

Missouri Meanderings

Prolog: In Search of a Famous Missourian

The Missouri State Capitol has a splendid location close to a bluff overlooking the Missouri River and there is a really nice view of the building driving into Jefferson City from the north. I had been interested in seeing it not only because it would add to my personal collection of state capitols visited, but also because of what was inside.

The ground floor of the Capitol is the Missouri State Museum, with displays that exhibit the state's natural resources and its place in history. It was really well done, and included everything from a hands-on Civil



Missouri State Capitol



the Mark Twain statue in the Hall of Famous Missourians

War display to an impressive 20-foot long model of the Battleship Missouri. But what Nicki and I had really come to see was on the third floor of the Capitol, the Hall of Famous Missourians. It was there that we hoped to find the bust of a renowned writer.

No, it wasn't Mark Twain. We had no trouble locating him; he was next to a pillar near the central rotunda. And he is certainly in equally famous company. Among the other Missouri residents so honored are such notables as Scott Joplin, Harry S. Truman, Walter Cronkite, Betty Grable, Ginger Rogers, Edwin Hubble, Stan Musial, Buck O'Neil, Walt Disney, Thomas Hart Benton, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Sacajawea, and Dred Scott.

The person we were looking for was the most recent inductee, and try as we might we just couldn't find him. After four circuits of the Hall we finally decided we needed some assistance, so I went over to a State Government worker in a nearby office: "Excuse me, can you please help me find Robert A. Heinlein?"

It may not have been the first time he had been asked that question because he didn't even pause before answering: "He's not here yet, and won't be until next Tuesday. The unveiling is on Thursday in Kansas City. At some event called MidAmeriCon 2." The 2016 World Science Fiction Convention.

The City of Fur Traders

Nicki and I would have already known that if we had more closely read some of the information that had been sent us by MidAmeriCon. But we still would have gone to Jefferson City anyway. As it happened, the State Capitol more than lived up to our expectations, even

without Heinlein's presence. And it was also an easy stopover on the way to Kansas City from St. Louis.

Several months earlier, while planning for the Worldcon trip, we had chosen to book our flight to St. Louis instead of directly into Kansas City. We had wanted to visit not only the state capital of Missouri, but the one for Illinois as well since Springfield is only about an hour and a half by car from St. Louis. But first we wanted to see what a city originally founded by French fur traders had to offer for us.

St. Louis as a settlement dates back to 1763, named in honor of Louis IX, the only French monarch who has been canonized. It and another 828,000 square miles of territory was acquired by the United States in 1803 as part of the Louisiana Purchase, and less than a year after that a small fort near St. Louis became the starting point of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In the decades since then the city has become known as the place where the ice cream cone was invented, the first U.S. city to host an Olympic Games, the home of the second-most successful Major League Baseball team (in terms of championships won), the birthplace of T.S. Eliot and Chuck Berry...and the site of the tallest man-made monument in the western hemisphere. That would be the Gateway Arch.

The Arch is by far the most dominating feature of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, a 91-acre park along the Mississippi River in downtown St. Louis. It's a 630-foot tall steel catenary, originally designed back in the late 1940s by architect Eero Saarinen; next year will be the 50th anniversary of its opening to the public. The Arch is a hollow structure and there are trams that take visitors to the top where there is a very panoramic view of the Mississippi River on one side and downtown St. Louis on the other. I'd done that, back in 1980 on a previous trip to St. Louis, and being up there was a disconcerting experience. The top of the Arch is designed to sway as much as 18-inches in high winds and even on a day when there was almost no wind I could tell that the structure was not rock solid. As could most of the other visitors on that morning – I recall that only a very few of them seemed willing to linger very long before taking the tram back down.

For this trip, Nicki and I were content to view the Arch from ground level. It was a rainy day which removed much of our enthusiasm for being outside, especially since the entire area around the arch was under construction for a new museum and visitor center. Instead, the Old St. Louis Courthouse, at the west end of the Memorial, turned out to be a better option.

The Place where the Dred Scott Went to Court

The Old Courthouse is the most historic site in all of St. Louis. It dates back to the late 1830s and is the place where, in 1847, the slave Dred Scott had gone to court for his freedom. There were actually two trials, the second of which went in Scott's favor only for it to be overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1857. That decision, later decried by legal scholars as the worst ever by the Supreme Court, became a catalyst of the Civil War.



Nicki and the Gateway Arch

The Courthouse is very grand, with its dome and rotunda more resembling a state capitol. Nicki and I took a docent tour from a National Park Service guide who was an expert on the history of the building and its times. She showed us some photos that indicated the place was a mess when the National Park Service first took control of it back in the 1940s – the roof leaked like a sieve and had caused severe damage to the interior. There have been several renovations since then which have restored much of the building to its original condition, including Courtroom no. 4, where Dred Scott had sued for his and his wife’s freedom.



the Old County Courthouse in St. Louis



the docent tour of the Old County Courthouse

It’s now a wonderful building. A room of the courthouse has been made into a museum of sorts that walks the visitor through the particulars of the Dred Scott case and what life in St. Louis was like back in the mid-1840s. Elsewhere are doors and woodwork made from common yellow pine where faux woodgrain had been added to make it resemble oak (signatures of the craftspeople who did the detailing are disguised as part of the faux woodgrain if you know where to look). At the exact center of the building, under the rotunda, there is a spot where orators once spoke – my voice was naturally amplified by the acoustical

design of the building when I stood there. Around the perimeter of the dome there are paintings that depict events in St. Louis history. The building is filled with stories about St. Louis and its past, as recounted by our docent guide. And all of them were fascinating to hear.

The Newest Museum in St. Louis

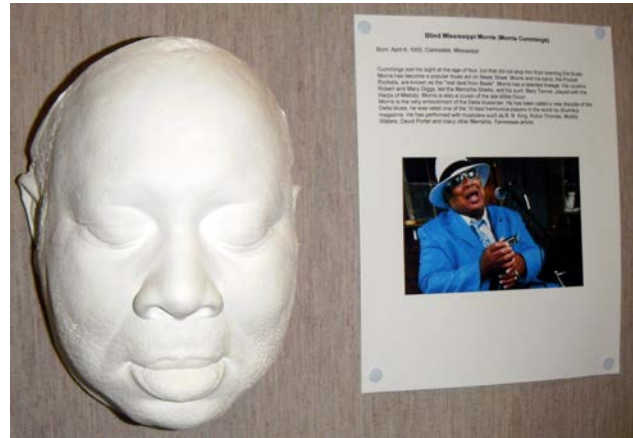
There are many other museums in St. Louis that are worth a visit, far too many for the one full day that Nicki and I had in the city. But the steady rain made the choice easy for us. The National Blues Museum, which has been open for only a few months, is the only American museum focused on that genre. We’d seen it on the taxi ride in from the airport and our interest in music immediately made it must-see. And it was also only a short walk from our hotel!

We found it a bit of a work in progress. Definitely worth seeing, but not as rich in content as it will someday be. For sure, there were some excellent exhibits including the only



the National Blues Museum

known film featuring the Empress of the Blues, Bessie Smith (it was a short 1929 talkie titled *St. Louis Blues*). After viewing that, hers is the definitive version of the title song as far as I'm concerned. There was also an exhibit of "life mask" sculptures of Delta Blues singers by Mississippi artist Sharon McConnell-Dickerson collectively titled "A Cast of Blues". In all there were 40 of them, and the intent of the display was to, in effect, make more 'real' some of the renowned people in this storied musical genre. The exhibit was designed to be accessible for people with disabilities, and in that regard I found it sadly ironic that the sculptor herself is disabled, having lost almost all of her sight from a degenerative eye disease.



life mask of blues singer Blind Mississippi Morris

The City where the Cold War Began

There was a continuing forecast for unrelenting rain in the central Mississippi River valley, so Nicki and I had to make a decision on what our two-day road trip between St. Louis and Kansas City would be. In the end, we ruled out going to see the Illinois State Capitol. The rain forecast looked, if anything, even worse for central Illinois than for St. Louis and we didn't want that to be what we remembered most from a visit there. So we headed west instead.

It was a good choice. The rain diminished noticeably in the first 50 miles, and by the time we had reached the Interstate exit to head south toward Jefferson City it had stopped altogether. Just ahead was the city of Fulton, where not long after the end of World War Two an important event in world history occurred.

On March 5, 1946, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Harry Truman came to Westminster College, in Fulton, on the invitation of the college's president. There was a parade through the center of town and afterwards, in the college's auditorium, Churchill delivered one of his most famous speeches, the "Sinews of Peace" address which portended the coming of the Cold War:

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an 'Iron Curtain' has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia; all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject, in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and in some cases increasing measure of control from Moscow."



one of the historical displays at the National Churchill Museum in Fulton, Missouri

There is now a National Churchill Museum in Fulton, where a film of portions of that speech can be viewed. It's in the reconstructed Church of St. Mary Aldermanbury, originally designed by the famous British architect Christopher Wren. The building was almost destroyed in 1940 during the London Blitz, and in the mid-1960s it was dismantled, stone by stone, and shipped to Fulton where it was painstakingly recreated to its pre-war appearance.



the rebuilt St. Mary Aldermanbury Church in Fulton, Missouri

The museum is a commemoration of the life of Sir Winston, with exhibits that walk you through the decades of his career as a military officer and politician. And also his legacy. On a plaza adjacent to the church is a sculpture simply titled “Breakthrough” which was created in 1990 by artist Edwina Sandys (Churchill’s granddaughter) from eight sections of the newly-fallen Berlin Wall.



the “Breakthrough” sculpture

So in the end, the misfortune of canceling the Illinois portion of the road trip led to an unexpected and fascinating visit to a place we didn’t even know existed until we happened across it on our way to Jefferson City. If we’d stuck to the original plan we’d have gotten to Fulton so late in the day that we would have had to

pass it by. Further reinforcement of my belief that there is a Law of Conservation of Karma.

The Road to MidAmeriCon 2

The drive from Jefferson City to Kansas City took us through the city of Sedalia, originally a railroad town that was once described by *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as the “Sodom and Gomorrah of the nineteenth century”. Back then it was a center of vice, in particular prostitution, which created enough trickle-down wealth in the city that there was no real need for taxation. Nowadays it’s the home of the Missouri State Fair, and it was in progress the day we passed through. If we’d had more time we might have stayed and enjoyed the fair, which is by far the largest attended event in all of Missouri. But there was another big gathering about two hour’s drive farther west that we were very much looking forward to.

Kansas City is actually the largest city in Missouri – westward looking in attitude, much more so than St. Louis. In the time since its founding in the 1830s it has become known as the City of Fountains, with more of them than any other city except Rome. And, oh yeah, there’s also some pretty good barbecue.

Nicki and I arrived in Kansas City in time to take in an early dinner at Arthur Bryant's, perhaps the most famous barbecue restaurant in the country if not the world. Over the many decades of its existence it has been patronized by renowned sports stars, media personalities (including Steven Spielberg and Harrison Ford), and politicians (including Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama). As well as thousands and thousands of barbecue lovers, ourselves now included!



Arthur Bryant's restaurant in Kansas City

Bryant's is located away from downtown, over in the so-called "18th and Vine" district. That's where the Kansas City jazz scene was thriving back in the 1930s and 1940s. There are still plenty of jazz venues in the city, and since 1997 there has been the American Jazz Museum which we found to be an



inside the American Jazz Museum

interesting counterpoint to the Blues Museum in St. Louis. It occupies a smaller space, some of which has been made into an actual jazz club, and it has taken the approach of highlighting the careers of luminaries such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Ella Fitzgerald rather than trying to tell a more coherent story of the birth and evolution of the genre. I liked it a lot.

I also liked the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, which is located in the same building as the Jazz Museum.

Unlike its neighbor, it *does* attempt to tell a coherent story. It wasn't until 1947 that the so-called 'color barrier' in Major League Baseball was broken when the Brooklyn Dodgers brought in a superb young infielder named Jackie Robinson. Prior to that, blacks had to play in segregated professional baseball leagues. The museum, which was founded in 1990 by several of those players, is set up to chronologically follow the history of the era of Negro Leagues baseball. There are hundreds of photographs and memorabilia items, including uniforms and baseball gloves worn by some of its brightest stars.

The highlight of the museum is its Field of Legends, a reduced-size baseball field populated by bronze statues of some of the Negro Leagues' best players, including Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Buck O'Neil, Buck Leonard, and Cool Papa Bell. It's possible to stroll out onto the field and even stride around the bases. Which I did.



the Field of Legends at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum

The final stretch of the road to MidAmeriCon 2 was a short one, just a couple of miles to the Marriott Hotel where we were staying for the convention. But even that was not without a point of interest. The route to the hotel took us past the corner of Oak and 18th, where resides a robot that is chained to a light pole.

I'd known there was street art in Kansas City, but this took us both by surprise. As far as I could tell it's constructed from scrap metal, maybe even from found objects. And I have no idea who created it. There was too much traffic to stop and not enough time to circle back as I needed to get the car turned in before the rental office closed for the day. But no matter, just seeing it from the car was enough to put a coda on an enjoyable day. And, on the eve of a Worldcon, this seemed a right and proper way to end a road trip.



the robot of 18th Street

Thirty-one and Counting

MidAmeriCon 2 was the 31st Worldcon for Nicki and me, a long and continuing series which does not include the first MidAmeriCon. That one was in 1976, and back then we were only a very few years removed from college and did not have the resources to do much traveling. The Guest of Honor for MAC-1 was Robert A. Heinlein and even though he's been dead for more than a quarter of a century his presence still pervaded this year's convention.



viewing the Heinlein Guest of Honor speech from MAC-1

One manifestation of this was a series of videos recorded at MAC-1 which were shown in the Fan Room. The one I watched was his Guest of Honor Speech, which ran not quite half an hour. It was completely extemporaneous and rambled a bit from topic to topic, touching on areas that caused some of the more liberal people in the audience back then to boo him. Watching the video of Heinlein's speech was certainly timebinding for me. I had never gotten to meet the man and, indeed, until then had never even heard his voice. Times have changed to the point where I don't think he would have been booed by the current generation of Worldcon attendees. Some by comparison would probably make Heinlein seem like a liberal.

One other thing that has changed since 1976 is the size of Worldcons. MAC-1 membership has been estimated as high as about 4,200 which had made it the largest Worldcon ever, at that time. But Worldcons have grown so much since then that 4,200 members nowadays would constitute a disappointingly small convention. Back in 1976, the function space that MAC-1 used was contained in a single hotel, the Radisson Muhlenbach. For MAC-2 they needed the expansive Kansas City Convention Center.

There was a lot of space available. The breakout rooms for discussion panels were all down on the first floor of the convention center while the upper floor was made into one huge extended concourse, with the Fan Room on one end and the Art Show and Dealers Room way down on the other. In between there were dozens of displays of one kind or another and tables promoting various conventions and special interest groups. The place where I hung out a lot was the table for the Fanac Fan History Project, which is working to digitally preserve audio/video recordings, photographs, fan publications, and other materials from the current and past eras of science fiction fandom.

It's a noble effort, one that I hope to be very much involved with if and when I ever retire. In my opinion there is a crying need for a high quality "fair use" archive of photographs, for historical research and future publishing projects. What's out there now is a hodgepodge of lesser archives, often with very restrictive usage or with photos of such low resolution that they're not very useful for anything. That has to change.

For MAC-2 the emphasis was on fanzines, especially ones from the 1930s through the 1960s. Tens of



at the Fanac Fan History Project table: (L-R) Teddy Harvia, Mark Olson, Joe Siclari, and Edie Stern

thousands of them were published during those decades, many of which contain historically valuable information about people and events and all of them moments frozen in time that provide a window on what science fiction fandom was like back then. There are physical archives of these fan publications, at universities and in private collections, but access to them is problematic at best. The Fanac Fan History Project is trying to improve on that by creating a digital archive of these publications. The brain trust of this project has been three notable fan historians: Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, and Mark Olson, and I have great admiration for all that they have so far been able to accomplish. And great empathy for all that still needs to be done. Sisyphus had it really easy compared to this.

Colophons! Why did it have to be colophons?

I was on six different program items at MAC-2, a big improvement over last year at Sasquan when I wasn't on any at all. The very first one had the most interest, at least based on the size of the audience. For that, I was moderator of a panel that attempted to describe what a science fiction history library should be in terms of types of materials available and suggested content.



"Fred" the astronaut
in the concourse of MAC-2

Nicki was one of my panelists along with Joe Siclari and Lauren Schiller, the latter an actual-by-god librarian who has previously worked at Harvard and Texas A&M. I am reasonably knowledgeable on the topic, but basically



“Building a SF History Library” panelists: (L-R) Nicki, me, Joe Siclari, and Lauren Schiller

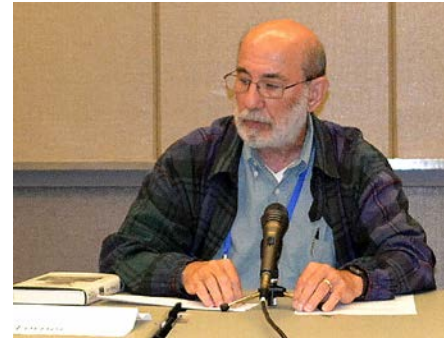
my job was easy – get the discussion started and have the panelists do most of the heavy lifting in terms of content added. I kept it snappy, letting panelists talk for up to a minute or so at a time and making sure everybody had ample chances to contribute. As for building a library, a lot of the usual stuff was suggested including Sam Moskowitz’s *The Immortal Storm*, Harry Warner’s two fan history books, Dave Kyle’s two coffee table pictorial books, Damon Knight’s *The Futurians*, Rob Hansen’s *Then*, and Fred Pohl’s *The Way the Future Was*. But this is now the 21st century and the definition of what constitutes a library has expanded. I had wanted Joe on the panel so he could talk about what’s available on the World Wide Web, and there is a lot. And more coming online all the time. Someday, soon perhaps, it will be possible to have an entire reference library available at the swipe of a finger across the screen of a tablet computer.

I was about ready to take a swipe (a verbal one) during the next panel I was on. The topic was “What is a Fan Writer?” and from the description I guess I should have been a bit suspicious: “*Is it a professional writer doing some work for free? Is it a way of life? Some say that the Internet made us all fan writers.*” The moderator and two of the other panelists were professional writers and one an artist/writer, according to their descriptions in the program. The only other quote-unquote traditional fan writer on the panel besides myself was the convention’s Guest of Honor, Teresa Nielsen Hayden. But that wasn’t enough to keep the panel from almost immediately succumbing to topic drift. One of the panelists, a 2014 finalist for the Fan Writer Hugo Award no less, apparently decided that the main subject of the panel should be fanfiction, and in particular “genderqueer” fiction in keeping with her interests as described in the program. And the moderator allowed her to monopolize the panel – she went on and on and on, no kidding, for more than half of the available time all by herself.

I think I was called on by the moderator maybe two times the entire panel for generic comments about the overall worth of fan writing, for about a cumulative twenty words total. I had wanted to bring in some historical perspectives about fan writing, citing the contributions of Bob Shaw, Walt Willis, and others who have entertained us with their words over the years. But to no avail. About two-thirds of the way through the panel I finally gave up and thought to myself, “Is this *really* what fan writing has sunk down to?” Steve Stiles, a damn good fan writer in his own right who was a Hugo Award finalist this year in a different fan category, was sitting in the front row and appeared to be as dismayed as I was. I looked at him and gave a resigned shrug, and he returned the shrug.

But it was my final panel that was the most difficult. For that one, Fred Lerner and I were given the task of expounding on “The Art of the Colophon”. For most of an hour it was just me,

Fred, and five hardy audience members. Fred is one of the founders of the Science Fiction Research Association and has written several books, while I was co-editor of a six-time Hugo Award winning fanzine. So we both knew something about colophons, but let's face it – it's a pretty narrow topic. It took us maybe ten minutes to discuss what the uses are, what kinds of information are usually included, and provide a few examples from both professional and fan publications to demonstrate stylistic differences. After we got through that, minutes started passing like hours as we attempted to find various nuances we could dissect. We didn't exactly run dry, but by the end of the panel we had not only beaten the topic to death, we had also smashed it flat, crushed its bones, and scattered its pieces to the wind. When I saw Fred the next morning in the Marriott concierge breakfast room, I pointed to him and said, "Colophons!" He just smiled and shook his head.



Fred Lerner

Giving the Puppies the Business

Nicki was a participant in five panels, one of them an improvement on that disappointing "What is a Fan Writer?" panel. It was titled "Fanfiction and Professional Writing" and had a much more capable moderator – her. Other participants included freelance writers who had leveraged fanfiction and fan writing experience into pro-dom of one fashion or another, and one of them was a finalist for this year's John W. Campbell Award for best new professional writer. I missed seeing the panel due to a conflict and when Nicki described it to me, the first thing she said was that she had sat next to a television celebrity – *Jeopardy!* champion Arthur Chu.

There was enough to see and do at MAC-2 that I didn't sit in on all that many panels where I was not a participant. And, like last year, I spent several hours in the WSFS Business Meeting. But not all at once! No, that probably would have been debilitating.

There were enough proposed changes to the WSFS Constitution and Bylaws that this year's Business Meeting lasted, in total, about ten hours spread out over four days. The most controversial items were those that modified nominating procedures for science fiction's highest achievement awards, the Hugos. This was in response to the continued campaign by the so-called "Rabid Puppies" faction who had objected so much to the recent trend of what they perceived as liberal-agenda stories, writers, and publications being nominated, that they had attempted to hijack the Hugo Awards by block vote nominating hand-picked slates which were in some cases ideologically conservative to the point of being Fascist. Or in other cases, just to be obnoxious, in ridiculously bad taste (an example of the latter being the short story "Space Raptor Butt Invasion" by the pseudonymous 'Chuck Tingle').



the WSFS Business Meeting

This was the second year of that kind of nonsense, and by now even the traditionalists who had resisted drastic constitutional rules changes had finally resigned themselves that enough was enough. There is a two year process for amending the WSFS Constitution and at MAC-2 a radically different way of tabulating nominees, using a statistical process that very few people completely understood, received its final approval. However, the decision was far from unanimous and a provision was added that future Business Meetings at the next five Worldcons can revert to the previous simpler system should the new method prove ineffective in preventing another block vote take-over. But as for this year, it was a different denouement...

Dinner and a Spanking

After hours entertainment at a Worldcon usually involves consumption of food, and that was certainly true for MAC-2. Nicki and I participated in several dinner expeditions with friends, with lots of good food and entertaining conversation. All of them were to restaurants within a reasonably short walk. Except for one.

It happened on the Saturday evening of the convention, right in most restaurants' prime time. The degree of difficulty had been high to begin with, because there were ten of us and we hadn't made a reservation anywhere. We ended up at a place called John's Big Deck, which wasn't our first, second, or even third choice – it was kind of the choice of last resort. The place turned out to be an open air sports bar, up on the roof of a building close enough to the Kansas City Stockyards that every so often a breeze from the north would waft in an odor that smelled like somebody had shit their pants.



dinner at John's Big Deck

The food was actually pretty good and the conversation even better. But the service, not so much. It took forever for the food to get to the table and nearly that long to get the check. By the time Nicki and I had stopped by the Marriott to briefly freshen up and then proceed over to the Convention Center, we'd missed the first part of the Hugo Awards Ceremony.



in the concourse at the Hugo Awards livestream

We arrived in the overflow area, up in the middle of the concourse where the event was being livestreamed, just in time to see the Best Semiprozine Hugo be awarded to the editors of *Uncanny Magazine*. Three of them came up to accept the award, and more than seven minutes later they were still there – each of them gave a long and drawn out acceptance speech. This gave us a chance to find out what we had missed, and to our dismay it turned out to include all four of the fan category awards.

All of these had been influenced by Puppies block voting in the preliminary nominating round,

but in three of the four categories that actually turned out to be a very good thing. Mike Glyer, who has been editing high-quality fanzines for more than 40 years, won in both the Best Fanzine and Best Fan Writer categories. His competition had been Puppies slate nominees who all finished below “No Award”. The same result happened for Best Fan Artist, with our friend Steve Stiles finally, *finally* getting his long-deserved Hugo Award, winning out over four Puppies slate nominees who all finished below “No Award”. Before the convention I had predicted this would happen, for both Mike and Steve, because it had *already* happened – a year ago, at Sasquan, the Best Fanzine Hugo went to the very deserving *Journey Planet* which had vanquished four Puppies slate nominees in the voting. But for the Best Fancast category (for fan-produced podcasts) there were no non-Puppies finalists, and so “No Award” was the voters’ overall choice. And no Hugo was presented in that category. Which had been the expected result.



Steve Stiles contemplating his Hugo

When the dust settled, the Puppies had been thoroughly spanked. None of their extreme slate-nominated candidates had won, and “No Award” had also come out on top in the “Best Related Work” category, where again there had been only Puppies finalists. We eventually did get to see Steve Stiles win his award, once the livestream of the Hugo Ceremony was made available at the **ustream.tv** website. But it was a much shorter wait than Steve himself had. This was his only win in fifteen appearances on the Hugo final ballot, the first of which was almost a half century ago when the Fan Artist category had originally debuted. He made reference to it as he told the audience, “You know, I had written an acceptance speech, but I wrote it back in 1967 and it got lost amid the fossils.”

Epilog: Convening with Heinlein

Unlike Steve Stiles, I was not yet a fan back in 1967. But as a senior in high school I was most definitely a science fiction reader. The village where I lived only had a small public library, and the science fiction books available were mostly by some of the giants of the genre – Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Andre Norton...and Robert A. Heinlein.

I didn’t get to see the unveiling of the bust of Heinlein – it happened when I was participating in that surreal “What is a Fan Writer?” panel. But Nicki did, and she told me that a politician was there and read a proclamation from the Missouri House of Representatives, and that there was a scrum of people jockeying for position to get a photograph of the event. Nobody else was present when I went to pay my respects to Mr. Heinlein a bit later on. So I patted him on the head and told him, “I’m still a fan.”



the bust of Robert A. Heinlein

I think I’ll remember MidAmeriCon 2 as one of my favorite Worldcons, for the trip that surrounded it as much as the convention itself. About an hour into the airplane ride back home, I turned to Nicki and said, “Epic!” She nodded in agreement. ☀