



# SPIRITUS MUNDI 198

A SFPazine for SFPA #236 by

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My Aunt Cora gave the *best* Christmas gifts. Not that they were the most expensive, but rather that they seemed chosen with the most care and respect. Who else would give a high school kid volumes of Eliot and Frost? I know it sounds repulsively egotistical to praise someone based on how delighted you always were by the aptness of their presents – but it was a mark of her character.

Aunt Cora had the most ebullient personality I've ever known. She had superb taste – she was constantly decorating and redecorating her apartments in Birmingham and on Grand Island, New York, where she moved in her old age, and her decor showed liveliness and restraint. She loved a Van Gogh portrait of a gaucho, possibly for romance, because she never married. At my first wedding in 1979, she treated herself to her first cigarette in 25 years, and loved it. She absolutely gassed Beth's gay uncle, the florist. I knew how he felt: when I was a small child there was no delight equal to having Aunt Cora come over. There are very few people whom I was ever happier to see.

During World War II, when she was with the Red Cross in England, she survived the Blitz, and when the Royal Family visited her air base, she served lemonade to the King and Queen and their family. (She liked Princess Margaret the best.) It was during WWII that she had taken the photo, in full Scottish regalia, I wanted to use to illustrate this eulogy. I can't find that picture, but I won't stop looking.

If you notice her *nose* in these photos, by the way, don't be embarrassed to say so. That's the Lillian family trademark. To quote my mama, on her pregnancies: "If you knew how many nights I've stayed up *praying about that nose ...*" Worked once. After Aunt Cora retired from the Red Cross, she told the story of a young plastic surgeon who absolutely flew into ecstasy over what he could *do* with her nose. He sounded like Michelangelo confronted with the block of marble from which he would hew *David*.

One time she was feeling sorry for herself and said that she had no family. "Well, what are *we*, chopped liver?" we asked. She was my grandfather's baby sister, my dad's aunt, my brother's and my great-aunt, and my nephews' great-great-aunt. That's her on my cover with three of those boys – my father, myself, and my nephew Steve. Not a bad crew. She adored my father and was great pals with my mother – one time they bullied poor Guy Jr. into taking them to the Condor, first of the San Francisco topless clubs. They were, I'm glad to say, embarrassed to death. It hurt her to outlive my father, and hurt her even worse to lose my mother's friendship to Alzheimer's. But my brother and sister-in-law kept her close.

Aunt Cora drove until the first time she missed the brake, due to loss of her reflexes. Nothing happened, but she gave up her keys on her own volition anyway. She lived on her own, too, until age worked its will. At least it took its time doing so. She was well past 90 when she went into the nursing home, in Buffalo.

In 1977, when I first fell in love with Rosy, I took her from the Birmingham DSC to Aunt Cora's apartment – I wanted to show the both of them off. Alas, Aunt C wasn't home. At Christmas, 2001, they finally got to meet. After Torcon, this past summer, Rosy and I went by the home where, for the most part, she was bedridden for the last two years – and though her eyesight had mostly gone, Aunt Cora

knew me instantly by my voice. It was at that home, sometime between 4:30 and 5:30 on the morning of September 27, between bed checks, that Aunt Cora's splendid heart finally stopped. She was 95. She was timeless.



In mid-October, Rosy and I were Fan Guests of Honor at **Con\*stellation:Pegasus** in Huntsville, Alabama. What a spiffy experience. Mikes Kennedy, Cothran & Company treated us like royalty.

I'll publish a couple of pages of photos from the con elsewhere, just so you can see how great a time it was ... and note the SFPAns, Randy, Steve & Suzanne, and Toni & Hank, who showed up. Alas, no Hearts were played – the penny I took from Reinhardt at DSC had drained the old boy's allowance for such losses for the rest of 2003.

Escorted by Cothran, we toured the Space & Rocket Center, where we looked at the rockets, played in a genuine Apollo training capsule, watched an IMAX movie, and Rosy rode a ride which *whooshed* her eighty feet into the air. I watched. Back and around the con, we ate – ate so damned much that we *welcomed* the diet we started the following week.

In return for our good times, we were asked to talk about DUFF and Australia, which we attempted to do via a power-point slide show. We showed 252 slides and talked for just over an hour. Must cut. Too much emphasis on Hanging Rock – understandable, since it was literally and figuratively the high moment of the trip – and too many crappy shots from my camera. We hope to show our slides at other cons – Oasis, DSC, maybe even worldcon – and before that, we decided, we have to *cull* and *script*. Still, great fun for us and at least, the audience stuck with it.

Our fellow guests were pro's at this sort of thing, and were terrific at their task. Artist GoH was Don Maitz, whose accomplishments include the label on the Captain Morgan's Spiced Rum bottle (he autographed dozens of the things, including the bottle itself at a restaurant we went to). He was approachable, friendly, and funny. The bird-loving dynamic duo, Larry Dixon and Mercedes Lackey, were toastmaster and pro GoH, respectively, and they were delightful. I haven't seen so many books hauled out for autographs since Steve King's appearance at DSC '83. They inscribed all – told bird stories – endured fannish attention – without losing their smiles for an instant. Very neat folks.

As one should expect from a con with Maitz as Artist Guest, the art show, though small, was excellent, and Uncle Timmy Bolgeo's art auction was phenomenally successful. Take a bow, Randy Cleary – and accept our thanks for making DUFF the convention's charity of choice this year. Con\*stellation made \$769 for the Down Under Fan Fund, a remarkable gift for which we're extraordinarily grateful.

It made no money for DUFF, but the masquerade merits mention: Rosy and I were asked to join Maitz as judges. I frankly don't know why small cons bother with costume contests, but the people seem to like them, and only two of the seven entries were actually embarrassing. One was a chubby 13-year-old kid who put on a pair of grey sweats and sang along inaudibly to a song he dedicated to his dead mother. God, kid, push the buttons, why don't you? We gave top awards to a cute Frodo, a mad **Monty Python** pastiche involving a rabbit puppet, and a reluctant fairy (caught at the end in Lady Coddington's pressed fairy book). The award I would have given the chubby guy in skin-tight drag does not bear repeating in a politically correct outlet such as SFPA.

Idiot that I am, I'd asked Con\*stellation to fly us to Huntsville instead of paying for our mileage, and they did, and it was a mistake. A front moved through the South on the Thursday we left, October 9th.

Though the sky was choked with clouds, everything was hunky-dory until our plane – a wide, beautiful 767, reminiscent of the wonderful A330s in which we crossed Australia – reached its cruising altitude of 31,000 feet. The beautiful 767 began to buck like a bronco with colic. Descending to 25,000 smoothed things out for the rest of the ride, and the thirty-minute hop to Huntsville was flawless, but the damage had been done. I was thoroughly freaked.

I forgot about the weather on October 10 and concentrated on having fun, but all day Saturday I kept sneaking looks at the Weather Channel to check on the likelihood of a smooth flight home. Someone warned me that a front had settled in between Atlanta and New Orleans, and that was that. It p.o.ed Rosy and made the next week tense and exhausted, but we *drove* home. Under perfect skies, I might add.



The reason I'd even thought to hurry in our travels had to do with my work as a public defender in St. John Parish. I thought I had a bad one coming up on Monday, and I wanted to be fresh for it. Fortunately, the guy pled – or *pleaded*, which my boss reminds me is the correct term. I was right relieved about that, since speaking for the life of Roy Logan was not a task I anticipated with glee.

Those of you who read my article about the insanity defense in **Challenger** read a little about Logan (a pseudonym, of course, as are the names of all clients in my fan writing). He's the maniac who slit the throats of his wife and three young children, sat around the house all day with their bodies, and finally waltzed into the detective bureau late that night to surrender and confess. He was a cold fish, without affect; the only emotion I ever saw him exhibit was an occasional small smile after someone would say something funny in court. Mostly he just sat, numb, with a vague anger under his face, as if impatient and mildly irritated with things.

Logan was represented by a successful attorney I knew from Jefferson, and I thought I'd have nothing to do with the case – until the lawyer asked for an IDB second chair, ostensibly to help with *voir dire* – jury selection. I drew the job. Trusting the lawyer about as far as I could throw his Lexus, I prepped as if I'd have to handle the whole penalty phase – the part of the trial where the jury decides whether the murderer gets life imprisonment or the Needle. And then the lawyer had a heart attack.

Whether this incidence would take me off the hook and force a postponement in the trial, or spear me to the wall as responsible for the whole defense, I didn't know ... but it turned out better than either. Recovering quickly, the lawyer talked Logan into accepting the plea bargain offered by the D.A. – life imprisonment, times four.

So the day after our late-night return from Huntsville, I sat in Judge Sterling's court and watched the last act of a baffling and disgusting tragedy. Something strange: I couldn't long look at Logan as he sat there, shackled, clad in pumpkin orange, his sandy, receding hair neatly trimmed. It was difficult to listen to his voice – the few words I heard from it. It was almost shocking to realize that he *had* a voice, that he shared common metabolic traits with other people. An act like his shouldn't come from a being who thinks and feels and moves and talks. It should come from a demon out of myth.

Logan answered Sterling's questions from the *Boykin* form without inflection, without emotion – perhaps he twitched slightly when a relative spoke, bewailing in bewilderment the four beautiful lives he'd taken from the world. Otherwise, he was still. Yes, it was hard to look at his face, but it was a relief to look at his back, when the door closed on it, and we in the world of men and women were through with him.

But – we have no clue. We'd never know, now, why he did what he did. His lawyer said that even Logan didn't really know why he did what he did. All we'd know is that he *could* do what he did, and that means the same monstrosity is out there still, and we don't have a name for it. Roy Logan was part of the mystery, the deepest and sickest and most frightening mystery humanity can claim. With him, we're through. With the mystery, never.



Gah! Let's change topics, fast. Arnold Schwarzenegger

*Yih.* Changed my mind. Back to the family killer.

No, no, the Terminator's victory in the California gubernatorial recall isn't *that* bad news. Although Ah-nold calls himself a Republican, his social opinions are moderately liberal – pro-choice, pro-gun control, and I believe pro-affirmative action within limits – and if he's also pro-free speech and pro-Fourth Amendment, I can live with that. Besides, Gray Davis' attempt to smear the actor with ancient verbal *faux pax* and tit-squeezes seemed desperate and irrelevant. (Just to keep my opinions clear: no, a fella should never impose physical attentions of any sort on a lady, but if he's done so, one should take his subsequent maturation into account. Thanks to his wife, Schwarzenegger won on that issue.) I wouldn't have voted for the recall – it seemed like another Republican attempt to circumvent inconvenient democracy for the sake of power, power, power. But considering the clumsiness and negativity of Davis' campaign, and the impermeability of Arnold's Hollywood charm, I was certainly not surprised by the result.

But so what? Will it make W more popular in the electoral paradise out west? Schwarzenegger's answer to the state's crushing financial problems seems to be to advance an open palm to the feds. Bush may fill that massive mitt in hopes of buying the state's electoral vote. I doubt that will help. In 2004, in California as everywhere else, tangential matters won't matter as much as the Republicans hope. The economy shows signs of statistical recovery but the job market remains in the shitter. People are suffering. Bush has the bruised cantaloupe he calls a brain stuck in Iraq. People are noticing. When they get a good look at Wesley Clark ...

We shall see what we shall see.



While we're on the subject of movie stars, we might as well turn briefly to some movie *notices* ...

Rosy and I went to see **Under the Tuscan Sun** mainly so we could sneak into the theatre next door and see the preview of **Return of the King**. I ran into one of our female judges there. I'm pleased to report that she agreed with my beloved wife about the movie – that as a sappy Diane Lane romance, it 's acceptable eyewash, but as a translation of the book to the screen, it was inane. Apparently the book is a comedy about the hassles inherent in renovating an ancient Italian villa. The movie shorts this aspect of the story and opts for silly sentimentality. Pretty scenery, though, and Lane has a maturity to her cuteness that I like. Do like I did if you see this thing, and immunize yourself with a few strong masculine chapters of James Lee Burke before the opening credits. Or do like *we* did, and rush out to see the **RotK** preview again as soon as it's over.



**Lost in Translation** is a romance with humor, subtlety, respect for its characters, and superb sensibility. I cheered. Bill Murray portrays an almost-has-been actor forming a friendship with a neglected teenage bride as both of them cope with a week in alien Tokyo. He is hilarious – nobody does funnier silences – but he’s also thoughtful, caring, and poignant as, in true mid-life fashion, he judges his life. Murray merits an Oscar for his performance. I’d be surprised if his co-star, Scarlett Johansson, isn’t nominated in the supporting category, and if the screenplay isn’t also tapped. I thought the young director, Sophia Coppola, dreadful in her acting debut in **Godfather III**, but as a director, she’s definitely a worthy daughter to her old man. Superb.

**Mystic River** is a severe disappointment to me. Hopelessly overhyped and overpraised, I found this adaptation of a Dennis Lehane crime novel to be hopelessly botched – and at the last minute, too. After a fine build-up, establishing deep and rather profound characters, director Clint Eastwood lets his film come to a weak and confusing climax that cheats them not only of complexity, but of common sense. I mean, what these guys do – the life and death decisions they make – *makes* no sense. I’ll go into detail next issue if enough of us talk about the movie in this mailing, but my word for it now is Waste – waste of Eastwood, who usually makes pretty good movies, waste of Sean Penn and Tim Robbins, who usually give fine performances, waste of Kevin Bacon, waste of our time.

**Runaway Jury** was filmed here in New Orleans, and Rosy sat next to a lady who worked as an extra in a restaurant scene. As I dislike John Grisham’s fiction, I had serious doubts about this one, but the promise of local scenery was irresistible. And while the courtroom scenes are utterly laughable – the anti-gun tantrum by the activist would result in an immediate mistrial anywhere in the civilized world, and *even* in New Orleans – the ridiculous plot won me over, and I liked the flick as I left it.

Which brings us to **Kill Bill** (Vol. 1), Quentin Tarentino’s paean to Hong Kong martial arts movies, Kurosawa samurai movies, *anime* and Italian westerns – utterly ridiculous but extremely funny and big fun. Stylish, ironic, wry, and bloody as hell ... but hilarious and both viscerally exciting and rewarding. I didn’t like having the film split in two, but at least it gives us something to look forward to next spring. Lucy Liu, by the way, is priceless, while Darryl Hannah, alas, alack, is getting horsy in her middle age.

All of this is nice. I love movies. But all of this is also unimportant. Because when it comes to movies, all of our thoughts turn forward ... to Beethoven’s birthday.

Which is *December 16<sup>th</sup>*. On that day, Rosy and I will travel to Mobile, find the theatre, and settle in for twelve hours of **The Lord of the Rings**.

News of the marathon came out while we were in Huntsville, and John Guidry immediately e-mailed the announcement – to Rosy. Not to me. Rosy had problems retrieving her e-mail during Con\*stellation – and so we didn’t hear about the plans to show the extended versions of the first two films *and then Return of the King* in one showing until we got home. Our local theatre was completely sold out. The closest available venue: Mobile, Alabama.

Now, did we really want to put ourselves through this? A 2 1/2-hour drive, in the middle of the week, between two court dates for me, to see three movies, each pushing four hours in length, which marathon promises to let out after two in the morning, facing either a night in a motel or another three hours on I-10 or both? Did we *really* want to do that?

Pfft. How long have we known each other? *One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them*



And finally, because it's the most horrible thing I must talk about here ... we have started a four-letter nightmare. *DIET*.

It is called the Medifast Diet, and Rosy picked it up from Mike Resnick's chatroom. Resnick apparently lost something like 60 pounds following its dictates, and as Rosy thinks (rightly) that I'm a fat pig and (wrongly) that she herself is not perfection, she ordered the stuff and, after Con\*stellation, we began.

Medifast is based on putting one's body into ketosis, which causes your bloated fat cells to think you're starving, which causes them to release their death grip on your corpus and depart. You lose lotsa weight lotsa fast. You drink water-shakes made from packets of fine powder (chocolate is good, vanilla is the slightest bit icky, orange is very good), and soups (chicken is all right plus, minestrone is almost tolerable, the chili is inedible), and tasteless crackers. You can snack on celery – thank God I like it – and can have a real meal, within limits, at night.

Well, I'm completely and proudly whipped in this marriage, of course, so I went along. I whined a lot but only cheated once on the diet, a quarter of a sugar kruller I devoured like a werewolf at court. I don't blame myself: my rumbling stomach was drowning out the testimony. And .. two weeks into the nightmare, I'd lost six pounds.

But then we went to Florida for a weekend, and I gained all of that back. The occasion was an annual party thrown by Rosy's Aunt Voncile. Miss V spread delectable goodies throughout her beautiful Orlando home – which she designed herself, by the way – and there was no point in resisting. We buried our faces in food and scarcely came up for air. Only a few games of "slop pool" with father-in-law Joe and Rosy's stepmother Patti interrupted the feast. By the way, it was grand to see Rosy's family again; Joe told stories about the fabled Apollo launch parties, Patti and I made plans for a DUFF website and worked on **Challenger's**, and her daughter Melody got a boost out of our Australian photos.

The diet took another blow when Elst Weinstein and his wife visited town – and naturally, we ate a carb-rich dinner with them. As this section of **Spiritus Mundi** ends, we have another party to look forward to – Hank Reinhardt's Atlanta soiree celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a science fiction fan. Plus, Thanksgiving looms at the end of the month. Gluttony reigns. Nevertheless, we have a supply of the Medifast meals on hand, and I have a determined wife in charge of my life. Pour another packet of powder into another glass of ice water, Rosy ... I'm with you in this.



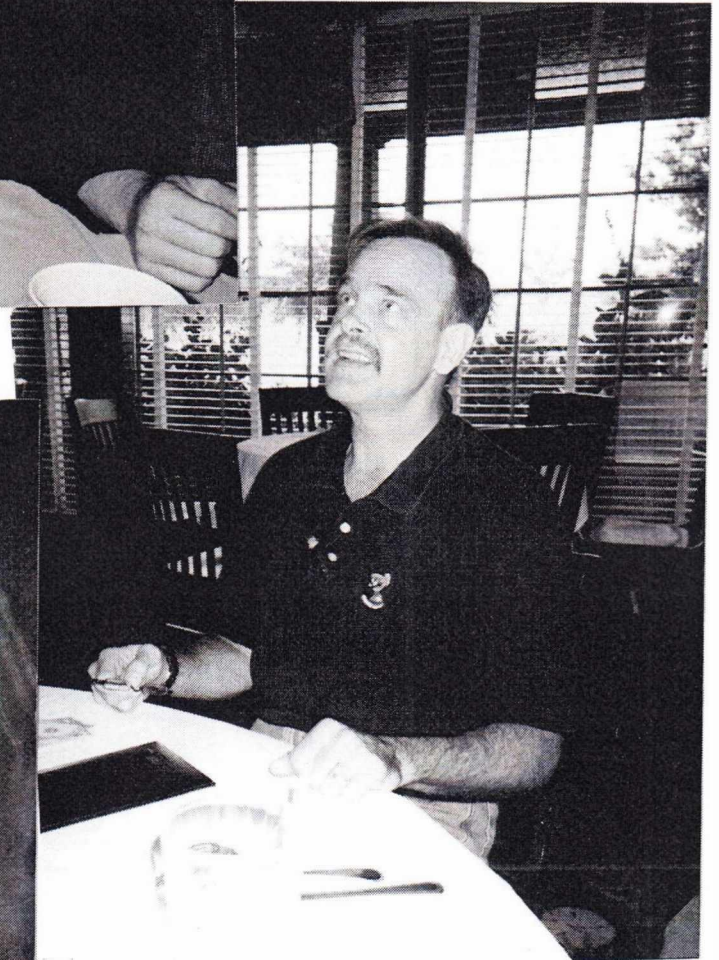
Oh yes, one more thing. My ten-year-old traffic ticket, the one which got me thrown in jail for seven hours on May 14<sup>th</sup>, came up for trial in mid-October. I went to Gretna, my old stompin' grounds, and spoke to the city attorney, who remembered me from my Jeff Parish days. I was prepared to attack the attachment on a number of grounds – that the 1993 notice had gone to the wrong address, even though I'd written the right one on the ticket, that I'd bought cars, gotten stopped by nice cops and hassled by hostile ones, and most significantly, practiced criminal law for ten years in that very venue – but the city attorney merely said, "You're kidding me!" before writing "Dismissed" on the ticket, over and over again.

I appreciated that – but my boss still suggests I sue somebody. I might. Let me think about it.





CON\*STELL-  
ATION  
2003!



Above left, Guest of Honor **Mercedes Lackey** seems to pray for success at Con\*stellation. Her prayer was answered! Artist GoH **Don Maitz** looks on reverently. Below, from the Space & Rocket Center, molds of **Neil Armstrong's** hands.



## More Space & Rocket Center ...

Fan Guest of Honor **Rose-Marie** rides the Space Shot, right. Below, she joins her lucky husband in the Apollo training module.



**Mib the Panda** demonstrates the art of using a zero-gravity space toilet. Everybody, after all, has a talent.

Wonderful time! Thanks,  
Con\*stellation!

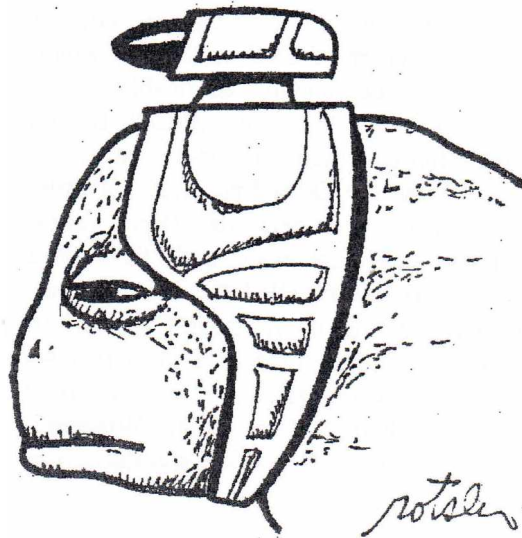




## MAILING CAUSTICS 235

*The Southerner #235 / Egoboo Ballot | Jeff* I vOEd for Sheila with glee, and if she wishes, pledge to give assistance. After all, if I help collate, I get my mailing first! Aside from that, I did a terrible job on my egoboo ballot this year, hurrying to get it mailed before Con\*stellation. I've never failed to send in my ballot, but I've also never failed to try to make the most of it ... until this one. Sorry, everyone. \ \ My guess for your Rule 4 mystery man ... well, *you* guess. \ \ Is it time yet to heap praise on the Copeland O.E.ship, the northernmost in SFPA history? No? One more to go? All right.

*Bob's Infected Nose / gang oft astray | mike* lovely cartoons this issue, I must say. Did you catch – and guess – the guest artists working **Dilbert** in October? \ \ I suppose it's my age showing, but the idea of a comic book like **Catwoman** touting “strong gay relationships” makes me more than faintly queasy. I felt the same way when the short-lived **Patchwork Man** made a story point out of abortion. The message must suit the medium as much as the medium, the message, and comics to my mind are a bit too juvenile in their readership to adequately handle themes that adult, the complex, that difficult. Of course, a book pitched to adults, like **Watchmen**, is a different story, but comics should entertain kids, not indoctrinate them. \ \ I see the value in avoiding ties and establishing clear-cut winners, the initial point of the Aussie ballot, but it's also produced some screwy and unjust results. It's not at all unusual for a Hugo nominee to get many more first place ballots than his nearest competition, and *still* lose the award. Frank Wu has had it happen, it happened to Cheryl Morgan's **Emerald City**, and a Heinlein bio endured it recently, as well. But worry not; the ballot won't be abandoned. Fandom's barons like having numbers to crunch and that's the end of it. In fandom, one does not defy The Way Things Are. \ \ Hey, lay that Jules Verne article on me! It would have fit in well with the other treatments of classic authors in **Challenger #19**, but I print in January, probably too soon ... \ \ The analysis of the fall of the WTC is fascinating – if, of course, horrible. We were lucky that day –



had those shitbirds hit the Towers an hour later and a few floors lower, the death toll would have been double. \ \ A well-turned but sad eulogy for Dash Rip Rock; your devotion to the band continues, if in regret. \ \ I really enjoyed **Pippin** on stage – *genuine* Fosse – but like you, am bored by imitations of his choreography. (Does Paula Abdul qualify? I find her work dull.) Anyway, I recall only one Fosse-like number in **Chicago**, which is on occasion brilliant, so yes, see it. \ \ **The Banger Sisters** is junk, though. Cute idea given short shrift by the script. \ \ Tremendous story about Stan Laurel timing the laughs gleaned by one of his films, so he could re-cut the movie. His timing with Hardy was impeccable. \ \ I remember **The President's Analyst** with affection, except for the scene where the British rock star/secret agent is repeatedly shot skidding across a room. Since December 8, 1980 that bit hits too close to home. \ \ The bizness analyzing the phrase “In like Flynn” and the Dylan raspberries are fun reading. Urban legends beware. \ \ Hmm ... here's a story about an office temp – who froze employer files under his own password – facing charges. What for, I wonder? Possibly theft of intellectual property, with the defense that he didn't mean to deprive the owners of their files permanently. Notice that such a defense would require the defendant to prove something; the burden of proof in an American court doesn't *always* sit on the prosecution. \ \ Since it blunders well past the protections afforded by



the First Amendment, the winger column advocating the murder of Chelsea Clinton would seem to me to be legally actionable. No Democrat, you note, has ever vilified Bush's family just because of their relation to that hyena. \ I disagree about the Dead End Kids – a little. They were superb in **Angels with Dirty Faces**. Hmm ... I first saw them in the early fifties in a nothing little horror film called **Hold that Ghost**. Haven't thought of that movie since I walked out of the theatre ... \ For some reason these reviews of **Then Comes Marriage** remind me of Saki's exquisite short-short, "The Open Window", which I read at Toni's. Gotta find a collection of his work.

*The New Port News #211 | Ned* Thanks for the verbal permission to reprint your remarks on Cavourite in **Challenger**. They're a riot – the Best Bit in this mailing, and they'll certainly enlighten **Chall**'s readership. Rare, also, to hear you talking like a physics-trained engineer and techie! \ Our friend and hostess Donna Hanson, of Canberra, Australia, has Maori kids, and the girls, at least, are gorgeous. I wonder what they thought of **Whale Rider**? \ I'm surprised that one of W's stooges – or should we say, *Cheney's* stooges – hasn't tried to *fake* evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Since nothing is past such people, I must credit their fear of our free press for the honest truth about WMDs coming forth. But will it make a difference to the people? Stay tuned. \ Albert Speer's **Inside the Third Reich** has been an eye-opener for me insofar as Nazi Germany is concerned; never again will I give Hitler credit for any quality military or organizational thinking. Even within his own government, the man was a fountain of chaos. He assigned competing organizations to common goals with no incentive for cooperation. He issued contradictory and/or whimsical orders. He refused objective expert advice. He undercut his best men (of course, Speer considered himself the best of the best, and some of his carping may be just that). The Nazi government was a morass of backstabbing self-promotion, even in wartime, and even without World War II, it couldn't have long outlasted Hitler. Interestingly, however flaky Hitler became, the magnetism of his personality still galvanized almost everyone

about him, even Speer, his social and intellectual superior. \ The white page behind my cover to SM196 (I guess) was Rosy's idea. She was afraid the text on page 1 would show through the cover and ruin its effect. \ That homicidal Atlanta cop obviously belongs behind bars, not a badge. What defenses have been made for him? – aside from the obvious and common rationalizations that if we don't let police kill whoever they want whenever they want, the black people will come into our homes, steal our daughters and rape our televisions, or something. \ We saw Mars' closest approach last summer from the street before my brother's home in New York. That puppy was *red*, Ned. \ My ambition, if you can call it that, for the introductory segment of **The Simpsons** is to freeze-frame it on that moment when the "camera" sweeps over the crowd – see who and what it shows. Three things vary from show to show in the intro – what Bart must write on the blackboard, the tune Lisa plays as she's tossed out of band practice, and of course, the sofa shtick. Often in **The Simpsons**, the main story emerges from another, almost as zany – my favorite being the gummy bear story that morphed, through sublime idiocy, into the grotesque tale of "The Babysitter and the Beast". Remember ... Homer being accused of molestation after he snatches the gummy Venus off the babysitter's butt? Look at how much space I've spent on this ...

*Variations on a Theme #22-23 | Rich L.* Expect to hear more "politic-speak" as 2004 drones on. What a depressing year it promises to be. I bought an appointment book for it the other night, and just contemplating the ugly news and gloating that will fill its days was enough to send me into a funk. Anyway, I liked your questions to the nabobs. \ Agreed, unless one enjoys endless **Star Trek** jokes around the workplace, one should keep one's membership in fandom to oneself. But sometimes things work out: my boss found an SF paperback while cleaning out a bookshelf and passed it along to me. ~~Inside, a thousand dollar bill!~~ \ I agree, **Return of the King** will be nominated for the Oscar, and Peter Jackson could very well win it, as a gesture to the excellence of the **LotR** trilogy, but Best Picture will probably go to a

more mainstream film. My current bet is on **Cold Mountain**, a Civil War tale I'd cheer for in any other year. \ The world's strangest flight-ophobe, I desperately want to visit that Smithsonian Annex devoted to famous airplanes. Air & Space is possibly my favorite place in D.C. after the Wall and Arlington. \ Patti Green has installed **Challenger #18** onto my website, [www.challzine.com](http://www.challzine.com). Even without illos (yet), it looks splendid ... if I do say so. \ Rush Limbaugh's attacks on Chelsea Clinton can be excused, he (I) said sarcastically. After all, he was stoned. \ I *really* like your mini-biographies of revered composers. This is the kind of article – a *personal* appreciation of a fan's *personal* interest, not necessarily science-fictional – that I envisioned for **Chall** when I created it ten years ago. The idea fits in with my idea of fannishness – that anything a fan loves is worth reading about. Anyway, Dvorak is here well-served. Does that polka (!) he wrote at age 15 survive? \

**Esquire's** splendid story about "The Falling Man" – about the WTC victim you mention, who seemed to *dive* from the building – gained some compelling letters of comment. My favorite said that the man, rather than choosing to die, had chosen to *live* – to bring grace and composure to his last awful moments. Of course, the guy was actually tumbling, and the pose caught in that shot was an accident of the camera. But the picture is still true to the man, to all of them, to their last moment not of despair, but of courage. Hell – would *I* have had the guts to deny the killers power over my death? Would *I* have had the courage to jump? \ You guys took the pretty route to Toronto – western New York, around Cooperstown and the Finger Lakes, is gorgeous. Love the Indian name for the lakes, too, a name appropriated by the famed opera there: the Glimmer Glass. \ "Mark Twain's grave" is a strange phrase to read: it's hard to think of him as dead. \ You saw a lot of great stuff in Toronto that we missed. I really wish we'd gone up in the CN Tower, \$20@ for a ticket or not. \ Hey! Lookit who it is with the latest Hugo he lost! Congrats again, by the way – this was **Mimosa's** most deserving win! Refreshing, by the way, to read a *positive* review of **Torcon 3** – what winning a Hugo will do for you!

**Travelers Tales, vol 2 no 3 / Adventures in Graphic Design | Steve** Grand to see you guys at the Hank party. \ I love reading about your New Zealand tour, although as I suspected it would, the account makes me pine for Australia again. Your photos are all unspeakably lovely, and the 3-D photos *work* for me – I just let my eyes unfocus and *pop!* there it is – and the place looks fantastic. Excellent photo of Bear Bear, too. Mib envies him his dark glasses. \ **WEEP!** I can't *stand* this! *Melbourne* (or *Sydney* or *Adelaide* or *Perth* or *Canberra* or *Auckland* or *Hobart* or effing *Coolooloolumba*) in 2010!!!!!! Let's agree now to take the same plane. You can help Rosy keep me sort-of sane!

**Twygdrasil #84 | Rich D.** Gorgeous – and hilarious – Martha Stewart cover. "It's cell-block K!" \ "Poor Sheila"? Naw – without arguments or hassles going on, the O.E.ship is a pleasant task. You have to know when to quit, though. Several O.E.s held onto power one term too many, and the burnout showed ... \ I've avoided the last two **Matrixes**, so know nothing about their fight scenes, but I remember the worst movie rumbles I've seen – or rather, the worst three. Ed Wood made a movie about wild '50s youth into which he inserted a gratuitous fight consisting of himself rolling on the ground with another ham. John Carpenter made Keith David and his co-star trade shoves and punches for ten minutes to pad out the middle of **They Live**, a terrible version of a great short story, Ray Nelson's "8 O'clock in the Morning". And John Derek's battle scene in Bo Derek's **Tarzan** was so lame he cut it down to a single shot: "Omigod! Here come the 'natives'!" Cut to Bo being stripped naked and slopped with whitewash by the Zulu girls. \ Tsk. You may have "gotten through" **Finnegans Wake** but you forgot its first rule. *No apostrophes in the title!* \ The Supreme Court has weighed in on the question of mistreatment of Arab prisoners in Guantanamo. I wish this gave me confidence that the rule of law would prevail. This same court gave W the presidency he could not win honestly; its winger members have been rewarded with fat federal jobs for their children, pure impure graft. They'll obey their masters; the mistreatment of prisoners will get a clean bill of health. \ "So maybe there is a way to make



cells forget old age.” And thereby, help us live forever. Dream on, Rich. (It *would* happen as I enter middle middle age.) \ There’s a helluva good story in your sister’s efforts to save a mural painted by your mother; once matters are decided, consider writing it up. And good luck to your sib. \ Perhaps Wells meant **The Time Machine** to be a socialist warning of what the future would look like if the classes continued their schism. I wish the George Pal movie had been more thoughtful insofar as the Morlocks were concerned. They looked stupid, were portrayed as little more than monsters – bah. \ I appreciate your words of praise for this city – “Life is slow and tolerant, yet has pizzazz” – but there are undercurrents to New Orleans. Poverty – corruption – constant violence – decay. And where do you see tolerance here? But pizzazz? That is absolutely and forever true. \ It’s established that schizophrenics’ art gets more and more interesting and powerful as their disease progresses – they seem to sense light more vividly and create more spontaneously. *Viz*, of course, Van Gogh. I don’t know if this is true for Alzheimer’s patients, but in any event, good for your mother’s caretakers that they encourage her to keep drawing. \ “Someone ... proved ... that the Third Plane on 9-1-1 was aimed at the Congress.” How? \ The signers of the Declaration of Independence didn’t sign their names to the copies sent to the various states – the printer left the names out. One of those copies was displayed a while back at the D-Day Museum. \ Did Johnny Depp overact in **Pirates of the Caribbean**? Absolutely. But I bet he’ll get a Golden Globe nomination out of it, if not a chance at the Oscar. He was the indisputable hit of that overly praised movie. \ Wait ... those biblical passages you quote do indeed ordain death for disobedience – apparently without regard for one’s age – and homosexuality, but masturbation? Genesis 38:8-10 seems to be a response to Onan’s disobeying Judah, wherefore he was probably eaten by dogs, not necessarily for whacking his pud. I don’t see any general rule against it. Whew. \ Not only are Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein “close as peas in a pod,” they also married and adopted a shaved monkey. Or does **The Weekly World News** lie? \ Nope – no one with any sense blamed the troops for Vietnam. You’re reacting to Nixonian

urban legends about hippies spitting on G.I. amputees. The anti-war movement was directed almost entirely against those who directed the war – “Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?” Exception was Calley, but Calley – well, even he got a break from the public, hawk and dove both. \ Thanks for the fine mc/LOC to **Chall #18**. You’ll be twice represented in **#19**.

*Space Travel An You don’t Even hafta get into a SWEAT | Poulette* Rosy and I went to see the director’s cut of **Alien** in November, and it was superb. I spotted the new scenes at once, of course, and thought they added to the power of the already-powerful film. Only the scenes with Mother, the ship’s computer, seemed dated by the quarter-century that’s passed since this brilliant space nightmare premiered. I must have *both* versions on DVD. Anyway, Borby, I like your idea of cast iron flying saucers, but what if they crash in the Indian Ocean? Wouldn’t they sink and hit Pocahontas?

*Nice Distinctions 3 | Arthur* I’m glad the insurance company was reasonable in regards to your auto accident. We think State Farm sold me short in terms of pain and suffering, even after I showed them the permanent scar on my forehead left by my steering wheel, and the black-eyed photos I ran in **Spiritus** some mailings back. If I have plastic surgery to correct the scar – something my dermatologist says would not completely work – the insurance people would compensate me for much of the surgery, but screw it. \ That’s a very interesting point, that **Queer Eye for the Straight Guy** reinforces repulsive stereotypes of gay men. I suppose they could regard this as a type of liberation – freedom to be a caricature because *now* the caricature is *cool!* – but it seems self-destructive, undignified and limiting to me. Let the ladies watch it; I will too, if ever wrapped in a straightjacket with my head in a clamp and my eyelids propped open a la **Clockwork Orange**. (On something close to this topic, I recently reviewed **The Boston Strangler**, which contains a most compelling pitch for tolerance – the scene between Henry Fonda, as the investigator, and Hurd Hatfield [I think] as the gay millionaire under suspicion. Their commonality – what Hatfield calls “the old school tie” – overcomes

whatever suspicion is there. And then there's the interrogation of the Colonel, but that's another matter.) \ The Yellowcake Incident? What do we care? I understand the **NYT Magazine** for November 2<sup>nd</sup> has a fine article on the pseudo-intelligence behind the Iraq invasion. Fundamentally, W went in without a plan – just wild optimism that we'd be greeted with huzzahs. Home-made bombs, yes; huzzahs, no. \ Ooh! Glad you never said "Jack Kerouac sucked" in front of my first wife! Beth worshiped him! Speaking of Beth, she was mentioned in **Good Housekeeping's** June '03 issue, recommending some gardening tools as a successful landscape designer. I'm anxious to see the magazine itself to see if there's a picture.

*The Sphere* vol. 206 no 1 | **Don** Goering's quote about "the big lie" is applicable to every massive piece of political chicanery governments have pulled in history – including the Iraqi war. What hits me in both the sentiment and in Goering's specific situation is the ragged contempt in which he holds his people. Speer reports the same thing: in ordering a scorched earth policy when the war was lost, Hitler said that the people *deserved* it. He blamed *them* for losing the war. Speaking of whom, I got a huge, if bitter kick out of the attempt to equate Saddam to Hitler – the better to glorify his conquerors. Notice how long it's been since that liberal media of ours has mentioned that Saddam is *still* at large? \ Obviously, the Republicans complain about the national debt when a Democrat is President, but when in office themselves, go apeshit playing with guns and run it up to the sky. Of course, that isn't the point. They want to pump money into the military so they can claim to be tough. But God forbid America should improve its infrastructure or provide health care – spend money that doesn't end up in Republican patronage. It's the beneficiaries of the debt that they care about. \ W "doesn't get a second term"? Hopefully ... but I doubt it. He has enormous money and the fear of the American people behind him, and that's too potent a combination for sense and intelligence to beat.

*Frequent Flyer* | **Tom** Since you're listed as "nominal editor," I'll praise you for our dreadful but enjoyable DSC oneshot. Should I include a

copy with the GHLIII Press? It does have my writing in it. Questions these for philosophers. \ I can pretty much guess the rationale relatives of the 9-11 victims have for suing the airlines – for being so negligent as to allow the hijackings – and the Port Authority – for erecting buildings with inadequate escape routes that jets could bring down – but why, I wonder, the manufacturers of the planes? Because the Arabs were able to get into the cockpits? Because the planes leaked fuel when crashed into the Towers? How were they negligent? \ A paragraph with the following words: "Shakespeare" ... "fried chicken" ... "potato chips and chocolate". That's not a *paragraph*, it's a *paradise*. \ So you changed your mind about supporting the Iraqi War. Just like Wesley Clark. Good for you. Hope more and more mimic you. \ How did you help send a man to prison? \ You mention Theodore White. I met him once, in 1968, as Nixon's campaign plane was unloading at the New Orleans airport. **Making of the President 1960** was brilliant, but the other three volumes missed the point.

*Revenant #20* | **Sheila** Hail, Madame O.E.lect! If you ask me to serve as Emergency Officer in your administration, consider me delighted to do so. As for collating assistance, that's a much-practiced pleasure. I've collated 24 mlg of my own, and helped Markstein, Dolbear, Inzer, Montalbano and Weisskopf stack zines. I must enjoy it. I hope that *you* enjoy O.E.ship. SFPA's in a stable epoch, with no unpleasantness going on that we can't handle, no disagreements beyond the political, and enough cash in the larder to keep us afloat for awhile. Keep good records and accurate pagecounts (always a problem for me), mail on time, and you'll do fine. \ With three+ years of solid SFPA membership behind you, there's no question that you've "been here long enough" to serve as OE. Lon Atkins, of fabled fame, was just completing his *first* year as a member when he ran for – and won – the job. \ Very fond of Nashville's Acropolis. Hope to lunch there often in the future. \ I always like traveling through strange little towns and staying at strange little motels; it's part of the romance of the open road. Of course, now that I have a partner, I can't frequent the septic dumps I



stayed in during my bachelorhood, but it's still exciting to wake up under a strange roof. (Note: this comment written prior to exposure to the Admiral Benbow Inn in LaGrange, Georgia, or at least the back alley portion where we stayed. I think they were keeping Al Qaeda prisoners in the next room, to judge by the United Nations inspectors milling about outside.) \ Your Torcon report is fun, even if the convention wasn't as much fun as it should have been. I see your air route took you NOLA > Houston > Toronto; I know Houston's a hub and all that, but somehow I can't see traveling *west* to go *northeast*. \ Thanks for the nice words on our Hugo presentation. I thought Rosy looked lovely but that I came across as stuffy and nervous. Of course, I wasn't in the audience. \ It's clear that the ingredients of a good worldcon are a close crash pad, a good crowd to hang with, entertaining events, ~~and a Hugo nomination for GHEH~~. \ A great story you have to read about "secret elites" and cabals is Lafferty's "About a Secret Crocodile". It's winger lunacy about the liberal media, but it's by Lafferty, so it's brilliant. \ Speaking of slash fiction, a member of the **Plokta** cabal published an article about writing *elf* slash in their latest issue, including a sample. **YECH** By the way, include me among the number who didn't associate Hugo Weaving as Elrond with the bad guy in **The Matrixes**, not that I've seen the last two. \ Louisiana had a light summer in terms of heat, methought. \ As for a dinner date during Jazz Fest, I'm sure Liuzza's, our favorite eye-tie restaurant, couldn't care less if someone is "sweaty" and covered in sunscreen. Sounds like their waitresses! We'll go – damn the diet! \ I wonder if limiting the time someone has to cast his ballot might be unconstitutional. \ The future of SFPA? Keep it up until no one wants to do a fanzine and no one wants to be O.E. Thanks to you, that's not now.

**Peter, Pan & Merry #51 | Dave** The Copelands' O.E.ships have been a real comeuppance for me; I squawked like crazy when Carlberg took the apa power center to Los Angeles, and I've often wondered why I didn't make such noise when it was shifted even further away from our beloved Confederacy, to Seattle. Maybe it's because Stven moved SFPA to L.A. without warning, or maybe it's just that it was Jeff up there in Seattle.

\ "12 sheep for every person" sounds like paradise for perverted Muslims. \ Your horrible "ham bush" joke is noted and ignored for sweet Kay's sake. \ This discussion on Jewish biblical rules is fascinating for a gentle, and inspires thoughts of a *kosher guide to fanac*. Why do I feel as if I just bought myself another 30,000 years on the devil's barbecue for that comment? \ Interesting discussion of Tunguska and why it wasn't seen until – well, until it went poof over Siberia. Maybe it was just too small for the telescopes of 1908, or had too low an albedo. \ How does a school honor a superior student – like Allie – without offending the other students, or their parents? By eschewing the schmaltz! None of this "There's Allie and then there's everybody else!" crap. Just say, "And the Art Department award goes to Allie Copeland." Allie gets the egoboo and the award, and no other kid has to feel like something scraped out of a sneaker tread. \ "Mares would have to be peels" instead of steeds, huh? HAW \ "I like to think that us folk on the left aren't that vicious." That's our problem. We have to *get* vicious. Republicans have stolen and perverted our country. They *can't* be forgiven. Of course, except for our Republican friends, relatives and co-workers. \ I'm quite fond of the film of **Fail-Safe**, overshadowed as it was by **Strangelove** that same year. Dan O'Herlihy is terrific and it's the best Fritz Weaver performance I've ever seen. \ **Seabiscuit** was a fine film, but I'll bet it's all but forgotten when the Oscar nominations appear. Let's see ... beyond **Return of the King** and **Cold Mountain**, maybe **Mystic River**, I can't predict any of the short list yet. Check with me next mailing. \ Playing golf for 34 years ... you remember John Carter's answer to the Martians' questions, who is Franklin D. Roosevelt and what is golf? Roosevelt was a politician and golf is a *mental disease*. \ SFPAnS are taking wonderful vacations this mailing – yours to SanFran evokes memories of my youth. I left before BART opened and have been back but once, for Confrancisco, but I remember well the dreams with which I wandered its streets as a pennyless college kid – dreams of living there, in financial adequacy, a beautiful wife, and a good, productive, cultural life. Well, got one, anyway, and I ain't done yet. \ Cody's Books,

too, in Berkeley. That was the *new* book store, down Telegraph Avenue from Shakespeare & Co. and Moe's, the epic used book stores where I began to build my SF collection. Damn, I'd give a lot to walk back into those places ... Also, gotta get to that Winchester Mystery House. That was one great **Swamp Thing** ...

*Tyndallite Vol. 3, No. 109 | NORM!* Your quotes this time resonate with the weekend I spent with my father-in-law, SF novelist and NASA techie Joe Green. For instance, he insists that most SF is actually fantasy, because it postulates physical impossibilities – faster-than-light travel, for instance. Which would make even Hal Clement's fiction – and how Joe mourned his frequent launch-party visitor – fantasy, in one respect. He also told some good John W. Campbell stories from the Apollo days, and oh, I need to carry a tape recorder along on one of these trips. \ \ Verne and Wells – you know, there was a time some 20 years ago when SFPA had both on its roster! Vern(e) Clark and George Wells – there you are. \ \ More good word on **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**. Resnick may be right that it'll be hard to beat at Hugo time.

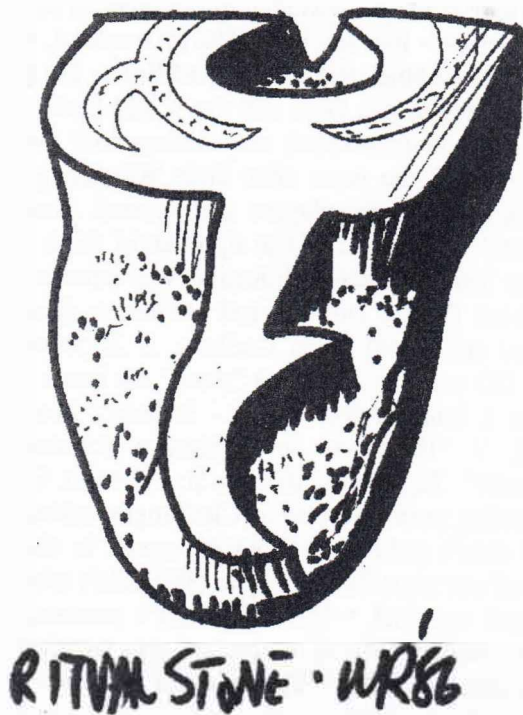
*Guilty Pleasures 30 | Eve* I agree that we need to credit those Torcon staffers who “worked their butts off trying to salvage situations not of their creating”; I've been where they are and I appreciate the hurdles they had to cross. \ \ We too saw little of Toronto, and regret our lack of energy. Resnick says that the shoe museum there was fantastic. A ... shoe ... museum ... You can tell it's Canada! \ \ The Hugo ~~Losers~~ Nominees' Party was indeed a terrific soiree, only partially hurt for me by the release of the complete Hugo results. I hate it when concoms hurry to get out the totals, and don't give us Hugo losers the evening to adjust to the loss and simply enjoy the party, but I don't dare say much about it; mentioning my plaint to the '05 committee drew angry ripostes from smofs devoted to crunching the numbers immediately, if not sooner. Hell, in that case, why waste time with a ceremony?

*Oblio No. 148 | Gary B.* Inconsistent sleep patterns have been driving me wacky for months – although mine is all too consistent. I pass out

in exhaustion at about 10:30 Central Time, and sleep like a stone – until 3:30 or so. I lurch awake, leave the room to avoid waking Rosy, start up the computer, check my e-mail, and if I'm not completely stuporous, change a comma here and there in **Spiritus** or **Challenger**, or scan a website. When I feel the return of blessed sleepiness, I play a game of computer Hearts until I take the Queen, then seek dreamland again. God, I'd *love* to make it all the way to 7AM, but my flab is *trained*. What do I do? \ \ Great article catching us up on the lost Brown years, when you were out of fandom. I see now why you ignored all my calls to contribute to SFPA 100 in April '81. Real life has a way of taking over. But I bet now you wish you'd put (1) your foot down and (2) a few words on paper ... \ \ If I could guarantee one thing about this present mlg, the one we're in right now, it's that you'll be exulting about the Florida Marlins! It'd be a lie if I said I was glad to see them *in* the World Series – like the best 98% of mankind, I wanted the Cubbies to face the Red Sox – but I was delighted to see them *win* the World Series. Quite an accomplishment, considering how the owners gutted the team after their '97 victory. Are there many/any players still around from that year? \ \ Hmm ... if I'm right, and I think I am, the last contested O.E.lection was between incumbent Dennis Dolbear and challenger (and eventual successor) Stven Carlberg ... *20 years ago!* DD won. \ \ There's a “word” we haven't read in a long stretch: SARS. It hasn't been missed. \ \ “Have you ever seen a Russian doughnut?” Right now, if I saw it, I'd eat it. \ \ I'm quoting your question in **Challenger** asking why I didn't publish a photo of myself in the midst of our trans-Pacific flight. We didn't take any, and too bad. When I wasn't scanning Qantas' satellite map of our route, I was wearing an eyemask – I looked like a panelist on **What's My Line?** \ \ Hmm ... no reason SFPA can't make it to mailing 400. That's March, 2031; I'll *only* be 81. We'll celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of mlg 100. Or at least *some* of us will ... \ \ It's true, and tragic: what might the soldiers and sailors lost in World War have accomplished had they lived? But it's also true that the world would have been a much worse place without their sacrifice.



*Avatar Press 2.29* | *Randy* Great to see you Hank's party, and thanks for the Tarzan illo for **Challenger** #19, but ... "Nice pumpkins!"? \ Good photos from DSC 41, but they seem a little squashed. I appreciate the misery of having one's bed situated directly over dance floor speakers; at Barrington Hall in Berkeley my bed was but one floor above the house stereo, which made my room the least desirable in the building. Or some said. I just liked having a room to myself that I didn't have to access by walking through others' quarters. It made collegiate romance difficult, as you can imagine. \ Comments on **SFC Bulletin** in **The Zine Dump**. You're doing a fine job with it, and again, I sympathize with your efforts folding, taping, stapling, labeling, sorting, mailing the things. We gotta buy you a slave. \



DragonCon had 30,000 members? No wonder pros like Julie and 4SJ are choosing it over puny old worldcon! I wonder ... if worldcon changed its dates to avoid this conflict, would it help bring them back while they're still around to *come* back? \ Accidental yet brilliant juxtaposition: a photo of the Star Wars alien above the headline, "Mom Revisited". She looks much better in the

second photo. \ You did indeed run the Art Show at Con\*stellation XXII, and an excellent job you did, too. (That illo you did which you disparage is actually pretty good!) Also good work on that program book appreciation for Larry Dixon. Resnick's article about us was really neat; maybe I should reprint it here. \ You're generous to **Underworld**. I thought Kate Beckinsdale looked terrific in her leather jumpsuit, but overall the movie sucked moose.

*"Yngvi" #85* | *Toni* I'm writing – or trying to write – this mc on our way home from Hank's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary party and our night at your exquisite pad in Athens. I'd have an easier time writing if the sun wasn't glaring right onto the laptop screen, and if I wasn't also trying to drive, but with the event so fresh in memory, I can't tarry. Anyway, thanks for the generosity and the epic time. Sorry — Jessie had that accident on your quilt, and how sweet it was to see my gal KT. Her babysitter is a stunner. Much fun looking over the wolflord's photo album – for which I understand you're responsible – and listening to his reading from **Galaxy 666**. Incredibly good to see George Inzer and Ward Batty again – it's been so long that I had no idea that (1) George has changed careers and (2) Wardo has an 8-year-old son! His wife is a winner, too. Anyway, a soiree worth the thousand-mile drive there and again, and so congrats; you done good. \ Good for you for sending forth **Yngvi** to a wider mailing list. Feel free to consult **The Zine Dump** for the address of every English-language fanzine I know. \ Your investigation into the differences between Canada's best doughnuts, Tim Horton's, and America's, Krispy Kreme's, is greatly appreciated, and I promise to defy my diet and sneak a sugar-swathed KK in salute. No kidding; this bit made my stomach hurt in envy. \ I was befuddled by the Bean Beer insignias I saw at Torcon, so thanks for the explanation of their significance. \ Charlotte Proctor's column is wonderful – a humane and insightful look at parenting. She describes an obnoxious kid – one very familiar. I've been that kid. As an adult, though, I have not Charl's magnificent patience. Rather than give that brat stuff to put into the trash, I'd've put *him* into the trash. As ever, she is too kind. \ Keith Troop's

"The Hanklander" is a gem. What is it about that boy that moves so many to verse? \ I don't know if the magnificent **Sweeney Todd** is available on DVD, but the answer is as close as E-Bay. I have a tape of the play which I'll be glad to dupe for you. Just keep an eye out for the Broadway version of **Nicholas Nickleby** for me! \ Once more, great party, magnificent home! Say hey again to Katie and pull Maggie's ears for us! (And it was the *dog*, not me.)

**Passages #18 | Janet** I really enjoyed this rerun introduction. Be assured, no one who's met you has forgotten you. "Guy may remember [me at] the New York Star Trek convention in 1973." And how. I remember trying to shave with tepid washroom water at the airport, waiting for you to arrive. I remember taking you to see the Cloisters tapestries. I remember turning you around in an elevator at that fascistic convention and watching you pop a cork at the sight of George Takei and Nichelle Nichols. Army major and wealthy doctor and Republican pilot and mother and mother-in-law and concussed equestrian though you undeniably are, you will always be that 16-year-old charmer to me. Keep on trekkin'. \ But *don't* keep on ridin' ... not if you're going to take more tush-over-teakettle spills from your horse. Gad! Terrible thoughts of Chris Reeve spring sickeningly to mind ... And I like the spirit in the sentence, "I know it's a weak excuse for missing a SFPA mailing, but that concussion ..." \ You have succeeded in tickling my fancy about lasik surgery. 23 seconds per eye, huh? How much recovery time? \ Your comments on free will eerily reflect the district attorney's question in the terrible "Mickey D" murder trial: "Does Joel D\_\_\_\_\_ have free will?" which slaughtered the defense's psychologist. Irony rules: that D.A. became a judge, and then planted evidence, and is now doing federal time. Think *he* had free will? \ "Now if I could just get some confidence back ..." Hard to imagine you without it.

**TN Trash #55 | Gary R.** That's a nice rock on your cover – for like you say, Yosemite is a single slab of granite. I'm glad you and yours got a few days within its spell; the trips will do your boys amazing good. I only spent short hours there, gazing up at Half Dome and El Capitan, and the mite-sized climbers I could *just barely*

*see* traversing its face – for some reason the place really fried my nerves, and I couldn't allow myself to simply sit there and *look*. You were much smarter. \ Even if you did take your clan on a hike into nowhere along the John Muir Trail. You have incredible adventures in the great outdoors; I'm surprised you haven't yet described the inside of a bear. Anyway, the before & after photos of their happy happy faces are priceless, as is this entire account.. \ A tragic story of drying-up Mono Lake – its water stolen by L.A. – the true sequel to **Chinatown**.

**Trivial Pursuits #109 | Janice** Smell smoke? How'd it go? Is God punishing California for the recall? You should have taken your pals' advice and run! (How many votes did that porn star take?) \ Your dissection of Torcon is comprehensive and invaluable. I'm going to recommend it widely. Hopefully other readers will understand your technical talk – even the digression about wireless billing was Greek to me – but everyone involved in worldcons could profit. I'm dismayed that passport problems kept Mike Glycer's wife and kid from Toronto – Elst explained them to me – and aghast that the convention's pro GoH, George R.R. Martin, was so shabbily treated. We both loved his autobiographical Guest of Honor address, by the way. \ We ate several times at the Royal York, usually with Jay Kay Klein. Adequate chow, but our best meal was with the Lewises. \ The Table Rock gift shop at Niagara Falls is as familiar to me as a boyhood home – because I remember it so well from my boyhood. My family was there the day before my brother was born. Possibly the nicest moment of our whole northern trip this summer was taking my nephews, his kids, to the Falls, my first time with them there. \ I'll have to think about my opinion on the 2- vs. 3-year lead-time for a worldcon; I know that two years weren't enough for Nolacon, and that with another year, we might have attracted the needed help with our programming mess; on the other hand, Torcon had three years to prepare after winning their bid, and they still messed up. I think I'd rather keep the three years, but of course, it's a done decision, and what importance could it have for me, anyhow? \ *Thanks* for the great support at the DUFF auction, and I'd envy you that



premiere issue of *Mimosa* if I didn't have one myself. N4 will be better. \ As for the masquerade ... oh, to hell with it. Naturally, Torcon screwed it up. At least they didn't have some poor comedian booed off the stage – and out of fandom. (Or is ASK still around? I haven't seen him since 1988.) \ Here's a serious question that came up in the Fan Fund panel. Obviously, becoming a delegate carries duty with it as well as honor. As DUFFers Rosy and I are expected to attend the two worldcons until our American successors are elected and run DUFF events there. Some people declared at the panel that no one should run for a fan fund who can't afford to do this. (We can – barely – but the TAFF delegate, Randy Byers, didn't get to Torcon and says he won't be in Boston.) I worry about the implication. Could personal wealth become a qualification for the job? Will candidates compete on the basis of their bank accounts as much as, or more than, their fannishness? Might not some future fund candidate run a sleazy, negative campaign, claiming that his opponent couldn't afford to perform his post-trip duties? \ Again, a superb evisceration of Torcon, not to be forgotten here, especially whenever I drive to the end of Canal Street, between the Marriott and the Sheraton, past the Hilton to the great long stretch of the Morial Convention Center, “big enough for four simultaneous worldcons,” and – despite all the lessons of Nolacon – begin to dream ...

*Home with the Armadillo #60 | Liz* A “super-sized parathyroid adenoma” sounds impressive and expensive. I hope your recovery continues apace. \ It's grand, of course, that Heinlein is helping you recover through the power of his prose, but I admit that Friday's appeal baffled me. Everyone from Harlan to Jerry Pournelle proclaimed it the master's best book in decades, but when I read it, all I found was a stale soft-porn rehash. \ I wonder if it's true that female streakers in the U.K. receive no jail time, while men showing the world the full monty have to go to jail. If so, consider it a bow to aesthetics; I salute such unequal enforcement of the law. \ The issue of military privatization is so blatantly corrupt I'm astounded no Democrat has made more of it. Where's the outrage in this country? Where's the *intelligence*? Can't people see that

our soldiers are spending blood to buy patronage for Republican corporations? If they see, don't they care? Reinhardt is right when he bemoans the moral decline of this country – and the purposeful abandonment of wit and healthy dubiousness in regards to pork barrel war-making that shows it.

*Wave to the Nice Mountain, Dear | Jeff* Really gorgeous Japanese cover. Strange, though, that I should begin this mc after watching a fine History Channel show about Iwo Jima. *Not* such a nice mountain. \ Allie's going through a tough change, getting used to life away from home, and I wish her best fortune. I think I had a fairly ideal transition between home and college; Berkeley was just over the hills from Walnut Creek, where we lived at the time, and if sickeningly homesick, relief was less than an hour away. Of course, within a few months the family moved to Louisiana – thank you and *fuck* you, Union Carbide – but at least I'd had the chance to adjust. *And* meet Barbara E\_\_\_, the six-foot-one buh-lon-duh English II teaching assistant whom I still occasionally think about at 3AM, considering fantasies and opportunities gone. *Which was she?* I'll never know. \ Some mini-reviews of the movies we've seen recently run elsewhere. My reading in October – aside from Albert Speer – can be summed up in three words: *James Lee Burke*. I got tired of waiting for *Jolie Blon's Bounce* to come out in paperback, so ordered it from Amazon – paying less for a good hardback than I would have for the eventual paperbound edition. Amazon also offered the follow-up Dave Robicheaux novel, *Last Car to Elysian Fields*, new for half price, and a good deal on a slightly-worn copy of *White Doves at Morning*, so all three came before me, one two three. I suspect I O.D.ed. Because while Burke's moralistic and somewhat tortured machismo was a welcome antidote to *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and *Jolie Blon's Bounce* was simply brilliant, I found *Elysian Fields* a bit of a letdown after that triumph, and the Civil War novel to be just too much. And depressing, too. I'm thoroughly sick of today's *Will & Grace* distortion of masculinity, and Robicheaux is a helluva great character, but if that guy didn't have *bad* luck, he wouldn't have any luck at all. \ Which version of *Smiley's*

People did you “manage to get through,” the book or the miniseries? I loved both. Guinness made a spiffy Smiley on the tube, and of course you noticed Patrick Stewart’s cameo as Karla. \ \ Nothing wrong with soldiers being diplomats. General George Marshall was one of the best Secretaries of State this country has ever had (he even won the Nobel Peace Prize, for heaven’s sake), and I hope to vote for a soldier to be our chief *executive* next November. \ \ I can’t blame anyone for wanting to make September 11<sup>th</sup> a day of remembrance, like December 7<sup>th</sup>; I can’t even dispute it being called “Patriots’ Day.” . The only reason *not* to dub that horrid anniversary such is revulsion at the Republicans’ confiscation of “patriot” as a term and the draconian law to which they affixed it. The political aspects of the label will pass away in time, so if they want to call 9-11 Patriots’ Day, so be it. I’d just as soon call it “Parents’ Wedding Day,” because for me, it *is*, but support for such an alternative is minimal. \ \ The “D.C. Sniper” trials have begun, with a bit of flash as Muhammad (I’ll misspell that word; I always do) vacillated between trying to defend himself and letting his public defenders stand up and tell the jokes. There may be some headlines if they act up, or if any insight emerges about their motivation, but otherwise, the verdicts are a foregone conclusion. \ \ “I used to send Liz flowers all the time.” Well, *I* used to send Rosy **Spiritus Mundi** – at least until she dumped me like a sack of used cat litter in 1978. \ \ My cat – I don’t know which one – moved me to near-mayhem the other night when he barfed on the cover of my journal, but otherwise, news on our feline front has been promising. Malibu, the beautiful Balinese (we think), coexists with Boo, the yellow tom, without much in the way of consternation – although we caught him biting his rival’s tail the other day. \ \ Nice phrase: “I think of apas as a thoughtful letter.” For me, SFPazines are bimonthly journal entries, shared with others, done to preserve, encapsulate and define a period in my life. OTOH, I intend my genzine to take a more general tone, personal to me as editor but less individualized, if I’m making much sense, but I see I’m *not* making much sense, so I’ll let it go. \ \ A wonderful comment on that alternate universe where justice reigned in 2000 and the elected president – Al Gore – became President in fact. But extrapolate.

Right now, Republicans would be howling for an invasion of Iraq, citing their secret evidence of weapons of mass destruction, and their certainty that Saddam was behind the 9-11 attacks. Gore would be damned as a weakling, blamed personally for the 9-11 security lapse. Riding a wave of paranoia and blood fever, the Republican candidate would be a formidable challenger to President Gore in ’04 ... and so it goes. \ \ Three cheers for that Aussie legislator who heckled Bush during his speech in Canberra. “I love free speech,” W intoned, and I’m sure he does. In Australia.

**Spiritus Mundi 197 | me** The portrait of P.L. on the first page was reprinted from my SFPA history (thus the shadowy “Ned Brooks” in the lower left), which stole it from her own zine. She liked it. I’m reprinting it, effectively, in **Chall #19**. P.L., you were the genuine article. I had the sad duty of telling both George Inzer and my former neighbor Cindy about P.L., by the way – George was shocked, but he didn’t even know about Meade. Gotta keep that boy better in the loop. \ \ I haven’t told the story of that truckdriver accused of raping his step-granddaughter. Another time – but I will say this: when a kid who flunked the fifth grade uses verbs like “inject,” I’m suspicious of whether she’s been coached. \ \ Answered my own question about George Inzer at Hank’s party – he’s changed careers and looks great. \ \ Getting a look at Elizabeth Smart on **Today** taught me one thing: she’s tall. Much more ineffably attractive, too, than the actress who played her in that insipid TV movie. \ \ The guy who talked me into buying the Nissan – which sat unusable in front of my house for months – has taken it away, and is supposed to be selling it for me. I’m just glad to be rid of it, but I still hope he brings me some money. \ \ John Guidry came through with tapes of the second **Six Feet Under** season; Rachel Griffiths’ character continues fascinating, and I pray that the redheaded cutie gets into art school, but the show is hardly as groundbreaking (HAHAHA!) as it was in season 1. Still, we’ll watch. I hope that guy stays off that bus. \ \ And that, cats, is that, on November 11, 2003, at 5:42 PM by the computer clock.

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## *An Anniversary*

On November 10, 1941, Hank Reinhardt bought his first issue of **Planet Comics**. Sixty years later, minus two days to allow for the weekend, he threw a party to celebrate the event.

Rosy and I wouldn't have missed it for several worlds. Even though we'd just returned from an exhausting drive to Orlando and back, even though it was over five hundred miles to *chez* Reinhardt from here, even though every motel room between Montgomery and the Georgia border was hoarded by Auburn fans and we had to sleep in a dump in LaGrange, we went – and loved every minute of it.

We loved looking through the photo album Toni had put together for the occasion. Hank at ten We loved helping Charl Proctor and Toni decorate the house (since we were among the first there). We loved playing Hearts – okay, *I* loved playing Hearts, even though Pat Gibbs and Bill Zielke came, and they do more with the game than simply ducking points. George Inzer showed up. How long since I'd seen George, who joined SFPA one mailing before me and who had been here in all the best years? We watched Auburn botch the last plays of their game in the best traditions of the New Orleans Saints. Ward Batty appeared with his nifty wife – they have an 8-year-old son! Ned Brooks was there, with nephew Joe. Randy Cleary showed up, and Julie Wall. We frolicked the day away, and only when slumber threatened to eat us alive retired for the night to Toni's palace in Athens. An editorial expanse to be envied and admired! (Jessie had an accident during the night. *Jessie* did. *Not* me.)

A thousand+ miles to hail sixty good years. I've known been around Hank Reinhardt for half of those years, and they've been magnificent. Praise the wolflord! (Pass him the Queen.)

