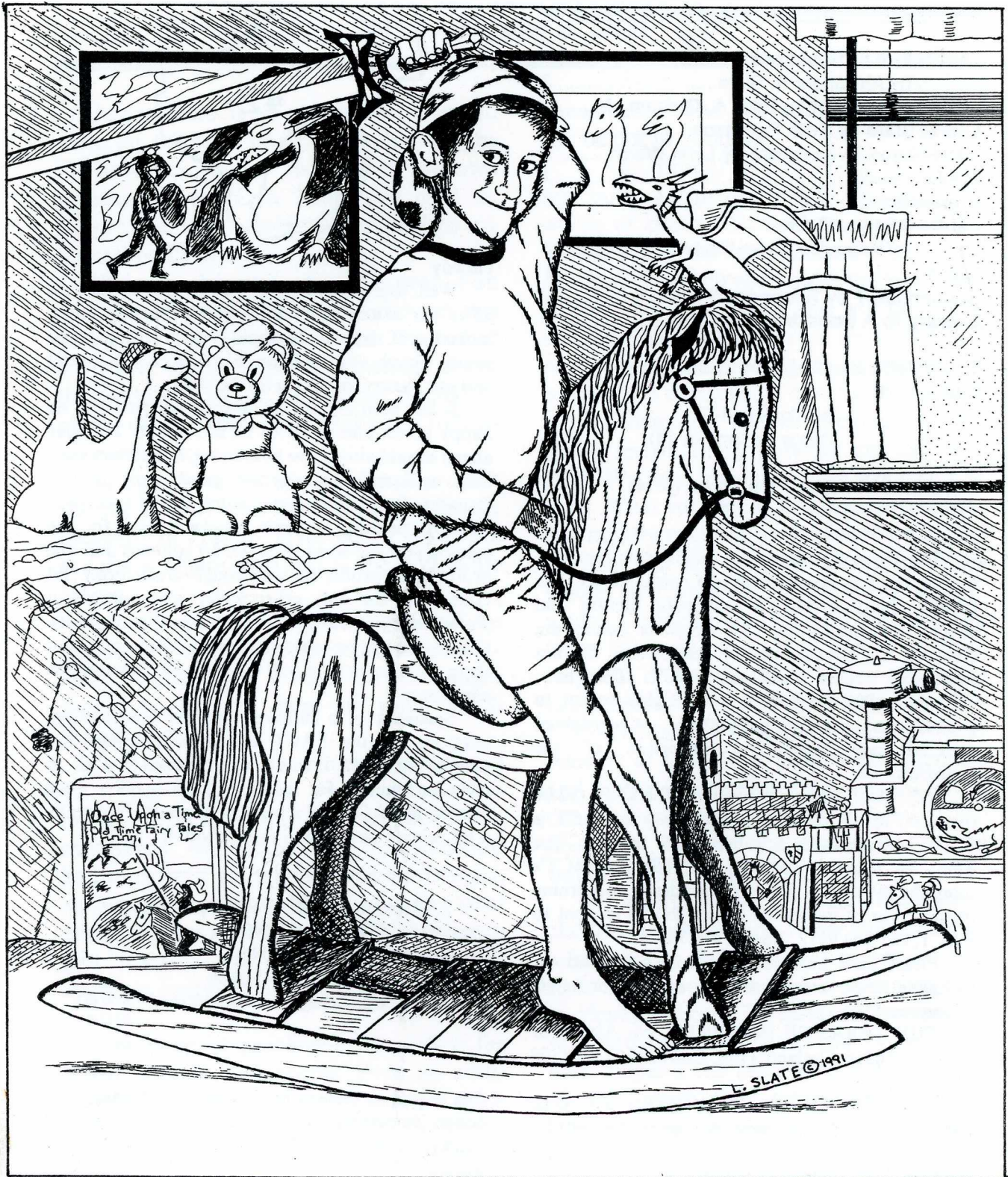


# The Texas SF Inquirer #42





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Cover Art: *Good Knight* by Laurel Slate

Interior Art:

Sherlock (p 14)

Peggy Ranson (p 14)

Advertiser: Richerson Books (p 14)

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Please send any trade zines or contributions, including news, reviews, articles, artwork or letters of comment to:

THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER, c/o Alexander R. Slate, 10316 Flatland Trail, Converse, TX 78109 or:

THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER, c/o Dale Denton, 2016 Ravinia Circle, Arlington, TX 76012

Editors: Dale Denton &  
Alexander R. Slate



Howdy

Well, this was almost it, the dreaded *editor's do all of the writing* issue. Even up to the very end it looked as if the editors would have to fill in a few pages. Thank you to Lynn Ward, Kathy Kimbriel and our loccers for taking up the slack.

It has been an interesting year, with a lot to be happy about and much to be sad about. The year ahead should also prove interesting. With everyone's help we'll make it another good year for the Inquirer. But, to belabor a point, it will take your help. At present, the only articles I have for the coming year are some *Alex on Art* columns and one professional profile (in very rough draft form). Ed Graham is the only other writer who appears in almost every issue (thanks, Ed, we appreciate it). Others also can be counted on from time to time, but there are a lot more of you out there that I know can contribute.

Speaking of a different type of contributing, elections for the FACT Board of Directors are coming up soon. I would like to urge you all to consider running for the Board. All it takes is an interest in FACT and a meeting a month. Not really a lot, when you stop and think about it.

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Advertising in TSFI. Rates per issue are:

full page - \$50.00

half page - \$30.00

quarter page - \$20.00

eighth page or business card - \$10.00

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Ads should be camera ready (but if y'all want, we'll design something for ya). Please send ads and checks, made out to FACT, Inc., to either of the editors.

Editorial:

## The Return of Boondock Central

by Alexander R. Slate

---

Again there is so much that I could write an editorial upon. Someday, maybe I'll have the money to publish my own perzine the way Don Thompson used to. Meanwhile, this issue's editorial will be my general political rant.

We're at the start of a new year. Fun and games will undoubtedly abound this year since it is an election year. For what it's worth, this is my public statement about the persons I would like to see elected to public office. They would take the following positions:

1. Pro choice -- though I really don't like the idea of abortions, it should be the decision of those involved. I can see situations where abortion is the preferable option.

2. Budget -- the budget should be balanced, but not by constitutional amendment. Many areas in the federal budget should be cut, but there are some which should be expanded.

3. Taxation I -- I support an additional \$0.50 per gallon tax on gasoline. The money collected from this tax would be earmarked specifically for infrastructure improvements (rebuilding roads, bridges, etc.), mass transportation (subsidizing local urban systems and the national rail system), and research into energy conservation, alternate energy production, and pollution control.

The price of gasoline in the US is far below international norms. Even an additional \$0.50 per gallon won't raise the price to European levels. The low price of gas, I believe, encourages wasteful use. Perhaps the increased cost will encourage

conservation and the additional revenues can be put to good use.

4. Taxation II -- Cut the capital gains tax, but only for the first \$3,000 - \$20,000 worth of profits. Rethink the income tax laws towards the requirements of the middle class. This will encourage the lower and middle classes to invest and will not favor the rich. Why not an across the board cut? Most investment doesn't go to industry, it is the resale market that benefits.

5. Defense I -- The defense budget needs to be restructured, possibly cut dramatically. We need less large-scale strategic systems. What we need is an armed forces that can rapidly respond to smaller-than- global conflict that can put self-contained forces where they may be needed quickly, anywhere. Curiously enough, this may actually mean increasing the actual size of the military, but it should cut out many of the big ticket items.

6. Defense II -- Reduce nuclear stockpiles by at least 50%. Destroy all chemical and biological stockpiles. Modernization of the nuclear arsenal delivery systems is unnecessary. Yes to the Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars).

7. Childrens' Issues -- Very important -- children are the future. Every child deserves a fair chance. Schools need reform so that class size is controlled. A nationwide core curriculum should be instituted; consisting of language, arts, math, and physical fitness. Expand the head start program. Ensure that each child gets proper nutrition (this requires changes in other programs). Fund these areas completely -- cut elsewhere if necessary to fund these.

8. Health -- I'm unsure about universal health. Not about whether we need some sort of it, but what it should cover and how to do it. I don't think a totally nationalized health care system is the answer, but I do know that whatever is done, the escalating cost of health care needs to be controlled.

9. NASA -- We need to make a choice, fund the projects (Shuttle, space station) so they can be done correctly, or don't do them at all. There needs to be greater international cooperation here and less nationalistic pride.

10. Foreign Aid -- Let's send less money and more people and materials. Let's send teachers, food building materials, and construction crews.

11. Crime and Punishment I -- Large scale white collar crime (banking fraud, securities fraud, counterfeiting should be punished with large monetary fines, all the money that was gained illegally and more. Those involved should be banned from ever working in the appropriate industry again.

12. Ethics -- The same rules need to apply to everyone. Right now the major administration personnel and the legislature make all sorts of rules and exempt themselves from them. When those in power break the law they need to be punished more forcefully than the common man because they've done more than break the law, they've broken the public trust.

13. Welfare -- This area needs to be reformed drastically. The current system encourages the cycle of poverty. Large families need to be discouraged (not just for welfare families, though for these and the working poor there are special reasons for them to have smaller families). Regardless of what the court's have said, I believe in workfare. What I would really like to see is government sponsored retraining and child care so that those who want to work, will be able to.

14. Pollution -- Maybe the studies on global warming and CFCs aren't definitive. But can we afford to wait?

15. Campaign Reform -- Limits need to be placed on the amount that can be spent on any election, the amount to vary by the electorate count.

16. Gun Control -- I would like to see tighter laws here. At the minimum a long waiting period to own handguns and banning automatic and assault weapons. The right to bear arms is not absolute.

17. Equal Opportunity -- Everyone deserves equal opportunity. No quotas, no reverse discrimination.

18. Energy -- Yes to nuclear energy and to alternative, renewable sources.

19. Freedom of Speech I -- No flag burning amendments. Part of what makes this country great is the ability to tolerate varied forms of political expression, as long as it is essentially non-violent. It is also one of the major issues that the War for Independence was fought for.

20. Freedom of Speech II -- School prayer cannot be mandated, however the purpose of the separation of church and state was to allow free practice of religion, not to stifle it. Yet, those in charge of public events need to be sensitive to the fact that not everyone is a Protestant of some sort, nor even a Christian of some sort.

Schools should be allowed to provide facilities for non-denominational groups (for students only), but it has to treat all requests equally.

This is my agenda. I believe it to be neither *liberal* nor *conservative*, but to be humanitarian and pragmatic. There are many things I wish to be so, that I know can never be. While there are many issues I wish could be left to individual conscience, but I fear they must be legislated for the overall good. People when left to themselves often tend to be very short-sighted.



Book Reviews:

## From The Recliner

by Edw. A. Graham, Jr.

---

It's almost Turkey Time and, having an overabundance of vacation to use up ("use it or lose it"), I'm not looking forward to eating my way through Thanksgiving. Hey, don't get me wrong -- I like eating. It's just that the fall/winter crop of reading material is bountiful enough.

**Halo** by Tom Maddox

(\$18.95, hardback, Tor, November 1991)

Rating: 3.9

Mikhail Gonzales was an auditor working for Sentrax Halo, a leading mega-corp. Mikhail rather enjoyed the free-lance work and thought that he was his own boss. Then the man who pulls his strings for Sentrax puts him on yet another job: find out what's wrong on Halo, the orbital station. There is an all-out effort to try to store the "mind" and memories of one of the super-computer Aleph's creators inside Aleph itself -- and things aren't going smoothly. Mikhail may be out of his league...

Maddox's first novel is finely crafted with a terse, spare style that would leave editors tearing at their hair. There is not one wasted word or phrase as the author takes us into a future that is not all that far from here. Despite a paucity of words, Maddox paints a rich canvas of people, both carbon and silicon. The style seemed almost brutal at first, but once I got into his rhythm the story just flew by and I was done before I knew it. This is a good example of solid, post-modernistic writing.

**The Garden of Rama** by Arthur C. Clarke and Gentry Lee

(\$20.00, hardback, Bantam Spectra, September 1991)

Rating: 2.0

When we last left our intrepid explorers, they had been abandoned on the second Rama craft that looped through our solar system. Rama II is now speeding away from the familiar yellow sun, destination unknown. And Nicole, Richard, and Michael must now learn how to survive in the bleak interior of Rama.

I can't believe this book was even published, much less that I bought it. Rama II was pretty poor by anyone's standards, and this one -- well, let's just say that there was no logical point to it. Sure, I learned all about Rama, it's intent and all sorts of other meaningless trivia; but I still didn't give a damn about the protagonists (who are alternately strong and weak in all the wrong times), and I certainly could care less about the literary posturings of the writers. This book stinks. The writing is stiff and bland and the plot was equivalent to a third-rate SF "B-movie." I will say one positive thing: the book packaging was extremely attractive.

**Entoverse** by James P. Hogan

(\$20.00, hardback, Del Rey, October 1991)

Rating: 3.6

The "giants" are back and they need some help. The brave, daring, and almost human captain of the Shapieron, Garuth, has been placed in charge of Jevlen since

the "pseudo-war" with Earth was waged. Of course, being a Giant means he and his people don't totally understand human psychology. And that's where the problem lies: something is going radically wrong with Garuth's plans. He does what any right thinking Giant would do -- call in some friends who happen to be good at finding things. Vic Hunt and Chris Danchekker are off and running again, in possibly one of their strangest quests yet.

Although Hogan is no slouch at writing, I got the impression from this book that he is no longer excited about the universe he created years ago in **Inherit the Stars**. The technical merits of this book are outstanding, but I would expect no less. The characters are still real, although a first-time reader of the so-called "Giants series" would find it hard to grasp the personalities of the main protagonists Vic and Chris. I found that the pacing of the novel was a little uneven and, at times, lackluster. Despite this, it is a worthy addition to the three previous tales of these characters.

**All the Weyrs of Pern** by Anne McCaffrey

(\$20.00, hardback, Del Rey, December 1991)

Rating: 3.1

Picking up the tale left off in *The White Dragon and Renegades of Pern*, the people inhabiting the world of Pern are learning the true history behind their world, dragons, and themselves. And the revelations are astounding. Digging in the abandoned site of Landing, the dragonriders-turned-archaeologists discover a functioning machine. When the Avias awakens, it answers the most important question of all: yes, there is a way of eradicating Threadfall forever. But it's up to the dragonriders to make it happen.

I'm going to spoil the novel just a bit here -- this should be (and appears to have been written as) the final exploits of the Dragonriders of Pern. No, everyone doesn't die or even live happily ever after. However, there is a note of finality that permeates the plot and, believe it or not, helps to move it along. This is not McCaffrey at her height of writing, but it's solid and thoughtfully crafted, though the denouement is a little heavy-handed. It is a fitting capstone in the series that's been around for over a decade.

**Quick mentions:**

**Slow Freight** by F. M. Busby (\$4.99 paperback from Bantam Spectra) is a unique way of dealing with interstellar travel and a chance encounter with extra-terrestrials. Another good book from an author that's been around for a long time.

**Consider Phlebas** by Iain M. Banks (\$5.99 paperback from Bantam Spectra) is a novel of Banks' future society, the Culture. A really different kind of space-adventure, Banks has a style that's hard to get into, yet flows well from scene to scene. This guy is good, but I wouldn't elevate him to deity status.

I'm going to end this with a complaint. As you may have noticed, two of the hardbacks above were published by Del Rey. Unbelievably, those are the two books that (physically) looked the worst. I'm kinda grumpy about shelling out 20 bucks or more for a book, but when the book has ratty page edges, I get real bent. C'mon guys! Give me a break! If I'm pitching a buncha dough for a book, you could at least trim the pages! They look like a picket fence! Hell, I've seen better job on some SFBC selections! If you're not proud enough of your product to give it that one extra second of care, you shouldn't be in the business.

Alex on Art:

## Laurel Slate

by Keith Parkinson

---

As a reviewer I face a problem, how to review an artist that I'm married to? If I'm complimentary, people will just say, "Well what do you expect?" If I'm too critical, my wife, who does have an artistic temperament, either bashes me over the head or freezes me out (Just kidding!). The solution? Get someone else to do the review. So, thanks to well known artist Keith Parkinson for providing the following critique of the works Laurel displayed at AggieCon. - Alex Slate

In her artwork, I think Laurel is stronger in black and white. The composition is better in the black and white pieces than in the color pieces. It's hard to judge Laurel's progress with color, because there are only two color pieces exhibited, "Dragons' Dare" (1989) and "Mermaid's Dream" (1989). But from what's here I say she needs to concentrate on color value and chroma.

I like to see strong mid-ground and background work. This is fully lacking in "Dragons' Dare" and somewhat missing in "Mermaid's Dream".

On one color print, "Medusa's Misery", the way the scales are done is interesting but the use of color on the main figure hasn't changed much, the background also needs to be colored. It would have been better to use color and highlights to show contrast rather than using lines to define form.

On to the black and white work. Laurel has improved quickly in the two years represented. She shows greater realism and less stylization in the newer works. And the control is improving dramatically.  
(continued on Page 14)

Opinion:

## Subcultures Everywhere

by Lynn Ward

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On PBS a while back, I saw a documentary entitled "The Love Train". It was literally a train, chartered to go cross-country carrying a gaggle of romance novelists. After publicity/autographing stops in several cities, it arrived in New York; its passengers disembarked and went on to a romance novelists' convention. My first reaction was "purple prose city; don't these people have a life?" (As you can guess, I am not a [romance] fan). However, on second thought, I drew some parallels between SF fandom and romance fandom. No, don't barf yet, keep reading. Writers and fans alike shared confidences, funny stories, "true confessions", things which constituted bonding. There was someone else who liked romance novels besides her (sound familiar?). One woman, drafted to organize the trip, talked about the sense of accomplishment, of simple confidence, it gave her. Follow-up interviews a year later showed her, more confident and sophisticated, attending another such convention. As well, the "before and after" interviews showed women, most of them rather mousy housewives, who began to write their own romances or, in some cases, other kinds of fiction.

Finally, they spoke/showed the pleasure of sharing an experience which their husbands, and official male-dominated society had little part of.

It's a subculture, much as SF fandom is. Granted, it is not so full of certified oddballs and non-conformists. Yet both subcultures offer companionship, escape  
(continued on Page 14)



Fanzines in Trade:

## Trades Listing

**Austin Writer Oct 91**  
**BCSFazine #221, 222**  
**Cry Havoc Oct-Nov 91**  
**DASFax V.23, #10, 11**  
**File 770 #90**  
**FOSFax #157**  
**Knarley Knews #30**  
**OASFIS Event Horizon #53**  
**Opuntia #4(see below)**  
**PSFS News Oct 91**  
**Robots & Roadrunners V.6, #3**  
**SF Convention Register Aut. 91**  
**SFSFS Shuttle #79, 80**  
**STET #3, 4**  
**Stone Hill Launch Times V.5, #10-11**  
**TAFF Door #4**  
**The Colonist Oct 91, Nov 91**  
**Transmissions V.14, #4**  
**The Insider #165-167**  
**The Unintelligencer #3**

### NEW OR NOTABLE

**ASFA Quarterly Autumn 1991.** ed. Nevenah Smith; Assoc. of SF & F Artists, c/o N. Smith, PO Box 331, Madison, WI 53701-0331. Not on our trade list, my wife gets this. If you are an SF/F artist or are simply interested in SF/F art, this is well worth your while.

**The Mostly Artzine #1.** ed. Kevin Hopkins, New Life Graphics, v/o Kevin Hopkins, 1209 SW Binkley, Oklahoma City, OK 73109. As the name implies, this fanzine is about art, though not exclusively, some short fiction and poetry may also be found. The prurpose is to act as a showcase for artists. Unusual in that the zine is spiral bound. An interesting first effort.

**Notes From Oblivion #23-25.** Jay Harber, 626 Paddock Lane, Libertyville, IL 60048. A very curious perzine from a person stating he has Environmental Illness. A fan, no longer able to attend things like conventions, I think he's basically looking for contact with the outside world. The issues deal mostly with his condition and are interesting reading, if a little repetitious.

**Opuntia 3.5, 4.5.** Dale Spiers, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7. The perzine version of Dale's fanzine. These issues deal with a number of issues, mostly Dale's job as a parks' foreman and other items having to deal mainly with animals.

**Situation Normal Newsletter V.1, #8.** Ken Gregg, ed.; Southern Nevada Area Fantasy & Fiction Union, c/o 7215 Nordic Lights Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89119. A short club newsletter with calendar & con report.

**Sunshine Over Arkham.** Hal Speer, PO Box 238, Sea Cliff, NY 11579-0238; Midnight Press, A well produced little chap book about the author's attempt to identify the locales of Arkham and Dunwich from the Lovecraft stories. I found it to be an interesting analysis, though I think it should be a little longer. Available from the author for \$3.50 postpaid.

### CATALOGS, ETC.

**The Science Fiction Shop,** 163 Bleeker Street, NYC, NY 10012, August 1991

**Mark V. Ziesing,** Bookseller, PO Box 76, Shingletown, CA 96088 #96



Conventions:

## Convention Listings

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**Jan 17-19 Sercon 6.**

Wyndham Southpark, Austin TX. Guests: Jonathan Carroll, Orson Scott Card. Info: \$30 until 30 Dec 91, PO Box 9612, Austin, TX 78766.

**Feb 7-9 PsurrealCon 92.**

Central Plaza Hotel, Oklahoma City OK. Guests: Tad Williams, Robin Bailey, W.J. Hodgson, Casey Hamilton. Info: \$15 until 2/1, POB 2069, Norman, OK 73070-2069.

**Feb 29-Mar 1 Conniption 92.**

La Quinta, Arlington TX. Guests: Fred Pohl, Wilson Tucker, Brad Foster, Robert Taylor. Info: PO Box 260912, Plano, TX 75026-0912.

**Mar 13-15 CrackerCon.**

Baymeadows Holiday Inn, Jacksonville FL. Guests: Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon. Info: POB 1509, Orange Park, FL 32067-1509.

**Mar 20-22 NeoCon 3.**

Red Coach Inn, Wichita KS. Guests: Algis Budrys, Howard Waldrop, David Lee Anderson, Leonard Bishop. Info: \$1, POB 48431, Wichita, KS 67201.

**Mar 20-22 LunaCon '92.**

Rye Town Hilton, Rye Brook NY. Guests: Samuel R. Delany, Paul Lehr, John Singer, Kristine Kathryn Rusch. Info: \$25 until 2/22, then \$35, PO Box 338, New York, NY 10150-0338.

**Mid South Con 11.**

Memphis Airport Hilton, Memphis TN. Guests: Nancy Springer, Margaret Weis,

Beth Willinger, Belinda Anderson. Info: \$20 until Mar 1, then \$25, PO Box 22749, Memphis, TN 3812.

**Mar 27-29 I-Con XI.**

Stony Brook, NY. Guests: Tom Doherty, Mike Resnik, Phillip Jose Farmer, Walter Jon Williams, Lawrence Janifer. Membership: I-Con Info, PO Box 550, Stony Brook, NY 11790.

**Apr 24-26 AmigoCon 7.**

Sunland Park Holiday Inn, El Paso, TX. Guests: Jennifer Roberson, Patricia Davis, Mel White. Info: \$15 until 4-1, then \$18, PO Box 3177, El Paso, TX 79923.

**May 1-3 RockCon.**

Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock AR. Guests: Lois McMaster Bujold, Cat Conrad, Fran Stallings. Info: \$15 until April 31, PO Box 24285, Little Rock, AR 72221.

**May 1-3 NameThatCon5 - Conditions: TBA.**

Saint Louis Airport Hilton, St Louis MO. Guests: Mercedes Lackey, Paul Daley, Ron & Chere Raiti, Mickey Zucker Reichert. Info: \$16 until 1/1, \$18 until 3/1, SCSFFS, PO Box 57 5, Saint Charles, MO 63302.

**June 5-7 New Orleans SF & Fantasy Festival.**

Clarion New Orleans, New Orleans LA. Guests: Stephen R. Donaldson, David Cherry, Melinda Snodgrass. Info: \$17.50 until March 15, NOSF3 '92, PO Box 791089, New Orleans, LA 70179-1089, (504)837-9462 or 837-7399.

(continued on Page 15)

Book Review:

## A Fantasy Series Reviewed

by Katharine Eliska Kimbriel

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### **Night-Threads: The Calling of the Three.**

by Ru Emerson (Ace 1990, 256 pp., \$3.95;  
ISBN 0-441-58085-8)

### **Night-Threads II: The Two in Hiding.**

by Ru Emerson (Ace 1991, 294 pp., \$4.50;  
ISBN 0-441-58086-6)

That trilogies and so-called "series" books are very popular right now is undeniable, but the number of writers producing more than one successful story in a world are few. Ru Emerson has already proved herself more than capable of weaving a multiple-book tale, and if you like intricately-plotted, colorful fantasies peopled with strong, believable characters, you won't want to miss the first two **Night-Threads** books.

One of Emerson's greatest strengths is that she doesn't pull her punches for her characters or her readers. In this tale, she drags three young Americans out of their own world and into a struggling desert culture of an alternate thread of time. Jennifer Cray, her older sister Robyn, and Robyn's teen-aged son Chris have been brought to Rhadaz by the efforts of a Night-Thread wielder, an old woman trained to manipulate ghostly strings of power. They are needed to put a sickly young Duke on a throne his former guardian has denied him. It was Jennifer's untrained love of music, revealing potential Wielder power, that drew the spell; Chris and his mother were so much baggage.

A simple, well-written alternate world fantasy? With Emerson, there is always

more. The product of divorce in a tiny Wyoming town, the Crays were shuttled off to the West Coast to be raised by elderly relatives. Robyn rebelled and fell into the 60's hippie culture, while Jennifer became determined to beat incredible odds. Twenty years later, Robyn is a faded, alcoholic welfare recipient with a son who spends his time protecting her from life's blows, while Jennifer has become an associate at a Los Angeles legal firm. Combine these three with the sheltered and depressed Aletto and his nearly- incompetent Wielding sister Liana, and fireworks are guaranteed.

Emerson's travelers must deal with old prejudices and weaknesses before they can hope to succeed--from class snobbery and cultural clashes to physical addictions denied. They must find former allies of Aletto's father, or they have no hope of accomplishing their task. Against them are several fascinating systems of magic, a psychologically abusive uncle determined to recover his straying dependents, the daunting rigors of the road -- and each other.

It is a grueling world, and a punishing trip, but it is not without hope. Jennifer does have a talent for Thread, "hearing" it rather than seeing it, and her skills as a speaker soon earn her the name of The Advocate. Robyn's ability to accept anyone without judgment begins to draw Aletto from his shell, and Chris finds his feet as his love of martial arts and stick fighting becomes the difference between life and death. These are not carefully-picked,

**(continued on Page 15)**



## Letters of Comment

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Teddy Harvia

Teddy sent us a postcard, but I'm ashamed to say that I can't find it right now. Hopefully, I'll have it in hand for the next issue.

Sheryl Birkhead  
Gaithersburg, MD

Started Nov. 9

Dear Inquirers,

Glad Dale is re-employed - having been unemployed now for about 1 1/2 years, I can understand that panic can set in!

I figure I might as well get started on this, even if I hold off on mailing it for a bit - which also probably means I'll miss the deadline for the December ish - but so it goes ...

I can commiserate with ignorant (hopefully NOT stupid) computer owners - salesmen tend to be intimidating to the "illiterate" - and I speak from experience. I just got my system a few weeks ago and the monitor "went bad" the first time I hooked it up, but when I called to ask if what was happening was "normal", I got such tsksks over the phone that I held off for still another week, then called and was told to call service -- THEY told me to Drop by (I then explained that this didn't mean just a quick trip down the block the guy was nice enough, but ...) -- and they replaced the BRAND NEW monitor -- but I still felt embarrassed and stupid (But I DO know that I have a color monitor - I researched the system for over a year -- and while the jargon still loses me very quickly, I had enough memorized to make the salesman understand that I didn't want to alter from my selected path.). I also came with a sheaf

of papers that would have choked a horse - comparison prices from various mail order places -- but I'd been convinced to go for "local" over price (but go for the best price I could, of course) -- because of my luck -- which obviously was holding )to wit - the monitor's breakdown and the service man's comment that they didn't get many Seiko monitors back because they were such a good product ...).

I'm trying to learn the back up lesson - but when one is just playing (and it isn't for "real" or "keeps") it is not so imperative. The first time I actually lose important stuff I think I'll remember -- but I'm trying to make it a habit now.

I've heard a lot of good things about George Alec Effinger - whom, until recently, I knew as Piglet ... ah, things change. Is there a listing of cons that hold the type of charity auctions you mention - in case someone wants to donate material? Your professional [profile] only reinforces what I've heard about the many writer. Thank you.

Before Walden's converted to a generic membership - I had a membership in their sf grouping. I ordered a copy of THE NEW DINOSAURS and was amused (but not very much) to find out this was considered fact and not sf - hence no discount. I'd like to see the specific criteria they used to make THAT decision.

Carol's Star Trek outing sounds like a fun way to spend the day - right down to the barbeque (pit stop?) pig out on the way home!

um ... er - I didn't mean to run unto the back, but this has now sat here almost a week and I think I had better send it along - or it'll be buried alive amongst the other

paperwork -- better this than a silence!

Good thing you did go local on the purchase. I've heard much the same, for major hardware purchases, go local. For software, go mail.

I still haven't learned the backup lesson. And I HAVE lost important material when either a hard disk has crashed or I've inadvertently reformatted a diskette. I remember for a while, then soon forget until it happens again. Oh, the terrors of being absent-minded.

PIGLET? Either you or George Alec has to explain that one.

I don't know about a convention listing specifically noting charity auctions. I don't think I've ever seen one. Has anyone else? Usually though, the cons will have it on their flyers. I think your best bet is to contact the specific conventions that interest you and find out from them.

Walden's decision was probably based on the publisher's sending the book out as non-sf, but I can understand it. THE NEW DINOSAURS was a serious attempt to extrapolate what could have happened had the dinosaurs not died off. It was meant not only as non-sf, but non-fiction. The fact that it was also entertaining enough to attract fiction readers was a bonus. That's also probably also why you were only somewhat amused.

You just made the deadline for this ish. The deadline actually was late this time, for several reasons.

Richard Brandt  
El Paso, TX

Dear Alex, Dale and Gang:

I have to hand here issues 40 and 41 of THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER, and as I happen to be in loc-writing mode at the moment, there you are.

A nice wrinkle on "Alex on Art" this time to see the artist's response--not just because it's yet another innovation on y'all's part, but because nearly every pice of critical writing appears in a void, without any "extenuating circumstances" surrounding the work ever being made known to the

reader.

Sheryl [Birkhead]; mentions Linda Michaels -- she had quite a few pieces in the Bubonicon art show this year--swept the Amateur awards, and made quite a few sales. I was impressed, having only seen her work in fanzines. I had no idea she was about to win three awards at the Worldcon, including Best Amateur in both Judges' and Popular voting (for different pieces!). As a fanzine type of long standing, I was well pleased.

Cholera has appeared in Juarez now; no surprise, since the dump raw sewage into the Rio Grande. (Sandia Labs wanted to dump low-level radioactive waste, but that's another story...) Our company has put out leaflets about cholera and sanitation next to our coffee machine, but it's hard to get those bloody gringos concerned about the sort of thing that only happens to those poor people in faraway countries...

Great logo on #41. Always good to read about George Alec Effinger (whose first publication was in FANTASTIC; the typesetter made his byline "Alex Effinger"). Learned something new, too, such as the stylistic changes planned for the subsequent Marid books. George has never been afraid to try stylistic experiments in his works, even if the general reader is likely not to notice.

Keep up the good work.

buena suerte,

Thanks for your remarks on the "Alex on Art" article. The reason you mentioned is why Bill Hodgson's response was included. I'm a bit surprised that Juarez is allowed to dump raw sewage into the Rio Grande. I would have thought there would be some sort of treaty concerning that type of issue.



## Con Report:

# SoonerCon 7

by Alexander R. Slate

Once more Laurel, myself and the kids made the trip up to Oklahoma City for Soonercon. This year SoonerCon started on Friday, 22 November, and ran through Sunday, 24 November. The venue, as before, was the Central Plaza Hotel, located just off I-35. Again, just like last year the convention sold out the hotel.

We got in late Thursday night and spent Friday morning at the Kirkpatrick Center, which houses the Natural Science Museum, the Air and Space Museum, and the Art Museum. It is an interesting place to see, especially if you have kids. Back to the hotel for lunch and the convention. The operative word for this convention was "just like last year". A lot was the same.

Registration was quick, then we went to get Laurel's stuff into the art show. The art show layout was "just like last year." In this case that's good. It is one of the better layouts for an art show I've seen, particularly for a convention this size.

The biggest problem with SoonerCon, from my perspective is a lack of babysitting and/or childrens' programming. That means Laurel and I spend a lot of time watching the kids, either one or both of us at a time. This is particularly a problem when both of you want to see a panel at the same time, or one of you is on a panel and the other wants to attend one. This year the kids got introduced to Anime, which they liked, even though the works were in Japanese (subtitled, but the girls don't read yet and Josh is only in 1st grade). I also enjoy watching Anime, but many times I'd really rather be doing something else.

### Programming I attended--

Portfolio review (David Cherry and Jan Sherrell Gephardt). It was interesting hearing their comments, they have a different outlook than I do when I do my art critiques. It's one way for me to pick up and learn the real technical aspects of art to help with my reviews.

Opening ceremonies. Toastmaster Mike McQuay was very funny.

World Peace Through Chocolate Reception. I love chocolate, this is just a good time to talk to people who will be busy doing lots of other stuff later in the convention.

Face Painting (J.R. Daniels). Very lightly attended, there were about six or seven kids who took advantage of this.

Masquerade Registration and Tips (Marsha Diggs and Marilyn Berry). The purpose was to get the kids registered for the masquerade, generally the tips weren't helpful for our situation, but would be good listening for neo costumers.

It's All Black and White (Jan Sherrell Gephardt, Kevin Hopkins, and Laurel Slate). Also very lightly attended, it ended up just being a round robin discussion for the few who attended.

Masquerade - Interesting, mostly there were a lot of Klingons. My kids were registered, but Melissa changed her mind at the last minute and didn't want to go on. Josh went as a team with Trey Daniels (J.R. Daniel's son). This wasn't planned this way, but Josh was going to be a Pteradactyl and Trey was going to be a caveman, so we figured it was a natural partnership. The kids liked the idea too. Sarah went on as a ballerina and got her share of aahs from the audience--the child is a natural ham.

### Programming I was on--

I was scheduled for 3 different panels this year.

Space: Economics and Trade (Mike McQuay, Rob Chilson, Susan Howard, Jane Fancher, G.K. Sprinkle, A. Slate). This panel went well. It was well attended (the room was packed) and the audience asked questions and had comments. We (the panelists) all spoke about the same amount of time, and we covered everything from the possibilities of trade and economics in far-flung, long in the future societies, to what the possibilities are and what the problems are for the short term.

Publishing Fanzines: Desktop Publishing (Marilyn Berry, Cat, J. Murray, A. Slate, P.N. Elrod). This panel also went well, attendance was about half of what it had been for the Space panel. I did a lot more talking at this one, being the primary user of desktop publishing stuff on the panel.

Hugo Balloting: Popular or Good (A. Slate, Teddy Harvia, Susan Satterfield). Better forgotten. A very, very light turnout, so we all talked together for about 20 minutes and called it a day.

Other stuff --

SoonerCon 7, just like last year, had a real good art show. Of course with the number of artists in the OKC area, that's not really surprising.

The Dealers' Room, just like last year, was small but well mixed. My major problem was a lack of money to spend on the books I would have liked to buy.

The Con Suite is only so so. Basically chips, sodas, and beer.

SoonerCon 7 is a good convention. I recommend it. Costs are really reasonable, and the con site is fairly convenient to a number of different restaurants. OKC has some interesting sites to see besides. But make your reservations early, because I will almost guarantee that the hotel will be sold out again next year. programming.

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### **(continued from Page 7)**

Contrasting two pieces, "Medusa's Misery" (B&W, 1990) and "Guinevere and Lancelot" (1991), there is a nicer use of weighted lines in the latter. She has broken up lights and darks better.

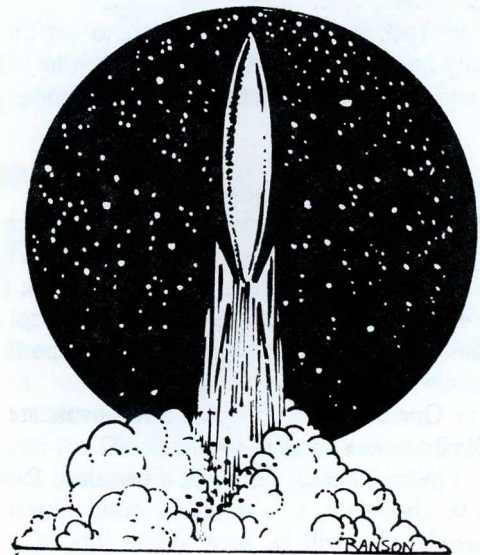
The earliest pieces, "Chimera" and "Griffin of Gold" look overworked; there's too much scratchy-scratch. Contrast these to the dinosaur pictures, "Stegosaurus", "Diplodocus", "Deinonychus", "Protoceratops", and "Struthiomimus", which have a much better sense of form through the use of negative space. "Griffin of Gold" could have been a much better piece had the griffin been moved to one side to complement the angle of the mountains in the picture and using a different, more dramatic angle-pose for the main subject. Because of this lack of a lost. "Transformation I" used a starburst behind the central figure to attract the viewers' attention. This isn't a subtle way to draw attention, but it works.

Laurel has talent that needs more practice. The improvement shown in the short time period represented shows promise for the future, Best of Luck!



### **(continued from Page 7)**

from convention, stimulus to creative expression, a sense of "I" separate from patriarchal mundane norms. Perhaps that sub-culture should be thought of more kindly by SF folks, male and female alike. (Guys, SF is as much for women as men today!) How many more subcultures are there? Not just fan or interest groups, but intricate social networks of people wanting to set free their imaginations and validate their own identities? A whole bunch, which says precious little for "everyday" middle class society. The way I see it, the more escape routes that don't involve mass murder or drugging yourself to oblivion the better.





**Business:**

## Coming Soon to a Bookshelf Near You

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This is a new addition to our lineup. Every so often, the publishing houses send us notices of upcoming releases. Now this information is also available in places like Locus, but not everybody gets Locus. I had hoped this first column to be bigger, but *c'est le vic*. Because of the delay in publishing this issue, these are probably already out in the bookstores.

**Bridge Publications:**

**Final Blackout** by L. Ron Hubbard (paper)

**Battlefield Earth** by L. Ron Hubbard (paper re-release)

**Del Rey:**

**All the Weyrs of Pern** by Anne McCaffrey (hard)

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**(continued from Page 9)**

July 3-5 **Galaxy** #92.

Sheraton Park Central, Dallas, TX. Guests: Bob Asprin, David Cherry, Clayburn Moore. Info: \$20 until 3/1, PO Box 150471, Arlington, TX 76015-6471.

Sep 3-7 **MagiCon** (Worldcon 50).

Orange County Civic Center, Orlando FL. Guests: Jack Vance, Vincent DiFate, Walter A. Willis, Spider Robinson. Info: \$95 until 12/31, C: \$45 until 3/31, S: \$25 until Jul 15, PO Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32862, (407)859-8421.

Sep 2-7 1993 **ConFransisco** (Worldcon 51)

Parc Fifty Five & Le Meridien Hotels, San Francisco CA. Guests: Larry Niven, Alicia Austin, Tom Digby, Jan Howard Finner, Guy Gavriel Kay. Info: PO Box 22097, San Francisco, CA 94122.

Sep 1-5 1994 **Connadian** (Worldcon 52).

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Guests: Anne McCaffrey, George Barr, Barry Longyear, Robert Runte. Info: \$60 until Dec 31, children \$25. Box 7111, Fargo ND, USA 58109.

**BIDS:**

95 - Sidney, Glasgow, NY, Atlanta, I-95

96 - Los Angeles

97 - San Antonio, St. Louis

**(continued from Page 10)**

tightly meshed adventurers--they are chance companions rubbing against each other like sharp stones.

Betrayal behind and before, enemies behind every rock, and the realization that they must depend on each other, for there will be little other help--these elements combine to provide an intriguing adventure. Emerson always pleases with deft sketches of chance companions on the road, and watching Jennifer attempt to hunt down coffee beans or Chris teach new Rhadazi companions LA slang provides needed humor. Entering Volume Two, the group finds their efforts to work together improving, but there are no easy steps in this journey. Pacifist Robyn must kill, and learns of the terrifying change Rhadaz has made in her; now Aletto must be the one who does not judge what he has always feared. Injured people bleed and scar, men learn what it is to be psychologically raped, and the lines between "good magic" and "bad magic" begin to blur. As always, Emerson provides a satisfying journey. The only flaw so far might be that same vivid realism; for some readers, it may be more than they really want to know. A word of warning--Emerson loves to leave first books in a series hanging, and **The Calling of the Three** abandons one character, at least, clinging to "the lip of an abyss". Mercifully, **The Two in Hiding** leaves us impatient for the last volume, but not

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