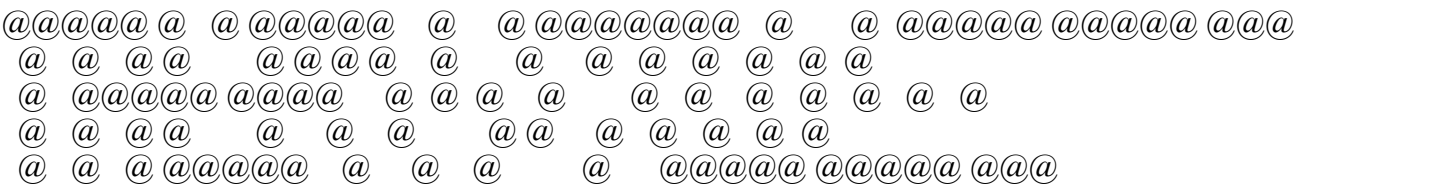

Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
Club Notice - 10/09/92 -- Vol. 11, No. 15

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

_D_A_T_E _T_O_P_I_C

10/28 HO: Book Swap (HO 4N-509)
11/18 HO: DOOMSDAY BOOK by Connie Willis (Plagues) (HO 4N-509)
12/09 HO: A FIRE ON THE DEEP by Vernor Vinge (HO 4N-509)

_D_A_T_E _E_X_T_E_R_N_A_L _M_E_E_T_I_N_G_S/_C_O_N_V_E_N_T_I_O_N_S/_E_T_C.
10/10 SFABC: Science Fiction Association of Bergen County: TBA
(phone 201-933-2724 for details) (Saturday)
10/17 NJSFS: New Jersey Science Fiction Society: TBA
(phone 201-432-5965 for details) (Saturday)

HO Chair: John Jetzt HO 1E-525 908-834-1563 hocpb!jetzt
LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell HO 1D-505A 908-834-1267 hocpb!jrrt
MT Chair: Mark Leeper MT 3D-441 908-957-5619 mtgzy!leeper
HO Librarian: Nick Sauer HO 4F-427 908-949-7076 homxc!11366ns
LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 3L-312 908-576-3346 mtfme!lfl
MT Librarian: Mark Leeper MT 3D-441 908-957-5619 mtgzy!leeper
Factotum: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 908-957-2070 mtgzy!ecl
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1. Continuing this rather short series on airline flight, I am writing this still on the ground in Newark, now about 75 minutes late in taking off for an hour flight. (Connection? Bye-bye, connection.) The pilot has been getting on the P.A. in that standard pilot deep gravelly voice and saying we will be delayed, we don't know about connections, and thank you for your patience. Of course we are sitting strapped down in our seats. I am not really sure what we could be doin differently to manifest inpatience. If they would tell me how to do it, I probably would. As it is, it is sort of like saying, "Thank you for having a nose on your face."

I guess one of the things I object to with flight is this strap-downedness. What people dream about in flight is the freedom of it all. You want to float around freely in three dimensions. Have you been on an airline flight? You have this tiny space about two

feet from front to back and eighteen inches from side to side. You pretty much have to wrap your left leg around your neck to get into your seat. Then the guy in front of you puts his seat all the way back and puts his head in your lap. Makes you wish they still had the big spacious airships for passenger flight. At least I wish they'd bring them back. I think about them every time I go to the movies. You know how there is no smoking at the movies and when the movie is over some jerk always lights up a cigarette under the sound principle, "Wotta dey gonna do? Throw me out? I'm leavin' anyway." Well, there was no smoking on the Hindenberg so it got almost all the way through its flight and just as the passengers were leaving I suspect some big jerk said, "Wotta dey gonna do? Throw me out?" Anyway, every time I feel like I have been jammed into a seat on a plane I blame the cigarette companies. (You'd be amazed how convenient the cigarette companies can be at times like this!)

So you are sitting in the plane in this tiny cramped space and the air is stale so they have the air-conditioning nozzles. Ever use one of them? It is set up not to bother anyone else so it creates a pencil-width stream of air. That still leaves most of you uncomfortable. It is a bit like trying to take a shower with a fire hose. I used to aim the thing at my head but I discovered it was giving me a bald spot so now I just swelter.

Mark Leeper
MT 3D-441 908-957-5619
...mtgzy!leeper

The direct use of physical force is so poor a solution to the problem of limited resources that it is commonly

employed only by small children and great nations.
-- David Friedman

MagiCon 1992
(Part 2 of 4)
Con report by Evelyn C. Leeper
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AAAAllllttttteeeerrrrnnnnaaaattttteeee AAAAwwwwaaaarrrrddddssss
CCCCeeeerrrreeeemmmmoooonnnnyyyy
Friday, 9 PM
Guy Gavriel Kay (master of ceremonies)

It was good to see that MagiCon moved most of the non-Hugo awards out of the Hugo Awards ceremony (but see that section for my comments on the Gryphon), but they should have scheduled this Alternate Awards ceremony for a nicer room, or at least decorated it a bit. As it was, it was held in a basic meeting room that was used for panels all day (room 11C, which I will mention later), and lacked any air of festivity. (Even before this con report was finished, I was discussing this on the Net, and indications are that people have realized that this should be played up a bit in the future.)

Awards handed out:

- Electric SF Award (from ClariNet Communications): Geoffrey Landis, "A Walk in the Sun"
- Prometheus Hall of Fame Award (from the Libertarian Futurist Society): Ira Levin, _T_h_i_s _P_e_r_f_e_c_t _D_a_y
- Prometheus Award for Best Libertarian SF Novel (from the Libertarian Futurist Society): Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, and Michael Flynn for _F_a_l_l_e_n _A_n_g_e_l_s
- Golden Duck Award for Best Children's SF Book (from DucKon): Bruce Colville's _M_y _T_e_a_c_h_e_r _G_l_o_w_s _i_n _t_h_e _D_a_r_k
- Golden Duck Award for Best Children's SF Picture Book (from DucKon): Claire Ewart (illustrator), _T_i_m_e _T_r_a_i_n
- Golden Duck Honorable Mention (from DucKon): Monica Hughes, _I_n_v_i_t_a_t_i_o_n _t_o _t_h_e _G_a_m_e
- Sei-un for Best Foreign Novel in Translation: Charles Sheffield, _T_h_e _M_c_A_n_d_r_e_w _C_h_r_o_n_i_c_l_e_s
- Sei-un for Best Foreign Short Story or Novelette in Translation: John Varley, "Tango Charlie and Foxtrot Romeo"

The most humorous section was the Prometheus Awards. First Brad Linaweaver announced that Ira Levin had won the Hall of Fame Award for _T_h_i_s _P_e_r_f_e_c_t _D_a_y, and then asked, "Does anyone know if he's still alive?" Levin has published other books recently and it was concluded he was probably still alive; I assume someone will locate him. Then Linaweaver announced the award for _F_a_l_l_e_n _A_n_g_e_l_s, but of the three co-authors, only Flynn was present. Flynn accepted the award, saying, "I don't want to make a habit out of this" (referring to his win last year for _I_n _t_h_e _C_o_u_n_t_r_y _o_f _t_h_e _B_l_i_n_d). As he finished, Pournelle, Niven, and their spouses arrived. Pournelle's first questions were, "What did we win? How do we split

it?" He then proceeded to berate (in good fun) Linaweaver for directing them to 11C in the Clarion and impressing upon them how important it was that they be there--in Clarion 11C--on time. This became a running gag. When the representatives of Japanese fandom were introduced for the Sei-un presentation, one of them was not present. Someone from the audience called out, "She's probably in Clarion 11C." The same was offered for all the winners who were not present, and Kay announced that photographs would be taken in Clarion 11C afterward.

Kay closed by noting that all these awards show the diversity and scope represented in the field of science fiction.

Other awards handed out at MagiCon, though not at this ceremony, included the Chesley Awards given by the Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists:

Best Cover Illustration, Hardback Book: Michael Whelan, _T_h_e _S_u_m_m_e_r _Q_u_e_e_n
Best Cover Illustration, Paperback Book: David Cherry, _S_w_o_r_d _a_n_d _S_o_r_c_e_r_e_s_s _V_I_I_I
Best Cover Illustration, Magazine: David Mattingly, _A_m_a_z_i_n_g, September 1991
Best Interior Illustration: Bob Walters, "It Grows on You," _W_e_i_r_d _T_a_l_e_s, Summer 1991
Best Color Work, Unpublished: David Cherry, "Filea Mea"
Best Monochrome, Unpublished: Michael Whelan, "Study for All the Weyrs of Pern"
Best Three Dimensional Art: Clayburn Moore, "Celestial Jade"
Award for Artistic Achievement: James Gurney, body of work to date
Award for Contribution to ASFA (tie): Jan Sherrell Gephardt and Richard Kelly
Best Art Director: Betsy Wollheim and Sheila Gilbert, DAW Books

Also, the major Art Show awards were:

Popular Choice--Best Professional Artist: Michael Whelan (Honorable Mention: Thomas Canty)
Popular Choice--Best Amateur Artist: Deb Kosiba (Honorable Mention: Linda Michaels)
Guest of Honor's Choice: "Star Quake" by Steve Crisp
Chairman's Choice: "The Four Liberties" by Tom Kidd
Art Show Director's Choice: "Daughter of Conflict" by David A. Cherry
Judges' Award--Best of Show--Professional: "Subterraneans" by Michael Whelan
Judges' Award--Best of Show--Amateur: "Chameleon Confessions" by Lisa Snellings

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@@@@ PPPPaaaarrrrttttyyyy
Friday, 10 PM
Brad Templeton (host)

The @ party was hosted by Brad Templeton and ClariNet Communications. This meant there were no worries about collecting for refreshments, finding someone to volunteer a room, etc. It was conveniently located (being just down the hall from my room, so I could pop out to see if Mark was back in the room yet, then pop back for a while without a major time investment). I don't know what the total attendance was; it seems to be at least as much as last year, though not as crowded because of the larger room. I didn't see as many familiar faces (names), though. ClariNet was using the room to promote their "Library of Tomorrow" electronic library as well, so that may account for the new (to me) folks. There was a laptop for signing in, but someone managed to delete a lot of the names by mistake at one point, so I don't know if anyone knows the actual attendance. The free buttons were popular.

Panel: IIIIffff TTTThhhhiiiissss GGGGooooeeeessss OOOOnnnn.....
Saturday, 11 AM
Michael F. Flynn, Jack C. Haldeman II, Frederik Pohl, Michael Swanwick

(Pat Cadigan was supposed to be the moderator but didn't make it; I'm not sure who, if anyone, did moderate.)

When I arrived, Haldeman was talking about working with medical technology and how it has changed a lot over the past few years. He's currently working on a medical technology science fiction story set in 2040 and says it is very difficult to predict what things will be like then.

Swanwick talked about his trip to the convention. He got on an airplane which had a telephone at every seat from which you could call anywhere in the country; arrived at an airport with slide walks and monorails; used a bathroom that had infrared sensors to open and close doors, flush toilets, and turn on faucets; was given an electronic key by the desk clerk; and was told that he could pick up his voice mail on channel 99. And, he said, the clerk didn't explain what was meant by this--he assumed Haldeman would understand. To this Flynn remarked, "If this were a science fiction story, the clerk _w_o_u_l_d have explained."

Flynn said that he represented the voice of reason speaking against the theory that change keeps accelerating: "Between 1870 and 1920, the daily lives of citizens in cities in the Western World changed more than any period before--or since." There was considerable debate on this, in part because the panelists couldn't agree on which citizens' lives they were measuring. Swanwick pointed to the computer, modem, fax, and satellite dish as changing his life (and many others) enormously. For example, he says that

his record between submission of a story and its acceptance is now three-and-a-half minutes, where ten years ago it would have been weeks. But he says he also finds himself expecting this sort of response for everything. He recently mailed a copy of an article to Jane Yolen and a half hour after sealing, addressing, and stamping the envelope, he found himself wondering where her answer was--even though he hadn't mailed the letter yet! But other panelists focused more on the people who were not as touched by the communications revolution.

Pohl, for one, said he was completely out of sympathy with the computer network movement, though he didn't actually explain why. He did talk about the World Future Society and others who _w_o_r_k at predicting the future, and who say, "We don't know it [the future] and we don't want to know it." Pohl also gave Pohl's Law: "The more accurate and complete a forecast is, the less useful it is." Why? Because if someone can predict accurately and precisely that X will happen, then there is nothing we can do to change that. This gets into a whole philosophical discussion of free will versus determinism which would probably be too long and complex for this convention report. Suffice it to say that while knowing there will be a frost on October 10 of this year won't change that there will be a frost, it would allow farmers to plan accordingly, so accurate and precise predictions can have useful secondary effects.

As far as predictions go, Flynn (I believe) claimed that the Department of Energy has run a variety of scenarios and concluded that in all of them our society will crash and burn--the only question is how soon. But he says the fallacy in them is that they have programmed into their scenarios that science is a drain on energy resources, and he and many others feel that this is not the case. He says the problem is our belief that "progress is our most important product," that we must be constantly increasing production, increasing personal possessions, and so forth. He also referred again to Dewey and Dakin (see his Friday "Alternate History Stories" panel for details).

On the whole, Pohl is a pessimist (and says so). One reason for this, he claims, is that we are always working on the cure for

something such that by the time we have the cure, it's too late. Research cutbacks caused by the economic downturn have exacerbated this as well.

The panel then responded to the question: "Can we save our country from the automobile without bulldozing the suburbs?" Pohl rejoined, "No, you've got the right idea--bulldoze the suburbs." (As you can probably tell by this point, the panel tended to drift from the actual topic to how to fix things that _ w_ e_ r_ e going on.) Pohl pointed out that in regard to the "planned communities" that many audience members seemed to be proposing, "The history of planned communities is not promising." (One need only look at the

problems in Starett City in New York to see that.) On the other hand, the recent devastation in South Florida might lead to a move back to the cities, where homes are available, and the suburbs have already been bulldozed by Nature. As far as true arcologies go, though, some major issues remain: Who knows how to build them? Who can pay for them? Who wants to live in them? The biosphere in Arizona is a special (and very expensive) case.

Asked what current or past hot issues were dying out, the panelists felt abortion would cease to be a major issue, because RU-486 would become generally available (either legally or illegally). Threats to personal freedom would also cease being a major issue, not because they would go away, but because we would get used to them, and the wide-spread acceptance of monitoring cameras was given as a prime example. (Read Charles Oberndorf's _ S_ h_ e_ l_ t_ e_ r_ e_ d _ L_ i_ v_ e_ s for some extrapolation and commentary on the video monitor phenomenon.)

Somewhere along the line Haldeman told of an experiment which involved following paranoids around to see if their paranoia was justified, i.e., was someone really following them? The conclusion? No. (Think about it.)

As an example of the failure of science fiction to predict major events, I would point out that no one predicted anything like AIDS (as far as I know--if there was such a prediction or speculation, I'm sure someone will point it out to me). And Robert

Lucky, head of research at Bell Labs, was quoted in a recent issue of _ A_ n_ a_ l_ o_ g as saying that we are terrible at predicting or directing change: the Picturephone and something else (I forget what) were pushed by the industry but failed, while cellular phones and facsimile machines were big successes that were surprises to the industry, but gained enormous grass-roots support. And of course, Flynn cited the now-famous prediction from 1900 that based on the then-current trends, and projecting for expected population growth, New York would be buried under six feet of horse manure by the year 2000 (or whenever).

Panel: D D D Do o o oe e e es s s sS S S SF F F F
P P P Pr r r re e e ep p p pa a a ar r r re e e e
P P P Pe e e eo o o op p p pl l l le e e ef f f fo o o or r r r
C C C Ch h h ha a a an n n ng g g ge e e e? ? ? ?
Saturday, 1 PM
Grant Carrington, Michael Kandel, James Morrow (moderator), Mike Resnick, Kristine Kathryn Rusch

This panel tied in well with the preceding one ("If This Goes On..."). For example, the Robert Lucky quote above about the predictability of change is equally applicable to our attempts to deal with it.

My initial answer to the question posed by _ t_ h_ i_ s panel was, "No. If it did, there wouldn't be the fight over electronic fanzine eligibility that there is." Morrow's initial answer was yes; as he

said, "I'm prepared to deal with change. I know technology. I knew to turn the microphone on." Carrington hedged, "It depends on the person." Kandel admitted, "I'm not really prepared for the present," and went on to describe a $3.4 million lawsuit over the dismissal of a high school girl from the cheerleading squad. Rusch felt that "science fiction explores the results of change rather than preparing us for change." But Resnick, in seeming contradiction to this, claimed that "science fiction is first to present technology, but last to present the moral and ethical issues about it."

A thought which had occurred to me, and which was voiced by Kandel, was that it is perhaps not so much that science fiction

prepares people for change as that the people who are prepared for change read science fiction. Reading science fiction to prepare oneself for change strikes me as similar to Tanith Lee's rationale for reading horror stories because they give you practice being frightened.

As evidence of science fictions fans' inflexibility, Dozois and Resnick said, "If you want to make a lot of science fiction fans mad, portray the Third World as it really is." (This has resonances in some of S. M. Stirling's comments in the "Build an Alternate History" panel below.) Fandom is almost entirely white and middle-class. (Looking around the room for this panel certainly seemed to bear that thesis out.)

Regarding why change is often portrayed negatively, Resnick said, "Every writer has at most one utopia he can create," so most futures are dystopias. Of course, a writer could set several stories in the same utopian future, or create some "almost-utopias," but you get the point: there can be only one "best of all possible worlds."

Morrow pointed to a current story, John Kessel's "Buffalo," as being a wonderful example of the characters in the story missing the direction of change entirely. And there is a certain irony to this, in that H. G. Wells (a character in "Buffalo") managed to predict air wars and the atom bomb, but couldn't see most of the direction of social change. (This is also captured rather effectively in the film _ T_ i_ m_ e _ A_ f_ t_ e_ r _ T_ i_ m_ e, in which Wells has a time machine and uses it to come to modern-day San Francisco to chase Jack the Ripper.)

I would note that perhaps one reason that alternate histories are so popular is that they deal with change (in a very specific manner). When fans pick holes in them, it's their way of trying to understand what change means and how it works. Alternate histories were in fact mentioned in passing here--at least I have a note referring to someone talking about a Denny's full of truck drivers all reading Morrow's _ O_ n_ l_ y _ B_ e_ g_ o_ t_ t_ e_ n _ D_ a_ u_ g_ h_ t_ e_ r, and if that's not alternate history, I don't know what is!

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Just as we reached this point, Program Ops sent someone in to hold up a sign to the panelists saying, "STOP!" As one of them said, "I guess they want us to stop change."

Kaffeeklatsch: P P P Pa a a at t t t
C C C Ca a a ad d d di i i ig g g ga a a an n n n
Saturday, 2 PM

I had never been to a kaffeeklatsch before, but since I think Pat Cadigan's work is among that which is just about the best thing since movable type, I decided I had to sign up for this. Luckily for me, there were people there more willing to ask questions and draw her out (not that she's incredibly shy or anything!), because I wasn't quite sure how these things work.

Cadigan talked about how she worked for Hallmark for ten years and therefore knew "corporate hardcases"; that's why she can draw them accurately in her work. Hallmark was interesting, she said, because it had a very schizophrenic nature. To the outside world, it had to appear as a very conservative, family-oriented ("family values," I suppose) company, while in actuality it had a very high percentage of gay employees, because of what she felt was an accepting environment. Even now, she remains in Kansas City (she was born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts), and says that Kansas City has one of the country's largest gay pride parades.

Her literary influences seem to have been authors with what she termed "original voices." Among these were Cordwainer Smith ("Cordwainer Smith is God") and Tom Reamy, whose "Pottifee, Petey, and Me" still awaits the publication of _ T_ h_ e _ L_ a_ s_ t _ D_ a_ n_ g_ e_ r_ o_ u_ s _ V_ i_ s_ i_ o_ n_ s. She said she had seen the manuscript and gave us a brief outline of the plot. We asked about whether the rights hadn't reverted to his estate by now, but Cadigan wasn't sure. Other "original voices" she listed were James Tiptree, Jr., and Howard Waldrop.

In response to another question, she said that her work had first appeared in _ N_ e_ w _ D_ i_ m_ e_ n_ s_ i_ o_ n_ s _ 1_ 1 and now, "ten years later, I'm an instant success."

In regard to what she writes about, Cadigan said that in a workshop she learned that there were first-order stories (write about building an invention, e.g., the automobile), second-order stories (write about learning to cope with the invention, e.g., build some roads), and third-order stories (write about further effects, e.g., suburbs). She decided she wanted to write third-order stories, because she felt those were the best, and wrote _ S_ y_ n_ n_ e_ r_ s to be primarily a third-order story with some first-order elements.

Alas, I had to leave this somewhat early in order to make it back to the Convention Center in time for the next item.

Preview: B B B Br r r ra a a am m m m
S S S St t t to o o ok k k ke e e er r r r' ' ' 's s s s_ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a
Saturday, 3 PM
Francis Ford Coppola, Roman Coppola

There was apparently some confusion over this item. A friend said that she didn't realize that Coppola was going to talk for an hour before showing the movie. Huh? Eventually I realized that she thought this was a sneak preview of the entire film _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a, rather than a preview in the sense of overview. "Preview" is one of those overloaded words in English, and future committees should be sure to clarify which meaning they are using. This was particularly confusing at MagiCon, since George R. R. Martin _ d_ i_ d have a sneak preview of _ D_ o_ o_ r_ s, also labeled a "preview."

I was glad I had a press ribbon, because by the time I arrived the only seats left were in the press section. There had been some talk about Coppola holding a separate press conference, but that didn't happen. The hour started with a ten-minute film on the making of _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a, then Coppola talked for a while, and finally the audience got to ask some questions.

The main information we got, and the reason Roman Coppola was there, was that the special effects were being done using only techniques that were available in 1897, when the book was written. So there would be no computer morphing or anything like that; all the effects were done using camera tricks or stage magic. Roman Coppola was the second unit director and the person in charge of all these effects, and talked a little bit about them. For example, many of the techniques he used were taken from a 1897 book on illusion that Roman had discovered when he was in film school.

Coppola (Francis Ford) began by talking about his early association with _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a, when as a camp counselor he used to read the book to his charges at camp to get them to sleep early so he could visit his girlfriend across the lake. (Whether this worked because the boys didn't argue about going to bed because they were eager for the story, or because it was so boring it put them right to sleep, he didn't say.) Coppola's favorite Dracula is John

Carradine from _ H_ o_ u_ s_ e _ o_ f _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a. He says his version of _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a will be the most accurate yet, with the closest version he's seen up to now being Murnau's _ N_ o_ s_ f_ e_ r_ a_ t_ u. When he was asked about the BBC version _ C_ o_ u_ n_ t _ D_ r_ a_ c_ u_ l_ a (starring Louis Jourdan), which most people list as the most accurate, Coppola admitted he hadn't seen it. While I can understand his not wanting to be overly influenced by previous versions of the story, I would think that he should have watched what is generally accepted as the best version.

At least Coppola was fairly knowledgeable about Dracula, though the script seems to take great liberties, giving Dracula a lost love and having other strange non-canonical touches. Coppola commented that it was curious that the two great classics of the horror film

(Frankenstein and Dracula) were both based on Byron, though the latter was one step removed by being based on John Polidori's vampire, who was based on Lord Byron. (Both _ T_ h_ e _ V_ a_ m_ p_ y_ r_ e and _ F_ r_ a_ n_ k_ e_ n_ s_ t_ e_ i_ n came out of a bet made by Polidori, Byron, and Mary Shelley one night in Switzerland during a summer spent there with Percy Bysshe Shelley.)

Still, Coppola claims James V. West's script is accurate to the book. The film was shot entirely on a sound stage, in 69 days, with a budget of $40 million. Even with that budget, the film had to be carefully planned to minimize the number of sets needed. Coppola says one reason films cost so much is that every department not only wants to do 100% of the movie--they want to overproduce "just to be sure." So, for example, the costume department will decide that it must have the absolute ultimate in costumes, and in addition, will want to make some extra costumes, just in case they're needed. This can run the cost up very fast. The advance planning necessary to keep the costs down helps, but Coppola admits that one side effect of all that planning is that you get sick of the movie faster than if you just dived in.

Gary Oldman (of _ S_ i_ d _ a_ n_ d _ N_ a_ n_ c_ y, _ P_ r_ i_ c_ k _ U_ p _ Y_ o_ u_ r _ E_ a_ r_ s, and _ J_ F_ K) was chosen for the title role as being the actor that Coppola felt had both the range necessary to play Dracula in all his forms and at all

his ages, and the ability to show the passion and love that Dracula feels. The score is performed by a symphony orchestra rather than a smaller group or a synthesizer. Coppola had wanted to commission a classical Polish composer (Poland being where most of the classical composers are these days), but discovered that would take too long. So instead, he hired Wojciech Kilar, who did a lot of the music for Andrzej Wajda's films.

During the question-and-answer session, someone asked Coppola what his favorite science fiction was. He said he liked _ T_ h_ e _ D_ a_ y _ t_ h_ e _ E_ a_ r_ t_ h _ S_ t_ o_ o_ d _ S_ t_ i_ l_ l, but also mentioned _ C_ h_ i_ l_ d_ h_ o_ o_ d'_ s _ E_ n_ d--not a movie, but a book. He must be one of the few directors in Hollywood who reads science fiction (or has read it). In general, he seemed very enthusiastic about his work in general and this film in particular--more like a fan than a famous director.

Someone asked his about his "cinemobile" (named the Silverfish) and whether it was true that he spent all his time in that rather than on the set itself. Coppola said that having a portable lab/viewing room/etc. made his work easier but that he always directed from right next to the camera, and did not hide out in the Silverfish.

In response to a question about rumors that the film would be very violent or erotic, Coppola said that these must have been started by someone who saw all the footage that was shot. Coppola said they never intended to use _ a_ l_ l the footage, though I suspect

the film will have a R rating rather than a PG-13.

Coppola advised people trying to break into Hollywood as writers not to write screenplays, but instead to write short stories or one-act plays.

Among upcoming projects, Coppola mentioned that Columbia Pictures is trying to get the rights for _ D_ r. _ S_ t_ r_ a_ n_ g_ e for Roman to direct.

Asked to sum up the message of the film, Coppola said, "Love is

stronger than evil; love is stronger than death."

Panel: B B B Bu u u ui i i il l l ld d d da a a an n n n
A A A Al l l lt t t te e e er r r rn n n na a a at t t te e e e
H H H Hi i i is s s st t t to o o or r r ry y y y
Saturday, 5 PM
Barbara Hambly, Cortney Skinner (moderator),
S. M. Stirling, Harry Turtledove

Judith Tarr was supposed to be on this panel, but couldn't make it. However, Harry Turtledove credited her _ i_ n _ a_ b_ s_ e_ n_ t_ i_ a with the inspiration for his latest book, _ T_ h_ e _ G_ u_ n_ s _ o_ f _ t_ h_ e _ S_ o_ u_ t_ h (previously known as _ T_ h_ e _ L_ o_ n_ g _ D_ r_ u_ m _ R_ o_ l_ l). It seems that he was talking to Judith about one of her books and she bemoaned the fact that the cover on it was "as anachronistic as Robert E. Lee holding an Uzi." Well, Turtledove thought about this and decided that Uzis were not the right weapon, but what about if Lee had an AK-47? What if Lee had a _ l_ o_ t of AK-47s? And who would give Lee a lot of AK-47s? Time traveling Afrikaaners, of course. And so _ T_ h_ e _ G_ u_ n_ s _ o_ f _ t_ h_ e _ S_ o_ u_ t_ h was born.

The question of how to choose a change point was raised. Stirling claims the trick is to avoid the really over-used one. But he claims lots have been done with the Armada as the critical point; I can locate only three: John Brunner's _ T_ i_ m_ e_ s _ W_ i_ t_ h_ o_ u_ t _ N_ u_ m_ b_ e_ r, Phyllis Eisenstein's _ S_ h_ a_ d_ o_ w _ o_ f _ E_ a_ r_ t_ h, and Keith Roberts's _ P_ a_ v_ a_ n_ e.

As the panelists agreed, catching the author in an error in his or her alternate history is part of the game. (I'm glad they do it too; it makes me feel a little less guilty about pointing them out when I find them. And they also said they love it when history experts compliment them on the good job they did.) And they don't worry about making the same mistake more than once--fans _ w_ i_ l_ l write them to tell them. Turtledove says that a common mistake is to slip up on the language. For example, a United States without a major European immigration in the early 1900s would not speak a language full of Yiddishisms. On the flip side, making the language accurate to its period or its world will often alienate the readers and possibly cause censorship problems. In a story set in a world in which slavery continues to exist, the word "nigger" would more than likely still be in common use. But using it in a story can cause problems (ask Mark Twain). The panelists agreed that the best

solution was to use it, but only in dialogue.

This led to what is the most useful (and perhaps most controversial) idea to emerge from this panel. To paraphrase Resnick and Dozois from the "Does SF Prepare People for Change" panel (above): "If you want to make a lot of science fiction fans mad, portray the people of a different era as they really were." When Stirling first introduced himself, he said, "I'm S. M. Stirling, or as I'm often called, that fascist bastard." This is no doubt due to his Draka alternate history trilogy (_ M_ a_ r_ c_ h_ i_ n_ g _ T_ h_ r_ o_ u_ g_ h _ G_ e_ o_ r_ g_ i_ a, _ U_ n_ d_ e_ r _ t_ h_ e _ Y_ o_ k_ e, and _ T_ h_ e _ S_ t_ o_ n_ e _ D_ o_ g_ s), in which Tories driven out of the United States upon its independence colonize South Africa and eventually begin to conquer the world. As someone on the Net has described it, the Draka "have rejected Christian/Bourgeois morality, and follow a philosophy close aligned with Nietzsche and Gorbineau. The Draka give a whole new meaning to the dictum 'Die Macht ist Das Recht.' The Draka are both repellent and attractive. They are the most ecologically sound resource developers on the planet, but they treat the people they conquer like excrement." Now, Stirling has stated that the Draka are the villains, but apparently a lot of readers haven't gotten the message that he thinks so, so they think Stirling believes what the Draka believe, and hence describe him as a "fascist bastard." But what he has done is portray the Draka with the mind-set he thinks _ t_ h_ e_ y would have. His claim is that people of different eras thought differently than we do, and that drawing them accurately--especially if one of them is your "hero"--either leads your audience to think _ y_ o_ u think that way, or alienates them by painting a picture of people they can't identify with. (I should note that while this sounds plausible, and Resnick has run into the same problem with the protagonist of his Kirinyaga stories, Connie Willis in a recent _ L_ o_ c_ u_ s interview says that we often have this belief that people of different eras felt differently about things than we do and that, for example, the death of a child in an era where childhood deaths were more common did not affect people as much. She says her research found this belief to be wrong, and she wrote _ D_ o_ o_ m_ s_ d_ a_ y _ B_ o_ o_ k in part to counter it. So everyone has to decide for her or himself.)

Another problem with attempts at accuracy is that what we think of as "common knowledge" is often wrong. For example: George Washington and the cherry tree. Now at this point, most readers know this is a fictional story, but there are certainly other cases in which if you tell the truth, readers will think you got it wrong, and vice versa.

Stirling also said that while the cover for _ M_ a_ r_ c_ h_ i_ n_ g _ T_ h_ r_ o_ u_ g_ h _ G_ e_ o_ r_ g_ i_ a was accurate, the covers for _ U_ n_ d_ e_ r _ t_ h_ e _ Y_ o_ k_ e and _ T_ h_ e _ S_ t_ o_ n_ e _ D_ o_ g_ s were not, because the publisher didn't want to put swastikas on the cover. That struck several people as strange, since swastikas on a cover seem to sell books rather than inhibit sales. Len

Deighton's _ S_ S-_ G_ B did quite well with a swastika, and Robert Harris's _ F_ a_ t_ h_ e_ r_ l_ a_ n_ d has nothing _ b_ u_ t a swastika on the cover.

Hambly described this as the "obsessive detail panel," which led an audience member to ask about research. While a lot of research is done in major university libraries and via electronic networks, most of the panelists had done some first-hand research as well, not in the sense of going back to 1860 of course, but in the sense of wearing clothing of that period; trying to cook, wash, and live in the manner of that period for some length of time; fired weapons of that period; and so on. (What they discovered was that living in these historical periods is not fun, and they didn't even have to cope with disease, hygiene problems, and so on.) And if you're writing about the Civil War or World War II, there's no lack of documentation. In fact, these eras were described as "over-documented." Turtledove said that he asked someone for an estimate of how many men were in a particular regiment and got back a complete roster of who was in it, where they were from, their family histories, etc., etc. And what he discovered he probably can't even use because no one would believe it. For example, there was at least one woman in the regiment. But if you put a woman in a Civil War regiment in a novel, everyone will scream that you're doing it from political correctness rather than accuracy. (In the alternate Civil War panel, it was noted that the Confederate Army actually had a couple of black regiments. This, too, would not be accepted in a novel.)

Turtledove talked about his upcoming book, _ I_ n _ t_ h_ e _ B_ a_ l_ a_ n_ c_ e, in which World War II is rolling along, it's May 1942, and then the aliens land. He describes it as "_ F_ o_ o_ t_ f_ a_ l_ l meets _ W_ i_ n_ d_ s _ o_ f _ W_ a_ r."
(Who knows--that could be the blurb. Anything is possible. Some bookstores are putting the promotional flyer for _ T_ h_ e _ G_ u_ n_ s _ o_ f _ t_ h_ e

_ S_ o_ u_ t_ h in the history section. Maybe they think Lee _ d_ i_ d have AK-47s!)

Skinner, on the other hand, is working on a project a la "Vinland the Dream" (by Kim Stanley Robinson)--an artifact of a Gobi Desert dinosaur expedition (that never existed in our world). Skinner is an artist, and the project consists of authentic-looking documents, newspaper clippings, telegrams, steamship tickets, and so on, all carefully faked to look authentic. (If you've read "Vinland the Dream" you know what I'm talking about.) I commented that the only problem was that a few hundred years in the future someone might find this project and think the expedition it documented really did happen!

H H H Hu u u ug g g go o o o
A A A Aw w w wa a a ar r r rd d d ds s s s
Saturday, 8:30 PM

First the awards:

Novel: Lois McMaster Bujold, _ B_ a_ r_ r_ a_ y_ a_ r (Baen)
Novella: Nancy Kress, "Beggars in Spain," IASFM, April 1991
Novelette: Isaac Asimov, "Gold," _ A_ n_ a_ l_ o_ g, September 1991
Short Story: Geoffrey A. Landis, "A Walk in the Sun," IASFM, October 1991
Non-Fiction Book: Charles Addams, _ T_ h_ e _ W_ o_ r_ l_ d _ o_ f _ C_ h_ a_ r_ l_ e_ s _ A_ d_ d_ a_ m_ s
Original Artwork: Michael Whelan, cover of _ T_ h_ e _ S_ u_ m_ m_ e_ r _ Q_ u_ e_ e_ n
Dramatic Presentation: _ T_ e_ r_ m_ i_ n_ a_ t_ o_ r _ 2 (Carolco)
Professional Editor: Gardner Dozois
Professional Artist: Michael Whelan
Fanzine: Mimosa, Dick and Nicki Lynch
Semiprozine: Locus, Charles Brown
Fan Writer: Dave Langford

Fan Artist: Brad Foster
John W. Campbell Award: Ted Chiang
First Fandom Award: Arthur Widner, Jr., Nelson Bond, Art Saha,
and J. Harvey Haggert
Big Heart Award: Samanda Jeude

(The last three are not Hugos.)

Now the commentary:

What a fuck-up!

I am not one to use obscenity lightly in a con report, so when I say, "What a fuck-up!" please understand I am talking about _ m_ a_ j_ o_ r problems.

"Like what?" you ask.

Like allowing Andre Norton to award the Gryphon Award at the Hugo Awards ceremony.

Like the master of ceremonies having no idea that he was supposed to match his reading of the nominees to slides being projected, which he couldn't see very well from the podium anyway.

Like the master of ceremonies not knowing what order to do the awards in, and almost skipping one and repeating another.

Like having the slides kludged together by the committee so that, for example, some artists had a slide of their work and others just one of their signatures from the Hugo Nominee information form. (And my work was represented by a piece from the _ M_ T _ V_ O_ I_ D, which is not known for its layout or design; I would have preferred to send

them a copy of one from _ T_ h_ e _ R_ e_ a_ d_ i_ n_ g _ E_ d_ g_ e, which would have looked more like the other nominees. But compared to all the other problems, the importance of this is lower than whale shit, as my old supervisor used to say.)

Like announcing the wrong nominee as the winner.

Yes, that's right, folks: in the fanzine category, Spider Robinson announced that the winner was _ L_ a_ n'_ s _ L_ a_ n_ t_ e_ r_ n edited by George Laskowski ("Lan"). As Lan approached the podium, the slide announcing the winner flashed up on the screen--except that it said "_ M_ i_ m_ o_ s_ a: Dick and Nicki Lynch." At that point, I don't think either Lan or Robinson could see the slide, but the person holding the award saw that it was engraved to _ M_ i_ m_ o_ s_ a, and Lan saw that when he took it, so Lan thought fast, stepped up to the podium, said he had no prepared speech, said "Thank you," and walked backstage. This seemed odd to people who knew Lan--he had speeches both times previous that he had won, and that he wouldn't have at least thanked Maia seemed unlikely. Therefore we suspected that the slide may have been right, and sure enough, after the next award, Lan came back out with the Hugo and Robinson announced there had been an error and _ M_ i_ m_ o_ s_ a was the winner. Could Dick and Nicki Lynch come up to the podium to receive their award? Well, Dick could, but Nicki had gone to the women's room and was unavailable. After another award or two, they announced a break to change the slide tray (actually I was told later it was so that the staff could frantically open all the envelopes to make sure the cards inside were correct), and the audience called for Nicki then, so she did finally get her moment of triumph.

How did this happen? Well, for reasons known only to the committee, they decided that the winner's names should be nicely calligraphed on fancy cards (in spite of the fact that only the master of ceremonies would see the cards). But the advance time for the cards was such that they had to have a card made up for each nominee--they had no way of knowing then who the winners would be. How the wrong card actually got in will remain a matter of speculation for years to come.

People observed that it was at least some consolation that the "wrong winner" had won a couple of Hugos already; having this happen in the other direction would have been much worse. And many people observed that had this happened in the semi-prozine category, it would have been quite entertaining no matter which direction it happened in. (Well, perhaps not to Charlie Brown and Andy Porter.) I observed to Lan later than he now could put "2.0000095-time Hugo winner" on his colophon, giving him the edge over those people who had won only precisely two times. And Lan received universal acclamation for being a real "class act" in his genuine enthusiasm and happiness in passing the award on to the winners. Many of us feel that ConFrancisco should present him with a special award for

"grace under pressure." (Laurie Mann thinks it should be named the "Coonskin Cap Award" after his trademark hat.) The most popular button of the following day among the nominees seemed to be "For all I know, I might have won a Hugo," made up by Brad Templeton of ClariNet. He also made one for Nancy Kress that said, "I lost the Hugo to Nancy Kress." And Connie Willis went around the next day talking about how she managed to lose bigger than any previous Hugo nominee.

The Gryphon Award was first given out at Noreascon 3 at the Hugo Awards ceremony there, with the excuse that Norton was a Guest of Honor, and she had apparently made a fuss when this award was originally scheduled to be presented at one of her panels or talks. Confiction and Chicon V moved it to the Alternate Awards ceremony, but MagiCon again found itself under pressure by Norton--the claim was she had given a lot of time and money to the convention, to which Nick Simicich responded, "How much do I have to pay to get to present my award for white male writers at the Hugo ceremonies?" (No answer was forthcoming.) The Gryphon Award is for the "Best Unpublished Fantasy Manuscript by a Woman" (who has had more than one piece published). Norton's rationale for this was that "the women" don't win as many awards, so this is needed. At Noreascon, C. J. Cherryh won the award for Best Novel and Connie Willis on for Best Novella. This year, Lois McMaster Bujold won for Best Novel and Nancy Kress for Best Novella. In fact, this year more than half the fiction nominees were women. So what on earth is this ridiculous award doing at the Hugo Award ceremony?! If the Libertarians and the Japanese and everyone else are presenting their awards at the Alternate Award ceremony, then Andre Norton should be also.

Samanda Jeude is one of the founders of Electrical Eggs.

The Hugo was designed by Phil Tortorici and includes a piece of the gantry from Launch Complex 26 at Cape Canaveral, from which Explorer 1 had been launched. Everyone agreed it was one of the best Hugo designs they had seen.

The Hugo Awards ceremony was preceded by a fifteen-minute slide show retrospective of fifty years of Worldcons. The slide show included pictures of program books, covers of Hugo-winning novels, photos of the guests of honor, and other remembrances and was produced by Scott Robinson and Sally Martin. Unlike the ceremony itself, the slide show was universally well-received. Well done! (One author commented that what he liked about it the best was that people were applauding the _ b_ o_ o_ k_ s!)

As far as my opinions on the awards, I have to say there is no

justice, or at least only partial justice. "Gold" clearly won because it was Asimov's final story--or people thought it was, though now I see there are one or two more still in the pipeline for

the magazines. It was the weakest in its category; Pat Cadigan's "Dispatches from the Revolution" absolutely blew it away in quality, but she was up against the sympathy vote. Oh, well, maybe her "Golden Boy" will take the Hugo next year (hint, hint). "A Walk in the Sun" seemed to win more because it was the only real hard science fiction short story than because of any great merit on its part. Connie Willis should have won at least one Hugo, given her strong placement in the nominations, and this would have been the category I would have chosen it in (for "In the Late Cretaceous"), because I also thought Nancy Kress's Hugo for "Beggars in Spain" was right on the money. (I must admit this was a strong year for short fiction.) And _ B_ a_ r_ r_ a_ y_ a_ r in the novel category is quite reasonable. As far as my opinions on the recipients, I have to say that Michael Whelan was as usual the most gracious--when he finished talking about how good all the other nominees were, you almost felt as if they had all won. Charlie Brown, on the other hand, was even more pompous than previously. He said that when he heard that he was nominated this year, he started to worry, but that turned out to be unnecessary. For those of us who are nominated and know that we have no chance of winning, the idea of worrying that one might not win strikes us as really egotistical.

Your mileage may vary.

(End of Part 2)