

Roxol

SPIRITUS mundi 196

A SFPazine for SFPA #234 by
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[My cover and interiors: Rotsler. My bacover: yeah,
I couldn't believe it either.]



Fandom *owns* my summer. For instance ...

In a haze of post-DUFF enthusiasm and instant Australian nostalgia, I finished the 18th issue of **Challenger** in early July. I wanted to get it out before the July 31st Hugo deadline. Of the zine's rivals for the Torcon Hugo, **File 770** and the on-line **Emerald City** published this month, and according to Greg Benford when we saw him in June, **Mimosa** was ready to go. Looks like another fifth place finish for my little genzine, but hey, I've done what I could.

I have to admit that I really love this issue. Shorter than most, "only" 76 pages, but with two substantial personal pieces from me (one the complete tale of our climb up Hanging Rock) and lots of cool – if lamentably light – Aussie photos. Senior SFPAns will find the cover familiar. It ran atop **Up the Darth Vator**, my Iguanacoon report, in (Jeezum Pete) 1978. 25 years ago! At least nobody's forgotten the subject; everyone will still get the gag.

And *you* get the zine. I've skipped sending **Challenger** through SFPA for the past two issues – but #18 is here, lacking only the letter column. Enjoy, please ... and please, respond!

Also on our plate: preparations for worldcon. Flights *erk* to book to the shores of Lake Ontario, attending memberships to Torcon to secure, hotel plans to check. We can't miss this one, for several reasons. First, there's the Hugo. I've emoted all over creation about being a nominee again, so you won't have to endure more ecstatic blubbing here. Yes you will! It is such a hoot to attend a worldcon as a nominee, to wear a rocket pin and ribbon on your nametag and make neos think you're a Big Chalupa, to attend the pre-awards nominees' reception and the post-awards Losers' party. Until late Saturday night, you *are* a Big Chalupa, until everyone sees how badly you've been shellacked for the fourth year running and the eternal mantra begins anew, "Maybe next year."

But this year the Hugo has even more significance for Rosy and me. We've been asked to *present* an award, Best Fan Artist – practically the only fan category where a new candidate, who hasn't won 20 times previously, might have a chance. I debate myself daily on what to say on stage, the universe of fandom at my feet – probably thank the fan artists who have decorated **Challenger**, read the nominees, and then hand the mike to Rosy and savor the moment when the whole of fandom attends her next words with bated breath.

The reason we were invited to give out the award is another we absolutely have to be at Torcon: DUFF. We've enjoyed the benefits of the Down Under Fan Fund in the manner described last issue, and now, we must begin the process of re-inflating the fund we've gutted. Got lots of ideas, from a Hurricane party like we threw in Perth to a slew of Tuckerizations. We imagine that great steaming hunks of August will be devoted to gathering goodies for auction, shipping them to Toronto, and haggling with the concomm for auction time and party space. Yeah, now we *pay* for our trip!

(While on the subjects of DUFF and **Challenger** and paying, a note. When Rosy and I won DUFF I was informed that several unnamed fans had expressed worry that I would embezzle from the fund in order to xerox **Challenger**. I regard such talk as forgivable where I'm concerned, of course, but it's also an insult to Rose-Marie, and that I have not yet decided to forgive. So, just for the record,, here's how I paid for issue 18's printing. Recall my car wreck of late January. In mid-July, *before* any DUFF funds were transferred, the last small insurance payment came through. **Chall**'s printing came out of that. Any questions?)

All right, on to something else. My bacover, for instance. John Guidry forwarded it to me, along with the rest of the WriteAPrisoner.com site, and it is every bit as inane, and insane, as it appears. That is, of course, *the* Susan Smith passing along her favorite things ... "Rainbows, Mickey Mouse, the beach" ... *The beach!* My God! Join me as I run *gibbering into the street?*

Actually, the site is more sad than anything else. Some of the ladies – like Smith! – are quite attractive, and their notes can be alluring. All bullshit, of course. Women in prison pull this scam all the time. Some exchange smutty letters for money. Shampoo, cigarettes and candy bars are expensive behind the walls. Some are looking for sugar daddies to take them in and set them up after they walk out of jail. Thus the line in many of these lonelyhearts ads: "Willing to relocate." No shit, and the sooner the better!

I'm the guy who exchanged letters with Leslie Van Houten – who never talked dirty or asked for money and no, is not in WriteAPrisoner.com – and I've known lots of female prisoners, so I can't be too critical of these pitiful losers. They're just trying to survive. Of course, they *are* criminals, trying to survive by taking advantage of other people. Need I go on? Leave them be.

It being summer, and judges being human – sort of – not much is going on in the country judicial district where I work. I'm using the time to prep for future trials, especially my first degree – which I learned at press time will not involve the death penalty. Thank heaven. Went to an excellent seminar on that subject in Alexandria in June. And speaking of travel, I suppose I should mention our day trip to the Mobile area, to have dinner with Greg Benford and his twin Jim, during which excursion we got a tour of the wealthy tourist town where – long before it was a wealthy tourist town, they grew up – and Rosy bought **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**, which she pronounces excellent. After searching and searching through our hundreds of moving boxes, she finally dug out the first four Potter books for me, so I can start in on them again – with **The Prisoner of Azkaban**, where I left off. I'll get to it as soon as I finish my current Ramsey Campbell novel and Albert Speer's **Inside the Third Reich**. Lighter reading for the summer months.

Aside from mentioning our delight in finally moving neighbor Cindy into the building she's been hoping for (improving both her disposition and ours, since we no longer have to store her stuff), and the briefcase stuffed with fanzines awaiting the next **Zine Dump**, that pretty much does it. With luck you'll be one of the SFPAns actually in attendance at this month's DeepSouthCon, so all of this will be old news. Oh ... and we've got to start assembling our DUFF slide show. Better plan two editions, one for fandom, and one for kids, *without* the obscene kangaroo ...

Ladies, gentlemen, your mailing comments await.



which translates into MAILING CAUSTICS
233 for the Vacation Font-impaired ...

The Southerner #233 | Jeff The masthead – the view from Everest – is go-juss, appropriate for the Golden Anniversary of Chomolungma's first conquest. Difficult to believe that 1200 people have followed in Hillary and Tenzing's footsteps – but *not* difficult to believe that many more than that have failed. || When you speak of the "effective deadline" for a mailing, I'm reminded of the good old days when Official Editors had zines delivered to their doorsteps, often at the last minute. I'll bet that hasn't happened to you – yet. || Jeez! I see what you mean about messing up this Contents page! I'm sure you'll clean things up in *this* OO. || So I'm spending an extra \$28 a year for first class delivery. How much time does it save me? Anyone hazard a guess?

The New Port News #209 | Ned "It's been a long time since I read Verne's description of *cavourite*." I didn't know he had one. Cavourite was created by H.G. Wells. || Trinlay Khadro has had nothing but nice things to say about SFPA since leaving the roster, and is still very active. She does cute fan art and writes cute fan articles, as you can see from **Chall #18** in this mailing. || John Ashcroft "anoints himself with oil"?!? New weirdness – how can this administration top itself? || I don't know enough about the Norwood murder case to offer an opinion; if someone will tell me where to write, I'll inquire about it with the D.A. in charge. || Speaking of murder, I want details about the Buckhead case where, you relate, an undercover cop killed someone. I remember a NYC case some decades back where a cop blew away a 10-year-old, and he rode public support to exoneration ... but I forget the all-important question, *why*. I recall being disgusted by the story at the time, but that could have been a reflection of my own youth at the time. || Plenty of planes have crashed because of bullet holes ... but they were Japanese or German bullets! Seriously, remember the jet whose fuselage tore itself apart over the Hawaiian islands some years ago? The disaster began with

a small hole in the hull, which tore itself wider and wider, until the whole roof of the airplane was gone. || The fact that you did a zine in Australia makes me feel better about *not* doing one there; I feel as if I didn't let SFPA down, down under. What was its title? Neat that Bill Wright published it for you; you'll read about his inestimable value to us on our journey. But wasn't Robin Johnson the chairman of Aussiecon One? || As you know, **Queen Kong** was yanked from distribution after a lawsuit, but a copy of the film must exist *someplace*. I am desperate to view it – the one still in the novelization of the worshipful slave girls is unforgettable; I can only imagine how they'd look in motion. || A good reply to those who think liberals are charting new ground with *ad hominem* attacks on W; wingers have heaped personal loathing on every liberal President since FDR, at least. Their lowest moment, indeed, came when Rush Limbaugh mocked Chelsea Clinton's looks. No class. || You know, if Reinhardt did become a Muslim, he'd have to obey rules written by the Ayatollah – including wiping his butt with a bone. Didn't say whose.

Variations on a Theme #20 | Rich L. D.C.'s turistas behave better than New Orleans'. Nobody *shows their tits* for the cherry blossoms. On the other hand, who's complaining? || This little piece on Rachmanonoff is a gem – you ought to work it up into an article for some deserving genzine with two "I"s in the title. || It's funny how astonished Harry Warner's family of cow-orkers was by his fannishness. You'd think accomplishments as renowned as his would have made waves even in mundania. But you never know everything about another person, for instance I never knew he spoke 7 foreign languages and played the oboe. Perhaps people of that generation always hid their musicality: my dad never knew that *his* father played the saxophone, for instance. || During DUFF we had dinner *near* two of John Foyster's wives, but we weren't privy to the conversation: it was a private memorial with Bruce & Elaine Gillespie. We were introduced, though. || You say that the new Washington convention center could swallow worldcon whole. Wish someone would give it the chance! I've never been to a Discon! 2008 seems to be open; does D.C. have that much of a

fandom anymore? || TAFF winner Randy Byers edits – or is part of – a very good genzine, *Chunga*. He's definitely part of the Seattle fanzine mafia with Andy Hooper and, at least before he moved to Boston, Victor Gonzalez. We're currently trading e-mails about Torcon's fan fund auctions, be there any. || I try to aim high when I engage in "political mud-slinging," reserving my mud for the professional politicians, lest I splatter SFPA's resident wingers, grand people and beloved pals. Nevertheless I have to say that it's ludicrous for a conservative to accuse liberals of mean-spiritedness after the hell they put America through, trying to Get Bill Clinton, and seize power by any means possible in 2000. Your closing words on this topic, by the by, are priceless. || One neat fact about the 2002 Oscars ... After Adrian Brody's victory, *all five* of the candidates have Academy Awards in their pockets – uhh, on their mantles. This is either the first or only the second time that's happened in any acting category. Since Ralph Fienne's brilliant turn in *Spider* is unlikely to attract Academy notice, I'd say we haven't seen any Oscar-worthy performances yet in '03. || But these are secondary questions. The real issue is, will *Return of the King* win the big one? || The Best Short Drama category in the Hugos was created just so *Buffy* could win a Hugo in this mini-era of *Lord of the Rings*. Nothing new. Nolacon created "Other Forms" so fans of *Watchmen* could honor the comic without nominating it for Best Novella (which was threatened). An early worldcon created the movie category just so its GoH, Richard Matheson, could take home a Hugo. The practice is as fannish as lime jell-O. With these examples in mind, I've suggested that Noreascon 4 create a Best Young Adult Novel category to escape the possibility that *Harry Potter* and the *Order of the Phoenix* will crowd out more traditional genre novels. I will, of course, be laughed out of the building, and Rowling will win yet another trophy that she neither knows nor cares about. || Greg Benford agrees with you that a "new approach" is needed to shuttle technology. What do you think of the new design, with no external rockets? || I understand the Baycon committee lent its votes to one novella in 1968, to insure a tie in that category. Was it "Weyr Search" or

"Riders of the Purple Wage"?

SFC Bulletin vol. 8 no. 2 | *Randy* How're you enjoying the power and the glory of the SFC presidency? You're handling its zine-producing duties splendidly, because this is a beauty. || Sam Smith's efforts to bring Toni's epochal *SFC Handbook* to the internet shows why he was a deserving Rebel winner. || Pioneer 10 is 7.6 *billion* miles away? Come back! You forgot something! I love the plaque, even if the female isn't anatomically correct. A cartoonist at the time, Paul Conrad, depicted aliens dressed in business suits looking at the drawing and saying "Earthlings look just like us, except that they do not wear clothes!" || Hurts to see a photo of the *Columbia* crew – they look so damned young. || Charl Proctor's paranoia about the giant caldera volcano under Yellowstone Park is great fun – even if her panic is catching! Maybe W will hear about it and nuke Old Faithful. Talk about a WMD! || Hugo Award novels by Irish writers ... *The Bars My Destination*. Brilliant! || Hmm ... the SFC by-laws are getting cumbersome and show clumsy wording. Time for a re-write.

The Sphere vol. 204 no 1 | *Don* Your comment that "Democracy will come to be regarded with the same fear and loathing as Communism" is chilling, because it may possibly come to be. Of course, the frightened folks of the future who feel that way will be confusing the noble concept of self-government with the *de facto* doctrine of capitalist imperialism – once a silly Commie catchphrase, but now a burgeoning reality. But if America itself has confused the two, who can blame the rest of mankind? || Cons may indeed be less exciting than they were once upon a time – but it depends on a lot of factors. The size of the con, for instance, the company, the expectations – the surprises. My three favorite events of all were Confederation, because it was a huge Southern worldcon where I was one of a stalwart krewe sweating out (and sweating on) a worldcon bid ... Chicon 2000, because I was a Hugo nominee and Rosy was going to be with me (and the fact that we got engaged unexpectedly put it 'way, 'way over the top) ... and Halfacon '75, the teensy relaxacon, because of the SFPA company. "Sleep? Ridiculous!" So I still look forward to cons ... you never can tell. || There *is* a difference

between the American internment camps of World War II and the Nazi concentration camps of the same era. One was a stupid, panic-stricken mistake which remains a blemish of the national honor. The other was Hell on Earth. Like my 7th grade social studies teacher said when I made the same facile comparison, *we* never put people in pits and dumped lime on them. She had a point. Here's a telling comparison: the guy who approved the Japanese internments, once he learned the error of his ways, spent the rest of his life fighting for racial justice, through actions like *Brown v. Board of Education*. His name was Earl Warren. The guy who dreamed up the Nazi concentration camps, once he learned the error of *his* ways, spent the rest of his life shrieking in agony for forgiveness. *His* name was Reinhard Heydrich.

Frequent Flyer | Tom That pretty house of yours is lookin' right finished! Told you it'd be better with walls. I recently dreamed that Rosy & I rented an attic apartment from Justin & Annie Winston; it had big windows, nice arches, pleasant furnishing, and all for \$400 a month, and no, their attic is nothing like that. Although I might be wrong; I've been going to their home for nearly 30 years and have never gone upstairs. || A Sherlock Holmes with a goatee? *Blasphemy!* Funny that the director of the play you saw did double duty as your waiter. || Rosy is into her *second* reading of **The Order of the Phoenix**; she really enjoyed it. Our copy has both Greg and Jim Benford's inscriptions, since we'll probably never get Rowling's. || About the Hugo nominees – the one you didn't mention, **The Years of Rice and Salt**, strikes me as science fiction's prestige publication of 2002, with a *Locus* cover (and Award). People will vote for it without getting it read. I'd call it the front-runner. **Hominids** didn't impress me, but I agree that Sawyer's Canadian popularity could push it high towards the top. I found **Bones of the Earth** shruggable, but **Kiln People** blew me away. It changed my mind about David Brin. **The Scar** remains unread. || What happened with the "two employees ... caught with their hands in the cookie jar"? What about your job means you had to investigate? || I'm reading **Inside the Third Reich** even now; I'll let you know if Speer mentioned that Hitler favored Islam. || Those

censorious e-mail systems are hilarious; one wouldn't let me send mail to Tony & Suford Lewis because their e-dress was "pussywillows". || I haven't read, or finished I should say, three or four Hugo'ed novels – **Cyteen**, **The Doomsday Book**, **A Deepness in the Sky** and the Harry Potter. Cherryh's clanky style stopped me in the first book, I got bored in the Willis, the anthropomorphic spiders bugged me in the Vinge, and I need to read **The Prisoner of Azkaban** before I get to **The Goblet of Fire**. || "Anita hurt her back recently" ... *No!* Tell the dear gal to get well soon!

Oblio No. 146 | Gary B. Pretty heron on your cover – my eyes always linger on these elegant birds when they sweep out of Louisiana's swamplands, a beautiful part of life's decor. Not quite the hoot of seeing a wild kookabura in the Blue Mountains, but righteous. || A **Diver Dan** comic? When I was a kid his adventures played on a Canadian TV station barely accessible from Buffalo. I liked the puppet fish but was rack stunned by that buh-lon-duh mermaid. Got a picture of *her*? Helloooooo, puberty! || **X-Men 2** was certainly better than **The Hulk**; Ang Lee's ponderous movie was overlong and plain dull outside of the action scenes, although I could stare at Jennifer Connelly's face for seven hours without blinking. || Didn't care for **A Mighty Wind**. Its satire seemed forced and vague, and the point of parodies should never be unclear. Best thing about it was that it prompted *le belle* to ask to see other Christopher Guest efforts, so we spent a happy weekend with **Waiting for Guffman** and **Spinal Tap**. **Best of Show** hasn't come up yet. || Jayson Blair epitomizes modern American sleaze: a guy who takes advantage of a noble impulse on the part of the NYT to better the lot of an ethnic minority, and cheats it for personal gain. Watch: if he doesn't profit from his criminality, he'll squawk racism – a craven insult to the civil rights martyrs who put him where he was. || "Ichabod Toad"? That's Ichabod *Crane*. Mr. Toad went by "Thaddeus" to his pals, I believe. You're thinking of the folksinging character in the sequel, **A Mighty Wind in the Willows**. Or the Civil War folksingers in **Gone with the Mighty Wind**. Or the folksinging evolutionists from **Inherit the Mighty W-** ... Gary ... we've been friends for 30

years ... put that *down!*) || Judging from his input to B'rer Wells' recent on-line exchanges, and from his frequent **Challenger** articles, Bob Sirignano-Whitaker (or is it Whitaker-Sirignano?) would make a righteous SFPAn. He also works for the post office, an employer with a distinguished history *via-a-vis* our roster.

Revenant #18 | Sheila Yet another reminder of Australia ... Your *name*, I mean. || Speaking of librarians, I saw "The Obsolete Man" on a **Twilight Zone** rerun t'other day. "Obsolete, obsolete!" Fortunately not true in the here & now. || The makeup in **X-Men 2** was the real star of the show; Nightcrawler and the blue babe truly looked alien. I hope it's Oscar-nominated next year. || We didn't bother with **The Matrix Reloaded** either; it looked and sounded pretentious. It's been a bad summer for blockbusters; I was even disappointed in **Terminator 3** – nothing new, and such a downer ending. || Please, next year, call us during your Jazz Fest visit. We'll sup! || A nice eulogy for your poor cat, Silky. We've come to terms with Malibu, the Balinese fiend that bit Rosy so badly, and he's now part of the household. Still has his predecessor, the neurotic Boo, in terror, but Rosy's taught him that she's the boss. Malibu needs worming, and I imagine that's plenty of information about him for now ... || Let us know how Toronto looks post-SARS and pre-worldcon. I envision a deserted slum a la **24 Days Later**, the superior horror film set in post-plague London. No problem getting restaurant reservations, anyway. || I'll have to find copies of the original SFPAn coat of arms – done by Dave Hulan during the Garfield administration – and the one whipped up by Charlie Williams in the early 80's. Lassitude forbids my printing them now, but it's a promise.

It's Because We're Embarrassing You | Jeff Congrats again to Allie for graduating high school and choosing a college, even if it is across the border! Let's see, could I have helped in her decision process? Berkeley, my bachelors alma mater? Her requirement that it have less than 20,000 students – no. UNC-Greensboro? Fewer than 5,000, and snow, so – no. Loyola Law School? No "good art and psychology." Heck, I carried that kid to her first Hugo ceremony and

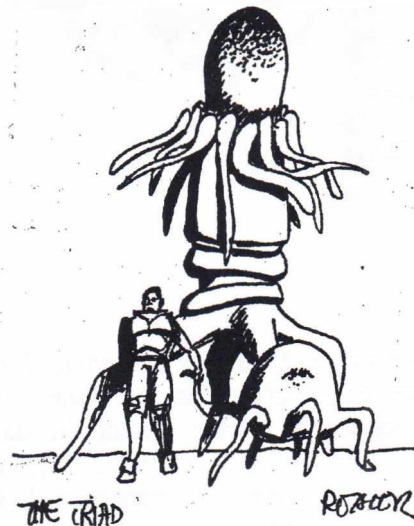
knew her when she was a *bulge*, and I'd've been no help at all ... But seriously ... *whoopie!* || But I have a bone to pick with her high school art department. However nice it was to hear the department head praise Allie as so superior to the other students that they could name only her as outstanding, think of how that made the other kids feel. I imagine the parents who heard this were mightily pissed, and I don't blame them. || I'm not surprised at all that the system set up for Homeland Security rips off its employees. The Republicans in power care nothing for the substance of security or establishing a solid, permanent department. They just want to keep the populace both scared and mollified long enough to win re-election. This whole administration is a nest of flies. No wonder they ship in Tony Blair to do their talking for them; he's more articulate and intelligent than W, and truly believes in the Iraq War, making him the biggest fall guy in the history of the alliance. Watch: it'll cost him his office. || The letter about the proper concoction of a mint julep is so wonderful that the very page seems impregnated with the smell of mint. A Best Bit for General Buckner! || **Holes** was indeed a good film; it packed more of a punch than most Disney fare. As for Star Trek, I've heard talk that the franchise is dying an overdue death. I'll miss the classic stuff, but political correctness and two boring movies in a row have killed it. || Speaking of Patrick Stewart, he played le Carre's "Karla" in the superb adaptation of the last George Smiley novel. || Note: find **Cobweb** by "Stephen Bury". Have you ever read Kenneth Cornwell's **Sharpe's** series? Fred van Hartesveldt absolutely adores the books, and gave me a slew the last time we were in Georgia. Apparently the novels involve a non-parody Flashman-type Victorian soldier, fighting alongside Nelson and Wellington and the like. Something to tackle after Speer. || Best thing about the current version of **The Italian Job** is the same as the Michael Caine version: the mini-Coopers. I *love* those cars. Esquire recently ran a cardboard ad that you could pop out and fold together – models of two mini's. They sit on my desk. I *want* one. || You've heard, I think, that Allen Steele plotted "The Days Between" at our banquet table at the second Jekyll Island DSC, bouncing ideas off of Ron Walotzky. || Hey,

how much is that “easily available” color printing there in Seattle? I want to do another full-hue **Challenger** cover someday ... || The Bond movies started diverging from the Fleming novels early – Dr. No, for instance, fries in a nuclear reactor in the film, whereas Bond buried him in bird shit – really – in the book. But that’s a minor point. The basic plot and setting of most of the movies match most of the books ... at least in the early going. The movies of *Moonraker* and *You Only Live Twice* had only characters in common with the novels, and *The Spy Who Loved Me* contributed nothing but a title. (Good thing, too, since the book sucks.) || The “Bring’em on!” comments of W and his idiot general, referring to – and all but inviting – guerilla attacks on our soldiers in Iraq, are obscene. There is no depth to the grotesque stupidity of this president; I said the 2000 election would be adjudged one of the darkest moments in the history of this country, and how right I was. The Democratic field has produced only one candidate of personality so far – Vermont’s Howard Dean. I like his pugnacious anti-war stance and the enthusiasm he engenders in younger voters. A little nervous about his background as a physician; W fantasizes himself the reincarnation of Theodore Roosevelt, and his opponent in 1904 was a doctor, too. || Turning to OE matters, I don’t think a CD, or a stick of bubble gum, or a stickpin, or a button, or a rubber Godzilla toy should count as part of the SFPAGEcount in the Official Organ. They should be acknowledged as gifts to the membership and that is all. This is a *press* alliance. That means, an association of *paper* fanzines. Until an amendment to our constitution is voted in, allowing such stuff to be counted as official parts of the mailing, I’ll regard them as nice extras. All of the above, of course, have come through mailings on occasion. || The Nebula and the Hugo hardly ever go to the same works anymore; I understand the SFWA changed the period on which they’re voting and are a year behind the worldcon. American Gods did win both – and the Bram Stoker – and was a finalist for the World Fantasy Award, which it most deserved – so obviously, there are exceptions. || Your comments on the tax cut and other “fiscal ranting” should be published where they might change some minds. Does your local fishwrapper have an op-ed page? Contribute! || How dare you

insult Hank Reinhardt by saying that he voted for Samuel L. Tilden! Hank’s a Republican – he voted for Rutherford B. Hayes!

Home with the Armadillo #58 | *Liz* So how you feelin’? || A great quote from Molly Ivins. I can’t believe that GOP congressmen who voted their rich constituents a fat tax break want working stiffs to forego overtime – and have the further gall to say it’s for patriotism! What amazes me about this political era is not that the party in power after 9/11 is trying to milk it for its own ends; that’s almost to be expected. It’s that they’re so damned *clumsy* about it. || Indeed, a nice pic of a wood duck. But viaduct?

A Little Behind | *mike* Neither one of us has one of *those* any more. || I hope you didn’t erase those unaffordable pages of mailing comments. Egoboo, like everything else besides eggs, is better late than never. Moving – especially with so many hassles – is a damned good excuse. || You were one of the first SFPAnS to start serious video collecting. Favor us with an updated inventory of those old tapes, why not?



Passages #17 | *Janet* That is one gorgeous steed you’re riding! (Or can mares be steeds?) If we could swing through South Carolina someday, could we visit Indiana? (Your horse, I mean.) In the summer of 1979 I drove Beth, my first wife, to Louisville for a convention, and went right by the entrance to Tweedy Farms. Had I had the idea at the time we might have

been able to see its greatest denizens – Riva Ridge and Secretariat. That’s another lapse in consideration I do not want to repeat with Rosy; going on the assumption that no girl ever outgrows the adolescent love for horses, no fella should ever miss the chance to show his lady a horse. Anyway, pretty beast. || All this talk about hormone problems is most brave and trusting of you to reveal, but as a guy I have to say it’s as alien as Martian poetry to me. Anyway, the solution you found – Androgen implants, I take it? – is working, so hooray for you, and good luck to your mama-in-law and daughter.



Trivial Pursuits #107 & My Month of Fame | Janice That silly story about the Democrats in the Texas legislature literally fleeing the state in protest of Republican gerrymandering is a demonstration of how desperately divided, politically, this country remains. What would have been different had the election in 2000 ended honestly? I think a Gore victory would have forced the Republican party back into a more moderate mode; now that the really radical wingers of the party have established a stooge in the White House, and are enjoying success, we may never see a true “compassionate conservative” in American politics in our

lifetime. Nuts like this Debbie Riddle will abound, and sanity, straight dealing, and the art of honest compromise will forever be lost. Where is hope? In Howard Dean? || The recent version of **Metropolis** revealed a strong spiritual side to the film that I hadn’t noticed before. The film only grows in my estimation. Strangely enough, the frequent – and foolish – cuts in the released editions of the movie didn’t seem to bother Fritz Lang; it’s as if he didn’t care what happened to his creation once he was finished with it. Or maybe ... a comment he made at a Berkeley showing of **M** may be a clue; I’ll mull it a bit and write it up for **Challenger** #19 or 20. || Two factors – weather and Mardi Gras – have kept me from Con*Cave. Rosy and I were just talking about needing a mid-winter convention, too. || Don’t disparage your ZotY victory! Yes, it was “just” an e-mail exchange, but *you* turned it into a zine, and a damned funny one, too. Like I say about the Rebel, if we say you deserve it, you deserve it. Enjoy. || I could take it a titty bar with my brother – and have; don’t let my sister-in-law see this – but I don’t think I could have done so with my father. One time I was sitting at the Mouse’s Ear in Knoxville, stupefied by the parade of natural femininity, when a bachelor party came in. The groom was escorted by, among others, his father and that of the bride. They whooped it up in the normal way – normal male way, let’s say – and then, for some reason, left in a group, their faces somber; I’ll never know why. || What “Robbins/Sarandon” debacle involved the Baseball Hall of Fame? Something to do with **Bull Durham**, no doubt. || Gawd almighty, I hope that Mallard Fillmore cartoon predicting Gore in ‘08 comes true. || I’m hesitant to reveal *my* favorite porn movie title in a lady’s mc, but it was both evil and brilliant I dare say no more lest the gates of Hell open wide ... || Aside from congratulating you on your Fan GoHship at Baycon, and lamenting that I recognize not a single name among those you mention, I can only respond to someone’s comment that this has been a weak year for the SF novel by saying that they say this every year. I even remember old-timers in 1969 griping that no book in the last year’s crop merited a Hugo – and that was the year of **Lord of Light**.

TN Trash #53 | Gary R. “Whomps” and kicks upside the head ... I realize I’m repeating myself, but this Taekwondo hobby of yours sounds *painful*. Well, if you’re ever OE, hint hint, you can certainly guard our three cubic acres of treasury ... || “[To] protect my ... knees from ... construction work I bought myself a pair of kneepads.” Yep. Construction work. Yep. That’s why you bought ‘em, all right. Sure thing. || So the aroma of *toothpaste* attracts bears in the woods. I wonder if they prefer Crest to Colgate. Both are fluoridated; I guess it doesn’t make much difference. || In all seriousness, this article about the hike on Mount Mitchell is my favorite read of the mailing – a terrific story. Your star is the fat kid who barely makes it up and down the mountain. The point is, he *makes it up and down the mountain*, a tremendous accomplishment for him. I hope he’s proud of it. Hey, flesh out this piece a bit – I’ll send it to Kurt Erichsen to illustrate and we’ll get a great **Challenger** article out of it. || About Iraq – I hate to give a savage thug like Saddam Hussein the slightest credit, but I have to agree with those who’ve used the term “rope-a-dope” to describe his *possible* strategy there. Realizing that he didn’t have a chance of holding back the American military, could he not have decided to fight us with guerilla tactics – which have been effective against us before? Knocking off an army one or two soldiers at a time may not improve his lot militarily, but it’s Hell on our morale, at home and in the field. We kill two of his sons; he kills hundreds of ours. || Wise words on stem-cell research and an overtly “Christian” government. || “It looks like you and Rosie had a very ambition [Australian] itinerary.” I wish it had been *more* ambitious. I wish we’d gone to Rottneest Island and to the other Perth attractions in slow hours during the convention, and left town a day or two earlier. I wish we’d flown to Melbourne via Alice Springs, and seen Ayers Rock. I wish we’d driven the Great Ocean Road. And visited Adelaide, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Great Barrier Reef. I wish we’d stayed longer. I wish we were *still there*. || I wonder why the feds are involved in the James Norwood murder case – possibly the killers crossed state lines. Thanks for the rundown of the legal *dramatis personae*; I may write to the prosecutor and try to follow the case closely. || Rickey Sheppard and Betsy Hirst – a fellow KAPAn –

married? Huzzah! || Thanks, I guess, for all the sticky on duct tape. At least now we know.

Avatar Press 2.27 | Ran’Dib So what’s with this dickheaded nephew of yours that he’s such a travail on your mother? Sounds like someone needs to impart unto him the facts of life. || Ah, you went to Cocoa Beach, newly familiar from my visits to Joe and Patty Green. Drop in on Ron Jon’s Surf Shop? All that beach gear blew my brother’s mind when he was there for my wedding. || I love the IMAX 3-D space station movie. We were gifted with a free showing of **Spy Kids 3-D** the other night by John Guidry, who handles such previews for movie distributors; all Rosy had to do was hand out the 3-D glasses, and all I had to do was guard 48 VIP seats for late-arriving exhibitors and their families against hundreds of sweet children and their angry parents. The movie was loud and the effects gave me eyestrain, but it was fun to see Elijah Woods in a role other than Frodo, and Ricardo Montalban got off one line about “fine Corinthian leather” that only we understood. Anyway, the space station movie was better. || Bill Holbrook is a terrific funny animal cartoonist – Markstein’s reprinted a slew of **Kevin & Kell** strips, and they’d hysterically good. I’m surprised by the extent of “furry fandom”: conventions! special names! Wonder what mine would be ... || You noted something about **The Matrix Reloaded** that we noted about **Pirates of the Caribbean**: sloppiness. There isn’t anything tight about modern blockbuster movies except the heroine’s wet tee-shirt. Scenes go on forever, plots flop over into redundancy – the storytelling, in short, is lax. The days of *crisp* moviemaking, where every frame matters, are past. We enjoyed Depp’s hamminess and Rosy is a sucker for “Legolamb” Orlando Bloom, but like most major flicks these days, **Pirates** sagged under its own weight. But! Glorious fx!

Peter, Pan & Merry #49 | Dave “Guy and Michelle Pfeiffer doesn’t qualify as ‘/’ fiction.” She’s “/” me! And it’s not “Pfeiffer” It’s

Pfeiffer

... || You can’t equate **Star Trek** movies with

007 flicks. I've never heard of a "Bondie." || Speaking of **Return of the King**, we're anxiously awaiting the theatrical trailer – not to mention the movie itself! At least a poster has made its way to the local googleplex. December 17th ... count the days. || As for the Democratic field of presidential candidates, everyone's impressed with Howard Dean, but I can hear the Republican character assassins now: *Dean, Dean, the musical fruit / the more he speaks the more he toots* ... Think *they* care about political correctness? || I may have found **ST: Insurrection** a reasonable diversion while it was on screen, but I can barely remember anything about it. Let's see ... F. Murray Abraham with his face wrapped in plastic ... Picard and some gal posing in front of some nice lake scenery ... that's about it. || As *Ulysses* buff, I resented Mel Brooks appropriating the name "Leo Bloom" for Gene Wilder's character in **The Producers**. || My 40th high school reunion will be in 2007. I'll go if Jerrell S goes. Found a photo of her, the great redheaded damp dream of my youth, in an old book recently. It was taken at the People's Park March on 5-30-69. She had a flower stuck down between her breasts and her radiant auburn locks were wound about the earpieces of her enormous shades. Hippy paradise. She still lives in Oakland ... and *I'm* married to another dream, so forget it.

"*Yngvi*" #83 | **Toni** *Funny* Kurt Erichsen cover. That guy, like so many others, is Hugo-due. || It's great that you can now receive your favorite radio station over the Internet, but your story demonstrates my complete out-of-it-tude insofar as technology is concerned: I had no idea such was even possible. So 20th Century ... || Charlotte's review of the DVD of **Pirates of Penzance** remarks that it was presented at New York's Delacorte Theatre in Central Park. Been there – saw Raul Julia in a Shakespeare play, the one with "All the world's a stage ..." What was it again? **The Iceman Cometh**, that's it. Anyway, I well remember the delight of watching great stagecraft under an open sky *a la* the Globe, one of the richest experiences in a city stuporous with great theatre. || Very interesting guide to the Koran, in that it resembles nothing more than a civil code. We're versed in such matters in Louisiana law – keep this coming! *Allah-u-*

ackbar. || I've about decided to try to repair my Nissan instead of follow my instincts, and shove it into the river. If it's at all salvageable, fixing it would be cheaper than buying a new car, and people do react nicely when I say I drive a Nissan. || So Judkowitz is now a music therapist as well as a musician. Inspiring a vision of one of her sessions: "Miss Ruth, I have bad dreams about my mother!" "Well, then, *hoist Fifi!*"

Tyndallite Vol. 3, No. 107 | **NORM!** Thanks for the rundown on John Stewart "Jack" Williamson's Seetee series. I never read it – another of the many classics of SF that have escaped my gaze. Interesting that it involved anti-matter. How long has it been since I told the anecdote related to me by a Berkeley friend, who well remembered the day a physics grad student came in, sat a table in a co-op cafeteria, and remarked, "Well ... found the anti-proton today!" A Nobel prize and six Ph.D.s, he said, came from that project. || *Very* interesting facts about E.E. Smith and the creation of the Lensman series. I still wish I'd helped myself to Harry Moore's copy of that first Lensman cover on **Astounding** ...

Nice Distinctions 1 | **Arthur** Great line on colonoscopy: "look up an old friend." Also great that the medics kayoed you before working their wicked and proto-sexual will upon your chaste rump; they'd have to do the same to me before doing the same to me. || We've been discussing refilling our laser printer cartridge to print **Challenger**, but have been deterred by the smallish number of copies we could get from each refill – only about 6000, I understand. The normal **Chall** run would eat up four or five of those, for little if any savings. For small print runs like **SM's**, though ... || Hey, you might *praise* Dolly Parton, but did *you* ever catch her eye, mouth "I – love – you!" to her, and be rewarded with Mardi Gras beads? Hah? *Hah?* || It lifts my spirits greatly – and I wasn't even depressed when I wrote this – to see **The Manchurian Candidate** praised by another voice than my own. Just got a DVD of that exceptionally fine, exceptionally sad film – a movie with true integrity. It's not only Sinatra's best performance, it's everybody-in-it's best performance, although one could argue for

Room at the Top for Laurence Harvey and one *must* argue for **Psycho** where Janet Leigh is concerned ... Not to mention **Sweeney Todd** for Angela Lansbury.

Twygdrasil #82 | Rich D. I don't know which is the worse shame, your father's death or the guilt and regret that steams from your every word about him. This may not be the time or venue for this, but as your friend, I must say it: he was only a man, finally, and men die – and men make mistakes, and behave badly and foolishly and unfairly no matter how brilliant they may be. You know yourself best, but accept *your* value on *your own terms*. That isn't for him or his ghost to rank. So saying, I hope he rests in peace, and that you let him. || Mentioning maps: Quinn Yarbrow was once a cartographer, and not just for Transylvania. Mentioning Tom Swift: loved the old series; wish I could have bought the complete set in dj I saw for sale at Confrancisco. But \$2000? Mentioning Verne and Wells: remember the major difference between them – Wells was wrote better stories, richer in language, excitement and subtext. I can still read **The Time Machine** with awe. **Journey to the Center of the Earth** reads like a book for kids. They've closed highways for weather my Buffalo-bound brother wouldn't even notice. || It feels like blasphemy to say this, but the only thing a Confederate attack on Washington after Antietam would have accomplished – even if successful! – would have been a relocation of the government to New York City and an even more vicious retaliation and Reconstruction. Shelby Foote once said that the North fought the war with one hand tied behind its back. The South, in his view, never had a chance to win, *unless* – as Lee thought – it completely destroyed the Federal army. You couldn't beat the Union head on; you had to take it on, keep it on, wear it down. Which is how Grant eventually beat *him*. (Look – we're talking about the Civil War again!) || I meant to extol the excellent A&E special on comic book superheroes to Brown, but your mention of Fatman gives me the chance here. Excellent survey of the genre from Siegel & Schuster to Vertigo and **Watchmen**, with interviews with Stan Lee and Paul Levitz and Denny O'Neil and Jim Steranko. *Not* Julius Schwartz, oddly enough, although he was of course touted as a

revolutionary figure. || A German victory in World War I might well have resulted in a World War II – Britain would never have sat still for a Europe dominated by Berlin – but would it have had Nazis? There would still have been a fear of Communism around and a terrible economic Depression, but the disgrace of defeat wouldn't have afflicted the German people and fueled nationalistic fervor. By the way, I've never read a more complete or compelling portrait of Hitler than Speer's. || Intoxication is a very limited defense in criminal cases, at best. *Involuntary* intoxication exempts a perp from responsibility if the condition is the direct cause of the crime – an unpredicted reaction to a prescription drug, for instance. *Voluntary* drunkenness only helps if the “intoxicated or drugged condition has precluded the presence of a specific criminal intent or of special knowledge required in a particular crime” (Berrigan, **La. Criminal Trial Practice**, Third Edition, s.21-17). It's up to the defense to prove that mouthful. Rotsa ruck. || Hey, if we really want to know the movie in which Tony Curtis says “Yonda lies de cassle of me fadda da caliph,” *why don't we ask Curtis?* His publicist must get that question so often, he probably has a form letter reply. || Re: the D.C. snipers. I disagree. Muhammad does not deserve “a long term in [the] slammer.” He deserves a *short* term in the slammer. And an even shorter time on the lethal injection table. || Remember ... the wires have been pulled.

Wer Saddam is Hidden | Poulete Something's cracked here, and it's not just your wall.

Spiritus Mundi 195 | me I'm going to get a spate of **Challenger** articles out of the DUFF trip. The first is in #18, and the next will probably feature Norman Lindsay and the Blue Mountains. *Auugh!* I miss it!

My mailing comments, this **Spiritus**, end on July 22, 2003. Hey, everyone! Three cheers for Jeff for a great O.E.ship, and let's all hope we had a great DSC! See you in Toronto!

GHL999

WriteAPrisoner.com Introduces:

Susan Smith



I am 31 years old. My birthday is September 26. I am looking to meet new people and, hopefully, become friends. During my spare time, I enjoy reading, working puzzles, and writing. I love rainbows, Mickey Mouse, the beach, the mountains, and waterfalls. My favorite color is navy blue and my favorite flower is the daisy. I am a Christian and I enjoy attending church. I consider myself to be sensitive, caring, and kind-hearted. I'm currently serving a life sentence on the charge of murder. I have grown and matured a lot since my incarceration, but I will always hurt for the pain I've caused so many, especially my children. I hope to receive letters from those who are not judgmental and who are sincere. I look forward to hearing from new people and, hopefully, finding new friends. May God bless each one of you!

Please Write Me At:

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Or, click [here](#) to e-mail me your first message.

Some things to know about emailing inmates

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