

◆ Corpus Delicti ◆

# The Texas SF Inquirer #44

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Please send any trade zines or contributions, including news, reviews, articles, artwork or letters of comment to:

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10316 Flatland Trail, Converse, TX 78229 or:

THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER, c/o Dale Denton, 2016  
Ravinia Circle, Arlington TX 76012

**Editors: Dale Denton & Alexander R. Slate**

Well, this issue is late, and I'll have to take the blame for it. But I'll pass the blame a bit as well. I can blame work partially for this delay. Okay, actually it's the fact that I am working, and therefore making money, but not nearly as much as I was in times B.L. (Before Layoff). Hmm, still not clear. Let me come at this from another direction.

The fact that I am working means that I can afford to begin much-needed maintenance on my house. The fact that I am making considerably less means that I can't afford to pay anyone else to do these chores. Now are things becoming clearer. Let me explain further.

My outside of my house needed painting when I got laid off, but I put this off due to a lack of funds. Recently, I inspected the house and found some areas where the paint had peeled down to bare wood, several spots of rotted wood, including a couple of places under the eaves (I have open eaves—no soffets) where boards had rotted through such that the roofing was showing through from the underside. This meant that in order to paint the house, I'd have to replace the rotted boards, and as it turned out, reshingle a part of the roof (that part of the roof had three layers of shingles, so all of that had to come off to replace the wood).

The weather wasn't helpful, either. It at least stayed dry long enough for me to get the old roofing off and put some roll roofing down before it continued its almost daily deluge, and of course I couldn't find any solace in working on this issue of the *Inquirer*, because I refuse to turn on the computer when it's lightning outside (working as a computer technician during last spring's thunderstorms provided a wonderful object lesson—learned through other people's bitter experience).

So now the roof is done (for the time being, anyway), most of the wood has been replaced, some of the worst areas have been scraped and primed, and I'm finally (!) getting this ready. While I'd like to say that the next issue will get to you quicker, both Alex and myself will be out of state (for different reasons) during the majority of July. After that, we should be able to get back on track.

Keep your cards, letters, articles and reviews coming in. We need them.

-Dale

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Ads should be camera ready (but if y'all want, we'll design something for ya). Please send ads and checks, made out to FACT, Inc., to either of the editors.

## Real Life Intrudes

editorial by Alexander R. Slate

Well, here is the annual 'editor gets junk off his chest editorial'. It's not that there isn't anything else to write about, because there certainly is. I could cover the presidential race, politicians, the media handling of the election, the media handling of the news in general, education, the problems with American business, ecology, the situation in Europe, the situation in the former Soviet Union, and on almost *ad infinitum*. But I get the feeling I've covered most of these topics at least once before, and getting my thoughts together for another editorial on these doesn't really thrill me right now.

Beyond all these pressing world issues, I could also cover fannish topics; the state of the stories I read, the state of conventions, the graying of fandom. Well, to some degree I may touch on some of these topics. But the thrust of this editorial will be about me and my place and participation in fandom. If that doesn't thrill you, you always have the option of just skipping this and going on to the remaining items in the issue. But, if you're at all interested into getting into my head and seeing why I sometimes act like the SOB I do, maybe this interest you. Either way, I've written it. Sometimes an editor has to do what an editor has to do (or wants to do).

Lately I find myself going to fewer conventions and enjoying them less. Or enjoying them differently any rate. I've even had this nagging urge to gaffiate from fandom.

Many things have happened over the past few years; I've gotten married (which included picking up a step-son), had my wife deliver twin girls, lost our house, moved three times, moved offices five times, actually changed jobs twice, officially changed jobs once, held various offices in a professional society, been elected to the FACT Board of Directors and actually been an invited guest to a convention three times. Each of these has its own particular level of stress, and each has affected my life in a different way. The most significant items in this list are getting married, having the girls, and changing my job (officially).

Since 1985 I've had three separate, but inter-related lives; my personal life, my professional life, and my fannish life. The problems are that each of them takes time away from the others and each of them requires money. And it's getting to the point where I need to start making some decisions as to the importance of each.

My professional life itself has two facets; my job and my participation in the American Society of Mechanical

Engineers. Let's deal with the latter first. I have been fairly active in the local San Antonio Section of the ASME for a while now. I have held the positions of government relations officer, secretary, section Chairman, special projects officer, and am currently industrial relations officer. While maintaining a position in the society is not a necessity, it could be important later, particularly if I ever decide to stop working for the government. There is also a measure of personal satisfaction, very much so when I was section chairman. I could easily become section chairman again, probably any time I wanted to just by announcing I would be interested in holding the position again. However, being chairman involves quite a measure of time involvement. The monetary commitment is only about \$15 to \$25 a month.

Then there's my job. The reasons for this are obvious; without it, I don't got no money. But beyond that, I enjoy my job. Prior to November this past year I worked at one job, and I was underutilized. I had lots of time, even on the job, to work on side projects; and I rarely ever brought stuff home. In November I got a new job, one that will shortly mean a promotion. This new job keeps me hopping. I have something to keep me busy every day; and even without the official tasking, there's some projects related to my job that I want to start working on. While not a common, everyday occurrence, it is not unusual for me to take stuff home to work on. This job will also put me on the road more than the old job. For instance I should be TDY (Temporary Duty, also known as out of town) about three weeks during the next two months.

My personal life is the most important to me. My time with my wife and children are very precious, and to some degree I resent having to take time away from them to do anything else. Yet I balance this with the desire to not sit at home like a lump and do nothing. So I like it best when one of my other interests is something that I can do with my family. Complicating matters is that we don't have my stepson every weekend, so we have to work our schedule around visitation. I also dislike the fact that where I live and the state of my finances means I don't get a chance to see the rest of my family (my parents, grandparents, brother, aunts, uncles, and cousins) very often. But if we can ever get the finances straightened out that will help take care of this.

(continued on Page 14)

## From The Recliner

by E. A. Graham, Jr.

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*That was a real quick winter, at least from my point of view. And I feel that I must apologize for missing my last deadline. Some other things had priority and I hated to disappoint all of my loyal readers out there. Okay, you can stop laughing now. And, because of a spate of a particular kind of sequel, I'm going to introduce a new category:*

### Book Sequels by the Original Author And...

**Crisis on Doona** by Anne McCaffrey and Jody Lynn Nye  
(\$4.95, paperback, Ace, March 1992)

Rating: 1.6

Returning to the great experimental colony introduced by McCaffrey in **Decision at Doona**, this collaborative sequel falls short of the original novel. Although Nye's writing talent has improved quite a bit since **The Death of Sleep**, I simply couldn't care one bit about what was going on. Oh, the characterizations built up by extrapolating 25 years seem fairly faithful and the narrative is chock-full of excellent descriptive prose, but the pacing and expository explanations just bring the plot to dead halts in the wrong places. I'll admit that I got bogged down about 1/3 of the way through, but I did manage to at least get that far.

On to the regular stuff...

**The Memory of Earth: The Homecoming, Volume 1** by Orson Scott Card  
(\$20.95, hardback, Tor, March 1992)

Rating: 3.1

Harmony had been settled by survivors from a dying Mother Earth, which had been destroyed by their own kind. Forty million years of peace have reigned under the watchful gaze of the orbiting computer Oversoul. However, something has seriously gone awry. Oversoul is breaking down and war is about to erupt on the surface of Harmony. In order to save the human species, Oversoul must travel back to it's origin. The problem is, it needs human help and the lost knowledge of space flight is the key to either survival or destruction.

Card has started another series (it says so right on the jacket!), which leads me to believe that he's pretty well thought this one out. He's built up a fairly realistic society and his characterizations are on a par with his well-paced plotting. The point of view jumps around a bit, but I had

no problem keeping up with what was happening. Of course, the protagonist(s) are embroiled in more problems than they seem to be able to handle and the book ends leaving a lot of questions and conflicts unresolved. Just like any good cliff-hanger, there is the teasing sense of frustration, waiting for more. I just wish that Card would stop writing "coming of age" themes—I'm getting tired of watching his literary kids grow up. And where's the rest of Alvin Maker, hmm?

**Harmony** by Marjorie Bradley Kellogg  
(\$5.50, paperback, Roc, September 1991)

Rating: 3.5

Another "after humans have destroyed the planet" novel (this time through pollution, etc.), the cities of Earth are encased in great domes to keep the toxic Outside at bay. Each city has population and technological problems, but only the artistic center city of Harmony accepts all qualified comers. The catch is you've got to be *real* talented in order to stay after your apprenticeship. Otherwise, you go Outside. Gwinn seems a shoe-in to remain, until the acting/dancing troupe from the undomed, thriving island of Tuamatutetuamatu comes through. Gwinn then learns that power and politics can kill or exile you if you let them.

This is a rather hefty book of almost 500 pages and takes a little bit of time to get through. The pacing seems a little erratic and the characters sometimes exhibit failings where their strengths are and vice-versa. I'm fairly certain that the same story could have taken at least 3/4 the amount of time/space that Ms. Kellogg used, making the book itself less daunting. My major complaint is that no resolution is finalized at the end: too many conflicts are left hanging. I have a sneaking feeling that the author is going to try for a sequel. I hope she does better next time...

**Voyage to the Red Planet** by Terry Bisson  
(Avon, paperback, \$3.50, September 1991)  
Rating: 2.7

Megacorps now rule the Earth, the various governments having sold off their assets (e.g. Yellowstone, NASA, the Navy, etc.) to try and stave off the Grand Depression. Entertainment is a BIG business and technology has advanced the so-called art to the point where actual acting is no longer required. Hardly anyone goes into space anymore and the Mars ship *Mary Poppins*

sits in orbit, abandoned. Then an independent producer gets this idea of taking the mothballed spaceship to our ruddy neighbor to shoot a film that would set Hollywood on its collective ear.

Bisson has come up with a slightly different idea, replete with the odd-ball characters that are needed to pull off this unusual stunt. However, the narrative plunges and jerks along erratically and it's hard to identify with any one of the protagonists. The extrapolation of the recession and growth of international corporations is eerily perceptive, but I had a hard time just giving a damn about what was happening. Bisson does aim some well-deserved barbs at the movie moguls and corporate mentalities, but that's about all he delivers.

**Alien Blues** by Lynn S. Hightower  
(\$4.50, paperback, Ace, January 1992)  
Rating: 3.3

Homicide Detective David Silver is having a bad day. Correction: he's having a whole lot of bad days. His marriage is going to hell, his buddy's been missing and presumed dead, a serial killer is on the loose, and he's not too keen on his new partner: a seven-foot manta-like alien. The Elaki came to Earth to try and help humanity along, although David could do without this kind of assistance. Until the trail starts leading to a possible conspiracy among the aliens themselves.

I would classify this book as "Space Opera" in feel, although Ms. Hightower has put more depth in her characters than I expected. I actually started to feel sorry for the protagonist because of all the messes that get thrown in his way. Her alien Elaki are a little shallow and simplistic, but the prose and dialog between the two races are entertaining to say the least. I recommend this one for a late-night snack.

**The Changes: A Trilogy** by Peter Dickinson  
(\$12.00, trade paperback, Dell, December 1991)  
Rating: 2.3

Something happened to the British Isles. One moment everything's just fine, the next—everyone is fleeing the cities and forsaking anything that reeks of technology. A spell has been cast that turns England into a madhouse. Here are three tales of how it started, how people dealt with the changes, and how it finally came to an end.

A very intriguing concept, told within the confines of three novelettes (or maybe novellas—I didn't bother counting words, okay?). Each story has a different point of view, although the narrative voice and style did not change. It seemed a bit dry to me, and the characters went wishy-washy at odd times. The part that delights me the most is that each segment could stand on its own merits easily, without modification. Imagine, someone actually wrote a series and it all fits into one book! This wasn't the

easiest book to read or get lost in, but it definitely has its merits.

#### Short Takes

**Drifter** by William C. Dietz (\$3.95 paperback, Ace, September 1991)—decent space opera, but not the best I've seen.

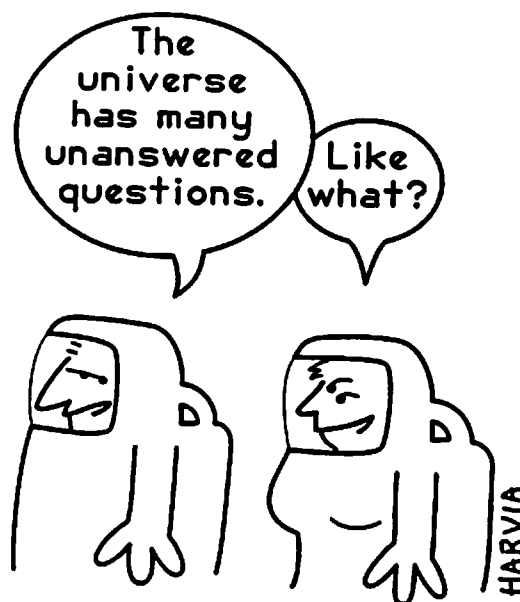
**Supernova** by Roger MacBride Allen and Eric Kotani (\$4.50 paperback, Avon, October 1991)—hard-science "thriller" with emphasis more on the science than on the thrilling part. Mediocre.

**Good Omens** by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett (\$8.95 trade paperback, Berkley, March 1992)—Monty Python, the Stooges, the Marx Brothers, etc. are co-mingled with Revelations. This one's a belly-laugh when the Apocalypse goes awry.

#### Special Mention

I didn't really know how to review **The Bradbury Chronicles: Stories in Honor of Ray Bradbury** (\$19.95, hardback, Roc, November 1991). Superbly edited by William F. Nolan and Martin H. Greenberg, some of SF/F's most noted and respected writers pay homage to the undisputed master of storytelling. Each story here is the individual author's tribute to Bradbury and the unique visions that only he could share with the rest of us. This book is a must to any serious fan of the genre.

That's it for this time, friends and neighbors. Hopefully I won't foul up again and I'll be back on track, so don't touch that dial!





## CONVENTIONS:

# Conventional

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### May 1-3 RockCon 16

Excelsior Hotel, Little Rock, AR

Guests: Lois McMaster Bujold, Cat Conrad, Fran Stallings

Info: \$15 til April 31, PO Box 24285, Little Rock, AR, 72221

### May 1-3 Name That Con<sup>5</sup>-Condition: TBA

St. Louis Airport Hilton, St. Louis, MO

Guests: Mercedes Lackey, Paul Daly, Ron & Chere Raiti, Mickey Zucker Reichert

Info: \$20, SCSFFS, PO Box 575, St. Charles, MO 63302

### June 5-7 New Orleans SF&F Festival

Clarion Hotel, New Orleans, LA

Guests: Stephen R. Donaldson, David Cherry, Melinda Snodgrass

Info: \$20 til May 1, NOSF3 '92, PO Box 791089, New Orleans, LA 70170-1089

### July 3-5 Galaxy Fair 92 & Art Con IV

Sheraton Park Central, Dallas, TX

Guests: Diane Duane, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Alan Gutierrez, Keith Birdsong, Robert Asprin

Info: \$?, Galaxy Fair, Inc., PO Box 150471, Arlington, TX 76015-6471

### July 10-12 Archon 16

Henry VIII Best Western Hotel, St. Louis, MO

Guests: John Varley, Don Maitz, Toger Tener, Ricia Mainhardt

Info: PO Box 50125, St. Louis, MO 63105

### July 14-17 Dragon Con

Atlanta Hilton & Towers, Atlanta, GA

Guests: Raymond Feist, Forrest J. Ackerman, Robert Anton Wilson, George R.R. Martin

Info: \$30 til June 15, Dragon Con '92, Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362

### July 18-19 TexomacOn I

Howard Johnson, Lawton OK

Info: \$2.90/day (no pre-reg.), Holly or Gypsy (405)357-7105

### July 24-26 OKon '92 The Last Roundup

Camelot Hotel, Tulsa, OK

Guests: Elizabeth Ann Scarborough, Wm. Mark Simmons, David Lee Anderson, K. D. Wentworth, Diana Gallagher

Info: \$15 til June 30. PO Box 4229, Tulsa, OK 74159

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### Sept 3-7 MagiCon (Worldcon 50)

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL

Guests: Jack Vance, Vincent DiFate, Walt Willis, Spider Robinson

Info: \$125 att, \$25 sup., PO Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32682-1992

### Sept 92 Justice Con II—Dallas, TX

Info: 2116 E. Arapaho #555, Richardson, TX 75081

### Sept 12-13 Trekfest 1992

???, Houston, TX

Guests: John Vorholt, Carmen Carter

Info: \$15 til Aug 1, c/o Starbase Houston, PO Box 981701, Houston, TX 77098-1701, 713-527-9277

### Oct 9-11 ArmadilloCon 14

Wyndham Southpark, Austin, TX.

Guests: Neal Barrett, Jr., Darrell K. Sweet, Al Jackson, Gardner Dozois, Kim Stanley Robinson

Info: \$25, PO Box 9612, Austin, TX 78766-9612, 512-453-2241

### Nov 20-22 Sooner Con 8

Central Plaza Hotel, Oklahoma City, OK

Guests: L. Sprague & Catherine DeCamp, Frank Kelly-Freas, Mark Schulzinger, Martha Beck, Wilson "Bob" Tucker

Info: \$15 til May 30, PO Box 1701, Bethany, OK 73008-0701

### Nov 27-29 Contex X

Hilton Southwest, Houston, TX

Guests: James P. Hogan, G. Harry Stine

Info: \$18, Friends of Fandom, PO Box 266996, Houston, TX 77207-6996

### Sept 2-6, 1993 Con Francisco (Worldcon 51)

Parc Fifty Five & Le Meridien Hotels, SF, CA

Info: PO Box 22097, San Francisco, CA 94122

### Sept 1-5, 1994 Conadian (Worldcon 52)

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Info: PO Box 2430, Winnipeg MB, Canada R3C 4A7

### WORLDCON BIDS:

1995 - Atlanta, GA, USA & Glasgow, Scotland

1996 - Los Angeles, CA

1997 - San Antonio, TX & St. Louis, MO

1998 - Baltimore, MD & Niagara Falls, NY

## Trades List

Andruschak APA Zine

Austin Writer

BCSFazine #225

Colonist, The Mar 92, Apr 92

DASFax V.24, #3

File 770 #92

FOSFAX

Frozen Frog, The #2

Knarley Knews, The #32

OASFis Event Horizons #58 (see below), 59

Opuntia #7, 7.1 (see below)

Peripheral Visions #9

P.S.F.S. News March 1992

Robots & Roadrunners V.7, #1

Scavenger's Newsletter #98

SFSFS Shuttle #84

Smart Ash #49

Situation Normal? V.II, #2

Stet

Stone Hill Launch Times V.6, #1-3

The Insider

Transmissions

The Unintelligencer #6

### New or Notable

#### Canadian Progress Report #1

ed. Terry Fowler; Canadian, POB 2430, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 4A7, Canada. Guess what. Contains a message from the chair and info on the dealers' room, extravaganzas, facilities, memberships, advertising, and customs taxes. I like the flow chart on how to get a membership.

#### The Nature to Wander #11

ed. Dale Denton, (see p. 2). Our co-editor Dale is back after a long hiatus. There's Dale's editorial and reviews from Dale, Susan Strahan, and Scott Cupp. There's a short piece of fan fiction and some ravings by some odd fellow on conventions.

#### OASFis Event Horizon #58

ed. Louise M. Kleba; Orlando Area SF Society, PO Box 940992, Maitland, FL 32794-0992. A new editor, the same look, and the same type of contents.

#### Opuntia 7.1

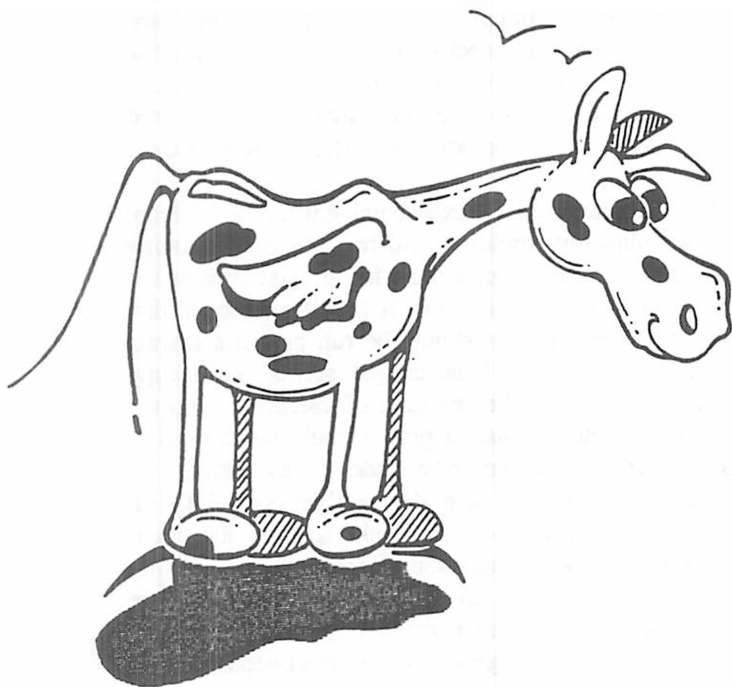
ed. Dale Spiers, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7. Welcome to the reviewzine version of Dale's effort. I like the format of the different editions for the different content containing zines; but wonder how much extra this is costing. A well written issue here, with reviews of books, movies, etc. Even a review of the Calgary Olympics.

#### Trajectories #6 (Winter 1992)

ed. Susan Sneller; Trajectories Publishing, Box 49249, Austin, TX 78765. Yes, this zine is also back, after it seemed dead. It's an interesting effort. The presentation is as it always one, newspaper stock and layout (he said with a grimace knowing that it really didn't fit, but what was he to do ...). A lot of art and photographs, a lot of interviews (of Austin based folk like Chad Oliver) and a lot of fiction and poetry. Much of the fiction, poetry and artwork is out on the fringe. I don't think this is to everyone's taste, but there is a definite crowd that will enjoy it. Try it and see if it's your cup of Texas Tea.

#### Writer's News V.3, #2 (March)

ed. Jehri Chastain Fleet; Texas Writer's Association, POB 8300-287, Dallas, TX 75205. Another newspaper stock publication. Full of information for writers and poets who wished to be published. Based upon a quick look-through, I'd say this is well worth your time if that's what you're trying to do.



# LOCs

Teddy Harvia  
PO Box 905, Euless, TX 76039

2 March 1992

Dear Alex—

I was tempted to send you a postcard you'd be careful not to accidentally misplace, but I didn't think Laurel would appreciate it.

Knowing SF fans, I think the Hugo panel at Sooner-Con might have been better attended had it had a title like "Who Did You Sleep With To Get On the Ballot?" Not that I had any stories to back it up.

Matilda is showing an interest in art. She's starting at the top, drawing pictures of God. In an outer space setting, of course.

Beast wishes,

*Laurel says that type of postcard would be fine with her...*

Harry Andruschak 4 March 1992  
PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309  
Dear Alexander:

Thank you for sending THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER #42. It arrived last week, I think, but I have been so busy with CORFLU 9 that I have not had time to attend to regular correspondence.

However, CORFLU 9 is now over. And a marvelous relaxicon it was. I think we had 64 +10 attending members. The +10 refers to ten members of THE FRIENDS OF THE ENGLISH REGENCY who also bought "cross-over" memberships to CORFLU. Both fan groups shared the same hotel, and room nights and food functions were lumped together, thus giving us a greater impact with the hotel then (*sic*) would have been the case with two separate groups.

The hotel, for example, totally ignored the con suite, which The Usual Don Fitch made a mecca of food and drink. In fact, the con suite was the focal point of the whole CORFLU.

Yes, I had a marvelous time.

But back to reality. I still have not started my next perzine, and probably will not until I get back from my vacation, 9-27 March at the Grand Canyon in Arizona. I need to get away from it all, and day hikes into the Grand Canyon are a good way of doing this. Especially in March when the weather is cool, and the crowds are absent.

Ahm yes, your program on page 3. Lots of luck.

Lynn Ward might be interested to know that I am a member of a subculture. RSCDS, The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. Twice a week I attend classes, and

once a month we have a Ball, and sometimes a special dinner. Good exercise, good social activity, and a lot of fun.

One leftover from this subculture is that I now sometimes wear the kilt to fannish functions, such as CORFLU. When some CORFLU members asked me why I was wearing the kilt, I replied that I did so as not to be mistaken for Marty Cantor. Well, why not, it's paid for.

Not much else to write and comment on in this issue, which is probably my fault .... I am still a bit tired from staying up late on CORFLU nights.

Interesting listing of cons. I do not wish to get some of those local cons. But getting time off from the Post Office is always a problem, even if I had the spare money (which I don't at the moment.).

Have to go now, AA meeting night.

Yours Aye.

Sheryl Birkhead 20 March 1992  
23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20882  
Dear Dale,

Time to give the ole CPU a rest and see if I can still type as poorly as ever—yep!

Yet another . . . Inquirer has popped into the mailbox. I really like the heavier stock—but assume it adds a bit to the costs—like to see it (in colors, too?) in future issues.

You didn't say and it doesn't look as if you need doodlings—so I'm not including any this go round—know others have been sent.

I specifically like Alex's comment on a national education plan—but wouldn't hold my breath. Mandating class size and minimal curriculum for graduation is something devoutly to be wished for. A friend mentioned that he felt the federal budget should be run just as a private one (ie—balanced), but I never got around to asking, specifically, how to make any kind of transition from the way things are now to such a plan. I really *am* curious as to how the changeover would be made . . . just curious.

I need to consider both the McCaffrey and F. M. Busby books mentioned—need to take another look next time through the bookstore—sound interesting.

I missed the interior art—hope there'll be some more of it next ish—personal interest.

I seem to be losing ground in the mail department—only 8 of the 26 listed.

I've been looking for sf conventions in states like Nevada, Utah—and close (?) by—since I might be out that way in the spring (which starts tomorrow—in the clod ...)



—I'm not having much luck. That, presumably, means there aren't any, I guess.

Way back when, I met George Alec Effinger—introduced as Piglet—and I have no idea why. I assume he can answer that one. I still tend to refer to him as Piglet, since it is easier to type!

B. Dalton Books has now moved the sf section (and expanded it)—up against the wall. Unfortunately, now the top shelf is above my reach and all books are spine out—can't see any of the nifty covers at all. I haven't joined their discounting club—stuck with Waldenbooks—but may change that. I seem to be finding more books of interest at Crown lately.

Sounds as if Alex (*et al*) enjoyed SoonerCon. Several years running I have contacted them well in advance—even joined the con—only to get paperwork with SOLD OUT written across the art show information—so much for that idea. Think I may call it quits in efforts to send stuff.

I searched—vainly—for a page 16 of page 10's continuation—um ... er ... —where did it go? Did I miss something?

I wouldn't have realized this was all editor-written material except for the comment on the first page—but I hope it brings in mailbags full of contributions for the next ish.

Nice to see the Sherlock and Ranson pieces!

Left the headlights on all day and, for the first time, had to use my jumper cables on my own car—waiting now for re-charging and hoping the battery will rebound from yet another insult! Such fun—with Spring to start tomorrow and ice on the trees (all over the new leaves and buds!)

'bye,

*Yeah, I like the heavier cardstock better, as well as using the folded 11x17 sheets. However, while both give a more finished appearance to the Inquirer, they both require additional money. We editors have been discussing this and if we can wheedle some extra money for our budget, maybe we can get back to where we were when Alex and I started editing this zine.*

*All I can say is, the more doodlings, the better. It seems that I always have plenty of artwork, except for the size that will properly fit the area available.*

*Hmm . . . I'm not sure what happened with the continuation to page 16. According to my computer (and you know how they lie), it should be saying page 15 for the continuation of Kathy Kimbriel's article.*

—Dale

Jay Haber  
626 Paddock Lane  
Libertyville, IL 60048

30 March 1992

SF Inquirer—

I sent you something called "Notes From Oblivion", probably several months ago. You 'reviewed' it recently.

You have no right to comment on something you haven't actually bothered to read. You paid no attention to anything I said. If you had, you'd have realized that I was doing something a hell of a lot more important than just sending you some "zine" for entertainment purposed, for you to skim over and 'review' in an offhand, oblivious way. I was, and am trying to save my life. How and why I have to do this through mail contact, at least partially, is only clear if you actually read what I wrote. Thoroughly.

What's happening to me makes it almost impossible to get anything like what I sent to you written, printed, and sent, and I'm spending hundreds of dollars in Disability money that I might actually lose soon. I wouldn't do this without a damn good reason, and after all that I at least deserve your attention.

I've had no real answers from anyone. People seem to skim through what I send them for "entertainment value" and put it aside when they don't find it. Every 'review' (it no really appropriate to 'review' something like this though) gives the impression I'm doing something completely different than what I am doing. Usually its just assumed I'm passively or purposelessly "chatty" about being "sick". (Believe me, if I was talking just to talk, or writing just to write, I'd pick other subjects.)

I might actually be able to make contact with a few people who'd take the time to try to understand what I'm actually trying to do said something about this in a few fanzines, & elsewhere. I'd appreciate this very much. I did #26 in November, but gave up after this, because of the condition, but also because no one bothered to read or try to understand what I was saying.

If you can go over it again and say something about it in your 'zine I'd be grateful.

*One of the quickest ways to get me angry is to accuse me of doing something that I didn't or don't do. I have not, do not, and will not review something which I haven't read. I read the first copies of everything that comes in to me completely and thoroughly; regardless of how boring or confusing I happen to find it. On later copies I may skim things I don't find relevant, but NEVER on the first set of items I receive.*

*I have been accused in the past of being tactless, selfish, unfeeling and insensitive and will admit to same. But I am conscientious. My memory of my impression of what you sent us was that you said a lot, but never actually said what you wanted from us.*

*It may not be appropriate to 'review' your particular effort, but telling my readers what it's about is the only way that they have to know whether or not they should read something, so some sort of review is necessary.*

*I will reread Notes From Oblivion to see if I can fathom through what you are trying to tell us or ask us. I will comment on it next issue.*

—Alex

Teddy Harvia                      3 April 1992  
PO Box 905, Euless, TX 76039  
Dear Alex—

The WorldCon discussions make me thankful that organized and conscientious individuals like Karen Meschke, Fred Duarte, Peggy Rae Pavlat, and Robert Taylor are a part of fandom. I appreciate all the effort both before and after that can make those few fleeting days in the fall seem effortless.

What is Brad Foster doing putting 16th Century Dutchmen on the American Frontier? The long shadows of late afternoon and the glare of detail create a surreal picture. If I were to ever grow up, I'd want to draw just like Mr. Foster.

Linda Michael's mermaids, their backs turned toward the viewer, are evocatively wonderful. Sexist pigfish that I am, I'd love to see them from the other side. Glub, glub!

The spacescapes of Peggy Ranson seem as natural in the context of your publication as stars in the sky. Not having her fillos would certainly create a void.

Beast wishes,

## WAHF

*The Book Symposium* c/o Terence A. McVicker, 1745  
Kenneth Rd, Glendale, CA 91201-1451 — a catalog

Brad Foster — who sent illos

Kelly Freas — who sent illos

Auriette Hahn, *Sci Fi Channel* — who's resigning her position of Director of Fan Relations; she's getting married

Bjo Trimble and the *Space, Fantasy & Adventure Network*; a start-up cable/satellite television venture who are looking for supporting letters to the cable multi-system operators. If your interested contact SFA Network, Suite 372, 1807 Slaughter Lane #200, Austin TX 78748-6200 or Bjo at 713-359-4284 (no late night calls please!)



# The Vampire Files

Reviewed by Dale Denton

*The Vampire Files*, by P. N. Elrod, (series in paperback, Ace)

Individual titles include:

**Bloodlist** (March 1990)  
**Lifeblood** (June 1990)  
**Bloodcircle** (October 1990)  
**Art in the Blood** (February 1991)  
**Fire in the Blood** (June 1991)  
**Blood on the Water** (June 1992)

When I first saw these books at the bookstore, I immediately wrote them off as a don't bother. The cover of the first in the series showed a dimly lit face with red, glowing eyes, a whiter-than-Data complexion, prominent fangs, and three-inch pointed fingernails holding a cigarette. Both the fingernails and chin were smeared with blood. The caption that went with the picture said, "Meet Jack Fleming, Newsmen. Ladies' man. Vampire." Right!!! Sorry, but I had problems buying that, and quickly decided that there were plenty of more interesting books on the shelf.

However, when I went to *Cluefest* (a small Mystery convention in Dallas), the author noted that the cover had little to do with the story, or even the description of the main character, so I decided to chance it and bought the first book. By the end of the next week, I had read them all.

than most vampire stories. First, these are not horror stories, despite what the front covers would seem to indicate. On the spine, Ace declares them as science fiction or fantasy, dependent upon the which book in the series you pick up. The books really are hard-boiled detective stories, with the fantastic element or twist of having the main protagonist being a vampire.

As a vampire, Fleming has most of the abilities of the Bram Stoker vampire, withwith a good many of the disabilities as well. He must drink blood, though animal blood works just as well as type O+. He goes comatose during the day, and needs his home soil about him. Running water (like Lake Michigan) inhibit his abilities, garlic and crosses don't bother him, and while knives and bullets ruin his wardrobe, it takes wood to do lasting damage to him.

The action is centered around Chicago in the 1930's, complete with mobs, radio, and private detectives, or rather private agents (they don't do divorces). In *Lifeblood*, Fleming wakes up on the shore of Lake

Michigan, and almost immediately someone runs him down with an automobile. When he isn't killed by this, he decides that he must have turned into a vampire. He knows how this happened, and is aware of his more apparent powers, but doesn't remember the circumstances surrounding his death. From the bullet-holes in his clothes, he assumes he was killed, and his body dumped into the lake. The first book takes him in the search for his killer, and the reason for his death.

The second book, *Lifeblood*, has him encountering vampire hunters, and other humans more sinister while he looks for the former lover who made him *nosferatu* (gave him the ability to become a vampire), and then disappeared some five years past.

*Bloodcircle* continues his search for his vampire lover, Maureen, and brings him face to face with another of his kind.

In *Art in the Blood*, Fleming gets involved with a circle of artists, and when one of them is murdered, and another artist is implicated, Jack has to try to track down the real killer.

*Fire in the Blood* has Jack hired out to locate a priceless bracelet which has been stolen. What should be a simple case gets complicated when the main suspect is murdered, and the mob becomes involved.

*Blood on the Water* continues with Fleming pitted against a crime boss who's put a hit out on our favorite vampire.

These short synopses don't do the books justice, of course. There's a whole lot more going on, but it's hard to describe without giving stuff away. In any event, the stories are very reminiscent of the better hard-boiled mystery pulps from days gone by, but with a supernatural twist. Ignore the cover art, and give these books a try.

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# A Gaelic Experience

by Carol Stepp

Hi. If this is printed, I'll know Alex and Dale have initially approved my plan to write a regular column for the *SF Inquirer*. Whether I continue depends on how it is received—if enough of you don't like it, I'll quit.

This column is likely to appeal more to fantasy lovers than science fiction lovers, particularly hard-core sf. It will be mostly ramblings which will include my reactions to books, movies, television shows, the occasional convention I attend.

I won't be doing reviews or making recommendations—just writing my personal thoughts. I have also proposed including a few Gaelic phrases each column with phonetic pronunciations and meanings as I learn to speak Gaelic (I, with a few friends, have established an official UT campus organization to learn to speak the Gaelic together—emphasis on Irish, but my personal interest includes the Hebridean Gaelic as well).

I plan to take a 2-month trip to the British Isles in the summer of 1993; the places I intend to visit include Winchester (ancient castle and cathedral), Salisbury (Stonehenge, of course), Tintagel and Glastonbury (both very well known to King Arthur lovers), several places in Wales with Celtic and Gaelic pagan attachments, Iona, and the Western Isles and Highlands of Scotland. In addition, I will be stopping at Glasgow, Edinburgh, York, Lincoln, and a few other places of interest to historians, particularly British historians.

Please note: as I think British, so does my vocabulary, grammar, and spelling sometimes reflect it. I'll make occasional comments about my preparations and the things I learn from assorted pen friends in those countries, and next year about the trip itself. Finally, I might write occasionally about a Celtic or Gaelic god that I learn about in my search for a spiritual path through paganism (which I won't discuss in this column).

For instance, did you know that *Robin of Sherwood*, the British television show about Robin Hood which ran during 1983–1985, used a central theme of Robin being a son of Elric. Upon his father's death at the hands of the Sheriff of Nottingham, Robin was chosen to carry the sword of Albion (one of the 7 swords of Wayland, a legendary blacksmith) by the god Herne, god of the trees, who is also known as Cernunnos, a stag god in Welsh lore, to carry on the fight for the common people of Saxon England for their rights. (Cernunnos wears a stag's head and a torc and is accompanied by the ram-headed serpent and a stag.)

It was not so much a tale of stealing from the rich to feed the poor as it was to help the downtrodden regain or retain their rights as citizens. He was called Loxley because he was raised by a miller of that name as a stepson. There was a lot of magic and sorcery in the series. It originally starred Michael Praed as Robin Hood, but he left after the first season to go on to other things. As the British do in their programming, Michael's Robin was killed off, and a new Robin Hood was chosen by Herne (this Robin being the Earl of Huntingdon's son). The part was then played by Jason Connery, Sean's son.

**Impressions from a first-timer to Aggiecon:** I went to Aggiecon for the first time this year (I went as a dealer), and enjoyed myself. However, I wish we could all stay in the place where the con is held, as is true of most cons, because I found it difficult to go back to my hotel room (2 miles away), and then return for any activities in the evening—not that there were many activities. I heard *Los Blues Guys* for more than one song for the first time, mostly because I could stay in the room with them. Way to go, *Guys*. I made a lot of contacts for my dealership business, and met a lot of nice people. I will probably return.

This past weekend (April 4–5) the second annual Canterbury Faire was held in Waterloo Park in Austin. This is a fair begun last year by the High Fantasy Society and the Wild Basin Association, with proceeds going to the Wild Basin. It features activities put on by such organizations as the Society of Creative Anachronism, the High Fantasy Society, and several other medieval groups. Activities included musical groups playing music of the era, jugglers, troubadours, story-tellers, dancers, fencers and jousters (on foot), and lots of activities for children. Everyone who has medieval clothes wears them to the festival. There are markets where you can buy things related to the genre (as well as other merchandise), and food and drink booths.

The Scots of Austin, a group I have been interested in for some time, had a booth, and I paid for membership in the organization (I am a descendant of the Hamiltons, a Highland clan with a tartan, and a family which includes some royalty, although I don't know my direct line to the clan). There were parades with Scottish bagpipes and drums. There were about twice as many attendees on Saturday as I saw last year, but I think Sunday may have been rained out. I think this fair will grow as people

outside of Austin learn about it, and will within a few years outgrow Waterloo Park.

I have begun enjoying *Nightmare Cafe* on television, even though a couple of the stories were not very good. It had a limited run, and I suspect will not be picked up. Too bad—I think it might have done well if it had been given time to improve. Several of the shows were quite good—particularly the last one, which I think was very tongue-in-cheek. Robert England is an interesting character. I also watched *Scorch* the three or four times it was on. I wasn't surprised when it was canceled—it was really bad—but I like dragons so I watched it. Finally, *Fish Police* was cute, but it only lasted three shows—again not surprised when it was canceled. I don't understand why good sf and fantasy can't be put on commercial television. I know there are capable writers. Perhaps it's just that the heads of the various networks are too mundane to understand it. *Star Trek* is an exception.

Well, we are supposed to finally get the "Sci-Fi" channel. I will at last get cable if Austin Cable Vision adds it to their lineup.

Most of the books I have been reading lately are biographical or historical novels built around the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. But I did read a book not too long ago, *The Adept* by Katherine Kurtz and Deborah Turner Harris, which was a story of magic—good and evil—which took place in Scotland—Glasgow, around Edinburgh, Dunvegan Castle on Skye, and Farquhar Castle on Loch Ness. Did you know the fairy people (also known as the Sidhe, pronounced Shee) tear people apart with their sharp teeth and claws and eat them? They did in this story. The Fairy Flag at Dunvegan Castle (home of the MacDonald clan), which really exists, played a big part in the story. The Gaelic for the Fairy Flag is *Am Bratach Sith*, pronounced Um Brrrahtach (as in loch) shee. Some of the place names in the book are sites I will visit next year.

For those of you who like Celtic and Gaelic music: I know you have all heard of Clannad and Enya. May I recommend The Battlefield Band (Scots and Irish), Pamela and Phillip Boulding ("Crossing to Skellig", mostly Irish), and Joemy Wilson (a Tennessean who plays Celtic and Gaelic music on a stringed dulcimer). As well, if you haven't already done so, get a copy of "Over the Sea to Skye" by James Glaway and The Chieftans.

A few phrases for you in Gaelic. In greeting someone, the Irish say '*Dia dhuit*' (Dya gwitya) which means 'God be with ye'. A less religious greeting could be '*Bel dia dhuit*' (Bel yia gwitya) or 'Bel be with ye' (a pagan god). When leaving you say '*slan*' (slaun), which doesn't exactly mean good-bye, but is a word said in farewell. It

is the shortened version of a phrase which I haven't learned yet. Thank you is '*Go raibh maith agat*' (Go rrah mah hagat), and 'You're welcome' is '*Ta Failte Romhat*' (Tau Faultye Rowat [as in ow, or ouch]). 'How are you' is '*Conas ta tu*' (as spelled) and "I am fine" is '*Ta me go maith*' (Tah may go mah).

LOCS about this column should go to *The Texas SF Inquirer*. However, personal comments, suggestions, or criticisms can be sent to me at 1817 Oltorf #2012, Austin, TX 78741.

*Slan*, till next issue.



### Boondock Central (continued from page 3)

My fannish life also changes every so often. Currently, what I like best about fandom is doing this fanzine. If I could afford it (and some day I will) I'd also do my own personal fanzine. So whatever else I may say in the rest of this editorial, I intend to continue as co-editor of this fanzine until you get tired of me and kick me out.

Anyway, earlier I said I was enjoying conventions less. That's true, but why? When I was a neo-fan I enjoyed going to conventions because it was all new; meeting people, attending the programming, even working the cons. As I get older, the programming seems to repeat itself, and much of the conventions' efforts these days go into areas I just don't care all that much about. How about just smoffing? Or how about working on the conventions? I enjoy both, but there's a cost in both time and money? Remember that I will only take so much time away from my family. Baby-sitting is expensive, and a lot of cons these days still don't have children's programming. And believe me, you don't want me dragging my kids to the regular panels; they get bored and start causing trouble. They're just regular kids. Bringing my kids along means expenses; travel, lodging and food since there just aren't many (actually any) cons in San Antonio. I'd like to work the conventions, but I want to do more than just be a gofer, which means attending convention planning meetings and since there aren't any in SA, that means travel time of at least an hour each way, plus again what to do with the kids?

Going as a guest is still fun for me, because it's new. Plus, as a guest some of my expenses are taken care of. Particularly if me or my wife start getting invited as at least semi-major guests.

A lot of it comes down to time and money. Cons can't do much about time, except planning things for people like me to improve the way I can spend my time at cons; such as children's programming. But cons can try to hold down costs; not just the registration cost, but also the cost of available food and lodging. Maybe this means sacrificing some of the fancier things a con might want to do, or cutting down on the range of special interests a con caters to. But maybe, in the long run, these things will improve conventions and fandom. I could elaborate more on this, but I won't right now.

So what's the point of all this? There really isn't one, except that it lets me get stuff off my chest. Maybe it will influence someone's thinking, maybe it won't. But what's the point of being an editor if you don't get to grouse once in a while?

### Coming Soon to a Bookshelf Near You!

Here's a listing of forthcoming or past releases:

#### ACE:

**Crisis on Doona** by Anne McCaffrey & Jody Lynn Nye, Ace; paper, Mar 1992, \$4.99

**Cybernetic Jungle** by S. N. Lewitt; paper, Mar 1992, \$4.50

**Rune Sword 6: The Stone of Time** by Roses Estes & Tom Wham; paper, Mar 1992, \$3.99

#### BERKLEY:

**Good Omens** by Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett; trade, Mar 1992, \$8.95

#### BRIDGE:

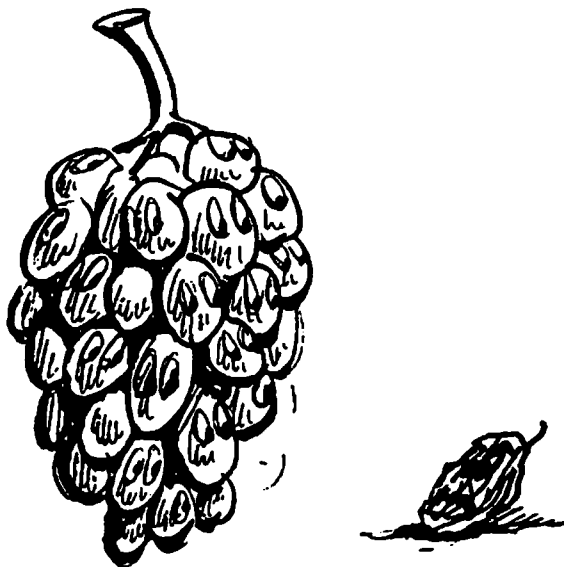
**Ole Doc Methuselah** by L. Ron Hubbard; hard, April 1992,

#### DELL:

**The Changes: A Trilogy** by Peter Dickinson; trade, Dec 1991, \$12.00

#### ROC:

**The Bradbury Chronicles** edited by William F. Nolan & Martin H. Greenberg; hard, Nov 1991, \$19.95



*MATURITY... maybe*



# TUCKER AWARD NOMINATION

A new award was instituted in 1985 to recognize the activities of that heretofore unsung group of people known as SF convention partiers. Every award must, of course, have a nickname; the official nickname of the Award for Excellence in Science Fiction Convention Partying is the "Tucker".

The first two years awards were sponsored and administered by the St. Louis in '88 Worldcon Bid Committee, and subsequent awards are administered by a related group. The awards will be nominated and voted on by members of Czarkon (St. Louis' "adult relaxicon"), and the rest of SF party fandom via convention parties and any fanzines or SF Club newsletters willing to reprint this nomination form and/or the final ballot.

There are 3 awards: 1 each for SF Professional (writer, editor, or dealer), SF Artist, and SF Fan. Couples or groups are eligible as a single nominee. Any SF convention partier over the age of 21 is eligible, and nominees need not attend the presenting convention if they win as long as they are willing to have their award accepted by a proxy. Winners are not eligible for re-nomination in any category for a period of 5 years; losing nominees are eligible again the following year. The 1987 thru 1991 winners were:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>SF Professional</u>	<u>SF Artist</u>	<u>SF Fan</u>
1987	Nancy Edwards	joan hanke-woods	Jack Jennings
1988	Ed Bryant	Alexis Gilliland	Ken Moore
1989	Robert Asprin	Jim Elmore	Rich Zellich
		Dan Patterson	Michelle Zellich ----
1990	Somtow Sucharitkul	Robert "J.R." Daniels	Midge Reitan
1991	Bob Cornett	David Lee Anderson	Tom Meserole

The design of the physical award is a full bottle of Beam's Choice bourbon mounted on a base; the base has a plaque with the year, award name, and the winner's name. An instant tradition was begun in 1985: the winners received their awards full, but took them home from the convention empty (many self-sacrificing volunteers helped empty the awards).

*To nominate someone for a 1992 Tucker Award, write their name (both names for a couple) and address opposite the applicable category on the form below, detach it along the dotted line, and mail it to TUCKER NOMINATIONS, PO Box 1058, St. Louis, MO 63188. Machine- or hand-printed equivalents of the nomination form are acceptable. If you don't know a nominee's address, and don't think the Award Committee will either, if possible please include on the back of the form or on a separate sheet the name of a prominent SF person (whose address we CAN determine) who may know the nominee and might be able to give us an address. Your own name and address are requested, but not required, to further assist in tracking down unknown-to-us nominees.*

**IF YOU ARE SENDING MORE THAN ONE OR TWO NOMINATION FORMS IN AN ENVELOPE,  
PLEASE ENCLOSE A NOTE EXPLAINING THE EXTRA FORM(S); WE ARE TRYING TO AVOID  
A CYCLE OF BALLOT AND COUNTER-BALLOT STUFFING THAT COULD SPOIL THE FUN.**

-----NOMINATING DEADLINE IS 15 JULY 1992-----

## 1992 TUCKER AWARD NOMINATIONS

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YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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Small (\$1 or less) donations will be gratefully accepted to defray award expenses, but ARE NOT REQUIRED in order to nominate or to vote.

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