



CHALLENGER

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THE CHALLENGER TRIBUTE: NANCY KING LILLIAN

There were so many things I wanted to say. My brother Lance and his wife Marie were seated with Rose-Marie by the blue damask casket. Lance's sons, friends and in-laws stood behind. I had so much I wanted to tell them about our mother, Nancy King Lillian, for whom we were performing a last service this cold day in February at the little cemetery on Grand Island, New York. So many memories ...

Some memories had their patina of pain.— reminders of the long obscurity of Alzheimer's and the ordeal it represented to my brother and sister-in-law. They lived near my mother and their suffering was horrible and their endurance, heroic. And one doesn't butt heads for a lifetime with an alpha woman like my mother without the occasional bruise. But we have choices in life, and one is to *insist on joy*, and the moments that came to mind there and then were just that: *joyous*.

Such as when L.E. and Marie told Mama that she was going to be a grandmother – and all she could do was giggle. Such as the day I found I'd passed the Bar, and called Mama at my grandmother's place in California.— sadistically, drawing out the news for as long as she could stand it. I was rewarded by the sound of both Mama and my grandmother bawling happily on the other end of the line. Such as when I was 7 years old and sat outside of my brother's nursery, listening to her rock him to sleep, singing "Bye Baby Bunting" over and over again — the happiest human sound I've ever heard.

But this cold day in February was *really* cold, and some of the folks were of Mama's age – early 80s. As I spoke I saw Lance brush a tear away – and make "hurry up" motions with his hand. So I simply mentioned the stop Rosy and I made on our way north, at Gregory, the tiny cotton town in Arkansas where Mama was born, and the long world-spanning road she traveled afterwards with the man she would soon rest beside. One memory I did share was all about them.

It was of a time when my father and I went to the New Orleans airport to meet Mama as she flew in from California. Dad stood in the concourse, six-foot-four, long-limbed and lanky, greeting his "Nen" with a raised eyebrow as she scampered up, smiling. It did me good to see the affection Lance and I came from, and it did me good to recall it that cold February morning on Grand Island. All was well. My folks were together again, now and forever, "and not just in this cold ground."

Not enough, but ... you *can't* say enough, can you?



I've been delving into old storage boxes lately and here's something I found. It's dated 3-11-03. I don't remember what caused me to write it.

We're told by geniuses that the universe will eventually lose all coherence, and evolve into a uniform soup of individual hydrogen atoms spread too far apart to attract each other and coalesce, and that eternity will be just so: a vast pointless motionless gas.

I don't think so. Now, the people who put forth this model are geniuses, & I am spending my life desperately trying to attain mediocrity. But I can't help thinking that they're wrong. Through this miasma forecast by the scientists there will move *something*. A bit, a tiny neutronic bit, of the stuff generated by all the living beings that have felt and imagined, planned and considered throughout the universe in the complete span of its existence. In short, a *thought*.

It's my belief that just as the conversion of matter into energy leaves residuum, so does the inchoate act of imagination. And that the residuum of imagination will survive the heat-death of the physical universe, and even if only one elemental pip of that residuum persists, its presence will be incomprehensibly significant.

For I imagine this pip, this single thought, zipping through the universe, the near-empty infinity of drifting hydrogen – seeking something, not knowing what, restless, endlessly patient, searching – gathering. And that this thought, this tiniest of incorporate things, will gather unto itself the stubbornly stupid physical items upon which it chances. One by one, it will find them, and over the numberless multi-millennia gather them, and take them with it – until finally, it has enough of them with it to do what every thought, even the smallest, even the last thought there is of all the thoughts ever thought, wants to do.

Which is *create*.

And the thought will take up the meaningless detritus of the universe, and say what it will say.

LET THERE BE LIGHT.

And there will be light.

editorial:
THIS WHEEL

(Remembering Isaac Asimov's "The Last Question" and Phil Dick's assurance that if the physical world ever begins to feel, *it* has not conquered *us*, *we* have conquered *it*.)



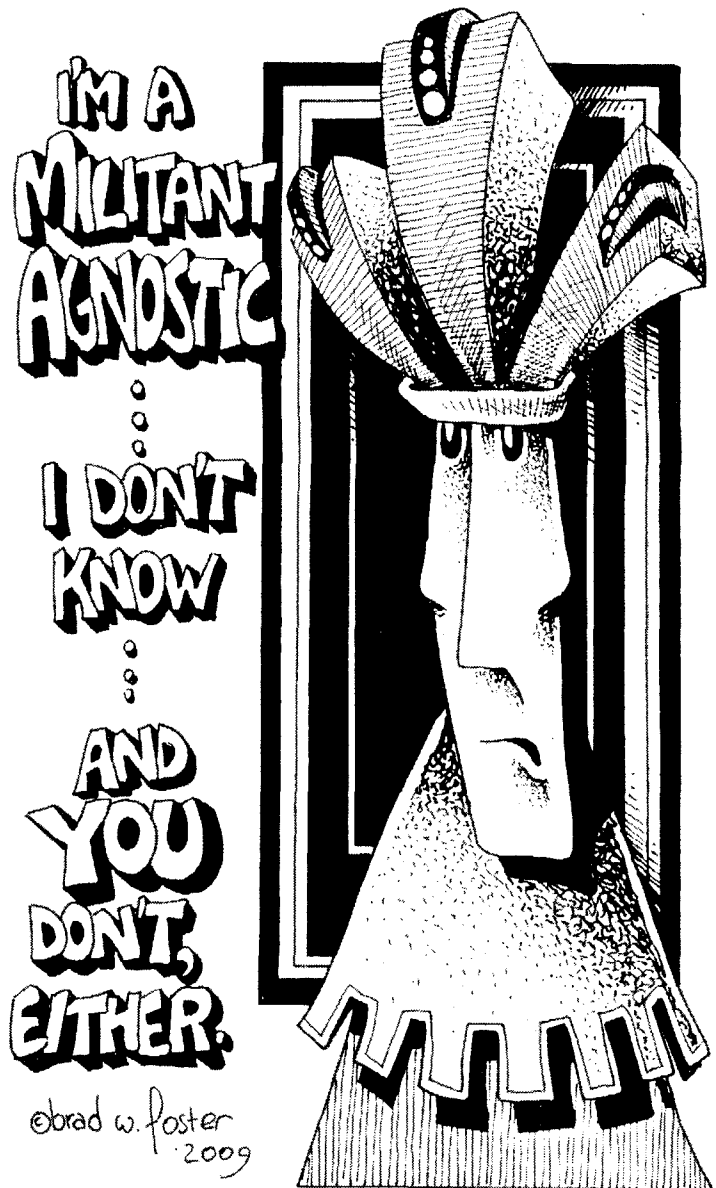
Ask someone about their faith and you ask them to expose their innermost feelings. What are mine? Here in the present day – late spring, 2009 – and in these opening pages of *Challenger* #30, to which welcome – more musings along these lines ...

I call myself an agnostic, since I haven't the slightest idea if a Supreme Being created the universe, but I value, admire, even envy what I feel to be genuine religious feeling. A co-worker I admire, for instance. Last November they found Stage Four cancer percolating in his liver. There is no Stage Five. But the sharp attorney and devout Christian keeps on living and lawyering, stronger every time I see him. Part of that is chemo, of course, but he'd credit his religious faith – acceptance of God's Will. As with Chloe Airoidi's Unitarian community, it's what provides possibilities in the face of disaster – it's what binds him to living. Such peace of mind is impossible for me – what do I have instead?

Recently I changed the screensaver on my work computer to the Hubble telescope's Ultra Deep Field. I've talked about that picture before. It was taken the third time astronomers simply pointed our great eye in the sky towards a seemingly empty patch of space, opened the shutter and kept it open. This is what they found. Thousands of galaxies – in myriad hues – a box of cosmic Trix. Spirals, elliptics, twisted shapes in near-collision ... and all so old they must be new. You know what I mean. The light captured by Hubble's point-&-shoot is *10-13 billion years old*. That dates back to when the universe was just being formed. These are *old* images – of *young* galaxies.

The center of the picture is a literal (if not a scientific) black hole – you can almost feel yourself falling in. But if you look closely you see microscopic specks – they could almost be dust on the screen. Instead they are the dimmest, and most distant, aspects of this image – galaxies at the far end of Hubble's resolution. The dimmer, the older. We're seeing very close to the beginning of All Things.

That's mind-staggering enough, but better is the idea I've mentioned before, when speaking of Andromeda, the great spiral galaxy a relative stone's-throw away. Looking at each and every one of the spiral nebulae in the UDF, it's a matter of mathematical certainty that now, in present time, *someone is there*. Can't imagine what he looks or sounds or smells like, whether he's made of carbon or silicon, breathes oxygen or methane, solid or liquid or gas – but *he's there*. The physical necessities for life being what they are, and as common as they likely are, you can rely on it as fact. *Life permeates the universe*.



But here's where faith comes in. And if you want to know what I believe in that you cannot see, that you must intuit, that stems from hope as much as experience, here it is. That person, in that most distant of places, is capable of *care*. Care, too, is common throughout Creation. That being in that furthest galaxy and I can care about one another. We are *brothers*.

And if that's true for that impossibly distant being and me, then it's certainly true for me and you.

See? Clear as glass. Oh, well. Fortunately, the contributors to this issue are more coherent than I. Gaze upon the contents of

THIS ISSUE.

My amazing cover is a previously-unpublished portrait by **Frank Kelly Freas**. Yeah: wow. I am indebted for its appearance here to two extraordinary ladies, **Laura Freas** and **Nita Green**. Laura has the right to say yea or nay to the publication of her late husband's work, of course, and Nita – my mother-in-law, by the way – owns the painting. It hangs in her condo in Royal Palm Beach, Florida. I suppose you should call it a collage – the face is on canvas, the body on treated burlap. I've been staring at it for years, dreaming of the day I could do what I've done here – and feature it atop *Challenger*. *Voila*.

When I started planning the *Challenger* which would accompany such a masterwork, I first took its theme from Kelly's portrait. *Write about faith*, I asked my contributors – *what you believe in*. **Charlie Williams** and **Binker Glock** sent thoughtful squibs on the topic. Later still, I expanded that concept – and brought in the title of this fanzine. *Write about challenge*, I suggested, *and how you handled it*. With such vague, murky and confusing instructions I'm lucky I got any responses at all – but as you see, I heard many.

Greg Benford poses a powerful question – **Rich Dengrove** and **Binker Hughes** provide context – and **Chloie Airoidi**, Chattanooga fan, Unitarian, and survivor, offers something of an answer. Her victim's view of homicidal madness and the community strength that helped her get past it, demonstrates the undeniable value of a church as a community. Chloie directed me to **Olivia Spooner's** wonderful prize-winning essay on the Church's response to monstrous horror. My thanks to the UU and Olivia's family for permission to excerpt it. If you wish to find the terrible backdrop to Chloie's story and Olivia's account, the killer's so-called "manifesto" is available on-line. Against his black obscenity their vitality and decency shine all the brighter.

Community is one thing – Authority is another. **Mike Resnick's** piece on the short film made from his novel, *The Branch*, shows the danger of religion as dogma. Faith without freedom can be fearsome. Remind me to thank America's Founders for that First Amendment. (By the way, Mike's current Hugo nominee, "Article of Faith", is a superb treatment of religious issues.)

Moving away from religion, other contributors tell of other challenges and other responses. From *Challenger* #7 – one of my favorite issues, it had a beautiful David Cherry cover and its tributee was *la belle* Rose-Marie – comes "**Susan Whitmore's**" "Challenge on the Cutting Edge", one of the strongest pieces *Challenger* has ever run. It's reprinted in this issue with the kind permission of its author. **Mike Estabrook** faces down a personal obsession in the best way possible: through poetry. **Jeff Copeland's** paeon to his papa's experiences in World War II shows how a man of character can meet a terrible challenge in a way both stoic and heroic. **Chris Garcia's** story of his dad is touching and powerful. I tell the story of **John Henry Faulk**, who met the challenge of the blacklist through law, humor, and character – and incidentally, changed my life.

Off-theme but on-target, **Joe Green** actually talks about *science fiction* – the predictive ability of Robert A. Heinlein. **Lezli Robyn**, whom we were delighted to meet at Denvention, sends us a refreshingly happy autobiographical vignette. **Curt Phillips** proffers entertaining snapshots from his fannish life. **Taral Wayne** reveals a surprising influence on his art (I saw that movie recently), work he shares by illustrating **Alexis Gilliland**'s philosophical musings “in the Night Kitchen.” Hmmph – both art and writing from Charlie, Alex *and* Taral – one could easily create a big genzine tapping the talents of these polymaths alone! Speaking of artists, repeated thanks to **Kurt Erichsen** and **Brad Foster**, and congrats to **Randy Cleary** for winning the **Rebel Award** at the latest DeepSouthCon!

This issue is something of a tribute to **Kelly Freas**. There is, of course, the hitherto-unpublished painting on the cover and the familiar self-caricature on the Contents. (“But Kelly wasn’t a southpaw!” True – the illo, like the editor, is *flipped*.) The penultimate page in this issue was taken at Kelly’s home sometime in the ’60s. Behold Kelly, the aforementioned Joe Green, and the late **Wally Wood** chewing the fat. The sketch Wood gave Joe on that occasion rides our back cover. I have a lot to thank Joe for – his daughter, for one – so this is only my latest gratitude.



Among the folks I contacted about possibly telling their stories in this *Challenger* was Mr. **Charles deKunffy**, a teacher of mine at Ygnacio Valley High School once upon a long ago. In 1966 he assigned my Social Studies Honors class to write personal journals of our thoughts and experiences. I still keep mine. Mr. deK went on to write several successful tomes on horse dressage, but when I found him on the internet and wrote to him this spring it wasn’t concerning equestrian matters.

When he was teaching and I was student-ing, Mr. deKunffy told us about his young manhood in 1956, when his native country – Hungary – fell under the boot of Russian invasion. He escaped. I vividly remember his account of walking with his brother out of Budapest, the muzzles of Soviet machine guns trained at their backs – how they were *almost* fooled by an illuminated Austrian flag – the ditch into which they stumbled, beyond which lay the West, and liberty. It was a tremendous story – and if Mr. deK had ever written it down, I hoped, mayhaps he would let me reprint it.

He called me. It was wonderful to hear his accent again. Alas, he said, although he’s written about a great many topics, he’s never put his escape to paper. It would be too long for a journal like *Challenger* anyway. But, calling me his muse, he told me I’d gotten him thinking about it. Cheered to my gills, I sent Mr. deK a couple of *Challengers* – and he replied with one of his books on dressage. Autographed!

NEXT ISSUE.

I have a splendid cover, several contributions, but no theme picked out for *Chall* #31, so I call upon my contributors simply to relax and have fun. Write what you enjoy. My deadline is December, but the zine may be a bit delayed. With the idea of fighting Alzheimer’s by exercising my brain cells, I want to spend part of this fall writing a short story. Since I compose at the breakneck speed of a snail mounting a redwood, I anticipate a long haul. But please don’t let this fact keep you from penning LOCs, composing articles, assaying artwork, and sharing it with the world through our pages. *C’mon ... be a (Chall) Pal.*

So as we churn into summer, 2009, Rosy and I ardently anticipate Anticipation! See you there! Come to the Fan-Eds’ Feast!



So let's get started with the newest of our contributors ... and the happiest of our contributions. Cue the Wonder from Downunder ...



**FROM
READING IN
THE
OUTBACK TO
WRITING IN
THE SF
WORLD**

Lezli Robyn

I've had quite an amazing year. Ten months ago I had never been to a science fiction convention. Nine months ago I had yet to write a fictional story, let alone sell one – sf, fantasy or otherwise. And eight months ago I would never have thought it possible to realize my dream of publishing something I'd penned.

But in August of 2008 I went to my first Worldcon, and by October of that year I had written and sold my first story.

Since then, I've had a whirlwind tour of the publishing world, writing and then selling stories to *Asimov's*, *Analog*, *Jim Baen's Universe*, *Clarkesworld*, *The 50th Anniversary Twilight Zone Anthology*, and an anthology of another publisher I can't name yet. I've also sold reprints to Russia and China, and had a non-fiction sale to boot - and I'm still not convinced that it hasn't all just occurred within my very active imagination.

You see, prior to eighteen months ago the only contact I had with anyone in the science fiction field was an email I received from Anne McCaffrey in response to fan mail I'd sent her as a teenager. I remember asking her about the "secrets" to publishing (oh, I was *so* naïve!), and much to my delight she replied with some incredibly sound advice. But then Life intruded and my dream was shelved for many more years; I never actually got around to writing that first story.

After years of devouring as many sf and fantasy books as I could read on the bus to work, I decided it was about time I bought a signed book of Anne McCaffrey's to add to my growing collection. (She had been the first sf author I'd read at the tender age of 11, and thus her books hold a fond place in my heart.) Since not many prominent international authors visit Australia – and with book prices here being so prohibitive anyway – I searched the internet to find an unbelievably cheap signed book of hers from overseas. Again Life intruded and I missed the end of the auction, but after discovering the book hadn't sold I contacted the seller.

Now, you are probably wondering what this has to do with my first foray into the writing world, but the seller happened to be Mike Resnick, a prominent writer in the field and editor in his own right – and now a friend and collaborator.

After I bought the book off Mike, we traded some emails and opinions about the industry. I told him, frankly, that I would give him my opinion on *his* books, but I didn't have one because I had never actually read a word of his fictional writing. (I know, shocking isn't it? But in my defense Mike's books, like a lot of well-known authors' books, are hard to find here.) His response was "Well, we can't have that" and he promptly emailed me some of his stories.

I critiqued them.

He sent me some more.

I critiqued them too, and after a few months of this he strongly suggested (when I didn't respond to his not-so-subtle hints) that perhaps I should try writing a story; I might find that my ability to analyze other peoples' stories could translate into me being able to successfully compose some of my own. We could even do a collaboration together, something he'd done with many a novice writer before.

But I was hesitant. It wasn't as if I'd been penning stories for years in obscurity. I knew that the first thing I would hand him would be the rawest thing I'd written, and I didn't even know how well I could write fiction. So I suggested we'd wait until after we'd met at Worldcon. (I figured that if we got along then, he couldn't form that bad an opinion of me if I then wrote something hideously awful.)

It turned out that the convention was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I was finally able to see more than the tip of the iceberg; the sf world behind the books.

And I was hooked.

I discovered people with interests akin to my own; new friends who were fans and writers alike – and all ordinary people like me. I knew then that becoming a writer myself didn't just have to be a dream; if I worked hard I could actually become a part of the world it felt so much like I belonged to.

So upon my return to Australia I wrote my first story with Mike (who it turned out wasn't scared off by my Aussie accent and outlandish ways when we met) and I didn't do badly at all. In fact, in between our solo stories we've done several collaborations since then, all sold.

And now, as I approach my second convention in Montreal, I'm interacting with publishers and editors as well as writers; I've even been asked to sit on a publisher's reading panel at this year's Worldcon.

Who knows what else is ahead for me in the writing world?

I don't.

What I *do* know is that I've had one hell of a first year: I've been privileged enough to form new life-long friendships since Denvention, I've discovered how much I love writing, and I'm committed to enjoying my second Worldcon, regardless of what the future holds.

What more could this Aussie lass ask for?

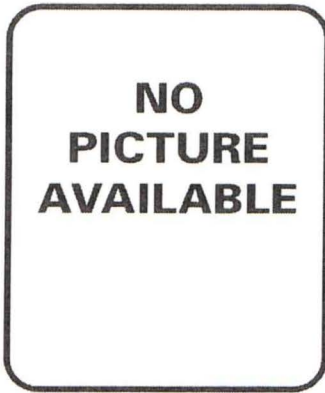
More sales, hopefully.



Kurt Erichsen



YHWH



SATAN



WAY- WARD ANGEL

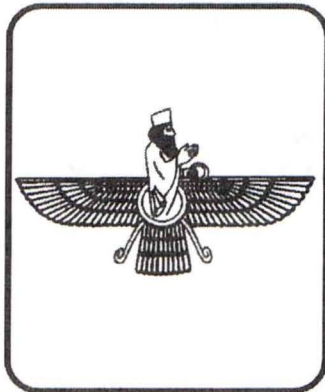
Charlie Williams

"One day the Sons of God came to attend on Yahweh, and among them was Satan."

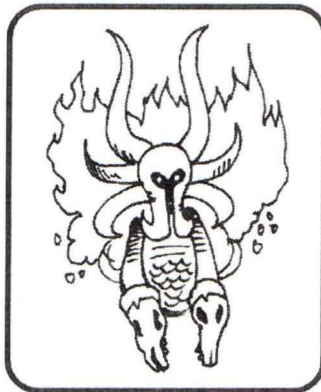
A *modern* rational person must find his own way through Scripture's thicket. You're reading the words in English, which loses something in the translation from Hebrew to Greek to Latin. The Bible is an entire library of books, written by diverse hands over millennia. Some books reflect a particular tradition, while others (re-telling the same story) demonstrate a very different bias. The very nature of Yahweh evolves from a storm god on an isolated mountain to the Trinity worshipped by Christians.

But what revelations –or literary devices- gave birth to the Adversary, Satan? Is Satan a separate supernatural being, or could he be the result of a gradual understanding of the dual nature of God?

AHURA-MAZDA



AHRIMAN



The character Satan appears very few times in the Old Testament and only three times does he appear as a distinct personality. These appearances are in Job, II Chronicles, and in Zechariah. The Hebrew verb *'satan* originally meant "to accuse", which is not unlike the role played by Job's Satan, but this form of the word is a development of a functional concept of Yahweh himself. *'Satan* was also a demeaning term used to indicate something or someone who is a hindrance. We can see this in I Samuel 29:4, where David is the "adversary" (*'satan*) to Achish's men; that is, a hindrance: they are afraid he'll not only be in the way but that he might "turn on us once the battle is joined". In I Kings 5:4, 11:14, and 11:23, Solomon has and sometimes doesn't have an adversary, not

necessarily a military threat but someone who constitutes the opposite to rest and to undisturbed peace in this life.

When we look at the Angel of the LORD (*mal'ak Yahweh*), however, we can see the word "adversary" in the sense of the divine plane meeting the mortal one. In Numbers 22:22, Balaam meets the "roving messenger of God", who stands in the road as "*le- 'satan-lo*", "for an adversary to him"; he stands in Balaam's way. Satan is not yet a mythological figure here; *'satan* is here, as in the preceding passages, a functional concept, not a proper name.

Let us examine for a moment the function of the *mal'ak Yahweh*. If we look at certain OT passages it is clear that the *mal'ak Yahweh* is identical to Yahweh, and yet is not Yahweh in his

all-embracing totality. He is Yahweh in a definite function, as his manifestation. In Exodus 3:2 he appears to Moses in the burning bush, but in verse 4 it is Yahweh himself who speaks. In Judges 13:17-18, after the *mal'ak Yahweh* has disappeared in the flame of the altar, Manoah says to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." Gideon also fears dying because he has seen the *mal'ak Yahweh* face to face in Judges 6:22; Gideon's lamentation is directed at Yahweh, not at the angel. These and other passages indicate that Yahweh and the *mal'ak Yahweh* are identical yet different: God and his emissary which is also a semi-mortal, semi-divine aspect. We can then say three things about the *mal'ak Yahweh*: (1) The *mal'ak Yahweh* is God operating in a concrete place and time. It is the enacted will of Yahweh which detaches itself from the divine personality in the process of actualization, hence the hypostasis of God's active intervention. (2) It can cover the whole range of Yahweh's activities, from eating lunch with Abram to becoming a pillar of fire by night and of smoke by day. (3) Its actions and words parallel Yahweh's (see above). The point here is simply that from time to time, especially in the case of Numbers 22:22, the *mal'ak Yahweh* is a '*satan*, someone or something's adversary, as in the case of the destroying angel of Exodus, if we can read between the lines. He was certainly Pharaoh's adversary!

When Yahweh was assigned a heavenly court we see the concept of the *mal'ak Yahweh* fading, to be replaced by the *bene-ha-elohim*, the "Sons of God". Unlike the *mal'ak Yahweh*, these beings are always around Yahweh in a sort of heavenly assembly. We can safely assume that they are an assimilation of Canaanite-Babylonian cacodemons, perhaps even the zodiacal signs and personalities. The difference lies in that these spirits do not simply mouth the words of Yahweh: they are independent personalities which follow their own desires, as in mating with mortals in Genesis 6:1-4. It is interesting to note that their offspring are not demigods like Hercules in the Greco-Roman mythologies, but are monsters.

But where does a supporting cast of minor gods come from in a rigidly monotheistic religion? During and after the Exodus, Yahweh was represented by the Ark of the Covenant, a portable god sometimes carried into battle.

Jerusalem was made the holy religious center of the nation when David brought the Ark there after the conquest of the Philistines. The center, then, of the Federation of Tribes was the shrine, the Temple, for the Ark was the very presence of Yahweh (II Samuel 4:4, II Samuel 6:2, II Kings 19:15), no longer identified with Mount Sinai. Canaanite cults in the Kingdom could not be completely uprooted, but were tolerated as long as taxes were paid. Yahweh had kept the Covenant and delivered Israel to the Promised Land.

The Covenant had to be re-examined, then, after Israel's civil war and conquest by the Babylonians. Sargon II conquered Samaria (northern Israel) and in 721 BC deported its populace. Religious syncretism seemed a foregone conclusion (II Kings 17:5ff). In 587 Nebuchanezar deported the population of Judah to Babylon, and although Cyrus the Great restored a Hebrew community to the area in 538, it was a Persian colony under Cyrus' hand-picked satrap. Why had Yahweh abandoned his chosen people?

The Prophets declared that the apostasy of the people had brought this chastisement. The Covenant was not withdrawn, but not yet fulfilled. Whenever Israel failed to keep its side of the bargain, the fulfillment is further postponed (Hosea 2:16 and Isaiah 6:13, 8:18, 10:19ff). Yahweh God was responsible for these calamities, and the nations which had overthrown Israel were but instruments of Yahweh, raised up for that purpose. God was not just more powerful than Ba'al—He was Ba'al.

While captive in Babylon and Persia, Israel assimilated concepts alien to the Patriarchs but all too familiar to us: the dual nature of Good and Evil in the Godhood. The Persian pantheon was dominated by the eternal conflict between Ahura Mazda, sky god, and Ahriman, Lord of Darkness. The antagonism between these Zoroastrian gods would continue into the next life, thence to a cataclysmic battle wherein all men would enjoy a general resurrection, the good gaining immortality, the irredeemably evil being annihilated by fire together with Ahriman himself and his hordes of bat-winged devils.

The greatest Hebrew literature came from this period, and was written to preserve racial and cultic purity. But the language of Hebrew cosmology was forever altered. Where before Yahweh had sent man good or evil, and when

dying a man could expect his soul (*neppish*) to descend to the shadowy realm of Sheol (Ecclesiastes 9:10), man could now expect that his bones would rise (says Ezekial) and that a great confrontation between good and evil would culminate in a final judgment. Ahriman and his attendant demons had a profound influence on Hebrew thought. Here was an answer to God's unpredictable and inscrutable behavior. The entire shape of monotheism was drastically changed. Of course, Ahriman and his court was the absolute equal of Ahura Mazda, not some subordinate being, and this posed problems for the radical monotheism of Judaism. The book of Job provides an answer.

What we have in Job is not an argument between God and a lesser angel, especially one who has been consigned to the opposite end of the Universe. The wager in Job sounds as if it had not originally been agreed to between a servant and a master high above him, but between two equals. This impression is also supported by the fact that Yahweh and Satan speak together without any regard for the distance between them.

In Job 1:8 Satan is a nagging doubt in God's mind, a doubt without grounds. Compare this dialogue to the one in I Kings 22:19ff, when one of the "spirits" (*ha-ruah*) volunteers a suggestion to Yahweh. Could a discussion in the divine court be a *divine soliloquy*? I offer as a parallel the creation passage of Genesis 1:26. Furthermore, look at I Chronicles 21:1, where we see Satan moving David to take a census of his people and incurring the wrath of God, while in II Samuel 24:1 we see Yahweh giving David the same instructions! Compare the "roaring lion" in Hosea 11:10 and Jeremiah 49:19 to the devil in I Peter 5:8. God's anger has become Satan.

Job is delivered into Satan's hands, but it is not Satan who deals the blows, but Yahweh. Job acknowledges Yahweh's hand in his fate, but not Satan's: "...Shall we receive good at the hands of God and shall we not receive evil? (Job 2:10)" This perception of Satan as God's "dark side" is a key to the transition between the Testaments. In Zechariah 3:1ff, Satan and the *mal'ak Yahweh*, two angels, two aspects of God, are fighting over the high priest Joshua. One wants to annihilate him, the other to save him. One wants justice, the other mercy. Here Satan becomes what was once a positive quality of God,

his justice. A high principle of love is visualized in mercy. This is the outermost edge of Old Testament thought, a premise for the merciful God in the New Testament.

By the first century of the Common Era, stateless Judaism was Hellenized, then Romanized, and its rich mythology absorbed and reflected these new influences. The new faith Christianity becomes much more than an apocalyptic sect of nominal Judaism, because early in its history most of its converts were Gentiles. The growing popularity of "mystery cults" and the world-view of Gnosticism colored this new faith, dramatically changing the nature of the Hebrew God. Jesus the Christ is not just the long-awaited Jewish Messiah but is also the Divine Man and the Heavenly Redeemer.

The Redeemer was an ambassador from the Most High God, the *Nous*, Greek for the spiritual counterpart of base matter. Unknown to this great God, lesser manifestations of godhood called *archons* created this world; this concept was the result of violent anti-Semitism which contended that since this world was awful, it was a mistake to have made it at all, and its creator can only be evil. Yahweh becomes demoted by the Gnostics to a malevolent spirit which had misguided the Hebrews for thousands of years. Jesus the Christ was not just a wandering preacher, but was the *Anthropous*, an alter-ego of the *Nous*, and his sole mission was to rescue souls trapped in this world of base matter. Their rescue was effected and their transcendence from Earth assured by the transmission of secret *gnosis*, knowledge, and of course, only those with ears to hear will hear, and this Truth will set you free. Evidence of Gnosticism abounds in the Gospel of John, and in the apocryphal gospels of Peter, Phillip, and Thomas, and although Ignatius of Antioch blasted the Gnostics in his letter to the Ephesians (19:20) as did Justin Martyr and Paul, it has survived down through the centuries to color modern Christianity.

Gnostic teachers and other apocalyptic writers went to great lengths to free the *Nous* from any blame in various controversial stories. Why did Yahweh prefer Abel's offering over Cain's? Why did Yahweh flood the world? Why did he love Jacob and hate Essau? Surely, they concluded, Yahweh must be a jealous, irrational god, inferior to another Supreme Being. So we

have developing the concept of a High Father who created many lesser spirits, including Yahweh/Elohim, whom they equate with Satan.

Gnostics arose in some cases from those who were tired of “lies and broken promises”. The Covenant had not been kept and Yahweh/Elohim had delivered Israel into the hands of one oppressor after another. The failure of Danielism and apocalyptic thought in general led to the idea that a wayward angel had misguided the Hebrew people since the dawn of history. And so in the Gnostic thought, Christ had come not only to redeem the lost souls but to destroy the god of the Jews. We can attribute this largely to Saturninus, who taught at Antioch during the reign of Hadrian (117-138). Saturninus wrote during the period in which Jerusalem revolted against the Romans and were crushed not once but twice, in 115-117 and in 132-135. This destruction led radical dualist Jews and Christians to move from apocalyptic

hopes toward Gnosis, and to reinterpret the Old Testament. Thus Yahweh the Protector and Deliverer of Israel from Egypt to the Maccabees had to undergo many drastic changes in the minds of these liberal Jews and Christians.

By now we are far and beyond traditional Judaism. The Old Testament and its eschatology have been rejected. We have reached a point in the dualistic development that is radically anti-Semitic. But as Christianity evolved, it deliberately overlooked these excesses, incorporating the Old Testament, retaining a doctrine of a world created by and for goodness. Satan, the Adversary, becomes the Serpent in the Garden, the Tempter and the Father of Lies, and yet doomed to fail in the fullness of time. Despite his many guises and mythological trappings, Satan has, in the end, become someone to blame other than a loving but unknowable God, when bad things happen to good people.



AN ANECDOTE

Curt Phillips

A few years ago when I had more time to do so, I used to put on my Civil War uniform and go to local elementary schools (with their invitation, of course) and talk to some of the classes about local Civil War history.

Here's one of the ways I used to try to convey to them the fact that war, in general, changes our world for all time. I'd ask them to look around their classroom and look at the faces of all their 25 or 30 classmates – kids they'd all known for several years at that point – and then to imagine what it would be like if every 4th one of them suddenly vanished into thin air, as though they'd never been born in the first place. The kids usually giggled at this idea.

Then I'd say, “The thing is, this already happened to you and you didn't know it until right now. The Civil War caused the deaths of over 620,000 soldiers, and many of them were young men from right here in Washington County. Had it not been for that war, those young men would have grown up, married, had children, and their children would have done the same as would their children. And *their* children would have been right here in this room sitting beside you now. But because of the Civil War, those children whom you would have known for all your lives simply never existed. So that war, fought long before you or I were born, has taken something from all of us. All wars do that, and that's why we all should work as hard as we can to prevent any more wars from ever happening again.”

The kids seem to understand my point well enough. Of course, that story seems like a much harder sell these days when we're fighting a war in the Middle East that even I don't know how to justify to schoolchildren.



Levi and Me

Gregory Benford

It all started with experience, as most philosophical positions should. What's an idea worth if it cannot withstand the rub of the real?

My mother taught English and my father taught agriculture in Robertsdale High in southern Alabama. Except for his three years fighting in The War. My twin brother and I were born in 1941 and sensed that he was gone, and only when he returned in August 1945 did the reason why he went dawn on us.

I recall a big party with much celebration, and I asked my father in the 1980s what that had been about. I expected that he would say it was for his return. But he told me it was because the bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima and everyone knew he wouldn't have to go to Japan for the invasion. Many had died but in Robertsdale there was a party. Life was like that. It always had been.

He was a forward observer in field artillery, fighting across France, the Bulge, and through Germany to Austria. I believe he was the only beginning forward observer in his battalion to survive the war, and suspect that his farm-boy field smarts made the difference. In 1945 he returned to teaching, developing an agriculture training program for the whole state. Then in 1948 the Cold War called him with a Regular Army appointment, which he seized as a way up into a world he had glimpsed in the war. We went with him, first to his training post in Oklahoma at Fort Sill (where in 1967 he retired as commandant), then to Japan for 1949-51. Into the world beyond blissful America.

My father served on MacArthur's general staff, and we saw the whole range of Japanese life, hard and strange, with communists rioting in the streets and farmers working the rice paddies only miles away, in a fashion unchanged by millennia. With my brother, I lay in bed at night in our compound housing and listened to Marines firing at communists trying to get inside. One morning we sneaked out of our house before dawn and watched the Marines pull bodies out of the rice paddies. I realized that the world was a lot bigger and tougher and darker than sunny Alabama knew.

As the Cold War deepened, its chill winds blew the Benfords to Atlanta in 1952, then Germany in 1954, where I saw the colossal damage wrought by the Big One, the greatest of all wars, and the suffering that had followed. That shocked me, coming out of my Episcopal upbringing. Both of my parents had firm religious faith. My brother and I were acolytes in the church and confirmed in formal ceremony in 1954. But my experience in devastated lands meant that more and more I thought about theodicy, or the problem of evil—if God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-benevolent, then why do bad things happen to good people?

This is the “hellmouth” that can suddenly open before you, for no reason. There are three classical answers: we don't understand what God's justice is, and maybe it's a lesson; or maybe we sinned without knowing it, and so are punished; or perhaps true mercy is beyond human conception. There's a crucial scene in Kingsley Amis's novel *The Green Man* that captures these issues. The devil appears to a man taking a bath and simply says that humans don't understand the real issues at all. If God doesn't halt suffering, he is cruel, and if he can't he is weak. But maybe the game between God and Evil is just more complex than we can fathom. Maybe Christ suffered on the cross to no end; maybe he, too, was deluded into thinking it would do any good to man.

Then there's the free will argument. To be free we must be able to commit error, and from that comes pain. The Bible is full of Godly interventions, though, mostly to shield the Jews or murder their enemies. But... Why has that stopped in the face of endless persecution, pogroms, and the Nazi Holocaust? (A televangelist argued recently that the Holocaust was God's way of getting the Jews back to Israel.)

Christianity needs Heaven to explain Evil and make up for it, but can anyone believe such pain will be made okay at the End Time?

And what could Heaven be like? Either it's a place where we cannot sin (no free will) or we don't want to sin.

But my teenage self couldn't buy that. If Heaven makes up for suffering, why wait? Why not make us suitable Godly companions right now—angels, as it were? This idea bothered me a lot when I was younger. If Heaven allowed continuity between our mortal selves and our states in Heaven, why was Heaven free of sin? Was it without free will? I read Dostoyevsky and found he had the same worry, expressed powerfully in “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man.”

I came to the conclusion that either God is impotent or evil...or he's simply nonexistent.

There the issue rested until the 1990s. If nothing else, the reality of death and the experience of losing loved ones punctures even the most gratifying and well-ordered life. My wife died in 2002. I collapsed two days after her death and left many of the details of her memorial service to our children.

Days later, coming out from an errand onto the street in Laguna Beach around noon, I looked up at our house and mused about Joan's schedule, where she would be, calculating if we could meet for lunch—and suddenly saw that *she was nowhere now*, not in this universe any more. In such moments the enormity of our lives hammers home. I realized the emotional conclusion of my loss of faith.

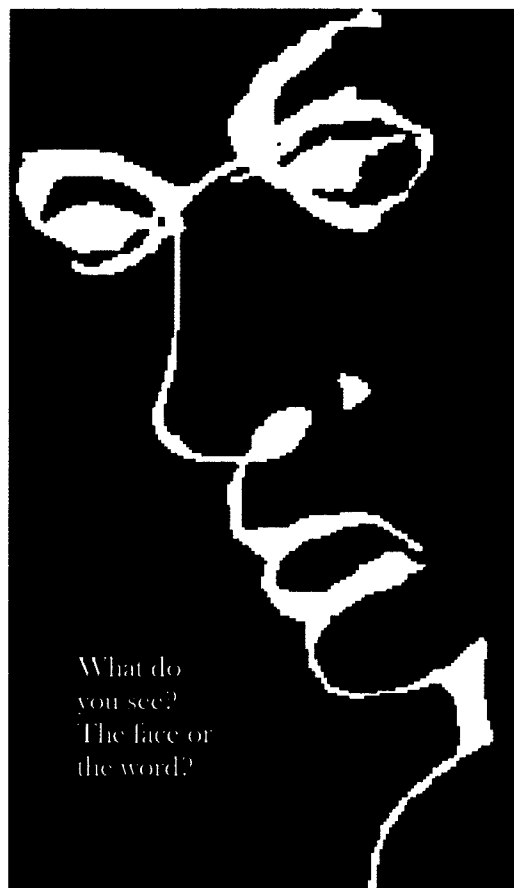
Life kept hammering. Three months later my father died. My mother's faith carried her through. A few months later, as I walked with her through Fairhope, Alabama where I grew up, we met an old family friend who had not heard the news. He asked how my father was. “Oh, he's in Heaven,” my mother said in a lively voice. But I could hear something darker under it. In two more years she was gone, as well. Indeed, she deliberately ignored an infection, refusing to take the antibiotic her doctor prescribed, and died within a week of sepsis. I believe she wanted to join my father.

Every religion with an afterlife theory has something that survives death or is resurrected—and that gets interpreted as the essence of what it means to be human. Often the strength of faith seems shaky, so you believe you must have the One Truth Religion to which others must convert or go to Hell.

But indifference, not doubt, is the greater adversary of faith. The Europeans are in that slow retreat of the “Sea of Faith” whose ebb Matthew Arnold lamented in “Dover Beach.”

As I became a scientist, I learned ways of accounting for how strong religion is among us. Through multilevel or group-level selection, evolution has given us the many essential genes that benefit the group at the individual's expense. Some are essential to a social species—genes that underlie generosity, moral constraints, and plausibly, religious behavior. Such traits are difficult to account for, though not impossible, on the view that natural selection favors only behaviors that help the individual to survive and leave more children.

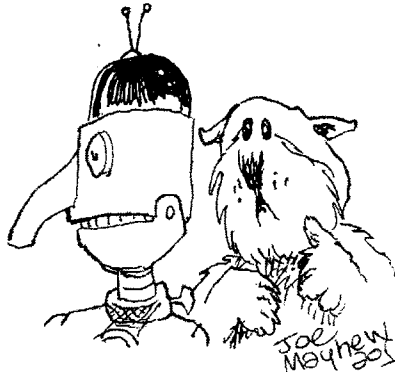
So I now believe that Evil isn't a problem to be solved. It's just a feature of our world. Perhaps many people cannot live meaningful lives without God. But I'm happy to, now. The universe is a dark and tragic place. Our experience of it makes more sense without the complication of a God who supposedly loves us.



AN ESSAY

Rich Dengrove

I was debating in an apa about the nature of God with someone who, unless he chooses not to, will remain anonymous. He never answered me. However, I suspect he had a good reason: he had had a Niagara of other things to do. I would be delighted if he chooses to answer me now, but I realize he still has a lot on his plate. For now, my argument will remain:



Joe Mayhew

Neither one of us uses the term God in the normal parlance. There, God both created the universe and is worshipped. You argue that God has to be the creator of the universe, preferably by supernatural means, but need not be worshipped. Here, you have an ulterior motive. You would just as soon get rid of all that faith nonsense and zero in on where God as an entity can be disproved: i.e., the science, the facts and the logic. However, your examples of un-worshipped creators who were gods do not work out. For the Gnostics who believed in the Demi-Urge, while that being created the universe, he wasn't worthy of being worshipped. For them, the entity above him who didn't create the universe, God, was the one worthy of being worshipped. Your second example does not work out either, a sheet. You said a sheet would still not be a God if it were worshipped. However, it was never worshipped so we will never know. You are right to find the idea absurd. Of course, because it is, a sheet would be unlikely to ever be worshipped.

A third example seems to work out on the surface, the Deists. They claimed the First Cause, or the Unknown Builder, was God, yet they claimed not to worship him. However, my experience with modern day Deists, the Unitarians, is that they worship God, despite their ostensible belief. In fact, I know they have what they call a "Worship Service." I suspect the Deists would have too, or they would not have been called the Unknown Builder God.

I freely confess to having an ulterior motive: I wish to separate faith and science,

which, I think, should have their own separate places in our lives. Thus, anything people worship is a God. About the sheet, I am not going to flinch: if it were worshipped, it too would be a god.

Whichever way we define Religion, it clears up confusion here: that the creator of the universe has to

be God, and is ipso facto worthy of worship. That is the confusion of the Deists and their modern day descendents have failed to disentangle themselves from.

The Fundies I have met do something similar. They have tried to convert me with an argument similar to the Deists, only with a vengeance. They argue the old saw that a building has to have a builder so the universe does too. Very similar to the First Cause or Builder of the Deists. However, the idea is to get you to worship a God a lot harder than the Deists or Unitarians would ever have wanted you to. On that basis, you are supposed to accept the Unknown Builder into your heart, and his son, and be born again. Also, go to church, practice religious precepts, oppose abortions, and be happy having found God. Above all, agree to a literal interpretation of the Bible. No Evolution should cross your lips.

Here too we clear up a confusion: Fundamentalism need not follow from the Unknown Builder argument.

I think my argument has an advantage for most people, though: if creation and worship are independent of each other, it makes God almost invulnerable to the usual doubt: that God does not accord with science or the facts. This has been the curse of the modern age. If science and fact, and faith, are irrelevant to one another, neither should be able to convince people to give up God.

On the other hand, I must admit people are unlikely to advocate my doctrine because it is totally foreign to them.

Lots of people over the millennia have tried to “prove” the existence/non-existence of a God. It's a totally pointless [and endless] exercise, but it keeps them amused. The reason it's doomed to failure is that nobody's bothered to ask what would count as a God – what would make a candidate for Godhood worthy of worship. Oh, sure, Aquinas' “ontological” argument relies on defining God as 'that than which nothing greater can exist' and then saying God must exist because it's “greater” to exist in reality than as an idea – but that misses the point. People's conceptions of “that than which nothing greater can exist” vary wildly. Besides, the 'can exist' line stacks the deck in favor of whatever-it-is existing. In short, it's one of the cuter attempts, but irrelevant.

The same can be said for the “argument from randomness” [my personal choice for cutest of the lot]. It starts, as you recall, with the usual claim offered against common “intelligent design” views of the intricacy of the universe/etc that “Absolutely anything can result from the random interactions of atoms and molecules.” [We will courteously bypass the touchy question of how said atoms and molecules came to exist.] The claim, as it stands, sounds good. The catch is that “Absolutely anything” is a large enough class to include (you guessed it) a God. Gulp. It's so all-encompassing, in fact, as to include all possible versions of “that than which ...” In short, you could have multiple Gods duking it out for top dog [or cooperating, of course] – which is the gist of pantheism. The worse catch is, “Absolutely anything” also includes a “supreme” God, outgunning the paltry Gods of pantheistic systems. Even if you didn't have one to start with - even if you can get those pesky atoms and molecules out of nothingness – “absolutely anything from randomness” means, sooner or later, you'll have one. In fact, after all the millennia, there's almost certainly a “supreme” God already. Hmmm.

That's what I mean about the pointlessness of existence/non-existence arguments. All they accomplish is to amuse the debaters and distract us from the real point. Before haggling about existence/non-existence,

one has to identify what would make a candidate for Godhood worthy of worship. Let me suggest a few qualifications.

Qualifications for Godhood

Durability is essential. It's hard to commit oneself to a flash-in-the-pan that is here today, gone tomorrow or vanishes when times get tough. A short-term “god” can't be taken seriously because it'll be gone before long.

Power is another essential - indeed Omnipotence. How could one worship a God that was too feeble to do any good? or was easily thwarted by something else? The something-else would seem a better candidate.

“WORTHY OF WORSHIP”

Binker Glock Hughes

Cartoons by Alexis Gilliland

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Readiness to help is built into the 'do any good' line above. Nobody wants, or would worship a God that wouldn't help in times of trouble. Being powerful doesn't mean much if would-be worshippers might just as well pray to a mindless lump. This means the candidate also needs Caring, since worshipping a God that doesn't give a hoot is a waste of time. The candidate must also be Evenhanded, treating all alike instead of playing favorites – which adds the requirement of Lawgiving, so everybody

knows the rules and the benefits of sticking to them. This in turn, leads to another requirement.

Communication is necessary between the God and the worshipper, to convey the rules and to let the worshipper ask/receive help and guidance. Who would worship a God who, through lack of communication, might as well not be there? Get real.

These characteristics rule out a vending-machine-style mechanism that dispenses good or evil depending on what buttons you push. To be worthy of respect, much less worship, the candidate must be a Person, and a Reliable person at that. We see enough of vending-machine style mechanisms with cause/effect and stimulus/response phenomena, but who could worship that sort of thing?

Then there's Intelligence/Wisdom. How could one worship a God that was stupid? or, through lack of wisdom, gave instructions that were often wrong? Since one can't respect somebody who can be suckered, or can have things pulled off behind his/her back, Omniscience is also required. Yeah, I know it's getting to be a long list but, let's face it: we're talking about qualifying as God. Nobody said it was going to be easy.

Yet even all those characteristics won't do without Truth/Trustworthiness. If the God isn't reliable in word and deed, you don't have a God but a crapshoot. Truth is the touchstone of reliability and, to be worthy of worship, the candidate must be reliable.

Finally, even such a splendid being as met these qualifications must have/provide a Means of Communication. Otherwise, the whole exercise is senseless. Fortunately, we have scriptures from many major [and minor] religions purporting to embody what their respective Gods have said and done. They offer an idea of how well the proposed Gods measure up to the various standards. Let's deal with them briefly.

Applications for Godhood - Scriptures

The various pantheisms – from Greek/Roman/Norse mythologies to Hinduism and the neo-pagan animistic systems – are amusing, but fall short. Their own scriptures show that none of their innumerable candidates measures up. Certainly they reflect recognition that being God is a really complex business, with so many intricate details to oversee; but they tell us their candidates are unreliable, squabble among themselves, are malicious at times, and are powerless outside their own narrow areas. Such a “god” says, Not my job, mon' when problems arise, so such systems never attain to the conception of a God worthy of worship. One can only say, “Bite-sized gods for bite-sized minds.”

A different flaw besets Buddhist and Universalist/Etc. systems. They claim their respective Gods have durability and power, but they're absent. Communication is mostly one-sided [the worshipper trying to get the God's attention] and replies are haphazard at best. Maybe they're uncaring. Maybe they only talked to the unique individual who once-upon-a-time had the revelation that became the scripture. Also, those I've heard of are as likely to do evil as good [often unpredictably] - or might not do Anything. I can't see accepting such a God myself, but you may be masochistic enough to fancy it.

Then there are the Jewish, Islamic, Mormon, and Christian religions, which share the scriptures referred to as the Bible but with their own unique twists. Judaism only accepts the Old Testament as scriptural, while the others accept both the Old and New Testaments [which I'll sometimes call O.T. and N.T., respectively, to save typing]. The Mormons and Muslims each add a scriptural document - the The Book of Mormon and the Qur'an, respectively - so let's deal with them first.

The Book of Mormon is patently fraudulent – which may be why, for the zillion Mormon missionaries that assailed me over the years, it took 10+ years of diligent effort to get my hands on a copy. Either they know it's fraudulent [which I doubt] or more likely, they've never read it [as most “Christians” have

never read the Bible]. It's clearly the fabrication by a clever kid [Joseph Smith] who wanted to go West instead of doing farm chores at home - and had sized up the stupidity and religiosity of the community around him. He "legitimated" it by opening with summaries of O.T. books he'd been obliged to do in Sunday school [about half the length of the thing], then shaped the rest to play on their hyper-religious credulity with inventions like the Indians being the 'ten lost tribes' to make it religious duty to go West. Being in puberty, he also made it legitimate to marry as many women as he liked. It was a good gig, but he had to get it accepted by the religious community, so needed the 'testimony' of "witnesses."

The "testimony" of the "witnesses" - earnestly recorded in the front of the copy I got - is classic "Emperor's New Clothes" stuff. The carefully-selected "witnesses" were brought one at a time into a closed room to see what they'd been told could only be seen by the 'pure in heart' - hence They, not others, had been chosen as "witnesses." Isn't that swift? The "witnesses" were their religious bigwigs, plus a few 'humble' members privileged to be asked. None would have dared say, "I didn't see anything." "Proving" you aren't "pure in heart" is totally unacceptable to a holier-than-thou bigwig. If he later reflected on his "impurity" in private, it just gave him a higher regard for the "innocent" who "received" this wonder. Of course, once the "important" people had come out of the room raving about divine writings, "groupthink" would do the rest. I suspect somebody along the way recognized the fraud or they wouldn't have felt free to modify it by vote of their inner circle. It's a trifle more accessible since then, but still not easy to get. Either way, it's too clearly fraudulent to take seriously.

The Qur'an is much easier to find, but is not thought binding in any translation - only in the original [now ancient] Arabic. It contains the remarks and pronouncements of Mohammed but, illiterate, he didn't write any of it down. Instead, it was assembled by his followers after he died. If enough witnesses agreed verbatim on a saying, it made the Qur'an. If not, it got into a

book of his sayings with only semi-scriptural standing.

The problems are two-fold. First, the Christians Mohammed knew in his town [he was a townsman, not a desert-dweller] weren't very knowledgeable, so he decided the only way God could have had a son was by physical copulation with Mary. This was unacceptable to him, so he decided God couldn't have a son. It never occurred to him that a God who supposedly spoke the worlds into existence could speak



pregnancy into a young woman. This connects to the Qur'an's other problem - inconsistency. Like Joseph Smith, Mohammed tells bits of O.T. stuff [mostly major "Bible stories"] but he sometimes accepts the whole Bible. There are moving passages urging his followers to honor and be at peace with "the people of the Book" [Christians and Jews] - but there are Also moving passages urging conversion to Islam by the sword or killing anyone who Won't convert. No wonder there are moderate, peace-seeking Muslims and wild-eyed extremists! Each group can cite "scripture" to support their views.

That's just the most obvious of many contradictions.

The central problem with Islam, then, is that its identifying "scripture" doesn't meet the fundamental test of consistency. The Bible's apparent tangles can be resolved with only one principle of interpretation and one premise - the principle of finding out who's speaking to whom and only attributing to its God what the text attributes; and the premise that, to be God, the claimant must be worthy of respect. This won't work with the Qur'an. It stays inconsistent despite much greater effort. Like the Torah [the first five O.T. "books"], the Qur'an is seen as written by a single writer; but a high percentage of the Torah is directly attributed to God. Not so the Qur'an. It's almost all Mohammed, with few quotes from God. This means we can't carp at all the inconsistencies [they go with the territory] and can't blame the Qur'an on the God it claims to present, much less take it as reliably expressing that God's will/instructions /preferences. This means it's no measure of whether the God discussed [Allah is just the Arabic word for "God" as *Dieu* in French or *Gott* in German] is worthy of worship. One must suspect, however, that any credible God would prefer a less self-contradictory "prophet" or would supply outside confirmation. The Bible - which Islam accepts and honors - offers a simple test. It says you need 2-3 witnesses to establish anything. The Qur'an's extremes/contradictions aren't likely to pass that test, even by referencing Mohammed's other sayings, much less by examining Islam's other "scripture," the Bible.

Means of Confirming Scriptural Claims

Actually, the Bible's God suggests three means of confirming that He really is God and the legitimacy of those scriptures - two in the Old Testament and one in the New. The requirement of two or three witnesses to establish anything is first presented in the O.T. Also in the O.T., the God in question proposes prophecy as a basis for verifying that He is who He says He is. [I use the masculine pronoun because the text uses it and because Jesus referred to God as 'Father' (masculine) rather

than "Mother" (feminine) or "Parent" (neuter/non-specific).] Telling prophets ahead of time things that will happen is offered as a basis, once the prophecy is fulfilled, for deciding He really is God. In the N.T., after Jesus' resurrection, a further means of confirmation is offered - "signs and wonders" shall follow and confirm his teachings for those who believe. In part, this is why the "books" after the main accounts of Jesus' earthly activity report various miracles associated with his followers' preaching and teaching.

What's Left?

This leaves little choice but to look for a God worthy of worship in the remaining "scripture" - the Bible as accepted by Judaism and Christianity. Anybody who will take the trouble to read it through from start to finish marking words attributed to God the way 'red-letter' editions mark words attributed to Jesus will find whole chapters, almost whole books, so attributed. With so much material directly attributed to the deity, there's a lot of evidence concerning His character and personality. It's interesting to note that reading the Bible from start to finish shows it to be a single, coherent book [with the "books" little more than overgrown chapters]. Essentially, it's a family-saga, recounting events starting when disobedience to the God it concerns cut off direct communication and opened humanity to various afflictions. It then follows events as that God sets up a way to restore communication with any individual who's willing. The N.T. shows the implementation of this remedy, the results after the God was able to send His Spirit to dwell in human hearts, and a lot of explanatory stuff by the best educated of those who accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited Messiah.

That the God depicted would go to such lengths to restore communication with individuals is evidence of Caring that seems absent in other scriptures. The use of prophecy and promise in the Old Testament sets the stage for fulfillment in the New - giving evidence of Durability [and durability of purpose] through all that time; Power [to arrange fulfillment of

prophecies, etc.]; Intelligence/Wisdom [to plan, prophesy, and properly execute it all, not to mention fulfilling other prophecies along the way]; Patience [to put up with the time it takes to unfold]; and Reliability/Truth [by keeping promises, fulfilling prophecies, etc., over time]. In short, the Bible's candidate seems to qualify, especially if one examines the New Testament as well as the Old. The N.T. records the fulfillment, in Jesus of Nazareth, of so many prophecies that statisticians have likened the odds to covering Texas a foot deep in silver dollars and, on the first one picked up, getting the only one marked with an X. That requires taking Jesus seriously, especially since non-Christian contemporary accounts [such as that of Josephus, a Jew working for the Romans] report Jesus' miracles and other data most people have only met in the N.T.

Much as some might wish it otherwise, Jesus of Nazareth seems to have been a historical figure meeting the description given in the New Testament and fulfilling all the Messianic prophecies of the Old. New Testament accounts say he rose from the grave, ascended after forty days, and fulfilled God's prophecy of writing the Law on human hearts [instead of external tablets of stone] by sending God's Spirit to indwell believers on the day celebrating when Moses received the stone tablets of the Law.

Whether one accepts these accounts, or regards them as clever inventions by the followers of an impressive person, relies on other data. The most difficult evidence to discount is what happened to those early followers. If it had been invented for supposed benefit, they would have retreated and recanted when things got tough. Such scholarly, zealous Pharisees as Saul of Tarsus would have kept hunting and imprisoning Jesus' followers. Instead, Saul reports an encounter with God on the road to Damascus, after

which he did a complete about-face, not only accepting Jesus as the Messiah, but [under the new name Paul] becoming the main voice for belief in Jesus to non-Jews [Gentiles].

Then there are those who were with Jesus during his earthly activity and report experiences with him after his resurrection. It would have been so simple to say they'd made it all up - but rather than take that obvious course, they suffered brutal treatment and died appalling deaths. Paul's wasn't so bad. He was beheaded. Of course, he'd been stoned, beaten within an inch of his life on several occasions, and lots else while he was spreading the word about Jesus - but beheading wasn't so bad compared with the others. Several were crucified [Peter was crucified upside down]. Bartholomew was skinned alive. John, although he died a natural death, had been through boiling in oil and other efforts to kill him. All suffered "lesser" penalties, such as being brutally beaten or stoned. They could've avoided all that just by keeping their mouths shut, even if they didn't formally recant. Yet their conviction that Jesus was the long-prophesied Messiah couldn't be shaken by any earthly penalty they had to endure for insisting on it and telling others. That sort of devotion isn't easily won.

Jesus, as they understood it, offered the only way - but open to any who would accept it - to gain forgiveness and cleansing from the human tendency to disobey that had cut people off from God. Any who would believe it and invite him into their hearts as Lord could have it.





Once that change was made, the curse humanity had walked into by disobedience [including sickness, poverty, etc.] was/is broken. People could/can be filled with God's Holy Spirit, so communicate with God directly [not through a narrow priesthood], receiving ongoing, individual guidance and help. Further, this God is 'big' enough and caring enough to treat each individual as His beloved child.

Even if we don't like it, then, the closest we seem to come to a candidate for a God worthy of worship is the one seen in the Bible. The N.T., as recording the fulfillment of O.T. prophecies, seems needed to complete the picture. The N.T. also presents a way any ordinary individual can get a fresh start, erasing all past folly and error, and making it possible to interact directly with this God. The means is to "believe in one's heart and confess with one's mouth that Jesus Christ [the Greek word for Messiah] is Lord." That's all. Since the God in question resolutely adheres to the freedom of the human will, He won't strong-arm anybody into accepting Him. To me, it's further evidence of caring to refuse to force anything on us, even something seen as beneficial. I've heard many forms of such a prayer in Jesus' name – from elaborate, detailed formulae to such simple ones as, "Lord Jesus, take my life and do something good with it." The traditional upshot of sincerely praying such a prayer is what people call "being re-born" – born as a new creation into this God's Kingdom. Like changing any other habit, this change involves adjusting to new ways of

thinking/acting, getting information [maybe even 'reading the manual'], and so on. This is easier with experienced help – guidance/encouragement from other(s) who have been at it longer. That's where a problem arises.

While the Christian God seems worthy of worship, Christian churches/sects over the centuries have engaged in many follies – even atrocities – in God's name [which the God depicted would Not appreciate]. Hypocrisy in the ranks and abuse of power in the leadership have meant Religion has given Christianity a bad name. Still, the Christian God seems the only one so far who's worthy of worship – whether through Messianic Judaism, a denomination, or a more tenuous linkage with one or more of the independent ministries. Since, however, a person who has committed to this God can receive direct guidance, he/she can ask to be shown suitable sources of teaching and worship – or other sources of knowledge [scripture/etc.] to build a better basis for choosing.

What Then

Having criteria makes it worth asking, What's my current God? The answer is what gets most of our time, energy, money, attention, and trust. Does it measure up as worthy of worship? If not, maybe we should seek a God that does meet these standards – or look more closely at the only one found so far. Since this one doesn't force people into anything, requiring their authorization before getting involved, it's entirely personal choice to join this Kingdom so He can protect, provide, heal, advise, and bless in other ways. Of course, once in His Kingdom, He can't help if the person ignores or refuses His advice. Still, advice from a God who met these standards might be the quickest route to fulfilling one's highest potential. Does my God qualify? Does yours? Look and see.



A Different Kind of *Predator*

Cathy Palmer-Lister

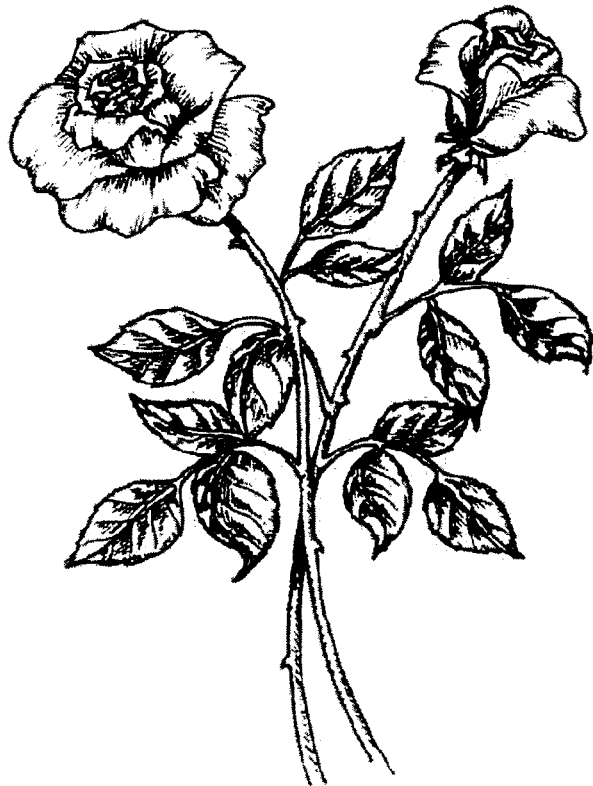
I didn't at first realize what was happening. Stalkers are nutcases who follow movie stars and Anne Murray, right? Wrong. They walk among us. They go to conventions, sit among us at fan club meetings, join us for supper after the *Star Trek* movie....

At the time, I had got to know Nikki (not her real name) fairly well. She was an accomplished costumer, but quiet and soft-spoken. She joined several SF clubs and even the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, as I did, so I saw her often. The stalker, who became known as LaRose for reasons that will soon become obvious, was also a fairly quiet fellow who joined only one of the groups so I barely knew him. When he did speak up at meetings (always from the back of the room) there was a quiet sort of intensity about him, but that was not unusual for somebody trying to make a point in his second language. Just an ordinary guy, like the rest of us, a fan of SF movies and TV shows.

The trouble was already well under way when I first woke up to what was happening behind the scenes of the club I shall call Trekkers. I remember standing on the steps after a meeting and getting involved in a discussion between Nikki and another friend whom I shall call Connie. Nikki was disturbed because the club would not ban LaRose, but Connie was saying it was better that Nikki knew where he was and what he was doing. It was at least a safe environment, and our meetings were during the day, and circumstances were such that he wasn't likely to be able to follow her home. The president of the Trekkers reasoned that, "He pays his dues, so I cannot send him away." He thought the roses were funny. It was a shock to me, the first of several yet to come. Ummm, a female

member tells you she is being stalked, followed around by a guy who started showing up every day at the fast food place where she worked to give her roses, and this is not cause for banning? Connie said, "At least he is in the open this way." Yeah, I guess... But Nikki was thinking of quitting the club, does that make sense? Lose a master costumer, keep a weirdo?

The discussion on the steps happened because Nikki was having to wait until LaRose had been gone awhile, and her friends had taken a look to be sure he wasn't lurking around a corner to see what bus she took. This is not normal. And, come on, the guy was not a life member! Just refuse to renew his membership, at least. But no, LaRose was still welcome to the club meetings, as



was another member who *had* in fact been banned from MonSFFA meetings because of his violent tendencies. After this creep had smashed a couple of things at meetings, and gone on about how much fun it was to have a party in the Mount Royal Cemetery, and then finding out about LaRose, I was considering quitting, too. But Connie's point was valid: Don't let them win – you also pay your membership fees, your voice is just as important. Absolutely, but MY voice was not being listened to. Was it because I was a woman and they were males? I don't like to think so, but the evidence was starting to point that way, and now here was Nikki standing on the stairs, scared that LaRose might learn where she lived. Did no one care what was happening to her? She was living in fear, but the guy in charge seemed to think there was no big deal.

Finally, Nikki did quit the club, and she changed her job, and she moved, and eventually LaRose lost her trail.

Months later, just before noon, the school secretary appeared at my classroom door, looking white as a sheet. "There's a guy downstairs in the office wanting to talk to you." And then, trying to make light of it, "Have you lost your love?" She handed me a business card: Lost Loves Detective Agency. What the ????? We have detective agencies here? Well, of course, we must. Never really thought about it before. Geez, detectives now, at the elementary school where I teach, when did I start showing up in a TV script?

I got the kids off to lunch and with great trepidation, made my way to the principal's office where a fellow with a very bad cold was sniffing and snuffling. Was this some sort of joke? Lost Loves? Well, yes, somebody had lost his love, and did I know what had become of Nikki? Not a joke. Maybe a false agency, but this was not a joke. Somebody had tracked me down, and found me at my workplace – my school, full of children. My principal was not there, she worked two schools and as luck would have it, she was in the other. She would have made mincemeat of this sniffing excuse for a detective. I was furious, and ripped into him. How did he find me? My phone number is unlisted, Internet was new then and I wasn't on it, not many fans knew what city I lived in, never mind where I taught school, but

somehow Sniffles knew exactly where I taught. Did he go looking for me at every school for miles around? And most importantly, who had hired him to look for Nikki? He refused to answer. Just wanted to know where Nikki was living, couldn't I just give him her phone number? I told him most emphatically that I suspected LaRose, that Nikki was not a lost love, far from it, and if anything happened to Nikki, I was reporting him and his agency to the police. He left, still sniffing, and me so angry and upset I couldn't eat. I'm still angry, even as I am typing this. Sniffles couldn't find Nikki, but could find out where I taught school, and me just a casual friend of hers? Suddenly, my world had become a very unsafe place to be.

That afternoon, I spoke with my principal. She had started her career as a social worker, and her advice was clear and succinct: Call the cops.

First, though, I called Nikki to warn her it wasn't over, LaRose was still out there, don't answer questions from strangers. Then I called the detective agency and told the head honcho what I had told his minion, that I was holding him and his outfit personally responsible if LaRose found Nikki, and that the cops were going to be informed of this unwelcome visit to my workplace. He refused to answer my questions, and he sniffled, too. Hmmm, small office?

Then I drove to the local police station. I was taken aback to realize I was speaking to the duty officer through thick, probably bullet-proof glass, in a probably deliberately tiny reception area that wouldn't accommodate a crowd of three. But this is a bedroom community! Kids, dogs, tulips in the parks, bicycle paths! Years later, I was to learn that all sorts had bedrooms in this town, including one of the province's most notorious gangsters, Mom Boucher. Obviously, the cops knew what evil lurks in cheerful little cities where the mascot is a big skunk in a red tuque.

I was afraid the police would not take me seriously. At that point, I was beginning to think only women feared stalkers, and men thought we were being hysterical, but he did take a very good look at the Lost Loves business card, and he

listened patiently to my tale of Nikki and LaRose.

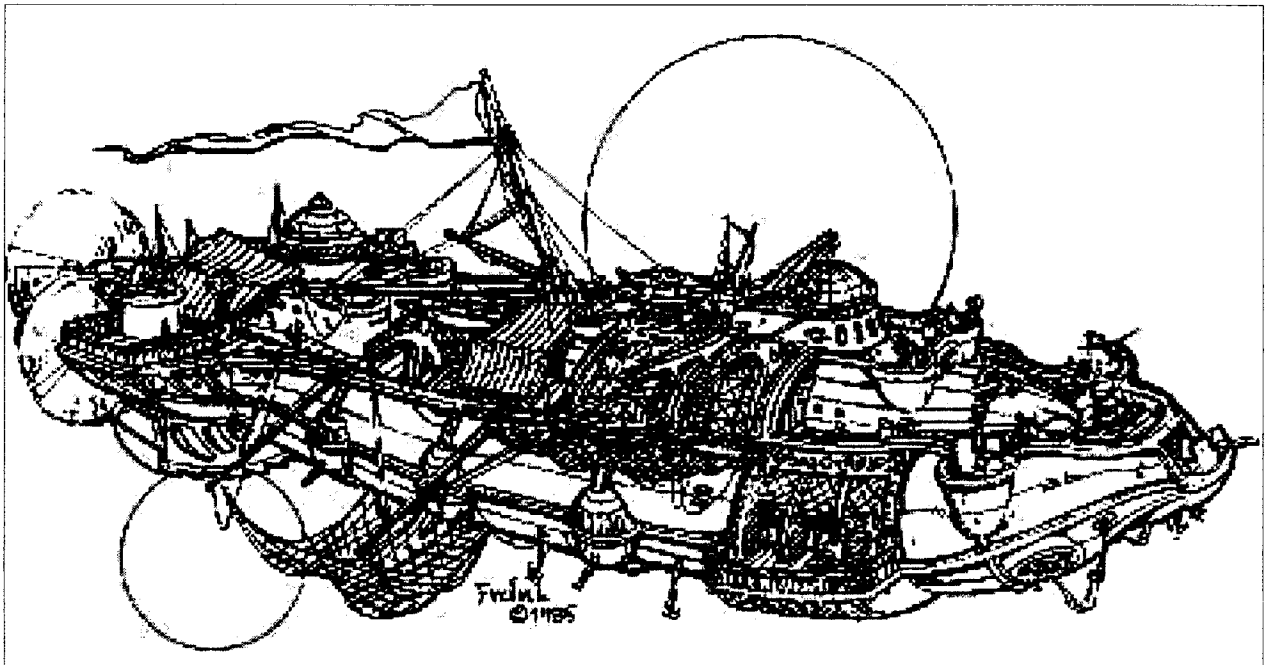
"First thing to do," said the cop speaking to me through some sort of grill that distorted his voice, "is find out if this is a genuine agency." He had his doubts, too, obviously. I learned that the Sûreté du Québec, our equivalent to the State Police keeps tabs on detective agencies. "The 'Grand quartier général' is in Montreal on Parthenais." (Well, of course it is, duh, that's where Kathy Reichs works. I am sometimes amazed at how inept I am at joining the dots.) "Then tell your friend to get an injunction." Knowing Nikki, I had an idea that was not going to be easy. She wasn't one to make waves.

I met Nikki soon after at an RASC meeting, something LaRose had not clued into, and Connie being also a member, our little group had a powwow. Connie made plans to take her to the Sûreté, but Nikki wasn't sure about the injunction. After all, he hadn't found her. "Yet," I added.

Shortly after, Nikki dropped out of everything. She was working, going back to

school, and now busy renovating an old house she had bought, so fandom went to the back burner. But I wonder, would she have dropped all her fannish activities if LaRose had not been making her life a misery? If the club had been more supportive?

I never did find out if the agency was legit, and though Connie seemed to think she had, I don't believe Nikki made any move toward getting an injunction against LaRose. I never saw LaRose after the Trekkers folded. He also dropped out of fandom. Maybe he never was into fandom much anyway, maybe his interest was only in Nikki. I think of him sometimes, when I read of stalkers in the press. I know now that they don't just go after the John Lennons and Ann Murrays of the world. I get so angry and frightened. Where is he, who is he following about now? Does he still buy roses every day for his prey? Because that's what these stalkers are, you know, predators, and anyone of us can become prey at anytime.



Dany Frolich

"EVERYONE WELCOME"

The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church Shooting – a Victim, the Community

Guy Lillian/Chloie Airoidi

Chloie Airoidi is a survivor ... and a science fiction fan. For many years she chaired Con*Cat, a terrific convention in Knoxville which featured guests like Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Octavia Butler, Charles deLint, Neil Gaiman and Samuel R. Delany. She also worked other Tennessee events, like OutsideCon, KublaKon, and Liberty-Con. And she is a member of the **Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church.**

On July 27, 2008, it became the most famous church in America – for all the wrong reasons.

GHLIII: Tell us about the church. Does it have a history and guiding principle?

It had this on our front door, even before the shooting:

**EVERYONE
WELCOME
HISTORICAL MARKER**

On Sunday morning, February 12, 1950 Jim Pierson arrived at the front door of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church. He saw a sign in the front window where the church was meeting (it was renting space at that time) - a sign very similar to this sign. He asked the greeter at the door "Does that welcome sign mean me?" He asked because Jim Pierson was a black man and Knoxville was a highly segregated city at the time. Mr. Pierson was not at all sure that the church sign really meant what it said. The church greeter assured him that he was indeed welcome and he was seated for that Sunday's service. Mr. Pierson returned for more services and later became a member, making this church one of the first integrated churches in Knoxville. Because it was integrated, many organizations - including the City of Knoxville - refused to rent the church space.

This begat an era known in our church history as "wandering in the wilderness." For months worship services were held at a different location every week as leaders searched for a permanent home. All because a black man was welcomed in to attend our worship service. It was a simple sign placed by the front door, backed by the sincerity and warmth of the people within, that made the difference for Jim Pierson and for this church.

This current sign is only slightly different from the original. "Universalist" has been added to our name. And, as a Welcoming Congregation, we have added the rainbow flag - the best visual

This current sign is only slightly different from the original. "Universalist" has been added to our name. And, as a Welcoming Congregation, we have added the rainbow flag - the best visual symbol we could find to show our intention to welcome ALL people. Yesterday and today, whoever you are, wherever you are from, wherever you may be on life's journey, you are welcome to worship with us. Come in to this church.

What drew you to the church? Have you always been a believer?

No, I've always been somewhat of an agnostic with a smattering of Seth. JaNell Golden asked me to take her son to and from church because he wanted to be in a high school group there and she had heard me say "If I go to a church, I'd go to a Unitarian."

Also, I'd seen a documentary Gene Roddenberry's son was doing and our minister, Chris Buice was interviewed. He loves using *Star Trek* references. Once I started taking Sean, I found I loved this community of people and Chris' sermons.

How long you been going there? Any particular memories of the place, pre-tragedy?

Since 2003, I was and am involved in a lot activities. BookSale for the Alliance, a church group of which I am president. Family Promise (co-coordinator), a homeless program. KIN (Knoxville Interfaith Network), where I represent our church on the Board. I'm also on the Board at TVUUC. The most vivid memory is sharing meals & lots of laughter.

The tragedy itself - what was going on that day? Do you remember the order of events?

The Music Department was putting on a production of *Annie* & my granddaughter Amira, who many know, was playing Mrs.



Illo: RANDY CLEARY

Hanigan. I normally seat on the left side of the sanctuary, but joined my son and 6 year old granddaughter, Aidyn, in the front pew on the right side. The play started & was to the place where Mrs. Hanigan catches Annie who was going to run away. I was so excited to see Amira! Just as she grabs Annie and starts to yell at her, a loud, ear-deafening noise goes off.

I thought maybe it was part of the play, but my son pushes Aidyn and me to the floor. Someone, I think Vicki our music director, shouted he's got a fucking gun! There were two more shots.

Some where in that time, Jamie, my son says "I'm going to help the guys stay down" All this time my granddaughter is screaming "Why are you pushing me down on the floor?" I am trying to keep her from getting back up and I'm scared and confused. I remember thinking this can't be happening, not here, not now. I want to see Amira sing and act. I worried I couldn't keep Aidyn down with me.

Then we are told to leave the sanctuary by the back door. I'm hanging on to Aidyn and as we get up from under the pew I notice a still white form and a large (huge) pool of blood I was laying in. I believe this was the woman who later died.

I had blood spatter all over me & my hair was covered. People freaked out thinking I'd been hit I remember saying over & over "It's not my blood!" My daughter-in-law Amy took Aidyn from me and tried to calm her. She kept asking "why did we push her down with the dead lady?"

I was numb & in shock. I sat in the grass with others waiting to find out what was happening. Later the police talked to us all. I remember sitting in the fellowship hall feeling displaced. It was hard to comprehend what was happening to us. Amira had just lost her mother Maia on February 26 and now this, The TV shots were using Amira crying while smoking a cigarette. I remember her apologizing to her Dad.

At some point a friend took me in the ladies room, washed my hair and gave me her sweater. My purse was somewhere in the sanctuary which was now a crime scene, so I didn't have my cell phone or car keys. My daughter-in-law had a spare of my keys so I was able to drive; however, we all went to my son's. I don't remember much there or later. I remember feeling I was watching a movie.

My son and daughter-in-law appeared on the *Today* show in an interview. It was Aidyn and me that Jamie talked about pushing to the floor.

Chloie didn't know Jim David Adkisson, the shooter – or his wife, once a member of the church. *What's with his talk about the church's "liberal" views? What was he talking about?*

I copied this from our web site:

We strive to be a liberal religious community where people of all faiths can find common ground and feel empowered to work for the common good. In our church we believe that diversity is a strength not a weakness. Listening to different points of view can lead to opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth. Our members hold a variety of theological and philosophical perspectives and yet we covenant together to build a community where each person is valued and respected. We believe that each person has something to share that can enrich our common life. Our congregation has a deep commitment to religious freedom and the authority of the individual conscience. We believe in building a society that respects human rights both at home and abroad. We are committed to working in interfaith partnerships to feed the hungry, protect the environment, empower social justice efforts and celebrate religious freedom. We appreciate your taking the time to learn more about our church by visiting our website. Here you can begin to get some sense of the creativity and the variety of our programming and activities. We hope you will drop by and visit our church in the near future. We welcome you and your ideas and your vision.

Rev. Chris Buice

What did you do the rest of that night?

I went out to dinner with a friend & then we played Scrabble. It seemed like we both didn't talk about it, like it didn't happen. Which now I see was just a way of coping with our fear and shock. At the debriefing sessions at the 2nd Presbyterian Church is when I really fell apart. It was good to talk about it in a safe and loving setting. All the next week I was at church helping and hugging and crying with others.

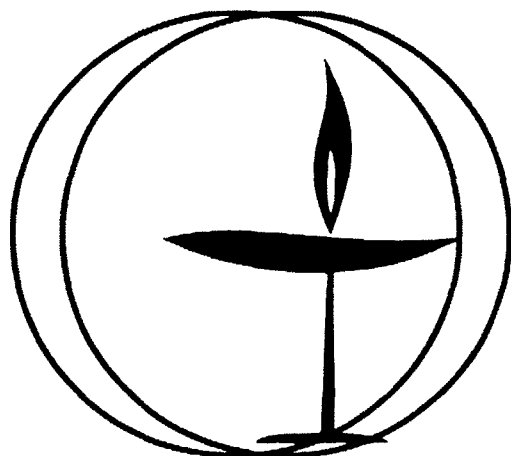
Has the incident changed the church?

We are more committed to "Love is the spirit of this church & service is its law, to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love and to help one another. This is our covenant. Or as the kids say: "Ours is the church of the open mind, loving heart & helping hands."

Also more people have joined, including many with families. We have felt the outpour of interfaith caring from the local mosque, the Jewish temple & synagogue, Christian, Wiccan, Bahai, as well as non-believers.

Did it change you?

Yes – it has made me realize how precious life is & how important the people you care about are. My respect for this community has grown. They conducted themselves so wonderfully, helping one another and showing great presence in the face of such horror.



TOMORROW The Tragedy and Healing in Knoxville

Olivia Spooner

The Unitarian Universalist Historical Society

Chloie led us to Olivia Spooner's prize-winning essay for the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society.

Ms. Spooner is a 17-year-old home school student who attends the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, where she facilitates a youth small group ministry. She plans to attend Pellissippi State Technical Community College following high school graduation in 2010, and then attend the University of Tennessee. She was a member of the Annie cast that day. Chloie credits her with moving the younger children safely out of harm's way.

Ms. Spooner, her mother, and the UUHS all gave Challenger generous permission to reprint excerpts from her prize-winning essay. The entire text, including credits and notes, can be found at <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/index.html>.

"I'm a star!" This exuberant exclamation from the young cast of *Annie, Jr.* echoed in unison through the bare sanctuary at the end of each rehearsal day. They were preparing for their big debut on Sunday morning, July 27, 2008, from the transformed stage at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) in Knoxville, Tennessee.

In character and as ready as they'd ever be, the children paraded into the sanctuary through the "house" past proud family and friends, to take their places for the opening scene. In all, 26 children, ages ranging from 7 to 16 years old, and 2 adults comprised the ensemble of talent, having persevered several weeks of intense rehearsal. Under the direction of Vicki Masters,

music director at TVUUC, a crew of well over a dozen adults and one teen had fulfilled roles ranging in often overlapping responsibilities, from directing, music, choreography, set design, and costumes, to administrative tasks necessary for such an ambitious project. *Annie* filled the summer with planning, construction, memorizing dialogue, singing, and dancing. Every bit of it was invested into this Sunday morning. The full dress rehearsal the day before had been captured on video – a piece of history that would bring unimaginable comfort to some and unfaceable memories to others.

Because the musical theater workshop was a community summer camp, a number of participants had no other association with TVUUC other than the desire to be a part of the show. Some children were from out-of-state, visiting grandparents for the summer. Likewise, many in the audience were first-time visitors, coming to support their neighbor, relative, or friend. The cast and audience represented a true fellowship of diversity, coming together to celebrate the story of the orphan *Annie*, who inspires us to have hope in the face of adversity and to know that tomorrow holds promise.

The sun will come out - Tomorrow!

The following is a reflection of that Sunday morning, 10:15 a.m., from a backstage adult: “We were past the first song and were several minutes into the dialogue in the opening scene with eight children performing on stage. The first ‘boom’ was incredibly loud, startling, and so foreign that it did not register – it had no place, no context, no warning. It forced you to gasp and hold your breath. The second ‘boom’ confirmed danger. It seemed even louder, even more inconceivable. When I ran out from behind the stage right curtain to reach the kids, there frozen on stage, I did not look out into the audience at all and I did not hear any voices, yelling, or commotion. I clearly remember thinking that if I was wrong, if it had somehow been my imagination or if I was overreacting, I would simply apologize to everyone and we would start over again from the top. We hurried around the corner, and most of the children had reached the back door just as the third boom sounded. We gathered with the other children

who were already outside waiting for their scenes and we moved a distance away – the children huddled, clinging, sobbing. It was like time came to a standstill as we waited, confused and unsure of what just happened. We were unaware of the well-being of a handful of fellow cast members who were staged to enter from the ‘house’, who, as we later learned, had run to the church next door. We were unaware of what our families and friends were experiencing inside. We held our breath again, numb, unable to imagine the extent of the damage that had just been done.”

The shocking news of the church shooting dominated headlines and internet blogs as facts about Jim David Adkisson and his motives were released.

In a sworn affidavit, an officer who interrogated him on July 27, 2008, wrote, “During the interview Adkisson stated that he had targeted the church because of its liberal teachings and his belief that all liberals should be killed because they were ruining the country, and that he felt that the Democrats had tied this country’s hands in the war on terror and they had ruined every institution in America with the aid of major media outlets. Adkisson made statements that because he could not get the leaders of the liberal movement that he would then target those that had voted them into office.” Knoxville Police Chief Sterling Owen said that Adkisson’s stated hatred of the liberal movement was not necessarily connected to any hostility toward Christianity or religion *per se*, but rather the political advocacy of the church. He commented on some of the contents of a four-page letter found in the defendant’s vehicle parked at the church, saying that Adkisson wrote he was angered by his lack of being able to obtain a job, by the reduction in his food stamp allotment, and at “the liberal movement.” Owen explained the liberal movement, as defined by Adkisson, included liberal philosophies and issues pertaining to gays.

The so-called manifesto, initially kept from public view, reveals a disturbed soul who believed the church to be a symbol for everything he hated and who blamed liberals for his economic problems and life’s failures. He saw the

congregation not as a church, but as a part of the problems in society. He targeted the church and its people because he disagreed with what Unitarian Universalism stands for –tolerance, equal rights, fair treatment, progressive change, safe harbor, mutual respect, inclusive community, and transformative love. Adkisson became familiar with UU ideals when his ex-wife had attended the church a decade ago. He had accompanied her to at least one summer event in the district in the mid-nineties.

While police said Adkisson did not mention his ex-wife in the letter, they believe this connection is why he selected TVUUC to unleash his frustrations.

Adkisson bought a 12-gauge shot gun at a pawn shop a month earlier, despite a domestic violence restraining order in 2000 that should have prohibited the purchase. He concealed the weapon in a guitar case and first tried to enter the building through a door behind the stage but was stopped. At the main entrance, he was greeted by a child holding the door open for him. After taking the defendant into custody, police recovered 76 rounds of ammunition, including three shots fired. He intended to take a lot of casualties and be killed by police. The letter he wrote was meant to be a suicide note.

The brokenness of this man is clear, his rationale deranged. Mark Harmon, a church member who witnessed the attack, stated in an interview later that day that “the church is full of people of good will, of open and loving spirits, and into it came this moment of pure hate”.

Adkisson’s plan to kill himself and many others was thwarted by six brave men who subdued and disarmed him. The heroic actions and quick thinking of John Bohstedt (who played Daddy Warbucks in the play), Terry Uselton, Arthur Bolds, Robert Birdwell, Jr., Jamie Parkey, and Michael Wilson prevented the potential for devastating mass casualties. They kept him alive to face the justice he deserves and to see what his hatred wrought.

Bet your bottom dollar that Tomorrow...there'll be sun,

Congregants feel that “hero” is not a big enough word to describe Greg McKendry, who in his last selfless act of love courageously shielded others by sacrificing his own life. Eyewitnesses say that he did not hesitate. Greg’s passion in life involved putting himself in a position to be of service and to help others, which he did by fulfilling many roles in the congregation. His kindness was legendary. It isn’t surprising to those who knew him that he would be first to approach the assailant to try to diffuse the situation and avert the threat. Greg would have been just as likely to have extended a helping hand to this man who felt life was no longer worth living. He would have reached out to this man with intentional love and given his all to help. Instead he gave his all to protect others. His life exemplified the qualities of religious liberalism.

Amy Broyles’ family had been in the line of fire and was shielded by Greg’s heroism. Visiting the church that morning to see her daughter perform in the play, Amy said in an interview that Adkisson “was a man who was hurt in the world and feeling that nothing was going his way. He turned the gun on people who were most likely to treat him lovingly and compassionately and be the ones to help someone in that situation”. She shared that she was tremendously impressed with the calm, effective way that church members with medical training responded to the needs of the gunshot victims, treating them at the scene until help arrived.

Tragically, Linda Lee Kraeger’s life was not spared. Linda was a member of Westside Unitarian Universalist Church (Westside UUC) in nearby Farragut since 2007, and had been a long-time member of the Denton UU Fellowship in Texas before then. A humanitarian and author, she had a teacher’s caring heart, a big smile, and devotion to friends. Although not related, Linda was like an aunt to one of the play’s “orphans”, whom she was helping to raise, the granddaughter of dear friends, the Barnhart family. Four members of the Barnhart family were wounded by gunfire. TVUUC member Tammy Sommers, 38, and John Worth, Jr., 68, also survived gunshot

wounds. Allison Lee, 42, was injured while crawling to safety.

Just thinking about... tomorrow,

The work of mourning was exhausting, yet the church could not rest from it. Members held each other until the shaking stopped. "The sanctuary had, through a horrible, senseless act of violence, been turned into a crime scene, a trauma center, a wake, a memorial, a week-long media event," wrote Rev. Lynn Thomas Strauss, minister of Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville, MD., and former TVUUC minister. At Westside UUC, a special service was held to honor two of their own who were victims in the shooting, to acknowledge their sorrow and loss, and begin the process of healing.

To represent how the fabric of the church community had been torn, members observed a rending-of-the-garment ritual, which was borrowed from the Jewish tradition. Grieving members stood before the congregation and tore apart a shirt bearing the church logo and signatures of members. After being displayed in the sanctuary for about a year, the shirt will be coarsely mended, using thread of a contrasting color. It will symbolize that although the shirt will be usable again, it can never be the same, just as their congregation will be forever altered. The mending of the shirt signifies the promise of healing to come.

At the Rededication service on August 3, Rev. Chris Buice, minister at TVUUC, said in his homily, "He came into this space to inflict death: and he took away the lives of two precious people, wounded six other, traumatized the rest of us, traumatized our community and the world. But strangely, at the same time, reminding us of the preciousness of our children, the sacredness of life, and at this moment in time the true value of friendship and family, and how much we need good neighbors".

In a letter to the congregation read at the Rededication service, UUA President Rev. Bill Sinkford said, "You created meaning from an unthinkable destructive act. You have chosen to

reclaim this space, a choice that reflects your deep commitment to your religious mission and an abiding belief in the power of community." Congregants agree that their belief in the power of community had not been misplaced; it did not forsake them in their hour of need. Its power was resuscitating.

Clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow...til there's none.

Throughout the greater Knoxville area, people came together to express their outrage, sorrow, and solidarity with the members of TVUUC and Westside UUC. According to TVUUC spokesperson Bill Dockery, forty percent of the thousand people who attended the vigil were members of the community who came out on that rainy night simply to show support. In a moving closing at the candlelight vigil, children from the cast of *Annie* stood hand-in-hand, front and center, and sang "Tomorrow", which had been practiced to perfection, along with a tearful crowd.

In the days ahead, other prayer services were held in and around Knoxville, and UU congregations around the world observed special services. In the weeks ahead, love and support poured on the church and its members, like the drenching rain that night of the vigil. Rev. Buice said, "We thought it was about us. What we discovered was that it was about the entire Knoxville community. Our children were their children. We had people show up for the memorial service (candlelight vigil) from the Tibetan Buddhist Center, from the synagogues, the local mosque, and a wide variety of Christian churches. The people who have come to feed us come from churches you'd consider conservative, liberal, and everything in between. But they fed us and loved us and didn't discriminate on the basis of race or sexual orientation. It's been a reflection of overwhelming, overpowering love". Rev. Strauss, who had served as minister at TVUUC from 1991 to 1999, said, "For one week there were no separate denominations or faith groups in the city of Knoxville. For one week we were one grieving family, one in sorrow and one in our resolve to witness to peace."

When I'm stuck with a day, that's gray, and lonely...

The criminal investigation continued. Believing that he would be killed, the defendant left his home in Powell unlocked for police to search after the intended massacre. Along with a pistol and other items, books were seized as evidence. This reading material is believed by many to have contributed to Adkisson's agitated state of mind because the books are written by media figures selling the idea that "liberal" is the brand name and source for the nation's woes, for opinions they disagree with, and for what is wrong in our society. The debate between competing world views is presented by the authors as a morality play with one side morally superior and right, and the other morally inferior and wrong. Disagreements between liberals and conservatives that utilize intolerant rhetoric are commonly described as "culture wars". The use of such language of violence is believed to play a role in the culture of violence in our country. Words or deeds promoting bias can incite hostility, distrust, and fear by feeding an "us" versus "them" mentality. Extreme political polarization is thought to create an environment where outrageous criticism could influence the vulnerable and inspire the misguided to act in irresponsible ways and feel justified in doing so.

The attacker acted alone with no connection to any hate group. According to Tennessee hate crime laws, political affiliation is not a protected characteristic. Tennessee courts are permitted to enhance the sentence for a crime committed because of the victim's "race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, or gender". A second state law makes it a felony to intimidate someone for exercising his or her civil rights, and specifically mentions, "race, color, ancestry, religion, or national origin", leaving out both political affiliation and sexual orientation. Tennessee authorities are investigating the church shooting as a hate crime because of Adkisson's confession of targeting gays, but not because "liberals should be killed because they are ruining the country".

Stacie Bohanan, spokeswoman for the BI's Knoxville division, said, "Anytime someone uses force to obstruct another person in the free exercise of their religious beliefs, that becomes a violation of the federal civil rights statutes".

I just stick out my chin, and grin, and say...Oh, the sun will come out...

Cards, notes, letters, flowers, artwork, and other forms of expressed love and support began arriving at the church. A map was displayed that marked where they came from, providing visual reassurances that hurting members were not alone. Volunteer groups have given beautiful handmade blankets, quilts, scarves, and shawls to the *Annie* cast children to "wrap them in love". School children, community groups, congregations, and families from across the country have sent thousands of peace cranes, a Japanese origami craft that is believed to grant wishes, especially wishes for peace. Colorful peace cranes hang in a huge chandelier in the TVUUC fellowship hall, recently renamed the Greg McKendry Fellowship Hall, as well as in offices and other places. Strings of peace cranes have gone home with the children as reminders of peaceful wishes for them and have inspired plans for the 2009 TVUUC children's summer camp about the true story of Sadako and the Thousand Cranes.

The children of the congregation received official Bravery Awards at the Rededication service that state, "The Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church presents this certificate on the Third of August 2008 in recognition of your great courage and willingness to continue loving in the face of adversity". The award also states the Affirmation: "Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another: This is our great covenant."

Tomorrow...but you gotta hang on til tomorrow...come what may...

The violence in Knoxville has emboldened Unitarian Universalists denomination-wide because it has focused attention on the core beliefs and values of the

faith. Rev. Bill Sinkford said that the terrible crime and the inspiring responses have put Unitarian Universalism under an intense media spotlight. He invited Unitarian Universalists to publicly define who we are and what we stand for. The UUA placed a full-page ad in the *New York Times* on Sunday, August 10, 2008, with the header, "Our Doors and Our Hearts Remain Open". It proclaims that the message of Unitarian Universalism is "to welcome the stranger, to love our neighbor, to work for justice, to nurture the spirits of all who seek a liberal religious name, and to help heal the wounded world."

Words are etched in the stone exterior of the beautiful Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church building, built in 1997. Among these words, selected by the congregation to represent UU beliefs, are "sorrow", "justice", "peace", "diversity", "struggle", "question", "love", "community", and "hope". Their meanings have helped sustain them since unexpected shadows fell across the sanctuary on July 27, just as their meanings have helped to reinforce the spirits of all who were intimately touched by the tragedy.

Annette Marquis, UUA Thomas Jefferson District Executive, shared words of healing at the TVUUC Rededication service. She said, "When you could have understandably responded with bitterness, you showed the world your expansive spirit, your unconditional love, and your incredible openness to all who seek to be in community with you. You have modeled the ideals of who we all strive to be". A note from a sister church reads, "We pledge to redeem the sacrifice suffered by your congregation by our own commitment to continue our work for these principles, and to work all the harder knowing how much some have already given in support of these values. May our common struggle soon blossom into the world community of peace, liberty, and justice we seek". A note from a fellow UU simply urged, "Do the right thing in response."

Tomorrow, tomorrow... I love ya, tomorrow

Rev. Richard Weston-Jones, of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough, NC, said, "When an individual acts in a way that denigrates our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we are called upon to reaffirm that belief – even in the terribly misguided person who attacked us." He shared that the attack "marked the first time since the Second World War that Unitarian Universalists were martyred because of their activity in one of our churches – and the only time that members of our faith have been singled out to be killed in one of our churches anywhere in the world for the faith that we share". Francis David, the Unitarian martyr who died in prison in 1579, scratched the words he believed on the walls of his prison cell, "We need not think alike, to love alike."

Modern Unitarians believe these words too. While Unitarian Universalism is unmistakably grounded in the liberal religious tradition, members hold views and maintain affiliations as their consciences guide them. These views represent a range across the political and cultural spectrum. In the *Newsweek* article, Rev. Buice wrote, "In our church, the word 'liberal' is meant to describe whom we include, not whom we exclude. The children in our congregation say these words in chapel services: 'Ours is the church of the loving heart, open mind and helping hands.' Our understanding of liberalism speaks to a generosity of spirit that transcends partisan politics".

Rev. Cheryl M. Walker, in a sermon at All Souls Church in New York, said, "In far too many ways Jim Adkisson personifies all that is the struggle of America. Too willing to blame, inflamed by too many who would divide us into the good and the evil, failed by a health care system he did not have access to, ignored by a criminal justice system that did not act soon enough, and shamed by a society that measures our value in wealth. Sadly, at the end of his rope he chose to destroy the very people who are most interested in changing all those things about our society, we Unitarian Universalists."

Adkisson's actions are the manifestation of deep-rooted problems. Despite whatever political outlook, economic condition, or mental affliction that tormented him, the ultimate blame for this crime rests first and foremost with the man who pulled the trigger. The extent that American culture, the lack of a truly equitable society, and the ineffectiveness of proper social nets may have failed him is complicated and had likely presented numerous battles. The battle he lost was with his own demons. When asked by a reporter if Adkisson would go to hell for what he did, Rev. Sinkford replied that he had been "living in a hell here on earth for years."

Accountability and responsibility for actions are important. In the *Newsweek* article, Rev. Buice wrote, "If you walk into a liberal church and open fire on its members, we will still defend your right to due process, access to an attorney and a fair trial". While perpetrators are in the criminal justice system, they should receive respectful treatment that does not rob them of their worth and dignity –no torture, for instance, and basic humane treatment, e.g., shelter, food, cleanliness. On February 9, 2009, in the Knox County Criminal Court, Jim David Adkisson pleaded guilty to the deadly shooting rampage at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church and was sentenced to life in prison without parole. In the would-be suicide letter, which was released to the public, Adkisson deemed his attack part "political protest" and part "symbolic killing". He showed no remorse in the courtroom. Rev. Buice said, "Ultimately, his hatred is what now confines him. He will spend the rest of his days in prison. He is now a victim of his own hatred."

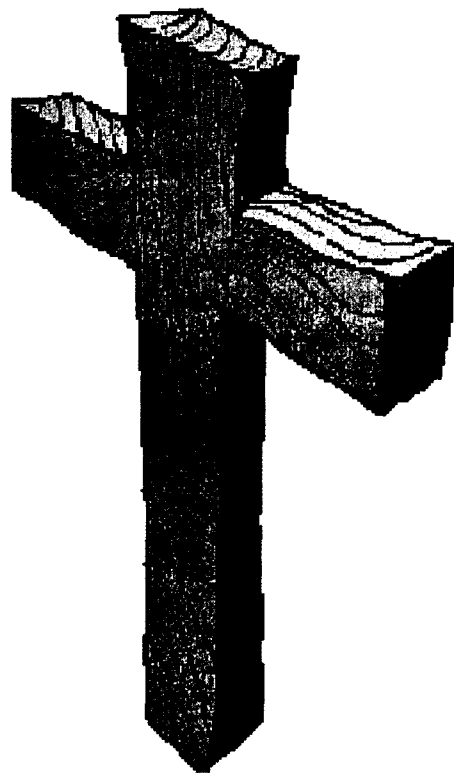
You're only a day away! Tomorrow, tomorrow...

Knoxville's unfinished *Annie* performance was brought to a conclusion before an audience in Baton Rouge, a bittersweet gift just in time for Christmas, to say "the show will go on, violence will not win." The youth and congregation of the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge have paid tribute to those affected by the tragedy in Knoxville by preparing and

presenting the musical *Annie, Jr.* to their community. They did what TVUUC had not been able to do: touch hearts with a timeless story of optimism, compassion, and overcoming your own odds.

The Knoxville youth and congregation have endured a different story, one for which there is no preparation. Theirs is a story of heartache and of hope and of spirit and courage to cope with circumstances beyond their control. The red-headed orphan experiences hard knocks in life to find her happy ending surrounded by acceptance and love. It takes a while for her to get there. While justice may be more than a day away, the stages of recovery continue to progress, like through scenes of a play. A note of encouragement from a fellow UU says that some holes in our hearts are never meant to heal; we must simply grow bigger hearts around them. As we continue together sharing in this life-affirming faith, today and tomorrow, our resilient spirit will withstand gray days.

I love ya, Tomorrow... You're only a day away!



The Unitarians' experience dramatically demonstrates the value of a church as a community. The piece which follows demonstrates the danger of the church as an institution.

ME, JOSEPH, AND THE MESSIAH

Mike Resnick

Illo by Kurt Erichsen

I wrote *The Branch* after taking an 11-year-old Laura to see her first James Bond movie. When we got back home, she began karate-ing (is that a word?) all the furniture, and in the process broke an antique chair.

We were living in Libertyville, Illinois at the time, and I checked the phone book and dropped the chair off at the closest place that repaired antique furniture. An assistant took it, gave me a receipt, and told me what day to pick it up.

When I arrived back to reclaim my chair, I was greeted by the owner, a Hassidic Jew who wore a yarmulke, a prayer shawl, and all the other trappings...and when he realized I had a Jewish last name he commenced to lecture me on all the moral laws I had broken (which was pretty perceptive, considering he'd known me for about 20 seconds), and he kept on, and kept on...and I was polite and accommodating and just inserted a sentence every two or three minutes asking for my chair back, a request he ignored while calling the wrath of Jehovah down upon me if I didn't shape up. And I kept agreeing and politely asking for my chair. And at one point he used the Hebrew (or maybe Yiddish; I don't know either language) word for Messiah, and I said that maybe he'd be lucky and still be around when the Messiah finally came and could I please have my chair. And he turned white as a sheet and told me that the Messiah was coming, no question about it, but he hoped he was dead and in his grave when that event occurred, because the Messiah of the Old Testament was no prince of peace, that he was coming with the sword and the fire and would burn the old kingdoms to the ground before establishing *his* kingdom in Jerusalem.

Well, eventually he ran out of breath and gave me my chair, but I was fascinated by the fear that he, a true believer who had been waiting more than two millennia for the Messiah, displayed at the thought of confronting him. So when I got home I picked up a copy of the Old Testament and read it – *really* read it – including not only Isaiah but also the Book of Zechariah, which gave me the title of the book I'd already decided to write: *The Branch*, because the Messiah was supposed to be a branch of the Davidic family tree.

I kept wondering: if he didn't come during the Inquisition, and he didn't come during Nazi Germany, just what would things have to be like before he finally made his appearance? And, remembering with the old man said, would we be happy to see him?

I also had to do a lot of research in the New Testament, because about two billion people believe Jesus was the Messiah, and if the people in my book were to accept this Branch, the book would first have to prove to their satisfaction that Jesus *wasn't* the Messiah. Made for a controversial novel.

I finally got around to writing it maybe 8 years later, and sold it to Signet, which immediately decided to sit on it for a couple of years while they worked up enough courage to print it. *The Branch* came out in early 1984, and went through four quick printings – not that it was selling that fast, but because Signet initially wouldn't ship it south of the Mason-Dixon line, and as more areas of the country read favorable reviews and wanted it, they had to keep going back to press. I would guesstimate that all four printings together came to about one printing of *Soothsayer* or *The Widowermaker*. I sent copies to Jerry Falwell and Jimmy Swaggart in the hope that they'd hold it up in front of a TV camera and announce that anyone who read it was doom to hell, but alas, they never did. It came, it sold some copies, it got uniformly good reviews, and that, I thought, was the end of it.

And it was – until I heard from Josep Guirao. He put through a transcontinental phone call in the late 1990s to explain that he was an independent producer in Andorra (yes, I had to look for it in my Atlas), that he had fallen in love with *The Branch*, and that he desperately wanted to make it into the movie.

I'd never dealt with a foreign filmmaker before, but *The Branch* had been in print for a decade, and while I'd had a couple of nibbles from Hollywood, the fact of the matter was that no one was breaking down my door to produce it, so we negotiated a two-year option.

And I didn't hear from Josep for two years. Then he called back to tell me he simply hadn't been able to raise the money for a full-length feature film, but he had an idea: would I have any problem extending the option another year and allowing him to make a half-hour condensation of the story that he could then show to backers and hopefully raise the funds for a two-hour feature. I had sold a bunch of other things to Hollywood, but they were still leery of *The Branch* and Josep clearly loved it, so I agreed.

Another year passed, and then I started getting the strangest e-mails. He was in Madrid with a copy of the film. The Andorran church had condemned him, and the government had told him that his reward for making such a blasphemous movie was that he would not be allowed to work in the country of his birth for the next fifteen years.

A couple of months passed, and I heard from him again. He was in South America, still with the film clutched tightly in his hands.

Then, just about the time I was wondering if this was all a gigantic hoax perpetrated by some friend with a strange sense of humor, maybe Gardner Dozois or Connie Willis, I heard from him again. He was in Miami, and he was sending me two copies of the subtitled videotape – and sure enough, they arrived a few days later.

And the next time I heard from him, it was with this message:

Hi, Mike,

Just wanted to let you know that the movie was shown yesterday at the festival...people loved it!!!

"The festival" was the South Beach Film Festival in Miami. The film was *No Pronunciaras el Nombre de Dios en Vano*, which translates as "Do Not Pronounce the Name of the Lord in Vain". More to the point, it was Josep's (very) condensed film version of *The Branch*.

So who is Josep Guirao and what is this all about? He's graciously allowed me to quote (and edit just a bit) from his web page.

About the script: It is adapted from the novel *The Branch* by Mike Resnick, regarding the arrival of a new Messiah in the 21st Century. A fictional thriller, full of real information and historical references.

I was advised by the Ministry of Culture of Andorra not to touch the topic of religion in any script. I therefore decided to write a script in which religion was the main topic. The presentation of the film was unofficially prohibited; no commercial movie house offered to exhibit it, and they



also refused to rent out their facilities. So we had to debut it in an almost clandestine fashion in a theater, with a portable projector and screen. (I myself and the leading male actor put up the posters the night before on the streets of Andorra.) I got some interview spots on the radio and television a few hours before the debut, and a half hour after we opened the doors, so many people had arrived that we had to turn them away.

When the movie was over, the three hundred people that were there stood and applauded for several minutes. It had been a success. The next day, the press was censored and there was no mention of the event, as if nothing had happened. Several journalists apologized to me for not having been able to publish anything, as the orders had come from above.

I wrote this script respecting not only the source material but the opinion of each religion. I held several meetings with theologians and representatives of the Catholic and Jewish religion, and the only thing I did was summarize briefly in 34 minutes their opinions on a topic they have disagreed upon for centuries, the Messiah.

Once this, which was to be the first part of the film, had been filmed, I imagined, based on a solid historical and sociological foundation, how the world would react to the arrival of a Messiah in the year 2046. Therefore, all the data presented in the dialogue between Armstrong and Emmanuel, in what would be the second part of the picture, is very thoroughly researched. Everything, from the different quotes concerning the world's population to who and what the process of recognizing this Messiah would be like, has been calculated beforehand.

I think it is also important to know that the character of Armstrong (Solomon Moody Moore in the novel) borders on paranoia, and that he is, at least for himself, the only god who exists. If he calls a meeting, after capturing the alleged Messiah, it is rather to determine what repercussions killing the Messiah would have on his business.

Neither is it strange that Armstrong's economic power should have gone so far as to buy certain representatives of the Vatican or some rabbi.

The alleged Messiah, Emmanuel, is a Messiah who comes from the street, from poverty, and who has become completely involved in the business of the gangster Armstrong. He has been doing so for some years, and now he is beginning to do the gangster serious harm. The reason he has become involved in such shady dealings – whether it forms part of his mission as a Messiah or if it is just due to his personal ambition – is not known. The audience should form its own conclusions, as with other questions, such as whether he was really the Messiah or not, or whose position was more logical, that of the theologian rabbi or the Vatican representative.

Evidently, in accordance with the culture or the religion of each spectator, he will be more or less in agreement with such different characters. However, these characters leave a series of questions and contradictions between "the history of humankind" and "religion," which will not leave anyone indifferent.

Of course, the excessive amount of information in the movie and the tension created on purpose evidently require a very attentive and predisposed audience.

Director's notes: 34 minutes (35mm). A personal challenge in directing actors, filmed in five days (12 hours a day). Actors taken to the limits of their abilities, with continuous dialogue, sound, negative and limited number of takes. Two of the main characters are played by the same actor. The rest of the actors were not available every day, so that many times scenes with dialogue were filmed with only one of the actors appearing on screen, with the director providing answers off-screen. In this movie,

I also play the part of the character Krack.

The ending of the movie was filmed first, to make sure that it could have some interesting camera movement at the conclusion that would give it some rhythm, since otherwise I risked having to have to rush to the ending and go to a fixed camera.

The budget was US\$ 4,000. Everyone worked for free and the negative left over from the previous film, *Confidencias*, was used. The movie was filmed without the permission of the government, so we had to film on private property – in this case, a garage. The problem is that the garage was so small, that we had to come up with all sorts of different ways to represent three different locations, and move everything from the set at every change of scene, so that it wasn't apparent that it was always the same place.

I also chose a very zenithal type of lighting, and a very charged atmosphere.

Because authorization from the government was not obtained, and fearing that they would put a stop to the shooting, I moved up the filming date, and it was shot without previous planning.

After reading the web page, I wrote to Josep to ask if he himself was still in serious trouble in Andorra. Here's the operative part of his reply:

Andorra is now a democracy, and it is in the interest of all Andorrans that we be perceived as such abroad – especially if it continues to be a state in which, of 60,000 inhabitants, only about 25,000 are Andorrans, and the economic and political power of the country is divided among four or five leading families. (They form part of the banking monopoly, the government, and the judiciary.

The government, for its part, also controls the media (radio, television and Internet "domains.ad").

Thus situations are created in which, although it is not evident at first glance, a large network of influence brokers continue to control the system.

It is evident that my point of view differs very greatly from that of the government, as well, of course, as from that of the newspapers belonging to certain politicians or their children.

My current situation is that I have no legal problem residing in Andorra. I never have, because I am Andorran – but in reality living there is impossible because of the following:

I cannot have a business in my name, nor a bank account, credit card or property.

Thus, I cannot rent a place to live or contract for telephone service, electrical service, etc., either ... I cannot legally practice any professional activity and, it is well understood, especially not my activity as a movie director.

A few months ago I informed the Andorran Ministry of Tourism as well as the Ministry of Culture, through the Director of Tourism, Sergi Nadal, that I needed a copy of the documentaries that I made about Andorra (17) for my personal files, in VHS.

This was categorically denied, with allegations that I would never have access to this material which was now their property.

Any guy who suffers all that just for making a Resnick movie is aces in my book.

As for *The Branch*, it was reprinted in trade paperback by Wildside Press in 2000, and will be coming out again in 2010 from Golden Gryphon Press as part of an omnibus hardcover that will also contain *Walpurgis III* and 5 short stories containing God or the Messiah. The title for the volume is, of course, *Blasphemy*.

As for Josep's movie, the scenes are not taken directly from *The Branch*, and they leave out most of the plot to present some of the more telling arguments, but then, when did movies ever follow the source material.

Anyway, if you'd like to see it, Josep has posted it on You Tube. Here's the URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b8XFBVxMgM>

Just don't tell the Andorran government you're watching it.

The Ballad of John Henry Faulk

By Phil Ochs © 1963

I'll tell you the story of John Henry Faulk.
I'll tell you of his trials and the troubled trail he walked,
And I'll tell of the tyrants, the ones you never see:
Murder is the role they play and hatred is their fee.
 On the TV and the radio John Henry Faulk was known.
 He talked to many thousands with a mind that was his own,
 But he could not close his eyes when the lists were passed around,
 So he tried to move the Union to tear the blacklist down.
His friends they tried to warn him he was headin' for a fall.
If he spoke against the blacklist he had no chance at all,
But he laughed away their warnings and he laughed away their fears:
For how could lies destroy the work of many honest years?
 Then slowly, oh so slowly, his life began to change.
 People would avoid his eyes, his friends were actin' strange,
 And he finally saw the power of the hidden poison pen
 When they told him that his job was through, he'd never work again.
And he could not believe what his sad eyes had found.
He stared in disbelief as his world came tumblin' down,
And as the noose grew tighter, at last the trap was clear:
For every place he turned to go, that list would soon be there
-- Oh, that list.
 And is there any bottom to the fears that grow inside?
 Is there any bottom to the hate that you must hide?
 And is there any end to your long road of despair?
 Is there any end to the pain that you must bear?
His wife and children trembled, the time was runnin' short,
When a man of law got on their side and took them into court,
And there upon the stand they could not hide behind their eyes,
And the cancer of the fascist was displayed before our eyes.
 Hey, you blacklist, you blacklist, I've seen what you have done.
 I've seen the men you've ruined and the lives you've tried to run,
 But the one thing that I've found is, the only ones you spare
 Are those that do not have a brain, or those that do not care.
And you men who point your fingers and spread your lies around,
You men who left your souls behind and drag us to the ground,
You can put my name right down there, I will not try to hide --
For if there's one man on the blacklist, I'll be right there by his side.
 For I'd rather go hungry to beg upon the streets
 Than earn my bread on dead men's souls and crawl beneath your feet.
 And I will not play your hater's game and hate you in return,
 for it's only through the love of man the blacklist can be burned.



Blacklisting: denying an artist work due to his alleged political beliefs. In the early to mid-50s, the most grievous American political sin was, of course, membership in the Communist Party ... or sympathy for it. Or, in the minds of some, any involvement, on any level, in any manner, towards any group or movement which might be branded as Communist or Red-leaning. It was the era of Joseph McCarthy and HUAC, and it is *always* the era of paranoid businessmen afraid of losing money.

The specific group afflicting AFTRA was called Aware, Inc., basically consisting of a researcher, a moneyman (a Syracuse, New York grocery store owner), an official of a local American Legion post in that area and various flunkies. For such a tiny group they wielded incredible power. Mindful of the damage done their crusade by Faulk's AFTRA slate, they took him on in their own inimitable fashion. They published a broadside replete with innuendo and falsehood linking Faulk to Red-sounding movements. CBS, ever courageous, fired him. Afterwards, besmirched as a fellow traveler, he couldn't get work.

So he hired a good lawyer – in fact, the definition of a good lawyer: Louis Nizer. And sued Aware, for libel.

The story of the lawsuit can be found in Faulk's own book, *Fear on Trial*, and Nizer's memoir, *The Jury Returns*. It's fascinating to read of a lawsuit from two parallel points of view, the plaintiff's and his attorney's. For analysis of the legal issues and tactics of the attorneys, there is no better text than Nizer's – the man was master of libel torts, as shown by his prosecution of Westbrook Pegler on behalf of Quentin Reynolds, a case documented in his *My Life in Court* and the play-slash-teleplay, *A Case of Libel*. No one had a better understanding of the fundamentals of libel: false statement, publication, damage – reparation and punishment. For an attorney or law student, there is no better model than Nizer, and to understand the case of a precedent, there is no better account than *The Jury Returns*. But to understand the human story of a lawsuit, there is no better voice than the victim's. *Fear on Trial* is a powerful and painful memoir.

Faulk won his suit, and though he collected little of the huge judgments against Aware, he exposed their invidious techniques and the cowardice of the companies that did its bidding. He brought to light the salient fact of the blacklist: it didn't matter to the listers that its targets were by no means Communists – it only mattered that they were in their way. Aware, and the blacklist, went out of business.

And now here he was, a genuine champion of American civil liberties, and here was an 18-year-old fart who walked in through his open door on March 4, 1968, and wrote about it in his obsessively-detailed diary. Quotes from my journal are given in the darker typeface. Remember, and have pity: I was 18.

I spent a good portion of this afternoon – and it was indeed good – talking to a most amusing man. His name is John Henry Faulk; he comes from Texas; he's a liberal hard and fast, and worst of all, quick. During the days of the reign of Joe McCarthy he was accused of being a Communist and blacklisted from the entertainment industry. Since his vindication he has devoted his life to fighting the type of intolerance and hatred that, in an extreme, almost destroyed his career. All this sounds incredibly serious, but that gives entirely the wrong impression. John Henry Faulk's ardent liberalism emerges from his short, incredibly Texan figure in a stream of hilarious anecdotes, imitations, and dialects. But there's a message beneath it all, beneath all the earthy crudity, which is, in unadorned company, no rarity at all.

In fact, when I walked in Faulk was demonstrating as dance step he'd seen at a recent soiree, one where it seemed, he said, that the male was whipping the female *with his penis*. Such was my introduction to John Henry Faulk.

Once sat, I listened for awhile, and took part in the discussion, filled with Faulkesque impersonations of his various fictitious and utterly bigoted aunts, uncles and cuzzins and their reactions to the various liberal causes he espouses. [W]hen he used the word "genocide" in relationship with the war in Vietnam ... [t]hen I quarreled with him, because I don't see our actions over there as anything worse than stupid ... and he sees them as the darkest shadows of evil. And he said himself that we are not an evil people, merely (in his terms) *diseased* ... "and we're gonna have to perform some major surgery on ourself!"

John Henry expressed worry about an upcoming International Students' Strike and was afraid his student listeners might get hurt. Such protests were common in the late sixties, as was the bluster of, as I put it,

campus gun-bearers (one of which sat next to me and spat flame) ... nobody will be allowed onto the campus [and] the Oakland Black Panthers will join with them and blockade the place off.

We heard bloviation like that all the time at Berkeley. Such was the tenor of the times. But though John Henry was ardently opposed to the Vietnam War, such anger and bravado wasn't his style. *Viz:*

Faulk read a telegram "a prominent man, socially", living in the same Congressional district Lyndon Johnson comes from, and a former personal friend, sent to the President. It oozed with Texas grease, a smooth Southern Baptist style of venom ... The writer is running for LBJ's old Congressional seat on a "Bring Lyndon Home" platform, and this telegram was to explain to Elbie just why this was being done. "I prayed on my decision ... you know I and Mrs. 'Hicks' have always had the highest regard for you and Mrs. Johnson ..." It was smooth, and sincere, and friendly, and it twisted the knife in Lyndon's gut – Faulk's impressive image, hilariously given. Texas, all the way – "You have to know Texas to appreciate this," he drawled.

He's worked with Johnson in the past "so I know just how he acted when he read this telegram. 'Bird' was woken up by a *roar* ..."

There was much more. He talked about the political comedy album he was planning – *Let's Leave Lyndon Alone and Let Him Fight His War in Peace*. When I mentioned the *Firing Line* interview, John Henry scoffed. He thought he'd beaten Buckley. "I was more adequately prepared," he said. When I called home that evening, my mother was delighted to hear I'd met Faulk – she'd been a fan for years. He autographed an advertising pamphlet for her. And I wrote down as much as I could remember of the afternoon.

I haven't given a sufficient feeling of the integral *humor* of the man, his *slinging*-ability, talking to his "sweet little wifey" on the telephone: "Well, I'm just sittin' c'here with Chancelaah Heyns, and he's askin' me howta run this university. Says 'John Henry dammit you gotta help me out' ..." He's magnificent. He could even help me become a liberal.

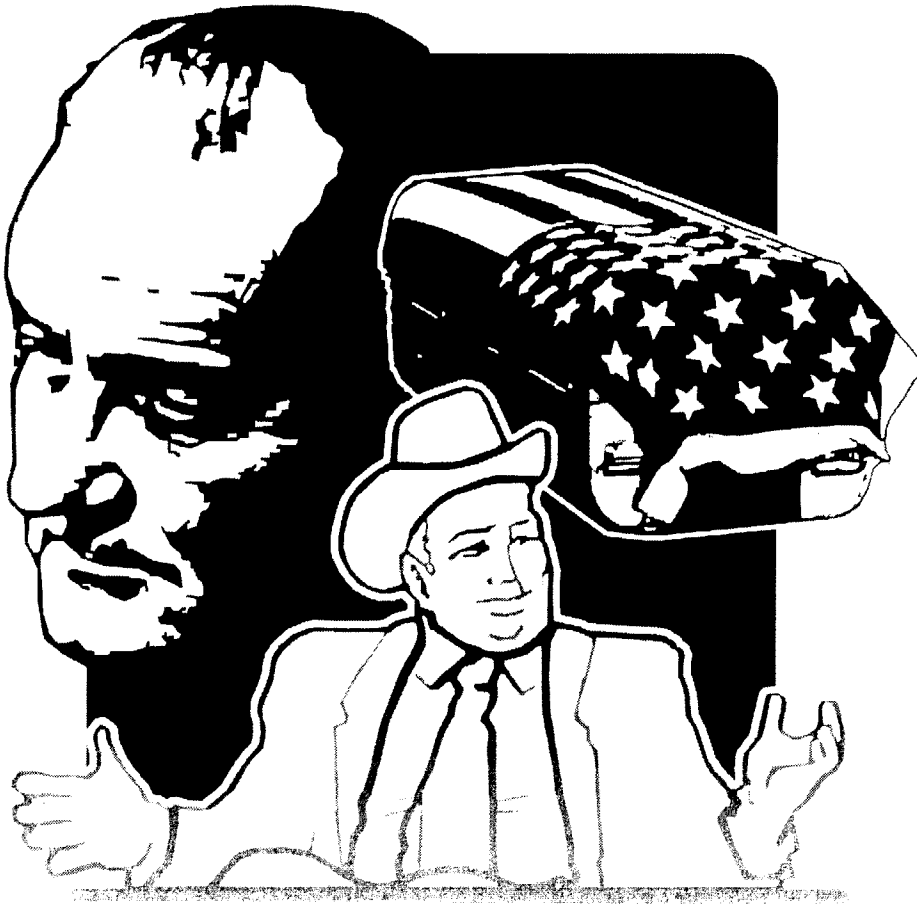
Apparently a consummation devoutly to be wish'd!



Hooked, I returned the next day, but only for about 45 minutes. John Henry mostly listened as I joined a former GI named Fast Eddie – "who wore a [Eugene] McCarthy button on his T-shirt, had hair in his ears and knocked his cigarette ashes into his shoe" – in arguing about a contretemps the previous October at the Oakland Induction Center. The GI paid me a huge compliment.

“Well,” [he said], “I don’t know how long you been around here, five, six years, I guess, but ...” “Try three months,” I said, apparently forgetting December and January.

There were impediments to my turning left – for one thing, the characters waiting there for me. Many were absolute idiots. The soldier boy, who called himself Fast Eddie, was an exception. . Him I liked. Faulk and he spent long hours discussing a possible antiwar speaking group – to be staffed entirely by veterans. (Ex-G.I.s were always the most effective voices against Vietnam policy; they led the million-strong antiwar march through San Francisco I joined some years later – until some clowns carrying North Vietnamese flags jumped in partway through. I’ve always suspected those guys were *agents provocateur* sent by Reagan’s Attorney General – Edwin Meese.)



But Berkeley was a breeding ground for leftist posture – such as the guys threatening to close down the campus the next month, and the “rabid and theatrical leftist screaming at a seated [Eugene] McCarthyite about Franco” on Sproul Plaza, the campus common. It was inevitable that such guys would show up to see Faulk. We drew a guy I’ll call Kenneth. He was almost comically typical. New Yorker ... big talker ... claimed he’d spent a month in a Selma, Alabama jail with Stokely Carmichael, the angry-and-getting-angrier head of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and Black Power advocate. He described Southerners as “crackers.” It was clear to me, even at 18, that this guy had never been south of Staten Island and the only crackers he knew were Saltines.

Fast Eddie couldn’t stand Kenneth, in fact he thought him “pathological.” John Henry was more tolerant, but when Faulk took us to the Bear’s Lair for lunch (in the rain, holding my umbrella, the rest of us clustered around him), he mentioned a time when Kenneth had used a certain execratory synonym in mixed company. “I have nothin’ against sayin’ ‘shit’ [he said]. I prefer it over some of the other words, like *dung* or *defecation* ... but this was just plain *awful*, bad use of it! Using ‘shit’ to *hurt people* ... That was wrong.”



Wednesday, March 6 wasn't the last day I saw John Henry, but it was certainly the most illustrative. Present that day was

an older woman named Miriam, I think, feisty and a fighter, a very short old gal [*oh, Jesus!*], with a very alive, aged, but not in the face, 55 or 60 [*HA HA*] I suppose: a world traveler who knows newsmen, an employee of a news agency, against the Vietnam war and apparently *so* damn depressed about the world today – without optimism, without even hope. The flint sparking her misery was a scene she witnessed: a gang of goons beating up a draft inductee on a bus when he indicated he wouldn't accept induction. She was so sickened by this that she ... gently scoffed at John Henry's advocations, particularly that of enlisting whatever help possible to end the war.

She said she once felt as Faulk does, and had worked in Robert Scheer's 1964 campaign for Congress, which, needless to say, failed. [Scheer was strongly anti-war.] "I don't *like* the person," she said, "I consider him another Mussolini," but she worked in his favor anyway. That evidently proved something for her, and she reiterated her disenchantment with the world – at least at present.

John Henry rose to her challenge, replying in terms that led me once again to believe that, despite his anti-Vietnam stance, the guy is really pretty square. He's optimistic about this country, and spelled it out, sure, by chiding her cynicism as something "we can't afford" and as a ploy of the administration. "I know that there's either doom or salvation on the way, and I'm optin' for salvation. Heck, if I were in a flood, as the water came up my nose, I'd say, 'Why, it ain't even damp out!'"

This from a guy who had been so beaten up by the blacklist he couldn't even get a stand-in's job in New York for ten dollars a day.



An aside. That same week, I finished classes for my second quarter at "the Big U." I was taking an English Literature seminar from a Ph.D. candidate named Barbara, as memorable in her own way as John Henry. In fact, who are we kidding? Barbara was blonde, beautiful, sweet, well over six feet tall, very *Nordic* if you get my drift ... and she liked my writing. The last day John Henry held his office hours, she asked me to stop by *her* office, and the thought of that visit still makes my hands tremble, and not with palsy.

At the time, though, I was too stupid to think that she was interested in aught but the paper I was writing – about Ken Kesey and Edward Albee, brilliant writers with only two things in common: both wrote in English and both featured some really horrible female characters. My papers lauded the writers' talent, and I've since suspected – and admit that this may be fantasy – that Barbara, while impressed with my essay-writing ability, was *distressed* with the subject matter. She thought *I* felt that way about women, and wanted to teach me that there was more to her gender than Big Nurse from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and Martha from *Virginia Woolf*.

Okay, I was hot-for-teacher. I was lost in fantasyland. So what? So what about the chin she dropped on my shoulder and the nice soft *Nordic* ... *pressure* she applied against my back as we talked about my paper? Fantasy? I don't know! All I know is that I cut the conference short to get to John Henry's office and I could kill myself about it now! *Witless all-but-a-virgin imbecile!*

I'm glad I didn't tell John Henry about Barbara – for leaving *her* company for *his*, he'd've beaten me to death with a *shovel*. As it was, that afternoon, the last time I saw him, he let me take his photo, pipe held in his smile, and said, "So long, L'il Guy!"



John Henry never released his antiwar album; Lyndon Johnson withdrew from politics soon after his Berkeley visit and the Texas connection with Vietnam went with him. I watched the TV version of *Fear on Trial*, disgusted that the cowardly network that had fired John Henry, CBS, had bought the rights for a pittance. I saw *The Best Man*, which afforded Faulk a good speaking role, and sometimes caught his storyteller gig on *Hee-Haw*. Like his walk-on in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, it was so unworthy as to be infuriating. In 1990, John Henry died, honored by history – but from the day the blacklists came after him, through the day he destroyed them, to the end of his days, poor. .

But nevertheless, *great*. John Henry Faulk didn't "make me a liberal," nor even turn me against the war in Vietnam. That would follow the death "in country" of my cousin, Jimmy King, later that year, and the savage brutality Ronald Reagan would level against my campus in springtimes to come. But John Henry had an undeniable effect. His personality, his character, his courage, his *story* showed me the principle and the quality of that side of the great American debate. His "little hammer" was actually a mighty one, and it helped beat my self into shape.

I haven't done much talking about my own politics this week [I wrote one night], and I suppose that's deliberate, because my mind is changing, I guess. It all boils down to the three most common words in the world: *I don't know*.

John Henry's work was well begun.



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The Jury Returns by Louis Nizer, Doubleday & Co., 1966



Taral is Fan GoH at this year's worldcon! How did his ascent to such greatness begin? Read on ...

Artistic Influence

Taral Wayne

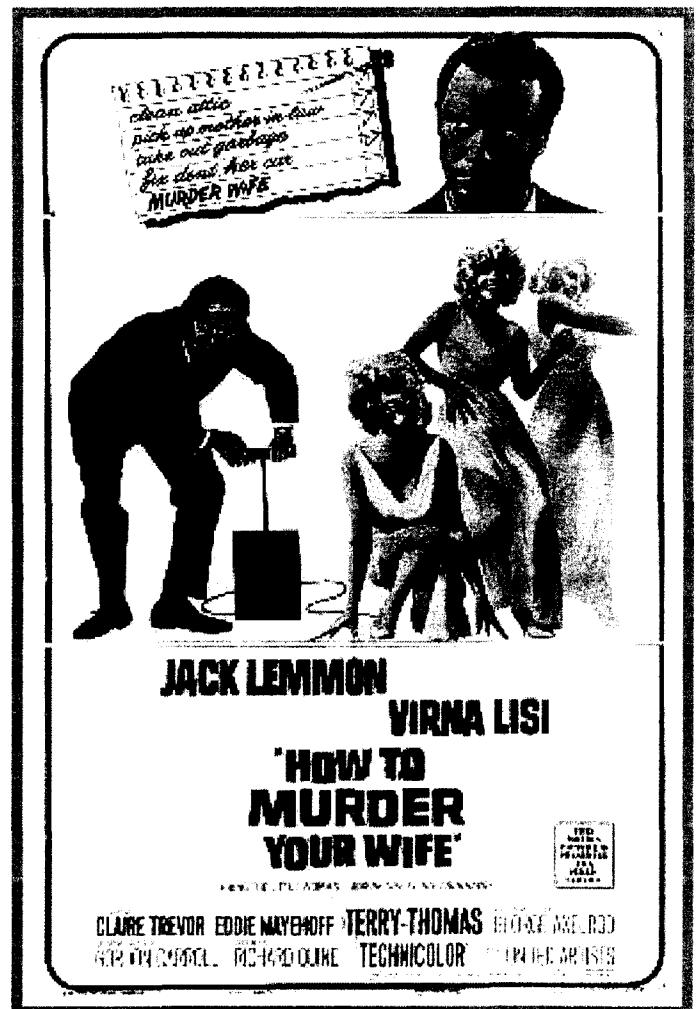
It all began with Stanley Ford, the genius behind Bash Brannigan.

Now and then I'm asked who were the major influences on my art. I bring out the usual names – Carl Barks, Walt Kelly, Gosciny & Uderzo, Hergé, Eisner, Low and so on. Those are the sort of models an artist is supposed to have, if not actually Rembrandt or Van Gogh. If I look at the matter honestly, the greatest influence on my subsequent career was rather more likely to have been Stanley Ford.

Let me explain.

One of my favourite film stars is Jack Lemmon, who appeared in many comedies of the 1960s that still bring a big smile to my face. *The Odd Couple*. *Mr. Roberts*. *Good Neighbor Sam*. *The Apartment*. And maybe best of all, *How to Murder Your Wife*.

Lemmon plays bachelor Stanley Ford, a successful newspaper cartoonist. "Bash Brannigan – Secret Agent" is the adventures of spy-detective Brannigan, who is part 007 and part Peter Gunn. The curious thing is that before each day's strip is drawn, the artist and his man-servant Charles (Terry Thomas) act out the events in real life. Stanley dresses up like Bash, chases hired actors around the docks and warehouses of the East Side, and finally stages a climactic fight scene. Charles captures every movement photographically. The developed photos are used as source material for the strip. Nothing that happens in "Bash Brannigan" can't be done, boasts Stanley Ford, because the artist himself has done it all.



Unexpectedly, Stanley's blissful bachelor life is about to come to an abrupt end.

One of his single friends is getting married. The stag party resembles a funeral or execution a lot more than a celebration, however. Only at the last minute, when the doomed man announces that the wedding is off, does the party turn into a wild, drunken revel. Just when everyone is joyfully blotto, a bikini-clad vision rises like Venus from the half-shell out of the traditional cake. For the cartoonist, it's love at first sight. His buddy's reprieve is a life sentence for Stanley. He wakes up next morning married, with no memory of just how the disaster happened; just that it has.

The girl is Italian and doesn't speak a word of English. Curiously, Mrs. Ford is never given any name other than Mrs. Ford. She is Every Newly Wed. The lack of communication skills proves to be little disadvantage to her, however. She quickly takes over Stanley's life. Although he realizes he is a captive of love, he grows more and more disenchanted with the changes marriage brings to his routine. Worse, his man-servant, a committed misogynist, walks out on him. Worse still, his domestication is reflected in the comic strip. From super spy/sleuth, Bash evolves into a newly married and bumbling husband. The new strip is even more popular than before.

It isn't long before discomfort with his new lifestyle turns to visible dismay. Belatedly, he realizes how he has mirrored his marriage in the strip. "Bash Brannigan, Secret Agent" has mutated into "The Brannigans – the Hilarious Adventures of America's Favorite Hen-Pecked Boob". Dismay turns to disgust. Stanley decides to take back his life, and in a bold move restore Bash to his rightful life of adventure and manly independence.

Stanley seeks out Charles and convinces him to participate in a new caper. Armed with telescopic lens, goofballs, a store dummy, and "the most powerful single remote control device created by the Western World", the pair set out to pre-create Bash's next adventure. The murder of his wife! Her "body", the manikin, is secretly interred in a construction site where the "gloppetta-gloppetta" machine buries it in uncountable tons of wet concrete.

Stanley had no intention of anything but acting out his resentments in the newspaper, of course. Unfortunately, his wife sees the completed strips while he's asleep. Shocked that he felt that way, she quietly leaves. Next thing Stanley knows, the police are at his door and he's charged with murdering her, just as Bash did in the strip. The strip is in fact submitted as evidence of the crime!

At first, Stanley's trial goes very bad for him. His lawyer is incompetent, dominated by his own wife, and cannot put up a respectable defense for Stanley without withering under her disapproving glare. Even the man-servant, Charles, now believes he participated unknowingly in a real killing! Desperate, facing conviction for homicide, Stanley grows creative. (He is an artist after all.) First, he fires his attorney, then requests to defend himself.

"I really don't know what to say," answers the judge.

"How about, *this is most irregular, but you may proceed,*" says Stanley.

“This is most irregular, but you may proceed.”

Stanley then calls the hen-pecked counsel to the stand as his witness. The next ten minutes are among the funniest, most politically incorrect, matrimony-hating moments in film history. Stanley reminds the witness, as well as every married man in the jury, what his unmarried life had been like. He then draws a black spot on the witness stand, and instructs the lawyer to imagine it was a button. This button, if pushed, would cause his wife Edna to vanish – painlessly, permanently, just as though she had never even existed – so that he could *in actuality* go back to his former bachelor life. Buy that sail boat. Stay late at the club. Grow that mustache if he wants. *No one would ever know.* Before the ten minutes are up, the witness enthusiastically stabs the button, shouting “You won’t even feel it Edna!” Unbidden, the entire male jury leaps to its feet and cries “Not guilty!” The judge himself cheers.

The irony is that Stanley hadn’t murdered his wife, of course. But to be found innocent, he had awakened the wife-killer in every man who sat in judgment of him, and convinced his own lawyer to commit the ethical equivalent of the murder Stanley stood accused of.

Hollywood believes in happy endings though, as well as tying up loose ends. The wife returns, and Stanley has never been happier than the moment he sees her again, just as he saw her on the first morning – naked, gorgeously blonde, and laying asleep on his rumpled bed. (Like in *Goldfinger* but minus the gold paint.)

Charles makes for the door again, satchels in hand. For a brief day he thought he was rid of the woman, but found he was wrong. Before he can reach the stairs down, however, he comes face to face with a woman. She is mature, good looking, blonde, and bears a definite resemblance to ... yep, Mrs. Ford has brought her mother back from Italy. With an apologetic look, Charles ushers her into his own room, and closes the door on the watching audience. The misogynist has had a change of heart ...

So that explains everything about the influence of Stanley Ford on me as an artist, doesn’t it. It doesn’t?

Hit Fast Reverse on the remote, and we’ll go back to the beginning of the movie.

How to Murder Your Wife starts with the voice of Terry Thomas, who reveals himself as Mr. Ford’s “man”. “This is Mr. Ford’s townhouse”, he says, somewhere in a fashionable part of mid-Manhattan. The camera pans down the façade of a four story Queen Anne, and out of an elegant white paneled door emerges Charles to pick up the paper. He beckons us into the house, and with a cut to the inside he begins a tour. There is a long climb up the oval stairwell to the second floor, and there we view Mr. Ford’s spacious living room, his lavish walk-in shower, the rooftop terrace (overlooking construction and the gloppetta-gloppetta machine), and, finally, Mr. Ford himself, whose quarters are on the third floor.

Woken at the tender hour of ten-thirty, and showered, Mr. Ford is served a frugal breakfast. He then takes to the streets. The garage opens and out drives a powder blue, 1964 Lincoln convertible – a classic then as now. He’s dressed in sport suit, black turtle-neck sweater, and fashionable narrow brim hat (the type with the little feather in the band). Charles drives of course. In the back is a large, sinister looking camera mounted on a rifle stock. The Lincoln pulls up to a café and picks up a pair of dangerous looking desperadoes – a mustachioed Turk, and a Russian in tall fur cap. To the docks then, where begins a protracted gun chase. Charles follows with his camera, catching every moment of the action on film. At last the adventure comes to an end aboard a tramp steamer, where Stanley Ford (in the guise of Bash Brannigan) guns down both international criminals, rescues the dancing girl, and retrieves the missing microfilm from a diamond in her navel!

Next stop is The Club. It’s an exclusive institution, that no woman has set foot in for 123 years. It has a lounge bar, sitting rooms, a gym, sauna, and its own Olympic size pool. Doubtless, the cost of membership is more than mere mortals such as you or I make in a year. Finally, after a bracing swim and a robust massage, it’s home again.

That night is the bachelor party that changes everything. Miss Galaxy rises from her cake, and she is every bit as gorgeous in that busty, long legged style as any Bardot or Lollobrigida. He awakes at the start of a new day... fatally married, as you already know.

Of course, it isn’t all play for Stanley Ford. Between laps at the club, capers in the streets of Manhattan, and exquisite meals prepared for him by Charles, Stanley *works*. He spends most of what seems like perhaps *two whole hours* by himself in the fabulous fourth story loft, his studio, drawing “Bash Brannigan.” Thirty-seven year old Stanley Ford is not just *any* cartoonist, but is nationally syndicated in 463 major newspapers, with 80,000,000 readers in American cities from Bangor, Maine to Honolulu. When he wants a change in the strip, *he* phones the syndicate and names the time and place for a meeting with the heads of all departments. He informs *them* of another change in the direction of the strip.

When Bash murders his wife, it touches off speculation nation-wide – will Dagwood do away with Blondie? Will L’il Abner do in Daisy-Mae? The public wonders what next.

In Stanley Ford we see the cartoonist in a light no man could resist. The world is his oyster. His lifestyle is elegant, privileged, masculine, liberated, wanting for nothing. He has a fashionable townhouse whose value on the Manhattan real estate market can’t today be much less than two or three million dollars. He drives a car that simultaneously manages to be both extravagant and dignified. He belongs to a magnificent gentleman’s club. He holds suave cocktail parties on his personal terrace, with live jazz. The walls of his home are tastefully covered with fine art. He has a live-in butler, cook, friend and confidant in one man-servant. He runs the streets playing make-believe cops and robbers. He beds all the beautiful girls he wants every night. He is famous. He is happy.

Oh, how I wanted to be Stanley Ford! Twelve-year-old-Taray lay in front of the TV on Saturday mornings, copying earnestly from *Mad Magazine*, DC comics, and Hot Rod Cartoons. I naively imagined the artists from these fine periodicals also lived the

lifestyle of Stanley Ford. Someday I knew I would too, if only I practiced, practiced, practiced.

I did practice, practice, practice. I practiced every day for more than twenty years before I made my first professional sale. Thirty years before my first comic book was published. More than forty years later I'm still not syndicated in 463 papers across the nation, however. Wealth and fame still elude me. I don't own a car, I live in a small, rent controlled apartment with a cat rather than a man-servant, and if you don't mind I'll not go into the details of an absent love-life. What went wrong?

Do you suppose that Will Elder didn't live in a four story Manhattan townhouse, or that Alex Toth drove a six year old, common Chevy instead of a Rolls? Did Carl Barks not bed starlets and fashion models nightly? Could Gahan Wilson not order his editors and publishing execs around like errand boys? What about the guy who actually drew the Bash Brannigan strips seen in the movie? His name was Mel Keefer, if you must know, and he was a veteran of many years in syndicated newspaper strips. Ever hear of him? Do you imagine *he* plays gunfighter or police detective or whatever else he pleases, before sitting down to his two hours of work a day? No, the world is not the oyster of cartoonists, not even those who are successful by the standards of the genre.

Typically a cartoonist works six days a week, worries constantly about deadlines, and is never sure of his next assignment. Far from dictating terms, cartoonists generally live in fear of their editors' voices. It almost always means bad news – changes to be made, extra work to be done, another paper dropping the feature, or a story rejected. Editors never call up to tell you what a grand job you're doing. That would take five minutes and cost a nickel.

There are exceptions to this rule. Al Capp, for instance, probably could call up his editor to give orders, and was rich enough by most people's standards. Frank Frazetta went on from working for Capp to become a household name himself, and likely every bit as independent and well heeled. Charles Shultz on the other hand, a multi-millionaire, worried until the day he died that his strips in umpteen hundred daily papers, his TV specials, his dozens of paperback collections, and scores of other media tie-ins would be cancelled overnight, and that he'd end in poverty. More typical are cartoonists like Will Elder, who retired in moderate comfort. Or Wally Wood, who did live more or less in poverty, and took his own life.

No, the world is not the oyster of cartoonists. I was grossly misled. Lamentably, it was *How to Murder Your Wife* that put that idea in my empty young head, and started me on the long path that has brought me no wealth, little present renown, and no likelihood of posterity. What if I had never seen this comedy, this tempter of burgeoning artists? What if I had stopped doodling hot rods and space ships, and had applied myself to school instead? Gotten summer jobs to save up for college? Maybe I should have screwed up the courage to date girls? Would I be a comfortable, well-adjusted tax accountant today? An associate producer for PBS? A senior civil servant perhaps? Whatever I turned out to be, no doubt I'd be daydreaming in free moments about the romantic life I'd given up, and I'd wonder *what if* I'd gone on to be a *cartoonist* instead?

In my mind that elegant townhouse is rightfully mine, and – though she throws up hair balls from time to time and claws the blankets – I wake up every morning next to a gorgeous female, sleeping in the nude. In a moment Charles will inform me that breakfast will be ready in five minutes. And don't forget, he will say, I'm meeting Stanley Ford at the club later today.



HOW JULIE SCHWARTZ AND FORRY ACKERMAN NEARLY GOT ME KICKED OUT OF A CONVENTION -

A confession by *Curt Phillips*

I attended a con in Roanoke, Virginia a couple of decades ago where Julie Schwartz and Forry Ackerman were the guests. Entering the main hall just after Forry's GOH speech had started (actually a moderate sized room holding only about 40 fans) I happened to wind up sitting next to Julie, whom I knew slightly. I just happened to have brought along a copy of an issue of *Fantasy Magazine*, the fanzine that he edited in the mid-1930's, for him to autograph and was holding it as we sat there listening to the speech.

Forry's giving his standard talk; "blah, blah, blah - ...Bela Legosi's ring... - blah, blah, blah, - the head of the *Metropolis* robot..." - and so on. Don't get me wrong, I liked Forry and his speech was fun – the first few times I heard it. He just needed new material. Well, Julie's starting to snore and I'm nodding off myself, so I give him an elbow him in the ribs and hand him the fanzine with the idea that he'll look it over and think, "My! What a bright and intelligent fellow this jerk must be for carrying my old fanzines around!" Instead Julie – refreshed from his nap – guffaws loudly and starts telling me about the zine. "**SAY! THIS IS A GREAT ISSUE! WE GOT A LOT OF GOOD RESPONSE ON THIS ONE! DID YOU KNOW...**" and so on. Did Julie Schwartz ever know how to whisper? The evidence I've collected suggests not.

Forry's reaction to all this was fascinating. He tried to ignore Julie and after a couple of loud "ahem, ahem"s he plunged gamely on about twice as loud as before. By this time Julie was well launched into the story he's telling me and he apparently interprets Forry's added volume as nothing more than increased background noise. I think you can see where this is going.

Now, *here's* the unfair part of the story: I'm sitting there not having said a single word, Forry's whooping it up on stage, Julie's whooping it up on my right, I glance around to my left *and the entire audience is glaring at me!* For once in my life I'm the only entirely blameless person in the room and the audience is ready to pounce on me like raptors on a wounded tree-sloth. Just as I'm thinking, "How could this possibly get any worse?" I felt an angry tug on my sleeve. I turned to find myself facing a white-haired and very angry Forry Ackerman fan. "Young man", she snapped, quivering in fury. "You and your grandfather are being *very* rude!"

I can't remember what happened after that, but I never did get my fanzine signed...



Reprinted from Benny Girard's much-missed fanzine, *The Frozen Frog*.

PLATO IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN

Alexis Gilliland



Illo by Taral Wayne

The evening before Professor Chilton's final for Philosophy 217 they went down to the local Night Kitchen franchise for coffee and onion rings. Well, the menu called them onion rings; what they were was Bisquick, eggs and onions run through a blender and deep fried like funnel cake. The girls took the booth under the Sendak poster of their favorite Wild Thing, and Mario pulled up a chair to the end of the table rather than trying to crowd three on a side.

"This essay question on a 'just state'," said Alex, "How do you get a handle on it?"

"You should have been reading the assignments on Plato's *Republic*," replied Judith unhelpfully. Then she relented because she knew enough to fake the answer. "Old. Socrates started off explaining 'what a just person was, and either he didn't know or his mind wandered, because he wound up saying that, well, a state is bigger than a person, you know, so you can see it without squinting, and once you knew what a just state was, a just person would be the exact same thing, only smaller.'"

"*L'etat, c'est moi*," said Susan. "Was that Evita Peron or Mao Tse-dong?"

Joe-Bob took a sip of coffee, ignoring her. "A just state," he said, pensively. "Well, I suppose one could exist. But only momentarily, for just the barest instant, as it swung between equal and opposite perversions "

"Well no," replied Mario. "That assumes that the state changes continuously and in an orderly fashion. If you want to mix Poli-Sci with Plato, the halfway point is where you have a 50-50 chance of being screwed by either of two mutually exclusive injustices."

"The just state is a Platonic Ideal," mused Alex. "Just like a clean, clear river is the ideal river. The problem with the river is that everyone wants to use it for irrigation and sewage disposal and so forth so that the flow gets all drawn down and polluted." He broke off a length of onion ring and dipped it in salsa. "You don't denounce the river because people used it badly or the rains made it flood the lowlands; you build a levee or a sewage treatment plant."

"Spoken like a true civil engineer," said Susan. "Then a just state would be one that nobody has used, yet?"

"Well, the just state is a Platonic Ideal," replied Mario. "Which means that it's what you're aiming at, not anything that's actually going to get installed in the real world." He took a sip of coffee to hold the floor while he was thinking. "So the ideal state is sort of the plan ... no, the prospectus, actually. The plan is the blueprint you work from, in order to build what actually is going to get built. The prospectus is what you go around showing people to persuade them to invest in this Wild Thing of Yours, explaining what a great deal it's going to be. The just state is the prospectus, what Prof Chilton calls 'the Way it s'posed to be'."

"The just state is Socrates' prospectus?" asked Judith. "What was he trying to sell?"

"Textbooks for Plato's Academy," said Susan and Mario together.

"No, no, no," said Joe-Bob. "The just state is part of a system, along with just people and honorable politicians."

There was a general laugh at the table. "Plato conceded *that* wasn't likely to happen," said Alex, scrolling through his notebook. "He was talking about philosophers becoming kings, or maybe vice versa, which isn't all that different if you figure the odds." He dipped onion ring in salsa and took a bite. "Do you suppose he wanted to put those beautiful, logical theories of his in practice?"

"Depend on it," replied Judith. "Plato spent his life 'arguing' with the students at his academy; who figured to be a bright but docile bunch sucking up to him for their grade. If they couldn't catch him in some gross logical error, they let him have his way. So even if he knew the real world wasn't like that, old Plato thought his academy was 'the way it s'posed to be.' "

"Professor Chilton will want to know what Socrates and Plato were thinking about, though," said Joe-Bob, scrolling through his notes. "Here's Socrates: 'When everyone minds his own business, that is justice and will make the city just.'"

Judith took another piece of onion ring. "Socrates could never quit while he was ahead," she said, dipping it in salsa. "What about his argument for having all women and children in common?"

"That was only for the guardians," corrected Alex. "Otherwise the ruling class to which old Socrates so ardently aspired to belong."

"Looks like what Socrates really wanted was a no-fault divorce from Xanthippe," said Susan. "So he

figured out the philosophical equivalent.”

“What do you mean?”

“Think about it, Joe-Bob. Socrates was a social-climbing jock-sniffer. What he liked to do was hang out with the affluent and athletic Athenian youth. Those young and impressionable men, who, it goes without saying, would become the future movers and shakers of the city.”

“Which is why they slipped him the hemlock for corrupting the youth of Athens,” said Mario. “His former students kept trying to overthrow the government.”

“You saw how Professor Chilton liked *that* idea,” Susan reminded him. “Historical accuracy will not get you through Philosophy, young man. *The way* I see it Socrates came up with a plan that would let other people service Xanthippe, because he wouldn’t have the duty to her more than once a year.”

“You can’t blame him, Susan; Xanthippe was a notorious scold and shrew.”

“Hellfire and damnation, Joe-Bob! Who was it wrote that lying and pernicious history? Socrates and the good old boys at Plato’s academy is who.” She held out her coffee mug and the waitress refilled it for her. “If they ever discover the Socratic dialogues with Xanthippe, you can bet your sweet ass that Socrates came off a sorry second best.”

Alex looked up from scrolling his notes. “Got it,” he announced triumphantly. “The quote, the summary and a crib note. What do you want?”

“Just the summary and the crib,” said Susan, stirring sweetener into her coffee.

“Right. The summary says: ‘The community of women and children is good because it promotes the unity of the state.’” Alex paused. “The crib note says: ‘Discuss the ideas of Socrates, not his sexual preferences.’ Which means you can skip Xanthippe and go directly to unity.”

Leaning over, Mario studied the quote for a moment. “Unity. Solidarity. Cohesion. Ever righter thinking by ever larger majorities, wanting only what is best for the state. What was it Kipling said? ‘This is the state above the law. The state exists for the state alone’?”

“Men are *so* easily distracted,” mused Judith, resting her chin in her hand. “What the old boy *should* have said was: ‘This community of women and children is a neat idea which would be good *if* it did, indeed, promote the unity of the state.’”

“It doesn’t?” asked Joe-Bob.

Judith shook her head. “In practice, men are all too likely to run off and abandon their women and children, weaken the family bond like the old boy wants to do, and when times get tough they’ll bug out. I’ll bet that’s what Xanthippe told him and the son of a bitch didn’t want to hear it.”

“A platonic red herring,” said Susan. “*Tres elegant.*”

“In the real world,” Judith continued, speaking with the calm authority of a sociology major, “the communal sharing of women and children has been destructive of the community wherever it was tried. You get these goddamned duty rosters listing who sleeps with whom, and when, because *somebody* has to sleep with ugly old Xanthippe.” She took a sip of coffee.

“So what we have is Socrates advancing this logically impeccable but practically appalling idea, an idea he must have known was wrong, to support what? The greater unity of the state. Guess what gets argued about, and what gets to slide by in all the confusion?”

“Unity slides by, of course!” said Joe Bob. “But look, a state *needs* some degree of unity to keep from splitting into warring factions.”

Mario put down his coffee cup. “Look, yourself. If you want a just state you need to have some way of dealing justly with dissent. Which means that dissent ought to be expected and ought to be tolerated so that you can have too *much* unity as well as too little. Too much unity means an unjust state.”

“Well, a 99.98 percent majority means somebody is lying,” Joe-Bob conceded. “A just state could do with less.”

“States don’t get votes,” said Alex, “politicians get votes. A just state tries for an honest count, but look – ‘unity’ expresses the degree to which people are in agreement on things. How can you have too much unity?”

“When Isabella was Queen of Spain,” replied Susan, “she instituted the Holy Inquisition, which was extremely popular with the Spanish people because it confiscated Jewish property and burned Jews who wouldn’t convert to Catholicism. The persecution of minorities is always popular, usually inspires a feeling of unity in the majority, and is not done in a just state. Too much unity on *any* issue could demand – and get – unjust solutions.”

“I’ll buy that,” agreed Mario, “although Philosophy Class may not be the best place to argue that a just state functions within limits, including limits on unity. But when Plato quotes Socrates as saying the more unity the better, he isn’t thinking about a real state, never mind whether it’s just or not, but about the Platonic Ideal of a state. The man is touting his own intellectual property and doing it in a shabby, dishonest fashion because the truth won’t serve.”

Judith scribbled in her notebook. ““Yes, yes! That takes care of unity and commonly held women and children. Self-promoting propaganda hidden inside a scandal. What about the ‘golden lie’ Socrates advocates telling?”

“You mean the ‘royal lie’,” said Alex. “The idea that some people – men, I mean, Professor Chilton marks down far anachronisms – are gold, so we make them guardians, while others are silver so they get to be auxiliaries, while the rest are brass and iron and have to be tradesmen and craftsmen.”

“Ri-ight,” exclaimed Joe-Bob, looking up. “And that good old boy of an oracle who says that, hey, when a man of brass or iron is elected president, the city will be destroyed.”

“Elected president,” said Mario. “Better to follow the text and say ‘guards the city.’ The idea seems persuasive on the face of it, though. “

“You think so, oh man of gold?” asked Susan. “This is more snake oil, packaged so you argue interminably about whether the lie is justified, and never look to see who it is that gets to do the gold to iron rating. A job that looks to be tailor-made for Plato’s Academy. Surprise, surprise.”

“Is the royal lie justified?” asked Joe-Bob. “Chilton asked the question in three out of the last five finals.”

“You slop over from Philosophy into Political Science,” said Judith, resting her chin in one hand. “Every state justifies itself to its constituents, using whatever lie is handy – slogans to rally the plebes around the cause *du jour*. They wear out, the gummint replaces them. The slogans, that is; the plebes have to replace themselves.”

“States lie because they have to,” said Joe-Bob. “Philosophers are held to higher standards, at least,

they're held to higher standards than politicians. Can the royal lie ever be justified?"

"Can you justify Machiavelli?" asked Mario. "The Question never comes up in Poli-Sci, only in Philosophy."

"Philosophical justification would have to be operational," said Judith, pensively. "Otherwise, philosophers are right down there with lawyers and used car salesmen."

Mario emptied the plate of onion rings. "What do you mean, 'operational'?"

"The answer is yes, if, and only if, Plato's Academy aspired to become a government," replied Judith. "As a theoretical exercise describing the Platonic Ideal State the royal We promotes cynicism, bad attitudes, and clearly tends to corrupt the youth. However, as part of the manual for an imaginary political machine, it has a certain – call it Machiavellian – appeal. Since nobody ever bought into the idea, the question remains academic, but it seems to me that the royal lie can only be justified by the intent of Plato's Academy in uttering it."

"For Professor Chilton, the answer would be no," said Alex. "Philosophically, the royal lie is a bad idea, and since Plato's Academy was for philosophers, it clearly had no business pushing bad, ideas. However! If the academy aspired to turn out a philosopher king or two, then deviations from wisdom and truth can be winked at."

"Right!" agreed Judith, making a note. "And since they never *did* turn out a philosopher king, that is clearly proof that they never intended to do so, from which it logically follows that the royal lie has no justification whatsoever."

"What about our just state, though? Is that everybody minding their own business?"

"That might get a pass, Joe-Bob," said Mario. "If you want an 'Excellent', you need to expand on it a little. What's the usual reason for people messing around in other people's business?"

"Curiosity?"

"Oh, hell, Susan. Paying attention isn't messing with other people's business. The reason for putting a spoke in somebody's wheel (assuming they aren't your enemy, in which case that makes it your business) is usually envy. So a just state, at least the justest state you're going to get, is one in which law and custom have combined to minimize envy."

"Aha," said Susan. "A just state does not have TV commercials. Pushing expensive toys at the rich arouses the envy of everybody who can't afford them."

"A just state doesn't have the rich?" suggested Judith. "No, surely not. In a just state the rich just don't flaunt their wealth. For the wealthy, modesty and discretion are necessary virtues. Alas for contemporary civilization."

"For Professor Chilton's exam," said Mario, "the just state is the prospectus for the Platonic Ideal State that Plato's Academy was trying to sell the Athenians. Which justifies the royal lie, by the way."

"How do you figure?"

"Plato's Academy aspired to play at philosopher kings, Susan, but the Athenians were just too smart to trust them crafty intellectuals."

"Okay," she said, writing it down. "How was it supposed to work, this just state?"

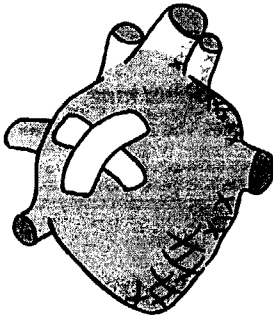
“One infers that ‘the way it s’posed to be was trying to achieve the Socratic ideal of everybody minding their own business.” Mario picked up his empty coffee cup and put it down again. “Chilton always says to ask the next question, which .is: How does the state seek to achieve that noble goal?”

“What noble goal?” asked Joe-Bob. “Minimizing envy? That’s the political equivalent of Sisyphus rolling his rock up the hill.”

“Poli-Sci says it ain’t practical, but philosophically, that constitutes a complete and elegant answer,” said Mario.

Alex looked up from keyboarding his notes. “Would it work?”

“Long enough for you to say that we achieved the Platonic Ideal State at 12:01 Tuesday morning,” replied Mario. He looked at his watch. “*Ach du lieber*, the last bus leaves in five minutes.” He put his share of the check on the table and stood up. “Good night, y’all.” He saluted the Wild Thing poster with horns and claws and fangs and bare human feet and grinned at the artistic depiction of the Platonic Ideal State. “Good night, Blue.”



Howdy everyone,

Since my heart attack and angioplasty/stents, I’ve been trying to think of a fannish way to get the word out about heart disease. I was pondering this more over the weekend, as I volunteered at a health expo on Saturday, at the WomenHeart booth, where I and other women handed out brochures and information.

Well, on my way to work this morning, a lightbulb went off. Fans don’t want to read brochures, we want to read *fanzines*. (duh)

So I figured I’d try to solicit as many stories from as many fannish heart patients as I could, put them all together in a one-shot, and distribute it far and wide. Maybe even make a nifty, limited-edition button to give to all the contributors.

The last page would be an “In Memoriam” page, or as one my favorite TV shows, *Babylon 5*, says, “To absent friends, in memory still bright...” with a list of fans who’ve passed on from heart disease/heart attacks/etc.

Toward that end, this is a call for contributions for my one-shot, tentatively called A CHANGE OF HEART. Stories, poems, letters of comment, and artwork from fans who’ve had heart-related illness and/or surgery are welcome.

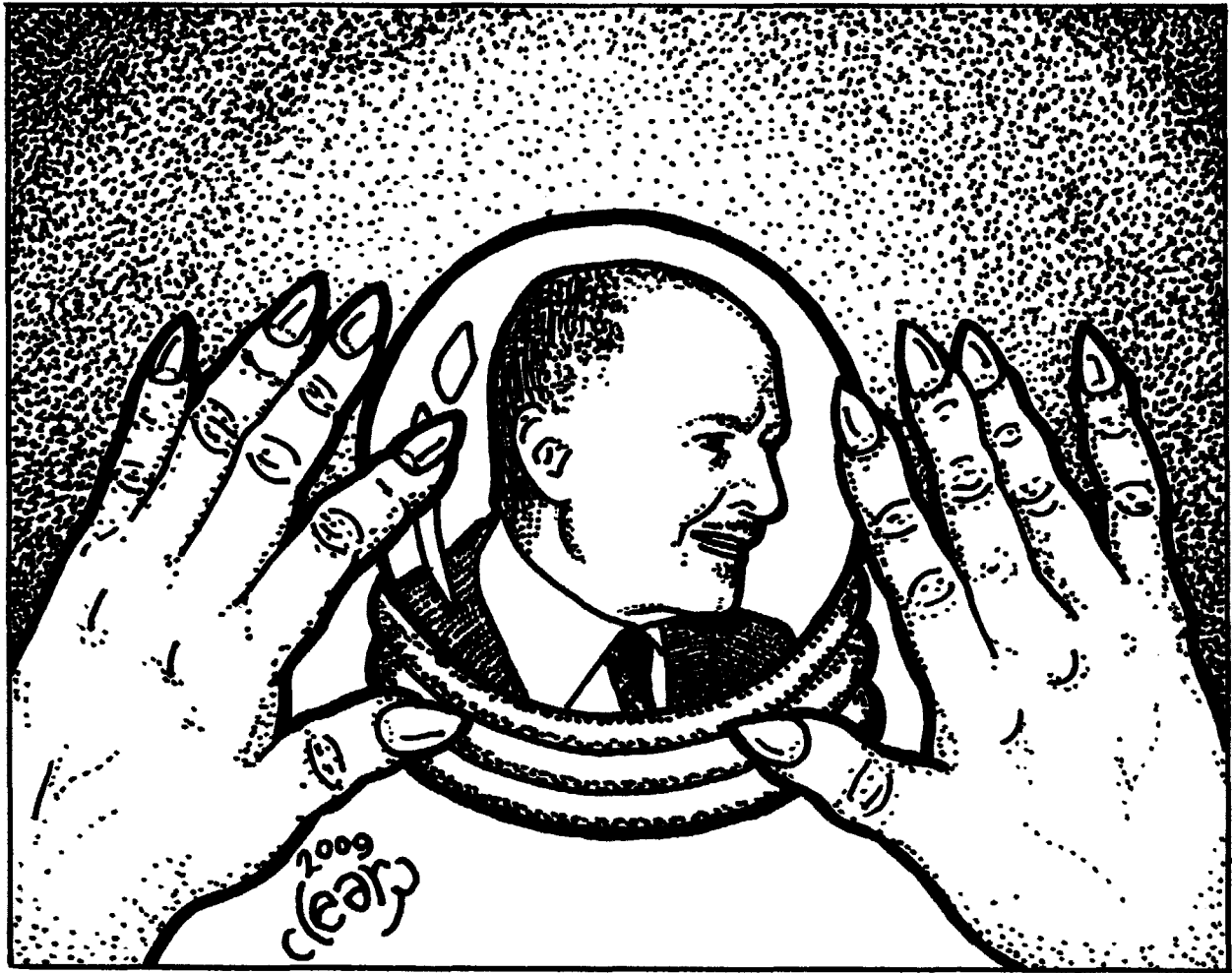
If you yourself aren’t the heart patient, but an immediate family member is/was, I’d also be glad to hear from you. Emailed submissions are strongly preferred; please send to laurahcory@yahoo -- but if you know someone who doesn’t do email, pass along my snail-addy. And I need names for the “In Memoriam” page.

Deadline for submissions is July 24th-- that gives me time to put the thing together and have some copies ready for WorldCon.

Permission granted to forward this to other fannish places. Thanks.

Laura Haywood-Cory, laurahcory@yahoo.com

Snail-address is 5100 McCormick Rd., Durham NC, 27713.



The Predictions of Robert A. Heinlein

Joseph Green

Illos by Randy Cleary and Kelly Freas

Several years ago I did a study on the accuracy of science-fiction predictions by four acknowledged masters of the field, two older (Verne and Wells) and two modern (Heinlein and Clarke). One fact I learned quickly is that this facet of the literature, like science itself, is highly cumulative. Later writers build on those who preceded them, while often trying to outdo their predecessors in imaginative speculation.

Today, a great many of the ideas of Verne and Wells have either come true, or been proven

unlikely ever to become fact. This contrasts with many of the stories of Clarke and Heinlein, often so far ahead of modern science that they do not yield predictions that can be verified or discounted. The following examination of selected Heinlein works, however, illustrates a well established fact. Science fiction writers can be very good at depicting possible alternate futures, including what it would be like to live in one, but are no better than other types of futurists in predicting which of these will actually occur.

Heinlein stated more than once that his

books and stories were intended primarily to entertain (he famously said that someone with the price of a six-pack in his pocket must want to read his book more than to drink beer). Nevertheless, he worked hard at creating a logical, believable and consistent possible future, both for the relatively near term and a few centuries ahead.

Unlike many writers of science fiction, who presented their guesses only in fictional form, Heinlein was bold enough in 1950 to make a list of clearly stated projections, examine and update it fifteen years later, and present a final update fifteen years after that, in 1980. Like most of his contemporaries, he was far more often wrong than right. The list is too long and detailed to even summarize here; see original publication.

Selected Works

“Expanded Universe” (1) (ACE Books, February 1981)

1. In this book Heinlein tells the truth right up front, stating in the first sentence of the foreword that it is an expanded version of “The Worlds of Robert A. Heinlein”, and includes the latter book in its entirety. The first set of predictions, made in 1950, appeared in the original “Worlds”. It also includes two possible scenarios for the year 2000 A.D. Heinlein believed there was a 99.92+ chance that either he or this civilization would be extinct by then, and he would not again have to account for his mistaken prophecies. Sad to say, this was an accurate prediction. He died in 1988.

PERSONAL NOTE: This book has several articles dealing with the U.S.S.R., and more specifically, the six-month trip Heinlein and his wife Virginia took through Russia in 1960. They include “‘Pravda’ Means ‘Truth’” and “Inside Intourist”. The Heinleins were able to make such a long tour because his books had sold well in Russian translations, and he had a huge stack of rubles piled up – but at that time had to come to Russia to spend them. Over the Labor Day weekend of 1961 Heinlein was Guest of Honor at the 19th World Science Fiction Convention, in Seattle, Washington – where I happened to be living at the time, while working for The Boeing Company. My then-wife Juanita and I attended, of course, and heard Heinlein give a long, apparently

extemporaneous GOH speech on Russia and their experiences there. (Ginny Heinlein had spent two years learning Russian before they left; they wanted to talk to regular people, when occasion allowed, without an official interpreter.) He paced the floor and spoke without notes. It was vintage Heinlein, colorful, strong, well-delivered, and highly controversial. Among other predictions, he stated that war was inevitable; suggested we all build bomb shelters; and be prepared to shoot our grasshopper neighbors who would want in at the last minute. He talked about the fanaticism of the Russians, the endemic lying, the dangerous convictions the government had successfully instilled in most of its citizens, the probable spread and possible success of communism, etc. The talk, like Heinlein's later books, was over-long, but very interesting. He was booed a few times, and a number of people chose to publicly and loudly disagree with some of his major points after the speech. I suspect he was pleased as punch to have ‘stirred up the animals’.

Heinlein was generally considered the preeminent science fiction writer of his time (though a case can be made that Clarke was more popular in Europe). I did not meet Heinlein in Seattle, but later he and Ginny were guests at the Greenhouse, at the Apollo 11 prelaunch party in 1969 (and Ginny returned after Heinlein’s death, for a small dinner party in her honor). I also talked with him at length during his 3rd Guest of Honor appearance in Kansas City for the 1976 WorldCon, and exchanged some slight correspondence. He called me, I think really to say good-bye, not long before he died (and apparently called many other people as well).

2. When he gets to the actual predictions (page 323) Heinlein chooses to reprint his 1950 forecasts, followed by the 1965 ones, and then his new (1980) ones, where appropriate. This provides the reader with an immediate basis for comparison, without a lot of flipping pages back and forth. In his introductory remarks Heinlein carefully points out that all good science fiction writers tell a story first and prophesy second, using arguably the greatest of them all, H.G. Wells, as an example. Heinlein's record of prediction is better than that of Wells, which time has proven largely wrong; but he still has more misses than hits.

3. Heinlein also plays Cassandra in other articles in this book, such as in "The Last Days of the United States" (page 148). It deals primarily with the idea of forced dispersion of the entire population, to make the country less subject to the worst affects of atomic attack. "How to be a Survivor" (page 163) describes the basics of buying or building yourself a cabin deep in the woods/hills, and preparing to live there indefinitely. At the end, it mentions that the enemy who has conquered your country can't then use the big bombs, because his own people occupy the territory; so you hidden survivors can now become a deadly guerrilla force. He uses the same theme in the story "Pie From the Sky". (One wonders if Heinlein's popularity – he is read fairly widely outside the science fiction field – had anything to do with the tremendous upsurge in the last few decades of the survivalist movement.)

4. The last part of this book is "The Happy Days Ahead". Heinlein obviously meant the title to be ironic, since he proceeds to list a series of serious upcoming traumas & travails. But the final item is "Over the Rainbow", a fictional scenario in which a worthless new President of the United States dies in a plane crash shortly after taking office, and his Vice-President, a black woman and professional actress put on the ticket to get votes, becomes the new President. She proves to have integrity, a lot of common sense, an iron will, and a determination to do her job and make the USA into a better country. She institutes many changes, largely involving a tightening of discipline in the armed forces, a resistance to pressure groups that is total, and a commitment to scientific and technical progress that is unswerving. (2) She does so well that of course she gets elected to a second term. This is pure Heinlein speaking, that odd mixture of old-fashioned gentleman and far-future thinker, expounding on his beliefs of what it would take to return this country to its original road of high promise (from which he apparently thinks it has strayed).

5. Summing Up: It's difficult to sum up a book as diverse as this one. If there is a theme, it must be the art of prophecy, and the hazards thereof. There are more articles speculating about the future than any other subject. Heinlein makes a consistent effort to recount his career as a prophet, warts and all. He sees far more bad than good ahead, but admits progress is being made in some

areas. His overall philosophy of unreconstructed libertarianism comes through clearly here. And he quite often makes the same point, in a short article or story, that he later expounds on and amplifies in a novel of great length and wordiness.

"The Man Who Sold the Moon" (New American Library, April 1959)

1. In "The Roads Must Roll" Heinlein postulates a set of roofed conveyors, equipped with variable speed strips, that run long distances across the country. A person rides the 'roads' by getting on a slow strip at the edge and transferring (by walking) to strips of increasing speed; the center one rolls at 100 miles an hour. It's a bold concept, conceived ten years before the rapid development of commercial air traffic and the Interstate highway system. A straight-line forward projection, the idea makes no allowance for side turns, such as the development of communications systems so good they often replace physical travel. Heinlein states in his preface to this book of four long stories that they are intended as 'what if' speculations, not his personal predictions of events likely to actually happen.

2. On page 63 in the novella "The Man Who Sold the Moon", Heinlein uses a throwaway concept, a sensor switch that turns lights off automatically when the last person leaves a room. This is in fact now a viable idea, but so expensive the technology has not yet sold very widely.

3. On pages 68 -71 the name character, Delos Harriman, explains why private industry should develop the means to travel to the moon; so that it could be claimed, carved up, and sold as real estate. The idea that it would be done for reasons of political prestige and international rivalry apparently did not occur to Heinlein. Nor did he foresee jumping ahead of the orderly development of needed space-borne infrastructure, and going directly from the face of the Earth to the moon. In real life, logic and an orderly progression of technology played a secondary role in humanity first reaching the moon.

4. On page 143, the first rocket leaves for the moon, without Delos Harriman aboard; he was too valuable to have his life risked that way. The ship runs along a track and up the side of a mountain, then jumps into the air and lights its "jets." (3) This was one of Heinlein's few failures in basic

physics. Rail-guided takeoffs require more propellant than a straight vertical liftoff. And jets, as they developed, were all air-breathing engines. Still, the overall story is more logical than the way moon landings were actually achieved.

“Revolt in 2100” (Baen Books, 1981)

1. This is a reprinted novel about a theocracy taking over the United States, one of the earliest and best examples, often since imitated. As is usual with Heinlein, the action occurs within the known world of the central protagonist, in this case John Lyle, and what we learn of the ruling Prophet and his cohorts emerges slowly, through John's viewpoint. On page 18 he learns that the rulers are corrupt, as anyone with more experience would have expected.

2. It is interesting to note (page 32) that the Cabal, the secret group organized to overthrow the Prophet, appear almost equally religious and fanatic in their beliefs. It is not clear whether the people who rule the Cabal are themselves genuinely religious, or are only using the



*Joe Green by
Kelly Freas*

trappings of religion as tools in their own struggle to gain recruits. A parallel occurred during the founding of Israel after World War II, when many Jews with little or no religious belief nevertheless worked shoulder to shoulder with the most fanatic of Jewish fundamentalists to found the new state. (And this continues to some extent today.)

3. This novel was first published as a series of shorter works in 1939-40, then later combined and revised into a book; about a decade before George Orwell published “1984”. But the means of keeping total control over the ‘Angels of the Lord’, the elite guards of the Prophet, are very similar to what Orwell forecasted for all the citizenry in his novel. There is an “ear” and an “eye” in every room, with monitors at television screens both watching, listening, and, if need be, recording every action of the guards. The rulers have mind control drugs (also possessed by the Cabal), use torture, psychological conditioning, and most of the other techniques Orwell outlined so convincingly. One would suspect that Orwell read this book, though it does not address some of his more profound inspirations, such as ‘doublethink,’ ‘doublespeak,’ etc.

4. Summing Up: Overall, a very good book, high on thought-content and with the human and believable characters for which Heinlein is famous. It has little value as prophecy, but is certainly a fine example of what Heinlein said he was attempting to do: provide a vivid example of what could happen “. . . if this goes on.”

“The Past Through Tomorrow” (ACE Books, July 1987; incorporates the early novel “Methuselah’s Children”)

1. “Methuselah” seems the first book or story in which Heinlein fastened on what was to become one of the major themes of his writing, the search for immortality. Apparently it was also the debut of his most famous single character, Lazarus Long, the archetypical ‘wise old man’ who figures so prominently in much of Heinlein's later work.

2. On page 655, first page in “Methuselah”: “Mary had no intention of letting anyone know where she was going. Outside her friend's apartment she dropped down a bounce tube to the basement, claimed her car from the robopark, guided it up the ramp and set the controls for North Shore. The car waited for a break in the

traffic, then dived into the high-speed stream and hurried north. Mary settled back for a nap." This is the type of writing which made Heinlein justly famous – the brief, passing description of technologies which must have seemed incredibly far away to readers of 1941, when this book was published. The author makes the technology appear even more a part of everyday life by providing nicknames for some of the machinery. The "bounce tube" is apparently some form of anti gravity; "robopark" seems self-explanatory; setting the destination point and ordering the car to take her there, including decision-making authority to dive into high-speed traffic, indicates a degree of automation and computer control still only on the horizon today.

3. On page 656, the little car transporting Mary converts to a surface effect vehicle that can skim over water, then to a submersible that drops below the surface of Lake Michigan, taking Mary to a meeting of the Howard Families in a secret hollow island in the lake called the 'Families Seat.'

4. "By the time of the meeting of 2125, eleven years ago, it had become . . ." Heinlein feeds the reader the data needed to form a good mental picture. But the world has moved much faster than Heinlein projected; most of the automated functions he describes in personal transportation could be built now, if the economics of the society permitted it.

5. The profession of 'psychometrician' is introduced on page 664, at the Howard Families meeting. (And while there Mary meets Lazarus Long, attending for the first time in 100 years.) This turns out to be a psychology of mass behavior, with statistics to back up the conclusions; as opposed to theoretical psychology without numerical proof. The statistic most interesting to the Howard Families, the hidden long-lived humans, is the one that establishes the behavior of groups; verifying that they can and often do function quite differently from individuals. This may have been known, at least to some extent, at the time of writing. But modern psychology has verified Heinlein's insight.

6. Mary Sperling is 163 years old, a gift of her genes, but looks 'early thirties', a gift of 'biotechniques'. Heinlein does not spell out what these are, except to say the results are from ". . . hormones and symbiotics and gland therapy and some psychotherapy – things like that." This is the

standard clever way for the science fiction writer to avoid having to go into convincing but boring detail. On page 671 Heinlein, in brief passages, mentions the 'second' Centauri Expedition spaceship Lazarus Long (a.k.a. Woodrow Wilson Smith, his original birth name) and Mary can see being assembled in orbit, when she draws back the shutters over her 'sky view' ceiling. Lazarus is the oldest known member of the Howard Families, 214 in the year 2136 (though the breeding program that noticeably extended the life spans of the Howard Families began many years before his own birth).

7. On page 672 Lazarus tosses his kilt toward a wardrobe – which catches it, shakes it out, and hangs its neatly inside itself. This devoutly wished-for projection has not yet come true.

8. After a night of only two hours sleep, Mary takes a 'sleep surrogate' – a drug we could all use! Again it is not explained, the term alone being enough.

9. On page 680 Lazarus and Mary are pursued by three men in a helicopter. This machine seems an anachronism in a world otherwise so far advanced technically. One would have expected such awkward devices to have been replaced with something better.

10. A character called "Slipstick Libby the Calculator" appears on page 688. Obviously the idea that the slipstick would die with the advent of the pocket calculator never occurred to Heinlein; one of his more serious misses.

11. Machines that control the weather, but are sometimes overwhelmed by the size of particular fronts, are mentioned in passing on page 690. We are still a long way from realistic weather control.

12. On page 721 Lazarus Long decides to visit the permanent space station New Frontiers, which is located over meridian 106° west, declination zero, at a distance from the center of the earth of approximately 26,000 miles. Since the perfect height for a geosynchronous orbit is 22,238 miles above mean sea level, this is quite close to the true figure.

13. On page 745 Heinlein describes 'free-fall nausea', obviously a prediction of what has come to be known as SAS, or Space Adaptation Syndrome – the malady of the astronauts. One wonders if Heinlein had some data on such sickness occurring among people in free-fall

parachute jumps, allowing him to make such an accurate projection.

14. Some of Heinlein's speculations on mass, energy, and light speed on pages 748-50 are highly advanced stuff. He explains just enough to make it sound believable, within the context of background science not understood by the chief protagonist, Lazarus Long. In 1940, not one reader in a million was qualified to say whether the physics explained here are believable or sheer hogwash.

15. On page 753 Heinlein presents techniques on the psychodynamics of crowd behavior, political manipulation, and social control that are only now emerging into the mainstream of consciousness as effective systems. Political symbol of today – handsome, clean-cut young-to-middle-age man striding vigorously along an urban street, wearing a good suit, with tie loosened and jacket held over right shoulder. . .

16. On pages 774-5 Lazarus Long remembers the 'water people of Venus'. Heinlein, like almost all other science fiction writers, went by the 'known' or 'best guess' facts of his day, and the best guess of 1940 was that Venus was covered with water and/or swamps. We know better now.

17. On page 801 the Howard Families discover the people on the planet they have reached, the second in their search for a new home, have progressed past the point where they need machinery. The cute, furry 'Little People' are telepathic, have from 30 to 90 bodies sharing a 'group mind,' and an 'individual' is one such grouping. It's an interesting concept, but too far away from current human concerns and technology to be of much relevance to this study.

18. On page 809 Lazarus chairs an assembled meeting of all 100,000 members of the Families, using a microphone. A helper stands to one side and aims a 'directional pickup' at speakers who rise in the crowd, to amplify their voices. Such devices are relatively common today, but I believe they existed only in theory in 1940 – if even that.

19. On page 823 the Howard Families learn, on returning to Earth, that during the 75 Earthyears they have been away, scientists have solved the longevity problem for everyone. One of the rejuvenation treatments consists of replacing the entire blood supply with 'young' blood. The amount needed could never be produced by donors. Instead, scientists have learned how to

manufacture blood, apparently through growing bone marrow in vitro and gearing the production of blood cells up to factory levels. This is the type of speculative science idea that provides a real and immediate payoff, if it inspires some scientist to go do in fact what was done in fiction. One wonders how often this has actually happened.

20. The book ends on an optimistic, upbeat note, with the Howard Families preparing to land and reclaim their property on Earth, knowing they too can take the rejuvenation treatments and plan to live, not just long lives, but indefinitely. Lazarus Long decides to take the treatments and then head out to the stars again, looking for habitable planets. They will be needed to handle the overflow from Earth, now that the refugees have brought home a practical interstellar drive that provides a means to relieve the extreme overcrowding. This is, of course, a replay of the 'leave crowded Europe for the Americas' idea. In the world of today, what we have learned is that the birth rate drops dramatically when women gain the power to control their own fertility. Many countries, including some of the largest (The USA, Russia and China) now have birth rates lower than the needed replacement level.

21. Summing Up: This was a seminal work for Heinlein, marking the first appearance of Lazarus Long, the archetype of Heinlein's 'wise old man' figure. And Heinlein's obsession with immortality, presumably because of a concern with his own expected life span (he spent parts of his life in ill health, starting fairly early), appears here in full strength. (4) It's interesting to note that during their hegira the Howard Families encounter not one but two separate species who seem far superior to man in intelligence and development, an attitude toward Mankind that seems more typical of Clarke than Heinlein. Regardless, a great deal of Heinlein's later work appears to use this book as a springboard – and of course some, such as "Time Enough for Love", are a direct follow-on (5).

"Starship Troopers" (edition lost in the mists)

1. With the publication of this novel Heinlein was perceived by some fans as entering into a new phase, a deep concern with war and military philosophy. Here he projects a professional soldier being prepared for combat by injections

and hypnotic suggestion. These turn him into a fearless fighter, unworried about death. This seems an updated version of a very old technique, used by several types of religious fanatics in the middle ages. It was also used by societies of professional assassins, a technique that survived for a few hundred more years in Japan. Heinlein substituted injections for ingested drugs, and hypnotism for religious conviction/frenzy, but the results are the same.

2. The equipment used by the Mobile Infantry (Heinlein's nomenclature) in this novel (pages 8-17) is far advanced over anything that exists today. Both the weapons and techniques of use have been carefully thought out, and are detailed with typical Heinlein thoroughness and believability.

3. An off-beat 'prediction' in this novel (page 38) is the use of oriental fighting techniques in hand-to-hand combat, particularly for trainers such as military drill instructors. At the time this novel was written oriental martial arts were known in this country, but little practiced. Today the western techniques of fighting with the fists are generally acknowledged as inferior, and Taekwondo, Karate, and other oriental arts instruction centers abound.

4. On page 79 our viewpoint character, Johnnie Rico, starts describing the 'powersuit' that Mobile Infantry use as fighting equipment on most raids. Power-assisted exoskeletons are now being developed and tested by the U.S. military, with expected use just around the corner.

5. One of the less believable aspects of this book (brought out very well on pages 110-14) is that Heinlein takes present military life and simply extends and exaggerates it for future soldiers. A good case can be made that future military personnel will do almost all their fighting by remote control, keeping their bodies at a safe distance. In which case, like high-altitude bomber crews, or those now manning the control centers for the Minuteman multiple atomic warhead ICBMs, they might kill vast numbers of people with little direct emotional involvement; making war even more horrible – and impersonal – than it is today.

6. Summing Up: This book opens with a very lively and exciting battle scene, and closes (except for a few wrap-up pages) with another. It's a defense of the military, and of the need any large

nation has for defense forces. But it espouses a philosophy which the world of today seems to be outgrowing.

"Stranger in a Strange Land" (G.P Putnam's Son's, 1961)

1. This is Heinlein's most controversial novel, the one by which he is best known to the general public. It appeared after "Starship Troopers", and takes moral and philosophical approaches to life almost directly opposite those expressed in the prior novel. Heinlein, in a conversation with Patrice Milton (Green), said he wrote the first half in 1948, and put it aside because he felt the public was not ready for it. Ten or more years later he brought the manuscript out and finished it, when he judged that public tolerance had increased enough to make the book acceptable. It won a Hugo in 1962, and has had strong and continuing sales since its first appearance. This novel was purportedly a guidebook for the Manson Family, some of whom have stated that they attempted to actually live by its precepts. It also became a cult book for some students of the late 1960s, years after its first publication. The awareness of its virtues as a novel for the general public grew slowly. Like "Dune", which began as magazine serials and, mostly on word-of-mouth publicity, grew to be a huge bestseller, "Stranger" expanded its audience every year for at least a decade. Its sales have not equaled those of Herbert's classic, but only because (in my opinion) no movie appeared (though rights were sold).

2. This book is divided into five parts, and the titles – His Maculate Origin, His Preposterous Heritage, His Eccentric Education, His Scandalous Career, and His Happy Destiny – all indicate immediately that this is a Jesus myth, or parody.

3. On page 13 we have World War III having been completed, and the second expedition to Mars (a cautious unmanned one, unlike the first) reporting back from Martian orbit that the canals are huge engineering works, and the apparent sites of former great cities are visible. In less than a decade after this book was published both the USSR and the USA sent probes by Mars, which verified that the air is too thin to support life-as-we-know-it, no canals exist, and there are no visible artifacts.

4. On page 33 Heinlein relates a little history, which includes the USSR sending the first spaceship to the Moon, the USA and Canada combining to send one, and then a private company sending up a big spaceship with colonists – and thus actually homesteading the Moon, and claiming it for the settlers. The courts upheld the rights of the occupants, as opposed to the rights of those who landed and left, and the Moon belongs to them. The real space program had started when Heinlein returned to finish this book, and the first satellites were up. The actual landings on the Moon varied considerably from this scenario.

5. Automated, unmanned flying cabs are used routinely throughout this story – a minor prognostication done many times before, and yet to come true.

6. On page 73, in a semi-news-of-the-day report: “The Kingdom of South Africa, Federation associate, was again cited before the High Court for persecution of its white minority”. Both Heinlein and Clark have used South Africa as the example of a lasting bastion of racial prejudice, though both had the major actors change places. So far, South Africa seems to have survived the transition to black majority rule without instituting an equally abhorrent reverse discrimination.

7. On page 216, nearing the end of what seems to me the first section of the book, written a decade earlier, Heinlein mentions the planning being done to establish a colony on Jupiter. The context makes it clear he is referring to actually living on the 'surface.' By the time this book was published the accepted theory – now confirmed – was that Jupiter had no surface at all, only thicker and thicker gas layers, down to a possible solid core about the size of Earth.

8. Summing Up: A re-reading confirmed what I already believed, that this is Heinlein's best novel. Its focus and emphasis is not on science and technology, but on philosophy and religion – and it does a superb job of exploring and depicting major aspects of both. It is a thoughtful, intense, mentally stimulating exercise in looking at religion – and American society, as shaped primarily by religious beliefs and old technology – from an outsider's point of view. Organized religion does not stand up well under such detailed scrutiny. Its emphasis on human relations,

as opposed to the effects of technology and change, renders it only partially suitable for this study.

Robert A Heinlein ~ Summary

Robert A. Heinlein vaulted to the front rank of science fiction writers within a few years of his first appearance in print, and has remained there since. Two polls taken 20 years apart by the leading science fiction news magazine, “Locus”, showed exactly the same result: The most popular science fiction writers in the world were Heinlein, Asimov, and Clarke, in that order.

Heinlein has to be read to be understood. In my opinion it is about equally likely that in the future he will be a) respected as an insightful social thinker and inspiration for real scientists, or b) forgotten and ignored except as a writer of fiction. Regardless, his place in the history of science fiction is secure.

NOTES

1. I've taken the liberty of putting book titles in quotes, though I'm well aware they should appear only on shorts. The vagaries of transmission and translation make the use of underlines or italics problematic, at best.

2. Speaking years later, in 2009 – one can't help but believe Heinlein would have been very happy to see a highly educated, articulate African-American, who is pro-science, serving as President of the United States.

3. I actually saw such a U-track (not in use) on Santa Rosa Island, off the Florida coast from Hurlburt Field, when I worked there in 1958 at the Bomarc Missile Development site.

4. Real life extension isn't here yet, but a tremendous amount of serious work is underway. It would be very interesting to know how much of this was inspired by Heinlein's fiction. He was one of the first (and most popular) to present the idea as a practical scientific possibility.

5. If you go by what he wrote about in fictional form, particularly in his last, consciously 'wrap up' novel, “To Sail Into The Sunset”, a second obsession was to have sex with his mother. I find the first one much more understandable.



And for more on Mr. Heinlein ...

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KID STUFF

Curt Phillips

Many people who care about the future of science fiction these days seem to be more than a little concerned about where the coming generations of SF readers are going to come from. Here in the early 21st century – a time that many of the readers of this fanzine grew up thinking of *as* the future – science fiction is more ubiquitous than ever and may already have become so much a part of the mainstream for school-age children that they may well not even recognize that science fiction even exists as a separate literary or stylistic vehicle. To the youngest readers, it may simply be the world they've known all their lives. So how do we "recruit" young readers into the genre that many of us admire? In all honesty, I'm not certain that we can, or even should. But if one is going to try to turn a kid onto SF a certain amount of care should be taken – and the effort must begin by recognizing a few things about the target audience.

If you give kids *lousy* SF to read they'll spit it out and never take another taste. Reading, after all, is *work* compared to watching television or doing the many other leisure time activities that kids have available to them. I remember one of the first SF books I ever read at the age of 10. It was *The X Factor* by Andre Norton, and it not at all a good book to pick for your first sample of SF. It was way over my head and I just happened to mention this in a conversation with my school librarian, Mrs. Dameron. She gave me a studied look for a moment and then took me over to the shelf where the Heinlein books were kept. "Give it one more try with this book", she said and she handed me a copy of *The Rolling Stones* by Robert A. Heinlein. So I did, and the path of my life was changed forever. On the other hand, I've never been able to get any of my cousins, nieces, nephews, schoolmates, or really, any other person at all to take up an interest in SF. Every SF friend I've ever had was already into SF when we met. So has entry level SF ever really been shown to work? I've no idea, but I suspect that one is either a natural born reader of SF or one isn't.

I think the biggest difference between "good" kid SF as represented by Heinlein's juvenile novels and the bad ones as represented by *Apollo at Go* by Jeff Sutton (just to pick on the third SF book that I ever read and hated) is that the bad ones seem to be "written down" as if the poor little mites were assumed to be not terribly bright and couldn't possibly understand ideas bigger than rockets and ray guns and monsters that like to eat bad children who don't do their homework. Such books only describe some big world where adults did all the important thinking and kids just sort of bumbled around and found out things only by lucky accident. Grown-ups always had to save the day in the end. This concept is crap, of course. Its crap today and it was crap when I was 10 and I knew it.

The good stuff was different. In *The Rolling Stones*, for instance, the family was constantly *doing* things together. The whole family; kids, parents and even grandparents. Sometimes the kids screwed up but then sometimes the adults did too. Even more radical, the *ideas* of the kids were listened to and given fair consideration and the adults tried to take time to realistically explain things that the kids wanted to know about. In other words, the kids were treated like ignorant but intelligent people. Now this is the key point: all children are ignorant. And it is important to understand that ignorant does *not* equal stupid. Ignorance means nothing more than that there are facts or bodies of knowledge that one is unaware of. And further, ignorance can be eroded by time, education, experience, and the inborn ability to *learn* from time, education and experience. This is as good a definition of intelligence as I'm aware of. Children are ignorant but they're not necessarily stupid and Robert A. Heinlein understood this and made use of it in his work. Go and reread some Heinlein with this in mind and see if you don't agree...

SONGS OF BETRAYAL

Michael Estabrook

The Good Old Days

"No, no, no, please no," I begged leaning over putting my head in my hands. "I never planned it," she said, "I never ever thought in my wildest thoughts that this would happen to me. I never wanted to find someone new, it just happened, like in the movies." She shrugs, her hands open out in front of her as if she's begging for alms. "Please, please don't," I begged again, the tears beginning now, starting out hot and thick. "I love you so much, we've been together for so long, how could you allow this to happen to us?" She is very sad, but resolute too, to stay with the truth to see this pathetic scene through to its end. "I'm sorry, I'm so so sorry, I don't want to hurt you, never wanted to hurt you, I don't know what to do." She pauses and takes a deep breath. "I simply love him more than I love you. With him everything is so new and fresh and alive, life is brimming with sunshine." In my head I knew I needed to stop begging and act like a man, to take my medicine, my lot in life, my punishment like a man. After all this lack of behaving like a man is probably what has gotten me into this situation in the first place. "You're just not strong enough for me, I'm sorry, you're just too needy, too sensitive. You've always been too sensitive," she said, obviously reading my mind like in the old days, in the good old days. I hope I am strong enough, I think, to not kill myself. Some things simply aren't worth living through.

Dancing

What if I came home early from work and found you in our house with another man? I came up the stairs and there the 2 of you were standing together in the living room or the kitchen, surprised looks over your faces.

"Oh," stammers Dick, "I was in the neighborhood so stopped by to drop off the money for the gift we're all giving Gail this Monday."

And he's stepping a little away from my wife, a blank, uncertain look on his face.

My wife seems paralyzed, finally manages a few words. "Honey, how come your home so early?" Her face, too, is blank, but concern and perhaps fear begins to arise. I admit, I am speechless. What could be going on here?

"Well," declares Dick, "I'm off." He lumbers down the stairs. "See you guys Monday night, thanks Pat." And he's out the door.

I still haven't said anything. I look around and can tell they have been together for a long time. Two coffee cups and some wrinkled napkins on the kitchen table. The pillows on the sofa in the living room pushed together and flattened. I'm too frightened to make my way into the bedroom.

Finally, I sit at the kitchen table and say, "What's going on here?"

"What do you mean?" She collects the cups and napkins.

"How long was Dick here?"

"Not long?"

"What's not long?"

"Why are you quizzing me?"

"Because I've seen him stare at you in dance class. Because he horns in to dance with you whenever he can. I'm not stupid you know."

"There's nothing going on, stop being jealous and so silly."

Wild Roses Dream

Walking behind my wife on a narrow trail
through patches of thistle bushes and wild roses.
She's chattering about work, trying
to be happy like in earlier days when
we'd walk together hand-in-hand for hours. But
I sense a strain in her voice. I stop walking,
take her gently by the shoulders, look
into her deep brown eyes. But they're empty.
How strange. The wind begins blowing her long
hair,

I can smell the fragrance of her hair.

"Tell me about it, please," I beg.

She shakes her head. "You should talk about . . .
him."

She doesn't blink. "I can help. I'll listen. I love you."

She shakes her head again. I can't believe this.

I try again. "I know how you feel, I do:

a love you can't have is like a hole in your soul."

EDINBURGH

I've returned home after twelve days of being in England and my wife is off at this huge party without me, engaged in what apparently are heated discussions with Jim. She isn't bothering with me at all. I'm sad because I miss her and want to see her, but she's off with Jim. Jim's handsome and tall and classy and successful and sure of himself. And my wife's off with him, I'm not sure where, but somewhere in this house. So I swim in the swimming pool alone for a long time, going back and forth, back and forth, diving down to the bottom, rising back up again. It's so peaceful down there, so quiet and pretty and calm, this translucent light like sun through the clouds shining down. And I almost breathe the water in.

Not Looking Back

I had a bad, bad dream about my wife last night, a nightmare really. I think it stemmed from her being impatient with me lately, being insensitive to stress I've been having at work.

But anyway, that's another story and not a very interesting one to boot. In the dream she and I were on a college campus. It was dark. We were walking back to our car after a meeting of some kind. We began to disagree about something, I'm not exactly sure what, but apparently there was someplace she wanted us to go, but I didn't want to go. I was tired and wanted to go home. So after a bit of yelling I told her, hey, it's a free country, she could go and I didn't need to. We got to our car and I kept on walking, not looking back, leaving her standing there alone on the sidewalk. She let me go, yelling how angry she was at me. "You can keep on walking, I'm so angry at you!"

I rounded the corner, then doubled back and crouched behind a bush at the side of a building and watched her. Parked next to our car was another car and the driver was there too. I recognized him as a man about town we both knew, a Jim Something-or-Other, who has seemed, in my jealous paranoia anyway, to have always had his eye on my wife.

Jim So-and-So saw that Pat was upset and got out of his car to talk with her, to comfort her and calm her down. She was mad, madder than a wet hen! After a few minutes, him touching her arm, nodding understandingly, they both got into our car where she continued her harangue. She was very animated, gesticulating, moving her hands around, swinging her head. I could see from behind my bush, that she was getting a lot off her chest. I could almost hear her calling me names and telling Jim What's-His-Name what a damn bastard I am. Also, I could almost see the hopeful sparkle in his eyes.

After awhile she began to calm down, but she was still upset, even crying a little. And he listened intently the whole

while, being sympathetic, offering encouragement and understanding, his shiny face leaning in close to hers. He stroked the hair back off her cheeks and gently rubbed her shoulders. He reached his handkerchief over and dabbed carefully beneath her eyes, and the next thing I knew there were embracing. They were holding each other tight, then began kissing hard and heavy, like you do when you are teenagers and really into making out. There was my wife, the love of my life, holding tight onto another man, rubbing her hands over his back, her mouth locked onto his. I couldn't believe it. I wanted to die and realized I never should have left her standing alone and vulnerable by the car as I walked off aimlessly into the night. My life would never be the same again. Betrayal cuts a swath through the fiber of one's being that can never be healed.

Purgatory

A Nightmare,
my wife loves another man.
Through a narrow window
in the sauna door,
all white and clear and clean,
I see her, sitting,
naked completely,
perched up on a wooden bench.
her shapely white legs bent at the knees,
spread open, a red glow
of warm contentment
matches the flushed red of her cheeks.
Her head turns and lifts
ever so delicately towards
her new partner.
Her mouth, a soft sweet smile,
the vision of fulfillment,
of pure thankful bliss, breathes
tender affection.
Both of her pearly white hands,
nails of red,
clutch the hands of another.

I have lost her. Oh how
did I ever let the passion cool
into the dust of neglect?
It's too late for me.
She has found what I could never give,
Although God knows I tried my best.
Tenderness cannot be made,
It must blossom by itself.
Without love what am I?
Nothing. I have no rights to her.
I have no hold, no power.
Just a hollow shell remains
Where once life's blood coursed
With ardent abandon.
Now I am a mere huddle mass
of transparent dried-out flesh
trapped in a dark corner of blind existence,
numbed for all eternity
on the edge of the abyss,
forever caught in the neutered realm
of Purgatory.

jealousy over my wife and an old high school friend -

Ed Meagher, I recall him from high school, one of the popular guys, the kicker on the football team. He was also in the Chorus, a Student Council officer, a member of the Varsity Club, President of the Key Club, and voted Most Popular in the Class of '66. Anyway, good old Ed Meagher was in my dream last night - with my wife!

She had gone with her friend Linda (who back then tried to convince her to find someone better than me, dear girl) out to the Midwest for a class reunion, not of everyone, only of the popular kids, so I was not invited. But my wife went anyway. Linda is her best friend, after all.

They stayed at a hotel after the reunion party and due to a lack of rooms people had to share rooms. Linda met up with an old boyfriend, while my beautiful wife shared a room, and a bed, with good old Ed. She called to tell me so, but mainly called to say that she did not stay in bed with Ed. She began by thinking it was not such a big deal, especially in this day and age, sharing a bed with an old chum from high school, particularly someone as cool and popular as good old Ed Meagher.

But after a short while lying there in bed with him, reminiscing about the good old days at EB High, it became more than apparent that this arrangement was not going to work out. There's not a man in the country who could be in bed with a beautiful woman and not . . . Well anyway, nothing happened, no harm done, she said, and left the bed and slept on a sofa across the room. She just wanted me to know she had remained faithful to me.

Dreams, man do hate dreams.

But I'm not complaining, at least she didn't sleep with the guy. In real life when I told her about this dream she laughed out loud

Yves Saint Laurent and Patti

We're in San Francisco's *de Young Fine Arts Museum* strolling through the Yves Saint Laurent exhibition: such elegance, such exquisite style. Behind one of the shiny glass cases stands a bridal gown, officially that is.

In reality it's more of a bridal bikini,
constructed of lovely pastel flowers,
a diaphanous satiny train flowing behind.

"I'd love to see you in that little number,"
I quip at Patti. She frowns of course,
and shakes her head. She's
the most modest of women.

"I'd clearly look ridiculous in that,
and besides," she bends forward
to get a better look at the sign,
"It's a bridal gown, so too late!" she declares.
"You married me already."

She turns and walks away, more sashays
away really. And I'm watching her move thinking
how none of Yves Saint Laurent's fancy-
schmancy gowns or any
of his stunning, sultry models who strut them
have anything, not one single thing whatsoever,
over the natural purity
and ethereal, eternal elegance of my beautiful Patti
sashaying away smooth as satin
in her tight old blue jeans.



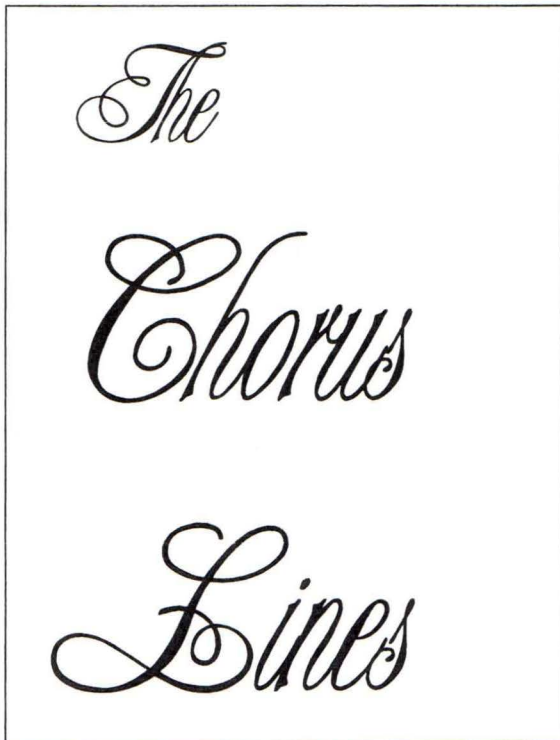
*Special thanks to la belle Rose-Marie for her invaluable assistance with this section and throughout **Challenger #30**..*

Illus by WILLIAM ROTSLER

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Another magnificently full *Challenger!* And with a beautiful and fun cover. I usually enjoy theme zines and anthologies, but this one has a sports theme. I confess that the most sports I watch are during the Olympics, but I enjoyed it (Dear Editor, I knew I would!). I especially liked Mike Resnick's piece on the forgotten basketball player, Bevo; Rose-Marie's article on Quidditch (thank you!); the cricket background; the illos with the Footy piece; and the other background articles. I learned a lot, including about tennis, which I've never paid much attention to, and I'm sorry that Jerry Seegers never got to see a World Series. (A bird in the hand...)

Speaking of birds, I enjoyed *The Story of Edgar Allen Crow*. (I like critter tales.) Back to sports, one of the best values of cable is replaying old TV shows—and classic baseball games. Who'd have thought it! And I see that Scotland is a really scenic site for playing golf. I loved Gary R. Robe's piece on hosting minor league players.



Opportunities like that can be a lot of fun.

I enjoyed Richard Dengrove's article on Nicholas Cusa; that was very interesting. ('Course I've learned a lot over the years from Richard. Yes, from other zine writers too. There's a quote about that I read recently...) Thanks to Mike Resnick for the WorldCon report. I've never been to a WorldCon and probably never will go, but I love reading about them.

Excellent article by Warren Buff on fandom. Btw, there were two TV series episodes recently that took place at SF conventions. I missed the one on CSI, and I forget the other one, but I wish writers would get over the stereotypes and clichés!

More background and critter tales in *The Chorus Lines*. Thanks to Curt Phillips for sharing his story of Muffy and Smudge. (Been there, cried, and once said Damn in front of the vet when my last dog was put to sleep.)

Well, I was about to sign off, but I have to thank Nicki Lynch for telling us about her tour to Italy. (I will try to avoid going there in summer!) Oh, what an apropos back cover! And a good feeling of speed.

Thanks for *The Zine Dump* also. I'm happy to see so many good zines out there, and Janeen's News was full of interesting items I'd like to know more about. Btw, the first I heard about *Star Trek* fragrances was here and probably in *Challenger* too. (I know there were at least two mentions.)

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Thank you for #29. An outstanding issue.

"The Story of Edgar Allen Crow" by Shelby Vick; "Bravo Bevo!" by Mike Resnick about Clarence "Bevo" Francis; and Steven H Silver's story concerning the Chicago Cubs and Jerry Seeger were all very much enjoyed.

Rose-Marie's explaining the why and wherefore of Quidditch was enlightening.

Then there is your excellent commentary about Jimmy Connors.

Mustn't leave out the first-rate report on their Italy trip by Nicki Lynch.

Joseph Major: Does the “crazy complainer” actually have a BA or is it an AA from a Junior College? With all her problems I find it hard to believe that she could complete college courses.

My thanks for the copy of your *Denvention 3* Trip Report. It was very much enjoyed.

You drove 725 miles for 14 1/2 hours? The best I ever did when much younger was 550 miles. Well, you had Rosy’s help. Still, that many miles was incredible.

Driving solo, I’ve popped 800 en route to Confrancisco, after doing over 700 the day before. It helped to be traveling unfamiliar and picturesque roads.

Yes, you are correct that the WorldCon was lost in the huge Colorado Convention Center.

Personally, I was planning to vote for Seattle. Well, they dropped out and Reno is ok and I’ll try to make it. I’m not getting any younger and it is getting harder for me to travel. But, Reno isn’t that far.

It’s also beautiful country. Lake Tahoe is right there.

Referring to me as “LOCmaster” is a stretch. I receive and LOC five fanzines. That’s not a lot and my LOCs are not always that good. But, my thanks.

The Fan-Eds’ lunch (that included supporters) was most enjoyable.

I agree with you about Dave Langford and the Best Fan Writer Hugo. It was good to see someone else win.

Yes, and that’s no slight to Dave, a princely fellow – but his two-decade domination of the Fan Writer category was bad for the Hugo and bad for fandom. John Scalzi’s victory – and his call for us to “Spread the wealth” in the fan categories – was utterly righteous.

My niece Sheilah Kennedy and her husband Brad Cozzens (who live in Idaho) attended their first ever SF convention at *Denvention 3*. I should also mention Margaret H. “Maggie” Bonham who is married to my second cousin Larry Bonham. Maggie has attended a number of SF conventions. But, I believe that *Denvention 3* was her first WorldCon. We have never met Larry and this was our first meeting with Maggie. It was a great pleasure. (Larry was recovering from an operation and could not

attend.) They live in Montana. Maggie is the author of some 30 books. Most of them about dogs, some about cats, and several fantasy novels. She was on a number of panels. Maggie can be checked out at <http://www.shadowhelm.com>, or do a Google search on her name, and also check Amazon.com.

May you finally obtain a well deserved HUGO. Perhaps I should not mention it since at *Denvention 3* I told you that you were going to win and you didn’t.

Fortunes of war, but nice to hear, and thanks.

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“Merritt Green 1952-2008”: My condolences to Rosy, Anni, and Joe on the loss of their brother, husband, and son.

A quality that sometimes gets us through challenge is not one that is greatly heralded, or made a Positive Influence. I’ve seen it referred to as sheer bloody-minded bulling through. Some might say it was Asperger’s, if not outright autism.

One Saturday, Lisa and I were having lunch at a Denny’s near the University of Louisville. We ordered, they had just brought our meal when ... a woman at a nearby table collapsed. The EMT were called, they came, moved tables around, treated her on the floor, and eventually shipped her out to the hospital. Lisa watched the obituaries for the next few days and there was nothing about her dying.

But, it seemed, she was dining with a granddaughter and infant great-grandchild. The granddaughter was really in a bad state; for example, grandmother was driving. All I could do

was sit there, numb, and let her hold my hand. She was terrified.

They let her and the baby have a ride to the hospital in the ambulance, and presumably someone would come and get them. Then they thanked me. I'd been reassuring.

Breaking down wouldn't have done anyone any good, me least of all. There wasn't anything else I could have done.

However, we have never eaten at that restaurant since.

"Bravo Bevo!": And it seems Bevo Francis has never been nominated to the National Collegiate Hall of Fame, either. This sounds like "Nobody Bothers Gus".

"Cricket for Novel Readers": And in P. G. Wodehouse's *The Swoop!*, his attempt to deconstruct the England Invaded novel, the news of the invasion of England was buried in the stop press items, amid the cricket results.

"I Call It Loyalty": You do realize that one of the other admirers of the Billy Goat Tavern was Mike Royko, who put in his columns many references to the Siannises and their establishment.

"Golf in the Con-Dom": It was Carson Napier who commented on golf, and he said, "Golf is a mental disorder." *Lost on Venus* (1932). I seem to be the only man in the family who doesn't like it. My brother plays with his son and son-in-law. The cousins who run the florists' greenhouses won a cancer-charity tournament, but then Mack is a cancer survivor. Cousin Dick down in Houston has been finding it easier to shoot his age of late.

"The Stars My Consternation": And Disch passed along from Samuel Delany a reference to a scene on a nonexistent page of *Starship Troopers*. The page might exist if Chip had been reading a Large Print Edition, but there is no scene such as he describes (Rico checking his makeup in a mirror).

What killed so much of the New Wave, as I understand Darrell Schweitzer to say, was not what was in it but what wasn't. So much of it was

"non-functional word patterns"; things that looked nice but didn't say anything. This is the sort of thing that goes over very well in the Semotics of Deconstruction 325 class.

"Denvention 3 Diary": Alas, Larry Smith won't be in Montréal. Something about the difficulty of getting his stock through Douane Canada Customs. So the belly dancing will have to be somewhere else.

"The Chorus Lines": Me: Well, Curlin made the Breeders' Cup and Big Brown didn't. So much for my predictive abilities. On the other hand, in January we went to see Curlin, and he let us pat him.

An event charmingly described in that month's Alexiad.

John Purcell: Wondering "Which should I want most: a long life or a good pizza?" Since I don't like pizza, the question is a non-starter for me.

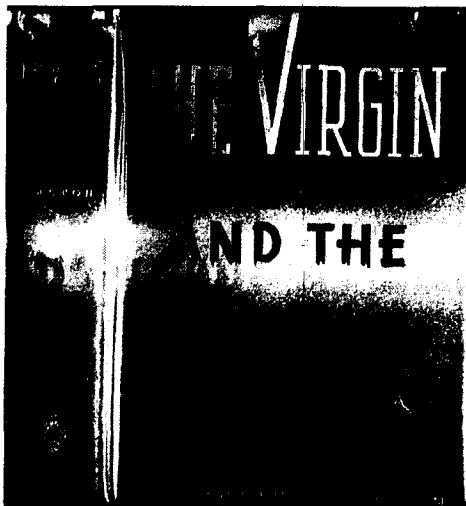
Curt Phillips: Shopping on-line is great if you know what you want already and the problem is how to get it. I don't think, for example, that I've ever seen Lord

Mountevans' *South with Scott* in any bookstore anywhere. (Hint: he was the last surviving person to have seen Scott alive for the last time.) But if I want to look, there's no telling what I could find. The bookstore in Chambersburg that had *The Log of "Bob" Bartlett* for example . . . "Just Here for the Gelato": Now Nicki's gone and done it. The WWF will be doing "The Twilight of the Gods", complete with losing wrestlers being burned on a funeral pyre right in the middle of the ring. She *HAD* to suggest it!

Leonardo liked to experiment and innovate. This is why the "Last Supper" is in such bad shape; it was painted using a technique that he had devised and understandably has not been used again. InnovaTion is not always for the best.

Ned Brooks
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Thanks for the massive zine. How did you come up with the notion that a sports-themed issue was needed? I have nothing against sports in



particular, but I know almost nothing about them either - I am about as sports-challenged as I am fashion-challenged. I hope you are not planning a fashion issue.... The only sport I ever enjoyed at all was pool (but not in River City) and I wasn't much good at that. I never got anything out of watching sporting events.

Great story [from *Shelby Vick*] about Edgar Allan Crow. I never had a pet either, but at least I can understand the appeal. Nephew Joe, who was at several DSCs, now has a large hairy Akita that he calls "Chicken", and my mother and sister have dog-sat several beasts for friends - I have occasionally walked one of these.

Frank Buck lives!

I thought NASCAR was a religion rather than a sport....

Rose-Marie is right about the physical problems of actually riding on a broom. In many old illustrations, the witch rides "sidesaddle", that is, with both legs on the same side of the broom handle. But it still wouldn't be very comfortable if your entire weight actually rests on such a narrow support. However, as a broom flying is pure fantasy, perhaps the magical broom confers some degree of weightlessness on the rider - that would make the acrobatics of Quidditch more plausible. I'm told that the oldest pictures of witches riding a broom have the brushy part in front, perhaps as an analog of a horse's head - the change to having the brush behind might have been inspired by some aerodynamic understanding that it would serve as a stabilizing tail surface. Either way however, the magical propulsion properties of the broom must also aid the rider in staying with the thing. Cartoons and video simulations of broom-riding seem to imply that the propulsive force is normally along the direction of the handle.

Interesting article about cover art. I probably pay more attention to the dramatic implications of the title words than to the art, though there is bound to be a strong subconscious effect of the artwork - and I have learned that neither is much of a guide to whether I would actually enjoy reading the book. The covers that Mervyn Peake and Edward Gorey did for their own books are quite relevant, but of course in general the author is not an artist and may not have any say at all in what art goes on the book - I can't imagine that Evangeline Walton was much taken with the dust-jacket of her 1936 *The Virgin*

and the Swine, a novel based on the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogion.

Take a look opposite, readers; judge for yourselves.

Cathy Palmer-Lister

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<http://www.conceptsff.ca>

<http://www.monsffa.com>

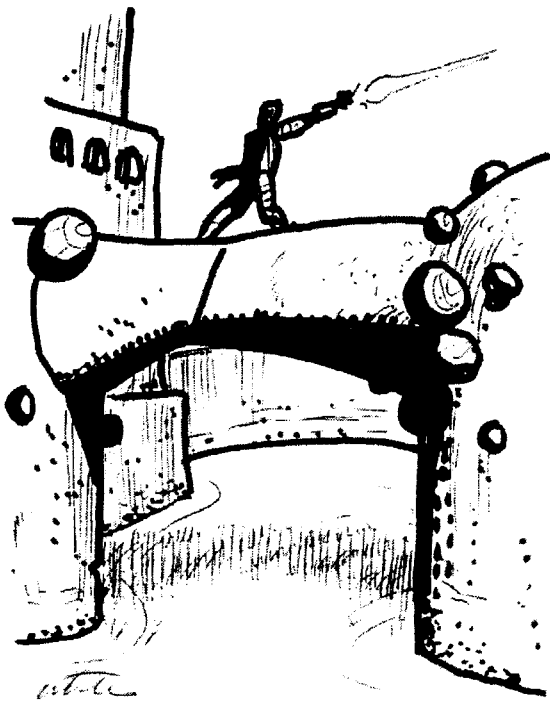
Hi, Guy! Thanks for *Challenger!* Cool cover, made me laugh.

First, please convey to Rosy my condolences on the passing of her brother. I suffered a huge shock when I lost a parent, I can't imagine losing a sibling. The poem you inscribed into the memory book is *Requiem*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, and it's one of my favourites. The final lines were indeed engraved on his tomb in Samoa.

Re "The Story of Edgar Allen Crow" - what a great name for a pet crow! And how wonderful that he lived to the ripe old age of 28. We don't have fish crows here, I had never heard of the species before, but lots of their cousins inhabit the area. I once saw an astonishing number of crows, at least a dozen, in a neighbour's maple tree and learned why a group of crows is called a murder. Glad I wasn't trying to sleep through the ruckus. I'm not superstitious, but it was sort of spooky.

Sports - I was always a bookworm, and not much into physical exercise. When I wasn't reading, I was listening to music. Or eating, another reason I wasn't keen on sports. I had some interest in hockey, being Canadian after all! but gradually lost interest in watching it as the league expanded beyond the stage where I could recognize all the players, and then the fighting really turned me off completely. Our international woman's team is doing well, though. I wish I had seen the game against Finland, but I was doing some running around that afternoon. I got hooked on football (soccer, that is) years ago during the time of the NASL when the Manic played in Montreal. Then I got my husband hooked on the sport, and now he lives and breathes soccer to the point of watching every single EPL match, all the Champion's League matches, Euro Cup - well, you get the picture. Just as Rich Lynch discovered the all-baseball TV channel, we discovered the all-soccer (and sometimes rugby) channel.

In "Cover Judgment", James Bacon describes Foyle's Bookstore. I was there in '05, having extended my Glasgow WC holiday to include a week in London. I'm so jealous of Londoners, they have all the best shops! Foyle's had some of the most delightful books for kids, too, and if I hadn't already retired from teaching, I would have been shipping crates of books home. But returning to book covers, I *have* bought books based on covers. One of them was *Game of Thrones* by George RR Martin. Great-looking guy on a black horse, black crow, white snow, huge wolf, burning fortress... I wanted the picture, but found the book was one of the best I had read in many years and became a devoted GRRM fan. Covers are important to me. Have you noticed



how boring cover art is becoming these days? At a convention panel, I asked why this was, and was told publishers want to make covers less overtly SFF to attract a wider audience. Even the GRRM covers have become mundane, though still done by Stephen Youll, one of my favourite artists.

Fascinating article from Gregory Benford. I note that it dates back to 1998. I think some things have gotten worse since then, and it's not just the covers. I find that novels, whether SF or

fantasy, tend more and more to fall into either utopian or dystopian world views, and I dislike both extremes. Neither magic swords nor very big spaceships can be counted on to save humanity, and why would I want to spend my time reading about cruelty and ugliness? I resent the amount of space bookstores "waste" on media tie-ins, too. I have read a few good ones, but had to go through a lot of drivel to find them, so I don't read them anymore.

Being very involved in running a con and publishing a clubzine, I am always interested in articles like Warren Buff's "Against the Graying of Fandom". In my experience, I have to agree with Warren that there *are* young fans, they *are* attending cons though the grey-headed lot aren't much interested in *those* cons, and they are indeed starting their own conventions. In fact, every time I get good people on my concom, they take off to start their own, and I'm back to pleading for volunteers. It's not so good for me, but it's good for fandom in Montreal. We are now several cons richer than we were a few years back. The kids are OK, they just have different priorities.

I dream of visiting Italy, especially Florence and Venice, but good gelato is available in Montreal if you know where to look. We have a huge Italian population. Just Google for Gelato in Montreal.

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Thanks for the paper version of *Challenger 29* – it helped pass the time on our recent flight to Denver. We were at last using the tickets we'd bought last year for our (cancelled) trip to Worldcon. (This visit was purely vacation - visiting with my sister and bro-in-law, and sightseeing.)

Earlier this year, we decided to keep our out-of-town travel to a minimum, so we're not going to Montreal. That saved us a bundle, which immediately disappeared as our furnace died and was replaced in March. I hope you guys have a fine Fanzine Feast despite our absence. Once again you'll probably lack a significant portion of Corflu attendees - I think most of us who go to Corflu can't really afford too many trips to big cons, and we'll be hoarding our nickels in hopes

of getting to the UK next spring for Rob Jackson's Corflu.

I'm afraid much of this issue of *Chall* did not excite me, as I'm not a sports fan. I tried a paragraph here and there, but even the articles on baseball (the sport I know the most about) didn't grab me.

That's why there was other stuff in the issue! Nothing appeals to everybody, but with a variety of subjects in one's zine, you've got a better chance of catching your audience's fancy.

I'll guess that you ran Greg's review of *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of* because of Tom Disch's recent death. Disch's conclusions, as reported by Greg, and his decline and death, add up to one very sad summary of a life. It seems as though Disch decided that his life had long passed its high point and not only was the future not worth staying around for, the past may have lost its value, too. Disch was far from being a comforting writer, and the message of his death is also discomfoting. (This may be cheap analysis on my part, but I understand the feelings, having had them myself from time to time.)

I greatly enjoyed Nicki Lynch on her and Rich's trip to Italy - it's a destination that's long been on my own list of places to see. I was amused by Kurt Erichsen's drawings of them - Rich is much taller than Nicki in life, but Kurt has shown them of about equal height. This reminds me of the cover drawing Ross Chamberlain did for an issue of our '70s fanzine *The Spanish Inquisition*. We conceived a scene in which I was torturing Mike Glicksohn by waving a bottle of Newcastle Brown Ale under his nose while he was manacled to a dungeon wall. Ross had never met Mike (who is around my height, about five and a half feet tall), so drew what most people took for the six footer Bill Bowers, albeit wearing Mike's signature Aussie hat.

And that's the digression for this letter, which will now draw to an appreciative close.

P.S. If you're interested in reading Suzie's TAFF trip report, it's now available for \$7 postpaid.

John Thiel
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What a splendid cover on the December issue.

The glistening robot on his surfboard with its jet propulsion, or even rocket propulsion, in a comic realism and in a style that reminds me of Leger, but is inimitably a work of creative and original SF art. It made the fanzine a pleasure to receive.

John Purcell
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Holy Hannah, Guy! Another mailbox-rupturing issue! Not only large, but chock full of fine articles. A stellar effort, sir. Will you have another one out before Fencon VI in September? My wife and I are planning to be there; after all, Warren Buff is the Fan GoH, and there is that unsanctioned Hearts tournament lined up for that weekend during the con. The groundwork for this was laid out in the Southern Fandom listserv, and the last I knew contestants included you, me, Warren, and Dean Sweatman. There may have been a couple more, but I'm not sure. Should be fun no matter what.

Jiminy Christmas, I don't know where to start in LOCcing this issue. First off, my condolences to Rosie and you on the loss of Merritt Green. Too damn young, if you ask me. That picture of him on page 2 is a great one. Thank you for sharing this with us.

So we have here a sports issue of *Challenger*. I didn't have the time to get something to you, but it appears you had no trouble finding material. Lessee: basketball, baseball, golf, cricket, Australian Rules football, tennis, Quidditch, NASCAR ("they're making another left turn!"), but no hockey. That would have been my contribution. Or soccer. I coached my son's soccer team for a couple years, and in the Spring 2008 season the team won its division in College Station. I have the team picture in my office at Blinn College, so when we report back next week (preparation for summer classes) I will make it a point to scan the photo and send it to you.

Steven Silver's article on the futility of the Chicago Cubs is probably my favorite selection from this entire massive issue, which has a ton of great material. I can certainly identify with Steven; I am a life-long Minnesota Twins fan, and have suffered through some really terrible years when the team just couldn't seem to do

anything right. Unlike the Cubs, the Twins have won two of their three World Series appearances (1987 and 1991; in 1965 they lost to the Dodgers in seven games, which had Koufax and Drysdale at their peaks), so we're not championship-frustrated like Cubs fans. Even so, the Cubs have a really good team this year (again) and they're in a very difficult division: the NL Central, which boasts two other very good teams, the St. Louis Cardinals and the Milwaukee Brewers. Good luck to the Cubs! I'm pulling for you, Steven.

James Bacon's article about the various covers to Philip K. Dick's award winning novel *The Man in the High Castle* (and other books, too) was very interesting. The cover scans were helpful in matching up to the text, and James' commentary proved insightful. I have never been one to really sit down and analyze cover art; about the only thing I care about is that the cover be directly related to a key scene or theme in the book, and it definitely appears that most of these covers do this job well. The cover scan on page 28 doesn't do much for me, though; it doth not compute. Some year I must reread *The Man in the High Castle*. Dick is one of those authors that bears re-reading from time to time, he was that good.

Interesting to read something by David Schlosser in *Challenger*. I haven't seen David since the mid-80s when I lived in Los Angeles with my first wife (who shall forever remain nameless, so don't ask). A very nice fellow, and I never knew David golfed. If he's still in it, he is one of the longest-serving members of LASFAPA, which I joined for a couple years (~1979-80). Now you've got me wondering what else he's up to these days. I may have to contact him and say hello.

Another good article in here is Gary Robe's account of housing minor league ballplayers. That would have been interesting. I am such a baseball nut that I would have enjoyed it. Here in Bryan-College Station, Texas, we have one of college baseball's best teams, the Texas A&M Aggies, and their games are the best buy in town: \$6 per person (beats out the football team's exorbitant \$55 fee for the cheap seats), and Olsen Field has great sightlines and seats 6,000. Our next door neighbor is the head groundskeeper for TAMU athletic facilities, Leo Gertz. Heckuva nice guy. We talk sports all the time. Getting back

to baseball, there is a semi-pro team in the area, too, the Brazos Bombers. This is basically a conglomeration of college and former-college/pro players who form one of the 6 teams in a semi-pro Texas league. Good prices there, too: \$14 gets you into the game and buys you a couple hotdogs and a soft drink. Not bad.

I also really enjoyed your article about Jimmy Connors, Guy. Well done. I never really cared for Connors as a person - he seemed so full of himself and angry all the time - but as a tennis player, he was one of the all-time greats and I respected his abilities. You told a great story about meeting him and acting all bubbly-headed at the time. Yes, this was a fun article.

Finally, Curt Phillips made me blush in his LOC. Thank you, Curt. Now let's see if you can get the third issue of *Smoooooth* out in less than 23 years. This new-fangled technology tends to speed things up a bit, I have noticed.

Great final article by Nicki Lynch. Man, I haven't seen her positively years! I really liked this trip report. She made me so jealous; Italy is one of those countries Valerie and I would like to visit some year, probably after I retire from teaching. So that makes it 10 to 15 years from now. Yeah. Italy should *still* be there, I hope

Fine issue, Guy. Good luck with the Hugo voting this year. For your information, *Challenger* is my choice this year. Then again, my record as a fannish prognosticator is not the greatest, but I thought you might like to know how I feel about your zine. It is one of my favorites currently being pubbed. *Bon chance, mon ami.*

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Many thanks for *Challenger 29*. I was very happy to read all the articles about the great game of baseball. Anyone who wants to read my thoughts about my team, the Baltimore Orioles, can log on to *National Review Online* - put down that barf bag, Guy, this isn't political! - and find a fine symposium where fans of every team said "Why I Love the (My Team)". Being the Orioles fan I got to go first!

I think I've been to even more dead stadiums than Rich Lynch has, and can tie in

many of those trips to fandom. I went to Exhibition Stadium in Toronto and the Kingdome with Alan Rosenthal, who moved from Toronto to Seattle and changed his nationality in the process. (I also took him to RFK Stadium before the Nationals moved.) Like Rich, I saw Candlestick Park at the 1993 worldcon.

But my favorite dead stadium story concerns former Midwest fan Ed Zdrojewski, who asked me to be his best man at his first marriage in 1991. (It was a pagan wedding. The bride was a witch – and the groom was too.) Ed said he needed a bachelor party, so we went to County Stadium and ended up in the fantasy broadcasting booth in the 4th inning of a Brewers-Angels game. We decided the game would be better with some special effects, so we threw in an earthquake, a tidal wave, and plenty of gratuitous cheese eating. The Brewers scored two or three runs, and the Angels had five or six, so we had 45 minutes to rant. Dave Parker was an Angel then, so in his honor when the Angels had batted a round, we sang a horrifically off-key falsetto version of “We Are Family” in honor of Parker’s appearance for the ‘79 Pirates. It was a great day.

Gary Robe’s piece about Kingsport was really fun to read, and gave a lot of insight into minor league baseball. But Lastings Milledge’s name is spelled that way (not “Millage”). I saw him play a doubleheader in Denver during the worldcon. He hit a couple of home runs and made some great plays in center field. Coors Field is a very nice stadium, by the way; they have a mountain landscape in center field, and whenever the Rockies hit a home run, the waterfall erupts. Plus there’s a brewpub inside the stadium – which makes some very good beer.

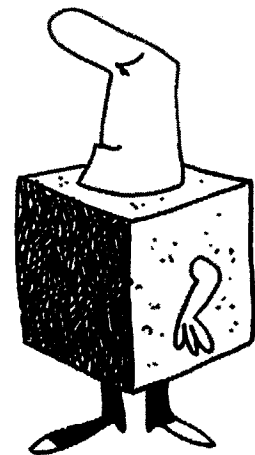
Mike Resnick’s worldcon report was, as always, entertaining. I don’t think the lack of hotels was a problem; I ended up staying at a Knights Inn a couple of miles away that was dilapidated (the shower didn’t work, and the “continental breakfast” was stale pastry) but was only \$48 a night. My guess is that the economy was partially responsible, but it’s also true that Denver is an expensive flight from either coast – particularly in high season.

We stayed at a Motel 6 a few miles from the convention center – also for economy – and had early problems parking, which was also expensive.

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Ironically, I read James Bacon’s somewhat breathless perambulation through the science fiction section of Foyles [Book Store] and the associated paean of praise for *The Man in the High Castle* shortly after I got back from the British Eastercon (co-chaired by James) where a panel comparing old and new SF found that of the three older titles under consideration TMITHC was the least resilient to a twenty-first century reading.

I never used to be that enthusiastic or troubled by book cover artwork or design, or at least that’s what I would always have said – but if I think about it for more than a moment I can see that of course cover artwork has been an important influence. Even now, I’m significantly more likely to buy an old fifties paperback with a Richard Powers cover than a comparable edition decorated by some other artist. My perception of science fiction as an adult literary form was absolutely shaped by the Chris Foss spaceships which seemed to dominate UK SF paperback covers in my formative years, long before I ever read any of those books and learned that the covers weren’t necessarily even faintly associated with the texts. The Penguin branding was also an important influence on my reading in my late teens – this would be in the early eighties – with the simple, clean Ionicus covers for P G Wodehouse and the almost childlike bright colours of Christopher Corr that adorned George Orwell. I could never understand why Penguin abandoned those distinctive orange spines. It seemed such an odd decision given that it was such a strong brand. Penguin books were virtually a genre in themselves, something that I’m sure contributed to



CHASTITY

my long-standing sense that John Wyndham isn't really an SF writer because he's so obviously a Penguin writer.

The variety of covers on different editions of *TMITHC* are, as James speculates, "a revenue-making thing" in as much as that's the purpose of all book covers: to sell the book. Presumably if you or I or James want to buy a copy of *TMITHC* in a real-life bookshop, and so long as that bookshop files its stock in some sort of coherent fashion (which, I should add, once upon a time Foyles didn't, at least from a customer viewpoint), then it doesn't much matter what's on the cover when it comes to getting us to pick the book up. The cover art or design is there to encourage somebody to pick up the book who's never heard of it or possibly even of its author. There's a perception that different cover designs potentially reach different target audiences, hence the "rounded edge" version of *The Forever War* that James mentions, which was, I believe, part of an attempt to market a number of solidly genre titles to a mainstream audience by stripping out the external genre trappings in favour of (hopefully striking) simple images and an unconventional profile – although playing with the shape of the book is itself a quintessentially science-fictional piece of imagery. Gollancz have tried a number of initiatives over here in the last few years, most recently with a series of "Future Classics" which were notable for innovative design and putting neither author nor title on the front cover, and now a series of space operas in monochrome livery which eschew any trace of a space ship. I've no idea whether it works, but the battle seems to be to get the bookshops to file such editions somewhere other than in the "science fiction and fantasy" section and my personal experience is that it's been a lost fight – setting aside one Croydon bookstore which may be undertaking an experiment of its own by filing Chris Priest's *The Separation* in its "History" section.

I had a look online at the plain white

cover for the Penguin Essentials *TMITHC* James so decries, and sure, I don't think it's as evocative as the swastikas-and-stripes version of the Penguin Classic you use to illustrate the article. It is in fact damn near invisible on Penguin's own webpage. But I can see how the minimalist design would stand out in a bookshop and Dick's name combined with a pull quote from Rolling Stone probably does have an appeal for a market segment that wouldn't have bought the *Bladerunner*-esque edition of the same book from the mid-Eighties or the similarly overtly science-fictional Chris Moore-adorned Roc paperback from the nineties that I have in front of me right now.

The same thing is presumably at play with the various editions of *Dune* that are currently

available. For James, the classic Schoenherr cover on the Gollancz SF Masterwork clearly works whereas the Hodder paperback by isitdesign doesn't, and if I didn't already have the book and wanted a copy I'd go for the former too. But the Schoenherr does look old-fashioned

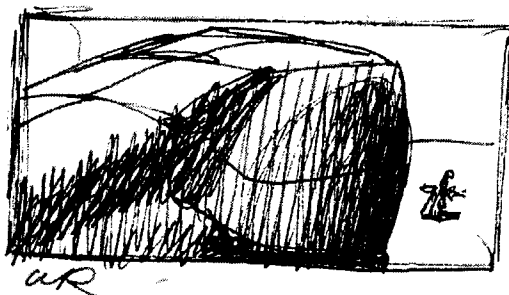
which isn't a problem for me – quite the opposite, in fact – and the more contemporary starry image used by Hodder may work for an audience less immersed in classic genre imagery.

I generally prefer Schoenherr's interior line art to his covers, but his *Dune* paintings are his best work, all-time. Great artist – a shame he won but one Hugo, but at least he got that. And in answer to James question, "I wonder how much input the author genuinely has into the cover," I'd refer him to Charles Stross's blog post at:

http://www.antipope.org/charlie/blog-static/2008/04/preemptive_alert.html

which was provoked by the US hardcover edition of *Saturn's Children*. If you've seen that book you'll understand why Charlie felt moved to comment on the matter.

I was "moved" by that cover, too – and by the book itself, which I call "Good Friday".



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Thanks for the latest *Challenger*.

My condolences on Merritt's death.

I've long tired of the "core fandom" view of many fanzine fans that Warren Buff comments on. I've been trashed for not worshiping faanish history and my attempts to carve my own path. This has done much to alienate me.

And for more on this topic ...

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Thank you for the hard copy of *Challenger* #29, very elegantly turned out as usual. It should be counted a failing of mine that I have been unable to focus on e-fanzines, which is where a lot of the action is, and which may be in contention to be the wave of the future. In spite of your kind solicitation, I regret that I had nothing sports-related to submit, except for a brief account of my career as captain of the GWU chess team. We played in the DC Chess League, and while chess hardly qualifies as a sport, it might perhaps be of interest that after I got rid of the GW students, we took first once, tied for first once, and came in second three times. (You think that is a long time to be team captain? I was in grad school, going at night, but that would be an explanation not an excuse.) The sports connection would be the inverse relationship between the players being students and their excellence at any given sport, a relationship especially noticed in sports where the players can make a lot of money.

Alan White's cover is well executed and unexpectedly witty. Good for him. Regarding the print version of this issue, you mention that the print was a bit light on some copies. Not to the point of illegibility, of course, but Brad Foster's work does suffer a bit.

And considering the generosity fan artists like Brad – and you – show to fan-eds, that was unforgivable. My printer was herself very generous – giving me more copies than I paid for! – but I'm considering alternatives.

On the graying of fandom, it would

appear that the new prospects coming up (or on-line in the case of the internet) tend to have new idea and new interests to the extent that many of the older fans are unable or unwilling to connect with them. Which means that "fandom" is here defined generationally, as to some extent it has always been. (First Fandom was originally defined as those who had been active prior to January 1, 1938, for example.) So it appears that some clubs and conventions tend to be unwelcoming to newcomers, in part because the newcomers are seen as heretics, and in part as a desire of the good, gray fans to cling to their hard-won social status. Where you find such clubs, there you will find fannish graying since the average age goes up year after year because they aren't recruiting new members.

And more ...

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In *Challenger* #29, the opinions in Warren Buff's article on the graying of fandom sound awfully familiar. Someone has said all of this before. They may even have said it a number of times. Of course, it's hard to remember at my age. You know you're getting older when your dandruff suffers from malnutrition.

There is a difference between *Fandom* and *fandom*. I didn't always make this distinction, but I now believe it to be necessary. When I say Fandom I mean the science fiction and fantasy thing we've been associated with in the past. It's basically an intentional group for people who have some association with science fiction and fantasy. In the early days, Fandom was a universal state something like the Roman Empire. We still use the terminology of that long gone universal state. By now, Fandom is more like the Holy Roman Empire. We're really a loose confederation of feuding principalities. I suspect this was an inevitable evolution. There is probably a maximum size that any intentional group can reach before it starts breaking up into smaller groups.

When I say fandom I mean any intentional group. I can talk about comics fandom, mystery fandom, SCA fandom, gaming

fandom, or anime fandom, and I believe I'm making sense. When I was in college my father joined the Horseless Carriage Club of Southern California. I started referring to it as old car fandom. After awhile, so did he. All intentional groups have some similarities. This even includes groups that are ostensibly political or religious. In the large anonymous cities of today, our only real communities are intentional groups.

There are thousands of fandoms. Some of them resemble us even though they aren't really us. There have been a whole bunch of Creation Cons in Southern California. They are devoted to things like *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and *Xena*. I've thought about attending one of them, but I've never done it. At times, they've done things that might be interpreted as unfriendly. They have scheduled cons the week before one of our cons and in the same hotel. That's how we discovered that they have no impact on us at all.

Thinking about recruiting people into Fandom, I'm reminded of the movie *Dogma*. In that movie, a Catholic cardinal is trying to increase the attendance of his church. First, he gets rid of the statuary of the crucified Jesus, because that creeps people out. He replaces it with the OK Jesus who sort of looks like Bob's Big Boy with a beard. Then he made a special offer of forgiveness for all sins whatsoever for everyone who entered the church on a particular date. Even people who are not religious should realize there is something wrong here. We should be careful not to do something similar to what the cardinal was doing. We don't want to sacrifice our essential nature for the sake of expansion. That would be counterproductive.

Naturally, there are some things going on in the general culture that influence us. The Bowling Alone syndrome is one of them. Maybe because of the internet and maybe because of other reasons, people are not gathering together to socialize as much as they did in earlier decades. It seems unlikely that this will be a permanent situation. By nature, we are social beings.

It is generally assumed that the internet is attracting many of the teenagers who would have been attracted to fandom in times past. That seems to be true. Another thing that slows our recruitment of younger people is the fear of pedophilia. I think back to how things were years

ago. In 1970, Craig Miller and I lived a couple of miles from each other on the west side of Los Angeles. We both were members of LASFS. I was in my late twenties, and Craig was in high school. At the time, I didn't think anything about having Craig drop by my apartment. If a similar situation were to happen today, the neighbors would start watching me if they didn't call the police. These days, you have to be a little more careful about being friends with teenagers. Even with older people, it isn't a good idea to be overly friendly. People will start suspecting your motives. When you think about it you realize one of the worst things about the evangelicals is their oozing friendliness. We don't really want to be like them.

And yet more ...

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Challenger #29 is on hand, many thanks. Rose-Marie's article on the game Quidditch reminded me of another game-that-never-was, *Mad* magazine's famous "23-man Squamish" from back in the 1960s. The rules of that game were ridiculously complicated, with strange and undefined playing implements and player positions. One or two college teams were started up to play it, but for some reason it never became a professional sport.

Warren Buff mentioned the attempt by a Las Vegas fan to declare his tiny little segment of fanzine fandom to be Core Fandom. I have never agreed to this idea because both zinedom and fandom are reticulated networks, neither of which has a genuine centre. Zinedom is a network of nodes where each zine is a node and had a unique mailing list, usually overlapping with other zines but not exactly. SF fans, even back in the 1930s or 1950s, had different connections with other fans, again many in common but not exactly. Your zine is at a node with other SF zines both paper and electronic. My zine shares some of the same connections on the Papernet but not your connections on the Internet, just as you do not get the mail-art zines I do, and they do not trade for SF fanzines.

In like manner, there is no Core Fandom and never has been. The 1950s SF clubs in Britain or Canada may have known about the American clubs but did not consider them as the centre. Canadian fandom in particular, despite the efforts of the late Chester Cuthbert (1912-2009), never had a centre, but was only ever a network of cities with just the thinnest vertices connecting them. The term I use for fandom today is Atomized Fandom. Not only are fans disconnected in time and space, but even within the same city the *Firefly* crowd has nothing to say to the gray-haired Trekkies. If it isn't *Sailor Moon* or *Ranma 1 / 2*, the anime fans don't want to know about it. Things fall apart, and the centre did not hold.

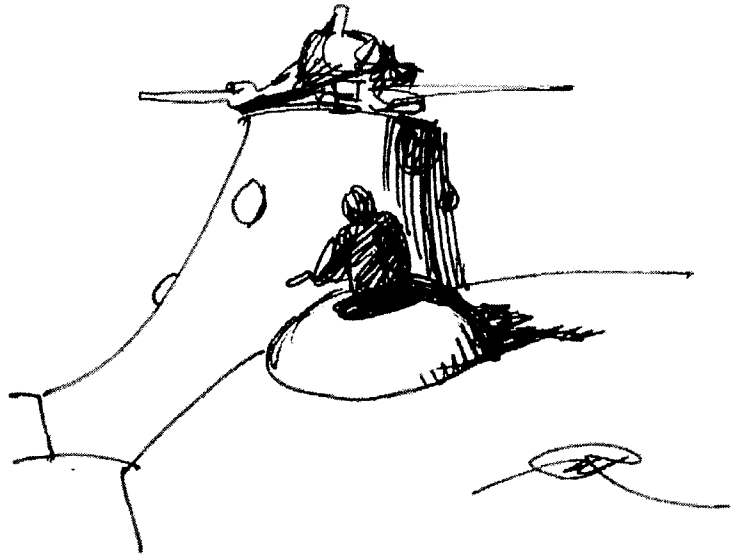
My feeling on the question of fandom's generations ... Each of us is brought into the SF community by enjoyment of the

*aspect of the genre current when we discover sensawunda. So science fiction for me resonates of the comics, of Andre Norton, **Forbidden Planet**, Philip K. Dick, **The Twilight Zone**, Poul Anderson and Analog. Fandom for me naturally involved meeting people who shared my love of such stuff. Older fans recall the pulps and Captain Future and their ghetto days in fanzining and see trufandom as enjoying that. Fans getting into the genre now would treasure Harry Potter, gaming and the slew of video SF, the second incarnation of **Battlestar Galactica** and **Stargate** and so forth – and fandom for them would mean celebrating those loves. Like seeks like; it's only natural.*

As people delve more deeply into the community of fandom, they encounter its history and the stuff that brought earlier generations into the fold. If they want to get the most of fandom, they'll learn to appreciate those things as well – much as music aficionados who love rock learn to understand jazz.

But it's fatuous to expect people to embrace the whole picture from Jump Street. Fatuous, unfair, and as I found when I joined fanzine fandom, ugly.

The divisions you speak of are normal, inevitable, and tolerable. I feel we must let people follow their loves, and I would hope fans of whatever generation would show humor and tolerance and



*enjoy one another's fannishness even if the source of that affection isn't the same as theirs. In other words, I can enjoy cute kids running around in homemade **Stargate** uniforms and can hope they'll learn to understand why I prefer fanzines to blogs Likewise, I can enjoy reading **Warhoon** ... and have the right to expect that my right to my fandom is respected.*

Science fiction is the ultimate Big Tent. No one has the singular and unique right to call himself a fan and others phonies. No one. As for "Core Fandom", it's just a name. Like I say, I think the movie was a complete waste of Hilary Swank.

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An article on fandom that does not mention FIAWOL? A gross omission! I wuz a fan, am a fan, and will die a fan...been that way since the late 1950's.

Happy to remind your readers that, yes indeed, "Fandom is a way of life" and that *Pulpdom*, Son of *ERB-dom*, lives!

I've just pubbed *Pulpdom* #54 and am at work on #55. #53 contained a never before reprinted short story by Otis A. Kline, "The Fang of Amm Jemel" (*Argosy*, 1935)

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Thanks for mailing me the zine. I can understand why you can't afford to mail out too many copies. That's quite a book.

My condolences to you and Rosy on the loss of Merritt. Also to his widow – must be rough.

I don't have a lot to say about the sports articles, since none of them covered my favourites – figure skating and equestrian events such as dressage and show jumping.

Strange you should mentioned dressage as I'm renewing my acquaintanceship with Charles deKunffy, onetime GHLEI teacher and equestrian authority. (See my editorial.)

So you need a storage unit – not enough room in your house for your vast fanzine collection? Our new house should be large enough for all our thousands of books. I'm thinking of thinning out the collection after we move (right now they're still mostly in boxes from our previous move), but we keep buying new ones.

Us too. Our storage unit holds all kinds of crap, but mostly, books – and we got rid of 25 boxes when we left New Orleans!

Thanks for the heads up on *Doc Rat* – looks good.

I much enjoyed Warren Buff's article, "Against the Graying of Fandom". He made a lot of good points. I have a number of younger fan friends, so I know there are a few younger fans entering all the time.

I'm probably just showing my ignorance, but I'm puzzled by his LoC. Do you mean to say that there are actually laws that make lynching legal? Sorry, I grew up in the northeast. I really would like to know. I didn't get very far searching on the Internet – just more confused.

I greatly enjoyed the Lynchi trip report about Italy. I was there in 1970 but mostly only saw Rome. My parents have seen more, but I haven't been back since. I think one of their trips involved driving themselves around, but I could be misremembering. I recall another fan saying that Italians drove like maniacs and didn't bother observing any traffic laws, but that was quite a while ago. I do recall that being a

pedestrian in Rome was pretty tricky. Someone made the remark that the safest way to cross a street in Rome was to find a group of nuns. I couldn't tell exactly when the Lynchi made the trip, but I assume it was in the last year or two. I winced every time they talked about food. Since discovering that I'm gluten-intolerant, it's become nearly impossible for me to have any Italian food unless I make it myself. There's actually a pizzeria in Phoenix that makes gluten-free pizza. It's good, but of course it's not the same. There aren't any in Tucson that I know of, but I plan to attend a gluten-free faire next weekend.

When my mother and I were in Rome, nearly everyone was on strike – taxi drivers, hotel workers, etc. We found a driver to take us around; they're a cross between tour guides and taxi drivers. We went to Villa D'Este, which is outside of Rome. It's a beautiful place with lots and lots of fountains. We were supposed to go to Pompeii, but that didn't come off. There are certainly many reasons to go back to Italy one of these years.

I remember being at the Vatican but don't really remember much about the museum except that we were there. I recall not being able to take photos in the Sistine Chapel. I bought a bunch of slides of the place; it was quite cheap to do.

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Fine cover for *Challenger 29*: that's one very happy robot!

I've been reading *Challenger 29* – not got right through it yet, and I've sort-of-skimmed a lot of the sports stuff (sorry), but I enjoyed learning about Nicholas of Cusa, and I found James Bacon's musings on *High Castle* covers the most interesting article of the issue. (Mine's that derivative, 1987 Bladerunneresque one, but I can live with that.) Rather than a cover that shouts about the political situation in the books or shows any of the more visually dramatic moments, I would have like to see some of the Edfrank jewelry arranged on a table, with hints of the situation shown in the items it is displayed with.

Susan recently announced that she's

suffering from thyroid problems – as do I, as do many. We wish her good health, and a quick return of Tortoise.

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It was lovely seeing my words in print but I do need to make a correction, whether the mistake was mine or thine. The other golfer that I know of around fandom is *not* Howard Ackerman, but rather Howard ~~Marshall~~ Rosenblatt. Knowing his wife longer than I’ve known him is no excuse for shanking that shot.

I share your embarrassment; as editor I should’ve caught the goof. Howard, by the way, is a real lawyer and an invaluable source of financial advice.

We also heard from Jeff Boman, “one who will not be named”, and Ms. Kathrine Jack, Staff Attorney of the National Advocates for Pregnant Women, about the case behind my article “The Best Speech I Never Gave” in *Challenger* #21 – and the article itself.

Recall that my client had delivered a premature baby at home, which passed away immediately, and then disposed of the body. She was accused of second-degree murder, a charge I got reduced to a misdemeanor.

Ms. Jack wrote to inform me of her group’s existence (since I had trouble contacting NOW) and enclosed a copy of Jeanne Flavin’s book *Our Bodies, Our Crimes* (New York University Press, 2009), which mentions my case (page 84). She paid me an enormous compliment: “We recognize that your zealous advocacy made the difference in getting the murder charge dropped.

“I congratulate you for seeking the truth in Ms. _____’s medical records. So often, we see that women are blamed for bad birth outcomes when neither medicine nor science supports such conclusions.”

How about that? Guy Lillian, feminist champion.



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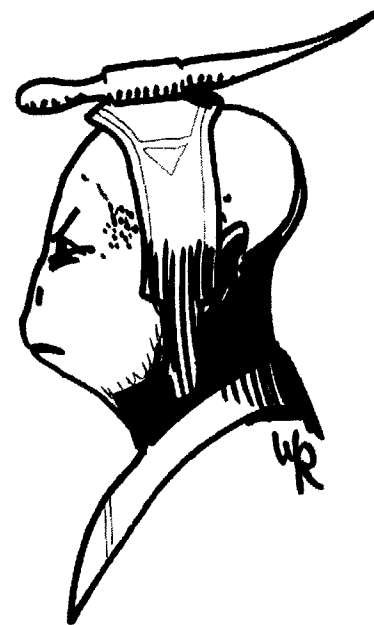
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Challenge at the Cutting Edge

Susan Whitmore

Given the title of this fanzine, it's fitting that there should be discussion herein about the nature of challenges. I suppose the ultimate challenge would be death, something everybody has to face sooner or later. But there are some challenges, pre-ultimate, that have to be met by living. Having a hostage to fortune, as I believe Lois Bujold put it in one of her recent novels, is one of them.

I'm going to tell the story of my child and my challenge. I'm a science fiction fan and naturally interested in the cutting edge of science as well. The nature of my child's challenge is such as to engage those interests. Otherwise, it's just a story about a parent coping, a universal theme.

I suspect most parents go through that moment when the universe shifts, and you suddenly realize that it's not about you anymore, but your child. For me it came fairly early. I had a particularly difficult labor and delivery, complete with emergency c-section and follow-up surgery the next day to clean up the mess that had been made the day before. There were some high points to the whole procedure: They had given me an epidural for the surgery, and the



cessation of pain was wonderful; I felt better than I had in months. I was burbling away all through the caesarian. During the conversation I gave forth with the most insightful analysis into **Glory Road** -- I just wish to hell I could remember what I said! And when they finally got Eleanor out, I could tell instantly that she was beautiful, though covered with blood as she was, I'm not sure *how* I could know, but I did.

So there I sat for a few days, recovering, trying to learn how to breast feed around intravenous tubes. And round about forty-eight hours later a thought floated through my brain, "That wasn't so bad. I could do that again." A tribute to the power of post-pregnancy chemicals, because it was not a decision based on anything rational! When Ellie was five days old the nurses took her temperature and it was very high. She had to go on intravenous antibiotics right away. And it was then I knew that I would do anything to take on her pain -- and that I couldn't.

It didn't seem fair, that I had gone through so much to have her, and that she had to be hurt, too. If only there really were healers, like there are in any decent fantasy trilogy. I would do anything to be able to lay hands on Ellie and make her pain mine. But I can't. It isn't fair. And it continues to be unfair.

As it turned out, the fever was just the first sign. We thought everything was all right when we finally got to take her home three weeks later. Previous to that I had to do the hardest thing I've ever done, and that's leave the hospital with her behind. We went back everyday, and I did everything but sleep there, but getting in the car every evening was not easy.

It became clear to her pediatrician within the next month that Ellie was not developing properly. He could tell because Ellie would not be comforted quickly when she was crying (also, she was not gaining weight quickly enough). What did I know? I had never been around babies before and received about a million congratulatory cards on Ellie's birth that warned me about getting no sleep and endlessly crying babies. But those were just jokes. Healthy babies really aren't like that. But what did I know?

The neurologist knew. Or, at least, the neurologist agreed that something was drastically wrong. What, she didn't know. And we still don't know, five and a half years later. This is where it starts to get intellectually interesting.

They did a blood workup on Ellie, her father and I. They tested for what genetic diseases they know how to test for. They did a evoked hearing & seeing thingamajig, they did an EEG and they did an MRI of her brain. That last was most fun. It was scheduled for the morning of Christmas Eve, and my mother was in town so she went into the city with us. Ellie had to be sedated, which meant she couldn't have food or liquid some time before the test. Try explaining to a howling six-month old why she can't have her bottle. In a car. Ellie howls really loud, too. (There's been some speculation about wolf genes sneaking in somewhere, but I think that's been ruled out. Still, when the moon is full...) As we were sitting waiting for the sedative to take effect, we shared the room with another mother and child. This boy was older, maybe six or seven. He was hyperactive, running around tearing up the magazines. And his head was malformed, shaped like a cone. His mother was well dressed, a rich lady, older than me, obviously tired, but clearly she loved the boy. And I realized then how easy I had it.

Ellie, as mentioned before, is a beautiful child. The first impression wasn't just a sozzled post-partum flash. Though it's hard for her to communicate, Ellie has a great personality, too. Sharp sense of humor, willing to find most things amusing, good with other people: she's very easy to love.

Ellie's father and I are reasonably well-off, too, which makes it easier for us than for a lot of people with neurologically complicated kids. It's meant we could afford to buy the things



we felt would help her, and not worry too much about money. One of the things it's bought us was Internet time, specifically access to Medline.

Nowadays, Medline is more or less free. A few years ago, it was fairly expensive, and getting access to full papers, not just abstracts also cost a bit. Why was this so important? Because the bloody doctors weren't doing it.

The aforementioned tests turned up inconclusive. Yes, clearly something was off. But what exactly, or why, they couldn't say. They suggested we find a parent support group. Now, I never had thought of doctors as godlike beings, but this effort seemed to me a bit half-hearted.

The only chemical test that turned up anything indicated a deficiency in something that meant a genetic disease called metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD). All this was happening around the same time that a movie starring Susan Sarandon was coming out called **Lorenzo's Oil**. It was a movie based on the true story of a family with a boy

who had adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD). We hadn't seen the movie (people with newborns don't see movies), but I'd read enough of the reviews to get the gist of it, and understand that ALD was a degenerative disease. So is MLD; projected lifespans for sufferers is not long, nor pleasant. And the results from the MRI seemed to confirm that there was degeneration. Or something.

Getting the doctors to tell me what they saw, even if they weren't exactly sure themselves was like pulling teeth at first. Maybe it was just that set of doctors, even though they were from a prestigious enough institution. But I don't think so. I think it's the nature of the medical industry beast. There are plenty of doctors I respect, plenty of therapists I admire, but getting them to work with you, who is most interested, can be hard. It's worth the work. (And as an SF fan I can't help but extrapolate -- soon you are going to be the expert on you. It'll be you and your personal medical AI making decisions on medication and therapy, and we won't need human doctors (vis **The Ship Who Searched** by Anne McCaffrey & Mercedes Lackey -- an instance where the AI is wrong, by the way).)

Learning to parse medicalese is half the battle: all "leukodystrophy" means is a dystrophy (disorder) of the white (leuko) matter in the brain. What the "metachromatic" part means, I don't know, because the second test on the chemical that was its indicator came back normal, so it turned out not to be that.

More lessons in medical terminology that I learned at that time: "Cerebral palsy" is about as descriptive and useful a term as "the grippe" is for describing a cold. It's not a diagnosis, per se, it just means a person so described has something wrong with his head. It could have been from a one-time injury, birth trauma, an on-going biochemical problem, or a

genetic disease that just hasn't been described yet. Isn't that helpful?

I finally got the neurologist to spell out for me what exactly the MRI showed, which was that Ellie's myelin, most clearly in the occipital region of the brain, was not present as much as it ought to be. This is still the one piece of hard data we have, other than her observed developmental abnormalities and her failure to gain weight and head-circumference like she should. At any rate, myelin is that stuff that coats the nerves (in the brain and elsewhere). You aren't born with it, but it should all be there by about six months. It's not clear if Ellie's myelin problem is de-myelination (just not enough there) or dis-myelination (normal myelin that is for some reason getting chewed up).

Ellie's problem probably isn't chromosomal, they told me, because aside from those physical indicators, she wasn't "dismorphic" in any other way. But otherwise, her set of symptoms didn't fit into anything they recognized offhand. Which was when I figured out that of all the terrible things to happen to humans, medical science, such as it is, has classified just a very few, has figured out the causes of even fewer, and cures to a minuscule handful.

So we got a second opinion, this time from a guy famous in the field. Another MRI (she's had three, one at six months, one at a year and one at eighteen months). Another time with screaming, confused, child, another time sending her sedated and bound up into the maw of the MRI (another time getting my credit cards demagnetized by the heavy magnets because I forgot to put my wallet away.... Actually, that happened only once; I'm not that stupid). And another shrug and a suggestion to seek a support group.

All very fine and well, but what about solving *Ellie's* problem; then maybe her parents wouldn't *need* a support group. What we discovered is that doctors are, for the most part, very poor scientists. I suspect that is because medical science is based on statistics. Most people have their heart on the right side; a very small number of humans have it switched. Most people metabolize caffeine the same way; a very small number have a wonky reaction. Etc. And you know what they say about statistics: There are lies, damned lies and statistics.

The doctors just didn't ask the next question (nod to Sturgeon). They didn't seem to have the time or inclination. It wasn't their area, and their area is always very small. Now, to be sure, whatever Ellie has is rare. And I can understand that not a lot has yet been done in that area. But to just stop, that seemed awful to me, both as a parent, and as a curious, inquisitive fannish type of person.

So that's when Ellie's father hit the Internet. If they weren't going to do the research, he would. One of the first things he did, was look up "demyelination" and "cure." And what do you know, an article turned up. A doctor in London had done a study with three children with vastly different symptoms giving them supplements of B-12 (AKA cobalamin), methionine, and one of their end-products, s-adenosylmethionine (SAM). Ellie's dad spent months staying up all night trying to understand the biochemistry involved, and seeing if it could safely apply to our child.

Turns out there's no way in the world to overdose on B-12. Your body loves B-12, can't get enough of it, and SAM is the reason why. So Ellie's father cooked up a cocktail of vitamins and amino acids in order to pump Ellie's system to create more SAM, which should, in turn, create more myelin. We saw immediate results. Ellie had been making slow, infinitesimally slow, but clear, developmental progress. From age six months she'd been getting physical therapy, with occupational therapy, speech therapy and a special ed teacher thrown in over the following few months. But we were starting to see signs that maybe she was losing skills she had acquired. That's bad.

After starting with the substrate therapy, she seemed better. We had high hopes that this

was the answer. But it seems she was just back on her very slow track. After a few months, we were able to arrange for a supply of SAM itself, and while clearly it helps, after three and half years it's also clear it isn't the entire solution.

Meanwhile, we'd located a neurologist who was more of a researcher than a clinician, and he, though it wasn't exactly his area, was willing to help try to figure out what was wrong with Ellie. He introduced us to CoQ-10. Like SAM, it's one of those ubiquitous necessary chemicals needed to run the body. You need CoQ-10 every time an oxygen ion is exchanged, you need SAM every time a methyl ion is exchanged, which is every time there is growth, whether it be in the brain, in the liver, in the colon or any one of at least thirty identified systems.

After a few years, we figured out that the SAM wasn't going to be the solution we had all hoped for, and I moved. Since it was time, I showed Ellie to a whole new slew of doctors, at a different teaching hospital in another state.

This bunch are interested in Rett Syndrome, another thing that had earlier been suggested but then discarded because the order of "presentation" of symptoms didn't fit the pattern (and that's all that "syndromes" are -- description of a pattern of symptoms; another pin bursting the bubble of faith in doctor's omniscience). And they, too, find Ellie "interesting." Oh, gee.

They know a bit more now than a few years ago about Rett's, and there are altogether too many similarities to make me happy. Rett Syndrome is, like MLD and ALD, degenerative. But, also like those two, it usually allows for normal development before degeneration sets in, and that Ellie never had. Rett's is probably a neurotransmitter problem, not a myelination problem, though. It may be that Ellie's particular metabolic disorder somehow combines a screw-up in myelination with a screw-up in neurotransmitters.

My next task will be to prod these doctors into finding out more. And for Ellie's father and I to hit the Internet. Because for sure, unless it's common knowledge, the doctors won't know about the latest research or correlate research in other areas that apply, at least not any faster than we will looking for abstracts ourselves.

The parents of Lorenzo, he of **Lorenzo's Oil**, felt the same way. They had even more resources than we did, and have set up their own institute to figure out ALD and other myelination disorders. They thought they had a therapy, the oil of the title. It didn't work. I suppose that's why the doctors were reluctant to tell us what we needed to know to try to help ourselves -- they figured we'd be doomed to disappointment. But I could no more not try to figure this out than I could stop breathing. I'm a fan, dammit; if I can envision galactic empires, FTL transport, the end of the universe, AIs that tell bad puns, alien entities made out of dark matter, then by ghu I can at least *try* to address a little biochemical mistake.

We may not be able to solve Ellie's problem. I can, and do, try to make her everyday life as fun and normal as possible. At age five and a half, she is functioning on the level of about a nine-month old, albeit a very sophisticated nine-month old. She can't quite yet crawl, she can say only her name, respond to just a few more words (although I'm reasonably convinced she *understands* more than she responds to, the little darlin'). But so long as she's happy, that's what's important. That, and challenging her to go as far as she can.

It's very easy with kids who are like that to cater to them, serve them hand and foot. And my Ellie, like most everybody else, is not immune to that kind of spoiling. Providing her with the sorts of games and activities she can do, and not frustrate her, is my challenge. I've never had a lot of patience, and this calls for every bit I can muster. Well, Ellie doesn't have a lot of patience either -- she's come by that naturally. One thing I have learned, that I suspect many other parents learn, is that in a battle of wills, she wins. In this my mother's

blessing/curse that I have child who is like me has been more than amply fulfilled. I try to reason with Ellie to eat her food (with desperately needed vitamins in it) and explain that she is way under weight and that it's really for the best. But if she turns her flashing dark eyes to me, sets her jaw, and whips her head away from the spoon, I've learned the Empress of the Universe (not **Glory Road's** Star, but the one in my living room) must be obeyed. Until next time. So if I can maintain her body and soul, until a cure is found, then that's what I'll try to do. I'll try my best, and like any parent, know that my best still won't make the world a perfect place for my child. Again, like any parent, I know I'll make mistakes, and just hope that I get enough right to keep Ellie going. In the immortal words of Lyle Lovett, "Ya gotta try."

I'd never been interested in biology. I slid through high school one year before my state made it a requirement for graduation (I took theatre instead; shows you where my priorities were). But neurobiology was the one part of it I was even vaguely intrigued by, and managed to get through about three quarters of a book on the brain when I was a teenager before giving it up. Ellie's father is very good about figuring out the complicated paths of neurochemistry and boiling it down to the parts we care about. (And I've learned that a little bit of Latin goes a long way to understanding all of this--if you can follow the trail of the component parts, understanding the why of the chemistry isn't so important).

In the course of all this cramming in biochemistry we've learned that whatever it is Ellie has it's rare, and there isn't a lot being done in this area. However, we also discovered that there are a lot of crossovers between neural degeneration caused by odd genetic flukes (which seems the likeliest cause of Ellie's, though some kind of problem in the womb can't be ruled out either) and those caused by old age.

And there's lots of research on old age. Applying that, learning about CoQ-10 and SAM before everybody else figured it out and it appears in *Newsweek*. That's been fun.

I would have been more sensawundered had my parental emotions not been involved, but still . . . here we are at the cutting edge of science, balancing on its raw jagged edge, waiting for the future to be now.

References & Resources:

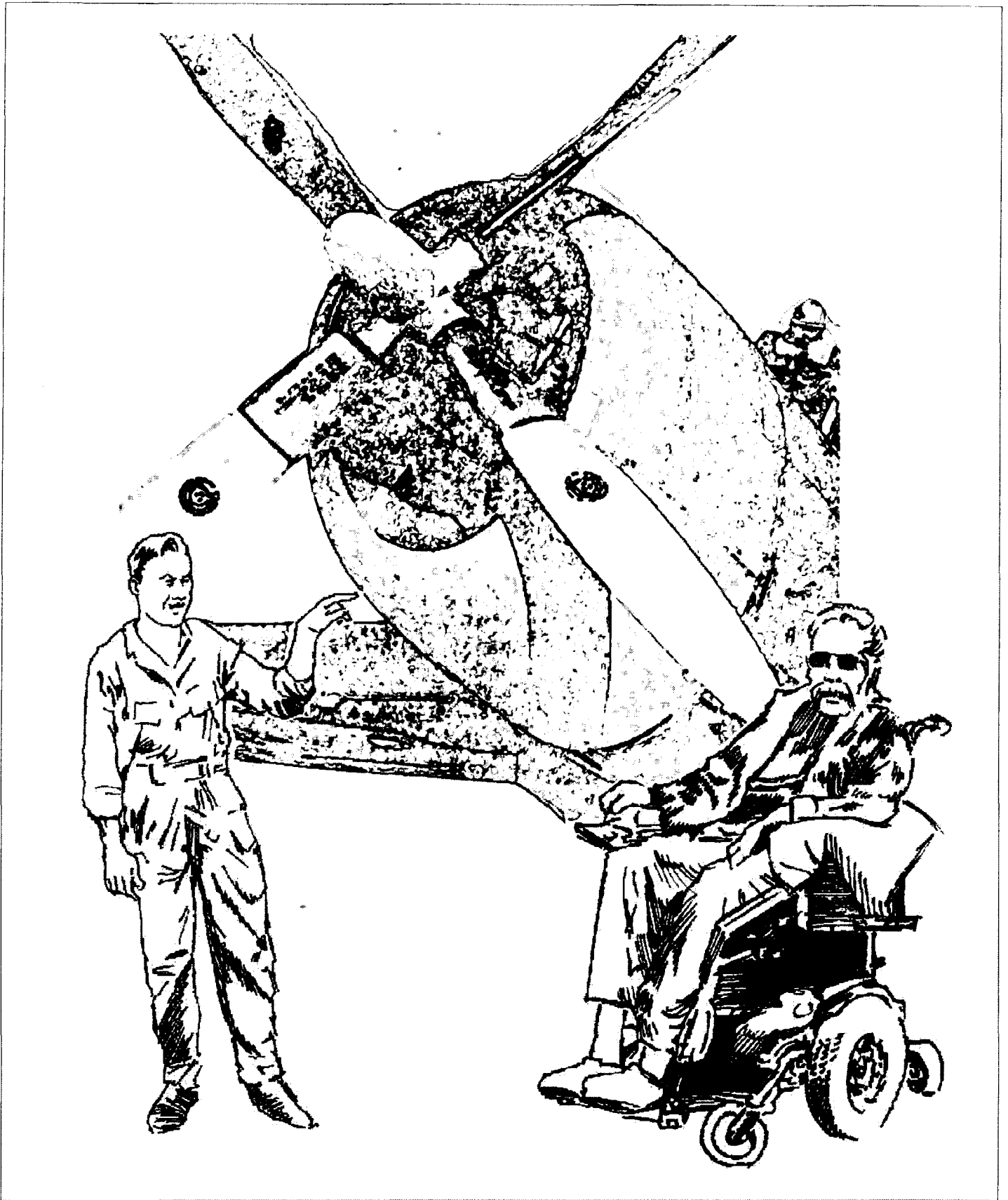
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National Organization of Rare Diseases--a useful clearinghouse. (800) 999-6673

Illustrations by PEGGY RANSON





Says Jeff Copeland: This article is an expanded version of my tenth speech for Toastmasters, the last one I needed to complete for my "Competent Communicator" certificate. I had far too much material to cover in the allotted nine minutes for the speech, had been throwing slides and paragraphs overboard up until five minutes before the meeting started, and so was uncharacteristically nervous as I stood up at the podium. And then about a minute in, I realized that I wasn't delivering the speech for the thirty people in the room, but for the man it was about, the man who would see the video later, that I was speaking to...

THE MAN IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT

Jeff Copeland

*Illos by CHARLES WILLIAMS and LAWRENCE COPELAND
More of Mr. Copeland's art appears on the **Challenger** website*

Once upon a time, I met a man. Or more accurately, he met me. And it was some time later that I understood that he answered to the name "Dad."

Like all parents, he has some quirks. He is always remarkably calm, which was a nice contrast to my mother's tempestuous Italian nature. He doesn't take life too seriously, which sometimes lead to problems when I wanted to have a sober conversation with him. He cannot stand waste, particularly of food. And he has a remarkably off-beat sense of humor.

Lawrence Gill Copeland was born in the flapper era, which meant he was reared during the Roaring Twenties and the Depression, in the deep South, in places like Knoxville, Tennessee and Florence, Alabama. When the time came, he moved on to Muskingham College in Ohio, which has had Copelands on its student rolls since it was founded – and which his own parents attended.

It was at Muskingham, on an afternoon in December 1941, surrounded by cousins, that he listened on the radio to the announcement that the United States was at war.

Over his parents' objections, he enlisted in the Air Force on the understanding that he'd be allowed to defer induction while America spun up production of airplanes. So he did periodic familiarization and training, until it was time to head off to boot camp. After graduating at the top of his class in both Officer Candidate School and Navigators' School, he was assigned to the 459th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force.

Thence off to Europe to the headquarters of the 15th Air Force in Cerignola, Italy, from where in late May, 1944, he wrote a letter back home:

"Dear Family,

"We arrived safely in Italy, though I can't tell you where. I've already flown three missions. Just 32 more. With luck, I'll be home for Christmas."

He arrived safely in Italy because he navigated 56,000 pounds of heavy bomber across the Atlantic, arriving within one minute of his ETA, winning a bet for a case of beer with his co-pilot in the process.

He'd flown three missions, earning combat pay of \$9.70 for each one, a rate of about a buck an hour for flying five hours out, delivering thirteen thousand pounds of bombs – to the oil refinery at Ploesti or the railroad marshalling yards at Linz or a ball-bearing factory in the Ruhr Valley – and then flying five hours back.

He was twenty-two years old.

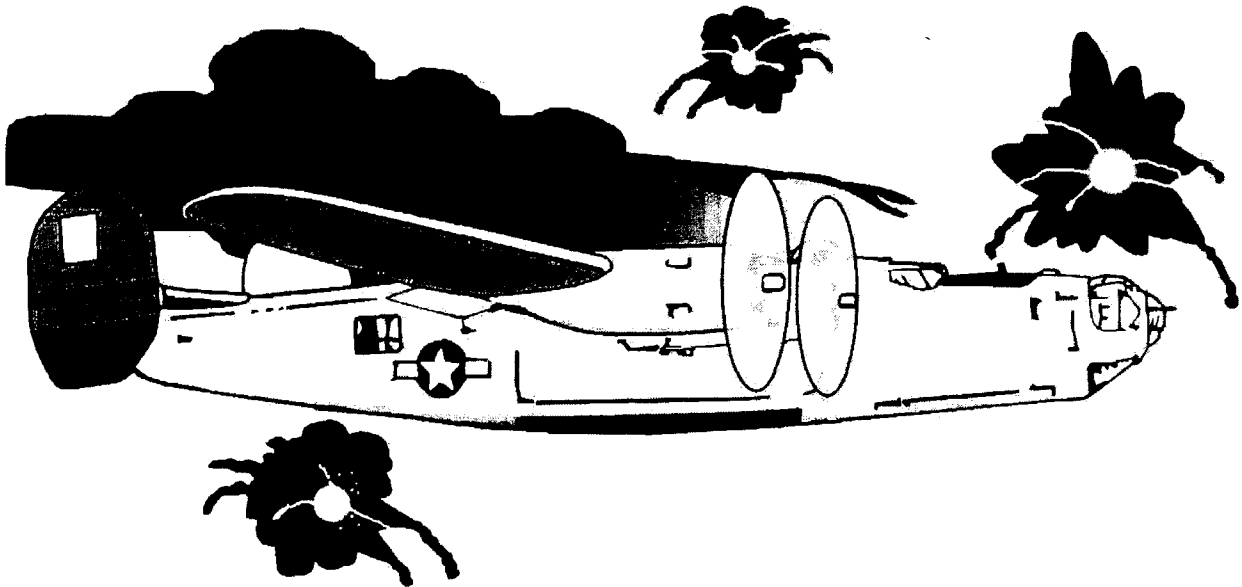
"With luck, I'll be home for Christmas."

No such luck. Six weeks later, the 459th was assigned to fly a mission to bomb the bridge at Avignon, France. Hearing this story growing up, I was always confused because I know the famous bridge fell down in the eleventh century. Finally, I understood that it was the railroad bridge they were being sent to bomb.

No order was ever given in the Air Force in World War II. Missions were posted, but no one was ever explicitly ordered to go on one. Every mission, every man: a volunteer. Thus, on the morning of 17 July 1944, following the flight plan of Lt Copeland, lead navigator of the 459th, the mission took off at 6 a.m..

Dad was standing in his non-standard, but accustomed, position on the upper deck between the pilot and co-pilot at 11:05 a.m., turning to the southwest over Carpentras, when ...

BANG!



Years later, he wrote:

"At that moment there was a burst of flak just outside the cockpit, shattering it, slamming me back against the turret and covering the pilots and me with a rain of glass. My first thought was that I was blinded. I covered my face with my hands, peeked between my fingers and discovered I could see. My relief was so great that nothing else seemed of great concern even though our transportation seemed incapable of transporting us further. So I turned to my desk, entered the instrument readings on the log, wrote 'Finis', carefully folded it, removed my ear phones and oxygen mask, hung them in their proper place, checked my harness to make sure it was tight, picked up my parachute and snapped it on."

Note, please, that he took the time to stop, clean up, and make a final log entry for an airplane that very shortly was going to be scrap metal. Neither *grace under pressure* nor *savior faire* begin to describe it.

As Dad was standing in the bomb bay preparing to bail out, several things happened in rapid succession: the plane was hit by another flak burst and flipped, he hit his head on a 500 pound bomb (which, fortunately, wasn't armed) knocking himself out, the flip tossed him clear of the plane, and his hand was on his ripcord, so he fell ten thousand feet with an open parachute rather than a closed one. (That last detail had severe existential consequences for this writer.)

* — *

Allow me to take a moment at this exciting point in our narrative to flash forward in time. In June 2003, when my daughter Allie was graduating from high school, the family descended on us in Bellevue. My parents were here, as was my brother, Ian, and his family. That weekend the Collingwood Foundation, who own the last operational B-24 in existence and barnstorm it around the country every summer, were bringing it to an airshow about 50 miles south. As part of their fundraising, they give flights on both their B-24 and their B-17, and Ian had arranged for him and Dad to go on one. We bundled Dad into the car and took him, first, to the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field. Without letting on that there was another stop, we headed further south. We arrived at the airfield, explained that it was another museum, and led him around the hangers.

As he rounded the corner, flanked by his sons, he stopped mid-stride, cane poised in the air, and said "Wait: That's a B-24!" His elder son replied, "Indeed it is," and his younger followed up with, "Would you like to ride on it?"

He looked slightly goggle-eyed, and barely stopping for thought, he said, "Hell, no! The last time I was on one of those, it ended rather badly."

Nonetheless, he did climb on board, and after the plane took off, he relocated himself to the upper deck, standing between the pilot and co-pilot, watching the instruments, and asking questions about what modifications they had made to the plane for twenty-first century use.

The pilots were a little taken aback by his intimate knowledge, but shortly twigged to the fact that here was a man who actually understood the B-24's air-worthiness in combat, and started asking *him* questions. A lot of questions.

After the flight, as they helped this arthritic veteran out of their aircraft, *they* thanked him.

* — *

Meanwhile, back in 1944, several days elapsed in Alabama before The Telegram arrived:

"The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your son Second Lieutenant Lawrence G Copeland has been reported missing in action since seventeen July over France. If further details or other information are received you will be promptly notified."

On the ground in occupied France, the scene was a little different. Dad woke up from his head bump surrounded by parachute silk and terrified German conscripts, who herded him onto a truck to the processing center. In his sketchbook, he details the scene with a fanciful self-portrait, hair standing on end in shock, trying to climb back up his parachute rigging to get away from goonish Germans with stick rifles. The sketch is captioned, "For yew der var iss over!" So, thus he became a *Kriegsgefangen* – "Kriegie" for short – a German prisoner of war.

He had a brief stay at Dulag Luft, the processing and interrogation center for captured flyers. His drawing of that features a very realistic view of his solitary confinement cell, with the annotation, "Private office at Dulag Luft, Frankfort on Mainz, where entrance interrogation for Stalag Luft was held."

That sketchbook is an interesting artifact by itself. Each POW was issued a blank "Wartime Log" book by the YMCA and Red Cross. Dad filled his with sketches and watercolors, interspersed with the occasional page of observations in his incredibly precise handwriting. He traded cigarettes for pen nibs



For yew der var iss over!

and ink and watercolor blocks, and made his own brushes and pen holders. The book features a forged German censors' stamp on the flyleaf, in the hope that if it was ever discovered the guard who opened it would look no further.

However, in spite of the deprivations and difficulties surrounding its creation, the book is amazing, not only as an historical record of life on the ground as a POW for the last year of the war, but because Dad's sense of humor and awareness of the wonder of the world around him shines from every

page. There are cartoons of mail call and stinky German cheese, the POW equivalent of filksongs, a contemporaneous recounting of the guards abandoning the camp as the Russians approached in May, and a page of pressed flowers, captioned "it is sometimes hard to see but there's beauty even in kriegie camp – sunsets, snowflakes, flowers."

After his stay at Dulag Luft, he was off on a long, very roundabout rail journey through Germany.

(Roundabout because there were chunks of railroad that were missing, thanks to Dad and his chums.) He arrived in Pomerania, at his home for the rest of the war, Stalag Luft I, which he occasionally refers to as "The Baltic Resort." Surrounded by guards, German shepherds (of which he still

isn't very fond), and housed in rickety shacks, he hunkered down for the duration, taking his turns cutting other Kriegies' hair and cooking.

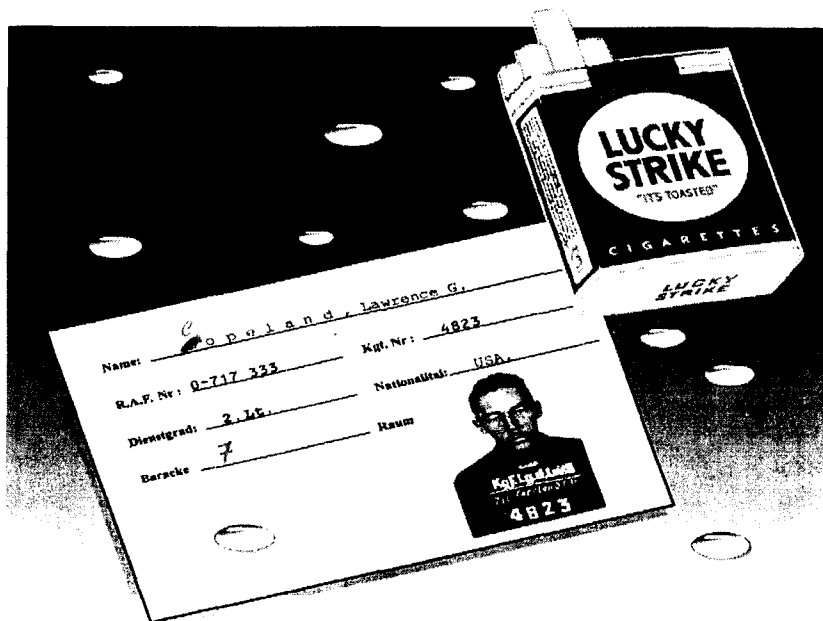
Food, of course, became a constant concern. The meager rations from the Germans were supplemented by parcels from the Red Cross, culminating in a spectacular Christmas parcel for each prisoner – cheese! canned meat! plum pudding! tinned cherries! jam! However, immediately after Christmas, the British bombing campaign became so effective that supply lines were cut off, and they were forced to survive on what they could get locally: rutabagas, sparrows, and the occasional cat.

The winter of 1944-45 was the coldest winter of the twentieth century in Europe, and so the ten thousand men of Stalag Luft I huddled, shivering and starving, waiting for spring. When the ordeal was over, Dad weighed eighty-five pounds.

All good things must come to an end, even the Second World War. And so, after being liberated by the Russians, and spending a stint in a military hospital in Paris (which are stories deserving their own articles), and another recovery period in Delaware, he was back to Alabama, and then back to Ohio State to finish his interrupted undergraduate studies.

He was soon back off to Europe, this time courtesy of the GI bill, to study painting in Paris and, more importantly, to apprentice in Stockholm with Baron Eric Fleming, the silversmith to the king of Sweden. It was with Fleming that he perfected the craft that would be his passion for the next four decades. After Europe, he was off to Cranbrook Academy for his MFA. A project from that period is the chess set on which he taught me to play, based on his first stint in Europe. It features as the king and queen Roosevelt and Churchill on one side and Hitler and Mussolini on the other. From Cranbrook, Dad moved to the School for American Craftsmen, which had just relocated to the Rochester Institute of Technology.

The Rochester years were remarkably productive. Cigarette boxes, decanters, ceremonial plates, tableware, and one traditional Swedish wedding crown worn by Mary Cuteri on the day they were



married. One of the decanters is a favorite of mine. A confection of graceful pewter curves, bulging at the middle, with a wide lip at the top, it was borrowed by the State Department for the 1958 Brussels Worlds Fair. Alas, his government didn't dare display the piece under his fanciful title: the Pregnant Nun.

With a second child on the way, Dad moved from Rochester to Oneida Ltd, where he became Designer in Residence. Even though he made friends and did good work, the experience had to be frustrating: many of his prototype designs were too avant-garde for Oneida. His joke was that he'd design a piece, and the chief designer would assign some junior guy to graft a rose onto it before putting it into production.

Several years later, with his third kid not yet walking, he moved the family to Hackensack, New Jersey, and moved himself back to academia, to City College of New York, where he spent the next two decades training the next generation of craftsmen while rearing the next generation of Copelands.

But, with retirement, he was far from finished. For an encore, he took what he'd learned in four decades of practicing design, three decades of building his own furniture, and two decades of critically examining dwellings, and designed and built a seven thousand square foot house in Warwick, New York. When I say "built," I mean that literally: the framing and outside sheathing were contracted out, but most of the interior was completed by Dad and Mom with their own hands. With typical humor and understatement, he dubbed the place "The Braecroft," which is Scots Gaelic for "little stone hut."

It was there, in September 2006, that Dad suffered a stroke, leaving his left arm and leg partially paralyzed, and left him unable to walk.

And so, with much sadness, he had to leave the largest and least portable of his creative endeavors. Mom and Dad moved to Boulder, to share a sprawling house with my sister and her family.

But, even if his mobility is now limited, his outlook is not. This art student turned Air Force officer turned prisoner of war turned silversmith turned art history professor turned architect turned carpenter faces each day with the wisdom he's gained over four score and seven years:

Always take your afternoon nap.

Waste not, want not.

Don't take life too seriously.

Look for the joy and wonder in every day.

The past is past – don't let it get in the way of the future.

Keep your sense of humor about you always, especially in the bad times.

Don't make the mistake of letting the facts get in the way of a really good story.

But always, always, always, *always* start that story with the most magical words in the English language: "once upon a time."



ROLL CALL

Oh, van I go aus for ze roll call

In ze morgen und ze abend,

I often hear a familiar phrase

From der hauptman ab ze end

Spoken to one of our number

And mimicked by all ze tricoopie

“Ein, zwei, drei, vier, fumpf, sechs, sieben,

Platz slotz zem stand at ease.”

to the tune 'Give my regards to Broadway'



My Dad and the Magazine in the Seatback

Chris Garcia

After my parents split, my Dad had troubles. Pops, as I always called him, was a nut, a fan, a sweetheart, a tough guy not to love. He was generous to a fault, often trusting those who had previously given him reasons not to trust them. Pops was that kind of guy. I loved the bastard, and oddly, his life from 1989 through to the day he died makes me think of the time I was flying back from Boston and found myself without a thing to read.

Mom tossed Dad out (or at least the way Dad put it) the day my half-sister was born. Mom couldn't handle it, again according to Pops, and that ended their marriage. The Forty-Niners had just won the Super Bowl. These things happen. Dad didn't have anything, he was still recovering from getting hit by a car about 6 months before, and he ended up staying at a shelter.

My Dad was, officially, homeless.

He had a car, the other car as far as Mom was concerned, but he didn't much like staying in it. Pops stayed at the Julian Street Inn, a local shelter that was where a lot of guys down on their luck would stay. He was there for at least a month, but when they were full, and in the late '80s and early '90s, there were a lot less beds in this area for those without roofs over their head. Dad would park by a bridge, or in the parking lot of some store. He didn't like staying in the truck, but he needed a place. That's what he did. He had everything in his truck. A few boxes including his zines, his 8-tracks (the ones that Mom didn't destroy when Mom was really angry one night) and all his clothes. At various times, Dad would lose all of it, get some back, lose them again. Pops would tell stories of times he'd fall asleep and wake up to a guy stealing whatever they could get their hands on, only to roll back over and call out "You can take whatever you want. Just let me sleep." That's what my Dad was like.

You see, he knew that the others had it harder than he did. He had a car. He had a son who would regularly talk to him. He had food and some money, at least enough to get some food and maybe see a movie once in a while. He had a newborn daughter. It was a life that wasn't easy, but it was also full of family and love. Dad himself would say that he was the Poorest Rich Man he'd ever met. A lot of folks would argue that.

Dad pulled himself together. He got a job as a Limo Driver, a job he'd had years before. He managed to hold on to that for a year or so. That was his first job, but it was rough. He couldn't walk or stand for too long, since he'd had his leg messed up when he was hit by the car. He would make sure that he could manage, but eventually, they had to let him go. This led him to the job I'd talk about for ages: carny.

That's right, my Dad was a carny. He ran carnival games, always insisting that they be the clean ones, that ones that could actually be won. He was honorable, but I love the fact that when given the choice of not getting paid or pushing the crooked ones, he took the money. I will never say that he was a Saint, but he tried. He toured with the carnivals, which he hated since he had to either shack up with another carny-person or he'd stay in his car. Shared a room was not ideal. Dad, clean and sober himself at that juncture, would almost always find himself sharing with someone who had their demons that came in little plastic baggies or balloons. And that only made Dad want to help them more, which usually left him holding the bag for the room, losing whatever he may have brought. They'd scamper off, then they'd come back and he'd help them out, and the same thing'd happen all over again.

Dad got back on his feet. It took a couple of years, but he got himself a regular apartment. I'd come over to watch the wrestling PPVs with him. We'd chat, I'd give him new books to read, he'd give me back the ones I'd left him. He had a huge collection of VHS tapes, which would change. Sometimes there'd be someone crashing on Dad's floor, and somehow after they'd left, half the stuff in the apartment would change.

Dad was always giving.

When Dad found out he had cancer, it was rough. He had his own place again, which was nice. He still had folks coming over, and a girlfriend who required a lot of help as she was an ex-hooker and a junkie, but he loved her and that was that.

In those times, he was often arrested. He helped out at various shelters and kitchens, but would do his protesting at times and they'd take him in, never charge him for anything (he knew all the cops) and they'd let him go. He'd get himself a gig, like

Limo Driving or being a part of a moving team, but he was always helping people out. He'd find folks on the street and he'd get them into a shelter, or take them home, make them dinner, maybe give them a little money. He was that kind of guy. Pops never had much, but he always made sure that everyone had something, often at the expense of himself.

Pops died at the age of 50. There was a lovely memorial several months later. I've got his ashes on the bookshelf in my apartment. I'm looking at them right now. And right next to them is the February 1999 edition of *Skymall*.

I was flying back from Boston, finally returning to California after several months living in the cold climes of the North East. I was flying back and had almost forgotten my tickets. I did forget to grab anything to read. I took my seat, 21C, which was right behind the Exit Row, and went through the pocket. The *In-Flight Magazine* was crap. I mean real crap. The Crossword was challenging enough to take me from Pennsylvania to the Rockies, but there was well more than two hours to California. I was done with the magazine and the only thing left was the *Skymall*.

Skymall, the trap to get you to buy stuff while flying across the country, was full of all the stuff I expected, but there was the section on coins and such. While flipping through, I found a coin called The Widow's Mite. There was a coin minted before the time of Jesus that was a big deal. In the Bible, there's a story of Jesus watching the donations made at services. Most of the rich, and even the middle-class, gave a single silver piece, which was a fair bit of money. There was a copper version, but giving one gave a bad stigma as it was the lowest piece of currency. Well, not quite, as there was a smaller unit, 1/32 the value of a silver piece. Beggars and such would have these.

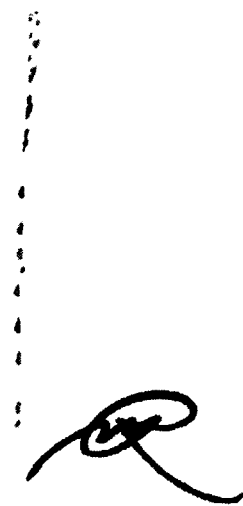
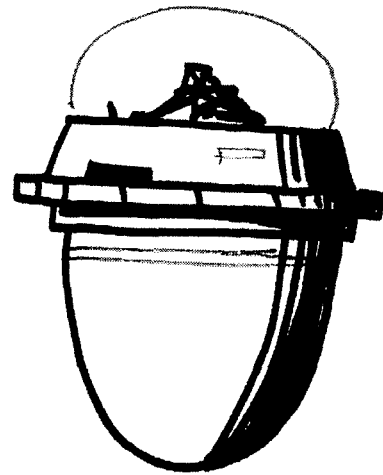
There was a widow with two children. She only had two of the small coins, both of which she gave. It was all she had in the world and basically that was her giving away all the security she had for her and her family. Jesus noted that she gave everything, she had nothing left, and that the rich were only giving a single silver piece, almost nothing to them. If I were them, I'd do the same thing.

My Pops was the widow. He just gave and gave, even if it cost him far more than what he had. I'll never be like that, I'm too much of a worrier, too much of a coward, and maybe I'm just too smart for all of that. I don't have it in me, but Dad did. 100%. That was Pops.

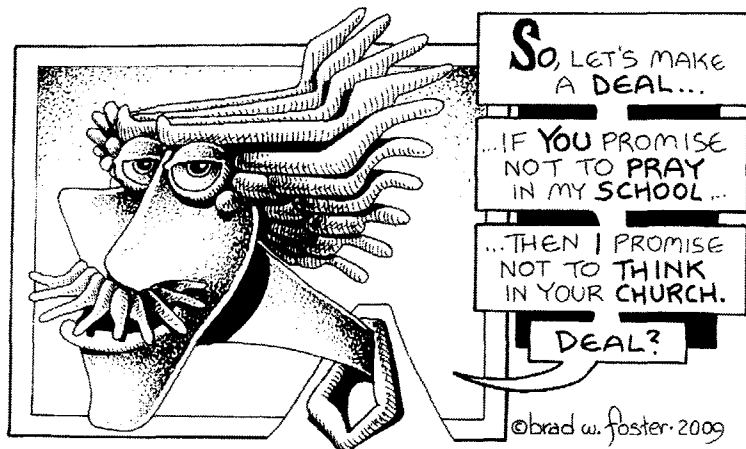
John Paul Garcia wasn't the kind of guy who

would say he was a giver, but everyone else would say that. He'd complain about being ripped off, but he'd let it happen again instead of letting someone suffer. He knew what would happen, there was no way he could have over-looked that it would happen again, but he would do it anyways. He was a mensch. A fine and deeply flawed human, but an absolute mensch.

So, I finally understood my dad largely because of something I found in the seatback of a TWA widebody aircraft. I always knew that Pops was something different, something flawed but something really special. And it only took a flight back and forth from frigid Massachusetts to make me understand him.



Wm. Rotsler



A CLOSING WORD

Looking over *Challenger* #30, I see that a number of themes have emerged, not just faith and challenge – like, families and freedom. How many of the articles foregoing have dealt with parents? How many have revolved around the freedom of expression? An accident, of course – but it's a juxtaposition that makes sense. *Families, faith and freedom* – it'd make a good campaign

slogan. Not to mention, a pretty solid foundation for one's personal life.

Challenger #30 hits the silks into queasy skies. Overseas, the nuts in North Korea threaten nuclear war, with no other justification besides the paranoia and belligerence of its military. (Surely no one thinks that dumpy crackpot Kim Jong Il runs *anything* in that country.) Hope exists in the Middle East – Obama shone with it in his Cairo speech, igniting the imagination, affection and enthusiasm of the next generation of educated Islam. As his opposition found to its dismay in America, a politician who captures a people's imagination is the greatest threat there is to entrenched power. Change will take long, painful struggle. We see that in Iran. The windbreaker-clad squirrel claiming to be the voice of that country throws a bogus election, thinking to impress the world with what a great democrat he is – and ends up impressing the world with what a frightened tin-pot fraud he is. Afghanistan burns. Pakistan simmers. The primal screw-up in Iraq refuses to settle down. Hope exists – Obama has brought a real opportunity for reconciliation – but not until some GI drags Osama bin Laden out of his cave by his feet will Obama's philosophy have a chance.

Bad as the world is, worse is the building war among ourselves. The massacre in Chloe Airoidi's church – the murder of that abortion doctor inside *his* church – the attack on the Holocaust Museum – are only at our peril written off as the aberrance of isolated psychotics. They are acts of domestic terrorism, on the main, disorganized – these cretins may have shared affection for red-meat right-wing rhetoric, loathsome racket that fed their fear and loathing, but aside from the whacked-out anti-abortion crusade, no one has suggested any direct involvement of any authority in these crimes. But the crimes feed from the same trough. Right wing rhetoric stokes their fires. Winger flacks search for wedges and demonize all those who are not themselves – claiming to be Sons of Reagan but behaving much more like Spawn of Nixon. Classic conservatives *aren't haters* – Robert Taft, Bill Buckley or Barry Goldwater would never condone violence, in their actions *or* their rhetoric. This present savagery may shut down an abortion clinic or two – terrorism works in the short term – but as the left found during the anti-Vietnam uprisings, murder and mayhem are ultimately ineffective in a free society. Our people respond to *ideas*, to hope and thought and persuasion – not to inchoate terroristic rage bespeaking only frustration and failure.

We respond to *faith* – and if not faith in a Supreme Being (because the universe is far beyond the metaphors we construct to explain it), then faith in human decency and wit. In *Freedom*. I firmly believe that America's liberty is founded on faith in our fellow citizens. That when left to our own judgment, we will do the right thing. The society will keep going. We just have to maintain respect for each other's lives and the perspectives that have come from them. And if you have *family* around you, giving you something to work and hope *for*, then all the better. Of course, as I tried to say in my opening editorial, about *my* faith, we do have a family. We *are* a family. You, me, the people beyond that farthest star.



A Visit

Joseph Green

During and after the Apollo pre-launch parties, for which **Kelly and Polly Freas** were among our most frequent guests, then-wife Nita and I several times visited the Kelly-Freas in their Virginia Beach home. During one of those visits (date now lost), **Wally Wood** dropped in for an afternoon. Nita and Polly were busy elsewhere, so it was largely just myself chatting with these two great artists. The conversation centered on the art world, of course, and especially comics – particulars not recorded in permanent memory. But I do recall that Wally was an articulate but sometimes hesitant speaker (unlike Kelly, who could speak almost as fluently as he painted), with firm opinions on a number of subjects.

Memory says Wally avoided alcohol the entire afternoon. (I only learned later that he suffered from incurable headaches, and had had bouts with alcoholism.) I think he was single at the time, and there were noticeable signs of loneliness and melancholy in his attitude and conversation. It seemed to me that he was very happy to get away from work for a time, and spend a pleasant afternoon with Kelly (and myself, because I happened to be there). Wally committed suicide eight or nine years later.

As the afternoon drew to a close, Wally asked for sketch paper, and very quickly drew a small but lovely little nymph, which he presented to me as a memento. It now hangs on the wall beside my desk.

Joe's Wally Wood original can be found on this issue's back cover.

