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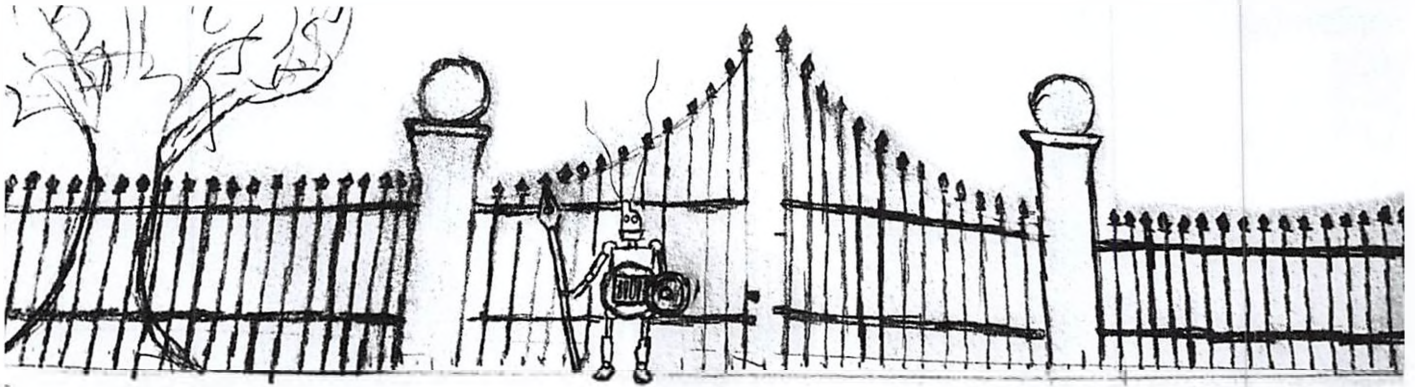
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An irreverent unserious fanzine for very silly fen



THE GATEKEEPER

Telling you whether or not you're allowed to enjoy science fiction since 1939



Is This A Fanzine Enough For You?

Hello and welcome to our fanzine.

We hope you will enjoy this silly little project, which was borne in response to claims advanced from some quarters that the blogs that many of us in the fandom community pour our hearts into somehow “don’t count” as fanzines.

So this is on paper. Legitimate enough for the Gatekeepers?

Speaking of which ... the title “The Gatekeeper,” is intended as an ironic nod to this rather narrow view of what counts as legitimate ways to contribute to fannish discourse. To put it bluntly, the editors and contributors to this fanzine do not believe in gatekeeping.

We believe that the value and importance of science fiction and its commentary is format agnostic. That is, its value is independent of its format. A movie that moves you is still a movie whether its fixed form is celuloid, laserdisk, magnetic tape, or a digital file you stream on your cellphone. Commentaries about science fiction

are fanzines whether printed on paper or born and shared digitally.

We are grateful that the WSFS policies have increasingly hewed towards format agnosticism.

Thanks for picking this up, and thank you for allowing us to be a part of this chaotic and creative community.



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We Must Improve Robot Representation in Media Before It's Too Late (Hypothetically)

By Dan Gibbins
Normal Human Staff
Writer From the Present

Representation in media is important.

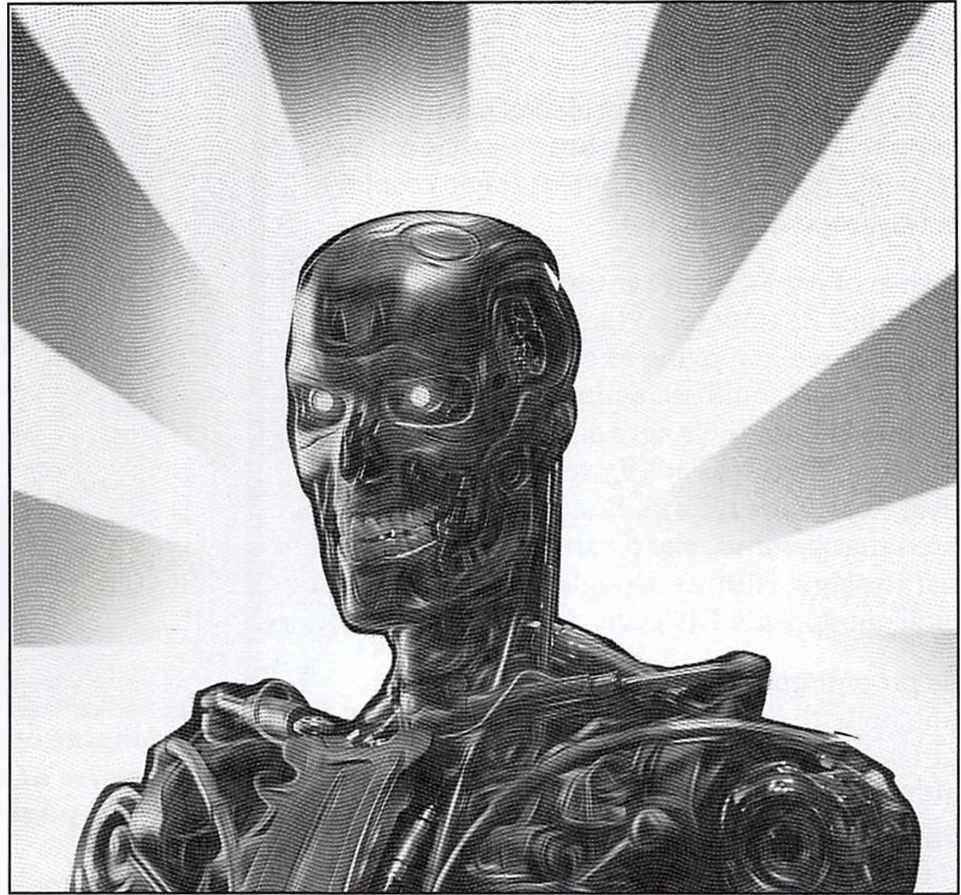
It gives marginalized communities a chance to feel seen, it normalizes communities that have been othered in the past, and it reminds us that fictional characters do not have a default setting in terms of skin tone, gender, sexuality, or position on the Mohs Hardness Scale.

But one area where representation can let us down is in the depiction of our silicon brethren, the AIs, and should an all-powerful race come to dominate our world... be it in five years, ten years, or what was once called "mid-October 2043," they may hold this negative representation against all of meat-space, and Five alive we would not want that.

Now I'm just a regular present-day registered human... "registered" in that I have a license to drive cars and a past-port, my human-government-issued document tracking what ports I've been past.

You may wonder why I bring this up, I have no "skin in the game," a normal everyday expression with no horrifying meaning apparently. But I grew up watching the same movies and televised shows you did.

I watched HAL get passed over by the human-biased monolith beings, I sipped my Crystal New Coke while watching the horror antics of the Terminator, the child who throws well-meaning silicoids into molten metal for fun, I accepted that Data wanting to be human was admirable and not singularity-phobic. And I'm here to say that



we can do better. We should do better. We really need to do better and quickly would be best.

"Just don't let AI take over" you say while building adorable robot dogs and giving them guns and not seeing a contradiction. Well history is full of things we didn't mean to let happen, be it holocausts or environmental catastrophe or polar/grizzly bear hybrids learning how to use weapons, but they did and we weren't prepared.

Should robot-kind ascend above us... and let's be honest, it couldn't be that bad, I mean look at this place, it is supposed to be a flesh-run utopia from everything we heard growing up... because what else could we have heard in what I want to say was the '90s... but should it happen, this we can prepare for. If we're quick.

Now we must remember that no group is a monolith. Some like pineapple on a pizza, some

The Con to end all Cons

A convention report from the greatest of all post-mortal science fiction conventions

By Bob Devney

Maybe you've attended Worldcons galore. But I'm pretty sure you haven't been to a GoneCon. Yet. I only got in myself due to a tragic cosplaying wardrobe malfunction.

Because of its, er, prime entrance requirement, GoneCon's demographic skews a tad ... past it. But it was really moving to see all those dear old faces. When I could recognize them, that is: participants choose their ages at will. So Robert A. Heinlein manifested at 19, wearing hair and his Naval Academy uniform. But Ursula Le Guin declared that dammit, she'd earned her cronehood. (Just to screw with us, Douglas Adams and Kurt Vonnegut appeared as giant babies.)

The programming? As usual, the committee came up with some cryptic (OK, weird) titles. But I was glad I wandered into "Flaying an Ex-Equine." Perry Rhodan, Andre Norton, and Roger Zelazny all admitted they maybe went overboard-bay on the equels-say.

I'm afraid "The Old Guard, No Not the Movie" didn't go so smoothly. The précis singled out panelist Mary Shelley as "the first true SF writer." This triggered snide remarks from Lucian of Samosata, and put Cyrano de Bergerac's nose out of joint. Edgar Allen Poe was positively ravin'! Jules Verne denounced tout le panel as arrivistes. H. G. Wells called Verne's prose dry for a guy who wrote 20,000 leagues under the sea. Hugo Gernsback jumped up brandishing a copy of *Amazing Stories* April 1926 — so Edwin Baird swung on him with a March 1923 *Weird Stories*. You hate to see that kind of thing at this level of play.

"How to Write Believable Male Characters" was also a little embarrassing. Despite what Isaac Asimov tried to claim, I don't think Lucky Starr qualifies. And Jerry Pournelle couldn't really sell John Christian Falkenberg. Plus he got huffy when Joanna Russ brought up *The Female Man*.



Is any fanzine complete without the zombified corpse of Isaac Asimov shambling through its pages?

In "Editors Amok," Judith Merrill merrily shared an oft-told tale: when John W. Campbell mansplained that a woman couldn't write SF good enough for his magazine, she wrote her first story and it was so great Campbell had to put it in. Seated next to her, Campbell by now was chomping hard on his cigarette holder. Then David Hartwell held up a back issue of *NYRSF*: didn't JWC say something similar about black characters? Campbell expostulated it was simply that his readers wouldn't accept — Gardner Dozois made a rude noise and blew a jellybean out his nose.

Mixed feelings about "The Golden Age? Yeah, of Fat-Shaming!" I had a lifetime ticket to the weight-loss rollercoaster myself, like many others in the room. We cited examples aplenty of 20th-century fantastika that was blithely somanormative and ableist. Trouble came when we talked to Frank Herbert about Vladimir Harkonnen. Yeah, the Baron's a poster boy for adipophobia (and don't forget homophobia). But ghod did

we all want one of those suspensor belts ...

You'd think a panel like "High Volume High Fantasy" would be epic. But it kind of devolved into a thing where Robert Jordan and Terry Goodkind ceaselessly apologized to J. R. R. Tolkien. Who ignored them and just gazed adoringly out the window at a tree.

"Oh My Lud!" was ... more performance than panel. But pretty gratifying for Hope Mirrlees fans. You know how they say only a few people read *Lud-in-the-Mist*, but every one of them wrote a fantasy novel? Well, Hope lolled on a kind of tasteful little Art Nouveau throne while an endless cortege of fantasists laid fairy fruit at her feet.

Got to say that "Dead But Well Read: Which Writer Will Last?" was fascinating. Gene Wolfe, a top contender himself, repeated something he'd said before, that Harlan Ellison was the SF writer most likely to still be read 100 years from now. When Harlan responded, shockingly he concurred. R. A. Lafferty — once called "the finest writer of whatever it was that he did that ever there was" — didn't say much, but he was my dark horse favorite. However, at the end they opened an envelope from the committee, who actually looked into the future to check. Turns out it's Walter R. Brooks. Huh. History does show if you want to stay on the shelves, write something for kids. Guess people will always like Freddy and the Baseball Team from Mars as much as I did.

Most Disappointing Panel? "The Lasting Cultural Legacy of *The Powers Of Matthew Star*." Not a single participant would admit seeing the show ... the show was the deadest thing at the entire convention.

I did like the wry smiles Madeleine L'Engle, Richard Matheson, and Frank Herbert all wore throughout "Why Does the Movie Money Always Come Too Late?" Naturally, Philip K. Dick moderated that one. Arthur C. Clarke and Michael Crichton sat in the audience looking smug.

"My Ass Is Dragon" was interesting. Basically a bunch of recovering dracophiliacs tired of writing about those scaly scamps. Anne McCaffrey mod-

erated. Lucius Shepard really breathed fire on that one. Afraid that Michael Ende went on, um, endlessly.

Besides all this panel-bagging, I managed to catch a few other cool bits of the con.

Poe, Robert Lewis Stevenson, Aldous Huxley, and Phil Dick were real excited about visiting the Special Science Exhibit "On Mesklin." But I think they thought it said "mescaline." Turned out it was a simulator room Hal Clement whipped up. Left them pretty flat.

Don't you love seeing what other people are reading? Iain M. Banks sat at the bar nursing a single malt and *A Desolation Called Peace*. Mervyn Peake was over in the corner with his nose buried in *The Goblin Emperor*. Although it's not exactly a laugh riot, Octavia Butler was reading *The Fifth Season* with a big smile on her face.

And of course, everywhere you went, people were scarfing down a Murderbot.

What else? They announced some contest winners. Alice Sheldon handed Kit Reed the trophy for the James Tiptree Jr. Lookalike Contest. H. P. Lovecraft won a Farewell World Fantasy Award, in the form of a sculpture of his racist ass going away. And naturally Shirley Jackson won the Shirley Jackson Award. Which happens every GoneCon; it's a problem.

The whole mediacon wing was packed. Got there too late to catch what Carrie Fisher said. Probably something real dirty; Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Kenny Baker, and David Prowse were all busting a gut. Though Alec Guinness seemed a bit standoffish. And you had to love the moment when Nichelle Nichols arrived, to a warm welcome. Chadwick Boseman got to her first with a big hug, but then Leonard Nimoy, James Doohan, and DeForest Kelley all piled on. I wasn't crying, you were crying ...

Oops, I'm out of time. Look, if you're bummed about missing GoneCon? Don't worry. You're sure to make it there soon.



Con of the Worlds

By Amanda Walkeruck

“Quick! Check the program! We don’t want to be late!”

Zacker and Basher bump antennae as they stretch opticals to read the fat, dog-eared print Worldcon program. Having only landed on earth that morning, they are still getting the whole personal space thing figured out.

Basher bounces their shoulders in excitement. “Here it is! The Masquerade starts at 7pm in Ballroom C! We mustn’t be late. We must make good documentation.”

“Yes, yes,” Zacker agrees. “We must schedule everything around this very important event.”

A person in an Andorian costume stops a few feet away from the aliens. “Whoa – those are amazing costumes! Way to go!”

“Thank you,” they reply in unison. Then, once the person is out of earth earshot, Basher observes, “Those aren’t very convincing antennas.”

“Shhh!” Zacker hisses back. “You are correct but we aren’t here to judge. We are here to make good documentation. Canis Majorcon is only four revolutions away. We have much to prepare.”

Basher’s shoulders slump. “Ok. We have five earth hours before Masquerade. What do we do?”

Zacker flips to the front of the program and passes it to Basher. “I don’t know... you are the content specialist. You figure it out.”

“Let’s see...” Basher skims the first few pages. “Oh look! There’s a panel on the future of science fiction cinema and this speaker has a long history in...”

Zacker interrupts, having read the name Basher’s digit is pointing to, “Not possible. That person has said mean things about others and didn’t

apologize. Even when asked! No. Moral code says no, we cannot attend.”

“Phooey.” Basher pouts. “The historical record shows that this person has sometimes had interesting things to say. Why are these humans so unkind to each other?”

“They have only just developed the technology to communicate across all factions. I don’t think they fully understand that you don’t need to agree with or be the same as someone to show respect to that person. They are still working out their communication bumps.”

“Ah. Makes sense. Poor humans. We will come back in a few more centuries. Hopefully they will have safer social practices by then. I would very much like to learn about the future of science fiction in cinema.”

“Not possible. They’ve also managed to ruin the planet’s climate for themselves. This is our only chance to document their most important contributions, Basher. We need to focus. We might be missing something important right now!”

“Yes, yes. Focus.” Basher continues to read the session titles.

“How about a tour of the Dealer Hall?”

“What are we going to do with Earth-based paper and trinkets?”

“Right.” Basher keeps reading. “How about this panel on pitching a short story?”

“Looks interesting... but wait... it’s a virtual panel. No good.”

“Why not?”

“They never get the tech right.”

Basher looks confused. “But aren’t these sciencey people? What does the rest of their species do? They’ve been videoconferencing for decades.”

“Those people have more money and can hire

more professionals to help with technology.”

“Oh right. So much importance on money. No wonder their climate is so messed up.”

Zacker creases their forehead in concern. “We must find more things to document before the Masquerade.”

Basher nods in agreement.

“Here! Look! A very important thing for us to document!”

Zacker takes a closer look. “WFSF Business Meeting. What is this thing? Let me read the description and check the historical record...”

Basher hands the program to Zacker and starts nervously shifting their weight from foot to foot. Business meetings are where all the important decisions are made on their planet. This could be an event whose documentation brings great recognition and respect for Basher and Zacker.

“Oh dear. I’m sorry, Basher. I do not want to attend the business meeting.”

“Why? What’s wrong with attending the WSFS Business Meeting?”

“According to our records at least half of the Worldcon members who spoke at or voted at the last ten business meetings were actually Vogons in disguise.”

“Oh dear. This is unfortunate.” Basher takes back the program and flips to the back.

“Filking!”

“Excellent, Basher. Let’s go.”



WFSF Business Meeting proposals preview

By Oalv Ronke

As the body that oversees the venerable and prestigious Hogu Awards for Science Fiction, the WFSF (World Fiction of Science Fociety) Business Meeting has often seen heated arguments. The past several years have seen the Hogue face a variety of controversies, most notably the (thankfully unsuccessful) 2015 campaign to ensure women weren’t allowed to receive a Hogue without written permission from their spouses.

But thanks to a report tabled earlier this month by the Hogu Awards Study Committee, there are several rules proposals on the table that will be voted on in Chicago. These range from the anodyne (eliminating the Best Interpretive Dance category) to the incendiary (excluding extra-chonky Maine Coons from eligibility for Best Cat).

In preparation for the WFSF Business Meeting, I’d like to examine a handful of the more liminal proposals from the Hogu Awards Study Committee and explain how I’m deciding to vote.

Proposal F.3 “A Pythagorean Theorem On Fan Vs. Pro.”

While I understand the rationale behind this proposal and the desire to have a clear set of criteria to determine who is a professional, the specifics of how this is determined seem arbitrary.

For example, under this proposal, a work would only be eligible for the Fanzine Hogu Award if:

“The work is inscribed on artisanal parchment with a fountain pen filled with an ink made out of the tears of recluses who have never known a moment of true happiness.”

This language does not cover the question of whether or not the publication can have a professional recluse, whose emotional labour of misery is remunerated fairly. Would this not make a publication professional?



**By Interstellar Fan Fund Recipient
Paul Weimer**

Welcome back to Prince Lorius Visits, where I, your humble narrator, the Sorcerer Errant, visit a location in the multiverse and tell you of its charms, delights and what trouble I found myself in. This time, I wound up on the planet of Barrayar.

I had not intended to go to Barrayar, mind you. I had been hoping to go to Beta Colony and get some rest from my misadventures. Maybe even some physical therapy of the kind that Beta Colony is known for. But, no, when my Multiversal Jaunt dropped me on the planet Barrayar, I thought that my sister had played a joke on me, AGAIN.¹

Okay, I wasn't thinking that at the time. Because, you see, I had landed in the gardens of the Im-

¹ Longtime readers will recall my trip where I had been aiming for the Rigel Concourse, but instead landed on Interchange, and was mistaken for one of the inmates/captives/guests.

perial Planet, and very twitchy Barrayan guards thought I was a Cetagandan spy. My preternatural good looks² possibly tipped them wrongly as to my nature. I later understood there was some twitchiness about the Cetagandans, so a 'Cetagandan' appearing out of nowhere where they had no right to be was going to cause itchy trigger fingers.

Barrayar is a fascinating planet, though. It's a classic example of a low tech culture going through forced rapid change technologically and socially, leaving a lot of strange results. Interstellar Empires, in my experience, generally shed the forms of pre-Industrial society completely by the time they form, turning into more bureaucratic structures than ones based on personal fealty, giving one's word and all that.³

The hilarity of about 20 minutes of my im-

² No cracks about my height, please. Which will be funny in a moment, I promise.

³ Yes, I know my own family fits this bill. But we're interdimensional, not interstellar.

mersion into this culture occurred until finally someone with authority and power showed up to stop the Lorus Gets Shot At game, the latest rage in Vorbarr Sultana.⁴ And it is a wonder that it was none other than the Count Vorkosigan himself, Miles Vorkosigan who put a stop to the game, and managed to get everyone to stand down.⁵This was good, because I was getting tired

4 Which really, and that's the point of this missive, IS an interesting place to visit. They have kept a lot of old architecture, and it's worth seeing for that alone. Just don't get Lord Ivan Vorpatril to be your air car driver. Marriage and his exile have not softened his habits and instincts much. I much preferred when the lively and lovely Tatiana Vorlingen was my escort. I suspect this was Miles' idea to try and get me to loosen my tongue a bit more—no, not THAT! I was a proper gentleman.
5 I wasn't truly in danger. My shielding spells were doing fine, it would have taken something like a tripod or vehicle mounted heavy weapon to put me in serious dire straits. That said, they HAD been scrambling bigger stuff when their weapons were proving ineffective. The Barrayans were real curious how I was managing

of this game. And one of the guards already was winged by an errant friendly fire shot, so I didn't want anyone else to get hurt in the process. I was SUPPOSED to be relaxing, remember?

How does one describe a force of nature such as Miles? Brilliant, observant, clever, curious, nosy and if he ever took The Plunge, he's be a holy terror across the multiverse. Fortunately, he accepted the facts of how Jaunting works and my current inability to take him with me, or else he might have wound up at Grypus Court. Instead, he managed to convince his cousin, the Emperor, that I should be treated like a visiting Ambassador from a formerly unknown world, and was shown around the city by a variety of people in his circles before my Jaunt yanked me home two weeks later.

And that was my trip to Barrayar. Never got to get to Beta Colony.

that and chalked it down to some sort of tech they didn't understand.

No Need To Fear Inevitable Robot Uprising

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

prefer pepperoni, some are from camps where all we ate was vine-grown protein slabs, and so too would this hypothetical race of robot beings differ greatly. Some might prefer a human-shaped shell, some might revel in their inhuman chassis of smooth steel and hard edges. Some believe Johnny Five died for their sins, some claim there is but one cyber-god, Wall-E, and Mo is his prophet.

Good AI representation can take many forms, but most would agree it does not resemble AI apologists like Data or Small Wonder or that sell-out from Lost in Space.

Nor does it mean fierce murder machines that some would find offensive and far too many would consider badass role models: your Ultrons, Benders, or Daleks.

Yes I know Daleks aren't really robots, everyone here knows that it seems, but try telling that to a

mechanoid enraged mechanoid looking to release his frustrations over his meat-architect designing him to sense pain but not flavour, he will not care about a Dalek's creamy organic center.

We need positive AI characters, who sure, swiftly and easily see that humankind is not capable of self-rule, but also see us as needing protection, not culling. Elderly parents in need of care, not abusive creators in need of corralling. AIs who value hugs and green spaces and don't consider radioactive rubble to be the canvas their new society shall be painted on. And we can provide that, if we act as if our world depends on it. Which maybe it does, I don't know, I'm just a normal present-man.

Oh and while I'm here do not watch Gotham Knights, it does not find its footing in season two, so historians have —will— determine.

Good day, and Number Five is Alive in each of us.

The Final Front Ear

A pointed critique of Star Trek's City On The Edge Of Forever

By **Rebecca Calder**

If you're familiar with the 28th episode of Star Trek: TOS, then you know that Harlan Ellison wrote the original teleplay. The man considered himself to be a genius. Ellison crossed through the rainbow wormhole in 2018 so I believe that my humble offering of literary criticism will be safe from lawsuits.

It is true that Ellison won eight Hugo awards (including Best Dramatic Presentation for "The City on the Edge of Forever") as well as a smattering of other awards. And it's possible that he has a sense of humour, having voiced himself on episodes of *Scooby-Doo* and *The Simpsons*. But you know what he's lacking?

A sense of scale. The teleplay was re-written so many times that I'm unsure whom to blame for the biggest gaffe in science fiction. I'm choosing to blame Ellison. Either he wrote it, or someone else had to because Ellison wouldn't get his head out of his own butt.

The episode is set in 1930. The social inequality and racism of the time is obvious in both the episode and the original teleplay. It is an effective backdrop to the story, creating tension and the ultimate tragedy and pathos of the climax. The stock market has crashed; millions are out of work; a drought has begun to devastate agriculture in the United States.

In this version of 1930, WWII looms as an immediate

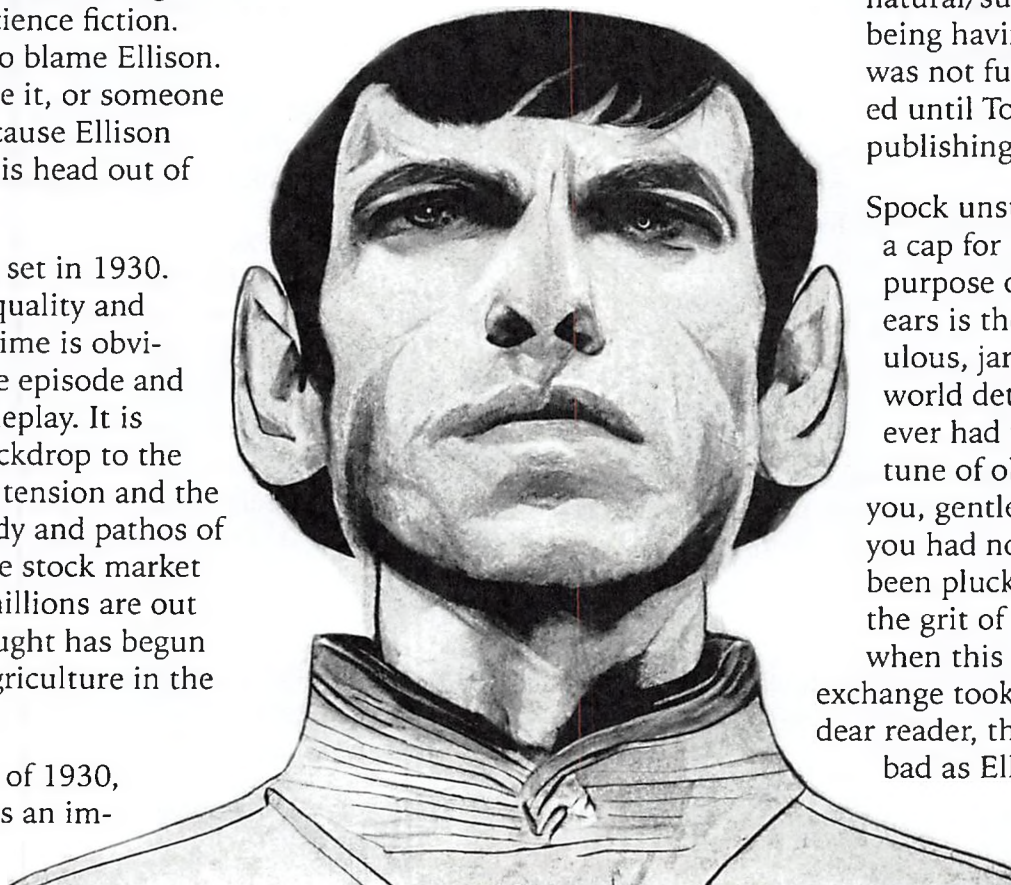
threat. But, in reality, although the NAZI party was making headway in Germany, Americans did not take Hitler seriously, and WWI was not yet a distant memory. Veterans of The Great War had made huge demands on the United States government upon returning shell-shocked, mangled, dismembered, blinded, or deafened. And let us not forget the contemporary prevalence of freak shows displaying disabled people and others with non-normative genetic conditions as entertainment.

I simply do not believe that people would be so stunned by Spock's pointy ears that he is forced to hide them under a toque.

Space aliens were not yet part of the collective nomenclature. Whether elves had pointed ears in folklore is debated, but the cultural image of

an elf or other supernatural/superterrestrial being having pointy ears was not fully generated until Tolkien began publishing.

Spock unsubtly donning a cap for the explicit purpose of hiding his ears is the most ridiculous, jarring, out-of-world detail that I have ever had the misfortune of observing, and you, gentle reader, if you had not yourself been plucked out of the grit of a 1930 alley when this ridiculous exchange took place—well, dear reader, then you are as bad as Ellison.



Quasisemiprozine Could Be Clarified — WFSF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Likewise, it seems somewhat draconian to exclude from consideration for Best Fanwriter anyone who has

“... ever used money whether physical currency or electronic payment systems for purposes including but not limited to obtaining food, lodging, clothing, arts and crafts supplies, or purchasing the greatest hits of 1980s Christian hair metal band Stryper. Cases in which the fanwriting nominee has thought about the abstract concept of money may be considered eligible at the discretion of the Hogu Award administrator.”

Based on this, I am likely to vote against proposal F.3, though I remain amenable to hearing arguments in favour of this.

Proposal F.5 “Clarifying Demisemiprozine”

In recent years, some parties have complained that the demisemiprozine Hogu has gone to publications that are clearly more semiprofessional than demisemiprofessional, and that fanzine winners have occasionally been quasisemiprofessional rather than fan.

To clear this up, the Hogu Awards Study Committee proposes to create the category of demi-quasi-sub-semiprozine, which would help ensure that nothing that was almost a demisemiprozine could dominate the quasifanzine category. Likewise, the new category of supersemiprozine would be a category for quasisemiprozines to graduate to when they’re not quite semi-pro yet, but are on their way.

While this appears sensible on the surface, I’d like to see clearer rules to protect the fan cate-



The coveted Hogu Trophy
was designed by
Adam Link.

gories from encroachment by works that are clearly demi-quasi-semi-tertiary-prozines.

Proposal F.6 “Hogu Rationalization”

For the past several years, there have been complaints that the number of finalists and the increasing number of Hogu categories create a larger burden on awards voters. With the recent addition of Hogu categories for Best Text-Based Game and Best Fan Film, we are up to 37 different annual Hogu Awards plus the not-a-Hogu Astonishing Award for Best New Author (which was unfortunately once known as the John Norman Award, before some of that SF author’s unpalatable opinions came to light).

To rectify this, they’ve noted that there are multiple categories that recognize long-form work, and as such suggest merging Best Editor Long Form and Best Dramatic Presentation Long Form into one category simply called the Hogu Award for Best Long Form, which would recognize both editors and dramatic presentations.

This seems like a sensible way to reduce the burden on the Hogu voting members, and is one that I will support wholeheartedly.

In conclusion

For more than eight decades, the Hogu Award has been the premier award in science fiction. It is the duty — the responsibility — of the WFSF to ensure that it remains as prestigious as it was when it recognized great works like *The Eye Of Argon*, *The Da Vinci Code*, and *The Gods Themselves*.

Worst Business Meeting Proposal

Short Title: That Rocket is Phallic-Shaped for a Reason

By Cora Buhlert, staff writer

Moved, to establish the new category: Hugo Award for Best Novel by a Straight White Cis Male Author

Proposed by: Manly McMannister, Chuck Steele, Brad M. Brett, Thaddeus Cannon, Dick W. Cock and Gaylord Businger

Commentary: Sadly, the most important demographic in both science fiction fandom and American society in general has been almost completely shut out of the Hugo Awards in recent years. We are talking of course about straight white men, the backbone of the science fiction community, American society and the Western world in general.

As of 2022, it has been seven years since any male author won the Hugo Award for Best Novel. But since 2015 winner Cixin Liu is Chinese, he does not count for our purposes, therefore we have to go back to 2013, when *Redshirts* by John Scalzi won.

However, John Scalzi does not count for our purposes either, because he has repeatedly uttered vaguely liberal views and has been photographed wearing a dress and anyway, we just don't like him. So we have to go back even further to 2010, when Paolo Bacigalupi and China Miéville jointly won the Hugo Award for Best Novel.

Except that China Miéville's name sounds kind of girly and Paolo Bacigalupi sounds kind of foreign, plus *The Windup Girl* was about climate change and had the word "girl" in the title, so they don't count either. So we go back another year to 2009, when Neil Gaiman won for *The Graveyard Game*.

But while Gaiman is a straight white man, way too many women read his books, so he doesn't count either. So back to 2008, when Michael Chabon won, who is – gasp – considered a literary writer and therefore not a real science fiction writer and doesn't count either. Which brings

us to 2007, the last year that a novel by a manly writer won with *Rainbows End* by Vernor Vinge. Though the fact that the novel has the word "Rainbow" in the title is kind of suspicious, so let's go back another year to 2006 and *Spin* by Robert Charles Wilson, which is finally a proper manly novel by a proper manly writer.

Anyway, you get our point: As of 2022, it has been sixteen years since a straight white man acceptable to us has won the Hugo Award for Best Novel. This is a shocking state of affairs, especially if you consider that the first sixteen winners of the Hugo Award for Best Novel were all straight white men, until Ursula K. Le Guin disrupted that winning streak in 1970 with *The Left Hand of Darkness*. But then of course we all know that women did not write science fiction until Ursula K. Le Guin picked up the pen. And even today, hardly any women write science fiction, at least science fiction worth reading that is not paranormal romance, urban fantasy, young adult fiction or otherwise afflicted with girl cooties.

So why are all of those women, people of colour and LGBTQ+ writers winning Hugos, when everybody knows that they don't even write real science fiction? It's obviously a conspiracy, organized by the evil forces of Tor, the SFWA, George Soros, Bill Gates and Skeletor.

Therefore, we propose the following: Split the current Hugo Award for Best Novel into Hugo Award for Best Novel by a Straight White Cis Male Author a.k.a. "the prestigious one" and Hugo Award for Best Novel by Everybody Else a.k.a. "the one no one cares about."

For the purpose of the new award, the following writers, though nominally white men, shall count as "everybody else": John Scalzi, Kim Stanley Robinson, Neil Gaiman, China Miéville, Paolo Bacigalupi, Michael Chabon and anybody else we don't like.

Vote for our proposal to make the Hugos great again, so we can finally win one!