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#38
April 1991

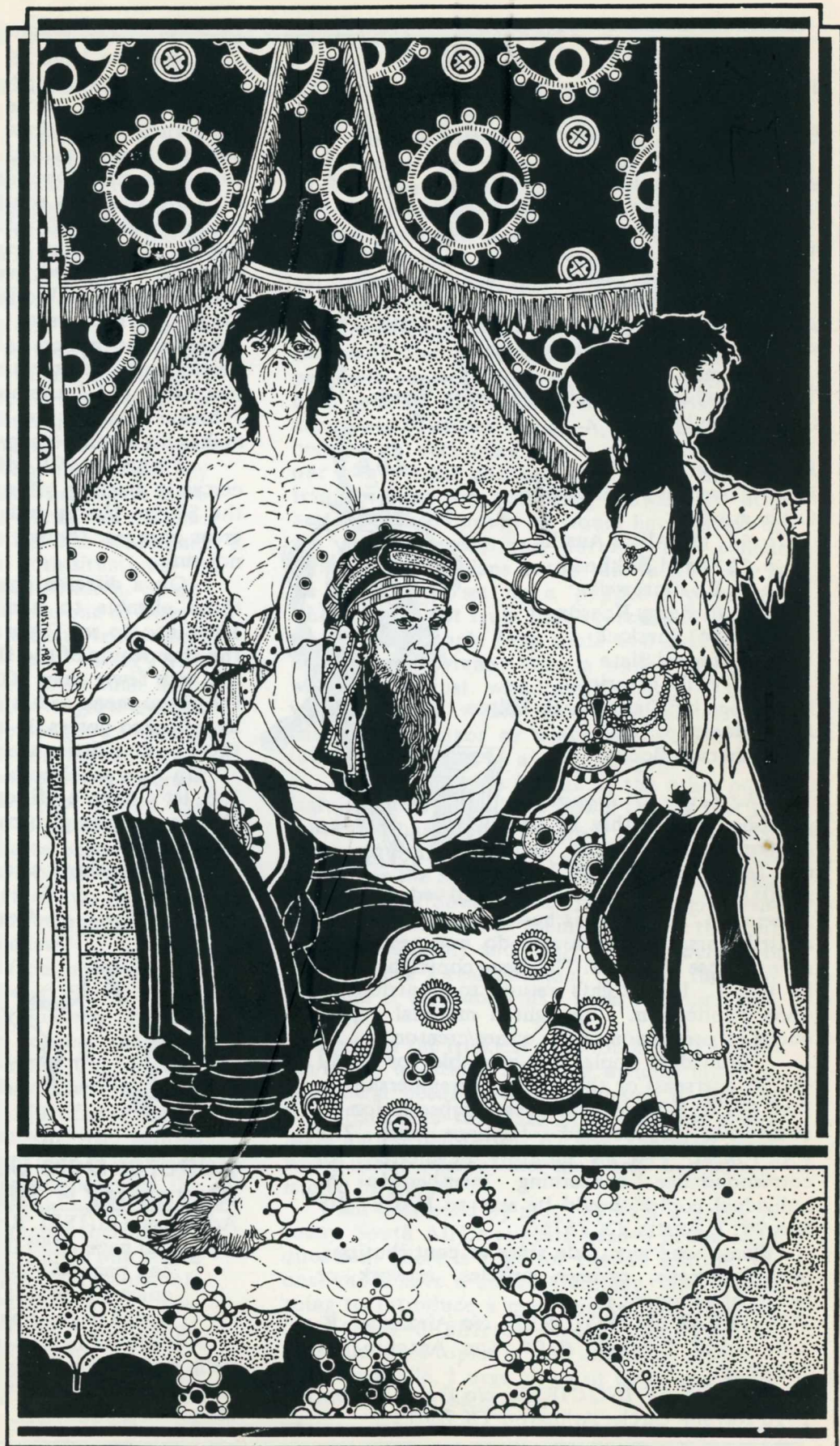


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Welcome to Issue 38 of *The Texas SF Inquirer*. Well we've determined who drew our masthead logo and have given credit opposite.

1990 was a bit rough on fandom and SF&F, a lot of deaths. Too many people who will be missed; among them Donald A. Wollheim, Don C. Thompson, Elizabeth Pearce, J.J. Johnson. As fandom is now over fifty years old, deaths are to be expected. But not all of those we lost were old, venerated first fandomers. J.J. Johnson was lost to senseless violence, which makes his death perhaps all the sadder.

Perhaps 1991 will be a better year. It is certainly starting off strange enough. Events in the Soviet Union and the middle-east portend great changes, though exactly what changes I'm not sure.

On a different note, let me encourage all those eligible to nominate and vote for the Hugo's to do so. There's been talk of late, about the cheapening of the Hugo when some are given out with fewer than 1000 votes cast. Let's make the Hugo mean something again, and let's do it as informed voters. It wouldn't hurt anyone out there to do a little research of the nominees.

On a personal note, Dale is still looking for a job, let's hope he finds one soon. Well, I guess there's something to be said for working for the government.

All the above said, we hope you enjoy the issue.

-Alex & Dale



Editors: Dale Denton & Alexander R. Slate

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The Return of Boondock Central

by Alexander R. Slate

Operation Desert Storm is, to all intents and purposes, complete. Was it a righteous war? No, there is no such thing as a righteous war. Righteous connotes moral. No situation that involves the death of a sentient being, particularly a human, can be termed moral. However, Operation Desert Storm may be judged as a justifiable war. I will explain.

There is a difference between morality and ethics. To me, there is only one moral imperative, to do no harm. (More correctly, it is to do as little harm as possible.) Hurting anything is morally incorrect. However, sometimes it is necessary. Here is where ethics comes in.

Ethics is a convoluted system of 'rules' governing the way one should conduct oneself. By necessity, ethics must be situational. There is no necessary correlation between ethics and the law. Sometimes one must break the law to remain ethically correct. Examples of both situations.

Situation one, I have small children. Sometimes, it becomes necessary to give one of them a little slap on the tush or the wrist to teach them the difference between 'right' and 'wrong'. This little harm will do them more good than harm because it will teach them how to grow up and behave, so in order to do a greater good I have to perform a lesser harm. A situational ethic.

Situation two, lets say I come across a person bleeding badly on the road. After I stop the bleeding it becomes necessary to get him/her to a hospital as quickly as possible to ensure his/her safety. This may mean that I break the speed limit or maybe run a red light or two (safely of course). The ethics (and in this case morality) of preserving a life overweighs the law.

But I have truly digressed from my main topic, the ethics of Operation Desert Storm. I said that Desert Storm was a justifiable war, what do I mean. Regardless of the reasons that our 'glorious' leaders actually used, our participation in the liberation of Kuwait was ethically correct. Sadam Hussein had no justifiable reason for invading and occupying Kuwait. The actions of the occupying Iraqis once they had taken control of the country further compounded the crime. Regardless of what you might have thought about the Kuwaiti regime before the occupation, the situation had become one where the people of Kuwait were undeniably worse off then they had been. No good thng would have resulted for the average Iraqi from this situation either, so their is no justification there.

Therefore the ethical thing to do was to free Kuwait. The coalition leaders chose a period of

economic sanctions followed by military actions. The question really isn't whether or not the sanctions, if left in place longer, would have worked. There is no guarantee they would have and President Bush and others felt that their actions prevented a larger loss of life. That is a strategic decision that was theirs to make. And I am relieved to say that it appears they were correct.

Would it have been correct to continue on to Baghdad? No! It is the business of the Iraqi people to control their own political destiny. To have gone in and toppled Saddam would have meant one of several things. A, we would have to become an occupying power ourselves, making our own ethical position little better than the Iraqi position of occupying Kuwait (A little better because I doubt we would have carried on the massive executions, torture, and callous treatment of civilians as they did in Kuwait.) B, we would have set up a 'puppet government' which would not truly have represented the will of the Iraqi people (and could well have turned into its own tyranny after a while). Or C, we would have just withdrawn leaving a power vacuum which would have degenerated into anarchy and chaos or which would have been taken advantage of by a new demagogue.

Quickly, what do I think of the other political situations around the world. I think that the Baltic nations should be given back their freedom, and I think it can be done in a manner that won't tear the Soviet Union apart. I believe that the blacks in South Africa should be given the political power due to them, and hope they will handle it sensibly and fairly. I don't believe in the IRA has a real position, the laws there are fair, and if they don't like them they can leave for Eire.

Perhaps the trickiest situation is the Palestinian/Israeli question. I'm of a divided mind on this. What needs to be remembered is that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were not a separate nation before the '67 war, the West Bank was part of Jordan and the Strip was administered by Egypt.

I am heartened by much of what is going on today. South Africa appears headed in the right direction. There is hope for Eastern Europe. We once more have a united Germany. GM is even going to introduce a mass market electrical car (but that's a different topic). But I'm out of handle these topics in later editorials, maybe.

Meanwhile, I urge all to sit down and think out your own eithical code.

impressions of an Illustrator:

Ed Emshweller: Domesticated Super Science

by Al Jackson

Place: Dallas, Texas, J.L. Long Jr. High School
Time: Fall, 1954, Lunch break

There was this fat guy. He was always sitting on the back step of one of the thrown up wooden annex buildings at the school. I never saw him around the school, he just always seemed to be just kind of there in the back of the school at lunch time. My friend Richard Koogler spotted him first. He noticed the guy was reading a science fiction magazine.

I was in my 13 year-old golden age of sf. Absorbing every Robert Heinlein juvie in print at the time. Sense of wonder ran all round my brain.

We struck up a conversation with this guy. But my eye caught the glint of the autumn sun off an orange colored cover that had this futuristic bathyscaphe maneuvering towards what looked like a crashed space ship in an underwater setting. At the top it said GALAXY, in smaller letters underneath SCIENCE FICTION.

I asked the guy if I could look at it, I thought it looked neat. I had not seen anything like it before, though I had seen some of the pulps like Planet Stories and Amazing around somewhere. I had been checking out library books and buying a few paperbacks when I saw them, but for some reason the suburban stores in Dallas in the early 50's didn't have SF magazines.

On the contents page was a name I knew, Willey Ley, that caught my attention. I had taken up science fiction because I had read all the Willey Ley and Werner Von Braun popularizations of space flight, but when that ran out there was nothing else to read. SF fed my hunger.

My eye also caught a title, *Gladiator at Law*, said part 2 of a 3 part serial. Hmm..., I turned over to page 112. There was an illustration from the story. A guy in the foreground carrying a suitcase, another in a kind of ominous black uniform. He was punching out this girl and there was this vehicle and spherical dwelling in the background. I had never seen anything like it before. Another illo a few pages over, a guy playing a slot machine, no it didn't look like a slot machine, another guy looking on, the interior of a building, a huge cylindrical building from the point of view to a vast floor below. A sweep of glass. The line work was good, but spare. But something..., what was it about these illos? A certain look, a feeling. An appearance of domestication, but the slot machine and clothes spoke of futuristic super science. No slaving bems or

rivet head Gernsback'en scitifiction gear I had seen on *Planet Stories*. Here was sophistication.

It said illustrations by EMSH. Now that's a neat name I thought. It was several years later before I knew the name belonged to Ed Emshweller.

Alas, Ed Emshweller died in California on the 26th of July, 1990.

It is little remarked upon but when we talk about John Campbell we usually note his vision of science fiction as a literature of ideas. But we all know that one of the remarkable attributes of the prose he demanded, besides good writing and story ideas, was a conception about how to make super science tenable. In the 1940's and 50's much of SF was dominated by 'future fiction', which Campbell and his writers imbued with a certain texture. The texture of a certain, well... domestication. How more exciting interstellar travel was if it had a lived in look. Golden Age SF prose converged quickly on this insight of Campbell.

Soon too there were artists like Hubert Rogers and Edd Cartier filling the covers and interiors of ASF with wonderful art that captured this spirit. Then Kelly Freas and Ed Emshweller began illustrating for the even more refined SF prose of the 50's. What most impressed me about this work was their attention to costume, equipment, architecture and vehicles. Art work where future time super science made a connection with everyday life.

But..., more than that. There is a certain kinetic feeling, a juncture to the action in the stories. Realization of what, to my mind's eye was going on. I point to the Emsh cover and interior illos for Alfred Bester's astonishing novel *THE STARS MY DESTINATION* serialized in *Galaxy* (1956). How to capture Bester's Wide Screen Baroque and still make it looked 'lived in'? You just have to look to see Ed Emshweller's marvelous talent.

During the 50's the great cover artist was Kelly Freas, every sf fan knew him. But he did have a peer in Emsh. Some of Emsh's covers, especially for *F & SF* and *Venture* equaled Freas. As a black and white scratch board artist Emsh could match Kelly Freas scene for scene. There were other wonderful artists at the time such as Mel Hunter, Vestal, Earle Bergey, and Alex Schomburg (Virgil Finlay and Hanns Bok as wonderful as they were seemed more fantasy artists to me, and Powers is hard to fit in).

[Continued on next page]

As *Astounding* slowed its innovation from 1950 to 1959 *Galaxy* and *F&SF* brought something new. For writers wanting a break from *Astounding* and John Campbell, *Galaxy* was a breeze. Wonderful stories, and writers like Fred Pohl, C.M. Kornbluth, Robert Sheckley, Damon Knight, Phil Dick, and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr..

H.L. Gold and art director W.I. van der Poel had an eye for interior illo. Art to match the urban future fiction satire of the authors.

Fiction with a sort of cyber-punk cast to it nearly 30 years before the invention of the word, does anybody remember this? It is interesting to wonder just what influence Emsh-Pohl-Kornbluth - Dick pre-cyber-punk had on the French comic artist Mobeus who had great influence on Riddley Scott who in turn made *Blade-runner*, its texture is more that of early Dick *Solar Lottery* for example than *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*.

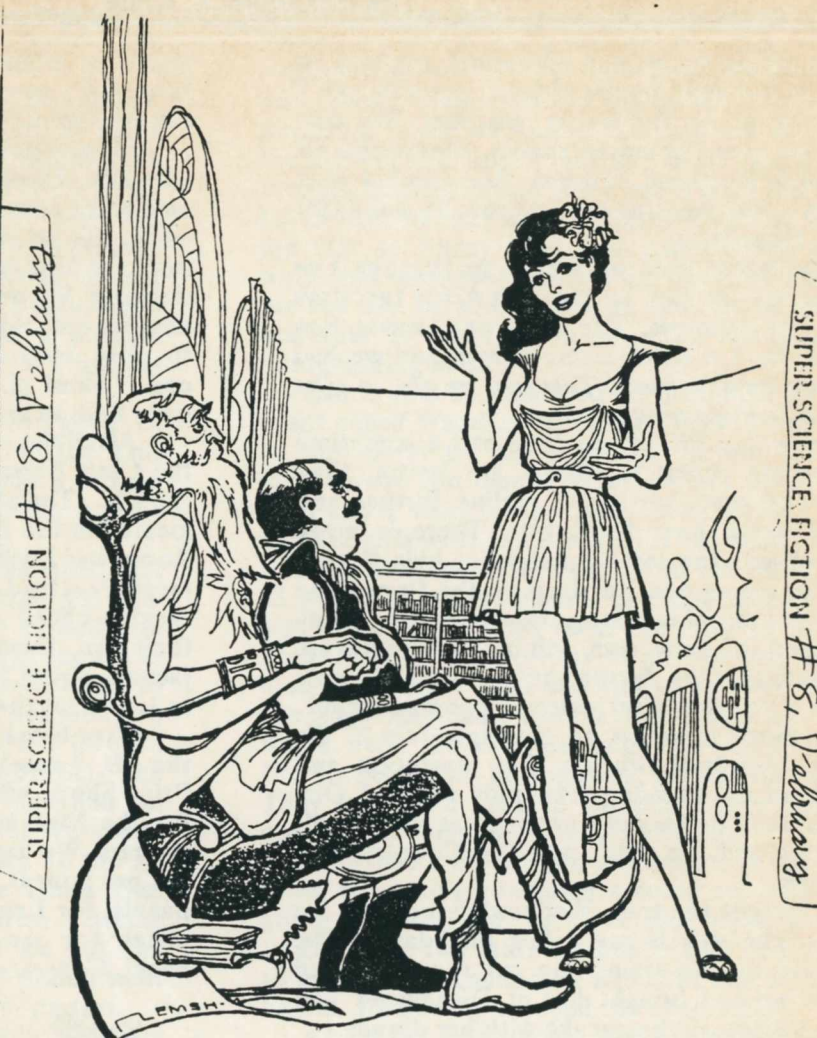
Lookit here! Open the November 1955 *Galaxy* to page 70. Story by Phillip K. Dick called AUTOFAC, this is a wonderful story about von Neuman machines gone amok. Emsh's illos in pages 70-71, 80, and 90-91 could give pause to any Hollywood production designer. Technically Emsh was a consummate pen and

ink line artist, but here the machines and costumes are wonderfully realized. Sometimes when I look at science fiction art 35 years old there is a kind of transposed anachronism. A kind of future-look that did not come about. To EMESH's credit the 'look' here has not happened yet, but looks like it could. So clean, so slick and still different, so elswen.

His pen and ink work could be superb. I loved things like a small illo in the Feb. 1956 issue of *Galaxy* for "The Category Inventors" by Arthur Sellings, page 77. An angry guy grasping a robot by the arm. Besides its technical perfection it's a very clean, clever extrapolation of costume and machine.

Emsh was Freas' equal in black & white pen and ink and scratch board work all through 50's (it is sad that in a way he was not known for this, Emsh won most of his Hugos when Freas sort of retired from the field for a few years in the early

4 1/8"



'60s. However, his color cover work seemed to vary and was not as consistent as that of Freas. But he was Freas' equal when he wanted, there are some wonderful covers on *Venture* and *Infinity* from this period, why exactly those mags I don't know, and later he did some beautiful covers for *F&SF* equal to anything Freas ever did. Especially nice for *F&SF* for Heinlein's *Have Spacesuit Will Travel* and *Starship Troopers*.

And...such gorgeous work for ACE when uncredited much of the time.

If you ever wonder who did the beautiful brunette is many of those EMESH drawing and painting is, it's his wife, writer Carol Emshweller.

Brian Aldiss, in his book *Science Fiction Art* wrote, "Emsh is the great all-rounder of sf art. A well chosen folio of his drawing would be a thing to treasure." Alas! No such collection of his art exists.

Someone should take note! Please!

Westercon 43

by Alexander R. Slate

Because we heard that Westercon was one of the better conventions for sf/f art, my wife and I decided to go to Westercon this year. We also decided to take the entire family. Westercon 43 was held in Portland, Oregon. We decided that going by train was our best option. It was \$400 cheaper than flying.

This meant that we would go through Los Angeles. We decided to stay in LA for two days to visit my relatives. The train only leaves San Antonio for LA three times a week and we had two extra days, anyway. This way we got to take the kids to Disneyland.

If you can afford the time and a sometime inconvenient schedule, trains are better than planes. The seats are wider, recline further and most of them have foot rests. There is more room between the seats, enough for kids to play in or for young ones to sleep on the floor. One hint, if you do plan a long train trip bring along some food of your own (dining car prices are pretty steep). One further note, trains are only cheaper if you don't get a sleeping compartment.

We made it to LA on Monday, July 2. We went to Universal Studios that afternoon and Disneyland on Tuesday. The kids enjoyed Disneyland, Josh's (my son) favorite was Mr. Toad's Wild Ride and the girls' was The Country Bear Jamboree.

We caught the train Wednesday morning for Oregon. The 4th is my wife's birthday, so we celebrated on the train. She got the cards and presents we had bought her at Disneyland and she got a piece of cheesecake with her dinner.

We met several fans from LA on their way up to Westercon. Five in all, only four were in our car. There was R.V. Branham, a writer with several stories to his credit, Sean Smith, Michelle Delude, and a guy named Alex. The fan not in our car was Gary Louie.

Northern California and Oregon are very pretty and so green! Two things my wife and I miss in SA are trees and mountains. They're in abundance in the Northwest. We pulled into Portland Thursday about 4:30 PM (two hours late) and caught a cab for the hotel.

We stayed in the Delta Inn, the remote hotel. The con was held in two different Red Lion Inns, the Jantzen Beach and the Columbia River, which are on opposite sides of Interstate 5 but which share a parking lot that passes beneath the highway. The Delta was cheaper, our room was \$43 a night, plus tax. The Delta ran a shuttle to the convention once an hour; but it was a bit of a hassle getting back and forth. After eating

dinner in Elmer's, next to the hotel (huge portions and a good value for the money) we caught the shuttle to the con.

Con registration was in the Jantzen Beach (the JB). After this we caught a ride with some nice folks over to the Columbia River (the CR) where the art show was. Laurel set up her art, I took the kids into the lobby to keep them out of mischief. We weren't there for two minutes when another kid, Aaron, Josh's age, came running up to play. Josh didn't lack for playmates at the con. Laurel got the show stuff up, but didn't have time to get the prints into the Print Shop.

After the Art Show closed, we went to find the Club Room, the non-alcoholic consuite, in the CR. (The alcoholic consuite, Hospitality, was located in the JB.). The couple running the Club Room was Dick Pilz, Jr. and his wife Roz Malin, local Portland fans who edit and publish a fanzine called *Renaissance Fan*. We also met their son, Evan, who was playing in the suite's jacuzzi. From here it was back to the Delta Inn to try to get the kids to sleep.

After breakfast at Elmer's and the shuttle to the JB, Laurel went to get the stuff into the Print Shop, while I went to get Josh registered for the Masquerade and the kids checked into daycare. We used daycare sparingly (at \$2.50 per kid per hour it adds up). Then it was on to 12:00 panels, for Laurel the Illustrators of the Future panel, for me the What is/Why is a Fanzine panel. Contrary to what often occurs at this type

of panel, the audience outnumbered the panel. It was a good panel, and I met Chuq Von Ros-pach, Bruce Pelz, and Art Widner.

Let me digress here to talk about the programming. There was quite a variety of items. At most times there were 11 different panels going on at once. There were four gaming rooms, a fanzine room, a costume display, and two con-suites. This in addition to the art show (which was also used for



programming.) and the dealers' room. There was programming on every aspect of fandom: literary, media, costuming, gaming, comics, you name it.

The dealers room was smaller than I expected, but it was well stocked and well balanced. Book dealers made up about 45% of the tables. The art show was large and the space and good lighting made for excellent viewing. There were folk concerts, a masquerade and three dances, one each on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. There were three special events; a sternwheeler cruise, a self-guided bus tour, and a potlach salmon bake. But now back to our regularly scheduled con report.

After the panel, I went to the JB and got P.C. Hodgell's signature. Laurel picked up the kids and met me there. There was already a bid on one of her pieces. After lunch at the nearby Burger King we went on the bus tour.

The first stop was Powell's, a book store that covers an entire city block! Everyone got one book. Gary Louie had also come to Powell's; in the hour we spent there he got through the B's in the sf section. In several trips he spent close to \$300). From Powell's we took the tour bus to the Rose Garden and a city bus to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI). The OMSI is a great place for kids; they had an exhibition of robotic dinosaurs there. We ended up taking the city bus all the way back to the JB and the hotel shuttle back to the Delta Inn. From there we walked to a nearby Chinese restaurant for dinner. After dinner we put the kids to bed, Laurel stayed with them while I went back to the con for some of the room parties.

I went to two parties, the Hawaii in '93 party and one other that I can't remember. At the Hawaii party I talked to Laurie Mann of NESFA and met John Dalmas, with whom I set up an interview. I looked in on the dance between trying to find parties. It got off to a slow start, but had picked before I left.

Saturday morning we went to the Club Room for breakfast. Josh and I left for the Masquerade Walk Through. It went smoothly, it consisted of going over your requirements with various staff members (Emcees, lighting, sound, etc.) and since Josh had no special requirements there was little problem. The assistant stage manager walked Josh and me through exactly what was going to happen, which helped. We met Laurel outside the rehearsal, she took the kids to day care and went to an art panel, while I walked to the CR for my interview with John Dalmas. I caught up with him and Dean Ing in the coffee shop.

While Laurel went to the Kelly Freas Slide Show I took the kids to lunch at Burger King.

From there it was off to the dealers' room foyer where the signings were, I wanted to get Larry Niven's signature on a few books, after that I wanted to go to the LeGuin reading. Because of a bad back, Larry Niven cancelled his autographing. While we waited the kids laid down in the hallway and took a nap so I didn't get to the LeGuin reading either. But I had a good talk with Ed Bryant, whom I hadn't seen in a year or two. I did talk to Fuzzy Pink and Larry Niven for a while and showed Larry a yoga exercise which I use for my back. One bright spot to all of this was that I was first in line for the LeGuin autographing at 4:00.

Laurel met us there and we walked to a restaurant called Waddles for dinner. Then it was back to our hotel to get everyone dressed for the masquerade and dance. When we got to the JB, Josh and I went to the prep room while Laurel and the girls went to get seats for the show.

Josh was one of two entries in the Nova class (8 years old and younger). The masquerade staff was very helpful. Two took the time to talk to Josh. Josh wasn't nervous at all. He was scheduled to go right after the judges entered. When the stage hand came to take Josh I went out to to watch. Josh did OK; he forgot to yell boo and fire his pistol like he was going to, but who cares. They took Josh back to the prep room where a crew of photographers was standing by.

They had a closed circuit monitor in the prep room so waiting contestants could see what was going on, so Josh watched the other presentations. The two staff members who had talked to Josh earlier came over and told him how well he did. Josh really enjoyed the experience.

As for the masquerade, there were some really beautiful costumes. The judges and the emcees, a very funny couple, were also costumed. After the masquerade we joined Laurel and the girls in the ballroom. The girls had also enjoyed the masquerade; they recognized Josh when he came out.

Of course Josh won a prize, as did the other entry in his class. Josh won a certificate, a ribbon, and a computer game. The committee also gave him a tee-shirt for participating. The best of show winner was an *Aliens* group (Ripley, Newt, and an Alien).

[Continued on page 14]



Westercon Review

by Fred Duarte, Jr. and Karen Meschke

This year's Westercon was held in Portland, Oregon at the Red Lion Jantzen Beach and Red Lion Columbia River. Karen and I really looked forward to going to Portland and temperatures 20 to 25 degrees cooler than in Austin. Besides the cooler weather, there is great natural beauty in Oregon, particularly the waterfalls and the amount of timber on the mountains. Our first full day in Oregon, July 4th, we (Karen, myself and St. Martin's editor Gordon Van Gelder) were escorted by K.W. and Geri Jeter to several of the aforementioned waterfalls plus a lookout center that overlooks the Columbia River and the surrounding countryside for miles.

This long, tiring day of sight-seeing was capped off by having dinner with Robert Sheckley at an outdoor beer garden in the Bohemian section of Portland; greasy burgers, fries, beer and literary sf talk; only in Portland!

We then were entertained by an excellent fireworks display that originated from the Washington state side of the Columbia River, lasting about 45 minutes.

So much for the pre-con stuff. The con started July 5th. Since it was held in adjoining hotels, a catch phrase was born: "It's in the other hotel," which made its way onto the buttons of con staff.

The art show and dealers' room were held in separate hotels; and due to popular demand from Orycon fans, the dealers' room was at least 45% book dealers. We didn't see any problem with this. To complement the book dealers, there were several jewelers and one or two glass blowers. Overall there was a good balance to the dealers' room.

For a lot of the convention Karen and I were committed to working. We spent several shifts at the artifacts table where one could buy mugs, t-shirts with the convention logo on them (a very nice design) and the souvenir book.

I also split time pulling a shift or two with convention operations, going between the two hotels, making sure no trouble got out of hand.

Karen and I also spent time at the Hawaii in 93 table, even taking 2 ballots to take to Holland, voting for Hawaii. So, much of the time we worked the convention.

One thing we were paying attention to was the voting process for future Westercons. It's much like Worldcon site selection voting, except that you have to be physically present to vote; no mail-in votes allowed. There are now north-south rotation zones; this was the year to vote for a south zone city; Phoenix was running unopposed. Of the 156 votes cast, they received 112, so they won by simple majority. Their guests for the 1992 Westercon will be Jennifer Roberson, GoH; Joe Lansdale, Toastmaster; and Pat Mueller, Fan GoH. I don't know what inspired Bruce Farr to select Joe Lansdale and Pat Mueller, but from a local standpoint they were excellent choices. I'm not familiar with Jennifer Roberson's work, so I won't comment on her selection.

Westercon was run as a weaponless convention, which was also allright by us. The convention was run very well, with no major problems. Co-chairs Patty Wells and John Lorenz are to be commended for their hard work in making this Westercon a much more enjoyable one than the other Westercon I attended. Fans from both coasts attended Westercon this year due to the fact that the Worldcon was to be held in Holland. This made for a nice blend of fans from both coasts. Also attending were FACT member and half of the TSFI editor team, Alex Slate, and family who took the scenic route and took the train, a three-day excursion, rather than flying. Both Karen and I would like to see a third coast of fan support from Texas attend and participate in the Westercon tradition.



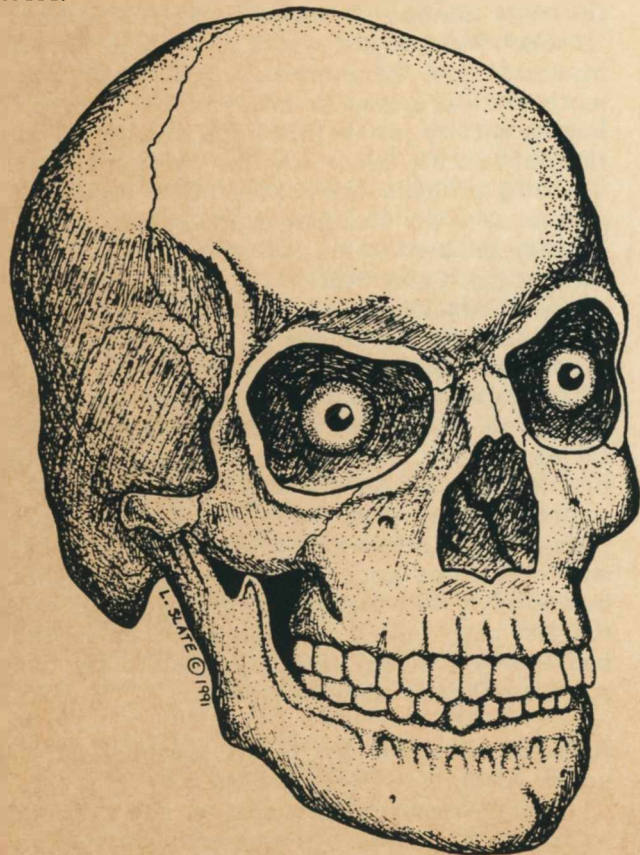
Trades Listing

Austin Writer Vol. 11, #1
BCSFazine #212-214
DASFax Vol.23, #2
DR #68
Factsheet Five #40
FOSFax #153
Mimosa #9
NASFA Shuttle Jan 91, Feb 91, Mar 91
Robots & Roadrunners Vol. 6, #1
SFSFS Shuttle #71, 72
Smart Ash #47
Stone Hill Launch Times Vol. 5, #1-3
The Insider #162
The Knarley Knews #25, 26
The Nature to Wander #10
Timescoop Vol. 5, #11
Transmissions Vol. 14, #1
West Wind #154, 155

NEW OR NOTABLE:

Black Hole #30

ed. Ian Creasey: Leeds University Union SF&FS, Leeds University Union, PO Box 157, Leeds LS1 1UH, UK. Arrived unsolicited but welcome. Interesting zine with good book reviews, also has parodies. Some may consider the humor ascerbic.



Brunch Shot

ed. Bill Hoffman, c/o Andrew Hooper, 315 N. Ingersoll, Madison WI 53703. A one shot zine resulting from a gathering at the Hooper/Root residence. Eclectic offerings.

CRY HAVOC Sep/Oct 90, Nov 90

ed. Keith Smith, asst. ed. Linette Horne. From New Zealand, this is a restart of a trade we hadn't heard from in a while. Primarily news of the scene from down under.

NOTA #4

ed. Johnny Caruthers: Louisville Free Public Library, Oklona Branch Library, 7709 Preston Highway, Louisville KY 40219. Reviews, a recommended reading list, and local area club news.

YHOS #50

Art Widener, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda CA 94563. One of the longest running zines extant, from long-time fan Art Widener. Good writing on varied topics from different people. I was very glad to see this, it almost makes up for the writing we've lost with Don-o-Saur.

FROM LAST ISSUE:

OASFile Event Horizon #42 & 43, 46

ed. Ray Herz: Orlando Area SFS, POB 616469, Orlando FL 32861-6469. A nice clubzine with a touch of genzine.

FTT #10

Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frinton Rd., Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH, UK. A very liberal minded per/genzine from across the pond. This ish also includes a memoir of a kayak trip on the Guadalupe. I like it, but if you're easily put off don't read it, it will raise your blood pressure.

Sci-Fi Channel Newsletter V.1, #1

Sci-Fi Channel Club, 2000 W. Glades Rd, Suite 206, Boca Raton FL 33431. The in-house newsletter of the Sci-Fi channel. Channel and fan club news.

Stet #1

Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling IL 60090-6425. New genzine from Leah Zeldes Smith. Holland trip report and the horrors of buying a house.

Reviews:

FROM THE RECLINER

by Edw. A. Graham, Jr.

Here it is, spring. What a wondrous time of botanical renewal and flowering! The same can be said of the publishing business -- new contracts and book-lines are popping up everywhere, giving us poor starved readers a bountiful harvest of tomes for perusal. Is anyone buying this? No? Okay, on with the show...

Synners by Pat Cadigan (\$4.95 paper, Bantam Spectra, Feb. 1991) Rating: 3.8

As many have foretold, computers have become more prevalent in our lives. Not that they're taking over, just that they are the most adaptive tool for the human mind ever invented. The quest for the "perfect" interface, the actual joining of brain and electronics, has reached its peak: sockets. Sockets are the natural way, utilizing culture-grown nerves poked into the brain. Sockets allow simulation artists to achieve unparalleled realism, to truly synthesize fictional realities. Unfortunately, one of the new breed of "synners" wasn't paying attention while he was hooked up and released a frightful monstrosity into the world-spanning system. It's up to the underground synners and a computer-construct to stop this thing before it gets the upper hand. All they have to do is figure out HOW...

Cadigan has brought her gritty, hard-edged style once again to novel length. The author's strength is bringing her fictional reality to life, practically thrusting it in your face and forcing you to live through the story with the characters. The many characters and their lives become intertwined with one another, without them even knowing it. The cultural background is stark and, unfortunately, very believable, drawing on present trends of not only computers and electronics, but also fast-food. Cadigan has turned out a very solid book, by all accounts. I really had a hard time putting this one down, even though my boss would rather I was working.

Robot Visions by Isaac Asimov (\$4.99 paper, ROC, Mar 1991) Rating: 3.5 (because of most of the stories)

There's not a lot that I can say about this awesome collection. And awesome it is: 482 pages of probably the most familiar and loved fictional invention of the century, the positronic robot. Over the past 50 years, Asimov has created a world where the robot is conceived, built, and (somewhat) integrated into human society. Almost every fan can recite, word for word, the Three Laws of Robotics. Everyone knows of the sleuthing duo Elijah Bailey and R. Daneel Oli-

vaw, not to mention the cold-hearted, calculating roboticist Susan Calvin. Presented in this collection are the short stories that started it all, that continued the legends through the years, and even the freshest tales. Included are several of Dr. Asimov's essays on the nature of robots and their impact on human culture, not to mention some very fine renderings by renowned artist Ralph McQuarrie. The Good Doctor may have written Too-Many-Ghu-Damned books, but this little gem is good for the enthusiast, as well as for an introduction into one of the mainstays of modern science fiction. Pretty cover, too.

Wolf and Iron by Gordon R. Dickson (\$4.95 paper, Tor, Apr 1991) Rating: 3.2

Civilization has collapsed, but not because of the Big One. Sheer economic inertia has propelled the whole world into a recession/depression (hey, I flunked Economics, okay?) that put everyone back about a century. Although modern science and technology are not forgotten, there is no infrastructure to support it. Small communities and isolated ranches and farms are the only havens -- unless you're a stranger. "Jeebee" Walther just wants to live and preserve his knowledge: the group he led had developed a mathematical means to interpret the actions of human society just before the Collapse. He felt the only secure place was his brother's ranch. The only problem was getting there. Jeebee sets out to save his fledgling science and ends up learning the hard lessons of survival with his only companion, a gray wolf.

Dickson has shown himself to be a master craftsman of story telling in the past. Although the fire and zip of his earlier works isn't present, his style has matured. This is a densely packed book, full of amazing details pointing to painstaking research, none of which detracts from the plot in any way. All of the writing is rock-solid, something that will not be "critically acclaimed," though. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if Jeebee and Wolf came knocking at my door -- that's how solid it is. I was almost disappointed when the last page turned and there was no more. I had a very pleasant time with this book and recommend it to almost anyone.

A Book Dragon by Donn Kushner (\$3.50 paper, Avon, Mar 1991) Rating: 2.8

Young Nonesuch was a dragon, albeit without a treasure to guard. "All dragons have treasures to guard," expounds his grandmother. But Nonesuch can't seem to find his niche, especially since

dragons aren't the hot tickets anymore. What's a fledgling to do? All seems for naught, until Nonesuch happens upon a monastery with devout Brother Timothy working tirelessly upon a book. And what a book! The illuminations are inspiring, the calligraphy beautiful and flowing, and the effort the man puts into the book pulls at that undefinable something that Nonesuch knew he was lacking. Now he has his treasure and he will guard this book through the ages.

Well, not only was this a fantasy, it was cute and cuddly and all those other pink-tinged things. It was also well thought out and executed faithfully. It's a tiny little book (200 pages), but I just had such a ball reading this ditty that I would feel remiss in my duties as a reviewer not to mention it. The target audience seems to be early- to mid-teens, but I had no difficulty in getting my teeth into the story. Hey, come on, have a little fun!

Phoenix by Steven Brust (\$4.50 paper, Ace, Nov 1990) Rating: 2.8

Poor old Vlad is up to his patrician nose in trouble, again. Not only is his wife becoming a foaming-at-the-mouth political radical (a touch reminiscent of all the parodies of "freedom fighters"), but his Goddess wants him to do her a favor. His Goddess wants a favor? When the ruling Dragerians get involved and so do Vlad's friends, everything turns topsy-turvy faster than you can say "jhereg." It's times like these that an honest assassin just can't make any head-way...

I was sorely disappointed in the previous tome in this saga, but Brust is back on track with his wise-cracking master assassin with the smart-mouthed jhereg. I always look forward to reading about Vlad Taltos and the interesting world in which he lives. It's a fun romp through back alleys, the Imperial Palace, not to mention briefly visiting the Spirit World (or something resembling it). Brust got off his soap-box and got back to just plain ol' good times and fun. Though, for Vlad, it must have been a little rough at times.

I will mention one teaser: the next book (it's set up for another) will open a new saga for Vlad and Loiosh. Hope it's as enjoyable as this.

Night of the Cooters: More Neat Stories by Howard Waldrop (\$25.00 trade hb, Ursus Imprints and Mark V. Ziesing, 1990) Rating: 4.3

Ever wonder what happened to those Martians of H. G. Wells that landed in the states? Well, the ones that landed in Texas got more than they bargained for. The lead story in this latest collection of the off-the-wall stories by "Mr. National Treasure" is just a small sample of the weird and wonderful that we have all grown to look for. Between fascinating trips into the

imaginary, the insightful introduction by Chad Oliver and the intros to each story, the reader can more readily glimpse the workings of Waldrop, who remains indescribable. Starting with the Hugo-nominated "Cooters...", we are treated to such ditties as "The Passing of the Western", "Do Ya, Do Ya, Wanna Dance?", "Thirty Seconds Over Broadway!" (the kick-off for the *Wild Cards* series, including "The Annotated Jet-Boy" which goes into a morass of detail), and the original "Fin de Cycle", which is really weird. If you're an avid Howard reader, you know what I mean. If you're new to Mr. Waldrop, this is a good introduction to a special kind of speculative fiction. I wouldn't expect anything less from this author, much less the two hottest small-press houses in operation.

Some quickies and special mentions:

Wild Cards VIII: One-Eyed Jacks edited by George R. R. Martin (Bantam Spectra, \$4.95, Feb 1991) -- ably threaded together by Walton Simons, the Aces and Jokers are all up against a menace that ranks right up there with the Astronomer. If you ain't reading this series, you're missing some gritty fiction.

Boat of a Million Years by Poul Anderson (Tor, \$4.95, Jan 1991) -- if you like eons-long epics, this is the book for you! The classic touch of Anderson can't be beat for a novel that literally goes on for a million years. It looks daunting and reads smoothly. Good classic SF.

The Ring of Charon by Roger MacBride Allen (Tor, \$4.95, Dec 1990) -- another thick sucker, this one's for the hard-stuff groupies. The science is excellently used to further the plot and the people are believable. The first in what Allen calls "The Hunted Earth" series, although he says that all the following novels will be able to stand on their own two feet. I'm looking forward to the next installment...

That's it for now, kiddies. I've got a lot more to read and more to get. Please get out there and support your local specialty stores: they have more to lose than big chain stores, and are mainstays of our sub-culture. And B. Dalton's doesn't carry small-press, much less take pains to keep a back-stock of out-of-print stuff. 'Later, folks...

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Alex on Art

by Alexander R. Slate

The SoonerCon art show had the best lay out and set up of any convention that I can recall. The space was adequate and as a result the flats were well spaced allowing for plenty of room to back up and look at pieces properly without crowding other people or blocking access to or around the art. The flats themselves were the peg board variety, and were large. Even better they were all placed on top of tables, which allowed the artists to place overflow works or other items, like business cards or flyers, on the tables.

The lighting was adequate, though it was a little dim in a few places. But none of the works were shaded so that they couldn't be seen without putting your nose to them.

There were a number of artists represented. Curiously, for a convention that has the reputation it does for art, the show was not filled up. I understand there were a few last minute cancellations, but there was sufficient variety all the same. Among the artists who had pieces hanging were David Lee Anderson, artist g-o-h Alicia Austin (reviewed below), David Cherry, Tim Ezell, Dell Harris, Bill Hodgson, Kevin Hopkins (an Illustrators of the Future quarterly winner), Joy Marie Ledet, Mary Hanson Roberts, Laurel Slate, and Sondra Sontara.

Before I start the individual artist review, I would like to thank Bill Hodgson who took time out and helped me with the comments for the review.

The artist guest-of-honor for SoonerCon 6 was well-known illustrator Alicia Austin. She exhibited 18 pieces, including the original of the program book cover art. I discussed her work with local Oklahoma City artist Bill Hodgson. I asked him, "When you look at Alicia Austin's work what do you see, Bill?"

"Well, being an artist, first I see the form. I see the graphic approach to it rather than the pure realist's approach to it, which I like. I see the art nouveau influence there. Regardless of what sort of subject she's working with, whether it's the American Indian mythology pieces or children's pieces, or light fantasy pieces, it's got a real graphic approach to it. A very artsy control of medium."

One of the things about Alicia Austin's work is that it is almost all illustration, they aren't 'paintings' or cover art. A result of this, and the biggest weakness in her work (to me), is the fact that many of her works are either over-simplified or very empty. A case in point is "Hoedown" (watercolor, 1986). There is a central color piece

showing a gnomish individual playing the fiddle for a group of insects. Then there is vegetation, mostly done in silhouette. But surrounding all of this is a lot of blank, white space. As an illustration where the text comes to the borders of the illustration it is probably an effective piece. But as a piece of 'wall art' the empty space causes it to lose a lot of impact. Bill Hodgson credits the reason for this as Alicia's being a 'working artist', and a busy one, without having a lot of time to spend on the details of the backgrounds.

There are a few cases where she has taken this idea of the blank background and done something with it. These are the Indian 'fancy dancer' pieces such as "Keeper of the Fetish" (1985) and "Elk Brother" (1985). Here she has an Indian fetish dancer (an animal/man) surrounded by what is, again, blank space. However, the blank paper is embossed with figures, such as elk tracks; she has done something with the blank space and has done it both simply and effectively. Of the pieces that Alicia Austin exhibited, these were my favorites. Also, where she has drawn a complete 'picture' rather than a 'chopped illustration' the problem of blank space doesn't come into play.



Let's cover another problem with illustrations as exhibited by "Masques", the piece done for the SoonerCon program book. The picture is unbalanced because she has left space for captioning, so that the figures (the masks) start in the upper left, proceed down, and then across the bottom, leaving as 'blank' space (this time though, colored) the entire upper-right quadrant. But for all of that it is a well done piece. The masks are interesting, and show a nice progression from the simplest at the beginning (the top) to the most fantastic at the end. To prevent the whole thing being a series of disjointed masks she uses ribbons to both tie them all together and to bend the picture around the corner. This is well done.

Alicia Austin is an excellent artist, there really isn't any doubt about that. Her black and white figures are just as well drawn as the color ones. But she is not the type of black and white illustrator that seen these days in Asimov's and Analog. She uses bold, strong lines, and doesn't use a lot of shading, relying mostly on solid blacks and whites.

Yet, her color works are the most striking. And it is in her use of color that shows how she has progressed over the years represented by these works. In the newer works the color is more subtle in some cases, more aggressive in others; yet more effective in all of them. The range of color choices seems to be broader and made with more care. As Bill Hodgson put it, "She has learned to punch the colors."

To close out this article, I would like to leave technique and turn to content. The works presented here are not serious, moody pieces. The 'darkest', most introspective character drawn is in "The Pied Piper" (1985). For the most part, the subject matter is light, fanciful. Yet do not get the impression that these are light-weight cartoonish or caricature-style pieces. Instead, let me use two pieces, "Candyland Express" and "Riding the Twilight Trail", as examples. Both pieces portray children riding hobby horses or carousel horses. Yet "Riding the Twilight Trail" has these children floating in the air (on the horses) over a landscape on their way to a castle. I guess it would be best to say that what Alicia Austin is trying to capture is the innocence of childhood, the fantasies of the imagination that are the best in all of us.



Westercon 43 [From page 7]

The dance (a masqued ball) was fun. Sarah and Melissa ran around the dance floor and started dancing with each other when the music started. When Mommy and Daddy came out to dance, they insisted on dancing with us and didn't want to dance with each other or stop, they wanted to dance every dance. A little after midnight we returned to the Delta.

Sunday I got up early and did laundry in the hotel laundromat. When everyone else woke up we had breakfast at Elmer's. Waiting for the shuttle I met Jean Lamb, who like me is a FOSFAX correspondent. Off to the CR so I could get notes for my art critique. Ran into Judith Tarr again who introduced me to a friend of hers (a neopro) who also had twins (younger than mine). Went to the art auction for a while (None of Laurel's pieces went to auction, alas!).

Laurel met us and we went to the Club Room to talk with Roz and Dick and have lunch. The convention was winding down, so Laurel went to pick up her art. She sold two originals, her two newest (both Chinese dragons), but no prints. We were encouraged by the two sales but had hoped for some print sales. Waiting, the kids played in the lobby with some other kids and I talked to Laurie Mann, Aaron Insinga, and other NESFAns; with the occasional dash to grab a wandering kid. I also met Taras Wolansky. We took it easy for what was left of the afternoon, had pizza delivered, packed, and got to bed early. I also took the hotel van to the Safeway and bought food for the train ride home.

Monday we checked out, dropped the bags off at the train station and took a bus to the zoo. Portland has a really nice zoo. We didn't have time to see everything, nor did we ride the train from the zoo through the park to the Rose Garden.

We got back to the station about 1:45, the train was supposed to leave at 2:20. Had we known the train would be an hour late we would have gone to Powell's.

Once more we were in the same car as the LA fans. There were two additions, a fan from LA named Jerry, and Kathleen from Tuscon.

We arrived in SA Thursday about 7 AM (an hour late) and made it home by 8:30. At 10 I went to work. And that finished our trip west.

Convention Review:
ArmadilloCon 12
by James Vanneman

An even dozen now! On 12 through 14 October FACT hosted ArmadilloCon 12 at the Wyndham Southpark in Austin. ArmadilloCon has become Texas' premier convention. The focus is science and literary but there are activities to satisfy most fannish tastes.

Chairman Ed Graham and his staff did a good job. Guest of Honor Pat Cadigan was ... well, she was Pat Cadigan, a class all to herself. Other guests of honor were Jean Elizabeth Martin (Art), Debbie Hodgkinson (Fan), and Susan Allison (Editor). It was good to see Melinda Snodgrass (Toastmistress) again, it's a shame she had to leave early Sunday (she had a horse in the Arabian National Trials). There were many, many other guests, perhaps to many -- over 100 in all. I mean, how you gonna meet and seriously talk to that many folks in the space of only 3 days.

Special kudos to Lori Wolfe for a con suite to match any other. Not just snack foods; eggs and pancakes for breakfast and hot dogs at dinner time. Bravo! The art show this year featured a lot more artists and art than last year, but the layout left much to be desired.

The Cosmic Cabaret made its debut this year and as enjoyable, but could use a little practice. Providing the entertainment were magician Walter Jon Williams, comic Alexander Slate (and his daughters), and Los Blues Guys. The dance Saturday night was not a rousing success -- set up took too long and the music selection left a lot to be desired. One great Saturday success (though not an official con function) was the informal Indian dinner hosted by Bev Hale and Mike Moe. Bev is a superb cook. Finally there was the event; the annual pilgrimage of Texas fandom to the shrine of Howard (in mundane terms the Howard Waldrop reading). Howard once more delighted a very crowded room.

As for programming, there were almost continuous readings. There was Family Feud, the auctions and the normal mix of panel topics. There was a video room, an anime room, and a room for Special Interest programming. One new SIG event was a Brown Bag book auction to support the writers' workshop of Ursa Major, a San Antonio based club. Bidding on books unseen and it seems there were a number of gems mixed in. If they do it again next year take money and go. Last, but not least, the dealers' room -- not too small, not too large, with a pretty good mix of huckster types.

I enjoyed ArmadilloCon 12 and will return next year. Till then, ciao.

Book Review:
The Hereafter Gang
reviewed by Judith Ward

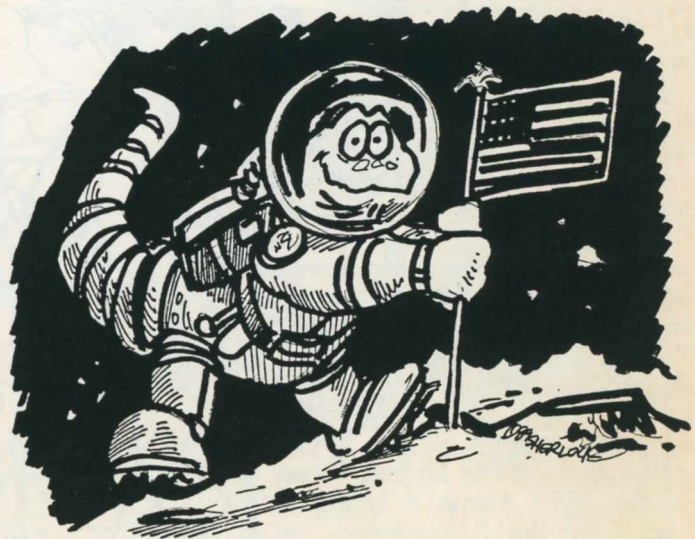
Before I read the book I had heard it characterized as an "off the wall" mainstream novel. Having read it (an advanced uncorrected proof) I totally agree.

The Hereafter Gang by Neal Barrett, Jr. (Mark V. Zeissing Books, \$25, hb) chronicles the "rites of passage" for Douglass Hoover, a "good ol' boy". It's a wild ride - things he had or wanted as a child and as an adult, the women he loved or lusted after, the men who were or try to be his friends, the jobs he had, and the things that really make him who he is.

Neal Barrett invokes tastes, smells, tactile senses, sights, and hearing with the craft of a true word-smith. I could not find a word that I would have replaced with another nor one that could have easily been deleted. At times the language was rough but it fit the characters and the story.

I found myself tracing the route Doug took to get where he wanted to go and to make sure Neal was taking him in the right directions. The descriptions of the small and LARGE Texas towns were colored by Neal's love for Texas. Details of picnics, bar-b-que ribs, pies and all the other food mentioned made me hungry. I could both see and hear the women Doug had, wanted, or fantasized about.

I heartily recommend this book to anyone who likes "Texas Tales", "good ol' boys", and a rousing good book.



Upcoming Conventions

May 3-5 **Corflu Ocho**

Embassy Suites, El Paso TX
 Membership: \$35, Richard Brandt, 4740 N.
 Mesa #111, El Paso TX 79912
A fanzine convention.

May 3-5 **RocKon 15**

Holiday Inn at Otter Creek, Little Rock AR
 Guests: Mercedes Lackey, Jay King, Belinda Christ
 Memberships: \$18. RocKon 15, POB 45122,
 Little Rock AR 72214, 501-370-0889

May 3-5 **Name That Con IV**

Downtown Holiday Inn, St. Louis MO
 Guests: Robin W. Bailey, Lucy Synk, Martha Beck, Wilson "Bob" Tucker
 Membership: \$20. NTC-IV, c/o SCSFFS, PO
 Box 575, St. Charles MO 63302
From what we hear a fun convention (benefitting a non-profit charity).

May 22-27 **10th International Space Development Conference**

Hyatt Regency, San Antonio TX
 Membership: contact Dr. Carol Luckhardt
 Redfield, SwRI, 6220 Culebra Rd., San Antonio
 TX 78240, 512-522-3823

May 31-June 2 **ThunderCon**

Central Plaza Hotel, Oklahoma City OK
 Guests: Colm Meaney
 Memberships: \$15 until 5/1. ThunderCon 1,
 2019 Beaumont, Norman OK 73071
Brand new media con benefitting the Infant Crisis Services of OKC.

June 21-23 **New Orleans Science Fiction and Fantasy Festival, 1991**

Clarion Hotel, New Orleans LA
 Guests: Frederik Pohl, Ed Bryant, George Alec Effinger, Elizabeth Anne Hull, George RR Martin
 Memberships: \$20 until 5/26, then \$25. NOSF3 '91, POB 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089, 504-835-4314.

Jun 27-30 **SF Research Assoc. Meeting**

Auburn Inn, Denton TX
 Info: Edra Bogle, Dpt. of English, Un. of North Texas, Denton TX 76203, 817-387-8216

July 12-14 **Dragon Con '91**

Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta GA
 Guests: Piers Anthony, Philip Jose Farmer, L. Sprague & Catherine de Camp, Mike Jitlov
 Membership: \$26 until 6/15, then \$30. Dragon Con '91, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362.

Sep 21-22 **Connption '91**

La Quinta, Arlington TX
 Guests: Bob Tucker, Brad Foster, Robert Taylor
 Membership: Connption '91, 2813 Cactus Drive, Irving TX 75060

Aug 29 - Sep 2 **Chicon V (WorldCon)**

Hyatt Regency, Chicago IL
 Guests: Hal Clement, Martin Harry Greenberg, Richard Powers, Jon & Joni Stopa, Marta Randall
 Membership: \$125 until 7/15, then ?. Chicon V, Attn: Larry Smith, Registrar, PO Box 218121, Upper Arlington, OH 43221-8121
Where to go to see the Hugos presented.

Oct 11-13 **ArmadilloCon 13**

Wyndham Southpark, Austin TX
 Guests: Dan Simmons, Dell Harris, Pat Mueller, Amy Stout, Emma Bull
 Memberships: \$15. ArmadilloCon 13, POB 9612, Austin TX 78766, 512-990-3782 (before 10PM CST).
The Texas Convention!

Sep 3-7, 1992 **Magicon (Worldcon)**

Orlando FL
 Guests: Jack Vance, Vincent DiFate, Walter A. Willis, Spider Robinson
 Membership: \$75? until ?. Magicon, PO Box 621992, Orlando FL, 32862-1992

OTHER CONS TO NOTE (Write for details):

Oasis 4 - May 17-19 Orlando FL
 Conquest XXII - May 24-26 Kansas City MO
 X-Con XV - June 7-9 Milwaukee WI
 Westercon 44 - July 4-7 Vancouver BC
 Archon 15 - July 19-21 St. Louis MO
 ConFransisco (Worldcon) - Sep 2-6, 1993
 San Fransisco CA

OTHER CONVENTION NEWS:

Note the new dates on ConFransisco. A change of hotels has allowed the committee to extend the convention an extra day.

Sercon this year was cancelled due to the lack of sufficient pre-registrations.

Sercon in '92 will be hosted by FACT in Austin. The projected GOH is Johnathon Carroll.

We also heard from Amigocon and Mid-South Con, but not in sufficient time to print their news.

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