

Science-Fiction Five-Yearly



First in Five-Yearlys since 1951 – Number **12** – November 2006

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Science-Fiction Five-Yearly

Issue Number Twelve

November 2006



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Printed using Mr. G
NESFA's mimeo-in-a-box

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The lustrous SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY cranks on with special thanks this time around to the New England Science Fiction Association, who donated the printing, and to Jeff Schalles, who saved the white Fibertone from being donated and through two moves. All hail our contributors and readers, trufen brave and true. We share letters, so send your LoC to any of the following addresses. All three of us will read or hear your comments.

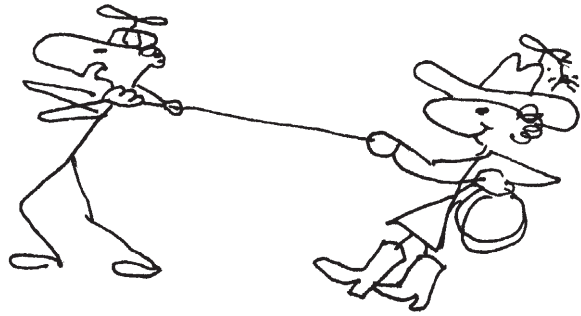
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"You bring the squirrels; I'll bring the linoleum."

Carry On

By Geri Sullivan



Airport security screeners have seen what I hope is more than the usual amount of weird stuff in my carry-on luggage over the years. CPAP equipment for sleep apnea wasn't all that unusual when I started toting it with me during the summer of 2000, and it's even more common now. Modest amounts of jewelry are also bog-standard carry-on fare. But the same can't be said for James White's complete run of *Hyphen* that I squeezed into my carry-on backpack when I returned from Northern Ireland in 1995, and I'm quite certain the tubes of black mimeo ink I carried out to Ted White about 10 days after the publication of *SFFY* #11 count among the truly weird stuff when it comes to what's been carried aboard an airplane in the last lustrum or three.

On the mimeo ink occasion, I was flying to Washington, D.C. for the fannish memorial held for Terry Hughes, associate editor/publisher of *SFFY* #6 and our named co-editor of *SFFY* #11. It was just a few months after 9/11. I wasn't checking any luggage and I opted on the side of smooth travels by packing only ink that came in plastic tubes. I could just imagine what they would have thought if a bunch of lead Gestetner tubes had shown up on the screen. Demonstrating that the tubes carried nothing more than black ink could have easily turned more than a tad messy, and I wanted to get the ink to Ted more than I wanted whatever "entertainment" and explanations would have accompanied my passage through the airport security checkpoint.

More recently, I surveyed my carry-on luggage at the end of a 3-week, 4-part vacation in the midwest this year. The bag of salted black licorice in fish shapes for Deb Geisler wasn't that strange, but if all had worked as I intended, the salted licorice would have been tucked in next to the Twinzy Toy mold for making the Man-in-the-Moon doll face. As it turned out, I ended up shipping the toy mold at the last minute. I was concerned that TSA would deem the seven pounds of metal too weapon-like, little though it resembled one to me.

Between my jewelry bag and the CPAP headgear was a red velveteen bag, with gold embroidiery, "Until we meet again at the Rainbow Bridge."

Inside that was a plastic bag, and inside that, the cremains of Willow, the American Water Spaniel Jeff Schalles and I owned together through the last half of the 1990s. Willow went to live with Jeff when he and I broke up. He'd given me her ID tag a few months after her death in 2005, and asked if I wanted her ashes when I visited Minneapolis this spring. I was surprised at just how strong and certain my "yes" was, and even more surprised by my desire to just rest my hand on the bag during my travels later that day. The ashes are not the dog, but the desire to give and receive her comfort and companionship was as strong as ever.

* * *

It's now several weeks later. *SFFY* is looking very real, as well it should considering the collation starts in two hours. Comfort and companionship have been the hallmark of the last four days, ever since Randy flew in on a red eye from the West Coast. We took my old living room sofa on a scenic tour before discovering that it won't fit in the flamingo loft over the garage. Indeed, the only place it will fit is back in the living room I was trying to remove

it from. Walt Willis napped on that sofa when he and Madeleine visited after MagiCon in 1992; I'm not ready to completely part with it yet. After all, LeeH still has the sofaed Walter slept on during his first visit to America in 1952. LeeH's sofa is even more of a monster than mine. It's of the old style, with iron construction. Her parents had it recovered, so it's beige nowadays, rather than the blue print of its earlier life. Tucker slept on it, too. Tucker, Gina Ellis, Rusty Hevelin, Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, and other fans for all ages. Not *all* at the same time, though, no matter how much Tucker might have wished otherwise.

Randy probably thought he was finished with the heavy lifting by the time we headed over to Boston Monday to start printing the pages you're about to read. But then Dell shipped two, count 'em **two** color laser printers to our hosts, Deb Geisler and Mike Benveniste. You can thank the color printing on this page, !Nissassa, and quite probably page 1 for the opportunity presented by the timely, last-minute arrival of that extra laser printer that we lugged into the NESFA clubhouse the day of the collation. Most of the other color pages came off an ink-jet printer. Full-color printing on Fibertone. Who'da thunk it? It's perfect for SFFY -- LeeH printed multi-color covers on the earliest issues, and guest editor-publishers have been challenged to keep up with her standards of innovation ever since.

I've also been following her excellent example in the recruitment of guest editor-publishers. Randy did the heavy lifting on the editorial side this time around; I had more than my usual fun with the layout while keeping a light editorial touch by working with most of our artists, talking with our regular contributors, and updating LeeH on our progress along the way. Randy and I had a blast putting this issue together; we wish you likewise in reading it!



From the "As it was, forever shall it be" department:



"LeeH," I said, "I am of the opinion that assistant editors must be rare and uncommon."

"No, Terry, assistant editors are very common," said Lee Hoffman. "There's one born every minute."

I wonder what she meant by that?

-- Terry Hughes, SFFY #6, 1976



CASE NO. 770: October 13, 1961

...

From the Files of Ronald Archer, Private Investigator

...

By Ted White

It was a side street over on the East Side. I found the address and then looked at my scrawled note again. It said "basement," so I pushed open the little gate in the fence and took the metal steps down to the door under the front stoop. I pushed a doorbell button, but it looked like it had been painted over too often, so I knocked on the door several times.

The woman who opened the door was not at all what I'd expected. She was tall, with short-cut dark hair and a questioning smile. She wasn't pretty, but she wasn't plain either. And her voice, as she invited me in after I identified myself, had just the hint of a southern drawl.

I followed her into a dark hallway and almost immediately through the door on my left, into what I guessed was the small apartment's living room. It too was dark, but cozy. The windows high on the street wall were curtained, but no light came through them and I guessed they'd been painted over. She gestured to the sofa against that wall, and I sat. She pulled up a three-legged stool and sat facing me. Only a low table lamp on an end table to my right cast any light.

I looked around. Walls of bookcases, filled with books, magazines, and record albums. My sense that I was in a cozy cave was heightened when I noticed the wall to my right. The table lamp illuminated the browned plaster wall, on which someone had created a startlingly realistic cave-painting -- a bison-like animal, with spears sticking in it.

"I did that," she said, laughing. "Everyone says I live in a cave, so I decided to decorate it as a cave. Do you like it?"

"Very impressive," I said. "We could be in France."

She laughed again. We were in Manhattan, New York City. Then her expression sobered. "I need to explain this job to you. I don't think it's the sort you're used to."

I could tell that already.

...

Her name was Shirley, and she'd called my office that morning. She explained that she couldn't leave her apartment and asked me to meet her there. "It's not like I'm an invalid and can't leave," she told me on the phone. "But I'm expecting several important phone calls and maybe a messenger, and I just don't know when they'll come."

I'd asked her if she wanted to come to my office tomorrow or the day after, but she'd explained that all her days were like this, and I'd agreed to come to her place, scrawling down the address on my notepad. "Basement," she'd said. "Separate entrance. Don't go upstairs. Don't use the front door." And I hadn't.

I'm Ron Archer, and I'm a private detective. Don't look at me like that. I've never been on TV and nobody is going to make a movie about my life. I do divorce work and serve papers, mostly. It's a living. I knew Shirley's neighborhood, because she lived around the corner from the Five Spot and the Jazz Gallery, and I liked to hang out in those clubs nights I wasn't working.

"I want to hire you to find a man," Shirley told me. "He's supposed to live in Evanston, Illinois, but my last letter to him came back, undelivered. I've heard rumors that he might be here, in New York right now, maybe for a week or two, and then he's driving out to California. I need to talk to him before he leaves."

I told her that finding someone in New York City was something I could do, but if I had to make any trips to Chicago -- Evanston was a suburb of Chicago -- I'd have to charge her my expenses, and they wouldn't be cheap.

"I'll give you some phone numbers out there," she said. "Maybe you'll have better luck with them than I did." Then she explained to me why she needed to talk to this guy.

"I'm a writer and an editor," Shirley told me. And maybe she was an artist on the side, I guessed. "There's this one magazine I do which is kinda unusual. It comes out once every five years, on a rigid schedule -- November, every five years. Here it is, October, and an issue is due next month. He started a serial in the last issue, and his next installment is due, and I don't have it yet."

"A serial -- with installments every five years?" I asked.

I guess I didn't keep the skepticism out of my voice, because her response was a sharp one. "I don't ask you to understand why this is important to me," she said. "But I'm willing to pay your going rate if you can find him. The question is, can you?"

I could and I would.

. . .

I got the phone calls to Evanston out of the way first. My man's home phone was disconnected. Illinois Bell told me that service had been cancelled, the bill paid. Moved out. Gone.

Another phone number was for something called Regency Books, but when I called it the woman who answered said, "Blake Pharmaceuticals," which threw me for a moment. But I asked for my guy. "I'm sorry," she said. "He's no longer here. Would you like to speak to Ayjay?"

"Who's that?"

"He's the new editor."

My guy's replacement? "Sure," I said. "Let me talk to him."

He was no help at all. First he wanted to know who I was, where I was calling from, and what I knew about him. He was all questions and no answers.

.
"The garage showed two cars, quietly not burning."

WHITE

He seemed strangely suspicious of my call and of me. "Who put you up to this?" was his repeated response to my attempts to ask him questions. Then he growled and hung up on me.

I called back and got the receptionist again. "Mr. Ayjay didn't work out too well," I told her. "Is there anybody else there I can talk to?"

She put me through to a man who said, "This is Earl," in a rich southern accent. "How can I help you?" Once again I explained who I was trying to find.

"He's not here any more," Earl told me. "Palace coup, you know what I mean? He brought in Ayjay as his assistant -- they were old friends -- and Ayjay went to the owner, the boss man, and took his job. The irony was that he was planning to leave in a month or two, and he was grooming Ayjay to replace him, but Ayjay couldn't wait. It got pretty nasty, the day he came in and found Ayjay sitting at his desk, all his own stuff already packed in a box on the floor by the door. Loud words were spoken. I was downstairs and I could hear more than I wanted to. I mean, I'm still working here...."

"Apparently he's left Evanston," I told Earl. "His phone's been turned off."

He laughed. "Yeah, he and Billie and the kid, they've split."

"Split?"

"Gone. Left. Amscrayed. Packed everything into their car and pulled up stakes."

"Where to? Do you know?"

"You're calling from New York City?"

"Uh-huh."

"Well, watch the tunnels and bridges -- the approaches to the city. Watch for an overloaded car with a short man, a big blonde, and a 12-year-old kid. They're coming your way."

"To New York, you say?"

"Yup. You got it."

"Watching the bridges and tunnels isn't too practical an approach for me," I said. "Got any ideas where they'd be heading?"

Earl gave me three names and wished me luck. One of those names was my client's.

• • •

Both of the other names were, I saw when I cross-checked their phone numbers with their addresses, located on the same block of Christopher Street in the Village. 95 and 107 Christopher St. I took the 7th Avenue IRT local from my office down to Sheridan Square. That was where Christopher Street crossed 7th Avenue. It was one of the older and nicer parts of the Village. There was an A&P at the corner of Christopher and 7th, and next to it a little deli where I scarfed down a quick lunch.

Heading west on Christopher I crossed Bleeker Street and there was 95 Christopher -- a tall luxury apartment building, with a doorman. That was where Miss Solomon lived. A few doors further west was 107 -- a more typical tenement building with no doorman and no elevator. The guy who lived there had an apartment on the fifth floor -- out of six.

I'd decided to try him first. I'd called from my office and his wife said he'd gone out but she expected him back within minutes. "He just went to the A&P for some Pepsis," she told me in a young, girlish voice. Miss Solomon had not answered her phone.

I was out of breath by the time I'd climbed four flights of stairs and knocked on the apartment door. It was opened by a stunningly good-looking slender young woman, who ruined her looks by frowning at me. "Yes? What do you want?" she asked coldly. I have that effect on some people, unfortunately. I am not a handsome man.

I told her I'd called earlier, and I asked if her husband was back. Her face brightened. "Oh, sure. Come on in. He's writing something right now, but...."

I followed her down a short hallway and into what was obviously the living room. Beyond a pair of closed French doors I could hear the sounds of typing and see into a room with a desk and a man with his back to me at a typewriter. A small tiger-striped cat looked up at me from the living room couch and then stretched itself and rose and leapt to the floor to come over and sniff my shoes, after which it rubbed itself against my ankles. I reached down to pet it, and it immediately began purring.

"That's Aphrodite," the woman explained. "She's a slut." She grinned at me. "She wants you to pick her up." I did, and the cat's purring got louder.

At that point one of the French doors opened and a young man entered the room. He was average height, skinny, and fully bearded. "Hi," he said. "I see you've already met the important people here."

I returned the cat to the couch and shook his proffered hand. "I'm looking for a man," I said. I told them his name. "I heard you might know -- "



"Oh, they were here just yesterday," the woman said. "You should've told me -- on the phone, I mean. I coulda told you and saved you the trip."

Her husband amplified: "They just drove in from Chicago. It's really sad. They're breaking up." He smiled ruefully. "I introduced them to each other just -- well, not much over a year ago."

"They gave us a bunch of kitchen stuff," the young woman said.

"He gave me a suit," he added. "You wouldn't think of it fitting, but our arms and legs are pretty much the same length. It's his torso that's shorter."

"They're heading out to Los Angeles," she said. "Driving out in that car."

"Hope they make it," he said.

"Have they left already?" I asked.

He shook his head. "I don't think so. Not yet. He has business here to wrap up. See his agent, see a couple editors -- "

"He's a writer?" I asked. "Or an editor?"

"Both," they chorused together. The young man amplified. "We're all writers and editors. Both professionally and fannishly."

"'Fannishly'?" I asked.

"It's too complicated to explain," he said, shrugging. "We're all science fiction fans, too. And he writes science fiction, professionally."

"Do you, too?"

"I'd like to. I've started a couple of stories. But right now I'm a journalist. I write for jazz magazines -- like Metronome."

I'd heard of Metronome, but I usually read Down Beat. "So if I picked up a copy, I'd find you in it?"

"You sure would. I'm all over that magazine. I do a column, I do record reviews, club date reviews, book reviews -- "

"What about the man I'm looking for? Is he in Metronome too?"

"No," he said. Then he picked up a copy of a digest-sized magazine sitting on a coffee table. It was an issue of Amazing Stories. He pointed to the cover, and there was my quarry's name in big letters on the cover. "This is where you'll find him."

"Yeah, well, that's all very well, but I need to find him in person. Any idea where he is now?"

The young woman said, "You could try Linda's."

"That would be Linda Solomon? Just up the street?"

"Yeah," her husband said. "He used to live in that building. Back before the job in Evanston. He stayed with us for a month or so and then he bribed the doorman and got an apartment there. That's how he met Linda. She's also a writer."

"A very good-looking writer," his wife added.

• • •

She certainly was. I gave her name at the desk in the lobby and she was home and said I could come up. An elevator took me up to her floor and if I was breathless when she opened the door, it had nothing to do with the trip up.

Miss Solomon was in her early thirties -- older by nearly ten years than the young couple down the street -- and wore her dark hair to her shoulders. She was dressed in what I can only call elegant casual -- simple but expensive clothes. Her apartment matched her attire. Only a set of four unmatched suitcases in her foyer clashed with the décor.

She looked me up and down. "You'll have to forgive me," she said with a coquettish smile. "I've never before met a real private detective. You don't look much like the ones on TV."

For one split second I entertained the notion of suggesting we go out for a drink. Then I remembered that I was years older and that this was just another job. And for all I knew, Miss Solomon greeted every stranger this warmly. So I told her why I was there.

"He's here," she said. "Oh, not right now, but he's staying here." She gestured at the suitcases. "Billie and her son are staying at her mother's place in Queens, but he'll be back here, sooner or later."

I looked at the suitcases. They looked packed and ready to go. She answered my unasked question. "He's totally organized. Every morning he packs up everything. Says he doesn't want to be in my way." I realized the smaller fourth suitcase wasn't. It was a portable typewriter.

"He use that thing while he's here?" I asked.

"As a matter of fact, yes. He wrote a complete story on it last night. He insisted on reading it to me, every three or four pages, while he was writing it." She gave me a rueful grin, like I should sympathize with her, and then admitted, "It was pretty good, actually."

"Science fiction?" I asked.

"No," she said. "It was called -- what was it called? 'Robert White for the Greater Good,' I think it was. Contemporary. Race relations, you know?"

"So what do you suggest?" I asked. "I come back here later...?"

"Or you could wait around," she said. "Could I get you something to drink?"

• • •

I was still there two hours later when my man used a key to enter Miss Solomon's apartment. We were listening to an old Mildred Bailey cut on a sampler album of vintage jazz when the door flew dramatically open.

"Wow! Shit! That's Mildred Bailey!" exclaimed a short wiry man who seemed to explode into the room and fill it with his presence. "That's John Lewis's band, right?"

"Actually, no," I said. "John Kirby's." I rose from the couch, glad there were no obvious signs on either Miss Solomon or myself of what we'd spent the previous couple of hours doing, and thrust my hand out and introduced myself.

His grip was very firm. Close up he wasn't more than half my size, but he seemed bigger. It was the energy that seemed to emanate from him, all but shooting off sparks. And he talked a mile a minute.

"Kirby? Nah! Gotta be Lewis. I know it's John Lewis! Lemme see the album jacket, sweetheart."

"That's pre-World War Two," I said, mildly. "John Lewis wasn't working professionally before the war. Got his start in the Army band."

"What? Are you sure? Nah, can't be. Lemme see that, honey." He grabbed the jacket out of Miss Solomon's hands and started scanning the small print on its back eagerly. "Gotta be John Lewis, gotta be! Lessee, where is it? I'll bet you anything!" Then, his attention focused, his face fell as he read the liner notes for the Mildred Bailey track. "Well, fuck! I guess you're right...."

His clouded expression cleared. "So, okay," he said. "You wanted to see me, and here I am. What's it about?"

.....
"It's not in his interest to over-egg the pudding."

WHITE

I told him. In a dramatic gesture he smote his brow and exclaimed, "Oh, damn! I knew I was forgetting something! I promised her, too! Well, hell. I'll have to do something about that. Listen, you doing anything later? Tonight, I mean?"

I'd been mulling some ideas, but nothing had jelled yet, so I shook my head.

"I'm going to a party, just down the street." He named the young couple I'd visited at 107 Christopher. "They're throwing a small impromptu party for me. This is my last night in town. Tomorrow I'm heading west. You come to that party and I'll give you the piece for Lee."

"'Lee'?" I asked.

"Lee -- Shirley -- same person." His face grew sober, intent. "Listen, Lee is one of the best people in the whole world. I would do anything for her. Anything! I will not let her down! You can bank on that!"

"Will she be at the party?" I asked.

"She doesn't go out much," he said. "Not the partying type. But you be there and I'll give you my piece for her."

"Is there some reason you can't just give it to her yourself?"

"Yeah. There is. But I'm not gonna share it with you, okay?" He walked me to the apartment door, his body language expressing an impatience to be rid of me right then. He opened the door for me.

I looked over him at Miss Solomon. She gave me a wink. I think that is the very first time a woman has ever actually winked at me.

• • •

Dinner was two hot dogs with mustard at Needick's, standing up. But a couple of hours after that I ponderously climbed the four flights of stairs at 107 Christopher for a second time.

This time I could hear music -- more jazz, but contemporary, Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" -- and voices as I approached the apartment door. When I knocked, the same young woman opened the door, this time giving me a wide smile of recognition.

"He said you'd be back," she said in greeting. "Come on in."

There were maybe a dozen people in the apartment. The French doors were both wide open, effectively doubling the size of the living room, and people were wandering through both rooms, talking over the music blaring from a hi-fi system. Most of them were young -- teens or just post-teens -- and most of them were male. In addition to our hostess I saw Miss Solomon and one other woman, a middle-aged woman who was talking animatedly with my man.

He looked up at my entrance -- I was not only probably the oldest person there but the biggest -- and a guilty look flickered briefly across his face. "I'm sorry, Noreen," he said to the woman next to him, "but I made a promise and it's time to make good on that promise." He nodded at me. "Hold your horses, big guy."

He turned to address the room, and at that provident moment the record ended and there was a momentary silence in conversation. "Okay, guys," he announced, his voice drawing everyone's attention. "You all know that I started a serial in Science-Fiction Five-Yearly #2. And now the next installment's due. This big guy is a local enforcer" -- he gestured at me and there was nervous laughter from a couple of the younger guys who looked like high school kids -- "here to see that I do it." There was ragged applause.

"That's what you need, all right," said our host, the skinny bearded guy. "You need an enforcer!" Everyone laughed.

"Can I use your typer, Ted?"

"Sure. What do you need? Paper's in the first drawer on your right, carbon's in the second drawer."

"That'll do me." And with that, the party still swirling around him, my guy settled in at the typewriter on the desk, assembled a sandwich of paper and carbons, rolled it into the Underwood manual, and began to write. He wrote in quick staccato bursts, his fingers flying on the keyboard, the only punctuation his occasional bark of laughter at what he'd written.

Less than twenty minutes later he pulled the final page from the typewriter, and began collating the original and two carbon copies into three neat stacks. Later, when I looked at the manuscript he'd given me, I saw that it was impeccably typed, error free.

One of the high school kids asked him, "You gonna read it to us now?" Apparently this was not the first time my guy had written something in the middle of a party, and those who were there had expectations.

"Normally I would," he said. "Normally I would, but not this time. This is for the Hoffwoman. This is special. You'll get to read this installment when she publishes it. You gotta wait."

And with that, he handed me the original copy of the manuscript. I folded it in thirds and tucked it into my jacket's inside pocket, and thanked him.

"That was pretty neat," I told him. "Good party trick."

He laughed. "My pleasure, man. My pleasure."

I looked into the other room. Miss Solomon was surrounded by teenaged boys. Their tongues were all but hanging out. She looked up and our eyes locked and we exchanged brief grins. I knew I'd be seeing her again, after the suitcases were gone from her foyer. That was something to look forward to, after I'd delivered the manuscript.

And I wondered if I'd run into my guy again, sometime. He seemed like somebody I'd be hearing about, one way or another.



Returned reborn, refurbished, reinvigorated, that miracle of artistic pandiculation, eons in presentation, unarguably THE LONGEST-RUNNING SF SERIAL in the history of the Fantasyesque Genre

!N!S!S!A!S!A!

by the incredibly humble SFWA Grand Master and cultural icon, HARLAN ELLISON
writing as

NALRAH NOSILLE

SYNOPSIS OF WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE:

Horstmann, heir to an unsavory past, has been ripped untimely from the womb of Time and Space, hurled sidewise and also heretofore into "another place"

where, for going on fifty years, he's had the shit kicked outta him. Without even the formality of decent references, Floyd Aaron Horstmann (AKA FAH, an anagram of the initials of a human pus-bag I despise) now serves the frightful Dorgla in his jihad against the Scourge of the Seven Planets (reduced from eleven). But is Dorgla good, or is Dorgla evil? FAH hasn't had a quiet moment's respite even to consider *that*, so you can expect just a whole lot of twists and turns and betrayals worthy of *The Da Vinci Code*, which would've been a very short story if Sophie's bogus grandfather had just taken her aside and said, "Listen, kiddo, you are the Holy Grail. Let me take you down into the sub-sub-basement of the Templar Motel and show you all these really nifty papyri, et al, that go back -- we are told -- to the time of Christ, so you'll see I'm not just making this crap up,. But he didn't, and he made megabucks, even if the story makes about as much sense as trying to figure out who killed the chauffeur in that Raymond Chandler novel. Anyhow...twists and turns, including FAH's mission to slay The Tainted One, the Ring of Silence, the Whip With A Million Eyes (reduced from googleplex to the 9th power), and Horstmann's journeys through the Seven Valleys of Pain (reduced from...oh never mind) starting with the dreaded Gulf of Weariness where FAH has faced one ugly manifestation of a sick mind after another, awaiting the appearance of Rogoth who turns out to be (twist'n'turn) The Tainted One hisownself! But Rogoth has set Klamath, High Regelux of Xxor to impede FAH's progress. Sort of like trying to get Visa or MasterCard to eliminate a bogus charge made by some junkie wank who went through the dumpster behind the Takanawa sushi joint on Santa Monica, and came up with all the improperly-disgorged credit card slips, and bought eleven hundred bucks' worth of really hardcore porn videos in your name so that the CIA and the moronic Patriot Act assholes put you on their Most Wanted List and killed your credit. Just like that, only with more side-bar appurtenances like poisonous flying bat-winged pteranodons. Just like that. Six more Valleys of Pain later, Horstmann has finally reached the Tower of Tolkien (pronounced Zetzfleisch) wherein lie the fabled Nards of Noblesse, a registered trademark of the Oblige Corporation, Ltd. Meanwhile, over in another story entirely, a *real* story for which the Author is being paid, as opposed to this freebie crap that they wait till the goddam five years is just

about up before they importune me to rush rush rush
and get great literature written on a weekend when
I'm sick as a garbage fly with stomach flu, over
there in *that* story, FAH appears in *trompe l'oeil*
guise and within the folds of the plot of *that*
story, for which I'm being paid BIG BUCKS, I've
hidden the Da Vinci-like secret of *this* story!
Eat'cher heart out, but...

Flex on into the fescennine

CHAPTER 12

of

by

NALRAH
NOSILLE

INISSASSA

THE SYNAPSES-SQUASHING SIX-PART
INTERGALACTIC ACTION-ADVENTURE SERIAL



Certain death penultimated its cacophonous threnody of unpleasantoid voluptuosity as FAH fell back in simulated agoraphobia. He gagged. The miasma o'er-hanging the village was mind-numbing. Also, not so terrific on the suede shoes. Dorgla, cunningness incarnate, had chosen well in selecting the Black Amortizers as her paladins. Their powers to make all within their sphere puke their guts out was altogether not such a cute multiple-choice.

FAH stared across the greensward, over the rills and leas, under the orts and contrariwise beyond the festoons, binocularly evaluating the distance between himself and the Tower of Tolkien. And even as he tried to keep his gorge from becoming buoyant, he felt his suede shoes dissolving from the fetid Amortization spell.

His feet were now bare.

Hair began to sprout from the flesh.

He looked with horror on the mutation.

Soon, if he didn't free himself of this venue, he would be no more viable than a review on television by a chimp like Richard Roeper, who actually thinks *Night of the Living Dead* is a movie worth a pinch of saltpeter.



Hobbiting slantwise in desperation, FAH brought forth the Ring of Silence. "What the hell are you actually good for?" he heard himself ask no one in particular.

"Bitch bitch bitch, that's all you do," said the Ring.

"I thought you were supposed to be Silent?" FAH snapped, snarling, whistling a whine and a whoop.

"Who can sleep with all that kvetching going on?" the Ring MOMA'd.

"Can you help me?"

"I could."

"Whaddaya mean, 'I could'?" FAH was now puking and growing more hirsute by the second, standing there at the edge of the Amortizer's fastness below the Tower where the Nards were festering in their own Lea & Perrins. "Will you, or won't you?"

"I think not," said the Ring, yawning costumejewelishly.

And it went back to sleep, abandoning Floyd Aaron Horstmann, hero stymied, in a pickle I really don't see how he can outcome.

BUT WAIT!!! IT'S ONLY FIVE MORE YEARS IF THE AUTHOR DON'T CROAK FIRST, TILL

THE STUPEFASCIENT CHAPTER 13!!

(DON'T LET IT CROSS YOUR PATH)

breathlessly titled

**LA CORTA NOTTE DELLE
BAMBOLE DI VETRO**

or,

**SIX COFFINS
FOR SCORPIO SEVEN**

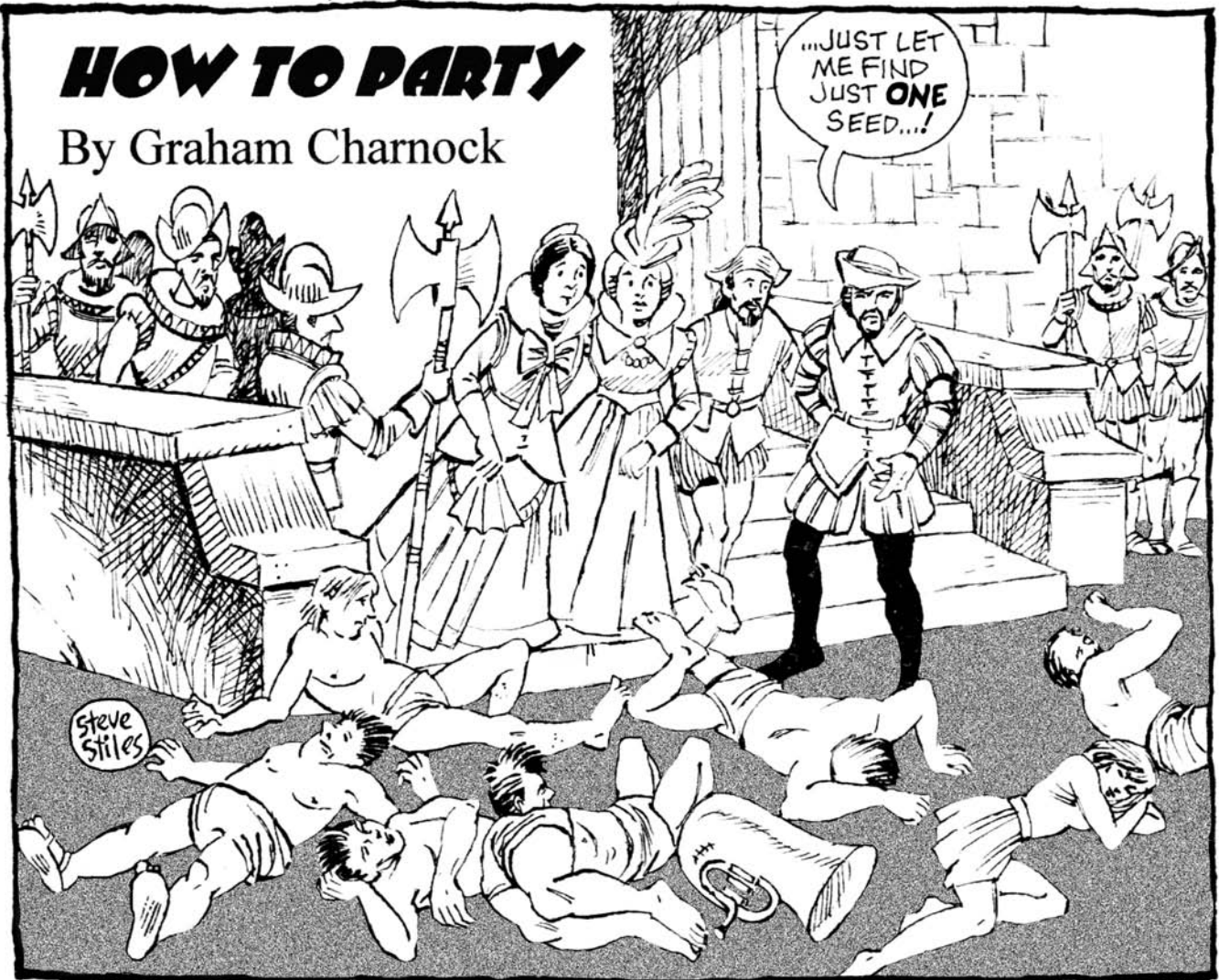
or,

**SEVEN SCORPIOS
FOR COFFIN SIX**

with Jude Law as Coffin

HOW TO PARTY

By Graham Charnock



What a strange thing about which for me to attempt to write an article. Graham Charnock and Party Animal are I guess, two terms that nobody would normally put together unless one of them were suffering from an abnormally large cyst upon the brain, or was in fact a Capybara, the largest living rodent. But let us see if we can tease some cheesy threads of fantasy from this Cheddar bedrock of truth.

This history of How to Party, throughout fandom and beyond and before, over the course of thirty years, from my own personal perspective, will probably start on any meaningful level in 1967 when I was twenty-one years old. But don't count on it.

Before that, where I was born and brought up, in Alpertown, just outside Wembley, in what in those dim and distant years used to be called Middlesex, but which has since become Greater London (although how much greater that might be, one might dare ask, than the original London? Well not much from my point of view, but that is a broader issue we need not touch upon here). I can only recall one party, the one in 1946 which greeted my birth. My mother stuck tiny rabbit ears to the side of her head and my father danced, possibly for the first and last time in his life. Well, I can dream.

EARLY YEARS:

We didn't party much in our family in Alperton. The war was over so after all there wasn't much else to celebrate any more. Sure we would occasionally, every alternate year, celebrate Christmas, when my mother would open a bottle of Babycham and my father would open a bottle of Mackeson's stout. They wouldn't drink them, just open them and leave them on the sideboard. We would then eat cheese and biscuits and that was about it. One year my father gave me several lead farmyard animals which I found very chewable. We cooked with aluminum utensils and our garden shed had flaking blue asbestos on the roof. And to think they ban such things these days. Obviously none of this did me any harm, and possibly only enhanced my ability to party later in life. Thanks, Dad.

THE TEENAGE INTERSECT:

Just before I left sixth form at school there was an abortive attempt at a party organized by my friend Richard Miles, at once a strangely boring and yet strangely charismatic figure who later went on to become something in insurance, probably the something you wipe off the sole of your shoe after just stepping in it.

This party took place in a house where the parents had predictably gone away for the weekend, leaving us rampant sexual young gods in the company of a handful of rather bored girls who would obviously rather have been somewhere else, riding horses or something of that kind.

It was here I got my first snog. Well, kiss. Well, actually the grim experience of trying to kiss a girl who was determined to keep her mouth shut, her lips together and her teeth tightly clenched, and holding her breath while she did so. What disease she thought I was trying to pass on to her, I cannot imagine.

I think we drank cider and listened to 'pop' music on a Dansette Portable. The party broke up at about five o'clock in the afternoon because we all had to go home for tea, but not before Richard and his date disappeared into a bedroom for ten minutes and came out smiling smugly.

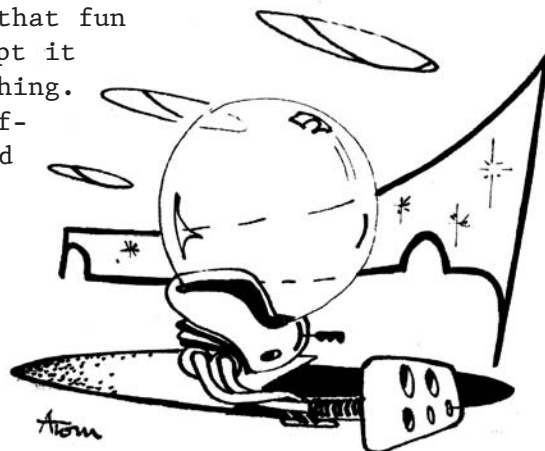
I was later to learn that Richard's 'date' was his on-going girl-next-door friend who he had met when he was twelve. So he had it made. I was the best man at their wedding much later. Another kind of party. At which I tried to cop off with a bridesmaid, and even took her out a few times before discovering she still held a candle for yet another different schoolfriend.

She ditched me with a sorrowful letter and later married her hero, and then, as I discovered through Friendsreunited (what a misnomer -- should be called FriendYouRealizedYouNeverLikedintheFirstPlace) she divorced him. All of human tragedy revolves around parties such as these. If she'd stuck with me and I had married her, history would of course be much different, and would probably have involved even more divorces, but fewer visits to America. So it goes.

THE FANDOM INTERSECT:

I don't know when my first convention was. Long term memory deficiency has blocked it out. Can anyone remember me at Buxton? Well that was probably it then. Whatever it was it wasn't a party, not unless you count wandering desolate corridors at three AM looking for fun, or at least some kind of life, other than a cockroach, a party.

I always figured in these early con days that fun and parties were just around the corner, except it was never the corner I happened to be approaching. Usually at those corners there was a huge Gelf-Lord with a light sabre blocking my way. Mind you I could be a bit exclusive. People would rush up to me and say, 'Hey, party in room 106', and I would reply 'Yes, but I'm in room 204'. Maybe I just didn't get the point. And so I tend to remember more the parties I wasn't at rather than the ones I was at, but perhaps that was a different issue also. In the morning people would come up to me and say, 'Hey, great party last night. You were great.' 'No, I would tell them, you are confusing me with Roy Kettle. I was on my own in room 204.'



I remember during my years of con-going nearly attending several parties without actually achieving consummation. Once I wandered into a room where the door had been left open. I was thirty and dehydrated and thought I might find some water. My feet were aching from wandering the corridors endlessly and I had to find somewhere to discreetly jettison the foam gel insteps I had foolishly bought from Boots The Chemist the previous day. Hardly had I sat down than I found myself surrounded by Little Jimmie Robertson, who was quite little in those days but still big enough to surround me.

'Great party,' he said except in his peculiar Scottish lingo. More people arrived, Rob Holdstock, Greg Pickersgill, Roy Kettle, and I realized I was in danger of being trapped in a real party, where people were expected to talk wittily and then cop off with any unattached female that was going. I checked my watch. It was eight o'clock. Way past my bedtime. I made my excuses and left. Later that night, or earlier in the morning, I was woken up by people battering on my hotel door screaming, 'Get up, Charnock. We know what you are up to in there.' (I may have got this sequence of events slightly reversed, in that it may have involved me beating on Roy Kettle's bedroom door. Or Rob Holdstock's. Or anyone's, who had actually been witty and copped off with someone.)

Round about this time, determined to party at a strange convention held on a University campus, I found myself cold and hungry with the munchies, in a field overlooking Brian Burgess's room. He was naked, and there was nary a pork pie in sight, and he was beckoning me from his window to join him. This might just have been a horrible dream brought on by too much cannabis but I suspect it wasn't. Needless to say I declined his offer of social companionship. Now if he'd waved a pork pie at me the anecdote could have had a different outcome.

And so it wasn't until 1869 (possibly I'm wrong about this) that I went to my first real party. I'd fallen in with a scurrilous group of people known as Ratfandom, who were much younger than me (some by several years) but, what the heck, they were an open-minded crew and didn't seem to care about hanging out with geriatrics.

.....

*"To all of you visiting friends and family over the Holiday:
drive fast, take chances."*

"And sign your organ donor cards!"
.....



I also coincidentally about this time had a real life which involved an axis of science fiction publishing ruled by Charles Platt and Mike Moorcock, in that order. The party in question was organized by Charles. I also had a day job reviewing albums for Oz Magazine and had come into possession of the hot off the press Who album 'Tommy'. Platt insisted I bring it along with me, 'or else you can't come' was how I believe he put it. In Platt's kitchen at 290 Portobello Road I experienced many strange wonders including a very drunk Mike Moorcock haranguing an equally drunk Roy Kettle who had just dropped a very large bottle of wine on the floor, I believe a demi-magnum, shattering it and releasing not only a large volume of red wine but a huge ululation from those who realized they would never get to drink it. Chris Priest was at that party and so was my future wife, because I had invited her, after having met her at work at the local County Court and wondering not only at the expanse of long lithe legs revealed by her hot pants, but how anyone could get away

with wearing stuff like that in the civil service. Pat pretended very early in the evening to be very drunk and sick and thus conned Chris, who was still amazingly sober or possibly less amazingly drunk, to drive her back to her home in Neasden, North London in his Triumph Herald. Me too. I stayed on the couch in her parent's front room and was awoken the next morning by them prodding me to discover a) who I was and b) whether I was still alive. This is a habit which has in fact lingered on with Pat to this day.

THE MEDIA INTERSECT:

There is a special kind of party I have to talk about here called a book launch. One of the things I soon learnt about this kind of party in particular was not to talk to anyone, especially if you weren't sure who they were. Especially don't go to a book launch for Neil Gaiman and mistake Charles Shaar Murray for Mick Farren. It can end up in endless confusion which always results in whoever you are talking to thinking you are An Asshole. But then there is never any guarantee at any party, I find, that this will not happen. I have had this problem in the past with Brian Aldiss, Samuel R. Delany, Langdon Jones, Terry Pratchett* and more other authors than you could tip into a cocked hat. (Neil Gaiman, by the way, is one of the best Partygoers I have ever met, humble, self-effacing, and far more likely to talk to you about the weather than his professional achievements.)

* Terry deserves his own moment of glory in this history of parties. I was in a group of three talking to him in Rob Holdstock's kitchen. One of them was Rob and the other was A.N. Other Famous Writer. Rob got so bored with Terry he made one of his 'must circulate' excuses to leave. Chris Evans couldn't be bothered to think of an imaginative excuse so decided to go to the bathroom. Which left me and Terry. Whereupon Terry turned away and started talking to Rob's cat, Finnegan, who was perched nearby on a radiator. I could kind of understand it, I guess. Finnegan was always a better conversationalist than me. A few minutes later I saw Finnegan shuffle nervously out of the room, casting a look of horror back over his shoulder.

THE ROB HOLDSTOCK INTERSECT:

Unfortunately I live a few blocks away (in US lingo talk) from Rob Holdstock, so frequently find myself invisited to whatever social occasions are happening at his place. We used to play Badminton together every week for many years until old age caught up with us and although the after badminton experiences could hardly be called parties, they could always be called orgies. Something about the pheromones and natural endorphins released by physical exercise resulted in most of us rutting all night, only awaking bleary eyed to see John Brosnan, who had remained strangely sober, spouting forth on the stupidity of homeopathy. These days Rob events are becoming increasingly rare as financial straits hamper his overwhelming urge to party, and indeed orgy, but presumably this will change as soon as he sells his next novel and receives his biennial big fat cheque. Rob is very houseproud, despite the fact that he doesn't really have a house that he can be proud of, so frequently he would object when we spilt red wine on his beige carpet. I can't understand a man who would do that myself. I mean buy a beige carpet.

THE REAL ORGY INTERSECT:

There are many different sorts of parties of course. And I should probably venture some comments on the more salacious ones. I believe what is popularly called an 'orgy' is one of them. I've never participated in one of these, unless you count Rob's pretend orgies, and a certain episode involving wet fish when I was eking out a living as a male stripper. Orgy is of course a fairly loose term, and is probably essentially defined by your own social and sexual proclivities. Is a hen party at a pub lock-out an orgy or just bored housewives interested in comparative anatomy? Is a party where people dress up in costumes of either a voluptuous or bondage-based variety and parade before each other, an orgy or a fancy dress parade? Depends if prizes are given out, I guess. I once interviewed a young lady, experienced in such matters and wishing only to be known as LK, about orgies, and she reported that in her experience the main criteria seemed to be the willingness of people to pile one on top of another, not necessarily naked, and giggle a lot. I can only presume, knowing the habits of the people involved, that a certain amount of hash brownies were consumed as a preliminary to the particular event of which she spoke.

THE DEATH INTERSECT:

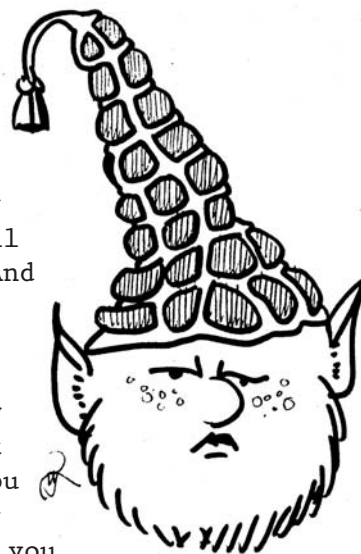
Parties happen subsequent to unhappy occurrences as well as happy ones of course, such as those which follow the death of an individual. Unfortunately there have been too many of these in recent years, and too many to pass over without comment. When John Brosnan died many people took this as an excuse to get together and drink until they were senseless, but we won't go into the behaviour of my son, James, on this occasion. Suffice to say as I left the Italian House late that night I looked up at the starry skies and had a vision of John gazing down benignly on me and saying, 'Thank God I didn't have to pay for that. And mine's a whisky.'

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*"Sexual freedom through all edible,
 certified organic edible underwear."*

-- Kale Libration Front

THE AFTER WORK INTERSECT:

Of course we all must be in agreement that the worst of all possible parties is the after work leaving do. There is usually a tab so everybody gets much drunker than they should, and then begin to wonder why they are there at all when they really don't like the person who is leaving. And never have. Later in the progress of drunkenness there will inevitably come a compulsion to share this view with the person concerned, who will not only not perceive your underlying hatred, but will gush over you in terms of how you were always the one he liked best and you really must keep in touch, even though you both know either one of you would be perfectly happy if the other walked out the door and under a bus. If you are lucky you will get so drunk you will be able to face your colleagues the next morning safe and secure behind a barricade of total amnesia. If you are unlucky, you won't.



THE JOSEPH NICHOLAS INTERSECT:

Whatever you do, I have learnt, never turn up for a Joseph Nicholas party the day before it is due to happen. He and someone called Judith Hanna will only laugh at you and turn you and your bottle of Tequila away from their door. The next day it is safe to turn up, and you will meet a broad spectrum of interesting people, many of them Americans fleeing from the horror of a recent Worldcon in Glasgow of all places, and at least one of them will be Rob Hansen, and another, Alun Harries. Be very afraid if one of the guests has recently won a Hugo for best fanzine because he/she will fondle it on every occasion, and also drink a lot of your Tequila. You can try engaging her partner in conversation but he will probably only glower at you. If the Americans are named Jerry Kaufman, you can safely ignore them because amazingly you will later meet them several years later in Seattle, should you choose to go there for another Party.

THE SEATTLE INTERSECT:

If you want to party in Seattle just ring up an escort agency. Your hotel commissar will give you a number. To quote Z.Z. Top, they have lots of pretty girls out there. On no account contact John D. Berry or Randy Byers. They will totally misunderstand what drives your desire to 'party' and drag you across town to a house in some obscure suburb owned by Andy Hooper (that's the house, not the suburb). Here you will be plied with drink and other substances and soon be reduced to spouting gibberish and filming yourself doing it. You will meet bizarre and yet also mundane people, including Jerry Kaufman, and a sinister gibbering dwarf named Victor, and in fact the experience will probably mirror every party you ever went to over the last thirty years, especially the ones where you wished you had remained sober. So it goes. And so it goes around. Will we dedicated party-goers never learn?

Well, I'm done, as the Actress said to the Bishop. The moral: Partying can be good if you trust the people you are partying with. I guess that's the bottom line. I've had quite good experiences along these lines quite recently in Harringey, Tottenham, Newcastle, York and Wiltshire, and Seattle and San Francisco. No names, no pack drill. As Kool & The Gang would exhort you: Celebrate!



SCIENCE-FICTIONAL FAMILY TIES?

BY CHRISTINA LAKE

I've often considered writing a fanzine article about my great-grandfather Walter Low. Not because he was a Hungarian Jew, son of an exiled revolutionary, interesting as that may be to me, but because he was an early friend of H G Wells. I knew through my family that Walter and Bertie worked together on a journal called the *Educational Times*. It pleased me to think that this early journalistic endeavour might not be so unlike "pubbing their ish" and that perhaps they were producing the *Chunga* of their generation. Maybe Walter even gave Bertie a few ideas for his early novels? What hot-blooded fan wouldn't want to claim a family friendship with the father of science fiction, even if at several generations removed?

I once mentioned the whole thing to Moshe Feder and he thought it was pretty cool. Not my embellishments, but that my great grandfather and Wells had hung out together as young men. Not that young men hung out in those days, or at least if they did, they didn't call it that.

The trouble was, there wasn't much more to say. H G Wells knew my great-grandfather. End of story. So what?

I'd read somewhere that one of the characters in the book *Tono-Bungay* was supposed to be based on my great-grandfather. I think it would be fair to say that *Tono-Bungay* is not one of Wells's best known novels. Not up there with *War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine* or even the non-sfnal end of the Wellsian oeuvre, beloved of school teachers, such as *Kipps* or the *History of Mr Polly*.

Indeed it took me a while to track down a copy of *Tono-Bungay* and when I did I was rather put off by the weighty binding and small print, not to mention the fact that it cohabited its volume with a serious polemical work by Wells called *A Modern Utopia*. After browsing through a few pages, I decided to put it aside for a more auspicious occasion, and didn't pick it up again till last summer. Luckily for me it wasn't nearly as hard-going as I'd feared. There were some typical elements of the Wellsian realist novel -- young man gets apprenticed into dull job, marries the wrong woman and sinks into poverty -- but it was really a semi-autobiographical version of Wells's own escape from dull jobs into a more interesting world where he and his uncle come to make a huge fortune by selling a fake medicine, the Tono-Bungay of the title (not, I hasten to add, that I'm implying the swindling part was meant to be semi-autobiographical, unless it can be taken as some oblique comment on Wells's writing career.)

Although the book doesn't contain aliens or time travel, it does involve attempts at developing a flying machine and a bizarre adventure section where the narrator takes off in a dodgy boat to steal some "quap" (highly radioactive material that causes anyone who stays within close contact with it "to die, eaten up mysteriously like a leper") in a last ditch attempt to salvage his fortune. Naturally this all turns to the bad, and the radioactive quap eventually rots through the fabric of the boat and sinks to the bottom of the ocean, leaving the hero bankrupt.

The character in the book alleged to be based on my great-grandfather was Bob Ewart, the narrator's school-friend. The Ewart character is introduced in positive vein as a friend who had lasted his life out, but the portrait goes downhill from there. Sculptor and free-thinker though he is, he is also portrayed as the "embodiment of talk" without action and an unsatisfactory moral influence. It gets worse, he is indolent and penniless, sponges off a prostitute, and turns up to drink sixpenny Chianti with an unaccountable black eye. He comes back from Paris wearing ridiculous artist clothes. But somehow his "unfortunate disposition to irony" and a "sympathetic sort of lunacy" help him survive the savagings of the plot and he continues throughout the book to represent the wild and radical thinking of the unfettered mind. Even so, I wasn't too sure I wanted to claim this man as my great-grandfather!

Of course, by the time I'd finally read the book, I'd forgotten where I'd heard about the connection between Ewart and Walter Low. Maybe I'd just imagined it? I put the question on the back burner and didn't think about it again until early this summer when my partner Doug Bell and I were at the Trowbridge Village Pump folk festival. I'm not a huge fan of folk music though through repeated exposure I am getting to be more knowledgeable and to appreciate the more accessible end of the folk spectrum such as The Oyster Band and of course the incomparable Richard Thompson. This year's headliners were

.....
"We're best friends now. I know how to rip his guts out."

Suzanne Vega and The Waterboys (I never realised the Waterboys were folk, and have to say that their tendency towards extended electric guitar solos came as something of a relief after so much noodling around on dulcimers and the like by earlier bands). Though the real show-stoppers were full-on ska/salsa/rock/reggae band Los de Abajo from Mexico City to whom we danced non-stop till we dropped, and even then the band were still leaping around the stage in a high energy frenzy which wouldn't be balked by frantic time-out signals from the organizers. In the end, rather than stop, they broke through the fourth wall and marched down from the stage into the audience to play their last number. It was awesome.

Anyway, as I was saying, I'm not a huge fan of folk music, so normally I bring a book to read for those mellow afternoon moments when you're sitting in a tent, a pint of beer at your side, chilling out to some harpist or female singer-songwriter. My festival book was the autobiography of the late great British DJ John Peel, which was a bit of a liability as the book was desperately poignant, and when read in combination with alcohol and music kept making me want to cry. Doug, despite liking folk much more than I do, also had a music-related book with him -- *White Bicycles* by Joe Boyd, telling of Boyd's career in the music business, producing bands such as Pink Floyd and Fairport Convention (not, as I had thought from my naïve and ignorant British '70s rock perspective, a book about the band Nazareth who had a hit with "My White Bicycle" in that era!)

Walking back to the campsite to get changed for the evening, Doug told me an anecdote from his book. Apparently Boyd was briefly imprisoned on a drugs charge (as counterculture heroes often are!) and one of the only books he was able to get hold of was, yes, *Tono-Bungay*. When he was released from prison, the first bus he spotted was going to Highgate Cemetery, a place where the book's lead character used to go to contemplate life. On a whim, he took the bus to the cemetery, and was contemplating the vagaries of life himself, when he realised that the names on the two tombstones in front of him, dating from the 1890s, were transposed versions of the names of the two main characters in *Tono-Bungay*.

This little nugget of information got me quite excited. What if one of those graves was my great-grandfather's? Ewart is close to being an anagram of Walter, and Walter Low did die in London in the 1890s from pneumonia following a bout of flu. In which case, what would be the name on the grave next to his? Back home after the festival, I dug out the book to see if I could find out more, maybe a character whose name contained the missing letters from Walter Low's. Naturally it wasn't that simple. The main character in the story had the unusual surname of Ponderevo. It occurred to me immediately that this must be another anagram. I set about rearranging the letters on the back of an envelope, confident that some sound and obvious English name would come out. Instead I found myself writing down nonsensical arrangements, the best of which were the equally outlandish Pedro





Oven and Devon Rope. Perhaps Ponderevo was a dead end after all? In which case what on earth was the name on the other gravestone? All the main characters were called Ponderevo as far as I could see, apart from Ewart. There was Gordon-Nasmyth, the explorer who found the quap, but he only appears a couple of times in the book. And the principle women -- Marion and Beatrice -- didn't sound very anagrammatic.

Eventually in exasperation I ordered Wells's autobiography from Exeter University library. One of the few perks of my current job is that previously unobtainable books are now at my beck and call, so a couple of days later Volume 1 turned up in the box from Exeter, sporting a shabby red binding dating from the mid-1960s. Judging by the library stamps it'd not been borrowed in nearly 15 years. Lucky for me that Exeter University don't have a tough discard policy!

I flicked through it straight away looking for my great-grandfather's name -- and found it towards the end of the book, in a chapter called Collapse into Literary Journalism. I was very excited to see several paragraphs about my great-grandfather, starting with the words: "Both Walter Low and I were very sarcastic young men, and we had excellent reason so to be." It took me a bit more reading to find out what they were being sarcastic about, which was helping students to pass exams. Not so nefarious, you might think, but in fact they were devising material for a correspondence course operation which got its results through drilling students in model answers to likely exam questions, rather than by teaching them the subject. Wells, a great proponent of the value of learning, came to find this somewhat scandalous. The other scam they had going was that Walter Low was paid £50 to edit the Educational Times, and had a budget of £50 for contributors. As Wells said: "He and I found it convenient that I should be the contributors -- all of them."

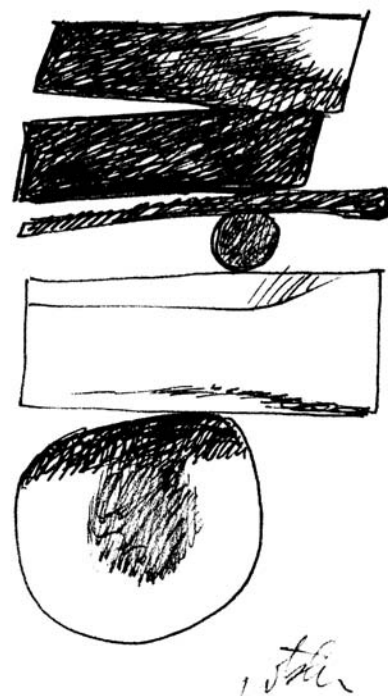
So, perhaps my great-grandfather was turning out to be of no greater moral fibre than Bob Ewart, though at least there was no hint of living off prostitutes. In fact Wells seems to have derived a lot of fellow feeling from the fact that they were both recently married, and that neither marriage quite lived up to their expectations. He talks of them prowling about London (so that's what "hanging out" was called in those days), sharpening their wits with talk. Apparently Walter Low was "mystical and deliberate", with an extensive knowledge of foreign languages, and, something I didn't know, a keen interest in the "Jewish question" (though I shouldn't be surprised since Walter's sister Edith later became an active Zionist). Best of all, Wells credits Low with influencing him to start writing again, though I'm not sure if this was through encouragement, or emulation. Having now read Volume 1 of the autobiography, and most of volume 2, I don't detect any hint that my great-grandfather might have shared in Wells's interest in writing about the future. Wells himself can't decide whether this development in his career was a lucky accident following his early success with *The Time Machine*, or a natural result of his strong interest in evolution and the future development of mankind. What Wells does say about Walter Low's influence was that he learned journalistic

savoir faire from him, dexterity in swinging into a subject and a variety of useful phrases and methods of reviewing. That's good enough for me! The Educational Times may not have been *Banana Wings*, but thanks to my great-grandfather, Wells would've had no trouble producing a fluent fanzine review column!

Wells's autobiography did, in the end, have something to say about *Tono-Bungay* and the origins of Bob Ewart. It turns out that some of Ewart's set piece talks were inspired by the artist Bob Stevenson, a cousin to Robert Louis Stevenson, renowned for his stylish public speaking. Wells is quick to assert that Ewart is not a caricature of Bob, oh no, he just had Bob's style of talk grafted on to him. But maybe Wells only said that for fear of a libel suit? After all, both Ewart and Stevenson were artists, and both were called Bob. In which case, ironically, the feckless Ewart might be more related to Doug than to me since both the Stevenson family and Doug's own can trace descent from Scottish hero Rob Roy McGregor. Still, I like to think that perhaps there is a little piece of Walter Low left at the core of the character. Or perhaps Wells started off wanting to say something about his early friend Walter, but became diverted by the comic possibilities of the character he had created.

Maybe it doesn't matter whether or not Ewart was based on my great-grandfather as I found out more about him from finally reading Wells's autobiography than I would have from any tombstone, or from working out some dubious correlation between a fictional character and a real life person. But I do have one further, and last, theory in relation to the graves in Highgate Cemetery. Perhaps after all, Ponderevo wasn't an anagram (though it sounds like it damn well ought to be!) Apparently Wells and his second wife Jane used to go for walks in Highgate Cemetery in the mid-1890s as part of their wanderings around London in search of story ideas for articles. The characters in *Tono-Bungay*, as already related, also used to visit the cemetery, and on one occasion Ewart ends up saying: "We're young, Ponderevo, but sooner or later our whitened memories will wash up on one of these beaches, on some such beach as this. George Ponderevo, F.R.S, Sidney Ewart, RIP. Look at the rows of 'em." Notice how Bob Ewart has become Sidney Ewart for this one paragraph. Maybe they were simply names borrowed from the cemetery, and switched around for the purpose of the story? Perhaps if I take a trip to Highgate Cemetery next time I'm in London, I'll find that the graves belonged to George Ewart and Sidney Ponderevo?

Whatever the truth, I've a feeling I've not finished with H G Wells yet. I showed my mother the Wells autobiography, and she told me that Wells had dedicated one of his early novels to my great-grandfather. So there's something else to research! Besides, since reading two volumes of Wells's autobiography I'm becoming quite fascinated with the man, despite watching a strangely skewed BBC biopic on him at the weekend, where his career was reduced to his most outrageous utterances set between episodes of womanizing that would have put even Ewart to shame. I can see I'm going to have to borrow some more books from Exeter University library. At this rate, who knows, I may even end up writing another fanzine article about him?



The Blind Men and the Fan

© 2005 by Kip Williams

Six learned men were at a con
To logic much inclined,
And by strict observation
(Though lacking vision, mind),
Each KNEW in his own words and way
How "FAN" should be defined.

So they descended on a fan
Relaxing in a chair
As THE example to define
All fans, be they so rare.
And they set out, these learned souls,
To do so, then and there.

The First man, groping near his hand
A book encountered then,
And quickly made his own conclusion
Re: the tastes of fen.
And claimed in accents clear,
"All fans are LITERARY MEN."

Rejecting this, the Second's hand
In's pockets then did fall
And pulling out a ticket stub
Did his deduction call:
"These fans, you see," asserted he,
"Love MEDIA, that's all!"

The Third heard this impatiently,
So eager to decide,
And rummaged in his satchel.
Finding music there inside,
He made his mind up, thusly: "Why,
'Tis MUSIC that's their pride!"

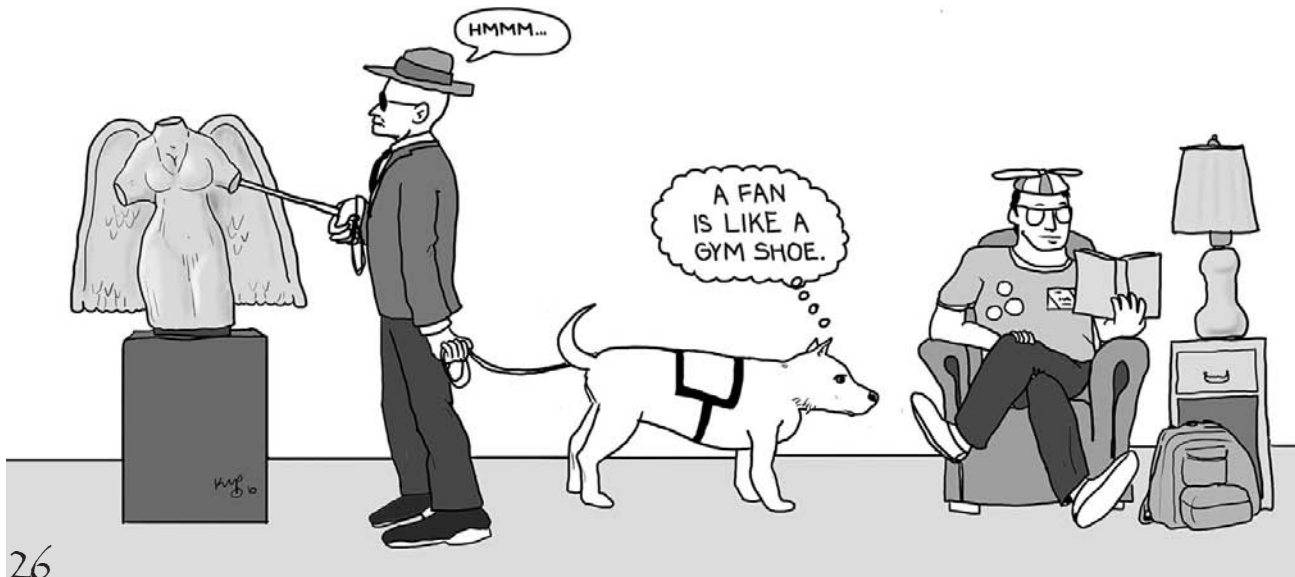
The Fourth then felt around him;
And a bag of dice did find.
And from their polyhedral forms
A thought came to his mind
And straightaway he said "FANS are
To GAMING much inclined."

The Fifth detected fingers
Fast IM'ing as they spoke,
Put two and two together
And asserted, "Okey doke--
He doesn't watch OR read the stuff,
He's just a SOCIAL bloke."

The Sixth man came to take his turn
And happening to pass
His hand against his spectacles
Deduced from out his ass
"From observation, I've confirmed
A fan's a LOOKING GLASS."

And in this like, these mighty men
Did argue through the night
Though they could not see anything,
To each, 'twas black and white.
And to this day, they shout away
Each claiming to be RIGHT.

-- after John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)
[hat tips to Harold Groot and Martin
DeMello for, you know, stuff]





Editors' Note: The United Amateur Press Association mailing of October 1911 contains this piece. Although we believe that we know well the history of our genre and the fandom it has inspired, obviously there is still research to be done.

The teeming streets of Lower Manhattan were notable primarily for the squalor exhibited there. Inhabited to a large degree by recent immigrants from the less cultivated outbacks of Europe, the Bowery may have seemed an odd choice as the place to hold The Third Annual Conference for Fanciers of Works of Scientific Romance, or LowEastCon as it was abbreviated (and, by some wags, even more tersely put as LeastCon), but it may have been appropriate. The future, it appears, is being brought to us quickly at the bottom right of the Island of Manhattoes -- a future based on large scale movement of populations from their homes to other shores where a great commingling of such extremely diverse cultures as Italian and Greek, Bavarian and Tyrolean, even Russian and Jewish, will meld itself into something new and different sheerly by force of proximity. Still, as one looked about at *this* particular mass of wretched, teeming refuse, tired, poor, and hungry, it was difficult to see the Eloi amongst them and all too easy to see a future of Morlocks dominating the isle.

My presence at the conference was due to the fortuitous placement of a small advertisement in *Adventure Magazine* and the summer break from studies at Yale which afforded me a weekend free. "Admirers of Garrett P Serviss" read the advertisement in *Adventure*, "Munchhausen merry makers and readers of the works of Wells and Verne. Join together with fellow enthusiasts of these works of imagination for The Third Annual Conference for Fanciers of Works of Scientific Romance. August 11-13, 1911. Attending membership 35 cents." As I had just completed reading Mr. Serviss's excellent story *The Second Deluge* and Mr. Wells's *The War In The Air*, the ad caught my attention and I thought I must go. Now that I was seeing how less than salubrious the setting for the conference was, I was having second thoughts but the idea of meeting fellow enthusiasts overcame my nervousness. For years now, since first sending my subscription money in to *Adventure*, *All Story Weekly*, and *Argosy*, I had grown used to the





derision of elders and contemporaries. A regular Mr. Polly, I was called, in reference to one of Wells's books that was looked upon with greater favor than my own choices of *The War Of The Worlds* and *The Time Machine*. Prior to leaving home in Boston for New Haven's rooming houses, I had amassed quite a collection of these works of imagination. Serviss' *Edison's Conquest Of Mars* and *A Columbus Of Space*, a Belgian edition of *The War Of The Worlds* illustrated by a mad Brazilian, a nearly complete series of *New Golden Hours* from March 30 to May 18, 1901 serializing J. Weldon Cobb's *To Mars With Tesla* (I lack the May 4 issue if anyone reading this has a spare copy), and a first English edition of Verne's' *Off On A Comet* are among my most prized possessions. My interest in this type of fiction was first piqued at the age of eleven when I happened across an old copy of *Boys of New York* featuring the tale of Frank Reade, Jr. and the Electric Horse. While the story now seems preposterous, it caught my youthful fancy and in the eight years since I have sought out these tales of

technology and space and time travel and unknown lands with an undiminished fervor. At last, I thought, I will meet with others who are similarly obsessed.

By contrast to the tenements seen on the blocks just to the north, the hotel was airy and pleasant. For 50 cents a night I acquired a small, but clean, room with a bath just three doors down the hall. The room itself provided a washbasin, towel, and chamber pot. I could certainly understand now why the organizers had chosen this unprepossessing location -- a similar room uptown would have been at least 85 cents! A hand-lettered sign posted on the wall of the self-operating elevator indicated that registration was being done in the conference suite on the 8th floor of the hotel.

The conference suite was a large room filled with a large number of fanciers chatting up a storm. It was a very modern room which included a telephone and its own water closet. There was a large keg of beer available for the attendees and ample bakelite tumblers to hold the beverage. A small table was set up with a cash box and a sign saying "Registration" so I made my way across to it, paid my 35 cents, and received a card on which to print my name, John Carter, and a mimeographed conference schedule. For this Friday evening, the schedule consisted solely of "Conference Suite Open 6 p.m. till 1 a.m."

Being six feet two inches tall, I had little difficulty surveying the suite. The first order of business was to get a beer and I joined the short line to get to the pump. "John Carter, eh?" said a short, frizzy-haired, man of about thirty-three standing beside me in line. "Is this your first conference? I've been to all of them. Izzy Bergman, that's me. Number one

fancier. The conference last year in Trenton was a bit of a let down. Glad they moved it back to New York this year. At least I can have a room I can call my own!" I was a bit non-plussed, I will admit, by this character's forwardness and by the implication that the hotel allowed Jews, but I pride myself on being broad-minded and certainly, other than his name and hair, there was little manifestation of a foreign faith in Bergman's appearance. I shook the hand he proffered and acknowledged that indeed this was my first conference and, in fact, I had not known that there were such things, but my interest in scientific romances was all-consuming. "A frosh, yeah?" said Izzy. "Bet you're all Gee-willikers-boy-howdy-jumping-jehosophat! We all start out like that. Here let me pour you a beer."

While my new found friend, for such I was sure he was, manned the pump, I surveyed the room. There were about 40 people crowded in, mostly men between late teens and early middle-age, with a few women who, I assumed, were wives of some of the men. Izzy handed me a tumbler full of ale and guided me away from the crowd near the keg and toward an intense looking young man in a woolen Navy jacket. "John," said Izzy, "good to see you again. John Carter meet John Griffith." I am afraid I goggled at this introduction for here before me was the author of *Before Adam* and *The Iron Heel*. "Gosh, Mr. London," I stammered feeling somewhat embarrassed by being so tongue-tied, "I'm a huge fancier of your work." He looked at me with a fierceness hard to describe. "I do not care about being fancied," he declared. "My work is there for the sole purpose of promoting international socialism and solidarity among workers of all nations. I do not seek to entertain." Sometimes it is hard to meet those one admires so assiduously. "Nevertheless," I told him, even as I flushed from my boldness, "the work is entertaining and its message may be more easily digested by its sweet wrapping." Izzy smiled at this and so, I am glad to report, did Griffith. In a short time we were three old chums fervently discussing Griffith's idea for a new novel, or series of connected stories, about a man able to achieve interstellar travel through a trance induced by torture. "I plan to call it *Straitjacket To Space!*" said Griffith and I, happy now with my fourth beer in hand, said with a laugh, "But that's an awful title! Why not something like *The Star Rover?*"

As the evening wore on I met others and ended up, how I don't quite recall, seated in the corner of the room with a young woman named Minnie in my lap tracing figures with her delightful fingers on my shirt. As the time came for the suite to close Minnie asked what I thought of Emma Goldman and her theories of free love. "I'm all in favor of them," she purred into my ear. Now I had, of course, had some experience of sex before this (although never with another person, I must admit), but I was certainly game for more and so we returned to my room for an episode on which the door will be discreetly kept closed.

Saturday morning dawned for me at a bit after noon. I was alone in the room and my head pounded like an old kettle drum while the interior of my



mouth felt like it had grown a large covering of moss which had dried out and died overnight. I lurched over to the washbasin, poured water from the pitcher, and doused my face. After about ten minutes of ablutions and a few swallows of water, I felt capable of getting dressed and heading back to the conference. The schedule showed the panel "The Twentieth Century -- Is Utopia At Hand?" was just starting and I made my way down to it.

The panelists were all agreed that the future looked promising. War was not going to be possible as workers of all nations joined in solidarity and refused to fight their brothers. Wells' *The War In The Air* was an obvious impossibility as, even if there were a war, nobody, certainly no government, would be so insane and reckless as to drop bombs from aeroplanes. The war in South Africa had shown that the future would consist of several large empires bringing the benefits of civilization to the most benighted areas of the globe, even as it had been brought to the American West over the past half century. One questioner wondered if the empires might be as tenuous as Bolivar's had been, but these qualms were easily dismissed by the panel, who thought that technical progress was now giving way to social progress and indeed a new age was upon us. I left feeling good about the world I would be living in once my studies at Yale were complete. Especially about the amazing energy independence that was about to become a reality thanks to Mr. Tesla. It seems that he has discovered a way in which to beam unlimited amounts of electrical power through the air itself and which can be tapped into using a small device. Undoubtedly this invention will be the locomotive force for all trains and airships and ships at sea by the end of the decade.

After the panel I found Izzy and Minnie and we went for a bite to eat. Izzy knew the neighborhood well and took us to a restaurant featuring foods I had never encountered before with odd names like "blintzes" and "knishes" and "lox". It was good though a trifle well-seasoned for my taste. As we walked back we spotted a nickelodeon and Minnie insisted we should go. They showed a reel of Little Egypt taken at the Chicago fair which had all of the men in the audience (and Minnie too) whistling and clapping. Personally, I preferred Edison's *Frankenstein* with its compelling story line of life, artifice, and chemistry. Disappointing, however, was *A Trip To Mars* from the same company. This short fable entirely failed to grasp the wonder of travel through the aether.

Back at the hotel I took the opportunity to browse through the dealer's room. It's a pity that my finances precluded me from purchasing everything available. Back issues of *Argosy* and *All Story* were plentiful but prices began at 15 cents and the best issues could reach as high as 75 cents! One table had a fair backlog of *Boys of New York* but not that elusive May 4 issue. At one table a young émigré from Luxembourg named Hugo was touting his new magazine, *Modern Electrics*, and an organization called the Wireless Association of America. He also had a book with a title I can't remember save that it had a lot of numbers in it. I had the distinct impression that this man was somebody we would hear more about in the future. One table featured large hardcover books reprinting, in full color, *The Yellow Kid* and *The Katzenjammer Kids*.

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 "Many many years ago, before the invention of eruptions,
 molten lava had to be carried down the mountainside,
 bucket by bucket, and poured over the sleeping villagers.
 This took time."

I couldn't for the life of me see why anyone would want to waste their money on mere funny papers but I guess there is a market for everything. Disappointingly, there was not an overwhelming number of scientific romances (or STFR as I learned the fanciers preferred to call them) -- they were there in plenty, to be sure, but in many tables they were drowned out by the volume of adventure tales by the likes of H. Rider Haggard. One dealer persistently tried to sell me a copy of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court* which, of course, is mere fantasy with nothing in the way of scientific background in it at all. Still, I did come out three dollars poorer with a bag full of Wells and Verne that I did not already have at home.

The costume show that evening was one of the highlights of the convention. One audacious group re-enacted the opening of the first canister in *The War Of The Worlds* and the Martian that peered out was so convincing that it drew a loud gasp from the audience which arose in a spontaneous standing ovation as the heat ray was raised and a brilliant light flashed out momentarily blinding us all and allowing the actors who were approaching the infernal device to quickly enshroud themselves in sheets that looked amazingly like ash. Minnie, too, got a standing ovation for her interpretation of Little Egypt's dance. Well, it's not STFR but I liked it too.

That evening I was introduced to Garrett P Serviss in the conference suite. Mr. Serviss does not consider himself an STFR writer but he is still a favorite of the fanciers thanks to his forays into the field which are all top-notch. I think I had too much to drink at the party this night for Sunday dawned and I found myself in a strange room lying next to a stranger and Minnie. I don't recall getting there but my friends must have helped me.

As I stood, a bit wobbly, and stretched, the other fellow on the bed looked up. He was in his mid thirties with a well-groomed appearance and the ineffable sad eyes of a man who feels himself to be a failure. "Good morning," he said, "I'm Ed. From Chicago." He looked me over. "My," he breathed, "you're a fine specimen of manhood, aren't you? Those regular features and closely cropped black hair, the broad shoulders and narrow hips, but most of all the steel gray eyes reflecting a strong and loyal character, all combine to make you a great pulp adventure hero, John Carter."

"I prefer scientific romances," I replied, embarrassed by his effusiveness and the piercing gaze sent in my direction, "and the company of Minnie."

As I spoke her name, Minnie stirred and stretched and stood. She leaned over and gave Ed a passionate kiss on the lips. Then she came over and gave me the same. Next she clapped her hands, whirled around, grabbed Ed by the hand and pulled him to his feet, clapped again, and squealed "William Tell!". With that she stepped over to the wall, produced an apple, and balanced it on her pretty little head. Meanwhile, Ed stepped over to the far side of the room and produced a large Colt Peacemaker with a twelve inch barrel. I twitched, aghast, as Ed raised the weapon, took his sighting and squeezed the trigger.



A deafening "Barsoom!" echoed from the room and Minnie collapsed to the floor. "Minnie!" I cried, and suddenly was beside her. "Oh, Minnie, what has he done?" She began to giggle. "Ed's a crack shot, John. He never misses." She showed me the shattered remains of the apple scattered about the carpet. I thought it a scary stunt, though, and wondered how Ed would explain the bullet hole in the plaster of the wall.

The rest of Sunday was a quiet day. I was hungover and had to catch the train back to New Haven at 3:00. I fell into conversation with a long faced fellow named Howard, a fellow New Englander, who convinced me that the Amateur Press Association was the best way to keep in touch with like-minded people. The near instantaneous feedback, he claimed, would be both gratifying and lead to improved writing ability quickly and near effortlessly. Hence this report for UAPA. I lunched with Howard who was full of strange stories of what the universe was like before man and how there were undoubtedly other races in the stars whose appurtenance we would find appalling and who cared little for the human race and our ambitions, as little as a man may care about an anthill he disturbs. Following the optimism of the previous day's panel, I found Howard to be gloomy and disturbing, but more than a little compelling. He gave me a small volume of his poems to read on the train ride home; I can't help but feel, though, that his real medium should be the story, not the poem.

The time came to head to the train station. I looked in vain for Izzy and Minnie to bid them farewell. A shame that I missed them but I am sure I will see them next year in Philadelphia.

Editors' Note -- It is not known if the Fourth Conference in Philadelphia was ever held. Like the first in Brooklyn and the second in Trenton, no record has been found of the conference. Indeed, except for the foregoing, found serendipitously tucked into a first edition of *The Second Deluge* obtained on eBay, no other record of this third conference is known. Perusal of all available issues of *Adventure Magazine* from 1911 have not revealed the small ad that Carter refers to; presumably it was another magazine that the author read.

John Carter himself disappears from records shortly after this dispatch. His first two years at Yale showed a promising student earning primarily As and Bs in his chosen subject of Chemistry. The third year transcripts, the 1911-1912 school year, shows a dramatic decline in grades with only a few Cs offsetting the majority of Ds received. Notes in the Yale Journal from 1913 seem to imply that Carter had started passing himself off as a Virginian and was intent on heading west to Arizona where he believed a huge treasure was waiting to be found. No trace of him can be found beyond that.

*A dot and a line.
My ship and I at morning
When both suns arise.*

John Hertz



Claire Brialey

It seems self-evident that each issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* offers not only a selection of the sort of fan writing and art which is prevalent in the period of its publication, but also a snapshot of what fandom itself is like at the time. Every time there's an opportunity to build up a picture of the trends, the key players and the concerns of each mini-generation -- a slice through fandom, in effect, rather like one of those mice that urban myth has found in loaves of bread.

And so it's not just for comic effect -- or what would, were it not for this preamble, be the sort of opening hook that Vinç Clarke advised fan writers to plant for the entrapment of their audience -- that I feel it's important to make one thing clear at the start. This is to help both contemporary readers and the fans of the far-flung future to understand fandom in Britain in the first decade of the twenty-first century by revealing one of its motive forces. It is, in fact, primarily my consideration for posterity that bids me tell you:

It was all James Bacon's fault.

Devotees of democracy might argue that ultimately it was the fault of the electorate who, back in 2004, chose James over Anders Holmström as the westbound TAFF delegate in the first ever race to be a straight fight between two candidates from outside the UK. James accordingly made the trip to his first non-European Worldcon, impressing a considerable number of Worldcon personnel and partygoers alike with his reserves of energy and focus on the

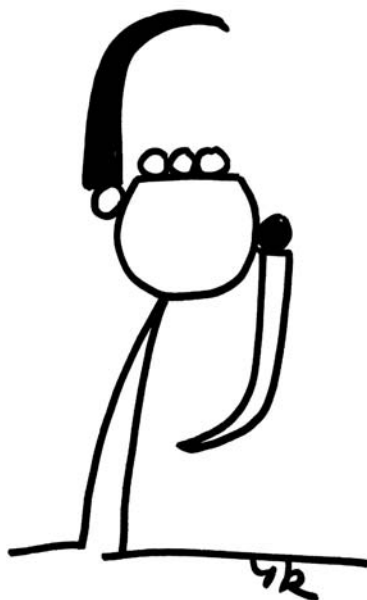
matter in hand, and came back to apply that focus to many, many fannish projects including getting more people interested in TAFF and in SF fandom outside their own country. It seemed unreasonable not to try to help.

My third convention was a Worldcon, in Brighton in 1987. It wasn't completely lost on me that it was a Worldcon and that the 'world' bit was significant; in terms of its size and scale and duration and cost and the overwhelming numbers of Americans, it was clearly very different to most aspects of my limited previous convention experience. But I was still so new and so young that all I was really looking for was to replicate that experience within the Worldcon, and I've since spent more time than is healthy lamenting what I missed. The extent of my ignorance about fandom at large and fannish institutions like the fan funds in particular doesn't now bear thinking about; I didn't even know what I didn't know and that I was missing a rather good opportunity to find out about it. Nonetheless, even I could see some of the advantages of so many exotic foreigners, even while I was personally thinking that some of the disadvantages of a Worldcon involved some of the foreigners too.

These days I can see rather more point in the 'world' bit of a Worldcon, and am entirely in favour of exotic foreign visitors. At the dead dog party in Glasgow last year the process of going to bed took nearly an hour, just by going round the fan lounge to find and say goodbye to all the friends I knew I probably wouldn't see again for months and months or even years. But I've never wanted to stand for a fan fund, not least because I've never needed to stand for a fan fund; I've been fortunate enough to be able to afford any of the trips to conventions abroad that I've wanted to take. I'm also not an ambassadorial type; I don't feel I can adequately represent anyone's fandom but my own, I shrink from being expected to be someone who is worth meeting and capable of near-continuous performance, and I really like being able to plan my trips based on what I want to do rather than on a sense of obligation and responsibility. And I would never voluntarily put myself into a popularity contest, since I would automatically expect to lose and I see little fun in that. (The administrative side of the fan funds, which dissuades many of the other people who don't want to stand, has always struck me as the less off-putting part; in the course of my everyday fannish activities I've written

trip reports and fan fund newsletters, raised money for the funds, and helped to administer a race, and it all seems entirely within the capacity of any normally intelligent, well-organised and responsible person.)

I've had a lot of contact with overseas fans through fanzines, and every trip I've made to other countries has involved meeting more of those fans and adding some new people to our mailing list. We have some exceptionally hospitable friends abroad and I've never felt that they would have treated us any better if we'd been visiting because of a fan fund. But I still feel I've benefited from the fan funds, through meeting American and Australian delegates, through reading the trip reports when people bother to produce them, and through being part of a fandom that's enthusiastic and energetic in its pursuit of engagement with other SF fans.



In spring 2006, with an eastbound race that brought Suzle to the 2005 Worldcon under his belt, James Bacon was on the final leg of his TAFF administration. Being James, he was planning not just a sprint down the home straight but completion of an obstacle course in a pirate costume, culminating in donning a jetpack streaming multi-coloured smoke for his victory lap. It all sounded quite reasonable to start with: James wanted to announce the result of the westbound TAFF race at a convention, since there would be scope for the candidates to strut their stuff, the announcement would be more of an event in itself, and it would all encourage lots of last-minute votes and raise the profile of the fund as well as swelling the coffers. It seemed plausible there might be a small fun fannish convention over the last weekend in May; the results of the 2002 race had been counted and announced during a similar con and, although it wouldn't leave the winner with a great many weeks to organise their trip, James thought it would be worth trying to do it again.

In the event, there wasn't a weekend convention, but once James had announced the voting deadline those of us involved in fan-fundraising thought that perhaps sponsoring a one-day event in London would be manageable -- especially if we could rely on James to do quite a lot of the work. History and *SFFY* readers would probably not thank me for describing in detail either the ensuing logistical anguish or the background faffing about. Suffice it to say that James wanted a convention at which he could announce the TAFF result, and that's pretty much what James got.

This isn't to imply that James acted alone. Part of his *modus operandi* is to sweep along in his wake a moderately-sized horde of henchmen who are convinced they are acting voluntarily and who often pick up enough momentum to start acting under their own power. (James himself will claim that he is incapable of achieving anything much without the involvement of Stef and Elvis, which may be either passing the buck or revealing them as the masterminds behind a plot to bring down fandom in a way that's too dastardly and complicated to be able to appreciate at this proximity.) Few people are wholly immune to James's powers of persuasion -- even those who are still sufficiently in control of their own actions to maintain that in some ways he is quite, quite wrong often seem to end up doing what he wants them to -- and those who do hold out are likely to be on the receiving end of a lengthy letter or fanzine article or a sincere and intense conversation about the world according to James until they either see the light or prove themselves to be, again according to James, irredeemably unreasonable wankers.

The only reason I can deduce that James -- who took up permanent residence in this country less than a year ago -- has not so far taken over British fandom entirely is that he has too much going on in his head at once and is thus frequently distracted by passing pretty girls, cool toys, awesome science fiction, an old-school fan in need of re-education, or his own wild imaginings.

In this particular endeavour James's main partner in crime was Flick -- herself a figure worth noting in contemporary British fandom, both for being a creative force as well as a content provider and for possessing a figure which many find worth noting. Despite being in the midst of a year organising the process of becoming the second Mrs Mike Scott, Flick took time out from planning the wedding to help James (her junior bridesmaid) to run a one-day convention. My role was, I think, to worry on the sidelines about TAFF, the

.
 "Forklifts and customers -- a bad mix."

League of Fan Funds generally, and anything that no one else was worrying about sufficiently which, given James's usual working methods, was everything. Mark designed a fabulous new vote-counting spreadsheet to make the on-the-day process rather less prone to accident and to generate proper records. Alison Scott did the artwork. But the design for the day was all James'.

So James and Flick whizzed about London looking at venues and laughing at naff wedding clothing en route, like a postmodern fannish retelling of the Three Bears: every possible venue was either too big (or expensive), or too small (or far away), or just right (apart from being unavailable). Then someone suggested the Horseshoe Inn.

It was twenty years ago in a few days' time, as someone may have written only to demonstrate that it's not a memorable line. I was 16 -- one of the young people that fandom seemed to be worrying less about finding then -- and about to encounter for the first time a part of British science fiction fandom that I didn't go to school with. Actually, I was slightly hazy about the fandom thing; so far as I was concerned it was ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* appreciation society, around and beyond which the rest of British science fiction fandom clearly did exist in a sort of haze, but I was only ready for one bit at a time. ZZ9 mostly saw the rest of fandom as, at best, fellow travellers, partly being a microcosm of wider fandom in itself, partly taking a Groucho Marx-style stance of not wanting to be part of any group that would have them as members, and partly being locked in a state of mutual suspicion with traditionally fannish fandom about whether ZZ9 was wanted as a member anyway. A lot of this came down to the way that most 'real' fans -- excepting perhaps the university SF groups who, being students, were probably a bit up themselves -- were so *old*. Most of them were in their thirties at least.

You can't get away from Greying of Fandom discussions now, or indeed weariness about Greying of Fandom discussions. Maybe that's always been true, and I inevitably didn't notice it when I was both young and just mucking about in the water having a good time; maybe I have aged naturally into it. Maybe my cohort, or even the one before that, were the last major intake; or maybe it's the one we noticed a few years ago. Maybe we should pay more attention to the mockery of the whole Greying of Fandom fret-fest -- not so much by the people who just haven't noticed that they're grey too or don't care what happens to fandom anyway but, crucially, by all the fans who are too young to be grey at all. Maybe there are lots more young fans out there and we haven't noticed because they're not interested in us because we're old; maybe there are lots of potential fans but they're doing something just a bit different and don't want to help us keep our odd little community alive. And maybe it just doesn't matter, and we should live for today rather than worrying about all this sustainability stuff.

I'm only conceptually grey, and some of the people who knew me twenty years ago will assert that I always have been. But back then I was chronologically 16, and in the sixth form at school which meant -- to the explicit sadness of several of the ZZ9 men I met -- that I no longer had to wear school uniform,

.
 Snap, what a happy sound
 Snap is the happiest sound I've found
 You may clap, rap, tap, slap
 But Snap makes the world go round...

and that I also had a bit more flexibility about whether I was on school premises during free periods. This gave us the courage and the inspiration to contemplate epic journeys. The plan had been that several of us would travel the 50 miles to London by train after school in order to visit some of the near-mythic figures who cavorted across the pages of ZZ9's quarterly newsletter in their natural environment: the pub meeting. The long-standing London Circle meeting on the first Thursday of each month, then established at the One Tun for at least a dozen years, seemed too big and scary, involving as it did the presence of many other (grown-up) fans of whom we had never heard; so the obvious first step was ZZ9's own Alternative Tun meeting, then held monthly on the third Thursday at a small pub near London Bridge station. In the event, my friends weren't allowed to go, even though the itinerary was eventually transmuted to my father driving us there and back.



I refused to be so faint-hearted, even if it meant having to meet these fannish legends by myself with only the lurking presence of my father checking them for axe-murdering tendencies, so at the first opportunity, September 1986, I slapped my thigh and set off for London to make my fortune. Outwardly, ZZ9 appeared safe and quite respectable (most of them actually were safe and quite respectable, but many of them also liked to believe that they weren't really), so Dad left me with them and went to visit his sister for the evening.

I have a photograph taken that night, showing five of the people I met at my first ever fannish pub meeting. It's quite a dark photo because it was quite a dark pub: small and dingy, really, but I always had a soft spot for it because it was my first time. A few months afterwards, it closed for refurbishment, which to be fair it needed, and ZZ9 switched venues. Unsurprisingly, most of the people in my photograph look quite different now -- at least enough to convince John Harvey, over a dozen years later, that he was looking at a group of foreign fans rather than younger versions of several people he knew well. But as well as its comical potential, the photo helps to demonstrate the profound effect that meeting had on the next twenty years of my life and what makes me keep returning to it in fanzine articles: of the five people there, two -- Noel Collyer and Mark Plummer, in turn -- became the other partner in my only long-term relationships. And by the time John got the chance to be confused by it the photo had realised some tragic potential as well, forming part of a memorial exhibit he and Eve were putting together for a third member of the photographic group: Ian Gunn, who died in 1998, had quite impressed me that evening twelve years before by having travelled halfway round the world to attend a ZZ9 pub meeting -- a journey nearly as intrepid as my own from the sheltered middle classes of small village life in East Anglia -- and may well be the first progenitor of my enduring belief that it's worth making the effort to socialise with Australian SF fans as often as I can.

It's therefore possible to construct an argument that links my support for the fan funds to my first ever fannish pub meeting as well. I suppose I should explain that there's a body of opinion in British fandom that TAFF, in particular, is now unnecessary and wrong, and should be done away with -- as distinct from the school of thought that TAFF has never been necessary or

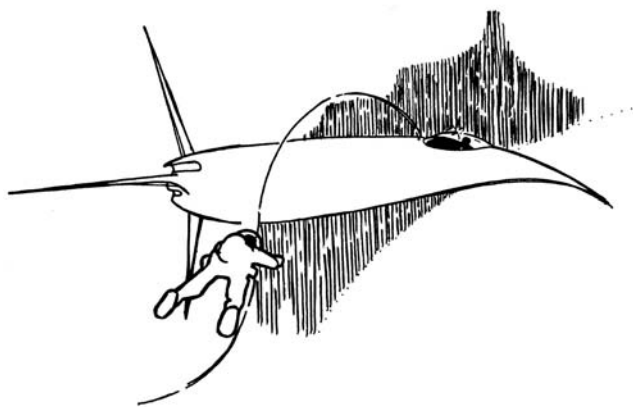
right, and should be done away with. Yet there seems always to have been this sort of feeling, albeit based on a variety of reasoning (the example that always leaps to mind is Terry Carr, himself an eastbound TAFF delegate only five years before, writing in the year I was born that 'it's simply an outdated idea to exchange delegates between European and American conventions as though that were a novelty'), and so far there's always been reason enough to keep going, even at times when the institution has enjoyed considerably less support and recognition than it seems to at the moment.

There are any number of reasons that motivate people to support fan funds, but that's the point: there still are a lot of different reasons that hundreds of people annually find it worthwhile paying to cast a ballot. Some will argue in favour of one-off funds to enable specific people to take a particular trip, and I've been as strong a supporter of a number of those because I agreed that the recipients deserved it. But the existing fan travel funds can fulfil a similar function, with the advantage of established arrangements for their organisation; and the enduring connection between the countries involved and the earlier fandoms in each of them is one of the things about the community of SF fandom that continues to make me want to be part of it.

And TAFF westbound has seemed pretty healthy recently. The 2006 race had three candidates representing a broad range of interests and experiences across British fandom, and I think it's worth reiterating that this race had the highest number of European votes cast in any TAFF contest and the second highest overall total in a westbound race. And yet there's still some concern, even amongst those who feel that TAFF is still a good thing, or at least that under the stewardship of James and/or Bridget Bradshaw it is currently a good thing, that it's all falling away and that all of fandom as we know it is doomed to follow. We're still asking ourselves where the young fans will come from, or at least the young fans who are like us, or perhaps the young fans who are like the way we imagine we were.

Even James is not immune to this. Despite his pretty conclusive answer at the 2005 Worldcon to the question of where the young fans would come from ('through that door at the back', as he and Stef led the participants of their Young Adult Fun Activities programme stream in an invasion of the Greying of Fandom panel item we'd scheduled for this purpose), in a few quiet moments which many might consider uncharacteristic he could be found scanning the massed denizens of the fan lounge and wondering who the next version of him might be and why they hadn't yet emerged.

Yet, for all that we might have been feeling like old fans and tired as we assembled in the Horseshoe Inn for the TAFF day, the pub itself was looking remarkably fresh and about twice the size it used to. Clearly it had had more than one refurbishment and, as well as a generally light and airy interior, had gained a back room and opened up to the public a room and veranda upstairs whose existence I'd never suspected when I drank there regularly. The space still doesn't entirely lend itself to putting on a programme of talks or panels as well as the social side, but the day was undoubtedly a success in TAFF terms.



For me, it was an oddly emotional experience. I felt so stressed about the number of things which could go wrong with the live TAFF count and announcement -- none of which did, which I ascribe at least partly to the placatory effect of my worrying on the underlying bloody-mindedness of the universe, but also to the careful preparations made by Mark and James and Suzle -- that, although I'd been entranced by the suggestion of the Horseshoe as a TAFF day venue, I hadn't really focussed on its significance beyond stuffing the photo from two decades before into my bag. I hadn't been back since ZZ9 left; without realising how much it had changed, I always suspected that it couldn't live up to the significance it had assumed for me.

Three of the subjects of the photo were there, and for the rest of the attendees -- well, it wasn't quite my whole fannish life flashing before my eyes, but James had managed to get a fair proportion of London fandom through the doors as well as a number of visitors from further away, even if not quite as far as Australia. Officially, the event was recorded as having 112 attendees; these included ten of this year's Hugo nominees (including guest speakers Paul Cornell, Paul McAuley and Kim Newman), four former TAFF winners, two former GUFF winners, and the winner of SMOFF (a one-off fund-raiser contested during this year's Eastercon). Unofficially, I like to think of it as a testament to the way that it's not all about the greying and ageing of fandom at all. The young people present were in a minority, there's no question about that; but it's also unquestionable that they were there.

There are active fans in their twenties in Britain: not just people like Flick and Helena McCallum -- who have also been in fandom since they were teenagers and who therefore qualify in one sense as old pharts so that we often forget they also qualify as young people -- but people like Liz Batty, who's heading up the literary programme for the 2008 Eastercon and who carried on her shoulders at the TAFF day the mantle of the whole of 'Third Row' fandom; yes, we even have active fans who actually read and watch science fiction, and who write and talk intelligently about it as well.

We also have a literal new generation of fandom as well as a literary one: the children of fans of about our age, sufficiently numerous in recent years to make their presence felt. As is often the case, they included Marianne Cain, perched on a bar stool in a corner reading quietly, and her younger brother Jonathan, leading Meriol Ameringen into a life of enterprise as he charmed 50 pence coins from passing adults to feed into the pub games machine. But on this occasion, with great significance for me, they also included the Waglets. Twenty years ago I would have had difficulty in imagining any of the young men in my photo as someone's father, but I would have put money on the least likely candidate being Screaming Mad Wag. Many would now contend that Helena is the responsible grown-up in this family, but nonetheless there they all were on the TAFF day: Helena, John Waggott, as he's more frequently known these days, and their twin sons, memorably named on their T-shirts as Thing 1 and Thing 2. We showed them the photo of their father and promised to tell them more about his disreputable past when they know more words.



But that's not all. Probably only a British fan could get sentimental about this but, as someone who hadn't drunk in the Horseshoe Inn since I was old enough to drink, I was really rather pleased to see that fannish events in this pub still attract fans who are too young to get served in it. Abi Brown is a second-generation fan as well; she attended the Worldcon last year with her father and met Flick, who was reporting on parties for the newsletter. With one fell tumble off two pairs of stilettos, the Plokta Cabal had a new content provider. John Coxon, meanwhile, had joined the ZZ9 committee at an age when I was told to run along and finish my exams, and took the opportunity of the TAFF day to distribute the paper copies of the first issue of his fanzine. They both seem not only a lot more self-assured, and perhaps more aware of the world in general, but also a lot more comfortable in fandom than I was back then.

I mention all these people by name because I'd like to think that they'll still be part of the slice of British fandom you could get to see in the next issue of this fanzine, in five years' time. Maybe one of them will even be writing it.

I've been told that ZZ9 are meeting in the Horseshoe again these days; I'm drawn to drop in for my own twentieth anniversary, but after that I think it's time to look forward again. Reports of fandom's imminent death remain, I think, an exaggeration; I believe SF fandom could yet have a pretty good future, and I still want to be part of it. See you in five years.



RECRUITER

"CLASSIC" FANFICTION
by rich brown



I knew Bob Healey and Ben Lucas back before they were even neofen. In a way, you might say I was their recruiter, since I introduced them to fandom. I met Bob

at a second hand book-store, buying up back issues of *aSF* and *F&SF*, and we got to talking about Science Fiction, and quite naturally in the course of events I broached the subject of fandom to him. At first he didn't seem too interested in active-fandom, but I thought I might at least get him to come down to the LASFS, so I took down his address and promised to come by some time and give him an outline of fandom.

What with one thing and another, it was about three weeks before I was able to get a day free to go visit him. I phoned before I left home, just to be sure he'd be there, and he asked if it would be okay if an interested friend of his were there. I said sure.

The friend was Ben Lucas. Whereas Bob seemed to be the sober, serious, slow but intellectual type, Ben proved to be the direct opposite; this is, witty, excitable, quick, but not as bright. He wasn't dumb -- you certainly couldn't say that -- but he didn't have Bob's solid intelligence.

Anyway, I had brought along a few things to introduce them to the best side of fandom -- old prozines, good fanzines, and a case of bheer. You can probably guess what happened. Lucas immediately wanted to put out a monthly, 29-page, hecktoed fanzine, which would undoubtedly bring in enough profit to buy him a mimeograph, and once he got a mimeo, he would have the best

brown

fanzine in fandom. You know how it is. Of course, I'd heard the same story enough times to realize that he probably wouldn't make it, but Ben had real enthusiasm, and I could sympathize (though I couldn't tell him that's what it was) with him. I was a neofan once myself.

Bob, well, Bob wasn't quite as enthusiastic, but it was something new. As he put it, "The concept of putting my ideas down for open-minded people to read, and reading the ideas of other open-minded people, appeals to me." That was the way Bob was; I might have expected it.

* * *

That was all three years ago, but I can still see, in my mind's eye, Ben's enthusiastic face and Bob's unenthusiastic-but-interested response. It was quite a contrast to the two I saw just a few weeks ago -- Bob, with a haggard look about him, worried, jumpy, excitable; and Ben, worst of all Ben, with a typer on his knees, and tears streaming down his face....

Bob's monthly never really got off the ground. It was heckto, and pretty poor heckto at that, and even if it had been offset, the material wouldn't have been worth wasting a glance on. The second issue, which came out three months after the first, was just as bad. It folded with the second issue.

But Ben wrote letters. Ghod, though, did Ben write letters! I never liked his fiction or articles -- and in the two issues of *Ben-Gay*, his "monthly" fanzine, I'd seen enough of them to be able to tell -- but his letters were superb. He had a facility with words that he couldn't develop in the style-characterization-plot ridden forms such as articles or fiction, but in writing letters he held his own with the truly greats in fandom from the beginning. He was good. It surprised me when I saw his first letter in print, because in person he never said much, except when he was really enthusiastic. He had a lisp, and I once ventured the idea to a correspondent of mine that because of his lisp he never talked much, and so most of his ideas had been kept bottled up inside him until he came in contact with fandom, where, via his typewriter, he could talk and be understood, and not feel self-conscious. Once, when we were drunk, Ben told me his lisp *had* always bothered him, but that hadn't been all.

"I always get ahead of myself," he told me. "I just think faster than I can talk. By the time I get one idea spoken, I'm three or four ideas further ahead. Not only does my typer omit the lisp, it doesn't have to stop and start again when a trend of thought is lost." He lapsed into silence.

Ben's letters had a kind of sarcastic humor to them. As I said, he held his own in letter-writing. I remember Bill Bryant, who was one of the worst sercon fuggheads I ever hope to know, didn't like Ben's sarcasm about good old Science Fiction. Well, Ben was an SF fan right down to the core, and he said as much, adding, "but I'm a *humorous* writer." Bryant's reply was hot and angry. I don't even remember most of it, but it called Ben out for being "a traitor to Science Fiction," among other things, and added, "I am a *serious* writer." I'll never forget Ben's reply. "Well," he said, "maybe we're both wrong."



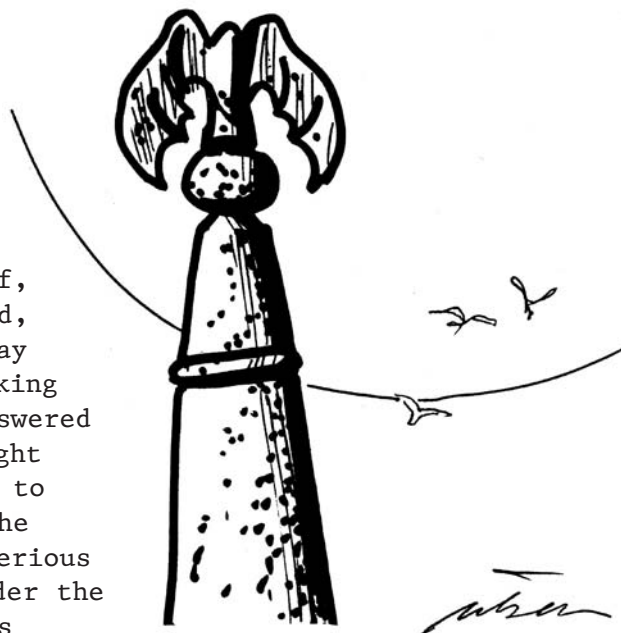
Whatever the reason might have been,
Ben wrote some mighty fine letters.
And a good number of them went for Zeus,
Bob Healey's zine.

Bob took his time about coming into
fandom. At first, after he subbed to a
few fanzines and let the subs run out,
I began to think he might not make it.
Bob was averse to making a fool of himself,
as he noticed so many neos doing. Instead,
he often spent parts of Saturday and Sunday
afternoons talking to me about fandom, asking
questions and testing his opinions. I answered
the questions, argued the opinions I thought
unsound, and tried to give him an insight to
things fannish. I had thought then that he
would probably rather be fannish in the serious
sense (discussing seriously everything under the
sun) than in the humorous sense, and I was
eventually proven right.

Zeus came out mimeoed on 40 half-sized pages. Twenty-five of them had
been taken up in an editorial discussing everything from religion to box-
top bargains. There was a satire by Leman about an advertising executive who
couldn't find a mattress, a fannish poem by Geo. Stevens, and fanzine reviews
by Leslie Gerber. It was quite good, in fact, for a first issue.

Now Bob, unlike Ben, could express himself easily, but the way he phrased
things sometimes confused people. Sometimes, but not often, he would forget
to put in some connective thought in his arguments or opinions and his readers
would blink twice, wondering, "Now, what in hell does he mean by that?" Like
this one time I remember him writing a great article on the works of Edgar
Allen Poe. It was a great article, and while I was reading it, in that issue
of Zeus, I kept thinking that it was possibly the most interesting thing Bob
had ever written. The article had given a detailed history of Poe and his
writings and added several profound observations on what had made Poe the way
he was. The article had been edifying, interesting, and totally logical,
except for the offending last sentence -- "Poe enveloped himself within a world
of fantasy, within a world of his own creation, and lived in fear and dread
of reality." There had been no build-up towards this ending; and it had been
entirely useless.

Bob had other writing faults as well, but even so he did quite well. He
managed to attract attention to himself and his fanzine, and it wasn't long
until Zeus had a paid circulation of 55 and was heading towards becoming a
Focal Point. Although it had been listed as "irregular" all through its first
year, Zeus saw seven issues. After two monthly issues in January and February
it officially went monthly. It had by this time, dropped the half-size sheets
and was running about 30 pages a month, dittoed. And at least five of these
pages were letters from Ben Lucas.



.
I say it's Crackle, the crispy sound
You gotta have crackle or the clock's not wound
Geese Cackle-Feathers Tickle Bells-Buckle-Beets-Pickle
But Crackle makes the world go round...
.

I never talked to Ben about his opinions of Zeus, but it was pretty obvious, even from the first, that he liked the zine. A friend of a friend later told me that Ben had once said that Zeus was the fanzine he'd always wanted to publish, but didn't have the time, money, or ability to do so. In a way, Zeus was partly Ben's fanzine -- he was more regular than anyone else in writing for it, (no doubt the fact that he lived so close to Bob helped) and a lot of his ideas were incorporated, as well as opinions adhered to. But don't get the idea that Ben was a master puppeteer, pulling all the strings behind the scenes; Bob and Ben often had differences of opinion, sometimes getting heatedly angry with one another. It was to be expected, though, that their personalities would clash occasionally. And their arguments were always interesting, even to those uninterested in the topic. Ben, using his wit and fine letter-writing against Bob's sometimes cold, always intellectual replies -- as I said, living close together probably helped them a lot. They never misunderstood what the other was saying, or his object in saying it. They were really a fine pair.

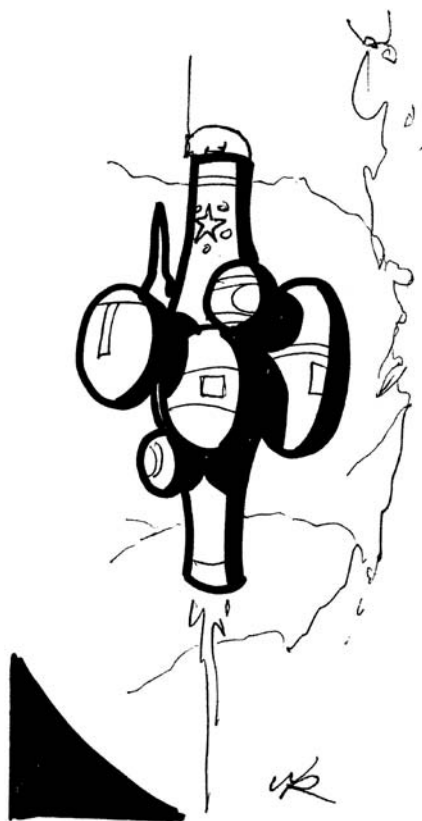
Zeus lasted 31 issues. The last four were possibly the worst of them all -- they were beginning to show signs of the speed with which Bob had to put them out (there was once a rumor that Ben helped type the stencils for many issues of Zeus; this was completely unfounded. Ben was one of the world's worst typo fiends, as witness his own *Ben-Gay*), and the number of pages per issue was dropping off. And there were no letters from Ben Lucas.

About the time of the last four issues I had been, first, attending the NyCon III, and when LA won the next year's bid, I had been put on the con committee. Busy was hardly the word for it, and when I finally got around to writing Bob, noting in my letter the decline of Zeus #28 through 31 and the two-week lateness of #32, it was too late. He wrote me a postcard saying that there would be no Zeus #32, and that he was losing interest in fandom.

I was driving out in his direction, some weeks later, and I decided to stop by and see how things were. Now I wish I hadn't. I wish to Ghod I hadn't.

I rang the bell and a voice inside said, "Come in," and I came in. In the center of the room was a table and a lamp, which cast a feeble yellow glow on the typewriter beside it. Next to the table, on the floor, were a few letters and a pile of seven or eight fanzines, several used envelopes and a few unused ones, a small stack of typing paper, a cardboard box containing some old *Planets* and *aSFs*, a pen, three stencils, and eight or ten paper clips. Bob was reclining on the divan, long-uncut hair strayed about his head. Even from half-way across the room I could see his eyes. They seemed grotesquely out of proportion to the rest of him -- large, bloodshot eyes, with heavy dark bags hanging under them. I could see this even in the dim light. He seemed thinner, too.

"Hi," he said sluggishly, half-heartedly waving his hand up from where it lay listlessly beside him, and then he added with more fervor, "you goddamn fan." I was even more stunned. To see Bob like this was one thing, but to hear him say that



was totally unexpected. He was the soft-spokenest, un-cussingest fan I had ever known, and I had often wished I could have been more like him in this way.

We exchanged a few more words; somehow, though I'll never be able to remember how, I managed to find out what had happened. He'd lost his job, for one thing. "I called the foreman a fuggheaded rosebud," he told me, "and he was. That son-of-a-bitch was a slob stuck to a 21-inch universe, and when I told him so he got mad and fired me." He told me he was quitting fandom; "I'm through," he said. "Fandom is too much for me. I let everything go just to put out a goddamned fanzine. There was even a time when I didn't eat, just so I'd have the money to buy more stencils. They tasted terrible," he added with a laugh. Then he was very serious. "Now I don't want to see another fan or read another letter or fanzine or prozine. Ever. I've been burning everything today -- what you see on the floor is all that's left. You can have the fanzines and prozines if you like, if not, I'll burn them anyway. Then I'll see if I can get my job back... and maybe get stuck in a 21-inch universe myself. Now, you represent fandom. If you want any of these zines, help yourself. If not, goodbye. Goodbye to you, and goodbye to fandom!" I left.

A few weeks later I was going by Ben's. I knew he hadn't written a letter in some months -- they weren't appearing anywhere. I hoped that things weren't as bad for him as they had been for Bob, but my hopes were in vain.

I knocked, and Ben came to the door. His demeanor was strained, too. In fact, he looked like hell. "You," he said bitterly. I said hello. "Come in," he said, "come in. I just want to show you what in the hell you've done to me." I followed him in, hesitantly.

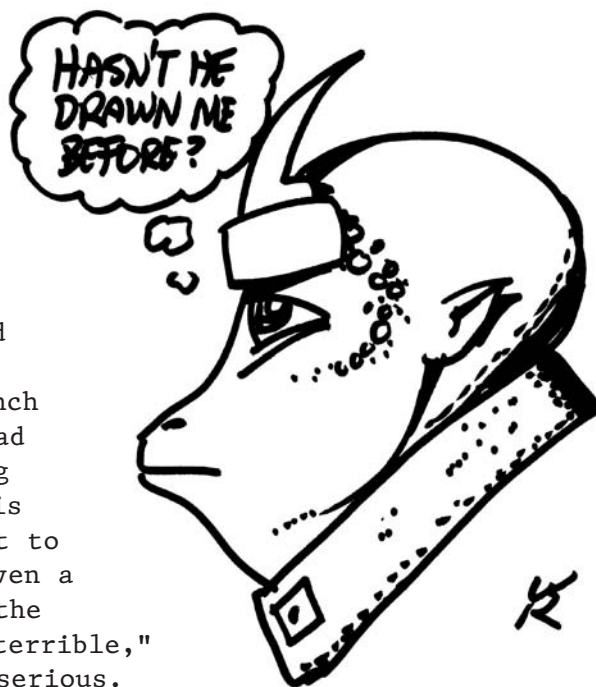
"No doubt," he said, "no doubt you're wondering why I'm not writing letters any more. Come here, and I'll show you why the hell I'm not writing letters any more." He went to his desk and I followed him. He snatched a piece of paper from the wastebasket, thrust it at me, and sat on the edge of the desk as I looked up at him blankly. "Read that," he said. I read:

Dear Bob,

Got Zeus #31 today. I liked it. Your editorial was interesting. Liked Warner's piece too. Bellemay's had quite a humorous twist to it. I liked it. Tate has an interesting article, but he doesn't say much. I don't agree with him that Hubbard's characters are bad. Gerber's fan reviews are as good as ever. Letter column is getting more interesting.

Best,
Ben

I looked up. "Yeah," he said, "that's why. I've been writing that way for months. I've been blaming you for letting me in for this, I don't know why.



brown

It's not your fault, Ghod knows. I'm sorry I went off half-cocked. I'll be okay pretty soon. I've lost touch, but I'll catch on to it again pretty soon. Real soon, because I've got a lot to say. Just wait and see -- yes, I'll be back on the road -- just wait." He turned and sat down at the desk, in front of the typer. He seemed to be ignoring me. He got two sheets of paper, rolled them in, and started writing. For five minutes I stood, horrified, rooted to the spot, watching him type each letter of each word slowly and painfully, remembering all the while how he used to complain about the slowness of the typewriter, because it couldn't keep up with the fast stream of thoughts that poured out of his head. While I hadn't been watching, he suddenly grabbed up the fanzine he was commenting on and hurled it across the room. He put a hand to his head and moaned. Then he smashed one big fist into the typer, choked, and leaned forward, resting his forehead on the carriage and sobbed silently to himself.

* * *

It was four or five months later that I walked into the second-hand book-store where I first met Bob Healy. I was down to pick up a batch of *Planets* the owner had been saving especially for me, and I noticed this fellow perusing a copy of *Imagination*. I started talking to him, thinking only of passing the time of day.

"SF fan, eh?" I said.

"Yeah," he said. We started talking; just about this, that, and the other.

"I don't usually read this type of mag," he said. "aSF is more my speed.

"I'll be picking up the ones I missed, since it's gone down so much since it became *Analog*. But I've been noticing this column by Robert Bloch, talking about these 'fanzines' and stuff. I wonder, at times, what it's all about."

I studied him for a few seconds. "Sometimes I wonder, too," I replied.

"But I'll be damned if I know anything about it," I said as I walked out the door.

[Reprinted from *Cry of the Nameless* #146, January 1961]

*Faster than light drive
Brings together people who
Now had better talk.*

John Hertz



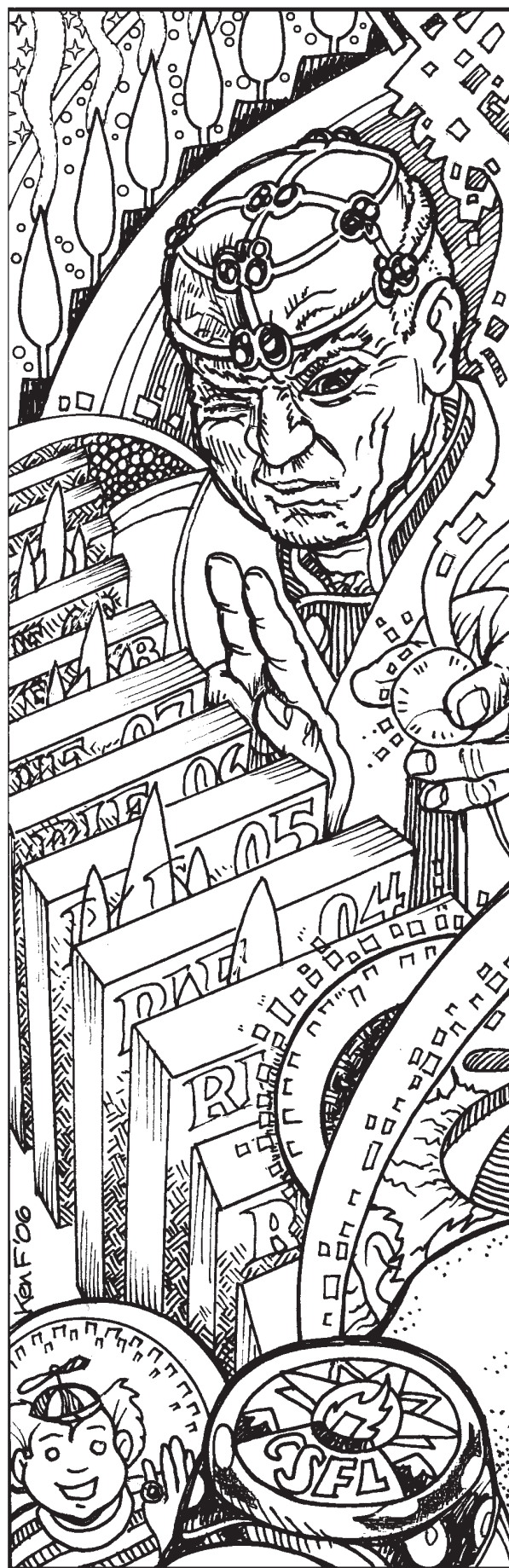
PRE-RELEASE

By Andy Hooper

2156 CE. The Earth was a garden, once more a green riot. And the Earth was a cenotaph, witness to the hundreds of generations of ambitious mankind that strove and played in that familiar yellow light. Even smeared among the stars, humanity had a romantic weakness for burial on the home planet. From the Watts Towers to the Arc D'Arcturus, the Earth was a procession of eternal beacons and memorial squares, twinkling and gleaming in the oxygen-rich air.

Robert Spicer had seen them all when they were new. He'd made up his mind. He was working on his terminal download.

Robert planned to issue himself as an 18 tetrachapter commemorative album on perpetually replaceable data tabs; there would also be a limited edition for his personal acquaintances, a 3-pound book on paper with a suprasensory cover painting by Barley Salt. Loaded with microbuds of Robert's favorite smells, it would fill the room with fresh popcorn or cold summer rain when touched with a moist fingertip.



His second wife Elliny was trying to talk him out of it, but getting nowhere. The ansible put a gap of 14 hours between her pleading paragraphs and his terse phrases of response. He was not especially depressed. He didn't feel very much of anything now. He was simply finished.

In his swanky Brin Building rooms, Spicer silped weak nuclear fizz while he reviewed the index of the Gonkulator Press for the last time. Seeing all the titles floating in glowing orange letters in the middle of the Jello-green page still gave him a perceptible thrill. The 400 issues of *Grab* marched by in justified ranks, each tipping a hat to show its table of contents under his tickling focal point. Then *Rif* and *Ocracoke* pattered in long, short and tall, almost coyly allowing the silver Hugo rocket to superimpose like a gray ghost over the issues from those prize-winning years. But each of those events was more than a century past.

When the exterior circuit chirped at him, he suspected that Elliny had summoned one of his 130+ acknowledged descendents to reason with him. But the annunciation holo was a fat kid in a propeller beanie, and when Robert asked the system for a clarification, the holo held out its hand, which swelled to fill the field of view. The hand sported a huge ring with the seal of the Cascade Science Fiction League. Richard sat on the committee that designed that seal in the 2030s, so it was a calling card sure to catch his attention.

When he connected, there were three men in field, all smooth and pink with the glow of genuine youth. Robert felt like he was looking at zoo animals.

The man in the center of the field spoke. "Happy Birthday, Bob! I'm Tanyon Tubb, and these are my committee heads, Belson Ferry and Kevin Mohindar-McCray. On behalf of the BSFA, we want to say FIAWOL to the world's most famous fanzine fan."

Spicer choked a little on the orange backwash of the nuclear fizz. He wondered momentarily if this might be a prank from decades past, a put-on banked in digital hiding by an old friend or feudmate, to be activated when his age and gullibility had sufficiently ripened. The fact that his 166th birthday was still two months away argued against this, as anyone willing to go to such lengths would surely get the date right. And the accent was pure Mancunian.

"I'm a North American, gentleman. My birthday is the 3rd of May, not the 5th of March."

The pink faces fell with such speed that Robert instantly felt regret. "Even so, I don't think anyone born in this century knows what the Cascade SFL was, or what Fiawol means. What kind of ur-skool retrofen are you?"

The pinks all grinned. "We're all cultural materialists. My specialty is 20th Century printed matter. Ferry's area is South Asian transportation and Kev does the early Orbital Era. And when we were all at Polytechnic, we formed the first officially-chartered college science fiction club to grace Britain in more than 60 years."

Robert smiled thinly. "I get student inquiries from a lot of systems. I'm no longer writing or teaching. All my work is available at demand and a surrogate will pretend to drink Beam's Choice with you if you so desire. Thanks very much for the birthday wish, too."

Just as he broke the connection, Tubb raised his fingers about a foot above his head, and his mouth barely began to round into the shape of the word "smooth."

.
 "You can also plastic canvas stitch a tater tot. Your point?"

Two days later, Spicer received a letter of comment in the middle of an anagathic treatment. He'd debated breaking the appointment, but he didn't want to go through another round of exit therapies. So his body was bathed in piercing spicules of ice when the mailbox function thunked at him, and he reflexively ordered it open.

It was Tanyon Tubb, commenting on issues #1 to 6 of *Ocracoke*. He had clearly studied the 2040's in some detail, and commented with some insight on the political bickering that lead to the Worldcon's acquisition by Vivid Entertainment in 2059. Another centennial he was going to miss, thought Spicer, with a nibble of relief. He was surprised to feel a tickle of egoboo at Tubb's praise for his style, despite the fact that the pink had no real frame of reference for his opinions. And he showed a commendable degree of skepticism where appropriate. Spicer asked for a generic reply, but it had been so long since he'd used it that he ended up reading each line and added several personal notes.

Another week passed, and Spicer's download was nearly complete. All of the essential material was now included, and Robert was finishing epilogues and personal observations that would only be seen by those who had read through a hundred thousand words or more.

He received a request for a face-to-face from Tanyon Tubb, and found that he was pleased to receive the message, and tried several settings for their sit-down. He chose a square near the wrestling stadium in Istanbul, with fireworks overhead to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Turkish conquest of the city. Dozens of his descendents had gathered for the event, and many of Robert's favorites populated the field as he and Tubb sipped their coffee.

Tubb had dozens of insightful questions; Spicer was patient this time, and gave the pinkling nearly three hours as the summer sun slid westward.

"Conventions and fanzines and publishing science fiction were all wonderful ways to pass the time, but you're lucky to have been born yesterday, Tubb. If you can avoid war and disaster, you might live 300 years or longer, and all your friends will probably live just as long. When I began cellular replacements at age 25, they were highly experimental, and intended for use in space. By the time they became available to everyone, most of my friends were over 60 years old and beyond treatment. So I have a legion of friends and family that I can know forever, but I find I miss people that I last saw 149 years ago."

Tubb nodded tightly as he listened. When Robert paused to watch his 7-year-old great-great-great-great-great grandniece eat a piece of Turkish candy, Tubb bent his head toward Robert in a gesture suggesting conspiracy.

"I know why you're telling me this now," said Tubb. "I know that you're busy downloading, Bob. I'm a Pre-Release Subscriber. So this was my last chance to see you directly. We're so close to publishing, Bob, and I really want to send you the first issue so you can include your reaction in the final release. It should be the first stfnal fanzine published since Feldman and Forrest quit in 2090. I think there's still so much to find -- time travel! Alternate worlds! We all know there's life out there somewhere, we just have to find it."

Tubb brushed up the last crumbs of his baklava with the edge of his index finger, and licked them off. "You know what it was like -- before we had everything handed to us on a null-gravity plate. When it was a proud and lonely thing to be a fan. The others don't know it, but you're the reason why I'm doing this at all. And when you're gone, there won't be anyone else alive that will get my favorite jokes."

Spicer took a deck of blue-backed playing cards from his coat pocket, and began shuffling them. "It's too late," he said, dealing out a hand of solitaire in front of him. "I've seen and done everything I ever wanted to, and a lot more in the bargain. I'm finished with every single thing I can still imagine doing. But I knew that if I entertained this correspondence with you for even a second, I would be unable to follow through with my plans. While you were talking to this very special series of programmed responses, I enjoyed a last look at the view from my rooms, then took a fatal dose of a painless, fast-acting poison and declared the download complete. This is your special Pre-Release Edition, Mr. Tubb."

The top card on the table opened a small field in which a be-robed Spicer jerked briefly, then slid to one side. He had GPNBC playing at the time, and an ad poem for Shawarma Station was the last thing he experienced: "Lamb and onion, sliced up hot," it sang, "put it on a pita and whadaya got? Shaaaa-waaaar-maaaaa!"

A few days passed. There was a funeral included in the data set, and Tanyon Tubb got around to attending about a week after Bob Spicer died. During the Snapdragon Ska-dub organ solo, Spicer walked up to Tubb and pressed a piece of paper into his hand. The address and access codes led him to a climate-controlled long-term storage facility in Swindon. When lubrication combined with force finally popped open the lock, Tubb found that the space was filled with 200-year-old science fiction fanzines, some crumbling to dust, but most stabilized with acid-free backing boards and other protective measures. Some of them were already decades old when Bob Spicer was born. Soon, Tubb was absorbing an alternate alphabet: A is for ATom, Armadillocon and Al Ashley; B is for Benford, Butler and rich brown; C for Campbell, Carr and Chesley Bonestell.

Many hours later, Belson Ferry's pocket wouldn't stop kicking and whistling, so he had to leave his girlfriend's parent's table at tea to take the message. In the hallway, the pink blob of Tanyon Carlisle Tubb resolved in a maze of piled-up paper and books. His usually smooth face was bruised and bagged with lack of sleep. "Ferry!" he croaked, clearing the twilltone dust from his throat. "Guess what! I'm an *Insurgent*."



Jim Caughran

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Science Fiction Five Yearly, the fiftieth anniversary! Such an occasion invites retrospection. My history with sffy goes back to 1957, when as a 17-year old neofan I wrote Lee for a copy of #2. She was sold out, but sent some other things, including fanzines and letterheads for Jim Caughran, ill-tempered LNF. Lee, you encouraged me in fandom. Should I be grateful or angry?

Nice to see mimeography and twill-tone again. The spell-checker just marked "mimeography"; I guess it's not a dying art, but already dead. Where do you get supplies?

Enjoyed SF Family. The marina in Puerto Rico where we kept our boat was called "Muelle los locos Adamos," the Adams Family Dock. It was a fun place; things were not taken seriously. Maybe we need more ridiculous names for things; society is too straitlaced.

A person I know has a big birthmark on his face; he is a candidate for being eaten by a [purple people] eater, if it is parsed that way. In fact, he is a candidate either way it is parsed; guess I'd better warn him.

But the line about the descending eater is an argument *against* a purple eater. If a bird or other creature were seen against the sky, the colour is necessary identification if unusual. So surely it would be noted in the lyric, unless it can't be made to scan.

And in Ted's story, "I thought he was going to turn purple..." indicates that there are purple people, if only when they're angry. Is the purple people eater an emotion control constable?

Dave Langford's speech was funny. It must have had its audience ROTFL, as they say on the Internet. From the short snippets in Ansible, I didn't appreciate his talent for sustained humour. Great!

I stockpiled a lot of mimeo supplies in the 1990s, buying from Logos in the Twin Cities), Gestetner, and an ink manufacturer in California. Plus the 100 cases of Fibertone Jeff and I picked up in 1995, and the mimeos and



supplies other fans gave us over the years. We had enough to keep the mimeos cranking for decades!

Sometimes I hear rumors of a business that still stocks mimeo supplies; none of the ones I dealt with do. I'm now strictly mimeo-in-a-box girl, with forays into color inkjet on Fibertone and other odd pairings of technology old and new. -- gfs

Robert Lichtman

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I really, really love Steve Stiles's cover for *SFFY*'s 2001 issue -- so date-appropriate, so well-executed. Moving right to Kip Williams's two poems, I liked them both but the bacover's "All in the SF Family" is by far my favorite. It doesn't hurt to have Dan's illustration below it, either--one of my favorite covers from my sentimental favorite '70s fanzine from the dear departed Terry Hughes.

I haven't been around fandom for all the soon-to-be-55 years that *SFFY* has been appearing on its highly regular schedule. However, because I have a complete set of them I certainly disagree with Lee writing in her editorial, "It was with my retirement from all but a nominal position that the best issues of *SFFY* came about." No disrespect to the parade of fine fans who've assisted Lee in continuing the tradition she began with the first half dozen issues, but those certainly do not suffer by comparison to the later ones.

As a recipient of the CD-ROM of the first eleven *SFFY*s, I certainly appreciated having their contents in electronic form in case the ravages of time eradicated their paper versions. However, I have a belated complaint. The scans of the first issue simply will not transfer themselves from the CD to my hard drive, nor will they open from the disk. Is it possible that a replacement copy could be sent my way?

A lot of the contributions to this issue are of the sort that evokes no parti-cular comment beyond an expression of sheer

LETTERS

enjoy-ment. However, in Dave Langford's "Secret History of *Ansible*" I wanted to add to his section about weird/unique issue numbering -- where he gives such memorable instances as George Charters's "base 3" numbering after the tenth issue and *Second Hand Wave* numbering each issue the 42nd -- the additional example of Geogre Bondar's ten issues of *Qotha 5*, where the issues all have the same number (or part of the name!) with dating being the only clue offering some assistance in determining the sequence in which they appeared. Later Bondar did another fanzine, *DV8*, but those did have issue numbers. Of course George's most famous (or perhaps infamous) fanzine was the one-off *Terry Broome's Underwear 4*, produced using the ditto process (highly unusual for a British fanzine) and with the fanzine cut to resemble a pair of briefs (or "Y-fronts" as they call them over there). I don't know if it was this or some other factor that caused the actual Terry Broome to gafiate for a time and then resume activity some years later under the name of Terry Hornsby.

Despite my comment above, I must single out Ted White's "Crime Stalks the Fan World, or, Abducted By Space-Aliens," which I found a very nice tribute to F. Lee Baldwin and a good piece of faan fiction in its own right.

Belated apologies to you and other PC users who had problems with the SFFY CD. In early versions, I used "/" in some file names, not knowing they are problematic. After you spoke up, I renamed the files. I think later CDs worked more reliably. Past issues of SFFY are also now available at http://fanac.org/fanzines/SF_Five_Yearly/ and I have dreams of adding PDFs of earlier issues sometime next year.

Thanks to Bruce Pelz, I, too, have a full run and I quite agree that the early issues do not suffer in comparison with the later ones. Just earlier tonight (November 24th) LeeH and I enjoyed talking about how SFFY continues to evolve. The early issues set the personality and tone Randy and I hope (and think!) is especially well reflected in these pages. -- gfs



Dennis Lien

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Someone on one of my lists got *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* (nice job, by the way) and wondered how the Sir Arthur Clarke contribution came to be.

I assume Sir Arthur wrote the caption, but did he do it first and Steve Stiles did the cartoon for it, or did he write it from pre-existing Stiles cartoon? In any case, did he do it specifically for *SFFY*, or is this a quote from a pre-existing letter or article or something? Did you approach him or he you or just what? If these details are not Top Secret, Inquiring Minds Want To Know. (If they are Top Secret, of course, Inquiring Minds will have to get by without knowing.)



Inquiring minds had to wait, but not even that was a secret. LeeH wrote to Sir Arthur and asked for a contribution, much as she had several other times over the lustrums -- they're friends from way back. He sent the caption specifically for SFFY #11. Next, we sent it to Steve and he had his way with it. The black areas are consistently solid -- I'll bet that page went through the laser printer rather than the mimeo-in-a-box. -- gfs

Eric Lindsay

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Many thanks for *SFFY*, much awaited, but infrequent enough that I forget it from issue to issue. I have to wonder how many other mimeo zines continue to appear, apart from those from LA. I haven't seen mimeo ink for most of the previous decade. I certainly hope that your mimeo supplies will last another five years, but I am also pleased to learn that back issues are on the web (and CD -- that is neat).

I wonder if perhaps Greg Benford aimed his paper at one of the journals who specialise in taking the piss out of science. It also reads like a description of how to write a web page, where technique and structure render actual content (if any) irrelevant.

Denny Lien carefully raises a reader question



regarding yellow polka dot bikinis, leading to the expectation that an answer will be forthcoming. Then he sweeps us away with a science fictional speculation about flying purple people eaters but without returning to the bikini question, which obviously deserves further observation (as it were).

Must say Steve Stiles provided some great illustrations, as indeed did other interior artists. Nice to know that there are still people doing such good work.

Dave Langford mentions briefly a topic dear to us, namely GUFF. It certainly is a wonderful thing to have survived this long, despite having *Ansible* associated with it. Having provided copies of our material on a web site, we have obviously failed to leave fans anything of use for the toilet. No wonder so many fans dislike e-publication, and demand paper copies.

Actually, like virtually all of Dave's material, his history was a delight to read. I've seldom heard a fanzine history as interesting.

Timothy C. Marion

c/o Kleinbard
266 East Broadway Apt. 1201B
New York NY 10002

I note that you abbreviate your fanzine's name as "SFFY." I abbreviated it as "SF5Y" to my Australian friends, when I offered to make a photocopy for them, since I figured your zine may not make it all the way down there to them. I hope you don't mind -- just trying to spread the Ghodd Word, as it were.

I did have some comments composed in my head, but I had to throw those out -- mainly going on too sentimentally (if such a thing is possible) about how many people who were in your previous issue who now are no longer with us, judging from your lettercolumn. But if you didn't do it, why should I? What I will say, though is that the letters give me a sort of bittersweet quality and almost the sense that I waited too long to get back into fandom. These letters make the previous issue sound so interesting that it tempts me to dig through the boxes and see if I can find it. No doubt you *did* send it to me, and fakefan that I was at the time, I doubtless did not read it, but kept it carefully preserved on a shelf with other unread fanzines. I have to admit, I have gone through a long period of turning my back on my friends and ignoring fandom, despite the fact that I practically grew up in fandom and learned to express myself best (and perhaps only) in fandom. I guess, as John Lennon once said, "I just had to let it go."

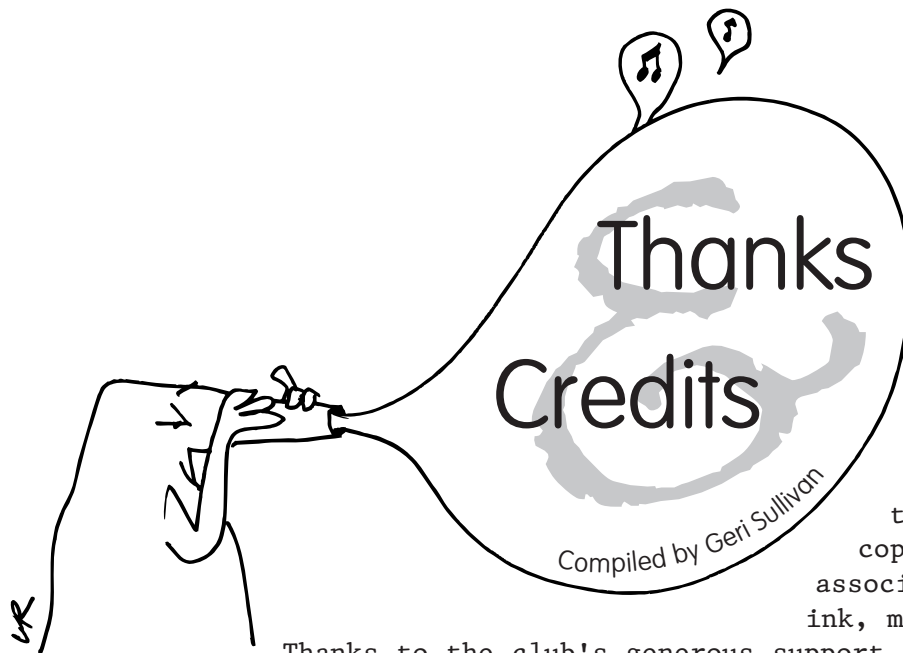
But I get to the end of the issue and I have to break down into maudlinity, or maybe that should be maudlin inanity, when I see Dan Steffan's illo on the back, captioned "TV nights at Terry & Craig's, circa 1975." He captured that basement apartment so perfectly that in light of the news that came before the issue (Terry's death), it's almost enough to make me cry. (I stayed there one night in 1976 on my way to a Steeleye Span concert.) I'm glad we have Dan's cartooning genius to capture this moment in time.

Believe me, updating the mailing list is a heart-breaking task. Tucker, rich, Mike Ford, Bill Bowers, Howard DeVore, George Flynn, KIM Campbell, Harry Warner, Jr. And more, of course. And I still miss Terry; I expect we all do. -- gfs

*"Troubled for you, from time to time
It's why nothing new can break the bind
It's the time we waste for them, that
makes a friend a friend
Unique in all the world until the end."
-- Ted Sherman*

WAHF: Greg Benford, Catherine Crockett ("Very cool to be *acknowledged*, too. I usually only get acknowledged for math theses."), Brad Foster ("I look forward to getting all the way up the 100th anniversary issue, though I might have to have someone read it to me by that time!"), Teddy Harvia ("I feel as if I'm writing something that's to be put in a time capsule. I hope I'm still around when it's opened."), John Hertz, Mike Lowrey, Lloyd Penney, Eric P. Russell, John Teehan, and one woman who found us while Googling for lyrics to both "Flying Purple People Eater" and "Itsy-Bitsy, Teeny-Weeny, Yellow Polka Dot Bikini" because... wait for it...she was writing a post about debate and logic!





All hail the Trufen
of NESFA! The New
England Science Fiction
Association donated not
just the use of Mr G,
their mimeo-in-a-box
copyprinter, but also the
associated expenses -- stencils,
ink, maintenance, and the like.

Thanks to the club's generous support, Randy and I were able in turn to reallocate our hypothetical budgeted funds and mail more copies to fans near and far, especially to those overseas. A luxury indeed!

NESFA also provided the use of its clubhouse for our collation and mailing party, and NESFans volunteered their ace printing and collating talents. Many hands...much fun.

Deb Geisler and Mike Benveniste gave a home-away-from-home to ye guest editor-publishers, saving us 150-mile daily roundtrips from and to Wales (the one in Massachusetts) for the printing/collating/mailing marathon during the last week of November. And there were sweetrolls!

Jeff Schalles is this issue's Saviour of the Paper. I donated 60+ cases of colored Fibertone to the St. Paul Art Scraps program when I sold Toad Hall in 2003 and moved east. Jeff offered to keep the white Fibertone specifically so it would be available for another issue of SFFY. He moved 100+ pounds of paper to his house, then to the house he and Marjorie moved to when they married in 2005. Then he managed to unearth it from the basement so it could be shipped east in a timely manner. What a trip!

Ken Fletcher, Peer G. Dudda, Magenta Griffith, David W. Schroth, Nate Bucklin, Sarah Brandel, Dan Goodman, Dean Gahlon, Felicia Herman, Rachel Rosenberg, Beth Friedman, Sharon Kahn, Martin Schafer, Steve Glennon, Eileen Lufkin, Judy Rosenberg, David Emerson, Erica Stark, Jeff Schalles, and Richard Tatge helped collate SFFY #11 and signed the Toad Hall Register so we'd remember the fact five years later. Some other people helped out, too, no doubt. Thanks to all, and to all who found themselves helping put the finishing touches on SFFY #12. Some of them don't even know it, such as the fine folks at NASA and STScI. They provided the image taken by the Hubble Space Telescope that goes so well with the fourth and final haiku John Hertz wrote and Jae Leslie Adams lettered for SFFY. You think outer space looks good on Fibertone? You should see it on silk!

*We made matter. We
Did it. Our hands open to
Energy, Space, time.*

John Hertz

D-I-Y Fanzine

By Geri Sullivan, with help from talented friends

Okay, enough already! It's not like you can expect another issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly* to arrive in your mailbox for another five years. You say you had fun reading this issue? Randy and I had way more fun putting it together! The best fanzines are those you pub yourself. Creativity. Fame. Glory, even -- if you do it right.

Here's a kit to help you get started. It contains all of the elements needed to produce a fanzine:


- 1) Something to write about; something to write with. Credit for the (un)common vocabulary list goes to Dave Langford and Edward Gorey.
- 2) A fillo, to add visual interest to the page, and to play off the words you use. The Rotsler is an original fillo, unique to your kit. Use it well, following Bill's instructions: "Please pass on any drawings you feel you cannot use in the near future. Many of the drawings really need to be Xeroxed down before use. (That's why God invented the Xerox.)"
- 3) Color consulting. Use the color shown on the unique Pantone chip somewhere in your 'zine. Color has been one of SFFY's hallmarks since 1951; we had to include color in the SFFY D-I-Y Fanzine Kit!
- 4) Interlino. The final kit component is an interlino. Give your fanzine some Pop to help the world go round!

Your assignment: Use the elements in your kit to create a fanzine between now and November 2011. Then send it out -- tell us and show fandom you did it!

Pub Your Ish!

.
I insist that Pop's the sound
The best is missed unless Pop's around
You can stop hoppin' when the cereal's poppin'
Pop makes the world go round....
.

accismus	dust	palindrome
aceldema	epistle	pantehnicon
amaranth	etui	paste
ampersand	exequies	phosphorous
anamorphosis	febrifuge	phylactery
antigropelos	ganosis	piacle
aphthong	gavelkind	plumbago
archipelago	gegenschlein	purlicue
aspic	gehenna	quincunx
badigeon	geranium	quodlibet
baize	gibus	remorse
bellonion	glue	rhoncus
betrayal	hellebore	sago
bosphorus	hendiadys	salsify
botargo	hiccup	samisen
cardamon	hubris	spandrel
cartilege	hymn	sparadrap
cassation	ichor	sphagnum
catafalque	idioticon	tacks
cedilla	lunistic	thunder
chalcedony	madrepore	thurible
chandoo	maremma	tombola
cicatrix	maze	turmeric
clavicle	mistrust	vanilla
corposant	narthex	velleity
cranium	obelus	wapentake
diaeresis	obloquy	wax
dismemberment	opoponax	whim
distaste	orrery	yarborough



We who laugh at time
Wonder at the blaze of a
Trillion trillion suns.

John Hertz