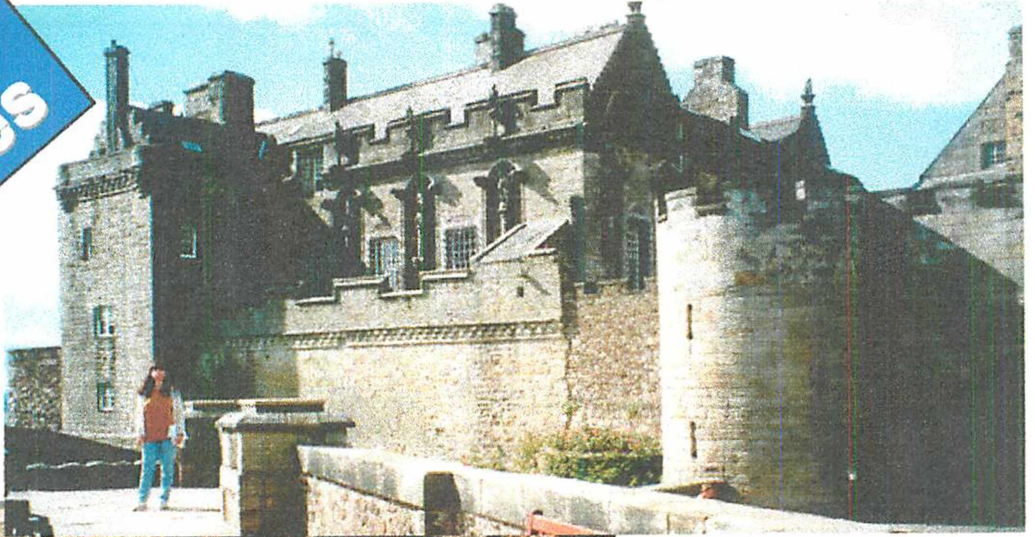


# SFSFS Shuttle 122

Nov., 1995

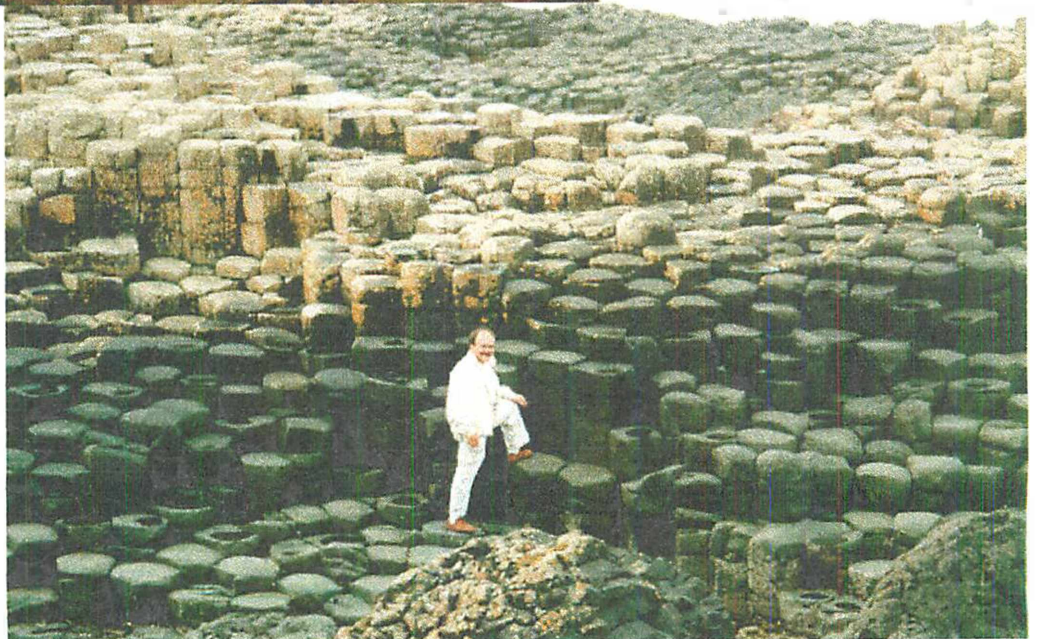
## Fannish Travelogues



Edie Stern at Stirling Castle



Edzell Castle garden where  
a wedding was taking place



Joe Siclari on the Giant's  
Causeway, Northern Ireland



## Shuttle 122 Cargo Manifest

### News!

#### Tooting our own horn department!

Edie and I are really thrilled to be Fan Guests of Honor at Minicon & at DeepSouthCon this coming April. As Edie says: "It's our 15 minutes of fame. Hope you won't let us be too lonely."

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Ask Joe about the FanHistory project. Anyone interested can get a copy of the project description for an SASE.

### SFSFS: and Tropicon on the World Wide Web.

Thanks to Nick Simicich.

<http://scifi.maid.com/sfsfs.html>

<http://scifi.maid.com/Tropicon.html>

### Shuttle Crew:

**Co-Editors:** Joe Siclari & Edie Stern

**Contributors:** Shirlene Ananayo, Peter Barker, Sheryl Birkhead, Dwight Douglas, Jan Howard Finder, George Flynn, Teddy Harvia, Judi Goodman, Jerry Kaufman, Fran Mullen, George Peterson, Carol Porter, Peter Rawlik, Dan Siclari, Joe Siclari, Nick Simicich, Edie Stern, James White

**Press Gang:** Edie Stern, Dan & Joe Siclari & anyone we can TomSawyer into helping.

**Art:**

Gail Bennett: SFSFS logo: 2, bacover

ATom: 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Shirlene Ananayo: 11, 24

Teddy Harvia: 33, 41, 45

Carol Porter: photos — 19 (4), 20

P. Craig Russell: 31

Joe Siclari: photos — cover (2), 20 (2)

Edie Stern: photos — cover, 20

Phil Tortorici: Shuttle logo: 3

Vess: 30

### Deadlines

Jan. Shuttle, #123, Sat., Dec. 16

Mar. Shuttle, #124, Sat., Feb. 24

### Editor

Porter (407)369-3251 & Santiago

Ananayo (407) 820-9083

Shuttle correspondence should be addressed to:

SFSFS Shuttle Editor

PO Box 70143

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143

### Club Officers:

**Chair:** Joe Siclari (407) 392-6462 (Boca Raton)

**Vice-Chair:** George Peterson (954) 524-1274 (Fort Lauderdale)

**Secretary:** Shirlene Ananayo (407) 820-9083 (West Palm Beach)

**Treasurer:** Peggy Ann Dolan (305) 532-8008 (Miami Beach)

For information about SFSFS call one of the Officers.

### Special Interest Leaders:

**Audio/Video Archive:** Judi Goodman (305) 385-1793

**Book Division:** Carlos Perez (305) 448-5152

**Book Discussion:** Edie Stern & Joe Siclari (407) 392-6462

**Creative Writing:** Peter Rawlik (407) 820-9083

**Library:** Cyndi Warmuth (954) 987-9905

**Media:** Ericka Perdw (407) 272-0156

### Conventions:

**Travelling Fete 4:** Melanie Herz; GoH: Jack C. Haldeman II

**Tropicon XIV:** Fran Mullen & Joe Siclari; GoH: James P. Hogan

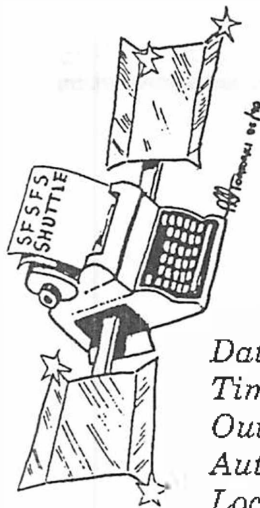
**Tropicon XV:** George Peterson; GoH: TBA at Tropicon XIV

## Renew your membership now!

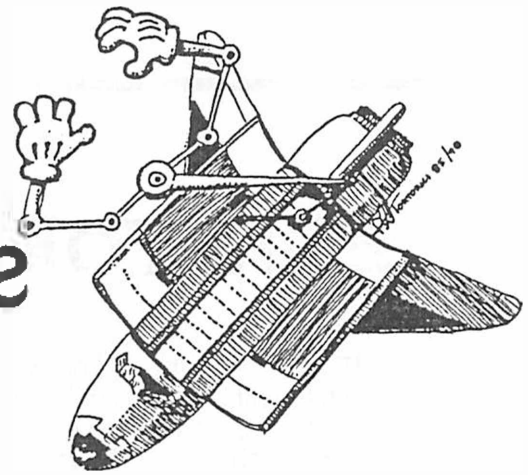
Send \$20 regular/voting or \$15 general membership dues to Peggy Dolan, 4427 Royal Palm Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140-3039. Make check out to SFSFS.

## The SFSFS Shuttle #122 — November, 1995

The South Florida Science Fiction Society is a Florida non-profit educational corporation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501 (c) (3). General membership is \$15 per year for adults, \$1 for children (see form at the back of the issue). Subscribing membership is \$12 per year. The views, reviews, and opinions expressed in the *SFSFS Shuttle* are those of the authors and artists and not necessarily those of the publishers. All knowledge is contained within the pages of fanzines.



# SFSFS Meeting Space



*Date:* Nov. 13, Saturday  
*Time:* 1:00 PM  
*Outing to:* **Miami Book Fair**  
*Authors:* Anne Rice and many others  
*Location:* Wolfson Campus,

Miami-Dade Community College, downtown Miami

We will meet at the Food Court area at 1:00 pm to hold elections and provide an update on our upcoming activities. The main activity will be to explore the Miami Book Fair. For those interested, Anne Rice will be autographing at 3:00 pm. Suggestion: buy all the book bargains you can afford. For new books that interest you, note the author and title or ISBN and purchase them at a discount through the SFSFS Book Division.

## SFSFS GENERAL MEETING RECAPS

The September General Meeting was held on the 16th at the Sawgrass Mills Mall Community Room. After a late start (due to the fact that the meeting space was difficult to locate and the BoD had to travel from Boca to the mall in a very brief period of time), Joseph Green participated in a wonderfully informative question and answer session about Apollo 13 and the NASA space program. SFSFS members voiced their recollections about Apollo 13, what they remembered and what they have read or heard about it since then.

Several announcements were made: future meetings, outings and the SFSFS home page. The most important announcement was the fact that Francine Mullen would be moving back to Oklahoma. There was to be a "Bon Voyage" party for Franny after the book discussion that evening. Somehow, the book discussion never happened as the party started early. If you're curious as to what happened at the Siclari/Stern residence, ask Judi Goodman if you can see "the video". <G>

The October General Meeting was held on the 21st at The Graves Museum of Archeology and Natural History. A brief business meeting was conducted before members were invited to explore the museum. Joe Siclari announced that fanzines and other clubs' publications would be made available for members to read at

future meetings. Of special importance, everyone was encouraged to get in touch with Carlos Perez if they wanted to order anything from the book division.

Partial listings of books in the SFSFS Library will be showing up in future *Shuttle* issues and members are encouraged/asked to write short comments on any of the books they have read, for the benefit of others who might be looking for a book to borrow and read from the library. Tropicon XIV members who have not joined or called in their hotel reservations were encouraged to do so right away. Anyone interested in ordering from small book presses was asked to contact Pete Rawlik.

The Nominating Committee announced that all current Board Members were willing to serve in their positions for another year. Anyone interested in running for a position on the Board (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer) needs to be nominated with a second at the November meeting, when elections for next year will be held.

The Vice Chairman asked that people willing to distribute flyers at specific locations (i.e. schools, universities, bookstores) sign up and/or let him know asap. The Chairman announced that quarter page size versions of the Tropicon flyer would be made available for future stuffing in books.

## EDIE-TORIAL

It's fall in Florida. The weather is approaching beautiful, and soon the snow-birds will be coming back. Late October should be a time for reflection, and a stockpiling of serenity to last the winter through. It helps to have a family situation that doesn't involve dozens of guests for the holidays.

Now that Dan's no longer young (hah- take that, kid!), Halloween isn't as much of a tumult as it used to be. When he was small, I worried at being a good mother. I tried to sew costumes, and goodie bags and do all the things for him that my mother could never do for me because she was working. I found out I'm a damn poor seamstress, and that plastic pumpkins work just as well as hand sewn black and orange drawstring bags when candy is involved. I don't think Dan minded too much. I hope.

I fondly recall my coworkers hamming it up, stirring large kettles in their front yards, and doing outtakes from Macbeth to great effect. Halloween decorations are much more fun than any other. My housekeeping is such that some years, we've enjoyed our Halloween spiderwebs until Passover. I've even tried performance art. One year, I dressed all in black, and sat near the front window playing spooky music at my keyboard. Boca kids must be fairly blasé as suburbanites go. All the trick or treaters ignored me completely, although they were very polite about the candy. It might have been my choice of spooky music. I'm short on Bach, and long on music from the movie version of *The Dunwich Horror*. And either the neighborhood is aging, or the kids don't like our version of Halloween goodies anymore. The numbers of trick or treaters have fallen off, and handing out coins instead of candy doesn't seem much appreciated.



A few days ago, I gave my 24 th pint to the Palm Beach Blood Bank. That makes it three gallons of blood that I've donated to them. I've given blood to other blood banks and conventions as well, over the years. I'm one of Heinlein's volunteers. When he started campaigning for fannish blood donations, with a handshake of acknowledgment for those that did, I rolled up my sleeve. Heinlein was a catalyst. I'm sure I'd have gotten around to it eventually, but RAH made procrastination an act of commission instead of omission. I'll never hit Hal Clement's record, but I am content thus far. We've set up a Heinlein Memorial account at the blood bank, and there will be a blood drive at Tropicon as usual. I'm eligible again in January. Consider being a belated Heinlein volunteer, and give a little back for those that need it.

Have a happy Thanksgiving. See you around the campus.



## Culture Shock — Joe's comments

I've been to 17 different countries, grew up in New York City, stayed in such culturally diverse cities as San Francisco, London, Miami and Vancouver. So I don't think I'm too culturally hidebound.

Recently, I was on a trip to Houston for a seminar on System One, the computer reservations system my travel agency uses. I have never run into such a tumult of cultural changes as I have during this week.

I left from Fort Lauderdale — itself a moderately cosmopolitan area with a wide ethnic mix: large numbers of Italian and Jewish retirees from NYC, increasing Hispanic and Black influence from Cuban and Haitian immigration, substantial input from relocated British, German, French Canadian and a variety of Caribbean islanders. The older native southern element has almost been buried amidst this mixture but it is still there.

But this trip has been an eye-opener. I had flashes of so many caricatures/personalities that the cultural stretch is just settling down.

On arriving at the Hotel Sofitel, I found the staff, especially the restaurant staff, trying to be just like the café waiters on the *Champs Elysee* — rude, arrogant and supercilious. Parisians have a bad rap with tourists and most of it comes from the restaurant staff. So the hotel did not endear itself to me.

It turned out that the hotel was overfull and I ended up with a roommate, Chuck. If I was prone to exaggeration, I could probably turn this guy into a *Reader's Digest* vignette. A real smooth talking southern good ole boy. Personal friend and political advisor to good old Newt. An Atlanta political hack who arranged travel as a sideline. Before the first evening was but half over, I found out why he was divorced twice and how another woman (a long time friend) had taken advantage of his weakened condition after his last divorce to take him to the cleaners again after he had taken care of her and her daughter while they were having a rough time. I think I learned more about his love life than I know about my own.

The first instructor was a real card — a naturally friendly person, nice and easy-going. No shock here. Then came "Hoss" — all 5 foot 2 of him. His favorite expression as he threw information randomly at us was "fighter pilots are crazy, but we're good!" While telling us how to use a specialized computerized tickler file, he kept illustrating it with personal examples from his little black book; it was about twice the size of the largest daytimer/organizer I have ever seen. Think he may have been trying to overcompensate for something?

Next to me during one class sat Jerri, a 68 year old great grandmother from the Tulsa area. Fran, I don't think you should use her as an agent. She couldn't remember two facts in a row — Gracie Allen made more sense during her radio heyday. One of the funniest incidents had fast-talking Hoss ripping through an 18 step shortcut to search for the first flight at a specific discounted fare to New Orleans during Mardi Gras. As he screamed: "Got it!" to all of us, Jerri asked him what city we were trying to go to.

• **Inner Beauty:** According to an October *Wall Street Journal* article, the number of bellybutton reconstructions in Japan went up 375 percent in the last year, in part because many Japanese have come to believe, as author Hogen Fukunaga writes, "The navel is the core of everything about the person." Said a Tokyo hospital president, "People want navels that aren't assertive." The perfect navel, surmised the *Journal* reporter, is "vertical, very narrow, and absolutely symmetrical." The navel is a popular theme in the Japanese language; for example, a favorite kids' insult is, "Your mother has an outie."

Behind me during the computer class were two Irishmen, Joe and Walter. They live in Boston and have been in the travel business for at least 8 years each. When the instructor suggested they might want to skip this class to go to a more advanced session, they declined. In an undertone, Joe said this would give them a breather and a chance to sample the Texan bars.

Next on the list were Mersinda and Meurice, a May and December couple who most people took to be father and daughter (or granddaughter). They were a Hispanic couple from Venezuela, I think, but now running their own travel agency in New York City. She got very upset when the instructor mistook Meurice for her father.

Jeff and Jim were typical college age guys out of town for the first time. They spent most of the classes recovering from being out with the Irishmen the night before. That is, when they could get away from the porcelain god long enough to attend. Joe and Walter had no problem with the evening bar outings — must have something to do with their heritage.

Cynthia was a real Southern Belle who expected to be waited on. She was particularly appealing one morning after a night of tequila boilermakers.

Diane was the biggest anomaly to me. A New York raised and educated black woman who moved to the heart of the south to be a travel agent. She worked with people who called her Honeybunch. And it drove her crazy, or so she said. There was a very straight-forward British agent, Sue. No nonsense, all work, then all play.

Nashville Debbie is next. At 41, she retained traces of why she was a country girl homecoming queen. Lived down the street from Reba McIntyre, I think, and about a dozen other county stars to hear her tell it. Montana native Renee seemed to be hunting young stuff and each day she had a different youngster panting around her.

During the session there was another large group of agents in Houston from Columbia, Venezuela and other parts of Latin America. Some of the "Americans" were a bit put out. Seemed the Americans thought that the American company, System One, should do their entire system in English, the "international language". I made the mistake of asking one complainer why the System run in Ecuador should be in English and if she

Continued on page 42

# THROUGH DARKEST BRITAIN — WITH GLASS & SONG

by Edie Stern

Intersection has come and gone and so has a gorgeous near month-long British vacation. With the Worldcon providing the excuse, we planned time in London, Scotland and Northern Ireland stretching from mid August until after Labor Day.

First stop was London. Four days there to sate Joe's bookstore loitering habits, and Dan's big city bias. We went to museums. We went to bookstores. I bought yarn. We went to the theatre. We had arranged to meet Priscilla and Mark Olson (from Boston. Mark was chair of Noreascon in 1989) in London, and stay at the same hotel. It was our first time trying to tour with fans, and was reasonably successful.

With five of us to satisfy, we split, combined and recombined into groups that were set on targets of special interest, while allowing the others to pursue something they found more to their liking. That way I was able to visit stores besides bookstores, and we spent a day in Greenwich.

Greenwich was delightful. We crawled over the Cutty Sark and the Maritime Museum. We happily took the stereotypical tourist pictures of each of us in turn straddling the prime meridian, and engaged in beer drinking, postcard buying, inquisitive gazing (very cool antique scientific instruments in the observatory), and generally unproductive and relaxing behavior.

Dan and Joe have a limited capacity for folk music, and so I hadn't attempted any of the London folk clubs. At the entrance to the Maritime Museum was a group of "buskers," singing sea chanteys to accordion accompaniment. When we finally got in to the Museum, we learned that the buskers were the featured

performers on site that day, and were to play in various spots around the grounds. We had a front row seat for about 20 minutes. Mark and I each bought one of their tapes.

*Lagniappe!*

I also bought bookmarks. In fact, I bought lots of bookmarks. I've collected leather bookmarks for years, especially the souvenir kind (with gilt line drawings of Glamis Castle or Mary, Queen of Scots or something on them). Bookmarks make nice memorabilia. They're small, they're useful, and they're not something other people frequently collect. I enjoy reading an unworthy book more if it has a worthy bookmark. I enjoy reading a worthy book too of course. I do wonder sometimes, if they all come from the same factory. There is a certain family resemblance. I'm glad to know there's enough of a market for them, presumably all readers or friends of readers, that it makes business sense to sell so many. The UK is particularly good for bookmarks. I'm using one from Leicester today.

London turned out to be particularly trying this time in one sense. Dan being 15 argued success-

fully to be let out on his own recognizance. London in the daytime is OK — he went to the Torture Museum, skipped the Victoria and Albert, and would have nothing to do with tea at Harrods. I hit my limit when he came home at 11:30 PM from a Jack the Ripper walking tour. I was practicing my speech for the missing person squad. ("No officer, I don't have a current picture. No officer, I don't know if he has the hotel address and phone number. No officer, I don't think he's carrying identification. No officer, I can't remember what clothes he's wearing.") Funny how you plan for success. Dan had money for a cab in case the tour left him far from a tube entrance, and a *London A-Z*. He did not have the kit I should have insisted on to prepare for being lost. As it turned out, all was well. The tour had run late. He came home straight away. The three brown hairs I had left turned gray. I'm not very good at teenagers; I think I have too much imagination. Perhaps I'll be a better grandmother. When I realize I'm being irrationally protective, I force Joe to make these hard child rearing decisions. It's not very fair to Joe, but probably more to Dan's liking.

One curious discovery I made was that Priscilla and I had been shopping at the same London perfumery for more than a decade. In the early 80's I had an assignment working with British Telecom in London, and spent about 4 months there in two week at a time chunks. I started using a carnation based perfume, *Malmaison*, produced by Floris. Supposedly it was a favorite of Napoleon's Empress Josephine. I like it — it's spicy and not at all subtle. The only Floris shop is a little storefront on Jermyn street, and so, since then, every time I've visited London, I make a pilgrimage and spend my money. Apparently Priscilla had discovered Floris about 5 years before I had, and was making the same pilgrimage. One morning, we lost the men, and went shopping. Unless there's a bit of a turnaround, it will be my last trip to Jermyn Street. The Floris folk say they are discontinuing *Malmaison*. Very disappointing.



From London, we flew to Edinburgh, and made arrangements to spend a few days there later in the week. Then we drove north. It turned out to be an eclectic drive-too-much, folk song, distillery and castle hopping tour of Scotland.

Our first stop was Kirriemuir, not only the birthplace of JM Barrie, but also the locale of the oldest dirty folksong I know. In the course of our travel, we visited other folksong locations, including Glencoe, Dundee (well, near Dundee), Bothwell Castle and others. Glencoe's song features the famous massacre of the MacDonalds by the Campbells. Dundee's song features a woman being burned at the stake for bearing the child of an Englishman. Bothwell Castle's song is about being ruined now rather than inhabited. Kirriemuir's song (also sung with Ballynoor) has more to do with orgies.

The castles were really more our objective than the distilleries. We visited furnished castles, ruined castles, and most stages in between. We'd bought a British Heritage pass, and it allowed us free entry into many historical sights. We had a grand time. Dan prefers the ruined castles. He likes to climb over the jumbled rocks, and walk the outlines of the walls and figure out what was where.

We found one ruined castle, Edzell, with a perfectly maintained walled garden. In fact, as we came around the walls, there was a formal wedding in progress. The groom was kilted, the bride wore white, and they took their vows in the center of the garden. On the walls, there were carvings of virtues, sins, and disciplines (grammar, arithmetic, geometry, rhetoric, etc.). The garden itself was very symmetrical, and was enclosed with borders of 18 inch high hedges that had been cut or trained into letters. They spelled out the family motto, in Latin. It was comforting to find that there was loving use being made of the site. I wonder who was in the bridal party, and whether it was in any sense held in an ancestral home. (See cover photo.)

Along with castles, we also sought out Pictish carved stones, Neolithic stone circles and other antiquities. Curiously, we found many in



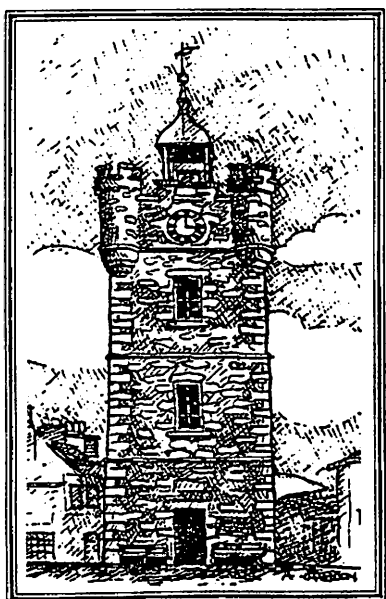
churchyards. My early exposure to Western Hemisphere history made me quite surprised at this. I expect Christian religions to do what the Catholic priests did to the *Maya Codex*. I did not expect to find pre-Christian relics well respected and carefully maintained in isolated country churchyards.

The number of ancient sites and artifacts left me feeling woefully bereft of my own history. My parents immigrated to the US in 1948. Somehow, while I have an emotional attachment to American history, I've never have felt that it's completely my history. This can be handy — I don't have to feel in the least bit guilty for settler-Indian relations, or for slavery. Even established American history seems very short. There's no such feeling of antiquity as you get touching a recumbent stone circle in a Scottish kirkyard. I wonder if this historyless feeling is due to recent family immigration. I talked to a couple of other American fans over for the convention and they both had a similar feeling. Whatever the reason, I particularly like to seek out the old places. Luckily, Joe and Dan are willing.

Welcome to

## Dufftown

The Malt Whisky Capital



The Glenfiddich Distillery, owned and managed by the Grant family for five generations.

Distilleries were fun. I have a book of single malt scotches, and I keep notes in it on which ones I've tasted. You'd have sworn that Joe was trying to get me drunk. He delighted in finding me new entries. When we found a pub or restaurant that specialized in the single malts, Joe took a vicarious thrill in watching me note down the new ones I'd tried. Single malts seem to have become quite a tourist attraction. At the shops, I noticed lots of labels that seem to have been made exclusively for the tourist trade, including clan designations and so on. It's hard to tell which ones are real.

British bitter was another well-remembered pleasure. Joe and I both swilled bitter as much as possible, enjoying it far more than American beer. Dan had been very curious about the legal drinking age in Great Britain. It's 18, but the pubs don't seem to enforce it tightly. Of course, Dan looks older than he is, and could pass for 18. He tasted a little of most things, but wasn't very interested in drinking a whole glass. He is a bitter fan as well. We visited the *Dallas Dhu* and *Glenfiddich* distilleries in Scotland (and later the *Bushmill* distillery in Ireland). We came, we looked, I drank.

We never made it to the real North. Inverness was as far as we got. I want to go back. I love the countryside, perhaps because it's so different from Florida. Mountains, deepwater lochs, brisk weather, heather, and people who speak like my Child Ballad records. I understand that the burr produces very strong tongue muscles. Is that an urban legend? It's supposed to make the men very desirable lovers. It's probably a legend started by a Scotsman.

We traveled from Inverness down the west side of Loch Ness, stopping at Castle Urquhart. The Castle is a commanding presence on the lake, and was intentionally destroyed in part by the English in the 1700s (1600s?) to prevent it being used against them. It's still beautiful, and somewhat haunting as it stands ruined sentinel over the loch. Very atmospheric. I love this shit.

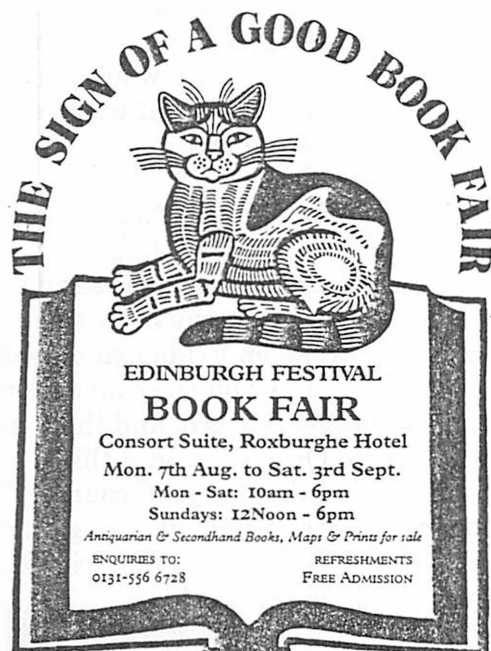
Edinburgh was a treat. The yearly festival is one of the largest in the world, and was in full swing when we arrived. We barely missed the largest massed pipe band ever. We were told it had about 2000 pipers. I regret having missed that. Joe and Dan are thankful. We did go to the *Tattoo*, the main event of the festival, held on the esplanade of Edinburgh castle. The *Tattoo* allows ten or fifteen thousand tourists sitting in bleachers to watch a few hours of military bands, most emphatically including pipers. We expected pipes and drums. We expected pseudo-historical pageantry. What we did not expect was the Egyptian Military Pipe Band, dressed in white (with King Tut head-dresses and sandals), dragging a pseudo Ramses in a chariot, and playing Sousa music with bagpipes. It was very bizarre, and made no less so by the side to side sway step the Egyp-



tian pipers used as they marched. In all, the music was stirring and the pipes were splendid. It was also the first time of many during our few days in Edinburgh where we had the opportunity to watch Japanese tourists react to the VJ Day buildup and speeches.

VJ day was a big event in Britain. In Edinburgh, there were large screens set up on Princes Street to carry the speeches at the castle. There were stirring patriotic talks, and World War II footage and many elderly gentlemen with battle ribbons in formal kilts on the street. I watched the German and Japanese tourists melt away when these things started. Were they displaying excellent manners, or did they think they were in danger?

We only spent a few days in Edinburgh, but managed a walking tour of the city. The guide made a big point of describing how filthy and stinky it had been (*Auld Reekie*), and told the tour about "Gardyloo" and what it meant. For those of you that don't know, *Gardyloo* is the name of a terrific Lee Hoffman folk music fanzine of the 50's. It's also what Edinburgh housewives would yell when they emptied their slop jars from the upper story windows out into the public street. Translation: "Garde de l'eau" or "look out for the (ahem) water."

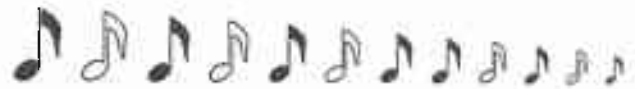


ORGANISED BY PROVINCIAL BOOKSELLERS FAIRS ASSOCIATION  
The Old Coach House, 16 Melbourn Street, Royston, Herts, SG8 7BZ

The walking tours were fun; we ended up in a graveyard at midnight next to the grave of Robert Burns' girlfriend. The tour guide told one proper ghost story, and for the rest of the tour recounted particularly brutal tortures and history.

The ghost story was about finding the secret exit and tunnel from Edinburgh castle. There had been rumors for a hundred years that one existed and the tunnel figured in the stories of Mary, Queen of Scots. The entrance was finally discovered by accident. The castle was being used as a garrison, rather than a residence. One night at a party, the soldiers discovered the entrance. They were ingenious, if drunk and figured out how to tell where the tunnel went. They persuaded a piper to go into the tunnel, and pipe as he went, knowing they'd be able to hear the sound from the street above. The soldiers, up in the street, followed the sound of the piping below, all the way down the street to Hollyroodhouse. But they couldn't figure out where the entrance there was. They lost the sound of the piper, and figured he'd become tired or had gone back. The piper never came out of the tunnel and was never seen again. The soldiers told the commander what had happened, and he sent a party of soldiers properly provisioned with torches and such into the

tunnel to look for the piper. The tunnel dead-ended in the middle of the Royal Mile, about half a mile away from Hollyroodhouse.



Intersection and Glasgow were fine. Fans were fans, and so the convention had bouts of organization mixed with absolute anarchy. A disappointment to Joe and to me was that the fanzine fans were woefully underrepresented. It was a pricey convention, with expensive accommodation. Many fanzine fans simply didn't go. They'd also apparently been shouldered out of the arrangements, out of some bizarre expectation that since they had run the last British Worldcon, which had its share of screwups, American fans might not vote for Glasgow if they knew the same crowd was associated with it. We tried to tell them that was bullshit. Americans will vote for almost any British worldcon, as long as it is a few years at least since the last one. We did miss some friends, but were happy to find others there.

It was a delight to see Vince Clarke made much of, as Fan Guest of Honor. He has been doing noble work, running his lending/copying library for new fans trying to get reading copies of old fanzines. I guess that's been going on for about 15 years. His former fannish life would have qualified him for Fan GoH in itself without even counting anything past the 50s.

One big upset was John Brunner's death, at con. I checked him into Program Registration on Thursday. He apparently had a great day, and partied into the night at the SFWA suite. He had a massive stroke on Friday, and died on Saturday. It cast a shadow on the convention. He had been a very popular pro, and the committee was in shock. On reflection, I think I would not mind dying that way. Of course, I'd like to be nearer 100 than 60, but, going quickly like that, at a convention and among friends, isn't the worst thing in the world.

The city of Glasgow was a fine host. They stood us to a cocktail party in the convention center

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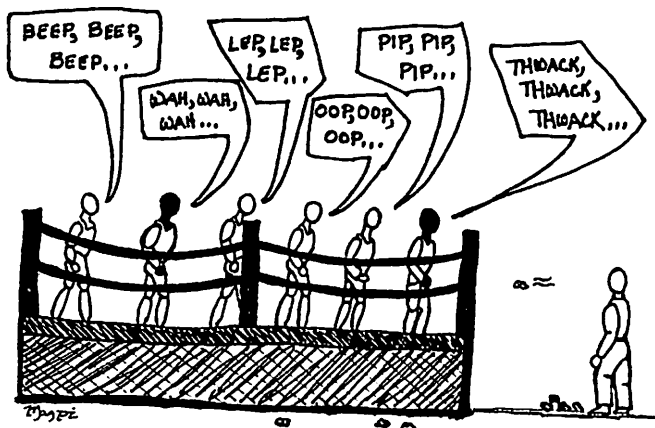
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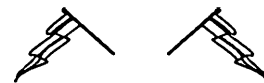
that featured wine and single malt scotch. The Americans were very appreciative, especially the part about the scotch. As usual, the convention was a bit of a blur, with only vignettes remaining in high relief. We worked some shifts to help out. Dan did a fair number, and earned a volunteer shirt. He's done that for several worldcons now. We did some planning for LACon. We spent some time with Geri Sullivan finding out what our responsibilities will be for Minicon. (Joe and I are fan GoHs at Minicon next year. DeepSouthCon too. April 96 is our 15 minutes in the spotlight.)

A curious moment came as we tried to figure out what a bunch of generation Xers was doing on a small stage set in the middle of the convention center. It was midafternoon, things were quiet, and they were doing some stiff-legged line dancing kind of thing on the stage, making odd noises, and then jumping off. On observation, Joe had it. They were doing human space invaders. They were imitating the video game, and as players hit them with paper wads, they were "destroyed" and came off the stage. It went from incomprehensible to pretty funny in 10 seconds. It was a one joke affair, but must have felt great because they all did it again.

Best of all in the convention center were the bouncy castles. These are large air inflated balloon affairs, usually populated by kids jumping up and down and bouncing themselves to exhaustion. Rarely do they allow full size adults to use them. This time, the castle being run to publicize the Boston in '98 bid, did allow grownups. Well, Joe and I didn't bounce.



However...towards the end of the convention, we were smocking in a corner, when Joe observed Jack Speer taking off his shoes. Sure that we'd soon have a broken piece of First Fandom all over the convention concrete floor, we all watched. At first, the castle won. Jack was bounced off. He managed to keep his balance, and soon was bouncing like crazy, with a maniacal grin, in the center of the castle. I wanted to applaud. He defied gravity for about 15 minutes, and got off without incident. Joe, Mark Olson and I were puffed up with delight. What a role model. I want to grow up to be like Jack Speer and take joy from life past anybody's expectation of what's proper.



Tuesday morning after the close of the convention, we took Dan to the airport and put him on a plane home. Well, we put him on a plane from Glasgow to Manchester so he could catch a plane to Atlanta and then one to home. We thought Manchester ought to be a moderate airport, and Dan is a pretty sophisticated traveler. His flight was a few minutes late, and luckily, airport security had allowed me to the gate with him. I inadvertently cursed him with crying babies (he had one nearby for the next 10 hours), and off he went. Joe called the airline (about every hour), until we established that Dan was on the flight headed for Atlanta. We breathed a sigh of relief and left the hotel. What we learned later was that 1) Manchester Airport is huge. Dan had to take a bus to another terminal. He was able for it — I said he was a sophisticated traveler, and 2) Joe had told the wrong landing time in Fort Lauderdale to



his aunt and uncle, and they ended up spending 4 hours at the airport waiting. They were not amused. Luckily, it was a week later before they caught up with us.

Once Dan was on his way, we headed out back towards Stirling, by way of Bothwell Castle. We were ready for a slower pace with more time for walking and rose smelling. We stayed in Stirling for two nights, and used it as a base. Joe found a bookstore he well liked, and in it I eavesdropped on local experts talking about *Rob Roy* and *Braveheart*. *Braveheart* was centered around Stirling, and in fact had the European premiere there several days after we left. (We missed seeing Mel Gibson.) (See photo of Stirling Castle on cover.)

Our goal was to eventually head for Stranraer, a point where ferries ply the route between Scotland and Larne (near Belfast). We had about four days to make it. As you might expect, it wasn't nearly enough. We kept falling into things we very much wanted to do. One of them was to trace what was left of the Antonine Wall, a Roman earthwork loosely contemporary with Hadrian's Wall (OK — I'm not much of a historian), that stretched from about Edinburgh to about Glasgow. That's the narrowest part of Scotland. It's earthworks mostly; the forts are gone. But the ridges and ditches show the hand of man after 2000 years, and give off that odor of antiquity. It boggles me to contemplate it. The wall was manned for about 35 years, in the midst of a not-too-friendly countryside. I wonder if the earthworks are so elaborate because the centurions had to find *something* for the men to do. It must have been lousy duty. As I said, I'm not much of a historian. What it brings to mind for me are snippets of Kipling, and other wall stories. We walked the sites that were best preserved, and tried not to disturb the farms nearby.

We skipped much of what we wanted to see, leaving it for another time. We walked through Dumfries at sunset, and missed the museums dedicated to Robert Burns. We drove past castles, somewhat wistfully, and promised ourselves another go some year. We spent a

good while driving by the sea, and stopping to enjoy the views. Not being the one at the wheel, I enjoyed it more than Joe. Actually, we were driving too much again, never quite connecting the fact that even if one inch equals 10 miles, the quality of the road does affect the driving time. Joe did all the driving. We had planned to share it, but the cost of the rental car would have increased by about \$100 had we listed both of us as drivers.

Roads in Scotland come in all sizes, including the two-way roads barely wide enough for 1 and 1/2 cars. These seem to be heavily frequented by trucks. The first time we were faced with an enormous truck barreling towards us on a road boxed in by stone fences, and not enough room to comfortably slide by, I figured I would acknowledge the problem so we all didn't have to pretend it was OK. I closed my eyes and yelled, "Challenge!". I yelled out "Challenge" a lot that month. When we got back to Florida, Joe started telling that story, but adding that the first time I yelled it out, he almost wrecked the car. Maybe he thought I wanted him to play chicken?



The ferry to Larne was peaceful and pleasant. It did emphasize the difference in the smoking laws, with far too much ambient atmosphere. We had a lot of luggage and felt like overstuffed tourists. We were, so that was all right. Larne is about 30 miles from Belfast. We rented our car, and drove out through the afternoon. Our objective was Donaghadee and a visit with Walter and Madeleine Willis. We always seem to approach big cities at either rush hour, or from due east at sundown. Joe's entire image of Glasgow from the highway must be one of strong squints and bright lights. Belfast was no exception to this rule.

Donaghadee is about 10 miles or so past Belfast. The suburbs seemed very much like suburbs anywhere. But the barbed wire is still there, and very telling. Some of the finer developments seem to have been looking for decorative ways to twist the wire so it would look a more elegant accompaniment to the high walls.

I cannot conceive of living 25 years under intermittent siege. I visited Israel in the mid 70s, and listened to a cousin talk about raising children under this kind of siege. It was making the whole country crazy. Northern Ireland must have a similar intestinal knot.

We took an alternate route from Bangor to Donaghadee (*ie* we almost got lost). When we found the center of the village, we were subsumed into a parade. A policeman waved us to the side, and an unexpected parade came marching up the street, complete with folks collecting for some good cause at the edges. It was unexpected, and slightly outré. We contributed, and I still don't know for what. I've never been in a parade before.

We found the Willis home, based on Geri Sullivan's description of how to get there. The description included landmarks that used to be there, but were now gone. Walt made a landmark of himself, and stood in the yard to make sure we'd find them. He had arranged accommodations for us at a B&B a block away, and within sight of the sea. Walt and Madeleine have a lovely house with a fabulous view. In the US, it would be like living on A1A in South Florida, but without the high rise condominiums to spoil the view. It was grand to sit and talk and see them again, and a great treat to be able to do it in Ireland.

Next day, Walt played native guide. We toured the local sights, including Scrabo Tower, which was the model for the Tower of Trufandom. It's an imposing Victorian erection, tall and lonely indeed on the hilltop. Joe and I made pilgrimage, and have photos of each of us in turn hugging the tower base, looking small and insignificant. Best of all for me were the Neolithic bits. In out of the way places, marked and unmarked, Walt took us to sites that dated back thousands of years. It makes one introspective. I wonder how our species would rank in galactic achievement. Are we slow learners? Or are we very bright to have come from the Giant's Ring stone circle to the Discovery shuttle in just a few thousand years. Walt is an excellent guide.

At day's end, Madeleine treated us to a delicious dinner, and we all sat by the fireplace and talked. Had we not distracted her, I'm sure Madeleine would have taken the cup at the Lady Golf Captains' Tournament.

We drove next to Portstewart to visit James and Peggy White. The drive up was absolutely gorgeous. We drove the coast road from Donaghadee, all the way up. The coast is beautiful, with cliff faces, rocky headlands, mysterious islands, the occasional ruined castle, and small village. Next trip, I'll have to do all the driving, and let Joe see where he is. I'm afraid I bumbled enthusiastically about it all as he was negotiating hairpin turns and wondering where exactly the road had gotten to.

We had a fine visit with the Whites and managed to go over some LACon business too. Joe and I are working on the convention center area, and trying to construct some Sector General interest within it. It would be very easy to overreach; some of our plans smack of hubris. But if we can bring it off...

Monday morning we headed back towards Belfast. First stop was Dunluce Castle, a ruined fortification on the sea. When we arrived, we were disappointed to see signage proclaiming that the castle would be closed on Mondays beginning in September. We decided to walk the grounds even if we couldn't get into the castle proper. The grounds were unique in our limited castle hopping experience. There was a deep ravine between two parts of the castle, and a cave under the seaside portion, leading naturally to the sea. The view of the headland as we descended into the ravine was gorgeous, with nesting birds on small ledges, amidst an aura of splendid solitude and austere barrenness. Of course, when you're from the semi-tropics, a lot of the northern coast looks a little barren.

In the US, lots of the best bits would have been walled away as unsafe for tourists. They were, but we crawled and climbed and checked it out anyway. Dan wasn't there, so we weren't setting a bad example. I like being my own conscience (or is that safety officer?).



People infiltrated our ravine, and when we climbed back up, the castle gates were being opened. Apparently the signage was premature, or simply ignored, and the castle was opening for business. We gave ourselves a brochure guided tour, and marveled at how quickly stone and wood can crumble. Dunluce had been too arrogant in its prime; during a storm some hundreds of years ago, the sea took back the kitchen (and the dozen servants that were in it at the time).

Near Portstewart is one of the wonders of the world. The Giant's Causeway is one of the most fascinating natural formations I've ever seen (see photo on cover). It's volcanic and is constructed seemingly of hexagonal basalt pillars. They seem to wear evenly, and form walkable steps and platforms. For all the world, they look like pavers laid down to form a walkway. Legend has it that the Causeway was built by the giant Finn MacCool to connect Ireland and Scotland. He wanted to fight a Scottish giant (whose name I can't recall), but when he spied how big he was, Finn fled back to Ireland. His wife had the answer. She bade him lie in an enormous cradle, and was rocking him when the Scottish giant appeared. The giant figured that if this large creature was but the child, then MacCool must be *really* big, and escaped back to Scotland, destroying the causeway to prevent MacCool from following. So today, the causeway extends only a little way into the waves.

The Causeway has been a tourist attraction for hundreds of years. There are old timey photographs in the visitor center that show Victorian era tourists (who don't look as if they are having a very good time) sitting on the rocks of the causeway. While we were clambering over the pillars and rocks, a group of Irish schoolchildren were let loose on the site. We were sensibly dressed in jeans, sweaters, and shoes with sure-grip soles. The poor kids were in school uniforms including blazers and ties, dress trousers or skirts, and in some cases, proper leather dress shoes. They managed to have a great time anyway if the side comments, races, and general mayhem were any indication.

The causeway is very impressive. Perhaps because we spend our lives trying to reverse entropy, there's something particularly appealing about a natural, inherently chaotic formation that seems to go along with us and create order. The contrast with a none too ordered sea is pleasing as well. Given a choice, I prefer the legendary origin story to the scientific one. Good thing there are no tests for consistency in adult life.

We took the central route back to Belfast, and were there in an hour or so. Our B&B for the night was in Bangor, about 10 miles from the airport. Our B&B was on a hill, with a beautiful view that reached to the sea. We had a lovely large room, with enough space to lay out all our cases. It only took a few quotes from *Glory Road* (remember the foldbox with more room on the inside than on the outside?) to convince all our belongings to fit. One of the least compressible items was the yarn. I had bought skeins and skeins. I may be knitting it up until the next British worldcon.

Everyone has two kinds of luck. There's "large" luck, for health, prosperity and making good choices. There's "small" luck, for finding coins on the ground, making the right turns, and not breaking fingernails. All of our small luck had saved itself for the return journey home. Unfortunately, it was bad.

I fell down half a flight of stairs at the B&B, resulting in a very tender behind. I lost a contact lens on the plane between Belfast and Manchester. I slipped and bruised a shin on the airport bus in Manchester. I broke a knitting needle between Manchester and Atlanta; my sweater won't be quite the same I'm afraid. Joe was in the full flower of a Scottish-Irish headcold, and majored in Sudafed and throat lozenges all the way to Fort Lauderdale. However, the gods were still smiling on us. We were upgraded to business class. The flights were fine, and on time. Best of all, we survived with all eardrums intact.

One of the benefits of fandom is the impetus it gives us to travel to interesting places and do

*Continued on page 18*

# The Bloody Side of London

by  
Daniel  
Siclari

This was our summer for touring Britain. Usually our family stays together during vacation, but this year London was different.

While my parents were shopping or going to art museums I was on my own, seeing a different side of town. I was able to do this without my parents because I had a subway pass. If you have a subway pass, you can go practically anywhere you want in London. You can even go on late night walking tours.

The Jack the Ripper tour started around seven o'clock at night. It started right near the Tower of London. The tour cost five pounds which is equivalent to seven and a half American dollars. The tour went through old and new London. We walked to every one of the murder sites except one. The one we were not able to visit was because it was in an apartment complex and people were living there. But we walked right under the window. The tour guide took us to a piece of the old city wall. For parts of the tour we had to stay close together because we weren't in the greatest sections of town.

Our tour guide was an expert on the Jack the Ripper case. The tour guide (whose name escapes me) had written a book on the serial killer. In addition, he helped write a couple of other books. I didn't buy his book because it was about \$15.00 for a paperback. It was not even a trade paperback.

Close to the end of the tour we stopped at a pub to take a break. The pub was *The Seven Bells*. It was known that the murdered prostitutes used to go to the pub. Inside of the Seven Bells there is Jack the Ripper memorabilia all over the place. In fact, the pub has turned more into a Jack the Ripper tourist attraction than anything else. The tour guide sold his book there. I was looking at other Jack the Ripper walking tour brochures before I went and every one of them had the Seven Bells pub as a stop.

Now here are some interesting Jack the Ripper tidbits. I think there are four main reasons why Jack the Ripper was never caught. Number one – all the victims were alcoholic whores. No one really cared if they were killed off. Number two – the bobbies did not know about fingerprints back then. Number three also has to do with criminal science. They didn't know about different types of blood. The tour guide said that bobbies couldn't even tell the difference between animal and human blood. The only way criminals were caught was if they were caught in the act. The last reason I don't think Jack the Ripper was caught was that the two precincts that were working on the case didn't work together. The two precincts that were working on the case were the London police and the police on the other side of the wall. For example, on one night Jack the Ripper killed two girls. One of the killings was in London and the other one was on the other side of the wall.

After the tour I was going to meet my parents back at the hotel for dinner at 10:00 PM. Unfortunately the tour ran real late, over an hour. The tour ran late enough that the underground wasn't running very many trains. By the time I got home my mom was practically crawling out the window.

Overall, I enjoyed the tour immensely.



# Never In the Morning

## Intersection Through a Bleary Eye

— Nick Simicich

Deb and I flew directly from Miami International, via Heathrow, to Glasgow airport. We took the red eye, and managed only a small bit of sleep aboard the flight.

We can easily describe our first two days at the con in two simple, short words: Jet Lag. Yes, we had a classic case of the dreaded jet lag. Up most of the night, slept during the day, and went out at night. After a while, we quit ascribing it to jet lag and began ascribing it to pure laziness. Because, after all, isn't that what you do at cons?

Programing at Intersection seemed to be a bit light for a Worldcon. It ended early, and we thus seemed to miss much of it. The laziness factor, y'know.

The media Guest of Honor was Gerry Anderson. We saw his evening presentation on Friday night. Gerry created such 'classics' as *Stingray*, *Thunderbirds*, and *Space 1999*. Currently on late night TV in the US is his *Space Precinct*. Deb and I sat through the interviews about his early years, as he explained how he would cut his budget to the minimum he thought necessary to create a quality product, whereupon he would be told he had to cut it in half again, and would only manage to cut a third off of it. We could not help but draw parallels to the career of Ed Wood, perhaps minus the cross dressing. Gerry's emphasis was always on quantity, not quality, as he produced masses of puppet shows, first with marionettes, and later with glove puppets, and finally with live action. The live action looked a lot like the puppets, in that he seemed to cast people who had heads that were too large for their bodies. In fact, the scripts

seemed similar. He talked about his first production which he admitted that he was ashamed of and his next production which he was more proud of. I couldn't tell the difference myself.

The term "Supermarionation" was coined by Gerry to describe the process of filming puppets with a lot of rear projection and miniature staging, mostly to make what he did seem more important than just puppeteering. He admitted to having to have explained that term every day of his life since it was coined.

The British parties seem to be a bit more sedate than those that we see in the US. British Worldcons seem to not arrange corkage (or at least they have more trouble squeezing it out of the hotels), so parties are expensive or impossible to stock unless you plan on spending an enormous amount on them. Sort of like the last Worldcon in Boston. Various rumors abounded, but it seemed that the corkage rule was enforced spottily at best. The Central enforced it, according to the con Newsletter. Typically, the parties either have to plan on buying everything from the hotel or they have to arrange their own corkage. Boston served a lot of French beer, some German beer, and very little Sam Adams. Baltimore served Rum and Coke, and crab chowder. Atlanta's big hit was hard cider, which they served in wine glasses rather than the British style pints and half pints, but you could go back.

Also, apparently to save on money, three of the four bid parties were in the same large room, a hotel function room rather than the more traditional multi-room suite, with waist-high



dividers between the spaces. Conveniences such as having the smoking area in the parties' joint foyer put everyone on an equal basis.

There was no 'con suite'. It isn't clear that there was a good place to have one, but there was a sort of 'fan lounge' in the convention center. It wasn't open at night and in any case it wasn't where the evening programming was, or the parties. Food was available for purchase, at fairly high prices.

Internet access was available, through three terminals supplied by a local provider, GPI. The connection was via Northern Ireland, and I found that I typically got better response to my computer back in the States than the folks going to England or Germany did.

Open parties did not abound. We saw only a few on Friday, run by those who were bidding, and they were mostly overcrowded. There were the usual furry and alt.sex.bondage parties. Zagreb in '93 now seems to be Zagreb in 1999, and couldn't seem to get it together to hold an official party on Friday. (They finally did Saturday night).

John Brunner died during the con. He arrived, attended some panels, had a massive stroke on Friday morning, and died Saturday afternoon. He will be missed. Bob Silverberg spoke in his memory at the Hugos. He had been a close friend of John Brunner's, and spoke candidly about John's life, and the ups and downs therein. Instead of a moment of silence, he asked the audience for a last standing ovation. It lasted several minutes and was the most enthusiastic applause delivered during the Hugos.

Baltimore won the 1998 worldcon bid with 812 first place votes. Their next nearest rival was Boston with 324. They got a large lead from mail-in votes. They allowed conversions to attending only at the highest possible rate allowed by the by-laws: \$50. It will go up real soon. Well, to quote the con flyer, they said they were pirates...

Non-North Americans (perhaps non English

speakers) do not seem to be familiar with Oreos sandwich cookies. If they have read the term in recent English writing, they will know it as a derogatory term for a black who does not act black enough but probably won't associate it with a type of cookie, nor will they know the origin of the term. At the Chicago in 2000 party, they were well stocked with Costco sized boxes of Oreos, but non North Americans seemed to not like them that much. I can't imagine how they would not develop an instant taste for lard and sugar which was vaguely burnt chocolate flavored. In any case, Oreo eating demonstrations ("A kid'll eat the middle of an Oreo first, and leave the chocolate cookie outside for last") were not infrequent.

Hall costumes the night of the masquerade were so-so at best. There was one boy dressed as a sexy female cat who managed to get his photo on the local news.

The masquerade started on time. We typically don't attend masquerades in the US, but have attended overseas ones. In this case, though, there was a science panel we wanted to attend up against the masquerade, so we went there. Panels not starting on time seemed to be almost the rule. We met a couple of program participants who were waiting for cancelled program items at the beginning of their program slots, and lots of fans who showed up for things that just didn't happen, or that were put off for 30 minutes without warning. Four of the panel rooms were in one large hall with seven foot tall barriers between the panel areas. You could typically hear all four sound systems, and had to concentrate to hear the one that was in the room you were in. Occasionally, moderators would up the volume in their room which resulted in a sort of escalating volume war. Well, there was no sound system at all in this particular room on Thursday, so perhaps this was an improvement?

Parties on Saturday night were a bit more interesting. The party hotel seemed to pretty much change from the Forte Crest (where parties were semi-catered) to the Central (an older hotel, both a bit more elegant and run

down at the same time). Again, there was a party floor, and fan parties were held in hotel provided function space, but either the con had arranged corkage or the hotel was looking the other way. Somehow, were this the plan, it would have been nice if the announcement had been made officially.

Downtown Glasgow was not the safest place to walk through at night. People were advised to cab it or walk in groups. Cabs were cheap — typically 2 pounds from the convention center to a hotel or between hotels — and usually available. They could be shared with up to five people for a slight additional charge. Cabbies were honest, always took you the shortest way, and gave good advice. Food costs varied. The cheapest places were streetside take-away joints. The only problem we had getting a cab was at the Central on Saturday night where the wait was 20-40 minutes, longer than the walk, even for us.

The Hugos, well, what worldcon would be complete without them? :-) In this case, except for the typical glaring technical errors, they were pretty well run. Each award presenter was given two awards to present, saving a bit of time. David Kyle was apparently told in no uncertain terms that he had but a limited time to speak and if he went on for too long he would get the hook. The committee wisely chose to return to the traditional set of awards: The Japanese National convention awards to works originally in a foreign language, the First Fandom and Big Heart awards, the John W. Campbell award, and the Hugos. I've previously

written on my feelings about awards that are not open to those of any race, creed, color, or sex without regard for anything but merit in a different venue. Suffice it to say that I'm glad that the presentation was shortened to its older list of awards.

Perhaps the biggest news of the Hugos was that *Interzone* won for best semi-prozine and someone other than Michael Whelan won for best artist. Oh, well, the convention was quite Brit heavy....

Then, of course, there was Monday. Monday was the day that we flew to Gatwick and picked up our rental car, and drove it back to Glasgow. This basically took all day, driving the British motorways, and we got back just in time to mourn the dog. We missed the closing ceremonies, but that was only fair because we also missed the opening ceremonies, so everything was in balance.

After attempting to find all three hotels on the drive back, we developed new respect for the Glasgow cabdrivers who made it seem like Glasgow really wasn't a maze of one way streets all designed to make sure that you can't drive via the shortest path to where you want to go.

Final attendance figures: 4800 formally warm bodies, 3600 pre-registered, full attending, 750 day walk-ins, 150 full attending walk-ins, 150 visitors, 150 conversions and transfers. Total membership including no-shows and supporting members just exceeded 7000.

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Continued from page 14

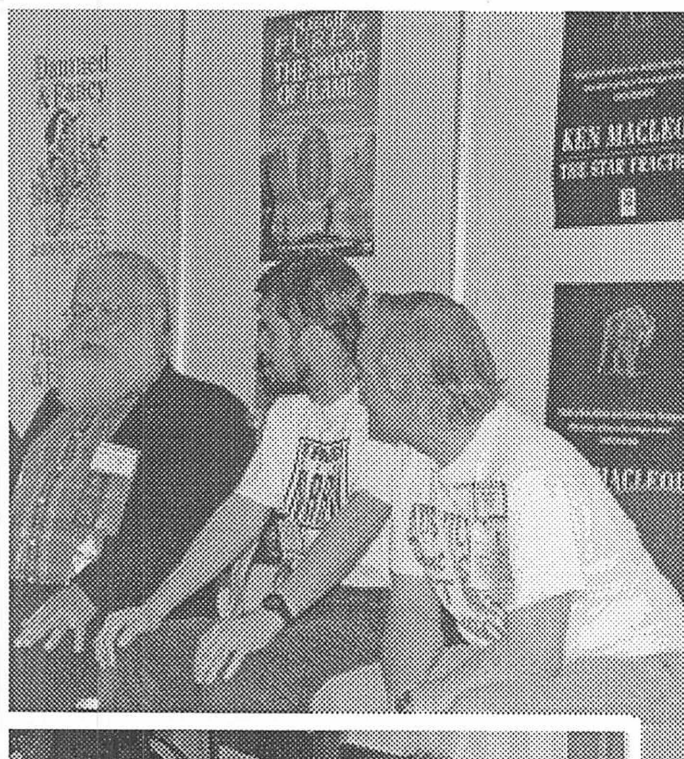
interesting things. Sometimes we travel without any fannish connection, although it's been a rarity. I'm beginning to think that there are so many fannish hooks out there waiting to drag you in, that there may be enough vacation and celebration to be had as an embellishment to the SF field. It's hardly necessary to go it alone.



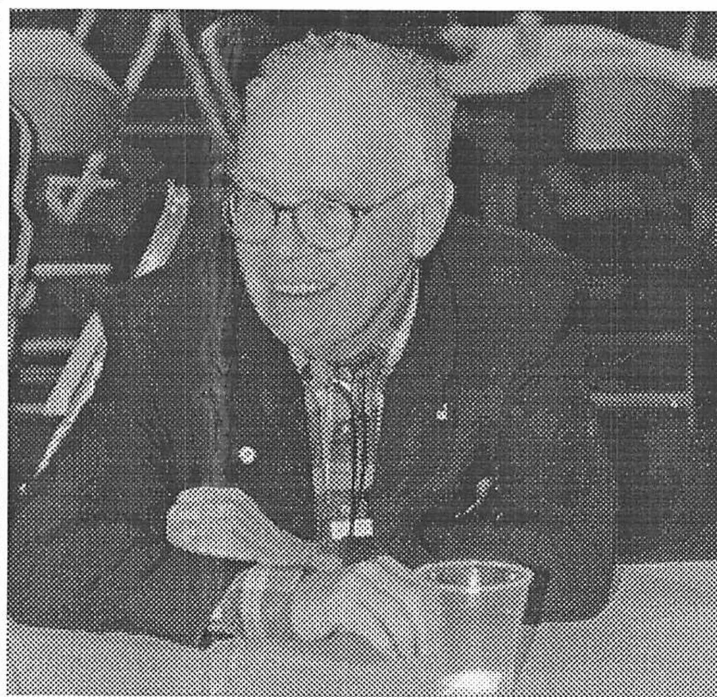
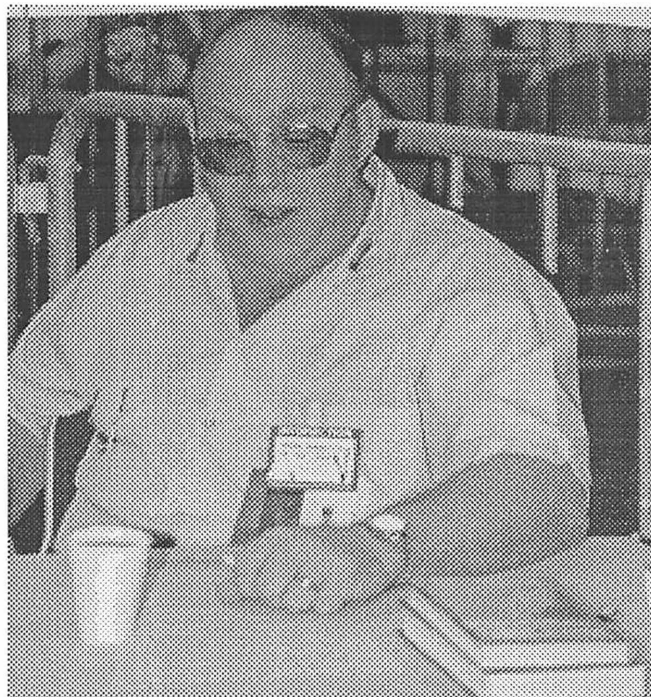
# PHOTO PAGES

Photographs on these two pages are from this summer's excursions to Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Intersection pictures were taken by Carol Porter. The others by Joe Sclari and Edie Stern.

Intersection Guest of Honor Samuel R. Delany sitting with the hot pot.



Tropicon XIV Toasimaster Mike Resnick went home with another rocket. Well done, Mikel.

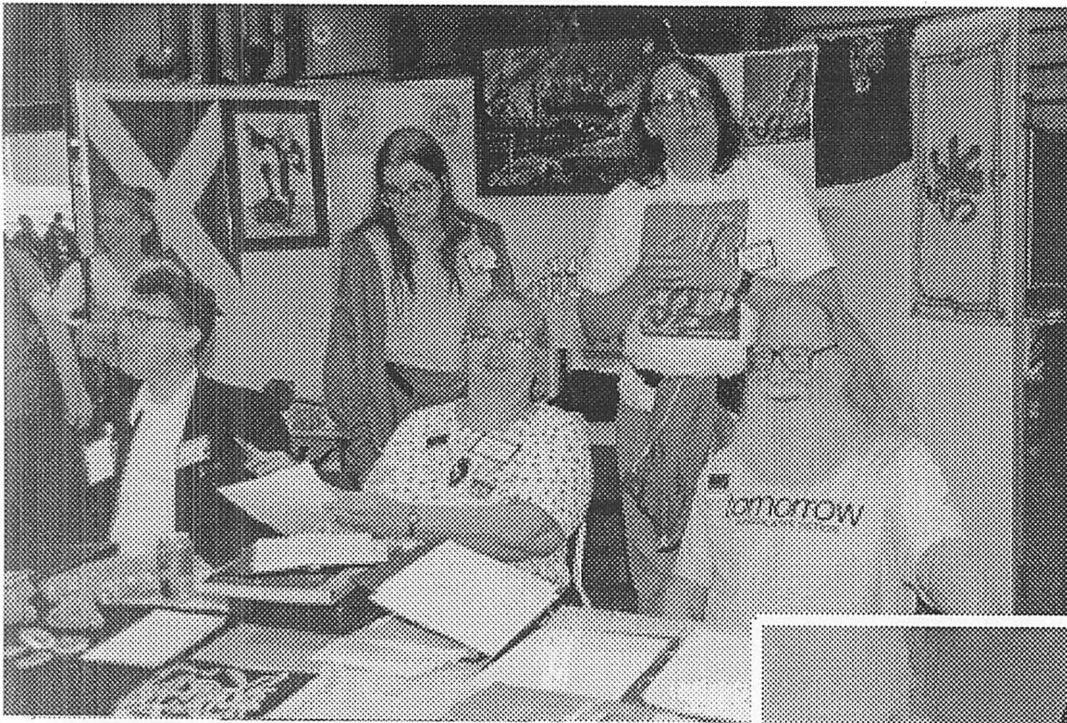


SFSFS Stan Frederick Bragdon focusing on a panel.

Tropicon IX GoH Hal Clement



Nov./Dec., 1995

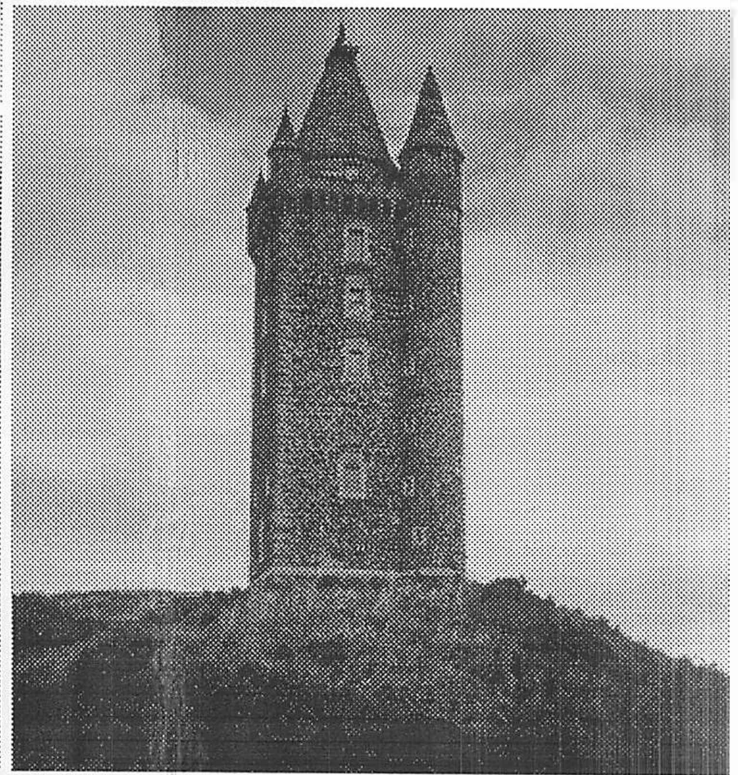


And the winners are...the 1998 Worldcon will be held in Baltimore. Chairman Peggy Rae Pavlat sitting at the Buccaneer booth with consort John Sapientza and the old man Iron under the mountain — well, it's Rusty Havelin. Close enough. Other Buccaneer staff

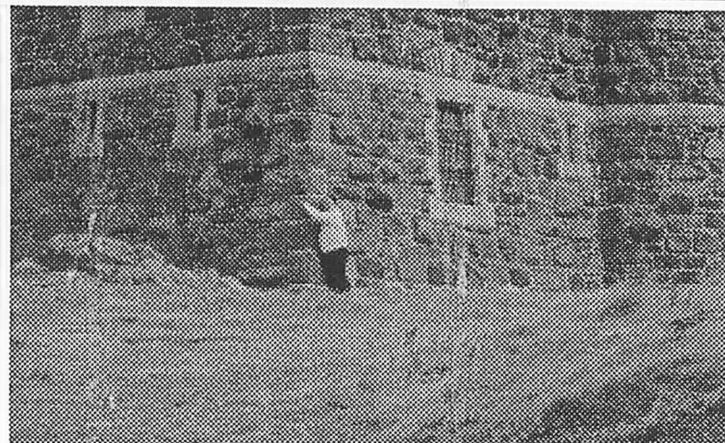


Walter Willis and Edie Stern in the ruins of the Grey Abbey.

Joe Sicari clutched desperately at Scrabo Tower, hoping some of its lannish vibrations will work with him. The expedition to Scrabo Tower was profoundly moving. Walter took Edie and Joe to the foot of the mountain, well, hill on which the famous Tower stood. He told them that they must make the climb to the summit of Inulandom on their own while he remained behind.



Scrabo Tower — the inspiration for the Tower of Inulandom in *The Enchanted Duplicator*.



# The Worldcon According to George

by George Peterson

*"So you're Trekkies, then," asked the cab driver.*

This was a question that would be asked of us throughout the weekend. I quickly decided that there wasn't much point in trying to make the distinction between a "Trekkie" and an SF Fan. After all, who really cared?

The driver went on to say that he'd never actually seen an episode of *Star Trek*. So, Yes Virginia, there are people in the world who can't quote lines of dialog from a show 25 years gone. I also refrained from commenting that of the 70-odd episodes filmed, only about 15 were really worth watching. This may be heresy in some quarters, but who really cares?

Nevertheless, after a day seeing Glasgow (Okay), a day in Edinburgh (the Castle lived up to its reputation), we arrived at the 53rd World Science Fiction Convention - Intersection. Below are some general comments regarding sights, sounds and thoughts as I wandered the Scottish Exhibition and Convention Center.

I liked the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Diane Duane & Peter Morwood were okay as toastmasters. They had an amusing introductory bit at the opening, where they dressed as witches and did a take-off of a certain "Scottish play". There were also introductory speeches by some of the city authorities. It was nice to see that they seemed very happy and excited to have us there. In fact they really went a long way to make the Collective feel welcome, including free whiskey. There were bagpipers, and Nessie made an appearance.

Though it may sound odd, the Safety Speech turned out to be the highlight of the closing ceremony. At the start of large functions a woman, whose name I never found out, gave instructions as to where to go in the event of an emergency. Since she said the same thing each time, it got to be something of a running gag. At the Closing Ceremony, after telling us where the fire exits were she went on to say that, in the event of an asteroid striking the Earth, we should reach under our chairs, remove the paper bags located there and place them over our heads, and should the Polar Ice Caps undergo a sudden melt-down, breathing apparatus would descend from the ceiling.

I spent a fair amount of time in the Dealer's Room,

which seemed pretty good. There was a lot of variety, including lots of booksellers, both new and used. I didn't spend much because I can get most of the same here in the States for a lot cheaper. My biggest complaint was there were some interesting British Videos I would have liked to purchase, but apparently the U.K. uses a different format. I would have had to have them converted. I made it into the Art Show only once. I saw a few things I liked, but nothing I could afford.

One area where there was a serious difficulty was the distance of the SECC from most of the hotels and restaurants. The hotels were at least a £2.00 cab ride away. In addition, except for the restaurants in the SECC & the Moathouse, there was nothing close. By the time my parents and I got out and went to dinner, it was too late to go back for anything. All things considered, I think we would have been better off paying the extra money and staying in, say, the Forte Crest. The Guest House we did stay in left much to be desired. Overall, I thought that the transportation system was very good; the cabs were truly a pleasure. I didn't make any use of the bus system, but it looked very good. My one complaint was that the underground didn't go anywhere near the SECC.

Programming was also in the pretty good range. Or at least I thought so. My mother was disappointed. She didn't see much that grabbed her. The only other convention she's attended was MagiCon, so I guess she was spoiled. I thought there was a pretty good variety, with Fiction, Science and Fannish tracks. As always, it always seemed that the stuff I wanted to see was running at same times. Occupational hazard.

The biggest problem with the programming, was four of the main rooms were located in an open area with collapsible walls separating them. There was a serious problem with sound bleedover, particularly when we wound up with dueling microphones. In one instance, Martyn Fogg was attempting a lecture on Terraforming Mars. Fogg is not a good speaker even under ideal circumstances, and the poor man was finding it very difficult to deal with the ambient noise.

The Kaffeeklatsches had the same problem with noise: they were setup in the Fan Fair - the area just outside the Dealer's area, where the Fan groups were



selling their stuff. It made it very difficult to hear what was being said. At Stan Schmidt's, I was across the table and could barely hear what he said. So at Greg Benford's, I made sure to sit close.

The two things that stand out from the talk with Stan, was how much he loved editing *Analog*, and his complaint that people don't send him stories, because they think they're not "Analog" stories. He said that the only person who can decide that is himself. Don't reject stories for his magazine.

Greg Benford surprised me by talking of how he went from living a sort of "Huck Finn existence" in the rural South, to suddenly getting moved to Japan at age 11. He thought this sudden culture shock was a significant milestone on his road to becoming an SF writer.

Benford did a real double-take when he saw Joe Haldeman on the flyer as our Filk Guest for Tropicon XIV. Oh no...Joe's going to sing?!

I didn't attend the Masquerade, but saw some of the costumes afterward. There were some impressive pieces - particularly the ones that lit-up from within.

As for the Hugo Awards: The actual ceremony went well. As with any such thing, there's a tendency for the eyes to glaze over while they get through the less popular awards. It was easy to see the influence of the British contingent when *Interzone* won and received lots of applause. I was disappointed in several of the outcomes, but was glad to see our Tropicon Guests do well.

Here are some of the highlights regarding the Awards Ceremony:

- Robert Silverberg asking for, and getting, a standing ovation for John Brunner.
- Connie Willis' stint as a Hugo Award presenter, where she kept the nominees waiting while she rattled on about the trouble a mid-westerner has tackling local place-names. I look forward to her Toastmastering at LACon.
- Lois Bujold looking almost embarrassed to be accepting a third Hugo for her Vorkosigan series.
- Meeting Connie Willis and telling her how much I liked *Doomsday Book*.
- Geoff Landis walking around after the Hugo Ceremony saying, "It's an honor to be nominated," as a sort of mantra.
- Joe Haldeman walking out of the party at the Forte Crest, clutching his new Hugo and wearing a very silly grin.
- And, best of all standing with Melanie and Mike outside the SECC watching the fireworks after the Awards Ceremony.

Those were some of the main areas. Below are some of the moments which stand out in my memory.

- Joe Haldeman at the panel on "American Futures" describing a scenario he developed for the Pentagon on the types of threats they're likely to face: how to deal with a decentralized country in the face of nuclear terrorism. As Joe put it, when New York gets nuked, millions will die. By the time they work their way down to Akron, the city will be abandoned. How do we hold the country together under such conditions?
- Trying to walk to the SECC and getting rained on and getting lost.
- Listening to John Cramer, Geoffrey Landis, Greg Benford & Bob Forward discuss "Negative Matter Supported Wormholes" and sounding like medieval philosophers trying to figure out how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.
- Joe Siclari's smile when I told him my mother found Intersection a little disappointing in comparison to MagiCon.

• Brian Stableford gave a very interesting speech called "Deus Ex Machina... or How to Achieve a Perfect Science Fiction Climax." He pointed out that there are generally a couple of different kinds of possible climaxes: Normalizing (where you get everything back to normal) & Catastrophic (where everything changes). The problem with Normalizing climaxes in SF is they require that you have to take it for granted that there is a "normal" world you can go back to, whereas SF is based on the notion that there is no such "normal" world — things are supposed to change. So a Normalizing Climax in SF is, to one degree or another, contradictory.

He gave the X-Files as an example, where the repetition of the Normalizing ending has the opposite effect: that of sabotaging the notion that there is a normality.

His criticism of Catastrophic Climaxes was a little more vague. Basically, there is a tendency to pull Deus out of the Machinae, to use contrived solutions. Since you're using made-up solutions to a made-up problem, you open yourself to the criticism of "faking it." (I don't think I put it that too well.) And the harder the SF, the harder it is to admit a Deus ex Machina ending.

His suggestion for a solution was to go with "the story of the man who kept trying to learn better no matter how much headway he actually made." In other words, go for subtle conclusions vs. explosive

climaxes. Personal transformations rather than large scale normalization. He suggested being sceptical about 'eucatastrophies', and be more interested in raising questions than building up bogus answers.

This is just an overview from a mediocre note-taker.

- After the speech, a few of us gathered in the hall to talk with him. He told someone how several of his novellas were cut down from novels that he couldn't sell (?!). He went on about the problems he's had getting published.

"I'm just an unappreciated science fiction writer," he said.

"I appreciate you," I said, handing him an issue of *Analog*, with a story of his, to sign.

I then asked him about the complaint so many people seem to have regarding the lack of a 'Sensawonder', and how his suggestions regarding SF climaxes would affect that.

His take on it was that what we experience as a sense-of-wonder is the sudden shock that comes with finding that the world is much bigger and stranger place than we'd ever thought. But, like most shocks, after a while you just get used to it. The fact that these readers don't experience that anymore is just an indication of the extent to which they've internalized these SF concepts.

Anyway, I told him to keep writing those stories.

Then there was Jack Cohen's hysterically funny talk on human sexuality. It was supposed to be about redesigning the human body for fun and... But his take on it was the current design was already a whole lot of fun, so what do you need to change it for? The truth is that nobody, even doctors and scientists, can really think rationally about Sex. Shown with appropriate cartoons.

At one panel, I spotted Evelyn Leeper transcribing a panel discussion into her notebook computer. I leaned over and said, "No wonder your con reports are so detailed."

- I think my single biggest point of culture shock was the complete lack of water fountains in the SECC.
- Of course there was also the matter of John Brunner's sudden death. The first I heard of it was at Delany's GoH speech, where he announced it and asked for a moment of silence.

Samuel R. Delany's GoH speech discussing SF as 'paraliterature' (literature for entertainment only — not serious), telling the story of how he got into a polite argument with a sales clerk on putting some copies of *Dahlgren* in the SF section. The woman (who didn't know she was talking to the author) resisted saying the book was a *good* book, not SF!

I was also much interested in David Gerrold's plans for the new *Star Wolf* television series.

David Gerrold was there and gave a presentation on a new project: "Star Wolf - the Series". He had a slide show displaying some pre-production art & photos, as well as describing what the series will be like. I won't go into details — if you want to know more, pick up a copy of *Voyage of the Star Wolf* at your friendly neighborhood bookstore. (If they don't have it, order it. The book's still in print.)

The basic idea is to do a WWII in space. Yes, I know it sounds like another show that's just premiered. But, Gerrold has been developing this concept for 15 years. He quit as a producer for *Star Trek - TNG* to try to bring this to fruition. That deal fell through so he novelized it. Now he's got the financing together to make it work. Last year he was trying to sell it to the networks and studios. Fox was one of those who told him there wasn't room for more than one 'space-show'. Then they came out with *Space, Above and Beyond*...

Hey, this is starting to sound strangely familiar! (Can you say, "Deja Babylon 5"?)

At first, Gerrold & Co. were po'd, but then, he said, "...We read the opening script and went, <mocking laughter>. I give [*Space, Above and Beyond*] eight episodes."

He's already got enough money lined up from foreign distributors to produce the show. They're thinking of premiering it on Showtime, and then letting the networks bid on it.

I asked Gerrold what he thought of B5, but he said he hadn't had time to keep up with what Joe was doing. He did enjoy the episode that he scripted. It was the episode where the parents of a sick boy won't let Dr. Franklin operate for religious reasons.

Gerrold's attitude and approach to his show is similar to JMS's in that he's someone who really knows and cares about SF, and who also knows television. His project was put together while keeping the lessons of *Star Trek* and other shows in mind. To actually learn from others' mistakes.

So if you're really looking for adventure — the real premier will be in September of 1996.

• Meeting Mike Resnick.

• The Epona Project — an attempt to create a detailed vision of an alien world and its inhabitants. There's a whole team of people putting this together, creating geology, climate, ecology, and inhabitants and their culture. The sentient species are flying creatures. Very neat. Most stories only sketch in the world and tend to be derivative of Earth. This world is much different.

• Seeing Bob Forward waylay a paleontologist after the "Dinosaurs as Aliens" panel — because he "...likes to get things right."

• "The Great Silence", which was anything but silent as Dave Clements, Greg Benford, Jonathan Cowie, Martyn Fogg, Duncan Lunan, Paul Shuch and audience argued over where the aliens are. One of the panelists, I didn't catch which one, describing an actual signal received from an unnamed G-type star about 18 years ago. No message - it wasn't something aimed at us, just an accidental reception - but definitely an artificial signal!

\* \* \*

Then there were my adventures in driving in Glasgow. I picked up driving on the left in a snap. Figuring out the medieval road plan was another thing entirely. Driving to the SECC Monday, I got lost, and did not arrive till the middle of the afternoon, only to find that the dealers I wanted to buy stuff from had already packed up and left.

Monday evening, after the convention, I found myself wandering around Glasgow in the dead of night and a drizzle with my parents, Mel, Mike and Carol looking for somewhere to eat.

We ended up at T.G.I. Friday's. (At least they had iced tea!)

All together, I thought Intersection was a very good convention. It was an entertaining time, that left me hungry for more.

And yet, the best part of the trip was still to come, as my parents and I took off into the highlands of Scotland in search of landscape that wasn't flat.

But that's another story ...

\* \* \*

Note: When I posted a note about Gerrold's tv show to the *Babylon 5* - Topic Drift Category on on GENie, I got the following response from Daniel Moran:

"David and I were originally supposed to collaborate on the sequel to *Star Wolf*, the book that ended up being called "The Middle of Nowhere." And indeed, about ten pages, toward the beginning of "Middle," are my text. For a variety of reasons (nothing personal) we ended up not doing that book together, though he did dedicate the book to me and Steve Boyet.

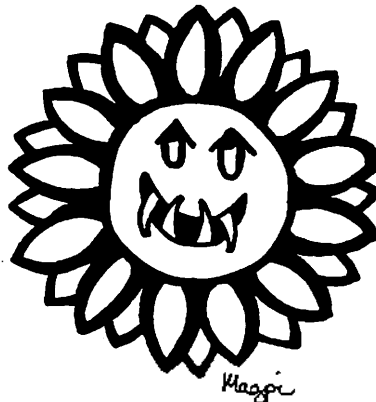
The *Star Wolf* television series looks extraordinarily likely at this point; D.C. Fontana told me last night that they should have money early next month to buy story outlines. I've been hired (retained? I haven't seen a nickel yet) to do the sixth episode, which will be, roughly, the second half of "Middle of Nowhere" — the part of the book that has none of my actual writing in it. <G>

It all looks really good right now... and I'll believe it when the checks clear. This is no reflection on Dorothy and David, who I admire about as much as I admire anyone I've ever met, but I still remember the fellow who wanted to option my story "The Face of Night" for possible development as a television series. This fellow was from a reputable company that had never actually done television work before, but was pretty big in comics and such. The option was \$5K. The check bounced.

Then there's "The Ring," a motion picture I was hired to rewrite for \$40K. The producer, a Canadian real estate developer, ended up leaving town being sued for some ridiculous amount in back rent on his beach house.

There are certainly honest people in Hollywood, or nothing would ever get made. But every *really* dishonest businessperson — I've run a consulting business for the last twelve years now — every *really* dishonest businessperson I've ever met worked in the film/television industry. (Or was trying to.)

I'm cautiously optimistic re *Star Wolf*. <G>"



## ***The Ghost of Fandom Past:***

In this episode, James white gains his majority — that's Peggy for those of you who don't know her. Here he is on a mad dash to vile pro status and a future as a Worldcon Guest of Honor. That's next year in Los Angeles for those of you who don't know. He also hints at some of his activities as a vicious fannish terrorist and weapons importer — for those of you who didn't know about his shadier side. You don't know much, do you? Well now you are about to find out more.

This series is being reprinted as a public service so that you will know the forgotten secrets of James White.

This article originally appeared in *Hyphen* #29, September, 1961, published by Walt Willis and Ian McAuley.

— Joe Siclari



Last issue I dealt briefly with my rather humdrum early life — feeding swans, teenage gang warfare, ballroom dancing, commando training, landscape painting and science fiction fandom — and ended with me selling my very first story to Good Ole Ted Carnell. Maybe I appeared a bit blasé about that first acceptance, but I didn't mean to. Any vile pro knows that indescribable feeling of joy and pride — and kinda humility, natch — and that sort of reverent feeling you get when your head lifts proudly, your chest swells and you remark quietly "Ye-e-e-e-hoo-o-o!" When the second story is also accepted the effect is only slightly less intense, and the third time ...

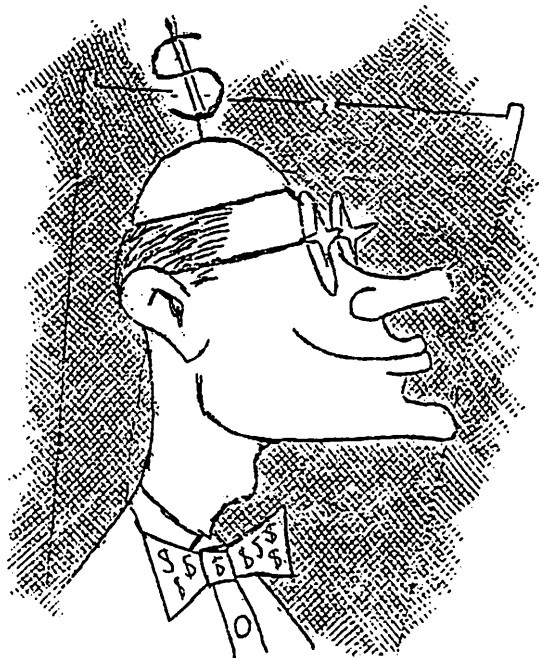
I opened the letter at teatime on 26th February 1953 and the letter had an American stamp and began by warning me about all sorts of legal complications, mentioned hitherto unknown authors and notary publics, witnessed affidavits and so on, which had me sorely perplexed. But the punch line at the bottom of the paragraph explained everything, it said 'I liked your story and plan to take it at our usual rate of 3c a word, or \$285 for the manuscript, signed John W. Campbell, Jr...

After a ritual "YEEHHOO-O-O" I hopped on my bike and scorched rubber for Walt's house during the odd moments when the bike was in contact with the road. It wasn't that I was going fast, you understand, it was just that I was practically floating with joy and the bike, being loosely attached to myself, had to float, too. When I got to 170, Walter said "Hoo-boy!" and Madeleine said "Whee-e-ee!" It occurs to me now that in those days our dialogue was a trifle on the cryptic side.

There followed a mad search through the dark, wet streets of Belfast for the private residence of a Notary Public. I don't remember just why we, or I, was so impatient, but it seemed vitally important that we roused a Notary Public from his fireside or bed to witness my form — maybe we were afraid of ASF going broke or an atomic war starting. But even though we rode our bicycles into the ground and were red-eyed from squinting at unlighted brass plates all we turned up was three Commissioners for Oaths. About eleven-thirty we went back to 170 where Madeleine had supper waiting — she didn't have a bike of her own, so couldn't help in the search — and I gave the ten-and-sixpence —

pardon me, the half-guinea I'd borrowed — back to Walter and went home.

Next morning, remembering to bring my own half-guinea, I located a sure-enough Notary Public. He was a tall, aged incredibly thin gentleman who looked like a lawyer straight out of Charles Dickens — he was wearing gold-rimmed glasses, exuded kindness like those people from highly - advanced civilisations, and was slightly deaf. After proving to him that I was me, not as easy a job as you might think, he gave me a lecture on economics and the adverse trading balance between the Sterling and Dollar currency areas. He ended by shaking hands gravely and stating that it was dollar-earners such as myself that would enable Britain to survive this ghastly post-war chaos.



The next Convention I went to as a real live honest-to-goodness vile pro — hadn't I sold to Campbell, after all? Such famous people as H. Ken Bulmer, Ted Carnell, William F. Temple (who affects a great hatred of me because of a basic disagreement over E.E. Smith or maybe it was that business with the water-pistol), John Wyndham and Arthur C. Clarke. They all welcomed me warmly, put me immediately at my ease and discoursed brilliantly together and with me as their friend and equal. During previous conventions, when I hadn't been anybody, they had all done exactly the same

thing, which proves something about them, I think.

But just before this particular convention I had spent five days, and nights, in Paris looking at museums and monuments (which all had 'Ridgeway Go Home!' painted on them), seeing the Bal Tabarin (where they didn't have anything on them) and filling my water-pistol in the river so that when I squirted Chuch later Bob Shaw could make his wringing in the Seine pun. I also created somewhat of a furor in Victoria station on my return, while being met by Walter and Vinç, by embracing Vinç and kissing him on both cheeks in the manner of De Gaulle decorating a freedom fighter with the Croix de Guerre. They should have *known* by my navy shirt, black beret and white canvas shoes that I was under the Gallic influence rather than being a Sturgeon-type character misplaced in Time.

It was during this convention also that I was credited with introducing the water-firing zap-gun to conventions and British fandom in general, an achievement which has taken five years to live down.

During the fifty-one week period of anticlimax between conventions I wrote some more stories. The first four sold and the fifth one bounced. It was a delightfully wacky fantasy in the *Unknown* tradition called "A Shade Technical" and Horrible Ole Ted Carnell said it was too *untechnical* and suggested where I might place it (with Gold for *Beyond* actually, but it bounced from there, too). Again I hopped on my bike and headed for 170, Horrible Ole Ted's letter gritted between my teeth — I couldn't ride a bike with one hand at that early age — in a seriously disturbed state of mind. Fellow professionals will know and sympathise with my feelings then. This was my first rejection, my whole world was shattered ashes about my feet — sheer writing, that, what? — and I wanted to spit and rend and tear somebody. I felt that either I must "End It All" or become a raging maniac liable to batter insensible the first person or persons I met. Fortunately for posterity I chose the latter course and played seven games of Ghoddminton, beating Bob



Shaw in singles for the first and only time in my life.

Story number six — entitled 'Suicide Mission' strangely enough — was accepted, with egoboo, by Good Ole Ted, but for a long time after this I didn't hear from him. Unknown to me Nova's fate was in the balance, all sorts of dramatic but hush-hush things were going on, which culminated in the London fans and fannish professionals floating a company to publish New Worlds themselves. This kept the mag going, but only just. Printing and distribution difficulties constantly threatened to send it under again, and fannish rumour from reasonably reliable sources had it that Nova was a dead duck.

While I was still writing under this misapprehension and trying to slant my stories towards the US markets, another con rolled around. This was the one which Miss Beatrice May Mahaffey, the whistle-worthy editress of "Other Worlds", prepared for by touring Ireland with the Willis' s and me. This tour was reported fully in Hyphen No. 4 as the Beacon Report, and solely for the purpose of plugging last month's Digit pocketbook entitled "The Secret Visitors" I can say quite truthfully, that the idea for this story came during a stay in a very peculiar hotel while we were on that trip, where a maid walked on me while I was passing a note under a door, and so on. But to keep this on a professional, commercial level, Walter had told Bea several times (an hour) that I'd sold to ASF, and Miss Mahaffey was being quite charming towards me in her efforts to extract an ms of ASF quality for her own publication.

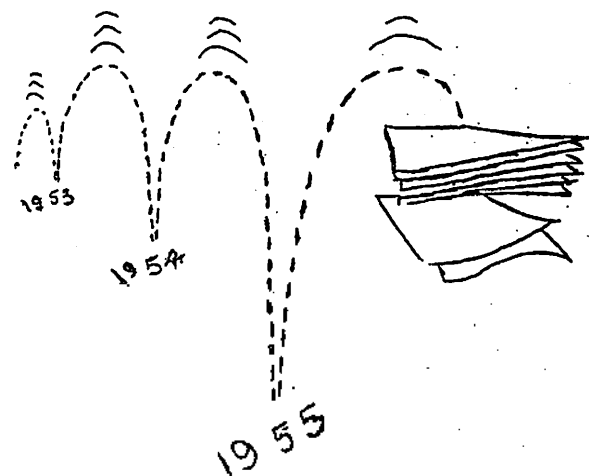
Maybe one of those thingummies on Easter Island could have remained unaffected by Bea Mahaffey's charm for six or seven days on end, but I began to feel funny. I mean, well ...you know...*Funny*. It got so bad that Walter and Madeleine, while we were on the way to London on the train, began a serious discussion as to the possibility of the engine-driver being able to marry people. And during the Con there was a party — I can't remember who gave it, only that at one stage our hostess came into the kitchen, where Ken Slater, Irish Fandom and

the Epicentrics had formed a splinter group, to tell us that she had received complaints that there was no drinking going on in this room — in the course of which I even became jealous.

Bea had been dancing with another vile pro called Bryan Berry — who seems to have dropped out of sight these days — in their stockingfeet. This display of decadence did not shock me unduly, I'd been to Paris, after all, but I felt that I could dance better than Berry could and had a bronze medal to prove it. The only thing was that I was traveling light and my only pair of socks had a hole in the right, or maybe it was the left, toe. I had to sit and watch them, eaten up with helpless anger, jealousy and frustration. Of course there were some neutral (and somewhat sozzled) observers of this incident who claimed that Bryan Berry was dancing in his bare feet, and my astigmatism being what it is I wouldn't like to argue. However, I left that party a greatly changed man; hardened, a little more cynical, older somehow. I had to accept the fact that this girl was not for me. But it *hurts* the first time you lose a girl to another man, even one with green and red striped feet.

The next story I did I submitted to Bea Mahaffey, and it bounced. It went on bouncing for five and a half years before it was taken.

Peter Hamilton, the editor of the newly started *Nebula* had been pressing me for material at the con and I sent him two short stories. He bounced the first and enthused over the second.



Peter Hamilton is a nice person to speak to but extremely one-sided as a correspondent—I remember sending a story in December, writing several times asking for a report and then being told personally at a convention the following Whitsun that it was a *great* story and he was hoping to send me a cheque and a complimentary copy of the mag in which it was printed next Tuesday week. However, when Ted Carnell saw my first *Nebula*-published story he wrote asking me whuffo. I told him that I was sorry but reliable London sources were noising it abroad that he was defunct, and that I considered this a great pity after all the trouble he'd had. Ted replied saying defunct hell for two and a half pages, explaining exactly what was happening at Nova, stating that it was agents of *Nebula* or *Authentic* that were spreading these slanders about, also promising that the two stories he was holding of mine would be published as soon as possible — and paid for before that — and would I consider writing something for him again. I said yes and started work on a story called "The Conspirators."

It was during the writing of this story that I met and began dating a girl called Peggy Martin. I began to feel funny again ... *you know* ...



and the dates went from irregular to frequent. The fact that her father shouted "Spaceship, Awa-a-a-y..!" and referred to me as Dan Dare every time I called for her didn't seem to matter greatly. She was nearly as tall as myself, had medals for dancing, too, and worked as receptionist in a classy photographers. And intelligent as well as good-looking — when I began slipping some science fiction into the books I sometimes loaned her she was particularly enthusiastic about "Scanners Live in Vain." She has a slightly off-beat sense of humour, too. Much later, when we were just a few days back from our honeymoon she whacked me in the face with a string of raw pork sausages. This doesn't hurt at all, but gives one a peculiar squishy sensation. She said that she always wanted to do that and this seemed the right time.

But to struggle back into chronological order, I introduced Peggy Martin to Irish Fandom, Chuch Harris began sending letters to Peggy detailing the things I was supposed to have done in Paris which she really ought to ask me about before coming to any decision regarding me, and work on "The Conspirators" became slightly delayed. I finished it a few weeks before Easter of that year, the date on which Peggy and I planned to get engaged, and bunged it off to Good Ole Ted. Three days later I was stricken with food poisoning, complicated —but definitely— by my diabetes and brushed off to hospital (I know I should say whisked off, but everybody says that) on the verge of going into a coma. My condition wasn't really serious, but just looked that way because of the equipment around the bed. Peggy got in to see me and hold my hand for a couple of hours and later two night nurses told me what lovely white teeth I'd got and asked whether my eyes were brown or sort of greenish. About this time another nurse came in to ask me how I was feeling. I told her I was having a smashing time. She said there was somebody phoning up about me and maybe in the circumstances she'd better just tell them I was doing as well as could be expected.

Next day at visiting time Peggy brought me a

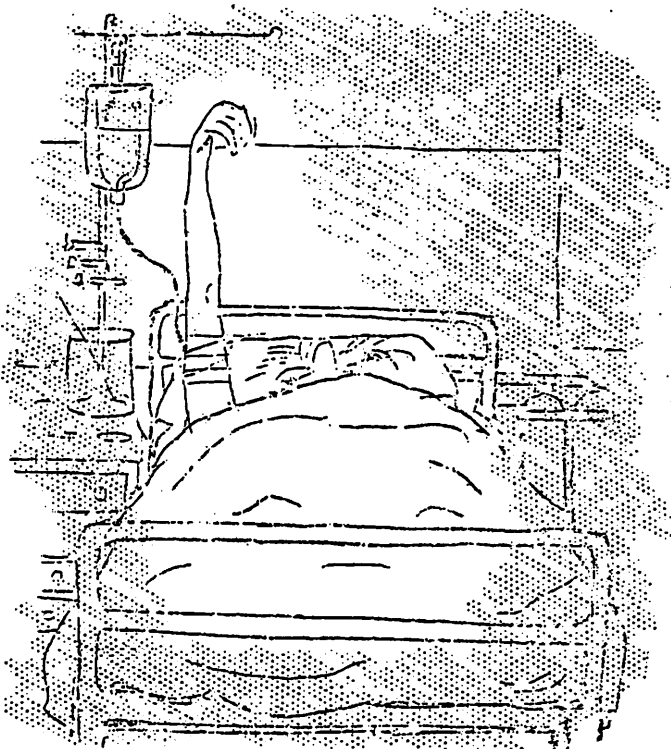
letter from Ted. I got her to open it and she read out in clear ringing tones the news that Good Ole Ted *liked* "The Conspirators", thought it the best thing he'd read in years and was darned well going to break with tradition (Nova tradition) and pay me a bonus of ten bob a thousand for it. And to heap egoboo on egoboo he wanted two hundred words of biographical data to print on the inside front cover with a good quality studio portrait of myself, which he wanted by return of post...

I instructed Peggy, who had been thereupon co-opted as my acting, unpaid secretary, to reply to Mr. Carnell describing my current plight — forced to lie motionless in bed with one arm freezing due to the saline drip apparatus and the other so enfeebled that I could just barely manage to hold up the current *Astounding*, and add that I didn't have any good studio portraits of myself, only snaps showing me squirting Bob Shaw with a water-pistol. I also said that with luck I'd be out of hospital in a week.

Haha.

Ted's next letter went direct to Peggy, saying that he was sorry about me but he needed a photo *urgently*, and suggested that she explain his plight to the hospital authorities. He said that if they couldn't spare an ambulance to take me to a studio for a few minutes maybe someone could modify the X-ray equipment to show my *outside*...

As that sardonic little laugh two paras back implies, I was *not* out in a week. Weird complications set in. I knew this primarily because every time a doctor went past my bed his forehead developed a little vertical crease — that's a bad sign, you know — and secondarily because I was having them. The trouble seemed to be the new, one-injection-per-day type of insulin they were trying to restabilise me on. Sometimes I would feel half-dead and too tired even to re-re-read Ted Carnell's letter and at others I'd feel like charging about the ward jumping from bed to bed. Quite a few doctors from the other end of the hospital were called in and made vertically creased foreheads at me —



I would have suggested sending for Dr. Conway only I hadn't thought of him yet — for nearly a week before the great light dawned.

Sometimes I would go down the ward to meet the nurse who brought the pills round, to save her the trip. It seemed there was another Mr. White in the ward and it appeared that occasionally I got the wrong medication. This other Mr. White had recently undergone an operation and was eighty-two years old so that the doctors were intent on building up his strength and vitality as quickly as possible. One thing I did learn from this incident was the name of the pills I'm going to ask my doctor for when I'm eight-two...

Two days before Easter I got out and had my photo taken. Peggy's boss went to considerable trouble with lights and camera angles and out of focus effects in order to make me *not* look like a recent inmate of Belsen. The picture was published on the inside front cover of *New Worlds*, and eight years later Ted is still using on the same one. I'd like to take this opportunity, however, to say that it is even now not a true likeness. I look much younger than that.



Vess & Gaiman collaborate on *Sandman* #19, with award-winning results.

Apocastasis. It's a big word. It means a restoration, a re-establishment, a renovation. It also means a return to a previous condition. It's a good word. I like it. It rolls off the tongue and through the lips quite nicely. It's a shame no one uses it. No one except Neil Gaiman that is.

If you don't know who Neil Gaiman is I'm kind of surprised. Since 1988, he has won two Eagle awards, nine Eisners, three Harveys, a Gem from the comics distribution industry, an International Horror Critic's Guild Award, a 1994 World Fantasy nomination, and a 1991 World Fantasy Award. Gaiman's 1991 Howard for the Year's Best Short Story was won for issue #19 of D.C.'s adult oriented comic *Sandman* titled "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Never before had a comic book won a Howard, and it is doubtful that it can happen in the future. The powers that be have rewritten the rules so that a comic book can never again be nominated.

Gaiman is like that. He bends the rules. He makes you question the conventions of literature and graphic, sequential art. He makes you

## Miskatonic University Literary Review

by Peter Rawlik

think. Gaiman is at his best when he is making you think. And the great part is he makes you think about the little things as well as the big things.

Example: Lucifer retires, kicks everyone out and closes the gates to Hell. What follows is a metaphysical poker game as the divine pantheons of the multiverse jostle for this most valuable piece of mystic real estate. Yet, while demons, gods, and angels hold court, Gaiman takes time to explore the earthly repercussions of this upset of the universe. Some of the dead and demons refuse to leave. Some dead return to the world and take up twisted places in a society that has passed them by ... Death finds herself overwhelmed. Two dead boys decide to live the life that they never had. Meanwhile, up the metaphysic scale, the Creator deems that a Hell must exist and sets two angels as overseers. One of the angels questions why he is being punished, he questions the Creator's decision and he decides to rebel. Except where can he go?

Makes you think.

I first read Gaiman's work in 1988 when the *Sandman* series came out. The first story arc was *Prelude and Nocturnes* and it tells the tale of the accidental capture of the Lord of Dreams by a Victorian occult society. Eventually he escapes and goes in quest of his missing articles

of office. In a theme right out of classical myth, the Dream Lord goes on a quest that eventually takes him through Hell itself. Afterwards, his quest at an end, he complains to his sister, Death, about his current near ultra-powerful state. There are no more challenges, no more mountains, no more wonders. He is trapped by the responsibilities and power of the throne he struggled to recapture. Like all hero-kings before him, he has come to realize that it is neither seemly nor challenging for a king to take up the sword and go adventuring. That is no longer his job. He must assure the tranquility of his kingdom above all other things. That can be quite boring.

Makes you think.

And I did.

I found myself agreeing with the Dream Lord and decided to quit reading *Sandman*. All I could see in the future was an all-powerful Dream Lord standing in the background manipulating the lives of poor, hapless mortals.

I was right.

Except Gaiman carries out the manipulation with such masterful skill that he keeps you in awe the whole time. He's careful too. Always sure to break up powerful metaphysical storylines with short, human details. It acts as a kind of grounding effect. It puts everything in perspective. He's very good at reminding us about what it means to be human. Not to say that perspective is always human.

In Gaiman's fairy tales, a cat hints that they were once the rulers of this world and could be again; a struggling author imprisons and repetitively rapes a Muse for inspiration; a superhero deals with the isolation her power results in; a medieval peasant denies death and decides to live forever; an aging werewolf tries to instill the old ways in his rebellious granddaughter; and the Lords and Ladies of Faerie find amusement and wisdom in the work of William Shakespeare.

There are other stories. Something for everyone. He has strong fantasy ("Murder Mysteries"), light fantasy ("Chivalry"), horror ("Snow, Glass, Apples"), science fiction ("Webs"), and social commentary ("Babycakes"). These are strong stories. Not always for people who want to be comfortable. They're disturbing and enlightening. They make you think.

He does however have weak stories. *Death the High Cost of Living*, tried to remind the reader that life and living life is a miracle. He does this by having Death spend 24 hours of life on the streets as a teenage punkette. She is accompanied on her journey by an alienated teen named Sexton who, unlike his name suggests, is lacking direction in his life. Their day on the streets of New York is framed by two seemingly unrelated plot devices involving two diametrically opposed mystics. Readers, I suppose, are to identify with Sexton and slowly be reminded of the meaning of life by Death personified. Unfortunately, I feel the story — despite strong character development, good dialogue and strong plot — just doesn't hold up to the rest of Gaiman's work. I particularly dislike the casting of Death and Sexton as teenagers. It seems to pander to the lowest common denominator of stereotypes. The disaffected male teen and noir girl motif has been overused. As a result, the whole thing seems like a trite remake of something classical.



Portrait of Neil Gaiman by P. Craig Russell reprinted from the 1993 edition of *Angels and Visitations* with permission from DreamHaven Books.



Similar problems occur in the short story "Only the End of the World Again". Larry Talbot, the wolfman of Universal film fame, takes up residence in Lovecraft's Innsmouth where the locals plan to use him to awaken the Old Ones themselves. It is an amusing story. It is fun to read. Unfortunately it is also a lot like watching *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. By combining the two genres, both are trivialized. In many ways, I think this story is a leftover. I have the feeling it was once part of *Good Omens*, a satirical look at the apocalypse written with Terry Pratchett. *Good Omens* is full of strange, cross genre mixings and reads like a combination of Douglas Adams and Robert Anton Wilson. It isn't serious, it isn't meant to be serious and therefore it is a great read. That may be why I don't like "Only the End of the World Again". I expected it to be a serious contribution to the Lovecraft Mythos and was therefore disappointed with the light way in which it was treated. It is an extreme counterpoint to "Snow, Glass, Apples" which turns the classic Snow White into a dark tale of vampire seduction.

If all of this hasn't convinced you to go out and read some Gaiman then maybe some accolades from the giants of the industry will help. I don't know how he does it, but Gaiman has had some of the best write his introductions for him. Harlan Ellison, Peter Straub, Stephen King, Samuel Delany, Johnathon Carroll, Clive

Barker and Gene Wolfe have all taken the time to read and write about Gaiman's work. The man is respected. A writer's writer.

The industrial machine seems to think so too.

The latest edition of Lovecraft's *Dreamquest* stories has an introduction by Gaiman. Which is fascinating because Gaiman has appeared only once before in Lovecraft's work. In the posthumous collaboration with Derleth, "The Survivor", the enigmatic Dr. Charriere apparently has a collection of drawings of Crocodylus, Alligator, and Gaiman.

Gaiman's about to make the big leap. The BBC has agreed to produce a new series based on a proposal by Gaiman. Hollywood has also finally gotten the go ahead to turn the Sandman into a feature film. Gaiman's been fighting this for a long time. He has good reason. Gaiman's first novel came out at the same time as Clive Barker's *Books of Blood*. Barker's work has been manhandled by the film industry and given the chance they'll do the same to Gaiman's. Thankfully, as I understand it, Gaiman has refused to do the screenplay, and he's even refused to direct the damn thing. Still after it's all said and done, the movie cannot live up to the writer's vision. I suggest that you read this writer's work before it becomes so much Hollywood hype.

**The Family That Reads Together** — disagrees on what is good! This year, we tried a family experiment and kept a list of all the books we've read. Just as all the quality programs insist, measuring something does seem to change it. Our list was kept on Joe's Macintosh machine, and therefore was intermittently out of commission, so our accuracy is variable. When I was young and unencumbered, I read at least a book every other day. According to this year's list, I'm down considerably. Now it's about a book every week and a half, with sharp peaks associated with business travel. I don't know if Joe and Dan are the reasons, or if it's personal entropy. I'm not reading what I thought I was reading either. There's a mighty lot of fantasy and non-fiction on the list along with the SF I expected to see. The non-fiction is pretty eclectic. It ranges from a book on Scottish place names to books on investing and

Pre-Raphaelite art. The fantasy ranges from retellings of Middle English sagas that unlike Beowulf never made it into modern society, all the way to truly poor Arthurian pastiches with no redeeming social value. The experiment was worthwhile, and we will continue it. Perhaps it's a reader's version of psychoanalysis? You are what you read? I haven't mentioned Joe and Dan's lists. You'll have to ask them about it.

There's a satisfaction in list making. NESFA keeps a recommended reading list, and a recommended Hugo nominee list. With my volumes of reading down, I try to take what I do read from trustworthy recommendations. It does help. I went through a string of half a dozen absolutely entertaining novels this summer. Check the NESFA url on the web. There are multiple years of recommendations listed out there. You can find them at <http://www.panix.com/NESFA/home.html/>

— Edie

# Reviews R Us

## Stranger in a Strange Land

by Robert A. Heinlein

Review by George Peterson

I couldn't help it; the book was staring up at me out of Cindy's box. So I gave into temptation and took it home with me. That Sunday, when I should have been doing a host of other 'should' stuff, I spent the whole day reading Bob Heinlein's most famous book, *Stranger in a Strange Land*.

This was my first read of this book in a decade, and the first time I've read the expanded, so-called 'Complete' text. Apparently, when Heinlein submitted the manuscript initially, the 220,000 length was too much for the publishers of the time. So Heinlein had to cut the book to 160,000 words. In today's publishing environment, 220,000 words ain't squat — especially from a famous SF author.

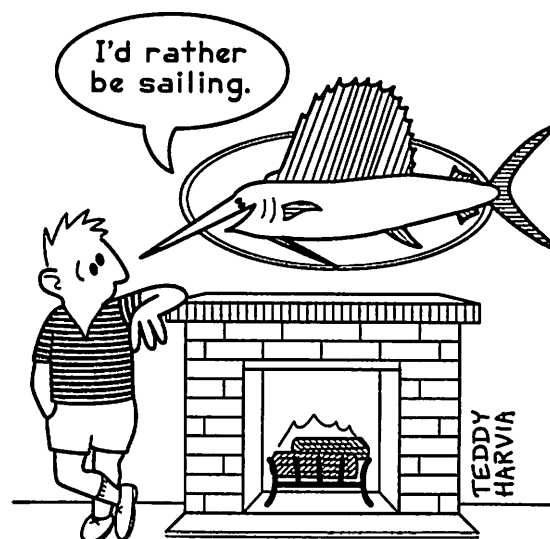
For those who might not know (is there anyone out there?), *Stranger in a Strange Land* is the story of Valentine Michael Smith. Born on Mars to crash-landed survivors of the first expedition, orphaned shortly thereafter, and raised by Martians, Smith has been brought back to Earth. Neither Man nor Martian, he possesses awesome powers and alien knowledge, but also a profound innocence and naiveté regarding Humans and their culture. Rescued from government captivity by Jill, a nurse, he finds sanctuary in the household of the eccentric doctor/lawyer/writer Jubal Harshaw. There he discovers the secrets of love, sex, laughter and religion. Ultimately, he takes it upon himself to bring enlightenment to the world through language lessons, and ends up martyred by religious fanatics.

To put it simply, I found the book a real page turner. In many ways it was like a visit with old friends I hadn't seen in too many years. Although it had been too long for me to be able to do a specific comparison, I didn't feel that the added material did much to improve the book. There were sections that did seem to be much more fleshed out. On the other hand, there were definitely stretches where the book bogged down, particularly during some of the didactic passages. There were points where I wished that someone would tell Harshaw to "Shut the hell up!" Yet I don't think that the extra wordage changes the book very much, on the whole.

One thing I noticed was that *Stranger* is a

trifle dated. Obviously, our knowledge of Mars has changed making the story less plausible. But I don't think that was really a draw-back or particularly bothersome. The most noticeable points were actually in some of the attitudes. Although Heinlein was consciously trying to break the bounds of his time, the book is clearly a product of '50's—early '60's mentality. For instance, although I think Heinlein was not sexist, at least in comparison with the standards of the day, the attitude towards women is not what we expect today. While it's not stated explicitly (except by a Muslim), the female characters in *Stranger* still live in a world where they are second-class citizens, not considered for many jobs simply because of their gender. There are others: the universality of smoking, some of the attitudes toward sex, the communications technology, sending a manned expedition to Mars *before* sending an unmanned probe, etc.

In rereading the book after all these years, I couldn't help but notice things that passed me by. Particularly interesting was Heinlein's basic theme, which wasn't, I think, about religion or sex, but about language. What Heinlein was trying to say was that language shapes what we are and how we function in the universe. What Smith attempts to do, near the end, is to improve the human condition by teaching people to speak Martian. This language, created by the ancient and alien Old Ones, enables someone who thinks in it, to transcend the limitations of the uneducated human. Although much attention has been paid to the free-love/sex in Smith's 'cult' — it is merely a by-product. By combin-



ing the Martian language with human sexuality and emotions, Smith creates a new synthesis that is greater than the sum of its parts. I'm sure that Heinlein, a rather conservative person, was aware of the failure of previous cults that tried 'free love' and sexuality. No matter how well intended, human emotions of jealousy and possessiveness inevitably reared up and caused trouble. Likewise, Heinlein has the absurd 'Fosterites' to contrast against Smith's 'Nest'. Without the substance of the new language to truly transform it, or something equivalent, all of the Nest's show and bump and grind is empty and empty-headed. In order for this to work, we must truly change how we think.

Whether this can be achieved without actually meeting real Aliens and learning to see through their eyes (or the equivalent) is debatable. But, *Stranger in a Strange Land* makes an excellent thought experiment.

Oh, and did I mention it's also funny, entertaining and full of wonderfully quirky characters? In many ways, *Stranger* marks the dividing line between the early Heinlein of the Forties and Fifties, and the later Heinlein of *I Will Fear No Evil*, *Time Enough for Love*, and *Number of the Beast*. Makes me wish he's dumped the sex and kept the neat ideas.



*Strange Days* — Director: Kathryn Bigelow.  
Producer: James Cameron.  
— review by Daniel Siclari

If you go see *Strange Days* make sure you take a couple of aspirins before you enter the theater. It is a roller coaster ride that doesn't stop until the last credits roll off the screen. Kathryn Bigelow's latest wanna be *magnum opus*, *Strange Days* is a new sci-fi thriller based in LA a couple of days before the millennium.

Lenny (Ralph Fiennes) is an ex-cop turned drug dealer. Well, you might not necessarily call them drugs. They're a new kind of high — virtual reality trips. But, you really can't call them virtual reality because they are pre-programmed. These trips are really **mini-CDroms**. You put on a headset and sensors in the headset send messages to your brain. To play these trips you need the headset, the disc, and the disc player. The beauty of these discs is that you can experience anything in the world you want.

Millennium madness has everyone going crazy and destroying things. Juliette Lewis plays Lenny's ex-girlfriend. She dumped him, but he is still obsessed with her. Angella Basset plays Lenny's best friend and bodyguard. The first hour of the movie is spent building up Ralph Fiennes' character. Basically the movie is about finding a killer rapist. Lenny gets involved because he thinks his ex-girlfriend could be the next victim. And to add to all of that, there is a conspiracy going on.

Overall I enjoyed the movie. *Strange Days* is not for the squeamish. There is a real intense rape scene. In addition there are a lot of quick cuts and loud, fast, and heavy music. I do have to compliment the cinematographer; he/she had some really inventive shots. While someone is tripping on the clips, the camera shows the view through that person's eyes. *Strange Days* is in the top five of the best genre films of the past year. Recommended.



*1901 A Novel*, by Robert Conroy  
— review by Dwight Douglas

I recently read *1901 A Novel* that I had ordered from the Science Fiction Book Club. The author, Robert Conroy, explores an alternate history where Imperialist Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II plots and executes an invasion of the United States.

It seems that the good Kaiser is jealous of Germany's lack of an empire. All the other great powers have overseas possessions — England in India, Malaysia, Africa, etc., France in Asia, Africa, Russia etc. etc. Even the upstart United States now has Cuba, the Philippines, the Virgin Islands, etc. All Imperial Germany has is a lousy colony in Africa and a couple of small islands in the Pacific. In the eyes of the Kaiser this is not "correct", so he looks to obtain by conquest America's new possessions.

He is intensely jealous of the United States. He feels that Germany should have obtained Cuba, the Philippines, etc. from Spain. After all, what is the U.S. anyway, a mongrel country with no army to speak of, a small but highly competent navy, thousands of miles of undefended shoreline. The Kaiser has the largest, most disciplined modern army in the world, the second largest navy. America should be a pushover.

His scheme is to invade the New York area, take

control of it and force the U.S. to relinquish its recent acquisitions and make America pay reparations. His plan to invade in early summer succeeds with complete surprise. A quarter of a million German soldiers along with the bulk of the Imperial Navy quickly take control of most of lower New York Manhattan and much of Long Island and parts of New Jersey. The Kaiser expects the Americans to fold quickly. This however is not to be the case...

America is led by President McKinley and Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt. The response is slow and muddled at first. McKinley soon dies of a heart attack leaving the country in the hands of that cowboy, Teddy Roosevelt.


At first the Germans have it their own way. The bulk of the force of the American 25,000 man regular army is thousands of miles away fighting revolutionaries in the Philippines or on duty in Cuba. The smaller American navy cannot engage the Imperial navy unless it can lure them into a situation where they can split the German navy and engage them piecemeal. However, National Guard, State Militias, small Regular Army units, among them the black 10th calvary and armed citizens contain the invaders in the New York/Long Island area. The Germans could at anytime break out, but this is not their goal. The Kaiser wants the U.S. to capitulate; he has no plans to invade further into America. Meanwhile the Germans in New York settle into the brutal occupation that typifies the German nationalistic mentality (Nazi think and racial concepts. Aryan thinking did not start with Hitler).

The Americans are led by Teddy Roosevelt who skillfully assembles a coalition of individuals including retired Gen. James Longstreet (who served under Gen. Robert E. Lee). Here the author skillfully interjects some of the political climate that existed in America. At the turn of the century, America was still somewhat divided between the north and south. Longstreet had been vilified in the south where many felt betrayed by his efforts after the civil war to reunite with the north. Indeed when a grand convention for Confederate Veterans was held, he was not invited. He went anyway and was given a standing ovation. Other famous Americans are also depicted in historical context.

The Germans leaders are pretty much depicted as Nazis. What is also interesting is the author's portrait of the German-Americans. Expected by the Kaiser to join him in the conquest of America, he is shocked when they remain loyal to their adopted country and he orders their deaths when captured. (This has to say something about what makes America work. Whether it was the Mexicans living in Texas in 1847 or African-Americans or the Japanese-Americans in 1941, almost all remained loyal and fought and died in her defense).

The author falls short on some of the historical facts regarding technology, but these are minor to the overall quality of the story. The story itself is a pretty good read, especially for a first time effort by the author. As an alternate history novel the author uses the 1901 time frame instead of the more usually used Civil War, WW I or WW II eras. It is not a great work but it entertains one like the *Indiana Jones* TV series — a good way to escape from reality for a few hours.

WorldCon Atlanta Presents  
A DeepSouthCon in the Deep South  
**BeachCon**  
**DeepSouthCon 34**  
April 26-28, 1996 Jekyll Island, Georgia



Jekyll Island is on the Atlantic coast of South Georgia, halfway between Savannah and Jacksonville, Florida, only ten minutes from Interstate 95, Exit 6. The convention hotel is Jekyll Island's largest oceanfront resort, the Best Western Jekyll Inn, situated on the beach. Rooms are \$74 for single to quad occupancy. Suites are also available: one bedroom, \$99 and two bedroom, \$124.

Programming? If you insist. We're planning a relaxacon at the beach, folks. We'll have the traditional and a few not so traditional functions. Don't play hearts? Planned activities include the Beach Volleyball Championship of the Known Universe and Fantasy Sand Castle Competition. The Art Show room will have natural light: there are windows on three sides, overlooking the pool.

Guest of Honor: Harry Turtledove  
Artist Guest of Honor: Peggy Ranson  
Fan Guests of Honor: Joe Siclari & Edie Stern  
Toastmaster: Jack C. Haldeman  
Cheap Local Guest: Jack McDevitt

Information is available by contacting  
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Voice (912) 638-1486  
GEInet w/ francis  
CompuServe 74076.3703

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P.O. Box 1271  
Brunswick GA 31521-1271

# Snapping Conventions

Carol Porter

Joe Siclari, editor of the *Shuttle* and SFSFS chair, in his benevolent wisdom asked yours truly to write an article about photography and science fiction conventions. Why did he ask me? I guess he thinks I know something about it. Perhaps because I've been taking pictures of cons since Tropicon VII (about when I first joined the club and hence my first con). And I always, always, am seen with a camera around my person so much so that people often ask, "Where's your camera?" when I don't have one. I'm not the only one. Stu, my hubby and an avid photographer, grew up developing pictures in a darkroom and snapping many photographs of his family. He carries a camera, too. What one misses, the other is sure to get. Except when I travel alone — which is what happened at the Glasgow Worldcon. I had the good fortune to travel with Melanie Herz, Michael Drawdy and David Ratti. Because of them, I have lots of wonderful photos and some nice memories (and they're in some pictures, too!)

Photography is a great hobby to have when traveling to cons because pictures always prove you've been where you say you were. Hey, I could tell people I went to Scotland, England and Wales, and they might not believe me until I pull out the pictures (all 15 rolls of them). We had a great time wandering around the countryside, visiting castles, barracks and staring awestruck at rolling hills and mountains. They don't have the like in Florida, except maybe in Gainesville and northern Florida.

What England, Wales and Scotland do have a large overabundant supply of is — you guessed it! — sheep. Sheep, sheep and more sheep. Pink Floyd, I believe, did a whole song dedicated to that charming herbivore, but even that doesn't cover it. I regret to tell you, however, in 15 rolls of film, I don't have a single picture of a sheep. I regret not taking any, and also not taking pictures of our car, a station wagon, on what passes as roads over there. I should have taken a picture of the road on the way to King Arthur's stone, which we visited on the way to Wales. It is barely more than a cow

path. But we didn't see any sheep on the way up. Mike, our driver, hit a fence, but that was because he had nowhere else to go. The car survived, and we lived to tell about it because we got back down the road to civilization.

There are too many great photos to take of English, Scottish and Welsh countryside. You just have to watch your exposures; I have several underexposed pictures because I thought I had enough light and didn't. Taking two or three of the same landscape is a good idea (if you have enough film, and the people around you are agreeable.) That's what the photo books call bracketing and in that way, you should get a good shot. Except if it's raining, then forget it! I hardly ever take pictures when it's raining because the photos come out looking like dreck and they're underexposed. If the weather refuses to cooperate, you don't have much choice. Just do the best you can and watch out for your lens. You don't want to get any water on it if you can help it. If you have a plastic bag, cover the camera body with it, leaving room for the lens to peak out. Be really careful; you don't want funny-looking smears on your lens because they'll get on your pictures. If you're taking photos of people outside and they're in the shade, you might want to use your flash. The sun, in these cases, doesn't supply enough light and your faces will be in shadow.

To tell people where you've been you might take pictures of the signs, which might be a little too obvious and not a lot of fun (actually kind of boring) or you can put people in the shots, too. I did this at Avebury (they won't let you do it at Stonehenge because there's a fence around the rocks now, boo!) where I had Dave stand next to a stone monolith so you could see how tall it was. Or I took a photo of Mel looking out past a stone wall so you again could see how tall it was. I also took several photos of Dave, Mike and Mel standing around looking at signs and looking very impressed. In reality, they actually and probably were waiting for me to focus.



Taking pictures at cons is a whole other ball game. I prefer taking photos of people to scenery simply because I find people to be fascinating creatures with a wide variety of expressions. I especially prefer that my potential subjects not know they're being photographed. Connie Willis wrote a wonderful story, "Last of the Winnebagos" about photography. In it, she makes a point about people and masks. I have to admit I don't always find posed pictures to be quite natural because when people pose for a shot, sometimes they will put a mask on their faces. You don't get to see the real person behind there. When someone doesn't know they're being photographed, you catch a glimpse of the real person. You also might catch them in a rare mood. For example, if someone's always happy, you might be able to catch them being pensive. If someone's rather quiet, you might catch them cutting up and jumping up and down on the con's moonwalk. I regret that I don't have any close-ups of the fen cutting up and bouncing around. That was a great photo opportunity I unfortunately missed.

The hardest things to photograph, of course, are the masquerade and the Hugos. I used to bring the tripod to World Cons, but it just got to be too much, so now I just bring the lenses. I didn't get any real good photos of this year's Hugos because the ceremony was too far away, and I just could not get close enough. Ushers encouraged the photographers to move to the center seating, but I also noticed the bar for the stairs up to the stage would have gotten in the way. As it was, even with the 70-210 lens I do not have many good photos. And it was a lose-lose situation because the 1600 speed film I used is very grainy. During the masquerade I did try to get close to the stage by kneeling in the aisle, but got kicked out and back into my chair. For other masquerades, I have had the great pleasure of shooting backstage with other photographers, but I could not get on the list this time. A "con photo shoot," if it's called that, is a lot of fun because you get to meet other people and get tips from them. I became good friends with another photographer this way, and we used to correspond. A lot of fun, too, was the time I got to be photographer for Noreascon's slide show. It was great to be able to take photos of fen reading and buying books and of other con goings-on.

The best pictures usually are accidents. You just happen to walk by, and there's Robert Silverberg and his wife, Karen, talking with

another writer. Snap! Or you walk past a bid table and there's Rusty Hevelin with several fen. Snap! I particularly enjoy working the kafeeklatsches this year and sitting in on author readings because I was able to get lots of great photos. But for every good one I took, there probably were several I missed because I was there for those and missed a photo opportunity going on somewhere else.

I don't have too many horror stories about taking photos except one. I got overly zealous one time and took a photo at a con of two people at a table because I thought it looked nice. One of the people at the table got very angry with me. It turns out these two weren't at the con and probably weren't even supposed to be seen together. Thankfully, other fans were walking by and I struck up a conversation with one of them and got the heck out of there before something happened.

The good definitely outweighs the bad as far as photography goes. There are a lot of funny stories behind the pictures we have taken. Room parties always are fun places to take pictures because you have uninhibited fen lying on beds, eating and talking a mile a minute. Filking is another lively place where you can take memorable, funny pictures of the singers and the audience's reaction to their songs. We have a wonderful photo of writer C. J. Cherryh playing a guitar at the Tropicon where she was a guest. Mark Simmons' cheerful, expressive face beams out at us from the photos we took of him last year. I especially loved his rendition of "Daisy, Daisy" which concerns the activities of one troubled HAL robot in 2001.

One of the drawbacks of being a photographer is having a house full of negatives, and not being able to find the ones you need when someone asks for a reprint. This is especially true when we take slides. Dale Labs, a Hollywood camera store and developer, is responsible for our slides; I think the only photographer down here that does both. But the negatives have a way of disappearing. And always when someone needs a reprint. If you can't find a negative, you might have to resort to a developer "copying" the photo, and getting a negative that way, but that's expensive. Some of the photos we have taken we hear about later, but we still can't find them. I have heard about this great photo we took of Gary Feldbaum, but I still can't find it. And we're supposed to be the ones who took it!

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# EARTH STUDY: EFFICIENCY

JUDI GOODMAN

Observation report, evaluation of earth efficiency, as reported by the fourth sub secretary, eighteenth sector, Brilljax line five, in the first reign of his brilliance, sildon the ignominious, of Laxton II.

As part of the ongoing study (now in its 512th turn) of the earth as a possible Laxtonian annex, this humble reporter has been directed to detail the group efficiency of the earth creatures referred to earlier as humans. We have previously reported on the efficiency of, but lack of true intelligence, of the earth group called athletes. While a few did seem to prove capable of coherent thought, this group overall was dismissed as possible first contact. This reporter reasserts his previous argument for the creatures called apes as prime candidates for first contact negotiations. The humans under observation at this time, milord, while exhibiting many useful communication skills and rapid adaptability in situational flux, had little direction or true decision making abilities. What follows is our full observance report.

Your humble subsecretary,

*Brrrpp*

Observations began at twelve earth standard half day time. Previously observed semi-mated pair (see earlier report on mating habits conducted in the second, ninety-fourth, three hundred sixteenth, and other turns) took turns preparing for the gathering. Male attempted to clean, but was easily distracted and often left the original, only to be reminded of it later by the female. Female remained task oriented and gathered necessary materials to complete required job. Female continuously urged male towards rear of the living quarters, to finish a

task requiring a group of electronic boxes (further observance of these materials is urged). Female continued to be the leader, giving the male both direction and focus for the completion of tasks.

Both partners of the semi mated pair prepared the living space for the gathering. Male randomly cleaned various areas of the "home" (earth terminology for living space), while female prepared area for food preparation and display. At this time this reporter would like to make quick note that food may play an important part in any negotiations with humans. Male and female continued with random acts of cleansing until other humans arrived. Please note that the semi mated female continued to clean throughout the gathering.

twelve forty five earth standard time. Mated pair arrives. General greetings are exchanged, and the presentation of the ritual offering is made to the consumable altar. Mated pair sits and converses with semi mated male, while semi mated female rushes to the rear of the space with a small furry creature. The semi mated female deposits the creature in the rear of the living space and partitions it off from the rest of the home. This seems to be cruel and may show a lack of sensitivity towards lesser creatures. These acts need further study.

one fifteen. Lone female arrives. Greetings are exchanged. Conversation continues. Purpose of gathering is still not clear. Semi mated female finally drops to the floor and begins drawing while conversing with all.

one twenty four. Lone male number one arrives. Again greetings are exchanged. He seats himself next to lone female. Conversation contin-

ues. The ritual quote "Waiting for Carlos" is muttered once or twice by various group members.

one thirty eight. Lone male number two arrives. The group cry of "Carlos" is uttered and semi mated male calls gathering to order.

Mated female reads a tale of a flying grocery baggage cart subdued by an elderly woman and an acned youth. The group responds appreciatively. Conversations are held regarding this work versus others done by the mated female. Talk quickly shifts away from topic to general discussion. Semi mated female walks out of area, returning with papers for semi mated male.

Semi mated male reads. His item deals with alternate realities within the realm of human/non human mind works. The group is attentive, but split as to the reaction to this work. Discussion ensues and suggestions made. Discussion once again devolves into general chaos. After a time, lone male number one begins to read.

It is important to note that all during the gather, lone male number two makes copious notes in a small black book. This is curious, as no other member of the gather does this. May require further study.

This pattern of reading, discussion and chaos continued for four earth hours, at which time

semi mated male attempted to set a future gather time and place. Discussion ensued, and no decisions were reached. Lone male number two suggested an assignment for the future to-be-set gathering. All collected agreed. Then the second portion of the consumption ritual began.

The ritual consisted of various members of this group opening small pouches and counting the papers enclosed therein. This reporter believes that the papers are the currency previously discussed in study four fifty seven. Discussion continued for thirty minutes and decision was made.

This group never officially ended the gather, but all participants left for the late consumption ritual, and no further business was discussed.

End report

*Addendum notation:*

Milords on his eminence's high council. Humans are inefficient in all aspects of their lives. I have but reported on one typical group and you can see that there is little hope for this group to continue. How humans have progressed as far as space travel is beyond this reporter's ken. Continued study of first contact alternatives is strongly recommended.

your humble subsecretary

*Brrrrpp*

*And now for Pete's version...*

#### **Creative Writers' Group Report**

Once more into the breach. The Creative Writer's Group stared dauntless into the deep, video eyes of the muse. Using an idea from Carlos the writers wrote. And what they wrote were words. Words about writers. Words that formed sentences, that formed stories about writer's groups. Several times was yours truly parodied for his stories of fine coffee and divorce. I tell you it is not true. I write about other things. Often. Sometimes. Well they say write what you know! Other members of the group were caricatured as well; Carlos took the brunt of the literary jabs for consistently being late, while Judi Goodman seems to be stuck in opening paragraphs. Peter Barker and Shirlene Ananayo seem to be obsessed with the literary uses of lemurs and lesbi-

ans, or is that an obsession that lesbians have with literary lemurs? George Peterson, of course, was taunted by the brief, if fictional, appearance of Harlan Ellison. Ericka Perdew, meanwhile, suggested that perhaps these meetings were less about writing and more about eating. An accusation both I and the caterers were quick to deny. Following the good natured jabs, coffee, and cake [he lies! We have yet to serve anyone coffee in this house! —Mags] were served while the fine points of editing the *Shuttle* were discussed. While a total consensus has yet to be reached, I think that in the future SFSFS may well see drastic and positive changes in the way the *Shuttle* is managed. Well, wasn't that an exciting episode? Be sure to join us next issue when we ponder the concept of Hell. Until then, keep watching the skies!

# SMOKED SALMON - YOU WRITE LETTERS

**JerryKaufman@medio.net**

Sun, 11 June 1995

We got the 10th Anniversary issue this week, and I thought I'd take advantage of our new on-line status to drop you a brief note. This is of course aimed at both Joe and Edie.

I particularly enjoyed your editorials. Edie's thoughts on the growth of parallel global villages through the Internet were quite interesting. I think that's what the inventors of the personal computer were hoping for, though they may not have seen that connecting all those PCs to each other and to main frames was the trigger that would cause this radical decentralization and use of information.

I also liked the James White autobiographical sketch. He was "into" so many things as a youth that I am impressed. I never built model airplanes, for instance, though I tried once or twice to assemble the plastic ones that came in finicky little kits. [[One of the things that I find so fascinating about James is his enthusiasms. His interests are wide, certainly, but he goes at all of them full tilt, at least for a time. I always say "Anything worth doing is worth over doing!"]]

One criticism: though many of the typefaces and display heads are very nice (and the ones for your editorials are charming and fun), there are just too many of them to give the zine a unified look. Instead, it looks assembled from many other publications, as done by many editors. I think you should just pick out a few, and use them in some systematic way (even if it's a way only you perceive). [[You are probably, right. However, I have fun trying to pick out typefaces that I think are distinctive and appropriate to the piece — particularly for poetry. I always criticized looks for looks sake when the material did not warrant it but I have learned that you can actually enhance a piece, especially a mood or a light piece by the way it looks. But I do go overboard.]]

And one more thing I liked, before I sign off: Peter Rawlick's con report, "Premature Emaculation," was a witty and nicely brief approach to this aged and venerable (i.e. done to death) fannish genre. I haven't seen anybody do it with this kind of rapid one-two since Dave Langford.  
**jan howard finder, 164 Williamsburg Court,  
Albany, NY 12203 USA**

25 Sep 95

Dear *SFSFS Shuttle*, enjoyed the latest offering. I was a little bit surprised to see everything I wrote appear. That could be dangerous.

The review of *First Knight* made it clear that I was lucky in not going to see it. It sounded like a waste of time anyway. The only possibly redeeming

thing was Sean Connery.

I did see *Apollo 13* and loved it. The book, *Lost Moon* by Lovell, that the movie based upon is quite interesting and very readable. The movie had more tension.

While y'all are basking in the warm Florida sun, I'll be freezing my buns off at Arisia, which is the same weekend as Tropicon. I hope that the con goes off very well. You have a number of super guests listed. [[Since Tropicon is hosting FanHistoricon as well, there will be more than the usual number of programs on fandom. I think there will be some other unusual occurrences.]]

Your con report on Dragoncon mirrors the others that I have heard. It sounds like the folk who ran it should stick to their comic cons. They don't seem to have a clue about SF cons.

I'm not a Trek fan, tho I have seen/read enough to make the proper noises when pressed. I have rarely heard a lot of great things said about ST professional (?) chain cons such as Vulcon or Creation cons. I did go to the fan run one in Toronto for several years when I was living up in Watertown & was even the Toastmaster at one. Maybe they knew I wasn't a real Trekker as they left me out of the Program Book! ... In any case the fan run cons seem to give the attendees more for the buck and offer more as well.

I enjoyed the short you ran. I'm not a big fan of fan fiction, but it was most readable. For some reason I feel that I have seen something like it in theme somewhere else.

I am 4 weeks into learning about auto engines and electricity. The depth and breath of my ignorance is mind boggling. However, I can read and do study. The first test in Engines was a success, I passed. The big test will be if the engine runs at the end of the semester. In the meantime, I still plan to take my Saturn into the dealer for service. [[I used to do a little work on my my own cars but newer vehicles seem to need more complicated checking — and I've grown lazy. So our local mechanic grows richer.]]

The first SF Discussion Group at BORDERS went over well. We even got one ~~sucker~~ volunteer to help with our con. We all have to give a 5 minute review of some book we have read in the meantime. This will give us some idea of what folk like. (I did find an Upfield fan in the group as well.) I'll probably do *Power Play*, which I'm currently reading. It is OK, but both McCaffrey & Scarborough have done better. This isn't to say it is bad, just not at the top.

Our plans to run a con here are inching along or is that millimetering along? I'm enclosing a flyer. It

is a great time to visit Upstate New York. Leaf Season! See the pretty leaves. Joe even gets in free. Some recognition for the minor bit of work he did on MagiCon. That is most of the news from Albania.

Oh yes, the trip to the UK went off very well. I got to meet with a couple of Upfield's relatives, have a confrontation with Nessie at -450 feet in Loch Ness (Details Real Soon Now in a Tabloid near you!), meet a street sweeper on a one lane road in the Highlands and have a ball at the Worldcon. [[Well, if the *World Wide Weekly Trash* won't print your Nessie expose, send it with the photos of you in Nessie's belly — I have a tabloid setting in PageMaker!]] It must have been good, I only got 11 hours sleep over the last 3 days. The only downer was Brunner's death. I had chatted with him briefly at the SFWA suite the night before. He didn't look well and he noted that he wasn't feeling well. I'll miss him. It is all John's fault that I got into fandom, but that is another story. [[Brunner's death was a shock to all of us, Edie and I registered him at the Programming tables. He was bustling around and wanted to get to a program.]]

Basta per oggi! Ciao & teggeddizzi! May the Great Wombat smile on you!

**Teddy Harvia**

701 Regency Dr., Hurst, TX 76054-2307

Dear Editorial Horde

What is with hurricane season this year, advancing so far into the alphabet? After "Z" do they start naming the storms with double letters, like "Aaron" or "BB"? Which ever the wind blows, eh? [[With the rash of shocking weather SF in the last year (Sterling's Heavy Weather, Barnes' Mother of Storms, etc.), I think Mother Nature decided that it was too much fictional hubris.]]

I can always tell when fall starts here in Texas. The grass stops growing. The absence of yardwork is my favorite part of winter. That and football.

Are you guys going to be at DeepSouthCon next year? See you there. [[Edie and I certainly will be there — I think a bunch of SFSFans are going to Savannah to help us celebrate our moment of fame.]]

**George Flynn, PO Box 1069,  
Kendall Sq. Stn., Cambridge, MA 02142**

Dear People,

"I know that there is an even better, LONGER word [than 'verbose'] out there." How about "loquacious"? "garrulous"? "logorrhic"? (The word for this paragraph, of course, is "polysyllabic.")

Pete Rawlik's article was interesting, but perhaps a bit too concentrated on the Lovecraftian tradition, without much indication of its relationship to the larger field of horror. [[Pete's just getting started with his column. As he feels his way towards a more permanent style, I think his column will cover a wide range of the darker side of the field. See the current column on Neil Gaiman.]]

jan howard finder is a bit out of date: NESFA has had a clubhouse for about ten years now.

**Sheryl Birkhead**

23629 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20882  
Dear Shuttlers,

Very nice cover by Shirlene — it took several looks to be certain the color was hand done - this makes it impossible for anyone to be a completist since each copy is unique.

I know my memory is not the best, but when I realize that I haven't the faintest idea where I was for the Apollo 13 happening. Sheesh.

I hope someone was taking notes on the Worldcon "reports" at the last meeting! (That's an unveiled hint.) [[Thish should give you some feeling of the Intersection/Scotland trips. I know we had a great time]]

A sad farewell to Fran — I hope she'll be able to get back for every Tropiccon!

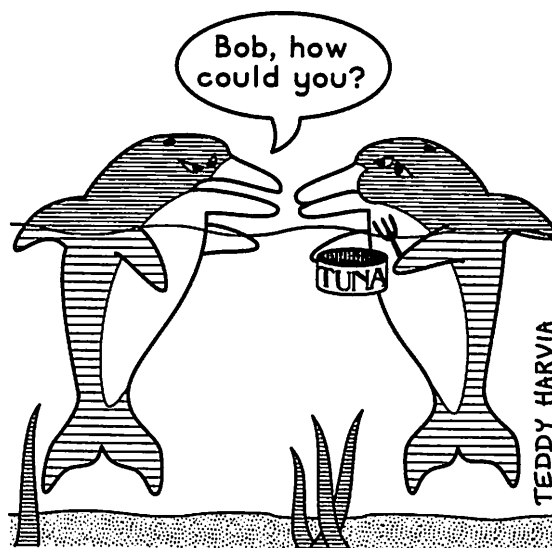
The Freas endeavor sounds very interesting — anybody have any idea on an approximate date?

I have long been a fan of James White and have (I think) all the *Sector General* books. I even went so far as to take one with me to the Worldcon (no - not Scotland!) so he could sign it — but that year I managed to miss both White and Chuch Harris. I went back through my zines after reading that James White first appeared in *Moth* — located thish and sent a copy to LA to see if they'd already seen it.

Well, in the absence of other things to say about DragonCon I will admit it has generated quite a few reports.

(Carlos — "slave" type costumes used to be fairly common at cons. While I'm no expert, I think quite a few hotels held the view that as long as "we" stayed with our own and did not bother the other guests, they kept pretty quiet.)

It is hard to believe that it is mid-October as I write this and Hugo nominations should be seriously thought about come the end of the year. Start





thinking about it, those of you who are members of LAcon.

Looking forward to Intersection tales!

**Teddy Harvia**

701 Regency Drive, Hurst, TX 76054-2307

Dear SFSFans

I was deeply hurt that I didn't have a nickname inserted in my name in your contributors list. Can't you create an anagram or something?

I am impressed with the even little bit of hand coloring on your cover. Another artist once hand colored an APA cover I drew. It took months for her hands to recover from the cramping.

Great mouse in an open cockpit spaceship. Keep drawing!

**Peter Barker <mal@sit.sop.fau.edu>**

Rumor has it apparently my lemur in a space ship has been thought of as a mouse. Thank goodness my fragile artistic ego can handle such dreadful blows. So let's set the record straight here. First I get accused of putting piranha fish in places where they shouldn't be, even though the movies do it all the time and now mice instead of lemurs!

Why mice are nothing but cheese sucking vermin while the lemur is a noble prosimian beast. If I had wanted to draw a mouse in a space ship, I would have drawn a small bewhiskered fellow riding aboard a piece of Swiss cheese with bottle rockets stuck in the holes. No mouse is capable of the sophisticated technology necessary to fabricate a space ship. The lemur on the other hand, are more than capable. Why you ask? It's because they are becoming extinct and have had to use their wiles to survive.

Continued from page 5

thought everyone in the travel industry should be required to speak English as well. I didn't have to ask her anything else for the last two days.

One New Yorker was amusing as I overheard him talk about his new four hundred dollar pair of shoes which the hotel made him ruin because the bus left him off across the parking lot after a heavy rain. He had to walk through a few puddles. Wouldn't you think \$400 would provide some water protection? He was one of those guys who kept talking about how much money he had spent on his suit, his fancy ink pen, and this and that.

On the way home I got on the plane late but it was nearly empty. I had an aisle seat pretty far back but there was no one around me. I would be able to stretch out and relax. Hah! I had the strongest shock to go.

A group of 47 Black Southern Baptists reached the plane less than 5 minutes before departure. They were returning home from a religious revival in Texas. And, I think, the annual shopping expedition. They all carried 3 to four shopping bags, many of which were too big to fit under a seat or in the overhead compartments. There was not a seat left. What wasn't overfilled by a

live. You see Madagascar, their home is being destroyed by deforestation much like the amazon rain forests, though most people don't hear about it because they don't bother to grow cattle for fast food joints in Madagascar.

In fact some kinds of lemurs are also killed on sight because they are thought to be evil spirits. (Though I suppose if you woke up one morning and discovered your entire village was covered with empty Big K soda bottles and twinkie wrappers you might get that idea.). So our poor earthly lemurs have had to devise schemes to survive. One of which is a space program. So it's perfectly normal to find a lemur floating around in a space ship.

Second off, lemurs have tails, well at least a lot of them do. Lemurs come in more than enough shapes and forms to shake a stick at. If you examine my illustration closely you'll note a long ringed tail. (How many mice have ringed tails? Maybe some do, but they are just trying to pretend to be lemurs so they can cash in on a free handout.) Yes a ring tailed lemur. The lemur space pilot has his tail sticking out to make sure it doesn't get caught in any of the complicated lemur controls — controls no mere cheese sucking mouse could possibly understand. Also he has it out to communicate. Lemurs communicate with their tails. The ring tailed ones are especially noted for it. Lemurs rub their scent on their tails and then wave them at each other. This is a method they use rather than all our brawling — something we humans still can't seem to get rid of.

Well I hope this sets the record straight at least for the moment.

person was filled over by bags. Hester sat in the middle seat next to me, all 400+ pounds of her. I spent most of the flight dodging beverage carts or flying food. The group brought their own sandwiches, chips and drinks on the plane. And to give Hester some room to breathe, I sort of leaned into the aisle. She was very large but just as nice. Apologized and said she "bet I never expected to be sitting in such a noisy group".

It was interesting though. The group sinner, I surmised, was sitting about two rows back and she kept getting up to go talk to one man or another. Each time one of the other women would shout out that she should mend her ways and the man should watch out for the temptation he was talking to. She would good naturedly sass them back. I think this was mostly the result of the fact that she had a body that could kill you just from looking while nearly all the other women were ready to give Hester a run for the job as chief seat tester.

I have never run into such a concentrated set of characters in all my life — not at a convention — not at a circus. Don't get me wrong, most of them were fun and friendly. But the stereotypes really do live out there.

— Joe Siclari

# Upcoming Meetings & Gatherings

## Filk Report

Is there filk after Franny? About 15 SFSFans answered 'yes' on October 28, and with the incentive of the grand cereal chicken cook-off (ask Shirlene or Dan), a full house sang their way through the night. Guitar accompaniment was provided by Judi Goodman and Don Cochran, and enthusiasm kept us going until about 2 in the morning. There is filk after Franny; it's different but it's still here. Hey, Franny, that doesn't mean we don't want you back!

## December Filk

Where: Stern/Siclari residence 4599 NW 5 Ave., Boca Raton. Phone: 407-392-6462.

When: 7:30 PM, Saturday, Dec. 30

Who or is that What: **Big Treat, Guys.** Two thirds of the trio, *Musical Chairs*, plan to join us at our filk. Linda Melnick and Jean Stevenson will be there, so expect some terrific singing and high quality acoustic music. Their new tape, just out, is *Sing Language*. This isn't a concert, so bring your instruments and keep practicing. Keep practicing singing in the shower. By the way, I believe it's Pete Seeger that recommends singing while vacuuming, and trying to overpower the noise of the machine. He claims it results in clear voices with power.

*PS* If you would like to purchase a copy of *Sing Language*, let Edie know, and she'll pass the word to Linda. Maybe she can bring some down with her in December.

## Also of Filkish Interest

Filk is old enough now to be venerable. You would think the folk music community would take some notice. Well, check out the latest issue of *Sing Out*, the Folk Song Magazine. Jordin Kare has a four page article on filk, including history, current practice and sources. If you are interested in folk music as well as filk, *Sing Out* is a valuable publication, with new songs (and old) in each issue. It is well worth while, and covers current and traditional folk, with columns on finding lost songs, new

words to old tunes, instrumental teach ins, and festivals and source guides. This issue also has a graphic adaptation of the child ballad, Thomas the Rhymer, by Charles Vess and Sharyn McCrumb. **RECOMMENDED** (by Edie)

## Writers Workshop

The SFSFS Writers' Workshop is on holiday hiatus. The next meeting will be scheduled for January, so "watch this space". There are several reports elsewhere this issue on the last workshop meeting. A short hiatus is necessary. Our doughty penwielders are thinking profound winter thoughts, and need some time to contemplate. Alternatively, consider this — they're all working on Tropicón, and have no more spare time. They're working on Tropicón. Are you? Why not?

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## Surf's Up

Another Internet tidbit for y'all. Thanks to Mal Barker's studious net researches, Joe and I have discovered the modern version of ego scanning. Once upon a time, when a fanzine came into the house, it seemed pretty normal to flip through the pages, hoping to find one's name. Now, with the nets, there's a new source of egoboo out there.

I was messing around with the Yahoo web site, and tried a search on Joe's last name. Yahoo was busy, so I tried a LYCOS search. Guess what! SICLARI resulted in 4 pages of abstracts, about half a page of which was in Italian. It successfully found urls (hitherto unknown to us) with info on Minicon, Timebinders and the LA committee. Cool.

Joe, being humble and self effacing, paid little attention. I'm having his hats altered, though, so he can continue to wear them.



# IT'S NOT TOTO ANYMORE, OKLAHOMA

## — PRINCES FRANNY ABDICATES

On the Road with Franny Mullen - or -  
Journey to Tulsa (?) - or -  
Franny's Farewell Journey - or -  
Another Fannish Trip Report, But This One Leads to Tulsa

I'm writing this while waiting for the temperature to drop down into the 20's tonight. Do I miss the heat and humidity of South Florida? No, no, no. I put on a couple of layers of clothing and sidle over to the floor furnace to warm my backside. Would you believe I can hear a marching band across the street. Someone scheduled a football game for this evening. Brrrrr. Now I remember why I don't like football.

Pennies are lucky. But don't ever let anyone tell you dimes are lucky. No way. So how do I know? Let me start from the beginning...

Packing the truck took us most of Monday, September 25, 1995. With the help of my friends Mary (from Tulsa), Becky, Dea and Jenn (note: all women!), we got all my worldly goods packed into a 15-foot Ryder truck and rolled the Toyota onto a trailer. Then a "last supper" and Mary and I headed west. We only got as far as Naples, but we were ON THE ROAD. It was wonderful. Tuesday was a full day on the road - has anyone ever told you how boring it is driving through Florida? We spent the night at Tallahassee. Too tired to make it all the way out of state.

Wednesday started out innocently enough. We got on the road early and made better time. We

lunched at Shoney's (they're everywhere, like Stuckey's used to be). I found a dime in the parking lot behind the car trailer. I thought, oh boy, if a penny is lucky, then a dime must be ten times as lucky - so I put it in my pocket. The whole day went downhill from there. Birmingham is a bad city to drive through with a large rig, due to its narrow streets and heavy traffic. They put even more narrow bridges at the top of hills to trap the unsuspecting - going over one such, I was rattled by the semi racing past on the left, and over-compensated. One of the wheels hit a curb and we were bouncing all over for what seemed ages to me. Mary tells me it was only a few seconds. I could visualize it skidding and going over on its side, but that did not happen. Was I worried about Mary? Did I see my life pass before me? No. I was worried about unpacking everything and repacking it into another truck! Ghod, how stoopid can you get. We kept going. When I could stop the truck and trailer safely I inspected everything. There were cuts in one of the tires, but I couldn't tell if they were old or new. I reeeally didn't want to get back in that truck. But I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in Birmingham, so on we went.

Because we wanted to visit the casinos of Tunica, we found ourselves trying to find a place to

spend the night in Tupelo, which was on the way. Now I know why Elvis's family moved away from there. None of the motels have more than one entrance. No kidding. The first motel we tried, I pulled in adjacent to the building. They had no rooms, so I drove around the building to exit the same way. Then I found the canopy over the driveway didn't have enough clearance for me to pass under. So, with the help of Mary, I backed everything up (fortunately there was space), and drove back the way we came. As if that wasn't enough, we tried another motel and discovered the same problem. When I drove around back, I found a dead end. Backing up was more complicated this time. We were saved by a man who had driven trucks before, and his hand signals helped me back out. He told us that there was a salesman's convention there, so there would be no vacancies in town. He suggested we try the next small town. So there we were, driving down a very dark two-lane road to Pontotoc. The motel we found was not exactly a four-star rating, but there was room. And they had two entrances and exits. I noticed a couple of cops standing in an entry as we passed by. As we entered the room I saw a bug skitter across the desk. And there was water standing in the bathtub. I was so tired, there was no way I was leaving, so I went to lock the door, and found the deadbolt didn't work. In disgust, I pushed a chair against the door. Mary said something about a wakeup call and looked around. There was no phone!

Well, at that point I pulled out the "lucky" dime and told her about it. Then I threw it over my shoulder, and we both had a good laugh. From that point everything went well. The next morning we found out there was a jury sequestered at the motel, and they didn't know how many rooms they would need. That explained a lot. I bought coffee and we got the heck out of there. Even Tunica had lost its charm. So we found a major highway and headed for Tulsa at full speed. Well, legal speed, anyway. I worried about the lacerated tire, but it held just fine.

That's how I found that dimes aren't lucky.

We reached Tulsa Thursday evening. Mary

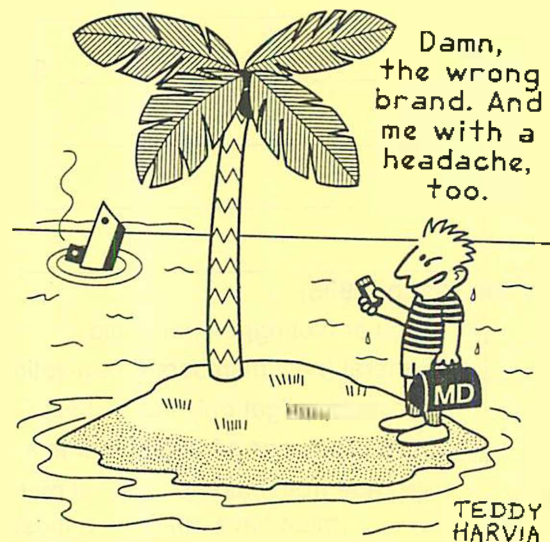
called ahead on her cellular phone, and her husband Tom had hamburgers and fries ready when we got there. It tasted wonderful, and I was ready to stay in one place for a while. The truck didn't want to move again that night either, 'cause I couldn't get it started. But it started fine the next day. Go figure.

Everything was moved in by Saturday, and the utilities were on by Monday. The house was a mess, and I had my doubts for a while. But now the floors are swept, the boxes are unpacked, and furniture is in place. The yard is fixed up and the rosebushes are blooming, and, well, it feels like home again.

I have been offered a part-time job working for the company I left in Florida, so at least that thread is still there. And it may work into full-time later, if I find I like it.

I just wish I could move all my friends here. There is room here for overnights, so keep me in mind when you plan your big trip west. I still don't have any pets, so those with allergies will be comfortable. And the back yard is fenced, with lots of room for a barbecue.

I'll see you at Tropicon in January. I plan to work, so figure out where I'll be the most use. Love ya all... Franny



## You're Getting This Because:

- ☐ Because Sputnik gave you a thrill
- ☐ You've contributed something
- ☐ We would really like you to contribute something for our next issue
- ☐ Fandom starts once with each person
- ☐ Trade for your zine
- ☐ Because Madame Blavatsky couldn't pull the wool over our eyes
- ☐ It contains a review/article that may interest you
- ☐ You are libelled; well at least you're mentioned
- ☐ Editorial whim
- ☐ You foolishly asked for information about SFSFS
- ☐ You are a member of SFSFS
- ☐ SFSFS wants to take advantage of you again — Are you coming to Tropi-con?

-----  
 Be sure to look for the December meeting postcard with details about our Annual Dinner Meeting and info on the next Book Discussion.  
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### 1996 SFSFS Membership Renewal/Application Form

Please make checks payable to SFSFS and send to  
 SFSFS Treasurer, 4427 Royal Palm Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33140-3039

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

SF Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Dues (for the rest of 1995)

<input type="checkbox"/> Regular (voting) membership	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> General (new members & non-voting members)	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Subscribing (get only the <i>SFSFS Shuttle</i> )	\$12
<input type="checkbox"/> Child (up to age 12 and only with a paid adult member)	\$1
<input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade from paid-up General member to Regular:	\$5
(must have attended 3 meetings)	

☐ I ask the club to waive the bylaws to permit me to rejoin as a regular member at \$20.