





CHALLENGER #21

Winter 2004 - 5



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To think we were looking forward to the waning months of 2004.

Normally, living in the sub-tropics, Rosy and I don't get to enjoy the turning of the leaves or the softening of the heat – Louisiana doesn't get a normal autumn, having but two seasons, *Carnival* and *hurricane*. For us as science fiction fans, I might add *Worldcon*, for surely Noreascon 4 was a season in itself. After a year of stress and craziness, and a summer of unending toil on our two responsibilities for Worldcon, DUFF and the program book, attending said event, and either worrying about Rosy's relatives or our own lives in the face of a parade of hurricanes, we hoped for an autumn of quiet and peace. Instead.... Instead, our lives were thrown into even greater turmoil. Just before Thanksgiving, my public defender job in St. John Parish evaporated in a haze of penury. Translation: our office ran out of money and I was laid off.

Being the most primitive and corrupt of states, Louisiana finances its indigent defender offices in a unique way. Most of our paychecks come from court fees and traffic tickets, funds which district attorney's offices can often raid and/or ravage by various means. We had a six-figure shortfall. *I* paid the price.

I was certainly no detriment to the office. I handled six of the seven trials public defenders, uhhh, defended in 2004, and won four of them outright. My work outside of the courtroom ... well, check out "The Best Speech I Never Gave" later in this issue and judge for yourself. No, I wasn't the issue. Finances were. Bottom line: AMF.

My mortified boss posted notices and made announcements at seminars and I mailed and faxed resumes to every public defenders' office in the state, every private firm which does criminal defense, and even a couple of district attorneys' offices. I got several compliments on my boss' warm recommendation and on my experience ... and *one* hit. Doing the same thing I'm doing now ... for less money. In Shreveport, Louisiana – across the state. Since we couldn't afford to wait and hope that St. John will somehow find more money, we had to accept the job, and the move.

We visited Shreveport in the waning days of 2004, toured the new office, scouted out places to live. I wish I could say I was impressed with the city, but on this first glance it struck me as little more than a typical mid-size Middle American Southern burg, without much in the way of character or that ineffable quality I call *texture*. As for the job, I'll be busier – about twice the caseload as in St. John, and as I say, for less money. There are no advantages besides a seemingly friendly boss, health insurance for us both and a retirement plan. Since I have no intention of retiring from this job, the search for better work will go on. I *want* to move to Tennessee, you see. Louisiana has capped out.



So: a new address for Rosy and Guy, and for **Challenger**: 8700 Millicent Way #1501, Shreveport LA 71115. (Same e-dress, same website, and same cell number, 504/909-7084. New house phone: 318/797-1822.) It's a *nice* apartment in a *nice* complex, close to a stadium cineplex, xerox outfits and a Barnes & Noble, and an easy commute from the courthouse. It's too small for all our stuff (to "simplify life," we donated 25 boxes of books to our local book fair) but it has one overwhelming quality other choices didn't have: Rosy likes it.

So: we must move. I will miss this decaying old wretch of a city. New Orleans has a rotten economy and a stagnant society and crime out the wazoo. But it also has its hooks. I have lifelong friends here, and memories that span the spectrum of wonderful to regrettable. I've loved showing it to people, a special place, a unique place, a place that is unmistakably itself. Twice or thrice before I've tried to move away, and each time I've come limping back. Life is never dull in this place. *Texture* it has – a spooky, sexy, historic attractiveness to just being here that made me fall in love with it, so long ago. Real life has forced us away, and like I say, I *want* to move to Tennessee. But N'awlins ...

We'll be back for Mardi Gras.

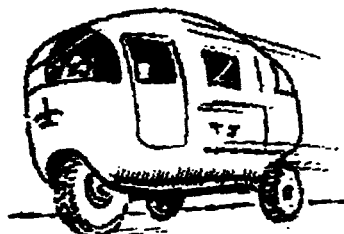
Into this madness I insert **Challenger** #21. Worldcon, being the highlight of the late year, plays an enormous role in its pages. Mike Resnick provides another of his famous diaries, I provide a pictorial account of the Lillians' adventures at the convention, and Jeff Potter's phenomenal cover is a Boston scene printed, in much smaller size, in the Noreascon program book. (Jeff, incidentally, is the only fan we know in Shreveport.) N4, you were terrific.

Along with another installment of my DUFF report, illustrated by Randy Cleary (who's the fubbo fella with the quokka?), a page reprinted from an apazine of long ago, and the aforementioned tale from the IDB, there is excellent text by **Chall** faithfuls Greg Benford and Rich Dengrove and several others, a superb reminiscence portfolio by Tim Kirk (courtesy of Sheryl Birkhead) and fine interior artwork by Korrati (here), Kurt Erichsen, Trinlay Khadro, Sheryl again and many more. I know I'm prejudiced, but I think this issue is *swell*. Just the thing to bring relief to a torturous year.

One important note, though: you are almost undoubtedly reading this editorial on the **Challenger** website, www.challzine.net. I have printed very, very few copies of this issue. Such will be the way of the world until our personal finances improve to the point where, an unregenerate paper slut, I can xerox these pages in the quantity to which I long ago became accustomed. I'm desperately sorry, but here as everywhere else in the world, economics rule. If you need a printed copy, download it from the site or help me with the printing. Figure six bucks. (Don't worry about the color covers – they're already printed.)

Check out the new DUFF website at <http://DUFF2005.blogspot.com> – the 2005 race will soon be underway. We've already heard from three potential candidates – but why not more? You need three North American nominations and two from downunder, a \$25 bond, a 100-word platform. Deadline for nominations February 15 (I've been warned not to write that as 2-15, since Brits would wonder about a 15th month), deadline for ballots April 15. If DeepSouthCon '05 (ad elsewhere) cooperates, Rosy and I will put on a DUFF party and auction there – so attend, boogie down, and vote!

And come see us sometime in Shreveport. Don't worry about being a stranger – you won't be the only one!



THE EINSTEIN CODE

by Kevin McLaurty, Princeton University Press,
April 1, 2004, \$38.

A review by Gregory Benford

This astonishing, revelatory book confirms rumors circulating in academia for years. Dr. McLaurty, an historian working in the Princeton Einstein Collection, found an obscure set of notebooks long neglected. They were written in an odd code nobody had bothered to decipher. McLaurty went to cryptologists and they cracked it easily. After all, it was invented by an amateur: Albert Einstein.

McLaurty had expected notes about Einstein's personal life, perhaps, but what he found in telegraphic German was a daily log of Einstein's ideas. He knew some physics but was unprepared for Einstein's careful notes about his personal reading, and how it influenced his thinking.

McLaurty found the earliest notebook from 1901, four years before the "miracle year" that saw special relativity, $E=mc^2$ and the theory of Brownian motion. Einstein has cryptic entries about reading Verne, thoughts about what possible fuel could send us to the moon, and after reading Wells' *The Time Machine*, an extended discussion of time. He wonders if there is a way that physical equations (which prefer no direction in time, an issue that bothered Newton) can be made to rule out time travel. "Of course," he says, "for believing (*glaubige*) scientists the rule of causality demands that we not venture backward."

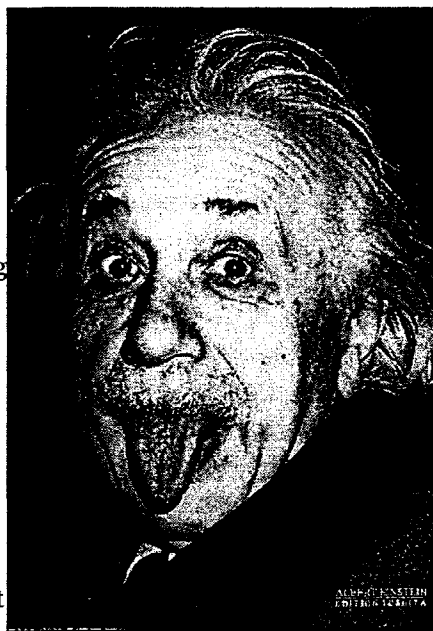
Later, he mentions several E.R. Burroughs novels by name, confessing that he sometimes reads for relaxation, not instruction. He learns English to read *Weird Tales* and in a visit to the US in 1931 picks up pulp magazines, quoting titles with amusement.

In Princeton, 1933, he receives Gernsback, who wants him to write "an article or even a column" and gives Einstein a free subscription. This inducement fails, but Einstein has much to say about Stapledon's *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, commenting favorably on the idea of an expanding, evolving universe. He notes a visit from the young Isaac Asimov, though Einstein could not understand what positrons had to do with robot brains. McLaurty quotes Einstein on the value of reading "fantastic fiction"—it helps him think:

"I rarely think in words. A thought comes in the mental world (*Gedankenwelt*) and I try to put it in words afterwards. But at times, particularly at night when the mind is tired, a story brings the thoughts first."

Einstein went to see *The Day the Earth Stood Still* because friends told him there was a figure like him in it; he liked the movie but thought the robot was the best actor. The last entry in the notebooks (in #17, 1955) is about a Bradbury story.

Einstein even relates an amusing story about a passage he spent in a cruise to Japan in 1936. Next to him in the smoking room of the liner he saw a man reading his book, *The Meaning of Relativity*. Einstein was reading a pulp magazine and the man sneered at it. But then, obviously not recognizing him, the man began talking about the relativity book. Weary of explaining his ideas for decades, Einstein said he had tried the book but did not find that he could understand it. The man raised his eyebrows at the pulp, nodded and then said condescendingly, "Let me explain..."



Challenger presents a guest editorial ...

SteamPunk: Towards a Better Yesterday

Christopher J. Garcia

Not too long ago, the Computer History Museum, where I daydream in exchange for a paycheck, received a very interesting machine for loan. It was a model of the completed portion of Charles Babbage's original Difference Engine made entirely out of Meccano, the British version of the Erector Set. As I sat, doing the four full rotations of the crank required to complete a third-order differential, I began to think about the London Science Museum's big build of a Difference Engine in the 1990s. Led by Doron Swade, the LSM used Babbage's original plans and made them work, building a complete machine that ran and then building the printer that would have gone along with it. They even named a new unit of measure, the Crick, which is equal to the amount of force it took ole' Reg Crick to turn the crank once. Contrary to popular belief, the difference engine was never planned to be steam-powered. To the untrained eye, Swade was leading a group in historical re-creation, but to the trained eye, he was doing much more.

I've been familiar with other historical re-creation societies for years. My father attended the 1968 BayCon Tourney that introduced the SCA to world-wide fandom, and I was involved with Santa Clara High's SCA club during my years there. I'd done several Civil War reenactments, which is hilarious as I've only done them in California and Nevada, far from any actual battle field. I even helped a bunch of folks who wanted to design a site where they could demonstrate World War I trench warfare. I'm well-acquainted with the beauty of bringing a portion of history back to life, which may have something to do with why I became a historian, but as I sat there, turning the crank of the Meccano Difference Engine, I realized that we've been doing it all wrong. That Doron Swade was doing historical CREATION!

Doran and the Meccano guy, as well as the only remaining automaton builder, François Junod, are working SteamPunks! They have taken the Age of Imagined Science and brought it forward to us, as improbable and pointless as it may seem. The one thing that this made perfectly clear is that all the other historical re-creation groups are bringing to life times that we've already left behind, and mostly for good reason. The SCA only re-enacts the clean and easy part of history, seldom touching on the plagues, betrayals and witch hunts, though I have heard of groups doing them, perhaps as a way of cleansing the historical palate. These newer Creationists are bringing about a world that never actually existed, though it did come close a couple of times. They can pick and choose what they bring to life without having to worry much about full authenticity. The ability to pick your history, to pick how intense you want to be and not have to worry about being contradicted is quite freeing.

So I now will make my proclamation: someone, somewhere needs to start the SteamPunk Recreationists, or what I shall hereforth refer to as the SPR. The SPR could hold events a kin to the Crystal Palace Exhibition or the Great Centennial Exhibition, showing off their goods and wares, interpreting the possibilities of Ye Olden Tymes, not merely finding a pattern or a recipe in some dusty old book. Imagine gatherings, held in

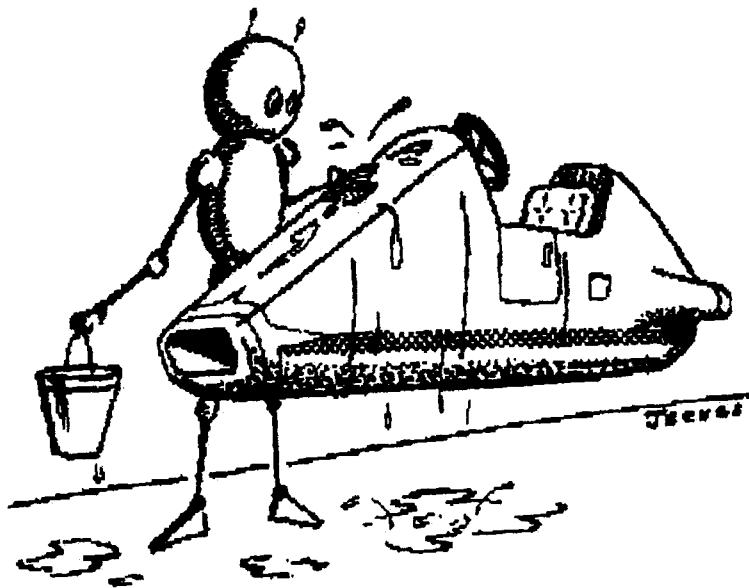
rooms filled with pipe smoke and animal heads, where wild haired minds in vested suits discuss the design of dirigibles and steam-powered doohickeys that move things from here to there. Think of the possibilities! A ladies' sitting club where new methods of female convenience are debated and then, gasp, perhaps even built! The SPR would be a perfect fit for those of us who like the act of re-creating, but hate the arguments over the acceptability of costume or device. IT would be a group that is re-creating portions of history, while at the same time creating things that never truly lived.

There are many possible areas in which one could explore. Say you wanted to run your chapter as an American university, awarding tenure and arguing the merits of presented papers and artifacts. Perhaps everyone is working at the pleasure of Queen Victoria, who could award titles of peerage for fine designs and arguments. What about ancient Egypt? They certainly understood the power of steam and made complex devices, so why not bring that concept forward? Or, keeping it in the Victorian times completely, bring those old tales of the Weird West to live with literal iron horses, mad flying teapots, and crazy ore-extracting machines. Western recreation using SteamPunk ideas would be incredible!

That is my call. If you love tinkering and the Victorian Age, then gather some friends, found the SPR and make me your chapter's patron saint. You can show those Dickens Faire folks a thing or two and perhaps make some nice stuff in the process. Gather! Expand! Create while you recreate! A better yesterday is calling, and if I were you, I'd reply in kind.



Tim Kirk



THE OLD OLD STORY

Terry Jeeves

When in a masochistic mood I used to dig out one of my slowly decomposing pulp magazines and wallow in what used to be a feast of nostalgia. Now in my dotage I find the magic has almost gone and what were gripping, exciting and highly thought-stimulating yarns have decomposed along with the pulp pages. What happened?

In the early days of SF, if an author sat down to write a story he generally needed a hero, a heroine and a villain to keep things moving by pinching some invention or kidnapping the girl. It was also almost mandatory to include a mad, or at least eccentric, Professor. We never heard what he professed. To simplify things it was handy to fix him up with a daughter who also had to double as the heroine. She was "A true brick" (i.e., a bit of a square) and probably created by parthogenesis, polyandry or even polyfilla, as we never heard of any Mrs. Professor lurking in the background.

The hero (usually named "Chuck), had to be seven feet tall, have muscles of steel (iron could be accepted), and was always a handsome college boy down on his luck and ready to accept any stupid or dangerous job if it paid off well. He also possessed "piercing blue eyes," whereas the villain had "gimlet eyes" which presumably made different sized holes. The baddy often spoke with a foreign accent, had greasy black hair, a thin moustache and no muscles to speak of; taht is you like speaking of muscles. Here again, to keep things tidy, it was customary to make him the Professor's laboratory assistant. Returning to the snow-white heroine, she was a tall, slim golden-haired brunette with pearly white teeth, mostly her own, no brains and given in moments of high emotion to using words such as "spiffing," "whizzo," "anyone for tennis," "How does it work, Professor?" or "Sod it!" Which one depended on the circumstances.

Having met all the characters, we can now get on with the story. Chuck is sitting on his usual seat in his temporary home – a bench in the park. He is reading an interesting ad in a paper which he found in a trash can. Chuck isn't a proud man. The ad says, and I quote, if I don't, you won't know what it's all about ... "Half-witted ex-college boy required to undertake a hare-brained experiment which is almost certainly deadly, if not utterly fatal. No insurance supplied, if you fail, you couldn't collect it and if you succeed, you won't need it."

Chuck thumps one fist into an open palm, and winces in pain, he forgot his steel muscles. "By

golly, that's for me," he ejaculates or says empathically in his deep brown baritone voice. Immediately, or even quicker and without further delay or dallying, he springs to his feet and sets off to the address given in the paper. This proves to be a dilapidated old mansion boasting an East wing and a West wing. Given a good engine and a decent runway, it could probably get airborne.

Chuck raps firmly on the double doors and is busily sucking the splinters out of his knuckles when they creak slowly open (the doors, not his knuckles). An ancient Professor and his hunchbacked assistant, Igor, stand revealed. Henchmen are always hunchbacks; it comes with the job. The Professor is bent double, something like this

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but the other way up. He's a little stiff from hiking, whereas Igor is a big stiff from Tooting. He blows a trumpet in the local youth orchestra under the false name of Rogi, he's a very backwards chap.

"Come in," says the Professor. "I'm professor Ben Tova, and that is my assistant Igor Stravinsky Skivar. Come to my laboratory. Please walk this way." He sets off. Always eager to oblige, Chuck bends over and hobbles after him.

They descend to a basement room crammed with huge retorts, flashing sparks, strange machinery and all the paraphernalia of the standard Hollywood horror film. The click-click of high heeled shoes comes from behind a giant transformer (it transforms giants). It is the Professor's daughter, Doolally, practicing on her castanets as she waits for a beaker full of a strange brown liquid to come to the boil.

"Anyone for coffee?" she asks giving Chuck a winsome smile. (You winsome, you lose some.) But the Professor is in no mood for dallying, he sets out to explain his invention to Chuck (but really, for the benefit of the reader, so that he'll know what is going on.)

"By means of negatively polarized quanta particles I feed genetically modified sunlight into my multi-dimensional accumulator and give it three seconds at F.8. When all is ready, you stand on that platform, press the green button and in a flash you will be transported to another dimension." He hands Chuck a belt studded with highly technical-looking gadgets. "Wear this and press the red button to return."

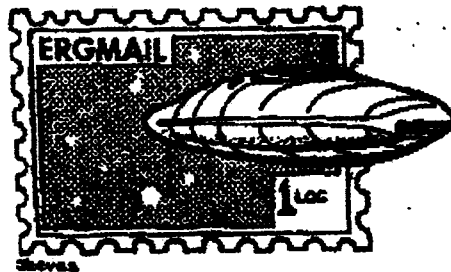
At this point, the author can choose from two possibilities:

(A) Doolally steps up on the platform, says, "Is this the button Chuck has to press?" She puts her finger on it, and naturally, touches it too hard. There is a flash and she vanishes.

(B) Igor grabs Doolally round the waist (he has long arms), sweeps her up on the platform, presses the button and they *both* vanish.

The way ahead is now clear. Chuck snatches the return belt, jumps on the platform and heads off to the rescue. This involves fighting off vicious aliens in the other dimension, or knocking the stuffing out of Igor. Either way, he returns with Doolally. At this point the machine explodes, Doolally goes into Chuck's embrace, then makes coffee for everyone – unless they fancy a game of tennis.

They don't write stories like that anymore. Somehow they have lost their magic.



In 1968, I invited myself to visit the Hugo-winning SF writer, Jack Vance, a visit that I've described elsewhere. I'm delighted that David read what I wrote then – and shares the joy of

A Visit With Jack Vance: 2004

David B. Williams

Fifty-nine years is a long career for a writer in the SF/F genres. Not a record – Jack Williamson holds that one, hands down. But for someone who was already 29 when his first story was published, 59 years is a good long run. That someone is Jack Vance, whose latest novel, *Lurulu*, will be [was] published by Tor in December.

Vance was once dubbed “the invisible man of science fiction,” but that’s not really fair. He did refuse to release photos or more than a line or two of biographical information, especially in the early years, in the belief that an author’s work should speak for itself. He didn’t care to make his living with his personality, he once explained, and he thought that information about the writer might influence a reader’s response to the story.

But Vance hasn’t been a recluse. He has been a guest of honor at more than a dozen conventions including Worldcon, has given a number of interviews, and has even welcomed visiting fans to his home.

For example, in November 1967, a brash freshman at the University of California-Berkeley named Guy H. Lillian III phoned Jack Vance and asked if he could come over and meet the Hugo-winning writer, who lived nearby in the Oakland hills.

Later, an older and wiser Guy cringed with remorse for intruding upon Vance’s time and attention. “What a *toad* I was. I invited myself to a man’s house and took up an hour of his time with nonsense. I dared project my Berkeleyan insolence toward men who worked for a living onto a being of accomplishment and purpose.”

When I visited Jack Vance in July 2004, I lacked Guy’s qualms because I had a standing invitation. I met Jack and Norma Vance when he was a Guest of Honor at Marcon 38 in 2003. Norma had given me their phone number and encouraged me to call whenever I found myself in the Bay Area. As an avid admirer of Vance since reading “The Miracle Workers” in the July 1958 *ASTOUNDING*, you bet I did.

The first member of the Vance household Guy met was a snoozing cat. Felines have been a fixture at the Vance home from the beginning. When they moved to the Oakland hills in 1954, five cats moved with them. Three are in residence today, and a chocolate Labrador.

Guy met Jack Vance from the bottom up, as the writer descended a ladder. In 1967, Vance was in the middle of a years-long, multi-phase remodeling and expansion of his house. When Jack and Norma bought the place, it comprised three hillside lots and “a rustic cottage” in Norma’s words or “a chicken shack” in Jack’s estimation. Vance worked as a professional carpenter while building his career as a writer, so he was well prepared to do the job himself.

At the time, Vance was 51 years old. Guy discovered “a much larger man than I’d imagined with a paunch, glasses, thinning hair.” Vance had already established his reputation as a refined and quirky stylist, leading readers to imagine a pale, bookish aesthete, not the burly fellow with powerful forearms and thick fingers who actually wrote such vivid descriptive passages and elegant dialog.

Vance had just won a Hugo and a Nebula for “The Last Castle” to add to the Hugo for “The Dragon Masters” in 1963 and an Edgar Award for best new mystery writer of 1960. Berkley Books had just published *The Palace of Love*, third of Vance’s Demon Princes series, and in a few months Ace would begin issuing the four-novel Planet of Adventure or Tschai series.

A lot has happened since then. Vance has published another 60 novels and collections, boosting his lifetime score to about 90. In 1980, Vance was Guest of Honor at World Fantasy Con, in 1985 at NASFiC, and in 1992 at Worldcon. In 1997, 52 years after the appearance of his first story in the Summer 1945 issue of *THRILLING WONDER STORIES*, the SFWA named Vance a Grand Master in recognition of his contributions to the field of fantastic literature.

When I visited in 2004, Vance was a few weeks short of his 88th birthday. The paunch is more expansive, the hair is even thinner, but the thick eyeglasses are gone. During the 1980s, glaucoma gradually robbed Vance of his already-poor eyesight. By a happy coincidence, word processing technology developed just when he was no longer able to continue writing with pen and paper (he always wrote longhand; Norma typed his manuscripts).

As the years passed and his vision continued to dim, Vance's technological support was progressively enhanced: first with small projections added to the keyboard to assist navigation, then with a 30-inch monitor that displayed large 32-character lines of text, and finally a speech synthesizer that reads back what he writes in a peculiar little robotic voice.

Needless to say, blindness has slowed Vance's writing. "Before, I could read up and down the page and get a sense of the flow of the material; now, with my eyes out, I have to try to pick out the flow of the stuff via what the voice tells me. I have to go back and forth, make sure that it isn't just a jumble of disconnected phrases. I have to do it via my ears, and go back and forth a sentence or two. If I'm really audacious, I go back several sentences."

Though writing has become such a tedious and frustrating process, Vance has remained philosophical about the difficulties: "I'm not bellyaching too much. I just bellyache a little bit."

Norma and son John provide essential assistance. John processes the files for such things as margins and formatting; Norma, as always, reads the text for meaning, raising questions and calling attention to inconsistencies. Thanks to word processing, of course, her days of actually typing all the manuscripts are history.

Though an advanced octogenarian, Vance's talents are as sharp as ever. His two most recent novels, **Night Lamp** and **Ports of Call**, are indistinguishable in wit and imagination from his works in decades past. When asked how a writer can keep producing good work into his ninth decade, Vance says: "First, don't get Alzheimer's." He has taken his own advice. His voice doesn't have an old man's timbre, and in conversation he is quick and expressive.

Today Vance considers himself "semi-retired." Since delivering *Lurulu* to his editor at Tor, he has begun a new work but without contract, deadline, or certain expectation of ever completing it. But writing is what he does, he explains, and after sixty years of doing it, he would feel at loose ends if he didn't have a work in progress, something to keep his mind occupied. "I'm just writing under my own steam," he says, "but I hope I'll get this book out."

When Guy visited in 1967, Vance was framing a new addition to his house, one of several expansions over the years. Today the large residence, a far cry from the original cottage, climbs the hillside on three levels. A few years ago, Jack and Norma traded houses with their son John II, who had a small house and a family. When I visited, the senior Vances had just moved back to the big house, which now shelters three generations of Vances, Jack and Norma downstairs, son John and his wife Tammy and their children upstairs.

The house bears witness to Jack and Norma's extensive world travels; one room boasts hand-carved walnut ceiling panels from Kashmir, the breakfast nook is lined with Koa wood from Hawaii. In 1967, Guy happened to catch the Vances at home between trips: in 1965 they had been in the South Pacific and Australia ("The Last Castle" was written in Tahiti), in 1969 they would leave for an extended stay in Europe. Many of Vance's stories and novels from the 1950s to 1970s were written in whole or part in foreign lands.

I wondered whether Vance found it difficult to write in strange surroundings, as some writers do. No, he answered, he began writing in the Merchant Marine during World War II, sitting on deck with a clipboard on his knee. And that's what he continued to do, whether in Mexico, Ireland, Morocco, South Africa, Pakistan, Tahiti, or at home in Oakland.

In 1967 Guy was surprised by Vance's "just my job" attitude toward writing. Vance hasn't changed in this regard. When asked what aspect of his work has given him the most satisfaction, he has a quick response: "Getting the check. I'm not fooling!" Yet the care that Vance invests in his writing – the constant revisions until he has achieved the effect he wants, the way he fumes when he learns that yet another editor has tinkered with his carefully crafted sentences – shows he is an artist; he simply has no patience with artistic poses.

Perhaps the greatest encomium of Vance's long career began in 1999 with the Vance Integral Edition project. The VIE is an all-volunteer, international campaign by his devoted readers to publish a homogeneous edition of all Vance's works in 44 volumes. The project has been conducted almost entirely via the Internet, and more than 400 individuals have performed at least one task in the process.

Each story and novel has been checked against original manuscripts or various published editions to restore Vance's texts as nearly as possible to his original wording. About 600 subscribers around the world have signed up at a cost of \$1,400 or more. Microsoft mogul Paul Allen, a big Vance fan, induced one of his foundations to purchase 50 sets for libraries. The first 22 volumes have been delivered to subscribers and the second 22 are almost ready for the press.

Jack Vance, the premier wordsmith, gropes for the right word to express his reaction to the VIE project. He doesn't think "grateful" is apropos; "pleased and honored" more nearly fit. He marvels at the enormous effort that has been invested in restoring his work and producing a uniform, classy edition. "I can't see the books myself, but everybody who has the books admires them tremendously."

When he isn't writing, Vance is "reading" spoken-word books on science, history, geography (never SF) and he likes mysteries, especially the novels of M. C. Beaton. He also spends a lot of time cataloging his vast collection of classic jazz and transferring the old records and tapes to CDs. Music has always been very important to Vance, and he considers classic jazz of the 1920s and 30s as the noblest of musical art forms.

If Vance's production of new work has slowed, one benefit of a six-decade career is a long backlist of books that publishers can re-issue. In the past few years, Tor has published omnibus editions of Vance's four Dying Earth novels and the three Alastor Cluster novels. Gollancz also issued the Dying Earth omnibus and reprinted **Big Planet**, **The Blue World**, **Emphyrio**, and the Lyonesse series. iBooks has used the corrected VIE texts to publish new editions of "The Dragon Masters" (with "The Last Castle"), **The Gray Prince**, **Maske: Thaery**, **To Live Forever** and **The Languages of Pao**.

For two hours, Jack and I sat at his kitchen table, sipping beers and discussing cosmology, the dispersion of the Indo-European language groups, the construction of the recurved compound bow, the deficiencies of egalitarianism, the lamentable state of English orthography, and other subjects. But like a Jack Vance novel, all good things come to an end. Before I left, Norma gave me a tour of the house and I had a chance to examine the layout and the many souvenirs and photos displayed on walls and shelves, a record of long lives well lived.

When we returned downstairs, we found Jack dozing in his chair.

Beneath the surface of Tschai, the Pnume continue to record the events of the passing millennia and add to the exhibits in Foreverness; on Dar Sai, bungle boys leap and caper to the snap of Darsh whips; under a dying sun, not far from the ancient city Kaiin, the golden witch Lith adds another thread to her tapestry while Chun the Unavoidable enlarges his ocular robe.

I didn't wake Jack Vance just to say goodbye. Let the dreamer dream.



THE FAR SIDE OF THE EARTH



New Orleans is located at 30° North latitude and 90° West longitude. Its *antipode* – the spot on our planet directly opposite – is at 30° South latitude and 90° East longitude. It's in the Indian Ocean.

Except for two flyspeck islands to the southwest, Ile St. Paul and Ile Amsterdam, the closest solid earth to that point of empty water lies some distance to the east: Rottneest Island, just off Fremantle, close to Perth, on the west coast of Australia. On dry land, you can get no further from the Big Easy.

Rosy and I have been there – as the North American delegates of the Down Under Fan Fund – and as delegates on our own, to the far side of the Earth.

*

They call them “windcheaters” downunder – the jackets we call *windbreakers* up here in the States. Both Rosy and I needed ours as we waited for our cab outside the Julian Warner/Lucy Sussex bungalow, where we'd been ensconced for the first few days of our DUFF excursion (see “No Picnic at Hanging Rock” in **Challenger #18**). It was cool in the pre-dawn, and Venus burned high in the gorgeous purple sky, the Southern Cross having already set. As our taxi negotiated us to the airport, I kept a lookout for kangaroos.

I was feeling cheated. This was our fourth day in Australia and so far we hadn't glimpsed any of its legendary fauna. On our jaunt to Hanging Rock we'd seen sheep and cattle and goats and a Shetland pony and a swaybacked horse – but no 'roos, koalas, kookaburras, or platypodes – nothing distinctly *Australian*. What a bummer! I was beginning to think that we weren't in Australia at all, but some extreme suburb of L.A. where the moon looked funny.

Perhaps I was merely nervous about the flight. The four-hour loft to Los Angeles from Nawlins, followed by 14 ½ hours en route to Melbourne, had taught me that flying could be endured, even by an aerophobe like me. But that lesson had only been absorbed intellectually. My terror of the airways extended into the *cellular*, and there, nerves reigned. Perhaps my search for kangaroos and their kindred was born of that fear; for sure, we'd seen none as we pulled under the gate to the Melbourne aerodrome. The sign above the gate should have inspired me:

LIFE IS SHORT, THE WORLD IS WIDE

– but I didn't appreciate the reminder.

The plane, I must say, was a beaut. We don't have Airbus A330s in America yet, more's the loss; the long wings, the wide windows, the comfy seats, the fold-down movie screens – none completely allayed my terror, but I was developing quite a faith in Qantas. Nevertheless it was still with trepidation that I watched the shadow of the plane shrink below me.

As we headed west, we passed over Adelaide, a city Naomi Fisher had praised – and which we

weren't scheduled to visit. Already regret was beginning to grow in me for what we could not see on this trip. I eyed the unknowable terrain past Adelaide with something like sadness. I knew from the map that it was bush, wild turf we wouldn't see up close – if Qantas kept its perfect flying record going, that is. It was territory we wanted to see, too, emptiness having its own appeal. But it also had its purpose; its very desolation gave our destination its rarest distinction: the most isolated city in the world.

Craig Stephenson – since early on, our contact with Swancon, this year's Australian National SF Convention – met us at the Perth airport, holding a sign reading DUFF at the gate. Perth's isolation – further from another major metropolis than any other substantial gathering of humanity anywhere – was something of a pride with "Stevo". He hustled us up to Kings Park, overlooking the city and the beautiful Swan River. I have to say, for a burg founded in 1829, Perth looked both clean and modern, some contrast to its contemporary, New Orleans, the squalid pesthole where I live.

That was it for the touring, at least for the moment. A con awaited. Now I get to sound like an ingrate.

For one thing, though Swancon was glad to welcome its American guests, and comped us memberships, it couldn't afford to pay for our room. DUFF had to. Also, the event was small – about the size of a DeepSouthCon, i.e., a membership in the low hundreds. And that constituency was *young* and inbred; everyone seemed not only to know each other, but to hang together most weekends, not just this one. We couldn't help but feel ever so delicately out of place. How doubly glad we were to greet Bill Wright and the great Robin Johnson, the Aussiecon chairman whom I first met at the '74 DSC. Excerpt for these worthies, I'm sure we were the oldest people at the event.

But NatCon/Swancon was fun, and we made the most of it. The kids were friendly – loved those twins! – and the other guests were entertaining and interesting. We enjoyed watching the talented paleontologist Brian Choo paint dinosaurs. Danny Heap and Justin Ackroyd were there – they handled the small auction – and the former DUFF winner, Cathy Cupitt, cuter than ever. Simon Oxwell and Grant Watson, the undoubted stars of Perth fandom, put on their "Raw Cordial" show, a live and film presentation that was the gag highlight of the con. Our hosts, Julian Warner and Lucy Sussex, appeared; the lovely Lucy is a multiple winner of downunder's Ditmar Award for her short stories, and this year came away with the A. Bertram Chandler Award for her overall contributions to Aussie SF. Tony Shillitoe, Australian professional GoH, gave a terrific talk in which he spoke earnestly and intelligently on the value of the fantasy genre – giving voice to people's passion on a heroic scale. "Voices are important," said this teacher – voices of defiance and hope against unjust systems. Stephen Dedman was a familiar name; talked to him quite a bit at Cupitt's house, where we crashed after the convention.

We managed, too, to explore Perth – a little. In addition to thrice-daily excursions to the Internet Café in the bookstore down the block, and dinner expeditions (don't ask for water in Australia, because they'll bring you *mineral* water, at \$5AU a pop) on Easter Sunday, we wandered into the delightful student quarter to see a movie – the only film we'd see on our entire trip. Sacrilegious souls that we are, it was **The Magdalene Sisters**, one of the most powerful anti-Church movies of the past thirty years.

The programmers for the event – criticized later for failing to utilize their excellent Aussie guest list – put us on two panels, and let me handle another one myself. Our mutual panels were on being a newcomer to fandom and fan funds. Rosy shone, her natural charm beaming forth. We really got off on a special **Hound of the Baskervilles** presentation – a compilation of scenes from lots of versions, from Rathbone's to Stewart Granger's (uniformly panned) to a *dreadful* animated version that looked like Scoobie-Doo without the Scoobie. (Right ... just the *do*.)

Another panel dealt with *Batman*, and hey, blokes, teach your granny to suck eggs! An audience member had the ill grace to mention that I was a DC veteran, which I think intimidated the panelists, especially when I mentioned interviewing Bob Kane in his comics-art-bedecked living room and the fact that he was such a ... a ... (Spanier?) *putz!* *Putz*, yes, that's it. The kids had never heard of the Giant Props Era, nor knew much about the enormous change in the character when Julie Schwartz took over **Detective Comics**, but hey, they tried. *I* tried not to talk too much.

The pup moderating my one-man **Smallville** panel *didn't* try – he'd never even seen the series! Expected to carry the full load, I was crippled by a spoiler factor: Aussie television was a *full year* behind

us in providing fans their Clark Kent fix. So the audience wouldn't let me talk about the pivotal Chris Reeve episode, "Rosetta" – eventually nominated for a Hugo – or anything more recent than the climax of the first season. I did manage to work in some comments about the place of *character* in Smallville, a central theme, I'm convinced, of the whole series. A kid's gripe about Jonathan Kent's attitude towards Lex Luthor – the crowd was wild about Lex – sparked a long GHLIII monolog about the purpose of parenthood, and my only political comment of the con: that Jonathan's moral strength and obstinate myopia are symptomatic of why America invaded Iraq.

A major treat, the concom had us present the fan Ditmars – Aussie fandom's equivalent of the Hugos. Rosy and I alternated reading the nominees and then the winner, and even if we'd never heard of them, at least our announcements were met with wild enthusiasm from the winners. In addition, the con was kind enough to announce **Challenger's** fourth Hugo nomination, revealed by Torcon just that week.

Came the convention's epic moment – our party. Rosy and I decided weeks ago that to make a splash at Swancon, we had to make a real splash – with hurricanes. We bought umpteen packets of the famous Pat O'Brien's cocktail mix and arranged with the concom to hold a party after the masquerade.

They established us in an unused bar on the convention floor and very kindly provided us with three huge buckets of ice – gifts from the local McDonald's. (Cleaner and with quanta more class than *your* local Mickey D's ... or mine.) Rosy hung decorations with a Mardi Gras theme, carefully adorned the bar and tables with Mardi Gras beads and *faux* doubloons, and I played bartender. Simple enough task, really. Fill a pitcher with cold water, mix in the powder, fill a cup with ice, pour in the kool-aid, add half a jigger of good Australian rum, and watch the people smile.

Costumed Australians flocked to the bar. Rosy hung beads about every neck and I poured inebriant down every (legal) throat. They came back for more, and more. Turned out that Mardi Gras is an almost exclusively gay holiday downunder; the natives were tickled to find out that it's a universal bash in New Orleans. And that it came with its own signature booze.

The hurricanes and cyclones flowed – the beads rattled – the Aussies got down – and *I* heard a compliment I never expected to hear: "You guys *rock!*"

**

Indeed we did, after the con – *rocked* on a train to Fremantle, and *rocked* on a shuttle boat to Rottneest Island, on Australia's westernmost coast. Again Bill Wright was our guide, and Robin Johnson came along. My fears that we'd be shepherding a couple of feeble old guys were quickly dispelled – active and athletic, both boys put us to shame.

Robin knew Fremantle well – he was not only a worldcon chairman but a travel agent in his past. He knew where to take us – the Maritime Museum, where the featured exhibit was the wretched and fascinating story of the doomed ship, the *Batavia*. Horrific stuff – a shipwreck on a desert island, a **Lord of the Flies** tyranny, murder by massacre, justice by rope. The Museum had relics of every kind from the *Batavia* on exhibit, including the skeleton of a victim (his skull dented from a cutlass blow) and a hunk of the keel, preserved somehow at the bottom of the sea. Very scary, very cool.

Then we were off on a shuttle across the deep, deep blue-black Indian Ocean – which blew my mind – the *Indian* Ocean, good grief! Never have we, or any members of our families, been further from home. Or hotter. While Bill went swimming and Robin took a bus tour, Rosy and I rented bicycles and pedaled hither and yon about the nearby bays and inlets – a beautiful experience, but criminy, was it hot, and *Gawd!*, were we out of shape!

Too bad, because the day was beautiful and Rottneest, despite its ugly name, was a nifty island. The sea was exquisite, if just as cold to the toes as its Atlantic and Pacific cousins, and the view of distant lighthouses and even more distant Perth calmed and soothed the heart. I had a serious case of the vacation jitters. There was so much to see, so many wonders to experience, and the days seemed so crowded and busy and short. I found I had trouble staying *in the moment*, because the sense of things-undone-and-left-to-do was just so intense. For instance, after a week in Australia, I hadn't seen any kangaroos not made out of metal – a set of sculptures on the streets of Perth. And here on Rottneest,



despite hours of sweaty pedaling, we had yet to see any *quokkas*.

Quokkas are funny critters, even in Australia, where funny critters abound. A marsupial, they're unique to Rottnest, never having gained a foothold on the mainland. The story of the quokka is a funny one, and quite involved, so instead of regaling you with their tale, I'll just refer you to

http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/plants_animals/mammal.quokka.html

and let it go at that. Signs at the boat dock asked stupid American tourists neither to fear nor to feed them. So while surreptitiously ogling the sunbathing tourist girls, I also scanned the scenery for quokkas, but found none.

It was late afternoon, and the four of us were cooling off at a beachside café, when I voiced this gripe to Robin and Bill. Robin reported seeing multitudes of the beasts on his bus trip. I fairly seethed with frustration. Then Robin returned from the bathroom and advised me to step into the dining room.

Lumbering patiently amidst the table legs of the café was a brown furry beast that seemed assembled by committee. He was about the size of a beaver – larger than I'd expected – with a rat's tail and a possum's friendly face. He reminded me a bit of

Louisiana's nutria, which are not, of course, marsupial – but I was not disappointed. *This was a quokka* – unique to my experience, utterly unafraid, and cute.

"You've seen a quokka in his natural habitat," Robin laughed. "A tourist restaurant!"

Now I felt like I'd been in Australia!

Night fell. While Rosy, Bill and Robin chatted, awaiting the boat back to the mainland, I lay on my back on the cool green grass and stared up at the vivid Southern Cross, dominant in the alien sky. I almost dreaded the approaching boat ride. I wished we'd joined Robin for the bus trip to the end of the island, but still, it had been a glorious day – one of the best we'd have in Australia. Never again, I knew, would we be that far from home – never again, I knew, would we watch a quokka bumble across a lawn, as one did just then, a few feet away.

The next day answered almost all of our fauna needs. We accompanied Dave Cake – Perth fan, onetime DUFF (and present GUFF) candidate – into the country outside of town. Rosy was looking forward to seeing some real outback, not realizing that the Outback to Australians is like the Kansas wheat country is to us. We couldn't see red dirt and aborigines and Ayers Rock without a separate plane trip – and having committed to an extra day or two in Perth, we just didn't have the time.

So we saw the Swan Valley, instead. Wine country – too far north, David said, for the *primo* stuff, but the grapes we passed still hung heavy on the vine, and they made attractive counterpart to the white-barked gum trees. I'd hoped to see some 'roos and wombats and whatnot in the wild, but in that I was to be disappointed – sort of. Dave took us to the Caversham Wildlife Park, where 'roos and such were guaranteed – if lamentably tame.

But like I say, I wasn't that disappointed, because though the zoo – soon to move – seemed a bit crude, it was also *approachable*. That is, you could get up close and personal with the inhabitants, and through them, with a bit of the Australian experience. Such as the sluggish koalas – poor grey lugs who eat nothing but eucalyptus leaves, which are poor in nutritional value and give them only enough energy to scratch. The 'roos, in their petting pen, also seemed a little tepid – but only because it was the height of the day. But I'm not making a big enough deal about our first live encounter with one of Australia's

signature creatures.

Kangaroos remind me of deer – they have about the same temperament and are spotted in the wild with about the same luck and frequency. In captivity, they were anxious to scarf from our palms the pressed foodies given us by the park management. Biggest hoot: the joeys, hooves and heads poking out of their parents' packed pouches, sometimes so huge and cumbersome that we wondered why the doe didn't dump her package onto the turf, commanding him, *Get a job!*

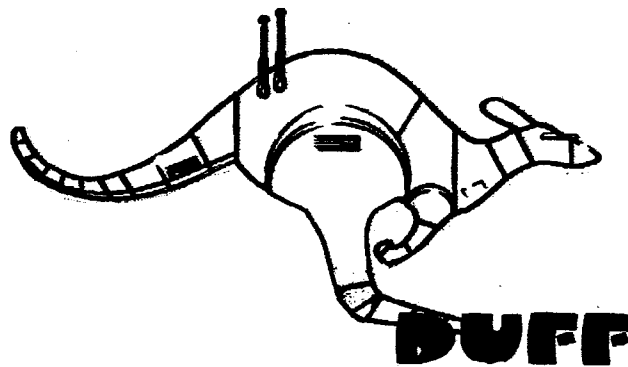
The beasts were plentiful – dingoes, Tasmanian devils, wallabies – even camels, brought to Australia as beasts of burden in the Red Center. My favorite critter at Caversham was a friendly parrot who stuck his head out of his cage and engaged me in conversation. "Helloooo?" he said, and "Helloooo!" I said back. This went on for quite some time. (A photo of this encounter appeared in **Challenger #18.**) My least favorite? The flying foxes, bats which piss constantly and who contaminated the whole zoo with their reek. **Yick**

Cake escorted us to lunch at one of the wineries in the Swan Valley, the Houghton Vineyards, and Rosy bought a bottle of their brew as a succulent souvenir. It awaits an appropriate moment for uncorking.

That night we joined the dead dogsters from the Swancon at a farewell bash. The site was a downtown eatery known as Pancakes, which served crepes, mixed liberally with fannish pandemonium. We probably shouldn't have given Perth two extra days, but it was still a bittersweet moment when we said farewell. The lady who drove us back to Cathy Cupitt's, where we were staying, pointed out a building she said was modeled after Marilyn Monroe. Huh? I couldn't see it. Maybe I was just too tired, or too surfeited with crepes, to understand what she meant. Perhaps I was simply too sad about the passage of time. The following day, after all, we would return to Melbourne, on the downhill side of our DUFF journey.

That night Cathy's place was rich with Sfers, "filling in the corners" of the convention with late-night conversation. We joined in until exhaustion took its toll. The next morning we were awoken by the contrasting sounds of Cathy Cupitt's breadmaking machine and an unknown Australian bird, making beautiful music outside of our window.

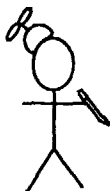
Coo-loo-looooo. Uhh ... that was the bird.



Think we had fun on our DUFF trip? You could too! Nominations are now open for the 2005 DUFF race! Get three North American fans and two from Australia or New Zealand to nominate you (via letter or e-mail to Norman Cates or us, send us a \$25 bond and a 100-word platform, and who knows? *You* could be an honored guest at the Australian National Convention, June 10-13, 2005. What are you waiting for? *Hop* to it!

Fanartists on Parade

Everyone enjoys a nicely illustrated article, a nifty cover,...a chuckle-filled cartoon, but most fen do not comment on artwork. Over the years I have seen some of the shining stars of fanartists disappear and newer fen don't know the names or the styles. To try to preserve some of our fanartist heritage, I tried to start up a series of articles or profiles --starting with fanartists that were out of the current mainstream. Man, you'd think I was trying to pull teeth. I never thought fanartists would be a particularly humble or retiring bunch, but very few even responded to my letters asking for some help. I was very chagrined to find that I was unfamiliar with the art of quite a few that show up on the list of fanartist nominees over the years, but couldn't pry responses or samples of artwork out of them, as a group.



So, I bumble along as best I can, letting the artist provide whatever they wish--a bio, an article...a showcase...snippets- I'll take whatever I can get!

In 1997, **Tom Sadler (the Reluctant Famulus)** agreed to be the forum and the first article appeared (**Bill Rotsler #51, Peggy Ranson #52, Joe Mayhew #53, Terry Jeeves #54, Alan Hunter #55, Ken Cheslin #56, and Grant Canfield #59**). These are loosely informative pieces, with the goal being to introduce and also preserve a style so future fen can also enjoy the wonders that are fanart.

What's fanart?

I regret that I could not get an article from **Ian Gunn**- I had written to him, but he could not get around to it...and then it was too late. I am desperately trying to keep that from happening to fanartists as a group. But, dang it guys-- I need a little help!

It's whatever I say it is!

Tim Kirk was nominated 8 times (last in 1977) and won 5 times. His style is distinctive and just plain...nice. Somewhere around here I have the hardback book about his art--really, really, nice.

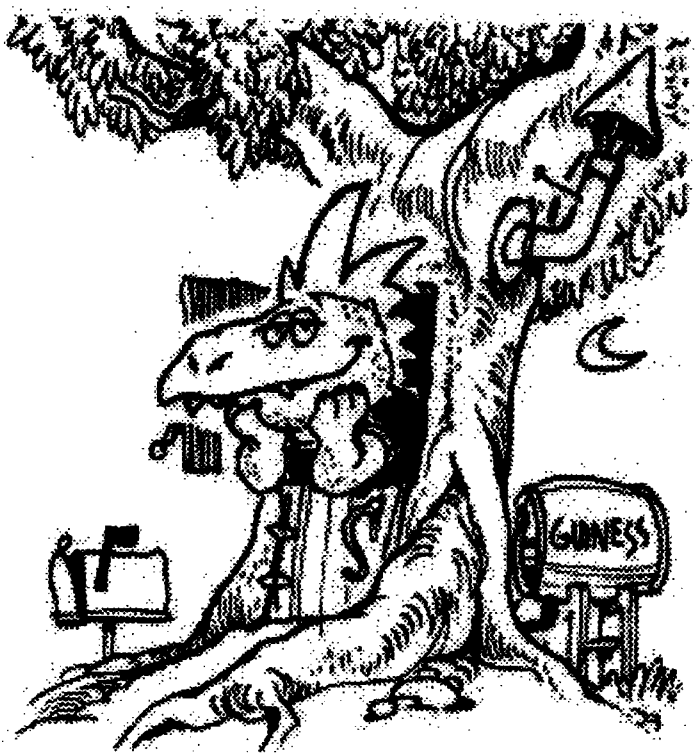
So, this begins the run of fanartist snippets in **Challenger**. **Tom Sadler** found his publishing schedule was getting too unpredictable and **Guy** kindly offered **Challenger** as a venue. We'll see what happens--I have requests out to quite a few fanartists...but it has been that way for a while--I'm told by friends of friends of... that something will be along **RSN**--could you hurry it up guys????

Read on and enjoy.

Just a few fanartist names... there are hundreds out there....

Chamberlain
Wright
Gaughan
HILTON
Haugh
Barr
Nielsen
Mayhew
Miklis
Gunn
Freff
Barker
Shull
Canfield
Fabian
Fox
Atom
Turner
Kirk
Bell
Rotsler
Jones
Trimble
Gilliland
Chambers
Cloutier

PORTRAIT OF
THE ARTIST
AS A YOUNG
FAN
Or
ART IS WHATEVER
YOU CAN GET AWAY
WITH
Or
TINY TIM AND THE
GREEN OCTOPOIDS OF
URANUS
Tim Kirk



As an artist, I owe a tremendous debt to science fiction fandom—and seemed pre-ordained to come in contact with it. I am the prototypical, stereotypical Baby Boomer, the poster child of post-World War II America—an era that seethed with an odd mixture of newfound national confidence, a desperate desire for normalcy, and Atomic Age anxiety. I grew up in a nurturing household, with parents (and grandparents) who encouraged the artistic efforts of myself and my brother and sister. This was pretty unusual in the 1950's, when anyone who wanted to make a career as an artist was looked upon, at best, as a beatnik—or at worst, as a monstrous, twisted deviant with inclinations toward anarchy, incest, cannibalism and devil worship. But with my family's help, I persevered, and prospered. I knew, probably at the age of five or six, that some story-telling form of art would be my path; and my family knew it too.

I was an avid reader and, particularly, a television watcher, as were the vast majority of my peers. "Space Patrol," "Howdy Doody," "The Twilight Zone," Warner Brothers' cartoons, scratchy reruns of "Betty

Boop" and "Popeye" (used as filler in the early days of sparse childrens' programming) -- these were my meat and drink. I was also heavily influenced by a lot of Disney animated material—though this never approached the Brothers Fleischer or Warner for sheer lunatic inventiveness. Two of my early favorite Disney products were science fiction: "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea" and the "Man In Space" trilogy (especially "Mars And Beyond") directed by the legendary Ward Kimball for Disney's weekly t.v. series. I do recall that my earliest conception of a perfect way to make a living was to be a Disney animator! And I discovered science fiction and fantasy as literature at a fairly tender age: my earliest encounter was, I think, a kids' book starring a feline character named "Space Cat"; circa 1956 or so.

My artistic influences and mentors—beyond animated cartoons -- were varied. I was, and still am, a huge admirer of the brilliant comic book artist Carl Barks, creator of Uncle Scrooge McDuck: Donald Duck's cranky uncle, the world's richest duck. Barks was, in his own way, a

genius—not only as a fine artist and meticulous draftsman, but as an endlessly inventive writer with a snarky sense of humor. I was also attracted to the pre-World War II school of book illustration. Artists such as Howard Pyle, N.C. Wyeth, Arthur Rackham, Harry Clarke (disturbing illustrator of Edgar Allan Poe), Aubrey Beardsley, engraver/illustrator Fritz Eichenberg, and Sidney Sime (who provided haunting, dreamlike illustrations for the stories of Lord Dunsany) were all tremendously influential in the development of my approach to illustration. In science fiction, my artist heroes were Ed Emshwiller, Edd Cartier, Hannes Bok and Virgil Finlay. School art classes—with one or two exceptions—were not much use, until I got to college and could hunker down in a more professional, directed environment. I graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a Master's

Degree in illustration in 1973.

Fanzines, of course, have been around in some form since 1930 or so. When I entered the field—in the late 60's—new, more sophisticated reproduction methods were becoming increasingly available to fanzine editors. The mimeograph, the hectograph and other such Jurassic Era fanzine production techniques were joined by affordable offset lithography, which allowed for better fan art reproduction—and less wear and tear on the fan artist. Many is the mimeograph stencil I tore with my little stylus, just as I was putting the finishing touches on some deathless masterpiece! But with the offset printing process, an artist could be pretty sure that his or her work would be reproduced as it had been drawn.

I look back on the 60's and 70's (for obvious nostalgic reasons) as a sort of Golden Age of fan art. I shared the limelight with an amazing array of talent: George Barr; Alicia Austin; Bill Rotsler; Don Simpson—the list goes on and on. I will be forever grateful to Bjo Trimble—a legendary fannish figure in general, and in fan art in particular, both as artist and as entrepreneur—for giving me my Big Break: my debut in her art show at F-UNCon II (Westercon 22) in 1969. Over the course of the next several years I produced fan art for many of the leading fanzines and semi-prozines of the era: Locus (then a stapled-together newszine), Shangri-L'Affaires, Trumpet, Energumen, Whispers, Granfalloon, Anubis, and dozens more. I was nominated for the Hugo Award several times, and was lucky enough to win five of them.

One of the high points for me in the early 70's—and the beginning of my professional career—was the exhibition at Cal State Long Beach of my Master's project: 26



paintings based on **The Lord of the Rings**. I had been passionately interested in Tolkien's magnum opus since I was first introduced to it in 1964, while still in high school. I exhibited the bulk of this collection at the 1972 Worldcon in Los Angeles, where Ian and Betty Ballantine saw them – and liked them well enough to purchase the entire collection, and publish 13 of the paintings as the Ballantine J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar for 1975.

I went to work for Hallmark Cards in 1973, recruited by that company in my last year of college, and spent 1973-1978 in Kansas City, Missouri illustrating “funny animal” cards, stationery, gift wrap and books. I learned a lot about color and composition at Hallmark, and had the ego satisfaction of seeing several of my efforts published each year. I started producing a lot of book and magazine illustration during this period, including work for Henson Associates (the Muppets), Owlswick Press, DAW Books, Arkham House, Bluejay Books, Don Grant, Whispers Press, Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine and Vertex. I moved to Colorado Springs in 1978 to work for another greeting card/stationery company (but really just to live in Colorado), and in 1980 I returned to Southern California and joined the Walt Disney Company as an Imagineer on the recommendation of my brother, Steve. He had been working there since 1976, helping to design EPCOT Center at Walt Disney World in Florida. His future wife, Kathy, joined Imagineering the same year that I did.

Over the course of the next 22 years I worked on a variety of Disney theme park projects, mostly at Walt Disney World in Florida: EPCOT Center, the Disney/MGM Studio park (among other things, I art directed two scenes in The Great Movie Ride: “Alien” and “Raiders Of The Lost Ark”), The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, Muppets 3-D, Pleasure Island, The Main Street Athletic Club (themed retail), a retro re-design for the Walt Disney World

Tomorrowland, the Sci-Fi Dine-In Theater, and a lot more.

In 1980, George Beahm's Heresy Press published Kirk's Works, an exhaustive compendium of my work to that date: fan art, professional art, and everything in between. This coincided with a gradual decline in my



fan art efforts – as work for Disney intensified, my energy for outside work ebbed away to almost nothing. My freelance professional work also ceased, for the most part—the demands of theme park design just became too all-consuming.

From 1991 to 2001 I worked almost exclusively on the concept, design and installation of what is arguably the most beautiful theme park in the world: Tokyo DisneySea, a companion park to Tokyo Disneyland, with my brother Steve (senior design executive in charge of the project) and my sister-in-law Kathy. About this time, world events intervened: my wife Linda and I arrived in Honolulu en route back from Japan on the morning of 9/11/2001. The tourism and theme park industries were severely

shaken by the terrible events of that day, and in late 2001, I – and my brother and sister-in-law – left the Disney Company and formed our own design business: Kirk Design Inc.

Kirk Design has worked with a fascinating array of clients – from Aimee Semple McPherson’s (she was the first female evangelist to preach on the radio in the 1920’s) Church of the Four Square Gospel and The Aquarium of the Pacific, to the Metropolitan Water Board of Los Angeles and Lotte World in Tokyo. I did concept work for a Disney Pictures film, “The Haunted Mansion.” We have recently begun working with Imagineering again as consultants. In June, 2004, the Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame opened in Seattle – the first permanent museum installation devoted solely to the world of science fiction in all media. Kirk Design was the design company responsible for the concept and execution of this project, which was funded by Paul Allen – co-founder of Microsoft with Bill Gates. This was a particularly exciting job for me, obviously, and very close to my heart. We had a great design and production team, and have a

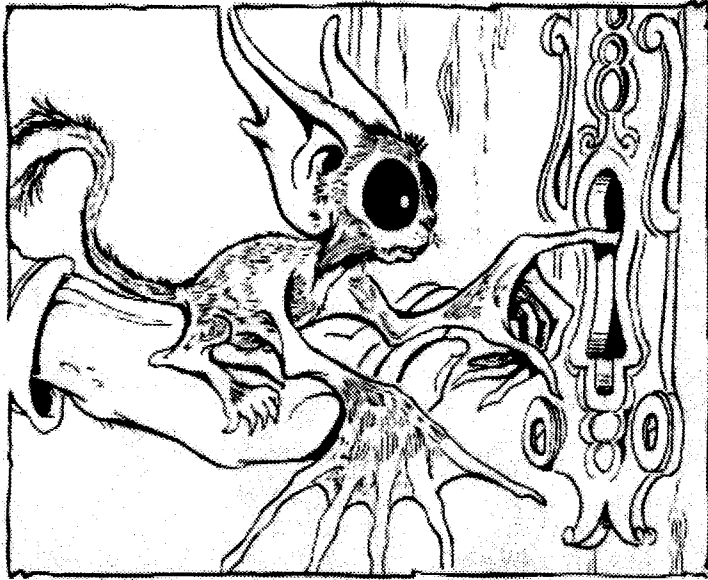
formidable Board of Advisors, including Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Harlan Ellison, Ray Bradbury and James Cameron.

Do I have any sage advice for budding artists? Probably it would be to “follow your bliss” (as Joseph Campbell put it) as much as you possibly can. If you can make a living doing it, all the better – as long as you don’t stop enjoying it. I have been truly blessed in my life – a patient, loving wife, a supportive family, and great work to do. My main regret is that I almost always took the safe paths, and usually avoided the riskier ones. So: don’t be afraid to take chances when you’re young – believe me, it gets harder the older you get. Never pass up a promising opportunity. Never allow yourself to be seduced by your own success; it can vanish overnight. I’ve been lucky, but luck will get you only so far. And always, always remember that talent – without determination and perseverance – is not enough. Guard your integrity – your reputation is one of your most precious possessions. Stay curious. Be happy. Love someone.



A TIM KIRK PORTFOLIO





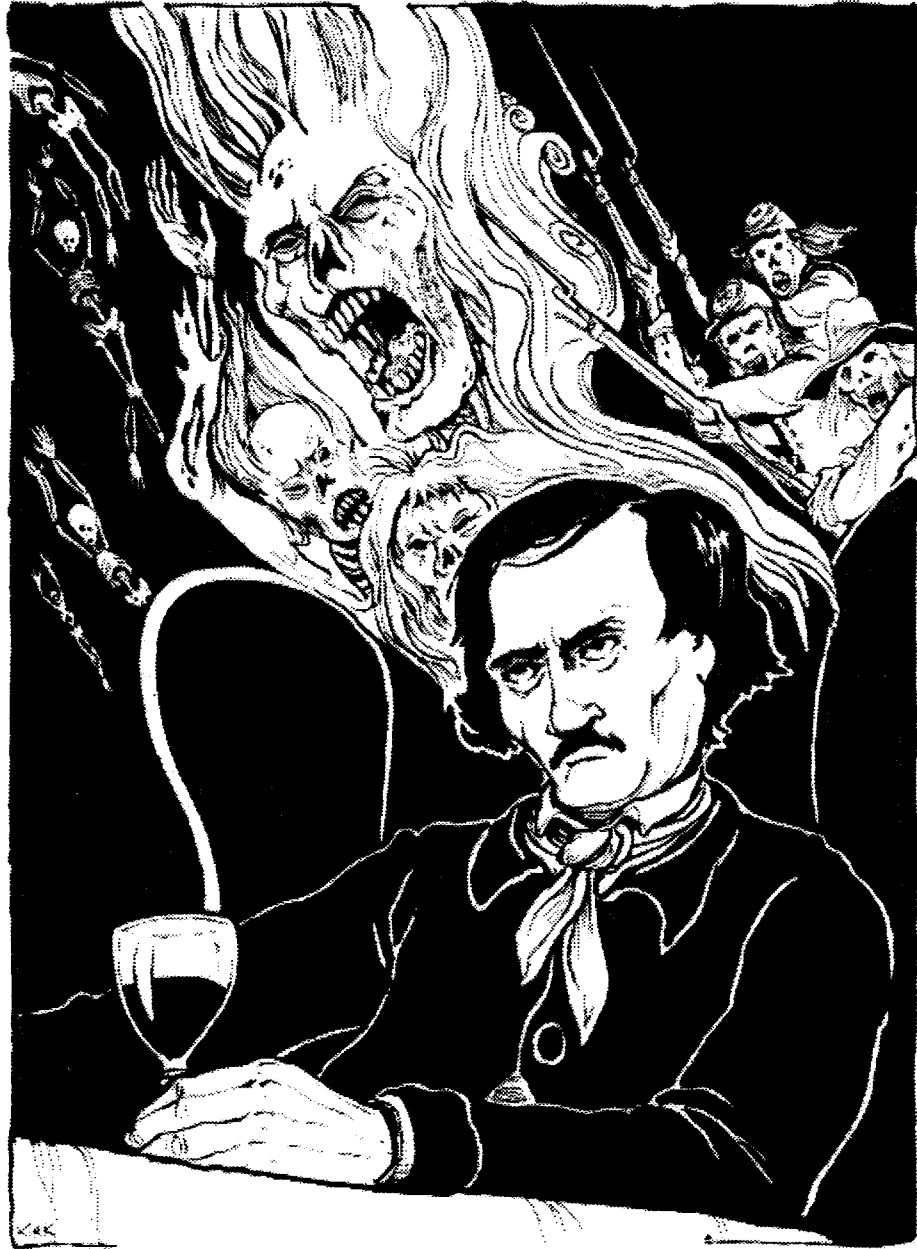
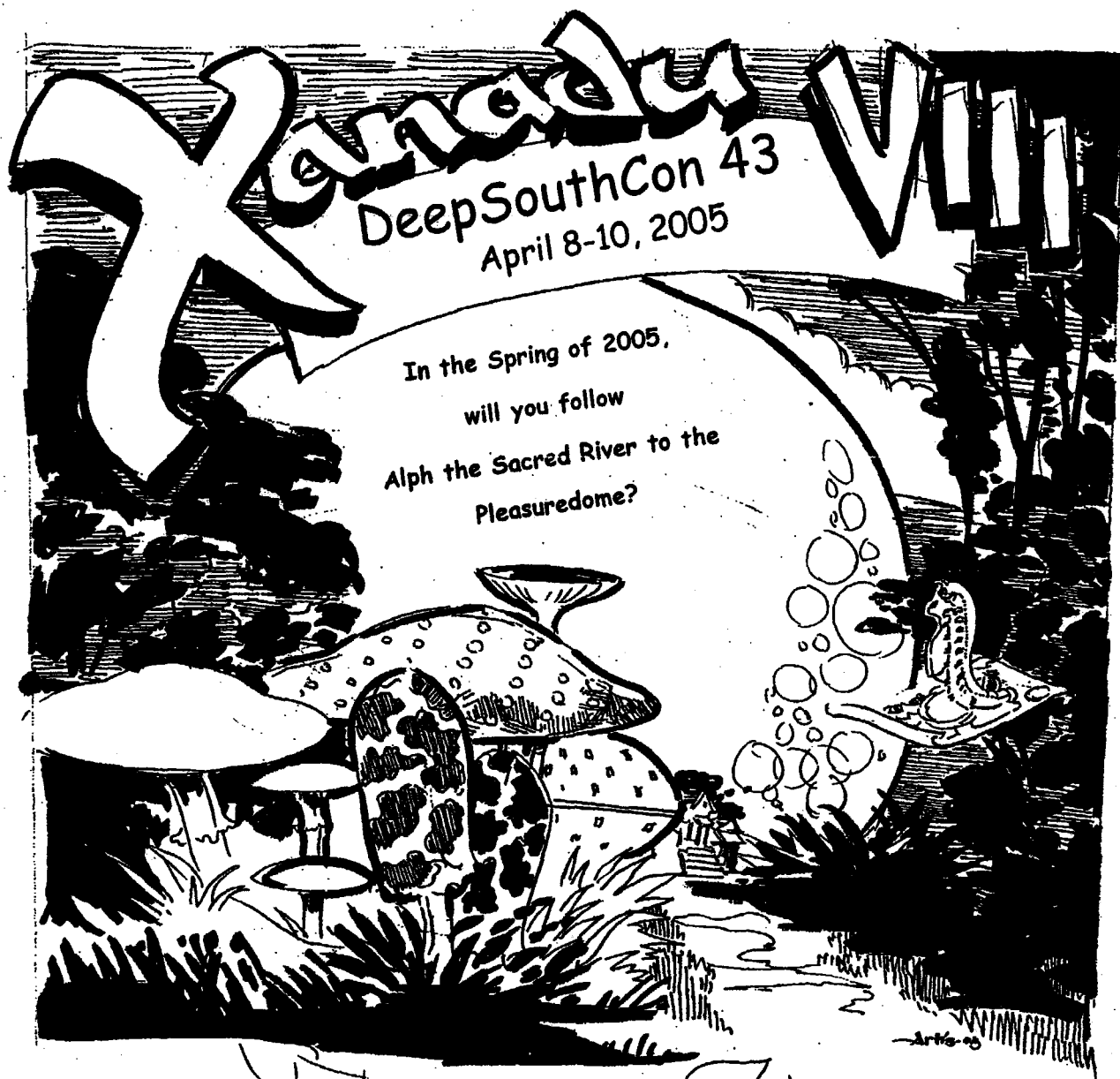






Illustration for *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis, in *Mythprint*





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Would it be worldcon without Resnick? We'd hate to find out ...

Mike Resnick's Noreascon IV Diary



Tuesday, August 31: Met fellow CFG members Mary Martin, Debbie Oakes and Jeff Calhoun at the airport, and we all caught the same flight to Boston. (I might as well confess that I am wildly in love with Mary, our retired octogenarian plastic surgeon who was good friends with Heinlein and Clement – and won the 1966 Worldcon masquerade – and I intend to marry her just as soon as I work Carol to death.)

CFG (the venerable Cincinnati Fantasy Group, for the uninitiated) always takes out a hospitality suite at the Worldcon. Those of us who had been to the three prior Boston Worldcons – or any of them, in fact – remembered the Sheraton's elevators with horror, and we all wanted to stay in the Marriott...but when we priced the suites, we found we could get essentially the same suite at the Sheraton for \$225 a day less, which meant we could keep it open for seven days, Tuesday through Monday, rather than the usual five. We're not exactly a party and not exactly private – we don't turn anyone away, but we really don't want three thousand strangers

coming by for food and drinks – so we never advertise the suite. If you know enough to trafen, you'll find us. Anyway, for that reason, we prefer a non-party floor, and then we try to block a number of CFG members and friends around the suite to act as a noise buffer. Worked beautifully this year; the suite was at the end of the corridor, and I think the friends of CFG had every room between the suite and the elevator. (And, surprisingly, the elevators caused no problems at all this time around.) I can't recall an evening that there wasn't a hot game of Wizards – a bridge-like card game for six players – in the smaller parlor.

We got there in early afternoon, unpacked, got our name tags and printed material – Guy Lillian outdid himself editing the program book – and checked out the mall, which was wildly impressive. Nothing had been enclosed 15 years ago at the last Boston Worldcon; now you can walk blocks in enclosed, air-conditioned comfort. (I still remember getting rained on walking from the Sheraton to the Marriott in 1989.)

The Sheraton's rooms were on the

small side, though nowhere as near as claustrophobic as the Royal York's at last year's Torcon 3. The suites, on the other hand, were spacious and comfortable. I am told that the Marriott had closed-circuit TV and you could watch the Hugos and masquerade in your room; the Sheraton had no such luxury. To our surprise, the Sheraton's elevators worked perfectly all weekend, a vast improvement over the last three Boston Worldcons. On the other hand, the Sheraton may be the only four-star hotel in the country that doesn't have a restaurant open after 3:00 PM.

We met NESFAns Rick Katze and Tony and Suford Lewis for dinner, along with some CFG members and the Florida contingent of CFG (Dick Spelman and Pat and Roger Sims, who had all moved to Orlando from Cincinnati.) The one place where a crowd of 15 or 20 could always get a table without a reservation was Marche, which was as enjoyable an exploring-and-eating experience here as it had been at Toronto, where we first encountered the Canadian-based chain.

I watched the Governor give a rousing speech to the Republican convention, concluded that the Democrats will never agree to a constitutional amendment allowing naturalized citizens to run for the presidency as long as he's alive, then hung around the lobby for a few hours after dinner greeting old fannish friends, because as always I metamorphize into a pro by Wednesday night and don't change back into a fan until late Monday, and most of my friends are fans. Ran into Paula Leiberman, my annual shadow at fannish parties, for the first of maybe thirty times during the con. I went to bed early (for me, anyway) at about 3:00 AM because we had to get out of bed pretty early in the morning. (By definition, if the sun's in the eastern half of the sky, it's too damned early ... or else it's the end of a long writing day.)

Wednesday, September 1: Got up at (ugh!) 8:30, dressed, couldn't even face coffee that early in the day, and met Bill and Cokie Cavin and Jeff Calhoun in the lobby. We hopped a pair of cabs and drove down to the harbor, where we met CFG's Orlando contingent, plus Sue and Steve Francis (the Louisville branch),

and we all boarded a boat and went off to bother whales. Saw a pair of minke, some humpbacks, and a finback during a three-hour trip.

After we got back to the hotel Carol and I went off for lunch, and then I spent a couple of hours scouting out the huckster's room, which didn't open officially until Thursday. It was large – 300 tables – and impressive, with more book dealers and less junk (i.e., non-books) than usual. I bought the one book I hadn't been able to find all year – John Clute's *Scores* – and picked up a couple of fannish items I was totally unaware of. Then, since three of my program items were in the Sheraton rather than the Hynes Center, I went back there to find out exactly where they were located and bumped into Josepha Sherman, who was doing the same thing.

Then it was time for dinner. I went up to the room and got Carol, who had cheated and taken a nap, and we went down to meet Glenn Yeffeth, the publisher of BenBella Books, and his managing editor. I've been his science fiction editor for the past four months, and have gone a bit overboard, picking up about a dozen titles in that time. (He's a small press; these will last us through mid-2006.) Before I'd become his editor he'd bought the reprint rights to my Oracle Trilogy, and I got to tell him that I'd optioned them to Intrinsic Value Films a couple of weeks before Worldcon. His eyes lit up with dollar signs, and I then had to explain that that merely lowered the odds against their becoming a movie from a google-to-one down to maybe fifty-to-one (but not before I suggested they'd sell even better with some Bob Eggleton covers, and he agreed to talk to Bob about it.) I don't ordinarily like Thai food – too spicy, and I don't like heat, either temperature or flavor – but this was a wonderful meal, properly cool and (Carol would say) bland; the restaurant, for anyone who's going to Boston and is interested, is the Chili Duck.

Spent most of the evening back in the CFG suite. Donna Drapeau, Toby Buckell, Herb Kauderer, Steve Silver and John Teehan had shown up at the con; before the night was over, so had Bob Faw and Linda Kelly. We got word that Gardner Dozois had shattered his

shoulder in a car accident, had already undergone surgery, and wouldn't be attending; and that Barry Malzberg's wife Joyce was in the hospital and Barry also wasn't coming.

I absolutely hate being reminded that we don't all live forever in perfect health, especially since I'm now 62. (How can I be 62? I remember every detail of Discon I from 1963 – the people, the meals, the program items, even the wallpaper. It was just a year or two ago, wasn't it?)

Thursday, September 2: Since Gardner was unavailable, that freed up a meal. Bob Silverberg and I always try to have lunch together at Worldcon, but we hadn't been able to mesh our schedules this year...and suddenly we were both free until 3:00 PM, so we popped over to an oyster bar he knew. While we were eating we decided to collaborate on a non-fiction anthology. I've bought stories from Bob, and he's bought from me, but this is the first time we've ever worked together, rather than for one another.

At 3:00 I moderated the panel that was the most fun of the con ... hell, of the last half-dozen cons. Fred Pohl couldn't make it, but there was Harry Harrison, Phil Klass (a/k/a William Tenn), Bob Silverberg and me, telling funny stories about the giants of science fiction who are no longer with us. This included the stories of how John Campbell presided at his own funeral; how Ted Sturgeon and his wife, devout nudists, would invite couples over for dinner and greet them in the altogether; how Randy Garrett always stiffed worshipful new writers with huge dinner checks; and on and on. I hope to hell someone was tape recording it. (Most of the panels were filled, but this one drew Standing Room Only and spilled out into the corridor.)

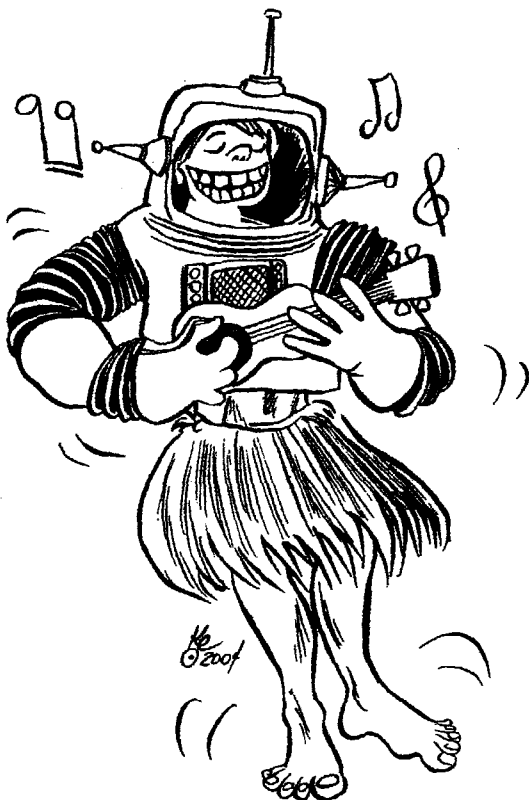
At 4:30 I signed at the SFWA table, and I moved over to the Wildside table to sign from 5:00 to 6:00. Then I went up to the room to relax for an hour, and Carol and I walked over to the Marriott lobby, where we met John and Kim Betancourt and went off to dinner at a Persian restaurant, the Rialto, across the Charles River; best meal of the convention. During the meal I sold John the anthology Silverberg and I had decided to put together,

and asked what I could do for the next issue of *Adventure Tales*, the pulp reprint magazine that had run an article by me along with all the old pulp stories in its premiere issue this summer. He said that it was still a reprint magazine, but he would make an exception if I would write a Lucifer Jones story for each issue. (You want to become my lifelong friend? Ask me to write about my very favorite character, the Right Reverend Honorable Doctor Lucifer Jones.) It was all I could do not to pick up the check for dinner.

So we returned to the hotel at maybe 10:30, just in time for me to grab a handful of stories and go to the Rhode Island suite, where Donna Drapeau and her gang had invited me to come do a reading. I like to rest a bit between stories, so like last year I invited the Harem Division of the Babes For Bwana – Linda Donahue, Julia Mandala, and any other belly dancers they could round up – to provide the entertainment between stories, and as always they came through with flying colors. Well, shimmying colors, anyway. And not to be



outdone, the Rhode Island ladies (and one incredibly graceful guy dressed in a spacesuit and a grass skirt) performed some hula dances. I don't think the thing was publicized much



beyond my Listserv, but Bob Eggleton and a number of others showed up and seemed to have a pretty good time. Adrienne Gormley also read a story, and Donna read a story by the late Robyn Herrington that I'd bought for one of my anthologies; it turned out to be the last story she ever wrote. Wonderful party, and I hope they'll invite me again, if not at Glasgow, then at Los Angeles in 2006.

I stopped by the SFWA Suite, talked to a number of pro friends I hadn't seen yet, went down to the spacious and well-run con suite, and stopped in at the bidding parties. Columbus and Japan shared the same large suite, which seemed counter-productive to me. Back in Chicon V in 1991, Louisville entered the Worldcon with a substantial lead for 1994, but Winnipeg caught and passed them in the five days of the con by the simple expedient of importing a chef and catering service and dishing out some great food. If someone had

done that here, the fans would never have known which side was responsible or who was striving so hard to please them and win their votes.

I wound up the night at the CFG suite, where CFG members kept arriving -- Joel Zakem, Steve Leigh, Frank Johnson, member emeritus Mark Linneman, others -- and I stayed until maybe 5:30 in the morning.

Friday, September 3: My schedule was really getting busy now. I ran into Laura (my daughter, who very likely outsells me these days) on the way to the hucksters' room, met Stephe Pagel, the publisher of Meisha Merlin, and we went out for an early lunch. I had just turned in *A Gathering of Widowmakers* to Stephe two weeks earlier, and I spent half the meal begging for a Donato Giancola cover and the other half hitting him with a 3-book proposal -- one reprint, one new novel, one collection, all related -- that I think he'll be making an offer on once he runs the figures later this month or next.

Then, at 1:00 PM, I stopped by to introduce and watch "Metal Tears", the 40-minute movie made by Jake Bradbury from my Hugo-nominated story, "Robots Don't Cry". Jerry Bradbury -- Jake's father and the film's producer -- had sent me a DVD a week earlier. I was enjoying the hell out of it for the first ten or twelve minutes when the damned thing froze, so I was really eager to see it all the way through. They started running it...and it froze again. They put in a different DVD and the same thing happened. But it had worked on Jerry's laptop, so finally they tied the laptop into the projector and it worked perfectly, and it was clear that the audience loved it.

It's a wonderful effort, and stayed far closer to the original than I did when adapting *Santiago* and *The Widowmaker* for Hollywood. The robot, the alien, and the older version of the narrator were excellent, and the younger version was at least adequate, and you can't get much better than that for a \$6,000 film. (To give you an example: \$6,000 buys approximately one-third of a *second* of *Van Helsing*, the biggest turkey of the summer.) I'm incredibly flattered that they chose my story to film, and equally pleased with the way it turned

out. Contractually it's an amateur project, so they can't sell it or charge people to watch it...but I hope they take it on the convention circuit and let people get a look at it. It's worth the effort.

At 2:00 I had to rush off to a panel about what would have happened if JFK had lived. I looked at the audience, composed mostly of people who hadn't been born before he was assassinated and who worshipped him because the press worshipped him. I explained that he was a multi-millionaire from a wealthy and politically-powerful family, he had a brother who also held considerable political power, and that the hallmarks of his brief presidency were tax cuts, an aggressive foreign policy (he was elected because of the mythical "missile gap"), and military intervention overseas (Cuba and Vietnam). Pause. Then I pointed out that if he were alive today with those credentials, his name would be George W. Bush. Kinda got the audience thinking.

At 3:00 Greg Benford and I autographed at the *Asimov's* table, which seemed to be taking the transition from Gardner Dozois to Sheila Williams very well. (So was I. I sold Gardner the last story he bought as *Asimov's* editor, and I sold Sheila one of the first she bought.)

At 4:00 I was on a panel promoting a new science fiction imprint, Pyr Books, owned by Prometheus Press, which has been around for ages but never published any fiction before. Lou Anders, the editor, was there. So were a couple of artists, and a pair of writers. (I was there because I was in the process of selling him some books. Gardner was scheduled to be there, too, having sold him an anthology – but he was still laid up in the hospital back in Philadelphia.) I especially liked one of the artists' work, and requested him for the first novel I do for Pyr – and got him.

Then Carol and Xin, Lou's lovely Chinese wife, joined us and we went off to the Kashmir, an Indian restaurant, for dinner. I had my usual korma – I don't do spicy, ever -- but Carol, who loves hot food, tells me her meal was excellent, which means it probably stopped just short of melting the enamel on her teeth.

We got back in time for the Retro

Hugos. I still can't get over that list of novels – **Fahrenheit 451**, **The Caves of Steel**, **Childhood's End**, **Mission of Gravity**,_ and **More Than Human**. Can you imagine any other year when **The Space Merchants** couldn't make the final ballot? Bob Eggleton did a very competent job as the emcee, and Terry Pratchett and Phil Klass, the pro Guests of Honor, and Jack Speer, the Fan Guest of Honor, took turns interviewing each other.

I went off to the *Asimov's/Analog* party in the SFWA Suite, ran into Tony Lewis, and learned that NESFA Press had agreed to buy a book Joe Siclari and I have been assembling for years and which I had proposed to him Tuesday night.

There were parties galore this night – *Asimov's/Analog*, a Tor party up on the top floor (where I visited with my del Rey editor, Steve Saffel, and never found my Tor editor, Beth Meacham), a Norwescon party, Columbus and Japan bidding parties, a sff.net party, a Glasgow party, an ASFA party (that's the science fiction artists' group), tons of others. When I stopped in the Japanese party the second time, someone there who works for Hayakawa's science fiction magazine handed me a contract for the Japanese rights to my short story, "Stanley the Eighteen Percenter". I hit them all, pro and fan parties alike, checked in at the CFG Suite, hit 'em all again, and wound up at CFG at maybe 4:30 AM.

Saturday, September 4: I dragged myself down to the coffee shop at (yucch!) 10:30 AM, where I met my editor from the Science Fiction Book Club, Ellen Asher, who wasn't a hell of a lot happier to be up in the morning than I was, but it was the only free hour we both had. She had purchased **Down These Dark Spaceways**, an original anthology of six futuristic hard-boiled mystery novellas, from me, an assignment I'd gotten at Torcon 3. I delivered the book during the summer, and hit her with some more proposals. There's one she claims to be anxious to do, but I gather we're going to wait to see the initial orders on **Down These Dark Spaceways**_ before we talk price. Just as well; I'm too busy to do much on it right now anyway. After that, we spent the rest of the meal talking horses. She's the ride-em-and-

love-em type, like Judy Tarr and Beth Meacham; I'm the I-love-to-watch-them-race-but-they're-the-dumbest-critters-God-made type, like Josepha Sherman and Barry Malzberg. We found a common ground at 11:29 and had to leave at 11:30.

At noon I was on yet another African panel, made more satisfying by the fact that it was (I think) the first time I've ever been on a panel with Laura, who has brought me fame if not fortune as Laura Resnick's Father. Other than that, there wasn't anything said that hasn't been said at the last thirty such panels. This one was limited to Africa; usually it's about the Third World and is the one place I can count on meeting Lucius Shepard in the course of a Worldcon.

The second it was over I raced a couple of (indoor) blocks through the enclosed mall to the Marriott, where I spent half an hour visiting with Marty Greenberg. I had given him eight or ten anthology ideas to pitch, and as I write this the results aren't known yet. (They vary wildly; our best year we sold 5, in 2001 we sold 4, a couple of times – including last year – we sold none.) Toby Buckell joined us after a few minutes, and he and I went back to the Hynes at 1:45.

At 2:00 I had my kaffeeklatsch. This year Boston decided to have kaffeeklatches for the teetotalers among us, and literary beers for the drinkers. I hope the beer folks got a little something to drink; I never saw any coffee until I asked a thoughtful committee member to find some for me. (Now that I come to think of it, this was probably the sixth time in the past eight years that the kaffeeklatch neglected to provide kaffee.) As always, I came equipped with giveaways – autographed covers, autographed matte paintings from one of the early and never-made versions of *Santiago*, autographed trading cards from Chicon VI (leaving me only another 300 to give away over the next quarter century before I run out of them).

At 3:00 I had lunch with Scott Pendergrast of Fictionwise.com. He mentioned a project he and his brother Steve had wanted me to do back in 2001, before we all got too busy, so we're going to take another crack at it this winter or next spring.

From 4:00 to 5:00 I finally got up to the art show on the third floor of the Hynes. It was magnificent. The regular show had some fine work by Michael Whelan, Bob Eggleton, Donato Giancola, Don Maitz, and others -- the usual superstars – plus some excellent upcoming artists ... but the highlight was the Retrospective Art Show, with magazine and book covers and paintings from the 1950s and earlier by Kelly Freas, Ed Emshwiller, Virgil Finlay (my all-time favorite), Alex Schomburg, and more. Great show, second only to the Alex Eisenstein collection at Chicon VI.

At 5:00 I moderated the best-attended panel of the con. It was devoted to Jack Williamson, and featured his friends, his collaborators, his agent – a stellar line-up that included Fred Pohl, Dave Hartwell, Eleanor Wood, Scott Edelman, Connie Willis, Melinda Snodgrass, Stanley Schmidt, Larry Niven, Jack Chalker, Michael Swanwick, and I'm sure I'm forgetting a couple. What made it unique was not just the line-up, but the fact that Jack was tied in by phone from Portales, New Mexico – at 96 he doesn't travel to Worldcons any more – and his comments were fed into the speaker system so everyone in the huge room could hear. I think it was a great idea; why wait until one of our giants dies before we pay tribute to him?

Carol had spent the afternoon on a trolley tour with Laura. She took the trolley back to the hotel, while Laura opted to walk. She joined Eleanor Wood (my agent) and me and we went over to the Hugo reception, while Laura showed up there maybe an hour later. Tony Lewis had made an offer on NESFA Press's behalf for the collected Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues that run in every issue of the *SFWA Bulletin*. I ran the figures and told him that we'd need a little more front money before we'd sign. Then Catherine Asaro, the president of SFWA, saw me and mentioned that SFWA would like to publish it, but probably couldn't come up with the advance we'd need. So I found an empty couch, sat Tony and Catherine down together, and told them not to get up until they'd worked out a co-publishing deal. They eventually got up, so I guess they managed; at least Tony tells me they did, and they'll work out the details in the next

couple of months. (And do you begin to notice how every deal will be done in the next couple of months rather than the next couple of days? That's why writers get so grouchy at bill-paying time.)

Next we went to the ceremony itself. The reason Connie Willis and I have toastmastered one Worldcon each and Gardner Dozois has never been a toastmaster, despite the fact that we're acknowledged to be among the most entertaining speakers in science fiction, is that we're always up for Hugos, and it's considered gauche for the Toastmaster to give himself a Hugo or announce that he's just lost one. So why did they pick Neil Gaiman, whose short story had won a bunch of polls in the spring and summer and was a lock to make the ballot, as this year's Toastmaster? (Mind you, I'm not complaining about the job he did; he was funny and fine and everything a Toastmaster should be. I'm merely suggesting that if the Toastmaster isn't supposed to be a nominee, someone messed up – and as the ceremony went on, someone messed up even worse.)

Bob Silverberg gave a very amusing and informative speech about the first fifty Hugo ceremonies – he's the only person to have attended all of them. Then came the plethora of lesser awards, and finally the Hugos – which were seriously marred by the fact that the idiot running the slide projector managed to flash the name of the Hugo winner before Neil announced it, and did it with more than one



award.

The results are common knowledge by now, so I won't repeat them here, except to mention that I lost yet another one, this time with "Robots Don't Cry". When I saw the tallies later in the evening, I was surprised to see that I'd come in eighth among editors, though I only had four anthologies out (and the major one, STARS, was co-edited with Janis Ian), and I even got a handful of votes for best fan writer, which at least shows that *someone* reads these diaries.

After the Hugos Eleanor took us out to dinner, and for the second year in a row I signed some book contracts at a Worldcon meal (after 39 years of *not* signing any). These were contracts for the Pyr novel, to be called **Starship: Volume 1 – Mutiny**, and the Pyr collection, to be titled at a later date.

Then it was off to the parties, and I was having such a good time at them that I never remembered to hit the Hugo Losers party. I made it to SFWA, Baen, ASFA, half a dozen fannish parties, and wound up (of course) at the CFG suite, where I visited with Bob Faw until maybe an hour before dawn.

Sunday, September 5: I'd been scheduled to have a late breakfast/early lunch with Barry

Malzberg before our panel, but since he wasn't at the con I was able to have a meal with just Carol, a real luxury at a Worldcon.

At noon Barry and I were supposed to do one of our dialogues, a two-man panel following the format of our

SFWA Bulletin articles. (We agree that God outdid Himself when He made Sophia Loren. After 25 years of close friendship, we have yet to agree on anything else.) So on Saturday I had looked around to find a pseudo-Barry, and lo and behold, there was my old friend David Gerrold. I don't know that we disagree on quite as many things, but we've held a number of very funny insult contests, including a couple for television, and I figured if we couldn't enlighten the audience we could at least amuse it, so I drafted him. It was the one panel that didn't draw a full house, but that's because the con committee had heard Barry wasn't coming and announced in the thrice-daily newsletter that the panel was canceled. (Of course, no one ever thought to relay that information to the other half of the panel.) Even so, we pulled maybe 20 people, and then David cheated by seriously addressing all the questions I put to him.

At 1:00 I did my "official" reading (as opposed to my reading with belly and hula dancers). I read a couple of stories I think ought to make some final ballots -- "A Princess of Earth" and "Down Memory Lane", both forthcoming in *Asimov's* -- but they are both very sad stories, and a woman I'd never seen before accosted me as I was leaving and castigated me for depressing her, stating that she had previously read the Lucifer Jones books and *The Outpost* and had come expecting to fall out of her chair laughing. I explained that if she'd fallen out of her chair she'd probably have broken something and wound up depressed, and if she was going to be depressed anyway, at least this way she heard some good stories.

At 2:00 I managed to find 45 minutes to take another partial tour of the hucksters room (which is where I practically lived when I was just a fan and didn't do my year's business at these shindigs) and probably spent more time visiting with all the booksellers I'd known for decades than looking at their wares.

At 3:00 I showed up for the official autographing session. Year in and year out the autograph session is held in or next to the hucksters room, so people can buy the books they want autographed and take them right up to the authors. This year, for reasons that

cluded all of the pros, it was literally as far from the hucksters room as it could get while remaining on the same floor of the immense Hynes.

I'd signed so many books at all the other tables during the con that I was done by 3:40. So was Nancy Kress, who was signing next to me -- but while we were signing we agreed to collaborate on a short story next year.

At 4:00 I wandered over to the Fan Lounge and went through all the fannish memorabilia on display, since I was leading the Fan History tour at 5:00. While I was there they auctioned off a Tuckerization in one of my stories for DUFF, and I got to meet the fellow who will be semi-immortalized. I had just found a table and was relaxing with Joe Siclari, Rich and Nikki Lynch, and Guy and Rosy Lillian when it was time to lead the tour. We began with the previous years' Hugos, and I told stories about most of them (or the cons where they were given out), then moseyed over to the impressive Doc Smith exhibit. Doc was the first pro Carol and I met at our first worldcon, and I was happy to be able to tell a number of stories -- all complimentary -- about him. We were working our way through ribbons and program books when the hour ended and I went back to the Sheraton.

The Resnicks -- Carol, Laura and me -- met the Turtledoves -- Harry, Laura, Allison, Rachel, and Rebecca -- in the lobby for dinner. (Actually, I call the younger Turtledoves The One on the Left, The One on the Right, and the One Without an R in Her Name.) We went back to the Kashmir where Lou Anders had taken us; very nice food, even the second time around. Harry and I had collaborated on a story we sold to Lou Anders this summer, and will collaborate on a novel in a year or two (we're the only two people in the world with any serious interest in the subject, and we figured two such novels would be one too many), but I suspect the real reason we always meet for dinner at Worldcon is so he can plot to run off birdwatching with Carol (they're both ardent birders), and he suspects that it's so I can plot to run off to New York with Laura (his, not mine) to see endless musical theater performances (she and I have been trading bootleg videos and audios for years).

All the younger generation skipped dessert and headed off to watch the masquerade, and the oldpharts stayed at the table and visited for another hour. (I still don't know who won the masquerade. I do know that people began showing up in the CFG suite at 10:30 and 11:00, complaining that they hadn't yet finished the first run-through and that the emcee was not going to put Robin Williams or Billy Crystal out of business.)

Then it was the usual round of all the parties, with frequent stops back at CFG, and off to bed at perhaps 5:00.

Monday, September 6: One last bit of business and then I was free to be a fan again for what little remained of the con. I had lunch with Chris Roberson, a fine new writer and the publisher of Monkeybrain Books. I had sold him a Lucifer Jones story – I love the title: "The Island of Annoyed Souls" – for an anthology he was editing, and we talked about his bringing the three Lucifer Jones books back into print as trade paperbacks. I don't know what will come of it – he's the newest of the new publishers, and he's just getting established -- but it's nice to know Lucifer still has fans. He's my favorite of all my characters, and he'd been in mothballs for eleven year due to lack of interest. Then, suddenly, he's in *Argosy* and Chris' anthology and *Adventure Tales*, and I imagine Monkeybrain or someone else will reissue the books in the next year or three. Lord knows I've written more important stuff, lots of it -- but if I could only write one thing for the rest of my life, it'd be Lucifer Jones stories. I just love them, and I'm grateful that there are once again some editors who feel the same.

And that ended my business for the con. I met Carol and Bill and Cokie Cavin, and we took a ducks tour, an amphibious bus (same thing as last year's hippo tour in Toronto). Our driver had honed his routine, and we got a groan-inducing pun or a joke with long whiskers on it every fifteen seconds for the whole two-hour tour.

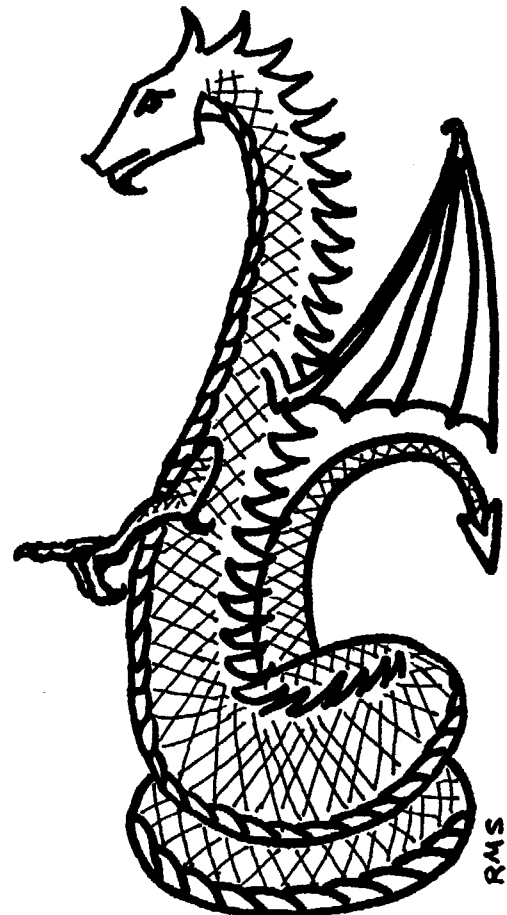
Then we went back to the Sheraton and met my Listserv members for dinner -- Bob Faw, John Teehan and his lady, Adrienne Gormley, Guy and Rosy Lillian, a number of

others – and wound up where we'd started: at Marche, which can accommodate a group like that on two seconds' notice. Carol came up to the CFG suite for an hour or two, then went to the room to pack and turn in early. I hit the few remaining parties, wandered down to the con suite for an hour, then back to CFG, where John Hertz had stopped by, and visited with him until maybe 5:30 AM.

Tuesday, September 7: Carol figured that I'd had about twenty hours sleep in the last five nights, so she very thoughtfully went out, bought some blueberry muffins, and brought them and coffee back to the room before waking me. We checked out, met Jeff Calhoun, took a shuttle to the airport, were joined by Mary Martin and Debbie Oakes, and flew home.

I found 1778 e-mails waiting for me. After I'd painstakingly eliminated the spam, one piece at a time, there were 114 left.

I just love the way technology has simplified my life.



N4 & More

The last time I attended a Noreascon, it was 1980. I have indelible memories of the event. Meeting Harlan Ellison in an elevator and having him tell me I'd gained weight. Seeing Asimov walk past, followed closely by a misty blonde with his autograph scrawled across her breasts. Crushing crowds and rushing up the down escalator to get to the Hugo ceremonies, which I observed from the nosebleed seats in the Hynes. Annoying poor Zetta Dillie to distraction, Lord rest her sweet purple-haired soul.

What a difference a quarter of a century makes.

I didn't encounter any crowds at Noreascon 4, although the attendance at the 2004 worldcon was surely as great as at its predecessor. Harlan wasn't at the con to hear Rosy brag on my diet, and we shall always miss Asimov and Zetta. As for the Hugo ceremonies this time, my wife and I got better seats – between Joe and Gay Haldeman and Connie Willis – in the section devoted to nominees.

And if I came only marginally closer to a Hugo in 2004 than I had in 1980, what of it? Surely there have been few conventions for which Rosy and I have put out more effort – handling DUFF duties *and* editing the program/souvenir book – but gleaned more reward in friendship and fun. Quite a journey to get there, too, trundling auction stuff overland in our trusty ~~Conestoga~~ Honda CRV ... we passed through Knoxville, Tennessee, spent an awesome day touring in Washington, got lost (a theme of our trip) in New York City, saw the Constitution *and* the *Constitution*, wallowed in the glories of Middle-Earth, enjoyed one hellaciously good convention. We made a buck or two for DUFF and people seemed to like the program book. So I didn't win the Hugo. I'll *never* win the Hugo. Noreascon 4 was nonetheless very, very gratifying.

As was the journey there and back. Rosy, Jesse and I saw some fantastic sights and had some terrific adventures. In these pages I can't go into the detail that N4 and our odyssey deserve. For such an account, check out **The Galactic Route** on the *Challenger* website, www.challzine.net. That's the cover to the printed version over there. See if you can spot its references!

If you don't know the story of the Cardiff Giant, the most deliciously blatant fraud in American history – well, until 2000 – then I may have to turn it into a novel. For insight into it and some of the other sights, check out

www.ussconstitution.navy.mil
www.roadsideamerica.com/attract/NYCOOgiant.html
www.niagaraparks.com/nfgg/maidmist.php
www.shelleybrigman.com/weevil.html

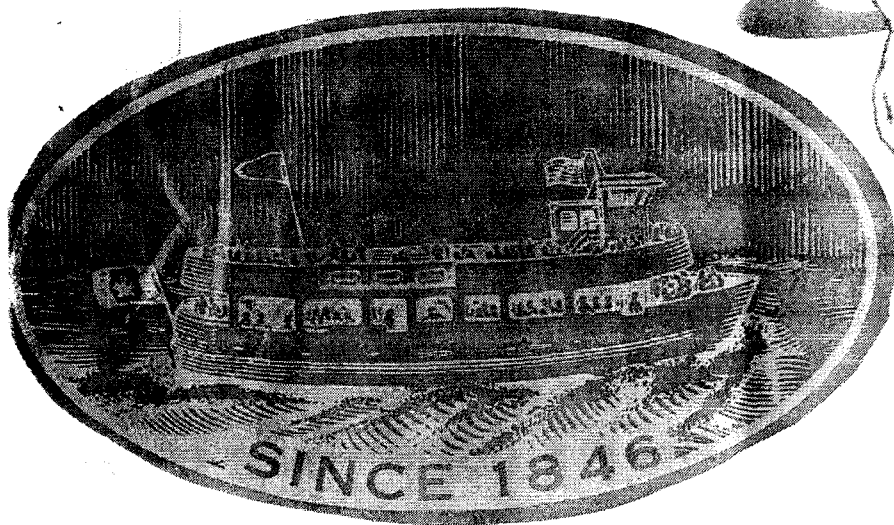
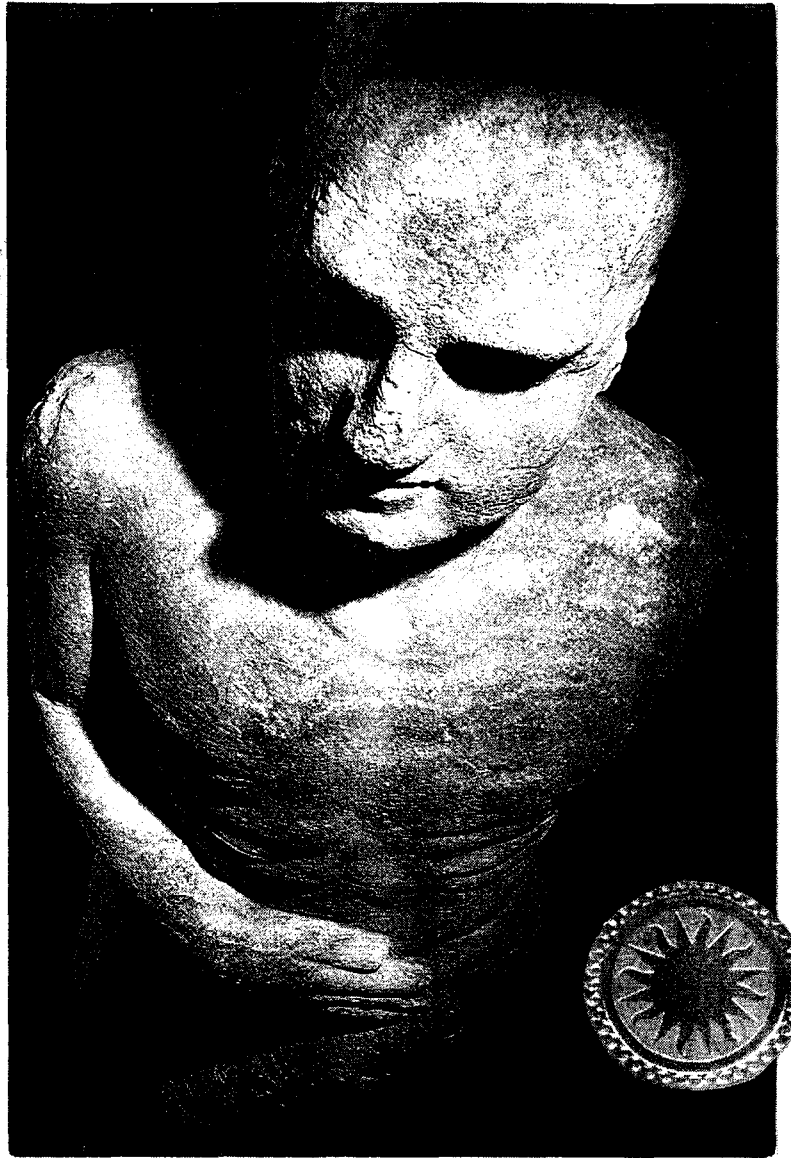
Here and now, check out a few images of that incredible fortnight, and the weeks before. It was a *galactic* good time. We hope we saw you there.



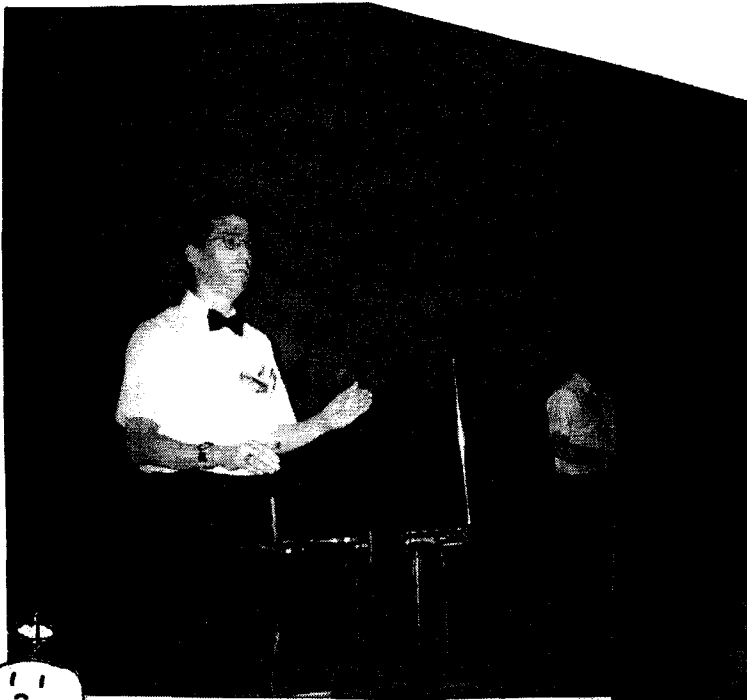


We the People

Article I

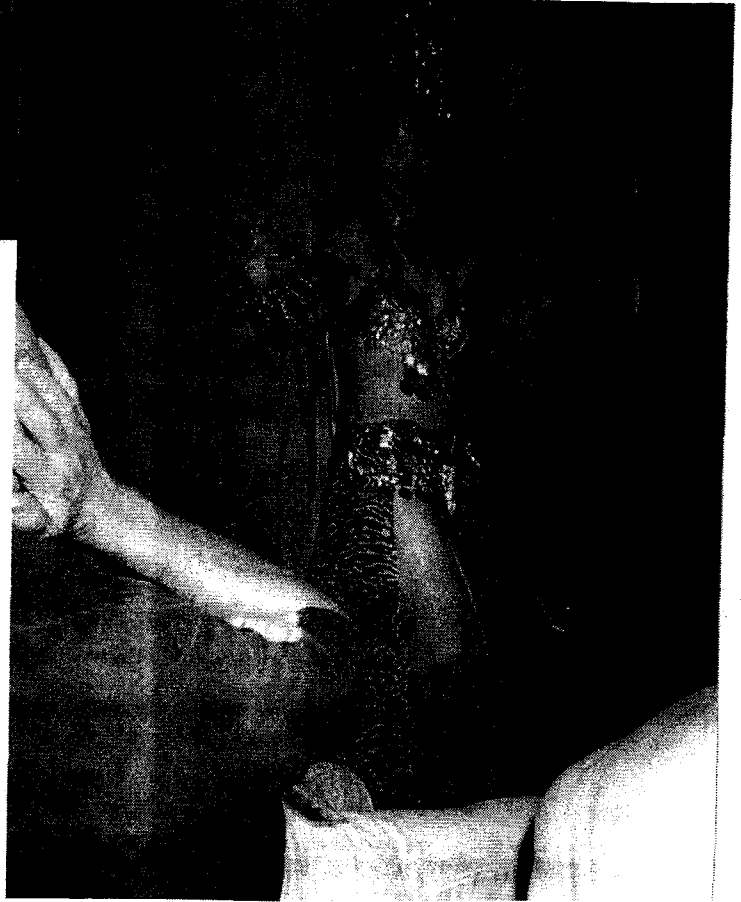


the GALACTIC Route



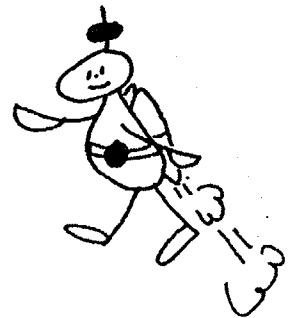
At NOREASCON

Theremins played at
the Retro-Hugos ...



Linda Donahue shimmied
at the CFG party ...

And **Alice Lewis** shone
just by being there.

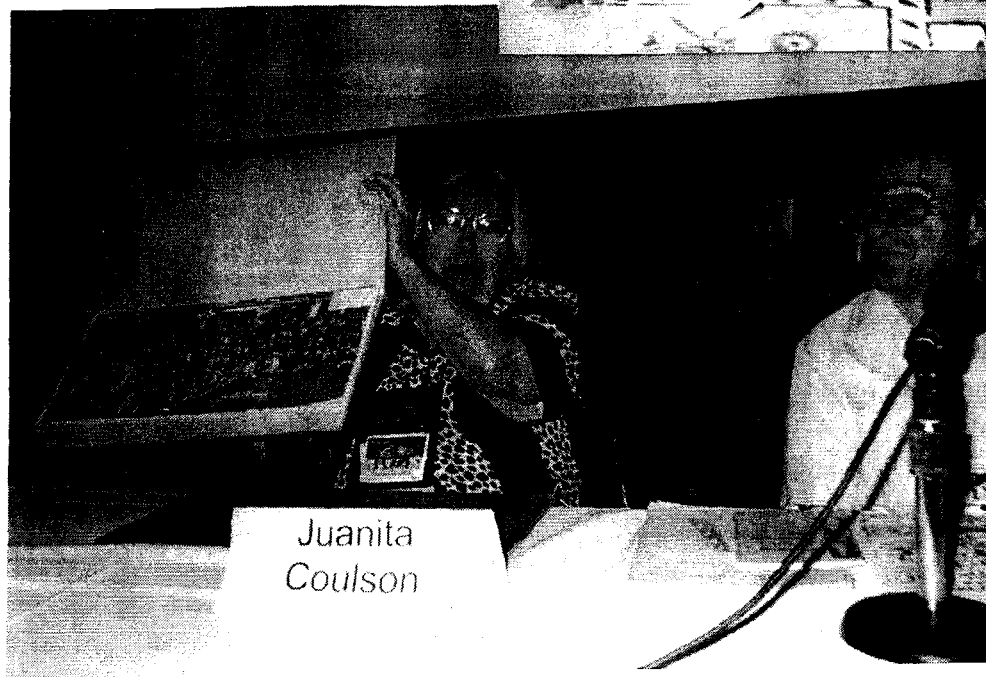
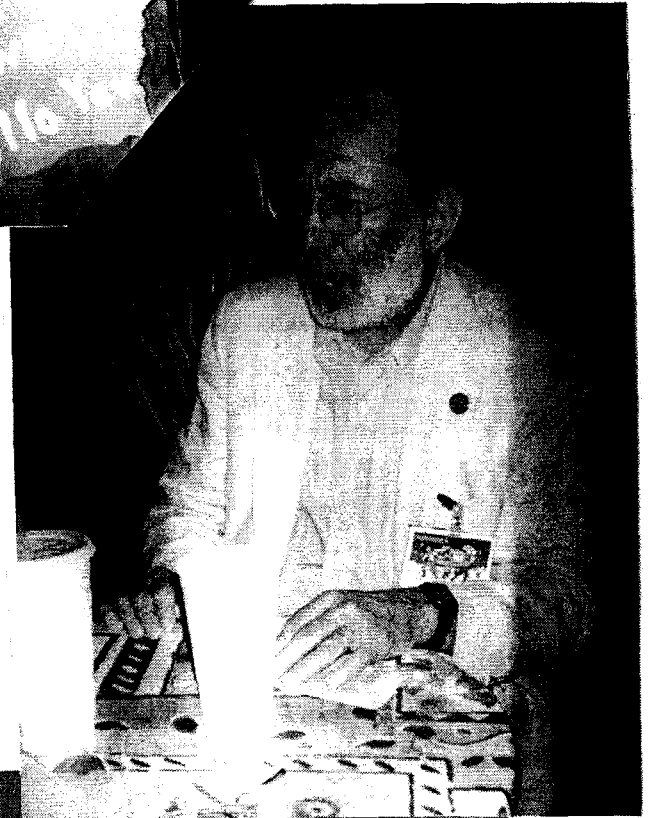




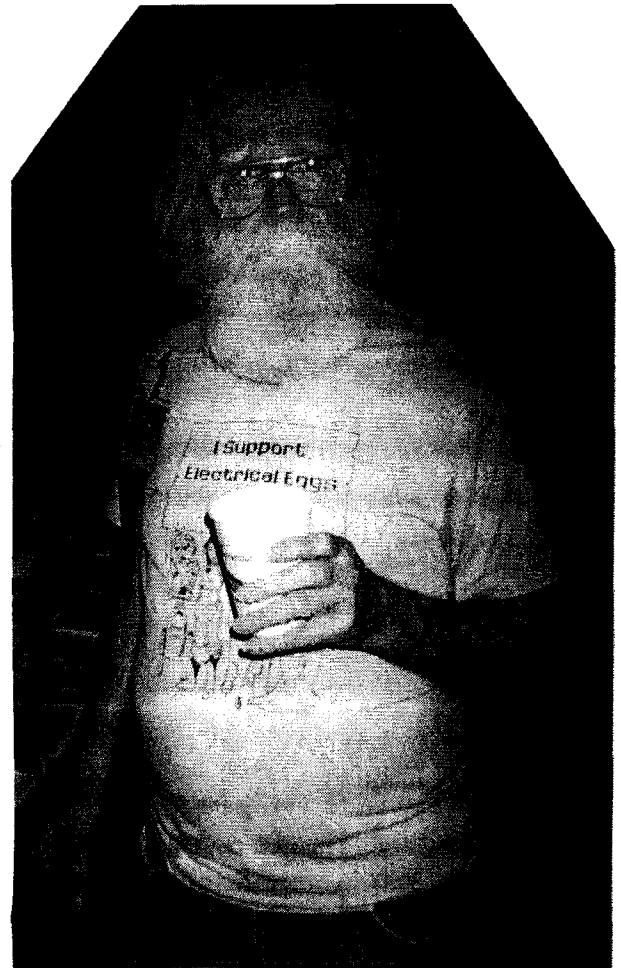
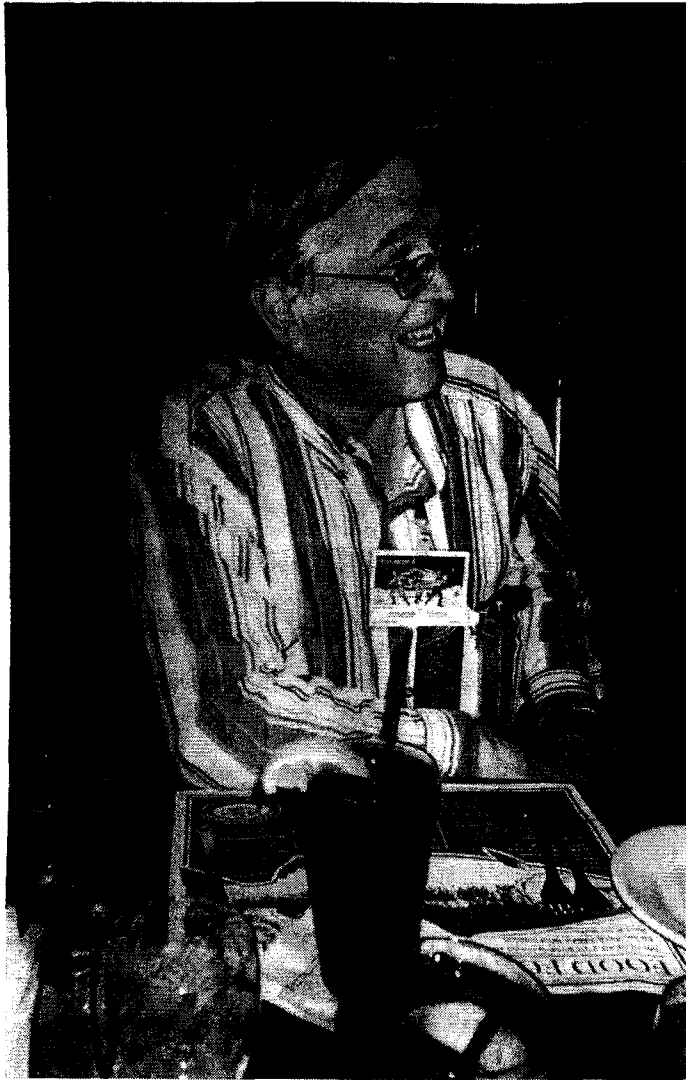
The PRICE OF FAME

Above, Pro GoH **Terry Pratchett** wonders if it's worth it when he encounters Discworld fanatics. Would we were all like **Fred Lerner**, with whom Rosy and I had a great lunch.

Below, **Juanita Coulson** displays a photo of a worldcon banquet she and **Roger Sims** remember well.



Joe Major was among our fellow diners at Bob Devney's faned's lunch at Legal Seafoods ...



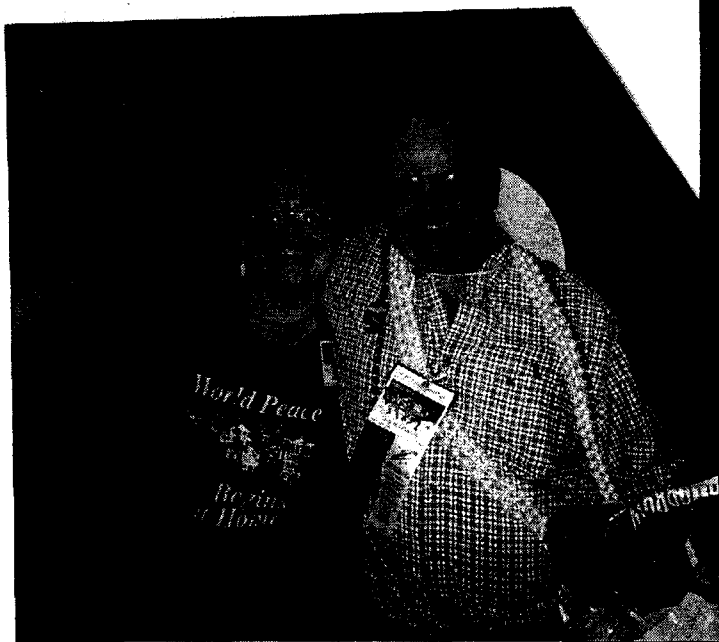
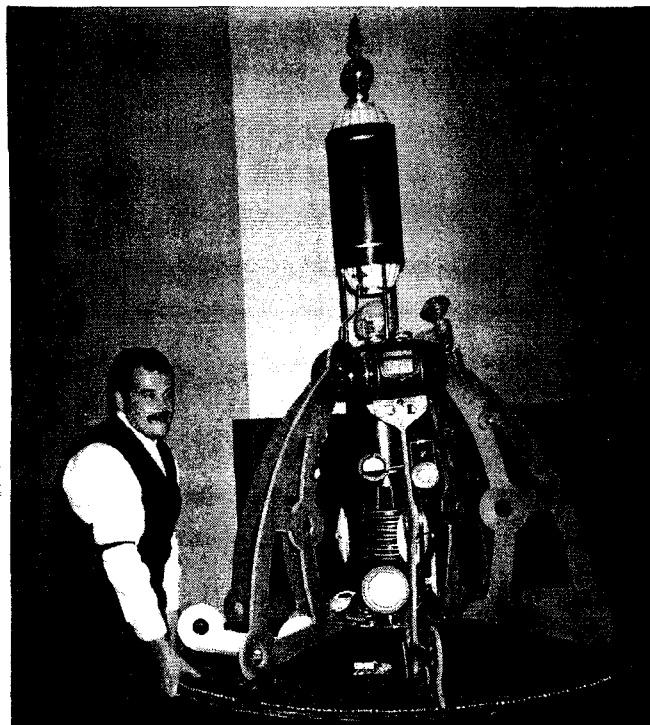
But Mike Glicksohn was not. (Neither was Rusty Hevelin)

Right, in the Green Room, GHLLH flaps gums with **Hank & Toni Reinhardt** and **Rich Lynch**, as **Roger Sims** strolls past.



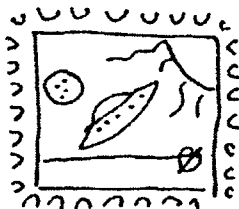


Jumping around in time ... this Time Machine was one of the few props featured at Sunday night's masquerade. Is it just me or is there a tendency towards less flashy costumes than in days gone by?



Above, GHLIII with an old pal from comics fandom, cartoonist **Mercy van Vlack**

Right, **Sheila Lightsey** and **Victor Golzalez** cavort in the Fanzine Lounge with Swedish fanned **Lennart Uhlin**.





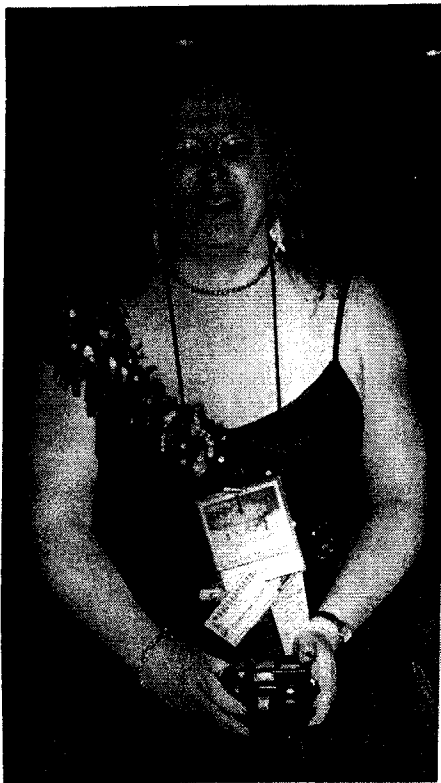
Above, **Karen Schaeffer Ward** brightens the brightest day.

Left, **Mike Resnick** hosts another glorious party along with fellow members of the Cincinnati Fan group. Also left, **Bob Eggleton** with our program book, for which he painted the magnificent cover. See the Yellow Submarine?

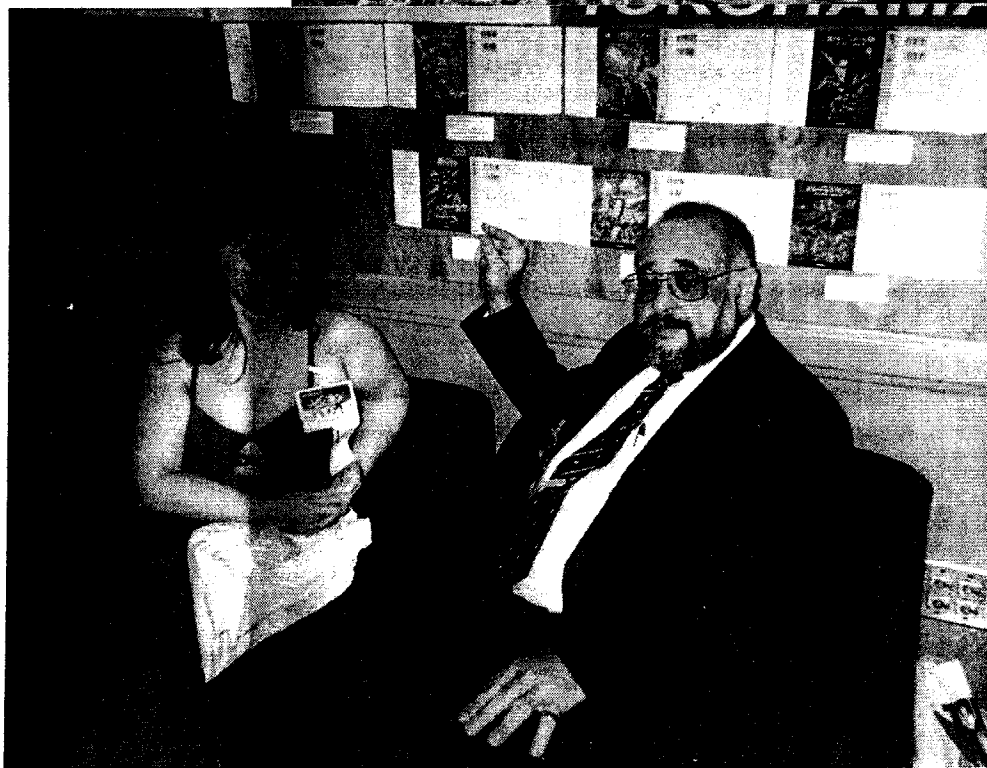


PRE-HUGO

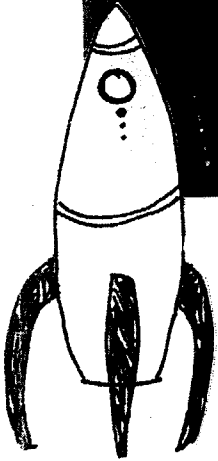
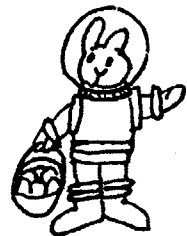
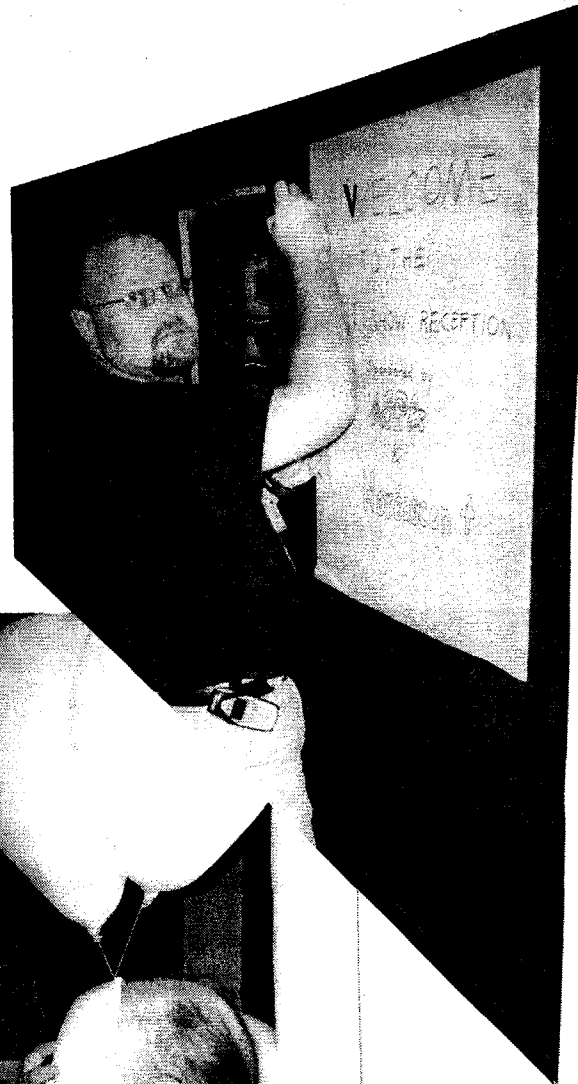
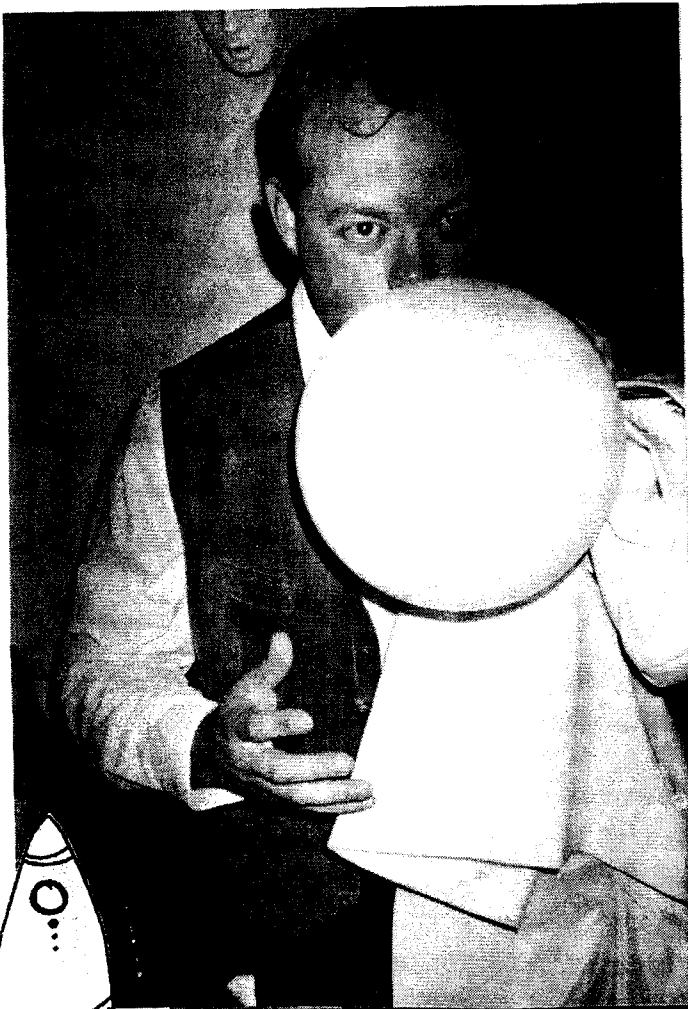
Right, *la belle* with Pro GoH
William Tenn



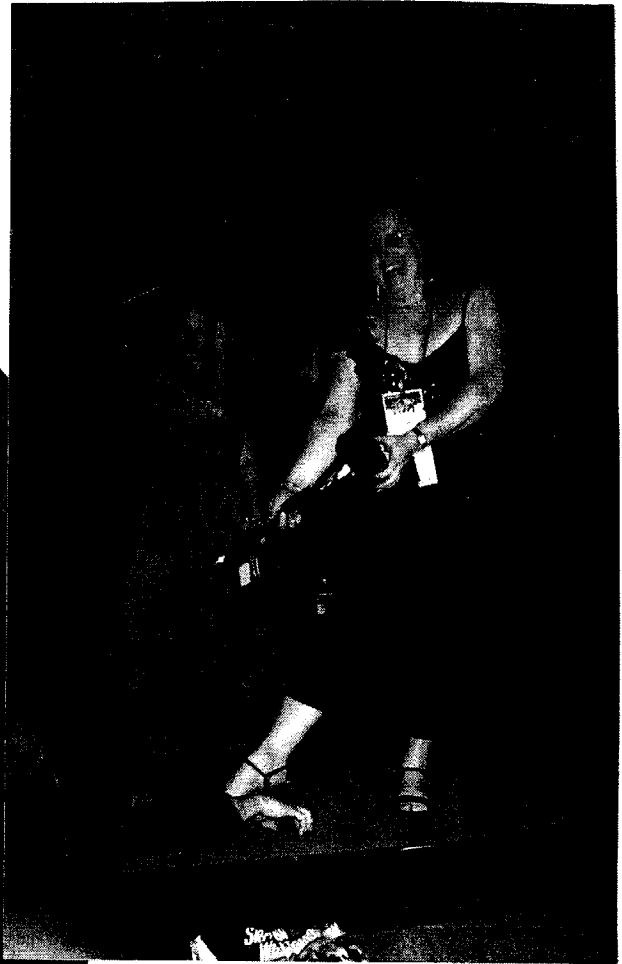
At the pre-Hugo
bash, Cheryl
Morgan snaps
shots, and
Catharine
Asaro joins
Tony Lewis
for a chat.



At the epic Hugo Losers² Nominees' party, award presenter and acceptor **Norman Cates** fills his lungs with helium to repeat his speech. Far below, **George R.R. Martin** and **Connie Willis** check out **Charles Brown**'s attempts to hide from his fans. ASFA President **Randy Cleary** puts up an announcement in the Concourse.



As I predicted, Cheryl's *Emerald City* was an easy winner of the Best Fanzine Hugo, the first on-line publication to cop that honor. Spurned again, I claw helplessly at the feet of the victor.



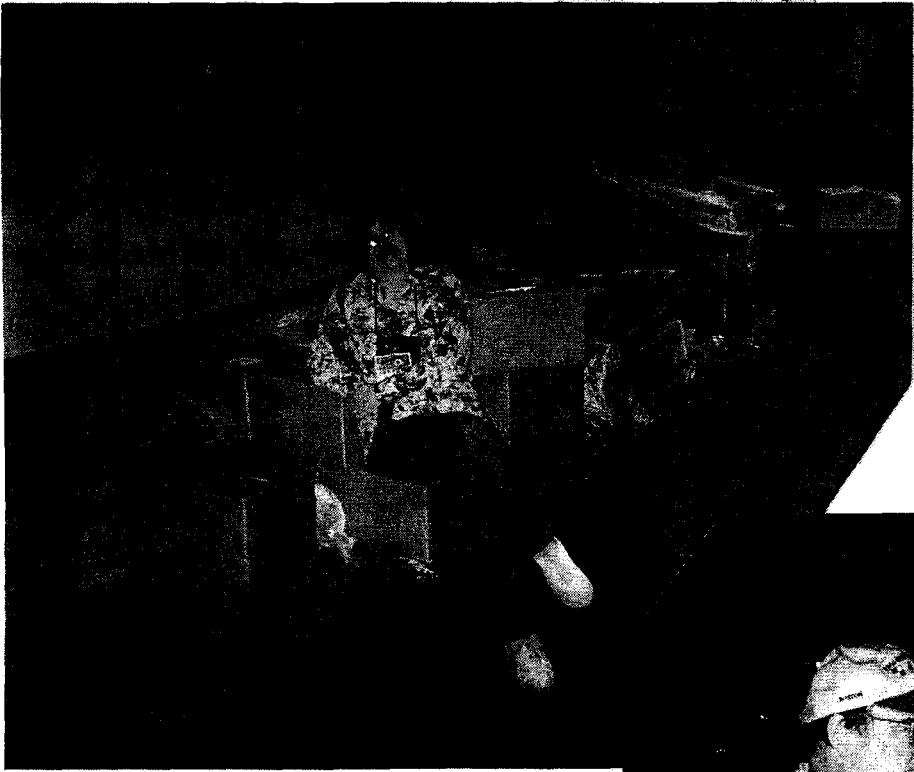
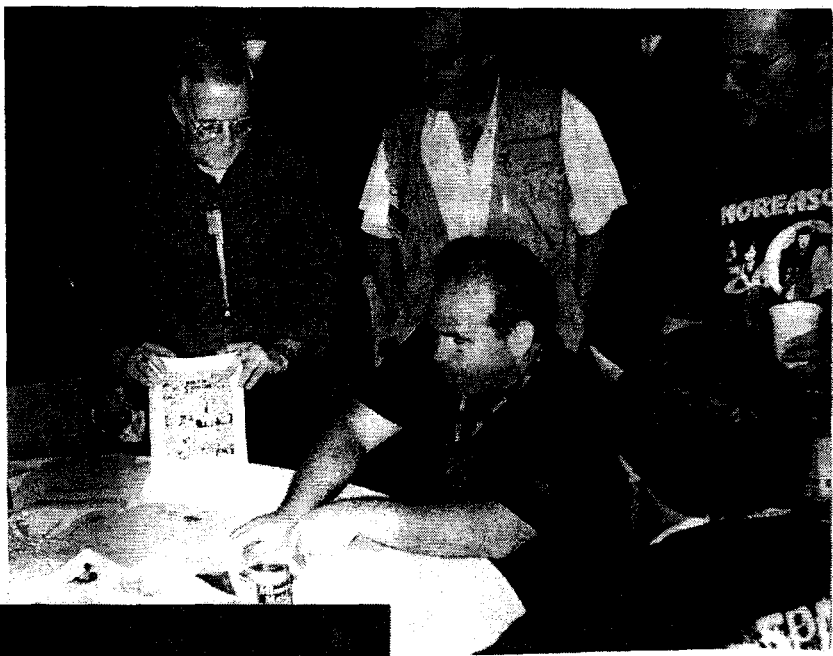
POST-HUGO

Rosy, above, hefts *Chall* #20 cover artist Frank Wu's award, with his happy approval. Right, Ervin "Filthy Pierre" Strauss celebrates his "double" – the Big Heart and the Special N4 Committee Award.



WINDING DOWN ...

Bob Devney o'erses the stapling of the convention oneshot, produced on First Night at the Fanzine Lounge.



Genny Dazzo spent the entire convention supervising Registration. Here she sprawls atop boxes of program books. I took two home with me.



A celebrant of Japan's 2007 worldcon win tries to get me in the mood. Keep trying, Godzilla.



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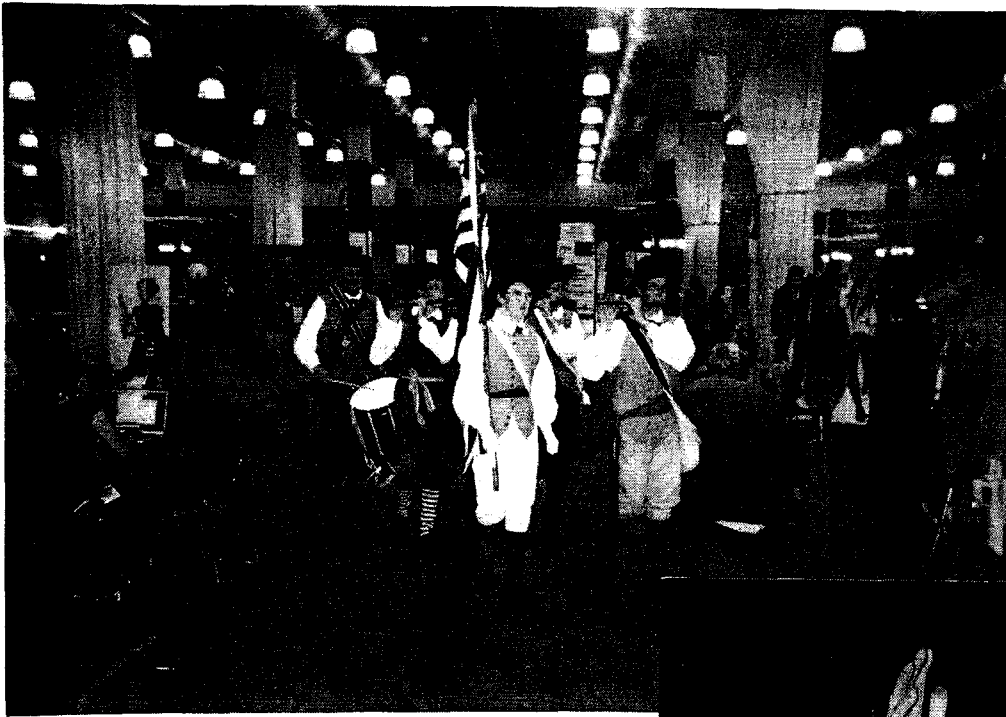
Possibly the most exclusive party at Noreascon was the soiree for former worldcon chairmen and their guests. **Robin Johnson** got us in – and posed with his peers, right.



Cheryl struggled to fit all in her lens.



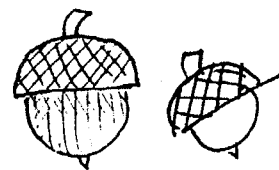
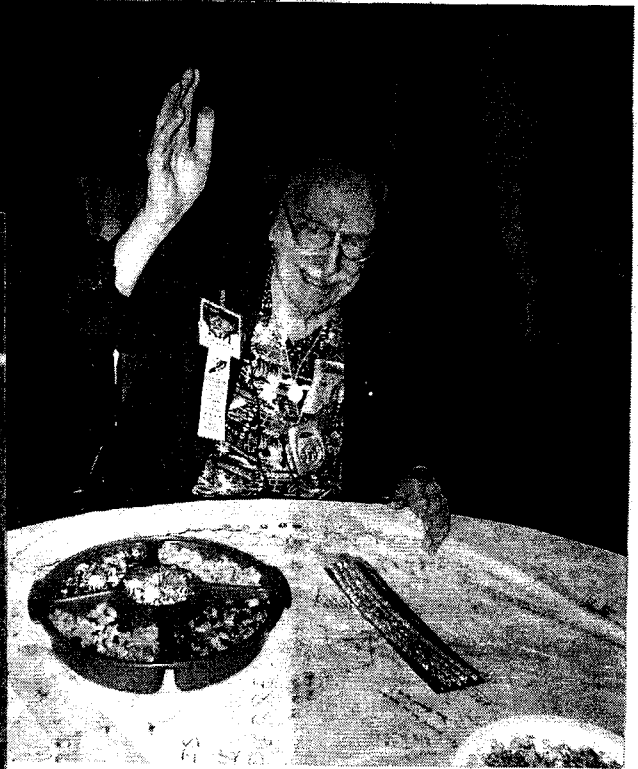
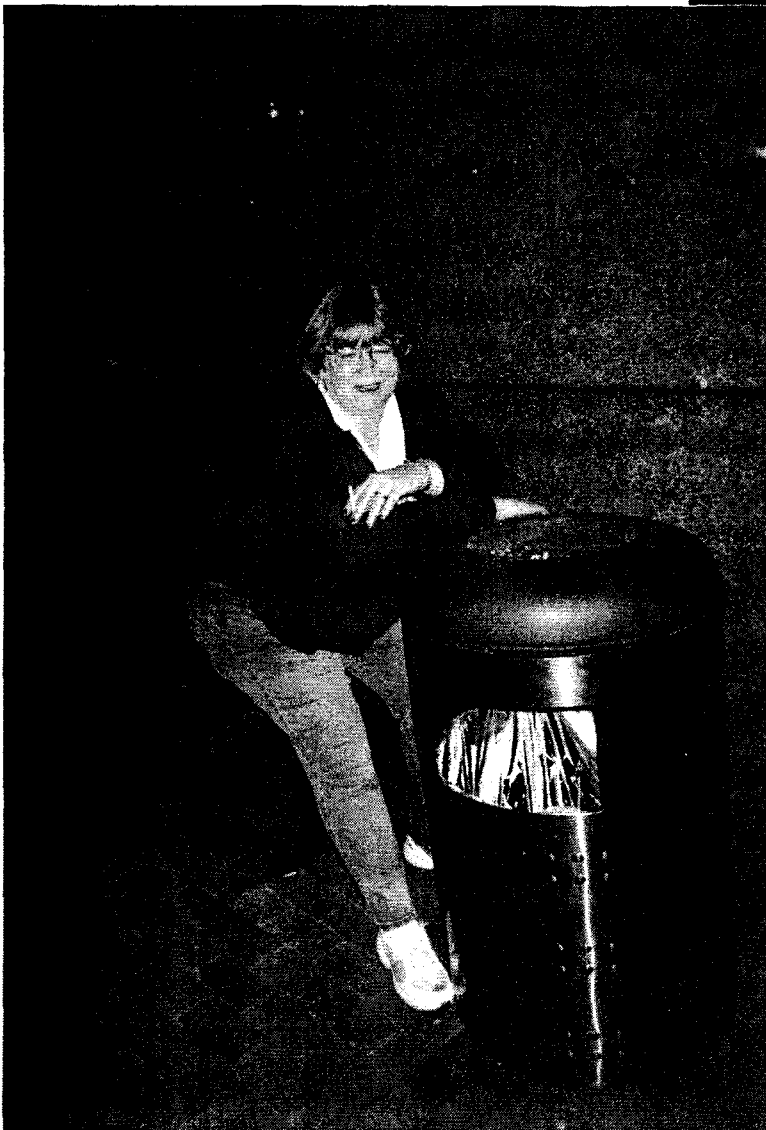
Right, **John Hertz** chats with **Leslie Turek**.



Closing ceremonies were cued by this marching revolutionary band ... and **Forry Ackerman** let us know he was still in the game.



50



As Rosy and I left Noreascon, con chairman **Deb Geisler** walked us to our car. Deb, I usually don't approve of smoking, but for someone in charge of such a splendid event, I'll make an exception. *Great work! Enjoy!*

ON THE ROAD

The Cardiff Giant ...

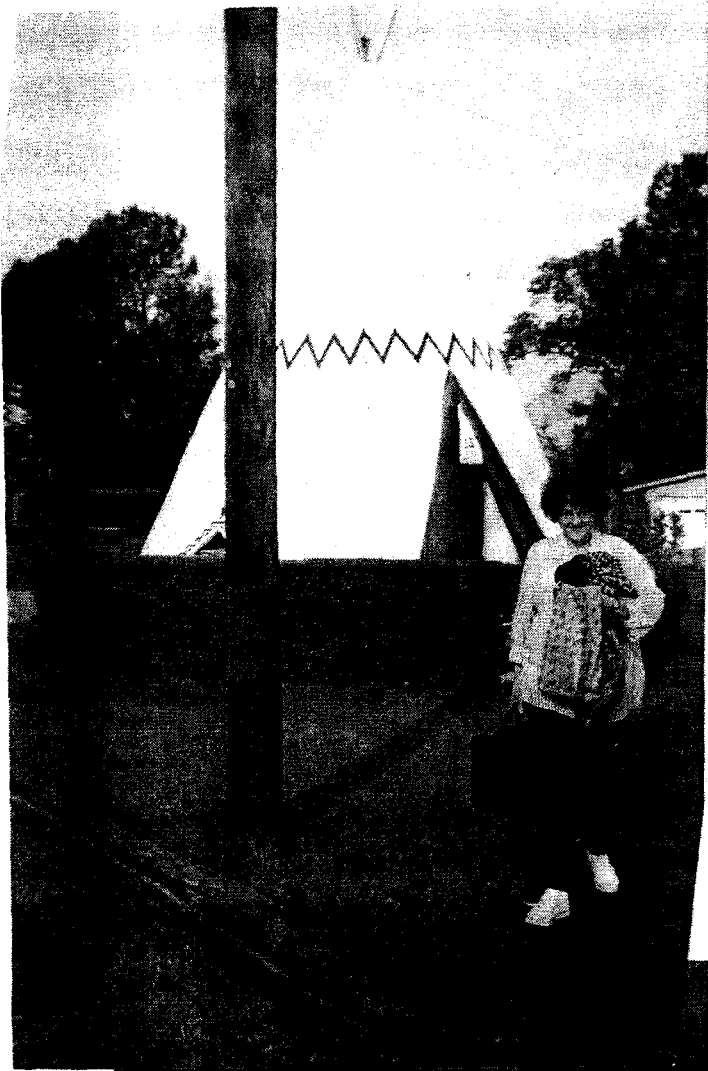
Mib aboard *The Maid of the Mist* ...



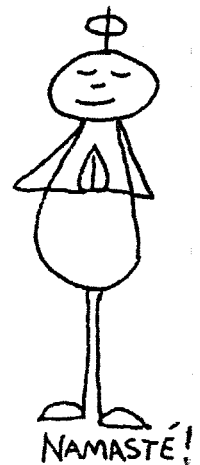
At a tacky horror wax museum in Niagara Falls, Rosy encounters dignified science fiction...

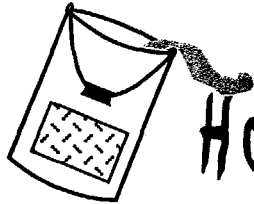


Rose-Marie exits our teepee at **Wigwam Village**. They don't accept pets – so that's Jesse she hides in her sweater.



Hurricane Ivan drove us to take sanctuary at Joe & Patty Green's in Florida – and play **Lord of the Rings** Trivial Pursuit. Above, the Boll Weevil monument in Enterprise AL.





mc²

ma

How Far Will Water Run Uphill?

πr^2

For those of you who have been following the exploits of my new home ownership- let me bring you closer to being up-to-date. At last visit, the new Honda lawnmower was successfully mowing the lawn and inflicting only minor injuries--the same is still true. The basement was having, to put it delicately, water difficulties--and I'll let you be the judge on that status. The newest problem (put in here just to tantalize and let you know there will be a future installment!) is the gradual disappearance of the front yard...poof!

As you may recall, I moved to a *new* home (new to me) from the farm where I grew up. I never knew houses actually required care-since we never did anything to the farmhouse (which may have had something to do with its being demolished, but I digress)-other than periodically paint the tin roof with aluminum/asbestos paint. I thought gutters were supposed to grow herbage. So, for almost three years I went on a honeymoon with the house- figuring that unless it was actively burning or leaking, it was doing just fine. In the summer of 2003--the monsoon season---I spotted a gray pyramidal outline on the cinderblock wall in the basement and figured this *was not good*. Eventually I had numerous companies come through and take a look to tell me that, while the basement wasn't **actually** leaking (the water that flowed in under the basement door didn't count) there was most assuredly a problem in there somewhere. Estimates went from \$54,000---to dig out the whole house (tearing up the yard etc) one wall at a time and waterproof it--to \$0 (from a friend of a friend who counseled that I just sit and wait to see what would happen).

Eventually I went with a company, *Mid-Atlantic Waterproofing*, whose estimate started out at \$18,500 to dig a trench around the whole basement floor and put in what I later called *french drains*- thank you Google---but would not redo the nifty Italian tiles. They finally came down to a hair under \$5,000 to do the same thing along only the wall where the ominous gray shadow had been spotted. As you might expect, there was a catch. Pay attention- this becomes important later! In order to get this super low price, I would have to accept the use of a commercial crew---at whatever date they would be available. Hmm.... and wouldn't you know--they just happened to have had a cancellation for late **January 2004**. Okay, that was only 5 months away...I could handle that.

I believe it was September--I have purposefully forgotten the date--that the forecast came in for a hurricane. This little lady was to be called Isabel and would be my first big storm in the new house. The farm had been located at the top of a rise, with the bankbarn even higher than the house, which meant that high winds were our primary concern there...and I figured that would hold true at the new place.

As the locals are wont to do, everyone panicked and laid in a month's supply of bread, milk, toilet paper, and videos. Me? I just made sure the flashlights had batteries and settled in to enjoy the gray majesty of a full blown..uh..er..blow. And enjoy the sound and fury I did. It was a wonder-full experience. The air cooled right down and the terrific rumbling was a great background for sleeping.

During the night, the electricity went out--but hey, I was prepared!

The next day dawned clear and bright. Up at 7, I took a stroll around the yard and was mighty proud of myself--only minor leaves and branches down. I did get a call from the guy who had come over to do a long list of assorted jobs (such as caulking- I was tired of decorating the walls with the

stuff and wanted it done right) to check and see if I had come through the storm alright. I assured him that, proudly, everything was just fine!

And then I found out the truth.

Although I really didn't have any reason to, I figured I ought to go down and check out the basement. I'd never actually had a basement before and maybe I should see if things were okay...

You have probably already guessed it, things were not okay. Just around the corner and out of sight from the top of the stairs, the water was up to the second step of the nice basement stairway. This is actually a two-story home, but the first story happens to be underground...with wide wooden stairs, fieldstone and slate landing leading into the family room with fireplace, and sauna-then into the office and finally the workroom and laundry area.

Uh oh--this did not look right.

I kicked off my shoes and went wading...all the way to the back door by the laundry room. Yup. definitely water alright.

I called Mr. Handyman back, rather panicky, and asked if he had any suggestions. Other than a generator...nope. Sigh. I called a few other friends--all of whom were extremely helpful in telling me I needed a sump pump. Ha- I was prepared for that one-I actually knew what a sump pump was and that I had two (count 'em **TWO**) of those suckers neatly drowning in their hole---there was no friggin' electricity. Okay- how about a generator? No, fresh out of those and even if I wanted one there would not be one available for another six months since everyone else had the same idea.

Uh, if Isabel had had the courtesy to wait until after the end of January to drop in- my handy dandy basement construction came with a battery back up system-I would have been spared all this anguish. What to do...what to do....?

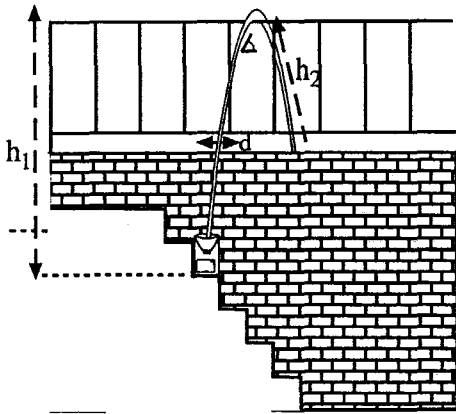
Okay- no time to keep thinking about this--grab two of those big buckets (5-6 gallons?) and start filling them up...and climb up the stairs from the basement and dump it down the side hill. Oh yeah, this is going to be a LOT of fun. You must also remember that the house has wall electric outlets about a foot off the floor and at this point the water was just about licking at them. Since I know enough about electricity to know I did not want water flowing into the outlets, especially while I was traipsing around more than ankle-deep in that same water. I simply pulled the breaker for the whole house--just in case the current came on while I was bailing.

I was not a happy camper...and those water filled buckets were **heavy**.

After a dozen trips up and down the stairs, it was painfully (literally) obvious to me that I would not win the race to keep the water level below the electric outlet. Think...**think!**

If you ask me what is the **one** thing that has been the most useful to me since moving into this house, it would be, no hesitation, knowing how to create a siphon. I ~~ran~~ splashed out to the tool shed and dragged up a garden hose. Question: how far will water run uphill?

I actually stopped long enough to give that some serious thought--did I know the height of my water column...its diameter...what angle...how high would... No- forget this and just try something-**anything!** Remember, as I said- this house is downhill-so while the rain had stopped, I was actively getting the runoff from a dozen other houses above me and it was not going to get better until I got the water out, the electricity came back on, or I drowned .



Okay--I know water will not magically (at least not in this world) flow out of this bucket in the basement... then exactly how far *up* the steps can I move the filled bucket and get the siphon going...? There must be a formula out there somewhere. The water is rising and the clock is ticking. Forget trying to calculate you idiot--just do **something**.

Twenty minutes later, I had the answer--if a full bucket of water was placed on the second step from the top and a primed garden hose, draped over the railing, shoved into it, the water would actually flow down the hill at the rate of one bucket a minute. That meant that if I tired and slowed down, I would lose the siphon and have to start all over again. Man, I almost knocked myself out at least a handful of times trying to get the suction back. I learned it would be best to keep that suction going at any cost!

Right- plan in place- now start hauling. And haul I did- from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.--with no planned stops at the rate of two buckets, dump one into the reservoir bucket - rest 30 seconds and dump two, then back to re-fill. It began to rain again. I tried to carry an umbrella along with the buckets and gave up--after all, I was already soaked, what did it matter?

At 7 p.m. I had to accept the fact that I simply could not keep this assembly line going any longer. By looking at the soak marks on the wall, I could tell that, while staying ahead of any rise, I was definitely not actually lowering the level much. It as getting dark. I gave up. What else was there for me to do? As it was, I figured I would not be able to move the next day-- let things just fall apart- I was too tired (and wet and cold and...) to care.

But, hope springs eternal. I went back to the breaker panel and made an executive decision. The individual circuits were labeled--okay, how about making a compromise and activating the ones that were labeled sump pump and leave the others off? That way, so my logic went, when the current came back on, the pumps would kick in. I was devoutly hoping that the lower outlets (the ones for the sump pumps are three feet off the floor) would truly be dead (if not, then, potentially, I would be)--**please**, if I was wrong, I don't want to know.

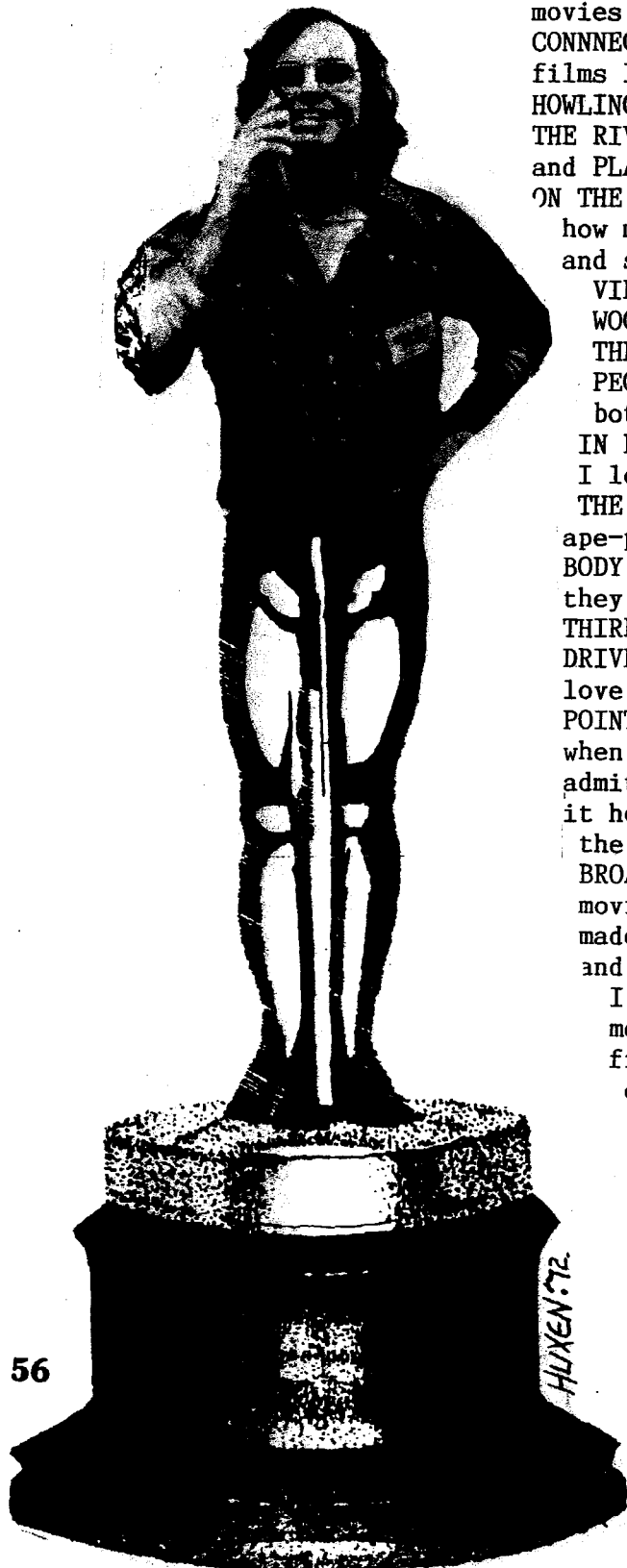
I, very slowly, hobbled upstairs and collapsed. An hour later I looked out the window and saw lights back on in the neighboring houses. Uh oh, this does not sound good--there was no deep purr telling me the the sump pumps were doing their thing. Well, I thought, maybe I just can't hear them. Unfortunately, when I got back down the steps, the water level was the same. Sigh- what to do? In all honesty, I did think about potentially being electrocuted if I stepped into the water, but at that point I was simply too tired to care. I did...and nothing happened.

As soon as I hit the main circuit breaker, the sumps roared to life--what a glorious sound-hallelujah. The previous owner had mislabeled the circuits.

I felt so very insignificant when, ten minutes later, all the water was gone. All that work....

Postscript- the company came in January and put in the drain and back-up...to their system. Petrified that the same problem might somehow develop in the future, I paid to have another back-up system installed for the existing system. The mess they made and the ensuing "discussion" with the Better Business Bureau will wait for another day. For a month, the basement was dry. Then the day came when the basement flooded again- but from an entirely unexpected source--read about it in future episodes!

MOVIES



I love movies. I love PSYCHO and STRANGERS ON A TRAIN and VERTIGO and a dozen other Hitchcock masterworks. I love FRANKENSTEIN and ALIENS and PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK. I love WITNESS and ON THE WATERFRONT and BLOOD SIMPLE. I love crime movies like THE ASPHALT JUNGLE and THE FRENCH CONNECTION and THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY, and horror films like DAWN OF THE DEAD and CARRIE and THE HOWLING. I love movies about war like BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI and PATHS OF GLORY and STALAG 17 and PLATOON, and THE GRAND ILLUSION and ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT and SANDS OF IWO JIMA. Funny how many movies are about war. I love obscure and symbolic movies like LA DOLCE VITA and THE VIRGIN SPRING and WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOLF? I love movies about joy like ZORBA THE GREEK and movies about pain like ORDINARY PEOPLE. I love the STAR WARS trilogy and both versions of THE THING and AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, to change directions all at once. I love Stanley Kubrick, even BARRY LYNDON and THE SHINING, and his FULL METAL JACKET is ape-porkin' wonderful. I love CHINATOWN, and BODY HEAT, and the movies like DOUBLE INDEMNITY they sprang from. I love CITIZEN KANE and THE THIRD MAN and THE GRAPES OF WRATH, and TAXI DRIVER and PINOCCHIO and LADY AND THE TRAMP. I love EASY RIDER and MEDIUM COOL and VANISHING POINT. I love the Oscars. I cheered (mutedly) when CHARIOTS OF FIRE won the Academy Award and admit to a glad tear rolling when PLATOON took it home. I can usually call the winners and the two Best Pictures I've never seen, THE BROADWAY MELODY and CAVALCADE, are tops on my movie want-to-see list. I love HAIR because it made me cry and ROCKY because it made me cheer and STREETWISE because it made me give a damn. I love BEAUTY AND THE BEAST because it filled me with wonder. I love TOM JONES because it filled me with laughter. I love ALIEN because it filled me with dread, and ALIENS because it covered me with sweat. I love PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE because it was so awful and FANTASIA because it was so grand. I love the movies, the vicarious experience, the drama, the indirect instruction, the lessons from left field. They do not just fill time; they fulfill it. Lives made only of light that light our own. I love the movies.

**

This page originally appeared in Spiritus Mundi 100 in the July, 1987 mailing of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance.

In case you were wondering ...

A NEW TAKE ON THE MOON HOAX OF 1835

Richard Dengrove

In case you do not know about the Moon Hoax of 1835, the idea is that the *New York Sun* published over six days an article about how the greatest astronomer of the time, Sir John Herschel, had built a new super-powerful telescope. With this telescope, he was able to see life on the Moon, intelligent life. The article was supposedly written from information supplied by his amanuensis, Dr. Andrew Grant. It caused a great sensation. The sensation then still causes a sensation now.

People have criticized me for writing about this hoax because so much has been written about it. It has but the popular accounts we see differ very little. The reader is left puzzled by what the people in 1835 thought. In the usual accounts, only bits and pieces are given about that, and people's actions remain a Chinese puzzle.

I thought it would be interesting to figure out what people were thinking then. Why a few created the hoax. And why so many fell for it.

What were the publishers of the *New York Sun* thinking? Most accounts say they wanted to make money. It is often not clear that that was more important for them than for other newspapers. This was a one penny newspaper, one of several, priced so the average New Yorker could buy it. The more serious newspapers cost six cents.

Illos by Terry Jeeves

However, to make money, the *Sun*, as a penny newspaper, had to sell quite a few newspapers. It was a matter of economies of scale. There were dire consequences if they did not. The very first one penny newspaper had folded because it did not sell enough.

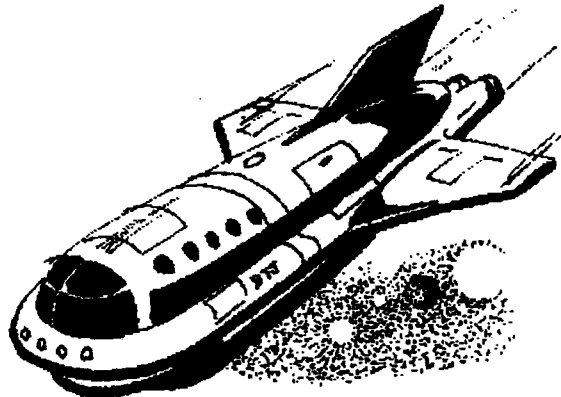
So much did the then owners Moses Beach and Benjamin Day think the Moon Hoax would increase circulation that the author, Richard Adams Locke, claimed they paid him \$150 for it. Benjamin Day claimed it was \$600. In any case, it was good money in those days.

Today we think a newspaper made for the masses would be manned

by grizzled newspaper men. This did not seem to be the case then. The American born Locke was a University of Cambridge graduate when being a university graduate meant something. He also had some status because he was related to the 18th Century philosopher John Locke.

Still, while he might have regarded himself as a 'gentleman' and as practicing a higher ethical standard, writing and selling this 'humbug' did not seem to bother him much.

The nation was not divided along class when it came to publishing, or reading, such 'humbugs' as the Moon Hoax. Rich and poor would do both. An owner of the *Sun*, Benjamin Day came from humble origins as had a previous



owner, George Wisner. Day loved humbugs but George had preferred that they publish more factual news.

So what did Richard Adams Locke think of his Moon Hoax? I am certain he liked the \$150 or \$600 he received, but I gather that was not his original inspiration. What was it? Benjamin Day claimed Locke had a highflown explanation where he claimed it was a satire on the political press in America. However, the political press was very extensive in the 1830s, and such an indictment sounds too broad to be the inspiration.

The real inspiration, I believe Locke laid out to a William Griggs, who wrote about it in 1853. Locke told Griggs he had been outraged by the Reverend Thomas Dick, a Scotsman famous for writing about astronomy. Also, Dick was licensed to preach in the Presbyterian Church. Unlike America's political press, Dick had at least something to do with other planets being inhabited. In fact, he had written extensively on the question.

However, it was something else, besides Dick's books, that first aroused Locke's outrage. He apparently read a lot on science. In his readings, he had come upon an anonymous article in the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*. It mentioned that the German astronomer Gruithuisen had claimed that he had discovered vast structures on the Moon, which could only have been erected by Lunarians. These structures, the geologist Noggerath was skeptical of.

The article does not say it, but such 'discoveries' had apparently gained Gruithuisen patronage from the most powerful man in Europe, Prince Metternich.

Gruithuisen's claims did not outrage Locke too much. What outraged him was Gruithuisen and another astronomer, Gauss, suggested that money be raised to erect giant geometrical figures on the plains of Siberia. The Lunarians would see them and signal back.

This seemed a great waste of money to Locke because there was no proof intelligent life inhabited the Moon. A lot of moderns would have agreed about extraterrestrial life in general.

Less reasonably, Locke believed he could see the hand of the Reverend Thomas Dick in this article even though Dick was skeptical of claims intelligent life had actually been observed on the

Moon.

Next, in Griggs' book, Locke went on to a diatribe against Dick proper. Locke thought it was **Celestial Scenery** that had outraged him, but that was written three years after the hoax. However, other of Dick's books would have done just as well.

For Locke, Dick's crime was mixing religion and science a little too much. At one point in the Hoax, Locke mentions this objection. He has Herschel's observe a temple of the higher Man Bats; and note he does not know whether it had been consecrated to religion or science.

What particularly outraged Locke about the Reverend Dick? Locke singles out that Dick ignored that other planets beside Earth were tilted away from the Sun, and must have seasons and storms.

This has no great implications now, but it did then. It is not Fundamentalist religion, but the Physico-Theological religion of the 18th Century. Most of the rest of the universe must be better than Earth because God is good and our Earth definitely is not. For instance, the other planets must not have storms and temperature extremes, like Earth. The subtitle to Dick's **Celestial Scenery** says it all: *illustrating the perfections of deity and a plurality of worlds*

In its way, the Great Moon Hoax resembled another famous hoax of the 19th Century, the Cardiff giant. That poked fun at religion too.

What did people think of the Great Moon Hoax of 1835? According to Alex Boese of the Museum of Hoaxes, the *Sun's* circulation actually went down. It claimed a circulation of 26,000 two weeks before the hoax, and 19,000 during. So, according to the paper's own statistics, it lost circulation. From this, Boese infers people ignored the hoax.

However, Susan Thompson of the University of Alabama shows that this is misleading. The 26,000 circulation represents a freak circumstance. Two weeks before, a fire had occurred in the printing district, and the *Sun's* penny rivals were temporarily put out of commission.

The Moon Hoax and its aftermath, however, represent a more permanent circumstance. It may not have been a big deal that the Sun circulation was 19,000 at the time of the Hoax. It is a big deal the *Sun's* circulation remained at 19,000

for quite a while. That was 2,000 papers more than the paper with the second largest circulation, the *London Times*.

Thus, people were intensely interested in the Hoax.

It is also obvious, despite contrary claims contemporary and recent, they believed the Hoax at the time. Edgar Allen Poe says that only one person in twelve doubted the Moon Hoax – and for the wrong reasons. Mostly, I bet, very conservative believers in religion. Others reported that the students and professors at Yale believed in the article implicitly, and could not wait until they got the next issue of the *Sun*.

It is easy to see why people believed in the Moon Hoax. Moon Men, Lunarians, Selenites had been the most popular type of extraterrestrial for several centuries. This was despite the fact that it had been known since Galileo that the Moon's atmosphere contained no water.

The real Sir John Herschel continued to believe in intelligent life both on the Moon and Sun. Even into the 20th Century some continued, beyond hope, to believe in intelligent life on the Moon.

Along with people ready to believe, the hoax had another thing going for it, Richard Adams Locke. I gather he was not that impressive in his looks. I suspect Locke's cross eyes and pockmarks from smallpox would have undone any other effect of his looks or social status.

However, the only thing of importance here is Locke's writing style. There is no question he was regarded an exceptional writer. Edgar Allen Poe describes it as concise, spartan and complete. In that day, he probably was. The *Sun* regarded him as its star reporter.

There was more to him than this. The Moon Hoax shows Locke was a very versatile writer. I suspect he was not trying to be concise and spartan; he was purposely trying to make his account as complex and scientific sounding as would befit the amanuensis of Sir John Herschel.

In addition, Locke gives detail after detail. These enable the readers to picture the Moon, and makes the Hoax more real. For instance, that the Moon has quite a few giant crystals.

Not all details were exotic, however. Some details were so mundane we never think of them. Locke had the astronomers acting like astronomers,

e.g., adjusting their telescope with planetary movements and watching other heavenly bodies when the Moon's orbit was no longer propitious. In addition, he promises 40 pages of scientific appendices.

Using all these devices, like Locke did, makes any account more credible. Such details have made many other hoaxes completely believable. It certainly did Mencken's Bathtub Hoax, which keeps being believed over seventy years after Mencken himself exposed it.

What probably helped too was that Locke mentioned intelligent life on the Moon almost in passing. A famous astronomer, like Sir John Herschel could not be bothered with details like that.

It is easy to understand how the circulation could have increased during the hoax. People believed that something marvelous and wonderful was being reported, something they really wished to believe. This has been called the P.T. Barnum effect. People, in the 1830s, flocked to see his humbugs, such as the Fiji Mermaid and 160 year old maid of George Washington.

However, the effect only works as long as a marvel has not been debunked. That had not been the case with the Moon Hoax. Locke had admitted over drinks to the *Journal of Commerce* reporter Finn that he had fabricated the Moon Hoax.

Nonetheless, readers remained faithful to the *Sun*.

My best guess is that once the hoax had been burst, it was easy to see it had been a joke. In fact, people could kick themselves for not having taken it as a joke.

The usual reason given then and now were the scientific jokes. I have to admit that they inspired intense laughter in people who could pick up on them. For instance, Sir John Herschel, the astronomer Locke attributed the amazing Moon discoveries to. Sir John laughed immediately after someone showed the articles to him.¹

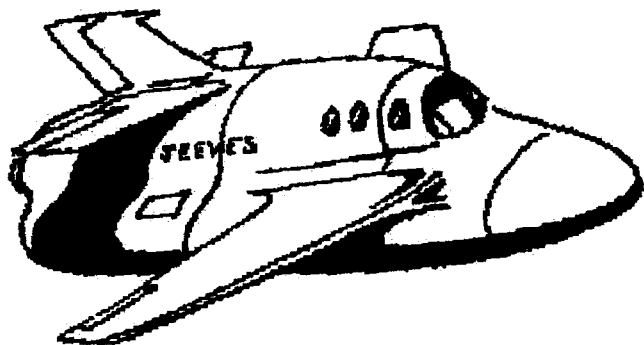
Other people who found the hoax funny were the scientists at the French *Académie des*

¹He did resent one thing about the Moon Hoax: so many people wrote him to ask whether the story was true.

sciences The astronomer Arago read the articles to this, the greatest French scientific organization, and was occasionally interrupted by uncontrollable laughter.

Most readers, I doubt would have kicked themselves for not picking up on the fact that Herschel's 42,000 times magnification would still be like seeing from five or six miles off. You certainly could not spot the color of small birds' eyes.

In addition, I doubt most readers would have kicked themselves for not realizing that the



Cambridge Journal of Science, where the hoax was supposed to be reprinted from, had been renamed the *Cambridge New Philosophical Journal* in 1826.

All this would have required knowledge the mass of *Sun* readers would not expect themselves to possess.

On the other hand, they might easily have kicked themselves for not getting the humorous account of Moon men. People in 1835 were more status conscious. Locke had a tendency to turn ideas of status upside down, which, through the ages, has been considered humorous.

The intelligent, Biped Beavers with their huts just tilted the ideas of status a little bit. Beavers were used for hats, so there was some dissonance between manlike behavior and beavers. On the other hand, beavers have been considered industrious and clever. The phrase "Busy as a beaver" had apparently been in use since the 18th Century. This prevented beavers from being considered too low.

I bet these Biped Beavers were meant to lead up to the full ludicrousness of the Man Bats. Locke gave them the Latin name of *Vespertilio-*

homo. In that age, a bat was a little regarded creature while man was regarded as the highest creature on Earth.

The actual description of their wings may have been taken word for word from Peter Wilkins' flying islanders; but, by making them into Man Bats, Locke seems to have injected his own humor.²

In addition, Locke made comparisons between the Biped Beavers and Man Bats and humans held in lower regard. Of course, the regard they were held in was not quite that low. He had an officer compare the lower Man Bats to a Cockney militia on a parade ground. Even these lower Man Bats came off as more dignified.

Another butt of humor, I admit, you needed at least some education to understand. However, those with it might have kicked themselves for not getting the joke. In the end, the more superior *Vespertilio-homo* do a sort of dance. This is what has been known as an Idyll, a dance of 'country folk.' It had been a vehicle for satire and humor since Ancient times. I am certain Locke wanted that connotation for his Moon Hoax.

We still hear about the Idyll. Two writers of the first Star Trek series, Gilbert Ralston and Gene Coon, included one in Episode 33 Season two. The Enterprise crew meets the 'real' God Apollo, who wishes to be worshiped by a rustic dance, an Idyll. It is a different take on the same thing.

Finally, people might have kicked themselves for humor in Sir John Herschel's wonder telescope of a nonscientific variety. By accident once, it was not positioned properly for the night, burnt a hole in the observatory, and fused some of its metal reflectors, which rendered them useless. It took some time to put the telescope back in operation again.

This must be nothing in our age of lasers, but must have made a clever joke in that age when magnification was rarely very powerful. I suspect it did this even though the more educated readers

²Robert Paltock, *The life and adventures of Peter Wilkins, or The history of the flying islanders*. Boston: Baker & Alexander, 1828.

may have remembered the Greek philosopher Archimedes. He set the sails of Roman ships on fire with a large mirror.

Episodes such as these, I bet ordinary readers remembered as ones they would kick themselves for not getting.

Laughter was not the only reaction to the Moon Hoax, though. Suspicion was another. Locke's hoaxes were never credible again. A year later he left the *Sun* and established a newspaper, *The New Era*. There he attempted another joke, articles purporting to be the final adventures of Mungo Park. Historically, Park was a famed and foolhardy African explorer of the 1790s. Poe assures us Locke made up some very imaginative adventures for him.

However, none of the readers bit. Even in that age of humbug, the Moon Hoax was apparently enough.

What did the Reverend Thomas Dick think? The person the Moon Hoax was aimed at to begin with. He did not like it. He said,

"The author of this deception, I understand, is a young man in the city of New York, who makes some pretensions to scientific acquirements, and he may perhaps be disposed to congratulate himself on the success of his experiment on the public."

Dick went on to say that the hoax was against the laws of God, created chaos in the world, and was injurious to science. It made the unlearned doubt the discoveries of science.

In short, he did not appreciate fun at his expense.

Dick ended by saying.

"It is to be hoped that the author of this deception to which I have adverted, as he advances in years and in wisdom, will perceive the folly and immorality of such conduct."

On the other hand the Reverend Dick did change his view. He originally believed life on other planets might be discovered in his lifetime. After the hoax, he began doubting that it would be.

I do not know if this is precisely the effect Locke wanted.

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The Challenger Tribute –

GERI SULLIVAN

By far the highlight of our 2004 was our work on the Noreascon 4 program book, and by far the highlight of our efforts on that tome was the visit of designer GERI SULLIVAN to our abode. Not only was her work on the book brilliant and creative, her friendliness and her patience and her unremitting

drive made the experience wonderful. When you consider that Geri was also responsible for the design work on most of the other publications put forth by the 2004 worldcon, well, in a **Challenger** dominated by Noreascon, there is no one else whom I could possibly honor with my tribute. Like cover artist Bob Eggleton said, kid, *we done good*. And more than anyone else, it was thanks to you.

Now, Geri, how about another great **Idea**?

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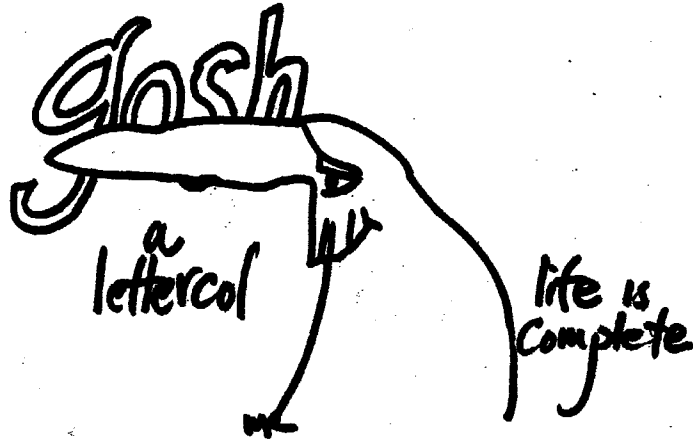
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THE CHORUS LINES

...

Art by Rotsler



Some notes of my own on **Challenger**

#20. First and most obviously, my apologies for the dreadful appearance of the photographs – the result of my personal laziness in cleaning the jets of our printer. Thanks again to Patrice Green for making the shots look simply great on the **Challenger** website. Secondly, and sadly, I must note the passing of Faye Best, author of “It’s Me, Katy, Talking”. Her daughter said that Faye spoke often of me and the other members of my writing class from Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina, and that means a lot. Rest peacefully, fine lady.

The letters below deal not only with **Challenger** #20, but **The Zine Dump** and, in one instance, the **Noreascon 4 Program Book!** Which cues ...

We Also Heard From: Chris Barkley, Astrid Bear, Ms. Ruby Bernstein (my high school journalism teacher), Camille Cazedessus (“As for me, I’d prefer to sit next to Mike Resnick and listen”), Brian Comnes, Harlan Ellison, E.B. Frohvet, Mike Glycer, Patrice Green, Jan Grogan, John Hertz, Ben Indick, Terry Jeeves, Samanda Jeude, Earl Kemp, Robert Lichtman, Joy Moreau, Janeen Schouten, Sheila Strickland (nice of her to mention my Hugo nomination at CrescentCityCon), Frank Wu, Kate Yule (“You inspire me – maybe we should include some SF content in the next **Bento!**”).

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Greetings Guy ~

I was so pleased to find a new **Challenger** in the mail this week, and then doubly surprised to discover, as I read the locs commenting on things I had no recollection of, that somewhere along the lines I never got a copy of issue #19! No wonder it felt like it had been so long between issues. Is there any chance there is a copy left of #19 you could send this way? Love to read Sue's comments on her Hugo win, and Mike's Torcon report.

You will get a copy of #19 as soon as I can afford to reprint; in the meantime, check it out at Patrice Green's superb website, www.challzine.net.

It all kind of felt like the pissed-off

curmudgeon issue here, what with things like the Resnick movie rant, and Taral's **Thunderbirds** comments.

I think Mike does, indeed, need to relax a bit on finding the problems in sci-fi movies. (And I have selected that term carefully here.) I no longer am concerned when they are done badly, I have come to expect that, but just try to appreciate more those efforts that work well. I mean, I can quibble too, like I thought the remake of **The Thing** actually did a better job of the core of the original story, of the not knowing who the creature was at any time, the paranoia of such a scenario. The first movie was, to me, standard sci-fi "monster-out-there" stuff. The remake had that creepy "who is it" idea much better.

I loved them both. Douglas Spenser – “Scotty” in the original, who gets to say “Keep Watching

the Skies" – reminds me of my father.

And as for the Star Wars movies, forget all the science-versus-psi'ence stuff, the thing that bugged me was what I see in so many movies, where the good guy has the bad guy in his sights, and the bad guy gives some sort of "You can't hurt me, then you'd be as bad as me" crap, and the hero buys it. Of course, then the bad guy does some underhanded thing so the good guy can still kill him, but now in personal, at-that-moment self defense. Give me a break!

As far as **Thunderbirds** and their brethren, just nice to see a mention of **Fireball XL5**. I remember little of the original TV show, but I do recall having a super-cool toy of the Fireball ship with all sorts of neat little parts that I spent endless hours playing with. Love to have that back again!

On Albert's actually, really, honestly seeing the spectre of Death itself ... well, I can see I believe that he believes it, and that he does so quite strongly, since he has no problem in telling us that he was sitting comfortably in a place where he could easily fall asleep before it started, and that he also could just have easily still been asleep when his beeper woke him. Yes, he makes a point of saying he wasn't asleep. I find that very hard to believe. I have a distinct memory as a child of a skeleton walking down the hall outside my bedroom. My memory says it was really there, my brain tells me it is more likely a very strong memory of a very strong dream. But hey, a cool story.

The part of Tim Marion's article about visiting with his parents that sticks in my mind is when he notes he spent time laying outside in the sun, after previously having noted how much he hated the heat in New York, and how hot and uncomfortable it was there. I've never understood the urge to lay down in the sun and get hot. Maybe has to do with the fact I am one of the world's major sweating machines, my shirt will get soaked when the temperature just starts to graze 80 degrees. And yet, here I live in Texas ... of course, my definition of "outside" is that area I move through as quickly as possible from the air-conditioned building to the air-conditioned vehicle.

Major nods of agreement with "What About that Ditch?" Had the opportunity to truly set an example for the world of how ultimate power can be used ... but heck, looks like it has corrupted once more. Proud of this country, embarrassed by the people presently in charge of it all.

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Interesting cover. You do remember Enemy Ace, don't you?

And how. Remember that his first book-length adventure made my top-15-comics-stories list a few issues back.

Fandom won't put Charlie Williams and Marc Schirmeister and Randy Cleary and Jeff Potter and Kurt Erichsen on the Hugo ballot next year. They will be overwhelmed by the folks who say, "yeah, I know Teddy Harvia, I'll put him down ..." Just like the people who say, "Fan Writer? Sure, Langford and ... and ... and ..." Not to mention the people who say "I saw Berkwits ask to be nominated and I saw Flynn, so I'll put them down."

"The Real Future of Space": Today Bert Rutan's SpaceShipOne flew. Spending \$20,000,000+ to win \$10,000,000 I hope the foundation has . . .

Fred Pohl wrote "The Midas Plague" as an examination of how a post-money society might work. Then he thought about how it *would* work and wrote "The Man Who Ate the World". Nothing in a post-money society ever has to be fixed, even the people. Er, make that "repaired". Having goods is only half the problem of economics.

Mike Resnick would profit from examining the Internet Movie Data Base (<http://www.imdb.com>) where many of his questions can be answered. For example, he asks, "Let's take **Blade Runner** (and someone please explain the title, since I never saw a blade or a runner in the whole damned movie)."

Ridley Scott read a script that was an adaptation of Alan E. Nourse's **The Blade Runner**. (Written by William S. Burroughs, for what it's worth.) He liked the title, so he bought the rights to *that*. Just the title. Then he bought the rights to Philip K. Dick's **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?** and made *that* into the movie.

Deckard is supposed to get the replicants before they kill Tyrell.

I don't think we can say anything against **Blade Runner**, considering that **Kill People**, which has much the same idea, was nominated for

Best Novel Hugo.

As for E.T., he is the advance scout for the aliens of **Independence Day**. "We've got them psychologically softened up: now we attack!"

"What is a woman with an unexceptional day job doing living in a \$900,000 house in one of the posher parts of the Los Angeles area?"

Because everyone the director knew who had an unexceptional day job lived in a \$900,000 house in one of the posher parts of the Los Angeles area. Movies always overstate the real income of the characters. In **Flashdance** Alex (Jennifer Beals plus Marine Jehan [dance double]) is a union welder and an interpretative dancer. She lives in a loft that a yuppie would pay \$3k month for.

Mad magazine had an even better question about E.T.; if he can cure injuries by touching them, why doesn't he cure himself?

People who are in horror movies don't watch horror movies. You know: "Well, here we are, the car broke down in the middle of the storm in the middle of the night and we have to take refuge in the scary old mansion where all the people were killed thirty years ago. What are we going to do? Hey, let's go skinny dipping!" The people in **The Blair Witch Project** were in a part of Maryland where walking in a straight line in any direction for two hours would get them to safety. So they wandered around shooting grotesque close-ups of each other.

Actually, **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen** left out a number of Victorian figures. Frank Reade, for example. Or Harry Flashman. Captain Nemo is an Indian, according to **L'Isle mysterieuse**. The karate, now ... The movie people couldn't get the rights to the "Griffin" character of Wells's original book, so they put in a new Invisible Man.

Blast Taral Wayne. Now I've got the theme song from **Fireball XL-5** running through my head. "My heart will be with Fireball ... with Fireball..." and since there were only three channels we could pick up then, in Hopkinsville, I can't even find anything else distracting.

If Dr. Hilton will get in touch with Cathy Gill or Greg Sullivan of the Sherlock Holmes/Arthur Conan Doyle Symposium (I can provide email addresses), to arrange to read or have this read there, I am sure all those involved would be extremely pleased. As for Sutton having the seven thousand pounds, I recall reading a book on the Great Train

Robbery which listed what each of the robbers did with his money. The largest category was "stolen by minder." And the Brinks Robbery was broken because O'Keefe had had his share stolen by Joe McGinniss. So it makes perfect sense to me that Sutton/Blessington would keep the seven thousand quid, but tell the bobbies (and the Crown Prosecution Service) that the others had it.

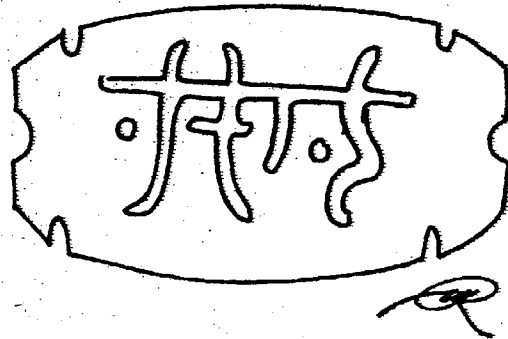
"In a bedroom I found my little cousin Joe, with at least two bigger, older girls piled on top of him". Of all the people in the world, I turn out not to be related to Tim Marion. Sigh.

Milt Stevens says of Vic Mackey from **The Shield**: "If Mackey was assigned to the case, he would immediately de-rail a train, commit piracy on the high seas, burn down a pre-school, torture a few nuns, and then decide he didn't give a shit about the Unabomber anyway." And then he would open this package he got from Montana.

IMDB says "The police technical consultant to the show told Michael Chiklis (who plays Vic Mackey) that all police officers would love the show, even those above the rank of captain who would denounce it in public." Doesn't this worry you?

To E. B. Frohvet: I suppose George Price and I will get around to editing the article on **Citizen of the Galaxy** by the end of the year. You will be able to see then the point about infant footprints, which determines slightly more than an insurance payment ...

Robert Kennedy: Back a decade and a half ago there was quite the kerfuffle over one year's Best Fanzine Hugo. A committee of thirty-one fans signed an advertisement saying that since none of the nominated fanzines was really Hugo quality, fans should vote "No Award" for Best



Fanzine. A Noreascon Hugo administrator pointed out that only five of the fans who had signed the ad had bothered to nominate anything, and if they had all nominated a fanzine, it would have got on the ballot. It was later pointed out that the thirty-one fans would probably have nominated a hundred and fifty-five different fanzines (at five each) or something like that; anyway, that there wasn't that much agreement. Nevertheless, the incident confirmed my belief that fandom consists of people who don't do things they think should be done but corrosively criticize those who do.

Martin Morse Wooster: Why do you think I had the CSI team make up a profile that so failed to describe Hut Man? Especially since real profilers did exactly that.

"It's Me, Katy, Talking": Why am I reminded that Whittaker Chambers translated Felix Salten's **Bambi**?

"Strange Schwartz Stories": You never know when you have it so good. I think that applies to all of us.

E.B. Frohvet
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Regrettably, I never had occasion to meet Julius Schwartz. I never thought of comics fandom and SF fandom having much overlap.

This is the first piece of Frank Wu's art I have ever seen. Colorful. Acrylics, right? It would require enormous patience to do that sort of thing in oils.

I thought you were a little hard on poor old Reagan. Given that you vigorously disagreed with his policies – it still seems as if you were most ticked off because he was good at putting up a charming facade. He was an actor and a politician. What did you expect? I don't even think he hated poor people. I think he was just totally oblivious.

Nancy Reagan's courageous – and wise – campaign on behalf of stem-cell research has won me over insofar as she is concerned, and I applaud Ron Jr.'s public disgust with W, so at least my resentment with RR doesn't extend to his family. Nor to his movies: he was very fine in Kings Row and Night Unto Night – and never worse than Not Bad.

"The Real Future of Space": I assume we're agreed that sub-orbital, a la Bert Rutan, is a dead end, except for tourism. Making sub-orbital

economically feasible does not make orbital economically feasible. And no nation on Earth is going to allow nuclears for Earth-launch. So we're stuck with chemical rockets. Which means we need a chemical heavy-lifter-to-orbit: either the shuttle, or an unmanned large rocket. And someone is going to have to pay for that. Barring some breakthrough that makes orbital launch cost-effective, the U.S. government looks like the only plausible candidate.

(Or, we need to solve the problems of 2005-2007 before we concern ourselves with the problems of 2059.)

Mike Resnick overlooks the fact that movies (yes, even **LotR**) are made for an audience of 15-year-old boys; not him.

I had the pleasure of meeting Robert Kennedy at Chicon, back in the day when I was still attending conventions.

Craig Hilton's impression of the U.S. appears to have come from bad news reports. The media in Australia are most likely to see the U.S. through the lens of politics and international affairs, which almost certainly does not represent a fair picture. Feel free to come visit, Craig, you'll find us more complex – and probably more likable – than your (dare I say "simplistic"?) impression.

But Craig has visited America. I met him here in the mid-eighties.

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Thank you for **Challenger** #20, a very impressive issue. We note the splendid Frank Wu cover, which combines a mythical fire-breathing dragon with the real Baron Manfred von Richtofen and his Fokker triplane. Well, he *was* real, but the Red Baron had the good luck to die in 1918 before being associated with the Nazis, and flew into legend, so I guess it's all right.

I never had any professional dealings with Julie Schwartz, but I knew him from going to conventions, and he was aware of my cartooning, and one Lunacon he presented me with a shiny gold Superman pin. And the next year, he asked me why I wasn't wearing it, and I told him that when my son had seen it, he said *All right!* and all of a sudden it was *his* pin. Julie thought that was very funny, but he didn't have any replacement for me. A fine look at olden times by focusing on one

of the major olden timers.

Greg Benford's article, "The Real Future of Space", was interesting but does not offer any persuasive scenarios for the human colonization of space. Better rockets are needed less than better destinations. Earlier this month, the first civil spacecraft – a rocket launched from an airplane at 50,000 feet – made it up to 62 miles and then returned safely. They said it cost \$20 million, and it's really neat, but what it is is a glorified amusement park ride. One presumes that with modest (or maybe not so modest) scaling up, a plane-carried rocket could make it up into low Earth orbit, though NASA never chose to go that route.

The old dream, von Braun's plan for an earth-orbiting station supporting a Moon-orbiting station, supporting a base on the Moon's surface (from where Gerard K. O'Neil was building his L-5 habitats) still seems as far away as ever. Or receding – these days we can't even make repairs on the Hubble. Given the rates of change in rocket science (slow, expensive, and pretty much mature) and computer science (going like the Energizer Bunny with no asymptotic limit in sight) it is likely that the move into space will have to be robotic.

The only money-making space application is telecommunication satellites, which are controlled from the ground. Light-minutes or hours further out, ground control will be difficult to impossible, so the machines will need to be invested with intelligence. To do what? To do what they can. Compare the PCs of 20 years ago with the PCs of today, and then extrapolate today's little Mars Rover 20 years into the future. If humans are going into space, then UberRovers of the future will have to go before them to construct a destination, a nice shirtsleeves environment, complete with biosphere, ready to be occupied.

What else? Nice to see a photo of Jerry Jacks again; he was, for a time a WSFA member, and a guest in my house. "Dope Court" is depressing; interesting, but sad. The editorial on Ronnie reminds me that the final verdict on that complex man is still out. Dick Cheney said, "Reagan proved that deficits don't matter." Reagan wouldn't agree with him. When his deficit was heading for a whopping 6% of the GDP, Reagan took back some of his humongous tax cuts by enacting the biggest peacetime tax hike in history. His deficits didn't matter because he didn't let them get out of control. Currently the GOP looks to be

shaping itself in the image of George W. Bush: rich, Southern, socially conservative and fiscally irresponsible.

And utterly reckless, feckless and hapless when it comes to foreign affairs.

Martin Morse Wooster

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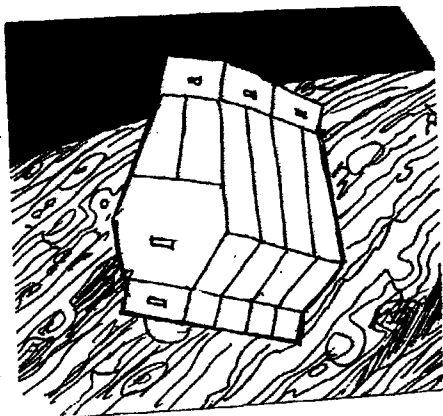
Many thanks for **Challenger #20**. And congratulations on your well-earned Hugo nomination! I have problems with one or two of the fanzines on the Hugo ballot, and a majority of the fan writers, but you deserve to be there, and I hope to see you walking across the stage to snag that rocket in September!

Mike Resnick's article about the stupidities in SF movies was, as with all of Resnick's articles, funny and entertaining. I think my threshold of stupidity in on-screen entertainment is lower than Resnick's, but there are plenty of times when we must cringe at what Hollywood offers us. Take, for example, **The Matrix Revolutions**, a 2 ½ hour compendium of every war movie cliché ever conceived. (As *Washington Post* film critic Stephen Hunter notes, **The Matrix Revolutions** is a film where a character named "The Kid" runs across a battlefield carrying an ammo can to help a machine gunner operating a giant robot.) I'm sure that Resnick screamed when he saw Phileas Fogg, in **Around the World in 80 Days**, wearing Rollerblades.

Gregory Benford's piece about the future of space was, as always, thought-provoking. But where did Benford get the notion that we will run out of oil in 50 years? I'm sure that we'll run out of oil at some point, and I don't believe the theory that oil is continuously created. But all the evidence of the past suggests that when the price of oil rises, companies get to work and find new areas to drill in. Isn't it true that if we only had the proven reserves of 1978, we'd have very little oil now? I'm sure other forms of power will be economically viable sometime, but we ought to let the market decide which form of power production is the most efficient.

I was happy that Guy got permission to reprint his 1974 interview with Julius Schwartz. I only saw Schwartz at cons, although I did read and

enjoy his autobiography, **Man of Two Worlds**. But I do know from reading Bill Schelly's biography of Otto Binder what a good boss Schwartz was. Or comics editors browbeat their freelancers, or tormented them. Schwartz had no need to play power games or have ego trips. By all accounts, Schwartz was a nice guy, who gave some of comics' greatest creators ample freedom to do their best work. Schwartz's fundamental decency is one of many reasons why he will be missed.



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Thank you for the introduction to Julie Schwartz – wish I could have met him. He's certainly one of the godfathers of fandom.

I certainly recognize you in the photos of your younger self.

Great batch of cartoons and art this ish, too.

I'll always recall "Ronnie" as the man who declared ketchup as adequate for a vegetable serving in school lunches. (As a mom I've found that if I stock the fridge with fruit and raw veggies I have to hurry to restock them.)

I loved the **Thunderbirds**, **Stingray** and **Fireball XL-5** – when I was somewhere between 3 and 7 years old. Was it **Stingray** that had the Sea Princess who couldn't/wouldn't speak? The ads for the live action movie seems absolutely goofy. It would have been better to stick to the puppets IMHO.

*I was a little old to appreciate those shows, but have never forgotten the blonde mermaid on **Diver Dan**.*

I got a kick out of Albert Hoffman's

encounter with Death. I've always thought of Death as a compassionate, patient "guy" with a difficult job.

Thus the success of Sandman's sister as a character – and Peter Beagle's terrific short story "Come Lady Death".

Iraq abuses editorial – I'm also dismayed by the all-too-common response of "Well, it's war" and "But look at what they've done to Our Boys." Does anyone remember that Americans used to hold ourselves to a higher standard? I'm heartened to see that so many of us do, but dismayed at a government that has decided that it's all okay – provided they don't get caught and no one does it to us.

I think your court stories, including "Dope Court", should get put into a book – maybe directed to young people. Not as "morality tales" but perhaps a cautionary story that often the consequences are *so much* more intense and heavy than anyone suspected. Unfortunately, in so much of the country drug treatment is vastly underfunded: but readily available to the wealthy and adequately insured.

E.B – A shoe museum would be intense interest to costumers and ladies like Star Jones (**The View** and Payless commercials) who avidly adore and collect shoes. I imagine they might restrict access to Imelda Marcos.

Alex and Guy – I like Guy's take on the *pon farr* handfasting.

Craig Hilton – "Why are so many people unhappy with what we (the U.S.) do?" In part, because American Culture (architecture, McDonald's, new-fangled norms and mores) is pushing local culture off the edge. Marginalizing people in their own homes. Can we learn to trade and interact with other nations and cultures without mutafing them into slightly exotic versions of ourselves? Can we encourage social and legal reforms when the evils we are protesting are practiced just as avidly here?

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Thanks for **Challenger 20**, another excellent issue. Having been a big fan of DC comics for many years, I was saddened at the death of Julius Schwartz, and I appreciated all the tributes to him. The tributes by Mike Friedrich (a

truly underrated comic book writer; I'll never forget the classic scene in one of his JLA in which Hawkman was feeding the remnants of the sacred rock to the undersea people, in imitation of a priest (distributing communion) and Alan Moore were wonderful, as was the article from **The Amazing World of DC Comics**.

Which brings me to Mike Resnick's article "Why Carol Won't Sit Next to Me at Science Fiction Movies." I tend to stay away from sf movies for many of the reasons he describes: an emphasis on special effects and thrills (and stupidity) over logical characterization and plotting (and common sense). The trailers they've been showing for the upcoming **I, Robot** are ludicrous; I don't recall *anything* in that book reminiscent of an action-thriller!

Certainly not one about a "revolt of the robots" – which is not only antithetical but insulting to Asimov's vision. And did you get a load of Hollywood's idea of Susan Calvin?

I avoided the **Superman** movies because of Gene Hackman's hamming it up as Lex Luthor, but perhaps the worst movie version of a comic character was Tommy Lee Jones playing Two-Face as a buffoon. Obviously Jones did not read a single **Batman** comic involving Two-Face or he would have realized he was an utterly-serious, tortured personality, not a Joker wannabe (which is how all Batman villains were portrayed after Jack Nicholson, alas). I dread seeing what they do with Scarecrow and Ras al Ghul in the next movie.

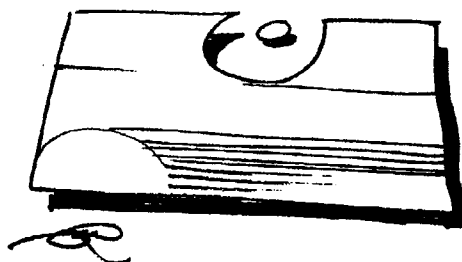
*You shouldn't blame Jones for the Two-Face travesty; when he made **Batman Forever** – or was it **Batman and Robin**? – the directorial duties in the series had slipped from Tim Burton's talented and informed vision to the hack perspective of Joel Schumacher. The fault lies with him. The smirky homoeroticism – rubber nips on the Bat-suit! – and hammy guest stars of his movies were a throwback to the character's atrocious "camp" era – mocking the characters without any trace of humor. Early indications are that the new movie will avoid such drivel in favor of seeing **Batman**, once again, as a **Dark Knight**, and let us pray that Schumacher will inflict no such insults on **The Phantom of the Opera**, due this Christmas.*

There are exceptions. **X-Men 1** (I haven't seen 2 yet). I haven't seen either of the **Spiderman** movies, but reviews are good [and accurate – it's written by the producers of **Smallville** and they know

how to approach a super-hero story] so eventually I'll watch them. But the percentage of bad sf and comics movies far surpasses Sturgeon's 90%. Maybe 99%? **sigh**

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I was hoping to see Sue Mason at Torcon, too. Ah, Torcon was a pivotal time for many of us. For Sue Mason and Rob Sawyer, a golden Hugo for each, and I have seen Rob's golden relic a few times now. For Yvonne and myself, well, enough complaining, but at least, we got to see much of it, and we worked extensively with the L.A.con people to help them win the 2006 Worldcon. Now that Torcon is past, Yvonne and I made a major decision ... no more Worldcons for us. We have our memberships for Noreascon 4, and intend to vote for the Hugos, but we will not go to Boston.



We will not paint all Worldcons with the same brush, but Torcon 3 (and the senior Torcon 3 committee) took the love of Worldcons right out of us. Also, Worldcons have become prohibitively expensive for us. I plan to stay with fanzines, and I am considering a couple of new print projects, but Yvonne has moved into the field of space advocacy, and will be heading to Washington, DC for a NASA brainstorming conference. Our con-running commitments run to 2006, and that is when we intend to retire from convention management.

If there's been any bitterness, it comes from the way Torcon treated us, but that is well past. The future beckons, and given our ages, it is high time to start thinking less about international fandom and more about our retirements. (I say much the same thing in the local, except that we were still planning on attending a couple of

Worldcons more. Plans do change.) We plan to involve ourselves where we feel we're wanted and needed, and for me, that's fanzines. We plan to become much more local fans, where we know we're a part of things.

So many evil aliens ... I will not believe that all aliens are malevolent or bent upon our entire destruction. They are just different, different thought patterns, environment, etc. That's why we call them aliens, hmm? Too many of us have problems dealing with those unlike ourselves.

Mike Resnick's Torcon Diary ... Yvonne and I have eaten at Shopsy's exactly twice, and that's it. It's okay, but there are far better places to eat. I think you pay more for the name, when the Shopsowitz brothers ran the best deli in Toronto, bar none. (We were so busy at T3, we rarely found the time to eat. Our best meal of the week was at the Lone Star Restaurant across the street.) We did make it to the CFG suite a couple of times, but both times, there were few people there, and our commitments to the L.A.con IV people made our time fleeting and valuable. We were pleased that our efforts for LA made such a difference, and the committee showed their appreciation. *That* Worldcon I'll probably regret not going to.

So ... come! In fact, if you haven't made such a trip before, drive – you could pass by Mt.

Rushmore – not that big statues of American Presidents would mean much to a Canadian – and through Yellowstone and cross the Rockies: a truly epic journey!

Great pictures! Rob Sawyer did know that great things were going to happen to him that week, with the Seiun first ... he knew about this ceremony for some time, his win being announced at the Japanese national convention some months beforehand. (*Illegal Alien* was the novel in which Rob Tuckerized me ... I didn't even know I spoke Japanese.) John Hertz' Big Heart win was a marvelous surprise to see unfold, and I got to meet Dave Langford for the first time. I did send an e-mail to you not long after receipt of this zine that the bearded man on page 41 was not Rusty Hevelin but Mike Glicksohn.

An interesting aside ... Yvonne and I were involved in Worldcon masquerades in the 1980s, and we did win a prize or two, but we were not asked to submit anything to the Canadian costuming retrospective. I guess we've been out of costuming so long, no one remembers but us. (We won two

prizes at the Chicon IV masquerade, way back in 1982, for the Royal Canadian Mounted Star Fleet.)

The parade of the departed continues ... PLCM [*P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery*], who would send me copies of the *SFC Bulletin*. Johannes Berg from Norway, who we saw and chatted with at Torcon. Shirley Maiewski of Hatfield, MA, who we had hoped to see in Boston. We try to make as many new friends as we can, for we know that our old friends won't always be with us. I just wish they wouldn't leave us so quickly. Selfish of me, I suppose, but I won't apologize for missing people who were part of my fannish past and present for so long. (Even Julius Schwartz has left us. The fandom we grew up with is becoming but a memory...)

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In my seventy years I have read many editorials and comments espousing all sorts of positions. Some have been superb, some have been lousy, but I am hard pressed to find one to compare with Guy's latest editorial. It is beyond compare! It is magnificent! Never have I encountered one piece that is so filled with ignorance, hypocrisy, absurd exaggeration and just pure drivel.

Lest I be accused of exaggerating the content, let us take it bit by bit.

The first paragraph deals with a photo I haven't seen. I cannot state an opinion about the woman looks like, nor the condition of the body. What I can state is that people have been taking pictures like this since the camera was invented. And there are the same kind of photos from every war on every continent. People take trophies; in the past they have taken scalps, heads, ears, fingers, you name it. It is a common practice, like it or not. As for Americans not doing things like that: Utter nonsense. Americans have always done things like that. The only people who don't do things like that are the ones who are beaten, and don't get the opportunity.

You don't like the idea of a pretty woman doing it: take women out of the Army in combat positions. [Note from Toni: I think you have also misinterpreted the photo. If it's the one I'm thinking of, she is not looming over a dead man, but merely a naked one.] [*Reply to Toni's note:*

Alas, that was a corpse, identified by his son as Munadil al-Jumaily; he wasn't even political.]

I do not know where Guy gets the idea that we are a happy, pretty, superior people. We were never a happy, pretty, superior people. We were hard working, driven, self-reliant and independent, and we devised a system that has provided for the greatest good for the greatest number. Now we're a bunch of fat, lazy slobs who sit around and whine about the brutality of the US, all the while ignoring the brutality, much, much worse, that goes on in the rest of the world.

In his effulgence, Guy seems to equate My Lai with Abu Ghraib. The prisoners at Abu Ghraib were humiliated and abused. They may have been deprived of sleep, yelled at, slapped, made to stand for long periods and other unpleasant things. To equate this with 223 rounds tearing into bodies of women, old men and children is childish beyond belief. To even call this torture is equally absurd! I wonder if he has seen the videos of the guy being beaten by Saddam Hussein's men with a flexible shaft on the kidney? The torturer uses slow methodical blows, designed to bring a lot of pain and eventual death from kidney failure. How about the guys being tossed off of the roof, so that they bounce when they hit some 50 feet later? Here's another nice one: propping open the victim's mouth and drilling out all of his teeth. That is torture. And all done by Saddam Hussein and documented by him. I suggest that Guy think about which one he had rather undergo. Senator Kennedy also calls what went on at Abu Ghraib torture. This is the noble politician who let a young girl smother (or drown, autopsy report was conveniently lost) while he talked with his advisors about saving his political career. So he'd know about torture, I guess.

This repulsive argument is like asking the relatives of a murder victim "You call that bad?" while holding up a photo of Ted Bundy. Torture is unacceptable.

Since this is a political rant, I have no problems with talking politics myself. Guy compares what went on at Abu Ghraib with the My Lai massacre: that was a Democratic war, under a Democratic controlled House and Senate. Was that a "corrupt war" that "corrupts its warriors"? If so, whose fault was it? Oh yeah, let's not forget that it was an American soldier who *stopped* further atrocity at My Lai, by ordering his men to fire on the GI's who were doing the killing. So you have both

low and noble actions there, both from the same side.

One such guy is worth ten thousand Calleys.

What I find staggering is the sheer hypocrisy revealed here masquerading as a noble sentiment representing all Americans. Where was the call for the "suits" to be charged when a 14-year-old boy was shot in the back by U.S. government agents? When a mother, holding an infant in her arms, had her head blown off! That all happened right here. Oh, the government admitted no wrongdoing, but they awarded three million dollars to the family. The Clinton-appointed judges agreed that the FBI agent who killed the mother, and the BATF agent who killed the boy should not be charged. Or what about Waco, where a small sect of people were annihilated for a photo op! (You don't think it was a photo op: Consider a bad warrant, on things which were perfectly legal, local news agencies notified before the raid so that they could have helicopters and cameras there.) The few survivors stated the government fired first, and pointed as evidence to the steel door. What, the steel door had vanished, how odd! The government said that there were tons and tons of illegal weapons and ammunition there, but no one saw it. After all, you can trust your government! As for the soldier pointing his weapon at Iraqis, how about the US marshal pointing his weapon at a family in a late night raid to steal a child to give it back to Castro?

The child was forcibly returned to his father after his late mother's fanatic relatives refused to release him. It was absolutely the right thing to do. What the fuck does it have to do with Abu Ghraib?

How about it, Guy? Did you call for the resignation of Bill Clinton and Janet Reno? Did you scream about the child killers being let off and even promoted?



I've found two occasions on which I responded to Waco, both in apazines for the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. In Spiritus Mundi 139, January '94, I told Toni Weisskopf (who would later become your wife): "The more I think about the Waco/Branch Davidians disaster, the more disturbed I am. Clearly, the ATF botched its investigation and its assault, and if it turns out that the fire was started not by Koresh, but by government klutziness, I won't be surprised. ... Now, do I blame Janet Reno? No. She was new to the Attorney Generalship at the time ... was given atrocious advice, and once the damage became known, owned up to responsibility. But somebody screwed up ... very badly. That head should roll." A year and a half later, in SM149, I said, "What was inexcusable about Waco was the clumsiness of the authorities." Indeed; David Koresh could have and should have been thrown into cuffs long before he locked himself in with his cult. No excuse for letting that child-molesting lunatic endanger others. I went on to say, "Worse in that regard was the assault on the paranoid winger family at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, by the FBI, an attack which left a federal officer and two members of the family dead. Law enforcement is a legitimate end, but it must be accomplished by rational and disciplined means. The addled cowboys who raided Ruby Ridge had neither legitimate ends nor sensible means on their side; it's not against the law to be paranoid wingers and it's not good police work to shoot women with babes in arms when you're firing at someone else. Hell should pay." I still feel that way, about both Waco and Ruby Ridge – the authorities in both incidents demonstrated utter incompetence in the field, and inept supervision and confused guidance from above. Nevertheless, I still think well of Reno for taking responsibility – something Rumsfeld and his stoat of a boss will never do.

As for Abu Ghraib, the trial and investigation is already underway—it got underway *one day* after the trouble there was reported. Sound like a cover-up to you? And the investigation was underway before the story broke. The photos *were from* the investigation. In *this* case, the system worked to correct itself.

Or to protect itself. At last we reach the key question. The cretins who did the torturing at Abu Ghraib are being punished. But how is that

obscenity related to the Justice Department memoranda referring to the Geneva accords as "quaint"? Why were government intelligence agents on hand during the abuse? What culpability should W's klatsch hold for what is at best an example of inexcusably poor training and discipline, and what is at worst a violation of every precept of human dignity this country used to hold dear? Or are those principles to be discarded when expedient?

As for the question about bullies and thugs, hell yes! That is what a very large percentage of this country happens to be, what a large percentage of the human race happens to be.

Not me. Nor my country, either, not that I have anything to say about it.

I would strongly suggest that Guy grow up, take a look at reality, and quit his childish whining because things didn't go his way.

Call it what you will, but no way. No way should any citizen quit demanding that his country behave in a fashion that reflects well upon it and upon human beings. Abu Ghraib and the whole Iraqi debacle do neither.

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Here's a fun thing that happened: About a month ago, there was a gas leak at my apartment. I was awakened by a fireman in my bedroom (probably the only time that'll ever happen! ;)) telling me to get dressed and get out of the building *now*. So I threw on clothes, grabbed my purse (I'm well programmed) and staggered out onto the lawn.

About ten EMTs surrounded me, and I was groggy and incoherent, so they slapped an oxygen mask on me and made me sit down. There were news crews and helicopters, and they told us they were going to MedEvac us to Philadelphia and put us in hyperbaric chambers to counteract the gas. (There were five people sick.) So I got loaded on a helicopter and flown to a hospital, which was quite cool. I called work and let my boss hear the choppers. That was fun, too. :)

Eventually, they figured out that the gas was not carbon monoxide, as they'd thought, but just natural gas from my neighbor's stove. Everyone in that apartment was sick. So they didn't have to take us to a different state after all, just

airlifted us to the hospital twenty minutes away. The helicopters were unnecessary, but still, cool.

As for me, it turned out that I had food poisoning. I'd been up all night sick, and was severely dehydrated. The doctor said I needed to be in the hospital anyway, so it was just as well. They stuck me five times before they found a vein that wasn't collapsed from dehydration (I hate needles) and put two liters of fluid in me.

After they discharged me, five hours later, I called my boss and said I was coming to work. She said, you're delirious, go home and sleep, so I did. How's that for an adventure?

So what's going on with you lately?

Oh, not much ... by comparison.

Terry Jeeves

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There was great excitement here in Scarborough the other day as the world's biggest passenger liner, the *Queen Mary 2* sailed through our bay. Apparently Jimmy Saville has persuaded Cunard to make a slight detour to visit us. Not knowing the exact time of passage, I didn't go to see it. A good job as apparently thousands turned up and the town was totally gridlocked.

Out in the garden my beans are flourishing as are the apples whilst in the greenhouse my tomatoes are thriving. I'm rather pleased with them as I grew them from seeds reclaimed from a salad tea and didn't spend vast sums on established plants. Our grapes are also looking good and should make some nice grape juice.

With *Erg*'s last issue after 45 years another landmark comes along with our 44th Wedding Anniversary. Amazing how time flies when you are having fun. The great thing is we have never had a row. We ought to get the Dunmow Flicht.

If that's good, you both deserve it.

We see some queer things around here including two wild deer which ran in front of our car a few years back. Then last weekend, at the same place only a mile from home, we had to stop while a duck led her eight tiny ducklings calmly across the road in front of us.

On the even queerer front was a phone call we got last night. It was a lady asking if we were a shop as she had bought a tape recorder in a car boot sale in Leeds and it had my name and phone number on it. The queer bit is the fact that I dumped that

recorder in our local dump about a year ago. How had it escaped from there and ended up in Leeds?

It's a twonky.

Milt Stevens

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As Mike Resnick says in *Challenger #20*, science fiction movies have many imperfections. However, my negative sentiments are somewhat softened by remembering how bad they used to be. I grew up in the era of fifty foot turkey movies. People may have thought I was strange for liking science fiction, but they thought I was really strange if I liked that sort of thing. I recall commenting shortly before *2001* was released that I liked science fiction, and I liked movies, but the combination of the two was generally the outrage of both.

Movies have always done better with fantasy than with science fiction. Even today, vampires outnumber space ships by a considerable margin. The Germans made some silent fantasy films which are still watchable. Hollywood did many quite good fantasies in the thirties. *Forbidden Planet* was almost an aberration. Hollywood made an outstanding science fiction film, and then didn't remember how to do it again for another twenty years. (You might regard it as the first episode of *Star Trek*.)

Oh no – much better than that – not that I didn't enjoy "The Cage".

Sometimes, you may be expecting the wrong thing from a film. *Star Wars* is a cross between a fairy tale and *Planet Stories*. Monarchy was the common form of government in both of those venues. You never found anyone establishing a galactic consumer co-op in *Planet Stories*. Of course, future monarchies show up in quite a bit of other printed science fiction as well. I think future monarchies are a heck of lot more likely than future Trotskyite states. There have been a fair number of successful monarchies in human history.

One of the essential things about movies is that they have to move. When people adapt stage plays to film the lack of movement usually makes it obvious where the adaptation came from. In *Road Warrior*, we have a biker gang. To make it obvious to the movie viewer that they are a biker

gang, you have to show them riding around on motorcycles. Of course, bikers do things other than ride aimlessly around on motorcycles. Aside from stomping people, they also drink beer and shoot pool. I think you can see it wouldn't be very interesting to show a bunch of hairy louts drinking beer and shooting pool.

In both print and movies, there are sometimes things that look like science fiction but aren't really science fiction. This was the case with the **Matrix** series. If you regard **Matrix** as surrealism, it makes more sense. Or at least, it makes sense that it doesn't make sense.

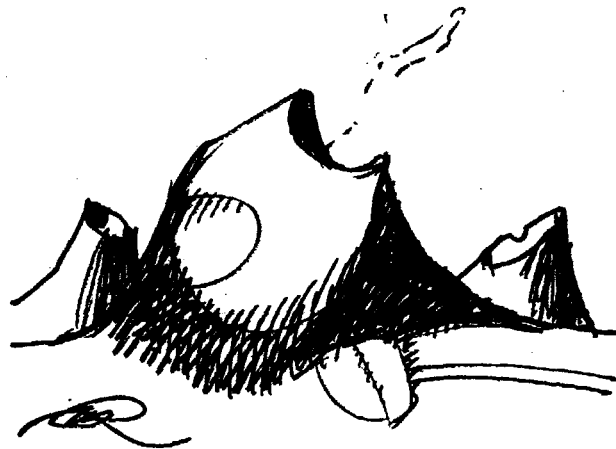
There's one thing that really bothers me about Morrie the critic in Alexis Gilliland's article. He puts salt in his beer. Even in these tolerant times, I regard putting salt in your beer as a perversion. It's even worse than putting catsup on a steak. They used to say that using a feather was kinky, but using the whole chicken was perverted. I'd say it's better to use the whole chicken than put salt in your beer.

As you observe in "Dope Court," the people who get snagged by the narcs aren't usually mental giants. That doesn't mean they can't be dangerous. I've seen a couple of narc videos where the narcs got robbed. People who buy dope make perfect robbery victims. What are they going to do, go to the police? Some actually do. West Los Angeles honkies down in The Jungle at 3 AM "visiting friends." A likely story.

Joy V. Smith
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What a great cover by Frank Wu! I don't think I've ever seen a biplane vs. dragon confrontation before. Btw, did you see the biplane outtakes from Independence Day? I can see why they changed that, but this works.

This was a fantastic tribute issue to Julius Schwartz. I was unaware of him until now, but he sounds like a wonderful, helpful,



supportive person who accomplished a lot. (What a lot of good one person can do...)

I enjoyed Joseph L. Green's article about his mistake in rounding off the geosynchronous orbit figure. (I sure hope I get an opportunity to nonchalantly correct someone some day.)

And that was an insightful article by Alexis Gilliland: "Morrie the Critic Discusses Love and Death". Another interesting article was "The Real Future of Space" by Gregory Benford – space opera and space economics. Btw, at Oasis 17 Michael Conrad (artist, writer, designer) gave a presentation on designing and building model rockets and space ships, and he included practical design aspects. It's covered briefly in my Oasis 17 con report, which can be viewed at: **O*W*C : Resources : Conventions : Reports : Oasis 17 '04**, and it should be in the upcoming **Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin**. (He's working on a more in-depth presentation and a book, I believe.)

I also enjoyed Mike Resnick's article about SF movies. He included a number of silly SF movie ideas that are on my list of most memorable annoying scenes, especially – the hero being outside during the terraforming of Mars at the end of **Total Recall** and Darth Vader's redemption. (Luke lived by sheer luck!) I avoided **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen** after reading the reviews, and I'd thought the premise was so promising!

I enjoyed the other articles too, including "The Resident Patient" (I'd like to mention that in the Sherlock Holmes folder on the AOL Mystery board.), your "Dope Court" article, and the SF background in your "Strange Schwartz Stories" article. And I'm glad you addressed the Abu Ghraib stupidity...

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About Greg Benford's "The Real Future of Space," I

was wondering if economic systems make things possible, or is it people who make things possible? My years in government have taught me the obvious: it is people. If people don't like a system or can't understand it, they go around it. In other words, if you re-organize idiots, you still have idiots.

I realize my experience is with a single organization, a government agency, rather than an entire nation. By my thinking, however, a nation, free from a conqueror, would reflect even more its people than its blueprint. As a cog in the bureaucracy, we are not free of overlords.

Anarchism, where everyone was cooperative, may be possible some day if people are in the right mindset. On the other hand, anarchism, where everything is in chaos, is an altogether too real prospect in the right mindset. Also, the same is true of all the systems in between, like libertarianism, socialism and state capitalism. They depend on the right, or wrong, mindset.

About Mike Resnick's "Why Carol won't sit next to me at science fiction movies," I think, being a science fiction writer, he is a little bit too harsh on movie illogic in science fiction films.

Regarding *Star Wars*, I didn't mind the replacement of the Emperor with Princess Leia. In most Americans' thinking, it is true there is little difference between absolute monarchs and absolute monarchs.

However, *Star Wars* is basically a fairy tale – in a planet a long time ago and far far away. Fairy tales have always been monarchist. And, yes, there is a great difference between the Emperor and Princess Leia. The Emperor is evil while the Princess Leia is good.

Regarding *Blade Runner*, I didn't mind the illogic there either. It is a premise we are asked to accept, that the androids will die in several weeks time yet the police have still decided to hunt them down anyway. Once we accept it, Mike admits we get a pretty darn good movie. I cannot say a realistic movie, but a pretty darn good one.

Of course, some films I am going to defend because I am wondering why Mike had expectations for them at all.

Regarding *E.T.*, it is a kids' film. I don't know why adults were gushing over it. The central characters, except for *E.T.*, are all kids. I would not hold too much of a candle for logic in a kids' film. That's not what they're interested in. Adults are little enough interested in it.

I am not going to defend *Signs*. While I thought the character development was great, the plot was heavier handed than a sledgehammer. Mike is right that aliens had come all the way across the stars for a snack. I guess the thinking was that's what happens when you hear about a good restaurant.

I am not going to defend *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* either. However, I have to say one thing for it. Nemo could have been an Indian prince. I hear the graphic novel was taking from an earlier draft of *20,000 Leagues* when France was anti-England. Later, when Verne put the novel in final form, France was anti-Russian. That is the only thing I am going to say for *The League*. After what you tell about it, it is no wonder every critic and everyone who saw it panned it. It sounds like it makes the old Buster Crabbe *Space Soldiers Conquer the Universe* look like *Citizen Kane*.

About Albert Hoffman's "The Night I Saw Death," no, I can't explain his vision of death and someone dying. Of course, I can't explain most of life.

On the other hand, I know this. The way to tell a hypnopompic experience is that it seems completely real. More real than everyday life. That is very scary because we usually distinguish reality from illusion by how it feels.

About Dr. Craig Hilton's "The Resident Patient – a Medical Opinion", I think maybe he is seeing too much in Conan Doyle's story. Unlike Dr. Hilton's painstaking analysis, I hear Conan Doyle just dashed his Sherlock Holmes tales off. They would fall if our only criterion was deep logic. However, there are other, more pressing reasons why we like them.

About your "Strange Schwartz" stories, so Julie's work as an agent for science fiction writers held him in good stead in editing *Superman*, *Batman* and the *Flash*. There are lots of crossover occupations you would not think are crossover.

Norman Maurer went in the opposition direction. He was writing comic books, and Moe Howard, his brother-in-law, said that was great preparation for producing Three Stooges movies. Apparently Moe was right: Maurer produced the best Three Stooges movies.

Finally, I have some comments about people who commented on my article last *Challenger*, "Evil Aliens and H.G. Wells."

1. I would like to thank Robert Kennedy for praising it.

2. Joseph Major asks who would want to sin with creatures with one eye in front and one in back. Most certainly other creatures with one eye in front and one in back.

3. Jerry Kaufman says my article had an interesting topic but he struggled with all the sentence fragments. That phase has passed. Now something else has to arise to ruin my writing style.

4. E.B. Frohvet believes Andre Norton anticipated with her Baldies the large headed, weak bodied alien archetype. I'm sure she did. However, I know of an earlier example. Harry Bates did the same in "Alas, All Thinking", *Astounding*, June 1935. Still, I am wondering whether there are not still earlier examples.

I know Edgar Rice Burroughs, in *Chessmen of Mars* (1922), wrote about Martians with only a head and appendages, the Kaldanes. However, they have greater similarities to the Martians in *War of the Worlds* than the later archetype.

Check out the photo of Rose-Marie with aliens in my Noreascon photo report!

Kathy Chamberlin
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Thanks for the copy of issue #20. I was particularly enamored with "The Resident Patient – a Medical opinion" by Dr. Craig Hilton. For one thing, I am foremost a mystery buff, so I found the subject enticing (can't have too many dead bodies laying around!). Also, I am a three-time cancer survivor and have spent many days rubbing elbows with medical personnel.

However, what really got my attention was the discussion of the congestive heart failure. My mother was one of the first persons (waaaaay back in 1956 or 1957) to be brought back to life by the use of defibrillation. She went on to live another twenty years (and six grandchildren). However, Dr. Hilton mentions "the results of rheumatic fever, a disease of the poor." I never heard that before.

My mother (child of white-collar oil company parents) had married my father (child of a blue-collar truck driver). My mother's mother was one of the pioneers who developed "shopping" into the fine art it is today. So, I was somewhat surprised to see that my mother had developed her heart problem by means of "a disease of the poor." I'm

not really complaining – I've just never heard that before, and I wish I had more information on why rheumatic fever is referred to in that way.

Says Dr. Hilton:

"Rheumatic fever is no longer the common disease it was up to a century ago. It is a type of immune reaction to an infection with streptococcus, leading to fever and inflamed joints, and finally life-long disease of the heart valves. Classically, it was most prevalent in the lowest socio-economic groups, where such infections (skin or tonsils) were the most prevalent. My reference to the poor was a classical quote, taught to me when I was in medical school: 'Rheumatic fever is an acute, reactive, post-infective inflammatory disease affecting the connective tissue of the poor.' It is unknown in our society, but cases are still seen in Aboriginal communities, such as I encountered in Doomagee."

Anyway, thanks again — you're an award winner in my book!

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Thanks for **Challenger 20** – amazing dragon cover.

A mini-disagreement with Mike Resnick's very entertaining piece, re his cavil on **Blade Runner** – surely the point that made it necessary to hunt them down was the damage the replicants could do before they auto-terminated – crude analogy the potential suicide bomber with terminal cancer.

Lovable articles re Julius Schwartz sent me back to my file of corresp from early '90s when I was researching life of SF writer/poet Lilith Loraine. Someone mentioned JS had been her agent at one time. DC Comics passed on my enquiry letter to him, and I got a really nice friendly reply – deffo one of the good guys.

Yeah, amazing how Reagan got away for so long with the lovable harmless old duffer/Forrest Gump schtick – after all, his record went way back, to when as Screen Actors Guild official (prexy, wasn't it?) He acted as fingerman for HUAC. Think reason his best role as actor was vile gang boss in **The Killers** was for once he

could play his real self. Him and Maggie Thatcher lovey-doveying was real villains convention.

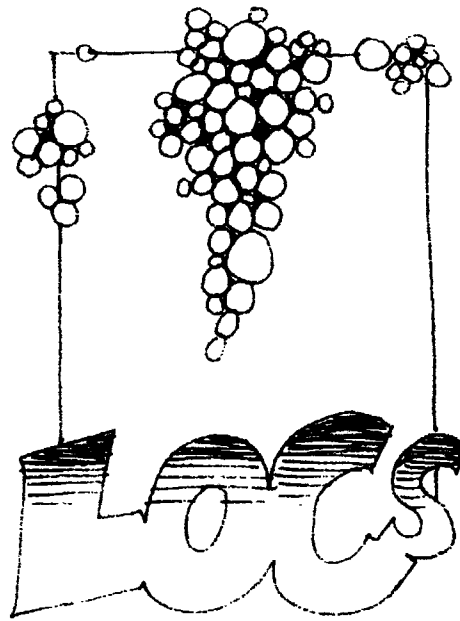
The political resonance escapes me, but I think Reagan's best performance was as an epileptic scientist in Night Unto Night.

Probably debilitating European cynicism, but seemed minimal surprise here at the Abu Ghraib carry-on – no doubt in twenty years we'll find out who at the top gave the orders to treat prisoners like that there (and doubtless at Gitmo and at even more closed-door US prisons in Afghanistan etc.) which got so creatively interpreted by Lyndie England – who doubtless has a profitable future as S&M dominatrix and/or presenter of "reality TV" prog recreating Ab Ghraib with volunteers, if she gets off current legal process.

Mentioning Afghanistan, and thinking of your dope court piece, another thing that has caused no more than shoulder-shrugging here is that the removal of Taliban has meant record opium poppy crop there this year – funds for the warlords busy tooling up with extra arms ready for holding their corner when "democracy" comes. Does raise question, given that no will to tackle them, why not buy the crop off'em direct, rather than just let it hit the streets, depress heroin price, and increase number of addicts – but then I suppose a shortfall of folk locked up for drugs would hit profits of private prison corporations (and keeping underclass in prison stops'em swelling unemployment statistics, so a win-win.) So it goes.

Dr. Craig Hilton
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I'm sorry to say this, but your country has crossed the line into very scary territory indeed. I followed the Bush-Kerry debate on the news, and the name-calling that came after. Bush, I believe, is now running with the line: "We shouldn't have to depend on the vote from other countries to defend ourselves." If this were the ranting of a loony minority, I would understand. But when it's the election slogan that sets the voting majority cheering, well... imagine what it must look like to countries outside the USA! Translated, it comes out as: "We don't care what anyone else in the world says. We'll invade, conquer and occupy any country we like, to make ourselves feel safe." Is this a line designed to win the hearts and minds of other religions and countries everywhere? Or is Bush finally revealing



that he has the mandate from the people of the most powerful democracy in the world to engage itself as the world's great dictator?

There will be no stopping him now.

Meanwhile, three days out from our own elections, John Howard is a little bit ahead of Mark Latham in the polls. This is very depressing. I can't stand any more of the mean-spirited and duplicitous Howard government. People don't trust him, but they don't care that it's an issue. People are more confident that he can run the economy better, although that's a debatable point. It seems to be a case of: "He may be a liar, but he's *our* liar!"

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I was glad to see you and Rosy and Noreascon, and sorry we didn't spend more time together.

Thanks for your work on the souvenir book. The photo section was more than I expected. My impression is that the biographical information on participants included more nearly everyone than that at Torcon.

Credit Mary Kay Kare for that whole section of the program/souvenir book.

In the printing of "Last & First Fen", i did not see Youngfan 4's line "You got down couldn't get up son of a bit your finger off, go to Helena

Montana my goods got damaged by fire!" Was the omission accidental, or did you feel the profanity too unrestrained for a family publication?

My personal incompetence in copying the text is to blame.

A footnote to "Colishun Course": My first letter to a fanzine was published in Julius Schwartz' **Fantasy** magazine. The magazine came to the Speer mailbox, and Dad read it before passing it on to me. He was amused at my presumptuously telling these people how to publish their magazine.

Unfortunately it's after the convention that we read we read most of the souvenir book. Yours for Noreascon is a great job. Of course you had help on it, but coordinating that help must have been a huge task. And you got it printed by the beginning of the convention!

For the efficient manner in which the book got published, as well as the beauty of its design, credit Geri Sullivan, who went to the printers and supervised the actual process.

Greg Benford said there are almost no genzines any more, mentioning **Challenger** as a notable exception. I hope to get to reading the issue you sent me.

When you do, let me know what you think!

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Thank you for #20. Great Frank Wu cover. Great pictures.

Thanks for pointing me to your website for **The Zine Dump**. But, what were you doing up at 2:16 a.m. on Friday, August 27?

Reading and reviewing fanzines. What else is there to do at 2:16 a.m. on a Friday in August?

It looks like the trial of Terry Nichols in Oklahoma was a complete waste of the taxpayers' money. The whole idea of having the trial was to obtain the death penalty. But, all they got were more life sentences. This brings up a question I've had for a long time. The original trial of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols was not held in Oklahoma (Colorado?). Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution states: "The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury; and such trial shall be held in the state where the said crimes have been committed ..." I do not believe that was the first time the Constitution was ignored in the

location of a trial. So, by what "justification" was the Constitution violated?

That brings up another question. How do lawyers who get brutal murderers (like O.J. Simpson) off live with themselves? Is it just a game?

No, it's a system – an adversarial system where advocates argue the merits of a case before a neutral authority and let that authority decide whether the prosecution has proven its allegations. It's founded on the democratic faith that this authority – a judge or a jury – will make just, intelligent, and humane decisions. Of course, this human element will fail occasionally. When it fails to the detriment of an innocent defendant, appellate courts exist to find and correct the problem. When it fails to convict a guilty party, as it did in the Simpson case, then it's a reminder that our country demands prosecutors be as close to perfect as possible – because we fear punishing the innocent infinitely more than we fear allowing the guilty to go free.

Outstanding coverage of Julius Schwartz. I had only one problem and that was in your "Strange Schwartz Stories". It's in the use of the expression "sci-fi." Every time I see or hear "sci-fi," I cringe. (Well, not in a book store of the Sci-Fi Channel. That I can handle. And yes, I know who coined the expression.) To me it's always been Science Fiction or SF.

To me, as well. My only excuse is that I wrote the piece thirty years ago.

The confession by your father-in-law, Joseph L. Green, "The Mistakes Tech Writers Do Live After Them" was quite interesting. The commentary by Alexis Gilliland and Gregory Benford were well worth reading. Mike Resnick's indication that the title of the movie **Starship Troopers** should have been **Ken & Barbie Go to War** was great. "The Night I Saw Death" by Albert Hoffman was rather frightening. Another excellent Sherlock Holmes piece by Craig Hilton. Your commentary "Dope Court" was insightful as usual.

Your reference to "Richard Nixon's war" was a bit off. Back in the early 1970's while I was taking a class at Pasadena City College, someone had strung up a banner referring to "Nixon's War". Someone else had somehow got up to the banner, crossed that out, and written in the much more

correct and accurate "Kennedy/Johnson War." Let's not have another rewriting of history.

Certainly Lyndon Johnson, at least, bears great responsibility for initiating full-scale American involvement in the Vietnam War, but most of our casualties and at least half of our domestic damage came on Nixon's watch. I'd fault both.

Joseph Major: Bugliosi is, of course, correct that O.J. Simpson was guilty. However, Bugliosi also believes that the people charged in the McMartin case were guilty. Any rational review of the case indicates that they were innocent. Even though they were finally found not guilty, their lives and livelihood were destroyed.

Demonstrating (again) the value of the adversarial legal system. Public opinion had the McMartins – accused of child molestation at their day care centers – as good as lynched, but lawyers stepped in, applied the law, and at least saved their freedom.

GHLIII: Yes, the last scene in *Paths of Glory* is gripping. But, what is the song?

I call upon Inge Glass, Dwight Decker or some other reader who understands German for the answer.

We *did* meet at the Chicago Worldcon in 2000. It was by the fanzine area and we talked for a few minutes. However, apparently you were so besotted by Rose-Marie having recently agreed to marry you that your memory of our meeting is a blank.

Apparently so, and I dash my brains on the floor in apology. But it only makes anticipating the next time we meet that much more fun.

Tim Marion c/o Kleinbard
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[It's] a helluvalot easier to access your website than go digging thru several feet of papers looking for unopened mail. And it's a very easy-to-read format, too – you sure have come a long way from telling Ned Brooks "What the hell are you talking about?" when he suggested you PDF your finished fanzine pages. This computer screen friendly format is much superior to merely scanning your pages in as a picture.

More accolades for Patrice Green, the genius behind www.challzine.net.

As for Greg Benford's article, strip-mining asteroids (originally the Moon) is not a new idea --

it was first proposed at least 25 years ago by Professor Gerard O'Neill of Princeton University. At the time he wrote a book on the subject, which I read both for informative purposes and to see if it could help me in my job as Assistant Editor of the trade magazine **Mining Equipment International**, where we wrote an article on O'Neill's suggestions. Basically he posited mining robots on the moon who could then throw ore samples out into space but within the moon's orbit. These samples would then be picked up by a roving satellite which would then process them for use on Earth. I don't know why these ideas were never taken up – doubtless they were considered too expensive. It's much less expensive to destroy the Earth instead. Greg Benford suggests that after we have depleted the natural resources of the Earth we should move to outer asteroids. I'm suggesting we move to the outer asteroids now and keep what remains on Earth, both to preserve our world and to "have something in the bank," so to speak.

Responding to your readers who are discussing current times, I would like to comment to **Richard Dengrove** that Saddam Hussein was *not* a "Moslem Arab" – I believe he has identified himself as an atheist in the past. On his cabinet, he had ministers and advisers of different religions, including Christians. Saddam Hussein was fundamentally opposed by most Arabs in the Moslem world, and was viewed as a "heretic" by Osama bin Laden. All of this changed with our latest attack on that country. Now al Qaeda is helping Iraq and the Moslem world is united more than ever against us. Now more than ever they have reason to chant what I've heard many Americans saying (even one fan!), "It's either us or them!"

Prediction: war with Iran by 2006 – 25 years later than necessary.

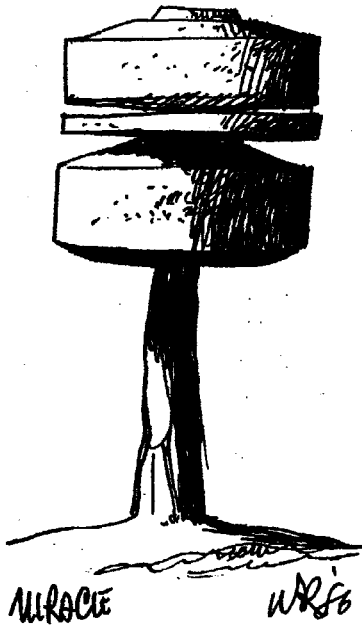
Craig Hilton says it is futile to attempt to find blame for the hole in American security which allowed 9/11 to happen. Stanley Hilton (no relation, I presume, to Craig), who was once the lawyer for Bob Dole, is now representing the families of the victims of 9/11, and claims that he has proof that our

president personally signed off on the order to have 9/11 happen. Rather than being piloted by suicidal terrorists, the planes were directed by remote control into the World Trade Center – technology we've had for years. What lends

credence to his claim is the fact that we normally have F-16 fighter jets surround passenger (or other) planes that go off their pre-designated flight paths, but yet they were told to stand down on the morning of 9/11 – according to Hilton, they were told it was just another drill, which is why they weren't there.

Stanley Hilton also claimed that Kerry would "roll over" for Bush, which is exactly what he did – after what is probably the very most controversial presidential election in history – many mysterious ballots counted by "electronic means" which vary significantly with the exit polls for the same districts. Gee, Guy, it used to be only the third-world countries had the elections stolen from them – isn't progress wonderful?!

Taral Wayne was whistling right down my alley with his article on the Anderson's lamentable "Supermarionation" (a process they developed



without me, despite the use of my name). I concede many of the weaknesses of **Thunderbirds**, but have to say, that once one puts oneself in the proper headspace for watching cartoons, it became quite fascinating watching those ships troll slowly across the

runway before they took off. Usually my reaction was, "Wow, isn't that ship cool?" both before and after my adulthood. It's a pleasure to watch it slowly scroll/stroll across the screen as one thusly gets to see it better.

It's funny that Taral says "Thundersbirds Are No Go." When I saw a live-action movie advertised around the same theme, when what little charm the series had before resided with the puppets, all I could say was, "Thunderbirds Are *Stop*."

And I too fondly remember **Stingray**, including the episode Taral mentions where they end up in someone's aquarium. To the best of my memory, this aquarium was a fish tank owned by their underwater-dwelling enemies, who were now (in this episode) gigantic. Of course, it all turned out to be just a dream.

And a part of me still can't help but fall in love with the anthropomorphic mermaid with the big eyes, or appreciate the ending theme love song – "*Mareena... Aqua-Maree-ee-eena... When will you say those words my heart is longing to hear?*" She was mute, and the protagonist was in love with her. It was obvious she felt considerably for him too, as she risked her little puppet life more than once to save his.

Trinlay Khadro! Here's your answer!

Altho I can sympathize with Carol Resnick for not wanting to watch SF movies with her husband, Mike, I empathize even more with Mike in his disappointment of several highly-rated movies. Surely no one would have been wanting to watch the last **Star Trek** movie with me, which was without a doubt one of the worst movies ever made. No muttering for me --- I was practically jumping up and down in my seat and screaming and shouting at the screen! Seldom have I been so outraged by a mere movie.

I can definitely understand Resnick's reaction to **Star Wars** – when I first saw it, with other fans, I found myself groaning throughout, mainly due to the childish and idiotic dialogue. I think there has seldom been a more over-rated movie. In order to keep my involvement with a movie, the characters have to act and speak in a fairly realistic fashion. Which doesn't mean that I have to agree or identify with them.

I do think he's a little too critical of **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen**, however, which I regarded as more of a fantasy than SF. It was *intentionally* anachronistic; not through carelessness. Deliberate anachronisms are becoming a genre unto themselves (such as "steam punk"). **League** was a sumptuous feast for the eyes and it was fun seeing the different interpretations of the popular characters. I'm not concerned with the inaccuracies of African geography, since most viewers may not be familiar with such. (Such errors should not occur, but do not detract from the story.)

Have to take issue with Mike about a couple of other movies – **Blade Runner** was a lot of fun and another visual feast, which Resnick acknowledges, but pokes fun of the title for not having a literal analog within the movie. Although I agree it's a melodramatic title, obviously it's use is a figurative one – that hunting down escaped felons (especially super-powered ones) is as dangerous as running on a blade.

Likewise I can't help but feel that Resnick missed a whole bunch of the first **Matrix** movie when he says, "The whole world runs on computers, which means the whole world is powered by electricity to a far greater extent than America is at this moment. So why is the underground city lit only by burning torches?" Did he miss the part where the human population is being kept asleep in pods so that the electrical currents from their brains can be harnessed for energy? The underground city was not exploiting humans in this way.

Not that I want to be a big defender of either of these movies, although I *did* enjoy them...

Your editorial is powerful and outraged, as well it should be. Surely no right-thinking American wants our nation to be known as a nation of torturers ... but as you point out, it's too late. Now with yet another stolen election, I feel that there is almost no one left to listen. I'm seriously thinking about moving to another country, if more of the same is all I have to look forward to.

Joseph Nicholas
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josephn@globalnet.co.uk

I want to respond in particular to Greg Benford's article, although it really consists of two distinct arguments yoked uneasily together – speculation on the technological feasibility of manned expeditions to the other planets of the solar system, and a critique of some current British space opera (or "new space opera" as it's called here, meaning harder-edged and less romantic narratives than of yore – no damsels in distress, few aliens, and lots and lots of re-complicated physical and biological concepts). The two don't really have much to do with each other, even though the technological speculation is presented as a sort-of means of realising the fictional planetary conquests.

I'll deal with the space opera comments first. (After all, they come first in the actual article.)

Benford says that "The BRS (Banks/Reynolds/Stross) pole seems Libertarian/anarchist, and by Libertarianism I mean anarchism with a police force and a respect for contract law", but this seriously misreads Banks. His "Culture" series is a literal communist utopia, based on the simple realisation that a truly space-faring society would have long ago solved all its energy problems and thus have access to limitless wealth and resources. This is why there is no money in the Culture: there is no scarcity to regulate. (Or even any work, if you don't want to work – "from each according to their abilities (if they feel like it), to each according to their needs (or their greed)". Those who read carefully between the lines of *The Excession* will realise that the Culture is actually kept running by the AIs.)

Benford gets MacLeod wrong too. "MacLeod is the closest thing to a true classical socialist, as in **The Stone Canal**. But even MacLeod is all over the board. Though socialism was his earliest fancy, he experiments with multiple social structures." This comes close to confusing the author with his creations. MacLeod is a socialist; but for the purposes of the story (because otherwise there'd be no conflict to drive it forward) it is sometimes necessary for him to place capitalists centre-stage. As in *The Stone Canal*, the least socialist of all the novels in *The Fall Revolution Quartet*. (Many people were uncomfortable with the promotion of revolutionary liberation through space travel in his first novel, *The Star Fraction*, considering the two mutually exclusive – but it is in spirit true to the Gernsbackian notion of "man emancipated by machines", and straight out of the Marxian tradition.)

Turning now to Benford's technological speculation about what's necessary to realise the exploration (and even settlement) of the solar system, I would say that while his programme is impressively worked-out, he's addressing entirely the wrong question. The principal question to be addressed is not whether it's technologically feasible to send a manned mission to Mars (or wherever), but whether there is the political will to do so. I say this because it is only governments which are in a position to invest the sums required across the time horizons required, in the full knowledge that the entire investment might be

wasted; corporations cannot. Any board of directors which advised its

shareholders that it was preparing to spend squillions a year for the next umpty-ump years on a project to (say) mine the asteroids with no guarantee of a return on the investment (or any returns at all) would soon find itself replaced, and the corporation returned to its original business of selling widgets and making money. Space travel is just too expensive for anyone other than governments, which can borrow at far lower rates of interest than corporations and don't have to worry about shareholder dividends and directors' bonuses – or even making a profit. Corporations won't spend money on manned space exploration, because as far as they're concerned it's money wasted.

A chorus of voices will doubtless now remind me of Burt Rutan and Spaceship One, a private corporation boldly going where the government didn't. Rutan's was indeed a very successful venture – to 100 kilometres. 100 kilometres isn't even sub-orbital, and simply demonstrates how much further corporations would have to go, and how much more would have to be spent, before they are anywhere near competing with governments. The fact that bandwagon-jumping Richard Branson wants to offer tours up to 100 kilometres in Rutan's craft only undermines the idea of private spaceflight – by demonstrating both its triviality (day trips to view the curvature of the earth) and its expensiveness (only the very rich would be able to afford it).

(Another chorus of voices – perhaps the same chorus – will doubtless embark on the familiar mantra that private enterprise is inherently leaner and more efficient than governments. I would advise anyone wishing to advance this argument with a Briton to first familiarise themselves with the history of the Conservative government's privatisation of British public corporations in the 1980s and 1990s. In almost every case, the privatised business delivered a worse service at higher cost – and in one case, the rail infrastructure, had to be taken back into

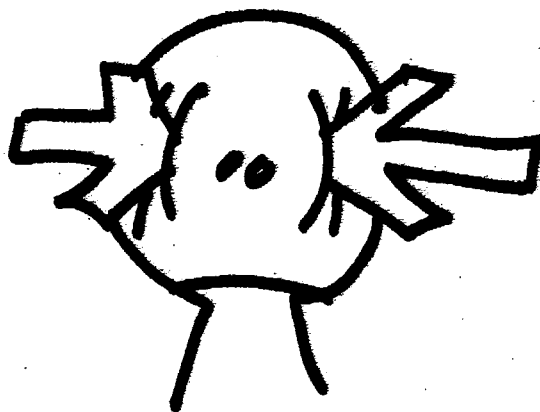
public ownership because of its shambolic management and operations. QED.)

Politics is largely driven by electoral cycles, which are much shorter than the likely lengths of the envisaged voyages around the solar system – which almost by itself explains the lack of political will to fund them. There may be one or two visionaries scattered throughout government, who are prepared to argue day and night for the conquest of the high frontier (or whatever it's called these days), but they will get little leverage in comparison with those wanting results in the

here and now. I'm aware that the Bush administration has agreed incremental year-on-year increases in NASA's budget with the objective of putting manned spaceflight back on the agenda, but this kind of money is inherently vulnerable to other economic factors – more tax cuts for the rich, a need to reduce the budget deficit, a desire for more and/or

newer weapons for the military, whatever – and even in the absence of these factors the promised sums are nowhere near enough. How much manned spaceflight would really cost was shown by the first Bush administration's projected expedition to Mars: announced to fanfares, killed off immediately by Congress because of its gargantuan cost. In short: the era of manned spaceflight is over, for good and all, before it ever really began.

(Yes, resource depletion may provide a plausible motive. But see above, under electoral cycles: by the time any government is ready to acknowledge that resources are running out, it will be too late to do anything about the situation. And neither I nor Benford have mentioned the Association for the Study of Peak Oil, which estimates that world oil production may have already passed its peak and from here onwards energy can only become more expensive. When that happens, no one will care about going to Mars.)



On one level, this is a bit of a let-down – I discovered science fiction at about the same time as I started following the Gemini and Apollo missions, and in my boy's mind it was easy to confuse the two: to regard one as the literal transposition of the other. I imagine that lots of other people did too – but as the 1960s wore in into the 1970s, it became clear that there was never intended to be a follow-up to the Moon landings: Apollo was a propaganda stunt, dreamed up by the Kennedy administration in the aftermath of the Bays of Pigs fiasco, to put one over on the Soviet Union. And it succeeded brilliantly – at which point political interest in the whole business virtually evaporated. Imaginings of what might have been, had there been a coherent long-range programme in the first place, such as Stephen Baxter's *Voyage*, are largely exercises in nostalgia. (I suspect that this aborting of the near-future as it then appeared is in some ways responsible for the rise of the new space opera – adventure in the distant corners of the galaxy on its own is insufficient; it has to be given the trappings of verisimilitude, through new discoveries in biology and physics and a range of socio-political ideologies, to avoid being seen as mere wish-fulfilment.)

But on another level, I do get a little irritated with those who keep promoting manned space exploration as though it has a real future. Grow up! I want to shout at them, Face the bloody facts! Because while facing the facts may be unexciting, it will save a great deal of disappointment later on.

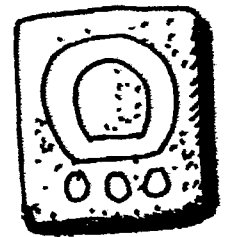
But let's move on from Benford and the exploration of space – to your short piece on your various encounters with Ronald Reagan. "I'd credit the Pope with the cultural miracle that persuaded Europe that communism was a dead duck," you say, but I don't think the Pope had much input here. As a Pole, he clearly had a higher profile in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, but little actual engagement with the political process (inasmuch as there actually was then a political process in the former Eastern Bloc). On the other hand, though, and despite what the neo-cons like to claim, Star Wars defence systems had nothing to do with it either: Soviet-style communism fell because it was economically rotten, and had been for decades. Gorbachev's desire to offload the drain that the former Eastern Bloc had become stemmed in part from his recognition of this – although it's arguable (albeit counter-factual, and thus unprovable) that if there hadn't been an old guard coup in 1991,

attempting to turn back the clock, there might still be a Soviet Union today.

You also refer to "the Queen of England". As a matter of tedious accuracy, there is no such person; she is queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (called the UK for short). England, itself, is merely one of three countries (the other two are Wales and Scotland) which make up Britain. (Great Britain, just for the record, consists of Britain plus the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.) I realise that these distinctions may be of little moment to a US citizen, but using England to mean Wales and Scotland risks seriously pissing off the Welsh and the Scots. It's as if we were to label US citizens as Mexicans or Canadians because Mexico and Canada were also part of North America. Or, for a better example, to describe good ole Southern boys as Yankees.

I shall say little about Iraq – chiefly because anything I do say runs the risk of being out of date almost immediately. (The second US attack on Fallujah is proceeding as I write.) From what you know of my politics, you will not be surprised to hear me say that the invasion was based on a lie; that the toppling of rulers you don't like (irrespective of their behaviour) is contrary to international law; that the neo-cons' plans for the reconstruction of Iraq (inasmuch as they actually had any plans) are a ludicrous fantasy; and that the occupation has made the Middle East more unstable, has irrevocably poisoned relations between the West and the Muslim world, and has made the West more vulnerable to terrorist attack and the world as a whole more dangerous. (QED.)

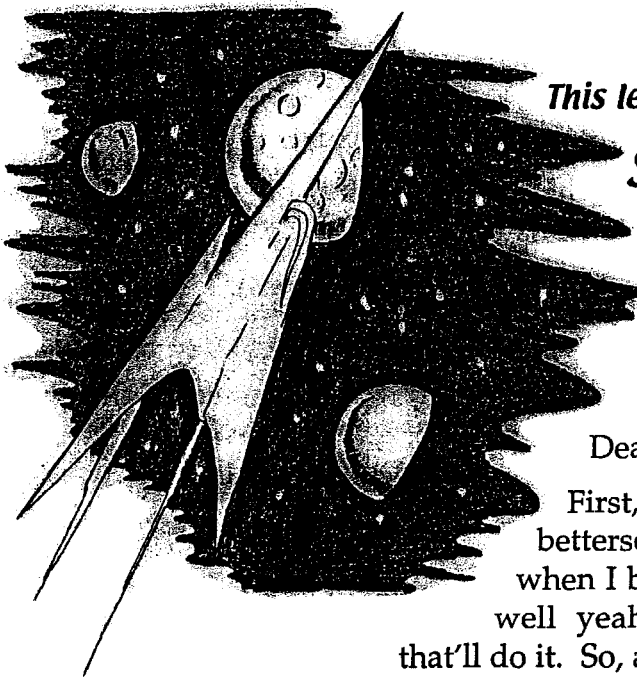
*And my country,
my beloved America,
more isolated, more
vulnerable, more
hypocritical, more
despised ... and more
frightened. I tremble for
my country when I reflect
that God is just.*



QUEEN MONKEY
OR

*

*And providing illos for her own letter of
comment ...*



This letter shipped to you from:

Sheryl Birkhead
25509 Jonnie Court
Gaithersburg, MD 20882

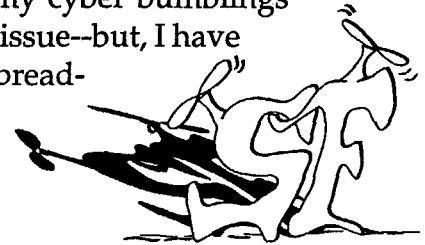
June 26, 2004

Dear Chall. crew,

First, my hearty apologies for not having written better sooner. I realized that something was amiss when I barely squeaked into the WAHF list in #20--well yeah, sure...ya didn't write much...uh--yup, that'll do it. So, again, my apologies.

Thanks for letting us know how *Sue Mason* felt about the Hugo win. I emailed her after I heard the news of her win and told her to enjoy the rest of the convention. She got right back to me and informed me of her true whereabouts.

Just so you know, I looked at one issue of *Emerald City* and did not get the feel that it was a zine..uh..I hope you know what I mean--maybe my cyber bumbblings didn't get me to the right place, or maybe this was not a real issue--but, I have not tried to re-trace my steps yet to see where the trail of bread-crumbs takes me. Many fen extol the praises of e-zines, but I haven't gone there yet. Heck, I have enough trouble handling those that manage to shoot through the (metaphorical) mailslot! I am sure it is my loss.



This year, for the first time in several years, I have (as yet) been unable to come up with some sort of mascot/theme to create a pastel piece of the fan fund auction at *Noreascon*. I may have to resort to providing an older piece that has just been languishing in the box of miscellaneous bits. I tried contacting the concom a handful of times to ask about sending critters, but perhaps I had the wrong email (aha- that must be the problem, it is a technology conspiracy!) and the missives never arrived. That'll teach me to trust the ether!

Drat! I was hoping (whine..) that *Craig Hilton* would provide the illos for his article--but I'll take what I can get. That makes articles from two fans that I do not normally see presented in such a way--although *Ned* puts out his own perszine...



John Berry's piece points out the vagaries of the english language even amongst the lot of us who purport to speak it. After I made some minor translations, I managed to get along quite well--having a tailgate party indeed...and not inviting their rescuer (is there a more appropriate term? speed bump?) and his wife to join them, they can jolly well hand draw their own illustrations!

As always, thank you for running the photos of the con.

The last note I had from *Frank Wu* mentioned that he was newly married!

Did *Colombo* really drive a *Toyota*? I thought it was *Peugeot*, but since I really did not think about it much- *Joe Major* is probably right.

Interesting cover on #20, by *Frank Wu*--shades of years long past.

Yeah, losing *Julie Schwartz* was a loss for all of fandom.

I am assuming (a dangerous thing to do, I know) that the souvenir/program book for *Noreascon* is what will manage to get to those of us who have a supporting membership--right? It sounds as if it is going to be a humdinger.... Quite a few worldcons ago (yeah, back in the Stone Age)--I forget which one, there was a booklet that was placed on each seat in the auditorium where the Hugos were to be presented. This little booklet was a ghreat idea! It highlighted each and every nominee, specifically at the time when they should be getting the accolades that befitted their accomplishments. To my knowledge- no worldcon has done the same thing since then...and it was such a nice memento.

Ah, now you know why *Alexis (Gilliland)* is such a fannish treasure--a fan who does it all and does it so very well!

Well,well...*Craig Hilton* (the Ghood Doctor) appears again and he still is not illustrating his words...but in ~~in~~formation Sherlockian is too good to pass up even without his illustrations.

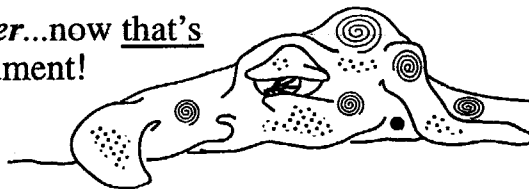
Jerry (Kaufman)-chuckle--if you think *Rich Dengrove's* article has a lot of sentence fragments, you should have seen his similar article for his own zine *Jomp Jr.* before I read it and tried to get him to clean up all the clauses he persisted in dressing up as full sentences. At first I don't think he believed me, but as the re-writes came, I think he got the message. I think that the final version that appeared in his own zine had taken care of almost all of them.

Once again, I want to thank you for the super remembrances and documentation you have provided for the life of *Julie Schwartz*--obviously a labor of love.

I have continued nattering on-if you want the continuation- use it, if not, please let me know. I am trying to get the *Tim Kirk* fanartist article for you--honest!

sheryl

Sigh...*Challenger*...now that's entertainment!





Most of the clients I've dealt with as a public defender have blundered into trouble through bad judgment or idiotic habit. Usually, all I could do for them is minimize the sanctions leveled against them by the State. An exception is therefore to be treasured, and trumpeted, because such a rarity is a defense lawyer's dream.

THE BEST SPEECH I NEVER GAVE

Guy Lillian

art by randy cleary

Very recently I received an e-mail from an associated producer of **The Montel Williams Show**. She asked if I could put her in touch with one of my clients, whose story had reached her through the local newspaper. The woman – I'll call her Lucy – was charged with second degree murder, the killing her newborn child. She had been jailed for more than a year.

When I met Lucy, she wasn't my client, but the wife of my client. Jake, her husband, was charged with negligent homicide after a pistol he was fondling went bang and killed a neighbor. I won the guy a low sentence and Lucy, delighted, sent me a nice thank you card and a jar of candy. I still have the card and the jar. Such gratitude is rare. Lucy went onto my Good People list.

I didn't hear directly that Lucy had gotten into trouble herself – her cases were assigned to another lawyer. It was only after that attorney resigned that I found myself handling Lucy's nightmares – nightmares which had cost her her family, and could cost her her freedom, permanently. A charge of murder in the second degree.

While she was in jail, her four kids had been sent to live with her sister, and authorities talked about a permanent change in custody. What more horrible murder is there, after all, than that of a child by a parent? The fact that this was a

newborn, or possibly even a premature birth, didn't help Lucy: in California, a woman had been successfully prosecuted for murder for using crack while pregnant.

I thought that prosecution unfair, as a Louisiana newborn doesn't gain what we call *juridical rights* – inheritance, the right to sue, all the benefits of being a *person* – until he takes a breath outside of the womb. But our assistant district attorney, I learned, was a pamphlet-spreading anti-abortion nut, a staunch advocate of extending juridical rights to the unborn. Lucy represented his chance to join The Good Fight.

I read over the file. Police report went like so: On 2-11-03 Lucy had gone to the local hospital in St. John Parish with some severe female bleeding. When treated, she revealed that she had given birth without reporting it, that the child had died and she hadn't reported that, and that she had disposed of the body, without reporting *that*. A police detective was called in. Lucy gave not one statement, but three.

The "confessions" went all over the map. In the first, she said the child was stillborn. In the second, she said it was full-term and that she had let the baby die. In the third she said nothing about why the child died, but claimed that it was about 5 months along.

All of the statements, however, contained several common facts. She gave birth on February

1st in her bathroom. The baby was not her husband's. It died. She held it, washed it, then wrapped it and hid it in a dresser drawer. Three days later she – and this *is* shocking – put it in the trash can and weepingly watched the truck go down the street and out of sight.

The police went into investigative mode. They went to the dump with forensic guys and corpse-sniffing dogs. They searched and searched – and found nothing. The body of the infant was never located. Nevertheless, they arrested Lucy and let her sit.

I visited Lucy in jail in October, 2003. Same pretty, pleasingly plump young black woman who had brought me balloons. She was upset by the circumstances, of course, but obviously rational. Nevertheless I moved for a psychiatric evaluation. However with-it she was now, her state of mind at the time of the incident was what mattered. Besides which, if we were assigned the shrink I hoped for, he was be on our side – and it was time to pull in allies.

One such was our IDB investigator, a huge, pleasant former cop named Tom Carver. Him I tasked with following up on an important lead: Lucy's doctor. Apparently Lucy had medical records at a clinic in a town near LaPlace. They might have useful info.

Carver came back in a few days, his shoes soiled with paydirt. He'd found Lucy's clinic. Out in next breath went a subpoena duces tecum – a request for records.

I also started calling experts in obstetrics. Lucy's first and third statements had maintained that the child born on February 1, 2003 was premature. I needed a bigdome in a white coat to opine on that possibility before the jury – because if the kid had been too premature to survive, the prosecution couldn't prove she was responsible for his death. Which meant, not guilty. I had little luck; the one neo-natologist I could locate was full of encouragement over the phone, but wouldn't travel the 35 miles to our country courthouse. I couldn't blame him; the rules of his university, it turned out, forbade him a fee. But then we got the psychiatrist we wanted – and the answer to our prayers.

Cavanaugh was bright, funny, friendly, with a law degree as well as medical honors. He interviewed Lucy, and came out passionately

convinced of her innocence. For one thing, because the police had been unable to find the body, we had to rely on Lucy's description to determine its age since conception. Lucy described a baby smaller in length than the paper you're holding – eleven inches. It had macerated skin – wrinkly and wet, like your fingertips after too long a bath. And its only breaths were short, shallow gasps – what Cavanaugh called *agonal* breathing.

That's not an infant, Cavanaugh said. That's a miscarriage.

I tried to get this point of view into the record immediately. Lucy had already spent months in jail, seldom seeing her children – although our sympathetic judge, Mary Becard, had allowed her the most liberal visiting privileges possible. But Cavanaugh was a psychiatrist, and unqualified to give expert opinions on neo-natal issues. Judge Becard reluctantly agreed, but reduced Lucy's bond to the lowest ever set for a murder defendant in St. John Parish.

Okay, so we needed a more convincing expert, a neo-natologist, to sock home the facts. Cavanaugh had a suggestion: his wife.

Mrs. Dr. Cavanaugh was not only a published expert in the field, she had literally written the book on it – her textbook was almost universally accepted as the last word in the field. I spoke with the imminently civilized lady on the phone, and she agreed to fly down from her home in Maryland and testify – if she could find the time. Knowing Lucy was indigent, she even offered to waive her fee. The only problem I could see with her testimony was local bigotry; the A.D.A. had a reputation for badmouthing witnesses from other states – even other parts of Louisiana. “We don't need so-called experts from *Shreveport* telling *us* what to think!” To counter this, I threw a question into my *voir dire* about giving an expert less credence because she came from outside the reach of a thrown stone.

Feeling pretty chipper, I went to see Lucy's doctor at his seedy hole-in-the-wall clinic. Her one-page record, which he'd sent to us, was Gold.

It turned out that Lucy had come to his clinic in November, 2002 for a pregnancy exam. Dr. Aubert had given her a *human chorionic gonadotrophin* test, a very effective urinalysis with an accuracy rating in the high 90s. The test was negative. Once those results were in, he'd given Lucy a *depo-provera* shot, a hugely effective

contraceptive with an intriguing side effect: when administered (by accident) to a pregnant woman, it caused a miscarriage.

November, 2002. Either the hCG test was faulty, or she hadn't been pregnant, or pregnant enough for the chemistry of her body to change measurably. Which meant ...

Which meant that the baby she delivered on February 1st, 2002 could not have been full term. By a matter of four or five months.

Any parent on the jury would know what that meant without being told, but we would have the distaff Dr. Cavanaugh to prove it from the witness stand.

Unviable.

Okay, we had tried to get this finished early, and had failed. Lucy remained in jail. Her kids remained at their auntie's. Fair enough; if I had to try the case, I would. I'd stuff the jury with women who had had miscarriages and/or difficult births, people who weren't blinded by passion – passion I admit, though that I somewhat shared. As Clinton proclaimed in his '92 acceptance speech, I am *pro-choice*, not pro-abortion; such an intimate decision for a woman is none of my business. On the other hand ...

It goes against the human grain to speak so coolly about the death of an infant. It is a *shame*, even when we're speaking of a foetus, as this was. Like Lucy, we want to protect the young and the helpless. It is a matter of primate nature. But so are miscarriages. They're nature's way of saying that something is wrong.

We would never know what was wrong with Lucy Gallop's baby, but of this I was now completely certain: it was not her fault.

In the present, I had a client to defend, and – in addition to a law degree, a Master's of Fine Arts to do it with. Time to unleash my golden pen.

As I composed my *voir dire*, my opening statement, and my closing argument, I tried to enlist more allies. The National Organization of Women was a partner in the defense of the ladies accused of murder for smoking dope during pregnancy. Surely, in a less questionable case, they'd lend assistance here. I called the local NOW chapter and left messages. Several messages. No answer, ever. What was with these people? Muttering a disgusted

bah, I wrote my speeches.

I had to remember the purpose of each speech. *Voir dire*, where the lawyer questions prospective jurors, is meant to draw forth their prejudices and feelings – and suggest one's case. An opening statement should outline what our side felt would be shown at trial. In the closing argument you argue – that the testimony and evidence prove your client's innocence, or rather, that they don't prove his guilt.

I decided to push matters a little – move my argument to the fore, into the *opening* statement. This would establish a tone of challenge putting the A.D.A. on the defensive. Whether Judge Becard would let me get away with it was a stream I'd ford when I got my feet wet. The risk was worth it. I wanted to win this trial from Jump Street.

In putting my speeches onto paper, I tried to imagine them as prose poems – as song without music. I was concerned with tone and pace and emphasis. So I staggered my sentences like an expressionist poet. Of course, my words were common, even clunky – it's hard to make poetry out of "chorionic" and "gonadotrophin". But I could give myself clues as to effective delivery.

I worked on the speeches, off and on, every day for weeks. Especially my opening statement. Here it is:

On February 1st 2003 at 8 PM

Lucy Gallop

was home in Reserve with her children

Lonnie, 9

Loren, 7

Lionel, 6

Likesha, 3 They were asleep.

Lucy began to experience severe
cramping and pain

She went to the bathroom.
She gave birth to a premature foetus.
She *miscarried*.

Some ten weeks before
she had gone to see
Dr. Robert Aubert.

That was on 11-19-02.

As you will find from Dr. Aubert's records her last menstrual period was on 11-10-02, and the hCG he gave her was **negative**.

That's the **human chorionic gonadotrophin** test –
A **reliable** pregnancy test done on urine.

With this in mind she was given a **depo-provera** shot –
a contraceptive with the active ingredient **progesterone**

Which would become 100% effective in a month,
but
which might cause a **miscarriage** in a pregnant woman.

Assuming that the pregnancy test given in Dr. Aubert's office was accurate she was either **not** pregnant on November 19 or she was less than 6 weeks pregnant

Anyway, she'd led her normal life since seeing
Dr. Aubert

along.
That's allowing for 6 weeks error in the hCG test.

It was only **11** weeks since her depo-provera shot

The foetus could have been **less** than that.
Easily.

You will hear expert testimony that a foetus cannot survive outside of the womb at less than 23-24 weeks of gestation.

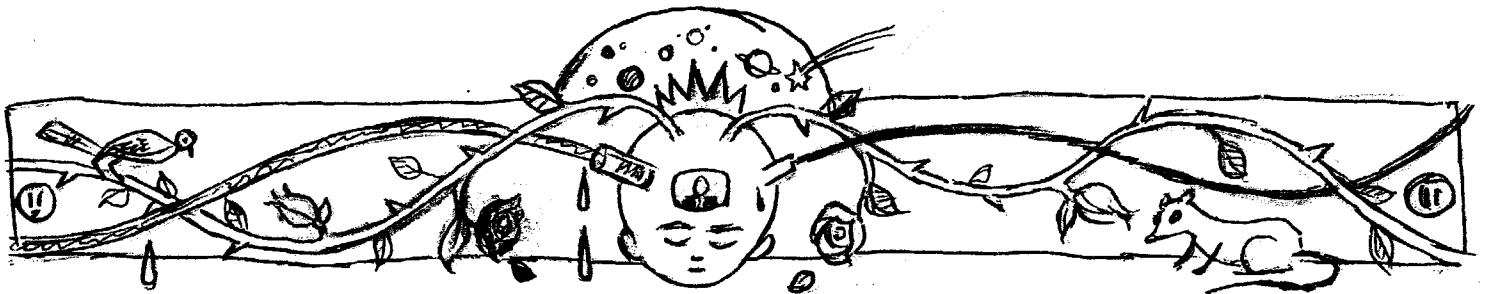
That foetus was doomed
Born dead or born dying

Lucy Gallop could not have saved it

The finest obstetrician on this planet could not have saved it, had he delivered it himself.

No action of Lucy Gallop's caused that foetus to die.

But to convict Lucy Gallop of murder



until February 1, 2003. **Eleven** weeks later

On that day, at 8PN, according to her statements, she passed a foetus. Had a miscarriage.

A foetus which was at the **most** 17 weeks

the prosecution must prove that she **did** cause it to die.

They must prove Dr. Aubert's records are either inaccurate or are forgeries and this was a full-term delivery

Or
they must prove that foetus was
a full-term baby
which they *cannot* do because there
is no body.

What can they prove?
Nothing.

And everything they can prove is based on
three statements given by Lucy Gallop
to the police,
which not only contradict each other
but also
contradict the
only facts
we have.

I propose to you that you will find those
statements
worthless
that they show only a confused
guilt-ridden woman

Lucy's three statements
ran like this, and
you will see this
She gave two on Feb. 11, 2003
ten days after the birth.
The last statement she gave on February 12.

In the first statement Ms. Gallop says
that upon giving birth, in her home
on Feb. 1st 2002
she blacked out
from loss of blood
And shock

When she came to
the foetus did not move – was dead.

She was in a state of
shock
grief
and guilt

nothing unusual to a woman who has had a
miscarriage

And what she admits to is admittedly
shocking

She cleaned the foetus
She wrapped it up
She put it in a drawer
she cried
she prayed

And she did something shocking – again.
She placed the dead foetus in a
Trash can
and
– in anguish –
Watched it taken away.

Now that *is* shocking
But it's not *murder.*

Lucy Gallop is a mother
Four fine babies
– children now.
She felt a mother should have *saved* her
child.
So she told her story to the police again.

Adding a statement that the foetus was
8 ½ months along
and gasped for air
and died of bleeding from the
umbilical cord, which was
not tied off.

This prosecution is based on this statement
alone.

It ignores the evidence that the foetus was
only 11-17 weeks along

Evidence Lucy Gallop did not fake
but only forgot.

I propose to you that the second statement
came from
Lucy's personal, irrational,
false
feeling of responsibility
Not as a murderer
but as a *mother*

who believed that if her foetus died
it must have been her fault.

It wasn't.

If the prosecution says it was –
it must prove it
it must answer that contradiction
between
this second statement and
Dr. Aubert's records

It must explain to you
BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT
why that evidence
those records
should be discounted

Because if those records are accurate

Ms. Gallop's second statement
is *not* accurate

And she is *not guilty*.

In Ms. Gallop's third statement
24 hours later
she alludes to pressure she was under
guilt she was under
because
this pregnancy was not
her husband's child.

He was in jail
He could not have been
the father.

In the third statement, Ms. Gallop says
the foetus was
5-6 months along.

If you accept *this* statement
it contradicts statement #2
that the foetus was close to full term
and Dr. Aubert's records.

It verifies that the foetus was
not
a full term, viable infant

The third statement –
Like the second –
makes no sense
The objective evidence is against it –
except for one telling point.

In statement #3 Ms. Gallop says that
after the birth
she held the foetus close
held it for 20-30 minutes
felt its life fade away

That's not murder
That's not a purposeful and willful killing

That's giving that foetus the only thing
she could give it

For the few minutes
it lived

For the few minutes
it could have lived

Comfort.

She held it close,
gave it what comfort she could.

She was *not* a murderer
but
a mother

That makes perfect sense.

Aside from Dr. Aubert's records
you will see **NO** objective proof –

Evidence will show

The police combed the site where
the foetus would have been taken
with dogs
trained to find human remains
and found
nothing

No body has ever been found

No autopsy was ever performed

No forensics are possible

Since we do not have a body,
I propose to you that we have
No proof of a crime.

Evidence will show
a box of bandages was recovered
from Lucy Gallop's house.
(She has four young sons – she better
have bandages on hand!)

The prosecution also has
a pair of surgical scissors
from Ms. Gallop's home.
(Proof – that she had surgical scissors.)

It has a few drops of blood found
in her bathtub and on her
bathroom floor

(Proof that someone had blew in her
bathroom.
WHO? WHEN? WHY?
They have no answers.)

They have a dresser drawer
with some sort of dried stain

Blood? Amniotic fluid? Coca-cola?
We do not know,
and it only backs up
Ms. Gallop's story.

Indeed, assuming all these things
they only point to the truth of Ms. Gallop's
basic story

She had a miscarriage
The baby died
she hid the body

BUT

there is no poof she **caused** the death.

Key question of this case:

If a person does not save the life
of one who is doomed
or dead already

Is that person guilty of murder?

Remember: proof is the responsibility
of the prosecution

Their sole responsibility
Their heavy responsibility
Their impossible responsibility

The prosecution must prove

They must prove this foetus was not born
dying or dead

Dr. Aubert's records are bogus, and
the child was **not** only 11-17 weeks
along

It must **prove** that her statement
to our psychiatric expert

that the foetus she bore on February 1, 2002
was
smaller than a piece of paper
was a **lie**.

They must prove that it was Lucy Gallop
and not
the cruel facts of nature
that killed that foetus.

They cannot do it.

Lucy Gallop is not guilty.

And **we** will show what we must show:

That Lucy Gallop's conduct after the birth
was that of a woman
blinded by physical shock
and pain
and irrational guilt

A woman who had done **nothing wrong**

She was in shock
she felt a mother's despair
a mother's guilt

But guilt for what?

MURDER?

This woman is being charged with murder

Because she could not work *miracles*

You will hear this evidence

You will find Lucy Gallop not guilty
because
the accusation is
Unjust.

But she has faith that *you* are just.

Observe – think about what you see –

You will acquit,
and return this woman
to her children.

I never would have gotten all of that in. An opening statement is supposed to present the jury with an outline of what the trial will show, from the defendant's point of view. A lot of the above is argument; the D.A. would have objected; the judge would have caved.

Argument is the purpose of a lawyer's *closing* speech, which would, of course, follow the evidence. I wrote that one out, too – a much briefer oration. I envisioned a quiet, almost exhausted delivery, a signal that we held the issue too serious for histrionics. Anyway, the speech was shorter:

The prosecution has brought its case
out of concern for
what might have been

The prosecution sees the unviable, premature
foetus

described by Lucy Gallop
and imagines
a living baby
a growing child
a productive adult

The prosecution asks
Why can't this be?

And it comes to
absolutely the wrong conclusion.

Was it because of Lucy Gallop
Something she did
or didn't do?
No.

The zeal of the prosecution
to protect the helpless
is laudable
but

The impulse of the prosecution
to blame Lucy Gallop
for this sad event
and jail her forever
is nothing but
repulsive.

I finished with:

Lucy did not beat this child
did not scald it with hot water
did not strike it in anger
did not neglect it
she simply held him
and he died.

He did not die because she didn't call 9-1-1.
He died because he was premature.

Nothing she could have done
would have saved him.

Nothing *anyone* could have done
would have saved him

Nothing that she *did* caused his death.

She is being charged with murder because
she could not work miracles
and because she blamed herself for being
human.

Enough of this.

This woman belongs with her living children.

Return her to them.

Not bad arguments, I thought ... but I hoped I wouldn't need them. In pretrial conference I gave our evidence – Dr. Aubert's meagre record – to the D.A. To my astonishment, they had never talked to the doctor. They had no idea of the most fundamental facts of their case.

Weeks passed.

And then, a year plus into Lucy's incarceration, a trial date came up. As usual on such days, the A.D.A. and I had a plea conference in the chief deputy's office. This time, though, there was no argument. There was only "Give us *something!*"

I gave them what my boss, David Richter, had found: a public health misdemeanor. Failure to properly dispose of a dead body. Maximum sentence, a year in jail. In a way, giving them such rinkydink when they'd gone after a second degree murder was sweeter than having them simply drop the case. "See if she'll take it!" they pleaded.

Since Lucy had already been incarcerated for a year, I had little doubt of what she would do. I went to her. "Guess what you're doing tonight?"

I said. Then I told her. She wept, praised Jesus, and hugged the lady guard.

In court, the A.D.A. who had pressed the case looked sheepish. Maybe he was embarrassed because his case had been smashed so easily. Maybe he was wondering if the clumsy blow he'd struck for the rights of the unborn was worth jailing an innocent woman for a year.

After the plea was done, the judge ordered that Lucy's child custody case be settled as quickly as possible, to reunite the family. Unbelievable! Judge Mary Becard, terror of defendants throughout St. John Parish, was in *tears*. Sympathetic to Lucy as she was, she still made the A.D.A. explain on the record why he was accepting the teensy charge in lieu of second degree murder. (How it must have galled him to say the fateful words, "We have no evidence.") Mindful of politics in Catholic Louisiana, "*I'm* the one the newspapers will crucify," she fretted.

Not on my watch. "Anybody gives you grief," snarled Lillian, "send them to *me!*"

And so the case ended, and Lucy Gallop went free. When I got the call from Montel Williams' producer, I notified Lucy at once – and reminded her of it two or three times over the next few days. I guess she wasn't interested. Hey, if she wanted **Montel Williams**, that's what the television's for, isn't it? To watch at home, with her family.

