



**COLOPHON:** File 770:99 is edited by Mike Glyer at 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys CA 91401. File 770 is available for news, artwork, arranged trades (primarily with other newzines and clubzines), or by subscription. Yes, need those subscriptions to afford to do this thing! Subscriptions cost \$8.00 for 5 issues mailed first class in North America or surface mail rates overseas. Air printed matter service is available for \$2.50 per issue. Telephone (818) 787-5061. **ART CREDITS:** Ray Capella - Cover; Brad Foster - 3; William Rotsler - 5, 6, 8; Diana Harlan Stein - 4, 14; Peggy Ranson - 20; Ruth Thompson - 22.

## KLINGON DISCRIMINATION PROTESTED IN OTTAWA

Angela Tchen complained how Ottawa charities stifled her group's helpful impulse, in *The Disruptor 12*, publication of the Klingon Assault Group/Kanada, (quoted in the *OSFS Statement*):

"When we first wanted to contact the Ottawa Food Bank to see if they could use some food donations in exchange for the use of their name, they clearly stated that we would have to sign a contract for a quota of food that we must fill to do so. What is so bad about getting some food that the party who uses your name must fill a quota?

"Another problem we encountered is with the Rape Crisis Centre here in Ottawa. In April, we were planning a car wash to raise funds for anyone, and one of the members suggested the Rape Crisis Centre, who have been asking for money so they can staff it better. So we contacted them in March to get everything set up. They said that because we are the Klingon **Assault** Group, they would have to think about it and get back to us. We still haven't heard from them. The part that irks me is the fact that just yesterday in the paper there was an article stating that a women had two wait two-and-a-half years to

get help at the Rape Crisis Centre because of lack of funds."

## GEORGE TURNER STROKE

According to *Ansible 71*, Australian writer George Turner, 76, "suffered a stroke in late April while his flatmate was away." Yvonne Rousseau reported that Turner, "was paralyzed on the right side, and couldn't speak, and therefore couldn't telephone anyone. So he cleaned himself up as best he could, and then waited three days until his biographer, Judith Buckrich, happened to telephone. George lifted the receiver, and Judith realized when no one spoke that something was wrong, and came and found him." In June *Ansible* heard he was recovering in hospital, fed by IV.

## THE WOMAN OF TROI

In his letter to the August *OSFS Statement*, Lloyd Penney files this remarkable report on Toronto Trek VII:

"For the most part, attendees had a good time. Attendance was announced as 3,615. The concom was frayed around the edges, as they had worked far too hard to get this con going, and fatigue had shortened tempers. (I include myself in that group.) George Takei was the best guest they could have had, his usual gentle and jovial self, in a wheelchair because of recent foot surgery. In contrast, Marina Sirtis was the worst guest. Her nickname was 'The Bitch Queen' amongst attendees and concom alike. Her talks on Saturday and Sunday degenerated into sexist attacks on what she called men's breast and crotch fixations with her. She climbed upon a table at one point, and flaunted her crotch at the crowd...some weren't certain she was wearing panties. Overall, a shameful performance, and many left disillusioned with her. I heard of at least one person trying to get their money back."

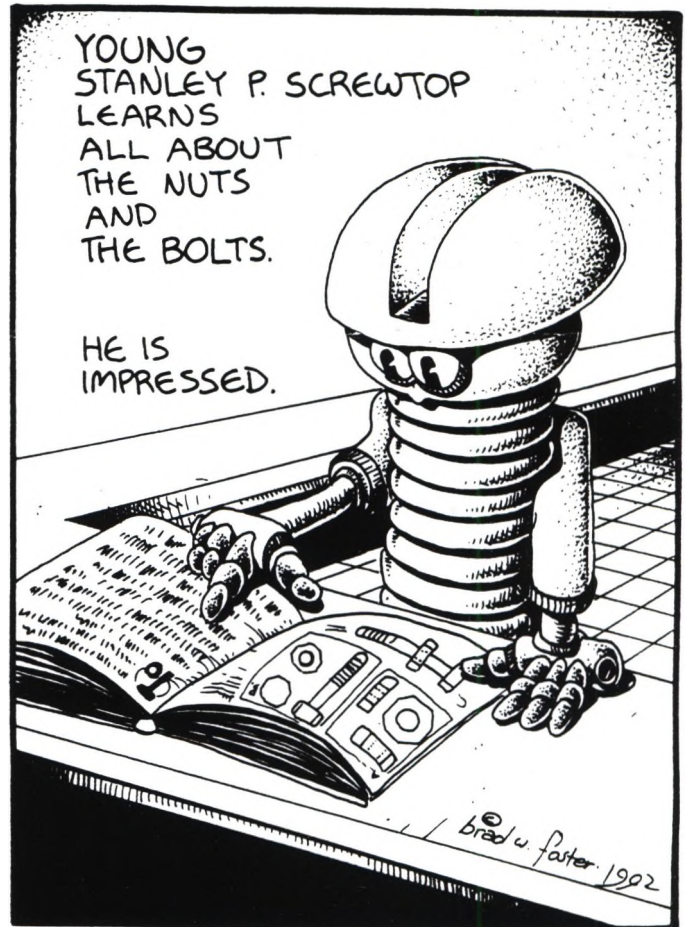
## No Power Failure In Fandom Rebuttal to Science Fiction Age's "50 Most Powerful People in Science Fiction" by Mike Glycer

"Who are the 50 most powerful people in Science Fiction?" Whoever they are none of them are fans, if you believe Paul Di Filippo in *Science Fiction Age's* July 1993 issue. On his list are people like Spielberg, Lucas and Tom Doherty who would satisfy any capitalist's definition of powerful. The other 47 are more puzzling. In what way are Harlan Ellison and Ursula K. LeGuin powerful? How do you measure power in this field, anyway?

Di Filippo's people-oriented definition is the right yardstick: the exercise of power in the creative arts is most visible when someone changes the way those around him or her act and think, something Ellison certainly does. All the people on Di Filippo's list are ones he believes can remake the field to some degree in their own image, "Specifically, the men and women active in the SF field who cause things to happen. The ones who influence, determine and sometimes squelch what the average reader sees and hears."

But no fans? Only Charlie Brown, editor of *Locus*, is identified with fandom. True, Charlie is a science fiction fan, much the same as I expect the editor of *Daily Variety* is a movie fan, but neither would be on a list of powerful people if he did not edit the dominant trade paper of his respective field.

It's hard to explain why fans are overlooked by Di Filippo, for it's not as if he myopically lists only the most commercially successful people in sf. Wisely, he avoids the trap of equating power with finance: power in this genre is also wielded by those who compete most successfully in the marketplace of ideas. Powerful creative forces include those whose



new use of science fictional ideas inspires hosts of imitators, like William Gibson and Michael Whelan, or whose lupine criticism devours intellectual stragglers, like Damon Knight's, or who enrich the field by developing its new talent, like editor Gardner Dozois. Some do all three, like Harlan Ellison. All five appeared on Di Filippo's list of fifty.

Perhaps Di Filippo mistakenly dismisses fans as passive consumers of science fictional product, and by some reverse logic thinks their main purpose is to acknowledge Spielberg's and Whelan's genius by making them rich?



### *Paul Di Filippo's List of 50 Most Powerful People in SF*

#### *Writers*

Harlan Ellison  
J. G. Ballard  
William Burroughs  
Rudy Rucker  
Ray Bradbury  
Arthur C. Clarke  
Larry Niven and  
Jerry Pournelle  
Robert Silverberg  
Ursula K. LeGuin  
William Gibson  
Bruce Sterling  
Thomas Pynchon

#### *Publishers*

Lou Aronica

Mark Zeising  
Charles Brown  
Stephen Brown  
Tom Doherty  
Byron Preiss

#### *Editors*

Kristine Rusch  
David Pringle  
Ellen Datlow  
Alice Turner  
David Hartwell  
Ellen Asher  
Gardner Dozois  
David Garnett

#### *Critics*

Damon Knight

John Clute  
James Gunn  
Mark Kelly  
Gerald Jonas  
Michael Dirda

#### *Artists*

Frank Kelly Freas  
Frank Frazetta  
Michael Whelan  
Richard Powers  
Kevin Eastman  
and Peter Laird

#### *Agents*

Richard Curtis  
Ralph Vicinanza  
Merilee Heifetz

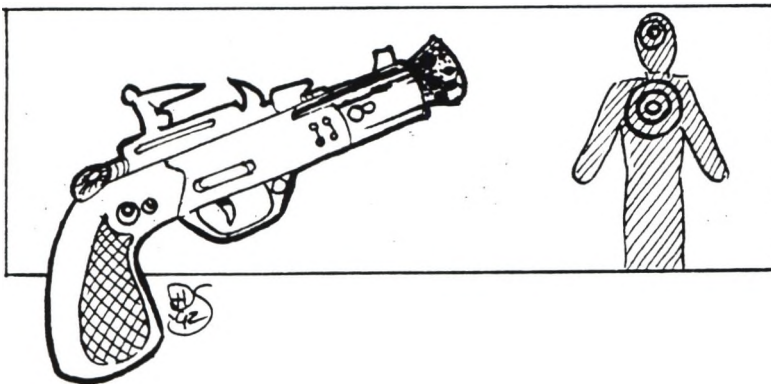
Martha Millard  
Virginia Kidd  
Eleanor Wood  
Russell Galen

#### *Filmmakers*

Steven Spielberg  
and George Lucas  
Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Robert Zemeckis  
Paramount Studios  
Tim Burton  
Terry Gilliam

Ford and General Motors once held a similar view of their customers until Ralph Nader infused consumers with a rage about their dangerous jalopies. The sf community also boasts a woman who has flexed just that kind of muscle: Bjo Trimble. In the late '60s she engineered the latter-writing campaign that prevented NBC from killing *Star Trek* after its

second season. In the '70s, she took a role in pressuring NASA to name the first space shuttle after the *Starship Enterprise*. In the '90s she continues to reign over a mailing list of media fans whose interests she shares and serves better than anyone. It strains the imagination not at all to cast her among the fifty most powerful people in this genre.



By overlooking fans, even when they are as influential as Bjo, Di Filippo doesn't fully succeed in measuring people's power by their influence on what sf we see. There are also no scientists on his list, yet has any of the seven literary agents listed made an impact on contemporary science fiction equal to O'Neill or Dyson? Agents don't create the ideas or choose what gets published. I figure the good stories will get bought anyway, so the only argument for including agents is that they affect how much people get paid. This is an area where he appears

to have chosen people for their financial power alone.

I found it easy to think of scientists who belong on the list: our field has been heavily influenced by the idea of L5 colonies and Dyson spheres. Identifying fans who belong is quite hard. Maybe one problem in picking individuals is that fans' power only rocks the needle off zero when a number of them are involved, and not only in the sense that tens of thousands of customers determine what succeeds and fails in the stores.

For example, every Brin manuscript is read by a posse of female fans -- and sometimes he even edits out the offending bits. How many books have Bob Asprin and Mercedes Lackey written in a particular way because of feedback from the authors' friends at midwestern conventions? Niven, Pournelle and Flynn's *Fallen Angels* sold to the general readership, but it really was written to tickle a couple of hundred fans the authors know. This kind of influence is being exerted all the time, but usually by small groups rather than individual fans.

Indeed, a list of 50 powerful individuals may, by definition, freely ignore groups of people acting together powerfully, but some groups become social institutions that sustain the environment in which those powerful creative talents thrive. No better example of the link between individual and organizational power exists than Damon Knight, who made Di Filippo's list as a prominent critic and a teacher at the Clarion Workshops. Unmentioned is that Knight also started both the N3F and the Science Fiction Writers of America, which undoubtedly exerted an even more powerful influence on the community than his writing.

The writer's desire to create is nourished by interested friends and readers. Then, specific storytelling choices are often motivated by a desire to answer points made by others in



fiction or in conversation. Both kinds of stimulation are found at conventions, especially a Worldcon -- remember Nancy Kress accepting her Hugo at Magicon with reference to a past Worldcon where Robert Silverberg told how he envied the winners at *his* first Worldcon? There are many such stories. If only as the field's leading trade show, the significance of the Worldcon, therefore fandom, should have come to Di Filippo's attention.

Like mayflies, Worldcon committees quickly serve their purpose and expire. Among the people who go on from one committee to the next are two fans of long service at high



levels, Ben Yalow and Peggy Rae Pavlat. Ben's experience and knowledge are well known. Peggy Rae, a D.C.-area fan, has much in common with other recurring division heads and bid organizers, but is unique in having such stature that when ConFrancisco needed an interim chair she was called for that duty. Symbolizing fans' influence on the sf community, they would be good additions to the list.

More fans who may belong on this list of powers in science fiction include: Saul Jaffe, whose *SFLovers* service reaches thousands of computer users; Forrest J Ackerman, the best-known fan in America; and Patrick Nielsen

Hayden, who adding together his intellectual leadership in fandom and his rising career as an editor might elbow into line ahead of some of the other selections.

At least, they would be more imaginative choices. A disturbing thing about Di Filippo's list is that it doesn't seem any different than the one you'd get by handing the last 24 issues of *Locus* to a mundane. Are all 50 of the most powerful people in science fiction so easily identified? I'm disappointed someone so knowledgeable about science fiction didn't show it by thinking of a broader range of creative influences.

Admittedly, his list is as much a homage as it is a registry of the powerful. Some famous figures he included are misplaced on a list of today's science fiction powers. Arthur Clarke, Ray Bradbury and Frank Kelly Freas are enjoyed around the world, but at age 70 their recent product mainly reworks stories or images that made them famous decades ago. Are they still sources of powerful new ideas in the field, or are they present on this list because the echo of their best work is still ringing today in the product of people they influenced? Sure, all three belong on a list of science fiction's most significant historical figures, but I don't think anybody expects them to do something tomorrow that will reshape science fiction in the way we expect it from Gene Wolfe or Connie Willis.

Then, we get down to a few simple nit-picks. I share Di Filippo's admiration for the erudite David Hartwell but is he as *powerful* as Mike Resnick (not on the list), busy editor of a whirlwind of "Alternate" anthologies and a Hugo-winning short fiction writer? Or, while laying claim to Terry Gilliam on behalf of science fiction, which he has enriched with *Time Bandits*, *Brazil*, *Baron Munchausen* and *Fisher King*, did Di Filippo bypass someone who means even more to the science fiction and fantasy field: Sean Connery, who made *Zardoz*, *Outland*, *Robin and Marian* tolerable,

gained worldwide fame in the quasi-sf *James Bond* spy movies and sparked the mythic quality in fans' favorite desert romance, *The Wind and the Lion*? (I can still hear the echo of Jerry Pournelle's cheers as Marines gunned down the sultan's guards...)

Perfecting Di Filippo's list is a game that could go on for months. I certainly enjoyed finding and filling gaps, and justifying my own choices. Of course, once you read this article you may think you can improve on my improvements!

## UNINTENTIONAL SCI-FI COLLABORATION

According to Eric Mayer, "Mary and I had an article on 'How to Write Science Fiction' in *Writing!* We didn't purport to know ourselves but rather talked to Gardner Dozois, Stanley Schmidt and author Rob Chilson, among others, so I think the article had some value. However, without telling us, the editor changed our every 'science fiction' to 'sci-fi'. Pretty embarrassing to have an article jointly written by two sf fans riddled with 'sci-fi'."

### UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PROJECT BLUE BOOK QUESTIONNAIRE: UFO SIGHTING

Please check the appropriate boxes

1. Your name is: ☐ Billy Bob ☐ Billy Joe ☐ Billy Joe Bob ☐ Shirley MacLaine
2. You are: ☐ a pilot ☐ an air traffic controller ☐ a state trooper ☐ a yokel
3. Your "close encounter" was of the:
  - ☐ 1st kind (sighting of a UFO)
  - ☐ 2nd kind (physical evidence)
  - ☐ 3rd kind (contact with aliens)
  - ☐ 4th kind (borrowing money from aliens)
4. The UFO you saw resembled:
  - ☐ a sphere ☐ a saucer ☐ a tube ☐ your neighbor's porch light
5. At the time of the sighting, you were driving:
  - ☐ a Chevy pick-up ☐ a Ford pick-up
  - ☐ a Dodge pick-up ☐ while drunk
6. The UFO landed:
  - ☐ in a cow pasture ☐ in a wheat field
  - ☐ in a corn field
  - ☐ in a "no parking" zone and was subsequently towed away.
7. The aliens claimed to be:
  - ☐ lost ☐ cross-border shoppers ☐ a distinct society ☐ Elvis love-children
8. The aliens said they came to earth to:
  - ☐ study humans ☐ take human specimens
  - ☐ mate with humans ☐ solve the Canadian constitutional crisis

*Questionnaire prepared by Bryan Ekers and Keith Braithwaite of MonSFFA (appeared as insert in "Warp"; version reprinted here found in OSFS Statement No. 194)*



## NEWS OF FANDOM



### BRAZIER ABOVE WATER

Sheryl Birkhead thought to write to St. Louis fan Donn Brazier, best-known as editor of the letterzine *Title*, and ask how he fared during this summer's floods. He replied to her, "Ok? Yes! I live in Des Peres but the river Des Peres is at least 15 miles from my house."

## DOCTOR OF INKLINGS

Diana Lynne Pavlac successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on August 10 at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her Ph.D. is in English, majoring in Language, Literacy and Rhetoric. Titled "The Company They Keep: Assessing the Mutual Influence of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and Charles Williams," Pavlac's dissertation applies current scholarship about the writing process and writers' groups to refute the dominant view in Inklings studies, championed by Humphrey Carpenter, that the Inklings did not influence each other's work.

### MANCHESTER/GLICKSOHN NUPTIALS

Isn't that how they say it on the society page, or, at least in Robin Leach's voice-overs?

Ace reporter Eric Mayer and his own recent bride, Mary, drove to Oneida, New York, to attend Mike Glicksohn's wedding to Susan Manchester on June 3. "It was held in a Methodist Church. I haven't been in one of those since my childhood. Susan had designed the ceremony to include music and poetry. It was quite touching. One of her poet friends, who read his composition after a reading by the minister, remarked that Corinthians was a hard act to follow. (The minister subsequently remarked upon the poet's use of images and rhythms that flowed like a river -- everyone seemed to be getting into the spirit.) Mike, in formal attire, seemed quite subdued. You could hardly hear him. (Honestly.)

"You could almost tell the fans -- like me, none of them seemed to possess actual suits. I really don't know too many fans. Mary and I did speak to George and Maia Laskowski, and Rusty Hevelin. Joe Haldeman was best man and in the receiving line afterwards Mary tried to get me to give him my business card



('writer editor'): i declined to do this.

"Who really believes Mike is forever and ever going to give up loccking, raise your hands??"

### OBITUARY

Thomas Clareson, 66, science fiction scholar and recently retired as professor of English at the College of Wooster (Ohio), died July 6. He was well-known as a co-founder and past President of the Science Fiction Research Association, whose journal, *Extrapolation*, he edited from 1959-1989. His obituary in the *New York Times* featured a 1984 quote: "For years I've tried to show that science fiction is a form of American literature which has a long tradition and, as a kind of fantasy, has an importance equal to that of the realistic social novel."

Mary Carey, who sent the clipping, added: "Doug and I went to the funeral. It was well attended by family and colleagues. The eulogies were very good. One was by his son, Tom. Another, by one of his colleagues, was particularly nice, made up partly of excerpts of letters received on his retirement in May. Doug and I seemed to be the only fannish presence. We didn't get a chance to talk with [his wife] Alice at any length. We expect to visit with her fairly soon... What a loss. I keep seeing the way he had of throwing back his head and laughing. He was such a gallant gentleman. He will be missed."

### SUPPORT

*Support* is a newly-formed amateur press association (apa) for people dealing with alcohol, narcotic and other chemical problems. Arthur Hlavaty says, "The apa... has no preferred approach to drug and alcohol dependency, and welcomes all those who are dealing with such problems. We ask that members emphasize their own approaches and areas in which they can identify with other members, rather than arguing about

which approach is best."

Members may give their full names, addresses and telephone numbers, or may protect their anonymity by withholding any of this information using aliases or giving only first names. No membership list will be published.

To participate, write about your experience in this area and send 50 copies of your contribution to the Central Mailer (Arthur D. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine St., Yonkers NY 10704.) Photocopying from camera-ready originals is available for a basic cost, contact the CM for information about that, and how to handle the expense of postage.

## TWO MORE WORLDCON BIDS SEEN ON BACKS OF MILK CARTONS

A Chicago-based bid Las Vegas in 1999, and Ottawa's new rivals for the Chicago and Kansas City bids for 2000, have tripped over the fannish event horizon.

Following up the Las Vegas in 1999 flyers, Dick Smith went to a party and found members of the Chicago-area "Duckcon" committee are behind it. Applying those interviewing skills so finely-honed as editor of *Uncle Dick's Little Thing*, Smith asked them, had they talked to the Las Vegas fans? Uh, no. Well, what was their experience? Uh, a few of them had worked on something called Pizza Expo in Las Vegas, with 25,000 attendees. Did they have any Worldcon experience? Uh, sure, the fellow he was talking to had worked on the Chicon V masquerade. Dick was doubtful, and asked who he worked for. The fellow said he didn't know, which I think proves he worked the Chicon masquerade...

The August 1993 *OSFS Statement* reprints a

letter and flyer from James Haroldson, identified with "Volunteer Program Consultants", asking the editor to publicize his unnamed clients' proposal to hold the 2000 and 2001 Worldcons in the Ottawa area. His premise is that Ottawa and the city right across the river, Hull, straddle the eastern and central site selection zones, so consecutive Worldcons could be held in the same locale: "The end result is something that a Worldcon has never had before, a sensational commodity shared by many of the best regional conventions, Site CONTINUITY." If anyone cares, which no one at Ad Astra 13 did; Haroldson's letter admits, "The preliminary results have surprisingly run contrary to theoretical models. There seems to be an overwhelming sense of skepticism to this proposal." Doubtless somebody made the mistake of giving one to Mike Glicksohn!

### *PUB CRANKING*

The London First-Thursday meeting is moving again, reports Dave Langford in the March *Ansible*. "Even tolerant Langford can no longer stand the hideous crush at the Hamilton Hall Permanent Beer Promotion. In February, pink flyers urged an instant move to the Florence Nightengale... Other fans mutter of regrouping at the old Wellington, now revamped with the same total area but one-third of it a wine bar with its own street entrance. ...On 4 March a new Hamilton Hall atrocity (closing the whole 'fan bar' for a private party) led to a clear vote to return to the Wellington in April."

### **DIGBY COLLECTION READY FOR WORLDCON**

*Along Fantasy Way*, an anthology of fanwriting by ConFrancisco guest of honor Tom Digby, will go on sale at the Worldcon. The 58-page collection, edited by Lee Gold, also features illustrations by Phil Foglio, Brad

Foster, Teddy Harvia and Kaja Murphy.

There are samples of Digby's fanciful, ironic, stand-the-world-on-its-ear humor from the past three decades. His kaleidoscopic Apa-L zine title serves as an appetizer: "*PROBABLY SOMETHING* but not Combining Voodoo and Acupuncture for Remote-Control Healing"; "*PROBABLY SOMETHING* but not The Entire Staff of a Hotel Being Turned into Frogs During a Witches' Convention."

There are also brilliantly funny poems, too long to excerpt here. And there are many examples of Digby's contributions to science: "Set up a Ferris wheel with a witch at the bottom and a princess on a special platform within easy reach of the top. Fill all the seats on the wheel with princes and start the wheel, with instructions that the witch is to change each prince into a frog as he goes by the bottom and the princess is to change them back as they go past the top. ...Since princes weigh more than frogs, you should be able to use it as a perpetual (until the princes, princess, witch, etc., get tired) motion machine."

After ConFrancisco you can order the anthology for the same price, plus shipping. Contact: Lee Gold, 3985 Alla Road, Los Angeles, CA 90066. Phone: (310) 306-7456.

### **NEW SF NOVEL SERIALIZED ON DIASPAR VR NETWORK**

Diaspar Virtual Reality Network will serialize Francis Hamit's new sf novel, *The Mannheim Mission* beginning September 3. As Hamit says, "*The Mannheim Mission* is non-stop action, played against a background that takes science fiction beyond hardware into military intelligence, political economy, sociology and the puzzling nature of the Terran species: the most dangerous in the known galaxy."

Each chapter will be posted to the Diaspar Emporium, which can be accessed through



the Internet at Diaspar.com or by modem at (714) 831-9191 (2400 baud, 8,N,1). The first chapter is free, there is a ten cent charge for succeeding chapters, 61 chapters and 130,000 words in all. Yes, someone might say: "All in ANSI color for a dime."

Hamit is also the author of the recent nonfiction book, *Virtual Reality and the Exploration of Cyberspace* (SAMS, ISBN: 0-672-30361-2, \$26.95.)

### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Garth Spencer, 2051 E. 4th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5N 1K5 Canada

Simon Ounsley, 25 Park Villa Court, Leeds, LS8 1EB, U.K.

Peter Morwood and Diane Duane, Potter's Pasture, Kilbride, Wicklow, Ireland

Ben Schilling, 2615 Madrid, Apt. 1, Madison, WI 53713

Gordon Garb, 1141 Polk Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Janice M. Eisen, 1111 Scalp Ave., Ste. 453, Johnstown, PA 15904

Tom Veal, 3000 N. Sheridan Road, Apt. 2C, Chicago, IL 60687

Rick Katze, 80 Herrick St., Beverly, MA 01915

Gay Ellen Dennett, 21 Woodbine Rd., Apt. 1, Natick, MA 01760

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### Serious and Constructive Stuff About Fan Awards by Mike Glycer

Most of us spend no time at all worrying about the dignity of major sf awards. In fact, being a friend of Elst Weinstein (who gives the satirical Hugu Awards), I probably spend more of my time sabotaging the dignity of sf awards than preserving it.

The balance swings the other way about this time of year. The Hugo nominees are

announced and Worldcon organizers begin last-minute preparations. People who haven't finished hashing out last year's mishap involving *Lan's Lantern* and *Mimosa* hurry to get their final thoughts published before the 1993 awards overtake them. Australian fanzines reporting on their national convention (and who won the latest Ditmar awards) are just reaching North American mailboxes. For a season it all seems terribly important.

### Controversy #1: Should Fans See The Hugo Base Before the Awards Are Given?

In 1988, NOLAcon II chair John Guidry passionately believed that the Hugo base should be a beautiful work of art, and in 1992 artist Phil Tortorici fulfilled a similar vision for MagiCon. ConFrancisco's bases are being produced by artist Arlin Robbins. Expecting something beautiful, the committee wondered if a copy of the base might be displayed in the Hugo Awards exhibit at the start of the con.

When the committee asked this year's nominees for an opinion they found three schools of thought, by far the largest made up of those completely apathetic about the subject. Since the splinter group opposing early display of ConFrancisco's Hugo base included the woman running the Hugo ceremony and the man in charge of the Hugo exhibit, ConFrancisco kept the traditional award-night unveiling.

Not that more than two nominees favored early display, anyway, but as one of them and having an eye on the future, say 1996, I'd like to challenge this "tradition." To begin with, is it a tradition, or merely a habit? Did it originate by design or by accident? Do the tradition's good features outweigh the bad?

The Hugo Awards exhibit was originated for the 1989 Worldcon. They borrowed Hugos for most of the years the award was given,

and created an impressive retrospective display. The exhibit was repeated at other Worldcons. Before then, you couldn't have seen anything like it unless you attended a party at Larry Niven's, toured Charlie Brown's house, or attended Harlan Ellison's 1975 NASFiC speech.

Not only was there no Hugo history exhibit before 1989, most people never saw a Hugo close-up unless they bumped into a winner in the hallway. Then again, almost all Hugos given before 1984 were mounted on wooden bases and looked like glorified bowling trophies. There wasn't anything about them that deserved an audience, and no special reason to be curious about their appearance.

One glorious exception was Tim Kirk's ceramic dragon base for the 1976 Hugos. And since 1984 almost all the committees have rejected the cliched wooden base in favor of original art or a base made of a unique material, like Australian rosewood or Georgia granite. The artistry of the Hugo base has become a convention's voice in the ongoing dialogue about how to express the award's meaning in physical form.

Tony Lewis, like everyone else on the Noreascon 3 committee, was proud of Noreascon 3's Hugo base, a design inspired by landmarks of the 1939 World's Fair. During the con he guided me into an office to see one close-up. Twenty Art Deco Hugos were lined up on the table, an impressive sight. Jill Eastlake, responsible for the awards, decided not to object since the nameplates were covered with masking tape and I wasn't going to be handling them. Yet I privately wondered if I was indecently peeping before the ceremony.

Thinking now about that experience I realize that I reflexively responded to an aura of secrecy associated with the need to guard the Hugo winner's nameplaques until they have been properly announced; the concealment of

the design has only been a coincidental byproduct of that security.

Further, for most years before 1984 there was no special reason a committee would want to display its generic wooden base, and before 1989 there was no planned exhibit where the current-year Hugo might be shown.

ConFrancisco's letter on the subject said, "It has been traditional for each year's Hugo base to be unveiled at the awards ceremony, and for a copy of the base and rocket to be placed in the Worldcon history display immediately afterwards," but we see this "tradition" has largely been the exhibit-maker's decision, and dates back only four years.

The winners, not the trophy, properly dominate the Hugo ceremony. Delaying the display of the base until late in the con -- it won't occur until Monday at ConFrancisco --- does nothing to enhance the ceremony, while it deprives the committee's voice in this artistic dialogue of an audience. I respect each committee's right to handle this matter in its own way, but I recommend that future committees forge a new tradition by showing the Hugo base early in the weekend.

## **Controversy #2: Are the Right Zines Winning the Best Fanzine Hugo?**

While Chuch Harris approved *Mimosa's* 1992 Hugo win in *Wild Heirs* #2, he attacked the award because, "I am never happy with the Hugo concept. I don't/won't vote because I feel the whole thing is riddled with pressure groups so that sooner or later the Trekkie Club zine or, worse still, the N3F organ will win the award. Frankly, *Lan's Lantern* and that sort of crap turns my stomach, but still has a big, vociferous backing whilst really worthwhile products like *Trapdoor* come nowhere."

Why blame *Lan's Lantern's* voters for



*Trapdoor's* poor showing: Chuch Harris is Exhibit A, a *Trapdoor* fan who disdains voting. Sounds like Chuch got left behind in 1986, when some leading fans urged everyone to vote "No Award" in the Best Fanzine category. The others have since done the arithmetic and realized that if they start voting for the zines they like then *Texas SF Inquirer*, *Ansible* and *Mimosa* can actually win Hugos.

Of course, no matter how he uses praise to disguise his true opinion, it's evident that Harris even thinks *Mimosa's* win is part of the problem. He aims another kick at the groin by claiming, "...I would bet that less than half of *Mimosa's* voters ever see *Trapdoor*, and those people who plugged *Lan's Lantern* last time have probably read nothing else since they struggled through *The Cat in the Hat*."

But is this really a numbers game? In 1992's Best Fanzine Hugo race, first place votes cast in the first round were: *Mimosa* 116, *Lan's Lantern* 87, *File 770* 84, *No Award* 63, *FOSFAX* 49, *Trapdoor* 38. I'm confident Robert Lichtman already circulates more copies of *Trapdoor* than the number of first place votes received by *Mimosa* in 1992, and probably to many of the same people who voted for *Mimosa*. Chuch's parochial view is unsupported by the numbers.

Not that any justification is needed, but I think Tom Sadler has explained *Lan's* strong Hugo support. While Chuch Harris dismissed *Lan's Lantern's* voters as functionally illiterate, Tom Sadler, in *The Reluctant Famulus*, defended the zine: "[To] me its main attractions are the huge book, filk and movie reviews, the various articles (and travelogues), the fairly large lettercolumn and the 'Conreports and Ramblings' which the editor, Lan, uses to update everyone on his life. Yes, *Lan's Lantern* may be trying to be all things to all fans and may at times seem overwhelming in its scope and subject matter, but I think it can be a good introduction to fandom and

especially to those who desire to become acquainted (or better acquainted) with fanzines."

Put even more simply, Chuch Harris snobbishly forgets how many science fiction fans are still interested in, oh yeah, science fiction. There will always be Hugo voter support for fanzines like *Lan's Lantern* and *FOSFAX* which have science fiction at the center. It's not just insulting but ignorant to disparage those who support zines that cater to their interest in sf stories.

Harris, who spends a paragraph elsewhere praising *Hyphen*, shouldn't forget how important science fiction was to Willis, Shaw and White. Irish Fandom is properly remembered as the acme of fannishness, but in a way that has entirely obscured its dominant interest in science fiction. When James White was interviewed by *Locus* last March, he said, "We were really religious about *Astounding*," but Campbell's obsession with atomic doom in the late '40s drove Shaw and him to write the kind of stories they'd rather read. Then, "The influence of Walter Willis, who in this very quiet way was a perfectionist about writing, ensured that story number five or six sold before I ever got a rejection slip."

I think it's no coincidence that America's best fanwriter, Andy Hooper, is avidly interested in science fiction and recently attended the Clarion West workshop.

### **Controversy #3: Are Awards For the Benefit of Fans or Pros?**

At the very first Worldcon business meeting I ever attended, Harlan Ellison succeeded in persuading voters to divide the short fiction Hugo category into Best Short Story and Best Novelette. That made the Hugos and Nebulas match, although Harlan was very careful not to antagonize by placing too much emphasis on SFWA's desire for the change. He enlisted

support by appealing to fans' desire to help the underdog, and boost a few more writers toward commercial success by making more of them Hugo nominees and winners.

Twenty years later, while writers have a better reputation, their economic power resembles that of professional baseball players, each field boasting many well-paid superstars who stand out from a background of underpaid novices. Today's fans are correspondingly less tolerant of appeals to change their awards systems for the commercial benefit of writers, judging by a new controversy surrounding the awards given at the Australian National Convention.

Paul Ewins, editor of *Ethel the Aardvark*, devoted his editorial in the June 1993 issue to describing the tension between defenders of a no-nonsense approach to the Australia's "Ditmar" awards, and those favoring a more fannish approach. "The impetus for most of this discussion was the growing perception of the Ditmar as a meaningful professional award which, like the Hugos, Nebulas, etc., could have a beneficial effect on the recipient's career.... While a Ditmar win may not directly result in any extra sales, it could give a writer more credibility when dealing with agents and publishers overseas.

"Unfortunately, as the fiction Ditmars take on more importance to some people it would appear that the fannish categories are thought to reflect badly on the 'professional' categories, particularly when something 'silly' is nominated, or worse still, wins... Personally, I think that the Ditmars cater perfectly well for what is, after all, a very small pool of SF professionals. To hand out an award merely because this may help someone's career is to lower the Ditmars to the status of a marketing device and ultimately this will destroy the credibility of the awards. Likewise, reducing the fannish aspects of the Ditmars only results in a much reduced relevance to general fandom."

Aspiring 1999 Worldcon bidder Donna Heenan dismissed that sercon approach to the Ditmars in the same issue:

"In Western Australia everybody has an opinion about the Ditmars, past and present. The [Swancon 18] business meeting was all about Ditmars. The Serious Ditmar debaters lampooned themselves when that *Eidolon* fella (Jeremy Byrne) wanted to reinstate at the 1993 business meeting what the 1992 business meeting revoked about the 1991 business meeting's negation of the 'Best Fannish Cat' Ditmar, awarded in 1990. (Did that one lose you? You haven't been following your Ditmar scandals, have you.) And then it moved on to 'how future concons should handle the awards.' Well, there came my second opinion, I didn't agree with those 'Ditmars are serious and big business and we should not poke fun at them' mob. The Ditmars were not instituted for putting on book covers and selling books! The Ditmars are an expression of my appreciation for the talent and effort of people who write the books, stories, articles, who draw, build, sculpt the artworks and raise, feed and groom the cats that I see in my everyday fannish life.

"That serious Ditmar attitude found at the business meeting contrasted rather strangely with the Awards ceremony. Held at the unceremonial time of 11 a.m., this awards ceremony was not the gala event, the linchpin of the Natcon, its *raison d'etre*. Indeed, the ceremony was low key, poorly attended and not helped by the half-drunk hotel patrons who staggered into the (public) dining room and demanded drinks!"





## CONVENTIONAL REPORTAGE

### SOUTHERN COMFORT

DeepSouthCon (June 4-6, 1993)

*Report by Janice Gelb*

*(reprinted from Trivial Pursuits #48)*

Thanks to a cheap ticket on Continental Airlines, \$250 round-trip courtesy of \$50 in receipts from the local supermarket chain), I got to go to my first DeepSouthCon in 13 years, [in Louisville]. I was a little apprehensive. Would I survive my roundabout three plane nine-hour flight? Would I know anyone there, or would Southern fandom be taken over by young fans? Would anyone from SFPA [Southern Fandom Press Alliance] be there? Would Southern conventions turn out not to be as superior as I remembered them, but merely be fondly remembered through a haze of "first getting into fandom"? Turns out my fears were groundless.

I finally got to the hotel on Thursday night at 9:45 p.m. local time. This was an all-time bizarre hotel layout, two low wings in an L-shape, leading somehow to a "high rise" (all of five stories high). People, including me, got lost all weekend. The hotel also featured the first shuffleboard courts I've seen in years, and various lawn ornaments: deer, geese, you name it.

[On Friday] I made arrangements for a banquet meal I could eat, wandered through the dealers room for awhile, met up with fellow Californian Genny Dazzo, the fan GoH, and hung out in the con suite with ol' pal Khen Moore. Dinner with Ben Yalow followed, and then I participated in one of the Southern con rituals I'd been missing all these years: the Hearts tournament.

After a snafu in finding decks of cards (we borrowed some from the head security

Klingon) our all-SFPA table eventually produced Guy Lillian III and Hank Reinhardt as the low scorers.

While at the Kubla party, who should find me but Drew Sanders, the head of the Hearts tournament, to inform me that despite my score of 85 in the first round, I had progressed to the semis! Given my history at Hearts tournaments (about which more later) I wasn't really thrilled at this news, but agreed to participate in the next round on Saturday afternoon.

After listening to some quality Southern filking, Murray Porath, Juanita Coulson and Moonwolf at their best, Murray having saved his version of the "Ecumenical Hora" until I arrived, it was off to bed.

[After Saturday's Hearts semi-finals] I was a remarkable low scorer at our table (at 15!) and was shocked to find myself in the finals. And that's where the trouble began. I proceeded to pile up points. Guy maintained a score of 0 or 1 through most of the game, simultaneously evoking the hostility and resentment of the fourth player at our table, who had never met him before and didn't realize that his vocal glee at slamming down winning cards was not directed to her in particular, or even with much malice aforethought.

Close to the edge, I sat watching a second diamond trick go around the table, 3 of diamonds led, Guy triumphantly smashing down the bitch [queen of spades], me happily sitting with a 4 waiting to duck Bill Zielke's card, and then WHAMMO! Bill produces the 2 of diamonds, leaving me to take the bitch and go over 100 points [lose].

Historical Digression: Old-time SFPAnS will recall that in my first DSC in 1978 I also surprisingly made the finals of the Hearts

tournament. Despite my pleas to let someone play in my place, due to a total lack of sleep thanks to the discovery of filksinging, I was forced to play, my mental faculties impaired. This was illustrated by the fact that I blew the only opportunity to kill a run Guy put together, which enabled him to win the tournament. (My guess is that Hank Reinhardt will raise money to put a remembrance of this loathsome deed on my tombstone.)

After this debacle, it was time to dress for the banquet. Unfortunately, Charles [Dickens] and I got there too late to sit with the SFPAnS, which did not prevent them from casting aspersion on my cardplaying ability and assuring me it was all my fault that Guy was behaving in exactly the gracious manner you might expect him to -- that is, with a total lack of decorum. Andy Offutt made a very funny speech ("You can tell someone is from western Kentucky if they think a personalized license plate is one made by their father") and the other speeches were fine, too. Guy's acceptance of the Hearts tournament plaque being the only exception, of course.

[On Sunday] the dealer's room provided reading material for the plane trip home. I should point out that this small DSC's dealer's room had probably as many booksellers and those of equal to better quality than Bay Area conventions three times their size, dealer's rooms out here consisting mainly of jewelry, costumes and media paraphernalia.

En route to lunch, Charles and I noticed an odd phenomenon -- seems the lawn ornaments we'd seen at the hotel weren't just some designer's attempt to create ambiance. There were several houses featuring varieties of the ornaments, some with various extra articles: hats, umbrellas, etc. When we came back from a fairly decent Italian meal, I questioned natives Steve and Sue Francis, who assured me that for some reason, lawn ornaments were *de rigueur* in Louisville.

After leaving the con suite, we bumped into GoHs Will Shetterly and Emma Bull, the conversation eventually wandering around to lawn ornaments. When informed by a Louisville native also in the conversation that her neighbors dressed up their ornaments based on the season of the year, Emma dissolved in helpless giggles and then insisted on taking me to view a satanic circle: a semicircle of Snow White and the seven dwarves that looked innocuous by day but much less so at night when low floodlights cast eerie shadows on the dwarves' faces, and an innocent deer placed in front of the gang. With visions of satanic dwarves and burnt offerings dancing in my head, it was off to bed.

All in all, DSC was as wonderful as I had hoped it would be. Southern cons are as friendly and traditional as I remember: the filking is good, the in-jokes as fun, the con suite as central -- I plan on being back next year!

## WESTERCON 46

July 2-5, 1993

Report by John Hertz

It was not the best of cons, it was not the worst of cons. It was the first Westercon or Worldcon in Seattle for 30 years, and with 2200 people the best-attended Westercon outside Southern California.

*The Ironing Board That Wouldn't Go Away.* At some cons I've arrived just in time to put on Regency dress in a lobby bathroom and teach dancing for four hours. This weekend I was early. I unpacked, clothes here, funny suit there, and phoned for an ironing board; I had packed an iron. The ironing board came and I used it. I phoned that I was through with it. That evening I phoned that I was through with it. The next morning I phoned



that I was through with it. I kept trying. Monday afternoon when I checked out it was still there.

I had so much time I missed my first panel. No one told me when I was first on. But that wasn't so bad, my next one was back-to-back with it: "Will minorities ever make it out of the s-f ghetto?" Ambiguous question. Beth Meacham said she thought the mainstream is more open to minorities. Ginjer Buchanan said educated people of color won't write s-f, Barneses and Butlers and Delaneys are exceptional. Beth said *most* people won't write s-f. Jackson King said s-f softens culture shock, teaches making sense of the future. Beth said the mainstream is about the past, s-f is about the present, you can't write about the future. I remembered Larry Niven's describing how he wrote about Protectors and Moties who were smarter than he. Ginjer said s-f only preaches to the converted, it converts no one. She also said no one ever writes to publishers except to say "There was a typo on Page 15" or "Your cover paintings are Satanist" (i.e. not as a compliment). I keep forgetting to trade Antioch stories with Beth.

Dick Wald was the only one in the Dealers' Room with pulps. He didn't expect to sell many, but brought a few shelves to make sure this part of s-f was on view and available for sale. I thought that public-spirited. If you fall into "Nobody appreciates me," and then react by folding up, you'll miss the people who were hoping you'd be there; if few, then how much happier met. The table next to his was Kelly Freas', whom I found examining a garage kit, like a model airplane kit, that someone had built for his 1955 drawing "How to Learn Martian", an ethnologist in a pressure suit sitting on a cactus taking notes of a three-eyed critter with prehensile ears. Along came a collector who had dozens of Kelly's pieces Kelly had no copies of. I let myself be dragooned into manning the table so Kelly and Laura could talk with this guy. I hope they were able to arrange for some

slides.

George Barr had a table, which in the Artist Guest of Honor was also public-spirited. He said that made it easier for people to find him, and gave them something to talk with him about. Jane and Scott Dennis had a new *Collected Works of Cordwainer Smith* (J. Mann ed.; everything but *Norstrilia*). On Monday they struck a deal with G-O Puppets to bring G-O's latex fantasies to ConFrancisco. Over at Jerry Kaufman's table, Amy Thomson was autographing *Virtual Girl*, which was just out. Only as I write this do I catch the allusion to Madonna, the Material Girl. I bought some things I'd read others' copies of, *All Our Yesterdays* and Blish's criticism. Jerry talked with me about *Fancyclopedia III*, which I'm trying to find a higher gear for.

Across the aisle was another disaster. There was no Fanzine Lounge. Instead Westercon 46 had, opposite from Jerry's table, a table of Trekzines. One would think that Geri Sullivan's splendid arrangement at last year's Worldcon would have shown everyone.

The point of all this, as Don Fitch wrote recently in *The Frozen Frog*, is that a Fan Lounge is a locus (I learned that word from *Between Planets* and I've liked it ever since) of contact among fmz fans *and potential fmz fans*. That's why it has to be daytime and public. The other half of the spell, which Geri staged as a running Minneapolis in '73 party, and local trufen did at Westercon 46 as a Roscoe Room, can be a quasi-closed party for people to attend by word of mouth.

The Roscoe Room was swell. There was a shrine to Roscoe, ghod of mimeo, with a two-foot-high plush beaver as the Great One, a basket for money offerings which were used toward refreshments, and -- innovation! -- a computer disk among the accoutrement of corflu, stylus, lettering guides, and shading plates. People kowtowed. Roscoe was also

shown beatified in a stained-glass-like image on the door. Don Fitch, repeating his performance from Corflu 9, provided the best refreshments on the evening he was in charge, which luckily was the first so we could benefit from the leftovers. In particular he found, he said at a nearby supermarket, some grand beer including Samuel Smith's and various local Red Hooks and Blackhooks. This was not left over. Jon Singer brought an armful sample of his 276 varieties of roses. For the second time in my life I could introduce him to something, since Don had brought Barhi dates from California. Anna Vargo, who I wish would write for APA-L, is studying to be an engineer. Clifford Wind and *Rhetorical Device* were still not to be found. I kept missing Buz Busby, but Elinor talked kindly with me about fmz, cons, and Rick Sneary. Gratitude to Suzle, Clarion West, Jane Hawkins, Marci Malinowicz, Minneapolis in '73, and the Leah Zeldes Smith Fannish Composting and Perloo Society.

For months Westercon 46 kept phoning me about Regency dancing. After twenty years doing this at cons I did have all the details and was happy to tell. Came Friday night. We were scheduled for two hours, about one-third short; we had two sections of a ballroom in name only, one being filled with tech gear; at the end we were told we could not run over even five minutes, because tech had to set up -- for what proved to be one of *four* rock 'n' roll dances. About a hundred people attended, in period and hall costumes as well as Fannish Modern. I expect none of us would have enjoyed living in the English Regency, but as a kind of play it has a transcendent silliness that delights me.

Mark Skullerud's gouache *Jungle Story* was awarded Best of the Art Show. He put a sketch next to it. I like this; not only can bidders get a version at \$75 of what must go for \$900, but we can see the work develop. The story was a spacecraft in the jungle; the

artist gave up some freshness of green leaves for strength in line diagonals. I want to buy the new editions of *1984* and *Animal Farm* with the Kelly Freas paintings. Gail Butler received Best Fantasy for *Emissary*, a pterodactyl carrying a long-haired man -- at least I thought the man was the emissary. The joy on his face made this picture. Joy Day made back-glass acrylics, painting the highlights first, yielding as she said "a special luminosity to the painting." Bryn Barnard had Best Color for *Well-Behaved Pet*, an homage to George Barr. George also exhibited, and for the Program Book cover drew a travel poster -- time travel -- for Lemuria. "SEE the Procession of the Conquering King, the Sacrifice of the Golden Virgin. EXPERIENCE All that History has Forgotten, More than Imagination can Conceive." Self-referential paradox humor there. A bug-eyed kid in the corner turns out to have three fingers on each hand. George, like Kelly, says he's proud to be an illustrator, to accept the challenge of drawing something that both pleases him artistically and communicates. There was no ASFA meeting.

*Is There a Trend Away from Hard Science?* Yes, I argued on a panel with Pro GoH Greg Bear. We are afraid of it, we think it will out-reason us. To me "hard science" is an angry expression I hear from those who think only their stuff, the soft stuff, is friendly, and equations are cold. Fantasy is healing, Greg said; it expands the inner mind, deals with old paradigms. Yet science can be exciting, and it burst on the scene as a liberation from undefinable glop people had been compelled to. Fantasy is, in the words of Washington Irving (or Irving Washington), "a nearly useless, because inimitable, example"; science says "You too can do it." Burt Webb said the humanities tried to render science irrelevant; "we are the core issues". But who is more broad-minded? A painting is much more likely on the wall of a scientist than a beautiful formula on the wall of a painter. And Hawkings' book outsold Madonna's;



Reagan confessed to libraries that he reads s-f.

Greg was the Master of Ceremonies for the Masquerade. He couldn't announce who was a Novice, Journeyman, or Master; no one told him. Presentation judges were Astrid Bear, Marjii Ellers, Dana MacDermott, Bruce Pelz, Judith Smith; workmanship judges, Bruce MacDermott and Terry Smith. A family show.

Deborah Strab went to folklore of the Ainu, the oddly European-looking aborigines of Japan, for "Katahira, Ainu Spellweaver"; with fine drapery and eerie bearing this won Best Master and Best Garment Construction. Sue Lyn Torgerson-Taylor and Bill Taylor won Best Fairy Tale (Novice) for "The Last Watch", a faithful dragon who died on vigil, releasing a dragon-spirit free to fly. "Autumn and Jack Frost" by Liane and Richard Stephens, Autumn a woman in an Elizabethan gown, Frost with glittering pectorals, won Best Journeyman and Best Pattern Drafting and Hand Beading; they danced, unusually sensitive to time.

Judges' Choice, People's Choice by ballot, and Best Use of Foam and Found Objects was "Tomb of Evil" (Master), by Joy Day, David Tacket, and Jay Vosburg, in which a thief tried to rob a glowing monument, was thwarted by a monster, and then even that was surpassed by the master of the tomb, a behemoth ridden by something unspeakable, the whole so huge it brushed the roof of the hall. Only Paula Crist-Pickett could beat this and the Spellweaver, which she did, for Best of Show, as "The Chancellor" (Master) with Vaughn Pickett, yet another of her superb Klingon presentations -- what if the Federation had lost? -- well imagined, well re-created, well acted. While not particularly a Star Trek fan, as I say I recognize the vitality of this sub-genre, and I admire good work.

Portland won handily for 1995 with 158 votes

of 195 cast. There was no Dead Dog party. I've left out the Barbara Hambly Non-Existent Panel Flap, the Child Care Flap, and the Drivers' Licenses Flap. Again I'm in the awkward position that Committee members were kind to me personally, but their con was bungled. Ben Yalow said it still was not as bad as Oakland. There was no Talisker in the hotel bar, but there was Lagavullin, and I drank as much of it as I could.

## WESTERCON FOOTNOTES

By Mike Glyer

Making sure you don't miss those stories John skipped in his report, let's begin with what the hoax daily newzine said about the masquerade:

"Remember when Nadia Comenici earned the first perfect 10 in Olympics gymnastics? 1993 Westercon masquerade judges declared it the first masquerade to **exceed** perfection by distributing 17 awards among 15 entries. Who would have expected the costume judges to borrow a page from the Special Olympics, that everyone who enters should win something?"

A delightful part of the brief masquerade was GoH Greg Bear's service as MC. With his mouth pressed against the microphone for the last two words, he advised the audience, "They have some nonhuman participants who require distortion -- of time, space, and my voice." His introduction of the judges noted one "who favors natural materials" -- she bowed, with ample cleavage. Later on, commenting about a costume, Bear shuddered: "I don't even want to think what Klingon Clearasil is like!"

Westercon gave out-of-town con runners plenty to talk about, but very little of it impacted average attendees. Perhaps the child care policy did.

Becky Thomson summarized the widespread

complaints about Westercon's provision for children, especially kids in the 9-12 year range: "It didn't matter if your child was 3 years old or 11. He could either sit in a nursery for \$2 per hour or tag along right beside mom or dad. I was lucky and knew ahead of time, which was why my son and his father didn't come to Westercon. I felt really sorry for John Finkbiner, who ran his first convention department at age 9 and is now 11, and couldn't visit the film or video rooms without his dad. Or for the family with two little ones who, because babysitting hours were so limited, sent dad and the kids back home so mom could fulfill her staff obligations."

Westercon members checking into the Red Lion received a four-page handout from the hotel. Unlike all its predecessors, which were usually the first sign of coming trouble between con and hotel, full of advice like "Please leave the tv remote for the next guest; it won't work when you get it home anyway", the Red Lion's handout was actually friendly and useful. What most struck my fancy was its offer, "We have a supply of towels available specifically for costume makeup removal. These towels are available daily at the Front Desk. Please use them!"

The most popular Westercon in-joke was: "It's 2 a.m. -- Do You know Where Your Driver's License Is?" Westercon required rovers using their radios to leave their licenses as security. But when the shift supervisor went to bed at 2 a.m. Sunday morning, all the licenses were still in his pocket. Rovers coming off shift wanted them back. They checked and found he wasn't with his usual roommate, instead, he was sharing a room with his girlfriend, only nobody knew her last name.

Some of the rovers gave up the idea of getting home and curled up under tables in the con office. In desperation, the committee resorted to the hotel for a list of everyone who had checked in since Wednesday. They finally

found a woman with the right first name, a member of the con, and the phone call woke both her and the errant shift supervisor. The night ended with the supervisor standing inside his darkened room handing the contents of his pants pockets to Chris Cooper through a crack in the door. Everyone got to drive home after all.

That probably happened about the same time I was enjoying the San Antonio in '97 party, parrying wits with whoever walked past. Tom Hanlon, Debbie Hodgkinson, Tom Veal and I tried to solve Worldcon "Meet the Pros" party's inevitable failure to get pros and fans to mix. A serious suggestion was to give pros a passport and give fans various stickers: when a pro had talked to five fans he would have enough stickers for a free drink. Less serious but probably no more impractical was Debbie Hodgkinson's idea to give the drinks free, but (like *Escape from New York*) spike them with something the antidote for which could only be obtained at the Meet the Pros. Tom Veal recommended electronic badges for the pros that continued to administer electric shocks until they talked to fans.





## FAN MAIL

**Dave Langford:** Congratulations on fifteen years of desperate fun. (When *Ansible's* 15th birthday comes around next year, I'd sort of planned to keep quiet about it.)

**Lloyd Penney:** Belated congrats on 15 years of news and silliness. I've received issue 97, and inside are the results of your poll. I also notice that my name doesn't appear on the list of people who took part.

*[[Since it was a "secret ballot" I was unable to tell who the voters were unless they put their return address on the envelope, or I recognized the postmark or their handwriting. I may have gotten your ballot after all.]]*

**Denny Lien:** Part of my failure to renew months ago was due to waffling over a decision to send or not send the enclosed letter. I never did decide, obviously, even though my irritation with fan fund voting and vote-reporting practices was cranked up another notch with the subsequent DUFF administration decision not to report the write-in votes. So, whatthe hell, I'm sending it... Insert standard grumpy rant here about "Whatever happened to" and "viewing with alarm" and use the phrase "hell in a handbasket" as appropriate. Not that anyone will care, or, I suppose, should care.

*[[Denny was originally ticked off by Jeanne Bowman's 1992 decision that write-ins would no longer be an option on TAFF ballots, which she made after consulting with "international fan honchos".]]*

Just another example of the perils of procrastination: I received the September *File 770* just before going off to *[[the 1992]]* ReinConation -- which con I donated items to the TAFF auction, bought items at same, and did half the auctioneering. Returning home and finally reading said *File 770*, I discovered

that the new TAFF ballot features "the lack of any place to write-in a vote...a change approved by 'international fan honchos'."

I wasn't even aware that fandom had real-life honchos (as opposed to the standard Secret Masters joke-honchos), international or otherwise. I am slightly bemused by having just gone through a national election in all 50 states, 49 of which (I believe) have no rules against write-in candidates -- even though several million voters are involved, the consequences of a Really Dumb Decision could contribute to worldwide life and death issues, and an entrenched political Establishment is notoriously hostile to outsider candidates, grassroots democracy and all like that.

By comparison, we have TAFF, where only a couple of hundred votes are involved (can't be too hard to count all of those four or five write-ins, can it?); where the issues involved are somewhat less than life-and-death (aside from the possible death of a couple of egos); and where the prevailing culture of fandom has long been a sort of easy-going, egalitarian anarchy (aside from, apparently, a few self-appointed honchos). Which electoral system would you have expected to opt for banning write-in candidacies?

So, as I say, the perils of procrastination. If I had read this *File 770* when it first arrived, I could have saved my time and money at ReinConation. But better late than never: there's always future conventions.

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