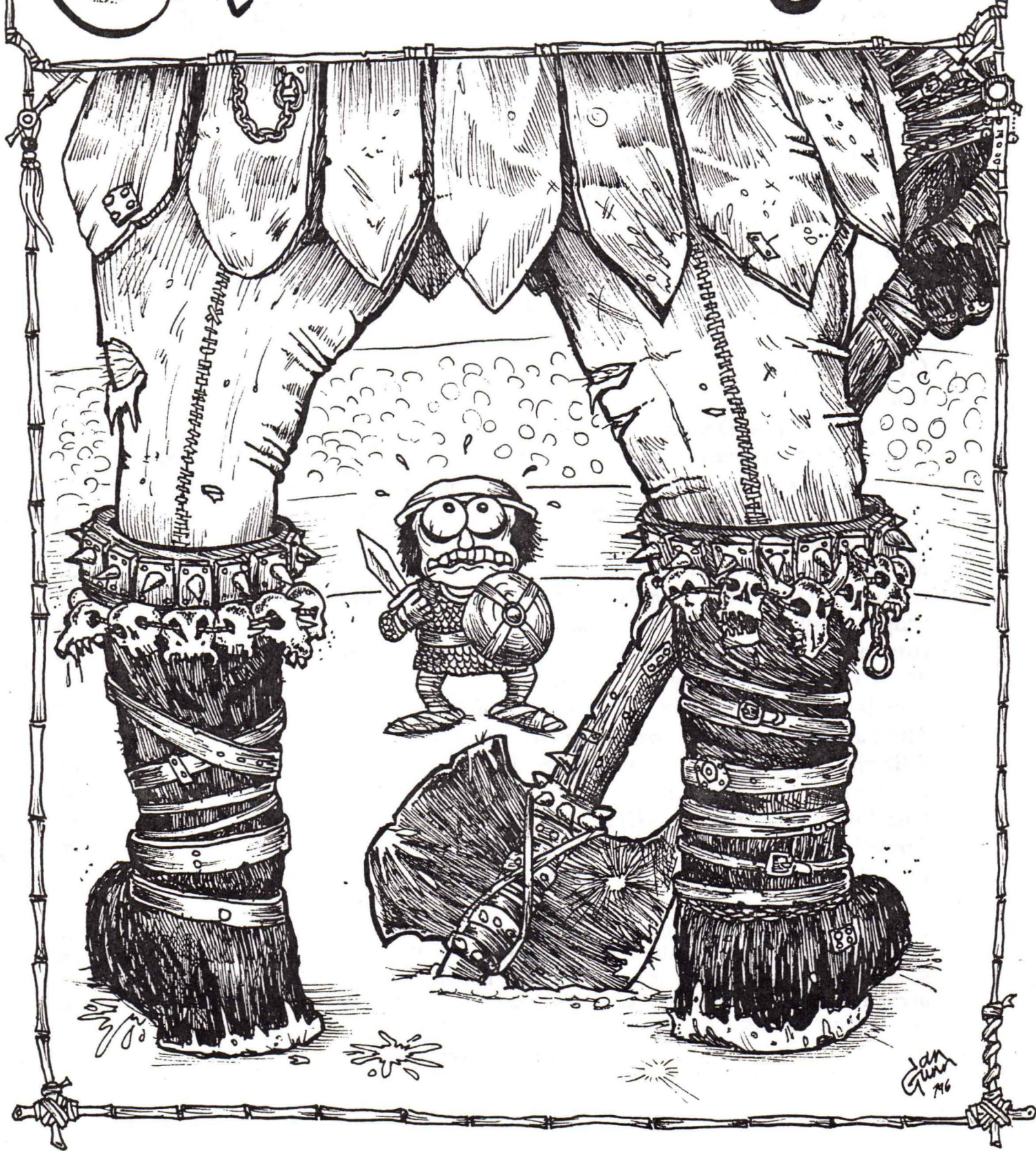


# CHALLENGER

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# CHALLENGER

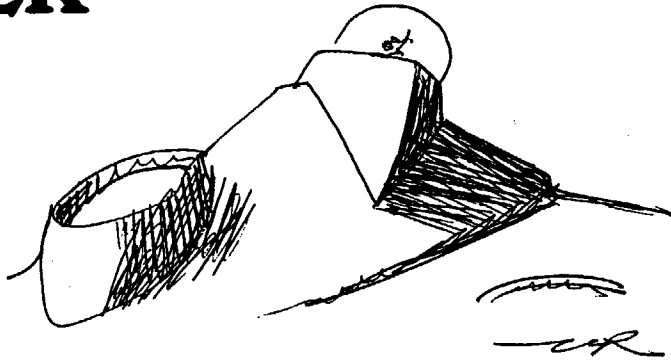
no. 6 \* Summer 1997

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GHLIII Press Publication #843

... a genzine for the tolerant, benevolent, open and inviting universe of science fiction fandom, available for letter of comment, or trade, or request, or whim, or kind gesture, or if you're a BNF or pretty lady, or if I see your address in another zine's lettercol, or \$5 per issue, which would be very nice. Printed August, 1997 by Office Depot. (c) 1997 Guy H. Lillian III. All rights returned to authors and artists.



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THE CHALLENGER ... UH ... CHALLENGE: What do Sultan Bin Salman ab-Saud, Jean-Loup Chretien, Muhammed Ahmad Faris, Bertalan Farkas, Reinhard Furrer, Marc Gameau, Zhugderdemidiyn Gurragcha, Miroslav Hermaszewski, Georgi Ivanov, Sigmund Jahn, Ernst Messerschmid, Rodolfo Neri-Vela, Wubbo Ockels, Dumitru Prunariu, Vladimir Remek, Rakesh Sharma, and Arnaldo Mendez Tamayo have in common, besides funny names? No fair calling up Zhugderdemidiyn Gurragcha to ask.

## Challenger 6

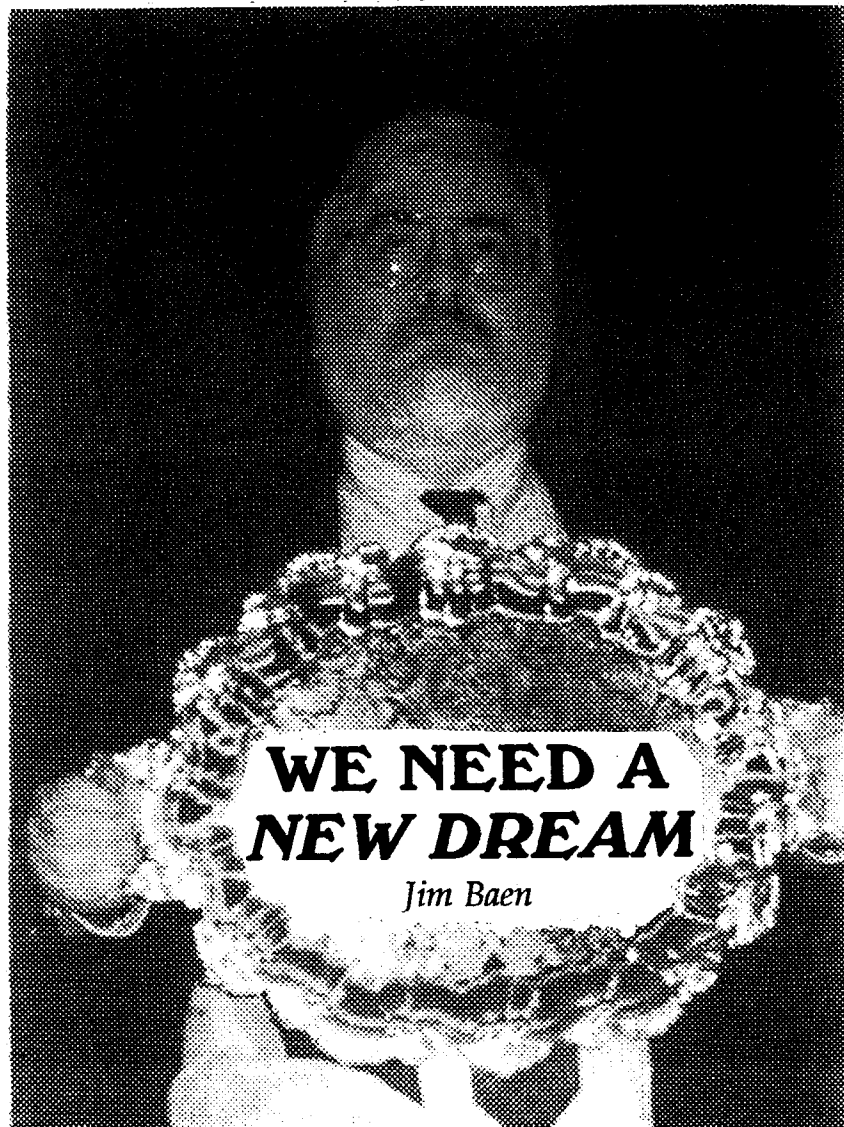
*Several years ago s.f. publisher Jim Baen addressed MidSouthCon in Huntsville, Alabama, home of America's space industry. Talk about challenging ...*

It is always a pleasure to be some little while among one's own kind, especially if for at least a little while one is in the limelight. But for me this is special. First, I don't get to be guest of honor all that often, but also because, well, this is the Home of the Marshall Space Flight Center. Marshall, Vandenberg, the Cape. When I was young these were the three centers of the universe. That's why I feel irresistibly compelled to talk about NASA. The title of my little talk is "We Need a New Dream."

Like many Americans today, I'm worried about NASA, not even sure in some sense that it's still there, though certainly there's still this bureaucracy that's in the business of looking like NASA. To me, NASA seems to have lost touch with its reason for existence.

First let's take a look at the old one, the one that NASA has sealed into a gold-plated and organizationally corrupt coffin. By "corrupt" by the way I don't mean to imply I think that fiscal dishonesty is rampant in NASA, quite the contrary. I suspect that, under the microscope as it is, there is less of that than in most government agencies. Far less than in the Post Office for example, infinitely far less than there will be in the administration of government health care, if we take that insane route. But I digress.

Frankly, even if it could be resuscitated, the old dream, the one that NASA sold for a mess of pensions, maximizing the cost and tenure of individual projects because the feared the future, has gone a bit stale. We pretty much know our way around the Solar System now, and details aside, it's a pretty grim neighborhood, about as



*Photo by GHLIII; artwork by R.M. Cleary*

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inviting as a blast furnace in the Antarctic. Once you've seen fifty thousand or so close-ups of various frozen, blasted cinders and muckballs, well the fifty-thousandth and first, unique as it may be, doesn't really seem unique. Frankly, what it seems to the non-specialist who is not kidding herself or himself, is boring.

We don't need more closeups. We don't even need more landings, at least not landings for their own sake, like that proposed international boondoggle the Mars Mission. Another slam-dunk look-at-us! techno-lunge that takes all the resources we can afford for true investments in the future, including the brains of our genuine best and brightest, and misallocates them -- wastes them -- on taking a walk to the outermost limit of the ultimate dead end street.

No. We don't need to recapitulate and expand upon the mistakes of the past--what benefits Apollo did bring us we already have; even a Mars one-shot would be just more of that. Better we save the rain forests, fonts of biological diversity we are told, than that. We could do so at a hundredth of the cost for a thousand times the benefit.

No, we need to remake this sorry dream of things entire, we need a new dream.

For me, the ultimate dream of human destiny consists of a sphere of colonization, centered on the earth and expanding outward through the galaxy and beyond at a tenth the speed of light. Some might say that's an awfully airey-fairy kind of dream, and one that doesn't offer any opportunity for devotion in the here and now. Me, I don't think so. I think we are closer by far -- or *could* be closer by far if it were not for national recto-cranial inversion -- than is immediately apparent.

We need a new dream.

Why the intense desire to explore burning little cinders and frozen slushballs? Not because of any intrinsic interest surely. Oh, they aren't totally without merit as objects of scientific inquiry, but we have dedicated generations of our best and brightest to say nothing of the lion's share of our science money to getting up close and personal with places with less to offer and less genuine potential for human welfare than the Gobi, or Antarctica--to say nothing of the rain forests, fonts of biological treasure we are told, virtually all of which could be kept pristine for less than the cost of a one-shot manned mission to Mars.

I will, by the way, except the Moon from this general diagnosis of great cost for small return. More on that anon. Back to the main thread.

Why do we do this. Oh, it's simple enough. We do it cause it's all we got. We know, we know perhaps in our human and most certainly in our American bones that space is the place, our future destiny, that Earth is a mere cradle, and getting a little tight for us now that humanity is entering the metaphorical toddler stage. Space is forever what's happening, endless frontier, the *everything* except one tiny little planet.

We still love her of course, and probably always will. Earth, after all, is the mother. But we're using her awfully hard, and she's getting on. To paraphrase Robert Heinlein's slightly less gentle dictum, we've about used this planet up; time to go get us another.

Alas, there aren't any more planets, not decent ones that have as much to offer as the Gobi or the Sahara, anyway. And those, it turns out, are worthless-- You don't think so. How come nobody lives there? Q.E.D.

Which brings me back to the main point of all this, the dilemma that for the human race to flourish rather than expire like fruit flies in a bottle whose population has already gone asymptotic, we must colonize space while much as we would like it to be otherwise, Earth is the only viable planet for several light years any direction.

In my opinion, whatever the answer to the dilemma may be, cataloguing and adding decimals to the local supply of slushballs and cinders isn't it. Given the price of more planetary

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data, we know all we need to know; even a superconducting collider offers more bang for the buck than, say, another Venus probe. Even the pretty pictures aren't worth a couple of points off the national discretionary income.

So is there nothing left? What's a poor space agency to do? What should the embodiment of the national will to thrust outward--and that's what NASA is if it's anything worthwhile--be directed toward?

Why getting us into space, of course. Not staring like a hopeless orphan through a bakery window, but getting us there. You see, the title of this talk was a rhetorical trick: we don't need a new dream. We need the old one, the one that was our lodestar before time had its way with us and we lost sight of our real goals as we met and surpassed a bunch of strawmen milestones, and began to think of space as a mere subject of scientific inquiry, and NASA as just another interest group.

We need the old dream of humans occupying the solar system. The genuine *sf*'nal dream of man and woman in space. Because if that's not what it's about, then frankly the whole thing has become a bit of a bore.



#

If I'm seeming a little hard on the home town team here, let me digress to point out that you are now seeing with me through innocent eyes: I don't know much about NASA, and except in a dreamy kind of way I don't know much about space -- but I sure do know about how easy it is to lose track of dreams. My profession, to say nothing of my publishing company, represents the culmination of a youthful obsession with science fiction. Back when I was a civilian who read three to six *sf* books a week -- and this was long enough ago that such a reading rate meant that you read everything -- I could have dreamed of nothing better than what I have achieved.

Even early on in my professional career, when I was the editor of *Galaxy and Worlds of IF*, I thought in my heart that I had a better deal than your average Senator. But now it comes on me, sometimes, very late at night, that I've lost track of what *sf* is all about. That rather than being in the business of purveying dreams and visions of the magic inherent in mundane reality and the incredible futures from which have in part to choose, in part be gifted with, and in part endure -- rather being a dream monger, I'm so focused on matters of commerce -- how many units go here, how many there, and how many are going to actually sell rather than eventually get pulped and how can I convince wholesalers to take more and not put them in the wrong places and can I afford that ad in *Publishers Weekly* and do ads do any good anyway -- as I say, I get so wrought up with that stuff that I lose track of what got me into this dream business in the first place... I feel like I spend so little time on the substance that I might as well be an accountant if science fiction has become no more than means of squeezing a little money out of shredding trees and shlepping newsprint from one place to another.

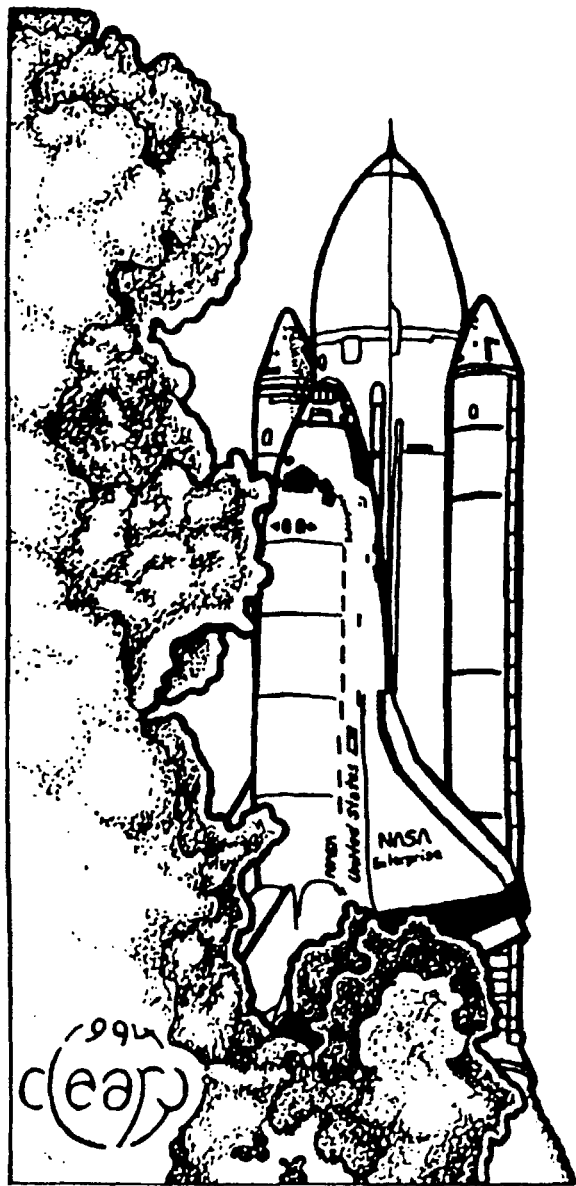
Somehow, absentmindedly, I've lost track of the fact that how many copies of a book get shipped only matters in terms of what the book is about, that if a book is genuinely bad it is not a proud thing to get it into the hands of millions. I've lost track of the dreams.

Trucks and trees, that's the essence of my business. Or so it seems sometimes, late at night. But...then I get a good night's sleep and feel better.

Has something like that happened to the space agency?

#

So if NASA's job is to get us out there -- not billion dollar probes, but *us*, lots of *us*, and our children and their children, who will have children who will have never set foot on a planet -- if that is NASA's job in the grand sense, how is NASA to carry out its glorious -- for once the word is appropriate -- mission?



First off, NASA can't be the main story. It has to recognize itself as a facilitator, a catalyst, an engine, pick your own metaphor, but NASA has to recognize that while its job is to see that things happen, NASA cannot at one and the same time be the things that it is bringing into existence. As long as it is institutionally driven to own space and the means of getting there, it won't be anything or get anywhere. Making space safe for bureaucracy is simply a non-starter.

Most of you I'm sure are familiar with the twin concepts of exothermy and endothermy: some chemical reactions generate more energy than they require, others do not. Those that do not include things like forest fire and rocket exhausts. They keep going and growing as long as they have fuel. Endothermic reactions on the other hand continue only so long as an outside entity pours energy into them. NASA must convert itself from an endothermic to an exothermic reaction, so to speak. In other words becoming a source of national wealth, rather than a bottomless sink for it. And how is NASA to do that?

Simply put, NASA should be in the business of getting other folks to build space ships. Now I am not saying that NASA should be in the orbital trucking business. It shouldn't, anymore than it should be in the airline business. Can't you see it? A thousand people gathered around displays ... the silence is deafening ... it's the first launch in a year ... in a single machine, built with loving, handcrafted labor at a cost of a billion dollars, reside the hopes and fears of a nation ... and then, the growing roar of the engines ... the crowd bursts into exultant applause

... The 747 is airborne.

The Shuttle isn't a 747? Well, no it isn't. Thank god. Imagine a 747 built from scratch, by hand, with previous state of the art being, say, the DC3. Are you sure that handcrafted 747 would be less complicated and prone to breakdown than the Shuttle? I'm not. At all.

And just as NASA shouldn't be building or selling or designing space trucks nor yet

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scheduling freight, just so NASA shouldn't be involved in anything where there is money to be made. If there's a dollar in it, private industry can be depended on to do the job cheaper and better. No, NASA should limit itself to things that both need doing and that can't be done profitably.

Does that sound too limiting? It shouldn't. It leaves all the fun stuff.

In the early 1800s it was entirely appropriate that the government undertake to subsidize the delivery of mail, and by so doing to further the sense of nationhood among the states. This could not be done at the time at a profit except in the most limited way -- sending a letter a thousand miles was a bit like sending a package to Mars.

In the mid-1800s it was entirely appropriate that the government should give away vast if narrow swathes of land to fledgling railroad companies so that the nation would be knit together by a high tech steel matrix that would make it cheaper in 1870 to send a package from New Jersey to California than it had been to send one from Philadelphia to the Adirondacks fifty years before. In the 1920s it was entirely right and proper that the primordial NASA subsidize airmail delivery for the sake of all that the carrier and its manufacturer might come to be if it could only get off the ground. In the late '40s through the early '60s it was deepest wisdom for the nation to pay for the X-Plane program. And in the '50s and '60s it was just as right for the U.S., through NASA, to undertake the conquest of space itself.

But note that all of these examples have two things in common: they were central to our national development and sense of national identity, and they were endeavors that no private enterprise could hope to accomplish for the very simple reason that there was no money in them.

Contrast that basic mission criterion with, say, the 100th subsidized launch of a commercial comsat, or worse -- far, far worse -- the sub-rosa but highly plausible campaign that some of the Agency's upper management was said to have engaged in with NASA vendors to the effect that anyone who competed with the Shuttle in any way was dead meat.

But I verge on the incendiary. One of the duties for a guest of honor, as I see it, is to survive the experience. He owes it to his hosts.

So let's just say that if it's true that the national space mission should on the one hand have no money in it and on the other expand and strengthen the reality of our nationhood, what is it precisely that NASA, in its proper aspect of the Will to Space of the Nation, should be doing?

Well, in that regard I would like to offer an extension of Parkinson's Law: you know, work expands to fill resources?

My version is that payload will expand to meet capacity. This is not to say that at any given price to orbit there won't be unused launch facilities, but that if the price is right, something will be worth launching. Just as private letters before the establishment of the post office had to be hugely important to the sender, just so is space now limited to ultra-high value packages. So high value that an additional few million in literal gold-plating makes perfect sense if it enhances the lifetime survivability of the package. And of course such ultra-high value packages should only be launched on the most failsafe and so expensive of vehicles, of course ... It all makes sense, but it doesn't make sense that it should make sense, if you follow me.

And just as when the government made mail affordable the number of letters soared, so too now, if we could drop the cost of pounds to orbit to something reasonable, would the space business take off.

What if payload could be placed in low Earth orbit for fifty dollars a pound instead of ten thousand? What would be the result of being able to place a ten thousand pound package in orbit for half a million instead of a hundred million? I firmly believe no amount of launch capacity at that price would be capable of meeting the demand that such a price would generate. How much

does it cost to build a Space Conestoga?

At fifty dollars a pound to orbit we would see the equivalent of the subsidized land rush of the 1840s. It would mark the beginning of the urbanization of the Solar System--a solar system I might add that would be informed with ideals and sensibilities recognizable to Americans.

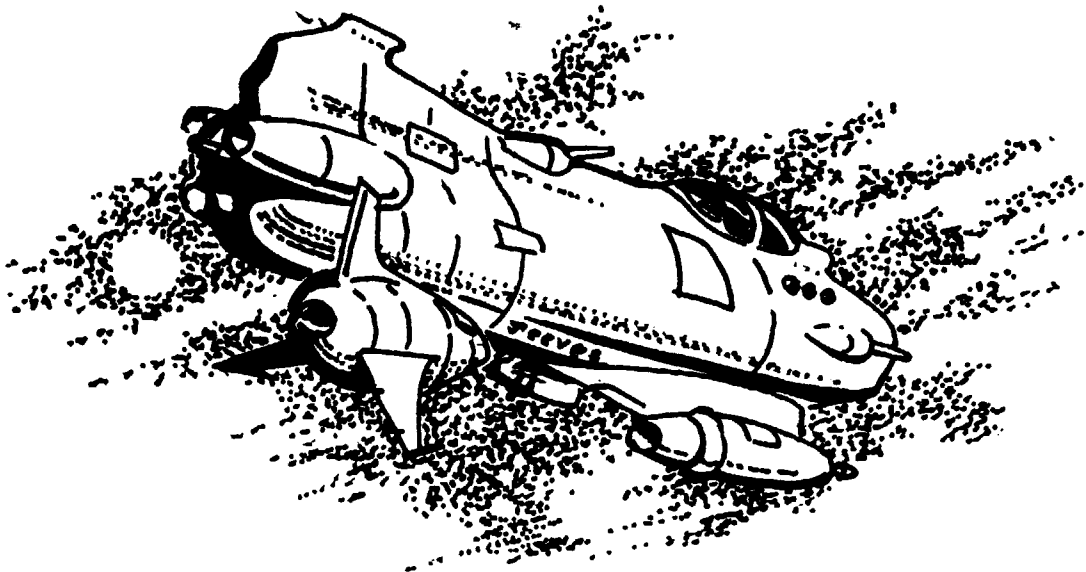
But as I said orbital poundage is not delivered at a unit rate of fifty dollars--it's more like ten thousand dollars. But it doesn't have to be like that.

To repeat: It is the government's legitimate job to provide subsidies that support and further the expansion and cohesion of the nation. The mails in 1800. The railroads and settler settlements of the 1800s in general. The air mails subsidies. The wholesale conversion at no charge of WWII bomber technology to commercial aviation ... the X-planes...Mercury and Apollo. All of these were programs not just in the national interest but that helped to define and knit the nation into a single fabric.

To further its mission NASA should not be spending lots of money subsidizing expensive spacecraft. NASA should be spending lots of money subsidizing and even commissioning cheap spacecraft. As a wild and crazy example, give Chuck Rutan a billion dollars and the use of the Marshall Space center and you would get the rest of the way.

Another nice thing about reconceiving the very purpose of NASA as the facilitator of humankind -- Americans and their friends, that is -- making space their ultimate and endless frontier is that the mission is so open-ended. Cheap launches to orbit are only the beginning. We also need atomic drives to settle the Solar System, be they fusion plasma, or my favorite, pulse fission. We need a few ultra-speed probes to the nearest stars--so what if we have to spend a few billion on nanotech research to get things down to pinhead size so we can boost them to a big chunk of light speed? We need an asteroids program. This is important stuff, scoping out territory for new future settlements, not just eye candy for astronomers.

NASA if it can get its organization head on straight, can be the starting point for all of this, rather than just the space equivalent of the Welfare Department for engineers.



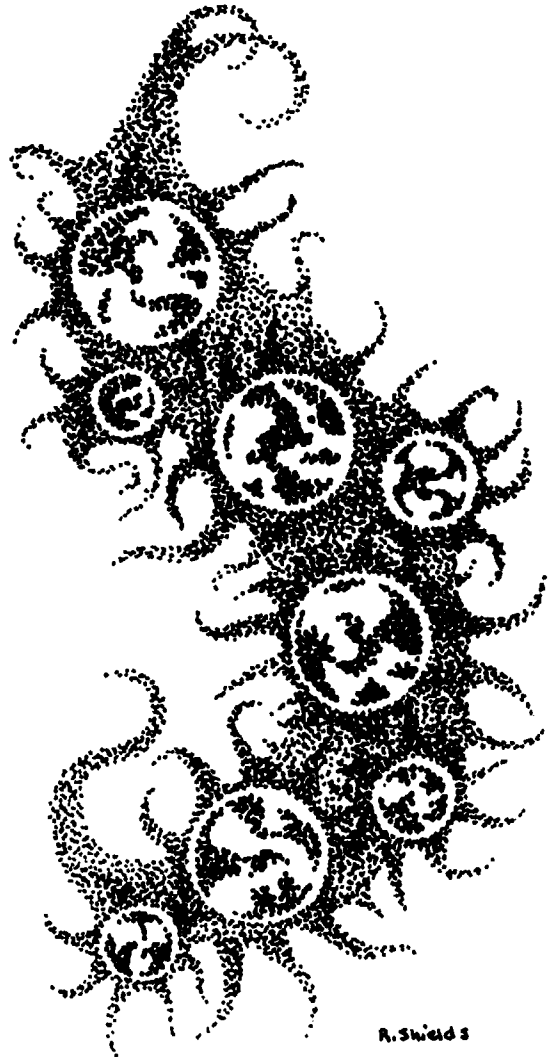


# THE SKYLARK OF **SPACEWAYS**

Harry Warner Jr.

A recent letter from Joe Siclari asked for permission to make available via computer the contents of my first fanzine, **Spaceways**. This was a genzine which I produced from 1938 to 1942. It ran to 30 issues. I told him to help himself but to exercise caution with just one page of one issue, which contained a poem by H. P. Lovecraft. It probably went into the public domain when I published it but I fear that distribution today might create a problem with the Lovecraft estate people on some grounds other than copyright protection. Joe is trying to make available to computer owners a lot of artifacts from fandom's past. I don't know if he will ever get around to carrying out his intentions towards **Spaceways**, but his letter started me wondering various things about what fans would think of **Spaceways** today and how much fandom has changed since I distributed its final issue.

I don't think there is any exact equivalent of **Spaceways** today, as far as type of material published and general editorial weltanschauung are concerned. The nearest to it might be Tom Sadler's **The Reluctant Famulus**, although Tom's fanzine is more relaxed than **Spaceways** ever was and he injects himself into it more often than I did, making it have a faint perzine aura which nobody could ever find in **Spaceways**. There are many fans who are ardent followers of TRF and it's scorned by a certain clique of fandom which corresponds to the cafe society fandom Eric Mayer used to pontificate against. **Spaceways** would probably produce a similar variety of reactions if dozens of fans suddenly found themselves reading right through all those issues today, via monitors or acquisition of copies at a dealer's table at a con. In **Spaceways**, I published mostly material that verged on the sercon or was pure sercon in nature, but there was usually a sprinkling of humor and some items which today we would call faanish because they were about fans than about science fiction.



R. Shields

Illustrations by **RUTH SHIELDS**

For instance, I believe **Spaceways** was among the very first fanzines to publish really long worldcon reports and there was an interminable round robin serial in which real fans were involved in fantastic adventures. But **Spaceways** also went in heavily for book reviews, biographies of pro writers, short science fiction and fantasy stories by fans and pros (the latter undoubtedly coming to me direct from the stack of professionally rejected submissions). This mix wasn't much different from the contents of a number of other fanzines of the era. My only real pioneering thrust was a decision to exclude from my fanzine any material that seemed likely to lead to fussing and feuding, so I rejected anything dealing with politics and religion. This policy didn't cause any other fanzines to imitate me, but I like to think that it demonstrated to others that the juvenile bickering that had been so prominent in fanzines up to then was not necessary, and gradually the serious conflicts moved for the most part into fanzines published by the major pugilists.

Sam Moscovitz says some nice things about this aspect of **Spaceways** in **The Immortal Storm**, but he never knew why I established that policy. I wasn't trying to bring peace to fanzine fandom or burying my editorial head in the corflu by ignoring the ballistic atmosphere. I felt I was too ignorant to handle controversy. At the time, I felt an inferiority complex in fandom because of my age. I was 15 when I published the first issue of **Spaceways**, I had never met another fan at the time, and I had somehow acquired the delusion that I was a child prodigy in a hobby field where everybody else was at least middle-aged if not elderly. I felt incompetent to judge the merits and the veracity of controversial material so I ignored it. It was a considerable surprise when fans started to visit me and when corresponding fans revealed their ages and I realized I was only a few years younger than almost everyone in fandom at the time and *older* than a few fans.

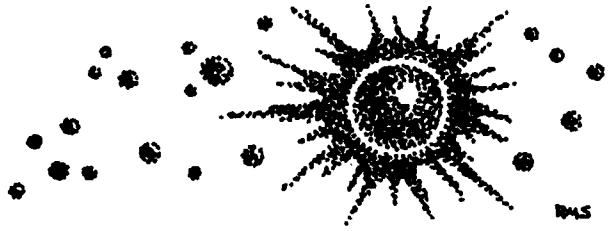
Nevertheless, either because of this policy or despite it, **Spaceways** was well-liked by many fans during its lifespan. It finished in first place in several fanzine polls during its four years. (In that era, taking polls was a popular pastime in fandom. Sometimes a fan gathered lists of favorite fanzines, favorite fans, favorite pro authors and so on by asking every other fan encountered at club meetings or conventions, sometimes a fanzine editor asked readers to submit their favorites for a poll to be summarized in a future issue.) This popularity must have resulted from a couple of factors. **Spaceways** was regular, never failing to appear in a span of more than two months, it was legible, it gave a good bit of reading for the three-for-a-quarter price thanks to the absence of artwork and the elite typeface, and I think it was literate despite a few spelling eccentricities I hadn't yet shed. Even today, it's easier to read a copy of **Spaceways** than 80% of the current fanzines produced via computer and office copier, because of that clear black mimeo ink on white paper.

But if I understand the Retro-Hugo rules correctly, there's no chance that **Spaceways** will ever compete for one of those things, even if some future worldcon decides to revive the awards, at least until worldcons begin to give out Hugos for achievements a century ago in the late 2030s and early 2040s. That's a shame in a non-egotistical sense. I'm not vain enough to want another Hugo but I am curious to know how fandom as a body would feel about **Spaceways** today. Would the other prominent fanzines of the day find more favor now because they put more emphasis on humorous material or because they were beautifully illustrated? Or would enough voters feel **Spaceways** embodied the spirit of the fannish age to give it a Retro-Hugo? I think the former is more probable. Once in a long while, I'll see in a letter or in a fanzine a note about how the writer came across a copy of **Spaceways** and was somewhat disappointed with it. I can't remember the last time someone told me how

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wonderful he thought it was.

Still, if Siclari actually does get **Spaceways** broken down into electronic impulses, there will be some things in the 30 issues that should interest almost any modern fan. The famous pros of its time were unbelievably kind to me when I asked them for material, so **Spaceways** contains stuff by such celebrities as HPL, John W. Campbell, Dr. Smith, and many other big names of its time, plus even more by fans who were destined to gain equal professional fame: Bradbury, Pohl, Del Rey, Tucker, and so on. Alas, one of the finest things I acquired never saw print. Sam Youd, who hadn't yet begin to use John Christopher as his pen name, sent me a superb memoir of his boyhood years, then for some reason withdrew it just before I got it into print. Why, I never learned. About a quarter-century after my last issue, Bill Evans thought **Spaceways** had enough material of continuing interest to publish a huge collection of reprints from it. Just recently, a major con reprinted an article for its program book without the formality of asking me for permission and without sending me a copy of the reprint. Joe is a good judge of fanzine material, and if he thinks it's worth resurrecting in computer form, maybe much of its contents not completely outdated today.



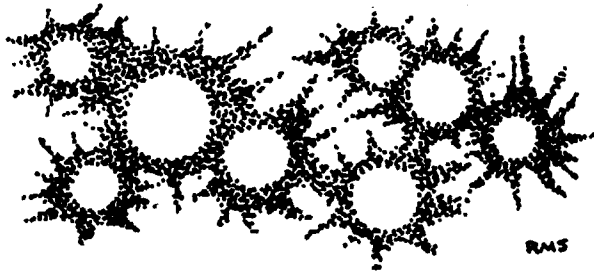
Although I'm not in that select minority of fans who published their first fanzine without having ever seen a fanzine, I wasn't too distant from that status. I doubt if I had received more than a dozen fanzines when I went to work on the first issue of **Spaceways**. Perhaps half of them had been letterpress publications, which I obviously couldn't imitate with my typewriter and mimeograph. If I had any model at all, it might have been Bob Madle's **Fantascience Digest**, although memory is tenuous on this matter and it's conceivable that I didn't start to receive that publication until after I'd produced my first issue; all I can be sure of is that there were some similarities in format and general editorial approach. But most of my decisions on how to go about publishing **Spaceways** were uninfluenced by the example of others. I sort of mashed up in my thoughts all the things I most frequently encountered in both prozines and mundane periodicals. I went in strongly for departmentalizing the table of contents, listing what would be regular features separately from fiction and individual articles. I didn't do too much tampering with the texts of the stuff submitted to me, except when obvious typos had occurred or a sentence here and there might violate my no-controversy rule.

There were a couple of special problems with that first issue of **Spaceways**. I didn't have a cover and I didn't have a stapler. My family came to my rescue. My father drew the spaceship that appeared on the first issue's front cover and a cousin who worked in the business office of the local newspapers persuaded the lady who ran its job department to staple the edition for me. In the future, my father traced onto stencil several cover illustrations that came on plain paper, because my efforts to translate paper drawings to stencils were as impossible as any attempt I made to draw freehand.

Also beyond my ability to remember exactly is the circulation **Spaceways** possessed. I have a vague notion that it was sometimes slightly under, sometimes a little over a hundred copies per issue. This was long before the fannish rule of "the usual." So letters of comment

didn't entitle the writers to future issues. I sold enough copies of most issues to pay the cost of paper, ink, stencils, staples and postage, and when an issue went into the red, I felt no remorse because I was receiving lots of fanzines as trades for *Spaceways*. Freebies went to fans who contributed material regularly, to a few regular correspondents, and to some others who for one reason or another seemed entitled to receive free copies honoris causa. Very rarely were many issues left over. In fact, I found it necessary to reprint the stencils for the first issue because I hadn't expected as good a demand as occurred and ran out of copies with dimes and quarters still coming in.

Of course, fanzine material necessarily varied greatly during the life of *Spaceways* from today. Almost all of our science fiction came from magazines, both the prozines and the scattering of other periodicals that ran a science fiction story once in a while. So emphasis was on those stories, their authors, and the professional editors. Except for serials shown before the weekend cowboy films, there wasn't much science fiction or fantasy to be found in current movies and it was next to impossible to see a movie that had been released in the past. Aside from *Buck Rogers*, which was too juvenile for even the typical youthful fan, there was little on the radio derived from science fiction in those years. Comics with science fiction or fantasy themes were more numerous, but they were beneath the dignity of most of us. There was no mass television audience yet. Perhaps a half-dozen newly published books each year had science fiction themes, but they cost several dollars apiece, far beyond most fans' purses, and the cheap paperbacks were not yet generally available.



Contrary to some misconceptions among fans today, the fanzines of the late 1930s and early 1940s contained quite a bit of material that had nothing to do with science fiction or fantasy. The social, political and economic issues of the day influenced the writings of some fans. There was a fair amount of writing about the moderately distant future world's general aspects, not just the science that

would be utilized in it. The Britishers were understandably more preoccupied with what was to come, because of the general fear that World War II would break out very soon and would not stop until the combatants had brought civilization down to near-barbarity. Fandom *as a culture* also got attention in fanzines, with much emphasis on what fans did and thought when they weren't reading the most recent issue of *Astounding Stories*. The New York City-area feuding did not engulf all fandom as today's young fan might assume from reading *The Immortal Storm*, but it did provoke a fair amount of sermonizing from those in distant parts of the nation who should have had the sense to stay out of the boring mess.

Occasionally I find myself wondering what my career in fandom would have been if Jim Avery had been able to subdue the wild hektograph. He was a correspondent who first put the idea of starting a fanzine into my soft head. We worked out a joint project. Jim would type up and hektograph material which I would assemble and edit, and we would share whatever costs happened to occur. Everything went well until I had enough articles and columns together to fill a first issue. Then Jim discovered that a sound body, intelligence, and good character don't necessarily qualify a person to operate a hektograph efficiently. He had one mishap after another with the harmless-looking tray of Jello-like substance, and finally told me we'd better drop the whole idea of a fanzine because he wasn't going to do

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any more botched production. I was tempted to follow his advice, but several dollars' worth of orders and subscriptions had arrived, all those nice pros had taken the time to send me material, and I decided to take over as the sole begetter. I don't think he was completely happy about my intention but we remained on good terms. Years later he paid me a visit. Jim eventually wound up somewhere on the Virginia peninsula after migrating from his original Skowhegan, Maine, home.

Suppose Jim had somehow succeeded in publishing **Spaceways** on a regular basis with that hektograph. **Spaceways** wouldn't have made as much of an impact on fandom because it would have been harder to read, would have contained less material per issue, and would have been a digest-sized publication instead of the letter-sized fanzine that I produced. Would I have tired of sharing the glory? If I had lost interest in **Spaceways**, would I have remained as active in fandom as I was for the next dozen years, and would I have hung around the fanzine field without a full interruption for almost six decades? If I hadn't, what would I have done with all that time which fandom has usurped down through the years? Would I have become a famous pro or would I be suffering now from advanced Alzheimer's, the result of having nothing to exercise my mind in my final years? Don't expect me to answer those questions, because I don't know what would have happened.

**Spaceways** folded after four years for several obvious reasons. My father's health broke down early in 1942, and I didn't like to disturb him with too much typing. I was on the very verge of being drafted and was positive that I would never make it through basic training because of my lack of muscles and bodily agility, so that problem preyed on my mind continually. And I was getting a little tired of the routine things about publishing a fanzine, like keeping subscription records and typing a dummy of every page in order to make stuff fit and to provide even right edges.

But sometimes I think I might have gone on for at least another year or two if it hadn't been for an editorial decision I had made during the latter part of **Spaceways'** existence. I had begun to run interior illustrations, as a result of one reader after another complaining about the unbroken masses of type on every page except the front cover. Never in my youth, middle age, or old age have I been a picture-oriented person. I rarely notice them when I read a magazine because I prefer the written stuff. It was a lot of extra work to arrange for artistic fans to send me small fillos or to borrow them from some mundane source and to remember to leave the right amount of space for them on the dummies. If I'd utilized the sense God gave me, I would have gone back to a no-interior-picture policy when I first began to react badly to the extra work. But I didn't, and today I suspect that this might have been the major reason why I ended **Spaceways**.

I don't think I've looked at an issue of **Spaceways** since I went through my file a couple of decades ago in the course of fan history research. I remember that I decided at that time that the fanzine was entirely too formal and a bit stuffy, but these qualities existed in some of the other prominent fanzines of **Spaceways'** time. When Bill Evans published a huge anthology of **Spaceways** material a couple of decades after its last issue, I found it a pleasure to read, freed from the framework in which the contributions had appeared.

And if anyone wonders why I don't put pictures into my apazines, he or she might have realized by now that I have come to know better. I don't think I could have published **Horizons** for every FAPA mailing since 1944 or have hit every mailing of both SPPA and SAPS since I joined those groups with illustrations.



6-2-97

*Prologue: I'm sure those of you over 40 remember the Cushman motor scooter, from the days before 1965. For all of you others too young to know, herewith a brief synopsis. Cushman scooters were built at the Cushman Motor Works in Lincoln, Nebraska, from the mid-thirties through the mid-sixties. There were many different models, from the Eagle, which looked like a smaller version of a motorcycle, with the gas tank and the engine up front in the frame, to trucksters, military versions, and the Step-Thru's, with a platform for your feet behind the handlebars, and the engine under the "body" where the seat was. This body was called the "Tailsheet," and was removable to afford access to the engine, chain, etc.*

*The Eagles had around 8 to 9 horsepower, and the Step-Thru's 4 to 5. Some had two or more speeds in the transmission, while others were "automatics," with a centrifugal clutch. The only controls the latter versions had were a throttle and brake. They started off slowly, and had to be held wide open to build up high speeds for climbing hills, etc. They weighed around 250 pounds, and had smaller, more balloon-type tires than did motorcycles. The scooter I owned was an automatic, and back then, was really The Thing To Have -- especially if you were too young to drive a car -- and in many states you didn't even need a driver's license to operate them.*

*In Science Fiction the proverbial Sense of Wonder had been discussed, defined, and delineated over the years by fans of all ages, who proclaim the S.o.W. as one of the reasons they were hooked into reading stf. I myself had that same S.o.W. during the years I read stf, until I too became jaded and "lost" it.*

*But would you believe that about the same time I started reading stf, I also experienced a True-Life "S.o.W." that could have seriously injured or even killed me? My Cushman scooter played a big part in it. I hasten to add that although I'm treating this subject lightly now, everything I'm about to relate is absolutely true -- with hardly any elaboration!*

Most stf fans reading this must have seen *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where near the end the astronaut goes on a spacewarp-like psychedelic trip to the planet Jupiter. My experience wasn't quite that long or colorful, but it sure was attention-getting, and very, very, real!

## *Challenger 6*

One day when I was 14, back in 1951, my father said to me, "Come on, Bill, we're going to look at a motor scooter." It turned out that one of his co-workers at the Wonder Bread Bakery had a used 1947 Cushman for sale for \$75. Sure enough, in the back of his garage, where it had sat for years, was a red, very dirty, model 52 Pacemaker Step-Thru. "Do you want it?" Dad asked. Silly question! As if I'd say, "Uh ... no ... I wouldn't want to have it, Pop!" It was love at first sight. After they showed me how to operate it, Dad drove his '47 Nash back home, and I followed on the scooter. What a thrill at that age to have my own motorized vehicle! I had seen many Whizzer motor bikes around town, plus a few scooters, but I never dreamed I would ever have one of my own.

The scooter was used for fun, riding around the neighborhood, as well as for going to high school across town. I parked behind a gas station near school, then after school let out around 3:30 P.M., I'd ride back across town to the Goodyear Bowling Alley, where I was a pinsetter. I'd work until the leagues were over around 10 P.M., then go home, do my homework, and get to bed late.

Getting bored with the routine, and hearing from the older guys in my neighborhood what a great town Kent, Ohio was for meeting college girls, one day I decided to "flick" work after school. I planned to see what adventure I could get into, using the scooter as a lure! Since I was known as a "good kid" -- never in trouble, like some of the guys -- this was a real departure. As I walked into the bowling alley, I almost talked myself out of being sick (talk about the power of suggestion!), so when I told the manager I didn't feel good, I actually did have a queasy feeling in my stomach. They let me go, and surprise! As soon as I walked out into the fresh (rubber-scented) air, I felt a lot better!

Exhilarated by my freedom, and ignoring the warning in my head that I was doing something I shouldn't -- plus the fact that my parents both assumed I was working instead of chasing around the countryside -- I hopped on the scooter and headed out of town. It was a beautiful, warm, sunshiny day, and I felt great!

The journey to Kent involved my riding through a suburb on the Eastern outskirts of Akron called Tallmadge, which like many small communities had a circle at the town hall, with many roads joining it all around the hub. It was always busy, and extremely difficult to enter and leave because of the traffic. I navigated it smoothly, and entered onto Route 261 -- the road leading to Kent. Everything went fine until about halfway to my destination. I had held the throttle wide open for quite a long time (too long!), when suddenly, "Clink! Clank! Clunk!" and the scooter died.

It just came to a stop and wouldn't start again. (Uh oh!) I took off the tailsheet and checked the engine, and knew instantly that the trouble was internal, and here I was, many miles from home, stranded with a busted scooter! I just knew the Good Lord was punishing me for flicking work!

I went to a nearby farmhouse and told my tale to the man living there. He agreed to tow me back to town, and backed his car up to the scooter. I replaced the tailsheet, but didn't tighten down the bolts holding it on, figuring my weight would keep it on while he pulled me.

Opening his trunk, the farmer produced a chain, which he hooked under his car bumper and to the top of the scooter's handlebars. Now I was raised at home, and at Catholic schools, to always respect my elders and keep my mouth shut, since they were wiser than I; but this business of the chain on the handlebars "jus' didn't look right to me ..." as Red Skelton used to say. But I figured since he was an adult he knew what he was doing. Wrong!

"Are you ready?" he asked me. "Yes," I replied. He got in his car, and we started up ...

5 ... 10 ... 15 mph. We hadn't gone far, perhaps 1/4 mile or so, when I found that when the chain was taut, I couldn't steer at all! The force of the pulling chain on the handlebars prevented me from turning the scooter right or left, and I almost popped the muscles in my arms trying!

The scooter drifted back and forth on the narrow, two-lane road. We topped a small rise, and the scooter sloughed to the left, toward oncoming traffic! I was frozen with fear ... but heroically fought it and got the scooter back to the right. I couldn't wave an arm at the man driving because if I did I'd lose what little control I had! I was just about to yell out to him to stop, and we had reached 22 miles per hour, when a drift to the right became too much, and the scooter went off onto the berm. It immediately flipped onto its side and he pulled the scooter right out from under me!

This all happened in milliseconds. I released the handlebars. The tailsheet flew off and landed in the other lane, while I was *still flying through the air*, inches from the ground! What a predicament! *Now* what do I do? Looking down at the rushing ground, my brain screamed out in self-defense: "RUN IT OUT, BILL! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE!" Stretching out my right leg as I hit old terra firma, I took One ... Two ... Three ... gutwrenching strides and was mentally congratulating myself on my terrific feet ... uh ... *feat*, and then my speed overcame my reactions and I went head over heels!

So there I was, literally somersaulting down the roadside at 22 miles an hour! I must have been completely relaxed -- either naturally or from the force of my speed -- because I rolled like a bowling ball (see, I told you I should have gone to work!). This probably saved me a broken neck. I somersaulted so fast I couldn't even feel my arms and legs at all! It felt like my brain was the nucleus of an atom, while the rest of me revolved around it like electrons. I kept hoping I wouldn't hit a tree or be scattered all over the countryside. I must have rolled 30 yards or so. My eyes were wide open the whole time. Here's where the psychedelic part comes in.

Just like rapid, tightly-edited, almost kaleidoscopic shots in a movie, I had staccato-like glimpses of the beautiful blue sky, then the trees on my right, then the green grass in front of my big nose, with black ants crawling on the blades ... over and over and over again. I knew if I had done this in the Olympics, I bet I'd have gotten perfect 10's!

Eventually I could feel myself slowing down, and actually came out of the roll right back on my feet, dizzy, staggering about like a drunk. "Somebody Up There must like me," I thought, "I don't have a scratch!" And I didn't -- not even a pulled muscle or *anything*. (Although to this day some people claim my brains are a bit scrambled.) I looked ahead, and that fool was *still* pulling the scooter on its side, sparks flying like the Fourth of July. I ran to the tailsheet to get it out of the way of on-coming traffic, and carried it to the side of the road. I noticed a man standing there, holding the bridle of a horse, his 8-year-old son sitting in the saddle. They were frozen in time, their eyes bugged out and mouths wide open, staring in wonderment at me. Apparently they couldn't believe what they just saw.

"Did you see *all* that?" I asked. "I sure as hell did," the man exclaimed. About this time the farmer finally reacted to the accident, stopped his car, and ran back to me, face white as a sheet, scared to death. "Are you all right?" he asked.

"Sure," I replied. "Just a little dizzy, that's all."

"That's good," he exclaimed, opened up the trunk, tossed in the chain, hopped into his seat, made a quick U-turn, and boogied off as fast as he could. Must have thought he'd get sued. It happened so fast it was just like the Keystone Kops!

The scooter's left handlebar was bent straight back, and the frame and tailsheet had bad



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scratches all over them. So now the scooter was messed up inside *and* out. (We found out later that the initial problem had been the "automatic" clutch sprocket -- it had broken into three separate pieces as a result of holding it wide open so long. Probably metal fatigue.)

I had to go to another house down the road for more help, and this time I told the man please *not* to hook the chain to the top of the handlebars. He attached it down near the wheel, and it worked okay. He explained that he could only tow me to Talmadge Circle, but I figured that was better than nothing. So what did he do? When we got to the Circle, he dropped me off at its *entrance*, then drove *around the circle* past the street I wanted to go to, then past me back to his home. Was there something in the water on the east side of Akron that made people stupid?

It took some time, but I finally managed to push that damned scooter around the Circle without getting hit by cars. By this time it had to be close to 6 P.M., and I was getting really worried. Darkness came early. My father, the typical Italian parent, had a very explosive temper. I figured there would be hell to pay when I got home. On the road from the Circle, I started the scooter up a small hill that seemed like a mountain to me. I'd push it a few feet, then stomp the brake pedal to keep it from rolling backwards, then push it a few more feet, etc. Feeling sorry for myself, and scared about what Dad would do to me, I finally stopped, sat on the scooter, and started to cry.

Traffic went by unfeelingly until a beat-up old pickup truck rattled up, the whole back end built of wood. A grizzled old man looked out at me. It turned out he was going the other direction when he saw me sitting there crying, so he made a U-turn to come back and investigate. He asked, "What's the matter, kid?"

I told him my sad tale, and he said, "I'll take you home if you help me get the scooter in the back of my truck. How much does it weigh? The 2x4s holding my truck together are kind of rotten."

My Savior's truck held up okay, and he dropped me off right in front of my house. I thanked him profusely -- but to this day never did find out his name.

Our driveway was long and uphill, but I got the scooter into the garage as fast as possible. Dad worked second shift and Mom was home alone, so I went in and hesitatingly told her everything that happened. I can't recall if I told her about the somersault -- but I'm sure she interceded for me when Dad got home at midnight, because he didn't rebuke me *too* much.

My adrenalin was still working pretty good, and although I went up to bed, my Sense of Wonder over my amazing somersault -- I relived it countless times -- kept me awake for hours. So that was my real life "S.o.W." Because of it, I never flicked work again, and I never did make it to Kent on that scooter -- which is probably just as well, because I had no idea what I would have done there anyway!





## **MEPHISTOPHELES AND MAN AND NATURE**

*Richard A. Dengrove*

Do you remember reading *Faust*, or about *Faust*? Did you ever ask how the Devil got the name of Mephistopheles? Probably not. I think it is a fair question, though? This era, since the Renaissance, has been called Faustian. Like *Faust*, we have striven to control nature; and we fear, like *Faust*, we have sold our souls in the process. Of course, this is handled in different ways at different times. And we can see that in the different versions of Mephistopheles and the *Faust* legend.

Some believe the life of *Faust* was based on a historical personage; but if it is, we do not know who he is. He has been identified with a Georg Helmstetter. Early on his name is Georg and not Johann. *Faustus* may not be his family name. The people of the time often took Latin pseudonyms and *Faustus* is Latin for fortunate. Originally, *Faust* was a practitioner of high, learned magic who degenerated to practicing low magic: casting horoscopes and predicting the future for money. Some were impressed by his wit and others saw him as the charlatan he was. He is first mentioned in 1503 by The Abbot Trithemius, a discrete practitioner of high magic.

*Faust* was not associated with the Devil until about 1540. Even then, it was the indirect pact with the Devil, which St. Augustine mentioned in the Fourth Century: *Faust* chose to do evil and be disreputable. Many who wrote about him were Lutherans, who were very interested in such indirect Devilish goings on. Melancthon, Luther's disciple, wrote an account of *Faust* based allegedly on personal experience. While astrology could be an approved activity for even a religious man like Melancthon, its debasement was not. He and other Lutherans easily identified *Faust's* horoscope peddling with the indirect pact. For which it was easy to substitute a direct pact. And that direct pact with the Devil dates to 1580; a pact that marks *Faust* as a witch.

The first book solely about *Faust* was Johann Spiess' *Historia von Dr. Johann Faustus* published in 1587. *Faust* desires to obtain knowledge by his own efforts rather than Divine grace; considered a very presumptuous thing at the time. This is different from an earlier sinner, Theophilis. In a 6th Century story, he only wants the honors he was unfairly denied. *Faust* wants more, forbidden knowledge. And this upsets the natural social and psychological order; the type of control of nature the men of the Renaissance thought imperiled your soul. *Faust* at first calls up Beelzebub, who gives his case to Satan. Satan, of course, is too high to involve himself with even a catch as big as *Faust*. So, he, in turn, gives him to Mephostophiles, who promises to serve *Faust* for twenty-four years if he will promise his soul to Satan. If you will notice, the spelling is "Mephos", and not the conventional "Mephis". This, I believe, is significant.

After the pact, Mephostophiles tells *Faust* outright that he can escape hell if he can be humble and glorify God, but such submission is something *Faust* cannot do. Also, *Faust* gives in to the sin of despair. This pact certainly allows him to satisfy his lust: in an orgy at the Vatican, in Constantinople in the Sultan's seraglio, with Helen of Troy. She turns out to be a succubus, i.e., a demon. He sells horoscopes and magic all over Europe to Emperors, bishops and professors. In short, the purpose of Mephistopheles is to not only upset, but invert, the "natural order" of things. Lust rather than reason rules *Faust's* life and the high kings and sultans are made fools of by a lowly charlatan. Also, *Faust* learns there has been a whole history of the Devil inverting nature like that: for example, in Helen of Troy. The great nations of Greece fighting over the lowest of the low, a demon. After twenty-four years comes to an end, *Faust's*

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students find his mutilated body on a dungheap.

Thus ends the Spiess' story. Some years later, Christopher Marlowe based his play **Doctor Faustus** on the English translation.

Mephistopheles is an appropriate demon for inverting the natural hierarchy of Earth, for he inverts the natural hierarchy of Hell. The literati of the Renaissance loved hierarchy almost as much as we hate it. We have long forgotten the elaborate hierarchies of Hell that separated devil from devil and demon from devil, from the princes and generals of Hell to its lowest privates. These only remain in the names of lesser demons, princes of Hell we sometimes mistake for Old Nick himself: e.g., Beelzebub, Astaroth, Asmodeus.

There were two main hierarchies being batted about. The first was the conventional one: 1) the false gods of the gentiles, 2) the liars and equivocators, 3) the vessels of anger, 4)

**MEPHOSTO  
HELES ME  
PHISTOPHE  
LES SATAN  
LUCIFER  
THE DEVIL**



*CHRIS JUGE*

malicious avenging devils, 5) cozeners, 6) aerial devils (who cause plague, thunders, etc.), 7) the destroyers, 8) the calumniating devils, and 9) the tempters. One reason this was accepted was that it contained nine ranks to match the nine that Angels were believed to have.

However, its less accepted, more Platonic competitor is the one that interests us. It was created by Michael Psellos (1018-78), a professor of philosophy in the Byzantine Empire. It had only six demons: 1) the Leliouria in the heavens, 2) the Aeria in the air, 3) the Cthonia on the land, 4) the Hydraia in the water, 5) the Hypochthonia beneath the Earth. And 6) the Misophaes. These last are the lowest. They hate the light and live senseless and unable to communicate in the lowest levels of Hell. People struck by them are rendered deaf, dumb and blind.

As I stated before, Mephistopheles was first called Mephostophiles. In Greek, this means Not a Lover of the Light, something very similar to Psellos' Misophaes, Haters of the Light. And the names of demons, as we have seen, often referred to their qualities and were not necessarily precise names. What this means is Mephistopheles himself inverts the natural order of things: this lowest of demons was raised to be one of its highest princes -- for the purpose of inverting man's natural order.

His further history shows Spiess was right; the Fausts and Mephostophiles were destroying the natural hierarchy. Soon, he became a generic demon. While he may still be under the Devil, the elaborate 'natural' hierarchy is gone. Shakespeare renamed him Mephistophilus in **The Merry Wives of Windsor**. "Mephitis" means "pungent, sulphurous, stinking" -- a generic picture of Hell. Another contemporary writer called him Mephistophiel, giving his name a flashy Hebrew ending.

As demons were prone to, Mephistopheles entered ritual magic, although more as window dressing. According to Elizabeth Butler, this occurred in **Doctor Faust's Natural and Unnatural Magic or the Threefold Harrowing of Hell** (I think this is a good translation of the German title). As the title suggests, a work attributed to Faust, grimoires typically being given false attributions. She dates it to 1755 although it claims to have been first published in 1505. I do not know why. However, it is a fact 1505 is entirely too early, and the freer air of the 18th Century made it a golden age of ritual magic. The second part mentions Mephistopheles under the names Mephistophiel, -philus, and -phielis. All the usual spelling variations but in one place. He is one of the Seven Electors of Hell, the rank Elector deriving from a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. Furthermore, Mephistopheles has an astral significance: he is the demon of Jupiter; his opposite, Zadkiel, is the cabalistic Angel of Jupiter.

This Mephistopheles has been emasculated. The Harrowing was meant to be accepted as a book of esoteric knowledge, and not a penny dreadful to scare the pants off you. The account mentions the pact and follows the story of Faust, but in spirit it does not. The pact is nothing threatening; Faust as the narrator never mentions the consequences of his pact making. Mephistopheles does, however. He says that he does not like to make pacts and warns you against them. If you insist, he will, however. He knows all the secrets of nature. He taught Faust how to call up demons, and transported him to anyplace as quick as thought. Faust adds that he is easy to talk to despite his "cruel and horrible" shape.

His shape is not even cruel and horrible. It is true he does appear as a bear at first, but later his appearance is hardly scary. The illustration makes this plainer. He appears as a cute, tubby dwarf in a monk's outfit with a winning expression. The Faust legend has turned tepid and this new Mephistopheles is a wimp.

It matters little. The goal of this ritual magic is not knowledge for controlling nature in general Mephistopheles brings; the goal is the narrower one of treasure. Mephistopheles is mentioned a lot and Mephistopheles answers questions. However, the ritual magician is more likely to use the ritual for Aciel, the demon who guards gold and gems, who guards treasure. The ritual here is not completely tepid; it does involve a pact with Aciel or one of his Counts Palatine. And he will take you to Hell if he can. However, with the proper prayers, you can slip out of his pact.

Goethe's Faust is a completely different person entirely from either Spiess' or the ritual Faust. It took Goethe about sixty years to write his Faust, from the 1770s to near his Death in 1832. Goethe was obviously very preoccupied with it throughout his life. He claimed that he had

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not meant anything in particular, consciously, by the tale; but it certainly reflects his time. The plot can be described to us of the late 20th Century this way -- as the stomach turns. As an overdose of sentimentality. But we must watch out: we are repelled because we do not wish to admit how close our world view is to Goethe's.

Mephistopheles, like the Bible's Satan with Job, wagers God that he will have Faust's soul. God pledges he will not interfere but knows Mephistopheles will fail. On Earth, Faust has been looking for ways to control nature. Strangely, for the 18th Century, he has gone to magic and not science; but Germans were more likely to choose this path than other Europeans as proto-Romantics and as a slap in the face to the dominant, reason-obsessed French culture. Presently, Mephistopheles comes to Faust, first as a dog, then in the form of a scholar. Faust makes a pact with him. Mephistopheles agrees to serve Faust in this world. However, if he falls into sensual pleasure, he must serve Mephistopheles in the next.

Faust does indeed fall into a sensual pleasure -- for a time. He makes a woman, Gretchen, pregnant. She kills her baby and is executed for it. However, sensual pleasure has opened Faust up to the possibility of love. In fact, he feels such remorse for undoing Gretchen she can find a place in Heaven, and Faust's pact can be abrogated. In short, the control of nature is OK with Goethe if Faust can control himself as well, through reason. This is a typical late 17th Century, 18th Century attitude. Still, Goethe was the harbinger of a new view too: he was a Romantic. A controller of nature can redeem himself through love too, an emotion quite different from reason. Even romantic love can.

Goethe's Mephistopheles reflects the new world view in other ways; it is individualist. Faust's damnation and redemption has little to do with what goes on outside himself, and much to do with his inner state. Also, gone are the great hierarchies that were the natural order. Mephistopheles appears to be Satan himself or Lucifer, not even a generic vassal anymore. He has a personal relationship to man and God; and man and God have a personal relationship with him. In addition, no walk of life is too high to be forbidden to Mephistopheles. In Spies's 16th Century book, Faust has to venture outside of academia to be damned. To the worldly world of the world's rulers. In Goethe's Faust, academia is no longer sacrosanct. In fact, the feather and the skullcap coming to a 'v' in front, we often see Mephistopheles and the Devil with, is scholarly attire. The desire to control nature is no longer foreign to the world of learning.

From Goethe, let us go to the late 20th Century. Goethe's view is quite different from ours. In fact, it is doubtful another Faustian classic will be written soon; among the cognoscenti God and the Devil are passe. This is a shame: the 20th Century is fertile ground for a new version of Faust. The sin would no longer be lust but greed for money and power. And Faust would no longer be an individualist, an island unto himself; but one with the lion, the lamb and even the sea polyp. With nature, if only he realized it. The consequences of his sin would be smokestacks, overbuilding, and destruction of wetlands. We feel they threaten to make the air unbreathable, kill the majestic beauty of the leopard and the eagle, damn us to a hell of eternal winter or eternal desert, leave no blade of grass standing.

Thus, Faust went from a rank midway between God and the angels in the old natural-social-psychological order to an island unto himself. He was no longer part of the nature. A would-be present-day Faust would be trying to fit back into nature again.

SOURCES: I got most of the material for this from Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: the Devil in the Modern World*, Cornell, 1986 and E.M. Butler, *Ritual Magic*, Cambridge, 1949. Butler, I believe, has been out of print for some time and you would have to get it by interlibrary loan.

## AIDS MEMOIR

*John Berry*

On our last day in Nerja, southern Spain, we did a nostalgic tour of its narrow streets, purchasing minor useless presents for "people back home," who would undoubtedly accept them with beautifully controlled scowls, hoping to suggest delight and approbation.

At the junction of Hernando de Carrabeo and Pintada we noted thick trestle tables laid out with photographs and books, patrolled by keen young men and women who shouted "Senor" as I furtively tried to pass by; my wife and I were forcibly directed to examine the gory photographs on display.

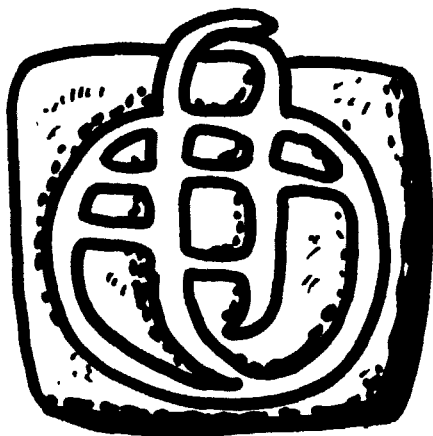
From their garbled conversations in numerous European languages we were thrust before an English-speaker who said he wanted us both to sign a petition regarding the abuses of drugs usage, and AIDS, in Europe.

"We have permission from the Police," shouted a young man, who appeared to be their leader, and he flashed me a typed sheet, signed by numerous personages who specialized in extremely ostentatious signatures. I believed the document to be authentic, but frankly, I had not even seen a member of the local constabulary during my ten days stay, indeed, I did not know whether or not Nerja had a police force. Any self-respecting police officer who was given an empty notebook could easily have filled it in one day compiling a list of the myriad motor-cycling offenses with which the Nerja streets abounded ... young persons between the ages of 12 and 16 being the main offenders. I had personally experienced several underwear-staining leaps to the nearest pavement, high-pitched laughs ribboning the snarling revs.

So the police had authorized their display ... we saw sad photographs of persons who had succumbed to the depths of drug addiction and AIDS ... we were therefore delighted to sign petitions, notwithstanding my secret fear of adding my name to a document written in a foreign language.

"We would like you to give us money for these unfortunate people," Interposed a young woman.

Well, I was feeling in rather a philanthropic mood, euphoric, I might even say, so I opened Diane's handbag and handed him a heavy 500 pts coin. The Pound Sterling was having a particularly good time on the financial markets, gaining several pts each day ... I had just handed over the princely sum of 2.50 pounds from my hard-earned pensions.



ALIEN COIN. ROSLER

I returned Diane's handbag, and commenced to saunter away, chest expanded, my new beard flamboyantly splayed out at my extravagance.

An arm roughly spun me around.

A young man threw my precious 500 pts coin to the ground at my feet.

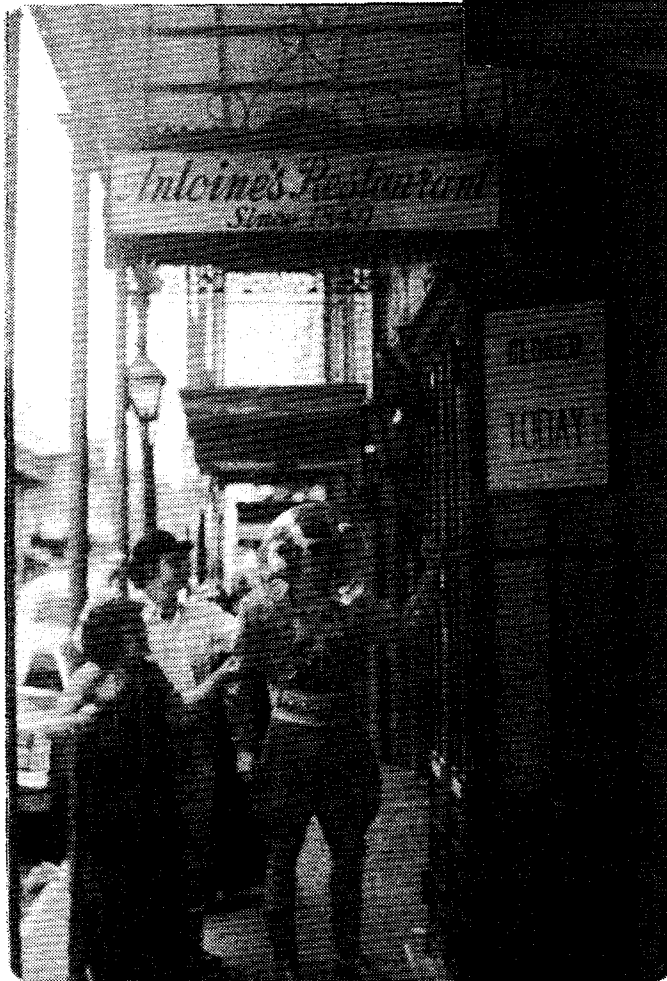
"This is no use, we demand paper money," he shouted, his eyebrows in one thick line like a helmet.

Diane feverishly searched in her handbag for a heart tablet, which I swallowed.

"Take it or leave it," I snarled, and Diane led me away ...

## Challenger 6

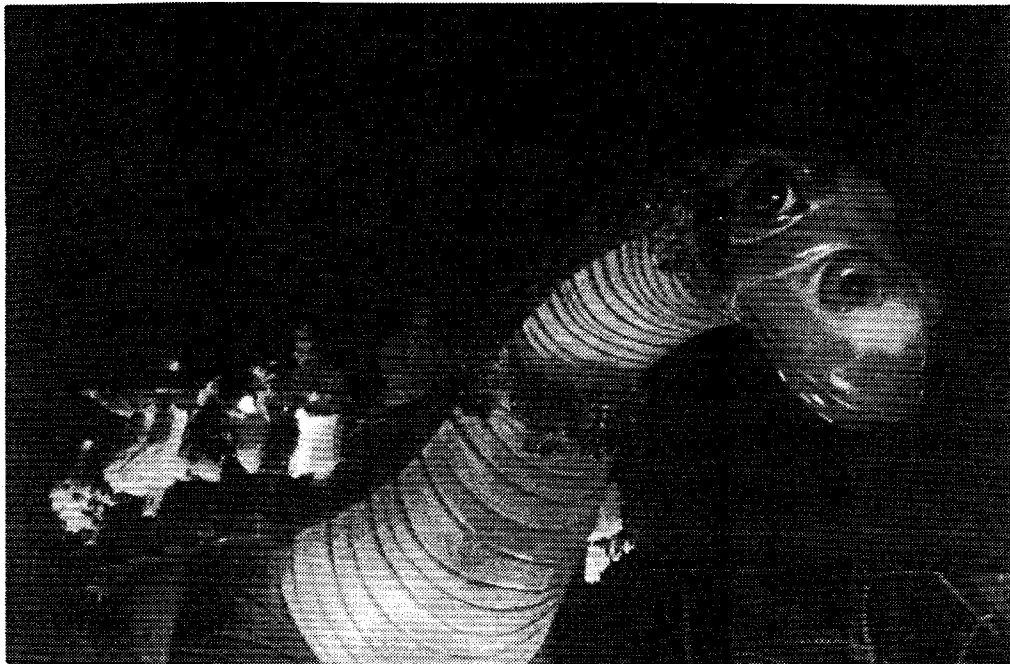
The calculations were made for the **Diet of Worms**. (Pronounced "Verm's", it was a religious conference, not a cookbook for robins.) Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox ... unless Passover falls on the same day, in which case Easter is shoved back a week. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, falls 40 days plus Sundays before Easter. The day before that is Tuesday -- **Fat Tuesday**. Or, in the vernacular,



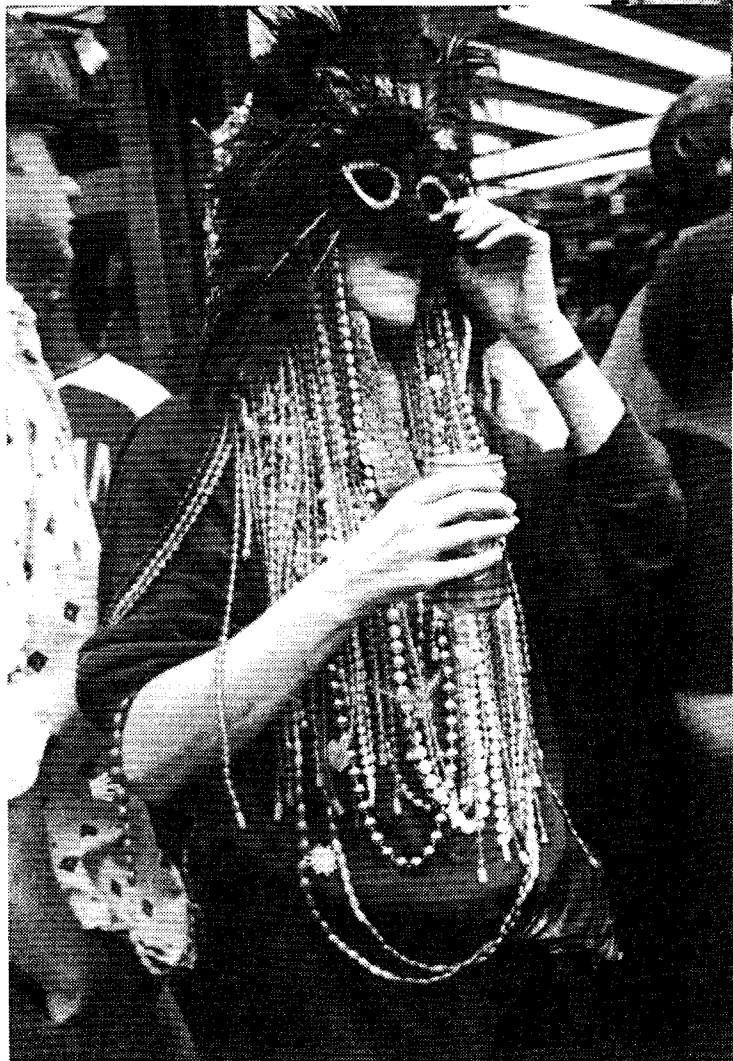
# MARDI GRAS!

a photo-essay by  
**GUY LILLIAN III**

*LEFT: "Captain Future"  
Doug Wirth and Liz  
Schwarzin demand service  
on the one day of the year  
Antoine's is closed.*



Above: the mighty **Bacchusaurus**



Left: Who is that masked woman? Why, it's **Peggy Ranson**, in a self-designed bead headmask. She only *seems* to ogle the Aztec beefcake squad above (Peggy would never do such a thing).

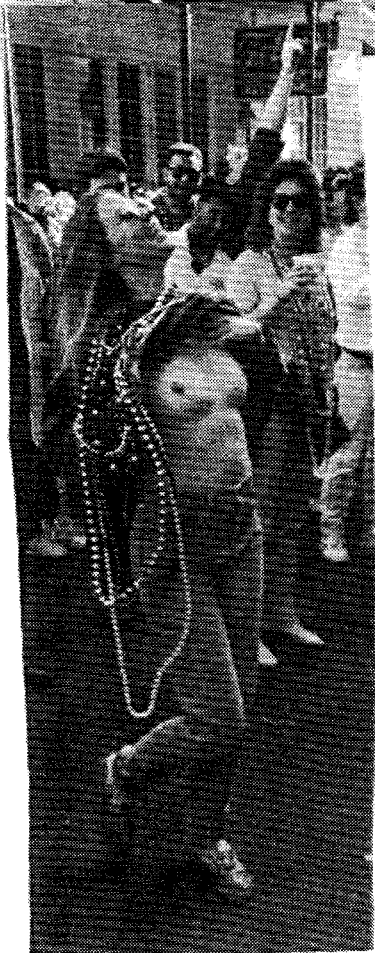
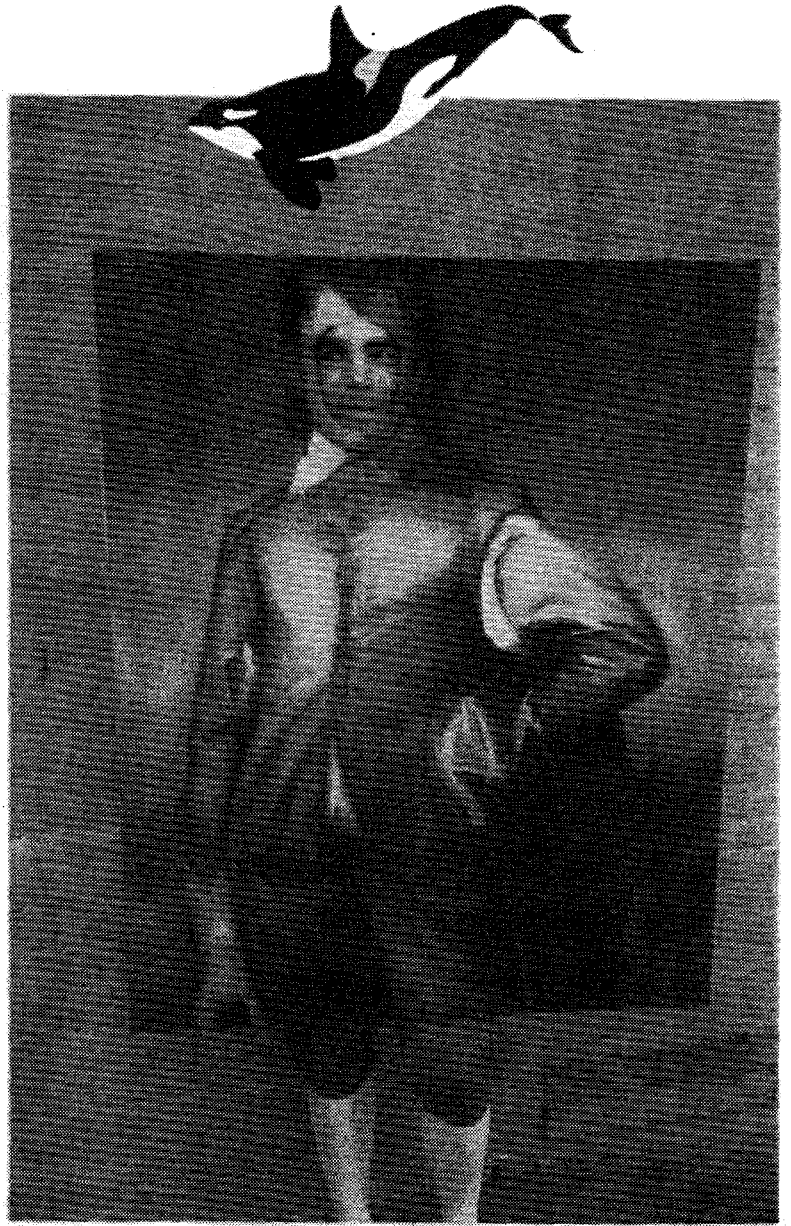




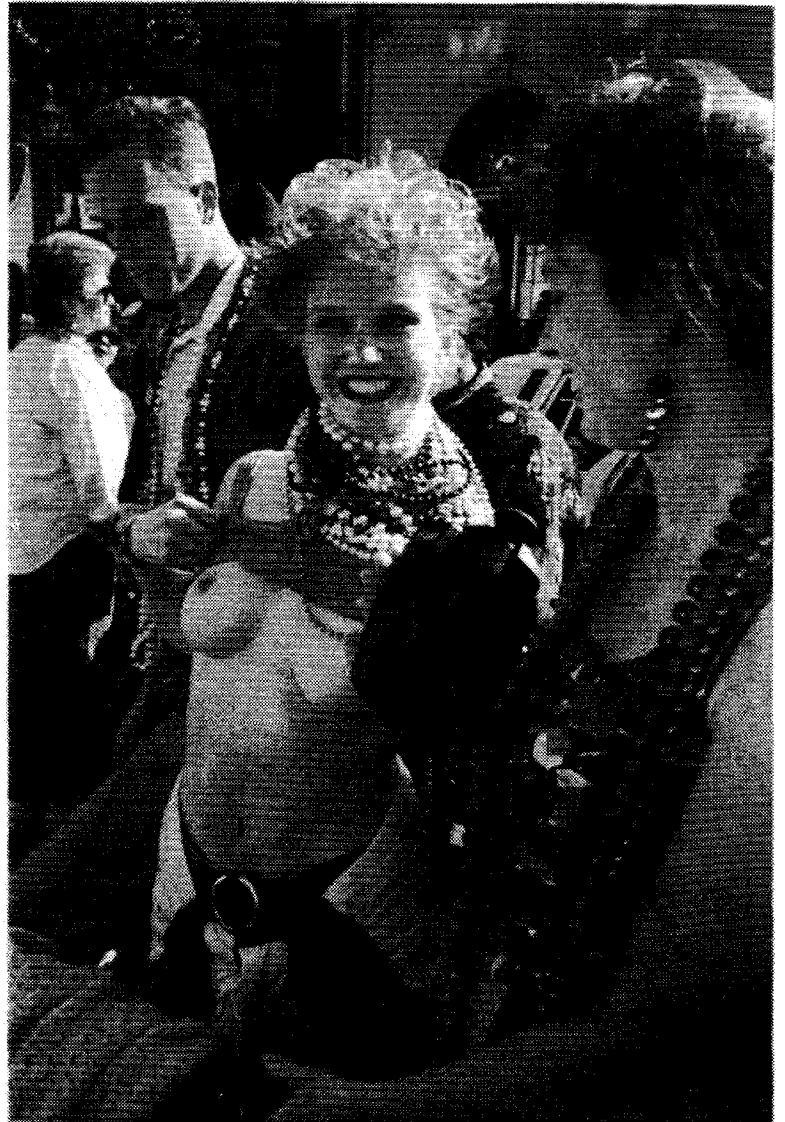
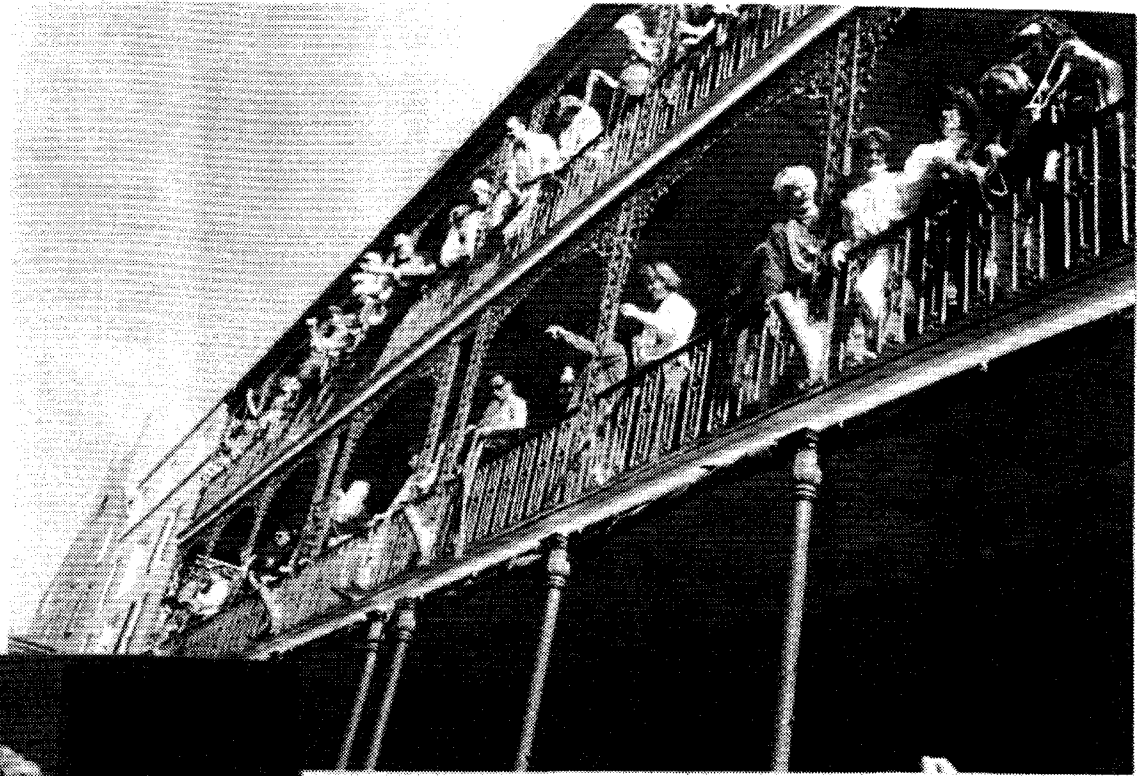
Challenger 6

Costumes of every sort and expense abound, from cheap (*below*) to elaborate (*way below*) to horrible (*right*).

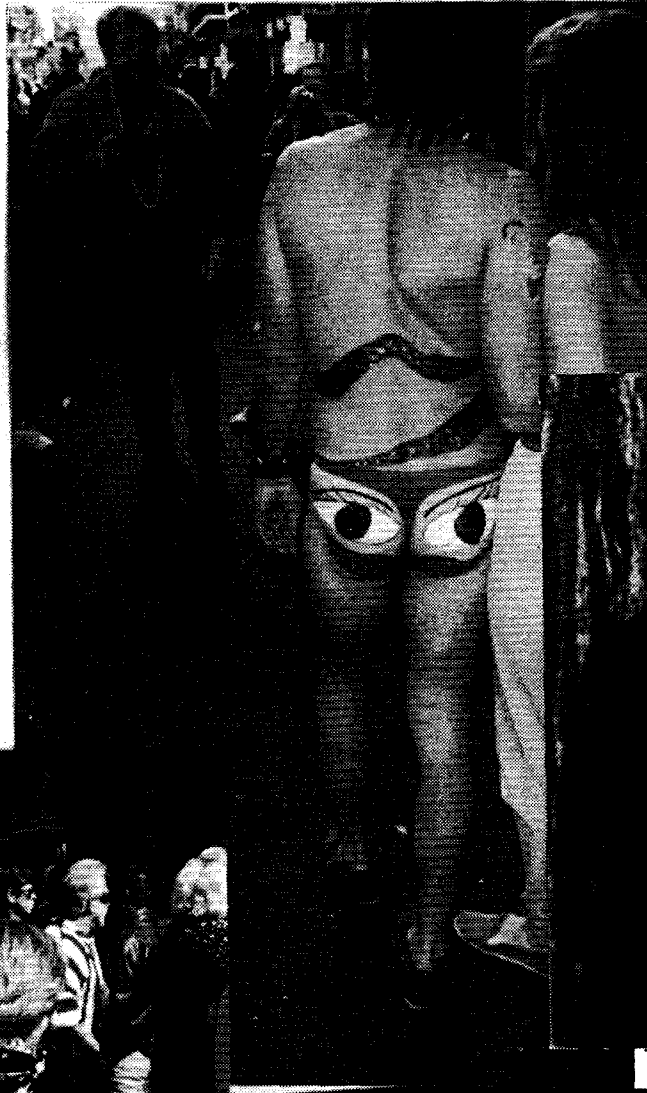




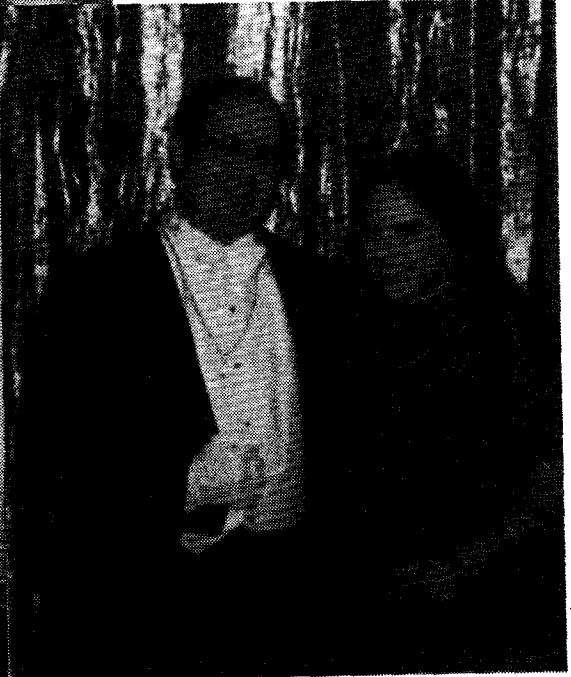
ALON!



From French Quarter balconies beads come pouring -- often in exchange for indiscreet exhibitions. (Like to right. *Not* like above.)



The Carnival season features foolishness (*left*) and finery (*below*, as yhos escorts Mary Wismer to the Krewe of Alhambra ball).



All things aren't Rosie, sees John Goodman

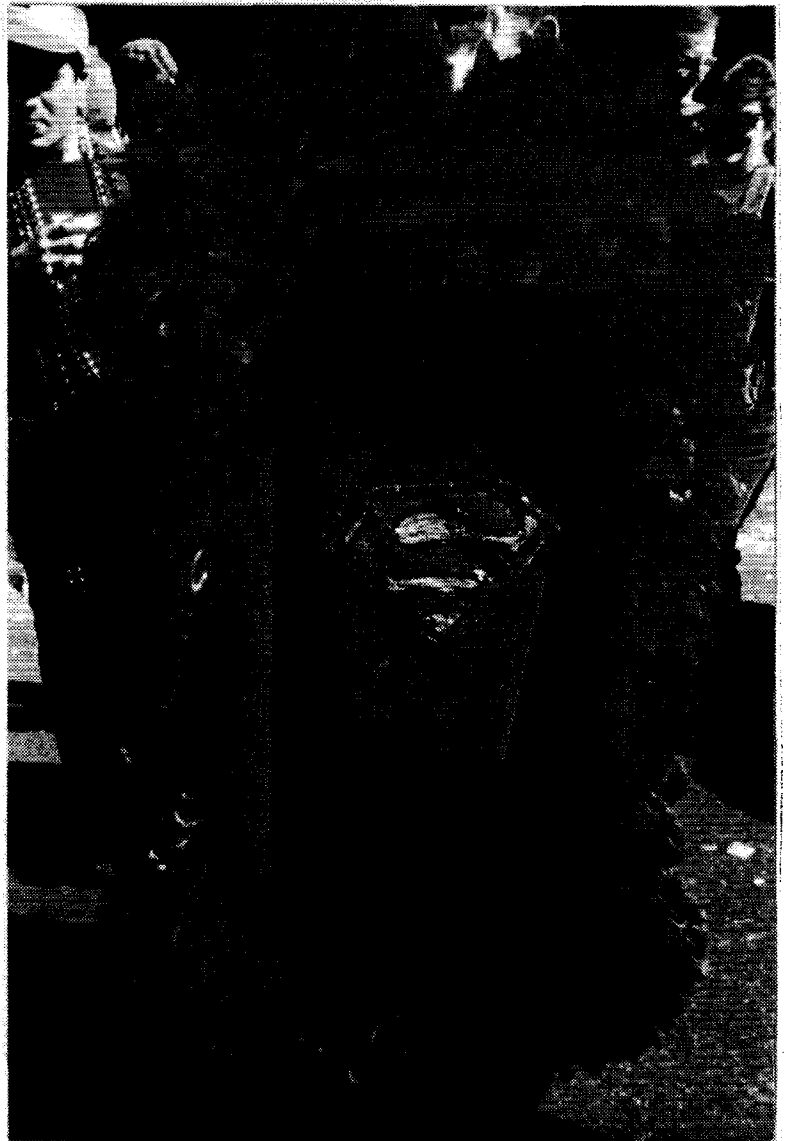


# Mardi Gras 1997

Cigars were all the rage



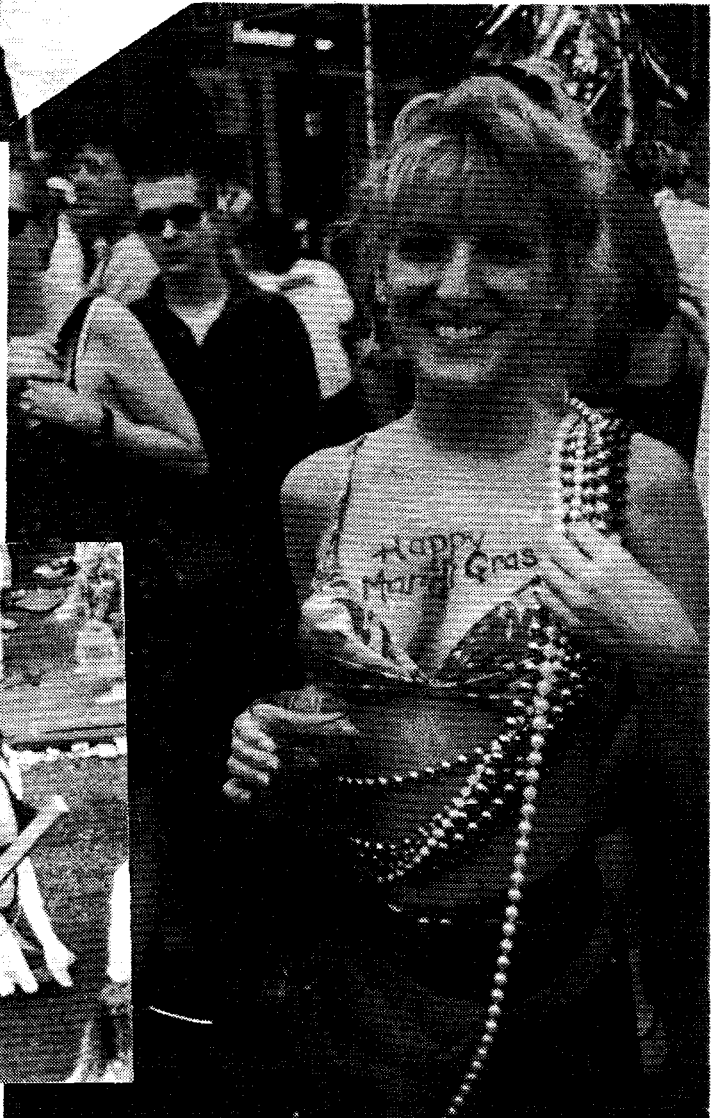
... and the Man of Steel wore sequins





Mardi Gras is the most universal of holidays. From billionaire businessmen to street derelicts like **Ruthie the Duck Girl** (left), its lunacy belongs to all. You too! **February 24, 1998.** See you here!

30



## Challenger 6

Fandom resounds with horror stories about the post office. Postal worker Robert Whitaker Sirignano now gives us the story from the other side of the slot.



Every now and then when I pull out a piece of damaged mail from the canceling machine I operate, I think of Stan the Count, a chunky obnoxious kid I knew back in the sixties. I think of him when I pull a gum wad off a collection of letters. When I scrape mud or a meatball off a letter I often think of Stan. Happily, I know Stan is no longer working his primary talent on the mails these days.

I did not hang out with Stan too much because he caused more trouble than the effort to really cultivate his friendship was worth. Besides, I could never trust him enough to let him go anywhere past the front porch of my house. Stan, you see, could vomit on command.

Stan would go to the local drug store and purchase a candy bar with money he said he stole from his mother and before the actual purchase, he would boast about six other candy bars which he stuffed into his socks. He would gobble them down in a few minutes and the few other guys that hung out with him would walk down the street and he would toss his cookies on a car windshield. Were it not for the sheer revulsion of such an act, he could be called creative, mixing Necco wafers with Almond Joys and jujubes for a really revolting effect. Mostly he puked into mailboxes.

So understand, quite often it is not the post office that damages your mail. It's that other guy, the one who mails a small bag of sand with his letter to impress you that he's down at the beach. Or the teenager who drops a half can of beer into the mailbox when he sees a policeman. The post office, however, takes the blame.

People just don't know how to mail letters. Sometimes the senders get a bit naive about what they are sending (the list below was all seen mailed in plain paper envelopes intended for letters).

- 1) Keys. The keys often arrive bent.
- 2) Pencils and pens. Often arrive in several pieces.
- 3) Soft candy bars with creamy centers. Often don't arrive at all.

4) Gum (chewed and not chewed).

5) Rocks. I'm always baffled by this item. Usually the rocks mailed look uninteresting.

6) Cookies. After mailing, crumbs.

7) Unsealed envelopes. Not just your average mailed paying his bills and being rushed and forgetful, but a conglomerate bank will slip up and mailed thousands of letters unsealed. Contents will fall out and get mislaid. Most frequently lost item: good checks, some worth thousands of dollars. One or two of the banks in my area mail hundreds and thousands of pieces daily, unsealed.

8) Jewelry of various kinds: rings, necklaces, watches, tie tacks, earrings, nipple studs, etc. The machines' speed and pressure will render the items useless.

9) Senate and Congressional mail. Millions of pieces of legal-sized paper folded neatly and requests for opinions ("check off the multiple choice option to give your views") and people mail them back unsealed, unstamped and wrinkled and they get ripped to shreds. The volume of the damaged mail is so large and fragmentary I often wonder how the final "back home opinion" of an elected official is formed.

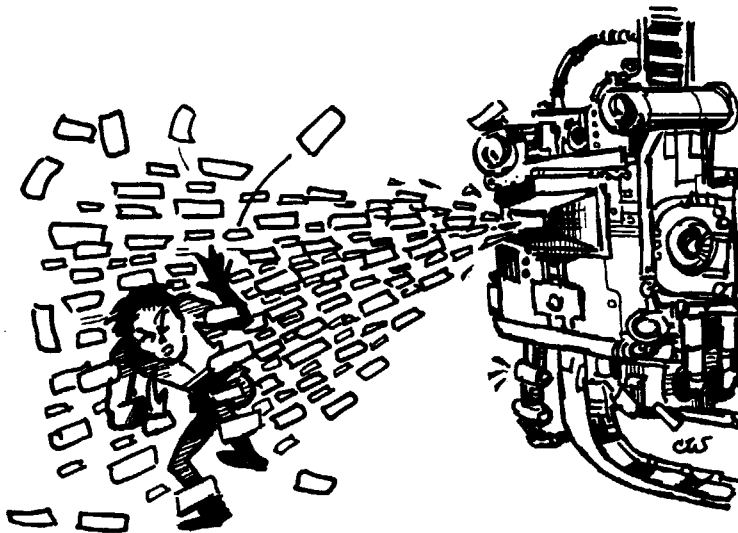
10) Seeds.

11) Roses.

12) Chocolate.

13) Small glass or plastic sample vials of perfume.

Live ammunition and fireworks have also been mailed. Not frequently, but enough to allow me to notice that usually only .22 calibre and ladyfinger fireworks are popular. When letters go through the machines and contain any of the above items and conditions they usually get damaged and ruined. The



letters that are near the letter that caused it all are damaged as well. Chocolate is singled out because a lot of it is mailed between friends and lovers in February. It splits and shatters and falls out of envelopes and melts inside the machine. At the end of a busy day, the machine seems to have had a small herd of cattle pass its interior.

Other things tossed in the mailboxes by the socially ill-equipped include:

Dead mice; dead fish; a dead duck being mailed from Maryland to a game warden in Delaware with a tag with the correct postage tied to its leg – it was quite gamy; used condoms (a reason to carry needlenosed pliers as equipment); a hard boiled egg with a stamp glued on and felt-tip pen-addressed; a large dead crab with a stamp and an address; round postcards, mostly bought in Europe and mailed in the USA, not machinable; beer cans; wrappers from fast food restaurants; trash, the kind people usually toss into trash cans, but some seem to think the mailbox will serve the same function.

Envelopes specially constructed to be the size of postage stamps, with a stamp on one



## Challenger 6

side and an address on the other. Usually these from the strident "I'm really creative now" University of Delaware art students. These are sent on postage due, if they aren't lost in the crevices of the processing machines.

Envelopes constructed out of exotica by those same strident University of Delaware art students who are really on a budget and have not been getting answers to their mail because they had made it the size of a postage stamp and it got lost. Tissue paper or onion skin, paper towels, magazine pages, newspapers, envelopes with strings attached, sparkling confetti, red ink on green paper, white ink on black paper, yellow ink on white paper, brown ink on black paper, a different color for each letter on different colored envelopes ... There seems to be no end to the various kinds of things you can do with an envelope to make it difficult to read and process.

And then there are:

Wooden postcards. They break.

Beehives. I used to be the one in my area that dealt with smashed beehives, damaged in transit. For several years I dealt with the insects because no one else knew how, and bees had a tendency to sting the usually drunken dock crew. Bees do not like the scent of alcohol. Carefully lifting a box with several thousand live and dead bees into a smaller portable open air container and calling the people listed on the address. Bees smell awful in concentration; worse when dead in concentration. There has since been a change in view in the post office about mailing bees, because fully populated, functioning hives are no longer allowed to be mailed. People can still order a queen bee, however.

Food. I've seen burgers, hot dogs, sandwiches of various kinds, pizza crusts, eggs, etc.

Once I emptied out a package that turned out to be rotting beef stew leaking out of the plastic container it had been mailed in. Labelled "Keep Cold," it represented a strange variant on "Do Not Freeze."

Homemade wine. Not an example of inexpert mailing techniques, but to mention that the contents had not stopped fermenting and had exploded in transit. Regulations say liquor isn't supposed to be mailed anyway.

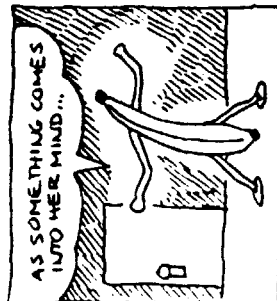
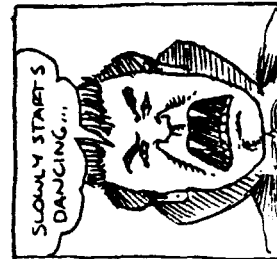
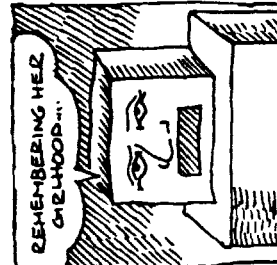
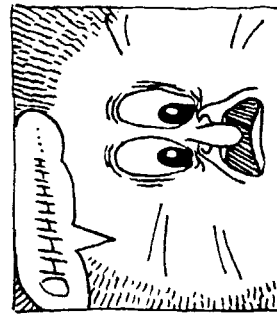
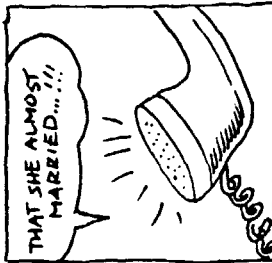
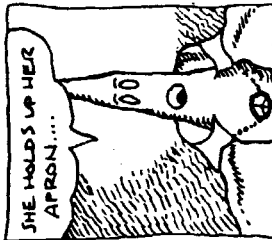
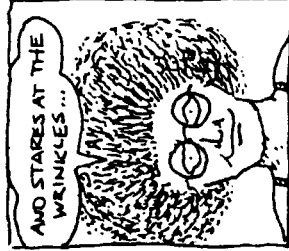
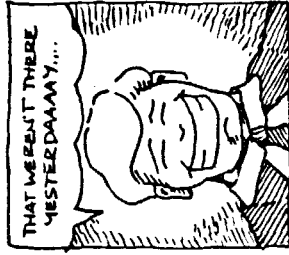
I hope the idea has been grasped.

So once in a while, the USPS really isn't top blame for your letter being damaged or smelling funny. Someone, maybe your neighbor, felt the need to mail Philadelphia Cream Cheese to his uncle in Kansas who could not find any in his neighborhood store. If they had only used a strong mailing box instead of an envelope ...

*Special thanks this issue to CINDY SNOWDEN for her invaluable help with collating.*

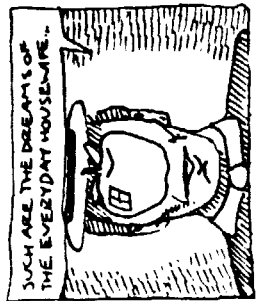
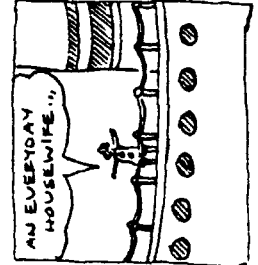
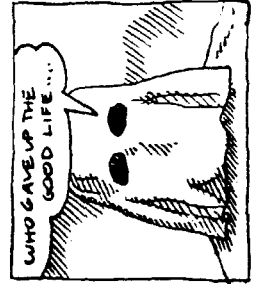


HOLY COW! IT'S A  
**SINGALONG!**



FOR MEEEEEE...!!!  
**MARK VERBEKEN '82**  
 YOU RETURN, BUD!

"DREAMS OF THE EVERYDAY HOUSEWIFE" SONG BY LARINE NEWTON, WRITTEN BY CAROL GARREY, 1964, SINGLE N-11983 PRODUCE: JIM WINDMILLER.



# Russia '94

a personal  
adventure

Richard  
Lynch



Art by Bryan Norris

June 5th, 1994 -- Prologue

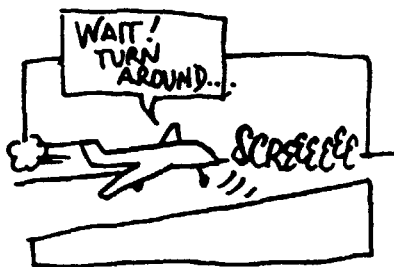
I like to think I love adventures in life, but until just a few years ago, overseas travel had never been one of them. It wasn't until the summer of 1990 that I made my first trans-Atlantic trip; until then, my idea of an adventuresome trip had been going north to New England, or west to the wilds of

## Summer 1997

southern California. I haven't been trans-Pacific yet, but I've been back to Europe every year since then, getting as far north as central Finland and as far east as Poland. But now, *now*, there was a chance to take a *real* adventuresome trip -- 10,000 miles from here, all the way out to the Siberian cities of central Asia, with stopovers in Moscow on the way out and the way back. Was I interested in going? Of course! But circumstances didn't really allow me to savor the anticipation. I wasn't entirely sure the trip would happen at all, in fact, until the very last week before I left -- plans and schedules kept changing that much, that often. And so, even when the day of departure finally arrived, it still didn't seem quite *real* to me...

My flight out of Washington National Airport up to JFK was on a 34-seat Saab-Fairchild, a sort-of mini-DC3-type airplane. I usually dislike small airplanes because they get buffeted around a lot more than jets, but the weather was nice and the ride was mostly smooth. The flight attendant (I made the mistake of referring to her as a "stewardess", which I quickly corrected) was a pleasant young woman with a Kathy Ireland-type squeaky voice who actually *liked* working in small airplanes, in preference to the larger jets.

Things did not get off to a good start, though. The airplane had taxied about halfway out toward the main runway, when the pilot suddenly came on the intercom and announced we had to return to the gate. Visions of delays and missing my trans-Atlantic flight swirled through my head, but it turned out that they had only forgotten the coffee. Then, halfway to New York, there was a small problem with the airplane -- an electrical blip that caused the exit lights to come on. The flight attendant unobtrusively called the pilot on the intercom phone and was told, "We know... we'll get back to you on it." Turns out it was only a circuit breaker trip, nothing worse. The whole incident was subtle enough that only I and she had noticed (I was in the first row of seating). The fix didn't take too long and the exit lighting soon went back off; there was never any changes in the sound of the engines or anything else that caused people farther back in the cabin to be aware of the problem. I wonder how many



other flights that I've been on have experienced in-flight problems that I've been unaware of, simply because I've been seated in the wrong part of the airplane.

Soon after, we landed at JFK Airport, with a spectacular sunset beyond the New York skyline in the distance -- my last North American sunset for quite some time. Russia with all its wonders was still about 14 hours in my future, but the first step in getting there, at least, was behind me...

### June 6th, 1994 -- Arriving Moscow

I should mention at this point that the purpose of this trip was business, not pleasure! I was part of a fact-finding delegation, sponsored by the U.S. Government, to look into ways of finding new alternate energy sources for the populations around the Siberian cities of Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk. Presently, some of the power and heat in those regions are provided by nuclear reactors which make weapons-grade plutonium as a by-product. There has been an international agreement to shut down these reactors before the end of the decade, but the local authorities are understandably concerned that when that happens, there won't be enough heat and electricity available, especially during the cold winter months.

There were ten of us on the trip, including two translators. We were supposed to have two others besides, but they dropped out less than a week before we left. One of them was the logistics

## Challenger 6

person -- he was pulled from the trip to help in the planning for a trip to India by a cabinet-level official, and as it turned out, we felt his loss almost at once. When we finally arrived at the Moscow airport, the van that we thought the U.S. Embassy had sent to pick us up never arrived. We sat and waited... and waited... and waited... and pondered what to do next. Finally, one of the translators figured out a way to hire a bus to come and get us. The total expense was only about \$100 -- not bad for 10 people plus luggage for a 10-mile trip in from the airport!

We arrived Russia on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, which was being remembered most everywhere in Europe. In Moscow, however, there was no apparent celebration or remembrance. On the way in to the city from the airport, we passed a historical area on the side of the highway, where three huge steel frameworks -- each in the shape of a three-dimensional "X", like a giant children's "jack" toy -- stood in silent sentinel just outside the city limits. We were told this was the spot where the German advance on Moscow during World War II was repelled, which was maybe the *true* turning point of that war. The Russians apparently think that the D-Day invasion of France was a relatively small skirmish, in terms of significance and in lives cost, in comparison to the titanic Eastern front sieges.

### June 6th-9th, 1994 -- in Moscow

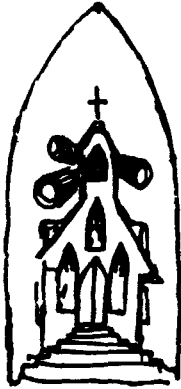
Boy, Moscow is an *expensive* city! The place I stayed in, the Club 27, cost me \$190 per night, and that's for a slightly above-average room in a slightly above-average hotel! We got to the hotel in the early evening, so we just decided to go down to the hotel restaurant for dinner instead of trying to find someplace else to eat. The prices there were enough to cause a double-take -- a bowl of soup cost \$13, fruit with whipping cream set you back \$10, a salad with shrimp was \$24, and a main course of beef filet with sweet/sour sauce and vegetable was \$32. I finally settled on a plate of something that resembled meatballs wrapped in dough (the Russian equivalent of dim sum?) and a Perrier, for \$25, including tip. Believe me, I *savored* every bite...

We had picked the hotel because of its proximity to the U.S. Embassy. Some of our meetings and many of our work sessions were at the Embassy, and the cafeteria there was *much* cheaper than the hotel restaurant. The commissary there provided us with lots of essentials, not the least of which was bottled drinking water. We'd been told not to drink the local water, even in Moscow, unless you wanted a case of "Brezhnev's Revenge". This advice proved hard to follow (vegetables in restaurants, for instance, were washed with the local water), and the very first night I found myself getting up about 5:30am for an urgent trip to the commode. Somebody with marketing sense should bottle some of that Russian water and ship the stuff to the States; it would make a great medicine to relieve constipation...

The U.S. Embassy seemed like a walled fortress to me. It was more than just diplomatic offices -- it was an enclosed, self-contained community. Just in the small area I was able to explore, I found that there were recreation facilities (a pool and an indoor basketball court), the commissary store, the cafeteria (which doubled as an inexpensive restaurant for dinner a couple of times), and a library. There were streets inside the embassy, complete with rowhouses. It would be possible to live your entire Russia existence in there during a tour-of-duty, if you wanted, without ever having to contend with the outside world.

The U.S. Embassy is situated out on one of the perimeter ring roads that circle Moscow, about a mile or so from Red Square at the center of the city. Even that far out, however, there are other embassies and Russian government buildings. Just a short distance down the street from the

Embassy, in fact, is the so-called Russian White House -- a tall, narrow white building that I remember seeing on the nightly news several months earlier. It's the building that was taken over in an attempted coup against Boris Yeltsin, and that was shelled by tanks in the ensuing melee. A bit closer, across the street actually, is a tall-steeped old church that I first noticed when someone was up in the steeple hand-ringing the bells there. From that vantage point, it's possible to look right down into the U.S. Embassy compound, which KGB observers routinely did during the years of the cold war. For that reason it was lovingly referred to by Embassy people, I was told, as "Our Lady of Perpetual Surveillance"...



There were *many* wonderful old churches in Moscow. The one by the U.S. Embassy fades into obscurity if compared to some of the onion-domed cathedrals located near Red Square. Unlike OLPS, all of those have been lovingly preserved (though not always as functional places of worship). Many have domes finished in shiny gold leaf, which makes them spectacular to see on a sunny day; if placed in a different setting, in a different city, any of them would be rightfully hailed as an architectural wonder. But even these wonderful old cathedrals pale in comparison to the most marvelous building that I have ever

seen: St. Basil's.

It'd hard to find words to adequately describe St. Basil's Cathedral. It sits like an architectural kaleidoscope, a fairy castle that's an island right in the middle of Red Square. The six multi-color candycane-striped domes are all different from each other, so the view from the west, for instance, presents an entirely different picture than the view from a different direction. It's the one image that visitors to Moscow come away with, even though the rest of Red Square and the adjacent Kremlin are picturesque in their own right.

The Kremlin itself is a walled fortress, the largest in the world (we were told). The Kremlin wall forms the western boundary of Red Square, and just about the midpoint of that stretch of the wall is a small, nondescript black structure -- Lenin's tomb, which no longer is a tourist attraction since Lenin's body was removed. Each place the Kremlin wall turns a corner, there is a tall conical tower topped with a five-pointed star. At night, these stars glow an eerie, surreal red, a sight most people did not see that time of year because the nights were so short.

By the way, those short nights took some getting used to! In Moscow, in June, it doesn't get dark until after 10 pm local time. In Siberia, the next week, nightfall came even later. [One late afternoon in Tomsk, we left a restaurant after a long dinner engagement with our hosts just as it was just starting to get dark; I looked at my watch and was startled to see it was nearly midnight!]

Luckily, the restaurants all seemed to be open very late at night. Quite often we didn't finish work for the day until about 8 or 9 pm, and by the time we found someplace to eat, it was 10 pm or later. But even at that hour, there were lots of people in the restaurants we went to. One of them, an out-of-the-way Italian restaurant, was obviously a popular place for a drink or dinner, but surprisingly, there didn't seem to be any other foreigners there besides us. And yet, all the various menu items were priced not in Russian rubles, but in American dollars instead. We had noticed this earlier, in the hotel restaurant, and thought it was done there just for the convenience of the business traffic, but here it was too, in a place that catered mostly to locals. Turns out that inflation in Russia is still so out-of-control that rather than re-doing the menu every day or two, it's easier just to price items in some relatively stable currency and then assume the patrons will be able to convert to rubles with whatever the exchange rate is for that day. To be able to dine out in Russia, you not only had

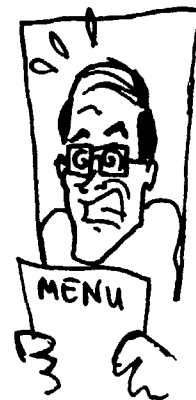
## Challenger 6

to have an appetite but a pocket calculator too!

Our experience in that Italian restaurant showed us, as we were pleased to find out, that it was possible to get a good meal for much less than hotel restaurant prices. Lower than comparable American restaurant prices, in fact. You just had to know where to go, that's all. On the way back to the hotel, we rode the Moscow subway system, mostly just to say we had done it. Each ride on it costs the princely sum of 100 rubles -- about five cents. Who says Moscow is an expensive city??

### June 9th-11th, 1994 -- in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia

*"1st May 1994: Po Chan and Bjorn spent 4 nights in this airport."* I saw that message pencilled on the wall in the departure lounge of Domodedova Airport outside Moscow on the night of June 9th. We had missed an earlier flight that day when we got caught up in a terrible traffic snarl on the way south out of the city, and the flight to Krasnoyarsk had already departed the gate by the time we arrived.



Domodedova Airport is actually the busiest airport in Russia. It has all the domestic flights, where Sheremet'yevo Airport, where we arrived Russia, is the International airport. Domodedova is probably the most decrepit, poorly-lit, and dirty place I've ever flown out of. It's falling apart in places, and doesn't look like the place has been cleaned in years (the bathroom facilities, for instance, are too abominable to even describe). Abandon hope all ye who enter here! Po Chan and Bjorn certainly must have...

The airline we flew from Moscow to Krasnoyarsk was called "Air Krasnoyarsk", one of the dozens of small airlines that were formed from the pieces of Aeroflot following its breakup a few years back. The flight we took was the overnight red-eye, since we had missed the afternoon flight earlier. All of us were more than a little apprehensive, and with good reason: the jet aircraft we flew on would not have been allowed off the ground back in the States. Safety systems like emergency oxygen were either not working, or non-existent. The flight attendant's safety instructions apparently translated into something like: "The emergency exits are over there, don't open them during the flight." The very day of our flight, the U.S. Embassy had issued a warning to travelers *not* to fly Aeroflot or any of its successors unless absolutely necessary, because of grave safety concerns. Actually, the gravest safety concern of all appeared to be the moldy-looking mystery meat that was part of the meal the airline tried to serve us midway through the flight. Eating that would have put me *in* the grave, I think!

We *did* make it to Krasnoyarsk without incident, however. Krasnoyarsk is a city of over half a million, and is located in central Asia, about 400 miles from the border of Russia and Mongolia. The surrounding area has another few hundred thousand people, including the formerly closed city of Krasnoyarsk-26, our destination. The Krasnoyarsk airport, however, was much smaller than you'd expect for all those people. It was also located a very long drive from K-26, over some *very* uneven roads. I happened to be sitting in the very back of the small bus our Russian hosts had brought to pick us up at the airport. When we hit one *huge* bump on the road to K-26, I suddenly found myself covered with pieces of luggage that had formerly been stacked up around me. I yelled out, and one of our Russian hosts quickly helped free me from the avalanche. As he was moving travel bags away from me, he told me, apologetically but unnecessarily, "There is an old expression we have: In Siberia there are no roads, only directions."

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Krasnoyarsk-26 was one of the so-called "secret cities" of Russia. Until only recently, these were closed to all foreigners -- we were the first official United States Government delegation ever to visit K-26. The "secret city" status has given the residents of K-26 a standard of living far above that of neighboring cities. Instead of huge ugly apartment buildings, townspeople lived in single family houses, and each house had an attached greenhouse. The nuclear reactor there, even though it produced weapons grade plutonium, was a source of pride (as well as income) for the city. This was reflected in the really spiffy K-26 city emblem: a Russian bear, wrestling with an atom, tearing open the nucleus of the atom with its claws. It's too bad the concept of marketing hasn't penetrated this far into Russia, because if they put that emblem on t-shirts and coffee mugs, they could sell *thousands* of them! Being a former "secret city" presented some problems for visitors, though -- there are no hotels in K-26. So we were housed in the only facility they had that was equipped to handle guests -- a sanatorium. When a friend had earlier told me that I must be sick or insane wanting to go all the way out to the middle of nowhere, maybe he was right!

Anyway, K-26 was a pleasant-looking city, with a very picturesque town square. Our meetings there were in the mayor's office, which gave us a nice view of the square and the statue of Lenin at its center. Out in the hinterlands of Russia, Lenin appears to be still in favor, as there were statues and portraits of him everywhere. The statue in the K-26 town square showed Lenin standing in a dignified pose, with an arm reaching out toward... all we unbelievers, I guess. I was told that particular statue was referred to as a "cookie-cutter Lenin"; there are hundreds of exact duplicates all over Russia. Almost every city or reasonably-sized town had one.



There were other images of Lenin to be found in our travels besides those cookie-cutter statues. For instance, attached to a wall just outside the passenger waiting room at the Krasnoyarsk airport there was a bas-relief sculpture of Lenin's head. (One of the people in our delegation had his photo taken there stroking Lenin's beard.) And our last day in the Krasnoyarsk area, we were taken upriver to tour a large hydroelectric power plant on the Yenesei River; at the entranceway to the dam there was a huge portrait (in ceramic tiles) of him. That dam, at over 400 feet tall, was one of the largest in Russia, so I guess they had to have a jumbo-sized image of Lenin to match...

It was during that visit to the hydropower project that the most surreal event of the entire trip took place. The dam is too tall for a conventional lock for barge traffic, so instead, there is an unusual cog railway transporter that carries barges and river traffic from the river up to the reservoir above the dam.

I had walked to the end of the railway and was photographing this mighty machine, when all of a sudden two anxious-looking women appeared and started gesturing wildly and talking very loud to me.

At that point I decided the best place for me just might be back down the path with the rest of the group, but the two women followed me and were intercepted by our Russian hosts. More loud talking and gesturing ensued... a *lot* more. The gist of the conversation, according to one of our translators, was as follows:

Woman #1 (pointing toward me): "This man is a *SPY!!!*"

Woman #2: "*We demand* that he be detained, and his camera confiscated!"

I got back on the bus and tried to look as innocent as possible. Evidently, I had annoyed the security people, and now there was hell to pay. Thoughts of concentration camps in the dead of winter swirled coldly through my mind. I could almost *taste* the salt I'd soon be mining in Siberia.



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Suddenly, with horror, I realized that the *least* of my worries should be about being shipped off to Siberia -- I was already there!

After a while, and much more agitated conversation, the two ladies stalked off with scowls on their faces. One of them glared at me as she left; her eyes bored into mine. Our Russian hosts got back into the bus, and as we drove off I started to breathe a little easier. It was all over, I thought.

I was wrong...

About five miles down the road, the bus was flagged off the road by the military. (One of the women had apparently radioed ahead.) The soldiers motioned our Russian hosts out of the bus, and once again there ensued a long, loud heated conversation with all kinds of arm waving and gesturing. And once again, our Russian hosts proved to be silver-tongued, because we were allowed to proceed, though not before one of our delegation bemusedly speculated, loud enough for the rest of us to hear, "Hmm... I wonder if they'll let us go if we give him up?"

It was a hot day that day. I was surprised to find out that, except for the jumbo-sized mosquitos (which don't take any prisoners), June in Siberia is very pleasant! I'd brought along a heavy jacket, but I never needed it, not even once. By the time we got back to K-26, we were all pretty much hot, sweaty, and more than a little tired, but our hosts had just the thing to perk us up before dinner: sauna!

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At this point, I have to tell you that I am a sauna neo. I had a chance to try it, once (in Finland), but I couldn't understand the local language well enough to tell which of the two saunas at my hotel was "his" and which one was "hers". There happened to be a sauna at the guest house in K-26 where we had our meals, so I joined four others (all men) in disrobing. If you think that I was perhaps just a *little* bit apprehensive about this new experience, you're right. But surely, I thought, there was nothing that might happen that could even *remotely* compare with the misadventure I'd survived earlier in the day.

I was wrong...

On the way to the heat room, I missed seeing a half-open doorway, and walked buck-naked past it just when one of the guest house's attractive young female housekeepers was passing by on the other side. I'm not sure who was more surprised, and we both stopped dead in our tracks for about half a second before I hurried on past the doorway, out of sight. In that short half second, though, I saw her eyes get big and round, and her jaw drop open as she dropped what she was carrying and brought her hands to her face in surprise. Thinking back on that moment, I remember that I first felt flattered by her look of utter astonishment. (I have to wonder if I surpassed her expectation of an American male...) But then, as I was hustling away, she did something that completely deflated the moment for me...

She *laughed*...

### **June 12-14, 1994 -- in Tomsk, Siberia**

The other Siberian stopover on this trip was Tomsk, a city of about 600,000 people, located some 300 miles to the west of Krasnoyarsk. To get there, we flew on a two-engine turboprop operated by Irkutsk Air, another of the myriad successors to Aeroflot. As we boarded the airplane, we sagely noted the completely bald tires and an oil leak onto the tarmac from somewhere on the fuselage. As we took our seats, we were dismayed to see that the plane's interior was also in awful shape -- the seatbelts couldn't be adjusted, the carpeting was not attached to the floor, and no attempt had been made to clean the cabin from any number of previous flights. The filth of the plane surpassed my worst expectations. There was all sorts of debris that hadn't been cleared out. In the seat pocket in front of me, I found a half-empty bottle of beer. Al, one of the other people in the delegation (and who had the seat next to me), told me, "Don't get rid of that! I've got a feeling I just might need it before this flight is over!"

But he didn't. In spite of its state of disrepair, the plane made it to Tomsk with no trouble at all. Upon arrival, I saw that the Tomsk airport was even smaller than Krasnoyarsk's -- there was just a single main runway to handle all the takeoffs and landings. That might have been enough, though; there didn't appear to *be* any other takeoffs or landings, at least during the time we helped the ground crew unload our luggage from the airplane. Inside the passenger terminal, there weren't many travelers' conveniences to be found. All this led Al to conclude, "I bet they don't expect too many visitors here."

He was probably right. Like Krasnoyarsk-26, Tomsk had also been a closed city. Until recently, you had to have a very good reason before you'd be allowed to come here, and tourism wasn't one of them. Which is a shame, because there actually *are* some things in Tomsk that tourists would be interested in.

One of them is a wonderful old cathedral, The Church of the Resurrection. It's situated on a hilltop in the center of the old part of the city, and with its multitude of golden domes it's a spectacular sight on a sunny day. The church is similar in appearance to the cathedrals I saw in Moscow, but here there isn't any St. Basil's to overshadow it. Another feature of Tomsk that *doesn't* have any equivalent in Moscow is the large number of wooden houses, constructed entirely

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from logs, that date back hundreds of years to the founding of the city. These are not the rustic log cabins of the North American frontier days -- far from it! These are large, ornate houses, with intricate carvings around the windows and along the rooflines. They are truly a marvel, especially considering the number of Siberian winters they've withstood. Whoever built these spent a lot of time getting all the details right.

Our Russian hosts in Tomsk also did a good job getting all the details right. Even though they were well aware that Tomsk is perhaps not the most exciting city in the world to visit, they made our stay there as interesting for us as possible, making sure there was time set aside for tours and shopping. They were also excellent dinner hosts; the amount of money they spent on food for us during our visit must have been enormous, which led Al to propose, in a dinner toast to them, that the money spent wining and dining us might have been enough to fund all the power generating projects that Tomsk would need for years to come!

The very Russian custom of making long, involved, and entertaining dinner toasts was something that we all were expected to participate in, by the way. Without fail, every meal, including breakfast, featured bottles of vodka and imported French cognac. Without fail, at the conclusion of every meal, there was a round of toasts. We all learned pretty quickly to just take a small sip whenever there was a toast, instead of knocking one back each time. There were so many toasts that you didn't dare do more than that, a lesson that sunk in early on when Al made the mistake of trying to match our Russian hosts drink for drink one evening, and we ended up having to pour him into bed.

Al, it turned out, was very adept and clever at making toasts, always having something entertaining to say. The one time I had to follow him, it was well past 11pm, and my mind was totally blank after a long day of continuous meetings. I had just about 15 seconds to think of something clever but the only thing rattling through my tired mind, due to some quirk of free-association, were limericks. I'm embarrassed to admit it was all I had, but sometimes you just have to 'goes with what you gots". So I said: "Due to the lateness of the hour, I'll keep my remarks short. I really wanted to educate our kind Russian hosts in the fine art of the off-color limerick. But I see that I just don't have enough time. So I *won't* be able to tell you about The Young Man from Boston."



There were a few chuckles, and an audible sigh of relief from our translator who had been afraid she was going to be asked to do something beyond the call of duty...

I pressed on: "And I *know* we're all very tired after a very long day, so to shorten the evening's proceedings I'm afraid I'll just have to skip the verse about The Newlywed Couple from Goshen." More chuckles, and even some smiles from the Russians now...

I was starting to feel better about things now, so I continued: "I'm only too aware that things are really running late this evening, so I absolutely *regret* that there just isn't enough time left for me to tell you about The Argentine Gaucho Named Bruno."

*Much* laughter, including even the steely-faced Russian, the one reasonably fluent in English, who was seated at the end of the head table. I guess he must have thought I was making up these first lines, from their outlandishness. Or else, maybe...

My jaw dropped. Or else... *maybe* he'd already *heard* that one before! I wrapped up my toast by saying something nice about the hospitality we had received on the trip, and sat down, still wondering...

The realization was stunning. I had traveled almost halfway around the globe, only to find

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that as specific a bit of Americana as the dirty limerick just *might* be as familiar to some of the people all the way out in the middle of Siberia. It was a long way to go to discover that the world was a lot smaller than I thought it was...

### June 15-17, 1994 -- in Moscow

Moscow is not the city I'd choose as a travelers' haven, but coming back to Moscow after almost a week in Siberia was like moving into a five-star hotel after spending a week in a tent. We survived the four-hour flight from Tomsk (TomskAir this time) with no trouble at all; by then, we were so hardened to Russian air travel that we didn't even bother checking what condition the airplane was in before we boarded.

The trip was starting to wind down at that point, and we *finally* found a bit of time to do some shopping. One obvious place to go, I discovered, was the large department store complex known as "Gum", which is located just off Red Square. Inside, it's not really a department store at all; it's more of a mini-mall, with aisles and aisles of small cubicles (on both a lower and upper level) where vendors were selling souvenirs and other items. As I walked through the place, every so often I'd happen across a "real" store, that was much larger and also had more than a single salesperson. In front of one such store, I saw a long line of people waiting to get in, and I wondered what kind of rare, valuable, and possibly unique items must be on sale there to attract such a crowd. When I got closer, I became puzzled, because the only thing that I could see on display for sale there were...shoes! Sometimes, treasures are what you least expect them to be, I guess...

If you were looking specifically for souvenirs, however, a much better location is a place known as "Sparrow's Hill", on the south side of Moscow near Moscow State University. Dozens of souvenir vendors set up tables there almost every day that weather permits, and it was there I found many things to bring home with me. One very popular item that almost everybody was selling was the Matrushka, a brightly painted hollow wooden doll, that contained inside it a smaller, identically painted hollow wooden doll, which contained inside it yet another, even smaller identically painted hollow wooden doll, which contained inside it.... There were Matrushkas for sale there that had as many as 20 other wooden dolls nested inside. The price on those were pretty high, but bargaining to get lower prices was common. Many of the hucksters spoke passable English, and most of them took American dollars as well as Russian Rubles.

Actually, the Russian language never did prove to be an obstacle during the trip. The presence of translators was a big help, of course, but even without them we were able to cope. And after two weeks, the Cyrillic alphabet even started to make some sense. For instance, the Cyrillic spelling for "MOSCOW" is "МОСКВА", which is pronounced "Mosk-va" because the Cyrillic "C" sounds like "S", and the Cyrillic "B" sounds like "V". Similarly, the Cyrillic spelling for "RUSSIA" is "РОССИЯ", which is still pronounced "Russia" because the Cyrillic "P" sounds like "R", and the Cyrillic "J" has a "Y" sound. It turns out that many of the Cyrillic characters are based on the Greek alphabet; for example the Cyrillic П' is like the Greek letter 'pi', and has a 'P' sound, while the Cyrillic 'A' is like the Greek letter 'lambda', and has an 'L' sound. From there, it was just a short step to find out that my name, 'Richard Lynch' is spelled like this in Cyrillic: 'Ричард Линч'. I was told that there were only four Cyrillic alphabet characters that had exact Roman alphabet equivalents: the letters A, T, O, and M. In light of the purpose of our trip, to expedite the shut-down of plutonium production reactors, this seemed highly appropriate to me...

### June 18, 1994 -- The Trip Home

It was three hours by air from Moscow to Frankfurt, then another eight hours from Frankfurt

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to Washington, D.C. I shared the flights with a large church group that had just had a big adventuresome trip of their own: two weeks in Moldova, another of the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. Like me, they had had their share of misadventures, and like me, they were more than ready to come home to The Land of Potable Water. But the lengths of the flights gave me a lot of time to think back over my experiences of the previous two weeks, and about what I'll remember from this trip.

One of the things I'll remember is my realization of just how *big* the world really is. The middle of Siberia is a full 12 time zones away, the farthest from home I've ever been. It took three successive long-duration airplane flights to get there, which made it, for me, a very different, exotic, and even mystical place to visit. But it can never be that way again. The first time you visit a strange new place, it's an experience to treasure. The next time just won't be the same.

The other thing I'll remember is my realization of just how *small* the world really is. The places I visited might have seemed exotic, but the people there were not; except for language differences, they were just like you and me. Many of them were memorable, but none more so than the precocious little girl who sat across the aisle from me on that surreal airplane ride from Krasnoyarsk to Tomsk. To her, the flight wasn't horrible at all -- far from it! She was very excited to be able to try out the English she was learning in grade school on me, and spent much of the flight doing so.

At the end of the flight, as the plane was bumping along toward the Tomsk passenger terminal, she gave me one of the golden rosette Siberian wildflowers from the bouquet she was bringing to her grandmother. When I gave her, in return, one of the Russia-America flag lapel pins we'd brought along, I got back her brightest smile. Our translator, who was watching all this from the next row forward, told me, "She'll remember you forever for that!"

I'll remember this trip forever, too; it really *was* an experience to treasure. Even though the next time, assuming there is one, won't be the same, I've made myself this promise: Someday, soon perhaps, I *will* be back...



*Summer 1997*



Whenever we see Jenny, we say something stupid ... be it at the DeepSouthCon (she chaired one in Louisville a few years back), or Rivercon, or one of the worldcons she's graced. We try to sound flip and clever, and we sound stilted and dumb. It's because we're awestruck, you see, in the presence of a lady who is not only heartbreakingly lovely, but warm and smart and funny and patient with stammering morons who only want to tell her ... well, isn't it obvious?

Nuts ... did it again.



*The  
Challenger  
Tribute -*

*Jennifer  
Wilson*



## EPISTLES

*Before we get to the letters to me, here's a letter from me. In early September of last year Dave Barry, the great columnist for the Miami Herald, polled his readership about their least favorite TV commercials. Since he failed to quote from my letter in response, I can only assume it was lost in the mail. Fortunately, it survived on my computer, so I may share it with the Challenger readership, viz:*

September 15, 1996

Dave Barry  
Miami Herald  
One Herald Plaza  
Miami FL 33132

Dear Dave:

I am glad you asked your readers for examples of their least favorite commercials, because your request enables me to shed a terrible memory that has haunted me for 22 years.

In 1974 Wrigley's Spearmint Gum ran a commercial featuring a marching band parading about a stadium carrying giant packages of ... Wrigley's Spearmint Gum. That the marchers were plump-cheeked middle-American Tricia Nixon clones was atrocious enough, but what made the commercial painful to behold was the theme. It went "Gum, gum, gum, Wrigley'sSpearmintGum, gum, gum" in a fight song tempo that was simultaneously intensely annoying and completely unforgettable. (Alfred Bester, in his epic science fiction masterpiece **The Demolished Man**, said this combination was the aim of all good advertising jingles.) Whenever I saw this spot appear on my television set, in those days before remotes, I would dive for the sound control and with luck, avoid the soul-destroying noise.

I still remember that horrible jingle, and will welcome death if it brings release from its curse. But the reason I recall it with such horror that I bother you with the story is this: one day I was standing on a platform waiting for a subway train, surrounded by fellow New Yorkers, and found myself muttering, *out loud*, "Gum, gum, gum, Wrigley'sSpearmintGum, gum, gum." My God, I thought, did anyone hear?

Yes. A lady nearby had heard. And was giggling to herself.

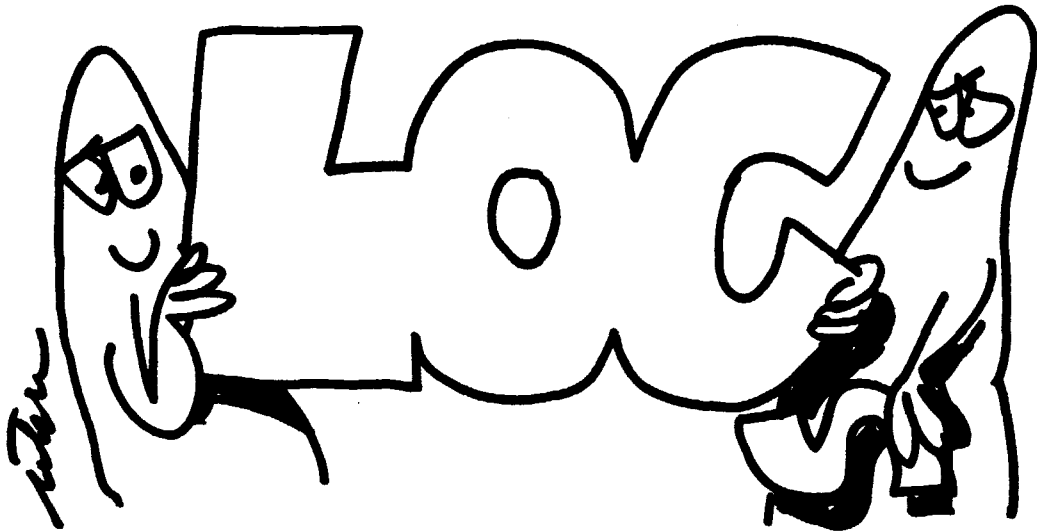
I take it back. I am shed of no memory. It is instead stronger. Thanks *loads* for bringing all this to mind.

Gum, gum, gum,

GUY LILLIAN

*Now, on with our regularly scheduled program ...*

Namely,



WAHFles: Harry Andruschak, Jeff Berkwits, John Berry, Ned Brooks, Steven Burgauer, Rose M. Carlson, Ann Layman Chancellor, Carolyn Clowes, Allie Copeland, Jeff Copeland, George Flynn, Brad Foster, Inge Glass, Steve Green, Rodney Leighton, Dick Lynch, Teddy Harvia, Ben Indick, Bill Mallardi, Mike McInerney (great photos!), Brin-Marie McLaughlin, Joy Moreau, Julius Schwartz, Joy V. Smith, David Thayer, Mary Ann van Hartesveldt.

**Fred Chappell**  
c/o UNC-G English Department  
Greensboro NC 27412

Many thanks for the new **Challenger**, as spiffy and interesting as ever. Congratulations on neat-o production as well as intriguing articles.

Of course, the thing that stays on my mind is the loss of Lynn Hickman. We went -- as you know -- to the Nolacon together, the first Nolacon, that is. I was, I suppose, 15 at the time and it was a bit of a chore for Lynn to get my parents' permission to let me go. But he was after all a salesman and had a great deal of charm.

I hadn't realized until the last few years how important that trip was for him. He had recently divorced his first wife. "She was unfaithful," he explained and his voice still quavered every time he said the words. So he had been depressed more than he let on to me and Bobby Pope, the other older teenager who traveled with us.

He had a brand new red convertible -- snazzy. I can't tell you what kind because I still

don't know one car from another. But he was proud of it and we rolled through the pleasant southern summer on our way to a science fiction convention, singing Dinah Shore songs, trading Bob Hope jokes, and doing the innocent '50s thing. I can see now that the journey was a kind of healing for his wounds, but then of course I saw him as a wise old man, savvy and sophisticated.

He was an affable dealer in farm machinery; he had a gift for enjoyment and not an ounce of snobbery in him. He even took cruel teasing by his customers for being a Yankee in stride. And he loved the girls -- to look at anyhow. Mostly at that time he was your big-brother type, a kid with a man's responsibilities which he handled well.

I miss him already.

**Camille Cazedessus**  
P.O. Box 2340  
Pagosa Springs CO 81147-2340

C5 looks wonderful -- except the Lynn Hickman obit, which made me sad. I had a nice visit and a bit'o'rum with'm in February of last year in Asheville at Pulpcon. He told me that years ago when he found out about an



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old lady with a room full of pulps, she gave them to him when he acted so excited upon seeing them! Yes, a fine gentleman, a trufan! Alas, the wind blows our dust away, and only a few even notice we were there!

**Dave Drake**  
P.O. Box 904  
Chapel Hill NC 27514

A wonderful job, but -- Ohio is not Illinois, where Ray Bradbury was born & raised. (And neither one is Iowa, where I came from.)

Back to work!

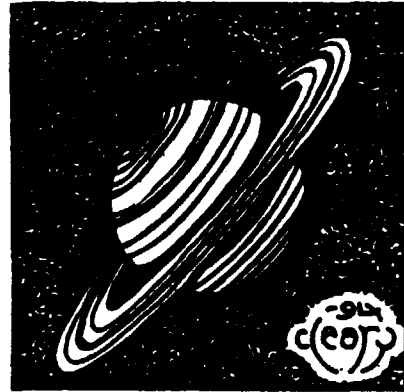
**Joe Green**  
1390 Holly Avenue  
Merritt Island FL 32952

Thanks for Challenger 5. It's as good as its predecessors, and that's meant as high praise.

In regard to your seeing Buzz Aldrin at the L.A. worldcon ... several weeks after that he came to the Kennedy Space Center to guest star in the syndicated TV series you mention for which he is credited as technical advisor, *The Cape*. A large chunk of that episode was filmed in and just outside the Center for Space Education, where I worked (I retired from NASA last January 3rd). Early that morning I received a call from my Director saying he had received a request for a tour of *The Cape* (the real one) from Buzz Aldrin for himself and family. I was considered the PA expert on the Cape and its history, so was asked to do the tour. I made my way through halls cluttered with the usual miles of cables, portable lights, technicians, scriptwriters (I'd already been consulted by one scriptwriter that morning, about an episode coming up later) and general junk in search of Buzz Aldrin. I found him outside by the Saturn 1B display, where he had been cornered by Corbin Bernson, star of *The Cape* (the series, not the real one; also a star on *L.A. Law*, the long-lived semi-soap opera series). I had heard the director (of *The Cape* episode, not my NASA Director) say as I passed him that they were ready to shoot, but there would be a delay because Corbin was "busy."

What he was busy doing was listening, with just an occasional question, as Buzz Aldrin

went on at some length about what it was really! like to travel in space. You mentioned that his L.A. speech was disconnected and rambling; not so in regular conversation. Bernson, whom I immediately decided was a bright man, was soaking up these second-hand experiences as thoroughly as he could. They were "alone in a crowd" in that no one was standing too close or waiting for autographs (possibly because few if any of the tourists recognized them). I walked



straight to them, but Buzz Aldrin (an astronaut I hadn't met, despite having casually known so many of them) was on a long exposition, and it didn't seem polite to interrupt. That one was followed by another short question and another long answer, and apparently this had been going on for some time. So I stood there, in my usual work outfit of dress clothes, NASA badge prominently displayed on left breast per regulations, and listened -- and there was just no opportunity to politely speak up as they ignored me and carried on. Now the three! of us formed an "alone in the crowd" group as the tourists went by. I grew very impatient -- it had to be obvious I was there on official business -- but I managed to keep silent for at least ten minutes more. Listening to someone who has been to the Moon talk about the experience is always fascinating, even if you have heard similar accounts for others, and I was just as interested as Corbin Bernson. Finally Buzz started winding down, and they suddenly turned and included me in the conversation -- the particular point being whether I had saved my newspaper stories of the Apollo 11 landing. (A quick aside; you, Guy, must be familiar with the story of the four New Orleans fans who were here for that launch, and how I

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managed to scrounge [at considerable risk] inside passes for all four.)

*Heard the story from "Vern Petro" -- a.k.a. Don Walsh -- himself.*

The ice being broken, I introduced myself, shook hands, and told Buzz I was there to take him and his family on the tour he had requested. (Corbin Bernson immediately headed for the inside of the building where they were waiting to film his scene, so I never formally met him.)

Well, turned out that Buzz didn't really! want to go himself because he didn't know what his schedule was for the day, but his family did. They, however, had disappeared. I finally made contact with an aide who had been serving as their escort, and she agreed to let them know we were ready. I went back to my office and worked for another hour, but eventually they did show up, Buzz's current wife and two step kids. Then it turned out that when they had told my Director they wanted to see The Cape they were using the term outsiders use to mean the entire Cape Canaveral/Kennedy Space Center area. In reality they are two quite separate entities, even though adjacent and with badged access reciprocity. What the family really wanted to see was the launch pad where Aldrin, Armstrong and Collins had lifted off, Pad A on KSC. My expertise on the real Cape wasn't needed. Anyone in KSC Public Affairs could have done the tour.

But the family was nice, both teenaged kids and Mom knew amazingly little about the space program in general and the Apollo Program in particular -- considering that they lived with Buzz Aldrin -- and overall it was a perfectly pleasant experience.

Almost everything else in the issue was interesting, as usual, but for me your meeting with Leslie Van Houten was the outstanding item. Your own wary ambivalence about the feelings she aroused in you, obviously influenced by your background as an attorney who deals with people who lie a lot, was clearly expressed.

*And greatest thanks for the nifty Eagle Nebula posters you sent ... the thing really does look like a cosmic hand shooting stars out of its fingertips!*

E.B. Frohvet  
4725 Dorsey Hall Drive

Suite A, Box 700  
Ellicott City MD 21042

Thank you for sending **Challenger #5**. As a neo-editor I am more than a little intimidated to see another zine arrive at this size and inclusiveness, with photographs yet, in only five issues. I quite enjoyed your very personal Worldcon report, and Mr. Page's article about prestidigitation: a subject in which I have no particular interest, but I'll listen to anyone discuss a subject about which they actually know something. Once I had a very long talk with an artist about working in stained glass, despite the fact that I knew nothing about it.

The letter column and fanzine review sections were also of interest to me. Perhaps I should have quit while I was ahead. I was with you, in your explanation of American jurisprudence, right up to the point where you said that whether the accused actually committed to crime is irrelevant. The purpose of a trial is arriving at the truth. The function of a defense attorney, according to your definition, is to turn out into the street, to abuse the public again (as they almost invariably do), persons who have performed loathsome crimes against innocent victims. Do you find nothing morally reprehensible in that? Perhaps you should do some research. Perhaps you should start with the Bible. Or *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

*I've read them. (In fact, 30 years ago I performed in the latter, as Otto Frank.) Perhaps you should do some reading, starting with the Bill of Rights. This society believes, as a fundamental precept, that protecting the rights of the individual from the potentially abusive power of the state primes all other considerations. It believes that this principle can coexist with the idea of justice through the adversarial legal system, where the perspective of each side is freely aired before a neutral decision-maker. If we followed your point of view, there would be nothing unusual about forcing each criminal defendant to testify against himself under sodium pentathol. Do you really want to surrender that much power to the government? Do you think you'd be safer and happier in North Korea?*

Having said that, it should be apparent how I felt about your flirtatious and complimentary portrait of a brutal murderer. So I don't really

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have to discuss that, do I?

On the subject of the difference between fans and "mundanes" (a term I still use), my experience suggests one of the easiest ways to tell the two apart is by introducing a snake. Mundanes will usually go, "Oh, yecch!", frequently with reference to Genesis. Fans will usually go, "Hey, cool snake! Can I hold him?"

As I write this, there is snow on the ground, sleet falling and thirty or so wet, unhappy sparrows picking spilled birdseed off my patio. Not that those facts necessarily mean anything; just thought someone might be interested.

**Pamela J. Boal**  
4 Westfield Way,  
Wantage,  
Oxon., OX12 7EW  
U.K.

I notice only four Brits in your lettercol (and one in the WAHFs). Is that because we are the privileged few (I don't blame you if so, with the cost of postage) or because we Brits (heaven forbid) are being tardy or omitting all together our LoCs? Might be interesting some time if you publish a breakdown of your distribution, as such a substantial part of Challenger is the letter column it would be nice to know, so to speak, where my fellow letterhacks are coming from.

Great photos. It seems from your own and others' reports that L.A.con III was an excellent event full of the most important ingredient, interesting people. Obviously your photos dealt with the central figures but I noticed, even in the background, a complete absence of young people (can one notice an absence?), certainly no one under 30. Even given that young people are more drawn to media fandom they should be about, as I gather most American cons cater for the TV and film fans. Your joy at a new face receiving one of the Hugos may be a pointer to encouraging younger people. Would it be an idea to establish some best newcomer awards? Best first time fanzine, best articles from a fan who had not been published in previous years, artwork from a newcomer?

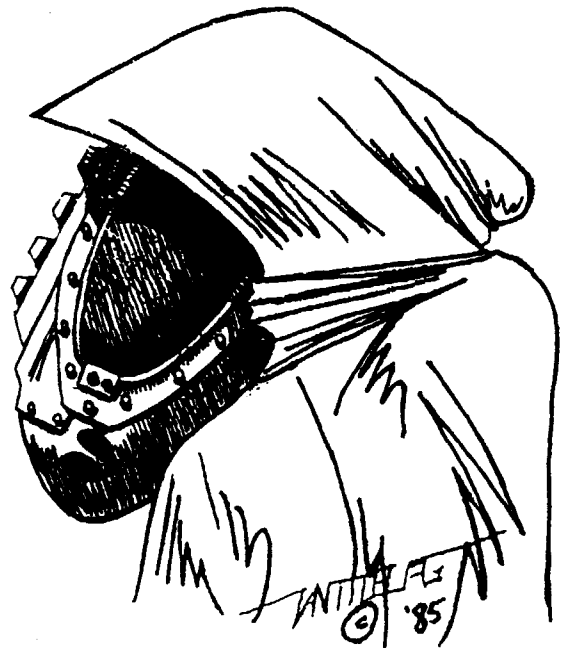
*Fandom is aging, and I fear our generation may be its last. The Net is to blame, meeting needs of communication and contact for the people of the*

*21st Century that fandom met for us. Of course, the urge to publish seems to linger, stubborn, unconquerable even by the web. Check out an issue of Zine World if you doubt me.*

Caving and magic, two interesting articles about my kind of person, male or female, one who lives life. How very true the point made by both writers, that safety not only makes sense but enables the participants to get the greater enjoyment from their experiences. "School Daze" is most amusing and oh so true. Even so those who try to redress the [sexual] balance in the usual thoughtless, kneejerk, politically correct fashion make matters worse. Oh how I would like to see a generation of parents who don't read the Sunday supplements but just get on and treat their children (of any sex) as human beings!

**Robert M. Sabella**  
24 Cedar Manor Court  
Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023

As usual, Chall 5 was full of fascinating items, many of the best being written by you! I enjoy both your writing style and what you have to say! I think you might have been a bit harsh on Neal Stephenson though. A friend of



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mine knows him fairly well, and she claims he is a very nice person who happens to be quite shy and introverted in crowds. I know from years of personal experience that introversion can often be mistaken for aloofness! :-)

*Stephenson's Hugo winner, The Diamond Age, is one of the most interesting and literate works ever to cop s.f.'s most precious trinket ... but I'd hardly call it a page-turner. It took me from just after worldcon till just before Mardi Gras -- five months -- to read it!*

E.R. Stewart's "On the Genre Jag Again" paralleled some of the columns I've written lately for both Tom Sadler's *The Reluctant Famulus* and my own *Gradient* concerning the merits of literary fiction. There are two different schools of literature: the small, narrow one watched over by the New York elite, and the much broader spectrum of great fiction about the human heart! I tend to ignore the former while embracing the latter. And of course, all genres overlap to a great degree, so worrying where works such as *Naked Lunch* belong is virtually useless. In an upcoming TRF column I discuss Toni Morrison's wonderful *Beloved* which fits very comfortably into the fantasy, historical, and literary genres.

I enjoyed JoAnn Montalbano's "School Daze" quite a bit. She managed to discuss quite a few universal truths while still entertaining mightily. Of course, she reminded me yet again that I was -- happily! -- quite a poor student at Boy School!

Walt Willis  
9 Alexandra Rd.  
Donaghadee  
N. Ireland BT21OQD

Congratulations on another magnificent **Challenger**.

"School Daze" was original and thought provoking, and Binker's piece about caving was very illuminating. E.R. Stewart on genre was worth reading.

Your report on L.A.Con III was fascinating, though you unaccountably omitted mention of the Guest of Honour from Northern Ireland. Incidentally, I've been wondering who Eve Ackerman is. Some distant and hitherto unknown relative of Forry?

Jerry Page's article was very interesting,

but the pride of place in this issue, as in the last, goes to your own article about your interview with Leslie Van Houten. This is nailbiting stuff, wonderfully well-written, and thoughtful. And above all, memorable. I can't help thinking there should be a mundane market for material of this class.

In the letter section, I was taken by your selection of "fragments you have shored against your ruins," in particular your references to Jimmy Connors. I remember well the occasion at Wimbledon you cite, and I agree with you.

*Only late in his career did Jimmy Connors get the recognition he deserved for his indomitable character. The right to say "Shit!" is the right to play tennis!*

Harry Warner surprises me, not for the first time, by his argument against the repeal of Prohibition. This is the first time I have seen anything of this sort. I had thought it was generally agreed that Prohibition had been a terrible mistake and it's very interesting to see a contrary view. I wonder how widely shared it is.

I was also keenly interested in the various mentions of Nolacon 1951. This was the original convention that Shelby started his Fund to bring me over to, and though that idea was quickly dropped because of a shortage of time, I always felt a proprietary interest in that convention. Lee Hoffman wrote to me from the train on her way to it, and afterwards about her famous encounter with Tucker, so I always felt I was there too. Also, I was privy to the big secret about her sex, so I felt ahead of everyone actually present at Nolacon.

Henry L. Welch  
1525 16th Avenue  
Grafton WI 53024

Thanks for **Challenger #5** and the fine comments you make about me personally. I've always felt that I was fairly level-headed, but I'm not quite 55 yet. I'll be 33 later in the year so I am perhaps a bit older than you thought after meeting me. I still have problems in that I look like (and am often younger than) many of my students. That is why I put up with a tie. I made up for it by becoming President of the Faculty Council. (Would it surprise you to know that I have an 18 year old son, well a step-son?)

It is unlikely that you'll see any [Alfred]

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Bester quotes in my "Quanta" column [in Knarley Knews] since I've only read four of his short stories. As you will probably point out this is my loss.

*You're right-the-heck-on about that! Forget that next meal, Knarl, and hie thee now to Barnes & Noble for The Stars My Destination and The Demolished Man.*

I enjoyed meeting you in L.A. The Bumble-Ball Bolters (as was most of the other decor) in the Fan Lounge were the work of Minneapolis fan Geri Sullivan. She did a really good deal on them since they've been remaindered by the toy stores.

The Best Original Artwork Hugo hasn't been very popular. The number of nominations has always been quite thin (I'm speaking from a vague recollection and could easily be wrong) for any individual piece and the voting has been even poorer than most of the fan awards which have a much more traditional history.

Binker's cave rescue stories remind me of a couple of incidents from my Outing Club days, even if they have nothing to do with caving. The first took place in a climbing area called the Gunks (world famous in New Paltz, NY). We were climbing in an area called Bonticue (SP?) which is sort-of a plateau of rock. Many high school heroes like to show off and climb the 75-foot face instead of taking the trail. I recall one such *intelligent* individual who had made it within five feet of the top and then realized he couldn't find a hand-hold. Had I not been there to talk him through it he might have become a stain at the bottom. In effect he had not realized that hand-holds need not be oriented horizontally like a ladder rung. He had two really good holds within reach that simply required a rotation of his hand to vertical.

Two years ago I visited Turkey Run State Park in West-Central Indiana. This is basically a number of narrow canyons and ravines with a stream running through them. As it was a nice spring Sunday about half the state was present including many high school heroes and their dates. At one point I came upon a group of Heroes on the upstream end of a large pool about five feet wide and a foot deep. All of the dates were trying to figure out how to get across and the Heroes were being too macho to help. I simply straddled

the pool and offered them a hand. If looks could kill I'd be pushing up daisies by now.

As for Binker's prusiker, he could have been left hanging on the rope. Since this would have likely been fatal, he's lucky he could be talked onto the ledge. A large number of incidents have been appearing lately where prolonged hanging in a climbing harness with little activity can result in fatal consequences. We always practiced our vertical work extensively in the gym before letting novices go on trips. In spite of my hours at this I was still unprepared for my first prusik over a ledge followed by a 75 foot cable ladder ascent. The gentleman in front of me spent over 30 minutes climbing that 75 feet and there isn't much to do to keep warm on a small ledge.

Perhaps Binker's continued stories will spur me into caving or rock climbing again. It is certainly reminding me of why I chose those two sports and why I still maintain a Life-Sustaining membership in the National Speleological Society despite very little activity over the last six years.

Gary Robe  
P.O. Box 3221  
Kingsport TN 37664

The article on caving by Binker Glock hit close to home, and I realize I've done some pretty dumb things in caves in my time. Bowling Green, KY is built on top of a labyrinthine cave system, and there are several large openings that are just too tempting for teenage kids not to explore. There are some very spectacular chimneys, huge rooms, and underground rivers and waterfalls. I've explored many of them, but looking back on it, I was probably seconds and inches away from disaster several times.

The ground below Bowling Green is so unstable that I was once walking in an open field within sight of my house, when the ground suddenly gave way beneath me. I was sucked into the ground up to my neck, my arms were pinned, and my feet were hanging free. I stayed in that position for an hour until I was able to call to a neighbor who pulled me out. The next rainstorm, this hole became a new sinkhole about 20 feet across and 15 feet deep. After that I lost some of my confidence in the ground.

Gene SQUIB Stewart  
HQ USAFE/SCXP  
PSC 2 Box 6151  
APO AE 09012

I was honored to have my SQUIB appear with Rotsler & Gephardt fillos.

Editorial by GHLIII -- Funny you should mention "A Night on Bald Mountain" -- its original, the Brocken, is one of the places we may visit while here in Germany. If we dare.

Your cover reminds me of Thirties sneak-peek movie iconography. Very tasteful.

Bugliosi's passionate ego burns bright.

School Daze by JoAnn Montalbano -- I did read the book and it goes a bit further than this delightful poke in the ribs but not much.

Underground Danger by Binker Glock Hughes -- You don't have a sib with the middle name Uzi, do you? Great article. It's astounding how foolish people can be.

L.A. con III - Fabulous report of what must've been a marvelous experience. Ray Bradbury? Wow, indeed. Friend of mine sent me a copy of Encounter with Tiber signed by Buzz Aldrin for Yule.

Watts Towers: art amidst anarchy; eloquent, *n'est pas?* They echo Antonio Gaudi's hand-made cathedral in Spain.

L.A.con's Hugo has cinema as a base, which is insulting to those of us dedicated to the written word. What's up? C-of-C get involved? No -- more like "G-of-H". *L.A.con had a strong media emphasis and film director Roger Corman as one of their guests, so the committee figured, "Hey, we're near Hollywood -- sorta -- so let's make a Hugo reflecting the movies ..."* That doesn't insult anyone, and we shouldn't be so hard on a cute idea, but really ... the design was just too much. *I'm surprised they didn't put tits on the thing.*

D'accord re Original Art category -- "Bring it back, you beanieheads," the stranger shouted from the shadows.

So no one told [Neal] Stephenson that Hugos can be rescinded for ingratitude, huh? Let's serve him a writ ...

Nothing Up Her Sleeves But Brains by Jerry Page -- Nice reminiscence that brought to life someone we'd all like to know. Thanx.

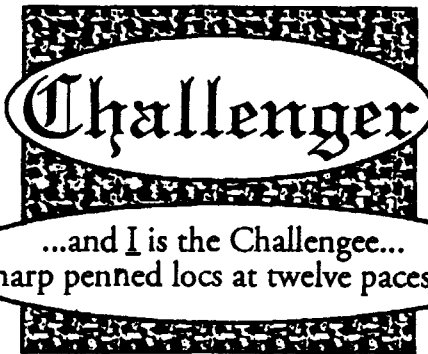
Healter Skelter -- Superb writing. This is a compassionate portrait of a human being caught in life's tangles as she's encountered by another human being attuned to the ups and downs, the certainties and doubts. Top-notch stuff -- may GHLIII publish a book of his own, on whatever subject, ASAP. (Eddie?)

Fascination with crime is no higher in our society than it's been in England's for as long as written records serve as reminders. And it's even a part of Rome and Greece and probably Egypt and Ice Age fireside chats. Or grunts. On a non-pro, purely popular public-consumption level you might enjoy Eric Ambler's odd book *The Will to Kill*, among other things a sort of exam of why crime and especially murder fascinate us so.

The "AI" Side by Alan Hutchinson -- Bradbury's love of *metaphor* comes to mind. Getting just the right one can be courtly torture.

Epistles -- David A. Drake -- Is a yeast-infected bullet considered a biological weapon?

Walt Willis, et alia -- Dengrove's article on Rosicrucians covered nothing that can't be found in such source's as Colin Wilson and various "exposes." The dismissive hostility and personal nastiness engendered by mere mention of this topic surprises me and makes me wonder with some of you folks. Hm ... Since when does scepticism (or even skepticism) equate with intolerance? Also, Wicca may have arisen from it, but maybe not. Evidence of anything can be faked, as PKD put it, and assertions in zines don't mean much as a rule, as I once wrote. For contrast, look at the varied response to James Hogan's AIDS-HIV piece on Duesberg's theses. Do things occult hit fannish buttons?



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**GHLIII** -- Pithy summation of adversarial law; cheers. Great list of good wee things on which to stand, too, esp. PKD and Lafferty.

**Sam Moscowitz** -- Perhaps reality shattered a nurtured fantasy for Harry B. Moore; people are different in person. The idea of a con might've been better than the fact of one, and from all reports the organizing rather left a lurch, alas.

*Sic Semper Nolacons ... and won't we all miss  
Sam Moscowitz?*

**Y'all** -- Recently a pal of mine from grade school was so stricken by getting a look at his first-ever contributions to a zine that he withdrew not only loccing but from corresponding with me as well. Idea appealed but reality shocked, is what I figure.

**Henry L. Welch** -- Howdy, Knarley. A caver, are you? My eldest son describes himself as a Trog, so much does he enjoy caverns.

**Joy V. Smith** -- PCBS is a great fannish neologism.

**Harry Cameron Andruschak** -- Your world-weary long-suffering tone re "this sort of thing is now becoming common in fanzines ..." makes me wonder *what* "sort of thing"? After all, who arbitrates what's Science and what's Pseudoscience in zine articles? Asimov's ghost? You? I say anything and everything can ought & must be presented, if it appeals to the editor, so that we the readers can see and decide for ourselves. Open discourse of all & sundry: only that and nothing more. And Hogan's use of Galileo was within acceptable bounds. Keep "... But Still It Moves" by the Good Doctor himself in mind before you balk. "Cite authority carefully, it might be listening," as some airhole of other said once. On good authority.

**GHLIII** -- I've always thought it would be useful to make the distinction between *physical* guilt and the rest. It wouldn't matter if Twinkies or the Devil or Lactose Intolerance or Mini-Skirts made you do it, just that your body did it. Sort out the rest separately. This might lead to a more humane system.

**Fred Chappell** -- Great Warfield and Price stories.

**Alexis A. Gilliland** -- "Asking yourself if laws are just is optional; you can't change them ..." You actually wrote that, huh? What country do you live in? What state of mind?

**Rich Dengrove** -- Did you come across German kitchen witches? They're little dolls of lovely-faced females astride broomsticks. They bring good luck when hung in kitchens, 'tis said. As for real witches and other mysterious beings, EU's different from USA in that much of this stuff is simply accepted as no big deal. No one much cares.

**Mary Ann van Hartesveldt** -- Yes, you are brave or what. You do good cover art posing, too, by the way. Try being vegetarian in Germany, a.k.a. MEATland, if you want to qualify as deprived. (For depraved, well, that's not my dept., I'm gastronomie dominii.)

*Rorsharch said Hitler was a vegetarian.*

**The Fanzine Dump** -- They do, do they? Nice collective singular there. But seriously, thanks for the faces to go with the names of many folks I've known only via loc or zine or phone. It was a grand vicarious visit to the Fanzine Lounge. How'd you get the picture of Don Franson just before the Velociraptor gobbled him?

**Spot Review -- Moving Mars** by Greg Bear was the last big Mars sf I read. I sort of stayed out of Spider's web. Your review talked me into wanting Robinson's entire Mars spectrum.

*I recommend all three books unhesitatingly and hope Blue Mars wins the San Antonio Hugo. But the Robinson responsible is Kim Stanley, not Spider. (Nor Will, for that matter.)*

This reinforces my idea, borrowed from C.S. Lewis, that only fans ought to review because they can best cite what's good or spot what's not, being familiar with the genre and its expectations, standards, and history.

**On the Spot: Big D** -- Just a matter of curiosity, but if those were the original boxes of books of which the sniper's nest were built, has anyone ever opened them and examined the contents? I've no idea what might or might not be there other than books.

*The sniper's nest in the sixth floor Schoolbook Depository museum was a recreation based on photos.*

As for Gerald Posner's book [on the JFK assassination] I'm not convinced by it, but I have no better hypothesis.

**Mikes and Lee and Linda** -- We could all use an appreciative friend like you, GHLIII.

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Lynn Hickman sounds to have been a wonderful person. Thanks for the glimpse and here's to his memory.

Russell Chauvenet  
11 Sussex Road  
Silver Spring MD 20910-5436

Having persevered through 38 pages of letters, some more interesting than others, I was prepared to file *Challenger 5* in one of those "safe places" from which I rarely extract anything again.

Then to my wondering eyes what should appear but another big entry, "The Fanzine Dump," which gives vital data on more fanzines than I could keep up with, and almost enough to support Harry Warner's pitiful plea that he be spared from accusations of reading and commenting on every available fanzine.

I am a believer in what I have modestly called Chauvenet's Law, which says that when the letter column pages outnumber the rest of the pages in a fanzine, that fanzine is approaching its end. You are obviously aware of this danger and have successfully added even more reasonably interesting reading than I should take the time for. But at least I have notified Buck Coulson that the most recent edition of *SF Five-Yearly* came out in December 1996 and is presumably still available from the awesome support team of Hoffman, Hooper, Schalles & Sullivan c/o 3444 Blaisdell



Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315. It runs to 46 pages and costs the firm over a dollar to mail to its customers. I see it is dated Nov. 1996 on its cover.

I want to give you, GHLIII (are you raising GHLIV at home?) an Outstanding Comment Award for 1996. When Ben Indick in his innocence ventured to ask if Galileo was some kind of hot air artist, you had the perfect comeback, "No, that was Montgolfier"!

All in all, an impressive issue and I'm glad that I lack the ambition and capability to expand *Detours* into the Big Leagues.

Teddy Harvia  
701 Regency Drive  
Hurst TX 76054

Your sympathetic portrait of Leslie Van Houten was frightening. Justice should be blind; you seem too easily blinded to ugly crimes by the woman's physical beauty.

*Leslie really was cute. All I wanted to do was crawl up to her feet and die. Why not? Others have!*

*In seriousness, I would have been dishonest had I not reported how the woman got to me. She affects people that way — I'm convinced poor Ronald Hughes fell in love with her and Bugliosi was once scared a young male juror would vote to acquit just because he kept staring at her. Does this mean I "ignored" her crimes? No. Van Houten helped murder two innocent people because she thought it would free her boyfriend from jail. But the questions are, has she reformed? and what should be done with her now? My reaction added further ambiguity to that quandary.*

JoAnn Montalbano's "School Daze" was cute.

Bill Rotsler seemed to be smiling the whole of L.A.Con. You must have taken his picture the one time he wasn't.

Lynn Hickman's death is sad news. I never did send him the art I promised.

Alex Slate  
8603 Shallow Ridge  
San Antonio TX 78239-4022

Thanks for *Challenger*. I, too, am glad we got a chance to meet at Worldcon. I wish we had gotten a chance to sit down and talk



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for a while. If you're going to be at LoneStarCon, we'll have to do that.

*Booked!*

I didn't realize that I came across as the Texas Wild Man. I do tend to get a bit manic. It's all just a cover-up for my shy, introspective side.

I truly enjoy your zine. It is one of the few that I really feel compelled to loc.

You print a compelling portrait of Ms. Leslie Van Houten, but I think your final analysis is correct. She really doesn't seem repentant. There are several sub-issues to discuss here. Should she have been sentenced to death? maybe not. She did not mastermind the crime, she was under some compulsion, but sixteen stab wounds? She deserves to be in jail for life. Manson deserves death.

To address the larger issue (re your comments to my last loc) we have to separate your comments. Without conscious volition is one thing, compulsion the same. No, we do not hold these people fully responsible. But we examine the actions to help determine how responsible. Let's look at Van Houten. She's responsible in the sense that she agreed to go, seemingly without extreme pressure. And she didn't just stab one person one time or even a couple of people one time. She stabbed Rosemary LaBianca 16 times! It was not really a spur of the moment thing. She knew they were going out to kill.

How about irresistible impulse? There is impulse and impulse. If I'm coming at you with a knife and you panic and shoot me that's one sort of impulse. You should only serve some sort of minor sentence.

*None at all, if you reasonably believed your life to be threatened.*

If you come home, find your significant other *in flagrante delicto*, grab a knife and kill the two in a fit of jealous rage, that's another sort of impulse. You deserve to be punished for taking a life, but after a reasonable period of time you should be released.

*It would depend on the time elapsing between the discovery of the two (just two?) lovers and the knifing. If the crime occurred immediately, there would be a case for a manslaughter verdict. If enough time has passed for "the blood to cool," then I've committed first degree murder (because*

*there would be more than one victim).*

If on the other hand I get a sudden impulse to run out and gun down 20 people at the local Burger King that's a different sort of impulse. I don't think this sort of person deserves



to be out in society. I don't even think this person deserves to live.

How about not being able to tell right from wrong. Hitler couldn't tell it was wrong to have multi-millions of people killed and enslaved. He did not deserve to live. A 14-year-old who goes out and kills a 7-11 clerk for kicks knows right from wrong, irrespective of his/her age and should be treated accordingly. A 17-year-old Down's Syndrome kid who kills someone is a different situation. This type of not being able to tell right from wrong should not be punished as severely. I question whether in this case there should be any punishment at all.

*A Down's sufferer probably wouldn't appreciate his own wrong nor understand the punishment being inflicted upon him. However, punishment is not the only reason a killer would be jailed.*

*Society warrants protection from a dangerous person and society's principles need to be maintained against his acts. Or as you say:*

I don't think that mental state at the time is all there is to look at. Total mental state combined with the situation and the actions taken have to be examined as a *gestalt*. Most (if not all)

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who commit murder I believe are insane at the time.

Tom Feller  
P.O. Box 13626  
Jackson MS 39236

I'm currently reading Deke Slayton's autobiography. He tells this anecdote about Buzz Aldrin. Gemini 12 had closed in on the Agena [an unmanned spacecraft designed for the astronauts to practice rendezvous and docking techniques] to a range of about 75 miles when the rendezvous radar just quit.

It was pretty funny that this happened to Buzz [who had done his Ph.D. thesis on orbital rendezvous]. He hauled out his sextants and charts, and with input from [Mission Control] managed to get Jim [Lovell, the pilot] to the right point in the sky. They docked safely.

In the era of hand-held computers and pocket calculators, it's mindboggling to imagine using a sextant for spacecraft navigation.

I read *Helter Skelter* and Susan Atkins' autobiography when I was in college. I'm not so crazy about the idea of parole for prisoners convicted of first degree murder. (Although I understand your point that Leslie Van Houten may have been guilty of a lesser crime.) If we had assurance that someone sentenced to life in prison would really serve for life, then I think we could make some headway to abolishing capital punishment.

*Louisiana provides for life imprisonment "without parole, probation or suspension of sentence," yet we still see death penalties meted out by juries. The argument is that certain crimes are so heinous that no other punishment will suffice. By the way, I'd like to borrow or buy Susan Atkins' book, Child of Satan, Child of God from whoever has a copy.*

I removed Rodney Leighton from my mailing list after he sent me a copy of his zine review in which he said he had no interest in *The Freethinker*. If that makes me an asshole, so be it

Mike McInerney asks whether there was ever a raid on a group of sf fans. In *The Futurians*, Damon Knight tells the story of a raid

on the group's apartment by the Secret Service because of an anonymous tip that they were counterfeiters. A few years ago, the Secret Service raided the offices of Steve Jackson, the game publisher, because someone thought the GURPS manual for *Cyberpunk* was a blueprint for credit card fraud.

I only met Lynn Hickman once, at the Chicago Worldcon in 1991, but I treasure the memory of his graciousness.

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What I usually hear about caving is where someone went into a cave and it rained, trapping him/her/them. Sometimes they drown, sometimes they get rescued by cave divers. One would think they get annoyed.

But the problem with the sound advice given by **Binker Glock Hughes** regarding sensible precautions for caving is that the people who should take already "know better" -- the equivalents of the people who *know* that they can "hold their drive and drink." In the Alps these people set off up mountains wearing light clothing, shoes without tread, and so on, with results similar to cavers of like unwisdom. After seeing it happen too often one can get hardened into the philosophy of "Just think of it as evolution in action."

However, one of the recurring themes of books on expeditions has been the stupendous struggle necessary to acquire the wherewithal for obtaining needful equipment, and once the excursion is underway, how so much of what was obtained is useless, and how so much of what could be useful is lacking. Though nothing else quite matches the notorious incident during the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition. Little America was short of toilet paper! Byrd radioed to his subordinate in New Zealand to send some down with the last replenishment cargo. The response was "Use wall paper." Shortly thereafter a new agent in New Zealand was appointed.

I expect I would find the essay by **E.R. Stewart** more interesting had I not read his other essays in *Skeptical Inquirer*, *Proper Boskonian* etc. on diverging purposes.

## Challenger 6

Remember that, sad to say, **Buzz Aldrin** took to drink after Apollo, a sign of how degraded our society is, that such a man was not honored.

*But he was! The Apollo 11 crew was feted upon their return to Earth as no American heroes had been since John Glenn: ticker tape, speeches before Congress, the works. My understanding is that Aldrin had trouble handling his place in history, got bad advice from his balls-to-the-wall military father, and mangled his own career and wits in the process. (Anyone have a spare pb of his **Down to Earth** for sale?) Neil Armstrong also felt the strain of immortality; he fled from celebrity into academia. Now there's a guy I'd like to see speak at a worldcon.*

It makes one wish that Tom Wolfe's proposal in **The Right Stuff** that the astronauts be promoted to the rank of Single-Combat General, and then (after any noteworthy accomplishment) Galactic Single-Combat General, with official ceremonies, status, and pay, had not been merely a flamboyant Wolfe commentary.

There are magicians who even outdo the low-cut-dressed **Betsy Gregg** in their devotion to show there is "nothing up their sleeves." They will do their acts *naked*. Fascinating article on conjuring by **Jerry Page**. It makes me think of those articles on circus life in **Astromancer Quarterly**; peeks into another extramundane community.

*The AQ squibs were the work of my great friend Joy Moreau, who has agreed to write another story of her life in the circus for Chall ... someday.*

**Destructive Generation** by Collier & Horowitz takes a slightly different view of People's Park, 20 years later. [28.] It has become a drug hangout. There was also a city park for animals, where they would co-exist in a non-hierarchical manner. The dogs set up a pack with an alpha male.

*You can read about my recent -- '93 -- visit to People's Park, and the memories and regrets and thoughts thus engendered, in Challenger no. 2.*

It would be interesting to read more of Leslie Van Houten's opinions on the Manson-Watson status offenses. Douglas and Ressler based their profiles on interviews of Manson and Tex Watson.

I suppose [some] will characterize the fan who wrote the glowing tribute to **Samanda Jeude** that heads your **LoColumn** as a fakefan. After all, he uses "sci-fi," and his excuse that he, **4SJ Ackerman**, invented the term is no excuse.

The on-line reports on **Corflu Nashville** seemed to emphasize going to microbreweries and a Thai restaurant. This does not seem to fit with the Nashville I know.

*Nashville is one of the niftiest burgs in the South, an appealing, tolerant, safe, active city. If I were young enough and bright enough to rip out my Nawlins roots and haul, N'ville is definitely among my top choices.*

**Commentary** had an article on the Greensboro shootout. The late Communist Workers' Party activists seem to have had advanced degrees which, absent resume legerdemain, would (one thinks) have disqualified them as overqualified for the proletarian jobs they filled. All the better to preach the revolution to the disenfranchised proletariat, which seemed curiously uninterested in starting a revolution and being the front line grunts, all to put them fancy **Noo Yawk prettyboys** into power.

*A couple of the survivors of the massacre -- I wouldn't call it a "shootout," since none but the Klansmen fired their weapons -- were M.D.s. Even in a courtroom, the KKKers were scary; violence surged in them like hot blood. But the Reds were closed, arrogant, nasty, more interested in posture than politics; I couldn't stand them. And they absolutely refused to cooperate with the prosecution.*

I think we're getting into an era of the elite, limited-distribution fanzine. The ultimate end of this policy will be the fanzine that *no one* is faaanish enough to receive.

*And I couldn't be more against that philosophy of zining. Fanzine fandom is not a cult; it is not closed, shut away, insular; it is open-minded, accesible, interested. Fanzines should celebrate and encourage free communication. I want to see every s.f. zine published. I resent being denied that opportunity because something about me or Chall falls outside a paranoid perspective of a hobby that should celebrate tolerance and liberty.*

**The Tom Clancy Companion**, edited by **Martin H. Greenberg** and much contributed to by

Roland Green, contains an essay by its subject, who discusses picking up the controversial [Lee Harvey Oswald] Mannlicher-Carcano [rifle] and taking a look. As you point out in "On the Spot: Big D", "A trained Marine wouldn't have needed a telescopic sight."

*Or as McManus says in The Usual Suspects ... well, never mind.*

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Many thanks for another mammoth issue of *Chall*. I can see what you mean about it impoverishing you. Cheer up, it enriches your readers.

I really enjoyed "School Days", nice, lighthearted but with just enough deadly accuracy with the barbs. One missed out was -- "Girl School", how to sit and watch "Soaps."

[The article on] caves was interesting, informative, and confirmed my belief that "cavers" are crazy. I've only been down two caves -- Workey Hole in Cheshire and a "Blue John" mine near Sheffield. Both were "touristy," well-lit, had footpaths and guide ropes -- but were enough to put me off the "real" caving bit.

"Genre Jag" was a bit too wordy for my tastes and I'm not too keen on fitting fiction into pigeonholes other than the two labelled "I enjoyed it" or "I didn't enjoy it." Rather a sledgehammer to crack a non-existent nut.

Excellent L.A.Con III photos. Great to see what so many "names" actually look like. I remember watching that "Phantom Empire robot" as a pre-war kid.

*Childe GHLIII saw Phantom Empire on TV in 1953 or so, and it scared the blue poop out of me. Gene Autry rode an elevator deep into the Earth to fight those robots; I thought he'd gone to Hell. My first idea of Satan was gleaned from that serial.*

The Watts Towers look fascinating and not unlike the Gaudi (sp.) architecture in Barcelona. What drives people to create such follies as this, Mount Rushmore and others?

*Gutson Borglum was paid to create Mount Rushmore, and enlisted a small army to assist him. Simon Rodia erected the Watts Towers all by himself for the sheer joy of it. It takes no credit away from Borglum to say Rodia was a*

*pure artist. By the way, addressing all Angelenos: I'd appreciate hearing about it when the scaffolding comes off the Towers. I may not be able to come see them in their new, restored glory, but at least I'll know.*

Jerry Page's piece was a real stunner (and a frightener). Pity he didn't give

away any real secrets other than the obvious "suspension harness." An excellent read, though; he has the gift.

The prison interview was surprising in that you would get to do it -- and be allowed to write about it.

*Leslie didn't care if I wrote about our talk, and no government has the power to stop me.* It brought out the fact that convicts are not a race apart but are just people who took a wrong turn somewhere.

*In some cases.*

Super issue.



## Challenger 6

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Challenger 5 is GHLIII Press Publication #834. I assume that not each of the previous 833 publications has been a 106 page monster, too. If Chall 5 was a normal issue, you would be a consumer of paper not far back in line from The New York Times Company in its publication of its Sunday edition.

*The longest GHLIII Press Pub was the Nolacon II souvenir book, Let the Good Times Roll, and the shortest was a mere five words long.*

Fans say of the thick photo-copied fanzine, "Wow. How expensive." Fans used to say of the thick mimeographed fanzine, "Wow. What a lot of work."

Your typos are few but ... interesting. The misspelled words are not obvious. E.g., "TAFF works if the most fans get the guest they want ..." puzzled me. I knew the wording wasn't right, but I had to think about it. And I am the line's author! "Most" should be "host."

I often use for locs the leftover flyers from my wife Mary Ellen's 1994 campaign to be elected the English language trustee for Midland and Penetanguishene for the Simcoe County Board of Education. Mary Ellen placed second in a field of six. I use the now-useless flyers often when I am writing a one-page first loc to a faned because it includes a photo of the four of us. (You younger fans, imagine a web page on paper.)

To answer your other question -- "Where the bejasus is Penetanguishene?" -- why, it's beside Midland.

Oh, all right. Midland, pop. 14,000, and Penetanguishene, pop. 8,000, are 90 minutes north of Toronto, on the shore of Severn Sound, which in turn is connected to Lake Huron.

Penetanguishene is old, in European settlement context. The British built beside Penetanguishene Bay a naval base in 1817. The still-used garrison Anglican Church was built in 1836.

The long-time provincial tourist site, Penetanguishene's Historic Naval and Military Establishments, a few years ago was renamed Discovery harbour, reflecting a switch in emphasis

to tall ships.

Penetanguishene is Ojibwa for Land of Rolling White Sand, a misnomer for anyone expecting wide, white sandy beaches. The beaches do exist locally, but not in Penetanguishene.

Penetanguishene is best known outside of Simcoe County as the location of Ontario's sole maximum security psychiatric hospital, yclept (spell check that, I dare you) [*I did; it didn't pass*] Oak Ridge.

American League baseball fans, particularly Philadelphia Athletic fans, interested in the events and players of the 1940s, might have read of the death this month -- January, 1997 -- of Phil Marchildon. The Penetanguishene pitcher won 19 games for Connie Mack's otherwise woeful team in 1947. Legend has it that the tight-fisted owner did not let Marchildon try to win a 20th game because Mack would have had to give Marchildon a raise.

Brian Orser, World and Olympic Silver Medal-winning figure skater (1984 and again in 1988), is a member of a prominent Penetanguishene family.

I talked with, and listened to, Lynn Hickman during Ditto 7 (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994). My experience certainly seconds your description of Lynn as a very nice man, and good company. I was interested to learn from him that he volunteered for the Canadian Army in the Second World War, and he spent time at Base Borden, here in Simcoe County. I would have enjoyed encountering him at another con.

Body surfing in the fannish sea ...

Harry Warner, Jr.  
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The monstrously plump fifth issue of Challenger arrived recently, shocking me with the amount of money it took for you to send it to me, not to mention how high your other production expenses must have been. I assume you didn't wait for me to receive a copy via SFPA because you want a loc. Goodness knows, the size of the letter column and the aristocratic WAHF list in this issue dictate that a loc from me is the last thing you need. But I'll oblige ...

*A loc from Harry Warner is practically essential for any genzine. I sent you the issue because*

*finances forced me to foist a digest version on SFPA, lacking the lettercol, zine reviews, some articles and most photopages.*

It's hard to believe someone is claiming Huck Finn as a black literary character. Apparently the homosexuals' arguing that everyone except Adam and Eve were that way has served as a challenge to the people who overdo their efforts to get racial justice. Nobody could imagine Huck being virtually adopted by those whites, getting invited to stay at the big house in the Deep South where the feud was going on, mingling freely with people along the shore during the raft journey down the Mississippi, if he were black.

*Nor would the core scene of the novel -- where Huck misleads the slavehunters away from runaway Jim -- have any moral power were he black, himself. At that moment Huck realizes the primacy of friendship and decency over the temporal power of his racist society; he violates man's law to follow a higher one. In the context of the times, he makes a difficult and revolutionary decision ... but only if he is what he is: an unsophisticated redneck kid, who just happens to be a fine human being.*

I reveled in all those worldcon photos. Some of them were startling, however. Bill Rotsler has been constant and unchanging in his ebullience and productivity and ideas over the decades that it never occurred to me that he looks differently today than he did when we were tape-



responding back into the 1950s. I'm sorry to see these photographic hints that Ray Bradbury is slowing down a little physically, but it's good to know he has a new book of stories coming out after his complaints a while back that his kind of fiction was no longer acceptable to book editors. And so I've finally seen the much-discussed Hollywoodized Hugo design. I wonder what the next few worldcon committees will do to top this design? Provide a vibrator for it? Or install a switch which will cause the rocket to zoom upward and through the ceiling?

*I like Hugo base designs that celebrate the city or region hosting the convention, but I also appreciate restraint, artistry and good taste. The best: Atlanta's simple-but-elegant pyramid of Georgia granite. And all hail Tim Kirk's groundbreaking creation for MidAmeriCon. Hmm ... I feel an article coming on. Who here has ever doodled his own design for a Hugo base?*

*Let Chall see it!*

Jerry Page's piece on magic was extremely good, although I kept feeling disappointment each time he seemed about to tell us how a trick worked and then left out at least part of the secret. When I was a boy, a Christmas present was a magician's kit, with which it was allegedly possible to perform a variety of acts of prestidigitation. I never found the courage enough to give a performance in front of other people but I practiced a lot. A very faint memory tells me that this kit included an up-the-sleeve device, a little black cone with an elastic string at the closed end, which went inside a jacket or sweater and permitted the magician to get rid of some small item which he had been holding in his hand.

But actually, Harry Moore's gaffiation after the 1951 worldcon wasn't unprecedented. Those early worldcons often dragged down one or more of the chief officials out of fandom for at least a few years, sometimes permanently. Mark Reinsberg was never the same after the first ChiCon, for instance. I believe the worldcon in Pittsburgh around 1970 was the last one to decimate an entire city's fandom. Admittedly, the worldcon effect on those who run it was rarely as complete and as long-lived as that experienced by Harry.

It seems strange to read a loc from Fred Chappell just a few days after finishing *The Fred*

## Challenger 6

Chappell Reader, which I enjoyed very much although I could have wished that one of his other novels had been included complete in place of *Dagon* which is better for a mature person than for me. I share Fred's admiration for William Warfield, and I might add a recommendation: his autobiography is superb. It's frustrating to think that I probably passed WW on the street from time to time without realizing what a great artist was on the same sidewalk with me. He was stationed during World War II at Fort Ritchie, an intelligence training installation about 15 miles from Hagerstown, and most of the soldiers there came to Hagerstown when they got 24-hour or 48-hour passes, as the largest town within easy reach.

I've never been accused of a double murder but I have had lots of practice at leaving my two gloves at two different places even when I am not in turmoil over a violent act. The front seat of my car, the chair just inside the front door, the gutter at the spot where I've just parked the car, and an alternative universe are the places where I must often look for the mate to the one still on my hand or in my overcoat pocket. It isn't a difficult habit to acquire.

A new issue of *Science Fiction Five-Yearly* has recently been published. I would have read it by now if you had run out of money after this issue of *Challenger* had attained 40-page status.

*I'd like to read it, too, but Geri Sullivan tells me that she's out of mailing copies. Anyone got an extra?*

How can a mundane complain about a word like "fanac" after the idiotic nomenclature that is all over computerdom? I don't mean computer language that must be invented for something which hasn't existed before. Rather, I think it's ridiculous to write or say "hit" when "press" is the accurate term for what you do to a key. Why "menu" with its specific connotation when referring to a list or index? Why "interface" for connection? Most fannish slang got that way because there's nothing in the dictionary that is accurate.

Science fiction got the reputation in the United States of being "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff" because TCBRS was what got wide circulation during the early part of this century. The prozines rarely sold more than 70,000 or so

copies, the few mature science fiction books rarely got into five-figure sales, and an intelligent science fiction movie emerged about once every three or four years. Science fiction that reached a vast public was Flash Gordon in the daily comic strips, Buck Rogers on the afternoon radio programming, an assortment of vaguely futuristic movie serials that ran on weekends with cowboy movies, and the Tom Swift boys' books. Science fiction had a bad reputation because most people never encountered



*By permission: the Moores of Midland!*

the quality stuff and saw only the juvenile and trite mass circulation manifestations of the field.

*But a lot of that was superb stuff! Certainly the Alex Raymond comics and the Victor Appleton novels.*

The tribute to Lynn Hickman was splendid. Curiously, I used the same thought in your last paragraph when I wrote something about him in either an apa or loc before receiving this *Challenger*: I had never seen one line in a fanzine that was critical of Lynn or his behavior or his writings, a situation that hardly any other fan has enjoyed down through the years.

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## Spring-Summer 1997

Challenger 5 was too large and varied for me to enjoy all of it, which is basically a good idea.

I know I'm not from Mars, and Juanita definitely isn't from Venus. I would have enjoyed being rich, but not enough to get out and work for it. I preferred being independent; so did Juanita. And we both managed it.

Nice to see something from Binker Hughes, but I didn't grow up in cave country and have no particular affinity for caves. I've been to the big three -- Mammoth, Carlsbad, and Wyandotte -- but only as part of guided tours. Wyandotte was the closest thing to "real" caving, since the group went in with a couple of college-age (or high school-age) guides carrying gasoline lanterns and changes of elevation were made via ladders rather than stairs -- but we didn't have to crawl up or down. The trips were fun, but now I've done them and have no urge to extend my cave knowledge.

Genres can die, but they can also be reborn. Westerns are out of favor now, but they might well come back some day.

*I'm fond of saying, "John D. MacDonald mysteries, Elmore Leonard westerns."*

And there were *always* market categories. There were dozens of western pulps, romance pulps, fantasy-stf pulps, adventure pulps. (Though I believe that *Dirigible Stories* was unique and short-lived -- as were dirigibles -- there were plenty of airplane pulps at one time.) And the genres *were* "on purpose," though the purpose of the publishers was to make money. The same publishers covered different categories, to broaden their sales.

*As did editors. Didn't Ray Palmer mutate one of his western tales to a science fiction yarn by changing the Indians to Martians, the site from Tombstone to Mars and the Colts .45s to rayguns?*

You didn't answer the question I'd want to know about Leslie Van Houten: has she learned to be an individual? She got into trouble by being a follower; has she learned any better? If she got out of prison without learning, she would have a 50-50 chance of following another brute. Does she have any real convictions of her own?

*Leslie wasn't so much a follower -- I don't think she ever really believed Manson's nitwit*

*mysticism -- as a member. She wanted to belong, to be part of the group. She still speaks fondly of that aspect of the cult experience. I couldn't see her hurting anyone again, were she freed -- but I could imagine her joining another cult, just to belong to something. Off to Hale-Bopp.*

Well, some parents drive their kids crazy. Dad knew I'd have to work at *something* when I was an adult, which is why he got me a job as cemetery caretaker when I was 13. (Not just mowing the grass; digging graves as well, and discovering that ratty old artificial flowers can still be cherished by the people who put them on the grave by way of my mowing.) But he never pushed me in any one direction. Before I got out of high school I'd also been a house painter and a warehouse worker. (And he taught me to handle guns at age 5, in case I never made enough money to buy meat -- this was the 1930s.) Being lazy, I went in for office jobs rather than outdoor ones when I grew up; draftsman, tech writer, garage door designer. (And writer, reviewer, and junior editor.)

As for what the child molester did, he was convicted of "fondling"; not with teenagers but with six-year-olds. And having them strip for him. Incidentally, I found out at this high school reunion that it's not just for graduates; it's for anyone who ever *attended* the school. One of my classmates who dropped out after her junior year was present. And a new issue of *Science Fiction Five-Yearly* dropped into our mailbox a while back. Issue #10; think about it.

Oh, being "allowed in" to Wiscon is a joke, but the convention *does* stress feminism.

There have been libraries which agreed to take fanzine collections, but how long they kept them I don't know; nobody seems to be taking them now.

No, derision of mundanes began somewhere before the early 1950s when I got in, and has continued. It was, however, initially a *response* to non-fans who derided "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff." The bad-mouthing didn't begin with fandom.

Basically, Sheryl, the fan funds are for fanzine fans because they're known to more voters than convention fans, and a good many fanzines circulate the ballots. Convention fans don't get the



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publicity. But some fanzine fans *also* regard the funds as their own property.

Nice tribute to Lynn Hickman. As I've said elsewhere, he was the first fan I ever met. I'd had some letters published in fanzines and when Lynn was on a sales trip to my general area he stopped by. I was more or less bewildered; I wasn't used to people looking me up just because I'd written a letter. I saw him a good many times since then; the last one was probably at a Detroit regional a couple of years ago. He spent a lot



more time drinking than I did, but we usually got along. 1926-1996; not bad. I was born in 1928, so maybe I have a couple of years to go.

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Ah, the day of the big fanzine is still here. Sure, I enjoy any fanzine I get, but the

big, thick ones are always the best read. And, Challenger 5 certainly qualifies as thick. (Take that the best way possible.)

JoAnn Montalbano's article has familiar tones for me, seeing I'm re-reading Joanna Russ' *The Female Man*. As long as I can remember, I haven't believed in the Marlboro Man-type of macho Western society has tried to instill in men. I took both gym and home economics in high school, for instance. I was better at the latter ... but, I also figured I had to learn how to fend for myself, not having any illusions about a wife wait hand and foot for me. (This means I wouldn't be getting married, and the idea of such a wife is such an outmoded one.) So, I had some skills to live by myself, and I cooked and laundered and cleaned for myself for a while. Then I got married, and ... the chores were shared, and they still are. In fact, over the past decade or so, I've done most of the cooking, until my new job came along, entering trade data at a major Canadian securities company.

Another worldcon report that made me wish we'd been there. As soon as I win a lottery, this problem will be easy to solve. I've been wanting to meet Ray Bradbury as far back as L.A.con II, but I never had the opportunity. We were to be in charge of sales in the fanzine lounge, but somehow, I got the feeling that we would have been in the way of the festivities. Even though the sales aspect sure needs it, the last place a worldcon should have paperwork is the fanzine lounge ...

In my early days of fandom, I would use the term "mundane" often. But, now that I'm rapidly approaching oldpharthood (if I'm not there already), such terms are unnecessary. Sure, this Buck Rogers stuff isn't to everyone's taste, and there's plenty not to mine, but as long as we're having fun, who cares? Fanspeak can be fun, but we've grown out of using derogatory terms to exclude others, and "mundane" is one of those terms. Granted, the attitude of the general public makes you want to use the term, especially those hotel officials who don't see what you're doing as adult, and therefore, don't treat you as such. (Besides, SF is now generally cool in the public eye, and our rebellion about that makes *us* a little mundane.)

*Your letter was written in February '97, and since, alas, the pathetic nuts of the Higher*

## Spring-Summer 1997

*Source have besmirched all SFers with the purple stain of their lunacy. I'm used to advising cretins that the science fiction I enjoy encompasses much, much more than Star Trek; now I have to assure my "mundane" friends that the worldcon banquet doesn't mix barbiturates into its applesauce.*

After reminiscences about Nolacons I and II, I've heard word about a bid for New Orleans in 2003. Can you tell me anything about it?

*This is the first I've heard about it.*

My verdict on the newest O.J. Simpson verdict ... dull, boring, and a waste of time, both court and television. He's not guilty, but he is liable to the tune of \$33.5 million. The racists (of all colors) have new grist, and life wouldn't change for me if O.J. were to drop into the San Andreas Fault. Remember when O.J. was something you drank for breakfast? Can we get on with something else?

*I welcomed the civil trial and verdict. Daniel Petrocelli redeemed the honor of every attorney on Earth and righted a grievous wrong. The truth has been recognized. A vicious murderer is condemned for what he is, and no decent human being will hereafter meet his eye. It isn't the justice Simpson deserves, but considering what he has most valued in life, widespread approbation, it's at least apt. In short, O.J. is toast.*

I have several issues of Alan White's *Delineator*, and I'd agree with Ben Indick, *Challenger* has a lot in common with Alan's wonderful zine. *Delineator* was jam-packed with good writing, lotsa locs, and tons of scanned photos, many of which contained Hollywood celebs, like 4E, horror writers and actors, and many more. Alas, Alan moved to Las Vegas, tried a thin zine called *Casablanca*, and now has been lost to the Internet & Web.

At one fannish party we had a while ago, some of the newer fans in the group were singing the praises of *Babylon 5*, which I heartily agreed with. For some, one character they liked, or liked to hate, was the Psicop Alfred Bester (played by Walter Koenig). I explained to them who Alfred Bester was, but they stared with skeptical eyes. Those eyes widened when I grabbed a handful of Bester books off my bookshelf. I smiled and smiled...

I'd love to see another issue of *The Frozen Frog* ... it certainly deserves an Aurora.

I've already seen other obits for Lynn Hickman, but this one was the best. I'd communicated with Lynn through various locols, and he'd sent me some of his various apazines, usually about the pulps. Finally, at MidWestCon 46 in 1995, we met, and had a great chat about various and sundry. It had been a long time since he'd been to Canada, and he said he'd look me up. It's a shame that won't happen now.

**Rich Dengrove**  
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About E.R. Stewart's article on genres, I think it's a piece of -- Actually, it's not so bad. But I am not certain science fiction is aimed at adolescent males. Given the graying of fandom, it seems to be aimed at juveniles of all ages. Also, are horror stories [supposed] to scare us anymore? The recent ones seemed to [exist] to gross us out. The attraction seems to be the same as blowing milk out of one's nose for little boys. In fact, horror is written for little boys of all ages.

*No; little girls. Much more bloodthirsty.*

I don't know. Maybe Leslie Van Houten is a hardened criminal who is pulling your leg.

*We weren't that friendly.*

Or maybe she is a luckless lass who wants an ear to cry on. I get the feeling the Manson family was made up of middle class kids who did as many kids do, follow the leader. And Charlie took them over a cliff. What prison has made her now, who's to say.

Regarding Mike McInerney's comment on my Rosicrucian article, the substance is less important in Rosicrucianism, no matter what it is, than the mystery. In the case of AMORC, the substance is pre-Norman Vincent Peale positive thinking. But that takes second fiddle to the thrill of secret wisdom and secret masters. These are heightened by intimations of Atlantis and ancient Egypt taken from the 19th Century ideas of Paschal Randolph. Rosicrucianism's attraction is not what we know but what we don't know.

Mike further complains that I don't give my own view. Do I believe AMORC's junk, he wonders. While I like a mystery, I'm not attracted to AMORC's. At least not enough to spend all the

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money and time their program demands. And I'm not much for joining lodges.

By the way, Mike is right on at least one thing: I'm too chicken to attack Scientology.

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England

(Very) belated thanks for Challenger no. 5, and also thanks for Chall 3, with Dennis Dolbear's London report. I can safely say for all this, even though separated by nearly a quarter of a century (oh all right, 25 years) my time there being from '65 to '68, there's much of the London I knew that's still there. In fact, much more; well, taking in the theatres and shows was outside my budget as a common-or-garden ill-paid clerk, but it must be truly inexcusable to have lived in London and never visited St. Paul's or the National Gallery ... Maybe I was trying too hard to be an ordinary Londoner, like any city dweller notorious for never seeing the places where tourists gather, or did I think there would be time enough later? Though I was a regular visitor to the British Museum at least, so there must be little excuse for missing the rest.

Perhaps we've got more in common in haunting the bookshops. Apparently they weren't there for Dennis (and I was too early for the Fantasy Centre and Forbidden Planet), but among the greatest finds of my city years were the Popular Book Centres, a London-wide chain of secondhand shops selling every sort of magazine, every category of book, where (the popular part) you could return them and get your next selection for half-price. I must have worn a groove in the pavement to some of them, notable down the Harrow Road or off Cambridge Circus; browsing through their latest stocks and decimating their science fiction shelves, to eventually take back to Norton.

Though what most intrigues me is the mention of the small arcade bookstore with Fantasy Tales-type titles on one side and Adults Only material on the other; there must be some ancient connection between the two, because I came across the very same thing. In fact, it was

one of my special delights. This particular shop was towards the bottom of the Charing Cross Road, in an alleyway connecting with Soho; on one side there was every variety of glamour magazine then available together with photos and slides and films; on the other, there were all the science fiction magazines, both American and British; the first time I saw it, I might have thought I'd died and gone to heaven. No, not for the glamour section (though that was the time when it was all glamour, rather than today's gynaecology); but for the sf mags. My enduring love, my goshwow factor, came from discovering there were magazines that came out every month filled with nothing but science fiction; but to find them all here, in one place ... Well, you could depend on them being found in odd places all around London, but there wasn't a week went by, or a day off, when I didn't pop by there to see what had arrived.

I might quibble a bit at E.R. [Stewart]'s opinion that science fiction has proven durable, profitable, and adaptable. In respect of filmed sf, certainly; the re-released Star Wars seems to prove that, along with The X-Files, the various spin-offs from the original Star Trek, etc. etc.; but I suspect that traditional sf might be, in that useful phrase, bumping along the bottom, and the only best-sellers now are those allied to the media sf above, the novelisations and TV tie-ins. They're a form of literature that I used to view with equanimity; reasoning that once you'd seen the film and read the book-of-the-film, your curiosity would be aroused to search out other titles, dive into the wider world of science fiction. But now there's no need; more and more writers are churning out further adventures in the same universe -- be it that of Star Wars or Star Trek or even Dr. Who -- with the same favourite characters, enough to keep you reading for the rest of your days with never a thought as to what else there might be out there. I'd hate to think that this might be the only future for sf.



*Spring-Summer 1997*

[As for caving,] disappearing into the side of a mountain or into the bowels of the earth is something I could never face without shuddering; and as far as Nature's cathedrals go, count me a fervent atheist. On my doorstep -- well, in this county -- we've got some of the best cave systems in Britain thanks to the limestone rock of the Pennines with enthusiasts queuing up to go down; but I'm not of their number. I know where my dislike -- maybe even phobia -- came from; right out of the pages of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. I'll have to steel myself to re-read it one day, but I can still remember dirt and mud and despair and candle wax and the fate of Injun Joe, and it's coloured my view of caves ever since.

The memorial verse for Lynn Hickman intrigues me; though without a bookshop that stock *Our Friends from Frolix 8* and having to rely on a library that has nothing more than the most basic books of reference, I haven't been able to track [the poem] down. Perhaps, knowing the Dickian universe, it's an English translation of some foreign *leider*? There's another verse that's long been my favourite as a memorial for passing friends and fans; it was written by a minor 19th-century English poet (William Cory) translating a minor Greek poet (Callimachus); perhaps it's been equalled since, never bettered.

*"They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you  
were dead,  
They brought me bitter news to hear and  
bitter tears to shed.  
I wept as I remember'd how often you and I  
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him  
down the sky.*

*And now that thou art lying, my dear old  
Carian guest,  
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at  
rest,  
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy  
nightengales, awake;  
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he  
cannot take."*

Ken Faig, Jr.  
2311 Swainwood Drive  
Glenview IL 60025-2741

Thanks so much for sending me  
Challenger #5. It is full of interesting things --

much news and many pictures of southern fandom, and your own fascinating article on Leslie Van Houten. Rightly or wrongly, I think society regards some crimes as so infamous that the perpetrators are unlikely to win parole. It is hard for an intelligent, attractive middle-aged woman to have to live her life in prison, but at the same time society cannot forget about her victims. This vindictiveness, if you will, does no good for the deceased, but perhaps it allows society to feel "safer" in a collective sense. I am glad that none of the Manson perpetrators were executed -- even Charles himself.

To a degree your article reminded me of that book by Sister Helen Prejean, *Dead Man Walking*, which I believe mostly transpired in Louisiana. I think that prisoners who do not abuse the privilege deserve the solace of correspondence and visits, albeit monitored. As Sister Prejean (and I suspect you also) have found, however, prisoners can be very manipulative in their relationships. One has to be careful.

Inge Glass [Chall 5's tributee] is one attractive recruit for fandom! But Ray Bradbury (and I, too!) should lose some weight!

*Here's another shot of Inge, with Jay Kay Klein.*



*And a special letter received on its own disc*

...

Bill Legate  
Box 3012  
Sequim, Wash. 98382  
(360) 681 3516  
*new address*

Mail to the old address takes a roundabout way but mostly reaches me. I like the Olympic peninsula just fine. Except the night driving: oncoming headlights on ice and fog. In the days after Christmas, we had some snow. It collapsed my garage roof. No major damage, but popped a bicycle tire.

Of course I was pleased to learn, on p. 5, that I will appear in your #6. I must have cast my shadow ahead of me in the way: which would indicate that I'm no longer moving at the speed o' light.

So, I appear. Appearances can be deceiving, and deceit is almost as much fun as being buried alive. This person whose narrator I

## Challenger 6

think I am tells me I'm not the whole, but only a function; that my role is to tell the story. He laughs at my pretending to wonder whether or not I "believe" it, and says that as a "self" I simply can't know; this one talkin' -- whose identity I'm bein', whom I am TELLING -- is the one who's tellin' ME. Now, any revision of viewpoint, any new version of what things MEAN, is by its nature already under attack. In the case of a society, this attack is by rational questions: which don't apply, which miss the point, being themselves grounded in the tacit prior assumptions that make up the body of superstition describing that society's viewpoint. (So that the society, by its nature, cannot objectively view either those assumptions or any proposed revisions.) In the case of this one's "self", I take the society-and-change situation to be derived from, a model of, the original self monologue.

Person: "Are you schizophrenic?"  
Self: "One of me is, one of me isn't." It seems so Egyptian! As for the telepathos, "I gave up pre-cognition. There was no future in it." (Or, "I need a third eye like I need a hole

in the head.") Such an ability to predict the future would put the prophet in a bind, "Sure hope the unspeakably hideous threat materializes so I can say, 'Told you so!'"

And if you believed any of that, tell me how long's the seventh-inning stretch which occurs at the end of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  innings. If the seventh-inning stretch lasts as long as a half-inning, and the game goes  $8\frac{1}{2}$  innings (and we suppose that all innings are the same length), then the point  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the whole game comes at the midpoint of the seventh-inning stretch. Where the duration of a seventh-inning stretch is the same as one whole

inning's, a nine-inning game's  $\frac{3}{4}$ -point occurs at the end of the seventh-inning stretch. With the various permutations this  $\frac{3}{4}$ -point jumps around some, in the stretch or in the bottom of the seventh, but it's all in the same ballpark.

If the opposing teams are members of two different intelligent species, we'll want to know how samples of two unrelated biospheres can ever discuss and reach agreements on the rules of the game. Who's the umpire? Is the world divided into political regions in two different, overlapping ways by the two species? Are the two species physically identical? Do members of one species hold the opinion that one must let his opinion be

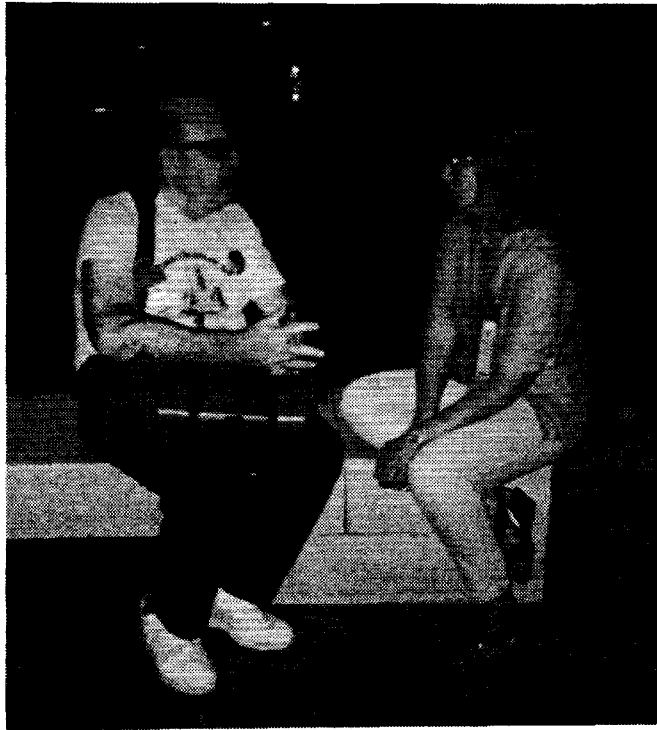
known, while members of the other hold the opinion that one must not let his opinion be known? How about that opinion, itself?

At this point I'd like to repeat an old English joke: A coachman recognizes a pair of notorious bodysnatchers entering a pub for supper. He goes to their coach and removes the body sitting in front, changes clothes with it, and slumps in the coach the way the cadaver did. The bodysnatchers come back from the pub and

climb up on either side of him. A mile down the road, one says to the other, "This body seems awfully warm." The coachman croaks, "Had ye been in hell as long as I, ye'd be warm too." They leap off in panic, and he takes the coach home.

I saw that one years ago, I don't remember where, and at one time even used it in the lyrics of a song involving some of New Jersey's famous Fusco brothers.

Then a few months ago I saw a similar joke without the moral trappings, an Ozark version in one of Vance Randolph's texts. Two fellows



who are taking a body to the burying ground are too drunk to notice the body bounce out of the wagon. When they stop at a tavern for another jug, some good old boy comes out, lies down in the empty coffin, and passes out. Down the road a piece, one fellow holds out the jug, "Have another sip." The one in the coffin sits up and hollers "Don't mind if I do," and the other two jump out and run away.

Bodysnatchers, called "resurrection specialists" and other names, were the only source of cadavers for generations of medical students to slice up.

If we ever do manage to raise the dead, we'll probably be thinking, about the same time, that we can judge correctly what's right and what's wrong -- and be in a position to bring back anyone who's ever died, to put him in jail.

The radio messages QUC? ("What's the number of the last message YOU received from ME?"), and QUC \_ ("The number of MY last message to YOU was \_"), remind me of potential consequences an author might develop from message exchanges between two vehicles in outer space. Assume their not dating and numbering the messages for some reason, at uncertain radio distance from each other, at perhaps an uncertain relative velocity: suppose that the operator of each vehicle gets the mistaken idea that the other operator's message #2 was an answer to his own #1 or #3. Continue that way through several, and take it from there. What might happen?

JoAnn Montalbano doesn't seem to be grinding any particular axe, here, except possibly nurture-over-nature. She may be very tidy, herself. In my experience, the girls leave clothes on the bathroom floor and counters, hairs in the sink, many different bottles of stuff and more hairs in the tub.

I enjoyed Binker Glock Hughes's thing about caves. I once went on a closely disciplined tour of the Lewis & Clark cavern in Montana. I escaped only briefly, and discovered a natural Santa Claus formation that no one else had seen. At one point the rangers turned off the lights, mentioned how the caverns would survive an atomic blast (this was about 1950), then set off the sound effect of one whopper of an explosion. Nice joke. I very much enjoy the silence of a pitch-black cave.

Mike McInerney tweaks my interest (whatever that means) with a remark about the Great Pyramid. Mike, you're Daly City, I suppose you know the Dead went to Egypt in 1978. You might enjoy the story of how the so-called king's chamber was wired. A van behind the stage at Gizeh sent a radio signal to a tower at the top of the pyramid. Cable and more cable was strung down and in to the king's chamber, set up for an echo chamber; and the parts were working. But it's bigger than you can imagine; they didn't bring enough cable from the U.S. They found rolls and rolls of surplus Italian coaxial cable (did it date from W.W. 2 ?) in Cairo, and used it. It must have had breaks in it, because all they ever got in the king's chamber itself were Egyptian radio stations; it just acted as an antenna. (Hamza el-Din, an accompanying musician, asked the engineer if he'd asked permission. Yes, there were papers and more papers from the Egyptian government. But he meant permission from the gods.) So it was a good try, and didn't work.

If any configuration may originate from a black hole -- if from the absolute beginning of time itself anything whatsoever may proceed -- then unobservable, causally disjoint regions occur, and there might be a universe without time but with something indescribably different, instead; or one in which the chicken came before the egg; or one not described by the special and general theories of relativity, but which instead has absolute spatial locations in one simultaneous cosmic preferred coordinate system -- in which unobservable, causally disjoint regions cannot occur.

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*Illos in this lettercol by Bill Rotsler, unknown, Sheryl Birkhead, ripoff or GHLIII photos, stamp from India, Reg Gilbert, Jan Gephardt, R.B. Cleary and Terry Jeeves.*

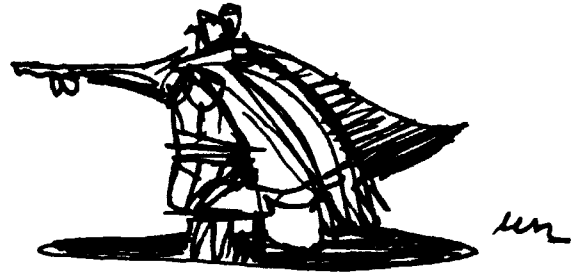


## THE FANZINE DUMP

No complaints this go-round about the volume of zines pouring into Challenger's coffers! Nary a day seemed to pass without another popping in for trade. Such a varied bunch ... Most hereafter listed are available for "the usual," i.e., trades, letters of comment, or contributions. If a money figure is mentioned I'll pass it along. *Italicized* zines didn't appear, but were missed. Arbitrary cutoff date this time: July 20, 1997 ... my birthday.

Absarka 8 / Curt Phillips, 23800 Green Springs Rd., Abingdon VA 24211 / Curt's zine for the pulp apa, PEAPS, features a heartrending article about his visit to the late Lynn Hickman's home in Wauseon, Ohio, where Curt inspected Hickman's collection and enjoyed a strange but welcome sense of Lynn's happy spirit, still in residence. It's wonderful stuff. In his mc's Curt reveals that my old pal from D.C. Comics' Junior Woodchucks, Anthony Tollin, is also in PEAPS. And speaking of pulps ...

Aces #7 & "8s" / Paul McCall, 5801 W. Henry St., Indianapolis IN 46241 / Need I say again how splendid I think this pulps-oriented genzine be? Great art -- Paul always features his own fabulous *color* covers; #7 is "Tarzan on Mars", subject of a portfolio within, as well as reprinted chapters from the novel itself -- and rich, absorbing copy. Scott Cranford on Doc Savage ... Jerry Page on *Railroad Stories* ... Burt Leake on artist Frank Tinsley. It even features the first photos I've ever seen of one of my idols, Dick Tracy creator and winger icon Chester Gould. The followup has a terrific Shadow cover (and a clever Wild Bill Hickock reference) and portfolio, and introduces a new contributor, Tom Roberts, who begins a series on George Rozen. Thanks to McCall and his contributors, the pulps live.



Adventures in Crime & Space no. 3.2 / Lori Wolf, 609-A West 6th St., Austin TX 78701 / email: acs@eden.com; web: www.eden.com/~acs / Books! Books! Books! The joy of literacy sings from these pages. Months back I sent Austin's supreme used book store "the most appalling list" (*challenge!* the source of that phrase?) of needed Edgar Award winners. After all, they helped me complete my World Fantasy and Bram Stoker collections ... But I've heard nothing yet. Maybe my last check bounced.

Ansible #113-120 / Dave Langford / 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, U.K. / U.S. Agent: Janice Murray, P.O. Box 75684, Seattle WA 98125-0684 / SAE or. / Congrats to agent Murray for her DUFF victory! Issue #114 of this Hugo-hoarding newszine features a splendid eulogy for Carl Sagan from Steve Baxter. Baxter liked him better than I did. #117 has some very trenchant thoughts on the Higher Source suicides. #119 relates a scandal about this year's Disclave that *must* be a hoax [*nope* -- see *File:770 review*], and eulogizes New York fan and editor Lou Stathis, who mimeographed a fanzine for me once upon a 1974, and uttered the best line I ever heard about Carly Simon. I never met George Turner, Australian grandmaster remembered in #120, which reveals the Bram Stoker winners and that TAFF is back on track. You get the drift: Ansible may be short, but it truly covers the s.f. world.

Asterism no. 7 / Jeff Berkwits, P.O. Box 6210, Evanston IL 60204 / e-mail: jberkwit@nslsilus.org / \$6/year. / The latest issue of this "Journal of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Space Music" profiles Aphex Twin and interviews "World Age"

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musician David Arkenstone, in addition to reviewing new releases. Superb production values, a unique subject matter, genuine enthusiasm and erudition.

**Batteries Not Included Vol. IV #s 1-7 / Richard Freeman, 130 W. Limestone St., Yellow Springs OH 45387 / \$3@ /** More intelligent commentary, from the editor and his many contributors, on the semi-wonderful world of smut. BNI is one of the most *emotionally enlightening* zines I receive. No one could read Richard Pacheco's occasional squibs and not be educated; no one can read Lisa Falour's 1979 diary (with current reflections) and not be moved. #5 has a letter about Mardi Gras balcony boob shows from a New Orleanian who signs himself "G.H.L.III." An obvious imposter! #6 opens with an impressive prose portrait of Hamburg's seedy Reeperbahn (that *can't* be its real name), #7 with Freeman's survey answering, "What Do Men Want?" What do you *think*?

**Ben's Beat 44 / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck NJ 07666-2626 /** A fascinating FAPazine, covering opera (Ben's son wrote a libretto for the story of Harvey Milk), World War II (two long installments in Indick's own memoirs), and Broadway, where he reviews Cakewalk, about Lillian Hellman, who was my teacher at Berkeley for four unforgettable months in the early '70s. ("Your last name's the same as my first name ... *isn't it?*" "Yes m'ammm.") Unfortunately, the play doesn't seem up to its subject matter.



**Broadside Two & Three / Bucconeer, P.O. Box 314, Annapolis Junction MD 20701 /** Newsletter of the '98 worldcon. Every time I see one of these pubs I reflect back on my own such zines for Nolacon and curse my 1988 ineptitude.

**Chimneyville Almanac #7 / Johnny Lowe, 1152 W. 24th St. #1, San Pedro CA 90731 / Johnnyrb@aol.com / T.u. /** Imaginative production values mark this rich genzine, with features guaranteed to hook me: articles on George Reeves' Superman (who had super-qualities none of his successors, able though they've been, have matched) and the 2001 series, a page of cartoons by Nola Frame-Gray, and unique fanzine notices: reprinted covers. Alas, *Challenger* isn't among them. The strongest writing, though, is the most personal: Lowe's editorial on the death of his mother and her brother, a mere 8 days apart. Johnny handled it better than I would have.

**Class War! #7 / Unknown.** Angry little flyer that showed up out of nowhere, berating Cathy (the comic strip) and the late Gulf War. "The 60's end here," it proclaims. I'm willing.

**Con\*tour Vol. 1 No. 0, April 1997 / Collin Wood, 196 Alps Rd. Suite 2-342, Athens GA 30606 / ConTour@negia.net / \$5.95@ /** Premier issue of a charming neo-semiprozine whose staff knows nothing about fandom but has just discovered the orgasm and is *very* impressed with the information. Content is heavy on sexy nonsense ("What do you look for in a man?" "Whiskey on his breath and an insatiable desire to play with nipples"), but it also has good variety, professional production values and *excellent* photography by Bonnie Heath. FanGirl columnist Teresa Thomason was at DeepSouthCon, where I picked up this issue; even if she does call it "sci-fi," she was really cute. So's Con\*Tour, for which I am obviously too old, but which I just as obviously enjoyed.

**Critical Wave / Steve Green & Martin Tudor, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 7LQ U.K. / 2 pounds 45 sub, U.K. only /** Nothing in '97. C'mon, dudes.



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*Cube* / Hope Kiefer c/o SF<sup>2</sup>, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701-1624 / CubeNews@aol.com. / SF<sup>2</sup> membership or. / *Cube* has flattened out.

*De Profundis* / Tim Merrigan, LASFS, 11513 Burbank Blvd., N. Hollywood CA 91601 / Okay, okay, L.A.con's long over. Where's *DePro*?

DUFF Talk-About #3 / Pat & Roger Sims, 34 Creekwood Square, Cincinnati OH 45246-3811 / Letter about the then-ongoing DUFF race.

*Empties* / Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarkes Lane, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX U.K. (COA) / 5 pounds / I suppose publishing is out of the question for Martin until his L.A. Con TAFF trip is paid for. One wonders if TAFF will ever -- or should ever -- recover from the twin slams of Abi Frost's mismanagement of the European fund and the obscene campaign against Samanda Jeude, but the fund has apparently recovered enough for the '98 campaign to begin.

ERB-dom #104 b/w The Fantastic Collector #262 / Camille Cazedessus II, P.O. Box 2340, Pagosa Springs CO 81147-2340 / \$24 for 6 issues US, \$25 Canada. No trades. / Hard to know which title to list first; Caz gives it both ways. Caz reprints the "'forgotten' science fiction classic" "The Metal Emperor" by A. Merritt along with a good critical essay by Al Lybeck, and other pulp goodies. Took a minute to realize that the wraparound cover was a Frank R. Paul reprint, and not a new piece by Paul McCall.

Erg Quarterly #136-7 / Terry Jeeves, 66 Red Scar Dr., Scarborough, N. Yorks. YO12 5RQ U.K. / The. / A really nice review of Challenger's fifth made ERG #137 really sparkle for me, but anyone would enjoy Terry's pub, now entering its 39th year. Each of these issues has a article (especially "churce" is Terry's piece on Mitchell's Cigarette cards, depicting "The World of Tomorrow" ... scenes from Things to Come), "General Chunterings" by Ken Slater, some letters, fanzine reviews, lots of spiffy/skiffy art by the venerable editor. Terry gives strong brace to Greg Pickersgill's "Memory Hole" zine archive.

Fanfare (in F) / Dave Wittman, 2675 S. Nellis Blvd. #1055, Las Vegas NV 89121 / Nifty first personalzine with ecstatic natter comparing fandom to marijuana (it's actually clever), terraforming Mars, the Green Bay Packers, and some poetry. Dave's an energetic and enjoyable writer, but he should find another artist. His self-portrait on the cover looks like an australopithecine.

Fanhistorica #5 / Joe Siclari & Edie Stern, 4599 NW 5 Ave., Boca Raton FL 33431-4601 / jsiclari@icanect.net / The usual, \$4, "especially for old fanzines." / Wonderful pub devoted -- as you can guess -- to the history of fandom; dated November '96, it fills the void left in Siclari's life by the absence of a worldcon project. Reprints of classic material by Francis Tower Laney (including "Ah! Sweet Idiocy!"), Dave Kyle, Theodor Yerke, art by Rotsler (of course) and that prince among princes, Alva Rogers, who welcomed me into fandom at my first meeting of the Little Men. Unalloyed pleasure, a keeper of a zine.

FTT 21/ Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU U.K. / A pound a copy; no subs / A.k.a. International Revolutionary Gardener. Great sense of humor in this ever-nifty pub. What will its initials stand for next? Wistful farm memories by Judith, and a tour of Baltimore's Fort McHenry by E.B. Frohvet (who is E.B. Frohvet, anyway?) are charming, but Joseph's somber musings on the Black Plague, Willis' The Doomsday Book and modern attitudes towards death weigh things down at the end.

File 770:115-117 / Mike Glycer, P.O. Box 1056, Sierra Madre CA 91025 / MGlycer@compuserve.com / \$8/5 issues, \$15/10. / #115 details the late L.A.Con, a fascinating chairman's perspective that has the good taste and humor to quote me about the appalling Hugo base design. The latest issue gives hilarious details of "the Disc-Wave," the supremely idiotic disaster that befell the '97 DisClave. (For those who have not heard, a bondage freak suspended his partner from a room sprinkler as part of their silly sex game, ripping the pipes from the wall and soaking not only their room, but the one below and several

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others. \$100,000 damage and enormous confusion. *Damn!* I miss all the fun!) Anyway, Hugo, Nebula, Mythopoetic news -- Martin Tudor and Knarley Welch are new fathers, Jackie Causgrove is ill -- and several eulogies, for Lew Stathis, George Turner, and Joni Stopa.



**For Dickheads Only** / Dave Hyde c/o Ganymeadean Slime Mold Productions, P.O. Box 611, Kokomo IN 46903 / A year without Phil Dick is a year without sunshine, but in Dave chimes with this marvelous fanzine about s.f.'s most celestial writer, and all is bright. This superb issue focuses on *Eye in the Sky*, with incisive essays by Hyde, Scott Pohlenz, and others, but also features responses to a best/worst poll I somehow missed. (If anyone cares, I side with the plurality ranking Valis atop the shelf, and consider *Our Friends from Frolix 8* the largest disappointment. But guess which book has the scene I read to my wife the day I learned Dick had died.) There is much else, including a disturbing biographical note by one of Dick's Boswells, Gregg Rickman, some fiction and poetry, and a *weird* piece on PKD and the JFK assassination by Adam Gorightly. Obviously, much there is to say about the author. Heads have told me that Phil Dick's appeal -- lasting now 13 years beyond his

death -- comes from his interest in alternate (read, drug) realities. I don't think so. What sings for me in his work is his humane faith, in love, in hope, in simple human value. Anyway, this fine publication joins others on the shelf I've devoted to PKD works, appreciations, and criticisms. Included with it, a mini-catalogue from **Chuck's Bargain Books** (412 Claxton Crescent, Prince George, British Columbia V2M 6B8, Canada) with lots of pricey PKD material.

**FOSFAX #186** / Timothy Lane c/o FOSFA, P.O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281 / \$3 or. / Only the latest issue of fandom's most robust winger publication, well worth reading even if you ignore the conservative politics. *Variety has* to rule in such a frequent and energetic title; I think of Patrick McGuire's review of the mystery convention, *Malice Domestic*, existing side by side with Hugo news (**Blue Mars! Blue Mars!**), poetry reviews, Sherlock Holmes musings, and a *ton* of locs. Approach prepared to read until bleary-eyed, think, argue, enjoy.

**The Freethinker #6** / Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson MS 39236-3626 / CCWS74A@prodigy.com / No subscriptions. / The best issue yet of Tom's genzine, with lighthearted art illustrating fun articles by Joseph Major on pirate ladies, Andy Offutt on spellcheckers, *Dilbert*, and so forth. Good locs ... and good luck to Tom on his move to Nashville and new marriage!

**The Frozen Frog** / Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boissat, Cap-Rouge Quebec G17 1Y9 Canada / *It's been far too long since FF last in the dooryard bloomed. It's one of fandom's friendliest and most delightful pubs; he's French, you know.*

**Gegenschein** / Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde NSW 2112 Australia / eric@zen.maths.uts.edu.au

**Girabbit #7** / David Bratman, P.O. Box 662, Los Altos CA 94023 / FAPAZine in memoriam for David's Hugo-counting cohort, Seth Goldberg. A heartfelt account of their friendship, accompanied by a very moving and beautiful memoir by Seth's

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onetime s.o., Leslie Blitman. I rode the LASFAPA roster with all of these people and can barely believe that Seth is gone. He was certainly lucky and most deserving in his friendships.

*Gradient* / Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake NJ 07828-1023 / bobsabella@aol.com

Ibid / Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Ave., Teaneck NJ 07666-2626 / Esoteric Order of Dagon zine.

*Ichthyoelectroanalgesia* #3 / Sean McLachian, P.O. Box 1933, Columbia MO 65205-1933 / e-mail: c638125@showme.missouri.edu / \$2@ or. / Archaeology and Asia. Sean leads off by answering reader questions about various questions in his specialty (going to great lengths regarding the construction of the pyramids) and continues with an account of his trip across Turkey. He notices everything: how to hitchhike (target truckers), the taste of Turkish tea (it's better than *raki*), Dervish dances. A thrilling narrative of Sean's exploration of the cliff cities of Cappadocia tops the issue. Well-writ, admirably restrained, and un-put-down-able.

Idea #10 / Geri Sullivan, Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315 / Rich, fun, thick. All-Steve Stiles issue of "the last twilltone fanzine" ... according to Geri's repute. Its creative color work is admirable and its light-hearted attitude is infectious. And what a great name for a zine: you can proclaim, "Got a great Idea today!" (As I said in my loc, it's kind of like naming a dog "Naked," as in, "Let's walk Naked downtown.") Content is entertaining (I wish Stiles' abortive revival of Li'l Abner had succeeded) and moving (Kathy Routliffe's account of her mental illness is arresting and compelling, a superb memoir). The infamous paper makes my fingers itch, but my memories glow -- even though I used stiffer *mimeotone* for my own printing.

The Knarley Knews #61-63 / Dr. Henry Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024-2017 / welch@warp.msoe.edu / Knarley's latest issues feature Don Pattenden's web report on his "Epic Journey" around the Australian continent; "we are," he says, "a nation of compulsive travellers".

I scream in envy for the sites he visits and the sights he sees. (The day *will* come when I climb Hanging Rock!) It's a delightful account which he ought to collect in book form. Knarl editorially "spumes" over an irate tenant, decries credit card marketing (those things should come with razor edges, or be banned!), and the lettercol is superb. (How often I say that: contemporary zines depend so much on our flexible and articulate readers.)

Lan's Lantern #44 / George "Lan" Lascowski, 2466 Valleyview Dr., Troy MI 48098-5317 / george\_lascowski@cc.cranbrook.edu / The usual, varying prices, whim. / The Hal Clement special of Lan's Hugo-winner, published in March '96. Accompanied by a note from 1-17-97 giving the above address and revealing many changes in the editor's life. The fanzine itself is superb, with commentary from Poul Anderson, Brian Burley, Lorraine Tutihasi and others, a partial bibliography, much else.



The Many Faces of Space Tom / Joe Mayhew, 7-S Research Rd., Greenbelt MD 20770-1776 / Joe and I had a terrific conversation when he called to check on his illos for Bill Mallardi's article. This is a jolly and creative graphic tale that makes little sense but certainly entertains the eye. Joe and Ian Gunn ought to start winning Hugos any time now.

Memphen #232-3/ Barbara & Tim Gatewood, 3125 S. Mendenhall #353, Memphis TN 38115-2808 / 72740.3445@compuserve.com / Free to

## Summer 1997

MSFA members, \$10/year sub, trade. / Pretty cover illos by R.B. Cleary, who announced him(?)self to fandom with general distribution of his(?) art. (Several pieces grace this **Challenger**.) Club news, locs, thoughts on the Hugo candidates and the **Battlefield:Earth** CD-rom. (Which reminds me ... whatever happened to Simone Welch?) A nice "toast" to Edgar Rice Burroughs by Darrell Richardson ends issue #232.

**Mimosa 20** / Dick & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1350, Germantown MD 20875 / e-mail: lynch@access.digex.net website: <http://www.smithway.org/mimosa> / \$4 or. / I join **Mimosa's** usual august assemblage -- Ackerman, Kyle, Willis, Hugo nominee Sharon Farber, and many others -- in this splendid issue, my article brilliantly illustrated by Charlie Williams. Heady company. Theme this time is fan anthropology (!); the highlight is a tribute to Bill Rotsler by other great fan artists. Though the Lynchi would never *purposefully* do anything so fiendishly clever, this issue hit fannish mailboxes on the very same day as the San Antonio Hugo ballot.

**Mobius Strip** / Alexandra Ceely, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923 / 104426.531@CompuServe.com / Monthly newsletter of the El Paso S.F. & Fantasy Alliance, dues \$15/year. / March is the last issue I've seen, I don't know whether it's because Alexandra's stopped publishing or simply cut a lazy trader off her mlg list. Club seems to be slipping in attendance, but I agree with the editor's disappointment in the "new" **MST3K**. *Bring back Joel!*

**MSFire** Vol. 3 No. 3 / Lloyd G. Daub, MSFS, P.O. Box 1637, Milwaukee WI 53201-1637 / \$1@ or a \$5 sub. / Witty and nifty clubzine for "Milwaukee Science Fiction Services," with a crackerjack lettercol (half the issue), spiffy interlinos (story ideas by Sue Burke), insane "SciFaiku," web notes, and a somewhat *disturbing* piece on slavery in fantasy gaming by David Martin. To be continued.

**Muse 134** March 1997 / Stephen desJardins, 1711 Massachusetts Ave. NW #134, Washington DC 20036 / [steven@desjardins.org](mailto:steven@desjardins.org) / \$1 or whim. /

Steve hints at the glories of unclehood -- which I heartily second -- and the benefits of aspirin. I too gobble one or two a night. Solid Hugo recommendations segue into an L.A.Con report. He too missed the goodies at the ice cream social, and seems a little disappointed post-con that he did so little socializing. Well, I said hello. Lunacon reports cap the issue.

**Nova Express** Vol. 4 #3 / Lawrence Person, P.O. Box 27231, Austin TX 78755-2231 / e-mail: [lawrence@bga.com](mailto:lawrence@bga.com) / 4/\$12 U.S.; 4/\$16 Canada & Mexico; 4/\$22 International. / A '97 Hugo nominee, **Nova Express** is slick, professional-looking, and handsome. Good, good interviews with Bradley Denton and William Browning Spencer (on serial killers and Lovecraft, respectively) form the bulk of the issue, but there's a hearty review section too.

**Opuntia** #s 28.5-33.5 / Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7 Canada / \$3 @ or. / That's actually *eleven* issues of Canada's most prolific zine. Speirs is incredible. In addition to the usual fanzine components -- reviews, locs, con reports, etc.-- he opines on prickly pears, cow magnets, soccer player David Icke, Apocalypse predictions (it's due), the life of murderer/philatelist J.R. Hooper, Ottawa fandom, graffiti, hayfields, and mystery novels set at s.f. conventions, which he too finds generally ignorant and insulting. **Opunt** is almost always accompanied by an issue or two of the **Canadian Journal of Detournement**, too crazed for my suburban caucasian mind to comprehend.

**Pablo Lennis** / John Thiel, 30 N. 19th St., Lafayette IN 47904 / Trade. Strange, cramped, bothersome pub, but attractive in a disturbing way, and always interesting. Odd, compelling, misogynistic art by La Follette, lots of s.f.nal poetry, some readable, reviews dipping back to '50s issues of *If*, and fiction. The tight grey type is hard to penetrate, but the angry off-center point of view is necessary.

**PhiloSFy** #4-6 / Alexander R. Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Rd., San Antonio TX 78239-4022 / [skateal@swbell.net](mailto:skateal@swbell.net) / \$1 but trade preferred. /

## Challenger 6

Alex continues his meditations on death and war -- quoting Joseph T. Major as well as Sun Tzu -- and promises a concentration on Nuremberg-type issues next time. He begins a series of ponderings on government and ethics which is even more interesting. Alex's notes on San Antonio will come in handy ... and I'm grateful to him for Dwight Decker's address. (See Rommeldam.)

**Pink 16** / Karen Pender-Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia / fiawol@bluesky.net.au / A special "Fast Food" issue, and while the subject is nauseating, the zine is delicious! Funny -- if gruesome -- cover by Ian Gunn, lots of info about the various chemical nasties in most quick edibles, a report on the fascinating British McLibel trial ... Unlike the subject hamburgers, there's no filler here, just informative, often funny, sometimes *nauseating* writing (they put *that* into hamburgers?). Karen appends a note stating that Popeye's, Nawlins' most successful outlet for "rapid rations," has yet to open downunder.

**Pinkette No. 15f, 16a** / Karen Pender-Gunn, see above / "The **Pink** You Have While You're Not Having a **Pink**." **Pinkette 16a** lists Christmas cards received by type, strange laws (it says "from around the world," but they all come from America), wildlife and roadkill seen on holiday, prints another installment of her 1995 GUFF diary, hoots that Ian made the Hugo ballot again, as did Joe Mayhew, who submits a hilarious loc. Both should win, two of these days ...

**Proper Boskonian Nos. 39 & 40** / NESFA, P.O. Box 809, Framingham MA 01701-0203 / pb@thor.com / NESFA membership + a \$16 subscription, \$3/issue or. / A new editor (Lisa Hertel) and a lighter tone. I'll miss Kenneth Knabbe, but this revered clubzine remains superb. Bob Devney's fanzine reviews are the best I've seen, Evelyn Leeper's convention reports (#39 covers L.A.Con III) capture every nuance of their programming, and there is always good art, good locs, and good production. Most of #40 is consumed by Leeper's awesome report on her trip to Japan; it's a stunning, well-written, and evocative piece, but needs illos. My mind was

thoroughly swacked by the Mercy van Vlack drawing that precedes it; Mercy was one of my favorite correspondents during my year at DC Comics ... 1974; it's a hooray-maker that she's still into fanac. Another installment of Ian Gunn's wacko "Space-Time Buccaneers" brings cackles. A 'plaint: they misspell my self-created, self-descriptive word, *fubbo*.

**QUANt Suff #3-4** / Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / A personal/FAPAzine, with comprehensible mailing comments (no easy trick if your reader isn't in that apa). #3 has a very nice article about Vegas' Gypsy Caravan flea market, #4 a memoir of Poplar Bluff fandom, a faanfic by Arnie, plus locs.

**Quipu 7** / Vicki Rosenzeig, 33 Indian Road, 6-R, New York NY 10034 / Vicki gets a tattoo -- *\*yih\** -- and visits Hong Kong in this exceptionally well-writ fanzine. The descriptive writing -- particularly her paragraph about flying over Siberia -- is splendid, and Vicki's eye is uncompromising.

**Raw Goof #1** / Bill Bodden, 2717 Stevens St., Madison WI 53705 / Trade. / Personalzine about baseball and cancer; the author survived the latter and plays the first. Good writing, and a nice cover portrait (?) by Stu Shiffman.

**The Reluctant Famulus #47** / Thomas D. Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian MI 49221-1627 / E-mail: tomfamulus@dmci.net / Or \$2. / 8th anniversary issue. A most different Peggy Ranson cover, nifty caricatures of the author by Fred Karno, and good writing from Steve Stiles, Sheryl Birkhead, Bob Sabella, Joseph Major, and Terry Jeeves, whose WWII memoirs are a continuing TRF treat. Tom's editorial deals with his efforts to improve the zine, but I must admit that I don't quite *get* what he's saying. I *think* Tom's going to add a personal touch and write more about himself, but whatever, TRF is already excellent. What's a "famulus"?

**Riverside Quarterly Vol. 9 No. 3** / Leland Sapiro, P.O. Box 12085, San Antonio TX 78212 / \$2.50@.

## Summer 1997

**The Rogue Raven 50** / Frank Denton, 14654-8th Ave. S.W., Seattle WA 98166 / [bearlodge@msn.com](mailto:bearlodge@msn.com) / Denton's fine personalzine marks its semi-centennial issue with journal entries. Roses. Computers. Travels through England, the midwest (including Northfield, Minnesota, where the James Gang came a'cropper), Texas and Carlsbad. Lovecraft natter takes Frank into nether realms.

**Rommeldam #19** / Dwight R. Decker, 20003 N. 23rd Ave. #193, Phoenix AZ 85027-4160 / A zine for DAPPER, the Dutch Amateur Press Association, from an old, old *compadre* of mine from comics fandom. The last I heard, Dwight was heavily involved in Perry Rhodan, and apparently he still is; he mentions translating "a plot summary of the first 1799 issues" from German into English. Wow! This zine details his most recent trip to Paris, Germany and Sweden. As I was 20 years ago when we were K-a mates, I'm impressed with Dwight's polyglot talents. Be at worldcon, Dwight!

*scopus:3007* / Alexander J.L. Bouchard, P.O. Box 573, Hazel Park MI 48030-0573 / *The or \$1.50.* / [ae019@detroit.freenet.org](mailto:ae019@detroit.freenet.org). / \$1.50 per.

**S.F. Film Fan #2** / Mike McInerney, 83 Shakespeare St., Daly City CA 94014-1053 / Locs, locs, and more locs from our friendly visitor from the Bay Area. Great names -- Speer and Fitch and Warner and Willis and Coulson and on and on and on -- but too little talk about *movies*, the ostensible subject of the zine! I'll have to pen a squib for Mike on why I prefer Michael Mann's *Manhunter* to the *second* Hannibal Lecter movie, *Silence of the Lambs* ... which I *loved*!

**SFSFS Shuttle No. 129** / Carlos Lopez, P.O. Box 70143, Ft/ Lauderdale FL 33307-0143 / Journal of the South Florida etc. etc., with minutes (the club obviously has fun), club biz, a few fanzine reviews by Joe Siclari, a Walt Willis reprint, and an interesting bit of research about Lovecraft's visits to Florida. The editor cries for fillos.

**Shinimicas Shithead** / Rodney Leighton, R.R. #4 Box 477A, Amherst N.S. B4H 3Y2 Canada / Any faned who gives a nice review of *Chall #5*, as

Rodney does here, is no shithead. Enjoyable natter about whatever crosses Rodney's mind. Miss Nova Scotian Hermit, though.

**Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin Vol. 6** Nos. 6-8 / Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson MS 39236-3626 / [CCWS74A@prodigy.com](mailto:CCWS74A@prodigy.com) / SFC membership or. / Tom's presidential publications for the Southern Fandom Confederation are fine, informative zines, with comprehensive guides to Southern cons (by J.R. "Mad Dog" Madden), fanzines (very kind review of *Challenger* no. 5), and clubs. Reelected by acclaim at the last DeepSouthCon, which he ably chaired, Tom reviews cons in his "Carpetbagger" column, and there's usually a great lettercol.

**Southern Fandom Confederation Handbook** / Toni T.K.F. Weisskopf c/o Tom Feller, see above / \$5 for SFC members, \$8 for non-members, everyone add \$2 postage & handling. / A 125+ page masterwork from the Baen editor and -- once and recently -- Birmingham fan. Most Southern clubs, conventions, apas, and fanzines -- even *Challenger* -- are covered, with city and state fandoms given their due. Alas, New Orleans and Louisiana are woefully under-represented. Wit, affection, quality -- N.B.: *this is the best fanzine of 1997*. It is quite simply the most comprehensive history and appreciation of Southern fandom that has ever been assembled, and it is such an accomplished labor of love and quality that many Southerners are touting it for Baltimore's Non-Fiction Hugo. Count me in.

**The Space Cadet Gazette #7** / R. Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Ave. #110, Vancouver BC V6J 1J1 Canada / [graeme\\_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca](mailto:graeme_cameron@mindlink.bc.ca) / \$1 for one issue, \$1,000,000 for a million issues. (What? No discount?) / The "Special Space Horse Opera Issue" opens with a charming Harvia cover and plows on with classic ongoing features: "Ask Mr. Science", "Marvin's Mighty Mayan Marathon", Granpa Charles Cameron's memoirs of WWI ... SCG is terrific fun. New this time is a review of a movie that truly is an unbelievable turkey, *The Giant Claw*. There's a photo of Graeme, by the way, in the March issue of *Thyme* (the "Thyme of March"?).

*Splish Splash Spring & Summer 1996 / Joy V. Smith, 3403 Providence Road, Lakeland FL 33809*

*Squee! / Brin McLaughlin, 247 19th Ave 6, San Francisco CA 94121-2353 / boadicea@lunacity.com / I know she says she's stopped publishing, but I have to tell her she's missed. So: you're missed, Brin.*

**Stefantasy #120 / William M. Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell PA 16374 / Doug Holland's Zine World** nearly flipped over Danner's volume number, which is now 53. Indeed it is awe-inspiring that someone could keep producing zines for more than half a century, and on such non-sciencefictional topics as narrow-gauge railroads and slag, which Bill actually makes entertaining here. But the true attraction of **Stef** is the *type*: gorgeous, antique, handset lettering. Lots of fine letters, but again I chide the editor for failing to give full addresses for his correspondents.

**The Texas SF Inquirer #55 / Brad & Cindy Foster, c/o F.A.C.T., P.O. Box 9612, Austin TX 78766-9612 / Winter '96 issue of a beautiful publication, richly illustrated (which figures) by Brad and others, including D.C. Potter (cover) and Jeff Haas ("Space Zombies"). Stacy Scott's article on Household Monsters is a hoot, as are the postcards the editors got from Scotland. Weirdest item: Dennis Pimple and T. Motley's talky four-page graphic (?) story. Content shmontent; it's a visual treat.**

**Thanks a Lot, Guys! (etc.) / C. Fairn Kennedy, Box Forty, 90 Shuter St., Toronto M5B 2K6 Canada / Fiction and religious thoughts, handsomely presented by CFK's Necessary Press.**

**Thyme #114-115 / Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia / a.stewart@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au / The or \$A 3; subscription \$A 15. (What does an "\$A" look like? Maybe Alan could send me multiple examples of all denominations for my inspection.) / The Australian S.F. News Magazine is an outstanding fan publication, nominated here for the San Antonio Hugo. Both of these issues open with creative rocket ship covers in styles I've never**

seen before, and contains news of every fan activity one can think of, from awards to top-5-book-polls to reviews to fan photos (I'm in #115, looking like a bat landed on my face) to Ian Gunn cartoon strips to con listings ... **X-Files**, locs ... **Thyme** truly and fairly gives its readers the whole ball of wax.

**Trap Door / Robert Lichtman, P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442 / Whim, \$4 / Turn that whim this way again, Robert!**

**Trash Barrel / Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood CA 91606-2308 / Trade. / Donald?**

**Twink #4-6 / E.B. Frohvet, 4725 Dorsey Hall Dr. Box #A-700, Ellicott City MD 21042 / The u. / (My father had a dog named Twink once.) "Frohvet"'s quarterly "Chaffinch Publications" are attractive and likable genzines, three issues of which he's produced in quick succession. Good covers by Steve Stiles (see **Idea**), Margaret Simon (who also contributes terrific interiors), and the team of Sheryl Birkhead and Bill Rotsler. Content is the usual plus a solid article or two: #4 focuses on Skip Delany's **Dhalgren** (which E.B. contrasts with **The Dispossessed**); #5 begins a series on black s.f. characters, as badly caricatured these days as ever before; #6 features a fun piece on Barry Malzberg and a World Horror Con review by Margaret Simon. Kind review of **Chall** no. 5 (not at all like his loc in this issue) leads into surprising discussion of the zine in the next lettercol. Appended to #6 is an open letter to the former **Apparatchik** editors, complaining about their "snotty put-downs." I'm hardly one to talk, but E.B. should hearken more to the rich interplay he's provoked and forget self-appointed arbiters of fanzine quality.**

**'ukelele 5 / Daniel Farr, #106, 77 Maitland Place, Toronto ON M4Y 2V6 Canada / d.farr@interserv.com / The "first ish ... in more than ten years," reflecting a new stability in the editor's life, and the goading of Robert Lichtman, Lloyd Penney and Tommy Ferguson to take up the faned's standard anew. Nifty locs from the incredibly late distribution of his last issue, responding to Robert**

Bloch and Mae Strelkov therefrom, and welcoming him back to the fanzine fray.

Wild Heirs #19 / Arnie & Joyce Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107 / Ah! The relief! A notation at the beginning of this issue mentions my plaintive call for "my Wild Heirs fix," and in the style of the late, lamented You Asked for It, Arnie and at his crew have at last obliged. It's astonishing how the enthusiasm of this group effort clubzine continues unabated. It's even increased with the acquisition of a fine bacover artist to supplement Ross Chamberlin's caricature covers. Do as I do, and ignore the group's deification of Ted White as an unfortunate aberration in an otherwise priceless fanzine. But ... how come so few issues this year?

Wordsmith/Eclectic Collector No. 4 / Vince Nowell, P.O. Box 1258, Simi Valley CA 93062-1258 / \$2. / Eclectic it certainly is, a catalog of books for sale and/or trade interspersed with photos and enthusiastic articles. This Ray Bradbury issue features an excited account of the editor's

first meeting with "the Most Fantastic Science Fictionist on This Planet!" and reminds me of how I felt when I met Ray. A clever short fiction and a short article about Neanderthals in s.f. (s.f. fiction, not s.f. fandom) and pages of books for sale ... even the titles are evocative. The zine reaches its apex on the bacover, with photos from the 1954 worldcon in San Francisco: Campbell, Anderson, Budrys, my old friend J. Ben Stark, Phil Dick, and most incredible of all, Ted White. He looked like Brad Pitt!

Xtreme / Arnie Katz, see above / Arnie's FAPazine is six pages of natter on Games (the reviewing of which provides him with a living), crime, the most recent Shining (which we both

liked), and most delightfully, chocolate. He explains the relative paucity of Katzpubs in the past year: he believes, quite falsely, that less Katz will be more appreciated. Nonsense of course.

The ZGL Christmastime Ragsheet 96 / Scott Patri, Box 1196, Cumberland BC V0R 1S0 Canada / Zero-G Lavatory was reduced to a single-sheet letter this year. Patri wants to go pro.

Zina / Barnaby Rapoport, P.O. Box 565, Storrs CT 06268 / "... or issues 2, 12, 27, 28 and 41 of Shade." Did Barnaby ever get those issues -- or publish again? I collected Shade for years until it finally baffled me too completely. Anything denser than Carl Barks gives me a headache these days.

Zine World #s 1-3 / Doug Holland, 924 Valencia St. #203, San Francisco CA 94110 / \$3.50 @, 7 for \$20 / My major discovery of late in this hobby has been the truly massive interest in amateur publishing outside of fandom. Doug's mordant and hilarious reviewzine has brought home to me how many people -- and how many of those, kids --

seek to express themselves on paper. Few of the pubs he and his staff handle here are s.f.-oriented; most seem to deal with the editors' crappy jobs and grungy lives. But the spirit is nonetheless familiar. This is a glorious enterprise, dedicated to freedom of speech and the press (Doug and I share a horror at Florida's Moreland comic book case), and a real education for me. Looks like the Net has *not* conquered all.

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**ARTWORK** in this section by William Rotsler, Anon., Robin-a-prisoner-at-the-Louisiana-Correctional-Institute-for-Women, Nola Frame-Gray, the late and forever-remembered Dave Ryan. **WE WANT EVERYTHING!** Send us every fanzine published! No excuses!

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BRAIN ON  
DOLLY PARTON!



ANY QUESTIONS?



Can't top French Quarter caricaturist Tom Short's caption. So **OF COURSE I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING** ... I'm writing what passes for an editorial in this 6th issue of **Challenger**: a single page of quick natter.

I had a long editorial in the works, mulling the nature of mortality and suchlike in the literal light of the Hale-Bopp comet ... But when I sort-of-accidentally-on-purpose erased it from my computer, I realized such heaviness didn't belong in **Chall 6**, an issue that had assumed, as it grew, its own lighthearted bent. I decided to give my readers a break. And so, **Chall 6** is as free of *me* as I could manage.

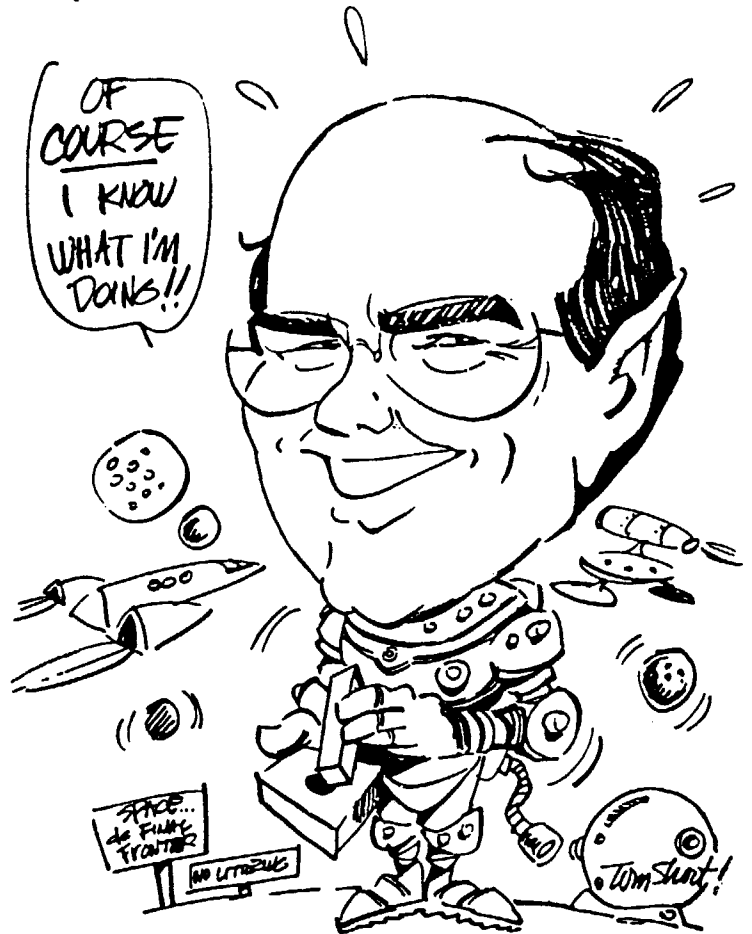
You won't find any pompous GHLIII opinionating or ponderous, uhh, ponderings. If editorializing is needed, Jim Baen's controversial thoughts on NASA bear that burden well. If no **Chall** is complete without reflections on crime, then Jeff Copeland's squib on the Ramsey case fills that gap. (I disagree with both pieces, but y'all make up your own minds.) I did have an article on lawyering written ... but Dick Lynch asked to run it in **Mimosa 20**, and where would you rather publish? No, **Chall's** sixth would still feature my rejoinders to locs and my reviews of fanzines and incidental writing like the **Challenger** Tribute ... but others would bear the issue's weight.

After all, the zine has a funny cover by Ian Gunn ... funny articles by Bill Mallardi and Robert Whitaker ... funny artwork by Bryan Porter and Charlie Williams and even a funny *old* (he asks us to note) page by **TimeCop** writer Mark Verheiden. I felt like telling y'all about Mardi Gras through some of the photos I've taken down through the years ... and by the way, if anyone is offended by the uplifted tee shirts therein depicted, ~~you must not like girls~~ sorry about that. I *did* say the article was *R-rated*.

Next time, if **Challenger 7** proceeds according to plan, and of course it won't, we'll be back to normal. I have a beautiful and serious cover chosen (and if the artist does *not* want his artwork used, he'd best tell me quickly), some articles already on hand, others -- like your locs -- solicited. Despite a dismaying sloppiness, I rather liked **Chall's** 5th issue; hope #7 can be even more satisfying.

This zine hits the silks just before LoneStarCon, so if you see me in San Antonio, be sure to say hello. I plan to haunt the fanzine lounge and ride a panel on this hobby early Sunday afternoon. Come and harass me. And of course, if you're passing through Nawlins before or after the convention, the number to call is (504) 821-2362. I'll show you the best places to eat!

With an inch or so left on this page, some advice: if you can pass through Memphis TN between now and 9-30-97, check out Wonders' exhibition of **Titanic** artifacts. It's fascinating, it's moving, it's unforgettable. I bought a souvenir paperweight: a lucite pyramid containing a tiny bit of coal brought up from the wreck. An insignificant fragment of carbon ... but think of how much human tragedy and hubris -- and courage, and sacrifice -- it signifies. Go ... and imagine how *you* would have behaved.





## Challenger 6

# JONBENET

by Jeffrey Copeland

*Imagine that you're six years old. You've had a very good year. You won a beauty contest. You started at a new school, with your big brother. Your half-brother, who goes to college, comes sometimes with his buddies.*

*Imagine that you've spent the day before Christmas playing with one of your best friends at her house. She's a couple of months younger than you are, and is in your kindergarten class. She lives down the hill from your family's house, in a nice house on the creek. It's nice to be quiet for a while, and make a tent out of chairs and blankets in your buddy's playroom, rather than going visiting with your parents, or having lots of adults visiting your house.*

*Imagine that at the end of Christmas day, after visiting more people around town, still thinking about your shiny new bicycle, remembering the dog you've shared with the nice man across the street since his died, your parents carry you up the stairs to your room, because you're half asleep.*

*(While we're at it, imagine that your mom's had a pretty good year: It looks like she's beaten the cancer that made her so sick. And your dad's had a pretty good year, too: The company he founded just broke a billion dollars in sales, and last week he banked a bonus of \$118,000 into his tax-deferred retirement fund. But that doesn't matter to you, because you're six, and the ways of money are foreign, and will be until you get to be a teenager.)*

*But now imagine that sometime during that night, a nice winter night in Colorado, a very happy night, a man comes into your room. He ties you up. He rapes you, and in doing so scrapes a bunch of the skin off your back. He puts some silvery tape over your mouth. He hits you over the head and breaks your skull. And then he ties a cord around your neck, and slowly strangles you. This all takes a very, very, very long time. And it hurts a lot. And you wish your mommy was here, or your doggie.*

*Imagine that before the sun comes up the next morning, your mommy finds a note on the back steps to the kitchen. It's addressed to your daddy. It says you've been kidnapped.*

*But imagine that what that note says doesn't matter. Because your name is JonBenét Ramsey, and as dawn breaks over Boulder, Colorado on the day after Christmas 1996, you're already dead.*

There are some murder cases that are more jarring than others. The murder of JonBenét Ramsey is one of those. It was the first murder in Boulder in 1996. The victim was a cheerful, beautiful little girl, universally loved. She was the daughter of a prominent local businessman and his former beauty queen wife.

Aside from the shock, why are we so jarred? Why the fascination? Why is the bar at the Harvest House Hotel packed with British tits-and-bum journalists?

=====

First, in the interests of full disclosure, I am obligated to tell you why this is important to

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me.

JonBenét's playmate is the daughter of dear friends of ours. The playmate's mom organized the magnet school where JonBenét went to kindergarten; I've worked with her dad in the past on professional and amateur projects and I count him among my best friends. The daughter has been completely devastated, but is slowly recovering.

The youngest child in JonBenét's kindergarten class was my nephew Graham. My sister Mary Louise's first-born is a bright introspective kid, who initially asked only two questions: *This means she's not coming back, right?* and *They'll find who did this and send them to jail, right?* After two days thought, he asked another: *Can I take karate lessons?*

That two children who are in my circle — both of whom I would defend with my life — have been hurt by this tragedy saddens and angers me.

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Why is the outside world so transfixed by the events in this little town in the Rockies?

The polite answer is that by definition, "news" is anything out of the ordinary. The week before JonBenét's murder, there was another death on the north side of town: a woman was found in her nightgown in a pit at a construction site. It developed that she was an epileptic who often neglected to take her medication, and was full of liquor and cocaine when she died of exposure. Fourteen days after JonBenét's death, a 9-year-old black girl was raped, choked, poisoned and dumped in a stairway in a coma at the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago. The crime was brutal to be sure, and was reported. Not to make light of them, but both of those deaths are things we expect. An accident. A kid in the wrong place in a dangerous neighborhood.

This is something different. It's completely out-of-the-ordinary. Much as my mother tells the story of being so frightened by the Lindberg kidnapping when she was a girl that she would not go upstairs in her house alone, this case has traumatized a lot of children, because they can each identify with the victim. Much as we mourned as a nation in April 1995, after the deadly terrorist attack in Oklahoma City, this case has traumatized a lot of adults, because we can identify with the victim's parents.

On the more spectacular side, there is the sleazy tabloid aspect to the case. It almost seems specially delivered for **People** magazine and the **National Enquirer**: The father is very well-off, a former Navy fighter pilot, running a very successful computer distribution company. The mother is a well-known local volunteer who kept up her work at the kids' school even when she was undergoing massive chemotherapy. The child was the daughter and niece of beauty queens, and was one herself. The crime occurred at Christmas, the season of joy and hope.

We've been spoiled by the O.J. Simpson trial and by television into believing that murders and their subsequent investigations happen for our entertainment. Would that it were true. Would that all the victims of murders got up at the end of the hour, paid their Screen Actors Guild dues, and went home.

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But what happened the night of Christmas?

I will declare at the outset that I don't believe any member of the family was involved. I initially wrote this during the third week of March, and am adding some new material on May 8th,

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and while it's hard to separate what is alleged from what is known from what's been leaked from what's a rumor, nothing has been reported to date to convince me they were responsible.

In a nation where a celebrity former football player murders his ex-wife, where a mother in South Carolina drowns her own children because her boyfriend doesn't like them, it's easy to turn our attention to the family in the search for culprits.

The Ramseys have not helped quiet suspicion by hiring attorneys and private investigators, and exercising their rights to not be interviewed by the police. In the aftermath of the Olympic Park bombing in Atlanta, where Richard Jewell had his life nearly destroyed by cooperating with the investigation, who can blame them? Certainly, in a less-publicized case in Colorado a few years ago, a father was wrongly imprisoned for his infant's death after cooperating with the investigation fully and immediately. John Ramsey is sufficiently comfortable with himself that I don't think he worries what other people think of him. Patsy is sufficiently devastated by the loss of her daughter that she's beyond caring.

Let's remember that the only family member in the house capable of molesting JonBenét was her father. Despite twelve weeks of trying, apparently no evidence suggests that John Ramsey was physically abusive. Sexual abuse doesn't happen in a vacuum. Both the playmate's mom and my sister report that JonBenét was a happy kid, and showed none of the signs of being regularly abused. Her pediatrician reports the same thing, and he's trained to look for those signs. JonBenét's brother Blake has been extensively interviewed, and shows no signs of having been abused either.

A statistical digression: In general, you're most likely to be murdered by someone you know. If you're a murdered child, there's a 63% chance a relative is responsible, and a 57% chance it was a parent. Four out of five times, a child murdered by a family member has been physically abused beforehand. However, even though about one in twenty children are raped before they are murdered, when a parent kills a child, the child is raped only one in one hundred times. So, from a purely statistical standpoint, there is a one percent chance that this murder was committed by the parents. [The statistics are from the *Boulder Planet* edition of Feb 19-25, 1997.]

Because at this time it is apparent that John Ramsey didn't write the ransom note, but Patsy has not been ruled out as it's author, it has become fashionable in Boulder to suggest that they have conspired together to murder their daughter. Nothing is more absurd: Patsy confided to a friend that she believed God had spared her from cancer so she could care for her children. To suggest that she is protecting the killer of her daughter, or even was an accessory in the murder is ridiculous, and is another example of the media and other observers paying no attention to the information in front of them.

Because of the media hype, we can't talk about sexual abuse without talking about beauty pageants. Since she was a naturally outgoing and pretty kid — remember it was JonBenét's idea to share her dog with the neighbor who had lost his — and because Patsy was a former beauty queen herself, JonBenét was a participant in the child beauty pageant circuit. As nearly as I can make out, she treated it as a dress-up game. Because she wasn't shy, she had fun singing and dancing in front of other folks. If there was anything provocative about any of this, I haven't seen it in any of the photos and film of JonBenét I've seen.

Arthur Hays Sulzberger pointed out in 1948 that "a man's judgement cannot be better than the information on which he has based it." Perhaps I have better information. Perhaps I simply have more faith in John and Patsy Ramsey as parents.

As for who is actually responsible, the case will hinge on the forensic evidence. Handwriting samples will help find the author of the ransom note. But it is DNA analysis that will ultimately point

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to the killer. That evidence is now expected by the end of the month.

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In terms of circumstantial evidence, there are a number of things to look at. In the classic formulation of means, motive and opportunity, we can provide the Ramsey parents with means (they knew the locations of the bedrooms in the house and how the wine cellar was laid out), opportunity (they were in the house), but no one has yet suggested a motive other than that John Ramsey was sexually abusing his daughter.

So, roughly, the brief for the prosecution goes something like this: You're most likely to be murdered by someone close to you; if you're a child, mostly likely by your parents. John Ramsey was molesting his youngest daughter regularly. On Christmas night, he went overboard, and started a kinky game in which he tied a cord around her neck and started strangling her. In his rage, he bashes her on the head and breaks her skull. Realizing what he's done, he wraps her body in a blanket and stuffs it in the wine cellar. Then he wakes up his wife, and convinces her to write a fake ransom note, which she "discovers" at 5am. There are enough other odd points in the Ramsey's recounting of events — not to mention having immediately hired a defense lawyer — to prove they did it.

On the other hand, the brief for the defense is more compelling: Men do not *start* molesting children at 54 years of age, and there is no evidence that any of John Ramsey's other children from either of his marriages — or any other child he had contact with — was sexually abused, despite months of trying to prove otherwise. What parent is going to murder his own daughter? Particularly a daughter he is proud of? Can't you just hear the sarcastic tones of the defense lawyer: "Why murder his daughter on *Christmas night*, the happiest night of the year? Because he didn't like the tie she gave him that morning?" Even more, we have to postulate that Patsy Ramsey was woken up in the middle of the night with the news that her husband had just murdered the last child she'd ever be able to have, and rather than picking up the telephone and calling the police, she sat down to draft and redraft a fake ransom note. Or even more incredible, we have to believe that she participated in raping and murdering the daughter she doted on.

Unfortunately, in practical terms, one has to not just demonstrate that John and Patsy didn't murder their daughter but to provide an alternative. That, it turns out, is rather painful. The murderer's knowledge of the house suggests someone who has been in the house before, such as one of the scores of people who participated in remodelling and maintaining it. The ransom demand exactly matching John's year-end bonus provides us with the possibility of a business associate (or rival) or employee who had been a guest in the house before. But it appears that the official investigation is so focused on family members as suspects, that no one else has been seriously considered or investigated.

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This case has been an education, too, in the workings of the press. Never before has Sturgeon's observation that most of everything is crap been brought home so vividly.

Cases in point:

In February at a press conference, the investigators announced that the Colorado Bureau of Investigation had finished its analysis of the DNA evidence, and that they were sending it on to

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Cellmark Labs in Maryland for further tests. No reporter asked any of the obvious questions:

Were the tests so far inconclusive? Did the CBI screw up? Is there enough material for additional testing since you've previously observed that so little was collected?

When Geraldo Rivera came to town later in the month to goose his ratings, one of his guests was Cyril Wecht, a coroner from Pennsylvania. Wecht is an expert-for-hire, and general media hound. Wecht began Rivera's show by declaring that based on the partial autopsy report (not the autopsy itself), this girl was raped at least two days before her murder, therefore there was on-going sexual abuse, therefore the father must be the murderer. Rivera (who it is reported now wants to be treated as a serious journalist — which he could help by acting like one) failed to ask the logical follow up question: even assuming there was on-going abuse, how can you conclude that the father was the abuser? Worse, Rivera had failed to do any research, and point out that the assistant district attorney in Denver, who has prosecuted hundreds of child abuse cases, says this evidence is equivocal at best. We can do better: We know that JonBenét was alive and well on Christmas Eve; she was excited about Christmas, not overwhelmed by her first sexual experience.

The president of the Pennsylvania coroner's association wrote a letter this week to Boulder's coroner apologizing for Wecht's "disturbing lassitude for ethical procedure." In a similar vein, I remember when Rivera was a young punk reporter for a local station in New York. He was the one who started the practice of sticking a microphone in the face of the mother whose son had just been murdered in a gang war, or whose daughter had just been run over by a car.

At a press conference, a reporter asked why Patsy Ramsey could take the time to complain to the sheriff about being harassed by reporters, but couldn't come down to the police station to be interviewed. Tom Koby, Boulder's police chief, initially said "no comment." When the reporter persisted and demanded to know why Koby wouldn't answer the question, he explained simply and directly that he'd learned there were three kinds of questions you don't answer when you're doing an investigation: questions that are stupid, because reporters should have enough respect for their readers and viewers and for the people they're interviewing to ask good questions; questions that cause speculation about people who may not be suspects, because their jobs and lives are at risk if you're sloppy; and questions that compromise the investigation, because your goal must be to bring the case to a successful prosecution. Koby finished by saying that he was leaving it to the reporter to decide which rule he violated.

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In that same press conference on February 13th, Boulder District Attorney Alex Hunter said that he was concerned about how this story ends, not how the intervening chapters were written. At some level, it doesn't matter how the story ends, because we've been deprived of a great kid, and the wonderful adult she was likely to become. So the beginning of the story is so tragic that there's reason not to care about the end. But on the other hand, anyone who would do this to a child is fundamentally broken, and there's only one possible ending:

*Imagine that you raped and murdered a beautiful, talented, bright six-year-old. Imagine that you're locked in a small room.*

*Imagine that in a short while men will come to this room. And they'll take you a short way down the hall to another room, where you'll be strapped to a table.*

*Now: Imagine that those men will stick a needle into your arm...*

## CHECKS AND BALANCES (an urban mystery)

I got a call from a man I did not know. He had a strange tale to tell.

"I live in the Garden District," he began, naming the elegant area of old homes and old money across St. Charles Avenue and its streetcar line from my more proletarian digs. "I was coming home when I saw this homeless-type black woman leaving my yard. She dropped some of *your stuff*. Have you been burglarized?"

My mind zipped back to an incident several years ago when some neighborhood rats had made off with my briefcase -- and it had turned up in a priest's driveway, broken open, nothing missing but a calculator. But my present briefcase sat intact at the foot of my bed. "What sort of 'stuff?'" I asked.

"*Canceled checks*. And there are some other things ..."

I interrupted him, got his address -- on First Street, a renowned avenue these days. "I'll be right over."

First Street's notoriety comes as the residence of author Anne Rice, famed for the Lestat vampire books. Tourist women flock down First Street to look at her home. In the fading glow of late afternoon, I zipped over there and passed her house at First and Chestnut. A limousine waited. A giant plastic German Shepherd stood watch on her balcony. A couple of blocks closer to the river was the proper address -- less famous than Rice's house, perhaps, but no less elegant. Just within the iron gate, perched on bushes, a cloth lay folded. I mounted the steps to the porch and rang the bell. Through a window I glimpsed polished wood floors, a piano.

The gent came to the door, a friendly fellow my age. He shook my hand and repeated his story, handing me a sheaf of canceled checks. They were mine, all right. "I was worried you'd been burglarized," he said, leading me to the folded cloth. He showed me the treasures hidden underneath, the other things the woman had dropped. A blue perfume bottle. A foil-wrapped packet of Alka-Seltzer Gold. Three 8 1/2 x 11 drawings -- two identical -- from Disney's **Hunchback of Notre Dame**. Not mine.

And the checks were old: summer, 1994. I hang on to canceled checks for a while so there was no telling when these had been discarded. One was made out to a comics shop. Hmmp.

I told the fellow he could trash everything as far as I was concerned -- except the **Hunchback** drawings, which I'd give to my special neighbor, Cindy. I thanked him for calling, and we parted, two strangers brought together for a moment by an accident of urban mystery.

Who was she, this homeless woman who not only found my canceled checks, no doubt scrounging in a dumpster, but for some reason kept them? Why? What connection did my checks have with her other trash -- the old bottle, the Alka-Seltzer, the pictures from a Disney cartoon? To her they'd been important. Why?

What did she feel and think, in her street psychosis, when she held my checks? Did she imagine ... me? Envision what my life was like from my little payments of my little bills? Did she visualize who I was, wonder at an Attorney at Law who trafficked in comic books? Or did she carry the checks as part of her daily street game, pretending to herself that because she toted the detritus of the normal world, she was part of that world and not an addled street zombie, wandering from trash can to trash can, scrounging, searching, probing -- for something to connect with her fevered mind? Not a derelict but a person, in society, more whole ... what she presumed I was?

Now that the checks were lost to her, would she remember? Would my name mean anything to her ever again? Home.



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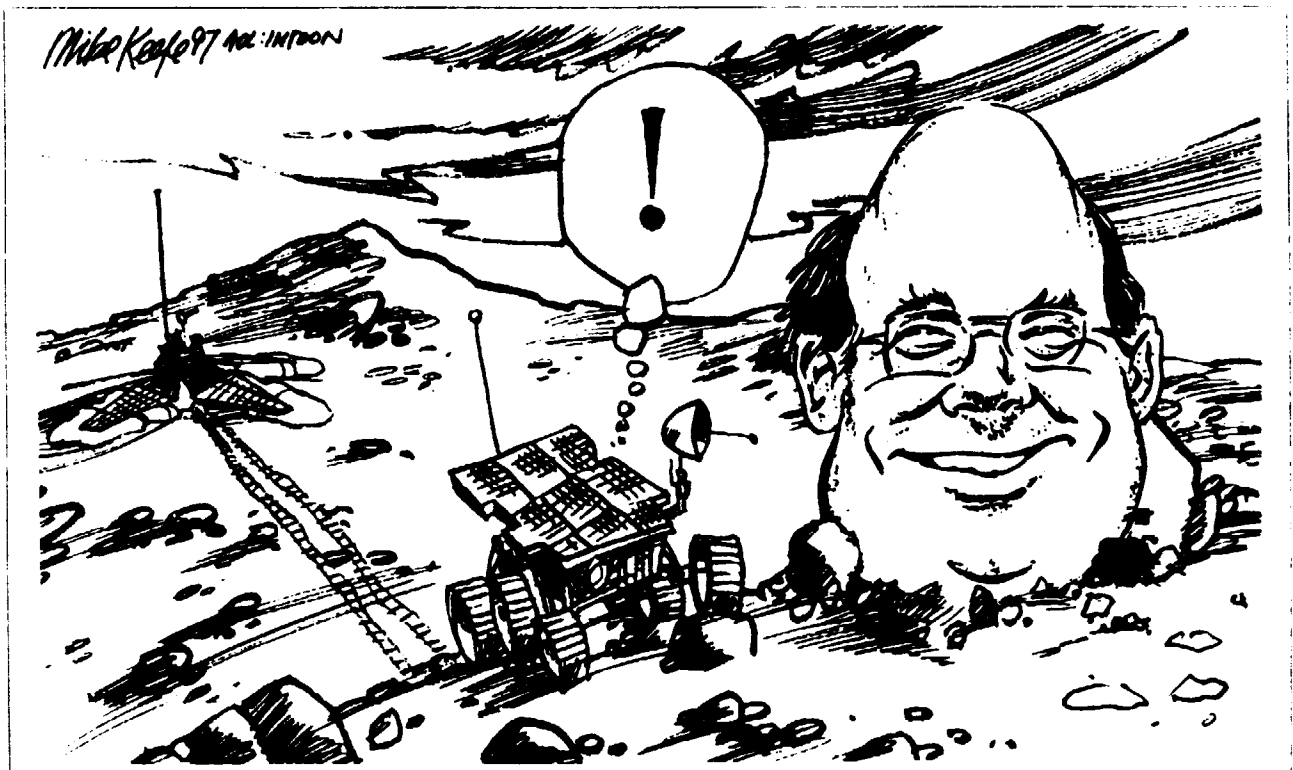
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*(When I gave Bryan his assignment, I told him, "This is Dick Lynch, my friend for 25 years, my lookalike, guide and mentor ... he is a decent, fair-minded, balanced man, encouraging, sympathetic, and wise ... he is in every way a fine human being. I want him destroyed." Bryan did his best.)*



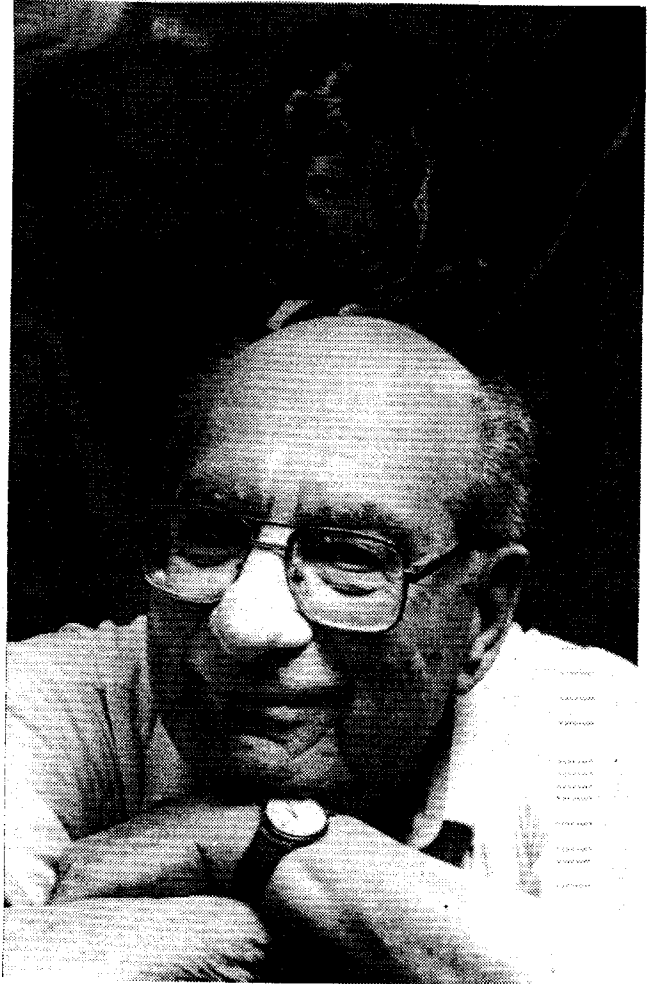
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**Julie Schwartz** won't be at the 1997 World Science Fiction Convention.

In June, just after his 82nd birthday, degenerative arthritis set in. His spirits are good, his doctor has him exercising daily, and he hopes to be out and about soon.

We'll miss you at LoneStarCon, Julie. Especially "Your Favorite Guy".

Get well.



*photo by BETH GWINN*