





*The story behind the cover ...*

*Some time ago, Fred van Hartesveldt finished a book on the Boer War. (I guess you can see where this is going.) Off it went to the typesetter. The typesetter had never heard of the Boers, and, when the title page of his opus was returned, it called the protagonists ... Boars.*

*Lest such a wonderful accident be forgotten, Fred's wife Mary Ann sent the cover illustration for Fred's book to her friend, the superb fan editor and artist Paul McCall. She shares the result with us.*



# SPIRITUS MUNDI 197

A SFPazine for SFPA #235 by  
Guy H. Lillian III \* P.O. Box 53092 \*  
New Orleans LA 70153-3092  
GHLIII@yahoo.com \* 504/482-7083 \*  
504/909-7084  
GHLIII Press Publication #957 \*  
August-Sept. 2003

Larry Montgomery's call came in on my cell phone in our hotel room in Toronto . I was surprised that Larry had that number. Then his words caved in the world.

I remember the first time someone mentioned P.L. to me. It was 1972. I was in Birmingham, en route to grad school in Greensboro. My new friends Meade and Penny Frierson had been recipients of a photo sent to them by a mysterious Memphis fan, and they showed it to me. It depicted a handsome well-built dude in bell-bottoms and '70s sideburns, standing beside a redhead with a shag haircut, a drink lifted in salute, and a grab-hold-and-we'll-go-to-hell smile. On the back was an inscription in a feminine hand: "P.L. Caruthers and friend." The question was, which one was P.L. Caruthers? We found out.

Indeed we did. And Southern fandom was never the same. That's how you tell the great ones, you know. Their personalities leave such a mark that after they've come, things are never quite the same.

P.L. ... well, hey, I could say plenty, but never enough. I could talk about meeting her in the Memphis bus station in March of '72, and watching her dazzle the DSC that year in her **Clockwork Orange**-ish bowler. I could say take credit for her marriage, claiming that she'd met Larry because of me. I'd invited him, one of the founders of Southern fandom, to a Birmingham DSC. I could pat myself on the back for printing her first SFPazine (**The Esthetics are Obvious**) and smilingly remember teasing her with "The Ballad of Eskimo P.L.". I could remember how much fun it was to present the Montgomerys with Rebel Awards at one of the DeepSouthCons in Huntsville. I could do these things if I wanted to make this all about me, and not about her ... and I can't do that.

Maybe I could hail P.L.'s excellent service as SFC President. She did marvelous **Bulletins**. But this is not just a loss to fannish history. This is ... Just awful, is what it is. To lose a comrade like P.L. — like I said in my initial e-mail, it feels like somebody cut out a piece of my heart. It cast a blight over Torcon, and it casts a shadow over this **Spiritus Mundi**. That's all I can say. We loved her, and will miss her forever.

It's a few weeks after the awful day on which I learned about P.L., and we're home and I'm exhausted. I've had two trials in eight days and they were *bears*.

**Rudy** – a pseudonym – was charged with armed robbery, and damned if I didn't think he might have a chance – because there was no victim. Basic story: two teenaged black kids, you know what I'm sayin', Rudy and an acquaintance, Floyd, decided they were tired of being broke. You know what I'm sayin'? Floyd went and got a handgun, which he gave to Rudy, and a shotgun, which he kept. They walked to the convenience store around the corner and found a small group of black guys goofing off and swigging brewskis out back. They focused on one guy whom they knew had just cashed his paycheck.

Cop was driving past and saw two pairs of locals fleeing in two different directions. He chose one and, it turned out, chose correctly. He caught Rudy and Floyd in a backyard. Floyd vaulted a fence and split, leaving his shotgun behind. Rudy gave up instantly, throwing down cash money and the vic's check stubs. His gun, he said, he'd discarded behind the convenience store. Handcuffed, he leapt from the police car and ran down the street, forcing the arresting cop to chase and tackle him. In custody, he waived his rights and sang like a canary. Sure, they'd robbed the guy at gunpoint – and he even knew him; he'd lived with his family when they all worked in California. Slam dunk – you know what I'm sayin'?

Obviously, this idiot had convicted himself before trial. But the victim had wandered off for parts unknown. Since Rudy wanted his trial, I was duty-bound to try everything legal that I could to help him. So when the jury was empaneled, I squawked about *corpus delicti*.

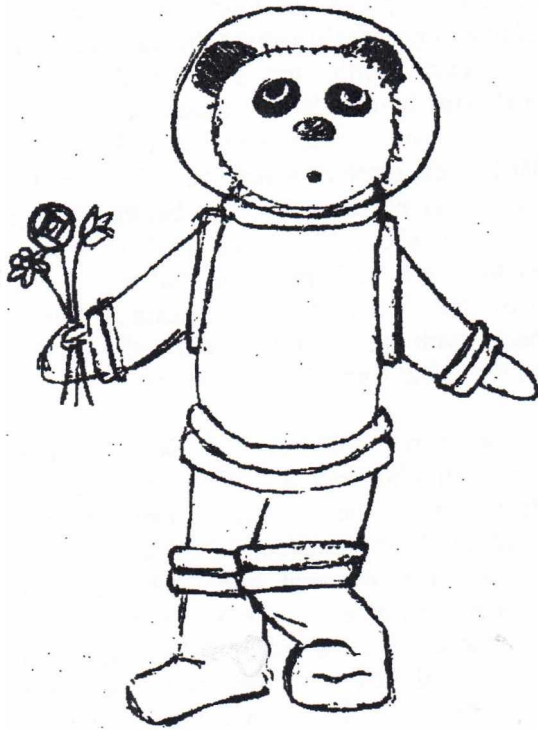
It means "body of the crime," and it's proof that the crime was actually committed. (That's the way they explained it in the Nancy Drew movie!) The D.A. could show us the money and photos of the check stubs – "Objection! Hearsay, and not best evidence!" "Overruled." – but by themselves, what did they prove? She could show us the sawed-off shotgun found at the defendant's feet – but so what? It's not a crime to have a shotgun at your feet. The prosecution didn't have the victim. How would they prove that there was a crime? (By the way, Rudy's confession couldn't be admitted until *corpus delicti* was proven.)

Well, the D.A. didn't have the vic. But she *did* have Floyd. They shuffled him onto the witness stand in his orange prison jumpsuit, and though he proved himself a *moron* – "Where do you live?" "I don't know, you know what I'm sayin'?" – he *also* proved that a robbery had taken place. That let Rudy's confession in, and that was that. You know what I'm sayin'?

Still, the vote was barely enough to convict – 10 votes to 2. The two nay-sayers were worried about Rudy's age – 18. He faced *at least* ten years in the clink, and that bothered them. Bothered everyone else, too; Rudy's grandparents – universally respected in the black community – were wretchedly upset, and Rudy himself cried like a baby. Kid had a tested IQ of 101: normal. How could he have been so *stupid*?

Ugly case? You should have seen the next one. Truckdriver grandfather accused of raping his 12-year-old step-granddaughter. That came out 10-2, too, and I'll write about it some other time. All I'll say now is, when a kid who flunked the 5<sup>th</sup> grade talks like a police report, I'm suspicious. At least I got an Attempt verdict out of it.

Ugly case? You should see the *next* one. I've been assigned second chair in the Roy Logan family murder. A *death penalty* case, coming up in October. The fun never stops for GHLIII, Esq., you know what I'm ... Oh. You do.



## MAILING CAUSTICS 234

*The Southerner #234 | Jeff* Your logo of the Great Wall reminds me: how's George Inzer these days? Sudden distressing thought: does he know about P.L.? @ Sheila Strickland's willingness to serve as OE is gratifying, since she's only been on the roster for about three years and is our junior member. Shows that the old SFPA magic has not lost all of its adhesive qualities (thanks, no doubt, to Messr. Robe). I'm sure she'll do swell ... and I hope she lets Rosy and I pop up to Baker to help collate! (That way I get my mailing quicker!)

*The New Port News #210 | Ned* Cool cover! Who did it? @ Whoa! SFPAns don't get Box Scores credit for genzines by simply writing "Special SFPA Edition" on the cover. They have to *change* the generally-distributed fanzine somehow. I wasn't looking for Box credit when I published *Chall #18* *without* the lettercol, but nobody would believe me, anyway ... @ George

does indeed need to purge his mailing list. I got into trouble with Gelb by replying-all to one of his e-mails. Her work addy was still on it. @ Lovely comment to my Hanging Rock story – "you've read LotR and should know not to go adventuring without a bit of rope." It'll ride *Challenger's* lettercol! @ There's a question. If "Emmanuel", the psycho asshole who took Elizabeth Smart from her family, *didn't* kidnap her, what can he be charged with? Stat rape, almost certainly, but what if she denies it? He could end up charged with nothing more serious than Contributing to her Delinquency. @ Best invective of the mailing: W is "just a sock monkey held up by the Junta." Fierce. @ Lastly, a cool rundown on your typer collection. In a power outage, in which computers and electronic typewriters would be useless, which would you select?

*Guilty Pleasures #29 | Eve* I'm glad, of course, that your neighbor is back safe from Iraq, and horrified that the son of Howard's colleagues did not. We who oppose the war must make clear our support of the guys we send over there – wishing them the best, even though we think their mission is corrupt. And not worth the life of one such kid as this. @ I really enjoy your book reviews. Maybe I could reprint one or two of the most up-to-the-minute in *Challenger*? Or maybe you and Janice could have a debate about *Harry Potter 5*? @ All fans everywhere should see the magnificent film version of *American Splendour*, the very funny and very touching tale of an everyman from – where else? – Cleveland, his dead-end career, his ridiculous romances, his terrifying mortality, his stupefying celebrity – during all of which he saves himself by being forever open to human connection. Creative, affectionate, very effective, and beautifully acted. A hymn to the loony humanity in us all. @ Hmm ... I usually don't read curlicue romances, but this *Book of Ruth* you describe sounds pretty good. Too bad J Lo and Ben have broken up; he sounds like the perfect Boaz ... @ I sympathize with Micah about his bike injury. The one time in my life I was knocked *seriously* unconscious came from a bike tumble. What I mainly remember about the aftermath was the blurred vision – my friends waiting outside to see if I was dead yet, and my



pediatrician reassuring face. Another time I slipped on an icy sidewalk and gave myself a near-concussion – and yes, nausea was a definite symptom. Made a point of buying my father replacement handkerchiefs on his birthday because of it. *Bleah* just thinking of it makes me queasy ... @ Good to see you at Torcon – even though I had to drop the news about P.L. on you. @ Yes – let's get a SFPA charter and *all of us* go to Oz!

*Variations on a Theme #21 | Rich L.* Congratulations, you dawg, on Hugo #6. That it was supremely well-deserved, for *Mimosa* was the finest fanzine published anywhere on Earth this year, is almost beside the point. You deserve the award not only for the zine, but also for the work you've put in to save Harry Warner's legacy. As an attorney, I can't fault the "jerk" hired by the church to protect its interests to insist on doing so, but I would have met with the UC Riverside representative and heard her out – perhaps even offered UC first bid on the collection. But it's obvious where Harry wanted his fanzines to go, and there they *should* go. UC needs to hire a Maryland lawyer and turn him loose. By the way, UC Riverside has also agreed to take my SFPA collection, if I can ever get it to them. @ Your trips to the Cato Institute – and the incredibly adept questions with which you punctured the speakers' various balloons – make for inspiring reading. Especially neat is your question on the inefficacy of solar power satellites in energy production. I am reminded of Bob Marrero's query to Senate candidate David Duke about the Jones Act, which exposed the racist little sleaze's ignorance of basic Louisiana issues. The Greenpeace, ah, piece about the bogus George Marshall Institute – revealing its reliance on Oil Money – shows again how divided this country is. I wonder, is the attempt by Oil to dominate our government through Republican chicanery among the basic wedges that drives us apart? Let's see the Ph.D. theses in American history in two or three hundred years. @ One of the more interesting assignments in law school was to construct opposing arguments on various issues. If I had to argue *for* the Iraqi War, with that lesson in mind, I'd say that the invasion was good for America because our initial military success restored our confidence.

*Americans kick ass.* We base our national self-esteem on that. 9-1-1 exposed our vulnerability – we *have* to prove our toughness to survive. Arguing as myself, I'd lament that myopic view of American worth, but I'll bet dollars to dingbats that it reflects W's rationalization to a "t." @ You mention some nifty Australian tourist locales, some of which we did *not* visit – but remember all the grief I got before the trip for enthusing about the scenery we'd get to see. I was told, and told, and told, and *told* – the point of DUFF was not to see Australia, but to schmooze with fans. Well, we did both, and did miss a lot ... but Australia is still there.

*The Sphere vol. 205 no 1 | Don* Bush's arrogance in claiming that God told him to invade Iraq would be hilarious if it didn't have such dreadful consequences. I'm sure he thought that the statement would translate well into Arabic, and give his words holy resonance with the locals. We can see from the body count how successful that tactic has been. @ My ignorance resounds like a clap of thunder, but ... does Toonapedia profit at all from all those on-line hits? Just think ... a million hits at a quarter apiece ... @ I haven't heard of seized property being kept by the gummint after charges have been dropped. Clear violation of the Fifth Amendment, I'd say. Examples? @ Taking no position on Harlan Ellison's suit against Time Warner – I haven't read the pleadings or heard any evidence – I should note the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Esquire*, and its choice for the best story it's run in that time. The winner was Gay Talese's "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold", which tells the story of Harlan's famous encounter with Sinatra in a Hollywood pool hall. I've heard a lot about the incident over the years – the most famous story is that Harlan beat up the Chairman of the Board's bodyguard with a pool cue – but Talese was apparently there. He says Frank was offended by Harlan's tacky boots, and after learning that he was the writer of *The Oscar* screenplay, tried to pick a fight by insulting the movie. There's something wrong here. *Sinatra had a cameo in The Oscar.* While he could certainly denounce the flick as wretched, because it was, wouldn't he mention that? Wouldn't Talese? Anyway, even though Ellison didn't engage in any Billy Jack heroics, he still

comes off as the innocent party. And he had the best line. "What do you do?" asks Sinatra. "I'm a plumber," said Harlan.

**Frequent Flyer | Tom** I look forward to seeing your new pad, and promise to obey your rule about not wearing shoes in the house. This Japanese practice strikes me as imminently practical and, for visitors, polite. I've wandered across ladies' fresh carpets with Keds caked with cowpoo many a time. @ Thought of somebody who might've handled the Rock Hudson role in **Down with Love** better than did Ewan MacGregor: George Clooney. Hudson had physical presence skinny Ewan couldn't convey. Clooney – to judge by the trailers to his new romancer with Zeta-Jones – could. @ *Nobody* liked **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen**. I'll bet it makes the Razzie short list next spring. @ Interesting runthrough of the Hugo-nominated novels and stories. Except for Neil Gaiman's fantasy "Coraline" – which, while excellent, had no business being nominated for a science fiction award – all of the winners came from **Analog**. So does its editor, Stanley Schmidt, win a Hugo as Best Editor? Of course not.

**Cow Drifters ...#1 | George** Yes, I forgot that Hank Davis brought a DVD of **Queen Kong** to DSC! I must find a copy for myself! A huckster at worldcon had a table-ful of outre classics for sale, but this masterpiece, no. @ I liked the Acropolis Restaurant – especially when the owner came by and chatted – and your conversation then as ever was delightful, not overbearing. Jill's was even better as we discussed the past, present and future of **Smallville**. Can't wait for that season opener – looks like Clark either flies or loses Jonathan! @ Actually, "Mona at the Window" (or whatever it's called) is among the best of Harlan's early stories. It's included in **Love Ain't Nothing But Sex Misspelled**, a very good collection which would have made Frank Sinatra ignore the author's boots. @ Another difference between Isaac Asimov and Britney Spears is that Madonna wouldn't let Asimov kiss her. @ Naw, there are Catholic grapefruit. Everyone and everything is Catholic in New Orleans ... except for demented mid-size Methodists, like me.

**Oblio No. 147 | Gary B.** What I like about Don Rosa's take on Uncle Scrooge is its *reverence*. He hasn't a patch on Carl Barks' genius with a line – either in art or in script – but he know what he loves, and really puts that love across. Great cover! @ Your car purchase is enviable. The piece of junk that I bought after my accident in January, and which got me *arrested* in May, still sits undrivable in front of my house, awaiting the resolve either to sell it for peanuts or repair it for a fortune, or a towtruck called by my disgruntled neighbors. At least *that* wouldn't cost me anything. @ Yes it is football season at last. I know you're tickled pink by the predictions that we'll have an *all-Florida* Super Bowl this year: Tampa Bay to repeat in the NFC and Miami to return to glory in the American Conference. As for the Saints, well, they were flatter than the field in their opener, but improved the next week. If Aaron Brooks can find consistency, and Joe Horn and Deuce McAllister stay healthy ... @ An especially colorful and happy report on this year's San Diego ComiCon! (I wonder if cousin-in-law Sue King made it.) It's personally delightful that you saw Julie Schwartz there, that he remembered my birthday, and that the moderator of his panel (David Armstrong) knew my name from the lettercols. He's in good company – check out the Neil Gaiman story from Torcon I print earlier. @ I've praised **Superman** stalwart Curt Swan's penciling in these pages; I wish I'd been at that Appreciation panel to do so there. Sharp, clean, perfect work – often spoiled by the inking forced upon him. Vinnie Colletta was a nice guy, but often seemed to ink Curt's pencils with a Magic Marker. Give those pages to Murphy Anderson, though ... and the result was pure beauty. @ So **LotR** actors appeared at the con! I am doubly envious! @ Heard a story once about a Gestetner sales rep who demonstrated a new mimeo while wearing *white gloves*. He printed a multiple-page memo and then displayed the spotless gloves to his appreciative audience. They may not have noticed that he'd handled the used stencils with his *feet* – which were *soggy* with ink. Part of this story is true. @ I never made any secret about my comics hobby when I was a teenager, and was only teased about it once or twice. I replied with the story of Mike Friedrich, already

writing scripts for DC, and earning the unheard-of sum of up to two hundred dollars a month! @ The macho dipshits who threatened to punch out the Dixie Chicks for being anti-war – if they were men – remind me of Dave Cummings, the 62-year-old retired Army colonel who spends his retirement making *porn films*. He called war protesters traitors –tough talk for a guy who screws drug addicts on camera. @ Thanks, and I mean that deeply, for the nice words about my Aussie trip report. My rationale was to get a version into print that I could expand into **Challenger** articles – and from them, our DUFF report. Along with Rosy of course, who has her own ideas ... Anyway, by encouraging me to write, you're in pretty good company. Harlan Ellison once said the same thing. @ Speaking of Chall, there's a good article in DC's **Bob Hope** and **Jerry Lewis** comics, if we can uncover someone with the chops to write it. Hinthinthint.

**Revenant #19 | Sheila** That's crummy news from LSU Library School, giving you the boot because of a 20-year-old grade. Is it possible to pursue your degree at another school? @ So how'd you like your second trip to Toronto of the summer? Frankly, your first one sounds like less fun than the worldcon, which is too bad, considering the mess Torcon was. *Thanks* for coming to the auction, by the way! @ Say, speaking of T3, when Rosy and I presented that Hugo, did we look half as stiff and scared as we felt? The photo of us at the dais looks like two statues. @ We saw **The Scoundrel's Wife**; it was competent, but just amateurish enough to be annoying. But as fall approaches, a better quality of movie is beginning to appear in the theatres. We saw the superb **Whale Rider** and the excellent **Dirty Pretty Things** while this mc was being written. I agree with your praise for **Whale Rider**, the story of a contemporary Maori girl who seeks to become a chief. Her grandfather – a hidebound traditionalist who is nevertheless admirable and strong – is one of the best characters I've seen in a film this year. But the power of the movie was dwarfed when we left the theatre, and found the five posters for another film made in New Zealand, to be released December 17<sup>th</sup>. Come on down here to see it, why not? @ Regarding **Red Thunder** ... you did notice that "Jubal" was named for the semi-

pederast secondary hero of **Stranger in a Strange Land** ... a guy based on the longtime New Orleans newspaper columnist, Herman Deutsch [*sic*]. @ Funny (as in "strange") that Copeland's food should strike anyone as inedible. He made his millions by finding what people consider tasty and covering his dishes with it. @ So, will SFPA's OE Apparent make the trip to Huntsville next month to see our slide show at Con\*stellation?

**Cats on Ritalin | Jeff** One more note about Allie's graduation from high school. A friend of mine, Barbara, got back with her estranged husband for their son's graduation. Their boy was apparently a bit less *certain* a grad than Allie. I saw the tape of Barb and John celebrating like maniacs in the audience, exchanging high-fives and howling in glee. Got'em back together. @ Though a flight-ophobe, I love airplane museums, and would love to have been along when your Dad toured that B-24. Don't know if I would've gone on the flight, mind you, but I'd get a kick out of seeing the plane. @ When next you visit Washington, stop at Arlington – and if you can, find the cemetery historian and get the tour I got in 1983. You'd weep at Gus Grissom's grave. @ I remember your response to 9-1-1 – "Baghdad, glass by nightfall" – but to give you credit, by the time you wrote it in your SFPazine, the thought that fired you at first was *scaring* you. @ Operation Pipedream – which closed down a perfectly innocent glass company and put several innocent folks out of work, because some Justice official thought they made crack pipes – needs to be publicized. Eventually, if they know about it, the people will *have* to react to the abuses arbitrary authority is visiting upon them. @ Janice wore that tee shirt at Torcon which apologizes for Iraq in several languages. Considering the venue, maybe a line should have been added in Elfish. @ It's a good sign that people are noting the ridiculous bias of Fox News, especially Al Franken, a new American hero. Fox is shameless. On 9-1-1 their commentators actually compared Bill Clinton to the hijackers. Did you see that episode of **The Simpsons** where Rupert Murdoch, conducting a telephone fund drive for Fox, gets a pledge call from Bart? "You've saved my network!" he



exults. "Wouldn't be the first time," Bart smirks. @ Your "rant" to Eve about the whole Iraqi situation sums up matters brilliantly. If matters haven't moved on when the time comes for **Challenger #19**, I'd like to reprint it. @ So what do you think of Howard Dean? I sense that he's peaked too early, but we'll see if the doc has staying power.

**Home with the Armadillo #59 | Liz** A wacky thyroid and an ability to speak the English language are two of the three or four things I share in common with the first President Bush. So far I haven't barfed into the laps of ant Japanese prime ministers, but the day is young. Good luck with your HPT ... and the latest goddamned operation. @ uhsdgdhjyfsjkfgjkggf oh ... pardon me ... just watching Shakira on **SatNiteLive** ... @ That columnist makes an important point about the Iraq War: it's a pork barrel. That's what I want to hear from Democrats this year: the angry, ugly truth about the War on Terror. It's a bait-&-switch to gut the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment and fatten the fat boys, a disgrace to the people fighting it.

**Ducks odyssey nears end | mike** Or as you actually call it, **Employment Strikes**. Any job in a storm – good for you for finding one! As for the rubber ducks, keep us advised of when they finally make landfall.

**Passages #18 | Janet** Hey, where's the doc?

**Trivial Pursuits #108 | Janice** Ours wasn't a particularly hot summer, but Toronto – temps in the 70s – was still a relief. I had to wear my Hanging Rock coat on one chilly evening. @ Speaking of Toronto, the high Canadian tolerance for gays was crystal clear at the worldcon, and I've heard of at least one same-sex wedding there. I'm not sure I could handle attending such a thing, but good luck anyway to the bride and the bride. @ But as for **Queer Eye for the Straight Guy**, there's a simple term for my response. *Never*. I'd rather drive nails into concrete with my forehead. Men *do* like to look nice and enjoy being dressed by people who know what they're talking about. Both Rosy and I wished we could have afforded a visit to Riverside Men's Shop while we were in Buffalo.

But those tailors are professionals dedicated to making a fella look good, not goofy, and customers needn't pretend to be amused by bitchy twaddle, apparently the big attraction of the show. Which could serve as a segue into a discussion of the first season of **Six Feet Under**, and so here goes. The show started out smug and obvious, enraptured with its own daring – the constant homosexual make-out scenes, and its latent misogyny, obvious in its most horrible episode – where the celebrating divorcee gets her face flattened. But it grew better and more thoughtful as it went on, and got over itself. The SIDS episode – which seemed at first to be nothing more than mockery of "breeders" – became a touching paean to the power of love. The show, in short, deepened and improved, and we'll see if it continues to do after Guidry hands over the tapes to Season #2. @ As for Asians in the Civil War ... well, of course. LEE is a Chinese name!

**TN Trash #54 | Gary R.** Rickey Sheppard's marriage to Betsy Hirst was mentioned last mailing, but I didn't give it the proper HUZAH! Consider it done! Wish we'd known about it in advance. This is a glorious, happy account. @ Migraines are frightening as well as painful – there's always the fear that your eyesight will *never* recover, that you'll *always* have that hideous inverted "C" in the middle of your vision, that the thick, dull, numbing headache will *never* go away. That you had such horrors several days in a row is especially terrifying, and it's good that you took the problem to a medic, and that you mastered it during the wedding.. But ... "I've since had a MRI scan of my head that found nothing" ... Gary, you're being *too kind* to us. @ Thought about bachelor party "debauchery" but settled for ice cream, eh? That's debauched enough, at least if didn't settle for vanilla. @ Cool that you've encountered Mookie Wilson, the Met who won the 1986 Series on Bill Buckner's error. My then-boss, a Red Sox fan, was practically insane with grief for weeks. @ Indeed, the talk at Torcon was that Japan was no longer a shoo-in for the 2007 worldcon, that Columbus' convenience was an advantage over Japan's exotic appeal. Nevertheless, I saw a lot of fans wearing Nippon's distinctive headgear,

and John Hertz wanted me to meet their committee. @ Another + vote for **Harry Potter 5**. Isn't it unfortunate that the least favorite of the series is the one that took home the Hugo?

*Tyndallite Vol. 3, No. 108 | NORM!* Thanks for the latest batch of Ramsey clips. Someday, not soon but someday, the break will come in that case, and the killer will be revealed, and jailed, and die, and go to Hell. @ Great comment about the split in universes caused by one's choice of socks in the morning. What mad universe is that? @ The quote from Verne about **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea** is tremendous. I wonder if he really *did* believe it might all come to pass?

*Nice Distinctions 2 | Arthur* However lucky you were in your auto wreck, it's still scary stuff, and thank God you're all right. Sue somebody! @ I like your Gilliland cartoon, and I like Gilliland too – a great guy and a tremendous wit. He almost made this year's Hugo ballot, by the way. Still knockin' em dead after all these years ... @ I hesitate to accept slash as a legit subset of SF fandom, but I may have no choice. A lady at Rosy's "So This is Your First Worldcon" panel – or was it the "Famous Fanzines" panel I shared with Lynch? – complained at how their "fan fiction" was being ignored at Torcon. I almost blurted out "I hope so!" but restrained myself, thankfully. @ Ramsey Campbell is my favorite horror novelist, but I admit to being tired of the despair endemic to the entire genre. I'm straining, for instance, to finish the latest Stoker winner, **The Night Class**. Its whacked out hero, by the way, could be a poster boy for "liminality," another great new word in this mailing, because he's between states – of *lucidity*. @ I appreciate your reviews of Enron-themed books, , because that scandal, like the S&L bailout of the last Bush administration, goes over my head. *When smart people get greedy* ... I wish I was smart enough to fight these sleazes as they need to be fought. @ No, the Brothers Smothers were never really funny, but brave, yes, that they were. And unrepentant het that I am, I still get a kick out of Tommy's expression in the original "ribbet ribbet" skit when his brother introduced himself as "the good fairy." Let's not forget, also, that they did show us "Hey Jude", the first

great music video, and "Revolution", the last time the Beatles dared look like a rock'n'roll band.

*Traveler's Tales Vol. 2 No. 2 | Steve Ah, St. Thomas* ... What a paradise. They don't happen to have a Fan Fund to send people *there*, do they? @ Bear Bear looks great in 3-D! (His old pal Mib is jealous.) I can unfocus my eyes and create cool images with the illusion of depth off the first page of this extraordinarily pretty zine, but the wide shot on the back makes me walleied. So thanks for the glasses. @ Great story about saving the spectacular 3-D film, **Sea Dream**. Let's hope they find a venue to show it again – to me, among others!

*You Bettwr Watch Out for thbe Antichrist | Poulette* So the Devil wears Bermuda shorts, huh? Well, I'd roast in Hell before I let anyone see *me* in Bermudas, so it makes sense.

*Twydrasil #83 | Rich D.* Nice color photo of your pop on the cover, and an enviable seascape behind him. @ Dreadful story of your mother-in-law's disturbed, depressed demise. From the edicts you say she issued against her husband visiting D.C., owning a computer or even an air conditioner, and from the bedridden lifestyle she embraced, she was obviously a desperately sad human being. One wonders if death isn't indeed a release for such people. Certainly those who love them should feel a relief, and shouldn't we frail human beings feel that way when suffering is ended? Surely we can forgive ourselves a breath when an ordeal is passed. Anyway, best wishes for Heidi and her father. @ You've written about the Rosicrucians before, and not as a "ludibrium." Thanks for introducing SFPA to a cool word. @ The invasion of Iraq may bring democracy to the country, but it'll come in a generation, not a year, and before it happens, it will bring carnage, chaos, a surge in terrorism, and the threat of damnation to our troops – for how many times can frightened young men slaughter innocents and stay innocent themselves? In a way, I'm grateful for the brouhaha over "weapons of mass destruction." The obvious fact that Saddam Hussein never had such things has caused our public to withdraw a healthy fraction of the Total Faith they'd pledged to W's invidious administration.



Probably enough retain belief in him to win the idiot “re”-election, but at least we can see that Lincoln’s epigram about not fooling *all* of the people *all* of the time still applies. Anyway, we’re obviously unsuited as a people for occupations such as we’re attempting in Iraq: we fail because we just don’t understand or *try* to understand the people we’re trying to control. @ Your mama’s drawing of the Ayatollah Khoumeini remains the best and most sensitive drawing I’ve ever seen of him. One can sense the intelligence that must have lived behind that face before senility and insanity supplanted it. There’s a tantalizing trace of *that* in the drawing, too. @ My extra set of Fu Manchu novels sold easily at DSC. The first book blows – it’s a set of inept short stories – but from then on, the series is ace. (No, it’s Pyramid.) @ Russia under Communism was never really a personal dictatorship. It was a bureaucracy – thus it could survive the death (and possible murder) of old Joe Stalin. What it could *not* survive was growth beyond its capacities – it collapsed, after all, under its own weight. Strange, is it not, that Gorbachev is revered as a great man not because he kept fighting against all odds, the usual mark of a hero, but because he knew when to quit. @ At Torcon I heard Robert Sawyer – whose *Hominids* was an easy, if unworthy, Hugo

winner – dispute the contention that Cro-Magnons *absorbed* the Neanderthals, citing the same DNA evidence you do. The consensus these days is that our ancestors just plain killed them off, probably in a vain search for weapons of mass destruction. @ That “Muslim New York” you picture is actually quite pretty. The Apple could stand a few minarets. @ Speaking of public nudity, just before its masquerade Torcon 3 showed a film taken at Torcon 2, and the contrast was painful. Not only were there no nude “costumers” in the ‘03 contest, there was damn little life at all. The best part was a retrospective of prize-winning Canadian costumes, for there were only two respectable presentations (one of which, “Winter is Coming”, was actually quite spooky, and should have won Best in Show). Rosy blames the great covering-up in SF masquing on aesthetics – 45-year-olds have more shame and less delightful exhibitionism than they did a quarter century ago. Whatever, our shame is *a* shame. I miss Laura Modine. @ Oh, but some “Native Americans” are doing *extremely* well, exploiting the loophole that allows the tribes to erect casinos on their reservations. Whether the riches attendant thereto filter down to the general populace, who knows? @ My plane flights this bi-month went so well that I’ve asked Rosy to remind me of them should I ever panic about air travel again. They were almost as nice as my flight to Chicon 2000, which was so perfect I got drunk out of *boredom*. @ I am not only more enthusiastic about the DUFF trip *since* taking it than I was before, my fondest wish is to *go back*. Alan Rosenthal, who accompanied his wife Janice Murray on *her* Aussie journey, feels the same way. Get us back beneath that Southern Cross!



*Peter, Pan & Merry #50 | Dave* Seems to my untutored eye that it should be relatively simple to coat the main tank on the space shuttle so material won’t peel off it in flight. Only the very first shuttle flight featured a painted tank; weight was given as the reason for abandoning the coating. But would it have made the necessary difference for the poor *Columbia*? @ I agree that riders on bills should at least pertain to the subject of the bill. @ Bush’s initial “declaration of war” against terrorism stated that

we would be fighting a covert campaign against the rabid maniacs – and here we are, wallowing in a mess like Iraq. Of course, covert operations could be proceeding anyway, and be enjoying success, but where would W get his photo ops that way? @ The benefit of launching a preemptive strike against a preemptive enemy is that there would be damn little chance that anyone could prove that you were wrong to do so. You can always claim that your attack is what prevented disaster. @ Teleportation in **Superman 2** came in the final fight in the Fortress of Solitude. Supes and the other Kryptonians just popped out of existence in one place and popped back in another. Really hurt the flick for me. @ At last, a positive review for **League of Extraordinary Gentlemen!** @ Hey, Kay!

*Avatar Press 2.28 | Randy* Just got the new **SFC Bulletin**; good stuff. This is too. @ So you have trouble getting rid of your nut sedge. Damn. It's a rough life. What the hey is "nut sedge." Sounds vaguely *dirty*. @ These "near-vampire" stories of Wm. Mark Simmons sound like fun. I'm still reading Speer and have novels by Michael Connelly (**Chasing the Dime**) and Geoffrey Landis (**Mars Crossing**) going, but they'll be done soon. Of course, **Hiium** – Dan Simmons' big new book – awaits, and there's that copy of **Girl Scout Sex Slaves** I found in the bus station men's room ... @ You know, honestly, it wasn't until I read your comment about my Hanging Rock story that I realized that it really was a "cliffhanger." @ Barb Mott is one of those who avoided being victimized by showing the creep her gun – a hammerless .38 I once had to fetch from Mississippi, but that's another story. I have nothing against private citizens owning guns, but also nothing against control – if that's even possible. But to the extent possible, yes.

*"Yngvi" #84 | Toni* Cute Kurt Erichsen cover – the guy looks like him! @ "Hank Goes Trippin'", the wolflord's account of your, uhh, epic trip to Birmingham. Blue Fruitopia, huh? That beats the hell out of Australia! A Best Bit for the bad boy! @ As for the question of killing Hitler at birth – you might want to read **Explaining Hitler**, the superb compendium of essays on the horror I read some years ago. Was

Hitler a hack seizing power by reflecting and focusing the prejudices and frustrations of the populace, or a demon who inspired – even created the Germany that warped civilization 70 years ago. No answers found, but plenty of compelling questions. @ Shrill invective against Bush? You ain't heard nothin' yet. Democrats might as well stop trying to appease the better angels of their natures and learn to fight dirty – to confront the Republicans and give them preemptive Hell. The voters accepted as vicious a campaign of vilification as has ever been seen in American politics against Bill Clinton, they can damn good and well take some ugly truths voiced against the stupid drunk that stole his place. The good people can win this election – but *no more Mr. Nice Guy!* @ It figures that Hank would like Hogan's work. Both are great raconteurs. Well do we recall the DSC breakfast where the two giants of BS sat down across from one another, and left the table convulsed. But that hang-gliding picture somehow fails to ascend to Steve Hughes' reproductive level, so to speak. @ Hey, quick DSC report! Missed Katie there!

*Spiritus Mundi 195 | me* Rosy printed this issue for me, as we were getting ready to roll towards DSC. The choice of parchment paper for the Rotsler cover and the white sheet backing it ... all hers. The hole-punched paper on which I printed the master – you can tell I was in a hurry – reminds me of **Spiritus Mundi I** – which, in a haze of guilt over stealing mimeography from the Berkeley co-op, I printed on such paper. Isn't *that* interesting? @ Sure enough, a **Buffy** episode won the Best Short Dramatic Fiction Hugo. I don't mind the category, but believe there would be no harm in redesignating it the *TV* Hugo. Chris Barkley and I disagreed about this on a panel at Torcon; I haven't the energy to repeat what each of us said. @ Susan Smith's lonelyhearts ad – reprinted on my bacover – caused such a media furor that she asked WriteAPrisoner.Com to withdraw it. @ Yes, I read **Prisoner of Azkaban** – pretty good! – and the cat Malibu hasn't bitten Rosy again. Hope you enjoyed **Challenger #18**, everyone, and it's September 14, 2003, and these mailing caustics have reached their end, 6:02 PM, Central Time.



And yes, we did go to a convention since the last *Spiritus Mundi* ...

# TORCON 3

## *Flight*

So we flew to the 2003 worldcon. Simple thing for most SF fans to say, but this is me, GH111, talking to you. It hasn't been that long since the idea of my *flying* someplace was as ridiculous for me as ... as ... as my *flying* someplace.

But this year has seen us jump onto airplanes and ride them across the country to L.A., across the effing *ocean* to Melbourne, Australia, across *that* country to Perth, and return. Popping up to Toronto for a worldcon – particularly a worldcon where I was nominated for a Hugo, where we were asked to present an award, and where we had a DUFF party to conduct – just didn't seem like that big a deal. Especially since we were actually only flying to Buffalo, intent on driving the rest of the way.

Still, I'm me, and flying still freaks me out, so I approached the moment of departure with some trepidation. The inexpensive flights Rosy had found took us first nor-nor-west to Minneapolis – a city I'd never visited – then due east to Buffalo, across two or three of the Great Lakes. And Wisconsin. The night before the flight, the girl on the Weather Channel mentioned *thunderstorms* likely over Wisconsin. Visions of my trip home from St. Louiscon in 1969 danced horrifyingly in my head. Thunder booming outside the window! Lightning sizzling inches from my eyes! Rolling, tossing, bucking, *falling* ...

Generous as she is, and resigned to my pain-in-the-ass lunacy, Rosy gave me the window seats on our upward journeys. I kept one eye on the cloud formations and the other on the ground. I'm all right if I can see *turf* ... or, on this occasion, water. I found comforting beyond measure the reflected sunrise flicker in the rivers, lakes, and ponds below. We reached Minneapolis – a beautiful airport – with ease. But we still had those storms over Wisconsin to rattle through!

No story: no storms. Instead we got to traverse Lake Michigan and Lake Huron – gorgeous sights as blue as the ocean – and skirt the southern edge of Lake Erie, where storms did rage, a hundred safe miles away. And then we were curling on a wingtip through the clouds over Buffalo, the only dramatic moments of the flight, and landing. The worst part of the experience was the deafening noise from the DC-9 engines. I wasn't even respectably drunk.

## *Family*

It had been 18 long months since I'd seen my nephews, and it could not have been a happier reunion. My brother being out of state on business, my sister-in-law Marie took on the in-laws – and it was a terrific time with her and the nevvies. John, 7 I guess, is the tallest soon-to-be-second-grader I've ever seen, and Steve's happy personality grows and grows. Damn, I love those dudes.

We went to Grand Island's tiny beach on the Niagara River, and let the boys cavort with a couple of their crew from down the street. On the way there and back, the boys argued over who'd get to sit next to Uncle Guy. The next evening we went to dinner at an Italian restaurant with Mexican decor, and thence to the Falls. I'd never been there with Steve and John, and it was like discovering Niagara all over again – or maybe I was simply discovering the avuncular fun of telling them about the Cave of the Winds behind the torrent and the abandoned power plant below it and the kid in the '50s who'd survived the plunge over the Falls – *without* a barrel. The edge of the torrent was *right there*, too – I enjoyed the additional excitement of making sure the guys didn't slip under the railing. But they've got Marie's good sense, thank heaven, and all was well.

I also took Rosy to see my childhood homes – still in excellent shape – and those streets I still dream about from time to time. The teachers gathering for a pre-school-year conference at Benjamin Franklin Middle School seemed ridiculously young and silly. They'd never heard of any of my teachers, of course – long retired, or dust.

We visited my Great-aunt Cora, 95 or so now, bed-ridden and nearly blind, but sharp – in the mornings. She could see well enough to compliment Rosy on my weight loss. And of course we went to see my mother at her nursing home, a frightening prospect that went much better than I'd feared. Mama recognized me instantly and seemed in fairly good spirits. She gobbled the pralines I brought her and seemed little changed from our 2001 visit. I got a list of her meds – something I should have done years back – and framed some of the wedding photos I'd brought last time. The attendant who helped said he liked to see pictures of his charges from *before*; he's always surprised by what interesting lives they'd led ... *before*. My mama was a cheerleader who married the center on the rival school's basketball team and lived all over Europe and South America. And gave birth to my brother and myself.

## ***Fandom***

If I had to rank my favorite moment at Torcon 3, the 2003 world science fiction convention, it wouldn't be the obvious ones.

It wouldn't be the most dramatic one, when Rosy and I presented the Hugo for Best Fan Artist. In the one photograph I've seen of the moment, despite *la belle's* beautiful dress (for which she had to fashion special underpinnings) and the kangaroo tie I brought back from Australia, we look positively *grim*. I've smiled more arguing death penalty cases. It was neat to walk out into that blinding light – you could only sense the audience – and announce the only surprise Hugo of the evening, to Sue Mason, “of Plokta and the world.” Only wish she'd been there. Nice-looking award, too – although we heard argument over whether the Hugo rocket was flanked by a maple leaf or moose ears.

Nor would it be the most disappointing one, a few minutes later, when **Challenger** lost the Hugo to **Mimosa**. Since '02 was a particularly magnificent one for Rich & Nicki's epic zine of fan history, and – don't tell them – they're two of the sweetest people in fandom, I couldn't gripe. Besides which, the Hugo Losers Party was really fun this year, containing my *second* favorite moment of the convention. We bamboozled Neil Gaiman, winner this year for his horror novella “Coraline”, into letting us photograph him with Mib the Panda, joining Gettysburg, Death Valley and the Sydney Opera House as a backdrop for Miboletto's greatness. *He remembered my name* from the comic book lettercols, and even the terrible pun with which Julie Schwartz answered one of my critical letters: “You sure know how to *Guy a hurt!*” Though Torcon perpetuated the distasteful practice of revealing the final Hugo tally that very evening, and caused a flinch of despair when I found that, once again, I'd come in fifth – that was great.

Dave Langford won his ten thousandth Hugo as Fan Writer, and was present to accept it. This was my first meeting with the great Langford, a great moment if not the greatest. Dave has a terrific foof of white hair, a cheery chubby Brit countenance, a wonderful accent, and is as deaf as the proverbial post. His live “Thog's Master Class”, featuring terrible syntax from science fiction novels and stories, was packed to the rafters and a huge success. After introducing myself, to a happy handshake, I shouted a line or two from **Werewolf vs. the Vampire Woman** by Arthur N. Scarm. He was properly impressed – as was I.

The masquerade, the following night, was hardly the greatest moment of the con. The costumes were pretty, and there was a truly neat retrospective of past Canadian costume winners and a *great* film about the last Torcon, 25 years ago. But there were only two extraordinary presentations, and the wrong one won Best of Show. (My favorite: the exquisitely spooky “Winter is Coming”.) Rosy and I had front row seats – it's nice to be DUFF delegates – and sat with our great friend Robin Johnson. Nice show, but like everything else connected with Torcon, less than you'd expect from a worldcon.



We were walking back to the Royal York Hotel, Robin and Rosy and me, talking about masquerades past. Naturally, I mentioned St. Louiscon in 1969, and the epic costume that changed the face of worldcon costuming: Karen & Astrid Anderson's "The Bat and the Bitten." We walked another half a block. Then a sweet voice called from across the street. "Guy!"

Astrid Anderson.

Astrid Anderson Bear, that is, daughter to Poul and Karen, wife to Greg, who joined us, marveling at the fabulous coinkydink that brought us together just as we talking about her 1969 Best of Show triumph. She walked back with us to the hotel and the parties, smiling as I talked about how Poul had invited an annoying 18-year-old neofan to his first Little Men meeting, and had even given him a ride, because that was just the kind of guy he was.

Neat moment, in fact an awesome one, but *not* the convention's greatest.

No surprise: Torcon's greatest moment had to do with DUFF, the Down Under Fan Fund Rosy and I won, and now must administer. It – the greatest moment – came after several DUFF-related *good* moments. For instance, we put on a successful Hurricane party in the under-appreciated fanzine lounge; I put on my stupid Aussie fisherman's hat and bartended, while Rosy gave out Mardi Gras beads (it was a mixed Australia/New Orleans event, after all), and a good time was had by all. Next year, at Noreascon, we'll keep the door open and the 'canes flowing longer. The party will be a reception for the Aussie DUFF delegate, after all, and he or she will be the important thing, not the fact that I'm tired and want to hit the other parties.

Yes, we had an auction, and in many ways it was the climax of the convention – though it only led to the very best moment. Much of the earlier days of Torcon was focused on setting up this event, coordinating with our local contact (and representative of the Canadian unity Fan Fund) Colin Hirz and Alan Rosenthal, stand-in for the TAFF delegate and husband to one of the convention's heroines, Janice Murray, and hassling with the Torcon programming committee – which I suspect will form the bulk of many Torcon reports. They'd originally set the auction for the various fan funds on Friday afternoon, far too early – and we succeeded in moving it to Sunday. I'd announced the auction from the Hugo dais, posted announcements on bulletin boards and in Chris Barkley's daily newszine, and was hoping for a decent crowd.

And decent it was. Of SFPA's number, Rich, Janice and Sheila were there, and contributed to the take, and the take was okay – over a grand. We sold books contributed by Toni, a Pez dispenser contributed by Pat & Roger Sims, a pair of Australian road signs (showing a koala bear and a kangaroo) contributed by Naomi Fisher, a book of *Simpsons* pogs contributed by Alan Stewart, the Aussie editor of *Thyme*. These last two items ... well, here we are, at the apex of Torcon, at last.

The youngest attendee at the auction was a strapping lad of 7 or maybe 8, there with his mother, bankrupting his father. She bought both of Naomi's highway signs, Kangaroo and Koala Crossing, and after the auction proper she approached us about the pogs. Her son ached for it, and ... well, doggone it, how much?

The little guy lit up when she brought it back to him. He was so excited, giggling like crazy over the silly cartoons. "Lookit *this* one, Mommy! Lookit *this* one!" Nothing cynical or ironic or sarcastic about it – he was enraptured. His father would probably deck me if he got the chance, but our nonsense had made that little guy *very* happy. I took his photo to send back to Stewart. So he'd know.

Best moment of the con. Bar none.

We made about a thousand off the auctions, most from peddling two of the seven "tuckerizations" we'd finagled out of various pros. A tuckerization: is an agreement, by a writer, to include a real person's name in his fiction. We sold ones from Larry Niven (obtained at the CrescentCityCon shortly before worldcon) and Greg Benford, but for short money. Rosy's friend JoeD Siclari looked over our collection – which included beautiful Catherine Asaro, Hugo-winner Robert Sawyer (who boomed his way through the convention), Harry Turtledove, and others – but those we held, and hold, for a more promising venue: Noreascon. Where we hope to triple our take. All for DUFF, of course, but worth the effort.

We had a last, and barely attended, panel on fan funds. It ended with my collecting e-dresses from the folks assembled, so I could send them all my Hanging Rock article from **Challenger** #18. And then we were in the rental car and out of there. Torcon became a bittersweet memory – a disappointing convention with some shining moments amidst the dross.

The drive back to Buffalo was pleasant – we passed a beached three-master on the shores of Lake Ontario – until we approached the border. Then Homeland Security took over, and it was a nightmare. It took us two hours to travel two kilometers. At the crossing, the guard asked one or two questions about the boxes in our back seat – papers and books we'd hoped to sell in Toronto, we said, but didn't – and then waved us through.

### ***Family Again***

Lance, my brother had actually made it home from his business trip the night before we left for Torcon, but had been too zonked when we went by for breakfast to get out of bed. Now we got an evening with him and the brood, a very good time. Nephew Steve reminded me to present his dad with the decorative boomerang I'd brought him from Australia. We told tales of the land downunder, *didn't* argue about politics, a relief, and watched a tape of Steve's school play – he played The French Fry Guy in "Mystery at MacDonald's". The kid's a natural.

I didn't notice it at the time, but L.E. was sick. Barely two weeks after our visit, he had his gall bladder removed. Doing fine now, thanks.

### ***Flight Again***

It was undoubtedly the stress of leaving my family, again, but I had a lousy night. I dreaded the flight home and made Rosy pay for it. Of course, the flights – to Newark first, then Nawlins – were faultless. I actually enjoyed the cloud panorama, as long as they weren't too close, too towering, too threatening. I hope I didn't jinx us – or our forthcoming jaunt to Huntsville for Con\*stellation – when I told *la belle* that if I ever freaked out about flying again, she could remind me of this trip.

Torcon ranks low among the fifteen worldcons I've attended. The confusion in its programming was horrible – if it didn't make me sound hypocritical, I'd call it the worst mess since Nolacon. While our hotel (in Toronto's Indian quarter) was only two or three subway stops from the Royal York, and was perfectly comfortable (and cheap), it *was* distant from the action. And we were *busy* – busy with the party, with the auction, busy with the Hugos – *busy*. Too busy to relax and enjoy the convention. Noreascon will probably be *busier*. And *better*. And frankly, I can't wait.

To work, at once, on Noreascon – on our slide show for Huntsville – on this zine, and the next **Challenger**. That's the thing against attaining a bit o'status in this silly hobby – you have to pay for it with work, work, work. And so y'all enjoy the transition, SFPAns, from summer to fall, 2003. We'll see you next time, when we come up for air.

