



CHALLENGER
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CHALLENGER no. two

winter 1995 issue

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LET'S GO GET ANGEL: memories of Karl

Linda Krawecka
art by Dave Carson

1988. Lawrence Road, Ealing

Lying neck-deep in a bath full of bubbles, working my way through a bottle of red wine, listening to Iggy Pop real loud on my Walkman. To say things are not good between Greg and I is less than an understatement and I am trying to scrub it away, drink it away, thrash it away with Iggy. Greg walks into the bathroom with his usual sneer and thrusts the phone into my face. I barely hear him. "It's one of your friends." I whip off the earphones and take the receiver. "Hello?" "It's Pike Bishop here ... I'm looking for the Lady in Black. She's going to pay my bar tab at the Metropole."

It is Karl Wagner, still in town following the World Fantasy Convention in London. There had been a lot of publishers' parties and book launches around the time of the con, and Karl always thought to invite me as one of the usual Party Brigade. We were the Wild Bunch.

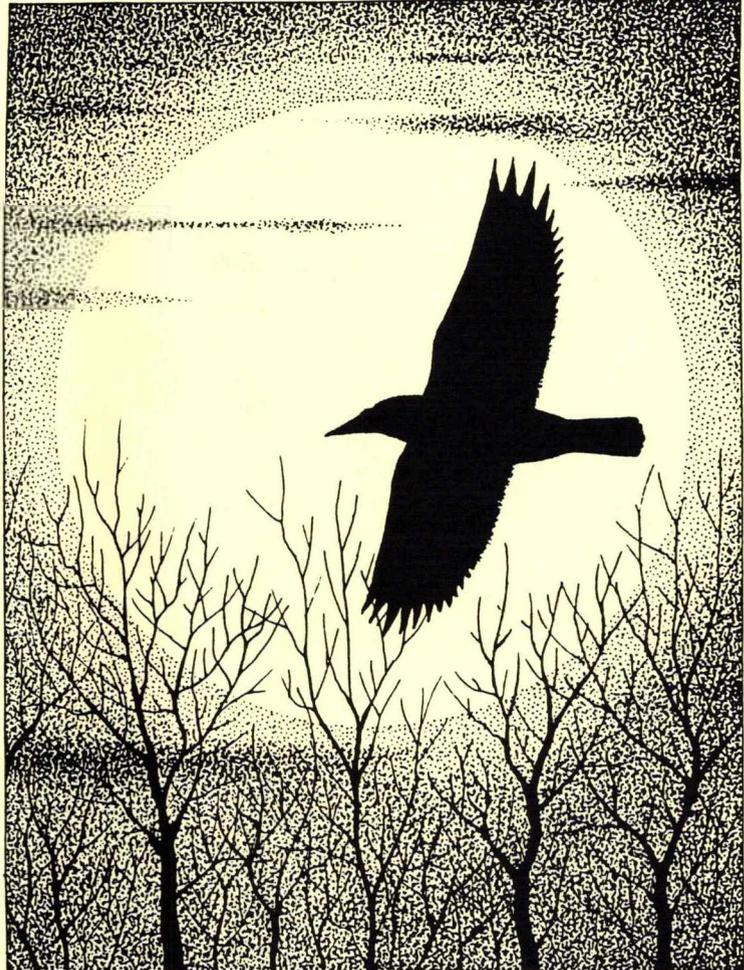
He had been running with the theme of the Lady in Black since the '87 worldcon, at the Metropole in Brighton, where a strange woman dressed in black had gained access to his hotel suite. This happened within days of his finding a playing card on the street, picking it up and turning it over to find the Queen of Spades. Being Karl, he was able to spot the cosmic significance of these events. On his checking out of his hotel room at the end of the con, the Metropole neglected to add his bar tab to the bill and he walked out of Brighton with a few hundred quid more than he expected.

"The Lady in Black has run off with Iggy," I tell him. "Better send Kane to get her back."

"Kane's gone underground. It's to do with the Harmonic Convergence."

We continue this banter for a few minutes before he gets down to his reason for calling.

"Dennis and Christine are getting married this Friday in London. I'm throwing a party for them in one of the function rooms in my hotel in the evening. Why don't you come along?"



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I hesitate. I'd only met Dennis a few times and didn't feel right about attending his wedding reception. "Hell," Karl tells me, "this is a party, not a reception." In that case, why not?

I go on Friday, and have a great time with some great people. It doesn't take much thought for me to end up going home that night with the fella who kissed me so deeply a few weeks back. Our fate is sealed.

1977. Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami

Tripping my brains out, I'm being marched through the bowels of the hotel along with a group of fellow Merry Pranksters by a couple of hotel security heavies on our way to the manager's office. The manager is a big fat man with a big fat cigar in the loudest pink polyester leisure suit the world has ever seen. He's reading us the riot act for climbing our way to the top of the hotel, his staff finding us perched on the roof, ready to strip and do a naked sun dance. Didn't we know that it was dangerous? Didn't we know we could be arrested, the law called in?

"Call them in," dares one of our lot, "and you'll have our lawyer to answer to. My husband is a writer and a paying guest at this hotel. His agent and lawyer are both here for the convention as well and I'm sure they'd be glad to hear how easy it was for us to find ourselves on the roof: no locked doors, no warning signs ..."

She bluffs on for another few minutes before the manager grumbles, takes our names and lets us go. Barbara Wagner saves the day. I don't know her husband or what he's written but I'm grateful for his existence.

Released back into the comfort of the throng that was the '77 worldcon, we follow our new heroine back to her room to toke up in celebration of our escape. Karl is there, a cross between a bear and a berserker. He's nothing like the weedy aging type I have met

before. Here was a new breed of writer who knows how to party hardy with the rest of gonzo fandom. During the next few years and during many odd adventures at many odd cons, Karl was always there like a rock in the midst of some fairly wild ol' times.

1991/2. Bloomsbury area, London

I'm sitting on a bench in the square sipping on a can of Big T, trying to remember the words to "Walking After Midnight." I'm doing my Patsy Cline medley. Dave Carson is singing a rendition of "Shall We Gather at the River" while Karl is doing a Willie Nelson tribute: "Mama don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys ... Don't let'em pick guitars and drive an old truck, make'em be doctors and lawyers that suck ..."

We've been pub-crawling all day, doing the rounds with Karl. That means the annual trip to Kensington Market, an indoor collection of stalls selling everything from tacky tee shirts to custom-made leather jackets, with several odd tattoo and piercing shops, not to mention the Skin Two boutique. We stop in the English Warlord, a leather shop that does anything with skull or Harley-Davidson motifs.

Karl tells the girl he is looking for a customized leather jacket. Smelling "rich American," the girl brings out several styles, all covered with a number of studs and chains. "No, no," he says. "No chains. I don't want anything that someone can get a *grip* on; know what I mean? Those bars get a bit rough on the weekend."

She nods sagely and brings out more studs. In the end there isn't a jacket his size. "You make these for scrawny poseurs. I'm looking for a *biker jacket!*" She promises that they could order one to size and ship it to him in the States but by then his back is turned and out the door in search of Betty Page material.

There is the Cathrine Wheel pub

nearby and after a few drinks there we go back to his hotel, have a shot of Jack Daniels before hitting the local off license to get a few emergency cans of Tennants Super (a super-strong lager) to hold us over once the pubs shut that night. A drink at the Swan, another at the Queen's Larder and a stroll for a quick one at the Sun. In between we pass by old churches and Karl starts rambling on about Kane and the sinister forces afoot. When the pubs close, we find a park bench and bring out the Big Ts. Dave and Karl exchange huge chunks of dialogue from **The Wild Bunch** and we get to singing.

There was at least one such craze day each time Karl visited Britain. Because I was a working girl, I couldn't afford more than one such day off and one was enough. As much as I enjoyed it, I couldn't cope with the level of drink and banter. Karl had always been a drinker and he'd always been on the cynical side but lately both were getting worse. Too many things had gone against him lately and he at least had his annual trip to London to get a little crazy and away from the pressures back home.

1987. Metropole Hotel, Brighton

I have never felt so wired and utterly exhausted in my life. Conspiracy was over and for me, this was the last of a ten-day marathon of activity. I was on that fateful committee and this was the last evening; all was packed and ready to check out in the morning. I don't think I had more than four hours' sleep at any one stretch over the course of things and as tired as I was, I knew I couldn't sleep tonight without a drink and a chance to unwind. I was at the bar when Karl found me. Next to my shoulder, I heard him ask, "What'll you have?"

I let him order me a double brandy. He led me back to his table on the front balcony of the hotel, overlooking the sea. He

pointed to the West Pier which had been deserted and derelict for years. "I have a view of that pier from my room and I've been watching it at night. There's a light that moves through the arcade at the end of the pier. I tried asking around to see if there was access to the pier or when the night watchmen were on duty but there are no night watchmen. That end of the pier is cut off from the shore ... you can't get to it. But every night I see that light. Keep watching."

I did, and as I did he began to tell me about finding playing cards on the street, mostly the Queen of Spades and about some strange women in black who just came into his room when he knew the room was locked. He told me about the latest he had discovered about some underground passages in London and about freak turns in the weather and the Harmonic Convergence, and was weaving a magic tale right there before me and though I didn't know it at the time, I was listening to an embryonic version of "At First Just Ghostly", which was a Kane-in-London story. He wanted to develop it into a novel and in more recent years he would read snips of the adventure to Dave and I. Dave was a character in the story, an Irish artist by the name of "Mike Carson"; Dennis Etchison appeared under another name as did Charlie Grant and others of their circle.

Listening to Karl's low Southern drawl soothed me along with the brandy and the sea. I saw the light at the end of the pier, or at least I thought I did. I told Karl and he and he replied with a low hum and a nod. The Forces That Be were at work.

After a spell my eyes were closing and I knew I just had to get to bed. I thanked him for the drink and the company and got up to go. "Wait," he said. "I'll walk you to your room. You don't know who's around on a night like this." And like the southern gentleman he was, he saw me to my door.

1990. Midlands Hotel, Birmingham

I'm at one of the big round banquet tables on the Sunday night of the British Fantasy Con. I wasn't going to attend the banquet. My split with Greg earlier that year left me in a financial hole and I could barely afford the trip to Birmingham, much less pay skyhigh prices for rubber chicken. Someone though had dropped out and there was a spare banquet ticket going for free at Karl's table. I was going to let Dave have it but he wasn't up to a meal and let me take it.

This was a bad time for Dave. He had gone through a series of emotionally draining problems with his ex-wife and to top it off when he went to his doctor to ask for help to get him through it he was handed an endless renewable Valium prescription. He might as well have handed Dave poison and gotten it over with.

Originally Dave wasn't going to the Fantasy Con at all as the only thing he was capable of doing was watching videos. That is, until his mate Karl came to town and saw the state Dave was in. He literally picked Dave up by the scruff of his neck and in so many words told him, "No more of this shit," and threw him on the train to Birmingham.

It was a rough weekend but Dave did it without Valium and with the support of Karl and his friends. He wasn't up to a meal on Sunday but he did want to be with Karl and Company, and he wanted to be nearby for the awards ceremony. Somewhere after the starter but before the main course a hotel dickhead came along and told Dave that if he wasn't having a meal, he'd have to leave.

Dave explained that he was just sitting with his friends and we all protested; Karl even offered to pay the price of a banquet meal to have Dave stay. But the dickhead would have none of it. He told Dave he could move his chair to the side of the room and wait for his friends to finish.

This is when Dave got up and walked out. I left with him. I was never fond of banquet food but I was hungry and convinced Dave to take a walk down to McDonald's with me. We were halfway through our Big Macs and well into a bitch session about the hotel when in strolled Karl.

"I told them where they could shove their chicken," he said as he joined us. Like good old Pike Bishop says, "When you side with a man you stick with him ... and if you don't do that you're like some kind of animal."

1994. Mountney Road, Eastbourne

I could sit here and type a dozen more stories about Karl but none will ever show what he really meant to me or to Dave. I feel the loss and Dave feels it even more so. He was closer to Karl than anyone else this side of the Atlantic maybe closer than anyone, period. I've lost a longtime friend but Dave's lost a brother and my heart aches.

And I'm so angry. It's no secret that Karl had a drink problem and that it was the cause of his death. We saw it coming and there wasn't a damned thing we could do about it. It was the path he chose and he knew he was going to die. There would be times in the past when in a black mood he'd say, "This is my last one," meaning his last trip to London. You couldn't do much more than shrug and say "Come on, Karl, you'll be back next year," but this year was different.

When we came up to London for the day to see him the week before this year's British Fantasy Con, he looked awful. I'm ashamed to say that I barely bring myself to hug and kiss him in my usual affectionate greeting because I knew I was looking at a dead man.

This time he meant it. It was his last one.

The weekend before he left London Dave went up to spend some time with him.

There were some publisher's signings on the Saturday, which usually meant a big rave up at one of the pubs. I knew we couldn't both afford to go to London again so I sent Dave along on his own. Karl left London on the Monday and by the Saturday he was dead. Brian Lumley called us on Sunday with the news.

Even knowing that it was the direction he was heading in, I didn't expect to hear it so soon. In some offbeat way I was hoping he'd get home and have a collapse and that he would be forced into the hospital for help. He would never have gone voluntarily. But to hear that he had died ... It was a hard one to handle. Dave has been grieving pretty bad, but we're coping.

October 1994. The South Coast Road

It's just after 6:00 in the evening and I'm driving eastwards on the Coast Road on my way home after work. The Downs are magnificent in the evening sunset glow. My mind is full of Karl and those thoughts that go

through your mind when death stops close to you; where was he, he can't be just gone, he can't be nowhere. I'm not Christian but I am spiritual and I was trying to comfort myself with the thought that he has returned to nature, that his spirit is now with the forces that make up the spirit of all things.

As his did, my mind turned towards the esoteric, the mystical, the symbolic. My van struggled to the top of the Downs and as it did I found myself staring into the face of a moon so full and so huge and so close that I could have touched it. Before I could gasp with the beauty of it, a big black crow swooped in front of it, silhouetted dark and raggedy in a frozen moment of time before he set off into the forest with a raucous caw.

I knew I had seen Karl. He was there in that crow, in that moon.

Every day now crossing the Downs to work I see the crows, sitting on a fence post or circling the tree tops. And I know Karl is there. And I know it's sappy of me but it's how I cope and how I best remember a friend who's gone but with me still.



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editorial

The kid was a wreck, and in chains, to boot. His hair was a sodden mop, his clothes rumpled and torn. I put that down to the probability that he'd spent the night on the jailhouse floor, but this boy carried his mess with him.

"I got a problem," he said, and it was no challenge to figure out what it was. After all, we were in Jefferson Parish's special drug court, where I make my living as a public defender, and he was in the prisoner's box, awaiting what we call a "Rule to Revoke" ... loss of probation, and time in jail. Yes, he had a pretty obvious problem, but he was almost unique among the many hundreds I'd seen in his situation: he was *admitting* it.

He was admitting that his problem wasn't simply that he was in trouble with the law. The angriest, most unrepentant drug dealer ever to sit in that box knows he faces time behind bars. Unlike such defendants, this boy knew his problem was more than that. The drugs were tougher than he was. They weren't just costing him freedom; they were killing him. He needed help.

I did what I could. With his permission, I stipulated that the kid had violated his probation by using more cocaine. I asked the judge to change his sentence from parish to state time. This switch made him eligible for Louisiana's "Blue Walter" program, which sounds obscene but is actually a pretty decent inpatient drug rehabilitation clinic within the prison system. No problem, said the judge.

No problem. Except that my client was still in prison, his life still engulfed in anguish. Maybe he'd benefit from Blue Walter. Maybe he'd find strength enough to beat cocaine. And maybe he'd come out of the penitentiary and fall into the grip of illicit chemistry again, worse off than before, another morsel for the monster. I could tell myself, at least there's hope. But in all the years that I have lived on the edge of the drug culture, I have seen very very little hope.

I have to admit, I don't understand drug use. I should ... I was at Berkeley in the sixties, I've hung with and fanned with and even loved serious dopers, and I've even read Ted White's rationalizations in *Fanthology '90*. But I've never *used*; maybe that's the reason. Maybe my prudence -- or cowardice, if you wish -- cost me a glorious experience worth all the social and legal and medical hassle. Certainly it cost me the trust and regard of a substantial percentage of my contemporaries. Not using branded you somehow. You were suspect. You certainly weren't acceptable.

And you couldn't *ask*. Dope was something you were expected to intuit. Those that used, knew. Those that did not ... weren't worth talking to. Whether this was due to arrogance or paranoia on the part of dopers is anyone's guess. All I know is that I *don't* know.

I see the effects. I see a country whose fundament, its understanding of human rights, has been eroded by toughened law. There's a joke among defense attorneys: "You know the Bill of Rights, don't you? First Amendment ... Second ... Third ... Fifth ..." The Fourth Amendment, written to protect Americans against unreasonable police searches and seizures, has been totally degraded. I'm currently writing an appeals brief on a case where the defendant was forced into a bathroom and her vagina probed to find cocaine. The judge let the evidence be admitted and I'm asking that he

be overruled. I don't expect to win. It's a newsworthy rarity nowadays when a court does not give the cops license to search who they will how they will for whatever reason they will ... and that's all because of drugs.

Who to blame for this miserable situation? I have an aphorism I go by: *Dopers who think they're cool impress me as assholes; fascists who think they're cool impress me much less.* Clearly, the imposition on civil rights is a solution infinitely worse than the crime. That's still true, even though drugs have left the snotty purview of the middle class for the inarticulate violence of the underclass, from which even we liberals, who oppose arbitrary police power, must recoil. The murderous competition among crack gangsters has turned the ghettos and the projects into slaughterhouses. Tonight -- as I write this, and as you read it -- at least one New Orleans kid will be slain in a cocaine turf battle. How is society supposed to deal with such carnage?

And how are we supposed to deal with the personal losses? Twice in the last three years I've had to face the deaths of good people, one solid friend and one jolly acquaintance, for reasons that could be at least indirectly traced to drug use. What quality in dope possibly justifies such waste?

Well, I think I know some of the answers, but I'd rather hear them from you.

Does recreational drug use have a place in fandom? Does recreational drug use have a place in *life*?

I realize that mine isn't the only point of view. Some of the drug users I've known, serious and "recreational," have been among the most intelligent and creative people I've ever been around. Surely they have reasons and words that can convey them. So I want to open up **Chall**'s pages to opinions, anecdotes, stories about drug use in fandom. Anonymity if requested is assured. Any point of view is welcome. I won't even claim the last word.

You are invited to write.

**

On a related topic ... an apology.

When I made my reply to Ted White's loony broadside against **Chall** in **Habakkuk**, I made mention of White's past, specifically his federal conviction on drug charges. I should not have done that. However despicable -- and they were plenty despicable -- the actions which sent White to jail, however sick his attacks on me, this fanzine, and (most deplorably) Southern fandom, drugs are irrelevant to any issue we have between us. This I realized when I asked myself, would I have called attention to White's criminal record had he *praised Challenger*? Obviously not. Reflecting unfairness is still unfair. Sorry.

Aside than that, I retract nothing of what I said about White's review. It was vulgar, rude, inaccurate and misguided. Fandom seems to enjoy people who use our genre to exercise -- no typo -- personal demons. Whether this is because we're tolerant, or simply weak, or the type of neurotics who enjoy watching others get hurt, is a mystery to me. In addition to my letter, I responded to **Habakkuk** in one other way. Several **Habakkuk** readers mentioned White's review in their LOCs. I wrote to

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each, asking if they'd care to see and judge **Challenger** for themselves. All but one said sure, and all but one of their subsequent letters ride our lettercol. This fellow sent me a postcard featuring the delightful sentence, "This isn't the first time I've thought Ted was full of shit!" Too bad his promised letter didn't arrive in time for this issue.

Ah -- magic words. "Time" and "this issue."

Challenger #2 is not only late, it's *repulsively* late. It was begun a full year+ ago and it's taken far too many months to finish up. What can I say? It takes some of us that long. Also, thanks to the literal crush of Dennis Dolbear's law practice, #2 is nowhere near as handsome in appearance as the premiere issue. I had to lay this one out myself. Lastly, there's a distressing lack of *faanishness* in this **Challenger**; my articles deal with law **groan** and politics **yawn** and the Civil War **oh NO!** Everything else -- with the exceptions of Jim Hogan's squib and ~~Tom~~ T.K.F. Weisskopf's speech -- is much the same. Sorry.

But maybe I shouldn't be sorry. Fanzines are subjective things, dependent -- no matter what Ted White thinks -- on no dominion other than editorial whim. That whim rests this issue events of 25 years ago, my current legal practice, and on last summer's emotional visit to Gettysburg. That's what I've written for this issue, and that's the way it goes.

But I do apologize for the long gap between issues. This will not soon improve. I have much else to fit into my life, desolate though it is. I have a legal practice minimizing the vengeance our society wreaks upon the druggies who would rot it out from within. I am trying to work up a book about my biggest case: the serial rapist, "Eddie." Some literary agents have shown interest. Very exciting ... and most daunting.

I've met many challenges in my life. To become a lawyer at 40 was only the most strenuous. To write well and worthily on a subject that means something seems a deeper and more onerous goal. I am a bit frightened, but also determined. Challenger, challenge thyself.



Illo by Dave Ryan

Jim Hogan writes about giants and is a genial Irish giant himself. Chall heard this anecdote at a Huntsville convention and begged him to share it with us.

HOW THEY GOT ME AT BAYCON

James P. Hogan

Through most of the eighties I lived in a town called Sonora in the Sierra Nevada foothills, about three hours' drive inland from San Francisco. The principal SF convention in that part of the world was the Bay Area Science Fiction Convention, "Baycon," held every year in San Jose. Cons are always a good break for writers showing symptoms of advanced cabin fever from being holed up in solitary confinement with keyboards for too long, and whose verbal English has been reduced to ordering at the 24-hour restaurant along the street and calling the phone company to find out what da it is. The additional attraction of a regular, local con is the feeling of being at home among familiar faces in a familiar setting, watching the familiar routine unfold. It's even nicer, of course, when you can do it as one of those special guests of the convention who get their expenses paid.

But one doesn't expect that kind of treatment every time. Others have to have their chance too, and the typical writer guest accepts making it to the privileged list in some years, and settling for a free membership in others. Well, by the second half of the eighties I had been Baycon's GOH, Special Writer Guest, Toastmaster, and everything else that qualified, and so this year I was happy to just make my own way, collect a membership package at registration, and enjoy the socializing in return for working a few panels. But when I checked into my room at the Red Lion Inn, there was a pleasant surprise waiting. Standing in the bathroom was a large tub of ice containing an assortment of cans of my favorite beers and several bottles of wine, with a card attached to it that read: **Welcome back**

to Baycon, compliments of the committee. It was their V of saying, "Sorry we can't cover our costs every year, but we're glad to have you back." Nice, I thought to myself.

Another thing that Baycon excelled at was parties. The organizers took the wise precaution of concentrating all the party rooms on one floor of the hotel that was kept mundane-free, so there were no complaints from bewildered or panic-stricken regular guests, and the con people could get on with having a good time. It made the parties a lot easier to find, too. As the night wore on, they tended to flow out into the corridor and merge into one giant part that kept the hard-core partygoers happy and the security staff edgy through dawn.

One fact of cons that authors become resigned to is being assailed by young, aspiring, would-be writers who think that some of the mystique of being a pro will surely rub off if they get close to one and stay in proximity long enough. There are the people who bring notebooks to every panel on writing topics, show their expertise of the genre to be on a par with ours by citing books and authors that you've never heard of, and who could probably find allusions to symbolic metaphor in the Manhattan phone directory and debate the implied self-referential generalizations of a laundry list. The parties tend to be one of their favorite stalking grounds. Here, victims can be cornered off-duty and defenseless, unable to invent urgent phone calls to be made to New York or to toss back a harried "Sorry, must get to a panel in two minutes" before retreating to the Green Room.

I say all this because it's expected -- the kind of thing that authors tell each other in

bars and agree how tedious it all is to show that they're above finding gratification in such cheap ego trips, while all the time secretly reveling in it. The truth is that it's hard not to start coming on just a little bit when every word one utters is received with the raptness of a synod of bishops witnessing a theophany. It's even more true in a party setting when one is getting a bit oiled oneself. Writers have an interest in communicating ideas, after all -- otherwise they wouldn't be writers to begin with -- and instant audience reaction is not something they get a chance to experience very often. All of which is a roundabout way of saying that given half a chance, they tend to talk a lot.

And so it was at Baycon. On the Saturday night of whatever the year in question, I was giving forth, probably on something that had to do with the Many Worlds Interpretation of quantum mechanics or the impact of electronic networks on totalitarian societies, to a group of studentish young men with intense expressions and wire-bound notebooks, when I was interrupted by a hesitant tap on the shoulder. It was one of the girls from the con staff, eighteen or so, I'd guess, quite pretty, and visibly nervous over what was probably her first stint on the committee. She asked me tremulously, "Did you get our present okay, in your room?"

It was a heaven-sent opportunity to lighten the atmosphere a little after all the intense questions -- and hell, after a few straight Irish whiskeys I needed to. I looked at her with the most furious glare that I could muster. "Yes, I did."

She recoiled at the tone. "Why? Was ... was there something wrong?"

"I'll say there damn well was!" I barked.

"Oh, really? What --"

"Where was the long-legged kinky redhead?"

Her head gave a short,

uncomprehending shake. "Long-legged kinky ..." she faltered. "I'm sorry. I don't think I understand."

I emitted the kind of weary sigh that people make whose lives are a perpetual and predictable succession of evaporated computer bookings, wrongly ordered parts, and lost baggage. "Look," I said. "I was quite specific with John" -- John McLaughlin was the con chairman that year -- "as to the terms under which I would attend your convention. He agreed that two things would be provided in the room on arrival for my personal enjoyment over the weekend: one, a tub full of booze; and two, a long-legged kinky redhead. I got the booze -- thank you very much. But --" I spread my hands and looked at the girl sternly, "no redhead. *Where's the long-legged kinky redhead?*"

She blanched, cringed, and shook her head helplessly. "I'm sorry. I don't know anything about it. There must have been some mistake. I'll have to check ..."

And she fled.

I turned back, managing to keep a straight face, and was rewarded by the sort of wide-eyed, incredulous looks that you see in biker bars when a naked Schwarzenegger says, "I neet your clothes, your shoes, unt der motor zycle."

"This doesn't really happen, does it?" one of them whispered.

I gave them a pained, worldly look, the kind that asks where you kids have been all this time. "Come on, guys, let's get real. You don't think we do this just for the money, the fame, and the prestige, do you? I mean, what else is life really all about?"

They exchanged looks that ranged from seasick wan through honest-envy green to agitated scarlatina, and muttered.

"Hey, guys, there's no other way. We gotta be writers."

"That's the way to live, man."

"I knew it had to be like that. I just

knew it ..."

But I acted as if it were nothing and returned loftily to our previous track of quantum weirdness or whatever. I believe that a writer who accepts a convention's hospitality owes it to the con to be available. In a way we're all whores in this business, in that as long as it isn't disfiguring or maiming, we deliver what the person who's paying wants. Usually that means the publisher, but in the case of conventions it's the fans with their dollars at the door. Right? And so, with the Bushmills flowing smoothly, I quickly forgot about the brief diversion and the bit of fun I'd had out of it. Until I realized that she was back.

She drew me a little to one side, nodded conspiratorially in a way that said everything was all right after all, and said, "I think we can do something." This time it was my jaw that dropped. But before I could say anything she lowered her voice and went on. "But the convention does have its reputation to think about, and there are family groups here. We do need to be a little discreet. So just stay here, and I'll be back in a few minutes when everything's fixed up." And with a smile and sly wink, she disappeared again.

I'm not sure what the others and I talked about after that. I was completely on auto-mouth, wondering if, in fact, it was I who had been out of touch all these years. I suppose we English have something of a reputation too, and who could blame these zestful colonials for exercising a little prudent discretion in our direction also, until they got to know us better. I tried to recall all the attractive redheads that I'd seen around the con, wondering which one of them might have volunteered, and found myself scanning the vicinity with rising impatience. Probably nothing was going to happen at all ... But then, sure enough, she appeared around a corner of the corridor a few yards away and beckoned with a finger.

I looked at the guys and shrugged with what I hoped came across as man-of-the-world nonchalance. "Well, it's been nice talking. When it's time to go, you have to go., I guess. Enjoy the rest of the weekend, eh?" I walked away like John Wayne leaving the bar-room, holstering a pair of smoking six-guns.

And waiting around the corner, I found

...

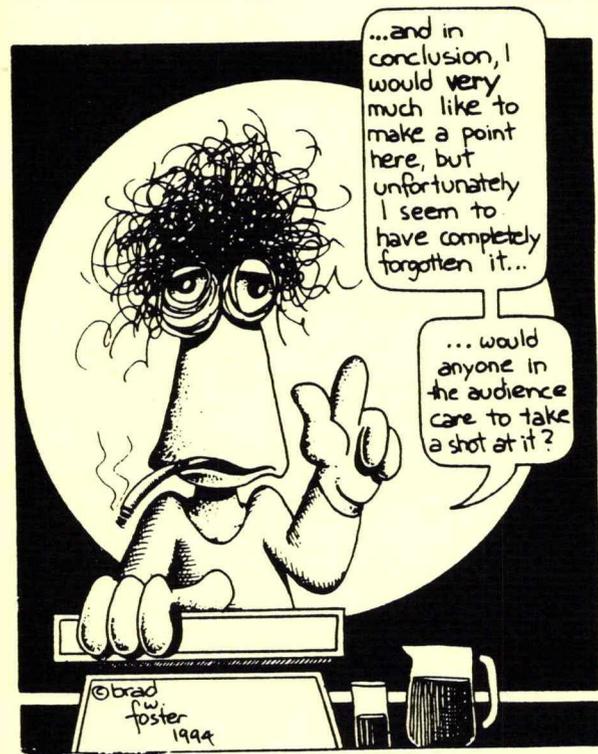
A redhead.

Tall, long-legged, and slender, smiling lasciviously.

And quite possibly very kinky.

He also had a big red moustache and a voice like Johnny Cash. "He," he greeted, thrusting out a hand. "My name's Mike. Glad to meet you."

And that was how the buggers got me at Baycon.



illo by Brad Foster

Back with another excursion into the middle ages comes Rich Dengrove, telling us all about

MEDIEVAL RHETORIC

Rich Dengrove

I once had an idea for a book on Medieval Rhetoric. Now don't fall asleep on me; it wouldn't necessarily be all that boring. It's true if it was done by a boring academic it certainly would be: they can make anything boring. But I think a book on this subject could be very interesting. In fact, if I were to write the book, I would have to leave my sensibility, my respectability and my decency at the door. This Medieval rhetoric stuff is hot like tamales.

C.S. Lewis explains the reason in his **The Discarded Image** (1964). He discusses the rhetorician Geoffrey de Vinsauf, who lived about 1200. The reason he chose Geoffrey was that only he was stupid enough to honestly describe the art of rhetoric. Lewis talks about the man's "extreme naivete." According to Geoffrey, you had to choose the most boring theme possible for your piece, and delay having to say anything about it. What did you do to delay it? You put in the most shocking possible digressions -- so the reader wouldn't want to leave them for the theme.

Thus, the Medieval rhetorician went out of his way to find shocking digressions. Sometimes this material can be compared to the **National Enquirer**; sometimes to the **Weekly World News**. Sometimes the rhetoricians even surpassed the **News** in reporting curiosities, anomalies and monstrosities.

In all honesty, I haven't done a great deal of study on this subject. But that is my reason for suspecting a cornucopia of sensationalism lies buried there. The little I've read is wild.

For one thing, there is the story about a Pope, Sylvester II (ca. 940-1003), who, the rhetoricians claimed, founded a school for black magic. And three future Popes had enrolled: Benedict IX, Gregory VI, and Gregory II.

Sylvester's original name was Gerbert of Aurillac, and he was a scholar from

Southern France. At one point, the rhetoricians rumored, he studied in Toledo, Spain, considered a hotbed of magic at the time. (He didn't.) While there, they claimed, he stole a magic book from his master, and fled back to France. He stole his master's daughter as well.

As Pope, the rhetoricians rumored, he made a pact with demons in return for magic powers and great knowledge.

Furthermore, Satan promised Pope Sylvester that he would not die until he said mass in Jerusalem. Not intending to go to Jerusalem, he presumed he would never die. But, what Satan apparently meant was the Jerusalem Church at *Rome*. Before Pope Sylvester died, the rhetoricians rumored, he cut off his tongue and a hand to atone for his sins of black magic.

One would suspect this tale would only be mentioned in whispers and anyone caught writing about it would be led to the stake. This was not the case. It was mentioned many times through the Centuries.

A Cardinal Benno started the tale rolling in the latter 11th Century. William of Malmesbury wrote the fullest account of it about 50 years later. Walter Map mentions it about 50 years later still. And, about the same time, Michael Scot, who was himself accused of black magic, mentions the story too.

Was there any truth behind these rumors? It's doubtful. Taking a guess, I would say Sylvester's crime was that he was

beholden to the German emperor, who ruled the Holy Roman Empire. During Sylvester's time the emperor made popes, but by the 11th Century the German emperor was usually regarded as the enemy of the Church. So I bet that the attack on this particular Pope was sanctioned by the Church.

However, you've still got to admit the tale was incredibly scurrilous.

Another example of hot rhetoric was **Rhetorimachia** by Anselm of Besate, written around 1050. Modern writers denounce him to the hilt. H.E.J. Cowdrey wrote in 1920,

"Modern readers have thought neither of the author nor of his work. Carl Erdmann called Anselm a 'bizarre Rhetoriker und extreme literat.' For R.L. Poole, the **Rhetorimachia** was 'a masterpiece of laborious futility.' While R.W. Southern finds it 'painful to read,' and refers to Anselm's 'absurd tirade.' It is impossible not to agree."

But they all read him, didn't they? And no evidence exists there is slightest historical significance in his work. There are only two extant copies of it, which is evidence he wasn't read much in his own time.

What caused these men to be shocked -- and entertained. Anselm wrote about a court case between him and his cousin Rotiland. And he accused his cousin Rotiland of making a pact with the Devil, and using magic to satisfy his lust and greed.

There is no evidence, by the way, that Anselm ever had a Cousin Rotiland and, in any case, he admits it's all fiction in a prefatory letter to his teacher.

Nowadays it seems like a perverse joke. Actually it was not even that; it shows admiration for the Ancient Romans and Greeks. The work imitated normal, late classical rhetoric, which dated from the decline of the Roman Empire, 400 or 500 years before. This rhetoric went in for wizards, pirates, and poisoners. In fact, it might be the

subject of another book.

In the first book, Rotiland is accused of following the precepts of his servant Mammon. One of these is to keep vigil for three nights with a cock and a cat, which are then burned, producing a powder "that has great power over girls and married women." And he uses it to seduce a number of women -- including his own mother.

Next book gives the incident everyone mentions; and everyone disparages. In it, Rotiland leaves the city of Parma accompanied by a young boy. He buries the boy up to his waist in the earth, lights a special fire around him, and forces him to smell the acrid fumes all night. Meanwhile Rotiland chants a love-charm, which is supposed to be either in Hebrew or the diabolical language -- whatever that may be. The characters given in the account are in garbled Greek; a language not much understood in Western Europe until the 15th Century.

The chant was supposed to have begun with the words, "As this youth is held captive in this place, so may girls be captive to my love."

In the morning the boy Rotiland tortured stole his magic book.

Later on in the next book, Rotiland accuses Anselm of similar infernal practices. For instance, that he performed a magical abortion with a mule's hoof. Other accusations include keeping the company of panderers and seducers. Anselm easily refutes the charges.

In the third book, Anselm accuses Rotiland of being a seducer, a thief, a murderer, and a willing servant of the Devil. And he goes into detail about Rotiland's pact with the Devil. Finally, Anselm accuses Rotiland of cutting off the hand of a corpse with a Saracen physician, and using it to commit a burglary unseen. Many centuries later, the hand would be known as the Hand of Glory. With this last piece of disreputable

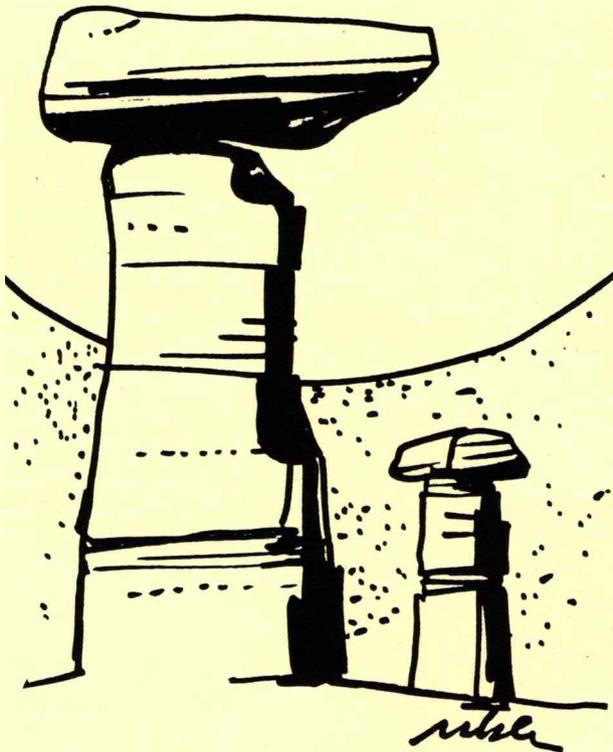
magic, Anselm brings us to the end of his manuscript.

Yet a third piece of hot rhetoric is significant not for what it does do, but for what it doesn't do. What doesn't it do? Apparently shock the audience. What is doubly shocking *to us* is that this was written by a monk, Ralph, Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Coggeshall, in England in the last quarter of the twelfth century.

Let me have Ralph tell it:

"For one day when Lord William, Archbishop of [Rheims] and King Philip's uncle, were taking a canter with his clergy outside the city, one of his clerks, Master Gervais of Tillbury by name, noticed a girl walking alone in a vineyard. Urged by the curiosity of hot-blooded youth, he turned aside to her, as we later heard from his own

illo by *William Rotsler*



lips when he was a canon. He greeted her and attentively inquired whose daughter she was and what she was doing there alone, and then, after admiring her beauty for a while, he at length in courtly fashion made her a proposal of wanton love."

In short, a priest is trying to seduce a woman. And Brother Ralph seems to be saying, Go to it boy.

The rest of the story is this. Gervais finds that the woman is a heretic and loses his interest in seducing her. Instead, he brings in the authorities, who question the woman, and from her, learn about another woman heretic. "Unhappily," the other woman escapes true authority by means of a magic ball of thread. "Happily," the beautiful woman hasn't learned much magic yet, so she gets burnt at the stake. Ralph found this a fitting ending for a heretic, and a partially 'happy' ending for a Medieval tale.

What was the woman's heresy? That sex was bad. Something the good fathers definitely did not believe.

The modern scholar Edward Peters says about this attempted seduction:

"The scene which opens the story -- that of a clerk accosting a pretty young girl in the countryside and asking her to make love -- is one familiar to literary critics, if not to historians proper: it is the opening of a *pastourelle*. The form is fixed: first the encounter, then the debate, then the man (or the woman) winning the argument and his (or her) way."

But this is a priest seducing a woman! Obviously priestly seduction had occurred so often, it had turned into a literary convention as well. Nobody thought anything of it anymore. It may at one time have been a shocker, but not in Brother Ralph's time.

So, with morality defended, we leave these Holy men.

My fourth and final piece of hot

rhetoric is the story of the Witch of Berkeley. It is not as perverse as the other stories, but it has a great finale; **The Weekly World News** could not do better. The tale was first written by William of Malmesbury around 1142. He described the Witch as excessively gluttonous, perfectly lascivious, setting no bound to her debaucheries.

One day, she heard a jackdaw chatter a little more loudly than usual. Then she knew she was about to die. So she called her surviving children, a monk and a nun, to come. She said she had depended on their piety to alleviate the punishments she would get for her sins.

Then she told them that while they could not save her soul, she depended on them to save her body. She entreated them to have her buried in a stone coffin, and fasten down the lid with lead and iron. On this they should lay a stone and wrap it in three enormous chains. Also, they should have psalms sung for fifty nights, and masses said for an equal number of days.

If, the Witch said, she remained secure for three nights, they were to bury her on the fourth. She was afraid so great were her sins, the earth would not receive her before then.

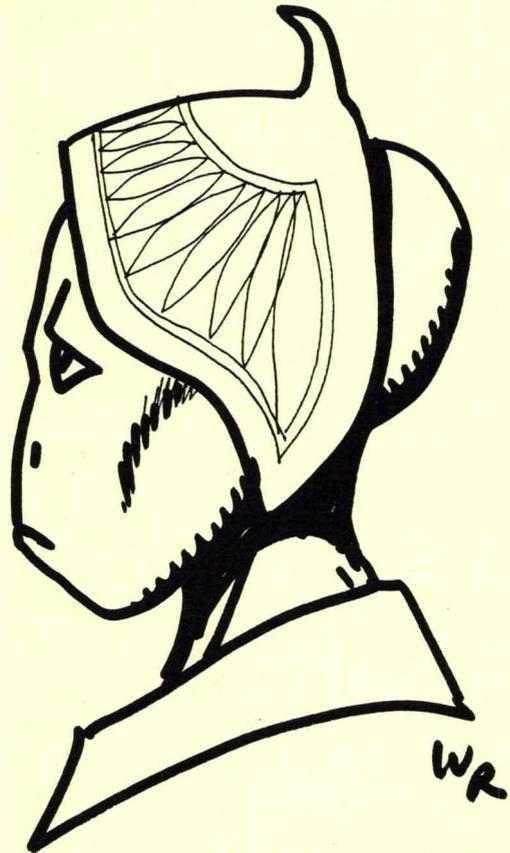
She had other things to worry about, however. Because of them, these preparations were in vain. They did work for the first two nights. Then devils were able to get into the church which had been closed with an immense bolt. And these devils were also able to sunder the two outer chains on her coffin. But the middle one defeated them.

These setbacks were only temporary; the forces of Hell had not used their big gun. The third night, about cock-crow, one enormous devil came. He tore the Church doors to splinters. Then he called to the Witch, and commanded her to get up. She said she couldn't because of her chains, and he said she would be sorry.

He broke the third chain like nothing, and beat down the coffin cover with his foot.

Then he dragged her out of the Church and onto a black horse -- which suddenly appeared. Over its whole back were hooks, the devil placed the Witch on the hooks. And, to her pitiable cries, rode off.

William of Malmesbury says that no one should deny this story. For many had written similar stories before.



illo by *William Rotsler*

OBIT

Space here to name a name I wish I did not have to, that of **Lee Pelton**, of Minneapolis, who has left this mortal coil. I shared some pretty jolly arguments with Lee when we were both in LASFAPA, but always thought him a kind, decent fella and he will be much missed.

Continuing my series on 1969, year of years ...

PEOPLE'S PARK



Charlie Williams

Winter '95

"I was awoken at ten past four this morning. At that time People's Park ... still belonged to the people who had constructed it, and Berkeley was an open city.

"The Park was taken by five, fenced in by noon. At ten PM tonight Berkeley went under something notably resembling martial law.

"Our fathers were honed and tempered for life by a Depression and a World War. It seems as if we are to undergo the same test of fire, tempered by our fathers."

That's an excerpt from my diary, May 15, 1969. I was 20, a boy, in the midst of the year that would start my becoming a man, experiencing the event that would, as much as anything, shape me as a spirit. Guy H. Lillian III, pompous initial and all, already existed, of course, and much of the kid that was already there is still with me. But something new was discovered on May 15, 1969 and in the weeks that followed. It has always been with me. During one of our early meetings, I told my shrink about People's Park. She said it sounded as if I valued the event because, for once, I could Belong, yet be myself as well. Maybe so. Belonging is one of the universal human needs. But if my feelings about People's Park stemmed only from that desire to adopt the protective coloration of the community around me, why was I even more anti-drug at Cal than I am now? Perhaps the excitement of rebellion had me enthralled. It was dangerous out there. The police shotgunned 35 people and killed one, for no other reason than that he got in the way. When you're 19, that sort of madness can be ... delightful.

I should give myself more credit. What I remember -- what comes through the turgid prose of my journal -- is the *calm* at the core of my excitement, terror, thrill. There was defiance and danger, sure. But there was also the sense of being *right*. Of being on the side of decency and justice, terms that were more than vague, comic abstracts in that place and at that time. Of having communion with, in that greatest American phrase, *self-evident truth*, a justice so pure and so simple that I could not imagine it being fairly denied.

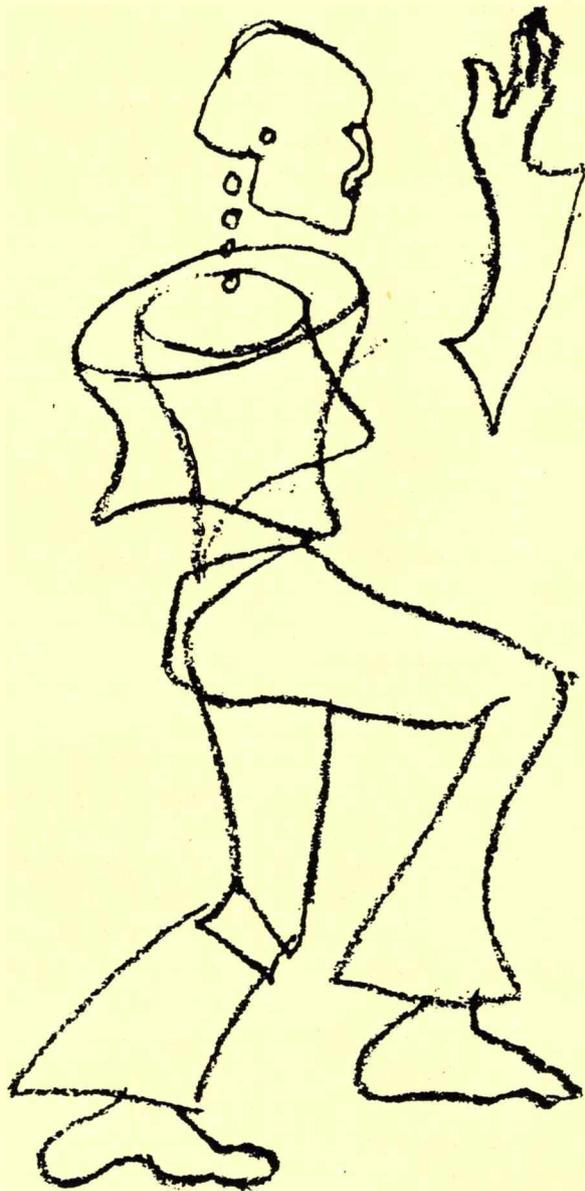
We were right, out there. We were right. People's Park, Berkeley California, May 15, 1969, and the weeks that followed. Twenty-five years ago. The best days of my youth.

By 1969, springtime in Berkeley had come to signal a nice fat round of campus rioting. But in the spring quarter of that year all it seemed to mean was pretty weather and relaxed anticipation of summer. Cal's winter session had seen the campus flooded with tear gas and racial division as the Third World Liberation Front had moved its call for a college devoted to minority studies. The appearance of People's Park seemed to promise a much more constructive and affirmative season.

Charlie Williams' illo for this article is based on a photomontage I picked up sometime in the days of the Park. It shows something of the way it was. A block off Telegraph Avenue, hotbed of Berkeley's street life, and coincidentally a block in the other direction from the highrise dorm where I lived, the University of California bought and razed an acre of land, saying that they intended to use it -- eventually -- as an athletic field. For months the land lay fallow, empty, cluttered with trash.

Then someone -- we don't know who -- began to plant flowers there. Bushes. Put benches down, and swing sets. It became a group project. Spontaneously, in the midst of dormitories, across the street from the university's housing office on one corner, and a beautiful rustic divinity school on the other, a community park began to emerge. Kids

played there. A path was etched through with donated brick. Strips of sod were rolled onto the lifeless hardened clay. Someone brought in hollow plastic hemispheres, just the right size for a kid to sit in and rock. A local radio



station, K N O W, donated enormous wooden letters (God knows where *they* got them) which stood in the corner of the fabulous lot. Someone -- we don't know who -- painted a

sign on rough wood and nailed it to a tree. It read **PEOPLE'S PARK**.

You have to understand the political dynamic of the day. All of California is divided into two parts. (Hmm ... snappy.) Southern California is dry, desert, frenetic, freeway urban, winger. Northern California is lush, wooded, tranquil, pastoral, liberal. Southern California is dominated by Los Angeles. Northern California is centered -- in all ways but geographically -- in San Francisco. In 1969, the major political activity engaged in by Southern Californians was outrage at the "youth movement" echoing out of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury and Bay Area college campuses. It was the height of the '60's, the era of the hippies, **The Berkeley Barb** (I always preferred the **Tribe**), with the Vietnam War in its full sick pitch and the reaction to it angry, angrier, and building. Nixon was President, beginning his slide into the paranoia that would, a year later, kill Schroeder, Scheurer, Miller and Krause at Kent State and, five years later, drive him out of office. In California, Ronald Reagan was Governor, in part because of hostility to the "Filthy Speech Movement" at Berkeley. That was actually the *Free Speech Movement*, which began in 1964 and which convinced me, at 15, that Berkeley just might be a helluva place to go to college.

As you see, I did so, although ahh, Berkeley's unique attractions took their time making an impact. Translation: I resisted drugs and shrouded within me an apprehension over Berkeley's huge population of street people -- runaways, mostly, the detritus of an uncaring and intolerant suburban age. Campus radicals bugged me; they seemed more interested in posture and bullying than in ending the war or achieving racial justice or any of their exemplary stated aims.

I walked through People's Park every day. I was 19, mostly ... inexperienced, shall

we say, uptight, repressed, all the residuum of a suburban boyhood. After the TWLF battles, however, and my first experience with police stupidity and promiscuous brutality, it was good even to my middle American eyes to see a positive and affirmative and beautiful thing come out of Berkeley. I didn't linger there, though. People's Park was beautiful, but it was scary. It was much safer back in the locked-and-bolted confines of my dorm.

But one time I couldn't avoid the real meaning of People's Park. I was walking past, en route to class, and a bearded guy hailed me. He was on his knees, planting shrubs out of nursery cans. He needed a little help planting a tree ...

Well, uh, gee, uhh ... I might be late for class, get grass stains on my slacks ...

Anyway, I helped him bend back the can, put the little shrub, its roots gripped by lush black soil, into the hole he'd dug for it, and tamp the dirt back into place. I remember nothing else about that day ... except that, in the quarter century since, I've become pretty proud of helping that fella plant that one small tree.

It gave me a stake in People's Park.

My roommate's name was Brian Siegel, an actor and overt hippie. T'was he who awoke me at 4 a.m. on May 15, 1969. "They're coming in," he said. For the past few days, the University administration, under the thumb of Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial tyranny, had been making threatening noises against the hippies and revolutionaries camping out on university property. But Cal officials and street people had been communicating very publically, and UC Chancellor Roger Heyns himself had pledged police would come into People's Park "in the middle of the night".

Give "Roger the Dodger" some credit, we said later. When they came, it was well *past* the middle of the night.

It was a downhill block from Griffiths Hall to People's Park. In the darkness a campfire burned, at the bottom of a shallow pit. Angry voices, perplexed voices, argued from the proposed wading pool. (Someone had an idea, and the next moment it had been begun. That had been the nature of People's Park.) The argument? "We've got to *do* something?/What *can* we do?", as every 30 seconds a police car roared down Haste Street, the shadowed face within peering out at us.

What to do? What to *do*? A couple of the braver lads climbed the tall pines in the center of the park; it'd be hours before they were discovered. We could see down Bowditch Street to the University; when they came, they'd come from there. More cop cars gunned past, and again and again the rumor flew: *they're coming*. And finally ...

It was quiet. I remember that silence. The streetlight fell on their bobbing helmets; they looked like blue bubbles flowing together down the street. Then you could hear their boots. In America we were hearing boots.

CHP -- California Highway Patrol. Reagan was leading off with his best troops. They moved in quickly, cutting off the corners, emptying the Park. We faded back to face them across the street, a no-man's-land of asphalt. Quickly done. "Please go home," one officer intoned. And some brave fool, awoken to self-evident truth on the morning of this bloody Thursday, replied, "This *is* my home."

That was me.

For the next couple of hours we stood across from People's Park and watched Reagan's troopers do their thing. I remember a squad of Highway Patrolmen -- or Berkeley cops, perhaps -- clambering into the tower of that lovely divinity school after God knows what and God knows who. I remember the commotion when the cops finally found the dudes who had hidden up the pines. They took him off to cheers. I remember, and am

still astonished by, a very small young woman who came up to the police line, leading her two children: small children, clad like urchins in the style of the day. She attempted to take her toddlers across the street, over to their playground. But the CHP line closed in front of them, and while one cop pleaded with her and another squawked, red-faced, a third cold-faced thug unsheathed and held ready his billy club. "Fair's fair," I shouted. "It's three against three!" She didn't get across.

They brought in a bulldozer with a fat, frightened hardhat (non-union, we were told later) at the controls, and he roared about the edge of the park, ripping up bushes and bashing the giant K N O W letters out of the way. A girl wept behind me. A few quick postholes were dug and what came to be known as The Fence began to rise. How much hatred was directed in subsequent months at that cyclone fence? An asshole waved wirecutters at the cops. "Go ahead," I told him. "There's the fence; go ahead!" This was too important a day for such posturing. The Fence, while we watched, was finished.

I went back to bed.

And because I was in bed, I was not there when Dan Siegel, Student Body President, led a quiet march towards People's Park from Sproul Plaza on the Berkeley campus. I wasn't there when the Alameda County Sheriff's Deputies, the redneck brutes known with no affection whatsoever as The Blue Meanies, opened fire on the march, first with tear gas, then with birdshot, then, for God knows what sick reason, with buckshot. I was a block away, eyes smarting from the CN fog rising above Telegraph Avenue, naive in my belief that the **boom - boom - boom** I was hearing came from the explosion of tear gas canisters, and not shotgun blasts.

Yeah, I was a block away, walking towards the campus, a skinny Middle American zero behind hornrimmed glasses, a scared kid not particularly scared today, a kid

becoming not-a-kid-anymore in the glare of self-evident truth, at the moment the Alameda deputies took their infamous walk up Telegraph. Someone dropped a beer can into the street. They whirled and fired wildly at the rooftops. They blinded an artist named Alan Blanchard. They gutted -- killed -- a guy from southern California named James Rector, whose only crime had been to stand where one of them could see.

(They say that as Rector lay there in agony, two Berkeley police climbed up to the rooftop. People asked them to get help. "That's what you get for screwing around," they replied, and left.)

The deputies shot 35 people that day. That night Berkeley went under martial law. The air was rank with acid. Cops everywhere. Daring death -- or at least arrest -- I went out driving with Steve Elgar, a pretentious Jewish kid from New York City, who lived on my dorm floor. We bought potables. When we returned, I wrote in my diary about how it felt to be under siege.

On Friday, May 16, the National Guard moved in. For a time we felt this was good, because we had a rapport with them, "clerks and typists" of their division, many of them students from San Jose State out to beat the draft. There was a night curfew, but before sundown students sat and rapped with their khaki contemporaries, and after dark we pointed speakers out the window and broadcast rock music, and some bopped in their boots. We grew used to seeing Guardsmen flash surreptitious "V" signs behind the backs of officers, and one time provided loud support when one of the weekend Pattons bawled out a guy for saluting us at our dorm window. True, a squad had careened onto the campus in a jeep on May 15th, spewing CS "peppergas". But when those bozos tried to *drill ... well*, the pandemonium that resulted was too comic for us to think of them as any

enemy. I went back to what was, for me, a normal life: lectures from the brilliant Mark Schorer, moping over the redheaded Jerrell; such was Friday.

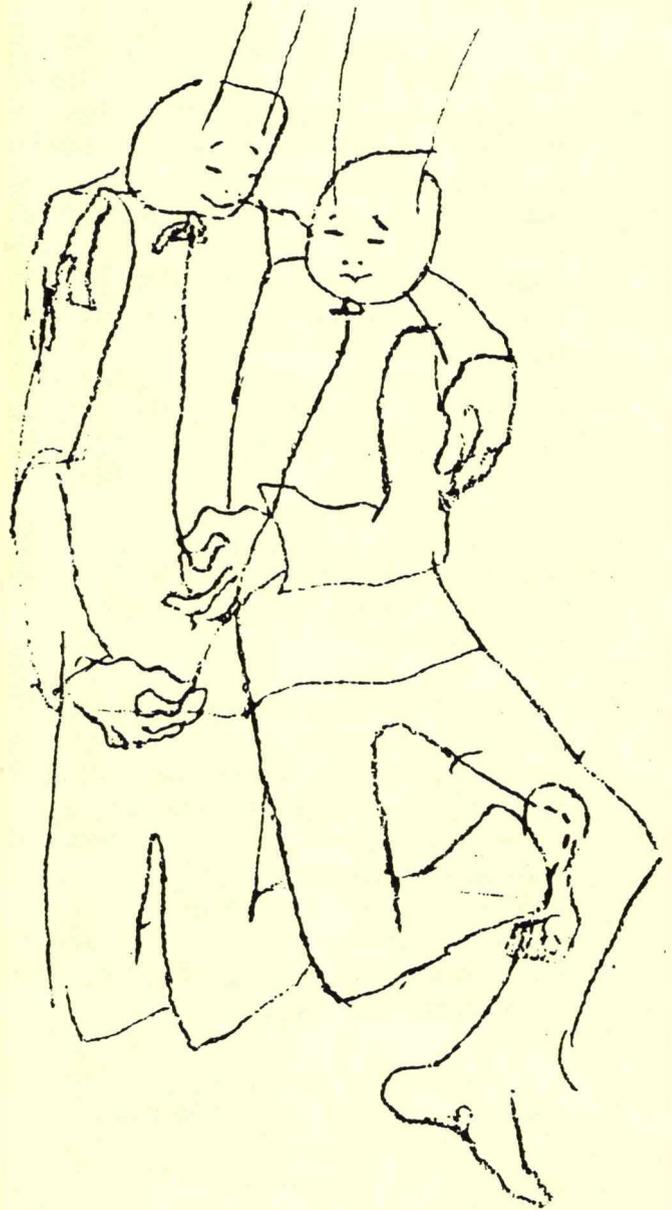
But for all the normalcy, it was a day of shock in Berkeley. Everyone was astonished at what had befallen us. Tom Collins, editor of *The Daily Californian* (and a fan, I found later), wrote a splendid editorial. A few cops chased a group of us -- me included, this time -- down Telegraph, clubs swinging. One calm voice on a bullhorn would have cleared the street as easily, if that is what they really wanted. Hysterical with worry, my parents called; I don't blame them now but I didn't need it then. Apollo 10 launched for the moon. Such was the weekend.

Quiet -- but tense, very tense. On Monday, coming home from class, I walked through a herd of Highway Patrolmen gathered on the campus' edge. They were taut as guitar strings ready to be strummed; one whacked his billy club again and again on the grill of his car, drumming up his battle blood. We exchanged a glance; I wanted to see into his eye. He looked away before I could tell what was there. For days we'd endured overflights of gnat-like "pork-choppers" that had been filling the air (and wrecking my nerves) with their drone. Now a bigger helicopter, a huge National Guard monstrosity, divebombed Sproul Plaza with tear gas. It blew into the campus hospital and forced one patient into an iron lung.

Some distance from campus a whole streetful of Americans were prodded by Guard bayonets into an empty cul-de-sac on Shattuck Avenue. People I knew were among them; my dorm-mate Edmundo escaped only because a local businessman let people escape through his basement. Those not so lucky were beaten, arrested, hauled out to Alameda County's Santa Rita prison farm, forced to lay face down on gravel for hours on end, allowed to turn their heads once an hour. Anyone giving

the deputies any lip were made to lean their heads against poles driven into the ground, which the cops whacked with their riot sticks.

The night at Santa Rita became the



most infamous incident to come out People's Park -- a *Life* article and several federal indictments came out of it. Although I need not tell you how those worked out. The cop

who killed Rector was brought to trial and totally exonerated. The cop who shot Blanchard was brought to trial and totally exonerated. The guards at Santa Rita were all totally exonerated. They were all totally exonerated.

On May 21st, the cops invaded my dorm. Music from the 6th floor was too loud for their tastes. It was only 7PM, far too early for what we called Quiet Hours, and nobody knew who sicced them on. Unis -- university cops -- they stampeded up the stairs, silenced the stereos, broke into rooms and tore down anti-cop signs hung in the windows, descended to a furious crowd and chants: "PIGS! PIGS! PIGS!" The cops fled.

A spontaneous street festival erupted. Frisbees flew. A jumprope flipped. And then the Blue Meanies roared in. I watched from my third floor window. Clubs whipped "in private arbitrary orbits." A camera was smashed from a student's hands. (His pictures might not have survived anyway. We'd been told local photo outlets were destroying pictures of cops in action.)

That night the dorm protested. Speakers were hauled to the windows. The **William Tell Overture** blammed out at full volume, at midnight. On the balconies people beat trashcans against the railings, in solidarity, one with the other. *One-two, one-two-three, one-two-three-four!* Dormies ... left of fraternities, we were the most complacent and middleclass clowns at Cal. And yet there we were, beating out our ragged chant. It had come home to us. Clapping.

Something happened on May 21, 1969 that I did not see. I wish I had.

There was a march, by students, street people, on the residence of the gutless Chancellor, a pretty, high-storied house on the opposite side of the campus from People's Park. Cops and Guardsmen rushed there and surrounded the house, gasmasks on, ready for a fight. But when the march reached the

house, the people found a hill overlooking the troops, sat down, and began to sing. They sang movement songs like "We Shall Overcome." And they began to talk to their brothers in the National Guard.

It was very simple, what they called to them. They called, "Take off your masks! Take off your masks! You are men, not machines! You are not our enemies. You are our brothers. Take off your masks!"

There's film of it that I saw later on television. I pray to God it survives. It shows the first Guardsman reaching up to his face and, with infinite weariness, removing his helmet, and with infinite sadness, pulling the gasmask from his face. He is young, crewcut, blond. He is weeping. He puts the mask into its pouch on his belt, so slowly, and so tired, and then he replaces his helmet and he stands there, at his post, tears streaming down his handsome young face. An officer runs up, or maybe it's a cop, screaming at the guy to put his mask back on. But the Guardsman just stands there and looks at the man as if he's speaking Martian.

All down the picket line gasmasks start hitting the ground.

That night I wrote in my diary, "We're going to win this thing. Reagan will be re-elected and [Sheriff] Madigan will still strut. But their time is limited in this life. What [we] saw today is forever. We're gonna win."

Two weeks after the assault on People's Park and the murder of James Rector, the streets of Berkeley began to fill with people. For May 30th a march was planned. Counterculture kids from everywhere under the sun came in. No one knew what would happen, but everyone expected blood. There was anticipation and excitement as well as dread. Thirty thousand people would be marching, we were told. *Thirty thousand.*

Both sides prepared. The student/street community was advised to fly kites -- with piano wire, the better to snarl and foul helicopter rotors. In the outside world, the copter gassing of Sproul Plaza was earning

shock, not the bland approval Reaganites expected, but there was no indication such an assault wouldn't be tried again. A rumor danced through the crowd that the Fence around People's Park -- already an icon of evil to the people of Berkeley -- had been electrified. When a black friend and I sallied forth from our dorm that Friday morning, we found thick rolls of barbed wire on every corner surrounding the Park.

We skirted the campus to meet the March near the vacant lot they'd dubbed "People's Park II". We met the March just as it got underway. In the forefront, *hrumming* motorcycles, fifty at least, flashed chrome and revved forth choking clouds of exhaust. Behind this line, a thousand thousand Berkeley people, street kids, students, and at least one of my English professors. Slowly but impressively, the March moved forward.

The sky was filled with helicopters and planes. The massive "pork chopper" that had divebombed Sproul Plaza chuggachugged in the distance, hovering like a single scout locust. But few cops were visible until the March reached Dwight Way, the street on which People's Park grew. Then they began to appear, sitting nervously in patrolcars, helmeted heads peeking over rooftops. Heat in the heat, for it had become a blisteringly warm day.

We reached the corner of Dwight Way and Bowditch. The Park within its Fence was filled with National Guard. A suspicious cord snaked up to the Fence ... but that didn't stop the people. They covered the Fence ... with flowers.

Instead of blood on the streets this hot May day, the people of Berkeley rolled out sod and grass: instant lawn. Instead of peppergas sprayed from the back of a jeep, rock music crackled forth from the back of a slow-moving truck. In answer to their flak jackets, cops looked on embarrassed and fascinated at the painful beauty of street girls naked to the waist. (I'm afraid we all gawked. One guy, spying a lovely half-nude lady seated on the turf, threw himself onto the ground near her

and snapped photos so recklessly she threatened to don her shirt again. *I* took only *one* picture.) The Fence -- barbed wire -- entwined with flowers. It was spontaneous and it was unexpected, this answer of the people of Berkeley, the creators of People's Park, to the brutality and the cynicism that had taken it from them. It astonished me then and it astonishes me now, that the answer our brethren gave to gas and terror was that most delicate of symbols: flowers. Instead of blood ... there was brotherhood.

I was loafing amidst those thirty thousand souls when, suddenly, *she* was there. A lacy white dress over black dance tights, a wilted flower between her breasts, and that fabulous, wonderful, absolute dream that was her red, red hair. She wore huge-lensed sunglasses and, in a photo I took of her that moment she recognized me, a little smile.

Her name was Jerrell. She looked a little like Susan Hayward and a lot like Samantha Eggar. Her hair had that off-coppery tone that shines like fire in the sun, and her hidden eyes were green. I'd known her through high school, alternately amused and friendly, or haughty and aloof. No adolescent male could have had a more terrible or more glorious fantasy feast than watching her strut down a hallway in her phony white fur coat. Berkeley had changed her much more quickly and much more dramatically than it ever would me; she'd become a dance student and discovered the musty glories of marijuana. There was a tremendous gap between us, but ... here we were, on the same street, under the same guns, beside the same Park.

We sat down on the exposed roots of a tree across from my dorm. A band was playing. Hairy knees danced all around us. Jerrell shook and nodded her head in time. I watched her move to the music, and she saw me watching, a kooky loudmouth pest from high school, and for some reason she smiled. I touched her hand. She wasn't *quite*

surprised.

Were this the People's Park story of my dreams, of course, the touching would not have stopped there. In a way it didn't. Jerrell lifted her eyes from our hands where they touched and asked me if I had any friends -- an close friends, people with whom I could really talk. Then as now I had to admit that no, I didn't. I could have gone on: it was difficult for me to open myself to others; cruelty and suspicion had driven me inside, and only a caricature dared show its face. When that changes, she said, she wanted to talk with me about what had gone on here, about herself and ourselves and what we had lived through.

It was a challenge, I think. **Come find me when you're willing to do that; when you're willing to do that, come find me.** And then she was gone.

I wandered about in the throng. Berkeley cops laughed on the streetcorners, flowers wound through their hair. Still toting their shotguns, as if that proved anything, Alameda deputies smirked behind their barricades, completely ignored. In the center of Haste Street a vast carpet of streetpeople fused into a chanting mass. "Ommmmmmmm ..." That night, elsewhere in the city, there was an enormous bacchanalia. Jerrell was there and told me her feet got stomped on. Me, I stayed home and wrote an English paper. And a journal entry about a day that still teaches me things.

One photograph I took that day: a roll of barbed wire sits like tumbleweed across an intersection. A Guardsman stands at attention a few steps behind it. In front of the wire a hippy kid looks on, his head bound in a red kerchief. The barbed wire is covered with flowers and draped in an American flag. On the back of the photo I wrote "People's Park, May 30 1969. Barbed wire by the National Guard. Flowers by the people of Berkeley. It's a common flag."

Blood had been shed over People's Park, and that made the area surrounded by Dwight Way, Haste and Bowditch as holy a place as Berkeley could have. For years it was sacrosanct. The University replaced the Fence with a stronger model. Fine green grass was sown there, which grew verdant and pleasant. But few were the footsteps felt by that grass; it was an unwritten Law of Berkeley life that no matter how the University prettified People's Park, no student would touch it. Nor would we use the parking lots set up first at opposite ends of the Park. People who did were reproached, even vilified as "scabs."

I was no different. By now I was in the far less constricted, shall we say, environs of the Barrington Hall co-op. I had discovered the twin wonders of *women* and *fanzines*. The Park saga gripped me as had no other event in my life. One time I caught myself carrying an egg up to the scab parking lot, intending to dash it against an offending windshield. When I came to my senses, I carefully returned the ovoid to the Barrington kitchen. But I did argue with people parking there. On one occasion Tom Collins -- then editor of *The Daily Californian*, later my New York roomie and fan editor of *Apollo* -- talked a nice foreign couple out of using it. I wasn't so successful with a black-suited yuppie (the type was true before the word was coined) I met there after a Stanford game, but the conversation did give me a frightening insight into the icebox that was the middle American heart. "I want my government to *fight* for its property," he proclaimed. "Helluva thing to die for, huh?" he sneered, when I told him how it had. No wonder Ronald Reagan became President.

But the general fervor matched mine. After I graduated, and moved South, People's Park remained a battlefield in the people's war against arbitrary authority. One day, some fifteen years ago, the pavement on the parking lots was literally torn from the ground by angry

citizens wielding picks and sledgehammers. The only other word I had of the Park in the years I was away was a disparaging portrait in a detective novel somebody leant me.

Then I went back and saw for myself.

The occasion was Confrancisco, the '93 Worldcon. Leaving the convention at about noon that Labor Day, I crossed the Bay Bridge into Berkeley, and began exploring my old home by auto. Seldom before had I driven its streets. Avenues which seemed endless when I was a footsore youth became quick traverses behind the wheel of my noble Geo Metro. I found Barrington Hall, now called Huddlestone, fully refurbished and protected behind a locked fence. I found Cloyne Court, the ramshackle northside co-op, and found it even more ramshackle than before. I found Griffiths Hall, the sterile highrise where I'd lived in May, 1969 ... still there, still sterile. I thought of seeking Jerrell, but decided to leave well enough alone.

Because I did find People's Park.

Should you follow me there, here's what you'll find. At the west end of the Park, towards Telegraph Avenue, you will find truck gardens and neat paths. On the Haste side of the block is a clothes bin and a basketball court, on the Dwight Way side a brand new volleyball court with obscenities chalked onto every available surface. East of that, in the area where Tom and I had argued with the foreign couple, where the fire pit had been dug, is an overgrown place now, almost a forest, and amongst the young trees and brush you will find flattened cardboard boxes with the homeless sleeping on them. They gather on benches about weed-swamped paths, and talk, and as I stood there, the day after Confederation, one of them walked past me, and I called to her. *Hey, come take my picture.* She came when I offered her a dollar.

Her name was C.C. and she wore blue jeans and a blue sweatshirt and blue

houseslippers. Her face was puffy but she had a prettiness to her, and after she took my picture and I took hers, with People's Park as a backdrop, we walked around the Park, as it is today.

C.C. had quite a story to tell. Her husband was a Vietnam veteran and he'd split on her and her kids, and the government had goddamn it taken her kids, and was trying to make her into a *legal drug addict* by feeding her thorazine and so what if they sold a little grass around there, they had to live didn't they? and the people who lived in the Park were "copacetic" with the basketball court but the volleyball was *bullshit*, man, because, because, because this place is *holy ground*, man ... *this place is holy ground.*

I know, I told her. I was here. She had no idea what I meant.

I gave C.C. some money and she said "Thanks, brother," and was off, and so was I. "Helluva thing to die for, huh?" "This place is holy ground." I drove away and thought long and thought hard about what People's Park meant to me.

Big words came to mind. Lessons. Community. Creativity. Justice. Brutality. Tolerance. And now ... Pity.

There are places on Earth where I am forever home. The Watts Towers in Los Angeles, and the Three Sisters Islands above Niagara Falls. The field at Gettysburg. And People's Park. Holy ground.



*Huntsvillean and Baen editor Toni -- excuse me -- T.K.F. Weisskopf won two awards at the 1994 DeepSouthCon: the **Phoenix**, reflecting Southern pride in one of our most accomplished professionals to emerge recently from our region, and the **Rubble**, so she wouldn't get a swelled head about it. Impossible for "yunge Toni"! She tells me the following was prepared as her "Editor Guest of Honor" speech for Galaxy Fair in Dallas. "I only delivered the first three paragraphs -- they didn't have long speeches at that convention! So this is its first appearance anywhere!"*

"THIS IS SO COOL!"

Toni Weisskopf

Thanks to Teresa Patterson, our convention chair, and all her committee for making me feel so welcome! This is the first time I've ever been one of the guests of honor! It's really a wonderful feeling being up here, and being honored like this. In fact, the way I feel reminds me of that Budweiser commercial that's been playing so much recently.

You know the one where the little guy is in a limousine for the first time and he's playing with all the buttons and gadgets and making the windows go up and down and generally having a great time. He says "This is so *cool*." That's exactly what I feel, being editor guest of honor at such a fine convention!

In fact, that's sometimes how I feel about being an editor. Sometimes my job is so *cool*. It's more than just a job for me, of course. I'm a science fiction *fan* as well as filthy pro. And being both, the fannish side of me would like to share with you all some of the parts of my job that I've found to be so *cool*. (Feel free to help me with the cools--you'll see your part as it goes by....)

Also, even with the lovely introduction from [Toastmaster] Bob Asprin, I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself and about my fannish career because, basically, being a book editor is not a terribly high profile job. Many of you might not have any idea who it is standing up here talking at you, let alone know what it is I've done to be here.

After all, you can see what an author's accomplished: her name is on the front of the book, and if you read the book you will know if she is any good. And you can expect an author will be able to write a speech just as easily and naturally as write a book. But I'm not so sure actually *witnessing* editing would be as entertaining as reading a good book! So instead of going step by step over all the nitty gritty details of editing, I'll try to give you a little background, and share with you some of the more glamorous moments in an editor's life.

But before all the glamour, comes fandom.

For me, despite the fact that I had been reading SF for several years, I didn't become a *fan* until I went to my first con. It was MidSouthCon in Huntsville, Alabama about fifteen years

ago. I didn't have a driver's license at the time, but I had somehow managed to convince my parents that this was a *literary* event I was going to and that they should be honored to chauffeur me to and from such an educational thing. They agreed--providing I was home by eleven each night.

Despite curfew and the limited amount of time to get into trouble, I did manage to get quite an education in fandom at that convention. I was introduced to the Guest of Honor, Frederik Pohl, and got him to sign my copy of his memoirs. I had a drink with the toastmaster, Bob Tucker--and it was smooth; and I got to see the fan guest of honor, Jack Chalker, at work running the art auction with his usual brio and zest. And I thought all of that was very *cool*.

Frederik Pohl in particular has always been an inspiration to me: he was editing professional magazines before he was out of his teens. And now, years later, I've gotten to work on a brand new novel of his! And this, too, was very *cool*. As it happens, during my tenure, Baen has published novels by *all* of the people who were guests at that convention!

But it wasn't just pros I got to meet over that weekend: I met lots of friendly fans at that MidSouthCon, too--including a bunch of guys from Tuscaloosa who lured me to their room by promises of showing me their fanzines -- and lo and behold, there were indeed fanzines there, *mimeographed* fanzines -- and they were pretty good. It turned out what they wanted more than anything else was to get people to write them LOCS! Now that's what I call *trufans!*

The last thing I did at the convention, after singing Tom Lehrer's "Masochism Tango" with the crowd at the dead dog party, was to sign up for the first meeting of the North Alabama SF Association. Fifteen years later, NASFA is still going strong, holding a convention every year, turning out a clubzine every month--and I am terribly proud to have been a charter member of that organization.

I became quite active in fandom after that, doing everything from working on conventions, to writing reviews for fanzines, to sending LOCS to *Asimov's* -- several of which got published, I might add, while I was still in high school. When I went to college, I became president of my college SF club and helped to give birth to that club's fanzine. And at some point in college I realized -- probably after I had helped design a couple of short courses in science fiction, and slept through a class in medieval philosophy--that what I really wanted to do was not spend my life debating the ideas of dead, deranged medieval monks, but become an editor of SF. I thought that would be so *cool*.

And then I became an editorial assistant. And I learned many things. I learned how to work the office copier. I learned how to answer the phone. I learned how to get rid of telephone salesmen. I learned how to file. This was **not** *cool*.

But there was *one* incredibly neat thing that happened to me because I was an editorial assistant at the right time and the right place: my publisher arranged for me to talk to Robert Heinlein on the phone. And Mr. Heinlein was very sweet to an incredibly awed neo-pro who could barely stammer out the words, "Gee I think you're really *cool*." I almost fainted when I hung up the phone. I had gotten to talk to an idol of mine one to one. It was fantastic.

And later, after Mr. Heinlein had died, I was able to take part in publishing a Heinlein first edition. It was nonfiction, but it was pure Heinlein all the way. The title is **Take Back Your Government**, and it's a nonpartisan guidebook for the common person who wants a practical manual for changing the world. As with all of Heinlein's work, it's inspiring.

In fact, I'd like to see *all* SF fans read it and become involved in local politics. As fans, we've had an incredible amount of practical experience organizing things, running conventions, writing up charters, applying for nonprofit status, running herd on club meetings: I'd like to see us apply some of those skills to the real world. I'd like to see a few more SF fans on PTA boards, city councils, and in state government. And then let's see how many books get banned, how many taxes get raised, how many freedoms are abridged!

But enough rabble rousing: to return to *cool* ...

In the fullness of time, I became an editor, the kind who actually gets to talk to authors on a regular basis and who is expected to read things not xerox them. Nevertheless, even now most of my day is not spent lazing around with my feet up, reading skiffy stories. Instead I seem to spend all too much time shuffling papers, just like any other mid-level manager running a business.

I do, somehow, find time to read manuscripts; sometimes I even find the time to call the authors and comment on them -- as a few of the people here in the audience can attest. Hi, David! Hi, Margaret! Hi, Mark! Hi, Jason! (And Jason knows I'll work on the weekends and evenings, too, don't you Jason!) Hi, Elizabeth! Hi, Jody! Hi, Harry!

And that part is definitely *cool*. Getting to work with intelligent, passionate, eloquent people on a regular basis is a great thing. Even debating the relative merits of the Braves (boo) versus the Yankees (yea!), in between wrestling bouts over names for the goddess of beauty--with an author I respect--is pretty cool. Right, David? [*That's David Weber -- Author GoH at the convention.*]

I'll leave you with one last episode that's made me feel really lucky to be an editor. For me, this illustrates one of the things that makes our genre different from all the others--the close and intense interaction between readers, and writers, and editors.

Back in the early '80s, when I was a "mere" reader, there were two series of stories being published in the magazines that I thought were not only great fun, but that also indicated a truly unique voice in science fiction was out there, stretching the genre. One series was alternate history, featuring a Byzantine detective named Basil Argyros. These stories were by Harry Turtledove, your author guest of honor. And boy was I right, has he gone on to do neat things in the field! Recently, we at Baen were able to reprint those stories in a new expanded edition of **Agent of Byzantium**. And this was *cool*.

The other series were vampire stories--but they weren't horror. They were wonderfully detailed science fiction, explaining the vampire phenomenon as a separate race, barely surviving undercover on the Russian steppes. The stories were full of accurate bits of history, horselore and music, and even speculative biology--all the loves of the author were clearly coming into play and were integrated into a compelling vision. I was charmed. And then suddenly the stories stopped coming.

When I first came to Baen, and was looking for new authors to introduce, I tried to find out if there were enough stories about these vampires to make a full volume, and to track down the author and get her to do more, if not. Well, as it happened, there wasn't quite enough material to make a full book. And the author, whose name was Susan Petrey, had died, untimely young.

And that's where the matter rested, until I noticed that a fan group out in Oregon had put together a complete volume of her short stories in hardcover! Now, how could they do that when I couldn't, I wondered? It turned out that she had left a story or two about the vampires unsold, and one or two unfinished. When Steve Perry very ably finished those fragments, there was just enough to make a book! I was able to obtain the paperback rights to **Gifts of Blood** for Baen, and finally got to publish someone I had admired for years.

Which was *cool*.

But my publisher gave me another chance to share Susan Petrey's vampires with a few more people. He encouraged me to sit down and edit a volume I had been toying with for years: the definitive collection of *science fiction* vampire stories. With vampire expert Greg Cox, I am the proud editor of ... **Tomorrow Sucks**, due out in October 1994 from Baen. Feel free to blame the title on your publisher guest of honor, Jim Baen himself. To be fair, he didn't come up with the title, but we were -- or *thought* we were -- KIDDING!

So finally, after years of laboring in obscurity, I, too, shall have my name on the front cover of a book. And that's pretty darn *cool*.

Thanks so much for inviting me here to Texas -- I think all of you are *cool*, too!

Challenger no. 2

In which our resident postal worker examines one of the modern world's strangest congruences ...

THE "AL" SIDE

Alan Hutchinson

Berserk mailmen and crazed pachyderms -- random tragedies or more than just coincidence? Tonight on **Insight** we will delve into the similarities between **postal violence and death by elephant**.

On Thursday, May 6th, the two most recent post office shootings occurred, leaving three dead in their aftermaths. Just the day before, an elephant inexplicably went berserk and crushed Ringling Brothers and

Other postal shootings

- **Aug. 19, 1983:** Perry B. Smith charged into the Johnston, S.C., post office with a shotgun and began firing at workers who fled the building. Smith followed them outside, wounding two and killing the local postmaster. Smith had resigned three months earlier after 25 years as a postal worker.
- **Dec. 2, 1983:** James Howard Brooks walked into the office of the Anniston, Ala., postmaster, shot him dead, then wounded another supervisor. Brooks had been involved in a dispute with his supervisors.
- **March 6, 1985:** Steven W. Brownlee, who had worked for the postal service for 12 years, opened fire in a mail sorting area of the main Atlanta post office, killing two fellow employees and wounding a third.
- **May 31, 1985:** Joseph Medina entered a New York City post office, pulled a rifle from a mailbag and aimed it at a supervisor. Another postal worker who came to the supervisor's aid was shot in the stomach. Medina, a letter sorter who had been suspended several times, held the supervisor hostage for another two hours before surrendering.
- **Aug. 20, 1986:** Patrick Henry Sherrill, a part-time letter carrier in Edmond, Okla., killed 14 people in the post office there before taking his own life. Sherrill had a history of work problems and faced the possibility of being fired.
- **Dec. 14, 1988:** Warren Murphy, a postal worker in New Orleans, shot and wounded three people and held his girlfriend hostage for almost 13 hours before surrendering.
- **Aug. 10, 1989:** John Merlin Taylor of Escondido, Calif., shot his wife to death in their home and then drove to work at the Orange Glenn post office, where he shot and killed two colleagues and wounded another before killing himself.
- **Oct. 10, 1991** — Joseph M. Harris, a fired postal worker, killed a former supervisor and her boyfriend at their home in Wayne, N.J., then went to the Ridgewood post office where he killed two mail handlers as they arrived for work. He surrendered after a 4½-hour standoff.
- **Nov. 14, 1991:** Thomas McIlvane, a fired postal worker who colleagues said had vowed revenge on his superiors, opened fire at his former post office in Royal Oak, Mich., killing four supervisors and wounding five employees. McIlvane then killed himself with his rifle.

Elephant incidents in recent years

Several elephant-related deaths and accidents have occurred in the United States in recent years, many in Florida because of its tourist attractions and winter training sites for circuses and animal acts.

- A July 1987 performance of the Great American Circus in Milwaukee was halted after an elephant named Irene broke from its trainer and injured two children riding on its back.

- A runaway elephant named Kelly crashed through a crowded Fort Myers fair midway in February 1989, sending eight people to local hospitals with wrenched backs and burns from hot grease sent flying from overturned food stands.

- Also in February 1989, a handler at Busch Gardens in Tampa slipped to the ground while taking a male Asian elephant named Casey from one section of the park to another. Witnesses said the elephant put its head on the man's chest for about five seconds, crushing him to death.

- In March 1990, the handler of an elephant at Lion Country Safari climbed under his truck trying to avoid the rampaging animal, but the elephant used its trunk to grab the man's leg, dragged him out and gored him with its tusks. The handler suffered five crushed ribs and a ruptured liver. He later died.

- In June 1990, an elephant performing with the Hanneford Family Circus in Fort Lauderdale kicked and sat on its handler, crushing the man to death.

- That same month, an elephant working with the Great American Circus in Reading, Pa., attacked its trainer and charged a crowd of about 1,000 people.

- Another performance of the Great American Circus ended in February 1992, this time in Palm Bay, after an Asian elephant named Janet Kelly charged through the crowd, injuring 12 spectators. The animal's trainer and an off-duty police officer pumped dozens of shots into the animal before it finally died.



Barnum & Bailey trainer Axel Gauthier beneath its webbed feet. The research staff of **Insight** has spared no expense in uncovering details of the rash of postal and pachydermal violence that has terrorized the country. Below are listed only the most recent incidents but they are ample proof that there is more to this than meets the eye.

According to experts in a recent AP-NY wire story, a stifling military style of management still exists in the circus. "Barnum & Bailey should give elephants more power, let them work with less supervision and deal more quickly with their complaints," said Gwen Stern, director of research and animal development in the Chicago office of the Wyatt Company, a consulting firm. "Today's animals are not willing to just take orders. They expect to be part of the decisions; they expect a more empowered job." Experts further state that the circus trainer is quick to find fault with an animal's performance but slow to address its grievances.

On the other hand, the problem with

the post office is that employees just don't get enough peanuts.

But, experts agree, it takes more than just insensitivity and legume deficiency to trigger armed violence. Our staff spent lunch hour after lunch hour wracking their brains to find a connection between the circus and the Post Office, other than a simple infestation of clowns in both, and in a surprise announcement just yesterday, revealed their findings. The common denominator between elephants and postal workers appears to be extraordinarily good memory. The tiniest slight, the most random insult and the slightest incidence of harassment are all forever stored in the brains of elephants and mailmen, building upon one another until the boiling point is reached and someone is stepped on. This discovery is certain to be a cause for concern for residents in those portions of the country which already employ elephants to deliver the mail.

Challenger no. 2

Every lawyer wonders how he would fare facing the profession's ultimate challenge. Here's how I handled

MY FIRST FIRST DEGREE

"We the jury find the defendant guilty of first degree murder."

When the panel of twelve citizens filed back into the courtroom, I knew we were in trouble. Their eyes were downcast, their expressions solemn. It had already been a long week. Now I would be coming back the next day, to argue for the life of my client, Victor. I was ready.

I

Surely you understand the impulses of a green lawyer. I'd been two years at public defending, handled two aggravated rape cases and two second degree murders, and everything less. Perversely, I wanted to delve into the only thing which matters more than a mandatory life sentence: the possibility of execution.

A death case is the Real Thing. I wanted the Real Thing. Why become a criminal defense lawyer unless you rack it up against the Real Thing? So I was handed Victor.

Victor was a 22-year-old black man accused of raping, strangling and raping, in that order, a girl from his 'hood. As her death involved an aggravated rape, as we define the crime here in Louisiana, the crime was La. R.S. 14:30 ... First Degree Murder. The death penalty was a possibility.

Capital trials in Louisiana, as in many other states, are *bifurcated*, split into two procedures. In the first, the jury determines if the defendant is guilty, and of what. I was assigned to the second phase of the proceeding, the Penalty Phase. There, the question would be whether his punishment would be life imprisonment without parole probation or suspension of sentence, or The Needle. Death by lethal injection.

As of this writing, lethal injection has been used only once in Louisiana, but has been very popular elsewhere. The state of Illinois utilized it to dispatch John Wayne Gacy to his reward last spring, for instance. Here, the death table is shaped like an arrow. An arm is strapped down along each prong. Through I.V. tubes three chemical compounds are introduced into the condemned: sodium pentathol, which knocks him unconscious, pancuronium bromide, which stops his breathing, and potassium chloride, which stops his heart. I understand one or two prisoners have gone into violent convulsions during the process, but Louisiana's sole experiment with the mechanism went, they say, swimmingly. My job would be to see that Victor's progress to the arrow-shaped table would *not* go swimmingly.

There are two fundamental issues in death penalty cases: *Aggravation* and *Mitigation*. The D.A. cites aggravating circumstances to prove to the jury that the crime was especially awful and they *may* consider needling the defendant. Mitigating circumstances are brought forth by the defense team. By law, these facts *must* be considered by the jury before they make their call.

Those facts: Victor lived in an all-black housing tract across the river from New Orleans, with his mother, grandmother, and two retarded brothers. For his neighborhood,

he had lived a normal life ... which is to say, he was neglected by his alcoholic mother, became a troublemaker in school, was sent first to residential counseling programs, then to the state reform school, the Louisiana Training Institute and heavy psychiatric counseling. He spent time at the local Charity Hospital for an O.D.

He hung with the local drug dealer, Ronald, and ran with the junkies and sellers and thugs and hookers who cling to such vermin. One girl of that number we shall call Lottie. She and Victor had known each other since childhood. According to Victor's granny, they liked each other and Lottie relied on Victor to keep the other boys off of her.

There came a rainy night in 1992.

Victor was arrested the next day. Ronald had turned him in. Ronald and his wife claimed they'd seen the entire event from their bedroom window, before going to sleep. Victor also gave a statement, a statement that was remarkably lucid despite his having finished off a clicker before the cops picked him up. He told all about how he'd been with some friends shooting baskets and smoking clickers -- reefers soaked in either formaldehyde or laced with PCP. He started home in the dark. He saw Lottie on the corner. Lottie owed him \$210 for cocaine. He confronted her about the debt. They agreed -- he said -- to trade off some of the debt with sexual favors. Just so she wouldn't run off on him, you understand, he wrapped his arm around her throat. Whether he dragged her behind the abandoned house or she came willingly was a matter of question.

Anyway, there were photographs of what Victor left behind. The D.A.'s investigator, who enjoys doing such things, flashed them to me shortly after I joined the I.D.B. I noted the cluttered refuse on the ground, the garbage: wire, soggy cardboard boxes, the pieces of a bicycle, Lottie. Pictures like that are so pitiless. They make the point so ...

bluntly. *Man is matter. Drop him out a window and he'll fall. Set him on fire and he'll burn. Bury him and he'll rot, like other kinds of garbage. The spirit gone, man is garbage. Ripeness is all.*

Victor's Chief Counsel will here go by the name of Dwayne. He was a former engineer, very skilled, a fine fellow and an excellent lawyer. If he had a fault, it's that he took his time -- and the court's time -- to try his cases. His examinations of prospective jurors were particularly infamous, as he sought to educate the jury in the law, and managed mainly to bore the panel into hallucinations. This worried me slightly, as trial was due to begin a mere ten days before my planned driving trip to ConFrancisco ... planned for two years.

But the way Dwayne talked, the defense would not take much time. Victor was being extremely uncooperative and would not help us in the slightest. When we visited the well-built young black man in the jail, he didn't seem to give the slimmest damn about what was happening to him. Ever defense Dwayne suggested was greeted with a shrug, and a secretive smile ... as if he thought he were putting something over on somebody. He told us nothing. We were on our own.

Well, even on our own we were not helpless. Options were available. One defense to a first degree murder charge is intoxication. A gassed defendant is considered to lack the wit necessary to form *specific intent* -- a requirement for conviction under the law. Victor had told the cops, in his statement, that he'd been blasted on cocaine and clicker the night of the murder. Would that help?

I went to see experts at the Tulane University Medical Center. I asked a Toxicologist about the effects of cocaine and clicker on the human mind. He told me the effects were catastrophic, infarcts: ruptured blood vessels; tiny strokes. A Tulane neurologist informed me that Victor had

simply burned his brains out with cocaine. Would this show up in tests? I asked.

I had two tests in mind. Dwayne and I had both seen a super crime film called **Rampage**, in which a psychotic serial killer had escaped execution after a PET scan proved his madness. I asked the doctor about PETs and he pschawed me down, in that irritatingly superior way they teach doctors in medical school. PETs show chemical changes in the brain, he said, and indeed, can differentiate a healthy cerebrum from a crazy one. But they're still only a tool of research, and as you need a cyclotron practically at bedside to provide the necessary isotope, they're available at only about 20 sites nationwide. The nearest was at Baylor in Houston. Okay then, I asked, what about an *MRI*.

Magnetic Resonance Images reveal the structures of the brain, he told me, and we might see "high intensity lesions" in Victor's scan, results of all the cocaine he'd ingested. Then again, these might not show up -- which itself, wouldn't prove much. But I was excited. To have a picture of the inside of Victor's skull to wave at the jury, to be able to say, "Look at this hole in his brain, he's a *damaged man!*" ... It was too good a chance to miss. With Dwayne's okay I arranged for the MRI and got the court to fund it.

That was a medical day for both lawyer and client. I visited my doctor and was told my hypertension was enough to kill a tree sloth. I wasn't surprised; the cataclysmic importance of this trial had me sick with self-doubt. With such bad blood pressure, I wondered how soon *I* would end up where Victor was, on a table sliding slowly into a massive metal doughnut, the Magnetic Resonance Imager.

The technicians let me stand in the control room and watch the monitors. The machine went *BANG BANG BANG BANG* as the great magnetic coils slapped together. And the most fascinating images coalesced on

the screen.

Man is matter, I said to myself. But what magnificent matter he is. Cross-sections of Victor's head, from the top and from the side, appeared before us in exquisite detail. Such a complex, efficient, *perfect* construction, the brain, seat of the human mind. Victor seemed possessed of a large and well-convoluted cerebrum, fitting nicely into the shell of his skull. There his eyes, there his sinuses, there ear canals, and the jawline's curve ... I was entranced. I didn't see what I hoped to see -- a bright throbbing mass with TUMOR engraved upon it -- but I did get a lesson in the exquisite complexity and *efficiency* of our species. The most complex organism known -- a being capable of turning flesh into spirit.

But in this case, capable of turning the spirit into garbage, rotting away in the rain with the trash. Seen in the MRI, Victor's head seemed perfect. What was truly wrong with it? For that question I'd get no answers here.

I began library research into death penalty law. The key question involved Aggravating Circumstances. What does "heinous" *mean*? What is "cruel"? What is "the needless application of pain"? These were crucial to the AggCirc accusation -- sadism -- that the District Attorney would level against Victor. I had to chuckle. It was a nervous, twitching chuckle -- did Mrs. Lillian bring up her baby boy to have to answer questions like this? Needless application of pain. What *wasn't* needless? Just enough pain to do the trick?

Think like a lawyer. How did Victor's circumstances fit established law? He had strangled a girl who was high on cocaine. It took her about 90 seconds to die. How did those facts line up with the case law defining cruelty, heinousness, the needless application of pain? A shotgun blast to the back was not heinous. Mocking a victim before shooting

him was. I decided Victor's act wasn't as sadistic as those called heinous in the past. I'd argue that it was sudden, impulsive, perhaps even accidental. I made notes towards a Motion in Limine, which is simply a motion entered before trial, denying the D.A. use of that AggCirc.

On August 11th I went to Victor's home. Felice came with me. Felice is a gentle psychotherapist who sometimes works with the public defender's office. In order to build up my MitCircs, I needed to hear Victor's life story ... and there was no one better suited than Felice to draw it from Victor's mother.

The neighborhood was schizophrenic. Many of the homes looked fine: suburban, nicely cared for, flowers in the garden, yards cut neatly. Others -- many others -- were claptrap wrecks, great plywood sheets nailed across the front windows, overgrown jungles in the yards. Side by side such houses sat. Victor's house had a fence around the front yard. His brothers sat in it. Both were grown, one was retarded, the other autistic. This latter fellow welcomed us to Victor's house.

The walls within seemed close, the hallway 2/3 normal width. For a second I wondered what else was strange about the walls, before I realized they were unpainted: bare sheetrock. Here and there they were

buckled in as if by great hammer blows, and patched by cardboard. From Victor's tantrums, I was told, though he'd been gone more than two years. Every surface was sticky with grease. Felice said later that the filth of the house was a sign of rage: "a two-year-old shitting on himself."

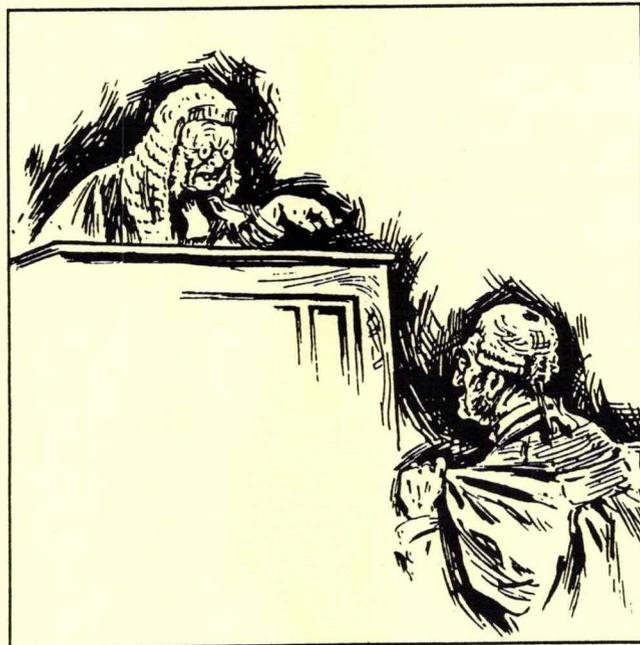
From the end of the hall Victor's mother called. "C'mon in here!" She drew her dressing gown about her enormous bulk and, settling back on her bed, directed me to

a sofa, Felice to a worn easy chair. There was a doorknob by my head. Even that smelled.

Victor's mother was loud and defensive. She claimed to have had no trouble with Victor, even though he'd been sent to a group home and the Louisiana Training Institute. She did admit to something we'd read in the reports: that *until their teens*, she'd gotten her boys to

sleep in the same bed with her. She didn't understand why Felice called that incestuous and harmful, even if "nothing happened."

Victor's grandmother returned. Dear old lady, 85; I liked her. She came from the age before welfare or drugs or neglect or whatever it was that had ruined her daughter. She struck me as sweet and courageous. Her faith in Victor was painful to see, since I knew the end it would come to. His brothers burst



in -- startling to look up, and find the stumbling one standing there, his tongue lolling.

It was a nightmare. I felt like Orpheus when we got out of there. But we had one more stop to make before leaving the vicinity of the flames.

Around the corner and down the block we found the scene of the crime. Another small brick suburban house ... but not the same one I'd seen in the pictures. Oh, it was the same structure, all right ... but everything was different. That was thanks to the dude I found in the garage, about 40, smoking a cigarette, taking a break. The place smelled of varnish. He was repainting, refurbishing, rebuilding the house.

"You here about the murder?" he asked as I approached. Yeah, I replied, but admitted I didn't recognize the place from the crime photos. Especially the back yard. Gone was the plywood over the windows. Gone was the trash that surrounded Lottie. The very place where they'd found her, naked and pathetic in the rain, was clean concrete now: merely a patio.

The guy didn't know Victor, but he was well acquainted with Ronald, the drug dealer/witness next door. He had short shrift for him. "Not worth a *fuck*," he said. "None of those dope dealers are worth a *fuck*. Put 'em *all* in the electric chair!"

Wow! Archie Bunkerisms from a black man. But this fellow was no Victor. This was a man who lived around drug dealers and faced them every day, who had bought a ruin and was making it a home. Of all the lessons Victor's case was teaching, this one alone held hope.

I began to feel better -- more confident. I was *in* this fight. Dwayne and I argued motions in court. The judge turned them all down. We met again three days later, to examine physical evidence. Not a day either of us will soon forget.

We began it wearing rubber gloves, looking over Lottie's clothes in the D.A.'s office. One bloodstained sock. Why? Neither had had a scratch on them. Likewise her blouse, seen in the photos pulled up over her dead breasts. Bloody. *Why?* This death had been a strangling. Her jacket was covered with dirt. We left a lot of it on the D.A.'s floor. Perhaps toughest on the emotions were Lottie's shows, cute pink tennies with sparkly laces. A tiny drop of blood on the toe. *Why?*

We drove downtown, and a conference with Deniese France of the Loyola Death Penalty Center. Wiry, sexy, a former bartender, a former public defender, Deniese had photos of herself with death row inmates on her bulletin board. She's an idealist, an abolitionist, a political gut fighter. She gave me valuable, instructive, inspiring advice on how to keep Victor off The Table.

Back at the IDB, we picked up a black lady lawyer who might, we thought, have better luck communicating with Victor than two white boys had. No luck. The lady was a fine lawyer and a strong talker, but this was Victor she was talking to now. And when she talked, Victor's smile took on a quality I'm not sure I liked. He wouldn't look her in the eye. His grin grew contemptuous. I felt disgusted. But she told us, after we left, that Victor had been on the edge of tears. Possible? Possible that human feeling lurked beneath that sexist street-thug bravado?

Trial was due to begin the following Monday. The following day was Saturday. Dwayne's call came at 8AM.

"Lad," he said, his voice very strange, "we gotta continue the case. My aunt ..." I missed the next part. What about his aunt?

"*Murdered*," he repeated. "Tied up ... stabbed ..."

It was so. Dwayne's aunt had been jumped by an escapee from a nearby minimum security prison. He'd tied her up, killed her, fled. They caught him two days

later in Texas.

Dwayne was a strong, professional man, but he had family to attend to, and obviously could not defend a murder case while dealing with personal tragedy. The D.A. furiously wished he could prosecute the aunt's killer. The judge gave us a delay. And I was left to reflect on what I had heard and seen and learned. *What a world*, I thought. What a world where kids have perverse and uncaring families and incinerate their brains with dope and sell sex to get it and kill one another without conscience and laugh at death because *life is worse*. What a world where a nice lady isn't safe in her own home and love is feared as much as crime. What a world. What a hellish world.

II

What a *week*. On Monday Judge DeVries had summoned a jury pool of 125 people, and had listened to pleas for release from those who could not be sequestered. On Tuesday we had gone through the remaining jurors, picking, choosing, challenging for cause, making peremptories. Judge Doug DeVries -- charming guy, former parish president, dispensing stories and advice and pipe smoke -- would not let us rest: the jury would be selected before we went home. We were doing fine until the very last batch.

Dwayne had used all 12 of our challenges. We had but two jurors to select and a ragtag panel of six exhausted souls to choose them from. This batch looked okay -- but no group that included Mr. Gomez could ever be okay.

"Why should we spend all our tax dollars keeping killers alive?"

That was Mr. Gomez. I just stared at the guy. There's an answer to such bozos -- "*You want to see tax dollars spent? Wait till Dennie France and her Death Penalty Clinic get hold of this case!*" -- but you're not supposed

to argue with jurors, you're supposed to get them to commit themselves, and then challenge them for cause. But after I did so -- got him to propound and propound his contempt for the idea of mitigation and for the severity of a life term, and practically got him to say he thought Victor guilty, evidence unseen -- Prosecutor Jim Marshall rehabilitated him. "Will you do your best to follow the evidence and the law as the Judge gives it to you?" "Well ...," Gomez muttered reluctantly, "okay."

Judge DeVries had given us everything else we'd wanted. Dwayne and I had literally no complaints. But now he refused our challenge for cause. Gomez joined the panel. Forget our defendant; we had a psychopathic killer on our *jury*. From that point on, I figured Victor was dead.

The Guilt phase of the trial did nothing to dispel that conclusion. To be blunt, Dwayne -- normally a sharp and very effective lawyer -- found that his heart wasn't at all in this case. The August murder of his own aunt still stung; the irony of a crime victim defending a criminal weighed on him. He seemed tired to the point of exhaustion, had little idea of what to do with the case, and bored and aggravated the jury in *voir dire*. Despite the weakness of the two alleged eyewitnesses -- who had seen the rape and murder from their bedroom window, *then* watched TV, *then* gone to sleep, *then* called the police -- he wasted valuable time on frivolous defenses. Finally, though Marshall lost as many encounters as he won, the frequency (and increasing nastiness) of our arguments with the cocky ADA blunted the point. The case went to the jury at 7 and they were back at 10. That quick a verdict in a big case only means they'd taken their time before taking their vote. As I said, their expressions told all.

Guilty ... first degree murder ...

It meant, it was my turn. As is my

wont, I'd been utterly disheartened up to that point. Now -- as is also my wont -- my despair fled. It wasn't that I felt confident. I don't know from confidence. But I *had* done my homework and I *had* made my contacts and I *did* have my witnesses and I *did* believe in what I had to say.

You see, the law provides a jury some guidance in deciding the sentence in a first degree murder. The general scope of argument may involve the circumstances of the crime and the propensities of the offender.

In other words, the jury *can* consider certain Aggravating Circumstances, such as whether the crime was especially cruel or heinous, and it is *required* to consider *any* Mitigating Circumstances, such as whether the killer was drunk or stoned at the time of the offense -- don't look like that; it's in the statute -- or suffered from a mental defect, or really anything the jury thinks should mitigate, soften, its decision.

My job was to get the Mitigation before the jury, and I'd decided to concentrate on several very specific areas. (It is always a good idea, in a trial, to *focus*. "This is the nub; this is the point.") First: Victor was not only drunk at the time of the murder, he was on *clicker*. Clicker makes people crazy: I have seen people literally lick the floor after smoking marijuana laced with formaldehyde. The white middleclass jury wasn't familiar with

this nightmare drug, but that could be an advantage; nobody would accept mere alcoholic drunkenness as "an excuse," but something totally alien to their experience might pass muster. (I kept insisting that MitCircs -- as I called them -- weren't excuses, but explanations, but nobody ever makes that distinction.) An essential point was the John Wilkes Booth question: Victor didn't get loaded *in order to* commit the crime.

Second: Victor was brain-damaged. No tumors showed on his MRI, but my psychologist said that was no big deal: Victor's tests indicated significant chemical wreckage in his brain. Dwayne had put Sam Zuckerman -- the psychologist -- on the stand in the guilt phase, and gone over much the same territory, but the point had been lost in shuffled papers and jargon. I told Zuckerman, "Be *sharp*, be *direct*, be *brief*." Victor's brain was not normal, he was an incomplete man *to*

start with. Though it's not unconstitutional to execute a damaged person, confronting the jury with the fact might turn them from it. I thought of Mad Max's revulsion when called upon to kill the retarded giant in **Beyond Thunderdome**; maybe these 12 citizens, even Gomez, would share it.

Third: Victor came from Hell. I described his family home and past above, and they were a horror. Filth. Brutality. Incest. I had Felice Campo to describe the scene and



lay it out psychotherapeutically (**whew**), and two Department of Corrections officers who'd cared for Victor as a juvenile, who would testify that he'd given them no trouble. Points being, he responded to a controlled, caring environment, emphasizing how shitty his home life had been, and that he'd be no danger to anyone in prison, for whatever that was worth. This kind of "Poor Baby" approach never works as a defense, but I wanted *everything* that might be helpful before that jury. I never wanted to wake up in the morning realizing I could have done more than I had.

So the court gathered the statutory 12 hours after the guilty verdict. The prosecution put on one witness, the victim's mother, who wept, of course. My cross-examination consisted of one sentence, "M'amm, we grieve with you." (I meant what I said, but ... who recognizes the **Star Trek** reference?) Then I paraded my people before the court. My toxicologist -- from whom I wanted details on clicker's effects -- finked out, but the jury had already heard what I'd wanted them to hear in the guilt phase. Felice had been at the hospital with a friend all night -- no, no, I believed her -- and was completely exhausted. But she knew the ropes and was surprisingly effective on the stand. Zuckerman faced the same problem she did -- the ADA practically called him a defense whore, provoking a most enjoyable shouting match which Judge DeVries put down masterfully. But Sam withstood all, and was much more pointed and focused than he'd been before. Perhaps most importantly, Victor's mother -- who had not wanted to testify -- changed her mind under prodding from Dwayne. She got up there and cried, "If you have to kill somebody, kill me."

Then it was time to argue. First, I had to harass the ADAs as they gave their closings. Leading off was Kim, a tall, pretty, severe shouter and pointer. She'd never done a first degree murder before (like myself) and fell prey to some easy objections. The state --

or "the government", as I kept calling it (because nobody likes the government) -- is restricted in what it can say ... one of those little differences between this country and, say, North Korea. Supreme Court cases have spelled out these restrictions. Several times Kim wandered over the boundary, and I got her whistled back. When Marshall was making *his* close, to frequent objections, the Judge finally got sick of me. "The District Attorney is bound by his arguments, Mr. Lillian," he said. "The jury is not." I *liked* being in that man's court!

Between the two state orations came mine. Argument, of course, is not evidence; it's just rhetoric. But its importance cannot be overstated. Vincent Bugliosi, in his superb **And the Sea Will Tell**, states that one's whole defense case should revolve about the closing argument; that, in effect, you should begin with it. I tried to follow his advice. I built on a model argument written by Ginger Berrigan, an IDB attorney -- now a federal judge -- who literally wrote the book on **Louisiana Criminal Trial Practice**. Although a script is dangerous -- your spontaneity must never suffer -- notes are invaluable. I'd sought a dais to stand behind, and been thwarted; our courtroom was just too small. So I sat my notes by the court reporter and let fly.

Very quietly, because shouts only turn people away, and running my gaze from eye to eye to eye to eye, juror to juror to juror to juror (even Mr. Gomez), I talked about the MitCircs listed above. I ended each section with the same refrain: *Spare him*.

Life isn't a harsh sentence? Victor is 22 years old. Remember when you were 22. Think of the life events which awaited you. Finding a mate. Creating a family. Beginning a career. Victor gets to look at the guards at Angola and know they own his life. Victor gets to look at the four walls of Angola and know they are the four walls of his life. (This was hyperbole. The Louisiana penitentiary is an enormous

plantation in an secluded corner of the state. Its walls are isolation and distance. Well.)

The vote to execute Victor must be unanimous. One person can spare him. It is one time when one person can make all the difference. (I hesitate to admit it, but I stole the sentiment from "Mirror, Mirror".)

Be that one person. Repeat the first words ever spoken by a civilized person: "I will not kill today." (Another **Star Trek** reference. Spot it?)

When all was over, the jury left and the lawyers shook hands all around. I thought we were doomed, or specifically that Victor was doomed, but I couldn't think of anything else that I could have done. Dwayne agreed; he told me I done good. We joined the ADAs, Jim and Kim, in the Judge's chambers, smelling DeVries's marvelous pipe smoke and talking about politics and movies; anything on Earth besides Victor. The judge's wife came in, a most upper-class lady. They had dinner reservations at Antoine's.

After we'd cooled our heels for about three hours, a deputy brought us a progress report. Looked like a deadlock, he said. My heart bounced off the ceiling. "Yep -- 7-4-1," he said. "Seven life, four death, one undecided." A deadlocked jury meant a life sentence. *What? We were winning?*

The Judge was impatient; he wanted his feed. He gave the jury another half hour, then paid them a call. Back into the courtroom we filed. DeVries asked the jury foreperson to stand. Were they deadlocked?
Yes.

I turned to Victor, the pathetic, stupid, arrogant, frightened, brain-damaged, drug-mangled murderer whose life we had just saved. I said to him, "Where there's life, there's hope." Cliches and puns are weaknesses of mine.

Jim and Kim gathered their books in a flutter of paper and dashed from the room. I leaned down to the victim's mother and

explained the verdict. She nodded and said "Thank you." Sweet lady; she and Victor's mother had both lost children and had been consoling each another. Outside in the hallway, I gave Victor's mama the news. She cried and hugged me and God-blessed me. His brother just shook my hand, tears brimming.

They took Victor away. "Pray!" his auntee called to him. Still stunned -- I think he expected the worst -- he nodded. Dwayne rode down with the rest of his family. Myself, I waited until the jury left. Didn't say much to them, since they were tired and wanted nothing less than to hear me talk again. But I did make it a point to shake hands with Mr. Gomez.

And sat alone in the courthouse corridor for just a minute, before leaping and (quietly) whooping like a maniac all the way down the hall.

I must have done all right. Got a lot of compliments in the next few days. The Judge said, "You got it!" Dwayne said, "When you're there, you're *there*." Kim graciously told me I'd done a good job. Marshall was almost shy around me for the next few weeks, which I took as enormous praise. And my harshest critic? I did the dumbest thing imaginable. I went to the head public defender and said, "Give me another one."

III

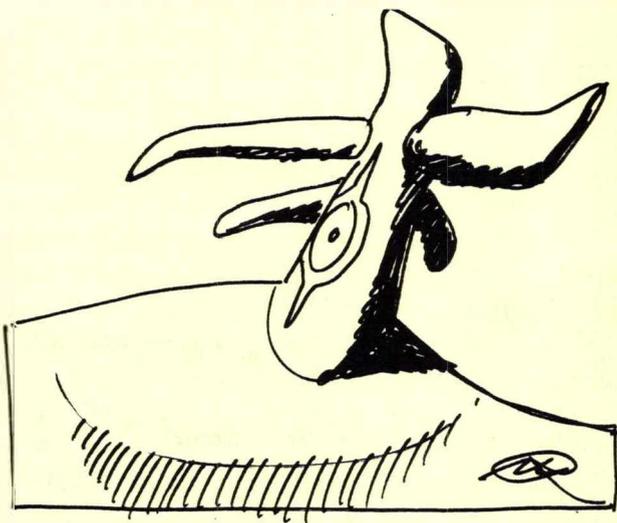
A brief coda. Recently -- a long time after the Victor trial -- I visited the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola and saw, for myself, the death table. It is located in Camp F, paradoxically the most lenient of the camps at Angola, housing trustees who can more or less come and go as they wish. It seemed also ironic that it is down a very short hallway from the inmate store, where leather goods and heavily lacquered woodcrafts made by prisoners are sold. On my visit, I bought a

box and a keychain.

The room was shown to me by two somber guards. It is smaller than the average motel room. The walls are cinderblock and painted bright white. A hospital-style curtain can be drawn about the walls, blocking the window behind which witnesses stand. The table itself is metal, painted white, except for the cushions and straps, which are black. It is, as I said above, arrow-shaped. Its head is near a wall in which is set a bluish window of one-way glass which the executioner stands behind. I went into that room also. Its walls are black, and there's a little hole in the wall through which the tubes lead and through which the three aforementioned chemicals pass. The room was stuffy and hot, that day, cut off from the pleasant air conditioning outside.

I couldn't take my eyes off that table. I tried to count the many straps but for some reason could not. It surprised me that the table had a footrest. Does it mark me as a sentimental liberal if I reveal that it horrified me more than any other physical object I have ever seen?

I said to the guards, and to myself, "I saved a man from this." At the moment it seemed reason enough to have walked the Earth.



Challenger no. 2

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS ...

On the cover ... **Mark Fults** reminds me of a *spring*, coiled and ready to leap happily away. Such is the energy of this superb young artist, whom I met at a convention in Chattanooga last year. There I also spotted our exceptional cover art, although I practically had to mud-wrestle Jerry Page for rights to it. Mark mentioned many plans, including a calendar of mermaids and mermen. For information, and to cadge other art, contact him at **P.O. Box 15905, Chattanooga TN 37415**. I believe **Chall** marks his debut in a nationally distributed fanzine. It's a distinction we claim proudly.

Interiors. Award-winning Brit **Dave Carson** did the artwork for Linda Krawecke's touching piece on their -- and our -- friend, Karl Wagner. We know it hurts, guys, but Karl would be pleased with what you've done for him.

Brad Foster and **William Rotsler** are familiar to all fandom. **Nola Frame-Gray** and **Jerry Collins** should be. **Alan Hutchinson** is a postman and maniac-at-large in St. Petersburg, Florida. As far as is known, he has no trunk. **Dave Ryan** was a honcho of Arkansas' Roc*Kon, a SFPAn, and a sturdy member of Southern fandom, greatly missed by his comrades. The art on my People's Park squib is by **Charlie Williams** and **Elizabeth Atkinson**. Charlie is the brilliant Chattanooga cartoonist whose work first came to prominence in Dick and Nicki Lynch's zines when they graced that city. Elizabeth was at Berkeley in the '60's with me, and like me, lived those magnificent, psychotic times. I have no idea where she is today, but wherever she and the rest of those brave, crazed lunatics of the sixties may be, may the Lord bless them ... and keep them ... and make His countenance to *shüüüüüüüüine* upon them ...

EPISTLES

Robert Bloch
2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles CA 90048

Dear GHL:

Thanks for **Challenger** -- I think you're off to a great start! Any issue that contains work by R.A. Lafferty has to be superior because he is just that, towering over contemporaries in the field like some as-yet-undiscovered Everest soaring above lesser peaks. Every time I read encomiums about "brilliant new" sf writers I murmur, "Yeah, true. But what about Lafferty?" Wonderful writing talent remains awaiting proper recognition: no offense, but there are few if any who could equal the perceptions of "The Day After the World Ended", and you won't find its like in either a Campbell or Asimov



editorial from the past, either.

If your own editorial intentions are as slated, I suggest you broaden your "Femmefan We Love" definition to include a pro who has given generously and unselfishly of both her time and talent to the cause of fandom for over 25 years -- Chelsea Quinn Yarbro.

Your conreport account of seeing my **doppelganger** in the St. Louis hotel coffeeshop is just a little on the scary side. I thought I had him locked up in the attic.

Alas, alas, alas.

R. Coulson
2677W-500N
Hartford City IN 47348

Mostly enjoyed **Challenger**, though commentary may be slim on my part.

So you're another lawyer. Fans seem to go in for the law in a big way; I knew four fan lawyers in Indiana and a fifth across the line in Louisville. Our own "family lawyer" is fan. Also the right sort of lawyer; she not only handled our house purchase and found some errors in the title but she and her then-current live-in came down and helped us move. Now **that's** what I call service.

We remember St. Louiscon; some fond memories and some not so fond. We were already friends of the Couch clan before the Worldcon bid, and at one point Leigh Couch wrote to ask our advice about bidding. We wrote back one word: "Don't." After the convention had been over a month or two, we saw Leigh at some other con, and she asked, "Remember when I asked you for advice about bidding?" I said I did. "You were right." I remember that the hotel insisted on charging outrageous amounts for ice. Both we and the Couches had portable coolers in our rooms, and at one point Herbert Couch invited me

along on an ice-stealing expedition to the big ice machine in the hotel basement. It was all furtive and at least mildly exciting, especially when we got caught by the house detective.

I hope that wasn't the same thug whose friendly greeting to me was "Lookin' for trouble?"

There was a story about the problem of getting rooms. One fan mentioned seeing Joe Hensley arguing with the desk clerk, and finally leaning his 6'3" or 4" bulk across the front desk and saying, "Then how about we go out in the alley and get physical about this?" Joe, of course, was not a US Congressman; he was a member of the Indiana state legislature.

There was also an account saying that the "Minneapolis in '73" bid -- which was legitimate at the time, though they've joked about it ever since -- was for a hotel in the same chain as the Chase-Park Plaza, and at one point, seeing their bid being undermined by the Chase-Park's attitudes, the Minneapolis chairman telephoned the mayor of Minneapolis and asked him to call the mayor of St. Louis to lean on the hotel management.

During the ripped movie screen incident, Leigh Couch was talking shop with one of the hotel's barmen, and when the fans started shelling out money for the screen, the barman said, "I've never seen anything like this before in my life. You people must like each other."

An idea of Elliot Shorter's size can be given by the fact that non-fans used to stop him in New York and ask for his autograph under the assumption that he was the New York football star, Roosevelt Grier. Elliot finally gave up trying to explain and began handing out autographs. (So don't ever pay money for a genuine Grier autograph, because it might not be.)

I have nothing particular against [Robert E.] Lee, aside from the fact that Pickett's Charge was a major military blunder (and Longstreet knew it at the time). But I

would prefer that the Confederate flag be relegated to history where it belongs. The South lost the war and -- once Reconstruction was over -- won the peace until at least the 1950's, and enough is enough. Blacks have not only felt powerless, they have **been** powerless, and their current excesses are understandable if not commendable. I've personally been refused a room at a con hotel because there was a black girl in my group. This was in 1953, but I damnwell remember it. At first only she was refused a room, but the reservations of the rest of us evaporated when we argued about it. Not that we'd have stayed, anyway; it was my car and I wasn't about to leave a passenger stranded. In the 1960s Juanita and I went to Lafayette to see the Harry Belafonte troupe perform. They came on late, and said it was because there was no place for blacks to eat in the city -- and it was a college town, at that. The "equal" part of "separate but equal" never existed.

*Which is one reason Earl Warren -- author, as you know, of **Brown vs. Board of Education**, which declared segregation unconstitutional -- is one of my heroes, and the person I'm most proud of meeting. "Separate but equal is inherently unequal," he said, and changed America for the better. The situation you describe has been part of history for decades; that aspect of America's racial nightmare seems almost simple compared to today's "excesses".*

But ... it's tempting to ask you what you believe blacks' "understandable" excesses are. If you mean criminal acts, then you're in my field. I defend those accused of such behavior, and often rely on sociopolitics to explain the actions of my clients. But every explanation I've ever heard or used -- historical, economic, personal, even psychological -- falls short when the crime evinces the casual disdain for human life we see in carjackings and drug killings -- common as the sunrise in most American cities. Personally as well as professionally, I can find

no rationale for that depth of inhumanity, and damn little hope in the entire situation. Strangely enough, though, the presence of Louis Farrakhan seems to be a positive development. Most "black" politics is awesomely corrupt. The common life of the urban black is fraught with crime and danger. Pride in self and community and heritage is an alien concept. But not to Farrakhan. His anti-Semitism is psychotic and intolerable, of course, but he brings a welcome and needed sense of personal and racial self-esteem to his people. He might not care less that a white man feels that way, but perhaps that's the point.

Teddy Harvia
701 Regency Drive
Hurst TX 76054

Great photograph of Peggy [Ranson] with her Hugo. Her cover art of Robert E. was clever.

Your Vietnam vet's assertion that all vets secretly wished they'd been at My Lai is nonsense. If I still have thoughts of killing anyone after all these years it is the politicians who kept us there and the war protestors who saw us as the criminals and morally supported the enemy.

I believe you about soldiers' feelings towards My Lai, of course, but as for protestors' condemnation of American soldiers, this is not so. The bravest, most effective, and most appreciated people I knew in the struggle against the war were G.I.s who had been to Vietnam themselves -- so obviously, not every peacenik considered the American troops criminal. On the contrary, most I knew saw the soldiers as victims.

Much of the antiwar effort was based not merely in sympathy for the Vietnamese, but in getting our brothers and cousins and friends out of the war alive. I vividly remember a San

Francisco peace march I joined in 1971. There were a million people there -- led by soldiers wounded in Vietnam. Who had a better right?

Charles Lipsig
2326 NW 27th Lane
Gainesville FL 32605

Congratulations on an excellent first issue. Considering that such zines should only get better with time and experience, **Challenger** could well become a fannish force to be reckoned with.

Probably the piece that most affected me was the review of **The Rediscovery of Man**. There are two authors whom I read extensively in my adolescence and whose influences stick with me today. James H. Schmitz is one and Cordwainer Smith is the other.

I remember the circumstances of my first reading Cordwainer Smith. I was supposed to be visiting one of my aunts, but her husband had caught the flu, so I had my parents take me to a conference at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York. One of the books I brought with me was **The Best of Cordwainer Smith**. I was staying alone, in a dorm room in a different building from my parents. The room was about four flights up, and looked straight down a hillside, onto a road, and further down a wooded hill. Many of the buildings were brick with minimal ivy covering. Smith's stories reverberated with a dazzlingly bizarre and tempting future, combined with a sense that even the future has traditions. Perhaps it is that, to me, most college campuses combine academic traditionalism with a sense of futurism, that causes me to so often associate Smith's work with them. Most of the stories in that collection I associate with Skidmore, but it was "The Lady Who Sailed the **Soul**" to whom Skidmore lent much of its setting.

As for political correctness, I agree

with you that it is evil. Of course, as someone who is generally considered to be a hardcore conservative-libertarian, that should be little surprise.

True, Chuck, but remember ... I voted for Bill Clinton, the prince of P.C., and so far, plan to do so again. (Jack Kemp's exit from the Republican presidential race removes the GOP's only class act.) Consistency is the hobgoblin of unimaginative minds, or something.

Curt Phillips
23800 Green Springs Road
Abingdon VA 24210

How appropriate that I begin LOCing a new zine named **Challenger** on the eighth anniversary of the loss of the space shuttle that bore the same name.

I recall the Peggy Ranson artwork on your cover from your SFPazine of a year or two ago, and while I recognize the quality of the work her interpretation of Traveler as a robotic horse-of-steel makes me vaguely uncomfortable somehow. I suppose I'm just not used to seeing such artistic liberties taken with a Southern icon of this sort. It would be interesting, however, to see Ranson explore similar themes in the future. Nobody ever said that good art had to be comfortable.

About your editorial, Guy, it's ... my God, it's **politically incorrect**.

Good for you.

Thanks, but see my reply to Chuck Lipsig above. I can't figure out if my antagonism to P.C. is disloyal to my Berserkely heritage and liberal politics or inherently consistent with those ideals.

Not that I agree that what fandom has been missing all this time is an aggressively male forum where we can hunker down with other men and scratch ourselves and talk about **wimmen**, but certainly there has been lacking any effective counterpoint to the often

expressed notion that feminism is unquestionably the banner that all right-thinking men must bow to as it parades by. I've heard quite a few intelligent and thoughtful men describe themselves in recent years as feminists, by which they evidently mean that they support the goals and ideals of



the women's movement. Personally I reject the label "feminist". I like to think of myself a humanist, a very simple belief that everyone be judged on the basis of their individual qualities. *Don't make the common mistake of identifying feminism with Political Correctness. P.C.*

proponents (such as the Antioch College twits who passed that idiotic -- and, we're told, completely ignored -- dating code, requiring stated permission prior to every touch) may lay claim to feminism. In truth, though, they're nothing more than posturing college kids drunk with new and unfamiliar power. The problem with P.C. comes when its advocates insist on arbitrary and unchallengeable authority -- as in the Minneapolis anti-porn ordinance, dippy college speech codes, the melanism philosophy and the like. When posture becomes power, and power asserts itself as domination over others -- then a legitimate movement to liberate has become cynical vassalage.

Gary Robe, my next door neighbor in fandom (in other words, the only other fan within 40 miles of where I live), tells an excellent coming-of-age story in his article about wandering into a gay party. As a smalltown Southern boy myself I can identify with the way he dealt with that situation.

Speaking of Southernness ...

I share your general respect for Robert E. Lee and like you I most admire his strength of character and his self-discipline. It is this last trait, I think, that made it possible for him to command an army that was general by such wildly antagonistic men as "Stonewall" Jackson and A.P. Hill, a pair of generals that no one else in the Confederacy was able to work with, both at the same time. He was hardly a perfect military commander. He made a severe mistake in attempting an "end run" around the Union right on the first day of Gettysburg as Longstreet suggested although the circumstances can exonerate him for that. Pickett's Charge was *not* a mistake; at that point it was the only possible chance to still win and Lee knew it.

As you know, I visited Gettysburg last summer, and trod the path of Pickett's Charge. It's something a lot of visitors do: to imagine what it was like that day in 1863, to imagine if they could do what the Confederates did, and make

that desperate charge into the Union lines. I don't know if I could.

Brad Foster
POB 165246
Irving TX 75016

Thanks for the copy of **Challenger**. Some interesting reading in here, though I must admit I have a knee-jerk reaction to things that say they are specifically targeted to male tastes -- sort of the same way I do with things for female tastes. I usually go, "Hey, just print what interests you, and we'll see who else is interested." But I'll be curious to see where you go with that in future issues.

Here's a query -- have you gotten any grief in fandom for your own erotic art -- or for that matter, the Barbi Twins calendars you sell?

Nice looking design, but also one of the things I've noticed in past few years with these lovely desktop publishing-style zines is the seeming death of fillos for their own sakes. I'm starting to wonder if this has something to do with the nature of the new technology, where the page is put together on the screen as a whole unit, rather than simply printing our text to be clipped and pasted up elsewhere, which seemed to allow for more use of art. Another fannish theory I want to keep an eye on in the following years.

Actually, we just didn't have much unused art for fillo use. Thanks to you, and others, now we do. Congrats on the Winnipeg Hugo, by the way.

Sheila Lightsey
71 Chilton Street
Cambridge MA 02138

You seem to be making a big splash with **Challenger**. I've already heard the production values praised and am sending you a NESFA bulletin [about it]. My first thought on reading the title of Dennis Dolbear's article

"Cookin' with Fats" was of Dennis bustling around his kitchen stirring huge vats of various oils and greases, in some grand chemistry-cum-cooking experiment. It seems like Dennis had quite the adventure [with Fats Domino and the Beach Boys at Mardi Gras] after I left. It was probably a good thing I did. I would have felt like a third wheel hanging around and the caption on the picture might have read "Dennis leers while Sheila sneers," or else, "Dennis tries to persuade Sheila to try on Beach Boys cheerleaders' garb." Who can tell? I hope you get another edition of **Challenger** out soon.

Soon, no. Eventually, yes.

Nola Frame-Gray
P.O. Box 465
Inglewood CA
90307-0465

I laughed and was moved at the Coming Out/black (fake) leather shorts tale. Good articles! Just one suggest:

could you please publish *your* address in your zine? Though I understand that you don't have any plans right now to run a LOC section, we'd still appreciate the pleasure of writing you.

The Chall p.o. box is mine, and as you can see, any plans to avoid a LOC section have long been abandoned. And I love your 'toons!

Milt Stevens
5384 Rain Wood Street #90
Simi Valley CA 93063

Congratulations, you have arrived. Ted White hates you and everything about you. It isn't

quite as good as being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, but it's definitely in that direction.

So I gather, but since I've never met Ted White, his opinion of me, personally, is meaningless. Far more offensive to me was his hysterical condemnation of Southern fandom, and as you'll shortly see, I'm hardly alone ...

Naomi Fisher
P.O. Box 9135
Huntsville AL 35812-0135

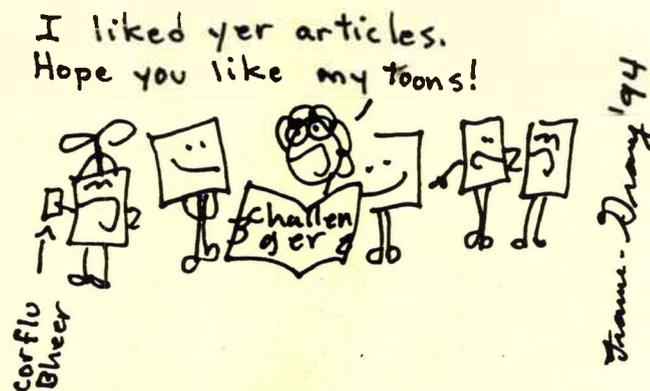
I saw the Ted White review [of **Chall** no. 1], and despite the fact that I can't take him seriously, I think his comments on Southern

Fandom should be responded to. Boy, talk about someone who hasn't done a reality check in 20+ years! Do I look like a middle-aged, cross-burning white male?

No, you look like a young, brilliant,

beautiful, witty Asian-American female.

Insular, ignorant? I'm more typical of Southern Fandom than not, and one of the reasons I will not move back to California/the West Coast (traditionally liberal areas) is that the intolerance, racism, homophobia and general armed craziness out there has grown to the point that I don't think I'd be safe. That **reality** is one of the reasons I like the South so much. There's racism, ignorance and intolerance, sure, same as anywhere. But the South has changed more, for the better, in those regards than any other part of the country, while a lot of places have slid backwards. Southerners as a group have been



the nicest people I've met in a lot of traveling and moving about the country. Southern fans have been the friendliest I've encountered. I'd rather live here and try to change the things I don't like than write self-indulgent, self-righteous diatribes on an area I don't know or understand. I think that sort of change is what you're doing, to some extent, with your life and your work as a public defender. What's Ted White done recently to make this world a better place?

No comment, but here's an offer I'm sure you'll second...

To anyone tempted to believe White's delirium on the subject of Southern fandom: come see for yourself. Check out Filthy Pierre's column in Analog and attend a Southern convention.

Challenger opens its pages to your reports.

Betcha bucks to bedbugs you'll think White was on hallucinogens when he put us down.

Betsy Hirst

**1116 Memphis Junction Road
Bowling Green KY 42101**

I read **Challenger** -- really masterful! I hope that you do "equal time" and photograph some hunks for your next issue -- you can call it "Fem Fans Favorites".

But but but ... didn't you see the photo of Dolbear? or the Freas drawing of moi?

Steve Jeffery

**44 White Way
Kidlington
Oxon OX5 2XA
United Kingdom**

So what of **Challenger 1**?

Still iffy about the chosen title, because it can be so easily misinterpreted. Having read the editorial, I think seeing it as deliberate poor taste is probably being cynical.

There's no "probably" about it, Steve. The shuttle explosion was one of the great -- as in,

"important" -- turning points of my life. It caused a fundamental re-examination of my opinions of other people and my relationship to and with them. I was in therapy at the time, and I doubt a week passed for a whole year that I didn't mention Challenger and its crew at least once in every session. I couldn't be less cynical about it.

Still, it's a loaded word, with associations of courage and ambition and awful tragedy.

And let's not forget Professor Challenger, as a Habakkuk reader suggested.

Not being American, and thus sitting on neither side of the Mason Dixon line -- geographically, socially or politically -- I can't really comment on **Challenger's** tone as a Southern Fandom fanzine. It says in my Factfinder that the Mason Dixon line is drawn on the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania, which strikes me that the South is a lot bigger than the North, although I suspect it's more a symbolic than real division of the States.

This is much more true nowadays than it was when I was growing up. Our national population is so mobile that regional divisions are fading -- at least among the much-traveled middle-class I came from. So is regional identity -- a shame in some ways, not a shame in others. But in the face of such profound social change, anyone who still believes in regional stereotypes is obviously a damn Yankee fool.

There's a lot of interest in this issue. I'm not convinced about your idea of a fannish **Esquire**, but then I haven't read a men's magazine since I stopped swapping these with my father and brothers as Christmas stocking filler (sorry!). Thus I'm not particularly inspired by the "Femmefans" slot, especially as I don't know Mary Ann [van Hartesveldt]. P.C. or not, I can't see a women-oriented fanzine running a similar "BNFs We Love" column in the same way, although that might reflect on the physical charms of many male

fans. (One exception is UK fan artist Dave Mooring, proud [?] recipient of "Best Bum in Fandom" at Eastercon a couple of years back.)

The "Femmesfans We Love" segment was the most misunderstood aspect of Chall no. 1. It was certainly not meant to extol female physical attributes -- Nola's 'toon here to the contrary -- although Mary Ann is a beautiful woman and we certainly enjoy and admire that. No, we meant to champion the loveliness of feminine character -- humor, compassion, power. To make that more clear, I've decided to drop the "femmesfans" label and just laud fandom's special ladies, who really do make this stupid hobby -- hell, this stupid planet --

worth waking up for. It's pretty obvious whom we so hail this issue.

What really surprised me was Richard Dengrove's article on Grimoires. It seems a strange inclusion for a fanzine, and was an interesting inclusion. This is something more likely to get from the more occult/esoteric contributors to our own **Inception** magazine, which we produce as part of the Information Service for author Storm Constantine.. In fact one issue had the theme of Signs, Seals and Sigils. (If anybody is more generally interested in Storm Constantine, whose "Wraeththu" trilogy is now in omnibus edition from Tor in the US, we would be happy to hear from them.)

So you were a starstruck neo in '69. I took 20 years to catch up, my first convention being in '89. What endeared me to s.f. fandom, certainly in the UK, was the lack of prima donna "celebrity" status of the authors.

You soon lose the starstruck bit, and find that most authors are "just us" as well, except they write books for their living. I gather it may be rather different in, say, media fandom. I still get my books autographed. Vikki [Lee France] still gets convention program books signed by as many as possible. One day these may go to charity auction, meanwhile they're reminders of good times.

Well said! I still enjoy autographs, but restrict my autograph requests nowadays to Hugo and Nebula winners and special people -- such as first-time authors like Jannean Elliott or Carolyn Clowes. And Chelsea Quinn Yarbro.

Or Algis Budrys. Or Ray Lafferty. Or ...

I've heard of Harlan Ellison's "Clarion"

collection at St. Louiscon before. In fact I first came across it in Harlan's bitter "When Dreams Become Nightmares" which closes the Clarion III anthology (Signet 1973, ed Robin Scott Wilson). In fact Ellison

takes the outrage further than a gaffe against fannish sensibilities, to the extent that the disagreement became a brawl and someone is said to have tossed a firecracker against his room door after the event. Quite how much of this is true, and how much hyperbole, I don't know.

The Lafferty speech is a rare treat, though I don't go along with his premise that s.f., fiction and the world at large are in a post-historical state. Admittedly there are a lot of "posts": postmodernism, postfeminism, poststructuralism. But as someone has tried to explain to me over recent months in the s.f. critical apa we share, the "post" prefix doesn't necessarily imply chronology or a rejection of



what has gone before. Rather it seems a "meta" form of a theory, incorporating and expanding what has gone before. Postmodernism, as we have gradually thrashed out, is primarily a mode of perception or appreciation, where the whole notion of a reliable, objective narrative "truth" is brought into question. It's not even particularly new (even as of Lafferty's 1979 speech) since Lawrence Durrell was playing these games with fiction in his **Alexandria Quartet** in 1957. Lafferty obviously has some rather precise and personal views on what constitutes the valid fiction form, and it has to be admitted that his own work is wonderfully idiosyncratic and pretty well left of center of the genre mainstream.

But it's an interesting and provocative viewpoint, and one I may throw back into our a p a f o r discussion, and seeks to ask some serious questions of s.f. and its function as anything other than fantasy escapism. Thank you for this.

Rodney Leighton
R.R. #3 Pugwash
Nova Scotia
CANADA B0K 1L0

I didn't notice any pretentiousness [in **Chall #1**]. Ted White and some others probably dislike **Challenger** because it's not free in return for 10 words on a postcard and it covers a lot of stuff that SFzines normally do not. I really liked it. I especially liked it that you are against all this politically correct

bullshit. I think I detected a bit of disillusionment with some aspects of SFandom and also I noticed a disdain for some of these folks who drink, do drugs, party wearing silly little propeller caps and still loudly proclaim that they are *better* than anyone else. One of the aspects of SFandom I really dislike.

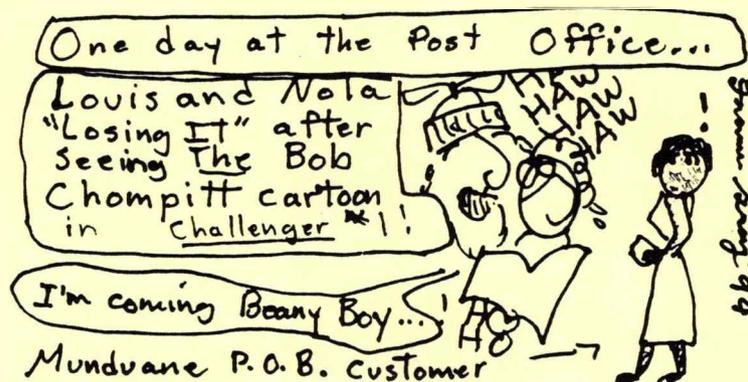
Let's see how the November elections -- upon which I look with untrammelled horror -- affect political correctness. I personally blame the graceless boors of the P.C. movement for at least part of the alienation which swept Newt Gingrich and his House-ful of high school vice principals into power.

I like the idea of the editor introducing himself ... and contributors, as well. Some

people do dislike the concept. I used to be very active in the pro wrestling underground and one time I started a new column with a self-introduction and was roundly blasted by a few folks.

Not that wrestling favorite of my youth, Bobo Brazil, I hope. One "Cocoa Butt" and your head splatted like a bug on a windshield.

We have a few things in common or close. I am one year and three days older than you. I got involved in s.f. zines a couple of years ago when Leah Zeldes Smith sent me **Stet**. I'm a well-known LOC fan. I enjoy seeing what people are doing and saying. I have a friend who sends secondhand zines occasionally. With what I get direct and what he sends, I guess I've seen about forty or so different zines, maybe fifty. **Challenger** ranks up there among the best. About on the level of **Mimosa**, I'd say.



Hoo! Let me reel my head in from the ceiling! Thanks -- but Chall has a long row to hoe before we can compete with Dick&Nicki in either consistency or quality. And as of Winnipeg we're now three Hugos behind them.

I was especially happy to see the picture of and information on Peggy Ranson. I've never been much interested in art ... and a lot of the "art" in s.f. zines is simply too silly for words ... but I started noticing these gorgeous mermaids and female warriors and maidens and I became an admirer of her artistic ability and later I heard that these fabulous females were self-inspired. This picture proves that Peggy is as beautiful as she is talented (and a brief by-mail encounter recently also proved that she is gracious and full of fun).

The picture idea [on the inside bacover] is also a good one. Why is there none of you?

Compassion for my readers. Close enough that there's one of Dick Lynch. We've been mistaken for brothers.

I think the only thing I disliked was "War Story", which was simply an illustration of a sapid youth losing it and slaughtering a guy and trying to convince himself, and others, that it was justified.

I admit to skipping the book review stuff. I enjoyed the article on "The Grimoires"; quite fascinating. I usually find con trip reports boring and ignore them but your article about your first trip to a con was amusing and enjoyable.

I even liked the report about the Fats [Domino] concert, although he ain't one of my interests, music-wise. There was some interesting information in there and I was also impressed that a middle-aged (apparently) guy had the *cujones* to write about being scared to death about sneaking into a cheerleaders' locker room.

The definition of "sexist" ... of many terms ... is somewhat open to debate and

interpretation. I'll be interested in seeing how you develop this in **Challenger**.

I open the question to the readership. From you I'd like to hear what life is like in Pugwash. Hmm ... "I still believe in a town called 'Pugwash'." You have a future, Rodney.

Mike McInerney
83 Shakespeare Street
Daly City CA 94014

From reviews of **Challenger** #1 I had expected a neofan's first crudzine -- badly written, poorly printed, bad artwork, etc. So I was pleasantly surprised to find a good-looking, well-done fanzine by an experienced fanned. There is a lot I object to in your point of view and your targeting the zine to "the adult male fan." I also wish you hadn't relied so much on reprints ... almost half the issue. Yes, I've never seen any of them before, so they're new to me, but they lack timeliness and some of your readers must have seen them. I assume in future issues you will get more stuff written fresh for you.

Right. Much of Chall is indeed reprinted from SFPA, which is seen by no more than 35 people. Shame to keep good stuff from a wider audience. (Toni Weisskopf will be publishing a "SFPAnthology" soon. Check with her c/o Baen Books.) As for "targeting" the zine on the adult male fan -- that emphasis is hardly exclusive. It's just that it's been ignored and disparaged of late, creating a vacuum that needs to be filled. Indeed, most of the contributors I have lined up for issue #3 are women.

Your job as a public defender is a difficult job which puts you into daily contact with people who can't afford to hire a lawyer themselves. It must be tough to work up an enthusiastic, competent defense for an accused child killer or wife murderer. I know I wouldn't be able to do it. I guess if I were in your line of work I'd want to be a prosecutor

in such cases. You don't mention ever defending anyone who was actually innocent ... *That* I think would be an easy job to get happy about doing well. Surely they aren't *all* guilty?

Only most. It's the innocent defendants who are the hardest on the nerves, because the lawyer's responsibility is ever so much greater.

*Fail a guilty client and he's only getting what he deserves. Fail an innocent party, and it's a tragic injustice. Sometimes even guilty clients require headaches, too. See the story of "my first first degree" in this **Chall**.*

I liked the book reviews by Lon Atkins very much and hope you get him to write some more for you.

If we can ever pull him away from the writing of his own novel, we will.

I was shocked that Lon's hometown library did not have Raymond Chandler or Dashiell Hammett on the shelves in their mystery section! I wonder if they had Heinlein and Asimov in the s.f.?

Your St. Louiscon report was the highlight of the issue for me. 1969 was a major year for me -- I moved to San Francisco in January, watched the moonwalk in July and got a job at the post office just in time to be unable to take time off to go to St. Louis for the worldcon. My first worldcon was Chicon 1962 when I was 19 and also had to get some money from my parents, so I know what that is like. Your memories of your neofannish enthusiasm shine through clear and bright and rekindle some of my memory embers from the old days.

You were lucky to get a job as a "Foot" and meet all the pros. You do a lot of namedropping but, what the hell, it was your first con. I loved the story of Ray Fisher standing off the hotel dicks in the lobby.

When I worked for Wally Wood as managing editor and NYC distributor of **Witzend**, Wood's semiprozine, I got to know and respect Vaughan Bode very well. I loved his artwork and was proud to help spread his

work by distributing it to more than a dozen of New York's finest bookstores in 1967 and '68. I wish I had kept some copies for myself!

Some day I want to visit the city of New Orleans. It's been a desire of mine for many years. Since I was a teenager, I've wanted to see the birthplace of Dixieland music and attend a Mardi Gras! [*See you here!*] Music and food are two passions of mine and New Orleans is famous for both.

When I was in high school I got involved in the civil rights movement and had friends who went to the South to register voters and got beaten and despised. I never wanted to travel in the South because of the horror stories I saw on TV news or read in the newspapers. Probably things are much better there now, and I'm sure that *most* people who live in the South are no more bigoted than *most* people who live in the North, but I'd probably still fly rather than drive whenever I do go to New Orleans.

Well, if you drove in by I-10 -- which begins at the Santa Monica Pier and ends in Gainesville FL -- you wouldn't see much of the South, just the swampy stretch between Houston and NOLA. But you owe it to yourself to shutcan those old fears. Don't let them prejudice you towards the reality of today. There are few prettier driving routes in America than those through Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia or Kentucky. You'd find it to be much like driving through Northern California. And the people have a wonderful sense of humor.

Seeing Robert E. Lee posed like something out of a heroic fantasy on **Challenger's** cover just doesn't doesn't sit quite right with me. The drawings are excellent and lovingly done. He looks like a saint (and maybe he was one, I don't know), but I think he is misplaced on the cover of an s.f. fanzine. How would you feel if you received a zine with beautiful covers of General Sherman or John Wilkes Booth or the Grand Dragon of the KKK? I'm sure Sherman, Booth and the

Dragon all sincerely *believed* that their cause was right and that they were heroes in a struggle for justice. I disagree with all of them.

So do I, but that has nothing to do with Lee, who has assumed legendary heroic proportions throughout America, not just in the "unreconstructed South". Ranson's cover illo -- to demonstrate -- was adapted from a pre-WWII painting by Leydendecker, the world-famous illustrator, from the Sat Eve Post, hardly a Confederate magazine. Ken Burns called Lee "America's favorite military figure," citing that to evidence our country's amazing generosity and sophistication of judgment. As can be seen in The Marble Man, For the Love of Robert E. Lee and Turtledove's Guns of the South, all recent works (and the latter, s.f.), he is still of mythic stature, far greater than the flawed cause he led. He despised slavery and thought secession foolish, yet was a man of his times, and his loyalty was to his state, not to the Union. That viewpoint would not be considered wrong-headed until after the Civil War. As for how I'd feel about fanzines fronted with beautiful drawings of Sherman, Booth or the Grand Dragon of the KKK, that's an oxymoron. I deny that beautiful drawings of any of those guys is possible. (Quinn Yarbro has written a romantic vampire novel about Sherman (!), and begged my forgiveness for it. An unnecessary consideration -- my beloved Quinn need never apologize to me, and it's a good read.)

George Flynn
P.O. Box 1069
Kendall Square Station
Cambridge MA 02142

Frankly, it never occurred to me that there was any need for a fanzine from a "specific masculine perspective," and the material explicitly tied to that perspective strikes me as a tad, well, fulsome. but whatever turns you on ... (Independent of

ideology, you do have a tendency toward *gushing*.)

Do I? Oh thank you thank you thank you!

Most of the contents are fairly interesting anyway.

Um, many thanks for your almost embarrassingly high praise for the Cordwainer Smith collection (which I got to copyedit). Yes, we are working on doing **Norstrilia** in a similar format; but the contract was approved only recently, and the text hasn't gotten to me yet.

Well, St. Louiscon was also *my* first worldcon -- but I was over 30 at the time, and this took it a good deal more calmly than you seem to have. For one thing, I didn't have anywhere near as much contact with the pros as you did (although I *did* meet Ray Lafferty). Details ... Well, I didn't notice Harlan as being so central to the con as you perceived him; we'll have to agree to disagree about that ... I don't think Joe L. Hensley was ever a congressman; still, he was certainly well connected politically, and it wouldn't astonish me if Ray Fisher invoked his name that way ... I don't know whether the night manager got fired, but I do know the people who got the hotel's fire insurance canceled after the con. Which reminds me: *How can you write about St. Louiscon and not mention the @\$#!&* elevators?*

As for the central set piece, I showed your account to Elliot Shorter. He says that (1) you've oversimplified the sequence of events (although he didn't specify how, and my own recollection isn't that good); (2) his words were "Now just a cotton-picking minute, Harlan" (sounds right to me); and most important, (3) it was a *different* group of protesters who wanted a "beer blast/dead dog party" -- he simply objected to Harlan's making the decision unilaterally (I have no independent knowledge on this question, but I'd take his word for it.)

Done!

ZINES RECEIVED IN TRADE ... AND OTHERWISE

The following publications were ... well, received in trade. And otherwise. Annotations self-explanatory, though I must mention why we don't list net addresses: the **Chall** editors don't have that capability and are jealous.

Aces Vol. 2 #1 / Paul McCall / 5801 W. Henry St., Indianapolis IN 46241 / Trade. / Wonderful pulp fanzine, featuring wowser artwork, including a color **Doc Savage** cover and a grand "Flying Wombat Woman" spread by Ron Wilber. Pulp is a fun corner of fandom, as pursued by such zines as this one, Jerry Page's **Spicy Armadillo Stories** and the apazines of Lynn Hickman. I wish I knew more about them. ("Then read the zines, stupid!")

American Journal of Psychoscamlology / Elst Weinstein / 11850 Mt. Harvard Court, Alta Loma CA 91737 / \$2 or. / Satire of Regency Dancing from the scion of the Hugu Awards, aptly illustrated by Kurt Erichsen. Hardly an ongoing publication, as you can never tell what Elst will lay on you next. Mark me: we owe this guy a Hugo nomination.

Astromancer Quarterly #s 1-4 / Joe Maraglino / P.O. Box 500, Bridge Station, Niagara Falls NY 14305-0500 / Hand-delivered over Christmas, and proof that Ted White -- who pilloried this zine shortly after he tore at **Challenger** -- is out of his mind, AQ is probably the handsomest fanzine produced. Beautiful Linda Michaels art and outstanding ongoing features. Joy Moreau's



Jerry Collins

remiscences of her family's life in the circus world are almost as wonderful as her attic, where mementoes of her father Sabu's incredible career are on display. Extraordinary fare.

The Boomer Flats Gazette: A Lafferty Reader 2 / Dan Knight / Box 79777, 1995 Weston Rd., Weston ON, M9N-3W9 Canada / I can't find a price, but I got *my* copy by howling and cavorting in glee when R.A. Lafferty won Japan's Seiun Award at Confrancisco. Editor Knight, seated behind me, handed me this zine -- no doubt to shut me up. This is a delightful publication about s.f.'s most delightful writer, with fiction, a Michael Swanwick appreciation, and an article about **More than Melchisedech** which has me frothing for the book. Since I published one in 1979, who's done an up-to-date Lafferty bibliography?

Cube #s 52 & 53 / Hope Kiefer / c/o SF³, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701-1624 / \$12 SF³ membership or. / Madison fandom's newsletter is faanish and you don't even have to know the people to enjoy it. #53 has an amazing variety of material, starting with a welcome rundown on the Tiptree Award.

Doodlebug Nos. 2 & 3 / Bill Kunkel & Laurel Yates / 805 Spyglass Lane, Las Vegas NV 89107 / The usual. / Enthusiastic fanzine from one of the coming hot spots in national fandom: Las Vegas. Led by Joyce and Arnie Katz, the desert city is center to a blaze of new fanzine activity. They even allowed *me* to visit for a memorable morning after Confrancisco. Splendid Ross Chamberlin cover on issue #3. Watch these people. They're going places.

Empties nos. 12-13 / Martin Tudor / 845 Alum Rock Rd., Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG U.K. / £5 or. / Excellent Britzine -- I love that A4 paper -- with a neat personal flavor. Shep Kirkbride provides cool caricaturish covers of the editor for these two issues; reminds me of Ross Chamberlin. Funny squib by Langford (I wish he'd send me **Ansible**).

File 770 #103 / Mike Glycer / 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys CA 91401 / \$8/5 issues or news or. / Mike's classic gossipzine has widened its scope; "The Men who Corflued Mohammed" is a superior fiction about nostalgia neurosis among fannish oldtimers. Glycer calls for a "Friends of Ellison" group to arise in response to the "Enemies" klatsch recently forming, and amen, I say.

The Ft. Dickerson Dispatch #1 / Curt Phillips, 23800 Green Springs Rd., Abingdon VA 24210 / ? / The newsletter of Co. D, 1st Battalion, 15th United States Infantry, a Civil War living history organization, this is the January 1994 issue so more may have been published by now. Phillips, a former SFPAn, is a skilled Civil War "re-enactor".

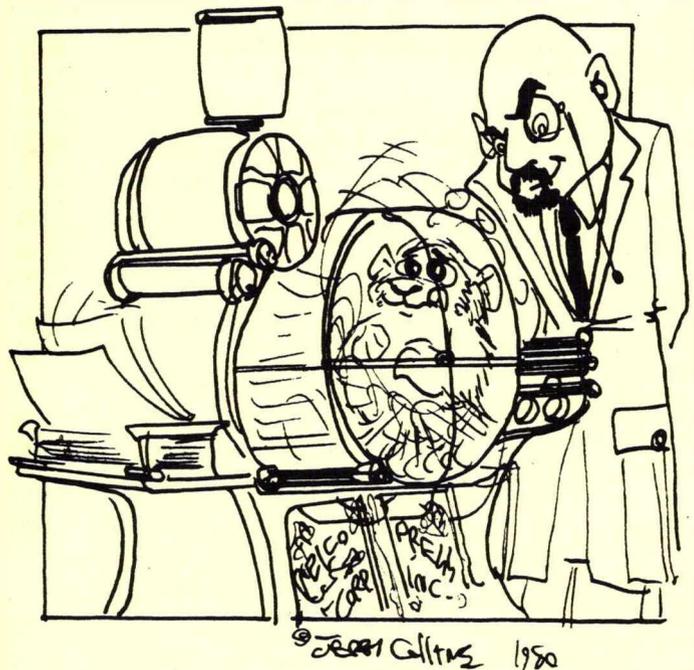
Fosfax nos. 167-169 / Timothy Lane / P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / Exceptional dittohead production from the South's most productive fanziners; I can't even get annoyed at its stubborn conservatism. No, Tim, **Chall** only *wishes* it were quarterly.

The Frozen Frog #9 / Benoit Girard / 1016 Guillaume-Boissat, Cap-Rouge, Quebec, G1Y 1Y9 Canada / \$2 or. / Strong article on American comics; most of the issue is (no surprise) lettercol, much of which is devoted to the editor's call for "masculist SF". They took *him* much more seriously than they did **Challenger**, he bawled, green with jealousy.

Gegenschein #69 / Eric Lindsay / 7 Nicoll

Avenue, Ryde, NSW 2112, Australia / Trade or. / Latest of several issues that have built up as **Chall #2** has lumbered towards completion, this publication briefly reviews Lindsay's voluminous reading list, showcases welcome Rotsler art and contains a long article about house renovations that makes me rejoice in my squalid little apartment.

Habakkuk Chapter 3 Verses 3 / Bill Donaho / 626 58th Street, Oakland CA 94609 / \$3 or. / The contributors here have almost all been



Jerry Collins

around since before there was dirt, which lends this classic fanzine a timeless aura. For obvious reasons I liked this issue far more than the second issue, but the invective of Ted White, keying off here on **Astromancer Quarterly**, is still vicious and vindictive; it speaks badly of fandom that it embraces this vicious and vindictive man so easily. But the non-White material, including a huge lettercol, is fine. "Verse" 4 is out, with a tremendous squib by Donaho on his youth in Texas.

Inception Eight / Steve Jeffery & Vicki Lee France / 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA, U.K. / The usual. / The magazine of the Storm Constantine information service, I'm forwarding it to Rich Dengrove, whose piece on "The Grimoires" last issue seems keyed to the same interest.

Intersection P.R. 3 / Vincent Docherty / Box 15430, Washington DC 20003 / Join the con! / Progress report for the '95 worldcon -- the one everybody *hopes* to get to. It's bound to be a great experience, and Vince Docherty is one of fandom's most pleasant souls.

The Knarley Knews / Henry L. "Knarley" Welch / 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / \$1.50 or. / Fannish journal with an excellent lettercol and a strong page of "book-bashing" reviews. The reason I received it, he says, is twofold: "You won't find any violation of O.J. Simpson's privacy in this publication" and "Too many fresh strawberries are bad for the concentration." I believe it!

Mimosa No. 16 / Dick & Nicki Lynch / P.O. Box 1350, Germantown MD 20875 / \$2 or ("or" much preferred). / The three-time Hugo winner is the new standard among fanzines: super stuff from super people. **Mimosa** is, like its editors, almost unnaturally nice -- even White isn't as nasty here as elsewhere -- but it's also a cut above almost every other fanzine being produced in the quality of its writing and production. Sharon Farber's accounts of her medical career won her a Hugo nomination last year. D&N suffered a terrible fire recently; forgive them late correspondence.

Moriarity's Revenge No. Two / David Hicks / 8 Dyfrig Street, Pontcama, Cardiff CF1 9LR, U.K. / The usual. / This chatty publication springs almost entirely from its lettercol, blending outside commentary with editorial responses.

The Reasonable Freethinker #s 1-3 / Tom Feller / Box 13626, Jackson MS 39236 / No price. / Tom is a familiar figure from LASFAPA and local conventions. His zine is eclectic, ranging from responses to **Schindler's List** and **Shadowlands** to the Florida Folk Festival. Word to the wise: Tom works for a hotel chain, so he's a good fan to schmooze.

The Reluctant Famulus / Thomas D. Sadler / 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian MI 49221-1627 / The usual. / Enthusiastic and funny fanzine from an enthusiastic and funny fan whom I hope will soon be writing an enthusiastic and funny article for **Chall**.

Riverside Quarterly Vol. 9 No. 2 / Leland Sapiro / Box 958, Big Sandy TX 75755 / \$2.50 or. / Fandom's premiere lit'ry fanzine is a lovely handful, thanks in large part to Art Editor Sheryl Birkhead, but you need a microscope to read it. To my surprise I find I like the poetry, and Grace Russo Bullaro's piece on **Blade Runner** is superb. She's right to focus on Roy Batty's complex, messianic character. (That film is infinitely better in its "director's cut" rerelease.)

SFSFS Shuttle No. 111 / Judy Bemis / P.O. Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / \$15 adult SFSFS membership or. / Bemis visited NOLA a couple of years back as a member of Golden Apa, and despite being hobbled by a busted leg, was great fun. Club events and such.

Small Press Review Columnist / Rodney Leighton / R.R. #3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, B0K 1L0, Canada / ? / A single, rather depressed page of zine reviews. Rodney expresses an interest in wrestling; he should meet Arnie Katz.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 5 No. 5 / Sue Francis / 5503 Matterhorn Dr.,

Louisville KY 40216-1326 / Available for SFC membership or trade, I imagine. News about Southern fandom, club directory, convention reports and listings, from the SFC President. This issue has a chilling **haha** account of last winter's crippling snowstorm. I receive the **Bulletin** as a Rebel Award winner perc ("What's the Rebel Award?" asks Andrew Murdoch) but name it here as a strong benefit of our "insular" slice of fandom.

Spent Brass #26 / Andy Hooper and Carol Root / 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle WA 98103 / The usual. / Hooper is a personable presence, but the hoot of this issue is Ted White renaming himself "Dr. Fandom" and offering to answer all our fannish questions for us. (Not to mention *my* letter explaining to "Dr. Fandom" why I send **Chall** by third class mail, when *he* demands first. Apparently it's all right that **Habakkuk** goes forth *bulk rate*.) Read it for Hooper.

Spicy Armadillo Stories / Jerry Page / 193 Battery Place NE / Atlanta GA 30307 / Or. / I've seen no recent issue of Jerry's terrific pulp-oriented publication, always funny, attractive, informative, and bountiful. If it was a woman I'd ask it to dinner.

Spindizzy #3 / Joyce Worley Katz / 330 S. Decatur Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / Or. / Joyce and Arnie allowed me to invade their gorgeous office/home during my trip back from Confrancisco, and my only grouse with these wonderful people is that Arnie dropped too quickly out of SFPA. Joyce chatters about TAFF and the "fans of tomorrow."

Stet 8 / Leah Zeldes Smith & Dick Smith / 410 W. Willow Road, Prospect Heights IL 60070-1250 / \$3 or. / Handsome Hugo nominee in multicolored mimeo, with outstanding contributors -- Gene Wolfe, Phyllis Eisenstein, Pat Sims, Bob Tucker, Neil Rest ... Jackie

Causgrove's article almost had me howling that **Chall**'s use of the word "femfefan" wasn't as outmoded as people said, but then I noticed that it was written in 1977.

Sticky Quarters 23 / Brian Earl Brown / 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit MI 48224 / \$2 or. / Brown and I have always regarded each other with mutual suspicion, as I am friend to his enemies (in REHUPA, the Robert E. Howard apa). But most of this issue revolves around his new daughter, and is charming.

Texas S.F. Inquirer #52 / Alexander R. Slate / c/o FACT, Inc. P.O. Box 9612, Austin TX 78766 / \$1.50 or. / The journal of the Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc., won a Nolacon II Hugo under the editorship of Pat Mueller, and is still a good journal. High points of this issue are part II of Evelyn Leeper's detailed review of Confrancisco panels and the editor's most generous critique of **Challenger** no. 1. ("[A]nother top-notch contender for the fanzine Hugo." Wow!)

Trash Barrel / Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood CA 91606-2308 / Trade. / Brief fanzine reviews, doesn't mention **Chall**



Nancy Mayberry

#1 -- it's a sign of how greatly zinedom has changed that Donald's typeface -- regular serif pica, from a manual typewriter -- has a pleasant nostalgic look to it.

White Trash / Thomas A. Longo / P.O. Box 130121, Roseville MN 55113-0121 / \$2.50 @, \$10/4 issues, or. / I knew "Thomas Anthony Longo" as "Tommy" back when we were both lots younger and he lived in New Orleans. Television, politics, baseball, fiction, a good lettercol -- Tommy fits a lot into his "urban journal." I taught him everything he knows.

ZX #5 / Andrew C. Murdoch / 2563 Heron Street, Victoria BC V8R 5Z9 Canada / \$2 Canadian or. / "Vote for ME!" Murdoch proclaims, when asked his response to being nominated for an Aurora Award. I wish I knew what an Aurora Award was. Andrew announces he's creating an e-mail address directory for fans, and reveals that he is *gasp* *young*, a malady that will pass with age.

8 1/2 x 11 Zine / Teddy Harvia / P.O. Box 905, Euless TX 76039 / The usual. / One-sheet natterzine from the taciturn fan artist. This issue is from 1992; perhaps Teddy sent it in *anticipation* of **Challenger**, or maybe I've shuffled my stacks of fanzines. Send us more, people.

THE UNKNOWN FLASHMAN

Great is the rejoicing following the upcoming appearance of **Flashman and the Angel of the Lord**, tenth of the Harry Flashman novels from George MacDonald Fraser. This new book deals with John Brown and the attack on Harper's Ferry, which is excellent ... but it's been four torturous years since the last Flashy, and curses on Fraser for making us wait.

We Flashman fans should be used to living in a state of frustrated anticipation. Indeed, I, personally, have been craving one Flashman story for decades: his account of the Zulu uprising, when -- as we've been told -- he escaped Ishlandwana by the side of Sebastian Moran, to end up, with typical Flashman luck, at Rorke's Drift. I didn't think we'd ever see that story -- but that was because we didn't know where to look.

One of Dennis Dolbear's British pals sent him a magazine interview with Fraser. An offhand comment by the great author nearby made Dennis blow lunch. *The Zulu story had been written ... and published!*

Apparently "Flashman and the Tiger" had been serialized in London's **Daily Express** in the fall of 1975. It instantly became our first priority in life.

Where could we find back issues of a foreign newspaper? Local universities didn't know where London was, let alone carry its newspapers. But we had friends in

Washington D.C., as rabid on the subject of Flashman as ourselves. We sent them to the Library of Congress. Come out with Flashman, we told them, or don't come out at all.

Vern Clark was the noble lad who did the searching and finding and printing, from official United States microfilm. Rusty Burke sent the golden pages south. "Flashman and the Tiger" was in hand. Of course, the tiny type had been smeared by the microfilming process and the copies were poor as a result. Only enlarged xeroxes made it sort-of possible to make out the story.

Which was terrific ... if incomplete, reading like sample chapters for a full book. Ishlandwana is ably described -- no one can bring a battle alive on the page like Fraser -- but not Rorke's Drift. Instead we leap forward in time to follow Flashman into Conan Doyle's "Adventure of the Empty House", and encounter ... well, you know who. (We also meet Flashman's granddaughter ... who is *definitely* true to her blood.) Wonderful stuff, if as I said unfinished, and without Fraser's footnotes, always an extra dimension of pleasure in any Flashman tale.

Will we ever see the entire story, in book form? Or the Civil War epic we cry for every night? We live in hope. Pray that George Fraser lasts a hundred years ... and publishes a new Flashman tale for every one of them. Where we can find them.

*In which Challenger's Associate Editor enters the world of Hollywood, and **Blue Velvet** ...*

LET'S BE FRANK

Dennis Dolbear

"I've always been an admirer of Frank Booth."

"You mean of Dennis Hopper, who *played* Frank Booth."

"Yeah. Him too."

I felt *his* presence long before Guy told me that *he* would be in town. And it made sense. What better place -- on earth, anyhow -- for Frank Booth than New Orleans? This isn't Lumberton, Oregon, with its wholesome exterior founded on greed and corruption. There's no wholesome exterior here -- the greed and corruption is all right out front where you can easily get at it.

Did I suspect we were fated to meet? Yes. Because one evening I came home from work -- late -- and found that a film crew had been shooting at the motel near my house. I sauntered over, and trying to act nonchalant, asked one of the techs if this was the film with Frank-, I mean, Dennis Hopper in it.

"Yeah, but he's gone."

Shit!

So I wrote it off at that moment. But two days later, I'm working late at court -- finishing my SFPazine, natch -- when I get a call from Liz, the assistant judicial administrator. She makes a request -- did I have a key to Section H that she could borrow? Sure, I said. Just bring the key down when you're ready, she said. And when I walk out into the hall, what do I find? A film crew set up at the other end. My pulse quickened as I walked the distance -- the hall in the Criminal Courts Building is nearly a block long -- and realized -- *He's here.*

That was confirmed when I got to the judicial administrator's office. Liz was sitting around with several roadie-like types, and we had a quick conversation: they needed our courtroom for shooting their HBO movie, **Double Cross**, and yes, they were *very* grateful -- was there anything they could do for me?

As a matter of fact, there was.

Listen, I've always admired Frank Booth. Sharp dresser, smooth personality, marvelous conversationalist, great with the ladies. Good taste in music -- like Roy Orbison before he was (again) popular. And not in the least pretentious -- drinks Pabst Blue Ribbon instead of that imported stuff in the green bottles.

And I've always admired Frank Booth's alter ego, Dennis Hopper, who portrayed him in David Lynch's **Blue Velvet**. While a lot of Hollywood types pretend to be rebels and nonconformists, this is a guy who has really fought the system -- and paid the price for that, apparently with few if any regrets. So how was I going to pass up an opportunity to meet him?

I wasn't. They told me to come back in a few hours -- he'd be finished shooting. No problem -- there was something I had to pick up first. I went to Schwegmann's Supermarket, bought that item, and then dropped by my house, to call that other great admirer of Frank and Dennis, Guy. But his neighbor informed me that was at a movie. *Damn!* Of all the nights. I told her if he dropped by, to tell him to meet me at court; I'd be there. And to court I returned.

They were still shooting when I returned. And

who did I meet? Faruk von Turk, a.k.a. Justin Sinston, doing a turn as an extra in a courtroom scene. And then the assistant producer tapped me on the shoulder. I'd have to hope for a meeting tomorrow.

I did get to have dinner with the crew, and good it was -- jambalaya, meatloaf, good salad bar. And I got to note the quality of the femininity that was hanging around -- not in the picture, just *hanging around*, trying to meet somebody in the movie business. Unbelievable. I'm in the wrong damn profession, which I gloomily noted to GHLIII when he finally showed up.

I sketched out to Guy the next day's itinerary. It was going to be tight -- we were scheduled to drive to Tuscaloosa, Alabama to participate in a SFPA collation. But hey -- priorities are priorities, and SFPA could at least wait for a few hours for something like this --

Morning. Cold. And out on the corner of Tulane and Broad, where the breakfast wagon was set up for the film crew, it was windy and *damn* cold. And when GHLIII showed up, he was pessimistic about our prospects. "I just don't see any way we're going to talk to Dennis Hopper." But I had faith.

And faith was rewarded. The assistant producer came over and informed me that Hopper could talk to us while he was being made up. Incredible! We waited by the makeup truck, watching through the doors as a *petite*, middleaged woman had her hair primped. ("Adrienne Barbeau," whispered Guy. "No way," I replied. "Adrienne Barbeau has ..." and I made a motion indicating truly mountainous boobs. But it *was* her, it turned out -- plastic surgery can really do wonders these days.)

Miss Barbeau left. No one was around. The wind was icy, and we were standing in it. "You know those kids in **Beatlemania**?" I said to Guy. "I'll never laugh at them again. At least

they were kids. Here we are, middle-aged attorneys, and we're doing the same damn thing."

And then around the corner -- a short, powerfully-built figure with a large head and intent eyes and intensity that you'd have to experience personally. "You the guys who wanted to talk? C'mon in." And as Dennis Hopper seated himself in the makeup chair -- *enthroned* -- his two acolytes, Lillian and Dolbear, swarmed about him, chattering on about his work, his life, and a hundred other topics.

What those two found out was that Dennis Hopper really is unpretentious for a star of his magnitude. (Contrast a recent incident with the considerably less important and infinitely more disposable Peter Weller, who, at a press luncheon, jabbed his finger at a reporter seated at his table and demanded he move. "I don't sit with people I don't know, and I don't know *you*." Unfortunately, he said this to the head of the New York Times Press Syndicate. Peter Weller is one stupid human being.) Hopper engaged in the conversation, asking about our backgrounds, discussing some law, and film, of course -- his experience with David Lynch, and the other filmmakers he's been involved with over his career. As we talked, he loosened up even further, joking around with us, and with his manager, seated in the corner.

Finally, I thought it time. "Uh, Mr. Hopper, I'd like some autographs ..."

"No problem -- got a piece of paper?"

"Well, it's more complicated than that. You see ..." And I brought forth my purchase from the paper sack I'd been carrying around since the previous evening. A case of *Pabst Blue Ribbon*.

"You see, we'd like you to autograph these *beer cans* -- and this *box*."

"Woo! That's a new one. But okay ..."

"One more thing ... I'd like you to autograph them as *Frank Booth*."

Resigned laughter. But he did it. Inscriptions from **Blue Velvet** to me, Guy, and our friend George Inzer, my requests (and my misquotes), onto labels, later affixed to Pabst cans.

To Dennis -- Now it's fucking dark. FRANK BOOTH

To Guy -- Don't you fucking look at me. FRANK BOOTH

To Geogre [sic] -- You are one sauve [sic] fucking man. FRANK BOOTH

And especially for me -- he autographed the carton.

FUCK HEINEKEN! FRANK BOOTH (Dennis Hopper)

Some more conversation -- I talked a little about handling drug cases, since this film was about Barry Seal, the famous drug-running pilot who first broke much information about the Colombian-American cocaine connection ... and who was gunned down in Baton Rouge when I was in law school there, not far from my apartment. I handed Hopper and his manager my cards, promising to represent them for free if they got into any trouble down here.

"See?" he said to his manager. "If we were still into drugs, we could've used these guys."

And on that note, Guy and I said our goodbyes and took off for Tuscaloosa. What a start to a great weekend. And soon it would be dark.

STRANGE BUT TRUE^o

TWIN FREAKS!

DENNIS DOLBEAR AND
DENNIS HOPPER WERE

**SEPERATED
AT BIRTH!**



Dave Ryan

Challenger no. 2

A THOUSAND WORDS ... the Challenger photo pages

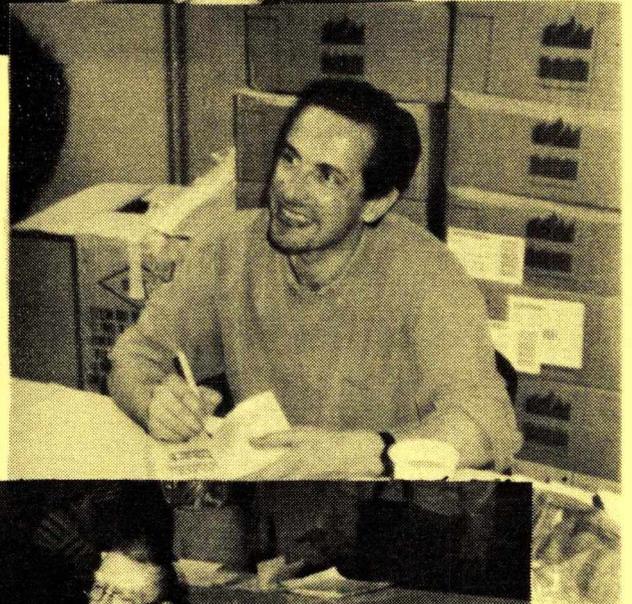
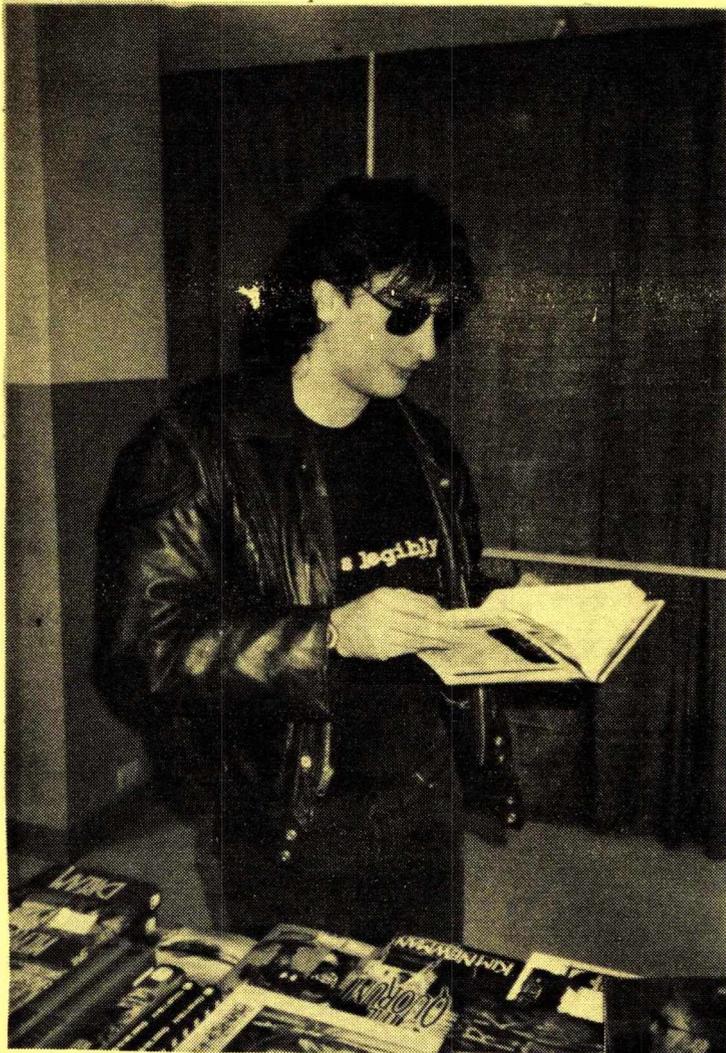
There's nothing New Orleanians love more than hosting visitors. **Lloyd Biggle** graced our burg with a research call in the summer of '94. The sign by which he stands reads, **On This Site in 1897 Nothing Happened.**



And last November, the whole **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION** came to town. Here **Julius Schwartz, Linda Nightengale** and **Ricia Mainhardt** are met by phos.



Challenger no. 2



**WFC
welcomed**

...

**Neil Gaiman, of Sandman ...
Len Wein, of Swamp Thing ...
Clive Barker, of Hellraiser ...
The DeCamps, of you name it!**

Challenger no. 2



Chelsea Quinn Yarbro peruses a special edition



Amy Thomson should be cloned.

**WFC
welcomed**

...

Elsie Wollheim



AWARDS...

Designed by **Gahan Wilson**,
the **World Fantasy Awards**



Lewis Shiner, of **Glimpses**, Best Novel ... and the other victors. NOLA's own **Peggy Ranson** (far left) picked up J.K. Potter's second award as Best Artist.

ON THE SPOT

A Historical Note

Ahead of my every step black butterflies sprang into the air, and a legion of grasshoppers scattered into the corn, the wheat, the tall tufted grass. I heard a mental drumbeat that increased in tempo as I raised my eyes to the edge of the gentle slope before me, to the copse of trees, and the rows of statues and monuments. After I reached the road, and the split-rail fence along it, the drum-rhythm in my head boomed quicker yet, and along the last hundred yards of ground -- beneath which Confederate bones, they say, still lie buried -- I broke into a run.

I carried nothing more than a camera, and a waxed paper cup sloshing with melting ice. Only butterflies struck my chest. I was alone, not shoulder to shoulder with 13,000 others, and awaiting me at the low stone wall were only other tourists. Still, I felt some inkling, some ghostly residue of the force that took my forefathers towards that wall, up that hill, 131 years before.

I reached the low stone fence -- **the Angle**, they call it -- and clambered over, ignored by the tour group attending its ranger, and ran to the stone marking the spot where Lo Armistead fell. No one else made it that far; projectiles far more serious than butterflies had taken them down. I seized one of the Confederate flags stuck into the dirt around Armistead's monument. Waved it once or twice ... then returned the flag to the ground.

GETTYSBURG. I visited there last summer.

I arrived on a dark night, and could see little. On either side rose the silhouettes of low hills and ridges ... and then there was a sign, LUTHERAN SEMINARY, and I could almost hear yankee General Buford, in his Chad Everett movie incarnation, saying, "Have you ever seen such excellent *grrr*ound?" The little city opened before me -- quaint, attractive,

spotted everywhere with monuments I could not read in the small light.

A short night followed. A few minutes after 7 the next morning, I rolled south of the city, following the signs for AUTO TOUR, and became frustrated. Like every American male above the age of 9, I knew the layout of the battlefield: two concentric half-circles, rebels on the outside on Seminary Ridge, Federals within, on Cemetery Ridge and the two Round Tops. But I couldn't find any of those places, even though I drove and drove past monument after yankee monument. *grumble* And then I motored down one more statue-laden road to brake, startled, by a sign. **THE ANGLE.**

There's something to be said for blundering about. I had by sheerest fortune found my way to the heart of the Battlefield -- to the spot where, on July 3, 1863, the Confederacy had come as close as it would ever come to ultimate victory -- to the crest of Pickett's Charge. Here, at this spot, by this tree, by this Angle in the low stone fence stretching down the low ridge, General Lewis Armistead had led his Virginians into the yankee army -- and *at this spot* marked by a small, tough-to-read monument, had fallen. The furthest reach into Union lines by the Confederate States of America. I looked down the gentle slope over the wide field to the line of trees opposite. Barely visible was a tall memorial there. A wide path connected that spot and this.

It was near to 8, so I went to the visitor's center to sign up for a tour. Dennis Dolbear had passed along an **American Heritage** which had convinced me that a one-on-one tour by one of the park guides was the best way to see the site. True. Guides have to pass a rigorous test to become certified, and mine proved his worth. He knew every inch of the Gettysburg Battlefield and every moment of the three days there which changed America.

We climbed Little Round Top; we visited the Devil's Den. My guide photographed me at the famous juncture of two high rocks where Alexander Gardner had posed a dead Confederate soldier. As he does for every visitor, my guide stopped at my "home" state memorial. Louisiana's is a ludicrously overwrought figure of a fallen rebel, his toes poking out of his shoes, over which an angel flies tooting on a trumpet. (The massive number of monuments, one for each Federal regiment and rebel state, brought home the *organizational* effort such a battle must have been. That in itself was impressive.)

But other states had done better. Virginia's memorial shows Lee atop Traveler, facing across that awful field between Seminary and Cemetery Ridges. From there you can barely see the copse of trees which was "Marse Robert's" target for his ill-considered assault on the middle. North Carolina lost more men than any other Confederate state on those terrible days in July, 1863. Their monument was sculpted by Gutzon Borglum in off hours from Mt. Rushmore. It depicts Confederate soldiers, advancing: Pickett's Charge.

After the tour, I went back to the Virginia Memorial. The field stretched low and wide. Wheat hung low and promising. *That* day ... was there anything left growing out there? Jack Chalker had told me that Lee's problems that day had been coordinating three attacks -- this one, one at Culp's Hill (at the northern end of the Yankee line), another to the south. The 13,000 men in Pickett's Division had to sit in the woods and broil for four hours before they marching out for that distant copse of trees. Then as now it was very hot. Lee knew the charge was a desperate gamble ... but was convinced the yankee center was weak, and that his men could do anything. His men in turn thought Marse Robert the next thing up from God. When he pointed across that field, they went.

It was 9/10s of a mile across the field. I was overdressed, and it was very hot. But I set out.

I told a friend about my feelings as I trod the route of Pickett's advance. "Much *juju* in that field," he nodded. True: a place of Power, Power leant to the land not by an act of art or an extreme of nature or beauty in nature, but by the courage and tragedy of men. While I stood sweating at the Angle, others walked out onto the green slopes of Cemetery Ridge. One large young man had his hair carved -- the only word for it -- in intricate swirls and curlicue designs. No one could imagine someone less like the men who climbed that slope, July 3rd 1863, in the face of canister and shrapnel and Minie ball and bayonet. But I sensed no irony as he trotted down to the road cleaving the Battlefield, turned, and strode back. I could feel only that which we shared: the urge to imagine what it must have been like, to wonder if we could do it, to match ourselves against *those men*, at *this spot*.

I visited the National Cemetery. There the Union dead are laid in concentric circles, strips of stone instead of individual headstones. My greatgreatgrandfather came from Indiana; ironic if he lay among them. At the spot where Honest Abe gave his Address, Kentucky has erected a bronze memorial, its words engraved in facsimile of his handwriting. Is it blasphemy still for a heart claiming Southern heritage to catch at those words? Can an American of today abide in their revelation, as a faith, yet cling to what he sees as the overriding value of the other side? The Southern Cause was poisoned by slavery, overmatched by Lincoln's vision of a United States where all men are created equal. But at the Angle, *at this spot* it had no equal. *At this spot* it was simply the most phenomenal moment in the history of American valor.

Does this seem contradictory to you? I have no further explanation.

I left the next morning at 5:50. It was, like the great and terrible Independence Day of 1863, a Pennsylvania rainy morning.

*The
Challenger
Tribute*



Linda Krawecka now lives in Eastbourne, outside of London, but the *Challenger* editors knew her when. They met her at her first s.f. convention, a VulCon in New Orleans, and sat with her all night talking in the hotel lobby. They watched in awe as she attended her first worldcon, MidAmeriCon in '76, and with Annie Hebert, smashed it blubbering to its knees. They shared SFPA membership with her, and mourned when she left New Orleans for the United Kingdom. With pride they followed her accomplishments there -- founding the first women's apa in the U.K., working on a worldcon and a slew of national conventions, publishing a well-received genzine -- while treasuring her visits back to the States. They watched her accept Alan Moore's *Watchmen* Hugo at Nolacon II. They miss her.

This illo is by Dave Carson. Linda's the one on the right.