

SPARTACUS NO. 36

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When you lose a friend like **Mike Resnick**, life itself seems to lose. It loses a buoyancy, a heartiness, a happiness, a depth. Science fiction loses a solid pro who produced witty, sometimes Runyonesque stories and, perhaps more importantly, a busload or two of talented proteges (I single out Lezli Robyn), but, definitely more importantly, it loses a wit, a presence, boisterous and loyal, kind and generous, inexhaustible and caring.

Personally, I lose a friend who didn't hesitate to rescue me from an air travel horror and who allowed me to crash o'ernight at his magnificent Cincinnati abode. Along with the rest of New Orleans fandom – particularly John Guidry – I lose a friend who encouraged us to shoot for the moon and, when we fell short, to keep our heads up and our hearts light. I lose a *Chall* Pal whose work enhanced every issue of my genzine to date, writings on Africa, on collies, on theater, movies, Paris, food. I lose a corridor-crawling companion who believed in the fannish world, in costuming, in Hugos, in parties and readings and in-jokes and laughter. I lose – we all lose – a consummate science fictioneer: pro, fan, *friend*.

But *did* we lose? Life remains enhanced – humanized – enriched – exalted, if you will. Our hearts go out to Carol, to Laura, to Mike's collaborators and students, to others who like us, reveled in his friendship. But so does our common joy in the great Bwana whose life he so generously shared.

And not a week later – not three days later – SF loses the wild wit of **Steve Stiles**. I didn't know Steve very well, but his generosity with his inimitable art was in SFdom's best traditions, as was his wacky self-deprecating humor. His priceless talent was on display everywhere – check out eFanzines.com and our Sasquan program book, particularly the page depicting his long-desired Hugo win.



I am so glad that fandom, at long last, had the wit to give him his Hugo, for real. The guy was an original.

Not only that, within a day of these losses, my wonderful brilliant friend Martina Klicperova, world-class intellectual and Czech patriot, lost her excellent husband James Baker. 2020, no offense, but so far, you *hurt*.

A last note: Mike Resnick's final illness left Carol with stunning medical bills. I'm sure Steve Stiles' family is in much the same boat. Rosy and I can't afford to contribute to GoFundMe efforts to assist them, but I *can* urge readers to do so if *they* can. These guys believed in SFdom as a community. Let's honor that belief.

Christmas was fun around here. I wonder how it was for the kids in cages, sleeping on concrete floors, not knowing where their parents are. Damn ICE. Damn their venal and repulsive boss.

Impeachment is upon us. Scant days after Donald Trump nearly led us into yet another Mideastern war with Iran, the appointed prosecutors from the House of Representatives made the solemn walk to the U.S. Senate. That superb statesman Adam Schiff read the indictment to the upper chamber, the Chief Justice of the United States was brought in, sworn in, the assembled senators raised their right hands and came forward to sign the oath for the Senate records. Those records go back to 1789. Solemn, serious stuff indeed.

In the days in which this *Spartacus* reaches fandom, the Trump trial will strain the walls of the Capitol with its anger and fervor. Trump's recklessness, mendacity, and hypocrisy will be broadcast to the American government and the American people. His inevitable acquittal on these charges – promised by his stooges in the Senate – will end none of the condemnation he and his deserve. The meaning of the trial – what it proves – will go on. And in less than three seasons, there will be an election, establishing if we're a people who puts up with making children give up their parents and sleep on a concrete floor ... or decent.

We have to fight this out. No way around it. Our standing as a nation of honest and decent people is at stake, not to mention minor matters like the respect given us throughout the world, the trust of our allies, the caution of our enemies, and our *very* hard-won heritage as the guardian of justice and the rights of man. Should we lose this time, many of us "Oh, Boomers!" will never see a country we can be proud of again. So we must not hold back. The issues are too fundamental and too important, the opponents too unprincipled and unworthy.

This will be a bloody year. We are up against a principle we have encountered before: pure *Fuerherprinzip*, absolute faith in a creature of no more substance than a caricature, a man without character or ability or vision or ideas. May I suggest *A Warning* by "Anonymous", an insider's account of the Trump White House? While LOL-funny in spots, where the author

depicts executive branch bureaucrats driven to hysteria by their inane boss' antics, the book's main effect is to terrify – and to firm up one's resolve.

Indeed we must find resolution *now* – it's never too early. Therefore, *my* resolutions for 2020.

1. No truce with kings. I'll speak out against Trump and his policies wherever and whenever and in whatever company they come up. No insult, no snide remark, no lie, no mistaken idea or error will go unanswered.
2. Seriousness. Easy enough to fight against Trump's crudity with crudity of our own. We can fight him better with rationality and decency. This stance requires faith in the ultimate wit of the audience, but faith in each other is required in the American community.
3. No personal insults against his sane supporters. Note: *sane*. Brutes will be called out for brutality, racists for racism without hesitation or apology. But the name-calling ends before we speak. Trump voters are citizens; it's important to bring them into the fold. We *have* to try to treat them with both strength and courtesy. I've been saying for years that the only ethnic group in America still acceptable to despise is the white rural working class. Their bitter isolation and resentment – and the myopic lassitude of black voters – have given us Trump. We can and must win them over. After all, vital as it is, this is not our last election. We'll all be here in 2021.
4. Energy. We need the drive of revolutionaries and the foundations of history. We can't afford to despair.

And we have to stay positive. No truce with lies, no quarter with Trump. But I have beloved cousins and superb neighbors who are Trumpys. It plays into my mantra: Respect their opinions? No. They're deadly dangerous. Respect their rights? More than they do. Respect their feelings? Not nearly enough.

The **Democratic nomination** race is by no means decided, but I note two developments. First, the odd endorsement by *The New York Times* of two candidates: Amy Klobuchar and my gal, Elizabeth Warren. I've heard nasty stuff about Klobuchar – she's apparently a real dick to her staff – but I approve of her feisty attitude, and of course I fully support Liz. I hope this endorsement gives her a boost. Secondly, I note the pointless argument between my beloved Liz and Bernie Sanders over whether or not he said something dumb to her two or however many years ago. The whole fracas is dumb. Cut it out, you two. Speaking of dumb, it was dumb of the Democrats to sell Ron Reagan Jr. commercial time for his Freedom from Religion group during their debates. We don't need any more ties to philosophies many Americans fear, even if their resentment is unfair.

Shout-out to climate guru **Greta Thunberg** for her selection as *Time's* Person of the Year. "And a child shall lead them." I just eye the smoke rising above Australia – is the forest around Hanging Rock okay? – and hope the world follows.

The **Oscar nominations** caused their usual hurricane-in-a-hamper scandal when announced. Various pressure groups frothed with outrage because this and these and those weren't included on the lists. While one can certainly argue that Lupita Nyong'o, Jen Lopez, John Lithgow and Adam Sandler *deserved* acting nods, should we assume that Greta Gerwig, the female director of *Little Women*, went un-tapped and no more black or brown actors made the cut because of some sort of purposeful slight? In clearer language, is diversity for its own sake more important than

professionals' aesthetic judgment? Stephen King, on a tangential topic, said that only the work matters. I completely agree.

Going wild with the need to wallow in the Oscar nominations, Rosy finally let me trundle her to 1917, Sam Mendes' World War I drama and winner of the Golden Globe for Best Drama. I was awed – by the filmmaking skill (like *Birdman*, the movie is effectively two unbroken scenes), the compelling story, the agonizing ugliness of the Great War. Have I seen a better film about WWI? *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Can't think of another movie treatment superior to this, although Peter Jackson's *They Shall Not Die* documentary of a year or so back was heartbreaking and powerful in a way no fictional movie could be.

Still, 1917's Sam Mendes will likely be named Best Director. My bet is on *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* for Best Picture, Joaquin Phoenix as Best Actor (for *Joker*), Renee Zellweger as Best Actress in *Judy* (I'd prefer Scarlett Johansen in *Marriage Story*), Brad Pitt as Supporting Actor in *Hollywood* and Laura Dern as Supporting Actress in *Marriage Story* (she was a hoot; Margot Robbie superb – and, I admit, eye-delighting – turn in *Bombshell* would be her main competition). See if I'm right. Bet I am. I've been doing fanzines for fifty-one years, but I've been an Academy Awards nut for *sixty-three*.

PREACH, CHORUS, PREACH!

Comments on *Spartacus* no. 35

Rich Lynch

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I'm going to forgo politics this time and instead comment on something *really* interesting: your mini-essay about Martin Scorsese and his belief that Marvel movies are trivial artless diversions and not "cinema" at all. You seem to come down on the side that they *do* in fact have cinematic worth, but I guess that depends on how you define 'worth'. I've seen most of them and I pretty much look on them as guilty pleasures – entertaining as long as you don't have your brain in gear. I grant you that they're cinema – by definition, what movie isn't? – but it's hard to disagree with Scorsese about them being nothing more than trivial diversions.

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It's a new year, and same old me, slogging along trying to get caught up with all the fanzines I want to respond to. I have here *Spartacus* 35, with the gasbag on the front cover, so with that out of the way...

Trump is impeached, and it doesn't seem to matter to him. He still carries on with this assassination of that Iranian general (act of terrorism, as far as I am concerned), which was followed by the Iranians mistakenly shooting down a jetliner full of people Iranian by birth, but from other countries. There were 57 Iranian-Canadians on that jet, plus tens of thousands of Iranian-Canadians traumatized by this event. Most Canadians lay all of this at the feet of Donnie Gasbag. When he is eventually deposed, either impeachment or by a loss in the next election, I hope he will spend the rest of his pathetic life

defending himself in an unending stream of courts of law for unpaid bills, to start off with, and then, the crimes he has committed as President, which are many. Lock. Him. Up.

Kids in cages. Nothing more need be said.

I hereby admit that I read few SF books, and few if any movies. No money, and not much incentive, to be honest. I've got lots of other things to do. Earlier today, I purchased the earliest registration level memberships for Ad Astra 2020, our local convention. I am under no illusions that I will be going there for the science fiction, though if they have something about Amazing Stories, I will be there. Otherwise, I hope it will be a reunion con, with us seeing lots of old friends. SF fandomwise, it may be all I have left up here.

Because of my activities with *Amazing*, I have been inclined to try to reinvent myself as a book editor. Four issues of *Amazing*, plus three books by Allen Steele, Nancy Kilpatrick and Shirley Meier later, I am thinking I can do this. I got myself a copy of *Chicago Style*, thanks to the good counsel of Rob Sawyer, and I have some studying to do. Work continues to be elusive, although some part-time work may arrive soon in the form of Rakonto Canada and World Vision, same as in 2019, again, I hope.

Sheila Strickland Baton Rouge LA

I debated with myself as to whether I wanted to see *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. The reviews made it sound like something I'd like to see; but the mention of extreme violence at the end made me hesitate. I can't watch violence onscreen anymore; apparently I've gotten more sensitive to it. What might work best is to watch the DVD so I can fast-forward through the parts I can't watch.

I like Elizabeth Warren as a candidate as well. I just hope she can avoid the label of "socialist." She has the reputation of being left wing, but I don't think her positions are all that extreme.

John W. Campbell and the award with his name. Le sigh. Campbell was a brilliant and ground-breaking editor, but even his admirers will say he held racist views, even racist for his time. And no, I'm not forgetting he published many Jewish authors.

The Tiptree award renaming is another sticky situation. I am willing to believe she shot her husband out of love; but some in the disabled community see that as a slippery slope. When do you cross the line between a mercy killing and a murder? If the person asked to be killed? If the person can't ask, but you have a reasonable notion that they wouldn't have wanted to live as they were? I can understand why someone disabled might be hostile to the idea that their life is worth little because they can't walk or take care of themselves.

Thanks to the deadline for the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, this *Spartacus* falls into the fortnight between the Conference Championships of the National Football League and the Super Bowl. Dominating in the former and facing off in the latter are the San Francisco '49ers and the Kansas City Chiefs. Neither has been a factor in the football playoffs in recent years, and both are superb teams, so we can all look forward to a righteous tilt.

It's a new match-up, which I applaud, and the New England Patriots aren't involved (they were half-baked this season), so I'm almost happy. But I cannot be. My adored **New Orleans Saints**, after attaining a 13-3 record as good as anything they've won before (except for their Super-season), played without verve or purpose in the first round in the playoffs. They recovered enough of their wham-bam to force their game with the Vikings into overtime – but then allowed them to score, and move on, on their very first possession.

It was classic Saints. Lose on the last play of the game.

Last year's catastrophe in the NFC Championship game was not their fault: they were cheated by an anencephalic referee who missed the most obvious pass interference call in football history. But this year they botched a win against SanFran – in the *last minute* – that would have given them a needed bye in the wild card round. How long ago was the Minnesota Miracle? How many years before that did NOLa miss the playoffs due to a last-second field goal by the '49ers? Remember when the Saints had a game tied had they not missed an extra point? Or the game where the opposing quarterback, within NOLa's five-yard line, not only fumbled the ball, but *lost* it? The Saints stood around like mannequins and seemed to give him hours to find the pill and score with it. Time and again it happened. I'd thought that, with a truly historic quarterback leading an extraordinarily able team, those days were behind my beloved team..

No such luck.

Back to the Saints' eternal motto. *Wait till next year*. And lest my loyalties be doubted, especially at this time ... **WHO DAT?**

Hugo nominations are pending, and except for Greg Benford's *Rewrite*, I have no favorites. Suggestions, anyone?

I owe Rich Lynch for reporting on the 2019 Worldcon for those of us unfortunate enough to miss it. Therein he discusses, and depicts in a photo, good Geri Sullivan's slide show on fanzines. Projected into the screen behind Geri: the first page of the last issue of ***The Zine Dump***. I edit it; you can find most of its issues on eFanzines.com.

It's been an obscene amount of time since the last *TZD*, for which I apologize. Though my "zinezine" of slight reviews brings me loads of contact with fan editors from every English-speaking country, it is a grizzly bear to do – translation: exhausting. I am an old fan now, and tired, and I am told that my reviews are not as incisive or compelling as others' (Bob Jennings' notices are indeed excellent).

However, *The Dump* is also praised for collecting info about a slew of fanzines into one place, thus helping preserve the community. Kind souls have ignored my all-too-frequent mistakes and praised my 'tude towards newbies to the hobby, which I intend to be welcoming. And though I have no idea what Geri said about *TZD* in Scotland, that *was* my zine on the screen. (Hey, I made a rhyme!) I'm not teaching this semester; I *might* have time on my hands ...

So: keep it up? What do you think?

Hey, it's 4:07 in the morning on January 21, 2020. Enough of this. See you in sixty, and I don't mean minutes.

