

The Fanivore

George Flynn

You quote Tony Lewis as saying that in the Highmore bid "George Flynn... came up and read a piece in Frisian, which is why nobody realized it was in foul language." A vile canard, sir! Hell, I had enough trouble finding the *ordinary* Frisian words. (I took time off from Lunacon that year, went to the New York Public Library, and worked through English-to-Dutch and Dutch-to-Frisian dictionaries.) What I read was in fact a pretty bland endorsement of Highmore by the Frisian Fannish Freedom Front (4-F) -- and even for that I had to invent the word for "fannish."

You refer to "the Souvenir Book's one widely-discussed mistake." At the Business Meeting we also discovered that they'd omitted one word from the WSFS texts I'd sent them. Unfortunately, the word was "not" ...

You were told to "borrow George Flynn's copy" of the Hugo results? Sorry, but I never managed to get the full data either. I also had to wait to read it in *Locus* (and to read the full site selection numbers in *File 770*).

By the way, an interesting tidbit from the NASFiC election returns: 36 people cast first-place votes for "None

of the Above" and 5 for write-ins; on the second ballot, these votes went 28 for L.A., 3 for Santa Clara and 1 for Phoenix.

[[So most people who think "Better nowhere than L.A." still think "Better L.A. than Phoenix"?]]

Evelyn Leeper

LSC2 comments: I don't recall being told not to say, "I have no idea why I am on this panel." In any case, I certainly don't recall having expressed interest in "Ethics in SF: Repressive Societies and Resistance," but there I was anyway. (On the other hand, there was the infamous "DG" who "expressed interest" in panels by just showing up and claiming he was on the panel, then spending the time -- until the other panelists wrested the microphone from him -- pushing his book and his personal philosophy.)

[[I was skeptical people had only been placed on panels they asked about. Also, I was tongue-in-cheek about saying "they didn't obey" -- who would expect people at an sf con not to bash the programming department? I didn't expect that even when I was the pro-

gramming department!]]

And speaking of microphones, whose idea was it that eight panelists at a table built for five could have a reasonable panel with *one* microphone? The recording seems to have become the tail that wags the dog.

Not only did they not have the Hugo nominee pins when we arrived, I *still* haven't gotten mine. Have yours arrived?

[[Not so far. And knowing what effort it takes to keep working after that post-Worldcon inertia sets in, I will be pleasantly surprised if the pins ever arrive.]]

Handing out the Hugo Winners newsletter at the exits of the ceremony was not new with LSC2 -- L.A.con III did it as well.

[[Distributing the daily zine with the Hugo winners in it at the door of the ceremonies impressed fans at LSC2, even if it wasn't the first time.]]

(Further comments can be found in my report at <http://fanac.org/worldcon/-LoneStarCon/w97-rpt.html>.)

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File 770 121

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Sheryl Birkhead: 2



Terry Frost is the first fan fund candidate ever endorsed by File 770. And he is also the first fan ever to appear in its pages with his head grafted onto Demi Moore's body. (A few of you didn't

realize that Frost's torso on last issue's back cover wasn't actually his, but an artfully doctored image from the movie Striptease)

Basicon 2, the Australian National Convention ***September 27-28, 1997*** ***Report by Terry Frost***

On the Saturday morning of the convention, I saw Karen Pender-Gunn, one of the convention's two person committee, the other being Ian Gunn. I told her that I'd be reviewing Basicon for *File 770*.

She said "I hope it's a good one".

"Excellent fanzine, *File 770*," I retorted.

For an Australian National Convention held a couple of birthdays before an Australian Worldcon, Basicon 2 was small. The committee seems to have a "small is beautiful -- cheap is cute" philosophy when it comes to fan gatherings. While this may fit a regional convention, people do expect bigger things of a Natcon. If someone's going to travel from Perth or Brisbane or even gasp! some other part of this clay and granite planet, it is not unreasonable to expect that the annual gathering of the antipodean fannish family to be a little larger than 150 bodies including the attendees who spent only a day at the con.

The other problem was that the con was held concurrent with the Aussie Rules Grand Final in Melbourne so seats of airplanes and hotel rooms, even at the con venue, were as rare as footballers without knee injuries.

Enterprise, the local Star Trek club supplied a Saturday night party in the main area of the venue - the Cato Centre at the Melbourne YWCA. Lots of finger food and loud Middle Of The Road dance music. Good party in spite of that. A group of us fled down a side corridor where we sat composing an Australian Fannish Purity Test ("Have you ever had Alan Stewart's love child?" "Have you ever knowingly slept with a Ditmar winner?") and drinking surreptitiously from a brown-bagged bottle of Jim Beam. The YWCA was a dry venue -- one which, for some reason, the committee encouraged people to use again. Eric Lindsay sat down there with us drinking Kickapoo Joy Juice out of a hip flask as is his prandial wont. Both he and Jean Weber were excited by the fact that they're moving to an apartment overlooking a beach in north Queensland before the end of the century. Photos of the new Lindsay-Weber residence were shown around to the envious but small hordes.

The panel items varied as they usually do. The Anti-Football Panel was brightened by the presence of a guy from the Australian Skeptics who gave a brief talk on football fanaticism as a religious cult. Cath Ortlieb and Karen Pender-Gunn put in their perspectives on the peculiar Melburnian idiocy of pig bladder idolatry. It was the meatiest mind-fodder of the programming I attended. Most of the other programming was lite (sic).

The Fanthorpe panel was fun, with Ian Gunn and Janice Murray alternatively declaiming the man's deathless (indeed, unkillable) prose. There were passages that sounded very Ed Wood-like. Maybe they shared the same cock-eyed Muse.

I was a little disappointed by the Auction. There were many items there that went for much less than they were worth. Justin

Ackroyd did his usual iconoclastic and amusing job as auctioneer, in spite of suffering from whooping cough. This program item was cut short by the need to use the room for the closing ceremony. I prefer auctions that aren't so constrained by time. Let 'em run over time and raise more dough for the fan funds. They're fun and the most interactive programming apart from the business meeting.

Voting for the Australian Science Fiction Media Awards was open until lunchtime on the Saturday of the convention (never a good idea, it encourages vote-stacking), so the Awards were tacked on to the closing ceremony on Sunday afternoon. Alan Stewart received the William Atheling Award for his brief book reviews in "Thyme". Best Australian Long Fiction went to Lucy Sussex for *The Scarlet Rider* (Lucy was on the other side of town at the



time, alas). Best Australian Short Fiction was given to Russell Blackford for "The Sword of God" from *Dreamweavers*; Best Professional Artwork" was Elizabeth Kyle's cover for *Dreamweavers*; *Thyme* received best fanzine; Ian Gunn received Best Fan Artist and Bruce Gillespie received Best Fan Writer, making a speech that said "Now I don't have to learn to write like Terry (me) or Cheryl (Morgan)". When I grow up I want to be as gracious as Bruce is. I never seem to get pissed off with losing an award to Bruce. He's the benchmark. As usual, there were satisfying and dubious winners in the mix, as is the nature of such awards.

The only room party held was the dead-dog Zombiecon in which James Allen and his merry Singular Productions cohorts supplied a venue, munchies, coffee, an Amiga computer loaded with a zombie-shoot computer game, a VCR and twelve hours of zombie movies for the assembled masses to enjoy.

Next year may be different. The business meeting passed a vote to merge the Media and Literary SF Natcons permanently, thereby getting rid of the Australian Media SF Awards. The catch-cry here was "We're all fans" to which I puckishly added that we were all Lit Fans because even *Star Trek* is the product of writers (albeit a committee of them). Tasmania's Thylacon won next year's Natcon. It too will be small, but on an island with around 300,000 population that's not surprising. The concerns expressed are that media fandom's weight of numbers may swamp the Ditmars, pushing out worthy litfan endeavours. We'll just have to wait and see.

Ian Gunn's joke Teaspoon Awards were given out and the closing ceremony began, with an AV presentation by H. Gibbens. This ceremony was made memorable and embarrassing by Karen Pender-Gunn's utterances. She begged the con to give her an award next time because "I write fanzines, too." As someone who was nominated for Ditmars somewhere between ten and a dozen times before getting one, I think I can speak knowledgeably on this. Awards nominations are carrots on a stick that encourage us to do better, not a chocolate that some spiteful fannish parent refuses to give us even though we really want it. You have to do the hard stuff to get the good stuff.

On the whole, the good aspects of Basiccon were the people met and friendships strengthened after time apart. The prevailing ethos of 'small and cheap' conventions may have worked in the days when local fandom consisted of students and low-wage people but that's no longer true. People expect more of a Natcon than a small regional con with an award ceremony tacked on, particularly when they fly across a wide desert to get to it. Janice Murray and Alan Rosenthal were great. We all chose well on the voting for DUFF this time. And we apologise to Janice for letting her get cornered for a chunk of Saturday night by one of the less pleasant members of Melbourne fandom.

When I joined fandom in the very late 70's there was a spirit of passing on the knowledge of fanac and conrunning to others. I learned fanzine production from other fans, I learned what works and doesn't work in a con from the best of the then con-running fans of Sydney and Melbourne. But there was always that sense of sharing the knowledge, rather than getting

people in at the last minute to help out because of an unanticipated illness debilitating half of the committee. In spite of my misgivings, my partner Sharon and I e-mailed an offer of assistance to Karen when we heard of Ian's cancer. We never received a reply. Giving more than two fans a sense of ownership of a convention is, to me, important, particularly with Aussiecon 3 looming on the horizon. Natcons belong to all of us. They should never be a juggling act for an absurdly small number of people.

Pavlac Update

Ross Pavlac gave Bill Roper an update about his cancer treatment on October 15. Roper posted this online:

The good news is that he's been accepted into the experimental cancer treatment programs at the University of Chicago, which -- according to *U.S. News and World Report* -- has one of the top ten cancer research programs in the nation. The bad news is that he is unable to start the experimental treatments immediately, because his bilirubin count is too high. For those of you who are not medically inclined, this means that he's having problems with liver function. Since the liver is one of the body's great scavengers, this is a bad thing, especially when working with potentially toxic treatments.

Ross is now receiving standard chemotherapy to try to knock down the cancer, improve his liver function, and get the bilirubin levels to the point where he can begin the experimental treatment program. In order to make it easier to administer the chemotherapy, he has had a porta-cath installed in his chest. This device allows them to give him the treatments without having to poke a new hole in him each time.

For those who adhere to the Jewish or Christian faiths, Ross welcomes prayer. His top needs for the moment are:

1. For his bilirubin levels to go down.
2. That his current chemotherapy have beneficial effects.

[[Source: Bill Roper, via Gary Farber]]

2005, A Scots Odyssey?

U.K. fandom, at least the part wanting to run another Worldcon, has settled on a bid for 2005, according to Cheryl Morgan in *Emerald City 26*. Cheryl added with amusement that the bid chair, KIM Campbell, is a Canadian living in York, and the treasurer, Vince Docherty, is a Scotsman living in Oman. While no site has been announced, Vince has in the past written glowingly about the planned expansion of Glasgow's SECC.

The Loud Hawaiian Shirts of Mourning



William Rotsler
1926-1997

Bob Lichtman searched his files for a Rotsler cartoon to mark Bill's passing and and copied it to give away at a memorial gathering. Bob encouraged me to reprint it here.

Bill Rotsler passed away on Saturday, October 18 at the age of 70. Even through a decade of medical problems that claimed him by inches, Rotsler lived like Dionysus, not like an Emily Dickinson poem. Only in the end did one of the poet's lines apply: "I could not stop for death, so death kindly stopped for me."

Bill spent the day before he died going all over Hollywood with Bill Warren to shoot video of billboards for an installment of a show they did for French cable tv. He became so exhausted that he collapsed in a yogurt shop where they stopped after shooting. But he got back up and spent the drive home talking continually about where they would shoot the next day, and his plans for seeing people later in the week.

Bill's passing was unexpected, coming in the midst of his recovery from a successful fight against throat cancer involving radiation treatment and surgery. Bill stayed with Paul Turner after the surgery, and according to Paul, Bill passed away "at about 7:30 a.m. while I was fixing breakfast for us. When I went in to awaken him for breakfast I found that he was not breathing and had no pulse although I had heard him breathing about 15 minutes before as I passed by the living room. I called 911 and did CPR on him until the paramedics arrived a few minutes later. They were very professional and worked on him for about 20 minutes before they took him to Huntington Memorial in Pasadena -- but to no avail."

Bill looked better as his recovery from surgery progressed, but the complete story was not that simple. His friends were aware how poorly he slept (Paul said he kept himself sane producing hundreds of color graphics on a computer program), that he was constantly tired, and that he ate very little. No specific cause of death was announced.

Remembrances are coming from all over fandom. According to Geri Sullivan,

Arnie Katz and the Vegrants in Las Vegas plan to do a *Wild Hair* style one-shot Rotsler tribute at their November 16th meeting. A memorial gathering at LASFS on Sunday, October 26 drew 75 of his friends and family, most wearing loud Hawaii shirts in his honor. One exception, Harlan Ellison, wore a t-shirt Rotsler made for him, boldly lettered, "IMPERFECT, but still better than what I see around me."

The tributes to Bill at the LASFS gathering also served as unintended eulogies to a past golden era of local fannish life. Bill Ellern described a long-ago day when they unrolled 100 feet of butcher paper on the walls at Forry Ackerman's house, and Rotsler, Bjo and another artist filled it with cartoons at a furious pace. (Bill told me the thing he'd enjoyed most in fandom was cartooning with Alexis Gilliland.)

David Gerrold recalled with delight being included in some of Bill's series of thematic drawings, like "pipes of famous science fiction writers", and how Harlan was always represented by lightning, Larry Niven by nuts and bolts, and David by fur. He also told how he went to dinner with a group at the 1974 Equicon and after Bill drew on all the sunrise-colored placemats, David grabbed one and took it home. He showed the framed drawing to the gathering and explained that while he had owned many pieces of art in his life, "If the house was on fire and I had to pick one piece of art to run out the door with, that would be the one."

Many agreed that Bill knew his friends well, and showed it in the memorable artifacts he created for them. Most widespread were the personal badges Bill created. Larry Niven cited two of his: "Larry Niven, Friend of the Great and Near Great" and "Have sex outside my species." (Which reminded me of the *Rishratha* panel at the 1987 Westercon.) Kelly Freas said that Rotsler was one of the few artists he envied with a passion -- "He was so fast, and so

good."

It's been equally long since Harlan Ellison might walk into his home and find dozens of naked men and women prowling through his drawers and eating his food, simply because Bill needed a nice home to shoot a party scene for one of his movies. Harlan recalled that happened in 1967, and when his wife, Susan, found a photo taken that day showing Harlan with a naked woman on each knee he needed only one word of explanation: "Rotsler."

There was always creative chemistry between Bill and Harlan. Bill's mock comic strip about Harlan Elephant (probably published by Dick Geis) was a legend in its time.

Len Wein illustrated Bill's devotion as a friend by telling about a period when Len was obsessed that he was going to die, and Bill spent a lot of late hours with him. When Bill told him, "You're not about to die," Len demanded, "How do you know that?" Bill answered, "We haven't used you up yet."

Lisa Rotsler, Bill's daughter, said that he regarded his friendships and relationships as the most valuable things he possessed.

Greg Benford called Bill undervalued as an sf writer, and praised "Patron of the Arts" (1973) as the most insightful story he'd ever read about being an artist. (Afterwards, Greg expressed regrets that the movie deal for their collaboration *Shiva Descending* was not finalized in time to allow Bill to see his name on screen in the credits.)

Larry Niven began his tribute, "I don't have any weird stories because I was married nearly all the time I knew Bill. But I heard all *his* stories." Niven had been working with Bill on a novel set in the B-movie milieu before Bill's bout with cancer. Bill had admitted not being able to plot (at this, Benford nodded agreement) and got interested Niven in collaborating. Niven regretted that the book could never be finished without Bill's unique knowledge.

Bill wasn't simply a good storyteller, he lived good stories -- have you met anyone else who went house-hunting with Marilyn Monroe? Bill also was (as

George Clayton Johnson would say it) the hero of his own life. Mike Stern retold Rotsler's story of the time he was mugged in the men's room. In those days, Bill was a working photographer and carried steel layout rulers in sheaths on his belt, 12-inch and 18-inch. As Bill was using the urinal, a man with a knife came in and demanded Bill's money. Bill promptly grabbed the 18-inch ruler, whipped around, and missed by six inches, because he'd grabbed the wrong ruler. But the mugger was so unnerved to see a foot of steel flash in front of his face that he screamed, dropped his knife and ran out. And that was when Bill discovered he'd wet his shoes.

Bill made his mark in the field as an artist, writer and raconteur, but the reason he was loved was for his inexhaustible interest in others, shown by how he befriended, listened to and interacted with (it seems) everyone. One fan saw Bill sit in the lobby at a Loscon for seven hours talking to several dozen friends in relays. His friendship was so prolific that news of his passing affects some people you would not expect -- like one fan's mundane relative who spent an evening at a fannish party and warmly remembers the long conversation he had with Bill.

Bill was in fandom over 25 years by the time he was Torcon 2's fan guest of honor (1973) and he still hadn't won his first Hugo. Sometime before Intersection Bill mentioned to me that the only Hugos he had won came from overseas Worldcons (1975, 1979) and we speculated whether he'd win another from Glasgow (he didn't). This is not to imply that Bill was ever in the slightest eager to win awards: he shunned the spotlight of praise. And whatever passion he felt about awards was reserved for friends, like his indignation that brilliant artist Grant Canfield won no Hugos while Phil Foglio won two.

But it started to work on my mind how disappointed I would feel if Bill got no tribute from L.A.con III -- someone so generous and active, someone I liked very much. Other fanartists won the Hugo at the first two L.A.cons, so I didn't count on Bill winning in 1996. I was ripe for Craig Miller's suggestion to give Bill a

special committee award. Presenting that plaque to Bill was one of my favorite moments of the convention. Of course, just ten minutes later Bill won a Hugo. His *second* that weekend....

The beautiful Suzanne Vega recalled that night, of being on Bill's arm in a glamorous dress and Bill carrying Hugos in both fists. They went into one party where a drunk took in this vision and declared, "When I come back in my next life, I'm coming back as Bill Rotsler!"

We would do better to begin in *this* life to be like Bill -- by showing his same caring, loyalty and courage.

Bill Rotsler Tribute by Marjii Ellers

My sunset to the west was framed for fifty years by eucalyptus. This summer they died and were cut down. I still look out there expecting to see them, freshly disappointed every time.

Bill and I met almost forty years ago. Through the years of fandom he shines as one of the wonderful lights of fun and good times. That is what I expected of him; but when we were both afflicted with cancer, we were brought closer.

Our phone conversations were just trading of symptoms and speculations, with doses of irony and philosophy. Neither of us had done anything to bring on the malignancy, so our consciences were at rest. The arrows of Apollo sometimes fall at random. We each had the best of care, our doctors thought us good risks.

We each responded to treatment physically. We congratulated each other on the absence of lingering traces, with the exhilaration of reprieve. My fragile emotional state healed, helped in no small part by Bill's unflinching good humor. He encouraged me tremendously.

Bill will always be remembered. At every fan gathering, I will look for him, and like the trees, he will just not be there.

The difference is, I never cried for the eucalyptus.

Wire Service

Cancun-to-Canada Connection Promises Joyeux Noel

Teddy Harvia, fanartist and Cancun in 2003 bidder, writes, "I am in Montreal on business until Xmas. The weather has been gorgeous, in the 20sC, about 70 [degrees Farenheit.] The second weekend I was here I went to an SF convention where I spent time with French-Canadian fan Benoit Girard, his wife Ginette, and their friends. Fanspeak in French gives the term new meaning. The con hotel was rundown and poorly arranged, but the fans were friendly. And it was with walking distance of my hotel.

"I've done some sightseeing. The Olympic Stadium has not weathered the years well. Up close the patches on its roof and inclined tower make it look like a shoddy fake UFO. I'm flying down to Toronto over the long Canadian Thanksgiving holiday weekend to pick up my daughter, Matilda. Yvonne and Lloyd Penney have generously offered to drive us from the airport to the train station. I'll get a glimpse of the city at night.

"I've added 100 postcards to my collection here in Canada. They have great scenic shots but can't seem to laugh at themselves like some regions in the States. Their postage stamps are strange, at least the ones for within the country. And expensive!"

Teddy spent 52 cents to mail his postcard, including a 45 cent stamp depicting "the supernatural Vampire" a gray eminence on a blood red background that picks up where 1920's German art left off.

Cantors Plan Divorce

Marty and Robbie Cantor are instituting divorce proceedings after several years of separation. Marty writes in a recent apazine, "I have no regrets about my marriage to Robbie except that there is some sadness that it did not work out. The world would be a much better place if all marriages, which had to end in divorce, ended in as civilised a manner as did ours."

(File 770's unwritten policy for 20 years has been never to announce a divorce unless the news was given to me for publication by one of the principals, as occurred in this case.)

Pocket Dragons Booming

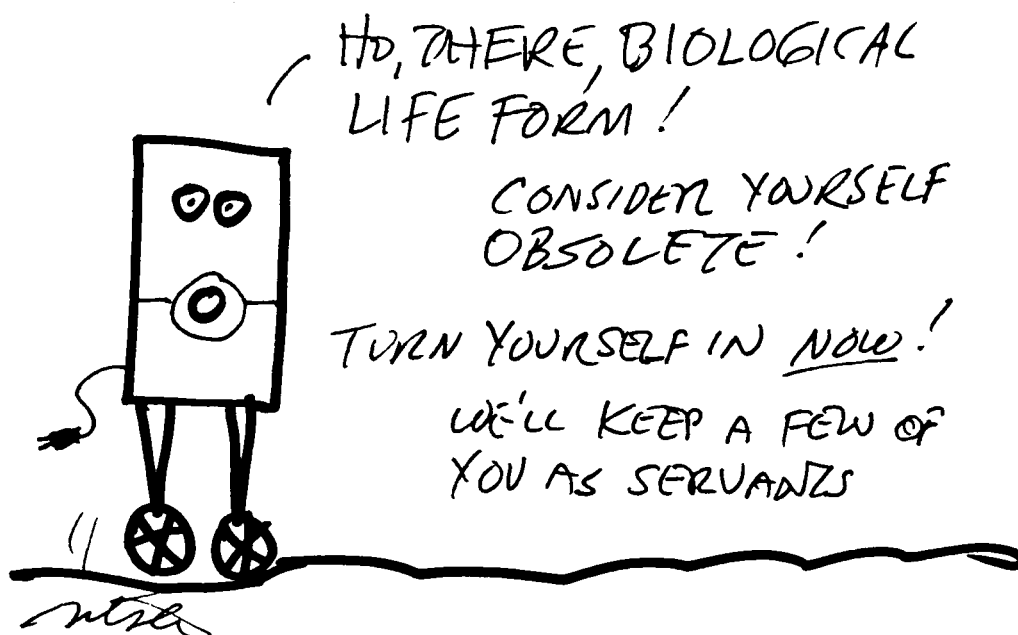
The distributor of *Pocket Dragons*, based on the art of Real Musgrave and created by Craig Miller and Marv Wolfman, has taken the unprecedented step of increasing its production order from 13 to 52 half-

hour episodes before the first one is even broadcast. The series has already sold in 59 countries and is being afforded prime program slots on the BBC and Europe's RTL stations. *Pocket Dragon Adventures* will debut in the Fall of 1998.

Cancer Gunned Down

"Haha! Got you, you little buggers," crowed Ian Gunn when he heard that his cat scan in September showed his tumors are 90% cured. His most recent e-mail, "Gunny's Jolly Cancer Hijinks", offers hope that after "just a few more chemos and another CT scan to make sure, I could well be back to normal. Of course I'll have to have tests and check-ups for years to come, just to make sure. But generally the news is good."

Ian adds, "The side effects, though, are no fun at all. The chemo that immediately followed the CT scan had the worst side-effects of my cancer-eradicating career. Maybe I'm just generally getting weaker.



"For one thing I fainted. I'd just stepped out of a particularly hot shower, vomited, put my pyjamas on and sunk to my knees. Now, I've had experience fainting before -- I used to do it as a teenager. I tend towards low blood pressure. Usually a combination of hot weather, not feeling well and listening to a conversation that turns to yuckie stuff like surgery, drug abuse, thalidomide babies, etc., and I was on the floor. Frightened the hell out of one of my teachers once. I'm probably the only person ever to faint during an episode of *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea* (it was about surgically implanted gills in humans). These days, as an adult, I've got a much more cast iron stomach and have even sat through Transport Accident Commission ads on TV....

"A few days later I was in the day ward having two units of A- pumped into me. Six hours sitting around with a half-dozen other guys, browsing *National Geographic*, listening to ambient music and watching the goldfish. I was still a bit slow on my feet, but I felt much better."

Ian says there is still a different problem, though. One of the chemo drugs has caused hearing loss as a side, effect, a continual "whispering, hissing noise like someone having a shower in the back of my head." Doctors are worried that further treatment may cause permanent damage, so the chemo will need to be changed.

Also, Ian picked up a some kind of "tummy bug" (pardon that exotic Aussie medical terminology) at Basicon and wound up in the hospital for four days. Ian has now begun a course of the less-toxic chemo.

X-Ray Revision

A CT scan of Gary Anderson's brain in early October showed the tumors are noticeably smaller. Cat Devereaux, who posts online reports of Gary's progress, added that after six weeks of radiation therapy, "It's been a surprise to everyone that he's kept over half his hair -- the brown part, not the gray. However, this disappoints a number of people because Gary had planed to be the 'Cossack from

Taras Bulba' character for Halloween. He'll just have to be a sun-burned raccoon instead!"

Gary's cumulative fatigue from the radiation therapy makes his left side "quit" sometimes. He also had another big seizure on October 21 and stayed overnight in the hospital. He was released back home after a short stay.

Radiation treatment continues. Cat's latest post concludes, "...Gary's weak right now so he also has a shinny new wheel chair to play with. It spins on a dime and has all kinds of nifty adjustments to make sliding from place to place a lot easier. He doesn't need it all the time, but it makes life more secure so Janet doesn't have to worry about him falling..... Hopefully, his strength will come back as he recovers from the mega-microwaving."

Ted Pauls Hospitalized

Ted Pauls fell into a coma as the result of a brain aneurism on October 14 and was hospitalized on life support. He had complained of a bad headache two days earlier.

Pauls was well-known as the publisher of the letterzine *Kipple* which discussed the hot politics of its day (like Goldwater vs. Johnson). Ted was one of the "five horsemen" who wrote reams of book reviews for *Science Fiction Review* (my private nickname for them; two others were Fred Patten and Paul Walker.) He and his wife Karen became well-known book dealers.

As of October 23, when Charlie Ellis visited, Ted could open his eyes when spoken to, but barely keep them open for long. He made improvements, responding to requests to move his hands, etc, but suffered a reinfarction (the blood vessel leaked again) the day before.

He responds well to visits and can hear (but not speak). Ellis believes cards, etc, from the many who knew him and/or enjoyed his writing would actually help his morale.

Mail them to: Ted and Karen Pauls, 6603 Collinsdale Road, Baltimore, MD 21234-6549

Changes of Address

John P. Chapman, 5208 East Keynote St., Long Beach,

CA 90808-2525

Dan & Danise Deckert, 2950 Monroe Dr., Ames, IA

50010. Telephone: (515) 232-6008

Georges Giguere, Box 75814, Edmonton, AB T6E 6K1 Canada

Diane Miller, 4304 N. Mamora Ave., Chicago, IL

60634-1739

Steven & Sue Tait, Joel Thurston, 507 7th Ave.,

Springville, IA 52336

Amy Thomson & Edd Vick, 14906 210th Ave. NE, Woodinville, WA 98072-7635

Elst & Carole Weinstein, 1427 Cambridge Ave., Upland, CA 91786. Phone: (909) 982-3936

Paul Edwin Zimmer

Paul Edwin Zimmer was attending Albacon in Schenectady, New York, and apparently suffered a major heart attack at the Boskone party. Three people trained in CPR were present and went to work on Paul, 911 was called, and he was taken to the hospital, but his death was reported the following morning.

If more widely known as a novelist, Paul was an easily recognizable figure at conventions, bearded and in kilts. As Edwin Bersark, he was a former Marshal of the SCA. Paul, together with Diana Paxson, began hosting Bardic Circles as private parties in their dorm rooms way back in the infancy of Mythcons over 20 years ago, modelled after gatherings of poets they held at their home. The Mythcon version gradually became a traditional, public and official function of the con.

According to Lisa Deutsch Harrigan, Greyhaven, the household of Marion Zimmer Bradley, Diana Paxson and others, planned a Bardic Wake in his honor on Saturday, October 25. (One of Paul's books is dedicated to Lisa.)

[[Sources: Lis Carey, Gary Farber, David Bratman, Lisa Deutsch Harrigan]]

How SF Ruined My Life: *A Memoir* by C. M. Barkley

*Sometimes the things
That are hardest to learn
Are the least complicated.*

The Indigo Girls
"Least Complicated"
from *Swampophelia*

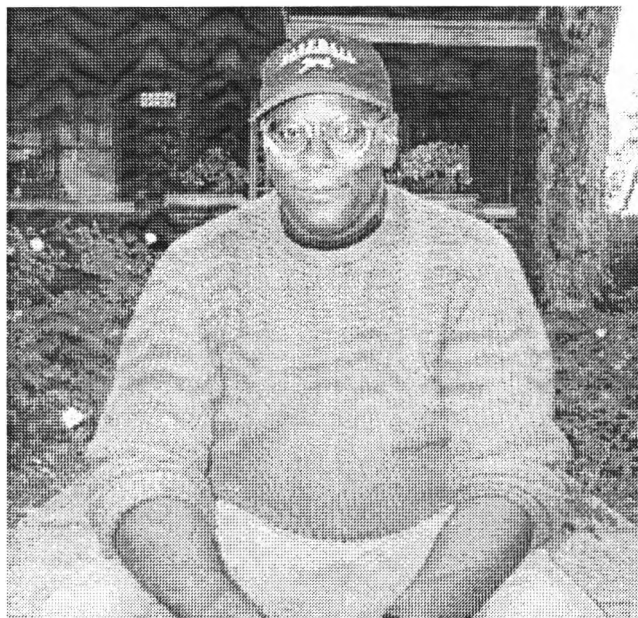
"Yes, I died. But I'm better now."

Captain John Sheridan,
From the *Babylon 5* episode
"The Summoning"

The MidwestCon of 1997 marks my 21st year in science fiction fandom, just slightly over half of my life. Seeing this as a significant anniversary in the most pivotal event in my life, I look back on my life with more than a little amazement.

I have met writers and celebrities and made more friends and acquaintances than anyone has a right to. Along the way, there have been lost and broken friendships, hopeless love affairs and sad misunderstandings. But on the whole, my journey in fandom has been informative, interesting and life affirming.

Besides being nostalgic, I have two other compelling reasons for writing this mini-memoir. On 7 January 1996, I became an ex-employee of Joseph-Beth Booksellers of Cincinnati, Ohio. Being a bookseller was far and away the best job I ever had and ever hope to have. Above all else, I have loved books all of my life. It was a privilege to sell them professionally at what the American Booksellers Association called the best bookstore in America for that year. However rewarding the job was, it took its toll on me physically and emotionally. After two years and three months, I came to my senses and realized that if I wanted to write, I could not do so working an er-



**The author sitting in front of his
childhood home.**

atic retail schedule at Joseph-Beth. There were other personal considerations that I had factored in, but the main reason I left was to write.

I immediately plunged into a project in late January last year and it continues as of this writing. I was going nowhere with it until I drafted a friend, fellow ex-bookseller and fellow writer, Matt Wehner, to be my writing partner.

In October, near Halloween, I nearly went into a diabetic coma and died. My father had warned me several years earlier that diabetes runs in the family and that I should be on the lookout for symptoms. At the time I collapsed, I was distracted by troubles at my new job as an engineering clerk and moving my family into a new apartment.

When the clinic doctor saw me, he just shook his head with amazement. My blood sugar level was **ten times** the norm. By all rights I should have died. The one, important thing I learned about

myself in my fannish years is that I am a tenacious, stubborn, hard-headed son of a bitch (sorry, Mom) and that if I desired something badly enough, I could achieve it. I didn't know how close to death I was, at least not consciously, but I did know that I wanted to succeed as a writer. The last place I wanted to be was in the hospital, sick, sucking on nothing but ice cubes for twenty hours as the intensive care staff struggled to stabilize me. There are stories, poetry and movies to be written. That, and the love for my family and friends, fannish or otherwise, is the driving force that kept me alive. Had I been depressed, in a lesser frame of mind, if I hadn't had those experiences in science fiction fandom, I believe I would have died.

After nearly a week in the hospital, I was out. I'm on a diet and exercise plan; I've lost 40 lbs. I feel much better now. My writing has improved measurably but not to the extent that I claim to be the next Ellison (Ralph or Harlan).

I don't feel as depressed as I used to, probably due to the fact that my blood sugar levels don't fluctuate like a bucking bronco, as they must have been throughout most of my years in fandom. This my account for some of my strange behavior but I don't offer it as a crutch, to myself or anyone else. Sick I may have been but I always knew what the right thing to do was. Sometimes I was just impulsive, arrogant, selfish or just plain **STOOPID**.

Another thing I learned in fandom; the two hardest things to say in life are I **DON'T KNOW** and I'M **SORRY**. For this I end this introduction with a sincere apology to all those I may have offended, insulted or hurt. **Hard** to learn, **very** uncomplicated.

I

Secret Origins

"What th-."

Superman

Action Comics #1, 1938

I was born on August 25, 1956 at Jewish Hospital, a 7 lb. 14 oz. bundle of joy for Alice and Erbil Barkley of Cincinnati, Ohio, the second child that will eventually grow to a maddening horde of six over the next eight years. Yes, they were (and still are) Catholics. Their lawsuit against the Vatican was settled out of court. For the record, the children in order of appearance are: Gwen, me, Diane, Anthony, Janice and Robert William, otherwise known as the Runt, who still owes me a hundred bucks.

I share this particular birthday with Walt Kelly (who wrote and drew *Pogo*, one of the best comic strips of all time for all you young whippersnappers in the audience), Sean Connery, Ruby Keeler, Anne Archer, Van Johnson, George Wallace and some guy named Elvis Costello.

In 1956, the Dodgers were in Brooklyn, but not for long. Robert A. Heinlein's *Double Star* was published. Everybody still liked Ike. The biggest movies that year were *Around the World in 80 Days*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Giant*, *The King and I*, *La Strada*, *The Seven Samurai* and *Anastasia*.

Then, in October of the next year, Sputnik happened. Everything changed. The stars ~~were~~ our destination! Lucky me; I was a space age baby! Two years later, American astronauts were chosen. When I was 5-1/2, Yuri Gagarin flew into space with Alan Shepard right on his heels. Believe it or not, I vaguely remember the Cuban Missile Crisis. I remember all of the events of the Kennedy assassination and saw Lee Harvey Oswald meet his shocking fate on live television. On the bright side, I also watched the March on Washington led by Martin Luther King.

If you lived in Cincinnati in the 60's, you lived and breathed baseball. I was no different. My father, took me to see sev-

eral games at Crosley Field to see the St. Louis Cardinals (he liked to watch Curt Flood in particular). My mother tells me that I always had my nose in a book. I know that this had to worry my dad; he was an all-city athlete in three or four sports. Me? Gimme that Dr. Seuss or picture book. I got athletic later in my adolescence, but never at my dad's level.

The main things in my life at that point were books, comic books and the space race. Several times I was caught faking an illness so I could stay at home and watch NBC's Frank McGee or CBS's Walter Cronkite pontificate on a Gemini launch or watch a weather satellite go up. Eventually, my school, St. Francis de Sales, gave up and let all the children watch rocket launches during school. My attendance record improved accordingly.

I had plans. I was going to be an astronaut. My schoolmates were skeptical. I knew so much about the space program that they started calling me the astronaut.

Those plans came to an abrupt end on a spring morning, right before school. My older sister Gwen and I were approaching the schoolyard, I was overcome by the sight of my schoolmates playing. So much so, I was heedless of my sister's shouts to stop as I ran...straight into the path of a station wagon owned by a local brewery. I remember bouncing several times.

I was taken back to Jewish Hospital, where my distraught parents were told that a refund was out of the question.

Apparently the driver of the station wagon was going the posted limit of 25mph. I suffered some cuts, bruises and an injury to my left eye. I recovered but my eyes did not. Within three years I was wearing thick glasses due to severe myopia.

I knew that was the end of my dreams of being an astronaut. So I buried myself even further into books. And television.

Back in the 60's, the coolest thing to have was a UHF converter. Channels beyond the number 13. It boggled the young minds of the Barkley household. But there was only one channel available then, one of the first public television

stations, Ch. 48. My father mounted the converter box on top of my grandmother's old Philco set. The picture of Mr. Rogers was fuzzy, but watchable. In 1967, my parents decided to declare their entry into middle class. A COLOR TV! We were thrilled.

Of course, fights over the tv escalated to new heights of idiocy. And if you think about it; it was the beginning of the cultural erosion of American youth. Having color television shows was not just better television; it became out damn birthright! Nothing else except color tv would do for our favorite viewing. And how fast did this happen?

Right after the first commercial break of full colorcasting.

I sucked up a lot of tube in the 60's. When I was nine, I began to notice that some shows appealed to me more than others, on some sort of primitive, intellectual level.

The Twilight Zone was better than *One Step Beyond*. The first year of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* was better than the second (or third, fourth and fifth for that matter). *Get Smart* over *My Mother, the Car*. Anything was better than *Lost in Space*.

You could not avoid the Vietnam War if you were watching tv in the 60's. I did not understand the issues being fought over. All I knew was that thousands of men on both sides were killed each week. Some network newscasts ran casualty totals on their Friday telecasts. I remember being appalled at the totals, especially of the NVA and Viet-Cong. They were *always* higher than the US or Allied totals. Some days, I just wanted to cry. All that death and destruction...

Then came the summer afternoon that I wandered in from playing and just turned on the set. A western was on. A darned good one. It had shooting, intelligent chit-chat, chases, two brothers in conflict and a little kid being held hostage. I came in towards the middle but I was riveted by the story. When it was over, I took time out, for the first time, to find out what movie I was watching.

It was *Night Passage* (1957) with James Stewart, Audie Murphy, Dan Duryea and Brandon de Wilde as the kid. So

I started looking for more movies with these cool guys in them. The same for tv shows. I discovered that people wrote, directed and produced them. I became more discriminating in my viewing habits. I started memorizing the tv and movie schedules. Even my mom started asking me when things came on.

As for first run theater shows, the first one I remember being taken to was *Mary Poppins*. It came on the local independent station a few weeks ago; I actually got a little teary eyed remembering the first time I saw it. Up to that time, *Supercalifragilisticexpialadocious* was the coolest song that I had ever heard. I even tried to spell it for extra credit on the next spelling test I took.

The family mainly went to the drive-ins for big screen entertainment. If we were *really* good children, we got permission to watch from the car roof.

My favorite drive-in of all time was the Twin of Norwood; so-called because it featured a double sided screen. If you didn't like what was on one side, you drove around to see what was on the other side. And in front of both screens were playgrounds with swings, slides and other well known child killing devices. Those were truly fabulous summer evenings.

At this point, I should say a few words about my parents.

They had their trials and tribulations with the six of us and I must say in retrospect that they did the best they could under trying circumstances. Until I turned 11, we lived with my grandmother (we called her Mama). My father was an aerospace mechanic for General Electric, my mother was first a secretary for GE, then subsequently went back to school (before it was fashionable) for a teaching degree, which she subsequently got in the mid-70's. Dad retired from GE in 1984, my mother is retiring (for the second time!) from teaching in the Cincinnati Public schools at the end of this week (6 June 97).

The six of us could be awful at times.

I look back, simply amazed that they survived the experience. If any of us ever questioned the number of children she had, she would look us squarely in the

eye and ask which of the children should she not have had. As intense as we were towards each other, I never heard *any* of us deny any of the others the right to exist.

They also gave us a sense of right and wrong. We were rewarded when we were good and given a hellacious spanking or licking with a belt to make a point. This in retrospect, in my opinion, was a good thing.

Being perceived as an intellectual of a sort, I got beaten up and taken advantage of on a regular basis. I, on the other hand, never beat up or victimized another kid for their ball or lunch money. Even as a callow youth, there were some lines that I would not cross. I'm rather proud of that.

Another thing that I realize is that in the integrated Catholic school, I was taught to respect others, no matter what they looked like. I was never subjected to any sort of racial slur or comments until I was nearly an adult. This too, was a good thing; it made the behavior of the racist people I have encountered even more shocking. If anything, this is the one thing that I have taken great pains to teach my daughter; judge individuals by their character, not their looks.

My parents, bless them, gave me good advice but left the final decisions to me. Any mistakes that I have made in my life are solely my own. I blame no one except myself for this.

As it should be.

One last remembrance before we move on; the music.

The station to listen to for rock n' roll in the 60's was WSAI-AM. If you have ever heard the soundtracks of *The Big Chill* and *American Graffiti*, you heard what I heard originally. Add Ray Charles, the British Invasion, American Bandstand on ABC, the Monkees, the Stones, surf music, Elvis, Hendrix, the Doors and Joplin, Johnny Rivers...musically speaking, there was nothing like it. Hey, you young turks! Remember the first time you heard Nirvana or the Smashing Pumpkins for the first time? Remember the rush, the excitement of hearing something new for the *very first time!* *That life would never be the*

same after you heard it?!? Huh?

Well kids, you just multiply that feeling by 1001. That is what music in the 60's was like. The only musical explosion that would be comparable would be the evolution of punk and alternative music between 1975-78. 'Nuff Said.

II

The Set Up

*Some facts you gotta cut clean,
You gotta take the elevator to
The mezzanine floor...*

Soul Coughing,
"Super Bon Bon"
From *Irresistible Bliss*

If blame had to be assigned for everything that happened in my life after August of 1966, it would fall squarely on my cousin, Michael Howard. He was the catalyst; his life didn't change but mine certainly did, forever. The cause: one comic book.

In the 60's, the most exciting, happening thing in the household would be a trip up to Dayton, Ohio and visit our cousins. My mother's younger sister, Blanche, and her husband Albert and their then four children (which grew to nine by the mid-70's and yes they were and still are Catholic, too), Michael, Karen, Cindy and Joel. The trips were especially welcome during the summer months because we could then beg our parents to stay for a few days or weeks. The same was true on the Howard side. We all loved each other's company. Both sets of parents would roll their eyes and give in occasionally. I remember all the trouble we used to cause when we all got together. The sound of us running through a house was often mistaken for a buffalo stampede; walls and floors would shake from the pounding.

Mom stopped her baby parade after Rob but it seemed like Aunt Blanche was churning out kids like Pete Rose hit baseballs back then. The Howards were so numerous, I couldn't name all of them, even to this day. But I digress.

In mid-August, right before my tenth

birthday, we set out on the then unfinished I-75 to show off our new baby brother, Robert William. When we arrived, we all screamed with glee and split up to play. The girls went off, Tony with Joel, Michael with me. They lived in a nice house on a quiet street. Sometimes we would play hide n' seek, tag or if we were really in the mood, a good long game of Monopoly with extra money pilfered from other destroyed sets.

Michael and I were two peas in a pod. We bonded due to our mutual interests in tv and reading, especially comics. He never shared my fervor for the space program though, which is why we drifted apart in the 70's. But back at this moment, we were probably having the happiest memories of our childhood.

This particular Saturday, we spent the day swapping parent and sibling stories, playing at the park and watching some cartoons. Later in the afternoon, we got around to the comic books.

Usually, we would trade a few back and forth. Marvel comics like Spiderman, Captain America and the Fantastic Four were ok by me, but the subtlety and sophistication was beyond my comprehension at that point. Mainly I was a DC fan. Just meat and potatoes action and conflict for me. Superman, Batman, the Flash, the Atom Green Lantern and Wonder Woman (loved that invisible plane, baby). Most of the comics I had read were either rejects from other kids or gotten as a rare treat from my parents. I never went out myself and brought them.

And up to that day I had never seen, read or owned a copy of *Justice League of America*, the first supergroup comic of the Silver Age. And that fateful afternoon, my cousin gave me a copy of JLA, the August issue, #46.

The first thing that struck me was the delightfully garish cover; a purple background and the JLA block letter logo in yellow with a fab looking banner of black and white checker scheme along the top border (an ad ploy by DC to make their comics stand out from everybody else).

Below the title to the right the caption read:

THE BATTLE MARATHON
THAT TURNS
THE UNIVERSE INSIDE-OUT!
BATMAN! SANDMAN! WILDCAT!
(PLUS 7 MORE SUPER-HEROES)

Directly below the caption box was the Blockbuster, a Neanderthal like brute from the Batman comics. He is gleefully knocking Wildcat through the letter O of a large green POW with a right cross. Right below the flying Wildcat, the almost mindless, albino skinned brute Solomon Grundy has just delivered a solid left jab to Batman, punctuated by Grundy's fist going through the O of the yellow SOK! Batman in turn, is falling on the back of the Sandman, whose orange and black fedora has been knocked askew. Adding to their humiliating position, both heros are landing on an orange THUD! at the bottom of the cover. The other caption box in the right hand corner reads:

Vs.
SOLOMON GRUNDY!
BLOCKBUSTER!
ANTI-MATTER MAN!
(TOO OVERWHELMING TO BE
SHOWN ON THIS COVER!)

You tell me...what nine or ten year old kid, male or female, could resist an offer like that? For 12 cents?

So, I politely thanked my cousin and plunged right in...

The splash page shows a line of ten super-heros, (from left to right) Hawkman, Green Lantern, the Flash and Batman of Earth-One, the Black Canary, Dr. Midnight, Dr. Fate, Wildcat, Sandman and the Spectre of Earth-Two, holding two earth-like planets apart. In the background, against the interstellar mists, a large foreboding pale blue figure, dressed in tight orange suit with a purple belt, the Anti-Matter Man!

In the upper right corners are the Justice League and Justice Society roll calls. In the opposite corner, the caption reads:

HURTLING TOWARD
COLLISION-DESTRUCTION WITH
EACH OTHER

ARE EARTH-ONE
AND EARTH-TWO!

STRIDING TOWARDS THOSE
EARTHS COMES ANOTHER
WORLD SHATTERING MENACE
FROM THE ANTI-MATTER
UNIVERSE!

AS IF THIS ISN'T ENOUGH
--YOU KNOW WHAT'S NOW
HAPPENING ON EARTH-ONE
AND EARTH-TWO?
SHEER DISASTER
IN THE PERSONS
OF BLOCKBUSTER AND
SOLOMON GRUNDY--
BUT WE CAN'T GO ON!

YOU'LL HAVE TO READ ALL
ABOUT IT FOR YOURSELF!
OUR NERVES ARE TOO BADLY
SHATTERED -- BECAUSE WE
ALREADY KNOW WHAT'S
GOING TO TAKE PLACE
IN THE CRISIS
BETWEEN EARTH-ONE AND
EARTH-TWO

On top of the page is the JLA logo and the credits; written by Gardner Fox, art by Mike Sekowsky and Sid Greene.

Never mind that I had never heard of any of these guys from Earth-Two, the story was just so exciting to wonder about details like that.

The story begins with the high flying Hawkman of Earth-One in pursuit of some truck hijackers at night on Moro Mountain. A sudden fog bank rolls in, obscuring the truck. The mists thin... and the crooks begin firing at him. But hey, wait a minute...the guys shooting at him are now in an armored car! Whipping the fog in front of the armored car, Hawkman succeeds in stopping it. He swoops down and subdues the crooks, wondering just what the hell happen to the original set of crooks.

Those crooks, in turns out, materialized on the same mountain on the extra dimensional world Earth-Two and were apprehended by the Golden Age Sandman.

Similar mishaps befall Dr. Midnight,

sending him into the arms of the Flash on Earth-One and Batman finds himself accidentally placed on Earth-Two.

Brief vignettes show people from both dimensions being shuffled between the two dissimilar worlds. The Green Lantern of Earth-One rescues Black Canary of Earth-Two, who was chasing burglars on a rooftop on her own planet but suddenly ended up in a swamp.

In the meantime, the supernatural hero, the Spectre, is on a mission to prevent some asteroids from falling towards Earth(Two), acting on a tip from another hero, Starman (who is, in his secret identity Ted Knight [no kidding], an astronomer). As he moves to perform this task, his spectral essence is drawn away into interdimensional space by cosmic forces he himself cannot understand. And while this is happening, Solomon Grundy, imprisoned in space in a globe of the magical energies fashioned by Dr. Fate and the Green Lantern of Earth-Two in *Showcase #55* ("Solomon Grundy Goes on a Rampage", co-starring another JSA member, Hourman), crosses the dimensional barrier, too...breaking free and headed for Earth-One!

Well, so much for part one!

Part Two begins with Flash, Hawkman and Dr. Midnight meeting Black Canary and Green Lantern at the JLA headquarters. GL tried sending Canary back with his Power Ring and the Flash tried super speed vibrations with The good Dr. Strangely enough, they did not succeed. Seeing that they cannot return immediately, Dr. Midnight offers their services in place of members who have been displaced by the present phenomenon. The Flash accepts. Then a call comes in over the international radio...Solomon Grundy has landed and is wreaking havoc all over the place. He wants only one thing... to destroy Green Lantern!

But wait, the Blockbuster, under study at Gotham City's Alfred Pennyworth Memorial Foundation, disappears from a lab where he is being studied and ends up in a remote area on Earth-Two. (At this point, editor Julius Schwartz urges the reader "to beg, borrow or buy" a copy of *Showcase #55*, so you can find out first-hand what a son of a bitch mon-

ster Solomon Grundy is and why our heroes are going to have a tough time ahead of them)

While all of this is going on, physicist Ray Palmer, who is secretly the six inch superhero the Atom, has felt his JLA emergency alarm go off but he can't operate his size and weight controls concealed in the palms of his hands to become his alter ego. At the moment, he is helping his lovely Italian science exchange assistant, Enrichetta Negrini, with an important experiment. He is stuck in the lab at Ivy Town, like it or not.

Then the mini JLA-JSA team confronts Grundy in a remote mountain area. Having absorbed the combined energies of Dr. Fate and Earth-Two's GL, he proves more than a match for our gang, turning aside all of their assaults on him. In a final, desperate move, Hawkman flies in and grabs Grundy *by the hair(!)* and with the aid of his wings and gravity belt, lifts him in the air. While he is momentarily dazed, the heroes subject him to several thousand sucker punches. Grundy goes out like a light. GL then opens up a large mountain nearby with his ring and Grundy is tossed into a deep crevasse, which GL then seals up.

I know what you're wondering; what happened to the Spectre? So glad you asked. In the inter-dimensional space between the worlds, the Disembodied Detective comes face to face with the Anti-Matter Man. He (it?) is giving off a glow that weakens his spectral powers. Spectre deduces that if he were to come into contact with any matter in either of our universes, *instant destruction!* Since the Anti-Matter Man shows no interest in going back from where he came from, the Spectre decides to duke it out with him, entity to entity, right there. Part Two ends with the Spectre giving the A-MM a right to the jaw.

Part Three opens with the Spectre getting the shock of his...wait a minute...he not alive...lets just say he's just shocked, ok? Shocked to see that his right fist *shrink!* Retaliating, A-MM gives him a left cross...and his head begins to swell up. Apparently the energies from the entity affect his spirit powers in perverse ways. Before he can suspend time itself

and stop him, the A-MM hits the Spectre so hard, his legs are *driven up into his body!* Weakened the Spectre steps aside and the alien resumes his course. His spirit senses alert him that the A-MM's destination is Earth! Either Earth! Racing ahead of the alien the Spectre discovers a more immediate threat; both Earth- One and Earth-Two have entered the dimension between the worlds and are on a collision course.

Gathering together all his supernatural strength, the Spectre resumes his shape and large size and places himself between the planets. But how long can he maintain this position?

On Earth-Two, Dr. Fate tries in vain to send Batman back to Earth-One from the JSA headquarters as Wildcat and Sandman observe. Then they get a call about a primitive caveman running amok on a road in Pinetree City. As they arrive on the scene, Batman recognizes the Blockbuster, who as a normal youth, Bruce Wayne had saved from drowning in a quicksand bog. By pulling off his mask, the face and voice of Bruce Wayne stops the Blockbuster from further violence. The threat has ended, but how long will Bruce Wayne have babysit the Blockbuster, without his mask? Will Solomon Grundy break out of the mountain on Earth-One?

And don't forget about the Anti-Matter Man...the Spectre is the only one in existence who knows he's coming. And speaking of which...

The last two panels show the Spectre shrinking in size... the overwhelming cosmic forces at work are driving the two planets together and in his weakened condition, he can't hold off the cataclysmic collision much longer. The last caption panel reads:

YOU DARE NOT MISS THE
CONCLUDING CHAPTERS
TO THIS TALE OF TERRIFIC
FORCES WHICH PIT
SUPER-HEROES
AGAINST THE GRIM
GIANTS OF EARTH-ONE
AND EARTH-TWO--
AGAINST THE DREAD DANGER
OF THE ANTI-MATTER MAN--
AGAINST THE COMING CRASH



Cover of JLA #46

OF THE TWO WORLDS WHICH
WILL MEAN THE UTTER
DESTRUCTION OF MANKIND!

IS THERE ANYTHING THE
JUSTICE LEAGUE AND JUSTICE
SOCIETY MEMBERS CAN DO
TO PREVENT THE ABSOLUTE
END OF EVERYTHING?
AMAZING ANSWERS NEXT
ISSUE!

So I turned to my cousin and asked
where the next issue was.

He said, "I don't know".

III

The Road to Fandom

*I'm an adult now,
I'm an adult now,
I've got the problems
Of an adult on my
Head and my shoulders,
I'm an adult now...*

The Pursuit of Happiness
"I'm An Adult Now"
Self titled album, 1987

Needless to say, I was plenty ticked
at Michael.

Looking back now, I can only speculate why he gave me JLA #46. I suspect the he bought it himself and the story did not appeal to him. Or he forgot to pick up the conclusion. In any event, the story so disinterested him, he didn't even want to know how the story turned out. Today I realize, *that* was the biggest disappointment of all.

I, on the other hand, had a feverish, burning and fanatical desire to know what happened next. For the rest of the visit I was fixated on getting JLA #47. We went to the corner store but it wasn't there. I dreamed about it that night. The next day, I checked out the neighborhood pharmacy, Becker's, which carried new comics. No luck. I went to several corner stores that had used comics with stripped covers. No sightings.

Next I tried friends and acquaintances. Friends of friends. My siblings friends. Enemies of all stripes. I even talked to girls about it. Zip city.

School began and I checked with anyone who even had a remote interest in comics. Nada, but...someone had a copy of *Challengers of the Unknown* (which was about four non-superpowered, but extremely smart guys taking on super villains and threats; it was ok) that had a small coming attractions ad with the cover of JLA #47. TO TOUCH THE ANTI-MATTER MAN WAS TO RISK INSTANT DESTRUCTION! screamed the ad. On the tiny reproduction of the cover, I was aghast to see a giant sized Batman delivering a left to the A-MM's chin (Remember kids, Batman was big on tv that year, so naturally he hogged most of the JLA covers during that period). Below, Hawkman, Dr. Fate and the Flash struggled in the GRASP(!) of the other-worldly villain. My young mind raced with excitement, dread and wonder; how were they going to fight something they couldn't touch? Aw hell, they *were* touching him! How could this be!

As much as I tried, I got nowhere. I had to put my quest on hold while I tackled more important stuff, like school.

Starting in the fall of '66, we were visited at school by the Bookmobile of

the Hamilton County Public Library system. It was a huge, thirty foot long green van, its sides filled with kid and young adult books. One by one, classes would trot down and ransack the shelves. Up til then, I was not a voracious reader of what I referred to as big books.

On the first or second visit, one book, *Danny Dunn and the Anti-Gravity Paint*, by Jay Williams and Raymond Abrashkin (first published in first in 1956, coincidentally) caught my eye. It was the story of a somewhat headstrong, but bright young man who wanted to become a scientist. He and his widowed mother lived with a renowned scientist, Professor Bullfinch. Frequently, young Danny would start some ill-advised experiment or start fooling around with one of the Professor's projects and trouble would soon follow.

Following Danny was his best friend, a would be poet named Joe and later in the series, Irene, a science scholar. There was also a bully named Snitcher, who acted a whole lot like the bully in my class, Wayne Stenson.

In this particular story, Bullfinch and a grumpy colleague, Dr. Grimes, accidentally (with Danny's help) invent a substance that defies gravity. The feds step in and a prototype spaceship is built. Danny and Joe sneak aboard one day, just to look around, mind you, activate and launch the ship with the Professor and Grimes aboard.

I was totally hooked. In rapid succession, I got other books in the series; *The Fossil Cave* and *On the Ocean Floor*. I expanded my interests as well, reading books and other series put out by Scholastic books. Among them were *The Fabulous Trip to the Mushroom Planet*, *Encyclopedia Brown*, the *Alvin Fernald*, *Boy Inventor* series, *Homer Price* and general history books. Those were days that I will never forget as I learned more and more about the world through reading.

At one point, I almost picked up a Heinlein title, *Time for the Stars*. It was an Ace paperback with the awful Steele Savage covers; this one depicted a multi-headed monster threatening some astronauts. Had I read it, I'm sure I would

have liked it and become even more advanced in my sf reading habits. But I rejected the book because of the cover, which of course I now regret. I did not read Heinlein until I was in high school. Pity. I judged a book by its cover and came up a loser because of it.

I did not forget about comics. I started searching in our local library branch for more knowledge about the older heroes. A tip from a classmate led me to *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, a fairly new book by some guy named Jules Feiffer. I tried to read the scholarly first section but I gave up after a few minutes and got to what I really wanted...ancient (by my standards) comic stories: *Superman*, *Batman*, *Flash*, *Hawkman*, *Captain America*, *Human Torch* and *Submariner*, all from the Golden Age. There was also a one-page glimpse of a character that I had heard about but had never seen before, Captain Marvel, a charming looking fellow who kinda looked like Fred MacMurray on steroids. But favorite was the last story, *The Spirit*, by Will Eisner. In a pre-WWII story, the masked crime fighter comes to a desert city to persuade a scientist to give him a cure for a plague back in America. I was amazed that so much story was packed into eight pages. Wowed, from then on I was always on the lookout for more books with compilations or histories of comics.

In the spring of 1967, our family moved into our own house, a block and a half south on Fairfield Ave. from Mama's house. Given more room, I started to collect comics, which alarmed my parents. They had nothing against reading but "funny books" as they called them, were not a serious endeavor for study in their eyes. Between then and about my sophomore year in high school, they banned comic books from the household.

I paid absolutely no attention at all to them.

No matter how many times they threatened, sanctioned or beat me physically, I dug in my heels and collected, damnit!

I hid them. Yessir, that's what I did. In the attic crawlspaces. Under the mattress. Under loosened floor boards in my bedroom. In my schoolbag and in the

garage. They would not relent; I would not give up. Finally, they gave up when my grades improved to the point where I could honestly say reading comics had no affect on my school work.

Oh God, the things that were thrown away or burned makes me wince... *Tales of Suspense* with Captain America and Iron Man, *JLA*, *Action Comics*, *Adventure Comics* with the Legion of Super Heroes, Marvel's *Captain Marvel*, *Our Army at War* with Sgt. Rock, *Strange Tales* with Dr. Strange and Col. Nick Fury of S.H.I.-E.L.D... I could go on and on.

All gone. (sigh).

I don't hold any grudges against my parents over this. They were doing the best they could. I couldn't hate them, even if they were dead wrong on this issue.

While the embargo was still on, I found my Grail.

It was in the spring of '68. My contacts on the street had come across a kid who actually saved comics like me. And he wanted to meet me!

I forget the boy's name but I remember the house he lived on Fairfax Ave., just a couple of doors away from Owl's Nest, an urban city-owned park. It's still there today. When I drive by every now and then, I smile at the sweetness of the memory.

We met on a Friday, right after school. It was a sunny day. I remember him being a little darker, slightly sized and wore glasses like me. I got right to the point: did he have *JLA* #47?

He said yes.

I tried to control my excitement as I asked what he wanted for it. He looked thoughtful and asked me what I wanted to offer.

I offered cash.

How much, he asked?

I thought *real hard*. I didn't want to haggle, I wanted it, I wanted it *right now*(!) and I wanted to make the right offer the first time around.

I sucked in a breath and made an offer of 50 cents.

He looked at me for five seconds...and accepted.

I swear I must have held my breath from the time he went into the house to



Cover of *JLA* #47

fetch it until he came back out with IT.

I gave him two quarters and he extended IT to me.

IT was in pristine condition.

IT was the most lovely thing I had ever possessed in my young life. I opened it. The conclusion was titled, "The Bridge Between Earths" I think I swooned in the light, spring breeze that hit me right then.

When I saw *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* 21 years later, I saw the look on Indy's face when he finally got his hands on the Cross of Coronado again after losing it when he was a kid. The look on my face on that fine spring day in 1968 **must** have been identical.

I sat down on the porch steps and read it.

Twice.

For almost two years, there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't think about having *JLA* #47 in my sweaty hands. Late at night I would try to make up my own pulse pounding conclusion to Gardner Fox's story myself.

Those are the origins of my becoming a writer. Right there. Trying to connect the dots in my mind, the long quest, the dreaming, the completion of one journey and the beginning of the next. Somehow, I knew I would follow in Fox's footsteps

one day. These longings and imaginings, I owe them all to him.

As for what happened in *JLA* #47...-get your own copy!

And now back to our regularly scheduled program...

Unfortunately, my joy of finding my Grail was short lived.

Indiana Jones had Rene Belloq in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* for a nemesis.

Mine in fifth grade was Roderick Dula.

I had read and re-read my copy a dozen times. I couldn't bear to part with it for a moment and it was not safe at home. My siblings, ever alert, squealed on me when ever they got pissed with me. I lost several good stashes of comics that way.

Ok, how about keeping in my desk at school. It would be beyond their reach, if I was careful.

But being a prideful hunter, I boasted about my find to some of my classmates and showed them my prize. This attracted the attention of another school bully, the aforementioned Mr. Dula, a tall, thin menacing figure. He asked if he could read it at recess time. I let him, but only with me keeping a careful eye on him. He thought it was amusing and asked if he could have it. Naturally, I said nothing doing. I went through a lot to get that comic and I was keeping it.

Dula narrowed his little beady eyes at me and said nothing else. I put the comic back my desk. I thought that was the end of it.

Later, after lunch, I opened my desk to check on it.

It was gone!

I turned to Dula and he had this strange smile on his face. I knew he took it but I never had a chance to accuse him, I was embarrassed that this could happen to me.

If time travel were possible, I would not go back and prevent Kennedy's assassination or witness the Crucifixion of Jesus...I would go and beat the living hell out of Roderick Dula and take back the comic book he stole from my desk.

What happened next was really pathetic. I offered him other comics in my collection as ransom. I offered him some

primo stuff like the first appearance of the new Captain Marvel and the latest Spiderman. I wrote three or four notes (passed at great risk, while class was in session (!), which was a hanging offense in some Catholic schools) begging him to give it back.

The bastard wouldn't even look at me. He took the Captain Marvel and never acknowledged me. I never spoke to him again.

The one good thing that came from this bittersweet experience was that it made me just a little tougher and a lot wiser than I had been before.

Another two years down the road, I ordered it from a store in Passaic, New Jersey where it was the cornerstone of my collection until I was forced to sell it in 1978 to pay bills I accrued in college. I finally got another copy of #46 and #47 at Rivercon last year. Cost me over \$30. Worth every penny. I keep em' in a fire-proof safe now.

An enterprising collector like myself needed two things; a good and plentiful source of comics and regular income.

For some reason the local pharmacy, Becker's, was supplied with only Marvel Comics. Since I like DC as well, I began to search out a place that carried both. In the summer of '68, I either walked or biked extensively all over the surrounding area to find the best place.

I finally found a drug store just inside the Norwood city limits, that carried a majority of what I wanted. The shipment usually hit Monday afternoons, right after school.

There were two problems. Norwood, a municipality surrounded by the city of Cincinnati, had a reputation of being hostile to blacks. Needless to say, I had to be on my guard if I was going there on a regular basis. It was also about a two mile walk. On this point I gritted my teeth and just did it. Week after week. Rain, shine, sleet or snow. After a while walking any distance was not a burden to me. Occasionally, I had a working bike, but usually I walked it.

Thank God there was a garbage strike in 1969. I would never had gotten money to accommodate my growing collection and I never would have met one of my

best friends and major influences in my life.

My allowance had grown from a quarter to 50 cents a week. Comics had just had a price jump from 12 to 15 cents. One of the conditions of the strike settlement was that from then on, the sanitation workers would not have to haul the trash from the point of origin; homeowners would have to haul it out to the curb themselves.

This is where I, the enterprising youth, stepped in. For a quarter, I hauled neighbors trash out, no matter what the quantity. For a several years, I had between 10-15 clients along Fairfield Ave.

One of the clients I met through the strike was a retired Army Sergeant named Mary Hahn. She lived on the second floor of a apartment house and most of the time walked with a cane. She needed someone to take her large trash can out every week. I liked her so much, I would have done it for free. When she needed help with other things, I was there for her. I also remembered that she had a plentiful supply of Hershey bars (the big bars, which usually went for an astronomical 79 or 89 cents back then).

Mary was divorced and had two daughters; Erica, the eldest, who lived in California and Michaela (pronounced mike-kay-la) who went to Bard College in New York. I usually called her Mike.

I met her briefly when she came home from school in '69 and '70 and I was just getting out of grade school. I would describe her as being about 5'4", a droll, snappy, fast talking, cosmopolitan young woman with short brunette hair, a kinda cross between Suzanne Pleshette and Barbra Streisand. She still does.

We saw a lot more of each other when she graduated and came to live with her mother in '72.

More on this in a moment; now, a few words about high school. I went to a prestigious local Catholic school, Purcell, an all boy's facility (then) which was (and still is) located right next door to my grade school, St. Francis de Sales. Those years, from 1970-74, were very hard on me. If anything, any positive self-esteem I had in grade school was obliterated. I was considered a geek even by other

geeks. I had few friends and a lot of enemies, including Rod Dula. Again, I can't be bitter at my parents for sending me to the best school available. I wanted to go to the local public high school, Walnut Hills. They had girls.

Puberty was difficult because at first, I had no idea what was happening to me. Luckily, I read a health book that explained everything. But I was feeling...frisky. I never had a girlfriend while I was at Purcell. I didn't understand how boys met girls or how to act around them, much less conduct myself with newer, higher levels of testosterone poisoning the deal with.

So I became a loner at Purcell. I think I went to only one or two dances, that's all. I shunned the Senior Prom. I was on the bowling team. Bowling I could handle. I went out for the baseball and football teams once, for my father's sake. I gave up; my heart wasn't in it.

The only women I hung out on a regular basis with were Mary and Mike.

If my parents had any objections to my hanging out with them I never heard about it. I'm sure they had their concerns but for the most part, I fended for myself when it came to issues of the heart and sex education. I did not listen to locker room chit chat, I trusted the library...and an occasional copy of *Playboy*.

Mike and I were never romantically involved. From the start, she viewed me as the little brother her mother never provided. If I deviated from this role, she usually let me know in NO UNCERTAIN TERMS that THAT was NOT going to happen.

The thing that solidified science fiction's role in my life (and her's, too I suppose) came in a series of incidents over a four year period, '72-76.

In '72, Mike took me to see *2001: A Space Odyssey* in its first re-release. I was very impressed. In return, I loaned her some of my comics; among them the groundbreaking Denny O'Neil/ Neal Adams issues of *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*. She hadn't read anything comic related since she was kid. She in turn was very shocked by the storyline of Speedy (Green Arrow's sidekick), being hooked on smack. Shocked, but impressed by the



Supply Sgt. Mary A. Hahn, circa World War II.

comic and my good taste.

Mike in turn, loaned me a paperback copy of Ace's *The Best Science Fiction Stories of 1969*, edited by Donald Wollheim and Terry Carr. She told me to read a story called "A Boy and His Dog", first. The first Harlan Ellison story I ever read was so good, I read it three times straight, savoring how good it actually was. And the sexual interludes weren't bad either. VA VA VA VOOM!



Michael Hahn-Jordan. Photo by C.M. Barkley.

In my sophomore year, my English teacher, Mr. Higgins (who was rumored to be an ex-linebacker for the Miami Dolphins), decided to liven up the curriculum by assigning some sf. We read *Childhood's End*, *The Martian Chronicles*, *Out of the Silent Planet* and *The Two Towers*. And just the *The Two Towers*. Needless to say, the whole class had no idea what the hell was going on. Its more than probable that Mr. Higgins was misinformed and thought that it was a single novel. When the class found out we had only the middle part of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, the ex-linebacker rumor didn't sound so far fetched...

In February 1975, Mike and I went on a road trip to New York City; she to visit some college friends, me to check out a Star Trek convention in Manhattan. As a college freshman, I wangled my way on the staff of the campus newspaper, *The News Record*. It helped that I was also taking a journalism course and were required to write a couple of stories for publication. With a valid press pass, I was able to get into a hotel suite and meet George Takei, Robert Lansing (Gary Seven on the episode "Assignment Earth") Majel Barrett and Gene Roddenberry. The one question I asked him was "If *Star Trek* returned to television, would it be on NBC?" Roddenberry gave a little grin and said "No comment."

During the three day-affair, I stayed with my mother's other sister, Cassie and her husband Sonny in their Brooklyn high-rise. I commuted on the subway, toured Times Square and saw a few movies. I was catching a travel bug I do believe. I never wrote a story about the convention.

Another ritual that Mike and I had was reading *Analog* every month. I think Mary obtained a gift subscription or she got it herself. She would read it first and then toss it to me.

On Wednesday afternoon, June 23, 1976, I was spending yet another lazy day with Mike and her mother. I was paging through the May *Analog* while she was preoccupied with some mystery novel.

After reading the letters in Brass Tacks, I started paging through the last

few pages to find out what was coming up in the next issue. The two columns of the calendar of upcoming events caught my eye.

"Hey Mike, says here that there's going to be a science fiction convention here."

"Here?" she said in a slightly incredulous voice.

"Yeah, at the Quality Inn in Norwood. I think we ought to check it out."

Michaela rolled her eyes. "You're crazy," she said. "Those things are for science fiction writers only. They'll toss us out." She went back to reading her book.

It might have ended right there if I hadn't said, "Well, we like science fiction don't we? I'd like to go down and meet a couple of writers myself."

Basically, I had to cajole and badger her into going, as Archie Goodwin would harass Nero Wolfe. Even after she agreed to meet me there Friday, I still wasn't sure she would show up.

That Friday afternoon, I hopped a bus and rode deep into the heart of Norwood. The Quality Inn was located directly across the street from GM's Camaro assembly plant (it was closed in the early 80's). The city still had a rep for being racist so I did not linger on the street.

I found the registration table on the lower level near the pool. A nice middle aged woman named Bea Mahaffey took my five dollars gave me my badge and welcomed me officially into sf fandom. My first question to her was, "Is Fritz Leiber's name pronounced Lee-ber or Lye-ber?"

She looked at me for a second. "Lee-ber," she intoned.

I thanked her and went on my way.

I had to introduce myself to the other members of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group as I met them; Lou Tabakow, Mike Lalor, Bill Bowers and a host of others.

I wandered outside to see who was in the pool and met a dripping wet Joe Haldeman, the guy who just won a Nebula for *The Forever War*. I introduced myself, half shocked that I was meeting Joe Freaking Haldeman!

Dazed, I helped myself to some snacks chatted with folks for a while,

gaped at the stuff in the huckster room and then decided to go to the lobby, catch my breath and wait for Michaela.

And in through the lobby doors walked Gordon R. Dickson. I jumped up and met him.

Then came Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett.

Followed by Frederik Pohl.

And Lloyd Biggle, Jr. from Michigan.

The rest of the weekend was a blur. I don't remember Mike showing up but when we caught up with each other after the convention, she thanked me for insisting we go. She had a great time and mentioned that we were going to have to go to a lot more of these things.

IV

The End of the Beginning

*I am exactly who
I want to be.*

Matthew Sweet
"You're Over It"
From the album
Blue Skies on Mars

Somehow I find it hard to believe that I am only 40 years old. I certainly don't feel 40 years old. But I've lived through so much...

The first landing on the Moon, the Vietnam War, Watergate, the end of the Cold War, Star Wars, the explosion of punk and alternative rock, the Challenger tragedy, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush and now Clinton.

In the 21 years that I have spent in sf fandom, I learned some hard lessons in life. I have no doubt that I will making some mistakes as I continue the long day's journey towards my death.

I have wanted to be a writer for most of my life. If I have one regret, it's that I did not start sooner. But, from a realistic perspective, I see that I probably wasn't ready or emotionally equipped. To be a writer takes fortitude, courage, focus and tenacity.

I didn't have it then.
I have it now.

One of the last things I obtained during my last days at Joseph-Beth, was a promotional baseball cap from Warner Books.

It's black with the logo NO FEAR stitched in navy blue in front.

For some reason, no one wanted this cap. I was put off by the phrase, No Fear. If you don't feel fear, or fail to acknowledge it, you're an idiot. But...

I picked it up and read the phrase that encircled the headband twice, parallel to each other: *To Achieve, We Must First Attempt.*

At that moment, I knew that I would have to leave the relatively safe confines of being employed at the best bookstore in America and seek out my greatest fear, asking myself the hardest question of all: *Can I Write?*

I kept that cap. I am wearing it right now, as I write this.

I had to answer the question. So I quit, giving several month's notice to prepare myself. I didn't even tell my wife, Naomi, until several weeks *after* I wrote my resignation letter. I also confess that I was having personal difficulties on the job, difficulties that I would rather not go into here. But the manager of the Cincinnati J-B, Scott Ruble, stuck with me. He knew how much I loved my position at the bookstore. I owed it to him to be as honest as possible with him.

I was feeling plenty of fear, but I knew that I *had* to see this through and answer the question or I could not live with myself.

Each time I thought of suicide, my thoughts about my extended fannish family of friends, my relatives and my daughter Laura, brought me back from the brink each time. I could not bear to leave them or cause them great despair by dying.

Could not. Would not.

Very simple and uncomplicated.

During these fannish years I had attempted to write before but I defeated myself before I could really get started by my own low self-esteem. This led to the deep, brooding depressions that led me to consider killing myself.

In retrospect, it was probably my

fluctuating blood sugar affecting my actions. It was more than likely the cause of my inability to concentrate and focus on writing and my poor judgement and actions. Knowing this gives me hope that I might succeed.

My experiences in fandom molded me into the person I am today. Besides learning to read, joining fandom was the best thing that ever happened to me. I couldn't kill that.

My goal now is to add to the cultural canon that fandom and professional writers have contributed to the world over the past century.

Isaac Asimov, Roger Zelazny, Robert Heinlein, James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon), Alfred Bester and Philip K. Dick are among those who have passed on, that I admire very much. My first project dedicated in part to them. I am not going to consciously try to surpass their achievements. I can't. I'll just to the best that I am capable of.

I will do so, mindful that it is upon their shoulders I will be climbing when I write science fiction and fantasy. I am grateful to them and all the others, pro and fan, who have blazed the trail for me to find.

And besides, I've been goofing off for twenty years. I need money for my midlife crisis.

AFTERWORD

*If it happens,
It must be possible.*

Anonymous
from the Laws of Life

So, here I sit at my Canon StarWriter Her 300, on a cool summer's evening in June, spilling my guts to you.

In my concluding remarks, I'd like to say that I do not consider myself a geek anymore. People still seem to like me and I even like myself after all these years.

As I composed this memoir, three paramount thoughts kept occurring to me:

(A) I was not "born" to write. My interest in writing stemmed solely from my enjoyment of reading.

(B) I developed a very vivid imagina-

tion at a very early age.

(C) If I were not driven or ambitious about writing, I'd still be working at Joseph-Beth.

The main thing is that over the next few years, I will find out whether or not I have the grit to make it as a writer. I won't look back 20 years from now, a bitter old man, crowing that I never had an opportunity to prove myself. I am making my own opportunity, here and now. There is no affirmative action when it comes to writing a story: either you learn and deliver the goods, or else.

Isabella Rossalini recently published her memoir, *Some of Me*, in which she reveals some of the important events, bon mots, pet peeves and personal observations. She does not offer a blow-by-blow accounting of her indiscretions, how she lost her virginity or who she currently sleeps with. (Bravo!)

The selective words about my life that you have just read amount to just about the same thing: a small but important piece of who I am. I'm having a hard time trying to visualize who I might have become if I hadn't read that single comic 31 years ago.

Barring my current writing project, it is the hardest thing I have ever attempted to write.

I am by nature a private person. Very rarely have I ever purposely gone out of my way to tell anyone too much about myself. I wrote this without any sort of conscious pretensions, to share the joy I have found in writing.

But...along with this I recognize that this newfound joy also plays into some of the more selfish aspects of my character. I have observed that in order to be creative I have to be a little more arrogant, egocentric and stubborn. Worst of all, I have a competitive streak in me that is ugly to behold. When those juices get flowing, I become utterly ruthless in order to win. Sometimes it's hard to step back and look at situations with a proper perspective. I hope I can control these urges to my benefit.

I took a week's break from my writing project to write and edit this. Today, I returned to it and felt reinvigorated, knowing that by finishing this piece, as

painful as it was, came the realization that I had reached a cathartic crossroads in my life and that I have chosen to continue the journey along a long and difficult path. To me, the decision to make the journey is as important as the journey itself.

And more importantly, I found fandom.

In fandom, I felt I was accepted and treated fairly on the basis of my character and actions, not because of what I looked like, my race or my economic status. Without the support of the friends, lovers and acquaintances I have met over the last 21 years, I never would have made it.

Many times in the past, I had started but never finished this memoir. Looking back over these 10,000+ words, I feel... encouraged.

But a peek beneath the hood is all you get. I have no desire to kiss and tell about all the other areas of my life. Dennis Rodman I am decidedly NOT.

Well... time to put up or shut up.
Let's find out, shall we?

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF
MARY HAHN
AND
GARDNER FOX

Thank You both for pointing me in the right direction.

(Also a special note of thanks to Ric and Dave of the Breakfast Club of 97X/WO-XY-FM, for their help in deciphering the lyrics to Soul Coughing's "Super Bon Bon".)

IT'S OVER.
IT'S REALLY OVER.
TWO ISSUES WITHOUT
A HARRY WARNER
LOC



[[FANIVORE, cont'd from page 2]]

Buck Coulson thinks the nametags that hang around the neck are a bad idea and wants pins, but I prefer the hang-around-the-neck kind. (Pinning a badge on a lightweight shirt tends to pull it out of shape, and it gets in the way more than the around-the-neck kind.) But the best solution is a badge holder that allows either, and I have seen them. (They also have badge holders that are optionally clip-on or pin-on.) Actually these days I tend to bring an assortment of badge holders with me to conferences and conventions, and can often just slide their badge into something that suits me. The only problem is when the badge holder is the badge.... (And the less said about hospital bracelet badges the better.)

Marie Rengstorff

I had a bit of trouble following what John Hertz "thot." See if I got it "write." The maroons won. Therefore Westercon will be in Spokane in 1999? Kathryn and James Daugherty have Hawaiian drivers licenses but do not

live on the island of Oahu? The Hawaiian macadamianuts do not have any fanzines going on any of the islands?

[[I sowed some unintentional confusion about Spokane's winning bid by excising a part of the line about the voting figures. Sorry Marie, sorry John. As for the rest -- Daughertys do live in Hawaii, however, we don't know of any Hawaiian fanzines. The last zine I saw from Hawaii was written by Charles Korbas, and I hope the next one will have been written by anyone

else.]]

I am interested because I have family on Oahu and I just sent in a bid on a house on the island of Hawaii, the Kona side, just south of Captain Cook, 20 miles south of Kona. I may not get the house I just bid on, but I will be on one of the "wrong islands" soon. I would love to get to know Hawaiian fandom.

[[Marie adds that she would like to get in contact with the leaders of the "Hawaii in 2000" Westercon bid, and also the Daughertys. Her snail mail and e-mail addresses are below.]]

Georges Giguere

Hey, and thanks for lastish [File 770:-119]. Nice cover! I'm still a fan of Taral's work.

Sad, the necessity of revoking a LASFS membership (yah, bad tempers are a hard thing in any volunteer thing), and Rotsler's ripoff (though value of a Hawaiian shirt collection is in the eye of the beholder). 'Tis a good thing you do, this personal, mag-

azine look at people's tribulations. Looking at the Bids-at-a-Glance almost makes me want to spend money. Almost. What intrigues me most is a battle between the Cancun and Toronto bids in '03.

Did the 20th NonCon in southern Alberta last week. Just yesterday we had Marion Zimmer Bradley, Trek, and Rocky Horror. This con had Spider Robinson, Trek-mutated-to-the-nth-degree, and X-Files. Fannish taste still sucks. Of particular note was my first dose of Spider playing guitar, before the dance. While he and Jeannie had fun, they needed to be in the consuite or grab a band and a real PA (sorry, been doing this too long). Consuite was closed but small parties mysteriously multiplied. Phil Foglio is again my choice for good-guy guest of any description. We all did the three-to-five-year howsitdoin', ate excellent sushi (serious Japanese population around Lethbridge), and had several yocks.

Oh, and after 14 years, I finally moved into a humungous hundred-year-old house with a roommate. Along with the yard comes expenses for laundry technology and snowblowers, but when one considers that Edmonton is 85 years old, this is one super-funky place to be.

Adrienne Losin

Your ish 117 has a delightful cover *[[by Taral]]* -- all the characters are so distinctly drawn. The situation depicted is one all of us commuters can appreciate. I've done a lot of travel recently, some for family obligations, some for health reasons. Along the way I've been doing lots of color pastel sketches. However, my health is deteriorating and it's starting to look as though I'll have to have some major surgery (and be an invalid for a couple of years, according to the doctors). I may have to sell up my place in the southeast of Oz. Preferably I'd resettle further north where it's warmer, but the real estate prices are high.

The infighting over Aussiecon 3 is disheartening. A few (younger) old farts are cutting their noses off to spite their faces. Haven't previous con problems highlighted the fact that the problem lies with them and not the rest of fandom? Obviously not.

Seems that fandom will always suffer from the immature (Disclave damage).

Sorry to learn of the Tudors' hospital drama, but glad to learn that their youngest treasure is home.

My own friendship with Joni Stopa was ...based on meeting the lady at a Chicon one year I was in the States. She is sadly missed. Fandom has too few thoughtfully kind people.

Sheryl Birkhead

I'm over at the Lynches, taking care of Mouse and Mimosa while they are in San Antonio.... *[[On File 770:118]]* File 770 is the only timely source I have of news (since I'm not online) and with the recent spate of illnesses I hope you can keep issues coming -- frequently.

I wonder if the hospital staff (during Buck's stay) showed any interest about the Sector General book -- after all, you never know where you'll find a new fan.

I can't believe *anyone* got 50-60 legible copies off of hecto. But, I must admit that the one time I tried it, fandom was well into mimeo and I was just trying it for curiosity's sake.

[[A very skillful fan can pull 65 legible copies (definition liberally construed.) I've seen it done by someone producing the table of contents for a weekly edition of APA-L. I wish I could remember whether it was Don Fitch or Tom Digby. Other fans who work in hecto get nothing but a myopic smear after the fortieth copy.]]

Congratulations to Teddy for winning the Rebel Award. I'm not sure how many regional cons give out their own set of "thank-you's."

[[I'm not aware of any other regional awards that include fans: perhaps someone else knows. A number of local clubs give awards to pros, such as the Skylark, presented at Boskone, and the Forry Award (named after Ackerman) presented at Loscon, BSFA's Compton Crook Award, and the Philip K. Dick Award sponsored by PSFS.]]

I notice that there seems to be a trend to charge the maximum allowable for site voting, which, I presume, also covers a supporting membership. Several times I've mumbled about a Hugo voting fee -- but get told, frequently, that by making a low voting fee so all could afford to vote, it might open the door for ...um ...suggested voting ("I'll pay your voting fee if....") I wish the world was a bit different.

[[You're right that it's an issue in the minds of some fans that a low voting fee might leave the door open to "buy" a Worldcon. However, I think the death of the low voting fee came about for two other reasons. There's a three-year span between site selection and the date of the Worldcon, and despite the escalating rates a lot of memberships don't come in until the final year; committees still have to produce publications and operate in other ways until those funds come in, so some committees have sought to maximize their start-up income with a high voting fee. Chicon 2000, in particular, wanted net income from supporting memberships (something more than it will cost to provide them with publications.) Also, there's been a general change of heart among fans: many more feel a higher fee involves a higher degree of commitment from voters, meaning the fans most likely to go to the con are the ones choosing the site.]]

Joy V. Smith

I have a nagging feeling that for some reason, out of a pile of zines, I didn't send a loc on *File 770:118*. So, just in case, the covers are intriguing, and I

love the interior illos, including the early design of Sojourner, with its rubber baby buggy bumpers. I enjoyed the news bites, the review of *Ethel the Aardvark*, and the locs, too.

Great cover on #119 *[[by Taral]]*. I spent a lot of time trying to be sure I didn't miss anything. Totoro: Is that the cartoon? (I have the video.) Love the letters/symbols on the vertical sign: haven't figured out the language yet.

The Westercon report seems thorough. (No time to transcribe the notes, huh?)

Interesting news tidbits and editors notes (But what was Charlie Sheen on, re: that Mars quote), including Sam Frank's ouster. I'd heard about it, and was glad to get more background.

Bids-At-A-Glance is a very good idea -- much needed info. (I can remember when Hynes Auditorium was War Memorial Auditorium.)

Franz Zrilich

I have *File 770:119*: I have given thought to changing my new fandom from Late Victorian and early Edwardian action-adventure utopian novels slightly, to Franzist Futurism.

Under Franzism, we deal with how we can change the near future to a benign one based upon the massive application of existing technology. We also accept that the best guide to social organization is to study past social organizations as well as slightly different contemporaneous ones.

Instead of super wars involving super weapons, ala *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, we emphasize building damn decent housing for at least 85% of the population of the United States, for example. The conflict then comes from differing social and engineering and financial approaches, with the story line normally allowing for a series of ever-increasing-in-size tests of each system followed by its modifications until a clear winner appears.

As part of the excitement, we adopt a policy of wartime fast-speed develop

ment. In the case of housing, for example, we might want to provide a family-oriented (say, O.J.'s old house) for the middle 85% of the U.S. population within a ten-year span. Another background variable that should provide for conflict is a heavy emphasis upon motherhood and the sanctity of the family ala tv sitcoms of the 1957-1967 period. We can even provide a society which sincerely and benevolently believes that the scientific evidence truly indicates that persons who are not straight, married, and blessed by five children by the age of 29 to 31 are mentally ill. Fortunately, while it will not-quite be mandatory, there will be immense social pressures for the Truly Unfortunate to take the miracle medication, Normzac.

As Franzist literature evolves, and agreement reached by readers of the written word and watchers of the digitalized teleplay as to the ideal and desired details of our future intercontinental domestic bliss, we can take on such issues as building a worldwide net of expressways 333 meters wide, 3 meters thick, with trains of automatically-piloted vehicles each the size of a Space Shuttle Transporter speeding along at 150 m.p.h.

The Cutting Room Floor

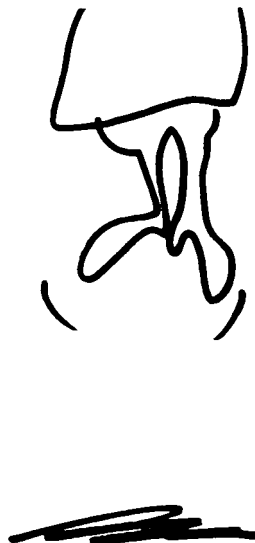
Janice Gelb: Enjoyed your LSC2 con report in the latest F770, especially the Lou Tabakow line!

Kay Drache: I am picking up the mail for MinnStf and Minicon again (official title: "Corresponding Secretary") and was glad to see your zine, one of the few things I missed about this job when I gave it up some years ago.

As a former housemate of Geri's, I basked in the reflected glory of your praise for *Idea #10*. Isn't she great?

[[Definitely. I'm glad she'll soon be visiting L.A. as a guest of honor at Loscon.]]

Chaz Boston Baden: NESFA has



joined the ranks of fannish organizations with their own domain (not just a web page on someone else's service). Now there's nesfa.org, lasfs.org, mnstf.org, and more -- and yet I couldn't print out a [NASFiC] site selection ballot online. Someday this will be seen as a glaring omission, not just a slight inconvenience. I'm working in my own way to hasten that day. On the Chicon 2000 page (www.chicon.org) we have ready-to-print PDF copies of all the official paperwork issued so far, and I hope to continue that right up to the Hugo ballots and 2003 site selection ballots.

Elizabeth Osborne: Instead of the Worldcon, I attended Pensic War in Pennsylvania again, (the Worldcon for the SCA), and ended up discussing B5 in a tent with other SCA members.

I loved the comic about the first restaurant on the Moon [by Ian Gunn]. It was really cute. Wonderful Terry Frost poster on the back cover!

Allan Burrows: Re: *File 770:120*. How many fans does Buck Coulson actually know who profess that they, or fen in general, are visionaries? And what does *he* mean by "visionaries"?

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