The Proper Boskonian

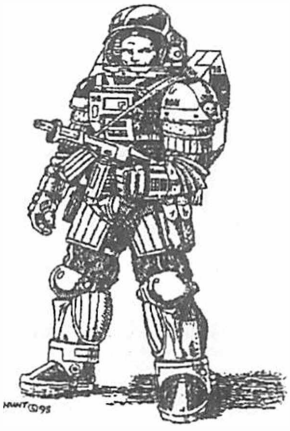
36

December

1995

Boskone 33

February 16-18, 1996
Sheraton Tara, Framingham



Guest of Honor

Lois McMaster Bujold

Lois McMaster Bujold is the winner of multiple Hugo Awards.

Official Artist

Gary Ruddell

Gary Ruddell is a Hugo-nominated artist who has done cover art for many fantasy and SF titles.

Special Guest

Bob Madle

Bob Madle is a First Fandom Fan and SF book dealer, well respected throughout the Fan & Pro communities.

Featured Filkers

Musical Chairs

Musical Chairs is the trio of Lucinda Brown, Linda Melnick, and Jean Stevenson. Their harmonies have thrilled convention-goers for the past four years.

Reflections

In keeping with our Guest of Honor's work, the theme of this year's Boskone is *Reflections!* We will explore the SF Universe from this unique point of view, providing an enlightening mirror into the core of the genre. We will bring you an amusing, informative, and insightful look into Science Fiction and Fantasy literature, art, music, and media.

Program

The Program will carry out the "Reflections" theme by exploring the ways SF reflects the real world. The Fiction track will explore SF from several viewpoints, examining SF in literature and art. We plan to have a particularly strong Fact/Science track this year. We also plan to expand on our GoH's strong interests in history and cultural development, by exploring the "Culture Building" factors in our World Building panels, and by including History in the Science track.

We will have even more space for Gaming than last year. We will hold *two* sanctioned MAGIC:The Gathering™ Tournaments. Players at any level of experience welcome.

Boskone is Filk friendly. Besides evening filking, we will have workshops, program items, and concerts.

Members of Boskone can meet with their favorite authors in the small informal discussion sessions we call Kaffeeklatsches. Coffee will be available but is not required.

MEMBERSHIPS: $33 until January 15, 1996. Make checks payable to Boskone 33.
We also accept Visa and MasterCard. Please don't mail cash.
I am buying _____ memberships at $33 US each, total $_____.
I am paying by: ____ check ____ cash ____Visa ____MasterCard
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exhibiting in the ____Art Show ____Dealer's Room
(Please attach any additional memberships and addresses. Thank you!)
Mail to: **Boskone 33, P.O. Box 809, Framingham, MA 01701-0203.**

Proper Boskonian 36

December 1995

Proper Boskonian is the semi-annual genzine of the New England Science Fiction Association. Send all contributions (writing, art, LoCs) to: *Proper Boskonian*, c/o NESFA, Post Office Box 809, Framingham, MA 01701-0203.

Editor: Kenneth Knabbe
Proofreader: George Flynn FN

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Official Notices

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All opinions expressed herein are the opinions of the individuals, and do not represent the views of NESFA. All [KK] remarks and most uncredited remarks are by the editor and are his personal opinions and not necessarily that of NESFA.

This zine is available as part of NESFA membership ($16 a year for subscribing members); or for a contribution of writing, art, and/or LoC; $3.00 per issue; trade and/or editorial whim.

Note to non-members: * in front of your name on the label means you are in danger of not receiving the next issue unless I hear from you. (Six people were dropped this time. I am serious. KK)

The next issue will be out in late May/early June. Reports on Boskone and art are most wanted. Other material is always welcome. There will be an as yet undecided artist highlight. Sugestion for future highlights are welcome.

Editorial Ramblings by Kenneth Knabbe

The response to the "Special Bonus Issue" has been largely positive. The only piece that has generated a strong negative response from some people was "Monuments on Mars" by Tom Endrey. While only two people mentioned it in their letters, I heard a lot of criticism.

Some people were upset by the tone of the piece. If you compare the writing style to that in "Beware of the Magic!" you will see a very different approach to the piece. In a letter I received from Tom this September, he says, "You probably get lots of sarcastic remarks and lots of LoCs about it." Tom is a regular contributor to Apa:NESFA, where we have discussed his views on such topics as extraterrestrial visitors, so it was obvious to me Tom was trying to generate a response.

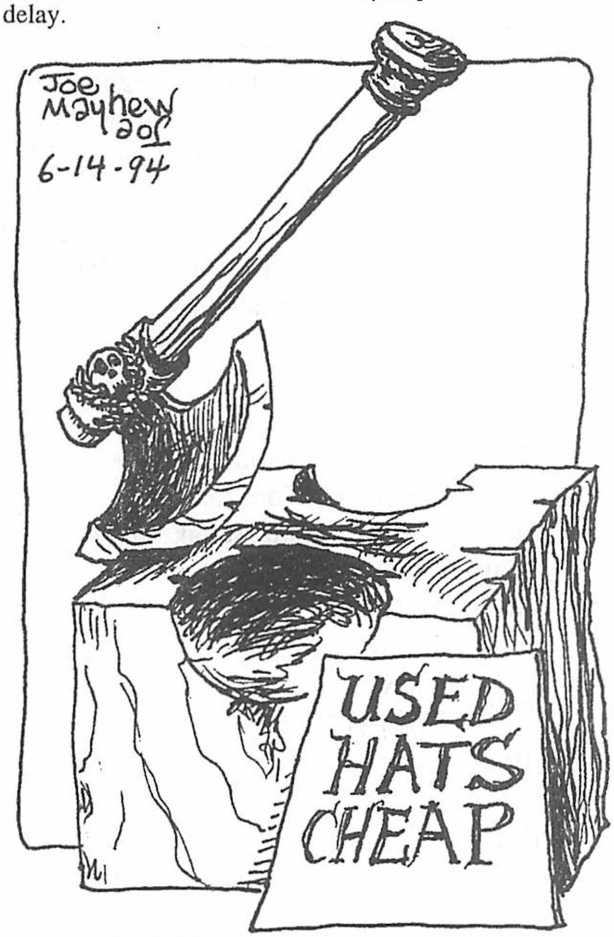
Some of those not stopped by the opening wished that Tom had been more specific about his supporting evidence and listed some of the scientists who have written papers supporting his theories.

In response top these two complaints, let me take the blame. The fault is mine for not requesting a rewrite. Because I read Tom's writing regularly, I generally ignore it when he gets "preachy," and since I do not share Tom's view on this subject, I was less critical about the content than I might have been. Hopefully I will be more objective and request a rewrite more often in the future.

Lastly, some people questioned whether it was appropriate to publish the piece at all. Granted the people who share Tom's ideas may be small in number, but the piece was reasonably written by a member of NESFA, and as Tom mentions, there is enough interest that some SF conventions do include items like this in the program. The "bonus issue," where I was highlighting the diverse interests of the members, was exactly the correct place to publish it.

The piece on SF art by Tom scheduled for this issue is being held over. Not because of any problems with it, but because as expected the Intersection report is running looong, and it is the most non-time-critical piece I have. Since Tom wrote it over a year ago, I will be requesting him to see if it needs updating. As for the tone, the piece currently is between thar of the two published last issue. I will suggest that Tom soften it some.

After hammering it into my contributors about how my deadlines are real and I really want the material by the date I give them, this issue is about three weeks later than planned. Why? I actually was on schedule until late September. About then other NESFA work (I am currently on **only** four committees) started becoming a higher priority. In addition, I had purchased the Kuttner bibliography done by Galactic Central to use as a start for the one published in this issue. As George and I started checking it against other sources, we found enough errors in it to feel it necessary to do a lot more checking than we would normally have done. (Gordon Benson has an update in the works.) This also took time. By my schedule I was supposed to have the bibliography and Intersection report ready for George to proof before I left for a two-week vacation that included World Fantasy Convention. I finished them the day before I left. I actually had them with me when I saw George at the convention, but no way was I going to try and hand them to him there. Handing him about 35 pages of proofing there would have been a real dumb thing to do. So I waited until I got back. George was expecting them before I left, and was now busy doing other more pressing tasks. With people complaining about typos in two letters, no way was I going to have anyone else do the proofing on the Intersection report. So here it is, about three weeks late, and George only had one pass at it, but I am sure no one but me was starting to panic about the delay.



One of the things you should never do is tell me you might be willing to contribute but feel that others who know more should be asked instead. Bob Devney said he hadn't read enough fanzines to do a column, but might be interested in the future. Well, Bob did not know enough to run when I took this as an offer. This issue Bob goes right in over his head and manages to show he does too know how to swim (or do a fanzine column). I hope you will write and encourage him to make this a regular feature.

Zineophile by Bob Devney

Real fanzine reviewers have spent years snorting mimeo fluid. Worked their digits to the bone churning out ish after ish of genzines, clubzines, perzines, and for all I know benzenes and thorazines. Pubbed piece after piece in other fanatics' zines. Racked up serious jail time for character assassination, critical battery, and stealing copy paper from the office.

They've parried and partied with all the players. Crossed quills with Greg Pickersgill. Smoked with the Lynches. Gone two falls out of three with Teresa Nielsen Hayden.

They're stuffed to their pointy ears with fannish lore. Ghu'd from the get-go. LoC'd to the max.

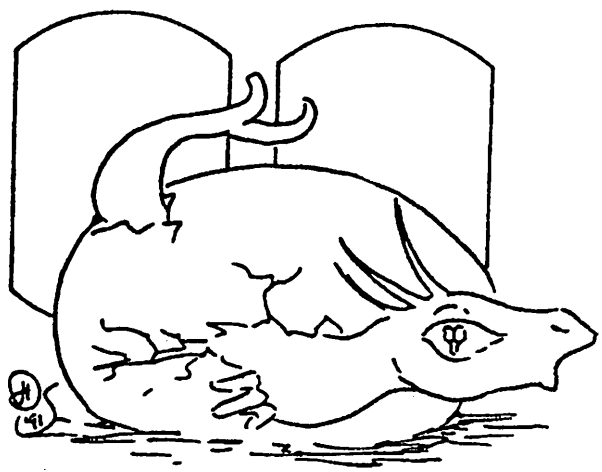
In contrast, there's me.

"Newbie" is putting it mildly. Although a longtime SF reader, I only joined NESFA in 1993, and read my first fanzine sometime in that distant year 1994, when Mark Hertel started sending small batches of Apa:NESFAs out to noncontributing members as part of his fiendish plan to heave the copy count up past 60. Then at Arisia in January 1995, Ken Knabbe tempted me with a sheaf of old *Proper Boskonians* as part of his fiendish plan to – well, as you see.

Since then, I've written for two *PB*s and several A:Ns. That's the sum total of my qualifications to write a fanzine review article for a major scientifictional opinion organ like *Proper Boskonian*.

A note about the title. As hinted, I haven't exactly read widely in the field. So if "Zineophile" is already taken by somebody else, I apologize unreservedly.

If not, why not?



Ansible 96 December 1994/Editor: Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU, UK/2 pages/8 ½ x 11 email: ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk

When you see an issue number as high as 96, you know you're dealing with either a fannish institution or the deranged product of a single-minded nutball's obsession-in-chief. I seem to recall that British critic/author/fan Dave Langford has won at least one fanwriting Hugo for this zine, plus at least 6 more for other stuff. And even I had met Dave (he was fan GOH at the 1992 Boskone) and heard of *Ansible*. (By the way, to start with, nice name. Referring to the trans-lightspeed communicator in many of Ursula Le Guin's stories, it actually bears a direct connection to SF.)

Still, it was a surprise. First of all, instead of some great sprawling brontozine, the mighty *Ansible* is just two sides of a single sheet, with type sized for the bottom of the eyechart and a quiet little two-column layout. What discipline. Or fiscal restraint. Anyway, if fanzines were races, *Ansible* would be an invigorating sprint, *Proper Bostonian* a bracing 10K trot, and *FOSFAX* (we'll get to it later) the Iditarod.

The tone and content were also a little unexpected. This is not the amateur humor of the hermit nerd, proffering punning bulletins gleaned from his own omphalos. More a clearinghouse for SF news and gossip from multiple sources worldwide. Langford comes across as a hardworking guy, plugged-in big time.

He covers a lot of ground. For instance, in this issue he mentions attending a Slovakian SF convention, Cascon, via Internet Relay Chat on July 1 as a "virtual guest." His comment: "Vodka does not e-mail well." In another Eurosquib, he announces that Piotr Cholewa won the Polish Translators Association Award in the popular fiction category "for his brain-bursting task of rendering *The Colour of Magic* into Polish."

Not that *Ansible* is all news all the time, entirely devoid of the unique Langfordian viewpoint and humor. For instance, he's happy to share that "Yvonne Rousseau [presumably an Australian fan?] reports a visitor's alarm when, after consuming 'Anzac Biscuits flavoured with a hint of the Australian bush,' he turned the packet over to learn what this flavoursome hint might be, and found the prominent words 'EMU BOTTOM.' "

For language fans, there are several choice Britglish expressions. Dave Langford reports that Dave Langford "whinges" about something – which my beautiful brand-new copy of *British English, A to Zed* by Norman W. Schur says is a corruption of both "wince" and "whine," and means to gripe, to complain, to bewail one's fate. Elsewhere, he alludes to a fan as the "notoriously stroppy John Grant," meaning Grant is bad-tempered, aggressive, quarrelsome. Finally, there's the publishing line Langford delicately terms a "shit-hot new imprint," which wins my vote as most unnecessarily evocative phrase of the year.

Ansible 97½ Worldcon 1995 (August 95)

This one's a special issue excerpting TAFF (Transatlantic Fan Fund) reports through the years. So the Americans report on their TAFF-subsidized trips to

European cons, and various Euroblokes return the favor in re their U.S. con visits.

Lots of names here I never heard of. Plus a few I've heard recently, leaving a dim impression of controversy: from 1983, Avedon Carol. From 1986, Greg Pickersgill. Oh, Terry Carr and the Nielsen Haydens – firmer ground there.

To sum up, my general impression of what transpires during these visits is that the Brits drink and the Yanks blink (bemusedly).

If you've broken bread, heads, or beer nuts with any TAFF visitors, you might very well find this issue interesting.

Ansible 98 September 1995

Finally realized with this issue that the graphic by Dave's banner changes every time. What called it to my attention was this little line drawing of Dave — holding a long, tapering implement resembling a carrot — saying "Still no batteries?" (which may rule out the carrot theory).

First line: "The Scottish Convention ... It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Thus neatly working in both Shakespearean and Dickensian references in a single go. What phrasemeisters these British be.

He has brief but well-chosen words on the death of John Brunner, including "John would have been hugely tickled by the idea of making his exit at a major convention ... but not just yet." Plus lovely comments by Lisanne Norman and an extended elegy by Christopher Priest.

Langford packs in a good number of verbal convention snapshots. Quite enjoyable. Plus other little tidbits, such as:

On meeting GOH Samuel R. Delany: "He has read my fanzine writings! I swoon!"

Why the con committee staged most panels in a curtain-divided hall with abysmal acoustics: "To do it properly, the committee explains firmly, would have cost money."

And then there's the "typo of the convention: Wizards of the Coast, purveyors of expensively addictive card games, billing themselves in one of their own ads as 'Wizards of the Cost.' " Fair warning, but sadly too late for NESFAn gaming goners like Tony Lewis and Tom Endrey.

Attitude 5 Completed 25 June 1995/Editors: Michael Abbott, John Dallman, Pam Wells/102 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CB1 3QF, UK/62 pages including covers/8¼ x 11¾

Quality.

That's the impression you get from the look and feel of this terrific fanzine, another British effort. A two-column format with highly readable type in a legible size on a fine, substantial light-green stock. Authoritative, bold heads. A sparing and effective use of often professional-quality art, mostly cartoons.

Some purist in this issue refers to the zine as being "overproduced." In my view, let's talk about that when we see seven-color art with embossing, gatefolds, moving slide rules, tissues, mirror-finish goldkote coverweight stock with UV overcoating, holograms, voice chips, and smell-o-sheet inserts. Until then, something like *Attitude* strikes me as simply crisp, effective, and just right.

The only thing excessive here might be the letter column – and it's a glorious excess. I count an incredible 26 pages of letters. Not just one giant memo from Evelyn Leeper about her trip to the stationery store, either. There are 34 separate LoC contributors.

Actual articles include an editorial mention by Pam Wells on being an Internet newbie, her interesting take on the comparative interpersonal dynamics of fanzine activity vs. Internetdom, and so on. She explains that her proximate reason for getting an Internet account was to acquire a unique fashion accessory. Learning that there was an Internet service provider called Demon, she swooped in to snap up what I can only describe as a really bitchin node address: PCWells@bitch.demon.co.uk.

I *like* this woman.

Ann Green includes a good, meaty review column on ten fanzines. Especially fine is her overall analysis of fanzine culture, which she finds "like a darn good party....sending letters of comment is like turning up at the party with a dance tape, a bottle of cherry vodka and a tin of Pam Wells' special fruit cake: it gets you in."

What *is* this about British SF people's fondness for parties as central to life's experience? Seems that they're nothing but crazed party animals over there, wholly lacking our famous American reserve.

Think I'm exaggerating? Here's Green on one leading American contender, *Mimosa*. "In all honesty ... not my favorite fanzine, partly because it's printed on what appears to be industrial strength bog [Britglish for "toilet"] paper and causes tactile revulsion second only to polystyrene, but mostly because there's been one hell of a party going on and I didn't get an invite..." More with the party obsession. Will these Dionysian British id monsters never get serious? No wonders the Puritans split....Green finally does concede that she can't get into *Mimosa* because she's not famous enough.

Other engaging and well-written articles include one by Mark Plummer on attending MiSconstrued, an invitation-only affair in Burnham, that he spends a great deal of time denying is an elitist convention strictly for fanzine fans. Paul Barnett notes, in a piece on attending Microcon at Exeter that they played a game titled Call My Clute – "a variation of 'Call My Bluff,' but, for obvious reasons, using less commonplace words" – in presumed tribute to hyperintellectual London critic and raging polyverbalist John Clute.

Rising SF writer Colin Greenland does a great piece on writing outlines. He talks admiringly about — and outlines – two existing 1967 outlines that Philip K. Dick wrote but never carried further. "In ten minutes flat they

give you the complete illusion of having read not one but two Philip K. Dick novels that do not actually exist. If that's not an authentically Dickian experience, what is?"

Editor Michael Abbott has a fine article on DC Comics' adult line, Vertigo, discussing Neil Gaiman's classic *Sandman*, Garth Ennis' and Steve Dillon's *Preacher* (which he savagely defrocks, terming it "a standard of badness for years to come"), and Grant Morrison's *The Invisibles*, a worthy newer offering. And Editor John Dallman has 3½ gracefully written, obviously heartfelt pages on cricket that would make a fine source document for some budding British Ken Burns. Finally, Mae Strelkov wraps things up with a warm yet mystical account of her life as a pig farmer in Jujuy Province, Argentina: "Faraway planets, described by authors writing in city flats, are scarcely tougher than what we have here day by day. And then there are the legendary haunts, and the invisibly lurking local yeti, called an *ucumarie*, that likes to cohabit with humans of the opposite sex...."

Man, I *like* this zine.

***FOSFAX* No. 177** October 1995/Published bimonthly on behalf of the Falls of the Ohio Science Fiction and Fantasy Association (FOSFA) by Timothy Lane with help from Grant C. McCormick and Joseph T. Major and edited by Timothy Lane and Elizabeth Garrott/*FOSFAX* c/o FOSFA, Post Office Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281/60 pages including covers/8½ x 11

Obviously one of the giants of the field from its size, staggering version number, article range, and huge number of lavish letters (29 pages' worth) from prestigious pros and fans, *FOSFAX* just about defeated me. I admit committing a reviewer's cardinal sin: not reading every word on every page.

Why? Because this zine fades tiny type with minus leading onto crummy paper stock, packed between minuscule margins in a two-column format that in any sane font size might just be readable without a scanning electron microscope. And because its politics are in my face and way to my right.

Let's talk about the good stuff. Don't get me wrong; there's mountains of it here. Alps. Himalayas....

Editor Timothy Lane offers opinions on everything from Susan Smith to Bosnia, then rips into what he terms "the NASFiC disaster." Although noting that he had a good time at this Atlanta con, he calls his sorry experience being scheduled into program items typical. He was put on four events. Two were scheduled before the time he'd told the committee he would arrive.

The other two were scheduled opposite one another.

Let's jump to another highlight: Frida Westford offers an entire page (which must be about 6,000 words in this format – all right, I'll quit griping) of cogent genre poetry reviews. Remember that incident in Delany's *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* wherein the narrator sucks up an entire complex literary tradition via a brain-dump device, only to find that no one now living has ever heard of any of the great writers and works he's absorbed? These poetry reviews were like that. William Kopecky, David Kopaska-Merkel, Steve Sneyd, even the "widely published" Rhysling nominee Dave Calder are unfamiliar to me. My fault, obviously, not theirs. Poetry was my favorite part of getting an English degree, so I'm drawn to this material. Just didn't realize that SF poetry was such a flourishing little corner of the garden.

FOSFAX editorial committeeman Joseph T Major, whom I've encountered through his good solid LoCs in *Proper Boskonian*, weighs in frequently throughout the corpus. He finds Terry Goodkind's *Wizard's First Rule* to be "particularly nasty." And notes about David Weber's latest Honor Harrington broadside, *Flag in Exile*, that he (JTM) had predicted Dame Honor would someday command the Grayson fleet. Plus he has a number of other reviews and items throughout the zine's echoing expanse.

For me, JTM's major delight is his exegesis of Heinlein's *Tunnel in the Sky*. Four solid pages. This is not my favorite Heinlein juvenile, so I've only read it 5 or 6 times. But Major still adds plenty of new food for thought.

He summarizes the plot at some length. Maintains that Heinlein's story makes use of repetition to embody more structure than other critics have thought. And points out themes such as the wisdom of packing light, the foolishness of formal systems of logic, and the desirability of good government. Major points out in this last context that Heinlein's anarchist admirers must shut their eyes to quite a few of the master's out-and-out civics lessons.

Most stunning insight: Major's casual penetration of a little Heinlein wordplay that has gone right over my head for 30 years. Brief printed instructions had told the class to watch out for "stobor." It eventuates that this was the teacher's little joke, a warning to look out for any or all menaces, not any particular creature. Before summarizing that revelation, though, Major hands me a major "duh" moment with this sentence: "For all the intellectual power sent through the Gate, no one seems to have tried spelling 'stobor' backwards to get 'robots.' "

Well, for all the intellectual power sent into my mighty brain...me neither.

Believe me, there was lots more to *FOSFAX* 177, as I mentioned. Lots and lots and lots. For instance, in a report on the InConJunction SF/fantasy/horror convention, James S. Dorr reveals that Lois McMaster Bujold's *Shards of Honor* began life as a *Star Trek* novel. Darrell Schweitzer contributes a brief abstract on Byzantine Stooging, with drawings showing MOE, LARRIVS, and CVRLIVS as long-faced religious ikons demonstrating hieratic hand positions such as the "Manichean Eye-Poke" – a two-fingered, two-Stooge-on-one digital assault that he conjectures was "influenced by Persian dualism."

Check back with me for more after I get stronger trifocals.

It Goes on the Shelf No. 14 July 1995/Editor: Ned Brooks, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, Virginia 23605/26 pages including covers/8½ x 11

Reading *It Goes on the Shelf*, you splash down a stream of book reviews flowing past little islands of gossip, letters, politics, and reminiscences. There are no separate articles or section breaks, no obvious organizing principle at all. Just a hospitable gentleman showing you through his library and commenting on books, friends, and the world. Then you realize: that *is* the organizing principle.

Intriguing cover art from Linda Michaels, perhaps my favorite from this entire zinestack: two mermaids browsing through their library. You glimpse spines of everything from *Moby Dick* and *Mysterious Island* to *The Poseidon Adventure* and what may be *McHale's Navy*. Is there anyone reading this particular fanzine who won't twist and squint trying to make out every title? There's a lot about art here. Brooks is a fan of everyone from Mervyn Peake (one of whose illos for *Treasure Island* graces the back cover) to Bok to Emsh to Crumb. All the drawings strewn throughout the zine are "snitched" from a 1926 travel tome.

Brooks plays the curmudgeon card well. In a squib about a Steve Sneyd book of verse, he calls it "very much in the modern style of poetry – it do not mean but be." And labels a 1940s book by George Allan England "a rare achievement for its time – not one word of it makes the least bit of sense – as common as such books have become of late." Happening upon David Pringle's *The Ultimate Guide to Science Fiction*, he demurs: "But it's a 2nd edition, so I guess the first one wasn't all that ultimate."

Among the interspersed letters, Walt Willis indicates his favorite novels of all time are *The Coral Island, Jane Eyre*, and *The Night Land*. This last is an allegorical, "utterly humorless" 1912 British fantasy by William Hope Hodgson, and is discussed at some length; *Jane Eyre* is universally known and loved by everyone except the family of the first Mrs. Rochester; but Brooks has never heard of *The Coral Island*. Nor I. Anyone?

What else....Brooks notes that he's still working on his "long-delayed booklet about the song *Green Hills of Earth*...Reviews *Up to Now, A history of science fiction fandom in the 1930s* by Jack Speer – originally distributed in 1939. "Harry Warner is referred to as a 'newcomer.' " ...Brooks finds in a 1935 memoir a verse of The Pirates' Song ("Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum," yo know) from Stevenson's 1883 *Treasure Island* — a verse not present in any recent editions of the novel. Maybe the clue that reveals the secret of Long John Silver's lost treasure?... In a political moment, Brooks notes that "in states with the death penalty the crime rate is now lower than in those without, but 43 of the convicts sentenced to death since 1973 were later found to be innocent — most of them had not yet been executed, thanks to the appeals process that the Newtoids are trying to eliminate."

A nice, spicy gallimaufry. But ultimately, this entire issue is justified for me by its mention of *An Anthropomorphic Bibliography*, edited by Fred Patten. This is a listing of stories in which animals act like people — stuffing fur the Furry Fandom subsubgenre, in other words. He likes the accompanying art, with one exception: "I don't think Mark Merlino was quite up to the task of depicting an erminoid alien doing the Dance of the Seven Veils upside down in a tree – perhaps no one is."

Terrific as that is, however, this last quote is surpassed for me by Brooks's revelation that Patten is also the editor of a journal whose subtitle is *The Journal of Applied Anthropomorphics*.

Its title: *Yarf!*

Mimosa 17 October 1995/Editors: Nicki and Richard Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875, U.S.A./48 pages including covers/8½ x 11

Mimosa is back and going like a house afire.

You know a fanzine has street cred when the editors talk about the conflagration that set back their publication schedule and mention salvaging "the three Hugos (soiled and [in] need of cleaning, but otherwise looking OK)."

No joking matter, of course. The Lynches devote most front and back matter to the agonizing details of recovery from the January blaze that destroyed the abutting townhouse and left theirs with charring plus extensive smoke and water destruction. You're talking months of living in rented space, dealing with cleaners, contractors, and insurance people. Plus varying amounts of damage to books, computer equipment, and Nicki's quilting creations, not to mention furnishings, walls, floors, and ceilings. The one bright spot: back issues were hot sale items (I just can't help myself) at the Glasgow Worldcon in August, because "the smoke markings added a degree of uniqueness..."

Layout is exceptionally lucid and clear, with large two-column type, excellent text paper, and substantial cover stock. Just to shake up my usual policy of mentioning illustrators last or neglecting them entirely through excessive logocentrism or plain pig-ignorance, let it be known there's vivid art by ubiquitous old and new masters including Joe Mayhew, Teddy Harvia, Sheryl Birkhead, Diana Stein, Brad Foster, and Steve Stiles. A class act all around.

Pride of place among the articles inside perforce goes to the tale of a local boy makes great. Recently joined NESFA member Michael A. Burstein provides a memoir of his 1994 stint at the famous Clarion SF writer's boot camp. It's nicely written, informative, entertaining, and disappointing only in the no-sex part. For ghod's sake, man, it was a speculative fiction workshop: make something up! Anyway, Michael spent 6 weeks at Michigan State University in scenic East Lansing along with 17 other scribbler monks and nuns. Their relays of teachers included John Kessel, Jim Kelly (I assume that's

James Patrick Kelly to us civilians), Boston's own self-described style slut Ellen Kushner, Delia Sherman, Tor Books editor Claire Eddy, early Egyptian Christian sect expert and 1960s sitcom maven Howard Waldrop, and luminaries Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm in their last Clarion after 27 years of toughlove teaching. Extracurricular activities included watergun fights, protobulimic Thai food ingestion, and ritualistic nocturnal manuscript sacrifices with bonfires and frenzied chanting. Among the creative writing tips Michael swotted up: "Why not just turn everybody into giant cabbages?" "Either you're gonna die or it's gonna sell." "Of B Background, S Situation, and C Character, if you don't include C, you're left with BS."

Although thousands might have preferred a Burstein theme throughout, the Lynches took the safe road and opted for two elegiac – and I admit, lovely – pieces on recently deceased horror master Robert Bloch.

Dean A. Grennell recalls spelling his sheet-metal-sales trips with stopovers at Bloch's house in Weyauwega, Wisconsin. Since he was a handy woodworker "and Bloch most assuredly was not," Grennel made major repairs to eliminate a distracting wobble on his friend's writing surface. "Which means, if I can claim no other distinction, I built the desk on which the manuscript for *Psycho* was written."

Esther Cole reprints excerpts from an early 60s Blochian interview, including these tips for aspiring writers: "1. Read voraciously. It's food for your imagination. 2. Live vicariously. You can't do and write simultaneously. 3. Keep a disciplined writing schedule." Also a great answer to that old interviewer's chestnut, what kind of animal would you rather be? "A Galapagos tortoise. They live slothful, long lives, have no natural enemies, and can mate for up to sixty-four hours at a time."

Sharon Farber offers a terrific read in what looks to be an ongoing series she should entitle *Mein MedSchool, or My Four Years of Struggle Against Lies, Stupidity, Cowardice, and Chauvinism Among Interns, Residents, Attendings, and Chairmen of Internal Medicine*. You can't believe she put up with this stuff long enough to actually become a doctor.

Also, John Berry tells how he ran wild as a dirty old man filling in as a consultant at a bride's convention in County Down, Ireland.

Finally, Dave Kyle, Ben Zuhl, Ahrvid Engholm, Walt Willis, and Forrest J Ackerman provide the beating heart of the issue with warm and funny stories of fan days past in (respectively) multiple Worldcon banquet sites, Illinois, Sweden, Ireland again, and assorted U.S. convention venues. With these, ghod is definitely in the details, so you'll have to read them for yourselves. I'll only say that I never exactly pictured Robert A. Heinlein as a costume contest fanboy, but Ackerman puts him at the 1941 Denvention, lurching across the floor in a crowd-pleasing portrayal of – well, read it and really exercise your sense of wonder.

Niekas 44 Issued sometime in 1994/Editor-in-Chief: Edmund R. Meskys, Niekas Publications, RR#2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9708/92 pages including covers/8 3/8 x 11

With fine layout, paper stock, typesetting, and art, and overall an inviting, eminently readable appearance, *Niekas* is to all intents indistinguishable from a professional pub. A past Hugo winner, it's less purely personal than any other zine in this pile; its bent is for the literary and historical. *Niekas* knows how to party. It just doesn't feel like it right now.

Unless you count the parlor game Eric Leif Davin plays in his thoughtful study (7 pages, 37 footnotes) of the literary remnants left by the ancient people of the Hyborian Age. Alas, "we know little of the songs, dances, march-hymns, devotional prayers, dirges, entertaining narratives and epic sagas, or mimetic representations of the Hyborians." Of course, many of the folks we're talking about here were way, way preliterate: "While a few other barbaric people, such as the Picts and possibly the Vanir, had no written language, Cimmerians seem to have been unique among Hyborian Age barbarians in viewing writing as a mystic skill to be held in dread and revulsion...." So on and solemnly, entertainingly on. You're five paragraphs in before there's even a mention of a personage appearing in quite a few of these sagas, one "Conan, King of Aquilonia."

This kind of thing is the exception. The core of the issue lies in the 14-page focus on the importance of Kipling for science fiction.

The invaluable Fred Lerner, *Niekas* feature editor, begins by declaring that "No writer, living or dead, has had as great an impact on science fiction as Rudyard Kipling." Lerner knows the more obvious candidates, but how many of us actually read Verne, Wells, Shelley, or Poe, let alone *Gilgamesh?* Whereas many readers and most writers still read Kipling with pleasure. Because he was one of us: conscientious about worldbuilding in describing the details of life in India or the army or ancient Britain. And giving central place in his stories and verse to day-to-day work, and the people and machines performing it. In other short pieces, Lerner reviews Kipling poems set to music on tape, and invites us to join the Kipling Society if we're not all kippled out after this ish.

Associate Editor Anne Braude has a long piece on two 1989 Baen anthologies, *A Separate Star* and *Heads to the Storm*, both edited by David Drake and Sandra Miesel, both collecting SF stories "similar to and/or inspired by" Kipling. Plus a few by Ruddy the K himself. She thoughtfully surveys a number of Kipling short works, then covers *A Separate Star*'s arsenal of warfare-and-soldiering stories. More to her taste are the fantasy-oriented selections in *Heads to the Storm*. Braude's nomination for "the most Kiplingesque novel since Kipling": Robin McKinley's *The Blue Sword*. In a separate article, Margaret Ball's *Flameweaver* (1991) and sequel

Changeweaver (1993) also come in for her high praise – alternate histories with a strong female protagonist, set in a Kipling-flavored East where the old magics have full power. Lastly, Braude indulges in a few (Kipling-) lover's quarrels with John Brunner over his 1992 Tor selections of *Kipling's Science Fiction* and *Kipling's Fantasy Stories*, but finally approves both volumes "for those benighted souls who don't already own a complete edition...."

Russell J. Handelman also adds a short, deeply serious piece comparing similar geo(if that's the prefix)politics in *Deep Space Nine* and *Kim*.

As I believe Kipling said somewhere, if you can keep your head while others all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you, what are you doing writing for fanzines? So let me panic right now and admit there's tons more *Niekas* to talk about and precious little space (or reader patience, I suspect) left. In situations like this, I ask: what would fellow Kipling freak Robert A. Heinlein do? Answer: abandon all previous structure and pacing and tie everything up in a breakneck ending. Like this:

Dammit I didn't have time to mention Editor Ed Meskys's fascinating stuff on coping with his blindness, how he's completely disorganized now – as he says, just like every other fan. No time to cover Fred Lerner's review of Heinlein's travel book *Tramp Royale* (perhaps that's fortunate, since he termed it "the story of a dull American couple who bring their dullness with them around the world"). No time to cheer RAH up by saying how much, though, Patricia Shaw Mathews admired his *Revolt in 2100*, and thinks Margaret Atwood's feminist literary triumph *The Handmaid's Tale* is virtually a prequel with about 2100 close parallels. No time for John Boardman's sage overview of the main nexuses where science fiction and science diverge, complete with equations yet. No time for Diana Paxson's explanation of how she rang in changes to the Ring mythos for her Siegfried trilogy. No time for Don D'Ammassa on horror and some horrifying new censors, Tamar Lindsay on *Darkman*, Sam Moskowitz on Everett F. Blier's bibliographic masterpiece *Science Fiction the Early Years* – plus on *The Index to Adventure Magazine* published by Richard Bleiler, son of Everett. No time to explain how much David M. Shea admires Zenna Henderson, and not just because he's a person who likes the People. No time for Publisher Michael Bastraw's explanation that it had been 3½ years since the last issue of *Niekas* because he had...no time.

The Space Cadet Gazette #1 (or: The Aging Old Fart Nostalgic Time Waster Gazette) December 1994/Editor: R. Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Ave., Apt #110, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6J 1J1/24 pages including covers/5½ x 8½

This is the premiere issue of a perzine by the planning-to-abdicate-any-day-now "God-Editor" of *BCSFAzine*, monthly organ of the British Columbia SF Association.

First of all, I like his subscription terms: "$1 per issue, or $4 for four issues, or $1,000 for a thousand issues, or $1,000,000 for a lifetime subscription (necessarily my lifetime, not yours)." And the half-size format and decent layout make for a fairly easy read.

Also admire Cameron's whatthehell inclusionary spirit, befitting a *per*sonal fan*zine*. Besides stuff of SFnal interest, he forks in some journal entries recounting a flight to Mexico he took in 1981 for an archeological tour. Plus excerpts from his grandfather's unpublished memoir of fighting World War I as a Canadian soldier suffering from rugby knee, unquenchable patriotism, kilts, and a bluff prose style.

The SF material starts with an entertaining and evocative saga with which many of us can identify, often to the tiniest detail: the year-by-year account of how young Graeme grew to become an SF addict. There's the toddler frightened by dreams of a skeleton in the closet. The 5-year-old proudly presenting numberless drawings of "ingenious mazes filled with the tortures of hell and inhabited by thousands of stick figures racing madly about trying to escape" to his concerned grandfather. And the boy reveling in the myriad delights of the SF/fantasy/horror explosion of the 50s and 60s. Cameron recalls viewmasters, comics, TV shows, and movies both famous and obscure, including *Tom Corbett*, Disney's *Tomorrowland*, *Shock Theater*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Turok Son of Stone*, del Rey and Clarke and Heinlein juveniles, *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules*, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, Burroughs's Mars and Venus books, *The Outer Limits* (to this day his favorite series), *Lost in Space*, and "At last, a witty, sophisticated, adult TV series": *Star Trek*. (He does admit the sets were hokey and "every second alien woman appears to be wearing a beehive hairdo.") It's hard to imagine a fan over 40 who wouldn't enjoy this one, and younger fans can hoover up some easy-reading genre history here.

It seems Cameron today has a rep as an expert on old genre movies. Which he richly deserves on the evidence of the fanzine's last piece: an exhaustively researched, closely reasoned six-page analysis – with (appropriately crummy) photographs – of an eternal Hollyweird mystery. In his immortal masterpiece of what I shall term "cinéma merdité," *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, what exactly did Ed Wood use as props for the flying saucer scenes? Plastic models? Hubcaps? Flaming paper plates? Cameron covers all the possibilities. An intriguing investigation of vital importance to nutballs, trivia aficionados, and Edheads worldwide.

The Space Cadet Gazette #2 March 1995/32 pages including covers

Several articles continue from the first issue.

Grandfather fights on in his World War I trenches. Spends several nights snoozing in the former piggery of the Belgian Royal Family. And is excited to hear that two

men in the regiment's front lines are scheduled to be shot as spies, until it's discovered that the mysterious foreign tongue they were caught speaking was Welsh.

Cameron proceeds deeper into diary entries from his archaeological tour of Mexico. Is swept up in what he takes for a dangerous Communist streetr riot until finding out it's a government-sponsored May Day parade. Gets a look at the Aztec twin temple of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, the Blue Hummingbird War God and Rain God respectively – though only by pressing his sweating face up against construction mesh at an excavation site off a Mexico City alley.

Since Cameron managed somehow to include several LoCs in his first issue before there was really anything to comment about, he's of course raised a healthy crop in this issue. Including between them letters from such *Proper Boskonian* stalwarts as Ken Knabbe, Teddy Harvia, Sheryl Birkhead, Joseph T. Major, and Lloyd Penney; plus lesser lights like David Langford, Harry Warner Jr., Buck Coulson, and Walter Willis.

Let's say Cameron also lays mighty sacrifice at the altars of Xhaxha and Tschlocko, the Red Faced Falling Down Laughter God and Dreadful Stinker God respectively, in twin absolutely hilarious reviews of an old bad SF book and an old even worse SF movie. *The Red Planet* by Russ Winterbotham (published 1962) was the first SF book Cameron ever bought. And as he says now, "Quite idiotic, but at least the concept of handholding killer Martians is rather novel, and that's what SF is all about, isn't it? Novelty?" Though apparently even it pales in awfulness next to his cinematic subject, *Wizard of Mars* (1964). A typical scene recalled by Cameron: "Steve finally decides to do something. 'We've got to pull up,' he says. 'Activate all operable rockets!' 'I can't,' shrieks Charlie. 'They're inoperable! We're going down!' The surface of Mars looms. Now normally you'd think the crew would want to strap themselves in to brace for the crash, but not this crew. 'Into our pressure suits quick!' shouts Steve. 'The hull may rupture on impact!' Well Steve, that's not all that might rupture."

Unbelievably for a zine this compact, there's more! The issue also includes his memory of disrupting a Frederik Pohl reading while attempting to elude an attack bee, and an exposé of animal exploitation in secret Singapore ice rink exhibitions pitting Japanese snow monkeys against the recently discovered Ice-Rats of Antarctica for bloodsport wagering.

In other words, something for everyfan.

The Space Cadet Gazette #3 June 1995/32 pages including covers

Great moments from *SCG* $3:

Cameron cowers in the Nacional de Antropologia Museum in Mexico City before "perhaps the most frightening sculpture ever conceived, a monumental depiction of the ever nurturing Mother Earth Goddess, Coatlique ["Serpent Skirt"]. She is a nightmare, terrifying.... To the uninitiated she appears to have a wide frog-like head with nasty teeth. In fact she is headless, for she has been decapitated in the process of giving birth to the Sun God..." Wait, it gets better. How about the were-jaguar baby? But perhaps you'd better read the issue yourself. If you dare.

Cameron's grandfather holds forth on the subject of dress codes at the front circa 1915: "The trenches were getting sloppier and sloppier as winter wore on. Rubber hip boots and kilts. How nice! Steel helmets also came to life but nobody would wear them until it became a court martial offense to be wounded on the head without one." And you're bothered about hall costumes at conventions.

Cameron at age 15 in his own journal jots story notes about an SF masterpiece he's hatching: "I must give the lizards a sense of fiendish delight. I must make it as amusing as possible. Man, this may shape up to be a good novel." Or not.

Guest contributor David Buss speaks of his own SF writing career: "As you know, I have not written over twenty novels, some of which are still in print and immensely popular both with the critics and with the hoi polloi." By the way, David, in Greek "hoi" means "the" and "polloi" means "people," so I'm surprised they didn't teach you at Clarion never to say "the hoi polloi."

In another wonderful Z-movie review, Cameron describes a typically moronic scene from 1962's *Slime People*, with his comments in parens: "Announcer: 'How do they make fog?' Doctor Brow: 'I don't know, but it is an attempt to permanently lower our temperature so they can live permanently above ground.' Announcer: 'What do these creatures look like?' Doctor: 'They are large, huge, prehistoric, covered with scales and slime.'... The next scene shows the Announcer broadcasting from a live remote in the fog. 'Men are working to clear the fog.' (You can hear the sound of men with shovels. How can you clear fog with shovels?)" The scraping sound was from the scriptwriter down at the bottom of that barrel.

Finally, there are fanzine reviews. They're all lots shorter than this one. Which might have given me valuable guidance if only I had read them before I'd just about finished this column. Oh, and there's a little squib reprinted from 1985 about a party at V-Con thrown by what Cameron consistently refers to as a "Boscon 89" bid. Seems killer robots were plotting to – well, kill – all the human elite gathered at this "Boscon" shindig. Now, I don't recall this actually coming off during the programming at what became Noreascon 3, but there was a lot going on....

[Like *PB*, most fanzines would rather have "the unual" (a LoC, art, material, or trade), than cash, but if you send a few dollars, the editor(s) will generally send a sample issue. After that it is up to you. KK]

Necronomicon 1995

Con report by Paul J. Giguere

Why some people (myself included) are attracted to the writings of H. P. Lovecraft is a mystery to me. The writing is not very good, the prose (void for the most part of dialogue) can be tedious and boring at times, and Lovecraft's work is sprinkled with disdain for women and racist attitudes. The majority of Lovecraft's fans are men, which is not surprising given his negative view of women. Many of Lovecraft's fans became interested in his writings in their adolescence and have carried this interest through to adulthood. At the second bi-annual convention for Lovecraft enthusiasts this past August (Necronomicon), I decided to use the convention as a means of examining why I still found Lovecraft's work interesting.

I myself discovered Lovecraft when I was fifteen years of age, and found that his worlds were unlike anything I had ever read before. Ancient and omnipotent races of beings from space, controlling the destiny of humankind through lesser beings on Earth and through fanatic cult followers, was a type of science fiction that I had never encountered before.

Lovecraft created a universe where humans are not only very minor players in a vast and dramatic play, but are not even on the same stage as the major players and don't have the full script. Through the observations and stories of the minor players, we see a mystery that we are never meant to solve and a horror that we are never meant to see. Maybe it is this unsolvable mystery that keeps people (myself included) coming back for more, I don't know, but I will continue to read Lovecraft for the mystery it evokes.

The convention was primarily scholarly in nature, but it did have the usual attractions such as panel discussions, book signings, a hucksters' room, and of course gaming (mostly Call of Cthulhu, a role-playing game from Chaosium). I've outlined below the panel discussions that I was able to attend.

On *At the Mountains of Madness*

This panel started off with a discussion of Lovecraft's novel *At the Mountains of Madness* (*ATMM*). One panel member pointed out the similarities between the Homeric style of storytelling and Lovecraft's use of very descriptive adjectives to preface the names of the fifteen characters in the story. Other panel members pointed out that *ATMM* was also a good hard science fiction story for its very technical focus on the geology and archaeology of Antarctica. This novel was also very revealing about Lovecraft's racist attitudes, whereby he described Shoggoths (a veiled reference to Blacks) as morally inferior. Lovecraft also used this novel to express his socialist views, where he describes mechanistic societies as orgiastic and decadent.

The Clark Ashton Smith Revival

This panel focused on the recent mini-revival of Clark Ashton Smith's work. The most recent evidence of this revival is the success of a new trade paperback edition of *Tales of Zothique*, edited by Will Murray with Steve Behrends and published by Necronomicon Press. NESFA's own George Flynn was also publicly praised for his excellent marathon weekend editing of the book so that it could be available for the convention (the whole project might have failed without convention sales to support the publication of the book). It is also possible that *Hyperborea* and other Smith books may follow.

Pre-Mythos Authors

Although this panel started off discussing some of the authors that Lovecraft used for inspiration (many of whom I had never heard of), the discussion centered mostly on Lovecraft's views of Lord Dunsany and his work. Lovecraft apparently loved Dunsany's early work but was very upset with him when Dunsany experimented with other forms of fiction (for which he became a critical success). Lovecraft praised writers as long as they wrote material (weird fiction) that Lovecraft wished to aspire to in his own writing.

Arkham, Dunwich, and Foxfield?

This session focused on how Lovecraft borrowed from the local Massachusetts geography to create the many cities and towns in which his stories take place. A recent discovery of some letters and pictures also revealed that Lovecraft may have also used the former town of Foxfield as a site for one of his stories. The entire town of Foxfield (then a truly rural outback town with very secluded townsfolk) was

flooded and its population forcibly relocated so that the town could be totally flooded and submerged to make what is now the Quabbin Reservoir. Some low-flying aerial photographs of the Quabbin still show houses and streets much as they were before the flooding. This session was probably boring for some people, but being a long-time resident of Massachusetts, I found it interesting.

alt.horror.cthulhu

This panel focused on what is available on the Internet on Lovecraft. In truth, this session was very boring and anyone who has Internet access could have easily found the resources that the panel members were discussing. The only interesting bit of information was the discussion of a project (The Lovecraft Transcription Project) that will make available electronically the text of many of Lovecraft's letters from the five-volume set published by Arkham House.

Lovecraft's Letters

Lovecraft loved to write letters, and in his short life-span he wrote over 3,000 of them. Many of his letters were long (some averaging 48 pages in length) and, in truth, were sometimes more fascinating than his stories, as they revealed the life of a brilliant thinker and creative visionary as well as a prejudiced social misfit. Also, many of Lovecraft's stories originated from ideas presented in letters to relatives, friends, and fellow writers. The panel couldn't praise this aspect of Lovecraft's writing enough.

Upcoming New England Conventions

January 12-14, 1996
Boston Park Plaza, Boston MA
Emma Bull, Will Shetterly and Lissanne Lake
Arisia '96
Suite 322
1 Kendall Sq.
Cambridge, MA 02139

February 16-18, 1996
Sheraton Tara, Framingham MA
Lois McMaster Bujold, Gary Ruddell & Bob Madle
Boskone 33
P.O. Box 809
Framingham, MA 01701-0203

March 1-3, 1996
Smith College, Northampton MA
5-Con 1996
c/o A. Wight
Box 6718
Smith College
Northampton, MA 01063

May 3-5, 1996
Franklin Pierce College, Rindge NH
George Takei and Alan Brown
MonadoCon 3
FPC Science Fiction Club
FPC Box 60
Rindge, NH 03461-0060

July 5-7, 1996
Burlington Marriott, Burlington MA
Gaylaxicon VII
P.O. Box 176
Somerville, MA 02143

July 5-7, 1996
Holiday Inn, Taunton MA
Michael O'Hare, James Sloyan and Bob Eggleton
RebelCon
c/o World's End Productions
10 Rankin Street
Worcester, MA 01605

July 12-14, 1996
Westborough Marriott, Westborough MA
William Gibson and Larry McCaffery
Readercon 8
P.O. Box 381246
Cambridge, MA 02238

November 1-3, 1996
Springfield Sheraton Monarch Hotel & Towers
Springfield, MA
Wishcon VI
500 Monroe Turnpike
Monroe, CT 06468

November 8-10, 1996
Burlington Marriott, Burlington MA
Majel Barrett Roddenberry and George Takei
Diamond Anniversary Convention
P.O. Box 2013
Dept. C
Quincy, MA 02269

Intersection 1995

A convention report by Evelyn C. Leeper

Intersection, the 53rd World Science Fiction Convention, was held from 24 August through 28 August 1995 in Glasgow, Scotland. There were approximately 4800 people attending, making this larger than ConFiction but smaller than Conspiracy. (It was also smaller than ConAdian, but it felt larger.)

Convention Centre

We decided to walk from our hotel to the SECC (Scottish Exhibition and Convention Centre), since it appeared to be only a fifteen-minute walk (or someone may actually have claimed that). As Mark noted, however, "It's a fifteen-minute walk ... for Pheidippides." (Or for the classically challenged, Roger Bannister.) And it wasn't even an interesting walk, but rather along the Clyde through a basically deserted area.

This is the probably the place to note that Intersection is the most inconvenient convention we have attended in this regard. Our hotel in The Hague was further away from the convention centre, but the tram ran from in front of our hotel to within two or three blocks of the centre. Most North American conventions have the hotels within ten minutes walk, and the main hotels are frequently attached. Even Brighton was more compact, and the area around the Convention Centre was full of shops, restaurants, etc., which made the walking more pleasant and safer (or at least gave one that feeling – it may be perfectly safe in Glasgow, but it doesn't feel that way).

Registration/Program Books/Etc.

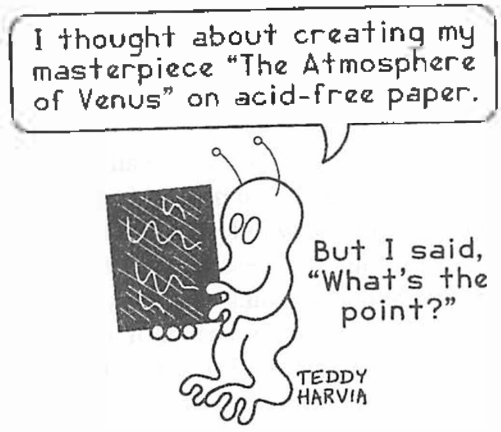
Registration was very fast – there were no lines, pretty amazing for noon Thursday. We picked up the freebies, which included an anthology of Scottish SF and some sample chapters from Voyager books.

I looked through the Pocket Programme, which is in a small loose-leaf binder for no really good reason, and discovered that while I was credited for the Glasgow Bookshop List, I was not listed in the Programme Participant Index. The Pocket Programme requires a larger than normal pocket, and still fails to provide a convenient daily grid, as only the (somewhat non-descriptive) titles of the panels are on the grid – the descriptions are elsewhere in it. As is distressingly common, the film schedule is not included in the grid (though it is in the book), and the video schedule is not in it at all.

While I'm at it, I should also mention that there were no schedules posted outside each room, giving the day's schedule for that room. These help early-arrivers determine if they're at the right place, and also remind people of things they might want to attend that might get lost in the longer full lists.

The SECC is very nice, with a glass-roofed concourse and lots of food stands. The Dealers' Room is a bit smaller than North American Worldcon Dealers' Rooms, but with a higher concentration of books. (Some people even claimed there were too **many** books.)

There are, however, two problems. One, there are no clocks. Two, there are too few non-smoking areas, particularly on the concourse itself.



Art Show

I got to this briefly once, but then every other time I had free, the art show was closed. Part of the problem was that the art was not arranged in aisles which make resuming a tour of it easy, but rather it was laid out in unmapped islands. Friends I spoke with had major objections to the bidding process, which was remarkably undefined (how many bids **did** it take to send something to auction?) and having most of the pieces labeled "POA" ("Price On Asking") didn't help. There should be a sheet with the rules given to bidders, and the rules should be followed. (Apparently, some pieces without bids ended up in the auction.)

Programming

Intersection had fewer panels that I was interested in than any other Worldcon of recent memory, and only one or two more than Boskone. The Green Room was actually three separate Green Rooms, with coffee not available in the Moat House one, only drinks. (In my opinion, more panelists need coffee than alcohol before a panel.) One could supposedly get a chit for a drink later, but whenever I tried they said they were running low on chits and to just go over and get my drink – I didn't need a chit. I don't think they quite understood.

The mechanics of the panels were not thought out. The rooms had no clocks, and no one came in with signs for ten- and five-minute warnings. It wasn't until Sunday that Programming asked the panelists (via tiny notes on the tables) to wrap up about ten minutes early. The signs for the panel titles and panelists' names were hand-lettered instead of printed, making them at times hard to read.

And finally, a problem that the convention planners may not have any control over. Some dip had a cellular phone that kept ringing during panels, to the extent that by Sunday moderators were requesting at the beginning of panels that people turn their cellular phones off and their pagers to mute.

Horizon 10 — American Futures
Thursday, 15:00
Jim Young (m), Joe Haldeman, Allan Steele,
Harry Turtledove

"The rise of the right and the fundamentalists, a boom and bust economy, and the largest debt on the planet. Where is America going? Factionalism and terminal decline? Or are these problems only temporary – will America rediscover global leadership and turn outwards again?"

["We" and "us" in the following refer to the United States.]

Young said that the panel would focus on the United States for the next thirty years, and asked the panelists for three scenarios each: very likely, moderately likely, and least likely.

Haldeman said that the least likely is that the United States would get a single vision and become the moral and economic leader of the world. The most likely is that we would spend money on small, disastrous wars until we became a Third World country. In between is his prediction of the primacy of fundamentalist religion (he noted that there are a **lot** of new churches being built in the South). What Haldeman said he would **like** to see would be a slow increase in respect for education rather than for accumulating money.

Steele said that the 20th Century is called the "American Century," but that it is unlikely this will continue. Currently, Steele said, the United States is "the tough guy on the block that nobody wants to play with." In the future, the United States won't dominate affairs; the European Community or Japan will. For one thing, "Every four years a whole bunch of zeroes come in who want to be President of the United States." Also, the United States won't completely break up, but some states may secede. For example, five or six years ago, Vermont had a debate and a non-binding vote, and voted to secede. There is also a movement in the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, and northern California, as well as parts of Canada) to form Cascadia. Certainly, Steele says, no one wants to become a state, citing the recent Puerto Rican referendum and the separatist movement in Guam. So in 2095 there will probably be forty to forty-five states, not fifty-one.

Turtledove saw the most likely scenario as a rough continuation of the status quo. He didn't see a rosy future, saying, "God knows the United States of America has its problems," and its emphasis on short-term results exacerbates the other problems of racial/economic problems. But he thinks we may have more than fifty states, because some of the Canadian provinces might join the United States if Canada breaks up. He also observed that this was the "American Century" because "we built up our industrial base over two world wars and haven't had the living crap kicked out of us at least once." (Someone in the audience pointed out that Switzerland and Sweden also avoided getting the crap kicked out of them.) The key question may be if we have learned the lesson of Vietnam.

Young said that he believed there was a hundred-year cycle of domestic upheaval that the United States follows (the Whiskey Rebellion in the 1790s, strife in the 1890s, and now unrest in the 1990s). Frankly, I think he has too few data points to generalize. He said, "Reform is the ideological goal toward which we want to move," but no one agrees on what it is. So everyone comes up with insane ideas on how to reform. He also foresees lots of technological revolutions at hand (e.g., a bio-technological one) with ethical, moral, economic, and other implications. These revolutions are more market-driven than previous revolutions, though. Young also asks, "If we are entering into a period in which literacy is primarily dependent on the computer, is it likely that we will build a new kind of society built on a class structure based on [the skills of] reading, writing, and typing?"

Young somewhat agreed with Turtledove, saying that the most likely scenario is that we fumble along. He believes the Religious Right will eventually collapse because, he said, Jesus will not return in 2000. (I suspect it will hang on until at least 2033 or 2034, but maybe the magic of the round number 2000 will overcome historical logic. There are certainly groups who have predicted the end of the world in the past, and survived as a group even when it didn't happen.)

Turtledove noted that Young had a baby-boom perspective in that Young appeared to believe that rough economic equality and equality of opportunity are the norm. This is not a God-given right, Turtledove observed, or even very common.

Steele said that the microelectronics revolution is a double-edged sword, and "Newt Gingrich's solution [to the economic problems some people would have in accessing the Net] of giving everyone a laptop computer is absolutely asinine." (Young then noted that Sturgeon's Law applies to Gingrich's ideas.) Steele said that the computer revolution has brought back the salon, conversation, and letter-writing, albeit in somewhat different forms. And it may even bring back literacy: even smart people look idiotic if their posts are full of grammatical errors.

Haldeman saw as fairly likely an apocalyptic future. For example, he talked to the War College about military futures in 2020, predicting the "dis-urbanization" of the United States following terrorist nuclear or biological attacks on cities. We will have virtual cities instead. As far as the problems of the information superhighway requiring that people have computer equipment, Haldeman said there was an obvious parallel to the interstate highway system, which requires that people have a car to use it directly, but clearly benefit even if they don't. (For example, their groceries get to market faster and cheaper.)

As far as literacy goes, Haldeman thought we would skip over that to voice-recognition systems, leading to a discussion of how soon we actually would have such systems. Young claimed that "voice recognition is one of the hardest nuts to crack." Haldeman countered that they used to claim computers wouldn't be able to play decent chess or

speak a sentence in this century. Of course, only time will tell.

Young said that the issues the panelists needed to look at to make predictions are the "functional questions" such as energy problems. Haldeman said the answer to the energy problems was cold fusion, getting a big laugh. Steele said fusion – hot or cold – would help, but thought the answer was solar power satellites and mining the moon, and said that Japan and Germany are actually planning to do something like this. Haldeman responded that in his upcoming book *The Forever Peace,* he has "warm fusion."

Turtledove noted that history has shown that if you absolutely run out of a resource, you will figure out how to make do without it somehow, and gave the example of whale oil in the 19th century. Of course, he also observed that our problems in solving the energy crisis are due in part to the fact that "for the last twenty years, we have been afraid of fuel which contains atoms in any way." (Steele said he had once seen a protest sign that said, "No atoms in New Hampshire.") The problem with fossil fuels, Steele claimed, was "they're not making dinosaurs like they used to," to which Turtledove replied, "In Congress? Are you kidding?"

Someone asked about the "new world order" and Haldeman said that the phrase was deceptive: the world won't change in an orderly fashion; we won't change until we have to. We are a nice people, but bumbling, and war-like, and we have killed more people than Nazi Germany. (Turtledove later pointed out that Stalin and Mao were probably ahead of us as well. And one needs to look at equivalent periods of time – is Haldeman comparing two hundred years of our history to shorter periods of others'?) Turtledove also said in defense of the United States, "God knows we're not perfect but for the pack of bumblers we are, we haven't done too bad."

Steele said, "The nastiness is surface detail, [and] a lot of cooperation happens under the surface." He told the story of seeing congressmen fighting bitterly on the floor of Congress, then going into the men's room afterward and planning their golf game together, to which Young noted, "I've heard of standing in the middle of a pissing match before...."

Someone in passing quoted S. I. Hayakawa as saying, "The reason we have a two-party system instead of a three-party system is that the latter has never worked."

Haldeman and Turtledove talked about one of the downsides of being a super-power: "You have to pay for all this stuff. That's why there's not a Soviet Union any more; they couldn't pay for it."

Someone in the audience asked if it was possible that the United States would solve its energy problems by learning to conserve, using public transit, etc. The quick answer was "no" (though I will point out that in the United States we have more recycling of Styrofoam, glass, and other trash than I see here in Britain). Turtledove pointed out that public transit doesn't work in the United States because of the spread-out scale of cities, and that this diffuseness is not really appreciated by Europeans. Steele said that in fact we did start conserving, to the extent that we brought about the failure of the nuclear industry, which had been predicated on the assumption that the use of electricity would increase, or at least stay level. But instead we started using more efficient appliances and decreased our usage.

Someone else claimed that the United States was more energy-efficient for its standard of living than any other country. (How does one actually measure that?)

An audience member said that the panel was ignoring that the rest of the world exists. Then she went on to talk about energy problems, saying that the rest of the world will use energy to get at the United States. Someone else asked about illegitimacy: "Is this as big a problem as some of the politicians say it is?" Turtledove replied, "Nothing is as big a problem as some of the politicians say it is." Haldeman thought that there was a problem with the break-down of the "nuclear family," although he didn't think that marriage was a necessary ingredient; two people bringing up a child together with or without benefit of a marriage license was what he was talking about. Of course, he didn't completely define what he meant by a nuclear family.

Steele said that in spite of all the negative comments, he has faith in the coming generation. He said that he finds young people today are more interested in the sciences than they used to be. And he also said that he is seeing less drug use at concerts, to which Haldeman responded, "They just don't offer it to you any more."

To wrap up, Turtledove suggested that people who feel the United States interfered in Iran, Chile, and Guatemala (as someone suggested earlier) compare and contrast those with other situations such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia. And Haldeman noted one pitfall when he observed, "People like me are not paid to think in optimistic terms." But in spite of that, he personally remains somewhat optimistic.

Further Visions
Thursday, 18:00 Stephen Baxter

"A talk on sequels to *The Time Machine,* from the first anonymous sequel in 1900 through Jeter, Priest, and Dr Who."

This being the centenary of H. G. Wells's *Time Machine,* there were several program items focusing on *The Time Machine* in specific and Wells in general, of which this was the first.

Baxter began by restating the direction of his talk: "What if Wells had written a sequel or prequel, and what have other authors done?" In 1897, Wells published "In the Days to Come," later developed into *When the Sleeper Wakes,* with upper and lower levels. (One wonders if this is where Lang got his idea for *Metropolis.)* But Wells was not as "strong" as he might have been. For example, Baxter said that Wells depicted the horrors of the lower levels more or less as "fist fights on Saturday night."

Baxter also said that in "Chapter 11: The Further Vision," Wells shows the possibilities of the future, with the crab-like monster and the giant white butterfly. This vision of a

"terminal beach" has become a regular metaphor in science fiction. But the first draft of 1887 ("The Chronic Argonauts"), serialized in 1894, had an extra stop between Weena and the beach, with something between a rabbit and a kangaroo, as well as an immense centipede. The traveler speculates that these are remnants of humanity, and it may be that the crabs and butterflies are also. And again, the round thing the Time Traveller finds on the beach is another aspect of man's devolution.

Wells later wrote "The Man of the Year Million," where man has heads and hands more greatly developed than now, and bodies less developed. (This idea was later adopted by Olaf Stapledon, who must have read Wells's works, for part of *Last and First Men*.) Wells still later used echoes of this idea in his Selenites, and possibly even his Martians, but he wanted to be somewhat ambiguous regarding this in *The Time Machine*. He also cut out an episode in the year 12,000, and other sections as well. But Baxter said that the round thing was the "Man of the Year Million stranded on the Terminal Beach."

Baxter speculated that one reason Wells was fascinated by this idea of the supremacy of the mind over the body was that Wells himself was sickly, or as Baxter put it, "Wells was alive in a mind trapped in an ailing body."

Baxter then went on to discuss other authors' sequels to *The Time Machine*. (Some spoilers occur in these descriptions. You have been warned.) He said that the best known is probably K. W. Jeter's *Morlock Night* (1978). This may be true in the United Kingdom, but I suspect it is not the case in the United States. In this, we discover that the Time Traveller missed the smarter Morlocks the first time, and that the smart ones are using the time machine to invade Victorian England. It gets a little far afield after that: King Arthur is the only one who can save England, etc. As Baxter said, "It's a fun book, I suppose." There is not much more about the Time Traveller, however, as he is killed on his return journey to the future.

The first sequel to *The Time Machine*, however, was apparently a 1900 book, *Leeds Beatified*. Baxter has been able only to find one reference to it and couldn't find the author's name or any other description.

The next sequel Baxter discussed was David Lake's *The Man Who Loved Morlocks* (1981). In this, it is revealed that the Eloi are actually dying off and the Morlocks are kidnapping them to take them to laboratories underground to try to analyze what is killing the Eloi and hence to save them.

Christopher Priest's *The Space Machine* (1977) was described as a cross between *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*. (Baxter did not stick to a strict chronological order.) This book is "recursive science fiction": it has H. G. Wells as a character. In fact, this has been done several times since, resulting in a blurring between Wells and the Time Traveller. Baxter noted here that one thing that readers need to keep in mind is that while the landscape of the base story *The Time Machine*, and that of *The War of the Worlds*, was indeed familiar to Wells's readers in the 1890s, it is an alien landscape to us now. He also said that Priest does not resolve what happens to the Time Traveller.

In what Baxter described as Michael Moorcock's "Multiverse" series, there is a trilogy which is a sequel to *The Time Machine:* "The Dancers at the End of Time" (1972–1976), comprising *An Alien Heat, the Hollow Lands*, and *The End of All Songs*. Baxter described this as a comic epic of a decadent future in which Moorcock's hero meets Wells, and the Time Traveller becomes a time tourist in a chronomnibus in a variety of time lines.

Other sequels mentioned briefly included Eric Brown's "Inheritors of Earth" (1990) and Brian Stableford's "Hunger & Ecstasy of Vampires" (1995). I recently reviewed the latter on the Internet and highly recommend it.

In the visual media, Baxter mentioned *Time After Time* (1979), in which Wells has built a time machine and follows Jack the Ripper in it to modern-day San Francisco. There was also an episode of *Dr. Who*, "The Time Lash," which has H. G. Wells as a character, and has him get the idea for the book *The Time Machine* from what happens to him in the story. And an episode of *Lois & Clark* has Wells as an inventor of a time machine visiting a utopia founded by the descendants of Superman. (Baxter described this as "postmodern meta-fiction.")

Baxter said at this point that one reason that many sequels in the popular media confuse Wells with the Time Traveller is that "a lot of people outside the science fiction world don't read much Wells these days." I would note that the same is true in the SF world; I suspect most people who started reading science fiction in the last twenty years have not read any Wells at all. Oh, they know about it (at least *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds)*, but have they actually read it?

Baxter said that the strangest sequel was probably Egon Friedell's *Return of the Time Machine* (1946, published in an English translation by DAW in 1972). This is an exploration of the scientific and philosophic implications of time travel. It has a narrative frame somewhat like the original, with an account of the second journey into time. The Time Traveller tried to go back to 1870, but couldn't, so he went forward to 1995 (a 1995 not much like ours, of course). Then he went forward to 2123, still trying to pick up enough momentum to break through back to 1870.

Baxter said this book might have been written as early as the 1920s, and that Friedell committed suicide in 1938 because of his Jewish ancestry when Austria was seized by the Nazis.

Baxter then talked about his own recent book, *The Time Ships* (published recently in the United Kingdom, but not yet in the United States). In this, the Time Traveller changes the future by his actions and reportage in Wells's time. Baxter said this project attracted him because "people say that science fiction lacks characters but the Time Traveller is a great character." In fact, Baxter feels that *The Time Machine* is emerging as perhaps Wells's greatest novel.

Mark asked Baxter about George Pal's novelization of *Time Machine II*, a proposed sequel to the film. Baxter had

never heard of it, so Mark will be sending him information on it.

Someone asked about the recent British Post Office stamps honoring Wells. Baxter liked them, though I would have preferred a more Edwardian feel rather than the modern look. (Mark says these are honoring the subgenres of science fiction that Wells created, rather than Wells himself.)

Baxter said he would now like to do a book about time paradoxes, and to push the limits of time travel: for example, to have time travelers from our time found a human colony fifty million years ago, to use time travel to get oil from the Devonian, etc.

Baxter mentioned he had thought of doing time travel in a *Dr. Who* book, but decided that was not for him. Getting authorization for *The Time Ships* was not difficult, and there were no legal problems with any of Wells's thirty-six descendants. In the United Kingdom, all of Wells's work is still in copyright, since copyrights run until fifty years after the death of the author, and soon (starting in a year or so) seventy-five, leaving everything in copyright until 2016. In the United States, however, most of his science fiction works are in the public domain.

However, no one is sure who has the film rights now, so a film is unlikely unless someone wants to spend a lot of effort untangling them.

SF Myths — Physics
Thursday, 21:00
Del Cotter (m), Stephen Baxter, Hal Clement, Howard Davidson, Geoffrey Landis

"[The panelists] look at scientific misconceptions that authors have inadvertently promoted to the extent that they have become 'common knowledge' amongst readers. We're not talking about **obvious** scientific errors, but rather the more subtle mistakes that slip by both author and reader. Examples include:
– Superconductors also have no **thermal** resistance
– FTL travel is possible if you 'get around' travelling at c
– Single-molecule objects or wires are indestructible"

Well, we walked back to this after dinner, in the rain, but couldn't find the hotel! Apparently it is visible only from one side of the block, which is not quite what the map indicated. At any rate, I figured that it didn't pay to spend a lot of time looking for it – by the time we found it, the panel would be over.

Terminal Force
Friday, 10:00

Since we had no panels we wanted to attend until 1 PM, we went to this free sneak preview of a new science fiction film starring Brigitte Nielsen, Richard Moll, and John H. Brennan; written by Nick Davis; and directed by William Mesa. It is therefore Nick Davis we have to thank (?) for such lines as, "[The crystal] is the soul of our culture; it is the antithesis of our ways." (After the film, Iain McCord in the row in front of us turned around and asked "What is antithesis?" My answer: "The wrong word to use in that sentence.") I haven't seen a movie this bad since *Ice Pirates* and had it been in the SECC I would have walked out, but since it was a considerable taxi ride away I figured I might as well wait for Mark and Kate.

Alternate Technological Histories
Friday, 13:00
Simon Bradshaw (m), Stephen Baxter, Evelyn Leeper, Pat McMurray, Harry Turtledove

"How might history have been affected by changes in the way technology developed, and how could alternate history have influenced technology?"

The more elaborate description given the panelists was:

"1. The way in which history might have been changed had technology developed differently, e.g., WW2 with better-developed radar or the Cold War without ICBMs to give two recent examples.

"2. How technological history might have been affected in alternate historical paths, e.g., US technical progress had the South won the Civil War, or aerospace if WW2 had never happened."

[Many thanks to Mark for taking notes for this panel.]

Bradshaw began by asking the panelists about the first aspect: how small changes in technology have had a big impact on history. Turtledove cited the example of the invention of the stirrup, which had a remarkable effect on riding and control, and would have resulted in some battles coming out very differently if it had been used in Alexandrian times. (I am sure there is a frieze with a rider using a stirrup from a period before it was assumed to have been developed, but Mark thinks that what is theorized was that it didn't catch on at that time. This would partially answer the question of why someone didn't think of it before – they did, but maybe it was tried in an imperfect form and people decided it wasn't very useful.)

Baxter said his next novel, *Ares*, will be based on a small change in technological history, the idea that the Apollo landings were followed by a Mars program. In our timeline, NASA did advocate such a program, but the times were wrong: we were involved in the Vietnam War, social programs were soaking up the government's money, and so on. Still, it was very close, and if Nixon had needed to go to Mars it could have been done, and wouldn't have cost much more than the shuttle. This was all very interesting, but it didn't actually address the question of what would be different now.

Leeper mentioned technology in Asia, saying that many times it could have moved toward more progress, and had a big effect on history. For example, China had a navy at one time, but burned it because the emperor decided there was nothing outside of China worth going to. And Japan had an opportunity in the 17th century to adopt Western technology but instead banned it and closed its doors to the West for two hundred years. If one considers how far they have advanced

in the hundred years since they did adopt Western technology, where would they be if they had started two hundred years earlier?

McMurray said his education was in mathematics, not technology or history, so he tended to look for things that might have been observed earlier. He gave the example that dairy maids didn't get smallpox, and asked what might have happened if vaccination had been around earlier. I noted that in Turkey, old women had been "vaccinating" people against smallpox for centuries, but Jenner gets the credit for adopting what others had been doing. Turtledove noted that in Turkey they used actual smallpox and hoped for a mild case instead of a deadly one, while Jenner used cowpox, which was considerably safer. In any case, had vaccination started earlier, it would have made a great difference, at least in Europe. McMurray claims it could have been eradicated sooner, but I am skeptical of that – there was a lot more than just the knowledge of how to vaccinate against smallpox that allowed the disease to be eradicated throughout the world.

McMurray also said that the yoke could have been invented earlier. The Roman Empire, for example, didn't have the yoke, which was why you needed so many horses to pull just a small chariot. McMurray added that they seemed to have the concept in some ways, but never applied it. (Oddly enough, less than a week later, we saw what were described as terrets from a yoke in the National Museum in Cardiff, Wales, which were supposed to be from between 50 B.C.E. and 50 C.E.) Leeper added that the same was true of the wheel in the Americas, and said a guide had claimed that while it was all right for children to use wheels in toys, they were too similar to the sacred sun to be used for work. Turtledove said it was probably not because of any religious prohibitions, but because they had no suitable draft animal.

Turtledove said that movable type has had a profound effect on everyone, and was discovered, oddly enough, in China, which has a poor language for it. (Actually, I had heard it was Korea, which does have an alphabetic language.) Had it been developed sooner in the West, things would be very different. Of course, for many of these suggestions of discovering or developing a technology sooner, one wonders if "very different" just means that we would be where we are sooner. This probably would have been an interesting direction to go off in. For example, if there had been movable type in the time of the Crusades, would the spread of the printed word have changed their course? If there had been better disease control in the 14th century, would the rise of the middle class and the mechanization of tasks been delayed because there was no great "die-off" in Europe? (Of course, one must also ask if this mechanization wasn't necessary **before** disease control could be perfected enough to have the desired effect.) However, the panel didn't follow through on this train of thought.

Baxter said that when he began *Anti-Ice*, he realized that an easy-to-handle antimatter would not have helped, because the Victorians would have no way to use it, so he had an anti-ice comet hit the moon (and Antarctica) instead. And trying to have the Victorians do space travel was difficult. They would have to have some way of making the ship airtight, and some way of recycling their air. And Bradshaw added that even with the plans, the jet engine could not be developed until materials for it had been made, but that radar could have been developed from World War I technology. Along the lines of this "single-point" technology, Turtledove said that the Germans knew about radar, but were not aware of its implications, which is almost standard: look at the tank. Leeper said that was true and that basically they were fighting with the same tactics as previous wars, in spite of having such weapons as tanks which required different approaches.

Baxter said the main problem the Greeks had with using any technology they developed was that they did not have the scientific method, so they had no way to test a hypothesis, or even the concept of doing so. That is why they thought heavy objects fell faster than light ones, though admittedly the fact is that most of the light ones they observed (such as feathers) probably did appear to fall slower (due to air resistance). Still, the fact that any sort of labor was beneath the aristocracy would have limited the amount of testing they would be willing to do, so developments such as Hiero's engine remained isolated curiosities. Baxter said it needed a social invention: the scientific method. Leeper said she thought this was more a scientific invention than a social one, but everyone agreed that it was needed. In any case, L. Sprague de Camp wrote about a time traveler trying to teach the scientific method to Aristotle in "Aristotle and the Gun"; needless to say, it did not work out as planned.

Baxter also suggested that going back to the Civil War and giving one side the Sten gun would have interesting effects, since they would have some idea how to use it, but not how to make it. Turtledove naturally noted that in *The Guns of the South* he used AK-47s. He even had his researchers try loading them with black powder, with the results described in the book. Leeper said that much of this was encapsulated in "Hawk Among the Sparrows" by Dean McLaughlin, a classic story in which a jet plane somehow gets thrown back in time to World War I, before jet fuel, before its heat-seeking missiles could find anything to seek, before there were any planes of a sort that its radar could detect, and when all the other planes could outmaneuver it. (Eventually it uses its sonic boom to shatter the other planes, however.)

Bradshaw asked how history might have been different without the catalyst of some wars. Wars provide a catalyst, he said, so what might things be like if there hadn't been a World War II? (This was drifting away from the technological aspects.)

Baxter said that one would need some basic changes in Germany to have no World War II, and Leeper agreed that you would have to come up with a scenario without Nazism. She said that without World War II, however, there would be many social changes from our time, or rather, there would not have been the social changes that World War II brought about: women working outside the home, changes in race relations, and so on. The GI Bill led to a lot more people

going to college, which led to further changes. (For that matter, without World War II, it's not clear what if anything would have pulled the United States out of the Depression.) These are all very Americentric, of course.

Turtledove said that World War II was the first time there was government-directed scientific research, but Bradshaw said it existed in World War I when Germany had its supply of guano (used to make nitrates) cut off and needed to develop artificial nitrates. Later, someone in the audience pointed out that the British navy was paying people in the 19th century to build chronometers, and Turtledove recalled that the tyrant Dionysius paid inventors to come up with catapults.

McMurray said that without World War II, there might have been a Cold War with Germany. I'm not sure – a Cold War requires some reason not to start a hot one, and without World War II, we wouldn't have had the atomic bomb.

Bradshaw returned to the idea of the way in which society looks on technology. In Greece there was a slave class to do all the work, but in Elizabethan times, there was a working class that could better its position through effort. Turtledove said that the major shift was the Industrial Revolution, since that was when someone could see change in his or her own lifetime, and different often looked better. This caused a change in attitudes toward artisans. Leeper noted that the Black Death brought a big cultural change, as an "underpopulated" Europe started using more efficient methods to do what had been done by brute strength before.

Baxter said that there is one type of change we are not familiar with, though it shows up in science fiction a lot, that of the crypt with the ruins of a previous civilization, or often that of bits of spaceships used by primitives.

Someone asked how difficult it would be for someone in the room to go back and change something (assuming a time machine, I suppose). Turtledove said, "Keep it simple," and I said the hardest part might be to avoid being burned as a witch through most of history. Bradshaw said that one could have the biggest impact by pointing out the wrong turnings. McMurray gave the example of a simple invention that would probably be quickly adopted: everyone in the room could invent movable type. Leeper suggested the concept of zero and place notation, but McMurray said this had been known for quite a while before its adoption, but was avoided because it made it easier for people to "fiddle the accounts."

Baxter felt that the battle of San Jacinto could easily have been tipped. Someone in the audience suggested stopping the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, but McMurray pointed out that Europe in 1914 was just itching for an excuse for World War I, and would have found something else. The audience member said the technology might have been different with a delay, but Turtledove reiterated that war was inevitable. Leeper suggested that a war without so much chemical warfare might have resulted in more chemical warfare in World War II, unless the solution to World War I also precluded World War II.

An audience member accused us of talking as if technology were inexorable, but claimed things would have changed if there had been no Einstein. Bradshaw responded that Einstein was ahead of his time, but his discoveries would have happened fairly soon anyway, because people had already observed too many anomalies in Newtonian physics.

Leeper observed that, for example, if Newtonian calculus hadn't caught on, Leibnitz's would have, and Leibnitz had a better notation (at least according to Mark Leeper).

Someone commented about what might have happened if Germany had developed the atomic bomb first. One has to postulate something that could lead to that, and that means either a much different way of doing the research, or Germany not driving all their Jewish physicists out, and the latter change would probably have far more interesting causes, and results, than just the bomb.

Someone in the audience reiterated what the panelists had hinted at, that it is the technological change that people have a use for that gets adopted. Turtledove noted that movable type reached the Ottoman Empire and in the first hundred years, only a hundred books were printed, because the Ottoman Empire was not ready or willing for large-scale information exchange McMurray said that relativity didn't really have much practical application either at first, so a few years' delay in its discovery would not make a lot of difference. Leeper observed that in the case of many technological inventions, you find six or seven people all working on the same thing. Edison, for example, stole a lot of inventions from other people, though Turtledove said Edison did invent sound recording on his own.

Baxter thought another interesting, if overlooked, invention that could have been introduced at any time was double-entry bookkeeping: it was the powerhouse behind the Italian businessmen. Someone on the panel noted that L. Sprague de Camp had that invention introduced much earlier in his *Lest Darkness Fall.*

An audience member said he still thought that inventions coming late would be of interest. Along these lines, Bradshaw suggested that without the development of the rocket in World War II there would have been no development of nuclear weapons (with no effective way to deliver them), and no real space program, but someone said that rocket travel would have come eventually.

McMurray said that if canals had been developed later that would have delayed a great deal; one audience member said that one thing it would have delayed was the compulsory buying of land by the government.

There was a discussion of the Romans. An audience member said that if Archimedes had survived, things would have been different, and this was possible since his death was somewhat accidental – the Romans had specifically said he was to remain alive. McMurray claimed the Romans were not technologically advanced, but Turtledove said, "You would be surprised." Apparently there has been a Roman pump found with a tolerance in tenths of a millimeter. Leeper asked if Babbage didn't have parts problems, and McMurray said Babbage's problem was that he could not find materials of sufficient strength, and that his search for such materials had a great effect on British engineering. Someone in the

audience asked what might have happened if Babbage had succeeded, to which Leeper replied, "Read *The Difference Engine.*" Baxter said his first experience with calculating machines was with those that had turn cranks, and Bradshaw noted that the first application was cryptography, not the sort of data manipulation postulated by Gibson and Sterling. Leeper noted that computers would have been very useful in ballistics, and Mark Leeper in the audience mentioned calculating trigonometric functions. Someone noted that the Manhattan Project used dozens of people performing sequential calculations to achieve results similar to computers. Leeper said another story along these lines was Sean McMullen's "Soul of the Machine," about a machine that used no electricity but instead had hundreds of people doing calculations and pulling on ropes and levers.

Baxter spoke about getting all knowledge generating words at random. Someone compared this to Arthur C. Clarke's "Nine Billion Names of God" and Leeper suggested a parallel with Jorge Luis Borges's "Library of Babel."

Bradshaw asked if all ideas will be investigated sooner because so many people are working on them. McMurray thought not, saying we still need to have people who have insights. Turtledove agreed, saying, "We will come up with surprises a good while longer." Leeper said that when things were primitive and basic it was clear which way to go, but now with more possibilities there will be more ways to go, so not all of them can be investigated.

Deus Ex Machina
Friday, 15:00 Brian Stableford

"A talk by Brian Stableford on how to achieve the perfect science fictional climax. If the archetype of all fiction is the sexual act, what types of climax are uniquely appropriate to hard science fiction stories?"

[In the discussion below, Stableford was talking primarily about hard science fiction, even when he referred to it without the qualifier. The thoughts expressed here are Stableford's even if not stated explicitly at each point; I have interpolated very few of my own comments.]

It was difficult to tell from the title and description whether this was a serious panel or a humorous one, and even after attending I can't be completely sure, but it did seem to take at least a reasonably straight approach to its subject.

The talk was based on comments by Robert E. Scholes in *Fabulation and Metafiction* in which he considers the climax of a story as an "orgastic act," complete with tension and resolution.

Stableford said that his talk was not only a discussion of the two types of climax, but also a pun on "hard science fiction." The basic climaxes in genre fiction are expected (the boy and the girl get together at the end of a romance story, the good guy beats the bad guy in a shoot-out at the end of a western, the murderer is revealed at the end of a detective story, etc.). Twist endings require this expected ending to exist, else there's nothing to have a twist on.

Stableford defined the two basic endings. There are normalizing endings, in which the situation is returned to that of the beginning of the story. An example of this would be a story in which some evil force enters a town but is eventually defeated, and everything returns to the way it was. There are wish-fulfillment endings (also called "eucatastrophes" by Tolkien), in which the situation of the hero is bettered. Examples of this would be stories in which the hero gets the girl, or wins the election, or acquires wealth, or gains revenge. In terms of the parallel of Scholes, sexual orgasms are essentially normalizing, but some are eucatastrophic.

But hard science fiction stories encounter awkward logical problems in achieving these types of climaxes. For one thing, there are no stereotypical science fiction endings except as they are also of other genres. That is because science fiction is about the socially transforming effects of science, and these are of a different nature than the problems in other genres. Normalizing endings assume that the status quo is both desirable and securable, and assume that change is bad – both of these assumptions are directly contrary to the underlying philosophy of most hard science fiction. In fact, Stableford noted, a show such as *The X-Files,* with its repeated normalizing endings, leads to paranoia rather than satisfaction. Accepting the inevitability of change was part of early science fiction, and this is still true of much of it today.

But conventional eucatastrophic endings have their own stereotypes (e.g., get rich, get revenge, get love). Though editors often favor these (John W. Campbell comes to mind), extrapolators often question whether our ideas of betterment are arbitrary. In fact, Stableford says, science fiction which refuses to question our existing values in eucatastrophic endings is cowardly. Hard science fiction demands eucatastrophic endings, but these endings cannot satisfy the reader if they cling to contemporary accepted values.

The history of eucatastrophic endings in science fiction goes back a long way. Edgar Rice Burroughs constructed "daydream fantasies" with such endings. Much early science fiction in the pulps was dedicated to the "myth of technological development as progress," and the technophilic Campbell certainly promoted this ideal. The two key figures in the analysis of plot in hard science fiction in the 1940s were Robert A. Heinlein and L. Ron Hubbard. Heinlein said that he believed there were only two basic plots: boy meets girl, and the little tailor. Then Hubbard pointed out a third: the man who learns better.

The latter results in a climax of "climactic enlightenment," in which the hero learns to place his life in the context of what science had revealed. And hard science fiction since 1939 has been a quest for new and more compelling eucatastrophic endings.

In hard science fiction, Stableford said, there are two types of eucatastrophic endings. One is what he termed an existential breakthrough: psi, acquisition of new mental powers, etc. He summarized these as, "The mentally blessed but conscientiously meek to inherit the earth." The other is the "cosmic breakout," involving rockets et al. Both of these usually start in a claustrophobically narrowed society so as to

emphasize the breakthrough. (Cyberpunk is just a variation on the cosmic, or extravagant, breakout.)

The cosmic breakout is closely linked to the sexual act, and Stableford attributes this to the male domination of hard science fiction. The eucatastrophe of the cosmic breakout is, as he describes it, essentially thrusting and penetrative.

Existential breakthrough stories also had sexual implications, but they avoid the masculinity of the cosmic breakout and are the other half of the masculine/feminine dichotomy.

Scholes thinks much popular fiction is as coarse as "slam-bam-thankyou-mam" and he notes how often writing is compared to prostitution. (Scholes had an even lower opinion of science fiction, and once said to Kurt Vonnegut, "Among the forms of popular fiction, science fiction was the lowest of the low.") But Scholes goes on to say that "the act of fiction is a reciprocal relationship – it takes two." His description clearly sees the writer as male, and the reader as female, even though he refers to both of them as "he."

Stableford feels that this low regard may be in some sense justified by the failure of most science fiction to follow the standards of characterization, mood, and so on that are applied to mainstream fiction. For example, characterization requires the author to fit a character to an environment, but in science fiction the environment isn't even there yet. Other standard techniques are equally difficult to apply to SF. The result is that science fiction foreplay is significantly different from other types. Other works construct realistic worlds with acts of **normalization,** while science fiction requires acts of **differentiation.** It is not the goal of the science fiction author to paint our world accurately, but to paint a world different from ours and emphasize the differences. Another difficulty is that hard science fiction is usually determined to extrapolate hard scientific principles, and because of this, the world described is more tightly bound that most fictional worlds. Indeed, most fictional worlds are allowed more leeway than the real one (we know Rhett Butler did not exist, but we allow him anyway).

According to Stableford, hard science fiction is judged on its potency, its ability to maintain its hardness, and its ability to penetrate the world, thereby reinforcing its masculine nature.

Sexual and narrative climaxes need no further justification other than their pleasure. But just as sexual climaxes serve a function in the reproduction of the species, so narrative climax is used to reproduce society and its mores. Readers want good to be rewarded. If this does not happen, this produces the feeling that is labeled as "tragedy." The supposed improbability of the happy ending is artificial in the fictional context, that is, no matter how unlikely the success of the hero, we know that he will triumph. When the starship *Enterprise* is attacked by Romulans on the television show, we know that it will defeat them, no matter how large the odds against it.

Which brings us to the deus ex machina. Religion and magical fantasy are full of dei ex machina, i.e., completely arbitrary happy endings of all the types discussed above. The harder the science fiction, the less room one would expect for dei ex machina, but this isn't what we see, because people (such as Campbell) say the technophilic moral order ought to be maintained at all cost. So hardness is confined to the early stages of the story (or foreplay, as Stableford said). As the stories progress, a metaphoric "divine wind" bursts forth to set everything right.

In Greek drama, however, it is the god-like power itself which matters; in hard science fiction, it is the source of the power that matters – technology. It is said that hard science fiction can insist that normality and moral order are transient, and that this end justifies the means (i.e., unrealistic climaxes that show this). The opposing view to this is that it's all essentially empty, and all we're getting are "miracles in technological disguise."

Stableford said he wants to discover and disclose a third type of climax. "L. Ron Hubbard was right – and wrong," he said. The man who learned better exists and is the best of the three plots, but Heinlein and Hubbard both misinterpreted this. Both men wrote and formulated their lives on this pattern. But Stableford noted, "We cannot know today what we will discover for the first time tomorrow." So we can't make claims about the next great breakthrough without making fools of ourselves. The man-who-learned-better-plots works when we set these tales in the past, but not as well in tales set in the future.

Stableford's answer is that we need to tell tales of men who never lose sight of the desirability of learning better, even if their successes are modest. These, he feels, are more satisfactory because this is how growth really proceeds. Progress is through the collective and collaborative efforts of many people, not through greedy individuals and supermen. Stableford said there are those who advocate avoiding the climax altogether (just as there are those who advocate the same for the sexual act), but he finds this too extreme. We must, however, be prepared to forsake the dramatics of the explosive climax.

Stableford insisted that we must "look with suspicion upon all the things we are bound to take for granted." In hard science fiction, eucatastrophic endings must be ironic and skeptical. "Satire is to be preferred to sermonizing." And in this leads to a parallel with what could be described as unorthodox and non-reproductive sex, in that its purpose is specifically not the reproduction of society as it is.

The Wheels of If

Friday, 17:00 Hermann Ritter

"A talk by Hermann Ritter about alternate history theories."

Ritter began by saying, "History taught in schools is usually a very dull business," explaining that there were no vampires, no magic, etc. In other words, everything that makes fantastic literature interesting is missing. So he became interested in counter-factual histories (which oddly enough also rule these out). Ritter makes a distinction between alternate histories and counter-factual histories, and

in fact his talk centered on this. Counter-factuals are distinguished by specific realistic change points. To justify a purpose for this, Ritter said that the laws of historical thinking define it as a science.

Ritter explicated four rules which separate counter-factuals from parallel worlds, etc. These are:

1. Laws of Nature: i.e., no aliens, superpowers, etc.
2. Law of Historical Evidence: i.e., you cannot have a counter-factual if there is no historical evidence of the period (on which to base a factual, I suppose). Therefore counter-factuals cannot have change points before 4000 years ago or so. (The figure is Ritter's; I suspect Egypt's history goes back further than that.)
3. Law of Effect: Things happening with no observation (e.g., Shangri-La) don't count, and if the timeline merges back into our own (as in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court)* it doesn't count either.
4. Law of Intention: The author must intend to write a counter-factual. For example, James Bond is not a counter-factual. In counter-factuals there is usually a reference to our own world (as in "Isn't it nice that X happened?"), or to famous people in different roles, or to counter-factuals to their own world. This also means that non-fiction that turns out to be wrong is not a counter-factual. But Ritter considers just about every fiction book as alternate history, even if it is not counter-factual.

Ritter described three groups of material published on the topic:

1. Wargaming: as used by the military. Ritter said he doesn't like this, because people are described as numbers, and it sees history only as battles.
2. Cliometrics: a new economic history based on explicit models of human behavior. It still uses formulae, but relies on a causal analysis of fact, e.g., "If slavery had not existed in America, then the Civil War would not have been fought." Sometimes people add a factor – if Hitler had invaded England – but cliometrics does not do this; it only takes factors away. These seem at first difficult to separate, but since cliometrics uses numbers, it can only work if it has numbers – it cannot make up numbers for additions, but can "not use" existing numbers for deletions.
3. Wheels of If: addresses the question of the individual in the stream of time. This is an area overlooked by the other two.

Ritter claims counter-factuals date from 1931 and J. C. Squire's anthology *If It Had Happened Otherwise* (later published under the title *If, Or History Rewritten).* Ritter listed many other articles, mostly in German, whose names I could not understand. I will assume most of them appear in Robert Schmunk's alternate history bibliography.

Ritter noted that although not the most popular change point, World War I changed more governments than any other war. Popular change points, working backward, include the Chinese Revolution, World War II, World War I, the American Civil War, the defeat of the Spanish Armada (here Ritter listed John Brunner's *Times Without Number,* though earlier he had said that book wasn't a counter-factual), the Black Death, and the death of Alexander the Great. Two other possible change points that he mentioned were not often used were if the Irish Christian Church broke from the Roman Church, and if the Scandinavians conquered Europe. (The former was used in books by L. Sprague de Camp, hence the title of the talk. The latter was discussed in Arnold J. Toynbee's "Forfeited Birthright of the Abortive Scandinavian Civilization," in *A Study of History,* Volume II.)

All this, Ritter claimed, is part of the process of history learning from science.

As part of the discussion, Michael Cule said that alternate histories (counter-factuals) emphasize the consequences of our actions. Alexei McDonald said that wargaming just says what **the player** would get if he or she did something different, not (for example) what Hitler would have gotten. And perhaps we should distinguish commercial wargaming from military wargaming. (I think Ritter was talking about military wargaming, but in English anyway, the term covers both of them.)

People pointed out that asking "What if X?" invariably leads to "How X"? For example, asking "What if the Loyalists won the Civil War?" leads to asking "How could the Loyalists win the Civil War?"

Someone asked whether this didn't lead to questions of free will versus determinism, and Ritter agreed that to some extent it did. But he believes that history is primarily a flow. In other words, in general he supports the "Tide of History" over the "Great Man" theory. However, most counter-factuals deal with specific people and not with more general causes. Could this be because it's easier to postulate changes if individuals can have large effects?

***Babylon 5* Interview**

Friday, 18:00 Marc Scott Zicree

I dropped in on this partway through. Zicree was saying that it was Warners who insisted on getting rid of O'Hare, not any sort of "mutual agreement" as was described on the Net. Who knows what's accurate? However, Zicree said that Warners usually doesn't interfere with the series. In any case, Straczynski is a pragmatist, and is willing to concede to Warners when necessary.

Zicree said that the networks are getting more adventurous in what they will run, and that some network executives even watch *The X-Files.*

Someone in the audience asked about "gratuitous spaceship shots." Zicree says they're popular, and besides, they need to write scripts to have crescendos before commercial breaks, and spaceship shots make that easier. It's also fairly cheap: while the opening credit sequence on *Star Trek: Voyager* cost $1,000,000, the Mars matte shot on *Babylon 5* cost only $2,000 and took one evening. This is almost definitely the death knell for models.

As far as how much the scriptwriters are told, Zicree said that for "Survivors" he was merely told to have Garibaldi fall off the wagon, but not given any reason for that. Zicree says

that in general outside writers get the non-arc stories, so they don't need a lot of information about future developments. Unlike with other series, the *Babylon 5* books and comic books are canonical and do connect up with the television story.

Asked about contradictions in various on-going series, Zicree said that they come in because everyone gets exhausted. Then later, writers try to write something to cover up the contradictions introduced.

Zicree is currently working on *Magictime*. The premise of *Magictime* is that all the machines stop and magic comes back; Zicree describes it as having a "mythic structure within a modern context." He thinks that Straczynski's "five-year plan" is a good length, and is looking at something like that for *Magictime*.

He said something about bringing Kirk back in future *Star Trek* film scripts. When someone pointed out that Kirk was killed, Zicree said, "Kirk's dead, but so was Spock."

More than the Sum of the Parts
Saturday, 10:00
Pete Crowther (m), David Garnett, Stephen Jones, Mike Resnick, Alex Stewart

"What makes a good anthology – the concept, the writers, the story selection? How much does the need for a balance and a complementary set of stories over-ride the quality of the individual piece? How often do you have to turn away a good piece because it just doesn't fit? When do you know if an anthology is 'working'? And is the whole really more than the sum of the parts?"

From this description this sounded like an interesting panel. Alas, Crowther started by saying that he supposed a "good" anthology was one that sold well, and most of the rest of the hour turned into a marketing discussion. However, considering that the audience barely outnumbered the panel, it didn't disappoint a lot of people.

Crowther said he sees too many anthologies in the United States, but Resnick replied that he thought we don't see enough, and would like to see more opportunities for short fiction.

As for marketing, Resnick said that if the publisher invests enough money in paying the authors, they will spend a reasonable amount on publicity to recoup their investment, but usually this isn't the scenario. Instead, the best-selling anthologies are the ones linked to movies. Even then, publishers screw up. Resnick's *Dinosaurs* was delivered in plenty of time, but missed *Jurassic Park*'s opening by three months, and *Aladdin* missed the opening of that film by four weeks. These were both DAW, indicating that the problem may be specific to them, and the fact that *Alternate Presidents* did make its window (albeit a larger one) supports this. In October 1992 I saw *Alternate Presidents* in the front window of a bookstore along with all the books by and about Clinton, Bush, Perot, Gore, Quayle, and so on. It also got $20,000 from the Book-of-the-Month Club, which outbid the Science Fiction Book Club by a considerable amount.

Jones said that the editor at Penguin in the United Kingdom was fired in part because she paid decent rates to authors. Jones feels that the word rate should be the same as for a novel, but rarely is, and in fact, the United States small press pays as much as the British mainstream press for anthologies.

Garrett contrasted magazines with anthologies, claiming that anthologies don't have as firm a deadline. (There was some eyebrow-raising over this. I think it's probably true that the deadline is slightly more flexible, but there is – or should be – a deadline.)

Resnick said the difference was that anthologies are sold around a theme, and are usually by invitation, while magazines are usually not themed (except by accident or perhaps a special issue) and open to everyone. Asked why anthologies are by invitation only, Resnick went through the arithmetic: the average anthology gets a $8,000 advance for 100,000 words. At the standard rate of 7 cents a word, that leaves only $1,000 for the editor, who almost invariably is splitting it with Martin Harry Greenberg. It takes about three weeks to do the work involved if it is by invitation, resulting in an annualized "salary" of under $9,000, or an hourly rate just slightly above $4. If it's open and the editor has to read through a slushpile, it's considerably lower.

Stewart said that publishers insist on having big names to put on the cover, so you need to be sure you will have a few of those in any case. And Jones said that you don't make money editing anthologies unless you're very lucky or very prolific (or a crook, Garrett added).

Jones feels most United States anthologies are junk, and wants to see more open slots for new writers. Resnick pointed out that he **does** publish new authors. He has done twenty anthologies (though he won't be doing any for a couple of years because he can make more money writing), and they have had six Hugo nominees, forty-one first stories, eight Campbell nominees, and two Hugo nominations for him as best editor.

Stewart mentioned he tries to encourage new writers and so sends personal rejection letters rather than form rejections. Garrett joked, "No one did us any favors, so why should we help anyone else?" More serious is Resnick's philosophy (given at ConAdian): we can't pay back the people who helped us, because they don't need our help; we can only pay forward.

Crowther, returning to the marketing aspects, said that if you go with a proposal without a theme, it's a difficult concept to sell unless you are an established name – such as Robert Silverberg – or a series – such as Bantam's *Full Spectrum*. Jones mentioned that the themes get ridiculous, and gave the theoretical example of "vampire angels," at which point everyone on the panel pointedly bent over their pads of paper and wrote it down.

Garrett said that *New Worlds* in the United Kingdom had problems with bookshops knowing where to file it: was it a magazine or an anthology? Its numbering is high enough now that it could easily confuse the bookseller; the latest one I have is number 172, but I'm sure it's much higher than that

now. Garrett noted that now that *Amazing* is dead, *New Worlds* is the oldest name in science fiction, having been started in 1946. He didn't mention *Weird Tales*, but the revitalization of that changed its name and now appears to be dead as well.

Regarding getting name authors, Resnick says that one way he does this is to let authors "double-dip" with their award-quality stories; that is, he lets them sell the stories to a magazine before book publication. This is a bit deceptive to the reader, since the book usually claims all its stories are new and written especially for the book, but it is not, strictly speaking, dishonest, since the book publication delay is why the story shows up elsewhere first.

Regarding timing, Jones said his aim was to publish his big anthologies right before summer vacations when people want something like that to take. He also said that bargain book reissues help. (We see that occasionally in the United States, although seeing original anthologies published by Barnes & Noble or other bookstores is more common.)

There was some discussion of the artistic end. Resnick best explained the dilemma by saying, "As a writer you have to be an artist until you write the words *'The End,'* then you have to metamorphize into a businessman. With an editor, it's the reverse."

There was a brief discussion of the short form versus the thick novel or trilogy. My observation would be that not every author is a Victor Hugo or a Leo Tolstoy. In fact, most authors are not, but only some of them realize it, and the rest try to write 1500-page epics.

Someone suggested that magazines are actually the replacement for general anthologies, but historically that doesn't make sense. Magazines were around long before anthologies, and the 1950s were the height of both.

Someone else said that a factor in buying anthologies was one's trust in the editor. But Resnick noted that he will edit anthologies that he has no interest in if Greenberg sells the concept and asks him to edit. Still, I think Resnick has enough pride that he will do a good job even if not inspired by the editing Muse, whoever that might be. As Jones said, "If your name is on the book, then you have to be able to stand up and defend that book."

Resnick said that one factor in the decline of the anthology is that the readership has changed: "More people reading sub-literate trash based on media events than science fiction," which I suppose is why publishers like media tie-in anthologies. Stewart added, "Publishing is run by beancounters who don't read books and [who] talk about product."

Resnick did observe that novellas by new authors are easier to place in anthologies than in magazines. "Magazines won't turn over half an issue to a name they can't put on the cover." He also told us to look for Brian Tetrick's "Angel of the Wall" and Nick DiChario's story (the last one in Piers Anthony's *Tales of the Great Turtle).* Resnick said that in an anthology, the last position is the strongest, and the first the second strongest.

There was some mention of one-author novella collections, and Bantam publishes some stand-alone novellas by such well-known authors as Robert Silverberg and Connie Willis. Young-adult books are also closer to novella-length. But in general, short stories (meaning shorter than 40,000 words) are dead outside of the science fiction and mystery fields.

Asked what anthologies most influenced them, Garrett named the Penguin science fiction anthology edited by Brian Aldiss (adding that ironically he now edits Aldiss), Resnick named the anthologies edited by Groff Conklin, Jones named the *Pan Book of Horror Stories* and *Dark Forces*, and Stewart named the John Carnell series "New Writings in SF."

Resnick closed by warning that the literary history of the field will be lost if we can't convince publishers to reprint some of the classic early anthologies.

Deconstructions: *The Guns of the South*
Saturday, 13:00
Paul Kincaid & Harry Turtledove in discussion

"The deconstructions thread is a new concept for Worldcon programming. To provide greater focus, we take a single work and look at its genesis, evolution, content, ideas, and at the author's view on it now. The format is somewhere between an interview and a conversation, and the focus should be clearly on the specific work."

Kincaid began by asking the obvious: "I want to ask how you came to write this book."

"This was not a book I planned to write," Turtledove responded. But Judith Tarr wrote him at one point about her new book, saying that the "cover art [was] as anachronistic as Robert E. Lee holding an Uzi." This led Turtledove to ask, "Who would want to give Robert E. Lee Uzis? Time-traveling South Africans?" And so it began.

Kincaid then asked about the problems involved in tackling the Civil War. Turtledove said that the main problem is that a lot of people know a lot about it. As Turtledove put it, "I knew the vast yawning depths of my ignorance." (I think he's being too modest, or maybe he just does research really well.)

Was he nervous about stepping into an area that's been very heavily worked by science fiction authors? "Somewhat nervous, but I knew I could create my own place."

Turtledove said he started in the spring of 1864 in order to make the South examine the assumptions under which they gained their independence. By that point, the South had seen black troops, had experienced the occupation of some Southern areas, and had seen the (at least theoretical) emancipation of the slaves in states still in revolt. As Turtledove said, he wanted the book to say, "You got everything you thought you wanted. You're so damned smart, what are you going to do with it?" (As Turtledove explained later, the Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to Northern slave states – Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware – or to the occupied South.)

Turtledove said he had read Lee's letters twenty-five years ago, and based almost all of what Lee said in *The Guns of the South* on what Lee actually wrote. There is a lot of documentation on the Civil War, Turtledove said, not like Byzantine history, which is a little piece of information here, a little piece there, and a lot of leaps of inference.

Kincaid asked about the fact that revisionists now present Lee as not such a great honorable gentleman, but Turtledove disagreed. Turtledove explained, "I respect him as a man. He had a great many admirable qualities, but he has a lot of attitudes I don't agree with at all." He also added, "If the South had won on their own, I don't think Lee would have been as liberal as in my book." He explained that it was what he called a "Hegelian relationship": the South Africans being so racist served to make the Southerners in his book less so, because they saw the horror of the extrapolation of their racism.

Turtledove also said that there would have been emancipation in the South even if they had won in 1862 but it would have taken longer, and gave Brazil as an example of a slave-holding society that phased it out without a war.

Kincaid asked about the lack of technology in the South. Turtledove said he had help from Chris Bunch on how the South would have tried to reproduce the AK-47, and they concluded that it would have been possible for the South to reproduce it as in the book.

Turtledove also noted that the South seceded on the basis of states' rights, but became more draconian than the North (in terms of conscription) and also more centralized than they intended.

In any case, a Southern victory in 1864 would throw Northern politics into turmoil. So, as Turtledove said, "I had McClellan running as an act of ego, which he came equipped with a large economy size of." And Turtledove's projections of vote totals led to throwing the election into the House of Representatives, but he felt that this would be considered unlikely by the readers. As he said, "All history has to do is happen. Fiction has to feel real too." Kincaid joked, "McClellan could never have won the election; he would have just overestimated Lincoln's votes and assumed he lost."

Turtledove noted, "One of the stupidest things the South ever did was replace Joe Johnston with Fighting Joe Hood against Sherman outside Atlanta."

Turtledove announced, "I do not ever intend to write a sequel to *Guns.*" His reasoning is that the changes he postulated are so radical that it's too difficult to figure out which possibilities are the most likely much further down the line. But he is working on a different aftermath of a different Southern victory. This one assumes General Lee's courier did not lose Lee's General Orders #191. Hence there was no Emancipation Proclamation, the South was recognized by England and France, so the South eventually was recognized by the Union as well. Then the Union allies with Germany in the late 1800s, leading to the Quadruple Entente. In passing, Turtledove noted that in 1914, Custer would have been seventy-five years old.

Turtledove talked a bit more about his research for the book. As he explained, there are a lot of documents about Greek history (for example), but the amount of detail/minutiae available for the Civil War is far greater. But "One of the nice things you find out as a writer is that people will help you for no good reason." He wrote someone asking about information about the 47th North Carolina Regiment, and the person asked if he would like the regimental history and the complete roster of that regiment, for $30. Turtledove said it was the best $30 he ever spent. The result is that all the people in the book in that regiment are real.

And this includes the woman in the book who served in the regiment in disguise. "There was a woman in the regiment," and she was well enough documented that he could use her. Other details include the high percentage of those dying of disease, which was twice that of those dying of wounds. The reason for this is that many North Carolinians (who had lived in relative isolation) were not immune to childhood diseases and died shortly after enlisting.

Regarding the South Africans in his novel: "Anyone willing to go back in time and noodle with history to preserve a racist state has a strong ideological commitment to begin with."

In response to a question, Turtledove said he ignored time paradoxes – he said he could always argue they are starting a new branch and then going up that branch and down the old one to get home.

Why the AK-47? Turtledove said it was produced in large numbers and is the terrorist weapon of choice; it also will take the most abuse of any weapon when used by amateurs.

Someone asked how Turtledove could rationalize the invasion of Canada, given the sea power of the British empire. But as Turtledove noted, "Ruling the seas does you a limited amount of good in a war against Canada." However, the beginnings of independence for Canada came because "Britain decided it was a good idea to start to create the semblance of an independent country because of the United States' drum-beating" in the real Civil War.

Turtledove also talked a bit about his new book, *The Two Georges,* which he co-authored with Richard Dreyfuss. It is set in the present in a world in which the American Revolution did not happen, the Gainsborough painting is a secular icon, and American separatists hijack it.

Someone asked why, when the South Africans have lost, why don't they pull out through the time gate? Turtledove's answer was that they still want to try to save the situation. Asked about recent changes in South Africa, Turtledove said there were "fewer malcontents than I expected," to which someone in the audience responded, "Perhaps they all ran away in a time machine."

No More Noble Savage:
Technology and Genocide of Native Peoples
Saturday, 15:00
Henry Balen (m), Daniel Marcus, Dale Skran, Amy Thomson

"Does technological growth mean genocide for native peoples? This has been the rule for the last century, but are there other better ways?"

I will insert my own observation here that occurred to me on reading about this panel. We are the result of some cultures being absorbed by other more technological ones. If no culture had ever wiped out another, we wouldn't be here. And, as I noted at one point, there have been previous cases of one superpower trying to control the world and force its government, religion, etc., on everyone else, and one was imperial Rome. And certainly the Roman culture was more advanced technologically than Greek or Middle Eastern culture, and did in fact conquer them, legislate Roman ways, and disperse the people. As I observed, this must be why we have so many temples to Jupiter and Mercury, and why the religions and customs of the Middle East have totally vanished. Or put less sarcastically, which had the more lasting influence: the technological conqueror or the native peoples of Judea?

Balen began by asking if it is possible to have technological societies coexist with non-technological cultures? Marcus said that there really seemed to be two parts to the question: "Is genocide a bad thing? Yes. Is technology a bad thing? That's harder to answer."

There was discussion of forcible change inflicted by the over-culture. The example mentioned was that of child-napping (basically) of American Indian children in the early part of this century to be sent to boarding schools and taught "American" ways. (A similar example would be the conscription of young Jewish boys into the Russian military in the last century for twenty-five-year terms.)

There was also mention of the fact that the United States government seemed (seems?) less concerned about the pollution of Indian lands than of other areas.

Thomson noted that child-napping is not technological, and not really the focus of the panel. We should stick to discussions of technology, she claimed, and gave the example of Meiji Japan. Thomson said that they themselves decided they had to become technological. (This is debatable, at least based on what I know about the period.)

Skran asked if it was **possible** for the two levels of technology to coexist. His answer was that it was possible only if the technologically advanced society enforces it. They may want to do it for ethical reasons, or in the interest in cultural diversity, but they have to actively decide to follow this sort of a "Prime Directive." (He gave the example of Michael Armstrong's *Agriq*, a post-holocaust world in which native skills are critical.)

Thomson suggested that another reason for preserving the "native" culture was that the "more advanced" culture might want the feeling of power it got from controlling the native people. (All these terms are loaded of course, and in fact the whole issue of cultural relativism was later raised.)

Skran returned to the question of what would be an ethical way to manage a relationship with a native people. The panelists pretty much agreed that it has to be possible for individuals to leave the native culture. For example, in Mike Resnick's "Kirinyaga" stories, a dissatisfied member goes to a certain spot and a certain time, and says the equivalent of "Beam me up, Scotty," and they're out. In Sheri S. Tepper's *Sideshow*, on the other hand, members in one society can be restrained from leaving, which results in a much less stable set of societies.

Marcus raised the question of whether a technological culture is intrinsically expansionist, but this remained unanswered.

Thomson noted in regard to letting the decisions be made by the native culture, "They will absorb what they want and that may or may not be good for them, but you have to let them make those decisions."

Balen asked what the difference is between adopting a culture and having it forced upon you, but this too wasn't dealt with, although Marcus gave the example of the Marshall Islands culture being totally destroyed by the United States.

Some people also expressed concern about cultures being supported as folk cultures instead of as "material" cultures (by which I assume my note meant real cultures). Skran asked if there are any currently surviving native cultures that haven't adopted the material base of the main culture. Thomson claimed the Navajo fit this description, but other panelists disagreed, saying the Navajo have adopted the material culture, and also make most of their money from tourism, which would not seem to describe a culture viable outside of the "folk culture" context. Someone in the audience suggested that the Hopi may be doing a better job of saving their culture than the Navajo. Everyone did agree that cultures don't exist in a vacuum in any case. Someone mentioned the book *In the Absence of the Sacred* by Jerry Mander on this subject. Marcus asked if a static culture, as people seemed to be favoring, was in fact a good thing. Skran noted that a perfectly preserved native culture would of necessity be one you couldn't leave, and that would be unethical – in effect, condemning all members born into that culture to imprisonment within it. Skran also said he agrees with Mander that genocide is bad, but disagrees with Mander's contention that technology is bad.

It is true, if one looks at history, that static cultures can survive a long time; examples would be ancient Egypt and China. But static cultures have problems when they come up against another equally powerful or more powerful civilization, and may find it more difficult to adapt. A static culture can easily become the tree that breaks rather than the tree that bends.

Someone in the audience said that native developments need to be valued by the technological culture, and said this wasn't happening. Someone (Balen?) suggested *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice* by Mark J. Plotkin as an example of this happening, though others felt that this was **not** what Plotkin was doing. The claim they made was that Plotkin was picking and choosing what he wanted to use from the native culture rather than taking it as a whole. Skran raised what seemed like the perfectly obvious objection to this attitude: if the native culture should be allowed to pick and choose what

it wants from the technological culture, then any culture should be able to pick and choose what it wants from another culture.

Thomson pointed out that the panel was starting to talk about "better" and "worse" instead of looking at how cultures function from different basic cultural assumptions. True, but one could also say that antebellum Southern culture had the basic cultural assumption that slavery was commanded by God. Does that mean that we cannot apply the term "worse" to that culture? Or even more paradoxical, if our culture has the cultural assumption that judging cultures as "better" or "worse" is valid, by their own rules it would seem as though cultural relativists cannot criticize us for doing so.

The Time Machine, 100 Years On

Saturday, 16:00

Robert J. Sawyer (m), Stephen Baxter, Robert Silverberg, Brian Stableford

"How influential has Wells been for today's writers? Is he still someone we can learn from, and if so, what? How readable is his work now – does it have anything to say to us in a contemporary sense, or is it becoming a period piece. And how well does *The Time Machine* in particular stand up after a hundred years?"

The panelists began with the question, "Is *The Time Machine* a seminal work for today's writers?"

Baxter said yes – the language was fresh and modern, and Wells invented the idea of using a mechanical, controllable method of time travel where previous writers had relied on magic or wishing. *The Time Machine* is simultaneously an adventure, a social parable, an evolutionary parable, and a parable about science. It can be read by a twelve-year-old, or analyzed by literary critics.

Stableford agreed, adding that it served as an example of both a novel and a short story, being the first item in Wells's *Collected Novels* and also in Wells's *Collected Short Works*.

Silverberg was more ambivalent. He said that Wells was the best writer who ever wrote science fiction, and that it's been going downhill ever since 1910. Wells, for example, wrote the first time travel story, the first alien invasion story, and the first superman story. But *The Time Machine* is no longer seminal for a science fiction writer, because it has been so thoroughly assimilated that it is not necessary to go back to the source – it is more necessary to see what has already been done with it. It is, however, seminal for science fiction readers. As he said, "The ten-year-old Robert Silverberg found that book in 1945 and was never the same again."

Sawyer said he first encountered it as the "Classics Illustrated" comic book and the movie. He finally read the book, coincidentally enough, in the *Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Volume I*, edited by Robert Silverberg. But Sawyer noted that the novel can be read in a lot of different ways and suggested the panelists start with it as a work of science fiction.

Baxter said that one important thing to observe was that *The Time Machine* has precisely imagined and described details. Many of these are in some of the parts taken out of the serial before book publication. Stableford said that the novel provided the method for the genre, as well as providing the basic stories. (The method referred to was that of searching the environment for nuggets of ideas and then extrapolating them.) Silverberg reminded us that Wells regarded his science fiction as apprentice work while preparing to do his real novels. As Silverberg noted, most of these are not read today, just as the other novelists of Wells's style such as Henry James and Joseph Conrad are no longer still popular entertainers, but Wells as an author of science fiction is.

Sawyer talked about the scene in which the Time Traveller arrives in a rainstorm in 802,701 C.E. and how Wells was able to reveal the scene gradually, rather than abruptly giving a 360-degree inventory of what the Time Traveller saw.

The panelists then turned to the Morlock/Eloi dichotomy and Wells's social commentary. Baxter said that the Time Traveller tries to interpret what he sees, but he can't be sure if he's right, and he knows it. Stableford said that although Wells was a brilliant writer, he was not of the intelligentsia, but was the son of a servant, and spent a lot of his youth living underground ("below stairs") in servants' quarters. In fact, one reason that Wells wanted to write serious novels was for respectability. Silverberg said that he always found the Eloi/Morlock story the least interesting, probably because he aspires to be an Eloi.

In passing, Sawyer noted that the most 1990s thing Wells did was to leave room for a sequel. (And as Baxter's talk earlier showed, authors have taken advantage of this.)

It was noted that we still have time travel stories, but not a lot of alien invasion stories, anti-gravity space ship stories, or invisible man stories. (Yes, I know there are exceptions.) Why is this, and is *The Time Machine* Wells's greatest novel?

Baxter said that it probably was, although *The War of the Worlds* may have been greater when the pastoral English countryside was more familiar. A twelve-year-old can read *The Time Machine* much as he or she would read *Gulliver's Travels* – as an adventure story, without worrying about the underlying meanings. Stableford felt that *The Island of Dr. Moreau* might actually be more relevant today (as well as *The First Men in the Moon*).

Silverberg partially disagreed, saying *The First Men in the Moon* seems merely quaint now, but *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is as "alive and quivering" as it was when it was first published. He also thought that *The War of the Worlds* still has relevance and is a perfect novel. In fact, he intends to write a response to it (whatever that means). (He also mentioned that Wells also wrote seventy short stories.) The only one of Wells's seven best-known novels that Silverberg thinks is antiquarian is *The First Men in the Moon*. And of Wells's lesser known works, Silverberg recommends *Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* as well. He also mentioned the extrapolated technology in *The War in the Air*, which

Wells wrote after earlier denying the role of the airplane, and speculates that this turnabout was due in part to others' writings. Stableford agreed that much of *The First Men in the Moon* was dated, but said that what was valuable was the Selenite society.

I asked, "This may be more a question about the readers perhaps, but if one of these were unearthed today and hence eligible for a Hugo, would it get nominated? Would it win?"

In response, Stableford said he wondered if the Verne novel was genuine or just a clever fake. Sawyer said that Stanley Schmidt (editor of *Analog)* said that if Wells had cut the first ten pages of *The Time Machine,* Schmidt would have printed it. And Silverberg noted that the real test is whether an author is read, and Wells is still read.

Mark Leeper asked about the one novel of the "Big Seven" that they hadn't mentioned, *In the Days of the Comet.* Baxter responded that Wells believed we were in a collective madness, but the basic implausibility of the novel works against it. This is also true of *The World Set Free* and *The Shape of Things to Come.*

Stableford thought *In the Days of the Comet* belongs with the other books in which Wells was developing his Utopian dream, saying, "Resentment works better in fictional form."

From the audience, Jack Cohen proposed that the Eloi/Morlock stuff is boring because Wells, by writing about it, has changed the world away from a path that would lead to it. The panelists thought that this was a possibility, though they said that Wells was a believer in the "Tide of History" rather than the "Great Man."

Someone asked about what Wells did about time paradoxes and the answer was that he didn't worry about them, or about the fact that the Time Traveller was in two places at one time. Someone else in the audience objected to Wells's sexual stereotyping and terrestrial chauvinism (and also to his apparent belief that there are things that science shouldn't probe), to which Silverberg replied, "Bless you, I haven't heard a word of PC since I left California two weeks ago."

Kaffeeklatsch – Harry Turtledove
Saturday, 17:00

This was very well attended, with its full complement and a waiting list besides. As we were settling in, someone asked if it didn't bother Turtledove to let the bad guys win in *The Guns of the South,* and Turtledove noted that S. M. Stirling did an even more thorough job of it in his "Draka" series.

Turtledove began by talking about his new book coming out, *The Two Georges,* co-authored with Richard Dreyfuss. I asked him why they didn't use the Gainsborough on the cover, and Turtledove said that the marketing people thought it more important to get the names of the authors on the cover.

How did this book come about? Well, apparently Dreyfuss had been interested in alternate history for a long time and liked *The Guns of the South,* which he read after seeing an article about Turtledove and the book in the *Los Angeles Times.* So he called Turtledove to suggest they have lunch together because he had this idea for a book, and, while Turtledove was skeptical, he went ahead anyway, and thus the project began. It was delayed somewhat, since Dreyfuss was also making movies at the time and couldn't always keep up to the writing pace Turtledove was used to. Turtledove admitted that the writing in *The Two Georges* was mostly his own, but said that the characterization and dialogue are heavily Dreyfuss's.

Later I asked him if he had seen the episode of *Sliders* with a similar premise about there being no successful American Revolution, but Turtledove said he had never watched *Sliders.*

Someone mentioned that *The Guns of the South* didn't seem to be marketed as science fiction, often showing up in the mainstream fiction section, and occasionally even in the history section! The latter is primarily in the South, supposedly. In connection with this "cross-over" aspect, Turtledove said that he had received the John Esther Cook Award for Southern Fiction in 1993 from the Order of the Stars and Bars, and described attending the awards dinner. Labeling himself as a conservative, Turtledove said at this event he felt like a far-left liberal, and wondered what some of the black waiters felt about the whole affair – but hadn't the nerve to ask. *The Guns of the South* has been translated into Italian, Spanish, and probably Russian at this point, but not French.

Turtledove got started writing alternate histories with his "Basil Argyros" stories. In the first one ("Unholy Trinity," a.k.a. "Etos Kosmou 6824" in *Agent of Byzantium,* 1985), Basil Argyros finds the Franks in Spain using gunpowder and adopts it. The idea behind this series is that Mohammed became a Christian, and because there was no Muslim threat, Byzantium never fell, but instead faced a technologically sophisticated Persia. Asked whether he had any "Salman Rushdie sorts of problems" with his Basil Argyros stories, Turtledove said no, because he is just an infidel, not an apostate.

Someone asked what Turtledove used to do before he quit his day job; he had been a technical writer for the Los Angeles Board of Education. Now he is a full-time writer. He writes two and a half to three hours a day, 350 days a year. (He takes time out for a few conventions.) The rest of the day is not idle; it goes toward reading and research for his writing. He is working on four things now, which is the maximum multi-tasking he can do. Someone said at this point, "I always worry when a writer quits his day job," to which Turtledove responded, "So does the writer." But he forces himself to write every day, because "if you wait for the Muse to strike, you will starve." He writes his first drafts by hand, because when he types, "all the crap comes out." Writing is slower, and forces him to edit as he writes. Currently he is working on a straight historical novel about Justinian II.

Someone asked about his books written as "Eric Iverson." When they were first published, Belmont wanted to use "Eric Iverson" as the byline, saying no one would buy a book by an

author named "Turtledove." As Turtledove explained, he was a new author who had just sold his first story and wasn't about to argue: "The first time you lose any cherry you don't care how. You worry about quality later." (Well, I'm not sure I'd agree with that philosophy as being true of everyone.) Later when he sold a story to Lester del Rey, del Rey insisted on using "Turtledove." So Turtledove was pressured first to use a pseudonym and then to use his real name.

Currently he is trying to place a collection which will feature his Hugo-winning story "Down in the Bottomlands." (Why should it be difficult to place such a collection? Maybe it's a question of who will pay the most, or market it the best.)

Asked about important turning points that still remain to be done well as alternate histories, Turtledove suggested that the Romans conquering Germany and keeping it would qualify. But he reminded us that the key point in choosing a turning point or alternate world is to remember that "the interest in alternate history is the light it sheds on the world we have now."

Turtledove referred a bit to the problems that occur when you try to write an alternate history too far in the future of the change point. I call this the "Via Roma problem" (after Robert Silverberg's novella). Silverberg avoided the extreme unlikelihood of there being any sorts of parallel people, place names, etc., in a world 2000 years after the Exodus failed and Rome never fell. But the result is that the story could as easily be set on a different planet; there is little that ties it to our Earth.

Masquerade
Saturday, 19:30

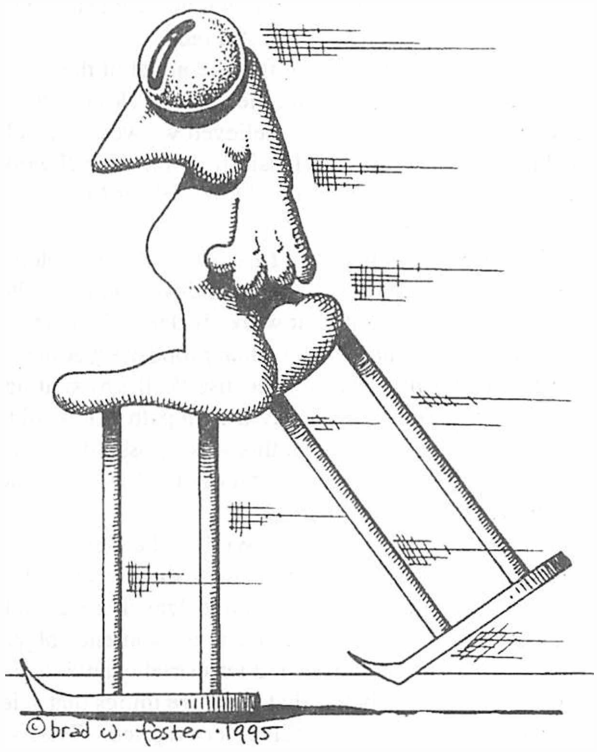
The doors opened at 6:30 PM, and the hall (which appeared to have a capacity of about 3500) was only two-thirds full for the masquerade. As usual, there was reserved seating which was at the end opened up to everyone, meaning people who arrived the earliest did not necessarily get the best seats.

The Masquerade itself actually started on time!!! There were only about twenty-five costumes, so we were out before 9 PM. The costumes were not bad, but there were no Master Class Awards (I think someone said there were only two Master Class costumes in the Masquerade). It's a trade-off – the costumes might not be as amazing as those at a North American Worldcon (it is hard to transport the costumes transatlantically), but you don't spend hours and hours seeing bad costumes either, and you get out at a reasonable time.

Parties

Having gotten out at a reasonable time, we decided to hit a few parties. Other than bid parties, the party situation was grim.

Chicago in 2000 party had the gimmick of science fiction author trading cards, available for purchase through some complicated scheme involving pre-supporting memberships. Kansas City in 2000 lacked any identifying feature. Australia in 1999 had the best party: it had the biggest room, the most interesting people, a ban on smoking, and Australian wine. Moscow in 2017 was (I think) a hoax bid, and had enough vodka to cause problems with drunken fans in the hallway. Zagreb in 1999 had plum brandy, though in somewhat smaller quantities, and very little chance of winning even if the bidders are serious. (Rumor has it that the last Zagreb bid was not entirely serious, but that the bidders were getting support from the Yugoslav tourist bureau to promote it at conventions around the world.)



The Funny Bon's Connected to the Headbone
Sunday, 10:00
Eileen Gunn (m), Jody Lynn Nye,
Mike Resnick, Connie Willis

"Can humour help you to put across serious points? If so, why? Are people just more receptive to the message wrapped up in a pleasant package?"

Willis was saying that comedy and tragedy have the same material; it's how you deal with it (the treatment) that makes the difference.

Gunn thought that comedy is a form of avoidance, a way of avoiding reality.

Resnick said that he has written so much humorous fiction that his problem is being taken seriously. In his opinion, comedy is the unexpected happening in an expected place, or vice versa. Given that simple definition, Resnick asked why only about half a dozen people can sell humor.

Nye said that humor in general gets no respect, and said to look at the Academy Awards, where the last comedy to win for Best Picture was *It Happened One Night*. (I guess she

doesn't count *Annie Hall* as a comedy.) Resnick said that shouldn't be given too much weight; the Academy Awards are voted on by fewer people than the Hugos.

Willis said that she was on a panel about humor and someone asked her why no funny story had ever won a Hugo – and this was right after she had won one for "Even the Queen."

Nye also felt that displaced cultures have the deepest humor to compensate for feeling out of place. Resnick agreed, saying that writing comedy is an outlet for pain, and gave the example of George Alec Effinger, who would write his serious work when he was feeling good, but when he was in pain could write only comedy. Willis said she had read somewhere that after being taken to Bergen-Belsen, Anne Frank had only happy dreams. Willis also said that Hitchcock understood laughter as the release of tension in a way filmmakers since seem to have forgotten.

Resnick said that returning from ConAdian on his Winnipeg-Minneapolis flight, there were a lot of professional authors, editors, etc., and the conversation turned to, "If the plane crashes, who will be on the front page of *Locus?*"

Willis said that she thought that writers who dabble in comedy fall through into an alternate world and funny things happen to them, and related a humorous travel of trying to get to Kyrie Muir from Glamis. I'm not sure I agree – equally strange things happen to Pete Rubinstein ... or to us. As someone in the audience said later, "It's the presentation. You made us laugh, but if we told the same stories, people wouldn't laugh."

Willis told how one year she bought a full-size cardboard mock-up of Harrison Ford, thinking she could carry it on the plane, and then won a Hugo which she also had to carry on. "I owe all my success to Harrison Ford," she said. Resnick said he won a Hugo the year they were clear acrylic and when they questioned what it was at airport security, he said, "This is a rectal thermometer for an elephant." In all of these stories, Willis said, it was important to be able to laugh at yourself.

Someone quoted Asimov as once saying that humor is a bull's-eye with no target around it – you're either funny or you're not. Gunn said that was what was nice about writing humorous stories: in a story, you have many chances to be funny; it's not just one shot.

Willis noted that there are many types of humor: topical, visual, language, and general humor. She also said that humor builds. Some people will laugh at some parts of a scene, others at different ones, but everyone laughs at the end because they've been built up to it. Gunn asked if Willis actually thought about this when she was writing, and Willis instantly replied, "Yes, I do." Gunn said, "I don't think about it" at the time, but she hones it later.

Gunn talked about telling or hearing a story about Nixon in which the audience laughed at the jokes because they were structured like jokes (or in scientific terms, they were joke-like objects) even if they were too young to remember Nixon.

Resnick said that once "someone asked me to record *She* with Ursula Le Guin," which led to great amusement until he corrected himself to say "Ursula Andress." But the point was that his reaction to the film was, "If they could be that funny by accident, what could they do if they tried?" And apparently this led to his creation of Lucifer Jones.

Resnick emphasized that the writer must be conscious of the audience, or you could tell tales to yourself in the shower and save wear and tear on your fingertips.

What humorists do the panelists like? Willis likes Goulart: "Humor does date, but his holds up well." Resnick said that Thorne Smith used to be very funny, but his Prohibition/drunk jokes aren't funny now, especially with our concern over alcoholism. Gunn said, "I think it's the tropes of humor that age." She likes Robert Benchley and Finley Peter Dunne (who wrote in Irish dialect at turn of the century). As an example of Dunne, she quoted him as having said, "If the American people can govern themselves, they can govern anything that walks." (This was apparently in regard to the Philippines.)

Resnick recommended John Sladek, Fredric Brown, Henry Kuttner, and William Tenn. Gunn recommended Lesley Black and Harry Harrison's *Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers*. Willis suggested Thomas Disch's "Santa Claus Compromise." Asked about Mark Russell, Resnick said he was just a watered-down Mort Sahl.

One problem humorists have now is what Willis called the battle cry of every group: "That's not funny." (Of course, 90% of the time it's not funny. It's only when someone with the talent of a Willis or a Resnick writes about it that it's funny. And denigrative humor that isn't funny is worse than other types of non-funny humor, in that it makes the "humorist" look bigoted.)

Gunn gave her example of telling ethnic humor: "How many Polish popes does it take to unscrew a pregnant woman?" She had this printed in the college newspaper and someone complained. Resnick added, "The Polish pope performed his first miracle: he made a blind man lame."

Resnick closed by saying that humor was an essential element, even in a serious work, and that one can't carry a serious scene more than 1700 words without relieving some tension with humor.

Can We Take Popular Science Seriously? (The Abuses of Popular Science)

Sunday, 12:00

Caroline Mullan (m), Steve Brewster, Christine Carmichael, Daniel Marcus

"An enquiry into the uses and abuses of popular science."

Mullan brought a lot of books which she stacked up as examples of popular science books. Some were mentioned during the talk, but as best as I could tell, the stack included:

– *The Collapse of Chaos* by Jack Cohen and Ian Stewart

– *What Do You Care What Other People Think?* by Richard Feynman

– *Chaos* by James Gleick

– *Eight Little Piggies* by Stephen Jay Gould
– *The Tangled Wing* by Melvin Konner
– *Fuzzy Logic* by Dan McNeill
– *The Descent of the Child* by Elaine Morgan
– *Mind Tools* by Rudy Rucker
– *The Density of Life* by Edward O. Wilson

Brewster began by saying that he reads popular science for the sense of wonder it gives him, and finds it better in this regard than most science fiction. He specifically mentioned Daniel Dennett's *Consciousness Explained.* (Dennett has also written *The Mind's Eye* with Douglas Hofstadter.) Mullan asked if Dennett actually intended to induce a sense of wonder, but I'm not sure that's a fair question in judging the reader's reaction.

Mullan said she reads popular science as a way to keep up with science without reading dense material that one may not have time for. Marcus said that this could be dangerous, and holding up Gleick's *Chaos,* said, "This book detracts from the sum of human knowledge." Why? Because it has spawned a non-rigorous treatment of the subject in the media, resulting in what Marcus termed a "chain of distorted reflections."

Mullan noted that at least science fiction says it's fiction, while the non-fiction treatments masquerade as truth. From the audience, Anita Cole asked, "What book on chaos theory would you recommend?" Marcus suggested *Order and Chaos* by Boullet and two others whose names I didn't get, and then added Stephen H. Kellert's *In the Wake of Chaos,* which starts out, "Chaos theory is not as interesting as it sounds. How could it be?"

Carmichael recommended *Science* or *Nature* magazines, and also *The New Scientist.*

Someone in the audience asked why there are so many popular science books now. Catherine Kerrigan, also in the audience, said it was due in large part to the success of Stephen Hawking's book, and to various political attempts (at least in the United Kingdom) to promote science.

Carmichael says that one way to keep up is to look for review articles of the books in journals, since they often summarize the book. Marcus said that the review articles cover the information, but don't entertain the way the books can. Mullan added that the problem was also to know which reviews to read; Marcus said the trick was to read the reviews in the specialized journals.

Carmichael also suggested just picking up the book and reading a page at random to see if it is what you're looking for.

From the audience, Kerrigan reminded the panelists that popular science is written for people who are not trained scientists, not for the panelists, most of whom were trained scientists.

Asked for specific recommendations, Marcus said James Trefil is a good popular science writer. Mullan said that although Jered M. Diamond's *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution & Future of the Human Animal,* which purported to be an examination of the evolutionary history of mankind, was well received, it never showed a link between the evolutionary theory and the current state of mankind. Brewster compared it to *The Bell Curve* in that it shows that what is needed is a popular science book on statistics, correlation vs. causality, false positives and negatives, and so on. (Someone in the audience suggested that John Allen Paulos's *Innumeracy* fits this description.)

Someone in the audience suggested that there are two types of pop sci books: one by the popular science writer who is trying to inform, and one by scientists pursuing their own agenda and trying to make a name for themselves. Brewster agreed, but said the latter was not necessarily an absolute obstacle. For example, Roger Penrose's *The Emperor's New Mind* was a splendid book in spite of being wrong, but then again, Penrose made clear it was his own agenda. Carmichael said she actually prefers when the author does have an opinion (e.g., Paul Davies). Mullan gave the example of *Fuzzy Logic,* which has a political agenda vis-à-vis why the Japanese have used it

Someone in the audience complained that we concentrate on the glamorous stuff and forget to teach the basics.

I asked for the panelists' opinions of Asimov as a popular science writer. Carmichael said it would be difficult for many of the panelists to answer, since Asimov's science writing was (and is) not generally available in the United Kingdom.

Marcus summed up the panel by asking, "What good does good science writing do?" and then answering, "It inspires young people to go into science."

High Tech Meets Low Tech
Sunday, 13:00
Sam Lundwall (m), Brian Aldiss, Gwyneth Jones, Ian McDonald, Jaroslav Olsa

"Is contemporary SF/F relevant to the 'pre-industrialized' world, and vice versa? Can the Third World be portrayed by First World writers without being exploited? Why do so few writers include the Third World in their work – lack of knowledge of the subject, a perceived unattractiveness of the subject, or is the low-tech subject simply at odds with a high-tech genre?"

Aldiss started by asking who invented the term "Third World"? Was it Tito or Nehru? No one really answered this, and that's because it was neither; it was G. Balandier in 1956, who said, "La conference tenue à Bandoeng en avril 1955, par les delegués de vingt-neuf nations asiatiques et africaines politique internationale, de ces peuples qui constituent un 'Tiers Monde' entre les deux 'blocs,' selon l'expression d'A. Sauvy."

In any case, Aldiss pointed out the term was misleading, since it implied some commonality to the Third World, which is actually much more "miscellaneous" and diverse than the First or Second Worlds. Aldiss also observed, "Life may be pretty tough in the Third World, but the people there appear to be, if not more happy, then at least more tranquil than we are in the West." He attributes this to the caste system in India, for example. There is no struggle to improve.

Olsa agreed, and said Singapore is successful precisely because it is not a democracy. (This led to a fixation on Singapore that ran through the whole hour and seemed to replace any discussion of the Third World in science fiction.)

Jones said there is a decline in the use of the term "Third World," and that it is being replaced by the term "the developing world."

McDonald said that by any workable definition, Belfast is part of the Third World, with its politics, violence, unemployment, etc. Just as streets in Los Angeles are showing "signs of spontaneous malling" in the words of some commentator, other areas show "signs of spontaneous Third World-ing." The division of the planet into First, Second, and Third Worlds is not a simple map; it's more of a fractal pattern. But McDonald agreed with part of what Aldiss said, saying that the lives of the have-nots seem to be richer and more energetic than those of the haves. (Aldiss noted here that this is true of people "outside the system" in general; science fiction conventions are more vibrant than anything Iris Murdoch ever goes to.)

Aldiss returned (metaphorically) to Singapore, saying it is a city of the future, and that we mustn't sentimentalize about some of these places. "These places ruled by dictators with rods of iron can be good places to live." Olsa reported that in Singapore, chewing gum is produced and sold by the underground like drugs (so prohibiting things doesn't necessarily work). Lundwall describes Singapore as a trade-off of giving up freedom for security. (Benjamin Franklin's ghost hovered over me, whispering, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.")

Jones said that the Third World can show First World characteristics; Elizabeth Hand writes about Indonesia as the last great imperialist nation. And the panelists agreed that such changes as the Internet may have a major effect: it is hard to enter the Internet without giving up the control of information that such societies seem to require.

Someone on the panel suggested that Singapore was an attempt to apply Western concepts in a Third World context.

The panelists were asked where Third World countries are going. Jones said she was not qualified to predict. McDonald said that the question was from a First World perspective, just as Singapore is a First World fantasy city.

From the audience, Chris Higgins asked if the First World needs a Third World. McDonald hinted that to some extent he would be addressing this in his upcoming book about aliens giving the Third World alien nanotech.

Someone in the audience asked why there were no panelists from the Third World. Olsa said that while the First World's science fiction had reached the Third World – he had just seen a Batman T-shirt in Kigali (Rwanda) – science fiction requires a middle class that thinks about the future. McDonald expressed it differently: "Science fiction is the mythology of developed nations."

David Zink noted that the First, Second, and Third Worlds are not permanent arrangements; China and Egypt used to be the First World. This led John Sloan to ask about the results in China of a whole generation of "only children," most of whom are male. Will this lead to an increased level of violence? Or will there just be, as someone suggested, a rise in mail-order brides? One of the panelists suggested that there was a similar imbalance in Europe after World War I.

Jones actually returned to the topic to ask how science fiction treats the Third World, and to answer by saying, "We talk about them as if they don't exist." She noted that when Arthur C. Clarke wrote *Childhood's End*, his description of the race problem in South Africa focused on the "persecuted whites."

Alternate Histories: Turning Points
Sunday, 17:00
Evelyn Leeper (m), Michael F. Flynn, Kim Newman, Herman Ritter, Harry Turtledove

"The 'tide of history' vs the 'great man' theories."

[Thanks to Mark for taking notes, especially since I asked him at the last minute after my tape recorder wouldn't work.]

I started by asking the panelists to comment on the dichotomy between the Great Man – Capitalism – Free Will – Aristocracy Theory and the Tide of History – Marxism – Determinism – Democracy Theory. Most said that they generally believed in the Tide of History, though there was room for the effects of individuals as well. Flynn pointed out that as long as authors are stuck making stories out of history, they will probably use the Great Man Theory even if they don't completely agree with it.

Newman expressed his feelings by saying that aside from agreeing with Turtledove on the Great Man versus the Tide of History, every now and then there is a fulcrum where history will be radically altered. For example, if someone else had been President he would have handled Reconstruction better than Andrew Johnson did. When we talk about changing history, what do we really mean about that? Maybe if things had gone differently, we would be living in Cabotland but things would still be similar.

Leeper said that she was reminded of a line from Tom Stoppard's play *Travesties*, in which a character expressed Marx's belief in the Tide of History by quoting Marx as saying, "I believe if Lenin had not existed, it would not have been necessary to invent him."

The panel talked a bit about history itself as a character, Leeper mentioned that Kim Stanley Robinson has done that, with such stories as "A Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions" (about the bombing of Hiroshima), "Remaking History" (about faking the Viking discovery of America), and "A History of the Twentieth Century (with Pictures)" (about how to look at history).

Leeper asked the panelists, "What makes alternate history believable, what makes it good, and are they the same?"

Turtledove said that alternate history doesn't have to be believable to be good; there can be a "gonzo" story that was still good. In any case, we do not write about alternate worlds, we write about our world, and alternate history gives us a different mirror. Turtledove said his story "The Last

Article" was set in a post–World War II in which Germany was victorious. Set in India, it looked at a situation in which Gandhi's civil disobedience was likely to fail. It is looking more at the limits of civil disobedience than the specific alternate history.

Leeper asked Ritter if he as an historian saw things differently. Ritter replied that utopias and dystopias also show the world in distorted ways. Historical fiction is bound to some worlds, but you can throw in all sorts of silly things as well. (Leeper joked that nobody would throw in alien invaders, though.)

Flynn said you can't write alternate history unless you are holding up some sort of mirror. World War II is popular as a base because our parents and grandparents lived through it.

Flynn added that it is possible to write alternate history with no science fiction content. Turtledove responded, "There is a 'but' to that." Even though you are not talking about science, there is still the theory that every decision "splits" the universe. Flynn suggested that E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* was an example of an alternate history that did nothing with science. Ritter disagreed, saying, "I think history is a science," and Flynn said that in the 1950's the big hip science was geography.

Newman agreed that not all alternate history was science fiction. For example, his *Anno Dracula*, having a vampire marry Queen Victoria, would not be science fiction – it would be fantasy.

Leeper mentioned one problem with making alternate histories believable is that if a story takes into account how much things would change, it will be completely unfamiliar. For example, Robert Silverberg's "Via Roma" takes place about our century after a change back more than 2000 years ago. There is no similarity to our world. "He did a good job of realizing everything would be very different, but it was so different I did not like it," bemoaned Leeper.

Newman said that he found the most irritating alternate history is that Rome did not fall, and everything is the same centuries later. Flynn said that is a stasis society. Leeper noted there was one like that in which Jesus wasn't crucified, but Turtledove noted in the specific three-book series they were all talking about, there were two changes: Rome defeated Arminius in the Teutoburg Wald, and twenty years later Jesus was not crucified. To be fair, the author did connect these two changes, but he assumed that after this, nothing would change for centuries.

Flynn pointed out that if you start making changes, all sorts of people would not be born; even if their parents did meet they would have a different child. Turtledove said that sometimes he would have an historical personage existing where he shouldn't, but he knows he's cheating. Flynn said while the child might be different, the parents could well give him the same name. Leeper mentioned Howard Waldrop's "Ike at the Mike," which does things entirely differently but is not an alternate history in the classic sense. What makes things really unbelievable is, for example, if six people come along and destroy Rome. Turtledove mentioned that something like that occurs in Poul Anderson's *The High Crusade*, but even that is more believable, and oddly enough, in the end does touch on alternate history.

In any case, things have effects. If you change history, none of the same people are born. If World War II doesn't happen, but you have John Kennedy become President anyway, you had better explain how. Ritter said he thought all the Kennedy brothers were fascinating, and any of them could have been President.

Ritter also said that although changes in World War II are a very popular subject for alternate histories, there are no more than five German works about such changes. Leeper asked if this was due to any restrictions in Germany on what can be published about the Nazis; for example, can someone write an alternate history in which Nazi Germany wins? Ritter said yes; there was one such book, and it was banned, and there was such an uproar that it was allowed. There were problems with Norman Spinrad's *The Iron Dream* in that the original cover had a swastika, which is banned, but when that was removed, the book was published with no problem.

Turtledove commented that given all the material about World War II, he was surprised there weren't more such stories in Germany. Flynn noted the same phenomenon in the United States; we don't write alternate histories about wars we lost. Leeper said that she believed one reason was that the most famous such war, the Vietnam War, was too recent and too many people find it too painful (she knew someone who wouldn't go to see *Miss Saigon* because he found the reminders too painful), With World War II, while veterans are still alive, it was long enough ago to dull the bad memories, and after all, the United States did win. As far as the Korean War goes, no one remembers it, and alternate histories about it would be met by puzzled looks by most readers. Also, Flynn said with the Korean War you would have to have one side or the other win, instead of a stalemate. And the War of 1812 is another one no one remembers, which, if the United States didn't lose, they at least didn't win: having your capital burned doesn't really constitute a victory. (And the best known battle of the war, which the United States did win, was fought **after** the war was over.)

Turtledove said that part of what makes a change point good is not only that it is relevant, but that there is a story that the author can write as well. Flynn agreed, saying that it is interesting to think of a Europe with five more geniuses like Freud, but then you have to write that. Newman said it's even more difficult if you choose to try to write about something happening that didn't happen in our world. Leeper said this tied in with Ritter's comments Saturday on cliometrics, and asked him to repeat them. Basically, Ritter said, you can only subtract out data, you cannot add it, so cliometricians say the only thing that is interesting is subtracting. Newman said all this implies the use of numbers, but thought this could be done without.

Newman suggested that an important factor, for example, was the proportion of people traveling; this will determine how fast an idea spreads. For example, adding a bunch of soldiers moving around will result in a ferment of ideas, not a static society.

Leeper agreed with Turtledove that the problem was in making the change interesting, and that to some extent requires not treading the same ground as everyone else. She asked what change points have not been overused that panelists think would be promising.

Turtledove suggested that having the Romans win at Teutoburg Wald and then romanize Germany seemed like a critical change point to him. (Although this was done, albeit badly, in the series mentioned earlier.) Ritter suggested that if in the 1845 vote about making Austria part of Germany, the Austrians had not voted against their own proposal, but instead had voted to join Germany, that would have greatly changed European politics.

Flynn said his mind was toward trivia: what if Fatty Arbuckle did not go to that party? Who would have had better careers? Flynn suggested Louise Brooks. He said that Mae West wouldn't have made it, since she relied on being just on the edge of the Hays Code.

Newman said he tried to come up with something off the wall, and while everybody does World War II, the American Revolutionary War doesn't get much play, and World War I is almost forgotten. He suggested von Kluck's turn not happening, or the Second Dynasty in Egypt not breaking down. What if Pharaohs had not been able to unify, and the Nubian Kingdom had started a thousand years earlier?

Leeper said an alternate history she would like to see would be what Christianity would have been like without St. Paul. As she expressed it, "What if more followed what Jesus said, instead of Paul's interpretation of it?" (One she didn't have a chance to mention was what if the British had known that Jinnah, the leading force for partition of India, had tuberculosis and would die soon. One speculation is that they might have delayed the decision until he was dead, and people would have decided to keep India together instead of splitting into India and Pakistan.)

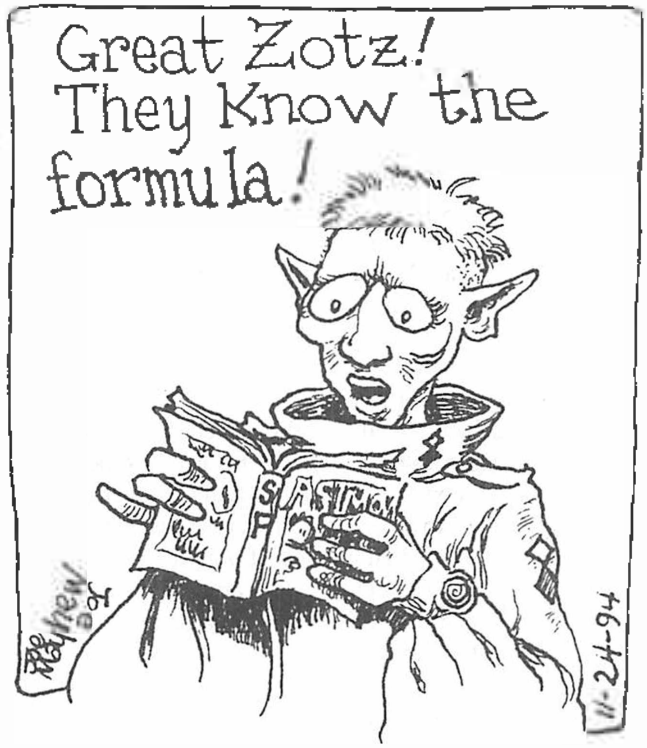
Someone in the audience, responding to an earlier comment, said that it used to be true that for ideas to travel, people had to travel, but now was that still true? Leeper suggested that modern communications could be looked on as "out-of-body" travel.

Someone asked whether the break-up of the Soviet empire would inspire more alternate histories. Turtledove said that this may be what's inspiring all the stories of Hitler winning, and then seventy-five years after the war Fascism starting to break up. Flynn said that the end of the Cold War will cause some, and old spy stories will come up as well. (Leeper mentioned Norman Spinrad's *Russian Spring* as an "instant" alternate history: near-future science fiction when he wrote it, but by the time it was published it was alternate history.)

Leeper asked for last thoughts. Newman said he thought of another example of projecting different pasts from what didn't happen but could have: using Hiero's steam engine as a Roman catapult. Flynn said that because alternate history has grown out of science fiction, it tends to dwell on technology; he would like to look at political fields or religion. Leeper agreed, saying that she likes to read alternate histories that look at social change, and particularly at religion. History is after all trying to change the future the way we want it, which is the whole idea of Flynn's *In the Country of the Blind.*

Ritter thought that it used to take longer to write an effective alternate history in the sense of waiting until after a given event. Where before it took a generation to assimilate and collect the information about something, now information flows so fast that it may take only five or ten years. This led Flynn to ask about real people suing writers for portraying them in alternate histories; Ritter responded that Hermann Goering filed a lawsuit against a writer for doing this.

Turtledove summed up a lot of people's feeling when he said, "A friend once described alternate history as the most fun you have with your clothes on."



Hugo Awards
Sunday, 19:15 (20:00)
Diane Duane and Peter Morwood, Toastmasters

Summary: Nothing went amazingly wrong, and many of the awards were predictable.

But before the detailed commentary, the awards:

– Best Novel: *Mirror Dance* by Lois McMaster Bujold

-- Best Novella: "Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge" by Mike Resnick

– Best Novelette: "The Martian Child" by David Gerrold

– Best Short Story: "None So Blind" by Joe Haldeman

– Best Non-fiction Book: *I. Asimov: A Memoir* by Isaac Asimov

– Best Dramatic Presentation: "All Good Things" *(Star Trek: The Next Generation)*

– Best Professional Editor: Gardner Dozois

– Best Professional Artist: Jim Burns
– Best Professional Artwork: *Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book* by Brian Froud & Terry Jones
– Best Semiprozine: *Interzone* edited by David Pringle
– Best Fanzine: *Ansible* edited by Dave Langford
– Best Fan Writer: Dave Langford
– Best Fan Artist: Teddy Harvia
– John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Jeff Noon
– E. Everett Evans Big Heart Award: Kenneth F. Slater
– First Fandom Awards: Jack Speer and Harry Warner, Jr.

There were also the Seiun Awards for works in translation: novel for *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons, and short story for "A Planet Named Shayol" by Cordwainer Smith.

The ceremonies began with Robert Silverberg giving a moving eulogy for John Brunner, at the end of which he asked, not for a moment of silence, but for a standing ovation for Brunner. After this, Duane's and Morwood's opening humor fell somewhat flat, though I'm not convinced it wouldn't have done so anyway. (Or maybe it's just not to my taste.)

The awards went without a hitch. Langford's two wins were predictable, *Interzone's* somewhat less so, but that was one I was pleased to see. I think *Interzone* is doing some of the best and most interesting fiction around, but it doesn't stand much chance at a North American Worldcon, with only 250 North American subscribers. Best Non-Fiction was another predictable one.

The business meeting earlier voted to eliminate the Best Professional Artwork category; this needs to be ratified by L.A.con III next year before it actually happens.

It was nice to see yet another artist win the Best Professional Artist Hugo; now if only the Best Professional Editor Hugo would start moving around to some of the other deserving candidates. Dozois is very good, but I don't think he's the best every year.

Mike Resnick was the first person to be nominated for four Hugos in a single year, but missed being the first person to lose four Hugos in a single night. He is now tied with Connie Willis, who lost three Hugos in 1992.

Michael Bishop has now had ten Hugo nominations without a win, the current record. However, he still has a ways to go to beat Robert Silverberg, who had a string of sixteen nominations without a win (although Silverberg had won a Hugo previous to the string).

The only major problem from the point of view of the participants was that they didn't give us any directions: which side of the stage the winner should walk up, how they should exit the stage, and so on.

The Hugo ceremonies were over by 10 PM. For a change they asked all the nominees to gather on the stage for photographs before having photographs of just the winners.

Hugo Losers Party
Sunday, 10 PM

Okay, it's officially called the "Hugo Nominees Party," but all the nominees call it the "Hugo Losers Party." I suppose one should not look a gift horse in the mouth, but this is the first HLP in six years that had a cash bar. Yes, I know things are done differently in Britain, but to throw a party with the nominees as your guests and then to ask them to pay for their drinks (including soft drinks) seems, well, just a bit tacky. The nominee souvenirs were travel flashlights (oops, this is Britain, so they were torches).

There was some food (for which we did not have to pay), but it was pretty heavy for that late: chicken drumettes, samosa, and doner kebab. For vegetarians or anyone avoiding fat, there was nothing. Maybe I'm out of step with what everyone else wants, but fruit, crackers (biscuits here), cheese, and raw vegetables are much more appealing to me.

What Makes a Good Short Story?
Monday, 10:00
Terry Bisson (m), Martha Soukup, Maureen Speller, Ian Watson

"A short story is not just a cut-down novel. So what is it that makes it work, and what is the difference between writing a short story and a novel? How much can you pack into a short story before it isn't really a short story anymore – is a 'short story' really defined by a word count or by other characteristics? And which is the more natural length for SF – if fantasy is naturally the blockbuster trilogy, is SF naturally the short story?"

Speller claimed that Terry Bisson once said that what makes a good short story is that it subverts all the rules of a good short story. Bisson said this was what he called a retro-story: "A wild idea dressed up just enough to get it out on stage and let it clank around a little bit." But he warned it can be done only occasionally. Soukup said that her story "The Story So Far" fit this description, being told from the point of view of a minor character with only a few scenes in someone else's story (something like *Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead,* but without scenes interpolated between the "real" scenes). The story, Soukup said, was workshopped, and everyone (except Vonda McIntyre) told her she needed to change it completely. She didn't, and it was nominated for a Hugo.

For a look at what a good short story is, Bisson recommended the Dozois anthologies. He said now it's pretty much a given that science fiction stories have dialogue, characterization, etc. – all the things that used to be missing. (Someone said that whenever they hear someone talk about wooden dialogue, they think of Pinocchio.)

Watson said one difference between short stories and novels was that "with short stories, I just start them. With novels you need a little more planning." Bisson said another way of expressing this was, "A short story you can hold all in RAM at one time." You can always see the "big picture." It exists all at one time.

Bisson also said that a short story doesn't have an arc like a novel; it's more like two photographic plates that have a shift between them. Speller said that a short story is much more compressed, like a snapshot, encapsulating just a single

moment. Soukup continued this analogy, saying "A novel is a whole series of photographs of a city." Bisson claimed a short story is like sex and a novel is like a love affair.

Watson said that one advantage short stories have is that it is easier to deal with obsessional or uncomfortable material in a short story than in a long novel, for both the writer and the reader. Watson also declaimed, "It is necessary for short story writers to be physically short." He noted that (the very tall) Geoff Ryman has not done short stories, and "look at Ellison." (Ryman has written novellas, which many would include under the rubric "short fiction.")

Speller said that the attitude she hears that short stories are just training for novel-writing bothers her. (Karen Joy Fowler, in the introduction to her short story collection *Artificial Things*, said she was repeatedly asked, "When are you writing a novel?") Bisson said that it worked in reverse for him: he started with novels, then switched to short stories. (For that matter, so did Mike Resnick.)

Bisson, speaking about the dearth of short stories outside of the science fiction field, said "There are very few Ray Carvers in America making a living writing short stories." Soukup mentioned that she had just sold a short story collection to Dreamhaven. Someone in the audience pointed out that in the 1930s there were more markets for short stories in magazines, but few markets for novels, and that now the situation was reversed.

Watson said that the problem with writing a novel is that people say, "I haven't seen a story from you for a long time; are you dead?" However, he also added that you can fix a story after it's published before it's reprinted, but with a novel, you're stuck. Bisson responded, "That's cheating," leading to a discussion of whether the text is the author's or the readers' after it is printed. Bisson noted that authors used to change their text all the time, but that has been phased out.

An audience member asked what freedoms short stories give an author. Watson said he had no real answer, but later noted that in general books have to give you a sense of believability that isn't as necessary in short stories. Soukup said they let you go after a tone, a certain emotional and philosophical feeling at the end. In that sense, she said, they were narrowcast rather than broadcast (although those terms usually apply to the audience, not what is being transmitted). Watson said a short story is black-and-white, a novel is Technicolor.

Bisson said he likes to write short shorts that are all dialogue (the one I thought of was his Hugo-nominated "Press Ann") or that use other tricks, but editors don't usually buy them. Sometimes short stories can grow; *Fire on the Mountain* started as a short story. But Watson and Bisson agreed that, in general, expanding a short story to a novel doesn't work, even though (as Bisson said) many novels we see today are really short stories swelled up.

The panelists agreed that using standard conventions (e.g., faster-than-light travel) helps do shorter pieces, because you don't need to explain everything. Speller thought this was allowed, but said she hates the re-use of historical characters, to which Soukup replied, "Sometime Mike Resnick twists our arms." Bisson said the problem was that a few people did it and it turned out to be fun, but then people got carried away.

The panelists also mentioned "fix-up" novels of connected short stories, such as A. E. van Vogt's *Voyage of the Space Beagle* and Edgar Pangborn's *Davy*, but Bisson observed that these are out of fashion now. (I expect we'll see one for Mike Resnick's "Kirinyaga" stories, and Harry Turtledove's *Agent of Byzantium* was a "fix-up" novel.)

The Reviews We Deserve

Monday, 14:00
Simon Ings (m), David V. Barrett, Greg Cox, Kathleen Ann Goonan

"Do reviews have a function? If so, what is it? Why are SF/fantasy reviews primarily confined to the semi-prozine and amateur press? Surely if SF readers wanted reviews, there would be more of them available in the mass market? How does reviewing differ from criticism – is it for instance fundamental that a review is directed at the general readership to support selection, whilst criticism is directed at an audience of experts? What makes a good review – or a good reviewer? And do we get the reviews we deserve?"

It sounded really great, but like so many other Monday afternoon panels, was canceled at the last minute (even after the day's schedule had come out). I don't know if panelists changed their plans and left earlier than they had said, or if the schedule failed to take the panelists' travel plans into account, but this seemed to be common.

Conan Doyle and Forensics

Monday, 14:00
Duncan Lunan (m), Owen Dudley Edwards, David Hall
[written by Mark R. Leeper]

This was an excellent idea for a panel. It brought together an expert on the writings of Arthur Conan Doyle and a police forensics expert. The panelists included moderator Duncan Lunan, Owen Dudley Edwards (a professor at Edinburgh University and a great enthusiast for the writings of Doyle), and David Hall (a local forensics expert for the Strathclyde Police Department). Hall explained that he is not a policeman and does not wear a police uniform; he wears a lab coat.

Lunan began by suggesting that Holmes did have a place at a science fiction convention. We think of the Holmes stories as detective stories, but the detective story was not fully formed at the time they were written, and neither was forensic science. Doyle was suggesting that the limits of forensic science could be much extended. In fact, that was a true statement. Lunan thinks that the Holmes stories were science fiction when they were written.

Edwards said that the real-life precursor of Holmes was not so much Dr. Joseph Bell, but another professor from Edinburgh earlier in the century, Professor Christianson. The incident in *A Study in Scarlet* in which Holmes is supposed to have beaten a corpse to determine to what extent bruises

can be induced after death was based on fact. It goes back to the notorious case of Burke and Hare. Apparently on one of the bodies the notorious pair provided there were bruises on the body, and the pair claimed they were induced by putting the corpse into a barrel. Christianson doubted that bruises could be induced after death, and decided to find out.

Hall talked a bit about how forensics has changed. Of course, in the time of Holmes there was no such thing, but certainly it is no longer just one person examining a crime scene; it is a team of experts with various specialties. Hall himself was a chemist and a forensic scientist; someone else might be an expert in examining with laser light and ultra-violet light.

Edwards mentioned another difference was the willingness to experiment on oneself. He read off an example from *A Study in Scarlet* where Holmes was using his own blood in an experiment. In "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" he applies a hallucinogenic to himself and to Watson, just the sort of thing that Watson was warned against in *A Study in Scarlet.* It was not that Holmes was malicious or even unconcerned for Watson's welfare, but that Holmes is shown as a consummate scientific enthusiast. And in this period many scientists did experiment on themselves. Edwards said that this, and not Deacon Brodie, was the inspiration for "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." (Deacon Brodie, a notorious figure in Edinburgh history, was a pious church deacon by day and a dangerous criminal by night.)

Hall added that any forensic scientist who experimented on himself would be sacked on the spot. Holmes at one part is elated to find a chemical test that proves something is blood. Things are now much more advanced. Today they would be able to prove not just if a sample is blood, or if it is human blood; today they could probably tell is a sample found was blood from one particular person or not. And in fact, they may not even need the person himself to make that judgment, but can determine it if they can get blood from near family members.

The conversation turned to Doyle's style. Edwards said that Doyle knew he was following on from the style of Poe. He said that not only do the Holmes stories tend to have the same structure repeatedly, but it is the structure of a medical investigation. The client comes to Holmes with a problem, Holmes collects data, Holmes builds a theory, he tests it, he may be right or wrong, and then the case is solved. That structure is based on how medical students do inference. The Holmes stories are derived from teachers at medical schools and how medical students are trained to look at problems.

At this point Lunan asked if the conversation could also bring in Professor Challenger. He felt that while the subject matter of the Challenger stories was different, there are certain parallels, and that Malone was a sounding board a lot like Watson, Challenger was a lot like Holmes. In addition, the Challenger stories were science fiction by any measure.

Edwards said that certainly there was a common theme running through Doyle of the Scientific Mind at war with lesser minds. For him a major moment in *The Lost World* is when Summerlee admits to Challenger that he has been wrong about the presence of dinosaurs on the plateau. Even with this theme the Doyle stories were not all resolved on a rational basis. Edwards read a piece from Doyle's first science fiction story, "The Silver Hatchet," in which the real villain is not a human but it is the cursed hatchet at fault.

Lunan pointed out that on the subject of Challenger, a recently discovered pterodactyl was named for Doyle. Edwards pointed out how Doyle manages to make the pterodactyl a sympathetic and even tragic character in the book.

From the audience I asked if Doyle didn't seem to salt his clues into the story. For example, while it is true that a particular type of mud on a shoe might be a telling clue that most people would overlook, it would be unlikely to show up on a shoe in recognizable quatities anyway and its presence is contrived. Curiously, Edwards, the Holmes expert, was the more inclined to agree with me. Hall said that "every contact leaves a mark" and it would in fact be detectable one way or another to show exactly where a suspect had been. Edwards said that this was based on a real police case, but the person had been in another part of the country. It is unlikely that Holmes would know dirt from all over London or that a particular kind of dirt would be unique to a particular part of London.

Three Fandoms — Travellers
Monday, 14:30
Frances Dowd, Oliver Gruter-Andrew,
Lynne Ann Morse

"This short item will explore culture clash, and will feature people who have travelled to other countries for fan meetings, who have lived in other countries, and who have perceived the differences in life there."

The problem with a half-hour panel is that there is less than half the effective time for the panel, since the introductions, etc., still take the same amount of time as a one-hour panel.

The panelists, all of whom were living in a country other than the one they had grown up in, had a variety of anecdotes, but no real generalizations. Then again, how could they? – the whole idea is that one can't generalize.

For example, one panelist who had moved to Holland had her husband arrange a birthday party for her. It was only afterwards that she found out she had been considered very rude because she wasn't bustling about serving everyone – in Holland that is the responsibility of the person whose birthday it is. (In the United States, that person is the honored guest.)

Body language and other clues also differ. Gruter-Andrew said it took him a while to learn that the slower an American speaks, the angrier (not the more polite) he or she is. And when he speaks slowly to an American, it is interpreted as patronizing.

Social structures, even in fandom, differ. In Germany, the first thing a group of fans will do is to register as an official

organization with the government. And in Holland, people travel long distances for meetings, but a lot of time is spent in the meeting part, rather than the socializing aspect. Gruter-Andrew said this was similar in Germany; in fact, Germans coming to conventions in other countries at first didn't realize there was something (parties) after the program was over.

The panelists noted that what was considered liberal varies from place to place. One had been told Madison, Wisconsin, was a very liberal town, but discovered that her punk clothing and hairstyle were a bit **too** liberal, and she needed to get the T-shirt, the jeans, and the Birkenstocks.

Miscellaneous

The WSFS Business Meeting defeated an amendment (passed on from ConAdian) to restrict Worldcons from being held within 60 miles of the NASFiC held in the voting year. They passed other pass-on amendments to require the release of statistical information about Hugo voting, to reduce the "overlap" of the Hugo fiction categories to 5,000 words or 20% of the new category limits, and to clarify the counting of ineligible candidates for site selection.

The WSFS Business Meeting passed original amendments removing the Hugo Award for Best Original Artwork, adding "related subjects" to the description of what is eligible for the Best Dramatic Presentation Hogo, and making various technical changes; if these pass at L.A.con III, they will take effect.

I used to rank all the Worldcons I had been to, but it was getting harder and harder to fit the new ones in, so instead I will split them into three groups. Within each group they are listed chronologically.

The good: Noreascon I (1971), Midamericon (1976), Noreascon II (1980), L.A.Con II (1984), Noreascon III (1989), and MagiCon (1992).

The average: Discon II (1974), Seacon (1978), Chicon IV (1982), Confederation (1986), ConFiction (1990), Chicon V (1991), ConFrancisco (1993), and ConAdian (1994).

The below-average: Iguanacon (1978), Suncon (1977), Constellation (1983), Conspiracy (1985), Nolacon II (1988), and Intersection (1995).

The 1998 bid was won by Baltimore in what turned out to be a not very close race. The Baltimore convention will be called Bucconeer and will be held August 5–9, 1998. (You will note this is not the traditional Labor Day weekend. The convention will start on Wednesday and end on Sunday.) Current rates are $30 for a supporting membership, $80 for an attending membership. Guests of Honor are C. J. Cherryh, Milton A. Rothman, Stanley Schmidt, and Michael Whelan; Charles Sheffield is Toastmaster. Bucconeer can be reached at P.O. Box 314, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701, baltimore98@access.digex.net, or http://www.access.digex.net/~balt98.

Next year in Los Angeles!

NESFA 1945 Hugo Recommendations

This year, LAcon 3 is running the first Retro-Hugos which will award real, genuine Hugos for the year 1945. If it works well this year it may be continued in subsequent years. To help make it work, NESFA is running a recommendations list for 1945 as well as for 1995. Any NESFA member who would like to recommend an item from 1945 to others to be considered for a Hugo nomination can add it to the list. We will publish it from time to time in *Instant Message* and on the nets. (Feel free to reproduce it provided you reproduce it intact!) It's neither definitive nor complete, but it contains the stories, novels and non-fiction works that a bunch of well-read fans feel may be worthy of a Hugo nomination.
There was some good SF published in 1945 -- try it, enjoy it. *And nominate!*

Novels			
Isaac Asimov	Foundation & Empire (appeared as two short novels, *The Mule* and *The Dead Hand*)	ASF, Apr 45 & Nov 45	mlo, rk, by
William Hope Hodgson	The Boats of the "Glen Carrig"	FFM, Jun 45 (first published in 1907)	arl
Fritz Leiber	Destiny Times Three	ASF, Mar-Apr 45	by
A. E. Van Vogt	The World of Null-A	ASF, Aug-Oct 45	rk, by
Novella / Novelette			
Lester Del Rey	Into Thy Hands	ASF, Aug 45	arl, by
Murray Leinster	First Contact	ASF, May 45	mlo, arl, rk, by
Murray Leinster	Things Pass By	TW, Sum, 45	arl, rk
Lewis Padgett	Beggers in Velvet		by, ta
Lewis Padgett	The Lion and the Unicorn		by, ta
Lewis Padgett	The Piper's Son	ASF, Feb 45	arl, rk, by, ta, mlo
Lewis Padgett	Three Blind Mice		by, ta
George O. Smith	Identity	ASF, Nov 45	
George O. Smith	Pandora's Millions	ASF, Jun 45	
George O. Smith	Special Delivery	ASF, Mar 45	by
Short Story			
Ralph Abernathy	When the Rockets Come	ASF, Mar 45	arl
Isaac Asimov	Paradoxical Escape		by
Robert Bloch	Lefty Feep Gets Henpecked	FA, Apr 45	
Fredric Brown	Pi in the Sky	TW, Win 45	
Fredric Brown	The Waveries	ASF, Jan 45	rk, mlo, by
A. Bertram Chandler	Giant Killer	ASF, Oct 45	mlo, arl
Hal Clement	Uncommon Sense	ASF, Sep 45	mlo, by
Raymond F. Jones	Correspondence Course	ASF, Apr 45	mlo, rk
Murray Leinster	De Profundis	TW, Win 45	mlo
Murray Leinster	The Ethical Equations	ASF, Jun 45	by
Murray Leinster	Interference	ASF, Oct 45	
Murray Leinster	The Power	ASF, Sep 45	mlo, arl, by
Lewis Padgett	Line to Tomorrow		by
Lewis Padgett	What You Need	ASF, Oct 45	arl, rk, by
George O. Smith	Trouble Times Two	ASF, Dec 45	
Jack Vance	The World Thinker	TW, Sum 45	
Best Editor			
John W. Campbell	Astounding	mlo, by	

Key to nominators: ta: Ted Atwood, rk: Rick Katze, arl: Tony Lewis, mlo: Mark Olson, , jr: Joe Rico, by: Ben Yalow

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Daymares - Fredric Brown, 68
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The Best Short Stories of Fredric Brown - Fredric Brown
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Invaders of Earth - Groff Conklin, 52
Above the Human Landscape - McNelly & Stover
Angels and Spaceships - Fredric Brown, 54
Star Shine - Fredric Brown, 56
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Enemies in Space - Groff Conklin
First Contact - Damon Knight
Invaders of Earth - Groff Conklin
Speculations - Thomas E. Sanders
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The Astounding-Analog Reader, Volume 1 - Harrison & Aldiss
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Hal Clement - "Uncommon Sense"
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The Best of Hal Clement - Hal Clement, 79
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Lester Del Rey - "Into Thy Hands"
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Invasion of the Robots - Roger Elwood
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The Earth in Peril - Donald A. Wollheim, 57

Murray Leinster - "De Profundis"
Far Boundaries - August Derleth, 51
Sidewise in Time - Murray Leinster
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Lewis Padgett - "Beggers in Velvet"
Mutant - Lewis Padgett

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Mutant - Lewis Padgett

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George O. Smith - "Identity"
Venus Equilateral - George O. Smith

George O. Smith - "Pandora's Millions"
Venus Equilateral - George O. Smith

George O. Smith - "Special Delivery"
Venus Equilateral - George O. Smith

Jack Vance - "The World Thinker"
Lost Moons - Jack Vance

How I Sold My First Story
by Michael A. Burstein

I have enjoyed reading science fiction for as far back as I can remember, and I always wanted to write it as well. Like many of us, I suppose, as a teenager I committed a lot of failed stories to pen. I even went so far as to submit them to some of the major science fiction markets. I still remember the pile of personal rejection notes I had received from George Scithers at *Amazing Stories;* at the time, I didn't realize that every story submitted to him got a personal note.

I gave up sending out stories at the age of 14 or so, and got through high school and college without doing much in the way of fiction writing. Oh, I did an occasional story here and there, and I even submitted a mystery story to some of the major mystery magazines, but that was about it. I guess I had decided that although writing was fun, I wasn't very good at it, or it simply didn't hold the appeal for me that it once had.

Then I entered physics graduate school.

There is something about graduate school that can make a person feel contracted, almost irrelevant. You're asked to remain intensely focused on one particular subject, and heaven forbid it if you express interest in Having a Life outside of your field or discipline. I was fortunate, in that I didn't get involved in a research group right away, but I saw what friends of mine were going through once they had joined a group. Their group leader would expect them to submerge themselves – mind, body, and soul – into their work. Already I could tell that this wasn't the life for me, and that I needed some outside release from the world of equations and problem sets.

I was also fortunate in that I met the woman who would later become my wife during my first year of graduate school. She was also a science fiction fan, and in early 1992, she took me to my first real fan-run con. I was hooked. All these people, sharing many of the same interests as me – and all these panels with real science fiction professionals spouting their opinions! The parties, the filking, the 'zines – the ambiance. That Monday, I went to my computer with a renewed vigor for my goal – to become a science fiction writer.

I spent the next two years paralleling my pursuit of a master's degree in science with an attempt to become a master in the field of science fiction. Oddly enough, I never had problems coming up with ideas for stories. It was putting those stories into readable, interesting form that gave me problems. I wince when I remember an early attempt to exploit the Copenhagen interpretation of physics, by writing a story about God being the ultimate observer. A friend I showed it to had two comments – it was a great lecture on quantum mechanics, and the descriptions of the dinner that the two main characters ate made him hungry. Needless to say, I had a lot further to go.

So I did two things. I read, and I wrote. I read every single useful book on writing that I could get ahold of, books on characterization, plot, structure, dialogue – and of course, books on writing science fiction. I also wrote as much as I could, when and where I could, and for a brief time gave up discouraged when my stuff sounded wooden and mechanical. Fortunately, a chance participation in an SCA dancing event gave me new inspiration, because one of the people I met there struck me as a really great character. I went home that night and wrote a thousand-word character sketch based on her, which I later turned into a 6,000-word story. That story still hasn't sold, but that wasn't so important. What was important was that it helped me break a period of writer's block, during which time I had thought I would never write anything that sounded good again.

I left graduate school in 1993 with my degree but without any story credits to my name. I took a job as a high school teacher in New York City, which made me even more eager to sell a short story, so I could establish my identity as someone creative.

Finally, two things happened near the end of 1993. First, I received my first personal rejection letter in recent history, a short note from Stan Schmidt at *Analog,* who turned down another failed attempt of mine to break into the "Probability Zero" section of the magazine. Secondly, I got an idea for a story that intrigued me, that grabbed ahold and would simply not let go. I got my first idea that needed, that demanded, to be written.

The idea was based on something that I heard at a lot of cons. I've been on the Internet since 1987, and a lot of people in the world of science fiction – and now, in the world at large – have made elaborate claims about the role of the Internet, to the point where one person said that by the year 2000 everyone would have an e-mail address and free access to the so-called

Information Superhighway. I was on a panel with someone who said that, and I was one of only two panelists who pointed out that the "free information" out there was not free – at the very least, you need to be able to afford a computer, modem, telephone line, and an Internet provider. I decided that I wanted to point this out to people in a science fiction story.

Of course, the Internet isn't science fiction anymore, so I had to extrapolate a little. Instead of writing about a poor person not having access to the Internet, I created the idea of a disadvantaged boy not having access to the school of the future, a Virtual Reality classroom in which students from all over the country could interact with each other and with a teacher. (AT&T and NYNEX are now touting primitive versions of this concept on some television ads.) The boy, whom I made a black student living in Harlem, New York City, hates his decrepit home school, and one day finds a pair of spex and sneaks into a private Telepresence School. And after enjoying a morning of learning and fun, he is found out...

I wrote a version of this story, and sent it to Stan Schmidt. Oddly enough, I got the story back on the same weekend as Lunacon '94, when I had a chance to have lunch with Stan and a few other people. Stan hadn't quite rejected the story; he had typed up a one-page note explaining the problems in the story, and had enclosed a few newspaper clippings about kids sneaking into schools in better districts. But nowhere in the note did he explicitly ask me to revise the story. So I asked him at Lunacon if he wanted to see another version, and he laughed and told me yes.

I took a few weeks to expand the story a bit, involving the character of the teacher more, a woman sympathetic to my protagonist's plight. But I got it back from Stan again, with a note that it was not quite there yet, and still needed work.

By this point, I had been accepted by the 1994 Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writer's Workshop in East Lansing, Michigan. I wrote back to Stan, saying that I was going to Clarion, and that I'd have the story for him in publishable form by the time I returned.

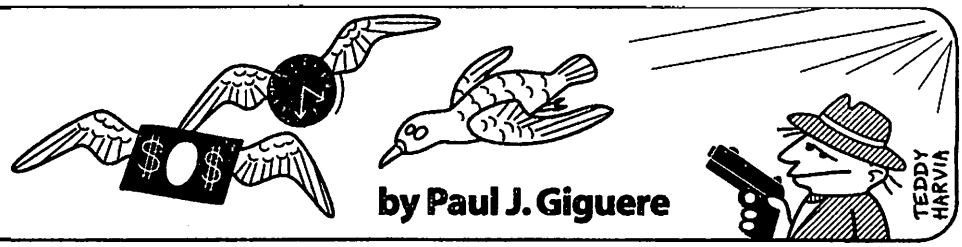
Although my attendance at Clarion is an important part of this story, I've covered my Clarion experience in another article which should appear in *Mimosa* 17 (but which I'd be happy to pass on to anyone who wants to see it). With respect to my first sale, though, let me just say that Howard Waldrop is a god. We sat down for over an hour going over what the problems were in my story, and what could be done to make it work a lot better. By the time we were done with our session, I had two pages of notes on what to do with the story.

Clarion ended on July 30. I finished a third version of the story in late August and mailed it to *Analog*. By October, I had the cheerful news of my first acceptance, which finally appeared as "TeleAbsence" in the July 1995 issue. A second sale to *Analog*, inspired by the circumstances of my first sale, happened almost right afterwards, and "Sentimental Value" appeared in the October 1995 issue.

And so, after either ten or three years of trying, depending on how you count, I found myself a published science fiction writer. Although I'm still very, very much a neopro, a lot of people who are in the same situation I was just a little over a year ago have asked me how I did it. Well, this whole article is about how I did it, but the problem with stories like this is that they are so personal it is hard to glean any useful advice from them. So, finally, I would like to give a little piece of advice to anyone who wants to get published in science fiction, tangible advice that anyone can follow.

If you want to sell your first story: Write. Write and write and write and write. And maybe, like me, you'll be lucky.

"Lucky Day" in the Fifth to Win



by Paul J. Giguere

Jack Stoltz cocked an eye up from the *Daily Racing Form* paper as he waited for the subway car to come to a halt. His prey, a young business type, still hadn't noticed that he had been followed for three transfers. Stoltz turned his attention back to the paper, where he was looking at the winning horses from last night. Stoltz knew that horses were a sucker's bet, but he still liked to make a little wager here and there. Occasionally he got lucky, but the inside tip was what was needed to really score. "Lucky Day" had placed first last night: a one-in-a-million shot, and it had placed first. There was a rumor that one guy walked away with about four hundred thousand from that race. Too bad they don't publish the names and addresses, thought Stoltz, as he tucked the paper inside a large pocket in his black overcoat.

As the train came to a stop, the business type got off. *Finally,* thought Stoltz, as he exited the train from a different door and casually followed the man into a rest room. *Perfect, this is the perfect place.* The man went to one of the sinks and began throwing water on his face. Stoltz made a quick visual examination of the empty room before finding a stall to occupy.

Quickly he reached into his overcoat and pulled out a Ruger Mark II pistol and screwed on the home-made silencer. The man was still washing his face when Stoltz exited the stall and silently came up from behind.

"You stupid shit," whispered Stoltz as he planted the muzzle of the gun at the base of the man's head, then pulled the trigger. An audible poof of sound, and the man slumped forward face first into the sink. He had no time to react to Stoltz's comment. Reaching into the man's back pocket produced a wallet, which Stoltz quickly discarded after removing the cash. He unscrewed the silencer from the Ruger, putting the pieces back into his overcoat once again, and exited the men's room.

As he headed for the street, Stoltz's mind breezed over the brutal act he had just committed. *People like the business type deserve getting popped. The stupid shits let themselves get set up, and if someone is so stupid as to let that happen, then he not only deserved to die but was basically asking for it. If someone let him do it, then he deserved it. What luck, I'm only two blocks from the track. 'Sally's Pride' looks real good tonight, and the stable hand I had talked to earlier this morning swore that this horse was a winner.*

Stoltz reached into his pocket to count the money he had just liberated from his latest victim. *I'll need more money than this,* he grumbled silently, *if I'm ever going to make a worthwhile bet tonight.*

Stoltz decided to hole up in an alleyway on Fifth Street and wait for another mark to come along. Fifth was great for this sort of thing, almost no street lights and rich shitheads from the track were always parking down here to avoid the parking fees. It was just a matter of waiting. The sun had fully set before Stoltz heard someone walking down his side of the street. Peering from behind the corner, Stoltz could make out a figure approaching down the street.

Like a grape waiting to be plucked, thought Stoltz as he pulled his Ruger from his coat and screwed on the silencer. He waited until the guy was almost past him, and then he stepped out from the shadows. "You stupid shit," whispered Stoltz. The man fell face first onto the sidewalk. Working in the near darkness, Stoltz began to reach for the man's wallet. As he reached into the man's back pocket, Stoltz felt himself enveloped by a bright flashing light, the same kind of light someone sees after he has been hit hard on the head. He felt no pain, but the effect was the same. Stoltz slumped backward and slipped into unconsciousness.

Waking up is hard to do early in the morning, but when you can feel a foot kicking you in the ribs, it's more effective than a cup of coffee. Stoltz woke with a start to see a bright, shiny badge with the number 299 and the words "Boston Metro Police... to serve and protect" embossed on it.

Stoltz began to reach for his pistol but thought twice and decided against it. This cop would have a jump on him so big that he wouldn't even have time to chamber a bullet, much let get off a round.

"C'mon, get your ass moving," shouted the man behind the badge.

Stoltz's head spun around to look where the body should have been from his hit last night. Nothing was there, not even blood stains on the sidewalk. *Someone must be looking out for me,* he thought with relief as he began to rise.

"I'm moving. Give me a chance, for Christ's sake," retorted Stoltz.

"Why can't you guys find shelters or some nice warm cardboard box or something?" complained the cop, as he turned to walk down the street and rouse the next person, this one occupying the front doorway to an apartment building.

Stoltz rubbed his face and checked his pockets. His wallet was still there, but there were only a few tens. The money from the hit last night was gone. *Someone must've got the drop on me after I capped the guy, but why the cleanup? And why would someone go through the trouble of bashing me on the head, only to leave me with a few bucks in my wallet and a very sellable pistol? There are some strange people in this world,* thought Stoltz, as he headed around the corner towards a coffee shop.

As he walked in, Stoltz picked up a copy of the *Form* and sat down at a table. Eventually, a waitress came over and took his order. As he settled down with a cigarette and began to look at the night's races, he noticed that the horse lineup seemed familiar. Turning to the front page, he noticed the date.

"Hey, didn't you get today's paper?" Stoltz asked the waitress as she put his coffee in front of him.

"What are talking about? That is today's paper," replied the waitress.

"No, it isn't. This paper is two days old. I want today's paper."

The waitress bent the paper back, looked at the date, and repeated, "This is today's paper."

"Listen," retorted Stoltz in an irritated mood, "these horses ran two nights ago."

"Listen, pal. That is today's paper. I don't know what you drank last night, but it doesn't agree with you. Just drink your coffee."

Stoltz looked at his watch to check the date, then looked at the paper: they were the same date. *I must've had a wild night,* thought Stoltz, *complete with dream and all. No wonder I still had my wallet and pistol. I must've passed out.*

Stoltz hated it when he couldn't remember if he'd had a good time or not. He began to sip his coffee and leaf through the paper.

As he got to the fifth race of the day, Stoltz almost choked on his coffee. There in the number two position was "Lucky Day." *It must be a coincidence. I must have heard of the horse from someone, somewhere. On the other hand, maybe this is fate,* thought Stoltz, as he paid his tab and left the coffee shop.

I think I'll play this horse, thought Stoltz, as he began to make his way to the Back Bay of Boston and the run-down apartment he called home. Once inside, Stoltz quickly started rummaging through his dresser drawers, several jars, and a shoe box in his closet. When he was done, he sat down at the kitchen table and counted out the money he had managed to save from his hits. In total, Stoltz had five hundred dollars and some change. Enough to make a decent bet tonight. He put the money in his wallet and decided to take a shower.

Later that day, with a fresh set of clothes and a clean shave, Stoltz headed back through Boston to a place where a lot of his money had been deposited. Of course, at a horse track, most deposits are permanent and you can't make withdrawals, but Stoltz liked to think of losing bets as contributing to the economic development of the city in his own little way.

By the time Stoltz arrived at the track, the fourth race had just begun. Quickly Stoltz made his way to the fifty-dollar booth, and waited across from the booth for the teller to open up again after the fourth race finished.

The wait seemed like an infinity, but finally the teller opened. Stoltz was going to wait until the last minute. Betting five hundred dollars on a horse would immediately screw the odds up, and he didn't want anyone to get any ideas and start betting on his horse.

The three-minute warning for post time was announced. Stoltz got in line in back of a man who was making a large bet on the favorite in the race, "Bucket of Steam."

"What will you have, sir?" asked the teller.

"'Lucky Day' in the fifth to win," replied Stoltz as he pushed five hundred dollars though the window. The teller took the cash without batting an eye, and produced 10 fifty-dollar tickets.

Stoltz stuffed the tickets in his pocket and took a seat in front of a closed-circuit television. The bell was sounded, and the horses jumped from the gates. At first Stoltz began to worry. "Lucky Day" was way behind. All the other horses seemed to be passing him, but as they rounded the first bend, things began

to change. "Lucky Day" began running harder and eventually began passing horses until he was in second place. "Bucket of Steam" was running real hard in front, but "Lucky Day" was gradually catching up. As they rounded the second bend, "Bucket of Steam" began to tire, and "Lucky Day" passed him. The winner was undisputed. "Lucky Day" had easily won.

Stoltz jumped and gave a whooping yell. He immediately turned and headed back to the fifty-dollar teller window. Finally a voice announced that the results were final. "Lucky Day" was the winner. When the window opened, Stoltz quickly passed his tickets to the teller.

The teller looked at Stoltz and without any emotion asked, "Would a treasurer's check be satisfactory?"

"Sure, that would be fine, make it out to Jack Stoltz, S T O L T Z."

A few moments later, the teller handed Stoltz a check for four hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Stoltz was ready to let out another yell, but thought better of it. After all, he wasn't a stupid shit. Yelling for joy at the fifty-dollar teller window wasn't the most subtle thing you could do. Stoltz quickly took the check and put it in his wallet.

By the time he left the track, it was nightfall. Walking back home, Stoltz began to think of the many ways he was going to spend the money. Cars, houses, parties, the list was becoming endless, as Stoltz continued to think of new ways to spend his new found fortune.

As Stoltz turned a corner, he realized he was in a familiar place. He continued to walk, while trying to get his bearings straight and clear some of the cobwebs which had quickly settled in his mind. Finally he recognized where he was. Fifth Street.

He stopped in his tracks and immediately felt something push against his head. Before he could act he heard a very familiar voice say, "You stupid shit." Stoltz fell onto the sidewalk, slamming hard into the concrete. As he felt his life rushing away, he was enveloped by a bright flashing light.

Waking up is hard to do early in the morning, but when you can feel a foot kicking you in the ribs, it's more effective than a cup of coffee. Stoltz woke with a start to see a bright, shiny badge with the number 299 and the words "Boston Metro Police... to serve and protect" embossed on it.

Contributors to *PB* 36

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[For those keping track, that's 14 contributors, 5 members, 9 nonmembers. There are 2 new contributors (one of each) this issue. KK]

The Books of Henry Kuttner

The Brass Ring (mystery)
with C. L. Moore, as by Lewis Padgett
Duell, Sloane & Pearce 1946
Collins 1946
Sampson, Low & Narston 1947
Bantam (as *Murder in Brass)* 1947

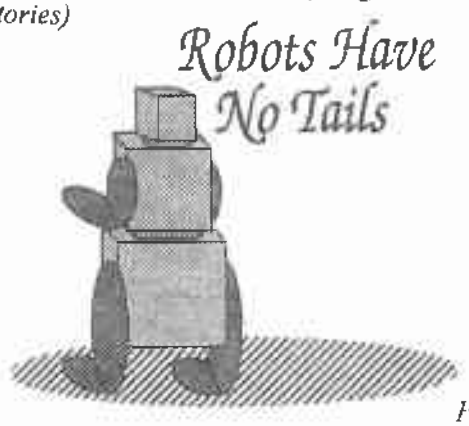
The Day He Died (mystery)
with C. L. Moore, as by Lewis Padgett
Duell, Sloane & Pearce 1947
Collins 1947
Bantam 1948

A Gnome There Was
with C. L. Moore, as by Lewis Padgett
Simon & Schuster 1950

Fury
with C. L. Moore, as by Henry Kuttner
Grosset 1950
Dobson 1954
Sidgwick & Jackson 1955
Avon (as *Destination: Infinity)* 1958
Digit 1960
Mayflower 1963
Lancer 1972
Garland (as *Destination: Infinity)* 1975
Magnum 1975
Hamlyn 1978

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and The Fairy Chessmen
as by Lewis Padgett
Gnome 1951
(reissued separately as *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, and *Chessboard Planet)*

Clash by Night
as by Lawrence O'Donnell
Malian 1952
(also contained in *Clash by Night and Other Stories)*



Robots Have No Tails
Gnome (as by Lewis Padgett) 1952
Lancer 1973
Hamlyn (as *The Proud Robot)* 1983

Man Drowning (mystery)
Harper 1952
Musson 1952
Bantam 1953
Four-Square 1961

Ahead of Time
Ballantine 1953
Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1954
Four-Square 1961

Mutant
Gnome 1953
Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1954
Sidgwick & Jackson 1962
Mayflower 1962
Ballantine 1963
Garland 1975
Hamlyn 1979

Well of the Worlds
Galaxy SF Novel #17 (as by Padgett) 1953
Ace F-344 (as *The Well of the Worlds)* 1965

Line to Tomorrow and Other Stories
with C. L. Moore, as by Lewis Padgett
Bantam 1954

Beyond Earth's Gates
with C. L. Moore, as by Lewis Padgett
Ace D-69 1954
(also contained in *The Startling Worlds of Henry Kuttner,* as *The Portal in the Picture)*

Remember Tomorrow
Malian 1954

Way of the Gods
Malian 1954

No Boundaries
with C. L. Moore
Ballantine 1955
Consul 1961

Sword of Tomorrow
Malian 1955

As You Were
Malian 1955

Chessboard Planet
with C. L. Moore, as by Lewis Padgett
Galaxy Novel #26 1956
Consul (as *The Far Reality)* 1963
(also contained in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and The Fairy Chessmen,* and *Chessboard Planet and Other Stories)*

The Murder of Eleanor Pope
Permabooks 1956

The Murder of Ann Avery
Permabooks 1956
Banner 1956

Murder of a Mistress
Permabooks 1957

Murder of a Wife
Permabooks 1958
Garland 1983

Bypass to Otherness
Ballantine 1961
Consul 1963

Return to Otherness
Ballantine 1962
Mayflower 1965

Tomorrow and Tomorrow
Consul 1963
(also contained in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and The Fairy Chessmen)*

Valley of the Flame
with C. L. Moore, as by Henry Kuttner
Ace F-297 1964
(also contained in *The Startling Worlds of Henry Kuttner)*

Earth's Last Citadel
with C. L. Moore
Ace F-306 1964
The Dark World
Ace F-327 1964
(also contained in *The Startling Worlds of Henry Kuttner)*

The Time Axis
Ace F-356 1965

The Best of Kuttner
Mayflower volume 1 1965
volume 2 1966

The Creature From Beyond Infinity
Popular Library 1968

The Mask of Circe
Ace 1971
Ace (as by Kuttner and Moore) 1977

The Best of Henry Kuttner
Doubleday 1975
Ballantine 1975

Clash by Night and Other Stories
with C.L. Moore
Hamlyn 1980

Chessboard Planet and Other Stories
with C.L. Moore
Hamlyn 1983

Elak of Atlantis
Gryphon Books 1985

The Startling Worlds of Henry Kuttner
Popular Library/Questar 1987

Prince Raynor
Gryphon Press 1987

Kuttner Times Three
Virgil Utter 1988

Secret of the Earth Star and Others
Starmont 1989

Vintage Season
with C.L. Moore
Tor (double #18) 1990

[Due to the large number of versions of some of the books, George Flynn FN and I have done more than our normal checking against the physical books for accuracy. While there are still likely to be some errors, I hope our work will help you find this author's books. KK]

SILLY BILLIES

Backwoods Humor in Kuttner's Hogben Stories

by Bob Devney

Hillbilly mutants are the subjects of Henry Kuttner's Hogben stories, light science-fictional favorites from the 1940s that have been fondly remembered – occasionally even reprinted – in later years.

They're corny, and often crudely sketched; get laughs out of ignorance, cruelty, and slapstick violence, plus family dysfunction, substance abuse, and physical deformity; and have all of a fantasy writer's respect for science (that is to say, very little).

God help me, I like them quite a bit. Betcher you would too.

Saunk Hogben narrates each tale. In outward appearance he's an overgrown, slightly dim, 18-year-old bumpkin who lives with his nutball nuclear family in a holler back in the Kentucky hills.

In reality, that's about right. Except that Saunk is more like 600 years old. He and his kin (Grandpaw, Paw, Maw, Little Sam the baby, and a rotating cast of uncles) are mutated superbeings with incredibly extended lifespans and even more incredibly powerful – well, powers – of levitation, telepathy, precognition, invisibility, time travel, supertinkering, and telekinesis, in addition to abilities I would term nanovisualization and nanokinesis. (They can see/mess around with stuff that's really small.) Also they can see things happening at great distances, an ability I would term "television."

All of which gifts they use for tasks like souring milk to make sour-milk biscuits.

As far as I can discover, there were four Hogben stories in all, published within a three-year span in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*.

"Exit the Professor" (1947)

(Found in *A Gnome There Was, No Boundaries, The Best of Kuttner* volume 1, and *The Best of Henry Kuttner*.)

This introduces Saunk and his off-kilter clan. A biogeneticist – that is, "a Perfesser feller from the city" – gets word of their strange gifts and turns up asking questions. However, the Hogbens know that the outside world mustn't learn the secret of their existence and powers. As Grandpaw, who hasn't got out much since about 1670, puts it, "The pack would tear and rend us." There's a complication when the professor fires off a gadget Saunk has whomped up (revealed to be a "selective radioactivity inducer") and gives everybody in town who has gold fillings awful toothaches. But eventually the professor's threat is, shall we say, contained, in a resolution reminiscent of Robert Bloch's famous protestation after *Psycho*, "Everybody thinks I must be a frightful guy personally. Not at all; I have the heart of a baby...It's at home in a jar on the shelf."

"Pile of Trouble" (1948)

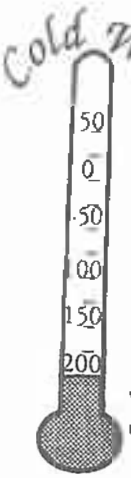
(Found in *Ahead of Time* and *Zacherley's Midnight Snacks*.)

This story's first line: "We called Lemuel 'Gimpy,' on account of he had three legs." This time Saunk can't get electric power from the water wheel because the creek is dry, so he and Maw fix up a gadget in the henhouse. When some busybody recognizes it as a uranium pile, the ruckus begins. Subsequent events involve a stay in jail, a crooked machine politician, an explanation of how Paw has managed to stay drunk for several hundred years (when his blood enzymes change ingested alcohol to sugar, he makes them change it right back), and a dam. Guess what happens to the dam?

"See You Later" (1949)

(Found in *Return to Otherness, A Gnome There Was,* and *The Best of Kuttner* volume 1.)

Here, the story revolves around the Hogbens' reluctant bargain with bad neighbor Yancey Tarbell, the meanest man in the world. This charmer reminds Saunk of an old acquaintance named Tamerlane, who once confided that "he wished the whole world had only one haid, so's he could chop it off." In furtherance of a somewhat similar plan, Yancey forces Saunk to build a simultaneous cloning/teleportation/time travel device. "I went out behind the woodshed...and got busy. Took me 'bout ten minutes, but I didn't hurry much." It takes Saunk a little more time and quite a bit more native cunning to thwart Yancey's plans while still living up to the letter of the deal.



"Cold War" (1949)
(Found in *Bypass to Otherness, The Best of Kuttner* volume 1, and *The Best of Henry Kuttner.*)

In the last and most satisfying of the stories, the Hogbens meet two ugly customers, the Pughs: *père et fils*. Papa Pugh is proud of his loathsome offspring Junior, "about seven years old and mean as they come." But he fears for his line's survival, because, like himself, Junior is so nasty-looking it's unlikely any woman would ever get romantic. (One notable character recalled here is the elder Pugh's deceased wife, the inimitably unattractive Lily Lou Mutz. "Grandpaw said she put him in mind of a family name of Gorgon he used to know.") Again blackmailed by fear of exposure into putting their special talents to work for evildoers, the Hogbens use time travel and delayed-action "heterochromatinic bursts" to cut the Pughs down to size.

Where's the charm? Why do these stories still read as lively entertainments, if a bit rough-hewn, almost 50 years after their creation?

Perhaps there's something mean in us urban SF sophisticates that enjoys laughing at the ignorance of rural simpletons. But that's not quite it, or all of it. Because our satisfaction doesn't diminish when, inevitably, the hicks outfox the slicks.

The Hogbens belong to a grand tradition, after all. From Joel Chandler Harris through Mark Twain to Sherwood Anderson and Will Rogers, country wit flourished in American stories. No surprise: America was still an agricultural nation as late as World War II. Or later – as Heinlein reminds us, in 1949 outhouses still outnumbered flush toilets in these United States. Ray Bradbury notes that Kuttner encouraged him to read Eudora Welty and Faulkner. I don't say the Hogben stories are worthy to, say, kiss the hooves of Faulkner's "Spotted Horses." But they're part of the continuum.

They are even part of a little hillbilly subgenre in science fiction itself. Remember Manly Wade Wellman's Silver John series in the 50s and 60s, set in the Carolina mountains? And today, arguably, there are Orson Scott Card's tales of Alvin Maker.

And there's an even closer relation – embarrassingly close, in true hillbilly style. In his 1967 study *Seekers of Tomorrow*, Sam Moskowitz claims the Hogben saga, which he loathed, was a direct steal from stories Murray Leinster wrote about a character called Bud Gregory. He also says my favorite Hogben, "Cold War," was entirely written by Kuttner's wife C. L. Moore – a far superior stylist – to Kuttner's plot.

What else is there to like? Well, I adore characters with extended lifespans, and Kuttner runs a nicely warped new thread into this idea. His concept: the Hogbens retain their physical development and family roles at their relative ages, not their real ones.

So Little Sam is still a baby and can't talk or walk, just stays in his crib. (Well, technically, his tank.) Even though he reads Einstein, can see the future, weighs 300 pounds, and is old enough to have been named for a family friend named Pepys.

There are other delicious hints about the family's antecedents. Saunk is not too fond of words scientists throw around like "irradiated chromosomes" and "dominant mutations." He says, "I allus got it mixed up with the Roundhead Plot, back when we was living in the old country. Course I don't mean the *real* old country. That got sunk."

Scientists don't fare awfully well in these tales. A constant theme: don't be so sure that polysyllabic labels and vaunted sophistication give you a superior vantage point for dealing with phenomena. In fact, the Hogbens turn out to be considerably more skilled at observing/manipulating physical events than anybody else around.

Since the average reader of the stories is probably more technoid than natural genius, it may say something for us that in laughing *at* and more than occasionally *with* the Hogbens, we can laugh at ourselves.

To bring off dialect stories like this, you must have a good ear. Mixed marks here. Some of Kuttner's countryisms seem pretty standard, with run-of-the-mill Hollywood hick words such as "pappy," "dingus," and "thunk."

Other times, he strikes a pure vein. Junior Pugh has eyes "so close together you could poke 'em both out at once with one finger." A visitor who has just taken a sip of the Hogbens' hospitably offered moonshine liquor "took a few gasping breaths and said, thanks, no, he didn't want any more just then or ever. He said he could cut his throat cheaper, and get the same effect." A man in pain rolls up his eyes "like a duck in thunder." And Saunk refuses a proposed course of action because if followed, "We won't have no more privacy than a corncob." (I *think* I know what that means.)

Is there any deeper worth here, beyond entertainment? Sure. Kuttner was more than occasionally an artist, not a hack, so he almost couldn't help adding value to even his most lightweight creations. Not symbolism or heavy-duty portent, but meaning.

How about – that wonder can still exist in the world, tucked into out-of-the-way pockets where you may not expect it. So keep an eye out.

That there's hope. The Hogbens allude a couple of times to plans they have for the world. Something about sharing their secrets when mankind is advanced enough, which probably just means tolerant enough, to appreciate them.

Or, here's a good one: that ignorance comes in different guises. So don't be so sure you know it when you

see it. In the currently famous words of Saunk's distant cousin Forrest – another simple-minded lump of a narrator who triumphs far beyond the seemingly possible through a combination of moral strength and unexpected, amazing resources – "Stupid is as stupid does."

[The first story in this series, "The Old Army Game," originally appeared in the November 1941 issue of *Thrilling Adventures,* (a non-sf magazine) and has only been reprinted once. It can be found in *Kuttner Times Three.* KK]

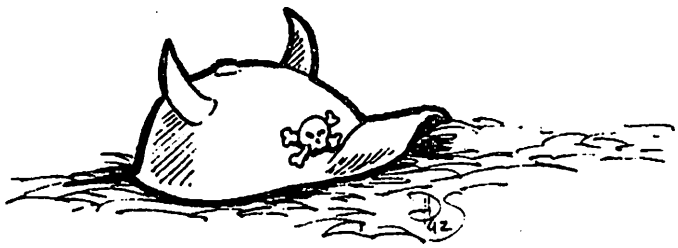
Mutant by Henry Kuttner
reviewed by Mark Olson FN

In 1945 Henry Kuttner published a series of novelettes about the Baldies, telepaths who had emerged after WW III. Besides the telepathy, their only distinguishing mark was a complete hairlessness.

Naturally they are feared by ordinary humans, and for the most part they only want to be left to live their lives in peace. But a few of the Baldies, the Paranoids, think themselves supermen and want world domination instead. These stories are of the conflicts between the normal Baldies and the Paranoids. The Paranoids are few in number, but have the advantage that they aren't too worried about a bad reaction from ordinary humans, while the normal Baldies must combat the Paranoids without scaring the rest of humanity.

The stories stand up pretty well, though they are very dated in some respects – everyday life hasn't changed much at all from 1945 to 2045!

They're worth reading.



24 August 1995

Dear Kenneth:

Proper Boskonian 35 arrived today. Thursdays and Fridays are my days off, and these days I diddle around with my computer system, mostly playing games from Maxis, such as *SimFarm.* So what do I see when I glance through this zine, but a resource guide to SF on the Internet.

Mind you, I do not have any real kind of Internet access. I am a member of a small, very non-profit BBS titled *The Great Escape.* But this does not give me access to the WWW, or just about any other internet resource except Usenet and its newsgroups.

I did note a couple of newsgroups on your list I am interested in, including rec.games.diplomacy, since I play that at times, mostly by mail. I might think about adding those.

[You have just demonstrated one of the main reasons I do not use the modem that came with my computer. While there is a lot of good information available on-line, and being able to send and receive information from other fans would be a big plus, I fear I would just end up playing games. I have a hard enough time concentrating on useful tasks without adding another possible distraction. KK]

One of the things I hate about being a fan, even after all these years, is the assumption that just because I read SF I have lost the use of my brains. You know..."Oh, you read SF? Do you believe in Flying Saucers?" Or maybe it is the Bermuda Triangle. Or maybe the Monuments on Mars baloney as represented by Thomas A. Endrey and his gang of "scientists" who think the formations are artificial. [I suppose you think that all of the scientists involved with SETI are wasting their time as well. There are a lot of people who feel differently. Please go back and read my editorial. KK]

Anything else? Guess I'll get back to *SimFarm.* Gotta grow some potatoes. Yours Aye...

Andy [Harry Cameron Andruschak]

August 26, 1995

Dear Ken and NESFAns:

Here I sit, broken hearted...I'm not at the Worldcon! I hope someone will phone me and let me know who won the 1998 Worldcon. Meanwhile, as my meagre fanzine supply dries up, I thought I'd spend a quiet evening writing a letter of comment on *Proper Boskonian* 35.

The Fan Groups listing is a valuable one, and not just for Boston fans. Seeing how many of these groups I've had contact with over the past year (including M.A.S.S.F.I.L.C., the B.S.T.A., Boston in '98, NESFA,and Boston in 2001), such a list should go on the wall. I wish more cities kept this list. I wish Toronto fandom could! (Years ago, I did a little publication called *The Whole Toronto Fanac Guide,* which kept local fandom up to date about clubs, conventions and stores, but everyone involved lost interest.)

Ah, another article about Magic: The Addiction. While I have not had any real interest in collector's cards or gaming. I figure that Magic and Jyhad and the ST:TNG customizable card game have all revitalized both card and gaming stores and the industries together. Ad Astra had its first Magic tournament, but few people took part in it. [Magic is still extremely popular here. At Boskone there will be two sanctioned tournaments. KK] The Fannish Cards are a laugh...perhaps Leslie Turek might want to re-create *If I Ran the Zoo* as a gaming card game? Ooo, scary...

Joseph Major wants to create a series of *Star Trek* novels in which the crew meets the characters of other TV

series? Half of the Trek fiction zines that aren't K/S zines are cross-universe zines. It's been done, and not too well, too. If we've got to have Trek novels, I'd prefer something like Mike Ford's *The Final Reflection*, which takes place in the same timeframe as the Federation, but mentions a couple of familiar characters only in passing. (Robert Sheckley just had published a *Deep Space Nine* novel. I'm still trying to put my eyes back in their sockets.)

I hope the membership is picking up on contributing. I'm glad my letter could provide some food for thought. I might have been able to be listed as having contributes a loc to each issue you'd done, Ken, if the Pest Awful hadn't eaten a letter I did send.

Anyway, the results of Intersection should be quite interesting. At least one Boston Worldcon bid will get what they want. Take care, and see you next issue.

Yours,

Lloyd Penney

27 August

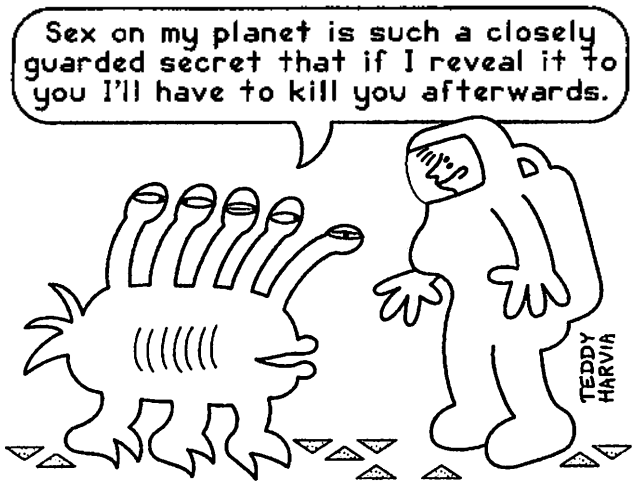
Dear Boskonian:

Thanks for #35.

I think the Magic article title should be Magic: The Addiction. As I am currently looking for proofreading/copyediting work, I am inordinately pleased to notice something George Flynn appears to have missed. [George did not miss it. All typos are by me. Real deadlines mean that last-minute corrections do not always get run by George. This is a fanzine. KK]

The lettercol kind of sneaks up on us unwary readers. What is *Bergen* (Joseph Major's loc)? Sounds like James Branch's Cabell's only book set in New Jersey. [Are you typo hunting? It was supposed to be *Jurgen*. KK]

One good thing about Martin Greenberg is that he is not Roger Elwood. Like Greenberg, Elwood appeared to have no taste, rather than bad taste. He published stories ranging from formulaic junk to some of the best work of writers like Silverberg, Malzberg, and Lafferty. The big difference was that Elwood was a funny mentalist, and he did not allow the words you can't say on television or characters getting away with sex he disapproved of. [I believe that the rule was that for fornication, the woman (of course) had to die, and for homosexuality, they both did.]



I imagine many of us have considered the possibility of *Star Trek* crossovers à la *Ishmael*. I can just hear Mr. Spock saying, "You believe that vehicle is inhabited by your mother's ghost? Most illogical."

Lloyd Penney's loc: Roger Zelazny's mother was Zelazny himself? That sounds more like Heinlein.

Ray Bowie's loc: Asimov strikes me as an excellent argument for the idea that one needn't be mentally healthy to be a useful and productive person. Asimov obviously thought that he was a worthless piece of doo-doo if he didn't spend at least all of his waking hours writing, and he produced a lot of excellent fiction and nonfiction as part of this doomed effort to shore up his self-esteem.

Excelsior,

Arthur D. Hlavaty

September 5, 1995

Dear Helmuth and the gang:

Dear, dear, dear. *Bergen* would be a book about a port in Norway. What it has to do with *Jurgen*, a notorious fantasy book by James Branch Cabell, is not quite known to me.

I wish I could answer Bob Devney's question in "Striking the Chord." I must admit that I first heard of the Jane Chord in *National Review* back in the seventies, where they noted that William F. Buckley's latest book produced "Herewith . . . light." (A nonfiction work, this being before the era of Blackford Oakes.) They would be predisposed to think so, admittedly. Anyway:

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*
"When . . . back."

The new *Hobbit* is very much so a "there and back again" (the subtitle of *The Hobbit*) book.

James Branch Cabell, *Jurgen*
"It . . . days."

This seemed incoherent, but when you recall that objectively the book takes place in a single day (as opposed to the subjective year), it was clear that for Jurgen, it was one of those days.

L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*
"Dorothy . . . again!"

A warning of the many sequels to come.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes*
"I . . . was."

It should be made clear that the "primitive-grammar" Tarzan is the character of the movies. Lord Greystoke was fluent, when not absolutely eloquent, in several languages. However, this comment has sinister implications about its protagonist's survival.

"Lewis Carroll" [the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson], *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
"Alice . . . days."

Not quite as disjointed as Jurgen's day, but its sequel is clearer:

"Lewis Carroll," *Through the Looking Glass*
"One . . . dream?"
This has implications for the whole set of books.

H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*
"The . . . man."
The Time Traveller no less, who is speaking in the beginning and is wondered about at the end.

H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*
"No . . . dead."
You have to introduce a comma here, but then that describes the Martians' final condition well enough.

Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*
"Mr . . . world."
Cosmopolitan bloke, that Phileas Fogg.

Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin) Shelley, *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*
"To . . . distance."
"And aaaway we go!" the monster (another eloquent fellow in the original book) says.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, *A Princess of Mars*
"I . . . know."
Confident fellow, that John Carter.

Baroness (Emmuska) Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* "A . . . ball."
Which functions Sir Percy Blakeney assiduously attended, all the better to build up his cover as an inane feather-brained dolt who could *never* be the daring, clever Scarlet Pimpernel.

Yes, indeed, "Beware of the Magic!" [Thomas A. Endrey]. By the time you usually hear of the newest trend, the buy-in cost has risen beyond the ordinary person' s financial resources. As with, for example, the Aubrey/Maturin books, for which you not only have to buy all the books at $20 a pop but the Official Guidebook and the newsletter. And so with Endrey' s high costs of playing Magic™. I remember when you could play D&D™ for only about ten bucks. As for speculators, I note Gary Lovisi's hope that the speculators never get into his hobby of fifties paperbacks. It saps the enjoyment of it all.

Thanks for the amusing Harvia cartoon on the parochialism of universality.

Lloyd Penney notes the problems of cultivating locols. One thing that might help is more informative and less parochial reviews. Reviewing standards that shrink to the level of only liking perzines that recount the mundane trivialities of, say, a bowling enthusiast, are a decided detriment to this end.

Ray Bowie is rightly concerned about Heinlein's ill health having affected his outlook on life. It was hardly "later on in life," either; he was invalided out of the Navy with tuberculosis in the early thirties, which for someone who had had his heart set on being a careerist would be quite a shock. However, he should be careful about what he says about Asimov, who has a fanatical collection of aficionados eager to defend him against all fancied slights.

Getting back to Bob Devney, yes, I recall *Miss Pickerell Goes to Mars* and other places, too. You have to realize that there has been a change in the perception of such things by remembering how unhostile she was towards the people who used her house and farm without her knowledge (and carelessly, too, considering that they tore off the calendar for last month). As I recall, though, Burroughs more generally went in for switching between two plot threads. He wrote on the basis of never wanting to strain his readers' minds. After seeing convoluted postmodern works like *Mother of Storms,* one could wish that such concern for the readers could be revived.

Best wishes to you all.

Námarië, Joseph T Major

October 1, 1995

Dear Ken,

PB 35 was a real bonus.

I like the idea of a fanzine review column. Ashamed to say I hadn't ever seen a fanzine beyond *Proper Boskonian* before my visit to the clubhouse last month, where I looked into *Ansible* and *Mimosa,* both of which I'd heard a lot about. (I'm easing into this fandom things slowly, as is my wont. Fifteen years of Boskones, two years of NESFA membership, now almost a year of apas and *PB*s, who knows what's ahead?) It would be great to get perspective from someone who really knows the field. [A fresh view is often the most unbiased one. Sorry I had to cut your reviews so much. KK]

Also think your coverage of New England fan clubs and conventions was valuable. Nice to know several colleges are cultivating propellerheads. Think some of them will join NESFA? [I hope so. I have been sending NESFA and Boskone flyers to some of them. KK]

The filksongs were interesting, and a nice stretch for the zine. Sally Childs-Helton's "Con Man Blues" pleased me most on the page; humor is easier to appreciate than more emotional treatments like Gendron's, Taylor's, and Kesselman's, at least without truly beautiful voices behind them.

Tom Endrey's piece on Magic was a good overview for nongamers like me. Thanks, Tom. Maybe you guys will get me under your spell yet...Nah!

My reaction to Elisa Hertel's deck of funny cards was hilarity, handicapped only by the fact that I didn't get half of them. But that any of them got across to a nonplayer is a tribute to her genius. Double ditto on the not-getting part with Tony Lewis's deck statistics.

The other Endrey piece on Martian monuments and the like was quite thought-provoking. Granted, some of the first thoughts were "C'mon!" and "If Charlton Heston says it, it must not be true" and "When I hear the word 'Velikovsky,' I reach for my gun" (which last sentiment should please Charlton). But why am I so knee-jerk about this? Healthy skepticism is fine, but I haven't examined any evidence myself. As a science fiction fan, I'm supposed to know about Clarke's Law, examine all preconceptions for empty dogma, and keep my eyes and mind open for new thoughts. So thanks again, Tom; I'll show up for your alternative science panel. And thanks, Ken, for running the piece.

Paul Giguere's piece on netborne SF was a great job, and very timely for me – my first modem (Motorola 28.8 kbps Power model) arrived yesterday. After a few months of major installation engineering and signup/connection torments, I'm sure I'll go surfing with Paul's guide propped up beside the monitor. Kowabunga, baby.

Wow, media coming out of your ears with this issue, Ken! The Diana Harlan Stein gallery of dragons was great. I grew scales just looking at it.

The work of Aron Insinga, Kurt Baty, and Elisabeth Carey on Stanley G. Weinbaum was all impressive. The Carey piece particularly caught what I remember of my reactions on reading Weinbaum years ago.

Loved the incidental art, like the Sheryl Birkhead brighteners, the Halliday Piel *Star Trek* thing, and especially Merle Insinga's "Anubis Skates." And special thanks to the talented Mr. Mayhew and to Teddy Harvia for doing stuff you could use to grace my humble contributions, the Jane Chord piece and even the LOC. Joe has got real elegance, and Teddy has a beautifully clean line – as well as a nice punchy sense of humor.

In the lettercol, I liked Joseph T. Major's description of Roger Elwood's now-vanished editing empire as "literary kudzu." And he filled in some nice background on Jonathan Swift and Isaac Newton anent my comment on *Gulliver's Travels*. I didn't know that...

Thanks to Lloyd Penney's letter for the blooper story about L. Spraque de Camp's *Rouge Queen* (*sic* and *sic*). As another sometime copyeditor, I also collect these goodies.

Versus Ray Bowie's letter, I remember being very taken with Nicol Williamson's *Hamlet*. Very dark, savage, and bloody-minded. Perfect for that play. But I agree with Ray on letting Heinlein grumble all he wants from the grave. I'll take my greatness with some grit, please.

Regards,

Bob Devney

P.S. Just heard that Tedd Harvia won the Fan Artist Hugo. Congratulations! Couiln't happen to a nicer Limer.

October 28, 1995

Dear Kenneth,

#35 looks a bit like a catalog in format (also meaning it lends itself to a browse through!). The cover certainly has a Celtic accent.

If you didn't specifically ask Teddy Harvia for that illo on page 7, you sure lucked out in one that really hit the spot! Where else but in a fanzine would you get free "sheet" music! [Like you, Teddy suggested I send him material to illustrate. But since I have been unable to give my artists a long lead time (you know this first hand) he asked that in the future, I stop sending him pieces and just accept whatever inspires him. Of course I am thrilled to receive anything by him. KK]

Ah, Jane Chord – worth thinking about and trying out. Many zines have started columns on net-working (so to speak) – interesting to see such an, apparently, comprehensive listing of web sources.

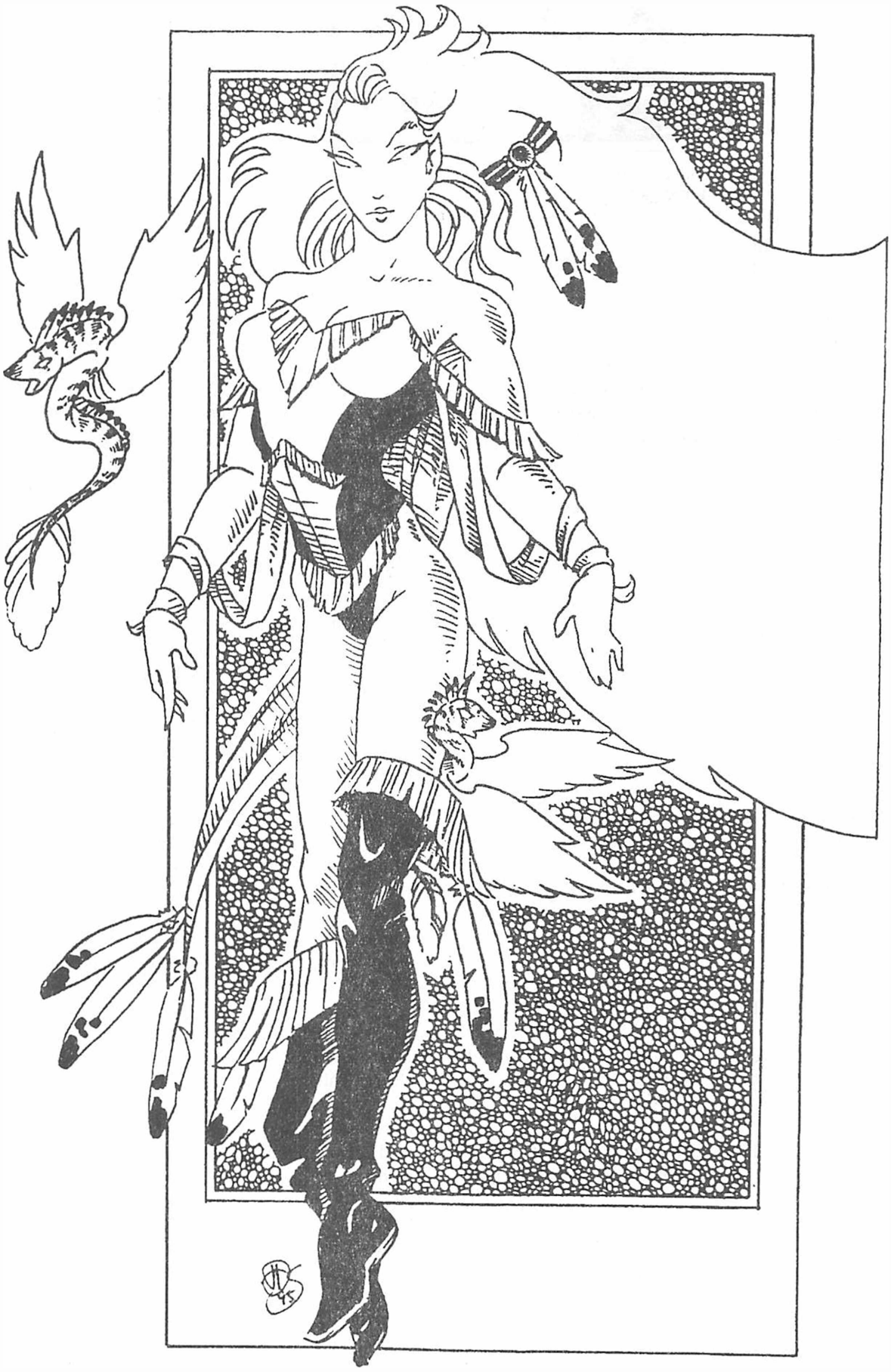
Diana's dragons have taken on many forms – from a simple line to a much more complicated form...all interesting to look at. Somehow the ones on page 31 remind me of Taral's furries (no, don't ask me why or how).

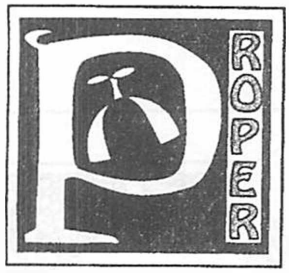
The Mayhew art is a pleasure. Is it my imagination or is his work REALLY starting to show up more frequently and widely these days? [Joe has been selling his art to magazines and elsewhere. Write *Asimov's* to and say you want to see more. KK]

In one of the season's first Christmas catalogs, I found an interesting book listed and wondered if anyone knows if there has ever been anything similar (other than the Feghoot collections) published in sf – this one was short mysteries. The blurb said that no story was longer than 5 pages long. For those of us with either small amounts of time or an extremely short attention span, this might be a gem...if such a thing exists. Just wondered. [There is *Space & Time*, $5 + $1.25 handling or 2 issues for $10. Check payable to G. Linzer at 138 W. 70th Street (4B), New York, NY 10023-4432. KK]

Look forward to the nextish!

Sheryl Birkhead





Back Issues Available

As promised last issue, I have begun reprinting the sold-out issues. Leslie Turek FN and Joe Ross FN are lending me their copies of the issues I can not easily find in the NESFA files. While I have not yet completed the task, all issues will be available by Boskone. The reprints will all be black ink on white paper. I have made no attempt to reproduce the multicolor art in some issues. In some cases, all copies of the originals available had the same text illegible. Using Mr. Gestetner and white paper, I have made the best possible reprints without reentering the text.

Listed is some of the material in each issue that's ready that may be of interest to today's reader. Unless the art looks good in the reprint, I have not mentioned it.

PB 0 – The original was light blue ditto. The reprint is readable but broken. This issue is mostly history.

PB 1 – Half of page 6 was illegible on all three originals available. Fabian cover, NESFA pickets WBZ to support *Star Trek* by Susan Hereford (Lewis), and fanzine reviews.

PB 2 – Crossword puzzle by Delle Seidman, 2001: A Space Odyssey by Tim Hunter, and back cover by Fabian.

PB 3 – Fabian cover, many, many zine reviews, and a nice back cover by DEA.

PB 4 – Fabian cover, another crossword puzzle by Delle Seidman, and fiction by Morton Pestal.

PB 5 – Jack Gaughan cover, "The Clement Problem" by Richard Harter, and "Is M.I.T. Student 6th Nuclear Power?" by Charles L. Whipple.

PB 6 – Fabian cover, art by Eddie Jones and Bill Rotsler, Delle Siedman puzzel #3, Baycon report by Cory Panshin.

PB 12 – Art by Bill Rotsler, the origin of DEC by Mary L. Cole, and "My Love Lies in the Blue Crater" by Mike Gilbert.

PB 14 – Covers by Al Sirois, "Learning the Hard Way" by Don D'Ammassa FN, and "Tanith Lee" by Suford Lewis FN.

PB 20–24 These issues will be reprinted together and will count as one. The contain mostly book reviews.

PB 25 – John Osborne cover, WW II Alternate History SF by Mark M. Keller, The Silliest of Apa:NESFA by Laurie D. T. Mann FN, and "A Bostonian SF Trivia Quiz" compiled by George Flynn FN.

PB 26 – Merle Insinga FN cover, fiction by D. J. Zauner, "In the Fringe" by Joe Rico FN, and a look at Reagan's Star Wars by Mark M. Keller.

PB 27 – Art by Merle Insinga FN, Teddy Harvia, and Joe Mayhew FN, "Bits and Pieces of Noreascon III," "My Life as a Faned" by Leslie Turek FN, and "The Kurt Baty Roast" by Laurie & Jim Mann FNs.

PB 28 – Microprogramming by David E. Romm, ConFiction Reports, and art by 13 people.

PB 29 – Laurel Slate cover, The Hawaii in '93 Bid by Pam Fremon FN, and "Asimov's Chronoclasms" by Anthony R. Lewis FN.

PB 30 – Peggy Ranson art, tour of the NESFA clubhouse (complete with map), Boskone 30 report, and "SF from Gilgamesh to John W. Campbell" by Anthony R. & Suford Lewis FNs.

PB 31 – Art by Merle Insinga FN, "Crosstime Bus" by Joe Mayhew FN, ConFrancisco reports, and "On Rereading Heinlein" by Jim Mann FN.

PB 32 – The convention art of Joe Mayhew FN, Boskone 31 report, and "Neglected F & SF Films" by Mark R. Leeper.

PB 33 – Art by Joe Mayhew FN, ConAdian report, a C. M. Kornbluth highlight, and "The Golem in Literature" by Mark R. Leeper.

PB 34 – Art by Diana Harlan Stein, Boskone 32 report, "25 Important SF Films" by Mark R. Leeper, and fiction by George Phillies.

PB 35 – "The Dragons of Diana Harlan Stein," Magic (the card game), SF on the Net, and a Stanley Weinbaum highlight.

Back issues are $3 each, 2 for $5, or 5 for $10. Member discount does apply. Mass. residents must pay 5% tax. Shipping is $2 for 1–5 issues, $4 for 6 or more issues. Orders will not be shipped until all issues requested are available. Orders can be held for delivery at Boskone.

Proper Boskonian History

by Anthony Lewis

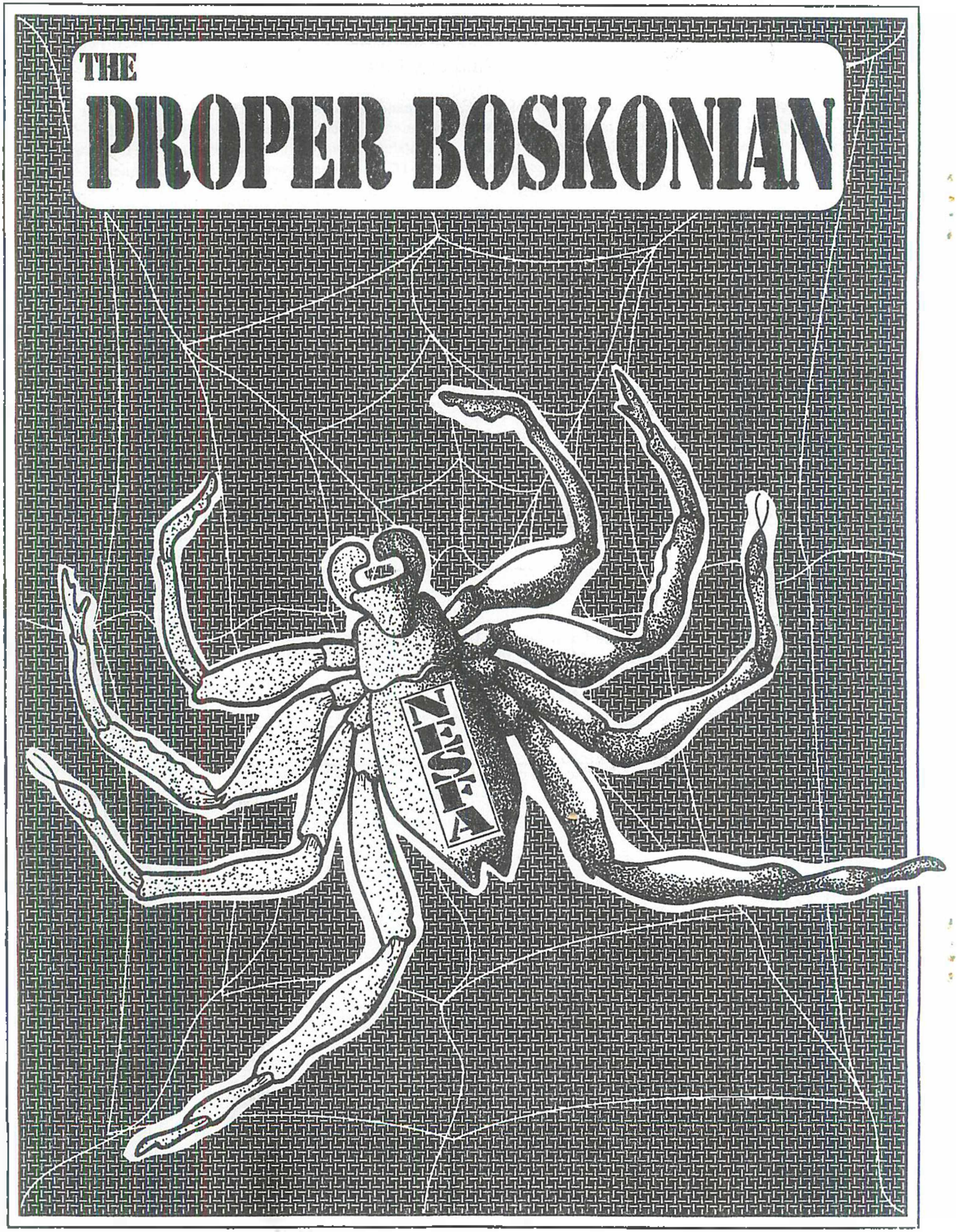
Proper Boskonian is the general fanzine of NESFA. The name was suggested by Dainis Bisenieks. Other proposed titled for this zine included *The Fenway*. It is ostensibly published on a quarterly basis, but in reality, has only done slightly better than annually. It contains writing, art, book reviews, and the like from both members and non-members. All issues have been 8-1/2 x 11. Issue 0 was dittoed; all subsequent issues have been mimeographed or offset.

#	EDITOR/NOTES	DATE	LENGTH
0	**Cory Seidman Panshin** / "The Great Pumpkin Lives!"	10/67	10 pp
1	"Happy Birthday, Tony Lewis"	2/68	30 pp
2	"Special Fuzzy Pink Issue"	6/68	44 pp
3	"Smoffing is a Way of Life"	11/68	32 pp
4	"Beware the Ides of March"	3/69	46 pp
5	**Richard Harter** / "Tranquility Base Here, the *Eagle* Has Landed"	8/69	46 pp
6		7/70	56 pp
7		4/71	56 pp
8		9/71	82 pp
9		4/72	82 pp
10	**Tony Lewis** / "Real Soon Now"	7/73	28 pp
11	"Highmore in '76"	5/74	18 pp
12	**David Stever**	5/75	26 pp
13		1/76	18 pp
14	**Sheila Glover D'Ammassa**	8/76	36 pp
15		11/76	58 pp
16		2/77	40 pp
17	**Mike Blake**	12/78	22 pp
18	**James Mark Anderson**	12/79	36 pp
19		1980	38 pp
20	unnumbered, distributed with *Instant Message* 292	5/81	6 pp*
21	distributed with *Instant Message* 294	6/81	2 pp*
22	distributed with *Instant Message* 296	7/81	3 pp*
23	distributed with *Instant Message* 300	9/81	12 pp*
24	unnumbered, distributed with *Instant Message* 307	1/82	12 pp*
25	**Joe Rico**	11/84	74 pp
26		12/85	46 pp
27	**Laurie D. T. Mann** / "The Fall of '73 Issue"	5/90	44 pp
28	"Back to Boskone"	2/91	32 pp
29		8/92	34 pp
30	**Kenneth Knabbe**	6/93	42 pp
31		12/93	88 pp
32		6/94	78 pp
33		12/94	74 pp
34		6/95	50 pp
35	"Special Bonus Issue"	8/95	54 pp
36		12/95	pp

Length includes covers

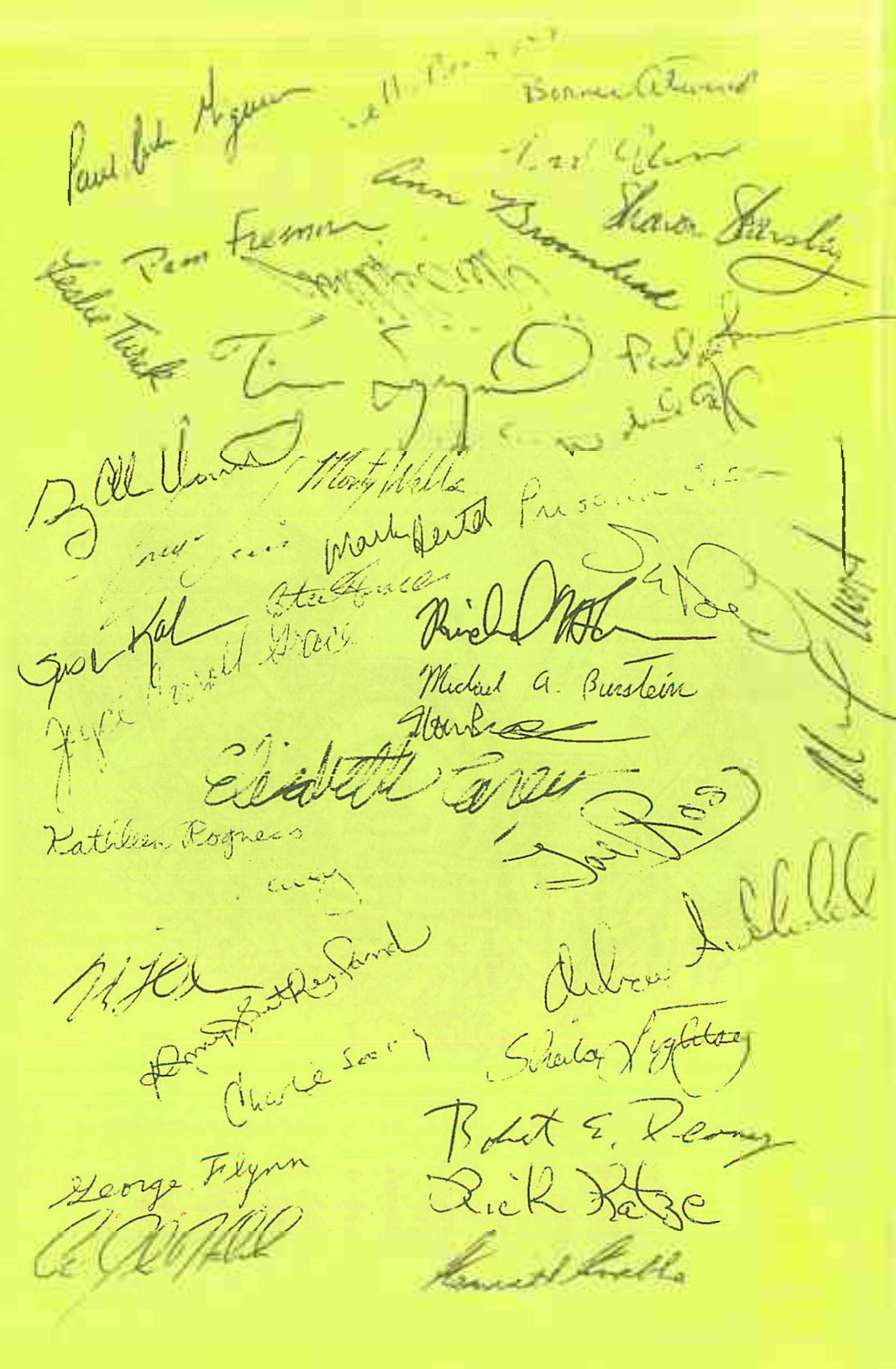
* issues that had no covers

THE PROPER BOSKONIAN



Seasons

Greetings



In the upcoming year may you:

Find all books you've been searching for,

Discover that special piece of art affordable,

Have lunch with your favorite pro,

Win an all expense paid trip to Worldcon,

Sell that first story,

Be published in *Proper Boskonian.*

Best wishes for the coming year from:

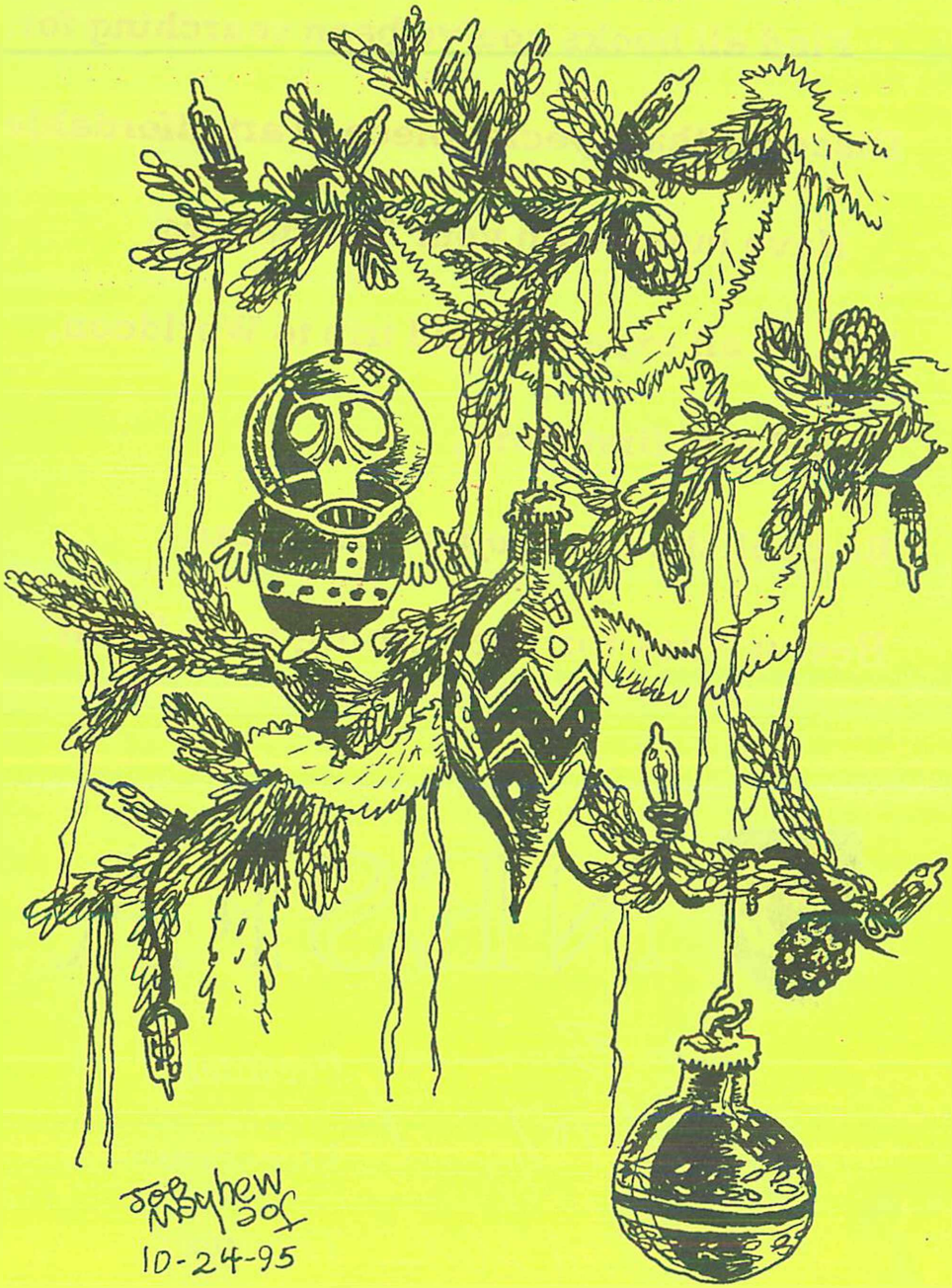
NESFA

President

Vice-President

Treasurer

Clerk


Joe Mayhew
10-24-95