

Steven H Silver Presents

# ARGENTUS

Issue Two  
Summer 2002  
\$3 or the Usual



Mike Glycer  
Bart Kemper  
Fred Lerner  
Erik V. Olson  
Lloyd Penney  
Steven Pitluk  
Bill Roper

Rich Horton  
Guy H. Lillian III  
Cheryl Morgan  
Marc Ortlieb  
Joyce Scrivner

Sheryl Birkhead  
Kurt Erichsen  
Brad Foster  
Teddy Harvia  
Sue Mason  
Stu Shiffman

## From the Mine

Steven H Silver

Welcome to the second issue of *Argentus*. In the first issue, I noted that the magazine would be published irregularly, however, I can now state that it will appear once each year, although not always at the same time. Therefore, while the first issue was published in September 2001, the second issue is making its appearance in June 2002 (before the postal rates increase).

Despite Fandom's self-described open arms, Bart Kemper has discovered that our arms aren't necessarily as open as we would like to believe. Fred Lerner examines the need for owning books and re-reading them. A new fannish ghod is revealed for those who seek information. Lloyd Penney, twice winner of the Best Letterhack FAAn Award takes a look at the difference between the little known FAAn Awards and the more famous Hugo Fan Awards. Erik Olson eschews most of his footnotes to take a sobering look at New York City as it was during his visit over St. Patrick's Day. Bill Roper looks at opening day of what may be the final baseball season in Montreal. David Truesdale has provided the second part of his look at the state of SF magazines and short fiction. Mike Glycer reflects on playing cards with two of the too many members of fandom we've lost recently.

ish, I've undergone surgery, with me by reading my

Before reaching the mock to disagree violently or meekly issue. Enough people however, that I decided to go second issue (as is evident by

The mock section in this issue is a little thinner than the movie reviews published last year. As the first Worldcon to hit the 3,000 mark, Twincon, the Minneapolis Worldcon of 1973, apparently didn't gather too many fans who wrote con reports. However, we do have reports from members from Minneapolis, Australia, New Orleans and Britain, as well as Rich Horton's look at the Hugo nominees for fiction from that year and a listing of the eventual Hugo winners in those categories.

Before the next issue of *Argentus* is published in 2003, I plan to publish a thematic 'zine which will recount the experiences of a variety of fen on a similar variety of gameshows. If you are interested in receiving the 'zine (or want to suggest a title), please contact me.

I would like to ask the fan artists reading this to send in fillos and illos. I received some for this ish, but would like to build up a stock for future issues so I don't find myself scrabbling around for artwork.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who thought highly enough of my writing, either in fanzines or on-line, to nominate me, once again, for the Hugo Award.

Finally, although the layouts between the print edition of *Argentus* and the on-line .pdf version are slightly different, the material is exactly the same. ✱

*ARGENTUS* is published once a year by Steven H Silver. All submissions, letters or other correspondence should be directed to him at 707 Sapling Lane., Deerfield, IL 60015-3969 or e-mailed to shsilver@sfsite.com. Issues of *ARGENTUS* are available for \$5.00 or "the usual." The *Argentus* website can be found at <http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus.html>

Since the last time I pubbed an and you can suffer right along description of it.

section, you'll have a chance agree with response to my first provided positive feedback, ahead with plans to publish the what you are reading.)

From the Mine .....	1
The Unwelcoming Face of Fandom.....	2
A Rereader's Notebook .....	6
The Ghospel of Ghughle.....	7
Fan Awards – Fan, Pro & Con.....	8
Remaining Light.....	9
Thoughts on the State of Short Science Fiction (Part II) .....	11
Emmenez-moi au jeu de boule.....	14
Lifetime Positive.....	17
There and Back Again .....	19
Take Up the Fannish Burden .....	24
Letters or Correspondence.....	25
Mock Section: Twincon: Minneapolis Worldcon in 1973 .....	26
An Alternate List of Hugo Awards for 1973 .....	26
Somerset Schools Short Fiction Competition .....	28
By Zeppelin and Yak to Minneapolis and Back .....	29
Twincon – the moment that changed it all.....	31
Running Twincon .....	32

When the editor told me to jump into the space/time continuum, I responded.

With a hardy, "How high, Silver?"

### Artists

Sheryl Birkhead, Cover, 25  
Kurt Erichsen, 6, 30  
Brad W. Foster, 8, 15, 18,  
Teddy Harvia, 1  
Sue Mason, 19, 21, 24  
Stu Shiffman, 7



# ***The Unwelcoming Face of Fandom***

**Bart Kemper**

*I tried to fit in, but they wouldn't let me. They made fun of my questions and what I was wearing. They didn't know anything about what is really going on, just were in their own comfortable world. They didn't care what I liked or anything about me. It was one of the most miserable experiences of my life.*

To some, this may sound like a stereotypical fan's high school experience. If this was the case, then some well-meaning soul would be likely to suggest, "Go to a convention! They accept anyone and you'll have a great time." To others, this sounds like a summation of their first (or second, or more) experiences at a science fiction convention and how they were treated by True Fen.

## **AKICIF**

True Fen not only recognize the acronym AKICIF as All Knowledge Is Contained In Fandom, they are likely to believe it. Further, True Fen believe that unlike the Mundanes, Fandom is accepting of all beings regardless of race, creed, sexual preferences, political opinion, nationality, species, planet of origin, or any other denominator you care to mention. It's obvious to the casual observer that SF (not Sci-Fi) foretold all of today's advances, has a handle on tomorrow problems, and the knowledge and solutions are just there for the taking if someone would just listen to us.

These general attitudes were well-established, and for many equally tongue-in-cheek, when I discovered fandom living in NYC in the mid-1970's. I was an Army brat just moved from Germany, had been lost when finding myself in an insular Brooklyn parochial school, and then my dad took me to a con. I found a home of sorts. Trek cons and Creation cons were still independent of franchise-protecting corporations. The first echoes of Star Wars hadn't died and the first Star Trek movie was still a petition at the cons. Given fandom hasn't run a WorldCon that made everyone happy, perhaps some of these venerable attitudes may not be as absolute as they sound.

## **HISTORY**

The state of science fiction and fandom has changed drastically in the last few decades. Back in the "good old days," often referring to the speaker's happy discovery and entry into fandom rather than a universally recognized era, science fiction was marginalized. Few SF movies had a significant budget, and the movies that did do well did so despite the budget. TV was similarly constrained. Books were where all the good stuff was happening, and conventions abounded as places where people could, well, do fannish things. Most universities had active SF clubs and were fertile breeding grounds for lifelong convention goers, some of who later became Secret Masters of Fandom.

SMOFs were poked fun at in a Sept. 2001 *Salon* article, "Sex with Stormtroopers" by Annalee Newitz. Called 'an Illuminati-style group whose covert email lists control the con universe,' they are more accurately the people who care enough about conventions and fandom to volunteer their time and resources to organize and run them. Many have decades of experience in this field. They remember when it seemed no one really "got" SF, when conventions were populated by future-thinking young people (like themselves) and work very hard to carry these traditions forward today.

They look left and right within their ranks and see a pantheon of interests, persuasions, beliefs, and politics. While there were relatively few ethnic minorities, it wasn't because they weren't welcome. Women were always part of fandom and became co-owners of the subculture in the '60's. Fen had (and have) left leanings, right leanings, liberal leanings, gay, polyamorous, conservative, Judeo-Christian, pagan, atheistic, pacifistic, martial...just about every leaning, bent, and philosophy under the sun, all united in their love for science fiction, fantasy, and all that's connected to it.

So why are there those people, usually in their teens or 20's, who are lifelong SF enthusiasts, feel like they don't fit in the Mundane world, and yet still feel rejected by "fandom?"

## **WELCOME TO THE FRINGE**

One long-time fan who laments the current state of affairs stated to the effect, "When I was starting out I thought nothing of driving four or five hours with a car full of friends, sharing a hotel room with yet another car load of friends, volunteer at the con in hopes of getting at least a discount, and we had a great time. We sat at the feet of older fans, learned the stories and who the people in fandom were."

Other fen with similar time in fandom have different experiences, often lining up with their interests. The many sides of fandom and how it shades out to the ragged edge of the fringe was lampooned in the Geek Hierarchy Chart on the Brunching website at <http://www.brunching.com/features/geekhierarchy.html>. One person's central fan activity is another person's fringe.

Kathy Secor, who's fan name is "Aiglet", would seem to fit the classic definition of Fan. She reads novels (including the 1950's and 1960's works), has been known to filk, and has even dumped her energies into running several small, grass-roots conventions at her university ([www.noncon.net](http://www.noncon.net)) in Poughkeepsie, New York. She hasn't seen that welcoming face of fandom yet.

"I aspire to someday join the great community known as fandom. It should be great—it's a whole group of people who ought to understand what its like to be a social outcast for one's hobbies, and who should be able to intelligently discuss allegory in *The Lord of the Rings*."

"Unfortunately, I will forever be debarred from it by certain people because I participate in what are known as the dreaded 'fringe fandoms.'"

This appears to be the crux of being welcomed. Whereas once just reading "that weird stuff" put you on the fringe, whether everyone likes the idea or not SF is now "respectable." SF novels are routinely found in the top selling lists. The top two grossing movies in world-wide ticket sales are "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (US\$926.1M) and "Star Wars: Episode 1: The Phantom Menace" (US\$922.8) as of Feb. 19, 2002, both of which are projected to sink "Titanic"'s US\$1.8B in gross leads. SF on TV has exploded and is now a staple on broadcast and cable. Media-derived books have made some viewers into readers, although reportedly at some cost to original fiction writers due to the finite amount of resources in the publishing industry.

"When the going gets weird, the weird go pro" may not have been coined for the SF industry, but it fits. Science fiction didn't go mainstream, but with the space race, followed by the computer revolution, followed by exponential growth and infusion of technology in almost every walk of life, the old "fictions" were catching up and sometimes overtaking real life. SF can be found taught in high schools and universities. It won the war for acceptance. Now what?

By extension, the "fan establishment" has become precisely that—established. What was once "the fringe" became mainstream. New fringe interests formed and have garnered fans in increasing numbers. Established fans have debated, without full consensus, on what are "real fans", whether a given gathering is a "real convention," and otherwise try to exclude those on the fringes. Part of this is a realistic look at the dynamics of a convention—you can't please everyone. Given finite resources of time, rooms, and money, you can't cover the entire gamut that a Mundane would consider "that weird science fiction stuff."

"I Don't think that fandom  
is so much accepting as  
mildly apathetic"

David Klecha

In and of itself, the decision to exclude some aspects of the SF universe does not seem to be what raises barriers. Even within traditional fandom there are "readercons," "relaxicons," and other more focused events. The issue is often the active, even forcible rejection of clearly sfinal or fantastic works and activities as essentially unworthy for consideration. Animé, gaming, and television-based works and their derived novels are often the dividing line that some of the establishment will not cross.

Coincidentally, these interests were not available or significant in numbers in the 1960's and 1970's as they are now. Coincidentally, there are complaints of "illiteracy," "apathy," and "lack of wonder and respect for the old/real works" by the establishment. Coincidentally, SF has often attracted those who are forward thinking, especially in terms of technology and society, and are on the edges of the mainstream, giving the newly attracted a different datum than those entering fandom 20 or 30 years ago. Coincidentally, there are complaints by the high school and college students of exclusion and rejection when they try to participate in conventions or become involved in fandom. Coincidentally, this energy not going into traditional cons are going into new cons or other activities such as websites and festivals.

There seems to be a lot of coincidents.

"Go to any convention that's been run long enough that media Fans are still youngsters and you will see a divide," said Kelly Beranger of Lafayette, Indiana who has attended local cons as well as the 2000 WorldCon in Chicago. "Anecdotally I find media Fans to me more friendly, open, and polite. I find enough literature Fans to be downright offensive in their false sense of superiority at times. I'm both. I arrived at media fandom through book fandom (with a small f)."

Trying to balance a con's content is not a simple task. As traditional fandom remains less interested in fringe activities, similarly many of the younger fans look for venues that will give them the collection of interests, discussion, and activities that appeal to them. Student-related cons typically have a content distinct from the more established cons.

"NonCon became labeled incorrectly an 'animé-based' because it has the media programming (the students want,)" said Secor.

"This year I've taken a lot of guff from my con committee trying to explain to them that we *can't* run so much animé because we'll lose older fen over it, no matter how much other stuff we're running or which authors we get."

## FEN ARE PEOPLE, TOO. UNFORTUNATELY.

Before running cons Secor had seen new convention goers reduced to tears by thoughtless or hateful statements of apparently more established convention goers, usually by wearing a costume or asking a question obviously marking them as, well, a new fan. When she mentioned this on a convention-running email list many of the reactions ranged from concluding the new fan in question was overly sensitive or had misunderstood the intent of the speaker to falling just short of accusing Secor of lying. "Fandom accepts all," therefore the fault must be the interloper's.

"What's the use of questioning why younger people aren't joining your community if the very things that might pull them in are considered to be anathema to it," she said.

"Fen, like many other 'closed' groups, don't perceive how they're seen by people who aren't one of them," said "M", who declined further identification precisely because of such experiences. "Hurtful comments get made without the

commenters realizing that they're hurtful. 'Secret handshakes' get formulated, and woe betide the poor mundane (or newbie) who doesn't 'get it.'"

Granted, this is not the rule, but my own observations confirm an ossification in the established fandom's mindset. Many are comfortable with what "has always been" (despite it looks much different than the cons before the 1960's) and see no reason to add to it, especially at the possible expense to what is already in place. It seems now a new person has to prove themselves worthy before being allowed into a conversation, whereas my rose-tinted memories recall being a nerdy kid being asked my opinion or invited to pull up a chair. For a new fan a lot depends on that first contact.

"(Fandom) comprises every type of mindset from *Farnham's Freehold* to *The Dispossessed* to Draka rules," said Jeff Parker of Omaha, Nebraska "As such, the welcoming face depends on many factors: Who was the person you talked to? Where and when (in the middle of a session? Just when they met long missed friends, etc); How socially competent are you? (I insulted their costume and thought that was a good way to start a conversation)."

"In my experience, fans are like any other segment of the population," said "Topacha," a San Francisco-based fan who has gone to many local, regional, and Worldcons. "Some can be unprejudiced and others are some of the most closed-minded people I have ever met.

"Interestingly, I think that those who are closed-minded are primarily those who come out of their closets only at con time and are extremely socially challenged or those who are so smart in one or more aspect they believe their thoughts and opinions are the only ones that matter or could be right," she said. "I think fans who are open are those who are comfortable with themselves."

"Fandom is accepting, but not welcoming," said Scott Raun of Minneapolis, Minnesota. "It's a problem Minn-StF (the Minnesota Science Fiction Society, Inc, [www.mnstf.org](http://www.mnstf.org)) has been going through for years.

"We will accept just about anyone. Unfortunately, when J. Random NewFan walks in the door, *he* has to be pushy - we don't try to make space for him in the conversation, we don't invite him on dinner expeditions, etc. If he asks if he can join in, we'll usually take him on—but that's something *he* does."

"I don't think that fandom is so much accepting as mildly apathetic," said David Klecha, a Grand Rapids, Michigan fan and convention goer who as a Marine infantryman as well as a college student has gained additional perspective regarding subcultures, acceptance, and stereotypes. "In more noble moments, I think people are more apt to say that yes, fandom is all-welcoming because they themselves want to feel and be all welcoming.

"The 'normal' folk of society who have marginalized the freaks, geeks, fanboys and nerds that form the majority of fen. Some of us are bitter in our dealings with them, and some of us are afraid of being ridiculed again. It's nice to be in charge for a change, even if just in our own little community.

"In a way we create an environment hostile to those who are curious or marginal or somewhat interested," Klecha said. "If you doubt that fandom can be hostile to 'normal' folk, just look at the word we use for them. 'Mundane.' It helps create an unwelcoming elite. The term says, 'You're not welcome unless you're one of us.' Until a new person somehow proves themselves to be part of the tribe, they are kept on the outside."

"Collapsing in on ourselves, we gain strength with regards to the outside world. We hang together in community so that we don't hang separately in a world hostile to freaks and geeks. Yet we have all the problems associated with a heterogeneous community. People thrown together for common interest in the progressive world of speculative fiction often find themselves in bed with some very strange fellows indeed. While an individual, meat-eating, Roman Catholic, heterosexual male might not have any trouble, on an individual basis, with a vegetarian, bisexual Wiccan female, either one confronted with grouping represented by the other may find him or herself unwelcome.

"This may not mean fandom itself is unwelcoming, but as with almost any community, it can be devilishly cliquish," Klecha said.

"I will forever be debarred from [joining fandom] by certain people because I participate in what are known as the dreaded 'fringe fandoms'."

✍Kathy Secor

## MEET THE NEW CON, SAME AS THE OLD CON

Some cons, such as OryCon, successfully draw in an active younger fan base. Gaming, animé, media-based panels, and nightly rock dances join equally the bevy of notable authors, science panels, lit panels, signings, costuming, and other "traditional" activities. While Worldcons and many other "traditional" cons do have these items, they often do not give the fringe activities a lot of time on the panels or space in the rooms.

Part of this is in recognition the larger regional and international cons have a far greater proportion of older fans with more time and money than many fans under 30. Programming has to develop a con that reflects these interests. However, there are also those within the traditional convention runners that can explain in detail how these other people aren't "real fans" and it would be better to have a smaller, even shrinking convention than to include these other interests that "have as much relation to real science fiction as pop music has to real music."

Other cons have developed to meet these interests. Not counting the corporate run conventions as the very act of a corporate-controlled convention negates about every definition of "fan activity" I've run across, there are animé conventions

such as Dallas's A-Kon, gaming conventions such as GenCon, media-heavy cons like Dragon\*Con, and for the lack of a better term, general fringe gatherings such as Atlanta's Fantasm, an adult-oriented con that embraces many of the elements of science fiction and fantasy passed over in other venues.

In some ways Fantasm underlines the rift in fandom. In the 1960's and 1970's reports indicate various amounts of nudity, avant-garde sexual mores rejecting mainstream values, interest in developing media, and active interest in bleeding edge technology and radical politics were much more common in major conventions, including WorldCon. Coincidentally, many of the people going to these conventions were college students or recent graduates.

At the 2001 WorldCon, held in Philadelphia, an attractive young woman wore an outfit made exclusively of linked quarters as part of the masquerade. Not only did some older fen lament she was likely to be the only person in the 4000 in attendance to be so daringly attired, they commented on how such adventuresome costumes had been far more frequent in the past. More telling was the number of older fen acting mildly shocked and remarking how she "must be immature or stupid to not realize how she is being viewed." It seems its not that the traditional conventions have changed because of new people, but rather they have changed because it has largely the same people who have changed over the years.

Fantasm ([www.fantasm.org](http://www.fantasm.org)), like all conventions, is open to anyone who wants to attend. Unlike most it is not open to members under 18. The majority of attendees are under 30. From what the organizers report most attendees are SF fans and even readers, but from the description of the panels and guests some of their activities would not be welcome at a modern WorldCon. Sexuality, bleeding-edge technology, non-traditional beliefs and social practices, media-related SF, and activist social commentary are brought front and center instead of a panel or two buried within 7 tracks on a five day schedule. These interests echo developments in other venues can even been seen on broadcast TV and in features on MTV, showing this is not an isolated slice of fandom or the age group in general. In many ways the fannish drive behind this convention are more closely related to the younger iterations of now-venerable cons. However, even a fresh con with a new slice of fandom is not all-welcoming.

"Many fans (under 30) have had Christianity shoved down their throats all their lives," said Bonnie Heath, a journalist and part of Fantasm's concom. "Many of them have negative feelings toward Christians.

"I have also seen people looked down upon by fans for having a mundane appearance," she said. "If someone doesn't look like part of our 'tribe' they are often not included in our reindeer games. There does seem to be a general disdain for people who are not part of an alternative lifestyle."

"Fandom is accepting, but not welcoming."

✍ Scott Raun

## FINDING THE MIDDLE GROUND

There is no union or certification to be a fan. While there are groups of like-minded people that have formed an agreement of sorts as to what a "fan" is, it is primarily self-identification. Regardless of what even a conchair thinks of your fannish credentials, you'll be allowed to buy a membership at the next WorldCon. Odds are you will even find like-minded people WorldCon, just perhaps not in concom just yet. It would be great if all cons would be truly welcoming to each person, without fault or misunderstanding, but human nature can interfere with even the best intentions.

A lot of this issue resides in perspective. I haven't been around as long as many of the con runners have, and I'm certainly not as active in the fannish or professional communities as many are. On the other hand, I grew up devouring my dad's stash of books by Doc Smith, Asimov, and Heinlein, have vague recollection of Star Trek in its original run, vivid recollections of that first Imperial Star Destroyer passing over my head in the theatres, cannot understand the phrase "I have too many books" except in terms of what you can physically carry, and have been a panelist or staff at a few dozen conventions, including twelve WorldCons.

Based on list traffic, commentary, and my own observations the last decade has seen a growth in interests that do not coincide with traditional fandom, at least on the face of it. Further, the younger fen have interests that have either already been explored by older fen or weren't around when older fen were entering fandom and therefore do not fit the image of what fandom should be for some. I'm speaking in general trends and know there are many exceptions.

It will be interesting to see what speculative interests of the younger fen will tweak the sensibilities of the "established fen" in 30 years. In the mean time there will be a continued dynamic of too many interests to fit in any one convention and not enough time for everyone to explore them all. This issue is nothing new to established convention runners, the fringe fans, and everyone in between.

If changing a program to draw in 15 new people drives off 50 regulars, a convention will not purposely make that change. However, if the dynamics become you will gain 500 new members at the cost of 50 regular members and everyone else is relatively happy, or at least apathetic, then it could happen. Fandom changes, too fast for some and not fast enough for others. I tried to bring some fresh voices and perspectives to the issue, but in the end how "welcoming" it is will still come down to that individual the new fan runs into and those first few exchanges.

Mike Resnick is not only a multiple Hugo and Nebula award winner, he is a Fan. As a long time convention goer he has competed in and won WorldCon masquerade events, written for fanzines, hosted parties, participated in panels, and in general is personally as well as professionally part of science fiction and fandom. When asked about fandom and how welcoming it is, he eloquently summed it up: "The best thing about fandom is that it is so tolerant. The worst thing about fandom is that it has so much to be tolerant of." ✱

## A Rereader's Notebook

Fred Lerner

**T**here are three reasons to buy books: to have them, to read them, and to reread them. Over the past forty years these three motivations have succeeded one another in governing my collecting habits.

When I was younger, I bought books for the pleasure of owning them. I felt a sense of security in being able to find whatever information I needed without leaving the house. That was the goal, but of course I never came near reaching it. How could I, blessed with a fan's typically wide range of interests — and those constantly refreshed by reading science fiction?

A fifteen-dollar thrift-shop *Encyclopaedia Britannica* marked the formal end of that phase of my book collecting career, but of course I had come to my senses long before. For two decades I've had access to more than a million books, less than five miles away. I can search the Dartmouth College Library catalog from my home or workplace, and even determine whether the book I want is likely to be on its shelf were I to go to Hanover to fetch it.

That takes care of most of my reading interests, but I've never found a library whose science fiction collection was large enough to support my habit, nor one that I could rely upon to keep SF titles available permanently. So, like most of us, I've become accustomed to buying my science fiction rather than borrowing it. My SF collection is a haphazard one, containing books that I know I like, or that I thought I might like, or that someone convinced me that I *should* like. It also contains quite a few books that I can't imagine that I ever shall like, nor ever understand why I got them in the first place.

Why don't I weed these books out, and create some shelf space for books I really do like? I can't do *that*: I might want them someday.

writer, another Keith Gentle, whose works entirety. Or perhaps a longtime convince me to try taste wouldn't lead

The true reader, rereader, the person more than one serving With the help of can revisit Cervantes if one's last reading of during freshman year. guidance there is meaning to be teased Disch story. And which one can *Lolita* and *Dhalgren*.

There are some reread every five or how what I've learned

changed what I get out of them. This is the traditional reason for rereading the classics, but it applies to our literature as well. The novels of Poul Anderson and John Crowley improve with age; and I can better appreciate *Silverlock* with the progress of my own explorations of the Commonwealth of Letters.

There's the pleasure of aimless rereading, of reveling for a chapter or a page or whatever time permits in the byways of Malacia or the palaces of Zimiamvia. There are favorite passages from *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Soldier of the Great War* that give me great satisfaction without the need for rereading all of the immense books from which they come.

And there's the purposeful rereading that one undertakes after some experience that will change one's approach to the text. I enjoyed Tomasi di Lampedusa's portrait of aristocratic life in nineteenth-century Sicily. Should I ever visit Sicily I am sure I would enjoy *The Leopard* all the more. Every reading of *Kim* offers a new facet of one of the best-realised environments in imaginative fiction — the alien world of India. Think what I might find in that book when someday I make my own trip along the Grand Trunk Road.

Winter evenings are long in Vermont, and on many of them you will find me sitting in my rocking-chair, a wee drop of the creature at my side, rereading one of my favorites. And on summer afternoons you'll find me in the dappled shade of our backyard, with a cup of strong dark coffee and a well-loved book. As one grows older, old books like old friends become ever more dear.\*



I've got is made as an SF writer - I'm  
trademarking "Outer Space."

Perhaps I'll discover a Roberts or Mary I want to read in their newly-made friend or correspondent will something my own me to.

of course, is the who is able to extract of delight from a text. Vladimir Nabokov one with profit, especially *Don Quixote* occurred Under Chip Delany's layer upon layer of out of a modest Tom consider the ways in profitably reread

books that I need to ten years, just to see during that time has

# The Ghospel of Ghughle

Steven H Silver

In the beginning all was black and bleak and none could see. <sup>2</sup>And a purple ghlow arose in the darkness. <sup>3</sup>On August 6, 1935, a new age dawned as the ghod Ghu was proclaimed. <sup>4</sup>And DAW looked upon it and acclaimed it ghood. <sup>5</sup>But Ghu, it turned out, was a divisive ghod and soon many in the land looked elsewhere for their beliefs and for deliverance from Ghu.

<sup>6</sup>Three long years passed with the tyranny of Ghu being felt by the many. <sup>7</sup>A cry went out from the swamps of the Okefenokee and a Speercarrier appeared to pronounce the coming of a new deity. <sup>8</sup>Thus was revealed FooFoo, the ghod of mimeography. <sup>9</sup>And he was looked upon and seen as ghood.

<sup>10</sup>Eons passed and came another ghod to the realm of fandom.

<sup>11</sup>In the pages of *Spacewarp* did Art Rapp announce the arrival of Roscoe, whose birth is celebrated by all fans each year come Labor Day. <sup>12</sup>The cult of Roscoe spread throughout the world and was embraced by many. And the years of Roscoe were ghreat in number.

<sup>13</sup>The world changed, however, and the mundanes recognized the coming of the millennium, twice. <sup>14</sup>Fans were no longer connected by only the letter columns and the holy writings of fanzines. <sup>15</sup>A strange creation appeared known as Internet. <sup>16</sup>With Internet arose new cries and acronyms. <sup>16</sup>And with Internet and the coming of the true millennium, a new ghod was born.

A summons was sent from the City of the Holy Arch to meet on a hill of roses in the shadows of the tarmac that was once an orchard to discuss the birthday celebrations of Capricious, the ghoad\*. <sup>2</sup>And this summons was answered by followers of Capricious as well as those who knew the ways of the Duck or were known as the Blowhards. <sup>3</sup>In this new era, a connection was made to the voice of Internet so queries could be made to the hive mind and answers received.

<sup>4</sup>And a request went forth seeking knowledge. <sup>5</sup>And the disciple named Silver saw the light of lore and proclaimed that the request be addressed to the Ghreat Ghod Ghughle, Phont of AKICIF. <sup>6</sup>Thus was born a ghod for the new millennium. <sup>7</sup>And the assembled saw Ghughle and knew He was ghood.

<sup>8</sup>But there was dissent even from those earliest moments, and a heretic arose in the midst of those ghathered at the birth of the sentient Ghughle. <sup>9</sup>There were some who did not recognize His name.

<sup>10</sup>Yet even those who knew not the true name of Ghughle knew of His power and helped spread the word. <sup>11</sup>And Internet became a powerful carrier of His message. <sup>12</sup>In the mystical lands of the East, the disciple Teresa recognized Ghughle by his symbol, the most holy asterisk.

And Ghughle ghathered around Him His initial disciples. <sup>2</sup>They numbered XIII in number. <sup>3</sup>Silver, Erik the First, Erik the Later, Teresa, Eloise, Herrup, Bill of Fermi, Kare, Kip the Singer, Philip Chee, Ross Smith, Cally, Shiffman the Painter, and DDB were their numbers. <sup>4</sup>These disciples spread the word throughout the land of the coming of the new Ghod. <sup>5</sup>As his believers grew in number, Ghughle took His fannish form. <sup>6</sup>To honor Ghughle's birth, Kip the Singer wrote a paeon to His worship.

<sup>7</sup>Their houses are libraries, <sup>8</sup>Their best friends, dictionaries, <sup>9</sup>Their god, the ghod of queries, <sup>10</sup>The SF Family\*\*.

The Ghreat Ghod Ghughle is a patient ghod. <sup>2</sup>He knows that compared to Roscoe and Ghu and FooFoo he is but an egg. <sup>3</sup>Now that He has made His presence known, He would allow those who would worship Him find Him of their own accord. <sup>4</sup>Any who seek knowledge, need only address Him through Internet and he will provide all the knowledge of the hive mind. <sup>5</sup>For He is truly the Phont of AKICIF.\*\*\* <sup>6</sup>The Ghreat Ghod Ghughle accepts all who come to Him despite the error of their ways prior to their discovery of Him. <sup>7</sup>For He knows that knowledge is the true importance and He welcomes all who seek it.\*



The Ghreat Ghod Ghughle  
Phont of AKICIF  
Patron of Librarians and Researchers

\* Capricorn XXII

\*\* Posted to Usenet on October 11, 2001.

\*\*\* All Knowledge Is Contained In Fandom



## Fan Awards – Fan, Pro & Con

by Lloyd Penney

The body of fan communications through fanzines, listservs and other methods touches on myriad topics. Any given topic will start reactions ranging from gentle and friendly conversations to flame wars and feuds, and few topics feed those flames more than fan awards.

The best-known fan awards are the fan Hugos, the main source of contention, or whine and bitch, if you prefer. What do we say about them? The most common complaint is that it's nothing but a popularity contest. The same people nominate the same people, year in, year out. Even with the numbers of those participating in the Hugo nominating and final voting, there isn't a true cross-section of voters exercising their paid-for franchise. And who says we want a cross-section of voters, anyway? There are so many people nominated, there's no real consensus on who's the "best". It's all so subjective. With great respect to Dave Langford, the same person's been winning it for more than a decade; does it mean anything to other fans any more? Does it mean the same to Dave? The distribution of fan Hugo ballots is limited to those who are members of the Worldcon, and not necessarily to everyone involved in fanzines. Worldcons are getting less and less affordable each year, as we know. Are those fan Hugos getting less and less representative each year?

We seem to prefer the FAAn Awards, specific for those of us in the fanzine field. We vote on them because we care about fan publishing. The voting represents those of us who know what we're voting about. It's an award voted upon and given to you by your peers, like a Nebula. You don't need to be a member of a convention, club or any other organization to vote for the FAAns. Many feel they mean much more than the fan Hugos. It's given out yearly for a variety of categories of fanzine involvement, from best fan writer and fan artist to the best letterhack.

But...in our own neo days, which we often conveniently forget, when we were reading pulps and anthologies, and learning all about those conventions called Worldcons, and the wonderful awards given out there called Hugos, those sleek, silvery rocketships with the wooden bases, they seemed almost legendary, won by those equally legendary authors you read and revered. Then there was the revelation that not only could those revered authors win those fabulous trophies, but a fan could, too, and perhaps we dared to aspire to some of that Hugo greatness ourselves. Later on, as we learned to honour fannish traditions and history, we saw the Hugos as one of the most honoured. They've been given out for nearly 50 years,

with the 50th Hugos to be given out next year at Torcon 3. There are few traditions in fandom that have such a long life. We hold those awards in such high esteem, the results are spread out through the fannish press (Locus, SFChronicle, many others, fanzines, fannish websites, listservs, chatrooms, etc.) almost immediately.

The FAAn Awards? They were revived some years ago, but were forgotten for some time. They've been revived, IMHO, because of dissatisfaction with the fan Hugos. Some years, they seem to have the same distribution problems the Hugo awards do. Not everyone who is involved gets that ballot (not that there's a fanzine fandom membership list used for mailing...), so it may be very subjective, too. And if one of the FAAn Awards is for Number One Fanface, doesn't that also include some kind of popularity contest? Also, why does it take forever to find out who won the awards if we prefer these awards to the Hugos?

Can't most awards be construed as popularity contests? Don't you nominate someone whom you feel has not only been the best in his field in that year, but whom you feel has been overlooked in past years? As such a contest, is the award fairly given? Is the fix in most times? (Ah, you've been watching the Olympics, too...)

Either you're agreeing with me, or I'm getting you angry. (Mission accomplished either way.) I suspect that these awards have more in common than we'd like to think. What do awards do for us?

Most of us have strong enough egos to say that awards aren't necessary, and that we do what we do because we love to do it, and enjoy our participation. Yet, as sure of ourselves as we are, it does feel good to have someone agree with you, that yes, someone else thinks you're doing a good job, too. We need that validation. That award might be a big chunk of metal and wood, a plaque or cup or medallion, or maybe just a ribbon or paper certificate, but we treasure it, and we keep it forever. It shows that we made a mark, set a standard and achieved something, and that your peers thought

IT'S A PROVEN FACT-  
SIX OUT OF FIVE  
PEOPLE HAVE TROUBLE  
UNDERSTANDING  
FRACTIONS!



that what you did was worthy of recognition. Besides, as we have often realized, sometimes, the greatest praise you can receive from fellow fans is silence. Here's a quote from a loc I wrote for another fanzine...

"I think many fans campaign for fan awards, even if a vocal number of them say that it's nothing but a popularity contest. I know why pros campaign for Hugos...having won one can help boost book sales. Why do fans campaign for them? Feelgood, self-confidence and perhaps a boost for their self-esteem." As another letter writer called it, warm fuzzies.

Perhaps our choice of Hugo or FAAn award depends on who we feel our peers are. Are they fanzine fandom or fandom as a whole? Depends on who you want your award from, I suppose. As said before, it's all so subjective. We write for ourselves, but...do you write for the vague subset of fannish fanzines alone? Do you write for your club's zine, or other clubzines? Do you write for your friends? Do you write for non-SF zines? Or, all of the above? Do you want only your fanzine peers to give you an award, or should that award come from everyone you write for, or from everyone who might read what you write? (This also might attempt to define what fanzine fandom is, but that's another article, and I don't think there's any winning that argument. There's that subjective thing again.)

(I'll poke a sharp stick into this discussion...there are other fan awards that aren't necessarily for writing. There's the Rebel/Rubble Awards in the southern states, two fan Aurora Award categories in Canada, non-writing fan awards in Australia and probably elsewhere. Many of these awards are voted upon by the general fannish populace in their region or country. Would they prefer to have only their peers vote on the award given? Their numbers aren't that many. For them, ALL fans are their peers. I think many of us feel the same way.)

Both Fan Hugo and FAAn awards have tradition and value, and self-validation, pride and achievement for the winner. When was the last time you heard of one being refused? (Nah, didn't think so.) If you are in the rare position of receiving an award for your fannish achievements, take it, smile, say thank you, and bask in the reflected egoboo. I'm sure you'll agree, no one gets enough of it these days. ✱

## **Remaining Light.**

**Reflection On Friends, Hopes, and Fears In New York City, March 2002.**

**Erik V. Olson**

*I t's St. Patrick's Day, and I'm standing under towers of light, leaping upwards to the clouds above. Battery Park. New York City. You can still smell the dust, and the smoke, and the tinge of organics that tells of those gone. A police officer, with a look that clearly says he never wanted to see it all, stands guard at a gate. Teresa walks up, "How's it going?" "Okay. They're still digging. They're still finding bodies." We nod, walk away, I turn, and see two towers of light, leaping to the sky. Following them up, a flash of light – an aircraft flies through the beam, glowing, fading. New York City goes on.<sup>1</sup>*

Six months, five days, from when it all went wrong. I'd caught a cheap fare, and decided to go see friends in NYC. I wanted to see people I cared about, who I still fear for after September, even though I've talked to them dozens of times since that day. Words in pixels and noises over wires just didn't seem real – I needed to see people.

I needed to see New York.

I'd heard of the Towers of Light at the same time everyone else did – from the New York Times Magazine cover. Float a battery of lights, pointed up, into the East River, and, for a while, replace what was gone – fill a gaping hole in the sky. Let the twin towers reach for the heavens again, to remember all that was lost.

It was a perfect idea – and, it was possible. Plans changed, of course. The current memorial sits in Battery Park, just southwest of the World Trade Center. The outline of light is smaller than the towers were, but the spacing is the same. On a clear night, they can be seen for miles around. They can be seen from the entire city. It seems they can be seen forever.

*Sunday morning. Patrick and I are headed to Midtown. Patrick locks the door, steps out down the hill to 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, and speaks.*

*"You know, one day, I stood on the porch, and realized that I could see the top of the Trade towers – from right in front of my house. I thought that was really neat, and I was looking forward to showing everybody."*

*"Of course, that was on September 10<sup>th</sup>."*

*Later that night, as I see the ghosts of the Towers reaching skywards, I understood what Patrick really meant.*

---

<sup>1</sup> No, not dozens of footnotes this time. Steven asked me to write some more, to try and ease this piece. Re-reading it a week or so later, I realize he's got a point. Unfortunately, I really can't. It was written, for the most part, on the flight home, and I really just don't have the heart or nerve to touch it. A different me, it seems, wrote it, and I just don't have the willingness to edit him.

Copyediting, however, is another matter. In the first draft, I'd gotten east and west mixed up, which had the effect of putting Brooklyn in New Jersey. I'm not sure who I offended more.

Flying into LaGuardia, on a straight in approach to Runway 4, I look out my window. We're flying over Brooklyn – over Park Slope, over Grand Army Plaza, into Queens. Out the window, a steady promenade – New Jersey, then, as we dip further below the clouds, New York Harbor. Staten Island, with the ferries crossing back and forth, Liberty Island, with her torch still held high, then, Manhattan.

If you had never seen it before, it looked perfectly normal – a grand view of one of the world's grandest cities.

If you had....

I think back to the last time I saw the World Trade Center. Flying out of LaGuardia at sunset, the May before. Looking back over the whole island, lit in warm golden light. There, at the far end, the Towers, held high above the southern tip. It was a magical moment. I swore I'd go there next time back, go up, and see the exact opposite view – the skies of New York.

But you can't climb light. You can only wonder at it.

*Sunday afternoon, in the American Museum of Natural History. Laird and I talk about various things, mostly geek, as Patrick tries to call Teresa. We're standing in the Atwood Rotunda, looking out over Central Park and Midtown, while various children, including Laird's daughter Emma, run around in circles.*

*"So, you're office is in the Alley?"*

*"No. We're down on Wall Street. It still doesn't seem right. I don't know if it ever will."*

*"Yeah. I had a friend – a Sun FE. They had him here, just after, trying to get all these financial companies back online. He said he'll never sleep the same again."*

*"I wish he was wrong."*

The city goes on. The N & R trains are running through to Manhattan again. The museums are full of people. The planes still dance through the skies of the five boroughs and beyond. Lady Liberty still stands her vigil. A new mayor is at the helm, and New York continues to move at the frantic pace it's famed for.

But the images linger – and the memorials still compel.

*Sunday evening. We pass from Battery Park, through Three World Financial Center, into the public plaza beyond. To the west, the Hudson River and New Jersey. To the east, the damaged but not destroyed atrium and Winter Garden. Just beyond, Ground Zero.*

*We walk along the riverfront. During the summer, it's packed with New Yorkers, but on this chilly evening, it's quiet. At the end, another memorial.*

*Hundreds of law enforcement symbols, hats, badges, notes, letters. This memorial is by police, for police. We walk around the corner, and another memorial, carved in marble.*

*"This can't be from September 11<sup>th</sup>," says Patrick, and he's correct. It's the memorial wall for the NYPD. Engraved is the name of every officer who fell in the line of duty. Two panels remain blank.*

*Patrick has walked ahead, as he is wont to do. Teresa lags behind, as she's fated to do. Neither hear. "I don't think there's enough wall."*

Nobody knows what the future will bring. Right now, the Towers of Light are temporary. No one is sure just what form a permanent memorial should take. Nobody's sure what anything is anymore.

But New York goes on – as it must. Buildings rise and fall, people live and die. It is what happens when you live in real time.

I saw what I came to saw. Not the gaps in the skyline, though I knew I would. Not the Towers of Light, though I knew I couldn't avoid them.

I saw people. In the final account, they are all that matter.

*Juliette and I are standing near the dinosaurs.*

*"Rose was half that size last year."*

*"Yeah. They grow so fast. And no jokes about the cliché."*

*"Me? Never."*

*"Right."*

*"How's raising kids in Manhattan working out?"*

*"It's working. It's different. Others have done it though, so it's not impossible." A moment of silence.*

*"I'm really glad you came."*

So am I.

My plane taxis out, rolls down Runway 13, takes off. A quick turn to the right sets our course westerly. Just before we hit the low cloud deck, I see two lances of light, reaching skyward, carrying the hopes and fears of all New York to the skies.

I hope, and fear, I will never see something like them again.

March 18, 2002 \*

## Thoughts on the State of Short Science Fiction (Part II)

David A. Truesdale

Last time, while attempting to answer an online statement by a would-be short story writer that it is harder to break in to the field today due to the dwindling number of professionally paying markets, we began with a brief examination of recently deceased print magazines, and the ails that afflicted the surviving magazines, with a promise to prove, this time around, that there are actually more professionally paying markets than almost ever before.

Today, in the print magazine field (counting U.S. and Canadian publications only), there are no less than sixteen (16!) print publications (sf/f/h) offering at least 3 cents per word (the SFWA minimum as but one of its criteria for a professional magazine). While several of these magazines do not meet one or more of SFWA's other criteria, they do meet the SFWA standard for a professionally paying magazine.

And then there are magazines like *Playboy* which, while not a genre magazine, has published many genre stories over the years. It offers \$2,000-\$5,000 per story. *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* also prints borderline sf/f on occasion. It offers 7 cents per word.

Outside the U.S. a few there are British sf quarterly offers 4-5 cents per *Alternative* (also offers 4 cents per UK monthly approximately 4-5 due to the exchange dollars).

Narrowing the print magazines, professionally paying current time.

exclude the long-*Sword & Sorcery* and

Nowhere in the there been more genre short fiction

And this total all of the new e-some of which do SFWAs criteria for a including obviously

These magazines are (listed alphabetically):

1. *Absolute Magnitude* (recently raised its pay rate from 3-7 to 7-10 cents per word, making it the highest paying genre print market)
2. *Adventures of Sword & Sorcery* (6 cents per word, but has been idle for a long time)
3. *Analog* (5-8 cents per word)
4. *Artemis* (3-5 cents per word)
5. *Asimov's* (5-8 cents per word)
6. *Black Gate* (6 cents per word)
7. *Black October* (3 cents per word)
8. *Brutarian* (10 cents per word)
9. *Cemetery Dance* (3-5 cents per word)
10. *Century* (4 cents per word, but idle for some time)
11. *Dragon Magazine* (8 cents per word)
12. *Horror Garage* (\$100-\$200 per short story, which works out to the minimum payrate)
13. *F&SF* (5-7 cents per word)
14. *On Spec* (3 cents per word)
15. *Realms of Fantasy* (4-8 cents per word)
16. *Weird Tales* (3-6 cents per word)

and Canada (just to name magazines like the new *Spectrum SF*, which word, *The Third* from the UK, which word), and the longtime *Interzone*, which offers cents per word (it varies rate from pounds to

focus to North American there are sixteen genre markets at the Fourteen if you wish to dormant *Adventures of Century*. preceding fifty years have professionally paying magazine markets. fails to take into account markets for short fiction, indeed meet all of professional publication, the pay rate.

At this time, SFWA recognizes four online magazines as "professional." They are *Sci Fiction* (edited by Ellen Datlow, offering 20 cents per word), *Strange Horizons* (edited by Jed Hartman, offering 4 cents per word), *Speculon* (edited by Timothy Cooper, offering 3-5 cents per word), and *Gothic.net* (offering 5 cents per word).

Other online genre magazines paying professional rates include, *Chiaroscuro* (3 cents per word), *Deep Outside* (3 cents per word), the *DNA Publications Website* (3-5 cents per word), *Future Orbits* 6-10 cents per word), *Infinite.Matrix.Net* 5-20 cents per word), *Oceans of the Mind* (5-8 cents per word), *Outside: Speculative and Dark Fiction* (3 cents per word), *The Pedestal* (5 cents per word), *Twilight Showcase* (3 cents per word), and *Would That It Were* (3-5 cents per word).

Adding the SFWA sanctioned four pro online markets to the ten other professionally paying online markets listed above, that's fourteen (14) viable e-markets to add to the sixteen (16) print markets, giving the new writer a total of 30 professionally paying markets to submit his or her stories.

And for those who may wish to brush off, or discount, the blooming e-markets as not "real" magazine markets, I point to the fact that in the last couple of years a handful of stories first seeing publication online have made it to the final Nebula ballot, and some have even won this coveted award. Linda Nagata's novella "Goddesses" won a Nebula last year, and first saw publication at *Sci Fiction*, and on April 27<sup>th</sup> of 2002, Severna Park took home a Nebula trophy for her short story "The Cure for Everything," also originally published at *Sci Fiction*.

Print magazines have come and gone in droves over the past seventy-five years or so. Online magazines will go through the same evolution, changes, and shakeout, but in different ways and due to different causes. As of the present moment, however, short fiction authors are blessed with a surfeit of markets—both print and online—paying the minimum recognized SFWA minimum of 3 cents per word, and in many cases much above this minimum.

With thirty clearly identified magazines paying professional word rates, I maintain that this period in our genre history is, if not a golden one, then certainly a Silver Age for short fiction practitioners, a boom that can only continue to grow (given the expansion, acceptance, and legitimacy of e-markets, as witnessed by the Nebula award winners above--not to mention several major horror awards being honored to online {or even CD-Rom published} fiction).

#

The problem with start-up e-zines (whether they pay professionally or not), is that there are so many of them. I mean, almost *anyone* can begin one with minimal cost (and no fictional taste or experience). In a recent article in the *SFWA Bulletin* (#153, Spring 2002 "The Ezines: Destiny or Disaster"), SF novelist Joseph Green surveyed close to 100 websites featuring short genre fiction. As with print magazines, Sturgeon's Law applied to online fiction as well, in spades. He says, after his exhaustive survey: "Looking ahead, what I see is a death sentence for professional print magazines." I disagree, but acknowledge the legitimacy of what is already happening with the serious, professional (and those who soon will be) e-magazines. They are here to stay, though I doubt they will replace our genre print magazines. Addressing the problem of the overwhelming numbers of e-zines on the web these days, Mike Resnick & Barry Malzberg in a recent *SFWA Bulletin* column ("The Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues XII: e-Publishing" #152, Winter 2001) have this to say: (Mike Resnick) "When the need arises, one or two consumer reports (or e-reviewzines, or whatever you wish to call them) will stand out above the rest, will be acknowledged as the cream of the crop just as Campbell's *Astounding* was universally acknowledged to be head and shoulders above its competitors in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and most readers will take their hint from them."

[For those desirous of finding the latest e-magazine reviews, I unashamedly point them to my own *Tangent Online* ([www.tangentonline.com](http://www.tangentonline.com)). For several years now we have reviewed Ellen Datlow's various online fiction (*Omni Online*, *Event Horizon*, and now at *Sci Fiction*). We also cover (reviewing every original story, as we do with print magazines), *The Spook* (an upscale, lavishly produced e-magazine, devoted to horror), the above mentioned *Strange Horizons*, *Future Orbits*, *Infinite Matrix*, and the occasional original online short stories *Fictionwise.com*, runs. *Tangent Online* recently created a special "E-Markets Division", which is devoted to covering online fiction just as the print and online versions have done for print publications (Jay Lake is the e-Markets editor). In our role as serious-minded gatekeepers for online short fiction, we screen every online market on a case by case basis. One of the primary (but not the only) criteria we employ is professional payrate. In the coming months, we'll be expanding our coverage of these proliferating online markets. The other magazine (both online and print) that even attempts to cover online fiction (though not on as thorough a basis as *Tangent Online*, is *Locus*, and its online counterpart *Locus Online*: [www.locusmag.com](http://www.locusmag.com)).]

#

Returning to professional (genre) print magazines, it has become clear to me--even more so recently--that they are receiving every bit as good a quality of fiction than ever before. A round-robin interview I conducted for the current *SFWA Bulletin* (#154, Summer 2002) featured *Analog* editor Stanley Schmidt, *Asimov's* editor Gardner Dozois, *F&SF* editor Gordon Van Gelder, and *Sci Fiction* editor Ellen Datlow. Dozens and dozens of new writers were mentioned, each of the editors always on the look for new talent. It is not the *quality* of fiction being published, they universally agree, as the primary cause for declining circulations, but a combination of factors, the most catastrophic being the conglomeratization of the distribution system. In the quite lengthy *Bulletin* article, as well as a panel I moderated with them at the recent Nebula Awards weekend in Kansas City, MO (April 25-28, 2002), all of the reasons (imagined or real) were discussed at length. The supposed "greying" of the audience, marketing, distribution, misconceptions in regard to the type of fiction each magazine is looking for (i.e. editorial preferences), was it the fiction itself, etc., etc..

Stan Schmidt brought up the point several times that *part* of the reason for declining subscription circulations occurred with the "stamp sheet" promotions during the 80s: (From the *SFWA Bulletin*, #154, Summer 2002) "I should probably mention that they [declining circulations] aren't entirely as alarming as they might look, since a lot of the subscriptions that were lost were the ones that came from places like stampsheets, which weren't profitable anyway."

Several of the editors agreed that lack of magazine visibility for potential newer generation readers is a problem (due in large part to the distribution system). As for solutions, *F&SF* publisher and editor Gordon Van Gelder offered this (from the same *Bulletin* article): "Solutions? 1) We're running an ad in the next issue of *Computer Games* and I'm curious to see if it will bring in any subscriptions. Reaching out to that audience can only help bring them in. 2) Publish fiction that will blow their minds." I hesitate to offer more of this fascinating (10,000 word) round-robin interview here—I'd end up quoting almost all of it, informative as it is.

My considered opinion on the whole matter is this: while it is true that *all* magazines (unless one publishes *Time*, or *Cosmopolitan*, or magazines like these—mega-magazines), but especially genre magazines, have taken a major hit due to the shrinking of distribution outlets where hard-line, bottom-dollar considerations rule, the digest-sized sf/f magazines will continue to survive. Their overhead is relatively low, and they are extremely cheap to print/produce. When it comes to a full-sized, glossy, full-cover production like *Realms of Fantasy* I am much less sanguine. Too high overhead expenses for too little return in these days of instant publisher gratification.

For the near term, I don't see any of the digests folding. Their fiction content is as good as ever, and I believe Gardner Dozois has said that *Asimov's* has even seen a *slight* increase in circulation (subscriptions, I'm assuming) of late.

## Random Thoughts

In a letter to the editor of this publication following issue #1, Ted White writes: “Nearly 50 years ago I suggested (in a fanzine) that prozines should go into the paperback book format to survive. Despite a variety of anthology series (starting with Ballantine's *Star* books), this has never actually happened, although it may be the most viable way to wide-spread distribution. That's because no one has approached an anthology series As A Magazine.” [ed. note: *The full text of Ted's letter can be found below on pages 25-26 of the letters or correspondence section.*]

*Au contraire.* I vividly recall the James Baen edited *Destinies: The Science Fiction Magazine*, which ran from Nov/Dec 1978 through Summer 1980. It was published as a paperback book. I quote from Jim Baen's first editorial, which, curiously enough, began on the rear cover but finished on the opening page: “You are about to embark on a wholly new concept in the publication of science fiction: the very first issue of the very first PAPERBACK {emphasis theirs} science fiction magazine.” It was loaded with original fiction from many Top Names, had tons of articles, and was fully illustrated. I can't recall the precise reason it folded (probably low sales), but the concept of marketing an sf magazine as a paperback has nonetheless been tried.

Ted was also curious as to the gross number print run for the print magazines, and how many were eventually returned. While every little fact is worthwhile in gaining an overall perspective, in this case it is not so *major* a point. Remember that digest magazines are very cheap to produce (cheaper than a paperback), and rely heavily on subscription numbers (not nearly so much as newsstand sales) for their survival. I'll steal one more quote from the Summer 2002 *SFWA Bulletin* article to illustrate why returns (unless unquestionably disastrous) have a bright side. *F&SF* editor Gordon Van Gelder quotes Tor publisher Tom Doherty on the issue of paperback print runs (which can be likened to print magazine overruns/returns): “I read Joseph Green's article on e-zines in the last *Bulletin*. Will e-zines bury us all? I keep thinking of what Tom Doherty said a couple of years ago: ‘Yes, it probably seems wasteful to print two paperbacks for every one we sell. But I'll tell you, that other copy is our single best advertisement for the book.’ “

## Final Thoughts

1. At this particular point in time several things seem clear to me, when considering the quality of short genre fiction being published, and the state of the sf magazines (print and electronic):
2. The quality of fiction is there. Mediocre to Good to Excellent fiction is being published in both formats—as it always has.
3. The state of professional print genre magazines is in trouble, due to several factors; the consummate, overriding factor being the distribution system. The digest magazines have an infinitely greater chance to continue, while any full-sized magazine published by a corporate entity is on much shakier ground (i.e. *Realms of Fantasy*). I also include a relatively new full-sized magazine here, though it is not funded by a corporation, but by a very small cadre of investors--*Black Gate: Adventures in Fantasy Literature*. This quarterly fantasy magazine runs to over 200 pages each issue. Through issue #3 it has run but one out-of-house ad (and that part of a special arrangement). While garnering some deserved praise for several of its stories, including at least two reprints (one forthcoming) in David Hartwell's relatively new *Year's Best Fantasy* (*Black Gate* is geared toward S&S, heroic, action-adventure stories, though publishes a welcome variety of fantasy fiction), I don't have hopes for its longevity. With no advertising revenue whatsoever, and given the harsh realities of the distribution, printing, mailing, and market place right now, I see a time when their funding is bound to dry up. *Black Gate* is a wonderful, idealistic experiment in format and marketing, but I see no concrete (financial) signs of its long-term success, unless they find a way to dramatically increase their advertising revenue. Which is a shame.
4. The burgeoning, exciting addition of viable, professional e-zines (and other e-markets—the first all-original e-anthologies are slated to appear this year and next), holds much promise. There will be the inevitable rough spots, as there were (and are) for new print magazines, but, in addition to the existing professionally-paying print markets, the e-zine markets are now another universe to explore for writers wishing to sell to professionally-paying markets.
5. Far from the case being made that due to shrinking markets it is harder for a newcomer to break into the existing pro-paying markets today, I think the case has been made that, because of the expansion in pro-paying print *and* the new e-markets, it might well be even easier than in almost fifty years for all writers to find a market for their work. Remember that each editor has his or her own preferences for the type of fiction they publish. With something like *thirty+* editors, the writer has that many more chances that some editor will find something in their work to like.\*

## Emmenez-moi au jeu de boule

Or, the Expos Ate My Homework

Bill Roper

Ok, Steven. You're probably wondering why this isn't the article on the "Essential Filk Library" that I've been promising you for the last nine months. That's fair. You're entitled to wonder. *I'm* entitled to try to explain what happened, which I'll try to do now.

As you're no doubt aware — but some other folks reading this may not know — I've been working for Alcar, a small company specializing in financial modeling software, for about 20 years now. As the one person who speaks both finance and computer, I'm rather popular there, so popular, in fact, that my trip to WorldCon last year got a week cut off of it, because we were trying to get one of our programs to ship and my presence was deemed vital enough that the company was willing to fly Gretchen and me to Philadelphia and back.

This left me with a perfectly good week of unused vacation that needed to be used up by June 30<sup>th</sup> this year. Now, I usually suck up leftover vacation one day at a time taking Friday off on my way to a con, but I had more vacation than I could burn that way.

You're also aware that I'm a baseball fan and have been a Cubs season ticket holder for 10 years, despite being a St. Louis Cardinals fan at heart. I how cold and miserable it is.

This year's Cubs schedule Friday, the same day as Toronto regional filkcon which years and I didn't really want to schedule again and discovered was earlier in the week, on

"Gretchen," I asked my of going to Montreal to see goes away?"

"Baseball in Montreal in enough *here*."

"Ah," I replied. "But they

Negotiations at home and of vacation. *Then* they moved the week after the vacation

To work's credit, I actually new calling card and my promise planned to leave on Monday, but a combination of the con's fault — kept me away Saturday after Gretchen got off

And headed back twice, as it But at least we remembered them drove like a bat out of heck (which is just enough slower than a bat out of hell that you have a good chance of avoiding a ticket) and made it to Dexter, Michigan where our friends Clif and Carol Flynt live in time for a late dinner, followed by a trip to George Hunt's retirement party.

George is a S.E. Michigan fan, airplane buff, and member of the Dorsai Irregulars of long standing. His "retirement" from working for the city of Ann Arbor means that he has the chance to take classes in airport management with an eye towards running a small airport somewhere in the vicinity. In the meantime, it was an excuse for a big party. We gabbed until about 2 AM on a variety of topics including "Car Crashes I've Walked Away From", by which time exhaustion set in for the dead dogs and we went back to Clif and Carol's to crash out for the evening.

We'd only planned to get as far as Toronto the next day, so we departed late and had a leisurely and uneventful drive. The border guard *did* ask us if our car had Florida plates, which was a bit disconcerting. "No, ma'am. Illinois replated this year." I suppose being from Chicago in a car with Florida plates would be a *little* odd, even for fans. She seemed a bit amused by our going to Montreal for Opening Day, so she must have been a baseball fan. It was probably the only time that she'd heard *that* reason from a car crossing the border at Sarnia.

Gretchen has referred to several of our excursions that I'd, shall we say, *overplanned* as the "Bataan Fun March". As a result, we'd deliberately underplanned this vacation. Perhaps a bit too much so, I started to think as we approached the Montreal area with no idea of where we might be staying for the night. If I'd been clever — or had enough time to *think* the

### Olympic Stadium/Stade olympique

**First baseball game:** April 15, 1977  
Expos v. Phillies (2-7)

**All-Star Game:** July 13, 1982

**Seating:** 43,739

**Surface:** Astrograss (2002)

#### Dimensions:

Left Field	325 feet/99.0 meters
Left-Center	375 feet/114.3 meters
Center Field	404 feet/123.1 meters
Right-Center	375 feet/114.3 meters
Right Field	325 feet/99.0 meters
Height of Fence	12 feet/3.65 meters

Built for the 1976 Olympics, the stadium was finished a month and a half after the games ended.

*always* go to Opening Day, no matter

came out and Opening Day was on FilkOntario starts. FilkOntario is the I've been going to for the last few miss it. So I looked at the baseball that the Montreal Expos home opener Tuesday.

loving wife. "What would you think Opening Day there before the team

April? Are you crazy? It's cold

have a dome."

work followed and I booked a week the delivery date of the software to instead of the week before. \*sigh\* got to leave on vacation, albeit with a to call in once a day. We'd originally right after I got back from Minicon, circumstances — none of which were this year, so we headed out on of work.

turned out that we'd forgotten things. within five minutes of leaving. I

week before we left — I would have done some Web searches for hotel rooms and made a reservation. Instead, for the first time in a long time, we were winging it.

I figured we had a reasonable chance of finding a hotel in the airport area that would fit the bill. Gretchen has often complained that we go to conventions, frequently in very nice hotels, and then spend no time whatsoever enjoying the facilities. What I needed was a suite hotel and a reasonable rate. And a way to find it.

Sometimes you get lucky. Seeing the big “Quality Suites” sign at the top of the hotel was one of those occasions. It took a while to figure out how to get into the parking lot, which was pretty well hidden, but for a rate that would have made me scream if it was in U.S. dollars, but which was *much* more affordable in Canadian currency, we got a very nice little suite.



The last time that I was in Quebec was in 1989, when I passed through Montreal on the way to WorldCon on my honeymoon with Carol. Then, I felt guilty every time that I had to ask for something in English. Things seem to be substantially mellower now, although coping with French signage can still be a challenge.

(I also need to remember to ask my friends in Toronto what the heck a flashing green light means. I *think* it means yield to left-turning cars, based on context. And is right turn on red legal or not? These questions become *much* more important when you’re driving in an unfamiliar city.)

We decided to spend Tuesday at Olympic Park (or *Parc Olympique* in the local parlance) ahead of the Opening Day game. This *seemed* like a reasonable idea, but it didn’t seem that they were really expecting tourists at this time of year. We ate lunch at the restaurant in the Tourist Center. If this can be taken as an example, given a choice, order the quiche rather than *anything* labeled as “barbeque” while you’re in Montreal. We rode the Funicular to the top of the tower above Olympic Stadium, getting a pretty good view of the city. Then we walked over to the Biodome, which is a standing display of rainforest, Canadian forest, and St. Lawrence River flora and fauna in simulated habitat, similar to the sort of thing you might see at your better zoos.

The free shuttle bus wasn’t running (since they weren’t expecting tourists), which meant that Gretchen’s knee wasn’t going to cope with the walk to the *Jardin Botanique* and Insectarium. I decided to make the hike, since I’d already bought the tickets. The Insectarium was interesting, probably more so if you actually enjoy looking at bugs. The butterflies and moths were very attractive; the

cockroaches a good bit less so. The Botanical Garden was still coping with winter. The fellow taking tickets at the Insectarium told me that the greenhouses about five minutes away had some very beautiful plants, but my enthusiasm for walking had been pretty much spent by the trip uphill to the Insectarium, so I decided to go back down and rejoin Gretchen.

We killed an hour in the Snack Bar (where I was delighted to find some muffins of a variety that I hadn’t seen in years) until it was time to head over to Olympic Stadium for Opening Day, probably the last one in Montreal, possibly the last one for this team if Commissioner-for-Life Bud has his way.

Subtext abounded. The visiting team was the Florida Marlins, now owned by Jeffrey Loria, the New York art dealer who had bought the Expos cheap, put the last few nails into the team’s coffin, then sold it back to MLB for a good price, which he’d used to buy the Marlins from another owner who was buying the Boston Red Sox. It was all nicely incestuous and 35,000 fans had come for what would otherwise have been less of an event, because they wanted folks to know what they thought about the whole situation. It was summed up in two words, on a multitude of signs and banners:

“Loria Sucks.”

I could hardly disagree. The most creative banner permuted the Expos logo into an upraised middle finger with the text, “Commissioner Bud, This One’s F You”. Then there was the fellow who made his way to the top of the Marlins’ dugout with his “Loria Sucks” sign which he waved, then handed into the dugout for delivery to the appropriate individual.

But I’m getting ahead of myself. The first thing that we noticed was that these were the smallest seats we had ever seen at a major league ballpark. It wasn’t just that Gretchen and I are large people — there wasn’t a single person in our row who looked comfortable in his or her seat. And the arms of the seats were curved inward, so that if I slid forward to make more room, the sharp tip would poke me in the hip. *There’s* something designed to encourage folks to come out to the old ballpark.

The food was nothing to write home about, but ballpark food seldom is. The prices in Canadian dollars were about what we were used to paying in U.S. dollars, so that part was fine. And they even had a scorecard you could buy for \$1, unlike a lot of places — not including Chicago, fortunately.



The pre-game ceremonies were fun. The Marlins were booed lustily, especially ex-Expos manager Jim Torborg. There were big cheers for former favorites Andres Galarraga and Henry Rodriguez who had been resigned by Montreal for this final season. And the lighted stands in each position on the field where the starters ran out of the stands to take their position were quite impressive, as was (supposedly) catcher Michael Barrett's entrance jumping a motorcycle onto the field from behind a paper barrier in centerfield. (Personally, I'm betting on a stunt rider. But it was great fun to watch.)

Since we don't have a big video screen at Wrigley Field, there are a number of things that we miss there that we got to see in Montreal. Some of them — replays of interesting action — are good things. Others, such as the film of the young woman dancing in her underwear and exhorting the fans to "Shake Your Buns" in English and French, I'm happy to leave behind here in Montreal.

The game was close until ex-Cardinal pitcher Britt Reames gave up a grand slam to Preston Wilson, dropping the Expos down 6-1. A few thousand fans left at that point. But the majority stayed around and saw the Expos score three in the eighth to make it close. And then we went to the bottom of the ninth...

The Marlins brought on new closer, Braden Loper — another ex-Cardinal who had just inherited the closer spot when Alfonseca was traded to the Cubs. Wilkerson drew a walk to lead off the inning, then Barrett (who had homered to right in his previous at-bat) dumped a double down the right field line, putting the tying runs on second and third with nobody out. Frank Robinson yanked Galarraga, batting in the nine-hole following a double-swap, to bring on Henry Rodriguez as a pinch-hitter.

The "Oh Henry" bars hit the field from all directions. There weren't more than a few dozen of them, but they held up the game for a few minutes while the grounds crew collected them. In an ideal world, Henry would have cracked a homer to win the game.

Unfortunately, in the world we're stuck with, he struck out. So did the leadoff hitter, Bergeron, leaving it up to Jose Vidro, the second baseman who's playing with a cracked shoulder blade and was 0-3 to that point. On a full count, he lined a single up the middle, tying the game and the fans went wild. Vidro took second on the throw home and Torborg wisely walked Vladimir Guerrero, whose run wouldn't matter anyway. Guerrero's noted for being able to hit a ball pitched just about anywhere and I noticed that he kept watching the pitches during the intentional pass, just keeping an eye out in case a pitch came near the plate by mistake. None did.

This brought shortstop Orlando Cabrera to the plate. He lined the ball over the head of the right fielder, driving home Vidro with the winning run and setting off a celebration on the field and in the stands.

For one day, at least, in this season, the Expos were in first place.

We left the stadium to find that it had begun to snow. It was just like Opening Days that we'd seen back in Chicago, except that the Cubs usually don't win and when they do, it's not nearly as dramatic as this game.

So, Steven, that's why my article is late. I'm going to see what I can produce now with all my references back in Chicago and me here in my hotel room in Montreal, but I thought you — and the folks reading *Argentus* — might enjoy this.

I hope I was right.\*

*Editor's Note: Assuming that Bill turns in his article on the essential Filk library, it will run in Argentus 3, sometime in 2003. Pre-rebuttals to his list are welcomed and, in fact, encouraged.*

## Winter Olympics

Forget about pair skating, speed skating and women's figure skating controversies or who won which medals. As I was watching the Winter Olympics, I realized it included the largest collection of stupid sports outside of Scotland. Sure, I can understand people getting into various ice skating and skiing sports, but luge? skeleton? curling?

I hereby make my own suggestion for a sport to appear at the 2006 games in Torino. Taking a cue from biathlon, we need a sport which combines figure skating and fencing. Points awarded based on complexity of the move (triple axle touch=2 points). Write your local IOC.

## Lifetime Positive

By Mike Glyer

Early in Ian Fleming's novel *Moonraker* James Bond is driving at night and spots an ominous neon sign flashing the message HELL IS HERE over and over. He rounds a hillock and once the sign is in full view sees it's only an advertisement that SUMMER SHELL IS HERE. But I'm sure the Friday night card players would have loved adorning the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society clubhouse with the neon sign James Bond thought he saw in the days when we were obsessed by a game called "Hell's Bridge."

Two regulars at the game were Jack Harness and Bruce Pelz, legendary fans who both passed away within the last year, Jack on July 13, 2001 and Bruce on May 9, 2002. Mourning the loss of two of the best-known fans of their generation is appropriate, yet so is joyfully remembering their great humor and colorful personalities. I spent many hours together with them in LASFS activities, often at the card tables. The best moments sounded like this:

**FRANK GASPERIK:** *I bid five.*

**MIKE FRANK:** *A man with a long suit.*

**JACK HARNESS:** With a trap in the back.

**BRUCE PELZ:** *I know what kind of opening to give you.*

**JACK HARNESS:** *But...but...but...*

**BRUCE PELZ:** *You assed for it.*

**MIKE GLYER:** *(scribbling furiously) Pun slower!*

Hell's Bridge, never actually called by anything but its first name, preoccupied about a dozen players every Friday evening. The game bears a faint resemblance to bridge in that there is a trick-taking and a trump suit (determined by a cut of the cards.) But every player makes a contract for the number of tricks he expects to take, and the total tricks bid may not equal the number of tricks available (it can be under or over.) Since the onus of that rule generally falls on the last person to bid, the dealer, people constantly refer to the "DDA" - dealer's disadvantage.

Hell is a comparatively inexpensive game to lose: a bad night would set me back the equivalent of a burger and Coke. Yet playing Hell still inflicted all the intensity and madness of more prestigious games like poker. (At least I assumed poker was more prestigious, because I never could envision Bret Maverick saying, "My daddy always told me 'Never gamble, stick to Hell's Bridge.'")

The legendary LASFS poker games went away in the mid-70s when the hosts of the old Thursday night gatherings gave up in exhaustion and the games weren't allowed to move into the new clubhouse. Members believed even penny-ante gambling would surely lead to a police raid, whereas poker without betting is even duller than a bar without booze. On the other hand members did allow Hell to be played there because it was tracked with a scoresheet, not played with chips or cash, and not hostage to the potential nightmare of the club's five-and-dime riverboat gamblers wallowing in their loose change when the LAPD kicked in the door and charged in with the vice squad.

As Hell grew in popularity those of us who had an early start on the game profited greatly from the neos who came along and received an expensive education in the game. But time was not on our side. In the good old days, Jack Harness finished cleaning out one game full of players (while the LASFS Board of Directors met in the front room), threw open the door, hollered, "Fresh fish!" and they came running to fill up the next game. All too soon, all the new players became competitive. It got very rugged for all but the best. Even Bruce Pelz and Jack Harness had runs of ill luck that were mercilessly exploited. That produced some mythic bursts of temper. Long has the story been told of the night Pelz, hosting a game at his apartment and doing badly, ripped the leg off his card table and chased the players into the night. Doubt it if you like. I can only testify that I never saw him rip a leg off a card table...

Other legends of the game included Marty Massoglia. He gained fame as "Captain Suicide" during a phase when he started jumping to conclusions about whether he would make his bid on a hand, and when it looked bad to him, he abandoned all pretense of making his bid in order to prevent others from making theirs. Conversely, Mike Shupp's brief career at the Hell table earned him the nickname of "Robin Hood," because he would junk his chances to make his own hand in order to sabotage a player he felt had bid too ambitiously.

**JACK HARNESS:** *I don't want to sit on the right hand of Captain Suicide.*

**BRUCE PELZ:** *Then sit on his other hand and we'll both be out of trouble.*

Those of us who frequented LASFS card games in the early 70's saw that Bruce tracked his wins and losses in a pocket diary.



While his memory was famous -- thus his nickname, the Elephant - he was also a prolific list-maker and recordkeeper. With the advent of personal computers Bruce was soon keeping track of everyone's wins and losses. Once accounts were settled for the night, Bruce would take the scoresheets home and enter the data. He assigned everyone a "handle"—real names were not used on the printouts. (Years had passed but we still expected the place to be raided by the vice squad at any moment.)

The players with the cumulative best records were dubbed "The Hell-5 Society." The top five scorers of the year got first crack at playing in the game held at the Nivens' New Year's Eve Party.

Players who were cumulatively in the black were referred to as "lifetime positive." I think I was about \$20 to the good when I stopped playing regularly after 15 years, so what was that, an average winning of lightly more than a buck a year? But as more newcomers came along and joined the minus column, a mystique grew up around anyone who had managed not to give all his money to Pelz and the other sharks.

If (in the parlance of comic collectors) Hell's Bridge represented the Silver Age of LASFS cardplaying, its Golden Age had been in the early 1970s when there were all-night poker sessions at the Nivens' house after LASFS meetings. There was an endless parade of great fannish names through the game (I would like to have played poker against Dick Geis). Those poker games were, in fact, the reason I joined LASFS. Joe Minne lived upstairs in our dorm at USC and said he often went to club meetings and then went over to Larry Niven's house to play poker.

The first time Joe took a couple of us with him, he turned his ancient Ford T-Bird off Sunset onto a dark side street whose mist-shrouded lamps must have inspired "Of A Foggy Night." When we got into the house Larry Niven said hello and asked Minne, "Can you vouch for these two?" Insuring the integrity of the poker game was probably the least reason Niven asked for assurance: what mattered was the art collection. His home was like a year-round Worldcon art show, walls covered with huge framed Tim Kirk drawings and Wendy Pini original pastel paintings. The burglar alarm system was no protection against light-fingered fans pretending to be poker players.

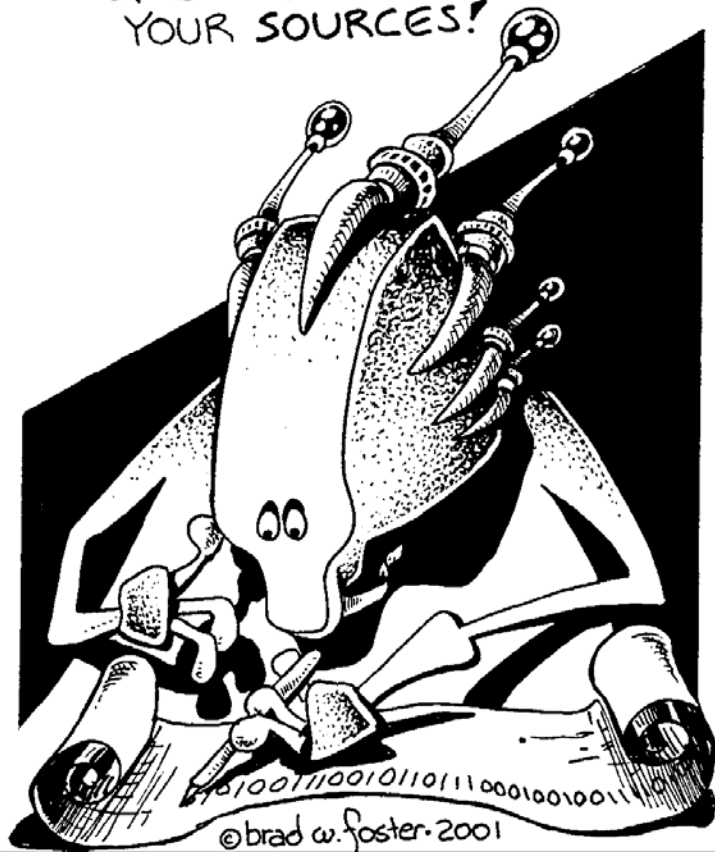
I kept going back and the welcome became warmer.

After all, I had the one utterly endearing trait of losing quietly, though I could only afford to lose about \$3 and then I was done for the evening. Once I accidentally left with a poker chip in my pocket and endured the embarrassment of calling Larry to confess because I needed to be able to get my dollar back next week. Joe Minne, on the other hand, answered each setback by opening his checkbook and saying, "Ahhhh!" I played at the cheap table, hosted by Fuzzy Pink Niven, and there was also a "blood" table where Larry presided over sharks like Jerry Pournelle, whose skill kept him from ever having to fill out the worn personal check he tossed in when he drew his poker chips to start the night.

A certain machismo compelled a few to play at the "blood" game who weren't equal to it and they made losing their rent a routine, prompting Larry to conclude that "Some people win by winning, and some people win by losing." There was a high level of pseudo-psychiatric analysis: if you screwed up at poker, your whole lifestyle was bound to be called into question. And for someone losing \$200 within a few weeks, this was not unreasonable.

The Nivens set a generous sideboard for these games, which some visitors managed to abuse by melting cheese all over the toaster oven or helping themselves uninvited to the good brandy. The Nivens resorted to posting a dittoed "Rules of the House" which I regret not having kept. At last they moved out of Brentwood and the club relocated to the San Fernando Valley. The era of poker games breaking up at dawn came to an end - and descended into Hell.✱

ORIGINALITY IN ART  
IS MAINLY the SKILL  
of CONCEALING  
YOUR SOURCES!



## There and Back Again

Steven H Silver

At the end of June 2001, my pregnant wife, daughter and I moved from a townhouse in Northbrook, Illinois to a thirty-odd-year-old house in Deerfield, a total distance of six-and-a-half miles. The new house would provide extra room for our growing family as well as a backyard and basement for our already existent daughter to play in. Storage space for my book collection, if not shelf space, would also be increased. I felt good about the house, having seen mass market paperbacks by Bujold, Herbert and Turtledove mixed in with the previous owners' Russian language books.

The closing on the two houses went well, although we had to spend three hours in an attorney's office. This was made even more fun by Elaine's pregnancy and my allergies given that the law firm in question had a smoking policy that seemed to be straight out of the 1960s. Worse, since it was a smoking office, it seemed to only attract people who wanted to smoke at their desks. Immediately outside the "non-smoking" conference room we were ensconced in, a woman was working on a computer and chain-smoking cigarettes. Her ashtray was filled with ash and butts when we arrived. It was overflowing when we left.

Early in the process, Elaine and I determined that since she was pregnant, I had a history of muscular back weakness, and as difficult in many ways as a cross country move, we the heavy lifted, van pulled away surrounding by 100 of which were other literary items And thus began the house.

*By all accounts street are a set of than Robin. While is a little closer and difference is which gave us the family room there was a 9x12 not been tiled, but first looked at the*

About the time that the pain I was quality or been suffering on than being pain was on the left although my thigh

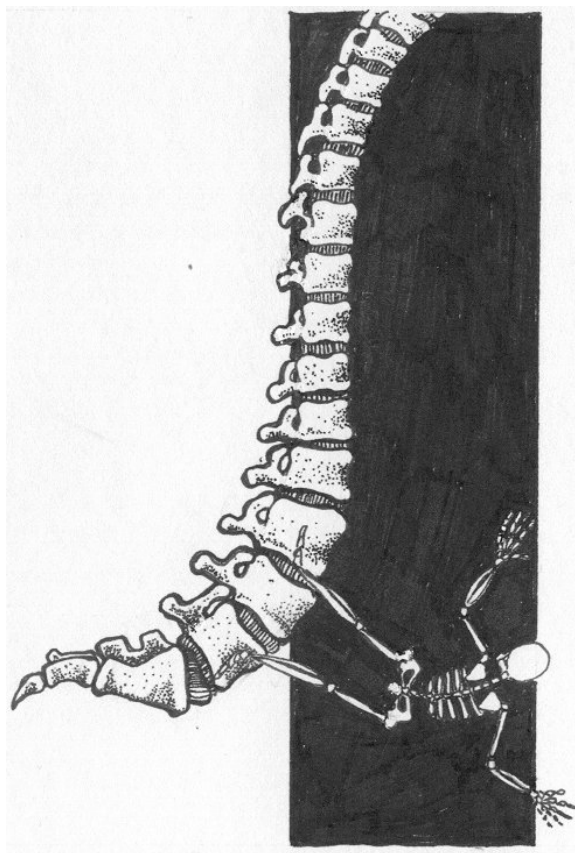
Eventually, in He decided to give to exercise and see

dose pack crams twenty-one pills into a six-day period. You start by taking six pills in one day, then five the next, and so on until there are no pills left. In theory, it will leave you feeling pain-free. Theory is a wonderful thing, but all too often, as in this case, has no relation to reality.

The next step was physical therapy. I asked what he thought of me going to see the chiropractor I had been seeing for years instead. He had no problem with that, so I made a couple of appointments. After the second appointment, I decided that chiropractic was not the answer to this particular question and stopped going. Each of the appointments had left me feeling worse, not better.

My physician had given me a few exercises to do, nothing too drastic. Robin, who was three and a half at the time, saw me doing them when I first got home. She quickly joined me, not needing any instruction, but figuring out what to do by watching me and looking at the diagrams I was using as a guide. She became my coach, insisting that I do my exercises and joining me each day when I did them.

At the end of October, I was told to get an MRI. This would be the second time I had done this. The first was in 1998 on the day we left for BucConer. That activity was in an open MRI machine. I had been warned of claustrophobic reaction,



arduous process of setting up a new

*our move has turned out well. Across the twin girls who are only six months older I'm a little further from my office, Elaine my office is close enough that the negligible. The baby came a little late, time to lay down a hardwood floor in the (shortly before we closed, we discovered foot section of underflooring which had had been hidden under a carpet when we house).*

that Melanie was born, I began to realize feeling in my back did not have the same placement as the undiagnosed pain I had and off for nearly twenty years. Rather centralized to my lower right back, the side and shot down into my left calf, seemed to be pain-free.

September, I went to see my physician. me a Medral dose pack and instructions him in about two weeks. The Medral

but that doesn't occur in an open MRI. I was also warned about the loud noises from the machine causing headaches. I fell asleep.

There is a lab that does MRIs near my office, and on October 30, I called to make my appointment. Since I generally get off work around 3:30, I asked for a 4:00 appointment. I was told they couldn't accommodate me for about two weeks. I asked if they had anything at 3:30 and was told they could take the MRI that very day.

The closed MRI machine was no worse for me than the open one, so I suppose claustrophobia is not an issue for me. Again, I fell asleep, which is really the only thing you can do, since you aren't allowed to move when they are talking their pictures and you can't exactly have a book or anything to read while you spend 45 minutes to an hour in the machine.

At the end of the hour, I was released from the machine and sent on my way, clutching a large envelope of pictures of the base of my spine. When I got home, I took a look at them. Even being a layman, I could spot the disk bulging against a nerve between the L4-L5 vertebrae.

I took the MRI to a spinal surgeon who was recommended by my physician. They say that to a carpenter with a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. This surgeon had a reputation for thinking the scalpel was the first recourse. Sure enough, after looking at the MRI and X-Rays, asking me about my symptoms and running me through a range of movements, he declared he would operate. It would be done arthroscopically on a Friday morning and I should expect to be back at work by the following Wednesday. While I was looking forward to the end of pain, the idea of undergoing surgery did not seem to be my idea of a good time, even if the doctor was telling me it would be on an outpatient basis.

I decided I would get a second opinion. My uncle, who is a surgeon in Arizona, trained in Chicago with a man who is generally considered to be one of the top neurosurgeons in Chicago. I called for an appointment with him at the Chicago Institute of Neurosurgery and Neuroresearch (CINN) and was told, in early November, that the first available appointment would be in the middle of January! I hung up and called back, using my uncle's name. Suddenly, an appointment opened up on November 15.

While waiting for my second opinion, I spoke to a friend of my in-laws, who is one of the top neurosurgeons in Lexington, Kentucky. At the time, we were still considering a trip down to Kentucky for Thanksgiving, although I was feeling less and less sure of it. Elaine and I agreed we would leave it up to the doctor when I saw him on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Anyway, I was going to bring my MRI down to Lexington, but when he heard my symptoms, he told me he said it sounded like I would need surgery.

The weekend of November 9-11 saw me at the Hyatt Regency in Schaumburg acting as vice-chair for Windycon. On Friday evening, I was discussing my situation with Dr. Bob Passovoy, who concurred with all the opinions I had, noting that he was not a neurosurgeon and the doctor I would be seeing the next week was one of the best.

On Saturday morning, I woke up early and in pain. Figuring nothing happens at 7:30 AM at a con, I jumped into the car and drove to a nearby pharmacy to pick up some painkillers. When I got back to the hotel, around 7:45, the first person I saw was the con chair, Amy Wenshe, who told me that while I was out a good friend of mine, Pat Sayre McCoy, had been taken away in an ambulance after spending the night vomiting what looked like blood. I popped some pills, called my wife to get in touch with Pat's husband and went about trying to figure out exactly what a vice-chair is supposed to do at a con. Later in the day, Pat would undergo an appendectomy, by which time it was determined that the red in her vomit was merely a sports drink.

That evening, with pain coursing through my back and leg, I got to play host, along with Amy, to Dave Attell, a so-called comedian who has a show on Comedy Central called *Insomniac*. They had contacted us about doing a piece on the con and we decided that if it was a good piece, it would help promote cons and if it was a bad piece it probably wouldn't hurt the con that much. The show was eventually aired on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was a relatively boring piece which, if it did anything, will convince people that if they are looking for a place to go and get drunk and be annoying, Windycon is not that place.

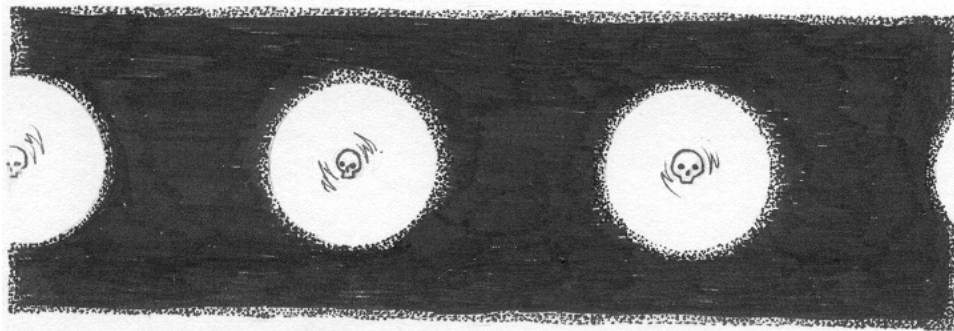
A few days after the con, I finally had my appointment with CINN. The doctor looked at my MRI and X-Rays and discussed my situation. He decided that the best thing to do would be to try physical therapy mixed with one, two or three cortisone epidurals (depending on their efficacy). If all that failed, we would consider surgery.

The next morning, I called the physical therapist to set up an appointment. Again, I got lucky when they asked if I could be there in half an hour. It was close enough to the office, and my boss is good enough, that the answer was yes. Could I wear sweats and a T-Shirt? I could, but not in half-an-hour. I wound up seeing the physical therapist three times a week before work.

The first epidural was scheduled for the morning of Monday, December 10. I was told that if everything went according to plan, I should expect to be back at work in time for lunch. I would also be okay to drive myself home. This might be a good time to point out that on occasion, doctors lie.

I had to leave the house well before I would normally have awoken to go to work. I drove into Chicago, to Ravenswood Hospital, where CINN has their surgery. I was scheduled to undergo the epidural around 7:30, which meant I had to be there at 6:30 so they could prep me. I spent a lot of time sitting in a waiting room, reading a novel. Eventually, a finance person came in to make sure my insurance was in order. She was followed by a priest and finally a nurse. Eventually, they tossed me onto a gurney and took me to the patient waiting area.

I had never been on a gurney before. In fact, I had never had a planned visit to a hospital in which I was the patient before. On television or in the movies whenever there is a shot from the point of view from the person on a gurney, it is always a strange shot in which the camera moves around without showing any of the patient's body. Turns are navigated in a slightly disconnected way. I discovered that those shots are a patient sees gurney. I discovered that lying down in an elevator is not the most comfortable feeling in the stomach. The pit of the waiting area, on a gurney,



The where I lay was a large empty room in which other patients were also on gurneys waiting for their own procedures. Normally, I have no use for television, but I was in there for long enough that I kind of wished there had been a television, or something, to focus my attention on.

The first time I met the doctor who would be giving me the epidural was actually in the operating room. To this day, I don't know what he looked like, since he was already wearing a mask. I was rolled from the gurney to the operating table, face down. The doctor asked what kind of music I wanted to listen to. Figuring that I didn't really care and wanted him to be comfortable, I let him choose. A mistake. I never did like Andrew Lloyd Webber.

First, I was given a local anesthetic in my back. Once it had a chance to take effect, the doctor told me he was going to insert the cortisone. There was a chance he would touch a nerve. If he did, I was to let him know. Not really thinking about what it meant, I asked how I would know.

The way to tell if a doctor who is inserting a cortisone epidural into your spine manages to touch the sciatic nerve is simple. If you've ever had a filling and had the dentist hit a nerve, you know the sort of electric pain that shoots through your skull. Well, touching the sciatic nerve sends a similar feeling through your body from the base of the skull to the toes on one side of the body. However, since you have a needle in your back, you have a strong impetus not to jump.

I had been warned that the surgery could take anywhere between five and twenty minutes. Fortunately, it lasted closer to the former than the latter, perhaps seven minutes. They wheeled me into the hall and I was on my way back up to my clothes. When I got there, the nurse asked if I could stand. I got off the gurney and decided there was still a residual numbness in my left leg. I was to stay in the hospital until I felt comfortable.

Earlier, I mentioned that doctors, on occasion, lie. Well, the doctor who gave me the epidural informed me that he wanted to me go home and lie down for a couple of days. I was not allowed to go back to work until Wednesday. So much for getting back to work in time for lunch.

A week later, I spoke to one of the nurses and told her that the epidural hadn't really helped. We decided that I would go ahead with the second one, scheduled for a Friday morning, which meant I would only lost a single day of work. Again, I drove myself to the hospital in the dark for an appointment which was way too early. Fortunately, this one was on Friday, December 28, so I would only miss one day of work.

The routine was essentially the same, although I was given two shots this time. The doctor avoided touching the nerve, but I began to feel very hot during the procedure (which I'm told is more common in men than in women) and began to feel nauseous. They paused before the second shot to try to make me more comfortable, the nurse noting that I was drenched with sweat. While the doctor inserted the second short of cortisone, she held a damp towel to my forehead.

Once I was released from the operating room, I felt better much faster and met my wife and daughters for lunch. While we ate, I realized that I was in a significant amount of discomfort from the epidurals and I made my way home, where I remained for the weekend. We had one of Robin's friends and her parents over to celebrate New Year's Eve on December 30.

A week later, we determined I would, in fact, be going under the knife. The doctor who had so far overseen my treatment would not be operating, since he specialized in brains and they had decided that my problem was located a couple of feet below my head and was nowhere near my brain. Instead, one of his associates who specialized in the lumbar region would perform the surgery, although he would be assisting. I was given a choice of having surgery either before or after my surgeon went on his vacation. Opting to get it over with, I chose January 15 as the day.

This gave me about a week to meet with the surgeon, get a chest X-Ray, get an EKG, and have a physical. I was scheduled to meet with the surgeon in Lincoln Park at 12:30 on Friday, January 11. The only appointment I could make with my physician in Buffalo Grove was the same day at 2:30. The two offices are thirty miles apart, so the timing would be very close. I also learned that the person who did the EKG at my physician's office was not there on Friday.

On Thursday, January 10, I drove over to Glenbrook Hospital during my lunch to have an EKG done. It only took a few minutes and looked good. The only discrepancy on the report was that it listed me as female. Apparently having a beard and having my shirt open wasn't enough to clue the technician in.

My wife joined my for the doctor appointments on Friday, the first time she came with. The surgeon was a little late getting in to see us, but explained the procedure. He wanted to cut into me rather than use a laser because he felt it gave him a better view. He went over the possible results, which ranged from feeling perfect to having a dropped foot. He insisted that paralysis would not occur.

Despite my explanations to Elaine of what my problem was, she asked the doctor and he gave her the same explanation I had given her. It made her feel more comfortable, which, of course, was the important thing. We jumped into the car and headed for Buffalo Grove. There was a traffic jam on the expressway with the result that we walked into the doctor's office at 2:29.

All my pre-surgery tests, poking and prodding accomplished, I was ready to undergo the knife. All that was left was waiting until Tuesday morning. I spent the weekend watching uplifting movies about surgery, like MASH.

Monday night, my parents had the Robin and Melanie sleep over at their house to ensure that Elaine and I could get a good night's sleep. We woke at 5:30 on Tuesday so we could be at the hospital by 6:30. I had been told that I was second on the surgeon's schedule, but the first surgery was short and, if the patient came in with a cold or a flu, his surgery would be postponed and mine would be moved up.

Elaine and I sat in a waiting area. Occasionally a hospital staffer would stick his or her head into the room to make sure I was still there/okay. Sometimes these visits were more intrusive, to draw blood, take blood pressure, offer spiritual comfort, etc. At one point, we were visited by my uncle's friend, who assured us he would be assisting.

Time dragged on and eventually the clocked showed 10:00, the time I had been told I would likely be taken down for surgery. There was no sign of anyone. My memories of this period begin to get fuzzy as I can remember some things with perfect clarity and other times there are skips in my memory.

Around 10:30, Elaine left the room to call my parents to find out where they were. After our daughters' nanny showed up at their house, they were going to come down to the hospital so Elaine would have company while I was asleep. I vaguely remember Elaine coming back into the room to tell me that they were just pulling in to the hospital parking lot. Despite that, I wouldn't see them until after surgery, because either while Elaine was making her call or immediately after, an orderly came in to have me get onto the gurney. He wheeled me away from Elaine, down the hall and into the elevator to take me to the surgical floor, where I found myself in the same prep area I had previously visited before my epidural.

Again, I waited there for a long time, although I don't know exactly how long since I didn't have a watch and the room didn't have any clocks (on purpose?). While there, my surgeon came in, although I have absolutely no idea what he said. One of the nurses came in a couple of times and eventually I saw an anesthesiologist. She gave me a shot, but I was still awake for a while. I think I remember being wheeled into the hall, but know I have absolutely no recollection of being wheeled into the operating room.

It is interesting. Over the years I've seen countless operating room scenes on television and in the movies. Invariably, the doctors and nurses are bantering between asking for surgical equipment. Naturally, when you find yourself the patient, you are completely unaware of what is happening, or even that anything is happening during these important hours in your life. I've had people tell me being under general anesthetic is like getting wonderful sleep. For me, it was simply a void, surrounded by periods of broken memory.

I have no idea when I came out of the anesthetic. My first memory is being in a hospital bed, although I might have a vague recollection of being awake for the transfer from the gurney to the bed. I definitely remember the nurse swabbing down my arm and putting in my IV, which came complete with a self-regulated morphine drip (I could dose myself every six minutes). I know that it was about 3:45 because I remember thinking I could turn on the television and catch the final half of "Jeopardy!" I didn't.

Within minutes of getting my IV, my family was allowed into the room. I was in quite a bit of pain, despite the drugs still in my system, and couldn't do much more than move my head. The nurses had me on my back, which surprised me since I had just had an incision in my back. If I wanted to shift position, I had to call the nurses who would roll me onto my side by pulling on the sheet. Once in that position, pillows would be stacked around me to support me. When lying flat on my back, a pillow was placed under my knees. When on my side, the same pillow was placed between my knees.

Before entering the hospital, I had been asked if I wanted a semi-private room, which insurance would cover, or a private room for an additional cost of \$84/day, which I would have to pay out of pocket. Naturally, I opted for a private room. Since the hospital only has five of them, they go fast, and I was placed in a semi-private room. My roommate, whom I didn't see during my entire stay, was moved into my room a couple of hours after I was there. Remember my earlier comments about television? Well, my roommate did not turn off his TV the entire time he was in the room. At least he turned the sound down at night, but I never want to see a daytime talk show, the Crocodile Hunter or the "700 Club" again. The last was definitely my least favorite, but it was the most limited.

The one benefit I had expected to being in the hospital for a couple of days was the chance to catch up on my reading. To this end, I made sure I packed the book I was reading when I went in (Holdstock's *Celtika*), as well as a couple of other novels. In case I found I had a short attention space, I also tossed a few anthologies into the suitcase. I needn't have bothered. Having only eighty pages or so of *Celtika* left to read when I went into the hospital, I still had about 25 pages left when I was released.

Wednesday, Elaine joined me early in the day. My mother planned to bring Robin by around noon, after pre-school. Although I still hadn't managed to get out of bed, I could look out the window and see snow falling. Amazingly enough, it was January 16 in Chicago and this was the first real snowfall of the season. Ironically, in addition to weather reports, the

news was full of the story that former Mayor Michael Bilandic, who succeeded Richard J. Daley and was voted out of office following the failure of the city to clear away the snows of the Blizzard of '79, had died.

Eventually, my mother called from the car. She had gotten off the expressway and wanted to make sure her directions were correct. After a while, when I was starting to wonder where she and Robin were, they entered the hospital room. It seems that shortly after they had called for directions, the girl driving behind them had gone into a skid and rear-ended the car. Fortunately, nobody was hurt. My mother also told me that she could see no damage to the car she was driving...mine. She called my father to tell him of the accident, which is how we learned that the nanny, whom we share with my sister, was driving my niece (four days older than my younger daughter, Melanie) around the neighborhood after dropping off one of my nephew's friends. She went into a skid and drove into a house. Again, no one was hurt, although her car was totaled.

While Robin was at the hospital, the physical therapist came in for the first time. She had me lift my legs and things like that. While that sounds minor, I'd like to mention that on Tuesday when I tried to lift my left leg, I found that I couldn't. The pain in my back was just too great. Now, however, I moved so well that she decided I should try to stand up.

I stood up with some guidance from the physical therapist, but it didn't feel great. She had me sit in a chair. When I did, I got lightheaded and all the blood left my face. Seeing me pale and with white lips caused Robin to show concern. Once I was helped back into bed, I decided that I didn't want Robin to watch me try anything new until I knew I could do it.

I already mentioned my roommate's fondness for television. His other little quirk was his ability to deal with pain. Whenever a nurse comes into the room, she asks you to rate your pain on a scale of 1-10. At the height of my pain, I figured I was around a 7. I also figure that if you hit 9 or 10, you couldn't tell the nurses because the pain would be too intense to speak through. My roommate was consistently telling the nurses his pain was at a 10. Although this, paired with the television makes it sound like I was constantly at odds with him, for the most part, I ignored him and he ignored me. For almost all purposes, we each might have been in separate rooms.

Thursday morning, attempting to stand up was similar to the experience on Wednesday. However, they decided we would try again in the afternoon. That afternoon, when the physical therapist came, the room was crowded. Not only were Elaine, Robin and Melanie there, but my father and sister had also stopped by. I sent them all down to the family waiting room while the physical therapist worked to get me to stand. This time, I was successful. Instead of trying to get me to sit, she had me walk down the hall to see them. Although I could walk, she decided I would need another night in the hospital and helped me back to bed.

Half an hour later, around 3:00, I slowly sat up on the bed without saying anything to the family gathered around me. When they finally noticed I was moving, I was almost standing. Using my sister's arm and Robin's head for balance, I walked slowly out of the room. The physical therapist saw me and decided she would have me climb and descend stairs, although she still wanted me to stay the night. She also showed me a regimen of four exercises I could do to help in my recovery.

My family, except for Elaine, left, figuring they would come back again the next day. At 3:15, the Physician's Assistant came in to tell me it was time to go home. He would fill out my paperwork and bring it back around 4:00. I got dressed for the first time since Tuesday and a wheelchair was brought for me. I still hadn't actually sat, so we weren't sure how I would handle the long drive home.

Once home, I had time to reflect on my stay in the hospital. It would be two weeks before I could even attempt to return to work and almost as long before I would get behind the wheel of a car.

It is strange. In addition to having somewhat hazy recollections of the time immediately before and after the surgery, I realize that I could not tell you what my room number was, or even the floor I was located on, for those few days I was in the hospital. As I lay on the gurney before surgery, I also realized it was my first planned hospital visit as opposed to an emergency visit for myself (several over the years), or a planned visit for someone else (Elaine's pregnancies, Robin's thumb surgery).

I have a small scar, although I'll never really be able to see it since it is located at the small of my back. It feels (and Elaine confirms) about an inch and a half long. Although I'm a month on the road to recovery and trying to work full time again, I still feel as if moving in the wrong way will cause the incision to re-open. I know this is an irrational fear, but when I spoke to Pat Sayre McCoy about it, she indicated similar thoughts about the appendectomy scar she received during Windycon.

Although I don't really need it, I occasionally carry a walking staff around now to help me walk and give me something to lean on. Last weekend, I attended Capricon as my return to society (fannish or otherwise). The carving of a morel mushroom on the top of the staff received praise and admiration from numerous sources.

My doctor also gave me a form which allows me to have a 90-day temporary handicapped tag in my car. Although I use it because I know I shouldn't try to push myself too hard (Capricon proved that to me), I still feel guilty when I use it. Interestingly, when I was given the application, the doctor noted that I could not walk more than 200 feet without resting. At the same time, he told me he wanted me to be able to walk a mile by the time he saw me on February 13.

In the entire time I was at home recovering, I think my favorite day came on Thursday, January 31. That was the morning that we woke up to Chicago's second snowstorm of the season. It really wasn't that much, but, as Elaine went out to clear the driveway of snow, I felt like I was staying home from work on a snow day rather than because I was recovering from surgery. I hadn't had that feeling since I was in junior high school and I have to say, it was a wonderful and nostalgic feeling. We lit a fire in the fireplace, watched movies and drank hot chocolate.



I'm already at a point where I feel fine the majority of the time, but my doctor has warned me to take it easy. Becoming too confident too quickly can result in more pain, probably muscular, but possibly neurological. I'm once again allowed to pick up my younger daughter, but I need to watch myself as I do it. ✱



## ***Take Up the Fannish Burden***

**Steven Pitluk**

Take up the fannish burden!

Escape your mundane ways—  
And make your way through fandom's,  
Hierarchical maze:

You'll look at fandom's structure,  
And hold it all in awe—

A neophyte to fandom,  
You will not see a flaw:

Take up the Trufan's burden—

Send forth the fanzine screed—  
Then, scribe your LOCs to others,  
To serve egoboo's need;

You write, edit and repro,  
And pub your ish on time—

You wait for response granting,  
The articles sublime.

Take up the Con Fan's burden—

Chair the con to agree,  
Time commitment will rob you  
Your spouse you shall not see;  
You'll wrangle concom and guests,  
To make things run so smooth,  
Your plans will go awry and  
Some egos you must soothe.

### **Web Intersection**

Pop, the Soda Shop: <http://www.popsoda.com/>  
For Your Used Book Needs: <http://www.abebooks.com/>  
Grudge Match: <http://www.grudge-match.com/>  
An interesting law firm: <http://www.b-f-h.com/>  
Museum of Hoaxes: <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/>  
Dubya's Dayly Diary: <http://www.madkane.com/bush.html>  
(If you are a fan of George W. Bush, you may not find this last one amusing.)

Take up the Filker's burden—

Compose songs of parody—  
Tune the strings of your guitar,  
Wax forth with melody;  
And when the night is darkest  
(the others all sleep)  
You'll sing the songs of fandom  
Beauty shall make you weep.

Take up the Fringe Fan's burden—

You share likes and dislikes,  
But hold other in'trests dear—  
They come at you like shrieks.  
Comics, Goths, costumers,  
You'll hunt for all your needs,  
And soon you'll found a new con  
Your interests it feeds.

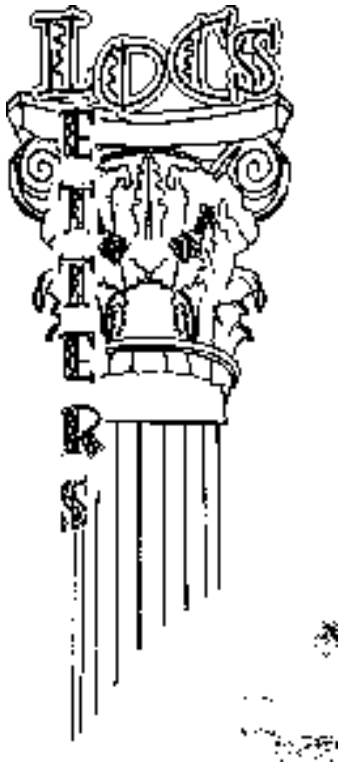
Take up the Femme Fan's burden—

Outnumbered as you are—  
Surround yourself with fanboys  
In orbit 'round your star.  
You'll find that you are welcomed,  
At every con you go,  
Femme fan, you will find yourself  
The center of the show.

So, take up the fannish burden!

Escape your mundane ways—  
And make your way through fandom's,  
Hierarchical maze:  
And soon the day will come when  
You'll be a Big Name Fan,  
The fans will recognize you,  
You'll want to start again.

**Letters or  
Correspondence**



While the print edition includes a letter column, the on-line version does not. Letters can be found on-line at <http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/aglocs.html>

## **Mock Section: Twincon: Minneapolis Worldcon in 1973**

In an alternate universe, Twincon was the thirty-first World Science Fiction Convention, held in Minneapolis, MN in 1973 at the Hotel Leamington. The guests of honor were Eric Frank Russell, Sandy Sanderson and Joan D. Carr. Clifford D. Simak served as toastmaster. Twincon also held the distinction of being the first Worldcon with a membership over 3,000. The official total was 3,019 members. Any resemblance to persons or places in our own timeline are completely coincidental.

### **Fiction Hugo Nominees:**

#### **Best Novel:**

334, Thomas M. Disch

*An Alien Heat*, Michael Moorcock

*The Farthest Shore*, Ursula K. Le Guin

*The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, Gene Wolfe

*The Sheep Look Up*, John Brunner

#### **Best Novella:**

“The Gold at Starbow’s End,” Frederik Pohl (*Analog* 3/72)

“Hero,” Joe Haldeman (*Analog*, 6/72)

“The Merchants of Venus,” Frederik Pohl (*Worlds of If*, 7-8/72)

“Sooner or Later or Never Never,” Gary Jennings (*F&SF*, 5/72)

“With the Bentfin Boomer Boys on Little Old New Alabama,” Richard Lupoff (*Again, Dangerous Visions*)

#### **Best Novelette:**

“The Animal Fair,” Alfred Bester (*F&SF*, 10/72)

“Goat Song,” Poul Anderson (*F&SF*, 2/72)

“Things Lost,” Thomas M. Disch (*Again, Dangerous Visions*)

“Tiger Boy,” Edgar Pangborn (*Universe* 2)

“Weihnachtsabend,” Keith Roberts (*New Worlds Quarterly* 4)

#### **Best Short Story:**

“Cloak of Anarchy,” Larry Niven (*Analog* 3/72)

“The Milk of Paradise,” James Tiptree, Jr. (*Again, Dangerous Visions*)

“Nobody’s Home,” Joanna Russ (*New Dimensions II*)

“On the Downhill Side,” Harlan Ellison (*Universe* 2)

“Their Thousandth Season,” Edward Bryant  
(*Clarion II*)

## **An Alternate List of Hugo Awards for 1973**

**Rich Horton**

People say (paraphrasing Peter Graham, whether they know it or not) that the Golden Age of SF is 13. I turned 13 in 1972, and indeed it was a Golden Age for me. That year I discovered that there was an actual category of books called Science Fiction, with its own section at Nichols Library in Naperville, IL. I was lured there by Andre Norton and Isaac Asimov and Clifford Simak and Arthur C. Clarke, and I have stayed there, more or less, ever since. Not long after that I discovered short fiction, and awards such as the Hugo and the Nebula. I clearly recall finding *Nebula Award Stories* 8, edited by Isaac Asimov and containing a story by Arthur C. Clarke, in the New Releases section of the library, sometime in 1973. So just as 1972 was the year I became an acknowledged SF reader, 1972 was the first year for which I was readily aware of the big SF awards, and for which I read the award-winning stories in a timely manner. In a way I became almost imprinted on those awards – at that age I accepted their authority in a way I find silly now. I believed somehow that a Hugo or Nebula Award winning story was automatically a great story.

And here I am, tasked to present my view of which stories really should have won the 1973 Hugo Awards, given for stories from 1972. I think back to my 13-year-old self, eagerly reading and enjoying the contents of *Nebula Award Stories* 8, confident that I was indeed reading the very best stories of that year. How can I defy that ancient wisdom?

Well, let's see. What were the winners? The Hugos went to Isaac Asimov's *The Gods Themselves* for novel, Ursula K. Le Guin's “The Word for World is Forest” for novella, Poul Anderson's “Goat Song” for novelette, and in a tie, Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth's “The Meeting” and R. A. Lafferty's “Eurema's Dam” for short story. (The novel and novelette

Nebulas were the same as the Hugos, while Arthur C. Clarke's "A Meeting with Medusa" and Joanna Russ' "When it Changed" won for novella and short story.) Is that really such a bad list? Even with 30 years of hindsight, I'd say no – the voters did a decent job. But not a great job – I have different choices in each category.

Novel first. The other Hugo nominees included two by Robert Silverberg, *The Book of Skulls* and *Dying Inside; There Will Be Time* by Poul Anderson; *A Choice of Gods* by Clifford Simak; and *When Harlie Was One* by David Gerrold. The Nebula shortlist was strikingly similar, including the same two Silverberg novels, and the Gerrold, plus Geo. Alec Effinger's *What Entropy Means to Me*, John Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up*, and Norman Spinrad's *The Iron Dream*.

I recall being very impressed by *Dying Inside* at the time – I think its angst-ridden slant on telepathy was just the thing for my teenaged self. But I don't think, in retrospect, that it's anything but a minor work. Most of the others on the lists really strike me as dated, none more so, perhaps, than *When Harlie Was One*, which I enjoyed back then but which I certainly can't conceive of as a Hugo winner. Of the combined shortlists, I think I would retain only John Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up* for my shortlist. Yes, it's a very 70s book, and very depressing too, but it remains an impressive "message" book.

My shortlist would also include Thomas M. Disch's fixup novel *334*, about the residents of a future apartment building. And I'd add Michael Moorcock's *An Alien Heat*, the first of his *Dancers at the End of Time* series, very amusing comic novels of the very far future. And we know now, after the 2001 Novel Hugo went to *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, that it's OK to nominate Young Adult novels: why not the capstone to one of the very great Young Adult trilogies, the *Earthsea Trilogy* by Ursula K. Le Guin? Book 3, *The Farthest Shore*, was published in 1972, and indeed it won a National Book Award – it goes on my Hugo shortlist as well.

The other novel is my ideal 1973 Hugo winner. Like *334*, and for that matter like *The Gods Themselves*, it is a fixup novel, but a spectacular fixup, in which the component novellas work excellently by themselves, but even better when taken as a whole. I'm speaking, of course, of *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, Gene Wolfe's first important novel. I read the opening novella in *Nebula Award Stories 8*, and I recall being fascinated but ultimately puzzled. I read the entire novel a few years later, and I thought I had figured it out. (I even knew the name of the main character!) I reread the novel quite recently, and I realized that I hadn't figured it out at all, but that every reading revealed more mysteries, and more potential answers to these mysteries. The central tropes, sister planets and shapechanging aliens, have been used again and again by Wolfe.

How about my novella award, then? Neither winner would make my shortlist – "The Word for World is Forest" is what some people call "Bad Ursula" – Le Guin at her shrillest and preachiast. Well-written, of course, but not a novella that I like much. And "A Meeting with Medusa" is a decent story of life on Jupiter, but in retrospect it doesn't strike me as any more than decent. I will, however, go to the Hugo shortlist and pluck three worthy candidates: Frederik Pohl's "The Gold at the Starbow's End", Joe Haldeman's "Hero", and Gene Wolfe's "The Fifth Head of Cerberus". But the Wolfe story is the opening of the novel, so it's got its award, already. The Haldeman is part of his fine novel, *The Forever War*, which was to win the 1976 Hugo. So I'll pad my shortlist with another Fred Pohl story, "The Merchants of Venus", his first Heechee story; and with a quintessentially early 1970s tale, Richard A. Lupoff's "With the Bentfin Boomer Boys on Little Old New Alabama" – a story that seems a bit silly now, but which I enjoyed immensely when I read it in Harlan Ellison's anthology *Again, Dangerous Visions*: it is vigorous and sexy and imaginative, and if it doesn't quite hold up over time, it's still worth a nostalgic read. My final shortlist entry would be Gary Jennings' hilarious novella set in the Australian outback: "Sooner or Later or Never Never". Jennings became fairly well known for a couple of thrillers later in his life, but this extremely funny story is by far my favorite of his works.

My novella Hugo winner? "The Gold at the Starbow's End". I read this in the only Best of the Year anthology Pohl edited: the Ace collection *Best Science Fiction for 1972*. (Ace briefly tried to establish a follow-on to the classic Wollheim/Carr *World's Best Science Fiction* series, after both Wollheim and Carr set up competing series at other publishers: this lasted only two years, with Forrest J. Ackerman editing the book in 1973.) Pohl apologized for including a story by himself, explaining that his excuse was that he had blown his budget and that he was the only writer he could ask to contribute a story for free, then admitting that his real reason was that he thought it was a damn good story. And he was right – it's the story of the first human starship, traveling to Alpha Centauri, and it's a gripping story with some real sense of wonder inducing ideas. (As with every novella on this list, it spawned a novel, the weaker expansion *Starbow*.)

I am very fond of the winner of both the Nebula and Hugo for Best Novelette of 1972, "Goat Song" by the late, truly great, Poul Anderson. As the title announces, it's one of Anderson's many SFnal tragedies. Certainly it belongs on my Novelette shortlist. What else? Another recently deceased writer, Keith Roberts, best known for the Alternate History novel *Pavane*, also wrote a great AH novelette, "Weihnachtsabend", first published in 1972. This is one of the classic "What if the Germans won WWII" stories, chilling and powerful. One of the finest results of Edgar Pangborn's late in life outpouring of post-holocaust stories is "Tiger Boy"—a bit overly sentimental, perhaps, as with much Pangborn, but sufficiently moving to push its way onto my list. Thomas M. Disch's contribution to *Again, Dangerous Visions* was the acerbic "Things Lost". (His afterword to the story suggested he was quitting the SF field—happily enough, as with so many other 1970s SF "retirements", his retirement didn't last long.) Another SFnal "retirement" had been Alfred Bester's—though he quit the field in the early 1960s. His return was heralded with "The Animal Fair" in 1972—and though none of Bester's late work was as good as his best 1950s stories, this one was close.

My choice for the Novelette Hugo? Keith Roberts' dark and twisty "Weihnachtsabend"—how about that for a Christmas story? Though I should say that choosing "Goat Song", as the voters did, would not be a bad thing, either.

The short story field of 1972 was very crowded. Indeed, I find the winners rather disappointing—I don't think they have held up nearly as well as my personal shortlist choices. I'll say first that I'd have been tempted to nominate Robert Sheckley's

“Zirn Left Unguarded, the Jenghik Palace in Flames, Jon Westerly Dead” on the strength of its title alone. But though the story itself is fine, it's not quite worthy of a Hugo nomination. But Edward Bryant's “Their Thousandth Season” is. This is one of Bryant's Cinnabar stories, and remarkably enough, it was published in *Clarion II*, an anthology reserved for new writers, graduates of the then fairly new Clarion writing instruction seminar. We don't see much of Bryant's fiction these days—but he really had chops.

I think the story in that *Nebula Award Stories 8* collection which I most liked back in 1973 was Harlan Ellison's lyrical unicorn story “On the Downhill Side”. That was the first story I ever read by Ellison, and I loved it. It's quite uncharacteristic of the stories on which his reputation is founded, but his range is wider than he sometimes gets credited with. Throughout the 1960s, Larry Niven built a reputation as the most impressive new “Hard SF” writer—but he never appeared in John Campbell's *Analog*, the hardest of the SF magazines. His first *Analog* appearance was shortly after Campbell's death, with the outstanding story “Cloak of Anarchy”, in the March 1972 issue. Just possibly Campbell saw this story and bought it before he died.

The Nebula winner for 1972 was Joanna Russ' “When It Changed” (another story from *Again, Dangerous Visions!*) But I don't think that was the best story Russ published in 1972. My choice for her best story would have been “Nobody's Home”, an astonishingly affecting story about a stupid person in a future built for the intelligent. In almost any year, it would have got my vote for Best Story of the year. But not in 1972, because ...

The most memorable writer of the early 1970s is easily James Tiptree, Jr. Several of her 1972 stories are worthy of awards, or at least nominations. Indeed, “Painwise” was nominated for both Hugo and Nebula as a Novelette, while “And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side” was nominated for both Short Story awards. One could also mention the novelette “Forever to a Hudson Bay Blanket”, and the short stories “On the Last Afternoon” and “And I Have Come Upon This Place by Lost Ways”. But for me the standout Tiptree story from 1972, indeed my favorite Tiptree story ever, and one of my favorite SF short stories of all time, is “The Milk of Paradise”, another piece from *Again, Dangerous Visions*. This story shares with “And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side” the theme of exogamy, one of Tiptree's most central obsessions—and for me it brings home the strangeness and attraction of the alien as powerfully as any SF story. And isn't “the strangeness and attraction of the alien” one of the truly basic SF themes? So—my 1973 Hugo choice for Short Story would have been “The Milk of Paradise”.

I suppose it is always a danger looking back to one's own “Golden Age”—the world was green then, things were so much better, I rap my cane obstreperously! But it does seem, listing these stories, these potential Hugo nominees, that SF in the early 1970s was not in so bad a shape at all. ✱

## Somerset Schools Short Fiction Competition

Winner's Trip Report  
by Cheryl Morgan

**T**o be honest, when I entered this competition I had little idea where I would go if I won. After all, I didn't really expect to win. I had vague thoughts of perhaps visiting Italy or Greece, maybe even Egypt, but America never crossed my mind. I didn't even know that there was such a thing as a World Science Fiction Convention, or such a place as Minneapolis.

So I have Mr. Brunner to thank for this, doubly so. I didn't even know that we had a famous science fiction writer living near Bridgwater, but it turns out he was one of the competition judges. My little brother's friend, Kim, says I'm an idiot and that Mr. Brunner is world famous, having won something called a Hugo Award for one of his books. Most of the time I think that Kim is pretty dumb. The kid is obsessed with vampires for a start. But it turns out that this time he was right.

Anyway, Mr. Brunner said that seeing as my story was science fiction, maybe I would like to go to this Worldcon thing. My friend Philippa, to whom I had promised my companion ticket if I won, got all excited. She's nuts about *Lord of the Rings*, and she figured that people from the Tolkien Society would be there. School and my parents were a bit concerned about letting two sixteen-year-old girls go to a convention in America. They worried that people there might be taking drugs and stuff. But Philly's mum, who is really great and sensible about teenagers, said she was OK with it, and Mr. Brunner said he would look out for us, so here we are.

We travelled to Minneapolis on Her Majesty's Airship, *Sir James Bigglesworth*. My dad, who was in the RAF during the war, says he knew Bigglesworth quite well and he was really chuffed that I was flying in an airship named after the famous fighter pilot. I don't care much for aircraft, blimps or otherwise, and would have much preferred going by sea so that we could look for dolphins and whales and other cute creatures. But at least this way we did not have to change transport in New York, which all my friends kept telling me is a really dangerous place. I think they were trying to scare me.

We hadn't expected to meet anyone else going to the convention on the flight, but we very quickly ran into a couple of Oxford University students called Dave and Martin. Dave is a bit deaf, but he seemed genuinely interested in my writing. Martin talked endlessly about computers, and they both drank amazing amounts of beer. Still, at least they never once mentioned football, which just goes to show that you probably get a better class of boys in Oxford than you do in Somerset.

Maybe I should apply there when I have done my A Levels. Mr. Brunner, who apparently knew the boys quite well, told us that they were nice lads but that we should never get mixed up with anything that they did that involved fireworks.

Minneapolis is HUGE: much bigger than Bristol. I don't think that it is as big as London is, but I've only been there briefly for a holiday and of course on my way to Heathrow. Philly and I were hoping that we'd find some American girls who could tell us where to go for really good clothes, but we've both spent so much money on books that I don't think we can afford it. There's a whole market in the convention selling all sorts of strange things. Philly bought a long green mediaeval dress and some plastic ears to make her look like an elf. Goodness only knows what people back home will make of that. She's got long, straight blonde hair so she really looks the part. Martin said that with my red hair I should get a Red Sonja outfit. I think he thought I wouldn't know what he meant, but I read comics too.

I've just got so many books that I'm not sure the airship will get off the ground on the way home. I've been relying on Dave to tell me which American authors are good because he seems to know what he is talking about. He likes Ursula Le Guin too. Which reminds me, she's here! Yes, really, Ursula Le Guin. I've talked to her, and she signed some books for me. "To Cheryl, may your writing career blossom!" I'm so chuffed. I shall cherish these books always.

Talking of famous people, there are lots of them. Larry Niven is here. People are still teasing him like crazy about that mistake in the beginning of *Ringworld* where he got the Earth rotating the wrong way or something. Boys can be so anal at times. Still, Niven seems a really nice guy and he's taking it very well.

On the subject of stupid boys, there's a whole big room here set aside for wargames. You know, lots of boys sitting round poring over charts of statistics and taking 15 minutes to work out what manoeuvres a jet fighter makes in 15 seconds of combat. That sort of thing. However, I did notice something interesting. There were two guys from an American game company, Gary and Dave, I think, and they had this new type of multi-player game. Instead of controlling armies or fleets, each player gets to control just one character. And it has a mediaeval setting, so you can be a knight or a priest or a magician, and you go round killing monsters. Philly tried playing it and was really chuffed when they let her be an elf sorceress. I think this could catch on.

There's a lot of Star Trek here too. People are going round dressed as Kirk and Spock and even as Klingons. The girls dressed as Uhura or Janice Rand get followed everywhere. My mum would have a fit if I wore a skirt that short in public. There's a guy here called Ben, who Dave and Martin know, who seems to know everything about every episode that has ever been screened.

Talking of Ben, they have a sort of debating society here. It is called a Business Meeting, and it is supposed to set the rules for the World Science Fiction Society. The Americans take debate very seriously, and they have this big fat book called *Roberts Rules of Order* which sets down exactly what sort of motions you can make and when and so on. Anyway, Ben is one of the big shots at this thing, making leading motions and everything. But this year there was this little kid from California called Kevin who kept raising points of order and telling Ben he was doing things wrong. Ben would get all annoyed, but Mr. Scithers, the chairman of the meeting, would look it up in the book and tell everyone that Kevin was right. I bet that kid will be really objectionable when he grows up.

Anyway, the convention is almost over and I have had a really wonderful time. I have gone to all sorts of fascinating discussions, met some really famous authors, and had a lot of fun. This evening it is the big do, the award ceremony for the Hugos. Much to my surprise, one of Mr. Brunner's books is again in contention. He didn't tell us that. He is such a nice, modest man. I'd like him to win, but he has some really stiff competition. I had a dreadful time deciding whom to vote for. I love Le Guin's work, but can I vote for her ahead of Mr. Brunner after all he has done for me? And then there is that book, *An Alien Heat*, by Michael Moorcock, which I have read and is just screamingly funny. Thankfully Moorcock isn't here. My mum would have had a fit if she thought I'd been mixing with someone whom the *Daily Telegraph* claims is a notorious drug addict. But Dave tells me that this Gene Wolfe fellow is just the best writer that there is and that he really ought to win because he's so good.

There is going to be a really posh ceremony, just like the Oscars. I'm so embarrassed. Mr. Brunner didn't think to tell us we'd need evening dresses. He's ever so nice, but men never think of things like that. Philly is wearing her elf costume and looks really smart, even if the ears are a bit tacky. All I had packed was a couple of sundresses in case it was warm. Of course I have hardly been out of the hotel so they were both clean. I hope I don't look too much like a country bumpkin.

Still, I had better put this away now. Martin says that one day I'll be able to get a computer the size of this notebook that will fit in my handbag and then I won't need to type anything up when I get home. I think he reads too much science fiction. Anyway, he's had at least 5 pints already this evening. I'll get back to this tomorrow morning and tell you who won the Hugo.

\*\*

## By Zeppelin and Yak to Minneapolis and Back

Marc Ortlieb

The problem with zeppelins is that you can never really trust them. There are always "unavoidable" problems - the wind was blowing in the wrong direction, the Americans have refused to supply the necessary helium, sparks from the mooring mast have set fire to the hydrogen cells - you know the sort of thing. It was then with great relief that I noted the Minneapolis in '73 blimp easing its cetacean bulk into the Toronto Airship Berth. I'd been worried about getting to

Twincon ever since I'd found that my booking on the Bozo Bus had been lost in an inexplicable time warp but Mike had assured me that catching the Zeppelin was the next best alternative.

Mike helped me to load the boxes of Australia in '75 t-shirts at the baggage check-in and I passed him a final surprise gift - a slouch hat personally autographed by Paul Stevens. After he checked it for plastic explosive, he thanked me and promised to catch up with me at the con. I was ushered to my seat and, following the compulsory lecture on making sure that all shoes were deflated before taking off, the airship gently lifted off.

I guess it was a combination of the complimentary glass of blog, the gentle swaying of the airship and the FAPA mailing I'd been trying to read; whatever the cause, I nodded off. When I woke, it was to a chorus of out-of-tune voices singing "Asta Zangasta's a dirty old geezer/Got fleas on his chest/And sores on his beezer."

A hand shook me and a voice whispered in my ear "Do you have your elevator pass?" I looked up and there was Denny Lien, dressed in what would have passed for a perfect replica of a Combine Officer's uniform, were it not for the fact that he'd sewn the cardboard epaulettes on the wrong way up and they showed the Coors Bheer emblem rather than the expected Zangastan sigil.

"Of course I do," I replied and presented the pass, signed by Mike Wood and counter signed by Ken Fletcher.

"Very well," said Denny. "You may descend."

I slithered my way down the rope ladder to the roof of the Leamington. Several of the airship crew were tossing luggage from the zeppelin hold to handlers below. "Careful with my bags," I yelled. "There are Darwin Stubbies of Fosters in them!" I noticed that the handlers were far more diligent in their catching after that.

Having shown my pass once more, this time to a gopher whose paws had been surgically modified so that he could operate the elevator buttons, I was whisked down to the main Leamington Ballroom, which had been commandeered for the morning to act as registration. "Follow the rubber line," said a voice and I obeyed, finding myself in one of twenty queues any one of which had more members than your average Australian Science Fiction Convention. I turned to the person behind me to comment on the fact, only to find myself face to face with Eric Lindsay. "Morning Cram," he said, passing me a bottle of Beam's Choice. "Have some of this. It'll help to pass the time."

It certainly did. My brain slipped from mundane straight into convention mode. Events flashed past like some poorly synchronized magic lantern show. Occasionally an event paused long enough for me to thoroughly grok it. My clumsy attempt to pick out the chords to "Chundered in the Old Pacific Sea" were counterpointed by Nate Bucklin's superb rendition of "The New Pterodactyls." I sat in awe as Denny, Spider Robinson and Bob Tucker turned a panel on deconstructing Frankenstein's monster into a full-scale pun fest, complete with whale jokes and Denny's comment that the original score for the film was composed by Carl Orff.

One slide that remains indelibly etched on my brain is the one where I'm chatting to a small pipe smoking woman. "Will you be coming to Australia if we win the bid?" I ask.

"Probably," she replies.

"You berk," says Robin Johnson. "That's Ursula..."

Of course there was more: The Australia in '75 parties complete with the joy of having to continually repair the precious print of the Antifan movie in a fug of Fosters' fumes and the delightful Alice, whose second name I didn't quite catch, who assured me that raccoons were just as interesting as wombats and who promised to show me around a raccoon sanctuary just outside of Chicago should my itinerary see me pass through. Unfortunately, just as I was about to get her address, Robert Silverberg grabbed me. He needed a few plants in the audience for his panel on the new wave of masculine science fiction as embodied by James Tiptree Jr. I didn't see her again after that.

That wasn't all I missed. Despite being an Eric Frank Russell fanatic, I missed his speech. A group of Martians shanghaied me into an all-night chess game that managed to go for 41 minutes and 19 seconds longer than I'd anticipated. (I'd forgotten that the Martian day was longer than ours and so had the Martians, engrossed as they were in a particularly nasty knight forking move.)

Then there was the masquerade which was enlivened by a cartoon duel between ATom, Rotsler and Bode. I would have dearly loved to have been there, but that afternoon, I'd been dragged out to a dessert bar by Denny Lien and Carey Handfield and my stomach was in a decidedly tender state, given that I'd attempted to eat an entire Lallapolooza - multiple layers of cream, ice cream, syrup, nuts and fruit served in a full-sized brandy balloon. I spent the evening in my room. It would be churlish of me to note that Carey not only finished his but polished off the remains of mine AND appeared in the masquerade as Nicholas van Rijn. Poul was impressed until Carey chundered over the front row of the audience - including most of the executive of the SFWA.

My last memories on Twincon are even more confused than the rest. I was supposed to be helping Carey in the site selection vote counting, and I'd set off for the secretly designated room pausing only to admire the scantily clad Bozoettes preparing for the panel on the role of strategically placed sequins in masquerade costumes. While my attention was thus distracted, I failed to note the dark caped figure lurking in the shadows.

SF is serious,  
important  
stuff. We only  
do Sercon here.



Today we  
will discuss  
"Did Ewoks  
evolve from  
Winnie the  
Pooh?"

The next thing I noticed was the smell of the matted hair on the yak that was carrying me through a remote snow encrusted pass in the Himalayas. But that was another convention altogether. \*\*

## Twincon – the moment that changed it all

Guy Lillian

**M**y major memory of Twincon? The sweetest memory of all. I met my lady there.

Of course, she wasn't my lady then, and at the time, I got the impression that she thought I was something of a dweeb. Or did we have the word "dweeb" back in the early seventies? Let me cast my mind back ...

Let's see: I was 24, a Berkeley graduate, and attending the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, one semester away from finishing the world's most enjoyable and useless graduate degree known to man, a Masters of Fine Arts. I'd driven to Minneapolis with some "mundane" friends of mine from the MFA program, John Hildebrandt and Lynne Barrett. (Hildebrandt now runs a huge amusement park in Ohio and Lynne has won an Edgar Award for a mystery story. Why they wasted their time with my company is anyone's guess.) While they visited Lynne's aunt, I attended the convention, reacquainting myself with Quinn Yarbrow and other stalwarts of the Little Men, the fabled Bay Area SF club, which I'd joined in my undergrad years. I crashed with several guys from my other club, the New Orleans SF Association; the Leamington Hotel didn't mind our crowding our room with cots. I never will forget how Norman Elfer's cot collapsed in the middle of the night ... Norman, now an engineer with Martin Marietta, still shakes his head ruefully when I remind him of it.

Anyway, Quinn was then secretary of the SFWA, and was running the press room. Tom Whitmore and I assisted her as runners, or "Feet." The job usually entailed finding a willing writer or artist for a media interview, and I'd been privileged to fetch Larry Niven, whom I'd met at Berkeley, and the extraordinarily urbane and charming John Brunner, who asked me some very apt questions about the perils of having long hair and living in the South. He was pleased when I told him I'd had no problems. Possibly the most delicate – yet rewarding -- task I was assigned was dragging Ursula K. LeGuin away from a luncheon for a talk with the scribe from *Time*. I knew from my stint as official photographer at the '69 and '70 Nebula banquets that Ms. LeGuin was painfully camera-shy and valued her privacy. That she was lunching with Alfred Bester made my duty all the more horrid.

That's a scene I never will forget – for many reasons. Imagine being a skinny 24-year-old boy, hair to one's shoulders, wearing a patched pair of jeans and a bulky sweatshirt, and having to walk into a pricey restaurant and interrupt a table full of idols. Ms. LeGuin sat to the right of a handsome, smiling man in specs and a goatee. It was, of course, Bester. That incredible gent – whom I'd interview a year later for an article about Julie Schwartz – was inspiring smiles not only from Ms. Ursula but from the others at table with an expansive, hand-waving story about – I gathered – Marilyn Monroe. The rest of the table? Brunner was there, and Gene Wolfe, who looked like an unsmiling version of my high school principal, and Joe Green, the Florida writer whom I had met at a DeepSouthCon in New Orleans. Sitting beside him, watching Bester, was a beautifully-dressed young lady who had to be Joe's daughter. She had dark curly hair, a heart-shaped face, a ski-slope nose, and eyes the size of small counties. Which turned to me as I approached the table.

Now, I've heard this story told by others, and it is *not true* that I interrupted Bester. Even at 24 I wasn't quite that gauche. His Marilyn Monroe anecdote had concluded, and the table was relaxed and smiling as I tore my gaze from the girl and attracted Ms. LeGuin's attention. "Excuse me, ma'am," I said, "but Quinn Yarbrow sent me to find you. That *Time* interviewer is here."

"*Time*?" Bester grinned. "I want her for *Holiday*!"

I gawped and smiled nervously. At the time I didn't know that the great Bester was a constant contributor for that lamented magazine.

"Oh, Guy!" Joe said. "Come here a second." He beckoned me around to the other side of the table. "This is my daughter, Rosy."

The young beauty beside him looked up at me. I gubbed and gabbled a hello. Her smile would have melted a cast iron statue across a soccer field at midnight.

"Are those risque stories I've heard about you true?" she asked, teasingly.

"Ubba ubba ubba," I replied, suave as usual. I was immediately conscious of my tattered jeans and cruddy sweatshirt.

"Sit!" Bester commanded, pointing to the empty chair beside Rosy. "*Time* magazine can wait. Now, Ursula ..."

My utter lack of grace, for remember I was only 24, embarrasses me now, but I did sit. I listened to those immortals of our genre chat for a good fifteen minutes, and if I had space, I'd recount every delightful line, every jolly anecdote, every pointed observation. But here I'll simply report how dazzled I was by Rosy Green. She was 18 then, with beauty and bearing and that ineffable quality I've heard called "class." With her father there, I couldn't ask her what I most wanted to ask: "What risque stories?"

That quarter hour got me into trouble with Quinn, who came in herself to get LeGuin for her interview. She immediately hustled me out of there to take care of some other bit of press room business. I didn't see Rosy again until the Hugo ceremonies, when I spotted her and her father chatting with Joanna Russ. She looked over in my direction and smiled.



As I say, I got to interview Alfred Bester a year later, and someday I'll have to write that afternoon up for my genzine *Challenger*. I saw Brunner again at a DeepSouthCon in New Orleans in 1979. Both gentlemen are missed on this planet and in this field. As for Twincon, there are many other memories I treasure from it. It was only my second worldcon, and as you know it was the largest of all time to that point. I got to witness the famous argument between Harlan and Ed Bryant written up in *The Last Dangerous Visions*. Not much of an argument, really; those guys were and are buddies. I was wowed by Edgar Pangborn; his *Davy* is much better when read by a grown man than it was when read by a dumb teenager.

As for Rosy – well, a mere 27 years after that awkward moment at Twincon, I married her. I've grown old, bald, fat. She hasn't changed a bit. No, that's not true. She's even lovelier.\*

## Running Twincon

Joyce Scrivner

**I**t was an amazing convention!

The great wild and wacky Mipple-Stipple fandom has created a marvelous yearly convention—Minicon (the 7th of which was held this past April at the Hyatt Motor Lodge)—but Twincon was wilder and whacker (do you mean "wackier" here?) than ever! I know the locals were a little overwhelmed with registration—over 3000 people!—but they coped and had fun solving the problems.

Jim Young was a typical skinny fan boy having fun (well, he wore a propeller beanie and flashed a ray gun at Opening Ceremonies, wouldn't you call that a fan boy having fun?) and the rest of MinnStf—from Happy Deadwood Fred Haskell to the more recent Duck calling fan Mike Wood—played their parts as well. There were some stray ooties—like the Fishers from St. Louis - that showed their support in helping to run the convention—as well.

I'm sorry it's over and gone, but maybe I can give you some flavor of what happened.

I arrived mid afternoon on Wednesday as I knew I knew the Bozo Bus Building would be jumping on all the floors with people working on the convention And the Guests of Honor had been invited and would show up to help as well. This way I could meet the authors and pros, I knew I'd be too busy during the convention to see much programming.

I found Sandy Sanderson (aka Joan Carr) and his wife Joy in the middle of large containers of vegetables and knives. Lots of compost material in tubs, but much more useful were the vegetables in barrels of water. The containers were being hauled out to a refrigerator truck parked in front of the building. Sandy pointed next door when I asked where Linda Lounsbury was.

Starting off the convention staying on Ken Fletcher/Linda Lounsbury's floor in the Bozo Bus Annex is not a terrible trial at all. It's a little quieter than staying in one of Boz's apartments and certainly close enough (being just next door) to be involved in all the activities. Linda was sorting registration cards and name tags when I put my luggage in a corner of her living room. I went upstairs to say hello to Ken—master of the shading plate and styli—who was doing small drawings to be used for the daily newsletters. (There should be a small Ken Fletch illo somewhere on this page—I bought one at the art show specifically to show off.)

That night the Buildings—the Bozo and the Annex—were full of visiting fans—Linda and Ron Bushyager were using the guest bedroom in Ken/Linda's house—and the Benford brothers were acting as if they'd never lived in Texas (or been involved with the Dallas in 73 bid) while staying with Scott Imes and Margey Lessinger in the Bozo. I saw lots of others doing collatio of the program books (in Mark Digre's basement apartment.) There were more people stuffing of the registration packs (on Fred Haskell's floor areas.) And there was general making merry.

There was Joyce (ex-Fisher, now Katz) and Arnie upstairs. Ray Fisher (who had chaired St. Louiecon, only four years ago) looked much more relaxed than he had then. Ted White hung out on the back balconies with various people scenting the air and talking about printing methods. (Is Mimeo better? Should you use yellow ditto masters for hecto?)

Frank and Carol Stodolka showed up later in the evening with several sacks of White Castle hamburgers and a stray Susan Wood they'd collected from where David Emerson was still busy typing up the restaurant guide.

Somehow I felt as if the convention was already beginning—and I wasn't wrong.

I had volunteered to help Linda with registration—since I was staying with them I felt it was appropriate. So after I had spent some time going up and down the Bozo just to greet the people there, I came back to her house and worked at sorting name tags and checking that all the transfers had been done and such. Linda Bushyager, who was doing the newsletter was asking about who would be there. Linda said that James Tiptree (who I for one wanted to meet), Keith Roberts, Michael Moorcock and Gary Jennings weren't going to make it, but the rest of the Hugo nominees would be around. And the LA people—who had run the previous Worldcon—were planning a big party on Saturday night.

Joe and Gay Haldeman stopped in after dinner and Larry Niven and Fuzzy Pink reported that the art show panels had arrived. I was hoping to meet Ursula Le Guin, but she wouldn't be there until the next day. Mad Man Riley brought Jon and Joni Stopa and a very \*loud\* set of records. I turned off my hearing aids and went to bed sometime after midnight, but before all the registration packets had been built. It was just a much bigger Minicon!

I spent all Thursday morning moving registration from Linda's house to the Leamington, and then most of Thursday afternoon helping Linda organize it. We opened registration as soon as we had enough people to staff it, and we must have registered most of the convention that day. I recall asking someone his name, not hearing it and having to have him repeat

it—only to find it was Harlan Ellison. At least when I worked registration I could see most of the people who showed up, even if I didn't have much time to talk with them.

I watched Jim Young and Fred Haskell with their ray guns heading towards Opening Ceremonies, but couldn't leave registration. It was fun to be there, but frustrating to miss the skit I know they'd planned for Poul Anderson and Gordie Dickson (two members of the original Minnesota Fantasy Society.) I sneaked in briefly to see Cliff Simak introducing the pros in the audience.

I woke a little early the next morning so I could raid the huckster room. Louie Spooner had set it up perfectly as far as I was concerned—Don Blyly and Uncle Hugos were in one corner, and Imagination Unlimited—with the fantastic Bonnie Dalzell original art work was in another. In between the two were people selling used books, and at least one bookseller from the UK. Rusty, as usual, had a table of select books and magazines. I bought a hardcover of Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up* especially for his signing later.

Friday was a day filled with more registration—and lots and lots of new people showing up as well. Someone had put a notice about Twincon on MPR (and it was noted in the Sunday Star Tribune as well) and a flock of locals arrived. We were happy to take their money to make sure Twincon broke even. But I felt rather overwhelmed by the number of people in the Leamington's lobby and elevators. (I was happy I'd booked a room on the 3rd floor so I didn't have far to walk up if I wanted to sleep or change clothes.) By the end of that day, 10 pm, we had registered our three thousandth member. I was exhausted, and Linda and I went up to the Committee Den and were treated to miso soup by Jon Singer. Jerry Kaufman (who was running the fan lounge) and his roommate Stu Shiffman serenaded us with filk.

I heard stories of the zeppelins that lined the consuite and how crowded it was. Mostly I was glad the convention was going well. I enjoyed some of the tales from the programming people—for instance poor Blue Petal had lost the slide projector that was used in opening ceremonies and the art presentations turned into artists standing up and doing drawings on large sheets of paper on the walls. The filk concert that Jim Young had arranged for that evening—with Gordie and Anne McCaffrey as featured performers ended up in the ballroom. Jim gave up on trying to play there and was sent to bed by Karen Johnson—Fred's wife.

Saturday I was finally managed to get to some programming. I was in the audience when Ed Bryant and Harlan talked about new movies and television. Harlan gave his 'Starlost' story with lots and lots of gory details. Ed chimed in and told about the glories of Harlan's house—the marvelous art hidden in the walls and the stray people who came through. It was a grand presentation.

Linda and I closed registration before the masquerade and went out to dinner at Murray's. As long as the crowd was in the main hall we could relax. We'd spent most of the day cleaning up the registration database and the registration area. Anyone who wanted to register on Sunday (or Monday) would register in Security. We'd passed them all the remaining badges and information. When we came back—it was the first time either of us had left the hotel during the convention—Linda changed into a hall costume and we went in different directions to party.

I spent most of the evening with Robin Johnson and the Aussiecon people. They were tired from the final bidding parties they'd thrown during the evenings, but were up for drinking someone else's wine. The gent in the Anti-fan costume had been a major draw for them—and he was certainly cheery even if he did sing 'Pub with no beer' off key. I'm not sure I want to meet Paul Stevens in a dark corner again, ...

I didn't stay up too late—midnight was enough.

Anyway, I'd bought a ticket to the banquet—\$12 sounded so expensive - but where else could I see so many of my favorite authors close up? I spent most of the day in the fan areas talking with Sandy Sanderson and others. I had handed a copy of the registration database to Robin Johnson after the business meeting, and we talked—all too briefly it turned out—about how to set up a bank account for them. (I think Robin spent most of Tuesday talking with banks, and if he had problems with getting the checks cashed in a timely manner, I expect some of the fault was mine.)

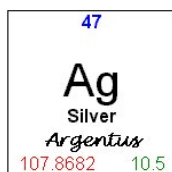
The banquet that night was only 500 people—but such elegance! Of course there were a few people in rather risqué costumes—Patia for instance—but most people had dressed to the nines. Eric Frank Russell's speech was short and snappy, and Cliff Simak's toastmastership was as dignified as he always is.

I was surprised by the Hugo results—but that isn't unexpected—*The Fifth Head of Cerberus* winning the novel was odd. The crowd at the back (and on the balconies especially) applauded everyone loudly.

Anyway, Monday was mostly packing up stuff—I made one more run through the huckster room before it closed—I never made it to the art show—a good idea for my pocket book! The dead dog Monday night was fairly peaceful for once. I think everyone was fairly exhausted. I did ask Jim Young how he felt and he's words were basically—never again! Chuck Holst took a photo of Jim in the corner sleeping on Jim Odbert and labeled it in Rune—the Jim Dandies. It was taken that night.

Tuesday we were all back at the Bozo. The refrigerator truck had been emptied into the apartments on the first floor and returned. The last of the party supplies were available for people still in town—there was some good beer if you looked hard enough. Ted found space with rich brown on the porches again. I'm sure I saw Joyce Katz there too. Even Ursula was on the balcony with her pipe for a little while. Sandy Sanderson and Joy were around for a while, but they were planning on an early start the next morning to drive through Wisconsin Dells back to Long Island.

Anyway, I'm sorry I didn't see you,...\*~



This Veteran's Day, there will be no Philcon, no Orycon, and no Tropicon. Get your Fannish fix at:



# WindyCon XXIX

**Author Guest: Charles de Lint**

*The Little Country, The Onion Girl*

**Artist Guest: Lisa Snellings**

*Dark Carnival Kinetic Sculptures*

**Editor Guest: Shawna McCarthy**

*Editor Realms of Fantasy*

**Fen Guests: Evelyn and Mark Leeper**

*Editors of MT Void*

**Toastmaster: Bob Eggleton**

*Artist*

November 8-10, 2002  
Hyatt Regency—Woodfield  
Schaumburg, Illinois

Pre-reg: \$35 (through 10/11/02)  
At the door: \$50

A fantastic weekend of panels, films, filk, fanac, gaming, art, auctions, dances, and travel into the magical worlds of Charles de Lint and Lisa Snellings.



WindyCon  
POB 184  
Palatine, IL 60076-0184

847-677-WNDY (9639)

Why this showed up in your mailbox:

\_\_\_\_\_ You LoC me, you really LoC me.

\_\_\_\_\_ You showed my yours, I'm showing you mine.

\_\_\_\_\_ The stars are aligned in just the right way.

\_\_\_\_\_ ~~Intel~~ You're Inside.

\_\_\_\_\_ When I asked Ghughle who to send it to, your name appeared.

\_\_\_\_\_ You didn't say you didn't want it.

Argentus  
707 Sapling Lane  
Deerfield, IL 60015-3969  
<http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/argentus.html>