

The Texas SF
Inquirer #40

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Editors:

Dale Denton & Alexander R. Slate



Welcome to Issue 40, and it appears, something of a New World Order, whatever that may end up being. I will try not to make any other comments on the happenings in the USSR (or what's left of it), because unless I prove to be very psychic, whatever is said will no longer be correct. I simply hope that all will continue to move away from the totalitarian state that has made up the USSR for so many decades.

Don't forget that ArmadilloCon is coming up in October. Come on down to Austin and have an enjoyable weekend. A large number of pros will be in attendance, so this will be a good chance to mingle. So come on down. -Dale

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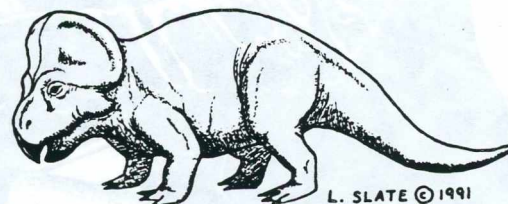
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The Return of Boondock Central

by Alexander R. Slate

Gee, there's so much to comment on; events in Eastern Europe, the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, the allied withdrawal from northern Iraq, the choice of a new UN Secretary General, Charles & Di's marriage problems. I hardly know what to choose.

How about none of the above. Instead, let's talk about school reform and education for the coming ten years and the new millennium that follows. The easiest thing to get everyone to agree to (and about the only thing they will agree on) is that American schools are in a crisis situation. Reform of one form or another is necessary.

The problem is, how to reform? Of course, this problem is compounded by the fact that the problems aren't the same in every area. Schools have traditionally been an item of local control.

This may change radically. The Edgewood ISD in the San Antonio area, brought a legal suit charging that school district funding in Texas is unconstitutional and unfair. This suit made it to the United States Supreme Court and national attention. The majority of the nine justices of the court at that time agreed with the Edgewood District. But, how to fairly distribute funds for public schools and how to pay for it has still not been solved.

Now the focus of this suit is money. Many say that this particular topic is a bugaboo and that the problem isn't money. That "throwing money at the problem" isn't the answer. The problem is one of curriculum reform and even more fundamentally, one of changing the way teachers teach.

Who's right? Both sets of parties, of course! Something has to be done about the way we teach children, what we teach children, but also we have to ensure that all children are treated as equally as we can, i.e. equitable funding for all schools.

But let's leave the funding question. This is a morass of conflicting opinions and rights that will surely be fought out in the legislatures and courts for years to come.

Teaching and curriculum reform; another sinkhole of conflicting opinions. One school of thought is a return to the basics, back to the three Rs, along with longer school hours, and a longer school year. Another group would have us return to a different basic, the classical education of the old British public school model. Yet a third group says

that the key is ensuring that there is a proper vocational/technical program to ensure that all are taught what they need to make a living. Yet another group would say that yes, we need to concentrate harder on the basics expounded by the first group, but that we also need to make sure that children are properly educated on the dangers of AIDS and drugs. Yet still another group says that the current curriculum is too greatly based on white-male dominated values and that we need to expand on ethnic requirements.

Now let's make things even more complicated. Beyond the curriculum question, there is great concern about the way we teach our children (not necessarily what). What is important, cramming children full of facts or making them think? How important are computers (Not just in terms of computer literacy but also as the proper method to teach children.)? Should children rely upon themselves alone, or is group work and study the wave of the future?

There are a few areas of general agreement. The teacher/student ratio is important, as is the importance of well-trained and motivated teachers. That we need to have greater accountability is another. But what credentials do we require teachers to have? And how do we motivate teachers or judge their effectiveness? Some of the greatest stink has been over the ideas of merit teacher pay and teacher testing. For every suggestion, there is an argument against it.

What about parental choice and do we or do we not include private schools?

Merit pay and increased salaries for teachers, as well as greater numbers of teachers and new schoolbooks and computers; longer school days and school years all mean increased costs. Yes, this brings us back to money, and we all know that that means more problems again.

Once more, I've managed to simply scratch the surface of an important, and very confusing issue with many different sides to the arguments. In fact defining the problems is a major problem in and of itself. To look deeper in this matter I recommend starting with **Educational Renaissance Our Schools at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century** by Marvin Cetron and Dr. Margaret Gayle [Saint Martin's Press, NY, 1991].

Book Reviews:

From The Recliner

by Edw. A. Graham, Jr.

Hot summer nights (and days) and changing residences again. I have got to get out of the habit of moving during the Texas summer. Fortunately, the movers I engaged to cart all of the books were both young and strong--hey, better than me! Having the movers also left more time for reading...

The Paper Grail by James P. Blaylock
(\$17.95, hardback, Ace, May 1991)

Rating: 3.9

Harold Barton worked in a museum and he had this great idea for a Japanese exhibit. Actually, it was an excuse to get back to Mendocino, ostensibly to get what just might be a sketch of the legendary artist Hoku-sai. Harold couldn't really be sure because he had only seen it once when he was a kid. However, when he arrives in the Northern California town, things begin to get a little odd and he's smack-dab in the middle of it. There's strange Mr. Jimmers, the enigmatic Gluers, nasty old Heloise Lamey, Harold's Uncle Roy, the bones of John Ruskin, and not to mention the ghosts driving around in an old Studebaker that belongs to the owner of the sketch (who has also mysteriously disappeared).

Blaylock treats the reader, once again, to his quirky way of looking at the world, although this excursion is not as strange as **The Last Coin**.

The characters are utterly believable, although if I knew some of them, I would give them a wide berth. This is a tale of honor, duty, and higher callings. The search for a little scrap of paper brings in mystical elements at odds with the so-called normal world we inhabit, but it does bring out the best in Harold as he stumbles his way into the truth.

Buddy Holly Is Alive and Well on Ganymede by Bradley Denton

(\$22.00, hardback, Morrow, September 1991)

Rating: 4.4

What would you do if, one late night, Buddy Holly suddenly pre-empted every possible TV channel, including the satellites, and told all of those dumb-struck viewers to get in touch with you?! Well, what Oliver Vale does is run like hell. And he ends up in one of the craziest quests since Monty Python took on the Holy Grail. Aiding Oliver (in various

and sometimes not-so-helpful ways) are two aliens that look like Khrushchev and Eisenhower, a cyborg doberman, bikers, a psychiatrist (who I think needs a shrink), a rabid feminist, some smart-ass kids, and his trusty 1957 646cc Ariel Cyclone motorcycle. Arrayed against him are the governments of the world (including one agent out for blood), two more aliens, millions of enraged TV addicts, and the Righteous Wrath of Reverend Willard and his Holy minions. And there's Buddy, singing his heart out, all alone on Ganymede.

Despite the indications I've given, the mad-cap escapades are a poignant counterpoint to Oliver's self-biography revealed through selections of his mother's diary. Denton has managed to reach out and touch the very soul of American rock 'n' roll and the people that have been affected by it for good or ill. His inspired plot doesn't hesitate, but continues barreling along though without feeling rushed. The story is told mostly by the protagonist, but the point of view switches between all of the major characters. A lot of novels that I've read like this have torn apart the threads of the story, forcing the reader to try and put together the pieces. Denton wove a tapestry and, while telling an engaging tale, poked some good-sized holes in current American society, bigotry, religion, and modern psychiatry. I've already got 5 bucks on this one making the Hugo ballot.

Batman: Captured by the Engines

by Joe Lansdale

(\$4.99, paperback, Warner, July 1991)

Rating: 3.9

Gotham City is once again terrorized by bizarre happenings. At first it appears that there's a homicidal car-enthusiast loose, but as things get weirder and weirder Police Commissioner Gordon has no choice but to call in the Dark Knight: Batman. This is a severely twisted tale of magic and magicians. It will take all of Batman's skill and insight to solve the mystery, not to mention coming out of it alive!

Another spin-off of the DC Comics super-hero (spurred on by the movie **Batman**), Lansdale brings his penetrating writing and taste for extremely macabre themes to Gotham City. Although you wouldn't expect real in-depth writing in such a book,

the obvious research and craftsmanship are first-rate. The author touches upon the madness that compels Bruce Wayne to don his costume and seek out evil. He paints, in broad brush-strokes of blood, the sadness of the American Indian, while preserving their honor and traditions. This book is not for the faint-hearted as the gore flies freely and the dark side of both good and evil are starkly portrayed.

Fallen Angels by Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, and Michael Flynn

(\$5.95, paperback, Baen, July 1991)

Rating: 3.2

In the near future, the eco-religious freaks have taken over the governments of the world "in order to save it." Yep, they managed to stop the Greenhouse effect. Of course, the glaciers covering the northern United States aren't their fault: blame those "angels" still living in orbit who dip down and steal the precious atmosphere.

Technology is bad in any form, real or fiction. Then the impossible happens: two "angels" trying to get some badly needed nitrogen get shot down. The man-hunt is on, but the underground techno-philos come charging to the rescue. Any guesses? The cavalry is comprised of Science Fiction fans!

This was highly-publicized as an *homage* to fans and fandom. Well, I wouldn't quite put it that way. What I got out of it was a fun, sometimes funny, definitely fannish romp through a future world where those dreaded Mundanes ("Danes") have finally and truly taken over.

There are more Tuckerisms per square inch than there are wheat stalks in Kansas, thinly veiled real-life fans and writers (including some really barbed pokes at the authors themselves), and situations that any fan would love in their heart-of-hearts to be in. It's not a great book, but a definite ego-boo to SF fans: no one else would understand even 10% of the references and/or people! And it does show, kinda tongue-in-cheek, the *natural* superiority of fans to mundanes. I thought it was a real kick and not condescending at all, contrary to what you may have heard.

Requiem for the Conqueror: Forbidden Borders #1 by W. Michael Gear

(\$4.99, paperback, DAW, July 1991)

Rating: 2.4

Staff kar Therma, Lord Commander of the Companions, controlled the most powerful mercenary military force inside the Forbidden Borders. The humans trapped within an impenetrable shell containing a few star systems have long forgotten Earth. They long to be free of

the barriers keeping them (very much on purpose) from the rest of the universe.

However, the Lord Commander (aka "Star Butcher") is preparing his forces for what he knows will be the final military confrontation, one that will decide the ultimate destiny of every person on all the planets. But first, he has to find the son stolen from him many years ago and the woman that bore the child. Along the way, Staffa will find his soul ... and maybe the key to mankind's prison.

This is a *big* book, so if you're looking for pages per cent, this is a great deal. The general ideas that Gear presents here are perhaps not unique, but well-dusted off and pleasantly rearranged. The author is at his best during the action scenes, but doesn't come off as polished when dealing with characters' inner thoughts, philosophy, or by-play. The plot is seemingly complex, but that's mostly an illusion of the length of the book. The characters themselves turn out rather shallow except in some fleetingly bright instances. There's one, for instance, that I think was supposed to make your blood run cold, but all I could think of was what a bitch she was. I would call this mediocre space-opera and it's too long (over 600 pages).

Threshold by Janet and Chris Morris

(\$4.50, paperback, Roc, June 1991)

Rating: 1.8

Joe South thought that his long, history-making interstellar journey was over and was heading home for all the kudos he could possibly manage.

Wrong. He comes back 1000 years later, to a society that doesn't need (or really want) him. Other Relics from the early days of experimentation and exploration have returned before him. They just don't fit in. Of course, Joe's timing could have been better. An interstellar schism is just about to pop even wider, there's a crazy spacer with some even crazier salvage, and all the bureaucracy wants to do is keep things from blowing up. And Joe's not making things easier, either.

There's a blip on the back that says "The Morris' best." Guess again. There are just too many things going on, all at the same time, which are not related to one another at all. The authors are having to do a frantic juggling act with all of the people, plots, and techno-garbage to do anything really worth-while. I got the impression that all hell's supposed to be breaking loose; I also just didn't care. There was nothing to latch onto in this novel, not even the supposed protagonist. It turned into a melange of supporting actors with no real leading man/lady.

(continued on page 13)

Art Review:

Alex on Art by Alexander R. Slate

The ArmadilloCon 12 art show was held in the same room as last year. The difference was there were a lot more art than last year, which made the room much too small. There was insufficient room to view the art, a great shame.

If you could see the art it was worth seeing. Artists represented were Artist Guest-of-honor Jean Elizabeth Martin, Peggy Ranson, Laurel Slate, Dell Harris, David Lee Anderson, Diana Gallagher, Keith Berdak, Lucy Synk, Sondra Sontara, Bud Miller (art contest winner at AmigoCon this year), Joy Marie Ledet, Brad Foster, Sam Douglas, and the focus of this column's review, W.J. "Bill" Hodgson. Before beginning the review I would like to thank Sharon Krueger, an art history major, who provided some of the comments for this review.

Bill Hodgson had 11 pieces in the show, ranging in price from \$65 to \$1200 (most in the \$100 range). Of the 11 pieces, two were star scenes, and three were star scenes with figures.

These three, "A Rose by Any Other Name" (90), "A Room With a View", and "Morning Coffee", were among the most interesting pieces shown. They owe as much to the method of presentation as to the actual illustration. The pieces are drawn and matted so as to provide a 3-dimensional effect.

"A Rose by Any Other Name" and "Morning Coffee" are similar pieces with respect to subject, both portray women in the foreground, with star scenes physically set back viewed through windows drawn in the foreground. The focus is on light and color rather than the figures. Yet the figures are drawn in such a way to keep your eyes moving about the picture. The women and the foreground are lighter, more colorful and naturally draws your attention, yet when you view the women and follow their gaze you are led to the star scenes. A nice effect overall.

"A Room With a View" was my favorite piece. It is a print over acrylic with painting on the glass as well. There are three layers presented, rather than two and the effect is really striking. The piece itself shows a room with classical architecture open to the view. In the center, facing away, is the classic reclining odalisque. She looks out on an alien starrise over the edge of a world (Which means she is on a satellite of some sort--whether natural or artificial is unknown.). The background (physically set back) is a star field.

The two star scenes are "Orion Variation" and "Blue Stuff". "Orion Variation" is reverse painted acrylic enamel on glass and shows a nebula and

starfield. It is not a detailed painting of the nebula, instead it is represented as a gauzy field in space. The problem with this painting is that your attention is drawn away from the center of the picture to the brightest part of the nebula and a couple of bright, accentuated stars located in the bottom right corner of the picture. Were these centrally located this would have been a better picture.

"Blue Stuff" is again a nebula and star field. It is a smaller piece than "Orion Variation" and the whole painting is done in shades of white and blue. But your attention is centered where it is supposed to be and so I think this a better piece.

Finishing up with the pieces that have an sf orientation, there were two pieces that I later discovered were the two halves of a diptych. The left-hand piece is a male figure seated on rocks overlooking a landscape. The right-hand piece is a female figure seated on another rock outcropping. There is a Saturnian planet rising over the figures which is almost completely located in the right-hand piece (only a little of the rings spill over). There is a nice, softer use of color in these paintings than in Bill's other pieces. Separately, each piece is a nice, if not particularly distinguished picture. Taken together the two are a striking concept hardly used in sf/f art.

The remaining pieces are all different and are handled in no particular order. First is "Out of the Dark" (90), a female figure with angel's wings viewed from the side. This is a dark piece and it doesn't appear as if Bill gave as much attention to this piece as he did any of the others. It was my least liked piece of the ones shown.

Next, "Another Black Cat Crossed Path" which shows a reclining woman in lingere with a leopard. The emphasis, though, is on the color and textures shown rather than the figure. A nice picture, but not, to my mind as some of the ones mentioned earlier nor the two to follow.

"Scheherazade" (90) is an experiment for Bill, a departure into the realms of classic fantasy. It is a bright picture with vivid colors. It is a striking piece with an interesting composition. There are only two problems (neither fatal); one, your attention tends to wander away from the center on occasion; and two, the central figure is too posed. It is a good, flowing pose and shows movement, but not a natural one.

The final piece is "Once Upon a Tide", a close second for my favorite piece shown. This is more of an illustration than a picture, it seems to be a scene from a story and that helps the piece. The two characters, a child being held by a woman on a ship, seem to be in motion. Here the pose is natural, unforced.

Bill Hodgson is a very good artist. I look forward to more of his work and wish I could afford some of it. If I would like to see him work on one thing it is his figures. The people aren't real, they are mostly too smooth and unwrinkled. He needs to capture the natural feel of movement as he has in "Once Upon a Tide".

Response: by W.J. Hodgson

This edited portion of Bill's response to my review is included because it adds detail and shows some of the difficulties faced when reviewing an artist based on a single showing. - Alex

I have to make an admission. The pieces at 'dilloCon were chosen not as a sterling representation but rather based on what fairly current, low-to-mid-range pieces I had which would fit in the trunk of a Subaru. I knew that with Casey involved, the art show would pick up from the dire doldrums of the year before, but I knew better than to squash my family in order to bring big, fancy pieces.

The only "front line" piece was "Scheherazade". She was originally intended as a play piece to fill the gap between big, fancy works, but every big, fancy work I finished in '90 was a commission of one kind or another, so that "Scheherazade" had to jump ahead and lead the way. As a "Thought-full non-standard illustration" or even "puzzle" piece, she was never intended to be representative. I enjoyed your comments concerning the painting. The composition was intended to cause the viewer's gaze to wander around the painting and find its way back to the "narrator," Scheherazade herself. It is a collection of my impressions of the narrator of the 1001 Arabian Nights tales, arranged in what I like to call a "curves over X" composition (I teach Design and Color; I taught a 2-hour slide show on it at ArmadilloCon), an arrangement very common among the big-name artists of the Renaissance and thereafter (though I stretched it to fit the "long" feel I wanted in the piece). I hate to nit-pick, but the piece is not an experiment/ departure for me. It's the s-f pieces that I only just started messing with a couple of months before 'dilloCon. "Scheherazade" is appearing as a VCR-tape-case illustration for that

video catalog we discussed. This view of the carpet and figure from the painting -- along with the reverse-angle view -- were painted on either side of a show Harley's gas tanks. Yes, the pose is an extreme, flowing one, and no, it is not really a natural pose. It is inspired by the "arms" in a classic pose from the ballet of the same name. My wife is a classical ballet dancer...

I hate picking at someone's review, but I guess I have to mention a couple of items. "Out of the Dark" is not a stand-alone painting. It is a figure study of a very small portion of a large, wrap-around cover I'm painting for a book about angels. I actually put much more work into it than the project required -- as a study -- but I liked the image and wanted it to be finished enough for others to see what I was getting at -- no more. It is unusual in that it is executed on black gesso/ground, finished in about 4 hours. It became my latest Christmas card.

"Another Black Cat, Crossed Path" was, as the bid sheet indicated, a hand-colored print, one of several from the print run which I've mounted for coloring in watercolors, scrubbed oils, pencils, and/or oils. This one is all oil work, my blue medley. Other versions include fluffing the leopard into a snow leopard (my favorite, when combined with a burgundy gown), adding flower pots and other animals, background scenery, and changing the floor into mosaic tile.

The one glaring problem I saw was with "Orion Variation." You had to tackle the composition problems with insufficient ammunition. I had taped a note to the piece, explaining that it looks entirely different, and much prettier, in proper lighting. There might have been ten candles of mostly cool light angling onto it, when it needed 40 or 50+ (as in a painting display light) with some warm light. Many colors in the painting were quite invisible in those conditions. In particular, all the bright, splashing crimsons around the focal point were gone, as was the swirling band of star-wrapping blues high up, which balanced the composition. I'm sorry the conditions did not allow a fair review.

Enough griping. The "Time for Wondering" diptych was a commission based on my b/w, wrap-around cover for one of last year's ASFA Quarterly issues. Thanks for the nice words concerning the soft, pretty colors, which is actually one of the effects I'm known for. I finally started taking painting classes last year. My teacher is an expert colorist and has been pushing me to brighten up my colors. "Scheherazade" is one result, since I knew I needed bright colors to suit her, anyway.

(continued on page 13)

Convention Reviews:

Three Convention Reviews

by Bear Philley

Rok-Kon

Rok-Kon this year was a very well organized convention and was fun to go to. The guests were Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon, and Belinda Christ. It is a small convention, they had expected 175 people and got over 200. Because of this many of the panels and events were full and had people standing up. The Dealers' Room was well designed and had been set up before we arrived. Dealers had no trouble finding their table, because the con had provided a map of the room with all the tables shown in place and numbered with the Dealers' name listed below, so that you could see who was in the room. Attendees were also provided with this map.

The art show was well put together but the room was a little small. The art show had sold in excess of \$3200 at noon Sunday. The art show was completely computerized and went very well for payouts.

The only problems that I saw beside the lack of room (to solve this they are already checking into a new hotel) had to do with registration and the art auction. The person who was handling registration at the con not well organized and acted like he was not sure that he was doing it right. The art auction was too long, because the rules for it stated that any piece in the art show with a BID, went to auction. Another problem was they didn't send items to auction that had been donated if it hadn't received a bid.

In all, a very laid back convention that I enjoyed and will be going back to.

Coast Con

I am sorry to say that I did not have fun at this convention because of the problems I saw there. 1) The Main room used for opening ceremonies and other large panels had to compete with the 60 or more gaming tables set up in the back and side of the room. 2) They had other panel rooms but then they set the film room next to them and you couldn't hear the panels because of the films. 3) The art show was not well laid out and the room was also used for displays and for the Pun competition. If you wanted to see an artist's work you had to look on at least two different panels or on a lot of different tripods. They mixed artists on panels and also put up a string

and hung artworks on that. A very badly designed and run art show. 4) Misty Lackey and Larry Dixon didn't arrive because of car trouble. Margaret Weis and P.D. Breeding were the other guests. P.D. was her usual wonderful self, I can't say the same for Ms Weis. 5) The convention was supposed to be a non-alcoholic event but almost every one of the attendees under 21 that I saw at night were under the influence. This might have been because of "The New Kids on the Block" concert held on Sunday night. It might have brought a different set of kids to the Con.

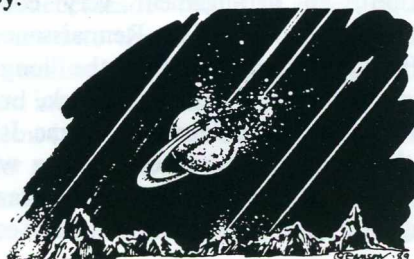
In all, not a very well run con and not one that I will return to.

ABA

The American Booksellers Association convention that was held the first weekend in June was a very hectic happening (They said they had 26,000 pre-registered and I believe them.). There were more people to see, talk to, and get autographs of than we could do. That's not even counting the between three or four tracks of programming that went on at the same time. If you wanted to learn about book selling, store running, advertising, how to start your own store, it was all there. FACT was well represented at the convention by eleven FACT members and Karen (Meschke) made some good deals while there. I think that we all got good input from the con and lots of free books.

There were some parties put on by the publishers and the one that I went to was a blast. The Bridge publishing group rented one of the Circle Cruise Line ships and took us on an almost four hour cruise of the bay and around the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Besides having live entertainment, they had a wonderful selection of appetizers and a full meal with dessert, with all the drinks that you could want.

In all, a very wonderful convention to go to and enjoy.



Convention Listing

ArmadilloCon 13,

Oct 11-13, Wyndham Southpark Hotel, Austin TX. Guests: Dan Simmons, Dell Harris, Pat Mueller, Amy Stout, Emma Bull. Membership: \$25 until 9/30, ArmadilloCon 13, POB 9612, Austin TX 78766, (512) 990-3782 (before 10pm CT)

Ditto 4,

Oct 18-20, Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach VA. Membership: \$35 (\$5, supporting), Ditto 4, Cathy Doyle, 26D Copeland Lane, Newport News VA 23601

World Fantasy Con,

Oct 30-Nov 3, Doubletree Hotel, Tuscon AZ. Guests: Harlan Ellison, Stephen R. Donaldson, Arlin Robins, Susan Ellison. Memberships: \$80 until 10/15 (limited to 750), Box 27201, Tempe AZ 85285 (602) 470-0494 (602) 730-8648

JusticeCon,

Nov 1-3, LeBaron Hotel, Dallas, TX. Guests: Janet & Chris Morris, L. Sprague & Catherine deCamp, John Steakley, David Cherry, NASA. Membership \$20 (\$24 at the door, \$8/one day). 3201 Colonel Ct., Garland TX 75043 (214) 840-2303

SoonerCon 7,

Nov 22-24, Central Plaza Hotel, OKC, OK. Guests: Tim Powers, Patricia Davis, Curtis Berry, Marilyn Berry, Marty Burke, Mike McQuay. Memberships: \$15 until 11/01, Box 1701, Bethany OK 73008 (405) 769-4417

ConTex,

Nov 29-Dec 1, Houston TX. Guests: P.N. Elrod, Ed Greenwood, Joy Marie Ledet, Patty Bushman. Memberships: \$18 until 11/1, ConTex, c/o Friends of Fandom, PO Box 266996, Houston TX 77207-6996 (713) 526-5625

Dallas Fantasy Fair,

Nov 29-Dec 1, Dallas TX.

Sercon 6,

Jan 17-19, 1992, Wyndham Southpark Hotel, Austin TX. Guests: Jonathan Carroll, Orson Scott Card. Memberships: \$20 until 10/13, Sercon 6, PO Box 9612, Austin TX 78766. (512) 835-9304 before 10PM CT

Psurrealcon '92,

Feb 7-9, 1992, Central Plaza Hotel, OKC OK. Guests: Tad Williams, Bill Hodgson, Casey Hamilton, Robin Bailey. Memberships: \$15 until 2/1/92, Box 2069, Norman OK 73070

Conniption MCMXCII,

Feb 29-Mar 1, 1992, La Quinta, Arlington TX. Guests: Wilson Tucker, Brad Foster, Robert Taylor. Membership: \$10 until ?, SFWA & ASFA members free, Conniption '92, POB 260912, Plano TX 75026-0912

AggieCon XXIII,

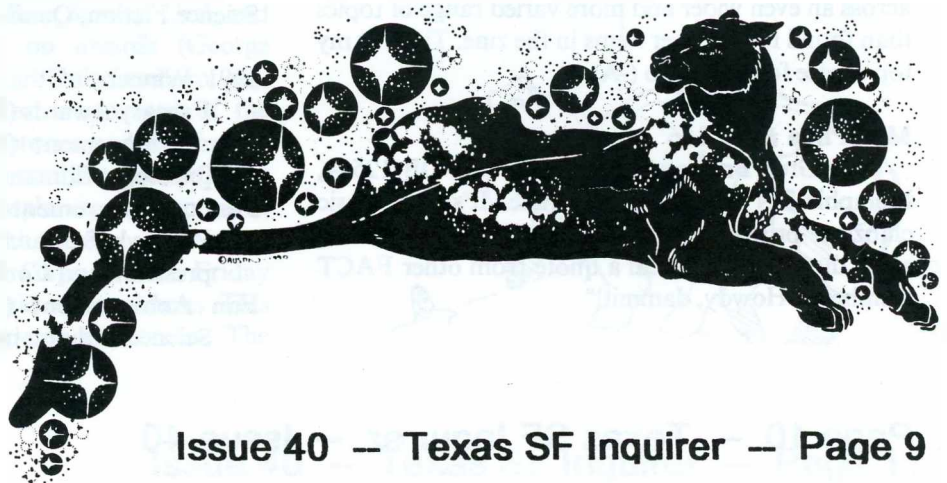
Mar 26-29, Texas A&M University, College Station TX. Membership \$13 until 3/1. Cepheid Variable, Box J-1, College Station TX 77844, (409) 845-1515

MagiCon (Worldcon 50),

Sep 3-7, 1992, Orange County Convention & Civic Center, Orlando FL. Guests: Jack Vance, Vincent DiFate, Walter A. Willis, Spider Robinson. Memberships: MagiCon, POB 621992, Orlando FL 32862-1992

ConFransisco (Worldcon 51),

Sep 2-6, 1993, Parc Fifty Five & Le Meridian Hotels, San Fransisco CA. Guests: Larry Niven, Alicia Austin, Tom Digby, Guy Gavriel Kay, Jan Howard Finder. Memberships: \$70 until 9/30, ConFransisco, POB 22097, San Fransisco CA 94122



Trades Listing

Austin Writer June 1991

DASFAX V.23, #7

Factsheet Five #43

File 770 #88

The Knarley Knews #28

Neology #73

OASFis Event Horizon #50

PSFS News June 1991

Robots & Roadrunners V.6, #2

Sci-Fi Channel Newsletter V.2, #1

SF Convention Register (Filthy Pierre's) Spr 91

The Unintelligencer #3

New or Notable

Bah, Humbug!

Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance CA 90510-5309. The perzine of Dr Shack the Quack. Consists of Harry's combined APA mailings. Half of this issue is the dairy of Harry's rafting trip on the Rio Bio Bio in Chile (worth reading). For more info on this zine see Harry's loc on page 14.

BCSFazine #218

ed. R. Graeme Cameron: British Columbia SFA, PO Box 35577, Stn. E, Vancouver, BC V6M 4G9. Not a new fanzine, but a new format. BCSFazine goes desktop, 8-1/2 by 11, too. A new look, but the same contents. If you liked it before, you'll like it now. If not, not. But it is more readable.

FOSFAX # 156

eds. Tim Lane & Janice Moore: The Falls of the Ohio SFA, POB 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281. Included here because it is a Hugo nominee. A worthwhile read that is a compilation of editorials and book reviews (even some of the reviews are editorialish). Not all of the reviews are new books and not all the topics are SF/F/ fannish. Has a letter column second to none, where the discussions range across an even wider and more varied range of topics than found in the other items in the zine. Tied for my top choice for the Hugo (-Alex).

MemPhen #153-156

ed. Greg Bridges: Memphis SFA, POB 12534, Memphis TN 38182. A new trade. It's your basic clubzine, primarily club news with the occasional extra thrown in. To steal a quote from other FACT members, "Howdy, dammit!"

SFSFS Shuttle #75

ed. Don Cochran & Fran Mullen: South Florida SFS, POB 70143, Fort Lauderdale FL 33307-0143. The Shuttle has new editors, we bid farewell to Gerry Adair who brought the Shuttle quite a ways. The new editors need a little practice under their belts, yet.

Sticky Quarters #20

Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit MI 48224. A genzine covering a wide array of different types of items. There are two pieces of fan fiction, an article on trying to become a writer, the diary of a WWII British Officer (to be), just to name a few. Many of the contents are reprints of items originally in older fanzines (which doesn't mean they're not worth reading).

Transmissions V.14, #3

ed. Anne Davenport: Panhandle SFS, PO Box 16382, Panama City FL 32406-6382. The fanzine is the same but the club has changed its name and address.

Other fanzine news:

Hugo nominees for ...

Best fanzine:

File 770, FOSFAX, Lan's Lantern, Mainstream, Mimosa (We didn't make the list, shucks!)

Fan Writer:

Avedon Carol, Mike Glyer, Arthur Hlavaty, David Langford, Evelyn C. Leeper, Teresa Nielsen Hayden (How did Don Thompson not make this list????)

Fan Artist:

Teddy Harvia, Merle Insinga, Peggy Ranson, Stu Shiffman, Diana Stein

Best Semiprozine:

Interzone, Locus, The New York Review of Science Fiction, Quantum, Science Fiction Chronicle

1991 Winners of the Canadian Science Fiction & Fantasy Awards (**Prix Aurora**)

Fan Achievement (Fanzine): Catherine Girczyc [Neology: Edmonton SF&CA Soc]

Fan Achievement (Organizational): Dave Panchyk [Saskatchewan Speculative Fiction Soc president and Combine 0 convention chair]

Fan Achievement (Other): Al Betz ["Ask Mr. Science" column in BCSFazine]

Convention Review:

Aggiecon XXII

by James Vanneman

To me the most impressive thing about Aggiecon was the Dealers' room. It was large with just about any sort of dealer of stuff you'd care to name. There were enough book dealers to whet my appetite, and everything else to keep just about anyone satisfied.

The worst thing about this Aggiecon was getting back and forth to panels. Programming was split between the two sections of the combined student union/conference center, the Memorial Student Center and Rudder Tower. Normally this wouldn't be bad, but construction (which has gone on for over a year now) meant having to go all the way around from the back side of one building to the back side of the other if panels you wanted to go to weren't in the same building. This turned a normal 2 or 3 minute jaunt into a 10 minute hike. The construction, along with a few 'special events' made parking a hassle as well.

I missed Thursday's activities, but the programming from Friday to Sunday was decent. At least the Aggiecon people have learned not to schedule major events or panels at the same time as the Guest of Honor addresses, something they've been known to do. I went to most of the GOH speeches. The two artist guest speeches (Keith Parkinson and Larry Elmore) consisted of slide shows with commentary and were both fun to see. I can appreciate their art more after hearing them talk. Lynn Abbey's speech was the story of how she became a professional writer (Not the way you'd want to go about it.). I missed Fred Saberhagen's talk, but Elizabeth Ann Scarborough's was also quite interesting.

I got to a few other panels, but not many (because of the construction). Two I did make were a panel on alternate histories (Lynn Abbey, Neal Barrett, Roger Beaumont, Lillian Stewart Carl, and George Effinger) and one on awards (George Effinger, Brad Foster, and Elizabeth Scarborough). Discussion on alternate histories consisted of the different types of alternate histories and worthwhile ones to read. The panel on awards concluded that the awards really aren't all they're cracked up to be, but they wouldn't do away with them.

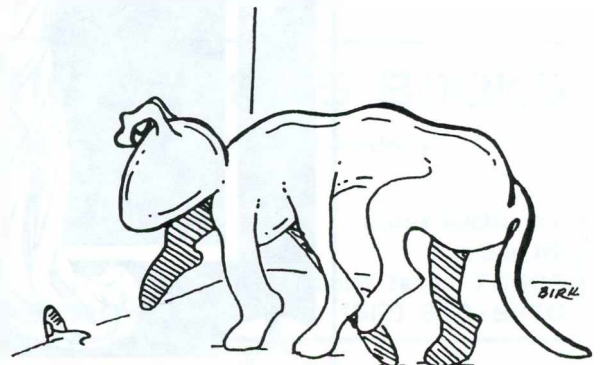
There was a Los Blues Guys concert Friday night. This seems to be a staple of Texas cons. This one was better than their Aggiecon appearance. The

room was bigger and so the noise level was a lot easier on the ears. The dance Saturday night started off well, but they held the masquerade contest in the middle of it, which sort of killed it off.

The auction was also held Saturday. Actually there were two auctions, held one right after the other. The first was a charity auction for the SFWA medical fund, mostly books and comics. This auction was followed by the regular art auction. The whole thing just took too long and was a bit amateurish. There was too much byplay between the auctioneers and a few of their friends in the audience. And the art auction was done strictly by the alphabet, so if you were interested in a piece by someone who's last name started with r, s, or t, you had to wait a long time or risk missing the piece you wanted to bid on.

This makes me realize I haven't mentioned the art show. It was really nice. Not huge, but Keith Parkinson and Larry Elmore each brought a lot of pieces. Both are very talented artists, and though there are some similarities between their work, they are also quite different. They both must have left early though, because when I went back to take a last look Sunday, all of their work was gone.

Was the long drive to College Station worth it? I guess so. I'll probably go back again next year, and I hope the construction is finished.





From the Recliner (continued from page 5)

Bone Dance by Emma Bull

(\$4.50, paperback, Ace, May 1991)

Rating: 3.7

In a bleak future after an almost-holocaust, there are all kinds of markets available for exploitation. Sparrow, a rather enterprising individual, deals in vintage video tapes. Sparrow also has a great love for long-forgotten music and those great movies of yesteryear. However, there's a tale of the Big Bang that's making a resurgence: the Horsemen, the government's greatest mind control weapons. And Sparrow finds out the hard way that, once again, the Horsemen are riding.

Bull has a way with her prose that's hard to match. The gritty backdrops, the almost surreal yet entirely believable, conditions of this future world, and the realism of her characters form a compelling whole that dragged me in and wouldn't let me out. Her projections of a post-Bomb society are extremely well thought-out and she uses words almost like a scalpel. Don't let this scare you off, though. Bull is an excellent story-teller and she has a lot to say in this novel.

And now for some quick bits:

Only Begotten Daughter by James Morrow (\$4.50, paperback, Ace, July 1991) The satiric masterpiece of Jesus' sister born into modern society. Funny, sad, a little strange, but definitely worth reading this mass-market edition if you missed the hard-back.

Time Wars #12: The Six-Gun Solution by Simon Hawke (\$4.50, paperback, Ace, June 1991) The final book in the series goes out with a whimper, not a bang. The series deteriorated after the first book, which showed a lot of promise. If you've been following it, you might want to get this just to find out how it all ends...

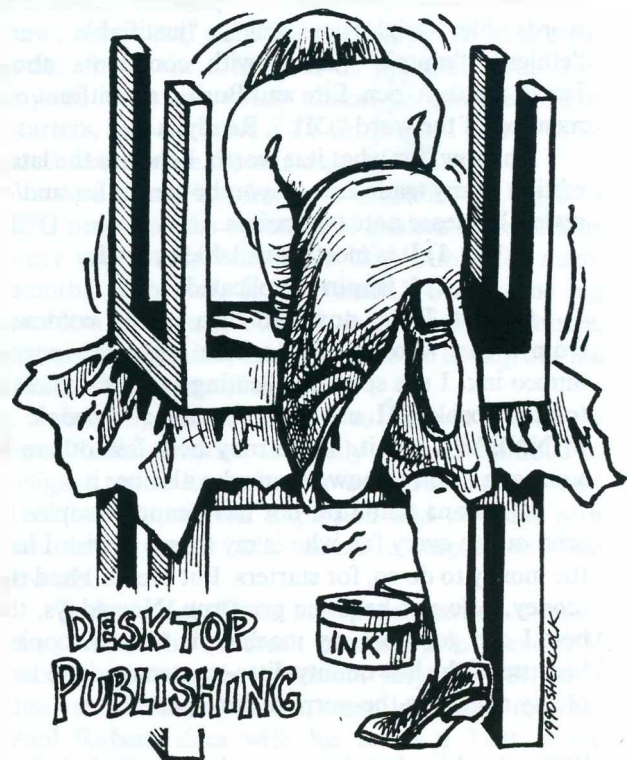
Go Tell The Spartans by Jerry Pournelle and S.M. Stirling (\$4.95, paperback, Baen, June 1991) For all you Falkenberg's Mercenary Legion fans. Pournelle has found a new collaborator and they work together real well. A good example of well-written military SF.

The World at the End of Time by Frederik Pohl (\$5.95, paperback, Del Rey, June 1991) Rather lack-luster novel that starts off as a juvie and aspires to be a grown-up. It doesn't quite click but there are some nifty ideas thrown at you.

The good thing about moving is that I can reconsolidate and arrange the books so that everything is in order and on shelves. The bad thing is I've run out of shelves. ***sigh***

Alex on Art [Response] (continued from page 7)

Thanks especially for your nice words concerning "Once Upon a Tide." It was my other project for that painting class. About one-third of my pieces use the "natural" feel of this one, which you mentioned. Perhaps another third use dramatically posed (sometimes highly posed, as in "Scheherazade") figures for movement, emotional impact, etc. The rest are something else or a combination. I painted "Tide" for myself and will likely keep one of those NFS notes on her for a couple of years, at least. It has the advantage of being a good size for capturing more realism in natural detail: a tough nut with oils.



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Letters of Comment:

2 July 1991

Harry Andruschack
Torrance CA

Dear Editors:

Thank you for sending *The Texas SF Inquirer* #38 of April, 1991. My, my, but it has been some time since I saw this zine....in fact, my last issue was Pat's last issue as editor. Although I sent a LOC, and a couple more fanzines for trade, I seem to have been cut off from the mailing list. Well, I was *and am* a good friend of Pat. So I'd better be careful of what I say about this issue, right?

WRONG! I just cannot believe the pile of drivel (sic) that Slate produced on page 3. Filled with words like "righteous war", "justifiable war", "ethics", "morals", along with comments about Israel, South Africa, Eire and Bush....all without one mention of the word "OIL". Really, now.

Anyhow, for what it is worth, I enclose the latest edition of my trade-zine. If you bother to list and/or review it, please note two points...

- 1) It is mostly available by trade.
- 2) It is spirit-duplicated.

#2 first. Every now and then I get a comment from a fan who wonders where I got the purple mimeo ink. I use spirit-duplicating, or "Ditto". It is totally obsolete. I use it, and maybe 4 people in MINNEAPA use it. There may be a few others in some apa I don't know about who also use it.

#1 means that I do not have enough copies to send out to every fan who is my friend. I wish I had the money to do so, for starters. But even if I had the money, I do not have the print run. Nowadays, the best I can get from my machine is 125-130 copies, because of the low quality ditto-masters and the lack of any made-for-the-purpose ditto paper.

Harry, a lot of people and zines were lost from the trade list in the two changes of editors between Pat and ourselves. How or why you were dropped I don't know. When I heard you were interested I sent you the copy. Glad to have you back. If anyone knows a person or fanzine that's been dropped from our mailing list (without cause - such as not paying dues) have them contact us.

Saying nice things about Pat won't get you dropped from our mailing list. Saying bad things about the zine won't either, fanzines are about feedback.

Please, however, go back and reread my editorial. The point was that oil should have been no part of the decision to go to war. Whether it was is on the conscience of those who made the decision. If it were me, I might have gone to war for the reasons I mentioned, tho I am unsure if I would have begun hostilities.

At no time did I say that Kuwait was a righteous war. In fact I specifically stated that "there is no such thing as a righteous war." There are only justifiable wars, a large difference.

The editorial was a discussion of the philosophy of ethics, a very cursory one, due to space limitations, someday maybe I'll have the money to put out my own zine of the type the late Don Thompson gifted us with with DON-O-SAUR. Until then, I'm stuck with one page editorials. -Alex

Don't feel too bad about not getting the TSFI. I haven't received the last two issues, and I'm an editor. -Dale

9 August 91

David Thayer
Eulless TX

Dear Alex-

Something about the cover of #39 looked familiar. Then I remembered Phil Tortorici had sent me a copy of it several months ago. But it was more than that. I stared at it for days. Then suddenly I saw my name in the caption. I looked at the character again. It was a caricature of me! I hadn't noticed that before. Argh!

August 13, 1991

Brian Earl Brown
Detroit MI

Sad to say but it is the nature of clubzines to end up with a large portion of each issue written by the editor. All too often people are content to lay back and let someone else do the work. Somehow the idea that they should contribute never crosses their mind.

Computers have changed a lot in the past ten years and will just (as) much in the next ten. It's kind of fascinating to think that I'm typing this on a palmtop computer which comes with more power than the original Macintosh or IBM-PC, both of which started out with 64K while this has 128K, and a shop in Texas offers an upgrade to 512K.

It's sad to think of MS-DOS dominating the computer field since it is a particularly crippled OS in an age when RAM comes in megabyte chunks. But Apple, Amiga and Atari have all found it necessary to develop DOS emulation, or more accurately, all three incorporate a DOS motherboard with an Intel chip rather than write software to make their Motorola chip to imitate an Intel chip. There was an Atari software emulator but it ran at 70% of the speed of the slowest DOS machine.

The price of computers has and has not come down like you say. Ten years ago you spent \$2000 to buy a system and today you'll still end up paying \$2000 for a complete system, sure it's ten times more powerful but saleswise it's still the same size purchase. It's not like with calculators where ultimately the cost of making them becomes but pennies a unit. Prices are being held up by steadily

increasing the standards for a "minimum installation."

I noticed that Tom Swift books that Edw. Graham reviews, too. These can not be called Tom Sift III because that was a specific series of titles. This is the fourth series of Tom Swift stories and stars a reconstituted Tom Swift, Jr., making this "Tom Swift II, Mk. II". While I recall the TSII series fondly I can't say I'm impressed with this series, maybe I'm getting to old. I'm also bothered that the first book swipes the Silver Surfers's flying surfboard while the second book's "Negative Zone" appears to be the same concept used in the Fantastic Four comic book, a gateway into another dimension rather than a gravitational singularity. So it's kind of good, and I'm glad to see it, but there are definite problems with it, too.

Aug 11, 91

Sheryl Birkhead
Gaithersburg MD

Dar Inquirers,

Hmm--interesting Tortorici cover--Phil's work has been popping up hither, thither, and yon--now another cover piece. Sherlock--always fine. The Austin piece surprised me. Ferguson is new to me. Laurel is back in great shape--and always that logo--love it!

I agree in that it would be nicest if the Club people would contribute, but--barring that--why not just contact writers whose work you've seen and liked (um--beyond your readership, that is--or perhaps a personal note to some writers ...).

Interesting comments on computers. I'm trying to price a specific Mac system and printer. I've found it *distressing* in that, since I wanted a quote in writing, only three of the twelve companies I've contacted have responded. True, it has *only* been a month--but by now I'd expect anyone interested to have gotten a quote back to me. Hmm--what I want may not be the top of the line, but I'd have expected more of a response.

Before I forget--Linda Michaels--most recently her work graced the covers of *Outworlds*. I also happened to see some pieces for sale at the Disclave art show--they were very reasonably priced, but I couldn't rationalize bidding. Her work is *very nice*.

The Same [sic] goes for books--but I can browse. I went to the library and rooted through all the sf paperbacks...and couldn't find a one I hadn't read but wanted. Yeah, I could have looked at hardbacks, but I needed pocket material.

Hope y'all make it to the windy city--Chicon is fast approaching.

15 August 1991

Harry Andruschak
Torrance CA

Dear Editors:

Received *TTSFI-39* a few days ago. As trade, I enclose my latest fanzine. Please note that while the purple pages are by me, the last 9 photo-copied pages are a 1990 Worldcon report by my good friend Betty Knight. Alas, she somehow forgot to include her name on those 9 pages, and I never noticed this lapse. It was finally pointed out to me by Harry Warner, Jr.

In case you are wondering, I have started my next zine, which is currently up to page 4 in spirit-duplicated reviews, plus 3 pages of a mimio-zine on my chess career. Final publication date not certain, maybe after my trip to the Grand Canyon in October.

I notice that both Dale and Brian (Earl Brown) write about the aftermath of the Gulf War. For myself, that war (was) almost a non-event. For starters, I do not have a TV set. Next, I was in Chile for 3 weeks while the war was on.

And in my last few days in Chile, the big **BIG** news was the outbreak of cholera in Peru. This story was totally lost to the USA public for many months. Too bad. It has ruined Peru, is one big problem in several other latin-american countries, has entered Mexico, and may soon be testing out the sanitation systems of the USA.

Actually, it was bound to happen sooner or later. Latin America is mostly Roman Catholic in religion, with its strictures on birth control and abortion. Population Explosion and all that, with sanitation systems quite unable to keep up with the growth.

Today's *LA Times* newspaper carried a small story about the outbreak of cholera in Mexico. If cholera ever reaches Mexico City, it will be a disaster. ((Unless you are more interested in what Paul Rubens does with his hands.)) That is the mass-media for you. Pages and pages on Pee Wee Herman, and a few paragraphs on death and misery of non-americans.

Lucky for you that the Gulf War *was* a non-event. Those of us who are military (active or reserves), or who have family or friends who were over there found it to be *eventful*. While I agree that more attention should be given to other areas, death and misery from more natural causes generally just doesn't seem catastrophic enough unless it all happens all at once. Even natural disasters don't get the newsplay that human conflict does. The last San Francisco earthquake wasn't newsworthy after a couple of days. -Dale

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