

Tropicon XIX



Tropicon XIX Program Book

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Welcome to Tropicon XIX!

I hope you will have a great time at the convention we have planned. We have a great guest list. Vernor Vinge and David Cherry will give you a preview of ConJose, the Worldcon in 2002, where they will again be co-Guests of Honor. With FanHistoricon being hosted by Tropicon, we also have Dave Langford. And we have a Special Filk Guest — Heather Alexander.

It might seem that we are also prescient because at this year's Worldcon in Chicago Vernor Vinge won the Hugo Award for Best Novel for *A Deepness in the Sky* and Dave Langford again won the Hugo for Best Fanwriter. Actually, it's just that we have such great guests that they always seem to be winning SF awards.

The highlights of the program are listed later in this publication but I would especially like to bring your attention to the programs listed as part of FanHistoricon. Tropicon is hosting a FanHistoricon for the second time to explore various aspects of our fannish past. FanHistoricon 10 has a number of different programs but will focus particularly on some of the fans that have been recognized by fandom generally as being good enough to send around the world. We have several panels on the Fan Fund Winners. These people have been voted to travel to another country at the voters expense to mingle and meet with the fen of another country.

Of course we also have the entertaining panels, interviews and slide shows that you expect at Tropicon. Don't miss the Conversations with our Guests of Honor, the Filk Concert, and our technology and space programs. Add our science fiction and fantasy programs and a special program on JumpNJupiter, a new local endeavor at developing SF in a variety of media and you might think you have a full menu. But there is an even bigger menu at our Guest of Honor banquet on Saturday night. Get your banquet ticket right away so you have the best seats (and food) to listen to our Guests of Honor and our other special guests.

My extra thanks go to my Tropicon staff who have worked extra hard this year to take care of all the last minute details because Edie and I have moved to New York. After more than 20 years of South Florida fanac, we will now be leaving. Edie and/or I have chaired 17 conventions in Florida, helped start SFSFS and some other groups and pubbed numerous fanzines down here. We will miss everyone this winter while we freeze our, er, watch the snow fall. Not that the locals will be getting away completely free. Both of us have relatives in Broward County whom we will be visiting regularly.

In the meantime, enjoy Tropicon 19 so it will linger and hold you in its thrall until you come back next year. We still plan to see you all at Tropicon 20.

— Joe Siclari Chairman, Tropicon 19

Vernor Vinge: An Appreciation

by James Frenkel

Vernor Vinge has been writing science fiction since the 1960s. I remember reading his novel *Grimm's World* (1969) and thinking it was very cool. Well, consider that I was in college, and here was this novel about a world where the Big Deal was a publishing company that was on a huge boat that went all around the world, and what they published was the coolest science-fiction magazine in the universe. Like *Astounding Stories* edited by John Campbell, but it was science-fiction that actually changed that world.

It was a science-fiction fan's dream. And whoever this "Vernor Vinge" was, I knew he must really love science-fiction, just as I did—and still do. I had no idea that Vernor would first of all drop out of sight almost completely for six years until his next novel, *The Witling*, and then drop out again for another five years. Of course, he was busy being a mathematics professor, and learning computer science, which in the late 1960s and 1970s was very, very different from today. He learned it from the ground up, and then became a computer science professor, which he continued to do until earlier this year.

And then he wrote a short novel, *True Names*, which was nothing short of incredible, conceptualizing the notion of cyberspace—he called it the Other Plane—and that very short novel crammed more cool scientific ideas into its less-than-30,000 words than most 100,000 word SF novels had.

I was very lucky. Because I got to publish *True Names*, and I've edited all the novels he's written since then. Which means I'm still very lucky. Because every time he writes a new novel, Vernor comes up with more cool stuff, more intriguing scientific ideas, and he learns something more about how to be a great science-fiction writer.

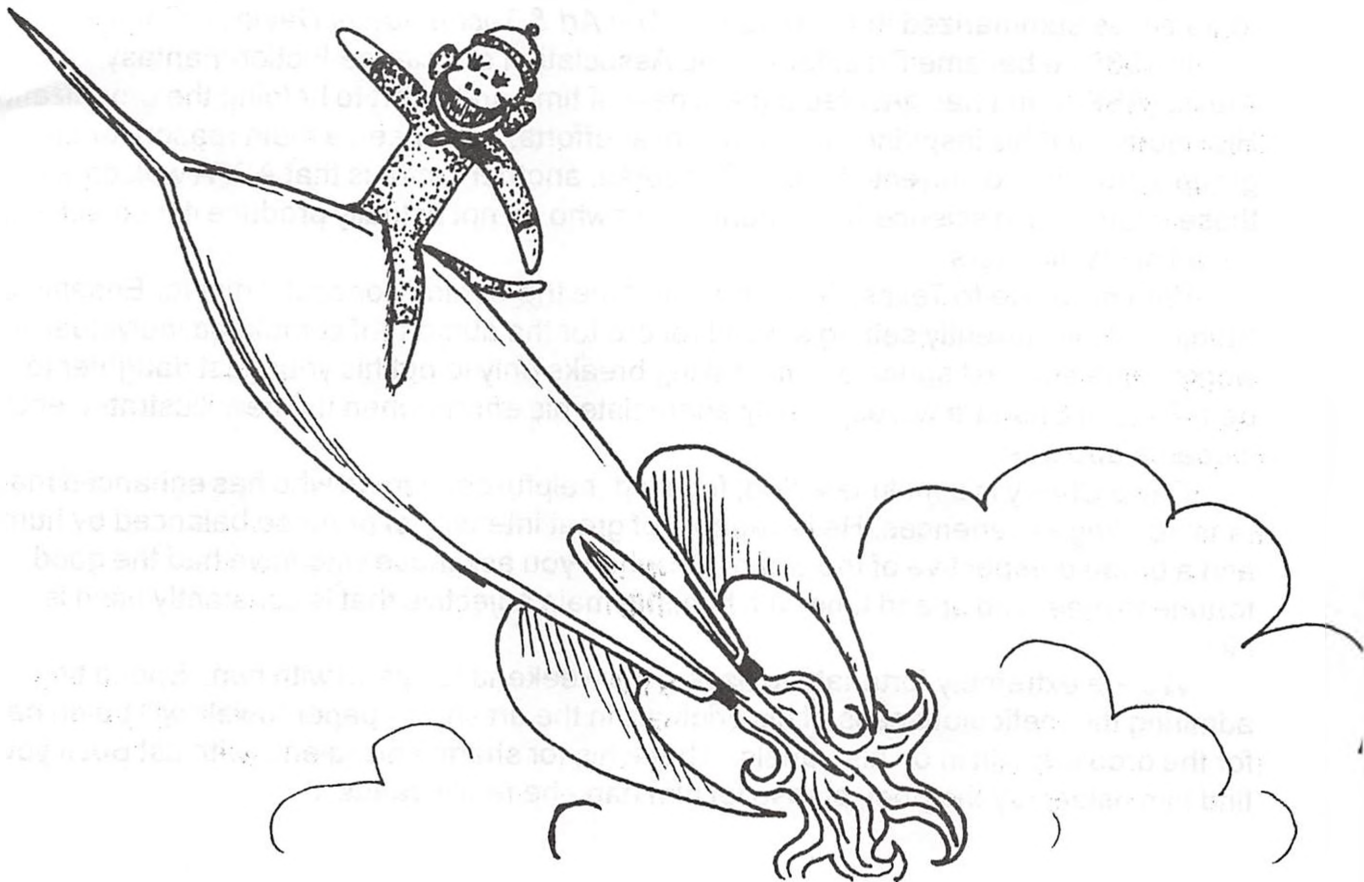
I don't know if anyone keeps records of this sort of stuff, but I can't think of any other writer who has had five novels in a row be finalists for the Hugo Award, with the last two in a row winning. But even if he never won a Hugo, Vernor deserves to be ranked among the great SF writers. Now you can say, "Hey, you're his editor. Of course you're going to say something like that." Well, I don't care what anyone says. I know it's true. Because if you read *A Fire Upon the Deep* or *Deepness in the Sky*, you can see for yourself that Vernor can flat-out deliver everything that science-fiction promises us: sense of wonder, neat scientific ideas, adventure, drama, scope (**big** scope), cool aliens, *originality*... and a satisfying ending. And let's be honest. How many great science-fiction novels drag you across hundreds of pages and then fizzle out at the end? He knows how to end his books. And the good guys win, but not without a lot of suspense, pathos, amazing plot twists, scary moments, nasty stuff by realistically complex bad guys, wonderful moments of emotional catharsis... all I can say is, "Wow!"

And now you, reading this in the program book, are the lucky one. Because Vernor's here at the convention, and you can actually meet him, hear him talk, spend time with him, ask him stuff, and enjoy this modest, middle-aged person who just happens to be one of the greatest SF writers in the world.

Of course, you need to be careful. You don't want to confront him with questions like "Do you think you're the greatest SF writer in the world today?" Because that would just make him blush. I can say that, but he would never say it himself. Because he's that rarest of writers. He's *not* over-impressed with himself; he's just a really nice guy, down to earth (sounds ironic for a SF writer, but when you meet him you'll see what I mean). He'll be glad to talk with you about his SF, the science of it, or pretty much anything else that he feels he knows about—ask him what he thinks about the "singularity" and be prepared for a fascinating conversation. You also might consider mentioning the words "Poul Anderson," one of Vernor's heroes.

You've got a rare opportunity with Vernor here. A two-time Hugo Award winner, a scientist, a nice guy. Hey, don't forget to get his autograph...on one of his books. But you probably don't want to start reading it while you're at the con. You might just get so wrapped up in it that you'll forget where you are, stay up all night reading it, and miss the convention. I have wonderful memories of people at Chicon 2000 telling me about the first time they read one of Vernor's recent books—and how they sort of "missed" a whole weekend...or how they "missed" work the next day, or college classes. You get the picture.

My only regret about being Vernor's editor is that I don't have the time to go back and re-read these books myself. I envy you if you haven't read them yet. What fun's in store for you. And if you talk to him, tell him that Frenkel wishes he could be here, too. You Florida folks have all the fun!



DAVID A. CHERRY

by Becky D. Peters

Born in Oklahoma in 1949, David Cherry lived there until a recent move to Texas. He is C.J. Cherryh's younger brother and his first professional sale was for her *Ealdwood*, published in hardcover by Donald Grant Publishers. He accompanied C.J. in 1976 to his first science fiction convention where he discovered "The Art Show!" It was a revelation that people could make a living (however precarious) creating and selling science fiction and fantasy art.

This turning point impacted his career plans. He had received his B.A. in Latin with honors, and in 1975 got his J.D. from the University of Oklahoma. He was in the firm of Morgan & Brown (interstate transportation law specialists) for six years. Always interested in science fiction -- and in science fiction art -- the 1976 art show revived his interest in creating art himself. Through several changes in circumstance he was able to do legal work part time and devote the rest of his time to his art.

David is allergic to oil paints and turpentine so he works in acrylics, alkyds and other formats. He is a classic realist, largely self-taught. His art is immediately recognizable and has appeared on many DAW Books, as well as most of Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Sword and Sorceress* series. He has been nominated for several Hugos. He has served as a jurist for the *Spectrum* art books, and his work has appeared in their annual (now up to 7) of the best and most noteworthy of science fiction and fantasy art. In 1987 his work to date was summarized in *Imagination: The Art & Technique of David A. Cherry*.

In 1988 he became President of the Association of Science-Fiction/Fantasy Artists (ASFA) and has devoted a great deal of time and effort to helping the organization. His efforts, and his inspiring others to similar efforts, have been a main reason for the group's growth and current stability. Of course, another factor is that ASFA welcomes those interested in science-fiction/fantasy art who do not actually produce it themselves, i.e. art show directors.

With his move to Texas, David has become the Senior Concept Artist for Ensemble Studios. He is currently setting a world record for the number of completed individual art works in the shortest space of time, taking breaks only to put his youngest daughter to bed. Fans of *Shanara* will especially appreciate his efforts when the new illustrated encyclopedia appears.

David Cherry is a multi-talented, focused, helpful gentleman who has enhanced many fans' reading experiences. He is capable of great intensity of purpose balanced by humor and a broad perspective of the world. Yet when you ask those who have had the good fortune to meet and spend time with him, the main adjective that is constantly used is ... nice.

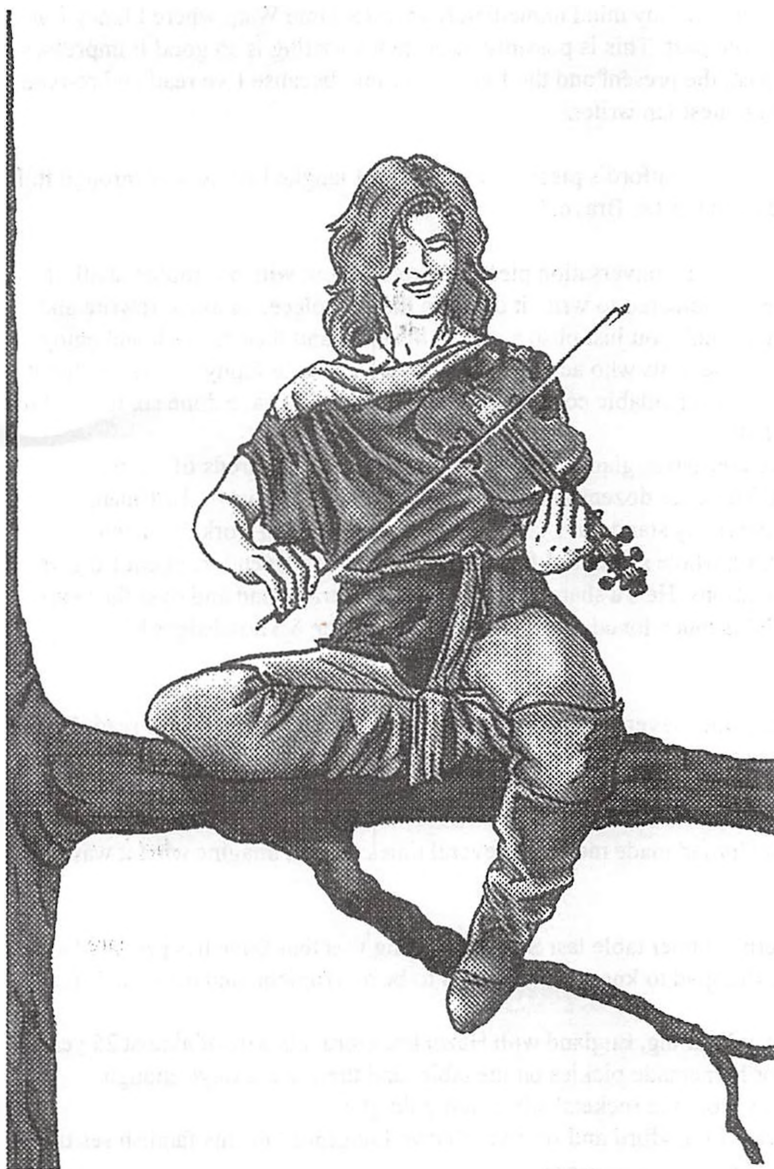
We are extremely fortunate to have a full weekend to spend with him. Spend time admiring the meticulousness of his originals in the art show - paper towels will be on hand for the droolers. Sit in on his panels. Thank his for sharing his talents with us! But if you find him asleep by the pool, please let him nap - he really needs it!

Heather Alexander

by Philip Obermarck

Heather Alexander spends her days playing tag with her four cats, being trained by her Arabian horse, training her foster daughter, or horsing around with her husband. Her free time is spent singing and playing original and traditional Celtic music on fiddle, guitar, mandolin and bodhran.

In 1997, her performances took on a new dimension when she was joined on stage by her foster daughter Maírl, an 1800-year-old changeling, who doesn't look a day over 21. Partially deaf, Maírl provides song signing, which brings the musical imagery closer to audiences, materializing mythology before their very eyes.



ARTWORK BY PHILIP R. OBERMARCK © 1999

Heather makes her home in North Bend, WA and is settling in to the PNW Celtic Scene, performing regularly in venues from Portland to Seattle. With three albums under her belt, she is now working concurrently on two projects, one, "A Gypsy's Home," a collection of Celtic traditional and Celtic styled original songs, and the other, an album of music inspired by SF author Steven Barnes' upcoming novel, "In'sh'allah." Her albums are available for sale in the dealers room..

Her previous work on book/album tie-ins like "Songsmith" and "Shadowstalker," as well as her original Celtic rock album "Keepers of the Flame" (with her former band, Phoenix), have assured her popularity at SF cons, while her appearances at pubs, coffee houses, Folk Music Festivals and Highland Games have made her music available to the public at large.

She can be found on the Web at www.heatherlands.com.

If you have several hours to kill, ask her about her horse.

Dave Langford: Fanhistoricon Speaker

by Geri Sullivan

Dave Langford doesn't get across the Pond to America very often. Nonetheless, I missed meeting him at Novacon in 1989 because he was OryCon's FanGoH in Portland the same November weekend that I was enjoying my first British convention. And though I have a Tropicon membership, I'm also missing the opportunity to listen to your Fanhistoricon Speaker this November.

Why? Two years ago last summer, Dave sent me a 9,000-word Minicon 33 convention report for my fanzine, *Idea*. Fandom deserves the treat of reading it almost as much as Dave deserves the relief of having it finally see print. So I'm spending Tropicon weekend doing fanzine layout.

In addition to waiting so long to see a major article of his published, Dave's also been waiting for reader feedback to "Twenty Years of Uproar," a convention speech of his that was in *Idea* 11. Perhaps a few excerpts from the *Idea* 12 letter column-in-progress will show why Dave is the ideal choice for Fanhistoricon Speaker, while also giving him an advance look at some long-overdue egoboo:

Vince Clarke: "When I read a new article by Dave Langford my mind immediately enters a Time Warp where I fancy I've read three-quarters of it in various manifestations in the past. This is possibly because his writing is so good it impresses the ambient ether along the Time Line both in the past, the present and the future, possibly because I've read and re-read everything he's written so many times. Our second greatest fan writer."

William Breiding: "There is not much to say about Dave Langford's piece — except that I laughed all the way through it. I imagined myself hearing it as a speech and laughed even harder. Bravo."

Chuck Harris: "Dave makes it all seem so effortless, a light conversation piece all sketched out with no trouble at all. It flows along so easily you can hardly credit that he even bothered to write it down in the first place, let alone rewrite and tighten it up like he MUST have done. Joe Neo might think you just push a pint in his hand and then sit back and enjoy the torrent of fun and frivolity as it tumbles out, but those of us who actually try to — well, "write funny" — know that it ain't so. It's bloody hard work. Any damn fool can write a readable con report — and most of us have done so, too — but original wit and true humour are the rarest talents of all.

"In the last 60 years we've found only five consistent giants out of the hundreds and hundreds of fanzine writers: Bloch, Burbee, Willis, Shaw, and Langford. There are dozens and dozens of worthy runners up — Hoffman, Tucker, Kettle, for a start — but only the Famous Five really stand out ... and only Dave remains to work the magic. "And 'work the magic' is not just my opinion. He has a whole sideboard full of Hugos... a fannish endorsement I'd give my right bollock for. He differs from my other nominations. He's a sharp observer with a rat trap mind and over the years he has built up a marvellous repertoire of stories, and is much loved for the meticulous way he acknowledges his sources."

Gary Deindorfer: "Dave Langford is devilishly funny and clever. This is one of the best articles by him I have read. It has so many serpentine twists and turnings in it, so many witty surprises, that I am forced to conclude that Dave has a subtle mind, something I had long suspected."

Janine Stinson: "Dave Langford's 'Twenty Years of Uproar' made me laugh several times; I can't imagine what it was like to hear that speech in person!

The rumor around Joe Siclari and Edie Stern's dinner table last Sunday evening was that Dave has prepared a new "Thog's Masterclass" especially for Tropicon. I'm glad to know Janine plans to be at Tropicon and hope she's ready to laugh a lot more!

Dave lives in a 3+-story, Hugo-filled house in Reading, England with Hazel Langford, his wife of almost 25 years. There's usually beer in the basement, quince jam or homemade pickles on the table, and there are always enough fascinating books to eventually draw one's eyes away from the rockets' silver and gold glare.

Even though he writes professionally as David Langford and reserves "Dave Langford" for his fannish ses the

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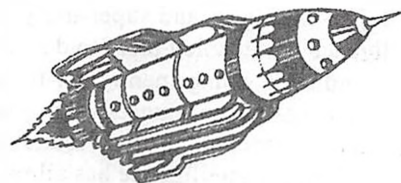
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Singularity: Vernor Vinge

by Mark L. Olson

What impresses me most about Vernor Vinge, I think, is how he started so well thirty-five years ago and just kept on getting better. He has never been a prolific writer – most years he only published a single story or novel, and some years he published nothing – but everything he has written is worth reading and some of his stories are among the best SF *ever* written.

Here is one reader's look at his career.

Vinge's second story, "Bookworm, Run!" appeared in 1966 in *Analog*. "Bookworm, Run!" is a fine story about a computer-enhanced chimp in a secret government lab. The chimp's intelligence has been brought up to human, but all the chimp really wants to do is read – he's a nerdish proto-fan, not very comfortable among people, and in love with his books – E. E. Smith is one of his favorite writers. Out of curiosity, he uses his linked computer to nose around in top secret files, memorizes *all* of the US's secrets, is discovered, and runs away. He's caught, but his partial success points out a great danger: enhanced by this technology, a chimp is a match for the best the US can offer. What will it do for a human? Change both humanity and human society beyond recognition, that's what. This was Vinge's first approach to the Singularity – more on that, later.

His next story, "Accomplice" is fairly minor, but it is the first story I know of to really think about computer animation and the use of computers to produce movies. (Vinge's main mistake was to imagine a *much* higher quality for the early work. In his story, the first thing to be animated is *The Lord of the Rings*, rather than TV commercials!)

The first story of the series which ultimately made up *Tatja Grimm's World* came next. The series started out as light adventure with a lovely fannish touch. It is set on a world which has been inhabited by humans for a long time, but which lost its technology somehow and has been static long enough for a single fantasy magazine to have been published continuously for over 700 years. And now the Regent of Crownesse plans to burn the only complete run in existence in a potlatch ceremony. Tatja Grimm – a young genius who wandered into civilization from one of the barbarian parts of the world – and friends are off to save it. It's great fun.

The series later turned, well, grimmer, as Vinge thought more about how such a genius could arise and how these people came to be living on this world in a permanent early-modern culture. The answer is chilling and again involves the Singularity.

"Original Sin", in 1972 was a triumph of Vinge's imagination. It takes place after the Singularity. (Vinge's Singularity is the point where technology – usually computer technology – has advanced so far and so fast that society is no longer really comprehensible to someone from today. We simply can't relate to the issues, the problems, and the aspirations of a member of a post-Singularity culture. Post-Singularity humans are alien to us in important ways.)

Here a few humans are on an alien planet to break a human-imposed embargo on advanced technology. High tech is embargoed because the aliens are super-intelligent and super-nasty. They only live about two years, but even with their short life spans, their intelligence has enabled them to develop a 20th century level of technology in less than fifty years. They are carnivores and their young spend their formative months in packs which eat everything in sight, including their elders. They make the creatures in the movie *Alien* look positively homey.

The high technology that the humans want to peddle is tailored longevity drugs...

The alien society is fascinating. The alien's sheer intelligence has allowed them to adopt a lot of human customs in spite of conflicts with their innate nature. (They can see quite clearly that if they retain their traditional culture (dog-eat-dog to the nth) they will never break out of their vicious cycle.) Interestingly, they are mostly Christians – human missionaries got there early and they were very much attracted to a religion in which they could hope for forgiveness. (One of the nicer lines in the story is "You Humans are lucky: you find it so easy to be good.") It's a major effort of will for them *not* to kill the defenseless humans in their midst.

(continued on page 14)

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(continued from page 12)

The post-Singularity human society is only faintly alluded to, but its technology is appropriately incomprehensible. For example, someone mentions interstellar travel in passing and makes the comment "remember spaceships?" *However* they travel between the stars, it is no longer by spaceship. The only gadget the humans use is something called 'mam'ri which appears to be something like a pile of cloth with some sparkly light in it. They fold it and finger it and *things* happen. No explanation is given, but it is clearly a *very* advanced technology. Another time, a human is trying to explain to an alien why he can't use his 'mam'ri: he'll be detected. How will he know if he's detected? Bad luck. The human 'police' can cause them to have runs of very bad luck without knowing exactly where they are.

This is a fantastic job of just hinting enough to make the scope of the technology obvious without having to do the impossible job of describing it. (There are a dozen SF writers who could profit from that lesson!)

An interesting novel in 1976 was *The Witling*, which imagined a world where people could teleport anywhere they could picture clearly. How would such a society be organized? What would this do to people? Vinge came up with good, logical, answers, built a society around them and then set an interesting story in that society.

Five years later, Vinge published the novella "True Names," the first of his great works. It was one of the earliest stories to talk of cyberspace and Vinge knew programmers well enough to realize that *their* cyberspace would be a world where they were – literally – wizards, a world shot-through with fantasy elements. The story itself is taut, has human interest, a plausible view of the future, a great war (which few people notice) and wondrous things for the reader to enjoy

Mr. Slippery is a hacker in a world where the net has evolved so that a limited direct interface to the brain is routine. Mr. Slippery (not his real name, but a *nom de net*) is a member of The Coven, a group of top hackers who meet only in a quasi-medieval environment they create on the net. No one knows another's True Name (their identity in the real world) but they're all, in one way or another, working against the Great Enemy – the U. S. Department of Welfare. On its part, DoW is trying to hunt them down because it is usually the target of their recreational – and sometimes political – hacking.

Their games against the Great Enemy are a cross between pranks, semi-serious anti-establishment action, and outright criminal theft. However, things are getting

rougher with the appearance of a new hacker, The Mailman, who seems *very* sharp and is on the verge of taking over the Coven.

Two members of the Coven investigate and discover that The Mailman is an AI which is on the verge of taking over not just The Coven, but the entire net and the whole world. They attack, and their battle rages over the world's net, leaving the hackers victorious and faced with a dilemma almost as great: how do they give up the power that they've accumulated in their fight against The Mailman without exposing themselves to the government's retribution?

"True Names" is a superb story, lean and exciting. It was criminal bad luck that it didn't win both the Hugo and the Nebula – it's one of the most perfect SF stories ever written.

The next three stories came out in the mid-80s and consolidated Vinge's reputation as a top hard SF writer. *The Peace War* is set perhaps fifty years in our future, but a very unexpected future. Even as you read this, a company in California has discovered the bobble, a sphere of force which is absolutely impenetrable and indestructible and can be projected anywhere. Once created, nothing (including its creator) can destroy it. Whatever was inside is gone forever. The unscrupulous owners of the company use it in a power grab, destroying military forces and government installations and over the course of a few years establish themselves as The Peace Authority, ruling a much-diminished world. (Not only were people bobbled for resisting the Peacers, but plagues of new, unknown diseases ravaged humanity.) The world may be at peace, but it is impoverished and most people are uneducated and oppressed.

Fifty years from now, the only resistance to the Peacers are a few wandering hackers who have continued to develop computer technology. They are far enough ahead that they can elude the Peacers, but not so much so that they can do more than hide.

Two things happen next: the earliest bobbles unexpectedly burst, and it turns out that they stopped time inside for about fifty years – fifty years' worth of bobbled military power and angry people are coming back. And one of the hackers discovers a young boy who is a mathematical genius of the highest order. This kid discovers how to truly control a bobble, and how long it will last before bursting, and how to build an efficient, portable bobble. The hackers and the first of the unbobbled US military attack and destroy the Peace Authority and the world is on the way back towards the future.

The Peace War is a good, edge-of-the-seat story that glorifies the best of the traditional computer hacker



traditions and also shows how a genius works and develops a true breakthrough.

“The Ungoverned” takes place fifty years after that. The world is seriously high-tech, having recovered from the fifty years of dreadful peace, but the governments destroyed by the Peace Authority never came back. Most of the world is ungoverned and happy to be so – it is essentially a libertarian world. (Companies with names like the U. S. Air Force and the Michigan State Police sell protective services to most folk, while others arm themselves with weapons a nation in the year 2000 could not stand against, hunker down, and dare anyone to bother them.)

It’s not a bad world, but it *is* a libertarian utopia, so it’s not terribly realistic. (As libertarian utopias go it’s nearly believable, and doesn’t actually sound too unpleasant to live in. Read Vinge’s “Conquest by Default” for a darker side of Libertarianism) Compared with *The Peace War* and the sequel *Marooned in Realtime*, however, it’s minor.

Marooned in Realtime takes place fifty million years later.

About a century after “The Ungoverned” – two hundred years from now – humanity reaches the Singularity. Since neither Vinge nor anyone else can write about it (if they could, it wouldn’t be a Singularity), Vinge set his novel much later. In about 50,000,000 AD the remnants of the human race are gathering together to try to rebuild.

Since bobbles stop time for anything within them, they are a perfect method for one-way time travel into the future. Want to jump to 2300 AD? Just bobble up for the next 300 years and, to you, it seems like you are there in just an instant.

In this story, many people did, some voluntarily, and some were shanghaied by criminals. (What a great way to get rid of someone!) But instead of stepping into an ultra-high-tech future, they stepped into a devastated world. Sometime just after 2200 AD, as mankind was approaching the Singularity, *something* happened. Man essentially disappeared from Earth, technological civilization collapsed, and humanity died out, leaving a dead, wasted world. As the various time travelers unbobbed, they found themselves alone in a strange world.

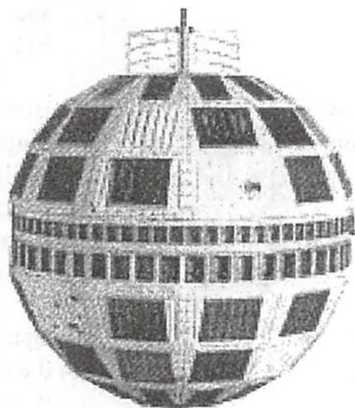
Some of these forward-in-time travelers were eager to see the future and bobbed themselves deliberately. Not knowing what to expect, they brought along bobbling equipment and enough gear that they could survive even the fall of civilization. And in 50,000,000 A. D. those few have agreed to meet and to try to

rebuild the human race – to build back to the Singularity and this time not miss it. (No one ever discovers what actually happened around 2200 – did humanity reach the Singularity and change into something which did need Earth anymore? Did aliens attack? Did the civil war between Microsoft and Sun-Oracle finally escalate to nukes? Who knows? It’s a measure of Vinge’s strength that he doesn’t attempt to answer these questions, leaving the various characters an opportunity to put forward their own answers.)

Marta and Yelen Korolev are among the highest-tech of the deliberate time travelers and are at the center of the plan to rebuild humanity. But in one of the jumps forward, Marta is left outside the bobbles and is – literally – marooned in real time. She must exist in an unpopulated world full of strangely mutated plants and animals – 50 MA is a *long* time from now – until the bobbles burst in twenty or thirty years and she can be rescued. She isn’t rescued; she dies and Yelen is determined to discover why their supposedly infallible systems allowed this to happen.

W. W. Brierson is a policeman – a famous one, for his actions in “The Ungoverned” where he helped to turn back an invasion of Kansas by the Republic of New Mexico, one of the last nation-states. Bobbled while tracking down a blackmailer, he was rescued by the Korolevs. Yelen asks him to help find the murderer, for she has become convinced that Marta was murdered by deliberate sabotage of her systems.

A murder mystery set among all this strangeness! Who did it? Can he be stopped from killing – or worse – again? Will the human race have a second chance? A spectacular story! (And the descriptions of some of the future life on Earth are wonderful – as are the “home movies” shown early in the book.)



After a gap of six years with only one more story in print, Vinge published *A Fire Upon the Deep* and clearly became one of the top – arguably the best – hard SF writers in the business. It is wildly inventive – any one of several of the ideas he used in this book would have sufficed to make a writer’s reputation. It’s well-written and there’s never a dull moment.

The story is set in the marvelous universe that he’d used previously in the story “The Blabber.” The Galaxy has ‘zones’ which roughly correspond to star density. As star density decreases, the laws of nature change. In the central zone, called the “Unthinking Depths”, intelligent life is impossible. This occupies most of the Galaxy. We live in the “Slow Zone”; intelligent life is possible, but artificial intelligences (AI) can’t be built, and space is Einsteinian: FTL travel and a lot of other

standard SF gadgets are impossible.

Outside the Slow Zone things get interesting: the "Beyond" includes the outer fringes of the Galaxy. AI can be built, FTL travel works and, in general, superscience works. The further into the Beyond you get, the fancier the gadgets and the better the AI. Outside the Beyond is the "Transcend" where AI can become so easy that, for all practical purposes, 'gods' exist. These supernal beings can only exist in the Transcend. They can't venture in person even into the Beyond...which is just as well...

The normal course of development of an intelligent species in the Slow Zone (those that don't just die out) is to develop slower-than-light travel and eventually wind up with colonies in the low Beyond which then develop superscience-based civilizations, and beget colonies ever higher in the Beyond. Eventually, they edge into the Transcend and – if they aren't wiped out by one of the 'gods' by accident or by malice – develop a Transcendent AI into which they are generally subsumed and which then becomes another 'god'.

I won't detail the plot. Suffice it to say that one of the first human colonies in the Transcend inadvertently awakens a terrible, ancient 'god' from a billion years ago which proceeds to devour it and starts working on the rest of the Galaxy. Somehow it can penetrate the Beyond, spreading a civilization- and intelligence-devouring Blight.

A few humans, refugees from the original colony and who are *possibly* carrying a countermeasure which may have been hidden along with the evil 'god', flee inward away from the advancing Blight, chased by ships controlled by the Blight. After adventures in worlds of superscientific marvels, they find refuge on a pre-scientific planet inhabited by the Tines, the most extraordinary aliens – another of those spectacular pieces of SF invention that Vinge seems to just toss off – I've ever seen. They are utterly non-human, yet Vinge manages to make their society and its strife real and plausible.

Vinge outdid himself once more with another exciting story set in a wonderfully stfnal universe!

It took six years for Vinge's next book, *A Deepness in the Sky* to be published but it was worth the wait. It is undoubtedly his best book to date and a damn fine example of what the top-rate SF can be.

Deepness doesn't really connect to any previous story or novel, though one character from *Deepness*, Pham, is evidently the main source from which The Old One constructed the Pham who appears in *A Fire Upon the Deep*. That may be so, but it connects the two stories in no essential way, and the two characters are not particularly similar. No matter, *A Deepness in the Sky* stands very well on its own.

Deepness takes place entirely in the Slow Zone where AI and FTL travel and communications are impossible. The time is about 8000 years from now, and mankind is spread over a rough sphere of stars hundreds of light years in diameter. Communication is by laser and by ships which travel at about 1/3 lightspeed with nearly all of the crew in cold sleep.

In the region of Human space in which the story is set, the Qeng Ho is a loosely organized society of traders who live mostly on their ships and carry goods and technology between the stars. There is no interstellar government and while star travel is robust, it isn't frequent. A backwater planet might see a starship every century or so, while the greatest civilized centers may have several in dock (typically for a period of months to years) at a time.

As hinted in *A Fire Upon the Deep*, one of the limitations of the Slow Zone is that AI is impossible (in fact, it's even obliquely hinted that the interaction between physics and computation is so intimate, that it is the limitation on computation which is fundamental and which *causes* the other effects such as no FTL.)

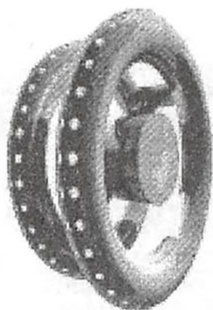
As a consequence, no civilization in all of Human space has undergone a Vingean Singularity. The highest of high technologies, while well beyond what we can do ourselves, is not beyond what we can understand – not even beyond what we can expect to have ourselves by 2050 or so.

Captain Sam Park has brought a large Qeng Ho fleet to an out-of-the-way world near the edge of Human space. His official motive is to launch an expedition to the On Off star, an astrophysical freak 50 light years beyond the edge of human settlement. His real motive is to search for Pham Nuwen, the founder of the Qeng Ho.

The On Off star is an impossibility. It has a cycle of about 200 years, brightening from a brown dwarf state to ten times the luminosity of the Sun in a few seconds, then gradually fading away over 40 years and then staying undetectably dark for a century and a half. That's remarkable enough, but over the 8000 years man has observed this star, the period has been precise within seconds.

The latest news is that in the previous two light cycles primitive radio has been heard from the On Off star's vicinity – alien radio. And although very distant alien sources are known to exist, never before has there been a contemporaneous, reachable, alien civilization. Capt. Park heads for the On Off star as does an expedition from the Emergents, a nasty totalitarian civilization also located on the edge of Human space near the On Off star. They arrive simultaneously and then the fun begins.

Vinge develops two stories in parallel: the conflicts between the two human groups, and the conflicts that



the aliens – the Spiders – are having amongst themselves.

The Emergents are among the nastier villains I've seen, with a plausible and very, *very* effective slavery – Vinge has dreamt up a totalitarianism which just might be stable and effective even against free opponents. How Pham defeats the Emergents is a complex, believable, tautly-told story.

On the Spider planet, civilization is building itself again – the Spiders are adapted to their planet and hibernate during the long dark, cold periods. The story is told from the point of view of two of the leading Spiders, a genius polymath and his wife who is the commanding general of her country's Intelligence branch, and their children. (I won't give away any more of the plot: it's good enough to be worth reading without spoilers.)

One minor notion in the novel is that technical civilization isn't terribly stable – Vinge mentions in passing that Earth itself has risen to highly technological civilization four times, fallen so thoroughly that it was entirely depopulated of humans, and then recolonized from elsewhere. The average duration of technical civilization seems to be on the order of a thousand years.

Interestingly, in the two cases where we learn how a civilization fell, it was from its successes rather than anything extrinsic. Essentially, the demand for more and more efficiency eventually causes people to build up systems so complicated that they fail catastrophically, triggering nuclear war in the case of Namquen, and a nasty totalitarianism grown out of over-efficient policing on Trygve Ytre. Quite believable!

Vinge makes all his characters, human and spider, good guy and villain, real.

If there is a fault in the book is that it's not quite as fast-paced as *A Fire Upon the Deep* – but it's much better!

So. Where will Vernor Vinge go next? It's hard to imagine a book which can top *A Deepness in the Sky*, but I would have said that about each of his previous three books, and each time it happened. Vinge's writing is characterized by wild, wonderful, and thoroughly disciplined invention. He has mastered the art of saying just enough and no more – I can't think of a case where he succumbed to the curse of over-explanation, taking a Mystery and turning it into mush. Likewise, he manages to write stories which are set in wonderful SF settings. Stories which can only be told as SF – no space opera for Vinge! – but where the setting and the story are in balance with each other.

Here's to a most extraordinary and singular writer, Vernor Vinge!

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What is FanHistoricon?

by Joe Siclari

Science Fiction fandom started nearly seventy years ago. Various fanhistorians have chronicled some of this history in books (Moskowitz, Warner, Hansen, etc.) and in fanzines (fanthologies, bibliographies, collections and specific fanzines like *FanHistory*, *Entropy*, *FanHistorica*, etc.). All of this has been rather sporadic and definitely uncoordinated.

In the late 1980's a few fans started promoting the idea that we needed to collect and preserve our fannish past in an organized manner before those artifacts and activities disappeared. Fandom has always been an artifice created by ephemera—short-run fanzines, wire recordings, weekend conventions, and short-lived fan clubs. Most of the history is contained in those fanzines, many of which crumble as you read them if you can find copies, in the first place.

We needed to have a gathering to focus on preserving our fannish past. Peggy Rae Pavlat, Bruce Pelz and I announced a FanHistoricon in May, 1994. It was held in Hagerstown, Maryland, the hometown of one of our best fanhistorians, Harry Warner, Jr. I had the pleasure of naming the convention. The Timebinders organization was formed and an outline of needs and projects was developed. Most importantly, we felt that we needed to encourage those who were doing related projects to develop lines of communication.

From the Timebinders web page (<http://fanac.org/timebinders>):

“The society for the preservation of the history of science fiction fandom, aka the Timebinders, was formed at FanHistoricon I . . . The purpose of FanHistoricon . . . was to bring fans of different fannish generations together to discuss ways to preserve fannish history. We developed a series of objectives and went on to discuss them over the two days we were together.”

In the ensuing years, we have had ten additional FanHistoricons hosted by standing conventions, from small and large regionals to Worldcons. In 1996, Tropicon hosted FanHistoricon IV. From these conventions have sprung a greater awareness of our fannish past, better communications, support, encouragement and coordination. Some significant activities have started as a result, including the FANAC Fan History Project (<http://fanac.org>) which is helping to sponsor this year's FanHistoricon.

FanHistoricon 10 is being held at Tropicon 19. In addition to the program discussions and interviews, we have another special guest. Thanks to the generous support of FANAC and individual fans, we have brought Dave Langford over from England as the second recipient of the FanHistoricon Fan Fund. Dave has long been acknowledged as one of the best writers and editors in fandom (witness his numerous Hugo awards). Dave has also been instrumental in preserving the history of the various fan funds, especially TAFF. His website contains much information about the history of TAFF and the other funds, from reproductions of the ballots to online reproductions of the many trip reports. Dave Langford is an excellent addition to our program as we explore and record our past. At FanHistoricon, we not only talk about preserving our heritage, we also develop activities and programs to discover more about our past. We want to encourage fen to help preserve it but also to learn more about what has made SF Fandom a “unique culture” that has influenced so many of us and the field that we love.

Most of the great names of science fiction came from science fiction fandom. This field is very recursive. The writers influence the fandom that influence the writers that continue to influence the activities of the fandom. Explore our history at FanHistoricon 10.

FanHistoricon Table

FanHistoricon	Year	Host Convention	Coordinator(s)	FanFund recipient
1	May 1994		Pavlat, Pelz, Siclari	
2	December 1994	SMOFcon	Pelz	
3	June, 1995	MidWestcon 46	Smith & Smith	
4	January, 1996	Tropicon 14	Siclari, Stern	
5	April, 1996	Minicon 31	Scrivner	
6	February, 1997	Boskone 32	Siclari	Hansen
7	July, 1997	Westercon	Glover	
8.5	September, 1998	Bucconeer	Mann	
9	June, 1999	Midwestcon 50	Siclari, Sims & Sims	
9.5	August, 1999	Aussiecon III	Foyster, Scrivner	
10	November, 2000	Tropicon 19	Siclari	Langford

Note: A FanHistoricon held at a Worldcon is given the .5 designation.

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Naked Guests of Honor, Psychotic Nurses, and *Gor* novels

or, My Dream Convention

by Adam-Troy Castro

When you've been to as many science fiction conventions as I have, you come to recognize that they're all different individuals of the same hairy beast; there are small differences in quality and in resources and in philosophy, but they're sufficiently alike to blend together after a while, and there are few ways of discerning the small local convention held in Kalamazoo from the one held in Floyd's Knobs. (That is a real-life town I am not making up, though if there is a guy named Floyd who is experiencing a convention in his knobs, there are sprays and ointments that can help him).

That said, I hereby suggest a number of potential programming items designed to make your convention stand out, and possibly make the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*.

For instance, you never see panelists forced to engage in gladiatorial combat. Granted that this is largely a good thing; using *Spartacus* as a model, most science-fiction writers (of the male gender, anyway) look less like Kirk Douglas and more like Peter Ustinov. But that only levels the playing field. Hand the author of last year's Hugo nominated debut novel a short sword and the principal rival a trident, grease up the floor a little, and watch the fun. Folks who like seeing extra blood and gore might want to add a new event – bobbing for Nebulas, using a salt water tank filled with leeches. Use really black water so the authors don't realize that there's not really a Nebula in there. Watch the fun!

Harlan Ellison likes to write stories at conventions, while fans watch. This is a fine way to demonstrate the creative process. I suggest an alternative inspired by Stephen King's *Misery*: as the author painstakingly produces each page of the story, have a psychotic nurse standing beside the table feeding each page to a bunsen burner. The writer can then tell everybody at length that it's "the best thing I ever wrote" without fear of being contradicted. There are writers I would like to do this to. There are writers who would like to do this to me. Psychotic nurses are not all that hard to find, and can in fact be identified by their resemblance to Kathy Bates; there are for some reason no psychotic nurses who look like Sandy Duncan. I don't know why this is, but it's a law.

Some of us are bored by masquerade events. I suggest a new wrinkle which can render any masquerade event a thrilling spectacle. Namely: add the rule that all costumes must a) be as elaborate as possible, and b) permanent. Imagine the thrill of seeing somebody dress up as a Klingon Fairy Princess, complete with eyebrow ridges and conical white hat, when you know that this very same person is going to look exactly like that when meeting the in-laws on Monday. It's fun and educational. For those who say that requiring people to spend the rest of their lives dressed up as a fantasy character is cruel and unusual punishment, I suggest going to Disney World; it's a short drive, and if you sidle close to the guys dressed like Chip n' Dale on some 100-degree August day, you will hear the ungodly moans of those who have been damned to this punishment for all eternity. You would think it's only for their workshift, but sheer logic would establish that this is impossible, as anybody who manages to doff a Pluto outfit in August would never willingly put it on again. The truth is unavoidable. They are prisoners. They are the folks who littered. I say that we can do the same thing at conventions, just to keep them interesting.

Auctions are run all wrong. They are all about fans bidding on merchandise. This is, to use the scientific term, stupid stupid stupid. It should be the guests of honor bidding for their clothes back. The event should be held in as public a venue as possible, with the Guest of Honor (who depends upon the convention to provide return airfare) giving up whole chunks of his or her life savings to get that all-important pair of

underwear back. Few people know this, but this is how all convention auctions were once run, a practice that was instrumental in leading to the popularity of Fred Pohl and Philip K. Dick (not to mention Neil Gaiman). J.K. Rowling, of *Harry Potter* fame, is said to be interested in renewing the practice during her Guest of Honor stint at the 2002 Tropicon. We are certain that news of this will be a tremendous draw for her legions of readers, and we hope this will help us get Andre Norton for 2003.

Panels should choose more exciting discussion topics. For instance, "Why the Person Sitting Next to Me Is a Boob" should certainly get animated. "The Guest of Honor's Rent-A-Car Is Filled With Whipped Cream" will provide a fine incentive for fans to provide adequate previous preparation. Personally, I'm looking forward to "People Who Should Take a Swan Dive Into a Vat filled with *Gor* Novels", and I'm willing to provide plenty of names of authors who would be willing to participate. If you want to be really interesting, put five authors on the same panel, give each of them a completely different topic, and make them all Moderator; provide an audience filled with people asking questions designed to be equally irrelevant to all five conversations, and watch the fun fun fun.

Make the banquet drive-through, but still hold it in the banquet hall.

Provide golf carts.

Replace all the paintings in the art show with the ones in your suites. The little ones of sailboats and trees? Yeah, those. Watch the bidding soar.

Finally, do this—hold a huge convention with media guests, world-famous writers, a giant dealer's room, dramatic presentations, and thousands of attendees. Make it so big that it fills a city block of hotels. Declare for your guest of honor some random person chosen off the street that day. Devote entire blocks of programming to the wonderfulness of this person. Have this person interviewed. Make web sites. Use guards to make sure the GOH can't leave. Arrange a complete critical reappraisal for the second day, with respected editors and opinion-makers deciding that the person has been a negative influence. Get even more vehement on the third day. On the fourth day, re-enact *The Lord of the Flies*, with half-naked savages with spears chasing the GOH through the jungle, chanting, "Kill the Beast! Kill the Beast!" On the fifth day, give your GOH a plaque. I guarantee you that media coverage cannot possibly be less kind than it is now.

For some reason, all of these suggestions were rejected for Tropicon. Well, that's not exactly true; we will be doing one of them. Check your schedule to see which one. In the meantime, don't look in your bathtubs.

* * * * *

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* * * * *

A Little on Our Other Guests

Lynn Abbey

A former Tropicon Guest of Honor, Lynn's been at the helm of the *Thieves' World* juggernaut for many moons, now. Fans will be happy to hear that the extremely popular series will be making a comeback next summer, with all-new books available from Tor! Be sure to also check out Lynn's latest novels *Out of Time* and *Nether Scroll* (Lost Empires Series, a *Forgotten Realms* novel). Lynn's fans are a dedicated lot, and they include fellow writers such as C.J. Cherryh, who has said that Lynn's novels are "brilliantly conceived."



Adam-Troy Castro

SFSFS's writer-in-residence is the author of many disturbing (and, incidentally, exceedingly well written) short stories and novelettes. His most recent short story, "The Astronaut from Wyoming" (with Jerry Oltion), was nominated for both the 1999 Hugo and the 1999 Nebula Awards. When not garnering multiple award nominations (he's also, in the past, been nominated for a Stoker), Adam enjoys relaxing with his cats and talking about Barry Malzberg.

Hal Clement (Harry Clement Stubbs)

If you don't know who Hal Clement is, or have never read anything by him, put down this program book right now, march yourself to the dealer's room, and go buy one or two of his books. We'll wait. May we suggest the recent NESFA Press compilations, *The Essential Hal Clement: Volumes I and II*?

Hal Clement is probably *the* premier hard SF author living today. From the publication of his first book, *Iceworld*, in 1953, Hal's hallmark has always been his adept way of marrying hard scientific facts with a compelling narrative. This is still true today, as witness the reception of 1999's *Half Life*. Kirkus Reviews had this to say: "Challenging problem, fascinating investigation, persuasive resolution; gripping, hard SF from a veteran pro." Need we say more?

Barbara Delaplace

Barbara Delaplace is (in no particular order) a writer of short fiction, a collector of fountain pens, and a displaced Canadian. She and her husband Jack C. Haldeman, II (the one for whom she gave up the mountains of Vancouver) have collaborated on one story to date: "That'll Be the Day." She is also the author of "Modern Mansions," "Home Key," and "Black Ice," for which she

was nominated for the Campbell Award for Best New Writer. It is a truth universally acknowledged that Barbara is a talented writer, a loving wife... and she really, really needs her own web page.

Charles Fontenay

A former Travelling Fete Guest of Honor, Charles Fontenay has been the author of distinguished juveniles since the 1950's. His works from this early period include *Atom Drive*, *Pretty Quadroon*, and *Rebels of the Red Planet*. In the 1990's and beyond, his ongoing (and very popular) Kipton adventure series for young readers is firmly rooted in the Heinlein tradition – although, unlike typical teenaged heroes of juvenile series, his protagonist is actually being allowed to grow up! The latest of these novels is *Kipton and the Delusions of Tante Else*.

Kathleen Ann Goonan

A former Travelling Fete Guest of Honor (they're everywhere!), Kathleen Ann Goonan has been the recipient of much praise (not to mention numerous awards and nominations) for her novels in the "Nanotech Cycle": *Queen City Jazz*, *Mississippi Blues*, and her latest novel, *Crescent City Rhapsody* (which Kirkus Reviews said was "packed with dazzling ideas.") She is also the author of *The Bones of Time* and several novellas and short stories. As if all this weren't enough, Kathleen also bakes a mean apple pie.

Joseph Green

A former Travelling Fete Guest of Honor (you knew that was coming, didn't you?), Joe Green is a former NASA poobah whose technical expertise has come in handy in writing several non-fiction scientific essays, and – oh, yeah! – over thirty short stories and five novels. He is probably best known for his 1972 novel *Conscience Interplanetary*, but his first one, *The Loafers of Refuge*

(1965) is worth a look, too – it is a fabulous cautionary tale of space exploration and the wonders that await us.

Jack C. Haldeman, II

I can't say it any better than Jack himself does, so here's the skinny, direct from his webpage:

Science-fiction writer. Biologist. Producer of CD-Roms. Ex-Arctic Explorer becomes Florida Gator. I was born eleven days after Pearl Harbor and a week before Christmas. In my opinion this has a lot to do with my life.

Jack has published eight novels and what appears (at an admittedly superficial glance) to be approximately 900 short stories. I could be off by one or two. Some of the novels are *High Steel*, *Echoes of Thunder*, and *Bill the Galactic Hero on the Planet of Slime Zombies*. Some of the stories are "Garden of Eden," "If Pigs Could Fly," and "Requiem for a Rare Bird." To find out why Barbara Delaplace left Canada to live with a self-professed "skinny hairy guy," whether or not Jack and Joe Haldeman are indeed related, and to finally find out once and for all what is behind those nasty "nude alligator wrestling" rumors that just won't go away, click on Jack's website at www.sff.net/people/jack.haldeman/. It's almost as entertaining and compelling as the man himself. Oh, and by the way... Jack's a former Travelling Fete Guest of Honor.

Diane V. Jacques

A veteran movie producer whose credits include *Sudden Terror* for ABC, and the independent feature film *Chapter Zero*. During her more than seven years in the industry, she has struck motion picture development deals with Mel Gibson's Icon Productions, Oliver Stone's Ixtlan and Ben Stiller's Red Hour Productions, among others. Currently, she is producing *Coconut Harry* which will be shot in early 2001. Additionally, she has struck television deals on several of JumpNJupiter.com's science fiction titles, including *Trinity* and *Children of the Plague*. Born in South Florida, she continues to call the area home, and resides there with her husband and three children.

Randy Miller

Randy Miller's short stories have appeared in anthologies such as *Excalibur*, *Phantoms of the Night*, *South from Midnight*, and the Stoker Award-winning *Horrors! 365 Scary Stories*. His recent short story, "Fifty-six," appears in the anthology *Joltin' Joe DiMaggio*. Randy earned his B.A. from the University of Texas at Arlington, and his M.A. from Texas Tech University. He then worked as an award-winning sportswriter and sports columnist for six years before going on to earn his Ph.D. at the University of Texas. Randy is currently an associate professor of journalism at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

Jeff Mitchell

When someone asks Jeff Mitchell, "Who do you think you are? A rocket scientist from MIT, or some-

thing?" He can proudly answer, "Yep!" That's *exactly* what he is.

When he's not driving would-be smart-alecks crazy with his distinguished pedigree, Jeff works at the Kennedy Space Center as the Test Director for the first Space Station element, Unity. He is also a professor at the Florida Institute of Technology where he teaches, among other subjects, Rocket Propulsion (that's where the "rocket scientist" part comes in). Jeff has written articles for the Encyclopedia of Space Technology, and does a Space Station slide show presentation for civic groups and at SF conventions. He also writes science-fiction in his spare time. Need you ask if it's scientifically accurate?

Beatrice Moon

Is the author of the high seas action thriller *Dire Straits*. Recently, she completed work on the recasting of Frank Belknap Long's classic *John Carstairs: Space Detective* for JumpNJupiter.com. The book will be available for purchase in the months to come. In addition, she served as editor for the JumpNJupiter.com fantasy *Trinity*, and is a former news reporter. In addition, she is a published poet and short story writer. Originally from New England, she currently resides in South Florida with her husband. She has two grown children and three grandchildren.

Edward Reardon

An award-winning writer, Edward was a finalist in the Eugene O'Neill Foundation Playwright Awards. He is a producer and writer for instructional television. He recently completed work on the recasting of *City at World's End* for JumpNJupiter.com, and recently began work on the next in JNJ's *John Carstairs: Space Detective* series. He is a veteran actor who has appeared in seven feature films, and is a member of the Screen Actor's Guild and the Dramatists Guild. Originally from Massachusetts, Reardon has lived in South Florida since 1964. He is married and has two grown daughters.

Mike Resnick

A former Tropicon Guest of Honor and Toastmaster, Mike has published over 120 novels including *Purgatory*, *Inferno*, and *The Branch* (newly out in paperback). He has written columns for publications such as *The Magazine of F & SF* and the *SFWA Bulletin*, he has been the series editor for *The Resnick Library of African Adventure*, *The Resnick Library of Worldwide Adventure*, and *The Resnick Library of Traveler's Tales*, and he is the author of non-fiction such as the recent *Putting it Together: Turning Sow's Ear Drafts into Silk Purse Stories*. He has probably won every conceivable award for science-fiction writing at least twice. When not writing, Mike enjoys simple, quiet pursuits – like African safaris.

(continued on page 29)

Program Highlights

Art Auction Sunday 3:15

At this time, all items from the Art Show that have three or more bids will be auctioned off. Please visit the art show for additional details and a look at what's selling this year.

Artists and Luddites Saturday 3PM

What is the good and the bad of technology as it relates to art and illustration? What new gadgets would you smash if you could? What would you preserve? Does the increased market provided by the internet make up for blithe theft? Are you better off with it or without it? Are computers killing original art?

Banquet Saturday 7PM

Charity Auction Saturday 5PM

This year's charities are The Broward Coalition for Literacy and the South Florida Science Fiction Society.

Clement Slide Show - Hal Clement Sunday 10AM

A thought provoking look at the universe, by *Hal Clement*

Concert - Heather Alexander Friday 10PM

A concert by Tropicon Filk Guest of Honor, *Heather Alexander*. With an introduction by Scruffy.

David Cherry Slide Show Sunday 1PM

The breathtaking art of our Guest of Honor.

Conversation with Vernor Vinge Sunday Noon

An informal, relaxed interview with Vernor Vinge: author, mathematician and computer scientist. Topics are expected to include the wired scene, family, what draws us to SF, influences that affected him, and what it was like to win this year's Hugo award for Best Novel.

Conversation with David Cherry Saturday 1PM

An informal, relaxed interview with David Cherry: artist and former attorney. Topics are expected to include his family interests, what brought him to art, what drove him to SF&F, what else he enjoys doing, his likes and dislikes, and how he came to lead the flock of cats that is ASFA.

Extrasolar Planets Sunday 2PM

There have been lots of advances in planetary knowledge, and many discoveries have been made regarding extrasolar planets. Some of these planets are relatively nearby. What's the latest on planet hunting? What are the techniques for finding them? What sort of planets have been

discovered? What's the status on current theories of planetary formation in the light of new knowledge? What are the possibilities for life?

FanHistoricon: Conventions Then & Now Sunday 1PM

The first science fiction convention was in 1936. There were perhaps a dozen people in attendance. Now conventions can run anywhere from 100 to 10,000 people. What got you to your first convention? Is that how you entered fandom? What were conventions like when you started attending? How have conventions changed? What has been lost, and what has been gained? What do you miss the most about the way conventions were? Is a specialized convention much different from a generalized convention? Or is it only the subject matter that is different? Is CFG the convention capital of the world?

FanHistoricon: Fan Fund Winners personal histories:

DUFF Saturday 12 Noon

What makes a fan fund winner? We have a number of DUFF winners here. We'd like each of you to talk a little about their place in fanhistory. What did you do before you won? What did you do after? Did you actually eat Vegemite? Is it true that most DUFF winners are women? Do trip reports really help to promote the fan fund?

FanHistoricon: Fan Fund Winners personal histories:

TAFF Sunday 11AM

What makes a fan fund winner? We have a number of TAFF winners here. We'd like each of you to talk a little about their place in fanhistory. What did you do before you won? What did you do after? Up until 1982, all but two of the TAFF winners were men (and one of the women didn't make the trip). Since 1983, only 6 in the 17 years have been men. Are women beginning to dominate fandom? Has TAFF changed? Do women get their trip reports done more quickly? Will Elliot Shorter (or any of the other delinquents) ever finish his report?

FanHistoricon: Sidebar to Fannish History Saturday 4PM

Over the course of time, various groups of writers, semi-professionals, and just plain fans that didn't quite mesh with the rest of fandom have created their own fandom entirely. This is a discussion about some of those groups: Lovecraft's circle, the Fictioneers, the Burrough's Bibliophiles, Comics Fandom, and more.

FanHistoricon: South Florida Fandom - How it did grow! Sunday 2PM

Since we're in South Florida, this panel talks about local fannish history. The South Florida Science Fiction Society has been around since 1985. Was there any fandom in South Florida before then? Have you ever heard of The Rocket's Blast? Or Tabuian? Or Omnicon? Or The Coral Springs Science Fiction League, Social Drinking Society, and Traveling FanVariety Show? Or even SunCon? Why did SFSFS start? What other groups are in South Florida?

FanHistoricon: The Web: is it ruining Fandom? Friday 10PM

Fandom grew as a means of communication for science-fiction fans through amateur publications. Conventions made personal interactions more available. Today, the internet is making constant communication not only possible, but unavoidable. Is this killing fandom? How does the internet affect publications? How does it affect conventions? Is there a line between professional web sites and amateur web sites? How about between professional publications and amateur publications? What will we do with all of this? How do we use it for Fanhistory? How do we use the internet, without being overcome by it?

Filk, Folk and Fans Saturday 2PM

What do fans like to hear? Sing-alongs? Ose? Are SCA crowds different from fannish crowds? Have some topics gone completely out of favor? Does enthusiasm count for more than skill? Has filk been taken over by the slick? How

do conventions treat filkers? What labels have the best repro? What bothers filkers today? After we've hashed out all this, maybe we'll even sing a song or two...

Giving the Crowd what they want (SF Today?) Friday 9PM

What pleases, these days? Blood and thunder? Sex? Humor? Political correctness? What buttons are easily pushed (and does Connie Willis have a monopoly on them all)? George O. once said that any story with a Scottish engineer overcoming a problem would get the OK from John Campbell, and make it into *Astounding*. What do the editors want? What do art directors want? What's the space opera of today, in this microchip, post-*Star (Trek) Wars* world?

Jumping the Shark Saturday 10AM

Based on a web page called www.jumptheshark.com. that is devoted to the moment when a TV series passes its peak, and is never as good again (the title refers to the *Happy Days* episode where Fonzie jumps over a shark tank on his motorcycle). Another good example would be the "Spock's Brain" episode of *Star Trek*. Issues discussed will be: what are the pitfalls of a long running series? How can it be kept fresh? Is the same true of comic books? Novels?

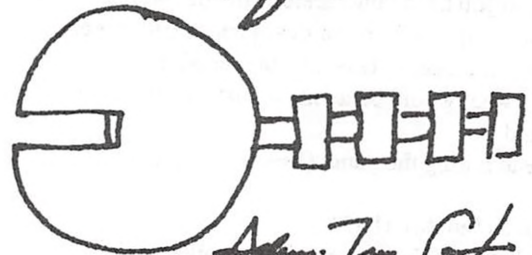
The Light Before the Dark: Unforeseeable Futures Saturday 11 AM

Are we experiencing the approach of a singularity in human history? Is technology bringing to pass tools for the 1000-year state? Is the role of SF (read by technolo-

THIS YEAR, IN HONOR OF THE
NEW MILLENIUM, WE WILL BE
HAVING A SPECIAL DRAMATIC
PRESENTATION WITH DAVE LANGFORD
AND HAL CLEMENT...

OPEN THE POD
BAY DOORS, HAL!

I'M SORRY,
I CAN'T DO
THAT, DAVE..



Adrian Fry G/2

gists) going to be different? Are the questions for SF today different? Can a hero, yet unborn, really overcome 24/7 observation, analysis and monitoring by industry, government, and curious strangers? Are the fundamental changes coming about in industry, politics, and personal relations going to be any fun at all?

Live Thog's Masterclass Saturday 10PM

David Langford and friends explore with you the perfectly formed phrases and entire fictions offered by the writing elite.

Open Filling I Friday 11:00PM

Bring a song on your lips, a guitar or bodhran if you play one (or whatever instrument you do play) and join the musically desirous as we sing of things that will be, and a few that never were.

Open Filling II Saturday 11PM

Readings by Adam-Troy Castro Saturday 3PM

Rescuing SF Tropes: Old Standards Made New Saturday Noon

There are once popular story ideas that seem to have become a bit passe' (except for Hollywood). Examples: Humans breeding with aliens, the Robot story. Are these ideas still viable? Are they worth bringing back? In what ways do modern writers take these "timeless themes" and bring them to new audiences? Campbell once said that there are only a small number of SF story ideas, and that Wells invented them all. (And Joe Siclari adds that if Wells invented them, Heinlein wrote the ultimate story using them.) However, there are still great stories coming out. What new basic themes are being invented?

SF Roadshow Saturday 4PM

SF Roadshow; bring your SF collectibles and have the experts tell you about it, appraise it, and maybe tell you where to find more like it. Find out about your treasures...and your white elephants.

So You Didn't Quit Your Day Job! Sunday 3PM

How does your day job or your career influence your writing? Can you use your job in your writing? Does your writing career influence your day job? Have any specific job occurrences shown up in your stories? Have any people from your job been "interpreted" in your work? Have they found out? Authors on dust jackets often seem to have had varied careers. Has this happened to you? Please write up what would be an ideal dust jacket resume for yourself, and bring it in to read during the panel. (Reality optional.)

Technology Today Sunday 11AM

A sample of what's available these days, thanks to the benefits of modern technology. Have you bought your webcam in a box yet? Is your cell phone equipped with a

digital camera? When's the last time you barcoded your groceries? Nanotech fiction getting you down? Don't worry, the techs are only up to the architecture so far. The latest on Frankenfood, data havens, Lovegettys, and more. Not to mention camels.

Trivia Free for All Saturday 1PM

Our Trivia Contest Winner from last year will be returning to ask the tough questions, and merrily fling wooden nickels at those of you fortunate enough to yell the correct answer out in time. Very loud. Very fast. Very exciting.

Twenty One Years of Ansible Saturday 11AM

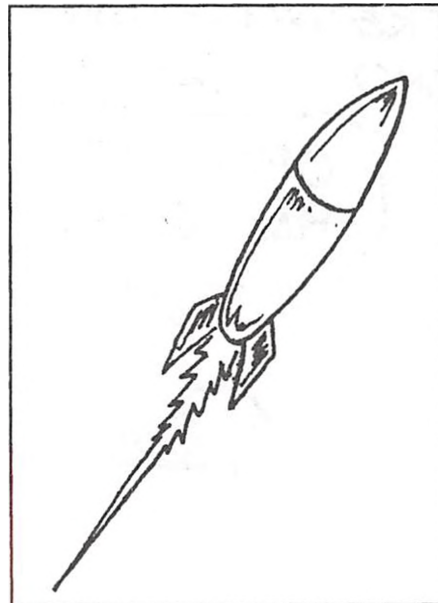
Dave Langford. Need we say more?

Where Do We Go From Here? An alternate approach to alternate history, Part 2 Saturday 2 PM

Why are we drawn to Alternate history? Does it fulfill a different need than other forms of SF or fantasy? Watching the pivot points unfold and the shape of the history make itself clear is a large part of the fun, and often taxing to the imagination. Last year we turned alternate histories upside down, and in a challenge round asked our panelists to take an end scenario and explain how history changed to allow us to get to that point. This year's counterpoint is to present certain changes in history, and ask our panelists in yet another challenge round, "where do we go from here?". Some examples of the kinds of historical changes we might suggest: Thomas Edison dies at birth; Booth misses his shot; Heinlein doesn't have to leave the Navy due to illness. We'll bring similar changes to the panel.

The Year in Review Friday 5PM

Our panel discusses the good, the bad, and the ugly of the past year, covering everything from movies, print, internet, and tattoos.



(continued from page 8)

working, or when.

A second desk in Dave's office serves as a convenient place for visitors to plug their computers in for a quick e-mail check. And while he works on a PC, one of the many spare cables was able to power a Mac laptop when a certain American visitor forgot her plug converter the last time she was there.

Before undertaking the otherworldly realities as a freelance author, editor, and consultant, Dave worked as a weapons physicist at Atomic Weapons Research Establishment. Slow-paying clients might do well to remember that; even though he left that line of work decades ago, his hobbies include "real beer, antique hearing aids, and the destruction of human civilization as we know it today."

The first Thursday of every month, Dave publishes the incomparable, informative, entertaining *Ansible*. The electronic version goes out at nearly the same time as Dave is handing the hot-off-the-copier paper edition to fans gathered in a London pub for another evening of drink and gossip.

Drink and gossip. In other words, fan history. In "Twenty Years of Uproar, Dave claimed a tendency "to forget all the historically important stuff in favour of what made me laugh...." But the attention he constantly gives to

researching detail and capturing nuance points to a deeper truth: Dave helps all of fandom to remember the historically important stuff by showing us how to laugh about it and then making us do so. Again, again, and again.

Writing a convention guest bio, or anything about Dave Langford, is wrought with peril. For important details I've glossed over or completely left out of this introduction, I refer you to Dave's web page at <http://www.ansible.demon.co.uk/>. You can read "Twenty Years of Uproar" there, follow the links to TAFF (Dave won the fan fund in 1980 and has helped TAFF in countless ways ever since), and find a complete bibliography of his published works.

As for the other perils, I can only hope that Dave doesn't find anything in this bio that prompts him to make any last-minute additions to that new "Thog's Masterclass." He's got rather a habit of revising things up until 5 minutes after they go to print, you see. Perhaps you could do me a favor and keep him busy in the bar all weekend. Except when you're at his program items, of course. They're not to be missed. Well, unless you've got an overdue fanzine to publish....



RED DWARF

How many vomit bags are stored in Starbug's hold?

What does the sticker on Lister's guitar say?

What do the dates March 2nd and November 25th have in common?

What was new/different about Red Dwarf VII?

If you don't know the answer to these questions, you are not watching enough *Red Dwarf*!

And you can find out the answers to all these questions by watching Channel 2 weeknights at 12 midnight.

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Please Become A Member of Channel 2!!

Call 1-800-222-9728 and speak with a member representative.

Benefits of Membership

Monthly Club Programs & Meetings - A chance to enjoy guest speakers discussing a wide range of subjects relating to the science fiction field, meet visiting professionals and other club members, join in lively discussions, and receive updates on our many special interest groups. Members help plan special events, such as outings to museums, planetariums, and our annual picnic.

BiMonthly Newsletter - Receive each issue of the *SFSFS Shuttle*, the monthly newsletter containing up-to-date information on meetings, club outings, local events of interest to members, and special sales notices. Members can put their talents on display and see their names in print by contributing stories, letters, artwork, con reports, poetry, book, film, and video reviews, etc.

Literary Discussion Group - Members get together to discuss books, authors, and common readings. Meetings are often based around one SF theme or author.

TROPICON - SFSFS sponsors TROPICON, the South Florida Science Fiction Convention. Members run TROPICON, learning how to plan and manage different aspects of a convention. TROPICON is currently held during winter each year. There is a separate registration fee.

Book Co-op Division - SFSFS members may order current books and other publications through the SFSFS Book Co-op. Discounts up to 30% make this benefit very worthwhile. If you spend only \$50 a year on books, you make back your membership cost. The Co-op is investigating adding music and video. If you are interested, contact the Book Div. Coordinator.

Creative Writing - The committee meets to assist members in their literary efforts. Members may uncover their creative abilities in writing as they learn writing techniques through mutual constructive criticism.

SFSFS Library - Members will have access to a club lending library with a wide variety of science fiction, fantasy, and reference literature.

Filksinging - Members may develop the fine art of setting new words to old or new tunes, creating and singing all-new musical masterpieces with a science fiction/fantasy/fannish slant.

Travelling Fete - SFSFS sponsors the Fete, our annual relaxicon. Members get together to meet and honor a Florida professional. The convention is currently held during the summer. There is a separate registration fee for the Fete.

Media Research - Meet with people to compare and contrast themes, discuss the making of movie, television, and radio programs; also learn behind-the-scenes workings of video production. Costumes, camera work, script writing, special effects, etc., are covered.

Discounts - Business Members of SFSFS offer discounts to all members in good standing. A SFSFS membership card is required to receive the discount.

Membership Directory - A useful and quick reference to contact anyone in the club. Annual.

South Florida Science Fiction Society Membership Application

Send this completed application form, along with your check for General Membership dues to:

SFSFS Treasurer, PO Box 70143, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307-0143

Make checks payable to SFSFS.

- General (new membership and non-voting) \$15
- Subscribing (receive Shuttle only) \$12
- Child (up to age 12 and only with paid adult member) \$1
- Livestock \$1

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: Address: _____

Date: _____ Interests: _____

SFSFS is established for literary and educational purposes. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Florida corp. recognized by the IRS.

(continued from page 23)

Recently he has been kept busy deflecting rumors that he has had himself cloned and that "Mike Resnick" is, in fact, "The Mike Resnick Collective." It would certainly explain how one person could publish so much consistently excellent work, so often.

Laurie S. Sutton

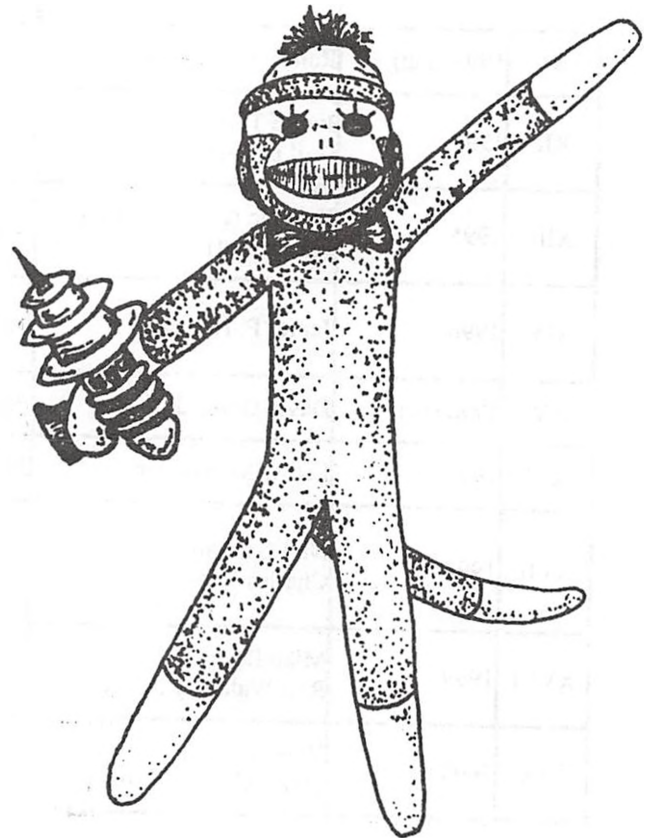
Laurie has written for a number of well-regarded comic book titles, such as Marvel's *Star Trek: Voyager*, Malibu's *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, and *Witch Hunter*. She is also a former editor for DC Comics, Marvel/Epic Comics, Tekno Comics, and Donning/Starblaze. Tropicana is glad to have her back with us again this year.

Jean Pierre Targete

Jean Pierre is a phenomenally talented artist whose work has graced book covers for Roger Zelazny, Harry Harrison, Greg Bear, and Gregory Benford, among many others. His creations are distinctive and visually dynamic, but also highly detailed and refined. This somewhat classical approach to his SF and fantasy subjects recalls Jean Pierre's childhood idols: Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo. Do yourself a favor and check out the art show, where some of his paintings will be hanging. If you're really lucky, maybe you'll be able to put the winning bid down on one!

Rick Wilber

Rick Wilber is the author of numerous short stories, some of the best known being "War Bride" (which was published in the popular *Alien Sex* anthology) and "The Babe, The Iron Horse, and Mr. McGillicuddy" (with Ben Bova). The latter is one of Rick's famous "baseball stories," many, if not all, of which are collected in the recently published *Where Joe Garagiola Waits and Other Stories*. Additionally, he has published non-fiction books about the business of writing and editing, and numerous essays about baseball. (It's rumored that Rick may have a particular fondness for the old horsehide, but the jury's still out on that one.) When he's not writing, Rick is a professor of journalism at the University of Tampa in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Tropicon History

#	Year	Guest(s) of Honor	Toastmaster	Chairperson(s)	Location
I	1982 (Mar)	Lee Hoffman		Joe Siclari	Boca Raton
II	1983 (Dec)	Marion Zimmer Bradley		Joe Siclari	Fort Lauderdale
III	1984	Forrest J Ackerman Vincent Di Fate (Artist)		Joe Siclari	Fort Lauderdale
IV	1985	Robert Bloch		Joe Siclari	Fort Lauderdale
V	1986	Gardner Dozois		Nancy Atherton	Deerfield Beach
VI	1987	George R R Martin Kelly Freas (Artist)	Jack L Chalker	Joe Siclari Gail Bennett	Fort Lauderdale
VII	1988	Poul Anderson Walter A. Willis (Fan)		Edie Stern	Fort Lauderdale
VIII	1989	Lynn Abbey Leslie Turek (Fan)	C. J. Cherryh	Judy Bemis Tony Parker	Dania
IX	1990	Hal Clement Bruce Pelz (Fan)		Judy Bemis Tony Parker	Dania
X	1991	Andre Norton		Joe Siclari Gerry Adair	Dania
XI	1993 (Jan)	Ramsey Campbell		Gerry Adair	West Palm Beach
XII	1994	Judith Tarr Gail Bennett (Fan)		Fran Mullen	West Palm Beach
XIII	1995	Kristine Kathryn Rusch Jael (Artist)	Ben Bova	Steve Gold	West Palm Beach
XIV	1996	James P. Hogan	Mike Resnick	Joe Siclari Fran Mullen	Fort Lauderdale
XV	1996 (Nov)	David Gerrold	Peter David	George Peterson	Fort Lauderdale
XVI	1997	Esther M Friesner	Josepha Sherman	Judi Goodman	Fort Lauderdale
XVII	1998	Neil Gaiman Charles Vess (Artist)		Shirlene Ananayo- Rawlik Pete Rawlik	Fort Lauderdale
XVIII	1999	Mike Resnick Ron Walotsky (Artist)		George Peterson	Hollywood, Florida
XIX	2000	Vernor Vinge David Cherry (Artist)		Joe Siclari	Hollywood, Florida

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That is, if you can afford
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