



# SPIRITUS MUNDI 194

A SFPazine for SFPA #232 by

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cover – unused Nolacon art \* interiors by Rotsler

On February 1<sup>st</sup> we woke to the fragmented contrails of *Columbia* vanishing into the morning sun. I hadn't slept much; the pain from my auto wreck was at its height and the narcotic effect of Advil had barely made it possible for me to lie down. My personal discomfort was forgotten, though, overwhelmed by our universal anguish. All day we watched the tedious, depressing repetition of the same video of the same cascading nightmare against the beautiful blue sky.

Later that night we tried to put the disaster away from us by going to see the brilliant, quirky **Adaptation**. After we got home, Naomi Fisher called. We had won DUFF.

It was a day of *very* mixed emotions.

Since that day life has been as entangled and complicated as a plateful of spaghetti. Remember, noodles give me the willies. I like my spaghetti sauce spread over plain bread, and my only pasta is lasagna. Nevertheless, the only way I can think of to write about the last two months is to reach into the spaghetti, grab a strand, and follow it to its end.

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The idea that Rose-Marie and I have been honored with a *free trip to Australia* has yet to sink in, even though we're less than a month from our departure. We have ten thousand things to do as March careens on, the most important being getting our passports and visas. No, bugging pros for auction stuff is more important. No, it's contacting Aussies and setting up crash space and guides that's the big deal. *No*, it's ...

As soon as we knew we'd won, by 101 votes to 57 for my SanFran pals Mike and Linda McInerney, we bought books on Australian travel and began to ooh and ahh over the wonderful and exotic scenery downunder has to offer. The weekend before Mardi Gras, we hosted a visit from the "reigning" DUFF delegates, the aforementioned Naomi Fisher and her husband, Pat Molloy. They gave us some extremely helpful advice on getting the trip together and passed along four heavy boxes of fanzines, bound for auction – if not in Perth, site of the Australian National Convention, then here in the States over the next two years. Most importantly, they named names of Australian fans we should contact – since after all, *fandom* is the point of DUFF. Their visit so energized Rose-Marie that she immediately proclaimed that our planned two-week journey was now a *three-week* journey, and our plans were adjusted accordingly.

Among the folks we've been yapping with via e-mail are Julian Warner, the last Australian DUFF delegate, Alan Stewart, publisher of the national newszine, **Thyme**, Bill Wright, one of the nation's senior faneds, and Robin Johnson, onetime worldcon chair and attendee at the 1974 DeepSouthCon – who has been assiduously luring us to visit Tasmania after Swanncon. We've been studying past DUFF reports – yours is invaluable, Janice – and watching Australian movies. Rosy wants to see the outback. I want to find Judy Davis and look at *her* for three weeks.

In any event, we've gotten our tickets together. Right now, our itinerary looks something

like this:

**April 12:** off to L.A. Our current ticket has us leaving in the afternoon, when local storms kick up during the summer. If it looks that rough in the spring, I'll change our departure to early morning. Generally, that's smoother air. The mileage is said to be 1676 miles. N.B. If there's time before we leave for Melbourne, near midnight, we may rent a car and drive around L.A. I'd love to show the girl the Watts Towers.

**April 14:** arrive in Melbourne. Since we're crossing the International Date Line, we'll be losing most of April 13<sup>th</sup>. If I'm not insane, we'll be picked up – probably by Julian, and be off. MSFC, the Great Ocean Road, Hanging Rock ... these are my hopes for the early days in Melbourne. Whatever we miss, of course, can wait till the next week.

**April 17:** on to Perth, on Australia's west coast, and the *Indian* Ocean, for the Swanncon. Get this: the distance is 1681, almost perzactly the span between New Orleans and L.A. Australia and America could be twins. For the next several days, we boogie down at the convention, throwing Mardi Gras beads, auctioning goodies (see below), wondering how the toilet spirals *the wrong way* when you flush.

**April 23:** back to Melbourne. I'd love to take the train, because it'd give us the chance to see some of the desert, and Adelaide, which Naomi praised as wonderful, and it'd save me the trauma of flying, but there just isn't time.

Over the next week, we may visit Robin Johnson in Tasmania, we may go up to Ayers Rock, we will definitely drive up to Sydney via Canberra, where we'll see the Aussie gummint and visit fans. Sydney is our goal, of course; there are fabulous sights like the Bridge and the Opera House to see, and fabulous fans to meet.

**May 3:** Head for home. Mileage 7509, plus another 1676. We'll have a longer May 3<sup>rd</sup> than most people in the world. May 4<sup>th</sup> we'll spend unpacking and recovering our wits, assuming I have any left to recover after all that air travel.

Speaking of which, I'm infamous for my fear of flight, and the DUFF trip will require at least mumble mumble add *42 hours in the air*. How in the world am I going to do it?

As a child of the '60s, and a veteran of SFPA in the '80s, my first thought was *drugs*. I checked with my doctor about going onto Prozac for the duration of the trip. Forget it. Prozac and its generics literally change the chemistries of your brain, and however warped those chemistries are, in the judgment of some, they're still *mine*. I know how much good drug therapy has done many depressed and anxious people, but to me, the very idea reeks of the idea that human life is nothing more than chemical illusion, a concept I find detestable. I refuse to be a clockwork orange.

So I've opted for *hypnosis* – which I found my insurance will cover. I sat next to a hypnotherapist on my flight to Baltimore some years ago, and his soothing words were invaluable. I called Paula, my onetime shrink, who recommended some specialists in that line. In turn, they sent me to a charming lady named Dr. Beard, who is, as we speak, indoctrinating me into the therapeutic value of *breath*. We're going to re-live my worst flight – returning from St. Louiscon, 1969 – and have me *breathe* my way through it. The lady inspires confidence and calm; I look forward to our sessions. In fact, I'm thinking of continuing with her, to try to recover some fuzzy memories, of conversations I want to recover and set down for myself, verbatim.

And if it doesn't work, there's always a sleeping pill.

Why am I *doing* all this? Above all, for Rosy. In 1979 and 1980 I had the chance to take Beth, my first wife, to Christmas vacation in Rio de Janeiro. I let my fear of flying keep her from the experience of a lifetime. I still bad about that. I won't make the same selfish mistake twice.

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The aftermath of my January 24<sup>th</sup> auto accident has been another strand of spaghetti, and not a very tasty one, at that.

First of all, I'm feeling much better, thanks, and sincere thanks to Dave Schlosser for the e-mail inquiry. I spent some time hiding my hideousness (depicted herein) behind enormous dark glasses, since both of my eyes were swollen and blackened. That's all gone now. I have a permanent scar near the center of my forehead that resembles nothing so much as a Manson Family emblem; I should send a photo to Leslie van Houten and thank her for her inspiration. In reality, though, I have sent it— through my lawyers.

Newton Muhammad works with me at the public defender's office in LaPlace; his wife does personal injury work in New Orleans. I asked her to help me out. In addition to sending shots of my mangled face to the insurance company of the brainless doofus who rear-ended me, they've sent me to a chiropractor.

The woman is pretty and the treatments – involving electrodes being pasted to my back and jolts of electricity zapped into my muscles – don't hurt. In fact, they've worked. My right shoulder ached like a bastard after the wreck, and now it feels fine. Those strange tables must have some salutary effect. One has rollers inside it that massage my back like a team of Turks; it *liquefies* my spine. Another is designed to move my body in what the chiropractor calls a “dolphin” motion, which mainly reminds me of the energy of my youth. No wonder I think her a *very* pretty woman.

My body is one thing, but far more important: my *wheels*. I work 35 miles from my house and very occasionally drive further. My Ford Festiva was totaled on January 24th, and I needed transportation.

For a month, we had a rental car, *gratis*, while the doofus' insurance company – All-State – inspected the crushed remnants of the Festiva, trying to find pre-existing damage. They accused me of *staining the carpets* myself – but admitted the rest of the carnage was the fault of their insured's. They offered me about \$750, property damage (my personal injury complaint will be settled later). A pittance, to be sure, but twice as much as I paid for the thing.

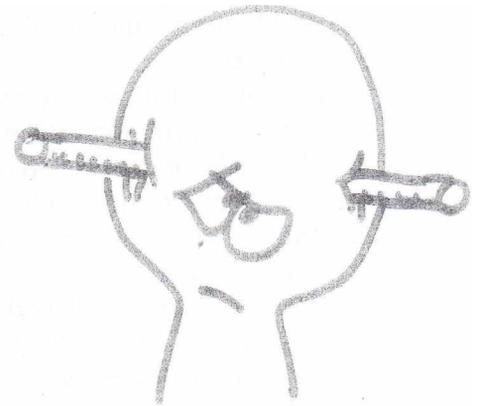
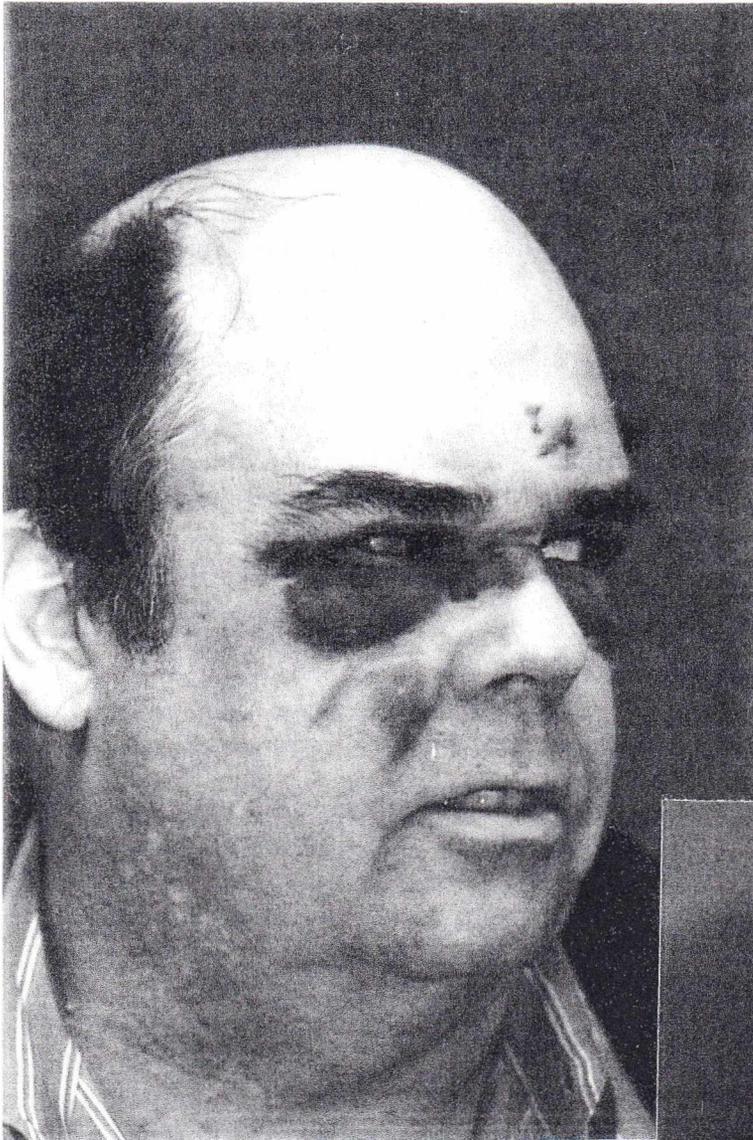
John Guidry's friend Tiffany Oswald is a very pretty lady who once appeared – fully clothed, I must add – on an episode of **Howard Stern**. At a movie preview, she advised us that her mechanic boyfriend had found a used car that fell within our price range, and once the rental payments had run out, and the \$750 had come in, I bought it. It's a 1989 Nissan 280ZX, maroon, black interior, several million miles on the odometer. Richie, Tiff's boyfriend, told me that the car had a faulty cylinder but was still a good buy, and after I drove it a bit, the miss in the engine disappeared. I thought I had a real bargain on my hands.

Then I tried to drive the thing to the Louisiana State Penitentiary to interview a client. It made it as far as Baton Rouge before steam began to course outward from the hood.

After I had the beast hauled back to New Orleans – bless you, triple-A – Richie took a closer look. The water pump fell apart in his hands. Add another couple of C's to the price of the car. Later, the windshield wipers and electric windows stopped working – while the driver's side was down – and the windshield developed a leak. Finally, the goddamned thing simply stopped, cold, bluh, in front of my office in LaPlace, and refused to re-start. Can you say “lemon”? I knew you could.

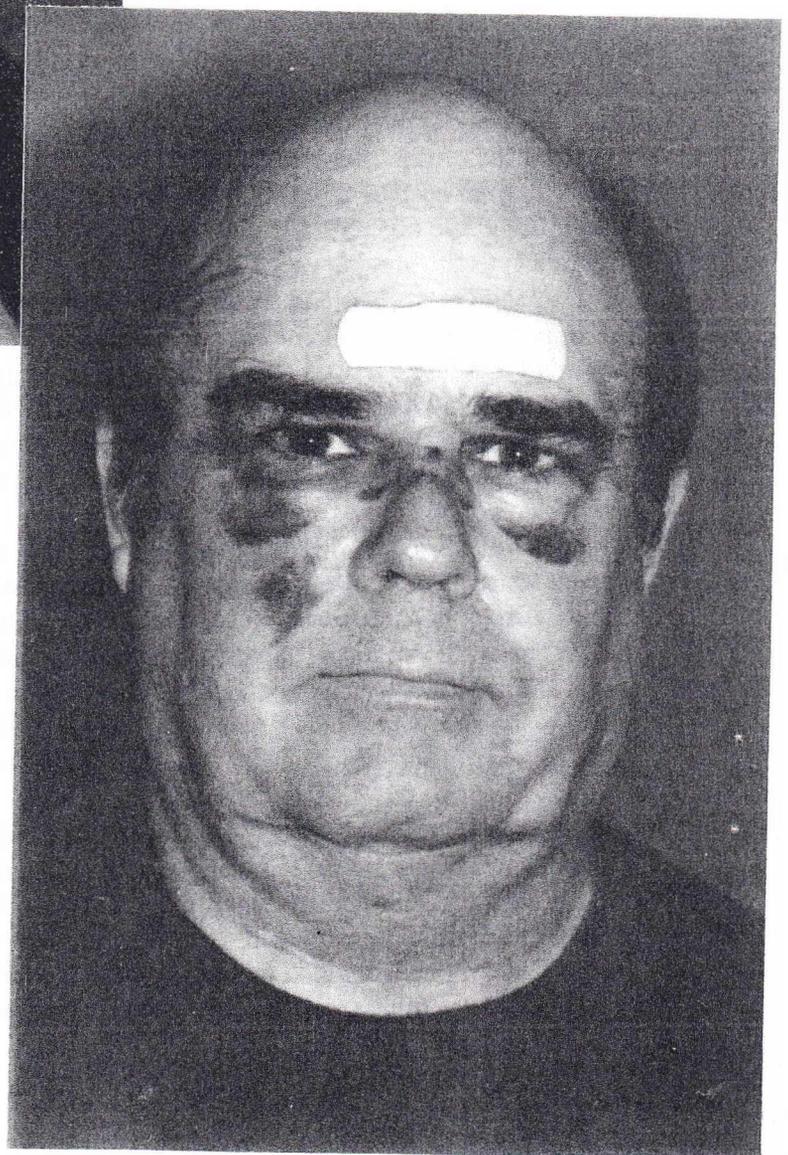
But *is* it a lemon? Richie replaced the water pump and repaired the window and windshield wipers. After he got it started in LaPlace, the engine *purred*. We still have to replace the thermostat, but filling the radiator every morning and afternoon is a tolerable nuisance for now. Once the personal injury money comes in – at which time my forehead scar will come into play – I intend to upgrade, but with a little luck this car will last me until then and *not* be a constant source of anxiety.

One nice thing ... while he was here, working on the Nissan, we asked Richie to look behind



Stages of recovery. Who said "It's an improvement"?

He hangs upon the  
cheek of night like a  
pearl on an Ethiop's  
ear ...



the dashboard of Rosy's car, in search of something she'd lost some time before. He undid a few screws and pried loose a few panels and "Hey!" he grinned. "I found it!" And he held up Rosy's wedding ring. For giving it the old college try, and setting that recovery into motion, this **Spiritus Mundi** is dedicated to **TIFFANY OSWALD**.

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Among the hassles that must be attended to, before we leave for Australia, is disposition of our critters – one yorkie dawg, Jessie, and *two* cats.

That's an increase in the feline population of 100%, and it's Rosy's fault. Seems one of our neighbors – the dopy gay guy, not the cute nervous blonde – got tired of the hairballs and booted his cat out the front door. The poor beast, a handsome long-haired Burmese, hung around 63 Allard Boulevard, sleeping underneath, cadging scraps. Rose-Marie, a loving soul, couldn't tolerate it. She left food and water on our side stoop. She ran an extension cord out the door and put a heating pad in a cardboard box so the cat would have a warm place to sleep. Eventually she brought him inside.

Where the old adage, man is the only animal which bites the hand that feeds him, was proven untrue. Malibu – his name – proved himself to be a sonuvabitch.

At first, he ensconced himself atop some boxes in our front room and left everyone alone. After a bit of acclimation, however, he began exploring ... and terrorizing our own cat, Boo. Many's the morning I've awoken to a pair of ten-pound felines bounding onto my stomach on their way to a fight. Real tussles, they are, with meanness behind them; I've seen pain on Boo's face when assaulted by the hairy Burmese. But the damage to Boo isn't the worst. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, Malibu literally bit the hand that feeds him.

Apparently he had crawled in behind some boxes and Rosy was trying to get him out. He sank his fangs into the soft part of her right hand, deep. We spent two hours in the closest emergency room. Rose-Marie had to soak her hand in antiseptic, get a tetanus booster and go onto antibiotics. A week later the swelling has gone down, but her hand was still tender ... and discolored. We still haven't decided what to do with Malibu.

Most of the time he just sits and looks at us, an attractive mobile house ornament. When he's hungry he'll curl about our legs in the charming way cats do. If we get his claws clipped he shouldn't be any more of a threat to Boo. He *could* become a normal cat ... but first, I have to forgive him, and be certain that he won't hurt my wife again.

First, we have to decide what to do with him during the trip. Boo and Jessie could go to Rosy's father and stepmother or to a vet recommended by Rosy's stepsister. But until Malibu is tamed, as well as defanged, there's no way we can inflict him on anyone else. I hate to say it, and Rosy will hardly hear of it, but he could be destined for the SPCA.

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And of course, there was Mardi Gras, 2003 ... forever to be known as the *Shoepick* Mardi Gras. To explain:

While Naomi and Pat were here, we took them to the parade of a minor krewe, Sparta. Floats, bands, beads, doubloons ... the usual madness reigned, our guests loved it, and I discovered anew what packs of visitors have always taught me and mine about New Orleans: this old burg is the repository of the most *fun* on the face of the Earth.

But Mardi Gras was not *supposed* to be fun, for us. It was supposed to be *work*. Rosy's little newspaper had her covering – and photographing – parades in outlying Louisiana hamlets. The moons of Neptune are a bit more outlying than some of the places we had to go, but not much. A few days before Fat Tuesday, for instance, we had to drive down the delta to a town known as *Golden Meadow* – neither golden nor a meadow but a single road alongside the intercoastal

waterway. The female-dominated Nereids parade rolled past cool fishing boats with tall V-shaped masts, spreading beads in promiscuous showers. No bands, Confederate flags on the trucks, and not a black face to be seen, but we had a surprisingly good time and scored lots of trashy plastic loot. Some of it will be re-tossed at Australia's Swanncon, or so we plan.

One unfortunate aspect of this year's Carnival season was the terrible weather – foggy and cold. But Mardi Gras Day itself betook of the magic that seems to fall upon this town every year on that day – it was sunny and relatively warm.

We had more business in the boonies, courtesy of the *Daily Comet*, but first we sought beignets for breakfast. Parking near the Café du Monde on Jackson Square was already impossible by the time we got there. We opted for the Morning Call, in Metairie, noting the crowds amassing a mere block away. When we joined them, our Mardi Gras Day really got rolling, not only with luscious sugared pastries, but with a Fat Tuesday parade the like of which I'd never seen: Argus.

Argus was both overtly commercial and repellantly political, as befits corrupt, backstabbing, sleazy and Republican Jefferson Parish, home of at least one indicted judge and constant political scandal. The floats in the expensively designed parade hailed either hack politicians, stooges for Jefferson's Jabba-sized Sheriff Harry Lee, or local businesses, like Popeye's, Cox Cable and those horrid Blue Dog paintings. The crowd was lily-white – the only black folks were marchers in the bands – but the spirit was high and we had a good time. I caught a stuffed animal toy that I gave to a blind kid. Am I a nice guy or what?

And then off to *Shoepick*.

That's *Choupic*, or even better, *Choupique*, site of the infinitesimal parade Rosy was to record for her paper. We're told it's named for a fish, which also gave its name to Tchoupitoulas, one of New Orleans' least pronounceable streets. The town is so tiny it doesn't appear on most maps, but it's a little north of Thibodaux; you just turn right at the church.

The parade was convenient as hell for the residents; it ran right past their houses, and people had lawn chairs set up in their driveways awaiting the goodies. I must say that what the Krewe of Choupic lacked in glamour or expense it made up for in spirit. The simple floats – manned by local kids, except for the Stars & Bars-bedecked "Southern Pride" entry, manned by beer-guzzling hunters – spewed beads by the basketful on everyone. The backseat of Rosy's car ended Carnival glutted with gaudy plastic.

We dropped off the Comet's camera at the newspaper offices, dodging a Thibodaux parade, and made quick for the French Quarter. Damned if I would let any Mardi Gras pass without at least some time in the city's center of Sin. It was evening by the time we arrived, but what of it? That's when Fat Tuesday really begins to *glow*.

We met John Guidry, his feet already aflame after a day working them around the Vieux Carre, and hit the streets. Ah, the glorious lunacy. I can't remember a single detail. And I couldn't care less. Hurricanes – we should take some mix to Australia – and ice cream and girls topless but for *paint* – at home, the day nearing its end, we watched the meeting of krewes, again subjecting my ears to "If Ever I Cease to Love", I reflected that if ever I cease to love Mardi Gras, I'd be fit for fertilizer, and little else.

**February 24, 2004.** If we survive DUFF, we'll be here. Sydney to Shoepick, that's the spirit!

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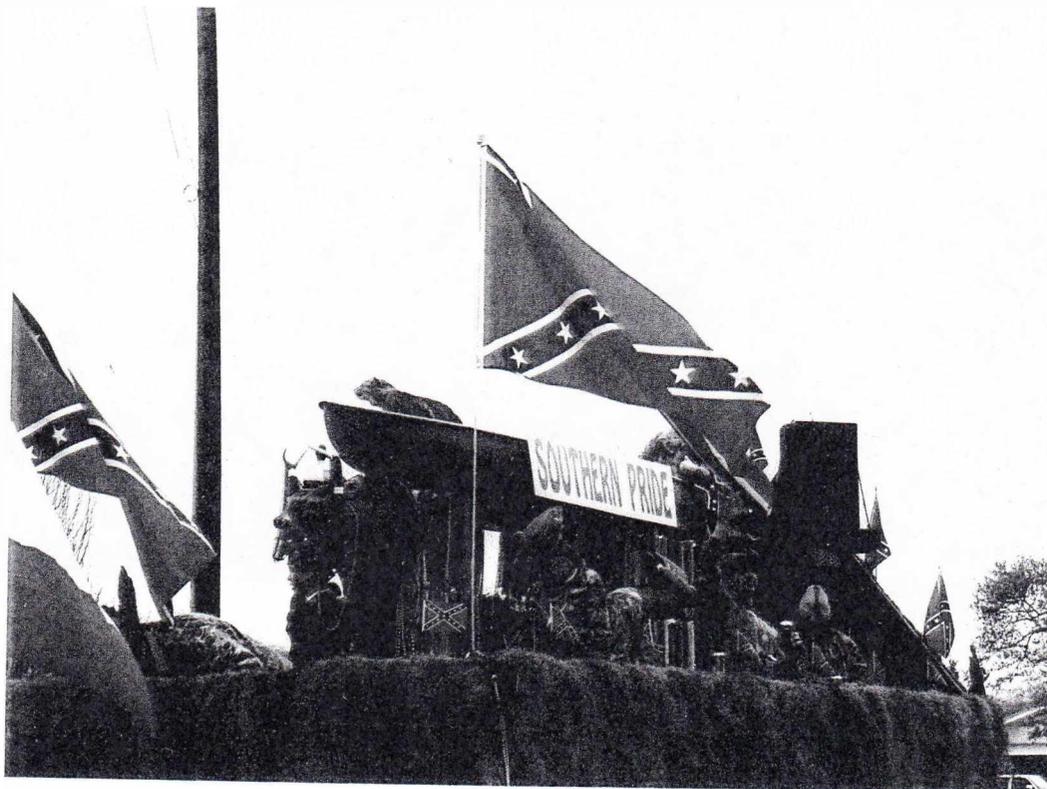


*MARDI GRAS 2003*  
Some goofball and la belle Rose at  
Argus, Fat Tuesday ...  
Left, Naomi Fisher, beaded down

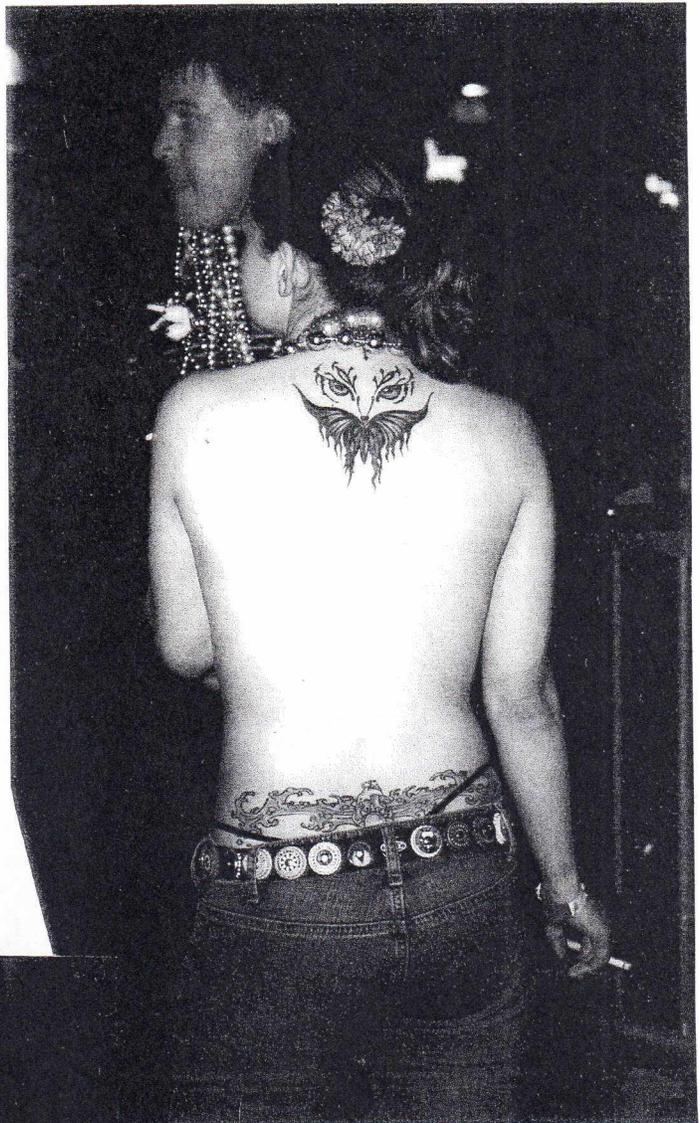


**Choupic shenanigans**

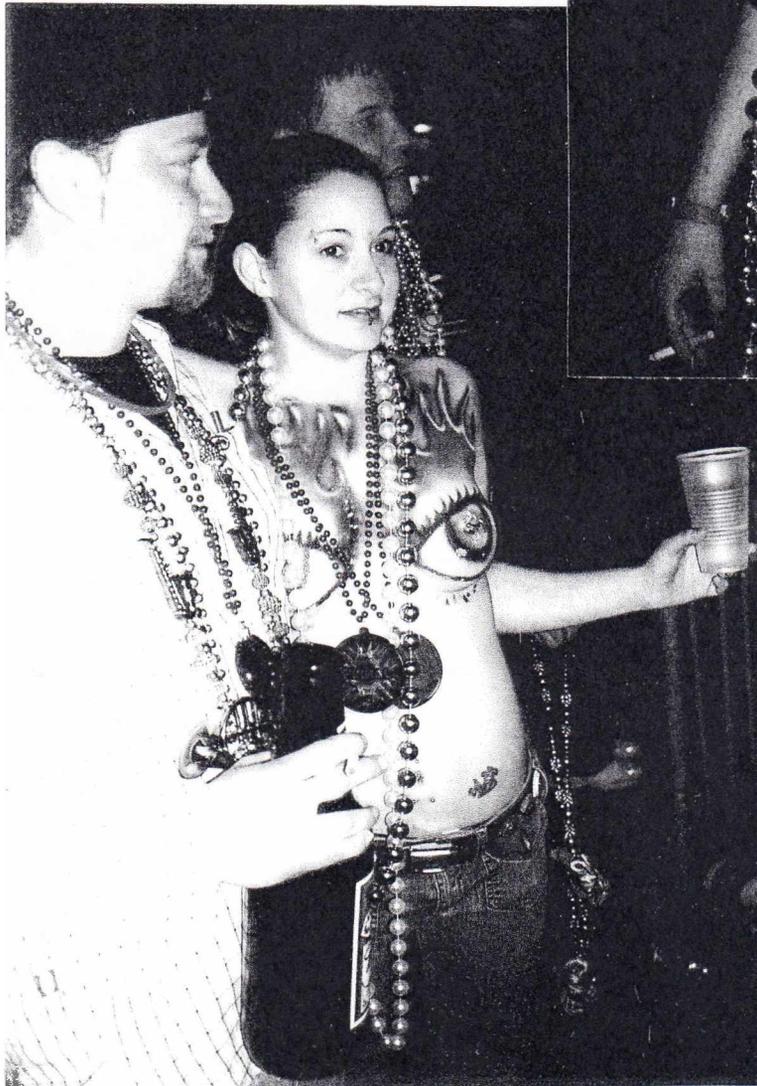
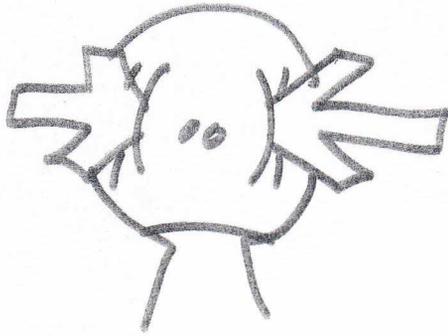
The locals eat it up for a Cajun country Mardi Gras. Below: fergit, hell!



HEH, HEH, I LIKE  
THEM SQUEEZY  
BOUNCERS



I have no idea  
what Mr. Rotsler's  
cartoon means,  
but perhaps these  
ladies know...



This lady said  
she was 21.  
Impossible,  
No one is 21.

## SFPA 231 – MAILING CAUSTICS

**The Southerner #231 <Jeff>** Pretty logo – although I’ll miss the plain-Jane blue O.O.s of your first two years in office. Every OE has his own logo style and that one bespoke calm and competence, a couple of Copeland trademarks. Well, it’s a pretty picture. ◇ I bet I owe another installment on my dues, but first class delivery is worth it. ◇ Noting the franked TAFF ballot, I’ll state publicly that I voted for **Chall** pal Curt Phillips, who lost to Seattlite Randy Byers. Phillips didn’t campaign – and that’s even more of a necessity in TAFF than it is in DUFF. ◇ Cool that Pat And Naomi (Molloy and Fisher, respectively) received this OO; maybe it means they’re getting back into fan publishing. Pat ran KAPA, Kentucky’s “friendly little apa,” for years, and since it’s folded I’ve missed reading them. Likewise, pretty Sally Syrjala and her “permanent teardrop” ... The poor lady was recently widowed, and I hope fandom can provide some comfort. Could this be the start of a roster revival? ◇ Before Rosy, unfamiliar Rule #4 could have been describing *me*.

**The New Port News #207 <Ned>** Your cover comes from an Australian newspaper of the ‘30s. *Everything* reminds me of DUFF! ◇ Keep us advised of that incompetent cop who shot the kid who thought he was escaping a car-jacker. We need to know details, of course, before we condemn the policeman, but what we hear here is simply disgusting. ◇ Bester’s “Pi Man” is a short story, and brilliant past imagining. I recently obtained a first pb edition of **The Demolished Man**, just so I could have it – I also have a hardback of that book, a trade paperback, an ugly pocketbook edition I had autographed, and one in Japanese Bester gave me himself – unless that’s a story collection. Damned if I know; it’s in Japanese! What can I say? the novel bears re-reading. ◇ No child should be *beaten*, ever. The word carries an implicit

connotation of brutality and injury that is intolerable, and should be criminal, in civilization. I find it repulsive that you were subjected to such treatment. *Spanked*, now, is another story. Nothing wrong with administering a well-placed open-handed butt-whap when your young’un is being a pill. ◇ Audrey Hepburn doesn’t play a waitress in her **Lavender Hill Mob** walk-on, but as I recall she and Alec Guinness *are* in a café. ◇ The “pointy-haired boss” in **Dilbert** – whom I fear I resemble, especially before my morning shampoo – isn’t really *malicious*, but utterly, completely, tragically and monumentally *clueless*. Dogbert the H.R. director, though, is evil, and proud of it. ◇ *Thanks* for the Libertycon/DSC information! We’ll be there, of course. How about you? Start another string! ◇ Hmm .. has any SFPazine been composed further south than Melbourne? ◇ You mention Joe McCarthy; tell the bwah I said hello, and Mardi Gras missed him.

**Variations #18 <Rich L.>** Your mention of the album **Blind Joe Death** reminds me of the time I handed Reinhardt a copy of a great short story called “Come Lady Death”. “The first word is ‘Come,’” I teased him. “That means the opposite of ‘go’.” The second word is ‘Lady.’ That’s a nice woman.” He fixed me with an evil stare. “And what’s the *third* word?” he intoned. Gulp. ◇ I’ll have to listen to Leroy Anderson’s work; I’ve found I enjoy light classical. Music is one art in which I am completely untutored, and I regret that immensely. ◇ You mention astronomy and remind me to once again hail the Hubble, whose latest photos blow my mind all over again. How did we survive without its incredible portraits of the infinite variety of stellar goodies in the cosmos? ◇ I enjoyed the World Fantasy Convention here in New Orleans – I got to spend time with Quinn Yarbrow, meet Neil Gaiman and start collecting its award winners, thanks to the list in Peggy Ranson’s program book. But I was the only one *really* applauding Fred Chappell’s short story victory – you could tell the event was filled with pros, not fans. ◇ I certainly agree that open-ended

contempt sentences are unfair; in fact, I think they're unconstitutional. The feds shouldn't have *had* to pass a special law outlawing them! ◇ Of course air marshals would have prevented 9-1-1; I want to know when – and why – our airlines stopped flying them. I've told the story often about the flight Rosy and I took back from Philadelphia; the cockpit door was left open at least once during the flight, and the cabin itself was at least 75% empty. We were lucky Atta Boy didn't know about *that* long-distance trip, didn't choose to attack the WTC two weeks earlier, and didn't fly out of Philly. I was too drunk for any Flight 93-style heroics; maybe I could have breathed on the hijackers and taken the plane back that way ... ◇ Again, I envy you the free chow at the Finnish and Russian embassies. Have a cracker-ful of caviar for me.

**Hundred <Arthur>** Priceless one-line gags on yourself. Particularly hilarious is #6, "I was born in New York City and grew up in New Rochelle." Don't admit to that outside of fandom!

**The Sphere vol. 202 #1 <Don>** I missed all this paranoid nonsense about duct (or duck) tape, since I automatically ignore anything W or his posse have to say, but the reaction has been refreshingly scoff-ful. John Guidry calls the brouhaha "Duct Tape and Cover." ◇ The Toonopedia is a remarkable success – both aesthetically and as a business. ◇ At 6 pages per mailing, you're doing exactly *double* minac.

**Peter, Pan & Merry #47 <Dave>** **The Return of the King** will be a very *full* movie, with Shelob and the Nazgul *and* the siege of Minas Tirath *and* the Grey Havens ... Well, even if the movie is six hours long *before* the extended DVD, I don't think I'll complain. ◇ **Fail-Safe** wasn't only about the limitations of technology, of course, but about *human* limitations – and how the inhumanly immense horror of nuclear war and racial destruction was a mere glitch, or twitch, away. ◇ "Can you ... challenge evidence obtained in a search based on the

warrant itself being improperly issued?" Sure. Warrants must be backed up by a good faith belief that crime is, was, or is about to be committed. Without good faith the warrant is faulty. It must also be particular, specifying the place or person to be searched and what is sought. If it screws up the description seriously, or is so vague that it allows the searcher too wide a latitude, then it also fails. Now you see why I could never be a judge. That's a shallow and confusing answer, and from a jurist, such doctrine should *sing*. Not that it does, from most of the black robes I've stood in front of. ◇ Your comments on Democrats running (foolishly) *away* from Clinton inspires a reverie on what the national situation would be had Gore won 600 more votes in Florida. As a liberal, of course, I fantasize a peaceful land of milk and honey, but in all honesty, I think we'd've done much the same *vis-à-vis* Afghanistan, be in far better shape economically, and *not* be on the verge of invading Iraq, destroying the United Nations and losing our prestige in the world. And how would President Al have handled Iraq? With diligent surveillance and readiness. Someone recently called W's warmongering "Churchillian," which was wrong. Churchill's advice about Germany in the years prior to WW2 never advised proactive invasion or war. He urged Britain to arm itself in response to Nazi militarism and respond with force against German aggression – *when* it happened. Gore would have done the same with Saddam. W, an imbecile, doesn't understand the difference. So the 2000 election was a national tragedy – and I bet you're surprised to hear me say that. ◇ Maybe Annakin assembled C3PO from a *kit*. ◇ I can't comment on **Birds of Prey**; I've never watched it, and indeed taped over the premiere. But I see that the erstwhile Batgirl, Barbara Gordon, is in a wheelchair, a reference to her fate in Alan Moore's **The Killing Joke**. ◇ "Reulse"? Oh ... RULES. ◇ You mention the Museum of Tolerance and remind me of **The Pianist**, Roman Polanski's critically successful tale of the Warsaw Ghetto. Winner of the British Academy Award and a

glut of critics' prizes, it's the dark horse in the Oscar derby – though very unlikely to win. (**Chicago** ... it has it comin', all the way.) On the other hand, AMPAS *always* salutes Holocaust movies ... Anyway, I applauded the film, more consistent and more personal in a way than **Schindler's List**, and would howl with glee if Adrian Brody won Best Actor, but I must admit that it didn't *shock* me. I've seen Nazis before. They're numbingly familiar. Everything they did disgusts me, but nothing they did surprises me anymore. I am intensely distressed to have reached this point, but shudder at what *might* surprise me. My dream, perhaps.

**How to Catch a Sasquatch <Poulette>** A trap baited with prunes is more appropriate for Beagle Boys than abominable snowmen, or at least one of them.

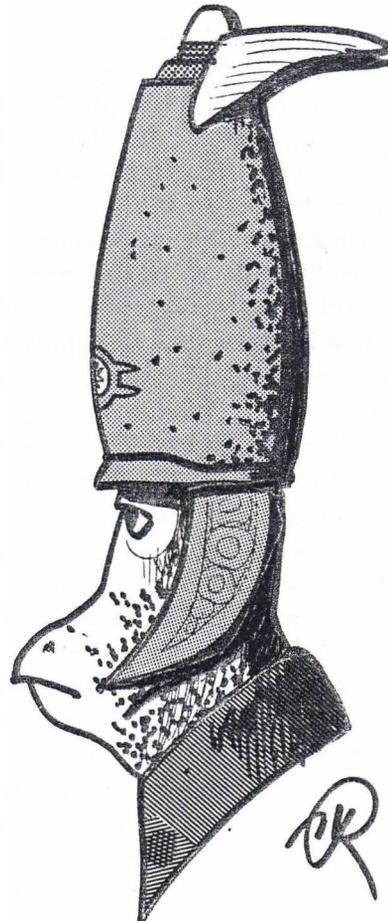
**Twygdrasil #80 <Yakov Genderovski>** I'm sorry to hear about your cousin Wayne; he sounds like a flawed but lovable human being, which is all people will be able to say about many of us. In fact, your whole Atlantic City family sounds both intolerable, and remarkably appealing. ◊ Isn't there an alternative to your sister being forced to care for your mother in her last years? I for one have no patience with the belief that a grown person "owes" a parent personal servitude in that parent's dotage; we *owe* the next generation personal care and guidance, and the last one only to make sure that they're cared for. When it's argued otherwise, I flash on Julie Harris' character out of **The Haunting**, her life destroyed by tedium and disgust and guilt. Don't let anyone impose that on your sister, or anyone else. That's not tolerable and not fair. ◊ Who's that on your cover? Nebocaneezar? (*Sic* – I never could spell that name.) ◊ You date yourself when you mention Arnold Stang. Of course, I imagine Stang dated himself on a number of occasions, but it's too bad the work he'll probably be known for, if at all, is the execrable **Top Cat**. (Who knows the complete lyrics to its theme? Two or three words in it baffle me, 35 years after.) ◊ That very famous Bradbury time-travel

story you mention was "The Sound of Thunder". Or so I recall; it's famous, but not *that* famous. ◊ I've never known a criminal defendant to "go scot free" if he was found to be intoxicated at the time of his crime – but intoxication could lessen the offense, serve as a mitigating factor, or establish insanity, which would pack the perp off to a mental institution instead of a prison. Being loaded on clikum saved my first first degree from execution, I know that. ◊ As you'll see from **Challenger #17**, the **Swamp Thing** about the Winchester House made my list of 15 favorite comic book stories. It still blows me away, especially the last page. ◊ 1968 was a lonely, bitter time; the only good public moment was the flight of Apollo 8 and there were *no* good private moments. The only thing I miss about 1968 was the fact that 1969 was just around the corner, when everything changed, and the flight of Apollo 11 was the *least* of the good public moments. ◊ James Watt didn't only fall short of political correctness, he fell short of basic common sense and human courtesy – not to mention, he espoused beliefs that were utterly antithetical to his job. What evil is he concocting now? ◊ The Hauer speech in **Blade Runner** was the most beautiful evocation of Phil Dick's thought that I've seen – outside of his own writing, that is. The inanimate has not conquered us should it begin to speak and plan and think; *we* have conquered the inanimate; life is again triumphant. I wish I could talk with him; I have some questions that need answers. ◊ I haven't noticed anyone among the Democratic candidates who seems up to the task of reinventing the party and booting out W, but I'm impressed that obscure Howard Dean had the *cujones* to oppose the Iraqi War. In this era of mass insanity, that was a brave stance. ◊ Your excellent comment to Janet about health care reminds me of the wonderfully paranoid stories by Ted Sturgeon and Karl Edward Wagner that portrayed medicine, as a profession, plotting to protect certain diseases from cure, to keep power. All I know is that my chiropractor made my back feel better, and antibiotics heal my skin. ◊ Clinton? Oh yes, the 8

dark years of peace and prosperity that preceded the current paradise of pointless war and economic deprivation. ◊ **The Ring** – as opposed to **The Lord** thereof – suffered from the common flaw in horror films of being too complicated: I didn't understand what was supposed to be so scary. Another recent horror el foldo: **Darkness Falls**. Gary Tesser liked it, but dimmed if I can figure out why. ◊ Speaking of the World Trade Center, the new design for the site is going to be even more of an eyesore than the original – more about the ego of the architect than the needs and meaning of the property. Maybe I just can't get into contemporary memorials: I didn't like the chair motif at Oklahoma City, either. The Nam Memorial, though, is perfect: simple, to the point (namesnamesnames), with serendipitous features like the reflectiveness of the stone adding to its impact.

**Revenant #16 <Sheila>** What happened to your margins here? Or is my concussion coming back? ◊ I take it that you aced your grad school course and so avoided having to hassle with the bureaucratic idiots who counted your decades-old F in your current average. I agree with your dean; it's an atrocious and unfair ruling, and I'm glad it fell by the wayside. Academics can be as bad as tax people when it comes to dotting their "i"s so fiercely that the pen point pokes through the paper. ◊ Rosy and I recently played our Christmas DVD, the extended **LotR: FotR**, and enjoyed it immensely. The longer movie is slower than the Hugo-winning version (which I also have in that format; I only have two DVD movies and they're both **Lord of the Rings**), and the additional Galadriel sequence isn't as lovely as I'd hoped (Cate Blanchett isn't the perfect beauty the Elf Queen should be, but she does have her dignity), but the other new stuff is wonderful. Mostly, it adds vistas and settings – we see a lot more of the mines of Moria, for instance. It's all glorious. We'll have to find the "Easter Eggs" Lynch mentioned in his zine. ◊ We seem to have a new cat. More about Malibu elsewhere. ◊ Methinks one reason I think ill of Baton Rouge is the

misery of my one semester at LSU Law School in 1983. Nothing wrong with the school; I enjoyed it. But I was recoiling from the trauma of a separation and coupled with the stress of starting a professional school, it was just Too Much. Not to mention my story about the artificial vagi- ... never mind. Anyway, I still hate driving in Louisiana's Capital City – I always get lost. ◊ Yeah, Branagh was the best thing about the second Harry Potter flick. He botched his **Hamlet** but his takes on Shakespeare have otherwise been splendid. ◊ Joseph Campbell's speech on human values is wise, and brave – even more so considering that he made it in 1940. Of course he was right in insisting that sane people recognize that the enemy is human, too ... but in the case of his own time, that concept would force humanity to face the darkest and most vile corners of its nature. Fighting Germany, hating Hitler, was an act of sanity, and civilization in action.



**Frequent Flyer <Tom>** I take it your cover photo shows where the new house is going to be. Felicitations on such an accomplishment, regrettably beyond us. Someone from New Orleans won the Powerball this week; had that ticket been in my pocket, *then* we could have talked ... ◇ I never knew that you wrote fiction! Creating comic characters – winning a short story contest – Tom, you gotta write more for **Challenger!** ◇ A good story of the SCA Feast, and that menu is making my stomach rumble, but the story brings up painful memories. Gary Brown will remember the 1974 DeepSouthCon, where the major entertainment on the program was an SCA banquet ... at which no one but SCAers could eat! The rest of us were supposed to get our jollies *watching*. Not a particularly successful event. ◇ Mentioning Monticello and Albany in your wedding account makes me think simultaneously of Virginia and New York. But this took place in Illinois, didn't it? ◇ You may recall that Susan Stockell took me by Nashville's model of the Parthenon, which has duplicates of the Elgin Marbles on display. I was so dense that I thought they'd be big stone spheres.

**Weird Stuff 2 <Steve & Suzanne>** Jeez, that is a gorgeous cover, and that paper is worth a dime a sheet. ◇ I love those toys! Glad you're leaving them up after Christmas – they're works of art! ◇ Speaking of snow, I took sadistic pleasure during the recent East Coast blizzard in calling my brother and complaining about the "frigid" forty degree temperatures around here. When a Buffalo resident like him says "forty," he means forty *below*.

**Oblivion No. 144 <Gary B.>** You were dead on in predicting a Bucs victory in the Super Bowl. Though I was a Raiders fan for years, it did me good to see them suffer Favorites Freeze and Tampa Bay fulfill their promise. During the game I kept remembering the time I snuck into the Superdome to see the Bucs win for the first time – over the Saints, of course – after which they celebrated almost as heartily as they did Super Sunday.

Inestimable the value of employing Gruder, the former Raiders coach, of course, but more important than that was their hunger for respect. They got it – and gave football a great story. ◇ If we are not at war with Iraq by the time you read this mc, I will be astonished. I share every iota of your dismay at this probability and your skepticism at W's stated rationale. Without hyperbole – unbelievable though that may be, where I'm concerned – I do believe that Bush Jr. is the worst President in American history. Our economy is *guttled* – unemployment up 43% since he took office and a budget surplus transformed into a \$300 billion deficit. Stock values down *five trillion dollars*, and the only economic idea the doofus offers is yet more tax breaks for the rich. Foreign policy is likewise in the crapper, our fifty years of difficult, determined diplomatic effort in building the United Nations, both as a concept and a working force for peace and justice – abandoned in the administration's bloodlust for pointless war. America's reputation in the world is sinking like a stone – and the cretin-in-chief smirks blissfully on. The 2000 election will live in history as the bleakest and most destructive turning point in American history since the advent of slavery. (There – I feel better with my hyperbole back in gear.) *Gore, come back!* ◇ Thanks for the recommendation of the graphic series, **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen**. I've been put off by Alan Moore since **From Hell**, but to judge from your review, this one should re-establish him in my favor. I'll bite ... and see the movie next summer. ◇ Dave Barry's Year in Review is always a riot, but we didn't see one for 2001, did we? Too terrible a time to satirize. I loved all the cartoons except the one set on an airliner. Too close to mid-April for me. ◇ No kidding, getting new wheels "on the fly" is a drag – and now I have to do it again. To make things worse, I'll almost undoubtedly never be able to get a new car. You don't suppose I could ride a nice *goat* to court, do you? ◇ No, no video-tape will be made of the ride to Australia, but I may well try to mc this present SFPA mailing on the trip. The

last time I tried that I managed maybe three words.

### Trivial Pursuits #105 / Winter Wanderings

<Janice> My first experience with a chiropractor has been a pretty pleasant one, although I was put off at first by the relative tackiness of the office. That the ministrations seem to have worked and the 'practor is a pretty girl help matters. ◇ Tom Tomorrow's "Modern World" cartoon about W blowing up the moon – because it might fall on us – is hilarious, and tragically apt. A recent *Newsweek* told the tale of a chiropractor – speaking of same – who grew so worried about Tom Ridge's duct tape and plastiwrap warnings that he became misaligned. Americans remain befuddled by panic; it is simultaneously agonizing and hilarious to see. ◇ **Spirited Away** got glorious reviews, and a NESFA recommendation for the "short drama" Hugo, but zipped through its New Orleans engagement too quickly for us. **Treasure Planet**, on the other hand, hung around for months – and still tanked. ◇ The plot of Anne Perry's **Face of a Stranger** reminds me of the fine independent mystery, **Amateur**, which I quoted in **Challenger** once. I wonder if Perry herself sees "the face of a stranger" when recalling her own murderous character in **Heavenly Creatures**. ◇ When I visited **Disneyland** as a kid, I enjoyed visiting the distinct "lands" ... wasn't Tomorrowland to the right, Adventureland to the left, Fantasyland in front as you came in through the magic castle? How do I remember these things? I still haven't been to Disney World. ◇ As you saw, Cindy's situation changed again between SMs 192 and 193. Her lawyer hopes to move her into a Jefferson Parish apartment, but a governmental waiver is required. Stay tuned – God along knows what will happen next. All I know is that I'll hear *all* about it. ◇ Regarding our DUFF travels, we've come up with a decent itinerary, and will, alas, fly between Perth and Melbourne. At present, we *do* plan on driving from Melbourne to Sydney; the road through the Snowy Mountains, apparently gorgeous territory. ◇

**The Telling** is a Hainish novel? Good news. ◇ Cool that there's a site about Stradivarius violins! I'll look it up next time the question of their superiority fiddles with my psyche. ◇ I should research the question of minac in SFPA using my *ahem* complete set of **Southerners**. Off my scalp, I recall tossing only one member for doing less than minimum activity, rather than no activity at all: Paul Flores. Considering how stressed out the poor guy was, working two shifts at a 7-11 and so forth, I probably could have been more generous, but at the time our waitlist was humongous, and harshness was commanded. ◇ True, a number of serious conservatives have been very annoyed at Ashcroft's unconstitutional acts, but these were sincere ideologues, and not the opportunistic sleazes who elected Ashcroft's boss. ◇ You should delight in your ZotY win in the egopoll! It was the SFPA honor I most coveted, and it took me 20 years to finally do it, with **The Book of Years**. Afterwards, I won it three years in a row with **Challengers**, but that first year was a true relief. Enjoy it! ◇ Got a hoot out of the cover cartoon to **Winter Wanderings**, "I'm with the Great Satan". Will our plane be met by anti-Bush demonstrators when we land in Melbourne? Will I restrain my desire to rush over and join them? Stay tuned.

**Tennessee Trash #51** <Gary R.> Your mustache shave on the cover is a rack riot and wins you a Best Bit this mailing ... doesn't help, though. ◇ Nice Christmas y'all had, and your pop showed epic good sportsmanship by wearing those silly fur shorts. ◇ This has indeed been a chilly winter, although I must admit to taking sadistic pleasure in calling my brother north of Buffalo – an area usually warmer than Buffalo itself, nestled between the sheltering Great Lakes – and reporting our Arctic nightmare of 40 degrees. He wasn't having a bad day: the snow was low enough so he could see the street. ◇ An excellent review of **The Two Towers** and its advantages over the novel. I agree about Gollum: I applauded Peter Jackson's decision to keep him repulsive and not cute him up. Dennis

Dolbear, in fact, admitted a strong case of the creeps watching Andy Serkis do his digitalized thing. You're not alone in questioning the flick's treatment of Faromir, though. Some fanzine reviewers found fault with his being tempted by the Ring in the movie, whereas in the book, as you say, he's more resistant. Myself, I rather like it that Galadriel alone, in Jackson's view, is pure and powerful enough to face the Ring down.

◇ Back when I was first developing my Hugo addiction, in the mid-sixties, I had no idea how to discover past nominees except in the same manner as I found out current ones. I haunted used bookstores carrying old issues of **Analog** and scanned Schuyler Miller's book review column. I didn't learn about Howard DeVore's invaluable reference work on the awards until I'd been in active fandom for years.

◇ Amen to your feelings on the Iraq war. Indeed, Saddam is a sack of shit. Indeed, there's no reason we know of to commit our national army, treasure, prestige and credibility to blowing him away – especially since the rest of the world joins me in questioning our government's true motives.

◇ That's a strange story about McGovern meeting the farmer he'd accidentally bombed during World War II. I hope the guy was telling the truth – that no one was hurt by the mistake, and they blamed Hitler, not McG. But it sounds like someone trying to make George feel better.

◇ If the creeps who killed Rick Norwood's son haven't been charged with murder, I need to know why. Could you pass along the name of the county trying the case? I'll call the D.A.

◇ I really do wonder why people go to such expensive lengths to see the Super Bowl in person. You get a better sense of the game from the tube. Of course, the corporate partying that surrounds the event is apparently awesome, and is as alien from my experience as the mating rituals of the most obscure aborigine tribe on Mars.

◇ Quote: "I doubt that many porn pages would key into a search for Acrylamac 16-1066 Acrylic Resin Solution." Not since Traci Lords retired.

◇ A Sherlock Holmes convention? Tom Feller, tell more!

◇ Great typo: "I think you fingered the real reason that

Israeli/Palestinian *peach* has been so elusive." Grows too near the top of the tree, I bet.

◇ A college club was expected to have a *flag*? And a marching band, no doubt.

**I Send Them Up <Jeff>** What a tragically apt title.

◇ One of my favorite wedding presents came from the IDB secretary: a paper shredder. Something childlike and psychotic in my makeup takes pleasure in reducing a coherent page to shards of unintelligibility.

◇ I envy your trip to D.C., even though I've been there a couple of times and seen the Nam Vets Memorial and National Gallery, described so beautifully here. I love how Allie got up and close and personal with the paintings in the Gallery, and as for the Vietnam Wall, it has to be one of the supremely affecting works of design I have ever encountered. Maybe it's that one name upon it that I knew, personally; maybe it's all the notes and flowers and photos and other reminiscences that still, I understand, pepper its surface. I wonder, two hundred years from now, when everyone who either fought in Vietnam or personally knew one of those etched names is himself dust, will the Wall still have an impact? Will people still Get It? Too bad the hawks devouring the doves in Washington never got it, and couldn't get it, in a million times two hundred years.

◇ I found the antiwar demonstrations of February '03 oddly comforting, even though I knew they wouldn't slow W's battlelust; just knowing there were people out there who didn't buy into his imbecility revived my calcifying faith in humanity. Of course, I too insist that I loathe Saddam Hussein and yearn for the headline announcing his downfall; it's simply that I don't want to see America waste trillions in treasure and thousands in lives to accomplish it. Why not send in the best CIA assassin we've got, and do the "regime change" thing that way? I'd actually cheer that.

◇ I haven't enjoyed a **Star Trek** movie since the one about the Borg, where Picard stepped over the assimilated body of Lieutenant Lynch. **Nemesis** was badly paced and dull. I'll be very surprised if it makes the Hugo ballot.

◇ I wish Joe Moudry,

onetime SFPA E.O., who was very into typography, could read your review of **Das Volkswagen Niebelungen Schickelgruber**, or whatever that book about German typefaces was. ◇ Clarke is right about Saturn taking your breath away: it kayos me even to look at it through a telescope. *Damn*, I say to myself. *It's a place!* ◇ Regarding Bill Mauldin's classic cartoon of a weeping Lincoln, and completely disregarding whoever the President happened to be, would such an awful event inspire such cosmic disbelief and horror now? Probably not – it'd be seen as just another depressing proof of the chaotic meaninglessness of modern life, and half of America would probably cheer. We've had terrible days since November 22, 1963 – indeed, one came while you wrote this zine – but none worse: that one marked the end of our American youth. "*J F K – blown away – what else do I have to say?*" ◇ Take a look at [www.challzine.com](http://www.challzine.com). I think Patty Green is doing very well at getting **Challenger** onto the net. Thanks for the address of the Portland SF club, by the way. They'll get a C. ◇ Regarding the new "short-form" dramatic presentation category in the Hugos, I wonder how popular it will be; NESFA's website lists few recommendations for that category. Of course, the Boston people don't impress me as Buffyites ... ◇ By the way, I asked Mark Verheiden which **Smallville** episodes he'd prefer be tapped for the honor, and he polled his fellow producers. "Red" won. I also named "Vortex". Ballot deadline is 3-31-03, so early readers who are late voters may still have time! By the way, if the unutterably *splendid* Chris Reeve episode which aired 2-25, "Rosetta", doesn't win next year's short drama Hugo, justice is as dead as Krypton. ◇ Re Michael Swanwick's Hugo-winning "The Dog Said Bow-wow", a sequel has appeared in **Asimov's**; maybe Gelb's dissatisfaction with the story reflected that it was part of a larger work. Maybe. ◇ *I feel compelled to write every day – in my diary. I only wish I felt the compulsion to write fiction.* ◇ I didn't read **The Federalist Papers** until college, and I had a pretty damn good secondary education – I thought.

Nowadays I realize that I had a good general education, but not a challenging one, and if I could do it again, I'd heap on the sociology, psychology, comparative religious studies, as well as humanities ... wait ... I did take all those things, except for the religious business, *verboten* in public schools. Never mind. ◇ That was the shuttle *Columbia* and not the *Challenger* which fell on February 1st, but it's an understandable substitution. The sacrifices make the accomplishment even more meaningful. Like you say, *ad astra per aspera*. You know, that's inscribed on a little plaque on the Apollo 1 launch site.

**Tyndallite Vol. 3 No. 105 <NORM!>** Bob Silverberg won an early Hugo as SF's most promising new author – whether in conjunction with Randall Garrett or alone is a matter for debate—but then went without until 1969, when he won for a novella. He went on a nomination binge in the 70's, with such serious novels as **Thorns**, **Book of Skulls**, and **Tower of Glass**, but never broke through the winner's column. He's taken the rocket home a couple of times since, always for shorter works. ◇ You mention bad deep-sea SF, and remind me of *good* deep-sea SF, Clarke's **The Deep Range**. I read it in junior high school, entranced by the Richard Powers jacket art. ◇ To restrict SF only to the written word is to apply a 19<sup>th</sup> Century definition to a genre that has successfully reached into the 21<sup>st</sup>; fiction is fiction no matter what the medium, and SF is no different. ◇ Certainly H.G. Wells' science fantasies couldn't stand up to the rules of physics, postulating impossibilities like invisible or weightless men, hyper-accelerated lives, and drunks who can work miracles, but as exciting and compelling literature, they stand up to the best of this or any other genre. ◇ **The Moon is a Harsh Mistress** is indeed an excellent book, Heinlein's best grown-up novel. "You listening, Bog? Is Computer one of Your creatures?" ◇ Your mention of **March to the Sea** puts me in a Civil War frame of mind, which provoke a response to **Gods & Generals**, Ted Turner's four-hour prequel to

**Gettysburg.** It bugged me. The stilted dialog – speeches and prayers – was intrusive and sounded phony. The forced sentimentality rang false. The characters talked like real people in **Gettysburg** – but not here. Jeff Daniels, the strongest thing about **Gettysburg**, has put on so much flab since last playing Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain that he hardly looks like the same man. But Stephen Lang made a spookily excellent Stonewall Jackson and the battle scenes – especially the flanking attack at Chancellorsville – were thrilling. Fergit, Hell!

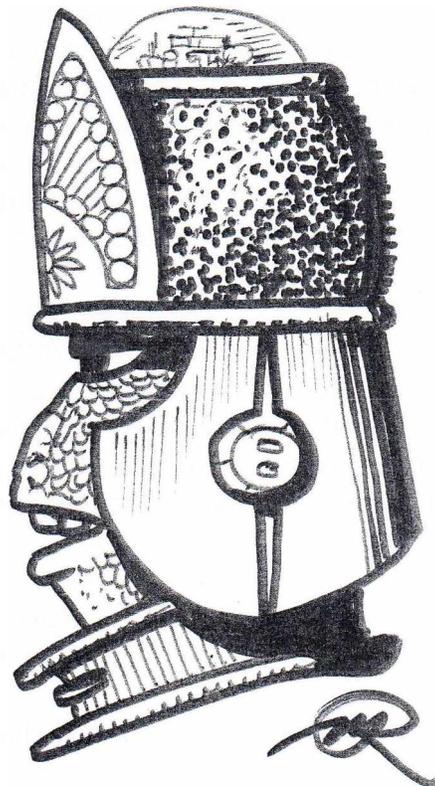
**Avatar Press 2.25 <Randy>** Your *hideous* cover (it takes a perverse talent to make Julie Wall look ugly) reminds me of the old Phyllis Diller joke: “Then there were the twins, 18 and 20 ... I’ll never forget *that* birth!” ◇ One of the big Powerball winners in February bought his ticket here in New Orleans. Before I had *my* entries checked (and torn up) I harbored the *niciest* fantasies ... “OK, Rosy, we’re going on our DUFF trip, but we’re taking a cruise ship!” RINNNGGG “Oh, we owe money on a credit card? How much? How much *more* for *you* to cut your ‘ears’ off on Main Street?” “Job? Hahahahahahaha” ... but it was not to be. Maybe the winner will get himself arrested for dope possession and hire me. ◇ I ate dinner at Julie Wall’s once. She *is* a good cook, and very patient of a goofball who wanted to spread his spaghetti sauce on white bread. ◇ I wish we could have made that Chattacon – we enjoy any convention where Benford is GoH. ◇ I too liked the Herbert/Anderson **Dune** trilogy; for once, the knowledge of the classic Muad D’ib future didn’t cripple the suspense and enjoyment of the prequels. I look forward to the new TV miniseries, since I liked the novel **Children of Dune** better than the original. ◇ There’s that name again: James Taylor. He’s infamous around **Spiritus Mundi**, Randy. Well, I tolerate him better now that he’s lost his hair and become a man of character.

**Spurious Mundi 193/rear-ender ‘02/Thirty <me>** That “spurious” is the act of an

overzealous spellchecker. I love it; it stays. ◇ We’re going to send our yorkie Jessie to stay with Rosy’s mother while we’re in Australia. I can imagine how happy she’ll be to see the Tinker stinker again. Yih. ◇ I mentioned abortion somewhere in this issue, and spotted on the highway just yesterday a delivery van covered with hideous photos of maimed and mangled foetuses. An anti-abortion propaganda truck, provoking thoughts I think I’ll put into **Challenger** #18 – on abortion, on free speech, on people I’ve known in that least enviable of situations. Check it out there; here, no more. ◇ For more on my accident, see natter elsewhere. For more mc’s, check out **Spiritus Mundi** 195, because *these* are done, 2-28-03 7:45 PM.

Oops. Not quite. **The Southerner Vol. 21, No. 13.1 <Jeff>** I salute this postmailing; our strings are important to us.

**Crude Joke <mike>** Boy, is this tale of monetary crisis familiar. Hopes yours is alleviated soon. That *really* does it, March 13, 2003, 4:47 PM.



I am closing the **Spiritus Mundi** on March 20, 2003, as Bush's mindless war begins in Iraq. My disgust is on record. I only hope that the trauma through which America is putting the world won't hurt too many people – and selfish though it sounds to say so, won't ruin our trip to Australia. I may wear a button, "DON'T BLAME ME - I VOTED FOR AL GORE". What I'd refuse to do, unless Rosy's safety was at stake, is lie and say I came from Canada. My country, right or wrong, and all that.

But I don't want to end this issue talking about W's latest and worst idiocy. I want to talk about Harry Warner. For a while, he was of our number, but it was as a legend in general fanzine fandom that he'll be best remembered: a peerless fan historian, author of **All Our Yesterdays** and **A Wealth of Fable**, and the most prolific of letterhacks, absolutely the prime voice in the Lettercol Chorus. His efforts brought him three Hugos and a FAAn Award. His were friendly, amusing, positive and encouraging communications, and we genzine types will miss them, and him. There will never be another like him.

I remember Harry personally, too, from two visits to 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland ... the first, in particular. It came on a chilly December night some 20 years ago, as I drove north from Louisiana, my brother's place near Buffalo my goal. A sad Christmastime for me; I had separated from my first wife in August and come south, bloodied and insane, to start law school. I'd put in a rigorous semester at Louisiana State University and emerged ripped and ragged; I was sure that I'd flunked, sure that my separation was a judgment on the goodness of my soul. Not only that, but the further north I went, the colder and less hospitable became the roads, and therefore it was a royal mess who careened through nighttime Hagerstown and decided, purely on impulse, to give its reigning hermit a ring.

You know the story, of course. Just because Harry was a hermit who never traveled didn't mean he wasn't hospitable. My yuletide greeting brought an invitation from the gentleman on the other end of the line to come by his abode and say hello. And so I did. Harry was a friendly and affable host and we enjoyed a nice talksit. I was still a mess when I left, and the roads only became worse the further north I went (so much so that I abandoned my car in Erie and took the train in the rest of the way), but things were better. I'd looked into the literal heart of fandom and discovered a gentle, quiet, friendly fella who was glad to admit me into his abode.

That's the kind of guy I wish I was, and it's the kind of fandom I believe in. When we spoke a day or so ago, Rich Lynch marveled at the fact that though Harry was a childless bachelor, he was a patriarch in Sfdom, just as I expressed wonder at how a man who seldom left his house and almost never left his home town brought our community together, with tolerance, humor, generosity and wit. It's time to recite the poem I read for Lynn Hickman, Dave Ryan, and Meade Frierson before. For Harry, who died at 80 in the first weeks of March, 2003, it rings true.

*And still I dream he treads the lawn  
Walking ghostly in the dew  
Pierced by our glad singing through.*

Rosy and I will be in touch from Australia and afterwards. Y'all take care.