



CHALLENGER 7

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* art by TERRY JEEVES, WILLIAM ROTSLER, ANON., PHIL TORTORICI, DAVE RYAN, NOLA FRAME-GRAY

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WAUSEON, OHIO - "THE TOWN YOU'LL TAKE TO HEART"

Saying Goodbye to Lynn
Hickman
Curt Phillips

Northern Ohio is as flat as a landing strip and in places it seems to roll on and on forever. Cornfields stretch everywhere. On the drive from where you get off I-75 at Bowling Green to the outskirts of Wauseon itself, corn seems to fill the entire world. On my way I passed hundreds of farmers on huge tractors patiently working their fields, mile after mile after mile. Eventually a town loomed up in the midst of all that corn. A bright little sign on the side of the road read: *"Welcome to Wauseon, Ohio -- The town you'll take to heart"*. And in truth, driving into

Wauseon did feel something like driving into my own home town because this was where Lynn had lived, and he had told me about this little oasis in the cornbelt for years.

I had put off this trip for a long time. Just after Lynn's death in October 1996 Roger Sims had told me that Lynn's fanzine collection had been left to me and that I should contact Carolyn about it soon. I wouldn't admit this to myself for a long time, but the fact is that I was deliberately putting off that phone call because I was putting off dealing with the fact that my friend had died. I had seen Lynn the previous February at the Pulpcon in Asheville, NC and we talked and joked and carried on just like always and when we parted at the end of the convention we said, "So long, see you at the next one."

We didn't say goodbye then, and I didn't want to say it now.

But of course, you can only put the truth off for so long and now here I was on a beautiful spring day pulling into Wauseon to pick up my inheritance and to say goodbye.

*

It was at a science fiction convention that Lynn and I first met. A Chattacon, I think -- sometime in the early 80's. We were introduced by a mutual friend who was recruiting us both into an amateur press association called Myriad and we soon discovered that we had a mutual fondness for pulp magazines, old fanzines, and "traditional" science fiction fandom. A few years later when Lynn founded PEAPS -- the Pulp Era Amateur Press Society -- he knew that



Art by JOE MAYHEW

I'd want to be one of the charter members and invited me to join.

Lynn and I became good friends, the kind of friends that you find in fandom once in a while -- if you're very lucky. I was about two full generations his junior, but no hint of a generation gap ever hindered that friendship, mostly -- I think -- because we largely approached life in the same way and were generally the same kind of science fiction fan. He seemed like a big brother to me and largely without even thinking about it, I looked to his career in fandom as an example of a good one to follow.

During that 12 hour drive from Abingdon to Wauseon I had a lot of time to think and remember. Little things kept coming to mind, like the time I gave Lynn an old detective pulp at a convention and in trade he later mailed me a very browned and brittle copy of the Nov. 1930 Wonder Stories magazine. It was obviously worthless as a collector's item but the accompanying note raised it's value from worthless to priceless. This was the very first pulp that Lynn had ever owned. He'd bought it used for a nickel back during the Depression when a nickel could buy you lunch and he'd hung on to it all these years. He knew it wasn't worth anything in that condition, but it was special to him because it was his *first pulp* ... and he wanted me to have it. I wouldn't trade it for anything at all.

Then there was the time that Lynn was the Fan Guest of Honor at ConCave -- a wonderful convention near Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. It was decided to "roast" Lynn at the banquet and I got the job of putting that together. I worked like a fiend getting material from Bloch, Tucker, Dean Grennell, and lots of other big-name fans who knew Lynn way back when. Naturally I thought I had him backed into a corner since everyone knows that at a roast, the roastee is supposed to try to mount a rebuttal and I figured that I'd made things pretty hot for Lynn. The moment came when some response from the man of the hour was required. I sat down and looked at Lynn with an expression that said "OK, get out of this one if you can." Lynn cleared his throat, and the audience leaned forward to catch the opening salvo. Then his face broke into a huge grin as he said, "Well that was fun. I'm kinda thirsty now and there's cold beer in the consuite, so *follow me*." Then -- pausing only long enough to throw a wink at me -- he marched the entire audience out of the room leaving me to marvel at just how easily he *had* wiggled out of it. Lynn was one of those guys who always had something up his sleeve when he needed it.

He visited us once here in Abingdon while on his way back home from visiting relatives in North Carolina. Couldn't get him to stay the night but he had supper with us and sat for a while talking pulps and fandom with me. Then after a last cup of coffee he jumped back in his car and drove straight home. After that he invited me to come up to Wauseon and visit. I always seemed to be too busy to plan that trip but he'd mention it again every now and then. After he renovated a storage building in his backyard into a "Slan Shack" to store his collection he called to invite me up again. I promised that I would...someday.

Then late that summer I heard that Lynn was sick. Not wanting to bother his family I called Lynn's closest friends Roger and Pat Sims and found out from them just how bad the situation was. It was the worst, and the doctors had given Lynn about two months to live. I don't recall what I said to Roger after that but I think he could tell that I was pretty shaken up. Shortly after that I called the Hickman home and talked to Lynn's wife, Carolyn. She told me that Lynn was very weak but he could talk on the phone for a moment. She put him on and it was obvious that it was very difficult for him to talk at all. He sounded awfully tired and his breathing was labored. I tried to keep the conversation light but I wasn't fooling either of us. I asked if he thought it would be possible for me to come up and visit him that weekend. He said, "No, I don't have the strength just now. Maybe next week would be better." So I told

him I'd call back in a few days and wished him the best. Four days later I came home from work and discovered Roger Sims' message on my phone. "*Curt, I have news about Lynn and it's pretty grim...*"

*

If you've never been there, you wouldn't really believe how pretty a town Wauseon Ohio is. Small but sprawling, old but graceful, it's a town where the folks just want to live and enjoy life. It's very much a farming town and it's what you think of when you hear the words, "small town America". It has wide, tree-lined streets and the cleanest downtown courthouse you've ever seen. On my way in I had to stop at the courthouse and be a tourist for a moment. Down here in Virginia courthouses just naturally have monuments to the Confederate dead of that locality and we all grow up taking it pretty much for granted. Wauseon has a courthouse with a huge monument to the local *Union* veterans. It was the first time I'd ever seen that and I had to stop and go over and read the names inscribed on the base. An awful lot of Ohio boys from that county had gone off to the war. Some of the regiments I recognized as having been at the battle at Ft. Donnelson in western Tennessee, a place I know well. A couple of years ago I marched in a reenactment of Grant's march from Ft. Henry to Ft. Donnelson and walked the same swampy paths that many of these Ohio boys did. Other regiments on that monument were at the terrible battle at Stone's River where the Union dead covered the battlefield so thickly that in places you couldn't walk without stepping on them. Some of those boys may have grown up there in Wauseon. Had I made it to town a year earlier, Lynn and I would have walked by that courthouse and he could have told me all about it.

413 Ottokee Street looks like a nice, average house. I don't know what I was expecting, but it seemed not much different from those around it. In fact I went to the wrong house at first and the neighbors had to point me in the right direction. Then I knocked on the door and Lynn's son Mark invited me inside and... something unusual happened. Bear with me. I'll try to write this as simply as I can. In spite of having read a lot of science fiction and supernatural fiction, I do not have the slightest interest or belief in ghosts or the supernatural. And although I do have my private beliefs about matters of religion I am not what you would describe as a religious man. However I have long been able to sense people around me, by which I mean if I walk into a room and someone else is in the next room I can tell it somehow. I don't know why this is so, it just is and I've never really thought about it. I used to think that everybody could do it. Different people have different knacks and among mine are that when I shoot a gun I always hit what I aim at, no matter where I am I can always tell which way is true North, and I can always tell where people are around me. When I walked into Lynn's house, my knack told me, "Hey, Lynn's here." In fact, he seemed to be standing up between the couch and a chair directly in front of a large plant that I later learned was the plant that I'd had sent to his funeral. I didn't *see* anything unusual, it just felt like he was there and he wanted me to know that he was glad that I'd finally come up to visit.

I know what you're thinking. You're not thinking that I'm nuts, necessarily; you're thinking that I'm just making this up to have something exciting to tell. You're thinking that I'm spinning this wild ghost story and some of you are starting to think that it's maybe in kind of poor taste to be using the occasion of Lynn's death to invent a ghost story, and you're certainly not going to believe a word of this. I don't blame you. When I think about it rationally I don't believe it either. I honestly don't believe in that which I can't see or touch,

but I'm stating to you that when I walked into Lynn's living room that evening the certainty that he was standing there in the corner *hit* me and if I had closed my eyes I'd have sworn that he really was there. I'm not asking you to believe anything except that his presence in that house was as real to me as was Mark's or Carolyn's. I don't intend to try to explain it. I'm just reporting what I experienced there, and you can make what you will of it. I hesitated for a long time to write about this, but since I believe (as we say in these parts) with my hand to God that all this is true, then for the propose of reading this article you might as well accept it on that basis.

And if you want to know the rest of it, he seemed to be very happy -- delighted, in fact -- and he stayed in the living room for some reason that I can't imagine. Mark took me all over the house a bit later and we went out back to the Slan Shack (which is where I would have expected to notice something if anywhere), upstairs and in the garage. No matter where I was, my "senses" told me that Lynn was in the living room, and was very happy. During my visit he only moved once and I'll get to that in a bit.

Carolyn was at work when I arrived but Mark welcomed me in and we sat and talked a while. We had previously talked on the phone about SF books and pulps and Mark wanted to pick my brains a bit for advice about selling some of the books that he'd inherited. He's not into SF himself and hasn't been a SF dealer before but he's worked a lot with sports cards and knows the basics about that sort of business. He's just unfamiliar with the SF market and that was where I came in. We talked about the various specialty SF dealers and Pulpcon and the auctions there, and I described the way that I sell SF books at conventions. Mark had already

sorted a lot of the material and much of it was pretty good stuff. The condition was usually good with a few items having been damaged in storage and some of it soiled or dusty. I showed him some of the ways I use to clean books. Lynn's collection of hardback SF had some very nice items and mostly seemed to have been bought new and packed away. Some of these were later sold at Pulpcon that year. Lynn's pulp collection was much better. Most of it was upstairs in a hallway that had been turned into library and it's condition was better than average. I saw a lot of hero pulps, a good bit of SF, large stacks of air pulps and a few westerns. (If you want to know specifics contact me and I'll put you in touch with Mark Hickman. It's my understanding that he plans to have a table at this year's Pulpcon and he plans to take his time to research the market to make sure he's pricing his pulps fairly. I think you'll find him pretty easy to deal with.)

I've often said that you can tell a lot about a fellow by looking at his collection. Lynn's collection told me a few things that I hadn't known before. It seems that he reviewed SF for a while in the early '60s or at least was able to get on several publisher's lists for review copies (most likely because he published *The Pulp Era* at the time.)



Curt Phillips

Although he read mostly SF he also read mysteries too, and particularly liked Frank Gruber, Harold Q. Masur, and Mike Resnick's stories. He was something of a technophile and loved to work with his computer and had a really nice desktop publishing outfit. Most of his mimeograph stuff had been removed before I got there, but there was still a lot of it around. (I later found that Howard DeVore had collected some of it for First Fandom.) There was a large box of over run sheets from his last issue of the Pulp Era. Mark gave those to me and when I get a chance I'll assemble as many of those as I can and distribute them at Pulpcon.) There were hundreds of extra copies of Lynn's other fanzines -- mostly his apazines from FLAP, KAPA, Myriad, and others. I didn't see much pulp related stuff. I know he used to enclose one or two of his zines from other apas whenever he wrote me so I assume he habitually ran off a lot of extras for that purpose.

Out back in the garden Lynn had converted an old garden shed into a comfortable little retreat that he called his Slan Shack. I was interested to note that Carolyn and Mark -- who aren't SF fans themselves and didn't know where the name came from -- nonetheless still called that building "the Slan Shack" in casual conversation. Carolyn had found a paperback of *Slan* by A.E. Van Vogt and wondered to me if there was a connection so I explained about it. Of course, I imagine that Lynn was thinking of the first Slan Shack at Al Ashley's place in Michigan during WWII since it was made famous in the fanzines of the day. Pulp fans today know that the true Slan Shack is behind the house at 413 Ottokee in Wauseon. Lynn had moved some of his best stuff out there and much of it was there during my visit. He'd asked me up to see his impressive collection of pulp cover art, and I'm glad that I got to see some of it in its natural setting. The Frank R. Pauls were sold before Lynn's death, but I did see most of the ones that he talked about over the years in PEAPS. The Walter Baumhoffer cover from *Adventure*, the R.G. Jones cover from *Fantastic Adventures*, the Ed Cartier and the Hubert Rogers from *Astounding*. There was a Lawrence Stevens painting that had been found in a pile of rags when they first started cleaning up and a Virgil Finley drawing that was found in a box of old fanzine art. There was a faded pencil drawing on very brown paper that I recognized as a Jerome Rozen -- but only because I saw Lynn buy it at a Pulpcon auction years ago. For me, the best of the batch was the cover printing that illustrated the first issue of *Imagination* -- a painting by Hannes Bok. Incredible. I wish Ned Brooks could see it. The impact of the original is stunning. Serious buyers were already talking to Mark about those paintings and they were about to be moved to more secure facilities after I left. There was also a file of old fanzine art, much of it by Terry Jeeves, that Carolyn passed on to me for use in my fanzines. I was also given some original Plato Jones artwork. That's one of the names that Lynn used back in the '50s for his own fanzine art. Some fine artwork there.

Prior to my visit Carolyn and Mark had sorted out much of Lynn's papers and boxed up most of the fanzines. These awaited me in the living room and I moved them out to the truck that night. I was also given his fannish correspondence files which contains letters from numerous pro writers and big name fans of the past. There also seems to be some early First Fandom material which is to be expected since Lynn was a founding member of that organization. All this will be carefully sorted and preserved for the future and I'll try to find good uses for it in the coming years.

Carolyn put me up in the guest room and I slept fine that night. No ghosts, no dreams, and I awoke feeling refreshed. I took Carolyn to lunch at a little place in town that has great cherry pie and I got to hear about how she and Lynn first met. She may not have been a SF fan but Carolyn did go to a lot of conventions with Lynn and she kept her eyes open. She long

ago met Tucker, Bloch, and Grennell; knew the teenaged Harlan Ellison , and has wonderful stories about Midwestern fandom clear back to the '50s. Later that morning at my request we drove over to nearby Napoleon Ohio. That's where Lynn grew up and that's where he's buried in a family plot next to his mother and right across from his brother who was an 8th Air Force fighter pilot and who was shot down over Holland in 1944. The death of his brother to whom Lynn was very close may explain some of Lynn's fascination with flying and the air pulps. It's a beautiful gravesite, about the prettiest I've ever seen. The stonecutter was just putting Lynn's dates on the stone while we were there. Carolyn mentioned that she was thinking of having some sort of symbol put over Lynn's name. "Maybe a First Fandom insignia," I blurted out, without thinking. "Yes," she said. "That's what I was thinking of." We visited there for a while and then went on back to Wauseon where I said my good-byes and left. Well, not quite that simply. I mentioned earlier when I was describing how I'd "felt" Lynn's presence in the house all during my visit and he'd not moved from that corner of the living room except for once. I was standing in the doorway about to leave when I turned around to take a last look over at that corner. Suddenly that "feeling", or "presence" or whatever it was, came over to the doorway where I was. I mean I actually sensed it move across the room to the doorway. I didn't hear anything, I didn't see anything, but I had an odd feeling sort of like deja vu. For just a moment I couldn't think of anything except the very last moment I'd seen Lynn in Asheville over a year ago when he'd raised his hand in farewell and called "So long Curt, see you next time."

Yeah, I know -- the unbelievable stuff again. What I know is that when I walked out that door, my grief for my friend's death was over. I still miss Lynn, and will for as long as I live but somehow I had said the goodbye that I needed to say. I stopped back by the cemetery on the way home. The stonecutter had finished and gone away. I didn't "sense" anything there, nor did I expect to. But just in case I said, very quietly, "So long Lynn. See you next time, pal." Then I went home.



Illos by JOE MAYHEW

2-3-98

MIDNIGHT RAMBLER : EDITORIAL

This 7th *Challenger* is a publication I've been planning for several years, and it came out *almost* as dreamt of. Herein my friend Susan Whitmore writes -- bravely, unselfishly, exquisitely -- about her daughter, Ellie. This is a piece I've wanted to proffer fandom for a long time, as the people are wonderful and the story is moving. But the story of Eddie, the serial rapist I once defended, is once again *not* here, and the terrible contrast between love and hate I wanted to present, the cosmic equation of evil and innocence I wanted to suggest, must wait.

Unlike the tale of Popeye and his pals in "Born to Lose", Eddie whips up deep hurt and anger and involves ambiguities of guilt and pity I could never resolve in the space and tone a fanzine allows. Though a lot of fine people have freaked when I told them about the article, it wasn't fear of the reaction that kept me from writing it. Rather, it's just too Awful. I can't do it right now.

So *Challenger* no. 7 has a lawyer story that shouldn't "challenge" anyone but baseball lovers. I forgive myself to the extent that this yarn might bring a smile, something Eddie's tale could never do, but dammit, I want this zine to be *more* than entertaining. *Challenger* must *challenge*.

There is other stuff in this issue, and I'm proud of it. Aesthetic musings (and verse) by Gene Stewart. Another stone-nifty piece on magic by Jerry Page. A moving memorial for Lynn Hickman by his legatee and friend, Curt Phillips. Inge Glass shares *her* LoneStarCon with us, a wonderful coup, as part of my usual spread on the worldcon, and hopefully you'll find my photo essay on Hugo bases diverting. Y'all have chimed in with LOCs and fanzines for review, and finally, there is my paeon and plan for WigWam Village. *Res ipsa loquitur*. (The thing speaks for itself.)

Such subjects demand the best treatment I can bring as an editor, and so in addition to great interiors by Joe Mayhew, Charlie Williams, Peggy Ranson, Bryan Norris, Ruth Shields, Rotsler, Gilliland and many others, this issue is fronted by the finest artwork I've ever seen on a fanzine. Dennis Dolbear bought this drawing by David Cherry at the World Fantasy Convention some years ago. Both DD and David gave permission to use it here, for which I am extremely grateful. We all know Cherry's work, of course; he is a multiple-times Hugo nominee, one of the most respected artists in the genre, and a righteously pleasant fellow. Beyond this, he is fortunate beyond measure: he is married to the artist and actress Davette Shands, one of the most beautiful women in the world.

Challenger 7 here. I hope you enjoy it.

* LoneStarCon was a diverting weekend, but friends there advanced a subject which terrified me to the tips of my toes. *DUFF*. Several were the worthies who encouraged me to ~~drink the same beer as Homer Simpson~~ compete for the Down Under Fan Fund, which conveys fans to and from Australia, in 1999.

No secret to my raging desire to visit the land downunder! I've admired Australian film for decades. I've loved the Australians I've met, from Robin Johnson at the 1974 DeepSouthCon to Al Fitzpatrick, gagging down medicine as he rode with Ned Brooks and me to MidAmeriCon to Craig Hilton and Julia Bateman touring New Orleans before Nolacon II. I've even tasted Vegamite. But I'm poor and never thought to walkabout the outback, climb Hanging Rock, or swim the Barrier Reef for myself, as I so craved. Australia



Cousin Roger, a friend and I at Disneyland, 1956

was a dream and nothing more.

Then along came these great people urging me to try for DUFF, and other great people agreeing to serve as my Australian sponsors. With such encouragement I might not have a choice in the matter. I might well have to run.

There are problems. '99 is Australia's worldcon year. The field will throng with outstanding candidates. (My ambitions began when Harvia told me *he* wouldn't be one.) If there is one thing I hate, it's ~~ea~~*flower losing*. Also, there are my personal liabilities. Leaving aside the fact that I hate to fly and would spend the many hours over the Pacific in an abject dither, I am *fubbo: fat, ugly, bald, broke, old*.

Okay, so being fat and ugly and bald means only that I am a typical male fan, and as lots of us are pushing 50, I'm relatively not all that old. So substitute another "O" word: *Obnoxious*. Nervous, pushy, occasionally insensitive, overanxious, hyper-enthusiastic, virulently opinionated, I'm well aware that it's very easy to get *plenty* of GHLIII, and *fast*. The fact that I never mean to piss people off has never stopped me from doing so. I am prostate with grief o- ... *prostrate* with grief over this, but there isn't much that I can do about it. Or really, am willing to do about it. You see, I'd rather be me than win any contest. I yam what I yam.

But there's also the question of finances. Broke I am indeed. Some internal character flaw prevents me from amassing the riches lawyers are supposed to. Public defenders are not paid extravagantly and I live paycheck to paycheck. I owe Uncle Sugar a swack of money, and Uncle *will* be paid. Considering TAFF's recent financial troubles, I can certainly understand why voters in any fan fund would be wary of entrusting their dollars to anyone without four stars on their credit rating, and mine is a black hole.

However. It's always been my understanding that TAFF, DUFF and the other aFFs and uFFs were created to take people places they couldn't afford to go themselves. I agree with that philosophy; it's waste to give money to someone who has money. Secondly, if management of DUFF dollars after 1999 is the issue, I could easily set up a savings account for the fund which couldn't be touched until the year of its use -- something like an IRA. That would certainly prevent pilferage if pilferage was a concern. I'd be responsible *as a lawyer* to the next DUFF winner for any errors, subject to professional discipline from the Bar. (That possibility doesn't worry me, because of a fact I know even if no one else does: I'm honest.)

So while I'm bragging, what are my *other* positive qualities? Enthusiasm. I love the fannish experience. I wouldn't be punishing my bank account and risking the scorn of the TWGM by publishing *Challenger* if fandom didn't have inestimable attraction for me. So, if I won DUFF, I could promise a raw-boned *fiend* of a trip report, published quickly in zine form and on the net. Lots of photos, lots of atmosphere, lots of opinions, spirited prose informed by a Masters in Fine Arts, a year emptying trashbaskets at DC Comics and thirty years pumping out fanzines. For me, an experience isn't *real* until I've written about it, and Lynn Hickman himself told me that when I write about a trip or a con, I bring my readers right along with me. I want to go to Australia and write about it. There's nothing I'd rather do than climb Hanging Rock (as in Peter Weir's wonderful *Picnic at*), and bring you down a scrap of calico.

Tempting, tempting! I'll turn 50 in the summer of 1999. I've resolved both to enjoy and to utilize the rest of my time on this turf. Exploring downunder in the name of American fandom would be a worthy way to start. If I decide to try, in this regard at least, I'd need your help. What do y'all think?

* In case anyone is interested in my opinion of the Clinton/intern scandal, follows a letter I wrote to the New Orleans Times-Picayune in mid-January:

I have some questions about the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Who betrayed this young woman? Who violated her friendship and confidence to secretly tape her private conversations and use them to humiliate her country and destroy her?

Who attempted to bully her into wearing a concealed recording device and into entrapping the President of the United States into illegal acts? Who is blackmailing this young woman with criminal prosecution and threatening to subject her parents to similar abuse, should she not counter her sworn word and say what he wants her to say?

Who is tempting America's media to ignore other stories, such as the liberalization of the most oppressive

government in the western hemisphere and the influence of the head of the world's most visible Christian religion on that liberalization, not to mention the conclusion of the longest manhunt in American criminal history, and to fill its air space with pornographic musings on the President's private sexual proclivities? Who is reducing the political dialogue in this country to smutty innuendo?

Who is willing to lay waste a period of prosperity and social calm and subject this country to years of turmoil and division? Who is abusing his legal authority to score political points for his party?

Who is behaving hypocritically -- cynically -- and despicably?

And who -- perhaps the most important question -- is going to fall for it?

The scandal is silly. It has nothing to do with Clinton's conduct of the office. The facts are dubious, the methods to garner those alleged facts, atrocious. Kenneth Starr stands revealed as a brute who will step on anything and anyone to besmirch his target. Any prosecutor who threatens someone's parents to get her to testify -- and *in a certain way* -- is not worthy of a demi-iota of public trust. Linda Tripp -- who urged a giddy girl to open her heart and/or imagination to her, recorded her outpourings of anguish and/or fantasy for use in a book, then bartered them to a political hatchet man -- is the lowest public creature I've seen since Tonya Harding's pond scum husband. One scribe called Tripp a villain of near-Shakespearean proportions. She has denigrated not only friendship and professional loyalty but the stature of her country.

The media have disgraced themselves utterly. They have lowered themselves into discussions of intimate and debauched sexuality more suitable for the pages of *Apa-69* than journalistic professionals. Dan Rather, to his credit, has acted as if ashamed of the whole thing ... as well he could be. For his profession has reduced the national stage to one giant Jerry Springer Show, and the whole country owes Bill Clinton and his family an apology.

* Speaking of disgraces, this issue of *Challenger* is being concluded in the receding din of the Karla Faye Tucker execution in Texas.

No one would dispute the fact that the crime Tucker committed 14 years before her death was heinous. Had her execution followed closely thereafter, there would be no argument that it was appropriate as well as deserved.

On the other hand, no one can dispute -- with evidence -- the fact that the rehabilitation of Karla Faye Tucker was an incredible success. People experienced with dealing with inmates, people experienced in spotting phony religious conversions and bogus redemptions, all swore she was the real thing: a redeemed and rehabilitated person. I believe them.

The state behaved obscenely. Observing the brute satisfaction with which the head of the pardon board squelched Tucker's request and the crocodile tears shed by the state's cynical and ambitious governor, one could only pray for the Bomb. They strutted, they postured, they behaved coldly and without honor. Apparently Texas thinks it takes tough men to kill a helpless woman. (By contrast, the district attorney who protested that the people of Texas took no joy in the death of Karla Faye Tucker was restrained and admirable.)

I'm not automatically against the death penalty. There are times when no other legal response to a criminal act will suffice. John Wayne Gacy had to die. Ted Bundy had to die. Timothy McVeigh has to die. Civilization would rock on its foundations were lesser penalties imposed in such extreme and awful cases.

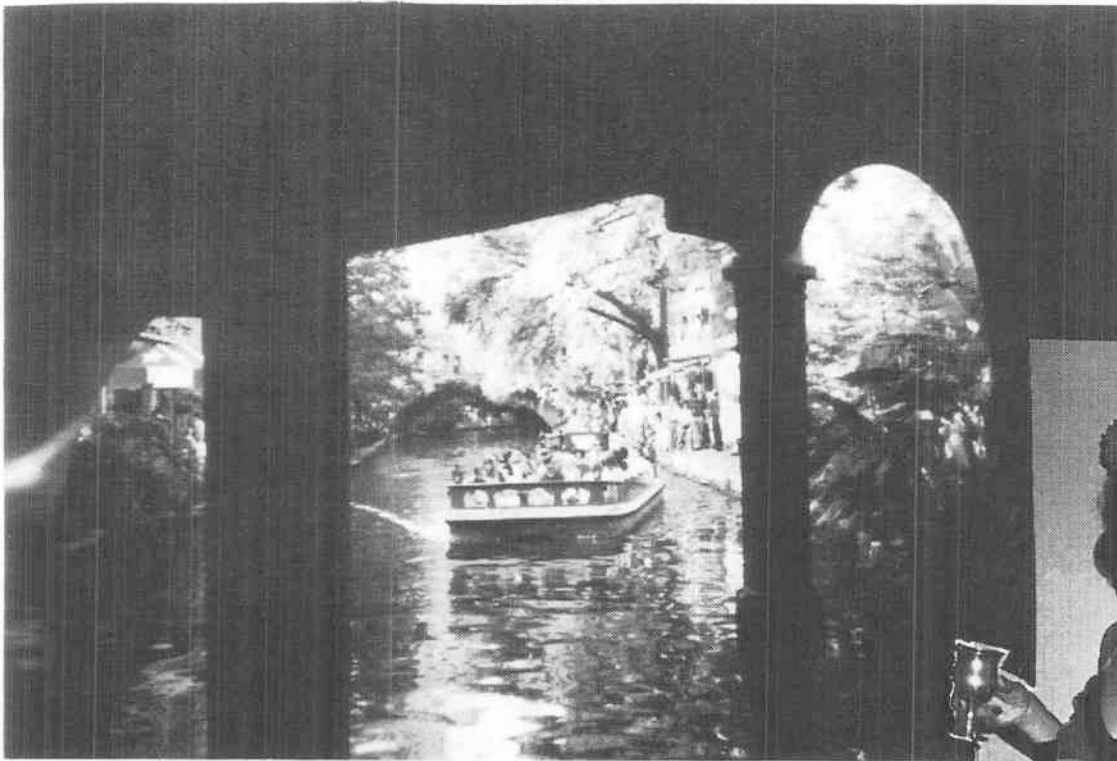
But Karla Faye Tucker did not have to die. Not when her life was such a symbol of the good a prison system can do. Her death by contrast is a symbol of human weakness and cowardice.

God rest and forgive her. Us too.



A SALUTE TO SFPA

Last November the mighty Southern Fandom Press Alliance distributed its 200th mailing. In recognition of this feat, *Challenger*, whose editor has been a SFPAn since mlg 39 in 1971, reprints these covers from the *first* SFPA mailing, from 1961. The zines and their authors: *Binge* by Mike Kurland, *Iscariot* by Al Andrews & Dick Ambrose, *Loquamur* by Dave Hulan (who also contributed to mlg 200), *Blob!* by KEN Gentry, *Sporadic* by Bill Plott (who had the idea), *Alabok* by Bob Jennings (SFPA's first "Mailing Editor".)



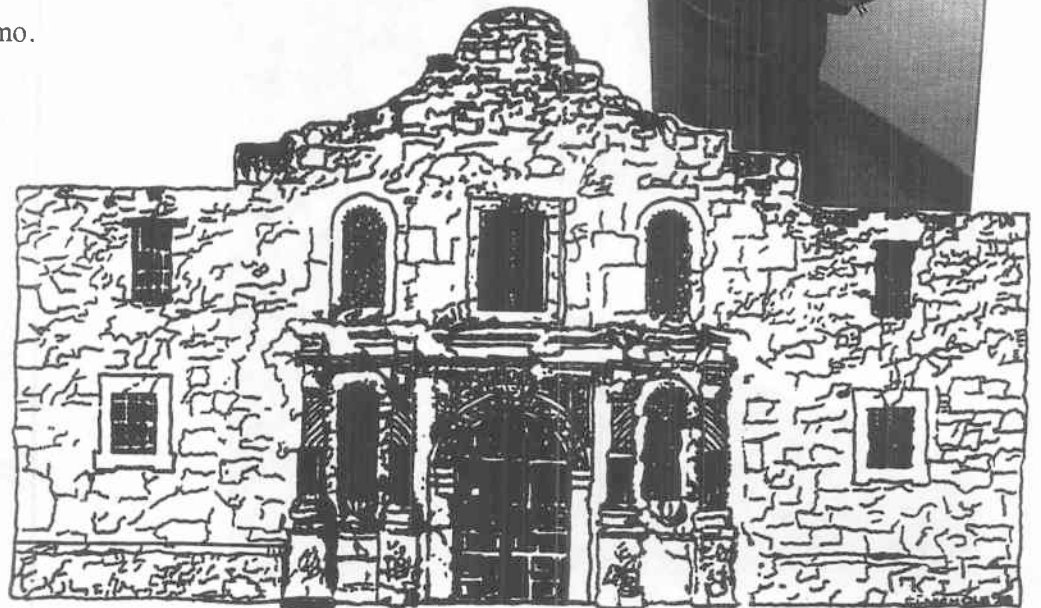
LONE*STAR*CON

Worldcon '97

pictures and text by Guy Lillian

It was a worldcon steeped in American history and punctuated by foreign tragedy. It rose by the side of the San Antonio River and within earshot of a Texas shrine. It was a *simple* convention in many ways -- for some reason, I expected more *stuff*, more speakers, more special events. (Hey, I expected to see *Alan Shepard* there!) But what was there at LoneStarCon was good to find there.

I'll remember the Alamo.





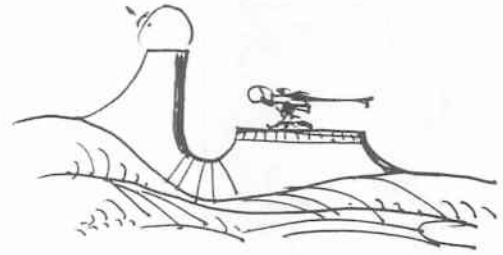
How often do you come up with an idea for a comic book and find it transformed into the #1 movie of the year? **Lowell Cunningham**, creator of *Men in Black*, with **Dorothy Tompkins**.

Bobbi Armbruster trapped between yhos and **Marc Glasser**, LASFAPAmates of a distant age. The first day of LoneStarCon made it *20 years to the week* since I'd first set eyes on the divine Bobbi.



Fred Pohl and a critic debate the way the future was at the LoneStarCon autograph table.

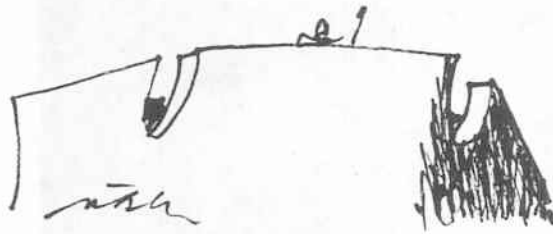




LoneStarCon featured fab'lous parties and great costuming. Here **Robert Neagle** and a friend compare furry footwear. Below, an Australian attendee.



Louisiana's first Hugo winner, **Camille Cazedessus**.

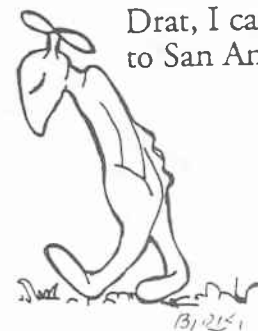


Ingrid Nielsen's smile has pulverized my heart at every worldcon for too many years to believe.

Spreading the word for their Cancun in '03 worldcon bid, Teddy Harvia and Diana Thayer.



At the Alamo monument in 1992, Dennis Dolbear and GHLIII strike Crockett-ish poses.

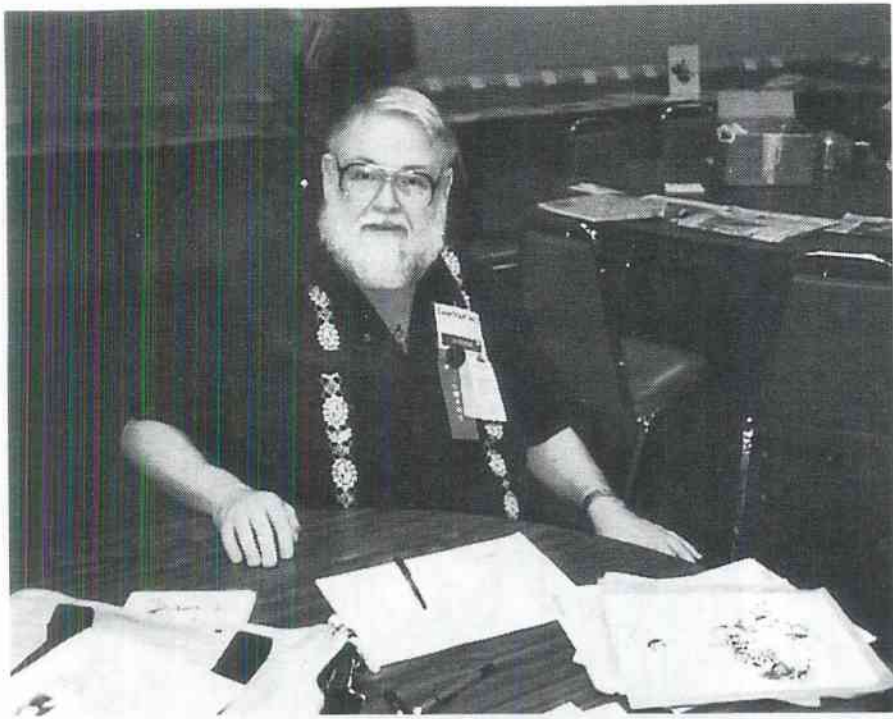


Drat, I can't get to San Antonio....



COSTUMERY!





In the fanzine lounge, **Joe Mayhew**, Hugo nominee, overdue for a win. Below him a panel of fanzine editors holds forth: **Alex Bouchard**, **Benoit Girard**, **Mike Glycer**, **Alex Slate**, **Henry Welch** and **Tom Feller**. Below *them*, the great **Algis Budrys**, and below *this*, the reason God created spandex.





Faces & Figures ...

Tangent editor Dave Truesdale.

Toni Weisskopf hosted
a great party for Baen Books.

Below, Inge Glass gets a
(temporary) tattoo while
Robert Neagle supervises.



HUGO NIGHT

Kim Stanley Robinson accepts congratulations for winning the Best Novel award for his magnificent **Blue Mars**. All three volumes of his superb Martian trilogy have won major s.f. honors, and he plans a collection of his shorter writings on the red planet. But he still insists the Face on Mars is "Just hills! Just *hills!*" Elvis will get him for that.

Below, **Bruce Sterling's** lovely daughter cherishes her dad's Hugo for "Bicycle Repairman".



Science fiction partied that Saturday night, but with the rest of the world, paused to acknowledge life's saddest reality, from the U.K. to San Antonio.



...and again: Sucked into the Vortex

Inge Glass' Worldcon

When it comes to SF conventions, and Worldcons, I am pretty much a beginner. My first one was Intersection in Glasgow 1995; Next came L.A.ConIII, and then, this year, LoneStarCon2 in San Antonio.

In Glasgow, I really didn't know what to expect. I was 100% ignorant about everything that makes a Worldcon tick, and I didn't know a single person there. I walked in shyly, passed hundreds of people wearing, yes, strange outfits, noticed varying numbers of colorful ribbons dangling from badges (what are these?!), and was not sure at all that I would enjoy myself. Well, it turned out that I did. During these five days, I learned about panels, the big evening events, the dealer's room, the art show, and bid parties (parties? really?). Being in Scotland, I actually met some men wearing skirts, and after five days, I had made a couple of friends, who, over the next year, kept contact.

In Glasgow, I had decided that I liked Worldcons, and purchased an attending membership for L.A.ConIII in 1996. This time, I thought I knew what I was getting into: basically, running from one panel to another to sample as many different subjects as possible, raiding the dealer's room for second-hand books, seeing old friends and making new ones, and having a look at one or two parties. Well. The parties there were good. I mean, good. I slept less than I did in Glasgow, much less, but I was still in control.

Having survived two Worldcons, I figured the next one in Texas would be worthwhile, too. So, when I boarded the plane to San Antonio, I looked forward to five days of fun and hectic activity, same as last year.

Little did I know.

I had arrived on Tuesday. The next morning, while looking for the breakfast room, I met people who already had their badges pinned on.



All of a sudden, I felt second-class. I wanted to belong to the 'family' again, as soon as possible. I chatted them up (or did they chat up me?), and one of them tried to convince me of the superior experience of... volunteering. I never had thought of doing this before. Up to this moment, I had been strictly on the consumer side of everything. Of course I knew that there were people actually working at Cons, the organisers behind the scene as well as the plainly visible gophers everywhere, but... me? A new experience. I signed up. Next thing I knew, I had my badge, I was a volunteer, and I started volunteering by helping setting up the art show and moving some of the art into the show. Clearly, this job took some time and thereby did not help to relax my already tight schedule.

From then on, that is, Wednesday afternoon, try as I might, I can't remember what I did at which time. I emerged exhausted and sleep-deprived on post-Con Tuesday, feeling quite like picked up by a tornado, whirled around a couple of thousands of times, and spat out again much later. So what has happened this time?

First off, I had made friends in Glasgow. Some of them I had met again in L.A. and met again in San Antonio. I wanted to spend some time together with them, and that's what I did. In addition, I had made new friends in L.A. with whom I wanted to spend some time. And, the SF community being what it is, consisting of friendly people, I made new friends in San Antonio with whom... you get the idea. After two or three days, I couldn't cross the hotel lobby in a straight line anymore because every few yards I met someone who wanted to talk to me, or who I wanted to talk to, or who gave me a hug, etc. etc. This condition worsened when I wanted to cross the lobby together with someone else on our way somewhere, because each of us met friends. Once, four of us tried to cross the hallway on our way to dinner. It took us the better part of an hour only to get out of the hotel.

Second off, Worldcons are highly parallelized and simultaneous events. I thought I knew that fact, but obviously, I had never understood the consequences. One can't see every panel, and the local attractions of the hosting city, and find all of the parties scattered about the hotel. And the more one tries, the less one can experience, and the less sleep one can get. Right at the beginning, people told me to hang on to the basics: get at least five meals and two hours of sleep per each 24 hour's Con time. I did better than that: I didn't pay much attention to eating,

but I made sure I got THREE hours of sleep every night. Sometimes barely that.

And I defined priorities. I volunteered ten hours altogether, mostly at registration in the mornings, to get one of the nice t-shirts. I attended one Kaffeeklatsch and one literary tea, both worthwhile. And, while I had seen lots of panels in the previous years, in San Antonio, I saw ..two. I feel guilty about this fact. I really do. But - the pocket program did not contain much information, only the title and participants, and I did not want to lose time by actually going there and finding out that I wasn't interested. So, I heard something about dinosaurs, and luckily, got into the one panel in San Antonio that was packed with people: The one about Sex&Drugs&Rock&Roll&SF. Absolutely hilarious.

Then, I had to do some serious shopping. The prospect of unlimited access to new and second-hand books was what actually had lured me to my first Worldcon. So, on my way to a Worldcon, my bag weighs only some pounds. Every time, on my way back home, my luggage mysteriously has gained about 40 pounds. This time, I bought lots of second-hand books, new ones, a kind of ornamental chain-mail top and hair net (just imagine me trying to explain this to my husband!), earrings, another bronze dragon pendant, buttons, bumper stickers....

So, when I think about it, which impressions did I bring home with me from San Antonio?

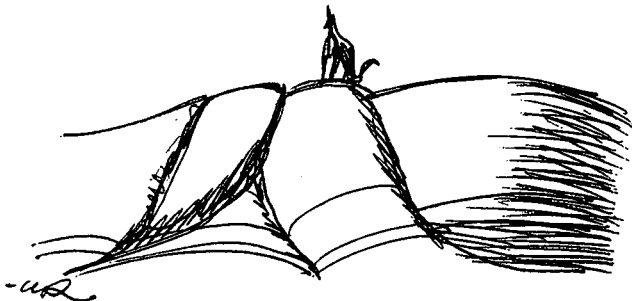
Chaos. Not enough time. Friends. Meeting friends, some of them unexpectedly. Wonderful conversations.

Parties. All the balloons at the Boston bid-parties. Wonderful food. Fun.

Mortality - the news of Princess Diana's death, at Saturday night. 'We are all immortal until we die' - (Emma Bull).

Sleep deprivation.

The very, very best time of the whole year.



HOW *MAGIC* WORKS; OR, WHY MAGICIANS *NEVER* TELL

Jerry Page

During the run of his half-hour television anthology series, it was Alfred Hitchcock's policy to direct the first episode of each season. He claimed that he simply took whatever script was on top of the



stack and to have made no special efforts to gear the material to himself. Perhaps it's no surprise then that sometimes he showed up to find things were not what he wanted them to be.

One year he was doing a story that began with the main character walking into a police station to confess to murder. When Hitchcock arrived to begin filming he discovered to his astonishment that a highly detailed police station set had been built. "But we don't need this," he said. "It's a complete waste of money!" Why? Because the most important part of the scene was the man who had come to confess. He would appear in the doorway, cross the room to the desk and talk with the sergeant. That was the scene. Since the point of the scene was the man's emotional state, the entire scene would be filmed with a traveling close-up to show the man's face. When he got to the desk, people would see the sergeant's uniform and know this was a police station. All the rest would be unnecessary because it would never be shown on screen.

And what has that got to do with magic? Well, for one thing, movies are the most popular form of magic shows ever created. For another, Hitchcock's point is as important to magic as it is to film making.

The greatest magician I was ever privileged to see was a gentleman who went by the name of Tony Slydini. Born in Italy, he moved to South America in the thirties and did not come to the U.S. until after the Second World War. He arrived here unknown by most Americans, and under the influence of none of the standard schools of magic. Being primarily on his own, Slydini had worked out his own method of performing and it was startlingly different from everybody else's.

Where some of the most influential magicians of the day argued that the only way to do magic was to master the most difficult sleights of hand, Tony Slydini simplified his moves, eliminating sleight of hand as much as possible. He kept only those moves that were absolutely necessary to do the trick, and concentrated more on timing on psychology than difficult manipulation.

Slydini's psychological approach to magic was so revolutionary that it literally changed the way many magicians thought about the field. But he remained the champion. When Dai Vernon, the legendary master of close-up and manipulatory magic, was in his eighties, he was asked if he was ever fooled by magic anymore. "No," he said, "I've seen too much." He hesitated, then added, "Well, Tony fools me. But no one else."

The most important contribution Slydini made to magic lay in his emphasis on psychology. He noticed, for example, that when the audience was relaxed, you could get away with anything. When were they relaxed? When they had just seen what they took to be the climax of a magic trick, or when they had just enjoyed a good laugh. At such moments, the magician could do anything.

The clearest example I can offer of this actually predates Slydini's appearance on the scene. I think it was Thurston (I apologize if I'm wrong and it was actually Blackstone) who had a routine in his show where he filled a box with rabbits and then made them all disappear.

He filled that box with as many rabbits as he could. Everybody in the show, every scantily clad showgirl, every uniformed assistant, brought a rabbit on stage to put in that box. Then the box was closed and Thurston performed the magical nonsense, opened the box and all the rabbits were gone.

The secret? It was simple. The very last man to bring a rabbit on stage always dropped the darned thing. He then had to chase it all over the stage to recover it and stuff it in the box. You know, while a dignified looking man is chasing a rabbit around on stage, the audience is so busy laughing you can get a lot of rabbits out of a box -- and the audience won't notice. And in the end you only have to make one rabbit disappear from that box.

It's what the audience *sees* that matters. Just like in the movies.

Other people than magicians know this. Dishonest gamblers, fraudulent psychics and other swindlers use pretty much the same methods to achieve their ends. And it's what their audience sees that counts.

It's hard to imagine anyone who has been shown up as a fraud more often than Uri Geller, yet I still see articles that proclaim him a proven psychic. A couple of examples of his skills should suffice to disillusion any intelligent person regarding Geller.

Geller has on occasion done what he calls psychic photography. If someone has a camera handy, Geller has that person tape the lens cap on the camera and concentrate on a picture in a book, or something similar. He then tries to read the person's mind and transfers the image to the film. He aims the camera at the person's forehead and snaps the shutter several times. Quite often, when the film is developed, a picture is found exposed on the film. It isn't always a picture of what the other person was looking at, however.

In the mid seventies, *Life* photographer Yale Joel was photographing Geller when it was suggested that psychic photography be attempted. Joel chose a camera that had a fish-eye lens, and taped the lens cap over it. Joel's son was present. The sons stared at a picture in a book, Geller attempted to pick up his thoughts,

snapped several photos, then went on to other "experiments." One of those later experiments required the Joels to leave the room for a few minutes.

When the film was developed, sure enough there was a picture on it. It wasn't the image of the picture in the book Joel's son had concentrated on. It was -- *ta da* -- Geller himself. What gave it away was that the fisheye lens picked up the tips of Geller's fingers holding the camera.

I watched a television magazine show about the same time that had a segment purporting to show Geller bend a spoon. The reporter told us we would see a spoon bend.

Geller and the reporter are in the kitchen of a hotel where they can borrow a spoon. There is much running around, much talk, much generation of confusion. There is much that is absolutely blatant.

You probably learned this when you were a kid. You pick up a pencil or pen and hold it loosely between your thumb and index finger. You then wiggle it up and down. The pencil appears to bend as if it were made of rubber. You can do that with a spoon, too, and claim your psychic powers are causing it to melt right before people's eyes -- if you have the balls. Geller had the balls.

The other example tops even that. We're shown a close-up of the spoon -- perfectly unbent -- lying on a table. Then an insert of the reporter's face looking absolutely amazed. What comes next? A close-up shot of the spoon -- completely bent -- on the table. The reporter then claims with a straight face that he has

shown us the spoon bending on television -- proving that Geller wasn't the only con man in the room.

I mean, think about it for a moment. You have video tape of a spoon actually bending. So you cut it out and replace it with a shot of your own face, so that the audience only sees before and after? Come on, David Letterman wouldn't even do that.

By the way -- if you ever want to impress people with your ability to bend spoons or keys, do the trick in a kitchen. Kitchens have faucets which are excellent gimmicks for working the trick. Just poke the spoon or key up the faucet while no one is looking and bend.

A little skill with misdirection and you can get away with it every time.

There's one advantage mental magic has over every other kind. People *want* to believe in it. Almost any magic trick that doesn't call for an elaborately decorated box with "Acme Magic Dealers" stamped on it can be performed as

an experiment in some form or other of parapsychology. And since it's an experiment, it doesn't matter if it occasionally fails, does it? After all, if it were a trick, it would have worked.

Wendy Webb and I used to perform mentalism at science fiction conventions. Our usual approach was to conduct experiments that would test the audience's psychic abilities. Not to put too sarcastic an edge on it, but it was astonishing how often our audiences proved to have amazing powers.

Of course we had to demonstrate our own abilities just to prove our qualifications.



One of my favorites involved Guy Lillian III, whom any reader of *Challenger* will know at least by reputation. Guy was in the audience once and I proceeded to have him merely think of his social security number. He never wrote anything down, he never even pulled out his social security card. There was absolutely no collusion between us, either. Yet I did it.

What was my secret? Well, some time before Guy was looking for work and had left his resume with a mutual friend, Hank Reinhardt. Hank let me get a quick look at it and I copied down the social security number. I sat on it for almost two years waiting for Guy to attend one of my performances.

M i n d reading at its best is almost always pure psychology. The great Joseph Dunninger, perhaps the finest mentalist of all time, made it a point to stop his performances in the middle of some routine or other and ask if someone in the audience weren't thinking of a certain number or color.

If Dunninger didn't get a quick response, he could suggest a couple of alternatives. Perhaps the number suggested a house or phone number. Did anyone have the number "6" in the address of a house that was on their mind? Is someone spoke up he'd ask more questions. If the person was thinking about a house it was important to them and therefore not far from some interesting anecdote or fact about the person's life. Thus, out of the blue, Dunninger could involve a complete stranger in his act in some way that often proved more fascinating than the most carefully arranged illusion.

And if it didn't work, no one would even remember later that he tried.

The current rage in magic is a new category of tricks called "Self Levitation", which means exactly what it says: the magician makes himself float. It was boosted by the television special of David Blaine, a young street magician, where he made himself levitate, outside, under seemingly impossible conditions.

Blaine's style is about as close to perfection as possible. He has a low key personality that appears to be just one or two notches above somnambulism. But that only emphasizes the miraculous aspect of what he does. For the special he walked up to people on the street and asked if he could show them something. Assuming they didn't run or call the

cops (and a good many of them ran), he would then perform a magic trick. His repertoire, for the most part, is the simplest of stuff: a couple of coin routines that rely on the sort of trick coins you can buy at any tourist dealers for a few bucks, and a handful of basic card sleights of the sort taught in any beginner's book on magic. His routines, however,

are clearly not the work of any beginner.

No, I'm not going to tell you how he levitated. I *will* give you most of the clues. He did it in several different locales, all of them outdoors. All were urban with the possible exception of the training center of the Dallas Cowboys. He was careful to make sure that the spectators were all standing to one side of him and he turned his back on them. (Okay, here's a bit more than a clue: I *think* this was because he was wearing a t-shirt.) He then held his arms out to his sides and lifted up three or four inches off the ground.

The show actually didn't give us a clear



look at the levitation. I'll give you my thoughts about the director in a moment. He clearly was more interested in the reaction of the spectators. Most were amazed, some deeply affected. One or two canonized Blaine on the spot, which I think is allowing things to go too far.

One of the spectators actually crouched down for a good look under Blaine's feet. This is a big clue because apparently he saw nothing. There is no full length shot of Blaine levitating, which could also be another clue if I thought the director knew what he was doing. But we do see his feet and they are up off the ground.

Since David Blaine is doing magic for complete strangers who had no idea they were

going to see anything of this sort — and since he's simply doing the tricks out on the street — the impact of his stuff is fabulous. People are amazed by him. Nothing he uses looks like a magic prop — sure, his coin magic relies on trick coins but they don't look like trick coins. They look like real quarters. In

one trick he appears to take a bite out of a quarter, and then magically restore it. The first time he did it, it blew me away.

There is a principle in magic that says you never repeat a trick for the same audience. Blaine's director obviously didn't know a lot about magic, and the fact that he'd show Blaine doing the same trick several times reveals that. The first time you see him bite a quarter, you see a terrific actor putting across a brilliantly simple piece of magic. The second time you see the trick. I would rather have the memory of how the trick affected me the first time than to have seen how it worked the second.



This is one of the reasons magicians don't tell. Magic is acting and the magician an actor playing the role of someone who performs miracles. It is a privilege to see a Slydini, a Dunninger, or a Blaine work in the way it is a privilege to witness the work of a great actor, a great musician, or a great athlete. You recognize that a Yo Yo Ma achieves what he does by long hours of practice, and it's the same with any magician. The scales a magician plays are a little different, that's all.

But they're still scales, and they're not inherently interesting in and of themselves. Chances are, if you have ever seen a card trick that really amazed you, and if that card trick

involved sleight of hand (many of them don't), it involved a double-lift, a glide, or a pass. (Those appear to be Blaine's arsenal.) Telling you that tells you nothing because it doesn't tell you what those moves are, what they can do, or how they do it. Within the length and scope of this article, I couldn't explain them to

you so that you would appreciate them -- unless you actually learned how to do them and used them, and saw the audience reaction you can get from them.

Personally, I don't do sleight of hand. It requires time and discipline I simply don't have, to practice and do it well. So I find other methods, but the idea is the same. When I do magic I want you to be intrigued and entertained. If I could entertain you by showing you how they work, I would. But the simple truth is that sometimes when I do a trick people gasp in amazement. No one ever gasps at me when I explain a trick.

A MARTIN SCORSESE FILM OF PAUL SCHRADER'S SCREENPLAY
ROBERT DE NIRO • JODIE FOSTER

IN
URBAN FRANKENSTEIN THE FILM

A MIRACLE PRODUCTION OF MARTIN SCORSESE'S 'URBAN FRANKENSTEIN' STARRING ROBERT DE NIRO, JODIE FOSTER, ROBERT D'WALL AND HARVEY KATEL AS 'FILTH.' PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY MARTIN SCORSESE. CREDITS BY SCORSESE'S MOM.

UH, GOSH, I JUST SAW YOU SITTING HERE
IN THE PARK AND, WELL, JEEZ, YOU'RE SO
SEXY IT DRIVES ME WACKY! IS THAT A
KITTY YOU'RE PLAYING WITH? HO... GRUNT...
DO YOU LIKE DIRTY BOOKS? BOY, I SURE
DO! I HAD A GIRLFRIEND BUT I STRANGLLED
HER ACCIDENTALLY WITH AN ELECTRIL
CORD... GRUNT... *SNIFF*... AREN'T YOU
PRETTY... BUSY TONIGHT? I HAVE LOTS
DIRTY BOOKS... DO YOU COME HERE OFTEN?
I DO!! HO... GRUNT... I SURE LIKE DIRTY
BOOKS!! GRUNT GRUNT!...

MARK URBAN

'1980

JESUS H. CHRIST!



MY FAVORITE HUGO

Guy Lillian

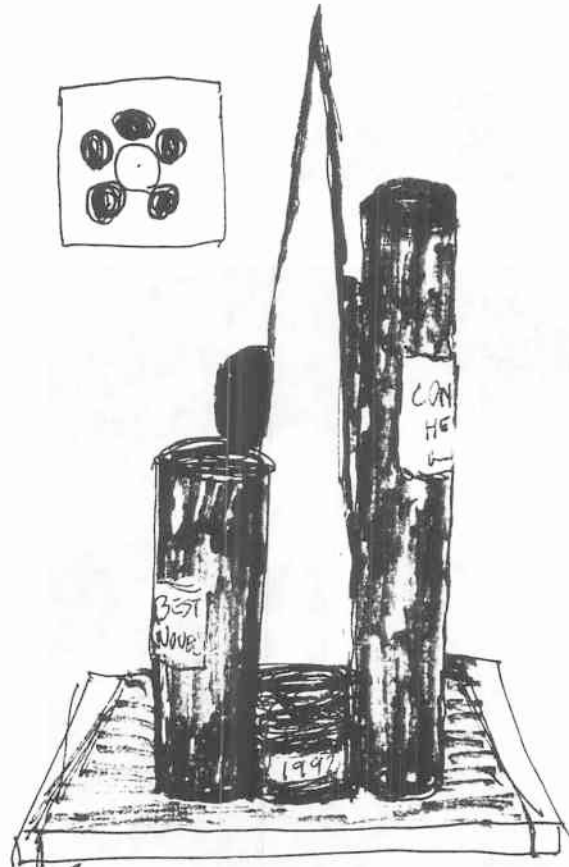
Before 1976 -- before the advent of the *modern* worldcon, that is -- bases for the annual Science Fiction Achievement Award, the **Hugo**, were dull affairs indeed. At MidAmeriCon, along with exorbitant at-the-door rates, a practice was begun which has become a worldcon tradition: each convention designs a unique and hopefully distinctive base for the chrome rocket. Unfortunately, I couldn't find a good photo of Tim Kirk's revolutionary design for the MidAmeriCon Hugo -- the photo below is a blow-up from a distant shot -- but follows a photo record of some the other unique awards we've given each other over the past years.

I suppose many fans doodle their own designs for Hugo bases. Here's one of mine. In case you're baffled by my divine artwork, the design is simple: the Hugo in the middle of a round platform, surrounded by metal cylinders of 1, 2, 4, and 8 inches. The plaques are set into these. It's supposed to be a futuristic cityscape. Note the material I had in mind: anodized aluminum is what they use to make Mardi Gras doubloons.

Well, some of us are artists, and some of us are ... *not*. If you've ever drawn a Hugo base, or have one you'd like to share ... you know the address: *share it*.



Tim Kirk's MidAmeriCon Hugo ... a base entwined with a dragon



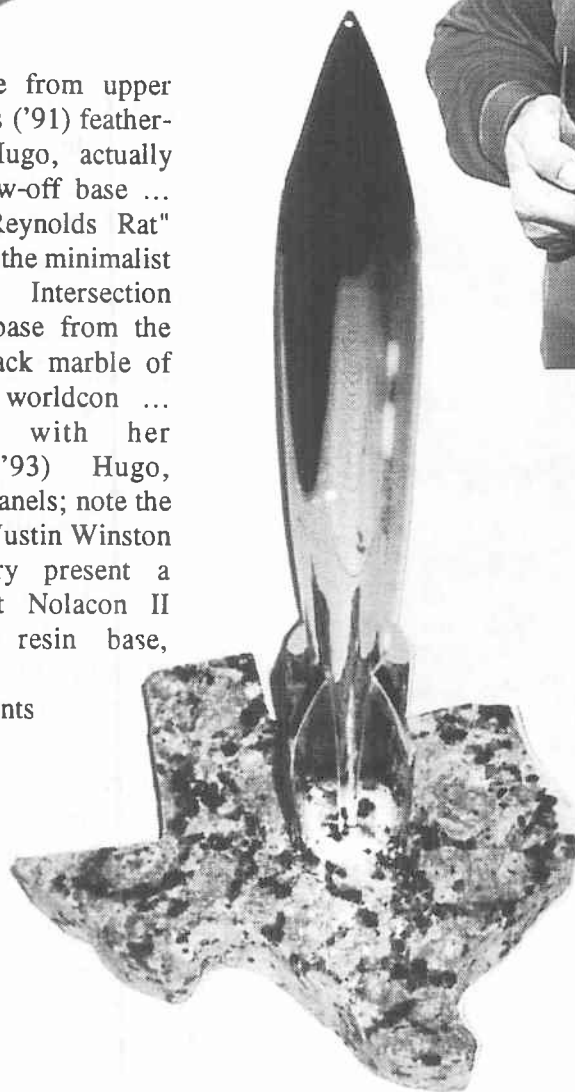
anodized
aluminum





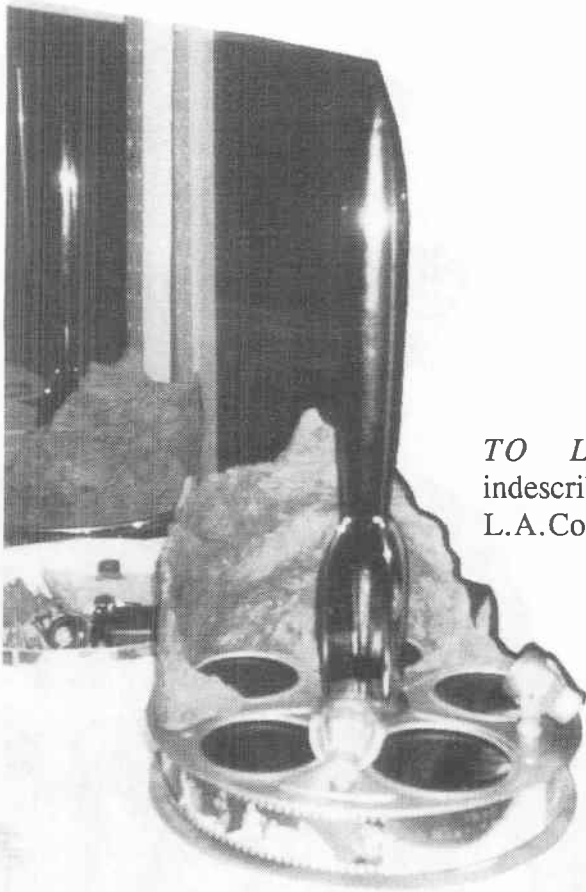
OPPOSITE

Clockwise from upper right: ChiCon V's ('91) feather-light "crystal" Hugo, actually plastic on a screw-off base ... L.A.Con II's "Reynolds Rat" Hugo ('84) fronts the minimalist round base for Intersection ('95), a classic base from the '60s, and the black marble of the '90 Hague worldcon ... **Janet Kagan** with her Confrancisco ('93) Hugo, missing the side panels; note the compass rose ... Justin Winston and John Guidry present a special award at Nolacon II ('88); the tall resin base, designed by Ned Dameron, represents exhaust. Next issue: his *original* concept.

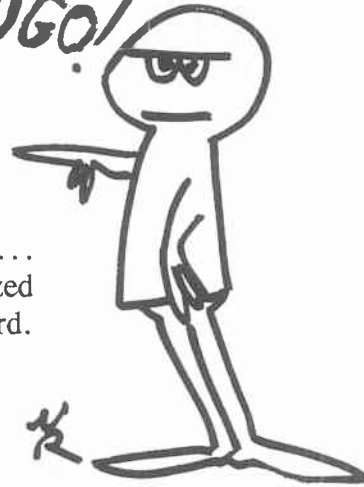


ABOVE

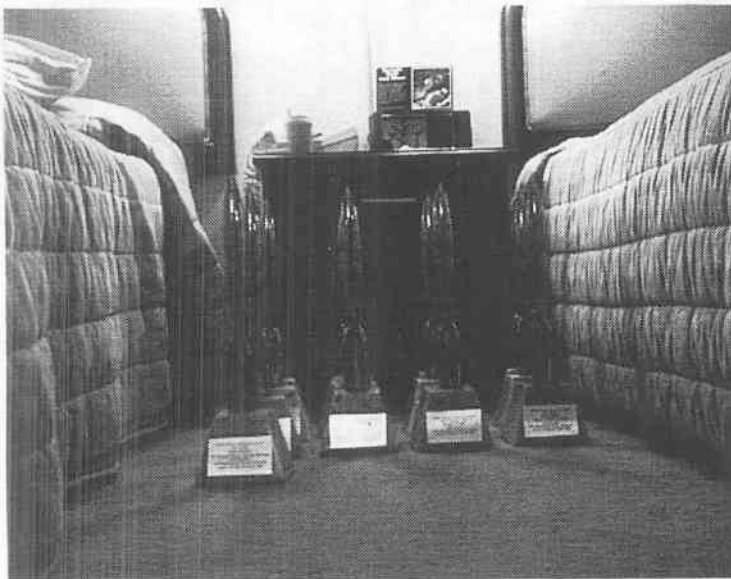
Far left: the Maple Leaf design from proud Conadian ('94)
 Above: Forry Ackerman with the *first* Hugo, the Jack McKnight "hood ornament" ('53) -- note: no individualized plaque -- and a later model ('60)
 Left: from deep in the heart of Texas, LoneStarCon's 1997 Hugo



NOW THAT
IS A HUGO!

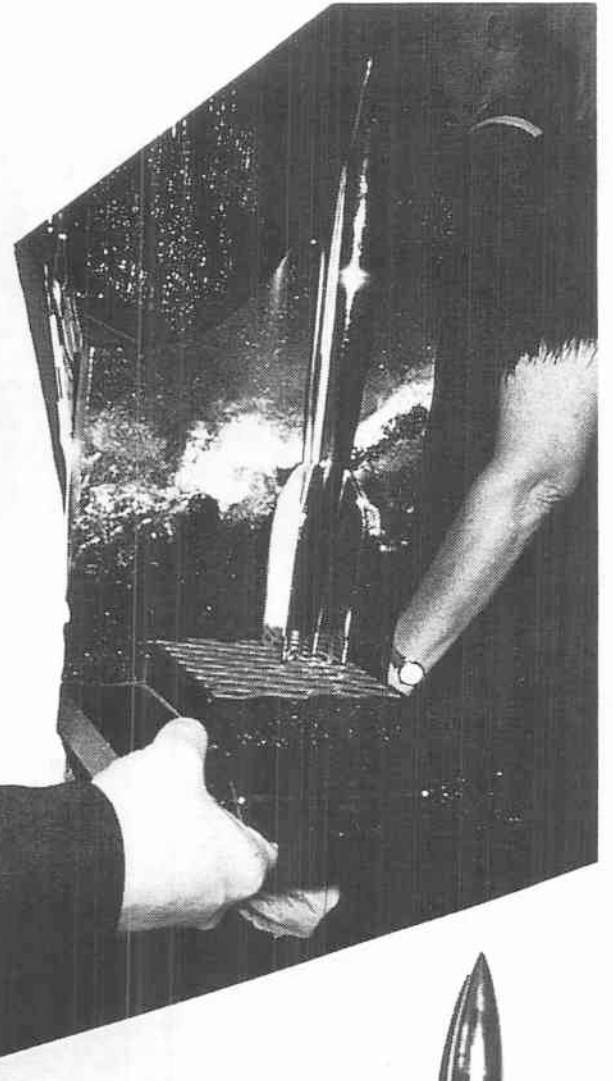


TO LEFT the ...
indescribable Hollywoodized
L.A. Con III ('96) award.

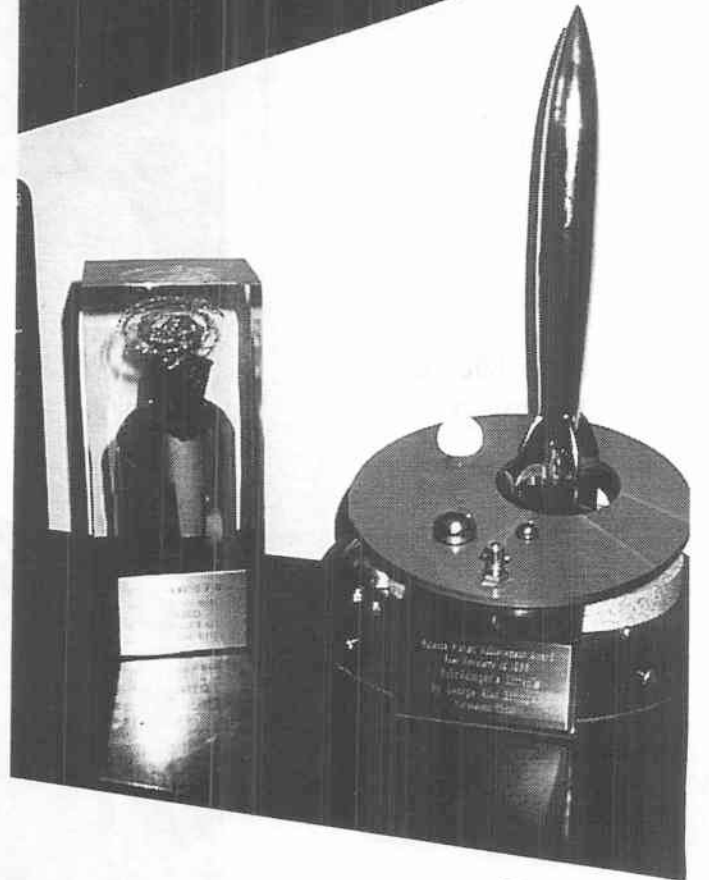


ABOVE Confederation ('86) formed the
heaviest -- and to my mind, *classiest* -- of
all Hugo bases from native Georgia granite.

ACROSS Clockwise from
middle left: Iguanacon's
unique "billboard" design
from '78 (held by Fred Pohl)
... Harry Warner's Hugo
collection from Confrancisco
('93), St. Louiscon ('69) and
L.A. Con I ('72) with his Big
Heart Award ... MagiCon's
elaborate base from '92
featured individualized
starfield backdrops and grid
squares from a Cape
Canaveral launch tower ...
Noreason III's infamous '89
motif allegedly fell apart on
stage, but I find it gorgeous;
this is George Alec
Effinger's for "Schrodinger's
Kitten", as is the Nebula ...
Some fool with one of
LoneStarCon's chocolate
condolence Hugos -- as close
as I'll ever get, and I had to
give it back! (photo by Susan
Higgins)



What a Guy!





*Left: RMGD at
Anne Rice's
fence, 1996.
Below, 1986, at
Confederation,
hovered o'er
by an unworthy
admirer*

*The
Challenger*

*Tribute
...*

**Rose-Marie
Donovan**

*Nee Rose-Marie
Green,
or just Rosy.*



With Joe at the MagiCon NASA exhibit



Is there such a color as *Rosy Green*? It sounds impossible. But when we first met the girl with that name, it was at a moment celebrating conquest of the impossible: her father Joe's Apollo 11 launch party.

Over the years Rosy Green Donovan has been the color -- the essence -- of beauty and class, gracing our genre and delighting our company. She is married to a fine, lucky man and seldom follows fandom these days, but we haven't forgotten ...

Challenge at the Cutting Edge

Susan Whitmore

Given the title of this fanzine, it's fitting that there should be discussion herein about the nature of challenges. I suppose the ultimate challenge would be death, something everybody has to face sooner or later. But there are some challenges, pre-ultimate, that have to be met by living. Having a hostage to fortune, as I believe Lois Bujold put it in one of her recent novels, is one of them.



I'm going to tell the story of my child and my challenge. I'm a science fiction fan and naturally interested in the cutting edge of science as well. The nature of my child's challenge is such as to engage those interests. Otherwise, it's just a story about a parent coping, a universal theme.

I suspect most parents go through that moment when the universe shifts, and you suddenly realize that it's not about you anymore, but your child. For me it came fairly early. I had a particularly difficult labor and delivery, complete with emergency c-section and follow-up surgery the next day to clean up the mess that had been made the day before. There were some high points to the whole procedure: They had given me an epidural for the surgery, and the

cessation of pain was wonderful; I felt better than I had in months. I was burbling away all through the caesarian. During the conversation I gave forth with the most insightful analysis into **Glory Road** -- I just wish to hell I could remember what I said! And when they finally got Eleanor out, I could tell instantly that she was beautiful, though covered with blood as she was, I'm not sure *how* I could know, but I did.

So there I sat for a few days, recovering, trying to learn how to breast feed around intravenous tubes. And round about forty-eight hours later a thought floated through my brain, "That wasn't so bad. I could do that again." A tribute to the power of post-pregnancy chemicals, because it was not a decision based on anything rational! When Ellie was five days old the nurses took her temperature and it was very high. She had to go on intravenous antibiotics right away. And it was then I knew that I would do anything to take on her pain -- and that I couldn't.

It didn't seem fair, that I had gone through so much to have her, and that she had to be hurt, too. If only there really were healers, like there are in any decent fantasy trilogy. I would do anything to be able to lay hands on Ellie and make her pain mine. But I can't. It isn't fair. And it continues to be unfair.

As it turned out, the fever was just the first sign. We thought everything was all right when we finally got to take her home three weeks later. Previous to that I had to do the hardest thing I've ever done, and that's leave the hospital with her behind. We went back everyday, and I did everything but sleep there, but getting in the car every evening was not easy.

It became clear to her pediatrician within the next month that Ellie was not developing properly. He could tell because Ellie would not be comforted quickly when she was crying (also, she was not gaining weight quickly enough). What did I know? I had never been around babies before and received about a million congratulatory cards on Ellie's birth that warned me about getting no sleep and endlessly crying babies. But those were just jokes. Healthy babies really aren't like that. But what did I know?

The neurologist knew. Or, at least, the neurologist agreed that something was drastically wrong. What, she didn't know. And we still don't know, five and a half years later. This is where it starts to get intellectually interesting.

They did a blood workup on Ellie, her father and I. They tested for what genetic diseases they know how to test for. They did a evoked hearing & seeing thingamajig, they did an EEG and they did an MRI of her brain. That last was most fun. It was scheduled for the morning of Christmas Eve, and my mother was in town so she went into the city with us. Ellie had to be sedated, which meant she couldn't have food or liquid some time before the test. Try explaining to a howling six-month old why she can't have her bottle. In a car. Ellie howls really loud, too. (There's been some speculation about wolf genes sneaking in somewhere, but I think that's been ruled out. Still, when the moon is full...) As we were sitting waiting for the sedative to take effect, we shared the room with another mother and child. This boy was older, maybe six or seven. He was hyperactive, running around tearing up the magazines. And his head was malformed, shaped like a cone. His mother was well dressed, a rich lady, older than me, obviously tired, but clearly she loved the boy. And I realized then how easy I had it.

Ellie, as mentioned before, is a beautiful child. The first impression wasn't just a sozzled post-partum flash. Though it's hard for her to communicate, Ellie has a great personality, too. Sharp sense of humor, willing to find most things amusing, good with other people: she's very easy to love.

Ellie's father and I are reasonably well-off, too, which makes it easier for us than for a lot of people with neurologically complicated kids. It's meant we could afford to buy the things



we felt would help her, and not worry too much about money. One of the things it's bought us was Internet time, specifically access to Medline.

Nowadays, Medline is more or less free. A few years ago, it was fairly expensive, and getting access to full papers, not just abstracts also cost a bit. Why was this so important? Because the bloody doctors weren't doing it.

The aforementioned tests turned up inconclusive. Yes, clearly something was off. But what exactly, or why, they couldn't say. They suggested we find a parent support group. Now, I never had thought of doctors as godlike beings, but this effort seemed to me a bit half-hearted.

The only chemical test that turned up anything indicated a deficiency in something that meant a genetic disease called metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD). All this was happening around the same time that a movie starring Susan Sarandon was coming out called **Lorenzo's Oil**. It was a movie based on the true story of a family with a boy

who had adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD). We hadn't seen the movie (people with newborns don't see movies), but I'd read enough of the reviews to get the gist of it, and understand that ALD was a degenerative disease. So is MLD; projected lifespans for sufferers is not long, nor pleasant. And the results from the MRI seemed to confirm that there was degeneration. Or something.

Getting the doctors to tell me what they saw, even if they weren't exactly sure themselves was like pulling teeth at first. Maybe it was just that set of doctors, even though they were from a prestigious enough institution. But I don't think so. I think it's the nature of the medical industry beast. There are plenty of doctors I respect, plenty of therapists I admire, but getting them to work with you, who is most interested, can be hard. It's worth the work. (And as an SF fan I can't help but extrapolate -- soon you are going to be the expert on you. It'll be you and your personal medical AI making decisions on medication and therapy, and we won't need human doctors (vis **The Ship Who Searched** by Anne McCaffrey & Mercedes Lackey -- an instance where the AI is wrong, by the way).)

Learning to parse medicalese is half the battle: all "leukodystrophy" means is a dystrophy (disorder) of the white (leuko) matter in the brain. What the "metachromatic" part means, I don't know, because the second test on the chemical that was its indicator came back normal, so it turned out not to be that.

More lessons in medical terminology that I learned at that time: "Cerebral palsy" is about as descriptive and useful a term as "the grippe" is for describing a cold. It's not a diagnosis, per se, it just means a person so described has something wrong with his head. It could have been from a one-time injury, birth trauma, an on-going biochemical problem, or a

genetic disease that just hasn't been described yet. Isn't that helpful?

I finally got the neurologist to spell out for me what exactly the MRI showed, which was that Ellie's myelin, most clearly in the occipital region of the brain, was not present as much as it ought to be. This is still the one piece of hard data we have, other than her observed developmental abnormalities and her failure to gain weight and head-circumference like she should. At any rate, myelin is that stuff that coats the nerves (in the brain and elsewhere). You aren't born with it, but it should all be there by about six months. It's not clear if Ellie's myelin problem is de-myelination (just not enough there) or dis-myelination (normal myelin that is for some reason getting chewed up).

Ellie's problem probably isn't chromosomal, they told me, because aside from those physical indicators, she wasn't "dismorphic" in any other way. But otherwise, her set of symptoms didn't fit into anything they recognized offhand. Which was when I figured out that of all the terrible things to happen to humans, medical science, such as it is, has classified just a very few, has figured out the causes of even fewer, and cures to a minuscule handful.

So we got a second opinion, this time from a guy famous in the field. Another MRI (she's had three, one at six months, one at a year and one at eighteen months). Another time with screaming, confused, child, another time sending her sedated and bound up into the maw of the MRI (another time getting my credit cards demagnetized by the heavy magnets because I forgot to put my wallet away.... Actually, that happened only once; I'm not that stupid). And another shrug and a suggestion to seek a support group.

All very fine and well, but what about solving *Ellie's* problem; then maybe her parents wouldn't *need* a support group. What we discovered is that doctors are, for the most part, very poor scientists. I suspect that is because medical science is based on statistics. Most people have their heart on the right side; a very small number of humans have it switched. Most people metabolize caffeine the same way; a very small number have a wonky reaction. Etc. And you know what they say about statistics: There are lies, damned lies and statistics.

The doctors just didn't ask the next question (nod to Sturgeon). They didn't seem to have the time or inclination. It wasn't their area, and their area is always very small. Now, to be sure, whatever Ellie has is rare. And I can understand that not a lot has yet been done in that area. But to just stop, that seemed awful to me, both as a parent, and as a curious, inquisitive fannish type of person.

So that's when Ellie's father hit the Internet. If they weren't going to do the research, he would. After several months of wading through glue, he tried searching for "demyelination" and "cure." And what do you know, an article turned up. A doctor in London had done a study with three children with vastly different symptoms giving them supplements of B-12 (AKA cobalamin), methionine, and one of their end-products, s-adenosylmethionine (SAM). Ellie's dad spent months staying up all night trying to understand the biochemistry involved, and seeing if it could safely apply to our child.

Turns out there's no way in the world to overdose on B-12. Your body loves B-12, can't get enough of it, and SAM is the reason why. So Ellie's father cooked up a cocktail of vitamins and amino acids in order to pump Ellie's system to create more SAM, which should, in turn, create more myelin. We saw immediate results. Ellie had been making slow, infinitesimally slow, but clear, developmental progress. From age six months she'd been getting physical therapy, with occupational therapy, speech therapy and a special ed teacher thrown in over the following few months. But we were starting to see signs that maybe she was losing skills she had acquired. That's bad.

After starting with the substrate therapy, she seemed better. We had high hopes that this

was the answer. But it seems she was just back on her very slow track. After a few months, we were able to arrange for a supply of SAM itself, and while clearly it helps, after three and half years it's also clear it isn't the entire solution.

Meanwhile, we'd located a neurologist who was more of a researcher than a clinician, and he, though it wasn't exactly his area, was willing to help try to figure out what was wrong with Ellie. He introduced us to CoQ-10. Like SAM, it's one of those ubiquitous necessary chemicals needed to run the body. You need CoQ-10 every time an oxygen ion is exchanged, you need SAM every time a methyl ion is exchanged, which is every time there is growth, whether it be in the brain, in the liver, in the colon or any one of at least thirty identified systems.

After a few years, we figured out that the SAM wasn't going to be the solution we had all hoped for, and I moved. Since it was time, I showed Ellie to a whole new slew of doctors, at a different teaching hospital in another state.

This bunch are interested in Rett Syndrome, another thing that had earlier been suggested but then discarded because the order of "presentation" of symptoms didn't fit the pattern (and that's all that "syndromes" are -- description of a pattern of symptoms; another pin bursting the bubble of faith in doctor's omniscience). And they, too, find Ellie "interesting." Oh, gee.

They know a bit more now than a few years ago about Rett's, and there are altogether too many similarities to make me happy. Rett Syndrome is, like MLD and ALD, degenerative. But, also like those two, it usually allows for normal development before degeneration sets in, and that Ellie never had. Rett's is probably a neurotransmitter problem, not a myelination problem, though. It may be that Ellie's particular metabolic disorder somehow combines a screw-up in myelination with a screw-up in neurotransmitters.

My next task will be to prod these doctors into finding out more. And for Ellie's father and I to hit the Internet. Because for sure, unless it's common knowledge, the doctors won't know about the latest research or correlate research in other areas that apply, at least not any faster than we will looking for abstracts ourselves.

The parents of Lorenzo, he of *Lorenzo's Oil*, felt the same way. They had even more resources than we did, and have set up their own institute to figure out ALD and other myelination disorders. They thought they had a therapy, the oil of the title. It didn't work. I suppose that's why the doctors were reluctant to tell us what we needed to know to try to help ourselves -- they figured we'd be doomed to disappointment. But I could no more not try to figure this out than I could stop breathing. I'm a fan, dammit; if I can envision galactic empires, FTL transport, the end of the universe, AIs that tell bad puns, alien entities made out of dark matter, then by ghu I can at least *try* to address a little biochemical mistake.

We may not be able to solve Ellie's problem. I can, and do, try to make her everyday life as fun and normal as possible. At age five and a half, she is functioning on the level of about a nine-month old, albeit a very sophisticated nine-month old. She can't quite yet crawl, she can say only her name, respond to just a few more words (although I'm reasonably convinced she *understands* more than she responds to, the little darlin'). But so long as she's happy, that's what's important. That, and challenging her to go as far as she can.

It's very easy with kids who are like that to cater to them, serve them hand and foot. And my Ellie, like most everybody else, is not immune to that kind of spoiling. Providing her with the sorts of games and activities she can do, and not frustrate her, is my challenge. I've never had a lot of patience, and this calls for every bit I can muster. Well, Ellie doesn't have a lot of patience either -- she's come by that naturally. One thing I have learned, that I suspect many other parents learn, is that in a battle of wills, she wins. In this my mother's

blessing/curse that I have child who is like me has been more than amply fulfilled. I try to reason with Ellie to eat her food (with desperately needed vitamins in it) and explain that she is way under weight and that it's really for the best. But if she turns her flashing dark eyes to me, sets her jaw, and whips her head away from the spoon, I've learned the Empress of the Universe (not **Glory Road's** Star, but the one in my living room) must be obeyed. Until next time. So if I can maintain her body and soul, until a cure is found, then that's what I'll try to do. I'll try my best, and like any parent, know that my best still won't make the world a perfect place for my child. Again, like any parent, I know I'll make mistakes, and just hope that I get enough right to keep Ellie going. In the immortal words of Lyle Lovett, "Ya gotta try."

I'd never been interested in biology. I slid through high school one year before my state made it a requirement for graduation (I took theatre instead; shows you where my priorities were). But neurobiology was the one part of it I was even vaguely intrigued by, and managed to get through about three quarters of a book on the brain when I was a teenager before giving it up. Ellie's father is very good about figuring out the complicated paths of neurochemistry and boiling it down to the parts we care about. (And I've learned that a little bit of Latin goes a long way to understanding all of this--if you can follow the trail of the component parts, understanding the why of the chemistry isn't so important).

In the course of all this cramming in biochemistry we've learned that whatever it is Ellie has it's rare, and there isn't a lot being done in this area. However, we also discovered that there are a lot of crossovers between neural degeneration caused by odd genetic flukes (which seems the likeliest cause of Ellie's, though some kind of problem in the womb can't be ruled out either) and those caused by old age. And there's lots of research on old age. Applying that, learning about CoQ-10 and SAM before everybody else figured it out and it appears in *Newsweek*. That's been fun.

I would have been more sensawundered had my parental emotions not been involved, but still . . . here we are at the cutting edge of science, balancing on its raw jagged edge, waiting for the future to be now.

References & Resources:

"Association of Demyelination with Deficiency of Cerebrospinal-fluid S-Adenosylmethionine in Inborn Errors of Methyl-Transfer Pathway," Surtees, Robert; Leonard, James; Austin, Stephen. *The Lancet*, Dec. 21, 1991 (v.338, p.1550).

"S-adenosylmethionine Levels in Psychiatric and Neurological Disorders: A Review," Bottiglieri, T.; Hyland, K. *Acta Neurological Scand. Supplement*, 1994 (154: 19-26).

National Organization of Rare Diseases--a useful clearinghouse. (800) 999-6673

Illustrations by PEGGY RANSON



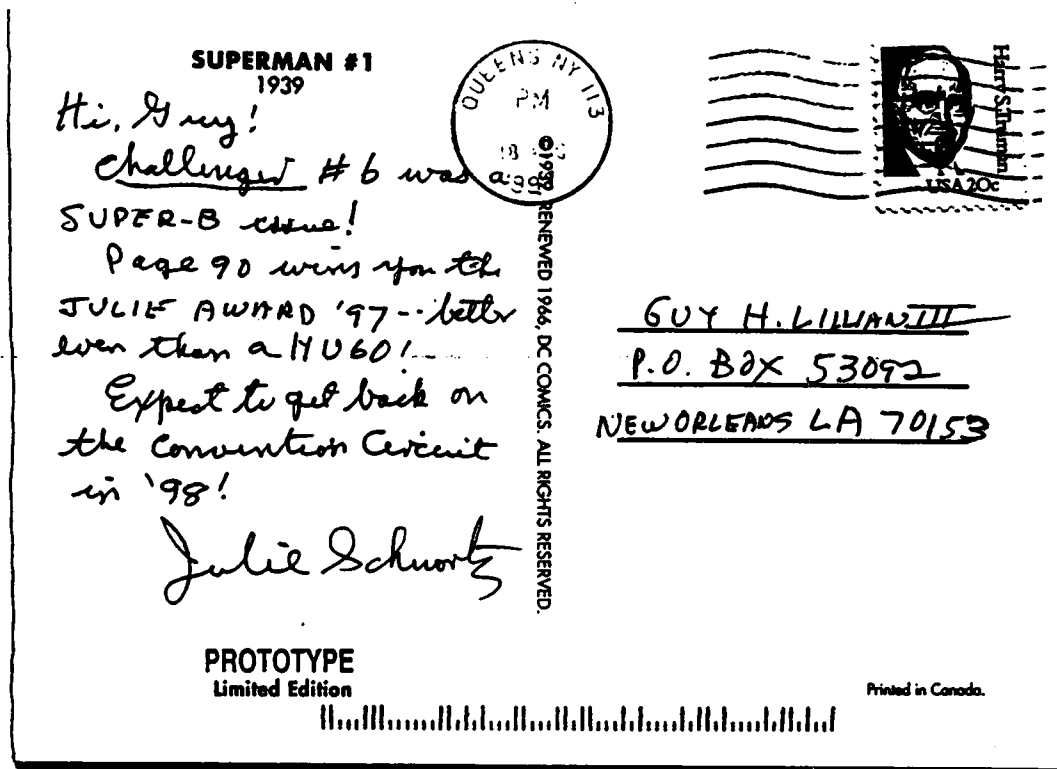
LAST GASP ^{ALL-OUT} GONZO VOLLEYBALL TOURNEY



LAST WEEKEND of SUMMER 1980
FRENZENII MANOR, SEPT 21ST
...FRW...

FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF SOUTHERN FANDOM ... Knoxville's Fabulo Frenzenii invites the hardy to a backyard volleyball tourney -- but warns that his wife takes no quarter.

L O C S



WAHFle Iron: John Berry, Sheryl Birkhead, Fred Chappell, Nola Frame-Gray, Janice Gelb, Inge Glass, Susan Higgins, Craig Hilton, Martina Klicperova, Dick Lynch ("Prague is a wonderful city ... let's hold a worldcon here"), Joy Moreau, Lloyd Penney (the Canadian mail strike is at last over!), Joy Smith (a late LOC on #5), Sally Syrjala, Ariane von Orlow.

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I was much taken by Jim Baen's Huntsville speech [in *Challenger* no. 6 ... and not at *MidSouthCon*, which is a *Memphis* convention!]. (When I mentioned it to him, "Gee, that must have been five years ago. What did I say?")

Over the past few years I've been reading John W. Campbell-era *Astoundings* (I yesterday completed my run!) and was struck by how much Jim's speech sounded like a Campbell editorial -- not in what it was saying, but in the intelligent and provocative fashion it was saying something. That train of thought led me to the premise that Jim was the last sf magazine editor of the classic school: an intelligent and competent editor whose real intention was to make people think.

I'm not saying that there aren't other ways to be a good editor -- Gardner Dozois is a good editor, one who could be considered a latter-day Sam Mines. But how many readers today could tell you who or even when Sam

Mines was?

They could start by telling me.

Jim Baen turned *If* and *Galaxy* into magazines with a viewpoint and a willingness to argue. He didn't have the financial resources that Campbell (or at *Amazing*, Gernsbach) did, but he put out issues that were interesting to read nonetheless. I'm glad that since Jim left magazine publishing he still has a few public outlets for the love of thinking that so characterizes my chats with him as a friend.

David enclosed an article with his letter, about another friend, Karl Edward Wagner. It appears as the introduction to a collection of Wagner's final stories. In a much more meaningful reading of the common phrase than the usual, if you knew Karl, read it and weep.

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Thank you for *Challenger* #6, which is perhaps a little larger than necessary because of its clearly legible typeface, a welcome amenity. You could save money on

paper, postage and printing by going to double or triple columns and the smallest legible type size -- going to maybe 70 pages instead of 88 -- but if money is not an issue, your present format is just fine.

Money is always an issue, so I'm experimenting with 10-point type. How's it look?

I found Richard Dengrove's scholarly article on the Faust legend interesting, but the only comment hook was his observation that nobody had done Faust recently, and since the thematic material was so far out of style, no one would. Alas for keeping current; "Jack Faust" by Michael Swanwick -- an ambitious sfnal reworking of the Goethe version -- hit the stands between the time the article was completed and the time it was published.

In contrast, the lead article, Jim Baen's undated MidSouthCon GoH speech, bristled with comment hooks. The dream he holds out for us to renew, the colonization of space, is a dream I share. The present cost of putting stuff in orbit, about \$10,000 a pound, makes space colonization infeasible, and Baen aspires to \$50 a pound. Sigh. That was the number which NASA promised to get funding for the studies that led to the shuttle. It was connected with the real world only to the extent that NASA did get the funding. The best, indeed the *only* current hot prospect, is the spikejet shuttle now being developed by Lockheed Martin. Making haste slowly, they will build the 67-foot X-33, to test the engine and the integrated system in normal flight in maybe three or four years. Once the X-33 is successful, the plan is to double its size and construct a single stage to orbit vehicle that launches vertically and lands horizontally. A lot of engineering dream time has been invested here, in what the Lockheed Martin prospectus calls the VentureStar, and it will, they hope, be a commercial vehicle. At a still-to-be-achieved \$1,000 a pound, shipping costs will be one tenth of the Space Shuttle costs, but still about 20 times what Jim was hoping for. This, alas, may be the best that can be done using a vehicle powered by liquid hydrogen and oxygen.

If you are still going to dream about colonizing space at \$1,000/lb to low earth orbit (LEO), that fiscal reality must preclude a lot of other dreams. In particular, Gerard K. O'Neill's pre-computer age dream; wherein adventuring into space would be such a money spinning proposition for large corporations that they would just naturally build company towns in orbit to house their workers, that dream is precluded. It hasn't happened, and it won't. Our large corporations, such as Lockheed Martin, will indeed make money by colonizing space, but they will be working for, and getting paid by, the government. Which means that it is the government which must set out specifically to colonize space, persevering until it succeeds.

Why the government and not private industry? If we suppose that our first colony will be established in Lunar orbit, there to consist of an envelope containing 40 acres of farmland, on which our colonists can raise their own food, how much will building that colony cost? My guess would be about 10 billion dollars per acre. How long will it take? Ten years, more likely 20. What return will the sponsor get? National glory, a lot of good press, and the knowledge that it will have been of some service to mankind. Something that insubstantial a President can sell a Congress, given popular support. It is not something a CEO can, or should, try to sell his stockholders.

Of course, what we get for our \$400 billion includes the infrastructure, an Earth Orbiting Space Station, which supports the Lunar Orbiting Space Station, which supports the Lunar base shooting raw materials into Lunar orbit, to be collected by the second Lunar Space Station and fabricated into the little habitat. At \$1,000/lb to LEO, logistics argues that EOSS, LOSS1, LB, LOSS2 will all need to be remotely operated from Earth. We need trouble shooters? Commuting to and from Mir-type space stations is possible but hard and expensive. Easier and cheaper to build a few highly versatile robots. Until the habitat is in place, of course, and then we can have maybe a few hundred people (including a few good farmers) out in space to duplicate the efforts of those several thousand experts working the remote controls back on Earth. If this is the final end, a 40 acre island in cis-Lunar space, it cannot be justified.

However, if our 40 acre space station is also dirigible, if it has mobility, then it, and our crew, can go into orbit around Mars or into the asteroid belt. Our little Conestoga wagon will travel in company with a flotilla of machines designed to do the grunt work, and at their destination the resident humans (in consultation with the experts back on Earth) will operate and/or administrate those machines. Conestoga wagons at 400 billion a pop is not what Jim had in mind, I think. Still, one should note that a subsequent dirigible space ship will cost less than the first. This is partly because the infrastructure to build them is already in place and working, partly because the research has already been done, and partly because we will be going up the learning curve and working smarter. Maybe they will eventually come down to a mere billion dollars apiece, providing a foot in the sky for Bill Gates, should he be so minded.

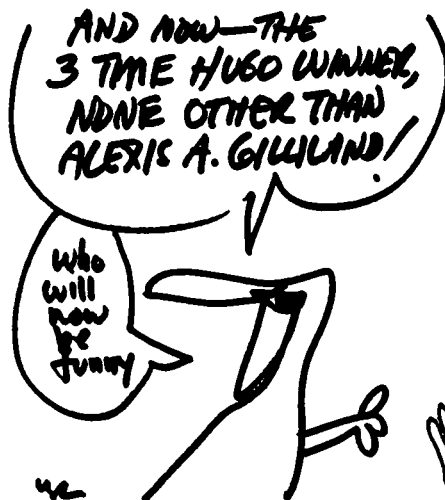
What else might knock the bottom out of our dream? Well, we are building in Lunar orbit, using Lunar materials; how much water will we need for our 40 acre farm? At a guess, say 5 acre-ft/acre, half liquid, half tied up in biospheric inventory, 200 acre-feet in all. One acre is 43,560 square feet, one cubic foot of water weighs 62 pounds; 1 acre foot weighs 2,700,000 pounds or 1,350 tons; 200 acre-feet will weigh 270,000 tons. At \$1,000 a

pound to LEO, this comes to 2.7 billion/acre-foot, a figure that can be reduced to 0.3 billion/acre-foot by shipping up hydrogen and burning it with Lunar oxygen. Which still comes to 60 billion for the whole 200 acre-feet, if we have to schlep up the H₂ from Earth for our H₂O in orbit. What we think we know about Luna from our limited sampling is that it is bone dry. Rock analysis found that the Moon is now depleted in volatiles and enriched in refractories, so we theorize that Luna was molten for its first 100,000,000 years, to explain why. Around the Lunar South Pole there may be water trapped in craters where the sun never shines, ice condensed from the impact of comets over billions of years. Maybe. It is a fact that needs to be checked out. If water ice is there, our robots can mine it; if it is not, then our little dowsing robots will have to go into the asteroid belt to locate the water for their large carrier cousins to go and haul.

The end of the beginning, then, is building a dirigible space station so that men and women can live in space without an umbilical cord to Mother Earth. From that vantage point they can direct the construction of larger habitats. Notice that I said direct; the actual physical labor must needs be done by machines, remotely controlled robots. Once situated in the vicinity of an asteroid with abundant frozen water,

our people will build an envelope enclosing a few square miles, move into their new quarters, and send the dirigible space station back to Lunar orbit to serve a new crew heading for a new location. If they survive, and thrive, the population will increase and eventually grow to fill the habitat which they have been instrumental in creating.

Once that happens, our space people have not only the raw material, energy, and equipment but also the skills and knowledge to use them. Like a tree growing, or a coral reef, they will build a second habitat, quickening dead rock and metal into the service of life. The result of all this prodigious effort is that the government has planted the seed of a pseudo-planet, and it will grow to accommodate the population increase of the people living there. A drawback to dreamers informed by the past is that these new pseudo-planets will be populated as they grow. There are major consequences, of course. An



incremental frontier, growing only when local population pressures require it, will be different from the old American frontier; no natives to displace and no immigrants to displace them. Why no immigration? Because the demand for cheap labor, to be filled by the surplus population of the old country, or convicts, or slaves, is frustrated by the logistical cost of humans, starting with that \$1,000/lb to LEO.

It is obvious that while Baen and I both seek space colonization, our related ideas of how this might be achieved are strikingly different. Perhaps I am Classical, while Jim is Romantic. I have tried to imagine colonizing what is actually in place with hardware already in development. Baen dreams of a bright future with a shuttle charge of \$50/lb to LEO, high tech Conestoga wagons to reprise America's storied past, and he yearns for the stars. More than once he deplores the ugly, useless

junk that NASA's space exploration probes have been reporting back on. No Bermudas, no Californias, not even a Devil's Island, just dirty airless rockballs in badly beat up condition. As if it were NASA's fault for reporting what was actually there.

So the Solar system has no new planets to conquer, and the stars are beyond our reach? Well, conform the dream to the reality. Plant the seeds for pseudo-planets and let them grow. Of course,

that dream is different from Jim's dream. Baen is dreaming of colonizing space, yes, but there is a Libertarian subtext to his dreaming, marked by his throwaway line near the end of his text, where he suggests the "wild and crazy notion" that giving Chuck Rutan a billion dollars and the use of the Marshall Space Center might result in cheap space flight, as opposed to the expensive space flight we now have. Libertarians, not necessarily Jim, also dream of private enterprise going into space and escaping government forever. Ha! Once we go into space it will be the government that maintains the integrity of the habitats in which we, The People, will be living. Libertarians dream of new frontiers to be conquered by rugged individuals. Once we go into space, our survival will depend on the closest teamwork of humans huddled together in an implacably hostile environment, and any new frontiers will have to meet

government specifications before we ever set foot in them. Baen is dreaming of heroic conquest, and what I have set out is the dream of organic growth. His dream, reflecting a Romanticized past, is prettier than mine which peers uneasily at the future, but if we want to colonize space, and the best that can be done is \$1,000/lb to LEO, then I suspect my vision of a Classical future cuts closer to the truth.

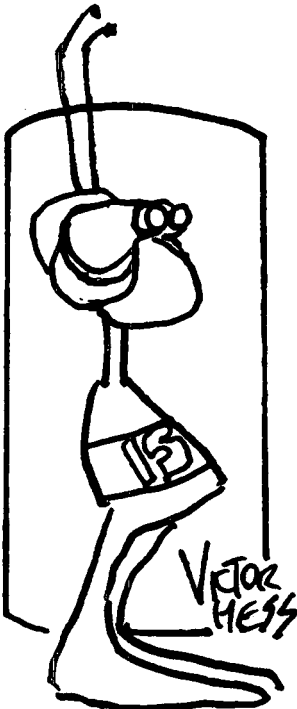
There is other stuff, particularly Dick Lynch's splendid report on Russia, which reads a lot better than hearing it in person, but this will do for now.

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I was definitely impressed to learn the ferocious and brilliant Lillian Hellman was your teacher! I had some fine teachers but as far as I know never an illustrious one. The same probably goes for their students, but perhaps one of my fellow-academics has made it big. It was too bad [the play about Hellman] Cakewalk failed to score with any of us, inasmuch as the author had, as I recall, briefly been romantically entangled with the lady. That alone did not make him a writer, however. In the [latest] Ben's Beat, you'll find the redoubtable lady mentioned again, in reference to a revival of *Candide*, less happily for her, I regret to say. Her book for the initial version was considered soggy, so a new one was written by other hands, far freer and theatrical. There was recently a decently-reviewed revival of her classic, *The Little Foxes*, but I forewent it. Had I comps I would have

gone, but at b.o. prices, I was content to recall a sterling production a few years ago with Elizabeth Taylor. Stockard Channing is very nice, but she is no Liz. A friend of mine is editing a book of letters by (maybe to also? I do not know) Dashiell Hammett and there should be some good stuff about Ms. Hellman.

Eventually I'll share my memories of Hellman with Chall's readership. Incredible class, that. It asked me questions about myself I still haven't answered.



On to *Challenger*, which, because it is a mature and well-thought-out zine I do enjoy. Jim Baen's thoughts are echoed, less graciously, in *Science-Fiction Studies* magazine July by Gary Westphal. He cannot see at all why we are involved in space stuff. The only reason he omitted was the prime one, simple curiosity. Just what the heck is out there anyway? And to reach Mars -- to walk on it -- doesn't Jim remember the memorable New York Times front page headline *MEN WALK ON MOON*? Wasn't he up, together with his family, watching TV that night? That is why. Yes, we have to do the things on Earth, but there is still room for more.

Anyway, my son-in-law works for NASA and surely needs that pension one day.

Harry Warner's article was a warm treat. I always read *Horizons* as a fellow FAPAN, but this tops them all. Harry is about my age, maybe a few days younger, and our tastes aren't all that different, but he was active in fandom long before I. I did some articles in the early '40s prior to being drafted, and the zines are lost, but although I considered doing a zine near the end when I was waiting for discharge, the opportunities did not come up and my first was not until 1963. Go on, Harry. And in spite of your objection, in the lettercol, that you do not read every single fanzine published, you do! Yes, you do! And what's more, you respond! That's probably why I gave up years ago responding to the many fanzines I was receiving. I knew there was no hope of matching you!

That is one hell of a note from John Berry, about the AIDS-inflicted beggars indignantly rejecting his coin. In today's *NYTimes* comes word that our government is treating African HIV-inflicted pregnant women with an experimental drug, except, as typically, and, truly, properly with medical experiments, half are given a control, a placebo, useless. There, with so serious an illness, which will also contaminate unborn children, these particular experimenters are playing God. Perhaps they do not know but that the drug may even be dangerous, yet, since they obviously believe otherwise, it should be their obligation not merely to observe but to try to heal. The theory again, and sadly, appears to be that there's nobody here but us Africans, Boss.

I can't get my wife to [visit] Russia, so this fine report by Richard Lynch will have to suffice ... Bob Whitaker Sirignano, when I was temporarily stationed in Cambridge, England during my hectic WWII years, part of a medical transport platoon awaiting our next shipment of wounded home, we were sent to an Army post office to help reduce the glut of mail. I still remember the piles of broken packages, all labels hopelessly lost, books, magazines and candies. So we read and ate.

Jeff Copeland's brutally frank and painful article on little JonBenet reflects on the supermarket tabloids,

which, more than six months later [*much longer, now*], with familiar photos of the child made up as an adult, and implications that the police were about to arrest the mother and/or father as the murderers. The articles are crap, and I never look into such "newspapers," if for no reason than they are phony anyway. It appears the case will never be closed, but I pray [Jeff is] right about the utter innocence of the parents ...

E.B. Frohvet
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I think our views on the Bill of Rights are not so far apart as the language in the letter column may have suggested. I do understand the Bill of Rights, thank you, and I wholeheartedly support the right of the accused to a fair and impartial trial. I also support the right of a society to protect itself from amoral predators who recognize no law except their own whims and desires. The cost of living in a civilized society is that one gives up certain options. One gives up the option of brutalizing strangers into sexual submission. One gives up the option of buying and selling 10-year-old girls in the marketplace like any other commodity. One gives up the option of firebombing churches and blowing up federal buildings. One gives up the option of sticking a knife repeatedly into a helpless stranger who has done one no harm ...

One reason I went to see Van Houten was to try to uncloud the mystery behind her crime. To figure out an outrage, understand the perp's motivations, and find your answer in the nature of the criminal. Susan Atkins' autobiography -- thanks to the benefactor who sent it -- provided a left-handed clue. A photo therein, taken at the trial, showed Leslie and the others dressed up for closing arguments. Leslie wore a phony white fur coat. High school girls of the late '60s affected those hideous garments, which they thought made them look tuff and slutty. A high school boy of the time, I hated the things, and wrote a rather mean satiric article for my high school newspaper about them. But seeing Leslie in mufti made me realize just who she really was. She wasn't a freaked-out quasi-religious Martian zombie. She was a pampered Middle American Homecoming Queen. Her interest in the Manson Family wasn't a slavering belief in Charlie; she thought he was a gnome and in his "autobiography," he barely mentions her. No ... Leslie wanted to rescue her sleazy boyfriend, a shallow druggie and sometime-musician named Bobby Beausoliel, who had just been convicted of murder. She thought that if the Family committed atrocities similar to Beausoliel's, the cops would suspect someone else and clear him. That's my take on her part in Tate-LaBianca. So what



about my efforts to find that understanding -- or the incidental fact that I thought she was cute -- implies that I have any tolerance for what she did?

I hope the fact that we differ on *one* subject will not be construed as any personal animosity. Outside that one subject, I suspect we are much alike. For example, we are both tennis fans with an admiration for Jimmy Connors! (Connors and Lendl, five brutal sets in the U.S. Open final; was it 1984? Connors and Krickstein slugging at each other for about five hours on a Labor Day afternoon ...)

Jimbo whupped Lendl in the U.S. Open finals in '82 and '83, both four set victories as I recall. My favorite Connors wins at the Open were the clay court triumph over Borg in '76 -- which he regards as his best moment -- and the fabulous Night of the Blood Beast in '78, when he gutted the Swede like a trout in straights. Jimmy was just admitted into the Tennis Hall of Fame. Now they can close the place! The right to say "Shit!" is the right to play tennis!

Robert Coulson
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If you ask why people don't live in the Sahara, people do. "Desert Song" and all that ... There might be some sort of inhabitants on other planets, too, though they'd have to be very primitive (no radio or TV, for example). Not likely of course, and nothing at all like humans.

I never saw *Spaceways*; for one thing, I wasn't in fandom back then. From Harry's description, Juanita's and my Yandro wasn't much like it from the editorial standpoint, but there are resemblances. We didn't, as far as I can recall, say much about politics, but I certainly injected myself into the fanzine and irritated a lot of fans thereby. Of course, we didn't start at 15, either; Juanita was in college when the first issue of EISFA (Eastern

Indiana Science Fiction Association) appeared, and when Gene DeWeese and I got involved I was working regularly. (And I couldn't vote for Spaceways for a retro-Hugo because I've never seen a copy. Though it would seem to deserve one as well or better than most.) Typing a dummy of every page to make things fit? Way too much work. Juanita cut stencils and when something didn't fit exactly she'd hand the stencil to me with orders to write something to finish the page. A lot of my verse was written on the spot to fill up a partly-blank stencil.

*An experienced old faned named Buck
Had a fine wife who ran out of luck.*

"Not enough on this page!"

So Buck said, in a rage,

"Juanita, I don't give a darn." (Sorry.)

Sorry, Bill, I don't recall ever hearing of the Cushman motor scooter before, and I'm well over 40. My only transportation at age 14 was an old racing bike that had originally belonged to a cousin, and I never tried to get to another town on it. Never raced it, either ...

I dunno; I frequently get pens and pencils as ads for businesses, and they're mostly sent in plain paper envelopes and arrive intact. I have one from national Federation of the Blind (no, two from them, both working) and a felt-tip pen from Meow Mix catfood, though I'm not positive that it came in the mail. Probably did, though. I guess the "Windycon XX Word Processor" came from the con rather than in the mail, though I'm not sure. The keys are generally advertising for something like a bank's new lock-box system or a new car and I don't know if they work or not, but they aren't bent. You just have lousy mail delivery, Sirignano. I've received unsealed envelopes, too, though of course I have no way to tell if there was something else in them originally. They *seem* intact. No food, wooden postcards, etc.

The function of a defense attorney is to defend his client. It's part of the Constitution, as I recall. If some of them are better at it than the prosecutors are at prosecuting, put it down to the fact that prosecutors are elected by the general public and defense attorneys are chosen by the defendant. The job of the defense attorney is to *assume* his client is not guilty; how else could he or she operate? Nations which have operated without defense attorneys (Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, for example) don't seem to have had much in the way of human rights. Certainly it allows the wealthy to have better attorneys than the poor can afford in most cases; that's one of the flaws of capitalism. Sometimes a murderer gets away with it. There is no perfect legal system; live with it.

I'm one fan who avoids handling snakes. As a boy, I killed several rattlesnakes on our property, but I've avoided harming any others. They leave me alone, I leave

them alone.

Someday I'll write a piece using the metaphor I thought up potting watersnakes with a BB gun. I, too, was bothered by the experience and now try not to harm anything ... but thou shalt not suffer a roach to live!

U.S. worldcons are expensive. I can't afford them these days, so I assume teenagers can't either, unless parents can afford to bring them. Or send them.

"Do things occult hit fannish buttons?" They hit mine, yes. (And they undoubtedly hit de Camp's, as his *Spirits, Stars and Spells* indicates. My autographed copy of that book has a de Camp-inscribed ghost, star and witch's cauldron alongside the title ...) I don't, however, argue about them with true believers -- why bother?

I haven't grown out of using "mundane" or other derogatory terms, because they're still applicable. I don't use the word to a mundane's face (because he or she wouldn't know what it meant anyway). And there are quite pleasant mundanes that I get along with fine. I just don't mention science fiction around them.

Apparently I'm afflicted with sciatica currently, though the doctor isn't sure. He did rule out arthritis. Anyway, I'm currently hobbling around like an old man. (Comments that I *am* an old man will not be appreciated ...)

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Canada

What a great Don Rosa, no it's an Ian Gunn!, cover, on *Challenger 6*. Impressions give way to accuracy. On page 3, another example: Jim Baen is not holding his World Wrestling Federation championship belt: it's a silver tea service?, held vertically.

Baen lost his WWF belt to Sergeant Slaughter in a three-man cage match with Hulk Hogan. But he was robbed.

The best I can do for "The Challenger Challenge" is a weak guess. Marc Garneau is a name I recognize: a Canadian, a scientist, an orbinaut courtesy of the space shuttle. Should I know, as a resident of a country whose elected leader is Jean Chretien, Jean-Loup Chretien? Ernst Messerschmid makes me think of the German fighter airplane. Wubbo Ockels' last name, too, makes me think aviation, First World War or, if not, Second World War. Flight, including ballooning, is my guess for the theme connecting every member of your grouping.

You're in the park! Did you ever wonder what sort of mother would name her kid "Wubbo"?

John Kennedy was president in the right historical circumstances to lead the United States into space. Americans were willing, if not eager. The Cold War was the cause of the race to space. Post-Cold War, a close

miss by, or better, a collision with, an asteroid or a comet lacking the mass to end civilization as we know it, is needed to galvanize interest in matters extraterrestrial.

Yoiks! I'll settle for Sojourner's Martian panoramas! Bill Clinton does not strike me as the first U.S. president to ride a rocket into space.

Bill Mallardi's return to active fan status continues to pay the rest of us dividends, such as his account about his youthful adventure on his Cushman motor scooter.

Robert Whitaker Sirignano does not mention whether information on a computer disc mailed in an unpadding envelope will be retrievable in an unscrambled state by the recipient, in the instance that the envelope passes through post office mail handling machinery. Okay: asked and answered: viz Bill Legates's LOC "received on its own disc." (The paragraphs at the top of page 69 do make me wonder, however.)

Legate's tape arrived in a special cardboard mailer. Any correspondent or contributor who supplies his own disc -- WordPerfect 5.1, please; I'm primitive -- will be hailed as a hero in these pages.

In the lettercol Gene Stewart wonders if Binker Glock Hughes has a sibling with the middle name Uzi. A youngster at our boys' school is named Asia. Whether she has a brother named Africa, deponent knoweth not. I am more interested in Binker as a name since I read in a recent Knarley Knews that, in the Henry and Letha Welch household, to binker is to rub noses.

Critical Wave has ceased. Editors Steve Green and Martin Tudor were unable to roll the financial boulder up the mountain one more time.

I knew the name JonBenet as the name of a murdered U.S. child before I began to read Jeffrey Copeland's article. A North American who passes through a supermarket checkout who reads the covers of the tabloids absorbs information. I prefer the tabloid to invent fantastic stories. My favorite tabloid headline revealed that Adolf Hitler was behind the Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands.

The Ramsey murder is interesting on its unsensational facts. Adult or child, it takes little imagination to wonder about having your house entered by someone who kills a member of the family and, undetected, leaves. And I doubt the Ramseys, as described, lived in a bungalow with a chain lock and a deadbolt.

The ransom note makes no sense. The child was neither executed nor killed by accident. I wonder why more of the super-rich aren't kidnapped. The chances of getting away with it are very poor, I say, answering myself. The ransom note in this instance strikes me as a poor decoy. My impulse is to hope that the father did the crime. The father being the killer is easier to accept than

the thought that a disturbed stranger did the deed. I know John Ramsey won't be coming to our house. But I do live ten minutes by car from Ontario's only maximum security psychiatric hospital.

All I have about the Ramsey murder is gut feeling, but that gut feeling is strong: both parents were involved in the killing, and one is covering for the other -- perverted father, monster mother, who knows? -- and both belong under the jail.



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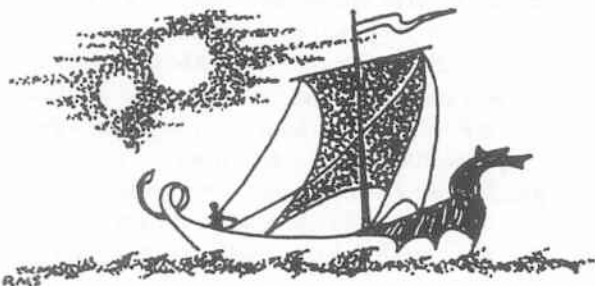
Pleased again to see an issue of *Challenger*; thank you. A better issue this time, at least for me. The spelunking article in C5 left me in a state of stark terror, and the Van Houten article made me quite angry. There are innocent people in jail to interview, some of them victims of our Attorney General, "Torchbearer" Reno. *This will sound strange, but persecuted innocents interest me less -- or at least, in a different way -- than the perplexing guilty. As it does for most people, crime puzzles me; I want to know why someone did something terrible. (Unlike natural catastrophes, a human's actions always has a human reason.) So that was an*

undertext to my meeting with Leslie: scope out why a spoiled middle American teenager would help massacre faultless people she didn't know. See my reply to Frohvet.

But C6 was a joy nearly to the end ... Jim Baen said what I've said about NASA and its proper role in space travel and colonization and said it better (I'd love to expand on his points, but I'm on an egoboo craze) ... I'm envious as all heck that you got an article from Harry Warner Jr. -- he didn't even LOC me the last issue of MSFire and it makes me feel like I'm stuck in a cave (Harry, please write soon) ... Speaking of Heck, Richard Dengrove ably filled a portion of my endless need for the whys of things without causing me undue soul-damage in return ... And your Mardi Gras pictorial filled out my almost equally endless need for the WOWs of, er, things.

Your article and Jeffrey Copeland's were important and said things that should be read, but coming at the end of the issue left me with a downer. If either were a call to action it might be OK, but there is nothing I can do about either situation, either the quick or the dead.

Following my same precept, I don't end on a downer but return to the thrilling pages of what went before (I wanted to do something like "Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear" but it didn't work out. Sigh.) Some Country singer I don't know the name of except she beat out LeAnn Rimes for a music video is caught in a TV commercial riding a motor scooter very like the one Bill Mallardi writes about. She thought it was the perfect gift. To each his own (I don't do French) ... I could sympathize more with Robert Whitaker Sirignano's plight at the USPS were it not for an unhappy habit the P.O. has just come up with. You know those lovely postal return cards? (Pre-addressed, just mail it in and you get a free issue. Or a stack of brochures ...) Well for some reason the USFA likes to pick up those cards, ignore the prepaid stamp on the "To" side, and mail it right back to me after reading the "From" side. If I ignore it, the company got its postage meter charged for nothing. If I mail it again, and USPS doesn't return it a second time, they get nailed twice for the same request. Makes you want to barf in a postal box somewhere. And now I know why the USPS just claimed another \$1 billion year in



profits ... I also enjoyed Richard Lynch's travelogue to Mother Russia. Put color pictures in that article and it was right out of National Geographic, heart-tugging concluding anecdote and all ... Thanks for the nice things you said about MSFire in the Fanzine Dump -- Oino laughed maniacally when you called his Scifaiku "insane" ... And, finally, a nice collection of art. I especially enjoyed the caricatures. (Oh. Those were photos?)

Answer to "the Challenger challenge": all were finalists in the Publishers Clearing House sweepstakes!

Well, no. Winning guess follows.

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Just finished wending my way through Challenger #6. Nice photos of Mardi Gras. Calgary's equivalent is the Stampede every July, the world's largest rodeo, with 1.1 million paying their way into the grounds and about 300,000 watching the parade downtown. All the oil company executives and secretaries dress up in western duds and go around screaming "Yeeehaaaaw!" at random intervals. None of the tit-flashing as you depict alas, and it is illegal to have an open container of alcoholic beverage on a public sidewalk. But good fun all around.

Your article did solve a problem that baffled me and many other Calgarians though. A couple of years ago, some representatives from New Orleans (Tourist Bureau?) took part in the Stampede festivities and tossed small strings of beads at us. The children scrambled to pick them up and wear them, but us adults were puzzled as to why beads instead of the usual candy.

Mardi Gras beads were the best worldcon bid gimmick of all time, the brainchild of New Orleans' John Guidry.

Maybe our Tourist Commission was campaigning to bring the Stampede down here. I wouldn't be surprised; this city has tried everything else to make money.

I can appreciate Robert Sirignano's article on the strange stuff sent through the mails, have toured the Calgary Mail Processing Plant, which handles more than a million letters a day. Everyone should take a tour of the MPP in their area, because when you see the high-speed machinery with letters flashing through them faster than the eye can follow, then you'll appreciate the postie's point of view. One separated staple, one jammed postmarker, and suddenly stuff is flying all over the place.

Your Challenger Challenge on the inside front cover: In the list of funny names, I recognized Marc Garneau, a Canadian astronaut. So I'll guess that they are non-American astronauts who have been up on an American space shuttle, and probably the Challenger itself. Yes? No? Anywheres close?

Close enough! The names were guest cosmo- and astronauts on shuttle and Soyuz flights! I once could name every human being who'd ever been in space ... and remember when the only name to memorize was Yuri Gagarin. Gad ... the cold rush of horror I felt when my 6th grade teacher, Mr. Alba, told us the Russians had beaten us, and put a man into orbit. I felt shocked and ashamed. The three weeks before we sent Alan Shepard up after him seemed eternal. Nowadays I curse fate that I never got to see Gagarin in person.

Sheryl Birkhead
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I'd like to see a bit heavier stock on the covers, but that is a totally minor (and personal) quibble. The AIDS memoir sounds particularly unpleasant. The picture of Peggy (Ranson) is one I would have figured out eventually, but I'd love to know the colors of the mask.

I'll print a copy of the color shot for you when I find the negative.

I'd heard some of the European stories from the Lynches before (by the way, the illos caught the character very nicely. There are times when you think that different venues are simply different places and then there are the times when you know they are also different mindsets.

Walter Willis
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Thank you very much for sending me Challenger 6. I had assumed that I need not write a loc on this issue since I had commented on the previous one, but I was wrong. Once I had started reading the issue I realized that it would be a crime to fail to acknowledge it. It really is an outstanding fanzine. I said so once before and I attribute to this judgment the fact that Ted White took me off his mailing list. Well, tough. It should be obvious enough from this issue that I was right.

Jim Baen's article was timely and hopeful. I hope the administration is on your mailing list.

Harry Warner's article is perfect of its kind.

So is Bill Mallardi's. It encapsulates the sort of experience that we have all had with motorcycles ... the men anyway.

I thought at first that the John Berry piece was one of his latter day travelogues and better than most. I notice you have attributed it to Bruce Berry in your contents page, but the mention of Diane makes me conclude this is a mistake.

It was, and I grovel in apology to all the Berrys.

"Russia '94" was a gem, one of the best travelogues on Russia I have ever seen. All that was missing, from my point of view, was some mention of the conclusions his group came to about the problem they were meant to solve.

The photo section on Jennifer Wilson was curiously affecting.

On the readers' letters, I was inclined to feel as I often have that people who regard the death penalty as the ultimate sanction do so because of their belief in an afterlife, during which the malefactor has time for reflection and regret. If like me you don't share this belief, then the death penalty is a copout.

I have read the newspaper reports of the Ramsey case and am grateful for [Jeff Copeland's] informed and expert opinion.

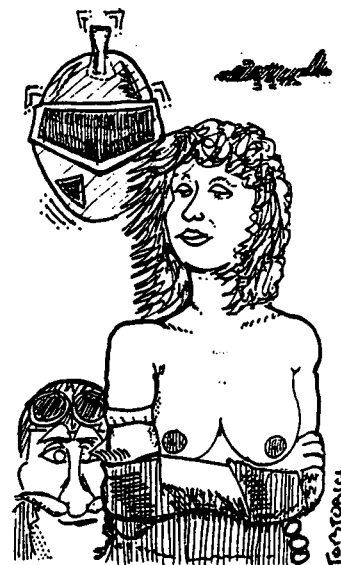
Henry L. Welch
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Thanks for Challenger #6 and all it contains. As I've come to expect you've put together a very interesting mix of articles, commentary, letters and pictures.

Robert Sirignano's explanation of the stupid things people mail them and the stupid way they mail them is fine, but it doesn't really explain the sliced and diced mail that I periodically receive in a body bag that is no doubt due to a jam or misfeed in a sorting machine that has little or nothing to do with unusual substances oozing onto my mail. I also like the large cancellation mark that looks like a truck tire has run over my mail.

As a lawyer you should be careful of the pornographic material that you are sending in the mail. Then again I cannot believe that a modern jury could possibly find your photo essay [on Mardi Gras] obscene for the topless shots; then again some of the other stuff is definitely obscene ...

This may sound a bit cold, but I have little or no interest in JonBenet and the public (or rather the press') fascination with her death and the investigation. Then again I didn't think that O.J. was headline news for as long as he was or Cunanan. Sure it might have been news for a day or two, but as a daily item it is simply *not* news. Yes, death and mayhem and tragedy can be valid news on



a local level (e.g. stay away from 25th and North there is a police siege in progress), but not at the regional or national level. So in this sense JonBenet is news for Boulder residents and people like Jeff Copeland, but the news media has got to understand that it isn't important news to the rest of us.

Teddy Harvia
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I depart today (September 20) for Montreal for three months and decided not to take your fat fanzine with me to loc later (it would put my luggage over the weight limit). I showed it to Diana for her opinion and she, seeing your Mardi Gras spread, said, "Oh, my goodness."

Dick Lynch's Russian adventure was news to me. He didn't send me a postcard! Bryan Norris' portrait of him as dolls within dolls was very revealing. Dick is the same on the inside as he is on the outside.

Mike Keefe's fantasy portrait of you as the face on Mars is every fan's fantasy and nightmare. Better you
t h e r e t h a n t h e m .

That illo was a collage; I pasted my Kelly Freas caricature atop a political cartoon I liberated. (Oops -- see my comments to Jeeves, below.)

Robert Whitaker Sirignano's inside story of the post office licked my stamps. I'll have to send him some chocolate as a thank-you.

Richard A. Dengrove always seems to be playing Devil's advocate. I'll be worried when he stops playing.

Richard E. Geis
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Thank you for sending C-6 recently. You put out a wonderful fanzine, especially remarkable for your interest in the Old Days and your actual interest in sf and fandom.

I especially appreciate the Harry Warner fanhistory article and the apparently complete review/listing of all the current fanzines and your VIP-filled locuterica; these permit me to send The Geis Letter to all those I've missed till now.

Finally, my appreciation of your dedication and willingness to publish this most expensive genzine as essentially a hobby; no real hope of breaking even, I presume.

You presume right ... and I loved your postcard, a reproduction of the cover of Like Crazy, Man, one of your paperbacks. I never met a beatnik girl that looked that good. If you promise not to sue I may print it in my zine review column.

Joy V. Smith
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I liked Bill Mallardi's piece on his adventures with his Cushman motor scooter. I can almost see him spinning down the road, sans scooter; and it reminds me of the time my sister and I, along with Lacer, her cocker spaniel, were visiting a friend's place in the country. Her donkey was grazing atop a small hill, and Lacer charged the donkey, barking. The donkey didn't flinch, and with a well-aimed kick, sent Lacer rolling head over heels all the way down the hill. I can still recall how I felt -- *The dog is dead! AND That is the funniest thing I've ever seen!* (Two opposite emotions occupying the same space at the same time.) Lacer was not hurt, though I'm sure she was shaken up a bit. Like Mr. Mallardi, I think perhaps her legs were tucked in, and this protected them. Now there is something I'd like to see on video, to relive that Sense of Wonder.

Interesting photo collection of Mardi Gras costumes, or lack thereof. I especially enjoyed the eyes on the buttocks.

Tsk!

"In the Postal Zone" was good. Postal workers do have a lot to put up with. And that reminds me of the time I sent my sister chocolates through the inter-office mail in a manila envelope-- not stamped, of course, but soft, very, very soft was how they arrived.

I enjoyed Richard Lynch's adventures in Russia, too. (Good illo, by the way, as were they all, but whose idea was it?)

Terry Jeeves
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Very many thanks for the massive issue of **Challenger**. Liked the cover with its David and Goliath slant. Interior art patchy, some good and some excellent, I'll leave you to work out which, but I'd give roses to pages 6, 14, 31, and 33.

Jim Baen's speech pushed a few of my buttons ... "a grim neighbourhood ... as inviting as a blast furnace in Antarctica." I'd imagine such a spot of warmth would be very welcome. Again, why *shouldn't* NASA make a profit if it can fit one in? What law says it *must* operate at a loss? As for a Mars mission not being needed, one must learn in the backyard before heading off into the wide blue yonder.

Looks black out there to me.

Harry Warner was highly entertaining, but the difficulty of including artwork is a feeble reason for

packing in [a fanzine]. I've run artwork in ERG for 38+ years now (and in Triode before that), much of it two colour work which involved screen and roller changing and cleaning on the Gestetner -- and I still enjoy fitting illos into the text. Indeed, one of my ambitions is to have an illo on every page.

I was fascinated by Bill Mallardi's scooter trip and have had similar but lesser adventures on an ordinary push-bike. The photopages were very good, and it's the first time I've enjoyed seeing boobs in a fanzine. Pity some of the photopages didn't tell us who was who ...

*Didn't know anyone depicted except those I i.d.ed ...
and Ruthie the Duck Girl.*

"Postal Zone" used the word "boosting" as a euphemism for "stealing." Funny how kids do that to lessen a crime. Over here they "scrump" apples from orchards. It's still stealing.

*At Berkeley they called it "liberating." (So did I,
above.)*

The Lynch trip to Russia was a real eye-opener, especially the notes on their aircraft maintenance. Hoo boy, fly Aeroflot but bring your own parachute.

Fanzine reviews and LOCs were excellent, so what more can I say? In short a potential Hugo winner.

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Ian Gunn's superb cover has stopped me wondering what gladiators wear under their kilts -- obviously battle-scarred long-johns. And may we all pause for a moment to wish Ian well in his fight against the cancermonster. I'm a survivor myself, and good thoughts from friends help.

In July 1992 I submitted a novel titled Loyal Revolt to Jim Baen and since then he has dodged me about it. Not even enquiries from my then-agent Richard Curtis, in both written and telephonic forms, managed to get an answer out of him. It's therefore obvious that I have but one central question for Baen, one that I'll ask face-to-face, once I'm again stateside. If anyone needs a new dream -- or perhaps to wake up from the old one -- it would seem to be Precious Baen.

The Skylark of the Spaceways by Harry Warner Jr. -- A fascinating account of a legendary zine; it's got me wanting to see some samples.

Bill Mallardi's Psychedelic Trip -- One of the most readable, enjoyable stories I've seen in a long time. Your narrative tone hooked and held me.

I often wonder if life isn't just like that somersault: one of those things that you'd never do on purpose, but that thrill and delight you -- after you survive

it.

Talk about Sense of Wonder, huh?

Mephistopheles by Richard Dengrove -- Over here, Faust is generally considered to have been a real person. And remember that magic was taught at university (openly) then. I've lived in or visited Geinhausen, Bad Kreuznach [as opposed to Good Kreuznach?], Wittenberg, and especially Heidelberg, at the last of which there is a Museum of Alchemy in the castle, where it's Paracelsus, not Faust, who gets most of the attention. There's a Faustian Alchemist's laboratory set up there, tho'.

He actually ducked a meeting requested by Thethemius in May, 1506, at Geinhausen, leaving only his

calling
card, which
styled him,
among
other
things, as
"second
mage," and
George
Sabellicus,
the
Younger
Faustus.
No one can
explain the
Sabellicus
part (is Bob
Sabella
available?
Is he a
relative,
perchance?)
nor to
whom he
considered
himself
"second,"



not who Faustus the Elder might have been. Father, maybe? A family of itinerant scholar/charlatans, perhaps?

Faust was at the University of Heidelberg for quite some time, and later taught Homer at the University at Erfurt, where he supposedly dazzled classes by conjuring the actual participants of the Homeric epics. Modern scholars figure he combined a magic lantern with a charismatic personality. He lived a riotous life, and drew large crowds as his fame spread.

The characteristic story about him is that he once left a tavern by riding through the air on a wine cask. He also once rebuked a Franciscan monk, who tried to save his soul, by declaring loudly, to much laughter from

onlookers, that he'd sold his soul to the devil and intended to keep the bargain out of fairness, since the devil had been so honest with him. This is generally considered to have been mockery of the piety of an overly importunate monk by a frank unbeliever, to paraphrase Charles E. Passage.

Those who doubt his historical reality ought to look at the minutes of Ingolstadt's city council, where it's record that he was ejected from that place on 17 June 1528 -- but only after the council elicited a promise from him not to seek revenge on them.

By 1540, he was dead, although his brother kept getting letters for and about him for years.

An interesting side-bar: Faustus kept a black dog as his *spiritus familiaris*, said to switch between dog and human-servant forms, depending on mood. Hence the reference to The Black Dog, generally translated as a metaphor for Depression or Despair. See Winston's Churchill's references to same in his memoirs.



Altogether a fascinating article, and may I add a recommendation to check out "Mefisto in Onyx" by Harlan Ellison, who told me he used "... the Italian spelling ..." instead of the more common "Mephisto," for aesthetic reasons.

Aids Memoir by John Berry -- Interesting shakedown. Didn't work too well, though, did it?

Mo-ped scares were common here in Deutschland in the Seventies, but the sport is almost vanished now.

My only complaints about GHLIII's photo-essay on Mardi Gras are that it was too short, and that it would've been even better in color.

Pink and darker pink. Take my word for it.

And yes, Worms is near here, too, although my diet is revegetarian these days.

Is that horror-writer Poppy Z. Brite in the lower-right quadrant of page 27, flashing her innate innocence? *Nope, just some insanely gorgeous college kid. I have a photo of Z. Brite doing that very thing, but it was taken from a balcony and is blurry.*

In the Postal Zone by Robert Whitaker Sirignano -- Does this mean I should stop waiting for my free loose-manure sample?

My guess is, people mail anything and everything in envelopes out of (a) stupidity, and (b) because they bought the postal "delivery-at-all-costs" myths. Face it, citizens of USA are spoiled by a superb, and inexpensive, postal system. In some parts of Europe, mail actually reaching its intended destination is an excuse for holidays and religious conversions. And it costs arms and legs regardless of such rare achievements.

Russia '94 by Richard Lynch -- Is he any relation to David Lynch?

Damn good coffee. No.

The tale of his trip to mommy Russia felt positively blue-velvety, when compared to RAH's prickly, suspicious narration of Cold War-era visit. Government-sponsored travel is always a pig-in-a-poke, but those planes and airports he describes have me nervous about USA's near future.

Perhaps GHLIII muttering "Gum gum gum" on the train platform might be juxtaposed with Lynch's visit to Moskva's big department store, eh?

In fact, as a psych-op, we CHALLENGERS might visit Moskva, *en masse*, and, proudly wearing our Challenger tee shirts, march triumphantly through the mall in our post-consumerism glow, as we all chant, like strange rejects from the Wicked Witch of the West's henchmen, "Gum gum gum."

Sorry, my medicine doesn't seem to be working too well today.

GHLIII -- Having Dave Barry fail to quote one is, in some wormholes, considered actually a compliment, based on his obvious *envy* of your way with the humorous turn of phrase.

LOCs - Robert M. Sabella -- Good letter. I agree that trying to categorize, say, *Naked Lunch* is useless, yet there are EngLit Profs who've cobbled careers on such ephemera. Their nonsense becomes entrenched and ignoramuses validate it by treating it as real.

Time out! You seem to be rejecting an academic reading of a work of art, and that's simply unwise. One can't fully enjoy Ulysses, for instance, without appreciating its range of references, and that's true of Naked Lunch, as well. There's purpose and intelligence at work in Burroughs; what's the matter with ferreting out the patterns and symbolism in the book, the better to comprehend its point and enjoy its effect? What doesn't work is self-conscious artistry on the part of a writer who aspires to academic attention, i.e., the calculated loading of a piece with symbols or hidden meanings, what Hemingway called putting the raisins in after the bread has already been baked. It reads phony because it is phony.

Remember the academics Samuel R. Delany wrote about, who'd "discovered" *s.f.* and knew nothing of its tropes, big names, or history. All the crap they write will be dutifully regurgitated by students seeking grades, and eventually a new set of morons is marching on us.

That's because most s.f. is eyewash and has no subtext.

I refer you to Fred Chappell's "Science Fiction Water Letter to Guy Lillian" in his poem, River (LSU Press), and his WFA-winning short story, "The Somewhere Doors".

This happened when King Stephen started selling big (making money). All the sudden, publishers tried to invent the horror genre. Horror 'til then had always been an adjunct of actual genres, from mystery and mainstream to romance, ghost stories, tales of the supernatural, and even s.f. All the sudden, it bloated toward the size and shape of a genre. Alas, there wasn't enough to sustain the transformation, and now it's gone back to being the adjunct it had always been, more a style than a genre.

Despite this, there are so-called horror sub-genres -- splatterpunk, Charles Grant's quiet horror, etc. -- that linger like blinks after fireworks.

Thus does art evolve, I guess.

By the way, evolve means change, but not necessarily for the better. It implies no hierarchy.

Sure it does. Evolution means survival. That's by definition "for the better."

Joseph T. Major -- My various essays and articles diverged in purposes because they were written over a course of years, during which my views evolved; and because editors had slant preferences (esp. Skeptical Inquirer's). Who knows why they appeared in print in such close succession? And anyway, isn't consistency the bane of small minds? Or is that constipation?

All I tend to recall of Nashville is the endless road construction.

Neco Wafers are 150 years old. And I've eaten some from the first batch, I'll bet.

Harry Warner, Jr. -- I gave magic performances in kindergarten, and to several dinner parties. By age 7 I was a cynical, bitter vaudevillian ...

Well ... my kids really do "hit" keys. [The use of the word] "Menu" [in computerese] was just cute, I gather. And "connection" doesn't connote the exchange that goes in from both sides of an "interface". Etymologies courtesy of the Advanced Hybrid Morphology Dept., which is located adjacent to the Muffin Research Kitchen in Zappa's domain.

I have no idea what you're talking about, but my ex- and I saw Frank Zappa in concert about 25 years ago!

Instead of trying to get public or college libraries to take [fanzines], how about A Place of Our Own? We ought to set up a Fanzine Library fund, similar to the DUFF or TAFF, so zines can be saved, donated, preserved. Of course, who'd administer it? SFWA?

(Stop laughing.)

Rich Dengrove -- Howdy. And yes, most stuff pubbed as horror today is just gross-out for toddlers, alas. That genuine *frisson* of fear is, however, hard to find because it always was incredibly hard to accomplish.

As for AMORC, be aware that the USA end of things is quite different from other manifestations and is generally held in contempt.

The German government sure isn't chicken about attacking Elron's Elite. [*"Elron" Hubbard, right?*] Here, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches, the two officially sanctioned churches, are powerful enough to have the German national government, as well as the government of most states, act very hostile toward Scientology. Some view it as a dodge, to duck the need to confront neo-Naziism. Others see it as an obsession born of growing poverty and a reactionary bigotry.

Just last month or so, Germany applied laws that allow wire-tapping, covert surveillance, black-bag jobs, and mail-opening, et cetera, to be carried out on anyone suspected of affiliation with Old Mother Hubbard. They've gone so far as banning musicians who are known Scientologists, and protesting Tom Cruise movies.

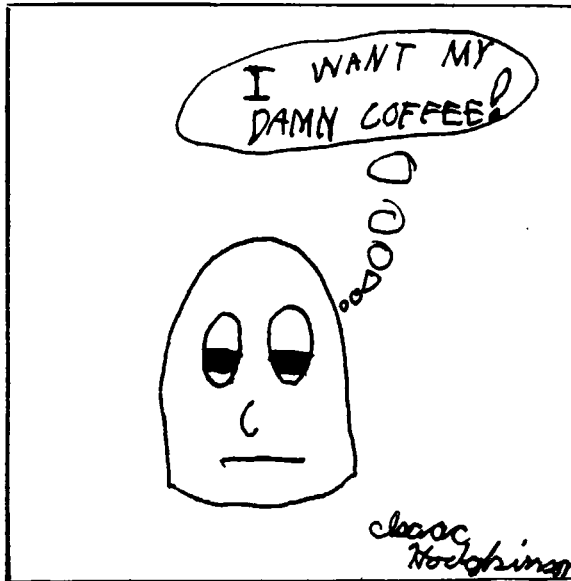
The intolerance is vehement and scary, and most of the claims made against Scientology are wildly exaggerated, such as "they seek to eliminate democracy and take over the world ..." Wonder if the Germans have been watching Pinky and the Brain on AFRTS, the military anagram network?

Roger Waddington --

You're right that too many writers are churning out endless derivative claptrap based on "media hits" and the like, but I think there's plenty of excellent s.f. still being published. Finding it is becoming more of a challenge, but compare even today, when one must wade through the dreck to reach a prize, to the halcyon days, when simply finding s.f. was a third-order miracle.

Also, those media-hype faint echoes won't be the sole future of s.f., as long as people -- no matter how few -- think in s.f.nal terms, which is where s.f. came from in the first place. And I suspect there's a percentage of any given population sample that's s.f.nal, just by nature -- probing, inquisitive, rebellious, and endlessly curious. Or so I hope.

Speaking of Dickworld, here's an oddity: one of the biggest, most complete collections of PKD fiction I



ever saw was in the base library on Lackland AFB, in San Antonio TX. Who was I to ask questions? This particular library also had quite an offbeat collections of works on magick, the occult, and suchlike. I'd love to hear about the librarian who collected them.

Bill Legate -- Schizophrenia is not "split-personality" or MPD, but I'll let the old joke pass with but a tap.

And speaking of PKD, the opening of your letter was marvelous. Reality, indeed. Bah, humbug. Enjoyed your boggling questions.

Fanzine Dump -- The Ansible review was damned near as long as the zine itself.

Jön Benet by *Jeff Copeland* -- A heartfelt, moving article that leaves one as baffled as ever. That the media frenzied is undeniable, and that the cops probably messed up seems likelier daily. We can only hope the killer, whoever it proves to be, slips up or comes forward. Too bad Millennium is just a TV show. Frank Black, we need you now.

Checks and Balances, an Urban Mystery -- Eerie and apt. It could be an excellent set-up for a Twilight Zone, or then again the opening of a moody, literate, and compassionate Southern crime novel. Nice vignette. And one of those excerpts from life that hit and stick, without ever really meaning much. It's good to notice them, and sort through them now and again.

May we all find peace, light and love or at least a new restaurant worth the trip and cost ...



I just love filling
up empty space!

Rodney Leighton
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Amazing strange was the fact that this Challenger arrived within days of me learning that Ian Gunn is battling a real life monster. In sincerely hope he wins.

I'm well over 40 ... damned near 50, in fact ...

but I don't recall hearing about those scooters Bill Mallardi hauled about Ohio. Had a ball reading about his adventures, though.

Your photo essay made me wish I had some money and wasn't a recluse, so I could journey to N'awlins. Of course, I've been wanting to come down there for a few years now, so I could get slapped in the face by a certain redhead.

Wonderful article [by Robert Sirignano] about the silliness that people indulge in regarding the postal service. I have always had good luck with mail. Lots of orders for zines and things have disappeared with no result but that's because I am being ripped off. I proved this to myself recently by mailing two of our \$2 coins in an envelope with one sheet of paper to Toronto. It got through.

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A pleasant surprise, to receive Challenger 6; though it was more a sense of shock when I realized it had arrived via airmail, and totalled up the stamps on the envelope. The phrase "more money than sense: might have come to mind if I hadn't nipped it firmly in the bud; whatever else might be lacking, you've definitely got sense, to choose the profession you're in. A noble and trufan gesture indeed; the question is, can I live up to it?

I have neither money nor sense, and must confess that the airmail postage on some overseas copies of Chall 6 was not a noble trufannish gesture, but the reckless grubbing of a gullible moron. You see, I believed the postal clerk who told me regulations had changed and there was now no difference between surface and airmail, and no such thing as special printed matter rates. The next guy set me straight.

Challenger once experimented with having a British agent, one willing to take on the job of receiving a fat bundle of copies and mailing them out locally. I want to do that again ... both in the U.K. and Australia. Is there any kind, generous, decent, fair-minded saint in either hemisphere interested in the job?

Certainly can't compete with Richard Lynch's exploits in Russia; in fact, I'd come nowhere near. It's a funny thing, but pre-s.f., almost from when I learnt to read, my favorite stories were those of travel in foreign lands and true adventure in the unexplored regions of the world; however, they were never accompanied by any desire to go and see those scenes, those other countries, for myself. Living a village childhood might well have fostered an urge for travel; instead, it sent me the other way, pulled in my horizons around me; and even when I

left the nest, the furthest destination I could think of was London. It's actually something that hasn't changed much; I can look with equanimity at the almost-annual TV news items about airport chaos, holiday companies collapsing and rescue missions to bring their clients home, when then same TV brings me all those near and faraway countries right into my living room without having to move an inch. Though after reading about Dick's Russian journey, I'm beginning to wonder: is there really any substitute for actually being there and meeting the people?

Likewise, the photo feature on Mardi Gras. Colour (or even *color*) might have been an improvement, though leading to bankruptcy even quicker than airmail fanzine delivery; film of the event would be perfect, but where's the reporter, or the cameraman, who can fully bring across the sheer exuberance of the event, so it's just like taking part yourself?

It must be a similar state of mind that has people demanding the closure of all zoos and wildlife parks, that animals should be released back into the wild, on the grounds that if children (and adults) want to be educated about animals they can watch films of them. But that's no substitute to having the living, breathing animal in front of you, even being able to touch it; and so, I've come to realize, is my reliance on films and TV features for foreign travel.

Damn straight! GHLIII for DUFF!

Can't match up to Bill Mallardi's exploits with his first mechanized transport, either. In my childhood village, some five miles to the nearest town, my rites of passage -- in both senses -- were gained via the humble bicycle; as a family we could never afford a car (or even a motor scooter). Or even need a car; something that might boggle those living in the country-wide freeway that's America. All these years later, I still haven't got a driving license, or even learned to drive. Mind you, there was fun enough learning to ride a bike. Sensibly, my first was a secondhand one; and a lady's at that, though it didn't bother me in the slightest. In fact, it was an advantage as I couldn't get tangled up in the crossbar, take my bike with me when I fell off.

Or reduce yourself to a soprano when you slipped forward off the seat.

One of the memories that linger is one evening sailing confidently round a corner back to the village, running out of road and finding myself in the ditch; surprisingly, with no harm to either me or the bike. And thankfully, there was nothing coming in the opposite direction; which is the other great advantage, that I learnt to ride in the Fifties when country roads were relatively traffic-free. I take my hat (or cycle safety helmet) off to the kids of today that can learn to ride with so much against them, from speeding motorists to the slipstream of heavy lorries; how

do they do it?

"In the Postal Zone" has been an eye-opener. I might say there's nothing like that over here, but I have my suspicions that there are, and our postmen (and women) (all right, *postpersons*), like any spy-master, have to sign the Official Secrets Act. We do hear officially of postal catastrophes, always around X'mas, when the PO bring out their horror stories of the limbo that awaits carelessly-wrapped parcels or those with the address missing; of forlorn teddy bears waiting for a new home, or boxes of chocolates that have gone astray. (Somehow I can't imagine those lasting very long.) On the subject of actual vandalism, I suppose one of the yearly regulars must be the news item about snails taking up residence in a postbox and chewing the letters; though that surely says more about the level of service. Very occasionally, some idiots take it into their mind to drop a lighted match inside a postbox; though, for some unknown reason, they never wait around to watch the resulting fire, or to warm themselves. As far as popping your cookies, the unofficial way, into a postbox, I haven't done a test run but seems that for most of the collection boxes round here, you'd need to be a contortionist to achieve that. I think all must be fitted with the sloping metal plate so that if you don't post all the way, it falls out again; and likewise anything else, with the resulting damage to your shoes rather than the postal system.

In fact, the general low level of postal vandalism and abuse of the system over here might well be credited to one man: Postman Pat, the animated hero of children's TV. When our infants can grow up avidly watching his adventures, wrestling with the postal system, accompanied by his black-&-white cat, and buy all the accompanying toys, they can surely gain a greater appreciation of what it is to be a postman, and so be less inclined to add to his troubles. Mind you, with all the fires that are started every year, I don't think the theory can be applied to Fireman Sam; or (with the current chaos on our railways) Thomas the Tank Engine. And of course, fanzine fans are a separate breed, with least of all reason to test the system to destruction; I perhaps bend it somewhat and so cultivate my friendly local post office which gives me the benefit of the doubt, where bigger city centers would take refuge in officialdom. But certainly not on the cream cheese level.

Another cliché might be "preaching to the converted," with Jim Baen's speech at MidSouthCon; although over here, I suspect that we're quite happy with the current state of NASA. Not that I've taken any public soundings, but my impression is that the general public's sense of wonder has been sufficiently stirred with the thought of a manned mission to Mars. (And, judging from the plethora of recent Mars novels, several s.f. writers as well.) In fact, we seem to be quite happy with the cinders

and slushballs of our own solar system, and personally, I still get a thrill with every Shuttle landing, watching that big bird coming in like any scheduled airliner, yet knowing that it's been into the depths of Space. "Eye candy for astronomers" is just as much eye candy for the rest of us; especially since the Hubble space telescope was put up and running.

Those photos aren't eye candy. They're soul candy.

Whether we'll ever reach those distant stars and galaxies is something that's not considered very much. Mars we can cope with; it came into the national consciousness back in the Fifties thanks to Journey into Space, the adventures of Jet Morgan and his crew, the most popular radio serial ever; but the dreams of further exploration, beyond the Solar System, are still the stuff of science fiction. Translating it into science fact, getting Congress to shell out (and the taxpayer) will take a massive re-education; and I don't think the efforts of science fiction authors alone will be enough.

Mars, of course, has been on the public mind since the striding tripods of H.G. Wells, and having the planet blaze red in every autumn sky has kept it there.



Must say, for a fanzine that's supposed to have its own light-hearted bent, you've been laying on an enormous amount of heavy on us in this issue, what with the article on Mephistopheles [*the Devil you say!*] and the JonBenet murder. Though I wouldn't be too quick to write off God and the Devil in this present age. What with Satanic child abuse cults apparently active in every American town and city, plus the presence of guardian angels everywhere around us, not to mention aliens governing the White House, there's no limit to what people can believe. As far as the case of Mephistopheles goes, I tend to see him as another fascinating example of how people can externalize their inner conflicts (if I'm using the current buzz words right); if the Bible can be believed, right from Adam when he claimed "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Likewise, Eve: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." My hero in that encounter is the serpent, who stood by his actions when he could have just as easily blamed God for creating him in the first place. And even if we no longer believe in God, we're still as reluctant as ever to take charge of our own lives and actions, such as the speeding motorist: "If the utility company hadn't put that telephone pole there, I wouldn't have crashed into it." Or even those lining up to sue the tobacco companies for tempting them into smoking and not telling them about the risk; we go into this life with our eyes open, and what we make of it is surely our own responsibility.

On the JonBenet murder, unfortunately I buy the only British tabloid not practicing tits-and-bum journalism, so had to wait for the in-depth article in the magazine section of the most respectable Sunday broadsheet, which also leads me to disagree with Jeffrey Copeland. But that aside, some crimes are beyond belief, as here and the Dunblane massacre, almost beyond reason; but the question I'm still trying to grasp is, why are we so fascinated with murder in the first place? Perhaps that killing another person, taking their life and leaving them dead is the worst crime we can imagine; maybe also a sense of wonder at how it would be in the murderer's place, how we could find a similar darkness in our own souls. And not only in the daily papers and the TV schedules; what about the massive sales for crime and mystery novels, most of which start with a murder and continue in the same vein? You can maybe excuse them as mystery puzzles, spot the murderer before anyone else; or in my particular case, a fascination with the ambience revealed, be it the mean streets of Raymond Chandler (and

the rest), Nero Wolfe's New York or the Cape Cod of Asey Mayo. However, we can't escape the fact that to provide this maximum enjoyment in whatever form, in every case someone has to die; and we greet it with equanimity. Or maybe I should take the attitude summed up in a marvelous book title read recently: *It's Only a Movie, Ingrid!*

Crime, especially murder, is life at the extreme, life without regulations, life obedient only to impulse. The criminal fascinates because he lives without rules, obeys only caprice, relates to society only as one who preys upon it ... or, in the best cases, lives separately within it. That might seem romantic from a distance, but from closer up it's a squalid and ugly and frightened and sick and lonely way to live. At L.A. Con III I watched a panel on Jack the Ripper, where the various romantic conceits about the killer were discussed, as well as the likely reality, that he was neither romantic nor even particularly interesting, that like most people at the extreme he was squalid and ugly and frightened and sick and lonely. So ... what about ol' Van Houten? I'd say all these descriptions applied at the time of her crime, even the loneliness, for what else besides an overwhelming need to belong -- coupled with overwhelming hidden anger, and a bone-deep self-loathing she had to rationalize -- could possibly have moved her arm?

Anyway, crime fascinates us, I believe, because it's underneath the surface of daily life, always there, the id to life's ego, a temptation, an easy answer to a complex need, and we feature it in our dramas as demonstrations of morality, justifying our self-restrictions through art. And maybe, as in the monstrosity at Dunblane, making the unthinkable possible to understand. Me, I look at the class photo of the victims in that god-awful case and find the crime beyond comprehension, evil so fundamental that it warps the space around it.

For my own lighthearted bent, perhaps I could point out that Dave Barry's quest for the least favorite TV commercials might find slim pickings over here, where the advertisers don't even take themselves seriously. As witness, a recent one for the Chicken Tonight sauce, where the chefs preparing it are singing away, with hit parade songs that would be even barred in karaoke. The closing caption is, "Great food, lousy music!"

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As you might expect, Challenger 6 is a bit overwhelming to your normal overaged s.f. fan, but taken slowly over a period of weeks it is an asset to have. Thank you.

Your reader E.B. Frohvet favors the "snake test" which assumes real fans can be separated from the mundane types by introducing a snake. I well remember a ten year old boy, son of my cousin, who sought a reaction from me with the unexpected present of a common garter snake. Placed on my lap, the snake twined easily up my left arm to enjoy my body heat and calm demeanor.

The other think I specially liked was the Greek-English poem, Heraclitus, which begins "They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead," courtesy of Roger Waddington.

I thank you warmly for these and other favors.

Thank you!

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So cover-artist Ian Gunn has been to the Ludi and seen the comic gladiatorial act of a battle of dwarves. Presumably the other comic gladiatorial act of a battle of women would not go over with some people.

The first owner must have given up on Bill Mallardi's motor scooter early if it was a 1947 model and he bought it in 1951. Five years, after all ... (I assume that motor scooters are, or were, like cars and the "year" models came out in "year-1".) Small wonder that the clutch sprocket broke like that. I bet Richard Seaton (for a macho space opera hero, the protagonist of *The Skylark of Space* seems to the uninformed a bit wimpy, riding on his motor scooter, but he is just economical) never had an experience like that! Also, presumably during John Berry's trip to Nerja, among the motorcycle offenses he did not see was presumably someone towing a motorcycle by a chain attached to the handlebars.

Mephistopheles and Man and Nature: "Faustus" is Latin for *fortunate* but "Faust" is German for *fist*. Of course, that makes the perfect macaronic pun -- "John Lucky-Punch" (by association). That is almost as bad as the dyslexic devil worshipper -- he did not believe in Dog -- he sold his soul to Santa.

Russia '94: A Personal Adventure: "Lenin's Tomb, which no longer is a tourist attraction since Lenin's body was removed." Huh? Wishful thinking, maybe?

Mikhail Tomsky was one of the few Bolshevik leaders to not be found guilty of conspiring to reintroduce capitalism in the Soviet Union, mostly because he anticipated the work of Stalin's executioners. So his city remained "Tomsk", while "Trotsk" and so on were renamed. Later on when Stalingrad and Stalino and Stalinabad and so on were renamed, it still was forgotten. Nowadays, Molotov and Kalinin and the big kahuna itself, the City Formerly Known as Leningrad, have been

revised, but apparently Tomsk managed to get forgotten again. I wonder if the town Gagarin has been renamed.

I certainly hope not! Yuri Gagarin's name will survive in human memory as long as there is human memory to survive. Someday they'll name cities in space after him; surely capitalist Russians can spare him the same honor now.

Actually the department store off Red Square (which has nothing to do with Lenin; red is the beautiful color in Russian culture) is GUM -- all capitals. And the (in)famous fanzine is actually "Arrayaatsnyk" since the font evidently contains one error -- the small "b" in "bl" = "y" was omitted.

Yeah, what you said, yeah.

We all deplore outrageous lawyering -- up until the time we ourselves are in legal trouble. Then it comes time to take off the gloves. Object to the witness giving his name on the grounds of hearsay! Have the ID picture of the deceased printed on extra-thin paper so the jury can see he is wearing a grand total of one sock! Accuse the murder victim of every crime in the book! And if it was me, or you, or E.B. Frohvet, we would not want it any other way.

I had some hard times in Bowling Green, but I never fell into the ground the way Gary Robe did. We all did a lot of things in our youths (like Bill Mallardi's motor scooter trip) that we regret in adulthood -- I recall the river behind my grandfather's farm and taking a header in it.

Reply to Gene Stewart: Not only was Hitler a vegetarian, he had the most atrocious table manners. His method of eating consisted of putting his head next to the table and shoveling the fodder straight in. This would never have gone over in the Herrenklub (the most aristocratic club in Berlin).

You had to mention "Will Robinson". You did know that some completely deranged and degraded director is doing a remake of *Lost in Space*. There are few things I would expunge from my life completely, if I had the chance, but the most likely one is the argument I had over whether *Lost in Space* was better than *Batman* ...

With hapless Gary Oldman as Dr. Smith. The poor ham has been stuck in stupid roles for most of his career. Dracula degenerated into a chick flick after a promising beginning, so the only thing I've really liked him in was The Professional. Fun to watch his sleazy DEA villain end up as 400 square feet of baked goo on the walls.

As for Alex Slate's capital question about capital and not-so-capital punishment, what about the "Let him have it" case? Two teenagers in Britain were being pursued by the police. They were cornered. The one

without the gun said to the one with the gun "Let him have it!" The one with the gun shot and killed a bobby. At their trials, they offered the defense that the sentence was intended to mean "Give him the gun." The prosecution put forth the claim that the sentence was intended to mean "Shoot him." The shooter was condemned to death and I believe executed, even though he was mentally retarded. Now there is a fine set of circumstances to evaluate ...

Actually, the question involved the fate of the accomplice, who was hanged. Justly? I think not.

Tom Feller: But even someone sentenced to life "without parole, probation or suspension of sentence" can still receive clemency, get long furloughs, or even get transferred to a halfway house with minimal (read "no") supervision.

In what universe?

But death penalty cases have the problem that the "victim" will often get a clerical sponsor or a woman who will believe her man has been framed and is innocent! innocent! (or even someone like Sr. Helen Prejean, who seems to manage to be both), provoking a big international media campaign and have the governor's office besieged with appeals. But this seems more to be used for death penalty cases, which itself makes a case for use of LWOP.

Prisoners sentenced to death can also receive executive clemency. Considering the long-haired hippy radicals Louisiana elects as its governors these days, that's a terrible threat. (End sarcasm.)

Roger Waddington rightly fears the tide of the media tie-ins, those expungers of the backlist and the midlist. So, the JMSies who knew everything about the character Alfred Bester and nothing about the writer Alfred Bester could not go out and buy the wherewithal to relieve their lack of knowledge, since the publisher, given the choice of *The Demolished Man* or *Babylon 5 #122*, *The Stars My Destination* or *Star Trek: Voyager #189*, *Starburst* or *X-Files: The Search for Cigarette Smoking Man* will choose the media tie-in every time. (I looked Bester up in Damon Knight's *In Search of Wonder* and noted that Knight compares Bester to -- Simon Rodia.) When a few weeks ago, *USA Today* highlighted s.f. books in its listing of bestsellers, all of the ones they listed were media tie-ins.

I don't really mind that. Doesn't it stand to reason that it's the profits from the media novelizations that allow publishers to keep Bester's classics in print? Some may have forgotten the name of Simon Rodia; he created the Watts Towers, subject of a wonderful book given me for Christmas by Ruth Judkowitz.



Perhaps Bill Legate would appreciate this story about a Nigerian truck ride. Transport being short and African cultures being companionable, the truck driver transporting the coffin gave the five guys a ride in the back without any qualms on either side. As they drove along at some speed, the riders suddenly noticed that the lid of the coffin was being lifted from the inside. They panicked, and jumped from the truck to their deaths. The sixth rider, who had felt the need for a nap and used the available cover to shield himself from the sun and rain, got out and probably wondered what all that shouting had been about.

I thought Tarzan on Mars had been stopped in its tracks by copyright suits from ERB, Inc.

If Tom Sadler does not tell you, a "famulus" is a sorcerer's apprentice.

USA Today (them again!) had an op-ed article by a woman who complained that a TV correspondent had asked her to let them film her talking about the people across the street. She replied that she did not know them, at which point she was asked to let herself be filmed saying that. She refused that too. The connection is that "the people across the street" were the Ramseys. So much for Geraldo! What do you expect, though, from a man who has a Star of David tattooed on his hand to remind himself of his Jewish heritage (which however did not seem to extend to being informed that tattooing is a violation of Jewish law).

The Man from the Pru case, the Julia Wallace Murder case in 1920's Liverpool, is a prime example of the police deciding on a suspect and investigating the suspect, not the case. In spite of what one would think was a pretty good alibi, insurance salesman W.W. Wallace was convicted of the murder of his wife. The police seemed to have decided that he did it and shaded their investigation to produce the predetermined result. The sentence was overturned on appeal. As a legal person you will be interested to learn that the judge summed up the case so as to just about order a directed verdict of not guilty, and the Lord Chief Justice who overturned the jury sentence was known as a fanatic defender of the concept of the inviolability of jury verdicts. But Wallace's health was ruined and he died a couple of years afterwards. The various media leaks -- I cannot go to the grocery store without being assaulted by a half-dozen different headlines describing how the police are closing in on the senior Ramseys -- seem to be to this end.

Perhaps the Ramseys were aware of the consideration that the parents are the prime suspects in a child murder. Hiring an attorney would seem to be a sadly necessary act of self-defense in those tragic circumstances.

Perhaps they were also aware of the natural conclusion

to be drawn from the facts that no footprints were left in the snow by the killer, coming or going, that the killer moved through a dark house as if familiar with every inch of the place, left drafts of his ransom note and the pad he wrote it on, knew intimate details of the father's private finances, and returned at least once to further molest the child's body, all without arousing a sleeping household. If they killed her, that must have meant they really loved her, right?

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Thank you kindly for Challenger 6 -- and for 4 and 5, too, although I'm sure I wrote a letter in response to one or other of them. Perhaps it was never received ... or perhaps it was one of those letters one imagines so intently -- phrases and sentences reworked and reassembled, arguments examined and restructured, the whole mentally polished to such an extent -- that one is eventually convinced a letter was actually written, even though no mark ever appeared on paper. It perhaps doesn't help that I do devote some marginal time (often on the walk from home to the tube station in the mornings) to mentally assembling portions of possible letters of comment. But then, perhaps, don't we all?

Anyway, I was interested to read the transcript of Jim Baen's speech, less because I wish to help him realise the s.f. dream of an expanding shell of human colonisation centred on the Earth -- I'm (probably very) unusual for an s.f. fan in having little active interest in spaceflight *per se* (read about it in New Scientist, yes, follow it in detail, no) and being almost fully convinced that we shall never establish continuing bases on the Moon, Mars, *et al* -- but because of a striking failure to fully think through his proposed transformation of NASA into a funding agency for private enterprise. On the one hand, he wants to reform NASA so that it ceases to monopolise the space business, and thereby make room for others; yet on the other hand, he wishes to see it underwrite the high costs of space exploration which he recognises would frighten off the private sector. Thus he wishes first to slim NASA down, presumably saving money; then he wishes to give it even more money. Isn't there a glaring financial contradiction here?

The contradiction is worsened when it is understood that the only conceivable source for the envisaged subsidies is increased taxes, which is anathema to U.S. conservatives and libertarians. I don't know into which of these two groups Baen might fall [*he's a personal friend of Newt Gingrich, so draw your own conclusions*], but if he or anyone else thinks there's a way of funding

these subsidies by other than increased taxes then they must provide clear details of the other sources from which the money is to come, including a list of the other expenditures they'd curtail in order to generate the required revenue. Baen conspicuously fails to provide any such explanations -- nor, for that matter, does he explain why, if NASA is to become just a funding agency for the private sector, it shouldn't be abolished *in toto* and the money handed directly to Boeing or whoever. (The obvious answer to this one is that it would be politically impossible to hand tax revenues directly to the aerospace industry; accordingly, they have to be laundered via a government agency.) Yet perhaps one shouldn't be too hard on him; failing to explain how the colonisation of space will be financed is a common to space enthusiasts of Baen's kind, who seem united in their ability to invent workable technical plans for advancing plans for advancing



the conquest of (say) Mars while utterly lacking the ability to grasp that without a resurgence of the political will (amongst both government and the public) to pay for these plans they will never be realised. Such financial and political oversights only reinforce my conviction that the "s.f. dream" of continuing bases on other planets will remain exactly where they have always been: between the covers of s.f. novels.

I note also that towards the end of his speech, Baen suddenly redefines humankind as "Americans and their friends" -- a formulation which presumably excludes "terrorist" or "rogue" states such as Iran, Iraq, Sudan,

Libya, North Korea, *et al.* Yet the inhabitants of these states don't stop being human just because Baen doesn't like their politics. Further, any attempt to prevent such peoples from participating in the realisation of the s.f. dream (assuming for the sake of this point that it will ever happen) would only lead to *more* terrorist or rogue behavior. Building and stocking an L5 colony cylinder would be fearsomely expensive, for example -- but launching a high impact kinetic weapon to rip it apart would be relatively cheap. (And it would only need one such cylinder or other orbital city to be destroyed for the whole enterprise to be abandoned as too risky, of both lives and money.)

Another point I note is that in the opening paragraphs of his speech, Baen refers to proposals to involve government in the provision of health care as "insane." It seems an article of faith amongst most Americans (and certainly among conservative and libertarian Americans) that a publicly-funded health service would be inherently more expensive and inefficient than a privately-funded one; yet the health services of most European nations are not only free at the point of use and funded out of general taxation, but also cheaper to operate simply because they are not encrusted with the extra layers of bureaucracy necessary to keep track of the paperwork that invoicing, contracting, pursuing overdue payments, insuring against surgical misadventure, and whatnot inevitably involves. Here in Britain we've had an opportunity, over the past ten years, to more-or-less directly compare privately-funded health care with publicly-funded, as the now-despatched Tory government constructed artificial purchaser/provider splits between the various sectors of the National Health Service to impose an "internal market" which it was claimed would ensure a more efficient use of resources but which instead resulted in continuing falls in the amount of money devoted to actual health care as more and more was eaten up by the additional layers of management necessary to make the system function at all -- never mind the ludicrous duplication of expensive facilities between neighbouring hospitals in order that they could "compete" with each other for "market share", which in Canterbury and East Kent led to hundreds of misdiagnosed (and missed diagnoses) or cervical cancer, inadequate or not treatment of same, and several entirely avoidable deaths. Not surprisingly, the new Labour government has decided to dismantle the "internal market" and spend the money saved on treating patients.

But enough of Jim Baen. In his article, Richard Dengrove laments that "it is doubtful another Faustian classic will be written soon," although "the twentieth century is fertile ground for a new version of Faust. The sin would no longer be lust but greed for money and

power ... the consequence of his sin would be smokestacks, overbuilding and the destruction of wetlands." All of which speculations have now been overtaken by Michael Swanwick's new novel *Jack Faust*, which deals with precisely those themes -- albeit that I don't think the novel's environmental message is as strong as it could be, and tends to emerge rather late in the proceedings. But the greed for money and power is there from the outset, neatly counterpointed against Faust's on/off struggles not to succumb to the venality exhibited by everyone else, and to use his new knowledge (of cosmology, biology and political philosophy in particular) to help humanity to higher and nobler things. I recommend it; and I'd be interested to learn in due course what Dengrove, as a Faust expert, makes of it.

Richard Lynch says that Lenin's embalmed body has been removed from his mausoleum in Red Square. Far from it -- there is a continuing debate over whether to move it, and to demolish the mausoleum, but no Russian politician has yet sufficiently screwed their courage to the sticking point to actually do anything of the kind. (Yeltsin was making noises about it, for the umpteenth time, only last week.) The die-hard Communists are predictably opposed -- conveniently forgetting that it was (I think) Lenin's wish that he be given a normal burial, alongside his mother, rather than be worshipped after his death at some secular altar. (Slices of his brain are presumably still preserved at the Moscow institute established for study of same, the rationale being that because he was a supposedly more highly organised individual than anyone else the structure of his brain would be very different too. Decades of research have presumably yet to show anything of the kind.)

*I remember when the Reds had Stalin's body laid out next to Lenin's. I also remember when they hauled the old brute out of there and dumped him in a potter's field. Just as gruesome in a way is our exhibition of an exhumed corpse at the Smithsonian. Exposed in a display case are the remains of a farmer, which the chemicals in the soil have somehow turned into a material like soap. *Yick* One of my first acts when I'm king of America will be to return that poor fella to his grave.*

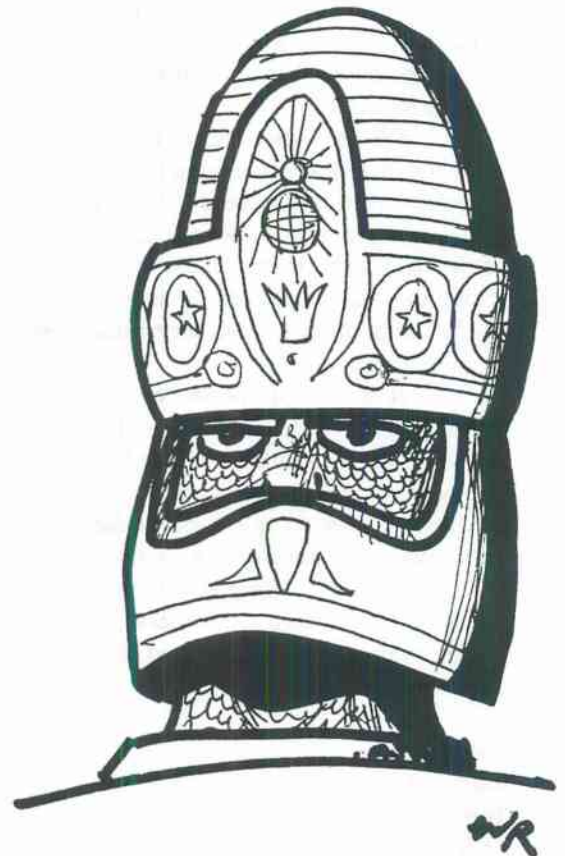
Finally, many thanks for the kind words about FTI 21 in your fanzine round-up. But, my article "sombre"? I admit that I had to omit one or two light jokes in order to finish neatly at the bottom of the page, but I don't think it was *that* "sombre." Not sombre at all, even, I mean, cemeteries are interesting places to visit, disease has had an influence on human history, the Earth's climate is changing, blah drone ...

CHALLENGER 7

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Suddenly I have given up my indifference and apathy about the JonBenet Ramsey case to discuss an issue I seem to care about, discriminating among the different levels of evidence.

Let us first take personality judgments. I know Jeff Copeland has made the judgment that the Ramseys



couldn't have killed their child. I would probably make the same judgment of a friend -- and the opposite of an enemy. However, such judgments are unreliable. The idea behind con men is that you simply know they can't be cheating you.

The cops I bet made the judgment that the Ramseys did it based on the fact that the majority of murders are committed by family members. This thesis is far stronger than personal criteria. But it is still weak; it is one size fits all and the weight of evidence could easily point in the opposite direction. Still, having made this theory, the cops are unwilling to contemplate any other, and their minds have been shut.

Next we come to more specific evidence. People claim that they are judging based on the specific evidence,

but I am not so certain their real reasons aren't the first two. It is a bit of specific evidence that the murderer had intimate knowledge of the Ramsey household and the father's finances. While an outsider "could" have known about them, a family member would be more likely to know about these things. And, more important, it is even more likely that a very personal fact would stick in the craw of a family member.

It is a bit of specific evidence that the murderer entered and left [the house] without being noticed. Once again, it would be more likely a family member, than an outsider, would enter and leave unnoticed.

On the other hand, it is a bit of specific evidence that there are signs of forced entry and unknown DNA on JonBenet. Of course, the proof is in the specific signs of forced entry and the location of the unknown DNA. These specific signs may be strong or weak evidence. Smart lawyers are always confounding the types, but we truthseekers must keep them straight.

It is a bit of specific evidence that someone in the neighborhood was known to molest children. This is proof this unknown assailant did it. He had the motive. Still, it is too early to convict. We have to know, Was he at the scene of the crime? Was he even aware the Ramseys existed?

Thus the strongest evidence presented to me so far pointed toward the parents. However, the case is still weak and the facts can easily point in the other direction.

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Thank you very much for **Challenger #6** which arrived a couple of days ago, and which has afforded me great pleasure browsing through its many pages (pausing only to wonder who Bruce Berry is) and appreciate the very diverse topics mentioned therein.

Bruce is your long-lost twin brother, kidnapped from the cradle by Martian gypsies and smuggled into Outer Penetengushene by buzz bomb during World War II. In short, he's a figment of yhos' idiot imagination.

I was stunned to read about JonBenet, please ask Jeffrey Copeland to consolidate the up-to-date situation in the next **Challenger**.

Not much seems to have changed. We have no arrest nor many new clues known to the public.

Really liked "In the Postal Zone" -- also, all illos were excellent. Do you collect spare stamps and covers?

Never caught the philately bug, but my favorite window in New Orleans is that to Ray Weil's stamp shop, where a facsimile of his Penny Mauritius [sic] stamp is on display. Someone once figured that stamp to be the most valuable thing in history. By weight.

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I agree fully with Jim Baen about NASA's failure to pursue the best possible course with the space program and with the need to get humanity off the Earth permanently as soon as possible. But he sort of avoids gingerly the question of cost, which enters like a terrible demon into all the ideas he advances.

I read not long ago a Michael Moorcock novel published some years back which had the Devil as the same rather nice guy that Richard Dengrove found in centuries-old descriptions in Faust legendry. So I suppose Michael wasn't as original as I imagined him to be. But I wouldn't think of Goethe's Faust as loaded with sentimentality. The Gretchen episode might be considered that way, but it occupies only a small part of the whole long drama, no matter how prominently she figures in most of the operas derived from Goethe.

I thought the postal manual put strict minimum size limits on letter mail and post cards. Maybe it's changed by now and Robert Whitaker Sirignano's complaint is valid. Nevertheless, I have received so much partially-opened mail in the past 18 months that I can't feel sympathetic with the occasional case when mailmen are bothered by someone having sent a letter unsealed by accident. I assume these invasions of my privacy are done in order to permit a dog or machine to sniff for drugs. Many of them are not large enough to permit someone hunting money to see if currency is inside. Maybe there has been another case of a fan suspected of having had a mailing list for a fanzine mistaken for a mailing list for customers.

Reading Dick Lynch's article [about Russia], I can only repeat my speculation about why the USSR didn't tear down or remodel beyond recognition all those large churches and cathedrals during the decades of its opposition to religion. Is it possible that even the leaders of the Communists recognized the probability that their system wouldn't survive indefinitely and felt they might as well leave

the buildings for use after communism collapsed?

Insanity, inability to distinguish right from wrong, and similar pleas are turning criminal courts into shambles. I think the law should be amended to require the person who escapes jail only because of such a plea to be confined to a mental institution for whatever period of time he would have been forced to serve without such a plea. It would protect society for some years, at least, against the possibility of more crimes from this person, regardless of whether the mental problem plea was justified. Confinement in an institution only until an authority pronounces the person cured and sane again is useless, because pressures and circumstances during confinement are so different from those in the free outside world.

Guy sounds like Mark Twain with his obsessive "Gum, gum, gum" memory. Mark wrote a wonderful little essay about how he had transferred the instructions on a railroad ticket into a jingle: *"Punch, brother, punch with care, / Punch in the presence of the passengaire."*

Conceivably, the solution to Guy's "Urban Mystery" could be simple ignorance of a thief. The woman might have been unable or barely able to read, unable to write a check, and she may not have realized that a canceled check can't be used to provide revenue from a bank teller a second time. Unless, of course, time travel was involved, and a future researcher had put on a disguise as a homeless person in order to obtain priceless mementoes of a jurist who attained international fame in the early 21st Century.

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To Buck C.: Once upon a time TAFF and DUFF and so forth may have been for "fanzine fans." No more. Take a long hard look. The people involved are mostly part of the group that has long "defined fandom." First they defined it to exclude media fen as "not true fen." Then they knocked out Convention Fandom. For a long time I wasn't too concerned. *I* knew what true fen, no matter what "they" said.

If you look at it now, these awards are for a clique, circle, or whatever best describes a nebulous group of people who are all friends. These people may only have much to do with fanzines when running for TAFF -- eventually they'll realize that sham isn't needed.

The majority of fanzines or their web page versions are shifting to operation by people who may or may not use the term fanzine to describe what they

do. They certainly are no longer dominated by the "Fan Fund clique." Hades, there may even be a slight resurgence of paper zines ... outside the "circle." But, still, the "in group" hangs on to the worn out "we're the only true fandom" party line -- and woe be it to anyone else who runs for a Fan Fund.

Fine. They just should no longer represent themselves as being fandom, and worse yet, conventions and others should quit treating them as fannish charities. They're just one more somewhat self-indulgent special interest group. It's time the rest of us defined them out of any special treatment.



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I disagree with Jim Baen that we Americans have no dream. We certainly have one, the world village. This, the internet is slowly bringing to us. The dream killers have tried to slay it. Mothers have been mobilized against its filth, academics scream from the rafters how the net will be the death of the book. But all in vain. We remain enthusiastic about the Internet, some of us genuflect over it all day.

I agree, if there is any justice, space flight should be another dream. But for now it appears too elitist, too far from the dreams of ordinary Americans. Maybe in another fifty years, space flight will again be a dream.

Another person I disagree with is Bill Mallardi. (I'm being very disagreeable today.) He likens s.f. to the thrill of rolling off a cliff at 22 mph. All our pastimes give us a thrill of sorts, but s.f.'s is far down on the list of thrills, cheap and otherwise.

I was interested in Dick Lynch's problems with Cyrillic. The reason is I had my own. My parents found a photograph that had been sent to my mother's family by a Russian relative. It shows a young fellow in a very elaborate uniform. In back is a lot of writing. I saw some letters that looked like the Latin alphabet and a word that looked like Musica. Thus, I originally thought the words might be Italian and the young fellow might be in music school. We saw the date 1910 so we figured the writing dated from 1910.

Then a friend of mine took a look at it, she used to work as a Russian translator. What looked

like the Latin alphabet turned out to be Cyrillic. Handwritten, Cyrillic looks a lot like the Latin alphabet. My friend also pointed out the 1910 was the year the young man was born and he sent the photograph in 1932. She also spotted the word Leningrad, so we presumed the young man was living in Leningrad. What looked like "Musica" in the Latin alphabet turned out to be the fellow's name in Cyrillic, Misha Sherman. This last factlet is more important than the rest of my laundry list of misunderstandings corrected. From it, I discovered a line of my mother's family I never knew existed.

Gene Stewart has a question to ask me... Do I know anything about German kitchen witches? He says that they are lovely-faced females on broomsticks and are kept for good luck. What I know about them, I know from hearsay. They are apparently sold internationally. People have told me that they have seen them for sale in Wales and Australia. My wife tells me that, around the '60s, they were very popular in the States. However, it has not been just a commercial venture. Someone else said that her grandmother, of German descent, made her own kitchen witch.

It is difficult to tell how far back the German kitchen witches go. All along it has been folk belief in Germany, as well in other places, that there were bad witches and good witches. The folk held into this belief though the authorities frowned on it, even after the witch hunt.

Apparently, the lovely face is a recent innovation. In the '60s, German kitchen witches looked either like our stereotype of the witch, old and with the large beak-like nose, or had a matronly appearance. Father back, the ethnic German grandmother made her kitchen witch out of a coffee bean, which perforce would give it wrinkles.

What the hell is a kitchen witch?

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apparently that is Hank Reinhardt on the cover. Ask Hank and he'll say he's the large barbarian with the axe. Ask Lon Atkins and he'll say Hank is the little guy with the sword.

Hank couldn't be the big guy with the axe. The big guy's beard wasn't real and he smelled okay.

Jim Baen's article was interesting and for the most part, found me in an agreeable mood. However, it bothered me that he harped so much on the costs for NASA to do things. Now, I'm not one of those who think it is proper to spend whatever

NASA needs to get the job done, but it is obvious cuts in the space program have limited it in the last 15 years.

It was nice to see the Mars landing on a "cheap" budget, but imagine what we could have done with some decent funding. Typical of most explorations in our history, including the Columbus trips to the New World when no one wanted to pay for his ships and men. When false stories of gold returned to Europe, *everyone* was ready to participate. If gold was discovered on Mars, someone would have a manned flight there in less than five years.

Gemstone's *The Comic Book Marketplace* had a wonderful two-issue series on Julie Schwartz last year -- worth getting your hands on, if possible. Sorry to hear arthritis problems have slowed our favorite editor down.

Okay, I have a new #1 purchasing priority, and those CBMs are it. Who has them?

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"We Need a New Dream" -- On the whole I disagree rather strongly with this article. Not the sentiment, not at all, I totally agree we should have an active space program that encourages real space exploration meaning commercial uses and settlement. Where I choose to differ is the value of continuing to explore the rest of the solar system. There are two strong reasons for doing so:

* First, we don't know all that much about the rest of the system. Every time a probe flies near any body in the solar system we find out something new. It would be hard not to see how little data mankind has accumulated on the subject. There is truly no such thing as useless data about the environment we live in. Yes we live in the same solar system these probes are exploring.

Leaving out the practical reasons for continued exploration, like trying to understand our own planet before we trash it, there is the simple human need to dream. The photos we get back from space feed that need and keep it alive. I do not believe the drive to space is the result of a desire to do business there; I think that is only an excuse, the same one used by explorers throughout history to justify chasing their dreams.

* Second, the technology needed to commercialize space is very non-commercial, in its developmental phase. Would it be better is private

industry built spaceships? No question, the answer is yes. Will the stock market bankroll a business to develop radically new technology that may or may not work and even if it does may or may not have a market? No. NASA, with its planetary probes and shuttle flights, is funding the developmental work to turn spaceflight technology into something a business venture could be built around.

I really object to phrases like "Welfare Department for engineers" and "eye candy for astronomers". Most of the engineers working for NASA could make more money for less work in private industry. They work there because they want to follow the dream. Then there are all the non-spaceflight related jobs that NASA does, like atmospheric studies.

Not that I think NASA has always been on target or made the right choices. It could be argued that the whole manned space program was a mistake. If we had continued to develop the "X planes" instead of ditching the program in favor of the rocket effort, we might well have had a *practical* space plane years earlier. Not to mention commercial SSTs. But we have to remember that NASA is a government agency and that means politics and political appointments. It means really bad decisions made in the name of public relations and need for constant compromise.

Anyway, the bottom line, I think NASA is doing a good job. It's easy to pick on them especially given disasters like the one your zine is named after, but over all they have managed to keep the dream of spaceflight alive when it might easily have died. Someday we will settle the Solar System and we will do it largely because of the incredible work done by NASA's people.

Agreement here ... but Challenger isn't named for the disaster. It's named for the dream.

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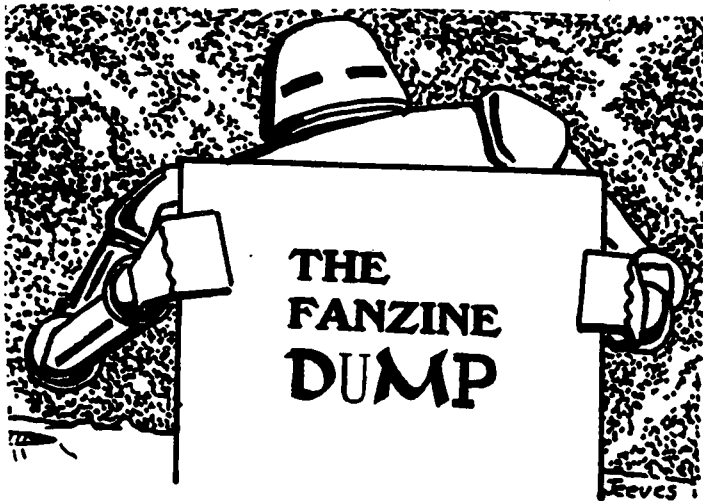
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CHALLENGER 7

another catalog. This is indeed a publication by, for, of, about, in science fiction fandom. Chall is an expensive beast to publish and exchange with s.f. zines has to come first. But: as far as I'm concerned, the very act of zining is s.f.nal. I will review every zine that I see, and will send copies of this section of Chall to all my correspondents, no matter what. So lay'em on.

Aces / Paul McCall, 5801 W. Henry St., Indianapolis IN 46241 / No Aces? My hand is made up of deuces!

Adventures in Crime & Space no. 3.2 / Lori Wolf, 609-A West 6th St., Austin TX 78701 / email: acs@eden.com; web: www.eden.com/~acs / I saw Lori at LoneStarCon -- an invaluable con member -- but never got to say hey, and she hasn't published since. Hope she responds someday to my request for rare Edgar winners.

Amusing Yourself to Death #8 / Ruel Gaviola, P.O. Box 91934, Santa Barbara CA 93190-1934 / rgaviola@aol.com / "The monthly guide to surfing the papernet." Well-presented review pub, mostly non-s.f.-oriented although Opuntia is properly praised. I get a kick out of some guy in his 30's calling himself an "old goat." Again, I am chastened, surprised, heartened and overwhelmed at the popularity and variety of this hobby.

Ansible #113-126 / Dave Langford / 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, U.K. / U.S. Agent: Janice Murray, P.O. Box 75684, Seattle WA 98125-0684 / SAE or. / #124 in this

It's because this Challenger is so late that this column is so clogged and stale. I read the zines as they arrived, even made notes for LOCs and reviews ... and then stacked later zines on top of them! Well, sorry.

Italicized zines are familiar titles whose latest issues were not received before our cutoff date: February 1, 1998. They're mentioned to goose the editors into producing before Chall 8! A generic creeb: please print the addresses of your LOC writers! No better way exists for a fanzine creator to reach an audience than by tapping other zines' lettercols. Share thy readership!

Finally, a note for "mundane" zinesters who found Challenger through Zine World or

invaluable one-sheet newszine contains obits for George Hay and Rotsler, as well as the World Fantasy Award winners (and a brief con report) plus the usual departments. First rumblings towards a 2005 worldcon bid for Britain are reported. #126, the latest received, reports Ulrika O'Brien's TAFF victory. *While I've got your attention, Dave, I call on you to demonstrate your generosity towards your fellow fanwriters, and remove your name from future consideration in the Best Fan Writer Hugo category. You've got more Hugos than any other individual, and have made your point.* (Of course, if Dave listened to my plea and withdrew, who'd win the next 13 Fan Writer Hugos? Glycer!)

Asterism no. 6 / Jeff Berkwits, P.O. Box 6210, Evanston IL 60204 / e-mail: jberkwit@nslsilus.org / \$6/year. / "Journal of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Space Music" ... #7 may well be out. #6 concentrates on Star Trek music, with interviews with Alexander Courage and several other composers, reviews of film and TV soundtracks, and so on. I admire Berkwits' critical edge and wonder if he's met LASFAn, SFPAn and professional musician Ruth Judkowitz; I'll have to

lend her my Asterism collection.

Batteries Not Included Vol. IV #12 / Richard Freeman, 130 W. Limestone St., Yellow Springs OH 45387 / \$3@ / Richard's superior pornzine -- as in, zine about porn -- is just the tonic I need after being seriously offended by an "adult film" for the first time in many years. I was watching the 71st **More Dirty Debutantes** by Ed Powers, and chanced upon the introduction to sex videos of a frightened and confused young lady Powers called Mickey Nice. Just turned 18, the little thing looked lost, anxious to seem cool, and thoroughly terrified, as that sleazy homunculus Powers and his scumbag crew did their best to humiliate and morph her into another generic pornchick urinal. I suppose her lost, anxious-to-please, terrified look was supposed to turn me on, as I vicariously experienced the thrill of defiling a near-virgin, but all I felt was the need to hurl. *Let fly the nukes.* But! Here is BNI to refresh my appreciation of the prurient arts with off-center wit, as in one brilliant article on Lisa Carver's autobiography and Larry Tritten's account of a Hollywood wrap party with Asphodel Dimes. A later issue brings another good Richard Pacheco article, if less insightful than earlier ones. Lisa Falour's reminiscences continue to instruct and enlighten in ways I'm sure she never could have guessed back when she wrote them, and one has to read the Traci Lords Filmography, look at Lords' somewhat satisfactory straight showbiz career, and puzzle at what country or dimension we're living in. Anyway, good writing on a tricky, touchy subject.

Ben's Beat 47 / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck NJ 07666-2626 / Ben's FAPAZine begins with a few pages of mailing comments, then hies into a piece on Donald Wandrei's newsletters, and furthermore into a proud account of the premiere of son Michael Korie's opera **Hopper's Wife**, and his account of visiting the **Queen Mary**, later reprinted in **Reluctant Famulus**. Long section of Broadway natter completes a fascinating zine. Whenever I read about the Great White Way I feel like I'm living in a damp refrigerator box in back of the municipal ice house of Port Blister, Alaska.

Broadside Four / Bucconeer, P.O. Box 314, Annapolis Junction MD 20701 / Handsome

progress report of the '98 worldcon, with Hugo ballot and hotel reservation form. I'll be there!

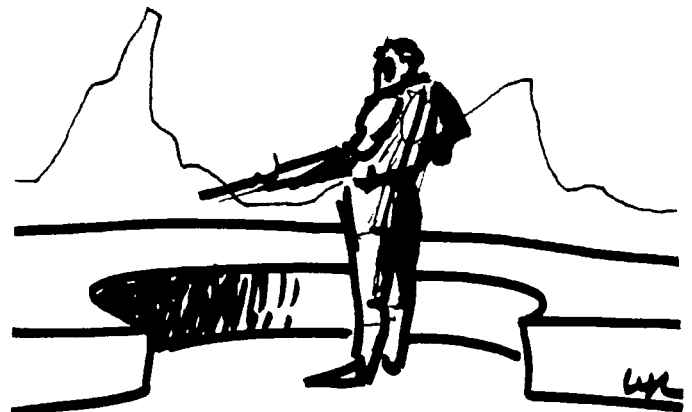
The Cat's Cradle / Mandy Pack, 227 Leonard Place, Knoxville TN 38917 / Journal of the Knoxville Area S.F. Association, which crew is responsible for Con*Cat, one of the South's jolliest ongoing cons. Tales of the Con*Cat party at Chattacon, their gaming plans for this year's convention, a rummage sale held by club honchess Chloe Airoldi, a survey on what-five-books/albums-would-you-take-to-a-desert-island, club bizness. No dates known for '98, but these ladies serve *ice cream* at their conventions, so take your sweet tooth.

Chimneyville Almanac / Johnny Lowe, 1152 W. 24th St. #1, San Pedro CA 90731 / Johnnyrb@aol.com

Con*tour Vol. 1 No. 0, April 1997 / Collin Wood, 196 Alps Rd. Suite 2-342, Athens GA 30606 / ConTour@negia.net / \$5.95@ / I saw some later issues at LoneStarCon.

Cosmic Tad / Joe Mayhew, 7-S Research Rd., Greenbelt MD 20770-1776 / A gift from the great fan artist, more wild strips taking the science fictional heart into dimensions of emotion undreamt of in ages past. All praise Amon Ra!

Cube / Hope Kiefer c/o SF³, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701-1624 / CubeNews@aol.com. / SF³



membership or./ Ladies, whatever I said, I'm sorry!

Detours 62 / Louis Russell Chauvenet, 11 Sussex Road, Silver Spring MD 20910-5436 / FAPazine in trade. / Neatest page of this little zine describes a family's climb up Mt. Chauvenet in Wyoming, a peak named for Louis' grandfather. Very impressive. I am named for my grandfather, but nobody lately is climbing me.

De Profundis 305-7 / Tim Merrigan, LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601 / Superb repro on this latest issue of the LASFS clubzine, no easy trick considering the tiny typeface. Also superb, its rundown of information on forthcoming cons and worldcon bids, fanzines received, area bookstores and so forth. De Pro can't help but be extremely useful. But it is for news of and insight into the west coast's premiere s.f. club that De Profundis is most valuable. "Scribe" Mike Glycer's account of the 8-14-97 LASFS meeting, at which a misfit member was expelled from the society, is a classic of club reporting. (Usually I'd oppose such ejections on general principle, but the LASFans' reasons make sense.) Even in less dramatic times LASFS is a fascinating krewe; even if the description of their Christmas gift exchange in #307 is so grimly serious as to border on the hilarious, I'd still love to trek back to that clubhouse I haven't visited in years.

Dick & Leah's Skiffy Calendar / Dick & Leah Smith, 410 W. Willow Road, Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250 / No price / Not just "skiffy" but spiffy 1998 calendar, giving birthdays of prominent fans and pros and significant anniversaries in space and science history, as well as some conventions. They need to include DSC (see below) and *ahem* I'm also a Moon Day (July 20) birthday boy. Neat!

Empties / Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX U.K. (COA) / 5 pounds / We're empty!

ERB-dom b/w The Fantastic Collector / Camille Cazedessus II, P.O. Box 2340, Pagosa Springs CO 81147-2340 / \$24 for 6 issues US, \$25 Canada.

No trades. / I thought I had a new ERB-dom on hand but don't see it. Absolute must for followers of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Erg Quarterly #138-140 / Terry Jeeves, 66 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ U.K. / The. / Charming publication with a nifty antique feel; the cover to #139 is positively Gernsbackian! The January '98 issue features a cool article on the pulps (with fun illos by the editor). A piece on Luck accompanies a column by Ron Bennett on the legendary but disappointing Hawes bookshop and a piece by Ken Slater on bad roads. Good lettercol loaded with Brits and a nice page of fanzine reviews, very kind to Chall. Terry, you the man!

Fandata Publications / Harry Hopkins, 7761 Asterella Court, Springfield VA 22152-3133 / Come-on for the '98 directory. Since Hopkins said it was free, I listed Challenger, but the directory, at \$18.95, is too rich for my tepid blood.

FTT / Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K. / A pound a copy; no subs / Waiting ...

File 770:119-122 / Mike Glycer, P.O. Box 1056, Sierra Madre CA 91025 / MGlycer@compuserve.com / \$8/5 issues, \$15/10. / #119 features a very valuable guide to '99 Westercon bids. #120 reviews the worldcon and Geri Sullivan's great Idea, and endorses Terry Frost for DUFF. The fall issue of Mike's newszine contains a rich variety of material: a report on the Australian National Convention by Terry Frost, a moving account of LASFS' tribute to Bill Rotsler, and a terrific memoir by C.M. Barkley, "How SF Ruined My Life." Chris is a trufan; he loved the Justice League of America even during the abominable days of "camp." Amazingly, Glycer says fans are still reproducing zines in hecto, which I've seen used but once ... and even then, only as a novelty! Finally, #122 celebrates File's 20th anniversary with faan fiction by Ed Green and an account of the Lone*Star*Con masquerade in addition to news. Grand eulogies for Pavlac; he leaves many good words to mark his passage.

For the Clerisy / Brant Kresovich, P.O. Box 404,

Getzville NY 14068-0404 / trade / Sampler issue about Latvia. Those who complain this isn't science-fictional haven't read the zine. Compelling and scary and funny look into another culture.

For Dickheads Only / Dave Hyde c/o Ganymeadean Slime Mold Productions, P.O. Box 611, Kokomo IN 46903 / Getting jittery here, Hyde. Need my Phil Dick fix for 1998 ...

FOSFAX #189 / Timothy Lane c/o FOSFA, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / \$3 or. / A memorial to Ross Pavlac leads off the latest issue of fandom's most prolific -- and occasionally profound -- conservative zine. The energy and intelligence here are astounding, even as the politics are ridiculous. Highly recommended for the scrappers among us.

The Freethinker / Tom Feller, see SFC Bulletin / No subscriptions? No issue!

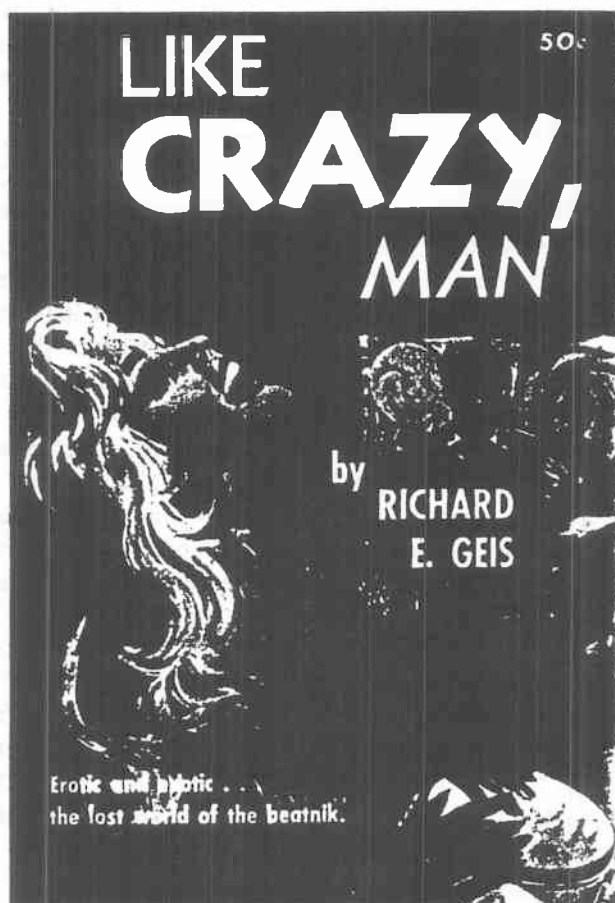
The Frozen Frog #12 / Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boissat, Cap-Rouge Quebec G17 1Y9 Canada / frozfrog@clic.net / What a delight at LoneStarCon when Ben handed me this long-awaited issue! He explains his long absence from our midst with a job change and discovery of the Internet. Highlights of the issue are (1) the cover, "Reservoir Frogs" by Bridget Hardcastle, (2) a great though insane piece on "The 17th Century Schizoid Fan" by Andy Sawyer, (3) the caricature of Benny by Ian Gunn (Hugo!), and (4) a review of Cybersix, apparently a Latino comic book featuring a sexy android assassin. Woowoo. Good lettercol, and the issue is capped by a fine memorial to Benoit's

Aunt Irene, a wonderful lady who kept photographs, trinkets, magazines, and mementoes, as well as a rich fund of knowledge, from throughout her long life, and didn't hesitate to share them with Girard as he was growing up. I read elsewhere that Benoit's divorce has driven him away from fan publishing. We hope not. His presence in the fan and fanzine community is a warm and funny one, and if my own experience 15 years ago is any guide, the community may hasten the healing that *will come*.

Future Transmission no. 1 / De Soto & Lolita Conduit, P.O. Box 4126, Seattle WA 98104 / trade? / Creative quasi-electronic/UFO lunacy, pretty color xerox collage cover, wild contents. DeSoto's interview with Jacob Coleman ("The Most Paranoid Man on Earth!") races with fear and hidden patterns, but is tough to read. Thick type may be punk but I want to know what people are telling me: that's *my* paranoia. Included, a tape called "Majestic 12" which I'll review next time, and ads for similar zines.

The Galactic Citizen #15 / W. J. Keaton, 3422 Pipit Drive, Alexandria VA 22306 / WJaK@prodigy.com / \$15 for 4 issues, \$4@ / Fiction-oriented pub traded for at worldcon. The issue closes with some good questions for Joe Haldeman as to why he changed the text of his masterpiece, *The Forever War*, for a new hardcover edition.

Gegenschein 75-79 / Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde NSW 2112 Australia / eric@zen.maths.uts.edu.au / Trade. / I learn from File:770 that Eric recently suffered a mild heart attack. Having lost all of my older male relatives to cardiac problems, I flinch in sympathy and



wish him a quick recovery. His zine is a flower in the garden of Australian fandom (oh brother ... where do I get this stuff?). Lots of book reviews and trip diaries (Corflu in Las Vegas ... SwanCon in Perth ... Comdex in Vegas again ... Boskone, Potlatch, Corflu once more), evocatively written to share the experience. Good fan writing. Perhaps the experience in expression helped when Eric's mother passed away and he wrote about it in *A Death in the Family*. With my own dear and exasperating mother beginning to age, it's a zine and an example I should perhaps keep close. Jeez, Eric; you hit my buttons this year!

The Geis Letter #s 40-1 / Richard E. Geis, P.O. Box 11408, Portland OR 97211-0408 / CompuServe: 100313,3440; Internet: 100313.3440@compu-serve.com (in ASCII) / \$1@. / Plots abound in Dick Geis' journal of "Thought Crime, Dogmacide & Intellectual Heresy." The writing is excellent, as one could expect, but the cynicism is frankly... I guess it shows my gushing gullibility, but I've never been a conspiracy buff. Nobody's capable of the super-intricate plotting taken for granted here; even Watergate mostly impressed me as proof that not even Nixonian Nazis could put toothpaste back into the tube. But pay no attention to me; I actually mourned Princess Diana. Anyway, Geis is challenging and sometimes very funny ("Okay, okay, I'm a rabbit, I'm a rabbit!") and it's good to see the editor of *Science Fiction Review* active and accessible. By the way, the cover to *Like Crazy, Man* reprinted in this section fronted a postcard sent me by Geis.

Green Stuff 4 a.k.a. Harry Warner, Jr.: Fan of Letters / Murray Moore, 377 Manly St., Midland, Ont. L4R 3E2, Canada / Freebie. Swell FAPazine in praise of the magnificent Harry, a collection of testimonials to the Hermit of Hagerstown by Glicksohn, Cuthbert, Coulson, Ortleib, Taral, Penney, Berry, and so on and so forth. For someone who has twice visited 423 Summit Avenue in Hagerstown MD, and who hopes to return, this zine is a keeper. The rich, witty Rotsler illos are perfectly chosen, if almost painful to see.

***Ichthyoelectroanalgesia* / Sean McLachlan, P.O. Box 1933, Columbia MO 65205-1933 / e-mail:**

c638125@showme.missouri.edu / Miss Ick!

Idea #11 / Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315 / I sent Chall #6, I LOCed Idea #10, I wrote and asked to see this zine, but have heard nothing ...

Is Noreascon Going South????? / Boston in 2001 Committee, P.O. Box 1010, Framingham MA 01701 / Not so much a fanzine as a mass mailing to presupporters of the bid. As you know by now, the Boston people have been forced to move their bid to Orlando, Florida by impossible hotel prices in their home town. No disputing the rationale for the move: worldcons can't really negotiate with hotels; we need them more than they need us. This flyer asks presups which of two Orlando sites we would prefer. I voted for Disneyworld. Dammit, though, I've wanted to see *Old Ironsides* since rugrat days. I was really looking forward to an excuse to visit Boston again. This is a great disappointment.

The Jezail #3 / Andy Hooper, 4228 Francis Ave. N #103, Seattle WA 98103 / fanmailAPH-@aol.com / t.u. / Andy chatters about new FAAN awards; the ballot is out and mine is in.

The Knarley Knews #67 / Dr. Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / welch@warp.msoc.edu / Great Joe Mayhew cover -- this guy should win the Hugo, people! Knarl sets up a fine fanzine behind it, even though he apologizes for its thinness. With admirable calm Welch describes his beautiful daughter's minor operation to correct a "biphed thumb" (hey, they just featured a guy with an extra thumb on *America's Most Wanted!* Call John Walsh!); Kira's doing fine. So is Jeanette Gugler, recovering from successful surgery to remove a brain tumor, and having the most beautiful state in the east -- North Carolina -- to do it in. Her article is as serene as its hills. Sadder is the brief written visit from Don Pattenden in Australia, reporting the death and funeral of his sister. Entertaining LOCs from the usual bwahs (what would we do without them?) relieve this issue's melancholy; no reflection on Knarley, some months are just like that.

Lan's Lantern / George "Lan" Lascowski, 2466 Valleyview Dr., Troy MI 48098-5317 / george_lascowski@cc.cranbrook.edu / The usual, varying prices, whim. / Years old; no sign of a new issue.

Memphen #232-8/ Barbara & Tim Gatewood, 3125 S. Mendenhall #353, Memphis TN 38115-2808 / tagat@compuserve.com / Free to Memphis S.F. Association members, \$10/year sub, trade. / Prolific and ever-improving clubzine of the MSFA, which really should host another DeepSouthCon soon. #236 features a local play review (Scotland Road, which apparently has s.f. overtones), book reviews, a few short LOCs -- including one from the lost and wander'd George Lascowski -- and zine notices, including a generous review of Chall 6 gratefully received here. Fine cover by R. Thompson to #237, which reviews Fosfax and DragonCon. Poetry and reviews and a Lan Lascowski (!) LOC mark the follow-up issue.

The MimeMeow of Bill Bridget #s 2 & 4 / Bill Bridget 4126 Mountain Creek Rd. #6, Chattanooga TN 37415 / <bbridget@mail.cha.bellsouth.net> / trade. / Natter on the TAFF race, in which he apparently played a small but factious part ... the superiority of paper publications, with references to scary Web stories ... a Christmas story by his cousin. I always feel like I'm walking into a Bridget zine about 3/4 of the way through.

Mimosa 21 / Richard & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Germantown MD 20875 / e-mail: lynch@access.digex.net website: http://www.smithway.org/mimosa / \$4 or. / Wonderful issue of today's dominant genzine, with a wraparound cover by Julia Morgan-Scott dealing with LoneStarCon, as does the editorial. (Nicki, you should *never* have to stand in line.) The content is varied -- memorials for SaM Moscowitz and Joni Stopa accompany good pieces by Mike Resnick (on books about fandom), Michael Burstein, Jack Chalker (on Baltimore fandom), Ron Bennett and the usual magnificos, Ackerman, Willis, Kyle and DeVore. 4sJ's memories of Bela Lugosi are particularly compelling. What's to say? Mimosa is the standard, a superb publication of, by, for, about fandom, consistently positive and consistently excellent. By the way, the thoughtful

Lynchi sent clippings of all the comments received on my lawyering article in issue 20, a kindness indeed.

Mind Wallaby 1 / Ian Gunn, P.O. Box 567 Blackburn, 3130, Australia / e-mail: fiawol@ozramp.net.au / t.u. / A "harmless little fanzine of eclectic stuff," companion zine to Karen's Pinkette. Neat! Ian reports that his cancer treatments are going well, thank God, gives his thoughts on convention video "programmes", talks about his toy and "small gods" collections, and prints a delightful review of the Star Wars trilogy by Brad Butter (age 10). "Star Wars is a rele old film made years befour I was born in fact its twice as old as i am." He gives it a rating of "9 out of 10", as do I, come to think of it.

Moriarity's Revenge #4 / Dave Hicks, 1 St. Woolos Place, Newport, South Wales, NP9 4GQ, U.K. / See Shooting Stars. Love that A4 paper.

MSFire Vol. 3 Nos. 4-6/ Lloyd G.

Daub, MSFS, P.O. Box 1637, Milwaukee WI 53201-1637 / \$1@ or a \$5 sub for 6. / Nifty clubzine of the Milwaukee SFS, a fun collective effort. #4 has lotsa LOCs, part two of David Martin's piece on Slavery in Gaming, and a kind review of Chall 6; the followup issue features demon cows (which George Schnobrich calls "the icon of Wisconsin"), comets (an informative piece by Sakai, with footnotes yet), web notes by Lucinda Borkenhagen (is that a Wisconsin name or not?), SciFaiku, Sue Burke plot interlinos ... in short, great variety and high spirit. LOCs are fair game for reply to all the editors. I haven't been a member of such a cool, cohesive bunch since NOSFA went trekkie.



Muse 134 March 1997 / Stephen desJardins, 1711 Massachusetts Ave. NW #134, Washington DC 20036 / steven@desjardins.org

The Nashville SF Club / Debra Hussey, 115 38th Ave. N., Nashville TN 37209 / dah2@hotmail.com or nashville_sf@geocities.com / webpage: <http://www.geocities.com/area51/dimension/4242> / Trade. / Chatty letter substitute about goings-on in one of the South's preeminent fannish cities; local fan news, who went to what convention, upcoming parties, etc. A new club is announced which will be meeting at the local library. Interesting account of the death of G. Harry Stine; apparently the last thing he ever wrote was "save to disk a:". Not dramatic, but always smart.

No Award #2 / Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St. #105, N. Hollywood CA 91606 / Doesn't say, but I'm sure it's t.u. / First issue in six years, this zine begins with Marty's explanation of where he's been since tobacco prices went up and his shop closed and LASFS went non-smoking. He has a computer and time now, so ... Articles by familiar, quality writers: Mike Glycer (Sierra Madre), Skel (fannish food), and Robert Lichtman (faan fiction, something I love but rarely see in genzines). In editorial, Cantor reveals that a piece he credited to Terry Carr in No Award #1 was actually by Harry Warner. A few *old* LOCs are given, along with a welcome rundown of the first issue's contents. Marty CMed LASFAPA during many of its best years; good to stay in touch.

Nova Express / Lawrence Person, P.O. Box 27231, Austin TX 78755-2231 / e-mail: lawrence@bga.com / 4/\$12 U.S.; 4/\$16 Canada & Mexico; 4/\$22 International.

Opuntia #s 34, 34.1, 34.5 / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / \$3 @ or. / At long last Dale explains his numbering system. "Whole-numbered issues are sercon. .1 issues are reviewzines, and .5 issues are perzines." Keep it straight! #34 venters on a history of rubber stamp art, which, as anyone who has received an Opuntia envelope can tell you, is a matter of some importance to Speirs. John Held's article *must* be exhaustive. On the last page of the zine we actually learn where and when the first

drawing of a pencil appeared. .1 lives up to its billing as a reviewzine, covering multitudinous fanzines. (A must for trades.) In .5, Dale reveals that he also collects stamps, describes (beautifully) Canada Day in Calgary, describes the Stampede and ... writes about a zillion other things. As I said last time, Speirs is stone amazing in the breadth of stuff he covers. Also included, **The Drunkard's Guide to Prayer** (distributed by Feh! Ministries), an ad for Meshuggah issues (the zine sounds subversive: moon-bladders?) and another issue of **The Canadian Journal of detournement**, which frightens me for some reason.

Pablo Lennis / John Thiel, 30 N. 19th St., Lafayette IN 47904

PhiloSFy #8 / Alexander R. Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Rd., San Antonio TX 78239-4022 / skateal@swbell.net / \$1 but trade preferred. / A fun presence at worldcon, Alex talked up hosting a Corflu there, and revealed that he was one of the kids Harlan Ellison flamed on during his Iguanacon roast, 20 **yikes years ago. I remember him! In the present day, here is another issue, provocative as all get-out, proffering its free-flowing debate on the ethics of war through excerpted LOCs. (Some intolerable comments on Kent State by a correpondent demand my response; expect *my* noise in #9.) Reviews of books and zines, musings on portentous topics, all dosed liberally with the editor's vigorous wit. All this and cute kids, too!**

Pinkette No. 16b / Karen Pender-Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia / fiawol@ozramp.net.au / "The Pink You Have While You're Not Having a Pink." / Note the new email address. Clever minizine with a great lawyer joke and a very moving piece on Ian's cancer fight. Also, material on the Gunns' '95 GUFF trip and LOCs, including one from me. Karen packs a lot of breezy fun into a small package.

Proper Boskonian Nos. 41-42 / NESFA, P.O. Box 809, Framingham MA 01701-0203 / pb@thor.com / NESFA membership + a \$16 subscription, \$3/issue or. / Latest issues of a superb publication, backed by huge resources of finance and talent. Great Harvia on #41, and in

both, lots of art by the dynamic duo, Gunn and Mayhew. Both issues also feature the usual in-depth report on convention panels by Evelyn Leeper (Boskone's "SF & Political Correctness p'ed me o', which is the sign of a challenging panel). Good balance of sercon and fannishness throughout. The more of each the better.

QUANT Suff #5 /
Joyce Worley Katz,
330 S. Decatur, Suite
152, Las Vegas NV
89107... / A
FAPazine with
LOCs, personal
natter, a funny
wolf's-eye view of
the Red Riding Hood
story (by Joyce's
greatnephew), and a
truly terrific memoir
of Joyce's Kentucky
clan.

Quipu 8 / Vicki Rosenzeig, 33 Indian Road, 6-R,
New York NY 10034 / Vicki's run for TAFF was
at the center of this November issue of her
personal pub. A long Orycon report, though, is
most evocative for me: Vicki visited the
magnificent panorama of the Columbia River
basin, of which my own 30-year-old memories are
still vivid. Nice if short lettercol.

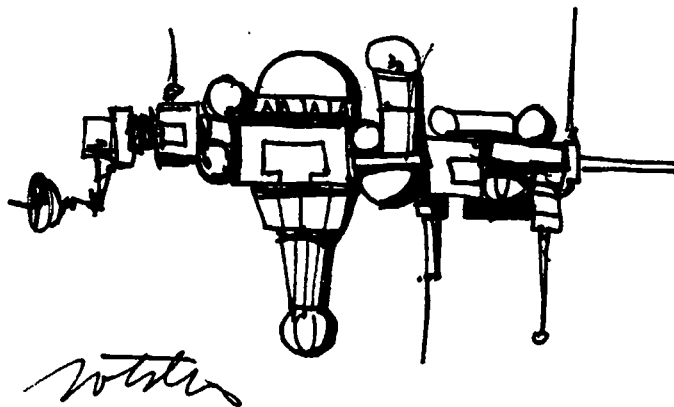
Raw Goof / Bill Bodden, 2717 Stevens St.,
Madison WI 53705.

The Reluctant Famulus #49-50 / Thomas D.
Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian MI 49221-
1627 / E-mail: tomfamulus@dmci.net / Or \$2. /
Superb fanzine which merits a Hugo nomination;
editor Sadler earned my TAFF vote this year.
These issues, featuring multicolored 'roxery, are
thick and rich and varied, illustrated by the best,
written by the best. Look for Sheryl Birkhead's
piece in #49, Terry Jeeves' wartime memoirs,
Skel's memories of Brian Robinson and Ben
Indick's visit to the Queen Mary, which had
transported him across the Atlantic during WWII.
Tremendous letter columns, good reviews (fierce--
and funny -- jabs at Fosfax) ... okay, don't let the
brevity of this review fool you: Reluctant is

simply an outstanding publication. Attractive
typeface, too; that makes a difference to an
envious colleague.

Riverside Quarterly Vol. 9 No. 3 / Leland Sapiro,
P.O. Box 12085, San Antonio TX 78212

The Rogue Raven / Frank Denton, 14654-8th
Ave. S.W., Seattle
WA 98166 /
bearlodge@msn.com



Rommeldam #19 /
Dwight R. Decker,
20003 N. 23rd Ave.
#193, Phoenix AZ
85027-4160

scopus:3007 #71
Alexander J.L.
Bouchard, P.O. Box
573, Hazel Park MI
48030-0573 / The or

\$1.50. / ae019@detroit.freenet.org. / \$1.50 per. /
Al and I swapped zines at worldcon. Delightful to
have scopus -- which survived a hard drive
disaster in early '97 -- back in hand. Intriguing
articles on the murder of Gianni Versace by Thea
Glas, PTSD by Megan Bouchard (if it isn't too
painful, I'd like to learn more about the trauma
and its post), professional travel assistance (my
sister-in-law was a travel agent), L.A.Con ...
Good fanzine reviews; Al has the grace to
remember my years as a comic book fan and
letterhack and is very kind to Challenger. Both
Al and Megan have problems traveling, so I'll
cheer all the louder if I see them in Baltimore.

S.F. Film Fan / Mike McInerney, 83 Shakespeare
St., Daly City CA 94014-1053

SFSFS Shuttle No. 130 / SFSFS P.O. Box 70143,
Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / Last issue by
former editor Carol Porter, #130 predates
worldcon. The first "SF" in the club title denotes
"South Florida". Looks like they might not be
heading as far north in 2001 as they thought ...
Anyway, this good clubzine has reviews of
Babylon 5, a continued article, quite cool, about
Lovecraft's visits to Florida in '31 and '35, and
thoughts beneath the light from Comet Hale-Bopp,

LOCUSS

NEW ORLEANS LOCALS
INVADE NOLA CON!
NO ONE NOTICES!!!



the most interesting thing to happen in anyone's sky in 1997.

Shinimicas Shithead / Rodney Leighton, R.R. #4 Box 477A, Amherst N.S. B4H 3Y2 Canada / A zine so delicately titled deserves a second issue.

Shooting Stars #1 / Mike Siddall, 133 Duke Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA16 7AE, U.K., & Dave Hicks, 1 St. Woolos Place, Newport, South Wales, NP9 4GQ, U.K. / mds@askamite.demon.co.uk or little.jim@dial.pipex.com / LOCs to whichever, trades to both. / Dated Easter, 1997, this was one of the first zines I received for this issue's column. Delightful cover by Hicks -- I love fannish caricatures -- followed by intelligent comments on the novel *Starship Troopers* by both parties. (Except for the bug battles and the face of the leading lady, the film left me cold.) Central to the zine is an account of a panel the authors put on at Novacon, very crazy. Mike rants about trends towards tasteless self-disclosure in fanzines, Dave reviews *Idoru*.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 6 No. 10 / Tom Feller, P.O. Box 68203, Nashville TN 37206-8203 (note new address) / SFC

membership or. / The SFC's superb guide to Southern fan activity. Con reports and calendar, club listings, reviews of Southern fanzines. **EVERYONE: COME TO DSC!** B'hamacon 4 will be on June 12-14, 1998 and can be reached at P.O. Box 94151, Birmingham AL 35220-4151. The last B'ham DSC was a fannish event of celestial magnitude. We expect no less this year.

The Space Cadet Gazette #8 / R. Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Ave. #110, Vancouver BC V6J 1J1 Canada / graeme_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca / \$1 / Cameron's opening pages describe his wonder at the landing of *Pathfinder*. Follows a synopsis of *Mars Needs Women*, one of the classics, and installments of two terrific series: the WWI memoirs of Graeme's grandpa and Cameron's own tale of touring Mayan ruins. The insanity of "Ask Mr. Science" and the veneration Terry Jeeves shows for "First Issues" add spark and warmth to this witty and confident publication.

Spish Splash Autumn 1996 / Joy V. Smith, 3403 Providence Road, Lakeland FL 33809 / Space collectibles are the focus of this issue of this nifty pub, with an article on the many goodies available -- stamps (she reprints some), lunch boxes, commemorative plates, and so forth. Such stuff would make a great exhibit at a worldcon.

Squee! / Brin McLaughlin, 247 19th Ave 6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353 / boadicea@lunacity.com / Okay, okay: *Squee! Squee!*

Squib #1-2 / Victor Gonzalez, 905 N.E. 45th St. #106, Seattle WA 98105 / squib@galaxy-7.net / "the real thing for the usual price." / Late of *Apparatchik*, the author announces his TAFF candidacy through this pub. I was impressed here in two ways. First, Gonzalez shows admirable if rather reckless honesty in frankly discussing his drug addiction. Also a boost in my estimation, the presence in his corner of Sheila Lightsey, one of the true lights in this tunnel and a boon companion on expeditions through the Mississippi swamps. #2 reprints a fine Terry Carr piece on fanzine awards, with criticism by Ted White, Andy Hooper, and a distressingly bitter Patricia Nielsen Hayden. Good, eclectic lettercol, with relatively little comment about TAFF.

The Squirrel's Tale / Ron Ellik / Ron Ellik's death was announced to universal anguish at the same Little Men meeting where I met Anthony Boucher. This is Bruce Pelz' 1969 reprint of Ellik's 1962 TAFF report, purchased at worldcon from Richard Brandt. It is witty, literate, and evocative, as befits the work of a boy from Berkeley's Barrington Hall. (I lived there too, or did you guess?) Fun to gaze upon the fine Bjo Trimble illos and remember the agonies of tracing artwork onto mimeo stencil; I was never very good at it. But this is a warm and wonderful pub; nice to read about Ron's visit with Terry Jeeves and then scan the latest *Erg Quarterly* 35 years later.

Stefantasy #121 / William M. Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell PA 16374 / Trade. Bill's charming zine about slag -- yes, slag -- old cars, "English as She is Spoke" and whatever his LOCsters want to write about is well into its 53rd year of continuous publication. Hand-set type, hand-printed with smeary ink ... Stef puts you in touch with the roots of this demented hobby. Note well his horrible tale of the artist who, caught in a fire with his masterpiece, *slashed open his chest and stuck the painting within, to save it.* And Danner calls the *firebug* a "loony."

Tangent No. 18 / David Truesdale, 5779 Norfleet, Raytown MO 64133 / Compuserve - 103133,1350; internet - 103133.1350@compuserve.com; web <http://www.sff.net/people/Dave.T/index.htm> / \$5@, \$20 one-year sub. / On its first nomination, *Tangent* came sickeningly close to winning the LoneStarCon Hugo ... it led after four rounds of the Australian ballot, only to be nipped by perennial *Mimosa* right at the tape. Dave's disappointment should disappear one of these worldcons, since this is a superb product. No, it's not fannish: it's about science fiction, not fandom. Personally, I'd call it a "semiprozine" and give it a Hugo as that. But its spirit is true and its production is exceptional and its policies are wise. This issue is chock-a-block with fine material, including profiles of the neglected Stanley Schmidt and the acclaimed Ray Harryhausen, pix from the Nebula banquet (Nicola Griffith is cute!), many reviews, many columns ... My famous talent for hyperbole fails me: subscribe.

The Texas SF Inquirer / Brad & Cindy Foster,

c/o F.A.C.T., P.O. Box 9612, Austin TX 78766-9612

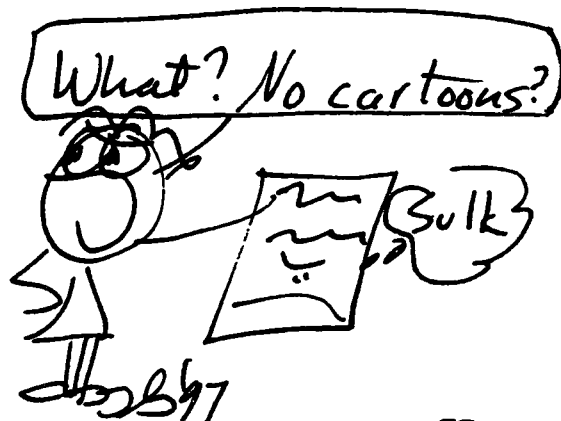
Thanks a Lot, Guys! (etc.) / C. Fairn Kennedy, Box Forty, 90 Shuter St., Toronto M5B 2K6 Canada

Thyme #114-118 / Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia / a.stewart@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au / The or \$A 3; subscription \$A 15. / With the '99 worldcon only a year and a half away, Australian fandom's energy level is *alpine*. These superior zines bespeak a national fandom gnashing at the bit for its worldcon. #116 is particularly strong, with great writing, lots of cool Joe Mayhew art, and an undercurrent of fierce humor. I especially applaud the editorial comments on the face on Mars and the acid review of a solemnly ardent *Star Trek* self-help book ... "awaken the inner Worf," indeed! #115 prints my photo, standing next to the tomb of a voodoo queen; I look like I have a bat in my mouth. #118 is the latest issue received; like all the others it's rich with Gunn and Mayhew (Hugos for these boys! Hugos!) and awesome potential.

Trap Door / Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442

Trash Barrel / Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood CA 91606-2308 / Trade. / Haven't heard from Donald in quite awhile. Is he all right?

Traveling Companion & other works / Clark Allen Dissmeyer, 2313 Central Ave. #7, Kearney NE 68847 / Trade. / Not zines so much as stories and jokes, several hand-lettered, amusingly



illustrated. I'd like to see what Dissmeyer would do with a more fully developed idea.

Twenty Bus 5 / P.O. Box 170612, San Francisco CA 94117-0612 / "20 cents, baby" / I think the author's name is "Twinkie," but that could be slander. Cool minizine about the editor's obsession with buses. Lots of tiny bus-oriented illos and neat anecdotes taking place thereon. I can contribute one from some 20+ years ago, when I was in college. A couple of girls and I were riding an S.F. bus to Golden Gate Park, accompanied by an aisle-full of fourth graders on a field trip. The little dogs kept talking about sex, of course, and used a most peculiar euphemism for the female genitalia: *Birmingham*. I had to admit that it made personal sense, of a repellant sort, since *I was conceived in Birmingham*. Strange



indeed the ways of fate. I liked this a lot and have ordered the earlier issues.

Twink #7-8 / E.B. Frohvet, 4725 Dorsey Hall Dr. Box #A-700, Ellicott City MD 21042 / The u. / One of my favorites. #7, a special Gormenghast issue, features superior artwork by Margaret Simon, Sheryl Birkhead, and Rotsler of course, nice variety in the content, and good writing by the editor. Centerpiece of the issue, for me, is not Frohvet's piece on Gormenghast, but his interview with Lois McMaster Bujold. (The Vorkasigan saga does little for me, but its author is another matter.) Anyway, from this and other internal evidence it appears that the mysterious Frohvet

was at worldcon, probably under his real name. Did he reveal himself to anyone there? He says he's not a BNF *incognito*, so he might have been *anyone* ... Twink 8 appeared in January, again a solid issue. Hugos are on E.B.'s mind; he editorially recommends Steve Stiles and Sheryl Birkhead for Fan Artist nods (yes!) and Reluctant Famulus and MSFire (yes again!) and writes a full, interesting article on recent trends in the fanzine category. Also in the issue, book (Lois & Clark) & zine reviews, *nice* lettercol, more Gormenghast. Look for "Labyrinth", Eebe's description of a New Age workshop. Yes, the Becky Thomson who was vice chair of MagiCon is the same Becky Thomson who is vice chair of ChiCon 2000. The best reason yet to attend.

User's Guide to Neil's Party / Neil Rest, 1549 W. Birchwood, Chicago IL / Clever invitation to Neil's annual birthday party, which I would love to attend some year.

Vanamonde Nos. 228-239 / John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado St. No. 409, L.A. CA 90057 / Trade. / Impeccable one-sheet Apa-L zine, with good natter balancing mailing comments. John hits on root beer, tanks, the Seiun Award (explaining the LoneStarCon debacle -- even more of a drag than the usual presentation), Len Wein, Seiuns, and I'm sure everything else under the sun. Strong eulogy for Bill Rotsler. I wish I lived near LASFS.

Visions of Paradise #V1-4 / Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023 / bobsabella@nac.net / Retiring Gradient, Sabella presents an "easier" fanzine, mostly culled from his journal. Considering that he will soon start Ph.D. studies, and travels regularly to Nanking (he reprints a long, woeful account of the infamous Rape of that city by Japanese troops and the subsequent trials), I hope he'll have time to continue. Compelling zine; I wish I could show it to my father so he'd know -- as if he needed to be told -- that he didn't waste his efforts in 1945.

Wild Heirs / Arnie & Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107

W.O.O.F. 22 / Victoria A. Smith, 12627 Harbor Dr., Woodbridge VA 22192 / Contributors / Not so much an apa -- there's very little interplay -- as

a collection of short natterzines collated together at worldcon. I was in on the first couple, but only four people chimed in this time. Dale Speirs' rundown of local headlines engendered by s.f. conventions past makes me appreciate the improvement in press fandom has enjoyed since 1969, when I joined; but the mocking welcome a Chattanooga TV station gave DSC one year still sticks in my craw.

The Wordsmith/Eclectic Collector No. 4 / Vince Nowell, PO Box 1258, Simi Valley CA 93062-1258

Xtreme #5 / Arnie Katz, see above / Great personalzine, richly -- and now, poignantly -- peppered with Rotsler illos. Best thing -- and it's superb -- about #5 is its memorial to SaM Moscowitz, recounting Arnie's relationship with this pivotal figure in fandom *and business*, a view of the great man I'd never before encountered. "The Immortal Storm swirls forever."

"Yngvi is a Louse" and Other Graffitoes #50 / T.K.F. Weisskopf, P.O. Box 130162, Birmingham AL 35213 / Trade. / Yngvi is Toni's regular zine for the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, and this was part of its 200th mailing. She tried for a genzine feel to the pub, so I'm reviewing it here as well as in mc's. There's a fannish appreciation of the editor from JoAnn Montalbano ("Hoist FiFi!"), a fannish appreciation of Southern fan legend Hank Reinhardt by his lifelong mate and mutual foil, Jerry Page, a good review of Starship Troopers (the idiotic movie) by Charlotte Proctor, a grand "rant" about "The Cold Equations" by David Zink (SFPA goes 'round and 'round about that story), and an appreciation of Harry Turtledove's Southern work by Greg Benford. Best in the issue is a piece by Vera Weisskopf, Toni's mother, on her "cusp" generation, caught between the WW2 stratum and the boomers. A nice experiment; Toni might want to try a genzine again if she can fit it in around editing Baen Books.

Zine World #4 / Doug Holland, 924 Valencia St. #203, San Francisco CA 94110 / \$3.50 @, 7 for \$20 / Doug's guide to underground publishing is funny and provocative; one of their reviewers gave Chall #5 a pretty nice review. ZW is worth twice its price, however, when its critics really tee off on some of the *outré* product they survey.

Holland is a passionate believer in freedom of speech, and his editorial pages steam with fury whenever zinesters find their liberty restricted. Amen and right the eff on, brother.

EDITORIAL BITS

SWA-MI HOW I LOVE YA HOW I LOVE YA

... I have the world's most useless psychic power. Occasionally my mind will produce a memory of a movie ... a scene, a line. Just an idle thought out of the ether. Within a day or two, *that movie will show on the TV*. Forcing the issue -- that is, concentrating on a terrific movie I'd love to see again, like *Gunga Din* -- doesn't work. The thought must cross my mind spontaneously. That's the truth. That's my power. Can anyone suggest a way in which I could profit by my "gift"? Didn't think so.

Dan Simmons' *The Rise of Endymion*, fourth and last, I guess, of the *Hyperion* novels. *The Rise of Endymion* is a truly cosmic conceit. In *Hyperion* Dan Simmons, knowing he was making a debut, demonstrated his mastery of classic science fiction styles, and from them formed a wondrous tapestry of a complex, poetic universe. In *Rise* he brings his cosmos into its sharpest and most dramatic focus, uniting religious and scientific themes into a rare and occasionally exciting volume. But pages and pages of explication bugged me with insistent *talkiness* -- and unless I turned a few essential pages while asleep and missed it, the most interesting question of all -- whence the Shrike? -- isn't answered at all. Still, I liked the book's references to *Ringworld*, *The Stars My Destination*, and many others -- not hidden so much as subtle -- and applaud its epigraphic point: *Choose again*. Wise words.

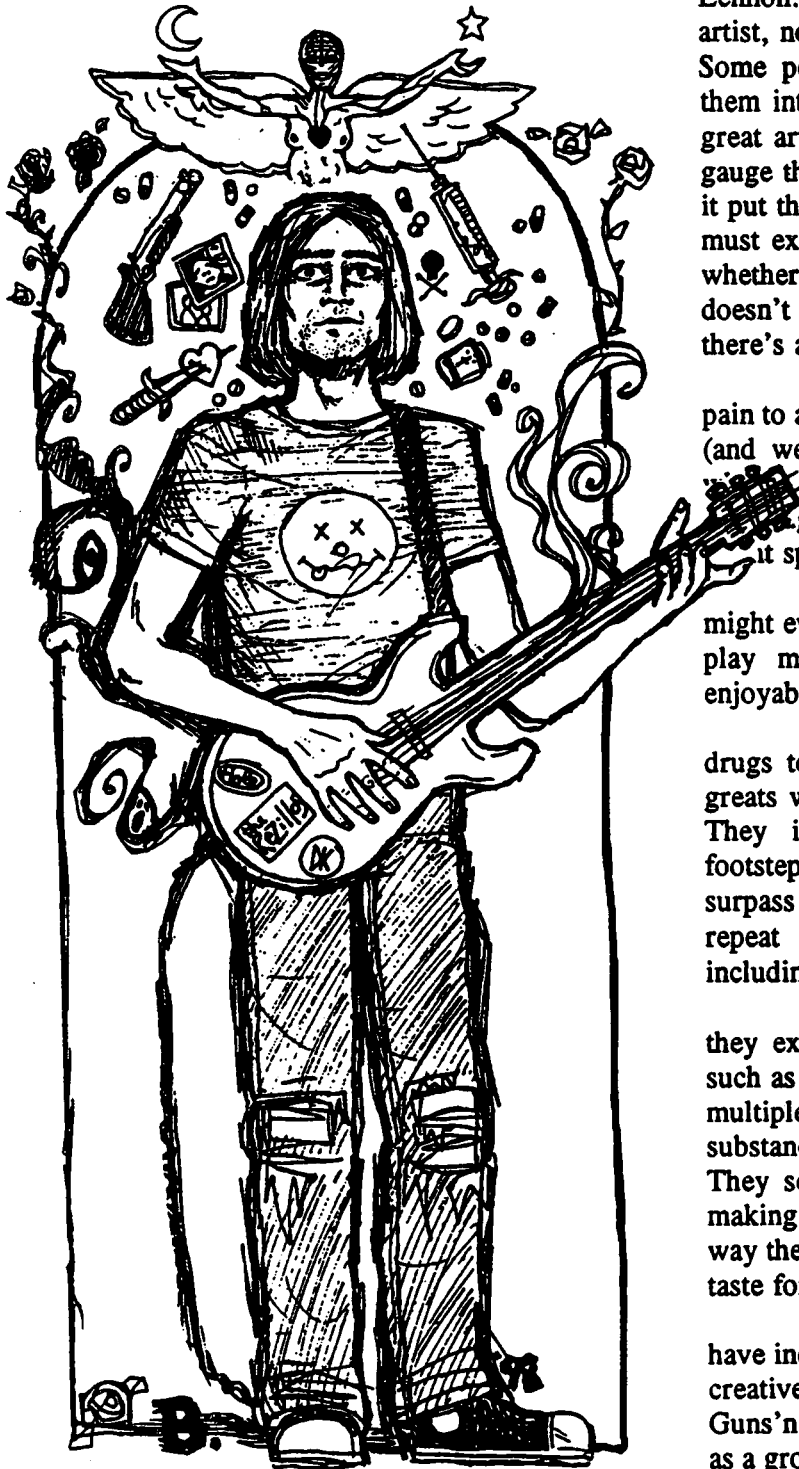
Also ... does anyone else wish the Baltimore worldcon would give a special Hugo to DC's latest graphic masterpiece, *Kingdom Come*? It was probably the most exciting and -- for a lifelong comic fan -- *moving* piece of s.f. I read last year. (True, most of the series appeared in '96, but the final chapter showed in the collected version -- and so a '97 date is appropriate. So's a special Hugo.)

Your editor disagrees with almost everything that follows. What do you think?

NOW GO PLAY

Gene Stewart

art by BRYAN NORRIS



"Creating is a result of pain," said John Lennon. He meant that, without pain to prod the artist, no art would get created. It's an old view. Some people seek out pain, thinking it'll make them into artists. That sort of person thinks that great art comes only from great suffering. They gauge the art by the pain. That's wrong, because it put the cart before the horse. It's not pain that must exist before art can exist, it's art that exists whether there's pain or not. And pain certainly doesn't validate art, it's the other way around if there's any link at all.

Creating is a result of play, you see. Add pain to a person's life, and if they're the artist type (and we're all that type to a degree, especially children), then they'll turn to play for relief, maybe. And if they get good at play, creativity might spark into originality.

Removing the pain won't stop the play. It might even improve. Lessen the suffering and the play may well come easier and prove more enjoyable.

There are many jazz musicians who take drugs to improve their art. They point to jazz greats who were addicts, who died of overdoses. They insist that, to follow in their heroes' footsteps, to attain and maybe have a chance to surpass what their masters accomplished, they must repeat as closely as possible all conditions, including the drugs.

Think about that. It's skewed logic. Are they expected to seek out injustices of the past, such as segregation, lynched family members, and multiple divorces? Yet they go straight to the substance abuse, as if it's a talisman of talent. They seek to walk the master's path, instead of making their own path to the master's goal. In this way they cheat themselves of achievement in a bad taste for experience.

It's not just the jazzmen. Rock musicians have incorporated their share of chemicals into the creative process, even into performance. Guns'n'Roses, for example, reportedly tried heroin as a group-enhancement. Country musicians have

Hank Williams hovering as a reminder that even genius can be snuffed by too much of this bass-ackwards philosophy.

Musicians are not the only group affected. Writers are alcoholics with notorious frequency, and painters all-too-often court self-destruction in the most colorful of ways. Van Gogh's ear comes to mind. Artists all, all at risk because they mistake pain for play, because they think that hurting themselves and those around them somehow changes them into better artists. Yet where is the equivalence?

Artistry is found in all walks of life. Everyone has moments in every day when they do things just right, or when things feel good, or when a new thought comes to them. Artists string such moments together by concentrating on them, by trying to come up with them -- by playing.

Writers move words around, experiment with saying things in different ways, or communicating complexities and getting feelings across. Painters do the same thing with paints, with colors, shapes and textures. Sculptors use any material that strikes them as malleable, as connectable. Musicians use sounds.

Ah, but stockbrokers use investment strategies. Mathematicians use numbers, formulas, and calculations. In all walks of life, the artists among us seek out an elegant way of doing their jobs, a graceful execution of their function. They find fulfillment in what they do. They transform drudgery into fun, into satisfaction, into a dance of motion and stillness, rest and energy.

And what else is this but changing work into play?

Don't make the mistake of thinking that play is unimportant. All work and no play makes dull lives, but beyond that, a child deprived of play either dies or goes insane. Knowing that, how can we be surprised at what kind of people our inner cities, our slums, ghettos, and barrios turn out? Poverty's the problem, and it can be fixed not by working hard but by playing right. Games about theft and power and violence have got to make room for games centered on people's worth, the fun they can have, the joy they can give and be. Look to the Watts Towers, look to the better class of graffiti, and pay attention even to the dress, the speech, and the walks on the streets; all are art, and all are play.

The play's the thing, as Willy the spear shaker said. Don't let living bring you life down to no fun and no way out, and don't let your own artistry express itself in negatives. No life is worthless, and no art is lifeless.

With the suicide of Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, a spate of commentaries on life's value and art's cost has come down upon us, in all media. Most asked a few standard rhetorical questions, blew them off with canned answers, trotted out experts for a good quotation, and wrapped it up like yesterday's carp. Next crisis, please; stay tuned for more mindless hysteria.

Well, heads slower if not necessarily wiser reacted with a bit more deliberation. Unlike Andy Rooney's rant and subsequent penance, most commentators in print media offered a more balanced assessment not only of Cobain, but of the process. Steven Tyler, lead singer of Aerosmith, summed it up by saying, "He didn't have to die." He meant that Cobain had cried out for help consistently and was ignored. And while intervention and therapy might not have saved him, it might well have at least helped him. Of course, Cobain's chronic stomach pain was never helped by specialists, and his self-medication led, most believe, to his final despair.

Cobain's desperation increased along with his band's success, and you can hear it in the change from Nevermind to In Utero. What began as a tightly-patterned well-formed approach to songs became more ragged, wilder, and more primal over the course of the two albums. And the words became more vicious, with greater self-loathing and less hope. Yes, hindsight's a cheat, but the evidence exists, and how come it took suicide to make us see it clearly?

Manipulative yes-folk, cynical management, and all the other show-biz cliches come to mind, but remember the suicide note, which in its course quoted Neil Young's anthem/sentiment, "It's better to burn out than to fade away."

Die like a man, in other words. Claptrap from the north woods, alas, an off-key salute to mythical machismo from days gone by. "Hope I die before I get old," sang the stuttering Roger Daltrey in a Pete Townshend Who song, "My Generation". It's a slashing, mocking portrait of a group of people more stunned than stunning. Once again, like the irony of Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA", it went right over too many people's heads. They took it seriously. They rallied to the cry, mistaking alarm for joy. Why live

beyond one's passion? they asked. They really thought it better to die than to mature.

Well, in terms of a rock & roll career or group, maybe so. In human terms, though, it's a position hard to defend.

The live-for-today, damn-it-all attitude has kids killing each other over clothes, petty jealousies, or for no reason at all. When arrested for the latest senseless murder, young criminal shows neither remorse nor regret. Too many of today's kids just plain don't care about anything, including themselves. Moment-to-moment gratification of whim is their credo, if such an approach to life can be so characterized. They live literally like animals, acknowledging very little of the past -- and that most sense-memory, not history -- and envisioning no future.

Does any of this seem familiar? Remember the song "No Future" from the Sex Pistols, for example. Remember head-bashing, and comedy suicides as a street performance. Remember riots in Brixton and looting in the high streets. Remember how it all phased into steaming, which in the USA is called wilding. In short, remember England in the Seventies, sliding down the slippery slope toward economic and social ruin.

Maybe the USA is beginning to catch up, huh?

When the dreams we offer can all be bought on credit over the phone from the television screen, we'd better find a new way of sleeping. We've lulled ourselves into forgetting human needs in our quest for consumer goods. Everything we invent tends to distance us each from the other a little more, a little more thoroughly. We network, now, and as a cartoon I saw recently put it, "One the network, no one knows we're dogs." We're so isolated we're not even sure of ourselves any longer.

That's why no one pays attention to even spectacular cries for help like Kurt Cobain's. That's how come we slough off the latest meltdown so easily.

We work too hard. We don't accomplish much, though. As Tom petty sang, we're tired of working so hard and nothing seems to come of it. We need to relax a little, duck the stress for a few minutes each day, and just play.

From play comes creation. Think back and you'll remember being all wrapped up and absorbed in a moment of play. It can be like that as often as you want, if you choose to make the time.

But enough talk. Go play now.

"27"
"He's gone and joined
"That stupid club,"
His mother said, when told.
Jimi, Janis,
Jim, now Kurt --
All balked at getting old.

Shotgun blues can
Disconnect
Chronic stomach pain.
A musician notes
His suicide
In songs, and few complain.

Potted plant
Lay overturned,
A note was pinned to a table.
Guy who found him
Called the radio
Station first; unstable.

Waiting for the
Electrician,
That's how Cobain died;
FireSign Theater
Psychobabble;
Laughed until we cried.

In a room
Above the garage
At a house he never used,
He ordered new
Security lights
Like privileges abused.

He was just like
BeatleLennon
Everybody said;
Both were born
And both survived
Until life caught them dead.

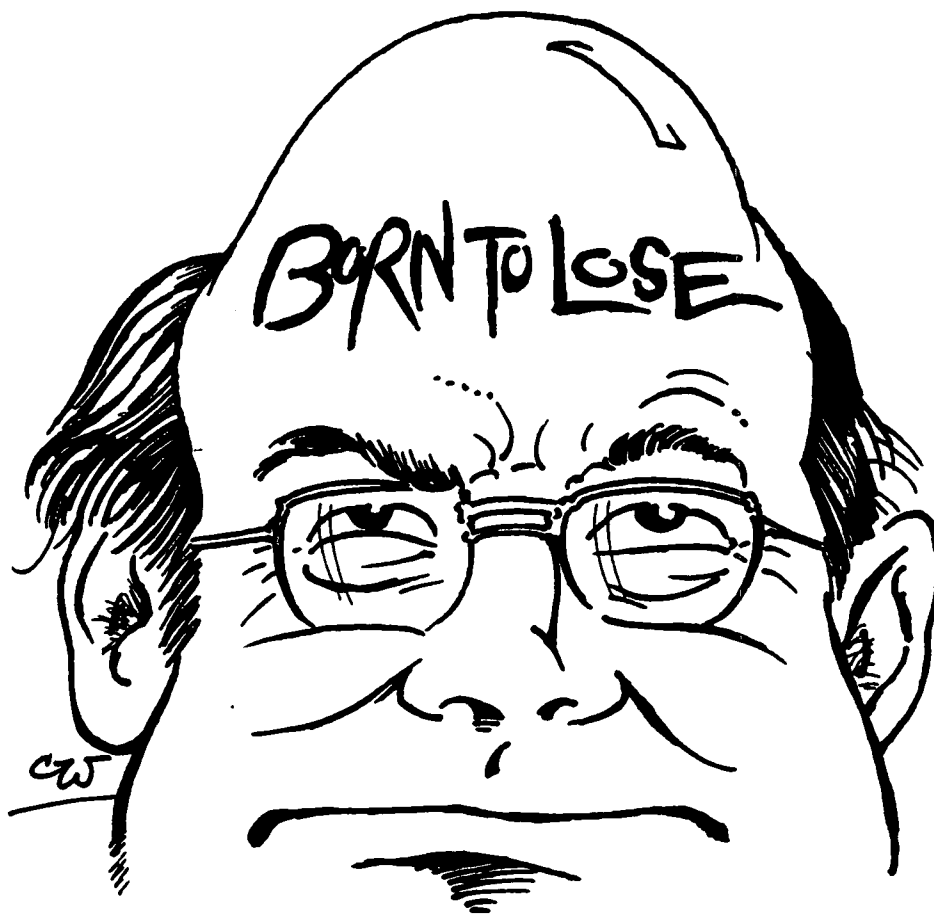
All the jokes
About Nirvana,

Generation X,
And dying young
Reflect our fears
Of life and death and sex.

"I love you all,"
His last note said,
So why are we perplexed?
Twenty-seven's
Pretty young, but
Wonder who'll be next?

And if, when all the
Profit's tallied,
Still you wonder why,
Weigh the price and
Count the cost:
He didn't have to die.

-- E. R. Stewart
written when I heard



GUY H. LILLIAN III
Art by CHARLIE WILLIAMS

Public defenders get *pounded*. Your workload would kill a jackass, if a jackass could lower himself in status. Your clients are always poor, and more to the point, are almost inevitably *guilty*.

Your opponents are practically always hotshot young assistant D.A.s bursting with zeal and energy and ambition, often super-competent and super-confident. Finally, if you practice in a desperately conservative venue like Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, your juries almost always tumble cut and sliced straight out of a loaf of Wonder Bread.

So you *lose*.

By summer, 1992, when the client I call Popeye came into my life, I'd faced juries in the 24th Judicial District Court of Louisiana ten times or more. The closest I'd come to victory -- to those mythical, magical words "Not Guilty" -- was the trial of an accused shoplifter whom I'd gotten off with a misdemeanor. All the rest went down the chute, guilty as charged ... and when Popeye showed his face, not only couldn't I tell that he might be different, he looked to be the most hopeless of the lot.

Even without subsequent events, I'd never have forgotten Popeye. A walking grotesque. He took his shirt off to show me why: he didn't look *human*. The skin over his stomach was stretched over a wire mesh, souvenir of an argument a fellow biker had settled with a shotgun. He was in constant pain and scheduled for yet another surgery soon. Hideous ... but at least his deformity would be covered by his shirt in court. Nothing, however, could hide his *tattoos*.

The guy was covered in jailhouse skin art. Every visible inch of his arms was veiled in crude drawings and cruder epigrams, and that might have been a woman's face on his throat. But the capper

was his personal motto. *Across his forehead.* It read **BORN TO LOSE.**

Staring at this apparition, I knew exactly how he felt.

Popeye was one of three defendants. The quartet, along with a friend of the victim's, had been carousing about the city, drinking and smoking crack cocaine. According to Huey, the victim, his girlfriend had given him a \$50 bill and he'd made the mistake of flashing it. Popeye, about 15 years older than the 19-year-old victim, had first forced the hapless youngster to buy brew for them with the fifty, then with his accomplices dragged him from the car, smashed his head in with a baseball bat, taken his beeper, cell phone, and gold chains (N.B.), abandoned him by the side of the road, and driven off. To the District Attorney, this constituted an Armed Robbery.

Armed Robbery carries a sentence in Louisiana of up to 99 years. Popeye had prior convictions. If convicted, he was gone. If convicted and charged as a multiple offender, he was worse than gone. They'd bury him at Angola State Penitentiary beneath a cross with no name. Even if I allowed that Popeye was guilty, which he denied, I thought this far too harsh.

No selling this idea, alas, to the Assistant District Attorney. Danny Sherman was young, crisp, cheerful, likable -- and savage. He had never lost a trial, and loved to tout the fact. Hanging in his office was an especially-made football jersey. **DANNY SHERMAN**, it read, **18-0**. Shortly before Popeye's case came up for trial he pinned a correction over the numbers. **19-0**, it now read. Danny had taken me to the cleaners on an aggravated rape case, a probably-winnable first degree robbery (during which I quoted *Silence of the Lambs*, or one word, at least: "post-ictal"), and several others. He was poised to win again, this time against the whole P.D. team in his court.

Popeye's accomplices in crime were **Manuel and Hawk**, represented by the other two public defenders in that division. I have spoken before of my mentor in the P.D. office, the great Farley Jenkins (see "Jim" in *Challenger* no. 3). Colorful, smart as a slap, he drew Manuel as client. Hawk went into the care of Alicia Long, who immediately pled him guilty to a lesser charge and effectively removed him from the case. Farley and I were left with the dreary prospect of defending goombah bikers to middle Americans who thought George Bush a dangerous wild man. I panicked at the thought.

Gratefully, when trial week came around, I learned that Popeye's surgery would interfere and buy me more time. When they brought in the week's jailbirds for trial that Monday, therefore, and I saw Popeye in the front row, his surgery postponed, the term was -- as I have put it before -- *a cold rush of shit to the heart*.

There was one chance to avoid trial, and the humiliation and defeat that would inevitably follow. *Plea bargain*. What, I begged Danny, would he accept to let Popeye plead guilty? Popeye himself said he would settle for fifteen years.

Not Danny. 19-0 and invulnerable, he was *anxious* to go to trial. No deal. Judge Oscar Braunhauer -- a bantamweight jurist who would succumb to cancer two years later -- called us to his bench and pre-trial motions began.

I learned a lot on this case and one of its best lessons was that there is never too much research. Jenkins read the fine print in the Louisiana Evidence Code, and discovered a wonderful precedent. *State v. Brumfield*, it was called, and it held that when a witness for the prosecution had charges pending against him in the parish where he was giving testimony, it was all right to elicit that fact. Ordinarily, of course, no witness can be asked about unproven charges, because one of those self-evident truths we hold to in America is that a man is innocent until proven guilty, and his word shouldn't be besmirched until that proof is established in a court of law. Well, here was **Brumfield**, reasoning that the fact that a witness had charges pending with the very same people who were getting him to testify *could* indicate a bias on his part, a bias the jury *should* know about. Beset with flu, and faced with the cold black letter of the law, there wasn't much Danny could do about it.

Brumfield would be handy because, far from being the barefoot boys the prosecution made them out to be, victim Huey and **Zero**, his witness, were in actuality scumbags. Huey had spent time in the clink and was facing charges in another division of court. His babyish blubber and dull demeanor hid an ugly nature. Zero was under indictment for sexual misconduct with a juvenile. Farley found the misconducted juvenile, a 14-year-old girl in the trailer park where Huey and Zero hung out. She, in turn, led him to other residents who could testify as to which merit badge these Boy Scouts had qualified for in the past. Try, *drug dealing*. Or did the beeper, cell phone, and gold chains tip you off?

(First of many scares. Farley found that, a couple of years back, he had represented Huey on a minor theft riff. For a short while it looked like he'd have to sever his dude from mine and try him separately, but Judge Braunhauer finally decided to let him stay on -- as long as he didn't question Huey about that case or repeat anything revealed in confidence.)

That and much else established, it was time to pick the jury.

There is no more important, time-consuming, or speculation-ridden time in a trial. Easy enough to pack a jury with bigots and play to their prejudices -- I knew that from the Klan/Nazi trial I'd watched in North Carolina, and Johnny Cochran would later give that lesson to the world. But what prejudices could the D.A. exploit in this case? *I* was the one who was prejudiced. The pool of well-fed clean-cut middle Americans who tromped into Judge Braunhauer's courtroom looked like demons to me, so vile, manipulable, sheeplike and obedient to authority that we didn't stand a chance.

So how do you deal with that? Load the panel with Berkeley boomers? I was the only one in Louisiana. Also, dripping with flu or not, Danny was on hand, making sure to pack the jury with nice *normal* people -- the antithesis of our gnarly biker clients.

One of the first panelists called up for *voir dire* -- the questioning that leads to the selection of the jury -- mentioned that he was a neighbor of the retired cop who served as Danny's investigator. I said something in response that surprised even me. I said, "We don't have to ask what kind of a neighbor he is. He's a *good* neighbor."

Note the *tone*. If you can't sit twelve misfits on your jury likely to accept your clients' anti-social image, then suit your defense to the jury. Middle Americans respect -- to the point of venerate -- authority, at least insofar as crime is concerned. So be *friendly* to authority. (I even asked one panel if they minded two middle-aged lawyers "ganging up" on a "nice young man" like Danny. It may have been a flush from his fever, but I swear Sherman blushed.) "People like cops," Farley noted, "so go easy on the cops." It was an idea to keep in mind.

We took a chance and let our opposition's neighbor onto the jury. Along with this *charming* young lady ...

Diana Rand was short (4'11") and pleasingly rotund, with blonde hair and a wide Mona Lisa smile set in a cherubic face ... Under questioning she seemed independent, smart, and spunky, the kind of citizen who wouldn't be swayed by TV stereotypes of cops and bad guys, who might even find a couple of macho bikers not guilty even though he was coated with ugly tattoos. Popeye went nuts for Miss Rand. "Get her!" he commanded. Good idea, I thought, enraptured. Maybe I'll get her on the *jury*, too.

I got her, all right; there was nothing about her to provoke Danny, and I threatened Jenkins *sotto voce* that I'd kill him with *tweezers* if he excluded her.

So the audience and *dramatis personae* were in place. The jury, Miss Rand always on the edge of a smile in the front row. Judge Braunhauer. Danny Sherman, snorfling into a series of handkerchiefs. Popeye, Manuel, Farley, me. Huey and Zero. And five denizens of Huey's trailer park, forced by sequestration rule to sit outside the court. Curtain up.

I should mention that, in the preliminary maneuvering of this great battle, I tried to hide my client's shortcomings. Specifically, I bought a large bandage and persuaded Popeye to paste it onto

his forehead. Maybe he and I were both BORN TO LOSE, but I saw no reason to let the whitebreads know it. Later, I told him to rip the thing off and keep it off, but that was after the heat of battle had risen.

Said heat was still rather cool as the first state witness came forward. This was the cop who had found Huey wandering the street after the ... uhh ... incident. He testified that the fat slob had been bleeding righteously from a scalp wound, but no, he added on cross examination, he hadn't seen any wood splinters in the gory mess. Since the bat in question was metal, this admission didn't mean much, but it set up an important point to be made in time.

(At this point, another problem arose. One of the jurors sent word to the judge that he knew the policeman. Well, sort of knew him. "I'm his mailman," he told us. We let him stay.)

Huey took the stand.

Huey was 19, but his extraneous flab made him look younger. I suppose Sherman -- wheezing and coughing into a handkerchief; I've seldom seen a man walking with a worse case of flu -- thought he would appear insouciant, callow, pristine. To be generous, he was dead wrong.

Through his respiratory agony, Danny guided his victim through his account of the crime. How his benevolent girlfriend had given him \$50. How in his innocence he had gone driving with Zero and a pack of blackguards. How, when the aforementioned lowlives had discovered Huey's monetary endowment, they had forced Zero to swerve to the roadside, where they had seized a baseball bat from the back seat, walloped the tar out of Huey, and stolen his money, beeper, cell phone and jewelry, leaving him split and bleeding in the grass. Furthermore, Sherman wriggled into testimony a fact the defense considered irrelevant: that while Huey had been held in jail on an unrelated charge, Popeye had threatened him ... or so he claimed.

Mistake. Big mistake.

I was the first to cross-examine Huey. Ordinarily a defense lawyer should be rather nice to crime victims, since after all, juries sympathize with them, and to be too harsh would run the risk of antagonizing the only opinions that mattered. Unless you have a sallow, swollen sack of shit like Huey in the role. I knew Farley had something dramatic in store -- he had his baseball bat and a 2x4 behind the defense table, hmm -- but I wanted to punt the punk a bit myself.

With questions he couldn't answer, like ... where did that \$50 really come from? Was his girlfriend accustomed to giving him such bills? He'd said he'd picked it up out of her mailbox. Did she usually leave big bucks out where anyone could grab it? What about his beeper and cell phone? He had no job -- why did he have such stuff? (His mother had given them to him to keep in touch, he told me. Aww.)

Since Danny had brought up jail events, we subpoenaed jail records ... and discovered an interesting fact. Huey had been in *nine fights* behind bars.

"You had a fight with So&So ... his fault?"

"Yeah."

"You had another fight with This&Such ... *his* fault?"

"Right."

"You had *another* fight with What&Which ... and that was ..."

"His fault. Yeah."

And so on. Tell me, jury: is a *pattern* beginning to emerge?

Now Farley stood up. Without even looking at Huey, he stepped into the well (the space between the counsel tables and the bench), and placed the 2x4 on the floor. He hefted the short metal baseball bat.

"Is this baseball bat like the one our clients used to beat you?" he asked.

"Uh ... Yeah."

"And they really beat you? Hit you hard?"

"Yeah."

WHACK! WHACK!

Farley swung from the shoulders and brought the bat down viciously upon the 2x4. Willie Mays never swung with such art. The whole courtroom jumped. Miss Rand started. A deputy later told me that he'd reached for his gun. Kleenex flying, Sherman vaulted to his feet, howling for sanctions against Jenkins. "He should be *disbarred!*" he screamed.

Farley ignored him. "That hard?" he demanded of Huey. Point made.

Meanwhile, Farley's witnesses waited outside of the courtroom. They grabbed me and bitched during a pee break. "How long do we have to sit out here?" "Uhh ... ask Farley," I replied. They returned to their simmering.

While the court was on break a third potentially fatal problem arose. Being human, if barely so, Popeye and Manuel needed to void their bladders. The bailiff affixed their ankles with leg irons and led them clanking down the hall. *A juror saw them.*

It's self-evident why this is a no-no. The sight of a defendant in chains or prison clothes prejudices his presumption of innocence. I ran screaming to the judge. "Mistrial!"

Braunhauer called the juror who had bumped into the defendants into his chambers. Would seeing them in "restraints" hurt his ability to sit as a fair and impartial juror? The guy was surprised we'd ask. No, he said with a shrug. Motion denied. I worried. Had the juror already made up his mind? Did he *already* imagine our boys in chains?

Sherman certainly wanted to jury to imagine Popeye and Manuel in chains. He did his best to make them seem threatening to the nice middle class jury.

"Your honor," he said, between snuffles, "Mr. Huey stated that his attackers had very distinctive tattoos on their arms and bodies. I would like the court to order the defendants *to take off*



their shirts in front of the jury box."

I wailed objection. "The district attorney merely wants to disgust and frighten the jury!" Knowing better, perhaps, Farley kept quiet. It's not an improper action when identification is an issue. The judge granted Danny's request.

Popeye freaked. "How can he do that?" he demanded. "I won't do it! How can he order me to do that?" I imagined deputies having to wrestle Popeye to the ground and strip off his shirt. Goodbye case.

We showed Popeye the Louisiana statute that allows a judge to order anything in his court that isn't illegal, but this only schizzed him more. To mollify my guy, I asked Braunhauer for a sop, which he threw me: because of Popeye's subdermal cage -- the mesh underneath his belly skin -- he could retain his shirt.

So the two bikers were paraded up to the jury box. Each stood within eighteen inches of Miss Rand, and Manuel peeled to the waist. The mesomorphic Manuel didn't have a brain in his skull, but he did have shoulders and pecs from here to next month. Miss Rand's pretty eyes bulged. Then Popeye came forward, and angrily flashed the tattoos on his arms and under his neck. Her eyes nearly popped from her head. Inwardly, I groaned.

Zero took the stand.

Danny led him through his story, the same as Huey's, emphasizing that Popeye and Manuel had hauled Huey out of the car and beaten him with a bat and stolen his stuff ... and adding that Popeye had later sold the cell phone to a third party, over his protests.

I crossed him first. I'm ashamed to admit that it was almost fun.

I got the zit-encrusted teenage crud to admit that Huey was his friend and that they had gone driving around together, picking up Popeye and his pals on impulse.

"Whose car was it?"

"Mine."

"Whose baseball bat?"

"Huey's."

"Why did you have *his* baseball bat in *your* car?" I asked him. "Looking for pick-up games?"

Sherman nervously objected to the sarcasm. I'm generous; I withdrew it.

"We had it ..." Zero replied, angry now, "because we had it!"

"Existential answer," I noted to Farley.

I handed Zero a map of New Orleans and asked him to trace the route they had taken that night. He couldn't do it. For ten minutes he stared at the map like it was Sanskrit. (No, it *wasn't* Sanskrit.) It became so evident that the kid was a moron that even I felt sorry for him. I kept that particular emotion under control.

Hoping to show that he had reason to lie to the D.A., I asked Zero about his pending charges. He'd had it by then. "*I'm not telling you any more about it,*" he snarled.

"Oh really?" I said, as the judge's gavel banged, and Braunhauer icily informed Zero, "Witness will answer any questions put to him unless a proper objection is lodged."

Sherman did have an objection. "He doesn't have to answer that about any charges except those in our parish," he said, so I took that in my teeth and asked, "Isn't it true that you have a charge of sex with a juvenile pending -- *RIGHT HERE?*"

I swear I was an instant from a stroke. The judge cautioned me to stop shouting.

Zero admitted it. Thank you, Brumfield.

I had one last set of questions for Zero. "You say you protested when Popeye sold the cell phone, correct?"

"Yeah," defiantly.

"And you also say that you were Huey's friend, correct?"

"Yeah," defensively.

"And that you were behind the wheel when they beat him, right?"

"Yeah," uneasily.

"You let them beat up your friend -- you say with a baseball bat -- and you sat there. You drove away and left him there. Bleeding on the ground. Correct?"

As I remember, he just nodded.

We took a break. Farley said "You tore him a new asshole." Indeed, I was exultant with blood lust. It must sound sadistic, but ooh, it feels so *good* to wad up your idiot antagonist like wastepaper.

At that point another assistant district attorney came in and whispered to Sherman. Danny nodded and the guy came up to Farley. He followed the A.D.A. out. When the judge took the bench, he scanned his court and asked, "Where's Mr. Jenkins?" When Danny told him he'd leant him to another division to handle some arraignments, smoke spewed out of Braunhauer's ears.

"Bailiff," he commanded, "come with me." He stormed off the bench and out of the room. Someone said he looked like an immense black bat swooping down the hallway. Farley was hauled sheepishly back into our court and we were all flogged to the bench.

I've never seen a judge so mad. He twisted the head of his gavel hard enough to garrotte the thing. "I know you district attorneys think you own this courthouse ..." he began through gritted teeth, "but if you *ever* delay a trial in my court again ..." I was so relieved that he wasn't mad at me that I missed the rest of what was said.

As court adjourned for the night, Farley's witnesses threatened to bolt. "We've been here for three days," they bitched, "and now we have to come back tomorrow. Whine whine gripe gripe ..." Never the Patience King, Farley popped his cork. "Leave if you want!" he bellowed, and stalked away. It fell to me to soothe matters. I explained the vagaries of court scheduling, that it wasn't us but the D.A. who was delaying their testimony. I assured them of their importance to our case through metaphor. "You guys are like *blood donors*," I said. You have *information*, that rare *blood type* our clients need. Please don't leave." They didn't. Bless you, golden pipes.

First, though, Sherman had to finish his case. He had established -- at least he thought so -- most of the elements of the crime. A beating. A taking of valuables. In Jefferson Parish. Now he had to show the jury proof beyond a reasonable doubt that a *weapon* had been used. Problem: he had none.

A police officer from neighboring St. Bernard Parish was brought forward. Did their records show that the car from this incident had been impounded in their parish? Yes. Did they have the baseball bat? No. *What?*

Apparently, according to the cop, the bat had been taken from the car and *donated to Good Will*.

"People like cops," Farley reminded me. "Go easy on the cops." So I simply asked the officer if St. Bernard Parish was in the habit of donating physical evidence in a criminal case to charity, and let it go at that.

Now, the defense case.

I decided early not to let Popeye take the stand. Too many risks, beginning with his record, which could have been generously described as atrocious. For some reason Farley put Manuel up there and had him describe the evening in question. I suspected he just wanted to hear details about his visit to a floozie, which preceded the cudgelation of the luckless Huey. "Yes," intoned Manuel, "as far as I know, I was the only one to have sexual intercourse that night." What do you want? A

commemorative stamp?

Farley's impatient witnesses finally got their moment in the sun. Simple questions about Huey's credibility, and Zero's veracity. *Did they live in the same neighborhood as Huey and Zero?* Yes, all answered. *What is their reputation in the community?* Liars, drug dealers and thugs, came the replies. I wonder how Zero felt hearing that from his girlfriend.

Defense rested.

Closing arguments. My favorite moment in any trial.

I can't overemphasize the value of an effective close. Vincent Bugliosi says that one's whole case should focus towards the points to be made in that speech. For Sherman, it was his last chance to overcome punky victims, questionable and missing evidence, and his own miserable flu and preserve his perfect trial record. He could have done worse. He could have forgotten his pants.

As it was, he muttered something to the jury about "these trashy-looking guys" and Farley and I hit our feet shrieking. "Mistrial! Mistrial!" Prosecutors can't talk about defendants like that. As Farley said, it was just like saying they were black. (Of course, our guys *weren't* black, and *were* trashy-looking, but Danny was so off-balance, medically and legally, that we couldn't help but spin him around a couple more times.) He basically asked the jury to ignore everything they'd seen and heard and sat down.

I'd risen two hours early that morning to work on my notes. It's considered poor rhetoric to work from a script, but, as I explained to Miss Rand -- and the others -- I didn't want to forget anything. After all, I intoned, I had the dreadful responsibility that day of speaking for innocent men in peril ...

"I wish I could show you," I said, "how *thin* the human scalp can be ..." rubbing, scratching, and finally pointing to my own hairless top. "Don't you think a bruiser like Popeye could break human skin with his *fist*?"

Bringing forward Farley's baseball bat and 2x4, "However ... dramatic Mr. Jenkins' demonstration may have been, it had a point. The police officer saw Huey bleeding from the scalp. If Popeye -- allegedly drunk and stoned on crack -- whacked him with a baseball bat, wouldn't it do worse? Wouldn't it *kill* him? And remember, without proof that a weapon was used, there is *no proof of an armed robbery!*"

I configured a stern expression onto my putty-like countenance and lectured the D.A. about judging people by their appearances. "Certainly I need not tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that because a man is tattooed that does not prove he committed armed robbery." Just a little blow for freedom of expression.

In dealing with crime before a jury, you should always remember that crime makes honest people *angry*. Normally -- in places like our parish, anyway -- this anger channels in on the defendant and the jury burns him like a match. You need to *turn* the anger. Let the jury focus its outrage elsewhere. On Huey and Zero, for instance.

"Huey admitted that he had been in *nine fights* while he was in jail." I ticked them off, following each name with the phrase, "and Huey said it was the other guy's fault." After about six names, I stopped. "Need I go on?" I asked, and then hit'em with the killer line: "Is a *pattern* beginning to emerge?"

"Look at what was *allegedly* stolen," I said. "A cell phone. A beeper. Gold jewelry. Ladies and gents, if it walks like a duck, it's a duck. If it talks like a duck, it's a duck. If it squawks like a duck, it's a *drug dealer*, and you're going to put men in prison for decades on *their* word? Unconscionable!"

I went over the uniform testimony of Farley's people about the reputation of the state's witnesses. "'Liars!' 'Drug dealers!' 'Thugs!' Put men in cages for decades on *their* word?"

Unconscionable!"

I reminded the panel that Huey and Zero faced charges in Jefferson, that they were innocent until proven guilty *but* they had reason to lie to the district attorney. One of those charges was for molestation of a juvenile. I didn't mention that Zero was only as much older than the girl in question as I had been older than *my* first girlfriend. "Put men in boxes for decades on such word as *theirs?* Unconscionable!"

Roll, baby!

"The defendants are *not guilty*. They have every faith that you will follow the evidence and the law and do what is right."

If I do say so, I was effin' brilliant.

That was that. Miss Rand and the other jurors were given their instructions, and out they went. Farley was aglow. "We won," he said with a smug shrug. Sherman clearly felt the same; he fled the courtroom, trailing flu germs, as soon as the last juror was gone, and was heard to tell associates "I blew it, I lost it, I can't believe it." Me, I hung around. The judge let me put my feet up in the jury box (sitting in Miss Rand's nicely warmed chair), drape my tie over my eyes and take a nap. The jury wasn't done by the time I awoke.

I became convinced of the worst.

Middle Americans ... *my* people. My fat, dumb, happy, Reagan-voting, hippie-shooting, cop-worshipping people. Surely the only reason they hadn't come back instantly was because they were buying into the idea that an accused *must* be guilty if he *is* accused.

"Middle Americans," I muttered. "We *won* that case. I *beat* Sherman. And they're going to convict our guys anyway. Fascist mumbledymumbledy unconscionable Nazi Nixon mumbledymumbledy ..."

Three hours ... three hours of paranoid agony until the knock came on the jury room door, and we were summoned in.

Before the verdict could be read, and while Popeye sweated and twitched beside me, Judge Braunhauer threw in a last sadistic delay. A civil hearing on a totally unconnected matter, a favor for another judge. We had to sit and wait while Jefferson Parish's powerful scratched each other's ... backs. Come *on*, Oscar! Popeye was a molten ruin by the time Miss Rand and the others trooped back into the jury box, and my mood wasn't much better.

The clerk took the sheet of paper from the foreman and read it.

Not guilty.

Sherman groaned. Popeye whooped. And without a thought in my mind for the dignity of the legal profession, I leapt from my chair and **punched** the air.

The judge soon had everyone settled down again. "This court adopts the decision of the jury as its own," he said, "and orders the charges dismissed." Popeye was in ecstasy. *Not guilty.* He'd never heard the words before ... not when it mattered.

"And to think," he murmured, "I was going to plead out to 15 years."

"Oh, I can still get you that," I offered. "Uhh, your honor ..."

"*No!* No, no, no, no ..."

I told him to get rid of his tattoo.

I went in to talk to the jury. (All right, to talk to Miss Rand.) They were explaining to Danny why his case was so lousy, and he was nodding. His victim and witness were punks. He had no weapon. The jury had gone over everything they had heard and everyone's opinion had been gleaned. That's why they had taken three hours. They were simply taking their time, talking it through, doing

their job. I really should pack my paranoia in a parcel and post it to Pakistan. Most juries want to do right by the defendants, black, white, whatever. What the defense lawyer needs to do is seat the smartest and most independent people he can and push his case.

Because you don't always lose. Sometimes the D.A. gets greedy and the jurors are smarter than usual and the facts and the law work in your favor, and you should always argue the point. Trust the people and do the job, Jack.

Miss Rand -- **sigh** -- admitted to me, later, that Sherman's strip show *did* freak her out, and Popeye made her *uncomfortable*, but Huey and Zero were totally unconvincing losers. She'd enjoyed my style and had imitated my shrieking "Right here?" to Zero in the jury room, to their merriment. Under the circumstances, I could forgive her. I think I could have forgiven Miss Rand if she'd tailpiped my car. But ... "uncomfortable"? That could mean a *lot* of things.

What of our *dramatis personae* since these epic events? I've gone on to work the Drug Court. Nice job even if the crimes are monotonous. Farley Jenkins has moved to the Florida coast, where he tans his way towards *nirvana*. Judge Braunhauer died two years after our trial. 19-1 being less impressive than 19-0, Sherman dumped his football jersey but generally took his first loss with grace. He and I tried one more case together, in dope court, which ended in a hung jury. He now works for his father's private firm and makes megabucks.

Miss Rand moved to Oklahoma. Huey was a "pumpkin" in Drug Court a while back and is doing time. I have no idea what happened to Zero, and that's fine by me.

Popeye was charged with a burglary in another division of court shortly after our trial. I had the case; he told me to plead him guilty and let him return to Angola, the state penitentiary. "You're just sending me home," he said. All right then; I pled him guilty, and home he went.

I've seen him since. A free man, now, working construction jobs in the Florida panhandle, he was back in court in 1997 ... when his *son* had charges. The face under that ridiculous tattoo was distracted and pissed off and very worried ... just like any father's would be should his son go to jail. Don't know what that proved, but it proved something.



THANKS this issue to the able professionals at Tom's Printing for the halftones and for printing my cover, to the game associates at Office Depot for handling the bulk of the issue, to Walli and the krowd at Kinko's for production assistance, and as usual to Cindy Snowden for collating help. Issue completed February 16, 1998.



DO YOU DARE ... SLEEP IN A WIGWAM?

In days gone by, before interstates, when U.S. highways were the great linkages that bound these United States together, days before every dot on the map was more or less the same stretch of fast food chains and soulless Ramadas and Holiday Inns ... in days gone by, when I was young, my family would drive crosscountry every year to see my mother's folks in Southern California.

It was on U.S. highways that we'd drive and at mom'n'pop motels in nowhere towns that

we'd sleep. Every place wasn't the same as every other place, in those days before cable TV and McDonald's, and still there stood, in isolate sites about the country, the most unique motels ever to grace the American landscape: fifteen metal wigwams in a semi-circle: **WigWam Village**.

They had been built in the '30s by a man named Frank Redford, inspired it is said as much by inverted ice cream cones as by the real Sioux teepees he'd seen in South Dakota. Two "villages" were established in the Mammoth Caves country of Kentucky, others in Alabama, Florida, California, Arizona ... and near New Orleans! To fleece the extra dime or two from his customers, Redford installed coin-operated (was Tom Digby involved?) radios and vibrating beds. Furniture was sturdy wicker, and decor was 100% *faux* American Indian.

Several times on my familial trips, I remember passing the Arizona Village, in Holbrook, on fabled Route 66. I'd beg my father to stop, since what could be niftier than sleeping in a teepee, but always, it was too early in the day, and on we'd go. In time, I grew older, the interstates were built, and like so much of the individualized, non-corporate, aplastic America that had come before me, the chain fell apart. Eventually I became a man. Thoughts of WigWam Village tumbled into the deepest grottoes of my memory. Always, though, I kept the sensawunda that marked me, from birth, as a science fiction fan. And eventually I came to the 1985 DeepSouthCon in Huntsville, Alabama.

According to a superb article by Pat Molloy in Toni Weisskopf's **Southern Fandom Confederation Handbook**, bidding for the 1986 DSC was at first restricted to a single city. Kentucky fan and gadfly *Rickey Sheppard* thought a bid without contest a repulsive state of affairs, so up he stood at the business meeting. There he advanced the name of a most unique motel still in business in his home town of Cave City, Kentucky: **WigWam Village**.

Imagine this boomer's delight at hearing that a dream from boyhood had endured. In fact, WigWam #2 was one of three surviving such motels. Holbrook's was still in business, they said, and the one in San Bernadino, California, was still standing, though home more these days to rats and vagabonds than to happy tourists.

Anyway, Rickey's motel stood near to Mammoth Cave, and his bid was ardent. He printed flyers and showed slides (exactly so; as he had no projector, he simply held up the slides and showed them to us). In later years Jane & Scott Dennis printed tee shirts for the bid, which went on for many years. Innumerable

INSIDE THE WIGWAM

Casual elegance is the style in each of WigWam Village's 14 palatial teepees.



The WigWam Village teepees proudly feature the original wicker furniture from the motel's opening 60+ years ago. I couldn't get the radiator to work.

times Rickey or his surrogates proclaimed the name of WigWam Village at DSC site selections. It never prevailed, although it was rumored to have missed by seven mere votes in 1987, and Rickey's dedication to his cause won him a *Kosmik Mind* Award at the Kubla Khan.

I had therefore two reasons, personal and fannish, to test this icon of my youth. So, in 1994, driving from New Orleans to Buffalo to see my mother, finding that I would pass through Central Kentucky, and recalling that I'd always craved a visit to Mammoth Caves ...

To get to the motel, I exited Interstate 65 at Cave City, and headed away from Mammoth Park. I ran a gauntlet of plastic modernity, so kept my gaze averted from the Holiday Inn, Ramada and Motel 6. At Highway 31-W, I turned left, and proceeded through Cave City, past other stubborn and funky locally-owned tourist motels. After a mile or so, rising imperiously on the left, I found -- fronted by an ancient neon command, "*Sleep in a WigWam*" -- the central teepee of WigWam Village, 52 feet high, 38 tons of concrete, 13 tons of steel. Once a restaurant; now a gift shop, filled with tacky Indian junk, postcards, and plaster models of the teepees. I bought one, of course ... my souvenir has 4 on it, as such was my wigwam.

Actually, I had wigwam # 4. As you can see from my closing photo, taken by a cooperative maid, they'd stencilled the number on backwards.

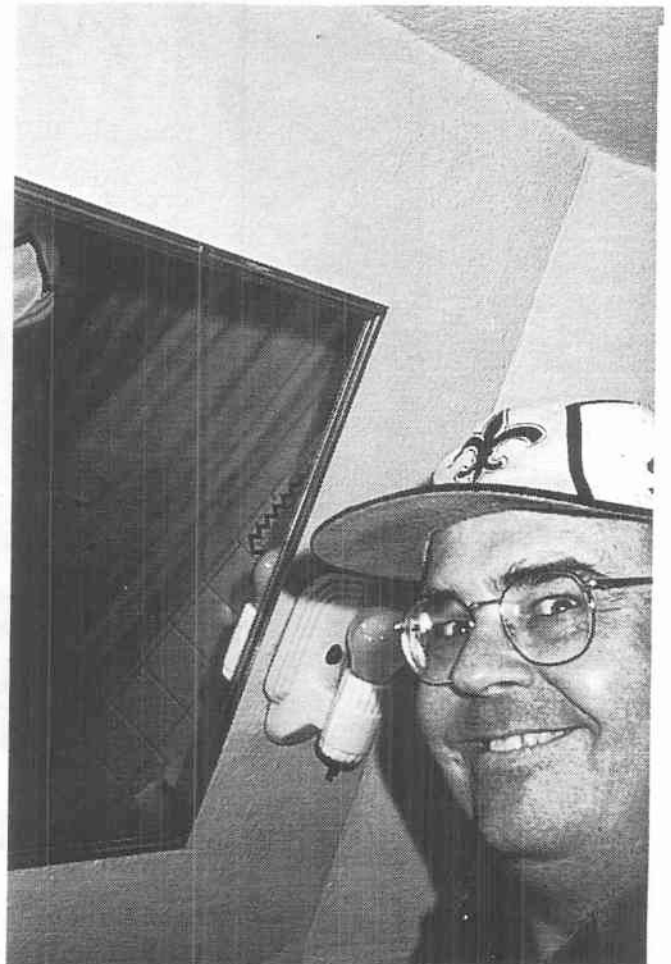
Inside ... charming. Clean, with sturdy shellacked wicker furniture (original from the motel's 1937 opening), a functional TV (not exactly original, but *without* cable), radiator heating (also original ... also dysfunctional). The bathroom was its own delight: because the walls sloped inward (I was inside a cone, after all) the mirror tilted forward. (See photo.) I enjoyed a superb view of my naked scalp. I spent a restful night, a hot shower the next morning, and emerged fit for the coming day. What more should one ask of an abode? (Well, we're coming to that.)

I have twice more lingered overnight at WigWam Village, both times in sublime comfort. On the last occasion, as I weighed down the creaking lawn chair before my wigwam and contemplated the scampering fireflies, I wondered what could make the serenity flawless, improve the pastoral perfection of the Kentucky night? The answer -- as Rickey Sheppard knew well -- was *fans*. **WigWam Village needed a convention.**

Rickey only went for a DSC, but Pat Molloy has improved on the idea. After all, the appetite of our regional fandom has grown beyond the puny dimensions of a DeepSouthCon! We have *big time* experience, now: ConFederation, Nolacon, MagiCon, LoneStarCon! What could possibly follow upon such triumphs? Yes ... **YES! A worldcon for WigWam Village!**

According to Molloy, two votes were cast for WigWam Village in the site selection for 2000. Just nipped by Chicago. The next biddable year for the central zone? 2003. Hmm ... True, Toronto is bidding for that year, with two worldcons and a splendid locale to its credit. And CanCun is also bidding, the allure of the exotic at its command.

But WigWam Village has a *con suite* none can match: **Mammoth Cave**. What Marriott or Hilton would offer \$35/night room rates? What **pschaw** municipal convention center could bring to the worldcon more than 2.5 acres of exhibit space ... with natural lighting, yet? (Rain? If



DisClave could handle a little water ...) True, WigWam Village has only 14 sleeping rooms, and worldcons are averaging 4,500 attendees these years, but who says you can't fit 321.4 people into a teepee? Has it ever been *tried*?

No more wimpy zone! Time for the *wigwam* zone!



WIGWAM FOR WORLDCON in 2003 !

Rickey Sheppard, honorary chairman. Naomi Fisher, Guy Lillian, Pat Molloy, committee.
Write for details.