



CAPTAIN JACK © JERRY CALLINS 1989



# SPIRITUS MUNDI 186

A zine for SFPA #224 by

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My heartfelt dedication for this issue goes to a lady named Kathleen Corrick, who was Kathy Ericksen when I knew her at Ygnacio Valley High School in Concord, California in 1967. In early October Kathy – excuse me, Kathleen – visited New Orleans with her husband, Steve. Rose-Marie and I met them for breakfast at Brennan's.

Even though we hadn't seen each other in 32 years, and in that time I have lost most of my hair and gained most of my weight, Kathleen recognized me ... from half a block away. I recognized her, too ... by the peering gesture she made when looking down the street. No one else on Earth could be as spontaneous, limber, and effervescent.

A thousand years ago, acting on her own volition, Kathleen sat me down at YVHS and gave me a lecture/pep talk on the value of being more social and less arrogant. She was my managing editor at the **Smoke Signal** and edited the school's literary magazine. She taught me to dance, after a fashion, which is to say she taught not to mind looking like a spastic idiot to music. She talked me into asking her beautiful yet shy girlfriend Alison to the senior prom (which our school called a *Senior Ball*, tsk. We triple-dated with Kath and her boyfriend, and Paul, the Swedish foreign exchange student who got caught in the sack with *his* date the next morning, but that's another story. When she was 20, she married a rather stiff dude with a moustache, and I was at their wedding. A third of a century later, thanks to Classmates.com, and a New Orleans meeting of her husband's law firm, here she was.

Unchanged? Nonsense. She's now a geriatric nurse with two grown sons – one a successful attorney in Las Vegas. Her husband, once a bit of a priss, is now a regular guy. Guess that happens in 32 years with Kathleen. (He looked amazingly like Steve Francis.) She well remembered the skinny goof, crazed with hormones, she knew in high school, but her memories were kind. "All my friends thought you were cute," she said. "Now you tell me," I replied. We caught up on old times and old pals, and I felt only a twinge of the shame poor people always suffer around more successful classmates. Only a twinge. Nobody deserves a happy life more, and besides, I had Rose-Marie beside me, and that is the most prideful thing there is.

Will we ever see her again? We have a standing invitation to stay at their house if we pass through D.C., so ... maybe. Until then, what a pleasure to have the world work out right for someone who so merits it.





## The move

In early October Rose-Marie and I were driving a rental truck west on I-10 through the panhandle of Florida, moving most of her worldly possessions from where they had been stored in West Palm Beach. It was a huge truck, 32 feet and 3 inches in length; we had to master a near-horizontal steering wheel and a five-on-the-floor stick shift. We passed a truck scale.

"Did that sign say 'All *rental* trucks stop here' or 'all *retail* trucks'?" We soon found out. Here came the state trooper.

"I know I wasn't speeding," I told him. "No way I could get this thing above 70."

It wasn't speeding. The friendly cop just wanted a look inside my van. He was satisfied by a glance in at the 300+ boxes and tubs and whatnot that Rosy and I were schlepping to New Orleans. Later, I wondered if I should have pitched a 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment fit, demanded a warrant, and so forth, but on reflection, blew it off. One has less *expectation of privacy* in a rental property such as a motel room than in one's own abode; undoubtedly the same holds true in a rental truck.

We wondered, though ... was the stop connected at all with 9-1-1? Could they be looking for smuggled A-bombs or compacted fertilizer? Or perhaps only illegal Cubans, a big problem in that part of this skittish land?

Whichever, it is a new world ... and not one any of us would want.

As for the move, it was a nightmare. Rosy had over 300 boxes of stuff, plus 40 tubs, plus various pieces of furniture, equipment, and very little of any of it, junk. It took forever to get our truck, and when we got it, it took forever to load it, and we had to leave her computer desk and some other good property behind. We may go fetch it over Thanksgiving. Fortunately, her family was helpful, and when we somehow got the behemoth here, my friend Barbara and her boyfriend helped unload. We've filled another storage unit top to bottom and back to front, and as I've said before, this house looks like the last scene in **Citizen Kane**, but! Her stuff is here. Day by day we get more of it unboxed and organized. Someday this joint may even be fit for visitors.

Since we've been home, Rosy has been busy emptying her nice neat clean pretty firm and uniform storage boxes. I've been busy refilling them from my vile torn soggy mismatched and dilapidated storage boxes, packed as long ago as Greensboro ('83) or even Dauphine Street ('79). Good stuff, too – a choice SF collection, including obscure Jules Verne novels – in heartbreaking condition after so many decades in the sodden dark. We'll see now how *neat* packing affects them, whether it'll straighten those warped covers and dry those dampened pages.

I also found a load of Jerry Collins art – remember Jerry Collins? Venison as sex objects? – a piece of which adorns this issue's cover. Jerry is long *gafia*, but he's all over

## Challenger #15

The issue is completed, and may even hold down the end of this very mailing, just as portions of its predecessor hold down its start. **Chall** #15 is something of a diary of the summer of '01, beginning with the demise of Poul Anderson and ending with the loss of our man Meade. Needless to say, an *awful* lot – and a *wonderful* lot – happened in that span.

There's grand work from my contributors but an awful lot of *me* in this issue: an editorial on September 11<sup>th</sup> – didn't think I could let *that* alone, did you? – a review of **A.I.**, conceived when I thought that movie would be considered important, a long trial report, and of course my zine reviews, lettercol interjections and photopage captions. That's a huge load of my ego for anyone to bear. But! The cover by Alan White is a masterpiece and the interior illos are splendid (thank you, Randy). I hope

people like it. I may never win the Hugo – in fact, I doubt it – but I *love* being nominated. So this issue – did I mention the glorious color cover by Alan White? – will flood the west coast, fans from which will no doubt themselves inundate Con Jose.

### Anthrax

A few minutes ago, at the post office, I retrieved our mail, and in it was *the* postcard from Uncle Sam. How to spot suspicious mail, and what to do with it. It was unaddressed.

It made my fingers itch.

For the first time, I understand the anthrax hysteria.

Last mailing we all talked about the horrible World Trade Center disaster. I'll bet this time the word on everybody's lips is the germ nobody wants on anybody's hands – or their mail. Anthrax.

(When I hear the word I always flash on Rex Stout's **Some Buried Caesar**.)

All but certain: the genesis of this outbreak – which is really incredibly small in scope – is one lunatic, a Unabomber with germs to spread around. It's clear that this anus chose his targets – media and government – less to maximize the damage done as to increase the publicity gained. If he hasn't been infected himself – which would be sumptuously just – he's chortling every time he sees a postal worker swelling his fingers inside rubber gloves, and he'd howl if he read my crack about the postcard above. Whoever gets him, the FiBbIes or his own bugs, it can't come soon enough.

### Angola & Environs

One of the articles in **Challenger's** 14<sup>th</sup> issue which you will *not* find in this mailing's special edition has to do with a client I call "The Empty Man." I had him on a first degree murder charge involving the beating deaths of an elderly couple in LaPlace. In late October I went up to the state pen at Angola to wheedle him into pleading guilty to the charge. For one thing, he had confessed, twice; for another, he had nothing to lose, having two death sentences already on the books against him.

Because I am a romantic soul at heart, I took Rose-Marie; she'd never seen that part of Louisiana and it's pretty country. Besides, as a former police reporter, she was interested. A call to the warden's office arranged a tour, to begin after we were don't with Mr. Empty.

While Rosy wandered through the prison museum – and let me reiterate its transcendent cool – I visited the Empty Man with another attorney. The inmate was in a listening mood – he *stares* at you while you talk; it's freaky – and within an hour we had the *Boykin* plea form signed. It was a great deal for the Empty Man: if he wins any of his appeals in any of his cases, he can withdraw this plea, so the plea really has no consequence whatsoever. Leaving Death Row – and that is *always* a nice thing to do – I collected Rose-Marie, we found Thomas, the fella doing the tour, and away we went.

I'd toured Angola before, but never in this depth. To tell the truth, it was a bit disturbing to introduce my beloved and incredibly feminine wife into the company of double-Y-chromosome lifers. At the trustees' camp, Camp F, Thomas walked us through a dormitory (the guard walked right behind us), then took us into the shops. Privileged inmates wailed away making first-class leather goods with some *very sharp* tools. They eyed Rose-Marie like she was an angel (which she is, of course). I admired their work and like the idea of inmate crafts, but wondered how many murders and rapes could be traced to that workroom. It was a relief to get her outside – even though our next stop was the carpentry shop, again producing first-rate work, where the guys looked at *me* like I was a tempting cord of oak.

There are, of course, other rooms at Camp F. This time I didn't get into the actual execution chamber, just the witness room, but I was just as glad to have a sheet of glass between my beloved and

the lethal injection table. They've painted the cinder block walls a peaceful beige, but the table is still black, and it's still the most horrible thing on which I've ever set my eyes.

Wonder if I'll be back there for the Empty Man ... or the guy I call Marcus Brignac in **Challenger** no. 15.

Judging from our tour, with the above exception, Angola seemed pretty darn nice. The kennel trustees live separately from all other prisoners in a shady hillside camp with their dawgs. They even do their own cooking. There's a hospice program too – overnight spousal visitation – connubial visits. As long as you don't get the needle and keep your nose clean, and of course don't mind being unable to leave, Angola isn't bad at all. Or so I keep telling my clients as I wave bye-bye to them as they vanish into its depths.

Rose-Marie and I had illusions about catching the famous Angola rodeo that weekend, but the every-Sunday-in-October event sells out weeks in advance. Still, we were in an interesting part of Louisiana, dotted with history, so we explored. After scoring a sandwich and hash browns au gratin at the justly legendary Magnolia Café, we briefly wandered the exterior of Oakley Plantation, including recreations of their slave cabins, which did not come cable-ready. The evening we devoted to Halloween.

The Willows is an antique plantation from the 1800's, now a bed'n'breakfast, which claims to be the most haunted house in America. This night they offered special haunted tours for ten bucks a ticket, and being SF fans ~~and suckers~~, Rosy and I signed up. For a while the tour was pretty neat. Costumed guides led us through nicely appointed antique rooms relating ghostly tales about the 19<sup>th</sup> century entrepreneur who built the place and the sprits which apparently walk there yet. Each embellished their historical accounts with a personal tale of The Unknown witnessed in connection with the house. All well and fine until it came to Earl. The last of our guides, he *read* his script, and his moment of supernatural visitation had come when he'd started to put on the Confederate uniform he wore and found that *\*shudder\** some one – or Some Thing – had *\*shiver\** *sewn a button on his pants!* ***\*Scream!\**** ***\*Shriek!\****

By all means take this tour next year. Visit the ghost of my twenty dollars!

(Also the ghost of Rosy's camera. She lost it in the courtyard.)

The next morning we returned to the plantation we'd briefly seen the day before. Toured in leisure, it was truly beautiful. Oakley is called the Audubon State Historic Site because John James Audubon worked there as a tutor for a few months in 1821. Original hand-tinted Audubon prints adorn the walls, original or period furniture fills the rooms – small; people weren't as expansive in those days – and the place is good corny fun. We wander'd about the grounds, photographing (with new, disposable cameras) the psychotic geese, the glorious falls of Spanish moss from the magnificent willows. It was something new about Louisiana, this fabulous, flawed adopted home of mine, and it was grand.

### **And Afterwards ...**

A pew full of victims' relatives, and the Empty Man balked when it came time to take his plea ... at first. It took a solid hour of cajoling and convincing, and a call to his appellate attorney, but eventually he did what he was supposed to do. I was relieved; the plea bargain costs him nothing and I still haven't lost a client to the table. Marcus was also sentenced that day, so our judge got to exercise his nastiest rhetoric in packing both off for Angola until Hell freezes over.

Visiting NOLA in mid-November were Fred and Mary Ann van Hartesveldt – but I refuse to mention them on the same page as the Empty Man. Several pages of mailing caustics will simply have to intervene.



# Mailing Caustics – SFPA 223

This was the 9-1-1 mailing. We all lived through it, we all wrote about it. Not to ascribe any mammoth mundane importance to something as deliberately insignificant as an apa mailing, but SFPA 223 demonstrates the value such a disty has above and beyond its worth to us. We showed how a group of articulate and literate Americans responded to overwhelming catastrophe. Those in the future who want to know history in the personal level could do worse than look to us. Hello, up there.

**OE** Thanks again for the extra OO; I maintain my complete set. Also thanks for the innovative egopoll ballot, but you were wrong in one respect: your trivia questions had me thoroughly befuddled. I was forced to provide ludicrous answers.

**Ackerman** Nice seeing you too at the worldcon. There's a photo of you in **Challenger**, serving sticky buns. You handled the Green Room splendidly, and how right you are about the Reading Market – excellent ambiance and decent chow. We also liked Philly's Chinatown; Rich and I took the ladies there. || I find it horrifying that you are discussing the college plans of a child whose birth you related in either this apa or LASFAPA. You are making me feel old. Now, if you tell me that Raphi is only 5 or 6, and you are simply planning way ahead, I'll feel better. || Bravo for putting your veins where everyone else's mouths were – and that sounds very gross – and donating blood after 9-1-1. You obviously cared in a way I didn't have the nerve to. I, uhh, don't like raisins. || Great luck to **Captain Sinister**, and in all seriousness to Raphi, as he faces college.

**Brooks** Exquisite Mahlon Blaine front and back covers. Reminds me of Erte's sculptures, on display and (very very expensive) sale on Royal Street in the French Quarter. || Your comment on people with desperately bad genes being "glad to go" reminded me of John Merrick, the Elephant Man, who makes an unforgettable cameo appearance in **From Hell**. (It's the best makeup job I've ever seen, far superior to that afflicting John Hurt in **The Elephant Man**; Oscar-worthy). Even a man with Proteus Syndrome – which apparently means that whatever can go physically wrong with you, will – must value life and not want to lose it, although it's clear that Merrick suffered from (no wonder) depression. His appearance in the movie reminded me of my own Jack the Ripper idea – based on the incredible coincidence of a famous physical distortion living at the same time and place as such an extreme moral and psychological distortion. Well, maybe someday I'll write it out. || Lucy Lawless made quite an impression on her first **X-Files**; I didn't pay any attention to the plot (Rosy's the fan; I'm not), but I didn't blink while she was on the screen, that's for sure. || I have the opposite reaction to the Hildebrandts' Tolkein art. Rather than finding their paintings "stiff and lifeless" I find their paintings vivid and evocative tableaux. After I first viewed one of their calendars I couldn't wait to read the trilogy. I'm doing so again, and damn, that stuff is good. || You can tell I've forgotten those wonderful days of neohood. My note on your typewriter natter goes "Idea: zine on all mechanical devices". An Underwood, a purple master, a ditto ... Rather far removed from hammering out **Challenger** on a computer and having it printed on a xerox! Why don't you do an article for me on the prime prizes in your typewriter collection – perhaps typing out an occasional paragraph in the more unusual typefaces? || I shiver when I remember my high school course in Biology. We had to dissect an earthworm, and .. Well, it helped that I was on the right side of the scalpel. || Boutillier's articles have been nothing but trouble for poor Lynch. I can't help but feel sorry for Lester, with nothing to write about but old New Orleans fan gossip, which apparently he always got wrong. || I dislike the pentagonal space postage –

too hard to tear loose from the background and use. The holographic stamps, on t'other hand, are the *ne plus ultra* of niftitude. || Dead armadillos dot Louisiana highways. I didn't know they were dangerous. Leprosy, huh? \*yikes\* || Irony pre-9-1-1 comment: "a suicide bomber is the ultimate in sincere dedication." Let them be sincere on their own damn turf!

**Brown** Powerful issue – perhaps SFPA's most comprehensive response to 9-1-1, interspersing views of the horror from your professional perspective as a newspaperman as well as from the personal. The front pages your present are dramatic, powerful stuff – although I agree with you about the "MASSACRE" headline (more appropriate would be "ATROCITY"). But more dramatic and more powerful are your very personal and very human reactions – astonishment at the unbelievable. || Ever the church-going caucasian, I never wore blue jeans during high school or college – I was well into graduate school by the time I discovered how comfortable and, to be blunt, flattering they were. Now I regard jeans – preferably Levi's; it pays to buy the best – as *de rigeur* for every day when I'm not in court. || No kidding about the Florida humidity; getting married there in the pit of summer was a test of my endurance. I could sort-of handle it, since I live in a swamp, below sea level. But my poor brother comes from Buffalo, where it *snowed* on June 30<sup>th</sup>. He suffered. || Your "Cool Stuff" column this time justifies its name: those notes from comics artists are indeed nifty. As for the **Roy Rogers** comic, I feel like responding like Bruce Willis did in **Die Hard**: "*Yippee-ki-yay ...*" I forget the rest.

**Cleary** Gorgeous artwork – consider it stolen! More later ...

**J. Copeland** A splendid essay on the tragedy – "the tickertape of history clattering loudly." I too, on first hearing, flashed not on terrorists attacking the WTC but on the plane bashing into the Empire State Building during WW2. I remembered a photograph of the fuselage hanging out of the side. (Weirdly, I found out later that the pilot of that aircraft was a friend of Rosy's stepfather, an airman who also knew Joseph Heller.) But then the second plane zoomed in from off-camera and we knew things were much much worse. || We still don't know the damage done to the Constitution as a result of 9-1-1, and the **New York Times** has said that the lawless arrests of Arabs which we'd seen with such horror were neither as extensive or as serious as we'd feared. Nevertheless, when a winger like Dick Cheney proclaims to Republican governors that the changes in civil liberties they've leveled are now a permanent part of American law, I shudder. Damn, I wish every Florida ballot had been counted. Gore – who would have then won the presidency – might well have taken the same foreign actions Bush has, but he would never have toyed so recklessly with domestic tyranny. The election may well be a forgotten obscenity, but it shouldn't be. || Why did wingers personally hate Clinton, and still do? Because he was so damn good at the game they thought they owned. || I *want* that 24 September issue of **The New Yorker**. I wonder if it's buyable on-line. || Moving on to MilPhil, I'd say the worst thing about the Hugo ceremony were and are the Japanese *Seiun* awards. The costumes are pretty but the presentations are a drag – and seem to take hours. But of course, now that they're a tradition, and a whole country's fandom is drawn up in them, how do we get rid of them?

**L. Copeland** Your quilt about 9-1-1 – which we saw on the Net – was fabulous; I hope you didn't mind when I published the website in **Challenger** no. 15. (Also appreciate the word on our mutual friend, whom I hope shows up at DeepSouthCon next year.) You found the solace you needed in creative excellence, and good for you. || I like your cover – dem some friendly hawks ... though I don't get the "orca" pig joke. || One of Woody Allen's problems in making films is that he's been trying to make "his" **Citizen Kane** ... or, in one case, "his" **Cries and Whispers**. He's been trying for

a masterpiece with other artists in mind, instead of just writing the movie he wants to make. Maybe I should couch that sentiment in the past tense, since I haven't seen any unrealized pretense in any of his recent films, at least none since **Crimes & Misdemeanors**. **Zelig** was groundbreaking, **Hannah and Her Sisters** was superb, **Mighty Aphrodite** was inspired – ever notice how many *supporting* actresses shine in Allen's films? Dianne Wiest has won two Oscars for his movies, Mira Sorvino won hers in one, and Judy Davis is only one of several who have come as close as nomination. I find Allen personally distasteful, or at least a little pitiable, but boy, he can make a good flick on occasion. || How'd JJ like it when **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** won the Hugo?

**Dengrove** Life *has* changed. It took me a second or two to remember who Chandra Levy is ... *was*. || More to come later ...

**Feller** "The Shot Heard Round the Worldcon" – a oneshot title with unanticipated irony, for sure. But it came on a jolly occasion – just after the Hugos – and I wish we'd made it to Toni's party. The Hugo ~~Losers~~-Nominees' Party was so crowded I had to pull Brad Foster's elbow out of my nose. I don't know how well I could have handled all those balloons, though – 52 years old and a veteran of six or seven ghastly murder trials, and I still get nervous around rubber balloons. || See my comment to Janice about Harry Potter winning the Hugo. I'd say such a result is inevitable a fandom which has grown so lazy that it votes on the basis of name recognition. But! It was the event of the year ... as I say to Janice. || Hey, here's Henry Welch, author/editor of **The Knarley Knews**, one of the great ongoing fanzines. Neat to see him in SFPA! || On to **Frequent Flyer** ... with its touching dedication to your late mother-in-law. 85! Our sympathies to Anita on her dear mama's passing, but no one can say the lady didn't get her innings. She went in her sleep, which is always best, and if her age cost her awareness of the outside world, so also – let's hope -- did it spare her the fear of death. Going through Jewel's house afterwards was obviously a mixed chore – delightful to find her poems and old photos, sad to disperse the place that so reflected her personality. I'm sure she would have been comforted that it was done by loved ones. || I haven't flown since 9-1-1, but as you know, even before then I was terrified of the thought. I don't know if the extra security around flying would make me feel *saner*, but *safer*, yes. || Football! Now we're cookin'! We both live in cities with disappointing football teams this season, high in promise, erratic in execution. The Saints have gone their usual route, starting strong, flaking off. I must say, though, that it's good to see Ricky Williams start to enjoy himself, and perform, on the football field. Call: Rams vs. Raiders in the next Super Bowl. Rams on top. || Damn! I missed Crescent City Con! You obviously had a spiffy time here, and we didn't get to see you at all. Fudge! || Like you, I had to force myself to go to MilPhil's fanzine lounge; it was off the beaten track and really, none too comfortable. Nobody bought any of the heavy back issues of **Challenger** I so laboriously schlepped there, either. || Martha Mitchell was the kooky but lively wife of Nixon's slimy attorney general. Margaret Mitchell wrote **Gone with the Wind** ... and I understand that Hank Reinhardt was present when she died. Says there's a photo of him standing with two of his teenage hoodlum buddies watching the cops haul the poor lady away. || Rosy really liked the Harmonicas, the *a capella* group at the masquerade intermission. Bought one of their little CDs. || I was thinking about **The Moon is a Harsh Mistress** the other day. Question for anyone: why didn't the imperialist Earthlings reply to the Lunans' *faux* meteor bombardment with a nice nuke or two? I'm sure Heinlein answered the question, but I can't remember how – and my Hugo winners collection is *still* boxed up! || Damn again! I'd've loved to have watched those "Davy Crockett at the Alamo" reruns! That's my childhood there! You know, they have the real Old Betsy at the real Alamo. As for Fess Parker, the only parts I can remember him in aside from Crockett and Daniel Boone were in



Disney flicks like **Ole Yaller** and **Westward Ho the Wagons ...** and **Them!**, where he played a pilot the FBI had locked up after he Saw Too Much. || Looks like the Confederate submarine *Hundley* sank some time after sinking the Union ship, possibly from a stuck valve. No one who ever served on that ship survived the experience. Not the best record. || Regarding shooting astronauts out of a giant gun, remember your **Things to Come**: "Beware of the concussion!"

**Gelb** Unique perspective on the WTC tragedy, from one who once tarried there on her way to work. I've felt guilty since 9-1-1; I never liked the bland immensity of the buildings or their overwhelming effect on the city skyline. Maybe I'm just transferring my regret over my former resentment of the yuppies who suffered so hideously in the attacks. || Have you heard many people blame American foreign policy for the attack? I couldn't expect such off-the-wall opinions to surface in a backwater like New Orleans, but anything goes out west. || I certainly agree about the berserk racial profiling which immediately followed 9-1-1 – the fools who threw Arabs off an airplane because they had "piercing eyes," for instance. It seems we're determined to repeat all the mistakes of the past century: get attacked at Pearl Harbor, relocate loyal *niseis*; face an enemy entrenched in hostile terrain, jump on the tar baby with both feet. || On to fun stuff – the Santa Fe visit. As I say to Robe, I like New Mexico; it's clean. || So RailRoad Martin is a toy soldier buff. I know a Royal Street store here in New Orleans which would make him *melt*. Wonder if he's ever been there. But after the first Saints game in November, I'm not sure a Jets fan would feel *safe* on our streets. (Kyle Turley for President – pass it on.) || You ought to keep worldcon notes the way I do – dictate them onto tape. The background noise helps me recreate the ambiance of the moment, too. || Neat comment about fireflies being "cool." True! *Cold light* – still a mystery! || Did you see the **USA Today** feature on 11-12 which indirectly tried to blame Clinton for 9-1-1, by saying he didn't do enough to find Osama bin Laden? Republicans – they never let up. || Dave Barry's post-disaster column is a classic; I'm glad you ran it. || **Philly Follies** now – hope you don't mind my saying you got lousy repro on the Stiles cover. But your report is superb and detailed, insightful as to MilPhil's structure ... and problems. Astonishing that those unreadable nametags were due to a computer klutz being in charge. Worldcon committees need to supervise themselves and spot these problems; no excuse for a huge group like the Philly committee not to have a competent nerd on standby for just such hassles. || Wasn't that Amish food stand wonderful? Great chow, pretty waitresses, cute "costumes." || Thanks for not mentioning my disgusting condition when I greeted you on Thursday afternoon. Some of us really shouldn't fly. Or drink. || Now that I think about it, I'm not all that upset by the Harry Potter Hugo victory. There's no denying that **Goblet of Fire** was *the* publishing event of the year, with the most wonderful long-term ramifications (how often have I related my astounded pleasure at the photo of the little girl reading the book stretched out on the bookstore floor; we hook such kids into fandom and we're set for a hundred years). Even though the book is fantasy, not science fiction, aimed at children and not (at least) young adults or adults, and even though J. K. Rowling (pronounced "Roaling," I am told) I can't object to SF passing along its thanks. I *do* worry about the fiction awards taking a path down which the movie category has long trod: honoring the most popular and visible candidate, not the best. (**Back to the Future** beat **Brazil**, for outstanding instance.) But it's obvious in every category that few are the *knowledgeable* Hugo voters.

**Hlavaty** Good to see you through drunken eyes at the worldcon, or have I said that before?  
Later ...

**Hughes** We'll be looking forward to those photos from our wedding! || Later for serious

commentary. The time crunch has me.

**Khadro** I had to tell you how much I enjoyed **Dewachen**'s first installments, but details will have to wait.

**Koch** I think your bid was a success in this important regard: you put up a righteous fight, and won righteous numbers of votes. There's an actual possibility that North Carolina – most beautiful of Southern states – will host a DSC, even a NASFiC. If so, at least part of the credit will go to the worldcon bid that never had a chance against Boston, but still put Charlotte on the map. Interesting reading about the financial effect of 9-1-1 – all kinds of perspectives here.

**Larson** August 13 vs. September 28<sup>th</sup> ... what a difference six weeks – actually, a single day – makes. It's true for all of America. On one side of 9-1-1's terrible wall, Caribbean vacations at luxurious villas (although I think you'd have to be a successful doctor to consider that anywhere near a normal state of affairs, even for a vacation). On the other, a new emphasis on being with family and friends. Good to see that your trip to Germany went well; I'd love to hear more about King Ludwig's fairy castle, the Schloss Neuschwanstein. Your notes on the journey are very cool, especially all the contrasts with life in the U S of A. Fewer fat people there ... but they don't use deodorant, and therefore, stink. I *won't* pass this last observation on to Inge Glass.

**Lynch** I've never driven into Philadelphia, but all big cities are roadway nightmares. Rosy and I walked the wrong way at first on our way to the Liberty Bell; glad you were able to find the worldcon. And yes, that was a neat meal in Chinatown. || Ah, there's the photo you took of us at the LOVE sculpture. It's marvelous, and thanks in advance to our gal Nicki for the quilt. I love quilts. || You met Joel Nydahl! That's epic! Did you get a photo? || Maybe Robert Silverberg admitted from the podium that he didn't deserve the Fan Writer Retro-Hugo from 50 years ago, but he took the trophy home, you notice. || Julie Schwartz's most famous co-editor on **The Time Traveler** was Mort Weisinger. I have a xerox of issue #1 somewhere in storage. || Agreed: **A.I.** will not make the ConJose Hugo ballot. **Harry Potter** will duke it out there with **LotR**. || 2PM thunderstorms at MagiCon? I must have been distracted by my companion – didn't notice them. || "Scheherazade" is indeed a wonderful, accessible piece of music, which even a tone-deaf lout like me can love. I once started a fan fiction in which the female lead used that name for her apazine title. I also note the mention of Beethoven – his "Pathetique" is an ironic theme in the superb Coen Bros. film *Rose* and I recently saw with John Guidry, **The Man Who Wasn't There**. (Look for Billy Bob Thornton to win an Oscar nomination, as will Guy Pearce from **Memento**.) || Terrifying first-hand account of the 9-1-1 attacks; we're lucky that no SFPAn got closer than your "smoke across the river." How, we must ask, would we have met the last moments endured by the people on the planes, or those stranded in high windows in the WTC? Eventually we'll all be there – let's pray it's a long time from now – and that we handle it well. || I have to disagree. No original zine published for SFPAn should ever be left out of a mailing unless it is totally illegible – and in the years since I rejected two of Bridget's mean-minded one-sheets on that basis, I have come to feel that even that rationale is pretty weak. Here, at least, freedom of speech should be absolute. The membership can praise or condemn what someone writes, but the OE can't speak for them. || Bill Clinton? Oh yes – the eight dark years of peace and prosperity that preceded the paradise of neither we occupy now. || From recent **Mimosa** events, and recenter, I think it'll be a *long time* before you run another Lester Boutillier article.

**Markstein** Note the Post article of recent days about the regrowth of the Imperial presidency. First he steals the office, then he inflates it. We're in the midst of a power play by the unscrupulous – just when we need integrity the most.

**Metcalf** Later, Norm. Got to mail this thing NOW.

**Robe** Those are sickening but evocative photos of “Ground Zero” – I prefer the fireman's name for it, “The Site” – and the mutilated Pentagon. Rose and I plan to go by Lower Manhattan if we make it through NYC this Christmas, and bear witness. Have to see the Lady ... satisfy ourselves that she's still there and we're still us. || As for flight security, I'm in favor of air marshals, although as a flight-phobe I wouldn't be suited for the job myself. I also applaud the new interior safety features on airplanes, and admit to bewilderment over why things got so sloppy and lax in recent years. It only makes *sense* to secure a cockpit; even if there were no terrorists in the world, there would still be lunatics, and consideration for passenger safety alone should dictate a protected pilot area. As for airport security, W and the Republicans have succeeded in blocking the eminently sensible idea of having federal agents screen luggage, since they were worried such workers might unionize and vote Democratic. Bush may rattle sabres in his speeches with the best of them, but he hasn't lost his corporate loyalty or changed his corporate spots. || You may have been lucky that you couldn't buy a razor in the Atlanta airport. Janet will remember that I picked her up at JFK in New York for a 1974 trekkie convention. Stubby and gross, I bought one of their disposable razors from a vending machine before she arrived – and it wouldn't have cut warm fog. I greeted Janet with a face ripped to shreds. || Wonderful trip through the southwest, beautiful and inspiring country. Your boys will never forget that moment of the Robe Experience. Rosy and I will pass through much the same turf on our way to worldcon next year, and I wonder if that same gal will still run the gas station at Two Guns ... || Happy 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary to your folks! Let's see, Rosy and I will celebrate *our* Golden Anniversary on June 30, 2051 ... You're invited to the party!

**Schlosser** Just ... just you wait! (I'll have comments in a follow-up pub.)

**Strickland** Well, foo ... Rosy and I passed near Baker on the Angola trip I describe elsewhere; we could have visited your library and disrupted your entire day. Now that I'm done with my inmate cases for the time being, it might be months before we get back up there. Like I say, foo. || 9-1-1 was a universal waking nightmare. Rosy's tap on the bathroom door – “They're dive-bombing the World Trade Center!” – I kept getting ready for work, sure the office would need me no matter what – and then just sat and stared at the monstrosity until almost noon. The office didn't need me. Everyone else was gawping at the TV too. Anyway, as you say, the photos that have appeared since have made the incomprehensible more real, and unforgettable – I think that pitiful black lady, her face, business suit and pearls coated with gypsum dust, staring at us from Hell will be staring at me forever. At least she survived. || You're not the only one to have that reaction to Catherine Asaro: neat lady, bad books. I send her **Challenger**, but I'll make sure not to send her this **Spiritus**. || Let's see ... I have 16 Canadian addresses on my **Chall** mailing list, and about half of those people get every issue – Lloyd Penney, Murray Moore, Scott Patri, the prolific Dale Speirs, Andrew Murdoch, and Benny Girard, whose **Frozen Frog** I really miss. When do you visit Canada? Will mailing **Challenger** there get the stuff to its destinations faster? Should ... but Canadian mail is reportedly pretty bad, far worse than ours. Anyway, I really appreciate the offer. || A fine last line: “Let's hope for a better world by next time.” If bin Laden is dead, it *is* a better world.



**weber** First of all, thanks for reprinting Meade Frierson's obit, even though it hurts to see it. I will miss that boy ... but wasn't it so appropriate for him that instead of flowers, Penny asked us to make a donation to a local library? R.I.P., large brother. || More comments later, but God, I love that silly Supergirl cartoon!

**Weisskopf** To start at the top: B'rer Cleary's Hugo ceremony cartoons win Best Bit in the Mailing honors hands down-doo-by-doo-down-down. I wish I'd spotted them first. Your cover, too, is superb – almost pointillist. || That's rotten about Reinhardt's pneumonia; that'll teach him to skinny-dip in Philadelphia fountains at 3AM. His column this issue ... well, *yeah*. That's *some* column this issue! However, I insist that comic books, especially those by Carl Barks, can be great reading, for whatever age or intellectual level. || I haven't heard any kneejerk gun control nonsense since 9-1-1, but I *have* seen Bush's people take some ill-advised and frightening swipes at due process. I have no objection to burning bin Laden and his cadre to the ground, but the wingers should keep their damn hands *off* the Bill of Rights. I do like the compromise found between those who wanted to give air pilots submachine guns and those who wanted them to disarm terrorists with dialectic: stun guns. || I never knew that Charl Proctor's granddaughter had a digestive birth defect; I hope she does well. Her thoughts on 9-1-1 are cogent, too, especially the reprinted piece in praise of the new appreciation for blue-collar tradesmen since the disaster – not only for their skills, but for their humanity. Both my grandfathers can take a bow from Glory. || New Yorkers are distracted. *Chicagoans* are rude. || Among the superb books published recently about the ghastly 2000 election is one by Jeffrey Toobin which pointed out the obvious: America is no democratic republic. It's a bureaucratic state run by lawyers. Al Gore won more people. We had better lawyers. Made me wish I had the smarts to take them on, because I share more of the good old Republican attitude towards my professional political enemies – loathing – than the usual run of Democrat. Gore's people were naive: they thought they were trying to win the minds of the majority. They did that – the plurality, anyway. But the Republicans were meaner, and the people didn't seem to mind that their express will was thwarted. The Bushie bounce from 9-1-1 will not last forever, just as Bush One's high ratings after the Gulf War didn't last forever. 2004 is not 2001. The economy will matter most, then, and if things keep growing sludgier and sludgier on that front, *and* we Demos learn to match the GOP in savagery, we'll win.

**Wells** **Werewolf with Fleas** does the impossible: it makes me laugh about 9-1-1. I know you were in no mood to laugh – you might have known some of the immediate victims, or certainly seen them. And yes, it hurt to lose Meade – indeed, a “unique, generous, talented man.” Let's lift a glass to him at DSC. || There's a horrifying thought: the Campfire Girls of Afghanistan. Campfires lit by Daisy Cutters these days. || That drawing of a werewolf with fleas belongs on your cover. Oh – that's right – you don't do covers. Well, that's all right: you can't draw! || Al Pacino can still deliver a unique and powerful performance. **Donnie Brasco**, for instance, was a very different cat from Pacino's other hooligan parts, Mike Corleone and the star of **Carlito's Way**. DeNiro's the one who's getting overexposed, with cookie-cutter character roles.

**yhos** Why don't you plan your zines better, so you won't have to mail **SM** forth with half its mailing comments unfinished!

This issue of **Spiritus Mundi** is being finished in a blur of secretive motion at \*shh\* my job. It's November 20, and tomorrow Rose-Marie and I set out for West Palm Beach to pick up the last of her stuff ... and, incidentally, Turkey Day. This won't be quite as horrid a trip – let's hope – as the last one, as we won't have to pack hundreds of boxes, just some furniture, and won't drive a truck longer than the Queen Mary on the way home. Still, it'll be tiring, and will keep me from finishing this issue as I would like, and so this is it. Those of you whom I shorted in my mc's, forgive me. I hope you'll find due notice in another zine in this mailing.

Before mailing caustics interrupted me, I was talking about the most welcome visit of Fred and Mary Ann van Hartesveldt to the Big Easy. Highlight was a true feast put on by Dennis Dolbear and Annie Winston in the latter's abode, a banquet worthy of Midas at which I stuffed my chops to the point of collapse. Rose-Marie, who is trying to trim inches off my flab, would have stung me with shame, had she not been in too good a mood from her own meal. Very thoughtful of Dennis to make his gravy with turkey – Rosy's strictly a non-meat eater. Anyway, the burping was so deafening it knocked birds from the air.

Mary Ann also joined Rosy, my neighbor Cindy and me in the Quarter for a quick lunch. It was nice of her to see Cindy, who rode with me to the van Hs' house when Hurricane Georges threatened New Orleans. While a great buddy and sweet soul, Cindy is also an enormous pain in the butt. We are having the world's fiercest time trying to find her a place of her own; she subsists on SSI and food stamps and what is left couldn't rent space in an inner tube in today's economy. In an ideal world, Cindy would either locate a nice garage apartment somewhere close to us and to her doctor, or else move to California and live with her sisters. (In that case I do admit that I'd miss her.) But she does need to move, and soon. Working on that problem is a strain. Newlyweds trying to cram two packrat households into one apartment, however large, shouldn't have the additional migraine a boarder brings.

But I refuse to further complain. Rose-Marie is with me. That is sublime, and all challenges are worth enduring.

So what is left for us to discuss? The cases which have almost – but not quite – gone to trial? The unfortunate outcome of a Supreme Court election *nearly* won by one of my judges? The **Harry Potter** movie, which Rose – a scholar of such matters – enjoyed immensely, and which I liked too (although it was a bit long and slow)? **24**, that excellent show? All deserve their line of print, but time is fleeting, and **Spiritus** must be off for Seattle before its author is off for Florida. Ah, how I look forward to these next two months ... we're hoping to head north, to see my brother and his family. I am having very serious nephew withdrawal, and Rose wants to meet Steven and John, who will undoubtedly join their uncle in awed admiration of her.

Gad! Enough with the mush! Next time, rebel krewe ...

