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BOSKONIAN #44

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Front Cover art by Leigh Kimmel; Back Cover art by Patricia Pierce Phillips
 Interior illustrations by Sheryl Birkhead, Brad Foster, Teddy Harvia, Anna Hillier, Joe Mayhew, Patricia Pierce Phillips, Gene Stewart, and Karl Winkler.

Official Notices

Proper Boskonian is still trying to catch up to being a quarterly (or semi-annual) genzine of the New England Science Fiction Association. Send contributions (writing, art, and/or letters) to:

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The Editor Speaks-Writes

by Lisa Hertel

I'd like to thank all of you for your congratulations on the birth of my daughter. Of course, it means I have even *less* time in my life...but in a way, the universe balances these things, since I am no longer on a Worldcon committee (our bid lost). I'm sure that, as Liana grows and becomes more independent—she may be crawling by the time you read this—some other lannish activity will come along to occupy my “free” time. So it goes.

I want to congratulate all the Hugo-nominated contributors to *Proper Boskonian*: first, Fan Artist winner Joe Mayhew, who claimed (to me) that “it all started with *PB*,” and our other fan artist nominees: Teddy Harvia, Ian Gunn, and Brad Foster. Also, the fan writer nominees: Bob Devney (whose fan writing career really *is* my fault), Evelyn Leeper, and Joseph T. Major; and Michael A. Burstein (novelette nominee). Others with significant nominations, but not enough to make the final list, include artists Sheryl Birkhead (7th) and Diana Harlan Stein, and writers Mark Leeper and Ian Gunn. I'd also like to thank the seven other people who nominated *Proper Boskonian*. I'm sure it will never win, but it's nice to be appreciated. As always, it was nice to meet some of my contributors face-to-face at Worldcon. For the first time, I am attending Ditto, and giving out free copies of *PB* there.

This issue features “The Game” from the 1998 NESFA Short Story contest. When I asked the author for reprint rights, Terry Hickman replied:

I received a very nice letter from Richard Blair, editor of *Aberrations*, today. He says, “Tell Lisa Hertel that it would be fine with everyone here at Sirius Fiction if NESFA went with [“The Game”] for *Proper Boskonian* first, and that [he and I] will consider this letter a rider to our contract specifying that Sirius Fiction is purchasing “One-Time Rights” from [me] only.”

He also says that NESFA's a “very classy outfit”.

I'd like to thank Mr. Blair for his consideration, and his kind comments. Next issue, I plan to publish the contest winner, “The Lives of Ghosts.” This issue also has Boskone reports; next issue will have Worldcon reports. Until then, enjoy!



Art by Brad Foster

THE GAME

by Terry Hickman

Came the red-lit whisper: "It's him again, isn't it."

"Yes. A-117 block. I recognize that shunt. Program Iota?"

"Yes."

Nevin scrunched and wriggled on the floor of the darkened closet, the deck in his lap, and the family's trunk rubbing against his spine. The only light was from the little green bead on the deck. He could hear the grafted Dim-unit sprangling gently as he moved, could imagine its springy coils bobbing like a foolish ear sticking off the top corner of the deck. It only took a minute to thread the shunt wire through the small hole he'd dug in the back wall, and connect with the building's waste tube power cable. He groped and pulled on the tight leather gloves. He flexed his fingers against the crisp resistance of the wires taped to them. The closet was airless, and smelled of his family's bodies from their few clothes hanging close around his head. He shoved them away again.

His pulse sprinted. Every time he shunted illegally, trying to plug into the Dimensional games the Regulators provided for the rich kids, it was the same. Tapping the games wasn't difficult, it was pirating the energy needed to run them that was tricky, and just as illegal. His whole family would be punished if he were discovered. But he figured he'd got around that danger this time. That, and the newest modifications he'd made to the Dim-unit, made the blood race in his veins.

The closet door flew open, blinding him with the family cube's yellow light.

"What are you doing now, Nev?" It was Fawn, his sister.

"Dammit, Fawn, I told you to leave me alone."

"You're messing with that Dim-unit again, aren't you? If you get our rations cut again, I'll kill you—if Dad doesn't."

"Shut up and close the door."

She complied, but she shut herself inside with him in the dark. He made room for her, exasperated, but his shunt access window was short and he didn't have time to argue with her.

"Where you goin' this time?"

"I don't know. Haven't been there yet."

"Can I go?"

"No, I've only got the one outfit."

"You better let me or I'll tell Mom and Dad you've been playing the Dimension games."

He'd wondered when blackmail would occur to her, and had been collecting bits and pieces of a second graftable unit. "Not this time," he told her, "but if you're quiet and keep a look-out, next time. I've got the stuff to make a second one; we can go together."

"Why can't I go by myself?"

"You don't know how. I've avoided the main power conduit and gone in through the waste tube sensors. They'd never think to look there. But it takes constant monitoring and adjustment, else the waste plant will sense the different draw-down patterns. I'll drive," he smiled, "and you can ride. But next time." He pulled his homemade visor over his face and ran his fingers over the deck keys. A faint metallic hum started up. Fawn felt him go stiff next to her, and she held still, listening to his breathing.

After a few minutes he sighed, "Wow."

"What?" she demanded, but knew he wouldn't hear her. She fidgeted. His body had relaxed a little but now he was moving, his sleeves rustling, the leather gloves creaking. His breath was shallow and excited. An unpleasant thought occurred to her: What if he was in one of those sex games? She didn't care to be around him if that was it. Yuck, brothers. Listening she decided he was just walking, climbing or running around in his Virt World and not...that other. She waited. She kept one ear attuned to the cube outside the closet.

After what seemed like a long time, he snapped off the computer deck, and lifted off his visor. He was still breathing like he'd been running.

"What'd you see? What'd you see?"

Before answering he removed and folded up the gloves, and pushed open the door to get light. He tucked his illegal trappings down in the bottom of the trunk.

"Let's get out of this sweat-box," he said, combing his hands through his lank blond hair. Once out, he stretched the kinks out of his back, and flopped into the lower bunk, her bunk. She picked up a pile of clean laundry and tossed it on his lap. He finally answered, folding the patched, worn garments absently.

"It's weird, not like any game I've seen. There was this desert-like place. The sky was green, so I guess it's supposed to be a different planet. The sun was up, but there were some stars out, because it's just this little tiny pale sun. There were people there! A covered wagon like thing, with livestock going along, and dogs trotting beside, and some kids—but they weren't human. I couldn't get very close to see details. I tried some stuff, to bring me closer, to change the scene, but none of it worked. I don't know what the game is. Maybe that's part of the game, to figure out what the game is."

"What did they look like?"

"Pretty much like us. Two arms, two legs, one head. But their heads were different. Next time I'll try to get closer again, so we can see more."

He handed her the pile of folded clothes. She handed him more.

"There's this long low line of mountains off in the distance. I think they're headed for the mountains. Anyway, not a word to anybody. We'll go tomorrow night if Mom and Dad go out."

Mom and Dad, Irene and Bud, almost didn't go out the next night. Dinner was a glum affair. Bud rubbed often at the jack-hole in his temple, at the reddened swollen flesh around the socket. He slumped over his bowl of watery tofu soup. His whole posture irritated Nevin. If his father would only show some spine sometimes, not let that stinking bank supervisor push him around so much, the whole family would be better off. Nevin tried to pace his eating. He was always hungry these days, but he didn't dare say anything. Their short rations were his fault. His spirit raged at his confinement. Not just the Tracer they put on his ankle to keep track of him. There were eyes everywhere, at school, on the shuttle to and from; even, he thought sometimes, in his own home.

He glanced guiltily at his sister. She knew a lot of the hijinks he'd got into and never been caught at, but as far as he knew he had no reason to suspect her of squealing.

His mother's tired voice made him jump. "I hear you were in trouble at school again today, Nevin."

Fawn snickered.

"Aw, it wasn't anything. Really, Mom—"

"They called me from school. You could have killed Mrs. Griscomb! What were you thinking of?"

Dad came out of his fog. "Kill her? What the hell were you doing?"

"Nothing! It wasn't anything."

"Dropping a heavy door onto your teacher is hardly nothing, Nevin."

"What?!"

"He was late to his bookkeeping class again, and she locked him out. He took the pins out of the hinges—you know what those old doors are—and when she opened it, it fell on her."

Fawn burst out laughing. Irene glared at her. "Don't encourage him, Fawn!"

"It didn't even hardly touch her, Mom! She's pretty fast for an old lady," he added. Fawn struggled to squelch her giggle into a smirk.

"What's your punishment?"

"Just detention."

Bud sighed with relief. "You're lucky. I don't know if I could live on much less than what we're getting now." His bleak eyes surveyed their cube. Thirty feet by thirty feet, their gray, allotted space in the densely packed megalopolis. The only decorations were drawings and collages of junk that Fawn made from trash she picked up on the street, shiny bits of metal and colored papers. The one closet, the tiny bathroom, their parents' bed in one corner, the "kitchen" in another with its card-table and collapsible chairs each a different tired color. The kids' beds were bunks that folded down against the wall during the day. One window, looking across the alley to the next tower. Bud sighed again.

If you hate it so much, Nevin thought angrily, why don't you do something about it?

"Do we have to go to Sheldon's party tonight?" Irene asked her husband. "I'm so tired, and so are you."

"His son's going to be a block manager one day," Bud said. "It doesn't do to offend somebody who's going to have that much power. They won't notice us if we're there, but they will if we aren't."

Fawn said, "Just get ready and go, Mom. Wear that ribbon I found the other day, it's real pretty in your hair. Nev and I will clean up."

As soon as they heard the elevator take their parents away, they raced through the cleanup. Then they went to the closet. Nevin produced the unit he'd pieced together that morning after the adults had left and before he'd left for school. The visor was smaller than his, just right for Fawn's chestnut-capped head. One of her gloves was tighter than the other, since he'd had to scrounge them out singly from waste bins. But she wiggled down beside him and waited as he hooked up the second home-made Dim-unit. He threaded the shunt into place, flipped a switch, and there was a low hum.

He could feel the vibrations of the forces flowing through the coiled Dim-units. When the hum reached a certain level of suspense, he touched a button, and they were There.

"Wow," he heard Fawn say. He turned his head, and saw her virtual self next to his in the new place. All around them was that dun-colored desert. The sky was jade-green above them, from horizon to horizon. A few stars poked through. Miles away there was that low range of mountains, black against the sky. And fifty feet away was the covered wagon.

"Good," he whispered, "We're closer this time." He moved his hands, worked his leg muscles to crouch and move forward. They were hiding behind a fragrant desert scrub of some kind. These elite games didn't miss a detail.

The wagon's wooden wheels creaked in complaint as the oxen-like animals pulling it dragged it through the soft sand. Fawn looked curiously at the draft animals. They were immense, with massive muscles, but they each had six legs! And a mauve-gray coat of coarse hair. Their heads were lumps between their shoulders. Eyes, flashing blue, as big as her hand, rolled as the animals strained with their load. The wheels and hooves kicked up little clouds of dust.

The "dogs" were feathered! Four legs, though. Beaks. They made hysterical yapping sounds as they ran among the oxen feet and tumbled along next to the wheels.

More livestock followed along behind the wagon. There were eight two-legged creatures, with splayed toeless feet, scaly legs and shaggy brown fur gray with dust. Black beady eyes peered stupidly from under the fur. Walking among them was a humanoid. It carried a long, flexible rod with which it flicked them sharply from time to time to keep them in a group.

Nevin peered at the herder. Rough, almost scaly, skin, leather-brown. From the tip of its nose arching up and back around the sides of the head were two bony ridges, forming a deep hood from under which the slanted, almond-shaped eyes glared. They didn't seem to have any pupils, just a crinkly-metallic looking yellow circle in a blue-white eyeball. The mouth was a round hole. The creature was singing, but it was atonal and strange to the kids' ears. The clothing was road-dirty, blue fabric draped and wrapped into loose semblance of pants and shirt. It wore sandals with elaborate calf-straps.

"Can't we get closer?" Fawn whispered.

"Try working your leg muscles as though you're walking," Nevin whispered back.

"Why are we whispering?" Fawn asked, as she took a few cautious steps forward.

"I don't know," he answered, still quietly. "It's not like they can see or hear us. Yeah," he added, suddenly loud because he felt foolish, "it's just a game. They're not really there and we're not really here." He strode forward with more confidence.

This brought them directly behind the wagon and the "birdoids" trailing behind it. They saw more people.

"Oh, man!" Fawn whispered.

The people they saw were two more beasts of burden, it seemed. They looked to be of the same species as the herder, but they were nearly naked. The smaller one was pulling a dredge by a wide leather strap stretched taut from the front rigging, looped around the forehead, and back. All she had on, that they could see from behind, was a thin chain around the waist, and metal ankle cuffs with little rings attached.

The other worker was bigger, but his load was heavier, too. He trudged pulling a smaller covered wagon, heaped high with something under a tarp. The wooden wheels sank deep into the sand. They could hear his laborious breathing from their location.

The other one fell. Instantly the herder was upon her, beating her with his cane. Fawn cried out but Nevin hushed her. He was moving rapidly, trying to manipulate the deck in his hands, but nothing he did seemed to have any effect on what was happening.

"Nevin, make it stop!" Fawn cried, but just then the female struggled back to her feet, adjusted the head-strap again, and pulled into the sledge's weight. They could see swollen stripes in her dark skin.

"That monster!" Fawn fumed, "that poor thing!" Oscillating between outrage and pity.

"C'mon, Fawn, it's just a game. It's not really happening."

She sulked beside him. They trotted to catch up to the front of the wagon. On the seat in the front sat another clothed alien and two smaller ones. They chattered amongst themselves in a lively conversation. Occasionally they'd all break out in "ink, ink, ink" noises, which the kids took for laughter. The scene alongside the wagon, the brutality of the herder, might never have happened.

After awhile the light had changed noticeably. The wagon slowed, then halted. Nev and Fawn turned around to see what happened next. The larger of the two slaves put down the handles of the cart he pulled, and stood as though waiting for something.

He was. The herder came to him and unlocked a chain that shackled him to the cart. From this angle they could see that the light chain around his waist held an oval metal disc in place over his belly. At the fork of his legs was nothing: no genitals. The female was the same, with a metal disc over her stomach, too.

The herder spoke some guttural words, and the slave commenced unpacking the cart. It was the family's tent. While he was unpacking and unfolding the various parts, the adult from the front of the wagon, now revealed by her size as another female, came back and spoke to the female slave. She immediately scampered off into the sparse scrub and started gathering sticks and brush and piling them up, for a fire, Nevin supposed. The mistress went to the back of the wagon and started unloading boxes and barrels.

Nevin was right. When she'd gathered enough kindling, the slave went to her mistress and was given a small device which she used to start a fire in the twigs. As the fire claimed its tinder, the mistress handed the slave more cooking implements and foodstuffs, and the girl busied herself starting the meal.

The male slave had grappled adroitly with the big family tent and by the time the meal was prepared the tent was up. They both served the family food—another youngster and another adult male had emerged from within the wagon—and the whole family sat down around the fire to eat. When their masters were served, the slaves went off on either side of the wagon to collapse exhausted sitting against the wheels. They didn't speak to each other or look openly at each other. Fawn watched them with pity.

"They're in love," she whispered.

"What?" Nevin said sharply. He'd been watching the meal, taking in details of the colors, textures, and smells—some of which weren't very appetizing. "You're a dink, Fawn," he added.

"Starlight," Fawn said sadly.

"What?" Nev said again.

"That's her name."

"Oh, sure. Everything's got to be romantic. So what's his name?"

Fawn thought about it, and said, "Cory."

When the family had eaten their fill, the matriarch took the plates and scraped the scraps onto two of them. She handed them to a youngster, who took them and tossed them on the ground in front of the two slaves. The youngster returned to the circle around the fire. They were chattering and laughing, "ink-ink-ink", but Nev and Fawn watched the slaves mop up their meager dinner. Nev's half-empty stomach rumbled in sympathy.

Two pale moons rose over the horizon and it grew dark. The herder went over and locked chains to the slaves' ankle cuffs, attaching them to the rear wheels on opposite sides of the wagon. He said something harsh as he left them. They lay down on the sand without answering. The family retired to its tent and the camp site got quiet.

When it was obvious that nothing else was going to happen, Nev keyed the deck in his hands, and the kids were back inside their stuffy closet. When Bud and Irene came home the children were asleep in their bunks.

"There was another one with him last time," the scarlet words crawled.

"Don't worry about her." The Regulator didn't like talking to the Supervisor.

"Just tagging along, eh? We'll see. But you're not depending only on the program...?"

"I'm taking care of it."

The following evening Irene and Fawn went to parent-teacher conferences for Fawn, leaving Bud and Nevin to clean up after dinner. It was a rare evening alone together for father and son. Through the meal Nevin had been quiet and distracted. He was trying to figure out how to adjust the Dim-unit settings to increase his mobility and choices in the Virt world.

When the dishes were done Nev spread his homework out on the card table and set his illegal thoughts aside. Bud lay back in the cube's only easy chair with the evening paper on his lap, but his eyes were closed as though he had a headache. He usually did. A half-hour of quiet, then he was roused by a curse from his son.

"Dammit! Why won't that come out?"

"What's the matter?"

"These damn water-balance equations. They don't make sense. They're stupid. Who cares about this stuff, anyway: water balance, imbibition, capillary pressure. Jeez! Whoever dreamed this crap up must be crazy."

"Sounds like it's all stuff you'll need to know in the hydro gardens."

Nev shoved his chair back angrily. "Nobody ever asked me if I want to spend my life in the damn gardens. And I don't."

Bud sighed. But to Nevin's relief, he didn't ask the next question in the script for this oft-repeated argument: "So what do you want to do?" Nevin couldn't see why, just because he didn't necessarily have a concrete answer for that yet, it meant they could force him into what they wanted.

Bud said, "It's a tremendous opportunity for you, Nev. Several cuts above what we've got now. Our strat seldom gets to break out like that."

Hydro gardening was a critical function in the vast city. Every two-hundred-story block had one floor in ten devoted to the gardens, which largely fed the other nine floors' 180 families. Produce and meat from the distant, environmentally-ravaged countryside was unreliable, sometimes inedible. Gardeners enjoyed more privileges, like larger cubes, better rations, more travel latitude, than many other strats.

From an early age students were measured for their potentials in the various professions. Nevin's acute mechanical and mathematics skills marked him as a superb potential engineer, but his rebelliousness soon precluded his advancement to the high-strat engineering fields. Hydro gardeners, dealing as they did with living systems, were allowed a bit more emotional volatility than engineers. Nevin was tracked into that path by the seventh grade. Unless he succeeded in completely destroying what good citizenship credits he had left, it was his fate.

"You're smart, Dad. How come they stuck you in the banking stream?" He didn't like to think of his father's job, being passively plugged into the immense, never-ending pipeline of banking figures, his neuronal pathways altered to process the money data as one of thousands of living components of the world-wide banking computer.

Bud smiled. "You may not believe this, but I wasn't all that different than you are, when I was your age. I never dropped a door on my teacher, but... I got into plenty of other kinds of trouble. Enough to wash me out of a banking management spot."

Nevin blinked, stunned by the vision of his dad as a misfit teenager, and his first realization that their lives might have been much different. Finally he grinned. "Yeah? So what kind of stuff did you do?"

Bud smiled and shook his head. "I'm not going to provide you with any ideas. You get enough on your own. I just wish," he sighed again, "you could see that what you do now will affect you all your life."

"I know that—if I knuckle under now I'll be skimming pond scum all my life," Nevin retorted.

"And if you don't 'knuckle under', you could end up shoveling shit in the recycling plant in the basement all your life. It's attitude, son; if you could just see it as taking advantage of the opportunities you're given."

"Yeah, I know; 'adjust my attitude', 'conform', 'settle down' and be a drone like everybody else. Like you." He was glaring down at his textbook and didn't see his father's pained grimace. "Who are the Regulators, anyway? What gives them the right to tell us what we have to be?"

"They're responsible for managing this population of half a billion people, so everybody gets fed, everybody has shelter,

goods and services are provided, crime is controlled... it's a hell of a job."

"Yeah, and it makes them rich."

"I told you before, that's not necessarily true. Most of them aren't rich at all."

"They've got the power; the ones in power are always rich."

"That's loose talk, and it doesn't help your attitude."

Nevin started to retort angrily, but bit his tongue instead. They'd had this argument so many times before. He glanced at his dad. The shadows on the older man's face seemed sharper tonight. Something pricked at Nevin's diaphragm, and he forgot his comeback. "Well, I guess I won't be finding out anyway, huh," he said trying to put some humor in his voice.

Bud gave him a tired smile. "That's okay, son. You'll do fine in the gardens. They're a lot less stressful anyway. Many a day I'd rather be there than... plugged in."

"I guess you didn't have much choice, either."

"Nope. With this many people in the city, everyone has to sacrifice for the greater benefit. I'm just..." His eyes closed and he sighed.

"What?"

"I'm glad I have my family."

Nevin had the feeling that wasn't what he'd started to say, but there was no use pushing it, so he went back to struggling with the calculations in his homework.

The caravan had halted at the edge of a dry gully. It extended from the foot of the mountains into the desert as far as Nevin could see; there was no practical way around. Forty feet wide, vertical banks forty feet deep. He couldn't imagine how they would get the wagons across. It seemed they had to.

He and Fawn stood between the herders, huddled in a squabbling group, and the two slaves, who stood side by side staring into the ravine. Finally the herders had prepared their strategy, and the eldest went to the slaves. With guttural commands and abrupt gestures he instructed them. The other herders commenced emptying the wagon.

"Oh, no," Nevin breathed.

"What?" Fawn whispered, anxious.

Nevin shook his head slowly. "The bastards," he muttered. "They're going to make them lug everything over piecemeal, then, I bet—" He didn't finish. He and Fawn moved closer to the edge of the crevice. Before long the slaves were being loaded with bundles, baskets and boxes from the wagon. The burdens were strapped on their backs. Then the masters secured long ropes to the wagon itself and the slaves backed down the steep slope, going hand over hand down the ropes.

"Jeez, Nev, how can they do all that themselves? Why don't those pigs help them?"

"Because they're slaves, dink," Nev said, but his eyes were dark on the two laborers.

"Can't you fix it? Make there be less stuff in the wagon or something? Make the ditch smaller? What kind of crappy game is this, anyway?"

Nev thumbed vaguely at the deck in his hand, but he already knew there was nothing he could do. He hadn't figured out what this game was about, but he knew the player—he himself—wasn't in charge. All he could think to do was stay as close to the scene as he could. Futile anger ate at his stomach. This was not a fun game, but he couldn't just drop it. There was something going on...

The first traversal was the most difficult; after that, the two slaves knew the hand- and foot-holds and the easiest path to the other side. But their weariness grew more obvious with every trip. Fawn ran up and down the gully's lip like an agitated puppy, weeping and calling down all kinds of dire curses on the herders' heads, wringing her hands and occasionally giving Nevin an angry shove just on general principles. He couldn't blame her. The herders' children sat on the rim of the ravine calling out what sounded like jeers at the two over-burdened slaves, swinging their legs and laughing among themselves. Mama passed around mugs of some beverage as they all watched. Nevin felt something ugly inside him growing.

At last the contents of the wagons sat in a dusty jumble on the other side. The elder shouted over to the slaves to come back.

"Why don't they just run away?" Fawn cried.

"And just where would they go, dink?"

Starlight and Cory scrambled back across, and then they got the animals over. They tethered the livestock, fruitlessly commanded the "dogs" to stay there.

Getting the wagons across finally demanded labor of the herders, too. Someone had to guide the wagon's tongue down the slope, and it was the slaves whose bodies were braced against the front of the wagon as the herders, behind it, fed it on ropes and pulleys down the hill. It was very nearly heavier than they all could manage, and its progress was as much skidding as rolling. Dust clouds flew up, obscuring the wheels and the desperately grappling slaves in front.

Only when it had reached the bottom of the gully did the rest of the family and all the herders make their way across. The males lugged the smaller wagon which carried their tent. The two slaves, panting, watched them come down.

Even the herders had to put themselves in some jeopardy getting the wagons up the other side. Still the elder kept his own skin safe, letting his younger relatives get behind the wagon and push, while he applied the whip with some enthusiasm

to Cory, who pulled on a hauling rope affixed to the sideboards of the wagon. Starlight, on the other side, strained at a similar rope, but Nevin thought the only reason they'd rigged her up for it was to be sure she suffered along with Cory.

It took much longer to get the wagon uphill than it had to get it down. It was just about to crest the rim when one of the herders pushing from behind slipped, and the whole rig started sliding back down. The elder screamed and beat Cory, who clawed and scrambled frantically but was inexorably dragged down, too. At the last minute the fallen herder regained his feet and his grip on the wagon, and the slide was halted. The entire crew, by the time they'd jockeyed the thing over the rim, lay exhausted in the dust for awhile.

The herders passed a skin bag full of (water?) around, chattering and ink-ink-inking among themselves, and gesturing excitedly toward the mountains.

Fawn, fuming still, suddenly leaped over the rim and started scrambling down.

"Hey!" Nev yelled, but she ignored him, so he jumped down after her. "Come on, it's almost time to quit for tonight," he panted when he overtook her at the bottom.

"Did you see them?" she gasped, ignoring his tugging at her arm, "They did all the work—Cory and Starlight—and then they wouldn't even give them any water—"

"Fawn, stop, we'll come back tomorrow—"

"We can't tomorrow," she corrected him over her shoulder, "Mom and Dad will be home."

"Well, soon, then—"

"No! I'm gonna make them share that water somehow!"

"Dink, we can't! Fawn, it's not real! Stop—"

But she was already halfway up the other side, sending rocks and uprooted plants cascading down on him. The fumes of their torn leaves stung his nostrils.

"Stupid girls," Nev muttered, and moved out of the avalanche to start climbing. She had enough of a head start that he couldn't catch her. He was still ten feet behind when she reached the rim. "No!" Her wail of anguish so startled him that he almost tumbled down backwards.

She was crying, running now, stumbling to all fours, sobbing, scrabbling toward the caravan.

"What—?" Then he saw.

Two of the male herders stood over Cory, who lay limp with some terrible black fluid running out of his head. Starlight's eerie keening shattered the desert stillness. The elder and one of the youngsters held her back from the fallen slave.

"They killed him!" Fawn screamed in rage, wheeling on Nevin as though it was his fault.

"No..." But it was obvious. As he stood rooted in horror, gulping air, the tableau broke and the two killers turned toward the struggling Starlight. New purpose showed in the lines of their shoulders, the angles of their legs. Nevin moaned realizing what was next.

The two herders strode over to Starlight, and batted the youngster's grip from her arm. The elder shoved her into their hands. He yanked the kid away with him toward the wagon. There the females and children had been busy re-packing it. The elder and his charge moved to the oxen, and picked up the harnesses.

By now even Fawn could see what they intended for Starlight. The two males had her on the ground, pinning her easily though she squealed and fought hysterically. They ripped the metal disk off her stomach.

"Jesus—" Nevin grabbed Fawn's arm, no nonsense this time, and jerked her away, but she wrenched around to watch, weeping and cursing him.

"Make them stop, make them stop—"

Nevin keyed the Dim deck desperately, one-handed. He couldn't get the sequence right. "Dammit," he tried again—
—and they were tangled together in the blackness of the closet. It felt cool after the heat of the desert. Fawn sobbed and shook underneath him. He disentangled himself and helped her sit up, propped against the trunk.

"I'm sorry, dink," he murmured, trying to pat her knee and find the doorknob at the same time. At last he got the door open, and the sweet fresh air and familiar light of their cube streamed in.

"I'm sorry," he said again.

Fawn's sobs were subsiding. "Why didn't you stop them?" she snuffled. "Why didn't you make it stop? That's a rotten, evil, horrible game, and I hate you!"

But Nevin didn't answer her. He was staring in dull horror at the closet floor. Scattered across it, glittering in the cube's slanted light, was, impossibly, sand.

"Let me feel your forehead, honey," Irene said, touching Fawn's head. No fever. "Aren't you feeling well?"

"I'm all right, Mom."

But that night, for the first time, Fawn asked her mother about rape. Irene believed her explanation that some girls at school had brought it up.

"I'm glad you've been working harder," Bud said to his son. "You're really putting the hours in on the old homework."

Hours spent staring blindly at the page, his mind whirring with new possibilities.

"Test coming up."

Bud dropped a hand on Nevin's shoulder. "I'm proud of you, son..." Nevin did have a critical test coming up, and they

both knew it. He hadn't been doing so well in his Plant Physiology class. If he didn't ace this next test he could lose even that option for his future. So his dad's words fell on cynical ears, deaf to the undertone of yearning they held.

"Fawn—"

"Leave me alone." She moved away toward the bathroom.

"Won't you just listen—"

"Gotta go!" and she slipped out of his reach.

Nevin shook his head. She'd started out so freely immersing herself in what they'd thought was a game, that it had worried him. Now, confronted with that sand on the closet floor, she refused to deal with the implications of it at all, using her anger with him to avoid it.

He hoped she'd come back with him once he had the hardware problem solved. It was constantly on his mind. In his dreams—anxious, highly symbolic struggles with technological puzzles—the gentle jingling of the Dim-unit coils provided background music. It's not a game, the voice in his head chanted, while the front of his mind worked on hydroponics problems.

The earlier modifications he'd made to the unit were merely attempts to bring the game under his control, and to enhance the sensory outputs. But somehow they had instead brought him and his sister closer to actually, physically, entering that other world. It was a hardware problem, he was certain of it.

Therefore soluble.

Therefore, he wanted, with every cell of his body, to solve it. He wanted to go—to take Fawn, too—to that other world. He wanted to wreak vengeance on those murdering herders. He wanted to make things right for Starlight, for his sister. He wanted things, somehow, to be right.

The Dim-unit was even heavier and more awkward, with the additional sensory coils, input cables, and auxiliary battery packs for headsets and gloves. Nevin shifted and re-shifted the thing on his lap as Fawn pulled her headset and gloves on.

"Are you sure we can get back?" she whispered. "I'm scared!" She'd surprised him with her eagerness to go back, once she found out he actually could get them there. Now, in the dark cramped closet, second thoughts.

"Getting back is the easy part," Nevin assured her. "It's the same as it always was. It's getting there, all the way, physically, that's going to be hard. Are you sure you want to go, Fawn? I don't even know if it'll hurt..."

"I don't care. We have to save Starlight," she said stubbornly.

"We don't even know if we can breathe their air, or if it'll burn our skin—or what their gravity's like—"

"Quit stalling," she growled. "You're the chicken."

He glared at her. His hatred of those herders welled up in his belly. "Here we go, then," he said, and he pushed the keys.

His brains were being sucked out his ears, the building was falling down around them, his body was turning to ice, it tasted like copper—

He could have passed out, he wasn't sure; everything was yellow... His own voice groaned, annoying his ears. Trying to move, his ribs, arms, butt, knees, feet, were pressed by walls like steel, like bone. It hurt, and he opened his eyes finally.

His heart squashed in a spasm of fear. Oh, this was a mistake— They seemed to have landed in some huge cave. He couldn't see Fawn, or hear her. He tried to call but his throat was stuck shut. Enormous translucent boulders, that's where the yellow came from; the boulders were cream-colored, pee-colored, rough and immense. He squirmed in the crevice that held him, peering all around, below and above, trying to figure out where they were. Maybe caves in the foothills of those mountains... Terror gripped him when he realized he'd lost the Dim-unit.

"Fawn!" he cried, grappling himself around in the confining space. The light came from above.

He heard her answering call, small and distant.

"Come this way if you can!" It was like they were swimming in a sea of boulders, there was no floor, you could only see darkness in the twisting cracks below. You had to get hand- and foot-holds and clamber about in the three dimensions—he almost laughed: Dimensions. At least the air wasn't poison.

"Nev!" her voice shook, but nearer now.

"Keep coming, Dink!" he shouted, searching for some glimpse of the Dim-unit. There! He spotted the corner of the deck, but it was forty feet below, resting on the precarious ledge formed by two of the boulders' angles.

"Where is this?" Crying, and her breath was ragged with effort, but she was only a couple of boulders away now. He craned around, and saw one small hand fumbling at a smooth stone shoulder.

"We must have hit the mountain," he called, carefully climbing his way down toward the Dim-unit. He looked up. "How far up to the surface, you think?" he asked her, more to keep her mind busy than for the information.

A pause while she squinted up and calculated. "Fifty feet?" Her voice was more normal.

"Stay where you are, I'm getting the unit," he called, "and we'll get out of here."

Every angle, every surface, seemed deliberately arranged to bang his shins, scrape his knees and knuckles. At last he laid hold of the unit, and started back up toward her.

"These rocks are really kind of pretty," she said, when they finally got within eyesight of each other. "The light shines through." Her skin looked like porcelain in the soft yellow glow.

"Yeah, pretty." He reached with his hand. "Let's get up out of here."

She spurned his outstretched hand. "I can climb." Her path took her a few yards away from him. He climbed, too, trying

to keep near her. Anxiety gnawed at his stomach.

The closer they got to the surface, the brighter, and the greener, was the light diffusing through and bouncing among the boulders. He smiled over at her once, seeing the greenish tinge it gave her face. "You look like you're about to throw up," he teased.

She gained a foot-hold and launched herself ahead of him. "I am; I keep seeing your face," she taunted him. He mock-growled at her, and lunged. She laughed and climbed faster. Puffing and gasping with exertion, they didn't laugh for long. A couple of times Nevin thought he felt the boulders moving; but he decided it was his own, out-of-shape body shaking.

Once again she reached their destination first. Her legs kicked and scratched at the rocks as she pushed toward the open air.

"Careful!" he cautioned, anxious again. "Try to see where we are before you climb out! Don't want 'em to see us!"

Her legs went still for an instant, and then her hiss froze his blood.

"What?"

"Nevin?" He'd never heard her sound like this: she'd gone back to four years old, squeezing out his whispered name through terror he'd never imagined. He climbed like a demon.

His head poked into open air, under the wide green sky. High above, the milky sun floated. The boulder he hung onto vibrated suddenly. But his eyes wide as palm-prints were telling him why.

The caravan looked to be a mile off, coming their way. He could smell the musky draft animals, the dust smarted in his eyes, he could hear the little dog-birds yapping. He could see the muscles in Starlight's naked calves jounce with each trudging step, saw the metal threads in the herder's blue garment gleam in the sun, saw the wagon wheels grinding stones as they turned. Closer and closer they came. Nevin and Fawn were right in their path. But they didn't have to fear discovery.

The boulders they'd climbed through to reach the surface were grains of sand. On this world, Nevin and Fawn were smaller than gnats. Starlight was taller than the building the kids lived in.

Fawn's breath escaped her in a descending whine, and Nevin looked over just in time to see her fainting face slide down behind the sand-grain she'd clung to. "Fawn!" he cried, but she slipped out of sight. Frantic, he swung around to see where the caravan was. The rumblings he'd felt were the oxen feet hitting the ground. Half a mile away—but every step brought them hundreds of feet nearer. If the kids didn't get out of the way they'd be ground to death among the sand-grains.

"Fawn!" Nevin screamed, and dove down into the crevices. Dragging the Dim-unit hampered him, but he held onto it instinctively as he crawled through the cracks looking for her. He wasn't Nevin now, he was total desperation, scrapes and cuts and bruises ignored in his mad effort to find his sister. The boulders surrounding them vibrated in a menacing crescendo, each caravan-step impacting harder. Dust rained down on him.

He was thrown askew by one tremor. He floundered, sobbing, thinking he'd lost her forever, until something brushed his head. It was her hand. She was hung up, her shirt-tail pinched between two boulders. She was still unconscious. It didn't matter. He levered himself up and laid the Dim-unit deck on her stomach, and pounded at the keyboard. Wrong sequence.

Far above them, through the dog-birds' barking, he could hear the herder's singing, right on top of them. The boulders jostled and ground together. His fingers flew over the keys. He wept in despair.

Thought I could save Starlight, I can't even save myself—Dad I'm sorry, I should've listened—Oh! God! Crush—!

The roar in his ears stopped abruptly when they were cast brutally down in the dark and stifling closet.

The red words greased under his eyelids like oil on a puddle. "The problem in A-117 has been corrected, I see."

"Yes." The Regulator squeezed the word out.

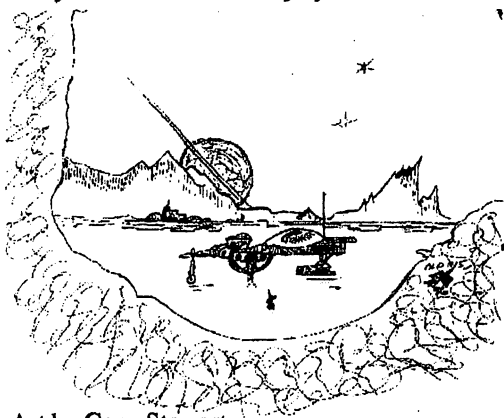
A pause. "You surprise me. I would think you'd be more enthused about it. Your Program Iota performed brilliantly."

"I expected it to."

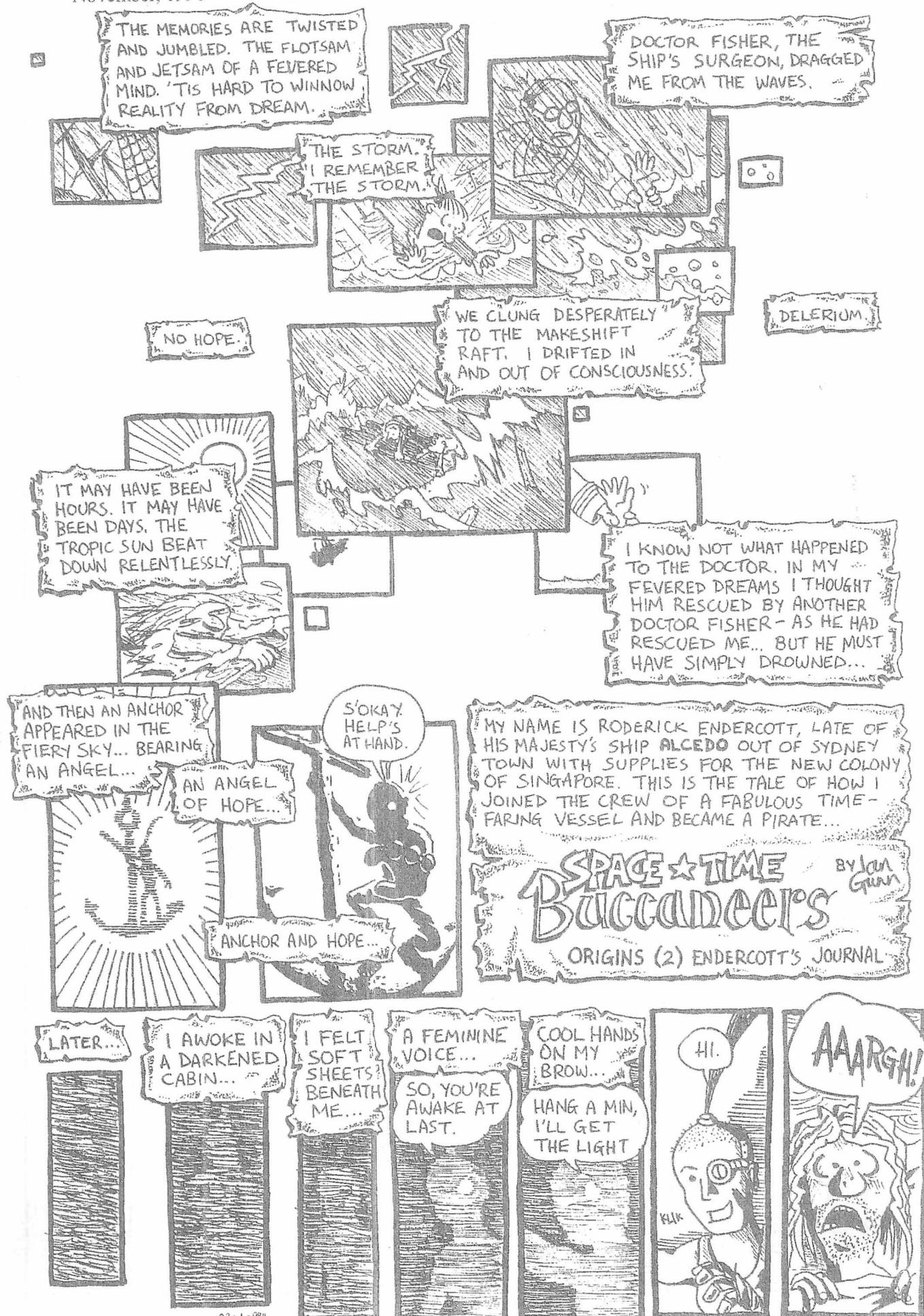
"Ah. Well, the boy has done quite a turnaround. Three short months, and he's at the head of his class. Attitude, behavior, completely rehabilitated. There's even talk of getting him back on the Engineering lists. You should be very proud."

The Regulator waited, but the red words were done. The Supervisor was gone. The Regulator swiveled in his seat, raised heavy lids over melancholy eyes to stare into blackness. "You bastard," he murmured, "I always was proud of my son."

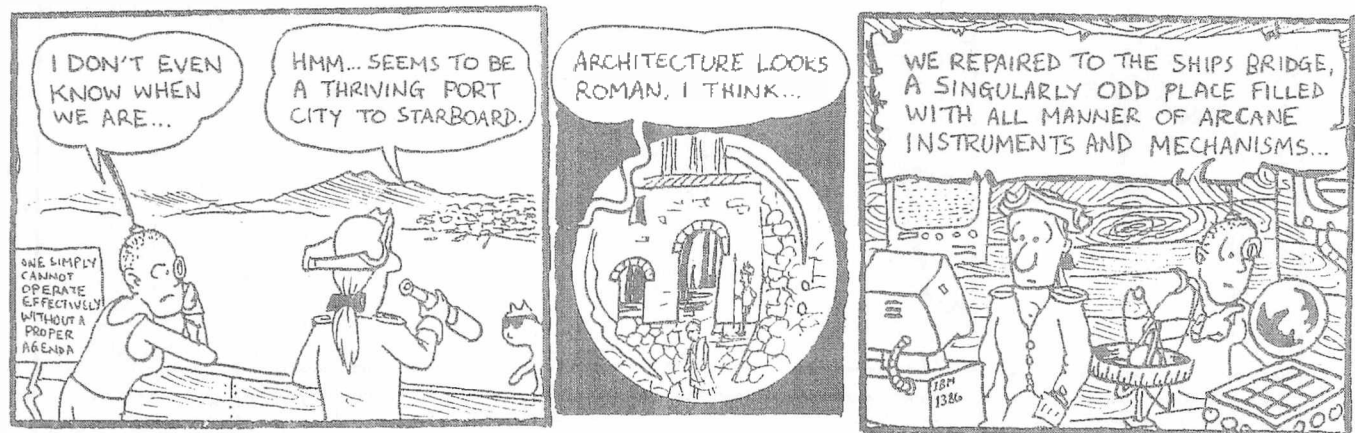
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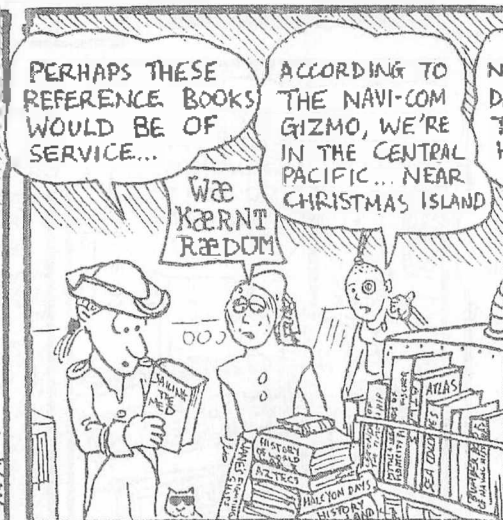
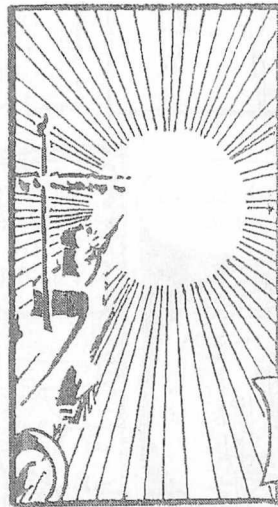
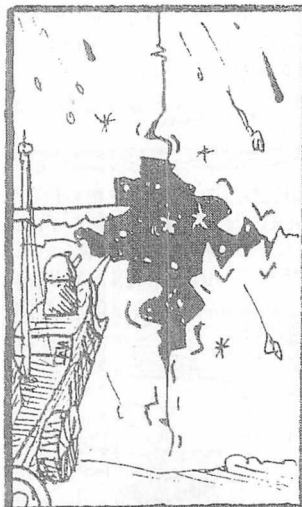


Art by Gene Stewart









Boskone 35

A convention report by Evelyn C. Leeper
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Illustrated by Teddy Harvia

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Overview

Boskone 35 was held in Framingham, Massachusetts, February 13—15, 1998. Registration, attendance, green room, con suite, etc., etc., were all pretty much as before. The hotel, however, had some major problems, with their computers being down all weekend, the coffee shop being closed for much of the weekend, people being pressured to use the buffets rather than the menus, and the bar being closed Monday. Given that there is no place other than the hotel within walking distance (the hotel is on a divided highway), better arrangements need to be made.

The Dealers Room has settled into a standard set of dealers in standard positions in the room. When we started going to Boskone (in 1969!), the used books in the Dealers Room (then called the Hucksters Room) were twenty-five cents each and we stocked up. If new books were sold there, I don't remember it. Now most used books are priced at or above new book prices (though there are still inexpensive ones to be had), and the superstores and Web stores have made the new book dealers somewhat less tempting than before. I did find a couple of books, such as *Tesseract 5*, a (Canadian-published) book of Canadian science fiction. This is the sort of thing is still found primarily in Dealers Rooms.

Button seen at the convention: "Programming: The art of debugging an empty text file".

Art Show Reception

Friday, 10:30 PM

There was an Art Show reception for program participants Friday night, and for a change I actually got to it. This was a good thing, as it gave me a chance to see the Art Show—usually I'm so busy I don't make it there.

Rediscovering Classic SF Writers

Saturday, 10:00 AM

Keith R. A. DeCandido, John R. Douglas, David A. Smith (m)

Description: [no description provided]

Smith said he was on the panel because he likes to be a moderator and they were short of moderators. He also said, "It's time for me to be rediscovered because my discovery was so evanescent I can scarcely remember it." DeCandido said he was doing his share toward rediscovering classic authors by bringing Alfred Bester back into print at Vintage.

The panelists noted that there was a fine line between classic and forgotten. Someone asked, "Can you be rediscovered when you're still alive or is it a precondition of rediscovery that you be dead?" DeCandido replied, "You don't have to be dead; you just have to be out of print."

Douglas noted that some authors can't get published for business reasons even while they're still alive (and so are candidates for rediscovery), and gave the examples of James Gunn and Wilson Tucker. There was a slight digression into the economics of publishing. To publish a mass-market paperback successfully, you need to sell 10,000 copies of a 25,000 run to succeed—and you need to do this in a six- to eight-week period. Trade paperbacks can sell fewer, but even more to the point, they don't have a time limit, since they are not stripped by bookstores after six weeks. NESFA manages to be successful in its reprinting of older authors, because it doesn't have to make money, and it doesn't have to sell in bookstores over a six-week period.

One result is that sometimes authors need to change their names to dump their old track record. As Smith said, "A history of declining sales means that your name is a negative." Douglas added, "Robin Hobb exists because Megan

Lindholm was not successful after four books." ("Successful" here means financially successful, not artistically successful.) Another is that authors want ever-increasing advances. Eventually advances exceed expectations and authors price themselves out of the market.

Douglas said that it used to be that 60% of science fiction and fantasy sales were back-list, but now the percentage was much lower, because of the economics. (Bookstores used to wait much longer to strip books, but the huge increase in the number of books being published means that they want to clear space for newer, faster-moving "product.") DeCandido said all this was why they did trade paperbacks for Bester. Also, Vintage is a "prestige" imprint and will help to sell Bester outside the field. Smith described this as "repositioning the author"; as he said, trade paperbacks say, "The words are worth reading."

Smith said that all this implies that "one criterion for being rediscovered is to have written well." (He suggested that if one checked out the other stories that appeared with Bester in *F&SF*, one would discover that they were of lesser quality.) In fact, he added, an author must have written well and sold well, then fallen out of favor. Someone noted that no one but John Norman is clamoring for a rediscovery of John Norman, leading DeCandido to observe that "popular fiction" doesn't age well because it plays to the sensibilities of the time, and that Norman was writing basically popular fiction. Smith said that Norman wrote a relatively rare (at the time) fantasy style and "easy listening S&M." At the time it sold because it was outré, but now is merely quaint. (And of course, it's not politically correct, a condition that has caused a lot of older fantasy works to go out of print as well because they had racial slurs in them.)

I asked if it hurt an author to reissue his or her lesser works? DeCandido said it did, and wants to save Bester from Heinlein's fate of having all his worst stuff appear after his death, so Vintage will not be reissuing *Golem 100* or *The Computer Connection*. From the audience, Robert Ingria said that Bester had three periods, and only the middle period was good. Smith added another criterion to his list: Write something that's seminal. Douglas modified this slightly to "Be influential." DeCandido said another way to achieve rediscovery was to form a religion.

DeCandido said that another limiting factor is that sometimes dealing estates is nightmarish. And since publishers don't want to reissue massive tomes, one should write "short enough to be easy to publish."

Someone mentioned Robert Sheckley, leading the panelists to observe that some authors have only a few good books in them. Douglas said that he felt that Sheckley "beat some of his themes to death."

On the one hand, Tom Clancy and Piers Anthony are examples of the momentum that a top author has—he can sell at least four really bad novels before people catch on. But you create a necessity for rediscovery if you write one great novel, then five bad ones.

While Isaac Asimov reads as dated, so do Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. Smith pointed out that we read Verne and Wells for the insight into Victorianism, not for the speculation, and the same, for a later period, is true of Asimov. Someone in the audience thought that steampunk brought back an interest in Verne and Wells, which led someone to note that stimulating an interest in academe would encourage rediscovery. There was then a somewhat off-topic discussion about how to edit old manuscripts (e.g., Verne): do you try to edit them to the literary conventions of the time, or of the present?

Some suggestions for rediscovery (those unattributed were from audience members) included:

Alfred Bester
James Blish [Smith]
Frederic Brown
John Brunner [Smith]
Algis Budrys
Sir Arthur C. Clarke (*A Fall of Moondust*
and *Deep Range*) [Smith]
L. Sprague deCamp's short stories and essays
[Connie Hirsch]
Philip K. Dick
E. R. Eddison [Smith]
James Gunn (*The Listeners*) [Douglas]
Charles Harness (NESFA is doing him)
Robert E. Howard (who is alive in the games
market; someone referred to Howard as
"Conan the midlist")
Cyril Kornbluth (recently done by NESFA)
Henry Kuttner
Stanislaw Lem (whom Smith described as
"all the rage in the early 70s," to which
DeCandido replied, "well, some of the
rage") [Smith]
Richard Matheson
C. L. Moore
Eric Frank Russell



James Schmitz [Douglas]

Clifford Simak

Olaf Stapledon [me]

Theodore Sturgeon

Wilson Tucker (*The Long Loud Silence* and *The Year of the Quiet Sun*) [Douglas]

Stanley G. Weinbaum [Robert Ingria]

William Tenn

Roger Zelazny

(Some, of course, are already in the rediscovery process.) On the flip-side of rediscovery, someone observed, is the oblivion you get if you write a totally plausible near-future that turns out to be false.

Smith summarized the rediscovery criteria: Write something really good a while ago which was influential on people better than you. It should be short enough to be published, but long enough for the market, and be quirky and original while at the same time intellectual enough for critics. It also helps to die in some memorable way.

Douglas pointed out that because the older market was more slanted to short fiction, this often meant rediscoveries had to be collections rather than novels and that these didn't sell as well. This segues right into ...

The Death of the Short Story Market Is Greatly Exaggerated

Saturday, 11:00 AM

Daniel Hatch, Warren Lapine, Charles Ryan (m), Ian Randal Strock

Description: "And we're here to tell you why."

Lapine publishes *Weird Tales*, *Dreams of Decadence*, and *Absolute Magnitude*. Ryan edits *Aboriginal SF*. Strock edits *Artemis*.

Over the last several years, the "flagship magazines" went from circulations of 100,000 to circulations of 50,000. Inept marketing may be part of that, according to the panelists, but the Internet, *Myst*, etc., are also cutting into reading time. But Lapine said that even 100,000 would not be enough to produce returns that make stockholders happy, because 60% of magazine revenue comes from ads, and national advertisers want circulations in the millions. In addition, most corporations think of science fiction as "sci-fi" and don't want that image; a 100,000 circulation for a yachting magazine would get ads.

Ryan said that small-circulation magazines can still survive, but they can't make a lot of money or pay a lot of money. This contributes to the fact that authors can survive by writing novels but not by writing short stories. One problem is the mentality that leads people to say, "I don't have time to read short stories; I only read novels." It was claimed that the real cost of a paperback (after adjusting for inflation) has doubled and people are less willing to gamble on unknown works, but I would think that would apply to new authors' first novels as well.

Ryan explained how the chains are now "ordering to sell-through": if they sell 60% of what they ordered of author X's latest book, they will only order that much of author X's next book. But they will never sell all they order, because there are distribution problems, wear-and-tear, etc. So it's a downward spiral. Lapine said that strange as it sounds, a 60% sell-through means you aren't printing enough. In addition, since short-story collections don't sell as well as novels, "order to sell-through" hurts authors by capping their novel sales at what their short-story collection sales are. The result is that often the author will have his or her collection done through a small press that doesn't use the chains, or sometimes release a collection simultaneously with a novel to maintain the sales figures.

Ryan said that as long as writers writing short stories, there will be magazines to sell them to, because if there aren't, writers will start them. He also felt that the better writers are those who started with short stories in magazines, because the magazines force the authors to write tightly, and they also edit what they publish. Someone related that Allen Steele couldn't sell his short stories at first. Then he sold a novel, and the publisher told him that he should sell some short stories to get his name out and familiar. When he mentioned to the magazines that he had sold a novel, they bought his short stories. Go figure.

There was a lot on submission guidelines, publishing and distribution that I didn't report. Authors shouldn't send disks—they can't be read easily, they often have viruses, etc. Also, don't submit via FAX or e-mail unless requested to. (The publisher does not want you using his paper instead of your own.)

In terms of sales, there are a few reliable performers. Dozois's *Year's Best* series sells well. (No one said whether the Datlow/Windling fantasy series did.) But for commercial reasons, the "best of" anthologies tend toward big names rather than the best stories—they publishers prefer a so-so Steven King story to a great Steven Nobody one. Original anthologies are mostly theme anthologies and this detracts from the newness and surprise of the stories. And reaching an audience of 15,000 to 20,000 versus 50,000 (or were these print runs?) in a magazine means that authors who want an audience go to the magazines.

Someone asked whether the Sci-Fi Channel could help promote magazines. It doesn't, because it promotes only its own. And Lapine said that "*Science Fiction Age* does whatever it can to crush everyone else and does not help the field." I asked about the reviews of short fiction in *Tangents*, but it turns out that it has a circulation under 300. (If you are interested in short fiction, it is a quarterly that tries to cover the whole field of magazines and original anthologies, including non-US publications.)

Ryan closed by saying, "One of the biggest problems in this field is that it's very incestuous."

Origami Demo

Saturday, 11:00 AM

Mark R. Leeper (m)

Leeper repeated his ever-popular origami demo/class, teaching the "Star Wars" X-Wing fighter, a T. rex, and an Anubis head, and demonstrated the morph. He had come ready to teach Japanese monsters, but the participants had their own ideas.

Without War: Alternate Histories that Don't Involve Wars as Turning Points

Saturday, 12 N

Ellen Asher, Laura Anne Gilman, Mark Keller (m), Evelyn C. Leeper

Description: "Most alternate histories have turning points involving one of two things: a war or a great scientific discovery. However, there are other types of turning points. Kim Stanley Robinson, for example, proposed a turning point in which Percy Shelley did not die so young. Instead he went on to become a great humanizing influence in what, in our timeline, became Marxism. What such turning points have been used in SF? What others can be used?"

[Since Mark was doing his origami demo, he couldn't take notes for me, so this will be briefer than usual.]

The statistic that I gave was that of the thousand or so alternate histories listed on the Uchronia List (<http://www.skatecity.com/ah>), about half have wars or their equivalent (e.g., assassinations) as the turning point. If one drops off those remaining that rely on technological advances, this still leaves a third—but they are not the most interesting third. Why are wars so popular as turning points? Well, wars are easy: it's up or down, yes or no.

Then there's the whole "Great Man Theory" versus the "Tide of History" theory. (I realize that I mention this on every alternate history panel, but it is critical to the field.) It is more difficult to do alternate histories that rely on the "Tide of History" theory, since by its very nature that implies history is resistant to change. But it was noted that people have to be ready to do something with the Great Man's ideas. Someone proposing a completely representative democracy in, say, dynastic Egypt is not going to achieve very much. (An non-alternate history story that looks at this is Frederik Pohl's "Mute Inglorious Tam.") Science and technology are also cumulative. So if you're writing an alternate history, you need a pivotal point. And wars, in addition to being pivotal, are also well-researched. A final contributing factor is that people have heard of wars. Alternate histories turning on obscure historical events will probably not hold the reader's attention, assuming s/he can even figure out what's going on.

The panelists observed that it is hard to separate the military and economic sectors from human drive in general, which is why these sectors figure so heavily in deciding on change points. One possibility outside these areas is births (e.g., what if Catherine of Aragon had a son who survived?). But subtracting someone is more common than adding someone. Why? Well, adding someone seems like cheating somehow: there are far fewer built-in restraints on this sort of change.

Someone suggested one possibility would be George Washington accepting the crown. Other suggested changes in royal families, various diseases, and so on. For example, if Prince Albert (Queen Victoria's husband) had survived longer, Britain might have become more technologically oriented and not fallen behind Germany in that regard. It was also suggested that many of the people who died on the Titanic might have had major effects had they lived. Someone claimed that Harvard got their library primarily from a Titanic victim and that is what started the change in universities from "rich men's finishing schools" to institutions of research and learning. Many people disagreed, saying this trend was already happening, and this one instance may have helped it, but was not necessary. This led someone to suggest "Alternate Libraries" as an anthology theme, which I suggested would be best done by Fred Lerner.

Religions provide popular turning points. Other than the obvious ones (let's just say there are a lot of stories with turning points between 4 BCE and 33 CE), people mentioned alternate versions of Joseph Smith and L. Ron Hubbard. (I think it's too soon to tell how much lasting effect the latter will have). Readers can provide their own additions. Putting your change in prehistoric times is one way to avoid wars, but you will probably have to explicitly tell the reader this, and if rigorously extrapolated, the present will be so different as to be unrecognizable.

Other suggestions included a frozen Bering Strait (providing on-going communication between the Americas and Eurasia), alternate literary people, and alternate sports stories. There were several mentioned about various people, and at one point Asher said, "[Elvis] Presley was a musician in a way that [Sonny] Bono was not," which I would nominate for one of the most obvious statements of the convention.

Someone asked, "What if muckrakers went after the stock market instead of contaminated meat at the turn of the century?? My immediate response was, "Who cares?" both in the sense that people would not have gotten stirred up to support it, the way they did cleaning up the meat industry (hence it wouldn't have gone anywhere), and that as a story idea it doesn't really grab the reader. Alternate histories are, after all, stories, and should generate some interest in the reader.

Someone mentioned lost scientific discoveries (such as no one picking up on Darwin and evolution). It was pointed out that most discoveries were really made by several people, and if one was lost, another would be found. Someone else suggested that Sir Walter Raleigh might have brought back three stocks of potatoes rather than one, hence there would have been no Potato Famine. First of all, the panel pretty much agreed that he brought back tobacco and not potatoes. And second, it was not just a single strain of potatoes that was susceptible, but many (all?).

November, 1998

The New Frontier: Australian SF

Saturday, 1:00 PM

David G. Hartwell (m), Evelyn C. Leeper

Description: "Several prominent SF writers, most notable of whom is probably Greg Egan, are from Australia. Australia has also given us the late George Turner, Terry Dowling, and others. The panel discusses Australian SF: what makes it special, who its key players are, and who to watch for."

This was more a listing of authors than an analysis of Australian (and New Zealand) science fiction. I had a handout of my report of a panel on the subject at LoneStarCon 2, which is attached at the end of this, and a review of *Alien Shores*. Hartwell mentioned the additional anthologies *Metaworlds: Best Australian Science Fiction* (edited by Paul A. Collins), *Strange Attractors: Original Australian Speculative Fiction* (edited by Damien Broderick), *The Pacific Book Of Australian Science Fiction 1 and 2* (edited by John Baxter), and *Rooms of Paradise* (edited by Lee Harding). All are out of print. What is in print, at least in Australia, is *The Year's Best Science Fiction and Fantasy Volume 1* edited by Jonathan Strahan and Jeremy G. Byrne. If my notes are at all correct, Hartwell is working with Damien Broderick on a new anthology, *Centaurus: Best Australian Science Fiction*, due out in early 1999 from Tor. Jack Dann and Janeen Webb are also working on *Dreaming Down Under*, due out from HarperCollins Australia in mid-1998.

The "Big Four" discussed were (chronologically) A. Bertram Chandler, George Turner, Greg Egan, and Damien Broderick. Also listed as past Australian writers were John Baxter, David Lake, and Jack Wodhams (whose work appeared in *Astounding*). Jack Dann is a recent arrival to Australia. The current wave of Australian writers is due to a workshop Ursula K. LeGuin held in 1976 and 1977 in Australia (shortly after she was a Guest of Honor at Aussiecon One) which brought new writers in. Hartwell compared this to Judith Merrill's efforts in Canada in late 1970s, which led me to comment that women certainly seem to affect world science fiction out of proportion to their numbers. (And let us not forget Mary Shelley.)

Someone said that culturally Australia was ten years behind the United States and Britain, but this is not true for the writers; according to Hartwell, they are writing "cutting-edge postmodern fantasy with a nod to science fiction and magical realism." One reason that we in the United States haven't seen many of the authors mentioned is that writers tend sell in their home market first, and later go outside.

Other authors mentioned were Damon Briggs (short fiction in *Aurealis*, *Eidolon*, and *Omega*, and the novels *Privateer* and *Winter*), Isabelle Carmody (a "hot new writer," young-adult novel *The Gathering*), Hal Colebatch ("The Colonel's Tiger" in *Man-Kzin Wars VII*), Terry Dowling (who probably should be moved into what would then be the Big Five), Leanne Frahm (short fiction that has won several *Aurealis* and *Ditmar* awards, and the novel *Borderline*), Rosaleen Love ("Turtle Soup" and other short fiction), Kevin McKay ("Pie Row Joe"), Phillippa Maddern ("The Pastseer"), Anthony Peacey ("Jagging" and "Time and Flowers"), Lucy Sussex (short fiction, essays, and the novels *Deersnake* and *The Scarlet Rider*), Andrew Whitmore (short fiction and *Fortress of Eternity*), Cherry Wilder (New Zealander, lots of short fiction and *The Luck of Brin's Five*), and Sean Williams ("Passing the Bone"). [Thanks to the Internet Science Fiction Database (<http://www.sfsite.com/isfdb>) and *Locus* (<http://www.sff.net/locus>) for this information!]

Beyond Godzilla: Japanese Fantasy and SF Without Large Reptiles

Saturday, 2:00 PM

Bob Eggleton (m), Craig Shaw Gardner, Daniel Kimmel, Mark R. Leeper

Description: "When most people hear the phrase 'Japanese SF and fantasy film,' they think either of Godzilla or of animation. But there is a lot more out there in Japanese SF and fantasy film. The panel discusses live action Japanese SF and fantasy that doesn't involve guys in big rubber suits."

Leeper had a hand-out listing all the non-giant-reptile, non-anime Japanese science fiction and fantasy films he could find. (It's attached at the end.)

Eggleton divided the films into decades. In the 1950s, there was *Battle in Outer Space* (a semi-sequel to *The Mysterians*). As Eggleton said, "The effects may be completely inept, but it's beautifully filmed." (Eiji Subaraya did the effects. I think of them as stylized—you are not supposed to think them realistic, but rather they are supposed to be reminiscent of what they represent.) Eggleton also mentioned *The H-Man*. Eggleton then mentioned other films, such as *Warning from Space* and *The Mysterians* (which had a cameo token monster, the drilling robot Mogura). He observed that in the United States, science was always the savior; in Japan, science was the enemy. Leeper disagreed about the United States, saying that many United States science fiction films of the period also painted science as the enemy.

Kimmel broke the rule about not saying the "G-word" by pointing out that the original *Gojira* (before the addition of Raymond Burr) was a serious film, and had a sub-text of nationalism in the post-war period and of the national anxiety of



nuclear attack. Kimmel said that the 1950s saw more Japanese films distributed in the United States than later, because they were cheap to buy, spectacular, and "rode Kurosawa's coat tails," that is, took advantage of the positive cachet that Japanese films had. Leeper added that *Rodan* was the first Japanese science fiction film in color; color film and processing was expensive, and they used it well.

Moving on to the 1960s, Eggleton started with *Gorath*, which he described as *When Worlds Collide* with a giant walrus. Of course, the walrus (named Magma) was not in the US version, and the editing made it a bit confused; at one point, planes are firing on a valley for no apparent reason and completely independent of the rest of the plot! There was also *Atragon*, which is not the name of a monster, but of a submarine in a story which also had a monster sea serpent (Manda) and the undersea kingdom of Mu. Eggleton said that *Matango* (*Attack of the Mushroom People*) was "one of the scariest films I've ever seen." He also mentioned that it was based on William Hope Hodgson's "Voice in the Night." Leeper said that there were echoes of *Matango* in *Goke*, *Body Snatcher from Hell*.

Kimmel listed the two similarly titled films, *The Final War* and *The Last War*, which he compared to *Dr. Strangelove*. Eggleton added *The Green Slime* and *Latitude Zero*. Gardner said that movie-goers couldn't tell *The Green Slime* was Japanese until they saw it, because the cast was not Japanese. But when people went to it, it was obviously Japanese, "because it works by Japanese logic." Leeper said that the problem was that slime solidified into something four feet high and cute, and all sense of menace was destroyed. Kimmel said that after the commercial failure of *The Green Slime*, theatre owners decided it didn't sell because it was Japanese, so it became harder to see or find Japanese science fiction films. Eggleton remembered *Dogora*, *The Space Monster*, which was mostly a gangster film. Leeper talked about the "Majin" films with a golem-like statue brought to life by the prayers of children. Eggleton also remembered this, and felt it had the best miniature work in Japanese science fiction. Gardner said that these were the only monster historical films that he knew of.

In the 1970s, according to Eggleton, there was a trend toward earth-saving stuff. Kimmel said that one aspect was the emphasis on ecological disasters. For example, *The Submersion of Japan* (*Tidal Wave*). Eggleton said that this had an indirect sequel ("the Japanese love indirect sequels") called *Catastrophe 1999* (also *The Last Days of Planet Earth* and *The Prophecies of Nostradamus*). This he described as an anti-story, with the whole second half turning out to be the main character's warning of what might have happened. There were also Star Wars "rip-offs": *Message from Space* and *War in Space*. Kimmel said, "At this point anime kicks in big," with *Akira* finally being the breakthrough film in 1986. Gardner added that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Japanese film industry fell apart, which was another reason for the end of the live-action Japanese science fiction film. There were still a few films, though. Gardner named *Tetsuo*, and Eggleton gave *Ziram 1* and *2*.

Leeper pointed out that the panelists hadn't even mentioned the many Japanese ghost stories. Kimmel named *Ghost of Rampo* (Rampo was Edogawa Rampo, a pen name which is the Japanese pronunciation of "Edgar Allan Poe"). Gardner said that ghost stories come from a different source in Japanese culture. They use Noh drama and kabuki. Leeper said that Japanese ghost stories are really morality stories. Kimmel said that a recent one was Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*. One that Gardner said was quite unusual was *Double Suicide*, done with live actors in the style of Japanese puppet theater.

My question is, if only giant reptiles were ruled out (and giant non-reptiles allowed), why was there no mention of *Gamera*?

Sources for these films are difficult to find, but a few were mentioned. There is Video dai Kaiju in New Jersey, Sinister Cinema (for a few), and the media fest Chiller Theater in the Meadowlands Hilton in New Jersey. There are also two stores in Harvard Square.

Plot Fidelity: What Does It Mean for a Movie to Be Faithful to a Book?

Saturday, 4:00 PM

Daniel Kimmel (m), Mark R. Leeper, Jim Mann, Steven Sawicki, Joan D. Vinge

Description: "There is often a lot of debate on whether a book is faithful to a movie, but rarely does this debate involve the underlying questions. What does it mean for a book to be faithful to a movie? How different can the movie be and still be considered faithful? Can a movie be faithful in spirit but not in detail?"

Sawicki began by reminding the audience that with books and films we are dealing with two different media. A novel has about 80,000 words (these days often more), while a screenplay has 8,000. So to adapt a novel into a screenplay, the screenwriter needs to do a lot of cutting. Because of this, it is generally more important to capture the spirit of the book rather than a scene-by-scene breakdown or exact dialogue. Kimmel later said that it helps to have a short story to work from rather than a novel. Vinge added that you can't put in all the dialogue because it's just too wordy—what works on the printed page won't work on the screen. Mann also felt that it was important to capture the feel, the basic ideas, and some memorable parts of the basic story. One problem is that people become so attached to the books that they've read so many times. Leeper said that if what you liked in the novel made it to the screen, you'll think it was faithful, but if it didn't, you won't.

Kimmel thought that 1997 was a terrible year for movies, but an interesting year for science fiction movies. *Contact*, *Starship Troopers*, and *The Postman* were based on novels, and *Mimic* on a short story. Mann thought *The Postman* did an excellent job translating David Brin's original novella, if not the entire novel, and Kimmel agreed. Also, Brin was pleased with it. Vinge added that Philip K. Dick thought that *Bladerunner* captured the essence of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* The panelists felt that *Starship Troopers* was, if anything, sometimes too close to Heinlein's philosophy for some people, but someone in the audience thought it was more that the movie parodied Heinlein's philosophy.

From the audience, Joe Ross said he thought that *Dune* was too faithful in detail to the Frank Herbert novel. Someone else said that the Sci-Fi Channel's adaptation of "The Cold Equations" was faithful to the events in Tom Godwin's short story but completely changed the reasons for them. Someone mentioned *Nightfall*, which Kimmel said was a "travesty" of Asimov's story.

Kimmel said that some stories are by their very nature unfilmable in any literal fashion, and gave the example of "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" (made into *Total Recall*). So the question was asked, "Why do people persist in filming things that are basically unfilmable?" One panelist gave the example of *Mimic*, in which Del Toro wanted to use a single image from the Donald A. Wollheim story, and wasn't trying to film the story. But the real answer is probably that fans keep asking for it. (If I had a dollar for every time someone in Usenet's rec.arts.sf.written posted asking, "Which of your favorite stories would you like to see filmed," I'd be rich. The answer to this question, by the way, is, "None of them—please!") Also, sometimes the "unfilmable" turns out to be filmable after all. People said *The English Patient* was unfilmable. Mann saw the film version of *Ulysses* (the Joyce, not the Homer). There is also a supposedly good film of *Finnegans Wake*.

Someone in the audience said that PBS's *Lathe of Heaven* was fairly faithful to the Ursula K. LeGuin novel, and Sawicki added that they also did John Varley's "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank." Mann said that as far as accurate television adaptations, he could recommend the BBC adaptation of *The Day of the Triffids*. I would also recommend their adaptation of *The Invisible Man*. Someone asked for unfaithful, good movies. Kimmel said that *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* changed the novel a lot but is superior. Someone asked which version; Kimmel said he could defend any of them.

Ellen Asher, in the audience, said that someone once said, "The better the book is as a work of art, the harder it is to be made into a movie." Mann somewhat disagreed, saying that Jane Austen has been made into good movies. Vinge added that she thought *The Last Unicorn* was also a good movie. Someone recounted the story about what Tom Wolfe said when someone asked him what he thought of what they did to his novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. "They didn't do anything to my novel," Wolfe said. "It's still there on the shelf, the same as before." Leeper said that was true, but if you read a novel after having seen a film, you'll never get the images out of your mind, so in a case the book has been changed.

Someone in the audience said that the anime *Lensman* was worst adaptation of a book he had seen. This led to mention of the Barrymore version of *Moby Dick*, although other recent literary adaptations (e.g., *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) are giving it a run for its money. This led to a bit of a digression about how history is also treated rather cavalierly by the movies. One person said that no one goes to animated musicals for history, but another noted that's still where they learn it.

Someone asked, "What's the problem with translating a work to film? Who's to blame?" After all, William Gibson did *Johnny Mnemonic* himself, and Stephen King did several of his. But as Kimmel said, "The less King has to do with it, the better it will be as a movie." Someone in the audience claimed, "The song 'Firestarter' is better than either the movie or the book." Mann said that *The Shining* was a very good movie but not faithful to the book. The television version was more faithful to the book, but not as good. (See Kimmel's Rule, above.) Kimmel agreed, saying that a good adaptation will capture the essence, the core of a book. It was noted that a television version of *Huckleberry Finn* that eliminated Jim completely missed the core. (My initial response is the question of whom to blame is that the audience is to blame because they're the ones driving this basically futile effort.)

Someone said that *The Princess Bride* was good, and that William Goldman wrote the screenplay. Ellen Asher said it was because it had the vitality of the performances. *The Martian Chronicles* was described as not entirely successful, though panelists thought that the mini-series format helped. Kimmel added that he thought that *Fahrenheit 451* was an interesting film. In closing, Sawicki said, "I really wish that Hollywood or screenwriters would stop trying to adapt." Leeper said, "A film version of a novel is a labor-saving device." And Kimmel thought that Hollywood uses adaptation too much as a crutch.

Don't Forget These: Things to Remember at Hugo Nomination Time

Saturday, 6:00 PM

Don D'Amassa, John R. Douglas, Daniel Kimmel, Jim Mann (m)

Description: [no description provided]

The panelists started with their "credentials." Douglas is an editor with HarperPrism (more on this later). D'Amassa reads a book a day. Kimmel is a self-described "media shill." Mann is a longtime fan, who began by encouraging people to nominate: "You should nominate even without knowing the whole field, but voting should be more informed." Discussion proceeded by categories.

For novels, Douglas recommended Stephen Baxter's *Voyage* (not eligible; it was from 1996) and *Titan*, Greg Egan's *Distress* (also not eligible) and *Diaspora* (not yet released in the United States), Jack McDevitt's *Eternity Road*, and Walter Jon Williams's *City on Fire*. Just coincidentally, these were all published by HarperPrism. I have a feeling that Douglas didn't have a very good idea of what was expected. It's understandable that he would think the novels he published good, but he should at least have known which were eligible. (He also later added Joe Haldeman's *Forever Peace*, not published by Harper Prism.)

D'Amassa also recommended Baxter's *Titan* and McDevitt's *Eternity Road*, as well as Elizabeth Hand's *The Glimmering*, Walter M. Miller's *Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman*, Dan Simmons's *The Rise of Endymion*, Brian

Stableford's *Chimera's Cradle* (available only in a British edition), and Bentley Little's *The Ignored*. Kimmel echoed Simmons's *The Rise of Endymion*, and added Joshua Dann's *Timeshare*. Mann said some of his were also already mentioned, but added Tim Powers's *Earthquake Weather* (a sequel to both *Last Call* and *Expiration Date*, two heretofore unrelated novels).

Someone in the audience recommended Charles Sheffield's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, I added John Kessel's *Corrupting Dr. Nice*, Robert J. Sawyer's *Frameshift*, and Michael Swanwick's *Jack Faust*. Connie Willis's *To Say Nothing of the Dog* is apparently not eligible until next year. *Antarctica* by Kim Stanley Robinson is eligible this year, but hardly any Americans have read it. The same is true of Greg Egan's *Diaspora*. This led to a bit of a discussion of why these books appear in Britain first. Apparently British sales basically require selling the rights there first. If they're sold in the United States first, (illegal) imports completely undercut the British publishers' market.

For short fiction there were fewer recommendations. D'Amassa mentioned "Dust Motes" by Ian Van Belkom and David Nichol (in *On Spec*). Kimmel named Michael Burstein's "Broken Symmetry" (from *Analog*). I would recommend "Reasons to Be Cheerful" by Greg Egan (March *Interzone*), "The Adventure of the Inertial Adjustor" by Stephen Baxter (*The Mammoth Book of New Sherlock Holmes Adventures*), and "Fortune and Misfortune" by Lisa Goldstein (May *Asimov's*).

Non-fiction books named included Vincent DiFate's *Infinite Worlds* (Mann), John Clute & John Grant's *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (Douglas), *The St. James Guide to Fantasy Writers* (D'Amassa), and Melissa Scott's *Conceiving the Heavens* (audience). Kimmel said he would like to see "The Lurker's Guide to Babylon 5" (from the Web) nominated, but no one could agree on a category. This is a real can of worms, yada, yada, yada.

The dramatic presentation category generated more discussion. Kimmel said that he is a *Babylon 5* fan, but "I think this is the year to give the show a rest." He felt that 1997 was a very good year for science fiction movies, with *Contact*, *Gattaca*, *Men in Black*, *Alien Resurrection*, and "The Invisible Girl" (on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) the stand-outs. D'Amassa also liked *Buffy*, mentioned *Titanic* (not seriously, I hope—he claimed it was science fiction without the science fiction), and also suggested *Alien Resurrection*. Douglas liked *Alien Resurrection*, *Third Rock from the Sun* (but couldn't pick an episode), and *Millenium* (same). Mann said he hadn't seen *Gattaca* or *Buffy*, but recommended "The Postmodern Prometheus" (*The X-Files*) and "Rocks and Shoals" (*Star Trek: Deep Space 9*). I would recommend *Gattaca* and *Men in Black*. Noticeably absent were *Starship Troopers* and *The Postman*.

For the John W. Campbell Award, Mann pointed out that Mary Doria Russell (*The Sparrow*) is eligible. D'Amassa added Kirsten Bakis's name (*Lives of the Monster Dogs*).

Finally, I will note that Kimmel named both Mark Leeper and myself as possibilities for Fan Writer.

Dinner was at the Bangkok Oriental Thai Restaurant, for which we had made reservations ahead of time. It was good, but had very slow service.

More Lies With Statistics

Saturday, 10:00 PM

Michael F. Flynn (m)

Description: [no description provided]

It's Saturday night at a convention, and there are at least a half dozen parties going. So where are we? At a statistics lecture. And there's at least two dozen more people with us. This will be a somewhat spotty report: I'm not going to try to reproduce the whole talk, just some highlights.

Flynn is a professional consultant statistician, but he probably should be a teacher (though that would probably be a pay cut). His presentation is wonderful. His training comes through in his work as well, notably his Prometheus Award-winning *In the Country of the Blind*. His most recent novel is *Rogue Star*, and he has a story, "Rules of Engagement," in the March *Analog*.

He started by talking about an article on Memphis he saw in the Wall Street Journal that had a picture of the statue of Rameses II they have, alongside a picture of Elvis and one of Martin Luther King, Jr., with the whole labeled "Memphis—City of Kings."

He ran across this while he was looking for an article which reported a recent change in Texas. If you graduate in the top 10% of your high school class, you are eligible for college there. In some schools, 25% of students are in the top 10% of their class. Flynn said this was even stranger than Lake Wobegon (in which all the children are above average). Flynn said in educational statistics, all states report they are above average.

He talked about reading magazines such as *Machine Design* in his clients' waiting rooms: "You think *Analog* has rivets?"

He recapped his presentation on imported automobiles from last year, where contrary to the belief that their numbers rose sharply in 1973 - 1974 because of the gas crisis, their increase has been fairly steady since the 1950s. "Where do these numbers come from?" *The Historical Statistics of the United States*, in particular the *Statistical Abstracts*. "Reading this proves several things. One, I don't have a life." Also, "like an *Analog* story, it doesn't have much plot or characteriza-



tion, but the details are fascinating."

Our impression of imports doesn't fit the data. "In the world of statistics, facts trump theories." This is also true for the data on women in the work force from 1880 on. Rosie the Riveter was a blip off the trend line (with an "assignable cause"). On the other hand, the correlation between working women and imported cars is 98%. This is a better correlation than between breast implants and cancer. Obviously to cut the number of imports, he said, we have to get the women back into the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant. He defined regression analysis: "Can I draw a straight line through these points without laughing?"

Moving on to current topics, Flynn noted that plotting the locations of announced icebergs near the Titanic would have told them something. (He also mentioned that the second half of movie was in real time.)

Flynn gave us a new "word wealth" word: quincunx. This is the way seats in movie theaters should be arranged. Quincunx is Latin for 5/12, and is how Roman legions lined up. (Flynn has no idea why 5/12 has anything to do with this.) The Greeks, on the other hand, used the phalanx ("a phalanx was a tank with a couple hundred legs"). The phalanx had to move crab-wise, and the spear throwers in the back rows were completely blocked by the people in front of them.

Anyway, returning to statistics, Flynn dropped some balls through a quincunx of pins, "aiming" for the center slot. Naturally, some missed. He asked the audience why. One man answered that it was caused by "a concatenation of small random factors." "What do you do for a living, sir?" Flynn asked. "I'm an economist." "Couldn't find honest work?" There are other distribution patterns: Poisson distribution, bathtub curve, log-normal curve.

Flynn described Corrective Action Report Forms that if you have to fill out when various processes occasionally fall outside the specifications, for a while you answer such questions as "What is the non-conformance?" (say, rolling more than 11 on a pair of dice), "What is the cause of the non-conformance?" (threw too hard), and "What is the corrective action?" (throw softer), followed by "engineering qualification tests." But eventually you lie, because "your momma didn't raise no stupid kids."

Every process has built into it an inherent degree of variation. When you see variation in excess of the natural variation, you know that "Flynn was fiddling with the funnel." Only assignable causes are subject to a solution. "Life is a tug-of-war between Munchkins." It only stops being random if you add Arnold Schwarzenegger to one side. "Bell curves go to infinity, and no real life process goes that long except waiting for an editor." In a random process, trying to compensate creates even more variation (positive feedback). Gödel's proof implies "if a religion is any body of statements that relies on an act of faith, arithmetic is the only religion with a rigorous proof that it is a religion."

Regarding Federal spending, Flynn noted that all measures are tied to standards except the dollar, and digressed into the old German system which said his grandmother was "5 shoe, 2 thumb" (5 feet, 2 inches). He added, "Very few statisticians will play the lottery." The Budget Reform Act of 1974 forced the President to spend allocated moneys, and this opened up the budget gap. A graph shows current balanced budget is just the result of the trends, not anything being done to achieve it.

In graphs, watch out for the scale of the graph. "A thousand theories wither before a single fact."

At 11 PM, the next group came in, but we didn't want to leave. One person said, "I'm from Minneapolis, it's only 10, keep going." And someone else attempted to gather data: "Who really thinks it's 11?" But we did have to leave. I went to the Orlando in 2001 party, where I ended up in a discussion of who would make good Guests of Honor for upcoming Worldcons.

Reviewer vs. Writer: The Reviewer Strikes Back

Sunday, 12:00 N

Don D'Amassa, Thomas A. Easton (m), Joe Mayhew

Description: "So many panels involve writers getting a chance to talk about critics. This panel takes the other side, and the reviewers get their turn."

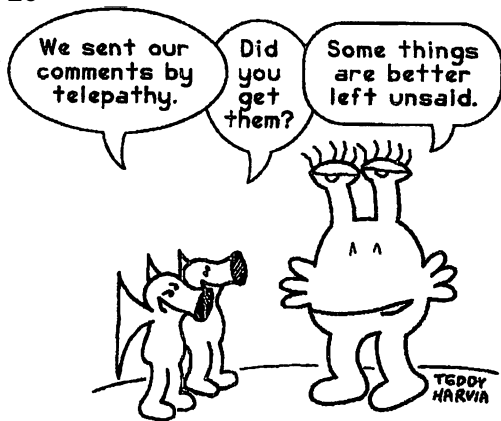
This was a series of questions for the panelists.

"When was the last time someone tried to bribe you with body or boodle?" Mayhew said it was more that people come up and try to be your buddy ("suck up"), and the others pretty much agreed.

"When was the last time somebody threatened you with mayhem?" D'Amassa said it did happen. And he had even given a good review but mentioned the high level of sexual content. He got a letter (saying "how dare you express your personal opinions in a review?") which threatened physical mayhem if he ever reviewed another of the author's books. Mayhew said he hadn't had physical threats, but he did get strong language (especially from Gregory Feeley). He tends to not review books he doesn't like, so that may skew the sample. Easton said he was threatened with tar-and-feathering by Robert Adams (who, like Norman, wrote as a displacement mechanism, according to Easton). Easton says some authors do say, "I'm going to tell my publisher never to send you another book."

Mayhew says sometimes it's the opposite; people say, "Why didn't you review my book? I gave you a copy." D'Amassa said that Harlan Ellison once demanded all his review copies back from Don. (He didn't get them.) According to Easton, one problem is that "we forget we trashed X's book and wonder why he is mean to us."

"Who is the most difficult to review?" D'Amassa said Ursula K. LeGuin. Mayhew said Gene Wolfe (too close a friend) and Jack Chalker (too close a friend and Mayhew doesn't like the category Chalker writes in). D'Amassa said that he does give bad reviews to friends (such as Paul DiFilippo and Michael Bishop).



"Is there anyone you won't review?" and "How do you choose what you review?" Mayhew won't review highly technical science fiction, and also there are some people he doesn't want to get mixed up with. Easton won't refuse a book based on the author, but will sometimes based on the book. D'Amassa agreed, but made an exception for Shatner, refusing to review his books because of "the inherent dishonesty of it." Mayhew selects by word-of-mouth.

"Has an editor or publisher ever tried to get you fired by threatening to yank ads?" Mayhew said yes: Bridge Publications pulled ads over his review of *Battlefield Earth*. Easton said Baen had pulled ads for a while based on a review. D'Amassa didn't know of any cases with his reviews, but said that Baen had sent him books that were already out of print when they sent them.

Speaking of other reviewers and critics, Mayhew said, "I really respect John Clute even if I don't understand him." He said that critics write about books you've read, and made the distinction that reviewers say how books will fit in your mind, but critics will say how they fit into literature.

From the audience, Lilly asked about showing the author a bad review so he can respond. The panelists recommended against this, though they felt running a response from the author in the next issue not unreasonable.

"Have you ever aroused religious or political ire?" D'Amassa and Easton both mentioned Bridge Publications, but what they described seemed more publisher's ire than any sort of religious or political pressure/fall-out. Mayhew said he generated political ire over Gingrich's and Fortschen's *1945*. (He jokingly—I think—said that having the villain named Mayhew didn't help his attitude any.)

Miscellaneous discussion followed. D'Amassa said that he reviewed Alexei Panshin's *Earthlords* based on the magazine serial, but the book had totally different ending. Mayhew admitted that he will engage in hyperbole to get you to read books he likes. And the panelists agreed that if you're given a book by the author, you have some obligation to at least try it.

The Single Book Series: Are There Still Stand-Alone Novels?

Sunday, 1:00 PM

Michael L. Moscoe, Steven Sawicki, Melissa Scott

Description: [no description provided]

Sawicki is a reviewer. Scott said she wrote a series by mistake. Moscoe wrote the "Lost Millennium" series (trilogy), and there will be another trilogy after this.

Moscoe said that he was a Navy brat, and transient, so he wants to hold on to friends and his books are his friends. (I would note that there is a term for the psychological state of constantly working on something and not being able to declare it finished, but I can't remember what it is.) Scott said that her series came about because she "couldn't finish the story in the space of a novel." She wished it were otherwise, because she said she had made choices in first book that were excruciating by the third novel. Her novel *Dreamships* was a stand-alone novel, but the social problem in it was not resolved so another novel (*Dreaming Metal*) was written about that. Scott said, "On a personal esthetic level I prefer single books, and [because of that] it's what I'd rather be writing."

Sawicki noted there were differences between "incidental series" and "planned series." Scott added that there is also another kind of series with a single protagonist who is not the emotional center; there are many mystery series like this, with a continuing character as the detective, but she couldn't think of any science fiction series that did this other than short stories. People in the audience named E. C. Tubb's "Dumarest" series, Harry Harrison's "Stainless Steel Rat" series, and Keith Laumer's "Retief" series.

There was some discussion of how books are labeled. For example, Moscoe's books don't say they are a trilogy: they just say "Book X of the Lost Millennium." To me (and others) this implied that order mattered, but we had no idea when the series was finished. One problem in a series is how you give the new reader information without alienating the return reader with repetition? Moscoe said that one thing he did was to change the point of view for the various novels.

Moscoe said that he had been told you couldn't sell more than a 400-page first manuscript (100,000 words), so he didn't want to write one very long novel. He also had 160 pages of recruiting and training chopped out of the first book. (It shows—lots of references remain that appear to refer back to this.) He also said his questions ("Who deserves to be helped? How do you help people?") needed more than one book. Some publishers will take a long novel and just chop it into pieces. Scott said that Baen probably won't let you write a transition paragraph, but some publishers will.

There was a lot of discussion of the whole marketing problem. Many people don't want to read a series until all the books are out, but by the time the last comes out, the first has vanished. Other people don't want to commit to buying some unspecified (or even specified) number of books for a single story. The panelists agreed that readers need to let the publishers know why they aren't buying the books, not just to stop buying them. Someone in the audience referred about "the question of Jordanitis" (excess verbiage).

The panelists were asked if publishers pressure people to do series? Some do, but agents will do this more often than publishers.

Do They Keep Kosher on Mars? Does SF Handle Religious Traditions Well?

Sunday, 2:00 PM

Michael A. Burstein (m), Nomi Burstein, Elisabeth Carey, Josepha Sherman

Description: [no description provided]

This was in one of the smaller rooms, probably because it was towards the end of the convention and people figured the attendance was winding down. Wrong—it was mobbed, standing room only.

N. Burstein figured she was on the panel because someone in Programming said, "Well, Nomi keeps kosher." Sherman wrote *William's Forge*, which had two Jewish starship captains. Carey said she was the token Christian. The first question the panelists asked was, "Which religious traditions?"

Carey said that she would start with a great broad generality: science fiction does terribly with religious traditions. This is reflected in how religion is portrayed as illogical and bad, Carey said, its leaders as frauds and its followers, dupes. For example, in John Brunner's *Maze of Stars* "every colony has a religious establishment that is utterly destructive to the sustaining of human life on that planet." And there was one where every person enters into a contract with their various organs. (M. Burstein asked, "What about their pianos and guitars?" Sherman added, "Hello, spleen?")

Sherman thought the answer to whether science fiction treated religious traditions fairly was "Yes and no; it depends." There is some fair treatment in fantasy, perhaps more than science fiction. N. Burstein echoed, "Yes and no; it depends. No, in that from the Jewish perspective since we have funny names for things, they become joke names for people. On the other side, we have people who actually care." She said she also tends to get really hyper about how Judaism is handled in print. People often get it wrong. *Frameshift* did it well, because Robert Sawyer asked the Bursteins to go over the manuscript. The recent story "Jew on a Chip" cuts major corners on how and why things are done (e.g., one rabbi gets a power of attorney from two other rabbis for a conversion, which would never happen). While she understands why the author did this, it was a dangerous subject to touch in a short story. Sherman advised, "If you're going to play in someone else's culture, you have to show respect for their culture" and ask about it. Panelists agreed that there is a problem with having to explain things to the reader. M. Burstein said that you can't footnote "except for *Analog*." N. Burstein said, "It's the people who think they know who are the problem."

M. Burstein said that he "want[s] to say the answer is yes, but it really depends." Science fiction is very skittish when it comes to religious traditions. Fantasy is less so. In science fiction, people look at science as the main religion. There are some exceptions. For example, Harry Turtledove in "The R-Strain" in *Analog* a while ago wrote about a kosher pig. Steven Burns (in "Leap") had a Catholic priest. In general, the more religious the writer, the more respect you'll see. M. Burstein mentioned that he was working on a novel where the main character is a scientist who is also an Orthodox Jew. Carey gave an example from another tradition: Christopher Stasheff has the Catholic Church accepting evolution in the 21st Century, but they already have, even back as long ago as to 1912. Not everyone knows about what we think of as the major religious traditions, especially in the global market. For example, N. Burstein said that she has had Japanese ask her how Jews celebrate Easter.

The panelists talked about having "religious characters" just in passing rather than as the main focus. Someone once asked Isaac Asimov, "Why are there no Jewish characters in your stories?" Asimov thought a moment and replied, "They all are." I suggested that if we no longer ask why a character is black or Chinese, why do we ask why he is Jewish?

Carey said, "I find a complete absence of religion more disturbing in a fantasy world [than in a science fiction world]." (Perhaps this reflects the idea that science is a sort of religion-surrogate.) I asked about Harry Turtledove's *Case of the Toxic Spell Dump*. Only Sherman had read it, and she remembered only the puns. Someone else mentioned *Contact*, and one of the panelists said that Orson Scott Card had disliked the portrayal of faith in the film version.

Distinctions were made between "religious" versus "spiritual," and "religious" versus "observant." N. Burstein said that non-observant Jews are still Jews: "We'll let you in but we won't let you out." In reference to this, Sherman said (jokingly), "Jews never argue with each other." N. Burstein jumped in, "Yes, we do," to which Sherman countered, "No, we don't."

Some science fiction novels deal with artificial religions. For example, there was Robert A. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* with its Fosterite Church and the Church of All Worlds. N. Burstein explained this by saying, "If you make it up, you don't have to worry about offending anyone." There are things in science fiction that have a religious feel to them, e.g., science, or the American patriotism in *The Postman*. (This leads into the concept that we in the United States have a civil religion; Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, thought so.)

The question was asked, "Does religion start from a lack of understanding or from a need?" but the panelists couldn't agree on an answer. They did agree that science and religion were not incompatible. Carey said she liked *Hyperion* and *Fall of Hyperion*, with a reference to Saint Teilhard which foreshadowed the end of the latter book. And Sherman said that the Pope's astronomer lives in Tucson and goes to science fiction conventions.

Someone mentioned the "Wandering Stars" anthologies, though Fred Lerner (in the audience) expressed the thought that these are more in the nature of Jewish ethnic jokes than serious extrapolations of religious belief. There is rumored to be a third one in the works. Other "religious" anthologies of note include *Tales of the Wandering Jew* edited by Brian M. Stableford and *Perpetual Light* edited by Alan Ryan. N. Burstein said that she "would hope that a trend of well-thought-out religious characters would emerge" and referred back to my comment about characters being black or Chinese without that being a big deal.

Strangely, on a panel on the treatment of religious traditions in science fiction, no one mentioned Mary Doria Russell's *Sparrow*, James Blish's *Case of Conscience*, Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s *Canticle for Leibowitz*, or anything by James Morrow.

Australian and New Zealand Science Fiction and Fantasy

Comments by Evelyn C. Leeper (revised for Boskone 35)

In the 1980s there were a few successful writers and a few small presses, but nothing conspicuous. The major writers were Damien Broderick, Lee Harding, and George Turner. Turner died earlier this year, and Harding has pretty much left the field. Broderick recently wrote *The White Abacus*, and a non-fiction work, *The Spike* (from Reed Publishing in Australia). A. Bertram Chandler was one of the early forebears. New major writers include Greg Egan, Terry Dowling ("the great unknown Australian science fiction writer"), and Sean McMullen. But not all authors have "crossed the water." For example, one big author there not heard of here is Martin Middleton.

Stephen Dedman is another major Australian writer. Lucy Sussex is a writer who has talked about the problems of publishers and distributors. Also, Paul Collins, Leanne Frahm, Tess Williams (*The Map of Power*), Rosaleen Love, and her daughter Penelope Love. "The kiwis" are Philip Mann, Cherry Wilder, Lynn McConachie, and others. Sean Williams and Sara Douglass are Australian authors. Egan has said (in an article in *Eidolon*), "We've got to stop searching for this mystical quality of Australianism in our writing." There is a disproportionate emphasis on heroic fantasy in Australia.

The big news of the next few years will be the struggle of publishers and distributors in Australia. HarperCollins Australia and other major publishers are publishing science fiction and fantasy. I would recommend Peter McNamara's collection of Australian short science fiction, *Alien Shores*. There was an anthology of New Zealand science fiction recently called *Rutherford's Dreams*. *Tales Off The Antipodes* is another good "Down Under" anthology. *Dreaming Down Under* edited by Jack Dann will be coming out soon. *Aurealis* and *Eidolon* are the two major magazines.

The recent publication of *The Year's Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy, Volume 1* edited by Jonathan Strahan and Jeremy G. Byrne gives readers a chance to see what's new and exciting from "Down Under." It includes stories by Russell Blackford, Damien Broderick, Simon Brown, Isobelle Carmody, Jack Dann, Marele Day, Stephen Dedman, Sara Douglass, Terry Dowling, Greg Egan, Beverley MacDonald, Lucy Sussex, Andrew Whitmore, Cherry Wilder and Sean Williams, and is available on the web from www.bookworm.com.au for A\$22.95 plus \$A11.50 for economy air, or about US\$22.50 total for a trade paperback—cheaper if you open an account or order other books to spread out the postage costs.

Japanese Non-Kaiju Science Fiction and Fantasy

List compiled by Mark Leeper for Boskone 35

Vocabulary note: Kaiju is the name given to the genre of monster movies. Kaiju is Japanese for "monster." The films listed here have no giant monsters or, in a few cases, have only a minor appearance of one. I include *The Mysterians* and *Gorath*, but do not include *Majin* films, all of which have a brief appearance of a golem-like avenging giant statue. *Majin* is the point of a *Majin* film, where the monsters in the other two are only minor plot complication.

Horror:

Ghost Stories (ghosts are generally just figures demanding justice):

- Rashomon* [1950], (non-horror)
- Ugetsu* [1953], (non-horror)
- Throne Off Blood* [1957] (*Macbeth*)
- Ghost Of Yotsuya* [1959, etc.]
- Kwaidan* [1964]
- Onibaba* [1964]

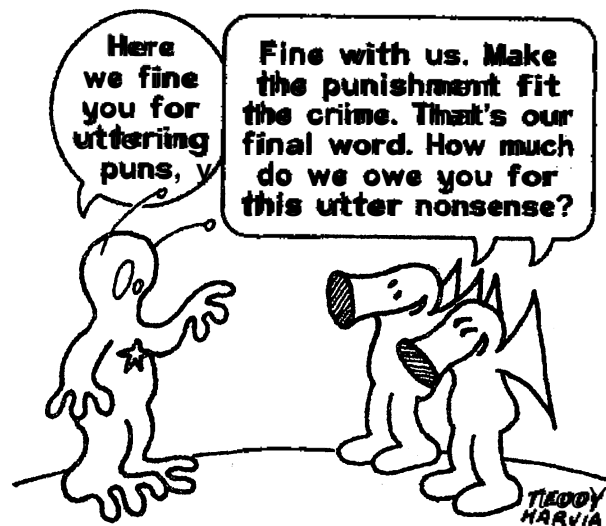
Miscellaneous:

- Matango/Attack of the Mushroom People* [1963]
- Lake of Dracula* [1971]
- Evil of Dracula* [1975]

Science Fiction:

Space Threat:

- The Mysterians* [1957] (invaders, kaiju: mechanized Godzilla complete with fins and heavy legs)
- Battle In Outer Space* [1959] (invaders)
- Gorath* [1962] (colliding worlds, kaiju: giant walrus in domestic version)
- The Green Slime* [1968]
- The War In Space* [1977]
- Solar Crisis* [1990] (earth in chaos as nova approaches, final sequence a genuine law-dropper)



Transformed humans:

- The H-Man* [1958] (liquid)
- Human Vapor* [1960] (gas)
- The Secret of the Telegian* [1960] (TV signal)
- The Guyver* [1991]

World Situation Warnings

- The Final War* [1960]
- The Last War* [1961]
- Goke, Body Snatcher from Hell*
[1968] (weird, weird, weird, with
alien invaders, vampires)

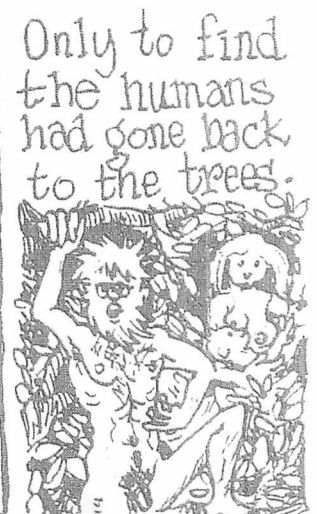
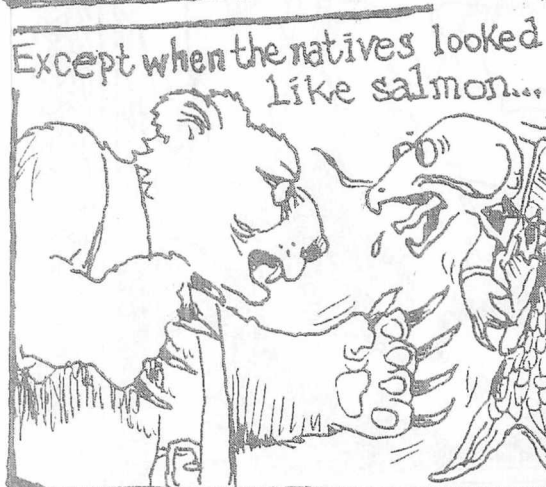
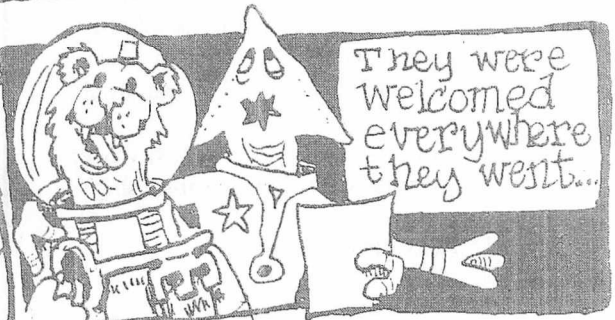
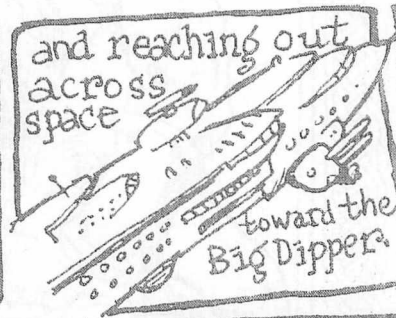
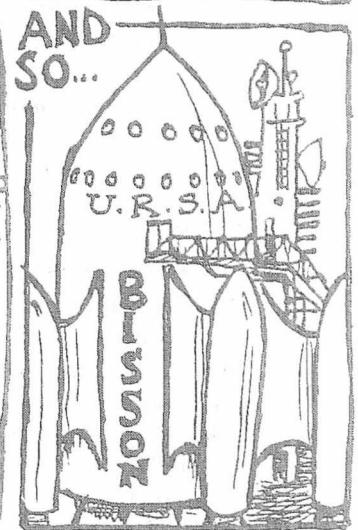
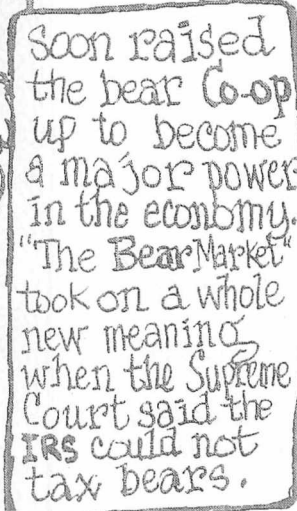
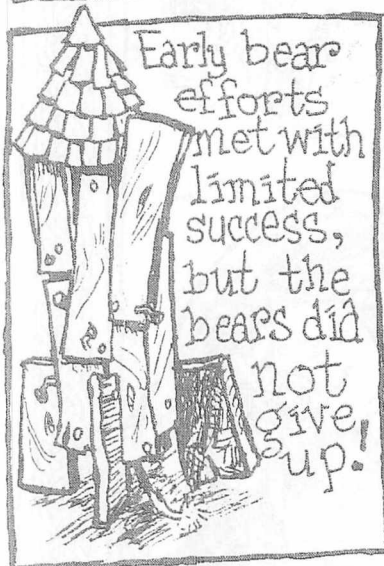
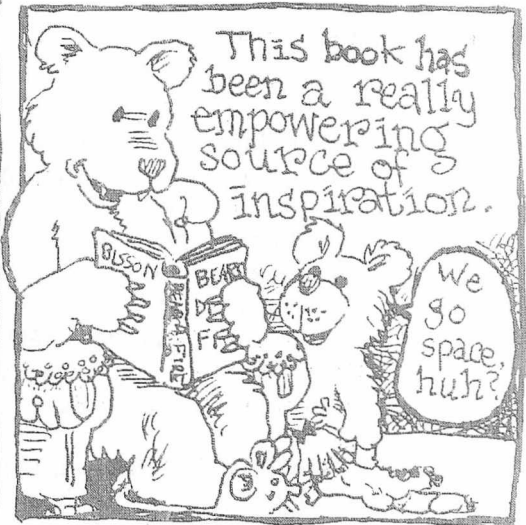
Superhero:

- Starman* [1957] (serial edited into
four films):
- Attack from Space* [1957]
- Prince of Space/Invaders From
Space* [1959]
- Evil Brain from Outer Space*
[1964]
- Atomic Rulers* [1964]

Miscellaneous:

- The Manster* [1961] (man fissions)
- Terror Beneath the Sea* [1966]
(underwater cyborgs)
- Black Lizard* [1968] (crime with
horror touches)
- Submersion of Japan/Tidal Wave*
[1973] (disaster and homeland
love)
- The Last Days of Planet Earth*
[1974] (Nostradamus prophecies
come true)
- Time of the Apes* [1975] (imitation
of *Planet of the Apes*)
- Message from Space* [1978] (space
fantasy with ship-like spaceship)
- The Ivory Ape* [1980]
- Virus* [1980]





Orbita Dicta

Heard in the halls of Boskone 35, February 13-15, 1998

by Bob Devney

Illustrated by Joe Mayhew

Note: this attempts to depict the experience of attending a science fiction convention by constructing a fetchingly artistic mosaic of quotes encountered there. You know, stuff people said.

The result is necessarily fragmentary. If not figmentary. After all, I didn't have a tape recorder or anything.

If you find yourself bothered by the lack of narrative flow, go back to first principles: ignore everything else and just look for your own name. Or your friends' names. Or just skip to the movie reviews ...

[Office colleague Forrest Trenholm wishes this reporter a stimulating speculative-literature weekend without being clear on the concept]

Don't forget your Spock ears.

[Once at the con, the first priority is dindin; although as four adults try to negotiate the hellish slot-shaped maze off Route 9 and drink from fabled Bugaboo Creek armed only with a speedy late-model sedan, the con's Restaurant Guide, and their (non)native intelligence, this comment is heard with distressing frequency]

I think that was the exit.

[Once this reporter is safely back on connish ground, hot author and incandescent self-promoter Michael A. Burstein extends his usual friendly greeting]

You are going to quote me at this con, right?

[In the con suite, film reviewer Dan Kimmel proves an honest critic must be a real trouper]

I wrote that the movie of *Starship Troopers* was actually surprisingly faithful to the book — and I got in such trouble with the Heinlein fanatics, I mean fans.

[Kimmel has some friends left, though]

A buddy slipped me a script of *Contact*. In the movie, it ends with Jodie Foster looking off into the stars.

In the script, it ends with another little girl's voice calling out into space, "Hello? Hello out there?"

[In the Friday-night panel on Mining Legends: How Myths and Legends Are Used in SF, big daddy editor David G. Hartwell of The New York Review of Science Fiction and other venues presents some background we might have mythed]

Otto Rank made up a long list of mythic themes from cultures around the world and combined them in what he called the Monomyth.

One, the hero has some supernatural circumstance surrounding his birth.

Two, he becomes orphaned or separated from his parents as a youth.

And on and on. There are something like 20 themes. There are superhuman tasks the hero is set to solve, and so on ... Eventually, the hero is thwarted or killed by his enemies. But will come again in the right circumstances, of course.

The thing is, some writers, being *aware* of this Rank book, started to write to it...

[Busy readers, these writers]

When he was still in grad school, Roger Zelazny told me he was studying Northrop Frye. And realized no one in SF was writing in what Frye called the heroic mode.

And Zelazny said he was going to do that someday.

And he did.

In fact, by the end of his career he had developed his own myth cycle in *Amber*.

[SF Book Club editor Ellen Asher thinks that after a certain point, borrowing gets boring fast]

The use of some sort of gallimaufry of characters created by other authors — using them in a historical setting — it's often just a lazy way of not having to create your own characters.

People get carried away. Oh, I can have Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes in the same book.

[Hartwell doesn't say don't do it, he says do it well]

I think there are more interesting examples, such as "The Dead Lady of Clown Town."

Or you decide to retell the myth of Orpheus, but the hero is not named Orpheus ... or even Orpheus Jones. And he doesn't live in Greece.

At first, I thought being in a Tolkien-C. S. Lewis Collaboration would be fun.



[Asher is OK with this]

Explore it. Like if Frodo had dropped the Ring and it fell all the way down the other side of Mount Doom ...

[So don't act like an utter orc, according to Hartwell]

You have to stay away from the cheap, quick rush of the reader's saying, "Oh that's Orpheus."

And of course, it may not work anyway. There are inherent problems. For instance, if you're telling a story that everyone knows, it does lack suspense.

[Though Asher feels SF certainly doesn't lack for passion]

SF is one of the more contentious fields of literature. The book clubs send out surveys from time to time, and the SF ones are the ones that come back all written over and scribbled upon.

[Just to spite her, Hartwell agrees]

Vonnegut said in the late 50s that SF is a field where people don't agree with each other — just to be friendly.

[Jung writer Brenda Clough turns the discussion to SF's archetypes]

There's the wise old man, and the pain-in-the-ass old man...

[Asher cracks wise herself]

...He's usually the very wisest old man.

[Hartwell likes a good pastiche as well as the next editor]

In *New Worlds*, which in my opinion is the best anthology of the year, there's a Kim Newman story, "Great Western." About the building of a vast railway in the southwest of England. And it's a parody of *Shane*.

[Asher points at Hartwell]

Or you can read it in *Year's Best SF 3*, coming soon from you know who.

[Fan Eleanor Perlman must dream in black-and-white]

I fondly remember those old early *Star Trek* episodes, that came out in black and white — or maybe it's just that our TV was black-and-white ...

[At the Trivia Bowl, fan Michael Devney grows anxious as the panel showers the audience with chocolates for each correct answer]

Careful, you guys, or the government will make everybody wear helmets.

[Sometimes trivial questions teach you stuff too: this was my favorite of the ones I contributed]

What SF artist also designed parts of the Golden Gate Bridge and all the gargoyles on the Chrysler Building?

[Although even he couldn't answer the above (it was Chesley Bonestell), trivia champ Mike Scott almost doubled some previous winners' scores with a knockout 99 — but says for Brits that's barely brilliant]

We have lots of these contests over there; I probably wouldn't have done as well back home.

[At the Art Show, Jim Mann has monster news]

For this summer, Bob Eggleton is doing the Unofficial Godzilla Movie Coloring Book.

[Tyler Stewart off Harvard Square's Pandemonium Book & Games sure knows his *fannish* food groups]

For my Pandemonium party tonight, I thought I'd serve some sandwich-type things. You know, so people will have one bit of decent food before they do the rest of the weekend on sugar, salt, and grease.

[There's something ... different about formerly ponytailed NESFan Kelly Persons]

Why did I shave my head? Well, there was this lab accident with wax. Hot wax.

[Michael A. Burstein is still lurking in the halls and pouncing for publicity]

Aren't you ever going to quote me in *Helmuth*?

[Saturday morning at the NESFA sales table, the talk turns to good-natured critiques of (absent) wives and girlfriends; but, sensing danger, Tim Szczesuil dodges the bullet]

Ann is the sweetest, most intelligent, most beautiful woman I have ever known. I'm very, very happy.

Hey, I'm not stupid. This could end up in *print*.

[As Intergalactic Paperboy Michael Devney hand-delivers individual copies of *Helmuth* to the poor news-starved folk in the Dealers' Room, one gives grateful voice]

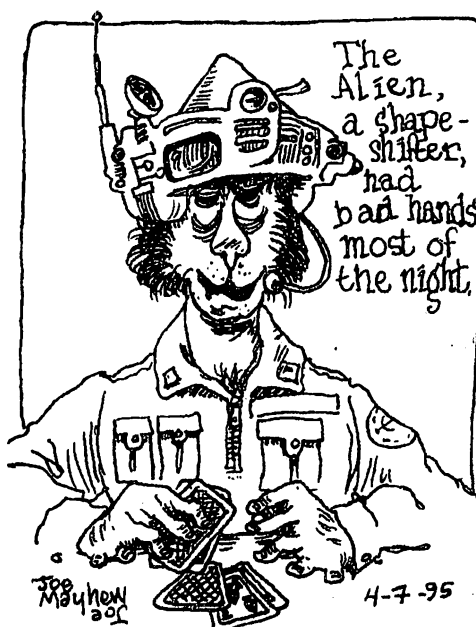
Service at last!

[After this reporter introduces himself in a elevator to Tor editor and ace word repairwoman Teresa Nielsen Hayden]

Oh, I know who you are. You send me strange e-mail.

[At my reply that "all e-mail is strange, isn't it?": Nielsen Hayden, after a thoughtful pause]

Someone who sends the e-mail you send would think that.



[Starting off the panel on Forgotten Authors: Charles Harness, NESFA's Priscilla Olson discusses the famous NESFA Work Ethic]

At NESFA Press, we're all volunteers. And this or that book gets started because someone in the club really likes the author's stuff and wants to put the work in.

[And Harness is richly deserving]

He's one of the few people from this era, starting in the 1940s — there are stories in the book's introduction about him arguing with Campbell — who hasn't been honored. After 50 years of writing. You know, 11 or 12 quality novels, 30 or 40 mostly good short stories.

[Olson tries to praise fellow panelist (and legal eagle) Rick Katze]

Rick tries to proof the Harness stuff I give him. But Harness was a patent attorney, and often has lawyers in his stories. Rick gets involved in the legal points and starts scribbling in the margin, things like "The judge is WRONG!" and fails to really proof it.

[Harness has never received enough honor in his own country, says Priscilla]

The British critics glommed onto Harness more than Americans. Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock — they really loved him to death. The Americans, not so.

[But maybe that will change this summer]

He may go to Buccaneer — Harness lives in Virginia. Not sure he'll actually do programming, but maybe signings.

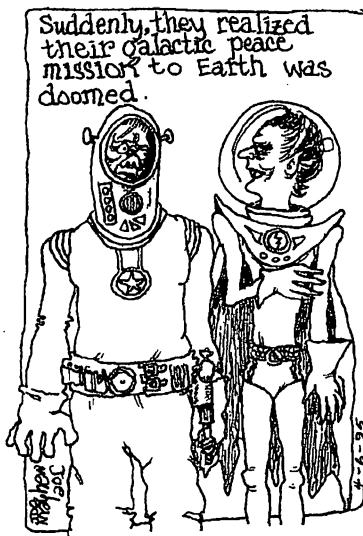
Anyway, the book is coming out this summer. I don't know that it will be a major success, or get love letters like the Zenna Henderson book we did. But he deserves it.

[What Harness stuff should we be seeking out? Aside from the obvious An Ornament to His Profession, coming soon from NESFA Press]

There's *The Firebird*, from 1981 — it's real fun if you can find it. And *The Ring of Ritornel* — a really superior book about a winged centaur. And *Lurid Dreams*, for all you Civil War buffs.

[After years of trying, I lure friends Dell and Ginny Campbell to their first Boskone, along with 14-year-old Lane and 11-year-old Bryan; as I begin the tour, Ginny seems suitably impressed by my natty con-going all-black chinos and shirt]

C'mon, everybody, let's follow Darth Vader here.



[NESFA's own Michael A. Burstein interviews Boskone's Special Guest editor Stan Schmidt, who starts with The Early Years]

At Case Western, I majored in physics ... Physics is a good basis for everything, because everything else is applied physics.

[As editor of Analog, Schmidt must dwell forever in the shadow of legendary editor John W. Campbell, Jr.]

I sent my first story to poor John at 15, and he sent me one of those printed rejection slips that people now indignantly tell me he would never send.

[What becomes a legend most? Cryptic utterance]

So he hadn't bought anything yet, but I kept trying... And began to get letters instead of printed rejections ... In the middle of one letter, talking about a story I'd sent, he wrote, "I'm taking 'Flash of Darkness.' Check is on the way."

Now, I spent 2 days trying to interpret this sentence.

Was it that my story had been confiscated and investigators were coming to my home?

Eventually I realized it meant I'd made my first sale.

[Not that sales are any easier these days, according to Burstein]

Before he knew who I was, it took Stan 4 weeks to reject my stories. Now it takes him 8 weeks to reject my stories.

[Schmidt observed Campbell's death by promptly following immemorial authorial custom]

I sent Ben Bova a story Campbell had shown absolutely no interest in. Because this is what you do when an editor dies. Dig out all your old stuff and send it to the new guy.

[Finally Schmidt himself succeeded to the Paper Throne]

In 1978 I became Editor of *Analog*. And immediately began getting letters about how I was ruining the magazine. This continued for at least 5 months until anything I'd bought actually appeared in *Analog*, you understand.

[Sensing that a fan audience is always fascinated by food, Schmidt discusses his lunch menu during a recent trip to Africa]

Eland, hartebeest, and crocodile. Eland is one of the largest antelopes on the Serengeti — and one of the shyest. Because everybody knows how delicious they taste.

[Burstein waxes wistfully curious about the non-kosher world]

What does crocodile taste like?

[Schmidt belts it out]

Alligator.

[Copies of a recent Analog were given out to all Boskone attendees, but Schmidt had other ideas]

What I wanted to pass out as a freebie was the April issue, because it has the beginning of a 4-part serial...

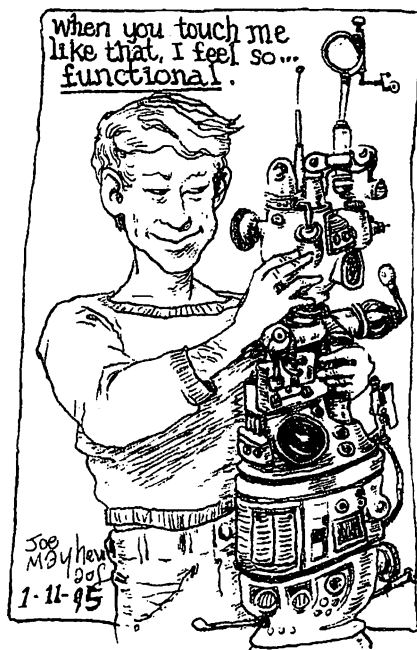
Beginning with the June issue, we're going to have a slightly larger size.

[Burststein just can't help himself]

Hmm. The June issue. Isn't that the one that has a story by Michael A. Burststein?

[Fellow Analog Maestro Ian Randal Strock, from the audience]

The issue is larger to accommodate your ego.



[In the panel on Exploring Other Genres: The Works of Patrick O'Brian, Tor editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden starts the scuttlebutt about that great series of sea stories featuring captain Jack Aubrey and ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin in the British Royal Navy of the early 1800s]

One of the things that O'Brian does that isn't usually attempted in any genre work is to play with point of view, and unusual characters ... including an absolute nutcase like Stephen Maturin.

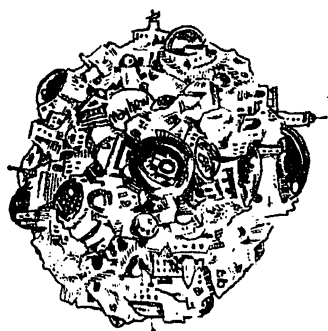
... He's a great choice as a point-of-view character, though. A roving expository opportunity. He's always either getting things — or completely not getting things.

[Writer Delia Sherman expostulates about exposition]

In real life, you know that nobody stops to explain things as you go —

[Nielsen Hayden stops her to explain things]

— Except fans. Fans stand around saying, "Well, as you know, Bob, the function of the expositor is to ..."



[As the author of some beautiful language herself in that fine historical fantasy The Porcelain Dove, Sherman appreciates O'Brian's gift]

His language is not self-consciously archaic. But there's not a single word he uses that wouldn't be found in that era.

[And his dedication ... at least until recently]

He has no target audience. His target audience is himself.

Except perhaps in the last few books. I'm afraid that in *The Yellow Admiral* the joy has gone out of it for O'Brian. The joy has certainly gone out of it for poor Jack.

[Bernard Cornwell's novels about a British soldier in the same period aren't quite as addictive, says Nielsen Hayden]

Ellen Kushner described the Sharpe books as "Methadone for withdrawing Patrick O'Brian fans."

[Casting the movie is always fun, though Nielsen Hayden's choice may not be too terribly box office]

I always see Stephen as John M. Ford.

[Sherman says try it, you'll like it]

I found *Master and Commander* very heavy sailing, and I thought "OK, this is a major boy book and life is too short."

But a friend told me to read the second book, and I came upon the bear — and that was it.

[The age of sea stories may not be quite blown over, according to author Susan Schwartz]

I missed Philcon this year because I had the opportunity to go to Newport News and attend a seminar on piracy.

Pirates we still have with us. In Southeast Asia, for example...

There was a woman at the conference who was attacked by pirates when she was first mate on a supertanker!

[Not that the first age of sea stories ended that far back, says Nielsen Hayden]

The Royal Navy gave out its last prize money as late as 1942.

[His tone of detached bitterness tells you Steve Sawicki has actually been there, in the panel on Plot Fidelity: What Does It Mean for a Movie to Be Faithful to a Book]

I've done a number of screenplays. A few of which have actually been made into movies.

[NESFAn Jim Mann knows why he's here]

I'm here because I put this panel together and put myself on it.

[Sawicki starts with important distinctions]

A novel is 80,000 words and up. A screenplay is 8,000 words if you're lucky.

... And one of the differences with seeing a movie of a book you've read is that it doesn't match the one you've already seen in your head.

[Fan and fanzine movie critic Mark Leeper gets down to cases]

I saw *Phantoms* recently. It had all of the gunfire from Koontz's novel, but not much of the characterization.

[Pro critic Dan Kimmel rounds on *Sphere*]

I urge you not to see *Sphere*. It was a terrible movie. And based on what I hear is a not-very-good book.

[Endings should be carefully calculated, according to writer Joan D. Vinge]

Originally, "The Cold Equations" had a happy ending. But John Campbell had too many stories that were upbeat, and told Godwin to rewrite it downbeat.

[Sometimes a great book is enough for Jim Mann]

People say, "Wouldn't you love to see a movie of *Lord of the Rings* or *The Demolished Man*?" No, I really wouldn't.

[Sawicki notes that SF can make the transition successfully]

A while ago PBS did two SF movies: *Lathe of Heaven* and *Overdrawn at the Memory Bank*. Both made excellent films.

You have to understand: movies are entertainment —

[Or not, cautions Kimmel]

— Well, if they're done right.

[After his reading, Darrell Schweitzer forces the sale of his dark fantasy *The Mask of the Sorcerer* on your helpless reporter]

This is me as a serious novelist.

[Teenager Lane Campbell, at her first con]

I like this place OK, even if my little brother doesn't. I like the art, and Japanese cartoons, and all the weird people ...

[After a few hours, though, younger brother Bryan Campbell isn't feeling quite as serene]

I wanna go home. I wanna go home. I wanna go home. I wanna ...

[If you think a con is a battlefield, try video games, says Steve Sawicki]

I saw a guy win the world record once, in a video arcade, for the game *Battlezone*. The one with the little wire-drawing tanks?

It took over 14 hours. Once the machine froze because it burnt out a chip, and once the plug got pulled out of the wall.

Both times, he had to start all over. It was awful.

[In the Dealers' Room, dealer doyen Larry Smith hawks S.M. Stirling's new *Island in the Sea of Time*, in which all of Nantucket is mysteriously transported back to the Bronze Age (reading this fairly satisfying book after the con almost delayed this Devniad into the next Ice Age)]

I read it personally ... and I recommend it strongly. I've been hand-selling this one all weekend.



[At the banquet, fan Dietrich Kulze III keeps praying our table will be called to the buffet last, winning the consolation prize of a free bottle of wine — with the inevitable karmic result that we're called second-to-last, netting the less coveted prize of cold leftovers; my comment]

Nice going, Dietrich.

[Artist Bob Eggleston prolongs the after-dinner suspense before announcing Donato Giancola for the Gaughan Award's Best Emerging Artist]

Ten years ago tonight, I was the one accepting this award. And what a long, strange trip it's been ...

[Priscilla Olson at the podium, wrestling a recalcitrant microphone to the ground]

I'm the only Luddite in NESFA, and they have me doing this!

[Special Guest Editor Stan Schmidt looks a gift bag in the mouth]

Oh, boy, unsolicited manuscripts!

[Hal Clement muses on the tight security about the winner's name re the Skylark Award for, what, *Most Lovable Pro?* (about to be affectionately announced for James White)]

You know, NESFA is an extremely sneaky organization.

[SFRevu netzine editor Ernest Lilley reflects on his considerate treatment from press liaison Elisabeth Carey and others at Boskone]

Here, I get some respect. But at Lunacon, which is my home con, they know me all too well ...

[Kinda like the attitude toward this reporter exhibited by that selfsame Elisabeth Carey]

Still ambushing people, sneakily going around taking down their words?

[Since a right-wing conspiracy somehow contrived to have me completely miss every single appearance of the Author Guest of Honor, my reputation for comprehensive con coverage rests entirely on this report from fan Jeff Wendler at the Orlando in 2001 party; thanks desperately, Jeff]

Walter Jon Williams said that all the technology in his books *Metropolitan* and *City on Fire* is completely nonscientific. He thought more people would catch onto this. They're completely fantasies.

[I sneakily ambush Jeff re his new girlfriend Lori]

She does read a lot, but not science fiction. So coming here with me, letting me drag her into this strange environment: she's got a lot of heart.

We saw the play earlier tonight, *Sweet Salvage Rivets*? With all those in-jokes about fandom itself, not even about the books?

I understood about one thing in four. Lori, not a one.

[Bookseller Chris Edwards uses the party to talk about, well, books]

Richard Ben Sapir did some great little books that nobody much mentions. Like two from the 80s: in *Quest*, somebody discovers the Holy Grail. And he wrote another good kind of historical called *The Body*, about a body archaeologists find in a grave in Palestine. Along with an old board with "INRI" inscribed on it, you know?



[Jeff Wendler sums up one charm of cons]

It's only at conventions that I buy books I may never read.

[At the crowded breakfast buffet Sunday morning, a lady in a wheelchair makes a fantastically generous gesture toward the empty place at her table, telling the waitress]

Just bring anybody waiting in line with a badge.

[Fantasy author Greer Gilman isn't quite revived yet, despite breakfast]

Well, I have to run to my panel. It's Fantasy Before Tolkien. I could do that one in my sleep. And I may have to.

[Waiting in the breakfast line, Ernest Lilley does some soul-searching (for which very few editors are at all equipped)]

The core of me is knowing very few facts, but extrapolating hard from what I know.

[While Ernest's companion E.J. McClure — active-duty naval officer, SF fan, and as Ernest says "a seven-sector callout" on the babe scale — muses on the impact of TV absolutely everywhere]

We did have a junior officer who explained himself once by saying, "I saw it on The Discovery Channel, SIR!" The captain was absolutely slain.

[At the Analog Mafia panel, as editor Stan Schmidt removes *The Ubiquitous Burstein's* toy octopus from his own head (don't ask)]

OK, it's time to inject a note of dignity into the proceedings.

[But author Michael F. Flynn isn't one to let a cephalopod slide]

I was just contemplating the Second Amendment: the right to bear arms?

[Schmidt has bigger things on his mind]

So starting in June, *Analog* will be 1 inch taller, and 3/8 of an inch wider; and we'll get 144 pages instead of 168.

... Apparently even that much increase in size can get us better visibility and different placement on the newsstand, the distributors tell us.

By the way, that increase in page size more than compensates for the decrease in number of pages. We should have about 10% more room for stories. Say about one more regular short story per issue. Or I can go back to having more novellas.

[And other news is even more electric]

We finally have a Web page: <http://www.analogsf.com>

[Michael F. Flynn announces he has discovered *The Secret of Selling Stories* to *Analog*; as every would-be writer in the room leans forward, he intones]

Step One, write lots of stories.

Step Two, sell them to *Analog*.

[In the Dealer's Room, Mike Walsh off Old Earth Books talks about one of his fine new E. E. Smith Lensman reissues upcoming as possibly marking a turning point in political correctness]

The blurb on back says basically, there's lots of neat stuff here, and it lists what kind of stuff — ending by saying, “even naked babes”!

You know who wrote that blurb? Lambda Award winner Nicola Griffith, that's who. Only *she* could get away with that...

[In the panel on Science: The Year in Review, NESFA Mark Olson muses about current astronomical Secret Origins stories]

One image of the early solar system is about 200 Marses — Mars-sized bodies, you know — rattling around and colliding ... So the Earth is made up of about 30 or 40 Marses that eventually stuck together, and the Moon is 5 Marses.

[We'd believe the following statement by Hal a little quicker if The Incredible Clement hadn't just finished working out relative masses in his head and determined that Mark should have said Earth is 10 Marses and the Moon about 2]

I was a high school teacher instead of an astronomer because I was a lousy mathematician.

[Continuing the modesty marathon, The Awesome Olson prefaces one discussion by averring]

I'm not an expert in black holes. I'm repeating what I've read, not what I've calculated.

... But a black hole has these properties we know about: mass, angular velocity, and charge. Black holes ain't got no more properties. Their composition: who knows? They could be made of kitchen appliances in there.

[Modesty doesn't keep one from turning a neat pun, eh Mark?]

The dark matter problem does seem to be heating up ... oh, sorry.

[This from a mystery astrobabe at the back]

I work at the Center for Astrophysics here in Cambridge ... One thing that fascinates me is the Kuiper Belt, out at the distance of Pluto. It's out there, but not out as far as say the Oort Cloud. But it's all these great huge honking objects ...

And then, what do we tell the kids about Pluto? I personally like to say we have eight planets and Pluto. Because it's such a deeply weird object... You've even got its so-called moon, Charon — that bad boy is two-thirds the size of Pluto itself!

... Pluto breaks every single rule for a planet.

[At the panel on The Arts in Science Fiction, SF writer Alexander Jablokov says many of his colleagues get artists all wrong]

Usually, they invent artist characters that are universally loved and admired. Well, there *are* no real artists like that!

[Della Sherman finds excellence under the rainbow]

There's a wonderful book called *The Rainbow Sonata*, whose author unfortunately I forget. But it's 400 pages about writing a sonata. One of the most gorgeous books I've read, but definitely hard science fiction. Yet very unconscious, very intuitive.

[And New York Review of Science Fiction editorial mother figure Kathryn Cramer thinks Ursula Le Guin attained a peak (or valley) of artistic commitment with a minor work]

In *Always Coming Home*, she's so into the music of the people she's describing that you even get a cassette tape!

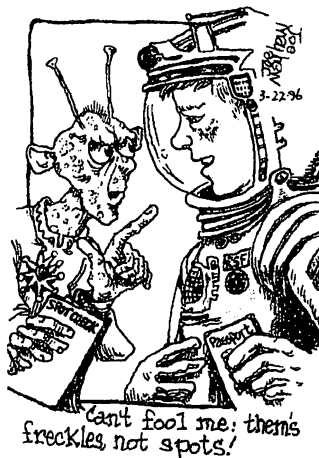
[The panel spends a lot of time on the difficulties of showing, describing, or actually printing the art for which your artist character is supposed to be famous; Jablokov says cheating is helpful]

Delany had the smarts to have Marilyn Hacker [his ex-wife who was a Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet] write all the poems in his books.

[Sherman did it her way]

In *Porcelain Dove*, I was careful to say that the play I wrote bits of near the novel's end was a very bad play.

[Can't remember why this remark of Jablokov's was on point, but it's too tasty to leave out]



Wolfgang Pauli received a letter with a bad theory. He wrote back and said, “This isn't right. This isn't even wrong.”

[This one makes a nice closer, though]

Some of my colleagues in SF don't think we're creating popular art. But — simply being unpopular doesn't mean you're not.

[A guy named I think Philip Gay that Tony Lewis introduced me to in the hall starts gassing about a recent article on the Hindenburg]

The skin of that zeppelin did *not* blow up because of the hydrogen. It blew up because its skin — cotton, flammable dope, and aluminum powder — was made of something very much like rocket fuel.

[Chip Hitchcock reports that the Female Heroes in Fantasy discussion soon turned into something more like *Revenge of the Moms*, as fantasy-and-folklore fem Jane Yolen related a heartfelt story]

My 31-year-old daughter called me up 2 weeks after her baby was born, and just kept saying over and over, “I'm sorry! I'm sorry!”

I said, “For what?”

She said, “For *everything*!”

[Esther Friesner put aside her chainmail long enough to admit her own sweet daughter hadn't got quite that far yet]

Mine's 14. She says I do only two things wrong: inhale and exhale.

[At the Gripe Session, next year's Boskone chair Deb Geisler magically reverses one complaint]

You have a gripe about your Magic Tournament. Oh, you mean the Magic Tournament that kept my husband the judge up until 4:00 a.m.?

[Sunday afternoon, my friends in the Art Show revise their opinion of my elevated artistic taste as I'm forced to lug a tiny powder-blue dragon with a "boo-boo" on its claw from table to table, claiming it as promised for my friend Dell's teen daughter Lane; encountering everywhere such emasculating comments as]

My, what a darling little dragon. How cute!

[Delia Sherman, after saying goodbye to our mutual friend E. J. McClure, tries to be nice to me too]

Oh, you've been at several panels. I noticed that you always made very good points. Very thoughtful and interesting.

[Me to Delia Sherman, blushing and gushing]

Oh, gee, thanks. Yes, I've been following you around — you give such good panel.

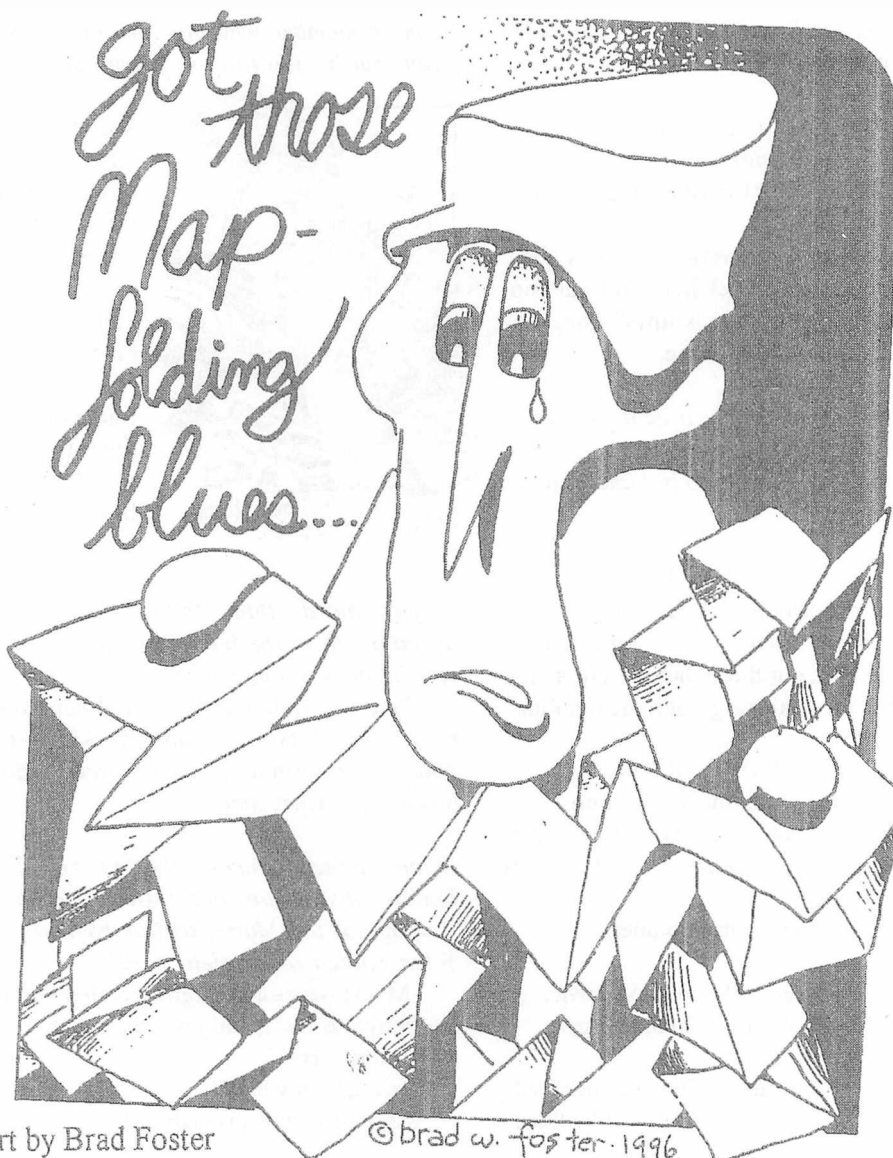
And I remember your photo in Perret's *Faces of Fantasy*. That beautiful shot of you by the nice house with the white picket fence ...

[Sherman, tactfully, and perhaps even remembering that the book in fact showed Susan Cooper with the house and the fence, which incidentally was white rail, not picket]

Yes, actually, it was the indoor shot with all this nice intricate floral wallpaper background. But thank you.

[My brother Michael, in the panting stillness of an elevator we just barely caught, staggering under the weight of 100 bags each laden with 1000 books out to our car to go— and quoting Bruce Willis crawling bloody-footed through an airshaft after all the fun explosions, gunfights, and deaths in the film *Die Hard*]

"Come to the coast. We'll have a few laughs."



Art by Brad Foster

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TAFF Race Begins

By Ulrika O'Brien, TAFF Administrator, U.S.

Balloting is now open in the 1999 North America to Europe TAFF race. The candidates are Velma "Vijay" Bowen, and Sarah S. Prince. The winning candidate will travel to travel to Reconvene the 56th Annual British National Science Fiction Convention, in Liverpool, England, April 2-5, 1999.

Deadline for voting is midnight, Saturday December 5, 1998. Ballots must be accompanied by a donation to TAFF of not less than \$3 US or £2 UK, though larger donations are gratefully accepted. Voting is open to individuals who have been active in fandom since April, 1997 or earlier. A complete statement of TAFF rules, plus the candidacy statements and nominators for both candidates, are available in the text of the TAFF Ballot.

Official ballots will be available from the U.S. Administrator:

Ulrika O'Brien
123 Melody Lane #C
Costa Mesa, CA 92627, USA
e-mail: ulrika@aol.com

and eventually from the UK Administrator Maureen Kincaid Speller, on her return to the UK. A ballot copy will be made available at the TAFF website: <http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Taff/>, or, look for ballots in a fanzine near you.

Best of luck to both candidates!

The 1999 TAFF Ballot—North America to Europe

What is TAFF?

The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted on by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$3 or £2. These votes, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.

Who may vote?

Voting in the 1999 race is open to anyone who was active in fandom prior to April 1997, and who contributes at least \$3 or £2 to the Fund. Larger contributions will be gratefully accepted. Voting is by secret ballot: only one vote per person, and you must sign your ballot. You may change your vote any time prior to the deadline.

Deadline:

Votes in this race must reach the administrators by midnight, December 5, 1998.

Voting details:

TAFF uses a preferential ballot system which guarantees automatic runoffs until a majority is obtained. You rank the candidates in the exact order of your preference for them. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority, the first-place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots are counted as first-place votes. This process repeats itself until one candidate has a majority. Your votes for second and third place are important, but you may give your candidate only one ranking on your ballot. In order to win, a candidate must receive at least 20% of the first-ballot first-place votes on both sides of the Atlantic, separately. Any candidate failing to receive this minimum percentage on either side will be dropped, and the second-place votes on their ballots counted as first-place votes in the next ballot count. Thus candidates and their supporters will need to canvass fans on both sides of the pond. You may send your ballot to either administrator, but it will be tabulated with the other votes from the side of the Atlantic on which you reside. Votes from fans not resident in either Europe or North America will not count towards either 20% minimum, but are important to the outcome of the race.

Hold Over Funds:

This choice, like "No Award" in Hugo balloting, gives you the chance to vote for no TAFF trip this year, if the candidates do not appeal. Hold Over Funds may be voted for in any position, and is exempt from the 20% requirement; thus, if it receives a majority of the votes on the final ballot, no TAFF trip will be held this year regardless of how many votes Hold Over Funds received on the first ballot.

No Preference:

For voters who prefer not to choose between candidates, but don't want the trip held over.

Donations:

TAFF gratefully accepts your freely given money and material for auction; such generosity has sustained the Fund for over 40 years. TAFF is fandom's oldest travel fund, and one of its worthiest causes—give early and often! Please contact your nearest administrator for details.

Candidates:

Each candidate has posted a bond, promising—barring Acts of God—to travel to Reconvene, the 50th Annual British National Science Fiction Convention, in Liverpool, England, April 2-5, 1999, if elected; and has provided signed nominations and a platform (overleaf).

1999 TAFF BALLOT — North America to Europe

Please read both sides of this ballot before voting. Send both pages as your vote.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number or e-mail address (we do not list or exchange this information): _____

Signature: _____

Enclosed is _____ as a contribution to TAFF. Please make cheques etc. payable to "Ulrika O'Brien" or "Maureen Kincaid Speller", not to "TAFF", and in the currency of the administrator's country. If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, then in order to qualify your vote, please give, in the space below, the name and address of an active fan (not a fan group, a candidate or their nominator) who is known to them and to whom you are known: _____

Velma "Vijay" Bowen:

Seventeen years in fandom: apahacking, con-running, fanzines, late night conversations, friendships around the world. You could usually find me working in the consuite in the mornings, or listening to tales of Fandom's Golden Years.

In two years of semi-gaffation, I gathered interesting material for fan articles by modeling, acting in bad movies, being set on fire.... Now I'm diving headfirst back into the heart of fandom. I'm gullible enough to be talked into almost anything for curiosity or the sake of a good story, and I'd like to redeem my family honor by writing and publishing a complete TAFF report.

Nominators: Avedon Carol & Rob Hansen, Jerry Kaufman, Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Vicki Rosenzweig, Alison Scott

Sarah Prince:

I have been a fan since January 1st, 1976. The bulk of my fanac took place in the next few years. Once upon a time I thought it would be "interesting" to run for TAFF, so I ought to pub my ish (getting out of the apazine ghetto) to get to know people Over There. But with that goal accomplished, one wouldn't need TAFF to have people to visit. Now I have cause and effect even more confused, in standing for TAFF in order to resuscitate my fanac. Would winning magically make me sociable, or shall I hide behind a camera forever?

Nominators: Steve Davies, Cathy Doyle, Gary Farber, Doug Faunt, Pat McMurray

Please read and fill out both pages. Send in both (or a copy) as your vote. Do not detach this portion!

I vote for (rank 1,2,3 etc.):

☐ **Velma "Vijay" Bowen**

☐ **Sarah Prince**

☐ **Hold Over Funds**

☐ **No Preference**

Send ballot & donation to:

Ulrika O'Brien, 123 Melody Lane, #C, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 USA

or

Maureen Kincaid Speller, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5AZ, England

Reproduction of this form is encouraged. It is the official voting vehicle and must be reproduced verbatim. Anyone doing so should substitute their name here: ~~Ulrika O'Brien~~ Proper Boskonian #44

1998 NATIONAL FANTASY FAN FEDERATION (N3F) AMATEUR SHORT STORY CONTEST

Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

1. This contest is open to all amateur writers in the field, whether members of N3F or not. We define an amateur as someone who has sold no more than two stories to professional science fiction or fantasy publications.
2. Stories must be original, unpublished, not more than 7500 words in length, and must be science fiction and/or fantasy in the opinion of the judges.
3. Manuscripts should be typed on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, double-spaced, with the title on each page. The name of the author should not appear anywhere on the manuscript, to insure impartial judging. Photo copies are acceptable, if they are of good quality. Computer printouts must be legible.
4. Contestants may enter any number of stories, provided each is accompanied by a separate entry blank and fee. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of the story at the end of the contest. Keep a copy in case of accidental loss. We are no more responsible for lost manuscripts than professional editors are.
5. Entry fees are \$1 for N3F members in good standing, \$2 for non-members. The extra \$1 is for printing and publicity, paid for by N3F funds. The basic \$1 is for judge's expenses and prizes. Members of N3F are encouraged to enter the contest, but will not receive preference in judging. Due to a long-standing agreement with the British Science Fiction Association, BSFA members pay the same fee as N3F members.
6. Cash prizes totaling \$100 will be awarded as follows: First prize is \$50; second, \$30; third, \$20. Honorable mentions and semi-finalists will receive a choice of paperback books available.
7. Send all manuscripts, together with SASE's, blanks, and entry fee, to the contest manager:
 Donald Franson
 6643 Babcock Avenue
 North Hollywood, CA 91806-2308
 Checks payable to Donald Franson, dollar bills, or unused stamps (mint, not recycled) are acceptable. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than **December 1st, 1998**.
8. The preliminary judge, who will pick the 10 or 12 semi-finalists, will be a knowledgeable N3F member. The final judge will be a professional writer.
9. The N3F assumes no publishing rights or obligations. We want to encourage pro sales, not fan publication. All entries will be returned after the contest is over. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. A full report will be made to N3F soon after the first of the year.

ENTRY BLANK

(Detach or not, as you wish, but must accompany story)

Title of Story (for Identification) _____

Author's Name & Address _____

Enclosed is the entry fee of \$2 (N3F or BSFA member \$1). I have read the rules for the 1998 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and agree to them.

 (Date) (signature)

THIS FORM MAY BE REPRODUCED FREELY, AS LONG AS IT IS AN EXACT COPY.

Letters of Comment

Fri, 3 Jul 1998

Lisa,

It was great to get *PB* (as usual), but I was certainly surprised to see Tracy & Bill's exposé of Madison fandom. However, as NESFA's spy-in-residence out here, I must make a factual correction. I was at the New Year's party they refer to, and there were only four cheesecakes, not five. At least, I only got pieces of four....

I continue to be surprised that Madison fans get bothered when a party starts to turn into a meeting. My NESFA training was to see that as a natural and appropriate evolution, but people here don't see it the same way. Strange. Maybe it's a Midwestern thing, too close to Minneapolis or whatever.

Still, the fans here have many other redeeming values, and WisCon is a great convention in a wonderful setting. So come visit, for the convention or any time!

—Jim Hudson (HudsonJ@mail01.dnr.state.wi.us)

March 18, 1998

Dear Ms. Proper Lisa:

How's that for combining all the types of salutations you get in your loccol?

Thanks for **PROPER BOSKONIAN 42**, which arrived a few days ago.

Are you sure this Leeper lady is human? I read a Dean Koontz book a while ago in which people became somewhat too attached to their computers and the beasts took control of the people. I don't just mean like so many folks who fall into cyberspace, but literally. Perhaps Ms. Leeper's laptop has gained control of her? From what I see, she managed, in spite of too small name cards, too dark rooms, and 3 to 7 minutes to get from one room to another somewhere in San Antonio, to still attend more panels than could possibly be human and take comprehensive notes. And then, file a report on the Worldcon which rivaled the mass report in FOSFAX with only a bit of help from hubby.

I guess these Worldcon things are massive. In the 20 some pages of this report and the 20 something pages of the FOSFAX reports, Ms. Leeper only crossed paths with any of the FOSFAX contingent about 3 times. Some of the panels held no interest for me whatever but a number did look to be of some value. Must have been one hell of a lot of hot air around San Antonio that week, huh?

She had Lyn McConchie's name correct except for one too many "n"s. Lyn authored *The Key to the Keplian*, which has Andre Norton's name on it but Lyn wrote it, and I understand that has become the best selling Fantasy published by Time-Warner in the past three years. Sequel due this summer. She writes all sorts of stuff, including SF and Fantasy. Plus operates a small farm.

It was unfair not to tell readers whether Esther Freisner posed for that cover or not.

Is Bob Devney always lost in cyberspace or does he sometimes write about real fanzines? My objections to e-zines, besides the fact that I don't have a computer and can't read them, are that the things are too ephemeral. Sit staring at a monitor ruining your eyes until the end of the zine and then it's gone. Unless you print a copy. Then again, I suppose my habit of reading a zine, locating it and never touching it again unless I mail it to someone is not much different, eh?

I used to do a lot of reviewing but have sort of lost interest. If I can generate the necessary interest, would you be interested in reviews of paper fanzines? I probably wouldn't spend a page on a zine; more like 3 or 5 to the page. Any objections if I wander outside SFandom?

Gene Stewart's inane comment about most rock zines being unreadable almost prompted an essay from me. But various emotional problems plus a bunch of mail intervened and then I realized that, well, it's a really old comment and besides everyone makes such silly statements from time to time. After all, my article in *TWINK* was entitled: 'There Has Never Been A Readable SF Book Written' which is obviously idiotic. I haven't found any worth reading but all books are, of necessity, readable. So, too, are all zines... except some handwritten ones and some so messy and crammed up that they are impossible to read. But those can be found in any sub-culture. Ever see *PABLO LENNIS*? And then there is... 'Most fans are idiots'. A comment made by not just anyone; not by just a fan but a Big Name Fan. I should, perhaps, leave it at that but I will explain that he meant it in an affectionate manner, in a discussion of fannish writing.

Which, of course, an essay discussing the usage of adjectives and nouns is, I guess, fannish writing. But is it fannish? And are you sufficiently desperate for contributions to publish such a thing? Not knowing, I abandoned the notion.

What happened to the R in Laurraine Tutihasi's name? I used to think of her as Lauraine Tootsiehasi but the occasional LoC I see from her these days always has her complaining about getting old, so maybe I should stop that. Kind of confusing to me. I think I remember seeing a picture of her about 5 years ago, at which time she was a super babe. Wrong person? Old picture? Inaccurate memory?

By the way, I am trying to decorate my little house with photographs of people who I come into some contact with in fandom and other small press arenas. Being a male chauvinistic pig, I naturally prefer ladies. And guys who talk to me, via letter pages. This is a none too subtle request for one or more pictures of Lauraine and the editor as everyone can see.

Well, I aim for two page LoCs and there we are. Dunno if you have a scanner or not, so I'll send it scanner ready.

Ciao.

Rodney Leighton

Letters of Comment

April 24, 1998



Dear PBers,

This ish we have Joe Mayhew coming and going—always a pleasure to see his creations and to know he was nominated for the Fan Artist Hugo once again! (And nice to know Ian Gunn also made the short list—health-wise I wish him all the luck in the world with his second go-round of chemo.)

Zineophile—okay—no way to get a look at *Emerald City*—not on line...and several more on the list and—of those listed I get 0%. Hmm.

I just got the Baltimore PR with the Hugo ballot and see that I haven't seen **any** of the dramatic presentations—but since I think they are all available to rent, I just **might** get a chance to see **them** before voting.

((The change in the Boston bid—read *Anstible*—are interesting—I couldn't get past the prices mentioned for a room—yeeouch!))

I treated myself to a pb—only to get home and check the books—yup—different cover art (one of the “Miles” books—Bujold) so I need to make a special trip to trade it back in and see if there is one which I missed when I looked through the bookcase there.

((Since there was no note or card—which I could see—I presume you don't need filios, etc.))

The LoneStarCon Report...pretty much (distilled) agrees with what others said—nothing **really** wrong, but not outstanding—hey, any Worldcon committee ought to be happy with that analysis. I haven't been to any cons (for any length of time, I presume 1 hour doesn't count) for a **long** time...well, since the last Chicon—and I wasn't really tempted to attend this year's Disclave. This year's con was cancelled and the circumstances seem a sum total of happenings over the past few years. I wonder what will happen to Disclaves-future. Even Baltimore is pretty much out of the budget except for (maybe) a one day membership—ironically, I'll be at the convention center a week or so before the Worldcon, using a free pass to the Exhibitor's Hall (~ huckster's room) at the annual veterinary (AVMA) meeting—which I also can't afford. I don't play favorites, I can't afford **any** of the meetings!

I finally was cleared of my parking ticket in D.C.. Uh, supposed ticket, I guess, since I don't (or haven't) drive in D.C. now that there is a Metro! It only took a year and spending hours on the phone (and one day “discussing” the problem). Ah, one small triumph.

Anybody heard anything about how Lan is doing?

That's about it—one crisis at a time (this year—so far—it was April 15th—but, so far, I've survived).

Thanks,

Shervl

Wednesday, May 27, 1998

Dear Lisa & Ken,

I'm moving from Germany to USA. Until I find a new place to live, please use:

Gene Stewart
1004 Tigerville Road
Traveler's Rest, SC 29690

Lots to do—gotta run. Stay in touch, eh?

Ineluctably,

Gene Stewart



7 June 1998

Dear Editor:

I am not sure when *Proper Boskonian* #42 arrived, but it was some time ago and I have been fatigued when I come home from work.

The main event in my life for the last six months was the total solar eclipse on 26 February 1998. I saw it from the dock of the sailing ship *MANDALAY*, a triple-masted barquentine. This was part of a 14-day cruise among the Windward and Leeward islands of the Caribbean

Reading a Leeper con report is always a joy, if only because it has been years since I've attended sci-fi cons, not even the local ones put on by the Local sci-fi club, LASFS. My last cons were the 1996 DITTO and the 1997 CORFLU. But since the Post Office does not give me Saturdays and Sundays off, it takes a substantial amount of effort to attend a con, effort I'd rather put into an overseas vacation.

As for the Leepers' zine, the day may come when I have Internet access. I've been reading hype about Apple's new computer, named iMac, which is supposed to make it quite easy for slow learners like me to master the Internet. If it comes with some kind of anti-spam/anti-junk program, I'll consider it.

Sorry this is brief, but I am tired and need to go to bed. More later. Yours Ayee...

Harry Cameron Andruschak

19 June 1998

Dear Lisa,

Thanks for *Proper Boskonian* 43, in the letter column of which I see Joseph Major comments—in response to me—that Paul Verhoeven's film of Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* “turned out to bring heavy support to Marty's thesis”. It does nothing of the kind. Cantor's argument was that only texts should be considered science fiction; Major seems to be implying, however, that the film wasn't very good SF, or was a bad translation of the original novel—which are quite different matters. In his own letter, Cantor

Letters of Comment

appears not to have understood such distinctions either, confining himself to a repetition of his earlier remarks; presumably, therefore, he does consider a *Star Wars* novelisation to be science fiction, while the actual film itself is not. Thus he destroys his own argument by demonstrating its internal inconsistency (and into the bargain conflates my remarks about the definition of science fiction with my comments about *Babylon 5*: "anguished rage" was a reference to the likely response of the series' fans, not him).

But let's turn instead to Halliday Piel's account of his experience as a lobbyist in Washington DC, to promote a bill to allow private corporations to undertake space activities—all the way through which I kept asking myself: why does it need a bill to allow this? After all, neither NASA nor the US government owns outer space; so what is preventing private corporations from just getting on with it, and doing whatever they want to? Clearly, it must be more than whether or not Congress has passed a bill—and the reason is spelled out quite clearly in Piel's account of Daniel Goldin's talk to the lobbyists: because private corporations do not wish to risk their own money. This is hardly surprising, since the actual record shows that for all their talk of risk-taking and entrepreneurial go-getting, private corporations are very reluctant to expose any of their capital to possible loss without prior guarantees and subsidies from the government. (The story of the on-again off-again fast rail link from London to the Channel Tunnel entrance at Folkestone is an instructive British example of this reluctance to take such risks. The line will now be built, but with government bonds to finance 20% of it—and probably more, once inevitable cost overruns and construction delays are factored in.) The larger the investment required, the more reluctant the private corporation is to invest—to the point where, in this case, they have obviously made a detailed financial risk assessment and decided not to do anything at all.

It seems an article of faith amongst US space lobbyists that private corporations can do the job more economically than government agencies, but this is almost certainly untrue. After all, government agencies don't need to make a profit—unlike private corporations, who need to pay their shareholders annual dividends to keep them happy. In consequence, government agencies are able to think and plan across longer spans of time than private corporations, which means that only government agencies can cope with the lengthy periods of time which have to elapse before the capital investment delivers any returns—whereas the board of directors of a private corporation which airily told its AGM that it was preparing to spend billions over the next umpty-ump years on a project with no guaranteed return would very shortly find itself out of office and the project abandoned. And of course private corporations have as many bureaucrats as government agencies—only they're called "middle management". All of which means that one should simply forget about the commercialisation of space flight and space activity, because it will never happen.

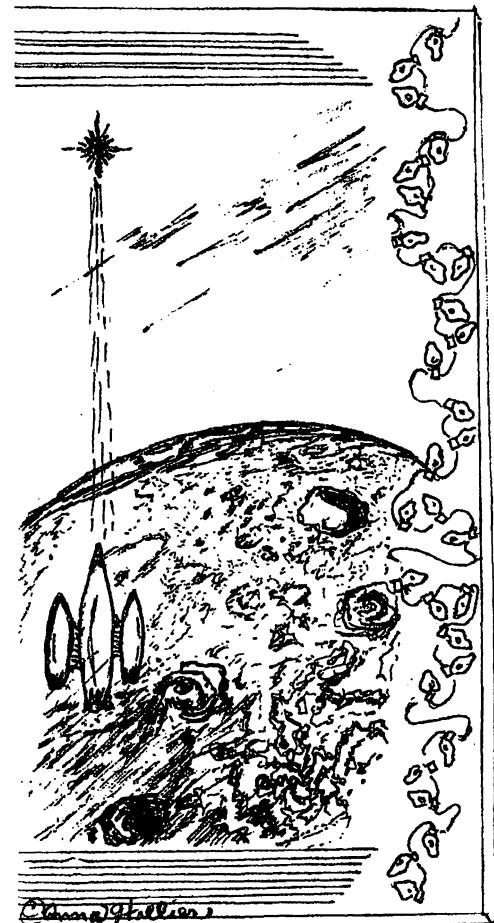
Piel says that in his view the possibility of "being trapped forever on Earth" is "depressing". I can well imagine that people who have grown up with the founding myth of a frontier, which had to be conquered and without which their nation could not have been brought into being, would be depressed by the closing of that frontier and the failure of a new one to materialise in its place. If so, Piel should prepare to be further depressed by the thought that if private corporations ever did get involved in space activity, they wouldn't spend money on something as expensive as people, who need constant supplies of air, water and food, but on machines, which require merely a power source and a set of instructions, and will keep going until they either break down or are told to stop. My advice to him, therefore, would be that he should face up squarely to his depression, and sooner rather than later, because acknowledging unpleasant facts and putting them behind one makes subsequent life so much easier. Start celebrating the Earth, old man, rather than trying to escape from it! After all, fiction is fiction.

Reverting to the letter column, I note an amusing typo in Marty Cantor's list of the classic SF titles in his library: *The Starts My Destination*. Well, if the protagonist only ever got to the start of things, it's no wonder he never got anywhere else....

Yours cheerily

Joseph Nicholas

Art by Anna Hillier



Letters of Comment

June 30, 1998

Dear Helmuth and the gang:

The Editor Speaks Writes: So Lisa was pubbing a different sort of ish. Congratulations to little Liana, who looks just great and so incredibly adorable.

March Storm 1997: Typo Correction: Dana Rohrabacher is a Representative, not a Senator. I remember him from the old Society for Individual Liberty days.

Russian rocket manufacture seems to be done on the AK-47 principle. Assume that your weapons are going to be fired by people who don't read any language, don't even speak yours, are chronically short of everything, and are blind drunk on smorgan [moonshine], and design appropriately.

Perhaps one reason not to invest in "novelties proposed by new companies without track records" is that so many of them are flakes or rip-offs. Deke Slayton found that out. And of course the pro-space community is so divided ...

Letters of Comment:

Lloyd Penney asks about Masquerades and Fandom: The Next Generation. Masquerades have been declining in the past few years. Kubla Khan in Nashville used to have a significant one but it died out three or four years ago (Kubla itself has been discontinued now that Khen Moore has stepped down, though Parthecon has taken its place). The Rivercon masquerade used to be big. Last year's had thirteen entries and ten of them won awards. The LoneStarCon masquerade would have made a good Rivercon masquerade in the eighties. I wondered at the time why so many of the entrants canceled out.

As for Fandom NextGen, one hears various explanations; that they are going into 'Zines and Net, or, like, not into that print stuff? You know? The Lynches have been noting this trend for the past few *Mimosas*. From what I have seen, 'Zines are not all that much and if there is any great Net trend it is in these restrictive little e-mail lists, which is like hoping that a fannish career will grow out of being in limited circulation very private APAs.

Gene Stewart: But nevertheless there are some good jokes on the Net. I liked the guy whose signature file (".sig") was a quote from "Zeno, Warrior"—"Before I can pass my sword all the way through your neck, I have to pass it halfway through your neck. Before I can pass it halfway through your neck, I have to pass it a quarter of the way through your neck. Before I can pass it a quarter of the way... " A cutting statement, what?

But Brando is letting himself go. I read a report by someone who visited his island. He saw an old woman shuffling along the beach and then to his amazement realized it was Marlon. Not that he seems to be deteriorating *mentally*. Someone implied that by reporting that he got his lines fed to him by an earphone, thinking that he was becoming senile. But

Brando *never* learned his lines; said it interfered with his concentration on the character. It used to be cue cards.

Thanks to **Richard Brandt** and **Michelle Lyons** for supervising a wonderful Fanzine Lounge at LSC2. I spent many hours there and enjoyed them all. Lisa brought there some of those past PBs for our collection.

Joseph T Major

[My thanks to you--and so many others--on wishing my daughter well.--Editor.]

Mon, 6 Jul 1998

To: pb@nesfa.org

Our new address is

PO Box 640
Airlie Beach Qld 4802
Australia

(all addresses at Faulconbridge and Ryde are now obsolete).

Any physical mail we don't catch on our redirection notices will probably end up lost (the redirections don't appear real efficient so far). We will have a redirection on the PO Box at Ryde and at Faulconbridge for at least the next six months. Jean's phone is (07) 4948 0450 or +61 7 4948 0450 I don't have a phone (Jean stole my line for her fax), and have no current plans to get one.

Jean's is retaining her jean_weber@compuserve.com email address for the moment, and has a new email address at jhweber@whitsunday.net.au. My email address at work, eric@maths.uts.edu.au may possibly disappear shortly after 17 July 1998, and will start bouncing (but retaining copies of) email at 12 July, as I am resigning from the University. I have established other (untested) email accounts as eric@lore.maths.uts.edu.au and Eric.Lindsay@uts.edu.au and there is some (considerable) possibility no-one will notice these or remove them for a considerably period. However I won't be checking any email frequently, only when I happen to use a Internet Cafe. I'll eventually link up with an ISP, probably whitsunday.net.au, but it might not be for three to six months.

My SF fanzine *Gegenschein* is currently available from my web site <http://www.maths.uts.edu.au/staff/eric/sf/geg.htm> and I hope issues will stay there for at least a few more months. I can see considerable problems in updating this site once I leave (don't ask about Windows NT ftp access), so I'll probably arrange duplicates at <http://www2.maths.uts.edu.au/staff/eric/sf/geg.htm> (which is actually the original Sun based site... and that I can get into).

Gegenschein 82 was mailed recently, but some extra work needs to be done on the web issue. I hope to photocopy *Gegenschein* 83 in the next two weeks, before I leave, but a decent web issue may take a while. You can check out where we moved to and see photos at my site <http://>

Letters of Comment

www.maths.uts.edu.au/staff/eric/airlie/index.htm or change
[www to www2](http://www2) if it seems nothing on the site ever gets
 updated.

Sorry about the rushed, messy and incoherent nature of this
 message. You should see things from this end!

Eric Lindsay

July 7, 1998

Greetings Lisa

Got the new issue of *PB* today, #43, and I must say that I
 think actually giving birth is a more than sufficient reason
 for a fanzine being delayed. I mean, there are some priori-
 ties that even outrank fanatic!

And while I'm more than pleased to continue to be on the
 mail-list, this makes the third issue I've gotten that didn't
 contain any of my artwork, which makes me feel a bit guilty.
 According to my records here you should still have three
 pieces of art on file to use. If you don't care for them, that's
 cool!—send 'em back and I'll send you something else. Or if
 somehow my records are screwed up and you've none on
 hand, please let me know that and I'll get something to you
 as quick as I can. I've always felt slightly guilty about getting
 all these cool fanzines for years simply on the basis of
 sending art, so I'm in absolute agony over getting them for
 nothing at all! That basic work ethic and all, I guess...no
 such thing as a free lunch....

Oh, incredibly cool back cover from Joe on this issue. You
 don't see a lot of architectural work in fanzines, but both
 Joe and Ian seem to be into it which is great! (I always loved
 those city scenes Tim Kirk did way back when for zines!)

stay happy~

Brad W. Foster

Dear Lisa,

Much thanks for the *Proper Boskonian* 43. I have discarded
 the envelope but future issues should go to

Ned Brooks

4817 Dean Lane

Lilburn GA 30047-4720

I am retired from NASA and have moved to a large house in
 a distant suburb of Atlanta.

Nice photo of the baby, who, like all of them, strongly
 resembles Winston Churchill—I can even see the ghost of a
 cigar in her mouth...

Just heard on the radio that Ima Hogg, daughter of Texas
 governor James Hogg, did NOT have a sister named Ura.
 Another illusion destroyed...

Interesting article by Piel, though I have little confidence
 that such citizen input to space program decisions is
 anything more than the usual smoke and mirrors. I was told
 at Langley Research Center (my own experience is all in
 wind tunnels) that the X-33 we tested a model of would have
 a wingspan of 180 feet in full scale and would land in
 Montana and be dragged back to the launch pad over the
 Interstate roads!

Ned Brooks

<nedbrooks@sprynet.com>



Art by Patricia Pierce Phillips

Letters of Comment

July 11, 1998

Dear Boskonians:

I thank you for both copies of *Proper Boskonian* #43. As I really only need one copy of your zine as I seem to no longer have two heads, I think that you should adjust your mailing list so that I am on your list only once. I leave it to you as to which listing you wish to retain; however, as one listing is for *Holier Than Thou* c/o Marty & Robbie Cantor (and I only have the funds to produce my much smaller *No Award* [which I send to you in trade] and Robbie and I have divorced), I recommend that that should be the listing which should be dropped. Knowing fandom as I do, I expect that you will make your decision Real Soon Now and that you will probably retain that which I recommend you drop. So be it.

Halliday Piel writes that Charles 'Chaz' Miller has apparently succeeded in recruiting a staffer of Senator Dana Rohrbacher (R-CA) for a pro-space effort. Ahern. Firstly, Dana Rohrbacher is a representative from Orange County in California—the two Senators from California are of a different gender persuasion than Representative Rohrbacher. Secondly, for many years one of Rohrbacher's staffers was Tim Kyger, one of the honchos of the 1978 Worldcon in Phoenix. Tim Kyger is a long-time fan; so, possibly, he is the staffer who is referenced—but I do not know if Tim still works for Rohrbacher, so it is possible that the referenced staffer is somebody else.

In your comment to me about your not finding my letter of comment on *PB* #41 what I find interesting is not that you lost my loc but that your filing system (or person) brought forth my loc on *PB* #40 to be printed as my loc on *PB* #41 when you had already printed it in #41. In such matters I am quite disorganised, moving discrete piles of locs around this disaster area of an apartment. Still, to the best of my knowledge, I have not made this kind of error. Consider—*No Award* #2 was produced some 5 to 7 years after *No Award* #1, yet I still had accessible the pile of locs on #1 and used them in a letter column in #2. Shucks, I still can see from where I am typing at the computer, a cubby-hole on my desk with the locs on *HTT* #27 (the last issue of that zine, produced about a decade ago). If I ever produce *HTT* #28 (which is possible though unlikely), I have handy the lettercol of that issue. Hmm. Despite the sheer weight of the evidence (all many tonnes of it), I really do throw things away. At times. Rarely. I think that I will put it in my will that the executor of my estate should have just one duty, with that being to toss a match in my place and be done with trying to sort things.

Gene Stewart considers my idea of what constitutes sf to be an "odd notion?" Let me put my ideas in another way and see if he still considers my opinions odd. Do any of you remember when, many years ago, there was some sort of comic book series which purported to be a retelling of classic literature in comic book format? [*Classics Illustrated*—ed.] I vaguely remember this stuff; however, having not been a fan of comics since the 1940s, I can state that I

not conversant with all of the details of this but I do remember that there was something like this. What is important is not the exact details of what occurred but the implications of same. Put it this way—these comic books may have been great comic books (or not, as it really makes no difference in the argument), the point here is that they were still comic books and were not the great masterpieces of literature they were portraying no matter how good they were as comic books. In the same way, the visual portrayals of what purports to be science fiction is absolutely not the words on paper which is what science fiction happens to be. You may love or you may hate these television shows and the movies—only an idiot can say that what is appearing on any size screen is words on paper. A television or movie screen is absolutely not a book or magazine with words on it; therefore, even though a story being portrayed on a screen may have been derived from the science fiction genre, it is not science fiction as science fiction is words on paper. If anyone wants to change the definition of science fiction to suit their own preconceptions/likes/ desires etc., what they are in essence doing is to state that words do not have meaning—or they are stating that words only have the meaning which they impute to them. In other words, language is nonsense. Well, I say to them, they are spouting nonsense. I am not stating that movies or television shows are either good or bad (although I have never seen one of these things which were half as good as a Lionel Fanthorpe piece of garbage), what I am saying that movies and television shows are, respectively, movies and television shows—and that science fiction is what it has always been, words on paper. Now, many of these words on paper have been good and many have been bad; but, good or bad, they were still words on paper and made no pretense to being other than what they were. In this case, science fiction words on paper (in contradistinction to other kinds of words on paper). They did not pretend to be other than what they were and neither did the authors of these words on paper pretend that they were other than what they were (except, of course, for the idiots of the New Wave who thought that their scribbles were some sort of superior form of science fiction when they always only a rehash of the failed experimental pap of the 1920s). To shorten this diatribe (which reminds me, somewhat, of some of what Joseph Nicholas, Darrell Schweitzer and I argued about in many issues of *HTT* during much of the 1980s). In effect, my position on this has remained constant—and I state this as a Truth in Advertising issue. (For the record, this whole argument, in *HTT* started when I ripped a Gardner Dozois "Best SIF" book which had (as I remember it) about 3 real sf stories out of several dozen, most of which were just so-so mainstream slice-of-life vignettes. And, no, I do not intend to do anything but rely on my memory of this—what I am remembering is good enough for this argument at this time.

Only two pages? For me, that is a short loc.

Faanishly yours,

Marty Cantor

Letters of Comment

22 July 1998

1 August 1998

Dear PB,

Whew—some faneds will go to any lengths to try to rationalize the, uh...,lengthened pubbing schedule, but I must admit childbirth is a pretty good reason.

Ah—someday (after I win the lottery) I'll get enough computer power, go on-line...all that good stuff—until then I'll presume my brain (such as it is) is safe.

While we, in this country, push the idea that the individual can make a difference, it usually won't happen in politics, unless that individual has a lot of money. But, we keep trying...

Welcome to Rodney Leighton—I do suspect *TWINK* is available for "the usual." Most zines do list a cover price—so instead of a LoC you can actually pay for it. Most faneds prefer a show of personal interest over an actual monetary payment—but will accept one.

Just a suggestion to Rodney—this may ruffle feathers if you don't like a zine, but a review should be more than merely a listing of "statistics" (ed., address, contents—etc.)—it should have an opinion and analysis. In all honesty, that's one reason I wouldn't be a reviewer, but it's also what makes one.

Yeouch—I've been getting a zine longer than Lloyd Penney and been "in" fandom longer—whew.

Sounds as if Richard and Michelle had the best of all possible worlds—they helped make San Antonio a success and enjoyed the ride.

Let me know (a note, or a comment next ish) if you need/want fillios... cover...I'll try to help out if you let me know—

As always—thanks for thish!

Sheryl

27 July

Dear Lisa et al,

Many thanks for *Proper Boskonian*. Alas, I have no time to LoC it properly before I come to the States, but I wanted you to know I appreciated it & would love to see future copies. There'll be another Snuffkin *Bum* before Christmas, I hope! And the TAFF trip report.

Maureen Kincaid Speler

Dear PB:

Rodney Leighton: Hmmm, "the usual". I divide fanzines into two categories: egozines, pubbed by an individual editor, and clubzines. Most egozines and some clubzines pub LoCs, but since pubbing the zine costs money, they prefer that you become a subscriber before publishing your letters. (*Proper Boskonian* is one of the few exceptions). The letters also need to be interesting and non-offensive, otherwise you might end up as "also heard from." Art is a different category; everybody needs art, it will be accepted with thanks.

Once you established yourself as a known "letterhack", like Lloyd Penney (it takes a few years), you might be able to get your letters printed for free. Meeting fan editors at conventions in person and cozying up to them also helps.

Gene Stewart: "Hint, wink, nudge". Sorry, I don't get it. The article probably should have been longer; unfortunately I am not a very good composer. In my family I was famous for my "telegram-style" letters. Participating in *APA-NESFA* somewhat improved that. If all else fails, I can always use the excuse that English is only a second language to me (I came from Hungary). Also in the art environment, just as in any other areas of fandom, there are some pretty large toes and oversized egos one has to avoid to step on.

I prefer not to start any fannish feud through *Proper Boskonian*.

March Storm '97. It is sort of a sad story. The Pro Space people and their ilk, they just don't get it (or they know, but deliberately mislead fandom). I don't know which is the worst. When we are in a Cold-type War, very carefully fencing with E.T., when we have a top secret Moonbase studying possibly super-high-tech, xenoarchaeological artifacts, then no mundane civilian got no goddamn business being in space! However distasteful it is, space for now is strictly a military business. (So don't expect much support from NASA).

And by the way, have you seen any photos from Project Clementine yet? (The military photo-survey of the Moon.). I thought you did not! I am not surprised....

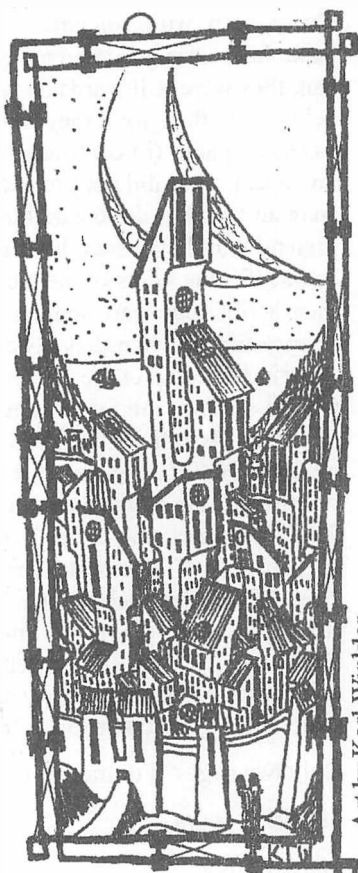
Thomas A. Endrey

August 2, 1998

Dear Helmuth and the Gang:

I see from this 43rd issue that the Gang has grown by one. (Saw the picture on the website, too.) Congratulations, Lisa ... your best issue yet. Now, before I get into further trouble, here's a letter of comment on the aforementioned fanzine...

This is your brain. This your brain on a hard drive. This is your brain as processed through Windows '98 ...



Letters of Comment

ewwwwww... Good little story. Some brains require a few gigabytes, and other just require a floppy.

I have to wonder if most of the big partners in the space station project are as committed as they once were. The anti-space faction in Congress seems to be making strides, and with the Japanese economy in ruins (and ruining other economies tied to it), who's left? Canada's role is an intermediate one, and the next generation of remote manipulators is ready to go, but our economy is having a tough time, and the C\$ is at its lowest level ever. (Makes it real hard to afford Baltimore, but here we are.)

Canadians do not say about. We pronounce it about, like everyone else. (Of course, watch us cater to other stereotypes at the Toronto in 2003 parties...)

My wordy letter ... the computer has not yet come through, but we might keep the laptop Yvonne uses for work, so that would do. We are going to Baltimore ... if you're reading this in Baltimore, and I handed you the letter. I have received fanzines from those faneds I listed, and thank you to them. The way I'm feeling as I write this, sign me up for the Vegetable Fannish institution. Already, the Aurora nominees for this year are out, and I am happy to say that I'm one of them again. (I wish Yvonne was among them, too, but not this year. We'll find out who wins at the CanVention, which is also Con*cept 1998 in Montreal. Want to come back to Montreal?) The nominee list is enclosed. My job hunt ... I now work for an engineering firm with publishing interests in downtown Toronto, but I have the Boss From Hell. I've been there four months now, and I'm still sending out resumes.

Greetings to Gene Stewart ... I think you've recently returned to the US from overseas. My royalties from being in Rob Sawyer's Illegal Alien is all the egoboo I can eat, and that's about it.

Interesting report on the LoneStarCon 2 fanzine lounge from Richard and Michelle ... wish I'd been there. This year's edition should also be some fun, I hope.

End of zine, end of paper, see you nextish!

Lloyd Penney

Mon, 03 Aug 1998

Dear Lisa -

Just got in the mail another copy of this excellent issue. I sent you an e-mail of comment the first time, and probably noted a COA to

Ned Brooks

It Goes On The Shelf

4817 Dean Lane
Lilburn GA 30047-4720

from the old address at 713 Paul Street, Newport News VA 23605.

While I am perturbing the ether, perhaps you can answer a question for me—was it NESFA or MITSFS that was microfilming the pulps? I have visited both web sites and find no mention of the project. A friend of mine wants a copy of Seabury Quinn's story *The Living Buddness* from the Nov'37 *Weird Tales*. I have a copy of that issue, but just having moved 50,000 lbs. of stuff here from Virginia, I have no idea when it will reappear.

Ned Brooks <nedbrooks@sprynet.com>

August 11, 1998

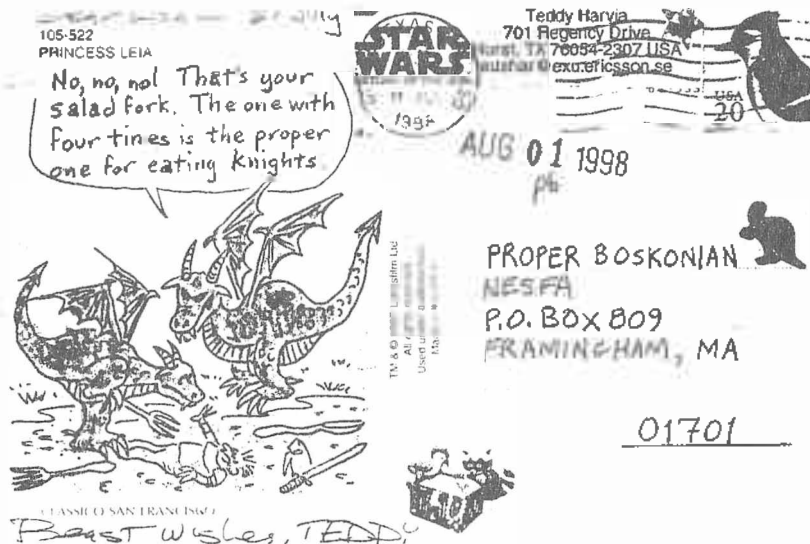
Dear Lisa,

Thanks for the issue #43 of the "Proper Boskonian." Looks great as always! Anyways, here's some filler art for future issues. Hope you can use them! Congratulations on your precious new little fan! I bet Liana Rebekah is adorable (her picture certainly is)!

Thanks again,

Patricia Pierce Phillips

PS. Would you have an address for "Mimosa." I've always heard about it but never seen an issue.



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