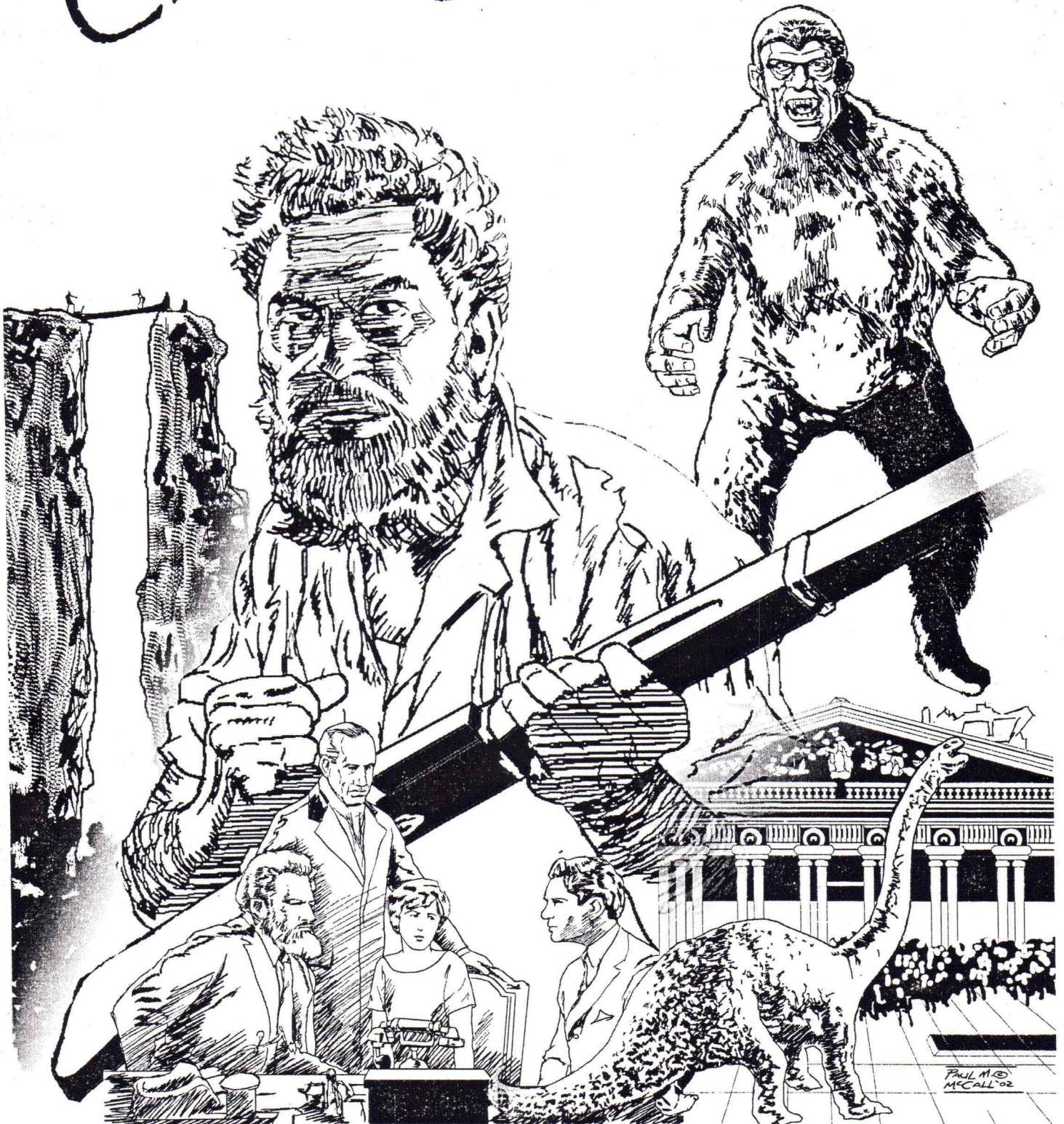
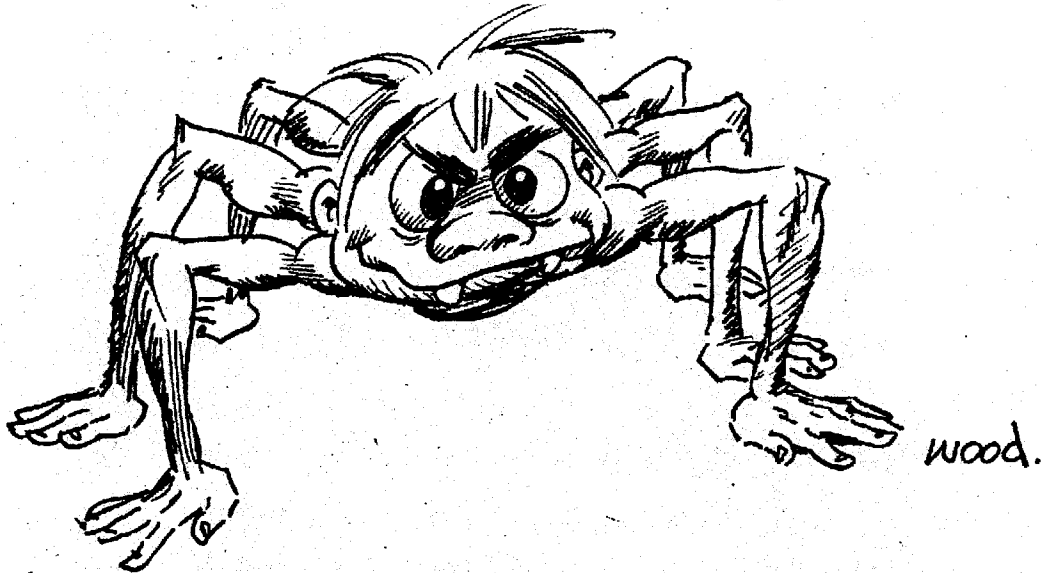


Challenger 17





CHALLENGER 17

Winter 2003

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Cover: the Good Professor by Paul McCall

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editorial

Well, you win some and you lose some. Teddy Harvia is right in his cartoon below. *Challenger* didn't win the Hugo at ConJose, the 2002 worldcon. It came in fifth. It's all right, though; I'm simply grateful ... for the nomination, for the egoboo, even for the delicious, maddening suspense of Hugo night, even though we spent it in a motel in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

Missing ConJose was infinitely more of a downer – for us both. Rosy had read my account of my drive to Confrancisco in 1993, and very much wanted to relive that epic desert journey with me. But Mr. Money – not much of a friend in 2002 – proclaimed there was No Way.

Of course, you also win some. This winter, Rosy and I ran for the honor of serving as DUFF delegates at Australia's Swancon in 2003. That one, we *won*.

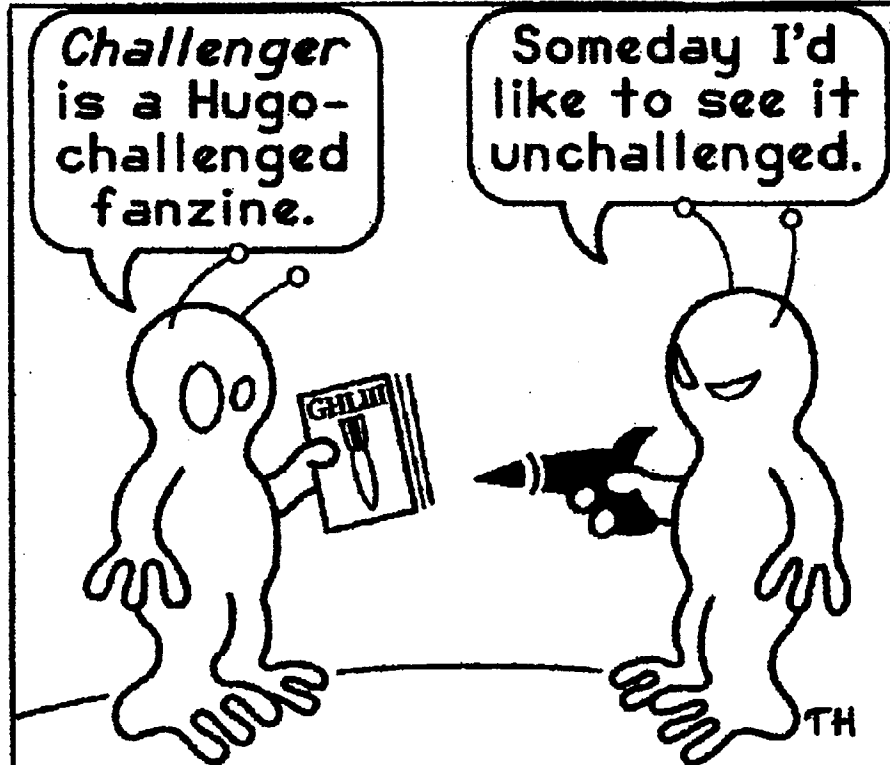
I am extremely pleased and honored by this. Our noble rivals Mike & Linda McInerney ran a righteously fun campaign and I'm delighted to be considered even competitive with such classy folks. The list of previous Down Under Fan Fund winners includes many fans I number among my best mates – note Ozzie-ism – in fandom. Roger and Pat Sims. Pat Molloy and Naomi Fisher. Leah and Dick Smith. David and Diana Thayer. They represent this hobby at its height of friendliness and character and ability and charm. To be included among them is astonishing – for me, anyway. Rose-Marie has always exemplified those qualities. Now I must, as her partner, and we look forward to it. Hmm ... how about a *Mardi Gras* party at Swancon?

Now I get to find out if I can do it ... ride an airplane across the Pacific. I am, you see, a notorious flight-o-phobe, who once drank *seven screwdrivers* to endure a one-hour plane ride. Will I down 140 screwdrivers to get through a 20-hour plane ride? *Twice?*

I'll do it! I'll do it! Be damned if I won't! *Without* the booze! And all for Rosy! I've done my last selfish thing where she is concerned. Besides which, I really do want to climb Hanging Rock.

Last issue

Much nice word has come to us about our last issue, *Challenger* #16. While I'm gratified by the response gleaned by my R.A. Lafferty memorial, I have to admit that I wasn't particularly pleased with the zine; in fact, I thought it showed some truly stark weaknesses.



For one thing, although my contributors and I waxed with passionate sincerity about our love for Ray Lafferty as a *fella*, I provided little appreciation for Ray Lafferty as an *artist*. Except for Fred Chappell's piece on **Past Master**, **Chall** hardly touched at all upon the quality of his wordsmanship, or its deeply serious themes – themes hinted at in his reprinted speech from DSC '79. At ConJose Ray was named winner of the second *Prometheus Award*, as a neglected genius in our field, and it wasn't just his epic Irish humor that makes him deserving of genre immortality. At least fandom heard how much his people loved him. Now do yourself an enormous favor and *read Lafferty*. His stuff is available on Amazon. Do it.

I also regret the several pages I excised from **Chall** #16 – to cut its length – at the last minute. My editorial hackery not only disappointed the contributors but made idiocy of several references I'd made to their articles which I did not excise.. Changed very slightly, those pages can be found in this present issue. Lastly, in the midst of my anguished thoughts on the death of George Alec Effinger, I let slip through one truly *terrible* sentence – a sentence that would have been cured by the simple excision of two “that”s. ~~That. That.~~ Okay, now I feel better.

Here in **Chall** #17 you'll find contributions by three generous professionals – Greg Benford, Mike Resnick, and returning from the abyss, Jim Hogan. There's work by regular **Chall** pals Rich Dengrove and Bob Whitaker-Sirignano. Randall Fleming introduced himself to me through his magazine **Angry Thoreauan**; now that he's safely in New York, after a journey described here, I hope he keeps us up on his unique perspective on life. Jack Calvert's eclipse anecdote is here, as is poetry by Michael Estabrook, and thanks to the poetryzine which allowed me reprint rights. Michael sent more verse which will grace future issues. Myself, I offer three pieces on police, and an article on – *sigh* – comic books. Please tolerate the last item as best you can. Remember, there was a time when the name “Guy H. Lillian III” was *known* in those circles.

The Wally Wood sketch on the colophon is an original, gifted years ago to my mother-in-law, Nita Green, and is used by her generous permission. Our archives produced much of our other artwork – William Rotsler, Joe Mayhew, Neal Pozner, you shall never be forgotten. The nifty flowers and squiggles here and there are by Trinlay Khadro. Charlie Williams, Kurt Erichsen, and Bryan Norris created art especially for this issue, thanks to all, with *special* thanks to that Ace of Aces, Paul McCall, for his superlative cover: Wallace Beery as Professor Challenger in the silent version of **The Lost World**.

changes

This issue of **Challenger** is different from any other in what it does *not* have – “The Zine Dump”. Because of the indeterminate time it takes me to finish – and finance – an issue, my responses to zines earned in trade have sometimes had to wait for months. That's not fair to my fellow faneds. “The Zine Dump” should come out much more often than **Challenger** – and from now on, so it shall. Separately, on its own, distributed by e-mail where possible and by printed snail mail where it is not. Trades sent will receive both zines ... plus the personal and political zine I'm thinking of also starting, when and if I get the moxie to do it.

Here's something exciting – **Chall** is opening another website. Rosy's stepmother, Patty Green, has taken it upon herself to create www.challzine.com. It's coming along fine. Most of this issue will be on it and so will selections from past issues – for the time being, until I can re-establish rights, my own stuff. The website will not carry zine reviews or letters, to save oodles of space and give people some reason to read the print edition – but we hope what's there will be read and enjoyed.

That's it for now. See you in Toronto, we hope, and who knows, perhaps in Perth ... and Nashville. (Let you know about *that* some other time.)

ghllii

Binker Hughes is one of my most steadfast friends in Southern fandom. The subject of this article is not, we emphasize, the artist oft-featured in our pages.

charles williams' novels of the supernatural

Binker Hughes

From the early 1930s through his death in May 1945, Charles [W.] Williams wrote seven unusual novels that are mostly out of print. I chanced upon copies when they were briefly reprinted (pb) around 1970, but have only lately gotten to read them. Since then, I've been looking for copies for some friends and find that three are on Barnes & Noble's list. I've marked them BN below, in case any of you are interested. It's some indication of the difficulty of categorizing these books that two are called "Literature"; one, found in their out of print list, is called 'Science Fiction'; and another is just listed "Not Classified."

Williams worked at Oxford University Press [though I'm not sure any of his stuff was published there] and was an 'Inkling' – friend of such better known writers as Dorothy L. Sayers, C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot, and J.R.R. Tolkien. He wrote a vast variety of stuff – for example, his play "Cranmer" was the main play at the Canterbury Festival the year after Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" was featured. These seven novels deal with the impinging of the supernatural – sometimes embodied in objects of power – on the lives of perfectly ordinary people; and they are impressively convincing. C.S. Lewis, they say, remarked that if ever he were to meet a ghost, he'd want Williams with him, since he'd know what to say to it. T.S. Eliot says something analogous in his introduction to my edition of *All Hallows Eve*. All those who associated with him report him as a gentle, intelligent, engaging conversationalist who Evidently was so used to the overlap of the natural and supernatural worlds that there was no sort of discontinuity between them – they believed he had personal acquaintance with the powers and influences he so successfully involves in his books. Certainly the books reflect extensive knowledge and clearheaded insight that would seem to justify this assessment. Never sensational for the sake of sensationalism, they are more convincing – hence more horrific – than the manufactured tales that are so common in books drawing on the supernatural. So, for what they're worth, here are sketches of the seven, in as close to the order in which they were written as I've so far managed.

WAR IN HEAVEN – Probably his least descriptive title, but a terrifically effective -- and unusual -- book, pitting a Satanist millionaire and an unscrupulous archaeologist against an odd assortment of ordinary and extraordinary people when the *Graal* [Holy Grail] has been identified as residing, unrecognized, in a small English parish church. Among other delights, this is the only book of my acquaintance where the 'body on page 1' is mistaken for a workman under a character's desk and treated with more annoyance than shock.

THE PLACE OF THE LION – Williams' second novel is one of his best. What if the purest form of characteristics – Platonic archetypes, if you will – were given a portal for entering human experience and drawing into themselves all that shared them? This book follows the consequences and impact on individuals of this possibility – and is one of several that I'd love a chance to adapt for the screen.

MANY DIMENSIONS – The unscrupulous archaeologist of the first book has gotten his hands on the stone of Solomon, which makes occur whatever a holder of it desires [travel through place and time, healing, ability to see through another's vision, and much else] and which, if split, produces an identical replica of itself with no diminution in size or power; so the cast includes its keepers [one of whom, now dead, betrayed it], an assortment of government and industry personnel who hope to benefit from controlling it, and the bystanders Williams draws so well. This is one of his best, both conceptually and in actualization. [BN]

SHADOWS OF ECSTASY – Here, it is not an object but an idea that motivates the action – and it is the ever-present idea, sold in a million forms by cultic leaders, of being able to feed on emotional experience [passion, beauty, love, pain, all of it] to the attainment of everlasting life and health. Again, a diverse cast enlivens the book, and Williams doesn't force a 'neat' or reassuring ending – it ends, but leaves possible that

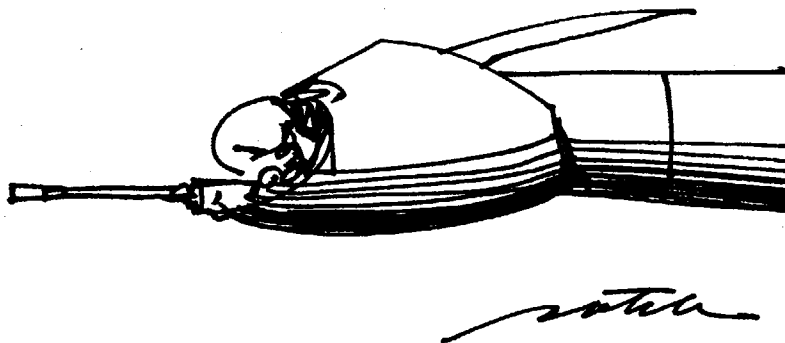
the leader of this cult, slain by one of his inner circle, Might be able to overcome death as he has claimed was possible. The main achievement here is Williams' exploration of the minds and personalities of those touched by the idea – and with it, an exploration of the phenomenon of cults – although this has more 'action' than most of the other books.

THE GREATER TRUMPS – Anyone who has messed around with the Tarot would find this one interesting, since it concerns the rejoining of the original cards with the constantly self-moving images, made of precious metals, which are the originals of the cards' designs. Again, there are some difficulties in clearly resolving the situation and Williams refuses to force a 'neat' conclusion or water-down the challenges that result from abuse of the powers inherent in the originals. Indeed, in my copy, the typography shifts from right-side-up to upside-down at a key point, and remains so to the end of the book – which looks intentional, since it's not just a signature put in wrong-way up: the pages continue in order.

DESCENT INTO HELL – One of his best, this one deals with ghosts and both forms of doppelgangers in a small town built on an oft-embattled hill. True to its title, it concludes with a character who has chosen the hell of complete self-absorption rather than ending on the more positive note of the sequence, with other characters, that immediately precedes this ending – but an enthralling book nonetheless. By this point in his writing, Williams has refined his sense of timing even more fully, so I found this one impossible to read at the one-chapter-as-possible rate at which I'd read the others. [BN]

ALL HALLOWS EVE – This is essentially the story of two ghosts – young women killed in an accident in London shortly after WW II – and those closest to them in life; and the ways they, both accidentally and intentionally, interfere with the plans of a sorcerer [Simon the Clerk, in the tradition of Simon Magus] regarding his illegitimate [by adultery] daughter with whom they were once at school. The ease with which Williams interleaves the worlds of the dead and the living explains many of the comments on his evident comfort with ghosts and makes this a fascinating book. [BN]

For all their apparent simplicity, these books couple great literacy with a rare balance between what we take to be 'normal' and the traditions of the supernatural Williams has so obviously grasped. Unlike a lot of books that incorporate such elements, these aren't sales-pitches – he does justice to the traditions he represents. Consequently, I'd think they'd do well in both 'New Age' and 'Christian' bookstores in the perennial waves of interest in humanity's spiritual potential, as well as among general readers intrigued by supernatural subjects. So if you've an interest in exploring some of the odder aspects of inner [as opposed to outer] space, give these books a try. He's an unusual writer exploring unusual subjects with so deft a hand that one rarely notices the complexity of the subjects of the naturalness of its handling.



Another reprint from *At the Sleepy Sailor* – the man himself on his most celebrated short story.

HOW I WROTE “CONTINUED ON NEXT ROCK” by R.A. Lafferty

To ask how any story or tune or statue comes about is to ask “How is it done?”; “What does it take?” Have you heard of the Dutch boy in this country who was going to butcher school, whose schoolmates tried to mix him up? The heart, they told him, that is named the liver; the bladder is called the stomach; the tongue is the coccyx; the loin is known as the chuck; the brisket is the flank; the lungs are named the trotters; and so on. This Dutch kid was very smart however; he figured out that they were having him, and he figured out the right names for everything, or for almost everything. And he passed his final examination with top grades both in meat-cutting and nomenclature. “How were you able to do it?” the instructor asked, “With so many things going against you?” “I’ve got it up there,” the Dutch kid said, and he tapped his head, “Kidneys.”

It isn’t exactly that one should use kidneys for brains, but the sense of grotesque juxtaposition *does* come in handy. You can’t be sure you are looking at something from the right angle till you have looked at it from every angle. How did I write “Continued on Next Rock” then? Upside down and backwards, of course. I started with a simple, but I believe novel, idea that had to do with time. Then I involuted the idea of time (making all things contemporary or at least repeating), and I turned the system of values backwards, trying to make the repulsive things appear poetic (“the nobility of badgers, the serenity of toads”) and trying to set anti-love up as comparable to love (the flattest thing you can imagine has to have at least two sides; it can have many more). I let the characters that had been generated by this action work out their own way then. After this, I subtracted the original simple but novel idea from the story), and finished things up. (The original idea was a catalyst which could be recovered practically unchanged at the end of the reaction.)

The beginning idea, which I give to anyone who wants it, was simply to have archeologists digging *upwards* through certain strata, for rather vague topographic reasons, come to deposits of the fairly recent past, or the very recent past, of the near future (a discarded license plate from fifteen years in the future, for instance), then the more distant future, then to realize that the strata still remaining above them had to contain the remnants of at least a hundred thousand years of unfaked future.

So much for the genesis of one particular short story. Each one is different but each one is anomalous; and there is a reason for that. No normal or reasonable or balanced or well-adjusted person is going to attempt the making of a story or a

7

Continued on p. 69

Here's a great name in fandom making his first appearance in Challenger, "eclipsing" my own poor efforts with

Darkness at Noon. Well, Dimness at Six P.M.

Jack Calvert

I am told that astronomy fans, or even astronomers, can predict these things thousands of years in advance, but when my wife told me that there was going to be an eclipse of the sun on June 21st, it caught me by surprise. The totality, or annularity, would only be visible to those willing to travel to the mid-Pacific. The show from our backyard wouldn't be as good, but we are not ones for traveling, and it is much drier there. On the appointed day and time, we noticed that the afternoon sunlight was visibly dim and weird. The local papers recommended making a viewer out of a box, but we found that a pinhole punched in a piece of opaque paper worked just fine. (I vaguely remember back in the old stone age when I was in grammar school viewing a solar eclipse through layers of exposed film, but I guess the projection method is recommended now because it is safer. It is certainly more fun.) The pinhole projected a sharp, clear image of the sun the size of a pencil eraser on a surface about a foot away. The solar disc had a huge bite taken out of it by the moon. Since there was enough time, I also tried the box method, but the resulting image in the box was small and blurry, I think because the cardboard of the shoe box that I used was too thick for the purpose. I believe the ideal material for the pinhole is thin but opaque.

Anyway, all this puttering about with projections reminded me of a piece that I had recently read by Vanessa Schnatmeier on the history of magic lanterns. (In LASFAPA mailing 308. All knowledge is found in fanzines.) She mentioned that the ancient Romans had known about the camera obscura, which got me to imagining some Roman senator marveling at a view of the Bay of Naples accidentally projected onto a wall of his villa at Baia, maybe through a hole in the villa's drapes. As far as I know, the Romans knew little or nothing about optics, and I wonder what they thought about things like this. I've never seen an accidental projection of an outside scene, but one year near the winter solstice we got an image of the sun projected onto a wall through a keyhole. Our house faces east, more or less, so it must have been the rising sun. It must happen each year, but I've only noticed it that one time, I suppose because all the conditions were right – weather clear, blind open, me awake, etc.

Then I came across a little article in an art encyclopedia describing how to make a camera obscura, and decided that I had to try it. This time, I cut a large hole in the "objective" end of the shoe box, covered the hole with duct tape, and poked the pinhole into the thin tape. I stuck a piece of white paper in the other end of the box, cut a hole in the side for viewing, and was ready for Test One. The article said to keep as much light as possible out of the box by installing a six-inch or so tube to view the image. But I thought I'd try without the tube first, not really expecting it to work. I stepped out in the garden, pressed my eye to the viewing hole, shielded it with my hand, and scanned around with the thing. Nothing but darker and lighter blurs, some green. Then I pointed the box toward my house, and goshwow, Mr. Science!) there was an image of it: faint, ghostly, washed out, with a black background (and upside down, of course), but definitely there. I love it when things work better than expected. I'm going to tinker around with this instrument and see if I can't get it even better. Hmm, maybe a charge-coupled device chip in place of the piece of paper...





*Making a most welcome return to our pages is one of our earliest **Chall** pals, with some cogent thoughts on*

THE TROUBLE WITH UTOPIAS

James Hogan

Some years ago, when I lived in California, I attended a weekend seminar on interstellar colonization, looking into generation ships and how they might function. There were some bright and interesting people there, versed in just about all the relevant technologies as well as management, social, and psychological sciences. For the first couple of days everyone split into task groups and disappeared off into the woodwork of the hotel to develop the aspect they had elected to tackle and decide their approach to dealing with it. The final day would be devoted to hearing presentations by all the groups and discussing their findings. As a general writer-guest of the occasion not attached to any group in particular, I was free to roam around the work rooms where they had ensconced themselves amid paper-strewn tables and walls steadily taking on a new papering of charts -- in the process being sometimes taken for a spy sent out by some other group to see what the competition was up to. And human nature being the way it is, that did happen.

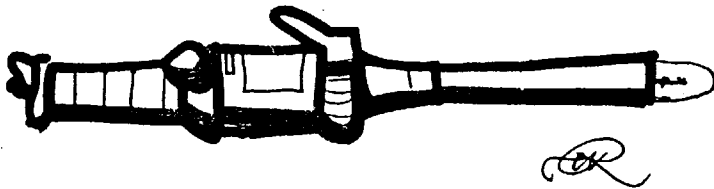
As was to be expected, much of the material had to do with technical issues, such as the physical problems to be overcome in creating a habitat capable of sustaining life for an extended period in the space environment, energy sources, propulsion systems, materials, structures, and that kind of thing. But one section of the agenda was

headed "Types of Social Organization," and addressing it was a team that included a couple of social scientists, an industrial psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a political theorist, among others. Their analysis, in impeccable organization-speak and with a facility for categorization, delineation, and sub-classification that would have delighted denizens of Washington bureaucracies or those masters of desiccation whose tomes line the bookshelves of humanities departments, reduced all of the diversity, richness, triumph, tragedy, and magnificent chaos of human culture to three societal types. These, in a breathtaking imaginative leap, were designated "Type A," "Type B," and "Type C."

A "Type A" community, we were told, was "Hierarchical and Homogenistic." People in this kind of community believe there is a "best" way of doing everything, which is good for everybody. They think in terms of maximization and optimization, pursue efficiency as a self-evident ideal, operate by majority rule, and consider competition to be the basis of all progress. Nonstandard behavior and minority groups are considered abnormal and undesirable, to be ignored if possible, or corrected if they become too inconvenient. Because of the belief that unity comes from homogeneity and differences create conflict, members of such a system would be divided into

groups by age and by occupation. Living units would be all identical, and the inhabited areas would be zoned into residential agricultural, and industrial areas, and so forth. It seems to be axiomatic that all of the above viewpoints and opinions come together inseparably, in one psychological package.

A "Type B" community, on the other hand, was "Individualistic and Isolationistic." (What is it that makes me uncomfortable about people who want to put "ic" on the end of every adjective?) Proponents of this kind of society value independence and self-sufficiency as the highest virtue. Accordingly, each living unit in a generation ship modeled to this philosophy would constitute its own castle, isolated from the others, with everything adjustable for individual taste and protection of privacy as the major concern. Decision-making would be autonomous and decentralized to the greatest degree possible, with a minimal command structure playing a Jeffersonesque federal role to provide a unified defense and foreign policy in terms of getting the ship in one piece to where it was supposed to go, and providing for the common welfare.



The above two categories were disposed of fairly speedily, and it was difficult to avoid the impression that they were included mainly as a token to completeness and impartiality, but with their negative aspects emphasized (not very subtly) to steer us all to accepting the vision that the authors were plugging as the only viable choice, which was given far more time and described glowingly.

This was the "Type C" community, characterized by being "Heterogenistic, Mutualistic, and Symbiotic." Its members believe in (I had to write this down to make sure I would reproduce it correctly) "the symbiosis of biological and social process due to mutual interaction." "Heterogeneity" is the primary value, "affording a source of enrichment, symbiosis, and resource diversification, while contributing to flexibility and survival, and

providing the raw material for ongoing evolution." Majority rule is considered homogenistic domination by quantity, in place of which would be enshrined the principle of "elimination of hardship." Competition is destructive and useless, and is to be replaced by cooperation, the overall design philosophy being harmony of diversity. (The word "harmony" occurred repeatedly throughout the description.) The different elements making up the heterogeneity would not be just thrown together, however, but carefully combined to produce ... yes, you've guessed, harmony. There were two methods of achieving heterogenization: "Localization" and "Interweaving" ... And so it went on.

The community had every kind of facility, amenity, and service imaginable. Nothing had been overlooked by the planners or excluded from their calculations. Residential units were allowed 49 square meters per person: 37 sq.m. of floor area and 12 sq.m. of exterior space. Business districts were assigned 10 shops to every 1000 people, and 2.5 sq. m. floor space per office worker. There were schools and hospitals; halls for churchgoing, community meetings and theaters; a variety of entertainments that were educational as well as beneficial; facilities for a wide range of creative hobbies; park spaces for sports, recreation, and leisure. It all sounded utopian. It was all very harmonious, of course; as well as being balanced, symbiotic, heterogenistic, wholesome, nutritious, healthy, hygienic, and clean.... And so antiseptic, vapid, insipid, germ-free, and sanitary that my first reaction was a feeling of acute nausea. Or putting it bluntly, I wanted to throw up.

Where were the sleazy bars, night clubs, and strip joints? What about some pool parlors, casinos, X-rated movie theaters, and pinball arcades? In other words, the things that a lot of real, live, flesh-and-blood people in real, jostling, bustling, hustling -- the things that make real "heterogenistic" communities -- like to do sometimes. Or wasn't this place meant for real, live flesh-and-blood people?

To me it came across as an upper-middle-class academic intellectual's ideal of how other people ought to live; a projection of the secure, worry-free suburbia that model families of TV commercials and yucky movies inhabit, infused with correct attitudes and social virtues, and healthily nurtured in body and mind. Maybe it was their fantasy of the world they thought their children wanted to grow up in. But the possibility

that the subjects might not be quite so enthralled by it all didn't seem to have occurred to anyone. Perhaps I should amend what I wrote above to read: nothing had been overlooked by the planners except how the unmasked recipients of all this moral guidance and cultural improvement might feel about it. Like the computers that the social engineers use to process their statistics and graph their models, the inhabitants -- "social units," not people -- of the exercise were receptacles for programs to be loaded into and then tweaked until desirable behavior was seen to emerge. The only problem is, humans have this funny habit of not reacting desirably to being treated like that.

Back in the late seventies, after I left Massachusetts and before I wound up in Florida, I spent some time in New York City. One of the people I got to know there was a black character called Pal, and I remember him recounting his perspective of the social programs launched with much fanfare in the sixties. "They sent rich people's kids from well-to-do suburbs outside the city to tell us how to live," he told me. "They knew nothing about blacks, nothing about life in the streets, and nothing about what it's like to be poor. They felt guilty because they were rich and had it easy, and they were gonna do good things for us to make themselves feel better. So they gave us handouts of other people's money that they'd taken away in taxes, making out like they were being real generous which said we weren't capable of earning our own. They set quotas to force people to give us jobs -- which said we couldn't make it on our own abilities. They lowered the entry grades for our kids to get into schools -- which said they didn't have what it takes. They gave us food stamps and took away our self respect, when all we'd ever wanted was the opportunity to prove ourselves on equal terms. And then, they expected us to be *grateful!* What would you have done?"

"I think I might have gotten pretty mad and set fire to their cities," I said.

"Damn right!" Pal agreed. "That's just what we did."

It's strange, too, isn't it, how many of those same people, who gave their children secure, worry-free environments to grow up in, with all problems taken care of and everything provided, ended up embittered and resentful because they didn't get any gratitude from that direction either -- and perhaps had their cities burned metaphorically.

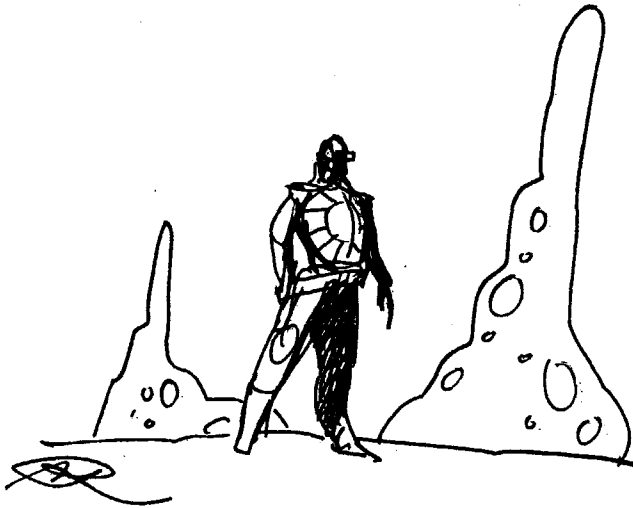
The most livable cities, in my experience,

weren't planned down to excruciating detail. To a large degree, they just happened. I grew up in the nineteen forties on the west side of London. There was no zoning and not much regulating then. Streets of houses, crowded markets, shops, pubs, schools, parks were all jumbled up together. Just walking around town was always an experience with something going on, never dull or boring like a modern-day suburban graveyard with its rows of white monuments, each on its patch of green, and nobody in sight. There was a railroad marshaling yard where you could sit on the grass bank by the tracks and watch freight trains shunting and being formed up, with the occasional express thundering through from Paddington on its way to Wales and the West Country. Behind it was a canal with a scrap metal yard on one side, with mountains of water tanks, oil drums, sheets of corrugated iron, and all kinds of junk that the kids would build into a tank, an airplane, or a submarine, and play all day. On the way to school we passed an automobile assembly plant and a printing works, where on warm days they kept the doors open and you could talk to the workers during their break and watch the newspapers and magazines coming off the presses. And there were parks with big, solidly-built, iron-and-wood swings, roundabouts, bucking broncos that could throw you ten feet if you didn't cling on right -- not the wimpy plastic things they have today because of lawsuit paranoia -- along with swimming pools, sandpits, and playing fields.

Across the main road where the electric trolley buses ran, behind the cinder grounds where the visiting fair pitched camp at the Easter and August holidays and the circus came at Christmas, was a large area of open heath bordering a prison on the far side, and which still had sandbagged anti-aircraft-gun emplacements from the war, where we played soccer with the soldiers. It was a community in every sense, where industry was part of everyday life, and men with greasy coveralls weren't something remote who existed on TV, but people who made the things that everyone used, and ate their lunch in the cafe between the greengrocer's and the fish-and-chip shop at the end of the street.

A lot of young people that you hear these days have absorbed the message from the media and frequently at school that technology is bad, causing pollution and cancer and despoiling the planet. They don't seem to connect industry with their own everyday needs. I see children of families that are far wealthier than we were in terms of

owning more possessions than we could have dreamed of ... but I'm not sure I envy them in their rows of model homes, marooned on islands of secure conformity, miles from anything interesting to do unless a parent has the time to drive them there. (We could go anywhere in London for a few pennies on the underground and the bus network.) And they're not allowed to have problems or challenges and learn to deal with them in their own way, because any hint of a worry or self-doubt is met by swarms of counselors, social workers, experts, analysts... . Yet we read continually of the difficulties young people experience with alienation, boredom, disenchantment, and the self-destructive behavior that can set in as a result, in the form of drugs, vandalism ... suicide, even.



True satisfaction and the inner feeling of self esteem come from doing worthwhile work and the knowledge of being up to dealing with life's downturns when they happen. What kind of work is worthwhile? The kind that people seek and are willing to pay for in one way or another without being made to. The kind that's *needed*. But what does somebody do who has nothing to offer that anyone really wants? Being a free-rider in life -- the feeling of consuming and putting nothing back in return -- is discomfiting and dissatisfying to most people. One reaction that it frequently evokes is that of the compulsive regulator and legislator. If we produce nothing that people will voluntarily spend money on, or have nothing to promote that they'll vote for at the ballot box, then dammit we'll

make them take notice of us and need us!

There seems to be a certain kind of mind that preoccupies itself with social engineering and visions of creating the ideal society. I suspect that there's often a streak of suppressed envy at work too for the producers and creators whose work is genuinely valued by others. And this can easily translate into deriving a perverse satisfaction from obstructing and negating the achievements of others as a way of combating the discomfort -- a task made easier, perhaps to the degree of being turned into a crusade with a purpose, when bolstered by the conviction that the achievements are illusory or endangering to Mother Earth or whatever. So in the utopias which the regulators create, *they* become not just needed but necessary, an paternalistic, expert elite, advising behind the throne while ministering wisdom to the grateful peasantry. So what could be a greater anathema than the suggestion that the peasants might be capable of muddling along and managing their lives to their own satisfaction without need of it?

The trouble with utopias comes when not everyone agrees that they're so utopian. What do you do if the peasants aren't so enamored with the vision dispensed from on high and start developing the unthinkable notion that they'd rather be left alone? Well, obviously that's just an aberration. They need a little "help" to become enlightened. The irony with the former Soviet practice of putting dissidents in lunatic asylums lay in the fact that it *wasn't* a malicious form of punishment; the ideologues *believed* that anyone not wild about the system had to be genuinely insane and in need of corrective treatment.

You can fool some of the people for some of the time, and you can fool yourself all of the time. But you can't fool reality. When somebody's utopian dream experiment on Earth eventually collides with one of the realities of life -- the most usual one being human nature -- it might be the end of the utopia but it isn't the end of the world. The disillusioned and hopefully wiser disperse back into the general run of things, and history carries on. But what happens in a less resilient, space-going community, such as a generation starship, when its over-planned and rigidly maintained system is unable to accommodate to, or failed to recognize in the first place, the whims and wants of real people living real lives? You can't have your dissidents transferred or retired from the service like

malcontents among the crew of an aircraft-carrier or submarine, nor throw them overboard in the way a council of elders might expel the misfits from a back-to-basics colony, while shooting them has a tendency to foster doubts as to the totality of a leadership's commitment to the sacredness of harmony. Screening and selecting at the recruitment stage, as is sometimes advocated -- following the military's way of assembling teams for demanding tasks of long duration -- has the drawback that the resulting space-going community isn't representative of real human conditions to begin with; so how can it be expected to cope when real human problems begin to arise? And in any case, since we're talking about generation ships, what do you do about the aberrants who will inevitably be born later, who don't conform to the original selection criteria?

Many humanitarians depressed by the human condition and deploring the exploitation and imperialism of the nineteenth century were nevertheless impressed by the achievements of science. If science could unify mechanics and gravitation, resolve questions that had been asked for millennia, and produce the steam engine, the telegraph, and the railroad, then surely all the human problems of ignorance, poverty, injustice, and oppression could be solved by the same application of objectivity and reason. But the ideologies constructed as a consequence, claimed to be founded on "scientific" principles and devised for the most part by concerned thinkers with the sincerest of intentions, led to some of the most vicious and intolerant regimes of recent times.

For, when the end is something as noble as finally realizing the Golden Age of human equality or the Millennium of opportunity, what, by comparison, are a few trifling rights and liberties of those unenlightened who, from motives of greed, selfishness, or contempt for the laws that apply to others, would stand in the way? If the institutions of a free society become obstacles to the Great Plan by obstructing the consensus that the Plan needs to be implemented, then those institutions will have to yield or be suspended. For the sake of "harmony" and the "best interests of society as a whole," those who oppose us will have to be ... removed. Once begun, the path leads ultimately to the secret police, the midnight arrests, concentration camp, and the gulag, not as unfortunate instances of good intentions that went wrong, but as *inevitable*

consequences of a precedent that sacrificed the individual to a supposedly greater collective good, and made service to an ideal the only measure of worth and justification for human existence.

Good reasons can always be found why those who disagree should be coerced into living as others think they should. The thin end of the wedge that rapidly widens to become the stripping away of rights and freedoms wholesale is usually the assertion of a position that few could find grounds to disagree with, such as fighting wars on drugs, protecting children, combating "terrorism," which disarms potential opposition in advance. Once the cause has been identified with furthering the common good, then any questioning of it automatically becomes the mark of the common enemy. In an artificial space habitat, vulnerable to extortion attempts and sabotage as well as being subject to all the natural rigors of the hostile extraterrestrial environment, the crucial importance of preserving security affords a ready-made justification for imposing a regimented, coercive order "for your own safety and protection and the good of everyone."

And again, unlike the wilderness that was available to immigrants to this country in earlier centuries, a starship habitat doesn't offer unlimited room to expand into and get away from neighbors you don't like; its physical resources are limited. The management and allocation of shortages -- and their creation, if necessary -- have always provided fertile breeding grounds for "people's" committees, planning boards, bureaucratic departments, and the like.

I'm not suggesting some kind of anarchy as an alternative or any way to run a spaceship. If history shows anything about the relative merits of different forms of human societies, it's that while



totalitarian systems kill more people than democratic ones do, anarchy kills far more still. But since a long-duration space experience involving a society-in-miniature offers all the temptations and pretexts that the zealots for authoritarianism relish, what I am asking is how best to preserve the values of free choice and self-determination that our political and economic systems are based on: the foundations of the way of life we believe in. It would be ironic, to say the least, if after threatening nuclear retaliation to defend those values here on Earth, we were to lose them and capitulate to precisely the forces that we perceive as so threatening the moment we venture out into space. Or must we conclude that our way of life simply isn't suitable for exporting into space at all?

How, in other words, do we prevent the emergence of a social order that stifles the kind of personal initiative, originality, and assertiveness that has proved the driving force and character of our culture, and avoid creating in its place a collection of docile and acquiescing social statistical units? Of the proud ship which lifts out of lunar orbit and turns outward toward the stars, how do we insure that what arrives one, two, three, or more generations later hasn't degenerated into a spaceborne sheep pen or a human vegetable patch ... or worse, a concentration camp in which all dissent and threats of diversity have been suppressed by force?

The paradox, in short, is: How do we design a society whose one, overriding attribute is that it wasn't designed?

The answer, I would submit, is not to try. Instead, let it design itself. Why is it necessary to specify all the details of how people shall work and play, where they should live, what they should think? ... for generations that haven't even been born yet. For the simple fact is that nobody knows or probably can imagine what the conditions might be of such an expedition ten, twenty, thirty years out, or what social, psychological, or other stresses could arise to challenge its resourcefulness. Quite possibly, even the natures of the people who had come into being by that time could be completely alien to the comprehension of anyone shaped by our planet-bound perspectives. The approach indicated, then, is surely to try to anticipate nothing, but to build in the flexibility that will enable the people concerned to create their own style of community as

they go. And since from what we've been saying, one form of community is never going to suit everyone, this means "communities."

The Royal Air Force in Britain in World War 2 had an unorthodox way of forming bomber crews, but one that proved very effective. There was no matching of psychological profiles by experts or grouping according to the results of elaborate personality tests -- maybe because nobody had the time, rather than through any dazzling insight. But what they did was simply turn loose the new recruits fresh from pilot training, navigation and gunnery school, and so forth in a hangar as one huge, unsupervised throng, and let the crews find themselves. A captain might find a flight engineer and radio operator who all liked the look of each other and thought they might get along, and together they would wander around in search of a navigator, tail gunner, and so forth until the crew was complete. Compatible temperaments had a knack for finding each other, and the teams that gravitated together in this way tended to be, dare I say "harmonious"? -- and enduring.

Maybe a generation starship mission could adopt something of the same principle. Imagine our initial ship -- or preferably ships, two or three, say, to provide lifeboats in case of emergency; Columbus had the right idea -- lifting out from parking orbit accompanied by a flotilla of immense cargo repositories packed with materials and equipment of the kind used in the construction of the manned craft. Or the rafts could have been sent out ahead at intervals over years if need be, to be overhauled and consolidated as the voyage proceeds. Now there's no need for any elite of prescient experts to spell out in advance what kind of geometry the descendants in years hence shall inhabit, the organization of the society they will form part of, and how they will function in it. Because as all the unpredictable factors that time will bring unfold, and various groups and factions emerge with different ideas about the kind of world that they think would appeal to them, they can simply *go out and build their own*.

What a great way to allay the boredom and disgruntlements that are bound to surface among any human community shut up for a long period in a limited space, besides providing an outlet for surplus energies and a reservoir for preserving the richness of diversity that we cherish! Tired of walking through the same mall-like concourses and

residential decks every day, and seeing the same patches of hydroponic greens on the far side overhead, interrupted by star-filled sky windows? Fine. Get a like-minded group together and design yourselves a torroidal world, dumbbell-shaped world, a modular Ferris wheel ... anything you want. You can set yourselves up as a Baptist community, Mormon, Muslim, Buddhist; or try out an experiment in Libertarian living, Socialist, Libertine, Monarchist, or perhaps united as of one mind in serving your own local dictator; even "Hierarchical and Homogenistic," or "Heterogenistic, Mutualistic, and Symbiotic" if it really grabs your fancy. And the beauty is that none of these attachments to a social formula or style of living has to be permanent. As the initial strung-out stockpile of construction materials gradually transforms itself into a formation of liberal-to-tightly-run city states, frontier towns, religious monasteries, pleasure resorts, urban crushes, rural spreads, academic retreats, and who-knows-what else, moving from one to another could be the source of variety found to be essential to a healthy life. It could be an invaluable means of education too. For what quicker and more effective way could there be of revealing the realities and flaws of someone's imagined utopia than shuttling across a few miles of intervening space and trying it for a while? And what better preparation could those distant descendants have, of whatever generation eventually arrives at an inhabitable world, for dealing with the conflicts and vicissitudes that go to make up real human existence than to have lived with them all their lives?

So what mix of objects will eventually drop into orbit to begin surveying that new, far-off abode? A variety of thriving, mutually supportive communities, ready to extend the pattern across a new world? Or mutually distrustful armed fortresses, seeking only their own territory to enclose and defend? I have no idea. But that's the whole point. At our end of the venture, nobody can have.

In the meantime, though, I think I may have concocted an idea for a new book.



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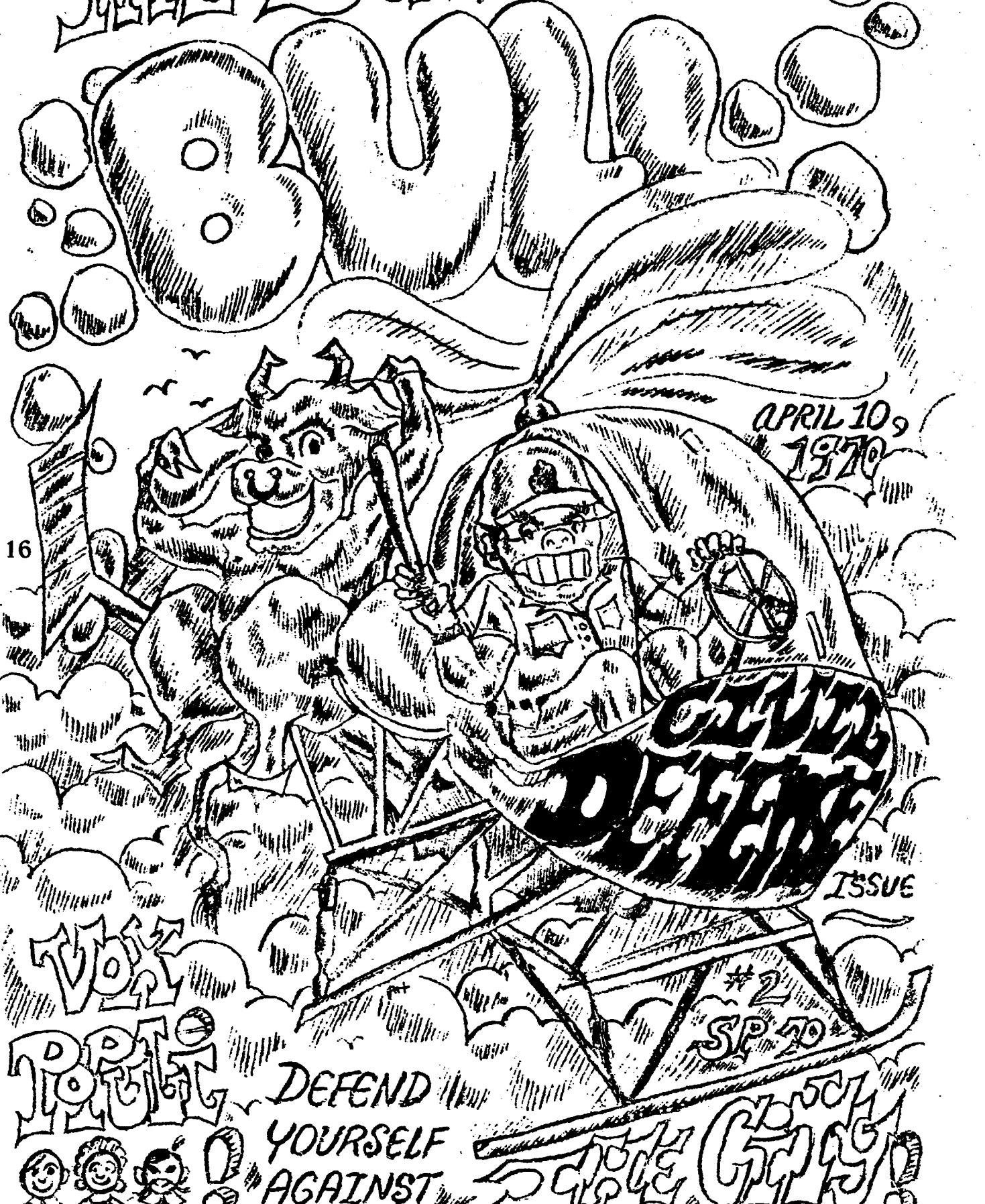
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THE BARRINGTON



APRIL 10,
1970

16

**DEFEND
YOURSELF
AGAINST**

ISSUE

TOY
POP

#2
SP 70



DEFEND
YOURSELF
AGAINST

TOY
POP
GUY

Didn't Klaatu say something like, "The measure of any system is the police force which enforces it"? All right then.

POLICE STORIES: talking it through in 3 parts

Guy Lillian

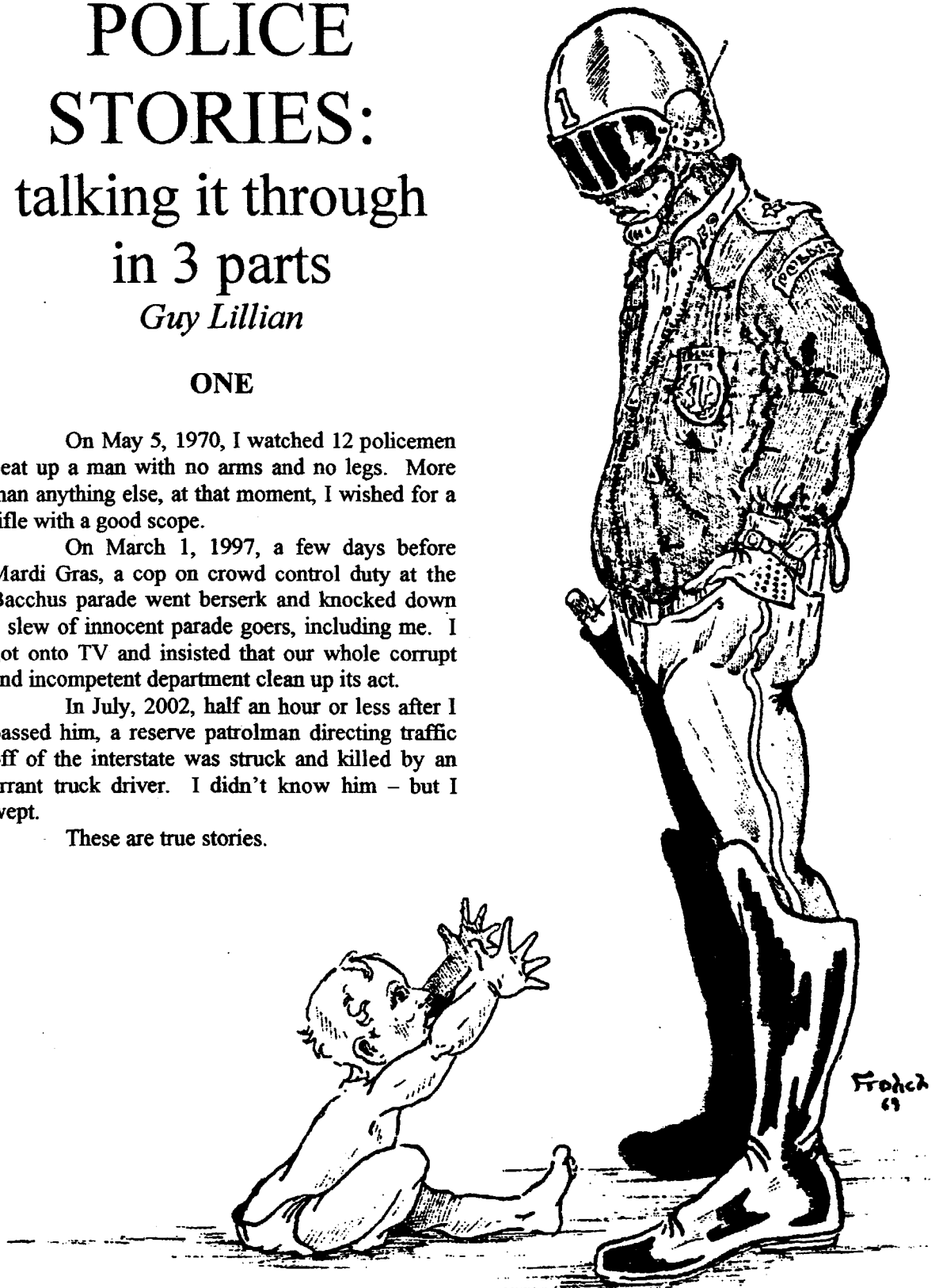
ONE

On May 5, 1970, I watched 12 policemen beat up a man with no arms and no legs. More than anything else, at that moment, I wished for a rifle with a good scope.

On March 1, 1997, a few days before Mardi Gras, a cop on crowd control duty at the Bacchus parade went berserk and knocked down a slew of innocent parade goers, including me. I got onto TV and insisted that our whole corrupt and incompetent department clean up its act.

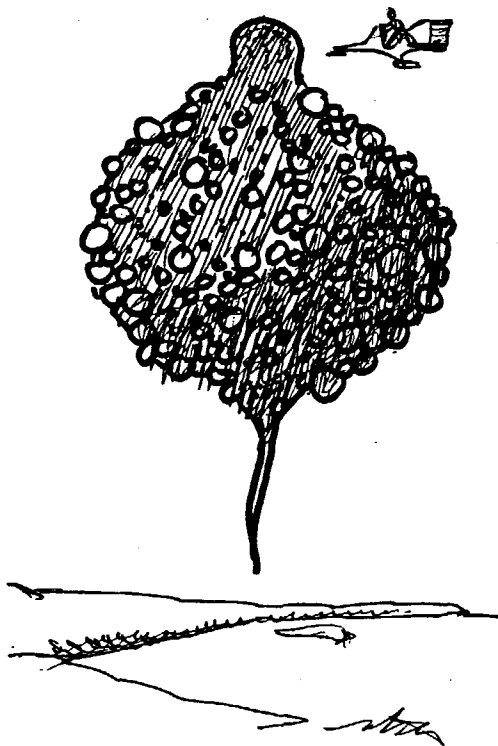
In July, 2002, half an hour or less after I passed him, a reserve patrolman directing traffic off of the interstate was struck and killed by an errant truck driver. I didn't know him - but I wept.

These are true stories.



It's happening again – the pendulum is swinging. A year ago, in late aught-1, police everywhere basked in the gratitude earned by cops and firemen at the World Trade Center. Cops were aggrandized in those nightmarish videos of the collapsing towers and gypsum-dusted people. Now other videos come to the fore, sharp in the public eye: a wild-eyed cop from Inglewood smashes a limp, handcuffed teenager half his size onto the hood of his police car and follows it up with a punch to the kid's face. (The boy who made the amateur video is later arrested, an old warrant, we're told. The world doesn't buy it.) Across the country, in Florida, two policemen swat at an unarmed black guy as he writhes on the ground, claiming him resistant to arrest. His only gestures are hands raised in supplication. Police apologists find their excuses drying in their mouths. From glory to disgrace, that fast.

But we only need wait for the pendulum to come back. It will.



It's a mark of my boomer generation that our experience with police has been both negative and fundamentally disappointing. We grew up celebrating cops as heroes. In fact., I remember one of my earliest heroes, Hopalong Cassidy,

ending one of his TV shows with a stern "talkin' to." He told us never to use that word, never to call a police officer a "cop." It was considered disrespectful. (I loved Hoppy. My folks bought me a Hopalong Cassidy wristwatch which I wore all through grade school.)

I remember the original **Dragnet**, before Jack Webb became a mannequin on wheels. I remember Quinn Martin's **The New Breed**, before Leslie Nielsen put on a rubber nose and became a clown. (The episode where Nielsen's department cuts down Victor Jory, as the hired killer "The Deacon," is a classic.) **M-Squad**. **The Untouchables**, and a thousand westerns where the sheriff was always the good guy. This was, of course, social indoctrination, and boomers weren't the first to undergo it. Our parents had **Gangbusters** on the radio and if America had a hero in their childhoods, it was J. Edgar Hoover. Wasn't it a constant in the literature of everyone's youth, the comic book – indeed, wasn't it ordained by the Comics Code – that police were to be portrayed as people seemed to think they were – honest, brave protectors and benefactors of all?

The '60s came – and they hurt.

The civil rights revolution showed that it didn't matter if you were a cop if you were a brutal and racist one. Who could praise the honor and courage of the thug who beat up Fanny Lou Hamer? Civil rights protest evolved into opposition to the war in Vietnam and the youth counter-culture – which itself led to the rise of the right-wing paranoia that still afflicts America. The impatient and exuberant idealism of our young years ran headlong into a bewildered establishment which employed, and controlled, the police ... the police who met our idealism with tear gas and billy clubs, to the general approval of the previous generation. To us, it was a betrayal, on the part of those we'd been taught to trust and those we'd loved. Oh yeah, the '60s hurt.

Since I've grown older I've occasionally wondered if we'd asked for it, even *enjoyed* it. Certainly there was arrogance and silliness, mere fashion and more than a little crazy nihilism mixed in with beauty, idealism and righteousness in the hallucinatory mess that was the counterculture. The music was wonderful, but the drug life it celebrated was a disastrous

mistake – innocent experimentation, individual quests for relief from despair, became dependency and sickness and psychosis – a cure worse than the disease. Most of the nasty street confrontations of those days resulted from youthful high – or low – spirits. The good things our society did – look no further than Apollo – were tarred with the same fouled brush as the useless waste in Vietnam by the alienated and the angry. And of course, there was Manson.

But no, we didn't deserve it. By and large, the power structure in place at that time met the challenges of our youth with bemused contempt – supplied by themselves – and wanton brutality – supplied by the police. No free people deserves such treatment.

No free people deserves what happened in Berkeley in May, 1969, during the two week Holocaust known as People's Park. I was there, and I saw it ... wearing my Hopalong Cassidy watch, by the way.

I refer you to **Challenger #2** for a complete account, but one memory from that awful fortnight must be repeated here. The subject of these articles, after all, is cops.

It was still early morning on May 15, 1969, but the California Highway Patrol had already forced us out of the formerly-blighted block between Haste and Dwight Way. Soon bulldozers would whack aside the giant wooden KNOW sculpture and the infamous Fence would arise –and soon after that, the sadistic "Blue Meanies," the Alameda County deputies, would take their notorious noontime stroll. But here and now, on that cool corner, a line of riot-clad CHP formed a line across the intersection – a line only one person dared try to cross.

This was a young woman in her early 20s, leading two very small children by the hand. Clearly they had been coming here every morning to play on the swings and teeter-totters people had put there. This morning they found their way blocked by the police line. The young mother would have none of that – she started across anyway.

Three cops got in her way. The burgeoning group at the intersection roared in outrage. My favorite cry went, "That's fair! It's three against three!" – but I've always been partial to my own lines.

Even then, I noticed that the three cops who stopped that little woman were three different men. One pleaded with her to turn around and go home. Another just pulled out his club and stood there, ready to defend with violence Republican property rights against infants who wanted to play on the swings. The third looked *ashamed*.

It would be a long, bloody day. And there was tear gas. The air stank of acid – your eyes ran, your skin burned, your throat felt rancid. Berkeley smelled more like Jupiter than Earth that day. But worse, far worse, the Blue Meanies hauled out shotguns and buckshot and blasted away, shooting at least 35 people – including a man named Alan Blanchard whom they blinded and a man named James Rector whom they killed. Their crime was nothing special. Being there.

That night, having survived, I wrote a poem in my diary. Compassion for my readership spares you from that 19-year-old's idea of heavy verse. But, three decades and more later, I find it interesting that on May 15, 1969, I chose to write about the cop who was ashamed. In his downcast gaze I found a small measure of hope, that at least some connection, human being to human being, could exist with men who had declared themselves my enemy.

Perhaps I was whistling in the dark. It seemed that way, certainly, fifty weeks later, when Nixon invaded Cambodia, the Ohio National Guard slaughtered Miller, Schroeder, Scheurer and Krause, and the Berkeley Police Department went *apeshit*.

Perhaps what happened can be ascribed to the "excitement" of the day, or the simple tenor of the times. It'd be impossible, I think, to convey the depth and the bitterness of the division Vietnam brought to this country. Hunter Thompson's "fear and loathing" line might have been meant as ironic commentary on his personal paranoia, but the phrase is an accurate description of the feelings between the generations and between the cultures.

The police had a specially-designed patrol unit which belched CS – the nastier form of tear gas – from its tailpipe. This war wagon wound about the streets of Berkeley gassing not just those who opposed Nixon's filthy war, but

everyone who lived. Eventually a group of guys climbed atop a building and scoped out their route – then lay in wait. Suffice it to say that those cops ended up hauling tush down the street and the car ended up on its hood.

(I watched this madness. A year later a similar event was witnessed by a terrified Berkeley teenager – Catherine Asaro.)

Another long, hideous day. People got hurt – and some of those from our side were taken to a place called the Free Clinic. Basically, it was a first aid station that usually provided free VD tests for street people, but today it was treating busted heads and scoured eyeballs ... until the cops came in.



They came *en masse*, chasing us down to the end of the block. (One even chased me, shouting “Hup! Hup!”) We turned there, and watched. We watched as the cops charged up the Free Clinic steps. Soon people – some bandaged – began flying out the front door and down the stairs. At the foot of the stairs we spotted a guy everyone called Shorty.

Shorty was a ragamuffin street kid, probably a little crazy, and certainly loud. He

used to hang on the sidewalk in front of Cody’s Books, one of the many great bookstores on nearby Telegraph Avenue, loafing amongst the people selling handmade jewelry, bongos, roach clips, incense, other paraphernalia of the age from blankets spread on the cement. Nothing remarkable about the guy, except that Shorty was a phocemelus. A thalidomide baby. Undeveloped arms and legs. A flipper kid, a seal. Read *Dr. Bloodmoney* or *Deus Irae* by Philip K. Dick – a great Berkeleyan I never met, alas – each features a phocemelus at its heart. So did this day in May, 1970.

It must have been difficult for Shorty to walk, but walk he did, barefoot and tiptoe, and at this moment he appeared amongst the cop swarming at the base of the Free Clinic steps. If he said anything, provoked them in some way, we couldn’t hear it. I’d like to hear words morally sufficient to justify what happened next.

They knocked him onto his back. He writhed there, waving his armless hands, his thighless, calfless legs. He looked like a turtle. They swatted at him with their clubs. San Francisco cops had clubs with a little bend at the tip, to give extra torque when they swung, but I don’t think Berkeley cops had those. Anyway, these weren’t full-armed clobbers, to be sure, just playful little swipes at his body. Couldn’t swat him on the legs, could they? He didn’t *have* legs!

There were 12 of them – I counted – and we couldn’t see their faces; they were half a long block away. Could be they wore gas masks or face shields; I don’t recall. But I bet they were smiling, because that was just the kind of guys they were.

A girlfriend and I walked through the campus that night. The tree leaves were coated with white paste – CS residue – and blinding fumes were still pocketed beneath. We saw Shorty across a street and called, How are you? “A little sore,” he said, “especially my nuts.”

Every cop I’ve known since has had to get past that memory.

The next day the university community began to draw together. It was an amazing moment in Berkeley history. For me it was summed up by the quiet speech given by the chairman of the English department at its public meeting. He

was a quiet fuddy-duddy genius who spoke meekly about the value of classical academic studies to civilization... and with quiet, intense conviction on the necessity of standing up for civilization by working for peace and justice. I can't recall his name nor a single direct quote, but I do know I've never heard a better speech in my life. At the magnificent Greek Amphitheatre in the Berkeley hills, the whole school gathered – declared itself on strike, and ready to do *political* battle against Nixon and his war. The clear import of the day was that street battles were Out, letter-writing and doorbell-ringing were In.

As we walked out of there, down to our dorms and co-ops and homes, we passed a squad of Berkeley cops, waiting in their riot gear. I remember one young black cop, obviously jazzed to the gills by the anticipation of action, staring at the peaceful passing throng in utter frustrated amazement. Take a picture, pal, I wanted to tell him; it'll last longer.

Aside from having my eyes burned with gas, and the thrill of being chased by Cossack cops on horseback (that happened in San Francisco), I had only two *personal* encounters with police while at Berkeley, and both – you'll be surprised – went well. On time a drip stole my camera from amongst a clutch of my alleged friends and the police I called were friendly, if utterly helpless. Students got jacked by street people all the time in that town. On another occasion some other so-called pals stranded me on the mountain road o'erlooking the Cal campus. A fence appeared in my downward path, and being unwilling to walk the extra mile around it, I clambered over, despite my knowledge of the interesting squat cylinder of a building I'd walk past a few minutes later – the Cyclotron. I would have gotten away with it without incident had I not tried to brazen my way past the guarded gate.

Although some put down University cops as dweebs who'd flunked the CHP exam, they seemed all right to me – used to students and rather laid back. They were certainly nice enough to me; they just wanted to make sure I hadn't wandered into radiation, and even drove me home. Embarrassing, to be sure, but a rather pleasant memory.

Rather pleasant memories – or at least neutral ones – are all I have of police encounters between Berkeley graduation and my return to New Orleans in 1983. The war in Vietnam ended – not soon enough, but it ended – and Nixon fell, hard, thud. Both moments were vindications to my sort which calmed down a lot of our youthful aggression. I did my year in Manhattan, getting the Apple out of my system (sort of; I still love it), and liked the blunt, ethnic New York cops. I had next to no business with the constabulary in Greensboro, North Carolina when I lived there. True, I picked up the occasional ticket, but most of the cops were professional, some friendly, some not, none remarkable. But while I was meandering lawfully down life's highway, the world was changing its view of police.

It couldn't help it. The media still presented a positive view of law enforcement, but it was a bit more adult and complex – **Hill Street Blues, Law & Order** – and the *news* media had other images to show. The spread of video technology to the common man meant reality would catch up to fiction, and after Rodney King was beaten like a bass drum by brutal cops while cowardly cops stood by and watched, we all saw it on the tube.

The cult of police infallibility couldn't stand up to police excess. Sadistic cops in Eureka, California smeared caustic CS paste into the eyes of demonstrators, earning the United States of America condemnation from Amnesty International – a stigma usually reserved for South American death squads and Saddam Hussein. Apologists struggled to rationalize this thuggishness – Americans will rationalize anything – but truth, once out, is a tough substance to recapture and hide. **Adam-12** would never be the same.

That was surely true in New Orleans, and God help me, I was part of it.

To be continued



A new Chall pal chimes
in with his tale of



art by Kurt Erichsen

It is said that a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step, and I am again reminded that even a cross-continental motor trek – be it one's first, my fifth or a journeyman's fiftieth – is a series of disastrous dots and joyous stops fueled as much by persistence as by petrol. Thrice the mileage is sure to have an exponential effect far more than merely three times that of said thousand; perhaps because of the magic number, death – while close at hand toward journey's end – was resolutely repulsed as many times as the charmed number.

My first journey across the United States was in 1987, and while slightly shorter, had no fewer bulwarks thrown my way than the most recently completed one. Granted, I was younger, alone and highly idealistic (who is not, at the genial age of eighteen years?) and even the Texas trek (across the widest part of that dismal state) was not so bad despite a trailer tire going flat, not to mention sundry other frustrations.

But that was then, and *then* has become misty in my musty olde mind.

And so it was that I started out from Los Angeles only a few weeks after the tenth anniversary of the 1992 riots – straight outta downtown. On the very day, ten years after, city-funded street crews were breaking down a Broadway Avenue carnival. The aftermath of the so-called street faire was no less a mess, at first glance, than the riot that had wrecked the main streets surrounding my soon-to-be abandoned AT ⁽¹⁾ office on Sixth and Spring Streets: carnival rubble everywhere, steel roll-down doors DOWN, and not a soul to be seen from Olympic up to Temple (a mile stretch, at least). The absolute lack of people, however, was due not to any impromptu nor impending carnage, but the break between pulling down all the stages and tents, and the cleaning-up of the day's drunken mess.

In any event, I departed. No, *we* departed. Unlike the solo fashion by which I had a decade and a half earlier delivered myself unto the west coast, this time I had with me a passenger. De-clawed some years before we collided, I could not help but have compassion for him and the way he seemed to have been abandoned by all others whom previously had been charged with Ernie the Cat's welfare. He probably had no concern about matters to come as we backed out of the Woodland Hills house that Friday at noon. As a Cat, he probably had little about which to fret; whether it were due to a burgeoning or declining sentience, I shall probably never know. ⁽²⁾

OUR FIRST STOP was in Tucumcare, New Mexico, a boomtown recently gone bust and one that relied almost exclusively on the rare international travler as well as any infrequent interstate drifter.

Entering Tucumcare with a loosening grip on reality induced by a full day's drive across a great stretch of unforgiving desert motorway, I immediately took two quick laps around what may as well have been Rod Serling's resting-home away from teevee-hell. Said spot of purgatory, locally known as The Tucumcare Boulevard Inn, had one inhabitant. He was standing stupidly against a sun-drenched motel wall, and in the moment I allowed my look to wander back to the road only to suddenly return to the otherwise bare wainscoting, he was nowhere. And I do mean *nowhere*, for there were no doors along the outer building against which he had only moments before been clearly standing. Whether a wisp of tainted vision painted by the possible onset of our Morning Star or a sign that the otherwise empty desert inn was no safe stop for a weary traveler, I cannot state. But as surely as I can even now envision the very denim cutoffs hanging dryly on the bearded man's waif-like waist, so, too, can I state that my interest was nevertheless deeply piqued. I continued into the front drive, pulling under the tawdry awning and stopping directly before the door. Locking my car doors while checking successfully for my spare keys, I exited the vehicle and stepped into the foyer to find the inner motel doors secured. Taped on the left one of the double glass doors was a sign that read, simply, "Gone to bank." Inside on the clerk's counter sat a tandem coffee maker, each pot filled with water. A third pot sat in the middle of a counter to the right; with it were some cups and an ashtray partially filled with butts. A (possibly) previously engaged monochrome monitor could be viewed through the recently cleaned glass doors leading to the questionable sanctuary of an inner office. The lobby lights, like the obviously lit monitor, were on. I knocked on the door. After a few pointless moments, I exited the stuffy foyer to wander in vain before the sandblasted bay windows while taking in the stale signs of existence. Making my way round to where the man had been, and seeing naught save weeds withering under the soon to be noon-day sun, I turned back to the car to find that Ernie was intact but the door locks were open.

Ernie, long in the tooth and exhibiting symptoms of the shellshock resultant of the resultant rapid travel, was nearly as nervous as his fraying nerves would allow. Alarmed at my absence, he had probably been at the driver's side window the whole time I had been away. I quickly obliged his obvious desire to leave, acting as if he alone had such a concern. We pulled out of the driveway and northeast along Tucumcare Boulevard, only to find no more than merely less mysterious motor hotels waiting further occupancy. I took a last chance and returned along the way I had just come and started yet again to turn round once again for a final pass and-

-And there it was. Truly an oasis it were, like love at first sight, the figurative saving grace, and surely something more than any proverbial port in the brewing storm.

It had no name, the vine-covered, L-shaped motor hotel, and it needed none. It was a better haven than I could imagine, and I was still wondering, as the borrowed car's tires crunched across the gravel, how in hell I *twice* missed seeing it. Bt I did not dwell long on my burgeoning delusions. I popped out of the vehicle, nearly sprinted into the shade of the shelter dealt, and was given a room - for a day and a half, if I desired - in exchange for the twenty dollar bill I surrendered with a quick flip of the wrist.

The thunderstorms came not much later in the day, and Ernie slept well, safe inside a rather large room with a firm foundation that hummed not at all. I sat outside beneath the awning that framed the entire building, peering out from the vines, sipping Guinness Extra Stout and recovering, that we could later continue wayward. Before too long, I took leave of the company that had gradually convened, drew a bath and after that was off to bed. By 3am, between rainstorms, we were off again.

AS THE SUN ROSE ON OUR SECOND DAY, I hurried to speed – but not so speedily as to allow me to be a quick bit of revenue for Tejas – through the smokestack section of that wretched place. But I was not to escape the Damn It! State without enduring the very misery that had marked my first true tour through it: motor malaise. This time it was a dearth of fuel brought on by my belief that we could make it to a filling station before the tank was empty. Just as it did in 1987, so, too, did the sun rise to illuminate my folly; again I walked with one terminal purpose in mind: not to stop, but to go. After a two, three or ten mile trek, I found a station whose attendant was kind enough to lend me a grease can that could hold a gallon of motor fuel. Despite the decent sleep in New Mexico, the two states' worth of travel that had since transpired left me spent. But the undesired anticipation of the return hike – under the mid-morning sun, no less – fueled my indignation much like the gas in the can hanging from my right hand would soon fire the pistons in my only briefly arrested four-door sedan, I was burning. Yet the burn was not so hard as to prevent me from anticipating the need for some way to convey the petrol from its lard tub to the gas tank: a paper towel tube found on the roadside worked well enough. It was a wonder that my anger failed to inflame the fumes as said tube was soiled by the gas. Ernie, confused by the concussions of the early morning eastbound eighteen wheelers, seemed nevertheless happy for us to be on our way again.

Next was Oklahoma City. A brief brush with the green field that marks the remains of ye olde federal building that was violently relieved of its middle section mere minutes after the federal gestapo were evacuated so as to let the explosives express their terrible voice upon the civilian proles and some of their nursery-bound yet no less doomed offspring. The site, now no more than an otherwise discretely covered scar on the once-aggravating acne that is indicative of the demeanour of America's biggest business, the U.S. Guv-Mint, truly works. Like the brevity for which it stands, I skated quickly past the remains and through the surrounding sands.

Skipping a mere degree or three north of the state whence I was seminally issued some thirty-five years ago, I continued madly towards my destination, but with one problem on my mind: fuel, and its imminent shortage. Pulling into a convenience shoppe just slightly north of the new Tahoe (Bruce Willis' Branson, MO) ⁽³⁾, I contemplated the soon-to-be-realised misery of vehicular estrangement. Little cash was left in our till, and judging from it, there was no way we could make it to New York.

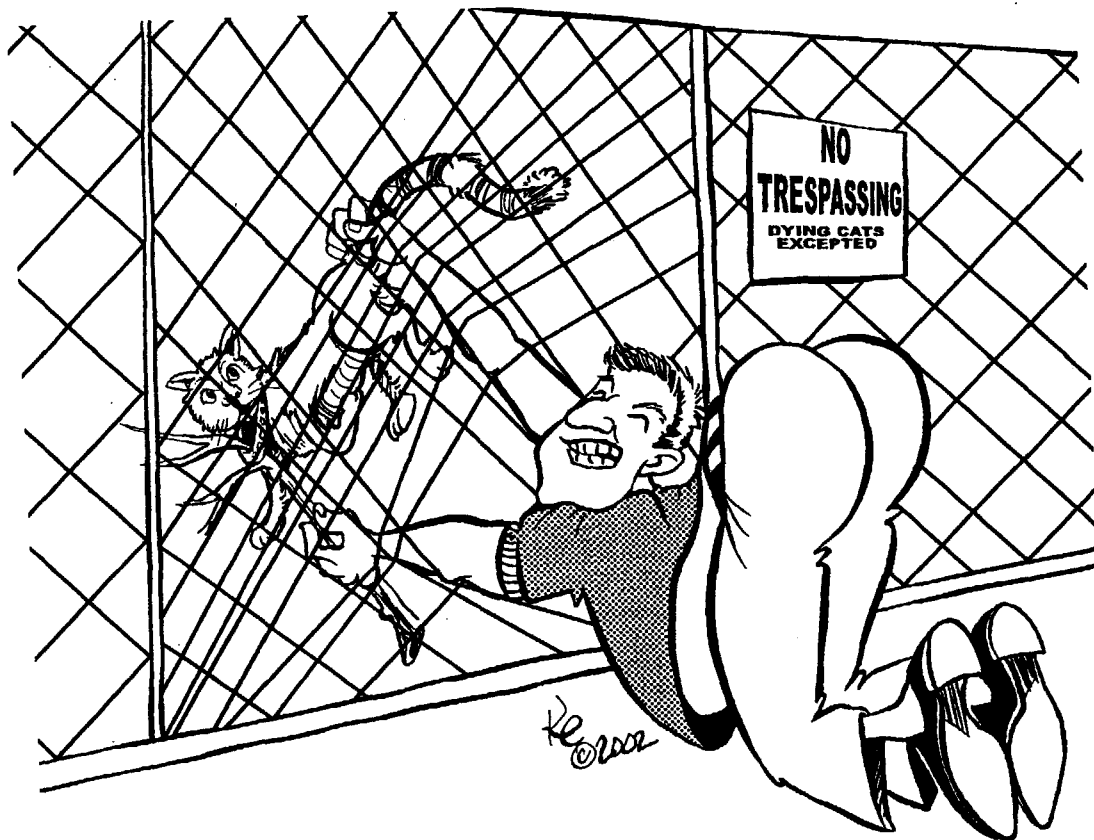
Here, I must admit the availability of a resource as well as the bulwark to it: my parents and my head, respectively. My folks, forever anxious about my tours yet (finally!) confident of my possible success, nevertheless offered help that I initially refused even as the winds of fate blew badly upon me. I was near panic when we pulled into the aforementioned stop. After wasting a dollar on a massive cup of coffee, I returned to our vehicle to verbally ascertain our desperation. **LOUDLY**. And as I started to state the situation to a stunned Ernie, I suddenly decided to step out and phone Sherry (a soon-to-be vain love in Manhattan) so as to act as if naught was amiss.

Marching boldly round the rear of the motorcar, I nearly stepped over a crisp albeit oddly folded \$50.00 bill.

With an almost fatal enthusiasm, we barreled across the rest of the rust belt. The earlier shortage of fuel – and its subsequent resolution – was indicative of the day to come. The eternal blast of the sandy range over which we raced was amplified frightfully by the decision to stop

using the car's fuel-consuming air conditioner. This, in turn, accelerated Ernie's unfavourable reaction to the late summer heat; and it was not long before he was seeking shelter beneath my feet between the pedals whose proper deployment determined our fate every minute of the way. He was panting madly, and I was cursing loudly. He suffered, I screamed and the car never stopped until Ernie nearly died.

Careening frantically off the tollway some miles east of St. Louis, MO, I was nearly in tears as I carted Ernie into the saving grace of a small spot of shade in the central area of a tiny rest stop. Despite the stink of human waste wafting our way from the outhouse-styled toilets so graciously provided by the state of OK (*a measure mandated to deter terrorism as well as any hint of civilisation, I imagine*), I sat and petted he whom had come under my woeful care. Thinking he was well enough for a moment, I quickly skipped back to the car to retrieve some food and water for him. The short span of time proved enough for him to purposely "wander" off through a barbed wire fence. He was just out of arm's length so that he could lay down and finally die.



Desperate to not repeat what to Nefertii had happened not a year earlier (3), I panicked. I started screaming at the poor olde boy; he stared back at me with a contentment that only made me more insane with rage and desperation. When he let his head flop onto the decomposing leaves and his tongue loll out to wet a patch of ground already mouldy with decay, I acted with a swift madness. Successfully seeking a long and strong branch, I stuck it through the fence and twisted it into Ernie's collar. Responding violently, he twisted as I partially choked him; when he came to his feet and attempted to back away from the offending intrusion, it was with his ass towards me. I grabbed his tail, quickly released the stick and shoved my other arm through the skin-ripping fence, dragging him back from the bliss that I myself had not the courage to attempt.

Dazed by the pain of salted eyes, scratched arms and a hardened heart strafed by some sort of strange love, I carried Ernie back into the shade of the nearby Oak tree. Lying down with him,

guarding his failed corpse with my bloody arms, I snuggled close in an attempt to impart life as much as to draw strength from his ironically innervated spirit.

Eventually we continued northeast towards Toledo, OH, a distant stop off our path wherein resided a doctor whose embrace would save us. (Her profession and public position prevents me from disclosing her name, but I can mention that she was known as "L" in the previously published series entitled *Los Angeles Downtown Diaries*.) There we were greeted with a truly great bed and breakfast while being entertained not only by our accommodating host, L, but also by two wonderfully confused Cats, Jasper and Shiva. We soon slept, neither Ernie nor I caring for the moment what the morning might bring, if anything at all.

A LATE START ON OUR LAST DAY OF TRAVEL, but being well rested we were also eager to end our journey as planned. Taking the tollway due east towards New York, the miles melted away as the day progressed. Possessed with a ferocity that seemed to make both of us glow, the car seemed likewise to slip over the road and through the woods as if by magic.

I contemplated a detour south to Akron, Ohio: by doing so we could have ripped through the Kent State University campus like a 5.56 ml round seeking satisfaction in some unfortunate student's abdomen. But I felt that enough risks had been taken during our mad dash across the U.S., and the obligatory major mistake made every few minutes or so had already been claimed by the Ohio National Guard. The last few sentences describing my reluctance to waste time and precious fuel seemed foolish enough (even if I had to complete the trip to contemplate the trite metaphors mentioned directly above!). In any case, I was too renewed to trip even slightly south of the straightest line (along which I had allowed my fate to be strewn), that I might slip through forgotten sites of olde deaths. Before I could think more about it, we had passed the already dwindling opportunity and the eastern seaboard loomed ever nearer.

I noticed Pennsylvania only because it took the rest of the day (and a little of the night) to traverse. Slicing through the shit-filled state of New Jersey, I dumped my fear and stepped on the accelerator. We tore through the tollways, and then, there it was, finsally, a-gain, for the third time in my life: New York City.

At the entrance of the Holland Tunnel, I lied to the toll-taker about what little cash I had on hand, and was told a bill would be sent later. (*I imagine a photo was taken of the license plate.*) Attempting – poorly! – to restrain myself as Ernie and I raced through the twists under the Hudson, we soon enough emerged amidst the recently ruptured city. A not-so-quick semi-right-turn had us on the crowded Canal Street, but I gained our bearing and quickly took us south to the site of what was once the World Trade Center Towers. It was a few minutes of midnight, Monday night, and the numerical order that had manifest came to mind: one trip completed, two towers gone, and three days done. We zipped around the brightly lit WTC Pit, popped up past Canal Street (again!), then Houston, and finally into Alphabet City. Avenues A, B and just past C and then into the squat on East 9th Street where we would very soon sleep; it was somewhere slightly north of the once riotous Thompkins Square Park. With a strangely settling abruptness not unlike our trip, this tale ended.

(1) *Angry Thoreauan magaZine*

(2) Ernie the Cat has since passed away, I am afraid to state.

(3) hailing (relatively) from Hollywood, I must namedrop at least once, eh?

(4) a cat with whom I had lived for ten years, and one whose brutal death in the jaws of the slumlord's dog was the beginning of the end of my fifteen-year-olde rag (the aforementioned *AT*)





Will this help?

Te Grol

12-11

When I Go To Sleep

...

... I am a science fiction fan. Within the realms of Morpheus I do fan activity. I have several kinds of sequential dreams and a number of them concern fandom.

One dream sequence involves trying to find the registration desk so I can get my badge and attend the convention. Much like a Kafka novel, I am situated in an endless hotel lobby, and greet dozens and dozens of people, have endless wonderful conversations and move on to the direction of the registration desk. The desk in question often moves, winds up on another floor and has signs on it that read: "Go to Information desk", or "Register in hotel suite", and I move on, greeting more people and conversations go on and on. I never do find the desk, but often wander in front of the huckster room, which I am not allowed to enter until I have registered. I get tired in this scenario, because I am wearing a backpack and carrying a suitcase.

The other major dream sequence is simply called "The Elevator." I am in one and I am surrounded by people. The door opens. People get off, people get on. I talk and talk as people enter and leave. Often more than one door opens up at a time. I never budge and seem content with the situation. I, after all, am getting to see just about everyone at the convention.

I've had this dream only twice: I am in the huckster room, looking for one dealer and one book the dealer has for me. I cannot find him and fear I may never get that particular book. It seems to be a multi-sized worldcon huckster room, with several floors and rooms. I find everything else, but not the specific dealer with the singular book. I don't recall if I had registered for the convention.

Last sequence of dreams has to do with getting fans together and going out for a meal. It takes forever, and some people drop out, some people show up and others invite themselves along. I find these dreams odd and comforting, though they are people by fans I do not see often enough, and often the fans are those who have passed away. Like the outcomes of the other sequences of dreams, we never do sit down and have a meal. At least this way, I am not presented with a bill.

Robert Whitaker Sirignano



VISITORS & VISITED

Okay, so we didn't get to ConJose. But we *did* make it to the Huntsville Alabama **DeepSouthCon**, where Rose-Marie was honored **kof** with the **Rubble Award** for turning a pompous blowhard (me) into a *giddy love-struck* blowhard! To right, la belle and Jessie with her trophies – including a Betty Rubble doll!

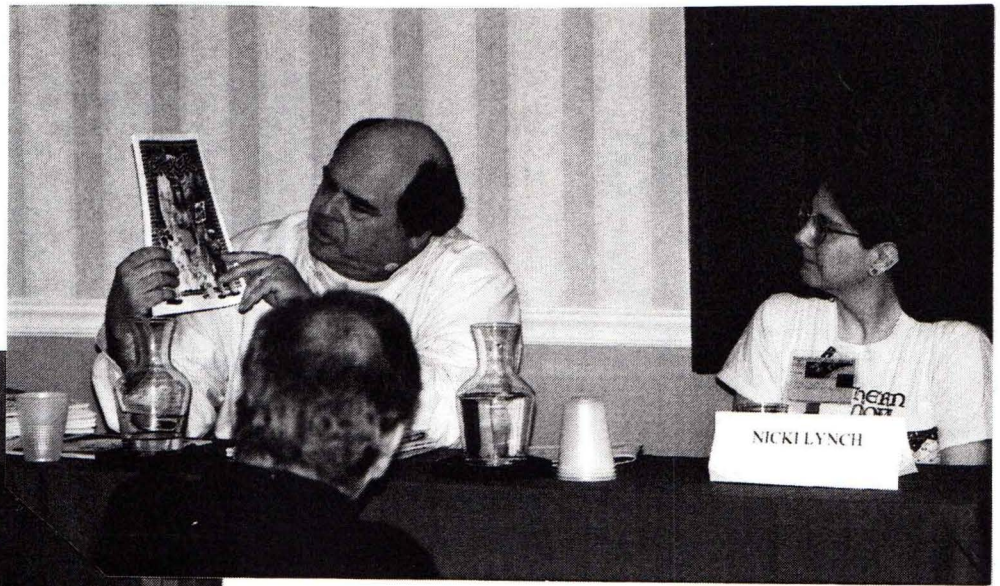


DSC gave out real awards, too, such as this **Phoenix trophy** to GoH **Allen Steele**.

29

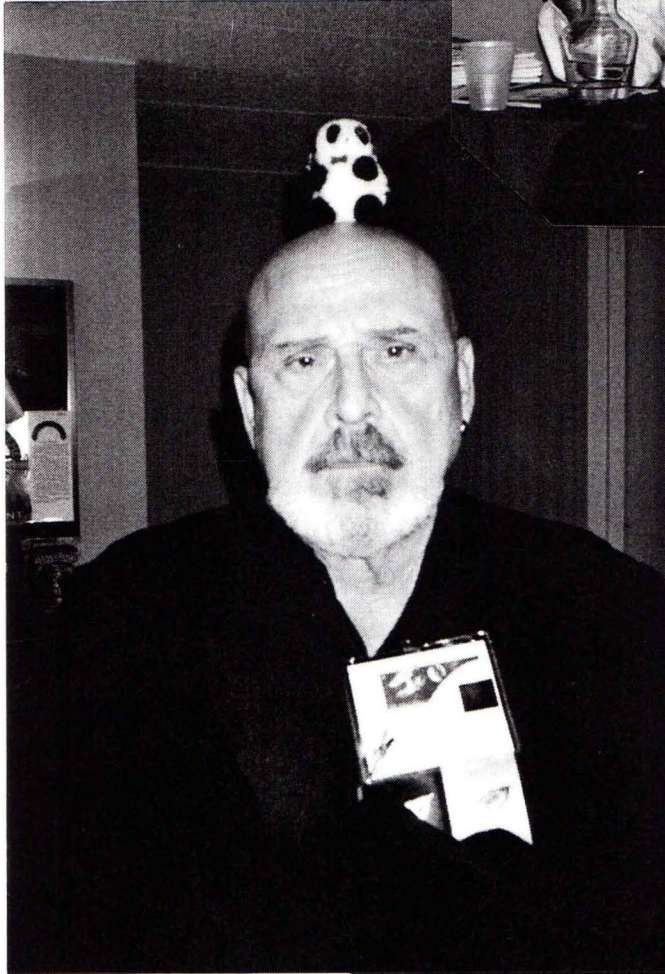
To right, **Chall pal Greg Benford** and UK in '05 chair **Vince Docherty** eye something succulent.





More DeepSouthCon ... above, **GHLIII** tries to convince Fan GoH **Nicki Lynch** that **Challenger** is half as good as **Mimosa**. Rotsa Ruck! To left, **Mib the Panda** suffers a **Hank Reinhardt**-size growth on his rear end.

Below, a New Orleans scene we could have lived without: the last night of the fabled **Hummingbird Grill**. Here **Dennis Dolbear** flanks the municipally-famous wall menu, one last time. (See "Bye Bye Birdie" elsewhere in this issue.)





Handwritten signature or initials.

*BLOW WIND, AND
CRACK YOUR CHEEKS...*

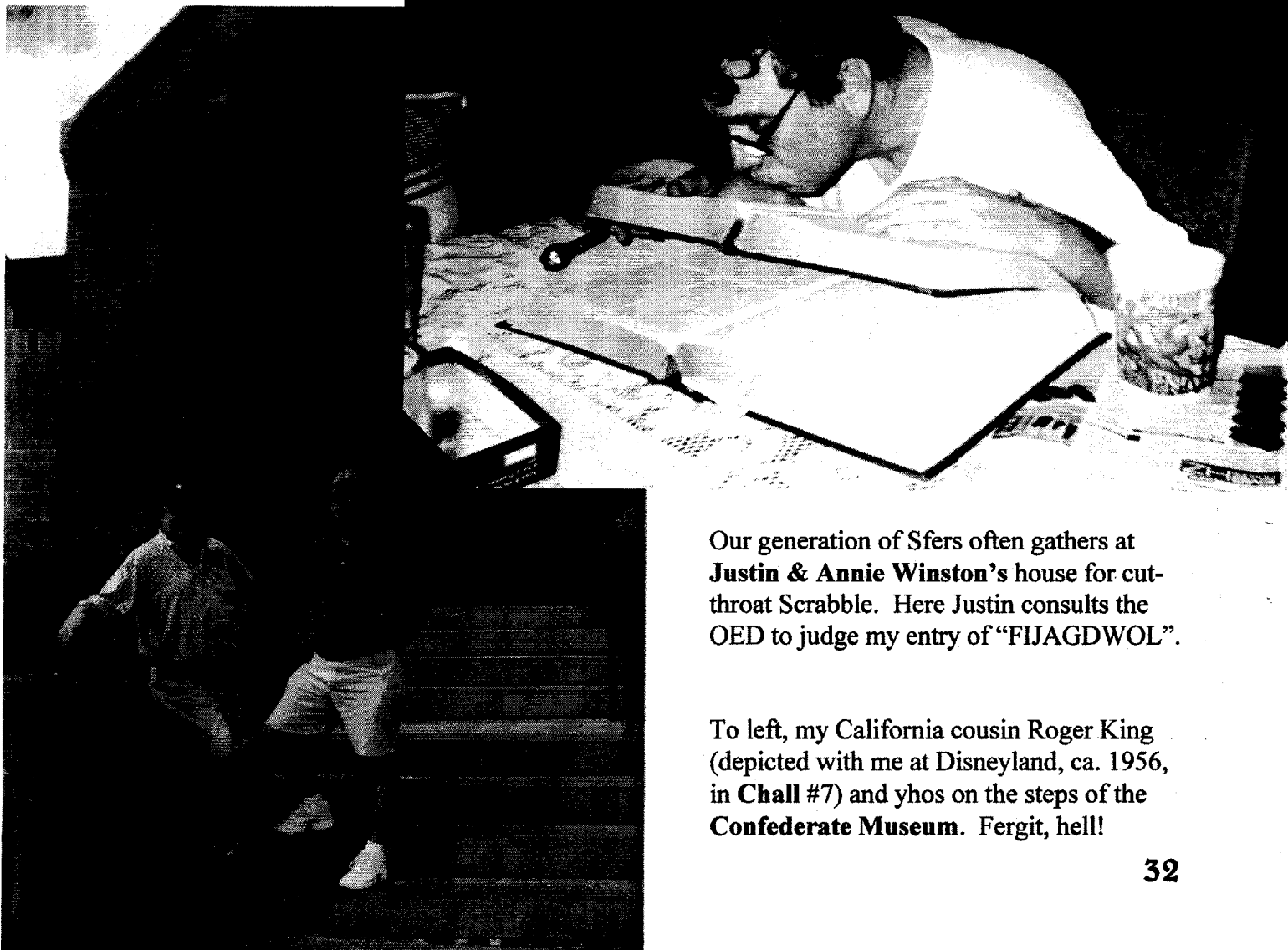
Most unwelcome visitors to Louisiana over the autumn of 2002 were tropical storms **Isidore** and **Lily**. Damage was light and few were hurt, but the New Orleans lakefront got a righteous drenching. Above, I call my nephew **Steve** to wish him a happy hurricane birthday, and to right, as she always does, Rose-Marie shines through ...

Handwritten signature or initials.





There is much fun to do in Louisiana, like visit the beautiful **Oak Alley Plantation** an hour upriver from the Easy. From the plantation house Rosy views the magnificent arcade which gave the site its name.

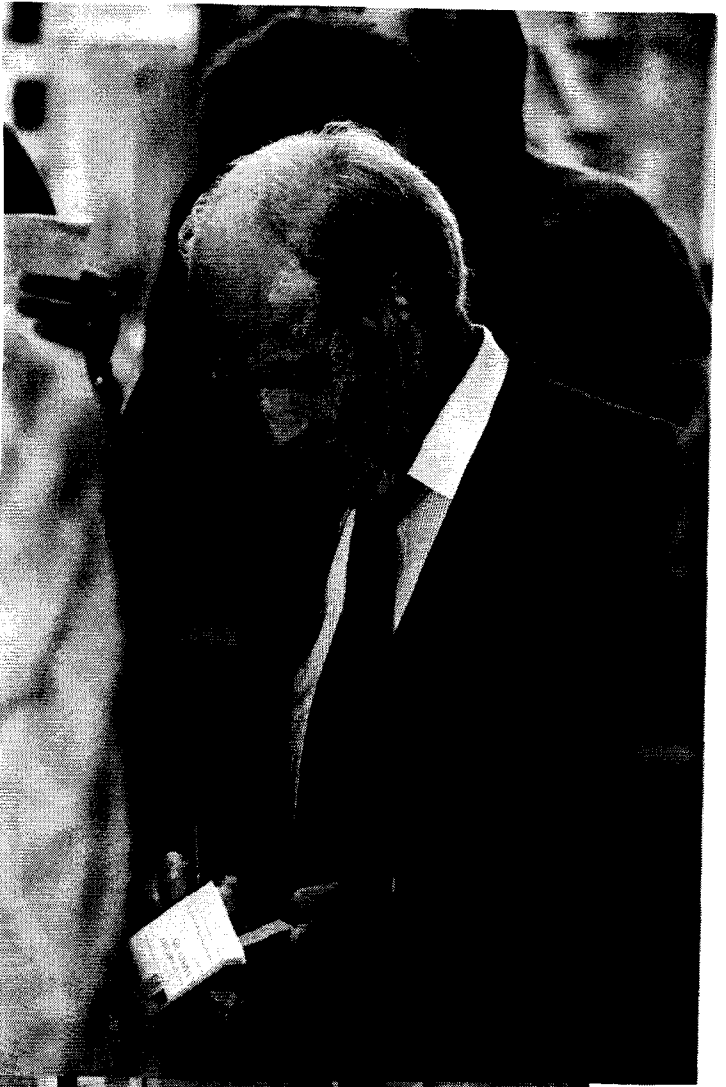


Our generation of Sfers often gathers at **Justin & Annie Winston's** house for cut-throat Scrabble. Here Justin consults the OED to judge my entry of "FIJAGDWOL".

To left, my California cousin Roger King (depicted with me at Disneyland, ca. 1956, in **Chall #7**) and yhos on the steps of the **Confederate Museum**. Fergit, hell!

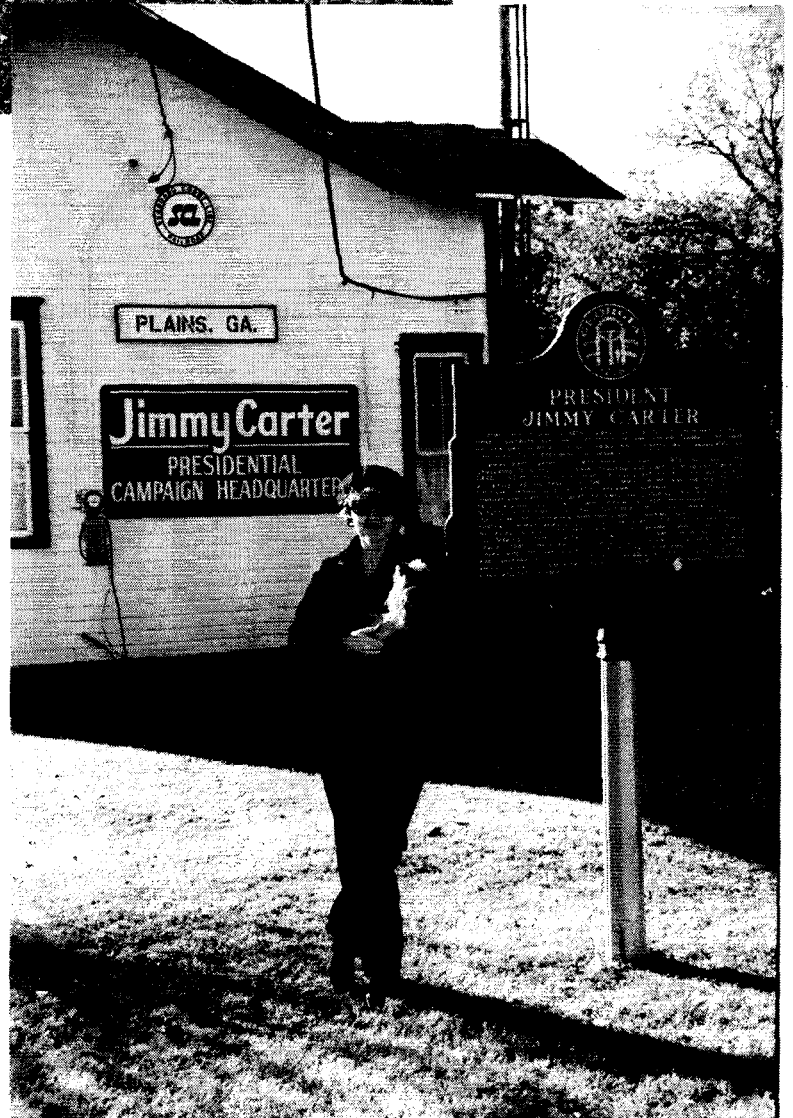


While Roger and his wife Sue were here, I made a special arrangement to bring in **George McGovern** and the first **President Bush**. Actually, the two Georges made an appearance at the **D-Day Museum** to honor its founder, the late **Stephen Ambrose**, along with **Tom Brokaw**, barely visible below to Bush's left. They kept us away from the former chief executive (my 7th in-person President) but I was able to shake hands with McGovern and thank him for the vote I'm still the most proud of. Come home, America, indeed.



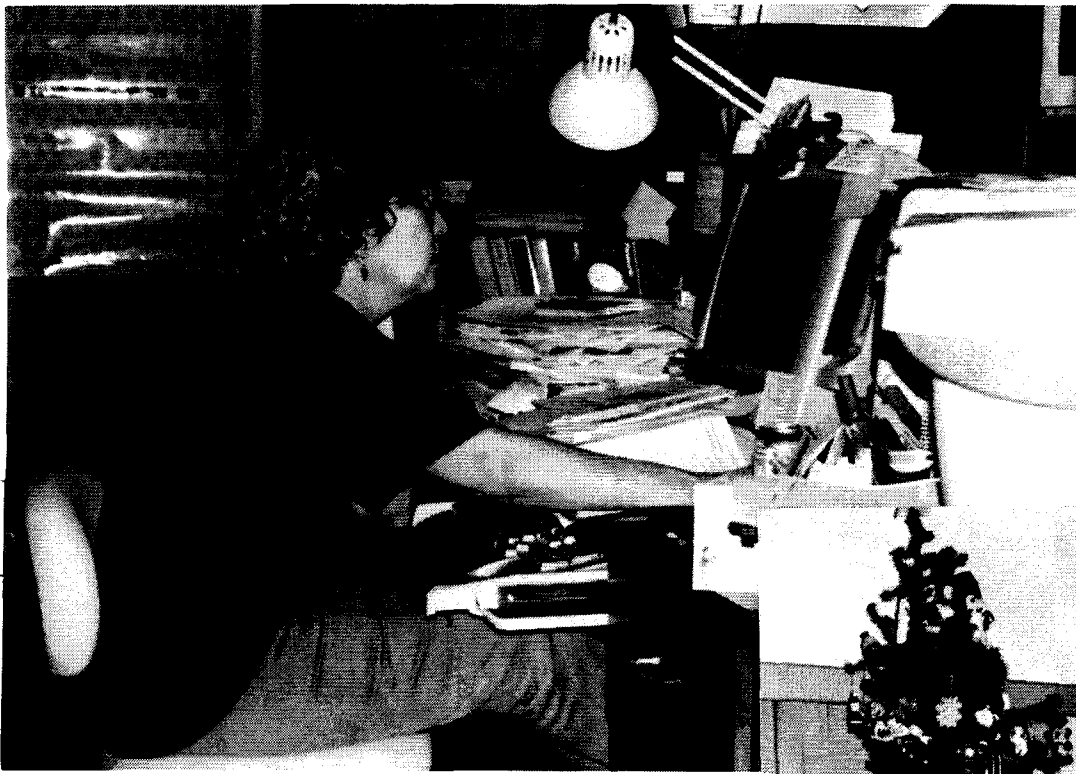
On the *next page*, shots from a recent **Georgia** jaunt. Bottom left, our wonderful and generous hostess **Mary Ann van Hartesveldt** shows off her prize-winning rose arrangement. Above, on a re-visit to **Andersonville**, I study the tombstones of the disgraced yankee **Raiders**, and wonder how I would have defended them. To right, Rosy and Jessie in a little town just down the pike from Andersonville ... a wide spot in the highway which gave the world one of the 3 men who both served as President and won the Nobel Peace Prize. They grow more than peanuts in Plains ... but we bought some anyway. (It turned out we missed seeing the #1 citizen of the town – and the country – by two short hours. On the way out, we passed his house & beeped the horn.)





CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Last year we braved the wintry north. This year, it was wintry Florida, where temperatures dipped sometimes to *sixty degrees*. To left, **Patty Green** preps the new **Challenger** website



Above, *la belle Rose* plays Santa at her mother's condo in Royal Palm Beach. To left, Santa's present for Rosy's stepdad, **Harold Rothbard**, a 1 ½ pound ball of purebred yorkie fur named **Tinker**. Hope your holidays were as happy!

Rich Dengrove once again takes on the myth of flying saucers ... but unlike many another, can really tell us where they came from!



Ron Juge

EXTRATERRESTRIALS:

A HISTORY OF AN IDEA. PART 1. THE STARS.

Richard Dengrove

I will devote this essay to how we came to believe in intelligent life in other solar systems. I have done this even though belief in life in ours and life in others has often been closely intertwined. There is too much material. Intelligent life on our system's planets is a whole other essay. At the least.

There have been two main theories about intelligent life among the stars. One is that Man is the Center of the Universe. A corrupt center surrounded by the spiritual grandeur of God and the angels, but the center nonetheless. In fact, its very corruption made it the center. This conception of the universe is considered Aristotle's, whose theory of gravity – more a theory of non-gravity – inferred it.

There was some controversy over whether stars and planets had souls or orbited because of spiritual beings who inhabited them. Usually angels. Aristotle originally believed the

stars and planets had souls. Albertus Magnus and Saint Thomas Aquinas said it made no difference. Whether by their souls or angels, the stars and planets still orbited.

All 20th Century histories of extraterrestrials ignore this theory. I mention it because extraterrestrials have often been close to angels: without sin, more rational, sometimes with miraculous technology. The last not as often in the 18th and 19th Centuries as in the 20th Century. Neither miraculous technology nor angelic powers were needed because extraterrestrials, unlike angels, did not stand watch and ward over man and nature.

Nonetheless, as I have shown in my last article in **Challenger**, the Extraterrestrials of the 18th Century were often angelic like this. The type continued into the 19th Century too. And the 20th and 21st.

One striking example is Ellen White, the founder of Seventh Day Adventism. She portrayed extraterrestrials who were angelic as well as actual angels. Ellen had a vision of the planet in the Orion nebula where God was breaking through. While on that planet, Ellen was attended by an angel. On the other hand, the extraterrestrials there were "noble, majestic and lovely" because they followed God's commandments strictly. In short, they were angels in their way. Given the hold which the past had even during the mid-19th Century, such angels had to go back to Aristotle.

The second theory is that there are intelligent beings like us in other solar systems. The idea is known as the Plurality of Worlds. In fact, there may be an infinite number of suns with planets and infinite number of intelligent beings

Originally, this theory came from the philosophers Leucippus (fl 5th Century B.C.) and Democritus (460 B.C.-370 B.C.), who, strangely enough, lived before Aristotle. It was made popular by Epicurus (341 B.C.-270 B.C.). The rationale of these Classical Greek philosophers had to do with ancient atomic theory; only later did the Plurality of Worlds get its trademark theological rationale. It is amazing how easily this originally materialistic theory became religious and mystical.

There has been a misconception that this theory is based on the facts. Lovejoy tries to correct this notion and points out that people could not know that the stars were suns until the distance was measured between our solar system and the star 61 Cygni in 1838 by Friedrich Bessel (1784-1846).

The problem is worse than that. Lovejoy presupposes that that proves there are planets orbiting those stars; something we only recently have been able to observe even indirectly. And then what about intelligent life? We still have not observed that elsewhere in the universe.

We know it exists nonetheless.

The original Ancient Greek Plurality of Worlds differs from what it became in another way. The worlds in the original were not seen but unseen. And beyond the stars. A view that was taken by Lucretius (ca 55 B.C.-99.B.C.). However, I am convinced that, by the late Roman Empire, there were some who believed

in other worlds in outer space – and extraterrestrials.

Crowe claims that the first sign that someone, seriously, believed the other worlds were in outer space came from the Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (fl. 4th Century). He claimed Heraclitus, the Pythagoreans and Orpheans believed every star was a world, and presumably inhabited. Their idea of solar systems here being different from ours.

This statement by Eusebius is a slender reed. These beliefs are being described by someone who despised them. And who could easily have gotten them wrong. He certainly got Heraclitus' beliefs wrong.

However, I have other evidence as well, from Lucian of Samosata (120 A.D - after 180 A.D.). He lived even earlier. A part of his *True Story* concerns a trip to the Moon. It is true he meant his tale as a joke, to lampoon traveler's tales. In the beginning, he admits every word he has written is a lie. On his Moon, people had children from the calves of their legs and had detachable eyes. There was a giant bird the Lunarians rode on, with lettuce for wings.

Nonetheless, wittingly or unwittingly, he placed the Other Worlds in outer space. I have heard that a journal of his says that he rather wittingly advocated Plurality of Worlds, but placing them in outer space was apparently unwitting. An assumption, it seems, when earlier philosophers seemed to have made the opposite assumption.

There certainly are Other Worlds beside the Moon in *True Story*. There is a war between the Moon and the Sun for possession of the Morning Star. I wonder if Ptolemy's or others' new astronomy made it seem the Moon, Sun and the planets were more like Other Worlds and less like the Aristotelian gods, spirits or souls?

The next person I know of to place the Other Worlds in outer space was Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64), a priest. He did this in 1440. He is also known as Nikolaus Krebs, Nicolaus Cusanus and Nicholas of Kues. Later, despite advocating the Plurality of Worlds, Nicholas became a cardinal.

He believed life, including men, animals and plants, exists in the lunar, solar and stellar regions, i.e., the Moon, Sun and the Stars. In fact, he believed all of the stars are inhabited.

Whimsically, he suggested that they followed astrology. Bright, enlightened and spiritual beings on the Sun; lunatics on the Moon.

Nicholaus set a lot of firsts. His reasons for believing were not scientific in the least but fully inferred from his Platonic conception of God. And writers followed similar reasoning down to the late 19th Century.

Another first from Nicholaus was that the extraterrestrials exist in a higher form than we on Earth. After saying the Solarians were bright and enlightened and the Lunarians lunatics, he had Earth people lower down and material. I have no doubt that this Platonist was taking a bow to Aristotle. As have many other who have imitated him down to the present time.

A third first from Nicholaus was that, having whimsically fathered astrological attributes on them, he realized that there was no way to know who or what the extraterrestrials are. An attitude responsible people have, after flights of fantasy, returned to from his time to today.

Later, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) also advocated the Plurality of Worlds. Which, despite folklore, apparently was not the reason he was burnt. His infinite universe was certainly different from Lucretius' and Epicurus'. All things, including the planets and the stars, were living. And all things were Divine. He advocated a very intellectual magic. And the stars influenced this magic both in demonic and angelic ways.

There is another thing striking about Bruno's system: it integrated the Plurality of Worlds with Copernicanism. His planets moved around Suns not vice versa. Apparently Bruno was not the first to do this; Thomas Digges earlier fused Copernicanism with the Plurality of Worlds. And Bruno could have easily read him while he resided in England.

After that a whole array of famous people debated whether there was a Plurality of Worlds with intelligent life. Early on, opponents dominated. Between the late 17th Century and the late 19th Century, those favoring it were in the vast majority.

I will list famous people you would recognize. Those famous in America only to experts, like Friedrich Klopstock the 18th Century German Milton, I will omit.

Here goes the list: Johann Kepler, René Descartes, Christiaan Huygens, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop George Berkeley, John Locke, Alexander Pope, Sir William Herschel, John Wesley, David Hume, Cotton Mather, Benjamin Franklin, Voltaire, Thomas Paine, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelly, Sir Humphrey Davy, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Huxley, Daniel Webster, August de Morgan, Georg Hegel, Joseph Smith, and Auguste Comte.

It might be cheating to mention Auguste Comte and Georg Hegel. Their contribution was that they said in no uncertain terms they could be less interested in what happened in other star systems.

However, Voltaire wrote more than dozen philosophical novels where he dealt with the moral ramification of the Plurality of Worlds. In *Candide*, if you read the people Voltaire was attacking, like Leibniz, you will see he certainly was doing just that.

Some were skeptical of the Plurality of Worlds. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, and David Hume, the well-known skeptic, for their own purposes doubted how explicit a plan God had for the cosmos. Wesley even used scientific evidence against the Plurality of Worlds.

Occasionally, we get revelations about Other Worlds. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Church of Latter Day Saints, said that his told him it was not the Earth that was closest to the throne of God but a planet called Kolob.

Two authors seem to claim the first part of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* concerns the Plurality of Worlds. As far as I can see, we are lucky if there are four pages concerning it. However, here is the famous Thomas Paine quote:

"From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who "had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all "the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one woman had "eaten an apple! And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the "boundless creation had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer? In this

case, the "person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would "have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of "death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life."

Also, Daniel Webster was supposed to have lost his faith in Christianity because of the Plurality of Worlds. Other writers, like Rev. Thomas Chalmers and Rev. Thomas Dick, proselytized for religion by invoking the Plurality Worlds. Since they are not famous to us, I omitted them above.

The Plurality of Worlds was a favorite of poets. Percy Bysshe Shelly wrote in "Prometheus Unbound" (1820)

"Then, see those million worlds which
burn and roll

"Around us; their inhabitants beheld

"My spher'ed light wane in wide
heaven...."

Alfred Tennyson wrote in "The Two Voices" (1833)

"The truth within my mind rehearse

"that in a boundless universe

"Is boundless better, boundless worse...

"Think you this mould of hopes and
fears

"Could find no statelier than his peers

"In yonder hundred million spheres."

In "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (1852), he wrote

"Tho' world on world in myriad
myriads roll

"Round us, each with different powers,

"And other forms of life than ours,

"What know we greater than the soul?"

Now back to people you have never heard of: one in particular who fired a parting shot in the controversy, William Whewell. A famous philosopher in his time, though less famous right now, he decided that the Plurality of Worlds was irreconcilable with Christianity. That the only position reconcilable with it was that Earth was the only planet in the universe with intelligent life. He published a book claiming that in 1853. It brought much

philosophy and many of the latest scientific findings to bear on the question.

And it inaugurated a great controversy. And some vituperation. Among the participants was Sir David Brewster (1781-1868), a famed scientific thinker, winner of medals from the Royal Society. He was one of those people, I mentioned, whose faith in God was based on the Plurality of Worlds. And apparently he was much in need of God right then. And very angry that someone was trying to take his faith away.

He was scathing in his attacks on Whewell: "a man dead to feeling and shorn of reason," "utterly inept and illogical." "the grapeshot of assertion, banter, and ridicule," "some morbid condition of mental powers."

However, Sir David could not stop the trend, which was going against the Plurality of Worlds. And for a more scientific, and less religious and philosophical, approach to the stars. By giving as much evidence as he did, Whewell helped.

Of course, while it may have proven there was no intelligent life on the Sun, the Moon, and the planets of our solar system, which the Pluralists claimed, none of it came close to proving we were it in the universe.

One who, unlike Whewell, embraced the scientific approach completely was the most famous writer in England on other worlds in the decades afterward, Richard A. Proctor. On the other hand, Camille Flammarion in France kept up a religious/philosophical approach for six decades, into the 1920s. His views were far from conventional: his idea of the Plurality of Worlds included reincarnation. Still, he was popular in France and elsewhere.

However, the atmosphere was primarily scientific, and two scientific theories took over. The Buffon Theory named after the Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707-1788). And the Kant/Laplace theory named after Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Pierre-Simon de Laplace (1749-1827), known also as the Nebula Hypothesis.

In the Buffon theory, planets, and thus intelligent life, have been an accident. It has been the scientific replacement for the Man the Center theory. If man was not the center of the universe, he was at least the center of intelligence.

In the Nebula Hypothesis, planets are formed as a matter of course from dust, planetoids, etc. It has been the scientific replacement for the Plurality of Worlds. There were other stars systems, and its proponents presumed other intelligent beings as well. These theories have competed with one another down to the present time.

The Buffon Theory, where planets around stars are rare, dominated between 1900 and 1940. Theoretically, intelligent beings were few and far between – if man was not the only one. Unlike during the Plurality period, not everyone fell into line.

This trend did not seem to affect science fiction. It is true that a lot of science fiction about extraterrestrials took place where it always had, in our solar system. Certainly the Burroughs books did; and C.S. Lewis' trilogy, Wells' *First Men in the Moon*, and Stanley Weinbaum's *Martians*.

However, Olaf Stapledon's *Star Maker* took place all over the known universe. And beyond. And David Lindsay's *Voyage to Arcturus* took place in the Arcturus system. The last was unpopular, as far as I can tell, because of its pessimism rather than its setting.

After 1940, the Buffon theory was replaced by a renewed Kant/Laplace theory. And I cannot help believing that in this time of "pluralism," this scientific replacement for the theory of the Plurality of Worlds would be attractive. Again not everyone has fallen completely into line, at least with intelligent extraterrestrials. It is not rare that science fiction stories and novels will have humans colonize a galaxy where humans are the only intelligent life.

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BUD LITE IN A BOTTLE

Michael Estabrook

Very strange with our 23 year old daughter in this Irish Pub, a simple box-like room with cheap chairs and worn stained tables, cigarette smoke floating, loud inaudible drinking song lyrics, clumps of young men in groups shouting to communicate with one another. We're with her young man and his parents, first time ever, standing to the side on the dirty, gritty floor trying to hear ourselves above the din, while drinking Bud Lite in a bottle. I can't, no matter how I twist and turn it, inspecting it top to bottom, figure it out. This place is nothing to speak of, doesn't have good food or dancing, the three piece "band" stinks (even Chris said so), it's cold and smelly and dirty and loud, nothing really worthy in here, except of course for our beautiful daughter smiling, happy, so comfortable and content, carefreely holding her cold Bud Lite in a bottle in her pretty little gloved hands, leaning against her young man.

PREDATOR VERSUS THE ROAD RUNNER

Robert Whitaker Sirignano
Script attempt #73

This is a simple outline.

Predator (or something to be called a "Trophy Hunter") has seen too much Earth based television, and decides to visit Marvin the Martian.

Marvin tells him that nothing on the planet Earth has ever caught a road runner. That's all the Predator needs to hear. He flies his space ship into the American Southwest.

He sets up an elaborate device he has purchased from "Acme Intergalactic" in an effort to catch the elusive bird. Bird looks in device. Bird dodges coyote, and falls into device. Predator catches a nosey coyote. In an effort to free the coyote, the trap shocks the alien.

Or: Coyote places large rubber band across the road, bird runs by, Predator hits rubber band and goes sailing into the sky, falls on his space ship, sets off a rocket that hits the coyote.

All efforts by the Predator to catch the bird are interrupted by the coyote, all which backfire onto the Predator. All coyote's efforts backfire on the Predator and the coyote.

After a few skirmishes, the Predator has developed a large hatred for the coyote, and begins to set out to trap him.

The end shot frame set is back to Marvin the Martian, watching a television set and who has been shooting and recording the sequence of events. He says "Isn't it lovely? I know I'll watch it more than once."

Finis

POLICE STORIES – II

GHLIII

The relationship between the people of New Orleans and their police force was already sour when I met Leon. In 1979, the police union called a strike just before Mardi Gras in an attempt to force the city to accept the Teamsters Union as their arbitrator. Teamsters! No wonder the city's first black mayor, Ernest "Dutch" Morial, told the cops to pound sand.

The union got it into their heads that the people would blame Morial if anything screwed up Mardi Gras – but they seriously misjudged the public mood. Rather than have their parades used for political blackmail, most of the major krewes simply canceled. The word went forth, person to person – *let's show them*. Show them they – we – did. The Carnival street party went on as normal, without cops, with no particular rise in devilry. Officers who dumped the union and went back to the beat were greeted with handshakes, thanks, and cheers. The strike fizzled and broke.



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Eventually, though, the union got what it wanted, but the strike had shoved a wedge between the police and the people. It split the whole city apart a few Mardis Gras later. It was 1987, at the Bacchus parade, when I became part of it.

At the outset I was just part of the crowd at the corner of Chestnut and Napoleon Avenue, a Garden District intersection near the start of the parade route. Gloriously pretty night, March 1: warm under a clear, lustrous sky, the silver moon a smile climbing into the purpling heavens. Great crowd, too, mostly families, happy people at a happy time. Preteen cheerleaders of infinite energy practiced pom-pom dance kicks. An older lady shepherded her excited 5-ish granddaughter. Magic string spun from countless spray cans to enmesh victims in harmless, peel-away webs. Above us, tree limbs hung low – the trees at Berkeley had grown heavy with tear gas slime; these hung ready for beads. A couple of young SF fans I knew walked by. They invited me to join their klatsch down the block, but I demurred. My date with destiny was here.

It was as sweet a scene as Carnival holds. Bacchus was a great gaudy lallapalooza of a parade, its riders generous with beads and doubloons and other jazzy junk, its king – William Shatner, do you believe it – bouncy and spunky. The crowd was happy and very *cooperative*. That's always important at a parade; the swinging trombones and whirling drumsticks of marching bands would lop off noses if people didn't fade back on request. These people did so. In truth, I'd never seen a better-behaved crowd.

Nor worse police.

Wait – I must keep this singular and specific. There were lots of police on that street. Most were utterly indifferent. Only one went berserk.

He was a short black guy, who seemed excited, but smiled easily enough and exchanged finger-flutters with a little girl on her daddy's shoulders. Later, I found out his name – Leon – and that his usual patrol was nights on New Orleans' rough Industrial Canal. My first explanation for what

happened was that cruising the docks at night was hardly proper training for handling parade crowds – especially on the 12-hour shifts cops were forced to work during Carnival. But other explanations came to make more sense. Like psychosis. Like crack cocaine. Like *vicious street punk*.

He charged into the crowd after a teenager. He drilled into the kid with his hands at his throat, crushing him down onto a baby stroller as the screaming parents yanked their child away. He grabbed the throat of a teenage girl and pushed her back, oblivious to the toddler clutching her knees. The man with the little girl on his shoulders tried to get between them. He swatted him in the stomach with his nightstick. The older woman and her grandchild were next; he pushed her viciously back into her family and all went sprawling. I was next.

He planted his hand on my chin and his PR-24 – the short baton with the side handle – against my chest and the next thing I knew I was flat on the ground. He kept shouting “*Git behin’ de line!*” Of course, everyone was behind the line, but he didn’t care. He was in the Zone. “*Git behin’ de line!*”

You know, I wasn’t scared. It’s remarkable, for a guy who shies from violence and has to drink himself into a stupor to board an airplane – but I wasn’t frightened. I was outraged, furious, and on my back, that animal’s hand on my jaw, his nightstick on my chest. I struggled free and came up shouting “Badge number! *Badge number!*” His reply was unchanged. “*Git behin’ de line!*” His partner stood and watched in sullen, stupid silence.

A sergeant came up. Turned out he was a neighbor of the first people the cop had attacked. I demanded that he get me the creep’s name and badge number. Reluctantly, the rank went and spoke to him, and though he shook his head at first, he gave it. I got busy collecting names from every witness there who would give them. Many were frightened, reluctant; I told them, forget **Adam-12** and **Hill Street Blues**. Learn the lesson I learned at People’s Park and had found solidly true in law school: just because

somebody gave this punk a gun and a club and a piece of tin doesn’t mean that he deserves them; just because being a cop is a scary job with rotten pay doesn’t mean they have any right to do this to us. I got a lot of names. One nurse witness said the cop looked like someone wild on crack.

“I’ll see you again,” Leon snickered when he thought no one could hear him.

Law school had had its effect on me. I began thinking like a lawyer. What should a citizen do when attacked? *Sue*. What are the first steps in a lawsuit? File a complaint and establish injury.

I escorted a group of Leon’s victims down to the local police station to file the complaint. They were welcomed with open arms – or was it, openly armed? We got the address and phone number of the department’s Internal Affairs Division and agreed to meet there the next day. Then I hid myself to the hospital for a onceover.

No lawsuit. Leon had bruised my chin and my pride, but nothing else. Well ... maybe this wasn’t *about* lawsuits.

What it *was* about may have had something to do with what I saw as I was leaving the ER. A woman stood at the admit desk talking with a nurse. The kicking legs of a chubby infant were visible behind her. A sucker for babies, I went over to take a peek. The woman smiled in exhausted, almost apologetic pride, lifting her baby towards me. It had a cranium the size of a cantaloupe: twice normal, hydrocephalic.

I wanted to tell the baby’s mother that I had two friends who were hydrocephalic, the bright son of a brilliant father and a sweet SF fan then expecting her own child. But I didn’t. I just touched the tiny blue-veined fingers and smiled into the miniature face. A cosmic equation of evil and innocence was being set forth for me that beautiful night in March. I couldn’t articulate it, nor can I yet, but one lesson law school had taught me came through clear as trumpets: *You are not doing this for yourself*.

I did a lot of talking over the next few days, and a lot of it *was* for myself. First, I

shepherded five of the teenagers who had been attacked by Leon to the Internal Affairs Office of the New Orleans Police Department. With me was my father, in New Orleans on business. Frankly, I wanted his moral support. Dad was 100% middle American and for years had seemed to write off my Berkeley anti-police feelings as so much hysteria. But he told my mother, later, that he'd been impressed: I'd kept the kids on message and had seemed professional and calm. The respect of my father, in the last year of his life: that was worth winning.

The IAD was less impressed. They made nice soothing noises but I could tell their act was simple public relations. The professors I asked for help blew me off – although one had plenty to say about bad black cops – and the media ignored me. Until Ash Wednesday, the day after Fat Tuesday.

I had a great Mardi Gras; the French Quarter was fat with naked tourist girls and there was no trouble. I left the Vieux Carre early and at 11:30, as usual, switched on the ritual Meeting of the Courts of Rex and Comus, grooving on the silly prancing bluebloods. At midnight, the curtains met in front of them at the Municipal Auditorium, and Carnival 1987 ended. At that moment, while I slept, the Krewe of Cops began its parade down Bourbon Street.

The newscasters were all jocularity the next day, when they showed it on the tube – cops moving in a line down our sinful-est avenue, pushing drunks off the asphalt and down the sidewalks. They also showed *military* cops from a nearby naval base doing the same, to civilians. A prominent editorialist praised the police as “magnificent” ... until the *next* day rolled around. Because then, the complaints began to come in, roaring.

People hadn't just been urged down Bourbon Street. Many had been clubbed, without cause. It was evident on the tapes. Furthermore, it's against the Constitution for soldiers to enforce civilian law, except when martial law has been declared. The cops had been dumb enough, and secure enough in their stupidity, to push around some media

people as well as drunks, and politicians had noticed. My calls to the TV station of a few days before drew results.

They came to my house and interviewed me on the front steps. I told them the story, leaving out Leon's name (who needed *him* suing *me?*), and being clear about what was wrong and why.

I said that New Orleans cops were ill-trained and poorly paid, that they hated Mardi Gras because of its 12-hour shifts without overtime. I made allowance for Leon in particular by saying it was stupid unto legally liable to expect a waterfront cop to handle a crowd of decent people – not mentioning that spot judgment by the nurse witness. But I also said that fools like him shouldn't be allowed to wear badges and carry guns in the name of the City of New Orleans. Mardi Gras was vital to this hungry city; our port was antiquated, our dependency on oil had backfired; we had nothing else – and if our cops kept screwing up, we'd lose the only moneymaker New Orleans had: tourism. As well as an ineffable part of our soul.

They played all that. They *didn't* broadcast my comments on what I thought of the media – that they kept a special can of whitewash handy for police stories out of fear of the Teamsters, and how I particularly resented that editorial doofus who sat on his fat ass and called such cops “magnificent.” *That* they kept off.

I thought I looked like a hard-boiled egg sprinkled with pepper, but the response wasn't bad. People came up to me at my Unemployment Interviewer job and told me their own horror stories. In a race-happy town like New Orleans, they were multitudes. The cops sharing law school classes with me fell into two distinct groups – the ones who knew I'd run into an asshole and were embarrassed, and the ones who believed I'd busted the brotherhood, and were all but violent.

My legal complaints went nowhere, not that I expected them to. Despite the witnesses whose names and numbers I provided, the IAD disposition came back “Not Proven.” One lawsuit came of the incident, from a teen boy whose leg was

injured. His lawyer was a onetime classmate of mine, who showed me the transcript of Leon's deposition. It was all but incoherent, but he claimed I had grabbed him on the street. So I went to the trial of the suit ready to call him a liar – but he never appeared. The city attorney, off the record, asked me if the cop had touched me, and when he heard my reply, settled. The kid got five grand, not that he'd ever see a penny; New Orleans was said to have promised *nine million dollars* in police brutality settlements in 1986 alone, and hardly any ever reached the plaintiffs.

Leon didn't show for that trial, but he *had* to appear for others. A few months after Mardi Gras, he made the news when he was convicted of domestic violence – strange item for a newscast, I thought, but maybe, I thought, it was for my benefit. (As if!) Later, his name appeared in more grisly circumstances.

A NOLA cop named Len Davis was revealed as the head of a profitable side enterprise with his fellow officers. Leon was one of these. This informal police group earned extra salaries providing protection for an entrepreneur skilled in the packaging and distribution of imported white powders. That nurse hadn't been far off in her diagnosis.

Davis had a woman murdered who complained about *his* brutality ... and got caught. He became the only policeman in America – for the moment – on Death Row. I thanked heaven that I'd made myself too famous to be silenced. The next police commissioner vowed to clean up the NOPD. Leon was one of the stains scraped up and flushed away. As far as Angola. 25 years.

I was an attorney by then, and it would have been a breeze to attend his sentencing – let him fulfill his pledge. But ... nah.

To be continued



KISSING

Michael Estabrook

I had a bad dream about my wife, a dream where I was watching as she kissed another man, kissed him hard and long and sure, the two of them clutched tight against one another. She was rubbing her hands over his shoulders and back, as he grabbed her around her waist trying to pull her in closer. It was more of a heavy making-out session, really, than simply kissing. And even though I know my wife is as true as a woman can be, the dream was unnerving.

So the next evening I say to her, can we hug and kiss just a little and she says yes. So we stand in the kitchen and I kiss her beautiful, sweet lips, feel the heat of her wondrous existence, her femininity, warming me, reaching its tentacles into me, entangling my heart and mind and soul, and the inevitable begins to rise and she looks at me with that frown of hers, a mixture of sadness and disappointment. "Why does kissing always have to lead to sex, why can't kissing simply be kissing?" she states, exasperated.

But going beyond kissing was not what I had in mind, truly, I only desired simply to kiss her, to help erase that horrid dream of her with that other man from my mind. But somehow it all got ruined, seems I'm a victim of my own manhood, or was it Mother Nature again, getting in the way.

MY TEN* FAVORITE COMIC STORIES

(okay, 15) (not including Carl Barks) (just to be fair)

Guy Lillian



Reading a comics fanzine that recently fell upon me, and contemplating Mike Resnick's frequent ten-best listings of various pleasures, I wondered if my own lifelong affection for the comics genre was susceptible to such a valuation. I couldn't restrict the list to ten, of course, so here's what I came up with ... very subjective, of course, almost all stuff that's appeared since I attained titular adulthood, and almost all DC. (Hey, they were my first job; I might need a reference.)

Seriously, I should explain some of the titles unlisted here. I did exclude Barks, because it wouldn't be right to introduce *religion* into such a secular discussion. Carl Barks is simply the most skillful artist, the most skillful story-teller, and the wittiest comic book guy ever to get ink on his sleeve. I could easily fill this list with ten of his Uncle Scrooge masterworks – “Land of the Frozen North”, “Land Beneath the Ground”, “The Golden Fleece”, the Bombastium yarn, oh c'mon, let's give the rest of the genre a break. As for why there are no Marvels present, I can only plead that I loved **The X-Men**, “Song of Red Sonya” and “Fin Fang Foom”, but that most of the rest of the Marvel *oeuvre* seemed like fodder to me. I realize this rends me from the life judgments of most of my '60s comrades, but hey, I never smoked grass, either.

Missing also are **V for Vendetta** and **The Killing Joke**, two great Alan Moore pieces. Moore is the best comic writer of his generation, and in **VforV** he is at his most overtly political, in a bitter, brilliant anarchist tale, occasionally over the top but beautifully complex and passionate. **The Killing Joke** is a consummate retelling of the Joker legend, with epic art by Brian Bolland. Where is Moore's **Miracleman**?

Where is Bolland's **Judge Dredd**? Where is Dave Michelinie's **Unknown Soldier**? They're here! They're here! They're treasured parts of my comics collection. But below are the stories which hang with me ...

1) **Watchmen** I had to argue and kvetch to get an "Other Forms" category introduced onto the Nolacon II Hugo ballot – just so fandom could note and honor this ultimate masterpiece of graphics storytelling. We did so honor it, the only comic book ever to win a Hugo, a suspenseful and thought-provoking alternate world where heroes dress in costumes and save the world – despite itself. Alan Moore's masterpiece, Dave Gibbons art, creative, symbolic, deeply rooted in comic book tradition (these guys understand visuals and understand action) – it's the genre at its height. And what an ending ...

2) "Flash of Two Worlds" **Flash #123** Julie Schwartz's grandest story of the Silver Age evokes the *Golden Age*. It won the first of the short-lived Alley Awards. Surpassed by "Vengeance of the Immortal Villain" and "Crisis on Earth-One/Two" in **The Justice League**, and burdened with Gardner Fox's stiff and uninspired style, this re-introduction of Golden Age heroes still marks one of the reasons comic books have been important and wonderful in my life. After all, it taught a generation of comics readers that their fathers had been boys, once, too.

3) **Kingdom Come** The most recent entry up here, and a beauty – something of a confused and convoluted script, but a wonderful homage to what we really value about superheroes: *character*. Author Mark Waid understands what's cool about Batman, what's attractive about Wonder Woman, and what's eternal about Superman. Such analysis is at the heart of the current superhero craze, and I believe it's why **Smallville** is such a superb series. Also, the Alex Ross art is revolutionary in its beauty and depth.

4) "Dream of a Thousand Cats" **Sandman** Neil Gaiman's **Sandman** was the most creative and original graphics work of its time, and here – in a rare stand-alone issue – the book is at its best, not to mention, its most frightening. To show you how scary I find this story of feline revenge, the cute teenybopper figure of Death *doesn't* appear – see the extraordinary "The Sound of Her Wings" – and she would have been *welcome*.

5) "Pog" **Swamp Thing #32** This sad, gentle fable of Walt Kelly characters visiting our all-too-real world is hilarious and heart-rending, using – and crushing – the language and the innocence of the original strip to make a bittersweet point about the search for impossible dreams.

6) "Ghost Dance" **Swamp Thing #45** I read this tale of guns, ghosts and the Winchester Mystery House, set it down, and said, "Well, just another masterpiece of horror. That's all." Moore's multi-issue **Swamp Thing** stories tended to sag under their own weight, but in his single-issue works, he could pack a taut, telling, terrifying thriller with a subtle political point – and an ending that jolts like an electric prod.

7) Jack Kirby's wonderful **New Gods/Forever People/Mister Miracle/Jimmy Olsen** series was a glorious creative act. When I once listed my ten favorite comic *characters*, Darkseid was right up there. It's almost impossible to single out one story in the universe of Apokolips and New Genesis, but **New Gods #7**, the origin story, stands out. "Hate is no longer a word in this place. Put that knife down ... son."

8) "Swamp Thing" **House of Secrets #92** The original story of one of the epic comic antiheroes, beautifully told from three points of view, it gave birth to a book I've cited twice above. Berni Wrightson only handled the art for nine issues, as I recall, and Len Wein's genius

only guided the character for another few stories before good Dave Michelinie took over, to be followed by Alan Moore, Nancy Collins, and others, but this was the first, and it was stunning.

9) "Night of the Hunter" **Detective Comics** A beautiful retelling of the Batman myth that appeared just before my year at DC, and I got to tell the author face to face how much I loved it. He brought forward the sadness and the loss at the heart of the legend better than Bob Kane – what a ... a ... a ... Spanier? *Putz*, that's it – or even the movies could.

10) "Superman Under the Green Sun" **Superman** If I must single out any of the Wayne Boring Superman tales that gassed me as a kid, this Edmond Hamilton yarn qualifies – corny as a Hitler-esque villain might be. The last panels are just lovely. Competing hard for this spot: the story of "Super-Menace" (drawn by that master of the possible, Curt Swan) and the exciting and Sfnal "Thing from 30,000 A.D." They were a joy of my boyhood and they're still good.

11) "Beyond the Sinister Barrier" The Spectre in **Brave & Bold** Later, Mike Fleischer took the Spectre in a violent new direction, and attained popularity for the spook that he never had before. Here, Julie Schwartz, Gardner Fox and the great realist, Murphy Anderson, take on Satan himself in a skillful story that wowed me silly when I was 17. It doesn't stand up well on re-reading, but how I mourned when it lost its Alley Award to "How Green was My Goblin" in **Spider-man**. I have to respect that teenage passion.

12) **Rocketman** They made a lousy movie out of a crackerjack comic, exquisitely drawn by Dave Stevens, a book in love with planes and Betty Page and a pre-WWII age bursting with innocence and optimism, a pure-hearted hero, Doc Savage in the background – I only have the first volume of this beauty; is there more?

13) **Enemy Ace** In the mid-sixties the erratic genius of Robert Kanigher found a footing, and delivered thoughtful, powerful work, kicked up a notch or more from the standard war stories that had gone before. The story of Hans von Hammer, the haunted World War I killing machine, was compelling, and beautifully realized by that most fluid and feral of comics artists, Joe Kubert. I must list but one of the tales – let it be the first **Brave & Bold** issue, with the fabulous red-on-black cover.

14) "What's the Color of Your Blood?" **Our Army at War** This story of a black heavyweight champion facing down – and then saving – the Nazi superman who had humiliated him in the ring was the most effective yarn of the revived, much improved war series. I've never forgotten Joe Kubert's last panel: "You're catching on, buster!"

15) "Mirror Madness" **House of Secrets #?** Well, this one is *junk* – a stupid story of a plastic surgeon who somehow gave a mangled scuba diver the face of a frog. But *I wrote the dialog*, one of several yarns I did that for in 1974 – and because it's so tacky, this one is my favorite.



Opposite: Undoubtedly my favorite comics page ever, "Flash's Rogue's Gallery", as envisioned by Carmine Infantino (pencils), Murphy Anderson (inks) and Charlie Williams (touch-up). I love this page – notice how skillfully Carmine conveyed the personalities of these costumed no-goodniks, getting across the central idea that no matter how fancy their gimmicks or flashy their duds, these creeps are *still hoods*. Copyright DC Comics, of course.

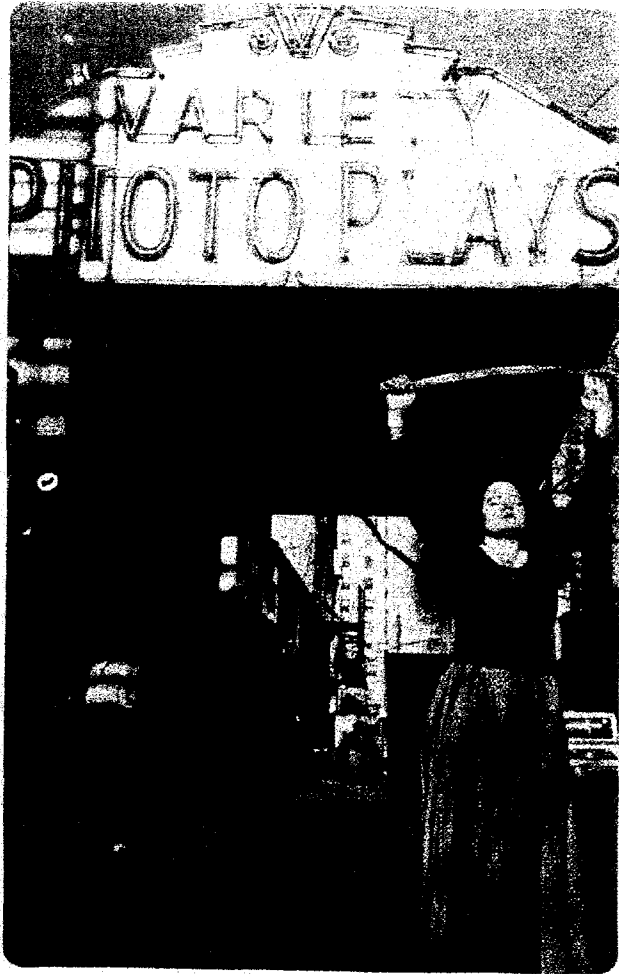


The Challenger Tribute

**GIANI
SIRIGNANO**

She is the essence of redheaded creativity and adorability and verve ... a blithe and brilliant spirit. Who else do you know who has made her own Tarot deck?

Giani's **New York Tarot** was created from photos Giani took in and about the Apple, featuring Giani herself as the Queen of Swords. May it always portend fair fortune for her and hers!



QUEEN OF SWORDS 93



Giani with her lucky lads ... **Robert Whitaker Sirignano, right, and Lepoldo Giovanni Whitaker Sirignano, above, snoring away at Confrancisco. 50**

Gregory Benford is a professor of physics at the University of California Irvine, the author of Deep Time and many SF classics, and a frequent contributor to these pages. He was one of our nominators for DUFF, and even if he hadn't written the following gem for these pages, would have my deathless gratitude. Hmm ... "deathless" ...

A FROZEN FUTURE?

Cryonics as a Gamble

copyright 2002 by **Gregory Benford**

art by Charlie Williams

For many, the most startling news of this summer was that the American baseball legend, Ted Williams, had been frozen. A close relative turned Williams' body over to a firm that suspends its "patients" in liquid nitrogen. A firestorm of media attention followed.

The USA is the only nation with a thriving industry in "cryonics." The underlying hope, that properly freezing people immediately after they have crossed the threshold we call "death" may allow them to be later reanimated, is a bold assertion about the future.

This goal is not scientific, in the sense that the results cannot be checked right now. This is not the same as *unscientific* statements — those which have been tested and have failed.

Rather, ideas of the future are *non-scientific*. However systematically arrived at, they cannot be tested today.

Cryonics opens a window into the American mind. It is utopian and pragmatic, since the essential argument is to freeze people with carefully tailored cryoprotectants distributed through the bloodstream into their cells. The technology to "resurrect" by warming the body and curing their disease must lie in the far future, perhaps a century away. This demands optimism few can muster, a faith that the future will both care and be able to work what to use would be medical miracles.

Response to the very idea is quite emotional, a fervently felt resistance suggesting a deep underlying uneasiness about death in modern society. Imagine a scientist today being rejected from a scientific society because he wants to present research relevant to long-term preservation of whole organisms, not necessarily humans. Yet this continues, as well as widespread views that cryonics is inherently wrong, greedy, or else the work of con men. (This last assumption is



universal among physicians.) Critics usually fail to note that the procedure, which costs between \$25,000 and \$60,000, is paid by the "patients."

Of course, cryonics is a huge gamble. Many thoughtful people discount cryonics because they simply consider it fantastically implausible. But Canadian painted turtles and four species of frogs routinely make it through the winter by freezing, then reviving. These creatures respond to low temperatures by making up a cocktail of glucose, amino acids and a kind of naturally produced antifreeze, glycerol. They manage to move water out of their cells, so that ice crystals form outside delicate membranes. While these animals have special adaptations, their body chemistries are not bizarre. Their methods could be extended artificially to mammals, like us.

Based on such reasoning, cryonics has gathered momentum, largely unnoticed by the world. Over sixty are now suspended in liquid nitrogen, with many hundreds signed up to be.

Many others regard cryonics as creepy and pointless; the notion calls up images of the cold grave, zombies, etc. Still, as eerie ideas go, being frozen strikes me as less horrific than turning into food for worms, or being cremated. (When cremation started out commercially, bodies were burned during a church service. The businesses quickly added organ music, because mourners wondered about the loud bang that often interrupted the funeral. It was the skull of the deceased, exploding.)

So if not especially creepy, is it none the less pointless? That is, are cryonicists making a reasonable bet?

That depends on many factors. Any vision of the future does. To analyze them in more than an arm-waving way, I'll work out here a simple method for quantitatively thinking about future possibility. The method can work on many ideas.

The simplest way to consider any proposed idea is to separate it into smaller, better-defined puzzles. This atomizing of issues is crucial to science, since it is easier to ponder one problem at a time. This approach has been applied to nonscientific questions, many closely allied to science.

#

I'm going to have to use equations here, but they'll be simple. So will my method. If every issue I raise is independent of the other questions, then we can simply multiply all the probability estimates together at the end to get the total likelihood of cryonics working. This probably is not true, but to do better one must know the future in detail.

What kind of concerns enter here? I'll break them down into three categories—the metaphysical, the social, and the technical.

First, the metaphysical. To preserve people's minds, we naturally think of saving their brains. What are the chances that the brain carries the mind? This is the materialistic world view, and the chances that it is correct I'll label with a probability M . I'm a solid materialist, like most scientists, so I'd say that $M = .99$, i.e., 99% chance that some vital soul does not leave the body when metabolism stops. There is evidence for this, actually. People cooled down to a state of clinical death on operating tables, for brain surgery, revive with their sense of self intact.

Next, what are the odds that our brain *structure* tells the whole story? That is, that your Self is not the product of continuing electrical activity in the brain? Here, too, the cooled patients seem to show that though their brain rhythms cease, they persist when revived.

Further, some people have gotten jolts of heavy current which completely swamped their delicate internal electrical circuits. This happens to hundreds of people struck by lightning every year in the U.S., and occurred in routine shock treatments earlier in this century. They survived with memory intact, except for short term recall.

Our minds, then, are somewhat hardwired, though rewritable programs inscribed in the cells of our brains. So I'll set this probability that our Essence is in brain cells, not momentary brain activity, at $E = .99$.

Finally, there is chance that your Self can make it through the process of being frozen down to liquid nitrogen temperatures. The trick is to get to the brain quickly, before it degrades.

Several years ago a boy survived drowning in a cold lake, reviving after an hour spent clinically dead. Even if cryonically suspended immediately — which means being perfused with a glycerol-type

solution to minimize damage while being cooled — there lurk the huge unknowns of what this perfusion does to your memories. Studies show that the most damage is done when brains are rewarmed. Neuronal membranes are ripped, pierced. Even so, experimental animals revive with memories intact. And the perfusion technology will certainly improve. Let's be optimistic and put the probability that the Self will persist through this Transition process, T , at $T = 0.9$.

Then the metaphysical factors, $MET = (.99)(.99)(.9)$, or just about 0.9.

Next, the social issues. First, what are the odds that your brain (and body, presumably—but the Self is in the brain, remember) will make it to some far off revival time without some accident thawing you out? Call this S , the chances for Survival of your brain.

Many issues enter here. Presently, all cryonics patients are kept in steel containers, carefully watched. This hasn't always been so; financial failures doomed several to thawing in the two decades after Ettinger's pioneering book. But none have been lost in over a decade, and the first man frozen (a professor named Bedford, incidentally) is still coasting along at 77 degrees above absolute zero after 35 years. Given that cryonics is far more sturdy now, let me set the brain survival odds $S = 0.9$.

Sure, one can say, but what about the odds that society as a *whole* will make it through for, say, a century? Call this factor O , the Odds against civilization itself being rich enough to not make cryonics impossible. This includes the chances that society will turn irrational, or break down (war, economic depression), or will take a fervent dislike to science, or to cryonics itself.

The economics of cryonics are modest. Liquid nitrogen is the third cheapest fluid, after water and crude oil, and is widely useful, so it will probably be available in even damaged economies. Of course, even democracies can decide to suppress those arrogant enough to spend their money on a chancy voyage across time into an unknown future. So I will set the Odds of social continuity allowing cryonics at $O = .8$. Probably in Europe this number should be much lower.

Ah, but what if the cryonics organizations themselves don't last? This is a real worry, because the collapse of Cryonic Interment Inc. in California during the mid-1970s lost suspended patients. The longest lived institutions in human history have been religious, with the Catholic church arguably holding the record at nearly 2000 years. Cryonics has some of the aura of a religion, with deeply persuaded people sustaining a long-range hope of personal salvation. Maybe that will help.

Still, greedy corporate directors could someday simply find it more profitable to keep tapping the assets left behind by the patients, rather than investing in reviving them. (See Simak's **Why Call Them Back From Heaven?** for a plausible argument that this would indeed occur.)

Or somebody could simply embezzle the funds, a la Enron. The more popular cryonics becomes, the bigger will be the spoils. Call this probability of cryonics organization failure C , and my guess is that $C = 0.5$ — a fifty-fifty chance that the whole shebang will go under. After all, we're talking about a wait that could be a century. How many of today's corporations are that old? About one percent.

These social factors I estimate at $SOC = (0.9)(0.8)(0.5) = 0.36$, or a bit better than a third.

I can hear the tech types impatiently asking, *can it be done at all?* And there's the rub. From the METaphysical to SOCial factors we come to the issues which blend the two—is revival TECHnically possible, given the social and philosophical assumptions?

Cryonics began with no clear idea of how revival could be done. That gave rise to a standard joke, about how many cryonicists it took to screw in a light bulb. The answer was none—they just sit in the dark and wait for the technology to improve.

The rise of nanotechnology over the last decade has made it the favored mechanism for cryonics. Nanotech envisions self-replicating machines of molecular size, programmed with orders to repair freezing damage, bind up torn membranes, and generally knit together the sundered house of a frozen brain.

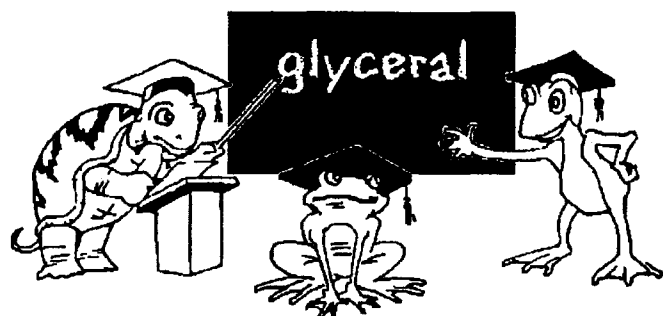
There appears to be no fundamental physical reason why such tiny machines can't be made on the scale of a billionth (nano-) of a meter. The rewards of developing such handy devices would be immense, a revolution in human society (which is why the SOC issues intertwine with the tech ones, as I'll discuss below).

Not only must this marvelous technology appear, but we must survive its flowering. This is tricky; runaway use of nanotech could produce virulent diseases or everything-eaters that could wipe us out. Modern, Promethean technology, like nuclear physics, shares this daunting property.

I suspect that we will take at least fifty years, and more plausibly a century, to develop nanotech able to repair freezing damage. The good thing about being frozen is that you aren't going anywhere; you can afford to wait.

Given these immense uncertainties, I put the chances that the Technology will arrive and we will survive it at $T = 0.5$.

But of course, a future society must have the *desire* to apply the technology to cryonics. If we do not yield to a kind of temporo-centric insulation, and cease to be curious about representatives from a century before, I suspect we will have the cultural Energy to work out nanotech for cryonics purposes. (After all, much of it will be useful in curing and repairing ordinary, living people.) So I put this cultural Energy probability, E , at $E = 0.9$.



Still, will they pay the bill? The first few revived cryonicists will probably get onto the 22nd century's talk shows. Famous suspended people, too. (Wouldn't you pay a bit to talk to Benjamin Franklin? He was the first American to speculate on means for preserving people for later revival. And the philosopher Francis Bacon died of pneumonia caught experimenting with suspension of animals.) But if there are ten thousand cryonicists waiting to be thawed...

This is a major, imponderable problem. Humanitarians will argue that spending money on the living is always morally superior to spending it on the dead-but-salvageable.

Will this argument win the day? Or, in the fullness of time, will nanotech make revival so cheap that the cost factor, C , becomes a non-issue? You can argue it either way — and science fiction writers already have.

Given such uncertainties, I'll guess that the cost probability factor $C = 0.5$.

Finally, there is the truly unknowable factor, H , which stands for the contrariness of Humans. Some powerful social force may emerge which makes cryonics reprehensible. After all, many think it's creepy, a kind of Stephen King idea.

Maybe people will utterly lose interest in the past. I doubt this, noting that the world was fascinated with the frozen man found in the Alps in 1991. Considerable expense went into careful examination of this remarkably preserved inhabitant of about 4000 years ago, and his clothing and belongings will tell us much about his era — but still, he can't speak, as a revived cryonicist could.

Or perhaps some other grand issue will captivate human society, making cryonics and the whole problem of death irrelevant. Maybe we'll lose interest in technology itself. Factor in also the Second Coming of Christ, or arrival of aliens who spirit us all away—the choices are endless.

But all rather unlikely, I suspect. I'm rather optimistic about Humanity, so I'll take the odds that we'll still care about suspended cryonicists to be fairly large, perhaps $H = 0.9$.

This means that the *TECH* issues multiply out to $(0.5)(0.9)(0.5)(0.9) = 0.2$.

All this homework done, we can now savor our final result. The probability that cryonics will work, delivering you to a high-tech future, blinking in astonishment, is

$$MET \times SOC \times TECH = 0.07$$

A 7 percent chance.

Do I "believe" this number? Of course not. It is very rough. Such calculations are worth while only if they sharpen our thinking, not as infallible guides. Some decry numerical estimates as hopelessly deceptive, too exact in matters which are slippery and qualitative. True, for some, but the goal here is to

use some simple arithmetic means of assessing, then planning. This does not rule out emotional issues, it merely places them in perspective.

#

Science fiction invented cryonics; it is, after all, an assertion about the future. It first figured in a Neil R. Jones sf story in the 1931 *Amazing Stories*, inspiring Dr. Robert Ettinger to propose the idea eventually in detail in *The Prospect of Immortality* (1964). It has since been explored in Clifford Simak's *Why Call Them Back From Heaven?* (1967), Fred Pohl's *The Age of the Pussyfoot* (1969), and in innumerable space flight stories (such as *2001: A Space Odyssey*) which use cryonics for long term storage of the crew. Fred Pohl became a strong advocate of cryonics, even appearing on the Johnny Carson show to discuss it. Robert Heinlein used cryonics as part of a time-traveling plot in *The Door Into Summer*. Larry Niven coined "corpsicle" to describe such "deanimated" folk. All these stories considered the long term aspects.

But even science fiction writers fascinated by it (Simak, Heinlein) never made arrangements to be "suspended", as the cryonicists say. I know of no sf writer who has publicly endorsed cryonics as a plausible possibility, except for Charles Platt, with the further marginal exception of a deposition Arthur C. Clarke made several years ago to support a court case.

Why do even those intrigued not gamble? Maybe writers without much cash think it's too chancy an investment. To wax numerical a bit more, suppose you regard cryonics purely as an investment. Does it yield a good return?

Well, what's a person worth? Most Americans will work about fifty years at a salary in the range of around \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year — that is the national average today. In other words, they will make somewhere between one and two million dollars in their lifetime.

One crude way to size up an investment is to take the probability of success (7% by our estimate here) times the expected return (a million dollars, earned by the revived person). Then compare with the amount you must invest to achieve your aim. This yields \$70,000, which is in the range of what cryonics costs today. (Cryonicists buy a life insurance policy which pays off their organization upon their death; they don't finance it all at once.)

The goal of cryonics is not money but time — a future life. Another way to see if cryonics is a rational gamble is to take a person's expected life span (about 75 years) and divide it by the expected gain in years if they are revived in the future. This would be perhaps another 75 years, but if the technology for revival exists, people may quite possibly live for centuries. Then the ratio of gained years to present life span is, say, 150 years divided by 75 years, or a factor of 2. It could be higher, of course.

Then even if the probability of success is 1%, say, the probable yield from the investment of your time would be $2 \times 1\% = 2\%$. It would make sense to invest 2% of your time in this gamble. Then 2% of your lifetime earnings (a million dollars) would be at least \$20,000, which you could use to pay your cryonics fees.

Or you could choose to invest 2% of your time — half an hour a day — to working for cryonics. Make it a hobby. You would meet interesting people and might enjoy it. Most people spend more time than that in the bathroom.

Take another angle. Probability estimates should tell us the range of outcomes, not just an average number like 7%. To be a flagrant optimist, I could go back and take all the loosely technical issues to be must more probable, so that $TECH = 0.9$, say. Then we get 29% probability.

This is just about the upper end of the plausible range, for me. I could be a gloomy pessimist, with equal justification, and take the social issues to be $SOC = 0.05$, say. Then my original 7% estimate becomes less than one percent.

So the realm of plausible probabilities, to me, is between one percent and about 30%.

Low odds like one percent emerge because we consider many factors, each of which is fairly probable, but the remorseless act of multiplying them together yields a final low estimate. This is entirely natural to us. Studies show that most people of even temperament, considering chains of events, are invariably optimistic. We don't atomize issues, but look for obliging conditions. This seems to be built into us.

I've dwelled on using this simple probability estimate to show some properties of the method. The deeper question is whether it truly makes sense to break up any future possibility into a set of mutually independent possibilities.

This comes powerfully into play in the *SOC* factors. Once the *TECH* issues look good, people will begin to change their minds about cryonics. The prospect of longer life may well make society more stable so *O* gets larger. Cryonics organizations will fare better, so *C* improves. The slicing up into factors assumes that the general fate of humankind is the same for the folk of the freezers, and this may not be so.

Cryonicists are a hard-nosed, practical lot, in my experience. They have many technical skills. Society might even crash badly, and they would keep their patients suspended through extraordinary effort. They have already done so. Police raided a cryonics company in the late 1980s (Alcor) and demanded that a recently frozen patient be handed over for autopsy. Someone spirited away and hid the patient until Alcor could get the police and district attorney off their back, but not before the police hauled five staff members off to jail and ransacked the facility.

Perhaps a better way to analyze this is to note that the biggest uncertainties lie in the intertwined *SOC* and *TECH* factors. A techno-optimist might say that cryonics will probably work on technical grounds, but social factors lessen the odds, maybe to the 50/50 range.

#

Of course, numbers don't tell the whole tale. Ray Bradbury once said he was interested in any chance of seeing the future, but when he thought over cryonics, he realized that he would be torn away from everything he loved. What would the future be worth without his wife, his children, his friends? No, he told me, he wouldn't take the option at any price.

Still, he came into this world without all those associations. And further, why assume that nobody else would go with him? This is an example of the "neighborhood" argument, which says that mature people are so entwined with their surroundings, people and habits of mind, that to yank them out is a trauma worse than death. One is fond of one's own era, certainly. But it seems to me that ordinary immigrants often face similar challenges and manage to come through.

Still, if you truly feel this way, no arithmetic argument will dissuade you. For many, I suspect, the future isn't open to rational gambles, because it is too deeply embedded in emotional issues.

So it must be with any way of thinking quantitatively about our future. We cannot see the range of possibilities without imposing our own values and views, mired in our time, culture, and place.

Often, these are the things which we value most—our idiosyncratic angles on the world.





Bryan Norris

Well I remember Secretariat's epic run in the Belmont Stakes. Well will I remember my anguish when a 70-to-1 shot won this year's Belmont. If I'd bet \$100 on Sarava, that would have been \$7000 in my hand. But such, says our man Mike, is the way of things in

THE SPORT OF KINGS

Mike Resnick

I am a horse-racing fanatic. I don't bet, but I've been known to fly halfway across the country to watch Seattle Slew hook up with Affirmed, or Dr. Fager take on Damascus.

I've written for **The Blood-Horse**, **American Turf**, **Horseman's Journal**, and half a dozen other racing publications, and I wrote a weekly column on racing for more than a decade.

So it stood to reason that sooner or later Guy Lillian was going to ask me to Explain It All To You.

TERMS

To understand horse-racing, you really should learn some of the lingo. So let's start with it.

Furlong. A furlong is an eighth of a mile, 220 yards. The term originated because that was approximately the length of a farmer's furrow. Almost all horse race distances are described in furlongs. A 6-furlong race is $3/4$ of a mile; an 8 $1/2$ furlong race is a mile and a sixteenth; a 12-furlong race is a mile and a half.

Turf. Turf means grass. Most American races – 80% or more – are run on the dirt. The rest, and almost all races in Europe, South America, Australia and Asia, are run on the turf.

Track conditions are fast, good, slow, muddy, and sloppy. Strangely enough, you get your second-fastest times not on good tracks, but on sloppy ones, because if there's standing water on the track, it means that it hasn't soaked in and the track is reasonably hard beneath the water. Good and slow tracks are tiring, and this affects front-runners the most. Muddy tracks are a class by themselves: some great horses, such as Swaps, could barely stand up in the mud, let alone run in it; others, such as Bold Ruler, were far better in the mud than on fast tracks. Most horses are relatively unaffected by it.

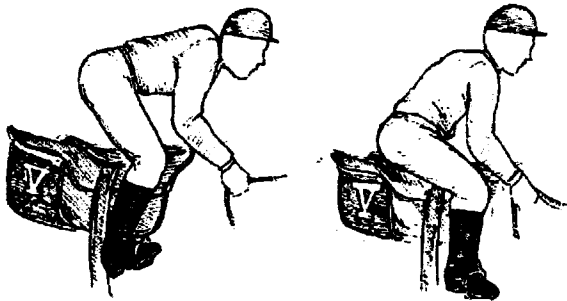
Weight. It's impossible to stagger a start, the way you can do with human runners, so when the track handicapper tries to give every horse an even chance, he does it by assigning different weights to them. The usual rule of thumb is that 2 pounds equals a length, and scale weight is usually 126 pounds – so if I think that horse A is 4 lengths better than horse B, and that horse A is probably a length and a half poorer than the average good horse of his age and class, I would assign horse A 123 pounds and horse B 115 pounds. Most jockeys weigh between 95 and 112 pounds, and any extra weight the horse must carry is made up by putting lead weights in the saddle pads. Over the past century, only truly exceptional horses have been asked to carry 130 pounds or more, and only one in the past 50 years has won with 140 pounds.

HOW TO WATCH A RACE

Horses don't just run hell for leather from flagfall to finish. They can't. The very best horses can sustain an all-out drive for about half a mile. There are no races that short for Thoroughbreds anywhere in America.

Competition saps a horse's energy. A horse running three lengths ahead of the field after a half-mile in 47 seconds uses much less adrenaline than the same horse, running neck-and-neck for the lead with a rival, uses after a half mile in that same time of 47 seconds.

The purpose of the jockey is twofold: to keep his horse free of trouble (and by trouble, I mean traffic jams), and to conserve his horse's energy and get him to relax, whether he is running in front or coming from behind.



How do you know if your horse is doing well?

Easy. Watch the jockey. If his rump is way up in the air, well above the saddle, if his toes are up and his heels are down, he's restraining the horse. (Remember: he weighs 110 pounds. The horse weights about 1,100 pounds. He *has* to practically stand up and lean back to restrain the horse.) How do you know when your jockey is asking for speed? His rump will come down to the saddle, he'll lean forward, and he'll drop his hands (thus releasing his restraint on the reins).

How do you know when your horse isn't responding? Every major jockey since the now-retired

Bill Hartack is right-handed, so each of them uses his crop (it's called a "popper", because it makes a startling sound but doesn't hurt or leave welts) in his right hand. If, in the homestretch, you see your jockey has shifted the crop to his left hand, it means he wasn't getting any response from his mount and is trying to startle it by whipping it on a side that never gets whipped.

How do you know if your jockey has confidence in your come-from-behind horse? It's generally considered that for every horse you pass on a turn, you're giving up a length. So if your jockey goes five wide on the far turn, he's saying, in essence: "My horse is so strong today, so full of run, that I'm willing to spot the leader 5 lengths in the homestretch, just to make sure I'm outside of all the traffic and have a clear lane to the

wire." (Tired horses, like tired humans, tend not to run in a straight line. The easiest way to avoid them is to go wide and come down the middle of the track – *if* you feel your horse is good enough to go wide.)

And, of course, if the jock tries to sneak through on the rail, or pick his way through horses like a broken-field runner in football, he's not as confident and he's saving every bit of ground he can.

Off-tracks: if you like front-runners, the best time to bet them is on muddy tracks. Why? First, they won't get mud thrown up in their faces like the horses behind them (and enough mud in the eye or up a nostril can discourage *any* horse), and second, the horses directly behind the front runner could pick up 10 to 20 pounds of mud on their necks, chests, and shoulders. (Remember the handicapper's rule of thumb, that two pounds equals a length? That means if you pick up 16 pounds of mud, you're spotting the front-runner an extra 8 lengths.)

TIME

You can also get a notion of how the race will turn out by looking at the fractions, which are posted every quarter-mile on the infield tote board.

A good, usually victorious, time for 6 furlongs is 1:10; for a mile, 1:35; for a mile and a quarter, 2:01; for a mile and a half, 2:29. As you can see, the average quarter-mile takes a bit longer as the distance increases (and for those of you who care, it's estimated that a Thoroughbred can run 5 lengths in a second, which makes it very easy for a sport that divides times by fifths of a second.)

The world records are, of course, a good bit faster: 1:06 $\frac{1}{5}$ for 6 furlongs, 1:32 for a mile, 1:57 $\frac{3}{5}$ for a mile and a quarter, 2:24 for a mile and a half.

Anyway, once you know what a good time should be, and how long a horse can sustain his top speed, it doesn't take much to look at the time and figure out what's likely to happen.

For example, you're watching the Kentucky Derby. It's a mile and a quarter. Five horses are bunched near the lead. The time for the first half-mile is :45 $\frac{3}{5}$ seconds. What conclusion can you draw? That none of those five will be around at the end. They've used themselves up too early, and there's more than half the race to go.

Okay, now we're watching a 6-furlong sprint. Same scenario: five horses bunched up front in :45 $\frac{3}{5}$ seconds. What conclusions can you draw from that? That one of them will probably win the race – after all, a final quarter of 24 seconds, much slower than they've been running, will still get him home in 1:09 $\frac{3}{5}$, usually a winning time. Which horse is the likeliest? Check those jockeys: whose rump is highest in the air? Who's already whipping his horse before the others do? Is the one on the outside riding confidently, or asking for an all-out effort already?

How do you beat a top front-runner, a Seattle Slew or a Dr. Fager? By making him use himself early. You get him to run that first half-mile in 44 seconds, and he won't be around at the end. You let him get away to an opening half-mile in 48 seconds, and the race is as good as over. If he's a front-runner, he very likely will not relax and let another horse take the lead without putting up a struggle. A front-runner's only weak spot is his stamina, and if you don't force him to expend his energy early, you've lost before the race is half done.

How do you beat a top come-from-behinder, a Forego or a Damascus? By setting the slowest possible pace. That come-from-behind horse wins by catching tired horses with a final burst of speed. Run that first half mile in 45 seconds and you're properly softened up for him; sneak away in 48 seconds, and your horse will be a lot fresher, and harder to catch, in the homestretch.

Did the favorite draw an inside post position? Good. Run alongside him, right behind the leader, and never give him room to move ahead. If he wants the lead, his jockey will have to slow him down until he's behind you and has enough room to maneuver to the outside.

You're in front, your horse is tiring a bit, and you know that the come-from-behind favorite has yet to make his run? Don't hug the rail. Move out as far as you dare toward the middle of the track, and make that favorite go even wider. His jockey will have just a fraction of a second to decide if you're purposely going wide (and hence he can cut inside of you) or if your horse is getting leg-weary (and hence might bear to his left any instant and close the inviting hole he just made). Usually the jockey will play it safe and go wide – and you might have made him go just wide enough so you can hang on and win.

It's all strategy, and it's fascinating when you understand what you're seeing.

There are, to date, 16,307 ways to lose a horse race. There is only one way to win: get home first.

Bill Shoemaker is widely considered to be one of the two or three greatest jockeys in history. He was the winningest rider of all time, both in numbers of wins and in money won, when he retired. (Both totals have been surpassed.)

And yet Shoemaker was capable of some of the most bone-headed blunders in major races that anyone ever saw.

Take the 1957 Kentucky Derby. Please.

A racetrack places poles every sixteenth of a mile, so the jockeys can look at the pole as they pass it and know how far they are from the finish. The sixteenth pole is a sixteenth of a mile from the finish wire, the eighth pole an eighth of a mile, and so forth.

Shoemaker was riding Gallant Man. He was a "plodder", a come-from-behind horse who lacked early speed but got better and stronger as the races got longer. He'd been running 7th for most of the way, but then Shoemaker put him to a drive, and he began catching tiring horses. At the head of the stretch he caught the tiring favorite, Bold Ruler. At the eighth pole he caught Round Table. At the sixteenth pole he was within inches of catching the leader, Iron Liege – and then Shoemaker, who'd ridden in half a dozen Derbies and already won one, mistook the sixteenth pole for the finish wire and stood up in the stirrups, easing his horse. He realized his mistake in less than a second and sat back down and started whipping Gallant Man again ... but at the finish wire it was Iron Liege by a nose, and there is no question that Shoemaker standing up for that second cost Gallant Man more than the four inches he lost by.

It came less than a year after an equally glaring blunder. In horse racing, 2-year-olds and 3-year-olds usually run at equal weights – but after two years on the track, there's usually very little doubt as to which is the best horse, and racetracks couldn't draw competitive fields if they didn't start handicapping the outstanding horses by making them carry more weight.

Now, if you're riding horse A, and carrying 125 pounds, and you beat horse B, who is carrying 119 pounds, by 2 lengths, in all likelihood the handicapper is going to increase the weight spread from 6 pounds to 10 pounds the next time the two horses meet ... so, from the point of view of the trainer and jockey, you want to win a handicap race not by the biggest possible margin, but by the smallest safe margin. Why win by 5 lengths and pick up 10 pounds in your next start when you can win by one length and only pick up two pounds?

Shoemaker was riding the brilliant Swaps in the 1956 Californian Stakes. Swaps had just set a world record in Florida; he would proceed to set world records in 4 of his next 5 starts, something that neither Man o' War nor any other thoroughbred ever did. And since all those upcoming races were handicaps, Shoemaker knew that he didn't want to win by a dozen lengths (though Swaps was clearly good enough to do so). The race began, Swaps lay back in 3rd place, moved up to the lead on the far turn, and entered the homestretch four lengths in front – and Shoemaker decided he'd better cut that victory margin down so that Swaps didn't pick up too much weight in his next race.

And of course, as he was slowing Swaps down, Porterhouse, a nice but not outstanding horse, ran the race of his life and caught him two jumps short of the wire. By the time Shoemaker realized what was happening, it was too late to get Swaps going again, and he lost by a head.

There are 16,305 more ways, but you don't really need to learn them all today.

THEY DON'T LOSE ON PURPOSE

Eddie Arcaro, considered the greatest jockey of his time, was riding a mediocre horse in a very unimportant race at Belmont Park. It came in 9th in a 10-horse field.

Upon returning to the unsaddling enclosure, Arcaro was confronted by an irate trainer.

"Why didn't you listen to instructions?" demanded the trainer in a loud, piercing voice. "I told you to lay fourth to the far turn, move up to third at the head of the stretch, and then come on to win!"

"What did you want me to do?" responded Arcaro. "Leave the horse?"

NAMES

There are names that conjure up equine greatness: Man o'War, Citation, Equipoise, Secretariat,

Ruffian.

There are names that don't, but they usually have more interesting origins.

For example:

Seattle Slew, the 1977 Triple Crown winner, was named because one set of his owners had a logging camp just outside Seattle, and the other set lived next to a Florida swamp.

Swaps, the 1955 Kentucky Derby winner, was named because Rex Ellsworth, his breeder, and Mish Tenney, his trainer, spent all of one night suggesting and rejecting monickers, and finally got tired of "swapping names."

The great British stallion, Ballydam, sired a colt who had colic as an infant. Named Bally Ache, he went on to win the 1961 Preakness.

Alfred Gwynn Vanderbilt was considered a master at naming his horses. The great Native Dancer, winner of 21 of his 22 races, was by Polynesian out of Geisha. Find was sired by Discovery. But it was the Dancer's and Find's stakes-winning stablemate who gets my vote as the best-named: by Shut Out out of Pansy, he became Social Outcast.

Alydar, who ran 10 memorable races against Affirmed, was named for Aly Khan, whom his owner knew as Aly Darling.

Tom Fool's greatest son was Buckpasser, but his best-named one was Dunce.

Trainer John Nerud had successful brain surgery, so he named a horse after the surgeon to thank him. The horse turned out to be Dr. Fager, the 1968 Horse of the Year.

Ponder, winner of the 1944 Kentucky Derby, sired Pensive, winner of the 1949 Kentucky Derby.

Sometime the names are so obvious you would never guess their origin. The winner of 30 stakes races, Swoon's Son was by The Doge out of (surprise!) Swoon.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RACES

To the man on the street, the most important race to win is the Kentucky Derby. Sports writers who don't know which end of the horse has teeth all become experts on the first Saturday in May, just as they become gymnastics experts every 4th years during the Olympics.

To the racing professional, there are more important races. One is the Belmont Stakes, because the 12-furlong distance is a quarter-mile longer than the Derby and requires that much more stamina (which is always a prime selling point in a stallion). Also, far more Belmont winners than Derby winners become divisional champions.

Another more important race is the Breeders Cup Classic, because it brings together the best horses in America, not just 3-year-olds but older handicap horses as well, at the Derby distance...and it's a rare 3-year-old than can beat a top-notch older horse.

In France, the Prix de l'arc de Triomphe, run at 12 furlongs on the grass about 3 weeks before the Breeders Cup, is considered by Europeans to be the most important race in the world.

GREATNESS

The mark of a great horse is to carry weight over distance. That's been the criterion for as long as there have been horses and races.

Put in simple terms, a horse cannot be considered great until he has won -- hopefully repeatedly -- at the classic distance of a mile and a quarter. Or more.

And he cannot be considered great until he has carried more than scale weight, in practical terms 130 pounds or more, and given away chunks of weight to good competition.

By this criterion, Secretariat was not a great horse -- or, rather, let us say that he was never given the opportunity to prove he was a great horse, because he retired as a 3-year-old, and hence never had to carry enormous weights and give weight away. Another horse from his crop, 3-time Horse of the Year, Forego, was demonstrably a great horse, winning more than a dozen times at 10 furlongs or more, successfully carrying 137 pounds to victory, and always giving away weight to his rivals.

Could Forego have beaten Secretariat? Possibly not. The one time they met was in the Kentucky Derby, when Forego was still a year away from his best efforts. But there is no question of Forego's greatness; there will always be some doubt as to whether Secretariat could have carried, say, 135 pounds, and given 15

and 20 pounds to good horses as Forego did so many times.

My own criteria would include not only the ability to carry weight over distance, but also the ability to win a huge percentage of one's races. Man 'o War won 20 of 21; Native Dancer 21 of 22; Personal Ensign 13 of 13; Seattle Slew 14 of 17; Dr. Fager 19 of 22; Ruffian 10 of 11. Allowances can be made for Kelso and Forego, because, as geldings, they raced at the mercy of handicappers for many years, whereas most complete horses give the handicapper a single year to slow them down and then retire with the reputations mostly intact. (Which is to say, they retire at 4, or in some cases, such as Secretariat, at 3; whereas Kelso was Horse of the Year at 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, and was still running at 9; Forego was Horse of the Year at 4, 5, and 6, and handicap champion at 7; and old Find, a stablemate of Native Dancer and Social Outcast, was still winning stakes at 9 and placing in them at 11.) Thus, I'm less impressed with Secretariat, who lost 5 times to very ordinary horses in 21 starts, than I am with Seattle Slew, who lost two photo-finishes to year-end champions, and lost only one other race when he clearly wasn't fit.

I can also make allowances for injury. Citation won 32 of his 45 starts, hardly a percentage for one of the 3 or 4 greatest American race horses – but he won 27 of his 29 starts at ages 2 and 3, missed his entire 4-year-old season due to injury, and was hardly the same horse when he came back at 5 and 6.

RIVALRIES

The Yankees and Dodgers. The Lakers and Celtics. The Cowboys and Steelers. Great rivalries are essential to any sport, and horse-racing has had its share of them.

The most famous rivals, of course, were Affirmed and Alydar. They met 10 times in 15 months. Affirmed won 7 of them, 5 in photo finishes, and was second 3 times. Alydar won 3, and was second 6 times. At the end of 10 races and almost 11 miles, they were something less than 2 lengths apart.

But they weren't the only ones.

Back in the late 1950s, there was a trio of outstanding horses, all of whom had been born in 1954 -- Bold Ruler, Gallant Man, and Round Table. When the dust had cleared, Bold Ruler and Gallant Man had met 8 times, splitting 4 apiece. Bold Ruler and Round Table had met twice, splitting one apiece. Gallant Man met Round Table three times and won all three.

Probably the two greatest horses to engage in a top-drawer rivalry in the past half-century were Dr. Fager and Damascus. They met twice in 1967, each winning once; and twice in 1968, splitting again. In 1968, neither ever carried less than 131 pounds.

MONEY

There's a lot of money in racing and breeding, far more than there used to be. I can remember when a Hyperion colt named Rise 'n Shine set the all-time yearling auction record by selling for a then-unheard-of \$87,500. These days yearlings sold at the Keeneland Summer Auction *average* more than half a million dollars apiece. The record, for a half-brother to Seattle Slew – remember, this was a yearling who'd never even had a saddle put on him – was for more than \$13 million.

And never won a race.

In fact, of the first 100 yearlings to sell for more than a million dollars, only 4 earned back their purchase price, and only one – A. P. Indy, a son of Seattle Slew – became a champion.

Stud fees have also skyrocketed. These days the leading sire in the country is Storm Cat, and a date with him costs \$800,000 – *if* you can get to him. He's usually booked years in advance.

(Cheer up. If he's busy, maybe you can get a date with Danzig. He's only half a million per service.)

You can also run up a tidy profit if you pick right. People talk about Seabiscuit and Stymie, former claiming horses (horses that were for sale for a set price on the day of the race) who were bought for peanuts and went on to win hundreds of thousands of dollars. John Henry sold for \$25,000 in 1979 and went on to win more than \$6 million.

But for a *real* success story, look no further than Seattle Slew. His "call name" around the barn as a yearling was Baby Huey, because he was so clumsy. He was rejected for the Keeneland Summer Sales, because neither his pedigree nor conformation were perfect enough, and the team of Mickey and Karen Taylor, and Jim and Sally Hill, bought him for \$17,500. What did they get for their investment?

Well, to begin with, they got the only undefeated Triple Crown winner in history, who went on to win

over a million dollars on the track.

Then they syndicated him for \$12 million, keeping 20 shares (\$6 million worth) for themselves and selling 20 shares.

By 1986, 8 years after his initial syndication, he had been so phenomenally successful at stud that a share in Seattle Slew sold at auction for \$4 million, making the horse's value \$160 million – more than any skyscraper in downtown Cincinnati, to put it in some perspective.

But that wasn't all. The Taylors and Hills entered into a foal-sharing arrangement with major breeders like Claiborne Farm and others of that ilk. It worked like this: Claiborne, to take a concrete example, got two free seasons to Seattle Slew. They would flip a coin, and Claiborne got one foal and the Taylors and Hills got one. In this particular case, Claiborne got Derby and Belmont winner Swale, who died tragically only eight days after winning the Belmont; and the Taylors and Hills got champion Slew o' Gold, who in turn was syndicated for \$15 million (and again, they kept half the shares and sold half the shares.)

Between his owners, and his syndicate members, and the breeders who sold his yearlings, and the people who raced his offspring, it's estimated that this one \$17,500 yearling created more than 100 millionaires. Hard to do if you're not franchising MacDonald's.

COLORS

Probably because binoculars are a relatively recent invention, horse-racing is an incredibly colorful sport. Not only do the horses come in a number of colors, but every owner has his own silks, and some of the designs are truly eye-catching (as they were meant to be, since they originated to help an owner spot his horse as a cluster of them raced down the backstretch half a mile away).

The most famous colors?

Probably Calumet's devil's red and blue – a red jersey, with two blue bars on each sleeve.

Then there's Claiborne's pure orange, and Odgen Phipps' pure black.

The Vanderbilt silks are cerise and white diamonds, with red sleeves. (When I was 10, and already a fanatic, I wrote a number of owners and stables, asking for their silks. Only two – Brookmeade Stable [white with blue cross sashes] and Vanderbilt – sent them to me. One of the most mournful days of my life came two years later when I realized I had outgrown them forever.)

There are currently more than 5,000 colorful designs registered with the Jockey Club. Makes baseball uniforms seem even duller than they are.

EQUIPMENT

The most common equipment for a racehorse is a set of blinkers. It keeps his attention straight ahead, and stops him from getting distracted by movements in the stands or the infield.

Then there's the shadow roll, about two inches thick and cylindrical, which goes over his nose, and prevents him from seeing (and jumping) shadows.

From time to time you'll see a horse with a tongue-tie; this stops him from trying to swallow his tongue in the heat of the race (or not trying and doing it anyway).

Some horses will wear protective bandages on front or rear legs.

On off tracks, some horses will wear mud caulks, the equivalent of spiked shoes, which gives them better purchase.

None of these things should give you any concern; none imply that a particular horse is at anything less than his best or fittest.

On the other hand, a bar shoe – the program book will tell you if he's wearing one – is a protective device for horses with quarter cracks (cracks on their hooves). The track vet won't let the horse run if he's lame, or in any way unfit, but a bar shoe is an indication that he's had problems in the past and may again.

MEDICATION

Almost every horse runs on Lasix these days. When a horse makes an extreme effort, he may occasionally bleed – which is to say, capillaries burst in his lungs, the blood comes up through his nostrils, and he can't breathe easily. Lasix used to be outlawed in New York, but now it's legal everywhere in the country,

and used as a preventative far more than a cure. (If a horse *does* bleed, he is forbidden to race again until the track veterinarian is convinced the problem has been solved.)

Many horses run on Bute – short for Butazolidin, a brand name for phenylbutazone. (I used it once myself, when I tore some tendons in my foot and my doctor prescribed it.) Bute doesn't cure anything, but if a horse is sore – and sooner or later, most athletes get sore if they stay in training – the Bute will mask his pain. Again, it used to be outlawed at about half the tracks – the one disqualification in the history of the Kentucky Derby came in 1968 when it was discovered that Dancer's Image had used Bute – but today it's legal everywhere.

Again, if you find a horse is running on Bute and/or Lasix, it's absolutely standard. He probably doesn't even need it, but as long as it doesn't hurt and might help, trainers will use it.

SO TAKE A LOOK

Okay, that's your primer. It can't begin to tell you what it's like to watch Affirmed and Alydar locked in head-and-head battle all the way around the track, or seeing Forego starting to pick up lagging horses as he straightens out to begin his stretch run, or old Kelso wiping out yet another generation of pretenders to his throne, or Ruffian turning into the stretch 10 lengths in front when her jockey hasn't asked her for speed yet. But maybe when you see it next time, you'll have a little better idea of what you're looking at.

PART II

Now that you know a little something about it, let's examine a few races and see not only how they played out, but *why*.

The 1985 Kentucky Derby The lukewarm favorite was Chief's Crown, but five or six horses were considered to have a good chance to win. One of them was a front-runner, Spend A Buck, ridden by Angel Cordero. There was another speed horse in the race, owned by the Yankees' George Steinbrenner.

The gate opened, Cordero sent Spend A Buck to the front as expected, and Steinbrenner's horse stumbled, just as War Emblem stumbled at the start of the 2002 Belmont -- and suddenly, only a furlong into the 10-furlong race, Spend A Buck was 5 lengths in front. Each of the other jockeys had to decide whether to engage Cordero's horse in a speed duel to soften him up for the homestretch (which would soften their own mounts up as well) or wait for someone else to do it. Every jockey elected to wait. Spend A Buck entered the backstretch with an uncontested 6-length lead, and the race was over. Turning into the stretch he was every bit as fresh as the horses who were trying to catch him, and he won by 5 lengths without drawing a deep breath.

The 1955 Kentucky Derby The heavy favorite was Nashua, with Eddie Arcaro riding him. Nashua had had a pair of all-out wars with Summer Tan, ridden by Eric Guerin, and Arcaro felt that was the horse to beat.

An unknown California horse, Swaps – who would not remain unknown for long – got a comfortable 2-length lead going around the far turn. Nashua was laying third, a length ahead of Summer Tan, and Arcaro didn't want to use his horse up and soften him for Summer Tan's stretch run, so he kept him under light restraint. And he kept him, and he kept him – and by the time he realized that Summer Tan was never going to pass him, and Swaps was running far too easily at the front end, it was too late and he never could catch the California colt.

The 1968 Suburban and Brooklyn Handicaps Two of the great ones hooked up. Damascus, the 1967 Horse of the Year, winner of 13 of his last 15 starts, possessor of the most powerful stretch run in racing, carried 133 pounds – far above scale – in the Suburban Handicap. His lifelong rival, Dr. Fager, winner at the time of 15 of 17 lifetime starts, and perhaps the fastest front-runner in history, carried 132 pounds.

There were only five horses in the race. Every horse was good, though the other three weren't quite in a class with the top two – but they didn't have to be, since this was a handicap, and they were in receipt of 15 to 20 pounds each. But the point is, none of them was willing to sacrifice himself on the alter of pacemaking to soften Dr. Fager up for Damascus. As a result, Dr. Fager broke on top, and when he had run half a mile in 47 seconds, the race was as good as over. Damascus made a run at him in the homestretch, but never seriously threatened him and came in second.

They met two weeks later in the Brooklyn Handicap. This time Dr. Fager carried 135 pounds to 131

on Damascus – but this time, Damascus had help. His trainer also entered his stablemate Hedevar, the previous year's champion sprinter. Hedevar wasn't there to win; his trainer didn't even care if the jockey pulled him up once his job was done. And his job was to force the headstrong Dr. Fager into such rapid early fractions that Damascus would have a chance to catch a tiring horse in the stretch.

The gate opened, Dr. Fager broke on top, as usual, and Hedevar broke almost as fast. He got within a neck of Dr. Fager, who absolutely wouldn't be passed. They ran the first quarter mile in a phenomenal 21 3/5 seconds, the half in 44 seconds flat – and even though Hedevar tossed in the towel and Dr. Fager found himself 3 lengths in front, the race was as good as over. Damascus moved up on the far turn, got the leg-weary Dr. Fager in his sights, ran him down in the homestretch, and beat him to the wire by 2 lengths.

The 1977 Belmont Stakes In the Kentucky Derby, For the Moment had pressed front-running Seattle Slew. They'd run the first 6 furlongs in 1:10, and Slew went on to win rather handily while For the Moment finished 5th.

In the Preakness, it was Cormorant's turn. He was heads apart with Seattle Slew after 6 furlongs in 1:09 3/5. Slew won by a daylight margin, while Cormorant faded to 4th.

In the Belmont, having seen what happened to For the Moment and Cormorant, no one was willing to press the pace, and as a result Seattle Slew had a comfortable lead after running the first 6 furlongs in 1:14 1/5. A horse runs a length in a fifth of a second. All any fan had to do was look at the time, realize that Seattle Slew had just been allowed to run the first 6 furlongs 21 lengths slower than the Derby and 23 lengths slower than the Preakness, and you knew that no one was going to catch him on this particular day. (He won, eased up, by 4 lengths.)

The 1979 Belmont Stakes Affirmed was our last Triple Crown winner, back in 1978. But we should have had one in 1979. He was good enough, and fit enough, and no one in the field was within five lengths of him in quality. He was Spectacular Bid, coming into the race off 12 wins in a row, including the Derby and Preakness.

He had just one problem. He was ridden by a 19-year-old kid named Ronnie Franklin, a totally-inexperienced jockey who didn't have all that much talent. But when you've got a team that's won twelve in a row, even if a few of them were closer than they should have been, you don't break it up and hire a new jockey, especially for the most important race in your horse's life.

So Ronnie Franklin was aboard Spectacular Bid when the gates opened and ten horses began the grueling, 12-furlong contest. A 30-to-1 longshot who'd never won a stakes race in his life raced off to a long lead. Franklin had Spectacular Bid in second place, running easily along the rail. This in itself was unusual, because usually the Bid came from the back of the pack with a powerful late run.

There was another unusual thing. General Assembly, the horse with the most early speed in the field, the horse who had set the pace in the Derby and Preakness, was three lengths behind Spectacular Bid. His jockey, the experienced Angel Cordero, realized that the leader was setting a suicidal pace and wanted no part of it.

When they'd run almost half a mile, the leader was still 6 lengths in front, and Franklin panicked. Fearful that the longshot would get an insurmountable lead, and unaware that they'd just run the half mile in 46 seconds, a murderous pace for the shorter Derby let alone the Belmont, Franklin sent Spectacular Bid after the frontrunner. He caught him in less than a quarter mile, and the longshot threw in the towel without a fight. Suddenly Franklin found himself four lengths in front with half a mile to go, and all the sportswriters who knew nothing about racing felt the race was as good as over.

It was – but not the way they thought. The Bid was four lengths in front, true – but he'd used up too much energy catching that meaningless frontrunner, and his time for the first mile was much too fast. He turned into the stretch with a diminishing two-length lead...and then Coastal, whom he'd never met before, and General Assembly, whom he'd beaten like a drum all year long, caught and passed him. So much for the Triple Crown.

Franklin was fired the next morning – one day too late – and Bill Shoemaker was hired. Shoemaker rode Spectacular Bid for the rest of the Bid's career, losing only one more race in the next two years. But thanks to a kid who couldn't judge pace, he lost the race he had to win.

The 2002 Belmont Stakes Every now and then strategy goes right out the window. You plot and you plan for weeks, and two seconds into the race everything's changed.

It happened in the 2002 Belmont Stakes. Everyone knew War Emblem was the horse to beat. He'd been a surprise winner of the Kentucky Derby (which, in retrospect, after examining his pedigree and his last

couple of races, wasn't so surprising after all), and had won the Preakness just as easily. He was a front-running horse possessed of remarkable speed, and enough stamina to win the 10-furlong Derby by a large margin. Every trainer and jockey had to decide what to do: run with War Emblem and perhaps use their own horse up in the process, or let him go and hope he couldn't last for a mile and a half.

It became meaningless in less than a second. The hard ground broke under War Emblem's feet as the gate opened, and he fell to his knees. He was up and running a second later, but for all practical purposes his Belmont was over.

Not all the other jockeys saw what had happened, but they all saw that War Emblem wasn't on or close to the lead. What to do now?

If only one jock had decided to go for the lead, he could probably have set a sane, reasonable pace – but four of them went for it, and they began running too fast for such a long, grueling race. And then War Emblem sealed their fates. Left at the post, he moved up along the rail. His jockey, knowing how much ground he had lost and how much energy he had expended already, wasn't asking him for speed, but he had a champion's competitive heart, and damned if he didn't forge to the front half a mile from home.



It had taken everything he had left to get there, and he would soon fade to 8th place – but the other jockeys didn't know that. They just knew that today the horse they had to beat had come from behind and suddenly he was in the lead, and they pushed their horses even harder – and by the head of the homestretch, after a mile and a quarter, every horse that was on or within 6 lengths of the lead was cooked. The two trailers, longshot Sarava and second-choice Medaglia d'Oro, ridden by two jockeys who had kept their wits about them, passed all the others as if they were standing still, ran neck-and-neck to the wire, and Sarava became the longest-priced winner in Belmont history.

The 1984 Breeders Cup Classic

When John Henry, one of the two contenders for Horse of the Year honors, scratched, the other contender, Slew o' Gold, was made the heavy favorite for the 10-furlong Breeders Cup Classic. He hadn't lost all year, hadn't even worked up much of a sweat. This was to be the

final race of his career, at his favorite distance, and he was carrying 126 pounds, a burden he'd been winning with for two years.

But he had a physical problem: a quarter crack on his hoof. They flew his very own blacksmith out and gave him a bar shoe that would protect the tender area, but his jockey, Angel Cordero, was very aware that the horse wasn't quite 100%.

The race began, Slew o' Gold lay 5th, about 10 lengths off the pace, and then made his move turning into the stretch. By mid-stretch, with an eighth of a mile to go, he was only a length behind the two leaders, Wild Again and Gate Dancer, and gaining ground, though not as rapidly as Cordero had expected. And, because he was aware of that foot, and of the fact that Slew o' Gold, while he was running a winning race wasn't running a devastating one, Cordero chose to save ground and go *between* Gate Dancer and Wild Again, rather than lose ground while angling to the outside in order to get a clear run to the wire...

...and as Slew o' Gold began moving up, Gate Dancer moved to his left and the hole closed. It was too late for Cordero to slow his horse down, take him outside, and put him to a drive again, so he stayed where he was, hoping Wild Again would bear in or Gate Dancer would bear out sometime in the final 70 yards so

his mount could forge to the front.

It never happened, and Slew o' Gold, demonstrably the best horse in the race, lost for the only time all year – and, it turned out, simultaneously lost Horse of the Year honors to John Henry, the horse who stayed in the barn.

The 1976 Marlboro Cup And sometimes strategy – either right strategy or wrong strategy – means nothing.

The great gelding Forego, seeking his third successive Horse of the Year title, was entered in the Marlboro Cup.

He was assigned 137 pounds, more weight than any horse had won with since Dr. Fager, and more weight than any horse had won with at more than a mile in close to half a century. By rights, he should scratched rather than accept that burden, but he didn't.

It rained all morning and most of the afternoon, and the track was officially labeled muddy. Forego hated the mud. He had chronically sore ankles, and a misstep in the mud could end his career. Even if he didn't take that misstep, he was probably 5 lengths better on a fast track.

He was giving 20 pounds – 10 lengths – to millionaire Honest Pleasure, and even more weight to other top-caliber stakes winners.

He was running without mud caulks.

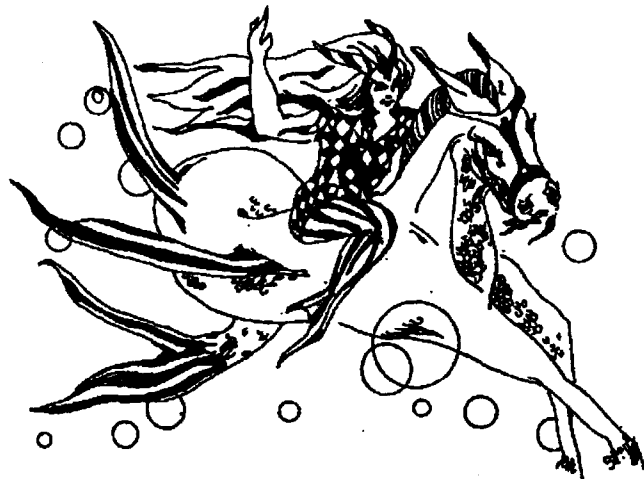
Once he'd possessed some tactical early speed, but as he grew older it deserted him, and these days he came from well behind. On a muddy track, that meant he'd probably pick up 15 pounds of mud on his chest and neck – a gift of 7 1/2 lengths to his rivals.

He drew an outside post position, and never got close to the rail. Going around the far turn, Shoemaker had to go six horses wide – another 6-length gift to the front runners.

They straightened away in the stretch, with a quarter mile to go. Honest Pleasure had just taken the lead. Forego was eleventh, floundering in the mud, 17 lengths behind.

So much for strategy. So much for luck. This was Forego, and from somewhere deep within himself he found a way to ignore the mud striking his face, to ignore the footing, to ignore the 137-pound impost, and just run hell-for-leather down the stretch. He was 9 lengths back at the furlong pole, 4 lengths back at the sixteenth pole, 2 lengths back with 50 yards to go, and just when everyone knew that valiant effort would fall short, he found yet another gear and caught Honest Pleasure 10 yards from the wire and won by a nose.

It's performances like that, when a equine athlete is so good and so determined to win that everything you know about analyzing a race becomes meaningless, that it truly is the Sport of Kings.



Here again from the pages of *Fingerprint Whorld* is a study in ridges and revenge from
John Berry

NOCTURNAL MISSION

I carefully select my 'interesting cases' for publication in your journal primarily for their entertainment value, but at the same time my intention is always to disclose important aspects of the discipline and also occasionally to indicate errors of judgement on my part which I sincerely hope will serve as warnings to your readership.

In this latter context, one case caused me to be publicly harangued by an Assize Court judge about twenty years ago.

A woman was sexually assaulted in her room in a hostel which was on the second floor. The victim was physically deformed, but Nature had attempted to adjust the balance by giving her a very beautiful face. She had had several normal illegitimate children, all adopted, and was living in the hostel where she was employed as a cleaner. An old woman in the next room had been awoken by the sounds of the struggle and had crept downstairs and dialled 999. The police speedily arrived, but the assailant had decamped.

I attended the scene the following morning, and noted a railway ran at the rear of the hostel. Scuff marks were on the drainpipe up to the second floor. The victim had left the window slightly open to get fresh air, and the assailant had forced the window further open and had furtively climbed in. Inside the window frame at the point of entry I found a right hand sequence, obviously made by the intruder. The right ring finger was a clear high-count loop; the other fingers were indistinct. I photographed the sequence, raced to my office, and was so keen to make an identification that I searched through the Two Hand Collection from the negative.

The search took me a considerable time, but eventually I was successful. The person I identified lived twelve miles away, in another town. His only previous conviction was seven years previously, for taking a motor vehicle. I noted that the train from the city (in which the crime occurred) to his town of residence passed the hostel, and I presumed that on his travels he had noted that the hostel was only inhabited by females.

When he was interviewed, he made a vehement denial, stating he didn't even know where the hostel was; he also had a firm alibi for the night of the outrage. Nevertheless he was arrested and charged with various associated crimes, and I was instructed to prepare fingerprint evidence of identity.

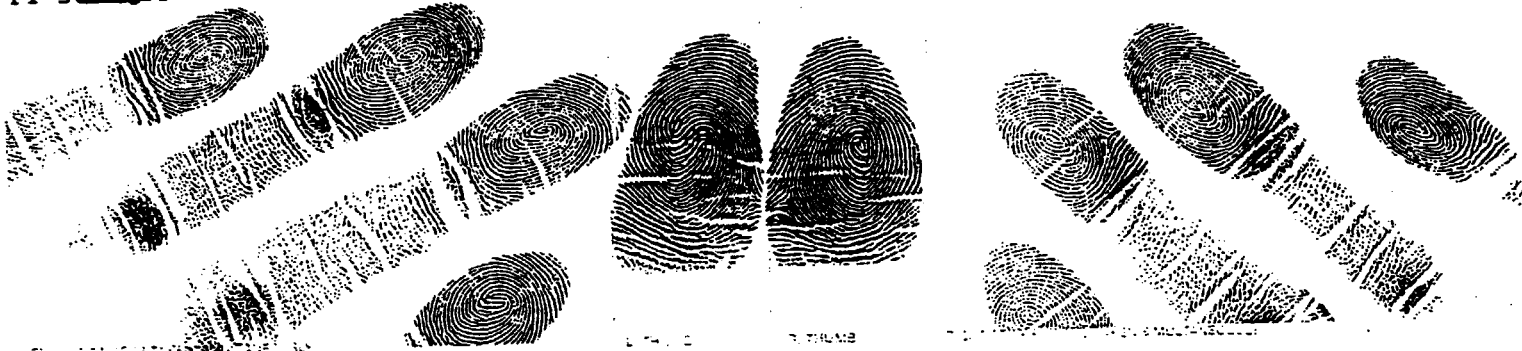
The defence counsel questioned me very closely on all aspects of the fingerprint exhibit. He ordered me to fold the exhibit in two parts, with the scene mark uppermost. I was instructed to name each of the sixteen ridge characteristics. I was then told to turn the exhibit over, revealing the right ring finger impression of the person charged, and I had to repeat the same check. Much to defence counsel's chagrin, both sets of characteristics agreed perfectly . . . the scene mark was excellent, and the police officer who had fingerprinted the culprit had taken an almost perfect set. It was a superb exhibit.

When the defence concluded a very long cross-examination, the judge also asked me a series of questions about the infallibility of fingerprint evidence mainly for the benefit of the jury.

For the defence, the accused's wife stated that she and her husband had been in bed all night at their house on the night of the offence. The prisoner made a firm

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denial when he gave evidence on oath on his own behalf . . . he said he didn't even know where the hostel was . . . he had never been inside it . . . he definitely had not sexually assaulted the woman.

The prosecution, in cross-examination, asked how he explained the presence of his fingerprints at the scene, and he gave the classic cliché reply, "I just cannot understand it."

The judge, in his summing-up, went through the evidence very carefully, and left the decision firmly with the jury. He told them that the conflict of evidence decreed that if they believed the fingerprint expert they must announce a 'guilty' verdict.

Conversely, the defence had provided an alibi witness. Her evidence, and her husband's denial of involvement, should be considered, and if they were satisfied by their explanations, they should find the prisoner 'not guilty'.

I confidently expected the jury to return with a 'guilty' verdict in about ten minutes, but three hours went by, and there was no indication of their return. The old woman witness, who had dialled 999, told me she didn't feel well. I got her a cup of tea, and she said she wanted to go home. I reasoned that her modicum of evidence would not be questioned by the jury, and told her so. I telephoned a taxi for her at her request, and I supported her down the stone steps outside the courthouse, and the taxi carried her away.

I returned to the witness room, and saw quite a lot of activity . . . members of the constabulary of both sexes were loudly calling out the name of the woman I had just sent home. The jury had returned and wanted to ask her a question, and the judge had ordered that she should return to the witness box.

Being terribly worried but nevertheless optimistic, I hurriedly returned to the top of the courthouse steps, looking hopefully up the road, hoping against hope that the taxi had stalled at the traffic lights. Unfortunately, it hadn't so I trudged reluctantly back to the courtroom . . . it was empty. I was told that the judge had told the jury that their question was immaterial to the proceedings . . . their decision depended entirely upon their assessment of the reliability of the witnesses.

After a further two hours, the jury returned and pronounced the man guilty of the charges. He was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. The judge then asked the officer in charge of the case to investigate the absence of the witness.

With great trepidation I stepped forward and confessed that I had told the witness

she could go home as she was unwell.

The judge commented unfavourably on my presumption of his duties. His command of the English language was so concise that although he didn't use many words, every one he did use bore extreme potency and the total of his pronouncement boded ill for any future misconduct on my part.

Whenever this particular judge was sitting at the assizes, I made sure that I left the court precincts a second or two in front of the caretaker.

HOW I WROTE ...

Continued from last rock page 7

tune or a statue or a poem; he'll have no need for any such abnormal activity. A person has to be somehow deficient or lacking in person or personality or he will not attempt these things. He must be very deficient or lacking if he will succeed at all in them. Every expression in art or pseudo-art is a crutch that a crippled person makes and donates to the healthy world for its use (the healthy world having only the vaguest idea that it even needs such crutches).

There are, I know, many apparent glaring exceptions to the rule that only persons who are deficient or lacking in person or personality will contribute any creative content. Believe me, those exceptions are only apparent. There is something unbalanced in every one of them.

Carry it one step further, though. One of the legends, unwritten from the beginning and maybe unwritten forever, is about a Quest for a Perfect Thing. But it is really the quest for the normal thing. Can you find, anywhere in the world, behind or before or present, even one person who is really normal and reasonable and balanced and well-adjusted? This is the Perfect Thing, if it or he or she is ever found, and ever found there will be no further need of any art or attempted art, good or bad.

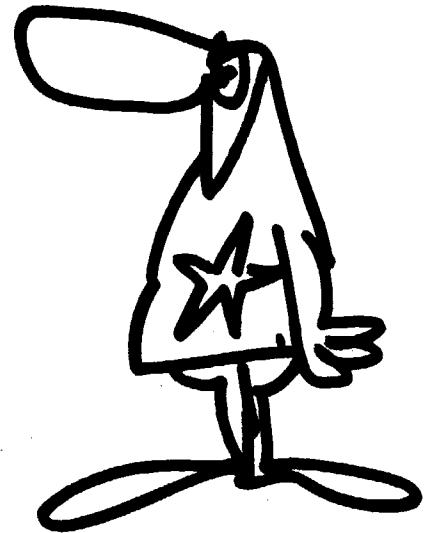
Enough of such stuff, end of article, if this is an article. I am both facetious and serious in every word written here.





POLICE STORIES

*THREE
Guy Lillian*



William Rotsler

One terrible night in the mid-'90's, a New Orleans police officer named Antoinette Frank called in sick from her regular detail – an extra, after-hours assignment. She and her partner worked this job at a Vietnamese restaurant. Instead of staying home, though, she waited until after hours, then walked in with her cousin ... and in the course of robbing it, murdered everyone in the place.

Or so she thought. Two kids hid in the cooler and got a good look at her. You may have seen the story of Antoinette's capture depicted on *Homicide: Life in the Streets*. You'll read the story of her sentencing now.

I was in Judge Frank Marullo's court in New Orleans, handling some minor matter, when I noticed that the courtroom gallery behind me was filling with spectators. TV sketch artists set up shop in the front row of the pews. Note pads sprang from the hands of TV reporters. Someone told me later that Dan Rather was in the room. It was very quiet. Onto the bench stepped Judge Marullo, a tiny man, looking like an owl. Two lawyers I knew stood before him. The bailiffs brought in a tall, good-looking black girl to take her place between them: former N.O. cop Antoinette Frank.

The tale was she knew karate, and was popular with other girls behind bars because she shared cookies from her gift parcels. She wore sweats and sneakers without laces. Her hair was piled atop her head. Despite the deplorable tendency of Orleans Parish juries to free black defendants no matter how strong the evidence against them, Antoinette's jury hadn't freed her. They'd convicted her of first degree murder, and came back with the sentence Marullo was preparing to impose.

She crossed her arms, and looked about the room, everywhere but at the bench. "Do you have anything to say?" Marullo asked. She shook her head. God knows what she was thinking as the judge spoke, his eyes on his notes. They had been composed and written out by his law clerk. It went something like

"I sentence you to the custody of the Louisiana Department of Corrections, and that you be taken by them on a date to be appointed to a room completely cut off from public view, and there, in the manner established by law, that chemicals be passed through your body of sufficient toxicity so as to cause your death, and may God have mercy on your soul."

Marullo looked up. "I think the sentence is justified in this case. Take her away."

And they took her away.

Behind me, a man whispered, "Damn!" It was a while before anyone could breathe.

Another day, when, driving east on Interstate 10, I passed a long group of blue figures marching informally along a parallel road. They followed a black limousine which itself followed a black hearse Autos on I-10 flashed their lights. It was the funeral for Franks' partner.

Antoinette awaits her sentence in St. Gabriel, Louisiana's chief prison for women, as I write.

One time I left a client's house in a black area of town after picking up a fee. Within a block I was surrounded by patrol cars. Hard-muscled green-clad tactical cops swarmed me, their faces solid masks behind eyes blanked by shades. Jeez, I thought, I must have run a helluva stop sign.

Came the dawn: my client was the matriarch of an infamous family of drug dealers. The heat had the house under surveillance – they thought I was a customer.

By the time I realized this there were four black-&-whites flashing lights around me and at least half a dozen cops milling around. I recognized one from a recent trial. I showed them my Bar card, proving who I was and underscoring my story. One or two exchanged sheepish grins, and the lot, after taking a long hard look through my windows (it's called "plain view") took off, with nary a sorry-about-that or a see-you-in-court. One of them tossed my Bar card onto the street.

Well, no harm, no foul, but if that shit-for-brains ever finds his ass on fire, he can stay up nights praying for the sweat off my balls to put it out.

Being a law student gave me an advantage in dealing with Leon, and being a lawyer got me both into and out of trouble with the street narcs. But more than that, being a lawyer, even a criminal defense lawyer, has given me insights into the police life. In a way it's analogous to the effect that excellent reality show *Cops* has had on the general public. My friend and fellow barrister put it succinctly: "You know them now."

Indeed I do. A fine young man I've known since he was a teenager, Carl Proctor, is a detective now on the Birmingham force. Bailiffs and deputies are my co-workers in court, and I've gotten to know retired cops as D.A. investigators, and they've been pretty much all right. Guys out of the pressure cooker of street work can let their natural friendliness shine.

Still, I've seen too many policemen shade evidence to convict a dooper to fully let down my guard. I've heard officers aver with straight faces that they've smelled marijuana from closed cars going the other way at a combined speed of sixty, or that they saw a running suspect drop a rock half the size of a tooth from fifty feet away on a dark night – and that they kept an eye on the evidence while wrestling the defendant to the ground. My job requires that I jump on every inconsistency, exploit every mistake, test every observation, challenge every judgment. That's my half of the constitutional equation, and don't knock it; some day it may save your freedom.

On the other hand, the cop's half of that equation may save your neck. I once eavesdropped on a courageous JP negotiator as he talked a distraught man into giving up a pistol. Once in Jefferson Parish Drug Court I had to tell a client that the D.A. wanted him to plead to 30 years. The guy went ballistic – who wouldn't? – called me a sell-out, and began to rampage around the room. He was tall and rangy – and a former boxing champion at Angola. Had he landed a punch, it would have been Lights Out. As it was, he spit at me – but missed. It took five deputies to get him to the carpet. I rather appreciated their being there.

Cops can also come in handy after they take off their badges. By far the most repulsive experience I've ever endured in a courtroom occurred just after Bucconeer: the month-long obscenity known locally as the Harvey Tunnel trial. Loathsome and dishonest prosecutors, a feeble-minded judge, half a dozen arrogant and contentious defense lawyers, and most troubling of all, defendants who very possibly were not guilty ... in a capital case. There is no worse nightmare for a defense lawyer.

Add to this sickening stew a jury I can only describe as vile. No – I must be fair. 11/12ths vile.

One juror was everything the others were not – observant, critical, intelligent, and unafraid. No suspense: he was a former cop.

Normally ex-policemen are driven away from jury duty with whips. The idea is that police are so sympathetic to prosecutors and automatic votes for conviction. "Mustache" – that's what we called him,

because he had one – only made the panel because the defense team – bickering, resentful, and so sick with ego that it practically collapsed – had run out of challenges. Which turned out to be lucky. Mustache had carried something away from his police career, all right, but it wasn't prejudice. It was professionalism.

The Harvey Tunnel case was based on the testimony of the survivor of a gangland shooting. Pierre, the witness, was no prize – a gang member with convictions for drug dealing and violence whose street attitude could not be bleached out by hours of prosecution coaching. Also, a particularly astute member of the defense squad – I'm blushing, I swear – had gone to the hospital where he'd been taken after the shooting, and uncovered a fascinating fact: at the time of the shooting, Pierre had been higher than Krypton on PCP. Phencyclidine. Angel dust.

Everyone on the jury bought Pierre's story and his identification of our clients – except Mustache. Mustache had dealt with scumbags like Pierre and had seen angel dust at work. Mustache had been on the streets, and knew that the combination of a rat's ass like Pierre and psychotropic substances did not add up to reliable testimony. A cop would not have believed Pierre on the street; true on the street, true in the courtroom. A good cop knows bullshit when he hears it – and a good juror doesn't convict based on it. Mustache was both. He was the only Not Guilty vote on the jury, and he stood by his guns until the rest of them gave up. The next jury acquitted my client.

I've enjoyed the bailiffs and the escort cops in St. John Parish, where I presently work. One of them is a youngster I'll call Cade, 23 years old, baby-faced, a college grad, friendly, enthused by life. His wife, in the summer of 2002, was expecting their first child. Hardly a Harley Hard-ass, but he's taught me more about the true cop experience than anyone else.

A few weeks before It happened, Cade was called for jury duty on one of my dope trials. Grinning widely at my amused discomfiture, he said all the right things during voir dire: of course, he'd be impartial; he'd never let testimony of senior officers intimidate him; sure, he believed suspects were innocent until proven guilty, and so on. I had to turn flips to save a challenge and get him out of there, and we had a good laugh about it. Then he got assigned to a street patrol and the next time I saw his kisser, it was on the front page of the newspaper.

A local black guy named Kenneth, in his late 30s, walked into a bank in LaPlace. He was no criminal, but was well-known to be schizophrenic and crazy. On this day, as schizophrenics often do, he'd skipped his medication. He had no account at that bank, so when he stood in the lobby and began howling for his money, the tellers called the police. Cade showed up.

Cade caught up with Kenneth in the parking lot outside of the local Wal-Mart. No one heard the words that passed between them. Knowing Cade, though, I seriously doubt that they justified what Kenneth did next – pull out a pair of scissors and stab Cade in the face.

He struck Cade just above the right eyebrow in a downward slash that cut him along the bridge of his nose, his cheek and his chin. Again he struck, a puncture wound on the back of his neck, right into an artery.

Cade drew his weapon and fired twice, quick, bangbang. Then he was on his face watching his blood spread across the asphalt. The scene began to shrink, he said, as if he were being pulled away.

Kenneth died. Cade did not.

He spent ten days getting sewn up and having Transylvanian tea pumped back into his body. After a few weeks he came back to court, for the Grand Jury.

The D.A. asked me to sit in as Cade's attorney if he were called to testify. I assented gladly. While waiting, I listened to Cade jaw with other cops. He seemed nervous, distracted, but joked and laughed when I told him the scar was an improvement. That was a lie, though; it made his round, once-happy face jagged, and old. The look in his eyes made him look older. Infinitely.

He'd killed a man. Kenneth had attacked him and come damned close to snuffing him. A cop has the duty to protect the public and the right to protect himself. Still, however justified the shoot, it wasn't as if Kenneth had been a bad-ass. He had simply been out of his mind.

It was just plain tragic – and whenever, in the future, Cade thought of the birth of his child, he'd remember the nightmare that preceded it. Hard thing to deal with. I hoped like Hell that Cade was seeing a shrink. He'd need one.

He wouldn't need a lawyer. The D.A. didn't seek charges and the Grand Jury refused to indict. Legally, Cade was free. Personally? Emotionally? Free? Ever?

Times have changed – and I have too. A 53-year-old lawyer, even one as immature as me, is not the same person as a 20-year-old college kid. I still have my Hopalong Cassidy watch, but it no longer runs. The Vietnam War has been over for 27 years. The evil men who promoted it at the expense of America's youth are dead and gone. Black America is quarantined to stew in its own juices, which is the way White America seems to want it. Though people like me hate that situation, no one in politics seems interested in seeking a solution. Activism is passé. It is a different world.

For every cop who's tried to bullshit me from the witness stand there have been others who have been straight. It never pays to judge the mission by the man or the man by the mission.

It's a tough job that requires respect – given, and expected. No police officer should be harassed, endangered or litigated for doing his job correctly. Correctly. All cops should be held to the strictest standard of professionalism. That means cool, patience, forbearance, courtesy, honesty, and honor, not only with other members of the profession, but with the public. Cops must expect and accept outside overview of their behavior, be prepared to answer for their actions and accusations they make against others. No excuses, no rationalizations, no invocation of the divine right of cops.

They screw up, they get disciplined. They break the law, they get prosecuted. They forget that their charge is the safety of all, they simply must go. They have guns on their hips and the authority to use them. There is no place for undisciplined, dishonest, misdirected men with such power in a civilization worthy of the name.

We, the people, must hold police to these standards ... and keep a simple truth in mind. They must remember it, we must remember it. The question is not cop; it's good cop or bad cop. Beyond that, the question is even more basic. Good man or bad man. That's true for every one.

Some time after the Cade incident, there was an enormous chain-reaction wreck on westbound I-10. The police blocked the Interstate at exit 206 – the LaPlace exit I usually take. When I toodled up to the exit that morning I saw a St. John's police car blocking the road, a deputy waving traffic off beside it. I peered over to see if I knew him. Older, stocky guy, gray-headed – nope. I went on to the office.

At lunchtime my boss flicked on the TV and we watched the story about the wreck – and the second tragedy, which followed. Minutes – minutes – after I'd used that exit, eying the cop on duty to see if I knew him, a speeding trucker had ignored the blinking lights and wiped the deputy off the face of the Earth.

He'd been a reservist, helping out for the day. The day before, I found, he'd gotten his oil changed at the same Goodyear I go to. His name was Skip. Every morning nowadays, I pass the cross put up for him by the side of the road.

Didn't know him from Adam. I hadn't forgotten Leon, or Berkeley, or Antoinette Franks, or Rodney King. But – I found myself racked. After all, true story, cop may be cop, but cop is also human being, so never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.

"Pierre", "Cade" and "Kenneth" are pseudonyms. All other names are real.



KEY

WR's

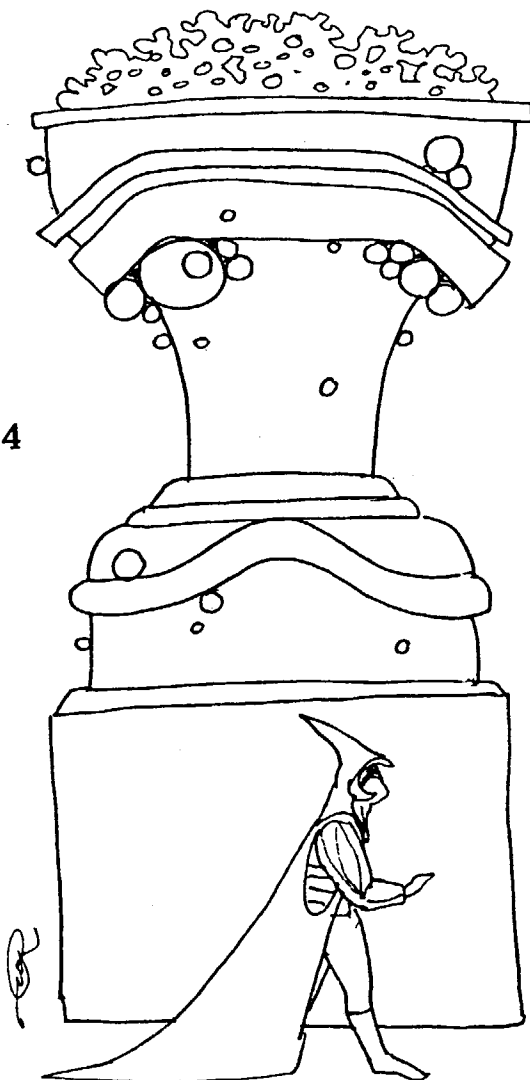
EPISTLES

We Also Herded In: Patricia Steele, Peggy Rae Sapienza ("I almost started this letter using the old fannish 'Gosh, Wow! Oh Boy! Oh Boy!'" *blush*), Binker Hughes, Rodney Leighton, Naomi Fisher, Sheryl Birkhead, Linda Krawecke, Craig Hilton, Joey Grillot

Fred Chappell
c/o *Challenger*

Challenger 16 presents your usual high-spirited, well made, highly entertaining zine, the one fans must have grown accustomed to, but of course an air of melancholy hangs over this production. I wish to present my con-

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dolences to the many friends of Mr. Lafferty. I never met him but have been told many times of his generosity, amiability, helpful good offices, and whimsical good humor. All his work that I have read I have enjoyed and admired.

But if you had told me you were going to reprint my little article on *Past Master*, I might have demurred. The tone, rather smartass and slickish, seems out of place for the occasion. But maybe solemnity would not be in the right key, either. Anyhow, what's done is done and I hope that readers will see that I meant no ill will toward the gentleman nor toward his kaleidoscopic novel.

And the whole of this *Challenger* makes up a fitting tribute.

Obviously I owe you an apology for my assumption that you wouldn't mind my reprinting your piece from my 1979 chapbook. If it makes any difference, Ray got a boost out of that production, including your take on Past Master, I disagree about your tone (comparing a novel to Shelley is by no means insulting), and agree wholeheartedly with the reasons the book succeeded. To say that "Past Master is finally a big shiny delirious clutter of impulse," to quote you, is to hail a work of spontaneity and joy. That says a lot for a book which Ray's editor, Terry Carr, made him rewrite five times. No, your review was a boon to Chall's take on Lafferty, a needed critical note about his fiction amongst all our tributes to his person, and I'm only sorry I used it without your high sign.

Joy V. Smith
8925 Selph Rd.
Lakeland FL 33810-0341

Beautiful cover. I love the details. Is that a robot mask on the jester stick? The back cover is intriguing. Are those Lafferty characters? What a great tribute issue to R.A. Lafferty – a must have for collectors, I think.

Dany Frolich did indeed add Lafferty characters to his cover for At the Sleepy Sailor. You can see Roadstrum and his cromagnon mechanic, the Ktistec Machine, the "cross between Harpo Marx and Albert the Alligator" from Arrive at Easterwine, the mermaid from The Devil is Dead, some of the 900 grandmothers from the story of that name, Thomas More from Past Master, Snuffles from

"Smuffles" ... not to mention Ray and Okla Hannali at the bar.

Fascinating article by Alan White on how he created the **Challenger** 15 cover ... probably 20 layers at any one time and six hours to create. Wow! Good article by Gregory Benford on Stephen Hawking...

Excellent article by Richard Dengrove: "The Flying Saucer's 18th Century Precursors" – fascinating. What a lot of research! You always have a great selection of articles, but I thought this was the most interesting.

I loved Mike Resnick's museum selection. There are several I really want to visit. I've never had the urge to visit the Salvador Dali museum, however, even though it's not too far, and I see the billboards for it all the time.

The National Gallery has my favorite painting by the artist, his beautiful and moving Last Supper. But they used to exhibit it in the gift shop! When I walked in I exclaimed, "Hello, Dali!" HAAAA

I enjoyed "In Touch with Spirits" by Terry Jeeves. That was fun. Re: "Not Guilty By Reason Of Insanity". Can't they change that?! These people are guilty but insane. This has irked me for years. Btw, look at amazon.com for all the books using that title.

Great selection of zines in "The Zine Dump". Where do you find the time to read and review all these? Btw, I saw that **The Proper Boskonian** is no more. Pity. There is always so much interesting info in the LOCs. **Challenger** is so educational!

Benjamin Jones
19 Manning Street
Pawtucket RI 02860

The salute to R.A. Lafferty was beautiful. Good old Laff: may he rest in peace, but not too much peace to giggle at us.

His "Day After the World Ended" is still timely. Does that make it true? Debatable. It's important to remember that there are two kinds of arguers in the world: those who argue because they know they're right, and those who argue because they like to argue. Lafferty was both, of course.

With all due respect to Fred Chappell, I would favor **Annals of Klepsis**, one of the man's last novels, as his best. It's weird and difficult, the **Finnegans Wake** of space operas. But that's part of the fun.

The article on changes in the insanity defense had nothing to do with science fiction, and for that I appreciated it. I have to have compassion for any lawyer whose client threatens his own home with nuclear destruction, then refuses to admit that he was irrational.

As to the cover, well ... I don't know how she's standing up with that humongous headpiece. Let's just say that's *one* of the impressive things about her.

Robert Kennedy
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Thanks for #16. Fine front and back covers as usual.

Dedicating this issue to R. A. Lafferty was a great idea. To have lost both Lafferty and Poul Anderson is terrible.

"In Touch With Spirits" by Terry Jeeves was much enjoyed and gave more proof that he deserves a Hugo nomination for Best Fan Writer.

"Tolkien in the Modern Age of Publishing" by Joseph Major was up to his usual quality and continuing evidence that he deserves more Hugo nominations and the Hugo itself.

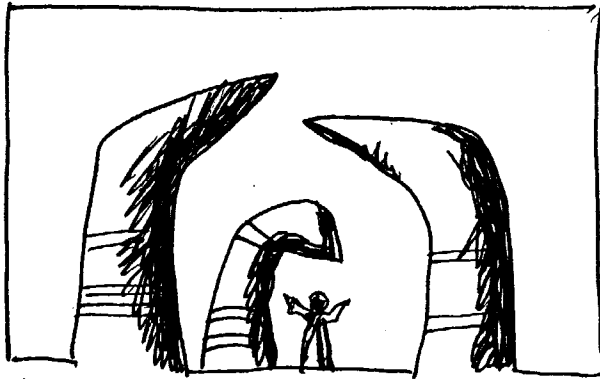
Your continuing coverage of criminal cases was much appreciated as was your explaining of M'Naughten.

In view of some of the movie comments, here are mine: **A.I.**—I didn't like it. **Tomb Raider**—I enjoyed it and thought it was a fun movie. If anyone would like to see more (and I do mean more because hopefully it was really her) of Angelina Jolie, I highly recommend **Original Sin**, a fine movie available for rental. And yes, she does have weird lips. **Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones**—It was ok. Certainly a great improvement over Episode I. One of my nephews thinks it was as good as the first movie (Episode IV). I don't agree. The first movie was incredible. Nothing like it before and it stands alone. I do hope Lucas gets someone who can write dialog for Episode III. **Harry Potter and the Sorcerers Stone**—I thoroughly enjoyed it. **The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring**—If it doesn't win the Hugo, there is no justice. [*In this matter, at least, justice reigned.*] And last, but certainly

not least, **Spider-man**—I can hardly wait for the sequel. The kissing scene at the end was interesting in that MJ obviously recognized Peter's lips as being the same as Spider-Man. (Would lips really feel the same upside down and right side up?) The concept was also used in one of the Batman movies.

I watch very little real time TV and no news programs. The programs liked are taped and watched at my convenience. So, just for the heck of it here are the shows I tape on a regular basis: **Booknotes**, **Futurama**, **King of the Hill**, **Nero Wolfe**, **Buffy**, **Angel**, **Enterprise**, and **Farscape**. (I was about ready to stop watching **Buffy** as it seemed to have lost its way. But, the last couple of episodes were great and it may be back on track. With Charisma Carpenter apparently leaving **Angel**, I will probably cease watching as she was the reason for watching in the first place. For some time it has appeared as if she has a medical problem.) That's seven hours of TV a week when they are not into reruns. Then there are the odd one-time programs and sometimes rented video tapes and DVD's. I don't think the amount of time spent with the TV is too much. Much more time is spent reading. And too damn much time on the computer.

Try Smallville. It's terrific, respects the Superman legend, and my friend and onetime fellow SFPAn Mark Verheiden is a writer/producer!



HOLY PLACE

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Oh man, what a rush that was to pull Challenger #16 out of the envelope and find

that incredible Dell Harris cover looking up at me! Cindy and I had just been talking about Dell not more than a week or so ago, wondering what had happened to him after so many years. He was almost an automatic fixture at every SF convention in the Texas/Oklahoma area for years, his amazing artwork always the hit of every show. Then he seemed to be moving into the pro ranks, lots of great art in mags, a few covers....then suddenly he went through some moves from city to city, and everyone has lost track of him. Did a web search in hopes of finding a big ol' site of his art telling us how he has hit the big time, but no luck. I hope somebody out there who sees that piece will write in and let us know what the big guy has been up to.

Ben Indick
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16 was a fine issue, and your tribute to R.A. Lafferty was well-deserved. I also enjoyed his work. I appreciated your tribute to Geo. Alec Effinger, poor guy, troubled all his life by ill health. Are you aware of the book I wrote about him? **From Entropy to Budayeen**, covering all his stuff. Unfortunately, it was published by Borgo, with lousy distribution. Clute does not even list it, although he has my book on Bradbury. Barry Malzberg thought it was fine, and George himself was happy with it. He said now his mother could be happy at last, "someone liked his stuff enough to write about it and him!" I forget the date of publishing, 1995? – he would never publish anything more. I loved his Budayeen stories.

Mike Resnick, obviously, is not a big time art-lover. He likes several natural history museums [in his list of favorites], which is fine, but only grudgingly puts in the Louvre, actually so enormous a place, and laid out so badly as to bedevil and weary the art-lover. I have not seen the Hermitage, but my list would acknowledge above all else, the best art museum in the world, for its vast collection, its easy accessibility, its splendor of shows, New York's Metropolitan Museum. Second, the National Gallery in Washington, which, if only for its possession of da Vinci's *Ginevra da Benci*, is terrific, but also for its newer section, the breathtaking East Wing, [architect] I.M. Pei's masterpiece. Third, the National Gallery

Nita of London, inch for inch, maybe the best painting collection. Fourth, make them a tie, Wright's Guggenheim in NYC and Gehry's awesome Bilbao Spain Guggenheim. This is only a start. The Cairo Museum is great, and we will re-see much of it when Washington will be borrowing lots of it. He likes Gene Autry, okay, but get things into their place, man.

I like the National Gallery, despite their former hanging – as mentioned elsewhere – of Dali's Last Supper in the gift shop. Except for spotting the Leonardo, my major memory of the place was the epic salad I built in the café. Art is great but food is food.

John Berry
4, Chilterns

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Many thanks for the superb **Challenger** 16, thick, impeccably produced, wonderful front cover and exceptional contents.

Gregory Benford – Stephen Hawking – how absolutely marvelous – the resultant conversations were spellbinding. I must point out that – although I left school at 14 years of age after a miserable education because of evacuation in 1939 and the school being bombed in 1940 -- I am completely *au fait* with astronomical and cosmological thinking! In my formative years I was considered to be dim – even by my parents – actually no one seemed to understand that my naive expression was but a façade for a very reasoning mind. And from the early fifties I have studied these subjects, purely from a layman's point of view. I purchased Hawking's **A Brief History of Time**, and relentlessly plowed through it, reading some chapters several times in an attempt to encapsulate his thoughts.

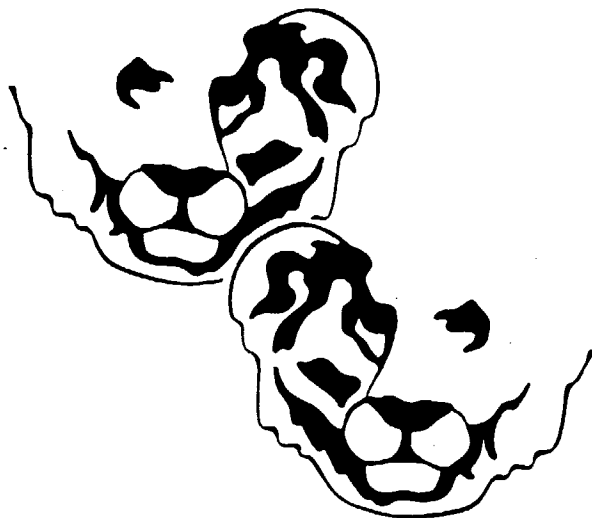
A couple of years ago I visited an exhibition site in Hatfield, where the University of Hertfordshire Astronomical Complex had a display. I conversed with a learned gentleman regarding the time before the Big Bang. Everything could be explained by a *singularity*, he announced. He started to lose his cool with me when I persisted that he tell me where the material came from *before* the Big Bang. He jabbed his finger at me. "Look here," he said, "a Universe could suddenly appear in this hall, and then disappear, but it might – *it just might* – develop into a fully-fledged universe."

I was flabbergasted, and left the hall in some confusion, at this seemingly ludicrous cosmological theory, and then, dang my eyes, Greg Benford discusses the possibility of "bubbles" popping into existence in one's living room "ballooning to the size of a cantaloupe." Invisible, naturally – but I believe Gregory Benford. When I have sleepless nights I allow my mind to ponder over alternate universes, and very exciting it is, too, and sometimes magnificent dreams ensue, featuring Marilyn Monroe, an appreciation jointly shared with Stephen Hawking.

Speaking of Greg, in response to my statement last issue that professional writers shouldn't compete with amateurs in the Fan Writer Hugo category, he writes:

Gregory Benford
c/o Challenger

I think fandom does itself a disservice by cutting a strict line between pros and fans, to the detriment of both. I've been a fan since 1954, publishing, editing, writing--and am still an APA member. That I am also a part-time pro matters not at all to me -- I only appeared on fan panels at the 2002 Westercon, and had a fine time. To omit fans like me, Mike Resnick and others from, as you mentioned, the Fanwriter Hugo is to deplete the field and commit a fantasy. We're fans! Indeed, maybe if there were some of us on the Hugo ballot, there wouldn't be the same old repetitive patterns in voting and outcomes -- a real race! Certainly subscribing to the historically disproved illusions that pros can't be fans (and vice versa?) does none of us any good.



E.B. Frohvet
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King Christian X of Denmark was a man of regular habits. Nearly every morning, weather permitting, he went for a ride on his horse; by himself, wearing a plain military uniform. Anyone who was so inclined could arrange to stand on a street corner and greet the King as he rode past. After the Nazi occupation of 1940, he continued to ride most mornings, solemnly returning the greetings of his countrymen – and stonily ignoring the attempts of German soldiers and officers to salute him. (Lesson in military courtesy: An officer always exchanges salutes with the military of an allied or friendly power. The King's refusal to do was a public statement that he considered the Germans hostile invaders.) The Germans, having in mind Hitler's own rabid security measures, were constantly amazed that the head of state could ride through the public streets, alone, without bodyguards or security. A German officer, watching the old fellow go by one morning, turned to a Danish shopkeeper standing nearby and asked curiously, "Who protects the King?" And the Dane replied, "We all do."

Well, congratulations on another Hugo nomination. That makes, what, three years in a row? You won't win – you should, but you won't. I guess you're on the way toward becoming a Usual Suspect. Assuming that's a goal worth aspiring to.

It is, of course, and I'm proud of my nominations and grateful for them. Perhaps thinking of your own annoyance at the same faces winning the Hugo year after year, a genius of my acquaintance once remarked: "The people in the know nominate, and the people who are not in the know vote." By that standard, the nomination is the honor, and I hope to win many more. But I'd still love to have a rocket in my pocket.

Here's a query for you: Dave Langford has declared Ansible a semi-prozine for Hugo purposes. Will this make him ineligible for the Fan Writer award, assuming he doesn't publish elsewhere?

Another spectacular cover on #16. I guess one can see how rampant blue-nose prudes might be offended by skimpily clad babes.

Not so much prudes, as feminists of the mistaken opinion that admiration of feminine pulchritude excludes appreciation of feminine wit, intelligence, or character – a riotous untruth.

Speaking of which, thanks to Alan White for explaining the technique used to make the #15 cover. I'll listen to anyone talk, who actually knows something about something.

Regretfully, I must admit that I never met R.A. Lafferty, nor did such of his work as I read do much for me. Of taste there is no disputing.

Try the short stories, gems I would favorably compare to Fredric Brown's.

In the debate between a Random Universe and Designed Universe (assuming there's a debate: the deeper you get into physics and religion, the more they have in common), the sad health of Stephen Hawking, as recounted by Dr. Benford, argues for randomness. It doesn't seem like the sort of thing a just and loving God would do.

Which argues for the necessity of Christ, if I may introduce a note of sincere piety, to advise us of the best way to treat one another.

Enough of that – SF doesn't like piety in its face.

It can be and has been argued that *mens rea* ("the intent or state of mind accompanying an act, showing a purpose harmful to society, and providing no reasonable justification") is essential to a finding of guilt. And yet if you go into a convenience store with an unloaded gun, or even a fake gun, and wave it around, and the clerk has a coronary and drops dead on the spot, you can be tried for murder – even if you did not intend to harm him, even if your deliberate intent was not to harm him. Intent is a slippery notion. In a recent case in Maryland, a long-time schizophrenic, locally notorious as "Crazy Frank", was convicted of murder and sentenced to death for shooting two cops. Does pulling the trigger imply intent to pull the trigger? Lots of juries will think so.

Need to know some details about that case. Was Frank a diagnosed schizo, on medication?

Did he evince sane behavior prior to the killings, which showed his ability to behave according to social law? What was he doing with the gun?

I have a hard time figuring out that pornography is "all about" anything except that people are interested in sex and will pay even to watch it ...

I agree wholeheartedly with Sue Jones that you should keep writing op/ed pieces in order that readers should be shaken out of complacency. (We don't necessarily have to agree.) There's a quote posted in the East Columbia Library, from Kurt Vonnegut as I recall, to the notion that freedom of expression means protecting everyone's ideas, not just the popular ones.

Richard Dengrove: Amir D. Aczel in **Probability 1**, makes the point (obvious enough once you consider it) that life could not exist for a substantial part of the history of the universe because it required the life and death of generations of stars to produce and distribute more complex elements - carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, iron - necessary to life as we understand the term. From this, he proposes as one answer to Fermi's Paradox, that perhaps Earth is the most advanced, or one of the most advanced, intelligences in the galaxy. Now if that doesn't disturb your sleep ... Going back to the random/design question, assuming that's a meaningful question, one can only conclude that God is extremely patient.

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Thanks for the challenge of another 100+ page issue of **Challenger**. I enjoyed both the front and back covers of this issue, but I admit that, beyond Lafferty himself, and Sir Thomas More, I didn't recognize any of the characters in Dany Frolich's happy bar scene. It could be simply a typical convention gathering, for all I can tell.

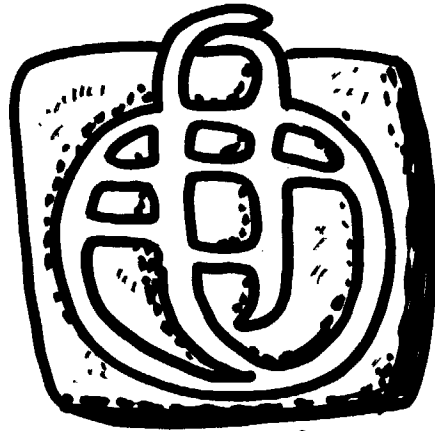
Convention bars do look like that at 3 o'clock in the morning. Check out the character listing in Joy Smith's LOC.

I read or skimmed the many pieces on Lafferty, and am glad you ran them. I enjoyed his short fiction as much as the next fan, and remember **Fourth Mansions** with fondness, even more than **Past Master**. **Fourth Mansions** struck me as having more hidden depths, though I never submerged in them enough to feel I understood the book.

The most recent issue of **New York Review of Science Fiction** has a very

interesting piece by Don Webb about the major themes in Lafferty's work. You should find it fascinating - I know I did.

*I wasn't able to delve into the (occasionally deep) undercurrents of Ray's work in **Chall #16** - the zine's major failing (of many). As indicated by his DSC speech, and evident throughout **Past Master**, he had a strong Catholic fibre to his being which contributed to his despair at the wretched, rootless modern world. It was the rock on which he built his work, but like so many, I was too busy laughing to get it.*



ALLEN COIN. ROSSLER

Most of my favorite museums are art museums, like New York's Museum of Modern Art and London's Tate. Sometimes little regional museums are lots of fun. There's the very odd Maryhill Museum, in southern Washington, overlooking the Columbia River. (It's an easy drive from Portland.) Built by millionaire Sam Hill to honor and please his wife, it includes Rodin sculptures and sketches, chess sets from around the world, furniture and furnishings once owned by Marie of Romania. It also has traveling shows that generally show at small museums, like the collection we saw a few years ago, of prints, posters, newspaper stories, etc., about Sarah Bernhardt, meant to show that she was the first media celebrity in the modern style.

It's just down the road from Sam Hill's reproduction of Stonehenge, built of blocks of concrete and meant as a memorial to the World War I dead from the area. You can't miss it.

I do want to creeb at you a bit for the patchy look that **Challenger** has sometimes. It comes from using articles in their original typeface – I'm presuming that when you get articles such as Fred Chappell's, for instance, you're either photocopying it from its original source or using an e-mailed file without changing the author's type style and spacing. It doesn't sit well with the look of the rest of the zine, for my taste.

You're right; I was lazy, and distracted, and more worried about paying for the zine than about its appearance. But as I still am lazy, and I kind of like the way it looks, I'll still print some pieces in their original typefaces ... John Berry's fingerprinting tales, for instance.

I would also like to creeb more strongly regarding Richard Dengrove's article. I found the writing and sometimes the paragraphing made his survey of Eighteenth Century writers a little hard to follow, and the apparent replacement of the word Medireview with Medireport really threw me. I had to check the context of both appearances to be sure I was at least 90% likely to be right about my guess. I presume this word was something you have in your spell checking dictionary for professional purposes?

If I were editing your letter column, I would have WAHFed my last letter. This one is slightly more substantial, but still... edit!

Sorry – too good to cut!

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Once again I must write to thank you for a massive and excellent issue of **Challenger**. I don't know you manage it, but I'm darned glad you do as it makes a welcome break in the week.

I liked that glamorous lady on the cover even if her legs went out of the picture. It reminded me of a TV programme where a copper was describing a girl over the enquiry desk "... dark hair, nice legs, etc. ..." then she walked away and we found he couldn't make out her legs as she was wearing trousers! Imagination helps I suppose.

Very sorry to read about the demise of R.A. Lafferty. He seems to have been a nice guy although I must admit I never warmed to

his stories. But then I'm useless at rating authors.

Benford on Hawking was a good, heart-warming (and –scaring) piece of writing. I knew in a vague sort of way about Hawking's difficulties, but Benford really put them in perspective and showed the man's sheet guts and determination. One wonders just what he might have achieved under normal conditions.

Dengrove on 18th Century Flying Saucers was entertaining but one can go back even further to the Bible wherein Ezekiel describes an alien visitation. Funny out of all these reports no concrete evidence or clear photos ever seems to emerge – or am I just a cynic?

I'd've been surprised if folks in Ezekiel's time could have taken photographs, but maybe the aliens could have.

As usual, your piece on law was right on the button, but I feel sorry for any lawyer called upon to defend the kind of killer you describe – other than plead insanity and leave it at that. A 21st Century Solomon would go round the bend in sorting out that lot.

Great fanzine column and thanks for the nice words on **Erg**.

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Very belated thanks for **Challenger** 16. I think (I'm sure) that the chief reason I haven't responded before now is that so much of this issue concerns R A Lafferty -- not a particular favourite of mine. I could take his stories in small doses, but somehow could never get much further. And of course I didn't know him personally, as you did.

So I tended to skim the Lafferty-related material, and spend more time with the rest of the contents – which regrettably haven't provoked much thought here. Other than a giggle or three at Taras Wolansky's letter, and the parallel universe he inhabits, in which "illegally registered felons...in Florida" were able to vote in the 2000 US Presidential election and Democrats rather than Republicans disrupted the recount before an utterly un-partisan Supreme Court disposed of the result in the most aloofly neutral way possible. Well, I suppose these Conservatives have to get their stories down

now, in the hope that if they repeat their nonsense often enough it will assume such a weight of fact that historians, when they come to write of this episode in fifty or so years time, will accept it at face-value....

The other notable thing about Wolansky's letter is that it pretty much matches the pattern of those he used to write to Fosfax (when that was still being published) -- that is, to complain loudly about the rude and hurtful things he believes have been written about him by others, before launching into ad hominem attacks on someone else (in this case, Al Gore). Perhaps we should just call Wolansky a hypocrite, unable to behave as he says others should, and have done with him.

And since your response to Wolansky, of course, Enron has been joined by other paragons of virtue -- WorldCom, Tyco, Arthur Andersen -- whose actions have similarly exemplified the capitalist system's inherent superiority to all other economic orders and the unimpeachably pure manner of its operations: a bright smile, some clever patter to mislead the public, and balance sheets which bear scarcely any relation to the truth. (Perhaps they come from the same parallel universe as Wolansky's Florida.) Money laundering? Blatantly lying to the public? Who cares if you can cash in your stock options early and buy a \$4million mansion in a severely upscale part of Houston or Long Island? Isn't this what robber-barony is all about? Isn't this, indeed, the reason why regulations to control corporate larceny were introduced in the first place?

Reading the two pages detailing how you created the cover for the previous issue [*actually, how Alan White did it*] made me feel really tired. All that work, just for a cover! And much of the work we do with computers, I think, can be attributed solely to the fact that we have hardware and software which can do more things -- although the more the software is tweaked, the less useful and certainly the less user-friendly it becomes. The more tiring it is to use, too -- for example, I spent a large part of yesterday creating a webpage to hold some photographs of our recent trip to Tallinn (www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~josephn), and while I was able to knock out the accompanying text in pretty short order, three-quarters of the total time spent on the project was consumed by the fiddling around required by CorelPhotoHouse to prepare the

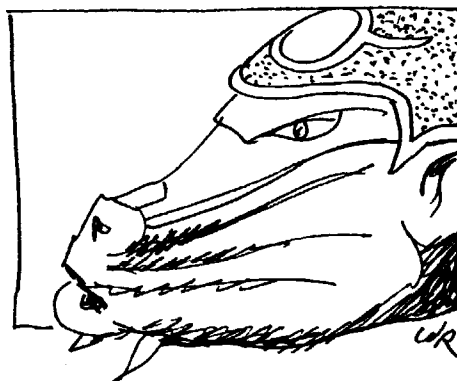
photographs, followed by the additional fiddling around required by Allaire HomeSite to get them correctly embedded in the text. The fact that this was also the first webpage I've ever constructed doubtless had some bearing on the length of time taken; but while in theory it should be quicker next time, because I now have a base of knowledge which I didn't have before, I'm sure that it will be many months before I try constructing another!

Martin Morse Wooster
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Many thanks for **Challenger 16**. I thought the R.A. Lafferty tribute was very nicely done. I'm not as familiar with Lafferty's writing as you are, but it's clear that the tribute was done with a great deal of love and care, and I'm glad you did it.

*Bob Whitaker-Sirignano prepped a great bibliography of Ray's work for **At the Sleepy Sailor**, but it's now incomplete and out of date. Besides, so much of Ray's work is out of print! At least, **Past Master and Fourth Mansions** are available through Wildside Press; well worth the expense.*

Mike Resnick, as always, contributes an entertaining article. I haven't been to many of the museums Resnick writes about, but then I'm not a frequent traveler to Africa. My favorite anecdote about the Field Museum is its guest appearance in the very trashy monster movie *Relic*. We learn in this film that museums have fire doors to keep people inside, and that all museums have secret tunnels so that people can sneak in and out of the Chicago wharves. It also had the immortal line, "The creature is 30 per cent *homo sapiens*." (Other elements of the creature: used rubber tires, surplus string, and BHA and BHT for preservation.)



I second Guy's request that Mike write about his favorite game parks. And I hope he will tell us a little more about the banquets at the La Brea Tar Pits. I hope the food served isn't too sticky. ("Try this mastodon - it's only been here a few hundred thousand years ...")

Barry Malzberg isn't as reclusive as Tim Marion makes him out to be. He was at Millennium Philcon, which was his first worldcon in many years. He also has a very robust e-mail presence.

I challenge Alexis Gilliland's assertion that "Al-Qaeda" means "foundation" and was taken from an Arabic translation [of Asimov]. This notion, which originated from an item that China Mieville contributed to *Ansible*, is apparently an urban legend. An exhaustive search by librarians associated with the Fictionmags newsgroup couldn't find any Arabic translations of Asimov. (However, it's likely true that the head of the Aum Shirikyo cult in Japan did read *Foundation* and was trying to advance history by his crazed efforts to gas people in the subways.)



I'm glad that Guy Lillian has continued to talk about his life as defense attorney. I don't know where I stand on the insanity rule, but I thought Guy's first-hand experiences were very informative. I've learned that one of the pleasures of being an attorney is that you meet a large number of memorable people; here's hoping that that more of Guy's clients are colorful and

entertaining and fewer are violent and psychotic!

Trinlay Khadro
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Hey, it's Rosy on the cover!

Nope - Rosy's much prettier.

Egads! More obits and memorials? Hey fans! Quit dyin' already! I haven't met enough of you yet!

Some people, and it can be sporadic, are keenly aware of nature's rhythms. I find this to be most common amongst the "country" and people who grew up in more wild places. It's not very common amongst the city born & bred.

Guy, you're very good at grabbing just the right pieces to show us who someone is. I'd read some of Mr. Lafferty's work - but your zine was my first contact with and about him. I keep finding myself missing un-met friends.

By the way, there is nothing shameful about an earthen pot - however humble.

I enjoyed [Alan White's] "Quick Photo-shop" lesson and I'm tickled to have my art run in your zine.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin has some fine museums and a world-class zoo. If you're ever out this way, you'll have to see them. Especially the new Catnaliva [*sic?*] addition to the Art Museum.

Thanks for the article on the insanity plea - by the way, Ms. Yates always looksexhausted even in the "happy family" photos.

Me?! Green? Hmm, I guess I very well am; like an elf ☺ ... I'm always a bit puzzled about how folks perceive me. I think much of what has shaped me was a childhood with plenty of peaceful solitude in the woods and wild places. Brown Deer is pretty much "the burbs" though technically our wee village is as older or older than the City, which now surrounds us. We do have a good share of wild places along the creek and river and the park (part of which is the golf course where the GMO tourney is played). We have deer, raccoons, turtles, squirrels, rabbits and skunks.

Response To LOCs: E.B. Frohvet observes people within fandom saying "We didn't lose anyone [on September 11th]..." I

agree with E.B. that we *all* lost all those people and many more each day. My conversations inside and outside of fandom have been around a pervasive sense of collective grief, but I don't seem to know anyone anywhere near six steps away. A friend of mine from the Buddhist list was an eyewitness. A friend from an SF list missed her bus that morning – and thus missed the event. Another sine editor had two friends die in the attack on the Pentagon.

Lloyd Penney – I find that I am still dismayed by “jingoism” being passed off as “patriotism.” The whole point of “Americanism” really isn't to “defend our commercialism” or “shut up and let the government do its work” but rather it's *always* been “I might despise what you say, but I'll gladly die fighting to defend your right to say it.”

Well, not “gladly,” but I'll do it too.

Font usage – IMHO as long as you don't look like a freakin' ransom note – it's OK! A change in font can support the particular voice of a particular writer or serve to show a “change of voice or speaker.” In the main body of a zine though there ought to be a tight limit on the number of text fonts. Title fonts can be a great deal of fun.

I vaguely recall a Social Science / Government class in high school wherein the discussion was of a Supreme Court case from the 1800s (*Yick Woo v. Harrison?*). The determination was that while the Chinese immigrant was denied citizenship, law enforcement was still required to protect him and his business from hooligans. “The Constitution protects everyone, not just citizens.”

M. Lee Rogers
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This issue works better than the last couple, even though the past numbers were filled with solid material. It's a shame you had to get a theme from the passing of an author whom you admire. On the other hand, we'll all be gone someday. You and your contributors have given Mr. Lafferty a fitting tribute.

Lafferty's article makes one think. I almost agree with the premise that we are cut off from the previous world of Western civilization. If so, it's because we have turned away from it. It could be recaptured to some

extent, but few people really want to. It feels like a sort of collective willful amnesia. History is not often kind to peoples who forget their past. I'll agree with him this much: our civilization is adrift. Somewhere.

I almost got to see the Dali museum this summer while in the Tampa Bay area. If my mother and I had stayed in the area longer, I would have gone to it. But the area was a steambath and our beachfront room was crawl-over-each-other too small, so we booked down the road after a couple of days. If I ever get back to that part of the world... If I ever get to Paris, I will see the Louvre. Resnick and I must disagree on the French impressionists. At their best, they created a new world of shimmering beauty. I also have a soft spot for the musical side of the movement, even if composers like Debussy hated the term.

You mention in your reply to Frohvet that you would not support summary execution of the would-be shoe bomber. Are you saying you would not support “kill on sight” for anyone? Even Osama “Yo Mama” himself? Hitler (had we gotten there first instead of the Russians)? I might be willing to let Osama live long enough for some kind of trial, but it would certainly *not* be in an American criminal court. Scumbags like him don't deserve that level of protection. Neither does M. Moussaoui. Mr. Lindh, being an American citizen who may not have taken any hostile action against the U.S., may warrant more lenient treatment.

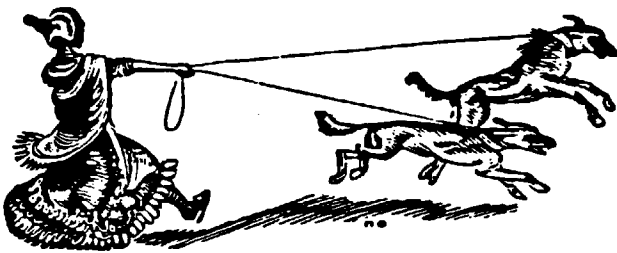
I have every confidence that should Osama bin Laden be brought before an American court, and accorded due process as a criminal defendant – which everyone deserves – that he would be convicted. Faith in law is our strength as a society, not our weakness.

To follow that topic, Alexis Gilliland mentions the passengers of Flight 93 and their cell phones. The hijackers wanted the passengers to call and spread the fear and terror, but that was a major mistake on their part. They must have believed no one would fight back once they dealt with the flight crew. At least now, any potential hijacker has to calculate that American passengers will use anything at their disposal to kill the hijacker since their own lives are forfeit. That may calm things down for this generation of terrorists.

But what about a non-terrorist epileptic, or mentally disturbed person, such as

that poor kook beaten to death by his fellow passengers for acting weird – months before 9-11?

Sorry, Ms. Hanna, but the best way to deal with the violent crime in your area of Britain is to let the citizens defend themselves. All articles I have read recently says that in your country, victims who use force to stop an attack are prosecuted more vigorously than the criminals who attacked them. Presuming that is true, it is a sign of a dying society. One good part of living in the southeastern U.S. is that most Southerners have managed to hang on to a more realistic attitude about crime and criminals. The Brits may choose to submit to the slaughter. I might even choose to visit the Isles someday. But I won't voluntarily live in an area with such a death wish.



As to Leighton's comments about many policemen wanting to control everyone in their path: I'll accept the idea because I've seen some who do. But "many" might be too much. Perhaps a sizable minority. My solution would be to pay them much better so we could get better candidates. Starting salary should be in the \$50-75K range depending on the income levels of the area. I'll be curious to hear how Ms. Stinson responds to Leighton's argument.

I can commiserate about your printing house's handling of #15. It looks from this perspective like service people care less and less about honoring the customer's special instructions as the years go by. I just had a headstone installed on my future grave. I told the people at the monument company to call me before installing the stone since the grave is next to a tree and placement was important to avoid the grave eventually cutting a major root. Of course, I got a call telling me that the stone had already been carved and planted. It turned out they got it in the right place and all was

well. But I was rather pissed about not being called. When I went to pay, the guy admitted he wanted to get it over with before the holiday began. In other words, *he didn't care what I wanted!* I guess I'm lucky they carved the stone properly.

Just so long as they didn't include your "departure" date, and when asked how they knew, smiled wickedly ...

On O'Brien's correction on Swedish spelling, it's easy to insert letters with diacritical marks into a document in the Windows environment regardless of the Win version. Look for the Character Map, usually on the Accessories menu. Just about every non-English letter from Western European alphabets can be found. Just copy the character onto the Clipboard and paste it into your document. Other alphabets are possible if you install the correct font on your computer.

As to the Massachusetts conviction of a guy who secretly taped his arrest, I could not find the original column by Paul Craig Roberts. But I did find a summary. It appears that the guy was suspected of having drugs in his vehicle. For what it's worth, the Mass. Supreme Court let the wiretapping conviction stand. No word on whether the case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

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The unusually impressive **Challenger #16** arrived in the usual way, for which many thanks: 104 pages, golly. Dell Morris' cover is spectacularly well done, and a fruitful recycling of artwork used at the last Nolacon. And yet, and yet ... one wonders how the lady's corset (bustier?) would look from the rear, given that the bottom half of her lacing can give no support since the garment does not encompass that part of her body. Cut longer and adding a garter belt would make it more enticing, suggesting naughty lingerie rather than a risqué Mardi Gras costume.

It was astonishing to encounter Stephen Hawking in Greg Benford's excellent article. Conceding his past optimism, Hawking suggests that we might – with luck – find a complete unified theory in the next 20 years, perhaps derived from the theory of superstrings. Given that superstring energies are beaucoup orders of magnitude greater than

could be generated in any machine that can be built, such a theory would be nontestable. Which leads to the question: is Hawking still doing science? If the proof of this prospective unified theory relies on its aesthetic appeal, its style if you will – or its beauty for those who have eyes to see – then maybe Hawking has moved insensibly from science to poetry. When Keats said: “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” – that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know” he was talking about a Grecian urn, not a complete unified theory. Or maybe not. If the theory were sufficiently divorced from practical application, maybe it would qualify.

R.A. Lafferty’s “The Day *After* the World Ended” was entertaining if more than a little obscure, not unlike a lot of his writing. His dates bracketing The End, 1912 to 1962, embrace the First and Second World Wars, with the fall of the dynasties ruling the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires after World War I, and the dismantling of the Japanese, British and French Empires after World War II. Subsequently, even the Russian Empire has been much reduced from what it was. The crash of Empires consigned to history’s dust bin seems not to be what disturbs him, so perhaps his event is more in the nature of a crisis of faith. At a guess one could speculate that technology is to blame, in the sense that our culture chose to use the “wonderful things” technology made available to us, and as it did so the culture insensibly started to change. What “wonderful things”? Birth control was what made the Roaring 20’s roar, a trend reinforced when the pill came on line in 1966, and in 1973 *Roe v. Wade* made abortion legal. The Catholic Church, an institution dear to Lafferty’s heart and associated with the theology central to his thinking, resisted change, declaring even contraception a sin. The utterly predictable result was that women of childbearing age, when forced to choose between the Sacraments and birth control overwhelmingly chose birth control. Either these women left the Church, or they stayed and made bad confessions – disobeying the Church and lying about it. Either way, the Church had a problem, and one way that problem may have manifested itself is by the disappearing novice; candidate nuns are currently scarcer than hen’s teeth.

Maybe John Paul II’s successor will correct the situation, or – given all those other fish to fry – maybe not. On p. 9, col 2, Lafferty says: “I’m not even pushing transcendence over gosh-awful secularism.” Given the rare opportunity to make a new and better world, people should do it, only he doesn’t see anything happening. Maybe Lafferty wasn’t looking in the right places. The Fundamentalists, believing in the literal truth of the Bible are trying to promote “Creation Science” as a counter and replacement to Darwin’s theory of evolution. The religious impulse is powerful, but here the Fundies are fighting a rear guard action. If Darwin had been around in 100 A.D., he would have been hailed as a major prophet, and Genesis might well have been the Book of Darwin. Grafting the new chapter into the ancient text shouldn’t be all that hard; just say that evolution is God’s solitaire, and then point at the fossil record, which records major extinctions every 26 million years and say that every 26 million years God starts a new game. Once that “gosh-awful secularism” aspires to transcendence it’ll be a whole new ball game, but you’ve got to be patient.



Which brings us to the Epistles, where Rich Dengrove touts the hard science fiction novel *Edison Conquers Mars*, in which Thomas Alva Edison kills all the Martians with his electric ray gun. He should recall E.E. Smith’s *Skylark Duquesne*, in which the formidable “Blackie” Duquesne wipes out a whole galaxy full of evil Chlorans in a *truly* epic climax. Also in Epistles, the well-read if somewhat tendentious Taras Wolansky, who explains why Al Gore must be crazy. Alas, the symptoms Taras sets out have alternate explanations, and since Taras was wrong about

most of his assertions about Bill Clinton – and all of the really outrageous ones -- we can safely assume that he is, as usual, revising reality to fit his ideology.

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Thanks for the latest **Challenger** and congratulations on your Hugo nomination. You continue to do a fine job with your zine with a fine host of articles and the demonstration of your sensawonda.

I believe that Wisconsin is one of those states where the insanity defense is Guilty by Reason of Insanity. It then becomes the burden of the defense to show insanity since the guilt has already been admitted to. This was how it went with Jeffrey Dahmer and he was eventually found to be sane. He survived a few years in prison before another inmate killed him to make a name for himself. It was never made clear how the guard who was watching them clean the bathroom didn't notice what was happening until it was too late. I suspect he was not a popular inmate.

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I wrote about Ray Lafferty's essay once before, and now I'm taking another shot at it. *What* ended after the 1910s? I'm not being totally critical here. In fact, I think it was important to what Ray was trying to do that we are not told. He is right that, no matter our nostalgia for an age of purpose and meaning, we are afraid to name the zeitgeist that moved us in the past. It would not go over too well today. It is considered evil. And, to use a passé term which suits our attitude to a tee, sinful.

On the other hand, we are not quite ready to embrace the zeitgeist of the future. It seems all wrong right now and we cannot embrace it. We look for other alternatives to reconcile all and give us purpose. But we are trying to reconcile a contradiction. We are between Charybdis and Scylla, two monsters of the Odyssey. Things will have to change before we can get away from Charybdis completely and embrace Scylla

Now let me name names. The zeitgeist of the past was a minutely hierarchical universe. . There was God, the angels, the stars, man, the lion or elephant as king of beasts, gold as the king of the metals. The lowest rung was unformed matter. Of course, nobles rightly ruled over the peasants. This hierarchy ceased in the 17th and 18th Centuries to be a natural hierarchy, but remained a moral hierarchy until the 20th Century. Then it was totally obliterated. Right now, hierarchy is an anathema. "We are all equal" goes the refrain. Of course, people are always trying to replace the old hierarchy with a new one, which they don't call hierarchy.

Now hierarchy is gone; I think it is slowly being replaced by the new zeitgeist, ecology. Everything makes a whole and everything is interdependent. It works in the animal world. It works in group psychology: psychologists have found even the dissenter is needed. It works in the physical world too. Einstein said that matter needs space and space matter. They are interdependent.

Of course, we cannot embrace interdependence totally because we in good part believe ourselves rugged individualists, independent of everything and everyone. And a part of us would like to believe the rest of nature rugged individualist. Of course, that attitude has got to go before we have this new zeitgeist of ecology.

Ray was more artistic than I not to name names but to be vague. He could depend on us to know enough about his meaning to shake our heads Yes. But not enough to shake our heads No. No unpleasant ideas sounded a discordant note. Which is good because he was making music. Which I definitely am not.

About Mike Resnick's article on museums, I have my own list based on my own much narrower experience. I live in the Washington area is the Smithsonian museums are really impressive to say the least. I could tell you stories about them.

However, the museums I was really impressed by were the ones in New Orleans. Were these in the Cabildo or the other museum whose name I forget? These exhibits were really impressive in the 1980s. Only in New Orleans. There was a Gay Mardi Gras exhibit with a man dressed as Mother Goose. Then I saw an exhibit about a governor who stole \$100,000 in the 19th Century, when \$100,000

was something. It said, by the time they got around to impeaching him, he was out of office.

I enjoyed your talk about insanity in law. There is problem with allowing Irresistible Impulse to be a sign of insanity and deserving treatment rather than jail. Which, despite wording, *M'Naughten* doesn't really allow but *Durham* comes closer to allowing. We presume that we have will power and that we can push back the throes of cause-and-effect. It is the basis for the whole legal system. Without this idea, the legal system would have no ethical rationale.

So I can see that it is insanity if someone actually does not know the difference between right and wrong, even if it is only in one situation. I cannot see that it is insanity if someone has an irresistible impulse he knows is wrong.

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Richard Dengrove's article about 18th Century beliefs on flying saucers was an interesting read. The study of such lore is more correctly a brand of psychology, not astronomy. What always made me disbelieving of little green men (nowadays little grey men) buzzing about is that they used so many different styles of transport. Disks, cigars, spheres, giant asterisks, you name it. One would think a star-faring race would minimize the number of types of vehicles they use so as to reduce spare-parts inventory.

Hugh Dempsey, a western Canadian historian, published a study on flying saucers on the Canadian prairies during the pioneer days of the 1860s to World War One. The earliest recorded UFO sightings were in Manitoba in 1897 after the Andree balloon disappeared over Spitsbergen. Many people thought it must have drifted over the prairies. The next spate of UFO reports was in 1909, when the first heavier-than-air machine flew in Canada (the Silver Dart, designed and built by Alexander Graham Bell). When Canada entered the war in 1914, suddenly the prairie skies were filled with Zeppelin-shaped objects.

My favourite UFO report was back in my hometown of Red Deer (Alberta), when one evening in the early 1970s, our elderly neighbour excitedly called me out to look at a

UFO. He knew I was an astronomy fan and had a refracting telescope. He said he noticed the UFO on the horizon, hovering over the railway yards several kilometers distant. I told him it was the planet Venus. "Nonsense," he said, "I've never noticed it before." He was going to call the Mounties about it, but I eventually managed to talk him out of it. It is astonishing how inattentive some people are. Recently I had a co-worker point out a rare astronomical event: the Moon was visible in the daylight sky. He had never seen it up there before by day.



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Re: "we didn't lose anyone 9-11".

My cousins who work in NYC, but now live out, initially only had their work schedules disrupted. I'm sure after the dust settled they discovered friends missing. The same is no doubt true for New York fans, and the fans who have non-fannish contacts in the Big Apple.

My church has a sister church, New Colony Baptist Church in Billerica, Massachusetts. New Colony members had personal connections with some people on

those planes. As vast as Boston area fandom is, you want to bet none of them lost friends that way, too? They wouldn't need to publicize it to non-NESFans.

So without casting my net as wide as Frohvet did his, I can still say you drew your "we" too narrow.

The fannish network spread quickly after 9-1-1, and it's my understanding that no one active in fandom was lost in that day's horrors; however, by the "six degrees of separation" standard, and by common humanity, we're all connected to the disaster. It tolls for thee.

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Fascinating article by Greg Benford on his meeting with Stephen Hawking. The world will be a much poorer place when Hawking finally succumbs to his disease. I have read both **A Brief History of Time** and the newer **The Universe in a Nutshell** and have very much enjoyed both. Not only is Hawking a genius in terms of his being able to conceive and understand these physics theories; he is also a genius in being able to communicate these theories to others, including the average person, in terms they can understand.

Speaking of communicating... If for whatever strange reason anyone wants to figure out what I do for a living, I have just had an article published in Program Managers magazine. It is available free on-line at http://www.dau.mil fo/pubs/pm/pm_issues.asp. Look at the May/June issue. My article begins on page 6.



"A Grinding of the Mind" – My own opinion is that there is no defense in insanity, particularly for the crime of murder. Anyone who would commit murder is, by my definition, insane, ipso facto. Of course, we may sort of be discussing semantics, but the idea of "not guilty by reason of insanity" just don't cut it. Now "guilty, but insane" is a slightly different matter. It's a question of the "punishment" you mete out to the guilty party. Either way I don't want these people walking the streets again. There is no way that Andrea Yates is ever going to be sane again. Let's face it! There are some people you can't reform and some things we just don't know how to treat. But for someone who is insane, or at least not normally dangerously so, I certain would expect some form of treatment while they are institutionalized. The real tragedy in the outcome of the Yates case (besides the deaths of those children) is not that Andrea Yates was found guilty, but that no one else was charged with anything either. Particularly the husband! He and (if memory serves me correctly) his mother knew that Andrea was ill, and that she was either not responding to treatment or was receiving the wrong treatment. Their own testimony proves this. Yet they still left her alone with the children extended periods of time. The husband, at the very least, should be serving time by now.

Anyway, Guy, you get some pips for clients, don't you?

To Rod Leighton: Yes it has, even longer now. Guy (in response to my LOC in Challenger 16) you indicate that you don't have a problem with the questioning techniques [used on "the Empty Man"] per se, just that it could be used wrongly. Well, anything can be misused (well almost anything), the system has to have other things in place to prevent it. Point taken on praise in relation to dislike.

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Gorgeous cover!

Alexis Gilliland has been misinformed – as have many others – as to the proper translation of the Arabic word *jihad*. It means struggle – which does not automatically imply war. Certain people who claim to be followers of Mohammed have stolen this word and perverted it for their own political ends. The

always followed by the letters PBUH or the phrase "praise be unto him"; not being of that faith, I don't use it, but do wish to state that I know about it. *Jihad* has nothing to do with "holy war," and is very probably another media construct used to encapsulate an idea without properly informing – something the American news media does far too frequently. I should know, I work for such people.

Robert Kennedy and Rodney Leighton: It's obvious that our individual experiences with law enforcement are widely divergent, to put it mildly. Please therefore accept my offer to agree to disagree as I don't intend to comment further on this matter.

No – please do comment further on this matter. Your perspective is too important to miss or to be ignored.

Joseph Major: I don't consider you scum. I don't know you well enough yet. <grin>

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The only time I ever met R. A. Lafferty was at MidAmeriCon. (That seems to have been such a *crucial* Worldcon!) He was at the Find the Pros, *er* Meet the Pros party. I ran into him shortly thereafter and asked him to sign my Program Book. He took the pen I gave him and tried to sign with the eraser.

When I ran into him the next day he used the proper end of the pen.

I liked the way he gave autographs. "Hmm," he'd say, studying the page. "R'. That's easy. 'A'. So far so good. Now it gets tough."

I wish John Clute and Alexei Panshin had considered Lafferty's article. Panshin wrote that the Myth of Science Fiction had died in 1945. Clute smote said heresy hip and thigh, explaining that Science Fiction had died in 1957. Somehow, ignorantly, writers continued to write science fiction. Whatever would we do without critics?

Lovely cover by Alan White — and the Mystic Secret of How It Wuz Done only makes it more interesting.

Given that Hawking appeared as the Holodeck-generated replica of himself on *ST: TNG*, it's hardly surprising that he has a touch

of whimsy. Better him than the usual lot of Cambridge graduates I read about.

Lisa and I visited the Kentucky Derby Museum last month. A place with somewhat more Kentucky Derby trophies is the International Museum of the Horse, near Lexington, Kentucky. (Unlike the National Museum of Racing, which is in Saratoga Springs, New York.) They have all the Derby trophies (along with all the other trophies) won by horses from Calumet Farm, plus the Triple Crown trophies of Secretariat.

As I've commented before, if you want to live the Ray Bradbury story "Icarus Montgolfier Wright", go to the National Air & Space Museum, step in the front door, and *look*. Straight ahead is the Apollo 11 Command Module. Above it is the Wright Flyer. To its left is the X-1 "Glamorous Glennis"; to its right *The Spirit of St. Louis*. What else is there?

Terry Jeeves: Yes, we have the body here ...

M'Naughten sounds like the sort of person who infests the Net, being advised on where to buy the best foil for his hat. Nowadays he would be lionized as a political activist and victim ("the Tories in my native city have compelled me to do this").

Note that Hinckley, for an alleged madman, showed several signs of premeditation, planning, and forethought in his stalking of the candidates.

Dan White's case should really not be brought up in the NGRI context. Apparently the alleged premeditation was not the case; the reason he went through the basement door instead of the door with the metal detector was that as a councilman, he was accustomed to coming through the basement door to avoid setting off the metal detector. That is, he wasn't trying to sneak a weapon past the security.

The Conan/Machiavelli (also LotR/Machiavelli, Elric/Machiavelli, etc.) parody in *Alexiad* was my way of saying what he might see about the events in said stories. You did see the point about it being "Chapter 9 3/4"; one on SF would be "Chapter 42" for reasons too obvious to state.

Tomb Raider: It is a sign of the artistic bankruptcy of movie producing that movies are made based on video games. But that is a High Concept – something that can be stated in three sentences or less, with no word of more than

two syllables, thus well within the comprehension and attention span of your typical Hollywood top banana.

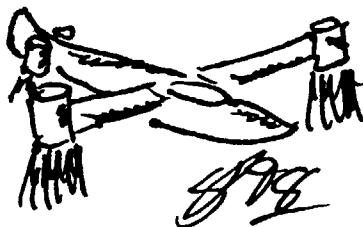
Man's: There was a **Men**, also a **Stag**, **Men's World** and other such magazines, all adhering to the same format. The stories were interesting, especially when I was fourteen.

Charles Williams sent me an e-mail about how his aunt knew my Quarles cousins in Paducah. One of whom was Roach Quarles. His full name was Cuthbert Roach Quarles. Do you think his parents hated him?

*Well, if they stuck a nipple on a can of
Raid ...*

"Until you've walked a mile in another man's moccasins you'll never believe the smell."

Has Timothy Marion seen all of the Rodney King tape? Making a decision in partial knowledge of the facts is fraught with hazards. (Myself, I saw it on a broadcast hosted by that well-known reactionary Andy Rooney.)



The real Lamont Cranston went off to find enlightenment in Tibet. He permitted the master Kent Allard, who was lit up, er enlightened enough already, to use his identity. Presumably the Secret Power to Cloud Men's Minds stretched to hiding the differences.

Also, I was rereading Jim Harmon's book on The Great Radio Heroes and he quotes a passage from a Shadow book where the Shadow comes into Margo Lane's bedroom and she is, well, happy to see him. Which may explain why Phil Farmer wrote a story about a guy named Kent Lane.

"Astro Boy is created because his inventor felt great guilt over the death of weight." What?

Thanks to Harry Warner for his explication *de texte* on "Patriotism is the last

refuge of a scoundrel." The edition I used lacked such annotations.

Improved translations of Verne are now appearing. For example, when I first read **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea** I was mildly puzzled by the comment by M. Arronax that Conseil spoke of himself in the third person, since he didn't. But one found out, upon reading the recent improved translation, that he had done so, but the translator "corrected" the "error". This made one very very angry! (Angry enough to drop the Conseil imitation, even . . .)

Also, "new" Vernes are coming out. **Paris In the Year 2000** for example, and there is a translation just out of a heretofore untranslated late Verne work, Invasion of the Sea, about a gigantic hydro power project. He will get his Hugo yet!

Verne used many of the modern strategies of publication:

Shared Worlds: Verne wrote sequels to **The Swiss Family Robinson** and **The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym**.

Collaborators: The first draft of **The Begum's Fortune** was written by someone else.

Grand Unification Sequels: **The Mysterious Island** is the sequel to three different Verne books (not only **Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea** but **Around the World In Eighty Days** and **In Search of the Castaways**).

Enron: Look at www.drfr frederick-cook.com and see if the era of "corrupt business brokers who see the economy as a highway to personal loot" is "just" upon us. Verne Robinson ("Verne" again!), the keeper of said site, really seems to have it in for Dr. Cook, "the inventor of the Ponzi scheme".

Harry Potter died May 27. Er. I mean, Colonel Henry A. "Hank" — but in Britain it'd be "Harry" — Potter, died May 27. He was Doolittle's navigator on the Tokyo Raid. Therefore, Harry Potter guided Doolittle to Tokyo.

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Thanks a lot for sending **Challenger**. Now I see why you are up for the Hugo. **Challenger** is huge, beautiful and thoroughly enjoyable. Gregory Benford interviewing Stephen Hawking. Goshwow indeed.

I particularly liked the Lafferty material. I know that I have read many Lafferty stories, but when I looked in my anthologies for a story or two to re-read, I found that there were none. So I did a crawl through the Berkeley bookstores, looking for a used paperback collection of his stories and a copy of Past Master, which I have not read, and had no luck. So I'm going to have to hit up ABE Books for some Lafferty, but it seems odd that his work is not more widely available.

"Odd" ... and criminal! Lafferty's writing should be required reading, and not only among the Camiroi (in joke). You provoke a wistful tear when you mention Berkeley's bookstores; the block between Dwight Way and Haste on Telegraph Avenue is still the closest thing to book paradise I've ever found. Cody's ... Moe's ... that-place-on-the-corner-whose-name-I-can't-remember ... Oh, I weep for days gone by. By the way, the best Lafferty collections are 900 Grandmothers and Strange Doings, and there should be copies on Amazon or E-Bay.

Cosmology is not something that I claim to understand, but I found the distinction that Stephen Hawking made between space and nothing-at-all evocative. I just finished a novel in which sub-universes are created, and are visible in this one as sort of glowing vortexes. This must be a wrong picture, but I've got to allow that it might be hard to work something into a story that is invisible, intangible, and not even conceptually reachable.

Richard Dengrove's piece provides a history of speculative world building, rather than just a background for flying saucer beliefs. The Great Chain of Being combined with modern cosmological thinking would provide a really complex story setting.

I'll add my voice to those in the letter column saying that you ought to do a book of courtroom stories. The insanity plea piece reads like a detective story. (Maybe a lawyer procedural?) Someplace I read that the insanity plea is comparatively rare. Is this not so, or are you uncommonly lucky to have so many clients who qualify?

One NGRI client I mentioned in Chall #16 – accused of aggravated arson -- pled guilty to a reduced charge of "criminal damage to property." He received a negligible sentence and is free.

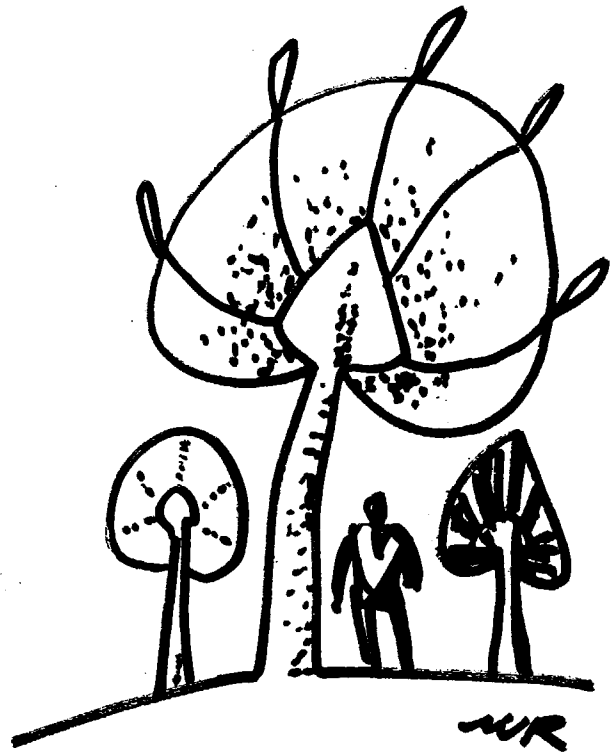
I looked through my reference books for something on [Mark Clifton's collaborator]

* *Shakespeare & Co.*

Frank Riley with no success, then tried a Google search. According to www.sfsite.com, Frank Riley was a pseudonym for Frank Rhylick (1915-1996). He is credited with, in addition to **They'd Rather Be Right**, several short stories, including "The Cyber and Justice Holmes" and "A Question of Identity", and also the cover art for the novel When Harlie was One.

I agree about the war on terror and the dangers to civil liberties. For a time after 9/11, I suspended my dislike of W, but now it's back in full force.

I don't so much dislike W these days as fear him. Though he lacks wit and depth and personal strength, his popularity has given him confidence in his position, allowing him to pursue reckless, pointless, destructive policies, foreign and domestic. Though he hasn't a patch on his predecessor's brains, he's the most dangerous American since Nixon.



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In **Challenger #16**, the close proximity of the material on R.A. Lafferty and Stephen Hawking created a strange juxtaposition.

Normally, I wouldn't think that these two men had any similarity to each other. However, in one way, they do. Both of them had things going on in their heads that the rest of us probably couldn't even imagine. It isn't that they just had more intelligence. They really had *different* intelligence.

Without the thinking of Stephen Hawking, I would have never imagined that I might have a pocket universe in my living room. Termites, I could imagine, but not pocket universes. Now if he could only figure a way of using it for storage. In many ways, theoretical physics resembles a trial for The Little Man Who Wasn't There. Maybe he was there, and maybe he wasn't there, or maybe he was born there and not there simultaneously. And what do we mean by "there" anyway? It's all terribly confusing.

Lafferty's speech has the familiar theme that we are living in the era of Post Something-or-other. I don't think it is quite as bad as The Day After the World Ended. Fortunately, we didn't have a nuclear war, and end up as Post-Toasties. Something has left, and something else hasn't arrived yet. The academics have been booting around the term Post Modernism, but it seems like nothing more than a place holder term. Future academics may decide we were really living in the era of Post Saturated Animal Fat. And what slim beast jogs towards Bethlehem to be born?

Reading Alan White's explanation of how he did the cover on **Challenger** #15 was a humbling experience. Previously, I had thought that it was only a complete lack of talent that kept me from being a successful artist. Now, I realize that wasn't the complete story. I also lack the technical expertise. Bummer.

Even before reading Richard Dengrove's article, I had noticed that early magazine SF always represented aliens as either saints or monsters. I hadn't thought about it being a continuation of an earlier tradition. Stanley Weinbaum was the first SF writer to represent aliens as critters who are just slithering to a different drummer. I knew that Weinbaum had made a revolutionary change in science fiction, but I hadn't realized he had made a major break with most previous human thinking on the subject.

I see more sense in the idea of the insanity plea after reading your explanation of it. I was always willing to accept that guys who

went around chopping people up with axes and eating them weren't exactly poster boys for mental health, but I didn't really care. As far as I was concerned, it would be a good idea to make it a capital offense to kill people while crazy. I see that the key word is "choice." Someone who can commit a series of murders and conceal their activities is exhibiting enough choice not to be considered legally insane. The insanity plea is just for people who didn't seem to have any choice at all. OK.

Last but not least, "In Touch with the Spirits" by Terry Jeeves is a really clever piece of writing.

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Nice covers on **Challenger** 16 – with that front cover, one might think you were aiming for newsstand sales. Good to see the tribute to Ray Lafferty. I have been asked who controls the literary estate, and my only guess was Dan Knight, or that he would know.

Interesting article by Dengrove on antique aliens. I read once that whereas people in the 20th Century saw flying "saucers," earlier sighting had been of spindle-shaped objects, at least when they weren't seeing women mounted on broomsticks. Did the aliens change technology, or is it a matter of perception – a saucer, after all, might be thought spindle-shaped if seen only edge-on.

Good question. I'll ask Elvis.

Hilarious tale of his encounter with the Mystic East from Terry Jeeves! Joseph Major's Tolkien spoof is a bit too silly for me – hard as that may be to imagine.

You are right about the drama of criminal law – though as with most drama I think it is enjoyed most by the spectators. The issue of insanity as a defense is clouded by the fuzzy state of psychology as a science and by the corrupt state of the prison industry. From the standpoint of public safety it matters little whether a violent criminal is sane or not – he can hardly be left to continue his depredations. And yet humane reason gags on the notion of punishing someone for acts he could not control. I am doubtful about the notion of "punishment" in any case.

The ideal response to murder by a lunatic was provided in at least one case – one of the major contributors to the Oxford English

Dictionary was an army doctor in the Civil War who after the war went to London and killed an Irishman in the street because he thought all the Irish were out to get him. This doctor spent the rest of a long life in a comfortable asylum – because the family had the money to pay for it. But there seems to be a lot of borderline cases where the gurus cannot agree whether the defendant is crazy or not, or even what “crazy” means.

Lloyd Penney
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So many familiar names march through the obituary column that many zines can't help but have, and it's a damned shame to see R.A. Lafferty there. I never met Ray, but did see him here and there at worldcons, smiling, even when by himself, wandering the organized chaos in the hallways. For some of us lucky ones, there is a comfort in knowing that being in that throng means that you are in your element, your people. I think Ray enjoyed that feeling, too.

Thanks to Alan White for the detailed explanation of that marvelous cover from the previous *Challenger*. I'd like to learn to use Photoshop, and we've got it where I work, and lots of people use it, but they won't teach it to me. They say it would take me away from my work for too long, and besides, they have me right where they want me, stuck at my desk. The resumes continue to flow out, and all I want is for one person to say "Yes, you're hired." That's not so much to ask, is it? (I've been four years in an abusive, dead-end job now. I need something new!)

I keep hearing that Stephen Hawking does get progressively worse (such is the nature of his condition), so I hope he is able to get as much of that fine mind of his on paper as possible, and tell us all about our universe. At least, as much as he can figure out himself. In the meantime, I am glad Prof. Hawking has been indulged by so many who study his theories in the makings of their own fictions. I still remember that episode of *ST:TNG* where Data is playing poker with Hawking, Einstein and Newton. The real Hawking, of course. Paramount's willingness to acknowledge the accomplishments of Hawking, as well as the memories of the *Challenger* astronauts. It is somehow comforting to know that Prof. Hawking has read and enjoyed some SF. I

wonder if it would be possible to send him a copy of *Challenger 16*? He might enjoy this kind of discussion, and who know, you might get a sidebar to publish from an illustrious potential contributor.



It sounds like those scientists and social commentators of the 18th Century, as described by Rich Dengrove, once their gaze was directed outwards instead of just inwards, asked many questions we still ask today... Are we alone? What's out there? Can we get there? However, today, we ask... If we could put a man on the moon, why can't we put a man on the moon today? If we can hope that we are not alone, can we afford not to go and find out? I would like to think that our ancestors may have asked that last question. It does make me wonder why we're not as curious as they were.

Rosy recently forwarded me a news story about a private commercial group planning on sending people on trans-lunar vacations. I believe the price tag was \$20 million. I'm not sure I believe the story.

I am very happy to rediscover where Dan Knight is hanging his hat. Dan, of course, lives just north of Toronto now, where I hope he is still producing chapbooks extolling the writing skills of R.A. Lafferty. Many years ago, when I was running dealers' rooms at our local convention, I sold Dan a table, with both of us hoping to find an audience that could appreciate Lafferty... I think our hopes were in vain, for I never found out how he did that weekend. Good to hear from him again.

This marvelous zine list reminds me how many of them I get, how many of them I don't (wish I did).

The Zine Dump is growing past my ability to keep up with it, what with e-fanzines and non-fannish work pouring in. I'm going to have to start to be selective when it comes to reviewing zines from outside of the SF world.

Is Worldcon finally becoming too expensive for even the richest of us? Torcon 2 was called the last intimate Worldcon; will Torcon 3 be the last affordable Worldcon? I pray not.

Frank Denton strikes a familiar note in his LOC. I was dateless in high school, and as I was most of the way through university, I expected to be a life-long bachelor, not ever finding any young woman who might like what she might see in me. And then, I met Yvonne, and we will be celebrating 20 years of marriage next May. (In fact, we attended a wedding earlier today, that of our niece Palmer.) Life has a way of listening to what you might say, and sometimes saying in return, "Oh, yeah? that's what *you* think!"

I wish I could have been at the Effinger memorial reading. Some years ago, GAE was our guest in Toronto, and knowing of his love for baseball, we took him to the Skydome the Thursday before the convention for a game between the Jays and the Twins. We bought him all the souvenirs he wished, we ate true baseball cuisine (dogs and popcorn), and the game finished in a 1-0 loss for the Jays, a real defensive battle. George raved about it all weekend; the con was an anti-climax. I hope the legalities will be straightened out, and the fourth Marid Audran book can see the light of day.

It is about two weeks to the first anniversary of the World Trade Towers disaster. I expect to see a maudlin, Hollywood-style marking of this horrific event, which would certainly cheapen the whole thing in my eyes. Instead, I hope we will see a quiet, introspective time of remembrance and thought of why America was hated so much. The efforts in Afghanistan barely make the news these days, and neither does the efforts of Bush, Rumsfeld and Ashcroft to abrogate your Bill of Rights, and even your human rights, under the guise of vigilance and improved security. Do not let the paranoia of a few allow this to happen. I heard an accusation a short time ago to describe what the Bush administration is doing, something I'd never thought I'd hear...that what it's doing is nothing less than fascist. And then, I see that word in your editorial at the end. Truly sad that patriotism is being exploited at the cost of liberty.

I was pleased by the public commemoration of 9-11, and taped several hours of the TV specials for my nephews to watch or ignore in the future. I want them to hear about the firemen who rushed up the stairs in the two towers, and about Flight 93 ... it might assuage whatever pain Americans are feeling

*about being despised by the rest of the world –
as we might well be.*

Erika Maria Lacey
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Thank you for sending me **Challenger 15** – it was very surprising to see your zine to begin with, and I felt kind of overwhelmed by its thickness, to the point that I am only just now getting around to writing you a letter of comment. It's a very good-looking issue!

And amazingly late getting to you downunder!

I don't understand the publishers' insistence on series, for half the time whenever I get into books and look at those I really like they'll end being stand-alones. The time between books two and three and four or whatever makes it easy for me to forget the previous ones were about and less likely to go on reading – just this month I tried reading book three of a series, knowing that I'd read the previous, but for the life of me couldn't remember what the previous ones were about. Happens too often for my liking, but then again I have the attention span of a gnat.

Your piece on meeting Poul Anderson was very heart-warming and amusing. I wonder what he thought of a young fellow turning up and asking all sorts of questions – kind of like an amateur journalist, it sounds like you were. It would have been interesting to see if there is anyone floating around with the knowledge of all the Hugo winners of the past.

Poul was simply a generous, open, understanding Sfer – well-familiar with the near-comic awe a Real Writer instilled in star-ha!-struck kids. Everyone should do it like he did; he was a champ.

Your mother and brother waited for you the first time you went to visit the Andersons – I hope it wasn't too long.

Poul was horrified when he found they'd been sitting outside while we'd been talking.

Lovely photographs of your wedding. I must admit to find it of amusement to see the names "Joe," "Justin," and "Lance" all on the same page – puts me into mind of N*Sync, although it's a Joey in that group, not a Joe.

It's nice of those guys to include a baby kangaroo in their group.

I must admit to not having been impressed by A.I. – its sentimentality was overdone and it was too obvious what reactions it was supposed to solicit. If they'd done away with all the tear-jerker stuff and fixated a bit better elsewhere – though I couldn't say where – I'm sure it could have been better. As it was all felt by the end of the movie was a numb backside and a strong sense of boredom.

The amputation I've heard most often suggested for A.I. was the entire final segment, featuring the aliens and the resurrection of the mother. It was obviously meant to counteract the cynical despair of the earlier scenes, but only ended up underscoring it, by continuing to portray love only as a need to be fulfilled. Perhaps, had the little robot learned to offer love, to sacrifice in its name, then the heartsickness at the core of the movie might have been cured. But Spielberg opted for shallowness and sentimentality, as he almost always has.

Not too long ago a friend of mine leant me her copy of Fred Hoyle's *The Black Cloud* with the instructions that I was to read it because it was really great. I hadn't also realised that it was revolutionary.

Another thing I'd not seen before was [Terry Jeeves'] Soggies. Indeed it's amazing what one can convey with a few strokes of the pen and a couple of eyeballs.

Ack! Lloyd Penney's mother threw out his comic books! I remember once as a preteen my mother decided I was reading too many romances [with] too much sex in them so threw them in the rubbish bin.

I remember Janis Ian's account of meeting up with pros and people she'd always admired, and how she'd gone all fangirlish at C.J. Cherryh [from] her web-journal. It was very touching to read how she'd felt that Cherryh had meant a lot to her in her life, and getting to meet her and say so made her realise how fans must feel towards herself and her music.

Now, a teary bow to my past ...

Jim Kingman
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The reason for this letter is one of appreciation for a wonderful aspect of comics that is suddenly no longer with us. With its comics released in October 2002, DC has

eliminated its letter columns in favor of a "Direct Currents" page. I was disappointed with this change, and it got me feeling nostalgic for some of those great letter pages of the past, so many of which you contributed to.

The other day I pulled out a stack of *Detective Comics*, issues #401-425 (1970-1972), and found myself completely enthralled by the letter columns in those issues. This was the time, as you well know, when writer Denny O'Neil and artist Neal Adams were raising The Batman to new creative heights, while writer Frank Robbins introduced Man-Bat and focused his Batman tales on the Caped Crusader's detective abilities. The letter writers at that time were thrilled with what was going on in the title. Martin Pasko, Chris Juricich, Scott Gibson, Clem Robins, Bob Rozakis, yourself, the late Steve Berry and Richard Morrissey ... these were just a few of the many readers (some soon to be comic book professionals!) who wrote in issue after issue to applaud, criticize, and offer critical analysis of Batman's adventures. It's a shame that this important part of comics interaction is gone.



The letters page was a neat way getting feedback on a comic book released just a few short months before; to get other readers' opinions on the stories, the writers, the artists, and the editorial direction of a particular series. It was a wonderful forum to have right there in the comic itself. Current comic book editors and readers will tell you that the feedback action is now on the internet, and I certainly believe that, but it's not the same. A neat little aspect of comics is suddenly gone, and

hopefully it will be missed enough to someday return.

I just wanted to thank you personally for years and years of wonderful letters that saw print in various DC letter columns.

*Jim publishes a fine comics fanzine called **Comic Effect**, reviewed in this issue's*

Zine Dump.

My favorite era in letterhacking was in the sixties, my teenage years, when they provided a wider sense of the world and my possible place in it than my little piece of California. The letter columns opened my life.

They put me in contact with other fans – most memorably Mike Friedrich and Irene Vartanoff.

They gave me my first taste of fannish fame.

*They brought me lifelong friendship with Julie Schwartz, the greatest of men and the first adult ever to treat what I had to say with attention and respect. As you note, they brought me my first job. Most importantly, they taught me both to write from my heart and try to express myself well. I wouldn't be a lawyer, I wouldn't be doing **Challenger**, I wouldn't know fandom, indeed, I wouldn't know my wife if it wasn't for the letter columns in comic books.*

Naomi Fisher

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Challenger 16 was much appreciated, though as I'll explain later, its arrival was not timely! Was pleased to see this issue begun and laced throughout with tributes to R.A. Lafferty. I'm sure he'd have appreciated it, and been quite touched to see how many people had fond stories to tell of fine experiences with him. I never had a chance to meet him, so these reminiscences and his speech notes are as close as I'll ever come to that privilege. Thanks to all for sharing your memories, and thank you, Guy, for bringing them to your readers.

Would've been interesting to see immediate reaction of the audience to Lafferty's DeepSouthCon speech. Suspect it was mostly applause, covering stunned non-comprehension by many – how can he say the world already ended? That we're stalled, Flatlanded, mired in maintaining? That we're failing to create or to move forward? Some probably walked away crestfallen, pessimistic, maybe even angry. Reading this, though, I find it deeply hopeful. May not agree with his premise, though really, how can I compare the world he grew up in with

what exists today? I know no other, have nothing against which to hold it for examination. But the thought that we can build an existence, our experience of living, from the ground up, and that the time is right for doing so, is one that has enormous resonance for me. All the possibilities, waiting only for us to make them real – **YES**. Absolutely. New worlds, without end, Amen.

One of my favorite parts of **Challenger** is always the "About this issue..." section. I find the thought processes (and occasional lack of them!) that go into 'zine production to be fascinating. It's like a factory tour of fannishness, with side trips into obsession – you get to see the whys, as well as finished product. But this ATI had a genuine shocker – Guy Lillian, hesitant to put Babe Art on the cover of one of his fanzines? 'S'almost as worrisome as his marrying a lovely and sane woman (Hi Rosy!). Checking out my window for "the hornéd Moon, with one bright star, within the nether tip," or other signs of madness and doom.

In all seriousness, Dell Harris' playfully sexy Harlequin is *gorgeous*, and absolutely should have fronted a Nolacon II PR, as intended. This glowing work, obvious product of much time, thought, and loving effort, was hidden away in an interior, for no better reason than Committee fears of appearing sexist? That's far more offensive to me than anything Dell *could* draw! Beauty should be celebrated, as should our fan artists' astonishing and generously shared talents. And even bearing changing standards of modesty in mind, I see nothing that should have offended back in '87, though it might have been too painful a reminder than time and consuite potato chips exact a price. Good to see you've righted fearful foolishness, 15 years later, by letting her frolic across the **Challenger** cover. The rest of us can only wish we'd age so well.

Oh, hey, just realized, what was the theme *supposed* to be this issue? Don't think you said ... *I'm* thinking it was "Different Perspectives". It certainly ran throughout – Lafferty's premise ("deadpan insanity"?) of unrecognized post-world existence, Rosy's and your snippet reviews of wildly contrasting books. It continued with Alan White's highly educational behind-the-curtain recounting of creating the C15 cover, and (my favorite!)

Gregory Benford's thoughtful account of a visit with Stephen Hawking.

Hawking exemplifies an almost alien viewpoint, working endlessly as he does to understand the ways of the universe, from the confines of a shell-like body and a motorized chair. Benford's recounting of that time at Cambridge read like a written snapshot, a look at the *person* on an ordinary day, not just the world-class intellect. Very different than the way the media portray him as the remote, almost mechanical, Icon of Popular Science, almost a caricature of saintly suffering (though they certainly seized on his divorce and re-marriage as fodder for scandal and headlines!). This small glimpse made him real, human, and yet rather humbling, intimidating despite his frailties. Couldn't help wondering – how can this man hold to life, joy, and his quest for comprehension, through everything? How is it done, how is it sustained? These seem larger, more compelling mysteries to me than the esoteric physical workings of the universe. The sweeping complexity of Hawking's thought processes is staggering, far beyond what I can understand, but it's his continued zest and wit that awes me. And as many of us will eventually face similar constraining of our selves through infirmity, this doesn't really leave us any excuses for our "nows".

The "Perspectives" motif twisted strangely, as usual, with Richard Dengrove, and his comparing current theories re superior extraterrestrial intelligences with similar 18th Century beliefs and reasoning. Dengrove *did* make this more readable, less alum-dry, than some past articles, but I still think his chattier APA style would serve much better in fanzine writing than the scholarly approach he uses in *Challenger*. Being fact-heavy and highly educational does no good if the material isn't read, and these can be a bit of a slog. Fred Chappell's review of Lafferty's novel, *Past Master*, on the other hand, flows so smoothly that I frequently lost the chain of thought in my delight at turns of phrase. Much like reading the book itself, actually – ought to again, see if I get more than the kaleidoscope-flashing enjoyment I originally found. Mike Resnick's take on which museums are his favorites, and more importantly, *why*, was terrific. Some surprises, like anything on which you ask his opinion, but the ones listed that I've been to (nine of 14) are all worthy, interesting, inclusions. One major

gripe, though – Resnick forgot to say where several *are*! Having driven over major portions of Alberta before going to the Royal Tyrell Museum (near Drumheller, incidentally), I can attest both that town names are essential, and that it's nowhere near "the middle"! You don't want to get lost in the Canadian Badlands. Other's locations could be deduced, if you know SF con locations, but the National Museum of Racing would remain undiscovered.



Can't find much common ground for the other contributions, interspersed with more Lafferty anecdotes and tributes, except in their diversity and their showing the many facets of fans' interests and experiences. Your article on the subject of "Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity" was, as always with your legal tales, very thought provoking. Slows the leap to judgment, even with such horrors as the Andrea Yates case, when you consider why the insanity defense was originally created and allowed. I don't necessarily agree that looser definitions are called for, but my own experiences with sociopaths and clinically psychopathic personalities probably have much to do with that opinion. Some were able to convince almost anyone of anything, and were unbelievably dangerous. Hard to think of mercy when contemplating that if you're wrong, such people could go free. Glad I don't

have your job. Defending the indefensible... that line's going to haunt me.

"On the Spot" was more enjoyable – I like your freewheeling personal journal-style writing. Some excellent thoughts on the dangers of allowing our own government the freedom to act as if we're engaged in a perpetual war – Mom's family certainly paid the price for trampled civil rights in WWII. Can't see much difference between some measures and means being advocated now, and the hysteria that led to the internment of the Japanese-Americans back then. When someone can explain why my pre-school age mother (a third generation US citizen!) and her spotlessly law-abiding family should have been jailed, without trial, for three years, I'll try to understand why we should give up essential freedoms for nothing more than the temporary illusion of safety. Probably won't succeed, though. Your serious musings were nicely balanced by the comic aspects of your life – funny story about the Hugo nomination!

Finally, "The **Challenger** Tribute". Oh dear, Guy – I know about your policy of never warning your *vietims* female objects of admiration, but the fallout from your so honoring me last issue, without my knowledge, was bizarre. Was it perhaps more than strange coincidence that Alan White's article, on using Photoshop to alter reality for the purposes of art, immediately preceded Gregory Benford's contribution? Benford, who I note is *your* Contributing Editor (same context as "Your puppy just..."), ran amuck at this DeepSouthCon, gleefully altering reality for the sole purpose of being a smartass...

DSC was in Huntsville this year, June 14-16. There's a tradition here that the Con Committee, and whatever Guests have already arrived in town, go out to dinner the night before a convention starts. Adrienne Martine-Barnes and Greg Benford had been told about this, as we'd known their flights were arriving Thursday evening, so they joined our dinner in progress. Introductions were made all around, and they were seated.

Greg and I have been bantering at Worldcons and such, in friendly and semi-flirtatious fashion, for well over a decade. So I wasn't surprised when he called "Hey, Naomi!" down the table to get my attention. Must have responded in some way, because his next comment, falling with unerring precision into one of those unpredictable near-silences, was...

"I really liked the pictures in **Challenger**, but where did Guy get the nude photos?"

What conversation there was slammed to a stop, and most of that end of the table turned to look at me, ears practically pricked up. Others studiously avoided looking anywhere in my direction – teapots briefly became objects of fascination. Greg careened on, talking with Allen Steele at roughly Warp Eight, cheerfully oblivious to the effects of his having lobbed a verbal hand grenade into my lap. I was quite literally stunned silent. All I could think was, "Good God, what *was* I doing at Philadelphia after Boston won the Worldcon?!? I don't remember anything till the Hugos next evening!" That was immediately followed by, "No, surely not - if Guy had any, he'd be blackmailing me into writing articles! Well, I think he would..." Meanwhile, those who hadn't heard anything except the "Nude Photos" part of the remark (interesting how selective fan's hearing can be!), were asking questions of those who'd been nearer. I watched the buzzing, and realized that not only would nothing I say squelch this, but *not having received a copy yet*, I couldn't even say for sure that there *weren't* any such pictures! I had no idea what Benford could be referencing, and I remembered when Guy ran topless Mardi Gras snapshots in KAPA. Was just going to have to get a current issue of **Challenger**, oh, yeah...

Fans talk – we all know that. By the time I made it to the Baen party Friday evening, eight people (who hadn't even been at the dinner!) had asked me "What's this I hear about nude pictures of you in some fanzine?" Give them credit – most looked somewhat concerned, mildly curious; not desperately interested. I told 'em I didn't know of any such, and went on, thinking "Where *is* Guy?!" I couldn't find you anywhere! By Saturday mid-morning, at least 20 fans had made inquiries, and I knew it wouldn't make any difference if there were photos or not - I was still going to get kidded on this for years. By then, I just wanted to know what pics that blasted Benford had been talking about...

Finally caught up to you and Rosy on Saturday, in the bar, and you greeted me with "Hiya, kid! How'd you like the Tribute?" *What* tribute?! Practically snatched the issue out of your hands, and found... a lovely,

affectionate and funny homage. Written by a dear old friend, who obviously remembers our '93 outing to the Ghirardelli Ice Cream Parlor with pleasure (albeit incorrectly – I ate that sundae all by myself!) With really *nice* pictures, that aren't embarrassing at all, and that are actually pretty flattering. Wow!!!

Reality didn't make a difference to the rumor mill, as I'd figured – I was still getting questions about the "nude photos" (from people who weren't even at DSC, fer Ghu's sake!) four

months later. But it made all the difference to me.

Thank you, Guy – I'm very flattered, and quite touched, by the honor. And I'm gonna *get* you for that someday, Greg! Wait and see ...

Art in this section by: William Rotsler, time and again, Sheryl Birkhead, James Pauger (me, he says, ca. 1974), anon., Neal Pozner, Scott Patri, Joe Mayhew, and below, Marc Schirmeister. *Give that man a Hugo!*

The Dreaded Ruckuss Sisters...



... and Their Probation Officer, Angie Detweiler.

A CONVENTION NOTE

Tom Feller

The Xerps in 2010 party at a convention had several issues of *Weekly World News*. The one I picked up had an article about the ghost of Charlie Chan working on the Chandra Levy disappearance. The article included a picture of Sidney Toler, if I remember correctly, and one of Victor Sen-Yung. However, they labeled the picture of Sen-Yung as Number One Son. As anyone who has the slight bit of American cultural literacy knows, Keye Luke played Number One Son, Sen-Yung played Number Two. Consequently, the tabloid lost all credibility with me.

*It's my hope that every issue of **Challenger** will pay tribute to New Orleans, the astonishing city in which it is based. Here's a melancholy moment in a somber corner of the Crescent City.*

BYE BYE BIRDIE

"For everything there is a last time, lieutenant." Isn't that what Spock told Saavik in **Star Trek II**? Something like that. It's true, of course, although I never thought there'd be a last time I'd walk into New Orleans' Hummingbird Grill for a cheap feed. There was, and it came on Friday, October 25, 2002.

The Bird, as we knew it, was a trip. It was located in a rough part of downtown, in a ramshackle brick building next to a garage. It took up the ground floor of the Hummingbird Hotel, and there used to be a Hummingbird Lounge next door – but that closed years ago. The Grill seemed eternal – but "seeming eternal" is an illusion.

Fans knew the Bird from late, late nights when we couldn't find anyplace else to eat, or from times when visitors came to town to whom we wanted to show the *real* New Orleans. Or we just went there on our own. In 1979, when I lived in the French Quarter, I'd hike up there almost every night to scarf one of their three-dollar ground steaks, or an anytime-breakfast of pancakes and ham. It was grease, of course, but as Beth, my first wife, said, it was "good grease."

That last night I had pancakes, chosen as usual from the big chalkboard menu on the wall. Just beyond that wall were the bathrooms ... from Hell. I never saw the Ladies' Room, of course, but I did see the priceless expression on Judge Miriam Waltzer's face one time when she returned from it.

Aside from fans, and judges, the Bird's clientele was just about what you'd expect from a diner open all night in a seedy part of New Orleans. Taxi drivers, cops, working transients, non-working transients, *illegally*-working transients, if you get my drift. I never had to worry about the rattiness of my blue jeans when I went to the Hummingbird. If anything, I had to avoid liberal condescension towards the regulars. On October 25, the place crawled with slumming yuppies, taking photos – like I did – giving interviews to anyone with a video camera, reminiscing loudly about the time the Hummingbird installed a salad bar for the World's Fair. People had lamented that the Bird had gone to the yuppies, and now it really had. Some 20-something developer had bought the building to convert to something "upscale." The Bird as we knew it had to go.

We cursed him loudly, and the cook and the waitress regarded us with silent, patient disgust.

I never had any trouble with other patrons at the Bird. 99 times out of a hundred I could eat my chopped steak and write in my diary in peace. Once a drunk started a fracas, leading his equally besotted girlfriend to calm him by imploring, "Give me some sugar!" A thug manning the register once chased away a complaining customer with a 2x4, and a smartass once pissed me off by howling along with my record from the jukebox. That was a good jukebox, too; for years it carried my favorite Bob Dylan, "Tangled Up in Blue". I'd play it every time I walked through the door.

On the day they closed the beat-up juke featured a wide selection of CDs – but not Bob Dylan.

One night I left the Bird, drove around the corner and found the client sprawled in the gutter who would make me \$7,000. Another story for another time. I don't know if any time would be appropriate for the story of the great Leslie Fortune, whom I first saw perched on a stool at the Hummingbird counter, wondering aloud to the cook if she should "go out" that night – a tableful of cops right behind her. Some tales are too dangerous to tell.

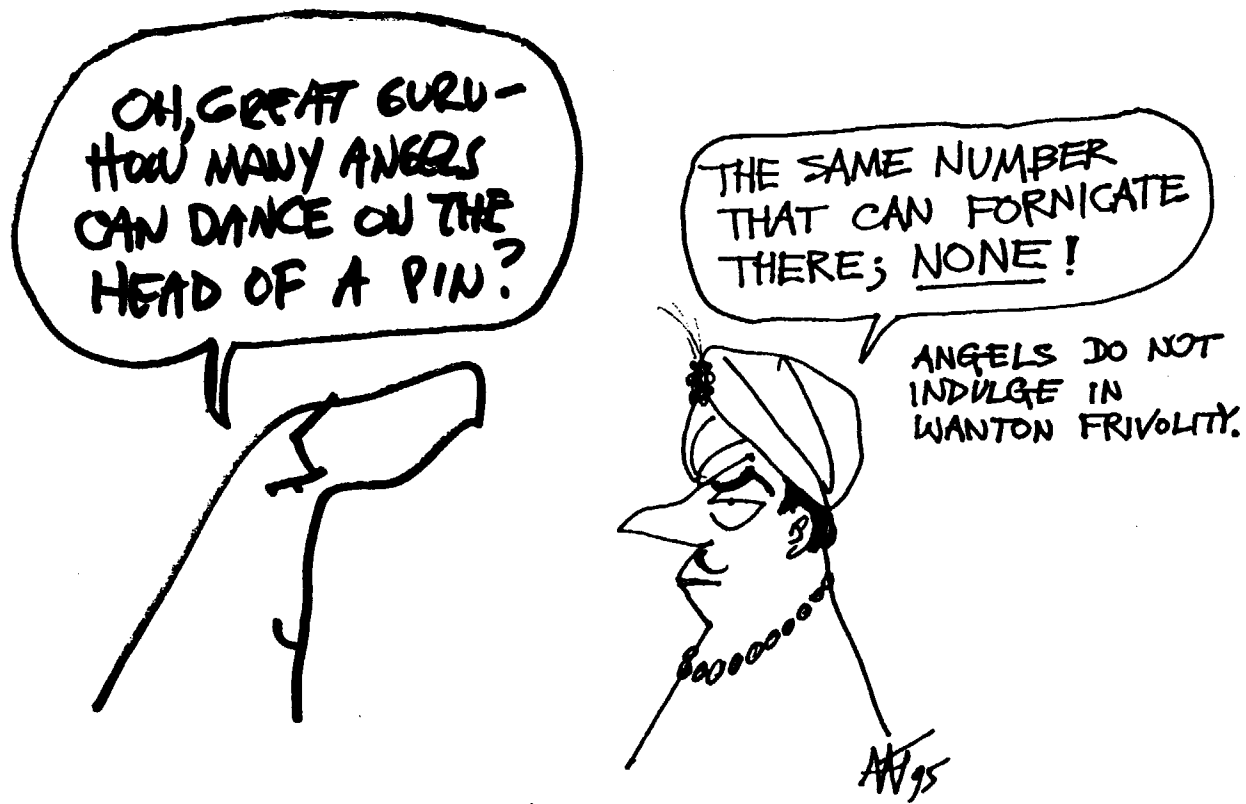
I liked to go there at Carnival time; the parades came right down the street. I didn't like going there on Christmas, the loneliest Christmas I hope I'll ever spend, when I sat across a table from a street boy. He looked lost, abandoned, frightened, feelings you feel forcefully on a day like Christmas in a place like the Hummingbird. He looked as grateful for the newspaper I gave him as if it were a bicycle. Maybe I was projecting; maybe I was grateful to have somebody to give something to.

That last evening Rosy and I joined our usual crowd – John Guidry, Dennis Dolbear, Annie Winston, Lee Young. They'd met a fellow at a play whom they'd brought with them, a literate guy who said "William?" when we spoke of Burroughs and "Ralph?" when we mentioned Ellison. Justin Winston was home asleep, which I regretted; he was with me and Dennis on one of the nights when we'd stumbled out of the Bird and someone said, "There's something you *do* see every day!" "What's that?" "Dawn."

It wasn't that late, or that early, when we left on October 25th, and stood together for a moment on the sidewalk. As we said our goodnights a couple came up. The man wore slops and was heavily unshaven, and the woman wore a loud, many-colored outfit almost as skimpy as a bathing suit. He went inside and with a smile she told us, "Just droppin' my old man off at work!" From her eyes and demeanor it was obvious that she was off the wall.

After she trundled down the street one of the ladies made fun of her harlequinish outfit. Tonight she was dropping off her "old man" at his job. Where would he go tomorrow night? Where would they *all* go? The night people who filled the Hummingbird, the transients, the runaways, the poor and petty evildoers who would have no place in the brave new upscale world coming to this building. Where would they go now to get a cup of coffee?

Heading our separate ways, we left the shelter of the dilapidated Hummingbird marquee, from which bulbs were missing, and which wasn't lit anyway.



Thirty

Used to be that journalists would end a story with the notation, “-30-”. *La belle* Rose-Marie, who is a reporter, tells me that since computers came in that practice went out. I’m writing “-30-“ on this issue at a nexus of anniversaries which mostly involve thirty, as in years, and had thought to form a section of **Challenger** around it, but also soon after I almost saw “-30-“ written to the whole universe, and that’s moreorless taken over my entire consciousness.

I should have figured something like this was coming. Over Christmas I chanced on a sappy old puppetoon called “Suzy Snowflake”, which I loved in early childhood and hadn’t seen since. In January a college girlfriend with whom I shared a terrible experience e-mailed me out of the ozone, long and happily married, with kids. Small matters, perhaps, but both representing circles in closure. Yes, I should have known.

On the chilly morning of Friday, January 24, I dressed especially warmly, adding a set of long johns to my usual *couture*. I fiddled around the public defender’s office in LaPlace, Louisiana, filling the last of my thirty (note) hour work week. Not much to do at my desk; I even sneaked in a little **Challenger** scutwork, pasting page numbers onto a few pages. At mid-afternoon I had a choice, go home or drive down to Thibodaux and surprise Rose-Marie. She has a reporting job there and feels envious of my leisure time, so I decided to surprise and maybe cheer her a little. Off I went to Louisiana’s sugar cane country, and Thibodaux. Fateful decision.

We’d recently replaced the fan belt in Ford Festiva, but I still watched the temperature gauge carefully as I set out over the Vacherie bridge. I turned the wrong way at first and had to double back to find the proper state highway. Second fateful decision. I passed a post office and gave a moment’s thought to mailing back an erroneous order received from the Science Fiction Book Club. I didn’t stop. Third fateful decision. While I drove along the two-lane road I eyed the empty fields and wide-open spaces about me, thinking how alien it must still seem to Rosy and how grim living in such an environment would be for her. ... and for me, too. I *need* my bookstores and movie theatres.

I was within two or three miles of Thibodaux, on a clear stretch of road several hundred yards long. It was a beautiful day. A woman some distance ahead stopped to turn left into a subdivision, a former canefield, treeless, sterile. I slowed, of course, and must have stopped, though I can’t remember.. There are one or two or three seconds there that just don’t exist anymore.

The universe separated into three distinct parts: *before*, *during*, and *after*. During:

An incredible violent jolt smashed my vehicle from the back, with a hideous metallic *crunch* and *bang*. Something smacked my face or my face smacked something, hard ...

And then it was *after* ...

I was feeling around for the latch to my seatbelt. It wasn’t where it was supposed to be. And the door – I couldn’t get it open ... was it locked? I scabbled at the handle. It seemed to snap off in my hand.

Faces double framed in my window and theirs, staring at me. Somehow I pushed the creaking door wide. I lurched out onto the pavement. *Are you all right?* the faces said from their car. *I don’t know*, I replied. *How do I look?* I wasn’t being sarcastic. I touched my forehead. Even as I brought down my hand and stared at the Transylvanian tea coating it, I was aware at how much of a cliché that was.

I staggered a few steps. I remember giving a guy my cell phone and asking him to call Rosy. He did. Someone told me an ambulance and a state trooper were on their way. I started to assure him that none of that was necessary, fat lot I knew, but instead I took my cell phone back and called my brother's house in New York. I *think* I talked to my sister-in-law. I saw a huge black pickup truck lying on its side in the roadside ditch. I also saw my Ford Festiva, which I'd bought in October when my Geo Tracker blew up. Know why they call small cars bugs? Because of the way bugs look when people step on them.

I flashed on an accident I'd seen in Birmingham when I was a kid. A lady kept staggering around the wreck, asking for her lost glasses. I asked for mine: they'd been flung off in the impact. As the EMTs were tying me to a board and loading me like so much laundry into the ambulance, they brought me my cell phone and keys and notary seal and briefcase – but they didn't see my specs. Also left behind, a nice Christmas sweater, that package I needed to return to the SFBC, and my NYFD pullover cap, bought at Ground Zero.

At the time, though, I was helpless about such things. Flat on my back, I busily tried to convince the EMT, and myself, that I was all right. I wriggled my feet happily, convincing myself of no spinal damage. I recited my phone and Social Security numbers to establish that I still had my memory. If I had the right numbers, I did fine. I also begged the guy not to catheterize me. I was doing this when the doors opened at the hospital and I heard the voice that meant the most to me in the world. Rose-Marie says she shot the EMT a look and he explained, "It's a guy thing."

They hauled my flab to a table and soon a doctor was poring over my blasted corpus. I hurt. My face hurt. My right thigh hurt more, and my sternum – probably from the seatbelt. My long underwear may have cushioned me from worse damage. My right eye was swollen shut. Off I rolled to X-Ray and Cat-Scan, both of which produced negative results. Felt woozy when I had to stand – but I never had to hurl. (What do you mean, "too much information"? You can *never* have "too much information.") We were there for five hours, but I didn't notice the passage of time. Concussion, y'see.

The last time I'd been in serious medical trouble was when I'd popped an eardrum, and they'd kept me overnight, pumped full of Antivert, *wonderful* stuff – it not only curbed my dizziness but enwrapped me lovingly in the gentle arms of Morpheus – the best sleep I've had in decades. I was disappointed, then, when the M.D. pronounced that there seemed to be no major damage, and Rosy could take me home, get me checked out for a possible fractured orbit (sounds science fictional, doesn't it?), and make me contemplate my bedroom ceiling. Which she did.

On January 28th we found my glasses, sweater, and NYFD cap in the wrecked Festiva. It looked like a tin can squashed for recycling. New bruises have appeared on my wracked bod as the swelling in the old ones has gone down. My upper back hurts like a bastard. My doctor expresses concern only about my right eye – part of the white has gone blood red. I have hired a civil lawyer of my acquaintance, the evisceration of the doofus who hit me the object. Specifically, I want a new used car. I want my face to stop looking like something out of Lon Chaney's makeup box. I don't want this hideous event to cost my wife a penny. And I want to finish this issue, even though I can't as I'd wanted to.

2-1-03

I'd wanted to write about the recoil of epic events from thirty years ago. Thirty years since Roe v. Wade, thirty years since George McGovern lost the presidency ... thirty years since men last walked on the moon. The Roe anniversary had personal significance, coupled with the e-mail from my college friend, and I may write about it – but not now. As for the coincidence of actually meeting McGovern three decades after voting for him, the last time America's soul was

last threatened as severely as it is now, well, another polemic against W and his war would be pointless. I found a letter written by a famous SF author to a faned about the launch of Apollo 17 in 1972, and asked to print it – but the missive provoked ambitions in the faned to publish again, himself. And then this morning came, and the multiplying contrails from the shattered *Columbia* disappear into the morning sun.

I named this fanzine after the lost ship which would have borne the best of America into the future. I end this issue on the day another ship is lost, bringing the best of us home. I can only pray that someday, we will take the examples of *Challenger* and *Columbia* to heart, rejecting simple conquest as our place in the world. That like these best of us, we will show imagination, and energy, and intelligence, and competence, and simple compassion, and leave those as our legacy to mankind. Someday.

As W's insipid drumbeats go on for war, war, war, and we stagger from the shuttle catastrophe, all I can do is wonder. What would I say to others about our country, if they asked me to explain us?

Would I say, "America is a country aglut with contradictions. Boundless generosity, depthless greed; it exalts the human spirit and condemns it to fathomless squalor. It supports hope, it enforces despair. It's the country of Abraham Lincoln ... and George Lincoln Rockwell. Of David Duke ... and Jimmy Carter. Of Tranquility Base ... and My Lai. Of Columbine ... and *Columbia*. It's a country always faced with choosing its own nature and its own fate. Will it live up to its promise and change the world by example, or sink into the easy rationalization of raw power? Will it be the hope of the world ... or its most profound disappointment?"

"America's only real problem, in this patriot's view, is that it refuses to stay true to itself. There are those of us who will never stop trying."

Once more, thanks to everyone who helped and encouraged us in the DUFF campaign, and we hope to see some of you in Perth and all of you in Toronto.

Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,
See how these names are feted by the waving grass
And by the streamers of white cloud
The whispers of wind in the whispering sky,
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.
Born of the sun, they traveled a short while toward the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honor.

Stephen Spender, "I Think Continuously of Those Who were Truly Great"

