made a number of friends and had a decent time...except with one particular fellow student who was the Reggie to my Archie, and who seemed to enjoy going out of his way slipping the meat to my delicate personality. I loathed him because he was wealthy (arriving at school in a chauffeured limousine), good-looking, smooth, jump-starting all those genetic impulses of many

desirable girls in my class. I loathed him because I was poor, shy, and smelled of Wild Root Creme Oil; a self-imagined Jack Kerouac trapped in a nerd's hang-ups. (From such stuff many a Marxist is made; fortunately for me, our school communist, being an asshole, was a poor role model.) I'll never forget the time my father arrived at a PTA meeting dressed in his carpenter's clothes. My Reggie drifted over, slowly looked us up and down with studied insolence and then drawled, "*Slumming*, Stiles?" *(Argh! To the barricades, comrades!)* I swore then and there that I would become rich and famous. I would someday be a Norman Mailer, a Pablo Picasso! Or at least a Harlan Ellison or Walt Kelly...

Today, after many years of struggling, I'm still struggling. Sometimes my income soars and more times it flops around. Each year about three comics fans ask for my autograph. Few people other than Bill Rotsler knows that I'm the one who coined the "Death Is Nature's Way Of Telling You To Stop" maxim (which I hope to have carved on my tombstone), and once, in 1968, a mere twenty-seven years ago, I was nominated for a Hugo.

As for my nemesis at M&A, he's a millionaire now, the producer of numerous award-winning television shows (I groaned when he won the Emmy over George R.R. Martin's *Beauty and the Beast*). Yes, it was Steven Bochco... Justice isn't just blind, it's a mangy, sleazy s.o.b. that laughs in the face of Horatio Alger! Maybe I should try harder...

# # # #

Visual Arts was and is a full-fledged art school, staffed with instructors of the stature of Milton Glaser and Herb Lubalin. Among the alumni were E.C. greats like Al Williamson, Angelo Torres, Mort Drucker, and Wally Wood. Originally known as The Cartoonists and Illustrators School, it was founded in `47 by Silas Rhodes and Burne Hogarth, two very unique individuals grateful for the G.I. Bill. I saw little of Rhodes, who functioned as administrator, money manager, and publicist for SVA. Hogarth, on the other hand, functioned as the Soul of the school, and taught several classes a day. He was also one of the most aggressively opinionated people I've ever known (outside fandom), with excellent credentials as the *Tarzan* comic strip artist, and author of many first-rate books on anatomy. His ability to whip out exquisite anatomical studies on a large newsprint pad was truly amazing, and I'll never forget his worm's eye perspective drawing of a horse leaping overhead, perfect in every detail.

Inevitably, the very first topic friends would quiz me about, when they learned I was going to art school, was modeling – or naked women, actually. Professional nudity was a constant fact of life at SVA and frequently the models were young, nubile, and female. This seemed to fascinate my friends. Me too, but after a few weeks it became something I took for granted. Those non-art students couldn't quite understand that the voyeuristic impulse could get nudged aside if you were serious about learning to draw; all that nice flesh sublimated away into the *gluteus maximus*, the *vastus externus*, and the ever-popular *pectoralis major*. With constant professional nudity being a fact of life at Visual Arts, I was amazed to read, years later, that Silas Rhodes had expelled several students for streaking. Damned amateurs!

Naturally, there were male models as well. Once, one of them managed to achieve a sheath-bursting woody while posing. I wonder if he got docked for that, because more and more of the women in the class got uncomfortable and left the class, at first leaving singly and in pairs, until a mass exodus took place. (If I had more smarts I would've taken note of the women who stuck around as he stuck it out.)

# # # #

One debate that's been going on for a while is whether or not such things as art schools are necessary. There are a few lucky types who are able to grasp far more in adolescence than artists three times their age. As for the rest of us, art schools at the very least give a grounding in what went on before, the tools, the techniques, the capabilities and drawbacks of various materials, and that alone should justify their existence. There is also a horrendous amount of Art Theory, a lot of it contradicting hot air. But a good teacher tries to make more of an impact than that, and luckily I had a number of them, in particular, Jerome Martin, a popular illustrator for some major magazines in the `60s. Martin, through discussions of Zen, Bessie Smith, Japanese art, bronzed cannons,

etc., managed to distill for me an idea of what the essence of art is, what the juice is that differentiates a good picture, or book, or symphony, from a bad one, even though both were created with an equal amount of skill and cleverness. Not that I can put it into words, but the approximation is in my mind in a place I try to go when I'm putting lines on paper. And when I really succeed – not often enough! – the feeling is All Right! It's gotten me through a lot of dark places.

That alone justified my time at SVA, but I almost didn't make it through the full three years due to a dangerous infatuation. Her name was Deborah Howell.

I was crazy about her; I'm sure the feeling wasn't mutual, but it didn't seem to matter. Debbie was a Finishing School Girl from upper New York, and a type of woman you see in fandom: Diana Rigg, Mrs. Emma Peel, was her ideal. One of Deborah's Peelish quirks was to take her lunch on the fifth floor window ledge, and, being an idiot, I'd join her. There actually wasn't that much danger, I thought; the ledge was over two feet wide and you'd have to be spastic to topple off it. With our legs dangling over the street, the seating was comfortable and the view of the rooftops was interesting. One day, I climbed back through the window to get us some cokes from the third floor canteen. When I got back, there were a lot of excited students milling around; there wasn't any blot on the pavement, but Dean Rhodes had spotted her dangling legs from the street, rushed up to the fifth floor, and expelled her on the spot. I had missed the same fate by five minutes, and I never saw Deborah again. She probably went to Europe.

# # # #

Eventually I graduated. Meanwhile, the comic book field had been emasculated by the Comics Code Authority; Marvel, DC, and Charleton Comics were all that remained of the field and they were publishing mere handfuls of titles that were mostly drivel, nowhere near the type of stories I was interested in doing. Superheroes were a real crock – it would never last. It was obvious to me that comics would go the way of the pulps, so I got into advertising, sublimating all my creative impulses – and comic strips – in fanzines, making money, working hard, being bored and depressed. It wasn't until I reached my mid-thirties that I started to get involved with comics professionally, and I often regret that I hadn't given it a serious try much earlier during my FIAWOL days.

Visual Arts still continues to thrive (my hero Harvey Kurtzman even taught there for a few years), but sometime in 1970 'my' Visual Arts ceased to exist; it was then that Burne Hogarth was somehow forced out of the school by his co-founder Silas Rhodes, later remarking in an interview in 1995 that it was "My cherished hope is that I live long enough to see [Rhodes] dead and buried... and I'll piss on his grave!" I guess that works if you can't dance, but that hope was not to be. As I was working on revisions for this article, I found out that Hogarth had died, at age 84, at the 23rd International Comic Strip Festival, in France, where he was the Guest of Honor. There are worse times to go. ☼

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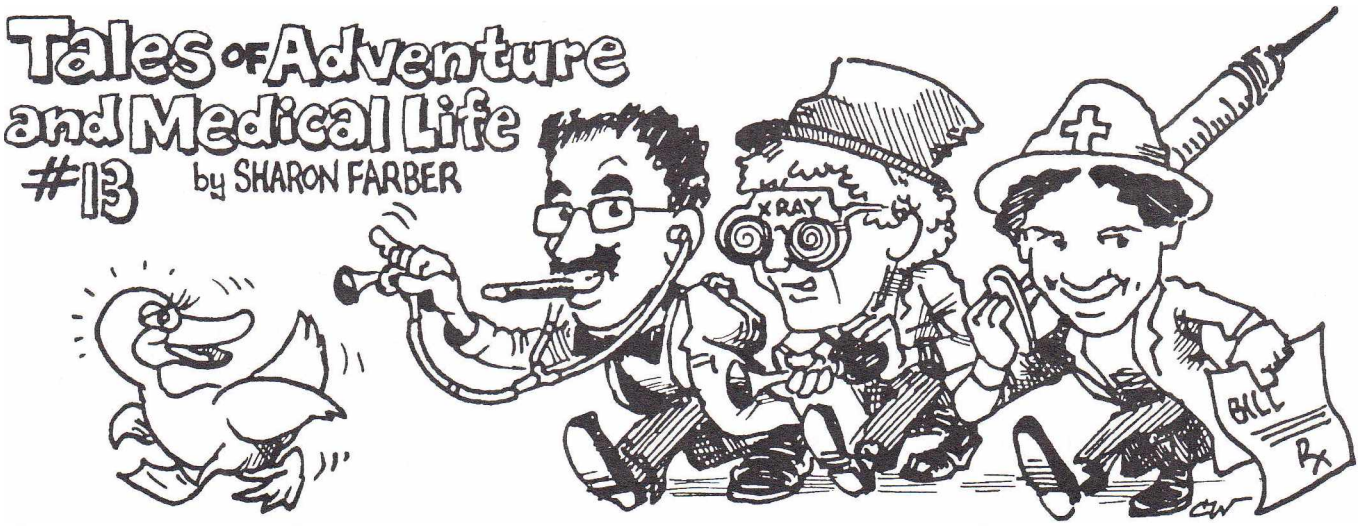
✎ Brad Foster wrote us that he could really identify with Steve's article: "Nice to find another struggling artist out there. Not that I'm saying that it's nice to hear that Steve is struggling, but that too many artists seem to be starving. I myself am in that 'struggling' stage, one notch up from starving. I think the next step is 'reasonably well-fed' artist." Similarly, Dave Hicks related that "As an art college grad myself, this was the piece [in the issue] that most reached out to me (I was going to say 'got a rise', but perhaps not in the light of the life drawing story)." Murray Moore also commented on that 'life drawing' episode, writing that "the model in Steve's class should have been fired. Even non-art students know that the basic requirement of a model is remaining still for a long time."

Another very popular article from *M*18 was the thirteenth installment of Sharon Farber's "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life" series. Her series was probably the most well-liked continuing feature in *Mimosa*, at least from the amount of readers' comments we received. And it's pretty obvious why – every article in the series was humorous and entertaining to read. Her article in *Mimosa* 18 was especially so, as it dealt with humor itself as its main topic.



A doctor, a lawyer and a rabbi walk into a bar... Stop me if you've heard it before...

There are two kinds of ethnic jokes. The ones told by outsiders – usually prejudiced and harsh – and those told inside – usually incomprehensible to the outsider, and not very funny even when explained.

Last time I promised to tell the unfortunate tale of my rotation on obstetrics. But for the past year and a half – thanks to a vicious stab in the back by people I had considered friends – I've been having to work 12 to 16 hours a day and have been stressed to the max. (The scoundrels' actions backfired and actually improved my practice. A Pyrrhic victory, at best.) The last thing I want to do today is remember County Hospital and the insane resident who wanted to hurt medical students.

So instead, I'm going to tell some of the jokes that doctors tell about each other.

# # # #

Every culture has its subclass of fools and innocents. Growing up in San Francisco, we deplored Oakland or Chico (where they sold Velveeta in the gourmet aisle). Los Angeles made fun of Pasadena. New York scorns everyone. In Tennessee (with it's motto "Thank God for Arkansas and Mississippi" – the states that keep it from being fiftieth in everything) we snicker at our neighbor Alabama. (What has 40 teeth and 80 legs? An Alabama family reunion... Why did O. J. Simpson move to Alabama? Because everyone has the same DNA there.)

In medicine, most jokes traditionally are at the expense of the surgeons, a practice probably dating back to the times when doctors had clean hands and surgeons cut hair on the side. Surgeons are portrayed as, well, less than intellectually gifted. Or as an orthopedic surgeon I once dated bragged, "I'm as strong as an ox and twice as smart."

An internist and a surgeon come to an elevator. The door is closing, so the internist inserts his hand.

"Why'd you do that?" asks the surgeon.

"Well," the internist answers, "you use the least important part of your body to stop an elevator door."

They go into another wing, and approach another elevator. It's closing. So the surgeon sticks his head in.

This joke has had less play locally since a woman tried this downtown. Unsuccessfully.

# # # #

The classical doctor joke, from which infinite variations spring, is The Duck Joke.

A general practitioner, an internist, and a surgeon go duck hunting. A duck flies overhead, and the GP says, "Gee, kinda looks like a duck," and shoots it.

Another duck flies overhead, and the internist sights it. "Duck, rule out pheasant, rule out goose," he says, and shoots it.

A third bird flies overheard. The surgeon raises his gun. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Then he looks at the others. "What was that?" he asks.

Variations usually feature other specialties. One I recall has an internist calling, "Duck, duck, come back! I want to examine you!" then the psychiatrist yelling, "Duck, duck, I want to talk to you!" and then BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

My surgical chief resident, Frank Psychosis, told me his version of The Duck Joke once. "There's this room," he said, "and the internist goes in and after an hour he comes out with a bunch of notes. Then the surgeon walks in and turns around and comes out and says, 'That's a duck'."

He laughed uproariously. When I realized that that must have been the punch line, I said, "Good one, Frank."

My favorite version of The Duck Joke makes fun of radiologists. (Nowadays most radiologists work long hours, do all sorts of procedures, and contribute to patient care. But twenty years ago they came in late, read a few films, and left. There are still a couple of hospitals I know where they disappear early and get very upset if you ask them to do something out of the ordinary, like look at an emergency scan and call you if there's a hemorrhage.)

An internist, a surgeon and a radiologist go duck hunting. There aren't any ducks, so they start bragging about their dogs. Finally they decide to have a contest.

They put down a chocolate chip cake. The internist points to the cake and says to his dog, "Sic it, Osler!"

Osler trots to the cake, takes out a notebook, and writes down all the ingredients, in descending order by concentration. Then he carries the note back to his master and wags his tail.

"Good boy, Osler! Impressive, huh?"

The surgeon snarls and says to his dog, "Get it, Halsted!"

Halsted runs over, takes out a scalpel, divides the cake into equal sections, dissects out all the chocolate chips and puts them in a container to sent to pathology. Then he goes back to his master.

"Good dog, Halsted," the surgeon says smugly.

"You haven't seen anything yet," says the radiologist. "Okay, Roentgen!"

Roentgen runs over, eats the cake, screws the other two dogs, and gets home by 3 o'clock.

Usually after I tell that joke to a radiologist (who always starts to protest "But we aren't like that anymore!") I defuse the situation by telling the only neurologist joke I know.

(Before the advent of CAT Scans and MRI – and often even with them – a neurologist would perform a lengthy physical examination in order to tell what part of the nervous system was involved, 'localizing the lesion'. Of course, most conditions were – and still are – untreatable. A famous neurologist in the fifties once described his job as "Diagnose, adios.")

Two neurologists are hot air ballooning when clouds come up and they realize they're lost. They go lower, and suddenly the clouds part and they see that they're passing over a field where a man is on a tractor.

One of the neurologists leans out and yells, "Hey! Where are we?"

The man on the tractor looks up and shouts back, "In a balloon!"

Then the clouds swallow them up again. The first neurologist smiles. "This has been a great day! We saw good scenery, we put back some brewskies, and now to make the day complete, the first guy we meet is a neurologist too."

"Wait a minute!" interjects his friend. "That looked like a farmer to me. What makes you say he's a neurologist?"

"Well, think about how he answered our question. He gave us precise localization and it didn't help a bit."

# # # #

In recent years medical care has been become the hostage of insurance companies. They decide if tests and treatments are appropriate, who can do them, and where. My office staff spends half the day trying to get basic tests approved, and more time arguing when they decide not to pay for it anyway. And few things can be more infuriating, in the middle of a busy day, than to receive a phone call saying you have to send a patient home because he isn't approved for further in-hospital days.

I met a new patient in the emergency room with a cervical spinal cord lesion – paralyzed legs, bowel, and bladder. After treatment he was able to walk again, Six months later he came to my office with difficulty breathing

and inability to urinate. Fearing his disease was flaring – fearing he would become totally paralyzed and die – I admitted him to the hospital. Luckily it was a false alarm.

The insurance reviewer called me up to complain. "You shouldn't have admitted him. In fact," she went on, "you shouldn't have admitted him last time."

"Last time... But he was paralyzed!" I protested in disbelief.

"Paralysis," she sneered. "You could have handled that outpatient."

So you can imagine how much we all love this joke.

Three doctors die and go to heaven. "Why do you think I should let you in?" asks Saint Peter.

"I was in medical research," the first doctor replies. "I worked on vaccines, and I saved millions of lives."

"Go on in," Saint Peter says.

The next doctor says, "I didn't save millions of lives, but I was a rural family practioner and I helped a lot of people with little reward."

"Go on in, it's a pleasure to have you with us."

The third doctor smiles proudly, "I was medical director for an insurance company."

"Go on in," says St. Peter. "But you're only approved for three days."

If you think insurance companies are bad, managed care and HMOs are worse. I heard this while rounding Christmas week.

Why did Mary come to Bethlehem?
That's where the nearest obstetrics provider was.
Why did she give birth in a manager?
She wasn't approved for in-patient days.

# # # #

I'll end with my favorite joke from residency. I suspect it was adapted from an army joke – I can just hear the roles being taken by a captain, a sergeant and a private – but I like it anyway.

The resident and the attending are talking while the intern charts orders. "I dunno," says the attending. Lately it seems like sex is 90% work and only 10% pleasure."

They argue for a while and, unable to reach a consensus, decide to ask the intern.

"What I think," replies the intern, "is that it must be 100% pleasure. Because if there was any work involved, you'd have me doing it." ☼

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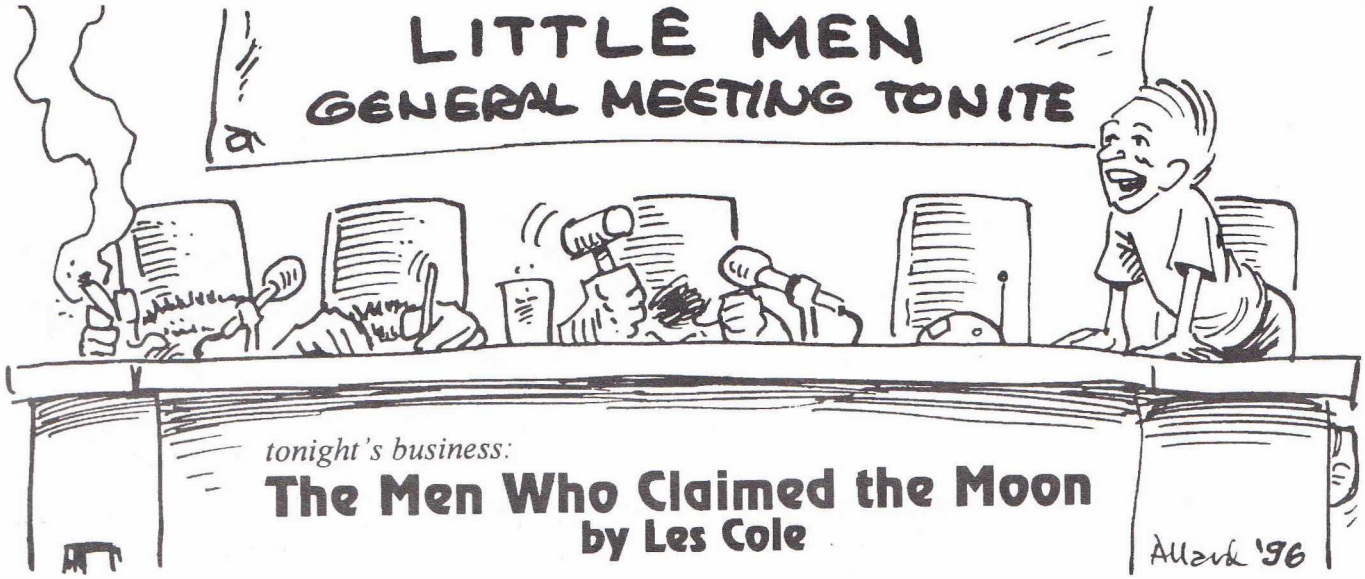
✎ Michael A. Burstein was one of our many readers who found Sharon's article as incisive as it was funny: "I have one brother who's a paramedic and another who's an Emergency Medicine Physician, so I have a slight insider's perspective on these jokes. For example, I had already heard the duck joke and the neurologist/balloon joke from my brothers – but the one about the dogs floored me. The ones about insurance companies and HMOs, on the other hand, were frightening, as they hit far too close to the truth. Which I'm sure Dr. Farber realized." On the other hand, Ken Lake wrote us (from England) that "as a dedicated admirer of Sharon Farber, I have to admit that she's right: her in-house jokes are just not funny. Mind you, I had to get translations of 'internist' (physician) and 'intern' (resident assistant surgeon or physician) before I had any idea what she was talking about anyway. ... We really *are* two peoples separated by a single language!"

Mimosa 18 was published a few months prior to the 1996 Worldcon, L.A.Con III, so we were only too happy to be able to include an fan history article about west coast fandom. In the early 1950s, one of the most renown fan clubs in the entire world was the Little Mens' club of the San Francisco area. It wasn't as big as its neighbor LASFS to the south, or as friendly as its other neighbor, the Nameless Ones, to its north, but it had a special claim to fame that the others couldn't match – it was featured in a news story that made headlines in newspapers around the world. It was an event that was, literally, out of this world:



There's been an overwhelming request – my wife Es standing in my office doorway, tapping her foot – to preserve for posterity the story of the Moon Claim of 1951. I undertake this with no few qualms, partly because there are a number of interrelated threads that you must be aware of. I'll try to be as brief as possible.

There's one other caveat. (It must be age creeping in on little cat feet: I find I can't make a statement without finding several counters to it.) I don't know about your memory, but mine is tricky, constantly betraying me. So I'll only set down here the things I'm sure of. Mostly. I think.

First, I must mention the Elves', Gnomes' and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder, and Marching Society, known familiarly as the Little Men. Don't ask where we got the name; it's too long to explain about the comic strip, *Barnaby*. The Little Men were an extraordinary group, based in Berkeley, with the resources of the University of California to call on. More, we were talented across a broad range of disciplines. We were known as being contentious, and that's true, but those on the outside never knew we hammered on each other far harder than strangers. It was a necessary part of the Little Men's mystique.

I had just been forced to be chairman – a knowledgeable Little Man didn't *run* for that office; he usually ran out the door – and knew what facing a pit of hungry tigers felt like. So when Don Fabun discussed his idea with me, I quickly agreed. Working on it gave me a chance to forget the horror of chairmanship.

Let me digress here to talk about the Fabuns. Don's wife, Gladys, a refreshingly intelligent and humorous lady, owned a circulating rental library where the Little Men met. Don was never a club officer, but he had a printing press and was definitely of the power-behind-the-throne ilk. He also had enough gray matter between his ears to replace three ordinary mortals.

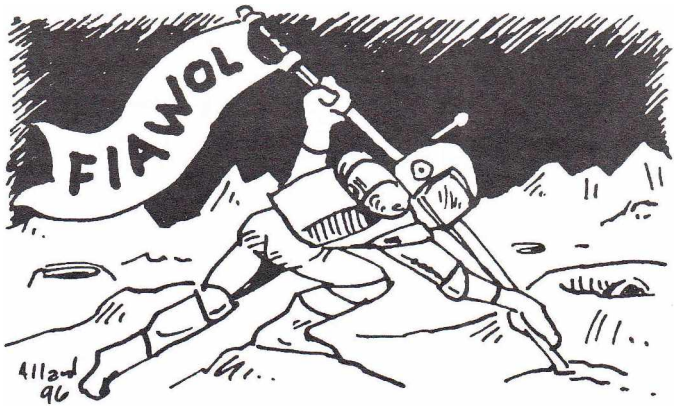
Don's idea? A publicity campaign to claim a piece of the moon. I guess it represented a challenge to him, to see if he could pull it off. He'd tried with other Little Men chairs, but I was the first taker.

Try to remember what the world was like in 1951. No missiles, no lasers, no computers, and John Campbell referred to in a national article as the 'Chief Slan'! *Destination Moon*, released about a year earlier, was the only sf entertainment around. (However, *The Thing* was due to be released soon. One day perhaps I'll tell about Es' and my visit to the studio, but I didn't consider *The Thing* as good sf.) It was the Little Men's mission to stir up the sf pot a little, and here was an ideal vehicle that might have gotten some publicity as far as San Jose, some fifty miles south.

Don, who owned the multilith press on which the club's fanzine, *The Rhodomagnetic Digest*, was printed... What lousy syntax! Let me begin again: Don never claimed the idea as his. He got most of it from Heinlein's "The Man Who Sold the Moon." But what Don brought was big knowledge about publicity. I worked with him because I wanted to know about publicity. I found out.

It was a long effort, something more than six months. I don't know who in the Little Men it was who'd found a wedge for us in U.S. mining law. The way it worked in the rough, tough West was a man staked out a claim, described it, and buried that description in a tin can on his claim. So long as it was never challenged, he did not have

to *prove* he'd been on the land. Incidentally, filing a claim on the moon was old hat; the Bureau of Mines had hundreds of claims on file. But the Little Men's claim was different in two ways: we would file before the U.N. – anyone of any sense could see that the U.S. Bureau of Mines had *no* jurisdiction on the moon – and we would file for a very small piece, not all of the moon; we weren't greedy. Of course, we ran in parallel to U.S. mining law about actually being on the claim – but no one ever challenged us.



I began by finding an astronomer. This was, after all, Berkeley, and the more exotic professions would drop like ripe fruit when the tree was shaken. The astronomer laid out a survey of an area containing the craters Ritter, Manners, and Sabine (a rough triangular shape) in the Sea of Tranquillity. It was pretty accurate, more than could have been done by a party actually walking the surface because of the moon's extreme curvature.

Given our triangle, I started with a great dollop of imagination, figuring that if this had happened and then that, we'd all be rich. Or smart. I plotted the geology, both areal and in cross-section, coming up with subsurface faulting, a few deposits of lead-silver telluride, and a lot of theory.

My father, who was taking law on the GI bill at the University of San Francisco, did a fairly comprehensive claim statement, writing it in nifty legalese. Just to check Dad, I also got a mining engineer to approve the wording.

We were getting close now. Don Fabun had been a journalism major at Cal and had worked in the profession; he wrote the basic story, the 'who what where & why' that seems to have disappeared in news stories today. Don gave me the job of 'slanting' – writing a lead paragraph to appeal to the particular slant of the local papers. As examples, the Hearst papers got leads that told about the horrible death and strangulation of someone caught on the moon without a space suit; the *Berkeley Gazette* learned that this claim was executed on behalf of a Berkeley science-fiction group, a home-grown product. Somewhere I must have gotten a little sex into it, but I'm darned if I remember for what paper. Don and his multilith printed a four-page foldover that included the map of the area and the mining claim.

And then came The Letter. Don and I worked on that one at some length. It was to be sent to the head of the U.N. Legal Department, and in it, we offered to cede back 85% of the mineral rights, all of any radioactives found (this was 1951, remember, and the romance with them had not yet fizzled), and perpetual U.N. rights to a presence in the triangular area. All the U.N. had to do was recognize our claim.

Since I, as chairman, acted on behalf of the Little Men, I had to prepare the packages and mail them. Plural packages there: one to Oscar Schacter (of the U.N.) with the letter and the claim, one to Harry Truman (of the U.S.) with the letter and the claim, and ten or so to Bay Area papers with the slanted story and the claim. I think we sent one to the *San Jose Mercury*, figuring if news was slack, it might run a story on a Bay Area event.

One thing Don cautioned about: we needed luck. If a juicy axe murder happened at the same time, our story would simply disappear. And it looked like the axe murder cameth – the day after I mailed the stories, nothing.

But the day after that ... !! I worked for a San Francisco oil company in the drafting department, and about 10 AM (February 17, if I recall, 1952), I got called to the phone. It was the *Berkeley Gazette*, and did I know the story had appeared on the 'A' wire of United Press? They were tearing up their front page and substituting the moon claim. They interviewed me about the Little Men and the claim.

The phone started ringing like there's no tomorrow, and my boss, who'd originally enjoyed what I was doing, got testy. But it kept going and going and going...

I can't remember all the calls. One that sticks in my mind came from New York, and in those days, a long-distance call was pretty hot stuff. The call was from the American correspondent of the *London Daily Mail*, and he asked intelligent questions. Why, for instance, had we filed before the U.N. instead of the U.S.? (We'd discussed this but never seriously, and not even in our wildest dreams: what would we do if they actually *granted* the claim? But we weren't interested in land grabs. At the time, everyone and his brother who ever landed in Antarctica had claimed it. This brought about lots of disputes and very little scientific progress. Given the mess, we hoped the

U.N. would grant the claim and immediately revoke it; it would show that the U.N., and not a welter of earth nations, had jurisdiction over the moon. We had not the slightest doubt that a moon landing was coming.)

It was a feeling of the roof falling in. The afternoon papers, the morning papers, Atherton, and yes, San Jose, L.A., St. Louis, Chicago, New York, Boston, South America, Paris, Sydney – we even heard it was treated fairly in Moscow.

I remember one other neat occurrence: I was still more than two years away from my first professional sale. And *Startling Stories* ran an editorial called "Les and Es Claim the Moon." It was my first appearance on a contents page, and if that appearance were a little outré, it'd have to do until the real thing came along.

In those days remember, radio was the big medium, and we got three minutes on a national news program, *ahead* of Winston Churchill's latest pronouncement. TV too: an eastern chain sent a crew to film one of our meetings; we hastily set one up, and Tony Boucher did the speaking honors (I was too nervous), pitching for a space program. (When the cameras weren't shooting, the Little Men jumped all over each other, one faction supporting the claim and the other indignant about it!) The film did not show on the west coast, but someone in the east wrote they'd seen us.

Oh, yes, the claim and the U.N.? It took me two or three letters to Oscar Schacter to get a reply. By then, the news was old hat, but he did mention that the U.N. had no jurisdiction and therefore couldn't do what we asked. A couple of months later, *Collier's* magazine had a lead article that discussed ownership of the moon in terms of terrestrial nations. Its author was one Oscar Schacter, head of the U.N. legal division. After we got through cursing and laughing, we decided that he probably didn't crib the idea; but it also seemed likely that he had already written his article and must have sweated mightily when our story broke.

In retrospect, it was an incredible three days; Es and I got our 15 minutes of fame. More important, I learned how difficult it is to do a publicity campaign and how one *must* be lucky enough to have the cooperation of all axe murderers. I'll never cease being grateful to Don Fabun and the Little Men! ☼

# # # #

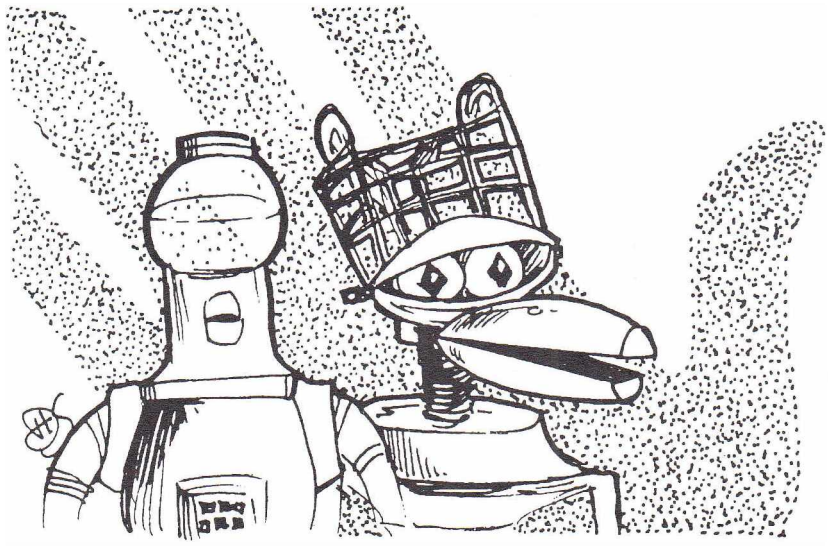
P.S. Harry Truman never did answer.

P.P.S. When Neil Armstrong landed on the moon, Es wanted to bill NASA $0.90/hour for parking... ☼

✎ An interesting postscript to this article is that it was later used as source material by a law student in the United Kingdom who was investigating the history of non-terrestrial territorial claims for a research paper he was writing.

Many of our readers' comments on Les's article marveled how sense-of-wonder the Moon Claim must have been to those involved in it. Ruth Shields wrote that "it's great to envision the hard work they put into this grand hoax, and satisfying to read about the responses it drew," while Alan Sullivan wrote that the story was "absolutely fascinating, and funny, too. This is the kind of legendary prank that can change mundanes to fans, or at least scare them away." Harry Warner, Jr., observed that "I can't think of anything else that has ever happened in fandom that was as carefully planned in advance as a publicity stunt and received so much attention from the mundane media. Just think of how many talk shows Les would have been a guest on, if television in the early 1950s had them in the abundance of today."

The medium of television was actually the topic of another article in *Mimosa* 18 – not talk shows, but a cult favorite on the Comedy Central cable network called *Mystery Science Theater 3000. MST3K* can best be described as a show about bad movies, mad scientists, bad movies, an intrepid space-faring janitor and his wise-cracking robot sidekicks, bad movies, and of course, bad movies. We were big fans! According to a viewers' poll, the best episode of the entire series was *MST*'s lampooning of a dreadful low-budget science fiction/horror film titled *Manos: The Hands of Fate*. Truly awful movies like *Manos* tend to become larger than life, so to say, once they attain cult status, but, as Richard Brandt's article from *M*18 described, the actual making of such a movie is even more fascinating. Here it is again:



The Hand That Time Forgot

by Richard Brandt

"What kind of movie would a fertilizer salesman from El Paso, Texas make?"
– Michael Weldon, *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film*

# # # #

For many years, *Manos: The Hands of Fate* must have been the Holy Grail for aficionados of obscure, low-budget, really godawful cinema: seldom mentioned, hardly ever seen, exactly the kind of movie that, yes, a fertilizer salesman named Hal P. Warren would decide to make, one fine summer in 1966.

That all changed when the grandmeisters of *la cinema du fromage* at *Mystery Science Theater 3000* delved into the bottom of the barrel and found this epic lying in ambush. For those without access to Comedy Central or some other clue, *MST3K* (for short) is about two scientists who torture a spacebound employee and his robot pals by force-feeding them movies, into which they interject their own snide remarks and alternative dialogue. Bad movies. Really bad. Really, really, *really* bad.

As one of the scientists confided when *Manos* came up for its turn, "I think even we may have gone a little too far this time."

So, instant cult phenomenon. Even if 'admirers' is not quite the word, *Manos* has been embraced by legions of 'MSTies' and cult film fans who passionately argue its demerits over the Internet. Even Roger Ebert's forum on Compuserve isn't safe.

And yet, as we shall see, there very nearly wasn't a *Manos: The Hands of Fate* at all.

How to describe *Manos* fairly? I tell locals that it's about a couple who take a wrong turn on Scenic Drive (that being the one landmark in the film still recognizable after three decades) and wind up at a 'Lodge' managed by a cult leader, his wobbly-kneed sidekick, and his harem of lingerie-clad wives. Wow; a cult movie that's *really* a cult movie!

"So, Richard," my fellow film buff Craig tells me over the phone, "for the next Amigocon you should really round up some of the cast and have a reunion panel."

"Hmmm," I said, the gears in my brain starting to grind away implacably. Problem is, how to locate some of these folks thirty years after? Assuming they're not dead, who would have hung around after perpetrating something like *Manos* upon the townfolk?

Suddenly my dreams are haunted by the spectre of *Manos*. In my sleep I can see myself after grueling detective work uncovering a fugitive cast member; hey, that little girl who played the daughter must still be alive by now eh? Only why hasn't she aged any by now....*Agggggggh!* Time to wake up, eh?

To the rescue: my old pal Roy, who springs on me the revelation that two of his poker buddies had fessed up to being in the cast and crew. What's more, it turns out I had met both of these guys. Bob Guidry, the 'Director of Cinematography' as he insisted on being billed, had been doing public relations work while I was in the TV news business. Bernie Rosenblum (stunt coordinator and featured player, now a noted Southwestern photographer) I had met one night when Roy had been misinformed that a poker party was underway at his house.

So I begged and pleaded and cajoled for Roy to be our intermediary with these two legends of the cinema, and he brought back these terms: they'd come to a panel on *Manos* in return for free con memberships and dinner at La Hacienda Café.

Deal!

We ended up shifting the panel to late Sunday afternoon, as a big finale to wrap up the convention. Of course, throughout the weekend and especially as Sunday began to wane I kept a watchful eye out for Roy and his pals, to no avail. Finally, as we were knocking down some of the last items in the Sunday afternoon art auction, Roy breezed in with Bob and Bernie in tow. Craig and I sat them down, popped in a tape of the *MST3K* rendition of *Manos* for reference, and laid into "the *Manos* Guys."

One of the first questions I asked was how they reacted to all the newfound public clamor for their work, what with *MST3K* picking it up and, I even hear rumors of, a laserdisc edition.

"Well," said Bob, "we'd be extremely interested, because we're still owed a piece of the picture."

"Oh, really?"

"Yeah. Hal only raised $19,000 to rent the cameras and pay for the film and processing, and so he couldn't afford to actually pay any of us. So we were all working for a percentage of the profits. Like Mel Brooks in *The Producers*, I think he gave away several hundred percent of the picture...."

"So whatever possessed Hal to make something like *Manos* anyway?"

"Well, Hal met Stirling Silliphant [the Oscar-winning screenwriter of *In the Heat of the Night*] when he was scouting locations for *Route 66*, and the two of them got to be friends. Hal had a lot of conversations with Stirling about filmmaking, and became convinced he could make a movie himself."

So Hal wrote a screenplay – a copy of which Bob whipped out of his satchel; Bernie produced the original shooting script, studded with Bob's camera-angle diagrams – which he called *The Lodge of Sins*. (At some point during production, Hal decided to change the title to *Manos: The Hands of Fate*. Why? No man can say...Although as time wore on and tempers frayed, the crew began referring to the project as *Mangos: Cans of Fruit*.)

And then it was time to round up a crew and "A Cast of Local Stars!" as the poster would say.

"I was the grand old man of the bunch at thirty," Bob said.

"The rest of us were all in our twenties," said Bernie, "because if we'd been any older we couldn't have pulled it off. We were shooting the whole night through, then running home, showering and changing, and going to work."

"We all had day jobs," said Bob. "And it was a good thing!"

In fact, two of the cast, Stephanie Nielson and Joyce Molleur, lived in Las Cruces, about an hours' drive away. After Joyce broke her leg while performing a stunt early in the shoot, new parts were written for her and stunt man-turned-actor Bernie, as a couple of kids who are perpetually hassled by the cops as they neck in their car. They start at dusk and are found still at it by dawn – a moment which drew Bernie a rousing ovation from our audience – but Bernie noted that the two of them were crammed into a convertible with her leg in a cast. "Not as fun as it looks," he concluded.

With Hal typecast as the hero 'Hal', the rest of the cast was largely recruited from the local community theater: Diane Mahree, as the damsel in distress; Tom Neyman, as the Master, who wears a black cape lined with red-embroidered fingers; and the tragic figure of John Reynolds, whose creepy Confederate-uniformed character of Torgo so endeared himself to *MST3K* that they incorporated him into their act.

"I heard a rumor on the net," I said, "that John had committed suicide."

"That's no rumor," said Bob. "He killed himself about six months after the movie was finished. John was a troubled kid; he didn't really get along with his dad, who was an Air Force colonel, and he got into experimenting with LSD. It's a shame, because he was really a talented young actor."

Bob explained that John Reynolds had built himself the metallic rigging underneath his costume which produced his ungainly, knobby-kneed walk. One of the reasons he hates the *Mystery Science Theater* version, he said, is the silhouettes of the *MST* cast which block the bottom portion of the screen throughout the film. They obscure the few shots where you can see that Torgo actually does have cloven-hoofed feet. The subtle explanation for Torgo's awkward gait: he's a satyr.

As for the Master's 'wives', they were recruited from a local modeling agency, Fran Simon's Mannequin Manor.

"And they gave poor Hal fits," said Bob. "They kept doing little turns every time they walked. 'This is not a runway!' he would scream at them."

Bob then pulled out a script and read where the wives' attire was described as "flowing, white tight robes." Hal evidently had something sheer and diaphanous in mind, but Fran Simon wasn't having *her* girls parading around in some flimsy bit of nothing. So the wives' uniform on-screen is a translucent white nightgown over a girdle and a sports bra, with a red strip of cloth trailing from the back that we assume is supposed to represent a tail. Aside from the last, it's uncomfortably like watching your mother getting dressed. Not that the crew ever gave up hope, though:

"We kept asking ourselves, 'And when do we start shooting the European version?'"

So, armed with nineteen grand worth of equipment and film stock, Hal and his troupe headed for County Judge Colbert Coldwell's ranch in El Paso's lower valley (where the exteriors for *Manos* still stand), and commenced a grueling two-and-a-half-month shoot.

Some of the crew soon chafed under the prima-donnish hand of self-made *auteur*-and-star Warren.

"One day," Bob said, "just to show Hal up, I showed up on the set wearing a beret and a safari outfit and carrying a riding crop, and barking out orders like Erich von Stroheim."

"I remember," said Bernie. "That's the day he threw the slate at you."

Bob also got back by slipping in some decent camerawork against Hal's express orders.

"See that?" he says as we watch a shot of the setting sun reflected from a rear-view mirror onto Diane's face. "Art. Hal would hate it when I did that."

Certain technical limitations of a $19,000 budget also soon revealed themselves.

"We had a spring-wound 16-millimeter Bell & Howell," said Bob. "Now, the maximum wind of the Bell & Howell was 32 seconds, so that was the maximum length of any shot."

...which explains away one of the film's first mysteries: why a lengthy driving montage is patched together from a series of choppy takes.

"We also shot the whole thing wild track" – meaning no sound recorded on the set – "then Hal, his wife, and Tom and Diane went to a sound studio in Dallas to do their voices. Everybody else in the film was dubbed in by two people."

"Wait a minute!" I said, incredulously. "You mean Torgo's voice was *dubbed*?!" – the quavery quality of Torgo's voice being his most imitated trait – and Bob confirmed this, yet another reason why John Reynolds' performance can't be properly appreciated.

Bob also explained away a scene in which two cops hear a gunshot, get out of their cars, take about three steps, look around and wave their flashlights, then without a word turn around, get back in their car and drive off.

"That's as far as our lights would illuminate," Bob said.

With limited lighting and a wide aperture, Bob had to apologize for the photography in some spots, which was, to put it politely, not quite in focus.

"At first," he said, "when we saw the dailies and I spotted any shots that were out of focus, we would do retakes. But as the film stock started to dwindle, Hal made it clear that our $19,000 worth would only go so far, so after a certain point we had to just leave the shots in."

The crew's motto became: "We'll Fix It in the Lab."

Bernie was especially disgruntled about the setup for his big stunt, when he goes rolling down a dangerously precipitous slope; it was shot from back of the crest of the hill, and so you can't see any of him as he goes rolling merrily away.

We asked if Bob had shot a cutaway of a rattlesnake that threatens our heroes.

"No," said Bernie, "that was a clip from a Disney nature film, I think."

"You can tell," said Bob. "You'll notice the snake was in focus."

So after a couple of months of ordeal in the desert, it was time for the grand premiere at the Capri Theater in downtown El Paso. Hal managed to attract a lot of local media attention. "Reputedly based on an old Mexican legend," quoted one reporter, "the tale has a surprise climax and people will not be admitted during the last 10 minutes of the program!"

Bob and Bernie and the rest of the cast and crew rented tuxedos for the occasion; Hal outdid them and rented a searchlight to sweep the skies on opening night. He also rented one 1955 Cadillac limousine which would arrive at

the door of the theater, unload a couple of the stars, then drive around the block to where the rest of the cast and crew were waiting, pick up two more, and make another run.

The theater was packed to the balcony with local dignitaries, they recalled, and the suspense was unbearable; you had the trailers of coming attractions, a cartoon, a twenty-minute *True Life Nature Adventure* set in the Antarctic, and then finally, the feature.

"And then," said Bob, "as soon as Hal opened his mouth, you heard it from the balcony: a little..." and then he mimicked the small snorting sound of a suppressed guffaw.

"And as the film unreeled, and you heard more and more laughs and catcalls, I started to slide down further and further in my seat. All my life, I had lived for one thing: to see my name in the credits of a motion picture. Well, the credits for *Manos* aren't until the end of the picture, and I sneaked out before then."

Betty Pierce, the movie reviewer for the El Paso *Times*, was particularly taken with the climax, in which, she headlined, Torgo is "Massaged to Death," although she also claimed to see Torgo as the film's Existential Hero. (Torgo does in fact eventually rebel against the Master, a parallel no doubt to the relationship between Hal Warren and his crew.)

"For an amateur production," she went on, "the color came out very well, however, and perhaps by scrapping the soundtrack and running it with subtitles or dubbing it in Esperanto, it could be promoted as a foreign art film of some sort or other."

In spite of all this, Hal managed to find a distributor – Emerson Releasing Corporation – who gave the film its shadowy half-life of a theatrical run.

"You have to give Hal credit," Bob said. "If you have any idea, even in Hollywood, how difficult it is let alone to get a film made, but to get it finished, and get it through post-production, and then get it distributed...well what he did was something of a miracle."

On which note it was time to adjourn and escort the celebrities from the stage ("You two were glowing," Craig's lady friend said accusingly) and on to La Hacienda. Roy pulled out some replicas of the *Manos* poster art he had produced with his Mac, scanner and laser printer so that we might get the local heroes' autographs ("Recognition at last!"). Outside the café, Bob and Bernie let us know that the adjacent road had actually been part of the driving-montage shoot, which prompted us all to pose for Craig's camera with a full moon overhead and genuine *Manos* scenery in the background.

"You know," I told them, reflecting on the genesis of this meeting, "this really is like a dream come true."

What about the rest of the *Manos* gang? One of the 'wives', Robin Redd, went on to a career as a genuine honest-to-God movie and TV actress. Tom 'The Master' Neyman dropped out of sight. The production's still photographer, a young Allied German soldier from Fort Bliss, discovered Susan Blakely on the campus of the University of Texas at El Paso, and went on to shoot for *Vogue*. Hal is long gone and his widow lives now in Colorado.

But Bob had one last word in defense of Hal's peculiar genius.

"Although I sneaked out of the premiere, I did go to the cast and crew party afterwards, at Bernie's parents' house. At one point Hal said to us, 'You know, maybe if we took it back and re-dubbed the dialogue, we could market it as a comedy.'"

"Well, look what happened," I said. "The son of a bitch was right!" ☼

✎ Todd Mason's comment on Richard's article seemed to pretty much sum up readers' opinion about the piece: "My goodness, to actually seek these people out was a brilliant idea! Kudos to you for running this piece, and to Richard Brandt for not selling it to *Film Threat*, instead (which he should probably do now!)."

It turned out that *M*18 was the last issue of *Mimosa* we published that didn't have an overt theme. *Mimosa* 19, which was published in November 1996, was an "L.A.Con" themed issue, starting with our Opening Comments about our epic two-week trip to California, which included an encounter with an oversize moose and squirrel on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, accidentally gate-crashing the worldcon equivalent for belly-dancers in San Francisco, a tour of the Ackermansion in the Hollywood Hills, and losing the Fanzine Hugo at L.A.Con III (to Dave Langford's *Ansible*) by just eight votes. Someone else who lost a Hugo by a narrow margin was Michael A. Burstein, who related the story in an article in the issue. Here it is again:

WORLDCON®, THE HUGO, AND ME.

BY Michael A. Burstein

Joe Mayhew 2005

Q: How many Hugo nominees does it take to change a lightbulb?
A: It's an honor just to be allowed near lightbulbs.
– Susan Shwartz

# # # #

What's it like being nominated for a Hugo and the Campbell for your first published story?

I have to admit that that's not a question I ever thought I would be in a position to answer. It is a question that I remember asking Nick DiChario a while back. Actually, I phrased it in the past tense, because by the time I met him, ConFrancisco was long over and Nick had already lost both awards. I honestly don't remember what he said.

But I do remember what he said when I asked him the question this past year. Because this time, I had a little more stake in the answer, and he told me just to enjoy the feeling, the way he did.

# # # #

Readers of *Mimosa* may recall that in 1994, I attended the Clarion workshop, as I wrote an article about my experiences which appeared in *Mimosa* 17. Since then, I had sold and seen published two stories in *Analog*, "TeleAbsence" (July 1995) and "Sentimental Value" (October 1995). I got very little outside feedback when the stories appeared – it seems that not a single person wrote to the magazine to comment on my stories – and I thought that was pretty much the end of it.

Until the following year, when I found out that "TeleAbsence" had won the Analytical Laboratory Award for Best Short Story of 1995. And been nominated for the 1996 Hugo Award for Best Short Story. And had somehow gotten me nominated for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer.

To answer, myself, the question I had posed to Nick, being nominated for the Hugo elated me. It came out of nowhere and totally blew me away. I was thrilled, ecstatic, and also scared.

Why scared? For one simple reason, which I think will make a lot of you nod your heads wisely, or explode with laughter. You see, my wife Nomi and I decided that this would be an experience we would never forget. So, even though we live in the Boston area, we made plans to attend L.A.Con III, just in case I won. I wanted to be present at the Hugo Awards Ceremony to accept.

And that meant attending my very first Worldcon.

# # # #

Fortunately, it was not Nomi's first Worldcon, as she had attended Noreascon 3, back in 1989. And it wasn't my very first convention, either, as I had been attending conventions since Arisia in 1992. But the prospect of going to Worldcon was slightly more intense than the prospect of just going to one of the regional cons which we try to attend every year.

So I ended up looking at it differently. I teach Physics and Mathematics at the Cambridge School of Weston, and one of the problems with attending Worldcon was that faculty meetings begin the week before Labor Day and cut into Worldcon. Since we wouldn't be able to arrive in L.A. until Thursday night anyway, I told myself that I wasn't attending Worldcon, but the Hugo Awards Ceremony, and that anything else I made it to was gravy. That way, instead of kicking myself for missing all the Thursday and Monday events of a Worldcon, I would see all the

Friday through Sunday panels which I attended as extras, side benefits of attending the Hugo Ceremony.

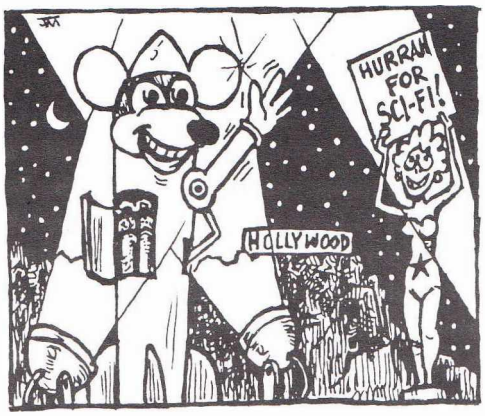
On Thursday night, August 29, 1996, Nomi and I flew out to Los Angeles with our friends Joe and Cindy Lazzaro. Joe is another writer, who has also had work appear in *Analog*, and he and his wife are frequent travelers, so we decided to plan our trip together. Cindy is wonderful when it comes to arranging flights and car rentals, which took a load off my mind. In turn, I made our hotel reservations.

We got to the hotel late Thursday night – OK, more like early Friday morning – and collapsed.

The Worldcon itself passed in a bit of a blur. I remember various parties. I remember going to the SFFWA Suite to receive the Science Fiction Weekly Reader Appreciation Award for Best New Writer. I remember meeting a lot of people I had known only from the Internet or Genie. I also remember a panel here and there. In fact, somehow I stayed sane enough to moderate one panel, called "Writing: The Long and the Short of It," about the differences between writing novels and short stories.

I also remember a very large dealers room, with far too much stuff that I wanted. And I remember one specific event in the dealers room.

Adam-Troy Castro was working at the *Science Fiction Age* table, and I found him there Sunday morning. The dealers room was filled with small exhibits as well as dealers, and Adam told me that they even had a display devoted to the history of the Hugo statuette. He walked me over to the display, and I got my first look at the 1996 model.



It was gorgeous.

Imagine the standard rocket statue, gleaming in all its glory, sitting on top of a film can base. The base, a real recycled film can, is surrounded on the edge by a filmstrip with color stills from famous science fiction movies and television shows. On the back of the base, framing the rocket from behind, is a model of the mountains from *Destination: Moon*. And in front of the rocket are two Hollywood style spotlights, aimed towards the rocket and designed to shine upon it when the back switch is depressed.

The very first battery-powered Hugo Award.

I'll admit it. I drooled over this rocket, I put my hands around it, I fondled it. The thought of being up for one of these finally hit home in a way it never had before. Here was actual, physical evidence of the award I was competing for.

I said to Adam, "If I win, it'll be a real problem getting it home."

He replied, "We should *all* have such problems."

# # # #

On Sunday night, after taking in one last panel to calm my nerves, Nomi and I headed over to the Arena building at 7 PM for the Hugo Nominees reception, which took place in a large room next to the main auditorium.

I still had trouble believing that I was present as a nominee, as I was surrounded by all these people whom I knew were deserving of the award; I felt like an upstart. Nomi and I met a lot of people during that all too short hour, and we spent a good part of the time talking with Stan Schmidt, editor of *Analog*, and his wife Joyce.

As it got to be close to 8 PM, the Hugo administrators brought out a sample Hugo Award for us to examine, and to show us how to hold it just in case you happened to be the one called onto the stage to receive it. Once again I found myself drooling over the statuette, and wondering if I'd have to worry about how to get it home.

And then, they ushered us into the auditorium. Quietly, the mass of us walked in the dark to the central seats, which had been reserved for nominees and their guests. Nomi and I sat with Robert Sawyer and his wife Carolyn Clink, whom we've befriended over the past few years. I tend to consider Robert a well-established pro, and it came as a shock to me this year when I realized that we were both up for our first Hugo Award.

Nomi and I sat down, and I looked around us, at the people filling the auditorium to capacity, and at the huge stage with the two movie screens on either side. All of my nervousness came to a head. This was the moment I'd been waiting for since finding out I was a nominee almost half a year ago.

As they say in Hollywood, it was showtime.

# # # #

Connie Willis was the Toastmaster, which I think was an excellent choice. She is a very funny person, and I enjoyed her performance when presenting an award at the Nebulas a few years ago, but I wouldn't want to have been squirming in my seat while sitting through a monologue placed between her reading a list of nominees and announcing the name of the winner. Having her host the ceremony as a whole was perfect; her humor helped reduce the tension I was feeling enormously.

Unfortunately, the beginning of the ceremony still seemed to drag, especially for me. Think about it. I had never been to a Hugo Ceremony before, and naturally I was assuming that they'd get to the Campbell Award fairly quickly, as it was one of the earlier awards to be presented. But first, there was the First Fandom Award, and the Big Heart Award, and the Seiun Awards, and they felt like they took forever. In fact, they took the better part of an hour.

Finally, it was time for the Campbell Award to be announced. Stan Schmidt walked on stage, discussed the legacy of John Campbell briefly, and stated the names of the five nominees: Michael A. Burstein, David Feintuch, Felicity Savage, Sharon Shinn, and Tricia Sullivan. Then he named the winner.

David Feintuch.

I turned to Nomi immediately, and said, "That's it. I haven't won the Hugo either."

She wasn't sure if that would be so, but I was. I had figured that although my chances of winning the Hugo were not that great, being both a Hugo nominee and Campbell nominee would help me on the Campbell balloting. (A few other writers had told me the same thing.) But I doubted it would go in the other direction.

Feintuch gave a very nice acceptance speech, and then the ceremony continued, with other Hugos being presented and humorous stories being told on stage. I was feeling a little low, of course, but my spirits rose when the *Babylon 5* episode "The Coming of Shadows" won the Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation. I am a major fan of the show, and felt that the Hugo was well deserved, and I cheered along with the rest of the audience when the winner was announced.

What I had forgotten was that the Best Short Story Hugo came next.

After J. Michael Straczynski gave his acceptance speech and the applause had died down, Larry Niven ascended to the podium to present the award. He listed the five nominees, mispronouncing my last name 'Bur-STINE' instead of 'Bur-STEEN'.

"TeleAbsence" by Michael A. Burstein. "Life on the Moon" by Tony Daniel. "A Birthday" by Esther M. Friesner. "The Lincoln Train" by Maureen F. McHugh. "Walking Out" by Michael Swanwick.

And the Hugo went to "The Lincoln Train" by Maureen McHugh.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who published the story in *F&SF*, went to accept the award on Maureen's behalf, while I sat in the audience, applauding. I had been expecting this, so it wasn't too much of a shock. Besides, Maureen's been deserving of the Hugo since her first novel, and furthermore, she's a very nice person. While Kris accepted the award, I kept thinking of how Maureen came to my reading at Boskone last year, and how pleased I was that an established pro of such magnitude would be interested in my work. Her attending my reading had meant quite a lot to me.

The other fiction categories were left, and the worst part of the Hugos is the fact that there can be only one winner in each category. As I told Esther at one party during the convention, I wanted to win, but I didn't want her to have to lose for me to win. So I was ecstatic when James Patrick Kelly won Best Novelette for "Think Like a Dinosaur" and when Allen Steele won Best Novella for "The Death of Captain Future," but at the same time there were other people on the ballot for whom I felt disappointed, as I had been rooting for them too.

I do want to express my deep appreciation for something Jim said, though. I had helped him with a small piece of science in his story (to the point where he named the protagonist Michael Burr), and during his acceptance speech he thanked me by name for a key piece of research, thus correcting the mispronounciation which Larry Niven had made. It felt good to hear my name as part of the awarding of some Hugo, even if it wasn't a Hugo for me.

The last category was Best Novel, which Neal Stephenson won for *The Diamond Age*. A fine book, indeed, which I enjoyed highly, but I had been rooting for *The Terminal Experiment* by Robert Sawyer.

The Hugos were over, and Nomi and I headed outside with everyone else. We were talking to each other and looking for friends when Priscilla Olson handed me a copy of the Hugo edition of *Stat!*, the convention newsletter, and directed my attention to the Hugo balloting.

My short story had been the last one to be eliminated; I lost the Hugo to Maureen by a final vote of 242 to 232. I had lost the Hugo by only ten votes.

I was thrilled; I screamed with delight. If I had lost by only one vote, I'd have been devastated; if I had lost by a large margin, my slight disappointment would have been intensified. But ten votes was just right.

I barely remember the Hugo Nominees Party (or Hugo Losers Party, as some people call it). I had a chance to congratulate David Feintuch, and I finally got to meet Richard & Nicki Lynch, who had published my first piece of fanwriting since I was a teenager. But it was all over and we had an early flight, so after only about an hour of socializing, Nomi and I returned to our room to sleep.

# # # #

The story doesn't quite end there, though. When I got back to the Cambridge School of Weston, I announced at an assembly that I had lost both awards. At the very next assembly, a group of my students took to the stage to announce the inception of the first ever CSW Bug Eyed Critter Award for Best Short Story. They read the list of nominees – and of course, my story was the only one on the list. They presented me with an adorable Folktails "Alien in Spaceship Puppet" (the bug eyed critter, of course), which I could control by sticking my hand inside. It even has a control stick for the spaceship, which you move with your thumb, and it glows in the dark.

You know something? It's better than the Hugo.

# # # #

Am I upset? Well, of course I'm disappointed – who wouldn't be? – but I think of the story of one of the American Olympians in Atlanta this past summer, who lost the gold medal and was asked by a reporter if he felt crushed about it.

The athlete stared at the reporter incredulously, and with a big smile on his face, exclaimed, "Are you kidding? I've just won a silver medal!"

And that's how I feel. It's hard to be disappointed when your first published story gets nominated for the Hugo, no matter how you do in the balloting. Getting nominated was a fluke, I know, as it usually takes years for someone to make it onto the Hugo ballot. If I ever want to look at an award, well, I've got my bug eyed critter. And in the end, I have to agree with the truth of what it's like to be a Hugo nominee, no matter how much it's been turned into a joke:

It ***really is*** an honor just to be nominated! ☼

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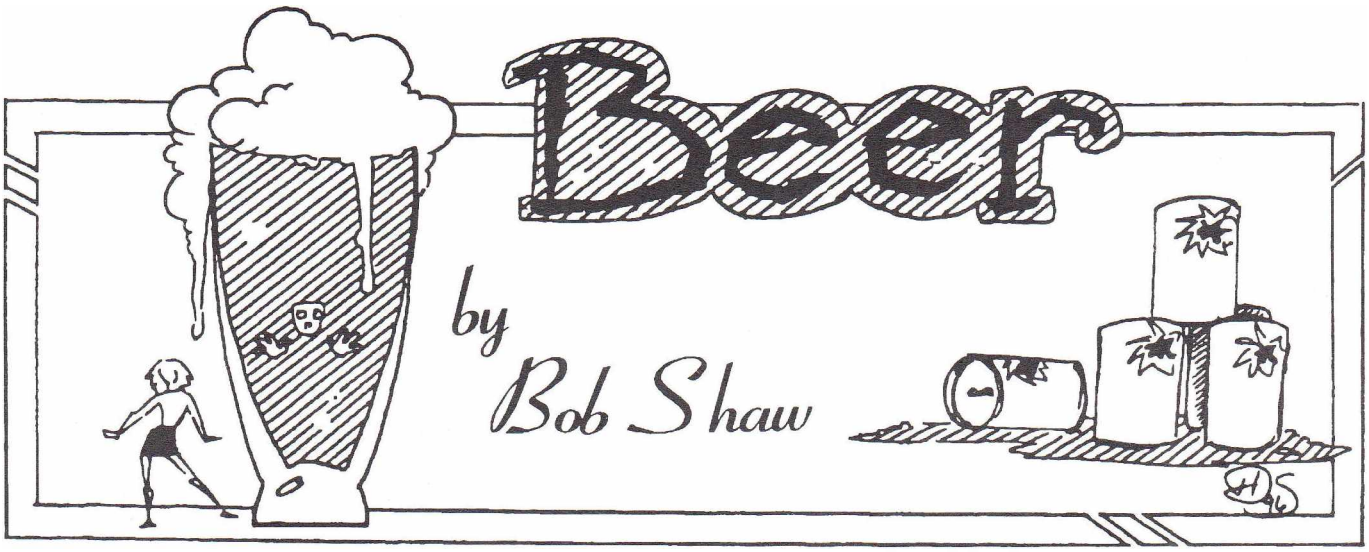
✎ Michael's article caused Harry Warner, Jr. to do some personal timebinding: "I've escaped the emotional upheaval of attending a Hugo Award ceremony in which I was a finalist. I attended only one worldcon in the same year that I was a nominee [but] left before the Hugo Awards ceremony because I wasn't feeling well." Of the novel design of the 1996 Hugo Awards, Harry commented that "Michael's description of the Awards makes me wonder if the trophies will continue to become more complicated and handsome each year. The one I won [in 1993] was a major advance in design over my earlier ones and obviously, [the 1996 Hugos] were even more exciting to look at and possess." But on the topic of desirable awards to possess, Teddy Harvia wrote that "I loved Michael's description of his alternate Hugo. I want one!"

Other articles in *M*19 included Dave Kyle's remembrance of "Those Wonderful Turbulent Thirties," Ahrvid Engholm's article about Swedish fan-slang, Harry Warner, Jr.'s remembrance of the 1971 Worldcon, Sharon Farber's deconstruction of the *Star Trek* universe, and Shelby Vick's description of a small Florida fan club of the late 1940s. Besides these, Forry Ackerman and Walt Willis each had articles where (from different viewpoints) they described their first meeting. And there was also a remembrance by John Berry of Bob Shaw, who's absence from fandom is even now still profoundly felt. We closed the issue with some wit and wisdom from Bob Shaw, a reprint of a speech he'd given more than 20 years earlier, at "An Evening for James Blish," about one of his favorite things:



I don't know how many of you realize it, but when Judy [Blish] was masterminding this evening we're having together she assigned different tasks to different people, and she told me I was to speak about beer. I'm wondering why I was chosen for this particular job. It may have been because a couple of years ago at a convention I was seen standing holding a pint of beer. But I'd like to hasten to add that this was beer which didn't belong to me. I was minding it for somebody else. It in fact belonged to Harry Harrison, who had just nipped upstairs to write a novel.

Actually the subject isn't inappropriate for Jim, as we all know. When I first met him I expected him to be a very grimmy-faced, serious type person on all levels. I noticed Armageddon cropped up a lot in his work. And I, presuming to advise such a man, actually said to him, "Jim, don't worry about Armageddon. It's not the end of the world!"

In fact, there's a long and honorable connection between SF writers and beer. Well, fairly honorable. In fact, thinking back on it, it's downright disgraceful in places, but then...

Bradbury, of course, introduced beer to Mars in his books – well, beer cans. He complained a lot about earthmen strewing the desert with beer cans, which spoiled the look of the ancient fragile temples. And in science fiction fandom in the `50s, I seem to remember, there was actually a project to build a pile of beer cans which would extend to the moon.

Talking about Jim, he liked beer, and he brought bottles of beer along with him to conventions, carefully chosen. But it says a lot for his cosmopolitan tastes that he even learned to like English pub beer. And this is quite a feat for an American who's used, all his life, to the chilled, fizzy drink which is served up in American bars and given the name of beer. The gulf between that kind of beer and ours is summed up in a three-cornered conversation Jim and I were having with another fan. This chap was a keen member of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. He was describing a beer he had got in a pub which he was recommending, and he said it was "a bit sour, lukewarm, flat as a pancake – perfect!" And Jim knew enough to agree with him because he had, in fact, learned to appreciate our kind of beer. He understood, too, that a dedicated boozer isn't put off a drink just because it doesn't taste very nice. Sometimes we have to force ourselves. Quite often when my wife thinks I'm out enjoying myself, I'm going through hell!

I've got one final beer story about Jim, and it goes back to the time two years ago when four SF writers were commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain to do a week-long tour of the Northeast, giving talks. One or two nights in the week a friend named Mark and I put away quite a lot of beer and other drinks, and, strangely enough, the organizers of that otherwise very good week had made the ghastly error of putting it into a temperance hotel. The lady who ran it was a rather puritanical type, and Mark and I arrived home one morning about two o'clock. We had forgotten our keys. I remember very well that last walk up to the hotel, because we kept bumping against each other at every step. It was strange, this synchronous bumping into each other which went on the whole way along that street – we couldn't help it.

We got to the hotel, and it was one of these places made up of what had formerly been a row of private houses all joined together, and all the entrances sealed up tight except the one which was supposed to be at the hotel. Mark and I hadn't our keys, but we tried all the other doors anyway, which hadn't been opened for years, because we didn't want to face the lady who owned the hotel. Finally we had to knock on the door, and she came out in her nightgown and told us off very, very severely. She said that was the third time that week that it had happened, and she wasn't going to put up with people who drank a lot behaving like that on her premises.

The next day – that was toward the end of the week – Jim was arriving. I was talking to the owner of the hotel out in the lobby, and she had decided to go on with part *two* of the telling-off. She really got on about it, how she didn't like boozers at this temperance hotel.

And then, just at that moment, Jim came into the hall. He was so tired, he had traveled up from London. He was wearing his black suit, and a black turtleneck shirt, and a fur hat pulled down, and he looked remarkably ascetic.

The landlady looked at him and said, "Is this Mr. Blish?" And I said, "Yes, that's Mr. Blish." And she said, "Is he a minister?" And I said, "No, but he has written books that dealt largely with religion."

Her eyes lit up with this, and she dashed across the lobby and said, "Mr. Blish, come with me and I'll get you your key." And he went to back away, and put his hands across her and said, "Can you get a drink round here anywhere?"

And she *knew* there and then that he was one of us! ☼

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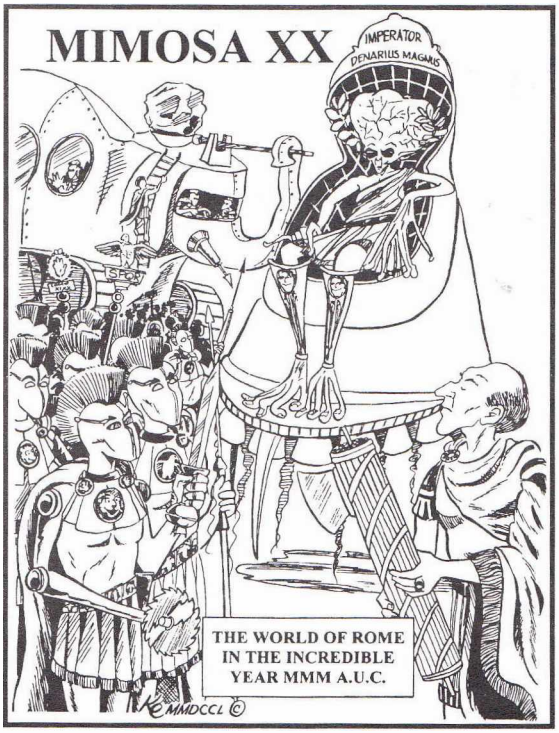
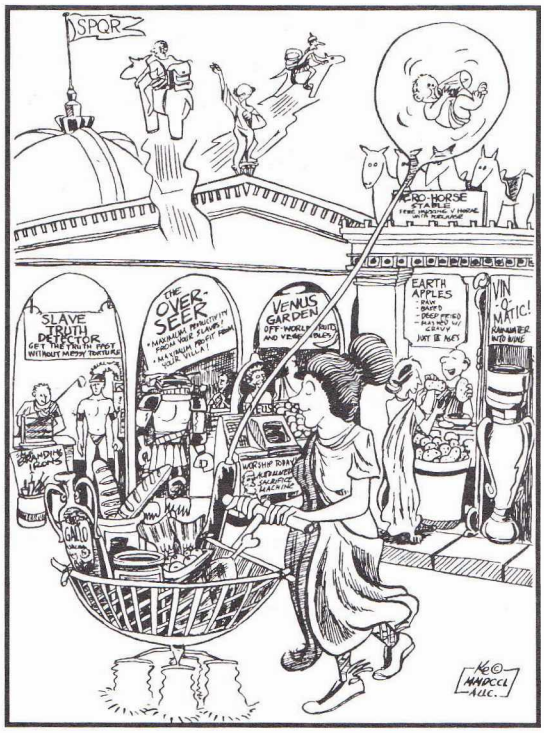
✎ Some of our readers had anecdotes to share about their memories or meetings with Bob Shaw. The collected comments we received became almost a virtual wake for him. One of them, from Tom Jackson, recalled Bob's talent for comic understatement: "[At the 1986 Hugo Awards ceremony, where he was toastmaster,] Shaw [told a story about his career as a technical writer, where he was called on to] explain that aircraft with twin engines are supposed to be able to keep flying when one of the engines didn't work, but his company's aircraft didn't do that. When one of the engines quit, the plane 'dropped like a stone'. Of course, Shaw wasn't allowed to write that; instead, he wrote, 'the plane had a negative rate of ascent'."





It unfortunately turned out that the passing of Bob Shaw was only the beginning of a series of deaths in fandom. Soon, the most of the rest of Irish fandom would follow, as well as many other well-known older fans.

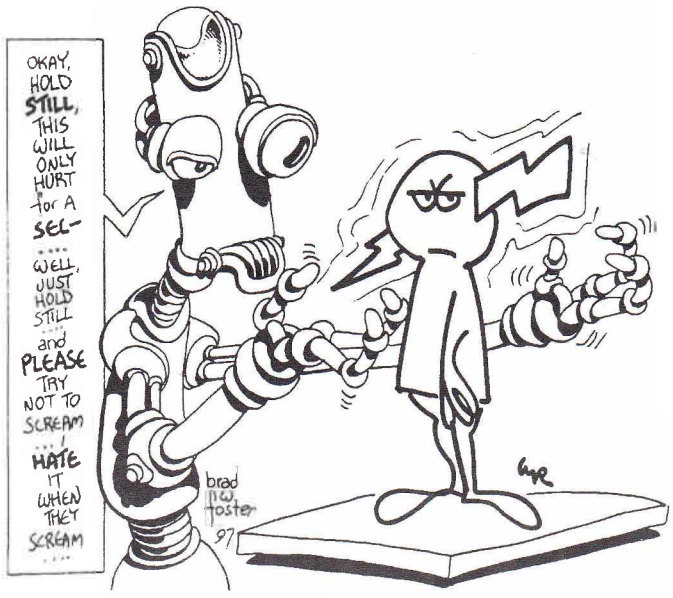
Mimosa 20, which was published in May 1997, had an "Anthropology and Archeology" theme, starting with Rich's "A Brief Lesson in Kitchen Table Anthropology" Opening Comments, where he likened moving downward through a long-ignored stack of stuff on your kitchen table is like traveling backward through time! The covers for the issue were by Kurt Erichsen, which depicted, in their own way, a kind of futuristic anthropology scene.

The featured article in the issue was a tribute to fan artist William Rotsler – we'd asked several other fan artists to 'collaborate' with Rotsler by completing some 'set-up' Rotsler cartoons (the same cartoons were provided to each artist), and also asked them to write something interesting about Rotsler that we could publish with their art. Here's some of the results:

Beginnings

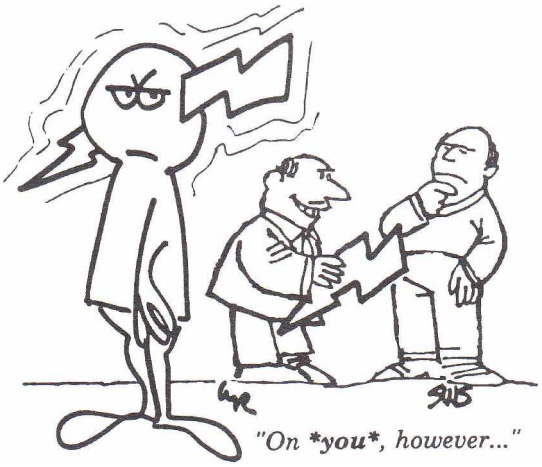
by Alexis Gilliland

The first time I encountered Rotsler was when I was cutting artwork on stencils for the *WSFA Journal*, back in the late `60s. Bob Pavlat gave me a folder with several pages of drawings by Rotsler, ATom, and miscellaneous. The first time I encountered him in person was at St. Louiscon, in 1969. He was a Hugo nominee in the fan artist category – and a BNF, and I felt very much the neo. At that time I hadn't started putting captions on my drawings, and I was having a run with a head opening the cranium hatch to show the joke in the conning tower, as it were. I drew one for Bill, and he said: "Why do you always draw those heads?" A very reasonable question which I took as criticism, and sort of wandered off, feeling that I was maybe intruding on his good time.



Time passed, and while I knew him, he got to the point where he knew my work in fanzines (he may have been aware of my work in `69, how else would he have known I was 'always' drawing those heads?), and then, after we were both Hugo nominees together, he began to know my face. At Seacon `79, over at Brighton, he beat me out to win his second Hugo, and at some point we were in a hallway together, autographing program books. I was standing downstream from him, and when he began doing little pictures alongside his signature, I began doing little pictures alongside his little pictures. That is the first time I can remember us doing any sort of collaboration. In the natural course of events, some of the books made their way back to Bill to show him what I was doing to his work. He loved it, and after he got home, he sent me the first of many packages of set-ups, for me to find and develop the jokes concealed within.

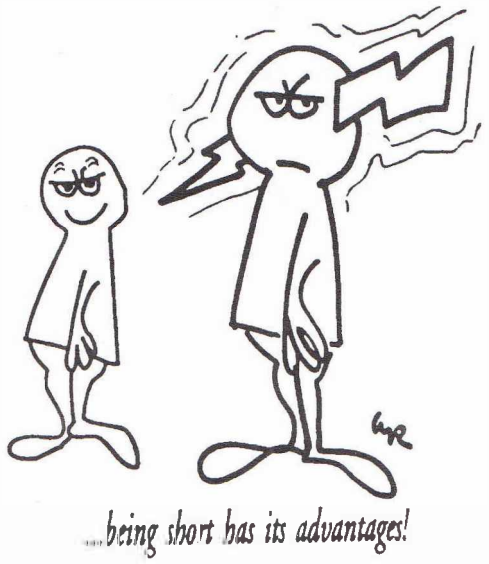
Since then, we have encountered each other at Worldcons, and now and then a Corflu or some such. Each time, we get together and draw silly pictures, sometimes on panels. Clearly if it wasn't fun for both of us we wouldn't be doing it. There is also an element of psychic jump-start involved. Collaborating with Bill for a few hours over the weekend is not only one of the highlights of the weekend, it also sets the creative juices flowing better than anything I have ever encountered on a regular basis. (There was the time... but that was a long time ago, in another country, and besides the wench is dead.) What else is there? Apart from the drawing, Bill is excellent company, and tells the most marvelous anecdotes. Some day I shall use one of his throwaway lines to start a novel: "After the war we all went to art school." ☼



*"On *you*, however..."*

Vintage Rotsler

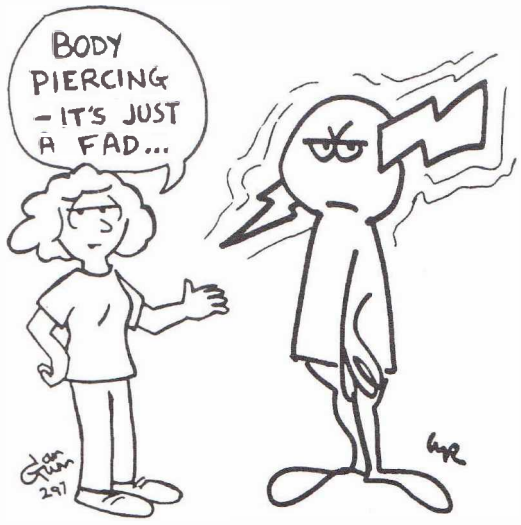
by Sheryl Birkhead



"Some wines are ageless!"

"And some just turn to vinegar."

Um...er...well, I consider *Rotsler* to be one of fandom's priceless assets. When I first got into fandom, way back in the Dark Ages, it took a while to figure out the fannish *patois*. A *Neofan's Guide* helped with the written word, but there was never any doubt about the content of the simplistic Rotsler cartoons. Don't ever confuse simple with simplistic. The man is about as chary as they come with lines, but packs a deceiving wallop in content.



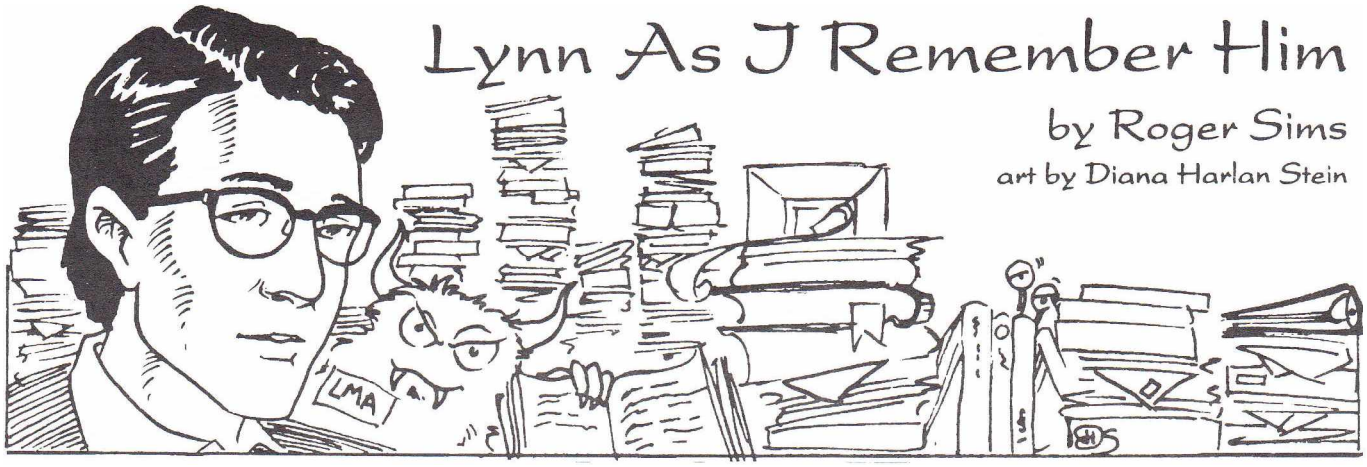
Alas, I cannot do much more than appreciate the man and, sadly, I don't have any juicy anecdotes to relate. I have never even been privy to one of his legendary *dish renditions*, when he mystifies all, waiters and mundanes alike, by turning innocent and unsuspecting dishes into fannish mementos. However, I *have* seen the man at various conventions and watched in awe as he participated in fanartist duels. He wields his felt tip as he would a sword, and has an economy of motion that is a beauty to behold. Few can keep up with him in sheer volume, and none can match his contributions to fan publications over (literally) decades.

I have never seen a biography of this phenomenon, but in bits from various articles have gleaned a bit of understanding of just how versatile and diverse an individual Rotsler is. But he's more than just that. Bill Rotsler has been a delight to fandom for over a half century that he's been *in* fandom. And there's only one word that adequately describes such a person of lasting, superior quality...

Vintage! ☼

✎ Lots of readers commented on the feature, with the most amusing one from David Bratman: "It's like reading *Partners in Wonder*, only shorter and funnier." It was all a surprise to Rotsler, who had no clue we were planning this stunt. He wrote to us: "My God, what egoboo! What a conspiracy! It is unique, fun and flattering!" And then he was gone, dead of cancer just a few months later. Living a continent-width away from him, we had no real idea that his condition had been so severe. And we also didn't know that within three years, two of the artists who contributed to the article would also be gone.

And that wasn't the end of it. Fandom is now into its ninth decade, and the unfortunate truth about the aging of fandom is that every year brings depressing news of the deaths of more and more of those who, in previous decades, were the shapers of what fandom is today. One such person was Lynn Hickman, active in fandom from the 1950s onward, collector extraordinaire and friend of all. Here's more about him:



My friend Lynn Hickman died October 30, 1996, at age 70, just eight short weeks after having been diagnosed with lung cancer. Sometime during the first week in August, Lynn decided that he wasn't feeling well. He also decided that he did not have an ordinary cold or even bronchitis or even pneumonia. It might just be something more serious. So, by his own standards, he did something very drastic: he stopped smoking – this, after being a smoker for his entire adult life. As the reader has already surmised, this action was much too late.

His wife, Carolyn, also aware things were not well, kept urging him to see his doctor. In early September, he finally did. Cancerous spots were located on his lungs and it was discovered that he had second stage emphysema as well as blood clots in his legs. It was determined that he was not a candidate for surgery, and was put on radiation treatments instead. A second examination after the radiation course revealed that the cancer had made considerable growth and the doctor gave him two to six months to live. Lynn cut that to eight days by eating and drinking almost nothing.

But that is quite enough of his death. Let us now examine in some length his life and times. Lynn Hickman was born June 5th, 1926. He grew up with the pulps and science fiction fandom. He was truly a man of his times.

Lynn's early career in fandom took the form of writing letters to the pulps and to fans whose letters he enjoyed reading in their letters columns. He had made a conscious effort not to attend a science fiction convention, although he did enjoy reading about the antics of fans who did. All this changed when Cincinnati won the right to hold the 1949 Worldcon, but even with Cincinnati winning, Lynn was still not sure he wanted to attend a meeting at which he might encounter over a hundred people, even if all of them would be fans! Now, I'm sure that many reading this who knew Lynn may well be astounded by that statement. But the truth is that Lynn never liked being with a lot of fans at one time. This is the reason why he attended very few Worldcons during his last fifteen years. What probably made him decide to attend the Cinvention was that his good correspondent buddy, Don Ford, was to be the chair – that and the fact that the convention hotel in downtown Cincinnati had beds that pushed into the wall. In later years as he told and retold this story, it was not possible to determine which one of the two reasons had the most weight, but I do believe that it was the bed in the wall that pushed him over the edge, so to speak.

It turned out that Lynn had a great time at Cinvention. When Portland won the right to hold the 1950 Worldcon, he felt that it was just too far to go for a weekend and stayed home. But in 1951, he decided that New Orleans was not too far, and besides, his favorite music, Dixieland, was played all over town there. And so he went. After attending those two worldcons and a couple of Midwestcons (including the first one) there was no turning back. In later years he was proud that he had only missed one Midwestcon!

I suppose it's possible that Lynn will be remembered as a fan legend. His accomplishments in fandom are themselves certainly legendary. In the summer of 1950, Wilkie Conner came to visit Lynn in Statesville, North Carolina, where Lynn was living at the time. They decided to form a club that would give solace and unification to people who were stared at by mundanes as if they were little monsters when they were seen reading prozines, and gave it the whimsical name of 'The Little Monsters of America'. The club lasted for over a decade and sponsored some small conferences. There was even a club fanzine. And in October of 1958, Lynn was present at a meeting that established an even more famous fan group: First Fandom.

From reading various things after he died, I learned that Lynn first published a fanzine sometime during 1950.

Over the next forty-five-plus years he published many fanzines and apazines. The two main titles of his general interest fanzines were *J.D. Argassy* and *Pulp Era*. *Pulp Era* was his serious zine, devoted to discussions of all of the pulp magazines. *Pulp Era* was considered an important fanzine for that reason, so much so that copies of all of the *Pulp Eras* are now in the Library of Congress.

In 1972, Lynn invited four other pulp collectors to spend a weekend with him at his home in Wauseon, Ohio, to discuss all aspects of the pulps. At the end of the weekend, two of the others, Gordon Huber and Rusty Hevelin, decided with Lynn that this one-shot was too much fun to let die, so they made plans to hold a second one in nearby Toledo. This was the start of the annual Pulpcon conventions. Lynn was only involved with Pulpcon's operations in its formative years, but he always remained loyal to it, attending over half of the meetings. He and Darrell Richardson have been Pulpcon's only two Fan Guests of Honor. Sometime in the 1980s, Lynn was the receiver of the Lamont Award, which is given each year to the person who has made major contributions to the world of pulp magazines. In 1987, he talked 24 other pulp collectors into participating in an apa devoted to pulp magazines. He was its first editor.

In addition to *J.D. Argassy* and *Pulp Era*, Lynn published many fanzines with often interesting names: *Pack Rat*, *Wauseon Wonder Stories*, *Huckleberry Finnzine*, *The Goody Gumdrop Boys at Jellybean Mountain*, and *Gooseberries*. His reason for using *Gooseberries* as a title was he liked gooseberry pie and once made several bottles of excellent wine from the gooseberries in his backyard.

I first met Lynn at the first Nolacon, where he was the very first fan introduced there. It was friend for life at first contact. Between 1951 and about 1965 our contact was limited to the conventions that we attended, but after that, he, I and our wives spent at least fourteen weekends a year together. In addition to the many hours that we spent at his kitchen table after our wives had gone to bed, we were privileged to spends many hours in bars in England, Scotland, New Zealand, and Australia. During these 'discussions', we would argue over the smallest details to the point that anyone in earshot would throw up their hands and walk away. In fact, sometimes in the middle, having exhausted our points of view, we would change sides and continue on. It is safe to say that neither of us made the slightest dent in the other's opinion on anything!

I will miss him more than I have ever missed another fan or friend. He truly was the brother I never had. For the rest of my life I will not be able to taste a new beer, or see a movie, or hear a new joke, or read a book without saying to myself, "Damn, I can't share this with Lynn!" ☼

✎ We received many warm comments about Lynn Hickman in response to Roger's article. Harry Warner, Jr., wrote that "I met Lynn only once, when he visited Hagerstown, but I sensed the same good nature and likeability that virtually every other fan found in him no matter whether the acquaintanceship was slight or close." Gene Stewart wrote us that "Roger Sims' reminiscence of Lynn Hickman is sterling and leaves me feeling that a good man's life has been honored by a good friend's attention. May we all be even half so lucky."

The other articles in *M*20 included Ron Bennett's entertaining autobiographical story about his job-related relocation to Singapore during the 1960s; it was the first of many articles he wrote for us, all of which deserve reprint. There was also the first part of Jack Chalker's short history of Baltimore fandom, Walt Willis' article about the 'discovery' of John Berry, another of Sharon Farber's "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life," Forry Ackerman's story of the start of a whole new kind of fandom, and Dave Kyle's remembrance of the late 1930s and the first science fiction conventions. Besides these, we also published an article by a fan friend who had recently gained his so-called 15 minutes of fame in a most unusual way:

It Pays to ADVERTISE?

by
Guy H. Lillian III

# # # #

ENJOY THE ***SUGAR BOWL*** *IN* ***NEW ORLEANS*** *...*
BUT ***BRING THIS AD!***

If you get *in* trouble, we can help you *out*!
If you need a lawyer while in New Orleans, call us.

Guy Lillian * Dennis Dolbear
Attorneys at Law * (504)821-2362/(504)831-9271
# # # #

Let me explain a brouhaha which made my friend Dennis Dolbear and I nationally famous – briefly, I hope – at the end of 1996. It was originally my idea: advertise in the home papers of tourists soon to visit New Orleans, some of whom would be bound to get in trouble on the streets of the Crescent City, and need lawyers.

It only makes sense. People flock to New Orleans for events like the Sugar Bowl and Mardi Gras looking for a Good Time. Such people sometimes take their quest for Fun a bit far, and run afoul of the constabulary. To put it bluntly, they get arrested.

They need lawyers. Strangely enough, I need something too. *Money.* When I was a boy, all life used to begin with play. Now all life begins with *work*, for the paying of bills is the root of all evil. How – to quote *Star Trek* – could the needs of the many (the desperate tourists) be reconciled with the needs of the few (me)?

You *hustle*. Central Lock-Up is the facility where new arrestees are booked and bonded. The hungry lawyer meanders through the door, casting his eye about for civilians with a desperate, deserted set to their countenances. To the trained eye such expressions connote one thing: *"My boyfriend's been arrested and I don't know what to do!"*

It happens all the time, of course. Her boyfriend may have done nothing more deadly than imbibe to excess, and/or fail to find proper facilities for the sanitary disposal thereof ... but our constabulary is not known for turning a blind eye to such transgressions. He ends up in handcuffs and she in hysterics. What does she do? Her usual course is to pay a bond at Central Lock-Up – about $500 for the usual minor malfeasance. The boyfriend is released after a few hours and given a time to appear in Municipal Court. He either pleads Not Guilty on that occasion and receives a trial date, or Guilty and receives part of his bond back, the rest being kept as a fine. (Or blows the whole thing off and skips town, forfeiting the entire bond.)

Or. She can hire *me*. In that case I call Dennis Dolbear, who calls his contact with clout (hereafter known as 'Our Man'), who calls the jail and gets the boyfriend *paroled.* This means he is released without bond. The money which would have gone to the bond goes, instead, to *me.* In exchange, he gets a lawyer to stand up for him at his arraignment, get his trial date, and fight the forces of oppression. Actually, since we only dun our clients to the tune of $250, they save half their money – and get legal representation, to boot. A better bargain, really. The trouble is getting people to realize it. So, step two is invoked: you *advertise.*

This is ethical. There's nothing wrong with lawyers advertising as long as they adhere to certain standards promulgated by the Bar Association. A lawyer can't guarantee results, for instance, or outside of a few specific disciplines proclaim himself a 'specialist'. There are lawyers who push the envelope and tout themselves like toothpaste, but when I advanced the idea to Dennis that we try to pick up some business from the Sugar Bowl, and he gave his enthusiastic okay, I vowed to cling to the canons and say nothing iniquitous. When I wrote the ad, I called the Louisiana Bar Association to clear the wording. The decree of the Liaison for Lawyer Advertising was abrupt and unequivocal: "Run it!"

Next question: Run it *where*?

I found the names of the student newspapers at the two schools competing in the Sugar Bowl football game, Florida State University and the University of Florida, and called 'em up. I'd missed the deadlines for each school's final papers of the semester, *but* Tallahassee had another outlet, *The Florida Flambeau*. A nice kid named Carlos assured me that *they* had available space, so I faxed them the above, and they ran it, and *all Hell broke loose*.

The phone *hurled* itself off the hook... but not with clients. With *media*. Apparently advertising in out-of-town newspapers was such a unique and original idea that my little amateur ad was *news*. The calls came roaring in from Florida radio stations and Florida newspapers. All had similar questions: **Why are you doing this?** "Make money and serve the public." No use denying the former, and it didn't hurt to schmooze the shmucks with the latter. **Why didn't you advertise in Gainesville papers?** As if we were stating that only FSU students ran the risk of getting busted. "Missed the deadline." **Will you do this again?** "If we make some money, we'll try it again for Mardi Gras... and *saturate* Southern colleges."

The tone of all the interviews was also similar, and not good. I sensed *offense*. Part of it was the usual, tedious loathing for our profession: lawyers being slimy shysters, how dare such vermin try to make money off innocent, pristine, and guiltless college kids? I began to worry a little. That worry cascaded into dizzying panic when the call arrived from WDSU-TV, the local NBC affiliate. *They* wanted an interview.

Dennis arranged for the TV station to sit us down in a downtown office where, presumably, we'd look lawyerly. Harried from a busy end-of-the-year work day, and a run of several blocks from the nearest parking spot, I arrived to find him smiling with an exquisite young black girl – originally from Dallas, which befitted her look of money – and a cameraman. They sat us down, set us up, and let us talk.

I watched the broadcast through a mesh of fingers, and I must say that Dennis looked good on tape. Me, I appeared – here it comes – thoroughly *fubbo**, though I don't know how anyone could tell that I'm broke just by looking. We *sounded* okay, although I could have garroted Dolbear when the girl asked what crimes we anticipated, and he proudly answered, "Public urination."

Then *Sports Illustrated* called.

The guy asked all the standard questions and got all the standard replies (with a request on the side for more stories about Jimmy Connors, my sports idol). When I scored the issue and scanned the squib in "Sportstalk," I didn't care for its tone; it mentioned Shakespeare's line about 'killing all the lawyers' and was headlined "Ill Legal Pitch." Well, *SI* never treated Connors right, either. (My cousin Johnny read it and called from California, pretending to be an arrestee from Florida State. Nice try, chum; I recognized the voice.) But... *Sports Illustrated*! How many *lawyers* who have to scrimp and save to *buy* an issue of *SI* end up *in* it?!?

It was all too much. Gratefully I fled north for the holidays. Safe at my mother's house in Buffalo, the only fallout was welcome: a call from Southern trufan George Inzer, who had read the national feed after our first radio interview. He said they were calling us 'smart lawyers'. Now *that* I could handle!

As '96 waned and the Sugar Bowl approached, I returned home. Waiting was a letter from a Florida fan (no return address), its upshot that true Gators and 'Noles aficionados would save their money to *bribe cops*, not pay shysters. Mentally wishing the writer much opportunity to explore this possibility, I set up a strong communications link with Dolbear (that is, I kept my phone by my side) and prepared for New Year's Eve.

The phone *melted*. Call after call came in. Three former clients asked for loans. My neighbor Cindy called twice to tell me what a great time she was having at her boyfriend's sister's party. However, no students, jailed or otherwise, bothered me.

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* *fubbo*: fat, ugly, bald, broke, old. *C'est moi*, I'm afraid.

I was feeling pretty glum about the silence, but New Year's Eve fell on Tuesday and the Sugar Bowl itself wasn't until Thursday. We had another night of mad French Quarter revelry to look forward to... with *plenty* more chances for ~~arrests~~ work. Also, the New Year opened with another request for an interview – this time from a *Florida* TV station. I pulled on a sports coat and hung a tie around my neck and met the pleasant sportscaster at the Hyatt Regency. *His* tone I liked. "Which school do you think will have more arrests?" he asked. "Actually," I replied, "I expect the kids from both schools will spend the entire weekend engrossed in *prayer.*" Big laugh, big hit.

The local tube claimed there had been only five arrests in the Quarter on New Year's Eve. Hard to believe! True, the city had borrowed police from all over this part of the state and the Vieux Carre was literally crawling with cops. But to me that meant *more* busts, not fewer... so that low figure sounded like public relations bushwah to me. I resolved to forget about the phone and keep a personal eye on Central Lock Up, where arrestees would be brought. Good move.

I was there at seven o'clock the next morning. Bead-bedecked college kids covered the place, dejected, exhausted, bleary, worried. Without *seeming* to pounce (since Bar Association rules forbid lawyers from approaching potential clients for work*) I spoke to several. Most were washouts – they'd already paid the bond and would face the judge without lawyerly representation. Rotsa ruck. But one sad-faced trio...

Like them, their 'downed bro' was a member of the FSU marching band. He had been caught using informal bathroom facilities in and upon the streets of the French Quarter. After his arrest for this 'lewd conduct', the lad was frisked and lo, a pipeful of marijuana was found. "We can get him out," I told the kids. "Here's my card." Still glum, they taxied off. A couple of hours later, they called. "Here's our friend's father's 800 number," they said. "He wants you to call him."

Daddy was an Orlando pharmacist, a solid citizen who, more than anything, wanted his boy to march in the Sugar Bowl. He was understanding of the occasional imbecilities of youth, and smart enough to realize the value of an attorney when you've been thrown in jail. He wired the fee to my bank and DD and I rushed to the courthouse, in search of a judge. At three o'clock in the afternoon on January 2nd, you can imagine how many still thronged the halls of justice. But we found one. and spilled the sad story of a wayward boy losing the chance of a trombonist's lifetime... and he made the call.

Dennis and I returned to CLU to wait for the kid's release. We didn't have to do this. But I'd promised Pops that I'd do everything possible to get Junior to the game, which meant, if the need arose, hauling him there from jail. So we sat and sat and sat, and while we sat picked up two other cases. One involved a beautiful young lady from Mississippi and her boyfriend, busted for fighting with a butt-squeezing local; the girl had been thrown down, slugged, tit-grabbed and called filthy names. By the *cop*! No no no *no*. I'd have something to *say* about that!

Anyway, the tinkling trombonist was eventually freed, and DD and I putt-putted him to his hotel. He got to toodle his horn in the Big Game and watch his team get porked, 52-20. I told his story in our second WDSU interview... and gamely autographed an issue of *Sports Illustrated* for another lawyer, who allowed that he, too, might start spending holiday nights hanging around Central Lock Up. Just what we needed: competition,with Mardi Gras just around the bend.

# # # #

Actually, it turned out to be a *good* Mardi Gras, despite my ambition to make money from it, and despite a week of lou'ring clouds and temperatures fit for chilblains. Carnival, it seems, continues to conquer all.

Not like it used to, of course. Not like the early years, when Carnival was new to me and catching every bead had the success of the season riding on it, and every Rex doubloon was a valued treasure instead of a meaningless disc of anodized aluminum. Or when Dennis' immortal GrasCon was in swing, and a glut of partying maniacs would descend onto Nawlins, shouts of *"EH-pic!"* echoing, and the call of this town to the prodigal grew stronger and stronger... No, not like those days, for one has since become jaded with the repetitive parades, and the jostling,

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* This rule is mainly designed to deter ambulance-chasing in civil cases, but also applies to criminal law. So what the hungry attorney must do is stand around, look lawyerish... and wait for the client to bite his lure. *ahem*

howling crowds, and the interminable waits, and the gawdawful traffic. Now, none of *Our* People visit New Orleans for Mardi Gras (fans come to Jazz Fest, if they come at all), and the krewe that used to coalesce around fandom in this town has drifted along differing (and diverging) paths. Now, Mardi Gras is mostly a bore, a bitter reminder of the lost joys of youth... *and* a way to make extra money grubbing behind the demands of my exalted and squalid profession. Everything has changed with the years, practically none of it for the better.

But still...

What was *good* about this Gras? Well, for one thing, I *did* make some money. Not a lot, not the tons that *could* have been collected, but enough to pay the odd bill or two for the month, which I'm old enough to regard as a triumph.

For Mardi Gras I decided to place an ad in the local fishwrapper. This act was called into question when the ad came out not on the eve of Mardi Gras' big weekend, but at the very start of Carnival, two weeks before. Porked again.

Carnival began. The early parades rolled. The minor krewes held their balls (so to speak). I ignored all. Not until the weekend before Fat Tuesday would the *big* parades hit the asphalt and the cops really get crackin'. Indeed, t'was on the afternoon before Bacchus, among Carnival's biggest and best parades, that I struck what gold there was to be struck.

Outside the gates to CLU a group of tourists stood, confused, upset, concerned, baffled... ripe for plucking. I sashayed up. They blubbered forth wonderful stories. You've heard what women do here for Mardi Gras beads?* Men can act with similar foolishness. One lady – very handsome gal in her late forties, wearing a parka with a flag on it – had seen her paramour hauled off by the gendarmes after he *whipped out his schween* in front of *Galatoire's*, one of the finest restaurants in this (or any other) city. *Nuns* were supping in the front window! She asked Dolbear – whom I quickly summoned – a zillion questions, but finally came up with the loot. The other folks told a more poignant tale.

The elder of the two was named Alison, and the younger was her daughter, although I could barely believe it. Alison possessed the smooth countenance of nubile youth but the bearing of adult care. That morning, on sheerest whim, she had joined her cute daughter and her daughter's boyfriend, and driven down from Biloxi, Mississippi. They'd had a fabulous day carousing in the French Quarter. And then some schmuck had put a move on the daughter in the French Quarter. The boyfriend had objected and naturally, it was him who had ended up behind bars.

In her own words, Alison had brought nothing but cigarettes. No money. No checkbook. No driver's license. No way to rescue anyone from jail. Despair! Despair! Alison was literally shivering with anxiety. ~~Buzz Lightyear~~ GHLIII to the rescue!

No money? No problem! Smitten to my idiot wits, I first offered to drive Alison – and her daughter, if she *insisted* on coming – home to Biloxi to pick up her checkbook. What's a three-hour jaunt to Mississippi and back on the busiest day of the season? For once saner, Dennis overruled me, and simply assured Alison that she could pay us *later*. The beautiful lady smiled, my heart split like a melon, and off went Dolbear to call Our Man, the elected official who would parole the miscreants out of jail.

He wasn't home.

Not to worry, Dennis assured me. Our Man is just out at the Bacchus parade. He'll call his answering machine anytime now, hear DD's entreaties, and free our clients. We went to dinner. DD kept his beeper by his ear. Nothing.

Not to worry, Dennis told me. Our Man is at a party, no doubt, and will call as soon as he gets home. Which will be *any time now*. We stared at the beeper. Nothing. We drove by Our Man's uptown house. It was as dark as the tomb. Had this ever happened before? No.

Now worry, Dennis said.

I did my best to reassure our clients, who were still at CLU, staring at the door, waiting for their friends to be

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* ✎ Ed. Note: The reader is referred to the photospread in *Challenger* #6, available from the writer of this article.

freed. Undoubtedly our contact is... delayed. Not to worry, I smiled... through clenched teeth. Alison gazed up at me with concern softened by limitless faith. My heart oozed out of my chest and dripped over my shoes. Oh, that she could think me untrue to my word. Dennis called and called. Our Man stayed gone. We called three judges, reaching none. They were also incommunicado.

I fled home and to bed. Twice during the night the other clients called to bitch about the long wait. I told them all that I knew, and somehow garnered enough sleep to have enough wit about me to know that it was good news when Dennis called at seven o'clock. "It's done," he reported. Seems Our Man had indeed been to a party and had indeed taken advantage of the Mardi Gras ambience and had indeed passed out. His first act upon staggering home had been to make our calls for us. Breathing a great sigh of relief, I dashed to CLU and reported same to our weary but comforted clients. In fact, I took Alison and her daughter to breakfast – their first meal in twenty-four hours. I was doubly a hero.

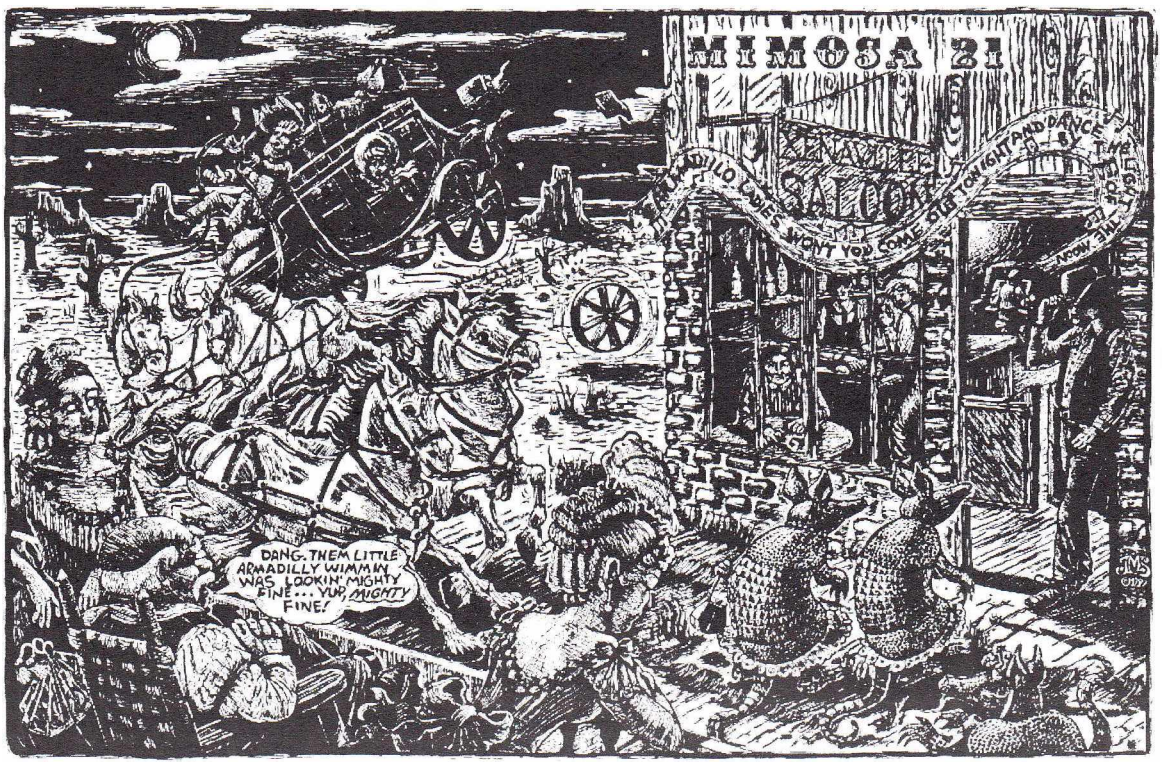
Later, Dennis and I got to meet the felons who had put the ladies through such an ordeal – a chubby, fortyish, bald-pated fellow and a skinny kid with a pierced ear. You, I told them, are lucky men. Not because they'd spent the night in jail, of course; but because they had such splendid people on their team. (Think about it. Say *you* were in a strange city and got arrested for an *embarrassing* offense. Who could *you* call? Who would ride to *your* rescue?)

So: were our experiments in advertising worthwhile? We didn't cull a single *sou* that could be distinctly traced to the advertisements... but we *did* get famous. Eve Ackerman, a fan friend who owns a radio station in Florida, told me that I'm *still* known as 'that New Orleans lawyer' to wags in Gainesville. For whatever that's worth, the ad was a triumph.

But I think I'd trade it for a kind word from Alison. ☼

✎ If being mentioned in *Sports Illustrated* was surreal to Guy and Dennis, it was even more so to a friend of theirs, Janice Gelb, who wrote: "you have no idea how weird it was to casually thumb through an issue of *Sports Illustrated* only to find a squib on the ad Guy and Dennis put in *The Florida Flambeau*. If I had to bet on fans whose names might appear in *SI* one day, theirs would probably be last on the list!" Another friend of Guy's, R Laurraine Tutihasi, was not quite as impressed by his tale: "Guy's story about his lawyering does not change my opinion of lawyers." Finally, David Bratman took Guy's article as proof of a fannish maxim when he wrote that "It's true: all knowledge is contained in fanzines, including how to find a lawyer when you're in the New Orleans lockup."

Mimosa 21 was published in December 1997, just a few months after we'd won our 4th Hugo Award in San Antonio, Texas. *M*21 had a "LoneStarCon" theme and featured a spectacular wrap-around scratchboard cover by Julia Morgan-Scott which inspired Pamela Boal to pay compliment: "What a marvelous cover! It has everything – humour, good design, excellent drawing and reproduction."

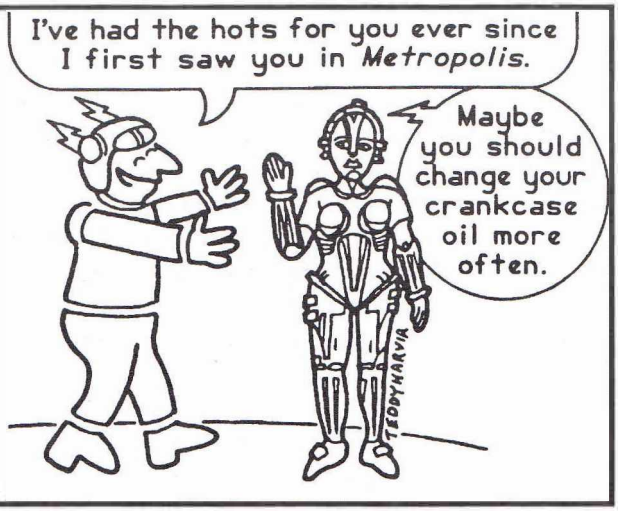


A friendly presence at LSC was Forry Ackerman, who was regarded as a living fan legend. His article in *M*21 was about one of his favorite topics, the movies, and in particular, about two cinematic legends:

Through Time and Space with Forrry Ackerman

PART VI

by Forrest J Ackerman



I have now seen *Metropolis*, my favorite film, a total of eighty-eight times. I hope to hit a hundred before ***I*** hit 100! I've been a movie fan for almost as long as I can remember. My dear maternal grandparents started me off on movies at the age of five-and-a-half. When I was growing up I was seeing films like *The Lost World*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *The Thief of Bagdad*. I enjoyed them immensely, but back then I wasn't paying any attention to the directors.

That changed when I was about thirteen years old. The year was 1929. I had seen *Metropolis* for the first time, and of course was thoroughly thrilled by it; soon afterwards I began hearing about another film from Germany called *The Woman in the Moon*. I was living in San Francisco then; unfortunately the film never got closer to me than Chicago. But in the meantime I'd seen yet another German film, *Siegfried*, and I suddenly realized, wait a minute, this one name keeps turning up – Fritz Lang, Fritz Lang, Fritz Lang... I found out he lived in Berlin, so I decided to write him a letter. Quite some time passed, but eventually, I think in 1931, I received a nice, inscribed photograph of him and some stills from *Die Frau im Mond* (*The Woman in the Moon*) and *Metropolis*.

After that I kept up a correspondence with Mr. Lang. He eventually emigrated to America in 1934, and soon after that he made his first film here, *Fury* with Spencer Tracy and Sylvia Sidney; that is one of my great favorite *non*-science fiction movies. Some years later, during World War Two, I was fortunate to be stationed only about 25 miles away from Hollywood, and I read in the morning paper one day that he was to appear that evening about eight o'clock in conjunction with a private screening of a couple of his films. I managed to wangle a pass to leave the army base, just for the evening; I got up to Hollywood and I went to the address. Today that address is Ron Borst's science fiction and fantasy film shop, but at that time it was just a little meeting place for a film appreciation group of about thirty people. So there I arrived and the lady at the door said, "Oh, I'm sorry, sir, this is members only. I can't let you in." Well, I threw myself on her mercy: "Oh, *pleee-ease* let me in! I've got a one-night pass and I've come all the way from Fort McArthur today just to meet Mr. Lang. Mr. Lang even knows me – I've been corresponding with him!"

Well, it must have worked. She said, "All right, I'll tell you what we'll do. When the lights go down, you just sneak in and find an empty chair." And I did.

After the showing, Mr. Lang lectured for a while. I was in awe of him, and when he and his lady secretary left, I followed for a couple of hundred feet along Hollywood Boulevard before I worked up enough nerve to approach him. Finally I caught up to him and introduced myself, and we stood in the doorway of a storefront to be out of the way of passing pedestrians while we talked for a while. I had brought with me a copy of the book *The Woman in the Moon*, and he inscribed it, 'To Forrest Ackerman, in memory of the day that we first met'.

After that, we became very good friends, and over the years I was frequently invited to his home. In 1969, he and I were in that fabulous ten-day affair in Rio de Janeiro, the Fantasy Film Festival. Robert Heinlein was there, as was Arthur C. Clarke, Roger Zelazny, Sam Moskowitz, A.E. van Vogt, Robert Bloch, George Pal, Yvette Mimieux... There were so many luminaries of the science fiction world there. One of the most flattering occasions in my life happened the evening they showed *Metropolis*. Fritz was about 95% blind at that time, so he and I sat in the front row. When the lights went up, they wanted him to come up on the stage and fend some questions about

Metropolis. But as he stood, he put his hand on my shoulder and addressed the audience, saying "Anything you want to know about *Metropolis*, ask my friend Forry Ackerman. He knows more about it than I do."

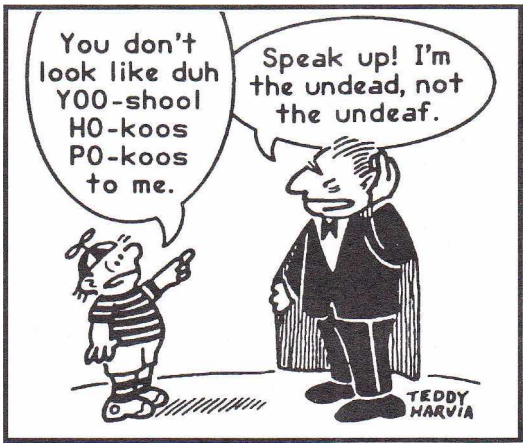
I remember on one occasion during that film festival that Fritz Lang told me that originally he had planned an ending for *Metropolis* where the boy and girl had got sick and tired of the whole situation in the big city and had gone off on a rocket to Mars. That obviously never happened, although it turns out that, through repeated takes, he photographed *forty-nine times* as much footage for *Metropolis* as ever reached the screen. His very favorite shots he made into a version that was released in Germany. Then he took the second-best, and made those into the version that was released in England. Other versions were made specifically for France, Australia, etc. I have chased that film all around the world; I've seen five or six different versions of it. The one I saw in Australia I call the 'vitamin-enriched version' because it seemed like scenes would start a minute or so before I was used to seeing them and would go on an extra minute or so afterwards. There's one version that I just can't wait to get my hands on, in videocassette, so that I can slow it down and look at it frame-by-frame. In that version, for one mad moment, we see citizens of Metropolis walking along a city street, and they go right past a magazine stand. There appear to be *dozens* of magazines available in the year 2027. I want to freeze that and zoom in on it to see each and every magazine; I want to have a print of that frame to see just exactly what those magazines were all about!

# # # #

In 1932, my father did me a big favor; he got me a ticket to see Bela Lugosi live in San Francisco, at the Erlanger Theatre as I recall, doing *Dracula*. I never forgot that; I never *dreamed* that after Lugosi died I would inherit the cape that I saw him wearing on the stage, and which he wore for the last time in that infamous film, *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. More than twenty years later, there was a young boy, fifteen years old, who after he saw his first Lugosi film was so entranced by Bela that he went home and stood in front of the mirror putting the whammy on himself, doing his best to talk like Lugosi. And then this young chap, Dick Sheffield, to his great surprise and pleasure, discovered that Bela, who was more or less forgotten by the world by then, was actually living in a nearby apartment house!

Well, the youngster didn't have the nerve to ring the doorbell of Dracula, so he got his aunt to call up and pretend to be a journalist who wanted to know if she could interview him. Once he said yes, she asked, "Can I bring my nephew along?"

She could. Well, after Dick Sheffield met Lugosi, he saw that Bela could use all the help he could get, so for the last three years of Lugosi's life he was quite devoted to him. He would go to the store for him, get his shoes re-soled, and buy his favorite cigars for him – just do anything he could to make Bela's life easier. So he proudly called me one evening, and he said, "Mr. Ackerman, Bela Lugosi is a friend of mine. Would you like to meet him?"



I said, "Why, I certainly would!" So my wife and I – and at the time we had a house guest, Tetsu Yano from Japan – the three of us went over there. I had the theater sound disks from Lugosi's film, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, so I took one of them with me and played it for Bela. He was rather deaf; he cupped his ear and smiled as he heard himself say, "*My NAME is Dr. Mirakle, and I am not duh YOO-shool sideshow charlatan. So if you're looking for duh YOO-shool HO-koos PO-koos, just GO to duh box office and get your money back!*" He laughed and left the room; when he came back he was wearing his Dracula cape. He put the whammy on Tetsu Yano, and I took a photograph of it.

After that, I realized, like Dick Sheffield, that Mr. Lugosi could use all the help he could get so I volunteered to take him a last time to get his shoes re-soled. Anybody else but Bela would have thrown them away seventeen solings before, but they had come from Hungary and had sentimental value to him. As he got out of the car, he put his arm on my shoulder and said, "I don't understand why you young people are so good to me."

I said, "Well, Mr. Lugosi, you were good to us. You entertained us for so many years of our young lives." He shook his head and walked away.

I happened to be with him two weeks before he died; there was no intimation at all that in fourteen days he'd

be on his deathbed. We were at the premiere of what was actually his final film, *The Black Sleep*. They had him play a deaf mute in it, because, frankly, he couldn't remember his lines anymore and they didn't want to pressure him or embarrass him. I sat up in the mezzanine with him and young Sheffield. In public, Bela was very vain and would not wear glasses, so everything must have been a big blur to him as we were coming down the stairs. We knew they were set up in the lobby to interview him for television, so when we got Bela to the bottom of the stairs, he said, "Boys, point me in the right direction." After we squared him around, we told him, "Now take about six steps forward and you'll be in the perfect position."

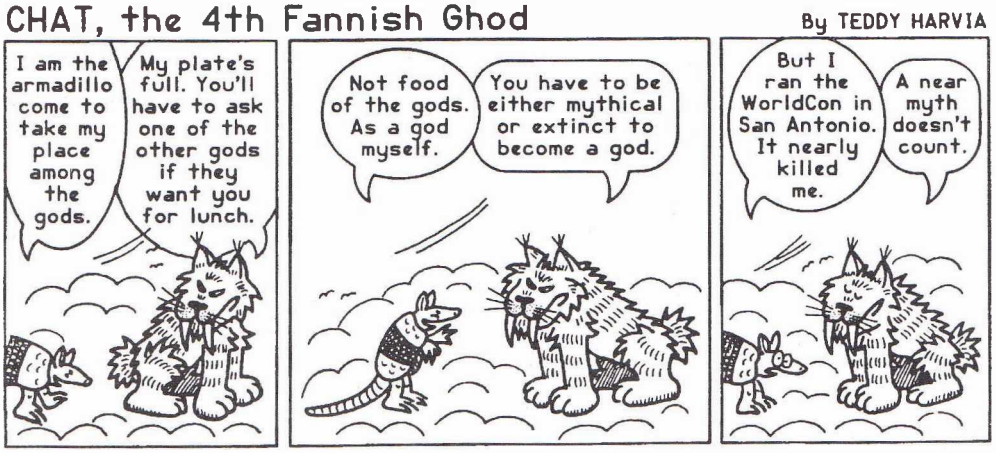
I hope that a kinescope of that still exists, because it was kind of a minor miracle to see. Here was this dear old man who looked kind of like a concentration camp survivor (he was still on withdrawal from the morphine drugs that had been prescribed for him because of terrible sciatic pain). But the world wanted him one more time, and this frail old man, just two weeks away from his deathbed...well, it seemed like he underwent a change before our very eyes. He straightened up and filled out, took command of the situation, and strode toward the waiting television cameras – a tall, proud figure, Count Dracula one last time.

Lately, whenever I mention Lugosi, I'm always asked my opinion of the movie *Ed Wood*. I take exception to the way Lugosi was portrayed in *Ed Wood*. First of all, he was a real European gentleman; I never heard him say so much as a 'hell' or a 'damn', much less those dreadful scatological things. Everything was wrong about Lugosi except his appearance and the way he spoke; Martin Landau certainly deserved the Oscar for that. Lugosi never 'fought' with the prop octopus in the movie *Bride of the Monster*; that was done by George Becwar, a stunt double. He never walked into a theater of screaming maniacs tearing up the furniture; he didn't go out to find his automobile half destroyed, because he was in the hospital when all that was happening.

They didn't premiere *Plan 9* on Hollywood Boulevard at the prestigious Pantages Theater; the premiere took place out about 48th and Vermont, at a little theater that doesn't exist anymore. The two dogs they showed in the film were nothing like his. In particular, the funeral scene from the movie was all wrong. It showed only about eight people in a tiny little room. Actually, I was the101st person to walk by his coffin. I stood there alone, for about five minutes in silence; nobody else was around at the time. I thought, well, if you're looking over my shoulder in spirit form, Bela, I think you'll be very pleased with your final appearance. ☼

✎ Ron Bennett perhaps spoke for many of our readers who were in awe of Forry's friendships with famous film directors and actors: "Hell's teeth! Wandering around with Fritz Lang and Bela Lugosi as though they were merely *people*! Almost as mind-blowing as the life I live here in Harrogate in my little shepherd's hut on the edge of the North York moors. Why, only yesterday I had a ten minute chat with the local milkman!"

Other articles published in *M*21 included Dave Kyle's remembrance of Sam Moskowitz, Michael A. Burstein's remembrance of Isaac Asimov, and a multi-part remembrance of Joni Stopa by Mike Glicksohn, Martha Beck, and Bill Mallardi. Besides these there was Walt Willis' look back at the 1952 Chicon, Jack Chalker's look back at 1960s and `70s Baltimore fandom, and Ron Bennett's look back at his early days as a fanzine publisher, including the life and times of one of the most entertaining fanzines of the 1950s, *PLOY*. Issue 21 also featured Mike Resnick's first in a continuing series of articles (this one on all the books that have been published about fandom) as well as the 12th in a continuing series of cartoons about a large furry Fannish Ghod.



Mimosa 22 came into existence in June 1998, and had a "Connectivity" theme – the issue was designed so that each article had a 'connection' of some kind to the article that immediately preceded it. But none of the readers picked up on it! (Perhaps we were too subtle.) At any rate, one of the articles we were most pleased to publish in *M*22 was by Lowell Cunningham, who has a direct connection to the movie *Men In Black*.

FROM RAGS TO Off the Rack

by Lowell Cunningham

I owe it all to a chance comment. That's right – if not for one sentence from my friend Dennis Matheson, the top-grossing motion picture of 1997 would never have been made. Here's the story. (Several stories, actually.)

One early evening about eleven years ago, Dennis and I were passing through the Fort Sanders neighborhood of Knoxville, Tennessee. Suddenly, a large black car drove past. "Looks like a car the Men in Black would drive," Dennis said, referring to the ominous figures of UFO legend which, up to that very minute, had been completely unknown to me.

Since I had very little knowledge about the intricacies of UFO investigation, I prodded Dennis for more information. He told me the basics – that 'Men in Black' appeared after UFO sightings and covered up the occurrence. My first thought was, "This would make a great TV series." It was easy enough to mix the legends with my own ideas to come up with a viable series concept, but finding the approach which would get MIB before the masses was a problem.

I tried prose. I'm not very good at it (as you can probably tell as you read this). I couldn't get to Los Angeles, so I had to eliminate the television and motion picture media as options. I'd just about given up on my MIB idea when I got a hint from another friend. Greg Lane, a former co-worker of mine, had begun doing penciling and inking for a small comics company called Malibu. "Hey, if they buy my art, maybe they'll buy your writing," he said.

Once again, I knew a good idea when I heard it. I've read comics as long as I can remember and felt comfortable with the format. As quickly as I could, I sent sample pages to Malibu, and within a week I had a response. Tom Mason, the man who would become my editor, called with an offer to publish a comic book called *The Men In Black*.

In 1990 and 1991 we produced six issues of *The Men In Black*. There was also some other work for me with Malibu, but soon the company changed their publishing policy to concentrate on superheroes. After having little contact with Malibu for over a year I was about to give up on MIB – and my fledgling writing career – until I got another phone call. Guess what it was about...

The call from Malibu informing me of the possible movie deal came just moments before the first inquiries from reporters. I'd barely gotten the news when the E! cable television network rang up hoping to verify the details and find out how to spell my name. I wish *Variety* had done the same thing – Hollywood's top daily paper somehow got the idea that *The Men In Black* comic had been written by "Lawrence Cunningham."

There was some negotiation with Columbia Pictures and soon I had quite a contract to sign. I've lived in towns with phone books that were smaller than this contract. Certain clauses even resembled works of science fiction, as when Columbia claimed the right to reproduce the upcoming movie in any format "currently existing or yet to be devised" throughout the universe. Fortunately the dotted lines I was expected to sign on had been conveniently marked with red 'x's.

Not long after signing the contract, Columbia treated me to a weekend trip to Los Angeles so I could meet Walter Parkes, who would be producing the *MIB* film. For my trip into L.A., the in-flight movie was *Sneakers* (a Walter Parkes film, by the way). The chauffeur who drove me to my hotel was an actor who'd actually had a small

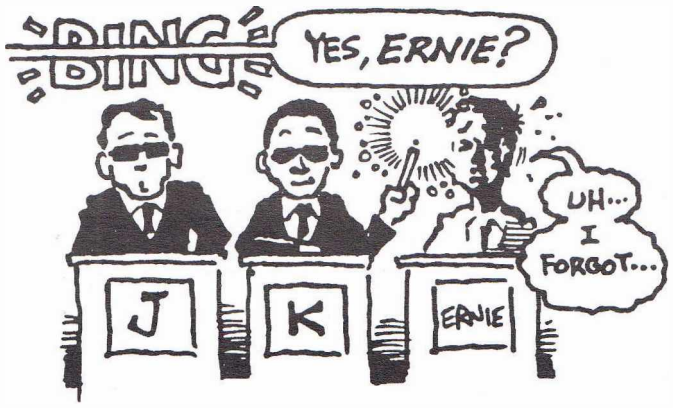
part in *Sneakers*. (There was some confusion when I tried to explain to a friend that my chauffeur was the black FBI agent at the end of *Sneakers*. He looked at me incredulously. "Your chauffeur was James Earl Jones!?" Of course not, my chauffeur was the *other* black FBI agent.) And I was a little surprised to discover I was staying at The Peninsula. It's one of Los Angeles' best hotels, but where I live 'The Peninsula' is a counseling center.

Things went well in L.A., but I didn't realize that it would take five years for *MIB* to actually go before the cameras. During those years, it seemed as if every company involved with *MIB* changed hands, changed its name, or did both. Columbia was bought by Sony. Malibu was bought by Marvel. Walter Parkes and Laurie MacDonald's production company was subsumed when Parkes became president of Amblin Entertainment – and Amblin in turn became part of Dreamworks. If all that wasn't confusing enough, I also discovered that Hollywood executives come and go more frequently than most people eat.

The four years it took to get *MIB* through pre-production were a bit disconcerting for me. Still living in Knoxville, I was thousands of miles away from where major choices and decisions were being made. I had to get information through phone calls, mail, and news reports concerning actors who'd been hired and directors who'd come and gone from the project. It was a relief when filming began in March 1996.

I decided to visit the Sony studios during the first few weeks of filming. Thanks to the kindness of director Barry Sonnenfeld, I was welcome to watch virtually every aspect of the actual production. One thing I learned quickly was that filmmaking is very tedious work. It seemed as if I spent most of my time in L.A. watching people wait for other people to do things.

There are three advantages to being a guest on a movie lot. The first was having access to the craft services truck (which holds the catering supplies to feed the crew and extras). Another was getting to watch the 'dailies' which show the various takes of each scene in their raw form. This is a rare chance to see footage before special effects, music, or sound effects have been added, and possibly the only chance to see the flubs and bloopers which wind up on the cutting room floor. Finally, by being on the lot you get to do some starwatching as various celebrities made their way through the studio lot. Besides the cast of *Men In Black* there were quite a few well-known personalities who passed by at one time or another. John "Q" Delancie and John Kapelos (of *Forever Knight*) actually exchanged a few words with me, but speaking with those two was the exception. Generally I stayed out of the way of people like Kevin Spacey as they went about their work. It was interesting, though, to see *Jeopardy* host Alex Trebek drop by the *MIB* set – the day before he appeared on *The X-Files* as a "man in black."



My most embarrassing run in with a "big name" occurred as I was looking for a mail box on the Sony lot. Walking along the sidewalk I looked about until I heard a voice say "Excuse me." I looked down and there was Danny DeVito, and I was a half-step away from stepping on him. "Pardon me," I said, to which Mr. DeVito responded simply, "Good Morning," and headed on his way.

There were other things to see on the lot, too. One day I watched for quite some time while a poor actor apparently waited patiently on a gurney for his scene to be shot. Then Rick Baker walked over and activated a control and the man's face opened – it was the prop that Baker had designed to house the film's little green man. On another day I watched a man I assumed to be a stage hand walk freely about the *MIB* HQ set as he introduced his son to the director and stars of the movie. I was starting to wonder how this person rated such treatment when he turned around – and I saw that he was Steven Spielberg.

The aforementioned *MIB* HQ set was where I got to experience an odd combination of tedium and excitement. Walter Parkes and Barry Sonnenfeld decided to put me into a shot as an extra. It sounded like fun... at first. I soon realized, however, that extras are the unsung heroes of filmmaking. Not only do extras have the most mundane roles to fill, they have to perform their actions over and over again whenever anyone shouts, "Back to one!" On top of that, extras spend the day in clothes which may or may not fit them and shoes which may or may not fit anyone.

Even though my appearance on the silver screen lasts less than 30 seconds in the final cut of the film, I had to

spend about 12 hours as an extra. Except for the hours of tedium (and the aforementioned ill-fitting shoes) it was a fun, interesting experience. Most of the extras were aspiring actors just looking for the chance to impress the right person, though one or two seemed be relating to reality on a different level than the rest of us.

My day as an extra began with make-up. The female extras got full facial make-up and hair styling while the males got only the hair styling. When it was my turn I hopped into a chair and waited for the make-up man to comb my hair into the same `60s style he'd given all the other guys. As he combed my hair all the way back he looked at me and said, "That's some forehead you've got there." He then proceeded to spray my hair so thoroughly that it would later take two shampooings for me to wash everything back to normal.

For the cameo, I just ambled up behind Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones as they looked up at a computer monitor. I had my little walk-on without ever really meeting the two stars. I doubt they'd even noticed my presence – they even had their backs to me the entire time we were on screen together. I would have to wait almost a year for introductions, at the film's press junket. (Yes, this is a segue.)

In June of 1997 it was time for the news media to see the film and to interview the participants. Some reporters were guests of Sony while others had to pay their own way (the latter were known as POWs). Everything took place in the remarkable Four Seasons Hotel, where the studio took over an entire floor just for interview space. Everyone seemed pleased with the movie and several interviewers even commented (with obvious surprise) that they'd seen Tommy Lee Jones smile. During the weekend of the junket, Saturday was set aside for the television media and Sunday for radio and print media. The more photogenic people were interviewed the first day and the rest of us the second. As it turned out, two of the interviewers were former college classmates of mine – we'd only had to travel across the continent for a reunion.

The main thing I remember about the junket is the people I got to meet. Of course, Walter Parkes and Laurie MacDonald (the film's producers) were there; I'd met them on my first L.A. trip. Unexpectedly, I got a chance to meet Spielberg and was quite gratified when he told me, "Without your work we'd have none of this." I even took the initiative to introduce myself to Tommy Lee Jones, congratulating him on his performance. "Yep. I did pretty much look like Kay up there," Jones replied.

Not surprisingly, the funniest at the junket was Will Smith. He'd just been a recipient at the MTV movie awards when I met him. Everyone was congratulating him for winning the "Best Kiss" award. He found it quite amusing that the news reports hadn't mentioned his partner Vivica Fox. "What'd they think, I kissed myself?" he asked, adding, "Let me tell you, Vivica locks on!"

Just weeks after the junket came the big premiere. So many stars and executives wanted to attend the opening that the studio had to rent two theaters to fit everyone. It was on my way to the premier, in a studio rented limo, that I first met Sandy Carruthers who'd been the artist on *The Men In Black* comic.

Of course, there was a party after the screening and big names were in attendance – too many big names to drop here. Two people stand out in my memory, however. I finally got a chance to meet Rip Torn. When I mentioned how out of place I felt coming to L.A. from Tennessee, Mr. Torn smiled. "I'm from Texas," he said. "You get used to it." The capper of the evening (at least for a long time SF movie fan such as myself) was getting to meet Mark Hamill and actually speak to him as a fellow creator.

And now you've gotten the high points of my experience with the *Men In Black* film. Ten years condensed to about two thousand words. That's all it takes to go from rags to off-the-rack. ☼

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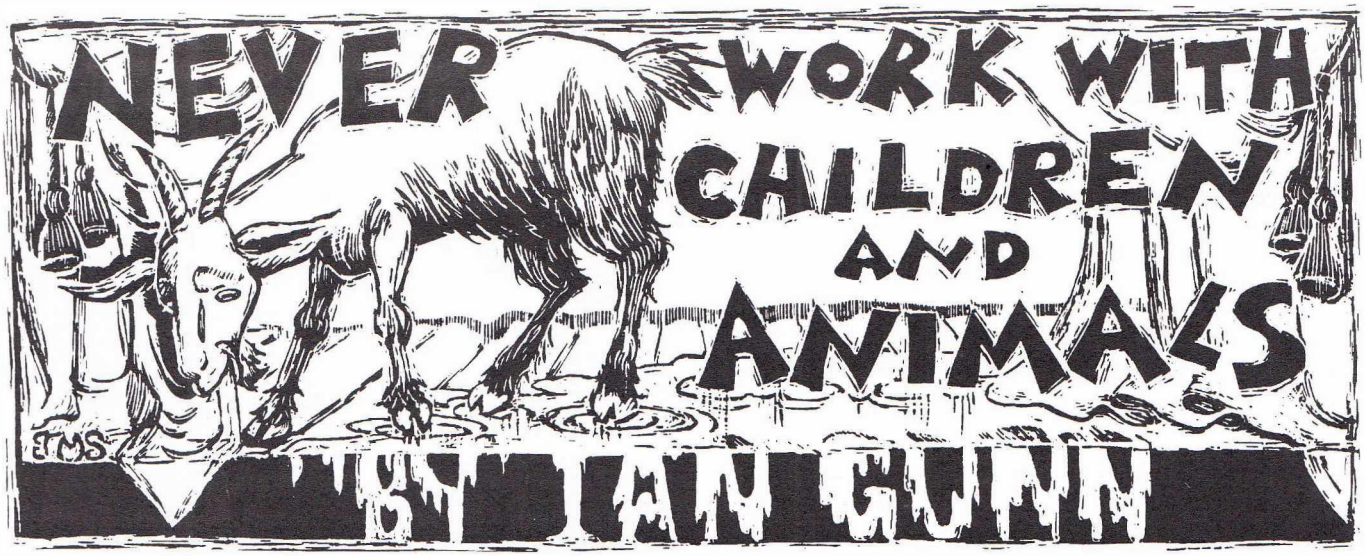
✎ Martin Morse Wooster probably spoke for many of our readers when he asked, "How did you get Cunningham to write for you?" Actually, we've known Lowell for many years, from well before his *Men In Black* fame, and he's always been a fan for as long as we've known him. When we mentioned to him that his success was kind of a rags-to-riches story, he shook his head and replied, "Maybe rags to off-the-rack." As for how success stories like this even happen, Steve Jeffery commented that "As intriguing as the tale of how *Men In Black* went from comic to film was [the] story of how it started from a chance remark to become a comic in the first place. There must be hundreds of moments like that where you just go, 'oh yeah', and an opportunity sails into the lost realm of might-have-beens. Sometimes (I know this is criminal) they don't even get turned into fanzine articles." Horrors!

Another article from *M*22 also dealt with a fan/show business connection, but not one involving Hollywood. The writer, Ian Gunn, was a notable fan artist who, before he became involved in science fiction fandom, discovered a different kind of activity in some ways not unlike fandom. Here it is again:



I discovered fandom in the early 1980s. Or rather, I invented it, and then it found me.

Oh, I'd read about it in SF encyclopaedias and such, but I thought it was something that only had happened in America back in the `50s. I didn't know it existed in Australia. When I discovered that friends of mine were also interested in a particular aspect of science fiction, I formed the *Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* Fan Club and people began joining – and bringing word about other clubs. It was all downhill from there.

But this isn't that story. This is about where I was *before* fandom. I was part of a youth Gang. A rather large Gang, The Scouts. (Not the *Boy* Scouts, because at the time Australian Scouts were already going co-ed.) It was the mid `70s, and I was a teenage Venture Scout when a friend took me backstage at the annual Scout's *Gang Show* – the hustle and bustle immediately overwhelmed me. I was hooked. The next year I joined the Publicity and Publications Department as a cartoonist and general roustabout. My first fanzine, *Scraggy's Scandal Sheet*, cranked out on mimeo during every performance and rehearsal, featured scratchy illos drawn direct to stencil by yours truly. I wasn't on stage, but I was part of the Gang, and I've got my Red Neckerchief to prove it.

The Gang Show has been running for decades in various cities around the world – a motley collection of corny sketches, songs, dances, and big production numbers. *Melbourne Gang Show* was, and is, one of the oldest and biggest. It usually had a cast and crew of 360 people ranging in age from eight to sixty. Only the set designer ever got paid – the rest were volunteer amateurs – so it was often said that putting on a show anywhere near this size would otherwise cost millions.

The only theatre in Melbourne big enough to hold us was the slightly rundown Palais in St. Kilda, a beachside suburb known for its Jewish cake shops and Luna Park (which was across the road – you could hear the rollercoaster screams during scene changes). Nowadays it's a popular resort with backpacker hotels and yuppie cafés, but in those days, prior to the legalisation – and clean-up – of brothels, it was a notorious hang-out for prostitutes, pimps, street kids, and drug dealers. After the matinee performances we were always told to go out in twos and threes to grab a meal. We had to wear the full Scout uniform because of a clause in our insurance, but there was always one dire warning: "For God's sake, make sure you've removed all your make-up!"

Having such a large show, the Production Team often got grandiose ideas for spectacular production numbers. Each year there was always one big number, just after the interval, that saluted some foreign country or other. The Production Team always had a penchant for having live animals on stage. They started small with the odd cute sheepdog and such, but gradually they got more and more ambitious, oblivious to the inevitable result that something would Always Go Wrong.

The year they did the Norwegian Market Scene, one of the three goats got stage fright and released the contents of its bladder. There was a slight slope on the stage, so the audience couldn't help but giggle as a thin river of goat's piss slowly meandered towards the orchestra pit. The next two items, involving kids sitting around a storyteller and dancing trolls, featured some unique stage placements and innovative dance steps as cast members avoided getting their costumes wet. The following item, a sketch about Norse Gods, saw Thor and Odin with mops and buckets. The audience cheered.

The first night they did Zanzibar, the monkey panicked when the lights went out and ran up the nearest kid, who screamed and leapt offstage. The two-week run was almost over before the Publications typing pool realised that the carton stored in their office – the warmest place in the theatre – and picked up by someone from Props each night during interval, in fact contained an enormous boa constrictor. They refused to work in the same room after they found out.

The year the show featured an Israel number, they naturally included a full-grown donkey for the occasion. A stubborn beast, it frequently required half a dozen husky cast members to get it on stage, hold it still, and then load it back into its trailer. On one occasion, the pushing from behind must have got the beast a tad excited and it developed a huge erection. The animal was – how can I put it? – hung like a donkey. One cast member, Bradley Miles, should have received a medal for nonchalantly leaning on an aroused donkey in order to obscure the view from an audience of several thousand Brownie Guides, parents, and grandmothers, while *still* managing to sing in key without cracking up.

The Hillbilly sketch was an old favourite. It started with Paw sitting in a tin bathtub on wheels ("Gawsh, Clem, yuh took me unawares!" "No, ah never, ah saw 'em hangin' on the clothesline, but ah never touched 'em!"). The guy who played Paw always complained that the bath was too cold – he had to leave stage before the end of a Prehistoric Rock dance number, tear off his caveman costume while running through the backstage corridors, grab his floppy hat and leap into the bath and be pushed on stage to start the skit. One night they pushed too hard and knocked a poor caveman into the orchestra pit. On the closing night of the run, the Props boys filled the tub with ice cubes. Paw – and the Director – were not amused.

Other practical jokes occurred. The spiking of stage drinks... Hilarious signs in places only cast members could see... When one prima donna bawled out his dance partner for upstaging him, he failed to take into account that her husband worked in Lighting. The ham had a green spotlight on his face in every finale that week.

There were technical difficulties, too. On one occasion, a new and enthusiastic fog machine made it impossible to see anything on stage. And then there was "I Like Walking in the Rain." A full cast first act finale with day-glow raincoats and umbrellas and actual, live rain on stage (with just a hint of washing powder so it would show under UV light). The rain was achieved by gravity – a water tank would be raised into the flies and rain would flow out of a series of shower heads. All very well until someone left a stage door open on a windy day and some ropes got tangled. The curtain went up on the Opening Number and the tank went with it. The dance team were rapidly drenched and their thin, cotton overalls suddenly became translucent.

But by then, I had seen cast members exchanging pirate copies of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* radio episodes backstage, and it gave me the idea of inventing fandom. Soon, I had been found by a much safer, saner group of people. ☼

✎ Ian's article also brought back memories for some of our readers of small amateur ensemble performances they had been part of. William Bains wrote us of a middle-school skit by him and a friend that involved a mad scientist and a strange new machine that 'exploded', with the aid of some strategically placed gunpowder in the device's innards: "The powder burned brilliantly and odorously, sending an increasingly frightening pillar of purple flame towards the lighting guy in the rafters, and a teacher with a fire extinguisher ran out with quite indecent haste. [Most of] the rest of the sketch was performed in front of the curtain to give us time to clear the smoking remains, [but] when the curtains rose again, an almost solid wall of sulphurous fumes rolled out across the audience and the dialogue was lost in a scattered volley of hacking coughs. We were not forgotten!"

Real-world pyrotechnics was actually the subject of another article in *M*22, "10-70 Structure" by Virginia fan Curt Phillips (the title derived from the '10-70' emergency radio code designation for a fire). Here it is again:

It was only my third night on duty at the Washington County, Virginia, Fire/Rescue Dept. and I and the five other firefighters present were sitting in the TV room watching a Jackie Chan movie that one of them had rented. I, as the most junior firefighter present that night, had spent the first few hours of my shift washing the oldest and dirtiest of our three fire trucks, a 1975 International that I suspected had not previously been washed since disco was popular – the *first* time. There's a lot to wash on a fire truck and I was ready to goof off for a little while. As I flopped down on a couch, the old hands were enjoying one of their favorite indoor sports: predicting the future.

"Well Marty," drawled our Assistant Chief, Kyle, "we gonna burn one down tonight or not?" I was starting to get used to the guys referring to answering a fire alarm as 'burning one down'.

"I think we will," answered Marty. I'd been told that he was the best in the department at predicting fires. "I'd say we'll get it about 12:30 this morning." Marty likes to make his predictions fairly specific. From reading the stack of old fire reports in the office I knew that we'd not had anything bigger than a dumpster fire in six or seven weeks and I figured the odds were that I'd be spending another quiet evening watching TV there at the station. Jackie Chan was smacking some generic bad guy around and I was starting to think about ordering out for pizza when the distinctive electronic tones of our alarm began whooping in the garage bay.

"Attention Washington County Fire/Rescue, 10-70 Structure; repeat, 10-70 Structure fire at 11857 Industrial Park Road."

The TV had been clicked off at the first tone and we all sat still while the announcement repeated. No one leaps to action when the alarm sounds like they do in the movies. We all listened carefully to the full announcement and memorized the address. Then we all quickly got up and went out to the garage bay to get ready. We each had a specific job to do. First, everyone gets into their turnout gear. That's the boots, heavy coat, pants and helmet that firefighters wear at a fire scene. Kyle then went to the office to call Central Dispatch to ask for a second alert. On any structure fire we roll out a maximum response, and with only six firefighters present our first need was for more manpower. My job was to raise the doors. Later we'd get garage door openers that we operated from the trucks, but that night we still had to do it by hand. I'd just gotten the third one up when the alarm sounded again for our second alert.

"Attention all members Washington County Fire Rescue, your department is requesting additional manpower at the station."

Marty and Kyle climbed into the cab of Engine 101, our newest and biggest pumper. Laura, Jason, and I jumped into Medic 107, one of our two ambulances. Laura is an EMT-I, a Shock Trauma technician (the next step above EMT-Basic), Jason is a Paramedic, while I was still in the first few weeks of my EMT class. As far as medical help on this trip was concerned, I was just an extra pair of hands, but sometimes that's what you need.

"Fire/Rescue 101 to dispatch. Engine 101 and Medic 107 are 10-8."

The radio '10-code' was still very new to me, but I knew that '10-8' meant 'in service', or that we were leaving the station in route to the location of the fire. My first big fire.

When you're the newest member of an ambulance crew you don't get to drive, or talk on the radio, or even run the siren. You *particularly* don't get to run the siren. You get to sit in back in what's called the "Captain's chair"

(although I can't imagine why – we have a Captain on our department and he never sits there) and hang on for dear life. On our ambulance this does give you a pretty good view forward and you get to see that most of the other drivers on the road in front of you haven't got the slightest idea of what to do when an ambulance comes up behind them with lights and sirens going. What the law of Virginia says they *should* do is pull over to the right side of the road and stop until we pass by, and in fact about one driver in twenty actually does exactly that, bless their hearts. Most simply slow down – possibly to give themselves more time to think about their next move. Some then speed up again and some actually try to outrun us. Some pull over, let us pass, then whip out right behind us, tailgating us for miles as though they were going to go help out at the fire too. Cops love it when they catch some idiot doing that. You want to make a Virginia State Trooper happy? Just tailgate a fire truck or an ambulance on its way to a fire when he's around. They can charge you with enough violations to make you do time.

Smoke from the fire was visible about six miles away, and as we pulled into the drive we could see flames starting to break through the roof. That's bad. Usually when we see that on arrival, we can't save much of anything. Even worse was that we saw immediately that this wasn't just a structure fire, it was a double wide trailer fire. *Much* worse. The difference between a wooden frame house (a structure) fire and a trailer fire is about like the difference between burning a piece of heavy cardboard and a piece of notebook paper. The paper will be cold ashes long before the cardboard is halfway burned.

"Fire/Rescue 101 to central; we're on-scene. This is a double wide trailer fire, well involved, with multiple exposures. Flames are through the roof. Request a third alarm for backup, and please alert Goodson-Kinderhook to stand by with their tanker."

Notifying Central Dispatch of what we saw on arrival does a couple of things for us. Dispatch records all radio traffic and notes the time of every transmission, and so regular reports to dispatch gives us a legal record of the progress of the fire incident. That comes in handy when it's time to write the reports. Also, every other firefighter in the county listens in to these radio calls, so now they all knew what we were seeing and that we had a serious fire on our hands. There are ten volunteer fire departments in Washington County, Virginia, and each one of us sometimes find ourselves called to a fire that's too big or too complicated to handle by ourselves. Thus, we have a formal mutual aid agreement with those closest to us. Goodson-Kinderhook VFD is the one next to us, and they have a tanker. That's a fire truck whose only mission is to load, transport, and discharge water. That job is absolutely vital when the fire is out in areas of the county where there are no fire hydrants. In our case, that's a bit less than half of the county. Our fire was out in a remote area so the Assistant Chief called for the tanker that he knew he'd need right away. Our pumper only carries one thousand gallons of water on board. Without another water source we could use that up in less than ten minutes.

The first priority on arrival at a fire scene is rescue. Was there anyone in that trailer? If there was, from the looks of the fire, they were already dead, but we'd have to try. The owner was waiting in the yard when we pulled up and told us the story. It was an older woman who lived there with her husband, and small dog. (And yes, we'll try to rescue pets when we can do so without risking human life. Imagine if it was your pet in a fire. You'd certainly want us to try to save it.) Only she and the dog were at home. She had been canning beans in the kitchen and had gone to the garage to get some supplies. Apparently she'd been delayed because when she returned to the house she saw smoke coming out the open door. She had the presence of mind to shut the door and run for help. (Shutting the door seems like a good idea, but because it was a trailer and the fire had already gotten a good start by that point, it didn't help. In fact, it caused a lot of trouble for us, as will be seen.) Running to a neighbor's house to call for help had used up valuable time; by the time we arrived the fire was about twenty minutes old. Since no one was inside, we put the ambulance on standby and I went to join the fire crew. Three other firefighters had arrived; Kyle and one of them put on air packs, pulled a trash line (that's a 1¾-inch line carried on each side of Engine 101 for fast assaults; it's often used on trash dumpster fires, hence the name), took it to the back porch where the kitchen door was and started in.

That was a mistake.

The way to mount an interior attack on a house fire is to enter where the fire isn't and push the fire back on itself. This prevents forcing the fire into unburned areas of the house and deprives it of fuel. Kyle said later that he thought the fire might be contained to the porch area – which seemed to be like a small utility building added on to the trailer. If that had been the case he might have been able to knock the fire down quickly and save more of the property.

The thing is, the fire had been burning in a closed building for some time now and Kyle was about to open the door directly into it. The textbook says *never*, *ever* to try this, but sometimes firefighters do anyway. Here's why you shouldn't: ever see the movie *Backdraft*? Kurt Russell plays a firefighter who never seems to use an airpack or to even fasten up his turnout coat, but never mind that... the film *does* realistically show the effects of a backdraft.

A fire in a closed building will quickly use up all available oxygen and die down, but *not* die out. It'll smolder, filling the room with superhot smoke until it gets a fresh supply of oxygen – like when an unwary firefighter opens a door on it. That's what Kyle did. That superhot air in the room suddenly saw a huge supply of nice fresh oxygen outside and immediately tried to set it all on fire. Kyle and the other guy happened to be standing right in the way. "Well," says the fire, "let's see how well they'll burn." A cloud of fire shot out of the open door and slammed into the two firefighters, knocking them off the porch and twelve feet out into the yard. Kyle later claimed that he was already jumping when the flames hit him and that helped, but the end result was that they suddenly had to swim through fire. They did have full turnout gear on with Nomex hoods and airpacks, and this saved them. But they both had heat burns on the face and neck from where the heat cut through the hoods. They weren't seriously hurt, but they both climbed into the ambulance and were taken to the hospital. I was needed at the fire scene and stayed there.

Now the fire was more serious and was fully involved in the rear of the trailer. Our chief arrived and set the eight of us who were present to setting up two attack lines in the front with another to start wetting down the exposures. An exposure is any other house or structure near the fire that might catch fire from the original fire. At that time – only about eight minutes into the fire attack – he called for additional backup.

"Fire/Rescue 101 to Central – this structure is fully involved. We request additional manpower from our backup departments and also the cascade unit from Glade Springs VFD."

By this time all the members of our fire department who could respond were either at the fire scene or on their way. Additionally, four members of Goodson-Kinderhook VFD who happened to be in the area arrived in their own cars. They'd wind up running our pump controls, keeping track of airpack use, and other jobs that free up our members to go into the fire. Our second fire truck – normally used on car wrecks – arrived, followed by our second ambulance. County deputies also arrived and took over traffic control on the road in front of the fire, freeing another two firefighters to join the fire attack. The tanker from Goodson-Kinderhook arrived, laying a relay hoseline to our truck and began pumping water to us from a creek about 200 yards away. Later the Glade Springs Volunteer Fire Department arrived with their cascade truck. This is a special vehicle that has the equipment needed to refill the air bottles on our airpacks. The bottles only last twenty minutes on a charge. We had four attack teams of two firefighters each committed inside the building. We worked in about twelve-minute shifts, with fresh firefighters going in to take over the hoses and the tired firefighters immediately coming out for rest, drinking water, and fresh air bottles.

After the backdraft I was assigned to help hold a hose on the safety line – that is, I was the second man on a two man crew that held a pressurized hose as backup for the team that made the initial fire attack on the front door. Had there been further trouble when that crew went in, we'd go in after them and cover their retreat. The second man helps hold the fire hose and makes sure that the nozzle man has enough slack at all times to go where ever he has to. A charged line is heavy and cumbersome, and each man has his hands full. If the nozzle man has to shoot a stream of water up, I have to hold the line down below my knees. If he wants to shoot down, I have to hold the line up over my head. It's not nearly as easy as it looks in the movies. Plus, the second man has to watch out for dangers in every direction but forward. Ceilings falling, floors collapsing, fire breaking out behind us – you tend to stay kinda busy. I didn't go in on that first attack, and when backup crews arrived, my partner and I were relieved and began carrying empty air bottles uphill to the cascade truck to be filled. It had parked about fifty feet up a hill above the fire because it was completely dark by then and they had large floodlights on boom poles that lit up the entire fire scene from up there.

By then we'd been on scene about 45 minutes and the attack crews had knocked down the worst of the fire and had ventilated the unburned areas of the trailer where smoke and heat had accumulated. Normally we would have had to ventilate the roof by cutting holes in it with a K-12 saw, but the fire had done that for us. The entire roof over the center of the trailer was gone, part of it burned away and the rest pulled down during the fire attack to keep it from dropping burning insulation on our heads. Fire was still burning in the rear of the house and in the ceiling, but we were getting control of it. The trailer was going to be a total loss but we'd be able to save a lot of their belongings.

Their belongings had, in fact, become a major problem. These folks were evidently pack rats; the house was full of stuff. Piles of clothing were stacked everywhere and the rear rooms were full to the ceiling with bulk quantities of food and other stuff, with narrow walkways to get around in. This was adequate for normal use, but for a firefighter in full turnout gear dragging a charged line it was impossible. In places, we actually couldn't move to get to the fire, so we had to start dumping stuff outside. In the living room where the fire had first been knocked down, smoldering clothes and furniture plus the remains of the roof hampered our movements, so the chief ordered the front windows removed and we started throwing out chairs, bookcases, insulation, and thousands of articles of smoldering clothing, all of it thoroughly soaked and now trampled into the mud and ashes by dozens of firefighter boots. I imagine that they were able to salvage some of the clothing. Their washer and dryer, I noticed, were in the separate garage which was undamaged.

With the fire now under control and the fire attack now consisting of knocking out hot spots, I was relieved from muleing air bottles up and down that hill and told to put on an air pack for a *rescue* job! Turned out that the family dog was nowhere to be found, and was thought to be in the house. Since every room had been filled with smoke and killing heat, it was almost certain that if the dog was in there it was dead. I was given the task of searching for it. So while crews still sprayed water in various places, I and a partner went in. We first looked in the relatively unburned areas where all the bulk food was stored. We dug in closets and turned over beds, figuring that a small dog might have crawled under something to hide and then been suffocated. No dog. Finding a locked door, I forced it open. It was a bathroom. Immediately I pushed open the shower curtain and looked in the tub. Nothing.

"Curt!" I looked up to see the Chief standing at the door and looking at me curiously. "Did you *really* think that a small dog would lock itself in the bathroom and hide in the bathtub?" While I was thinking of an answer to that, he was called away. Lucky for him.

Now the fire crew was into the longest and messiest part of the job: salvage and overhaul. This means checking all the hidden areas of the structure for hidden fire or hot spots and extinguishing them, plus protecting whatever you reasonably can of the family's possessions. These folks were seriously into recorded music. There must have been 20,000 records in that trailer, 45s, LPs and 78s, and lots of cassette tapes too. And also some serious stereo equipment, all probably junk now. Some tall bookcases of records had been spared the direct flames but the heat had warped and melted the LPs into black goo. The albums near the floor seemed OK, and may possibly have been playable, but they were all soaked from our hoses now. I noticed some stacks of 78s that seemed totally undamaged, which surprised me. I saw others on the floor which had survived the fire but had fallen victim to our fire boots.

Our search for that dog had brought us to the last part of the house, the bedroom on the end. Fire hadn't touched this room, but smoke and heat had. This room had a wall covered with those wall mounted cassette tape racks, filled with maybe 2,000 cassette tapes. Down near the floor the tapes seemed undamaged. I pulled one out and it looked perfectly OK. As I looked up the wall, the tape cases started showing more and more heat damage and at the top of the wall, the cases were almost entirely melted away and the tape shriveled and blackened – dramatic evidence of how the heat from a fire builds up in a room. Had we not knocked out the fire as early as we did, the heat build up alone would eventually have caused that room to burst into flames. I've seen that happen on training films.

We tossed that room thoroughly and found no small furry body hiding anywhere. That left us with two possibilities: either the dog had gotten out somehow and was hiding in the darkness, or it was part of the thoroughly burned piles of smoldering junk in the burned-out living room. We spent the next hour sifting through the room with pike poles and searchlights, stopping only when the floor suddenly gave way and my partner fell through it up to his waist. I helped him out and we retreated. I notified the Chief that the floor was now unsafe and met the lady of the house who was being helped to the front door to get a look at what was left.

"Ma'am," I said, "we've searched all over the house for your dog and haven't found him, so I think he might have gotten out somehow. We'll keep looking, but he might be scared of all the noise and lights and might not turn up till morning."

She listened to me patiently and then said, "Oh that dog's down at my neighbor's house. She caught him a while back, and I forgot to tell you all."

We spent about four hours on scene with a total of 32 firefighters present, gradually releasing the extra units as we no longer needed them. In the months since that fire I've gotten to know a lot of those folks better. Good people, all of them. They made a tough job a lot easier for us; we'll return the favor someday.

Eventually, the Chief declared the scene secure. We all assembled for a head count, packed up all our gear, and headed back to the station. *"Fire/Rescue 101 to Central dispatch. This fire is secured. We are clear at the 10-70 and in route back to station 100."*

At that point we were back on duty for another call, so as soon as we got back to the station we all jumped in to clean the truck and tools. The fire hose – all 700 yards of it – had to be unrolled, scrubbed thoroughly, and rolled back and stowed on the truck. Supplies had to be restored, soot and grime had to be cleaned off the tools, fuel for the generators and saws had to be topped off, paperwork had to be completed, turnout gear had to be roughly cleaned off and hung up to dry, and several families had to be called to be told that we were on our way home.

But first, we all crowded into the TV room – dirty, smelling of smoke and sweat as we were – to catch the eleven o'clock news. The TV crews had been all over the place, not that we were able to pay any attention to them at the time, but now we were ready to see ourselves on the news fighting our first major fire in two months. Since I was the new kid on the block and this was my first fire, I was allowed the seat of honor right in front of the TV. The station news logo flashed on and the local news anchor started his spiel. "Good evening. Firefighters battled a major blaze this evening in Washington County that sent two people to the hospital..." He looks off screen, obviously at his floor director. "But first we join the network for a breaking story." Cut to the network logo...

"This is an NBC News Special Report! A short time ago, Princess Diana was seriously injured in an automobile crash in Paris! ..."

You know, they never did show our fire on TV that night.

Eventually, everyone went home except for me and the others who had the station duty that night. We cleaned ourselves up, found some snacks, and settled back down in the TV room. After a while, I looked at my partner. "Well, Marty, when's the next alarm gonna come in?"

Marty looked thoughtful. "Well," he mused, "I'd say it'll be about 3:30 in the morning. But it'll be a rescue call. It'll be a really good-looking redhead with her toe caught in a bathtub drain."

"Well," I said, "I checked the last bathtub, so you can have this one."

"Fair enough," he said. ☼

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✎ William Breiding probably spoke for many of our readers when he wrote us that "Curt Phillips' piece on firefighting was vivid and incredibly lucid – I felt as though I was right there with him." And the date that the events in Curt's article transpired was not lost on our readers, either; Leigh Kimmel wrote that "when I got to the end of the article and the bit about Princess Di, I realized that all of this was going on right about the time I was at the [LSC] Hugo Awards ceremony." Wow, instant timebinding!

*M*22 might have been our very best issue, in terms of design, content, and appearance. John Berry lavished some praise about it on our contributors and artists, singling out one in particular: "The magnificent *Mimosa* 22 has provided a great evening's entertainment for me, because all your contributors are top-notch exponents of the fannish written word, all in their finest form. I [also] consider this issue to have the consistently highest standard of artwork I have ever seen in a fanzine. I must especially praise Julia Morgan-Scott, an absolutely outstanding professional talent on display." Some of the other articles in the issue that John was referring to included the first of four installments of Mike Resnick's "Worldcon Memories," an amusing report on LSC by Richard Brandt, Forry Ackerman's recollections about some of science fiction's literary giants, Greg Benford's remembrance of Bill Rotsler, more of Walt Willis' remembrances of the 1950s, and Ron Bennett's warm and entertaining article about the life and times of his 1960s newzine *Skyrack*.

And there was more: we were pleased to be able to publish an article about the most famous fan dwelling of all time:

It all happened in the 1940s. In the spring of 1943, perhaps in February, Neil de Jack of Chicago was about to report for military service. I had met Neil when I visited Frank Robinson in Chicago, so when Neil wanted to sell his science fiction collection before he was drafted, I bought it. By arrangement, Neil came to Jackson, Michigan, where I was living, on a Friday evening, spent the night on our sofa, and the following day the two of us went by bus the forty-odd miles to Battle Creek for a two-day session with the Galactic Roamers of that city.

The Galactic Roamers was a fan organization, the centerpiece of which was Dr. Edward Elmer Smith. "Doc" Smith was an industrial chemist at Dawn Donut in Jackson, Michigan, until the war came along, at which time he took a position with the government at the LaPorte, Indiana, ordnance plant where he worked with explosives. He still came back to Michigan on occasion, for example for Michicon II in the fall of 1942, which was my first science fiction convention. He also came up for an occasional Roamers meeting. The club was split between Jackson and Battle Creek, and the more dedicated fans were in the latter: 'fracas river' Walt Liebscher termed it. The location of the meetings alternated between the two cities, usually in the home of some member.

It was this group, which was centered on the household of Al and Abby Lou Ashley, that Neil and I went to visit. Joining the party that weekend at the Ashley apartment was Jack Wiedenbeck, a promising fan artist. We had a ball, talking – 'fan gabbing' – and discussing books we had read or comparing notes on writers. I had, for example, chased down in *Book Review Digest* the real name of Anthony Boucher, a.k.a. H.H. Holmes, which was William Anthony Parker White.

We all reveled in fan talk and someone came up with the idea, "Hey, wouldn't it be great if we could get fans together and have our own apartment house." A.E. Van Vogt's *Slan* had been published a year or so earlier as a serial in *Astounding* and someone had almost immediately asked, "Do you suppose fans are Slans?" (Meaning, were we a mutation from the mundane variety of humans? No one took the idea seriously, of course.) But our idea of closer association was promptly named Slan Center.

Our planning included a fanzine room where all occupants would share access to a mimeo, and apartments with northern light for the artists (Jack W.'s idea). What was behind this was the feeling of closeness, of being able to be open in our ideas, that we as fans could express most easily in each other's company. Everyone had experienced the raised eyebrows of mundanes when you tried to discuss science fictional ideas with them. Slan Center would make it possible to be openly fannish any time we were away from work. Before that afternoon at the Ashley's apartment was over, we were all excited about our brainstorm. Not long afterwards, in an issue of his FAPAzine, *En Garde*, Al Ashley wrote up the plan for discussion.

Fans were then overwhelmingly lower middle-class or working class. Al Ashley drove a taxi; Abby Lou had for a time been a cashier in a meat market. E.E. Evans was part of lower management in a shop in Battle Creek, and among other things did time and motion studies. Jack Wiedenbeck worked at the Coca Cola bottling company, and I worked making depth charge bombs for the U.S. Navy. It is some indication of the state of society there at the end of the Great Depression that fans, whose IQs ran from high to very high, were not in the professions. Part of the reason was the difficulty in getting tertiary education. It simply was not easily available. Ashley, who was only a high school graduate, took a standard achievement test for college graduates and scored at, as I recall, the 97th percentile.

In June 1943, my number came up, and I reported to my draft board. It was my good fortune to be stationed in California, where I could visit the Los Angeles fan gang any time I could get a weekend pass, which was about one Saturday out of three. Twice before going overseas I got two week leaves and on both occasions went back to Michigan to spend as much time as possible with the Battle Creek fans. About the time I was drafted the Ashleys had bought an old house in Battle Creek, and Walt Liebscher, a fan from Joliet, Illinois, who had taken a job with Civil Service at Fort Custer, just outside of Battle Creek, moved in with them. E.E. Evans soon joined them, as did Jack Wiedenbeck. There was also a friend of Abby's, Thelma Morgan, a dark, quiet woman, who loved to read and enjoyed fans, without being one herself.

Slan Center had become Slan Shack and fans from far and wide came by to enjoy the Ashley's hospitality. Frequent visitors were Bob Tucker and his girl friend, Mary Beth Wheeler, and an older fan from Cincinnati, Charles Tanner. Other guests included Oliver Saari of Flint, Michigan, a mechanical engineer working for GM, and the young office boy at Ziff Davis, Frankie Robinson. I was immensely unhappy that I couldn't share in this. In the fall of 1944, when I came home on my last leave before shipping overseas, we all went to Buffalo to visit another fan, Ken Kruger, who hadn't mentioned to his mother that he had invited us. We were joined there by Don Wollheim and Elsie Balter (later Mrs. Wollheim), Damon Knight, and Larry Shaw. Ollie Saari was there, as was Frank Robinson, all the way from Chicago. We promptly called it 'BuffaloCon', and I do believe it was over Labor Day. I promptly fell head over heels in love with Ken's sister, Gladys. Ah, sweet idiocy of youth!

The Los Angeles gang, for the eight or nine months that I could see them, went a long way in making up for the much-missed Roamers. In L.A. at this time were Fran Laney, with whom I had corresponded and whose fanzine, *The Acolyte*, I had subscribed to, Sam Russell and Phil Bronson, both of whom had attended Michicon II in 1942, and of course 4SJ and Morojo, whose *Voice of the Imagi-Nation* I had also received. In addition, I met and became good friends with James Kepner and Mel Brown. Jim Kepner later became archivist of the Gay and Lesbian Archives in L.A., but in those days he was just coming to terms with his homosexuality and was looking for an anchor in his life. Later, he became a Marxist and even later, a spokesman for the Gay community. One of the things about fandom in those days was that it was ready to accept the occasional gay fan without making a big deal of it. On the other hand, one of the things I find, in retrospect, to criticize about that early fandom was that there was too much Bohemianism, too much faddishness – last week it was Esperanto, this week it is Korzybski and General Semantics, and next week it will be Sartre and Existentialism.

Fran Laney was a good friend while I was there, and showed no signs as yet of the homophobia that is said to have later characterized his behavior. He was from the northwest, up near Lewiston, Idaho (I believe), and his dad was a college professor (a geologist). Fran and I talked on one occasion about the concept of a Slan Center and he said, "Only if part of the complex is a bar, where people from off the street can wander in. Fans are so introverted they need non-fans around." Morojo contributed the idea of a limited corporation for Slan Center, with condos.

Laney was right, of course. We all seem, in retrospect, to have been a bunch of misfits looking for a niche in society.

Laney was atypical of those fans. Slim, a born dancer, extroverted and very happy with booze, babes, and tobacco, he loved jazz and had a large collection of records. He had a job working in plastics and saw it as having a big future. Fans of that time tended to be either so introverted they were tongue-tied in the presence of girls, or were puritanical. Not Laney, but on the other hand he never bragged about his conquests. I remember Mel Brown publishing a fanzine in which he said that "Laney came to town a few weeks ago and is busy chasing everything in skirts." Laney read it over Mel's shoulder as he was typing it and complained that he (Laney) and his wife were on the verge of a divorce – such a statement could end up in court and cost him custody of his two daughters. Upon

hearing that, Brown added to his manuscript: "But since the women can run faster with their pants up than Laney can with his down, he has had no luck."

Of the people who made up the Slan Shack, Al and E.E. Evans are gone; Jack Wiedenbeck disappeared in L.A. after the war, and Mary Beth told me once that she was sure he had gone blind, a terrible fate for an artist. Mary Beth is now gone, too, and so is Walt Liebscher. I have been trying in vain for years to locate Abby Lou. Ollie Saari retired, I believe, from Minneapolis Honeywell. Frank Robinson, Tucker, and I are about all that remains of that old group, and none of us were permanent residents of the Shack.

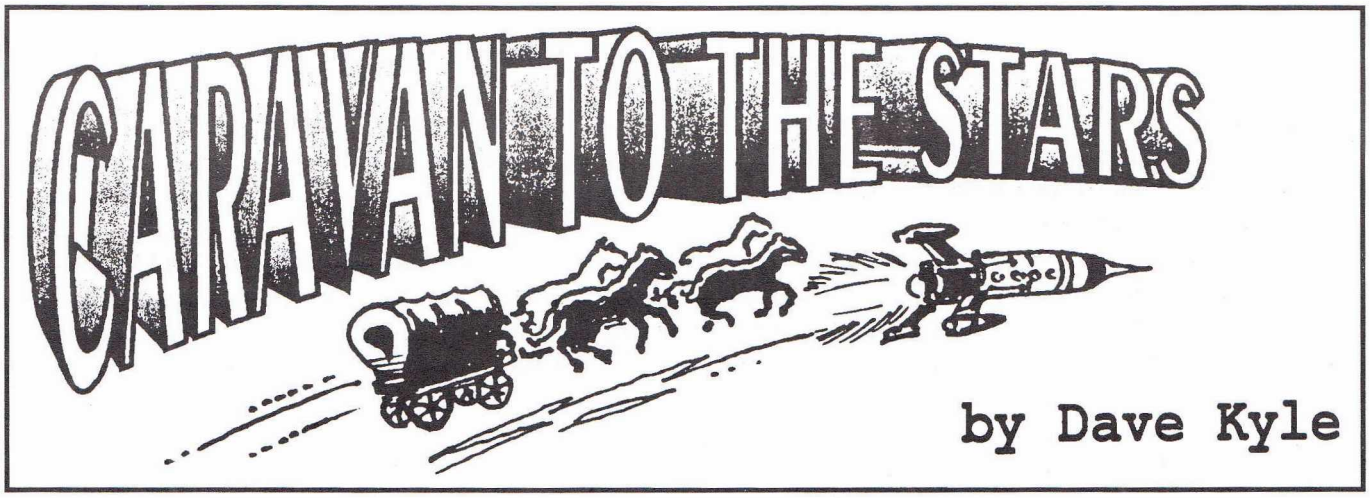
As for me, I stayed on in the military after the war, in Europe. I had found my niche in society. This spring I will turn 75, having soldiered twenty years and taught history for thirty-one. About twenty-five years ago I got back in science fiction fandom, having gafiated for nearly twenty years, a record of sorts I suppose. ☼

✎ On the subject of elevated fan IQs, Bob Tucker wrote us that Dal's article "brought back a torrent of memories and no, I will NOT tell you what my score was on [a] Jack Speer test that gave Al Ashley a score of 194. We had a lot of fun at Al's expense after that, in person, in letters, and in fanzine prints. Someone coined the phrase 'Ole AA-194' and it stuck to him for the remainder of his life." Gary Deindorfer commented that "Dal Coger's piece is of great interest to me, since it mentions so many of the fans covered in the Burbee/Laney mythos. For instance, we learn that Ashley really was intelligent, considering that Burbee made Al seem like a dunce with delusions of grandeur." Dal had actually promised us a follow-up article about Laney for our final issue, but it was not to be – in early October of this year, he passed away from a post-surgery antibiotic-resistant bacterial infection. He will be missed.

Perhaps the most important fan history article in *M*22 was by Dave Kyle. Our 'connection' to Dave goes back to 1979, when we met him at that year's NorthAmericon and found, to our surprise, that he lived in the same small town in northern New York State where we both went to college. Back then, the first issue of this fanzine was still two years away, but he put the seed in our minds by mentioning that he "didn't think there was enough fan history in fanzines." Dave's article in *M*22 was his personal view of the very first Worldcon, the 1939 Nycon. Here it is again:

Artist Credits

Ray Allard – pages 17, 18, 19
Sheryl Birkhead – pages 3, 54, 59
Kurt Erichsen – pages 29, 72, 73, 74
Brad Foster & **Teddy Harvia** – page 89
Ian Gunn – page 10
Ian Gunn & **Joe Mayhew** – page 79
Teddy Harvia – pages 39, 40, 41, 82
Joe Mayhew – pages 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 26, 27, 52, 53, 60, 61, 62, 63 (top), 64, 65, 68, 69, 71 (top)
Peggy Ranson – pages 7, 9
William Rotsler & **Sheryl Birkhead** – page 31 (top)
William Rotsler & **Brad Foster** – page 30 (middle)
William Rotsler & **Alexis Gilliland** – page 30 (top)
William Rotsler & **Ian Gunn** – page 31 (mid left)
William Rotsler & **Teddy Harvia** – page 31 (mid right)
William Rotsler & **Joe Mayhew** – page 31 (bottom)
William Rotsler & **Steve Stiles** – page 30 (bottom)
Julia Morgan-Scott – cover; pages 38 (bottom), 45, 46, 47, 50, 71 (bottom), 75, 76, 78, 86
Craig Smith – pages 90, 91
Diana Stein – pages 20, 21, 23, 28, 32, 33, 77
Steve Stiles – page 4
Charlie Williams – pages 5, 14, 34, 36, 37, 38 (top), 42, 43, 55, 56, 57, 58, 63 (bottom), 87
Kip Williams – page 80



Nycon in 1939, the first world science fiction convention, began the new era. Reports, speculations, controversies, nostalgia have revolved around it for sixty years. Back in 1989, Greg Thokar, the Hugo-nominated editor for the *Noreascon Three Program Book*, took on a wonderful fan history project to commemorate a half century of world science fiction conventions. A section of that book consisted of reminiscences about all the worldcons to date, each as experienced by one of its attendees. The lone exception was for the inaugural Nycon, where there were ten different contributors: Forrest J Ackerman (who originated the name 'Nycon' for the convention), Milton A. Rothman, Julius Schwartz, Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, Robert A. Madle, Harry Harrison, John Baltadonis, Charles D. Hornig, Sam Moskowitz, and myself.

From the many thousands of words, a fascinating picture emerges of the events of that very first worldcon. Additional material about the first Nycon can be found in a wealth of other sources. Fred Pohl's memoir, *The Way the Future Was*, for instance, explains the personal background which brought about Nycon's reputation for antagonistic behavior. Sam Moskowitz, in his *The Immortal Storm*, has voluminous comments and historical references about the event, while Damon Knight provides a fascinating down-and-dirty behind the scenes examination of the Nycon in *The Futurians*.

So, given all of this, I see a difficulty – what am I to do for this *Mimosa* article not to be merely repetitious, going over again what has already been said? What follows is my attempt to resolve the predicament. It is Nycon from a personal viewpoint.

# # # #

July 1, 1939 – The cardboard box on my lap contained 200 yellow pamphlets. On the cover of each was the bold black line: A WARNING! To me, they were 200 firecrackers whose noise could reverberate forever in the chronicles of fandom. Each pamphlet was an eight page booklet formed from a single 9x12 pulp sheet, rather more brightly orange than yellow. Above the arresting warning was the printed instruction: "Important! Read This Immediately!"

The box rested on my lap as I rode The Short Line bus out of the mountains. It was Friday afternoon and I was making the hundred mile trip from Monticello, New York, to Gotham for the holiday weekend. The destination was my mecca, Caravan Hall, in Baghdad on the Hudson – the ultimate goal at last, the World's Science Fiction Convention.

My secret "subversive" action was to have a permanent effect on the lives of six famous fans: Frederik Pohl, Donald A. Wollheim, Cyril Kornbluth, John B. Michel, Robert A.W. Lowndes, and Jack Gillespie – Futurians all. Through the confusion, other Futurians, me included, escaped such ignominious fate, among them Isaac Asimov, Richard Wilson, and Dirk Wylie.

In June 1939, I was back from my Freshman year in college and working at my family's local weekly newspaper and job shop. Far away downstate, the newly-formed Futurians fan group was my news source about the gathering to coincide with the New York World's Fair. Three outsiders had taken over as leaders, the 'Triumphant Trio' – a new counter force called New Fandom formed by the teaming up of the dynamic young Sam Moskowitz, fanzine publisher James V. Taurasi, and the older, former ISA fan club leader William S. Sykora whose unrecog-

nized paranoia was at the root of so much trouble.

Obviously, my fannish friends weren't in charge. Nor was I playing any role, having been away from the scene, inactive for nearly a year. Ironically, the person who had originated the worldcon idea and who was initially its organizer and leader, Don Wollheim, was out in the cold. With his power lost by mistakes, inattention and abrasiveness, he had surrendered the struggle and had become an unofficial, non-welcomed participant. Ignored and now a mere observer, he led the dispirited Futurians.

So what role could I play?

I was concerned about the trend by usurpers to dominate clubs and conventions, so I decided I could use the print shop to manufacture some kind of follow-up about my long and intense interests in creating conventions. I planned a handbill for distribution to con-goers. A mimeographed or hectographed product, too commonplace, would be easy to ignore. Photocopying was not yet available, but a printed handbill, by my own labor, was within my means.

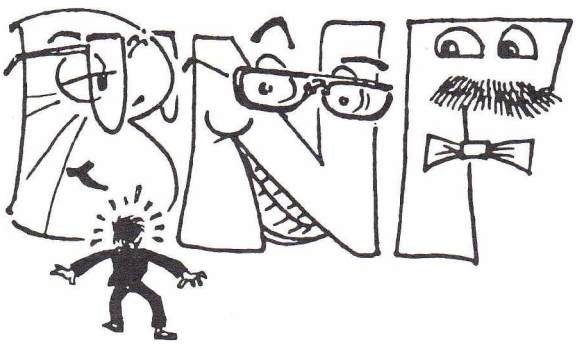
As I fumbled at type-setting on the Innertype (Linotype) machine in the shop basement, Tony Palumbo, the regular operator, took interest in my project, luckily for me. He was a dedicated union man and was delighted to help confront the authoritarianism I depicted. He set the type while I laid out the lead slugs, locked up the chases, and, by work-and-turn, hand-fed the small Chandler press. By Friday night, with my undisclosed propaganda, I was in the home of my friend Dick Wilson in Richmond Hill in the borough of Queens. I may have confided in him about my plan for distribution – I certainly didn't tell any other Futurian. The glory or the blame would be, in due time, all mine.

By early Saturday morning, box in hand, I had arrived at Caravan Hall in mid-town Manhattan, on East 59th Street. Avoiding the elevator, I climbed the three flights of stairs and hid my secret papers behind the cold, old-fashioned heating radiator.

I went back downstairs and joined Dick Wilson outside on the sidewalk. It was a beautifully clear and sunny day, and the pavement had not yet grown hot in the morning sunshine. Almost everyone around wore white shirts with ties; some had fedora hats. For all our liberal ideas, we the young were extremely conservative and conformist in our clothing. Don Wollheim's 'uniform' was a dark suit with dark hat and, in inclement weather, an ubiquitous umbrella. Unfailingly, we very much conformed to the culture of the day in the height of the Great Depression.

Of the few fans milling around, some I knew personally and some I knew by reputation. I was awe-struck to see so many celebrities. There were several strata represented. At the bottom were the young fans, like me and Dick, known in fandom by the printed word. Just above our level were the Big Name Fans, and then the BNFs who were turning into pros. Finally, there were the pros themselves.

One of the BNFs present was actually THE Big Name Fan. Forrest J Ackerman, unmistakable, what with '4SJ' emblazoned on his shirt-front, was there all the way from California, wearing his eye-catching street costume with green cape and baggy breeches derived from magazine illustrations drawn by artist Frank R. Paul. He was to me, even then, Mr. Science Fiction Fan, the guy who brought me into active fandom through the letter columns of *Wonder Stories*. And nearby was his neophyte fellow Californian, Ray Douglas Bradbury, only just starting on his way up the celebrity ladder and bucking the stereotypical dress code by an open shirt collar. (I remember later his colorfully striped T-shirt – West Coast garb seemed strange in our big city.) On the other side of Forry was the other great BNF of the day, Jack Darrow. What a sight I saw:



the two Biggest Name Fans in the world, standing next to each other – the original young directors of the Science Fiction League!

And over there was Julius Schwartz, one of the very first of our breed, famous for his fanzine editorship, a BNF who was also a professional! Standing next to him was his closest friend, Mort Weisinger, now a genuine professional editor taking up where Hugo Gernsback had left off (and secretly resented by me for debasing *Wonder Stories* into *Thrilling Wonder Stories*). Why, they were no more than Don Wollheim's age, still in their twenties! Julius had a face as distinctive as Don's, both with angular features and large noses supporting eyeglasses. Schwartz's speech was forceful and all the time his face was lit up with enthusiasm and good humor. To those around him, he was simply 'Julie', but I dared not break into the conversation. As for Weisinger, to me he was like a smiling Buddha, burly and confident. They were so different from the much younger, esthetic looking Charles D. Hornig, editor of the defunct *Wonder Stories* who had accepted my very first short story.

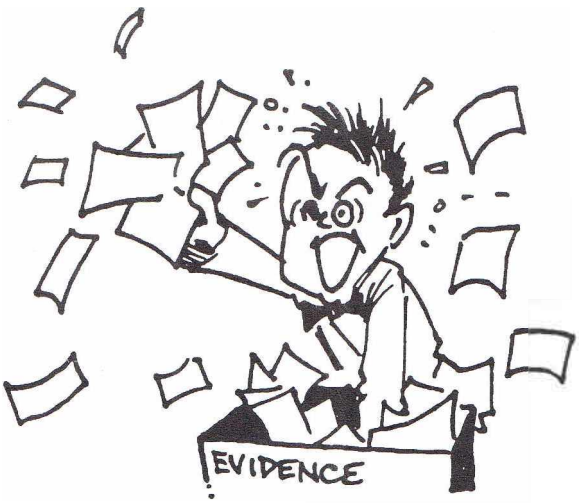
The brightest star of all was John W. Campbell, Jr., peering owlishly through his steel-rimmed glasses. Isaac Asimov was present as a lukewarm Futurian and not yet blossomed out into an extrovert with his distinctive flamboyant, loquacious style. Published that spring, he had a head start on Bradbury and was about to become one of Campbell's many famous prodigies. Isaac wore the typical brown, horn-rimmed glasses which made him look older and wiser than his nineteen years.

Quite remarkable to me was seeing so many females – young and old. The Guest of Honor, artist Frank R. Paul, had brought one of his three lovely daughters, and the legendary Ray Cummings, so distinctive with his magnificent, thick crown of pure white hair, had brought his 12-year-old daughter. The traveling companion of Forry Ackerman, Morojo (the Esperanto acronym for Myrtle R. Douglas), was present in costume, though hers was rather more subdued than his. Doris Baumgardt, a.k.a. Leslie Perri, darkly stunning, would be the future Mrs. Fred Pohl. Author Malcolm Jameson's daughter, Vida, in later years would be a frequent visitor to the Hydra Club. Robert D. Swisher and John W. Campbell, Jr., had their wives, Frances and Dona, with them. And then there was the attractive Connecticut fan, Trudy Kuslan, whom I tried to impress by surreptitiously slipping her a copy of my yellow pamphlet with a casual comment, "You're the first to know," or some similarly stupid remark. It was a big mistake.

The confrontation began around noon.

Five of the six doomed Futurians stepped out of the elevator and were immediately confronted by Jimmy Taurasi who barred their way into the hall. They had not known then that the three leaders of Nycon had discussed barring them from the convention. Naturally, an argument ensued. Stocky Taurasi was ready for physical battle against those Futurians who were strong of mind but not of body. Even so, Jimmy called for police help and waited for his two comrades. When Sam Moskowitz appeared, the argument continued, but he dismissed the police. Moskowitz had confidence in his muscle, having claimed "my greatest enthusiasm is boxing."

Oh-oh! Just as some good-behavior compromise seemed to be winning the day, the yellow pamphlet appeared, thrust into the hand of Moskowitz by Louis Kuslan. Evidently, Trudy had passed my gift on to her brother. Moskowitz scanned it and was angered. John Michel, the remaining sixth candidate for ostracism, then appeared and became an on-looker as Wollheim denied absolutely any knowledge of the pamphlet or that the Futurians were responsible for its publication or distribution. I had stirred up a hornet's nest. But my tirade, with its purple prose about "ruthless scoundrels," had ended optimistically with peace and harmony by stating: "Who are we that have published this? We are science fiction fans, young men who believe that science fiction is a new type of literature which must not have its future destroyed by any selfish interests. Despite anyone, or anything, the 1939 World's Science Fiction Convention is bound to be a success! And should the Convention Committee decide that democratic methods are best we will be the first to admit that they deserve full credit and praise for this gathering for the three days. May science fiction prosper!" I had attributed the pamphlet to a special 'committee', in effect, anonymously, and was actually rather proud of my



contribution toward democracy. I was startled later by Moskowitz's misrepresentation that I branded New Fandom as a puppet in the hands of the professionals. And I had never dreamed that such famous and important fans could ever be banned. So, I just watched the dispute and kept silent.

"Ah, ha!" Poking around the radiator, Moskowitz discovered my cache of yellow booklets. And then, a further, louder, "Ah, ha!" – he also brought to light a plethora of other 'subversive' material just waiting for the Futurians to place on the table with the approved fanzines and books, most to be auctioned off at the day's close. To Moskowitz, the Nycon was obviously on the verge of disastrous contamination from some serious radical propaganda which spoke of a world in turmoil.

There was to be no propaganda from the Futurians, no speeches, no disruptions of any kind, and a pledge of "orderly" conduct – these were Moskowitz's conditions for admittance. But this gag order was not acceptable to Wollheim and the other five Futurians, as it had not been imposed on anyone else. When Sykora, the unofficial co-chairman, arrived, he agreed that the official chairman was making the right decision. The banning became official policy. How did other Futurians make it in? Moskowitz has written that they were admitted because they agreed to his required promise to behave, but none of them ever did make any such promise. It was inconceivable that any of them would. I most certainly didn't.

Before the meeting opened on Saturday (with more than 200 people present), frantic efforts were made by some to correct the injustice. While the banned Futurians retired to a nearby cafeteria – for decades the favorite kind of place for socializing, arguing and conspiring about science fiction – action swirled around the blissfully unaware Olympian gods who took little notice. Frances Swisher and Morojo appealed to the leaders for reason, to no avail. Milton A. Rothman, the respected East Coast BNF, was the self-appointed liaison/courier running back and forth between the hall and the cafeteria. During intermissions I had no confiscated yellow pamphlets to hand out, but I did pass out a quickly prepared notice of a Futurian meeting, a "Free Convention for all of fandom," to be held someplace at some set time.

All during the meeting there was the undercurrent of repressed feelings, with only brief flashes from some sympathizers. Several attempts were made to make the general audience aware of the drama that was still in progress. The tight control of the leadership prevented airing the issue. Asimov, raised to the level of a pro, was too star-struck to comprehend. Leslie Perri several times did her best to raise the issue, as did others such as me. Not a chance.

According to Moskowitz, "The only potential source of further trouble came while Sykora was introducing the notables present. At that time David Kyle rose and attempted to make a motion that the six barred fans be allowed to enter the hall. Sykora, however, declined to recognize the motion. ... Later, after nearly everyone had left that hall, a telegram signed 'Exiles' arrived for David Kyle, requesting him to announce the 'Futurian Meeting' and offering regards 'to the tyrannous trio'. The committee regarded this as a delayed signal for Kyle to create a disturbance at the gathering." The committee of three had pulled it off for the moment – the repercussions came whistling in later.

And so the convention went on. For the entire day there was much hubbub which kept me from examining the wealth of items on display around the rooms, though I did get a copy of the Souvenir Book, with its gorgeous (for us) shining, gold cover – it was a production by Conrad H. Ruppert which Julie Schwartz had made possible by the solicitation of advertisements. There might have been a membership fee, but if so it would have been nominal, such as a dime. The convention had arranged for a refreshment stand, but I didn't even have five cents to squander on something to drink – any money I had would have gone to one of the auctions.

Lack of funds also kept me out of the banquet on Sunday evening. Much as I revered Frank R. Paul, a man perhaps more venerated than his old boss Hugo Gernsback, I couldn't afford the one dollar ticket. But I wasn't the only one – there were a total of only thirty-two diners. I think it was a great loss that the country couldn't hear Frank R. Paul's marvelous speech, "Science Fiction, the Spirit of Youth." He was undoubtedly the most popular person in our sf world – a sweet, warm person with a quiet, gentle manner. He talked of this "meeting" of

"rebellious, adventurous young minds" eager to discuss freely subjects unlimited. How ironic!

On Sunday, the attendance was down to less than a half. The reason was not disenchantment; I believe, it was because the day was restricted to science programs, the science fiction phase being concluded. There was great satisfaction when the Futurians met that day and the next, with many interested fans. The cafeteria was their initial assembly place, and Brooklyn was the site of the 'free' convention. I was very pleased by Ackerman's later comments about a critique session held afterwards: "I personally was very impressed by the very fair way in which the Nycon was analyzed. 'If the reason for the convention,' said the speaker, 'was for fans to meet the pros, to exchange autographs, to see movies, etc., then we would have to say that the convention was a success. If this first meeting of readers and authors should have produced some discussions, some resolutions, then we would have to say it was not.' The Futurians, as they were called (or, later, Michelists) were politically oriented fans who felt that science fiction had a mission, was more than just fun and games, should have gone on record on this historic occasion as being opposed to war or in favor of interplanetary exploration or *something* of a substantial nature."

My evaluation of Nycon, by hindsight after 60 years, is simple: For all of fandom, not just the professional aspect, it was a big success. Sykora, Moskowitz and Taurasi did as good a job as could have been expected – the Futurians might not have done it as well. But for fledgling New Fandom, ostensibly the world-wide sponsoring organization – and in particular, for Sykora, Moskowitz and Taurasi – the result of Nycon controversies and official actions was very close to an absolute disaster.

And I was there, both as spectator and unexpected participant – I *really* was there, *really there*! Wow! ☼

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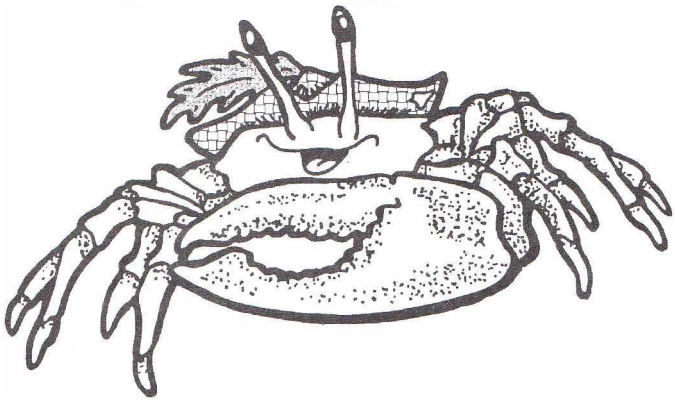
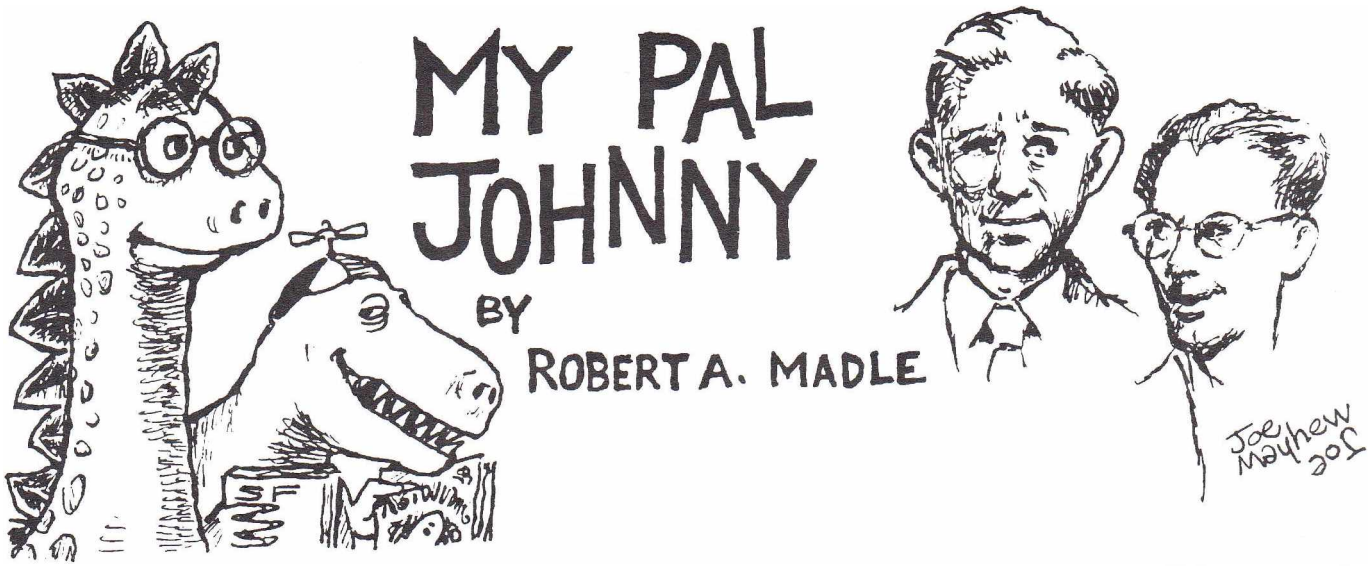
✎ Some of our readers observed that even though the events at the 1939 Nycon were some of the defining moments of the early era of fandom, a sense of perspective about the unpleasantness that occurred there is helpful. William Bains wrote us that "what comes across is a sense that this was a vindictive, inept squabble between teenagers who ought to have known better even then, and certainly should now." Gary Deindorfer commented that "It is difficult to realize how young these pioneering, legendary fans and pros were. Perhaps that explains in part their contentiousness; they hadn't aged enough to mellow a little. Plus the whole nature of their feeling themselves set apart by their passion for science fiction and fandom, then such a beleaguered thing, ignored or scored by the general public. There were Jiants in those days, even if they were just kids." As for Dave's detailed retelling of the events, Derek Pickles wrote us that "I am amazed and humbled by, and jealous of Dave Kyle. Why should Dave have a photographic memory for names, places and colours when I can't remember the name of the person I see in the mirror every morning? I went to a reunion of my primary school class of 1939 and knew not a single name of the dozen or so (of 32) who showed up – everyone knew me, though, and one of the women even kissed my cheek, making me wonder if she was one of the girls I'd gone into the field behind the school to play 'show me yours and I'll show you mine'."



And so it was on to *Mimosa* 23, which was published in January 1999 and had a 'Bucconeer' theme – some of the illustrations for the issue featured pirates, crabs, and even a pirate crab. Contents of the issue included another installment of Mike Resnick's "Worldcon Memories," Howard DeVore's recollection of the 1955 Worldcon and it's Mystery Guest, Dave Kyle's appreciation of the living legend that is Forrest J Ackerman, Jeanne Mealy's look at the similarities between the Minnesota State Fair and science fiction fandom, Cato Lindberg's remembrance of "When Fandom Came to Norway," Forry Ackerman's remembrance of the early days of Los Angeles fandom, and Ron Bennett's remembrance of a British convention that became memorable because of its hotel. *Mimosa* won its fifth Hugo Award at Bucconeer, and the Award was presented to us by the convention's Fan Guest, Milton Rothman, who was one of the founders of Philadelphia fandom many decades ago. One of the other Philly fans active back then was John Baltadonis, who passed away about a month before Bucconeer. Bob Madle, who was John's boyhood friend, wrote a remembrance of him that we published in *M*23. Here it is again:



John V. Baltadonis, one of the most active fans of the late 1930s, died of lung cancer in July 1998. He was 77 years old. John was born in Philadelphia, in February 1921, and resided in that area all of his life, except for 3½ years in the Army during WWII. Prior to this, he obtained a degree in Art from Temple University and, after the war, supplemented it with a Masters in Fine Art from the Tyler School of Art.

Johnny and I met in first grade at the Vaughn School, in the Kensington section of Philadelphia. We lived within a city block of each other and became the best of friends. This was 1927, during prohibition, and Johnny's father ran a 'speak easy' where beer and liquor was dispensed. It was a very large house, and I have fond memories of all the games we played there.

Both of us, apparently, had learned to read before starting first grade and we soon discovered boys' books. We were friendly rivals in most things we did from the beginning and thus it was we both assembled a worthy collection of such titles as *The Outdoor Chums*, *The Battleship Boys*, and *The Grammar School Boys*. These were the first items we ever collected and those books meant a lot to both of us.

Time went by and soon it was 1930. Several events of "great importance" occurred. *Buck Rogers* began to run in January 1930, *Tarzan of the Apes* appeared in the comics section of *The Evening Bulletin*, and a movie was released that shook us to our very foundations – *Just Imagine*, starring El Brendel. It was a musical, as were most of the 'talkies' of that early period, but this movie took place in 1980, fifty years in the future! In reality, we had become science fiction fans already.

Johnny was tall, blonde, blue-eyed and handsome, even as a pre-teenager. And he always had to be first in all our activities. So, as he was able to obtain money from his parents (which was a rarity in those days), he had the best boys' book collection, the best chemistry set, the best set of skates. And when he discovered Edgar Rice Burroughs, he was able to buy *new* books from the bookstores! (They cost all of 99 cents each!) But he let me read them as long as I kept them in perfect condition. I remember that, when reading those pristine copies, I would always remove the dust wrappers.

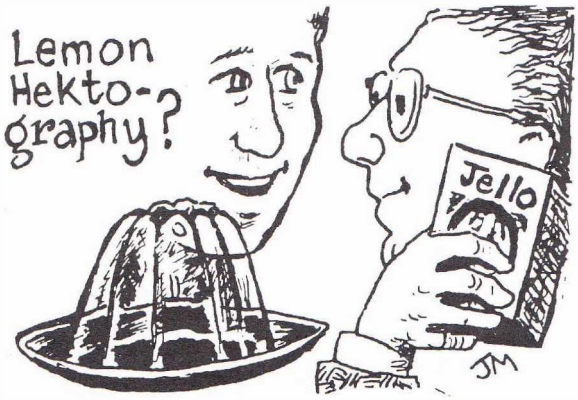
Then, in early 1931, we discovered S-F magazines. We were in a local junk shop when Johnny found two copies of *Wonder Stories*, with marvelous Frank R. Paul covers on them – the December 1930 issue, featuring "The Synthetic Man" by Ed Earl Repp and the April 1931 issue, featuring "The Man Who Evolved" by Edmond Hamilton. Wow! Were we impressed! But we didn't know where to get other issues (remember, we were only nine years old) and it wasn't until the spring of 1933 that we discovered back-date magazines stores and the S-F magazines. And, beginning with the January 1934 issues, we were able to purchase them from the newsstands (this was very neatly accomplished by the method known as "not eating lunch" – and spending our Junior High School lunch money, 15 cents a day, on S-F mags). But back issues were only five cents each (six for a quarter) and we both amassed our early collections in this manner. By this time, Jack Agnew, who is my cousin, joined us and we became a trio. Jack had no choice but to become an S-F fan, too.

In April of 1934, Hugo Gernsback started the Science Fiction League in the pages of *Wonder Stories*. This was probably the most important event ever to occur from the viewpoint of S-F and, particularly, S-F fandom. SFL

chapters sprang up world-wide. One of these was the Philadelphia SFL, organized by Milton A. Rothman, with the first meeting occurring in January 1935. We attempted to contact Rothman but received no answer so we assumed he felt we were too juvenile. Little did we realize that Rothman was just a year or so older than us. So, about this same time, we organized the Boys' SF Club, consisting of John Baltadonis, Jack Agnew, Harvey Greenblatt, and me. And we actually produced a 'fan mag', as they were called then, titled *The Science Fiction Fan*. It was carbon-copied (there were only two or three copies), and featured some S-F magazine reviews plus a short story, "The Atom Smasher" by Donald Wandrei, which was copied from a 1934 *Astounding Stories*. But also featured were the first illustrations by John Baltadonis. They were acceptable – I thought they were excellent – but they gave no hint of the John's latent talent that would propel him to the top of the fan field and make him known as 'The Frank R. Paul of the Fan Artists'.

In 1935, John and I both had letters published in *Amazing Stories* and this time Rothman contacted *us*! We brought our Boys' SF Club to his home and the first reorganizational meeting of the Philadelphia SFL was held with our group plus Rothman, his fan friend Raymond Peel Mariella, Oswald Train (who had just moved to Philadelphia), and a couple of others who never showed up again.

Baltadonis, Agnew, and I had been working on another carbon-copied fan mag, called *Imaginative Fiction*. After attending the first PSFL meeting, we added a couple of pages and Baltadonis did a remarkable cover (for a 14-year-old). And he had to do it twice, as we made two copies (there were no Xerox machines then!). The three of us then decided we were going to publish a printed fan mag, like *Fantasy Magazine*, to be titled *Fantascience Digest*. We actually bought a press, but had no idea how to set type – and we didn't have any type, anyway! It had taken all we could beg, borrow, or steal to buy the press, so getting type would be another day. But all was not lost; that very week we received in the mail the initial issue of Morris Scott Dollens' *The Science Fiction Collector*, certainly one of the most amateurish fan mags published to that time. It was hand-written – not even typed – but it had illustrations and they were in a blue color! We found out it was done by a process called hektography.



Baltadonis managed to get some more money, did a little research, and called Agnew and I to come over one day to observe his new publishing equipment. We arrived to find that his 'publishing house' consisted of a pound of gelatine, a large rectangular cake pan, a purple typewriter ribbon, and a small jar of blue ink. The gelatine was heated until it became liquid, and was poured into the cake pan and allowed to harden. The typed page was placed face down on the gelatine and allowed to remain for a few minutes until the gelatine absorbed the purple ink, and then removed. A sheet of typewriter paper was then very carefully placed on the gelatine, pressed slightly and pulled off. Eureka! There was a marvelous reproduction of the purple-typed page. With luck, this could be repeated about 50 or even 60 times; thus was born the era of the hektographed fan magazine.

Philadelphia's first fan mag (not counting the carbon-copied ones) was called *Fantasy Fiction Telegram*; it was dated October 1936 and was about 20 half-size pages, all in purple, with blue illustrations, all by Baltadonis, and material by the local group plus an article by the leading fan of the time, Donald A. Wollheim. The original Baltadonis hektographed artwork didn't even begin to suggest the prolific talent he would display in the near future.

John made more trips to the store – the gelatine was called "Ditto" by the way – and made an amazing discovery, one that would ultimately make him an immortal of early fandom: hektographed ink was available in many colors! From an artistic viewpoint, the possibilities were astounding. The third issue of *FFT* appeared in many colors, and Baltadonis received rave reviews of his artwork (the cover and all interiors). But *FFT* lasted only one more issue, the fifth issue never being completed.

Morris Dollens published the *Science Fiction Collector* for 13 issues, through June 1937 when Dollens announced that would be the last issue. But it wasn't really the *last* issue. A 14th issue (dated July 1937) appeared and what an issue it was! Sam Moskowitz described it in *The Immortal Storm* as follows:

In late August of 1937, the first issue of the new *Science Fiction Collector* appeared under the editorship of Baltadonis and staffed by Train, Madle, and Moskowitz. The result set the fan world agog and unified its struggling remnants. For Baltadonis had done the near-impossible; not only was *Collector* ahead of the old insofar as quality of material was concerned, but Dollens' hektography had actually been surpassed. Some of the most important names of fandom were contributors, and in the space of one issue, the *Science Fiction Collector* became the leading representative fan journal.

Sam could have added that the Baltadonis artwork was extremely impressive – and "all in color for a dime." It was at this junction that fandom almost universally recognized Baltadonis as the premier fan artist. Morris Scott Dollens had introduced the varied-colored hektograph fan mag but Baltadonis perfected it. He was not only outstanding in the handling of color and the mechanistic aspects of illustrating – he was also a master of 'figure study', as the following anecdote shows.

Back in 1935, when we graduated from Penn Treaty Junior High School, we had read a letter in *Wonder* or *Amazing* from Philadelphia fan Raymond Peel Mariella, who mentioned that one of his teachers was an S-F writer who taught at Central High School. We also had read a letter from a Philadelphia writer named Stephen G. Hale who had several stories in *Amazing*, and who was also a high school teacher. It had to be the same writer, we assumed, and both of us attempted to attend Central – to no avail. "You go to Northeast," we were told, and so we did.

But on the first day of art class, we were amazed to realize that Stephen G. Hale (author of "The Laughing Death" and "World's Apart") was our art teacher! He told us he had several other stories awaiting publication (*Amazing Stories*) – but they never appeared. Anyway, one of our first assignments was 'figure study'. So far as drawing was concerned, I was as bad as Baltadonis was good. We came to the deadline, and I hadn't finished the assignment. "Not to worry," said the over-accommodating Baltadonis, "I'll do an extra one and give it to you at class." But it turned out to be a scantily-clad figure study of a female band leader named Ina Ray Hutton. She was drawn wearing short tight pants, and John made sure he disguised nothing. I turned it in and, in the next art period, Hale yelled out, "Madle! Come up here!" I stepped forward in fear and trepidation because I knew he was going to accuse me of turning in someone else's work. But that wasn't it at all – he was extremely angry that I had turned in this "piece of pornography" and that he was considering sending me and the drawing down to the principal's office. But he relented – perhaps because we had discovered his stories a few days earlier.

JVB, as Baltadonis became known in fandom, not only edited and published one of the leading fan journals of this period, but he also conceived of Comet Publications, which comprised all of the fan journals published by the Philadelphia group. At one time, circa 1938-39, Comet Publications comprised about 15 different fan mags. (It should be mentioned that the 1936-41 fandom was so small that some active fans used only initials. In addition to JVB, there was DAW [Wollheim], FJA [Ackerman], MAR [Rothman], RWL [Lowndes], and RAM [Madle].)

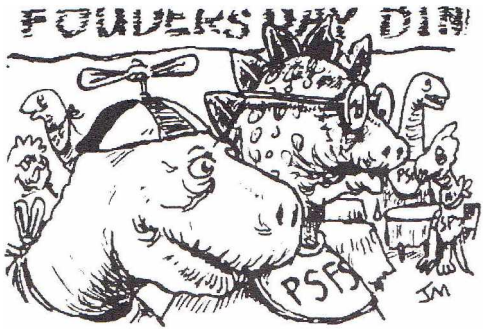
JVB was one of the attendees at the October 1936 meeting in Philadelphia when the New York group came to visit the Philadelphia group. This became known as the 'First S-F Convention', partly because, during the official meeting, Donald A. Wollheim suggested it. JVB was active in producing the annual Philadelphia conference and in helping produce Nycon in 1939 – the First World S-F Convention.

JVB's activity in the 1936-41 period was amazing. He did everything a fan could do – he wrote, illustrated, collected, corresponded, wrote to magazines, organized and attended conventions. During the years 1937-40, he was always voted one of the top fans in the world. In fact, in 1938 and 1939 he was elected as Number One Fan. And this was during the times that active fandom consisted of such as Ackerman, Bradbury, Wollheim, Moskowitz, Tucker, Pohl, Lowndes, and other great names.

Seventeen issues of the *Science Fiction Collector* appeared under JVB's editorship from 1937-41. It was a treasure-trove of early S-F and fandom, beautifully illustrated in multi-color. The final issue was dated Winter 1941 and marked the end of JVB's tenure as an active fan; in reality, the start of World War II in December 1941 marked the end of the grandest of all fan periods.

After the war, Baltadonis rejoined the PSFS for a while, but upon starting graduate work, drifted into inactiv-

ity. He did illustrate the Program Book for the Philcon of 1947 and, in 1948, did the dust wrapper and illustrations for New Era's only book, "The Solitary Hunters" and "The Abyss" by David H. Keller. Despite his S-F illustrating talent, he appeared professionally only once when Lowndes reprinted "The Abyss" in *Magazine of Horror* in the 1960s. But his entire career was art-oriented – he taught art in Haverford, Pennsylvania school system for 35 years, then became art programs coordinator for the district until his health forced him to retire.

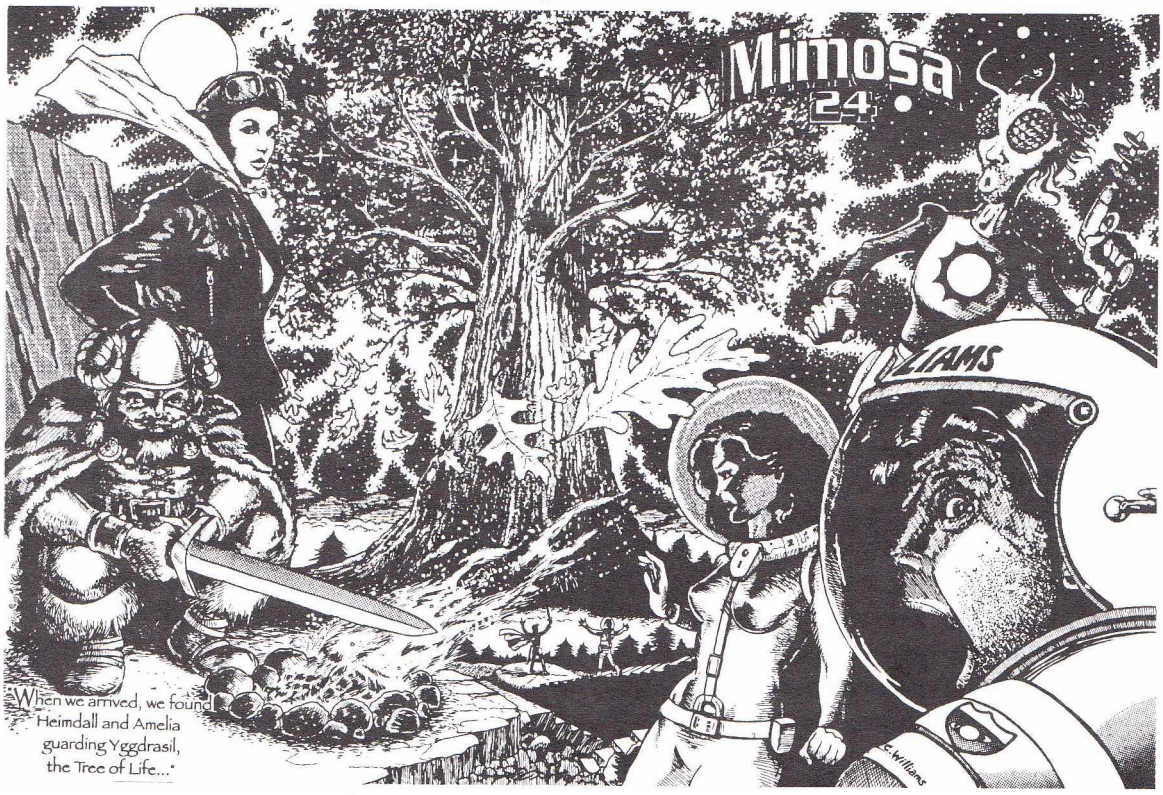


Our paths crossed occasionally during the late `40s and early `50s when I was attending Drexel University. In 1953 I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, and later to Washington, D.C., and we rarely made contact. However, beginning in the early `80s, Agnew, John, and I attended Philcons and PSFS Founders' Day dinners, and it was like the old days again. At the Philcons and dinners, John's wife Pat, my wife Billie, and Agnew's wife Agnes learned more than they wanted to when discussions of the old days came up.

John always retained his interest in S-F. He went from reader to collector to fan and back to reader. Fan history will certainly show him as one of the most important members of the 1936-41 period of fandom. (Just look at the indexes of Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* and Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* and this becomes quite evident.) It's difficult to accept that John V. Baltadonis is gone – but the memories of the friendship and the numerous hobbies, interests, and activities we shared, will be remembered forever. ☼

✎ Harry Warner, Jr., noted that Baltadonis had actually been mostly and undeservedly forgotten by latter-day fandom: "It's a shame that no worldcon ever thought about making him the Fan Guest of Honor during his long life." Fred Smith wrote us in agreement about Baltadonis' importance in fandom's earliest era, but also remarked about how all is relative in fandom: "Robert Madle's tribute to John Baltadonis was engrossing. It's funny, but when I was active in fandom in the 1950s, those guys, along with Ackerman, Moskowitz, DeVore, and Kyle, were *already* legendary. We even had nostalgia for the 'Good Old Days' back then!"

Mimosa 24 was published in August 1999, just before we left on a two-week trip that would take us first to the 1999 NASFiC, Conucopia, where we were Fan Guests, and then to Australia for the 1999 Worldcon. *M*24 was a "Communications" theme issue, featuring an intriguing cover by Charlie Williams depicting the Yggdrasil, the Tree of Life, where Ratatosk, the messenger squirrel dwelt. We began the issue with a remembrance of a great communicator. Aubrey Vincent Clarke was a contributor to Mimosa as well as a frequent correspondent, especially about matters of fan history of the golden decade of the 1950s. We were enriched by his friendship as we were immensely saddened by his passing.



Like everyone else in fandom, I mourn the passing of Vin¢ Clarke. A man without enemies. A dear man altogether. A quiet man, yet one with a burning enthusiasm for science fiction and an especial energy for all things fannish.

When I first saw Vince's name on the contents table of the fanzine I was being shown I was quite disappointed. I was new to the world of fanzines and, as a devotee of Arthur C. Clarke, easily misread the name of the article's author. A.V. Clarke? Why, I even had the slight suspicion that this upstart was trading on the good name of the great Arthur C.

I read the article anyway and a forty year long admiration for Aubrey Vincent was born.

I don't remember meeting Vin¢ at the 1954 British Convention, the Whit weekend SuperManCon at Manchester's Grosvenor Hotel. The small group of Leeds fans who attended gaped from afar at John Russell Fearn and reveled only in the coincidence that Mike Rosenblum, our own BNF and mentor lived in Grosvenor Park. We stuck together as neos did. And do. Not for us the wild distribution of quote cards to passers-by outside the hotel.

But by the following convention at Kettering, Vin¢ was firmly established in my mind as the compiler of *The Directory of Anglo-fandom* (every fan's bible), *Duplicating Without Tears* (and there's a neat pun for you, one which would escape a fair percentage of modern fanzine editors), and the voted delegate of British fandom in the first TAFF campaign. He had not only contributed a couple of pieces to my fanzine, *PLOY*, but he and I were corresponding on a regular basis. Still, Vin¢ corresponded with *everyone* on a regular basis. And that was in addition to producing *Science Fantasy News*, contributing to what appeared to be every other issue of every fanzine being published *and* being instrumental in the formation of the highly successful apa, OMPA (The Off-Trails Magazine Publishers' Association).

I wonder what he would have achieved had he been prolific.

And later that same year I had the honour and pleasure of staying overnight at Vince's home in Welling. I'd very recently left college and was hitchhiking my way to the small convention being put on in Antwerp. Vin¢ very kindly invited me to break my journey and I called for him after work at the wholesale iron merchants, Spencer, Bonecourt and Clarkson.

We walked through to London Bridge station with Vin¢ pointing out the various landmarks to a provincial lad on his first visit to the metropolis – the house where Dickens had lived, Southwark Cathedral, The Tabard Inn, Ted Carnell's office...

"I should have arranged to meet you here at the station," Vin¢ told me in his slow, languid drawl. He was the master of under-emphasis. "On platform five."

Naturally, it transpired that at that time there was no platform five at London Bridge Station. One, two, three, four, six and so on. This possibly accounts for some of the math pupils I came across in subsequent years.

Once at Wendover Way we sat surrounded by bookcases full of science fiction and fantasy... what was labeled

fantasy in those days... books and magazines as well as peripheral items which had taken Vince's fancy. Here, for example, Vin¢ introduced me to *Scoops* and to E.S. Turner's *Boys Will Be Boys*, the excellent survey of boys' story magazines, the "Old Boys' Papers."

And, as though this wonderland were not enough, there were the shelves of pulps. And the treasure trove of fanzines. Hundreds and hundreds of them. And what fanzines! *Voice of the Imagi-Nation*, *Futuria Fantasia*, *The Necromancer*, *Zenith*, *Slant*, *Quandry*... they were all there.

Sadly, I can't remember the item in question, but when a certain scarce title came up in conversation, Vin¢ reached up over his head without rising from his chair and pulled the very issue of the magazine from a shelf. "Just an odd copy I happened to have lying around," he said casually and with a neatly judged tone of modesty. Needless to say, I cracked up. And the sentence became a catchphrase between us in subsequent years.

We talked, as fans do, late into the night, discussing among other topics the deeper metaphysical implications of such items as eggplants and crottled greeps. I think I rather disappointed Vin¢ by laughing at his frequent puns. The fannish tradition seemed to be to react to them only with a straight face. And then possibly – an ability far outside my ken – to cap them two or three sentences later. These puns, in themselves, opened doors for me. I'd grown up in a divided world. Humour was always present in family life, but puns were an unknown beast. And in my academic studies, puns were considered the lowest form of wit. Sad.

The following year I was lucky enough to have a piece of mine published in *Eye*, the London fanzine Vin¢ was editing. The magazine had had a fairly turbulent history as far as editors were concerned and Vince's sheer *niceness* could be gathered from the name "Irene Boothroyd" emblazoned under the title on the printed cover. Printed covers were rare in those days of hecto and mimeo. Each was an event in itself. Irene was a fairly isolated northern fan who had professed to Vin¢ her ambition to see her name in print. And of course Vin¢ was just the Kindly Soul to make one's dream come true.

In the summer of 1957, by which time Vin¢ was married, I decided to seek temporary work down on the south coast, but without success (in later years it amused me to recall that one of the hotels which turned me down was the Brighton Metropole, the venue for two Worldcons) and I found myself in London.

Joy Clarke made two highly acceptable suggestions, firstly that I stay with her and Vin¢ as a rent-paying boarder at their home in Inchmery Road, Catford, and secondly that I try to find work in London. "You can type," she pointed out. "Why not try an agency? They're always looking for temps."

I presented myself at an agency on The Strand, directly opposite the Law Courts and, though my typing speed is normally calculated in minutes per word, managed to con my way on to the agency's books. (The typewriter they set me to work on for my test was identical to that which I owned. You think I told them?).

And so followed a glorious month (apart from a week in the sweatshop of Butterfly Brand papers), working during the days for architects, shipping offices ("So *that's* a Bill of Lading! I always thought it was something in a kitchen.") and a market research firm (Marplan) and spending the evenings in the company of fans, and Big Name Fans, too. I became a regular visitor to Ted Carnell's offices and also, with the aid of Vince's bike, to Tresco, the not *too* far away home of Ken and Pamela Bulmer on Wellmeadow Road.

I was also taken along to meetings of the Worldcon committee, for this was approximately a month before the Big Event, the 1957 Loncon. I remember chipping in with a couple of suggestions which were heartily accepted and it was only years later that it occurred to me that because of rivalries between factions on the committee, my suggestions were considered feasible because they were those of a neutral.

On my following birthday I received a large parcel from Inchmery Road, full of all sorts of useless goodies, a

pencil stub, a spent match, a bottle of solidified correction fluid, a broken stylus, a bank of rusty staples, flaking brown margins from the oxidised pages of some moribund prozine, a small sachet of potato chip salt, a quadruple-folded SuperManCon quotecard which read, "If you didn't want Crottled Greeps why did you order them?" and some duplicator slip sheets, spoiled pages from an issue of *Eye*... that sort of thing... plus a small yellow balloon, covered in writing which, when I'd blown up the balloon in order to read what was written there, turned out to be a selection of *Hyphen* bacover quotes. Plus one sentence, penned in Vince's recognizable writing: "And the mouth-piece was smeared with a deadly poison."

I was back in London, temping, a couple of years later, by which time Vin¢ and Joy had moved from Catford to Queen's Road in the New Cross district of London where they named their apartment 'Inchmery'. And with them went their permanent boarder, Sandy Sanderson. Sandy had been a leading figure in British fandom for almost ten years, primarily being involved with the SF club in his home town, Manchester. He was a regular soldier, a sergeant in the army, and when he had been posted in the early fifties first to Egypt and then to Cyprus, had formulated the most detailed and effective hoax ever perpetrated in fandom, the invention of femmefan Joan W. Carr.

At the time of the move to Queen's Road, however, the hoax had been revealed some three years earlier and Sandy had been living with the Clarkes for well over a year.

I can't say that I enjoyed moving into Inchmery. Enjoyed doesn't even come close to what I was experiencing. This was the zenith of my year, every evening being a paradise of fannish conversation and with Sandy beavering away, working on his fanzine, *Aporrheta*.

I went down to London a few days early for the 1960 Easter Convention and naturally called in at Inchmery. No one there had known that I was already in town, but it was Vince's birthday and I'd bought him a giant lollipop. When Vin¢ came home from work, I hid in the back room with the idea of springing out and surprising him. This I did while he was talking to his father who happened to have dropped in. Vin¢ merely took the lollipop, said, "Thanks, Ron," and carried on with the conversation.

A couple of months after the London Convention, in June 1960, Vin¢ produced a small oneshot fanzine which was an open letter to fandom, quite the most extraordinary publication I've ever had the misfortune to receive.

In it he announced that he and Joy were splitting up, that she and Sandy would continue to live at Inchmery for the time being, but that he was taking his and Joy's baby daughter, Nicki, with him to live in an apartment in Pepys Road, about a half mile away. As soon as the arrangements could be finalised, Sandy would leave the army and with Joy would emigrate to the States where they would be sponsored by a well-known New York fan of the day.

Vin¢ thanked the fans who had written to him for their kind messages of support. The future seemed pretty black, he wrote, but he would try and keep some time open for fandom.

Several fans suggested to me that I must have known or at least guessed what was happening. After all, hadn't I spent more time at Inchmery than any other outsider? But no, whatever the reason, I was as surprised and as devastated as every other fan of the day.

Later that year I was in London again for my summer break and took the opportunity to call on Vin¢.

It was a sad meeting.

By this time Vince's attitude had crystallized.

He did not invite me indoors but stood with me on the top step of the fairly sizeable house which had been converted into apartments. He was bitter, understandably so of course, and told me that fandom was no longer for him. Henceforth, he said, he would watch television. And to anyone who knew Vin¢, watching television on a regular, non-selective basis was, to him, the absolute worst waste of time to which one could lower oneself.

He also told me, in a straightforward fashion that he did not want to have anything to do with "someone who has had social intercourse with the people who have ruined my life."

The words stung, as they were so designed to do. What could I say? I mumbled something about wishing him luck, anyway, and stuck out my hand as he turned to step indoors.

He took the hand limply. "Well, if it means something to you," he said, clearly implying that the gesture meant nothing to him. He went inside and closed the door behind him.

Ten years later I enjoyed a three-year stint working in Belgium. For various reasons I'd drive to or through London perhaps ten times a year. The road from London to Dover and the cross-Channel car ferries is the A2, along the Old Kent Road and past the end of Pepys Road.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see the apartment house where I'd last met Vin¢. I'd wonder about him,

and, if the traffic was sufficiently light and I wasn't making a mad dash for a particular sailing, I'd contemplate stopping and seeing whether Vin¢ was still there, with Nicki who by then would have been eleven... twelve... thirteen.

But, guilty as I felt for driving straight past, that's exactly what I continued to do.

Perhaps one rebuff, as intense as that handed out to me in 1960, was enough. Vin¢ deserved better than my continually driving past, but I was a coward.

Then, some years later, out of the blue, Vin¢ returned to fandom. A fan who was researching into the life and career of Wally Gillings came across Vince's Welling address, tried his luck to see whether Vin¢ still lived there and lo! The old fannish flame in Vince's bosom was rekindled.

We sat together in the lounge at NovaCon and talked as though nothing untoward had ever happened between us. To my amazement he was surprisingly sympathetic with my own position, which by that time had to some degree mirrored his own, that of a single parent having to raise, in my case with the aid of a teenage son, a young daughter suffering from some ghastly side effects of radio- and chemotherapies.

It was a mark of the man that at no time did he point out that he'd been through it himself.

We kept in touch after that, via occasional letters, Christmas cards and, of course, at a dozen succeeding conventions, including the Glasgow Worldcon of 1995 when Vin¢ was the worthy Fan Guest of Honor. Neither of us ever mentioned Inchmery, Joy, or Sandy.

He wrote to me full of excitement and enthusiasm for having discovered computers, modems and e-mail. I suspect that everyone in the world, the world of fandom *and* the world of mundanity, received e-mails from Vin¢. Possibly even those without a computer. On one occasion during a discussion we were having about old British comics, I mentioned a particular comic collector by name. "Yes," came the reply, "a fine person. Very intelligent." Someone with whom Vin¢ was, much to my surprise, in regular contact.

In May 1998, Vin¢ wrote to me when he was taken into hospital. He was obviously finding it difficult to fill the days away from his new-found toy. In one exchange I explained some medical procedure to him, gleaned from personal experience and mentioned that he probably already knew of this and that I was undoubtedly teaching my grandmother, as it were, to suck eggs. His reply mentioned that he liked to make sure about such things. I thought he meant the medical procedure. But there followed a lengthy and detailed description of exactly how to prepare an egg for sucking.

And so, for a while, we once again began to exchange letters on a more than weekly basis.

Until November, when my letter to Vin¢ was answered by a phone call from Nicki.

One fan has mentioned to me that Vince's leaving us is very much a *deja-vu* experience, that he'd left us before. But, of course, it isn't. Even if I did drive past the end of Pepys Road, feeling as guilty as hell, there was always the chance that one day Vin¢ would return to the fold and that we'd once again enjoy his soft-spoken dry wit and wealth of fannish and literary knowledge. ☼

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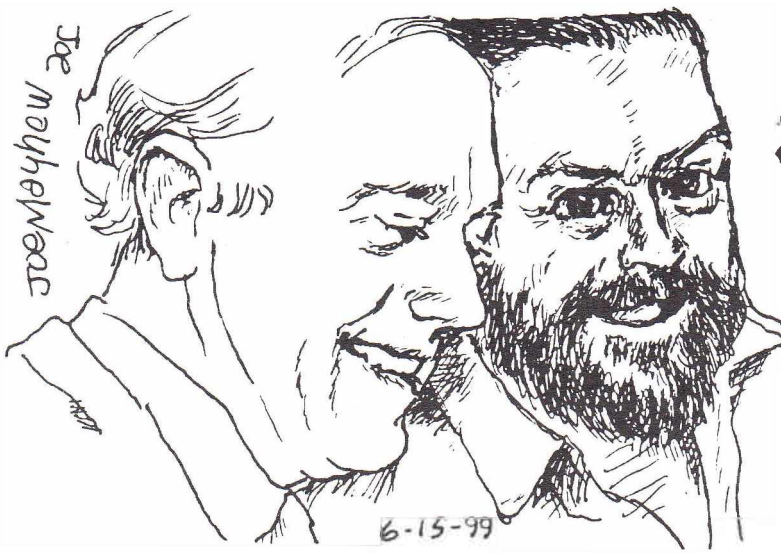
✎ Relatively few of our readers had their own personal set of memories about Vin¢, probably because he never in his life made a trip to North America. (He had been the very first Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund elected delegate, back in the mid-1950s, but then lost his job and had to decline the trip.) Even Harry Warner, Jr., never had the pleasure of meeting Vincent in person, though he's done the next best thing: "I never had the good fortune to meet Vincent but I have his voice on audio tape so I know Ron Bennett is right in his description of how he talked." We had done slightly better than that, as we'd met Vince in 1995 at the Glasgow Worldcon where he was Fan Guest, but never really got to spend more than a few minutes at a time with him. All the more reason to treasure the letters we received for him over the years, and the articles by him that we published in *Mimosa*. Before we assembled *M*24, Vince's friend Ken Bulmer had written us that "If you are publishing a tribute to Vince Clarke, I know you will ensure it is of a quality to match his stature as a fan. I know that you both feel Vince's loss." We do, and we hope that we (and Ron Bennett) have.

It happened that there were many other deaths of notable fans in the year between the Baltimore and Australia worldcons, including three past contributors to Mimosa – George Laskowski, Chuck Harris, and Robert "Buck" Coulson. Rich wrote mini-remembrances of these friends in his closing comments to the issue. And there was another death of a notable fan (and friend), Ian Gunn, who would posthumously win the Fan Artist Hugo Award at Aussiecon III. He was remembered by another award-winning Fan Artist, Teddy Harvia, in the closing article of *M*24. Here it is again:



A CARTOONIST REMEMBERS IAN GUNN

By Teddy Harvia

I was introduced to Ian Gunn first through his cartoons. As artist liaison for ConFrancisco, the 1993 World SF Convention, I wrote him, and a number of other fan artists, to contribute to the convention publications. At MagiCon, the 1992 World SF Convention in Orlando, I met Aussie Roger Weddall, whom I asked about Ian. Roger told me that Ian was a decent bloke, mid-30s, shaggy head of hair, full beard, medium height, heavy set, and very funny.

Roger revealed a reverent sense of wonder in his description of Ian's significant other, Karen Pender-Gunn. Compared to Ian, he told me, Karen was very quiet and reserved, stoically tolerant of Ian's antics. If she was loud at all, she showed it in the bright colors she liked to wear.

I had no idea when I might ever meet Ian and Karen in person. Then I met and married Diana and jokingly told her I'd take her to Intersection, the 1995 World Science Fiction Convention in Glasgow, Scotland, for our honeymoon. She took me seriously. Then Ian and Karen won GUFF, the fan fund that exchanges fans between Australia/New Zealand and Europe.

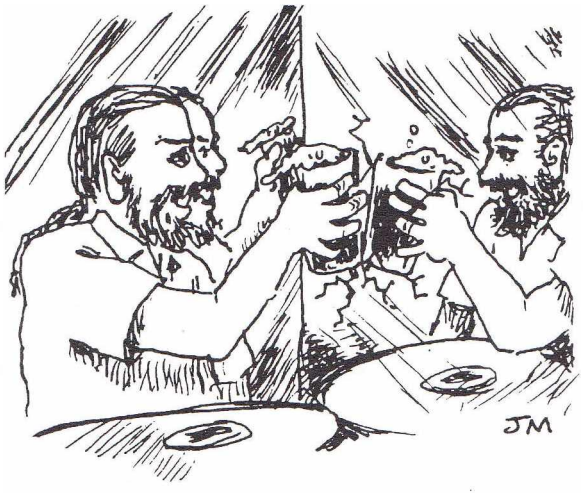
At the convention, Diana and I found Ian's name listed on a programming item in the fan lounge. We walked into the partitioned area in the middle of the cavernous convention center and instantly recognized Ian and Karen, he big and fuzzy at the podium, Karen glowing and purple several rows back in the audience. The two obviously recognized us, mostly likely because of my Texas cowboy hat; they smiled and waved back at us. The bad acoustics drowned out the speakers' voices with the rumble of the crowd scattered throughout the center so we sat close to Karen and chitchatted until the panel ended.

Ian and Karen took us over to the Australia-in-1999 Worldcon bid table in a corner of the convention center where Diana and I bought pre-supporting membership from them and they gave us black and white stickers of a space platypus for our badges. In return, we gave them fuzzy brown kangaroo stickers we were using to promote our intention to run for DUFF, the fan fund that exchanges fans between North America and Australia/New Zealand. The centerpiece of the bid table was a larger-than-life inflatable plastic platypus. Out of a large cloth travel bag Diana pulled the furry platypus hand puppet we'd brought all the way from Texas. Ian expressed mock jealousy that Texans had stuff with a more warm and fuzzy feeling for Australia than the Australians themselves.

We showed them the room in the ritzy Moat House attached to the convention center where we 'rich' Americans were staying (rich at least until we paid our hotel bill). We all took a cab to the more modest Central Hotel attached to the railway station in the center of Glasgow. We attended the bid parties thrown at the Central. Diana and I assisted at the Australia in 1999 party by handing out our kangaroo stickers and lending Ian the platypus hand puppet. Ian brought the beast to life, working its mouth with one hand and wagging its tail with the other. His distinctive Australian accent and laugh only added to the magic. Women and children were petting the puppet as if it were real.

Twice during the run of the convention we went out to eat together, the first time to a cozy restaurant called The Attic in a converted shop basement, accessible by outside stairs. Here Karen introduced Diana to the sinfully rich and very British desert icky sticky toffee pudding and made a friend for life. Richard and Nicki Lynch joined

us at the second restaurant, the more upscale Papingo, which means 'parrot' in old Scottish, but which I for some reason thought was Portuguese, perhaps because the colorful decorations reminded me of Lisbon. The mirrors on the wall made our party of six seem even bigger.



At the table, the women discussed food, or something else of little immediate interest to us cartoonists. They commented on the haggis but no one had the nerve to order it. Ian and I shot puns and jokes back and forth at each other. We scored points virtually even until I remembered the perfect dinner conversation piece. I took from the table one of business cards advertising the restaurant and put two creases in the middle of it at right angles. I pulled on the edges and the card folded closed like wide mouth. The surprise and delight in his face told me that I had scored big points with the paper hand puppet. I gave him a note card and showed him how to create his own. We drew faces on the creations and distracted the women by trying to engage them in conversation with our 3D cartoons. Richard Lynch, ever conscious of recording fan history, pulled out a camera to take pictures.

The night of the Hugo Awards, to my complete surprise, I ended up with a rocket after the ceremonies to carry around to the parties. At the Baltimore-in-1998 bid party we found hundreds of hard plastic party favors in the shapes of crabs, lobsters, sea horses, tuna scattered across one of the tables. Ian proceeded to entertain us by showing us how to play tiddlywinks with the red, blue, green and yellow toys, shooting them into his drink cup. When he filled his cup to overflowing and the room became overcrowded and stuffy, we decided to retire to the breezy hallway outside. On the way out I stopped at the LoneStarCon2 party, the next table over from Baltimore in the same room. There Texas fan Karen Meschke, desperate for a taste of home, traded me a fifth of Captain Morgan's Rum for a can of Dr. Pepper I'd brought with me across the Atlantic.

In the hall, we sat on the floor, I with my Hugo rocket in one hand, the bottle of Captain Morgan's in the other. Diana and Karen offered rum to everyone who passed by to keep me from getting totally wasted drinking it all myself. Several fan editors surrounded us, including Henry and Letha Welch and Benoit Girard. Feeling unqualified to draw at the moment, I suggested that Ian sketch them something. He pulled out a sketchpad and pen and immediately started inking. A caricature of Benoit produced an exclamation of delight and amazement from the recipient. Henry suggested that Ian draw a portrait of me. The whimsical picture of a gangly Texan under a cowboy hat looked just like me.

After the convention, Diana and I decided to sightsee in Edinburgh. Ian and Karen went to the train station to see us off. They had plans to travel to Edinburgh, too, to visit with fans there, only later. First they wanted to see what they were told was the last working police box in the United Kingdom, a look-alike for Doctor Who's Tardis. Ian and Karen stood on the platform waving goodbye to us, and we sat at the window inside the train waving back. Diana mentioned regret that the travel plans of Ian and Karen did not correspond more closely to our own and I agreed. She and I briefly discussed delaying our departure to spend more time with them but because of Diana's interest in old buildings and our limited time in Britain, Edinburgh Castle won out over the Tardis. As if unwilling to prolong the goodbyes, the Aussies looked away. Exchanging a few words, they suddenly took off toward the front of the train and out of sight. We wondered what caused them to run off before the train even started to leave. A moment later they plopped themselves down in the seats beside us.

They explained that they spontaneously decided that spending the day with their American friends appealed to them more than seeing a police box. Being *Doctor Who* fans ourselves, we understood the difficulty of the decision. We asked them about their luggage. They jumped on the train with nothing while we ourselves had numerous bulky cases. The Edinburgh fans were taking theirs ahead for them. Now they would actually beat their luggage there.

Diana and I remember little of the scenery between Glasgow and Edinburgh, catching only glimpses of it. We spent the trip conversing with our friends, away from the activities and demands of the convention. Ian told us outrageous stories and jokes while Karen groaned and pleaded with us gullible Americans not to believe a word of what he said. Having a new audience for his humor only encouraged Ian. I reciprocated by feeding Karen equally out-

rageous lines that she fell for and Diana told her she should know better than to believe everything a cartoonist said.

At the Edinburgh railway station, we momentarily parted ways, Diana and I to find our bed and breakfast and stow our luggage, Ian and Karen to inform their Scottish host that they had changed their plans slightly. We met again at the gates to Edinburgh Castle. Ian was dressed in conservative navy blue, Karen in immaculate white. Ian and I immediately ran ahead, eager to see what was around the next turn in the walls, behind the next door, around the next battlement. I told Ian we had nothing like the centuries-old castle back in Texas. He told me they had nothing like it back in Australia either. Over a metal plate covering a hole in the cobblestone castle walkway, Ian pointed out a sign with an exclamation point on it, saying that it was called a bang, indicating the use of explosives. I told him to stand beside it. He struck one of his many silly poses and I took a photo of a Gunn with a bang.

Karen and Diana, exhausted from the climb up the steep hill atop which the castle sat, protested our pace, but in vain. We peered back at them with goofy grins through gun slits in the walls. The women momentarily slowed us by insisting on lunch in the castle's public cafeteria. Later we all took turns taking photos of each other beside one of the huge black cannons with the roofs of Edinburgh in the hazy background. We mused at the soldiers' pets' graveyard on a ledge outside the walls. On the way out, I chuckled at a sign that had the words "WAY OUT" and said, "Way out!" Ian, more familiar with the sign, was more amused by me.

Outside the castle we walked down the Royal Mile toward the main bus route. Along the way, we popped into the famous Camera Obscura. I took a photo of Ian and Karen from the rooftop with the Firth of Forth in the background, laughing at the alliterative place name and again amusing Ian. Farther down the street, Karen spotted a picture of a kangaroo in an ad outside a clothing shop. She insisted that we take her photo in front of it, explaining that she and Ian were making a record of all the Australian references they found on their trip that had nothing to do with Australia. Ian and I agreed to let the women enter at least one clothing shop to satisfy their lust for shopping, unfulfilled by the castle gift shop.

We reached the main bus route a little sad, knowing that our week together was finally coming to an end. We found a bus stop and checked the schedule. There was only a few minutes to say our goodbyes. Ian's and Karen's bus came and its door opened. We hugged each other, taking a moment too long. The doors closed without Ian and Karen inside and the bus took off. We enjoyed our additional twenty minutes together before the next bus came, and after quicker goodbyes, Diana and I watched our Australian friends disappear into the Edinburgh traffic.

# # # #

I later contributed a cartoon to an Australian fannish calendar that Ian Gunn and Kerri Valkova published. Finishing it shortly before noon one Saturday, I immediately called Ian to tell him was on its way, miscalculating the time difference between Texas and Australia. A sleepy Ian answered the phone and informed me that it was three o'clock in the morning in Melbourne.

The next spring David Bratman, the Hugo administrator for L.A.con 3, called me and asked if I had Ian Gunn's telephone number. I gave him the number but warned him to take into account the time difference when he called. I waited 24 hours to give David time to call and then, unable to contain my excitement, dialed Australia. I again miscalculated the time difference and again woke Ian at three o'clock in the morning. "Congratulations," I told him.

"For what?" he asked.

"Hasn't anyone called you?" I responded, slightly dismayed that I'd jumped the gun, "You've been nominated for the Best Fan Artist Hugo!"

"Bloody Hell!" he exclaimed, sounding suddenly wide awake.

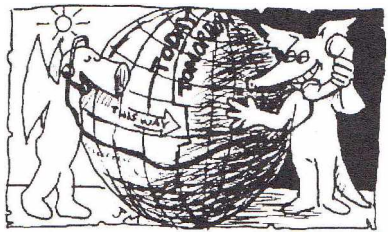
"When David Bratman does call you," I said, "act surprised."

We exchanged numerous packages with our friends, Ian and Karen sending Australian toys, postcards, maps, and trinkets to the U.S., Diana and I sending Texas memorabilia and science fiction kitsch Down Under. My favorites were the Yowies, assemble-yourself plastic models of Australian wildlife, that came in packages of chocolate candy. The amazing toy wombats, frilled lizards, fairy penguins, and bilbies more than compensated for our disappointment that Ian and Karen kept the candy for themselves.

Ian and Karen never woke us with a phone call in the middle of the night, but they did call. Once, Ian told me that he had someone he wanted me to hear. A tinny voice came on the line and uttered a single sentence in an unintelligible drawl. "Who was that?" I asked Ian.

"Woody from *Toy Story*," Ian explained. "He sounds just like you." He rang me all the way from Australia to pull the string on a doll for me. I was speechless. One New Year's Eve, they called to wish us a happy new year.

It was shortly before noon in Texas on December 31 but already three o'clock in the morning of the next year in Australia.



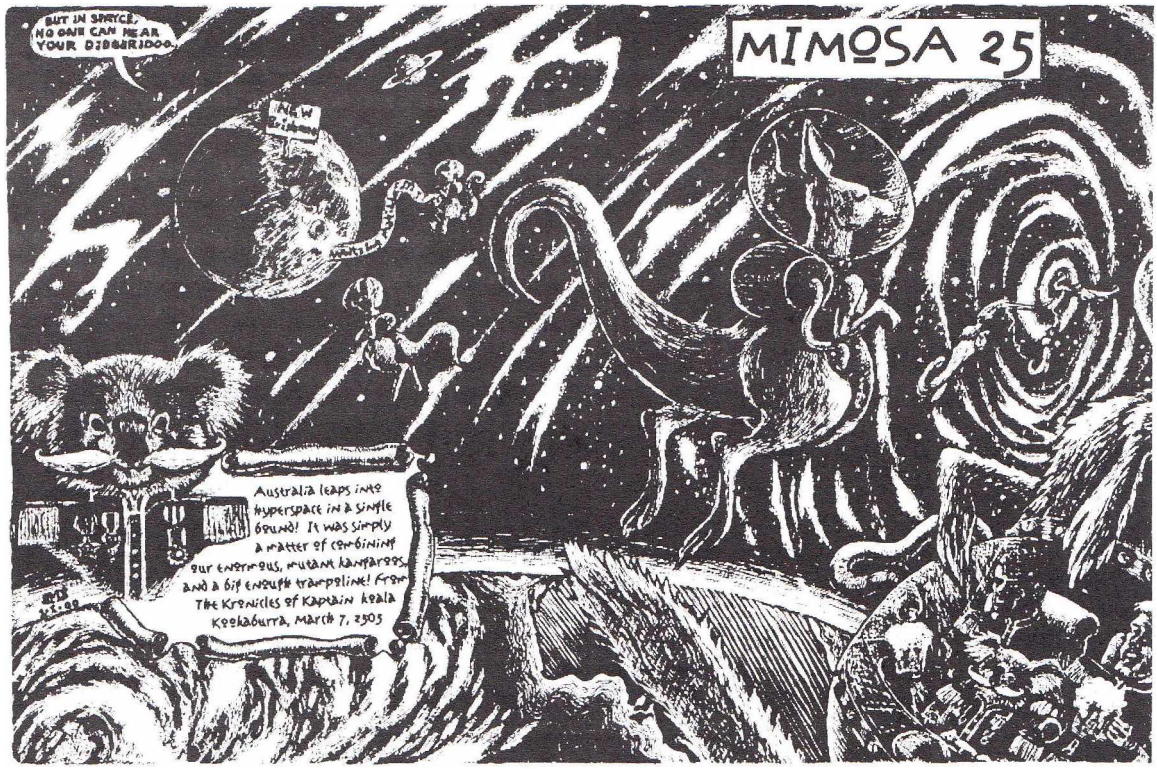
Ian Gunn drew wonderful critters, including armadillos. Diana, as a co-editor of the LoneStarCon2 progress reports, published several of his cartoons. Ian, when he became editor of the Melbourne SF Clubzine *Ethel the Aardvark*, reciprocated by asking me for filler art. Seeing his seemingly endless supply of creatures in print encouraged and inspired me to draw. In two of his densely populated fanzine covers, I discovered where he had hidden several of my own cartoon characters.

My frequent tendency to forget the time difference between us may have come from my feeling that we were closer than the 10,000 miles that separated us. It seemed that Ian and Karen ought to live right next door to us. Thinking back on Scotland, we were lucky to say goodbye to them three times. We never wanted to say goodbye at all. ☼

✎ Rodney Leighton wrote us that "[I] was totally captivated by the sheer joy that Teddy had in meeting Ian and their marvelous friendship. Yet, there was an undercurrent of extreme sadness. I was laughing throughout while almost crying reading most of the article. Teddy expressed the joy of knowing Ian exceptionally well while also sublimely expressing his great sorrow at the loss of his friend." As for the hall party at the 1995 Worldcon, Henry Welch wrote us that "I fondly remember the last evening at Intersection with Teddy, Ian, and Benoit and our families. I firmly believe that if there were more than 24 hours in a day that the conversation may have gone on for much longer than it did. It's days like this that make fandom worth all the time, expense, and effort."

There was more to *M*24 than remembrances of lost friends. Our "Communications" theme was well-represented by Eve Ackerman's fine article, "Reading for Fun and Non-Profits," about her experiences as a volunteer with the Radio Reading Service for the visually impaired and Curt Phillips' "Nights of Thunder," a vivid vicarious experience for our readers about a NASCAR race that inspired this compliment from Irwin Hirsh: "I liked Curt Phillips' article for its terrific word picture it gave of an event I'm otherwise not interested in." The issue also contained Polish fan Małgorzata Wilk's "Science Fiction Under Martial Law," the third part of Mike Resnick's "Worldcon Memories," Dave Kyle's look back to the beginnings of comics fandom, and Forry Ackerman's visits to far-away Russia and China, replete with cultural challenges and the inevitable communications difficulties.

Mimosa 25 made its appearance in April 2000, about seven months after our three week trip to California, where we were Fan Guests at the NASFiC, then went on to Australia where we attended Aussiecon III and spent another week seeing the sights in Melbourne and Sydney. The cover to the issue was another of Julia Morgan-Scott's super spectacular scratchboard extravaganzas that aptly depicted the issue's "Aussiecon" theme. One of the articles in the issue was an introduction of sorts to the Land Down Under by a fan who got to see much more of it than we did:

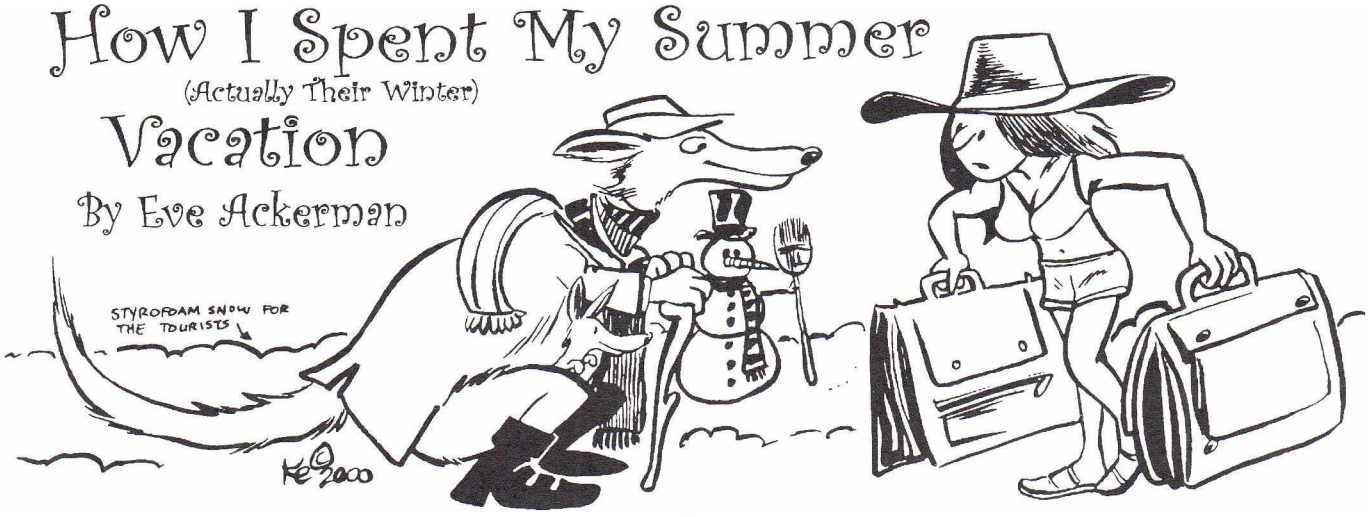


How I Spent My Summer

(Actually Their Winter)

Vacation

By Eve Ackerman



Author's note: Some *Mimosa* readers may be aware that the anonymous 'travel companion' mentioned in this piece is in fact, the 1999 Down Under Fan Fund delegate Janice Gelb. Ms. Gelb's recollection of events may be a bit different than the author's, and she's not responsible for any statements made in the following literary work. For instance, she might deny all knowledge of a post-game event where we tried to see how many of the Magpies footy team members we could jam into a hotel room bathroom...

# # # #

There are no squirrels in Australia. Strange, I know, but there it is. You can travel across the world and what do you notice? An absence of bushy tailed rodents. I envision Australian tourists coming to the U.S. and snapping photos of squirrels in the park.

"My word, Matilda, there goes another one!"

"Quick, Clyde, before it gets away!"

Certainly it's no more strange than an American tourist walking through Hyde Park in Sydney snapping photos of black-billed ibises. They may be as common as red dirt there, but it's startling to those of us not from Down Under. You'd be walking through the park, feeling like you could have been in any major North American city and suddenly what would qualify as an *avis rara* round these parts crosses in front of you and you realize you're not in Kansas anymore.

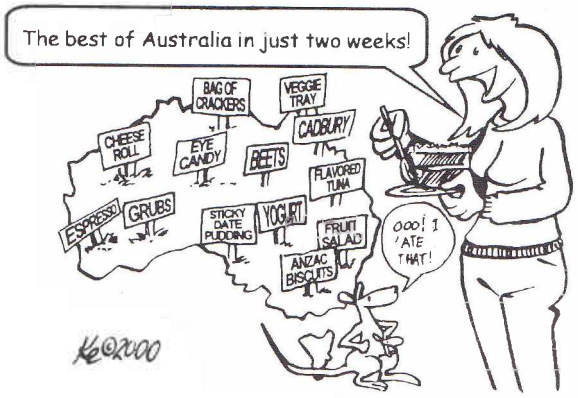
To say "I toured Australia in two weeks" is a bit like saying, "I'm going to North America and I'm going to see everything in 14 days." Clearly, one could spend much longer and not see everything. But there were things about Australia both noteworthy and praiseworthy, so here are some tourist notes you're not likely to find in your standard tour book:

The toilets are very cool. All the buildings we frequented, with the exception of the very oldest, featured two flush options: light load and heavy load. Now, if you're a woman with a bladder the size of an acorn who drinks water all day this is a neat thing. Instead of wasting ten gallons of water every time you take a trip down the hall, you only use the minimal amount necessary for the moment. Sometimes it took a bit of guesswork to figure out which flush button was which, but it was worth the effort. You'd exit the bathroom feeling like you'd done just one more thing to help out the environment and save our precious natural resources.

How come we can't get good dairy products like the Aussies get? The milk, cheese and butter all had more flavor than what's found in most American supermarkets and the variety was outstanding. The yogurt in particular tasted like more than flavored library paste. Oh yeah, and how come we can't get flavored tuna in individual little cans in the States? Or at least *I* can't get it. They get grubs and little tins of tuna. We get Cheez Whiz and Wonder Bread.

Aussie Rules Football, or 'Footy'. I'm not a sports fan. Definitely not a football fan. But my traveling companion sat me down in front of a television in our hotel room with instructions to just watch. Twenty minutes later I turned to her and said "if American women saw this it could change Sundays in the States forever." It was fast. It was easy to follow. But best of all, instead of 250 pounds of overfed, overpaid, overpadded beef hurtling down

the field you had hunky young guys in shorts and sleeveless jerseys playing in the mud. Real looking men, not caricatures. Eye candy for the ladies. You get the idea.



Flying foxes in the Sydney Botanical Gardens. They look like refugees from a Dracula movie, hanging up there and waiting to swoop down on unsuspecting tourists. Or at least that's how they looked looming over us.

More food: Sticky date pudding. It's a moist cake with chopped dates and sauce on top. Good stuff but it helps to have a well-seasoned sweet tooth, able to handle something a bit cloying. But cutting through the sweetness is helped by the coffee. Most of the time, when I ordered a cup of coffee what I got was an eye-poppingly strong espresso. That would cut through anything, including the fog of jet lag. Oh, and the Anzac biscuits! A modest little oatmeal and coconut cookie with a history dating back to the Great War, the Anzac biscuit is a delightful taste of Australia. Within three days of my return home I began to experience withdrawal symptoms and did a web search for Anzac biscuit recipes. Not surprisingly, there were as many variations as you would find for a standard American chocolate chip cookie, but with a little adjustment and a hunt for the proper ingredients (it's hard to find wattle seeds around here) I was able to bake a batch and got rave reviews from family and neighborhood kiddies.

Blue lights in the public restrooms. Took me a while to figure out what was up with this. Was it to sanitize? Was it to make you look like a corpse while putting on makeup? Finally, I saw a sign explaining the lights. Blue lighting discouraged drug use. Sure enough, the next time I looked at my arms under blue lights it was harder to see the veins. There were also convenient and discreet needle drop boxes for those who needed them.

Public transportation. I'm sure it's not great everywhere you go, but in the cities we were in it was fast, convenient, reasonably priced and perfect for tourists like us staying out burbs. The Melbourne trams were especially convenient, though the Sydney bus system was also very good. And the trains running to the outlying areas were a big improvement over driving.

The money. It's slick, it's plastic, it's colorful. I imagine Aussies coming to the States must find our money very boring. I know I do. The coins decreased in size as their value decreased with the five cent piece the smallest. Paper money too varied in size as well as color making it much easier to handle. And, since the Aussie dollar was worth about ⅔ of the American dollar, you could get lulled into thinking you were getting a bargain – if the price looked good in American dollars, you knew it was a deal!

The airlines! Oh man, I'll never feel the same way flying domestic US airlines again. On a 90-minute Qantas flight, passengers got two snacks. First, a bag of crackers and juice. Then, a meat and cheese roll, fruit salad, cheese, crackers, and Anzac biscuits and a Cadbury chocolate bar! The vegetarian tray that we got had a fruit plate in place of the sandwich. Ah, airline travel the way it was *meant* to be.

The Sydney Aquarium. A great way to get up close to the aquatic wildlife of Oz without having *too* close an encounter. An Australian saltwater crocodile made me feel just a bit inadequate as a Floridian. Size *does* matter. Our bull gators don't quite measure up.

Uluru (Ayers Rock) and Kata-Tjuta (The Olgas) National Park. Everyone's seen pictures of Uluru, but the pictures can't compare with the reality. It looks very sfnal, rising out of the red ground, a huge red monolith surrounded by kilometer after kilometer of desert. And the ground itself! Georgia has red colored clay but this dirt is *red*, a really deep, rich, lush scarlet. Uluru itself changes color as the day changes. In the morning and at sunset you see purples, blues, greys, all melding and blending as the light moves. During the heat of the day the rock is a majestic ochre, catching and reflecting the sun's light back to the desert. It's offset by a sky of a deep cerulean hue, clear and absolutely cloud free during the dry season when the humidity is at about one percent. Visiting the Rocks is one of those special experiences that make you appreciate the variety and wonder of life on this planet, and how fortunate we are in this day and age to be able to travel to these sites.

The Floriana hotel in Cairns. "Charmingly rustic" doesn't do it justice. The Floriana is a family owned inn, a somewhat run down Art Deco treasure oozing faded style, rather like a retired chorus girl dripping with Bakelite and rhinestone jewelry from her youth. The Floriana had Deco furniture in the lobby, plank floors, and an eye

popping pink, blue, yellow and turquoise color scheme. The outside was draped with strings of colored lights. We had a suite, a bedroom and sitting room with a second bed. The sitting room had bay windows opening onto the east and the Bay and I was thrilled to think of sleeping with the fresh sea breezes coming in, the birds awakening me with their gentle morningsong.

So after a stroll down the Esplanade, the funky, tacky, backpacker-filled main drag of Cairns we returned to our little treasure, the Floriana, and settled in for a good night's sleep. I drifted off to the night sounds of returning guests and the rustle of the breeze through the palms. All was calm, all was quiet.

And then came the black helicopters.

Turns out our charmingly rustic digs were next door to a regional hospital that serves Cairns and surrounding environs and many of the patients are flown in by helicopter. In the middle of the night. To a helipad next to my room.

Now, I'm not a light sleeper but I guarantee something right outside your window going WHUP WHUP WHUP and making enough noise to wake the fish in the Great Barrier Reef at two o'clock in the morning will roust anyone out of bed. And at three o'clock. And at four o'clock. And my travel companion, who'd taken the interior room after I insisted I *wanted* to sleep near the open windows slept like a baby. But really, the Floriana is a great place to stay. Once.

The Great Barrier Reef was, as promised, spectacular. Even if you're not a scuba diver the tour companies offer many options for seeing the reef from Green Island. My favorite was the Yellow Submarine. It took you below the surface and around the reef where you could look out portholes and admire the fish. Kind of a real life version of Captain Nemo's Submarine.

In the Melbourne area there's Healesville Sanctuary, the largest collection of Australian wildlife available for viewing in one spot. And yes, Virginia, there were koalas and they were adorable, but so were the echidnas, penguins, wombats, Tasmanian devils and the variety of birds. The only disappointment were the roos, who were clearly on the dole. There they sat, lounging, scratching their butts, smoking cigarettes, ignoring us, barely moving. Their attitude couldn't have been plainer. "Tourists? We don' need no stinkin' tourists!" I found out afterwards that kangaroos are most active around sunrise and sunset when they're feeding. Otherwise their attitude is "bugger off, mate!"

And the Royal Melbourne Zoo with its butterfly room is also a delight. Lonely Planet travel guide says the Zoo is "one of the oldest in the world but it is continually upgrading the standard of the prisoners' accommodations." The 'prisoners' seemed content when we were there and included a platypus in a nocturnal environment and some friendly penguins.

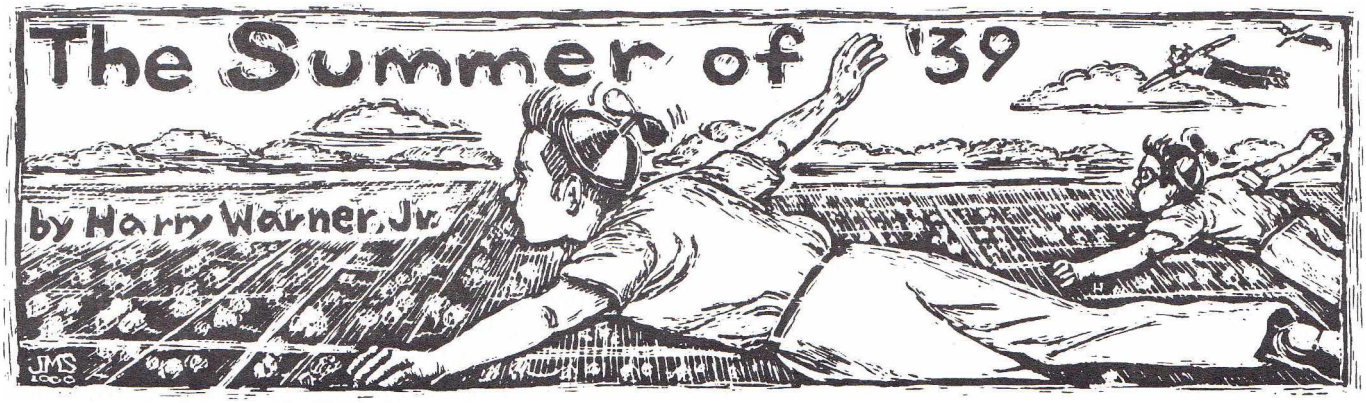
Were there negatives? Sure. The graffiti was widespread, annoying and pervasive. Canned beets are considered a basic food group. I never imagined I'd be ordering fast food and saying "hold the beets."

But other than graffiti and beets, I'd recommend Australia as a vacation spot for any Yank looking to go someplace with friendly natives, interesting sights and people who almost speak the same language. I hope to return someday to see many of the things I wasn't able to cram into this trip and spend more time learning about the people and places of the Land Down Under.

Oh yeah, and they had a nice SF convention in Melbourne too. ☼

✎ Eric Lindsay, who lives in Australia, wrote us he was "Glad Eve realised exactly what the Aussie Rules Football was aiming at, with their teams in short shorts and playing in the mud. Just moving with the times." Ron Bennett, who lives in England, wrote us that "I picked up more new facts about Oz in three pages than I've learnt in a lifetime. Many of the things which impressed her were the things which amaze me about the U.S.A."

The other articles in *M*25 included the final installment of Mike Resnick's "Worldcon Memories," Ron Bennett's description of his trip to the final solar eclipse of the millennium, John Foyster's remembrance of 1960s Sydney fandom, Dave Kyle's remembrance of the New York Hydra Club, and Forry Ackerman's visit to Sweden. And, in a fanzine themed for a far-away event, we also featured a short article from a famous stay-at-home fan.



In the late 1930s, Hagerstown had a remarkably stable population. Generation after generation of a family stayed in this city to such a great extent that the United States Public Health Service set up a local office to do research on how health problems in certain families persisted from one generation to another. So who were the young men, mostly thin and with a non-local appearance who showed up in this city from time to time? They weren't foreign agents or criminals on the lam. They were science fiction fans trying to find their way to my Bryan Place home.

I didn't realize it at the time, but many of my earliest visits from fans must have been partly impelled by uncertainty whether I actually existed. This was a time when you never could tell about fans. A famous fan in the early 1940s, Earl Singleton, lived for decades after his hoax 'suicide' had been publicized. 'Peggy Gillespie', an early FAPA member, turned out to be Jack Gillespie's cat. 'John B. Bristol' turned out to be an ingenious hoax created by Jack Speer. Neofans weren't absolutely sure that 'Hoy Ping Pong' was Bob Tucker's pen name because he might possibly be a Chinese fan using 'Bob Tucker' as a pseudonym. Forry Ackerman wrote under so many bylines like 'Weaver Wright', 'Fojak', and 'Dr. Acula' that any unfamiliar contributor to a fanzine might really be him. I had appeared in fanzine fandom rather abruptly; I had had several letters of no particular distinction in prozine readers' sections and had corresponded with various readers of science fiction who weren't otherwise active in fandom. When the first issue of *Spaceways* fluttered into fannish mailboxes in the fall of 1938, that was the first time some of its recipients had ever heard of me. So there was an excellent chance that I wasn't what I seemed to be, a new fanzine publisher who had seen very few fanzine issues and had never contributed to one.

My first wave of visitors from fandom to Hagerstown came around the time of the first worldcon, in the summer of 1939. As far as I can remember, none of them had announced their imminent coming before they knocked at the door of the house where my parents and I lived. I'm pretty sure that the very first fans to see and talk with me were Fred Pohl and Jack Gillespie, just few days after the very first worldcon. They rode to Hagerstown on their thumbs and looked a bit bedraggled but otherwise chipper after a long day on the road. The thing I remember best about their visit was the moment when Jack dug into a pants pocket and pulled out a badly-rumpled little pamphlet. He presented it to me and thus I had my first knowledge of the celebrated Exclusion Act at the worldcon which resulted from the refusal of several New York Futurians to promise to behave themselves during the convention. This was the document that Dave Kyle had printed for the Futurians explaining their opinions of the way the worldcon had been organized. I imagine it's one of the rarest documents in the history of fannish publishing by now, and I should still have that copy somewhere in my attic. As you might expect, I also heard from Fred and Jack a detailed verbal account of their opinion of Sam Moskowitz, Jimmy Taurasi, and Will Sykora, the main adversaries of the Futurians.

Three days later, the fan visitor jackpot came up. No fewer than six individuals clambered out of an auto in front of 303 Bryan Place and introduced themselves. They were Dale Hart, Walter Sullivan, Julius Pohl, and three others whose names I seem never to have chronicled. At that time, Dale was a good old country boy from the Southwest, although he became a very different sort of sophisticate a few years later in Los Angeles. Walter was a nice, quiet fan who was to die a few years later in the service of his nation. Julius never became a big name fan; I seem to remember he was a Texan and shared my interest in classical music.

These half dozen visitors were very tired after a long day of driving and threw me into complete consternation by asking if they could spend the night sleeping on my front porch. The Warners didn't have nearly enough square footage of bedding to offer them indoors overnight hospitality, but 303 Bryan Place was one side of a double house, in whose other side was the landlords, Mr. and Mrs. Fritz, resided. They were an ultra-conservative couple, extremely

strict about proper decorum on their property; bedding down on a front porch just wasn't done in Hagerstown. My parents offered to attempt the impossible by requesting permission for such wild behavior on their property, and to our astonishment, Mrs. Fritz loved the idea and insisted that three of the visitors spend the night on her front porch, since all six on one porch would be quite crowded. The other thing I remember best about this visit was Dale improving his appearance the next morning by what he called a 'dry shave'. I had never heard of such a thing, but he got rid of most of his whiskers by using a safety razor without water or any other preliminaries.

Some time later that same summer, Jack Speer and Milt Rothman paid me a visit. They were the closest active fans because they lived at that time in Washington, D.C. They were more dignified in bearing and conversation than most of my fan visitors, but I had never heard anything like the way they challenged almost every opinion one or the other stated and indulged in non-emotional discussions of these matters.

I believe it was in the fall of that same year when Willis Conover stopped by on his way from his home on Maryland's Eastern Shore to begin work as a radio announcer in Cumberland, a city in far western Maryland. That was a memorable occasion because when I mentioned during our chatter that the local second-hand store had a large stock of back issues of *Argosy*, Willis insisted on going there immediately and buying them. Night was falling and huge stacks of *Argosy* were kept in an unelectrified shed behind the store. Willis and I sorted through them by the light of a kerosene lantern and would have burned to death almost at once if it had toppled over amid the pulp magazines that consumed almost all the space in the wooden shed. He arranged to have hundreds of copies sent to his Cambridge, Maryland home and then left for Cumberland, the first step on what eventually became a career as a writer and broadcaster on jazz, eventually becoming internationally famous in this capacity.

I don't have the exact date when another impressive group of fans descended upon me, but it must have been in either late 1939 or 1940. On their way to Philadelphia came Bob Tucker (and his wife), Mark Reinsburg, Richard Meyer, and Walter E. Marconette. We did a lot of picture-taking and, for some reason, Bob insisted on keeping his own camera before one eye when anyone took a picture of him. Tucker, Reinsburg, and Meyer are all well remembered, but Walter Marconette is an unjustly-forgotten fan artist. He was one of the first in fandom to draw pictures that weren't imitations of prozine illustrations or comic strip panels. He did well-composed and uncluttered lovely pictures with hectograph inks and in pencil that have faded too badly to reveal their original splendor. Unlike almost all my early fannish visitors, Walter was not skinny. He wasn't fat, either, but he still looked strange compared to the emaciated appearance of the average fan. Not long after his visit, Walter grew interested in ancient armor and gave up fandom to collect it.

After that, I think fans in general were satisfied that I was what I had claimed to be – myself and not a conspirator in some sort of elaborate hoax. But lots of prominent fans continued to appear in Hagerstown during the next few years: Elmer Perdue, Art Widner, Bob Madle, Julius Unger, and Russell Chauvenet, to name a few. I also had a visit by a fan of whom I'd never heard – R.M. Brown, who surprised and gratified me by purchasing a substantial part of my stack of leftover back issues of *Spaceways*. It was only much later that I learned he was the hoax fan that I had once been thought to be. The real name of 'R.M. Brown' was Earl Singleton. ☼

✎ We offer the following bit of closure to Harry's article: After he dropped from sight in fandom, Earl Singleton went on to obtain his doctorate in Physics from M.I.T. He became better known as Dr. Henry E. Singleton, one of the co-founders of Teledyne Inc., and at the time of his death in August 1999, his personal fortune was estimated at about $750 million. As for another famous name in Harry's article, Ron Bennett wrote us, "Strangely, I first knew of Willis Conover as a broadcaster and authority on Jazz before I ever became aware of his being a fan. When I did come across his name in fandom, initially I wondered whether there might be two people with the same name. At any rate, a great article. I could read Harry all day. And come to think of it, on occasion, I have!"

Even though *M*25 had an "Aussiecon" theme, part of the issue was devoted to remembrances by John Berry and Joyce Scrivner of Walter A. Willis, who passed away not long after Aussiecon. Walt was one of the most storied and revered fans of all time; Harry Warner, Jr., once described him as the "best and most gifted fan of the 1950s, who also might qualify as the Number One Fan of any and all decades." Walt was a frequent contributor to *Mimosa* (we published his very last original fanzine article); we included in *M*25 (and again here) a bit of classic Willis – a narrative from his visit to the 1952 Chicon, reprinted (slightly abridged) from his epic trip report, *The Harp Stateside*:

As the night wore on, the party stayed very close to our ideal – not too many people and all of them conscious. The only noise seemed to come from the pros round the bar, where for a while I got caught up in a crowd which seemed to consist mainly of Mack Reynolds, though one caught glimpses of Tony Boucher, Poul Anderson, and Jerry Bixby roaming around his outskirts. I scored an almost fatal success with a couple of limericks they hadn't heard before. "This Willis is a *well*," announced Mack reverently. "A *well*, that's what he is!" It wasn't that I didn't enjoy the present company, but I wanted to get back to Max Keasler and Lee Hoffman; god knew when us three would ever meet again. But Mack would have none of it. "Willis is a *well*," he insisted to the crowd at the bar. "We can't let our well get away," he pleaded, pressing another drink on me to make sure I didn't run dry. Finally, I promised to mail him a complete list of all the limericks I knew and escaped, followed by resentful rumblings of "I tell you the man was a *well*! A positive *well*!"

I went back to the window ledge where I'd been sitting between Lee and Max. We spent the rest of the night there, holding court with various people who dropped by. Mack Reynolds made occasional sorties out of the bar to beg for more limericks. I would dredge the resources of my memory and he would retire again, shaking his head and muttering to no one in particular, "A *well*!" Poul Anderson came along wanting to be taught some Irish drinking songs. I sang him as much as I could remember of "The Cruiskeen Lawn" and promised to mail him the rest. Max was dispensing No-Doze tablets to everyone. He had been living on them himself for days and was beginning to feel very odd indeed.

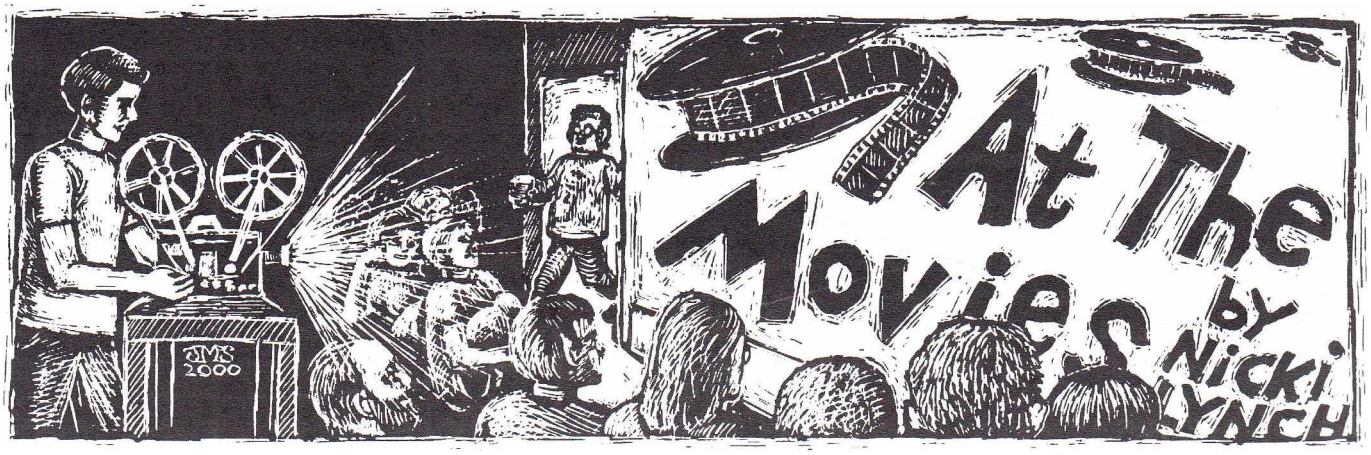
Time went by and things got quieter and quieter until we seemed to be ones who were fully awake. As the dawn broke, the three of us were quietly very happy and talked about how wonderful it had all been, and how much we were going to miss each other and how we must meet again some time. As for me, I was as happy as I'd ever been in my life. I had now been just seven days in America without even having had time to think about it, but now a feeling of utter exaltation swept over me to realize that here I was sitting between Lee Hoffman and Max Keasler at the top of a Chicago skyscraper, watching the sun rise over Lake Michigan. Life can be wonderful. It was one of those moments that has to be broken while it's still perfect, and when the sun was fully up we went down to have breakfast.

# # # #

I came home from my U.S. trip to find that half of you good people didn't know I'd been away, and the rest had written anyway. I'm sorry I haven't replied to your letter or appeared in answer to your writ, or whatever it was, but for the last six months I've either been getting ready to go over America, been over in America, or been getting over America. And believe me it's a hard place to get over. People keep asking me what I thought of it. Well, that's a good question; I wish someone would hurry up and tell me a good answer. There were some things I liked a lot. Malted milk, the Okefenokee Swamp, orange juice, the Gulf of Mexico, hamburgers, the Rocky Mountains, pastrami, the Grand Canyon, fried chicken, the New York skyline – subtle nuances like that in the American scene which the less perceptive tourist might pass unnoticed. What really did impress me was the American small town, which seemed to me the nearest thing to the ideal place to live in that has appeared so far on this planet. Pleasant houses, tree-lined streets, young people in summer clothes, and warm evenings filled with the crepitation of crickets and of neon signs – symbolically indistinguishable in sound. ☼

✎ Fred Smith complimented us on our choice of classic Willis: "I consider The Harp Stateside the finest thing [Walt] ever wrote and one of the finest sustained pieces of fan writing that there has ever been." Catherine Mintz agreed, and commented that "Willis is like one of those Chinese artists who take up a brush, make a two or three strokes on a piece of paper and suddenly have a rabbit, complete with a bit of grass in its mouth and ready to go on the wall."

We would not be done with remembrance articles any time soon – *M*25 contained Joe Mayhew's final fanzine article and original fan art, though we didn't know it at the time. Nicki also had an article in *M*25, but this one was a remembrance of a still-living friend and one of the happy times we've shared with him:



I don't want to sound like I'm ancient, but I remember a time when film programming at conventions was not an all-three-days, 24-hours-a-day event. Cons showed actual movies, either 16mm or 35mm, and video tapes were limited to professional productions.

Rich and I began our fannish life in the South. While much of the country had been giving cons for a while, the South started its convention circuit in the `60s. In the early `70s, Southern cons were still very small, and a movie was a special event that most people attended, if they could either stay up that late or if there were few parties.

The convention that usually had the best movie event was Kubla Khan, given by Ken Moore and the Nashville crowd. Ken had a movie projector and, through his connections, could usually come up with a good SF film that had seen life on the airlines. The movie room was the banquet/main hall converted into a theater by adding a standalone screen. Late Saturday night, we would assemble and the movie would began. And then about half way though the film, the snoring would start. At the end, the lights would come on and there would be Ken sound asleep on the floor.

The Kubla Khan film that sticks in my mind was the silent, black and white, Lon Chaney version of *The Phantom of the Opera*. It was on small reels and had the special addition of red coloring in the masked ball sequence. The first reel had only the clack-clack of the projector as accompaniment. While reels were changed (there was only one projector), people commented on the film so far. During the second reel, people suddenly realized there was no dialogue and began whispering to each other. The buzz slowly built up. Suddenly, someone piped up and said, "Hey, keep it down! I can't hear the projector clacking!" That broke the dam. From then on, people filled in the dialogue out loud and had a great time in general. It wasn't quite on the level of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, but it was fun.

With the advent of VCRs, showing of actual films at conventions has lessened in favor of videotapes of TV shows and movies. While this is a great way to see shows that you haven't seen before (I'm still waiting to see *Sapphire and Steel* played at a decent hour at a con), seeing a movie at a con is less of an event. I've been pleased to see that at recent worldcons and some regional conventions, actual theater-like places are being used to show movies.

So that leaves actual movie theaters for fannish movie memories. While seeing *Star Wars* the first time stands out in my mind as a truly sensawonder experience, it was a lesser movie – *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* – that made a fannish impression on me.

I loved *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and saw it a number of times at the theater. Rich even bought the video tape for my birthday. So, when the next installment of the series came out, I was ready to enjoy. Unfortunately, it wasn't as good as the first and I was disappointed. However, this didn't stop me from suggesting to see it when a group of fans descended on our house a few weeks after it opened.

Our friend Guy Lillian, from New Orleans, had come to Chattanooga (where we then lived) with the masters for the current issue of the *Southern Fandom Confederation Newsletter*. Since we had both an electrostenciler and a mimeo, Guy had persuaded us to run off the issue. But when an out-of-town fan visits, the local fans of course gather. Our little house was soon filled with people and Rich found getting any work done difficult. To cut down

on the congestion, I suggested we all go out to a movie. While this would mean fewer people to help, there wasn't much for them to do at the moment. Collating would take place in a few hours. So, stuffing as many people as possible into the available cars, we headed off for the theater to see *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. I think that of the ten or so people going, I was the only one who had previously seen it.

We arrived and got in the long Saturday night line. When we got into the theater, we managed to find seats together in a row near the front. Quickly the room packed to capacity and the movie started. Being a full house and a Saturday night, the crowd was a bit noisy – crunching popcorn, slurping drinks and whispering in general – but not so bad that one couldn't hear the film.

As the movie played, it became apparent that the crowd was restless with this not-as-good-as-the-last-one production. I was sitting next to Guy and we exchanged a few words to that effect. And then it happened...

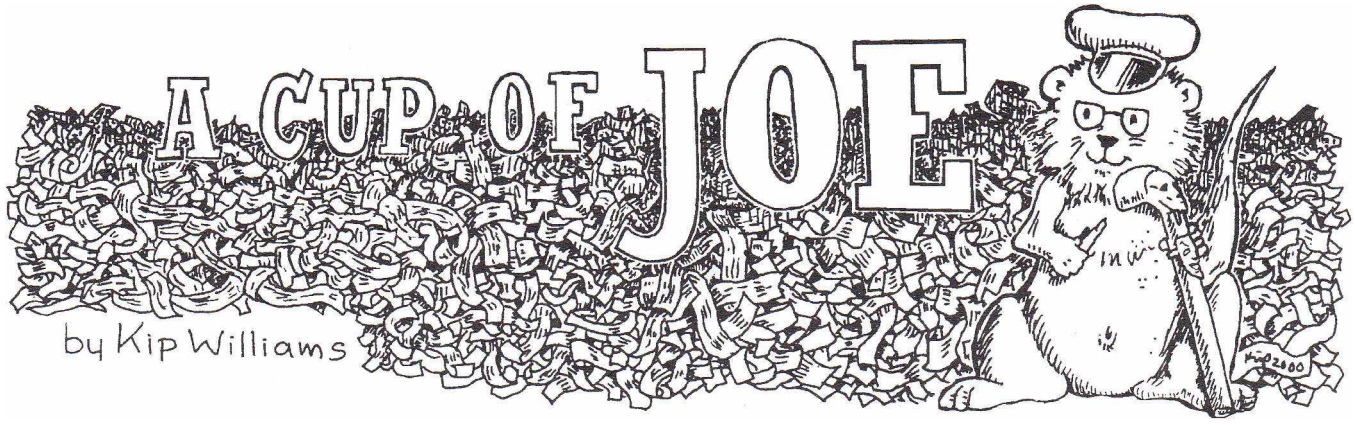
Part way though the film, Indy and friends are in an airplane without a pilot, and are trying to figure out how to fly it. Indy was sitting at the wheel and said something to the effect that it probably wasn't too hard to fly, when the plane suddenly goes into a nosedive. At that point, the movie obviously became too much for Guy. He got to his feet and yelled, "Pull back on the wheel!" as if he were a pilot instead of an avid moviegoer. There was a long moment of silence in the theater, and I was sure we were going to be tossed out of there.

However, like the earlier *Phantom of the Opera* film, this lapse in theater etiquette seemed to break the dam, and people loved it. The theater was then *filled* with comments on the action, with probably better dialogue than had been written. The fun continued until the end credits began to roll. As we left, I wondered if we had started something. After all, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*'s fame started with a humble fan shouting out a response to a line of movie dialogue. But, it was not to be...

Anyway, the next time you sit down to watch the latest SF or fantasy movie, remember that at cons they used to be a big event. With a group of fans watching, they could still be! ☼

✎ Nicki's article brought in comments from readers who were also fans of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, as well as one from Lloyd Penney, who told us that his wife Yvonne was drafted into doing instant translation of a French-language *Star Trek* episode at a Canadian science fiction convention. Ah, the perils of being bilingual!

Mimosa 26 was published in December 2000, and featured a collaborative cover by Ian Gunn and Joe Mayhew. The cover had actually been intended for an earlier issue. Several months before he died, Ian had told us that he was working on a cover that would be a sequel of sorts to his cover for *M*18. But after completing about ⅔ of the drawing, he became too ill to finish it. It was about a year after Ian's death that Joe asked if he could take a look at it, and barely a month later, we had the finished cover. It was only a few months after that when Joe himself became terminally ill. We consider the *M*26 cover a tribute to the memory of both Joe and Ian, and one of the articles in *M*26 was a remembrance of Joe:



What can you say about a man who saw the funny side of dying from Mad Cow Disease?

For starters, you probably can't say as much as he would have said. People wouldn't stand for it, coming from someone else. If Joe'd been standing next to me at his funeral, though, I would have heard some one-liners that never could have come from anyone but him. And it was only after we lost Joe that I started to know why.

I'd known Joe in fandom for several years. Probably ten or more – sometimes the beginnings of things aren't obvious. What I seem to remember is looking at a pile of his illos and realizing that Joe had a viewpoint that I really liked. He looked at things I saw every day and saw ways of twisting them just enough to make them off-kilter. In addition to that, it seemed that a room with Joe in it had more potential for fun. To some, it seemed that Joe was full of himself, and maybe he was, but he couldn't have been that much fun to be around without understanding the people he was with, and finding what made them laugh.

While Joe was still sick, I wondered whether he was wearing himself out supplying art. My reply came on May 26, when Joe's friend Elspeth Kovar wrote to me:

> Kip, in answer to your remark about his work, no, I don't think that cartooning wore him out. Joe creates cartoons the way trees create leaves; it is part of his nature and he's delighted when they bring pleasure to others. His latest work can be seen in the Chicon progress report and is full of his usual sly humour. He has won one Hugo for best fan artist and is nominated again this year. His writing, which has been published in several magazines – I've forgotten at the moment which ones, and perhaps someone else can supply the names – has attracted less notice, to his regret. He has also reviewed science fiction, most notably in *The Washington Post*, and was the librarian responsible for science fiction at the Library of Congress until his retirement. He gives unstintingly of his time and creativity to fandom, and specifically to a number of conventions.

Seems odd now to see someone writing about Joe in the present tense. I still catch myself saying, "he carves these canes..."

> He can be stubborn, acrimonious, rude and arrogant. At least once I had to consciously and deliberately repress the urge to leap across a table and strangle him; the knowledge that I probably couldn't fit my hands around his neck helped. At the same time he has an incredible mind, full of a vast and deep range of knowledge. He is a wonderful talker and storyteller, richly humourous, and, as you reminded me, a warm and generous person. I have a full file of email from people saying how much he has done for them, how much they have enjoyed his company, which I will print out and take to read to him when I next visit. It is a pity that more people have seen his faults than his many attributes but even I, who love and respect him, know that his faults were often in the forefront. I ask that people try to do the same as I am doing, to overlook his failings and remember and celebrate the person he is at heart. I am sorry, for him and for them, that more people don't know that person.

That's the man I remember. His certainty could be maddening. One of the earliest memories I have is him driving someone else I knew to tears on an obscure point that was in her area of expertise and not his.

For me, Joe was a fountain of encouragement. He would ask to see my artwork faster than I could thrust it on him, and sometimes quoted my old punch lines back at me. And he was always carving something, and I'd ask him the same questions each time, and he'd explain again what sort of push knife I needed, and demonstrate the basic stroke. And it only took about eight years, but I did get a knife kind of like the one he had. I still don't have the dedication he showed, though. He was a one-man sawdust factory wherever he went, and I'm told that he loved carving in bed and had declared himself the world's largest mammal to sleep in wood shavings.

We lost Joe a little at a time. He was weaker at each convention I saw him at, and this spring I started hearing that he was in the hospital. Diabetes, stroke, something else... no one was sure, but he was slipping. The last theory I heard was that Joe was taken out by a rare form of Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease – a relative of the 'mad cow' sickness that flared up a while back. According to Bill Mayhew, his brother, Joe's last word was "moo."

So, Cathy and I drove up to the funeral to pay our respects. I looked around for a coffin, and discovered that Joe's cremated remains were in a sort of cannister. Despite the fact that my father, a church organist, has played hundreds of funerals, I'd never been to one before. Once again, Joe broadened my horizons. I watched the proceedings with the interest of a novice, and hoped I was comporting myself properly.

Two of Joe's canes were at the altar, along with a cheery self-portrait. One of the canes was a sinuous abstract form, carved nearly hollow. The other a very narrative cane that he made for his storytelling brother Bill, with overlapping forms topped by a long-tailed bear, with little characters below it like a bearded bard, and a little egg with a beak just starting to poke out, with the words 'ONCE UPON A TIME' calligraphed below, wrapping around the stick several times. I didn't notice until Bill pointed it out to me that there was a band around the bottom containing 'BEOWULF' in carven runes.

We listened to harp music: appropriately, Joe requested it. The priest delivered a service that gave proper credit for his accomplishments. He stumbled on some of the words: 'fanzine', 'worldcon', and one or two others. Here I learned for the first time some of the details of Joe's spiritual quest. Seminary? Joe?? Yes, it's true. Hmmm. 'Reverend Mayhew'. 'Father Joe'. Alas, in Joe's phrase, he "flunked obedience school" and went into the secular world.

When the service was done, we went downstairs to the rectory where food filled the table and people filled the room. On the far wall from where we sat down (and were quickly hemmed in) were tributes and a large collection of photos. I looked at these for some time, as many of them showed a Joe Mayhew I'd never seen. Here was Joe the actor, decked out in Shakespearean regalia. There was Joe the seminary student. There was `60s Joe, with short hair, horn-rimmed glasses and a shaved chin. We talked, ate, talked some more, looked at pictures, and marveled at how little we had known this man.

A couple of months later, we journeyed up to Beltsville to talk to Bill and Maren Mayhew, and to take pictures of as many of Joe's carvings as I could. Bill let me pick out a cane from a small number that were going to different people, and when he found that I'm planning on trying woodcarving, he let me have three cane blanks that Joe had prepared but hadn't gotten to the fun part yet. I've taken a couple of tentative whacks at one of them, but so far have nothing to brag about.

I had had my own personal memorial for Joe the day before the funeral. Our classical radio station has a request show on Friday, and I had it in mind to hear something in Joe's honor. I stewed over it for a bit, then made a snap decision to call in and ask for the final, uncompleted, fugue from Bach's "Art of Fugue." I asked the host to pick one out that didn't try and finish the piece, and he obliged with an orchestral arrangement I hadn't heard before.

As it played along, I began to get into the piece more and more, with melodic lines threading through one another and building to grander and greater heights. Then I started dreading the final part where the music simply ends, in the middle of a bar, where the composer died. I stated thinking about Bach, who had probably written the whole fugue in his mind, including the part no other human has ever heard, but at the end his failing eyesight kept him from writing all the notes down. As I listened, I heard Bach's musical signature – the 'B-A-C-H' theme, which he wove into this fugue – and it reminded me again of Joe, and his invertible 'MayheW' signature, and other admirable bits of visual and thematic cleverness that Joe was so good at, and gave that extra lift to his work. The difference between a smile and an endearing smile.

Seconds later, the music up and ended, and the silence hit me like a wall, and Joe was dead, just like that. It was one thing to read the words that said he was gone, but when that music stopped, I knew it inside, and I closed my eyes there at work and missed him. ☼

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✎ Joe had been a big part of *Mimosa*, with his cartoons and illustrations, for more than a decade. He'd won two Fan Artist Hugos, one of them posthumously. He was as good a writer as he was an artist, and was also very interested in fan history – his article in *M*25, "My Own Personal First Fandom," was what we'd hoped would be the first in a series about Baltimore-Washington fandom. We reprinted in *M*26 an article written by Joe soon after the 1990 Worldcon (ConFiction in The Netherlands) in celebration of his very first nomination for a Hugo Award – vintage Joe at his most exuberant. Here it is again:

ConFact Stranger than ConFiction

by Joe Mayhew

I was a Hugo Nominee! I could hardly believe it, but Rick Katze was on my phone, asking whether I consented to be on the ballot in the Fan Artist category. Up until that very moment I really hadn't planned to attend ConFiction, Holland being thousands of expensive miles away from my humble proletarian rowhouse in Eleanor Roosevelt's Commie Pinko Paradise, Greenbelt, Maryland. But a little voice (my ego) told me now I really needed to attend. So, the very next day, I asked my supervisors at the Library of Congress for leave so I could attend the Con.

They asked why I wanted to go to Holland and I sez, "Because I'm a finalist nominee for an International Award." Damn, that sounded impressive. Did I stress that it was for my fan artwork?

Word buzzed around the corridors of power and then my Division Chief asked me whether I would like to be the Library of Congress' Recommending Officer for Science Fiction and to attend ConFiction in duty status as their representative. I was flattered and immediately accepted. The job as Recommending Officer would not be telling people what's good to read, but rather to develop better understanding of science fiction, its place in American Letters and to get our national library's collection of SF into shape.

As I said, I was all puffed up like Tenniel's toad with the invitation at the honor of becoming LC's first ombudsman for SF. True, there would be no additional pay despite the additional duties, and while the Collections Policy folks said I should feel free to spend all the time I needed to get the SF stuff going, my immediate supervisor had not been consulted in my appointment and resented my spending any time at all away from the duties he supervised (I was at the time Acquisitions Specialist for the Caribbean). There was just one more loose end: why had the Library of Congress suddenly decided it needed a Recommending Officer for Science Fiction? Subsequently I found out that a memo from my friend and co-worker, Eric A. Johnson, was to blame.

Eric is a Philip K. Dick fan. He had gone through the LC catalog and collection to find out exactly what of PhD's works were actually available, and found that LC had very few of Dick's books indeed. So he wrote up a very thorough report and sent it to the Collections Development folks who routed it to the reference people, who routed it to this one and to that one, but there was no place for the memo to land. No one either had, or wanted responsibility for "that sci-fi trash." The memo wandered like the little rain cloud in Ursula K. LeGuin's *Earthsea* books, driven off from place to place by hostile wizards so it was unable to rain anywhere. Anyway, they created a place for Eric's memo to land, and I was it.

Thus it was that I would be attending ConFiction as an official representative of the United States Congress. It was also about this time that the producers of the cable TV show *Fast Forward* asked me to review SF books for them, whereupon I actually had the job of telling people what science fiction books I think they ought to read. By way of escalation, doing book chat for *Fast Forward* helped give me the opportunity to review SF for the *Washington Post*'s *Book World*. All of which seems to have grown out of my Fan Artist Hugo nomination. Gilbert and Sullivan could have done something with that.

The 48th World Science Fiction Convention was held in the Netherlands at Scheveningen, The Hague's port city, in the Congresgebouw, a convention center which looked like a parking garage disguised as a museum built by a committee of hippies and civic boosters. I arrived at the Congresgebouw in search of glory – after all was I not a Hugo Nominee, Program Participant, Artist and Auctioneer, and yea, moreover, strangely believe it, the Official Representative of the Library of Congress to the World of Science Fiction? The Dutch, who live next door to the Germans, across the street from the English, and just a hop away from the French, are used to all sorts of pretentious

nonsense and pomposities. So, when I explained who I was to the registration folks, they just smiled good-naturedly and gave me my little Hugo nominee rocket lapel pin and all sorts of ribbons.

And there were an amazing assortment of ribbons! I got one for being an artist, Hugo nominee and program participant, and felt a bit grand until I saw some kid walk by with so many ribbons he looked like a regimental flag-staff. Then I noticed that most of the SMOFs looked like traveling maypoles for all the ribbons fluttering from their chests. My three were nothing! One of my cartoons that ConFiction reprinted in their Souvenir Book showed a highly-decorated U.S. Army general glaring enviously at a Noreascon Three fan with a wide bevy of ribbons. I knew that the NESFAns were again the guilty party, as one of them had done the ribbons for ConFiction. Since Noreascon Three there has been a general ribbon escalation. The next logical step might be merit badges.

Despite my Program Participant ribbon, I was only on the program as auctioneer. That was fine with me as I was primarily interested in meeting the European Fans and in smofing and schmoozing. However, I did make it to one panel. I was in the Green Room chatting someone up when Joe Haldeman came over and said, "Hey, Joe, what are you doing right now?"

I said something clever like, "I dunno."

Joe buddy-smiled and said, "Come on, I've got a panel right now." So I got up and followed him. Actually, his wife Gay had me by the elbow. She is probably the most charming person I know; if she had suggested we walk out of the third story window, I probably would have said, "Well, sure, OK."

So we went down the hall to a program room. I started to join Gay in the audience and Joe called me up to the table; it seemed that he had drafted me to join him on a panel. Until we sat down at the speaker's table, neither Joe nor I knew what the panel was to be about. It was titled "Homo Pacem" and turned out to be about whether man will ever outgrow war. Poor Joe, they always stick him on things like that. It worked, we got the audience involved, and with the Iraq crisis and the British Falklands experience, there was a good buzz. Good Panels usually include a lot of audience participation.

C. Howard Wilkins, U.S. Ambassador to The Netherlands, spoke before the Hugos were given out. It turns out he is actually a SF reader and either was carefully briefed or is somewhat a fan. After the ceremony was over, I went over to greet the Ambassador and to tell him that the dear old Library of Congress is also becoming an SF fan, which caused a small security panic among the Con security, but not with the Embassy Staff. I explained to some officious Brits who tried to hustle me off or chew me out or whatever, that I was also an official representative of the United States, and while the U.S. Legislature was not always fond of the Executive Branch, that neither the Ambassador nor I were likely to engage in fisticuffs.

For years I had heard that the Hugo Loser's party was one of the best events at the Con. I had looked forward to attending it, certain that while I had gotten nominated, I really felt reasonably sure one of the better known artists, Teddy Harvia, Merle Insinga or Stu Shiffman, would win. (And one did: Stu Shiffman, after eleven nominations, finally got his laurel.) The Loser's Party was sponsored by the 1991 Chicago Worldcon; they gave me an embroidered drink caddie with a Hugo on it as a consolation prize. Had I chosen to cry into my beer, I would not have left a table ring. The party was rather quiet, as most of losers were attending the winner's party. Oh, well, sometimes you can't win for losing.

More recently, I have begun to sell my SF writing, and given my extraordinary good fortune in being nominated for a Hugo in the Fan Artist category, perhaps I might get nominated for a Hugo for something I wrote. Considering the results of my previous nomination, perhaps the next time I get nominated for a Hugo, it will set off a chain of events which makes me Pope.

If I got that job, who knows where it would lead? ☼

✎ *M*26 actually did have a theme, by the way. It was published a few months after the 2000 Worldcon, so we made a "Chicon" theme of it with three articles (by Roger Sims, Esther Cole, and Bill Mallardi) about the 1952 and 1961 Chicons. We also featured articles by two of the three fans (Forry Ackerman and Dave Kyle) who have attended all six Chicons – no mean feat, when you consider the first Chicon was back in 1940. Besides these, there was an article by Mike Resnick that looked back to his early days as a professional writer (and not just in the science fiction genre!), an article by Ron Bennett that looked back to the British Eastercons of the 1950s, and an amusing article by John Hertz that looked back to the beginnings of a special interest fan activity that is growing in popularity – the English Regency Dance. Here's another look at that:

The English Regency and Me

by John Hertz

Fans have long been enchanted with the Regency (about the year 1800). By the 1960s there were Regency teas. By the 1980s, a worldcon questionnaire drew hundreds of replies that it wouldn't be a worldcon without Regency dancing. Although as we all know It's Eney's Fault, and indeed I did not start Regency mania, I must admit advancing it. A case could be made for blaming me. I blame Georgette Heyer.

A regent is a kind of pinch-hitter in a monarchy; if the monarch is alive (thus still reigning) but unable to rule – young, sick, long away – a regency is established. England has had only one since before Shakespeare, during the last years of King George III, so 'the English Regency' is relatively unambiguous now. George III's eldest son was made Prince Regent in 1811 and crowned George IV upon his father's death in 1820. But the curtains of history seldom go suddenly up or down. For many purposes, the Regency period may be considered to run from the early 1790s, or even before, until a few years after the Coronation.

Heyer, a 20th Century Englishwoman (died 1975), set three dozen historical romance novels in this colorful period. That's not too many. Deft, witty, lightly satirical, they speak to the fannish mind, like Walt Kelly's comic strip *Pogo*, the Ernie Kovacs days of *Mad* magazine, or more recently Patrick O'Brian's novels of the seafarers Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin. It helps that she is, in the language of the time, a friend to levity. I bow to Jane Austen, who had a superb sense of humor and counts among the greatest writers in English; I am her ardent follower, but in Heyer there is this special touch that resonates with us fans. *Space Cadet* ends, "Never lead with your right." *The Lord of the Rings* has Ents. Larry Niven. Book dealer Marty Massoglia says Heyer is his best-selling author at s-f cons. Among my favorites are *Arabella*, a neat introduction; *A Civil Contract*, mostly taking place after marriage; and *Cotillion*, whose ugly duckling is not the protagonist and is even a man.

Nor did Heyer choose amiss. The rhymes of Austen's contemporary Lord Byron in *Don Juan* can politely be described as breathtaking. George Bryan "Beau" Brummell led society by wisecracks; eventually he took to snubbing the Prince Regent, once asking Lord Alvanley, after more than the Regent's mind was broad, "Alvanley, who's your fat friend?" Foreign Secretary Canning kept the British minister in the Netherlands up till dawn deciphering an urgent message which proved to be

> Sir,
>
> *In matter of commerce the fault of the Dutch*
> *Is offering too little and asking too much.*
> *The French are with equal advantage content.*
> *So we clap on Dutch bottoms* [ships] *just 20 per cent.*
> *(Chorus) 20 per cent, 20 per cent.*
> *(Chorus of English Customs House Officers and French Douaniers).*
> *(English) – We clap on Dutch bottoms just 20 per cent.*
> *(French) – Vous trappere Falck* [Netherlands minister in London] *avec 20 per cent.*
>
> I have no other commands from His majesty to convey to your Excellency to-day.
>
> Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant,
> George Canning

In Regency London, the indispensable club was Almack's. Fandom thus formed the Almack's Society for Heyer Criticism. At the 1972 Worldcon, L.A.Con, it hosted a tea attended by Astrid Anderson, Judy Blish, Charlie Brown, Elinor Busby, Terry Carr, Lester del Rey, Marsha Jones, Peggy & Pat Kennedy, Suford & Tony Lewis, Ethel Lindsay, Adrienne Martine-Barnes, Ed Meskys, Fuzzy Pink & Larry Niven, Anne McCaffrey, Alexei Panshin, Bruce Pelz, Bob Silverberg, Bjo & John Trimble, Leslie Turek, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, and a host of others. The December 1974 *Esquire* (not 1966, as was stated in J.A. Hodge's 1984 biography of Heyer) ran a delicious

full-page photo of the Kennedys in an article "The Pleasures of Indulging Yourself," which also mentioned John Boardman and Forry Ackerman, but not fandom, another case of a tail wagging a dog.

Fuzzy Pink Niven no longer mixes the eggnog that inspired the first Georgette Heyer convention. We had all drunk at least our share on the New Year's Eve when someone proposed this clever idea. We took rooms at the St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, in 1975, that being Martine-Barnes' home country. I volunteered, or was volunteered, to research and teach period ballroom dances, such as would have been done by Heyer's characters. I am still not quite sure how it happened. I was then, as another hobby, teaching folk dancing (which I still do); perhaps with enough eggnog, the connection between village dances of the Balkan Peninsula and aristocratic dances of England, two centuries earlier, seemed obvious.

Anyhow, to everyone's surprise (including mine), the dances were a great success. S-F cons also seemed a natural occasion for them. I found myself in demand other than for my sensitive fannish face. Also to credit is Mary Jane Jewell, who over the years has tailored some of the best men's and women's costumes. Regency ladies wore what is now called the Empire-line gown (that's the Empire of Napoleon, ptoo ptoo ptoo); gentlemen looked like the man on a bottle of Johnnie Walker scotch. For dancing at s-f cons some people wear period dress; others wear hall costumes, and as I have written, until you've done the Figure of Eight with a large orange shaggy dog you haven't lived, but our usual flier says "Come in costume or come as you are." Enthusiasm is the salt of life, a little is good.

The 1979 Worldcon, Seacon `79, was the Nivens' 10th wedding anniversary. The con was at Brighton, a place almost as important to the Regency as Almack's. The Old Ship Inn had a play about the Prince Regent. This called for a party. Locals did not know what to make of the fans strolling in Regency garb. They trailed behind, commenting.

Jerry Pournelle was resplendent as a Colonel of 1st Hussars, King's German Legion, in a uniform Jewell made for him. It was dark blue with red facings, a fur hat, 152 brass buttons, and so much gold braid he was the Man with the Golden Ribcage. One Brightonian had the poor judgment to ask him, "I say, Governor, where's your horse?" Pournelle, who some of us forget has been in fandom a long time – long enough to silp a Nuclear Fizz in the Insurgent manner – drew himself up to his full nine feet three inches, looked freezingly down at the unfortunate fellow, and snapped, "In Wellington Barracks, of course." Clearly implying, without having to say, "you silly ass." The man turned pink and green, tucked his tail between his legs, and scuttled back to his friends where he was heard to mutter, "That one's real!"

At the 1984 Worldcon, L.A.Con II, three hundred people came to Regency dancing. The least bad time for it at a con seems to be Friday evening, but at a Worldcon there's so much to do that dancing is sometimes scheduled on Sunday afternoon before the Hugo Awards. I tried to persuade Pournelle, who was hosting the Awards Ceremony, to stay in his Regency costume for it, but he changed into a dinner jacket. He was right, of course. Since then I have judged Masquerades in Regency dress, most recently at the 2000 Worldcon, Chicon 2000, but for Hugo Night, our great event of the year, I put on white tie. L.A.Con II was also when Victoria Ridenour and the late Adrian Butterfield, whose costuming ability was known to Regency fans but not yet widely, 'challenged' the Master class in their first masquerade, i.e. entering as Masters although technically Novices, and won Best in Show as Titania and Oberon from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, spellbinding in gossamer, gemstones, superb presentation, and black, black.

At the 1990 NASFiC, ConDiego, I was standing in the lobby talking with Bruce Pelz in Regency clothes. From the bar came Sprague de Camp. After one look he turned to me and cracked, "Who's your fat friend?"

He'd never met me, but in seconds he recognized the costume, remembered Brummell's line to Alvanley, and figured that whoever I was, since I was with Pelz, it would be either all right or worth it. Later while waiting with Ben Bova for a panel to start, I recounted the story and marveled, "So Sprague de Camp really *does* know everything!"

Bova said, "That makes two people who think so."

"The other being you?" I asked.

He grinned. "No, Sprague!"

Three years later, at ConFrancisco, Regency dancing was in the afternoon again. Saturday night had been the debut of A.C.R.O.N.Y.M., the Association of Costumers, Related Others, Ninjas (in the Masquerade sense of stage helpers dark-clad for inconspicuity) & Yak Merchants, who won Best Novice as a set of chess pieces in black and white fantasy-style Regency costume, which they wore to dance in next day. Unhappily, Sarah Goodman had

scheduled Larry Niven's Guest of Honor speech at the same time, which vexed me, because I wanted to hear the speech, and him, because he wanted to dance. By the time we all realized, it was too late to cure. Goodman, who had first met him at Regency dancing, apologized. Perhaps I should apologize for telling so many Larry Niven stories. The Nivens are my friends; they've been to more of the annual Regency fans' conventions than almost anyone but me, and Larry seems to generate stories. In many ways.

At Westercon 45 in Phoenix, we were dancing in a kind of lobby outside the Art Show. A band of Navajo came by; they were Jane Austen fans. At Westercon 50 in Seattle, I went to the *Locus* Awards banquet in Regency clothes, the dance being immediately afterward. Andy Hooper came by and later said kind things in his fanzine, *The Jezail*. One Norwescon thought I wanted a panel, and helpfully put Martine-Barnes and Elinor Busby on it; like Tremaine of Barham in *The Masqueraders*, we contrived. Walter Jon Williams once arrived, apologizing for his mundane suit; he had been on pro business. "But I came in costume," he said, opening a matching fan. His wife beamed.

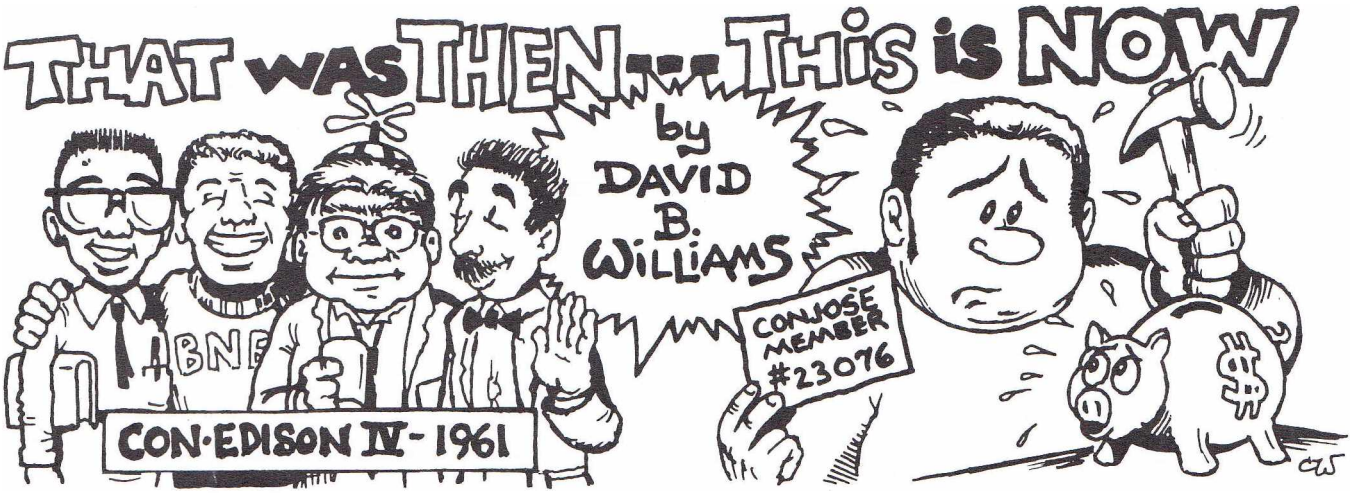
Marjii Ellers (speaking of *The Masqueraders*) sometimes came in gentleman's clothes, introduced as 'Peter Merriot', but even then, like the rest of us, not in the rôle of any particular historical or fictional person. It has not been only beer and skittles – perhaps I should say Madeira and whist; at a Lunacon with just months remaining to Walt Willis, one speaking glance from Teresa Nielsen Hayden told me how he was. On the outside, at a romance writers' con that invited me to teach them (all women, a fact of which we heterosexual men should be deeply ashamed), Carolyn & Ashley Grayson were there as literary agents, also long-time Regency aficionados. These writers, while knowledgeable about the period, struggled painfully. Stop the music, stop the music. I unsnarled them, and started them again. At length they seemed able to enjoy themselves. I gave a troubled face to the Graysons. "What," I worried, "if fans really are slans?"

Cross-cultural contact is homework for s-f. We wonder in meeting an alien world. Heyer's aristocrats, wealthy, tasteful, polite, are alien to us fans even as she by skill and discernment rouses our interest in them. Their formalistic patterned dance, to music of Mozart and Haydn – even Beethoven wrote ballroom music – is so unlike the shape of things that came; but fans can find strangeness delightful. Since we do not have to live then (Roscoe forbid! The dentists! The plumbing!), we can play at it. And these aliens cherishing their foreign treasures happen to sound notes harmonic with ours.

For me there have been many fences to clear, understanding historical material (see George O. Smith's "Lost Art") and the art of teaching. Choosing and arranging what to offer and how – I am sure half or better lies in the technique of application – has taken hours, though under inspiration it can be moments. I have found new pleasures, and evidently given some. I have tried to keep a light touch. The Regency saying was "Always get over heavy ground as lightly as you can," and it seemed the fannish thing to do. ☼

✎ Some of our readers professed ignorance of the English Regency, even though it's been around for many years. One of them was Pamela Boal, who doesn't go to many worldcons; she wrote us that "To someone who has been around fandom for over thirty years, seen fads and topics come and go, it is good to know that there are parts of the richness and variety of fannish interests still to discover. The chances of my witnessing this courtly phenomenon are low, but long may it continue."

There was one other Chicon-related article we published in *M*26 – a personal history of sorts by one of the Chicon 2000 attendees that could almost, in general, describe the path through fandom for many of us. Here it is again:



I've read that the 2002 Worldcon, ConJosé, is going to offer an installment plan to help us fans pony up the registration fee. I'll tell you why that makes me think of Anne Rice's vampires, but first some background.

I was born the day Roosevelt died. Throughout my childhood, we lived just a couple of blocks from the campus of Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, and for several years my parents rented the spare rooms on the second floor of our big old house to students. One summer in the mid-1950s, a grad student in entomology left behind a paperback copy of Arthur C. Clarke's *Expedition to Earth* anthology. Being a voracious reader, I picked it up.

I was already familiar with science fiction from *Captain Video* and movies such as *Forbidden Planet*. (I named one of my homing pigeons Walter after seeing that film.) So at the age of 11 or 12, I didn't find Clarke's stories incomprehensible, I found them mesmerizing. That discarded paperback planted the incurable spore, and I have suffered from chronic scientifiction affliction ever since.

In 1959, I became a home delivery provider (paperboy) for *The Daily Pantagraph*, Bloomington, Illinois', esteemed journal of record. That meant I had disposable income. Each Saturday morning I went down to the newspaper office, turned in the week's proceeds, and took the profit to a nearby newsstand. It was one of those old-fashioned places you don't see much anymore. It had everything – candy, cigars, curling ribbons of flypaper hanging from the ceiling, a grumpy old Jewish guy behind the counter. The walls were covered with magazine racks, the floors crowded with freestanding carousels for paperback books.

Just inside the door was a rack with all the sf prozines – *Astounding, Amazing, Fantastic, F&SF, Galaxy, If*, even the Columbia twins before they folded. One Saturday morning, I bought one. The next week, I bought another. After that, science fiction became a weekly habit. Of course, in those days you could buy a prozine and an Ace Double for a dollar and get change back.

An ad in one of those prozines or paperbacks led me to the Science Fiction Book Club. The SFBC performed an invaluable service in those days by keeping many of the golden oldies in print. All the stories that had created modern science fiction in the 1930s and `40s had been published in the pulp magazines, and paperback reprints hadn't picked up much of the slack yet. If you wanted to read Lovecraft's "The Color Out of Space" or van Vogt's "Black Destroyer," the SFBC was your time machine.

And speaking of pulps, I took another jaunt in time when I bought 50 sf pulp magazines from a New York huckster for $5. It was the best $5 I ever spent. It took many days to leaf through all those copies of *Thrilling Wonder Stories, Planet Stories, Amazing, Startling Stories, Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, and others dating from the late `40s and early `50s. Those magazines were battered and musty, not the kind of stock offered to collectors, but they were a window into the barely bygone era of the pulps. Today's neofans

have no idea what that Bronze Age of science fiction was like, but I came along early enough to catch a glimpse.

As an avid reader and incipient collector, I was primed when P. Schuyler Miller reviewed Dick Eney's *Fancyclopedia II* in *Astounding*. It sounded interesting, so I ordered a copy. What a monumental achievement! A hidden world was revealed, and I acquired a master's degree in fannish lore.

One item of information caught my particular attention. *Fancy* informed me that there was a BNF named Bob Tucker who was a movie projectionist in Bloomington. My mother had been a cashier at the Irving Theater in Bloomington, and yes, she recalled some such person. I mentioned this coincidence in a note to Eney, and he must have forwarded the news, because I soon received a hefty bundle of fanzines, return addressed from the famous P.O. Box.

Tucker didn't stint on the selection. There was *Cry of the Nameless, Yandro, Shangri-l'Affaires, Science Fiction Times, Fanac, Void*, and a dozen other fanzines of the day that I would recall if you mentioned them. And most of them contained reviews of other fanzines, which I sent for. When *Cry* published my letter of comment and sent me an official Cry Letterhack card, I became, literally, a card-carrying fan.

My early fannish and stfnal career peaked in 1962, when I attended Chicon III in Chicago. It seemed like everyone was there (except Harry Warner, of course). If you stood on a chair in the Florentine Room of the Pick-Congress Hotel, you could spot everyone you had ever heard of, from the filthiest pros to the biggest BNFs.

What's worth noting is that in 1962, a kid with a paper route could afford to attend a World Science Fiction Convention, including train ticket, hotel room, banquet, the works. And if you read the prozines and the leading fanzines, you were familiar with everyone who was significant in prodom and fandom.

The next year I was off to college, and my engagement with sf involvement waned until, by my senior year, I wasn't buying every issue of every prozine – ouch, a gap in the collection! But I bounced back after graduation, when I began reading for fun again.

I attended a second Worldcon thanks to bizarre good fortune. My first job after college was in St. Louis, and every day I rode a bus past the Chase Park Plaza Hotel. One day I glanced up to see the 27th World Science Fiction Convention proclaimed from the hotel's marquee. "Well, that's convenient," I thought. I rode the bus home, got off, walked back to the hotel, and registered at the door. How often do the Secret Masters of Fandom schedule a Worldcon just a quarter mile from where you live?

In 1970, I relocated to Chicago and my fannish career attained its second peak. I subbed to a plethora of fanzines and actually became an official columnist in Dick Geis' *Science Fiction Review* for two issues before he underwent one of his cyclical publishing gafiations. I even attended a couple of local fan gatherings, at George Price's apartment and Mike Resnick's place out in Libertyville.

I also noticed that sf and fandom were changing. A growing number of fanzines were becoming 'semi-professional'. Worldcons were drawing attendance in the thousands rather than hundreds, and local and regional cons began to proliferate. *Star Trek* generated the first of the major parallel or sub-fandoms, the beginning of ur-fandom's suburban sprawl. Paperback publishing boomed, shifting the genre's center of gravity away from the cozy community of the prozines.

This all seemed pretty exciting at the time. Sf was conquering the world. Sf was commercially successful, and that made it increasingly acceptable if not respectable. And it was just plain increasing. For the first time, I couldn't keep up with the effusion of new books and had to pick and choose what I was going to read.

During the 1980s, other interests consumed more and more of my attention, and from the late `80s to late `90s I successfully gafiated. I kept reading sf, but selectively (thank you, Jack Vance!), and I saw the big movies, of course. But I lost touch with fandom and didn't know how to reconnect until the World Wide Web appeared. The first thing I tried on my search engine was 'science fiction'.

A lot seems to have happened while I was away. All the trends of the 1970s have sprouted from seedlings into rain forests. For this displaced 1960 fan, there are too many books, too many authors, too many awards, too many conventions – too many fandoms!

I thought things might be going too far in 1966 when they created the Nebula Awards. Now there are probably more awards presented each year than new sf books published in 1960. And speaking of books, 38 new sf and fantasy novels were published last month, plus anthologies, collections, reprints, etc.

I recently encountered a fan who has attended 271 conventions (isn't there a German word for the mental sensation composed in equal parts of admiration and horror?). I scan all these con listings and I don't recognize most of the

other role-playing activities, neo-paganism, *Star Trek*, costuming – everything but plain old science fiction.

And this brings me to Anne Rice's most puissant insight about vampires – they, like the rest of us, are children of their times. The world in which we spend our youth is 'normal', and everything after that is increasingly strange and difficult to encompass.

As we age, we can remain flexible and adaptive for quite some time, if we try, but ultimately, the more the world changes, the more estranged we feel. Humans are lucky enough to be mortal. But for the vampires, the time comes when the world doesn't make sense anymore, and they succumb to insanity or self-destruction. The immortal vampires die from future shock.

I haven't reached that state yet, but an installment plan for Worldcon registration fees is just one more reminder that I'm not in Kansas anymore.

Recently, I was bemused to realize that my favorite part of *Locus* is the obituary section. Here are people I've heard of, and each entry is a capsule of sf or fannish history. And best of all, I get to know how the story ends. I like that. Maybe that's why I like science fiction. It's a way to consider the future and, ultimately, how it all ends. Inquiring minds want to know! So in that sense, I guess I'm not like Anne Rice's old and despairing vampires – at least, not yet! ☼

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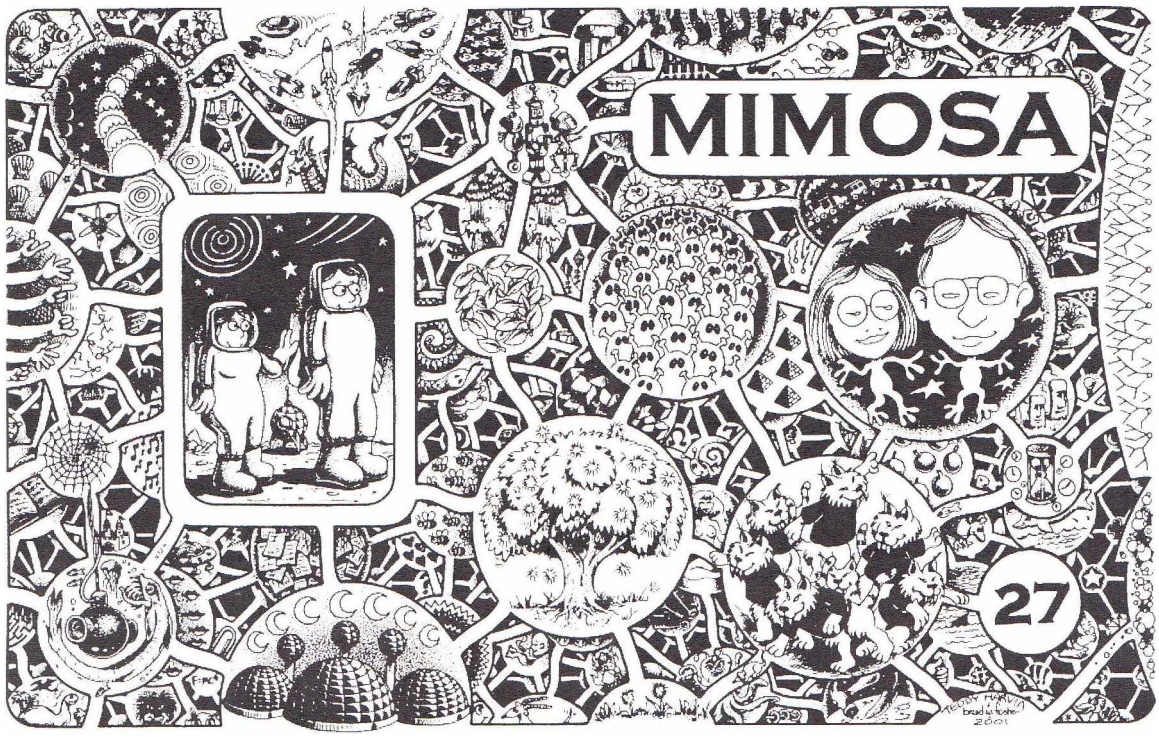
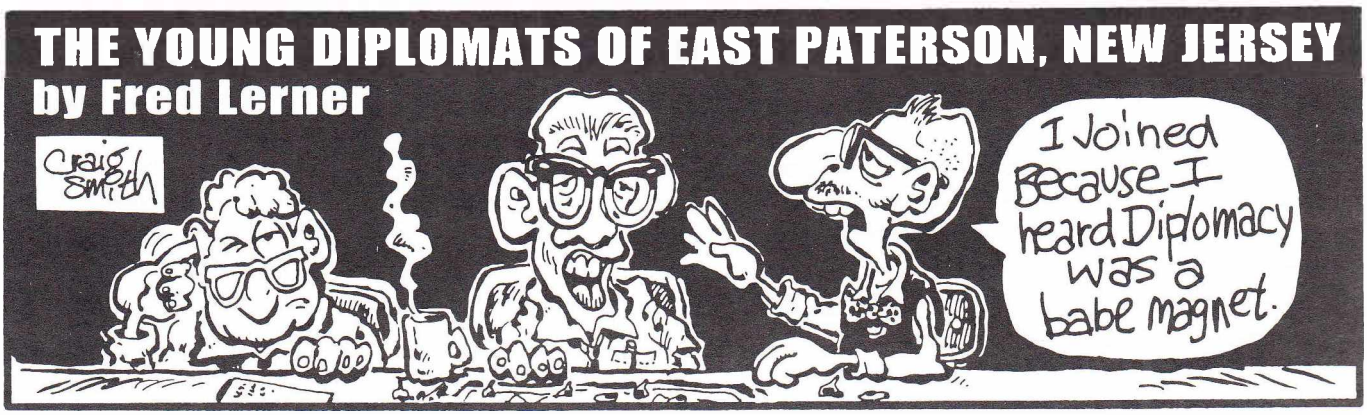
✎ We expected that many of our readers could identify with David's article, and we were right. One of them was Sam Long, who wrote: "[David Williams' piece] reminds me much of my own fannish history, save that I wasn't into pulps as a kid in the `50s and I didn't meet Tucker until the `70s. I started in SF by watching *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet* on TV in the early `50s and went on to movies before I actually started reading SF in my teens. I do remember, though, one more-or-less SF children's book that I found in the school library and read in about the third grade. The title was *The Spaceship Under the Apple Tree* [1952], and it was the first of a series of children's books by Louis Slobodkin. I'd like to read (not necessarily own) it again, just for fun, [but] I note that copies are available via Amazon.com for from about $20 up to nearly $200. Nostalgia ain't what it used to be."

The future ain't what it used to be, either – the true start of the new millennium, 2001, arrived right on time, but despite futurist Sir Arthur C. Clarke's best intentions, manned space flight was still stuck in earth orbit. *Mimosa* 27, published in December 2001, was our "Welcome to the Future" theme issue; contents included an homage by Dave Kyle to Sir Arthur, Fred Smith's look back at how well science fiction stories from decades past were able to predict the future, Eve Ackerman's look forward at the future of publishing, Mike Resnick's description of what would be in his personal time capsule, as well as other articles by Earl Kemp, Sharon Farber, Robert Madle, Bruce Pelz, Alexis Gilliland, Steve Lopata, Esther Cole, and Ron Bennett. The cover, a truly amazing one by Teddy Harvia and Brad Foster, caused Ron Bennett to comment "It's one of those pieces that will reveal something new and not previously noticed every time one looks at it." There was also fan history in M27, including an article that looked back to the decade of the 1960s, two decades prior to the era of personal computers, at the beginnings of gaming fandom. Here it is again:





Sometime during the early years of the Kennedy administration, I founded "the world's first formally organized Diplomacy club." Or so I was told by Allan B. Calhamer, the inventor of the game. I had written him on our club's behalf to enquire into some now-forgotten detail of the rules of Diplomacy, and received from him a handwritten reply.

I first heard of Diplomacy from my best friend in high school. Tom Bulmer showed me a brief description of the game that he had found in *Science Digest*. It seemed to occupy a middle ground between chess and the Avalon-Hill board games, and it had a special appeal for people (like me) with an interest in history. After all, its playing-board was a map of Europe on the eve of World War I.

Games like Tactics II had no appeal for me. I was intimidated by the complexity of their rules and paraphernalia, and I had no great interest in military strategy. The only strategic games that had ever held my interest were the variants of Capture the Flag that I had played years before in Boy Scout camp. Nor had I any talent for chess. I never could think far enough ahead to anticipate the ultimate outcome of a move, and I agreed with Sherlock Holmes's contention that an aptitude for chess is the mark of an evil and scheming mind. And Risk was too simple-minded to appeal to me. It seemed another variant on such outgrown board games as Monopoly and Careers.

Part of the appeal of Diplomacy was that its rules and equipment were essentially simple. As with chess, this simplicity did not preclude a complexity of play: there was no reason to expect that one game of Diplomacy would much resemble another. But unlike a chess match, a Diplomacy game involved several players – seven if we could get them, five or six if we couldn't. (Sometimes we might play a two-handed version that we called Tactical Diplomacy, but that was primarily to get some practice in handling the challenges facing a country we hadn't much played before.)

'We' were the East Paterson Diplomacy Club, a group of (mostly) juniors and seniors at East Paterson Memorial High School in Bergen County, New Jersey. Most of us were members of the school's Science Seminar or its debate team (I was in both), and many of us were science fiction readers. But none of us had any contact with fandom, or indeed anything more than a vague knowledge of its existence. Still, anyone who imagines us as a small group of teenaged proto-fans would not be too far off the mark. Like any self-respecting fan group, we had a written constitution, which we called our Charter. (A hand-written constitution it was, for none of us had any duplicating equipment.) We had no official connection with the high school, for we saw no advantage to seeking recognition as a student club. At least the way we played, personalities were too important for that.

I've played a little fannish poker in my time, and (at least in the low-stakes games that I remember) the satisfaction of winning a hand from a particular player often outweighed the trivial financial gain involved. So it was in a Diplomacy game, whether in the EPDC or in the early days of fannish postal play.

The East Paterson Diplomacy Club had its cherished idiosyncracies. Each session would begin solemnly with a mutual nonaggression pact, which of course had no effect whatever on the making and breaking of alliances among the players that is the essence of the game. At the end of each fifteen-minute 'diplomacy period', the Gamesmaster – we invented that term – would call the players to the table, require all pens and pencils to be put away and the papers containing that turn's moves to be placed in plain sight on the table, and demand that all players keep their hands in view at all times. (By the time I bought my Diplomacy set, the rules had been changed to eliminate 'infiltration', the surreptitious sneaking of additional pieces onto the board, that had caught my eye in the *Science Digest* article. But the rules did not explicitly prohibit changing one's moves after hearing one's rivals' orders – if one could get away with it.) Then each of us in turn would read his moves aloud, and the Gamesmaster would change the position of

pieces accordingly. (The published rules required that moves be unambiguous, but it was understood in East Paterson that a fleet ordered "from the Land of Milk and Honey to the BBC" would leave Brest and sail into the English Channel.) He would resolve standoffs, take care of any other necessary business, and send us off to another round of negotiation and betrayal. (And espionage: in one session held in my family's second-story apartment, a player climbed a nearby tree to eavesdrop through an open window upon the scheming of a rival coalition.)

In June 1962, most of us graduated and went off to college. During my freshman year at Columbia I discovered fandom, joined the Evening Session Science Fiction Society at City College, and met John Boardman. He, too, was a Diplomacy player, and he suggested that the game could be played through the mail. He organized the first postal Diplomacy game early in 1963 and served as its Gamesmaster. The five players (we couldn't find seven) were EPDC members Jimmy Goldman, Stu Keshner, and I, and LASFS members Ted Johnstone and Bruce Pelz (playing under the pseudonym of 'Adhemar Grauhugel'). I recall that I played Austria-Hungary – and played it rather well, considering the difficulties of its geopolitical situation. (As I recall, Franz Joseph had a few problems in his own game.)

I also got together a few fellow-Columbians for an on-campus game that met twice weekly in the lounge of Hartley Hall. This allowed plenty of time for negotiation between meetings and gave me the idea for intercollegiate play. There are eight colleges in the Ivy League, so one could serve as host and Gamesmaster while clubs from each of the others gathered for a weekend's session. Each college team would play a country, and would appoint from among its members ambassadors to each other country – these would conduct the actual negotiations – as well as military and naval chiefs of staff. Presumably the president of each collegiate club would serve as his country's prime minister. (I reckoned that this would afford endless opportunities for intra-club squabbling and politicking, which might well be more entertaining than the inercollegiate game itself.) Play would commence Friday evening at six, and continue night and day for forty-eight hours. I even fantasized some techniques of negotiation and betrayal that went beyond our wildest high school dreams. Who has not heard of Mata Hari?

But this never came to pass. The logistics of getting that many college students together were impossible, even if there had been Diplomacy groups at each campus. Perhaps it could be done today, at a gaming convention. (Perhaps it *has* been done.) And anyway, people had other things to do. I joined the Lunarians, where I found enough squabbling and politicking to satisfy the most ravenous appetite.

One evening in the fall of 1963, Allan B. Calhamer came up to the Columbia campus, and told us – a mixed audience of old EPDCers, Columbia students, and New York fans – something of the origins of Diplomacy. We bestowed upon him the title of Honorary Grand Gamesmaster of the East Paterson Diplomacy Club. And then the EPDC faded out of existence. My high school companions went their own ways, and I've had no contact with any of them for twenty or thirty years. I was too busy with college life and fan activities to take the time for Diplomacy games, whether in-person or postal. But the East Paterson Diplomacy Club left its mark on Fandom. Several of its customs and traditions were adopted by postal players, and the whole sub-fandom of postal game-playing evolved from John Boardman's first game with its three EPDC participants.

Postal Diplomacy is still played today, almost forty years on. But that's a story for others to tell. ☼

There's no more stories to tell in this Fanthology, though! *Mimosa* 28 and 29, combined (including covers), total exactly 200 pages. That's not too many. We hope that you enjoyed a look into our back pages; it was fun putting these two issues together. And so we come to the end. We will see you one last time in *Mimosa* 30, which will have a 'FIAWOL' theme; we want it to be a celebration of fandom in all its forms. Expect to see it the middle of 2003.

Have we been tempted to change our minds about ceasing publication after next issue? Not really, but we expect that, after more than twenty years as editors of this publication, it will be a rather strange feeling not to be planning a 'next' issue. And we admit that some of your letters imploring us to continue or lamenting our impending departure have been quite compelling – we'll let the last word on that go to Roger Waddington, who seemed to sum it all in his letter of comment published in *Mimosa* 25: "There's going to be [a] gap in my life when *Mimosa* folds its tent and quietly steals away. It's a fanzine I've always enjoyed, not the least for those glimpses into other times and places. I suppose like the rest of us, fanzines must have a natural lifespan; some are destined to die young, others become old and respected, but there eventually comes an end to them all. I might say, *a la* Bob Hope, 'Thanks for the memories'. But not yet – not till that ultimate issue!"


THEY HAD REACHED THE END OF THE ROAD, THE FABULOUS CITY OF ZINEA.
"I HOPE MIMOSA WILL BE HAPPY HERE," SAID NICKI.
"DON'T WORRY." RICH PUSHED SOME SHREDDED-ZINE STUFFING BACK INTO A SLEEVE. "SHE'LL LIKE IT."
"LOOK! ALL HER OLD FRIENDS!" CRIED CHAT AS YANDRO AND LAN'S LANTERN AND FANAC FLUTTERED DOWN FROM THE TOWERS.
GA-WHUMP! GESTETNER, THE FAITHFUL MIMEO, SPAT OUT ONE LAST PAGE. IT READ: "MAY I GO, TOO? THEN MIMOSA CAN BE ALL MIMEO, FOREVER." NICKI AND RICH NODDED.
WITH THANKS TO NICKI, RICH & TEDDY
AND APOLOGIES TO L. FRANK BAUM

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MIMOSA 29

Mimosa spread her pages and flew away. Gestetner bumped along.

faster and faster, and faster spun his propeller until he took off too THE END

WITH THANKS TO NICKI RICH TEDDY

AND APOLOGIES TO L. FRANK BAUM

A MIMOSA FANTHOLOGY, PART 2