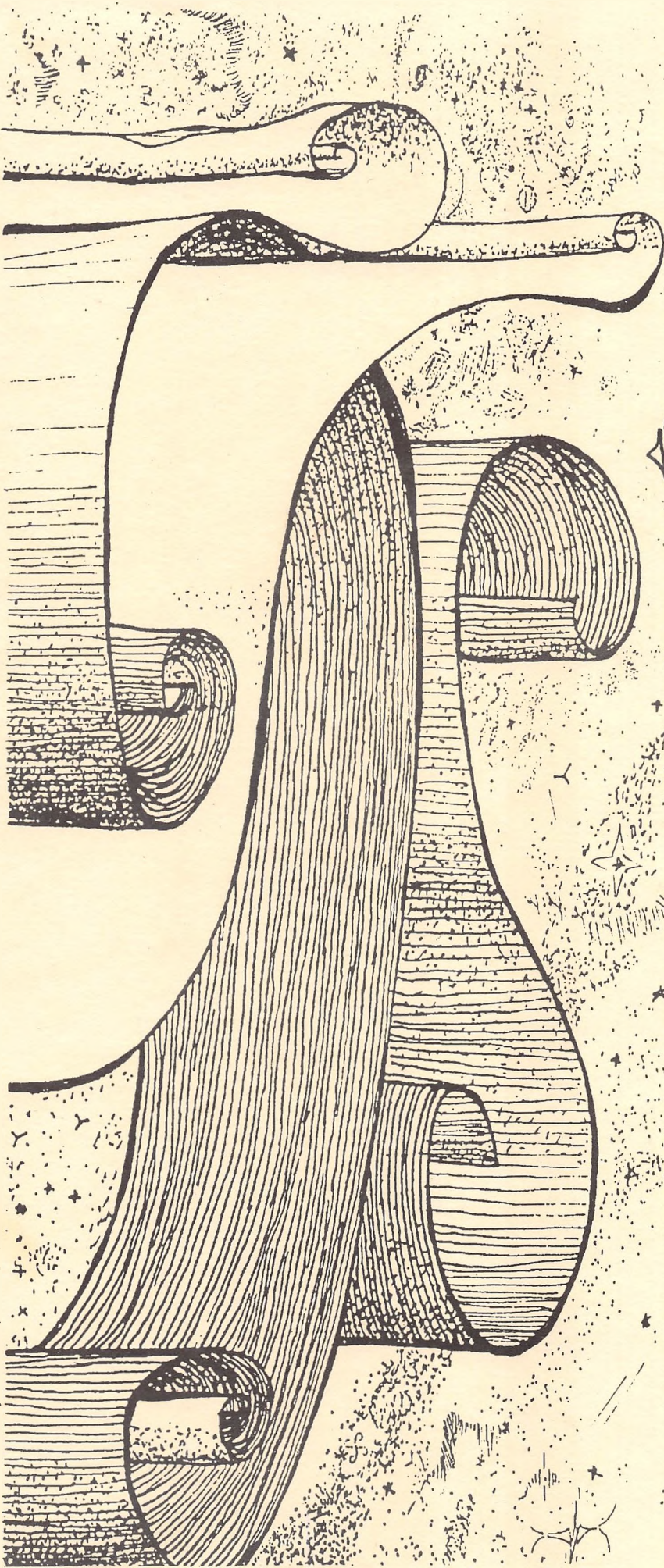


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WISCONSIN

1995

PROGRAM BOOK



WisCon 19 Program Book

May 26-29, 1995

The Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club

Madison, Wisconsin

WisCon is sponsored by SF³, the Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction, a nonprofit educational and literary society incorporated in the State of Wisconsin.

For more information, you may contact WisCon and SF³ at P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624.

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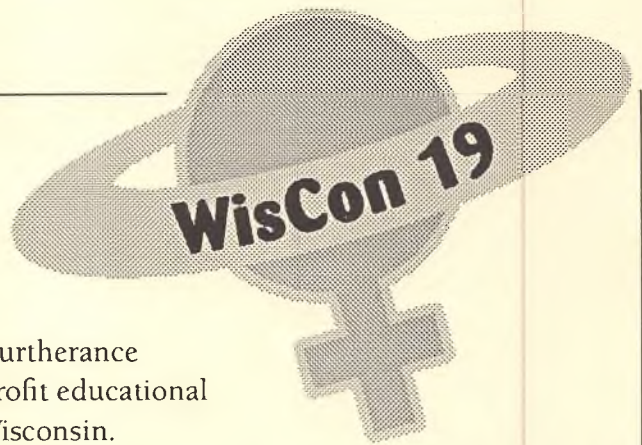
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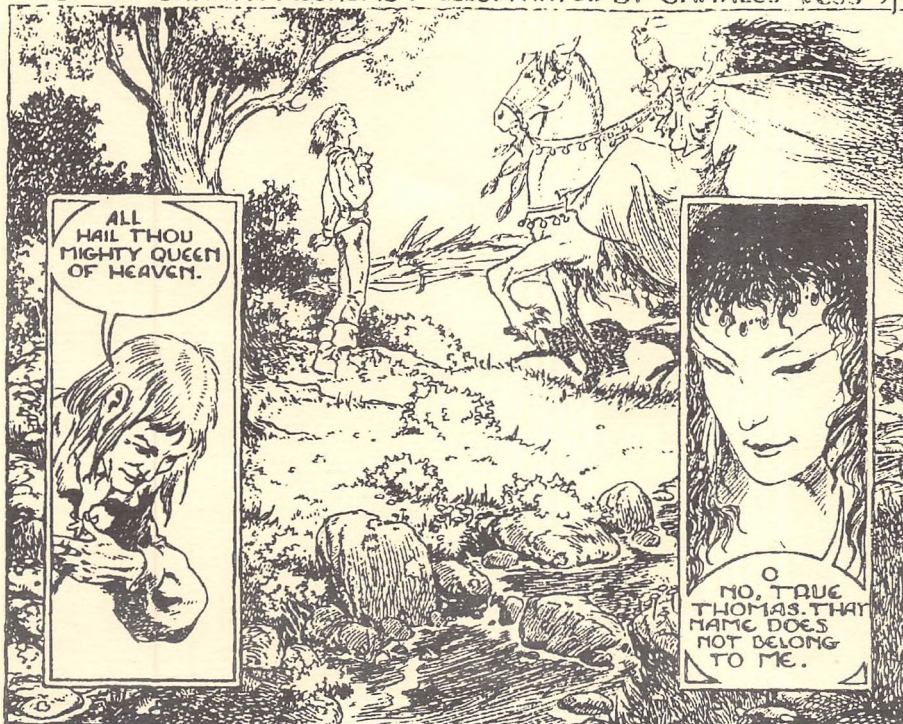
*Society for the Furtherance
and Study of Fantasy and
Science Fiction*

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THOMAS ^{the} RHYMER

TEXT BY SHARYN McCRUMB • ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES VESS '94



CHARLES VESS



BOOK OF BALLADS AND SAGAS

SIX ISSUES

• PREMIERING OCTOBER 1995 •
EVERY TWO MONTHS
FINELY CRAFTED STORIES BY
THESE FINE CONTRIBUTORS

- ISSUE #1 NEIL GAIMAN: THE FALSE KNIGHT ON THE ROAD
SHARYN McCRUMB: THOMAS THE RHYMER
- ISSUE #2 JEFF SMITH: THE GALTRE FARMER
MIDORI SNYDER: BARBARA ALLAN
- ISSUE #3 ELAINE LEE: TAM LIN
DELIA SHERMAN: THE DAEEMON LOVER
- ISSUE #4 ELLEN KUSHNER: LITTLE SIR HUGH
ELIZABETH WILLEY: FAIRIE FOODRAGE
- ISSUE #5 EMMA BULL: THE BOLD BLACK FOX
TERRI WINDLING: KING OREFO
- ISSUE #6 LEE SMITH: PRETTY SARO
JANE YOLEN: THE GREAT SILK OF SOLE SKERRY

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Art Credits

- Jae Adams front cover and pages 2, 5, 11, 16, 29
- Jerry Bauer page 23
- Tracy Benton page 14
- Kelley Eskridge page 26
- Jeanne Gomoll back cover and pages 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 15, 19, 20, 25, 29
- Don Helley front cover
- Kinky page 21
- John Kovalic pages 8, 9, 12, 13, 15

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR COORDINATOR

Greetings!

It is my very great honor and pleasure to welcome you to WisCon 19. Once again, our determined convention committee has striven to bring forth an enjoyable mixture of programming, social events, and hospitality worthy of the name "WisCon." I hope you will agree that we have succeeded.

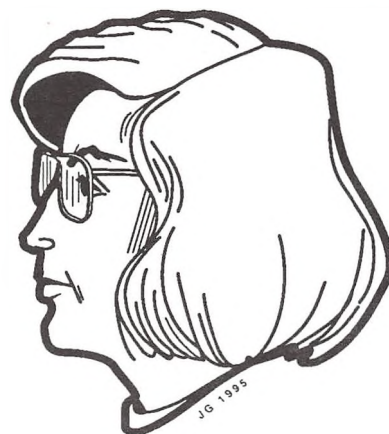


Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll

While you are here, we hope you'll take some time to enjoy what the city has to offer. Madison's downtown area is teeming with historic buildings, good restaurants, and fun places to shop. If you take a walk, you'll see why so many UW grads never leave the area.

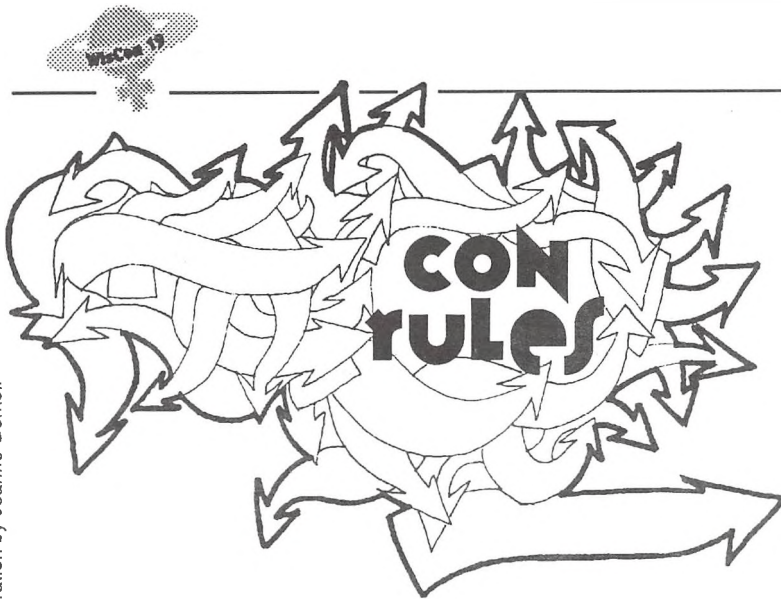
If you have any interest in helping with the next WisCon, strike while the iron is hot! WisCon 20 will be a massive anniversary celebration. For more information, join us at Nick's, 226 State Street, on any Wednesday night between 8 and 10 pm. Or watch your mailbox for the SF³ (Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction) clubzine Cube. Then you'll get all the details on the WisCon 20 planning meetings.

Eleven years ago, I attended my first WisCon, dragging a trailing Doctor Who scarf and a brain as yet unexposed to feminist ideas or science fiction conventions. Now, as coordinator of WisCon 19, I can honestly say I've embraced both. Admittedly, both can be subjects of heated discussion . . . but I've never found anything worth my time that wasn't. And this convention is our standing invitation to you, our members, to join us in the discussions, whether heated or not. Without you, this convention could not exist. So thanks for coming.

Have a wonderful time!

Tracy Benton

Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll



1. **Wear your badge at all times.** It is your pass, and without it you will not be allowed into con events or places like the Consuite. Treat it like it's worth \$30, because that's what it will cost to get a new one. Turn found badges into the Registration desk, and check there if you lose yours.
2. **Be civilized.** We'll treat you nice if you act like an adult; if not, we reserve the right to revoke your membership with no refund.
3. **Children:** All children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the convention area. Parents will be held accountable for their children's actions.
4. **Smoking** is allowed in some private rooms, but not in others. You may smoke in the Concourse bar, but not in the Bistro cafe. If you smoke in permitted areas only, smokers and nonsmokers should get along fine.
5. **The consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted,** but you must be age 21 or older. Alcohol is not available in the Consuite, but the Concourse's bar is pleasant and comfy. There will be a cash bar at the Mixer Saturday night, and don't forget the Saturday afternoon Brewpub Tour. Remember, however, that drunken behavior or breaking of the local drinking ordinances is not acceptable and may result in your expulsion.
6. **Sexual harassment** will not be tolerated in any way, shape or form. Stand up for your right to tell someone to get lost! If you feel you are being harassed, report it to one of our security team or a Concom member for help.
7. **Vandalism** is unnecessary and will not be tolerated. Please help us to develop and maintain a good relationship with the Concourse Hotel.
8. **Theft** shouldn't be a problem if we all remember to leave coats and valuables locked in hotel rooms or car trunks. If you are concerned about the security of your valuables, contact the hotel staff about storing them in the hotel safe.
9. **Weapons must be peace-bonded at all times,** which means they must be secured so that no idiot may snatch your sword/knife/raygun/laser/throwing stars/pointed sticks/rubber band guns/cream pies and wave them about in a threatening manner. Threatening anyone with anything is grounds for forcible ejection from the convention and membership revocation.
10. **Medical emergencies** should be handled by dialing 9-911 from any phone in the hotel.

Cartoon by Jeanne Gomoll





11. **In case of fire**, do not panic. If no one has sounded the alarm, please do so and then find the closest set of stairs and proceed down them in a controlled manner. Do not use the elevators! It would be a good idea right now to note where the stairs are.
12. **Pets** are not allowed in the Concourse Hotel.
13. **Signs** may not be posted on windows. If you must post signs, please use common sense, and use masking tape only
14. **If you lose something or find something**, go to Con HQ or the hotel desk. You can also leave a note on the Voodoo Message Board by Registration.
15. **Safety**: After dark, outside the hotel, remember to walk in groups, if possible. Lock your hotel room, and check the peephole if anyone knocks. Don't smoke in bed, and don't drink and drive. Also remember, condoms are available in the Consuite.
16. **Please have a great time at WisCon 19, and come back next year!**

voodoo message board

There is a bulletin board with a lot of names on it propped up near the Registration table. This is our Voodoo Message Board, and its purpose is to facilitate communications between con-goers. You may use it to indicate that you have arrived, to make contact with friends, to send a message to another con-goer, to advertise a need for a place to sleep or a roommate, or to announce a spontaneous special event. Instructions on how to use the VMB are posted at the Registration table and next to the Board.

Read
at least
one book a day
and write
as much as
you can.
Study
the memoirs
of authors
who
interest you.
There is no
substitute
for living; as
Hemingway
wisely remarked,
"Writing is
not a full-time
occupation"

A R T H U R C . C L A R K E



program

Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll



Feminist Panels

1 Talk Across the Generations

Two students from the UW discuss feminism and feminist SF with two women from “previous generations.” How has their experience of feminism within the context of their generations differed? In what ways do their readings of the feminist SF classics differ?

M Gwen Harris; Christina Yovovich,
Judith Peterson, Cris Goodwin

2 The Backlash as a political, fannish, and literary phenomena

The anti-feminist backlash is a complex phenomenon, manifesting itself in many areas of experience. This panel discusses the backlash as it appears in fandom, in the SF publishing industry, and in SF itself. How are these related to more overtly political aspects of the backlash?

M Jeanne Gomoll; Eleanor Arnason,
Victor Raymond, Carrie Richerson

3 When the Party Line divides: differences within the feminist camp

No single “definition” can characterize the experience of women or the nature of feminism. This is true of feminism in general, and more particularly of feminist SF. How does one find identity within diversity? How can one accommodate difference within unity? What kinds of differences need to be accommodated within feminism? How are these differences and efforts made to accommodate them used against feminism?

M Ellen Franklin; Peter Larsen,
Elise Matthesen, Carrie Richerson

4 The place of men in the feminist SF community

Seemingly of necessity, feminist spaces and organizations need to be woman-centric. What attracts men to these situations? How does their presence change the experience for women? If the two genders bring different needs to feminist spaces, how can those differences be reconciled? The feminist SF community will serve as an example in the discussion.

M Kelley Eskridge; Terry Garey,
Bill Humphries, Jim Frenkel

5 Feminist and lesbian SF: What is it? What isn't it?

Compared to mysteries and romantic fiction, science fiction is relatively unpopular within the lesbian community. Why is that? Is there a recognizable “lesbian SF” sub-genre; if so, is it characterized by its “writerly” or “readerly” orientation? How does it differ from “feminist SF”? Why do both find relatively little audience within the community of lesbian readers?

M Carrie Richerson; Susanna Sturgis,
Rebecca Holden, Nicola Griffith



6 Women SF writers you've probably never heard of

Our well-read panelists will present you with lists of their favorite obscure or semi-obscure woman SF writers, along with recommendations of books you might like to check out. This is WisCon's signature programming event.

M Gerald Schoenherr; Karen Axness, Bev DeWeese, Susanna Sturgis, Marsha Valance

7 The 1994 Tiptree Short List, and the Process by which it was created

Using the short list created for the 1994 Tiptree Award as a starting point, this panel will illuminate the process by which Tiptree-winning works are discovered and selected, issues that arise during that process, and the ways in which the books selected reflect the particulars of each year's process.

M Suzy McKee Charnas; Jeanne Gomoll, Ellen Kushner, Susanna Sturgis

8 Gender-bending vs. feminism: the case of Charnas's *The Furies*

In the reviews of the Tiptree short list for 1994, it was noted that Suzy Charnas's *The Furies* placed "a shade behind the winners of this year's Tiptree Award ... because its brilliance lies not so much in exploring and expanding gender roles — here *The Furies* clearly builds on the earlier books — but in asking the unaskable questions about revolutionary change, and in imagining, and facing, the unimaginable answers." Starting with the example of *The Furies*, this panel will discuss the places where gender-bending and feminism overlap as well as the places where they differ.

M Delia Sherman; Jeanne Gomoll, Susanna Sturgis, Bill Clemente



Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll

9 Difference theory and separatism in SF: Strategy or Metaphor?

Many familiar feminist SF works take place in a world of relatively complete social separation between women and men. This panel will consider the dialog between these works and feminist difference theory. Do these works, individually and/or as a whole, propose a strategy for social separation? Do the various images of separation and difference work better as metaphors? If so, what kinds of meanings to they create or convey?

M Matt Scholtes; Jeanne Gomoll, Rebecca Holden, Steve Swartz

SF/F Panels

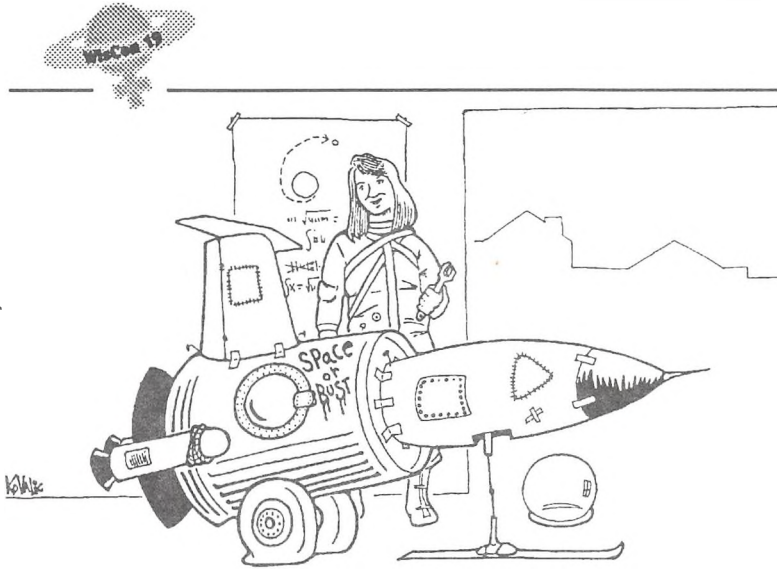
10 Alternate uses of alternate history

From "Steampunk" through the whimsical and on to alternate hard science fictions based on outmoded scientific notions, it seems that "alternate history" is being put through a lot of changes these days. After reviewing the current state of alternate history, the panel will tell us whether new alternate histories are working in fundamentally different ways, or whether they are evolutionary extensions of previous works.

M Mike Lowrey; Kathleen Massie-Ferch, Barbara Hambly, Buck Coulson

the GREEN ROOM

The Green Room is a quiet space for program participants to get away from the hustle and bustle. You can meet other program participants, talk, kick back and relax. It is a good place to meet co-panelists prior to your panels. The staff will make you most welcome. If you are not a panelist, you belong elsewhere.



11 Using Characters, Settings, and Situations from Other People's books

Writing within worlds created by other people has a long history within SF. Is its current popularity a result of new authorial interests or market pressures? What are some of the legal, aesthetic, and practical concerns faced by an author who wants to borrow from other works? How does reading in a shared or borrowed world differ from reading in a uniquely invented world?

M Ellen Kushner; Suzy McKee Charnas, Cris Goodwin, Ruth Berman, Delia Sherman

12 Return of "The Sense of Adventure": Aesthetic Backlash or Necessary Change

Some say the sense of wonder never left SF; others are calling for its return in order to address economic as well as aesthetic concerns. What does this portend for politically or literarily oriented SF? Is this call for a Sense of Adventure part of a larger aesthetic backlash against the spaces opened up within SF during the artistic and political experimentation of the 60s and 70s? Or has SF lost contact with some vital part of its roots?

M Cris Goodwin; Nicola Griffith, Richard Chwedyk, Jim Frenkel

13 Do an author's personal beliefs matter? Is the author really "The Author."

We are occasionally startled to find that authors whose works we admire have political opinions that we find difficult or offensive. Are considerations of economic support enough to lead us to boycott such authors works? Is the reading experience changed once a reader learns of the political opinions of an author? Aren't their differences between the "The Author" as she appears in her books and "the author" as she lives and breathes? Are we more concerned with the political beliefs of "The Author" or "the author"?

M Karen Babich; Terry Garey; Ellen Kushner, Joan Vinge

14 Fantasy and Political Awareness

Some common fantasy motifs have potentially troubling implications when considered as metaphors of racism, classism, or sexism. Some popular fantasy authors exhibit potentially troublesome tendencies to appropriate cultural material without what might be considered "due respect." Are these problems common? Significant? Have some authors struggled with these issues in ways that suggest writerly solutions to these problems?

M Victor Raymond; Judith Peterson, Georgie Schnobrich, Matt Scholtes

15 Researching SF—Resources, methods, perspectives

What resources are available to the person who wants to cross the line from reader to student of the SF genre? What are the differences between a critical and an experiential appreciation of the genre? What intellectual and readerly methods have proven useful in developing a critical appreciation of SF?



From what kinds of perspectives are critics currently looking at SF? and, in what ways are the different perspectives more or less useful to illuminate certain kinds of issues?

M Mike Levy; Kathleen Massie-Ferch, Joan Vinge, Barbara Hambly

16 Shapeshifting, Transexuality, and Gender-Bending

Panelists will review the books in which shapeshifting seems to work as a metaphor for gender-bending, transsexuality, and other attempts to break away from engendered dualities. How is it different to write such characters? To read them? In what ways does shapeshifting erode or strengthen the “identity” of characters and the readers ability to “identify” with them?

M Greg Rihn; Kelley Eskridge, Gerald Schoenherr, Eleanor Arnason

17 Men writing women, straights writing gays

We have a belief that it is critical for women to find strong women characters within the genre, and that it is somehow “wrong” when the genre does not provide them. This implies that it is hard to identify with characters across gender. Does this parallel

the situation of the writer in any way? Is it more or less difficult to write a character of a different gender or sexuality? Are there aspects of arrogance to that kind of writing? Do we as readers encounter special problems in characters created by authors across gender or sexual-preference lines? Are there ways such problems can be dealt with, by writers and readers?

M Elise Matthesen; Nicola Griffith, Gerri Balter, Barbara Hambly

18 American sources of fantasy material

Traditionally, fantasy has relied most heavily on European sources for its materials. More recently, fantasists have begun exploring materials from other cultures. Still, until the advent of urban fantasy, few authors have exploited the Euro-American past in fantasy novels. Is this simply because we live in a relatively new and rootless culture, and there simply isn't much that is uniquely Euro-American? Or is something else going on? Can we identify potential sources of fantastic Euro-American material which have not yet been used by fantasists?

M Ellen Kushner; Sharyn McCrumb, Tom Becker, Meg Turville-Heitz

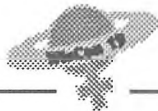
19 Fantasy and myth: compare and contrast

Some say that SF is the myth of our times. Others say that science fiction is the literature of our relationship with the objective, and that fantasy is the literature of our relationship with the subjective. From these points of view, fantasy seems to share a lot with myth. Are mythic elements inextricably a part of the best fantasy? the best science fiction? What sets myth apart from fantasy?

M Delia Sherman; Greg Rihn, Nancy Vedder-Schults, Joan Vinge



Illustration by John Kovalic



20 Do characters work differently in fantasy than in science fiction?

It seems as though characters function very differently in fantasy and science fiction. Consider the different ways characters work in Springer's *Larque on the Wing* and in Robinson's *Mars* trilogy. Is it genre that causes these differences, or is it something else? Do readers and writers of the two genres expect different things from character? Why?

M Kathleen Massie-Ferch; Pamela Dean, Barbara Hambly, Claire Eddy

21 Escaping the bonds of genre (if they exist)

Genre can be variously looked at as a set of reading conventions, as marketing categories, and/or as "types" of books. In what ways do these things called genre constrain writers and readers? What would it mean to "escape" these things? What kinds of experiments with genre work? What kind fail? What can writers and readers do to advance the cause of genre-bending?

M Gerri Balter; Meg Turville-Heitz, Eleanor Arnason, Rebecca Holden

22 Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Child Abuse

Focusing on Terri Windling's new anthology *The Armless Maiden*, this panel will discuss the ways in which the genre has begun to grapple with issues of child abuse. In what ways do fairy tales provide a unique avenue for exploring abuse issues—for both the author and the reader? What role can literature play in a recovery program? What precautions should be taken before reading any book that graphically portrays physical and sexual abuse?

M Sandra Lindow; Joyce Scrivner, Elise Mattheson, Jennifer Stevenson

23 Young Adult Fiction: The view from all generations

Panelists of all ages gather to discuss "Young Adult" Fiction. How did/do they experience it as youths? Are political and personal-identity concerns more or less relevant in our experience of this kind of book? How does our experience of it change as we return to it at different ages? How does one go about, as a parent, finding "Young Adult" fiction for young adults? Hopefully the panel and audience will do a lot of name-dropping, which will lead to a list of recommendations.

M Jim Hudson; Ariel Franklin Hudson, Pamela Dean, Elizabeth Matson

24 Second SF Novels

It seems as though authors can run into special problems in second novels, and that there is often a quality drop-off from first to second book. Is this true? Why? Are there truly great second novels? Truly hideous ones? What kinds of problems are specific to the second novel? What kinds of things can authors do to overcome them?

M Bill Clemente; Mike DuCharme, Joan Vinge, Nicola Griffith

Science Panels

25 Terraforming Mars: Is this a morally responsible choice?

Many hard SF authors seem to be exploring the colonization and terraforming of Mars. Is this technically possible? Is it moral? Would you like to live there? If you could, would that change your opinion? In what ways is the terraforming of Mars a good metaphor for environmental issues on our own planet? In what ways is it a bad one?

M Bill Hoffman; Tom Becker, Eric Heideman, Claire Eddy



Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll



**26 Pregnancy in Men:
Good or Bad for Women?**

Advances in medical science have made it possible for a man to carry a fertilized fetus to term. What does this mean for women? Does this make some important part of being female obsolete? Is it a relief from a burden? A potentially dangerous usurpation of something which should be exclusively female? Our panelists will have it out.

M Ellen Franklin; Laura Spiess, Gerri Balter, Hope Kiefer

27 Is History a Science? Is that what makes alternate history Science Fiction?

History can be viewed in a lot of ways, ranging from an objective organization of facts to an essentially literary or subjective organization of experience. Does alternate history rely on one or another of these notions of history? Is alternate history science fiction because it treats historical reality the same way that hard SF treats physical reality? Or does alternate history use our subjective historical experience in much the same way that fantasy uses folk tales and myth?

M Jim Nichols; Eleanor Arnason, Ellen Klages, Phil Kaveny

28 ... And Ebola's Gonna Getcha if You Don't Watch Out: Epidemiology and the Popular Media

There have been plagues as long as there have been peoples. Even in our own time, HIV and Lyme Disease have appeared out of "nowhere." So why the

recent media hype regarding wipeout diseases? A rambling overview of print and TV sources.

M Laura Spiess; Lisa Freitag, Barb Gilligan, Mary-Elle Testen

Mystery Panels

29 Women Mystery Writers you haven't heard of

A new twist on a WisCon favorite! If you have a favorite woman mystery writer you think nobody else knows about, bring her name to this panel! Panelists and the audience will put together a list of woman mystery writers who we all should know more about.

M Ellen Franklin; Karen Axness, Georgie Schnobrich, Judith Peterson, Marsha Valance

30 SF writers who write mysteries, too

This panel will be a survey of writers who have crossed genre lines and written both SF and mysteries, and the books they have written. Do books written by these cross-genred writers share characteristics which set them apart from other books, or do they pass? Do the tricks and tropes of SF work well in mysteries, and visa versa? Is it difficult (for readers or writers) to move back and forth between the genres?

M Carrie Richerson; Jim Frenkel, Jim Nichols, Mike DuCharme

*If I haven't seen
as far as others,
it's because giants
have been standing
on my shoulders*

SAM POELLER

Calligraphy by Jae Adams



31 If SF is a literature of ideas, are mysteries a literature of character?

Mysteries and SF both have their roots in the pulps, which lead to certain similarities in their focus on plot and atmosphere. At the same time, it seems as though our expectations of the two genres are very different. Is it easier to explore idea in SF, and character in mysteries? What in particular is different about SF and mysteries that makes this so? Is it possible to read some SF "like a mystery," and some mysteries "like SF"? What's going on there?

M Ellen Klages; Delia Sherman, Marsha Valance, Joan Vinge

32 Why She Done What She Did

For our panelists, two things stand out in recent McCrumb novels: the music, and the questions of ethics. Child abuse, infanticide, revenge, Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, feminism — all are factors that invest these books with worthy discussion material.

Warning: endings will be discussed.

M Laura Spiess; Cathy Gilligan, Diane Martin

TV/Movie Panels

33 Sitcoms with women leads: *Grace Under Fire*, *Ellen*, *Rosanne*

Several of today's most popular sitcoms have women leads. Unlike the days of the Genie and Samantha, these women are at the center of most of the humor, action, and relationships in the shows. What is it about these shows that catches the fancy of the viewing public? And, what is it about the times that leads the viewing public to these kinds of shows?

M Julie Humphries; Anne Harris, Mike Lowrey, Juanita Coulson

34 *Star Trek: Voyager*—Initial impressions

Seventy thousand light years from home, our latest set of *Star Trek* heroes struggle to return. What do we think of the new series? Does it have as much promise as *ST:TNG*? Is it better, at least, than *Deep Space 9*? How is having a woman at the helm working out? In what directions is it likely to grow?

M David Emerson; Jeanne Mealy, Eric Heideman, Karl Hailman

35 Dick's Silent SF Films

No, the films themselves have words, but Dick Russell will try to review the best SF films of the past year without saying a word. Our other panelists have been selected by their abilities to make sense of the weird writhing of the terminally confused: maybe you can figure out what Dick is not talking about, too.

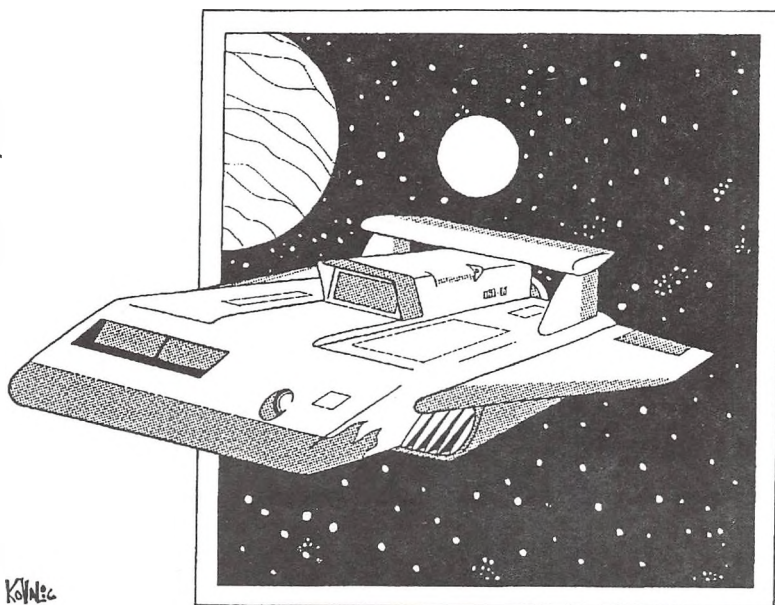
M Dick Russell; Bill Hoffman, Mike DuCharme

35 SF Films of the Year
a

Dick Russell presents the bombs and the big hits of the year.

M Dick Russell

Illustration by John Kovalic



Other Panels

36 SF as a spiritual resource

We talk about SF as a literature of ideas. It is also used by many people in many ways as a resource for the spirit or soul. Which works are particularly useful in these ways? How do they help? Does SF provide source material for the spiritual impulse, or insight, or something else?

M Richard Chwedyk; Jim Frenkel,
Lisa Freitag, Lynne Ann Morse

37 Music in written SF

Music and musicians figure in many of our favorite SF novels and stories. How does this work? What are the special challenges involved in writing about music and the musical life? Does it work to read about music? What kinds of metaphorical places do music and musicians occupy in SF?

M Laura Spiess; Suzy McKee Charnas,
Gerald Schoenherr, Judith Peterson

38 Frank Zappa

One of our panelists believes in Frank Zappa as a kind of deity; another argues that all things are implied in his music. In this panel, Frank Zappa enthusiasts gather to consider the many aspects of Zappa: musician, SFnal guy, satirist, and feminist spokesperson.

M Jim Nichols; Mike Lowrey,
Fred Schepartz, Richard Chwedyk

39 Comics: Women in Comics

The Comics field is probably more male-oriented than most genres, but there are women doing interesting work. Who are they? What special pressures do they have to deal with? What's it like for women to be comic fen?

M Peter Larsen; Lisa Freitag,
Mike DuCharme, Greg Rihn

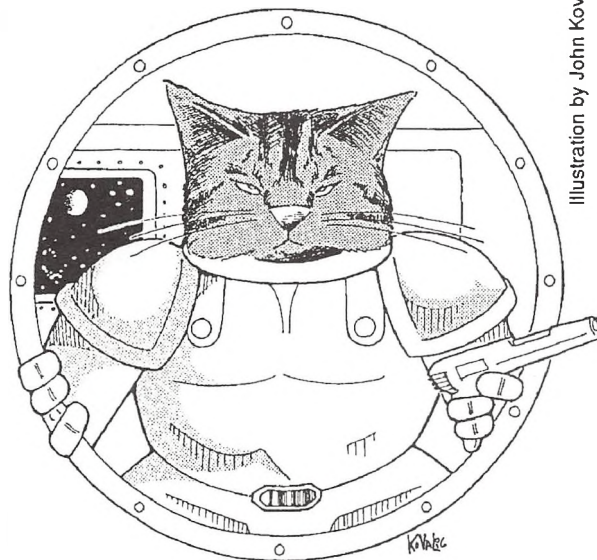


Illustration by John Kovalic

Fan Panels

40 We're grownups now—why don't professionals run our WorldCon?

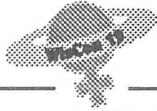
This panel will look at the uglier side of Worldcons — the feuds, the infighting, the budget scrambles, the mismanagement, the incredible burdens put on volunteers' personal and professional lives. The panel will consider the question "Why not hire a permanent staff to do the hard work?" as well as related topics.

M Bill Boddien; Greg Rihn, Victor Raymond,
Tom Becker

41 SF/fandom on the net: Resources and Activities

The internet is a big part of fannish live these days. Our panelists, each active on the net, will discuss the various resources and virtual hangouts that attract fen on the net. What are the qualities of virtual fanac? Does it have effects on the fanac we do in the real world?

M David Emerson; Bill Humphries,
Cris Goodwin, Rebecca Holden



Illo by Tracy Benton



Catnip Mouse, 2150 AD:
the thrill is gone

42 Parenting and the SF Life: Writing, Fanning, Living

Balancing ones own needs with the needs of ones children is one of the tricks of parenting. In this panel, parents will talk about some of the challenges in trying to raise children at the same time that one also tries to write SF, read SF, be active in a fan community, or simply have a life.

M Hope Kiefer; Mary-Ellen Testen,
Laurie Winter, Jae Adams

Practical Panels

43 Intro to the downtown Madison area

The Concourse is within 10-15 minutes walk of two brewpubs, a handful of coffeehouses, over a dozen bookstores, and more restaurants than we can count. This panel will try to sort through the options for you, so you can get the most out of your visit to Madison.

M Steve Swartz; Fred Schepartz,
Jeanne Mealy, Gwen Harris

44 Moderator Workshop

If you are a moderator of a WisCon panel, or if you're interested in being one, this panel is for you. Panelists will discuss how to find styles of moderation that are appropriate for both you and the people on your panel. Possible topics covered include discouraging discussion dominators, encouraging participation, and moving the panel along.

M Karen Babich; Elise Matthesen,
Ellen Franklin, Bill Clemente

45 WisCon Wrapup

Please come to this panel on Monday afternoon, and let the ConCom know how you think things went, and how you think we could do things better.

M Tracy Benton; ConCom

Presentations

50 Zapatistas of the Mind: The Anti-colonial Insurrection of Culture

Eleanor Arnason

51 Unmythopoeic Fantasies and The Victorians

Ruth Berman

52 Incas and the Science of History

Suzanne All'ès Blom

53 Public Space/Private Space: Pedagogical Uses of Science Fiction Images of Women in Cyberspace

Jan Bogstad

54 Imagination All Compact: Misconceptions about the Writing Process

Pamela Dean

55 Is Your Child a Changeling?

Lisa Freitag, MD

56 Scotland Slide Show

Lisa Freitag

57 My Life as an Editor, and, The Ten Best Books I've Edited

Jim Frenkel

58 Speculative Fiction: Use and Abuse of Child Ballads

(A Talk, with Musical
Demonstration)

Kim Hughes



59 Vonnegut's Intertextual Uses of Science Fiction

Phil Kaveny

60 The Brontes

Ellen Kushner

61 You Will Know Your Leather Jacket When You Find It

Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman

62 Wisconsin SF Writers

Hank Luttrell

63 Comics that Fans Like

Hank Luttrell

64 A Fierce Sex-Positive Feminist Gets Opinionated

Elise Matthesen

65 I Need a Dead Mouse: Researching Fiction

Sharyn McCrumb

66 Bagpipes: The Perfect Punk Drone, and More

Gerald Schoenherr

67 The role of the Otherworld in Early Irish literature

Bruce Stark

68 The Art of Memory

Jennifer Stevenson

69 Elizabethan Miniatures

Caroline Stevermer

70 Persephone's Mother: A Play in One Act

M Susanna Sturgis; Ellen Kushner, Delia Sherman, Kelley Eskridge, Jeanne Gomoll

71 Why Men and Women Need The Goddess

Nancy Vedder-Schults

72 Living in a Smart House

Laurie Winter



Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll

Readings



Illustration by John Kovalic

80 Jae Adams

81 Suzy McKee Charnas reads "The Demon Lover," a new, as-yet unpublished story, and invites discussion afterwards.

82 Richard Chwedyk

83 Farrell Collins

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85 Terry Garey

86 Nicola Griffith

87 Barbara Hambly

88 Anne Harris

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90 Elise Matthesen

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92 Carrie Richerson

93 Fred Schepartz

94 Larry Taylor

95 Meg Turville-Heitz

96 Joan Vinge



Book Discussions

This year, WisCon will hold a number of small and relatively informal book discussions. The most recently published paperback of each of our guests of honor will be discussed, as will our "Book of Honor," which is Melissa Scott's *Trouble and Her Friends*. These book discussions will be limited in size so that everyone who attends can become involved in the discussion. In case of significant overflow for any particular group, further discussions of that book will be scheduled for later in the convention. Each discussion will be held assuming that everyone attending has already read the book.

Time & trouble
will tame
an advanced
young woman
but an advanced
old woman
is uncontrollable
by any earthly
force

DOROTHY SAYERS

- B1** *Bride of the Rat God*,
by Barbara Hambly
Bill Clemente
- B2** *The Hangman's Beautiful
Daughter*, by Sharyn McCrumb
Jim Frenkel
- B3** *Ammonite*, by Nicola Griffith
Marsha Valance
- B4** *Trouble and Her Friends*, by
Melissa Scott
A general discussion.
Gerald Schoenherr
- B5** *Trouble and Her Friends*, by
Melissa Scott
Trouble as a cyberpunk novel, both
specifically and as compared to the
subgenre
Nicola Griffith
- B6** *Trouble and Her Friends*, by
Melissa Scott
Everything is more than it seems in
virtual reality.
Jeanne Gomoll



video program

This year's WisCon films will once again be presented on video. This enables us to give you a fuller film program, while still staying within our budget. We think we have a delightfully eclectic mixture of new and old films, plus as a few strange ones thrown in for good measure. We will be showing the following films:

Beauty and the Beast

Jean Cocteau, 1946

A lavish, surrealistic film that never lets up as we follow the heroine in her unconventional love story with the Beast. Brilliant.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Fran Rubel Kuzui, 1992

Kristy Swanson is anointed the Slayer by Donald Sutherland in this quirky suburban comedy. Her cheerleading skills comes in handy for the big showdown. Catch Paul Reubens (not as Pee-Wee Herman) during closing credits.

Bedazzled

Stanley Donen, 1967

The late Peter Cook and Dudley Moore team up in this sacrilegious nonstop comedy. Cross dressing, whee!

The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T

Roy Rowland, 1953

One of Hollywood's best fantasies devised by Dr. Seuss. Boy has nightmare about cruel piano teacher (Hans Conried) ruling over land where kidnapped youngsters are forced to practice the piano.

Female Trouble

John Waters, 1973

An early John Waters cult film.

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai

W. D. Richter, 1984

Buckaroo Banzai saves the world, when not performing with his rock band. An original cult classic, with John Lithgow, Ellen Barkin, Jeff Goldblum, Christopher Lloyd and Peter Weller.

Predator 2

Stephen Hopkins, 1990

Danny Glover stars in this sequel. Not as good as the original.

The Princess Bride

Rob Reiner, 1987

A merry, comic-like romp featuring exuberant performances from Mandy Patinkin, Carol Kane and Billy Crystal as bickering sorcerers, and Wallace Shawn. Fun!

Serial Mom

John Waters, 1994

Kathleen Turner stars as a suburban housewife turned killer in this dry comedy.

Naked Lunch

David Cronenberg, 1991

A weird translation of the classic William Burroughs novel featuring bugs and typewriters.

Mary Poppins

Robert Stevenson, 1964

This Disney classic helped make a star out of Julie Andrews, and taught all of us songs we're still singing.



The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T.



Nosferatu



Bedazzled



The Princess Bride

Continued on next page



The Mask

Charles Russell, 1994

The New York Times called Jim Carrey "Bright-eyed, crazily intense, irrepressibly silly" and "as close to being an animated creature as a live actor ever could." In the role he was born to play, Carrey gets to zing around the screen, dance the rumba, and turn into a cartoon. Not intellectually stimulating, but a downright fun movie to watch.

The Fisher King

Terry Gilliam, 1991

A wonderful tale of a burned out DJ (Jeff Bridges) befriending a homeless man (Robin Williams) and his friends. Mercedes Ruehl got a supporting Oscar as Bridges' sometime girlfriend.

M

Fritz Lang, 1931

Peter Lorre film debut in a suspenseful, psychological crime drama. Fritz Lang directs.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

Robert Wiene, 1919

The earliest and purest German Expressionist film is still spellbinding, as a hypnotist programs evil doings.

Animal Farm

John Halas, 1955

Animated version of Orwellian tale.

Frankenstein Unbound

Roger Corman, 1990

More SF than horror, it stars John Hurt, Raul Julia, Bridget Fonda and Jason Patric. A scientist is sucked back in time and meets Mary Shelley.

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social EVENTS

Opening Ceremonies

Fannish Wadda'yah Know, Friday 8:00 pm

It's the fan's version of the popular public radio game show. Host Don Helley will introduce our guests, then invite two members of the audience to join Ms. Hambly and Ms. McCrumb in a test on things you should probably know by now. Since we don't mind mixed metaphors, look out for a Top 10 List as well.

Coffeehouse Fan-O-Rama

Check pocket program for time and place

Fans read fans. Better than a poetry slam. No knowledge of Kerouac required. The back room of Steep and Brew at 544 State Street—three blocks west of the Concourse.

Farmers' Market Walkabout

Saturday, 8:30 am

Early every Saturday morning during late spring, summer and early fall, a group of local fans gather on the Capitol Square for coffee, pastries and a walk around the Dane County Farmers' Market. Kathi Nash and Diane Martin will take you over for your first cup of coffee, then a stroll around the Square to shop for breakfast and fresh produce.

Brewpub Tour

Saturday, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

Over the past few years, increasing numbers of Americans and Canadians have turned back to buying their beers from local breweries which specialize in making small, high-quality batches of traditional ales, porters and stouts. Saturday afternoon at 3:00, assemble in the

Concourse's main lobby. Homebrewer Scott Custis will escort you to the Great Dane Brew Pub and the Angelic Brewery. The staff at both of Madison's new brewpubs will show and explain the brewing process. You'll have an opportunity to try their products.

Masquerade

Saturday, 7:30 – 8:30 pm

The masquerade will be held in the Capitol Ballroom. Prejudging will be at 7:00 pm. Prizes will be awarded for Best Costume, Best Presentation and Best Child's Costume (12 or under).

The WisCon Mixer

Saturday, 9:00 pm – Midnight

The annual Mixer will be held in the University Rooms, with Bill Bodden as DJ. A cash bar will be available.

The Brunch and Guest Speeches

Sunday, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

The Concourse's catering staff offers scrambled eggs and condiments, sausages, fresh fruit, salad, breads, breakfast pastries and assorted desserts. After eating, enjoy a cup of coffee and remarks by our honored guests.

The James Tiptree, Jr. Award Auction

Sunday, 3:00 pm

The Exploratorium's own Ellen Klages is the auctioneer in this benefit for the annual award honoring gender bending science fiction. Bid for hard-to-find Tiptree T-shirts, artifacts from the Tiptree Quilt project, and other feminist SF rarities. After the auction, come up to the Alumni Suite on the sixth floor, enjoy coffee compliments of Steep & Brew, and buy some treats from the Tiptree Bake Sale.



Illustration by Jeanne Gornoll



Logo by Jeanne Gornoll



the wiscon art showcase

We're trying something new this year. The traditional convention Art Show has bid sheets, sometimes-auctions, special payment procedures, and a whole lot of other bureaucracy that costs the artists money and gets in the way of viewing and buying the art.

That may be necessary for a big convention with a huge show, but the WisCon Art Show is comparatively small, and that gives us the opportunity to experiment and simplify things to make them better for the art buyer, the artist, and the general convention member.

Here's how it works:

- ▼ We hang the art on Friday.
- ▼ You view the art and vote for the awards.
- ▼ If you like a piece, you buy it from the artist.
- ▼ At the end of the convention, you take your piece home.

Simple. No commissions, no delays for the artists to get their checks. Hopefully, no problems. But we do need to help out, otherwise you'll be running around trying to find the artists and that would be a big waste of time. Here are the mechanisms we've set up.

you leave, right? When you and the artist make a deal, come to the Art Show desk and we'll write your name on the master sheet for that piece, the artist will sign the line, and we'll let you take the piece at checkout on Monday.

4. Knowing What's Been Sold Already. After the sale is recorded, the artist will get a red "sold" sticker to put on the bid sheet. We'll also cross out the "bidding" area and write SOLD there. But we want the pieces to stay on display for as long as possible.

5. Leaving With Your Art. On Monday morning (check the pocket program), you should come in, pick up the pieces you've bought, go to the checkout desk, and sign them out. Since you'll already have paid the artist, we won't need to deal with money. We'd like all the art picked up by noon Monday. Let us know if you can't, and we'll try to make other arrangements, like an early pickup.

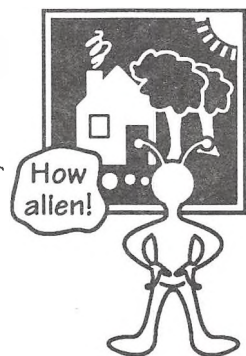
If you need to check out your pieces early (for example, because you have to leave on Sunday), let us know. We can make arrangements. If possible, though, we'd like the works to stay in the show through Sunday evening.

6. That's All, Folks. We're hoping that this will make the Art Show simpler and more convenient for everyone, at least for a small show like WisCon's. But it is an experiment, and we want to hear from you about whether it works or doesn't, from your perspective. Please use the comment form to let us know, or talk to us directly at the convention or on-line afterwards (WisCon.art@cs.wisc.edu).

How it works

- 1. Finding the Artists.** You can buy art any time. But we've set up buying hours to which artists are invited to attend. Check your pocket program for these times. Some artists may also post schedules, phone numbers, business cards, or other ways they would like to meet with buyers.
- 2. Helping the artists find you.** We have "bid sheets" on the art, which are really places for you to express your interest (with a price) in the piece. You can also list a phone number if you want.
- 3. Recording the Sale.** You do want to be able to take the art with you when

Illustration by Jeanne Gomoll





About barbara HAMBLY

by George Alec Effinger

There are quite a few things I could say about Barbara Hambly, and I'm safe enough because I live in New Orleans and she lives in Los Angeles. However, she is president of the Science-Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (of which I am a member), and that means that she could order SFWA's two enforcers, Guido and The Bulk, to pay me a visit here in the land of gumbo and magnolias. Consequently, I will say only nice things, but anyone who wants the real dirt can just send me a SASE with a check for any large amount.

I first met Barbara sometime during the Calvin Coolidge administration, before she was born (I, however, am very old). Even then, she did not let the bonds of nonexistence hinder her from displaying her considerable writing ability. I must admit that at that first meeting, I was not favorably disposed toward her. For one thing, I'd been writing longer than she, and I really didn't need any more competition. Second, Barbara was primarily a fantasy writer, and we strictly SF types just can't be bothered with wizards and dragons—all our time must be spent providing solutions for the real problems of our time: world hunger, eth-



Photo by Kirky

nic and racial strife, and going back in time to prevent Bill Buckner from committing the error that let the Mets beat the Red Sox in the World Series.

Then, one day when I had absolutely nothing better to do, I happened to open one of Barbara's books. I don't recall which one, they're all pretty much the same (you know, superior in story, characterization, prose style, and general storytelling invention). I could barely contain my excitement. I was actually enjoying the book—I was reading fantasy for pleasure! Of course, I didn't dare tell anyone, or my publisher would've made me stand before the rest of the writers, and he would've stripped me of all my hard-won insignia. I even had to wear a disguise when I went into local bookstores to buy another Barbara Hambly book, and another, and another. They're as addictive as salted cashews.

I have to admit that I haven't read the *Beauty and the Beast* novels, though.

Currently, my favorite of her books is *Bride of the Rat God*, in which she combines wholly original fantasy elements,



terrific action sequences, large helpings of genuine humor, a crew of wonderful characters, some fascinating information about film-making in the 1920s, and Chinese food. The only unfortunate aspect of the book are the Pekingeses, based on Barbara's own Celestial Creamcakes, Nicky and Kismet. I was the one who gave her the line that these minimal dogs are just one step above bunny slippers. I'm a cat-fancier, myself, you see.

I won't say a word about her most recent book, *Children of the Jedi*, appearing—nay, *leaping*—onto the New York Times bestseller list, debuting at Number Six (with a bullet). There is an old Estonian proverb that says, in rough translation,

“Fortune favors the Hamblys.” How true. Whatever the secret of Barbara's success, it hasn't seemed to spoil her. That's something else I resent. It would be so much easier if she'd turned into some egotistical, pompous, rude, arrogant kind of writer, like (well, I won't name names, but do send another SASE with another check). The fact is, that although she's one of the most popular and successful writers working in our genre today, she's also a delightful person to meet live-and-in-person. She is unfailingly pleasant and generous with her time, and if you haven't had the chance to talk with her, introduce yourself and tell her that I sent you.

I get a nickel a head. ▼

barbara HAMBLY bibliography

All published by
Del Rey/Ballantine
Books except
where noted

Novels

Children of the Jedi (Bantam, 1995)
Bride of the Rat God (1994)
Crossroad (Pocket Books, 1994)
Stranger At the Wedding (1994)
Ghostwalker (Pocket, 1991)
Those Who Hunt the Night (1988)
Dragonsbane (1986)
Ishmael (Pocket Books, 1985)
Search the Seven Hills (1983)

Suncross series:

The Rainbow Abyss (1991)
The Magicians of Night (1992)

The Windrose Chronicles:

The Silent Tower (1986)
The Silicon Mage (1988)
Dog Wizard (1993)

Sunwolf and Starhawk series:

The Ladies of Mandrigyn (1984)
The Witches of Wenshar (1987)
The Dark Hand of Magic (1990)

The Darwath Trilogy:

The Time of the Dark (1982)
The Walls of Air (1983)
The Armies of Daylight (1983)

As Editor:

Sisters of the Night (Warner Books)



SHARYN MCCRUMB

Sharyn McCrumb is a mystery writer, the author of novels and stories that focus on the lives and culture of the people of the Appalachians. This would seem natural from her background: born in North Carolina, she is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has a MA in English from Virginia Tech—where she once taught journalism and Appalachian Studies. Now a full-time novelist, she lives in the Virginia Blue Ridge with her husband, David, an environmental engineer, and their three children.

She has written many short stories and 13 novels (she is currently working on the 14th), including many award-winners. These include an Edgar for Best Paperback Mystery of 1988 for *Bimbos of the Death Sun*; the Macavity Award for Best Novel 1991 for *If Ever I Return, Pretty Peggy-O*; the Best Appalachian Novel in 1985 for *Lovely in Her Bones* and again in 1993 for *The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter*.

As Sharyn says, “My books are like Appalachian quilts. I take brightly colored scraps of legends, ballads, fragments of rural life, and local tragedy, and I piece them together into a complex whole that tells not only a story, but also a deeper truth about the culture of the mountain South.”

You may wonder why she a Guest of Honor at WisCon—an SF con that has always been dedicated to feminism and speculative literature. Well, two of Sharyn's books, *Bimbos of the Death Sun* and *Zombies of the Gene Pool*, while not SF or fantasy, are about SF fans and their lifestyle. These books have given Sharyn a shady reputation in the SF world, and the best way to introduce her is to give you her own words about the writing of *Zombies*. So hold on to your hats, here she is:

the salman rushdie of science fiction

by Sharyn McCrumb

It takes two ideas to make a book—for me, anyway. These two ideas may seem utterly dissimilar, but in my mind they resonate, complementing each other to form one unified concept, and I get a story. For *Zombies of the Gene Pool*, the sequel to *Bimbos of the Death Sun*, the two ideas that inspired me were: the draining of a man-made lake in east Tennessee, and the reported death of the most infamous man in fandom.

Some years ago, I wrote a novel called *Bimbos of the Death Sun*, which won an Edgar in mystery, and made me as notorious as Tokyo Rose in the genre of science fiction. I wrote a sequel to it (*Zombies of the Gene Pool*, Simon and Schuster,



Photo by Jerry Bauer

Continued on the next page



February 1992), because I decided that I had more to say on the subject of fandom as a way of life. And because for four years I've been haunted by the strident voice of a long-dead fan, Francis Towner Laney.

"You're not the first person to enrage science fiction fandom," people told me, when *Bimbos of the Death Sun* came out. "Back in the forties a guy called Francis Towner Laney created such a stir that people still won't believe he's dead."

Every time I talked to anybody who knew fan history, that name came up; the notorious F. T. Laney, the Salman Rushdie of science fiction. Laney was a Lovecraft enthusiast, who went from reading the genre to publishing a fanzine, to a total immersion in fandom that broke up his marriage, and finally to a disillusionment so bitter that he wrote a scathing account of his experiences in a mimeographed tome called *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* In it, Laney castigates himself for what he considered his foolish descent into the hobby, and then he went on to skewer everyone he had known in fandom for their personality traits, their hygiene, and every other defect he saw in them. His judgments were harsh, and he named names. It's a miracle he wasn't sued. After that verbal detonation, Laney left Los Angeles, dropped out of fan society, and—according to my early informants—he died on a mountain top in Mississippi.

Since there *are* no mountain tops in Mississippi, my attention was immediately captured by the mysterious F. T. Laney. For several years, in my spare time from other projects, I began to research Laney and the history of fandom. Finally I located a copy of the mimeographed marvel *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* In my research, I learned that Laney had died of spinal cancer in 1958 in Webster Grove, Mis-

souri (a suburb of St. Louis, not known for its elevation: no mountain tops.) When a kind reader from St. Louis wrote me a letter about *Bimbos*, I put her to work finding out if there were any proof of Laney's death. (There is. The church that held the memorial service told her cheerfully that to the best of their knowledge, "He's still dead!")

I wanted to do a character study of fandom's lifers, the people who don't move on to other interests after adolescence. There is something sad about a fifty-five year old man grinding out his political opinions in a mimeographed 'zine to an audience half his age. This wasn't the light-hearted Get-A-Life spoof that *Bimbos* was, because it had to focus on people for whom the advice would come too late.

At the same time that I was doing fan research, I became interested in the draining of a man-made lake in east Tennessee. I had vacationed at that lake as a child, and I had always known that a little town had been submerged by the TVA when they dammed up the valley, but suddenly the eeriness of a drowned village obsessed me. I began to see the draining of the lake as a metaphorical time machine, allowing the valley's former residents to return to their "past," when the land is uncovered again in the drawdown.

The plot arose naturally out of this notion. *Suppose, I said, that a group of aspiring science fiction writers called The Lanthanides had lived in that valley in the early fifties, and suppose that they buried a time capsule of their unpublished work on the farm—now inaccessible because of a man-made lake. But this summer, the TVA, needing to make repairs to the dam, drains the lake, so for the first time in thirty years, the valley is dry land again. In the intervening years, some of the Lan-*



thanides had become famous SF writers, and some of them had become mental patients, lawyers, and high school math teachers—but enough of them were famous so that the time capsule was extremely valuable. Suppose they had a reunion, complete with editors to bid for publishing rights—and suppose that the *most infamous man in fandom* showed up at the reunion, when they had believed him dead for the past three decades.

The strange reunion of the famous and the nobodies in the dead land of the drained lake is intended to be a compassionate look at those for whom fandom is a way of life. As one of the characters says, “It was the right reunion. Bickering, posturing, arrogance, and occasional lapses of genuine affection.”

I think Francis Laney would have liked it. ▼

SHARYN MCCRUMB SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

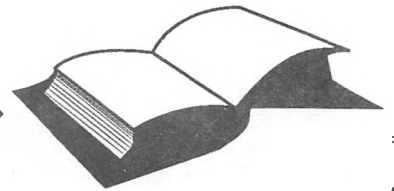


Illustration by Jeanne Gornall

Novels

If I'd Killed Him When I Met Him
(Ballantine, 1995)

She Walks These Hills
(Scribner's, 1994)

The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter
(Scribner's, 1992)

Zombies of the Gene Pool
(Simon & Schuster, 1992)

MacPherson's Lament
(Ballantine, 1992)

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Highland Laddie Gone
(Ballantine, 1991)

Lovely in Her Bones (Ballantine, 1990)

The Windsor Knot (Ballantine, 1990)

If Ever I Return, Pretty Peggy-O
(Scribner's, 1990)

Sick of Shadows (Ballantine, 1989)

Paying the Piper (Ballantine, 1988)

Bimbos of the Death Sun (TSR, 1988)

Stories

“Happiness is a Dead Poet” (1992)

“Nine Lives to Live” (1992)

“A Predatory Woman” (1992)

“Remains to Be Seen” (1991)

“The Luncheon” (1991)

“A Wee Doch & Doris” (1989)

“Precious Jewel” (1983)

Photo by Kelley Eskridge



SOME THINGS ABOUT NICOLA GRIFFITH

by Kelley Eskridge

When Nicola Griffith was nine years old, she wondered how bows and arrows worked. She had probably read a book about them; she has always read books about history and people and how they shape each other. So she made a bow out of a tree branch and string. She found a stick of bamboo and whittled it to a point with a pencil sharpener.

But how to test it? Nothing easier. Her little sister, who idolized her, was always willing to help with Nicola's mysterious and interesting projects. "Stand there," Nicola said, "and hold out your hand."

Helena did, and Nicola shot the arrow spang through Helena's left palm.



Jump forward about twenty years. Nicola is at a science fiction convention in England, where all of the Grand Old Men of (British) SF are gathered for drinks and discussion, with the emphasis on

drinks. Anyone who has seen the Brit table at an SF banquet will understand.

At the time she attended this convention, Nicola was still a Fledgling SF Writer, wet behind the wings, with one story published. She waited in the audience of one of the day's main events, a panel with several of the GOM's. There was some unexplained delay, which seemed to be resolved when the moderator announced that GOM "A" would not be participating on the panel after all. Enter, precipitously, Mrs. "A," who protested vocally that her husband had been ruinously maligned and set upon. She was escorted from the hall. Nothing was explained. The moderator said with some relief that now that everything was settled, perhaps the panel could begin. Quite right, quite right, mumbled the audience. Everyone was very happy to pretend the messy moment never happened. Except for Nicola, who stood in front of all those strangers, a Fledgling Writer in the company of the



big hawks, and said something to the effect of, *Excuse me, but this disturbing thing did happen, and I would like to know what it means.*



These are the things that people should know about Nicola Griffith:

She wants to know *how*.

She wants to know *why*.

She wants to know *what it means*.

People should also know that she has written and sold two novels: *Ammonite*, and *Slow River* (due out in August). *Ammonite* won the Tiptree Award in 1994, as well as the Lambda Literary Award; it was nominated for the Arthur C. Clarke Award and qualified for the Nebula Preliminary Ballot. It was the first SF paperback original reviewed by the New York Times SF book reviewer. There's a guy out in Hollywood who is hot as a peeled chili for the book, and knows someone who knows someone whose cousin just helped set up a Famous Actor's production company. There are three people I know of who say that the book has changed something about their lives.

This is all pretty cool, but what does it *mean*?

Context is always a tricky issue. A writer's work means a zillion different things to each reader, and ten times that to the writer; *Ammonite* is no different. One of the things the book means to Nicola is that a paperback original with a crappy cover and no publicity can go out into the world and find a home, with people who will watch it dance and feed it chicken scraps and pat it on the head and send it off to dance for other people, who will give it the Tiptree Award.

But before there was the cover and the reviews and the awards, there was another context. This is the context in which Nicola visited her first immigration lawyer, who said, "Are you famous?"

"No," she said, "but I can write."

"Sorry," he said. "Go home. Don't waste your time. You will never ever be able to stay in this country."

Nicola did not go home. She went to a second lawyer, who said, "Can you get a book contract?"

"Yes, I can," Nicola said. And so she did. She by God wrote *Ammonite* and sold it to HarperCollins and Ballantine Del Rey. She got a visa to stay here for three years, in spite of having to educate her lawyer about publishing from the ground up, and having to constantly correct him from referring to her short stories as "articles."

The third lawyer (who is really a goddess in human form) said, "Can you get famous with this book?"

"Yes, I can," Nicola said, and so she did, at least a little. She publicized and networked and did readings and sent out her own press kits when Ballantine ignored her, and she went to conventions and did her own reviews of other people's work, and won grants. She got letters of support from the governor of Georgia and Allen Ginsburg and many many people in the SF community. She did not know any of these people; she simply made it happen. She made new case law in the process. And she by god got her green card.



Ammonite is about a woman who does what others say she cannot; who fights and changes and survives, and is made richer.

Here's some news: *Slow River* is about six times better than *Ammonite*.



So here are some other things you should know about Nicola Griffith:

She does what she must.

She does not ever give up.

She can make six impossible things happen before breakfast, if she decides that's the right time for them to come into be-

ing. If not, you'll just have to wait until lunch.

I hope you get to meet Nicola and spend time with her during the convention. If you do, tell her about yourself. Tell her your *how*; tell her your *why*; tell her *what it means*. Tell her about the time you didn't give up. And she'll tell you. ▼

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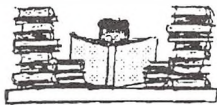
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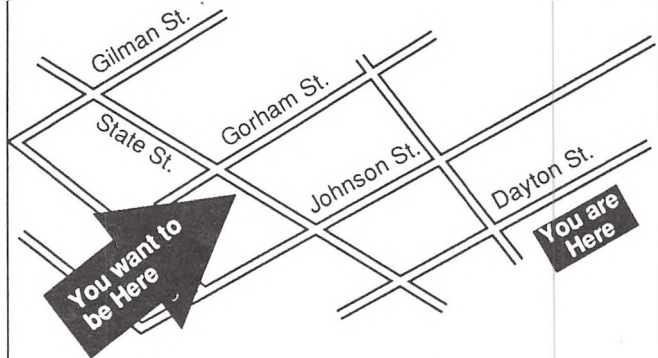
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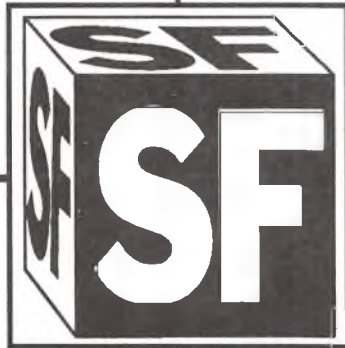
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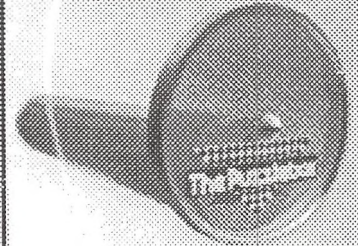
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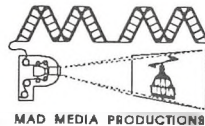
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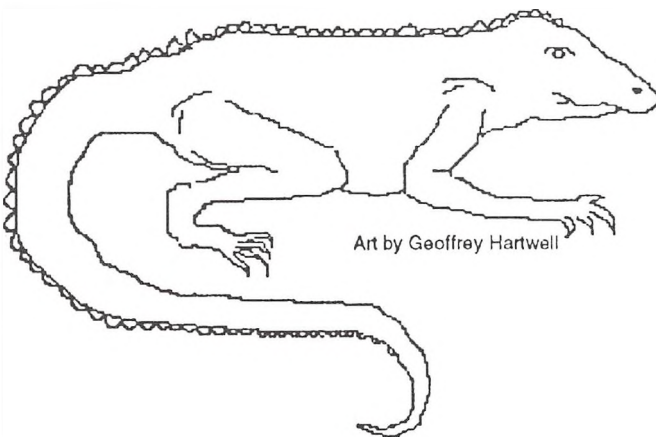
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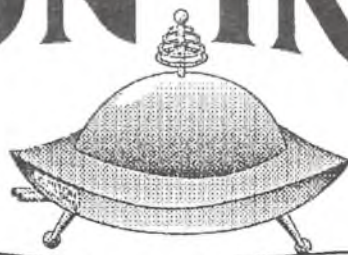


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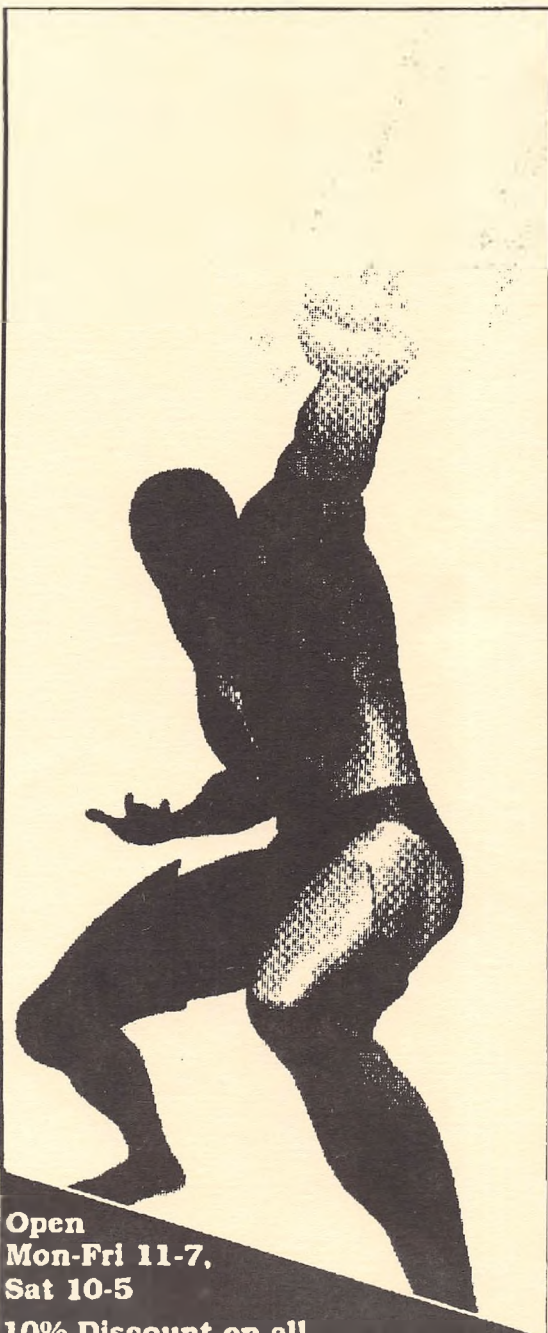
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