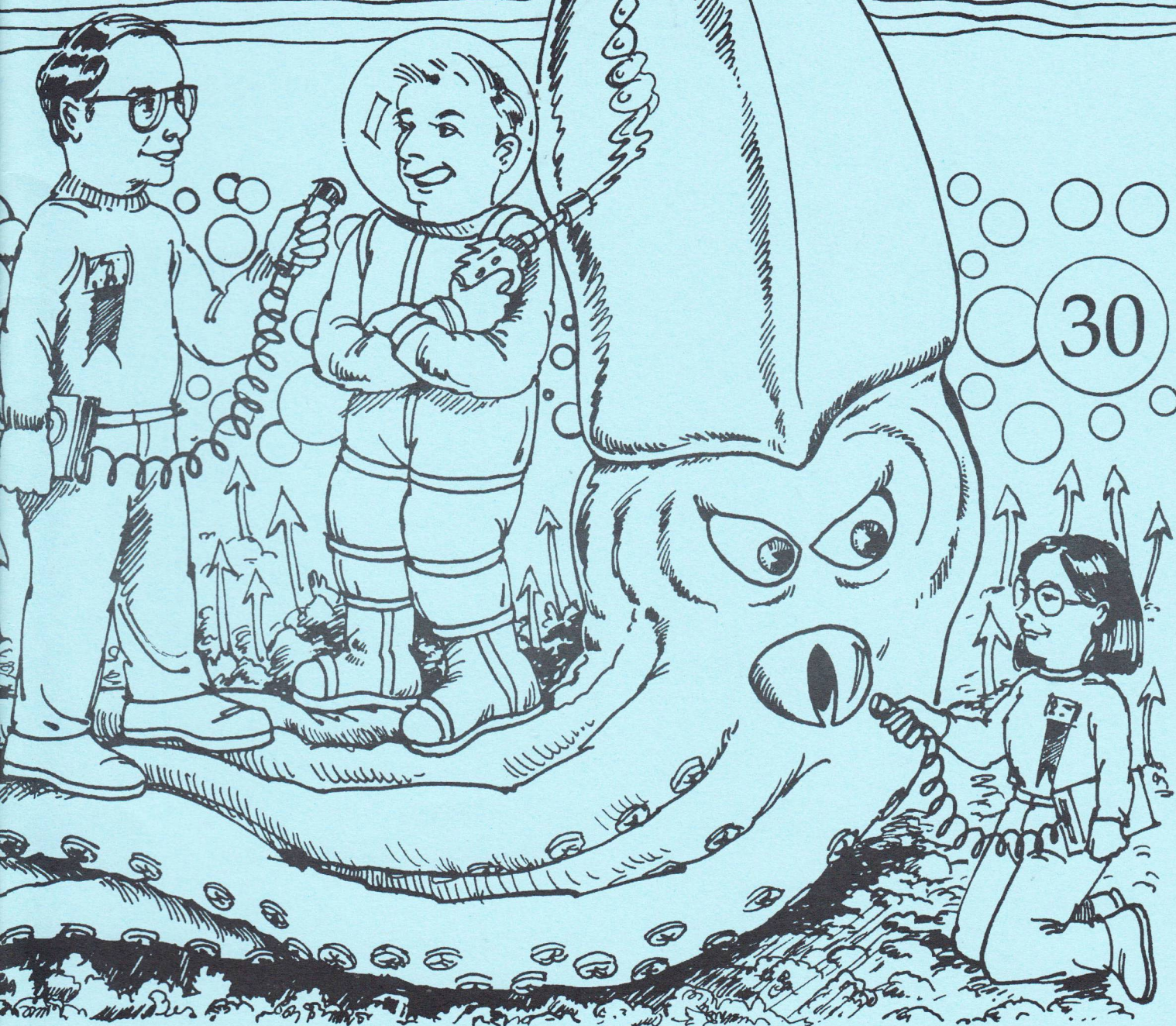
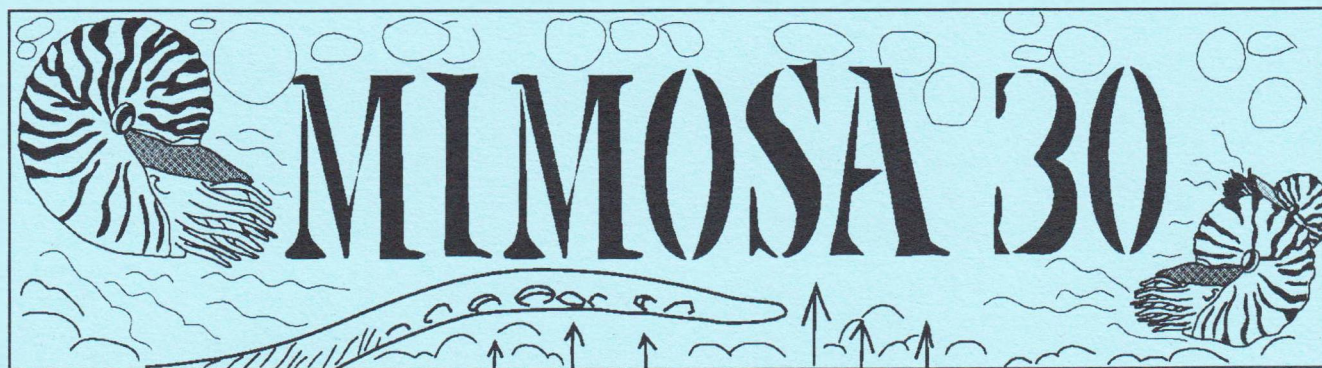


MINIMOSA



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Mimosa is a fanzine very much devoted to the preservation of the history of science fiction fandom. This, our 30th and final issue, was published in August 2003, and is available via surface mail for US\$4.00 (please add US\$3.00 extra postage if you have a non-North American address). Even though there will be no future issues, your letters and e-mails about this issue are still requested so we can forward your comments to our contributors. Copies of most back issues are still available; please write us for more information on price and availability, or go to our web site to view some of them online. This entire issue is ©2003 by Rich and Nicki Lynch, with individual rights reverting back to contributors after this one-time use. 'Worldcon', 'Hugo Award', and 'NASFiC' are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society. All opinions and versions of events expressed by contributors are their own.

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California Dreamin' and Other Remembrances

Opening Comments by Rich & Nicki

Do You Know the Way to ConJosé?

Doesn't seem that long ago, but the last time we had been to California was back in 1999 when we were the fan guests at the Anaheim NASFiC. We didn't get to see very much outside the Anaheim Marriott then, so the last time we actually got to do a bit of vacationing in California was back in 1996, just prior to L.A.Con III when we spent a weekend in San Francisco, then drove down to L.A. via Ventura.

That was a pleasant week, so we decided to do it again, more or less, but in the opposite direction (starting in Los Angeles this time), since the 2002 Worldcon was in San José, not Anaheim. Things did not get off to a good start. The United Airlines flight from Baltimore was more than an hour delayed due to some kind of mechanical problem with the airplane (they ended up using a different airplane for the flight), so we missed our connecting flight from Chicago. Luckily, there was another flight to L.A. about an hour later, but it turned out our luggage didn't make that connection and arrived at LAX about another hour after we did. And when we finally tracked down the luggage, one of the suitcases had been badly damaged en route (the zipper had been mostly torn out).

By that time, it was about 8:30pm, so we decided to take it up with United after we got to San José; we needed to find our hotel in the Van Nuys area then meet up with Craig Miller and Genny Dazzo, who were going to give us directions to their home for dinner the next evening. Due to more problems with the rental car, we didn't make it to the LASFS clubhouse until only the last few hangers-on were still there, but one of them, the writer John DeChancie, offered to lead us to the after-the-meeting restaurant where LASFS members often went. For once the timing was good – most people were just getting their food orders, and Craig and Genny were there. They told us they weren't too worried, as they figured we'd find a way to contact them if we didn't show up. We told them they have more trust in our people-finder

abilities than we did!

Genny and Rich had been talking about lasagna recipes at Midwestcon earlier in the year, which had led Craig and Genny to invite us to their home for a lasagna dinner. And, since you can't bake lasagna for just four people, they also invited some of their friends (all of whom were involved in some way with the television and film industry). Since the Washington area SF fans' career interests tend to revolve around government, it was interesting to listen in to a totally different topic that was the main interest of a different part of the country – the movie business. There were many interesting stories that night, and we had such a good time listening to them Rich never did get to tell any of his eastern Europe adventures.

It turned out that Genny had been preparing the lasagna for about three days! (Some things, including a good lasagna meat sauce, you just can't rush.) She also collects teapots, something we'd known for a few years (we've contributed several, in fact), but this was the first chance to see the collection. It was huge! She must have at least 500 of them, probably more, and they are all on display on shelves and bookcases in her dining room. They range from the large to the tiny, from the prosaic to the ornate. On the way north to San Francisco, we found her a teapot shaped like a pumpkin in a second-hand consignment store in Ventura. It was different enough to be interesting, but after seeing her collection, we weren't entirely sure she didn't already have it!

A day and evening in Ventura visiting our friends Lester and Esther Cole was next on our schedule. We first met them back in 1993, at the San Francisco worldcon, and both of them have written essays we've published in *Mimosa*. Ventura's downtown area has been transformed since we were last there into mostly a touristy area of antique and consignment shops and restaurants, with a regional attraction of one of the Spanish Missions that were built along the California coastline back in the 1700s. Definitely worth a day

there, but our schedule didn't allow us to stay any longer than that.



Lester & Esther Cole and Nicki,
at the Coles' home in Ventura

Next on our itinerary was a visit to the Hearst Castle, about three hours drive north from Ventura. The nearest town to the Castle is San Simeon, but we decided to stay the night instead about 10 miles south, in Cambria, which looked to be a more interesting place. And it was! The main street was lined with lots of little craft and antique stores to explore, and there were also many good places to eat. At one of them, where we stopped in for an evening snack, we were introduced to a local delicacy, the olallieberry, which seems to be a cross between the raspberry and blackberry – chocolate olallieberry bread pudding with whipped cream is just too good, actually, to adequately describe in print.

As for the Hearst Castle itself, it greatly exceeded our expectations, and we don't think we've been in a building that's comparable – it's a mansion that aspires to be a palace. The building and grounds now belong to the State of California, and it's not run like a typical state park – there's an IMAX theater in the welcoming center that shows a 40-minute dramatization about the construction of the place and several guided tours to choose from to see the place (you can't just get a grounds pass). We chose the Hearst Castle 101 tour (or whatever the name of the introductory tour was called), which, after an exciting bus ride up a narrow, winding road, took us through most of the ground floor of the main building.

And from there, it was on to San Francisco. The Internet found us a good hotel deal – a \$65 per night double at the Renoir Hotel, just off Market Street. Unfortunately, the San Francisco Giants were playing in Colorado, so we didn't get to see the new PacBell Park, but we had more than enough other things to do

to fill the two evenings and a day we were in the city.

One problem with having just two evenings in San Francisco is that you can only go to two different restaurants for dinner. One of them was The Stinking Rose, the garlic-themed restaurant, which was as good as we remember it from 1993 and 1996. We met up there with a fan from the Washington club who was on her first visit to the West Coast and showed her around Chinatown after dinner, which was its usual mesmerizing human kaleidoscope. We'd also intended to go to Des Alpes, a limited-menu Basque restaurant (where we'd taken Guy Lillian, Teddy Harvia, and some other fan friends, back in 1993 during the San Francisco Worldcon), but to our dismay it was gone! Where it had been was now occupied by a Chinese-owned business, proof that San Francisco's Chinatown has continued to expand in the time since we were last there. Change is inevitable, but we'll miss Des Alpes – we'd gone there for dinner whenever we were in San Francisco, and it was like an old friend.

And then, finally, it was time for ConJosé. This was the 20th Worldcon we've attended (our 15th in a row). We guess that means we're no longer neos, but subjectively, the 1970s don't seem *that* long ago.

It was not the most smoothly-run convention we've ever attended. We'd decided to stay at an outlying hotel, mostly due to waiting three months after the hotel blocks were opened before booking a hotel room (we never thought that \$130-a-night hotel rooms would sell like hotcakes). But if we'd successfully gotten into what would have been our first choice, the Hyatt St. Claire in downtown San José, we'd have most likely have gotten a rude surprise. Some screw-up with the convention booking service had resulted in a large overbooking for that hotel, and many people who'd thought they would be staying in the downtown instead found themselves out at the Hyatt near the San José airport, the better part of an hour's commute away by the county's slow-moving light rail.

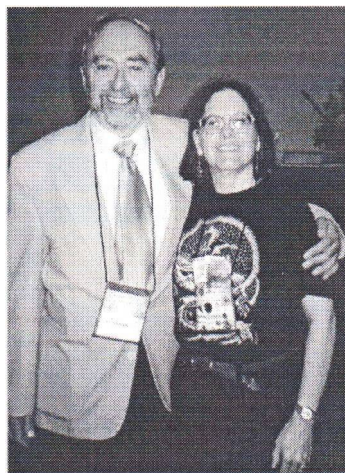
The convention itself didn't do too much better than that the first day – the registration people had apparently had some kind of problem with their membership database which resulted in them not having membership badges for any pre-registers whose last name began with the letter N. Pocket programs weren't available until that afternoon, either, which made it difficult for a while to figure out which events were going on where.

Originally the convention was to have been held in San Francisco, but problems with hotel and/or convention center availability resulted in the venue shift a few months before the site selection vote back

in 1999. We think we would have probably preferred San Francisco, but downtown San José is not a bad place to be. Many of the convention attendees took some time off to visit some of the local attractions, like the strangely-constructed Winchester Mystery House and the Tech Museum of Innovation. The one we went to see was the local Museum of Quilts and Textiles, which had a display of quilts on the topic of “The Last Year” – some stark images of the elderly during their final weeks. The quilts were done in a realist style to be almost indistinguishable from portraiture paintings when standing farther away than about ten feet. But it was not really morbid; the images were actually quite compelling – worthy remembrances of people who had accepted death, and were meeting the ends of their lives with dignity.

Parts of San José itself seemed rather morbid, but in a dignified way. There were many empty and abandoned storefronts along the street where the light rail ran, presumably where dot-com companies had once been located before the bubble burst, awaiting new life when the economy turns upward again. The local economy had other ways of coping, though – there was a large street craft fair in downtown San José the weekend of ConJosé, similar in scope and content to the Sugarloaf Craft Festivals here in the Washington, D.C., area, with hundreds of vendors. Thousands of people braved the hot weather to browse, and eat, and buy. We bought a silver armadillo pin for a friend of ours from a crafts-person who told us he liked to read science fiction, and who was amazed to find out that the World Science Fiction Convention was taking place just a short distance away from him. A bit earlier, Rich had talked to another craftsperson who was selling ornate little wooden boxes of the kind he’d seen during his Russia trip back in 1994. When he told her that, she asked where in Russia he’d been, and was rather surprised when Rich mentioned that one of the places was the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk – originally her home. It really *is* a small world!

There were many friends of ours at ConJosé from all around this small world. Janice Gelb, who lives maybe 15 miles from San José, was trying her best (with mixed results) to stay out of convention operations long enough to attend much of the convention. Adrienne Losin, who lives south of Melbourne, Australia, stayed hidden so well that we didn’t cross paths with her until near the end of the convention. One unexpected treat, on the last day of the convention, was the discovery that British fan Ron Bennett, the 1958 TAFF delegate (and *Mimosa* contributor), was at the



Ron and Nicki

convention for that one day. He was actually in the States to visit his son, who edits a Silicon Valley-based computer trade journal of some kind, and just showed up unannounced. The only reason we found him at all was because of a chance remark of a bookseller friend of ours who’d sold him a book in the dealers room.

It was a chance remark of a different sort that led to the most-repeated story of the convention. Australian fan Stephen Boucher, who comes to the U.S. so often that he’s become part of midwest fandom, had been asked, in jest, if he was interested in bidding Australia for the 2005 NASFiC convention. Stephen replied that if he was going to bid for a convention the scale of a NASFiC, he’d rather bid for a Worldcon instead. Bingo! Twenty-dollar bills for pre-supporting memberships immediately began piling up in front of him. Before another day had passed an ‘Australia-in-2010’ bid shirt had been produced and a web site was online. A somewhat dumbfounded Stephen was later heard to remark, when asked if he was going to be the Chairman, “I’m just the hood ornament on this bulldozer.” And thus are worldcon bids born and fan history created.

ConJosé seemed to do a better job of creating fan history than showcasing it – there seemed to be fewer fan history-related programming items than at other recent worldcons. In fact, maybe the most interesting fan history-related hour (for Rich, at least) of the convention happened at a room party, where he and Ben Yalow took the opportunity to describe some of the things that happened in fandom of the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s to an interested fan named Janis Ian. After the convention, Rich sent her a copy of the 1950s fan history book he had edited and she sent back two of her CDs. Fair exchange.

What ConJosé lacked in fan programming, it made up for in a Fan Lounge. An upper floor of the main hotel had two large suites – one was used as the Con Suite and the other became the Fan Lounge. Depending which way you turned getting out of the elevator, you found one or the other (and, from the looks of puzzlement, not always the one that was expected). As the Fan Lounge was the one with all the fanzines and fan-

zine fans, that's the one we spent time in. It was a place of relative quiet and good conversation as well as lots of good food, which made it a preferred breakfast spot.

The Con Suite also had lots of food, much more than even fans could consume, and they had enough to stock a small grocery store when the convention ended. Since this was the Con Suite, it was usually very busy and very, very noisy. It was also a bit dark as, unlike the Fan Lounge, the window curtains were usually kept drawn. Nicki found out why on our second day there.

While sitting and talking with Dave Kyle in the Fan Lounge, she noticed an airplane. Downtown San José, it turned out, was in the landing path of the airport and there was a perfect view from the Fan Lounge of each airplane preparing to land. *Too* perfect, actually. As she watched, the airplane got closer, closer, closer, *closer*, and just as you could clearly see the landing gear coming down, the plane veered to the right and receded from view. Every few minutes the performance was repeated; it was all a bit unnerving. Nicki eventually decided it was time to either sit where she couldn't see the planes or go watch some programming.

Five days for a worldcon seems a long time, but it usually goes by in a flash and ConJosé was no exception. The last major event of the convention was the Hugo Awards; we had been nominated in the Fanzine category, for *Mimosa*, for the twelfth year in a row, but lost by 19 votes to Dave Langford's *Ansible*. We weren't really expecting to win, as it's been a few years since the last time we had, but we *were* a bit surprised that *Ansible* was the winner – California resident Mike Glyer, who had won the award (for *File 770*) the past two years, had seemed the clear favorite.

There are many memories we'll keep from Con-José. Patrick Stewart's unpublicized event the Friday night of the convention was one of them; he came to ConJosé primarily to promote the upcoming *Star Trek Nemesis* and *X2: X-Men United* movies, but the 45 minutes he was on-stage showed him to be engaging and entertaining – somebody who was much more than just a talking head. Another was the Bruce Pelz remembrance event – Bruce wasn't a religious person and there was no memorial service for him after his death in May, so instead his friends held informal secular wakes for him at this year's Westercon and also at ConJosé, where we had a final opportunity to say good-bye.

Saying good-bye to California is never easy to do, but after two weeks of vacation and convention, we were ready to come back home. The return trip was uneventful, but it was almost midnight by the time we

got home and we both had to go to work the next day. By the time we'd gotten fully caught up with the real world, ConJosé had receded several weeks into the past and the only mention we saw of it was the occasional review in fanzines and online.

It came as a surprise, then, when a big cardboard box appeared on our front porch one day; when we opened it, we found... the suitcase! We'd left it with the United Airlines luggage service people in San José and had almost forgotten about it, but there it was, repaired and ready to go. Maybe we'll bring it to Torcon 3...

FIAWOL, or perilously close to it...

This, as most of our readers are aware, is our final issue, and we'll have more to say about why there will be no more *Mimosas* as the issue progresses. As for the contents of this issue, about two years ago we decided on the theme of FIAWOL ("fandom is a way of life"); this last issue is meant to be a celebration of fandom in all its forms and ways. Sometimes, though, a celebration is a remembrance of a life. It's been about a year-and-a-half since we published a non-Fanthology issue. Since then much has happened, including the passing of two fan friends who, to paraphrase Bob Tucker, never found science fiction or fandom a way of life, but at times probably came perilously close to it...

On May 9, 2002, Matthew Tepper posted the following to an Internet newsgroup: "I have just returned from tonight's LASFS meeting. Larry Niven announced that Bruce Pelz died this afternoon." It was terrible news, and more than a year later, we think we may still be in denial. Rich's response was the following remembrance:

I am truly at a loss for words, and I don't want to be because Bruce's friendship has been one of the constants in the nearly three decades I've been actively a science fiction fan; he was someone I looked forward to seeing, more than anybody else, at worldcons. Living a continent-width away, our paths crossed only too infrequently.

Bruce's presence over the past two decades has been a huge influence on my interest in the history of SF fandom. Nicki and I decided to publish *Mimosa*, a fanzine dedicated to fan history, in large part because of Bruce and other fans interested in preservation of our past enthralled us with entertaining and interesting stories about fandom's past eras. We regret we didn't try harder to get Bruce himself to write more about his decades in fandom – Bruce only preserved one of his stories in print for us. [It appeared in *M27*].

It's getting so that every time that I meet up with an old friend I haven't seen in a long time, I feel I need to

treasure the moment because there's a chance there might not be another time. I never thought this about Bruce, though – he was a rock, a constant, someone whose presence I always took for granted. I cannot for sure even remember the very last time I spoke to him in person, though it was sometime during the 2001 Philadelphia worldcon. It was probably when we went to dinner on the Saturday night of the convention; he was ailing from leg pain and moving very slowly. I remember that we shared about an hour's worth of conversation, on topics ranging from places in the world we wanted to go back to (he was a world traveler in his final years) to what we thought would make good fan history projects in the future (including my still incomplete 1960s fan history). It was there that he told me the story that he later put into print for *Mimosa*.

Bruce's passing is truly the end of an era. I think he will be remembered as one of the most important and most influential fans of all time, and certainly as one of the most active. The list of his activities and accomplishments is enormous, covering almost every activity imaginable from convention running to costuming to fanzine collecting to organizing. He was active in fandom in six different decades. He was truly a fan for the ages, and now he belongs to the ages.

I already miss him very much.

It was this past October, while we were preparing the second half of the *Fanthology* issue when more bad news arrived via the Internet: "Dalvin M. Coger, a fan since the early 1940s, passed away on Wednesday, October 2nd, from a post-surgery antibiotic-resistant bacterial infection." Once again, Rich posted a follow-up:

Dal's activity in science fiction fandom began in the midwest U.S. about 1942, when he attended the second Michicon in the fall of that year. He was only active for a couple of years before he went into the military for World War II, but in that time he became friends with Al and Abby Lou Ashley and other people in the Galactic Roamers fan club in central Michigan, and as a result, spent many happy days at the most famous fan abode of all time, the legendary Slan Shack of Battle Creek, Michigan. Of that place, Dal later wrote that "fan visitors from far and wide came by to enjoy the Ashley's hospitality." Because he became stationed thousands of miles away, in California, Dal wrote that "I was immensely unhappy that I couldn't [often] share in this."

It was actually Dal's good fortune to be stationed at Camp Haan, in southern California, for his basic training, and during the relatively short time he was there before being shipped off to France, he became friends with the LASFS crowd, including Jim Kepner, Forry Ackerman, and the enigmatic Francis Towner Laney.

Dal later wrote about that time, mentioning that "I was permitted to flop over the weekend in the [LASFS] clubhouse [on Bixel Street], and frequently spent Saturday nights there while on a weekend pass. Forry Ackerman and Morojo had made me welcome."

It was more than 20 years of gaffiation after that, first in the military and then in academia – Dal became a professor at the University of Memphis (Tennessee), where he was a notable historian and African Studies writer. He re-entered fandom in the mid 1970s, and became a sort of patriarch for Memphis fandom after that.

I met Dal not long after his re-entry into fandom, at a small convention in Arkansas where he was Toastmaster and introduced me to the convention's Guest of Honor, Bob Tucker. Dal and I stayed in contact with each other after that; it was probably our common interest in history, especially the history of science fiction fandom, that helped make us friends. And even though most of his time was still absorbed by academic interests, both before and after his retirement sometime in the 1990s, he still found time for some fan writing; I am pleased that Nicki and I were allowed to publish two of his fan history-related articles in *Mimosa*. He was also a great conversationalist, and the times we met each other at conventions usually resulted in a couple of hours of shared stories (mostly his), about travels and times past. These were fascinating to listen to.

After Nicki and I moved to Maryland near the end of 1988, Dal and I crossed paths only every year or two, usually at Midwestcons we both happened to attend. The most recent time was this past June, and I remember him looking very energetic and healthy, much younger than his 80+ years. For that reason, I don't think I ever thought that might be the last time I'd ever see him. Unfortunately, I won't, and I am still trying to come to grips that. I am going to miss him greatly.

Midwestcon 54 is less than a month away as this is being written, and friends of Bruce and Dal will be there. We will, too – we look forward to further celebrating their lives and we won't mourn their passing. We hope you'll do the same for *Mimosa*. ☆



Bruce (1994)



Dal (1992)

We begin this FIAWOL-themed issue of *Mimosa* with a tale along the road to FIAWOL. In this case, it's a real road, as one of the writer's favorite forms of fanac is traveling to conventions. For many of us, ourselves included, it's probably true to state that fandom found us as much as we found fandom. But as the following article demonstrates, it's a gradual process.



I was at a family function a few weeks back when a distant cousin-by-marriage asked me if I still had "that hobby." I bristled, thinking he referred to my romance writing, but he went on, "...you know, that science fiction thing."

"Oh, do you mean science fiction fandom?"

"Yeah, where you take all those trips."

I told him that yes, I still had "that hobby," and in fact was heading off to Canada this summer.

He shook his head in admiration.

"I think that is so neat, that you still do this. What a great way to travel!"

Later I thought it was interesting that after not seeing me for over 10 years, what Hank remembered about me was "that hobby," my involvement with fandom that takes me traveling. And when I think of my favorite things about fandom being a way of life, travel is near the top of my list.

My first cons were regional affairs, Asficon in Atlanta, Kubla in Nashville, Tallycon in Tallahassee. While I enjoyed the con experience, part of what I liked most about it was being able to travel someplace I'd never been before. Kubla Khan in Nashville was my first visit to that city. I didn't see much of it, and my impression of leaving Nashville is having gone over 24 hours without sleep and trying to navigate through the mountain roads while Janice Gelb talked non-stop to keep me awake, but I also recall thinking,

"Gee, these are neat mountains." It was nice to see something different from what I knew.

So that's how it starts. Little trips, not far from home, and you feel fairly safe and comfortable doing it. Then someone says, "Are you going to Noreascon Two up in Boston?" and suddenly you're thinking, "I can do that. If we stay eight to a room, and don't eat, I could go to Boston."

I'd never been to Boston. So I saved my pennies, took a tape recorder to get interviews and make it a business trip, and flew up north.

And in Boston I not only experienced my first Worldcon (and a splendid one it was, too) but ate sushi for the first time when a bunch of us decided on one extravagant meal at Legal Seafood, saw some of the city sights, met fans from around the world and vaguely recall sleeping in a bathtub the last night when we ran out of beds.

When I got home I was asked about my trip. Non-fans were fascinated by the idea that I would travel hundreds of miles for a science fiction convention. They wanted to know if Mr. Spock was there.

It was easier after that, planning my schedule around Labor Day, sometimes missing Worldcon for pesky things like giving birth, or family weddings (those darn mundane relatives! I keep telling them not to schedule events around Labor Day but do they listen?) but other times managing to wing my way to

such exotic locales as Chicago, Atlanta, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San José, Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia.

When people ask me what I get out of these trips I'm almost afraid to tell them the truth. See, I'm somewhat of an intellectual snob. I'm not brilliant, but I enjoy hanging out with people who are smart and let's face it, in most large gatherings you're not going to find wit and brains in abundance.

You find it in fandom. Oh, not every time, and not everywhere, and you can be cornered by someone who hasn't bathed during the entire convention, needs serious meds, and wants to tell you all about why his button collection ought to be archived at the local university, but fortunately these are the exception, not the rule. Either that or my radar's gotten better at avoiding these types. Anyway, what I do get out of fandom, what feeds my intellectual snobbishness, is a feeling that I'm in an environment where the jokes and one liners are flying fast and furious and *you have to be bright to keep up*. I love the challenge of it.

I love the travel so much that after a while you find yourself doing things you never would have expected when you first became involved with this as a way of life.

Intersection wins the Worldcon bid. I'm at a celebration party with men in skirts and lots of fine single malts. Janice turns to me and says, "We're going to Scotland in 1995."

"Ha, ha, that's funny, Janice. Like I'm going to leave my husband and children and jet off halfway around the world for a science fiction convention!"

We had a splendid time, thank you very much. I got to see *Scotland* because of fandom. I wouldn't have gone if not for Worldcon, any more than I would have gone to Australia a few years later. But it was fandom that gave me the excuse, and the encouragement to travel to places I'd read about, places I'd always thought about visiting, but the time was never right, and let's face it, I didn't have a good reason to go.

Fandom is the reason. When I got to Scotland, and Australia, I not only met fen from foreign lands who don't make it to U.S. conventions, an exciting experience in itself, but I met up with people I knew well so there was always a sense of "you're not alone here" that added a comfort level to the experience.

Sometimes it worked the other way. Fandom came to me, instead of me going to fandom.

Many years ago I got a phone call, and when I hung up I looked at my husband and said, "We're going to have guests for lunch. Two people from that

little science fiction thing I write for, *Myriad*, they're in town and want to stop by to see us."

"Have you met them before?"

"Noooo...but I'm sure they're lovely people. They're quite witty in their writing."

"But you've never met them? The Marquis de Sade was witty, but you might not want him over for lunch! How do you know these people aren't axe murderers?"

Howard was in law school at the time and if it wasn't litigation on his mind, it was mayhem.

"Don't be silly. I'm sure Dick and Nicki Lynch are perfectly normal human beings."

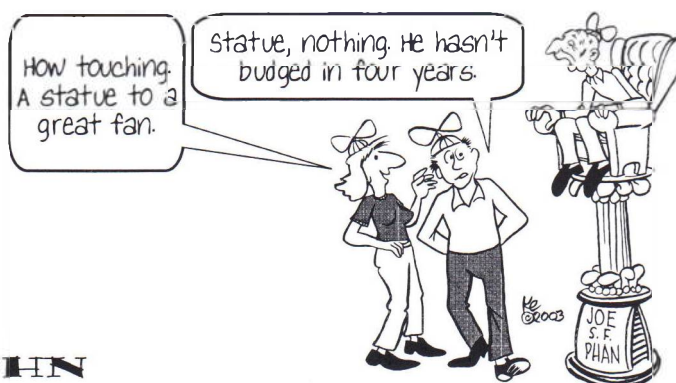
I told a friend going to Worldcon reminds me a little bit of *Same Time, Next Year*, where two old friends and lovers meet once a year and catch up on what's been going on in their lives, share new experiences, and renew their relationships. That's how it is when you travel in fandom. If I learned one thing from fandom over the last 20 years it's this – don't judge the person by the outer packaging – a lesson I've tried to carry over into all aspects of my life. I've also learned to be open to new experiences and new tastes and new ideas, so that even when fandom is just a little hobby, it can still be a way of life. ✧



☛ Another of the routes to FIAWOL, as this next article (by a past Hugo Award winner and worldcon Fan Guest of Honor) describes, is a few decades of persistence – if you stick around long enough, people will believe you've been there forever. The advantage of this method is that along the way, you'll get to know many fascinating personalities. It's an approach we highly recommend.

IF I CAN'T BE GREAT I'LL SETTLE FOR OLD

BY MIKE GLICKSOHN



When I first encountered science fiction fandom, over the Labour Day weekend of 1966, some thirty six-and-a-half years ago, I was immediately attracted to the world of fanzines. As I made my first tentative baby steps into that world I quickly became fascinated by its history (although there was only a small fraction of what there is now) and it didn't take me long to realize that certain names kept appearing and reappearing in the old fanzines I encountered or read about.

Names like Laney, Burbee, Purdue, Bloch, Tucker, Hoffman, Ellison, Ackerman, Speer, Warner, Moskowitz, Willis, and Shaw, to name some of the most prominent. Who were these giants, I wondered, what was so special about them that they'd made such an impression and had such an impact on this newly-discovered world? I'll never know, I thought, and I'll certainly never join them.

Well, I was right about the latter (although I'm proud of and content with the reputation I established as a fanzine fan) but when it comes to the former I'd overlooked one important fact: sometimes all you need is time. And although my thirty-six plus years don't come close to qualifying me as an Elder Statesman of Fanzine Fandom, they do mean I've been around for almost 60% of the time individual fanzines have been around. And longevity can sometimes do what a lack of great talent might preclude...

I never met Laney and only once encountered Burbee and Purdue. But at least I got to tell them that I knew of their many contributions to "our" fandom.

I was in an invitational APA with Lee Hoffman for a while and she seemed to enjoy our one meeting – at Chicon IV – possibly because I knew exactly what it felt like to be a Worldcon Guest who was unknown to over ninety percent of the attendees.

Jack Speer has invariably been the epitome of class when we've been at the same convention and I'm delighted he's going to finally add his name to Andy Porter's annual list of the "Not Gone But Pretty Much Forgotten."

Back in the '70s I once tagged along with someone visiting SaM at home. I was absolutely stunned when I shook his hand and said something like "You probably don't know me..." and he acknowledged who I was and opened his correspondence files and showed me the originals of a few things I'd written to him and copies of anything he'd written to me. Years later he bailed me out of a difficult situation at a con I was Fan Guest at by coming out of the audience to join me on a "panel" I was alone on.

Forry got me into fandom through his monster magazine and later graciously showed me around his collection on three trips to LA. He out-bid me on a copy of *Fancyclopedia* at the 1973 Westercon and shortly afterwards presented it back to me, suitably inscribed. I know of no one to whom fandom meant more than it did to Forry.

Everyone admires and respects The Hermit of Hagerstown. But to be arrogant, no one but me can even have an inkling of what it has been like to do what Harry has done all these years. I walked – far behind him – in his footsteps for less than half the time he'd been Doing His Thing. The man was a Fanish National Treasure. And I will forever treasure the visits I made to #423 so #1 and a very distant #2 could chat in person. My wife called him "courtly." I call him "incredible."

Shortly before he died, Robert Bloch took the time to sign a copy of his autobiography for me and send it back to me in the mail along with a letter in which,

among other things, he told me to aim at celebrating my 25th anniversary with Susan. In a few weeks we'll reach our 10th. And less than two months after that Bloch will be honoured as "GoHst of Honour" at Torcon 3, the obvious continuance of his Guest of Honourships at the first two Toronto worldcons. I fought for that and then was allowed to explain why in Torcon 3 publications. Friends with the author of *Psycho*? Amazing what enough time will do for you.

Over the years of my first ventures into fandom I got to be friends with Ellison too. He'd call me up when he was coming to Toronto for some television gig and ask me to find him a date. I visited "Ellison Wonderland" and even pushed his car through Hollywood when he ran out of gas. Then I wrote an article saying fans should read Chris Priest's fanzine suggesting that *The Last Dangerous Visions* would probably never see print. Harlan asked me not to publish it (I'd sent him a copy out of courtesy). When I declined to have my voice stifled he said our almost twenty years of friendship were over. That was almost twenty years ago. His book still hasn't been published. The man remains one of the most talented individuals I've ever personally known but he does have more than his share of demons.

I went to the Orlando 1992 Worldcon to meet Walt Willis. Again. Our paths had crossed many times, briefly in person at a con in Britain and often in the pages of many fanzines. It was like meeting an old friend, so warm was Walt's greeting. And when Walt wrote a report on Magicon which included a line something like "And I was delighted to see my old friend Mike Glicksohn in the audience for the panel." I'm sure my 1966 self was flabberghasted. Hell, my 1993 self was flabberghasted!

Bob Shaw was a legend when I first became a fan. In 1966 I'm sure I thought it highly unlikely I'd ever get to meet the man, let alone go beyond that. But I became pretty active in British fanzines in the '70s and attended a couple of British cons and got to share drinks and pints with Bob and listen to his Serious Scientific Talks. Eventually I was asked to write the introduction to a collection of reprints of those talks (and had a ball doing so) and a few years later Bob fell in love with a dear friend of mine, Nancy Tucker. And to my stunned amazement Bob asked me to be Best Man at their wedding.

In a little over five lustrums Bob Shaw had gone from Ghod to Groom. Time had once again wrought its miracles. Sadly both Bob and Nancy are no longer with us. But I'll never forget and always cherish the

one and only time I ever took communion. To my surprise, the wedding party was to take communion. As Best Man, I was the first to be offered the wafer. I attend church twice a year so I know how communion works but I'd never participated myself. But I would never have embarrassed Nancy or Bob so I knelt and accepted the wafer and sipped the proffered cup. Bob was next and he did as I had done and then Nancy was next. And as she took the wafer Bob half-turned his head to me and muttered "I'd've preferred a pint!" I can't recall that moment to this day without the taste of communion wine suddenly in my nostrils.

And then there's Tucker. Possibly the most famous of those old-time famous fans. Certainly on every fans' list of the Top Five Most Influential Fans Of All Time. And hence possible the person my 1966 self would have thought least likely to have made contact with. Ha! If I'd known just a little more than the pages of old fanzines told me I'd have realized how inaccurate that assessment was bound to be!

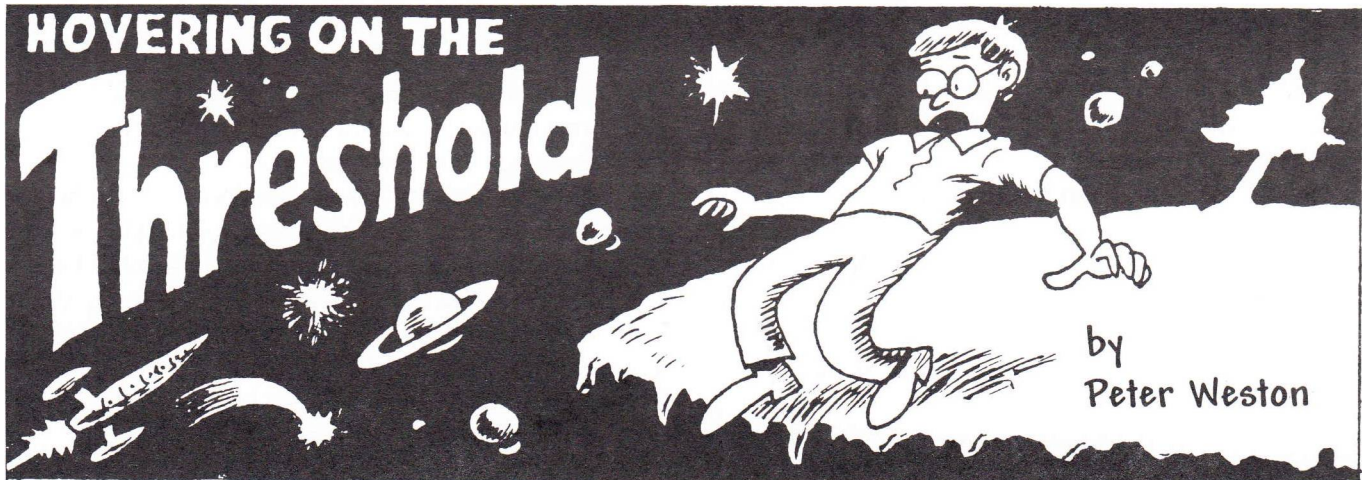
Over the years I've come to know Bob well. And I like to think I've had some influence over him just as his career as a fan has influenced me. I take pride in knowing that Bob calls me "The Only Fan I've Slept With On Three Continents." I treasure the various stories we've established together: forget "Rosebud" and "The Footprint On The Ceiling," I'm talking about "The Goose That May or May Not Have Been," "The True Story of Aussie Smoothing," "The Secret of the Purple Booze," "The Breakfast That Wasn't," and "What Window?" It is truly amazing what time will tell. (Even if Bob won't.) And I hold myself personally responsible for showing Bob that a hug (and occasionally even a kiss) with a male fan was just as politically correct (although possibly not quite as much fun) as with a female fan. We've come a long way since 1966, eh?

If someone had told my neofannish self in 1966 that all it would take to become a part of the fannish pantheon I'd been reading about was the passage of sufficient time, I'd never have believed them. But time passing accomplished many things and the lesson of my fan career is that if you hang around long enough you too will get to play a small part in the on-going saga of science fiction fandom.

Hell. All you have to do is stick it out for at least two decades and you too can be involved in the on-going career and winding down of *Mimosa*, one of the best damn fannish fanzines ever published. It worked for me.

And let's face it: two decades, that's not too many! ✧

Next up is an article by a former worldcon Chairman and Fan Guest of Honor at next year's Noreascon 4. Besides conventions and fanzines, one other route toward FIAWOL (and perhaps still the most common one) is through reading. Fandom originally came into existence because Hugo Gernsback decided to print the addresses of correspondents in his magazines' letters columns, and the unifying theme across the various types of science fiction fandom that have evolved into during the seven decades of its existence is still the 'sense of wonder' that happens when you encounter the stuff. In fact, the only real disadvantage to this approach is that it sometimes takes a bit longer to get there.



Looking back now, I wonder what took me so long. There I was, hovering on the threshold and I didn't know it. With just a little more luck I might have got into fandom three or four years earlier, and everything would have been very different.

I bought my first adult science fiction book in late 1957, *The Robert Heinlein Omnibus*, as an introductory offer from the (British) Science Fiction Book Club. This consisted of the first two books of something called the "Future History," bound together in one volume.

Now, I'd never heard of this Heinlein chap, or his Future History, but that first book was an eye-opener. A bit dated, of course – even by 1957 it was pretty clear that he'd gotten some details wrong. But I was intrigued by the idea of developing a consistent track for future events, and by his casual, matter-of-fact treatment of new ideas, particularly in the second volume. I was hooked, and immediately sent off to join the Club.

Every British fan of my generation will remember those Book Club editions, with their geometric-patterned paper covers in various colours. They were a godsend, bringing us a book every month, with titles like *Wild Talent*, *The Demolished Man*, *Earth Abides*, and more. This was at a time, remember, when paperback publishing was in its infancy in Britain, and there were no American imports. Science fiction was hard to find!

But prompted by the Heinlein book I recalled that

I'd seen some science fiction magazines in a junk-shop, just down the road, while I'd been looking for *Superman* comics. (These shops were on every corner in those days, a hangover from wartime shortages and rationing, full of old prams, household oddments and usually stacks of secondhand books and magazines). I went and had a look, and came back with several secondhand magazines at 6d per copy.

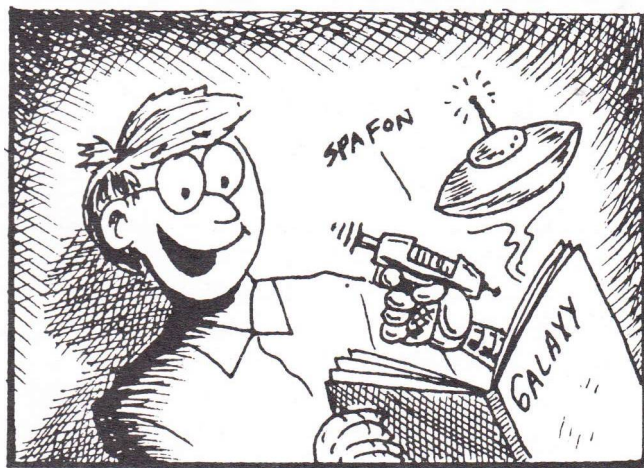
The first one I opened was *Astounding*, dated October 1956, the issue with Murray Leinster's "Critical Difference," a splendid piece of pseudo-science which impressed me enormously, with its landing grid technology and a very clever solution to the problem facing Leinster's colony planet. His name must have registered, because almost immediately afterwards I acquired the September 1957 issue, with his "Ribbon in the Sky," which from the title and cover illustration I probably thought was a sequel.

But it was a great disappointment. Now, I understand why. In the first story Leinster had built the entire plot around a scientific problem and the gimmick which solved it. The second story is a much more ordinary, good-guys-vs.-bad-guys situation, and the clever idea is used merely as backdrop. However, that issue did contain "Among Thieves," a very satisfying story by Poul Anderson, along with Bertram Chandler with "Drift," and a piece of space-opera by Randall Garrett.

I'd also bought the first British issue of *Galaxy*, undated, but numbered 'Volume 3, No.1', with the

blue cover and massive spaceship on the pad illustrating Willy Ley's article, "Space Travel By 1960?" Not actually a particularly good issue, but it had several short, snappy stories that I liked, and the second issue, the one with the Emsh cover showing "Galaxy's 2nd Birthday," was better. It had "Halo," by Hal Clement, "A Little Oil," by Eric Frank Russell, and "Baby Is Three" by Theodore Sturgeon, (which I found a bit baffling at the time).

I made repeat visits, to this and other shops, and bought more issues of *Galaxy* and *Astounding*. And there were other magazines, too. *If* quickly became a favourite, with those wonderful wrap-around covers by Ken Fagg on the first half-dozen issues, none of which had anything to do with the stories inside. The first one I bought showed a robot on a sort of flying saucer diving into the Sun, and it contained William Tenn's brilliant story "The Custodian." Great stuff!



Science fiction hit me hard. By the end of 1957, I was firmly hooked, every Saturday morning taking the bus into the city to the Rag Market. This was an indoor market in a Victorian redbrick building, with cast-iron pillars, glass roof, and cobblestone floor. There were rows and rows of stalls, and you could buy almost anything – cheap clothing and fabrics (hence the "Rag" in the title), household odds & ends, toys, china, and of course there were piles of second-hand comics, books and magazines.

I used to get there early and wait outside with a growing crowd until 1.00pm when they rang a bell and opened the gates. There was a mad scramble as the crowd surged forward, and in they rushed, some literally running in their eagerness for bargains! And I was in the front row, heading at full speed for the best stalls, firmly convinced that other people were trying to beat me to those precious science fiction magazines!

For the first year or two it was easy, since there was so much around. I'd come away with a pile each week, usually starting to read them on the bus on the way home. I didn't have much money so I had to be a bit choosy, and at first I wouldn't buy magazines containing second- or third- parts of serials, for instance, on the grounds that I didn't want issues that couldn't read right through at a sitting. I wasn't too keen, either, on those older issues of *Astounding*, the larger-sized, 64-page jobs from 1952 and before, with the crudely-painted covers.

(Later, I discovered that what I'd been collecting were only British Reprint Editions {BREs} of *Galaxy* and *Astounding*, stripped-down to 128 rather than 160 pages, shorn of many features like the letter-column, with stories omitted and covers repainted and switched-around to compensate for the 3-month delay in publishing over here. And while the American *ASF* had reverted to digest-size as long ago as 1943, the BRE remained pulp-size and at only 64 pages for another ten years, until 1953. They left a lot out!)

In those early days I also investigated the home-grown British magazines, but wasn't too impressed. They were harder to find, and the stories in *New Worlds* and *Authentic* didn't seem very substantial compared to my American favourites, so I tended to buy issues at random, read them and trade them away the following week. I thought the larger-sized *Nebula* was also a bit anaemic and lacking personality, but I did eventually collect a full run of the 40+ issues.

However, things became more frustrating and difficult as my collection grew more complete. Now I was looking for particular issues. The first four numbers of *Galaxy* were easy, but 5, 6, & 7 were like gold dust, they were nowhere to be found, not in the Rag Market nor in any junk-shop I'd visited. (I realise now that the publishers had probably reduced the print-run after seeing the returns from the first four issues!)

What I was actually doing was playing the statistical odds, hoping that if I looked often enough the missing issues would come to light. But it was a slow business. I started to wonder if there was any other way. Where did the stall-holders obtain their stock? Was there some place I didn't know about, a sort of Magazine Central Warehouse, where they topped-up their supplies? I tried to strike up a conversation with old Lil', my best source, to try and find out where she went between Saturdays, but she only muttered something about "other markets" and I was no wiser. I started to have dreams about finding a shop which had

its walls lined with science fiction magazines (dreams I still have occasionally, to this very day). I was getting desperate!

Of course there were some paperbacks; Pan had done Arthur Clarke's *Prelude to Space* and *Earth-light*, and a few other titles. Panther was just getting started, having taken on this little-known American author called 'Isaac Asimov'. Market-leader was Corgi, with those tiny, green-spined editions. I used to send up for their leaflets and news releases, and eagerly anticipated the day that *The Sands of Mars* came out. I bought it on the way to school and had half-finished it by the time I got home. Corgi followed up with *Expedition To Earth*, and then Russell's *Three to Conquer*. They were doing one book per month, and their back-list mentioned *City and the Stars*, although it was out-of-print. To my elation, however, I found a copy in the window of a particularly decrepit shop, sun-faded but intact. It was absolutely mind-blowing!

And I was also into the public library system, although our local branch library was very strict about letting 'children' into the Adult Section. They colour-coded your card to show that you were under 16, and they wouldn't let you take out an 'adult' book with a junior card. I got around this by getting my mother to register for a card, and used that, but you were still only allowed one fiction book (white card) and one non-fiction title (red card) at a time.

That library wasn't much good, anyway. I did find *Starman Jones* in the children's section (the only Heinlein juvenile to appear in the UK in the fifties), and J.T. McIntosh's *World out of Mind*, a novel which impressed me tremendously at the time, but there was very little else. However, I soon discovered that libraries in other suburbs were much better. In particular, five miles up the road was Yardley & Sheldon, which had two entire shelves full of science fiction anthologies!

'Anthology' was a new concept to me, a sort of magazine in hardcovers, and I went at them furiously. They were British editions of American titles, generally abridged (as I discovered later), and of mixed quality, but I devoured Bleiler & Dikty, Groff Conklin, August Derleth and so on (and wondered why they all seemed to have such funny names). Because I was only allowed to take out one book at a time, I used to hide others until my next visit, concealing them behind some of the gloomy racks of technical volumes which looked as if they hadn't been disturbed for years.

Until one day, shock horror, I found those two shelves had been emptied, cleared-out completely. And I hadn't read more than half of them! Stunned, I asked the woman at the desk what had happened.

"They're out of date," she said severely, "they've been withdrawn from circulation."

"But I wanted to read them," I protested, making no impression on her whatsoever. "If they've been withdrawn, couldn't I buy them?"

"Of course not!" she replied, affronted. "They have to be burnt."



She was only following the rules, of course, and it was not until some years later that public libraries abandoned this system and started to sell-off unwanted stock, something I'd have thought would have been an obvious thing to do from the start. They didn't give you much encouragement, in those days!

However, by this time I'd got stuck into the reader's departments of the magazines. There were no letter columns, of course, but *Astounding* did have Schuyler Miller's excellent book reviews in "The Reference Library," and I used to drool over those American books which were not available in Britain. In particular, I liked the look of the new paperback publisher, Ballantine Books, and their excellent list, titles like *Brain Wave*, *Search the Sky*, and *The Human Angle*.

And so I wrote a letter, addressed to "Ballantine Books, New York" asking for if I could buy their books by post. They replied, bless them, by air-mail with a super fold-out catalogue of science fiction titles, all at 35¢ each. I carefully selected six, which was about all I could afford, added on postage, and calculated that I needed to send \$2.75 in payment. This was about £1-2-0d in old money. How to do it? I went along to the local Post Office, and asked about an International Money Order. They looked doubtful.

"You'll need a Permit," they said, "so fill in this form."

The form wanted all sorts of information about my age, address, occupation, (and for all I remember, shoe size), with an ominous section headed, 'Reason for Requiring Order'. I wrote innocently "to buy science fiction books" and handed it in to the counter.

"Right," they said, "we'll have to send this off to London for permission. You should hear from the Ministry in about two weeks."

This now reads like a case of bureaucracy gone mad. However, the rationale was that after the war, Britain was extremely hard-up and the government wanted to stop money going out of the country. So anyone who wanted to buy something from overseas had to have a jolly good reason. This is why American books couldn't be imported, and magazines like *Galaxy* and *Astounding* had to be reprinted in this country. (Although I never understood why the cover artwork had to be completely repainted!) Apparently "buying science fiction books" was a good enough reason, because my permit form came back, duly signed and stamped, and I took it back to the Post Office, bought my money order and sent it off with great excitement.

Good old Ballantine! They must have felt sorry for this poor kid in England, because they rushed my order by air-mail. A treasure chest of science fiction, all with superb Richard Powers covers. There was *Far And Away* from Anthony Boucher; *Caviar*, by Theodore Sturgeon; *Fallen Star* by James Blish; *Man of Earth* by Algis Budrys, and best of all, two collections from Arthur C. Clarke, *Reach For Tomorrow* and *Tales from the White Hart*. I still have most of them to this day.

However I ground my teeth in frustration at the Doubleday Science Fiction Book Club, which advertised "Take Any Three for a Dollar!" on magazine back-covers, showing huge, hardcover books like the *Foundation* trilogy and *Treasury of Science Fiction*. But in the small print it said "Good for USA and Canada only," and they meant it! Begging letters were to no avail, "Copyright reasons" they replied politely, "preclude us from accepting foreign members." No way for me to get my hands on American hardbacks; or was there?

In "The Reference Library" I'd read about a scheme called 'Pick-A-Book', operated by Martin Greenberg from an address in Hicksville, New York. "Write for free illustrated catalogue," they said, so I did, thoughtfully enclosing some American stamps for

return postage. Good old Marty Greenberg sent a fabulous catalogue, crammed full of wonderful titles from Gnome Press, Fantasy Press, and Avalon. "Any three titles for \$4.00," was the offer, which was just too good to refuse. I selected my three books (*The Seedling Stars*; *Earthman's Burden*; and the Fantasy Press edition of *Deep Space*), applied for a permit, sent off the money order and waited – this time for a couple of months – until the parcel arrived. Success!

But, in all this activity, I'd somehow missed the plot. How on Earth did I fail to notice the existence of science fiction fandom for so long? True, the BREs were pretty well eviscerated; I subsequently found that in the U.S. *Astounding* "The Reference Library" usually consisted of quite a long preamble before the reviews, with quite a few mentions of World Conventions, *SF Times*, and so on. Not so with our reprint editions, where the book review column was obviously looked upon as expendable, boilerplate to be trimmed to size, with almost all references to SF fan activities ruthlessly expunged.

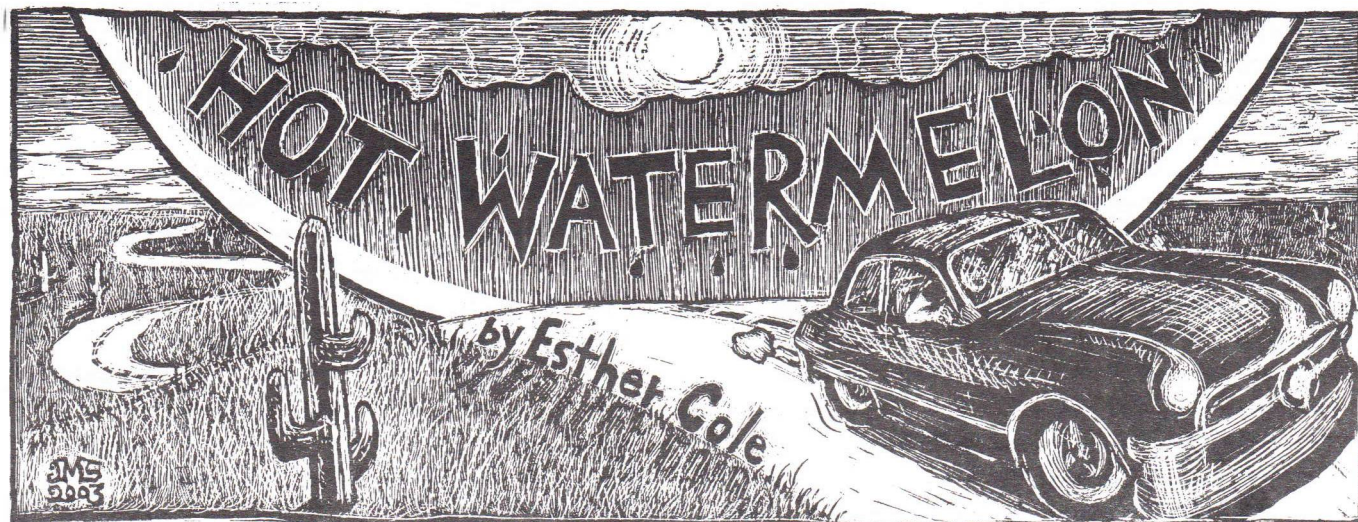
Even so, the British *Nebula* did carry Walt Willis' "Fanorama" column, and I'm pretty sure it would also have run the occasional advertisement for Ken Slater's 'Fantast' dealership. How could I have failed to investigate them? By ignoring *New Worlds* I'd missed reference to the nascent BSFA (begun in 1958), and worst of all, I didn't know about 'Brumcon', which took place in the Imperial Hotel, in Birmingham city centre over Easter weekend, 1959!

Just think of it; while I was hanging around the market stalls, a whole convention was taking place no more than a quarter-mile away. With professional writers, like Ted Tubb, James White and Ken Bulmer, dealers, and more books and magazines than I'd ever seen in my life at that time! This was the con at which Ken Cheslin and Dave Hale got started, and subsequently began their local group in Stourbridge, not too far away from me. I could have been in there with them, in time for Inchmery fandom and *Aporreta*, and the golden years of *Hyphen*, *Oops!* and *Void*.

Instead of messing around with permits and Pick-A-Book, I could have gone straight onto Ken Slater's mailing list. I was ready for fandom, straining at the leash, but just didn't find the right door! It was not until the beginning of 1963 that I came across the famous little pink slip in one of those Rag Market acquisitions, "Are you interested in science fiction?" it began. "Join the Erdington SF Circle."

At last I had made Contact, four years late. ✧

Time now for a short tale of the 1950s about two fans who had already found the road to FIAWOL, in this case a *real* road, from Oakland to New Orleans for the 1951 Worldcon. It takes a true sense of fannish determination to drive 2,000 miles just to attend a convention, and such a trip is an accomplishment in itself. But, as the following article shows, sometimes the most memorable aspects of a convention trip are things that happen along the way.



Les had been reading science fiction magazines since he was about five years old, and had been writing letters to the editors since he was a teenager. When we got married, he added my name to the letters, so Les and Es Cole had some name-recognition among the regular readers.

Then a real science fiction fan came to visit us in Oakland. Lee Jacobs was an interesting young man and no trouble as a house guest. All he did, all day long, was sit in the apartment and read Les' collection of s-f books and magazines. All he ate was macaroni and cheese, he made himself, and he drank chocolate milk. He told us that once he ran out of regular milk for making macaroni and cheese, so he used chocolate milk. He said it wasn't bad!

Lee talked us into publishing a fan magazine, and that gave us a little more name-recognition. Then we joined the local sf club and Les became president and I became secretary, and we were ready to attend our first world science fiction convention in New Orleans.

We drove, stopping at Carlsbad Caverns and picking up another fan en route. Carl Murray was a pen pal we'd never met. He turned out to have a Texas accent as thick and slow as hardening lava. But his wit was lightning swift. The combination was intriguing. (Carl came back to California with us after the convention for a brief vacation. We remained friends, mostly through correspondence, for over 30 years.)

When we reached Louisiana, it seemed like a cheerful state. All the signs ended in a musical note:

Shreveport La, Lafayette La. In Port Charles La, we stopped to eat ice-cold east Texas watermelon, and it was the most delicious, most thirst-quenching, satisfying watermelon I had ever tasted. All the wonderful tastes in all the world had been condensed into that slice of ice-cold melon.

Then we reached New Orleans. September in New Orleans should be abolished. I'd lived in California all my life, in dry heat, and it was incredible to me that weather could be so foul. The daytime temperature was about 90 and the humidity was just as high. In the evening, the temperature dropped about two degrees. Day or night, walking outdoors was like slogging through a sauna. Fortunately, the hotel was air-conditioned, as were the restaurants. And along with the convention, we were interested in sampling the cooking for which New Orleans was so famous.

Our first dinner was at the Court of the Two Sisters. Our food came, it smelled lovely, and tasted fine, but I wasn't hungry. Next night, we again went to a recommended restaurant, and again the food was good and again, I sat looking at it dreaming of watermelon. I thought maybe the heat was getting to me.

The science fiction convention took most of our attention. There was a small group of us from Berkeley, and we were trying to get the next convention to San Francisco. Most of the fans lived in the eastern part of the country and they preferred to keep the conventions in that area. Traveling to the West Coast would be long and costly. In those days, convention registration was about one dollar, and no one had

much money for travel or hotels. We were curious about other fans we knew through their fan magazines, and we were curious about some of the writers we read. A big treat was to meet Robert Bloch, who would eventually write *Psycho*. Bob had started a rumor that Les and Es were 15-year-old twin brothers. We thought that very funny. Les and I dressed alike in jeans and t-shirts, but we didn't look alike. It didn't take much to amuse us in those days.

At the end of the long weekend, we headed home via a different route: north to Missouri and then west. As soon as we were on the road again, I started craving watermelon. It was early September, and the melon season should still be around. We kept our eyes alert for any roadside stands.



At last, in Arkansas, we spotted a likely prospect. Les screeched to a halt and we ran to the stand. We couldn't spot any watermelon. The farmer, seeing how anxious Les and I were, said he might be able to help us. He took Les out back, and said, "How badly do you want that melon? I got some hot watermelon yonder in that shed." We didn't know if he meant the temperature was hot, or if the fruit had been stolen.

But it was really cold melon I craved, so sadly we returned to the car and continued.

For more than 2,000 miles, we chased the elusive ice-cold watermelon. We found stands that had been closed the day before we arrived. We found stores that had sold out 30 minutes before. There seemed to be a conspiracy to keep me from satisfying my melon thirst.

At long last, when we had finally reached California, very near to Sacramento, we spotted the sign we wanted: "Ice-Cold Watermelon."

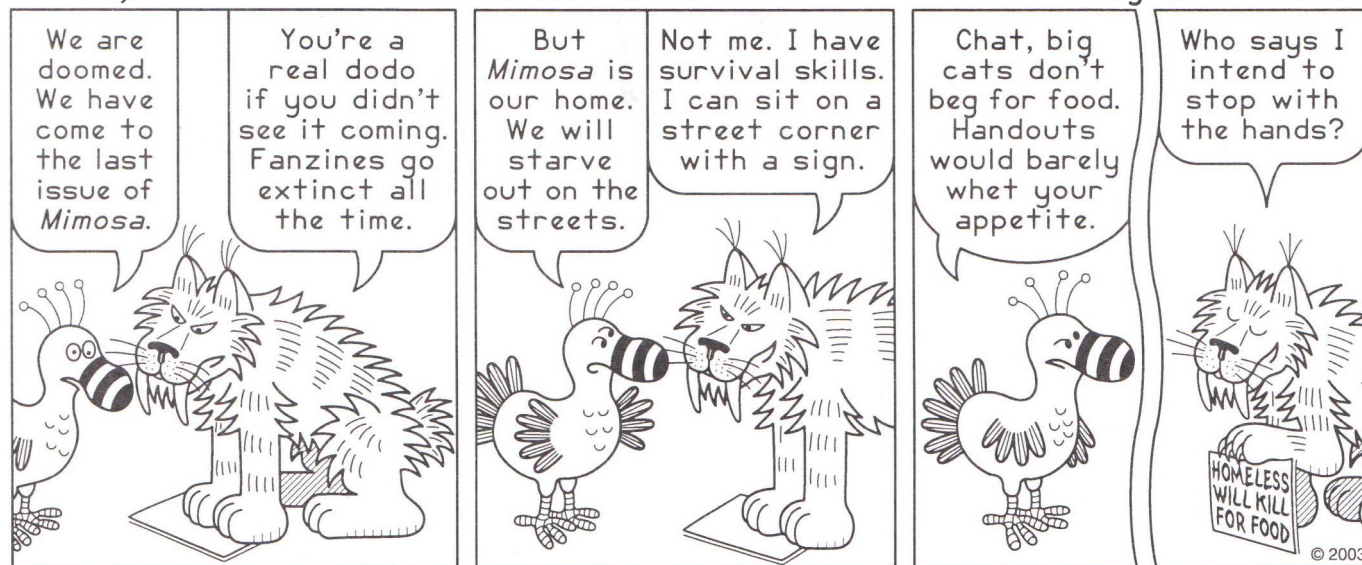
We pulled into the yard and gave our orders. With a flourish, Les presented me with a large slice of beautiful red watermelon and stood back waiting for ecstasy to pour out of me. I looked at the watermelon, then looked at the other displayed fruit. I turned to Les and said, "I want some nectarines." In that instance, Les *knew* I was pregnant. There was no need for a rabbit test. The nectarine test told the whole story. What does all this have to do with science fiction? Les used the saga of the melon chase in "Unborn of Earth," his first published story, and the beginning of his professional writing career.

Les went on to write and publish dozens more science fiction and crime stories. We went on to another world sf convention in Chicago, and to produce one in San Francisco in 1954. We even went on to produce another boy.

But I've never again found that magic taste of west-Texas watermelon. ✧

CHAT, the Last Fannish Ghod

By TEDDY HARVIA



☛ We stay in the 1950s, sort of, for a detective story of true fan historical significance. One of the most zealous fans ever to achieve the ideal of FIAWOL was the legendary Indiana fan Claude Degler. He was truly unique, to the point where it's not easily possible to separate reality from legend in the accounts that have been written about him over the years. The Degler mythos was enhanced by his abrupt departure from fandom in 1951, almost as if he were the fan equivalent of Ambrose Bierce. And now, more than fifty years later, a determined effort has been made to find out exactly what became of him. Here's the results...



LOOKING FOR DEGLER

By David B. Williams

I didn't know what to do. Rich had invited me to contribute something to *Mimosa* 30, and I desperately wanted to be part of this historic issue, but my trove of fannish lore is quite limited. Over the past 40 years and more, my relationship to fandom has been essentially passive. I haven't hobnobbed with any legendary fans of yore or participated in any historic firsts.

Oh sure, there was the time in the early 1970s when I was the guest speaker at a magazine writers' group in New York, and during dinner I found myself seated across the table from Mort Weisinger. But the rest of the table was full of mundanes who wanted to cultivate me as a paying editor, so it wasn't a suitable moment to chat about the era when fans lived in caves, dressed in animal skins, and duplicated their fanzines on hectographs. After the program I looked for Mort, but he was gone. No story there.

And yes, I did attend the very first Windycon in Chicago. But I just walked over to the host hotel from my office during the noon hour. I recall admiring the Schoenherr illos for one of the *Dune* serials in *Analog*. When I looked up, Gene Wolfe was standing beside me. I complimented him on the narrative resonance in "The Fifth Head of Cerberus." Then I went back to the office. Could I spin a *Mimosa* essay out of scraps like this? Not hardly.

Then one gloomy, drizzly Indiana afternoon, the propeller on my beanie started spinning. I knew what I could do. Lacking old fannish experiences to write about, I could create *new* fannish experiences to write about. I could go looking for Degler.

Indiana fandom has produced a number of notables. Catherine (C. L.) Moore was corresponding

with Lovecraft and selling to *Weird Tales* while working as a bank clerk in Indianapolis in the 1930s. Oscar, an articulated skeleton who served as mascot of the fan group in Decker, Indiana, was seated on the stage at Chicon I. Ted Dikty and Marty Greenberg were active in the Fort Wayne fan group around 1940. The Coulsons published their Hugo-winning fanzine *Yandro* for decades. Ray Beam's collection of SF pulps was featured in a statewide public television program. George Willick makes aging pros uneasy with his "gone but not forgotten" web site.

But towering above them all is the figure of Claude Degler. The theme of this issue is "fandom as a way of life," and no one believed in fandom more than Degler, to his ultimate rue. Harry Warner Jr. has told the story well in *All Our Yesterdays*, and Dal Coger provided some personal recollections in *Mimosa* 5 (reprinted in *M28*).

Degler first appeared at Chicon I in 1940, hailing from New Castle, Indiana. Initially, he had every prospect of achieving conventional prominence as an actifan. In 1941, he began publishing the fanzine *Infinite* in collaboration with fellow Hoosier fan Leonard Marlowe. At the second Michicon in 1942, fans gave one-minute speeches at the opening session, with Degler and Walt Liebscher sharing honors as the best orators. Ted Dikty appointed Degler chairman of the Indiana Fantasy Association when Dikty left fandom.

Hitchhiking across the continent, Degler became a Traveling Giant, showing up on fans' doorsteps from L.A. to New York. No other fan of that era traveled as widely or visited so many other fans in their home territories. But here was the beginning of Degler's

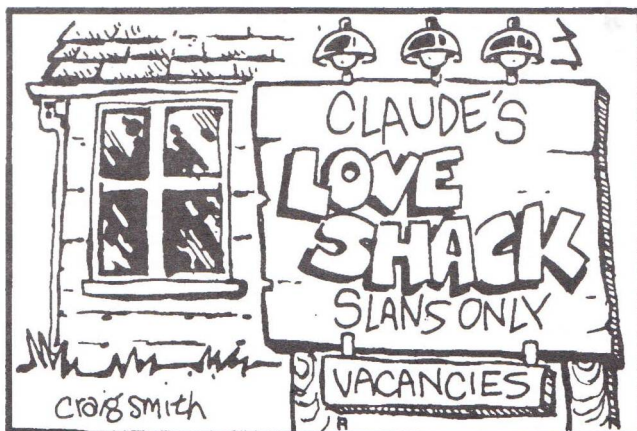
woe, because many fans were leery of indigents showing up on their doorsteps, uninvited and imposing on the nascent fan tradition of hospitality. Annoyed fans began dealing with Degler like a stray dog – refusing to pat him on the head or feed him, for fear he wouldn't leave.

While on the road, Degler was the epitome of fan poverty. Fans today can't imagine the threadbare existence of many fans of the 1930s and early '40s, riding the boxcars to Worldcons or rummaging through the trash behind hotels to recover copies of *Amazing Stories* discarded by departing patrons. There's a reason the Futurians moved every few months – they couldn't pay the rent. There's a reason fans were greyhound-thin in those days – food cost money.

But Degler outdid them all. Living on the road, he was unkempt and often unwashed. One legend has Degler surviving a Worldcon on an exclusive diet of grape jelly. The Ashleys in Battle Creek were incensed by the way he gobbled up the grub they prepared for Michicon guests, when wartime rationing made feeding the multitudes particularly difficult.

Degler's second mistake was seizing upon various ideas floating around fandom and extrapolating them into grandiose schemes of Nietzschean transfiguration. It was generally believed, with some support from psychological tests, that fans were more intelligent than the mundane population. Degler proclaiming that fans represented a new strain of mankind, Cosmic Man, a superior mutation (fans are Slans).

The Battle Creek fan group had played with the idea of creating a fan housing development with communal benefits. Degler proposed the creation of a Utopian fan community in the Ozarks (fans are Shakers?).



Fandom was to be united and Cosmic Consciousness achieved through Degler's all-encompassing

organization, the Cosmic Circle. Everywhere he went, Degler designated the fans he met as officers of non-existent organizations, all of which were branches of the Cosmic Circle. In its fullness, the Cosmic Circle claimed 47 regional, state, and local affiliates. The CC organizational chart would have shamed the new U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Many fans of the day were impecunious, and many neos went overboard in their fannish enthusiasms. But there was something about Degler's combination of hobo shabbiness, fanciful tales of adventures on the road, and delusions of grandeur that provoked many fans to mockery and some to full-blown hostility.

But Degler wasn't the complete derelict of repute. He worked in Indianapolis for several months to grubstake his second national tour. He paid \$10 for a life membership in LASFS and helped to pay the clubhouse rent. At least one fan with the courage to loan him money dropped a jaw when Degler repaid the loan without being asked.

Degler also realized when he had gone too far, which suggests that he wasn't simply a mental case (though he may have been that too, according to Jack Speer's investigations around New Castle). Both Bob Tucker and Harry Warner have testified that Degler enjoyed antagonizing his enemies and fanning the flames with tit-for-tat counterattacks in the pages of his CC fanzines. But in 1944, perhaps in reaction to Speer's revelations, Degler resigned from the Cosmic Circle, apologized to the fans he had attacked, and retracted his recent writings. Once again on the road, he was last seen in August of that year by Raymond Washington in Florida, after which he vanished from fandom.

At least, he vanished as "Claude Degler." In 1947 he arrived in Philadelphia two months ahead of the Worldcon, attended PSFS meetings under the name John Chrisman, and impressed local fans with his quiet demeanor. His true identity wasn't revealed until Tucker recognized him at Philcon. He was in New York City, using the name John York, in 1949. The next year he was using his own name, issuing a list of SF books and magazines for sale from New Castle and manning a huckster table at the Portland Worldcon. In 1951 he was in California, sometimes introducing himself by another of his *noms-de-fanac*, Don Rogers. After that, there were no confirmed sightings for 30 years.

Then, in one of the most astonishing moments of Tucker's life, Degler reappeared here in Indianapolis

in 1981 over the 4th of July weekend at the first In-ConJunction. Tucker was hurrying across the hotel foyer from one panel assignment to another. The greeting came from behind him. "Hey, Tucker, how are ya?" After 35 years, he recognized the distinctive, nasal Hoosier drawl before he looked around.

Tucker greeted Degler affably. He explained that he was on a panel starting immediately, but he would be glad to talk and asked Degler to meet him afterward. Tucker fulfilled his panelist duties and returned to the lobby, but Degler was gone.

This incident demonstrates that Degler was living in the Indianapolis area in 1981. Apparently, he saw Tucker interviewed on local television and stopped by the hotel to see if anyone remembered him (!). After the con, Tucker asked Ray Beam to try to locate Degler, but Ray was unsuccessful.

Twenty years later, the trail was cold. The first thing I did was check the phone book, finding seven Deglers but no Claude in the metro area. Oh well, I didn't think it was going to be that easy! Then I queried the local fan community. No one still active was aware of the 1981 apparition or any contact before or after that event.

Then I turned to the modern standby, the World Wide Web. The Social Security Death Index provided encouraging news – no Claude Degler born in the 20th century was listed (current to November 2001), so Degler was either still alive or never got a Social Security number. A query left on the Degler message board at Ancestry.com drew no responses, so the genealogists of the Degler family tree seem to be unaware of this particular twig. I poked around on a number of other web search services such as the InfoSpace People Finder, Online Detective, etc. Accessible data revealed no Claude Degler and they wanted fees for deeper searches or software downloads, which I wasn't willing to pay for a crapshoot.

Oh well. One of the local fans had suggested that I consult the City Directory, purportedly based on a door-to-door canvas and listing all the adult residents of each domicile, both homeowners and roomers. I trekked down to the main library and checked the Degler listings in each of the huge annual volumes. No Claude in the 2001 or 1981 editions, so he wasn't a tabulated resident of Indianapolis or the surrounding Marion County now or then. Since he was certainly in the area in 1981, he had evaded enumeration or lived in the suburban areas beyond Marion County.

Then I made a curious discovery. I checked earlier volumes in case he had resided within the city in

prior decades. There was no listing for Claude Degler. But beginning in 1949, a Doris Degler was listed as a roomer in the home of Virgil and Alta Smith, and her name was followed by the parenthetical information "(widow of Claude)." The listing remained the same until 1968, when the widow datum was dropped and the additional information "housekeeper" added. The listing ended in 1973, presumably when Doris died or moved away.

What was going on here? The Social Security Death Index lists two Claude Deglers born before 1900 and now deceased, one in Washington, one in Wisconsin. What are the chances that the widow of one of these men would relocate to Indianapolis, the home territory of *our* Claude Degler? Or did our Claude get married between 1944 and 1947, then fake his death so as to produce a widow by 1949? Or did the couple split up, with Doris assuming the guise of a widow to avoid the stigma attached in those days to divorce or abandonment? Or was her Claude someone else entirely, someone who never got a Social Security number and so avoided the Death Index? Another mystery.

Time was running out and the *Mimosa* deadline looming, so yesterday I took a day off work and drove the 60 miles to New Castle. I had one thin clue to pursue. In *All Our Yesterdays*, Harry Warner mentioned that Degler had left Los Angeles in 1951, saying that his mother had died. This would be a matter of public record. A death notice in the local newspaper ought to include an address, names of other family members, something tangible. Jack Speer had identified one Vergie Degler as owner of a post office box that Claude had used, presumably his mother.

I found the New Castle library, my steps dragging at the prospect of scrolling through each microfilmed issue of the local paper for the whole year, looking for that one entry. But to my utter joy, I discovered that some benefactor of mankind had prepared a card catalog of all deaths in New Castle for the past century and more. It was the work of a moment to pull out the "D" drawer, riffle through the cards to Degler, and lo, there it was: "Degler, Vergie, *The News Republican*, Nov. 1, 1950, p. 1." But wait. The preceding card was for "Degler, Robert" with the same reference information. Vergie and a husband or son, killed together in a highway crash? A fire? A gas leak?

It was worse than I imagined, but I had to wait an hour to learn the awful facts because someone else was using the only microfilm viewer. I went to lunch at Wendy's, where I started reading *Zombies of the*

Gene Pool by Sharyn McCrumb (Ballantine 1993). I picked up a copy on eBay because one of the local fans told me that Degler was mentioned in it (he was, page 28), and it had arrived coincidentally that morning. Back at the library I loaded the 1950 reel of *The News Republican* into the viewer, spun it forward to November 1, and discovered why the deaths of Vergie and Robert Degler were reported together on page 1. The lead headline read: "Police Probe Probable Murder-Suicide Here."

On the previous morning J.W. Allen, father of Mrs. Degler, had discovered the body of 26-year-old grandson Robert at the family residence. In Robert's pocket was a note stating that he had shot and killed his mother on October 20 and buried her in the unfinished basement of another family home three miles outside town. Mrs. Degler's body had been exhumed, and the state police were performing handwriting analysis to ascertain whether the note was in Robert's handwriting. "Another brother, Claude Degler, alleged to have been a former patient at Easthaven [mental health facility] in Richmond was also being sought by police Tuesday afternoon."

On November 10, another headline announced: "Degler Case Now Closed. Absolve Brother Claude Of Any Part In It." Robert's handwriting had been authenticated, and local authorities had learned from the Los Angeles police that Claude had registered at a hotel there on September 16 and had been in the area ever since. The L.A. police also reported that Robert had registered at the same hotel for one night on October 26. Between the murder on October 20 and his suicide on October 31, he had traveled 2,000 miles to Los Angeles, spent one day with his brother, and then returned to New Castle.

The police were at a loss regarding a motive, but it seems to have involved a combination of depression, despair, and powerful emotional relationships. Robert's note said: "I am so worried and love mother so much and she is so worried and nervous and everything. It seems so helpless. I was almost out of my mind. I shot and killed mother Oct. 20 and in blind fear buried her in the basement of our country place. I thought about suicide then but was so shocked and scared. Maybe this is the best for everyone. May the Lord have mercy."

Frankly, I wish I hadn't discovered this information. Rather, I wish I could have reported that I succeeded in tracking Degler and found him living in serene retirement in the Ozarks on the proposed site of Cosmic Camp, where fans with cosmic minds were

invited to bring their womenfolk and produce the coming generation of Cosmen. Alas, with *Mimosa's* deadline imminent, I had to call a halt. I intend to keep looking, but this morning I closed this phase of the quest at the Holiday Inn at 21st Street and Shadeland Avenue. I paused in the foyer outside the function rooms, where the 1981 encounter between Degler and Tucker had occurred. There is no plaque on the wall, nothing to commemorate this fanhistorical event. After a moment I heaved a sigh and left. For now, Claude Degler will have to remain a legend.

But why did such an unprepossessing figure become a legend? First, I think, because of his ubiquity. Degler met many fans on his travels, and those who hadn't met him could nervously anticipate doing so, at any moment and without warning. (Degler had copied Julius Unger's mailing list of 700 fans and knew where everyone lived. Both Tucker and Warner have described Degler's surprise appearances at their doors and the diplomatic gymnastics they performed to remain cordial without actually admitting him into their homes.)

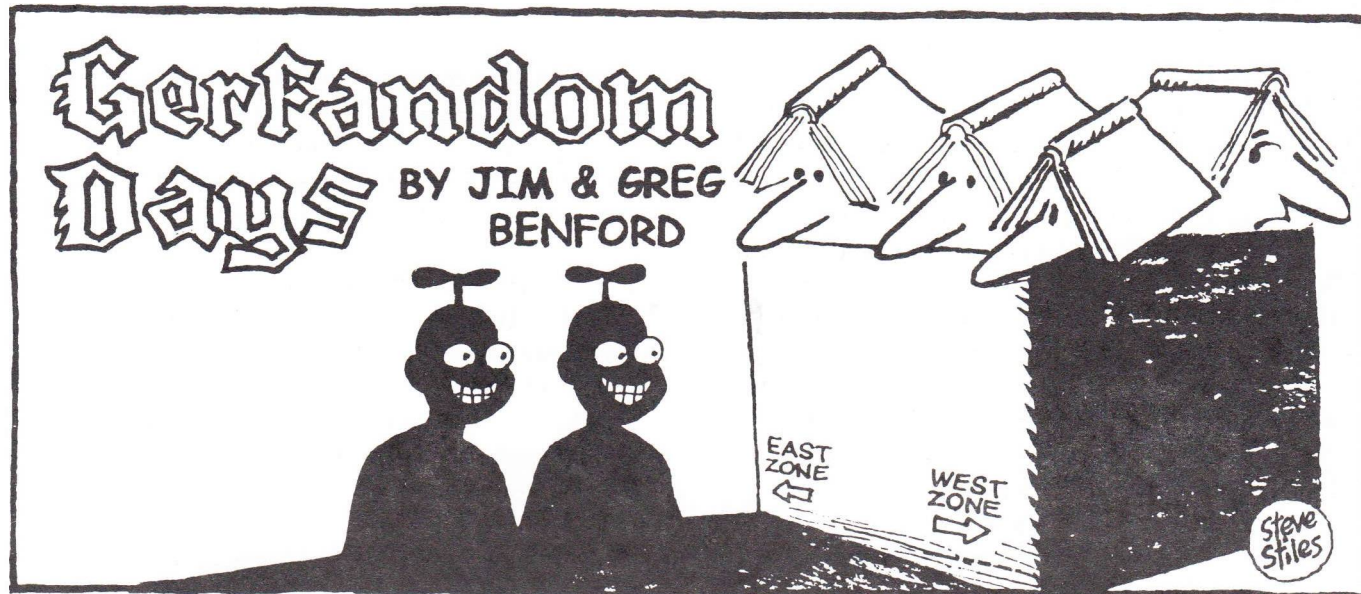
Then there was the contrast between grubby reality and Degler's self-image. In decrying his expulsion from the LASFS, he described himself as "the director of the Planet Fan Federation, president of the Indiana Fantasy Association, and representative of the Dixie Fan Federation, on tour of fandom as an ambassador in Los Angeles." He coined an abiding fannish catchphrase when he suggested that this outrageous act might "plunge all fandom into [a] war." Such pretentiousness plunged all fandom into mirth.

And finally, Degler's career must have shaken the faith of fans in the validity of fandom as a way of life. Degler was a total fan. On a metaphysical level, Degler cast a harsh spotlight on the Manichean duality of FIAWOL and FIJAGH, the eternal battle between Darkness and Light.

Although a common object of derision, Degler wasn't scorned by all. Wollheim deprecated Degler's excesses but admitted that he basically agreed with every one of Degler's ideas. Ackerman defended him because of his total dedication to fandom. Though wishing Degler had bathed more often, Dal Coger summed up his feelings about this legendary figure in *Mimosa*: "The fact is, I sort of liked Claude. He had a dream and sacrificed everything for it.... Fandom would be a poorer place without such characters."

Claude Degler believed that fandom is a way of life. In his enthusiasm, he discovered too late that sometimes, life sucks. ☼

The 1950s has always been the most fascinating era of fandom for us – it was truly a Golden Age, when conventions were of manageable size, international ties were growing, and subfandoms hadn't yet fractured away. It was also a time of FIAWOL, when fans lived for the next issues of *Hyphen*, *Quandry*, and *Shaggy*, theorized about "Who sawed Courtney's boat?", were crogged by the non-existence of Joan W. Carr and Carl Brandon, and campaigned for "South Gate in '58." Back then, many of today's writers and scientists were fans who had yet to sell a single word of fiction or conduct a single thought experiment. The next article is a remembrance from that era, as well as a window onto a fandom that even today, here in North America, we hear little about, by two fans who have gone on to much bigger and brighter things.



Jim

I have looked back at my collection of the early *Void*, produced almost 50 years ago when we were young and the world was new. There was a great future out there. I look back upon these early manifestations, our first organized publications. Thinking about 'Gerfandom', the term now obsolete, I can't help thinking of it as our early origins, early selves.

We came to Germany in 1955 and found it a forbidding land. We produced issues of *Void* using first hectograph and later a mimeo. It was a daunting time; there were few fans in Europe and we, having just come from the U.S., carried a basic fannish viewpoint, which was alien to the serious SF viewpoint point of the Europeans. We had produced a carbon-copied zine, *Vacuum*, at age 13 while still in Atlanta, but the title seemed not quite right. The issues of *Void* that we produced as mature 14-year-olds were in the beginning composed entirely of reviews, in comments written entirely by the two of us. (On rereading them, they are better now than they seemed at the time.) In that time, there was a substantial fandom in the U.S. and a burgeoning U.K. fandom. But on the Continent, all was essentially dark in fannish terms. You have to remember that the Cold War had succeeded the collapse of European prosperity during WWII and that

living was quite austere.

We began *Void* and quickly obtained lots of articles from British fans like Ron Bennett, Archie Mercer, Walt Willis, Eric Bentcliffe and John Berry. We quickly got responses from American fans Terry Carr, Dick Ellington, Dick Geis, Joe Gibson. And then there were the continentals Julian Parr, Lars Helander, Jan Jansen. The British artists helped – Arthur Thomson, Eddie Jones, Terry Jeeves. Julian Parr, who was with the British Foreign Service, was a steady contributor of reviews of European prozines.

We adopted an early European orientation based on the models of fannish fandom from stateside. It was a unique experience. Having absorbed fannish attitudes in the U.S. just before we left, we communicated them into Europe. This gave us a basically iconoclastic view of the somewhat insufferable seriousness of the early German fans such as Walt Ernting and Anne Steul. (Germany's leading SF writers were producing 1930s style space opera epitomized by Perry Rhodan – like Doc Smith without the style.)

A fine example of our approach occurs in *Void* 6 in Greg's "Deutsch Derogation." The derogation was a form invented by Boyd Raeburn in his legendary fanzine *A Bas*. It's a marvelous method of sending up people, using their own words, and should be reintro-

duced to fandom. As Greg said at the introduction, “we will show all of you the real atmosphere of goodwill in which Gerfandom works and so you might see the real cooperation we have here.” Of course the dialogue among various participants, some quoted from their works, some made up, shows them to be all self-centered, egocentric, and short sighted. A bit surprising, then, that German fans were speaking to us after that.

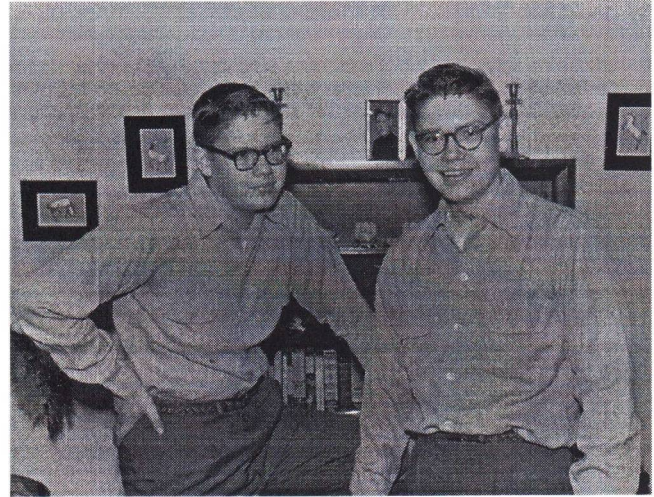
As usual, the underlying tension was between the serious forward-looking and the iconoclastic humorous fans. The sercons were imbued with the feeling that the future was accessible, but only to serious folks. This is a worldview now largely extinct. The alternative view, which we held, was that everything was for fun, transient and up for grabs – the basic fanish attitude. In all the *Voids*, this iconoclastic attitude really comes out. I think that the early *Voids* encapsulated an attitude in isolation on the continent that was taken up and carried on by those later to be co-editors of *Void*. [One odd feature of this attitude: fannish fans claimed to be a bit above reading SF, leaving it to the serious types. But we really *did* read quite a lot, and cared about it. We were Heinlein fans and thought the future would belong to those who prepared for it. And that’s exactly what we did later in life.]

I remember those years in that German house, maintaining paper contact with like-minded fans thousands of miles away. We used hecto, then a locally-bought flatbed mimeo, then a Sears Roebuck rotary that had been mail-ordered from the USA. Fandom and science fiction formed for us a lifeline and focused our ideas of the world. The early *Void* was essential to our development and a lot of fun. We learned many skills in producing something on schedule. Later, I would use those skills to produce proposals and reports in the R&D industry. Compared to fanzines, that was easy. In fact, it had a real impact on my career. Being able to integrate a collection of documents into a coherent whole, proposals, final reports, etc., was one cause of my rapid advancement in research.

Those early days have far more influence than we realized at the time. After graduate school, Greg and I undertook our separate careers. I worked in R&D and Greg went on to become a professor. In recent years, we’ve begun to work together again and are now working on all sorts of fascinating things: devising a new form of aero/spacecraft, figuring out what sort of beacons advanced civilizations could make, doing

flight experiments using beam-driven sails and planning to use beams from Earth hitting spacecraft in orbit to propel them.

I wonder what our earlier selves would have thought of this now-real future? It would’ve seemed quite fantastic, and I think those earlier selves would be quite pleased with what we have become.



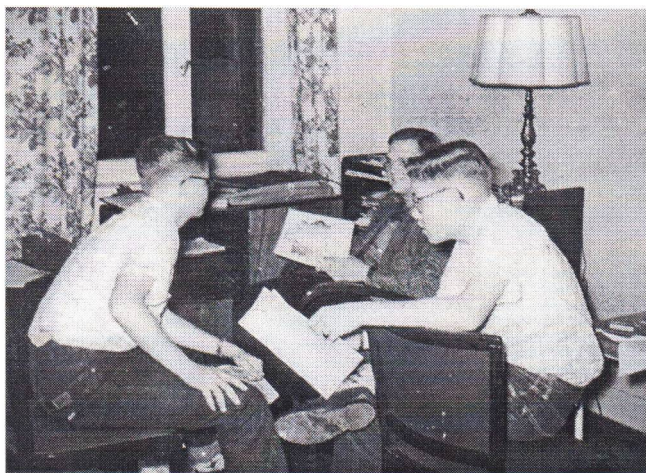
Greg and Jim in 1957

Greg

Hell, we even still belong to an APA.

And what became of all those figures? Julian Parr is retired, still living in Germany. The early SF pros have left the scene. Jan Jansen immigrated to the U.S. and vanished from fandom. Walter Ernsting, editor of the first German SF magazine, had come from a dramatic background – a soldier captured at Stalingrad, worked in a Gulag camp for five years, then repatriated. All that, and within a few years he was editing SF! Anne Steul, energetic and vastly overweight, kept active in fandom, even visiting a UK convention. (Prompting a *Hyphen* bacquote, “She Annesteuled herself in the kitchen.”) She died several decades ago.





Greg and Jim with Ellis Mills in 1956

That era still lives in Gerfandom history. Occasionally a German-language fanzine comes in the mail, sometimes with pictures from that era. Apparently Ellis Mills, the Air Force sergeant who dabbled in fandom, died in the 1990s. The other American who flashed briefly across the fannish horizon was Mike Gates, who was in high school with us and caught the bug. He even published one issue of a fanzine, using the name I gave him, *Motley*. Gates was neurotic, high-energy, and ate incessantly. He came over to our house every day to “fan” (he insisted it was a verb). This led to another *Hyphen* bacquote, “We introduced him to fandom and he came over and ate all the crabapples off our tree.” The son of a general, whereas our father was a mere colonel (but a real combat officer, World War II and Korea, which mattered a lot to us), Gates always tried to pull rank in his roundabout way, and let everybody know that he was going to rise fast in the Army when he got the chance. About five years later he was arrested for impersonating an officer, complete with an accurate uniform. We never heard from him again.

I carried away from the Gerfandom days an appreciation for the subtleties of writing, for craft and setting scenes. I learned that I *really liked* writing – a skill that led to my taking all my required university English courses by exam; just write an essay and collect the credit.

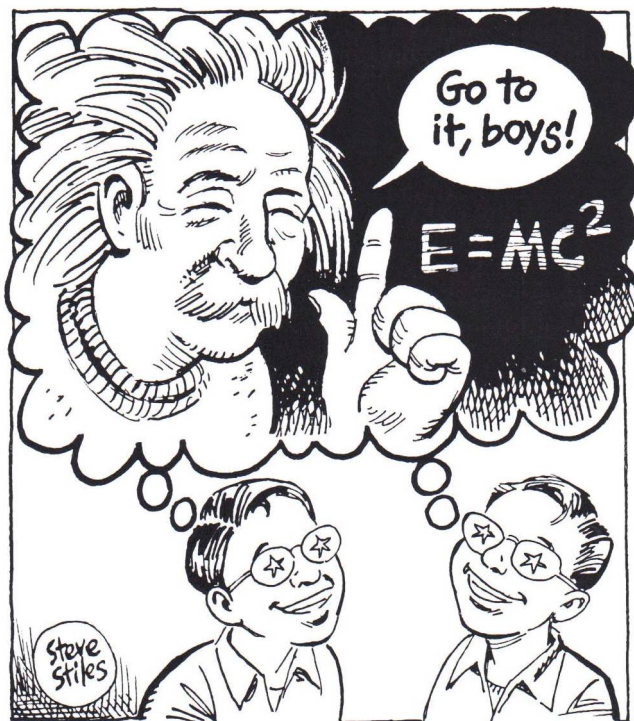
Dad’s next assignment was commander of the National Guard, based in Dallas, and we approached Dallas fandom in the same spirit, satirizing classic fuggheads like Rich Koogle. By this time we had become Smartass R Us, and must’ve been unbearable to the more sober Texas fans. Mercifully, they looked the other way. Tom Reamy I remember for his saintly reserve. I never suspected that he would become a

major fantasy writer. By that time I was thinking of pursuing writing as a profession. I went to my father and said, “Dad, I know the military is a good, solid career, but I want to grow up and become a science fiction writer.”

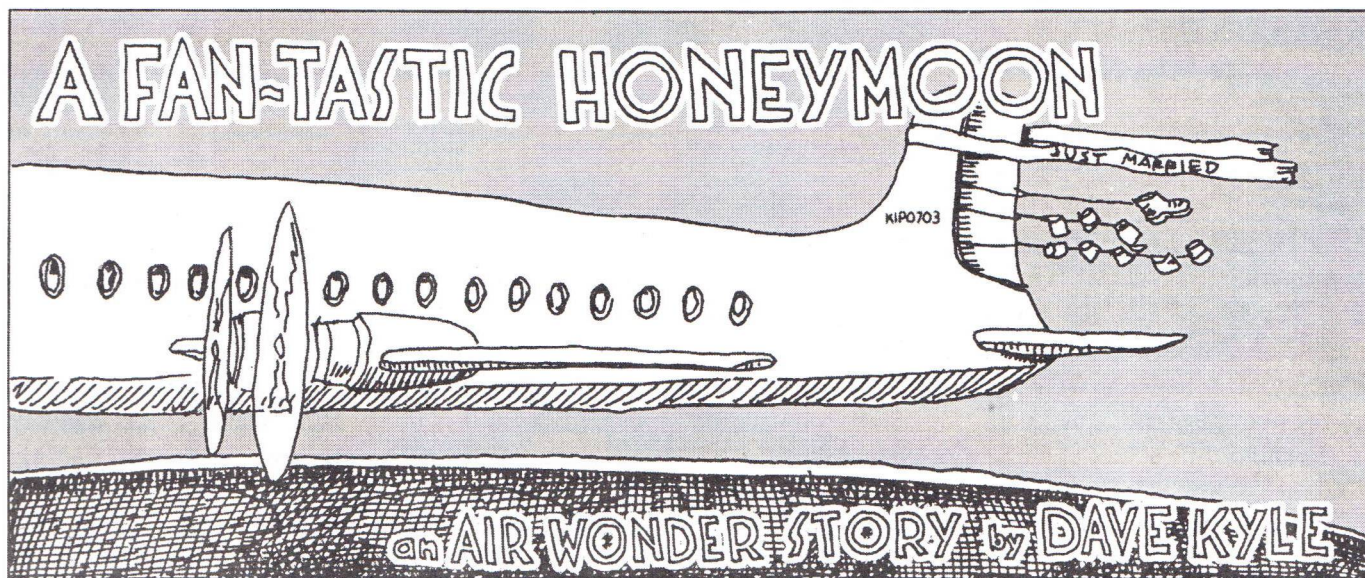
He shook his head sadly and replied, “Sorry, son, but you can’t do both.” Maybe he was right; I still haven’t really grown up, and that helps while writing fiction. Shortly after that, I read Laura Fermi’s *Atoms in the Family*, the biography of her famous physicist husband Enrico, and that changed my life. I saw that you could do science and have a hell of a lot of pure creative fun. It was certainly a lot easier to aim for than being the captain of a spaceship.

Still, Dallas fans were fun, and we helped with the first con in Texas, in Dallas 1958. (Having helped run the first German con in Wetzlar in 1956. This has got to be the most drastic transition in con-giving annals. We’d learned, though – and never worked on cons again.)

We returned to the U.S. in October 1957. On board the *America*, a classy ship, I was enjoying morning soup served on deck when the morning’s ship newspaper came by. Big headlines about Sputnik’s launch. I recall gasping and running down the deck to find Jim. That marked the end of an era. For us, the electrifying news brought the dawning knowledge that we could have careers in science, that the future was opening in a way SF had foreseen. ☼



One of the highlights of 1950s fandom was the first non-North American worldcon, the 1957 Loncon. It was probably the most fannish and informal worldcon to that date, with the presence of about 70 North Americans creating the first-ever mass meeting of fans from the Old World and the New World. Slightly more than 55 of those North Americans came over on a special charter flight, an epic adventure for those who participated. And it was an even more epic adventure for the coordinator of the whole affair, as the following article describes.



Taking 53 other people on one's sf fannish honeymoon is Amazing. Bringing along the mother and father of the groom is Astounding. And having a worldcon as the destination is a Wonder – actually an Air Wonder Story because a chartered airplane was involved.

This article will be an abbreviated history about what happened to me and my bride and all those people on the famous overseas 1957 Fan Flight. I think fandom ought to honor their pioneering pilgrimage and to know the names of those who completely filled the seats in the four-prop DC-4 Skymaster.

It all began in February 1956, while I was Chairman of the upcoming 1956 Newyorcon and pretty fanne Ruth Landis was con Secretary. I had made a promise then that if the 15th World Science Fiction Convention site were voted for London for 1957, I would make arrangements for a trans-oceanic air flight for the greatest number of fans.

London did win, and the London Trip Fund swung into high gear, handled by Ruth and me. Ours was a combination sure to work, because by then we had gotten engaged. So Ruth bore the brunt of the administration in Manhattan while I was 350 miles away establishing a radio station in upstate New York. I went to the city as frequently as possible for two important reasons, the LTF and, most certainly, to see my sweetheart.

There were many ups and downs during the year and a half in the complicated process of accomplishing this mission. My first attempt resulted in a remarkable bargain of a \$130 one-way fare to London (this assumed fans would arrange for their own way back at whatever time they were ready to come home). But it turned out that most of the fans who were planning to go on the trip actually *wanted* a round trip fare. That came in at \$285, based on availability of planes (and there were to be no complimentary seats, not even for Ruth and me). So we set September 2nd for departure and September 20th for return, as the convention was scheduled for September 7, 8, and 9. The deadline for reservations was April 30th, but June 30th was the moment of truth when cancellation of the flight might happen if we didn't have enough confirmed (and paid) reservations, and all monies would then have to be returned.

The biggest challenge developed in late April. Ruth phoned me that Pan American Airways couldn't furnish the west-bound flight. I immediately flew to the city for a three day attempt to solve the problem. Pan Am was dropped in favor of the Royal Dutch Airlines, KLM. The KLM Charter Director described my task as "virtually impossible," but we worked hard and eventually obtained a two-way trip under the original budget. I crossed my fingers and signed an agreement stating that "I may be held personally lia-

ble for default of the contract” and “I will make arrangements personally for return passage insurance.” I was greatly encouraged to know that everyone pledged to go was enthusiastic and optimistic.

It was that crucial June 30th cancellation date which now suddenly had me frantic. Last minute commitments by individuals were bouncing around like crazy. In May, one drop-out was replaced by getting my brother Arthur to sign up. Then came the really disappointing news that Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, the famous husband and wife authors, couldn't go because of a Hollywood script assignment. What to do at this last minute? Increase the fare? Or cancel? The solution was in convincing my mother and father that they should become convention members and make the trip. My parents were going on my honeymoon!

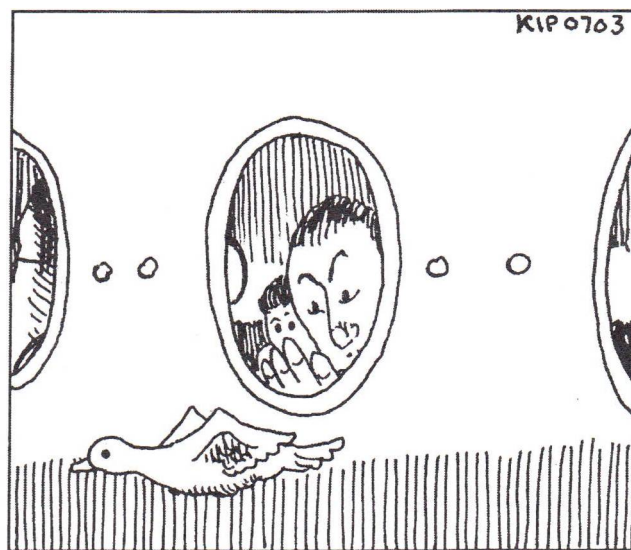
Finally, the passenger list was considered settled. And then it was time for the next step, the biggest one of all – marriage for Ruth E. Landis and David A. Kyle.

On August 31st, in the chapel of The Little Church Around the Corner in midtown Manhattan, the Kyle nuptials were performed. I'd originally intended that Dick Wilson was to be Best Man. Years earlier I was his Best Man when he'd wed Doris “Döe” Baumgardt (aka Leslie Perri). However, my brother, the last minute trip substitute, was in town with my parents for the London trip so he became best man, and Dick served as an usher. (Afterwards, Dick lent me his Volkswagen to whisk Ruth away for our wedding night and I ran out of gas on the Palisades Interstate Parkway. I struggled back with a gas can only to learn the next day from Dick that there was a reserve tank that could be used by simply flipping a hidden switch.) With flight departure only days away, a few of the con-bound travelers attended our simple wedding ceremony and the reception which followed. The presence of Forrest J Ackerman has to be specifically mentioned, as it was he who maintained that ‘KLM’ really meant ‘Kyle-Landis-Marriage’.

There were 55-and-a-fraction fans who boarded the plane at New York's Idlewild International Airport two days later (Harry Harrison and Joan had brought their infant son Todd). We each carried a small, bright blue, canvas carrying bag with the letters KLM stenciled boldly in white. We were bound together then forever friend and foe. (“Foe?” Yes, there were two of them, but that's another long, long agonizing story. What would fandom have been in those

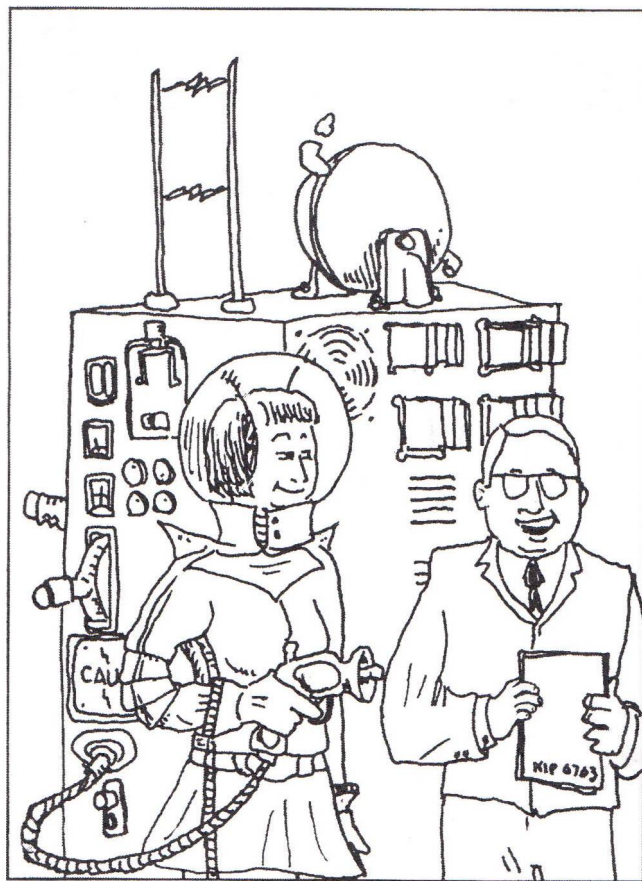
turbulent days without some kind of spectacular fan feud?)

The trip was eventful for Ruth and me. KLM presented us with a bottle of champagne, sparingly shared, and a large wedding cake trimmed in bright blue and white icing. The colors matched our overnight knickknack bags, and a sliver of cake was tasted by all. The flight was long, 16 hours or so, this being before the age of jet airliners. There was a refueling stop at Gander in Newfoundland which allowed us some leg-stretching, but while on board the airplane most of us drowsed or slept. This was Ruth's first airplane ride. She was by a window, on the left side to the rear behind the wing, able to see what there was to see. Her head had been nestled against my shoulder. But then, in the droning silence of the night, she moved and stirred me awake. “David!” She was alarmed. “David, we've stopped!” Stopped? Outside dawn was breaking. I looked out the window. Far below, the low carpet of clouds did indeed seem from our great height to be stationary.



The site of the 1957 Loncon was the rather small, old-style King's Court Hotel in Bayswater, and it was completely taken over by the convention members. The result was outstandingly fannish, especially with the intimate lounge and timeless bar service. Our ground floor bedroom was large. A big bay window near our bathroom jutted out toward the sidewalk, great for a view but with all that glass giving us pause for caution. The official attendance was 268, including about seventy North American fans who found the \$2.80 daily accommodation (with breakfast included!) absolutely incredible.

The BBC gave us wonderful TV coverage with renown interviewer Alan Wicker. The costume party participants were interviewed and televised. (Some Fan Flight persons had brought their own costume materials, but I went shopping that Saturday morning at the big department store a few blocks away and purchased all kinds of penny items and hardware gadgets, using them to build costumes for Ruth and me which were surprisingly photogenic.) As described in Harry Warner, Jr.'s *A Wealth of Fable*, "The imaginative BBC devised a smash ending for its coverage. Ruth Kyle's zap-gun, identified as a positron pistol, was made to zap the interviewer out of existence."



So who, exactly, went on the flight? Not unsurprisingly, metropolitan New York furnished the most travelers, but strange to say, the majority of them were not active fans: Mary Dziechowski (Forry's friend), Milton Spahn, Judy Grad, Arlene Donovan. Even more obscure were those whose first names I've forgotten: K. Leerburger, H. Hausman, R. Gutstein, L. Shapiro, J. Rock, and the two Leedhams, C. and B. Better known were Sheldon Deretchin (who was a prominent fan then) and Cynthia Margulies (the wife

of Leo, big time sf publisher and editor), Frank and Belle Dietz, and Nims Raybin.

Philadelphia furnished nine people, which included some prominent fans: Jean Bogert (frequent PSFS officer), Will Jenkins (often confused with the Murray Leinster one), Herb Schofield, Bob Madle (who was really from Hyattsville, Maryland by then), Ozzie Train (fan and pro), M. Hawthorne, the Fahringers (husband and wife), and H.S. Heap (whom I remember as the mother of George R. Heap, who fully paid but received a refund when he couldn't get away).

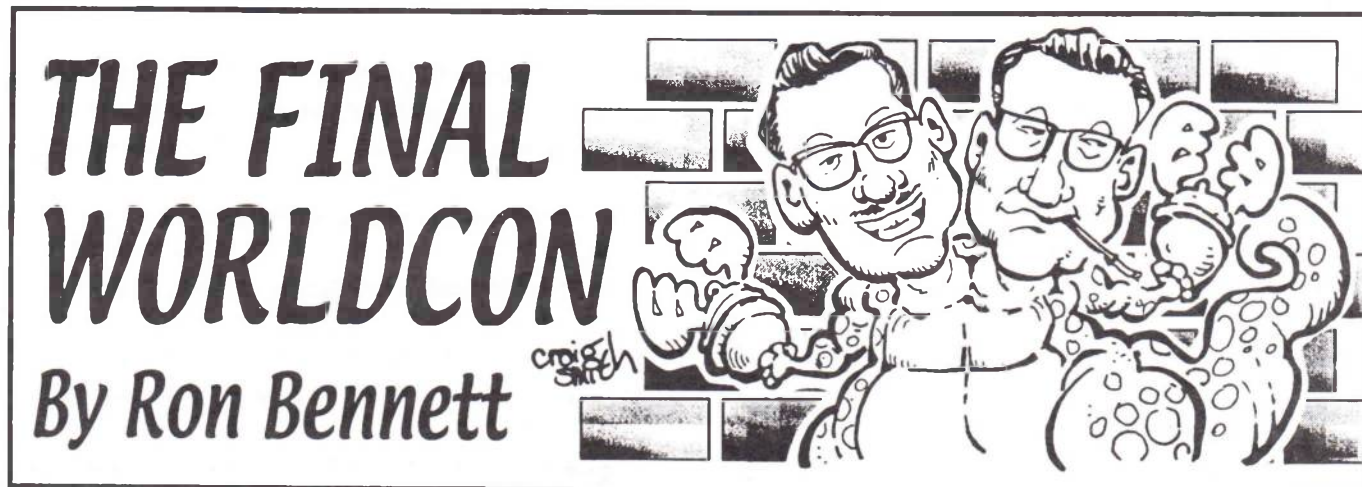
From Newark, New Jersey came R. Miller and, of course, Sam Moskowitz. C.M. Brennan came from Irvington, New Jersey. But who was the mysterious traveler P. Moskowitz (#34) also from Newark (Sam was #20)? Does anyone know?

Two came from Chicago: Ed Bielfeldt (a regular con-goer) and W. McGill. Two came from Strongsville, Ohio: R. Pierce and H. Neuberger. Two came from Clarksburg, West Virginia: D.L. McCulty and G. Barker. From Springfield, Virginia was Lee Sirat, and Val Anjoorian from Waltham, Massachusetts. R. Callahan came from Dearborn, Michigan.

Coming from farthest away (except for Forry from California) was Bob Abernathy of Tucson, Arizona. The lone Canadian was active fan Art Hayes. And from Detroit we had a future worldcon co-chairman, Fred Prophet. It turned out that four Fan Flight tickets were split into separate east-west passages. They were I.J. Hall, R.D. Cahn, and Jerry Josties, all of Swarthmore Pennsylvania, A. Frey, M.P. Graham, Nella Hellinger, Z. Benowitz, and S. Gerson, all of New York. Joan and Harry Harrison went on to live in Denmark, but I don't have a record of who flew back west in their place. Four well-known couples who hoped to go but didn't were Ian and Betty Balantine and, with their wives, Bob Sheckley, Charlie DeVet, and Jack Speer. Three who paid their full fare but received last minute refunds were F. Rae and D. Nillo of New York and R. O'Rourke of Detroit. The final tally brought all 55 voyagers an unexpected \$19.60 refund.

Once upon a time all these persons came on my honeymoon and we shared an adventure. Many of them may still be alive, and I wish I could better remember them all. Maybe somebody knows more details. If so, I'd love to have them drag my thoughts back to that time of the Loncon, almost half a century ago. ☼

Here's more about that FIAWOL-filled 1957 Worldcon, told from the perspective of one of the attendees. The 1957 Loncon, with just 268 attendees, was the ninth-smallest worldcon ever, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's compactness meant that everybody there could actually meet everybody else which, with the unprecedented international nature of the event, made that worldcon (from a world fandom perspective) the most important science fiction convention ever held.



My first World Convention was that held in London in 1957. It was a big, BIG occasion for the British science fiction microcosm. A world convention here, in Britain, wow! At that time overseas travel was a novelty. One or two fans had actually been to continental Europe and I can think of only Walt Willis and the 1955 TAFF delegate, Ken Bulmer and his wife, Pamela, being the only U.K. fans who had previously attended a worldcon. Each of these had, naturally enough, taken place in the U.S., Walt's visit to the 1952 Chicago Chicon, while Ken and Pam had attended the Clevention in, yes, Cleveland. Like baseball's "world" series, science fiction's world conventions were always held in the U.S. The 1957 London Worldcon was even more innovative than the 1955 shifting of the annual British convention from its traditional Whitsuntide time slot to the more convenient Easter weekend which allowed convention committees to make use of the additional work free day, the Good Friday bank holiday.

In those days the vast majority of attendees travelled to those Eastercons on the Good Friday itself and left on the Easter Monday. Many still do, of course (more recently economic factors, particularly those concerning family attendees, have forced large numbers of attendees leave to on the Sunday morning), though nowadays its by no means uncommon to have a reasonable number of attendees arrive on the Thursday, the day before the convention, and leave on the Tuesday, the day after. In 1957, fans began gathering at the King's Court Hotel, just off Bayswater

Road, anything up to three days early.

There was great excitement and an air of bubbly anticipation during those pre-convention days. We'd already had the pleasure during the immediately preceding years' Easter conventions at Kettering of meeting American personalities like Leigh Brackett and Ed Hamilton, honeymooners Lee and Larry Shaw and of course Dave Kyle, who seemed to be a permanent fixture at British conventions, but hey! Get this! There was a entire *planeload* of American pros and fans coming over!

I walked into the hotel on the Wednesday morning and there they were, faces to tag on to names familiar to us and a host of entirely new friends. Where does one begin? Forry Ackerman was sitting in a crowded lounge, showing everyone a hand held electronic (first time I'd even *heard* the word) doodad comprising a host of twinkling colored lights. Bert Campbell, the former editor of *Authentic*, suggested that Forry take it out on to the street and give the general public an imitation of someone divining for uranium with it. TAFF delegate Bob Madle, in a trademark bow tie, was looking a little bewildered, as well he might; there was a faction of British fandom at that time who had felt that he had had no right to enter the competition as he wasn't really a fan. Bob might have been the president of his local SF society in Philadelphia and a member for untold years and he might have produced a popular fanzine in the States, but hell, someone over in the U.K. hadn't heard of him, so naturally he wasn't a fan, hey ho, hey ho.

Bob always presented himself as being of good cheer, but it must have been hurtful and this rather unwellcoming attitude must have marred his enjoyment of his well-deserved trip. At least, he survived.

We'd heard of Sam Moskowitz, and of Boyd Raelburn who produced the very enjoyable fanzine *A Bas*. There was Ray Nelson sporting the badge, "You've heard of me?" which I felt should have included the additional word, "actually," and there was the sixty-something year old Rory Faulkner, who was an absolute charmer. And a novelty. Sixty-plus year olds just didn't travel six thousand miles to attend conventions, didn't y'know? She told me that George Bernard Shaw had said that youth was too precious to be wasted on the young. There was Bob Silverberg who was beginning to make a name for himself in the pro field. (Wonder whatever became of him?) And entirely new names to us like Steve Schultheis, Wally Weber, Shel Deretchin, the "original" Will Jenkins who wasn't Murray Leinster, George Nims Raybin (who a year later would be travelling in a Los Angeles car and singing the British National Anthem and extolling me, who happened to sitting on his lap at the time, to show a little respect and stand to attention), and Frank and Belle Dietz.

Of course, the convention wasn't only a chance to meet overseas fans, some of whom we'd been corresponding with for months if not years. It also provided the opportunity, as with every convention, to meet old friends from different parts of the country, people like Mal Ashworth, Terry Jeeves, Eric Bentcliffe, Tony Thorne, Peter West, Cyril Whitaker, George Locke, Eric Needham, Bill Harry (later to find fame as editor of *Mersey Beat*, the weekly Liverpool newspaper that documented the career of the Beatles), Ken Bulmer, Walter Gillings, Bob Richardson, Eric Jones, Audrey Eversfield, Dave Jenrette, Arthur Thomson, Ted Carnell (and his lovely petite secretary, Lynn Berman), Mike Moorcock, James White, Walt Willis, Vinç Clarke, Chuck Harris, Ted Tubb, Sid Birchby, Bobbie Wild, Joan and Paul Hammet, Laurence Sandfield, the Ratigans, the Buckmasters and the entire Liverpool Group, Norman and Ina Shorrocks, John Roles, Pete Daniels, Dave Newman, Pat and Frank Milnes, Stan Nuttall and John Owen.

Aware that convention coverage in the press usually took the form of, "If you're walking down the High Street this weekend and happen to bump into a strange creature with a two green heads and bulging purple eyes," the con committee had thoughtfully gone the official serious route by rounding up every

available writer and laying on an official press conference to which all the London dailies were invited so send along reporters. This little bash was well attended; every London and national paper sent along a team of reporters. All were interested only in interviewing John W. Campbell. Internationally renowned authors such as Arthur C. Clarke and John Wyndham were ignored.

We couldn't get to the newsagents quickly enough the next morning. Only one paper even mentioned our little event, *The Daily Express*, I think it was. Their short item began...and continued...along the lines, "If you're walking along The Strand this morning and happen to bump into..."

It was traditional in those days for science fiction people to meet at the Globe, the pub round the corner from Hatton Garden on a Thursday evening

I volunteered to show Forry and a few of the other visiting fans the way, virtually a straight run by tube, London's underground rail system. There are some underground stations where several routes cross and different underground passages lead to the different lines, but the nearest station to the King's Court was Queensway on the Central Line. This is simply a one line station; trains travel east into central London past Marble Arch, trains travel west way out to the back of nowhere. I led the assembled group down the stairs, on to the platform and eventually on to the train. We were all in high spirits, chattering away.

The train stopped at the next station, Lancaster Gate. So, why, I asked myself were there signs reading, "Notting Hill Gate?"

We were travelling in the wrong direction!

At the next stop I told these overseas greenhorns that we changed trains. They followed me like trusting or well indoctrinated sheep. We crossed the tracks by the overhead bridge and took our places on the next train travelling back towards Queensway. All was well. I'd got away with my gaffe.

Until we arrived at Queensway and one of the group who, dammit, could actually read, found me out. The red on my face is only now beginning to fade.

And, so, on that Convention Eve, the Globe burst at the seams, with dozens of fans spilling out on to the sidewalk. I remember standing at the bar surrounded by John Wyndham, Bill Temple and Sam Youd (John Christopher). Drop names, what, me?

The convention officially got under way on the Friday afternoon in the hotel's long and narrow convention hall with Ted Carnell introducing various per-

sonalities in the audience. I was sitting close to the back of the hall and watching various people stand up as Ted called out their names and remember thinking, "So *that's* what the back of John Russell Fearn's head looks like."

I don't recall there being any other programme item scheduled or taking place after that opening ceremony and so I went up bed for what was intended to be a short nap, waking in the early hours of Saturday morning and finding a small group of fans downstairs in the lounge, still chatting away and Forry, for some reason, having his own musical soirée. We eventually retired with Forry lading the way upstairs singing "California, Here I Come."

In these days of multi-track programmes, when three different items you definitely *must* go to are always scheduled simultaneously, that not only was the programme at the LonCon only a single thread affair, but that there were lengthy gaps between items. This was fine. I don't think that it was matter of attendees simply accepting this fact because it was the status quo of the day. I'm pretty sure that it was preferred. After all, there were only a couple of hundred attendees and in those days every attendee liked to have the chance to meet every other attendee. I have the faintest feeling at the back of my mind that at one of today's worldcons, with attendances around the five and a half thousand mark, meeting every other attendee would be, well, if not impossible, a mammoth task that allowed about three quarters of a minute per meeting. Yeh, that's not impossible. As long as everyone stands in line for you and you don't sleep. Heavens, haven't we all attended worldcons where we haven't even *met* people we've known were also there and whom we'd wished to meet?

The weekend's entire formal program ran as follows:
Saturday Morning: Free

Saturday Afternoon 1.15: The Official Luncheon followed by speeches from the Guest of Honour (*As-tounding* editor, John W. Campbell) and other luminaries. There was a little delay in seating everyone because of a bottleneck in the corridor outside the hall. I remember Sam Moskowitz telling of an early convention when a plane carrying an entire *three* fans had arrived from Los Angeles. I think that it was at this speechfest that Gernon Rainer Eisfeld brought a gasp of astonishment from his audience when he spoke of The Science Fiction Club Deutschland having a thousand members.

Saturday evening 8.15: A talk on the new London Planetarium, followed by an auction and the Fancy

Dress Party and a dance, with live music provided by the Merseysippi Jazz Band. It was here that Chuck Harris, who was profoundly deaf, danced the evening away, taking the beat from the vibrating wooden floor.

Sunday afternoon: The St. Fantony Ceremony during which the Cheltenham Group "honored" various worthy folk by initiating them into the Grand and Noble order. Bob Madle, Boyd Raeburn, Rory Faulkner and Bob Silverberg were some of those poor souls who were expected to drink the water from the well of St. Fantony, actually some 140 proof paint stripper.

Some amateur films, such as the coverage of a previous St Fantony ceremony came next, followed by a demonstration of hypnotism by Harry Powers.



Sunday evening 8.15: The Achievement Awards Ceremony, followed by Liverpool's taped play, *The March of Slime*.

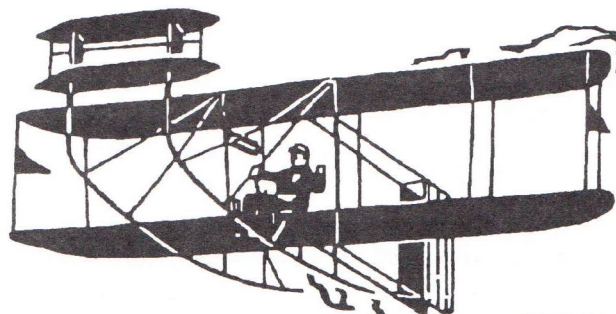
Monday 2.30pm: The Battle of Wits Quiz, reminiscences by Sam Moskowitz, Bob Madle and Forry. This was followed by more fan films. At a final auction I was lucky enough to pick up the manuscript of Ray Bradbury's *Icarus Montgolfier Wright* for a knockdown price, the assembled fans not bidding against me out of sheer niceness. Where else but in fandom...?

And so, memories fade... was it at The King's Court that Ted Tubb berated John Campbell about his statement that slavery was a thing of the past? ("What about the conscript soldier?")... no, I think that was eight years later at the 1965 London Convention. Ah, what does it matter? 1957 was a benchmark convention. We little band of Brits were being recognised by our seniors over there on the other side of The Pond. It was an adventure for them and a darn great weekend for us.

The final worldcon? Well, yes, the final worldcon to be reminisced about in an issue of *Mimosa*. ☆

Back to the present now, for a look to the future. The future of this fanzine is now down to just a few more pages, so perhaps it's time for a short philosophical discussion (or narrative, in this case) about what the future of all fanzines, or indeed, fandom in general could come to. Nowadays, the ideal of FIAWOL may be starting to show some wear-and-tear around the edges, and as we gracefully grow older a sense of FIJAGH may be starting to replace it. But if you look deeper, the driving force behind FIJAGH is another, and perhaps more basic form of FIAWOL. In fact, it all comes down to the basics.

FORWARD to the BASICS



by John Hertz

FIAWOL, fandom is a way of life, is a hard topic for me, devoted as I have been to the alternative view FIJAGH, fandom is just a glittering – or something – hobby. But let us reason together.

In my undergraduate days, Antioch College bloomed into Antioch University. William M. Birenbaum presided. “Back to the basics” was heard, as before and indeed since. We can’t go back, he said; and if we could it is not clear we had the basics. To get them we can only and we should go forward.

Today some leading fans have reached age sixty, seventy, eighty. I think this an honor and a wonder. Some have been with us from the beginning. Whatever we are doing has held their interest. All are old enough to know they can find other ways of spending their beer money. However, this is bad, because fandom is graying. We worry we might be lacking somehow because we are too old.

In the beginning everyone was seventeen. This was bad. We worried we might be lacking somehow because we were too young.

Science fiction then was an adolescent pastime. It had to be; it was written by Mary Shelley and Rudyard Kipling and Aldous Huxley and Hermann Hesse and George Orwell, and there were all those teenagers who paid for translating Jules Verne.

Now s-f is for fuddy-duddies. Except for permeating popular culture. A 1996 survey found half the

U.S. households had at least one person self-defined as an s-f fan. I know because Arnie Katz quoted it while Fan Guest of Honor at Westercon XLIX that year in El Paso. Most of them must be what we’d call readers instead of fans, or the 1996 Worldcon attendance would’ve been 6.7 million instead of 6.7 thousand, but it’s still impressive. As I write, the electronic book service Amazon ranks *Dune* about 200 by sales; *Fahrenheit 451* about 1,100; *Lucifer’s Hammer* about 5,400; *Frankenstein* about 11,000; *Tunnel in the Sky* about 15,000; *The Glass Bead Game* about 27,000. Tom Veal’s book is about 940,000.

It’s true we get no respect. When people disliked U.S. President Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative, the best way they could think to mock it was to call it Star Wars. In other words, it was science fiction, and therefore sick. Also there was “Ronnie ray-guns.” Some of these noises came from us. I didn’t vote for him, but I thought this was strange. While Newt Gingrich was Speaker of the House of Representatives, a mundane-politics magazine could think of no better way to mock him than reporting he was at work on an s-f novel. The article was by an s-f author. I thought this was so strange I told *File 770*.

Science itself is strange. One might think it liberating; I for instance joked in *Chronicle* 231 how I hurried to the 2002 Worldcon, unable to leave Los Angeles till noon, catching a jet, and dashing to my

panel in San Jose at four, which no human being on Earth could have done a hundred years earlier, not even Phileas Fogg. Yet we have 'hard' s-f, and Bridget Landry is lonely as a rocket scientist and master-class costumer, and even James Michener, whose novel *Space* is within an inch of s-f, knew there were more career scientists who worked in the arts than career artists who worked in the sciences.

I don't have to tell you fanzines are strange. Well, I do, actually, but I won't. Fanzines are goners. They were made obsolete by the Internet, or e-mail, or cheap travel, or something. As Lord Chesterfield said, "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, but we don't choose to have it known."



We're all goners. No one needs us any more. Earlier the people who showed up came because they needed to. They were good for nothing elsewhere but we didn't notice so we took them. It must be easier these days for worthless people to get by.

Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian student of communications media whose Ph.D. was in English Literature, and who incidentally considered, among media, money, clothes, and clocks, said media only seem to supersede one another. When a new medium arrives, it takes over the burden of being the latest thing. That frees other media, and tends to clarify them, so they come to be employed for what they prove best at. Fewer eggs are put into one basket. The telephone

did not replace the letter, nor did either replace going for dinner or a walk, on business or socially.

Science fiction, like science, is the art of the possible. Fantasy is the art of the impossible. Comprise them, in 'speculative fiction' perhaps: we are the what-if artform. This is a big basket, but even so it is better not having too many eggs in. Some of my favorite pastimes, and people, are not stfnal, to use our old adjective. I take a good deal of trouble staying involved with others that are.

We have long said fandom is communication. This is true, or had better be, but not the whole truth. When a game is not the only one in town, "nothing better to do" rises from sarcasm to description. I *want* to do what I can find nothing better than.

McLuhan's famous line *The medium is the message*, also expressed as *They became what they beheld*, had a qualification which, unsurprisingly enough, is rarely noted: *if not paying attention*. Users of an alphabet may become alphabetical, neat, segmented, serial, and uniform, but they need not if they bother to remain aware; or they may do so should it suit them, and become something else tomorrow. The artist can lay down a pen and take up a brush.

Beasts go where the other beasts are going. Slaves try to do whatever no one stops them from. Free people try to do what seems worthwhile. Artists know 'worthwhile' had better not be too materialistic.

We cannot merely call s-f imaginative fiction – any fiction is imaginative – but our what-if artform stretches the imagination, an exercise of the spirit of play. Some people insist on justifying that. They make s-f a form of prediction, or protest, or psychodrama. Let us say those are at most Newton physics in an Einstein universe.

Fans are what-iffy people. It was – will you say it or shall I say it? I will say it – one of Forry Ackerman's better puns to call us the Imagi-Nation.

This is where inhabitants of the mundane world fail us. They are forever proclaiming that we live in dreams, that we believe our fantasies. We have of course riposted that it might not be so bad if we did; that their cries have a strange ring of jealousy; that more dreaming and fantasy might be good for everyone; but it is not our program. We delight in tales of travel through time, or faster than light, not because we know how to do it, but because we do not. What fun "Let's pretend we're space pirates" if we really *were* space pirates? With our full share of faults, we're not so dull.

We are participatory. Our clubs, conventions, fanzines, are not gawkfests. With us fans and pros mingle. We're less interested in whether X and Y are celebrities than whether they can carry on a conversation. An s-f con sells, not admission, but membership, and expects both greenhorns and old hands to make themselves useful. A club may publish books or go bowling but will not cultivate low-lives who prostrate before high-lives. A fanzine is most often applauded as a forum for discourse. Outside our world live other versions of these things which rarely win our esteem. We do not begrudge their existence but we wish they were more creative.

The life of *Mimosa* is an honor and a wonder. This zine relishing fanhistory has earned acclaim and been voted a handful of Hugo Awards. If you are acquainted with me in person, or follow my fanwriting, you know I think people are lopsided with the expression *c'est la vie*; if used, it should also fly out for finding a fine sunset, or falling in love, or fashioning a success.

I believe we have grown complacent. I marvel at fanziners who don't go to cons because they don't see any fanziners at cons because fanziners don't go to cons, or conners who yearn for fresh blood while printing clever fliers that never say "science fiction convention." If you do any teaching, you know one of the oldest rules, a sometimes harsh rule which is all too true: *A well taught class fills, a badly taught class empties*. It's also a source of comfort – which means "lending strength," did you know that? I looked it up after a funeral – in that it points to something which can be done. In my own affairs I try to keep it in mind, the complement of publicity.

Pro activity has grown complacent. The craftsmanship is weak; compared to say, the 1940s, I believe we're imagining more widely and writing worse. That's not the joys of my childhood, I wasn't around then. Also our field is particularly prone to distraction by dazzle. We get a lot out of shock value – an occupational hazard of living by the sense of wonder. Some of this is right. Where else should be the home for dangerous visions? But not all valuable visions are dangerous. Behind the received wisdom is the received iconoclasm. Eventually when the same rules, however hateful, are broken the same way yet again, another beer begins to look better.

Pretending to disdain skill appears in history now and then. The Roman poet Horace cracked, "Because Democritus believes native genius is worth any

amount of piddling art, a good many will not take the trouble to trim their nails." Charlie Chaplin in the film *Modern Times* carefully showed a little tramp too awkward for a factory assembly line, who putting on roller skates suddenly flew round a floor like a champion, then being dragged into a nightclub show was suddenly master of the hardest comedy, a satirical patter-song; no practice; undoubtedly he could just be. These mundane currents influence us. We could yet take on craftsmanship for ourselves, like the feminist slogan a few years ago "Take back the night."

Theorists love contradictory data, which sound the alarm for a more fundamental theory. We used to say science fiction was what *could* happen, until new science falsified old stories that were yet manifestly distinct from fantasy. I've said science fiction is a mood. Fandom also may be. In that sense it may be more a way of life than a guaniferous hobby, oh dear.



I've been promoting a sense of the classic. I hardly suggest we are worse off than in the past, though it would be a surprise if people of another time and place were never superior to us at anything. If a classic is an artwork so great that it transcends its own day, that surviving its time and place it speaks to us after styles have changed and it is no longer buoyed by the currents of convention, then beyond what it may have been to its own people in the past, it can be an inspiration for us to make something great our way in the future. Let us not try to pull down heroes as low as we may feel ourselves. Let us grieve fitly but not defeatingly when they die. Let us try to rise by their example. Forward to the basics. ✨

☞ We're pleased to have two new articles by Sharon Farber in our final issue. This first one dates back to her medical school days in St. Louis and demonstrates that the embodiment of FIAWOL is not limited just to science fiction fandom. As its definition implies, when used as an escape mechanism it can also help get one through difficult times in life.

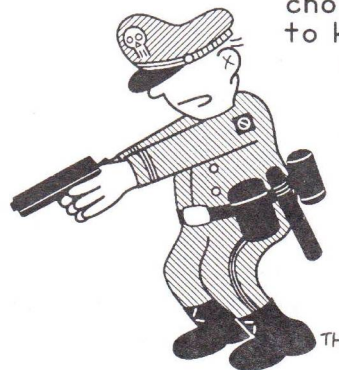
Tales of Adventure and Medical Life #16: The Adventures of the On-Call Knight

by Sharon Farber

I'm a medical student and I can't cope with the stress any longer. I'm going to kill myself.



Hold it right there. I'm a police recruit and if you make one move to harm yourself, you'll give me no choice but to kill you myself.



Recent studies have shown that doctors tend to be obsessive-compulsive. Well duh – only an obsessive could get an 'A' in Organic Chemistry. And its not like other professions don't recruit from those with diagnosable psychiatric disorders – cops, firemen and paratroopers are often sociopaths, hysterics (I have been told) make good actresses, and of course reporters in the grand old days were all alcoholics. (I had a delirious patient in the ICU once. "How much does he drink?" asked my attending. "One a day." The attending shook his head in dismay at my student naïvete. "Sharon," he said. "He's a *journalist*.")

Unfortunately, obsessives are prone to the comorbidities of anxiety, depression, insecurity and anguish at their imperfections. Perhaps as an undergrad you can know everything and you can smoke an exam – bemoaning your score of 99 rather than 100 – but in a school full of other high-performing obsessives and a fund of knowledge that exceeds human capacity... Well, get ready to be severely bummed out.

Sixty percent of my classmates sought help. Two killed themselves.

The question that has been asked is this: Does a science fiction writer cope differently with the stress of med school?

#

After a year in the dorm I moved into an apartment a mile down the road, in a neighborhood once fashionable, then slum, starting to be rehabbed. One of my attendings owned the mansion in which Wil-

liam S. Burroughs grew up. They filmed a documentary there; she said he was her only houseguest to bring his own methadone.

There was one street of new shops, an oasis in the decay. Many of the street people had been my patients at Malcolm Bliss. I would either nod and hurry by, or avert my eyes. Someone was shot outside my apartment one night. Another night watched cops wrestle down a suspect. A conventioner had his wallet stolen, and he pursued the suspect until he developed angina, then slumped over my Dodge Colt. I checked his pulse with the ludicrous phrase "It'll be all right, I'm a medical student."

Medical students are the bottom of the social hierarchy in the hospital, with only the nursing students exceeding us in cluelessness. Even the janitors have our number. And the contempt spills out into the nearby community. So I was astonished when the man was not only reassured but announced in awe to his arriving friends, "She's a med student!"

They had been at the Chase Park Plaza, a once grand hotel now famous primarily because its auditorium was used every Sunday morning for the TV show *Wrestling at the Chase* – a name implying volumes of social disconnect. The wrestling groupies would gather in the parking lot across the street from my own and wait to meet their heroes.

Our apartment building had been the *dernier cri* in stylish modernity seventy years earlier, and had not been remodeled or painted since. Even the cock-

roachs seemed courteously old fashioned. (We kept them under control with a typically obsessive scheme – a scorecard. Kill 5, you were an Ace. 86, a Red Baron. While waiting for the coffee to boil grab the swatter and hunt roaches.)

There were mice, too. We found the hole they came in from and closed it up. Then lent our traps to the apartment below us, inhabited by students in the 6-year combined program. Presumably smarter than the rest of us mortals.

One day one of them came upstairs. “The traps aren’t working,” he complained.

“Well, what are you using for bait?”

“Bait?”

Their apartment was a humid mess due to a continuously dripping shower. A friend of mine, going through a divorce, lived there briefly. He came up one day, sat on the couch, and just shook his head. Finally he said, “All you have to do is turn the handle firmly.”

#

We were busy and didn’t really get to know the non-medical student tenants who were scattered in the various apartments like raisins in a pudding. Okay, not a good metaphor. I remember once some guys across the hall having a bachelor party. The stripper brought her child, an auburn-haired little girl who sat in the empty stairwell engrossed in her coloring book.

Fourth year we had a kegger and (as one always should do when planning a loud party) invited any neighbors close enough to complain. The apartment above ours was currently occupied by some undergrads.

They arrived duly, got paper cups of beer, and began to hit on the women. Their line – and it’s a sad sad world to think that it might under some circumstances work – was the proud statement, “We’re accounting majors.”

“That’s nice,” said my roommate. “Those guys are PhDs in biochemistry and the rest of us are just medical doctors.”

The accountants refilled their cups and stole away into the night.

#

We were an odd assortment – a top student, from a family of important doctors; the sexiest guy in the class, so drop-dead handsome that women would turn and follow him down the hall; the president of the Christian Medical Society; and me, the class bohemian. (A demented elderly patient once snarled at me, “Are you a gypsy?” “No, ma’am, I’m a bohemian,” I replied, and my attending started laughing so hard I thought I’d have to Heimlich him.)

Later the cute guy took his mushroom collection and left, and we acquired a depressed grad student and a succession of others. The tiptop student in class lived there a while (the sister of the other top student). Her talents, unfortunately, did not include cleaning. Once a week or so we’d venture into her cesspit, stepping carefully between books and boxes and discarded clothing, to retrieve coffee cups. When we were burglarized, the cops looked into her room. “It’s been ransacked!” they gasped in horror. Her embarrassed sister hastened to agree.

One day I took down the hanging plants, watered them, and left them on the radiator. That day – not particularly cold, and a month earlier than usual – was the day the landlord chose to turn on the heat. The twins’ mother – herself an important physician – called to ask for one of her daughters.

“She’s in the kitchen, performing fluid resuscitation on a plant I just killed,” I replied.

There was a long pause. Finally she said, “And to think we’re turning you loose on people.”

#

Once during second year, before a particularly important test, we were all nervous. I told the particularly jumpy studious roomie: “If you eat your dinner, do your homework and go to bed. I’ll tell you a bedtime story.” This was it:

A research biochemist married a beautiful woman, and set her up in a lovely house of many windows. But she was lonely, and complained he was always in the lab. So he cloned himself, and the two of them got so much work done that he could spend more time with his wife.

But his clone grew fond of a research post-doc, and when he thought the scientist and his wife were both away, took his girlfriend to their house. The wife came home early, saw them, presumed it was her husband, sued for divorce, and won the house and half the patents.

Which just proves that people who live in glass houses should not grow clones.

#

Okay, not that good, but it was the first bedtime story. They became more frequent, and developed recurring characters. There was the Ivory Tower, dedicated to training pages to become knights. Then they had to pass the Boards – a plank bridge fraught with hazards – in order to enter the Magic Forest and become squires. In other words, they became third year medical students on clinical rotations.

I told most of the stories, of course, and the epic began to parallel my own journey through the clinics. For instance, while I was studying surgery Our Heroine was captive of the adventuresome but dimwitted Green Knights. At the end of my rotation Our Heroine offered to go for pizza and ran like hell. But I had put off three weeks of surgery until fourth year, and when I had that rotation Our Heroine, on her way elsewhere, blundered into a clearing still full of Green Knights awaiting pizza. Thinking quickly, she said, "Okay, was that 43 pepperoni and 17 sausage, or 17 pepperoni and 43 sausage?" And escaped again. It was the only time I've ever pulled off a joke with a sixteen month buildup.

Because City Hospital, where I did neurology, was next door to Malcolm Bliss Mental Hospital, and because neuro and psychiatry deal with different aspects of human consciousness, I invented a castle called the City of Distress (shades of Dante) wherein dwelt the bold Knights of the Hammer, always accompanied by their saber-tooth Catscans. But at night it transmogrified into the horrific Tower of the Blissful. Once the Green Knights decided to invade the Tower, and were held off by the last remaining Knight of Sigmund, who analyzed them into stupefaction.



Another time the Dashing Rogue – the gentleman thief character chosen by the guy who was head of the Christian Medical Association and about as undashing and unroguelike as you can get – was in the Tower to steal the Grandiose Grail. As he climbed out the window, dawn broke and he was hanging in mid air...

Our roomie the very top student appeared only once. As Our Heroine is in the tilting-at-windmills

class and complaining that no one can do that, she does. Oh well.

Gradually a plot of sorts occurred. Our Heroine, thanks to her many screw-ups and consistent distractability (especially whenever she sees the Wonderful Knight) is charged with finding the Pen of Flexner and healing the ills in the Magic Forest. (Abraham Flexner wrote the 1911 book which reformed American medical education.)

Our Heroine stumbled from adventure to adventure, eventually gaining some knowledge and talents. She was aided by The On-Call Knight, an idealized amalgam of helpful interns I had met. Finally there was a big battle, the Pen was recovered, the evil wizards defeated, everyone with amnesia remembered his identity, the king was rethroned, etcetera etcetera. And Our Heroine was rewarded yet punished by becoming the new On-Call Knight.

Well, you had to be there. But transforming my travails into a metaphoric silly Arthurian quest helped get me through it.

#

This is the year of my twentieth reunion (which I don't intend to attend). Life is still weird, work hard, people bizarre. Just a few days ago I was royally yelled at by a patient whom I refused to give a motorized wheelchair because she didn't meet Medicare criteria. Because she walks fine. I was called callous and heartless and well, I've heard it before.

I'll leave with a gross-out story. A couple months ago I saw a hospital patient and noticed that his toes were, as we put it, a little dusky. He indeed had poor blood flow to his legs but refused intervention.

A month later saw him in the ICU – back because a friend had scored some cool drugs and he'd tried a few too many. Which he freely admitted. I was called to see him because of the brief self-induced coma.

I pulled back the sheets to test his reflexes and paused. His distal right foot was now black. Not dark or gray, but frank black, like my polished leather shoes, with a line of demarcation. He had gangrene. Two toes were missing, having sloughed off. (They can do that in dry gangrene. Of course, anything bigger than a digit won't, and unless dealt with will prove fatal. And as for wet gangrene – well, let's not discuss the odor.)

I well knew the answer, but I was rather shocked and said "Gee. What happened to your toes?"

He looked down with casual unconcern. "Ahh," he said, "they came off in my socks."

Well, again, I guess you had to be there. ✨

Here's another article about FIAWOL, of sorts, in a real-life setting – how many of us can say that we have a mundane relative who had edited a newszine? The writer of the following piece was born and raised in northeast Arkansas, where she married Jerry Proctor in 1955. They lived in Jackson, Mississippi for five years before moving to Birmingham, Alabama, where she eventually became the cornerstone of Birmingham fandom.



This is the story of a tough old lady and some of the fires that annealed her. Grandma Gladys, henceforth known as GG, is tough. She has survived all her siblings, three husbands, friends and a lot of her neighbors. Well, it's not really fair to count the neighbors as she lives in Meadowlawn, a retirement community. While there are folks there older than she (she's 83), there is no one who has lived there so long. She shows me the little newsletter they put out, and the list of people who died is always long, while the list of people who got sick and lived to tell the tale is not.

Oddly enough, she was the editor of this newspaper until just recently. I say "oddly" because she knows nothing of fanzines, or small press publishing, and from my viewpoint it seemed odd that she published a newszine while I was publishing *Anvil*. She put her personal stamp on *Meadowlawn Capers*. She culled cartoons, funny stories, and clever sayings from magazines and periodicals and filed them away by month so they could be used at the appropriate season. At the attrition rate of Meadowlawn, she could use the same material every five years and the few who were still alive wouldn't remember anyway. She did the cutting and pasting, writing up the neighborhood news – visits of children and grandchildren, and local events of interest. Jack the apartment manager would print and distribute it.

I am the only one of her generation in either of our families left. She is 16 years my senior and has lived in interesting times all of her life. GG has outlived three husbands, lost a two-year old child and raised two others. She's never lost her sense of humor or positive outlook. She's the only grandmother my children ever knew.

GG was always my 'second mother'. My mother was a teacher (my First Grade teacher, too!) and while she was finishing her work at school I went to GG's for my after-school snack. When I had rheumatic fever in the summer and couldn't start school on time, I stayed with GG. I was not allowed to run or exert myself that autumn. There was a banister on her back porch that I thought would be such fun to slide down, but she allowed me to slide down only once each day as "it would wear out my corduroy pants to slide more." And I believed her.

GG told me the facts of life, at my mother's behest. My mother was much too shy to talk about such things. After that, GG introduced me to the dirty joke. She doesn't tell them now, but back then, whew!

Old Mrs. Hatcher lived next door to GG while I was in grade school. Mrs. H would come out on the porch and scream great obscenities at the children walking to school, sometimes waving a butcher knife. Once GG was saving cans for someone and Mrs. Hatcher asked if she could have them "to throw at people going by." GG put them out of sight.

One day my father had to go in GG's house through the window when she had accidentally locked herself out. Mrs. H saw him and for weeks after told the neighborhood at the top of her lungs "that woman has men in her house, coming in the doors and windows at all hours! She's f***ing them under the house," Mrs. H informed the world.

GG's husband had lost a leg in the war and was in veterans' hospitals a lot. And then he was on the road with various jobs. Whenever he came home he would get her pregnant or give her a disease. My mother urged her to get a divorce, even though this was not a

common thing in those days. Late one night a few weeks after GG's husband had been home, Mrs. Hatcher began beating on GG's front door. GG opened the door a little to latch the screen door so Mrs. H wouldn't break the glass in the wooden door. In the confusion that followed, Mrs. H fell and broke her hip. Her family, who could well afford it, finally put her in a home. GG suffered a miscarriage.

Years later, after my mother had died, and GG's youngest child, Janine, had died, GG did divorce her husband. She bought a Singer Featherweight Portable sewing machine (which I have now). She paid for it and supplemented her income by sewing for other people.

Five years after my mother died, my father and GG married. They had ten blissful years together. Internal bliss. Externally, they had GG's mother in a hospital bed waiting for an opening at the County Home. Then it was my father's father who took a year to die from little strokes. GG fed and diapered him, and sat him in a wooden-armed chair with a dishtowel tied across to keep him from wandering. "He's like a baby," she said. I came home that summer, and would stop and chat with him. He would think I was first one person and then another from his past. It was a busy household, with GG's two teenagers and the parade of those needing care, but everyone was cheerful. The feeling was, given the situation, one had to either laugh or cry, and we would rather laugh.

Another time, Uncle Sam (black sheep of the family) stayed with them a little while. During that time, Jerry and I had moved from Jackson, Mississippi to Birmingham, Alabama. Jerry went on ahead to find us a place to live. I came home with a four-month-old baby boy, Justin, and 15-month old Valerie. We had the back bedroom. Sam had the middle bedroom. Valerie was a toddler and it pleased her no end to sneak up behind Sam in his wheelchair and push him across the room, into the console TV set. Sam would whoop and holler "Whoa! Whoa!" I was in the rocker nursing the baby. Do you think I reprimanded my child? I did not. "Well, Sam! What do you expect? Put your brakes on!"

During the time Jerry and I lived in Jackson, my dad used to joke that he had two daughters, one in prison and one in Mississippi, and that he had been trying for five years to get that one out of Mississippi! I'm not sure how my sister Evelyn felt about this story.

GG had been born with a deformed hip with one leg shorter than the other, and has been the lab rat for hip replacement surgery. More than 40 years ago she went to a hospital in Memphis and let them practice

on her. After the first surgery they kept her in a body cast for weeks. They were amazed at how quickly she recovered and walked again, but her bones were defective and broke easily even as a fairly young woman in her 40s. She had a hip fusion on the other hip, and later they replaced that one, too. She has a stainless steel rod down to her right knee. By the time they had gotten through "practicing" on her, she was getting up and walking the next day after surgery.

GG, though wheelchair bound now, is still living independently. She has a washer and dryer and can do her own laundry. She prepares her meals and keeps in touch with the world. She keeps postage stamps to sell to neighbors who need one or two. Visitors who whine and complain are not suffered gladly.

Neighbor: "Oh, I'm dying... I feel so terrible..."

GG: "You've been dying ever since I've known you, and you're still here!"

She watches the news every day, and works puzzles in the paper. I can count on two birthday cards: one from GG and one from my insurance agent. She never misses anyone's anniversary or birthday. She is the glue that holds our family together.

Her daughter, my stepsister Marie, lives nearby and comes once a week to be there while GG showers. Marie also grocery shops for her every six weeks or so. GG is slowing down now, and I visit her more often. I do some shopping for her, change light bulbs, and things of that nature. Neither Marie nor her husband is in good health, and it's a toss-up as to who will outlive whom.

Just recently, on my third and last night there, I had a dream. I had been up until well after midnight and had taken something to sleep. My sleeping self heard a loud shrill noise – a telephone? Next I heard – a teakettle whistling? The third time I heard the noise, swimming up from the depths of slumber, it sounded like a smoke alarm, shrill and insistent. "This is something I need to investigate" I told my sleep-drugged body.

The lights were on in GG's bedroom. I stumbled to the doorway and looked at her bed. No GG. I looked the other way into the bathroom. She wasn't in there. Hearing (finally) my name, I followed the sound down to the floor. There she was, folded up in a spot between bed and walker, bedside table and wheelchair.

"I've been down here an hour!" GG complained. "I called you and called you. Finally I remembered a whistle in my bedside table drawer." Resourceful woman.

I looked at the clock. It was 4 a.m.

"Uh," I said, and moved to come over where she was.

"No, you can't lift me. I'm going to call 911."

Soon, a policeman came by. GG tells him she doesn't think she's hurt, and that my son is a policeman. The EMTs arrive and assess the situation, and ask GG questions to ascertain she is not altered. GG has me taking names, for the next *Meadowlawn Capers*, no doubt.

Explaining what they are doing and apologizing for stepping over her, the strapping young men put their arms under her armpits and raised her to her feet. She grasped her walker and then levered herself into the wheelchair. My biggest fear was that they would hurt her, squeeze her hand or swivel her hip, but they

are professionals and deal with worn-out old bodies all the time. I put socks on her ice cold feet. She went back to bed, and our early morning visitors left.

Next morning, I got ready to go, packed the car, and waited. I waited until GG had gotten in her wheelchair, gone to the bathroom and gotten back in the wheelchair. GG says she's just sore, especially her knee. I was afraid she would catch pneumonia from being on the cold floor so long.

But she survived my visit. I called Marie who said, "She's fine. She's a tough old bird!"

Meadowlawn Capers continues with another editor, but GG still contributes. ✧

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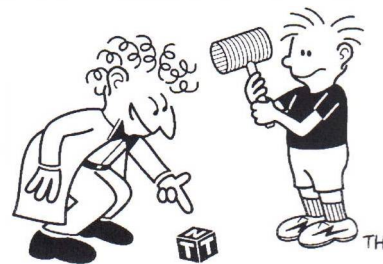
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☛ Probably the ultimate in real-life sense of wonder when you're growing up would be to have a parent who was a scientist – how better to become interested in science fiction than to be exposed to science fictional-type experiences practically every day? From those not-so-humble beginnings are fans created; the writer of the following remembrance has been involved in D.C.-area fandom for many decades, and lives out his sense of FIAWOL by hosting local club meetings in his home.

I Remember Dr. William L. Gilliland

by Alexis Gilliland

I'm the scientist here. I promise you absolutely nothing will happen to you if you follow my instructions *exactly*. OK, see this block of TNT? When I nod my head, hit it with the hammer.



The first time I was tear-gassed I was helping my father.

In the summer of 1943 I was twelve years old, and my father, who had been a Chemistry professor at the University of Maine, was a Major in the Chemical Warfare Service, tasked with teaching civilians in the War Department Civilian Protection School at some little college in suburban Los Angeles. The curriculum was basically the lessons learned in the London blitz, plus a few side items including propaganda films, and one of the things my father did was explain about TNT. He had a one-pound block of the stuff, and after explaining how it wouldn't explode when you hit it with a hammer or set it on fire, he would spot a student doing, and toss the block to him, a stunt which woke up the student and gave the class a laugh. The course also gave an introduction to the gas mask. This was done by having the class put on gas masks and enter a tent in which a CN canister was burning. Just before leaving at the far end, they would take off their masks to get a little whiff of the gas they were being protected from, so they would have confidence in the technology they were using. Eleven years later, in basic training, we went into the tent and then put on our gas masks, but this was for civilians.

I attended the course my father was giving because I wasn't otherwise in school, didn't know anybody, and staying at home was boring. On this particular day his class balked at going through the gas chamber, and he was trying to talk them into it. Maybe familiarity breeds contempt, or maybe I thought the class was a bunch of sissies; I don't remember what I was thinking, but at age twelve I had no judgment. What I did was take a deep breath, and went into the tent with one eye shut and one eye squinted so I wouldn't run into the tent poles. I walked through all that tear gas and came out on the other side, rubbing my eyes. After that the class

meekly went through the gas chamber without any further argument, and my father offered me a dollar – twice my weekly allowance – to do it again for his next class. An offer I had no trouble declining.

The last time I was tear-gassed was thirty years later, in Washington, D.C. We then lived at 2126 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, an easy walk to the Mall, and on July 4th, 1973, we – Dolly, our son Charles and I, and Kohlman and Sara, Dolly's parents – had gone down to the Mall to watch the fireworks, which were, as usual, excellent. After the fireworks, however, there was an antiwar demonstration, and we were downwind of a distinctly off-brand of tear gas, which *The Washington Post* described the next day as "home made." The inference, of course, was that it came from the demonstrators. Working against that inference was the timing; if the demonstrators were trying to disrupt Nixon's Fourth of July, they should have released their tear gas when the fireworks started instead of waiting until the crowds were dispersing. Many years later it came out that the FBI had prepared the non-standard tear gas and released it in an effort to discredit the antiwar movement.

Returning to my father, it eventually became evident that the Japanese and Nazis weren't going to be bombing the continental United States, and the Army closed down the civilian protection schools. My father was discharged at the end of 1944, got a job teaching chemistry at Purdue University, and started doing research of interest to those willing to support it, notably Lloyd Defenbaugh, an Oklahoma oilman, and the U.S. Navy. Although I was in high school at the time, I helped my father or at least kept him company. Defenbaugh was interested in the blast cutting of iron as a way to perforate oil well pipes, and eventually my dad duplicated the work on the VanMeter patent for about 5% of the cost, but the company holding the patent was disinclined to give it

up, so 'twas all for naught. The worst thing he had me do was run potassium permanganate through a grinder, which generated this awful dust. Another time I was in the shop in the basement of the Chemistry Building, drilling a hole in a block of carborundum, using rusty old glass cutting files. I would take a dozen files, and sharpen them on the grinding wheel, and grind down on the carborundum, which was much harder than the files. Then I would resharpen the files and continue. Eventually I went through several dozen files, but the hole got drilled.

Subsequently, my father found that graphite was suitable for controlling the flow of liquid iron, and a whole lot easier to work with. There were accidents as well, the most serious being the time one of the thermite guns went off prematurely. As my father said afterwards, "I could feel the liquid iron running into my shoe." The one I was involved with was going down to Oklahoma City with a trunk full of bottles of preheat, whose function was to burn fast and provide the gas pressure to squirt the liquid iron through graphite nozzle. We were driving a 1939 Packard, which had an external trunk, making slow time because of having a lot of flats (new tires were not yet available) and eventually the preheats ignited. I jumped out of the car, which was going pretty slow, and my brother Walter, who was sitting next to me, got a burn on his ear.

For the Navy he once made a batch of silver nitroform, a brilliant yellow powder, which he put in a desiccator – a two gallon jar with magnesium perchlorate in the bottom and a ground glass lid made air tight with a grease seal to the jar. Then we went out to dinner. When we came back, the desiccator was in place, but the silver nitroform was gone, and the desiccator lid was also gone. On the ceiling was a circular mark where the lid had hit, and on the floor and the bench tops and all over was the fine glass powder that the lid had been smashed into. Later, he began working with fulminuric acid, for which the intermediate step required mercury fulminate. He kept the dry mercury fulminate sitting around in paper cups, each covered with a piece of filter paper. "It's safer that way," he explained. "If it explodes it won't throw fragments."

It was about then that the Chemistry Department moved him out of the regular Chemistry Building and into the Heavilon Hall Annex, which had last been used to make elemental fluorine. There was still an acid smell in the air, hydrogen fluoride probably, and exposed glassware would get etched. After we finished moving in, he was missing one cup of mercury fulminate, which he discreetly chose not ask after. One of the things we did in the annex was to make tetranitro-

methane (TNM), because the Navy was buying the stuff for a dollar a gram and at the end we were using the biggest glassware they had in the stockroom.

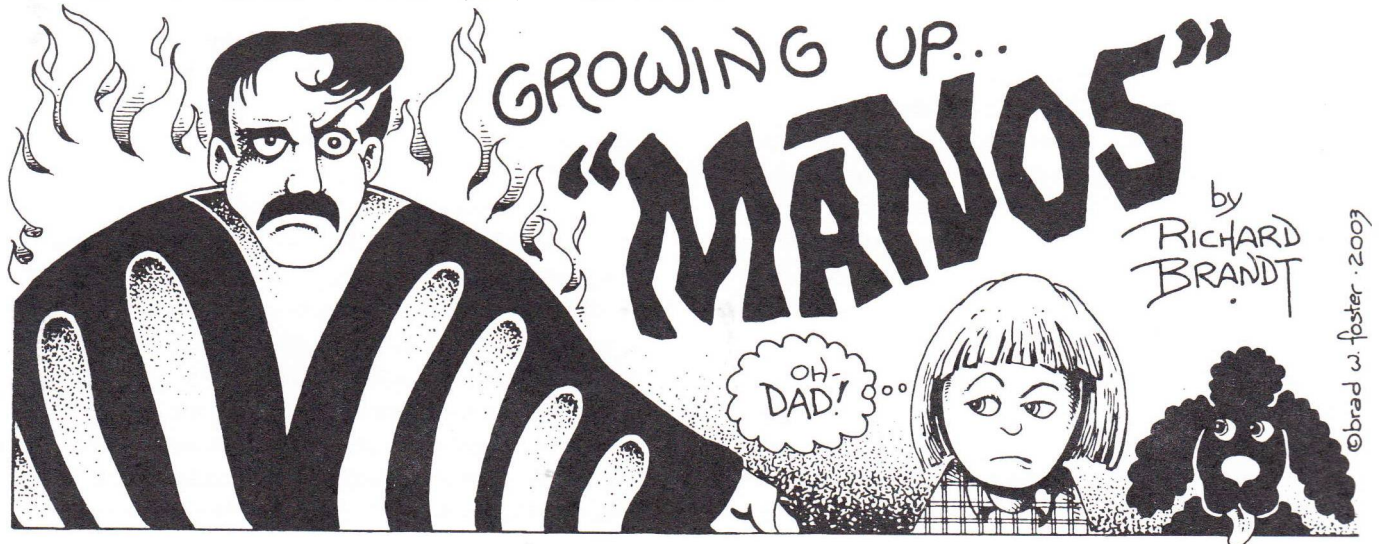
Eventually, my father left Purdue and set up his own laboratory in a converted garage as a prime contractor for the U.S. Navy. One of the things he was doing was making TNM, and on a pilot plant scale. He bought a 55-gallon drum of red fuming nitric acid, for instance. In this endeavor he was about six months behind another entrepreneur up in Chicago, but after a bit, we got his system working just fine, producing a couple of thousand dollars worth of TNM at a time. And then he just stopped. He never told me why, but later I discovered that his competition up in Chicago had had an accident, resulting in a crater fifty feet wide and about twenty feet deep, and three people missing and presumed dead. Well, knowing that your reaction mixture is a Sprengel-type explosive and therefore dangerous is one thing. Knowing that it has actually detonated is quite another. My father put the drum of red fuming nitric acid in the freezer and went on to other things, eventually inheriting the family farm and traveling between Lafayette, Indiana, and Harrington, Washington. The lab became a storage place for things too explosive, corrosive or dangerous to keep about the house.

My father died in 1971 at age 70, and the bulk of his estate, including the farm and the laboratory went to my brother Paul, who eventually sold the house in Lafayette and moved out to Harrington. Being a serious packrat like our father, Paul left the laboratory in place since he couldn't bring himself to dispose of its contents.

In 1981, my father made it onto the front page of *The Washington Post*. What happened was that the Lafayette Fire Department had been interested in the lab for some time, but my father, and Paul after him, had declined their requests for an inspection. Then a transient broke into the place, seeking shelter from the cold, and made a small fire on the concrete floor. He departed, having caused no damage, but left the door ajar, which the Fire Department took as an invitation. They went in and freaked out, calling in bomb disposal experts from as far away as Hawaii, and the discovery of an "abandoned bomb lab" from the counter-cultural '60s made front page news.

The bomb disposal experts found most of the stuff harmless and all of it properly labeled, but Paul had to get rid of it, burning the preheats and pouring the red fuming nitric acid down the drain in the dead of night. Was that permitted? Probably he figured it was better to ask forgiveness than permission. He may still have the bomb models my father used as teaching aids – but I don't know about that one-pound block of TNT. ☼

Time now to tie up a loose end from an earlier issue. One of the most popular articles we ever published in *Mimosa* was Richard Brandt's "The Hand That Time Forgot," which originally appeared in *M18* and was reprinted in the second half of *A Mimosa Fanthology*. That article was about the making of the movie *Manos: The Hands of Fate*, a 1960s-era film so adorably bad that it achieved instant cult status after it was lampooned by *Mystery Science Theater 3000* three decades later. Turns out that *MST3K* has its own fandom where FIAWOL has every bit the same meaning as it does for science fiction fandom (maybe even more so, in fact), as Richard discovered once the web version of *M18* appeared on the *Mimosa* web site. Given that, it wasn't a question 'if' Richard would ever write a follow-up article, it was only a question of 'when'.



By now, the legend of *Manos: The Hands of Fate* should be familiar, if not forgotten: How Hal Warren, a fertilizer salesman in El Paso, Texas, got a few friends together in 1966 and made a staggeringly if not stupefyingly inept low-budget horror film; how it premiered in El Paso and actually found a distributor to play it in a few theaters; how it subsequently all but disappeared and became a Holy Grail of cult-movie completists; and finally, how it was resurrected by *Mystery Science Theater* and gained a whole new following, and perhaps a whole new kind of, well, respect, in a way.

But for one little girl, *Manos* was all this, and more. For little Jackey Neyman, it was the time of her life.

"My father is Tom Neyman, who played The Master," Jackey told me over the phone. "When my parents told me they were making this movie and Hal Warren needed someone to play his daughter, they said, 'It's okay, honey, if you don't want to do it, we can always find another little girl.' And I was, like, 'No way! No other little girl is getting *my* part!'"

The project became quite a family affair. Her father, an artist, made the "Torgo thighs," the appliances that bulked up John Reynolds' legs, out of wire coat hangers and foam, as well as painting the self-portrait of "The Master" and making the iron sculp-

tures of hands that decorate the film.

"My mom made all the costumes," Jackey says, "including those for the lovely ladies from Mannequin Manor. That was really Hal's personal fantasy, I think, that ten-minute wrestling scene."

And Jackey's dog, Shanka, played the devil dog from the Lodge of Sins.

"Shanka was a real sweetheart, but not that smart. Getting him to obey commands – like, 'Go here, go there' – well, that was trouble."

As inexperienced as she was, Jackey didn't think she was necessarily giving her best performance, but her director thought it best to bolster her morale by assuring her she was doing fine.

"Hal was an optimist. He'd just tell me, 'Don't worry, hon, we'll fix it later in the editing.' He was always saying, 'We can fix this, we can fix that. And I thought to myself, 'Wow – movies really *are* magic!'"

"What was so disappointing when I saw the film, was I knew I could have done so much better if anyone had only said something. I was very shy and unsure of myself and didn't have very good direction."

Considering they were playing father and daughter, Jackey says there was absolutely no chemistry on the set between her and Hal.

"I was a prop to him," she recalls. "He wouldn't

even look at me. I never felt any real hostility, just a kind of – indifference. I think Hal was a little afraid of me, actually. Hal had a new baby but no experience with children of my age, and when someone hasn't had any kids of their own, they can be kind of intimidating."

For all that, she insists it was the best summer of her life.

"Well, I got to spend all that time with my dad! I loved my dad; he was my hero."

John Reynolds, tragically, never even lasted until the night of the premiere. "Later I realized the reason he was so much fun on the set was probably because he was high all the time."

On the night of the premiere ("I'd spent all day in the beauty parlor," she recalls wistfully), Jackey took the short limo ride to the theater with the rest of the stars, and had that familiar sinking feeling as the film began to unreele.

"Hey, I was only seven and it was humiliating! It was so obviously bad that even a seven-year-old could see it."

One scene mystifies audiences to this day:

"They cut out a scene where Torgo ran off into the desert with his hand in flames," she says. "Now you see the Master stick Torgo's arm in the fire, and next thing the Master is holding up Torgo's severed, burning hand. Now, I don't remember exactly how Torgo's hand came off, but you don't get that from sticking your hand into a fire!"

When "Debbie" spoke her first lines in the film, it delivered the crushing blow:

"Someone else's voice came out! Hal and Diane had gone to Dallas and dubbed all of the dialogue, and somehow I hadn't realized it wouldn't be me talking on the screen. I mean, it was bad enough as it was, but at least people could have heard my real voice!"

"Poor Hal, he had much higher aspirations and ideals. Big ideas and no budget. He did manage to get the movie played at some drive-ins in West Texas, which was quite a feat, considering.

"Everyone worked real hard, and the only ones who got paid were me and Shanka. I got a new bicycle, and Shanka got a fifty-pound bag of dog food."

In the years afterward, Jackey moved to California with her father, and stayed on there when he moved to the Pacific Northwest. Their only souvenirs from the *Manos* shoot were some stills and a copy of Tom's contract, "which makes clear that no matter

what happened, no one was getting any royalties from the movie!"

By the time she was attending Berkeley, she had friends trying to track down a print of the film, but no one could find a trace of it.

"I'm really grateful to the folks at *Mystery Science Theater* for unearthing it," she says, "because, first, I called them and they were able to send me a copy. And second, because without their commentary, it would be painful to watch! It's kind of like watching a train wreck."

Now that she's Jackey Jones, and all grown up with a successful career as a painter in Oregon, would she have missed out on the experience? Not for all the world.

"I was such a shy, withdrawn, sensitive kid," she tells me. "Catching the acting bug turned out to be my saving grace. I went into theater in a big way at school, and ended up directing the high school play in my sophomore year!"

So, there you have it. *Manos: The Hands of Fate* can be a life-altering experience.

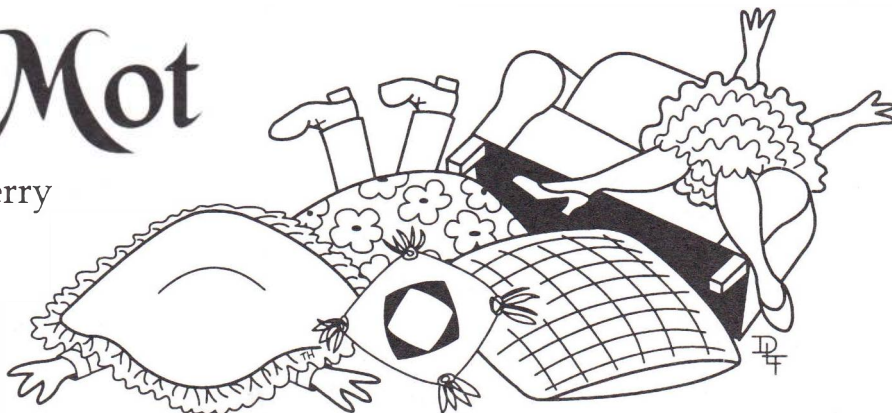
And we mean that in a *good* way. ☆



☛ Since this is a FIAWOL-theme fanzine, it seems only appropriate to include an article from someone who, back in the 1950s, was a member of the most FIAWOL-driven fan organization of all time, the legendary Irish Fandom. This is not a remembrance of that era, however – it looks back even further, to the post-war years, where the writer was still a member of the British military. The following tale is part of a much lengthier forthcoming memoir of those years.

Bonn Mot

by John Berry



I was transferred to a Battalion of The Manchester Regiment stationed at Wuppertal, Westphalia, West Germany, as part of the British Army of Occupation of the Rhine. Wuppertal was heavily bombed in World War II, and although I was posted there some time after the end of the war, huge piles of debris had not been removed, but merely pushed aside to form clear roads bisecting the town.

The devastation was really terrible, as it was in Cologne, Essen, Dusseldorf, and other German cities I visited. However, the army barracks in Wuppertal, built of course for the Wehrmacht, were virtually untouched, because they were built to defy every sort of attack, be it bombing or heavy artillery. The buildings were huge monolith-like oblongs, three stories high, with thick concrete walls and flat roofs. Barracks were sited either side of a main road, and I noted that male civilians walking along the road touched their headwear to officers as a form of salute. I was given a platoon of thirty men, most of them young soldiers who had completed their infantry courses in Manchester.

In the summer of 1948, the Army Welfare Service circulated information to army units offering trips down the Rhine. The Adjutant in my Battalion detailed me to organise a party and take charge of the trip. A Corporal approached me and asked if he could take his wife, which was an unusual request, but the Order from the organisers did not veto wives attending, so I said I would see what I could do. We were permitted to only take ten personnel. I was going, that was for sure, but I was surprised at the small number of soldiers who wished to sail down the Rhine, and so I told the Corporal his wife could go. A few of the

senior soldiers, not in rank but in service, had houses in Wuppertal – regular soldiers, of course. The Corporal was therefore accommodated.

The army truck was parked outside the Guardroom at 08.00 hours, and our party gathered there – myself, the driver, six private soldiers and the Corporal and his wife. She was a plump woman about forty years old; they hadn't been married much over a month or two. As Officer-in-charge I travelled in the cab with the driver, and although the soldiers were quite comfortable sitting on the hard seats along the sides of the truck, I felt this would be rather uncomfortable for the Corporal's wife, travelling the sixty miles to Königs-winter, our starting point. I couldn't offer her my seat, as it was necessary for me to travel with the driver. The Corporal whispered a suggestion to me.

"Sir, suppose we drive to my house and get an armchair for my wife and put it in the back of the truck?"

I pondered. "Er, let's try it," I said.

We drove to his house; he took a couple of soldiers with him and they appeared with a small settee, a two-seater, and we heaved it into the truck. She sat there; she said it was extremely comfortable. And of course, there was more room for the soldiers to stretch their legs.

"Shall I get some cushions, sir?" he asked.

They were soft feminine items, of vivid floral design with tasselled edges. Oh well, what the hell – the soldiers were pleased. But now they were more comfortable than I was, and this wasn't good for discipline.

"Would you like one, sir?"

He used his initiative and brought out two pillows – they were pink and really cosy. The driver didn't

want one, though he gave me a couple of rueful glances. I kept mine and threw the other one in the back.

We drove on the wide, straight autobahn to Königswinter. It wasn't badly damaged; it had a preponderance of large houses, and before the war it must have been a desirable place to live. En route, the sun had blazed down, and at the soldier's request we stopped and took off the tarpaulin from the top and sides. Germans looked at us in amazement as we entered Königswinter, and some of the older residents frowned; they held the British Army in high esteem and they were surprised to see the soldiers cheering – the Corporal and his wife appeared to be getting rather amorous on the settee. I stopped and asked a policeman the way to our hotel; when he saw me reclining on a pink pillow he also seemed to be rather disillusioned, and in the mirror I saw him take off his helmet and scratch his head in bewilderment as he espied than sprawling troops in the back of the truck.

Several other army unit trucks were at the hotel with personnel to make up the full passenger list. The Corporal's wife was the only female in attendance. All the trucks were parked in line abreast. At my insistence all the cushions and pillows were rammed behind the settee out of sight, but the settee of course was all too plainly visible. Fortunately, I was the only officer in the party, so even though senior NCOs from other units disapproved of the settee in an army truck, none of them offered any verbal criticism.

Next morning we went aboard the Rhine Cruiser. There was ample space, and the soldiers from the different army units were soon bonded into an amicable group. We left the berth and chugged into the mainstream of the Rhine, southwards. There were steep hills on both sides of the wide river, and I was surprised at the number of castles sited strategically atop them. Vineyards were also a common sight, racked horizontally up the sides of the hills.

In the late afternoon we reached Coblenz, and spent the night in an army barracks. The Corporal and his wife had their own room – it seemed to me that they thought they were on their second honeymoon. I figured that if they dissipated their passions overnight, they would not distract the soldiers in the morning.

We left quite early next morning for the run with the flow to Königswinter to assist our passage. We had a spartan lunch on board, and arrived in Königswinter in the early afternoon. Back in the truck, I would not permit them to distribute the cushions and pillows until we had left Königswinter. I decided I'd like to go to Bonn and visit the birthplace of Beetho-

ven, so we turned left at the autobahn and crossed the Rhine into Bonn.

It must have been a beautiful place before the war, and naturally it suffered bombing and artillery fire. Fortunately, the area of Bonn where Beethoven had lived was undamaged, and by shrewd map-reading we found it quite quickly. The other persons in my party were not interested in Ludwig, so I suggested they should go for a walk and return in half an hour. I could not get into the house, but I photographed it, and at a nearby shop I 'purchased' several postcards and a most wonderfully detailed alabaster bust of Beethoven, so detailed that every pimple on his visage was depicted. It was about eight inches high, and it took almost my whole stock of cigarettes to do the deal, but I was utterly delighted.

We met at the truck exactly on time, crossed the Rhine and drove north east towards Wuppertal. It was hot and monotonous traveling along the autobahn, and though I tried my hardest, I fell asleep. Suddenly I was awakened by a screech of brakes and was thrown forward against the angled metal of the truck below the windscreen. I suspected our driver had almost succumbed to an uncontrollable slumber, and had awakened not a second too soon. We swerved, but he controlled the truck admirably, and we stopped at an angle on the autobahn. He quickly drove us to the verge of the road.

With heart thumping and fearing the worst, I looked into the rear of the truck. There was a mass of arms and legs intermingled, but when the white-faced passengers sorted themselves out, there wasn't even the slightest injury to report. The Corporal opined that the settee, cushions and pillows had saved everyone from injury, and I agreed with him. The driver looked a very worried man.

I climbed into the rear of the truck, told the driver to join us, and then I addressed the party. "Listen chaps, and lady," I said, "the driver slightly lost control of the truck, there there are no injuries, and there is no damage to the truck. You all know I should report this incident to Motor Transport Officer, a close friend of mine, but, if you all agree, I do not intend to as there are no injuries or damage."

They loudly agreed, so we continued our journey at a somewhat slower speed. We dropped off our civilian accoutrements at the Corporal's house, and stopped outside the Guardroom as a pristine disciplined military outfit.

It turned out there *had* been some damage, though. The nose had been broken off my Beethoven bust... ✱

☛ Since this is our final issue, it's time for a bit of closure. Coming up next is the second of Sharon Farber's two articles and, we regret to say, the conclusion of her 'Medical Adventures' series. There's a lot of things we'll miss about publishing a fanzine, and one of them will be receiving a new Sharon Farber article in the mail. Her final article in the series offers some closure of its own, in a way, as well as a further demonstration of the old maxim that 'No Good Deed Goes Unpunished'.



Tales of Adventure and Medical Life #17

The Final Chapter

by Sharon Farber



Last week I was asked to see an unfortunate in the surgical ICU, a woman who had had a cardiac arrest as she was being wheeled into the unit. Despite the fact that a well-equipped resuscitation team jumped on her immediately, she suffered severe brain damage as well as multiorgan system failure. That is the fate of the vast majority of people whose hearts stop but are jump-started long enough to reach the hospital (and most don't make it that far), and also of many lucky enough to drop dead inside a top medical facility. The life expectancy of someone who dies is, well, about as long as that of a six-pack at a Superbowl party.

Part of a neurologist's job is to evaluate patients with anoxic encephalopathy (brain damage caused by lack of oxygen), and to give the family the odds for improvement. This woman looked about as hopeless as you can get, short of frank brain death. A machine was breathing for her; a portable kidney dialysis unit hummed continuously as it filtered her blood; there were at least half a dozen bags of intravenous medicine hanging above her.

I was trying to look in her ear, was getting tangled up in the endotracheal tube and the spaghetti lines straightened up, cursing, and some of my hair – it's waist length, gets caught regularly in car doors, and after the movie *Hannibal* came out our office nurses became obsessed with slamming it in refrigerator doors – my hair, by some fluke, drifted toward the dialysis machine and became caught up in the rotors. I was yanked toward the machine, my hair wrapped

about the dial, the alarms started blaring as dialysis stopped, the nurses heard me shouting as I was getting scalped.

So there I was, examining a doomed patient and we're all laughing hysterically.

There is a fine line between tragedy and farce.

#

I remember some letters to the editor of *The Flash* that I read in the early '60s. Readers complained that *The Flash* was not really comic; perhaps it would better be called a *tragicomic*. I found this quite profound – I was ten, okay?

(Now, what I know about literary theory could be inscribed upon the head of a pin and still leave plenty of room for angels to dance, but I suspect that pure adventure stories are exempt from the binary characterization as comic or tragic. Though from my current viewpoint I do consider The Trickster with his anti-gravity shoes, Captain Cold with his freeze-ray, and the Weather Wizard with his weather control wand to be extremely tragic for their hopeless lack of vision. They could be millionaires, living off their patents. They could be entrepreneurs in the fields of entertainment, construction, air conditioning. They could be humanitarians, bringing rain to the Sahara and sunny days to Oregon. But no, they choose to be petty criminals, knocking over branch offices of the First Bank of Central City, to inevitably be caught by the Scarlet Speedster.)

As a writer, sometimes feel that almost any trag-

edy can be comedy, and vice versa, depending on presentation and viewpoint. Take *Weekend at Bernie's*. A would-be comic romp. But from Bernie's standpoint, more of a tragedy. Perhaps even for the young executives seeking their boss's approval. Could they not have wound up as the corporate versions of masterless samurai? (Whoa. *Kurosawa's Weekend at Bernie's*. Sometimes I frighten myself.)

What about the death of a great or beloved leader? Can you write a comedy about the assassination of JFK? Well yeah, it just won't be tasteful. (I saw an ad in several Christmas catalogues for a dye-cast model of the limo in which JFK was shot, complete with Jackie and the Connollys, the victims in that Zapruder-famous pose as the bullets enter... Only \$70. Hard to top as a sophisticated stocking stuffer.)

It's hard to joke if the loss of the king leaves his realm in chaos, fodder for conquest... But what if the king decreed that he should be succeeded by whichever warrior prince is brave enough to rescue his daughter from one of those pesky towers guarded by dragons? Surely no less intelligent a method of choosing the head of state than the Electoral College. And what if a cowardly prince convinces an earnest yet dim stagehand to don his armor and undertake the quest.

Can you have fun with the destruction of planet Earth? No sweat. *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Are some things simply too awful even for black comedy? Probably. The Holocaust (Benigni and Robin Williams notwithstanding). Though perhaps we have simply not yet birthed the comic genius who will create the definitive *Hogan's Heroes*' version of Auschwitz.

Tragedy. Comedy. All in the presentation.

#

May 4, 2001 was the 110th anniversary of the day that Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty died, locked in each other's arms as they tumbled from the Reichenbach Falls. Some Sherlockians believe that Moriarty had been Holmes' teacher or friend. It's always much more personal when your archfoe was once your pal.

I had an enemy. Let's call him Magneto, after another villain who had once been the hero's friend. Or perhaps I should name him for Mr. Fantastic's friend turned foe Doctor Doom; right title. Or for Superman's boyhood buddy Lex Luthor, also follicularly-challenged. No, Magneto will do.

He had been my mentor. I turned to him for help, I gave him respect, I accepted his leadership. Then he, in a bid for power, allied himself with an unscrupulous lot. My practice was damaged, I had to stop teaching, I lost many insured patients (or as managed care mavens prefer to call them, "covered lives"). I found that doctors whom I had also thought my friends, doctors whose family members I had cared for, even some doctors I had treated, would no longer send me patients. And that some of these doctors, desiring to refer my current patients where they could receive an infinitesimal share of the fees, would lie.

And so I was threatened with lawsuits based entirely on things these doctors had said.

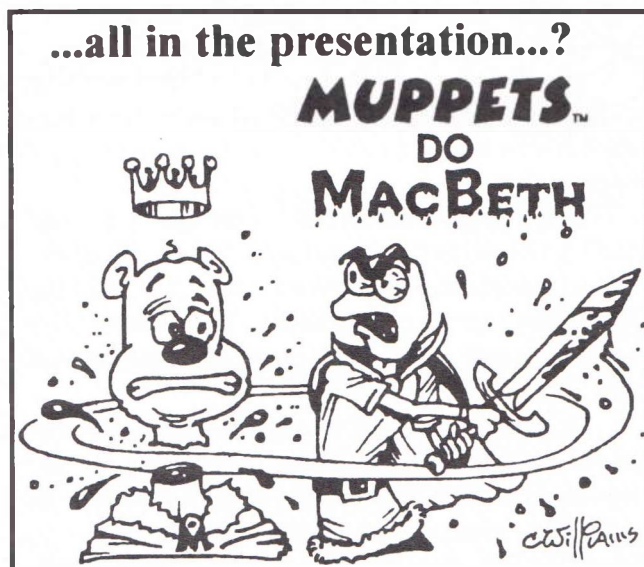
Now, I am not perfect. I make mistakes. But the things I was accused of were laughable.

(I heard even worse stories from other doctors whose patients were similarly aggressively redirected. Leading to the joke: Q: What's the difference between the Mafia and the _____ Medical Group? A: The Mafia has a code of honor.)

Meanwhile, my 13 hour days had become 14, 15, 16. I was on call every third night and weekend. I lived on fries and shakes consumed while driving. My weight ballooned, blood pressure soared, mood plummeted, self-esteem tanked. I felt so disheartened and worthless that I stopped writing and broke up with a boyfriend. It was the last nail in the coffin of my idealism.

And I wondered how I had been such a bad judge of character. Perhaps, I concluded, Magneto had simply been a Rorschach pattern which I had misinterpreted as honorable and trustworthy.

Of course, being the chronically sleep-deprived bitch that I am, I didn't take it lying down. I told Magneto what I thought of him. For a number of years I either ignored him or insulted him.



#

Friday, May 4. I hoped to finish early and drag friends out to celebrate the death and resurrection of Sherlock Holmes. (I used to hold a birthday party for Holmes every January 6. But everyone is all partied out on January 6.) I also hoped to get back in time for our office's Secretaries' Day lunch, which I had missed several years running. I skipped breakfast and set off for a hospital 30 minutes north, where I have a satellite office.

About 7:15, I turned onto the drive leading to the parking garage. It's usually deserted at this hour; doctors in this community tending to round later than in the city. A white Saturn was stopped outside the garage; not unusual for someone to pause while someone inside backs up. There was an SUV between me and the Saturn. A surgeon got out, striding toward the Saturn with an angry set to his shoulders. He was going to demand that the driver move.

Then I saw the surgeon do a double take. This was not automotive trouble. I turned off my car and sprinted. The surgeon was opening the door to the car, reaching in. was behind the door, couldn't see a thing. "He's dead," he said.

"Shit," replied. An inauspicious start to the day.

"It's Magneto," he continued.

"*Shit*," I repeated, with somewhat more feeling.

We stared at each other momentarily, and then he tried to lift. Magneto is tall, and a Saturn door not large. He looked at me again. "Well, give me a hand."

He filled the doorway, reached around, got my fingers around Magneto's collar, and hauled. We lowered him ungentle to the ground, legs still in the car.

The surgeon looked at me and I at him. He'd been there first; by medical etiquette it was his code, I was the assistant. He held out his cellphone. I'm an idiot with cellphones, so I turned and ran back to my car while he began CPR. I called 911 then the hospital ER, screaming for them to send the codeteam and ran back. The surgeon was looking tired. CPR is harder than it looks. He gestured for me to take over respirations.

No one else stopped to help. A pediatrician later complimented me on my public spiritedness for running to help someone with car trouble. A pathologist admitted to having seen the Saturn idling and to walking by without stopping. We did acquire a small audience of the elderly and infirm, who wandered over from the medical building opposite to watch.

"You know, he's not my friend," I told the surgeon. "He's one of my worst enemies." As he com-

pressed, counting to 15. Then I'd breath twice.

I wasn't sure it was working. You can see the resuscitation dummy's chest expand. For real is not as easy. "Shit," I kept repeating. "I don't think I'm getting a seal."

If he wasn't getting air, he wouldn't make it. His odds sucked in general, but the air thing was now my responsibility, and I'd feel guilty at the inevitable.

I thought should be feeling something at that moment. And I realized what I was feeling. Sheer overwhelming terror.

I've been in some bad situations in my life. I once crawled into a flipped car leaking gasoline to help the driver. I once, just like in a bad movie, jumped in front of a kid on a runaway horse. I once was tied up by a lunatic. But I had not been afraid in any of those situations, just mad as hell – at the driver for trying a hairpin turn at 50 mph, at my sister for putting the child on the skittish horse, at myself for being stupid enough to be alone with my wacky employer.

But this time there was no one to be angry at – my usual anger, in fact, defused – and my heart was going about 150. (The surgeon later told me that his hands were shaking so that he couldn't operate for an hour.) Codes aren't scary in the hospital; they're part of the job. You're ready for them. There's equipment, medicine, more help than you need. This was, well, blind fate, and all we could do was give it a try and expect the worst.

I was also thinking, "Damn, I hope he doesn't puke." Vomit is the usual outcome of artificial respiration, and it makes it sort of hard to continue.

Then, pausing during the count, found myself looking at his eyes, inches from mine. And that was the creepiest part of the morning. Because he didn't have dead eyes.

As a neurologist, I'm used to looking into the eyes of the comatose, of the dead, of patients whose hearts stopped and brains fried. Glassy, unreactive eyes, lids open.

This was different. His lids were open just a bit, and I could see the irises under the lashes. His eyes looked – peaceful. Not cliché peaceful, but...laid back. He had the expression of someone kicked back on the beach, a couple piña coladas down, enjoying the sunny day.

Magneto was one of the most Type A people I knew – next to him, I'm Cheech and Chong. If the National Institute of Standards needs a prototype to put behind glass and label UPTIGHT, he's their guy. I realized that, even when we'd been friends, I had

never seen him relaxed. Of everything strange that morning, this view of his eyes was what freaked me out the most.

#

He survived. He more than survived, he was back to work six weeks later. It was a nine days wonder. Cardiac arrests just don't do that well. Cardiologists would say, "I saw your patient in the hall," then shake their heads in amazement.

Then they'd smile wickedly, and ask if I wanted the billing code for CPR.

I actually tried a couple times to start a conversation with Magneto, but it didn't work. I did receive a thank you letter and a souvenir clock. I keep the clock on what I call the Wall of Mortality (after the Animaniacs' Wheel of Morality), between a nice arrangement of dead flowers in a vase left over from a friend's hospitalization for cancer and the office's model skeleton, which I rendered cheery with a Grateful Deadish array of plastic roses.

#

So, what's the point of the story? What are the implications of helping to save an enemy?

Other than proving the cliché that truth is stranger than fiction. I mentioned it to an editor. "If I wrote this in a story, you'd reject it out of hand."

"Right," he replied. "But you could selling it for big bucks to the *Reader's Digest* as a personal story, or *Writer's Digest* on the difference between life and art."



The first repercussion was that I was unable to work on my novel for half a year.

I have developed a delusion regarding my prophetic abilities. I was plotting a novel on Medea, and a ditz killed her two children. I started work on a disaster novel about a big quake in Japan, and guess what happened? I outlined a novel about terrorists taking over a hospital, and it happened somewhere in Russia...

A friend and considered writing a book where a comet hits the earth – boring old stuff, except that it would be Halley's comet in 1910 and the characters would include Sigmund Freud and Virginia Woolf. I stopped that project real quick.

When the parking lot incident occurred, I had just finished the second draft of a book about Nazi werewolves – not a lot of chance of that happening, thank you. But there's a character the heroine despises but will later come to adore, and there's a scene where she's helping shove his apparently dead body into a car for a getaway.

As we were pulling Magneto out of the Saturn thought, "This is like my novel in reverse." And that was enough to block my rewrite. Well, that and the thought of 550 pages of typos, grammatical errors, anachronisms and continuity problems.

#

The second repercussion was that I did something nasty to my right shoulder and sterno-clavicular joint in the extrication. I had had to lift all wrong, using just my arms. It hurt bad enough I asked advice of an orthoped and one of my partners – and me the sort of person who says "Yeah, I saw a doctor," meaning in the mirror while brushing my teeth. It's all better now, if I don't violate the mutual non-aggression pact and lift anything over ten pounds.

But for months it kept me from sleeping. And when I did sleep, when I'd dream, I'd see his dead eyes and I'd wake up with my heart going 150 again.

Until 9-11. The image of the second plane entering the tower replaced Magneto in the landscape of my nightmares.

#

The most annoying sequel to the rescue was its effect on the medical community. They considered it hysterical.

I feared that would happen. I asked the ER doctor to keep my name out of it. But it was too good a story.

I had called two of my partners. When I finally got back to the office, very late, I found that it had been the topic of conversation at the Secretary's Day

lunch. My associate had amused all with, "Mrs. Magneto called to complain about the lipstick." (It had briefly crossed my mind to be thankful I'd been wearing the really pale pink and not the bright red.)

Not a great witticism, but notable for being the first. And because this doctor had choked up when I told her, the only person to express any sentiment save amusement or amazement. Though she later denied being tearful, claiming she had been chortling.

No one I knew seemed broken up over Magneto's misfortune. He'd survived; it was fair game. One of his own former employees stopped me once to explain how she'd been on vacation, and when she returned her coworkers had said, "This is so funny, you have to hear this..." At the moment he had still been hospitalized, fate unclear.

I was sorry that my participation had turned Magneto's brief demise into a joke. The situation demanded some respect.

Then I learned that the majority of the jokes were at my expense.

Some labored attempts at humor focused on my imagined efforts to screw up the code, and my frustration when it succeeded. Most were cruder. Evidently the thought of mouth to mouth resuscitation is revolting even to doctors. The tamest was, "I heard you kissed and made up."

Most were just plain gross. A critical care specialist told me that he wasn't going to repeat what was being said, and that I should never, ever ask him. Doctors lacking his discretion have taken pleasure in seeing how much they can make me blush. Evidently the concepts of kneeling and blowing strike men as very, very funny.

Last week, almost two years after the event, it goes on. A gastroenterologist said, "I saw Magneto this weekend – he looks great. He wanted to know if it was good for you too."

Now, I am a humorist and it would be wrong for me to imply that I never joked about it. When I could no longer bear the question, "Why did you do it?" I began to answer, "I didn't have a choice. He was blocking traffic."

Only two weeks after the code a pulmonologist said, "I cannot believe what I heard what you did for Magneto." My tuberculosis skin test had just turned red (luckily a false positive). I rolled up my sleeve for him to admire and said, "yes, and his troubles are only beginning."

#

To return to my original theme: was this tragedy

or farce?

From his viewpoint it should be tragic. He died, after all, alone, in pain, in a cheap car on a bright spring morning.

But he survived, recovered amazingly. If he had taken this as a cosmic sign to clean up his act, if it had stirred him to awareness of ethical malfeasance, if he had learned from it – other than the usual "Uh oh, I'm past my expiration date, what the hell happened to my life?" – then Aeschylus might have been interested.

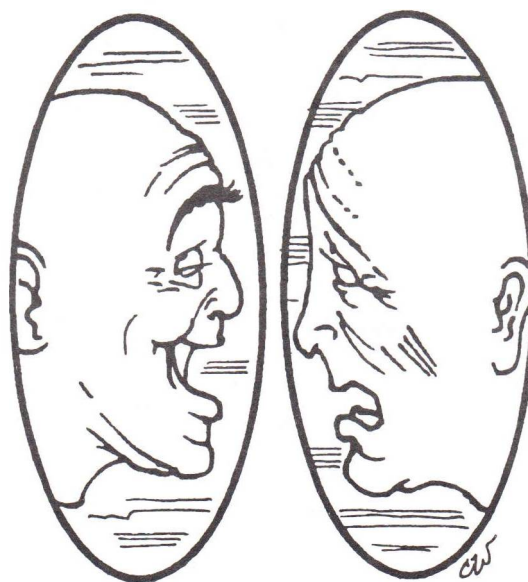
But there's been no outward sign of Sophoclean epiphany. So, rather than sadness and despair, it is a tale of a proud, even arrogant man who must live under the omnipresent pale of doom, and who may or may not be aware that his demise was considered hilarious.

Now, that's comedy!

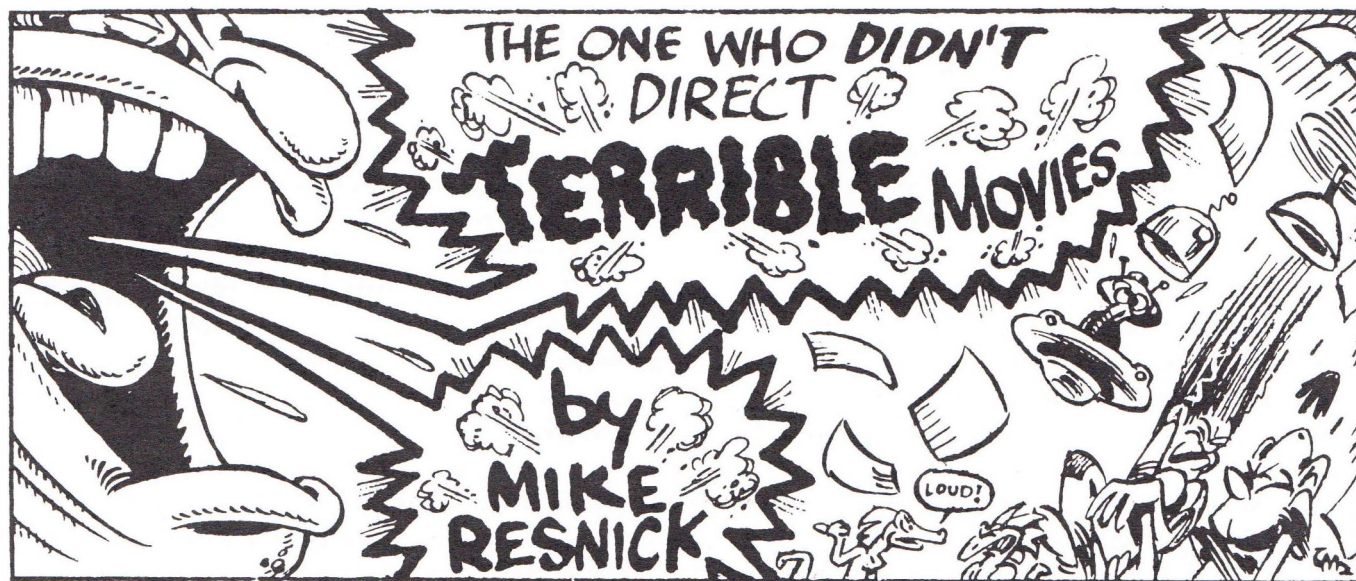
From my position, it should be farce. I went from revering to reviling the man, and then I breathed for him. Becoming in the process the source of infinite amusement, demolishing the feeble remnants of my dignity.

Maybe. But I had reached a certain bitter acceptance of my situation – the loss of professional status, the loss of friendships, the loss of the closest thing to a mentor had ever had, and the end of my idealism. May 4 – a day when I liked to parody celebrations of death and resurrection – robbed me of complacency. It turned things around in patterns still don't comprehend, and made me aware again of loss and emptiness. Perhaps for me, it was a tragedy.

But hell, I'm just the writer. And as my critic friends tell me, writers just create this stuff. They don't have to understand it. ✧



From time to time we've been asked if being a fanzine publisher is, in the end, really worth all the sometimes extraordinary lengths, in terms of time and money, that it requires to produce a publication like *Mimosa*. The easy way to respond would simply be to say yes, and point toward the recognition we've received over the years, but in truth there's really no simple answer. This final issue of the run is supposed to be a FIAWOL-theme issue, and we're pleased to present articles like the following remembrance of a fan who quite often went to extraordinary lengths of his own to do kindnesses, all in the spirit of FIAWOL. *Mimosa*, though, originally came into being not from any spirit of FIAWOL but from a more basic need to preserve bits of fan history, especially from the First Fandom "dinosaur" era, that were then only fragilely kept in the memories of some of the older fans. We think we've mostly succeeded, but in time the fanzine acquired a life of its own and "being worth the effort" no longer entered into the equation. Probably the main reason we're ending publication is that the time for *Mimosa* now seems past – there are now some other good means of preserving fan history, and with the ever-diminishing size of our mailing list and the passing of many of our contributors, *Mimosa* itself seemed to us to be slowly turning into somewhat of a dinosaur. It's the right decision to end it now. It will seem strange not to be planning a "next" issue, but it will be good not to be planning life around a publishing schedule!



The other day I mentioned Ed Wood to a couple of younger fans.

"The movie director?" asked one.

"The guy who did *Plan Nine From Planet X*?" asked the other, almost simultaneously.

"No, the fan," I replied.

"The movie director was a fan?" asked the first one.

Well, I was looking for something to contribute to this final issue of *Mimosa*, and that convinced me that someone had better write a little something about Ed Wood before fandom forgets him.

The first time I saw Ed was in the masquerade at my very first Worldcon, Discon I in Washington D.C., back in 1963. He was wearing about 75 membership badges from prior conventions and he walked across stage after being duly announced as "Superfan."

How true it was.

Ed's fannish exertions were legend. He edited the wonderful *Journal of Science Fiction*. He contributed

to fanzines. He worked on conventions. Most important, he was one of the founders, and eventually the editor, of *Advent Press*, which was just about the only source of criticism and pro and fannish history in the field from the 1950s to the 1970s. This was the house that published everything from Knight's *In Search of Wonder* and Blish's *The Issue at Hand* to Bloch's *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* and Warner's *All Our Yesterdays*, as well as *Proceedings* (complete transcripts) of both Chicon III and Discon I.

He was also the most crochety, wonderful, ill-tempered, generous sonuvabitch I ever met.

Example: Right after Carol and I were married, we moved into a subterranean penthouse (read: basement apartment) at the corner of North Shore and Greenview in Chicago's Rogers Park area. We were the only two science fiction fans we knew – and unbeknownst to us, Chicago fandom met every month at George Price's apartment, which was perhaps 80 feet from our front door. It was Ed who befriended us at

Discon, half a country away, and told us when and where to show up.

So we started attending the meetings. Like most newlyweds, we were broke, maybe a little more broke than most. I remember mentioning during a mid-December meeting at George's that Carol absolutely loved C.L. Moore's Northwest Smith stories (I hadn't read them yet, but I'm now their greatest fan), and I asked if there were any more beyond the two Gnome Press collections that she already owned. Someone, I think it was Alexei Panshin, said that yes, she'd written one for a fanzine that was never professionally published. I replied that I was going to start saving my money right then, and hopefully by next Christmas, 53 weeks off, I could find and buy a copy for Carol.

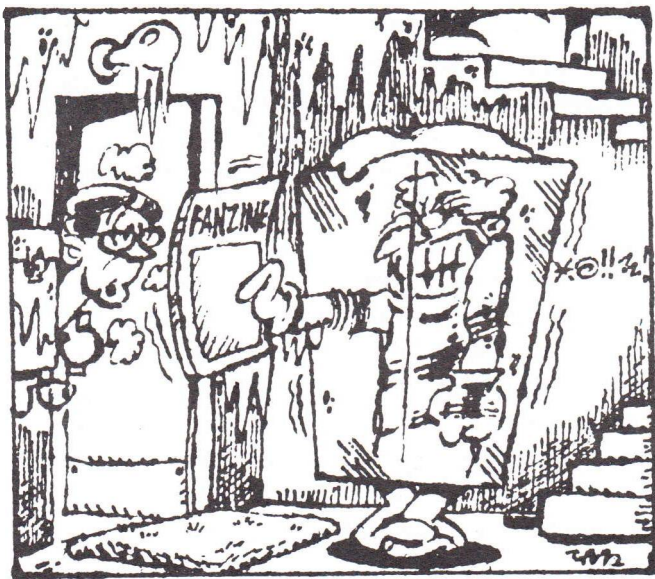
And that was that. The meeting broke up about midnight and we trudged back across the street through a heavy snowfall that was fast turning into a blizzard.

And at about 5:00 AM, the doorbell rang, and there was Ed Wood, covered with snow and ice. He had driven home to Milwaukee, maybe 75 miles away, in the blizzard, hunted up the fanzine with the Northwest Smith story, and driven all the way back to give it to me.

I overcame my surprise and began to thank him.

He snarled that only an asshole would want to give his wife a fanzine story for Christmas, turned on his heel, went back to his car, and drove home for the second time that night.

That was Ed in a nutshell.



Move the clock ahead a couple of decades. We had just had dinner with Ed and Jo Ann, his wonderful wife (and quite a fan in her own right, dating back to her CFG days). The talk turned to prozines, and he mentioned which ones he had complete runs of. I replied that I wasn't a completist, that the only thing I was even trying to get a complete collection of was Worldcon program books, and that I'd been within one of completing the run for a few years, but I'd been stymied – not by the first or second Worldcons, which produced more than ample numbers of program books – but by the 1948 Torcon, which seems to have produced only about 120 of them, all of which had been given out, and which were somewhat rarer than hen's teeth.

Two weeks later I get a manilla envelope in the mail. I open it. Out falls a near-mint copy of the Torcon I program book. I look for a return address. There isn't any. I check the postmark. It says Hurst, Texas, which is where Ed and Jo Ann lived.

So I phoned him to thank him for such a rare and thoughtful gift – and spent the next 90 minutes listening to him harangue me, on long distance and at my expense, about the idiocy of collecting Worldcon program books.

Ed Wood – the pure quill.

Ed was a purist. By this, I mean he was Gernsbackian in his tastes, rather than Campbellian. He liked Tony Boucher and Horace Gold personally, but was sure their literary taste had contributed to the ruin of science fiction, which Campbell himself had seriously weakened when he gave up writing space operas and produced the Don A. Stuart stories such as "Twilight."

My first two science fiction novels were Edgar Rice Burroughs pastiches, and my third was a Robert E. Howard imitation. They came out in the late 1960s. I took a good hard look at them, appraised them honestly, then didn't write another word of science fiction for more than a decade, to give people time to forget those rather abysmal efforts. (They still return to haunt me at autograph sessions.) All of my friends understood and sympathized.

All except Ed, that is.

Until the day he died, he simply could not understand why I'd given up writing fabulous gems like *The Goddess of Ganymede* in favor of all that effite literary shit that kept winning Hugos. I can't tell you how many times he tried to talk me into giving up Kirinyaga and all this Inner Frontier crap and go back

to writing what (he was sure) we both knew to be Pure Science Fiction.

I remember running into him at the 1976 Worldcon. He was sitting by himself in the lobby, a pre-publication copy of Dave Kyle's coffee-table book on the history of science fiction on his lap, looking like he'd lost his best friend. At first I thought Jo Ann must be critically ill. No, he said, she was fine. He held up the book. It was *this*, he explained.

He'd been doing some reviewing for *Analog*. I knew Dave was one of his oldest friends, and I knew that Ed was as honest as the day is long, and I naturally concluded that he hated the book and was filled with remorse at what he was going to write.

He was filled with remorse, all right – but only because he and Dave disagreed about various aspects of sf, and the book had no misstatements and only two typos, and he was going to have to give it a rave review. Which he did.

Other memories. People talk about Sam Moskowitz's voice. Yes, it was louder than Ed's, but not by much. Along with being a member of First Fandom and half a dozen other organizations, Ed was also a member of the Burroughs Bibliophiles. The BB met at Worldcons through 1978, and always held the Dum-Dum – their annual banquet – there. Usually Vern Coriell, the BB's founder, would announce the end of the banquet and the beginning of the speeches by screeching out a Johnny Weismuller cry of the bull ape to gently grab the diners' attention. One year Vern either wasn't there or had a sore throat, I can't recall which, and Ed gave the ape call – and it was so loud and so startling that one of the waiters dropped an entire tray of dirty plates.

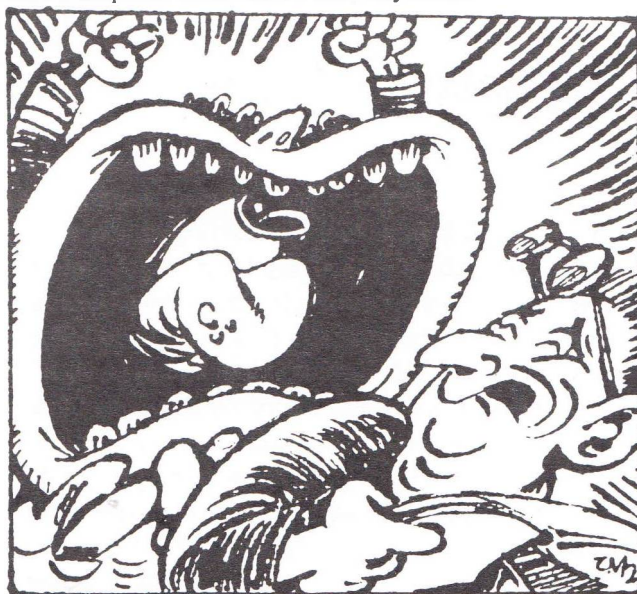
Ed was a loving and doting father, and his son, Larry, was a bit of a prodigy. (He used to win long philosophical arguments with Phyllis Eisenstein when he was three years old.) I remember at one Wilcon when Larry was still a preschooler, he asked Ed why the sky was blue. Ed began giving him a scientific explanation that was quite beyond my comprehension. I went away for a cold drink, chatted with a couple of old friends, and when I returned Ed was *still* explaining it to Larry.

(Laura once asked me why the sky was blue, and I came up with what I thought was a perfect four-word answer: "Because it isn't green." Larry became a cipher expert for the Navy; Laura became an award-winning fantasy writer. I think both careers were inherent

in the answers they received.)

Ed didn't care who he yelled at if he thought he was right. He once told me a story – and John Campbell himself corroborated it a year or two later – that Campbell, whose *Astounding* was regularly publishing Heinlein, Asimov, Kuttner, Leiber, de Camp, and that whole group, was prepared to reject Doc Smith's *Children of the Lens* back in the late 1940s, when Doc finally wrote and delivered the final novel in the series. It was just too crudely and clumsily written and characterized for what *Astounding* had become.

It was Ed who took Campbell aside and explained to him (as I'm sure only Ed could) that Doc had supported *Astounding* for years when he was the biggest name Campbell could put on the cover, and it would be the ultimate act of ingratitude to bounce the book now that Campbell didn't need him anymore.



(Now that I think of it, Ed was probably the only person who could win an argument of any sort with Campbell.)

Ed did something with atoms for his living – I have no idea what, but he was so highly specialized that only four or five places in the country were doing advanced enough work to hire him – and when computers came along, he wound up teaching computer courses in college.

And then one day he was gone – a heart attack while on vacation with Jo Ann in Los Vegas – and fandom lost the most intelligent, foul-tempered, passionate, growling, generous member it had.

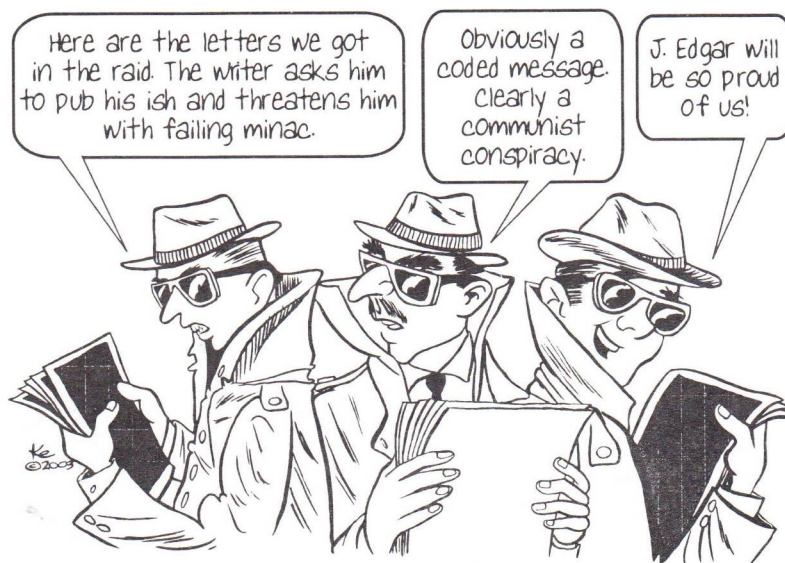
And I lost a dear friend with exactly those same traits. ☼

Here's a bit of closure we'd promised back in *Mimosa* 27, the completion of an article from *Mimosa* 27 which described the beginnings of Philadelphia fandom and some of the notable fans who were part of that fan era of the 1930s and '40s. This concluding installment brings the narrative into the 1950s, where the writer (a true Fan for All Seasons) was involved in many events of great historical importance, including the invention of the Hugo Awards, the origination of First Fandom, a very contentious Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund election, and even a less-than-successful attempt to bring fandom to another part of the country.

A Personal Sense of Wonder

(Part 2)

By Robert A. Madle



After World War Two, the dreams we had of having our own clubroom materialized. We rented a basement apartment in Philadelphia and had our own club rooms. We soon began to pick up membership, and even had David H. Keller and Lester del Rey come to speak. I remember at that meeting we broke our attendance record; we had more than 50 people – incredible for a local club having an attendance of 50 people at a meeting. Among the new members were L. Sprague de Camp and George O. Smith, both of whom had moved to Philadelphia. We became known as the new Mecca of fandom.

Probably the biggest year for the club in that era was 1953, when it hosted a worldcon. But this brought about an interesting situation – now that we had the convention, who would be chairman? There were only two nominees, myself and Milt Rothman, who had founded the club way back in the 1930s and had chaired the first Philadelphia worldcon six years earlier. But Milt had just gotten his PhD in Nuclear Physics and was expecting to go to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, at any time. And I had applied for a job in Charlotte, North Carolina, and I'd heard through the grapevine that I would get that job. So neither one of us really wanted the chairmanship.

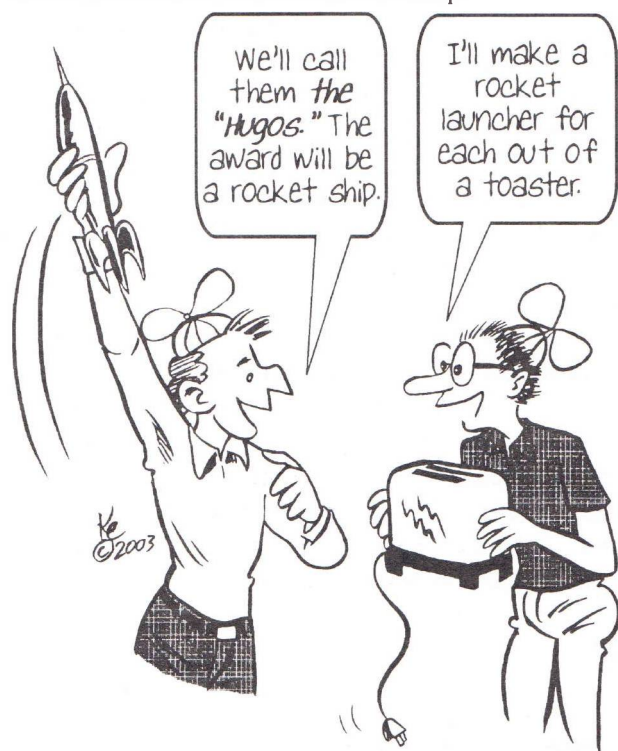
It turned out that I did go to North Carolina, but Rothman did not go to Tennessee. There was an au-

thor named Chan Davis who was a member of the Communist Party and who was a science fiction correspondent of Rothman. This was in the middle of the McCarthy era, and it turned out that the FBI had been conducting surveillance on Davis for some time. They finally raided his house and took all his correspondence, and what should they find but all these letters from Milt Rothman, who was being considered for a security-clearance job in Oak Ridge. It came out that Chan Davis had asked him to become a member of the Communist Party and Rothman had said no. But in the FBI's belief, he hadn't said 'no' definitively enough! So he didn't get the job.

Anyway, it turned out Rothman was better off not going to Tennessee because he became employed by the prestigious Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton University. It was a better job, and it was only a half hour drive from Philadelphia. This allowed him to accept the chairmanship for the 1953 Worldcon.

That worldcon was the one where the Hugo Awards were first presented. The idea for the Awards was the brainchild of one of our club members, Hal Lynch. He came running over to my house one night, and said, "Hey, Bob, I've got a great idea! Why don't we give awards for things like Best Novel and Best Magazine – sort of like the Oscars."

And I said, "Gee, that's great! We could call them the 'Hugos'." At the time I was writing a column, "Inside Science Fiction" for Robert Lowndes, and I used that to play up the idea of the Hugos before the convention. But how were we going to do it? Money didn't flow freely in those days. In the end we decided to make them ourselves. Milt Rothman suggested we use a rocket design based on a Chesley Bonestell cover for a Willy Ley book, and one of the club members, Jack McKnight, did the machining. But they almost didn't get them done in time! Milt found out that the person who had originally been responsible for making the Awards had never even gotten started, so Jack stepped in and had to spend the entire convention in his machine shop.



A Little-Known Story About the Creation of the Hugo Awards

After the convention I took the job down in Charlotte, a public relations position for a company that made women's stockings. After I got there I wrote a letter to the *Charlotte News* announcing that I wanted to form a science fiction club, and not long afterwards I got a call from a writer named John Borchert – he wanted me to come down to the *Charlotte News* for an interview. So I went down there and talked about science fiction, and the article appeared in the next day's newspaper. There was a large photo that accompanied the story that showed me holding copies of

Wonder Stories and *Science Fiction Quarterly*. I was amused to see that, in another story on that page, there was a much smaller photo of President Eisenhower.

John Borchert mentioned in the article that I was trying to form a science fiction club; in fact he joined himself – he was a science fiction fan; that's why he'd called me back. In just a few weeks we had 12 or 15 members and were meeting every other week. The amazing thing about this club was that, for the first time, I noticed that there were people who were science fiction fans but who had never heard of the science fiction magazines; they'd become fans from paperbacks and book clubs. Most of the members of that club are pretty much forgotten now ...Randy Warman, George Cole, Bob Shrader, Al Alexander... One of the most famous non-members was Fred Chappell. He never joined the club, though he was in communication with me a few times. One time I was in the Asheville area I dropped in to see him; his mother ran a motel there. He went on to become a famous poet, though back then he was just a thirteen-year-old kid.

It was a fun club and we had some great times. In 1955 we came up with the idea to hold a convention, one of the first southeastern science fiction conventions, which was held in Atlanta in conjunction with Ian Maccauley's Atlanta Science Fiction Organization. The following year we held another, in Charlotte. Dr. C.L. Barrett from Ohio came down for that and we made him our Toastmaster; he was quite interested in our group, and he thought we should try for a world-con in the South. We were quite intrigued with that idea, but it never went any further – soon after that I got a job with the Department of the Army in Washington, D.C., and after I left, so did the club.

I should mention that 1956 convention was notable for another reason – it hosted the world premiere for MGM's *Forbidden Planet*. I was in my office one day not too long before the convention and got this telephone call from a reporter at the *Charlotte Observer*. He told me that MGM was shipping a print of *Forbidden Planet* to Charlotte, and that it hadn't yet been shown in theaters anywhere. The reporter had taken it upon himself to inform MGM about the existence of our science fiction club and of the upcoming convention, and was told that they wanted to talk to me. So I called them, and it turned out that they wanted our convention to be the first place the movie would be shown to the public. We were very happy to oblige. Just the idea of premiering *Forbidden Planet* was something special, but then so was the movie – we all thought it was fantastic, no pun intended.

By 1958, I had been transferred by the Department of the Army to Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana, which was only about a hundred miles from Cincinnati. Don Ford, a member of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, called me up one day and said, "Hey, we're all going to meet at C.L. Barrett's house in Bellefontaine, Ohio for a weekend party. Come and join us." Doc Barrett was a well-known person in Midwestern fandom – he was an M.D. but also a very active fan, a great collector. Some of the others there were Lou Tabakow, Dale Tarr, and Ben Keefer. All of us had been active fans, at that point, for more than twenty years.

At one point during that weekend we all decided that there really ought to be an organization that would recognize the people who were active in fandom's earliest years. Legend had it that somebody had seen, somewhere on a Mens Room wall, where somebody had written "First Fandom is not dead!" So I came up with the idea, why don't we start an organization called First Fandom? It would include only the old-time fans who had been readers or collectors prior to 1938, and the idea would be to give awards to the famous writers who had never received one.

Don Ford thought that was a great idea, and ran with it. He said, "Okay, Madle, it was your idea, so you're the President. I'll be Secretary-Treasurer and Lou will be Vice President." We needed an Official Editor, so he picked up the phone and called Lynn Hickman, who was quite a fan magazine publisher, and Lynn also was very enthusiastic about the whole idea. We were the founding members of First Fandom.

One of the other things that happened to me during

the '50s was being elected the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund delegate in 1957. I'd actually been nominated for the 1956 TAFF election, by Forry Ackerman, but I had to turn it down – there was no way I could get enough time off from my job down in Charlotte because the company I worked for only gave me a one week vacation each year. But the following year, after I'd taken the Army job, Ackerman nominated me again, even though he was one of the candidates as well. As it turned out, there were eight people nominated in 1957, and it was a controversial election. One of the other candidates, Stu Hoffman, had put out a flyer offering to pay a dollar if you voted in the election, not necessarily for him. This was looked upon as vote buying. But somehow some of the British fans got me confused with Hoffman; to this very day there are British fans who think that I bought that election.

When I won, some British fan wrote, 'What the heck does Madle know about science fiction fandom anyway? He hasn't been active in so long, he's nothing but a fakefan.' And I thought, gee, that's a good title: *A Fakefan in London*. So I used it as the title of my TAFF trip report, which Lynn Hickman published in installments in his fanzine.

So that was the 1950s. It really was an interesting time to be a fan, and the term "Fandom is a Way of Life" was all too true much of the time. But to me, the very best times were my early days in fandom, in the 1930s, when I was just absolutely completely obsessed with it. I really did have a personal sense of wonder. Back then, to me every science fiction author was a god. Every day was an adventure. Every fan gathering was an exciting event.

Those were great times. ✧

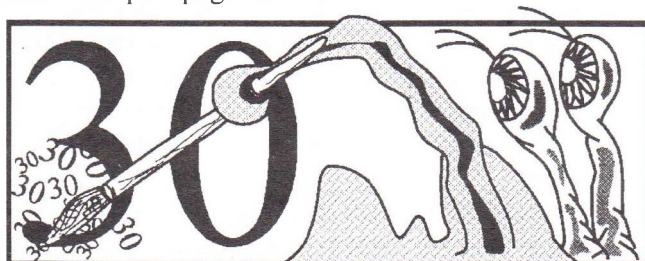
Artist Credits

Sheryl Birkhead – pages 2, 3, 56
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 Teddy Harvia – pages 17 (*Chat* cartoon), 34, 36, 40
 Teddy Harvia and Peggy Ranson – cover
 Alan Hutchinson – pages 12, 13, 14, 61, 62, 63
 Julia Morgan-Scott – pages 16, 17, 37, 64
 Marc Schirmeister – pages 51, 52, 53
 Craig Smith – pages 18, 19, 28, 30
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 Diana Thayer – page 44
 Charlie Williams – pages 8, 9, 31, 32, 33, 46, 47, 49, 50

Kip Williams – pages 25, 26, 27, 57

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The saddest form of closure of all is a remembrance article, and in the years that we've been publishing *Mimosa* we've had to note the passing of many of our contributors. That list is now depressingly long: Martha Beck, Bob Bloch, Vincent Clarke, Dal Coger, Robert "Buck" Coulson, Ian Gunn, Chuck Harris, Lynn Hickman, George "Lan" Laskowski, Joe Mayhew, Bruce Pelz, William Rotsler, Bob Shaw, and Walt Willis. It's our regret to note that earlier this year, another name was added to that list with the passing of Harry Warner, Jr. Here's more about him.



From the Hagerstown, Maryland *Herald-Mail*: "Harry B. Warner Jr., 80, of 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, died Monday, Feb. 17, 2003, at his home. Graveside services will be Friday at 10 a.m. at Rose Hill Cemetery, Hagerstown. The Rev. David B. Kaplan will officiate. Arrangements are by Andrew K. Coffman Funeral Home, Hagerstown."

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Such a stark announcement. Bare of any flamboyance or pretense, just as Harry was himself. Just the facts, plainly stated. It was the sort of announcement Harry would have written and kept on file for just such a circumstance, and since Harry had been a long time reporter for that paper, for all I know he may well have done that very thing. His colleagues at the paper and the local folks in Hagerstown remember him as something of a loner. A nice, quiet fellow who preferred his own company and didn't seem to have many friends or any family. We here in fandom know differently. Harry had more friends and more family than most people ever do, and though this legion is spread far beyond the boundaries of Harry's hometown they all knew very well the address '423 Summit Avenue' and the man who lived most of his 80 years there.

I traveled to Hagerstown, Maryland in the fall of 1988 to visit and interview Harry. We'd not met before though I'd sent him a copy of my first fanzine (as was the custom for all new fan editors in those days) three years earlier and his was the first letter of comment I'd received. He would amaze me later that day by mentioning that fanzine and remarking that he'd enjoyed a particular article in it. I arrived in town just after high noon, as previously arranged. It was a small, quiet town. Only a few other cars moved along the main street. Hagerstown seemed... isolated, somehow. It was the kind of town where I would expect to see a lot

of antique shops and used bookstores, but though I did look, I didn't see any of those things. There was a huge and very old cemetery not far from town and I noticed the characteristic shapes of Civil War era grave markers scattered among the more ornate late-Victorian markers that are common in the Mid-Atlantic States. Turning at the next street led me to the foot of the hill that Summit Avenue ascends, and four houses along on the right was the most famous address in fandom: 423 Summit Avenue. It was a rather stately house, painted a sort of mild blue with a large porch and a newly rebuilt set of front steps. Before I could knock, the door opened and I met Harry Warner, Jr.

He was a rather gentle looking man, and was 65 at that time. He'd retired from a long career as a newspaperman not long before the time of my visit, but he was dressed as if for a day at the office, even wearing a tie. He invited me to enter and stood for a moment while I took in the surroundings. Walking into Harry's living room was like walking into the 1950s. The furniture, rugs, wallpaper, and the very atmosphere all belonged to an earlier time. It wasn't that anything seemed old or worn; in fact the room was clean and as neat as a pin. It's more that nothing in the room seemed to acknowledge that the current year was 1988 instead of 1950.

We sat down, I on a heavy overstuffed couch and he in what was obviously 'his' chair in the corner of the room that had the best natural light for reading. Across the room to my left was a low built-in shelving unit filled with hundreds of record albums, many of them classical or opera. Huge old floor speakers and various components of old but high quality audio equipment were located in that area. By the front door was a large basket that evidently held several pieces of mail including what looked to be about a dozen fanzines. When I asked, Harry told me that this was the mail from yester-

day that he hadn't gotten to yet, rather than the previous week's mail as I had assumed. To my right I could see a parlor that evidently served as Harry's office. Centered in that room was his old manual typewriter. My eyes were drawn to that legendary fannish machine in the same way that in some alternate universe they would be drawn to the Enchanted Duplicator in whatever mythical room it sits.

"So that's the machine that launched a million locs, is it?" I ventured. Harry chuckled. "Hardly that many. I still try to respond to every fanzine I receive, but I doubt if that typewriter could stand that pace, and I'm pretty sure that I couldn't." Personal computers were starting to hit the market in those days and I asked if Harry had thought about getting one. "No, I've never liked computers for writing. I had to use one for my last three years at the newspaper but I detest those terminals. Several years ago I bought an electric typewriter but I just don't use it. I find I still prefer my old manual typewriter." I had to admit that the fanzine locs that I'd received from Harry seemed to have a certain presence with their slightly faded ink and their slightly misaligned keys.

Since I'd come there to do an interview I thought I should ask the usual background questions. "No," replied Harry, "I haven't always lived in Hagerstown. I was born in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, but I came here before I was old enough to know anything about it. I've lived here ever since."

CP: *When you were growing up, did you ever know anyone else who was interested in science fiction?*

HW: Not a soul. Never knew anybody who read science fiction until I'd started corresponding and started planning my first fanzine. Besides me there's never been anyone from Hagerstown active enough in fandom to have become generally known, though there are a few people here who go to conventions. But I've not had any direct contact with them. There have been fans that've lived here for a short time and even published fanzines from here. Chick Derry, an old time Washington fan lived here for maybe six months, and there was another young fan named Jerry Forrest who put out one issue of a fanzine while living here and working for the Health Department. Then he moved to the Southwest and I never heard of him again.

CP: *Did your work as a newspaper reporter help develop your fanwriting style?*

HW: It may have helped me in meeting deadlines for fanwriting. I got into the habit of meeting deadlines for the newspaper and that made it easier for me to write to schedule for the fanzines. I doubt if it had

any effect on my writing style though. Very different types of writing. Most of my fanwriting is just comments or material derived from other fan's comments.

CP: *As you know, you are somewhat famous for keeping yourself relatively isolated here in Hagerstown. Why have you only rarely traveled around to conventions and such?*

HW: Well, I'm not the gregarious type. I've always been happy doing things by myself or with just one or two other people. I hate to travel at all. I hate to drive or ride public carriers and my job for 40 years prevented me from doing too much traveling. I had to be in Hagerstown at certain times to cover certain events and there was no getting away from that. So it was just a combination of circumstances. I've been perfectly happy with the fanzine aspect of fandom. I haven't cared too much for the conventions. Halfway through the first day of a convention I would start to wonder if I wouldn't be happier at home listening to music or watching a ballgame. There're just too many people at conventions and most of them are interested only in some sub-fandom other than fanzine fandom. Of course I suppose that this is also the strong point of conventions in that at least you have a chance to meet interesting people who aren't involved in fanzines.

CP: *What's the truth about the legend of how you once left a convention early to take in a baseball game?*

HW: You know, I thought you might mention that. To me it was no different than going out to a special restaurant would be, but that story has taken on a life of its own. At the 1971 Noreascon in Boston (where Harry was the Fan Guest of Honor - CP) I did spend one afternoon at Fenway Park. I got permission from the chairman of the convention committee. He even offered to pay my taxi fare but I walked. I made no secret about it, but I figured it was probably my only hope of ever seeing a baseball game at Fenway Park, so I went.

CP: *Do you see much difference in how fandom is viewed these days by people involved in SF today as compared to the '40s and '50s?*

HW: Yes and no. I don't think the fans themselves are really different in any basic way, but several things about fandom have changed. One difference is that fandom doesn't produce graduates to the professional ranks the way it used to. Most of the people coming into the pro ranks today have never been involved in sf fandom at all. Back in the '60s it seemed as if every other sf pro either still was or had been an active fan for years and years.

CP: *What do you think it is that's characteristic among the very different sorts of people who become*

a part of fandom?

HW: Oh, I don't think there's any common factor, really. (Jack) Speer thinks that all fans are handicapped in some way or another but he has to stretch 'handicapped' to cover so many different circumstances that I don't think his theory holds up. For instance, he thinks growing up in a small town is a handicap. And an attempt was once made to prove that all fans are either first-born children or only children, but I don't think there's anything to that. There are those who claim that 'intelligence' is synonymous with 'fandom' but the evidence is yet to be provided on that claim. A fan has to be intelligent enough to read but outside of that I don't think there's any common factor.

CP: *That sounds something that might have been inspired by Slan (by A.E. Van Vogt, Astounding Science Fiction, Sept. – Dec., 1940) and reminds me of Claude Degler and his 'Ozark Love Camp' idea.*

HW: Degler may very possibly have been inspired by *Slan*. I think that novel may have inspired a lot of individuals at the time into thinking that maybe fans were a 'chosen race' because the Slans in the story were separate and different from the rest of humanity, and fans in those days did feel a sense of being 'different' somehow. But Degler seemed to take that sort of thing to heart like no one else.

CP: *What were your favorite science fiction books and writers in the days when you were first becoming an active fan and how does that compare with what you're reading these days?*

HW: I liked *Astounding*, mostly. *Unknown* was a favorite. I admired *Galaxy* very much and I think that Horace Gold was an extremely good editor who has never gotten the recognition he deserves. In many ways *Galaxy* was better than *Astounding* and *Analog*.

Most of what I read these days tends to be detective stories and literary classics. I don't read very much science fiction anymore. When I do I usually re-read some of the older classics from the '30s, '40s, or '50s. I don't see very much of what I consider to be true science fiction appearing these days. Most of it is very thinly disguised stories of today set in the very near future, or fantasy disguised as science fiction.

CP: *Who are some of the 'classic' SF writers that you do still enjoy re-reading?*

HW: I've always liked "Doc" Smith though not many people do anymore. And David H. Keller, who is all but unknown today. To that you can add Stanley Weinbaum, Henry Kuttner, and certainly Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke.

CP: *What sort of fanwriting are you doing these*

days? Do you write any regular columns?

HW: I did have a regular column in Marty Cantor's *Holier Than Thou* but I understand that Marty has suspended that fanzine so I suspect that'll be the last regular column that I ever write. I'm sorry to see *Holier Than Thou* come to an end. I think it was an excellent fanzine and Marty always lined up some first class material for each issue.

CP: *What would you say are some of the most important fannish documents; books and articles that you'd suggest that I search out and read?*

HW: Certainly [F.T. Laney's] *Ah, Sweet Idiocy!* and [Sam Moskowitz's] *The Immortal Storm*. It was Sam's book that inspired me to write *All Our Yesterdays*. I suppose I was just intrigued at the idea of continuing Sam's history. There was a letter from Bill Temple that was published in *Voice of The Imagi-Nation* back in WWII that is certainly a seminal document. It discussed the reasons why a person becomes a fan and stays a fan, and it's been reprinted in recent years. Probably you'd have to include the write-up in *Time* magazine about the first World Science Fiction Convention. That article immortalized the phrase "Gosh, Wow, Boy-Oh-Boy!" and that'll probably go down in history. You'd have to read *The Enchanted Duplicator* and something by John Berry – the Irish John Berry – probably his "Goon" series. You should read lots of Terry Carr's articles. "My Fair Femfan" is one of my favorites. Jack Speer's "Up Till Now" is important for being the first look at fandom's history and the inspiration for all the fanhistorical writing that followed it.

CP: *What are your thoughts on the problems of access and permanence of fanzines, particularly your own?*

HW: In my first year or two of fanzine activity I used to keep carbon copies of all the articles I wrote and I kept the zines in neat order, but I soon stopped bothering with that. My fanzines now are in no particular order and I wouldn't be able to find any particular zine without a lot of searching. I fear that a lot of older fanzine material – not just my own zines but in general – are in danger of being lost if indeed they aren't already lost to the ravages of neglect and time.

CP: *Are there any universities interested in preserving your collection?*

HW: I haven't heard directly from any university, no. I've heard from fans who've urged me to contact this or that university to consider a bequest, but I'm kind of pessimistic about chances for fanzine survival in big mundane libraries because I've heard so many horror stories about what happens to library holdings when an administration changes or when they start to

run short of space.

CP: *What do you think would be the best way to ensure the survival of fanzine collections?*

HW: Through dealers I suppose. (*We had earlier been discussing the then-recent sale of a large collection of fanzines to a certain college.* – CP). Dealers might pay them more respect than university libraries since they can make some money out of them. Now if something turned up that I thought was really safe; if the Library of Congress or the Smithsonian were interested in them, that would be fine. But I'm sure that neither of those institutions have the space to spare for fanzines.

CP: *I've heard it said that in the '30s and '40s there was no thought at all that fanzines would last beyond the immediate interest of those who were the first to read them. Was there really no thought that fandom in those days was the start of something that was going to continue for years and years?*

HW: I don't think there was. When you're young you don't think much about your future. When you're in your teens you don't think you're ever going to be old enough to retire. I think it was the same with early fandom. It just didn't occur to us that fandom was something that would still be around 50 years in the future. I suppose that's another way that fandom today differs from fandom back then. We didn't have all this back history of fannish tradition to consider that you do today. I'm not going to speculate on whether that was more of an advantage for us then or for fans now, though. No, we were just science fiction fans then. We thought about space travel and atomic energy and so forth but I don't remember anyone ever seriously considering the future of fandom.

CP: *How does the future of fandom and science fiction look to you now?*

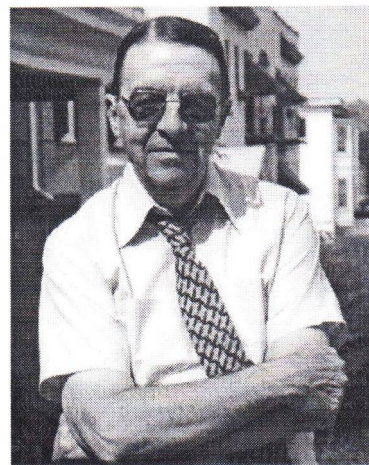
HW: I just don't know. I hope it'll continue, and I think it *should* continue, but whether it can survive the changes in the ways people behave and the ways people entertain themselves, I don't know. Books are getting to be more and more expensive. Some paperbacks are more expensive than videocassettes now. (*At the time of this interview in 1988 a new paperback cost \$4.50* – CP) Unless some revolution in publishing comes about I fear for the future of books, or at least for books published for a mass market. It's not that hard to imagine a day when science fiction fandom dies out because no one can afford to buy books just for reading pleasure. Fandom itself is a different matter, as you know. I'm sure it'll go on in some fashion, but it won't be the same as when all fans generally read most of the science fiction magazines.

But fandom really moved beyond that long ago. And there are still a lot of good fanzines being published and a lot of good fanwriting being written. I hope there always will be.

#

That afternoon passed before I was aware of it and all too soon I knew it was time to go. I talked Harry into letting me take a few photographs, my favorite being the last one I snapped of him on impulse outside in his yard just before I got in my car. It shows him just the way I remember him today; smiling, relaxed, a fan that has enjoyed his years in fandom and is content with life. Of course, on the way home I quickly thought of far better questions that I should have asked him or better ways of asking the silly ones that I did ask. But that was many years ago now and none of it matters anymore. I didn't ask him if he thought that "Fandom Is A Way Of Life." I didn't have to. Harry helped demonstrate to me that although fandom is based on things and ideas that most people outside of fandom would consider trivial, that doesn't matter at all so long as whatever fannish way of life we choose to live is lived well and lived according to the standards that we each choose for ourselves. Harry lived much of his life in that house at 423 Summit Ave., but he explored the world through the letters and fanzines he wrote and read. And we fans who are left to testify can surely say that Harry Warner, Jr., blazed new trails and explored them well.

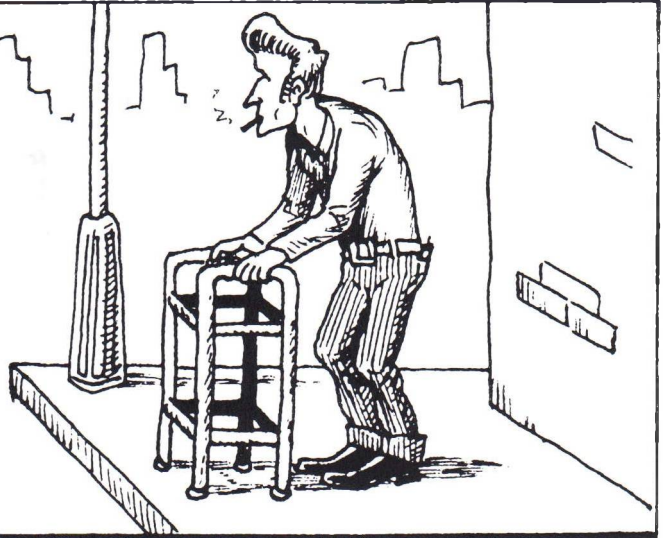
I think that if Harry were still with us, I wouldn't particularly want to ask more questions about fandom or fanzines. He's already answered all my questions in thousands of locs and articles that I expect I'll find in good time as I read old fanzines. No, I think if I could ask Harry just one more question right now, I'd ask if he'd like to go and see a baseball game with me. It's a beautiful spring day today, the sun is warm and the winds are fair, and I think the Red Sox are playing at home... ✧



There will be no more new Harry Warner articles, but we still wanted to include him as a contributor to our final issue so we're reprinting an article that, despite its title, originally appeared way back in 1958, in John Berry's fanzine *Retribution*. (At that time, Harry had recently briefly crossed over into pro-authordom with several short stories he'd written that had appeared in *If* and *Galaxy* magazines.) Harry was probably the best known stay-at-home science fiction fan of all time and gained a reputation in fandom as "The Hermit of Hagerstown," this from his reluctance to travel very far from home. As a result, he was frequently visited by those who were passing through the region on their way to or from various fan gatherings. One of these, in 1943, was the notorious Claude Degler, whom Harry described as actually behaving like a gentleman, but "he left Hagerstown without getting into my home, an accomplishment for which I have never been sufficiently recognized." Another of Harry's accomplishments was his success in keeping his fan activities unknown to his co-workers and everybody else in Hagerstown – he was so successful, in fact, that it was not until several weeks after his death that the newspaper that formerly employed him, after learning details from several fans who contacted it, ran a feature story titled "Harry Warner's Alternate Universe" that described his fan life and the fame it brought him. The following article provides a bit more description about this double life.

I WAS A TEENAGE OCTAGENARIAN

by Harry Warner, Jr.



The net closed around me the night that the squirrel who was afraid of trees came into the office. During the 14 years that I had been employed by the newspaper, I had successfully concealed my double life, as a normal person while in the office and as a science fiction fan while out of the office.

The squirrel had nothing to do with the situation, directly, but it provides a convenient mnemonic device. A young married couple had found the squirrel several weeks before, as the tiny rodent was stumbling away from a tree on wobbly legs. They assumed that it had fallen from its nest, took it home, fed it with an eyedropper, and made a pet of it. Soon the couple learned that the squirrel became terrified when it saw a tree. They took it out for fresh air at night, so that the trees just outside the house wouldn't be too visible. The squirrel was a fine household pet except for one trait. It insisted on using a 20-gallon brass pot as a *chic sale*. The squirrel's mistress was happy to have no mess to clean up in her apartment, but she regretted having the pot, purchased as an antique, in the house when the squirrel moved it. It was a lot of work to empty it every day.

The couple brought in the squirrel because they thought it would be a good item for the newspaper. I agreed, but I said the wrong thing. The squirrel's master was proud to have figured out some squirrel psychology. He thought that the animal was afraid of trees because of the traumatic condition induced by the fall from the nest in the tree. I demolished that theory by suggesting that the squirrel might have been afraid of trees from birth and jumped from its nest as soon as it had the strength to climb overboard. I advised him to keep it away from other squirrels, lest a mutated race of tree-fearing squirrels be loosed upon the nation. The couple left before I had finished painting the horrors of squirrels that crept into cellars like cockroaches or mice instead of peacefully hopping around lawns and climbing trees.

Then one of the other reporters said to me: "What's this about you selling science fiction stories?"

Now, there are several reasons why I had never talked much about my love for science fiction and my efforts to write it, to my business associates and the majority of my friends in Hagerstown. One involves well-meaning people who want to help aspiring young

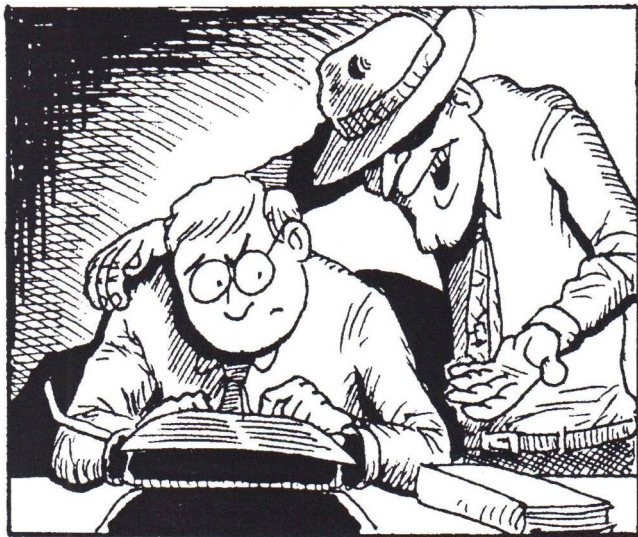
authors. For instance, there is a young accountant in Hagerstown who discovered somehow or other that I made money out of fiction, probably through a peek at my federal income tax return. He plopped down beside me at a lunch counter one evening, put his mouth a half-inch from my ear, and said in the most impressive whisper that he could muster that he had a wonderful story suggestion for me.

"Of course," he said, "I could write this myself and make a lot of money out of it, because I know exactly how to write good stories, only I never get time to write any. So I'm going to turn it over to you, no charge or anything. You know Ferry Hill, that big house down on the Vevertown Road, near the Potomac River? You've got egg on your chin; that's better. Well, now, this house has been there more than a hundred years, and there's been one family after another living in it, some real rich people in the past. Now, it would make a wonderful story, what the house has seen over the years ... wars and different kinds of people and everything."

I waited as long as I dared, and then asked cautiously: "Is that it?"

"Hell, yes, man. It's the sort of thing that makes great literature. But you've got to write it yourself. I've given it to you, now all you've got to do is put it down on paper."

He looks at me reproachfully, every time he sees me, because I haven't created a new Jalna series. And worst of it is, if I ever should write a story in which an old house plays a prominent part, he would claim credit as co-author or would seek part of the money because he did everything but write it. Strike one against letting it be known you try to write fiction: You get too many suggestions.



Then there's the peculiar wage structure of the company for which I work. The salaries here are based to a great extent on what the management imagines the need of the employee to be. One man who has been with the company for forty years is earning half as much as I do because he inherited twenty thousand dollars or so ten years ago at the death of a relative. I attribute the modest wages that I receive to my heroic abstinence from new clothing; I purchase a new suit only upon receipt of a raise, to prove how badly I needed the money. Since the word started to get around town, there has been no hint of a raise for me. The first time that I land in an anthology will undoubtedly mean a reduction in my weekly check. Strike two against blowing one's own trumpet about the ability to use plotto as the creator intended.

And Hagerstown is a small town, limiting sharply the number of persons who could imagine themselves to be depicted in the stories that I write. For example, "Earth Aflame" in *Science Fiction Adventures* contained a heroine who had a big nose. If I lived in Indianapolis or Belfast, it is hardly likely that any of my acquaintances would assume that any particular person had been the model for the heroine. But in Hagerstown, there are only five or six women who are acquainted with me, and possess a proboscis of more than ample proportions. One of them used to be the social page editor, until she started to suffer from a bad case of pregnancy, another is a secretary at a local high school, and there's a clerk at a dime store, to name three. Each of them would assume that she was the only large-nosed person of my acquaintance and would believe that I had modeled Katherine after her, which would be disastrous, considering how unbearable a person Katherine was.

Actually, I can determine precisely the direct reason that Katherine came into being and can guess at the subconscious reason. Directly, I wrote the story because my interest in the taming of the shrew theme was aroused by an argument I'd been having with Marion Zimmer Bradley over the validity of the feminine psychology involved in this theme. Subconsciously, the story may have sprung from the fact that I had been riding the last bus home with a telephone operator named Catherine; we would wait for the early morning bus in an apparently deserted, lifeless Hagerstown, frequently would be the only passengers on the bus; and she was a very nice, extremely engaged girl. Deep inside, I might have been imagining her and me as the only two persons left out of all humanity, which would have solved the problem of

her fiancé. She didn't have a big nose or a shrewish character, but if all my big-nosed female friends had suddenly begun to sue me for libel of character, I could hardly have explained this subconscious motivation. Strike three.

I could see the catastrophe closing in around me for some months before the net descended. For instance, there was the night that I was covering a production of *The Potting Shed* at the local little theater. Between acts, a large woman previously unknown to me descended upon me, looking mad. "I wanted to talk to you about something," she said. "I took a vacation last year. I wanted to get away from this damned town and every damned person in it. So I went to the West Indies and I stopped at the crummiest damned hotel that I could find, just so I wouldn't run into anybody else I knew who might be traveling. And the first evening I was in the hotel, I picked up an American magazine and opened it and I saw your damned name and a note saying you were from Hagerstown and I was so mad that I just went ahead and read your damned story. There, I feel better now." She walked away.



And then there was a narrow escape when the local library scheduled Willy Ley as its speaker for the celebration of National Library Week. I've never met Willy, but he had written me several times about this or that matter back in the days when I was publishing *Spaceways*. He seems to have a mind like flypaper, never releasing any subject that happens to land in his memory. It was pretty clear what would happen. He would be met in Hagerstown by a reception committee and make a morsel of conversation to break the awkward silence that always follows the first handshakes. Willy would say: "Hagerstown. This is the city where a fellow published a fanzine some time ago. Maybe you still know him. His name..." And this would be repeated with everyone who would be introduced to Willy. Fortunately, Willy got a more lucrative offer to speak in the Mid-

west, canceled his engagement in Hagerstown, and the sword still hung over my head by an unbroken thread.

Four months ago, another science fiction fan came to work in my office. She is a fan only in embryo, not yet conscious of the fact, but she has every characteristic of the full-fledged fan and it is only a matter of time until she will send for a fanzine or meet an active fan and break out of her shell into the greater world of fandom. It was torture, to sit and listen to her chatter to this or that reporter about the wonderful story she had just read by Jim Blish or Fred Pohl, and wonder how long it might be until she ran across *Jack of Eagles* with its reference to me on the flyleaf or saw my name under a story in a prozine. She was quite a girl: After high school graduation, she had gone to college because she didn't want to earn her living; she had enlisted in the Woman Marines after a year of college, to get away from studying; then she found she didn't like the Marines and chose the only way that permitted discharge after only three months of service: marriage; she got a job, so that she wouldn't have to be around her husband; and she now spends most of her time in the office reading science fiction stories so she won't have to do any work.

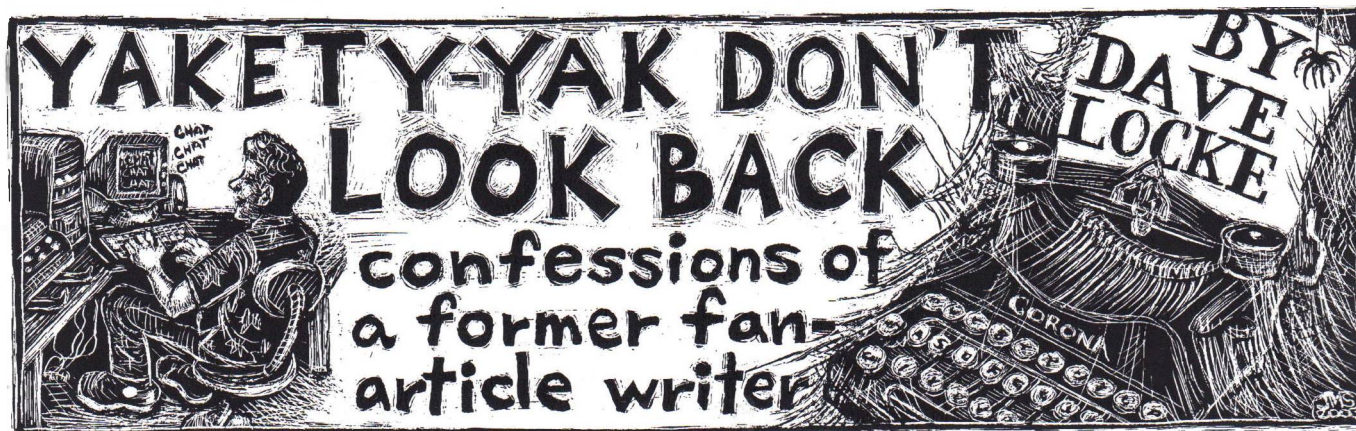
As far as I can determine, the operative incident that ended my double life was "Earth Aflame," to which Larry Shaw appended a brief note about my whereabouts, occupation and intentions. One of the linotype men saw a copy of the magazine, and talked to the reporter, causing him to say to me: "What's this about you selling science fiction stories?"

I must say that I took it calmly. I had always wondered what I would reply when the question was put to me in public, in front of everyone. I had never been able to think of the proper retort that would restore me to the previous condition of enigmatism that I had always enjoyed. When the actual test came, I passed it beautifully. I answered: "Well, one story slipped by under my own name. I always use a pen name, you know."

Now the other reporters buy every issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Playboy*, and *Startling Detective*, reading every story in them, attempting to find themselves in print as characters in those works of fiction, wondering if I write the entire contents of each issue of every magazine or just parts of them.

What has all this to do with the title of this article? Well, it was one way to keep you reading until the end, to try to find a link between the title and the text, wasn't it? ✨

So what have we got planned now that *Mimosa* is ended, you may be wondering? Well, we mentioned in *A Mimosa Fanthology* that the term 'fan publisher emeritus' had a nice ring to it, and we'll be very happy just to be known as former fan-publishers. It's not really likely there will be a successor to *Mimosa*, as we have plenty of other things to keep us busy. Like the following article suggests, there really *is* life after fan publishing, and we plan to kick back and enjoy our 'retirement'. Unless, of course, inspiration strikes...



You know you're too far out of the fan-article writing game when you begin thinking you've either got writer's block or that suddenly everything in your life has become too boring to write about.

The last totally original article I wrote was in 1992, and everything since then has either been a reworking of earlier lost items and unfinished fragments or a patchwork of miscellaneous short topics. If I were a member of the Fan Writers of America they'd drum me out of the corps.

I can't tell you how many fan articles I've written in the last four-plus decades, but they have to number in the low-to-mid hundreds. I was publishing genzines and perszines before I was writing articles, but was still conjuring articles long after my pubbing had dribbled off to producing only two apazines. But my article-writing output dribbled off, too, and stopped, leaving only the apazines. Following that I got online and my apazines became threatened by anemia. Then one of my apa OEs agreed to accept zines by email and print them off upon receipt. Pass the grapes, and hit the 'Send' key for me if you've got the time.

The great bulk of what tumbled out of my meatspace fanwriting cornucopia took place between 1968 and 1992. Those were the most productive years. If I take a second cut I can narrow down an even more intense period of writing which ran from the start of the '70s through the end of 1981. What does this tell me? This says I was most active when I was in my 30s and in the decade when I was living in Southern California. Not just in terms of writing, but also publishing and meatspace fan socializing. The '60s saw a bit of dabbling from an upstate New York location, the '80s a

lighter but still hefty load of crifanac from Cincinnati, and the first half of the '90s a letting go and a return to dabbling without any change in venue. In 1996 I stopped being a Luddite and got sucked up into the Internet where all was relative ease and facility and it gave my writing muse a much needed kick-start.

But in an almost wholly different direction. Newsgroups, mailing lists, and websites, obOhMy. The one age-old favorite fanwriting activity of mine – correspondence – was supercharged. And newsgroups and lists are a lot like correspondence and amateur press associations, so I became caught up in them almost immediately.

I certainly spend a lot of time online writing, but before I got online I spent an equal amount of time writing and a large additional amount of time processing the writing. As the years tumble along with new technologies hitting each other in the ass on their way down the chute, the processing time gets reduced to almost zero. Now it consists mainly of hitting the 'Send' key.

More and more I appreciate being able to just get down to the essence which is the writing.

But along the way, as one decade blurred into another, I incrementally lost a lot of interest in the fan article. Writing them or reading them.

Over the years I've read and have fond memories of quite a fair number of good fan articles. Most of them seem to have been written by fans such as Lon Atkins, Irish John Berry, Bob Bloch, Charles Burbee, Ed Cagle, Cy Condra, Dean Grennell, Tina Hensel, Dave Langford, Bob Shaw, Milt Stevens, Bob Tucker, Walt Willis, and the obligatory So On and Temporarily Overlooked. As with science fiction, I got to

the point where I knew whose writing I liked, and as they gradually or abruptly stopped writing I noticed that the pool was being drained. I'd accept recommendations on unfamiliar names and occasionally turn up someone whose work I enjoyed reading, but the big voracious experiment was over. I was reading a lot fewer fan articles and science fiction.

So I moved over to mysteries, and went through pretty much the same Read And Cull maneuver in that genre.

If I wanted to read good articles, I'd open a proven source such as *The Atlantic Monthly*.

When it came to my own writings there was a great deal of evolution and devolution going on there, too. I pretty much learned to hone my writing skills in fandom, and to one degree or another made my living with those skills for three decades. In the '70s I enjoyed the process the most, and in the '80s I had it about as fine-tuned as it was going to get. By 1992, the year I wrote my last totally original fan article, I saw I wasn't going to get any better. That, plus the lack of enthusiasm for writing fan articles, and the increasing difficulty in finding something I actually wanted to write about, took all the wind out of those particular sails.

The kick-start I got from the Net had nothing to do with writing articles, though I did crank out a few items too short to actually be called articles. Brief essays, perhaps. No, the lure of the Net wasn't in a broader market for formal structures of writing. The lure was the interaction. It was also the speed of the interaction.

A long, long time ago, fan David Hulan told me "if you don't like the people, you won't like the apa." Which may go far toward explaining why I'm in Apapage, the children's fantasy apa, when I don't read children's fantasy. As I said some quarter century back, I didn't like it when I was a children and I haven't mellowed much.

But I do like many of the people in it, and I think David's truism can be applied even more broadly. I apply it to fandom.

I no longer have an interest in producing genzines or perszines, or even reading most of them. Only my interest in some of the people can explain why I'm still in two apas. Only my interest in some of the people can explain why I'm still in three online fan mailing lists, and why I intermittently dabble in one fan newsgroup, when I'm also in non-fan online forums which have somewhat to one degree or another greater concentrations of better and, to me, more interesting writers.

It was in the creation of this article that I've come to terms with the fantasy that I'm still a writer of fan articles. I have never spent more time creating an article than I have with this one. Not in the writing, but in the creating. It was a handshake agreement the end of June 2002 that I'd write one by March of 2003.

I began working on it in November of 2002. From then until March I immersed myself in the process of finding a way in. I'd think about finding a topic. I did it every time I sat down at the computer. I thought about it as I went to sleep. I kept it in mind as I read, and as I did things, because I remembered from the days when I wrote columns for fanzines that the secret to having things to write about was to leave yourself open to inspiration.

Earlier this month, having gotten nowhere, I tried the Stare At A Blank Page And Sweat Blood method. I typed: "You know you're too far out of the fan-article writing game when you begin thinking you've either got writer's block or that suddenly everything in your life has become too boring to write about."

As I forced myself further into this piece I realized that neither statement is quite true, though the latter statement is certainly closer to being true...

The truth: I burned out on it. And didn't know it. Or, at least, I didn't fully acknowledge it.

Arthur D. Hlavaty, one of our most excellent fanwriters and a man who doesn't write fan articles but instead focuses more on brief essays, captured a predominant but not universal truth about publishing genzines and perszines when he wrote in August of 2001: "If a science-fiction fan is someone who used to read science fiction and likes to hang out with others who used to read science fiction, what's a fanzine fan?"

I liked the quote so much I've done it to death in email signatures and should probably begin sending him royalty checks.

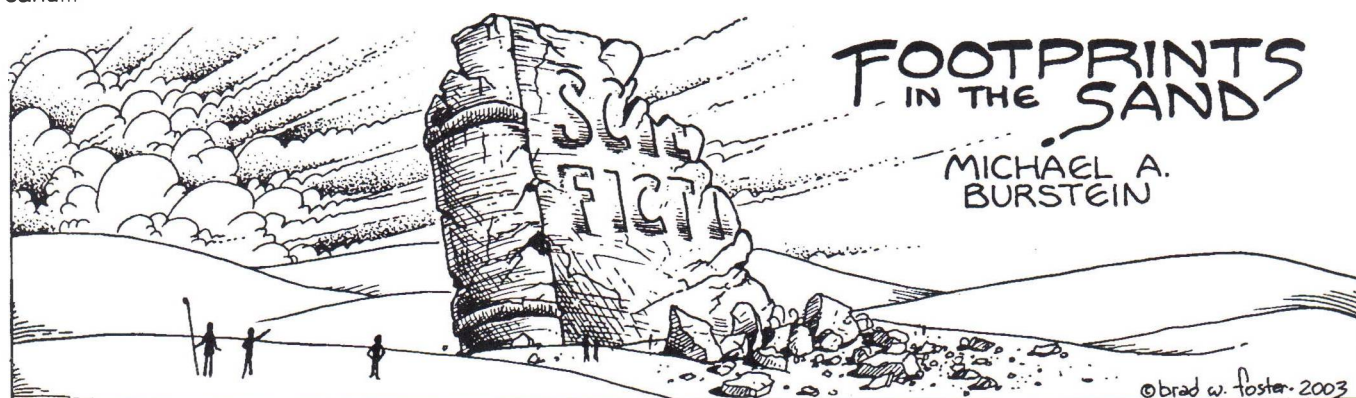
He followed that with a brief story of being at a con where, in one discussion, everyone was lamenting the relative dearth of fanzines these days. Everyone, that is, except Arthur and the one other fan present who still published one.

While I faced that truth not long after my last general-distribution fanzine, I hadn't faced it about still being an article writer. I'm still a fanwriter, but it's obvious to me now that writing articles becomes as much a thing of the past as pubbing general distribution fanzines.

In fact, I can now pinpoint the exact date I wrote my final one: March 14, 2003.

Unless, of course, inspiration strikes. ✨

☛ We saved this article for last because of the question it asks: after all the fanac, after all the recognition, after all the efforts to preserve the past, will anything of what any of us has done, in the long run, endure or even matter? We don't know how much of what we've done will ultimately survive us or how we'll be remembered; we *do* know, though, that we have very much appreciated all the support from you, our readers, friends and especially our contributors, as we tried keep the memories alive a bit longer. It's been a very enjoyable ride, but now it's time to leave our footprints in the sand...



I met a traveler from an antique land,
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

– "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley

I've always found myself obsessed with the question of how much of what human beings create will actually survive into the future. I suppose it's an inevitable question when one lives a life in science fiction. It's also inevitable when one writes, as you like to think that your words will persist, and that people in the future will remember you and what you did. Greg Benford wrote a whole book on this subject, *Deep Time*, which concerned itself with the question of how to leave a message for the future. His conclusion, that "all our gestures at immortality...shall at best persist for centuries or, with luck, a few millennia" (p.207) is a depressing one. If what I do will never be remembered, even in the tiniest way, why do it?

Or, to put the question in a slightly different context, why involve oneself in science fiction fandom?

A few years ago, at a Boskone convention for which Nomi and I were running Logistics, I had a sobering conversation with a fellow fan. For purposes of this article, I shall refer to the fan by the name Mark Olson. Mark and I had gotten to discussing fandom as a subculture, and I remember asking him about the older works of fiction, stories and novels, that younger people don't read anymore. I myself had been cited (anonymously, I'm glad to say) by Gardner

Dozois as one of a new breed of writers who had never read the works of Cordwainer Smith before I started publishing.

So Mark and I got to talking, and the conversation drifted towards broader topics. Ever since I entered active fandom at the age of twenty-one, the graying of fandom was a topic I kept hearing about. Older fans bemoaned the lack of younger fans participating in fan activities, or fanac. Every year, the active fans grew older, and the younger fans were nowhere to be found. The implication, of course, was that without an influx of younger fans to take on the reins, fandom would slowly start to decay and then die, like rotting fruit falling off a tree.

The idea of fandom eventually disappearing seemed to bother me a lot more than it bothered Mark. The way Mark saw it, fandom, like any other institution or subculture, could not last forever. Eventually, perhaps within the next century or two, people might lose interest in science fiction as a subculture, and move on to something else.

You know something? It bothers me, in the same way it bothers me that we can never be sure how long anything will last.

I'm reminded of the story of the time capsule the

New York Times put together shortly before the year 2000 to commemorate the millennium. They wanted to ensure that the “*New York Times Capsule*,” as they eventually named it, would last for a thousand years, and so after considering a whole list of ways to keep it safe, they decided to entrust it to an institution. The American Museum of Natural History, located in New York City, offered to hold onto the capsule and keep it on permanent display until the capsule’s scheduled opening date of January 1, 3000.

By now, I’m sure that many of you are already pondering what the capsule builders were pondering when the Museum made their generous offer. The people from the *Times* thanked the Museum board, then gently asked them what would happen to the capsule should the Museum close or disappear sometime during the next millennium.

They were met with blank stares. One board member reportedly even asked, “What do you mean? We’re the Museum of Natural History! We’re not going to disappear!” Apparently, he had never heard of the Library of Alexandria. (Side note: If you’re intrigued by this time capsule, you can find the list of the contents secured inside by visiting the webpage <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/timescapsule/contents.html>. Ah, but how long will webpages themselves be around? Better go check it out while you still can.)

The fact is that most of us don’t consider the issue of whether or not what we create will endure. In some ways, it’s an unbearable thought, almost as difficult to ruminate on as that of our own deaths. And it’s bigger than that. For example, most of us don’t worry about the fact that the Sun will only last another five billion years, or that the universe will most likely expire in a heat death or a reverse Big Bang, but in all honesty, these questions do sometimes keep me up at night. However, if I were to let these questions haunt me to the point of obsession, I would probably go insane, never seeing the point of doing anything at all. We deal with the knowledge of our own deaths by concentrating on the notion that something – our stories, our children, our institutions – will endure, and carry the memory of ourselves along with them.

But what if nothing endures? More specifically, and without being ironic, what’s the point of fandom? If, as Mark suggested to me, it’s only a matter of time before the subculture fades away, why do we get involved? Why do we do it? Why do we organize conventions, publish fanzines, join associations devoted to the true quill? What is our ultimate motivation?

For some of us, that’s an irrelevant question. We do it because we enjoy doing it, and we let the future take care of itself. Like the Museum board member, we may seriously be befuddled by the suggestion that fandom will not endure. Or, like someone living in the mundane world, we may just sweep the question under the rug and trudge along.

But, as you’ve probably guessed, I personally find both of these to be unsatisfactory responses. Both of those approaches go against the entire point of science fiction fandom. Going back to the time of Sam Moskowitz and the Futurians, it was clear that science fiction fans thought of themselves as something more than ordinary people. “Fans are slans,” the saying went, *Slans* being the title of a A.E. van Vogt novel about humans with superior mental powers. I don’t want to think of myself as devoting so much of my life to a hobby that could just as easily be another diversion or time-waster. I want our activities to mean something more.

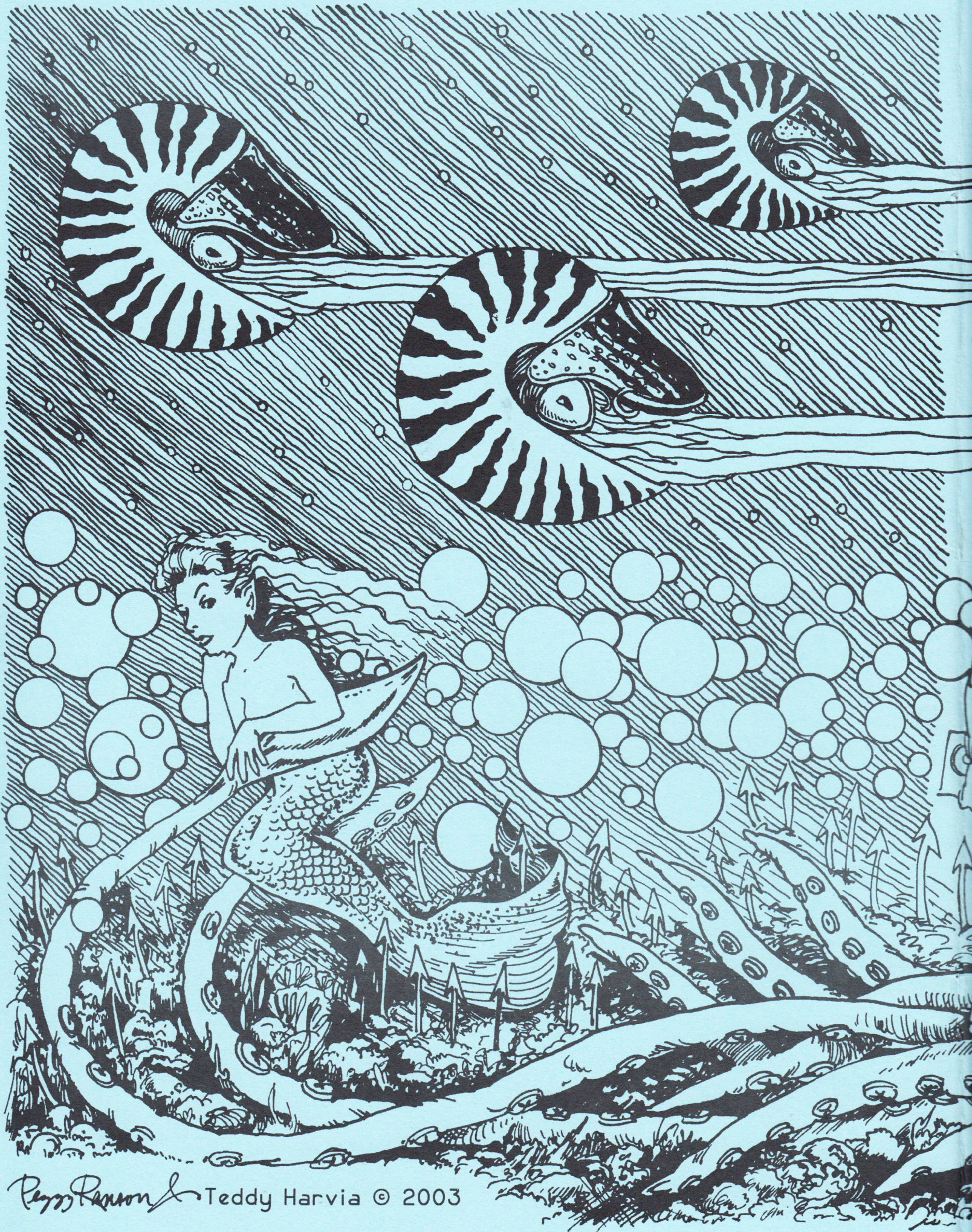
And I think they do.

Science fiction fandom differs in one main respect from all other hobbies that the human race has ever developed. All artists and politicians hope to communicate with and shape the future, but science fiction in all its forms was the first endeavor that realized that the future would be different, and tried to figure out how to communicate with our descendants on their terms, not on our own. In many ways, it is the main human endeavor that specifically connects us to the future. It’s no wonder that I hope that the subculture of fandom will last forever. And should it eventually die out...

I see a picture in my mind of the last World Science Fiction convention. The thousands of attendees we get today has dwindled below the hundreds we once got; fewer than fifty people are present. The “Closing Ceremonies” for the convention are acknowledged by all to represent much more, as no committee has stepped forward to run a Worldcon ever again. And the Con Chair, an elderly gentleman with white hair and a shaggy beard, puts together a time capsule, containing within it one last Hugo Award, the traditional rocket sitting on a simple wooden base, inscribed as follows:

“For Science Fiction Fandom: We Made a Difference”

And you know something? If that’s what our century or two of fanac boils down to in the end, it was still worth doing. Because no matter what else, we will be creating the future, and if we don’t, someone else will do it for us. ✧



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