





# SPIRITUS MUNDI 185

A SFPazine for SFPA #223 by

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September 11, 2001. What on Earth is happening?

The plane zeroes in from the right. We can see its large engines, so we know at once it's an airliner. It disappears behind the first tower, already burning. Then the flame pooches out the opposite side of the building from the impact.

We accept this only as we accept a dream. It's too terrible to accept as reality.

When the towers collapse I am reminded of Mt. St. Helens. The clean and perfect lines of the buildings fade and soften and give way and the crisp sharp corners open and all that is left is a rush of ash and dust. It's astonishing how quickly the enormous buildings, among the largest edifices ever erected by man, come down.

The people on the street look like ghosts.

My brother calls Rosy and then, my office, while I am en route between them. He's stuck on an airplane on the Atlantic airport tarmac, trapped when the FAA shut down air traffic nationwide. At least he's safe. So are we, far from the power and the symbolism of the northeast. The dust and terror from these explosions, however, covers the whole country.

Out on her island in the beautiful harbor, the Lady watches in silent anguish. What will this do to us? What will this do to her?

It should come as no surprise that I take this personally. I'm a cornball patriot, after all. I meant it when I touched the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia and said "Thank you, baby." I meant it when I lingered alone for a moment in the Assembly Room at Independence Hall to commune with the spirit of Thomas Jefferson. It heartens me to see the Lady still standing on her island in the harbor. In the smoke and ash of this horrible day it is our charge as Americans to see to it that our anger and fear don't curtail our respect for the essential dignities she stands for. If we allow our new lust for security to blot our regard for liberty, then Osama Ben Laden has won.

He will not win.

Today confusion and fear reign in America. But today is today and tomorrow will be different. Today the assassins celebrate. Tomorrow they will live in fear. We will be after them, then, and closing, tomorrow, the next day, the day after that, forever, until they are brought to account. There will be vengeance. There will be justice. And those responsible will wish that they had never been born.

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## *The Worldcon*

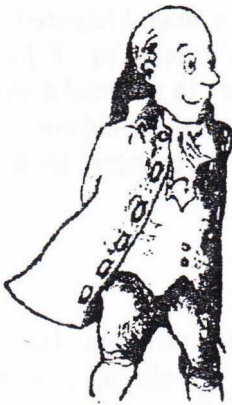
I think I'll sue **Sci Fi Weekly**. You can get damages for having one's hopes boosted beyond all reality, can't you? That's what they did to me with their on-line Hugo Awards Poll.

My genzine, **Challenger**, won that one, by *fifty votes* over Rich & Nicki Lynch's **Mimosa** and Mike Glycer's **File 770**. In fact, my closest competitor was the dreaded No Award. I was so bamboozled by the possibility that my fondest fannish dream might come true that Rosy and I *flew* to Philadelphia, which I needn't tell you took some doing – and drinking – on my part. I sported the rocket pin given award nominees with pride (on my Angola State Penitentiary cap), and when it came time for the rehearsal, I walked through the winner's route to the podium in a haze of anticipation. The mental composition of my acceptance speech – in progress for decades – reached the note-making level.

Of course, it didn't come to that; whoever it was who voted for **Chall** on the **SF Weekly** poll had no part of the Hugo contest, and my little project came in fourth, behind Mike, Rich, and the Brits (**Plokta**). Oh well.

It was a terrific weekend anyway. Rosy and I visited Independence Hall and touched the Liberty Bell (*cool* – figuratively and literally) and went to the Rodin Museum and ate at the Reading Market (prettiest little Amish waitress) and I had two cheesesteak sandwiches, provolone wit'.

And there was a world science fiction convention, too. The epic party in Mike Resnick's suite where I met the Bwana Babes (including the brilliant musician Janis Ian, who once put Leonard Bernstein into tears for being so good, so young) and watched fine hoochie-koochie dancers hoochie their koochies. There was a fun masquerade, dominated by a spectacular group presentation called "Fridays at 10" featuring characters from – that's the signpost up ahead! – **The Twilight Zone**. Succulent Rebecca Morris' harem gown composed completely of quarters also made a minor impression on me, and B'rer Randy Cleary told me that made cents.



The Hugo nominees' reception and party, flanking the ceremony itself, were excellent fun, and after the tedious re-recapitulation of the fan winners there were some professional surprises – **Crouching Tiger**, the Jack Williamson novella, and the astonishment of the year, victory in Best Novel for **Harry Potter & the Goblet of Fire**. This was the first time a "written" Hugo had stepped out of the community and gone for a children's book – not that SFdom doesn't owe Potter an enormous debt. If we can snare a tenth of the kids his adventures have reintroduced to reading, fandom is secure for a century to come.

I thought the Hugo design a bit boring, which didn't prevent me from hamming it up with winner Mike Glycer, taking another trophy-clutching picture. It'll show in **Challenger**. So will an appreciative shot or two of author Catharine Asaro, who again proved herself to be the loveliest of ladies, and who is my *dedicatee* for this issue.

The loveliest of ladies ... with one very important exception. This was the first worldcon in more than 20 years which I have attended as a married man, and it was joy itself to have my lady beside me. Some day I'll wake up to how unspeakably lucky I am, and I only hope I can tell Rose-Marie how grateful and happy she's made me. Flying home over gorgeous Antarctic cloud vistas, she held my hand and tolerated my alcoholic ravings – for I still couldn't fly without sousing myself senseless. What a good, generous, beautiful, exceptional lady I have married.

I have lots to convey about the worldcon ... lots of photos to publish and people to hail. But much of that must wait for **Challenger** #15, and first, I must make notation from the events of the week that followed hard upon MilPhil ... in fact, with but a single day's cushion. My boss and I tried a murder case in Abbeville, Louisiana, and we were lucky to get out of town alive.

### *The Trial*

Well, it wasn't that bad. In fact, Abbeville was – is – a beautiful place, and the Cajuns are gorgeous people. Except for the flooded parking lot that greeted us when we pulled into our motel,. A 90-minute cloudburst had preceded us by an hour. The lot was awash, and as you may have guessed, the critters evicted from their normal habitats by the rising waters had invaded human turf. When I went to the office to claim our keys, I stepped over millions of spiders and snakes that swarmed over the sidewalk \*yih\*

Spiders and snakes seemed appropriate companions for the trial of a guy accused of shooting a woman in the back of the head, especially since the prosecution relied upon his co-defendant as their only significant witness. It was true – there was no forensic evidence at all. When the killer or killers rampaged through BRS Seafood, with all of its stainless steel surfaces, they left no fingerprints nor any fibres or DNA. So the experts could say nothing to implicate our guy. The only witness who could implicate our client was, as I said, the co-defendant ... and he had admitted to cutting the woman's throat.

He told his story in a flat, dull, unaffected voice, sullen, dreary. I held up a crime scene photo out of the deepest nightmares people ever have. *[At least we thought nightmares could get no deeper, then, before September 11<sup>th</sup>.]* He looked at the pitiful fat lady with her throat slashed ear to ear and, like he was describing missing a trashbasket with a wad of newspaper, "Yeah," he said, "I did that."

When you gaze into the Abyss ...

I gave an impassioned speech trying to pummel, beg, somehow persuade the jury that this animal was not worth believing. They were out for two hours and twenty minutes; I'll give them that. Really, it was a great experience. I'll write it up in detail for **Challenger** and SFPA shall see the full account.

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All that, of course, happened Before 9-1-1.

I must mail this **Spiritus Mundi** early, on September 17, to give it time to cross our bleeding land. My me's follow, composed in a more calm and peaceful time ... last week.

## MAGAZINE COMMENTS ON ROOM SFPA 222

**The Southerner 222 / OE** SM184 took *six days* to travel from Louisiana to Washington. Teaches me a lesson: first class all the way. So put me down as in favor of your "alternate proposal" to have two types of SFPA dues, one for regular media rate mail, the other for first class delivery. I'll opt for the latter, of course; patience is not my cardinal virtue. // Running for re-election as Official Editor? Excellent! You have a supporter in the Easy.

**Dewachen / Trinlay** I neglected to say this last time, so I will now: *WELCOME!* You bring us a unique, arty presence. This zine is a visual happiness and a genial, ever-surprising read. // See my closing comment, please.

**Tyndallite Vol. 3, Number 96 / NORM!**

I receive **DASFax** in exchange for **Chall**. The new editor is able, but recently typoed the title of the zine as **DSAFax**. *On the cover*. He was tewwibwy embawassed. // "Errors ... in **The Invisible Man** put the story outside the pale." I wonder if you realize what a brilliant comment that is. (Or is "brilliant" the word?) // My favorite inventions in **Ralph 124C41+** are the rocket-powered rollerskates. // I liked Sam Moscowitz the one time I met him, and despite his scholarship being pilloried by no less a personal influence than Fred Chappell (in an old piece reprinted by Joyce Katz) I'll give him his due as "intellectually honest." That's a solid compliment for a historian.

**The New Port News #198 / Ned** New zip code is 70119. But keep sending mail to the p.o. box. // "If you think the DSC flyer looked strange, you should have seen the ballet gang that opened the ... ceremonies." Maybe my tutu didn't fit, but yours was perfect. // Does HaRoSFA, home of the never-forgotten V. Elaine White, have a clubzine I might obtain for **Challenger**? I need an address for them. // Speaking of Fu Manchu, I recently opened the box with my two sets (one complete, one almost so) and amused myself perversely fondling the thirteen sacred tomes ... // Rosy has me developing all of my film at Sam's. You're right: very cheap.

// Take note: good site for a future **Chall** website, *fanac.web*. I'm not at all happy with the current site, grateful though I am to Richard Brandt for putting it together. // I've seen too much suffering for me to support ending the drug war, but God knows it needs to be fought with more sense and more compassion. Putting a grandmother into jail for 25 years because she fronted some crack for a major dealer – and I've seen that done – is not the way to win anything, except a first-class seat on the Hell-Bound Train. // I'd like to invite those Eureka cops who smeared caustic pepper solution under the eyes of protesters to Avery Island, Louisiana, where I'd wash their eyes out with Tabasco. It's made there – there's plenty! // Wasn't the late Dave Hall once a member of SFPA? Or was that *Rich* Hall, such as you hope to make in the lottery – a *rich haul*? *Hahahaha*

**Twygdrasil #71 / Rich D.** I want to run your cover illo – a DSC '02 ad by B'rer Cleary – in the next **Challenger**. Who can give the OK? Randy? // Heidi's work with Ostomy Association is the noblest work imaginable. Express to her my highest admiration. Dealing with the terminally ill must be exhausting, though, for lay people; they do need shrinks on their payroll. // "Manbeef.com" selling human meat ... such a hoax, *such* a hoax. What's their newsletter called? **To Serve Man**? // After the Kent State massacre in May, 1970, college campuses took after Nixon and his sadistic war with a fury. It was an amazing and affirmative experience, canvassing neighborhoods, writing congressmen, good straight politics, and Nixon was at bay. Charlie Williams recently sent me an article about how Nixon tried to show his face at a Billy Graham revival at the University of Tennessee and was greeted with protest. But the war went on, and the slack-jawed greatest generation continued to cheer the butchers of their children, and my people got disgusted and quit. The war had to wait for the North Vietnamese to end it, Nixon had to wait for his own plumbers to bring him down, and we have never been as good or as hopeful or as unselfish or as brave as were then. // The problems with the O.J. trial lay with the prosecution – from the top down,



a botch, starting with venue and continuing with tactics – and, to a much lesser degree, with the clumsy CSIs, who left the defense room to criticize. Hey ... bushwah. The fault in that case lay with the racist, aggressively ignorant jury. // It's been 35 years since I read Allen Drury's awful novel, but I'm still amazed that **Advise & Consent** won the Pulitzer Prize. Depicting a Russian moon landing, it qualifies as science fiction. // Speaking of Russians and Luna, I recently introduced Rose to **From the Earth to the Moon**, and wonder why they didn't put a man inside their Lund [sic] spacecraft, which looped the moon a few weeks before Apollo 8's incredible voyage. Maybe they did, and he just didn't make it. // My own feelings toward the death penalty are protean. It's been shown that jury fallibility and prosecutorial amorality have put the rare innocent man on Death Row, so each case obviously needs to be left open for appeal and up-to-date scientific analysis, and indigent defender lawyers need to be paid and funded commensurate with their duties. But, I have to acknowledge the penalty's gut appeal. For some crimes it's the only satisfactory response. McVeigh. Gacy. The defense lawyer's best friend, Bundy. (And, of course, Osama bin Laden.) But again, I think your feelings – "[s]omething tightens in my stomach when someone gets executed" – is both humane and correct. No one should rejoice when society is forced to disobey its own prime rule. The death penalty is always the tragic culmination of a tragedy. // Fred Chappell agreed with you about poets and science in his 1975 "Science Fiction Water Letter to Guy Lillian". "They let it / get by them, all that pure data, those images, that new / access to unplumbable reaches of space/time." Though poetry is as inadequate as prose when confronted with some of those photos from the Hubble. Me, I just go "Yayyyyy, God!"

**Variations on a Theme #7 / Rich L.** A bond trader named Richard Lynch is among the missing in the New York City, according to the NYT of 9-13. What a world. // Again, please see my closing comment. I could kick myself.

**Revenant #7 / Sheila** As you might read elsewhere, Rosy and I are to spend about a week in Vermilion Parish, which is to the west of your locale, in September. I'll have called! Come on

down! // Visiting Toronto? Everyone's on the road! Think you'll be back in '03 for the worldcon? You'll probably be able to meet my nephew – if I can convince his pop. I'll bring Steve over for a day. // Allison – the tropical storm, not my Senior Ball (they actually called it that) date – was indeed a terror. Those storms that sit in place, even if relatively small, do much more damage than the behemoths which rage ashore overnight, tear up the turf, and then subside. Of course, I can live without all of them. // Speaking of Tolkein, I just read **The Hobbit** ... for the first time! Also bought a book of Hildebrandt calendar paintings; their exquisite renderings of MiddleEarth *places* really turned me on for my first reading of the trilogy. That was in '77. Lots good happened to me in '77. I am starting **LotR** again. // Glad you enjoyed your **Spiritus** dedication. I started dedicating zines when I was doing **The Barrington Bull** back at Cal, and never lost the urge. Here comes the dedicatee to #41 to ask me if I want a piece of pie. It's fun, and it makes ladies feel appreciated, so why not? // I'd love to have taken the train to the worldcon, but there just wasn't time. Thank the weather gods that didn't turn out ironic in retrospect. // I missed this business about our having a Mark Twain mailing; could've borrowed a great portrait of the man from von Turk to use as an illo, too. A fakeSFPA, that's me.

**The Frozen Weblog / Arthur** Nice to see you at the worldcon, even though I was blitzed with tension at the time over the incipient Hugo ceremonies. Hope I didn't come across as rude or weird, but I really was jazzed.

**Day of the Palm D'Or / Multitudes** I love this oneshot; it means something good to have Ruth and Kyla back in SFPA, even briefly, and that cocky picture of Allie on the back has my mind thoroughly shattered. (Best Bit in the Mailing? Booked!) Noting that she intends to shoo her parents to as many conventions as possible, does that mean we can count on a Copeland contingent at the Huntsville DSC?

**Peter, Pan & Merry #38 / Dave** Since the Stars and Bars was created specifically for Civil War purposes, it's impossible for it to have existed

prior to 1861. It apparently rides Mississippi's banner as a defiant response to Reconstruction, which is an infinitely more admirable reason than opposing integration. // See my comment to Lynch about quilts. // About **Shrek**: explain to *me* why it's funny that a parking lot should be called Lancelot. I'm too thick. // Staggeringly weird that you should discuss the **Maine** (its mast stands at Arlington) and Pearl Harbor, now. The calls to arms on both occasions began with "Remember" ... we do, and we will. // The religion of the victim does protect him from vampires in at least some of the recent myths – **Fright Night** and **Vamps**, to name two, although it struck me that **Vamps** gave a loon's hubcap supernatural power so as to deny any extrinsic power to the cross. Rather neat, if somewhat sacrilegious, to think of Christ as the first vampire slayer amongst His other qualities. // The law against suicide – at least in Louisiana – forbids *assisting* someone to do so. La. R.S. 24:32.12, and it carries 0-12 and a fine of up to \$10K. So live, baby, live. // Caught a miserable cold in Philly, and sneezed, wheezed, hacked and snorted all through my Abbeville trial. // However dreary your orthopedic problems – and we hope they're gone by now – consider them worthwhile if they somehow contributed to your triumph on the golf course. Almost anyone can walk without pain – knock on wood – but only the seriously blessed can hit a Hole in One!

**Offline Reader Vol. 1 Issue 23 / Irv** Your bid for the '04 worldcon came out as expected, with Boston triumphant, although Charlotte put up an admirable fight and I understand that you're bidding again – for a NASFiC, at least. Considering the gloom and exhaustion that suffused the Boston suite when we visited it after the vote was announced, I'm not sure which bid should be congratulated. Definitely, you did an *unshameful* job. // If I had control over a worldcon's selection of Guests of Honor, I would make Julie Schwartz *the* GoH. That's it. For his fan work, which was seminal, for his pro work, which was remarkable, and for his personal self, which is all but godlike. Alas, the guest-of-honor pantheon for the next several worldcons is filled: he'll probably never attain that notice. But all who know him hail him as Da Greatest. Missed him at MilPhil. // Submarines are *supposed* to sink. They're also

supposed to rise back to the surface, though.

**Avatar Press 2.16 / Randy** I remain envious-into-insanity over your new house, even if, like we peons in apartments, you haven't the furniture to fill your pad. Rosy says that she has a large-screen TV and a queen-sized bed in storage in Florida, but God knows when we'll get those up here. // Your **Challenger** art did indeed miss the last issue, but will show in the next, possibly fronting my eulogy for Poul Anderson. I am *very* grateful for the help. // Your mother shows incredible faith and patience in putting up with a long road trip with you, her son. When she was still together enough to travel, my mother never trusted my driving. But you went to some choice spots – Sea World and KSC, and the undeniably incredible Ron Jon Surf Shop. My brother literally could not believe that place. Too bad you weren't in the area on June 30<sup>th</sup>! Nifty photos, by the way, and a bacover full of spot illos I suspect I'll be revisiting time and again.

**Tennessee Trash #42 / Gary R.** Rather a different trip report from you this time, with the aim being good Christian works instead of sticky products sales. The archeological end of things is strong this time, too, with the pyramids if Teotihuacan assuming front and center. Fascinating visit – although it was a bit tacky of Gary Bush – another Gary, another Bush, lawsy – to razz the new-age sun-worshippers. That could bring on world-wide solar flares. // It's a great thing to say of anyone that he can get along with kids, and your experience with the babes in *el curso de verano*. It must have hurt to leave those kids when the time came for you to go home. Diego reminds me of my godson, Japhet (pronounced "Jo-set"), whom I haven't seen in years and whom I miss like crazy.

**Trivial Pursuits #96 / June/July Jaunts / Janice** You have my continuing envy for your ability to jump on a jet and zoom without alarm or discomfort; the mere thought of flying is enough to tie me in knots for weeks, and keep me from events I'd really love to attend – like MidWestCon in Cincinnati. It's only one day's drive from here, but it's a long, long, hard, hard drive. By air it's what? Two hours? For me that's two hours too many, and look at all the fun I've missed. // It isn't really my

*theory* that one should name Hugo nominees for whom the victory would “mean the most,” but it is my practice, since I don’t believe any of the ongoing winners are so superior to others that they should win time after time after time after time. How can anyone say that, in a field as various as fandom, any one candidate is “the best” for 20 years in a row? “Spreading the wealth,” as I call it, is also a solution to the “apples vs. oranges” issue, which asks how one can compare a cartoonist like Rotsler or Harvia with a less whimsical fan artist like Steven Fox or Joan Hanke-Woods. Cast the riches widely; SF fandom is a big tent; we can open our awards to all sorts of people and still do them justice. // Yes! Your present arrived, if that was your gift of the charming candles. Multitudinous thanks! // It always seemed to me that gossip and innuendo was at the heart of the LASFAPA Chart ... but David was its creator; he should answer the question. // If I can dare a judgment about the 2002 Hugos, I’d say **Shrek** was already a favorite in the Dramatic category. // My brother went through the first 30 years of his life – at least – with *one* cavity in his teeth. When I lamented his great luck, my dentist merely shook his head and muttered, “One percent of the population ...” // If Mike’s **New Tools** hurt your eyes, be glad you weren’t here when he ran through his zine in orange ink on orange paper.

**Oblio No. 135** / *Gary B.* Poor Chandra Levy was undoubtedly fish food without hours of her disappearance. The congressman probably wasn’t involved, but all the evidence points to someone who knew her, and whom she trusted, and his Connie Chung interview stank with evasion. The truth will out. Energies like those which claimed her can’t stay dormant long. // Exciting report of the San Diego comic convention. You mention some familiar, friendly names, like Mark Evanier ... He worked at Gold Key when I was at DC, and when we young staffers dubbed ourselves The Junior Woodchucks, he claimed that the new guys at Disney were going to call themselves The Justice League of America. // I’m reading **Kavalier and Clay**; it is excellent, and how neat to see two of my teenage obsessions, Pulitzer winners and comic books, merge so niftily. // Speaking of home runs ... what do you think of Barry Bonds’ chances? (Moot question by now.) // I remember that issue of **T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents** (#10) with my letter, but

I don’t remember what I said. I should have praised the Wally Wood covers and No-Man, which live on in memory. // The network is touting **Law & Order** these days as if it were about ... *law & order*, instead of being a superb reality-based series in which the heroes screw up occasionally and even deserve to lose. I understand it’s the longest-running nighttime drama in TV history, after **Gunsmoke**. (I’m so old I remember Chester.) // An original Charles Schulz letter! Outstanding! And **Turok** ... trapped in the Lost Valley with the honkers. Someone should publish a collection of those terrific stories, in honor of our wonderfully misspent youth.

**Guilty Pleasures 19** / *Eve* Good for Raphi for visiting Israel and good for Mitch for discovering **The Big Lebowski**, a neglected masterpiece. Good also for you and Howard for visiting NYC and taking us along with you. Mmmm ... delicatessens ... Nathan’s ... the Gotham Book Mart ... museums with Chagall ... the real juice in the Big Apple. *I miss New York*. If our Philly trip had been a week longer, we’d have headed there. But ... kosher *Persian* food? // I may miss New York, but I can’t miss Quebec, since I’ve never been there, but your guide makes for a neat second-hand experience. (I never knew there was a diamond industry in Canada.) // Exciting that **Pirate’s Price** has been picked up by another e-publisher ... but it’s really cool that an actual *book* is possible. If so, it’s bound for my shelf of books-by-buddies ... which is swollen these days.

**Comments 12** / *Steve* Cool that you sent stories to **Analog**, and that one impressed JWCJr. Enough for him to make suggestions on how to improve it. That should encourage you – and drive you – every time you work on that novel you tell Sheila about! // I hope you’ll forgive me for exulting over your comment “I some times wonder if the spell check doesn’t cause more problems then if fixes.” Nothing for the spell check to catch there! // **The Wind Done Gone** (or whatever that **Gone with the Wind** take-off is called) is indeed, not a parody, but a satiric companion piece, much like **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead** is to **Hamlet**, and lo, I just used **GWTW** and **Hamlet** in the same sentence without the Earth opening up and swallowing me whole. // As for a legal decision



defining parody, the Supreme Court's Larry Flynt decision probably does. // Love your comments about the '59 Studebaker Silver Hawk. Cars speak to the lizard brain. It doesn't matter if an auto has great mileage and never breaks down or that parts, when it does, are as easy to find as light bulbs. If it did, everyone would own a Marathon. What matters – as you say – is *style*. *Class*. How the wheels make you *feel*. Which is why I still hanker for a Mercedes ... // I wonder how corporate income, and by “trickle-down” effect the entire economy, will handle September 11<sup>th</sup>. Mangling our money was one of the points of that attack. Surely the insurance people will take a nuclear hit, and a lot of talented, experienced people were lost. But A-level money companies such as those with offices in the World Trade Center keep duplicate records in Netspace, and the expertise of their employees will be the easiest thing about them to replace. Our economy will suffer less from this horror than our psyches, and even those, eventually, will be stronger in the broken places. // An important plot point of **The Demolished Man** involved purposefully-annoying jingles. Of course, Alfie Bester's wife worked in advertising. (She said I was handsome.) // Compelling story of how it feels to kill something – even an animal. It sickens the healthy. The unhealthy it doesn't affect at all.

**The Sphere vol. #193, no. 1 / Don**  
Checking the public records in Orleans Parish, I find no arrests listed under your name.

**You've Got Mars / Jeff** As promised, here's an mc to your last zine. I disagree about **Jerry Maguire**; I liked Cruise's burgeoning relationship with the kid. I would rather have seen William H. Macy win the Oscar for **Fargo**, however, than Cuba Gooding. // “[**Voyager**] respected its viewers so little that the only thing keeping it afloat ... were Jeri Ryan's pneumatic breasts.” Beats the wax out of *Spock's ears*, pilgrim. // The Boba Fett character was a drag in the **Star Wars** movies; he never showed his face or did much of anything. Hard to cheer the downfall of such an ephemeral villain. // The 2000 elections were such a muck that they require congressional hearings. No – no one would trust the Congress to evaluate such a partisan mess – an independent commission, such as Warren's or

Scranton's, is needed. // “Do you have an overwhelming desire to surrender every time you see a German?” ~~Only Inge Glass~~ // Well, not much of an mc after all my hype. Let's see if I can't do better with

**Notorious Jumping Zine / Jeff** I've been trying to picture your writing mc's on thin air – I take it that's how the electronic highlighter works. Obviously a cool tool but I bet you got some strange looks. // I'll go into this in more detail when I comment to Liz, but I gotta say it here, too: your Alaska trip sounds supremely neat. I never heard of a *calving* glacier before, but the verb makes sense when you think about it. *MOOOooo\*splash\** // Reviews ... I found the film of **The Tailor of Panama** clever but I'd forgotten about it till I read your notice. Suzanne Chazin's **4<sup>th</sup> Angel** sounds very good. As for **Lara Croft – Tomb Raider**, I recently commented in LASFAPA – a dangerous place for such asides – that Jolie's lips looked like split sausages. I thought the movie a drag, although I did enjoy the e-mail where George Wells compared it to **A.I.** // We see the importance of the '00 election over and over again, in environmental and international issues, and even in the scientific arena, where W's wishy-washy stem cell compromise demonstrates the weakness of the man and the intellectual poverty of his administration. Shrub is worthless – to the country and to his party. I'm sure serious Repubs were writing him off as a one-term wonder before the Horror of September 11 made criticism of the boob unacceptable – at least for the moment. Let's see if he handles this monumental crisis with any trace of heart and courage -- if he's worthy in the slightest of the firefighters and EMTs of New York City. // Love that 19<sup>th</sup> Century comment about Jefferson's election spelling doom for the republic, if not civilization itself. How right they were! // Don't insult Denise Austin. She has great teeth. Or, to be consistent, thee hath greath teeth. (Did that joke come off?) // Anyone watching W.C. Fields' **Man on the Flying Trapeze** the other night saw an early performance by the *other* guy who won three Oscars: Walter Brennan. He played a singing burglar. (I told you it was a Fields movie. Oh, how I want to show Rosy “The Fatal Glass of Beer”!) // Speaking of Rose-Marie, she enjoyed the copy of **Weekly World News** you enclosed with our

mailing. That rag kept her alive for many years; I will always be grateful to it. // I don't get that Ahab cartoon. // Yes, please send your denunciation of Boulder p.c. for the next **Challenger**. I'd love a LOC, too! // Sherman! Bah! The **NYT Book Review** recently *praised* that foul creature, claiming that it was nobler to burn farms and starve families and create an atmosphere of loathing and alienation that lasted until the election of Jimmy Carter than beat Joe Johnston's army in a stand-up fight. War is Hell, and there you'll find William Tecumseh Sherman. // Yes, try to make the '02 DSC. Have you ever been to Huntsville? J.J. would like the space museum, and we could find and lay a fanzine on the grave of Al Andrews. (That'd be fun for Allie, right, Allie? Right?) // Rosy changed her nickname from "Rosie" when she was 12. I called her by the old name when I first wrote about her – in **Spiritus Mundis** 36 and 41.

**"Yngvi" #72 / Toni** Couple of mean-lookin' ol' tomcats on your covers... I see Hank's been dipping into the Grecian Formula again. He sported a shaved head at the worldcon! // As often with **"Yng"**, there's a genzine feel to this issue: a neat variety to the articles by lots of superb contributors. It's been a long time since Jerry Page raised his head in this apa! // I had a lot to say about your *excellent* speech/article on SF editing, but of course left your zine at work. See the close.

**Home With the Armadillo #48 / Liz & Jeff's Alaska Trip Report / Liz** We don't mind y'all making all those trips to the east coast if it doesn't keep you away from DSC. Should you eschew (gesundheit) our home convention, I won't have a chance to say hey until 2003, when I imagine you'll be in San Jose for the worldcon. Allie's maturation will have reached the just-shoot-yourself-old-man stage by then ... // For a minute I thought you'd made it to the last DSC and we'd simply missed you – but then I realized that you'd *meant* to type "Westercon." I don't know whether to be relieved or regretful. // That Matt Helm comment about Kent State is puzzling. Who's side is he on? // Indeed, the police shootings you mention are completely justifiable as you describe them. I have no problem with cops using force when necessary and unavoidable, and these two incidents would seem to qualify. When they

massacre an innocent man who's just trying to show them his wallet, and ride a wave of public race fear to vindication, that's another story. // The problem with an electrified fly swatter would be that it would most probably be used on pestiferous little brothers more than on pests. I've often wished for one of those suspended bug-zapper lamps, particularly here where the palmetto bugs resemble flying cats and it's a life-and-death struggle to engage one without serious armament. // I find Spenser's Hawk offensive in that his bullying is treated as cool and admirable, much as Cuba Gooding's (uncharacteristic) pummeling of Jack Nicholson in **As Good as it Gets** was presented as a positive plot moment. (The beautiful black boy *makes* the mean old white man accept his beautiful gay friend. Aw.) Stupid cliché, utterly removed from the ugly human reality from which it's drawn. Of course, Joe Mantegna's recent **Spenser for Hire** movie on A&E was excellent. // Rosy and I have every intention of attending Con Jose in '02. Will y'all be there? // Gad! I like this Alaska trip report! Even hauling your mom and stepdad along, it seems from your retelling like a great trip. Of course, like many another lady – I admit to squalid sexism, because I'm right – you dwell on your experiences shopping for souvenirs in the alien clime, but it's still neat. I especially like the bit about the earthquake-cloven cliff in Anchorage and the glacier. (The only chance I've ever had to see one of those awesome ice rivers was squelched by my mother's panic at heights.) *I wanna go!*

**The False Knight on the Road / mike** Right down there – below my own mc – that's the closing comment I mentioned before. What can I say? I'm an idiot.

**SM184 / me** Except for the fat slob in the groom's suit, mine is definitely the most beautiful cover in this mailing. Rose-Marie more than makes up for me. Wish you all could have been there!

*Closing comment:* Today is September 14. Captain Talent – that's *moi* – was going to finish his comments over this weekend – and then I left the zines I had yet to fully mc at work. Rather than wait, an intolerable alternative, I'm going to publish a special catch-up page with those comments, and call this puppy done here and ... *now*.



My cover is a detail from **Guernica**, the Picasso mural painted after the 1937 terror bombing of the ancient Basque city by Nazis. Picasso's largest painting, it's said that during the occupation of Paris, a German admirer visited Picasso's studio and saw the work on a postcard. "Ah, Señor," he said to the artist, "so you did that." "No," Picasso replied. "**You** did that."

Wowed by its easy symbolism and overt politics I bought a print of it my first days in Berkeley. It's been on the wall of my every apartment ever since. During my wonderful year living in New York, during which I never did more than drive by the World Trade Center, I'd often visit the original at the Museum of Modern Art, where it hung for decades. About 20 years ago it was sent to the Prado in Madrid, where it dominates that museum's Picasso collection.

Despite its use of heavily Spanish symbols – the **Pieta**, the smashed statue of past glories, the gutted horse with the hide like newsprint, and above all, the Bull with the artist's face – it is an astonishingly appropriate painting for this ghastly time in our lives. Whenever heedless, hideous death rains down on the innocent, the Church, the State, the Media, and the Arts all react. It's said that the figure leaning from the window is also symbolic. She's said to represent America – silent at the time, repellantly neutral to the struggle against fascism; in fact, she's said to be the Statue of Liberty.

I'm fascinated by sculpture – symbols and representations in stone and metal. If I'd written up the worldcon as I'd planned I'd've written a lot about statues. Philly is silly with them. There's a statue of young Benjamin Franklin at his press. There's the Rodin Museum, with its bust of Victor Hugo and **The Thinker** out front. Rich Lynch photographed Rosy and me by the famous LOVE sculpture in JFK Plaza, from which – thank you Joe Celko – the statue of William Penn atop City Hall does seem to imply that Mrs. Penn was a **very lucky woman**. Juvenilia aside, even the Liberty Bell could be considered sculpture of a practical utilitarian sort.

And so, as I said before, I took heart when I saw "the Lady" standing in New York Harbor, while all Hell fell around her. She is a symbol worthy of the firefighters and EMTs who are still risking their lives to save strangers on the shifting mountain of wreckage the terrorists left behind. They are American heroes.

I hope our alleged leaders are worthy of them. I admit to no faith in the current administration. It was finagled into office by political chicanery in order to secure advantages for corporate America. Its leader is a subpar figurehead and front man. Fortunately he has experienced warriors in his Cabinet, and them I do trust to ram it home good to our enemies. More power to them.

But **no** power to their domestic counterparts. Already Republican zealots are using this disaster to push their radical agenda: corporate tax breaks, capital gains benefits, restrictions on immigration, and most dreadfully, curtailed personal rights. True, America needs to put armed marshals on all flights and secure cockpit doors, examine luggage more than cursorily, kill Osama bin Laden and strengthen its intelligence network, but it also needs to remain America. Stay true to those heroes sifting rubble in New York on the barest wisp of a hope that someone, anyone, friend or stranger, beloved brother or man they never met, might still be saved.

My country, t'is of *these*.

In **Guernica**, after all, and despite all, the Statue of Liberty is alive. Liberty, after all, despite all, *lives*.

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