

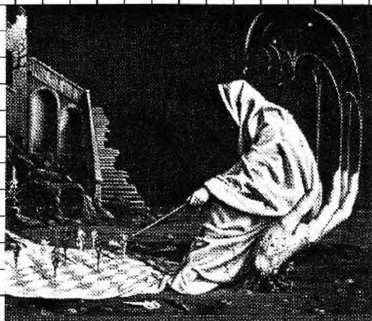
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# FRED SABERHAGEN: An Appreciation

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*Jim Baen*

---

*"I had always maintained that Fred Saberhagen was one of the most undervalued writers in science fiction. Fortunately, nobody listened to me; when I was put in charge of acquisitions for Ace I quickly moved to put theory into practice: I acquired three written but unpublished works, commissioned three more, and acquired (stole) a dozen more from other publishers' backlists. Each of them has been a top performer for Ace. Quod Erat Demonstrandum. (I gloat, I preen, I strut about obnoxiously.)"*

—Jim Baen, 1979,  
introducing Fred Saberhagen in  
*Galaxy: The Best of My Years*

I guess the reason I've been chosen for the pleasant duty of saying nice things about Fred Saberhagen is that I am notoriously one of his most enthusiastic adherents. Not that I'm alone, mind you. I share my relish of Saberhagen's storytelling with the likes of Larry Niven, Roger Zelazny and Gordy Dickson. And certainly my background in the Saberhagen oeuvre is no deeper—much less so, really—than that of several others, most prominently, perhaps, Sandra Miesel.

I didn't discover him, either. Fred pre-dates me in the field by nearly a decade; Frederik Pohl published his first story and several more before the rest of the field began to catch on. Still, over the

better part of the last decade I have been closely associated with Fred and in large part I have Fred to thank for getting me off to such a fast start at Ace, which in turn has led directly to my present good fortune. Thank you, Fred.

But so far I've just talked about the fact that I admire and relish Fred's work. One reason that I do is that he deals with the irreducible verities of living and their interactive relationship with the truths of science and the inescapable realities of technology in as entertaining a way as I've ever seen it done. To me this is what science fiction is about.

Most particularly Fred understands the nature of the relationship between good and evil: he knows that unlike evil, good is never unalloyed. For too many writers this leads to the petulant and absurd conclusion that there is **not** much to choose between them . . . a sort of indeterminacy of the spirit, a Moral Uncertainty Principle that can make no distinction between shades of grey or between grey and black. Fred has spent his career exploring evil and its effect on good. (Only rarely, as with Brother Berserker, does he attempt the reverse.) And of course the paradigm case is *The Enemy It's Ok to Hate*, the Berserkers.

Here was a case of a concept almost growing beyond its creator, but like Anderson with his Flandry, Fred was both confident enough of himself to give his creation room to breathe and wise enough not to let himself be smothered by his own creatures. Despite *vox populi* and the even

more powerful blandishments of a certain editor better left unnamed (me), Fred refused to stunt his growth as a writer: better money and certain sale did not prevent him from exploring new fields. Ironically one important result of that decision of principle has been vastly more remunerative than the Berserkers ever were: Vlad the Impaler, begun as a single novel, just as the Berserker series was begun as a single story, has grown to the point where for many of his aficionados the fact that mainstream cultural identification of Dracula is still one of unrelieved evil comes as something of a startlement. WE know that Count Drakulya is really a pretty nice guy, once you get past his patrician stand-offishness . . . and as long as you do nothing to offend his antique sense of honor.

Which brings us to the fact that Fred is the paradigmatic series writer. Some people will tell you that anybody who enjoys writing stories that are somehow connected to each other is not to be taken seriously, is a literary lightweight. Certainly such writing is a sign of not taking one's self too seriously, but that is a very different thing. Witness Doyle, Verne, C.S. Forrester, our own Poul Anderson, and that covey of anonymous hellenes who wrote under the house name, "Homer."

Personally, I am prepared to argue at some length that the series, properly approached, is the other great metier of science fiction, along with the

short novel. After all, science fiction deals with the essentials of reality, which is a very large subject; and so needs a large form to accommodate itself. It is in the series format that an author, if he dares, can trace out on every level all the implications of his vision. And that is what Fred has done. First with the Berserkers, next with the *Empire of the East* trilogy, and now with Vlad Tepes, also known as The Impaler, also known as Count Dracula.

Above I said that Fred is fascinated by evil, and its effect on good. That wasn't quite right. I think Fred really finds evil unalloyed rather boring—it is decency in evil's presence that holds his attention. The Berserker series demonstrates this perhaps best of all: Berserkers, insofar as we speak of them qua themselves, experience no more inner life than so many pocket calculators. It is their impact on the living that is worth writing about. Otherwise they are mere scary gadgetry, worth a story or two, no more. It is LIFE that makes death interesting. Without life, death is . . . nothing.

Those of you who will meet him for the first time this weekend may be a bit surprised at how unberserkerlike is our Fred. He's a quiet-spoken, almost diffident, and gentle man whose greatest love in life is his wife and children. If that seems odd, I can only repeat that it isn't the bad guys as such that interest him; it's decent folk coping with them.

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# UPON HAIRY BEASTS

Jack Gaughan

Among those of us who commit the peculiar act of limning science fiction, one stands out almost alone. Most of us are assemblers of images and mere manipulators of paint. All of us are illustrators; we depict what someone else has envisioned. Some of us have created images and thereby contributed a little more to science fiction than the simple act of visualization. The current demands of the field, particularly when it comes to cover design, have reduced us to package designers and caterers to the public taste. However, John Schoenherr, even in his leaner days, has never been guilty of this pandering. His images were his own; his approach and style, while it displayed other influences at times, became his and only his. While others looked to the great god Kodak for their colors, John, in a very painterly manner, drew his colors from nature and something within himself.

I have said before and must say again at the risk of offending the other practitioners of this craft that John Schoenherr is, in my opinion, the only *painter* to have graced our field. While the rest of us assemble, rearrange, and move about the images of science fiction as one rearranges little, fixed-image chess pieces, John has strode boldly forth and made his own images.

His manipulation of paint is, to me, a delight beyond the business of delineating sandworms and great, hairy beasts. The hairy beasts and other things that growl from his pages are in themselves a delight because they're pictured by a man who knows his animals and their various anatomies. Schoenherr's beasts, of whatever planetary origin, work . . . they live and breathe and function. I think a case can be made for my observation that his beasts and colors were "borrowed" by George Lucas for *Star Wars*. (A case can be made for a little "borrowing" from Kelly Freas and myself for that matter but . . . sigh!)

The inventiveness and verve with which he manipulates paint causes me to turn a deep chromium-dioxide green with envy. "What did you do that with, Jack?" I asked one day when confronted with one of his paintings. "Oh a little

paint, some brushes, ink, chalk, pencil, crayon, a rag with some leftover stuff on the palette and I sneezed on it." For weeks after that my big, old wife, Phoebe-face, stocked up on Romilar cough syrup because all she could hear was me sneezing in my studio. Evidently I didn't have the nose for it. Nothing happened I cared to display to anyone.

If you look about, you will see that under the sky, even if it's bright blue and sunny-clear, the world is more full of shadows than it is light. And poor John (His friends call him "Jack" . . . I call him "Crazy Jack" to distinguish him from myself. I'm "Old Jack.") must be sick to death of reading yet again that I consider him the master of those shadows . . . those subtle greyed tones of whatever hue which are the substance of painted pictures and which make that dash or streak of color sing when applied. We who make little travel posters to out-of-the-mind places must envy that shadowy ability.

He hears, unless he has seen fit to shave since last I saw him, a marked resemblance to Peter Shickele. Fortunately he doesn't paint like Peter Shickele. He does however play the nose-flute with a certain elan.

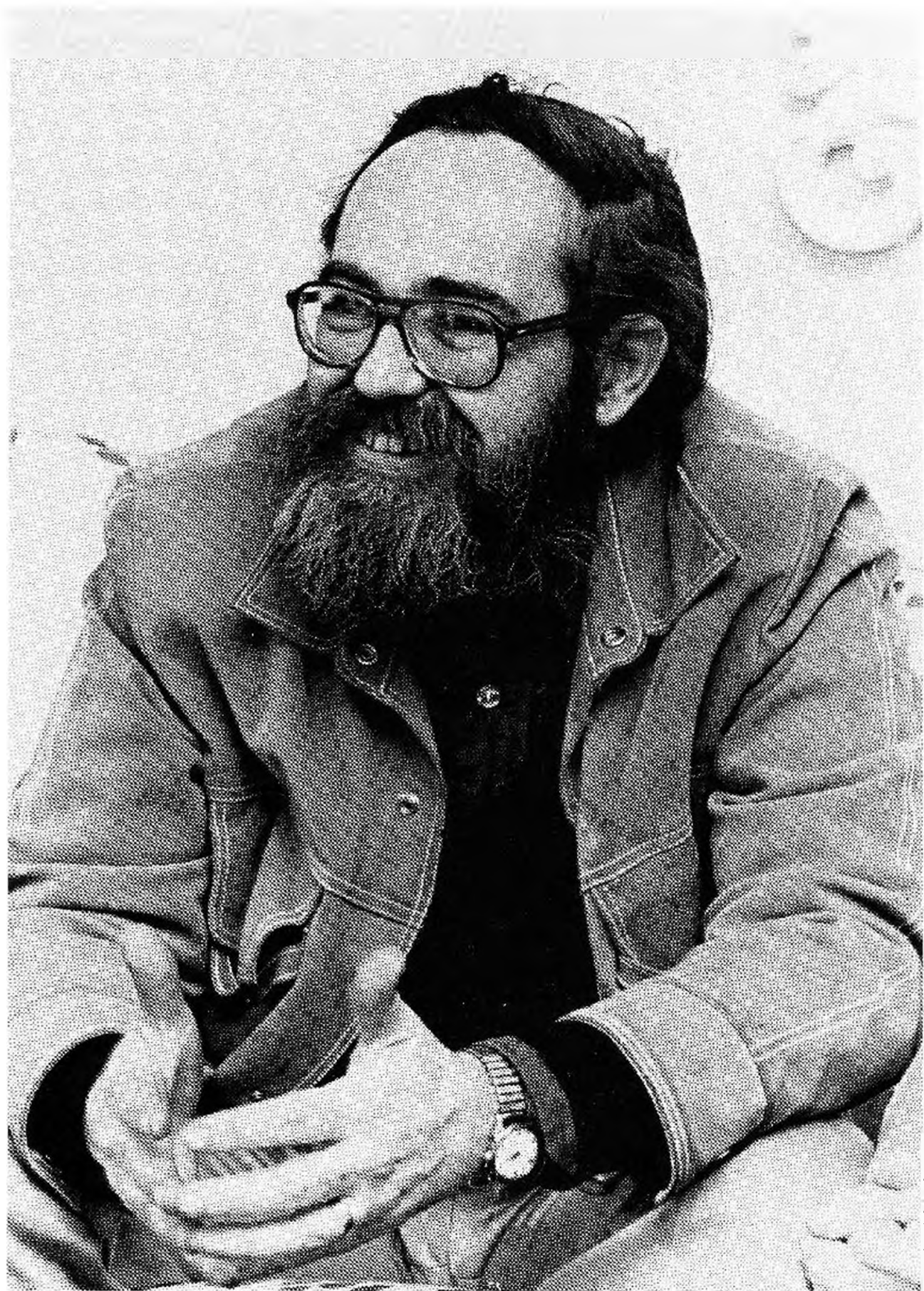
He paints with integrity. This is difficult because it's devilishly hard to squeeze from the tube.

I offered him some Ballantine's India Pale Ale once. He studied its colors. Nonetheless he remains my friend a thing which is much harder on him than it is on me.

Ben Bova used to accuse John of doing his black and white illustrations for *Analog* on the bus while commuting to New York City. Would that I could ride that same bus!

You have here an exceptional gentleman. (And that's ANOTHER beer you owe me, Schoenherr!) Make him welcome.

*Jack Gaughan w/love*



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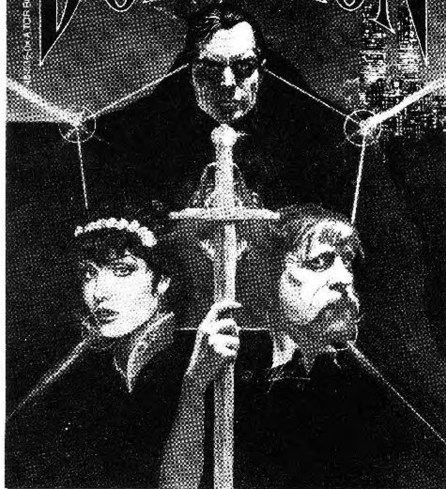
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# STEVE STILES: IMAGE OF AN ARTIST



## Ted White

When the name, "Steve Stiles," springs to mind, what images does it conjure for you?

I've known Steve for more than twenty years, and many images pop into my mind when his name is mentioned. The most recent of those images might be the day he married Elaine, and we each dressed in tuxedos for the occasion. I had never worn such apparel before, and while I was bemusedly figuring out how to don a vest which had no back to it (just straps which had to be adjusted), Steve said, "I can't figure out how to keep this tie on." It was a simple snap-on bow tie. "It's just a simple snap-on bow tie, Steve," I said. "What's the problem?"

"I don't know, Ted," Steve said. "But it keeps falling off. Look." I looked, and he was right. One side refused to stay attached, so that a few moments after putting it on correctly, one found it dangling to the side. The tie had come in a sealed plastic bag, along with various other minor accoutrements to our tuxes. It was somehow inevitable that while I, only the best man, had been given a perfectly-functioning bow tie, Steve—the groom—received a defective one. "It's the story of my life, Ted," Steve sighed.

My earliest image of Steve is rather different. Dick and Pat Lupoff, Larry and Noreen Shaw, and my first wife, Sylvia, and I had started a new club—so new that as yet it had no name. We'd invited all the more fannish sorts to our first, organizational meeting, and Steve, to whom I'd been sending my fanzines and from whom I'd received artwork for those same fanzines, was one

of the invitees.

We were meeting at the Lupoffs' penthouse apartment on East 73rd Street, only twenty blocks or so south of Steve's parental home in Yorkville. There was a knock at the door, and Pat let in a boy somewhere in his mid-teens. The boy immediately took a position sitting on the floor close by the door. "There are chairs over here, Steve," Pat said kindly. "Why don't you come sit in one of them?" But Steve resolutely maintained his position by the door, saying little or nothing, and at about 10 o'clock, or an hour or so after arriving, he quietly left. Thus was Steve Stiles's imprint made on the formation of the Fanoclasts.

Steve was incredibly shy in those days, and he established a pattern at that first Fanoclast meeting which was to be unbroken for nearly a year, despite his increasing activity in fanzine fandom as an artist and cartoonist. But one day in the summer of 1961, British fan Ella Parker arrived, stopping over on her way to the Worldcon in Seattle, and a whole bunch of us Fanoclasts took her to Chinatown. Now, Ella was neither demure nor restrained when in company she enjoyed, and she took to kidding Steve in a good-natured way during the bus ride down to Chinatown. And a remarkable thing occurred: Steve began laughing and kidding her back! Suddenly the Quiet Kid was turned into an ebullient, outgoing, and witty fan who talked so much that it was as if he had at last given up a vow of silence and let out all the pent-up *bon mots* which had been accumulating unspoken over the previous year. The change was both startling and

welcome, and fortunately it was also permanent.

Steve's reputation in the early sixties was initially as an artist. We used to kid him about drawing like Dan Adkins, something which may mean little to most current-day fans, but which could make Steve livid. To be charitable about it, his early style did have a few elements in common with Adkins', but Adkins was even then too well known as a swipe artist (the most obvious example being when a Frazetta EC cover turned up on the back cover of an *Amazing* over Dan's signature) for Steve to wish any comparison between the two of them. The Early Stiles style was characterised by a very controlled line which made even his simplest cartoons rather stiff. But a remarkable transformation—almost parallel to his conversion from shy silence to witty volubility—occurred in Steve's art. His lines became loose and free-wheeling, his caricatures manic if not savage, and the basis for the current Stiles style was born.

Steve was putting out a fanzine then, which he called *Sam*. Its earliest issues were dominated by interesting art and little else, but then the third transformation occurred: Steve began developing an ability to write. What had previously verged on inarticulateness in his fanwriting suddenly became the written version of his conversation: relaxed, humorous observations written in the "fannish" anecdotal style. Later *Sams* (now rare and hard to find, unfortunately) were excellent examples of the modest genzine. Rarely more than 20 or 30 pages, dittoed (rather than mimeoed), and unpretentious, *Sam* was a fanzine we all enjoyed and looked forward to. (It is a shame Steve didn't continue it longer.)

As a charter Fanoclast, Steve was much involved in the most exciting parts of New York fandom in the sixties, including NyCon 3. In fact, we included a portfolio of his art in the NyCon 3 Program Book—and that leads me to Steve's next area of attack: prozine art.

By the mid-sixties Steve and Dan Adkins were good friends, and Dan was getting not only prozine illustration assignments but comic art assignments as well. Some of Steve's earliest professional work was in collaboration with Dan, inking Dan's pencils and collaborating on penciling—both for SF prozines and for such publications as *Creepy* and *Eerie*. Steve had not, however, really settled on a "professional" style with which he was as comfortable as he had become with his fannish art, and I always felt that he was making a mistake in trying to create a "professional" style devoid of all those elements which distinguished his fannish cartooning. As a would-be professional artist he was trying to follow other leaders, while as a fanartist Steve was a leader.

When I became *Amazing's* editor, this put me in a quandary, because Steve was a good friend and I wanted to encourage him professionally, but I did

not want to see "straight" art from him, and thus I looked for stories which I felt were more appropriate for his cartooning style. Alas, there were few of those, but Steve did illustrate Greg Benford's "The Prince of New York" for me.

In more recent times Steve, after years of slaving away for Marvel Comics' British division (redrawing certain pages to fit the different format requirements) found a more hospitable home for his work: the underground comix of Kitchen Sink Enterprises. There his natural, "fannish" cartooning style and his verbal wit came together to produce some of his very best and most purely "Stiles"-ish work. Look for his *Hyper Comics* if you can: it is one of the very best of the "one-man" underground comix.

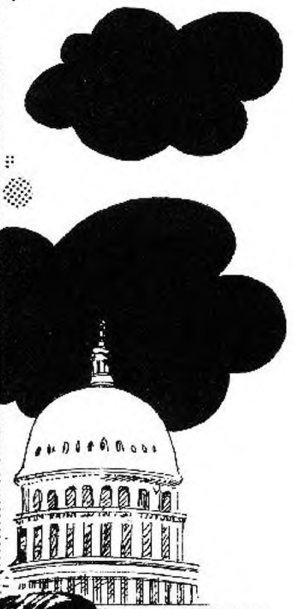
When, in 1979, I found myself editor (for a year) of *Heavy Metal*, one of the first things I did was to tell Steve that I wanted him in that magazine. I was thinking first of his epic collaboration with Dick Lupoff, "Professor Thint-whistle." This collaboration started out its life in the pages of various fanzines published by Steve and Dick in the sixties and was a spoof of the Victorian SF Dick was reading at that time. By the early seventies it had mutated into a Dell novel, but despite Dick's efforts to include Steve in the project, the only art to be found in the book was Frazetta's cover.

The saga was freshly rewritten by Dick and Steve and drawn by Steve as a serial which appeared in most of the 1980 issues of *HM*. I was blown away by the maturity and elegance of Steve's art for the serial. There is, in Steve's pages, more than one nod to his favorite EC comics artists of the fifties (like the late Wally Wood), but the conceptualization and execution is uniquely Steve Stiles. (I also bought a number of one-page interconnected strips from Steve for *HM*, some of which have yet to be published. These are more purely Stiles, since they are not collaborations, and provide a nice link to his underground work.)

I haven't mentioned Steve's long stint on Madison Avenue in an advertising agency; I've said nothing about his brief but brilliant career as an editorial cartoonist and illustrator for the *Baltimore Sun*; and somehow I've omitted his Vital Importance as a co-editor of the yet-to-be-seen latest incarnation of that legendary fanzine, *Void*. But my space here is limited, and I can only sketch in a rough outline of Steve Stiles, the fan, much less Steve Stiles, the man.

Nevertheless, I commend him to you as LUNACON's Fan Guest of Honor. He is a native New Yorker (albeit now transplanted elsewhere), and occupies an important place in the history of New York fandom.

BEAM ME UP,  
MR. SCOTT--THERE'S NO  
SIGN OF INTELLIGENT  
LIFE DOWN HERE.



Steve  
Stiles



# THE STOCK COMPANY:

## Or: The Good/Bad Guys In The White/Black Hats

Fred Saberhagen

What do vampires, murderous robots, and demons hatched from nuclear explosions have in common? Outside of the fact that most of us would not choose any of them as favorite companions, one might suppose that the answer is: not a whole heck of a lot. They do share one other attribute, though: I have used them all as principal characters in different books that have received a fairly good reception.

I find myself, perhaps more than any other writer of a great deal of science fiction and fantasy, identified in readers' minds more with my villains than with my heroes, remembered more for the monsters in my stories than for the monster-slayers. Whatever this may say about the side of my true nature that I keep so well (heh, heh!) concealed from the public, it has its amusing aspects from time to time.

I recall a muggy afternoon in St. Louis in 1969, when my wife Joan, then an innocent young bride (almost), lured by her mad husband into attending her first science fiction convention, was carrying our six-month-old daughter through the hotel bar, looking for me. (She already knew where to look.) Joan, identifiable to fandom by her nametag and also by her ladylike pleas to be apprised of my whereabouts, elicited one heartfelt comment from down at the end of the bar:

"My Ghod! Saberhagen has fathered a human child?"

And at that point I hadn't even started writing about the Count. Or thought up the demonic villains of *Empire of the East*.

There is something about a villain, something intrinsically more interesting than anything likely to be written about a good guy. (Is this, I wonder, why fans have been known to line up

to get writers' autographs?) And the most interesting heroes are probably those with a streak of bad-guy in them. Yul Brynner in *The King and I* comes to mind at once. (For some reason he's the actor I always picture when I'm writing about Dracula; and I would dearly love to see him play the part.) But this concentration on evildoers was not something that I ever planned consciously, not a deliberate policy.

It is my theory (some other writers have held it as well) that inside each writer's head is a stock company of characters anxious to get out, to do their thing upon the printed page. I offer Heimlein's Old Man as a conspicuous example. The same character appears in book after book, story after story, using a different name and probably made up in a different body, but as identifiable as Paul Newman or Katherine Hepburn. I believe that James Jones, the well-known mainstream writer, once commented on this, remarking that he sometimes didn't even bother to change the character's name from one book to the next, and wondering a little wistfully that no reader ever seemed to notice the fact.

If this theory holds water (it ought to hold something stronger), then where does it leave me? What would happen to me if I suddenly stopped writing, and all the Berserkers, monsters, and miscellaneous horrors that make up the strongest corps of my own stock company were bottled up inside my head, unable to get out?

I'd have to go out and get a job, that's what. Besides which, Joan would probably beat me.

It's something to think about.  
I don't think I'll stop.

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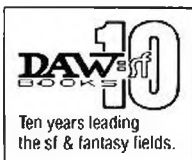
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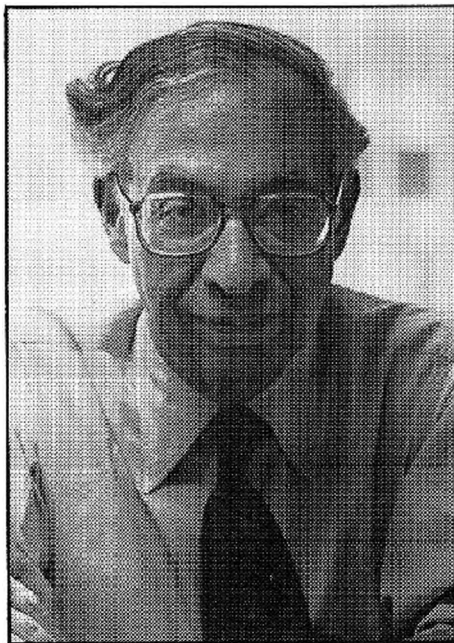
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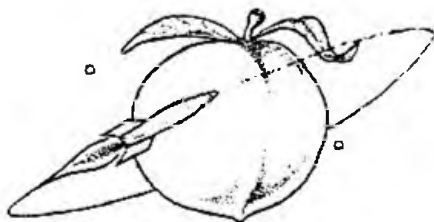
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# FRED SABERHAGEN BIOGRAPHY

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Born in Chicago, Illinois, on May 18, 1930, Fred Saberhagen has grown to be one of the most popular and prolific writers of science fiction in America.

After moving to the suburb of Lombard, Fred fondly remembers his first encounter with a fantasy "pulp" novel at the age of eight. He recalls a story that "scared the wits out of me," and so fired his imagination that it prompted him to write a short piece of his own afterwards. His mother saved it, and reminds friends that she must have had "a premonition" of his future success as a writer.

After graduating high school and holding down a few odd jobs, Fred decided to try his luck in the Air Force, in 1951. He was chiefly employed as a radar reconnaissance technician with a Strategic Air Command group, and served both in the United States and in England, where his interest in science fiction grew as he became an avid reader of *Galaxy* magazine.

Returning to civilian life in Chicago, he attended Wright Junior College in 1956-57, and subsequently worked as an electronics technician. He began writing fiction in his spare time, and in 1961 published his first short story in *Galaxy*, entitled "Volume PAA-PYX," and has been active with both short stories and novels from that date.

By 1963, he decided to freelance full-time, and on the advice of Fred Pohl, then editor of *Galaxy*, he started work on a series of stories with a common theme, and the first "Berserker" was born. He was also active at this time pursuing his hobbies of chess and karate. In 1968, shortly after publishing *The Broken Lands*, the first book in what was to become the *Empire of the East* trilogy, Fred met Joan Spicci, a mathematics teacher, and married her.

He then turned to a more financially stable

position as an editor for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The Saberhagen family grew with the addition of three children: Jill, 1969, Eric, 1970, and Tom, 1972. Evenings, in the basement office of their townhouse, several short stories and the second book of the "Empire" trilogy, *The Black Mountains*, managed to be created.

He went back to full-time freelancing again in 1974, and published *Berserker's Planet* and *Love Conquers All*. Not tied by job location, the family headed west and settled in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "Dracula" made his appearance at about this time in Fred's life, and seems determined to stay, inspiring four novels to date. The latest novel is *Thorn*, published in September of 1980, and the count is ready to emerge again in *Dominion*.

Fred tried his hand as an editor once more in 1980, and produced *A Spadeful of Space Time*, a very successful anthology. *Octagon* was published by Ace Books in July, 1981. *Coils*, done in collaboration with Roger Zelazny, is due on the stands in early 1982.

#### Trivia Notes

- \* One of Fred's "odd" jobs as a teenager was working in a balloon factory.
- \* He was a crew member of a B-36 aircraft in the Air Force.

\* His father died when he was nine years old, and he lived with relatives in the rural town of Byron, Ill., separated from his mother for a few years. (They rejoined in 1943.)

\* He attained a Purple Belt (next to brown, then black) in his study of karate.

\* An "Apple" computer is a member of the household, and he uses it to play the new "Strategy" games.

\* An old house in Lombard, Ill. served as the inspiration for the house in *Specimens*. (One wonders if the people living there now realize how mysterious their house is!)

\* Geronimo, the family's "literary" cat, insists on being Fred's first "editor," from his superior vantage point in his master's lap, while Fred composes at the typewriter. Gerry is now with us in spirit only.

\* His wife, Joan, insists that he gets a lot of inspiration from the peanut butter and onion sandwiches he consumes at lunch! (Well, if it was good enough for one of Ernest Hemingway's heroes...)

\* He is a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America.

\* A Chicago dentist became such a devoted fan of Saberhagen's "Dracula" series that he presented Fred with a set of porcelain fangs. (Self defense?)

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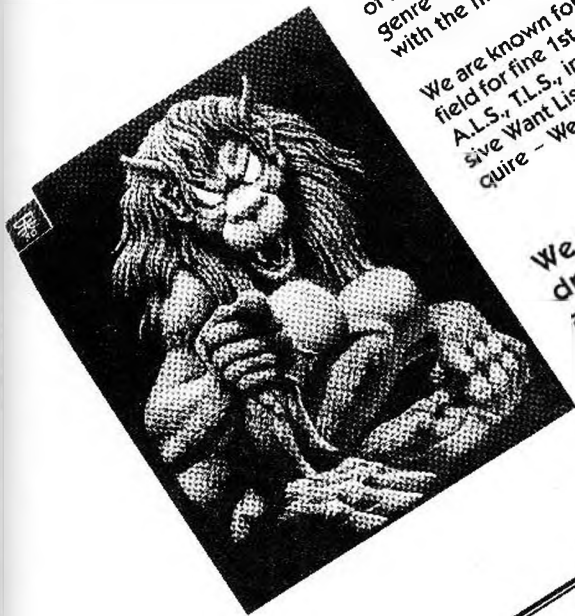
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## TITLES BY FRED SABERHAGEN

### BERSERKER SERIES

*Berserker*, Ace, 1978  
*Berserker's Planet*, Ace, 1979  
*Berserker Man*, Ace, 1979  
*Brother Assassin*, Ace, 1979

### DRACULA SERIES

*The Dracula Tapes*, Ace, 1980  
*The Holmes-Dracula File*, Ace 1978  
*An Old Friend of the Family*, Ace, 1979  
*Thorn*, Ace, 1980  
*Dominion*, Tor, 1981

### FANTASY

*Empire of the East*, Ace, 1979 (Based on the series—*Black Mountains*, *Broken Lands*, *Changeling Earth*)

### SCIENCE FICTION

*Golden People*, Ace, 1964 (Out of Print)  
*Water of Thought*, Tor, 1981  
*Love Conquers All*, Ace, 1978  
*The Mask of the Sun*, Ace, 1978  
*The Veils of Azlaroc*, Ace, 1978  
*Specimens*, Ace, 1980  
*Octagon*, Ace, 1981  
*Coils*, Tor, 1982 (Co-authored with R. Zelazny)

### COLLECTIONS

*The Ultimate Enemy*, Ace, 1979  
*The Book of Saberhagen*, DAW, 1975  
*Earth Descended*, Tor, 1981  
*The Berserker Wars*, Tor, 1981  
*A Spadeful of Space Time*, Ace, 1980  
(Saberhagen Editor)

### WORKS IN PROGRESS

*Pawn to Infinity*, Ace, Chess-SF Anthology  
*Swords*, Tor, Fantasy



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# CASE STUDY

## *Hal Clement*

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From somewhere near the terminal stage of convention addiction, I can look back over about forty years and say with some certainty that Lunacon has been one of my most effective and beloved pushers.

This is not to say that the Lunarians provided my first fix; that came earlier, well before they existed (or at least before they were holding Lunacons, if this is only their twenty-fifth anniversary). There was a Boskone sometime in the winter of 1942-43 which has that honor. I can't pin down its precise date; it was after my first story had appeared in the June '42 *Astounding*, because it was not until then that I discovered fandom (or, more accurately, the Stranger Club discovered me). It was before I finished college and immediately went on active duty with the Army Air Force at the end of February '43. It was attended by several dozen people, largely Strangers. There was an art auction at which I remember an *Amazing* illo going for fifteen cents, and a play which must have been based on Jack Williamson's thrillers. At least, it contained a dreadful weapon called the "Kakkle-Kakkle," and something that emitted a Green Glow. (*What* could be more *dismal* than a Green Glow [a takeoff on one of the radio ads of the era]?) Except for those points, my memory of the affair is thoroughly fogged.

The next convention I can remember was the Worldcon in Philadelphia in 1953. I had met some

of my heroes such as John Campbell, Jack Williamson, Sprague deCamp, and Tom Gardner earlier, but "Doc" Smith was at this one. I had registered as Harry C. Stubbs and my badge read accordingly, but *Mission of Gravity* had been serialized that year and the word was spreading. It was quite a thrill to have Doc seem almost as impressed at meeting me as I was at meeting him. I make no pretense of modesty; I'm not fundamentally different from Isaac, just less outspoken.

I'd experienced the high, but was not yet really hooked. For one thing, getting to cons and staying there was apt to cost money. Boskone hadn't been bad, since I could get into Boston for a dime on what was not yet being called the MBTA (I think it was still the "E1"—the Boston Elevated Street Railway). Philadelphia had been possible because my wife's brother lived in that area (and there was a meeting of the Meteoritical Society at UPenn at the same time, so I could justify the trip a little better professionally). However I was a young(ish) married man with an infant son (shortly two infant sons) living on a teacher's salary (yes, science fiction helped; but I have never in any year grossed more, or even half as much, from writing as from working). A trip even to New York for a weekend would have required serious financial planning. Ten or eleven bucks each way for train fare, another ten or so for a hotel room, plus eating—nope; not usually practical.

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So it was here that the Lunarians played the part of Tom Lehrer's Old Dope Peddler. I think it was '65—blame approaching senility if I'm a year or two out on this when they provided the Free Sample by asking me to be Guest of Honor (Boskone had done the same, but without the same effect; it was still possible to do the round trip from Milton to Boston for less than a dollar). I'm afraid I rather jolted the committee by flying down on the Eastern Shuttle in the interests of time; taking the train after school on Friday would have meant missing any significant Friday night programming. I have one extremely vivid memory of that convention: it was brought home to me that changes were occurring in science fiction. Some of my childish illusions were shattered. I understand that Saint Paul suffered a similar jolt at one point in his career.

I had, naturally, to make a Guest of Honor speech. There had been, as it happened, a recent article in *Analog/Astounding*—never can remember just when the title changed—wherein a hypothesis was offered to the effect that some force kept the general plane of the solar system edge-on to the galactic center. It seemed unlikely to me, even though the author was right about our particular orientation; one planetary system is not a statistically significant sample. Presumably the same force would apply to binary stars, so I spent some time translating a few of the visual orbits whose elements are well enough known over to galactic coordinates. I was rather startled to find that the first one I tried (Sirius) is also edge-on to the galactic center (to within a few degrees). However, I was finding the calculations very tedious—slipsticks had not yet grown buttons—and I finally had a rush of brains to the head and did a galactic distribution map of known eclipsing binary systems. This indicated clearly enough that the hypothesis was invalid, or at least the force did not apply to close binaries. This to me was a fascinating fact, and it seemed worthwhile to warn writers that they shouldn't base stories on this idea; so I built my Guest of Honor speech around this study, adding a few fascinating items about the calculation and nature of binary orbits in general—after all, one occasionally wants to set a story on the planet of a binary star.

For some reason, my own enthusiasm was not shared. The audience was polite both during and after—much more so than to the unfortunate Friend of the Earth who was trying to peddle the anti-nuclear power catechism at Lunacon a couple of years ago—but I could tell that I wasn't really getting across. It dawned on me slowly that the days had passed when science fiction fans got most of their kicks from arguing about the reality of the Martian canals and the effectiveness of rockets in a vacuum, and that the reason was not merely that these specific points were no longer arguable. The

impression has strengthened since.

Fan tastes seem to have drifted from nice, clearly demonstrable physical sciences to sociological, political, psychological, and even historical ones (I know this is an overgeneralization—thank goodness). So, to a great extent, have the stories. To some extent the change was desirable, even needed; I admit that characters even in science fiction stories should have credible motives, and the stories themselves at least vaguely believable plots. To this extent the art of writing can profit. I worry a little, however, about the possibility that some fans have drifted away from hard science because they're afraid to risk debates in which they can be proven unequivocally wrong because hard facts are available; I'd hate to have to spend the rest of my speaking career arguing with creationists and Velikovskyites (the sets overlap but are not identical). Tom Easton's criticism of *Nitrogen Fix* a year or so ago in *Analog*, on scientific grounds, gave me more pleasure than even science fiction has provided for a long time. (I still think I'm right, but the fact that such an argument could start was blissful nostalgia.)

However, there seems no denying that some of the less rigid sciences have moved into science fiction; and however much I may be willing to admit intellectually that this is good for it, I still have my taste for space opera. People don't seem to

mind too much; I still give physical-science oriented talks at cons, though I have learned to tie the science in much more closely with plotting problems or ideas. It means, however, that I probably have very little chance of winning a Hugo or even a Nebula unless I can swing the fashion around full circle. Maybe the rising negative attitude toward some of the cruder anti-sciences such as "creationism" is a reason for me to hope.

In the meantime, I remain firmly hooked on cons. I have missed very few Lunacons since that educational but disastrous GoH talk; I don't scare too easily.

This is not, of course, saying that cons don't change. They do. They evolve, Lunacon like the rest. Parallel programming, 24-hour films, game rooms with and without computers have all appeared and oscillate like rabbit populations in an ecology study. Luckster rooms have grown, but change only in detail: Spock cars have come and—pretty much—gone; edged weapons have appeared and seem to be declining (I rather regret this; while I am not a potential customer, I have admired some of them as works of art. It seems a pity that we should lose them from the fault of some of the more moronic customers who have almost a smoker's conviction of their total right to the space around them); magazine prices have gone up faster than mere inflation as items become



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scarcer and names more famous. I recently received a catalog quoting \$150 for a #1 Clayton Astounding, and I gave up years ago trying to get *Amazings* with Burroughs stories in them. Luckily for me I collect more for nostalgic reading than for pride of ownership; I can settle for a far-from-mint copy or do without if the thing hasn't been reprinted more recently.

Art shows, in my opinion, have gotten better, not entirely because they have gotten bigger; the competition has been getting more intense. It would be nice to think that we writers have been providing more inspiration, but down inside I know that's not it; the stuff isn't all, or even nearly all, story illustration. As my own financial situation has improved I've been buying a good deal of art work, and am already well past the point where I can hang it all. My study is small and my wife is not a fan. She's also even straighter than I, so that indulging my preference for Boris over Frazetta anatomy has to be controlled.

There is one basic fan quality, however, which I don't think has changed. We have always tended to be independent in our opinions, from back in the days when we were laughed at for believing that atomic power and space travel were possible. Some, of course, have expressed this by being merely anti-Establishment rather than original; but we all

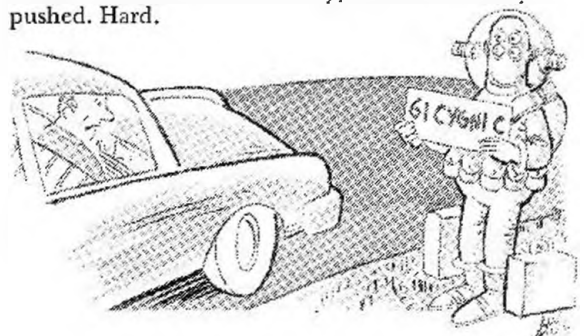
tend to be unimpressed by authority per se.

Unfortunately, this does not always reflect intelligence, whatever we would like to believe; granted that it is stupid to do something merely because law or custom demand it, it is even more stupid to do something merely because law or custom forbid it. I have, I regret to admit, seen otherwise adult-appearing fans driven by the latter motive (yes, I *am* square). Occasionally even conventions get slightly hurt by what amount to political debates—things which can't possibly be settled objectively and which are most unlikely to change anyone's opinion or actions.

But I love them (conventions, not political debates) anyway. I'm completely, thoroughly hooked and expect to stay that way. I don't want to change, even if Jerry Falwell disapproves (though I'd be somewhat bothered if Philip Morrison or Bart Bok did). I love the people, even when they disagree with me; I love science fiction even if I can't single-handedly hope to bring about a space-opera revival; I love talking (I expect that shows); and I love listening to at least some people. I admit I'm likely to get cornered in art show, huckster room, or corridor by small-scale discussions and miss scheduled program material, but I don't think I've ever been hard to find by the program committee character who was responsible for getting me in front of an audience on time.

And even if I do happen to love science rather more than fiction well, that's just mental laziness which can still provide a basis for good stories. Physics and chemistry are so much easier than psychology and political science, and produce so much more believable statements, if your standards of evidence are reasonably high . . .

And I don't mind being hooked. It's not as expensive as if it were illegal or run by a monopoly. So, Lunacon and all you other committees, keep the stuff coming. I'll be taking it as long as my machinery holds together—and, unlike most of the other addictive stuff, when I do fall apart it won't be your fault. On the contrary, you make the prospect of retirement bearable, and any addictive drug which promises to lengthen the customer's life, as well as provide practice for the imagination which may make him or her more, instead of less, useful to himself and society, should certainly be pushed. Hard.





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# GENESIS: LUNACON

*Stuart C. Hellinger*

When a convention holds a 25th anniversary celebration, there will always be people asking questions such as "Why?", "Who cares?", or, more importantly, "How did it all start?". The best way to explain why there have been 24 Lunacons prior to this one and to tell about where it all started is to go back in time. Back before there was a Lunacon. Back to the mid-1950s, when a new science fiction club was just organizing...

The first meeting of The Lunarians was held on Sunday, November 18, 1956. The founding members of the club were Belle Cohen, Martha Cohen, Frank Dietz, Bill Donaho, Allen Glasser, Dave Kyle, Ruth Landis, Dave MacDonald, Sam Moskowitz, Dave Pollard, and George Nims Raybin. As with any other group, the first meeting was used for a discussion of the organization and purposes of the club.

The second meeting was held in early December and continued the basic organization, expanding into discussions on club activities and a Christmas party. This was the first Lunarians' Christmas party, which has since become an annual affair open to all fans, and is now a fixture of the New York fannish scene.

It was at the third meeting, on January 12, 1957, that fate decreed that something different should be discussed! Among a rather lengthy discussion of club activities, which included square dancing, joint boat rides with other groups, and attending a SF related play, Dave Pollard suggested that for PR purposes the club should have one large social event a year to which all of fandom would be invited. It was George Nims Raybin who suggested that it be called the "Lunacon." As the evening went on, it was decided that the Lunacon, and possibly another large open gather-

ing—a regional in conjunction with other clubs in the area (possibly called a "ConFusion"), would replace the original idea of a large open meeting every other month.

(As a side note, another important even occurred at this meeting. The club accepted the membership application of Walter R. Cole, who is the only active member left from the early days. Frank Dietz was made an honorary member in the late 1970s.)

In the following months, plans were made for the first Lunacon. May was picked as the ideal month, as warmer weather would hopefully attract the 80-100 people that was felt to be the proper size. A tentative program, which included dancing in the evening, was drawn up before there was a location or date for the convention!

The first featured speakers were to be the Barrons (the people who did the sound effects for the movie "Forbidden Planet" and for the play "Visit to a Small Planet.") A speech by Lin Carter, a memorial for Ray Cummings, a discussion of Ray's works, films of NewYorCon and Midwestcon, and dancing in the evening were to round out the activities of the convention.

As part of the planning for Lunacon, a discussion of the membership cards lead to the creation of the Lunarians' emblem designed by Christine Haycock and rendered by Dave Kyle. The emblem was redrawn by Robert Germain in 1965. The third version, drawn by the late Wally Wood, is the most recognized version and is constantly used in connection with both the club and Lunacon.

The Lunarians held a meeting the evening before the first Lunacon to discuss the last-minute changes in the program, which included having Lester Del Rey as the main speaker instead of the Barrons. The words "New York Science Fiction Society" were formally

It wasn't until the January 1958 meeting that any formal discussion of a 1958 Lunacon was held. The program was to include a lecture series on old SF magazine covers, with a special emphasis on Frank R. Paul and a discussion of the works of Isaac Asimov, which was to include the Good Doctor as a speaker. At the February meeting, the Lunacon membership fee was raised to \$1.00. It was also decided that all speakers be given complimentary memberships, a policy that is generally followed to this day. This meeting also stands out as Bob & Barbara Silverberg and Milt Spahn were voted into membership of the Lunarians.

The second Lunacon was held on Sunday, April 13, 1958 in the same location as in 1957, Room 205, 213 West 53rd Street, New York City. This time the membership increased to approximately 85 people and the convention was again considered a success.

Other important events of Lunarians history in 1958 were the second summer beach party and the admission of Hans Stefan Santesson as a member. It was also decided at the September meeting to hold a Lunacon 1959 in the same location as the first two conventions and that the hall should be rented as soon as possible.

Lunacon 1959 was held on Sunday, April 12, 1959 with Lester Del Rey as Guest of Honor, with Judith Merrill, Randall Garrett, Don Bensen, Avram Davidson, and Garry Davis as additional speakers. Memberships were once again \$1.00 and there was an auction of materials donated by various editors. It was also the first Lunacon to have a printed program, which was mimeographed early in the morning of the convention! (The start of a tradition?) The attendance was approximately 80 people.

Ed Emsh was the Guest of Honor at Lunacon 1960, which was held once again on the second floor of 213 West 53rd Street in New York City. As with the preceding two Lunacons, the convention was limited to the afternoon, with speakers including Judith Merrill, Sam Moskowitz, Hans Stefan Santesson, and others. The membership fee was once again \$1.00 and about 75 people attended.

Rather than list each Lunacon in detail, there is a chart at the end of this article that covers all the Guests of Honor, locations, dates and, approximate attendance to the name of the organization at this same meeting. The only change since then was the addition of "Inc." after the club was incorporated in 1959.

On Sunday, May 12, 1957, Lunacon 1957 was held in room 205 of 213 West 53rd Street in New York City. Memberships were fifty cents each and were available in advance and at the door. The total attendance was about 65 people and the convention was considered enough of a success that the decision was made to hold another one the following year.

For the remainder of 1957, the Lunarians went about their usual business, planning a beach party in August and, of course, the Christmas party in December.

What does follow are more notes on the history of Lunacon and the Lunarians.

Up to this point, each year's convention was run under the auspices of the club President, with a few other members doing the original planning and the club discussion and approving all actions. Lunacon 1962 made a slight change in this procedure. The convention was still run by the President, with the club continuing to approve all actions, but there was a formal Chair of the committee—namely Chris Moskowitz. The location of Lunacon was also changed. Lunacon 1962 was held at Adelphi Hall, 74 Fifth Avenue, NYC. Due to the fact that the first panel was to be a discussion of fanzines, and that it was necessary to acquaint people with the concept of the fanzine, it was decided that "the Lunarians permit the sale or distribution of fanzines at the Lunacon." Late in 1962, Charles N. Brown was accepted as a new member of the Lunarians.

There was no Lunacon in 1964. Due to various reasons, planning could not be started until it was too late to run a proper convention. The official reason in the Lunarians records is that Lunacon was cancelled "due to the World's Fair." In the summer of 1964, the regular meeting of the Lunarians was set as the third Saturday of the month (which is still the regular meeting date), continuing the option of moving the meeting if it conflicts with a convention or other special event. In the fall Andrew Porter became a Lunarian.

Lunacon 1965 introduced many changes. It was the first Lunacon held in a hotel (the 7 Arts Room of the Hotel Edison), and on a Saturday, the first time that advertising was solicited for a printed program and the first time that FISTA was to sponsor parties the Friday before and Saturday evening of Lunacon they were called the Eastercon. It was decided not to have a Dealer's Room at this Lunacon, as it was agreed that it would "produce a disruptive effect on the program." Hal Clement was the Guest of Honor. Ted White was voted into Lunarians membership.

Lunacon 1966 was also held at the Hotel Edison, but this one was two days long. All the events were held in the afternoon, with the FISTFA-sponsored Eastercon parties on Friday and Saturday evenings. Charlie Brown was the Chairman and Isaac Asimov the Guest of Honor.

In 1967, had the Lunarians rescinded their earlier opinion about having a Dealer's Room. With more space available in the Hotel Roosevelt, it was decided that dealers would be permitted.

Progress Reports were decided to be the best way to maintain interest in the Lunacon, so the 1968 convention was the first to prepare and mail them.

In 1971, Lunacon was officially expanded to three days, running from late Friday through Sunday. With the Eastercon parties in each of the last few years, the convention has already started for many on Friday evening. This was also the year of The Lunacon Banquet, an event which has not been repeated for

various reasons. The Lunacon Art Show had its humble beginnings at this year's convention and the infamous black and silver covered ("Is it *dy* yet?") Program Book also appeared. Other features of this convention were a masquerade and the only other Fan Guest of Honor prior to this year—Howard DeVore.

After the 1971 convention there was a considerable amount of discussion as to whether or not there should be a 1972 Lunacon. From this discussion over a two month period, which decided to hold a 1972 convention, evolved the current system of electing an autonomous Chairman with only limited restrictions placed on him/her prior to the election. The first such Chairman elected was Don Lundry.

After holding all previous Lunacons in mid-Manhattan, the Lunarians moved Lunacon to Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey for Lunacon 1978. Basically, this was due to the lack of usable function space at a reasonable cost. Except for 1979, when the convention was held at a hotel near LaGuardia

Airport, Lunacon has stayed at The Sheraton Heights Hotel with continuing success.

As this is being published at LUNACON 25, there are many points of Lunacon/Lunarians history that were left out. After all, the minutes of the Lunarians meetings fill several large notebooks. If you are interested in the Lunarians and would like to attend some of our meetings, talk to one of us. We're not that hard to find, as many of us are around here somewhere working our tails off. Besides, you might become interested enough to want to run one of these conventions sometime in the future. After all, somebody will have to write about Lunacon and the Lunarians for the Program Book of Lunacon 50!

*A special note of thanks to Walt Cole, who provided the minutes of the Lunarians meetings upon which this article is based. Thank, Walt. The minutes have been very enlightening.*

## PAST LUNACONS

Year	Date	Guest(s) of Honor	Location	Attendance
1957	May 12	—	213 West 53 Street, NYC	65
1958	April 13	Frank R. Paul	213 West 53 Street, NYC	85
1959	April 12	Lester del Rey	213 West 53 Street, NYC	80
1960	April 10	Ed Ernsch	213 West 53 Street, NYC	75
1961	April 9	Willy Ley	213 West 53 Street, NYC	105
1962	April 29	Frederik Pohl	Adelphi Hall, NYC	105
1963	April 21	Judith Merrill	Adelphi Hall, NYC	115
1964		NO LUNACON - WORLD'S FAIR		
1965	April 24	Hal Clement	Hotel Edison, NYC	135
1966	April 16-17	Isaac Asimov	Hotel Edison, NYC	235
1967	April 29-30	James Blish	Hotel Roosevelt, NYC	275
1968	April 20-21	Donald A. Wollheim	Park-Sheraton, Hotel, NYC	410
1969	April 12-13	Robert A. W. Lowndes	Hotel McAlpin, NYC	585
1970	April 11-12	Larry T. Shaw	Hotel McAlpin, NYC	735
1971	April 16-18	Pro: John W. Campbell Fan: Howard DeVore	Hotel Commodore, NYC	900
1972	March 31-April 2	Theodore Sturgeon	Statler-Hilton Hotel, NYC	1200
1973	April 20-22	Harlan Ellison	Statler-Hilton Hotel, NYC	1600
1974	April 12-14	Forrest J. Ackerman	Statler-Hilton Hotel, NYC	1400
1975	April 18-20	Brian Aldiss	Hotel Commodore, NYC	1100
1976	April 9-11	<i>Amazing and Fantastic Magazines</i>	Statler-Hilton Hotel, NYC	1000
1977	April 8-10	L. Sprague and Catherine C. de Camp	Biltmore Hotel, NYC	900
1978	February 24-26	Robert Bloch	The Sheraton Heights Hotel, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ	450
1979	March 30-April 1	Writer: Ron Goulart Artist: Gahan Wilson	Sheraton Inn at LaGuardia, East Elmhurst, NY	650
1980	March 14-16	Writer: Larry Niven Artist: Vincent Dilate	The Sheraton Heights Hotel, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ	750
1981	March 20-22	Writer: James White Artist: Jack Gaughan	The Sheraton Heights Hotel, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ	875
1982	March 19-21	Writer: Fred Saberhagen Artist: John Schoenherr Fan: Steve Stiles	The Sheraton Heights Hotel, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ	?



## Three by Schoenherr

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# Autographs

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