

# Motley #11

Jim Benford

November 2017, FAPA # 321

## MAILING COMMENTS

Eric Lindsay/For FAPA: About the Starshot project, the power densities we're working on are in excess of a gigawatt per square meter so they are far far higher than anything that's been done before. For comparison, solar flux is a kilowatt per square meter. So we're a million times higher, 1 million sols. Request for proposals (RFPs) are being issued. One just went out for the laser system and we're now working on the sail RFP, which I think will come out early next year. There's going to be an RFP for sail materials and also for communication back from the sail, a particularly difficult problem.

Apple does indeed irritate a lot of people, increasingly. They are using the system that used to be called 'planned obsolescence' back when cars were coming out with new models every year. Apple introduces new operating systems that demand better processors, thus slowing down the speed of older models of phones, making you want to buy a new model. It is quite irritating.

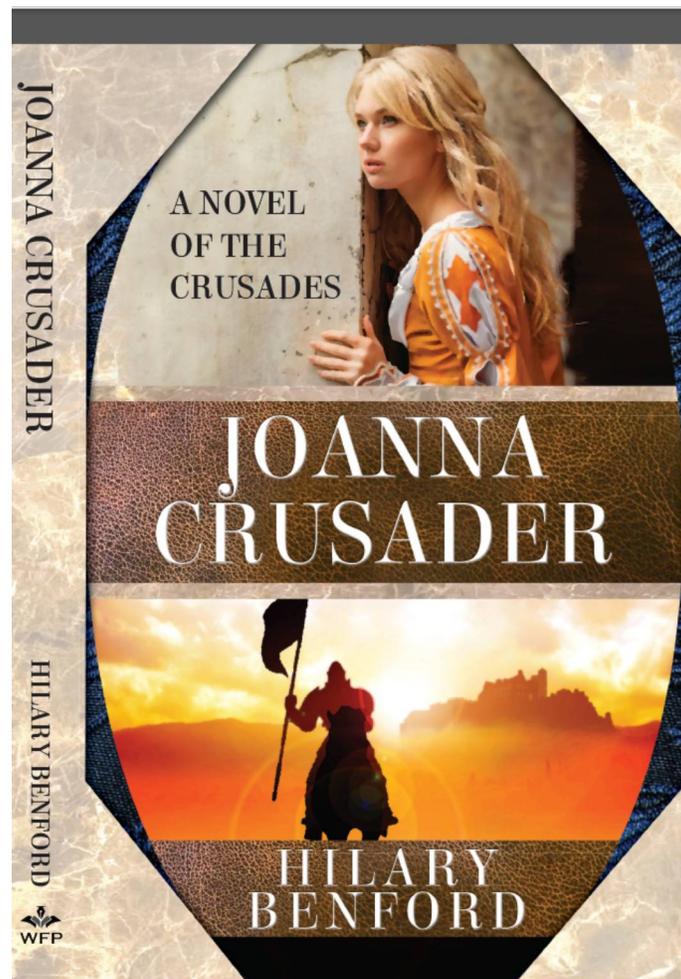
In the US, the federal government in World War II originally caused the healthcare system problems. They froze wages and companies had to compete for employees in a scarce labor market because so many people so many men were fighting the war. So the feds allowed companies to offer free medical insurance along with employment and this started the whole system of having people largely be insured to their employers. That's to 70% of the population today. So the problem of the uninsured is for those people who are self-employed or not employed. From my frequent visits there, the Australian system appears to be a two-tier, in which you can get adequate care through the government or pay more and get expedited higher quality care. That seems fine to me. After all, medical care is rationed everywhere on some basis, either quality or availability or price. It in US its price, in the welfare states in Europe it tends to be availability, meaning long wait times. And in many parts of the world it's quality. I noticed that people who really want serious cardiovascular care abroad comes to the US because it's much better here. It's expensive but on the other hand it works.

Fred Lerner/Lofgeornost: My favorite children's book series was Freddie the Pig! I see that it is still in print. I still haven't read *War and Peace* and I've really got to get to it soon.

John L. Coker III/Stories From 1st Fandom Archive: Very interesting, this time quite a lot of good stuff about the origins of FAPA. You'll find also that there was a lot about early fandom around that time in the novel *Arkwright* by Allen Steele. There some real fans and some fictionalized fans attend the 1st World SF Con in 39 in New York. This leads in the 21st century to the first interstellar voyage, paid for by the estate of a prominent SF writer who was originally one of those fictional fans.

Snickersee/Bob Silverberg: I did know you were collecting back mailings of FAPA until you wrote this up. I hope you can succeed in getting everything together because, as I recall from your account, there is no complete collection anywhere. You have always been a collector and now I see you collecting something that's particularly hard to get. / Slightly related: I recently bought, from LW Curry, *Warhoon 28*, the Willish, from 1978. You no doubt have one. I look forward to reading its 614 pages of Willis material. Greg tells me that Bergeron gave copies to a lot of people, but there's no name attached to this copy. But on the inside cover I found this, in pencil: "DgH #157337". Greg tells me this is from Dave Hartwell's estate.

## HILARY'S NEW BOOK



I wanted to let you know that my wife Hilary has another new book out, sequel to her *Sister of the Lionheart*. It's *Joanna Crusader*, in which Joanna accompanies her brother Richard the Lionheart on the Third Crusade and is the only woman to visit Jerusalem itself (then held by the Saracens). She returns to France to learn that her brother has been captured and held hostage. With Richard's wife Berengaria, she works for his

release. She marries for love, at a time when that was a rarity, but things go badly wrong when she finds that someone is trying to have her killed ...

**OBITS**                      **BY GREGORY BENFORD**

Jerry Pournelle

A single moment encapsulates Jerry's many-faceted self.

My brother Jim and I came to Corona, California in June 1963 to do research at the US Naval Surface Warfare Lab. We noticed a Los Angeles SF Society (LASFS) meeting was next Thursday in LA. In this era, a mile was a minute in the LA Basin, so we jaunted over.

Approaching the public building in a park where LASFS met, I saw a tall man leaning on a cane, hotly debating something with a shorter but more massive man. Jerry used logic, the LASFSian used emotion, and was plainly losing. Jerry's opponent got physical, advancing on Jerry with raised fists.

Jerry grasped his cane and—presto!—slid out a short-sword with an evil sharp gleam on its edges. "And so I better you again!" Jerry cried. The fan slunk off.

I went over and shook his hand, once the sword was safely back in the cane. "Your accent is...Tennessee? Or Texas? I'm from Alabama."

He nodded, head tilted in that self-deprecating way he had. Thus are friends made. Here's a photo of us together in 1976:



Yoji Kondo

From the moment I met him, decades back, I knew Yoji was as accomplished as he was humble. Already he had climbed the NASA pyramid to a commanding role in many missions. Plus, he adroitly showed me, he knew martial arts. I had a karate black belt,

but Yoji's quick, decisive moves taught me a lot. Then I read his sf—knowing, technically deft, quick and sure.

Plus the hardest: modesty. He spoke softly and well, never pressing a point with verbal weaponry. I'm sure that's how he mastered the art of bureaucratic infighting: be the calm one.

Mike Glycer puts it so about my old friend: "Kondo figured in one of my favorite anecdotes from the 2001 Worldcon, which shows he was an acknowledged heavy-hitter in hard sf. Program organizers Laurie and Jim Mann had so many people respond positively to their participant questionnaire that although hundreds could be used, nearly 200 could not. Some came to the Green Room in hope of last-minute openings. They were shown a list of about 20 vacancies that needed to be filled, and several were added that way. One vacancy never seemed to get filled. Many would see the title of one panel, "Worldbuilding 101," and be ready to volunteer, since most sf writers, not unreasonably, feel that's something they know about. Then they'd read the names of the other panelists – Greg Benford, Hal Clement and Yoji Kondo – and speechlessly go away."

I recall Yoji—Japanese in a strange land, physicist, executive, martial arts expert (9 belts in all!), sf writer... with dementia in his last years, alas.

### Brian Aldiss

I first met Brian in the early 1970s, when I was a guest at Culham Labs outside Oxford. In his favorite pub, ancient and warm, he took delight in my explaining that plasma physics got its name from blood plasma—ions and electrons that in mixing gave fresh properties to matter. "So could physics plasma live?" he asked, giving me an idea I used decades later. Brian was like that.

*He brought merry ideas to the sf tables through a rich, full lifetime. His Helliconia Trilogy is a hard sf classic.* He loved those who knew more than him—few though they were. He championed Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley as the founder of modern science fiction and convinced me of it with quotations from it.

With Kingsley Amis and Edmund Crispin, he was for decades a soldier fighting the battle for science fiction in culture cliques such as the *New Statesman* and the *Daily Mail*. His lively *Bury My Heart at W.H. Smith's: A Writing Life describes those struggles vividly.*

I last spent time with him at the London worldcon, 2014. At the closing ceremony a big audience sang 'Happy Birthday to You' to him, 89 that day. Later, reflecting that the Interzone fans didn't know or care that he had egged out an Arts Council grant to start *New Worlds* under Mike Moorcock, he mused, "Aren't they lucky, that they will never grow old?"

I recall him quoting to Tom Shippey and me, from the Old Norse poem Havamal,  
Pets die, friends die,  
Yes and you die;  
I know one thing that does not die,  
The word a man leaves behind.

And so shall his words endure.