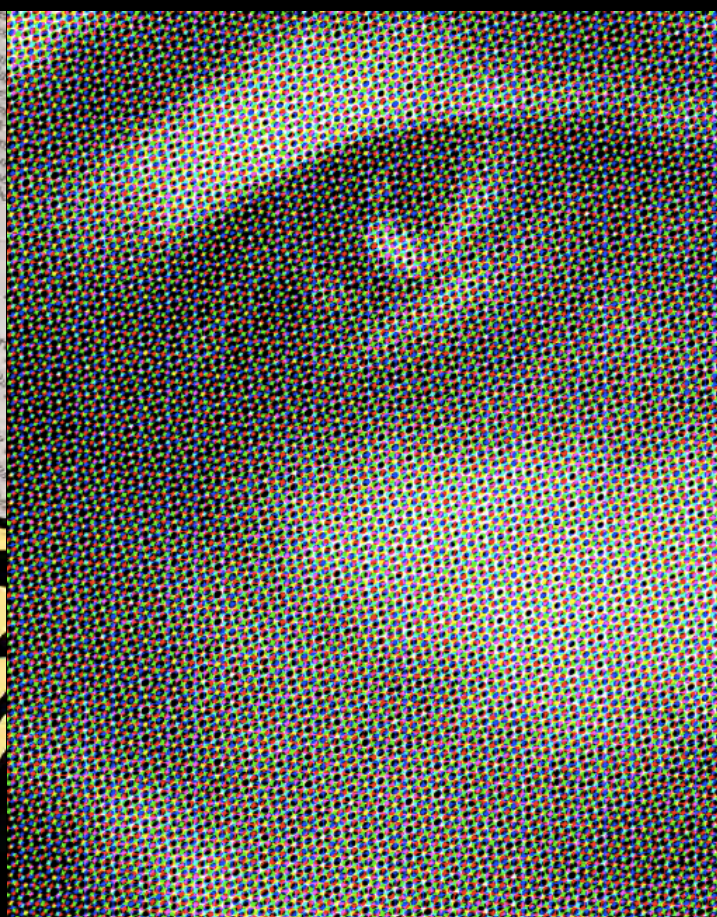
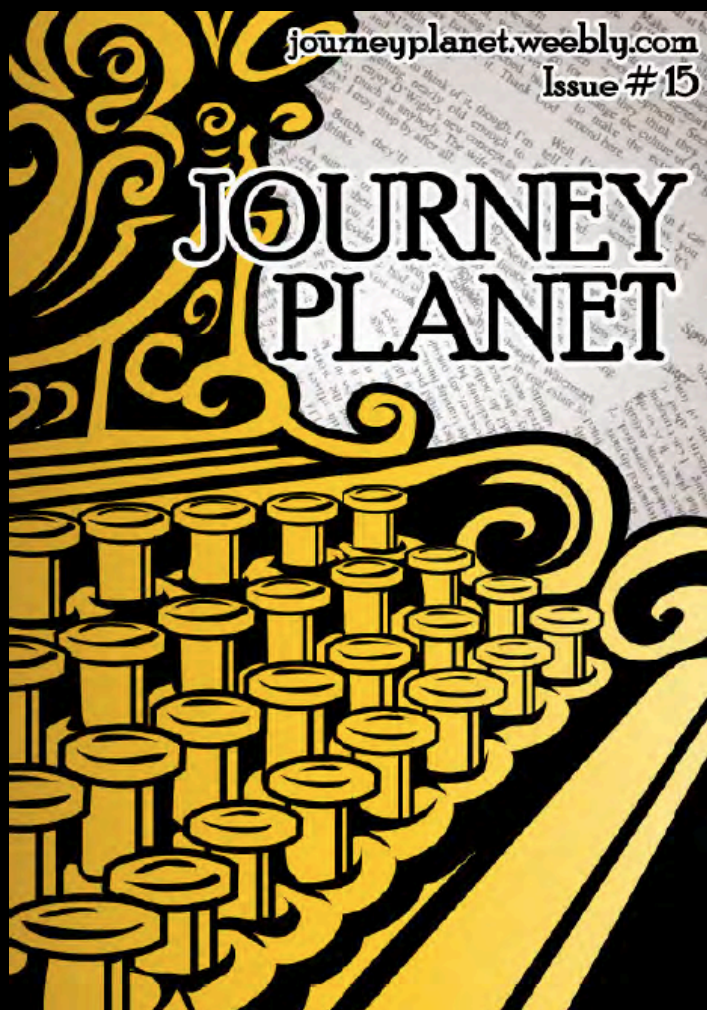
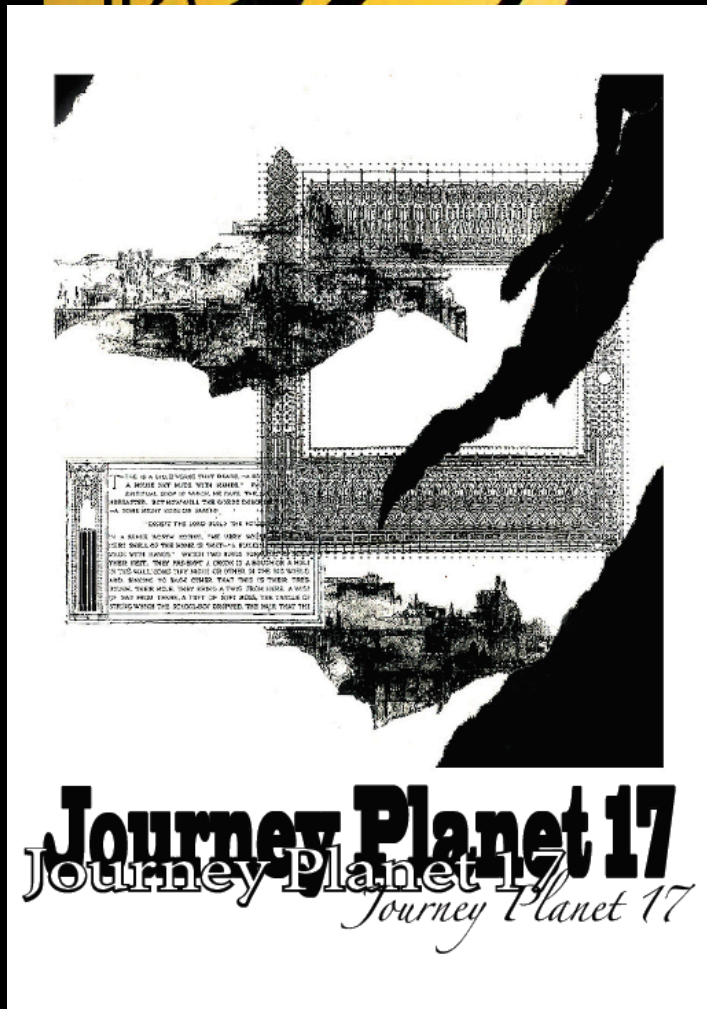


Journey Planet 15 / 16 / 17 / 18



Journey Planet 16 | the Philip K. Dick issue



Journey Planet 18

Journey Planet 2013

Gentle Reader,

We welcome you to Journey Planet: The 2014 Hugo Packet Edition. We have taken all the issues published in 2013 and created one giant bumper issue, which in addition to being giant, is also conveniently travel-sized for your e-reader!

JP is an “old skool” fanzine - we lay out the issues so that they can be printed and turned into a physical copy of the ‘zine. We do put them up on the internet as PDFs as well, but there’s something about holding a physical copy of an issue of a ‘zine in our hands that we just love.

We hope you will as well.

We have editorials, well researched critiques, Letters of Comment from our readers, short fiction, and lots of art.

We also make each issue “themed for your pleasure”, as we like to say. In order to do this, we find guest editors who are passionate about a theme that also intrigues us, and we pester them until they say yes encourage them to guest edit the issue with us!

Without further ado, we bring you the 2014 Hugo Packet Edition of Journey Planet. Thanks for nominating us, thanks for reading us, and enjoy!

Christopher J. Garcia and James Bacon, Editors
Lynda E. Rucker, Pete Young, Colin Harris, and Helen J Montgomery,
Guest Editors

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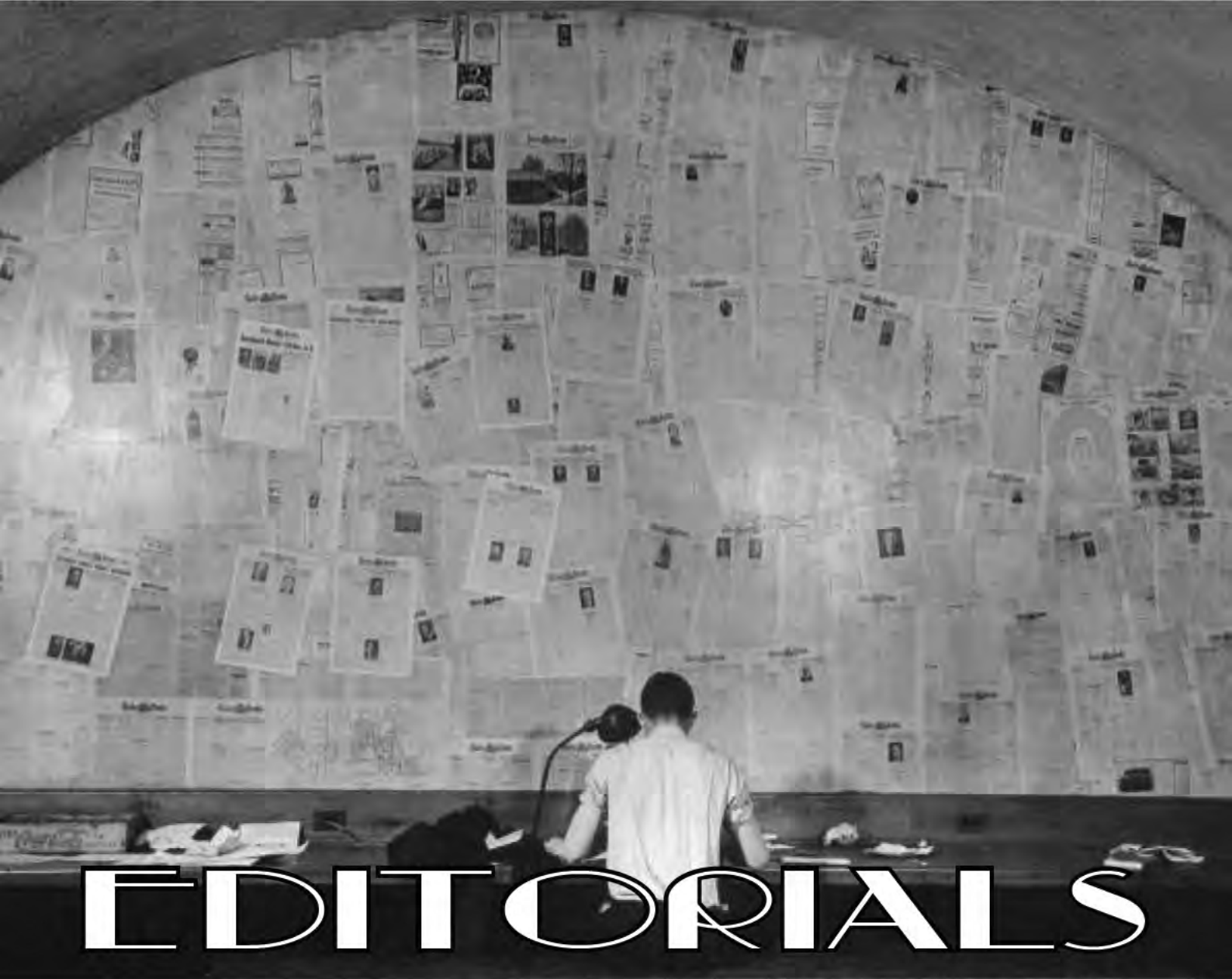
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EDITORS - JAMES BACON - CHRIS GARCIA
GUEST EDITOR - LYNDA E. RUCKER



I recently had a chance to meet up with one of my favorite authors in the Dealer's Room at a con. I always look forward to getting a brief chance to chat, since I'm all too often a whirling dervish through a convention hall. While we were talking, there was a gentleman I knew by reputation chatting with him and me.

And have you ever noticed that when people say they knew someone "by reputation," it's seldom a good thing.

He wandered off and author friend and I were left alone for a moment, at which time he asked, "Do you know anything about the gentleman who just walked off?"

I admitted I'd heard things.

"He's a snake," he answered.

"So I've heard."

In fact, I'd been looking to put together an anthology of stories a year or so ago, something that would have been a lot of fun. I put out a call for folks who might want to work with me and the gentleman had been on a list of folks one person had

recommended to me. A friend who had contacted me on various matters over the years asked to take a look at the list I put together. I shared the list of folks with her, and she basically said, "On the matter of <Mr. X>, if you want to get hosed, he's your guy."

Isn't it always the case?

I eventually scuttled the anthology idea (unless any of you wanna help edit *Wrestling with Science Fiction!*), and haven't been able to think about it since. These things happen.

Writers live a difficult life. I used to want to be one. I used to write fiction, almost at the rate I currently write my other stuff. I'd try to write a story a day, get it submitted. It was a pretty solid rate of work. And, as is always the case on the things I do a lot, I kept cranking and never got any better, got nowhere fast and never got published. These things happen. I ended up giving up on becoming a writer, started doing zines, writing for folks, doing what I could without having to deal with the troubles of submitting to magazines and the like. I'm so much happier just pumping out the crap I come up with

than trying to crack markets.

You see, writing is hustling, and if I'm gonna hustle, I'm gonna hustle much bigger than trying to get published.

When Lynda and James came up with this theme, well, I knew I wouldn't have too much to add. I'm not a writer; I'm a guy who writes. And writes. And writes. There's a lot more to being a writer than just writing. There's the obvious (editing, and when have I ever managed that?), and the less obvious (getting your name out, submitting) and a million little things that I would never be able to manage. It takes a certain mindset, and of course, it takes talent. These are things I just don't have. It's one of the reasons I hold writers in such high regard: they got what I ain't.

It's a tough world for a writer, one that I used to think would be cool. Not so much anymore. It's not that writers aren't cool, they are, but I guess I had an image of Fame and Fortune attached to the idea of being a writer, and that's just not the case, it turns out. What I wanted to do, it turns out, was tell stories. It doesn't make any difference whether I tell them to an audience of thousands or the five or six people who read *The Drink Tank*. I can never be a writer for one simple reason: I'm perfectly happy just telling my stories in my own pages. If you can be satisfied by less, then you probably shouldn't bother with the whole writer thing.

Besides, those who have read my fiction will tell you we're all the better for my giving up.

In other news, we're on the ballot! I believe, and with a preliminary search, no one has ever had two separate zines on the ballot in back to back years! Weird! We have to thank everyone who made it possible, and I'm so glad that the wonderful Emma King, Helen Montgomery, and Pete are on the ballot along with James and I! They're a HUGE part of why last year was so great for Journey Planet!

The Hugos are a big deal, and seeing Journey Planet on the list makes me a very happy guy. It's the zine that I put a lot into, but I've always thought that this is as much James' baby as *The Drink Tank* is mine, and I am so grateful to be along for the ride! Also, I really love that we've got so many wonderful folks on the ballot with us!

And we're gonna keep going! We're looking at Philip K. Dick in the next issue, and then... well, we're not sure yet. It's gonna be a good time! I hope y'all write somethin' for us, or at least send even the briefest of letters of comment to journeyplanet@gmail.com. Or art. Or baked goods. Take your pick!

~Chris Garcia

I am a fan of science fiction and comics. I pay good money for books and comics. I have done for some time, and it never really occurred to me that writers really have a shit time sometimes. John Whitbourn, who wrote *Popes and Phantoms*, an amazing book, was a GOH, and it struck me as odd that he still had a day job with the customs. Writing didn't pay enough, which I didn't really take in.

There are always the big authors, but it took a casual conversation about Tim Powers, another GOH, at another con, to really sink in. 'He worked in a pizza place, to make ends meet'. Really. Like really.

The industry of publishing is just that, an industry. Many people are making a living from it, from printers to booksellers to editors to the publishers' shareholders. And the end user pays a decent amount.

But do authors get treated decently? Where is the care and the living wage? I remember seeing a John Jarrold announcement, one of the nicest guys in SF, a really honest guy, and he announced with genuine enthusiasm and excitement, that one of his clients had signed a three book, two-year top end five-figure deal. Well, that could be at best, £33,000 pa.

"John Jarrold has concluded a three-book World Rights deal for Scottish-based Finnish SF writer Hannu Rajaniemi. Hannu's debut novel (presently untitled) plus two further books were pre-empted by Simon Spanton of Gollancz for a high five-figure sum, on the basis of one chapter."

Okay, so maybe the "high" part of the five-figure sum means £500,000 or more, but the truth is a lot of those six-figure multibook deals don't look nearly as lucrative when you start to break them down over the years it takes to write the books.

And I realised that I was paid at the time more than this. Now in England, people are shy about what they are paid, unless of course you are running a bank, and I have my own theory about these forced manners, and whose gain they really are to, and I was a little surprised. Upon further investigation, and looking at The Booksellers list of Gollancz announcements, six-figure deals abound, and Stephen Hunt and Alistair Reynolds seem to have had excellent deals that would seem like just reward for being successful writers.

Yet, are they the few out many? How many authors arrive, do a couple of books and then are gone? No matter the quality, the enjoyment, the uniqueness, they fail to capture the sales they need and are no more.

In my mind's eye, as a fan, I would never have imagined that I earn more than an author, or an editor, or an agent, but this is all feasible, I fear. And what about pensions and security, how can I have that, and

they not?

And that just seems wrong.

Yet it is worse when publishers are ropey with their authors. Press releases, public relations machines, point of sale material, pompous announcements, posts on Facebook all attempt to create a loyalty, a desire to read an author. And it works.

But I expect publishers to have a modicum of decency. To treat authors correctly, or if they cannot, to have a policy, deadlines, manage expectations. Is that too hard?

As a fan, it is my hobby to run conventions, write fanzines, and one does one's best, and frequently professionals may find elements below their expectations. That is fair enough. In my job, I am responsible for people. And to fall below expectations could lead to death. Therefore one doesn't, and chances are mitigated against. That is professionalism.

And I am sorry, but I expect professionalism, and have experienced considerable professionalism from publishers, have been pleased with their efficiency, interaction and hard work, and I suppose that is why it is good to hear about the other side. To hear about when things are not perfect. It puts into perspective, for fans, how hard it can be.

Then at Fantasycon last year, a lovely young lady who I had met at Eastercon was pleased her work had been published. Pleased that a pair of editors had chosen her work, and there it was.

I loved the idea, it was superb, and since I was running the dealer's room, knew I could find someone to sell the few she had. Then it went wrong. Really wrong.

First the price, seemed, well too much. But this was based on what she was paying the editor. How so, it was a print on demand book, maybe £2.50 at best, yet she was paying twice this. Was she paying and distributing the books, and was there a mark up for the editor(s)? It was now unclear.

Things all sounded wrong, and so I asked Steve Jones to have a quick look and chat. Steve slipped into professional mode, and listened. Listened carefully, then looked at the book. And gave some serious pointers. Really serious. And pointed out flaws. Issues.

And a writer **MUST ALWAYS READ THE CONTRACT.**

And I realised there and then, that I have not got a CLUE about it all. And that small, big, and unusual wrongs are perpetrated all the time, and sometimes, it is inexperience on everyone's part, well, when there is no benefit, and sometimes it seems that a pound of flesh must be paid for.

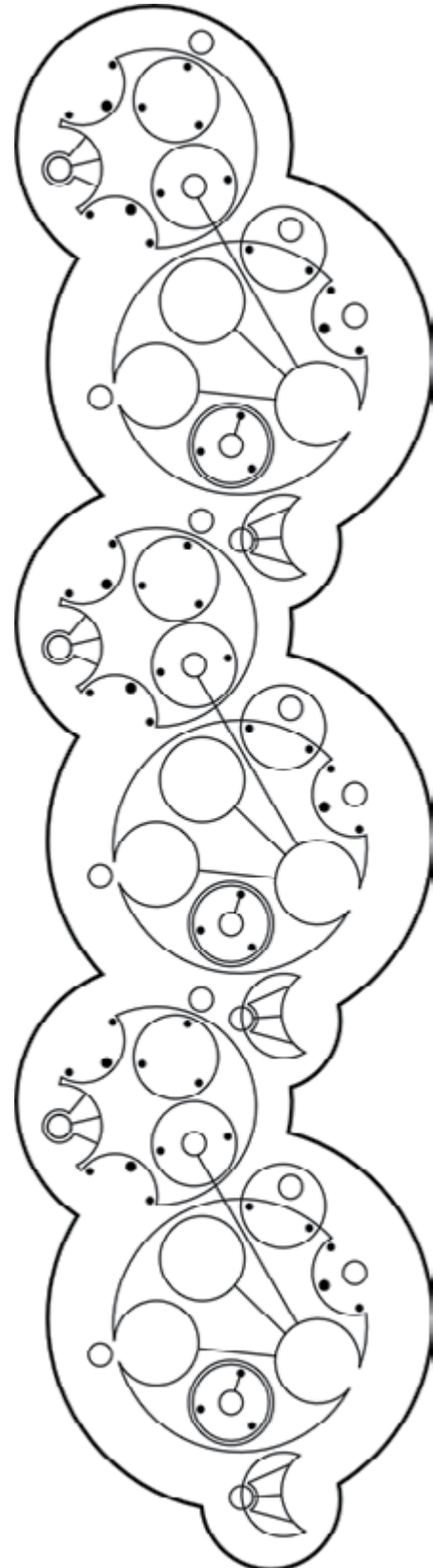
But it is not good enough just to be published.

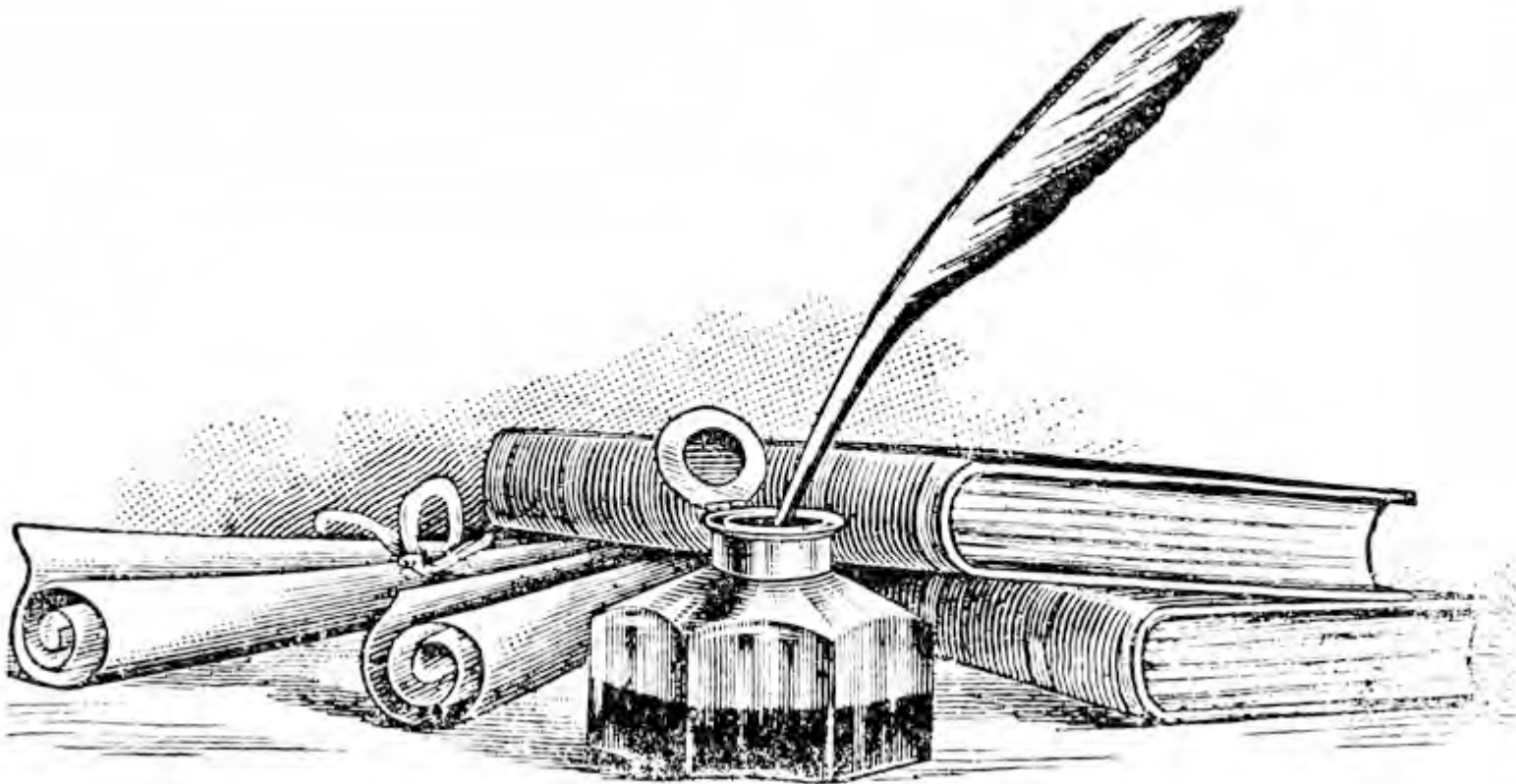
It must be done right.

And so, like a fan, I asked many amazing authors to write about writing, and I hope it is useful.

I have no imagination when it comes to literary stuff. Sure I can imagine, visualise Loncon 3 now, the thousands in the amazing venue, all enjoying themselves, but an original idea for a book no chance.

So, I hold authors, as many fans do, in high regard, and I am greatly appreciative to everyone who contributed to this issue.





THE LOC BOX

LETTERS FROM OUR GENTLER READERS

Blade Runner, James Bond, Other, we've got a lot of different territory to cover in these letters. We don't get a lot of response, which I think is required to be mentioned every time we do one of these columns, but we're dedicated to putting them up!

*In an issue dedicated to writers, writing, and the written word, it would be weird if we didn't have anything from our readers, and thus, here it is, edited gently by Chris, whose comments can be found in **easily readable bold italics!***

On JP 12 - *The Blade Runner* issue
Dear Chris, James and Pete:

Many thanks for a dark fanzine, *Journey Planet* 12. I think this will be a rather short letter, but if I don't attempt it, I'll never find out.

The reason I think it will be short is that I saw *Blade Runner* exactly twice. I saw it as a rather dystopian movie, with influences from the Dick novel, and some proof that Harrison Ford, at the time, could do more than play Han Solo. It was a confusing movie, with a general WTF? at the end. Was Deckard a replicant himself? Difficult to know at the first viewing, unless you were meant to take those questions with you when you left the theatre. Not every movie has to have its plot tied up in a pretty bow. I remember the Director's Cut, and not much more than that. The fact that there's been so much discussion about this movie and its iterations, shows that more people saw

more in the movie than I did.

I've got the movie font at home too, and if I were simply going to print up this loc and send it to you via the tender mercies of Canada Post, I'd use it.

The idea of the sequel...that's something I had not heard of anywhere. Seeing the movie was released in 1982, I think it would have to be re-released for a new generation to see before the new movie comes out. But then, look at the sequel to TRON...got that font, too.

The character of Roy Batty may have been Rutger Hauer's first roles in Hollywood, at least, first memorable role. I'd need a look at IMDB to confirm that.

I cannot add more to this...obviously, the movie didn't affect me the way it did so many others. Still, I was pleasantly reminded of some of the artwork used to promote it, and some artwork I'd never seen. Many thanks for this issue, and bring on

the next one.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Everyone has movies that either actively repel them, or that just deflect off the surface. It happens. Blade Runner is a difficult film for some. I have a friend who is a volunteer at the museum who told me “Blade Runner is a terrible SciFi movie, but it’s easily my favorite Noir.” I get that.

On JP 12 - The Blade Runner issue

Dear All

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of Journey Planet: The Blade Runner Issue. It looks very, very impressive. Unfortunately (or not -- it depends on your perspective) *Blade Runner* is a film for which I have next to no affection.

I have seen it twice -- once at the cinema on its original release and once on television, many years later, when it was shorn of its narrative voice-over. (I’ve no idea which of the later versions that might have been.) But although the film might be admirable as work of art, it left me emotionally cold: I could not engage with it, and thus could not manifest an interest in its plot, its characters, or its ideas. The only point of (mild) interest, for me, was its look, which I recall elicited a deal of excited comment at the time, about its world being a grungy, lived-in near future where the new existed cheek-by-jowl with the old -- which struck me as a curious comment to make, because new-next-to-old is routinely offered by almost all cities in the developed west. Additionally, a “grungy, lived-in” feel was exactly what was being offered by the then emerging sub-genre of cyberpunk, particularly in William Gibson’s stories of *The Sprawl*. (In an interview in an early issue of *Interzone*, in fact, he said of *Blade Runner* that it “looked so much like the inside of my head” -- he was working on *Neuromancer* at the time -- that he fled the cinema about halfway through.) In that sense, the film’s set designers were largely reflecting an emerging zeitgeist (some of them may even have been reading Gibson and Sterling), and the film critics who went bonkers over its look were displaying nothing more than their ignorance of contemporary science fiction literature.

(Indeed, many of these same film critics seem not to have spotted the precursors of this look in two previous films: 1979’s *Alien*, whose crewmembers did not wear shiny silver jumpsuits and spent much of their time in low-ceilinged, underlit spaces; and 1977’s *Star Wars (now Part IV: A New Hope)*, which had what J G Ballard described as “supertechnologies already beginning to rust around the edges, the pirate starship like an old tramp steamer, the dented robots with IQs higher than Einstein’s which resembled beat-up DeSotos in Athens or Havana with half-a-million miles on the clock” (“Hobbits in Space?” in *A User’s Guide to The Millennium: Essays and Reviews*, 1997).)

An additional strike against the film is its internal inconsistencies. For example, the information delivered near the start that six replicants have escaped but that one had already been caught and killed before Deckard’s arrival, leaving him four to hunt down -- but of course six minus one is five, not four. The explanation that the missing replicant must be Deckard himself seemed to me to be straining at a gnat, since there’s nothing in the film to suggest this. Another example: if the replicants have been genetically engineered to have shortened lifespans then of course the Deckard and Rachael characters will die just like the rest of them, so their escape from LA at the end of the film is without point. But the biggest internal inconsistency of all is that deliberately shortened lifespan: if replicants don’t live very long, then why do they need to be hunted down in the first place? All by itself, that last seems to me to render the film wholly without point or meaning.

Clearly, however, my view is a minority one, obviously not shared by many other people -- as this issue of *Journey Planet* shows, and as the film’s critical and public reception over the years has shown. That the words of Batty’s final speech have become so widely quoted in so many contexts, in either their original form or as parody (a version of them appeared in a spoof column written for *The Guardian* by the fictitious Malcolm Tucker in the weeks preceding the 2010 general election) indicates how deeply embedded in popular culture the film’s tropes and styles have become (even though the words are meaningless -- beams can’t glitter in a vacuum

because the dust they'll pass through is too thinly spread; the "shoulder" of Orion will appear so only when the constellation is seen from Earth). It might perhaps be said by some that my view of *Blade Runner* is not just a minority one, but wrong through and through!

Regards

Joseph Nicholas

None of that ever bothered me largely because I'd never have been able to know they were wrong as my science knowledge (or at least the ability to connect things to their scientific realities) is weaker than weak. I thought the look of LA in 2017 was just about the right look. I've hung out in the seedier parts of LA, and some of them already look like that... minus the glowing Umbrella stalks.

On JP 12 - The Parity issue

As always, Chris misses the point. You're not fucking mexican. You don't suffer what mexican-looking people deal with every day. Yes that reduces everything down to appearance but let's face it that's what most people think. If you looked like your dad do you think you'd have had all the options you've had? I know you play up your racial identity and that's fine but there's no way you're in the conversation of what race means to anyone today.

M Crasdan

First, ouch! I get it, I've never had to deal with the stuff my cousins have, but does that mean I can't stake it as my racial identity? That's the real question to me, who decides what we are or aren't? Am I Person of Color? Do I get to call myself such? Would my appearance in that PoC Safe Space at WisCon cause panic? These are the questions in my mind, and yeah, I've probably missed point, but when do I not?

On JP 12 - The James Bond issue

Lloyd Penney

Dear Chris and James:

Hapy New Year! I got the date and year right up above! And there's time for a fast loc on Journey Planet 14. Let's see what I can say about the James Bond films, seeing they were never my favourites...

The music for the Bond films was always grand, and the best artists composed and performed it. Yet, the main character, as you've written here,

seemed to care less about the world around him, too macho for his own good, vaguely abusive of alcohol and the unrealistic women around him. Almost too much happened, and there wasn't enough story, so James Bond, the super-secret agent, just didn't catch my attention much, even with the amazing cars and gadgets. I AM picky, aren't I?

I admit I liked Dame Judy Dench and John Cleese being involved with some of the Bond movies. Cleese was playing against his usual form, which may have puzzled some viewers, expecting him to break out in a cheesy French accent or something. Then again, he is getting on in years, and a role like this is probably his current speed. Best of all, Lois Maxwell played Moneypenny until she retired, and was known as that name until she died. After retiring, she wrote a regular column in the Toronto Sun, and sometimes would write about her experiences in the Bond movies.

And, I think I am done. Not what I wanted to do at all, but I am afraid that's all I can do about the Bond films. For the most part, they are outside my experience. I look forward to something a little more familiar in the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

I tried to get an article on James Bond music, but alas, it didn't happen. I liked Judy Dench a lot in the Bond films, and wish Cleese had stayed around for more of the movies. Actually, I really like the kid they got playing Q now, too!

TALK TO US!

- By email to: journeyplanet@gmail.com
- By post in Europe (c/o James) to: 54 Bridge Road, Uxbridge UB8 2QP, UK
- By post in North America (c/o Chris) to: 1401 N Shoreline Blvd, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA
- By post from anywhere else in the world to whichever of those addresses you prefer



VIEWS OF CENSORSHIP

A LIBRARIAN RESPONDS TO CENSORSHIP OF A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY WAYNE DISHER

Remember all the doctors last year who refused to treat patients who they thought were “disgusting”? Remember when all those doctors wouldn’t give medicine to someone because they disagreed with that person’s political views? No? Me either! That’s because it didn’t happen! Most doctors follow standards set in an ancient pledge called the Hippocratic Oath. A vast majority of doctors still take that oral pledge to follow Hippocrates’ ethical standards—even though they are not legally required to do so. The closest thing a librarian has to the Hippocratic Oath is the “Library Bill of Rights” adopted by the American Library Association in 1939. While librarians do not take a pledge, every librarian in every library school in our nation has studied and is intimately familiar with the six intellectual freedom principles and “right to read” ideals prescribed therein. According to our “Library Bill of Rights”, simply put, it is the duty of EVERY librarian to “challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment”. So, when news

comes out like that which came out of Greenville, South Carolina late last year—that their Executive Director removed an award winning graphic novel from the library’s shelves because she thought it was disgusting—it ignites a fury in the hearts of our profession unlike any other fury (including the fury so many public librarians are facing in regards to budget cuts—but that’s another story).

Before going much further, let me introduce myself. My name is Wayne Disher. I am a librarian. In fact, I am a fellow library director. I am immediate past-President of the California Library Association. I have written two library science textbooks, and am an award winning educator of library graduate students at the California State University system. It is this last role in particular which I point to in writing this article. You see, every lesson in the selection of library material, every lesson in the study of library community analysis, and every lesson in developing library collections begins and ends with the principles set forth in the “Library Bill of Rights”. Every

librarian steadfastly believes that material should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of that material. So firmly held is that belief that librarians can—and many DO—lose their jobs or resign in refusing to break that principle.

Enter Beverly James, Executive Director Greenville County Library System. A patron complains to her staff about the content of a book called *Neonomicon* by Alan Moore (Avatar Press, 2011). As is common practice in the public library world, the Director assigns the responsibility of evaluating the complaint to a staff committee and then the library's Board recommends follow through on the complaint. In the Greenville case, the committee finds that *Neonomicon* is the latest graphic novel from Moore, a well-respected author with some pretty substantial credits under his belt such as *V for Vendetta*, *Watchmen*, and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. The committee likely recognizes that the novel's author has had a distinguished career and he had been awarded just about every award a comic book writer can win. Additionally, they note that the book in question deals with extremely relevant topics of interest such as rape, racism, and violence and had won the Bram Stoker award for Superior Achievement in a Graphic Novel. In responding to the patron complaint that *Neonomicon* was violent and disgusting, the committee would normally point out that deliberately disturbing depictions of violence are often included in books as a critical comment on how such subject matter is handled elsewhere. Perhaps they would state that children are often LIVING the very stories we wouldn't allow them to read. Finally, the committee would point to the fact that the book's critical acclaim testifies to its artistic value which is enhanced, not overshadowed, by its sexual content. This looks to be exactly what happened when the board properly recommended to Executive Director Beverly James to keep the book exactly where it was. Things looked perfect. Censorship had been thwarted. A huge sigh of relief could surely be heard in the halls of the American Library Association. The status quo had been preserved. And then it all went horribly wrong...

Ms. James actually opened *Neonomicon* and looked inside. Gasp! She personally found the rape scene disgusting (something which—by the way—I would agree with her about). Because she was disgusted, she overruled her own staff and board's recommendation and removed the book from her community's collection. Because of the disturbing material, she personally found the book inappropriate for the community she served and withdrew *Neonomicon* from the community's library. In the past, Ms. James seems to have made at least five similar decisions to remove objectionable items from the library's collection. Obviously she thinks that she is managing her own collection rather than the collection of the community she serves. Because of this, she has failed the test of librarianship. Ms. James, it is NOT your collection. It's theirs! Librarians should be steadfast partners and allies in the fight for the freedom to read. Ms. James has discredited us all by not supporting her staff and board and working to defend that right.

If there were a "card" to revoke for librarians who have disgraced the Library Bill of Rights, I would put Ms. James' at the top of that list. In her repeated attempts not to offend her community by removing library books she thinks are pernicious and offensive, she has placed herself in the role of a censor. This is a very dangerous thing in our profession. To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, if all librarians were determined to provide only the things they thought were sure would offend nobody, there would be very little to provide! Look, we can all think of a book that disturbed or offended us so much that we hope no person ever picks it up. If Ms. James has the right to remove *Neonomicon* from the shelves because she was so offended, then you and I also have exactly that same right and so does everyone else in that community. Soon, there wouldn't be a book left on the shelf for any of us. As I teach my librarians, "In the words of George Bernard Shaw, 'censorship ends in logical completeness when nobody is allowed to read any books except the books that nobody reads.'"





CENSORSHIP & LIBRARIANSHIP BY LYNNE THOMAS

I read the article about Beverly James of the Greenville Public Library's decision to "deselect" Alan Moore's *Neonomicon* with great interest.

I remain baffled as to why she would go against the ruling of the committee of library professionals and community members that review challenges in her library. All of the appropriate library procedures were followed from acquiring the title based upon reviews and awards to restricting access to it as adults-only checkout to following the review process when a request for consideration was filed. The protest was filed by a parent after their child checked the book out with the card of "an adult male," a card that was not that of the parent filing the request for reconsideration, or the child.

The committee, after reading it, voted to retain the title, based on the award recognition, the reviews, and the fact that all of the appropriate safeguards were already in place to keep a kid from accidentally checking out a book meant for adults. Their policies state that ultimately, it is up to parents to determine what is and is not appropriate for their own children to read.

The established policy allows for Ms. James to overrule the committee, and she did so, simply based upon her own disgust with the title when she read it.

She opted to, as she put it, "de-select" the title, removing access to it, going against established

professional practice in libraries across the country, and denying thousands of adult patrons perfectly capable of making their own reading choices access to an award-winning title.

She determined that it was up to her, and her alone, to determine appropriate reading for adults. Not the adult patrons of her library, nor the other librarians and library staff that work there, and have charge for developing the collections that the patrons use.

It makes me sad, and it goes explicitly against one of the major tenets of our profession, which is intellectual freedom, the freedom to read. Proposition #4 in the Freedom to Read statement [<http://www.ala.org/offices/oif/statementspols/firstatement/freedomreadstatement>] says it best:

"There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression."

Ms. James did her patrons, her colleagues, and her library a major disservice. I hope her patrons know how to use interlibrary loan to get hold of titles that the library doesn't hold. I hope that there

are colleagues in her library that have the security of position and the courage to ask her directly exactly why she decided to go against established professional practice in this case, especially given that if she's been a library director for any length of time, she has come across materials that she found offensive before.

We don't get to deny access to those titles to our patrons, just because we were offended. This is specifically why we have policies, so that one person cannot make choices for everyone else in the library system.

**“What is freedom of expression?
Without the freedom to offend,
it ceases to exist.”**

Salman Rushdie

One of my favorite slogans is that “A good library has something to offend everyone.” When you determine that you will collect a particular subset of materials to serve your community, the goal is to do so comprehensively, including materials that we may personally find objectionable. That's how it

works, because what one person finds objectionable, another does not. And vice versa.

Every librarian deals with materials that they find objectionable at some point in their career: books with too much (or not enough) sexual or religious content; books with politics the opposite of our own. Heck, books that we think are boring, or badly written, or not to our personal reading tastes. We handle too many things over the course of a career to not run across something that we find deeply offensive. This is why we have developed more objective professional selection criteria than “I like this” or “this offends me.” That's what professionals do: move beyond just our own opinions, and take into account the needs of our entire community, not just the subset of the community that we agree with.

Ms. James: you're doing it wrong. Perhaps you need a refresher workshop through the Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association?

Lynne M. Thomas, MLS, MA





SCENARIOS OF CENSORSHIP.. OR NOT BY CHRIS GARCIA

Scenario 1 - The Greenville-Maru

A 14-year-old checks out a graphic novel by Alan Moore. His mother finds it, calls the librarian demanding that the novel be removed from the shelves. The librarian, perhaps pre-disposed towards disliking the form/author/content pulls the book, unapologetically.

My take - CENSORSHIP! FLOG THOSE RESPONSIBLE!!!!

Scenario 2 - The Kobayashi-Greenville

A 14-year-old checks out a graphic novel by Alan Moore. His mother finds out. She organizes a large-scale group to inundate the librarian with calls, letters, emails, and candlelight vigils. The librarian pulls the book from the shelves.

My take - Umm..... Community standards? Maybe? No... censor... wait. It's gotta be...

Scenario 3 - The Everyville Library System Matter

An acquisition committee meets and is considering what to bring into the collection. They consider a new graphic novel by Alan Moore. They choose to pass on it to purchase another three copies of Fifty Shades of Grey to ease the 200+ member waiting list for the novel.

My take - Well, you have to consider the needs of the community, and they seem to want Fifty, and...

Scenario 4 - The Worst Case Scenario

A librarian makes a list of books to dispose of to make room for new books. A list of 100 books is made, none of which have been checked out in at least two years. A graphic novel by Alan Moore is on the list. The list is approved and the book is scrapped.

My take - well, it wasn't moving...

The four above scenarios have played out in public and private libraries all over the world. More often in public than in private libraries, but it happens everywhere. And it's a problem with public institutions, for a number of reasons. The biggest one is that they are institutions of the public trust. They are serving the communities in which they are located and that's important to remember. You have to think about it like this: the libraries are spending public money, tax-payer money, and they must provide particular services. To many, a library has to provide books that will be used to school kids as educational materials, as well as books for the pleasure reading of the general public, and materials for individuals to use to advance themselves (ie. citizenship materials, books on the public codes, etc, etc), not to mention other materials and research services. Think about that, they have to provide all these services on a budget that is, all too often, being cut and cut and cut. It's difficult, and making decisions based on those parameters has to be hugely difficult.

The Greenville librarian made a MASSIVE

mistake. The book was brought into the collection, the book was available for check-out to patrons, a kid used an adults' card to check out a book that was under controlled circulation, and the mom flipped out. One mom. There's a Simpsons quote that really sticks with me: I guess that one person can make a difference, but most of the time, probably shouldn't. On the other hand, you can't say she censored the book beyond that one library. She didn't ban the book from within the city limits of Greenville, nor did she prevent the book from being sold in the local Borders (the economy did that!), but she pulled the book from one set of shelves. Still, it's a form of censorship.

But what happens if a movement forms? I know, I know, you've got an image of book-burnings and banning and High Chancellor Adam Sutler, but it does say something. How do you represent Community Standards and the desire of a movement to have x-or-y represented or removed? There have to be lines, and it depends on how big a portion of the community a movement represents. Even if a large group were to protest, would that make it censorship? That's not nearly as open-and-shut, at least in my eyes. What if the group that formed to get the book and others like it removed in order to increase the library's holdings in the area of foreign language books, or science texts, or historical holdings, or some other education-related works. Would that be censorship? They're still calling for the removal of material because of its content, but the content they'll objecting to is that it doesn't provide what the community needs. Then the water becomes much more murky.

Personally, I've got several conflicting opinions here. I don't think libraries should be supplying porn. It's not what the taxpayers' money should be spent on. Of course, my definition of porn is pretty high. Playboy has many redeeming qualities, including some fine fiction. I think. I've never really read anything beyond the centerfold stats, but flat porn is a no-no in my eyes. On the other hand, what about *Fifty Shades*?

It's smutty, no doubt, but it's not porn. The writing has little to praise, but it's hugely popular (that 200 person waiting list for *Fifty Shades* is an actual number from the library in SC a year or so ago!) and is that a reason to include it? I'd say yes. If it's what folks are wanting to read, that's something that should be made available to them. Now, how much importance do we put on that? That's the hard part, and it's all a part of the balancing act!

The worst case scenario, as I see it, is that books get ignored. It happens. Go to a library and so many have Friends of the Library book sales. They usually sell books that have been in the collection and are being sold, along with books that the community donate to be sold. You'll see many of the books that are there were checked out at one point and then it just stopped. That happens. If there's no interest, does it have to stay on the shelves? What role does popularity play? That's an important question to answer.

There's no question, the Greenville librarian done screwed up, they should probably be removed from their position, and that's that. On the other hand, we need to consider what it means to censor something today. Can anything really be censored today? Nothing is unavailable to the public these days. Even if something is governmentally censored, there are still locations on the web where things will be readable. That said, if something is decided to be worthy of inclusion in a library's collection, no individual should have the power to remove it with a good reason: ie. a large-scale change in the direction of the library's focus or if it's proven to be something that is not needed by the public for one reason or another. These matters have to be concerned. In the Best of All Possible Worlds, there's an unlimited amount of shelf space and money, and in those cases, to pull a book like this would be inexcusable in all cases, but in a world where that is not the case, it becomes something far more difficult.

Being a librarian must be a difficult, difficult thing.





THE TINTIN AU CONGO CONUNDRUM BY ZAINAB AKHTAR

It seems every year we get a debate over the status of *Tintin in the Congo*: whether it should be accessible to children, which section it should be shelved in bookstores and libraries, or if it should be available at all. I think it's important to begin with the assertion that the book is both racist and offensive. You'd be hard pressed to argue that page after page of grotesquely caricatured thick-lipped, 'savage' black people supplicating -quite literally- to a white man is anything other than immense stereotyping. The main and popular counter-argument against this is that the book is 'a product of its time' and reflective of the views of that time. This does not make the book less racist: essentially what's being said there is racism was more outwardly rife and acceptable in the 1920s and as the book permeates those ideologies (which we would hope no longer exist), all is well. That contextual distinction is perhaps fine for adults who are able to make it, but *Tintin* is a series aimed at children.

The debate stems, I believe, from the acknowledgement that the book IS racist, and one of the most frequently challenged books in libraries and stores around the world, which puts librarians, teachers and booksellers in a quandary as to what they should do with it. The discussion surrounding it is angled more towards the issue of censorship; both libraries and bookshops have attempted to resolve the matter by shelving the book in the adult section. When I bought my copy, it came with

a red paper band around it, with large bold letters pronouncing it a collector's volume. On the reverse of the band in much smaller text was that familiar refrain: 'This book is very much of its time. In his portrayal of the Belgian Congo, the young author reflects the colonial, paternalistic attitudes of his era. Some of today's readers may find his stereotypical portrayal of the African people offensive.'

“White man very great.
White mister is big juju
man”

Tintin in the Congo

Herge's regret over the book is fine, but generally pointed out so as to absolve the author of any negative connotations. Nor does Herge going back and editing a page here and there change anything: the book remains racist in its depictions. *Tintin* is practically an industry in Belgium and Herge one of the foremost comic figures in the world, so there's a vested interest in defending both. The issue, however, remains. There are two things I (and most people) am against: banning books and editing them in any way other than the author intended. So what, if anything, can be done with *Tintin in the Congo*?

In 2011 Professor Alan Gribben, a notable Twain scholar, released a revised edition of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. In the edited version, the word 'nigger' was substituted for 'slave' and the word 'injun' for 'Indian'. Gribben's reason for editing the book was well-intentioned: Twain's use of these terms had led to a significant decrease in classroom use in the US, with teachers uncomfortable with teaching the book and parents frequently challenging its use. *Huck Finn* is perhaps a different kettle of fish though- Twain's satire is about racism and not racist in itself. The repetition of the word 'nigger' -and Twain uses it a good 200+ times in the book- is supposed to provoke certain reactions, ideas, thoughts, and in censoring those words it removes Twain's intended language and diffuses the power of the book. Arguments about creative integrity aside, once you alter a text in any way, however small, it becomes just that: a changed text from what the author originally intended. Ironically, the practice of textual intervention



has been going on in an 'acceptable' manner for decades- most notably with literary classics, abridged versions, and I'm not sure that any students learn Shakespeare's plays in their original guise anymore.

But Tintin isn't a satire, nor does it feature archaic language. The option of 'editing' (whether you agree with it or not) isn't applicable here, as that would most likely constitute the whole book. The problem is the proposed audience of the book: young children.

The ruling by the Belgian courts in December last year that not only found the book not racist but exhibiting, apparently, 'a gentle and candid humour' was in response to a case bought in 2007 by Bienvenu Mbutu Mondondo, an immigrant from the Congo, and the Belgian Council of Black Associations. Their assertion was that "The negative stereotypes portrayed in this book are still read by a significant number of children. They have an impact on their behaviour." So the matter becomes one of the permeation of ideology and its effect; is it alright to make accessible to young children a racist book, when they may not understand the context in which

it was written? I didn't read *Tintin in the Congo* until a few years ago, so I can't say how it affected me as a child, or how aware I was of the representation of African people, but there's a case to be made, I think, for the potency and power in the visualisation of images exposed to children over words.

Context is the crucial factor. The book currently includes a short foreword that effectively repeats the 'preservation of history and social attitudes' line of the red band. It's not enough to simply softly say that the book and its representations are a product of their time: what's required is education. It should be made clear that that time was a less understanding, more intolerant and wrong time and that such views are unacceptable today, although how effective such a forwarding essay would be is anybody's guess. As for having the book available to children, my own view would be to shelve it in a designated 'parental guidance' section/shelf, so that parents can decide for themselves at what age they think their child would comprehend the context in which it was created. Until that time, Hergé wrote 23 other Tintin books which children and adults all around the globe have treasured for over 80 years.

“For the Congo as with *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*, the fact was that I was fed on the prejudices of the bourgeois society in which I moved...

It was 1930. I only knew things about these countries that people said at the time: ‘Africans were great big children... Thank goodness for them that we were there!’ Etc. And I portrayed these Africans according to such criteria, in the purely paternalistic spirit which existed then in Belgium.”

Hergé

ORSON SCOTT CARD ENDER'S GAME

ENDER VS. HITLER - SYMPATHY FOR THE SUPERMAN BY ELAINE RADFORD

Let me tell you about a book I just read.

It's the story of a young boy who was dreadfully abused by the grown-ups who wanted to mold him into an exemplary citizen. Forced to suppress his own emotions in order to avoid being paralyzed by trauma, he directed his energy into duty rather than sex or love. In time, he came to believe that his primary duty was to wipe out a species of gifted but incomprehensible aliens who had devastated his kind in a previous war.

He found the idea of exterminating an entire race distasteful, of course. But since he believed it was required to save the people he defined as human, he put the entire weight of his formidable energy behind the effort to wipe out the aliens.

You've read it, you say? It's *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card, right?

Wrong. The aliens I'm talking about were the European Jews, blamed by many Germans for gearing up World War I for their own profit. The book is Robert G. L. Waite's *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler*.

I don't know of any pair of novels that have been as consistently misinterpreted as Card's *Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead*. Even a reader with a rudimentary knowledge of twentieth century history might be expected to guess that the character of Ender Wiggin, the near messianic superhero, is based on that of Adolf Hitler. Card himself is the "Speaker for the Dead" who seeks to understand and forgive the genocidal dictator's behavior by demonstrating that his intentions were good. Because Hitler/Ender committed genocide to preserve the existence and dignity of what he defined as human, he is not a monster but a true Superman who willingly shouldered the heavy responsibility thrust upon him.

For those who missed the point of what he was doing in *Ender's Game*, Card sums up the Speaker philosophy near the beginning of *Speaker for the Dead*. "Speakers for the Dead held as their only doctrine that good or evil exist entirely in human motive, and not at all in the act..." Toward the end, he has a child voice the inevitable corollary, "When you really know somebody, you can't hate them."

To which I can only say, “Bullshit.” You can easily hate someone you know very well -- ask a few people who have had to learn a great deal about their abusers in an effort to head off some of their attacks -- and, in any case, adults remain responsible for their actions no matter how good their intentions. Certainly, it isn’t OK to kill somebody because you think he might try at some time in the future to kill you. Why then is it OK to wipeout whole races for the same reason? What in the world made responsible science fiction readers and writers embrace Ender Wiggin, a.k.a. Adolf Hitler, as a hero?

It isn’t because the books are skillfully written. *Ender’s Game* is plotted around the weariest cliché going, the game that becomes real. *Speaker for the Dead* is a preachy, tedious text that substitutes coincidence and the Superman’s omniscience for plot drivers. The characters in both books, to quote a friend, are constructed of the highest grade cardboard. But since Norman Spinrad has already detailed Card’s amazing lack of originality in plot and character construction, I won’t indulge in a literary hack job here. I’ll only say that I suspect that we take Ender/Hitler to our hearts because fascist ideals remain frighteningly alive in all of us. We would all like to believe that our suffering has made us special -- especially if it gives us a righteous reason to destroy our enemies.

Perhaps you feel that I exaggerate. I can hear you thinking: How could anyone equate that abused little boy with the Great Dictator? What kind of dirty mind does that Radford person have, anyway? In reply, I will now demonstrate that the Ender/Hitler connection is clearcut and central to the structure of both novels. I’ll leave it to you to decide what it means that so many people found it so easy to identify with Ender Wiggin.

The Formative Years

To see what Card’s up to, let’s first look at Ender’s formative years. Because eugenics works in his universe, Card grants the government the ability to predict the Wiggin children’s genius from their parents’ genes. Since the first two children are disqualified from Battle School on personality grounds, the parents are asked to try again -- producing Ender, whose early years are a nightmare of persecution because he’s a Third child in an overpopulated world. His only friend is his sister Valentine, with whom he’ll eventually wander about the galaxy in a quasi-incestuous relationship.

The reader is left with several questions that aren’t easy to answer without comparing Ender’s

background to Hitler’s. Why invoke eugenics, at best a pseudo-science and at worst an excuse for controlling one’s “inferiors?” Why is it so important that Ender be a Third, to the point that Card gives the word a capital T? And why, oh why, the unnecessary and offensive hints at incest with his sister, the only member of the family that Ender is close to?

Alan Bullock writes in *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, the following synopsis of Hitler’s early years. “Adolf was the third child of Alois Hitler’s third marriage. Gustav and Ida, both born before him, died in infancy...There were also, however, the two children of the second marriage with Franziska, Adolf Hitler’s half-brother Alois, and his half-sister Angela. Angela was the only one of his relations with whom Hitler maintained any sort of friendship. She kept house for him at Berchtesgaden for a time, and it was her daughter, Geli Raubal, with whom Hitler fell in love.”

It’s all here, isn’t it? Hitler was three times a third -- the third child of a third marriage, and, because his older siblings died in infancy, the third child actually present in the house. Since his mother didn’t conceive again until Hitler was six, Hitler, like Ender, spent his formative years as the third of three children. Like Ender, he eventually grew away from all of his family except his older sister. The main difference is that it was her daughter, and not Angela herself, with whom he engaged in a chaste but emotionally compelling love affair.

(After Geli killed herself to escape her uncle’s attentions, the doctor confirmed that she died a virgin. Likewise, Card makes us wait until well into the second novel before he tells us that Ender hasn’t consummated his love for Valentine.)

Similarly, both children’s lives were deformed by physical and emotional abuse. Ender escapes the abuse of his peers to join the Battle School -- where he is, of course, abused by adults. Hitler was literally treated like a dog by his father, who expected him to answer to his whistle and accept vicious beatings -- beatings which were all the more terrible to the boy because he had an undescended testicle and deeply feared losing the other. Both cases represented awful violations of a child’s body and spirit in the attempt to mold the kind of character that adults decided the child should have.

The Logic of Misogyny

As an adult, it’s in his relationships with women that Ender displays some of his most obvious parallels with Hitler. Indeed, as with the incest theme, some elements of *Speaker for the Dead* are inexplicable

unless you're aware of Hitler's dyed-in-the-wool misogyny. In a world where the Wiggin genes are "crying out for continuation," Ender's chastity until his marriage at the age of 37 is puzzling. But, again, when we look at the Hitler connection, all becomes clear. Probably because of his childhood trauma, Hitler remained chaste for an unusually long time. He isn't known to have felt love for any woman until -- are you ahead of me here? -- age 37.

Another bizarre element is the fact that Ender chooses a bitter, self-destructive woman for his mate. Why? I presume it's to remind us that Hitler too chose self-destructive women. Of the seven close to him, six killed themselves or made serious attempts to do so.

In his eagerness to help us understand Ender/Hitler, Card comes close to justifying misogyny. At the Speaking of Marcao, Ender says that Novinha solicited beatings from her deceased husband in order to atone for her adultery. Marcao wasn't really a violent person, you understand, since he never hit anyone but his wife. How false and ugly that seems to those of us aware of the truth about abusive behavior, which is that abusive people will take out their frustrations on anyone -- woman, child, dog, or elderly parent -- who doesn't have the power to fight back.

In this central chapter, meant to help us understand how speaking the truth heals a community, we see only a new lie traded for the old. Marcao may not have been the great guy we pretended he was, but hey, it was all his wife's fault.

Women have heard this tired story too many times before. It's called Blaming the Victim.

The author's contempt for women shows most clearly in his creation of Jane, a sentient supercomputer. Now there is no reason on God's green earth for Jane to present herself as female or even human. But Card knows that the reader would die laughing at the image of a neutered computer focusing on Ender like this. "And with all that vast activity, her unimaginable speed, the breadth and depth of her experience, fully half of the top ten levels of her attention were always, always [Card's emphasis] devoted to what came through the jewel in Ender Wiggin's ear." Hard to swallow, isn't it?

But Card expects us to understand when he depicts Jane as a woman in love. Surely the reader will recognize that a woman, no matter how intelligent, has nothing better to focus on than a man?

The Necessity of Genocide

The most explicit parallel between Hitler and

Ender is that they're both genocides. Hitler, of course, ordered the death of millions of Jews, Slavs, homosexuals, physically and mentally handicapped persons, and so on. Ender exterminated an entire intelligent species. Most people, I hope, agree that mass murder, much less genocide, is quite indefensible. Yet, as we follow Ender's life after he wipes out the Buggers, we're invited to understand and forgive his actions.

Why? How? Here are two answers.

"I would prefer not to see anyone suffer, not to do harm to anyone. But then I realize that the species is in danger..."

"I thought I was playing a game. I didn't know it was the real thing. But...if I had known the battle was real, I would have done the same thing. We thought they wanted to kill us."

The first words are Hitler's, the second Ender's. But the idea is the same, an appeal to good intentions. To save our people, we had to eliminate the threat presented by the existence of the stranger.

And that's a valid argument, if you're still a child and no one has ever told you what the road to Hell is paved with. It's a matter of historical record that Hitler honestly believed that the people he defined as human were in terrible danger from "inferior races." He did not merely use the threat to Nordic racial purity to become Fuhrer. Rather, he became Fuhrer because there was simply no other way to institute the sweeping racial programs his beliefs required. As Waite writes in *The Psychopathic God*: "The horror of Hitler was this: he meant what he said, he lived by his ideals, he practiced what he preached."

And this, precisely, is the horror of Ender the Xenocide. That's why Card lays such great stress on Valentine's silly "orders of forgiveness," which give the people in Speaker such a convenient vocabulary for their racism. Says a "brilliant" student in Speaker: "Through these Nordic [!] layers of forgiveness we can see that Ender was not a true Xenocide, for when he destroyed the Buggers, we knew them only as varelse [the truly alien]." To Hitler, of course, Jews, Blacks, and Slavs were equally alien, so by the same argument he is also innocent of genocide!

Forgiving Hitler

The most offensive thing about Ender is that he goes Hitler one better. Where the Fuhrer would have been content to kill everybody he thought might possibly one day represent a threat to his people, Ender does kill everybody -- and then proceeds to steal their heritage. Ender the Xenocide becomes the first Speaker for the Dead, writing the book that

will define what the Buggers are for three thousand years. It is as if Hitler not only exterminated the Jews, he then went on to write his own story of what the state of Israel might have been.

If there is anything uglier than silencing the voice of the alien because she is alien, it is then filling in the silence with your own version of what she was. Yet Card represents this act as Ender's redemption.

For the reader who isn't convinced that writing a book (no matter how highly acclaimed) makes up for exterminating a race, Card offers an alternative, albeit rather contradictory, excuse for his genocide's actions -- genetic determinism. Although this "science" has been shown to represent such an oversimplification that it's a downright distortion, Card makes it the foundation of the biology of his universe. From the very beginning, authorities can breed geniuses more easily than you or I could establish a strain of purebred blue budgies, and never mind that breeding for color and size involves at most a few genes, while breeding for intelligence would require a total understanding of the complicated interactions between whole chromosomes.

In Card's strange world, children can inherit advanced qualities like a talent for xenobiology -- a bizarre combination of genetic determinism and Lamarckianism since these characteristics were presumably artificially acquired at some point in the past. (Or does Card imagine that there is literally a gene for xenobiological talent that we can breed for? How could such a thing evolve? Surely our genes would have to be macroscopic to carry all the information he assumes they do.) In any case, his pseudo-science serves primarily as an excuse for ugly actions running the gamut from genocide to vivisection.

At the very beginning of *Speaker*, Card has the thirteen-year-old Novinha exclaim, "But you can't understand the piggies just by watching the way they behave! [Card's emphasis] They came out of a different evolution. You have to understand their genes, what's going on inside their cells." The reader may chuckle at the idea of understanding a race's psychology from its genes -- but Card plots later events so that Novinha's odd statement is entirely borne out. Environment (except for childhood traumas aimed at garnering reader sympathy) is nothing. Inheritance is all.

So what does this have to do with Ender/Hitler? Everything. Hitler, of course, believed in precisely this kind of oversimplified pseudo-scientific mishmash, and that's why he thought that applying the methods of the budgie breeder to human beings would work. Since there are no pet stores to accept

your culls when you're breeding people, he built the death camps. And if the world really worked that way, I suppose you could say he was justified. If intelligence and moral character were actually reducible to a couple of recessive genes just waiting to be cultivated, then you could breed a race of Supermen using Hitler's methods. Indeed, short of genetic manipulation on a level we haven't mastered yet, his methods would probably be the only way to breed Supermen.

(Perhaps Hitler should have asked some budgie breeders first. They could have told him that the culls often turn out to be the smartest, most personable birds -- because they're taken into people's homes and given personal attention. Beautiful show budgies who do nothing but preen and sire young don't say, "Look at the pretty bird." But Hitler -- and Card -- already know that intelligence is mainly inherited and easily correlated with other desirable traits, so why bother to see what actual breeders say?)

Ender, of course, is a Superman -- the greatest one. Breeding, not training, made him what he is. Remember, he brutally murdered a schoolboy for strategic reasons before he was accepted into Battle School. Although his training helped refine his talents as a killer genius, all the pre-arranged trauma and intensive schooling in the galaxy would have gone for naught had it not been for his superior genes. Card therefore Speaks for Ender by saying that the boy killed for the noblest reasons and couldn't have done otherwise anyway. So why should we attach moral meaning to his actions?

This interpretation also explains the clunky ending to *Ender's Game*. Having saved the world just by being what he is, Ender proceeds to demonstrate his innate nobility by wallowing in his own guilt. Sure, he isn't to blame and he knows it -- but why not be a real Superman and prove how sensitive you are while saving the world?

Speaker's ending is even more ludicrous. Having spent most of two novels telling us why we can never understand the alien, Card has Ender pull a quick turnaround at the last minute so that Bugger, human, and piggie can live together in harmony. (This in a universe where tolerance is so rare that premarital sex is unthinkable and whole planets are chartered on the basis of narrow religious, racial, and national affiliations!) Just a little understanding and a quickie resurrection by our local Superman are enough to unravel the twisted knot of racially predetermined hatreds. Hitler's made it to Brazil to put what he's learned to use in the interest of racial harmony between European, Indian, and African. He's even brought a few Jews with him to lend the

Brazilians a hand!

I'm sorry, Card, but it doesn't wash. It's just too cheap. In the real world, the murdered don't rise from the dead when the Great Leader decides that the times are right for tolerance. Shakespeare, speaking of another figure oft-cited as the model Superman, said it better: "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones..." So it was with Caesar, so it is with Hitler. All the understanding in the world doesn't change the fact that this man deformed the face of the twentieth century and that all of us are living with his destructive legacy. Perhaps you meant to focus on the good men do rather than their evil when you wrote: "Destroyed everything he touched -- that's a lie, that can't be truthfully said of any human being who ever lived." Perhaps you meant to help us enlarge the sphere of our capacity for forgiveness. No doubt, in any case, that you meant well.

But it doesn't really matter, does it? As long as people are struggling against anti-Semitism, misogyny, and all the other ways of oppressing the different, it seems inappropriate to focus overmuch on the delicate feelings of the oppressor. Look at the fact that the Fuhrer was sincere and re-define his life as dedicated rather than evil? Forgive Hitler? Card, from your privileged position as a white male American Christian, you have no right to ask us that.

* * * * *

Twenty years after this essay was written, in 2007, I wrote a brief postscript in my online diary, which is reprinted here in slightly edited form to reflect the differences in format:

I didn't expect the uproar caused by my analysis. I'm no longer certain that I was even confident that it would be published until Robert Collins, editor of Fantasy Review, mailed me some complimentary copies. I'm not a trained critic, and I do feel that my piece has since been outdated by John Kessel's fine essay, *Creating the Innocent Killer: Ender's Game, Intention, and Morality*, which at the time of this posting can be found as a free nonfiction offer on Kessel's webpage [http://www4.ncsu.edu/~tenshi/Killer_000.htm]. However, because of repeated requests, I've decided to go ahead and post my humble essay online where people can find it easily and make up their own minds.

If you really like this book and hate this essay, I don't have a problem with that. I believe in giving all sides to a story. In the original publication and in the first reprint, Card's rebuttal was printed alongside

my essay. However, I can't do that here, because I don't have the reprint rights to the portion that he wrote. So, to a certain extent, I feel like I now have to argue both sides of the question myself.

So, here we are, 20 years later...and, to this day, the most common response by Card fans to my essay is that they just don't see it. My goodness gracious, why should anyone imagine that hundreds of pages of meditation on genocide and forgiveness wasn't just pure science fiction, with nothing to say about the twentieth century or its most notorious genocide? To which I can only shrug and say, Hmm-kay, I start with the assumption that the guy is not a complete idiot and that he knows what he's doing.

I might not agree with it, but he did have something to say. The argument that he's an oblivious airhead is not particularly flattering to either you as a fan or Card as an author. If that's your argument, fine, but you'll have to forgive me if I think it's pathetic.

Very occasionally I get the question I expected in the first place: "So? What's wrong with that? Isn't it a perfectly valid enterprise to try to understand these monsters? What's wrong with using art to get into that kind of brain and figuring out how it works?"

Well, there you go. That's the answer. There's nothing wrong with that. Why do we read if not to get into other people's minds? I think Card took on a most ambitious project -- to see if he could get us into the mind of somebody that we would normally never dream of identifying with in a thousand years. The trouble is, I pulled his punchline by blabbing the "gotcha" before he put the third book out.

And instead of saying, "So? I was trying to experiment with enlarging the normal human capacity for forgiveness. You got a problem with that?" he freaked and called me a girl. ("Radical feminist" is the phrase he actually used, but yeah -- it means he freaked and called me a girl. Probably not too many guys get called "radical feminist" as an intended insult. And how 1980s is that anyway?)

And once he put his foot in his mouth, he couldn't quite figure out how to get it back out.

That's my take on it, anyway.

The line I would have taken is simple: Forgiveness, even to the very end, is a core belief of Christianity, and hence a core belief of large numbers of Americans. It is perfectly fair to see how far we can push the concept of forgiveness and who deserves to be forgiven. You don't like how far I went and who I forgave? Well, that's what makes horse-racing.

Hey, it's a more reasonable answer than spluttering, and I can actually respect the point of

view of the fans who suggested it.

Anyway, if I wanted to nutshell it, I'd say that my objection to *Ender's Game* is that our society already focuses too much on telling the powerless to forgive and forget. We've got entire religions devoted to it. We don't need more propaganda on the topic. It's a little cheap to tell me what I can get anywhere.

When you tell me a story, tell me something I don't know already. Surprise me. Boo hoo hoo, he was abused, so he killed everybody...It's been done. It's stale. It's ain't pining for the fjords. It's dead, Jim.

* * * * *

And what do I think today, in 2013? Well, I really can't say anything else about Card's SF. I didn't like it, so I stopped reading it. Since I don't read it, I don't have any further thoughts on it.

Yes, I was saddened to learn that, in recent years, Card has decided to "defend" marriage by poking his nose in other people's business. It certainly doesn't improve my opinion of his ethics.. I had forgotten how strongly I stated my case in this 1987 article, but I stand by it – I don't like what I've read of Card's work and I don't think I much like him as a human being either.

That doesn't mean that I object to him working for DC Comics or anybody else that wants to hire him. I believe in freedom of expression, and I'll express my freedom by spending my book-buying money somewhere else. What others choose to do is up to them.





STOCKING OSC'S SUPERMAN AT ILLUSIVE COMICS BY ANNA WARREN CEBRIAN

I've had two customers ask me to participate in the boycott, so I talked about this issue with a few other retailers before making my decision.

I will be stocking this comic for a few reasons:

The majority of my customers want to read this comic and I don't avoid ordering comics because some customers don't like the personal views of one of the creators. If I avoided ordering comics that offended a group of people, I would likely not have my Adult Section, most horror comics nor any comics with anything groups of people found offensive.

“Superman is not just a superhero. He's the superhero. He created the very concept of the superhero, and everything that's touched on that concept for the past 75 years”

Glen Weldon

This comic, itself, is not about the topic of Gay Marriage Rights. It's about Superman. That makes this issue less poignant for me.

Should DC have considered his widely

publicized political views before hiring him? I don't know. That's for their company to consider, as it reflects upon their company's values. My company policy is to be good to my customers, my staff and have a growing, thriving business. I don't see how I'm offending anyone by stocking a comic that many customers will want to buy. If we have a drop off of sales for this particular issue, I will not be surprised. It's up to consumers to boycott, and show their views to DC.

As a Gay Rights Advocate, as a Human Rights Advocate, do I have strong personal views about this writer? Yes. But I am a business woman, too. A business woman, who does have a “Safe Place” card in her store window and strives to make her shop extremely human friendly, regardless of customer's genders or sexual preferences. I have customers with myriad values and beliefs, and they have the right to buy product (or not), just as people who have values and beliefs that are not necessarily the same ones I hold, have the right to create product (or not).

We live in a country where we are allowed to think differently from each other. Shouldn't this issue come down to “does he do his job well?” Let's see if he did.





ORSON SCOTT CARD SUPERMAN STORY SPIKED AMID FUROR BY MIKE GLYER

DC Comics' new, digital-first Superman series was to launch in April powered by the name recognition of "acclaimed *Ender's Game* author Orson Scott Card," co-author of its initial story (with Aaron Johnston). But Card's brand has become as much identified with his conservative jeremiads as with his award-winning fiction. DC's Superman project soon attracted the wrath of those turned off by Card's anti-gay rhetoric.

Advocate.com turned its spotlight on the controversial views of the author:

"Unfortunately for DC Comics, Card is a well-known homophobe and anti-gay activist who in 2008 called for the overthrow of government if Prop 8 fails."

FrontiersLA.com ran its February 8 story under the headline, "DC Comics Hires Homophobe to Pen New Superman Series."

Petition website *Allout.org* started a petition calling for DC to drop Card that eventually topped 16,000 signatures.

Dominic Rushe detailed the furor for *The Guardian*, where he implicitly wondered about a creative decision seemingly at odds with the publisher's recent history: "DC, owned by Warner Bros, has been making attempts to include LGBT characters in its superhero universe recently. Last year the company announced that Alan Scott, Green Lantern, was gay. Batwoman has been a lesbian since 2006."

Not all Card detractors were comfortable with the campaign to run Card off *Superman*: "Dale Lazarov, a gay comic writer, said it was counterproductive to attack Card's appointment: 'I've known Orson Scott

Card is a raging homophobe since the early 90s. I refuse to buy or read his work. But asking that he be denied work because he is a raging homophobe is taking it too far. Asking for workplace discrimination for any reason is counterproductive for those who want to end discrimination on their own behalf."

Andrew Wheeler rationalized the tactic in his opinion piece for *The Guardian* a few days later:

"Card's involvement with the National Organization for Marriage makes him a deserving target for a collective boycott, because he's not just an artist with disagreeable views; he's an active participant on the wrong side of the struggle for civil rights. No one should be denied work because of what they think, but everyone should be held accountable for what they do. In allying with a group that directly campaigns for discrimination, Card was not holding an opinion; he was taking an action."

News writers seeking illustrations of Card's moral and political views found irresistible his 2008 *Deseret News* op-ed which ends emphatically: "How long before married people answer the dictators thus: Regardless of law, marriage has only one definition, and any government that attempts to change it is my mortal enemy. I will act to destroy that government and bring it down, so it can be replaced with a government that will respect and support marriage, and help me raise my children in a society where they will expect to marry in their turn."

"Biological imperatives trump laws. American government cannot fight against marriage and hope to endure. If the Constitution is defined in such a way as to destroy the privileged position of marriage, it is that insane Constitution, not marriage, that will die."

However, Wheeler, unlike many Card opponents, distinguished the artist's views from what Card's Superman story was likely to contain:

"Card's principles do not align with Superman's, though it's unlikely that Card will write a story about Superman spreading disinformation, robbing people of their rights or overthrowing the government. Yet, if DC Comics knew about Card's well-publicised views, why risk alienating parts of its audience by hiring him?"

DC Comics unsurprisingly felt people should not hold the company accountable for the unpopular views of its writers: "As content creators we steadfastly support freedom of expression, however the personal views of individuals associated with DC Comics are just that — personal views — and not those of the company itself."

The marketplace did not agree. Less than 10 days after DC's announcement broke *Robot 6* was tracking retail stores that had refused to stock the print edition of the comic — Zeus Comics (Dallas), Whatever Store (San Francisco), I Like Comics (Vancouver, WA), Ralph's Comic Corner (Ventura, CA), and Funny Business (Nyack, NY). Yet another store said it would sell the comic but donate the profits to a gay rights advocacy group.

The new Superman title is designed as an outlet for writers and artists to tell stories of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's Man of Steel outside the continuity established in DC's *New 52*. Art for Card's tale was to come from Chris Sprouse and Karl Story. However, on March 5, Chris Sprouse bailed on the project.

Sprouse explained in a statement quoted on *The Mary Sue*: "It took a lot of thought to come to this conclusion, but I've decided to step back as the artist on this story. The media surrounding this story reached the point where it took away from the actual work, and that's something I wasn't comfortable with. My relationship with DC Comics remains as strong as ever and I look forward to my next project with them." *The Mary Sue* provided additional cover for Sprouse's retreat by pointing to his work on *Midnighter*, a series featuring an out gay superhero who is currently a part of the DC Universe.

Sprouse's withdrawal forced DC's hand. *USA Today* reported Card's story will no longer appear in the first collected issue. "We fully support, understand and respect Chris's decision to step back from his Adventures of Superman assignment," the company announced. "Chris is a hugely talented artist, and we're excited to work with him on his next DC Comics project. In the meantime, we will re-solicit

the story at a later date when a new artist is hired."

Comics bloggers like Rich Johnston at *Bleeding Cool* took a victory lap and began setting their sights on a larger target: "This is quite clearly a success for those raising the issue, trying to get Orson banned from DC Comics. But it seems like it was only the warm up. Because next on the slate is the *Ender's Game* movie, with the likes of Harrison Ford and Ben Kingsley, based on the very positively reviewed novel by Card. If they can succeed with Warner Bros over a comic, can they succeed with Summit Entertainment and Lionsgate over a movie?"

At the other end of the spectrum, *LifeSiteNews.com*, a site which "emphasizes the social worth of traditional Judeo-Christian principles," agreed more protests are coming --

"Homosexual outcry over Card's views is expected to reach a fever pitch in the coming year as the film version of his classic 1985 novel 'Ender's Game' is released.

"The move toward blacklisting writers who fail to support homosexual causes has caused some controversy in speculative and licensed fiction circles. While many in the publishing industry support same-sex 'marriage,' some say they are uncomfortable with the idea of banning opposing thought outright.

"I think it is dangerous to support any blacklist of any creative for any reason,' John Ordovery, former editor of the Star Trek series at Pocket Books and open supporter of gay marriage, wrote on his Facebook page. 'It's validating the entire concept of blacklists. To oppose blacklists, we have to stand against blacklisting those whose opinions we find abhorrent as well as those we agree with.'"

The movie of *Ender's Game* is scheduled for a November release and *The Hollywood Reporter* says executives at Summit now question whether he should be part of its promotion, or represent the film on programs at the San Diego Comic-Con:

"Promoting *Ender's Game* without Card would be like trying to promote the first Harry Potter movie without J.K. Rowling. But having Card appear in the main ballroom in front of 6,500 fans could prove a liability if he's forced to tackle the issue head-on during the Q&A session.

"I don't think you take him to any fanboy event,' says one studio executive. 'This will definitely take away from their creative and their property.' Another executive sums up the general consensus: 'Keep him out of the limelight as much as possible.'"



I WRITE SELF-INDULGENT, UN-HELPFUL REVIEWS... AND YOU CAN TOO!

BY CHRIS GARCIA

At BASFA, we often have discussions. We'll talk books, argue movies, confuse ourselves with discussions of two and sometimes three different topics, each attempting to mingle with one another with none of the participants understanding that they're not even on the same topic. During one of these discussions, Adrienne Foster and I got into what the goal of a review is. Her reasoning - it should give you an idea of the style, of the plot, of the characters, and no spoilers. Chris says - it should tell you what it made the reviewer feel.

"Oh, I'm not at all interested in that." says Adrienne.

And I am croggled totally by that.

To me, there is nothing a reviewer can tell me ABOUT a book that'll make me think anything about a book. If you tell me how a book affects you, that is exactly what I need to know, need to understand. I don't read books for the plots, or the characters, or really for the style: I read a book to feel something. Not to understand or reconcile something (though those are often both side effects), but to be moved towards something. It's why I tend far more towards genre than mainstream. I want to be moved through emotion, and genre is the literature of differing emotions. That's why I read, and ultimately, that's the

kind of review I tend to write.

Sort of.

While you may read a bunch of my reviews and go, "Well, that was pointless" (and I've had several folks say that to me over the years), there is a philosophy behind them. They're not just me writing for the sake of writing (though, in the end, isn't that all I ever do?) but the way I look at books and reading and writing fully informs everything I review.

And now, I will pull back the curtain and teach you, yes YOU, how to write reviews just like me.

Books are objects that typically consist of an outer piece of paper surrounding other pages of paper. The outer parts usually have a picture on it, and some words. There are lots more words on the inside. Sometime there's more pictures on the inside. Boiled down to syrup, that's what a book is. Let's take Janet Edwards's *Earth Girl*. It's got a lovely image of a young, short-haired woman lazing against a globe. A lovely image, and it is designed to give off an idea of what the book is, but in this case, it does almost none of that. It does say that the main character is a young woman with an attachment to the world, perhaps even an affection. The description of the story on the back seems to contradict the emotional example of

the cover. Jarra is a young girl who is Handicapped. In this case, Handicapped is a term used by a future human race that has mostly abandoned Earth using a transport system. She is trapped on Earth while most of humanity has gone off to new systems. Putting the two parts together, I can see what the designer was going for with the cover, but it doesn't quite give the impression of the other.

So, what does a book do? It is a piece that people interact with. They put a portion of their lives on hold to take it in, to read and digest. A book is not a portal into a timeless place away from the rest of the world; it is something that exists in the world, interacts with it and with the lives of those who read it. I tend to not set aside time for reading. I don't have a living room with a fireplace and high-backed leather chair where I sit, swirling a snifter of brandy with one hand, a copy of Proust held open in the other. That's not realistic in my life, and I doubt in many other folks' lives either. One of the first things I did when I left college and headed out on my own was to learn how to fit things into my life. Reading has always been something I love to do, and I discovered that I had to place reading into my life in the areas where other things were already happening. Lunch became a place where I did almost all of my reading. Then while I was watching Evelyn, or sitting in a parking lot, or waiting for a movie to start. It's how I read, and the way in which you read a book is almost as important as the book itself. For *Earth Girl*, I had to read it mostly during lunches. Well, that means I read in small chunks, a chapter at a time usually, sometimes less. But sometimes, I'd be so into a section that I'd stretch it, read more, lengthening my lunch. That says something, that's important. That's exactly the kind of thing I want from a review. If a reviewer tells me "The prose is crisp, the plot engrossing, the character rich" it says "Yeah, this author's not a fuck-up." On the other hand, if an author writes "I was twenty minutes late for an important meeting because I couldn't stop reading," that's something that will inform my desire to read it.

Tell me how you fit a book into your life. If you had to force yourself to keep reading, I wanna know that. *Earth Girl* was a joy; it made me want to go forward, and it was largely because of how Edwards went through constructing a world that was so close to one that I would want to be a part of. A world of the future, with advanced technologies and a complex social structure that are so fully realized that I could see the blog posts that complain about the social inequities. It was a beautiful idea, and a large part of it dealt with the future students, of which Jarra is one,

going and doing archeological digs at the site of the once-great New York City. This, of course, is especially important to me because of my history background, but then how do you give that idea to the reader of any review you might write.

Well, that's the trick. It's kinda easy to just say "I'm a historian, and I liked the history in here because I'm a historian" in a fit of redundancy. You would be better off giving me a narrative of your life with the book. So, if I were writing about *Earth Girl*, I might say how I was sitting in front of the Babbage Engine at the museum, on the Cray I we've got in the back lobby for visitors to sit on, spending my lunch away from the pile of documents from Xerox PARC in the early 70s, digging through RFCs for information on how TCP influenced the developmental direction of the early internet. Then, I say how the strange connections between the text, where Jarra is the 'tag leader' in charge of the manual labor required to actually dig for artifacts, or how they find a stasis box holding paintings just moments after I found a set of early computer games on a tape listing which I had no idea existed until I opened a box. Background like that is what I want from a review: give me your life, or a slice of it, and how this work you're reviewing interacts with it: both passively and actively. Tell me what you did to make a place in your life to read it. That's how I write, and it's because that's what I'm looking to find in other reviews.

And sadly, it's so rare that I can find that.

Now, I want to know what the effect on you was emotionally. This can be tricky. For example, in *Earth Girl*, I found myself feeling that Jarra was something of the kind of whiner I fear I am. She's bitter that she was born Handicapped, and she lashes out. She applied to the pre-history specialty set-up on Earth instead of applying to Earth University, to prove a point, to weasel her way into their lives and then burst out and spray hot GOTCHA! over all of them. That's an awful character trait, and to open with that as a reason for a character to completely change their life is a good way to make me hate a character, and if she's utterly well-equipped for the world in which she lives, that's even worse. Jarra is the kind of character I am not: she knows what she's doing, she's exceptional at what she does, and she's bitter. I usually dislike these kinds of characters, but when you see how she questions herself, work through her anger in many ways, and even go off the rails, I started to like her, started to feel for her instead of withholding my approval of her.

And there's something that is important to me that isn't necessarily important to anyone else.

I need to have some sort of emotional connection with a character. I need to bond with them, not necessarily like them or care about them, but bond with them. I need to feel that there's a connection with the characters I'm reading about. If I can find a way into the character's emotional sweet spot, I can really enjoy the book. A few moments in *Earth Girl* made me feel like Jarra was a human who I could connect with.

But how do you get that idea across? How does a review get across the harder stuff? It's easy to give a sense of what happens in a novel, to give a hint at the plot, and yeah some of that is important, but that's not what I need as a reader, or try to impart as a reviewer. I want to understand how a reviewer takes in a book, what they need to enjoy a book. Within a review, the measure of what the review of weighing against must be present. A professor of mine once told me that every film is about what it means to be a film, and a review is always partly about how you review. That's difficult. It can weigh a review down, but it can also free it up. Fitting a review of some external thing, be it a novel, a play, a movie, or an album, into another work is one way to go. Like a piece considering the ways in which *Earth Girl* manages to put the idea of history as something for the excluded, that the closer you get to the normal, the mainstream, the further you get away from the importance of history. Jarra is Handicapped, and there is almost nothing that is as important to her as history, and the kids from the other sectors further out from Earth are there, but it doesn't mean as much to them. They all have other reasons and that concept completely jibes with my ideas as I see them in my regular life. Getting that info out is an important part, so my way of tackling it would likely be to write my article mostly about the world of history and bring in the review of *Earth Girl* into it. I would love to have that sort of article come in from someone.

Now, many of you who read *The Drink Tank* will notice that I don't get to run many reviews like the ones I'm describing. That's true, though you'll notice many of my reviews are exactly like I'm describing. I get that my love of these kinds of reviews may be solely with me. One thing that I always believe is that the author always needs to be in an article. No matter what kind of article, the author needs to put themselves in it. That's the only theory I have in *The Drink Tank*, and it's the personal articles that I love the best. There are some writers who desperately try to keep themselves out of the things they write. I can understand that, but you'll always find me in my pieces, especially in my reviews.

So, why is this kind of reviewing important? Because it says something about the relationship between the reader and the read. If you're just passively reading, powering through a read just to suck out the story or the characters or the prose or even the meaning, well that's cool. It's also not why I read. I read to feel something, to experience something, to give myself over to something and to have an experience. I'm not sure what the phrase is, but there's a thing that means the atmospheric conditions matching the action in an outdoor performance. I always called it Atmospheric Participation, but I'm not sure that's it. The environment in which you experience a book is important, because it can effect the emotional response. I was reading *Earth Girl* on a train trip, crowded shoulder to shoulder, three people sitting on two-person seating banks. I was reading, and reading, experiencing a chapter that had great emotional impact on Jarra, and I was finding myself emotional. Now yes, I know I'm an emotional guy, but even I can keep it in check while I'm surrounded by people who have no idea what's going in my head. But I was feeling it, I was getting that tinge of sorrow, that melancholy feeling, and barely staying on top of it. It was the sign that Edwards had managed to make me connect with Jarra, with her position and her feelings. I was so impressed that she could make me feel that in that position.

And my review of the piece would probably start with a story of how I have inappropriate reactions to literature in various modes of transportation. That's seemingly unrelated, but it's not, not at all. It's a story in which *Earth Girl* would be a character. Not Jarra from the novel, but the book itself. It plays a role, and ultimately that's what is really important to me. Books aren't just something to read and digest, they're something that I make important, that I give time to so I can get into them, bring them into my life. THAT'S what's essential to me about books, and I guess I want to know if a book is worth giving that sort of time and commitment to. I don't care if it's a story of a difficult and different young girl fighting through a system she thinks is unfair, or a story of a war between Texas and Israel, I want to know what the story made you feel, why it made you feel that, and if we've got a connection. I want to know as much about the reviewer as the reviewed. I want to know the opinion as it relates to a person, the text as it relates to an emotion.

Or maybe I'm just trying to justify the thousands of words I've expended in reviews that do no one any good!

A STEAMPUNK'S GUIDE TO



A STEAMPUNK'S GUIDE TO SEX - PROFESSOR CALAMITY, ALAN MOORE, LUNA CELESTE & OTHERS REVIEWED BY CHRIS GARCIA

**In the end, if Steampunk is about anything, it's sex.
- M Crasdan**

There is no question that if you're going to become a significant subculture, you've got to have sex. Not you personally, but it's got to be there, has to be among all the concepts, even if it's a river diverted underground like the Fleet under London. There's been a sexual component among all of steampunk since the beginning, it's even noted in *The Daily Bleach* (<http://dailybleach.com/what-is-steampunk/>): "Steampunk is a new sexual fetish that is sweeping across hipster groups in liberal urban areas."

Yes, I know it's comedy, but still, there's something to that.

You see, the Victorian Age was hypersexualized. I know, I know, you've always thought that it was a time of great repression, but that is nowhere near true. It was a time of sexuality under wraps, but there, and heavy, and real. *A Steampunk's Guide to Sex* covers that, but it goes so much further, providing amazing essays from an incredible cadre of writers, and some spectacular imagery.

Let us start with Alan Moore. That is a phrase I hear a lot of. He supplies some excellent essays, the one that made me take the most notice was *Murder & Prostitution in 19th Century London*. It's a wonderful essay, and it talks about the effect of the desperation and poverty of London, and a bit of Jack the Ripper. My belief has always been that Jack

the Ripper took prostitution off the streets (there was the idea of Tuppenny Upright, standing sex with a prostitute for tuppence) and into the houses. The idea of a streetwalker still existed, but they tended to walk better parts of town. And, as prostitution changed, it also grew the idea of the High Society Escort. His essays are excellent, and like everything in this book, they give a wonderful view of sexuality as it applies to our little subculture.

Perhaps the most informative essays are the teaching guides, as it were. One explores the roots of Modern Pornography, another is Professor Calamity's Five Steamy Reads, which is a great recommended reading list, but the best is a list of terms called Mettle in your Merkin: Victorian Sex Slang. It's an impressive list of phrases and it makes it possible for me to dig into more Victorian-set erotica. There's also Pleasure Devices & Moral Machines, which looks at historical sexual artifacts, giving us an idea of what those wacky Victorians were up to back in the day. In a way, I guess that's what I was looking for in this book: instructions.

If I see something listed as a 'guide' I want to get learnin' from it, and these are the essays that seem to do that the best!

There is a little oddness. I didn't see the application of O.M. Grey's (an author I love!) essay An Introduction to Polyamory, fitting in, perhaps because it applies no light to the Steampunk or Neo-Victorianism application of the concept. The same goes with How to Deal With, And Not Be, A Creep. I completely agree with the inclusion of it, but I wished it dealt with the matter in a more specific to the Steampunk lifestyle. Yes, I get that all of these are ideals that we should respect (and you should read it and take every note of it to heart!) but things like someone playing a flirty character who might interact with a regular attendee in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable has happened at a couple of cons I've been to, and almost always it's the person feels uncomfortable who is demonized. I wish there was some discussion of Steampunk-specific matters. But still, it's all good words that should be taken to heart. I understand that these two essays, and the Luna Celeste essay on BDSM, just don't seem to make the cut because they feel as if they could have been in any A _____'s Guide to Sex. These essays are good, information, and I understand that they're a part of The Steampunk Lifestyle for a lot of folks, but they're all kinda SubCulture 101: they don't give any view specific to Steampunk.

It's amazing fun and light reading. I made it through in less than a single night, but it is also the kind of reading that will lead you to more reading.

It's a gateway drug to Victorian erotica and porn, and what's kinda awesome is that I, something of a prude, read the entire thing without every feeling like I was reading smut. I was reading material that was enlightening, fun, fresh, and even educational! It wasn't academic at all (and academic writing about sexuality is my idea of hell!) and that alone made it well-worth going into.

Perhaps the best part of the books were the tintypes. Magpie Killjoy, the original editor of Steampunk Magazine, did the book's layout and created the tintypes used in the book. They're so great, set a tone that is exactly what I wanted to walk away from this book with: one of a historical encounter with modern sexual sensibilities. One image, a lovely piece of a woman in her underwear wearing a wrist spreader bar, really defines everything I wanted from this book. It is such a Steampunk image, right down to the under-sized hat, but that bar really does open things up to a new, sexualized world. That image, along with the others, set the tone, and it's wonderful.

A Steampunk' Guide to Sex is very good reading, and it's available from the good people at Combustion Books. It's great reading, and the size, like a slim manga, is perfect for slipping into an inner coat pocket or into a small pocketbook. And what Victorian lady or gentleman wouldn't like that?





AUGUST DERLETH & SOLAR PONS: WHO NEEDS A HARD BOILED DETECTIVE?

BY BOB BYRNE

It's quite possible that you aren't familiar with Solar Pons, the 'Sherlock Holmes of Praed Street.' If that is so, a quick viewing of the [Solar Pons FAQ](http://www.solarpons.com/) page might help [<http://www.solarpons.com/>]. And if you're thinking Solar Pons is nothing more than a tired copy of the Baker Street sleuth, the first essay in the first issue of [The Solar Pons Gazette](http://www.solarpons.com/Gazette_2006_1.pdf) might change your mind [http://www.solarpons.com/Gazette_2006_1.pdf].

Welcome back. So, August Derleth was a born and raised Wisconsin boy, enamored with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tales of the great Sherlock Holmes. He wasn't much different than an awful lot of American youths in the nineteen twenties. Except, the enterprising Derleth wrote to the author and asked if there would be any more stories, and if not, could he write some himself. Doyle, not the friendliest person in regards to his meal ticket, did have the courtesy to send back a reply, denying Derleth permission to continue the adventures.

Not discouraged at all, the nineteen year-old University of Wisconsin student made a note on his calendar, 'In re: Sherlock Holmes', as a reminder to write a story in imitation of Doyle's creation. The date is lost in the mists of time, but August Derleth did in fact sit down and produce *The Adventure of the Black Narcissus* in one afternoon, starring Solar Pons and Dr. Lyndon Parker. It appeared in the February, 1929 edition of *Dragnet* and Derleth would produce over seventy more tales before passing away in 1973. British author Basil Copper added over two dozen more Pons stories with the blessing of Derleth's Estate.

Derleth's Pons stories received praise and support from noted Holmes fans like Edgar W. Smith, Vincent Starrett, Anthony Boucher and the cousins jointly known as Ellery Queen. And it's safe to say that quite a few of today's Sherlock Holmes readers are familiar with and enjoy Solar Pons. However, Pons is not a major character in the history of detective

literature, nor are the books best sellers. But one unique aspect of the series, worthy of mention, is that Derleth was going against type.

As I stated in my essay [http://www.solarpons.com/BakerStreetEssays_3], [Hard Boiled Holmes](#), "The era of British detective fiction between the two World Wars is known as The Golden Age. This was the time of the country cozy and the locked room mystery." Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Morrison were replaced by Lord Peter Wimsey and Miss Marple. In America, Carroll John Daly, Raoul Whitfield, Dashiell Hammett and others were countering with the hard boiled school, in style far more than just an ocean away from the British mystery story.

But Derleth chose to create a new detective that wasn't a part of either school. Because of his love for the Sherlock Holmes stories, he spent the next fortyish years periodically writing stories that, while set in a London where cars had replaced hansom

cabs, immediately called to mind 221B Baker Street and all that went with it.

The start of the hard boiled school can be definitely traced to April and May of 1923 when *Black Mask* contained Carroll John Daly stories featuring, first, Three Gun Terry Mack and then the longer-lasting Race Williams. By the time Solar Pons made his first appearance, a fellow named Dashiell Hammett had published almost three dozen Continental Op stories in *Black Mask*. Heck, Sam Spade and Solar Pons both came into print in 1929. Hard to picture them solving a case together!

In 1934, Rex Stout introduced Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, a pair that blended the hard boiled private eye with the armchair genius best personified by Mycroft Holmes. Stout was a well known Sherlockian and the Holmes stories exerted a great influence on the Wolfe books, which remain popular today. However, Stout was astute enough to know that pulp magazines set the style of American detective fiction and Wolfe and Goodwin very much read like contemporary mysteries, not throwbacks to gas lit London.

But Derleth continued to write new Pons tales while the British Golden Age came to an end and the

pulp magazines fell by the wayside. Pons was a hobby that he indulged in out of affection for his boyhood idol, Sherlock Holmes. He wasn't compelled to create a tough private eye or a gentleman thief to meet the demands of mystery readers. Brett Halliday and Michael Shayne; Raymond Chandler and Philip Marlowe; John D. MacDonald and Travis McGee; Ross MacDonald and Lew Archer: just a few of the popular detectives that American readers gobbled up while August Derleth kept writing about Sherlock Holmes' successor.

Solar Pons was a return to the earlier days of detective fiction at a time when his peers had left that era behind. Fortunately, August Derleth was a fine writer and the Holmes fan who has not yet discovered Solar Pons has a treasure chest ready to be opened.





THE WRITE STUFF



ON THE WRITE STUFF

AN EDITORIAL BY LYNDA RUCKER

It all started with Steph Swainston.

Back in the summer of 2011, the successful author very publically left her contract with Gollancz to train as a teacher. Swainston's reasons included the usual litany of author woes: a too-fast turnaround time expected for novels, pressure from fans, and a general disillusionment with the writing life. James sent me a link to the article (<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/steph-swainston-i-need-to-return-to-reality-2309804.html>) and asked me what I thought—which was, basically, that these were all pretty typical of the types of things that writers had to put up with, not particularly egregious horror stories as I'd sometimes heard—and then I shared a few I'd heard (and experienced myself). James asked if I'd be interested in guest editing an issue of *Journey Planet* looking at things from the writer's point of view and I declined. I didn't have time, and I'm not good at asking people to do things, and oh yes, I really didn't have time.

But what followed over the next year and a half was an off-and-on conversation between two people who had both loved the field of speculative fiction, film, and comics their entire lives but had come at it from a very different perspective, James as a fan and me as a writer. And what we kept finding

was almost like a cultural exchange program! Our experience and expectations of everything from conventions to ideas about the writing life differed quite a bit.

Not only that, but I'd been immersed in the writing side of things for so long it's hard for me to put myself back in the shoes of aspiring writers who still need guidance on basic business things like "don't pay people to publish you" and "why you need a contract" (except when you don't, but it is, as they say, complicated). I felt like I'd been able to figure all that stuff out in the pre-Internet days handily enough, and didn't people have loads more resources at their fingertips at this point, and surely those same old mistakes weren't being made? But maybe the Internet just muddles things, makes it even harder to figure out where to seek good information; at any rate, after James pointed me to examples of several aspiring writers getting burned before they were even out of the gate, I had to reconsider.

§

There's loads of advice out there about the creative side of writing, but much of the business side of things seems to be a well-kept secret. And

you know, there are reasons for that. The business of genre publishing is a small, close-knit one. People don't want to get reputations as troublemakers. There are also strong friendships even between people who may be in the midst of a conflict about the business side of things. So this is twofold: people don't want to get a bad reputation and they don't want to be assholes.

This attitude was borne out in the response we got from a *lot* of writers to our solicitations. In a lot of cases, we were asking people to write about a specific problem they'd had; almost everyone declined to go on the record.

This left us feeling a little bit like we were in a *Catch-22*. This reluctance to talk about the problems leading to ignorance among both writers and fans was the whole reason we'd wanted to put the zine together in the first place, but we were being stymied by that very reluctance.

This is why when people do speak up it's a very big deal. Liz Williams wrote about this in her blog in 2010 (<http://mevennen.livejournal.com/777134.html?page=1>) when she went public with the difficulties she was having with Nightshade Publishing. (Brief followup here: <http://mevennen.livejournal.com/777719.html>) This led to Nightshade's being put on probation by SFWA for one year; once Williams said something, lots of other people started talking

about problems they'd had too, but up that point, everyone was just sort of suffering in silence. (<http://www.sfwaworld.org/2010/07/a-note-to-sfwaworld-members-regarding-night-shade-books/>)

Needless to say, this creates a remarkably dysfunctional family sort of atmosphere where everyone's pretending that everything is A-OK when nothing could be further from the truth.

Even writers who've spoken up publicly about publishing frustrations aren't always eager to focus on those issues later, and the reasons are complicated. The extraordinarily gracious Ian Tregellis, for example, declined to have us reprint his piece (<http://www.iantregellis.com/index.cfm?blog=212>), explaining that he didn't mind if we included a link to it but that his relationship with TOR had greatly improved and he felt it would look like a bit of passive-aggressive rehashing of old wounds to authorize its reprint here. This is perfectly understandable and speaks, I think, to the fact that sometimes it's less about a conspiracy of silence than it is about the difficulties of human relationships.

Tregellis's piece is great, though, not because it's a poison pen to TOR and its editors (it isn't that at all), who are, like most of us, just doing the best they can. Forget the publisher, forget the author, forget any of the specifics of the piece; this could happen literally anywhere to anyone. The important part is that it

illustrates how badly things can go wrong for writers even when they have a good agent and a major publishing contract.

And without a good agent and a major publishing contract, the seas are swimming with sharks. We've tried to provide a number of different points of view and lots of advice from people at different stages in the process and trying out different approaches including self-publishing and, yes, we do include a bit of good old how-to-write advice here as well.

In the end, our hope is not to discourage but to inform. I've always liked the quote by the great Flannery O'Connor in response to a question as to whether universities discouraged writers: "I don't think it stifles enough of them! There's many a best seller that could have been



prevented by a good teacher.” But the truth is that it’s not in my nature to discourage (although some might argue that might be kinder when it comes to the horrors of the writing life!). What I think aspiring writers *must* do is separate the business self from the self who thinks of publishing a story or a book as the culmination of a long-held dream. It’s okay to feel every bit of that excitement and dream-come-trueness when an editor says “yes,” but then, to paraphrase my writing teacher Jeanne Cavelos from the Odyssey Writing Workshop, you have to take off that dreamy hat and put your business hat on. For lots of people, this is a day job; for others, it’s an opportunity to scam money or too many rights off those daydreams about the writing life. And then some people aren’t evil; they’re just incompetent, but the end results for you, the writer, who’s now got a butchered story in print or has signed away all rights or can’t even get contributors’ copies of the magazine you wrote for are the same regardless of the editors’ or publishers’ motives.

These things happen a *lot*. So much more than they should. Be vigilant.

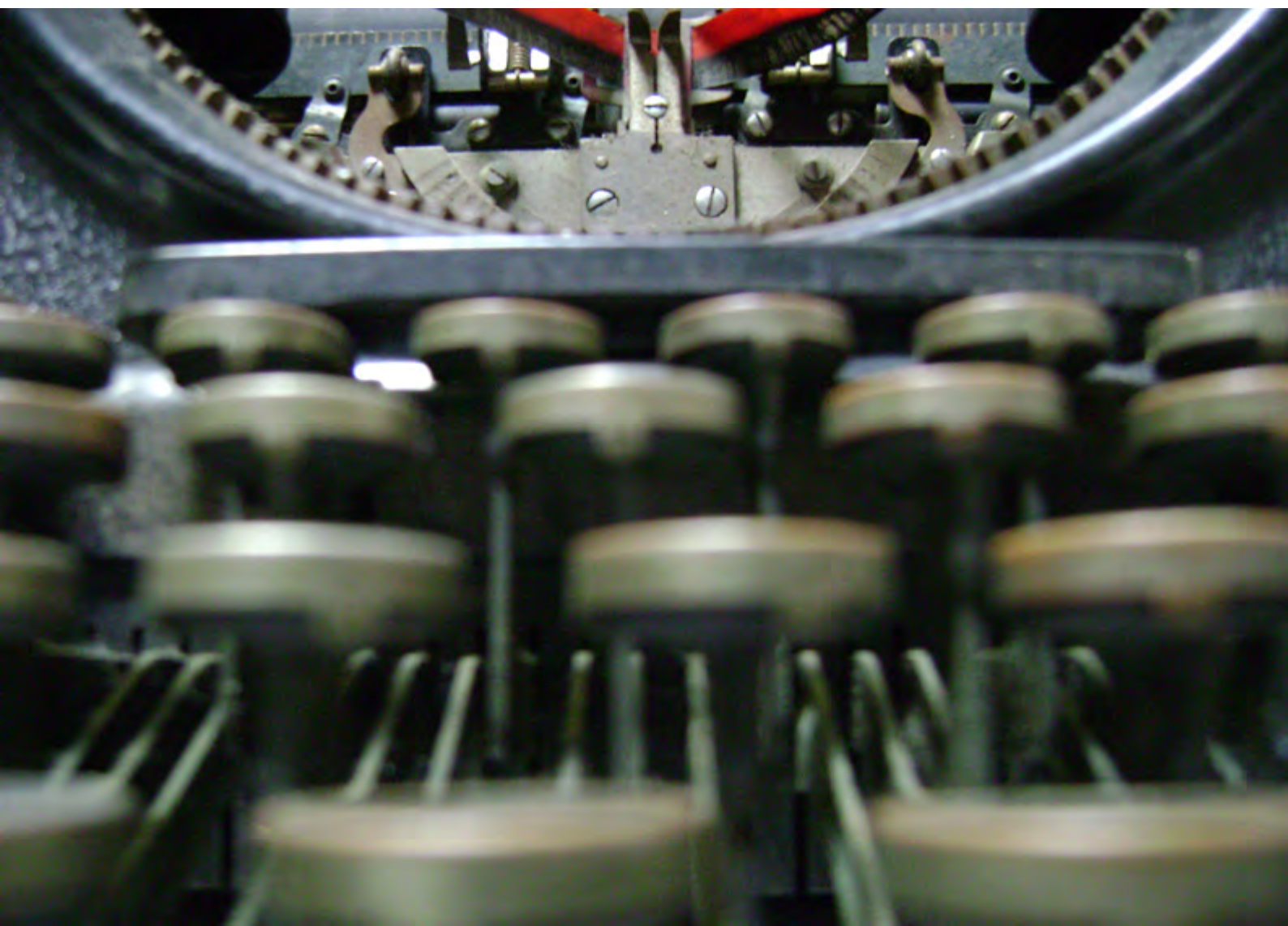
And yes, writing is above all a labor of love, too, for most people, and well it should be, but just as a relationship can’t always be just about the sex and

romance—at some point you’ve got to get out of bed, take a shower, eat something and go earn some money—the writing life will require you to remove the rose-colored glasses on a regular basis so you can read every single word of the fine print. And then read it again. And again.

Another advantage of educating yourself about these things is perspective. Shit happens to everybody in the writing life. Much of it is undeserved. When you begin to realize that this is the case, you’ll feel a lot less discouraged and take it a lot less personally when you hit your own set of doldrums.

Writing takes a lot of time to get good at and then still takes a lot of time after that and it isn’t very profitable. But we do it because we love it, or it’s a compulsion, or some combination of those two things. I hope that for those who aspire to move to a professional level with their writing, we’ve provided some useful pointers, and I hope this look at the wheels and cogs of the writing life is also interesting to fans and people with no interest in a professional publishing career at all.

Thanks to everyone who wrote for us and let us reprint their pieces, and thanks to James and Chris for asking me to work with them on this issue of *Journey Planet*.



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THE GLACIER BY ANDREA K. HOSTH

REPRINTED FROM [HTTPS://SITES.GOOGLE.COM/A/ANDREAKHOST.COM/THE-GLACIER/](https://sites.google.com/a/andreakhost.com/the-glacier/)

On 4 October 2000 I forwarded a manuscript called "The Silence of Medair" to the submissions editor of one of the "Big Few" publishers of science fiction and fantasy which still accept non-agented submissions. For the purpose of this saga I'll call them 'Glacier Publications'.

4 October 2000
MS forwarded by snailmail to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

May 16, 2001
Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi - in October last year I submitted a manuscript ("The Silence of Medair"), and about four months later sent a query letter with stamped postcard to make sure that it had arrived. Since this didn't come back, would it be possible to let me know whether or not the manuscript was ever received?

Thanks.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Dear Ms Hosth,
Your ms has passed first reading, which is why it's still here. I don't know if your follow-up letter got here, I would have replied if it had.

Our senior editors are very backed up right now, and I can't even guess when they ([...] the only people here who can "buy" a book) will be able to look at your book. In the hopefully-not-too-long meantime, we deeply appreciate your patience and understanding.

11 July 2002
Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hello - again, just checking to see if "Medair" is still there. [I'm operating on the assumption that it is in a queue and will eventually be read - I try to check in every six months or so because I've had a reasonable amount of lost snailmail in the past.]

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Still here and waiting. Soon, hopefully, I'm going through all the "passed" ms's and picking the top 10%. Then I can return the rest.

14 March 2003

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hello, pestering again. Shall I send a niggling little reminder every month or so, or just accept that TSoM isn't going to make it through your slush pile?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Your book is one of the next ones to be reviewed, but it is going more slowly than I had hoped.

All pestering perfectly acceptable!

20 May 2003

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi - checking in again. [Just re-read it actually, and am resisting the urge to split the thing into two novels. :)]

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

We have a new employee who will be able to help with second reading once she settles in, at which point we hope things will speed up.

31 October 2003

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi - pestering again. It's now three years since I submitted "Medair" to [Glacier]. Can you let me know if there's any real likelihood that I'll receive a response before, say, the end of the year?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Hello--not before the end of the year, but your ms is with the next batch to be reviewed.

30 May 2004

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

We're now heading toward the four year mark of this ms' submission. Could you let me know if there is any likelihood of "The Silence of Medair" being reviewed in the near future? I really would like to clear this submission up one way or the other. If it is not suitable for your house, please let me know.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Your ms is with the next bunch to be reviewed, so hopefully not too much longer.

21 January 2005

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi. Is this still in the queue at all?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

It's #2 in the queue.

9 April 2005

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Four and a half years now on this submission. Is there any realistic end in sight?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

You're next up. I asked our second reader when she would be able to review your book, and placed it on her shelf, so she knows just where it is. She said four to six weeks--six to be safe.

Thanks for being patient!

15 October 2005

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

October is the five-year anniversary of this submission.

So...shall we try for ten?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Congratulations of a sort--of the last dozen or so books that have had a second reading, yours is the only one that is being passed up to a senior editor. Sorry I can't say when it will have a look, but you passed over a big bump.

Good luck, and thank you for your continued patience.

12 March 2007

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Just my six-monthly check in.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

We will have a new employee who will do second reading. I'll have him read Silence as the one ms that has passed 2nd reading.

3 September 2007

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi - just checking in to see if this is still there.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Still here--I had hoped he would have had time by now, but a bunch of emergencies arose--again--but you're still on the top of the heap.

13 February 2008

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Just checking in that this is still in the queue.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Still is--I talked to the reader who had passed it up as well as the other second reader, and we decided it does not need another second reading before a senior editor takes a look. The question is, when will they have time for that? I know they're both way backed up. I will ask today. If I don't get back to you this week, please e-mail me.

[Next email had no reply.]

6 November 2008

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

I don't think I heard back to you on this one.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Things are going slower than ever, [...]. Everyone is taking up the extra slack, we are all busier than ever. But I asked one of our senior editors (the official book buyers) if she will have time to look in the next six months, and she said yes. She specified January, so please send me an email then, and I'll see it's put on her desk.

Thanks for your continued patience!

9 January 2009

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Hi-she's not here today, PLEASE send me this note next Tuesday-I'm working the warehouse tomorrow & she's back on Tuesday--thanks!

13 January 2009

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Done.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

[Senior Editor] said not this week, but she could look at your ms the last week of the month. Could you please send an email on the 27th?

Thanks!

[Next email had no response.]

14 April 2009

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] - I'm guessing this ms is still on the to-do list somewhere. Let me know if it's no longer in the queue.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Hi Andrea,

Actually, it's way beyond the to-do list, I passed it to [Senior Editor] a while back. She's been swamped, besides just getting back from vacation, but told me she would look at it in May. Thanks for being so patient! I'm sorry this is such a lengthy process.

6 July 2009

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Checking this is still in the queue. I'm not altogether sure what the etiquette is with such an old submission, but I'd really like to clear this one up.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

She's in tomorrow, I'll remind her that she said she'd be looking at it. Please email me next Monday, so I can tell you what she said.

[The next couple of emails go unanswered.]

6 November 2009

Email from Me to Glacier Publications general email.

Hi-pleaseseebelowanemailfrom[SubmissionsEditor].

Back in October 2000 I submitted a MS to [Glacier], and since then have been regularly kept up to date by [Submissions Editor] as to the submission status as it moved through first and second readers, up to the editors, back down to the second readers and then up to the editors again. The below email was my last contact with [Submissions Editor], and further queries have had no response. [Possibly he made his last reply by snailmail. Since I have moved address five times in the last ten years, there's every chance such a letter would not reach me.]

Can you please check your records and let me know if this submission is still in open status with your group? While a ten-year submission makes a nice anecdote, I'd really like to finalise the status of this one before it reaches that stage.

Thanks

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Dear Ms Hoth,

Please accept my apologies for not getting back to you sooner. As I've mentioned, your book has passed second reading, and awaits the final step of review by [Senior Editors]. I've mentioned this to both of them on a number of occasions, but my timing has been consistently bad. They were always in the middle of project deadlines when I made my request. Unfortunately, it gets worse, but I'm working at a happy ending. After the first of your recent emails, I attempted to locate your ms. [Senior Editor] thought it was in [Senior Editor's] office, and vice-versa. I spent about five hours looking in both offices with no luck. So I humbly and with great apology, request that you send another copy. I will discuss with [Senior Editors] the fact that you have been waiting with saint-like patience since 2000, and will hound them until I get a commitment on when one of them will be able to review your book.

With extreme gratitude,

[Submissions Editor]

[Replacement manuscript sent 7 November 2009. Postage cost \$67AU this time, a mere \$17 increase in the past decade.]

18 January 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi - did the replacement manuscript arrive?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Yes!

6 March 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi. Is there any tentative probable date for review of this ms?

[No reply]

17 March 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] - I'm afraid I might have missed any reply to this email. I normally wouldn't requery so soon, but the last time I didn't receive a reply the manuscript had gone MIA. Is "Medair" still with [Glacier]?

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Hi Ms Hoth,

In our last instalment, the big office move had occurred. [Senior Editor's] new office is a lot smaller, a lot of manuscripts are not unpacked, and will not be until places to put them are determined. The reader who passed your book filled [Senior Editor] in with some details about your book, and [Senior Editor] agrees that she wants to take a look. I truly feel terrible about the wait we're putting you through. Please email me in two weeks, if no unpacking has occurred, I will root through the boxes and find it for [Senior Editor].

31 March 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] - a two week reminder as requested (one day early as sending such emails on April Fool's Day strikes me as either inauspicious or perhaps too apposite).

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Hi Ms Hoth,

Located and put on [Senior Editor's] desk with a reminder. I know she's deeply busy right now, but it is a move forward. I would suggest getting back to me in a month. Thank you for your saint-like patience.

5 May 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] – checking back in again.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

I know she has a number of books in production that she's reading right now, but I'll talk to her later today for an estimate.

24 May 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] – just checking in again. I'll be bugging you a lot more than usual this year since we'll hit the full ten-year mark in October and I've promised myself to try and get this submission cleared up before then.

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

Hi – will be out of the office until next week. Please bug me again after the 7th? Thanks!

8 June 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] – checking in again (plus new email address).

11 June 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] – re-sending in case this didn't go through. Will try from the old address next month if it looks like this address has been vanquished by the spam filters.

18 June 2010

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

It's being looked at this week.

1 July 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] - just this month's pester.

1 August 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor] - just this month's pester.

4 August 2010

Email from Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications to Me.

[Senior Editor] gave your book to our managing editor to read a while ago. I just checked to see if he had been able to look yet, and he hadn't, but will soon.

4 October 2010

Email from Me to Submissions Editor, Glacier Publications.

Hi [Submissions Editor]

Ten years ago today I first sent Medair off to [Glacier]. Back when we hit the five year mark, I joked about trying for ten, but I never imagined we would reach this point. I find I lack the intestinal fortitude to push on for twenty.

Please mark this submission as withdrawn.

Thank you for replying to my endless number of queries over the years, and for passing the manuscript up in the first place - whatever else, I appreciated the compliment!

Yrs

Andrea K Hosth

These are around two-thirds of the emails sent to and from 'Glacier' over the decade of this submission, but the rest are a repetitive "Is it still there?" followed by "Yes" and so have been culled.

During the ten years while this manuscript was in (exclusive) submission I wrote other books which I submitted to other publishers, and sporadically queried agents. I spent a year amusing myself with a fiction blog, played three different MMO's, worked my day job, moved house a lot, and came up with many theories as to why it would take ten years to deal with one manuscript.

Although it did occur to me that this was some bizarre form of "Publisher's Chicken", and the submissions editor just wanted to see how long it

would take until I blinked, the more mundane and probable explanation is that publishers are very very (very!) busy people, and slush pile manuscripts are always the lowest of low priorities. It doesn't seem likely that mine was the only ms which made it past the first and second readers at 'Glacier' during the last decade, and I suspect that mine kept drifting to the bottom of the pile because it was overlong for a debut novel or perhaps was passed up with a note along the lines of "Will require some work to publish, but may be worth it" – or, worse, "Won't make money, but I liked it".

It constantly surprises me, when I read back over these emails, that I lasted so long. I doubt I would have if not for an earlier manuscript which spent two and a half years at a different publisher (until I withdrew it). That editor would never even answer queries so I had the greatest difficulty determining whether it was still with them. By contrast Glacier's submissions editor was almost always prompt answering my emails, and the content of his feedback was more than positive. And I'd learned from the earlier submission that no matter how many years they keep it, you don't gain anything by withdrawing it.

Though I must say I could have done without the email which began 'Congratulations of a sort' – there is only one kind of email beginning with 'congratulations' that a submissions editor should send to a slush pile author, and that was not it.

There is an essential powerlessness in the slush pile – you either wait, or you withdraw. [Indeed, there's a large portion of powerlessness served up to published authors as well, who are rarely given any say on questions of covers, let alone DRM.] When the manuscript went missing nearly nine years in, I considered simply letting the whole thing go, but figured that the second chunk of postage was not too great a cost, since the senior editors would surely be embarrassed at having lost it after such a long delay, and want to get the replacement off their desks as quickly as possible.

That didn't happen.

This page is a long-winded explanation of why I decided to self-publish. 'Glacier' wasn't the only reason: in some fifteen years of submissions the focus/style/quality of my novels evidently never passed the test with any publisher or agent. But they were the stories I wanted to tell. The ten-year mark on "Medair" did me the favour of forcing me to seriously consider what I wanted from my writing, and look at the other options which had opened in the decade since I mailed off that chunk of paper.

Self-publishing is not an ideal route for gaining readers. While it does mean you can have

input on the covers, and choose not to inflict DRM on the ebook versions, without the experience and connections of a publisher there is every likelihood of only selling copies to obliging friends and relatives. I don't recommend it as a path for anyone to rush down: having a talented agent and a well-established publisher is by far the better option for almost every author, and there is a lot of (non-writing) work and costs involved with self-publishing. And a good deal of automatic disdain from readers who state openly that they'd never read a self-published novel.

However, for all the massive advantages of gaining an agent/publisher, the submission process comes with not inconsiderable negatives - frankly, 'Glacier' made me feel like dirt and I don't want to go back to that. Self-publishing gave me my books on my shelves, and readers have a far better chance of discovering my stories now than they did when they were still buried on my hard drive. That makes me happy.

[That Medair went on to be short-listed for the 2010 Aurealis Awards of course makes me even happier.]





SEDUCTION AND PRODUCTION: HOW TO BECOME A PULP HACK IN TWENTY-FIVE EASY STEPS! BY JASON S. RIDLER

“Quantity is a kind of quality.” Soviet Proverb.

“Communism, like any other revealed religion, is largely made up of prophecies.”
H. L. Mencken

Lynda asked me to talk about my experience with self-publishing ebooks. I’ve tried hard to find something relevant and different to share. Most self-publishing advice is on how to maximize sales, usually via personal experience (since getting “numbers” on other people is tricky). Some advice is on the act of writing, but it’s skewed toward young writers who may need inspiration and, sadly, a lot of it comes off as self-help treacle (and since most self-help books prey on the desperate rather offer useful advice to stop being desperate, I’m not keen on this trend). But

most is on the biz.

I guess this is normal. A self-published writer is both the creator of the art and the business that sells the art: a new addition for most writers. So, most of the new dialog is on tricks and tips from promotion to production and 1001 other ways to maximize your numbers.

What I’d like to focus on is murkier territory. It’s about numbers, too. About how they can obscure as well as clarify, and impact the relationship between expectations, efforts, and the production of art. And, sadly, I’ll be using the personal essay, too, since my data is the only kind I can verify. But this will be a little bit different than the usual tale of getting the hang of ebooks. I hope so, anyway. Much of the self-publishing dialog is positivist (like most self-help stuff, you never go hungry selling optimism). But there’s also a flipside.

In my case, it was when the daydream of success and the hype about the ebook “revolution” ruined the joy of making fiction.

But, if you would prefer to read my list of all the contradictory publishing advice I’ve seen over the past three years, feel free to scroll down to the end of the essay. If not, read on.

YOU, TOO, MIGHT BE A MILLIONAIRE WRITER (MAYBE, I MEAN, IT COULD HAPPEN)!*

(*Note: I never actually said you would be a millionaire, and in fact made claims to the contrary beneath my inspiring remarks, so remember, all proclamations are puffery and there is no recipe for success, and since I told you this even while I was inspiring you to follow your dreams, don’t come crying to me when my advice doesn’t make you crazy-rich, because, after all, I never said it would, and, by the way, NO REFUNDS!)

In 2010-2011, I read a lot of articles and posts about ebooks. Amanda Hocking was fast-tracking to be a millionaire. John Locke was selling better than mainstream authors with big names and advances. Joe Konrath left traditional publishing to survive and then thrive on self-pubs alone. I read posts from friends and colleagues about their own successes. Some were making good money, others bar money. Not much was said about the fiction, but a lot was said about the numbers. Fine. We all want to make dough and be read. Cool beans.

So, I thought I would give ebooks a shot. Unlike a lot of self-published authors, I wasn’t a complete novice. I’d spent ten years writing and publishing short fiction, as well as academic work and popular non-fiction. I’d paid a lot of dues, learned a lot about creating stories, worked hard. I switched to writing novels fast and furiously in 2009, when ebooks started to catch fire. Thrillers seemed to be doing well. The audience wanted fast-paced novels, usually from an ongoing series. So, I took my punk rock thriller set in the world of pro wrestling (box office gold!), yanked it off the slush pile, and got it pretty and published and promoted as an ebook in 2011. I even wrote two more books in the series, as well as releasing a short story collection.

I told myself this was an experiment. I told myself that Hocking was an innovator at the cusp of a changing business, and not a model; that Konrath had years of traditional publishing momentum and fans to follow him; that Locke, for all his success, seemed to be writing pretty awful-sounding books I would not want to emulate in any way. I was doing this

experiment to learn. I’d try and sell as much as I could, but I wouldn’t get hung up if I wasn’t a millionaire in a year.

It didn’t work. Six months later, I was depressed about sales, lack of attention, failed marketing efforts, etc. I questioned the quality of my work, my methods, and what was wanted in the marketplace. Most of all, a part of me thought I’d failed because I wasn’t the next Hocking, Konrath, or Locke (despite the fact that I was a new novelist who wrote a pretty off-kilter thriller). It probably didn’t help that I had ten years of short-fiction “success” behind me, or that I was suffering some fatigue in the void after grad school, and a bunch of other junk.

With that cocktail of hang-ups, a poisoned seed rooted within my thinking. There was an ebook meme going around at that time: it’s the glorious revival of the pulp days of yore! The more novels you had out, the more chances you had to sell (see that Soviet proverb again). I became obsessed with production, which, for a recovering workaholic, is a slippery slope.

During my decade of short fiction, I became invested with the idea of “fast” writing, a school of thought that emphasizes quick completion of stories (usually one a week instead of a month or longer) as a means to develop your voice and get closer to the subconscious level of stories (Ray Bradbury is our godking). I consider myself a “fast writer”, with the caveat that I believe revisions are helpful; some “fast” writers loath revisions, and I wish many would change their minds. Nonetheless, I took the same approach when I started writing novels in 2009. But when ebooks boomed, I pushed myself harder. Instead of two novels a year, I’d write four, and planned on more. I constructed complex schedules for producing novel after novel, releasing them in short intervals: basically, making art on a treadmill. I would swarm the marketplace with my talent, see what survived, and soon receive fame, glory, and kudos made of cash.

I also forgot that, when I became a “fast” writer, I pushed myself to keep getting faster and faster until I tipped from learning, working and improving and nose-dived into a case of burnout that would mirror my attempts with novels. As they say, the most seductive liar of all is memory.

Now, I love the books I wrote during that time, and I think my heart was in the right place with all of them, but when I was done, the poisoned seed sprouted another idea. I’d only be “successful” (read “super-ass rich”) if I kept doing this regimen . . . forever.

But, after gunning it for four novels, I was

spent. The zest, the mojo, the kwan that I like to think I bring to the table, was dry. But I couldn't rest. In this brave new pulp world, that would be failing. Bramble thoughts bloomed hard and fast: "Well, you can't just wait until you're mana is back up, hero, you have to keep pushing, because that's how you succeed, and that narrow window before EVERYONE is writing ebooks is closing, so every minute other work is crowding you out, every minute you are not making new art and slapping it out there increases your obscurity, so you must become a hack to make it, writing shit you don't care about, doing it with zero enthusiasm; just get it done, just write junk and swamp everyone with garbage that will sell ... now get back to the computer, motherfucker, because you're slacking off!"

That voice was full of pure, 110%, Grade-A skunk shit. Yet, it was compelling. Nothing left in the tank, I pushed on. I started constructing a tawdry thriller series that I thought had much more marketability, full of sex and violence and designed to be written at an insane clip, a premise fit for a meth-fuelled production schedule ...

And I stopped cold. Just stabbed the breaks. Because somewhere down the road, at the corner of best intentions and secret desires, I'd fucked up. I didn't want to be a hack. For me, a hack was someone who wrote without enthusiasm, without trying to do their best work. Someone who only cared about the numbers, the metrics, the quantity, and some kind of fame or payday. Quality and writing the stories I was driven to tell had blurred out of the picture. Even if I was writing commercial fiction (which is most of what I do), full of action and adventure and, indeed, sex and violence, I had strived in my way to write about the "the human heart at war with itself." Writing stories only I could write had been my M.O.

But every idea I now had was drained of color, bled of joy. In my mind, I was writing stories to please everyone instead of finding the right way to create stories that I loved for as big an audience as I could steal. Believe it or not, those are different objectives. It was time to stop and rethink what the hell I was doing.

For six months, I untangled this messy thinking in my head. A mess rooted in poor management of expectations, of only listening to the advice that would punish me the most, of failing to see other avenues to take in art and business. Of dreaming about numbers, not art; quantity, not quality. So, I changed strategies.

The creative half of my life was exhausted, and needed mending and nourishment, from video games to comic books to Henry Miller's insane and inspirational ramblings on writing ("Why do lovely

faces haunt us so? Do extraordinary flowers have evil roots?"). I wrote "free verse" inspired by Japanese poetry and turned some of them into flash fiction. I wrote some of my best short stories yet. And I spent a lot of time thinking about what kind of novel I'd love to write. Not what would be most successful. That's fine, too. But not what I needed right then.

"My only other piece of advice would be this: Don't keep on trying to sell a book that no one wants, It doesn't matter how brilliant you might think it is, if it's not selling, put it away and write something else. And something else after that. I'm not saying give up after one or two rejections, but if, say ten agents and/or publishers (who you've carefully researched and who are currently representing/publishing the same type of book as the one you are selling) have passed outright on your project, it's time to move on."

Christa Faust

So I wrote a "monkey's paw" coming-of-age fantasy story about three kids in a punk band. It was an utter joy. It will likely never see the light of day. But sweet god, it was refreshing to write something without thinking how it fit in a production schedule, or if it should be a series, or if I had too much or too little genre elements to market it to X demographic, etc. The funny thing, though, was when I was done with that, I didn't mind thinking about commercial fiction again. I just had a rule: I had to love the idea. If I didn't get up each morning and want to drown myself in the story, then fuck it. I would explore until I did find a story that kicked out the jams in my skull. And that led to writing a book that I have high hopes for, one that was a joy to write and that may have a commercial payday. We'll see.

I also got re-jazzed about ebooks and released **BLOOD AND SAWDUST** (“Fight Club with a fat vampire!”) and began a more consistent effort at promoting it. It found a larger audience, likely because it fit the market better than my previous effort (though I still love my wrestling thriller). I’m debating on what to do next in the ebook space. But I’m not beating myself up about it. Life is tough enough without giving yourself a heartpunch for trying, falling, and picking your ass up.

I’ve been out of the doom and gloom for a year or so, just as the tides change again. Now, Hocking has a major publishing deal alongside her self-published empire. Locke’s success was tainted when it was discovered the majority of his positive reviews were bullshit, bought and paid for so that he could hijack Amazon’s algorithm for promoting successful work; thus garnering sales based on lies. Konrath joined Amazon’s new publishing arm while continuing his own self-pub stuff.

Hybrid careers are growing, including my own. I’m finding great opportunities in and outside the ebook boom. I get small dollops of fan mail and requests for a **BLOOD AND SAWDUST** sequel. I’ll do more ebooks, sure, but I also have a terrific agent and plan on selling via the traditional routes as well. I have historical projects that are ready to fly, both popular and academic. I still write fast, but I have healthier targets and a better gauge of when to pull back and relax (though my wife would disagree!). I still love short fiction and work on it whenever I can. I’ve had a blast writing novels again, and it’s coming through in the work. Hell, I might even warp that tawdry ebook series into something spectacular in the near abroad!

Instead of charging through a revolution, it seems I’m better equipped for evolution: because evolution favors those that can change to survive and then prosper in new environments for the long haul. I was too narrowly focused on production as a means of ebook success during what folks thought of as a “short window” to get rich quick, but that led to a creative dead end.

While there is lots of advice about planning your work schedule, on writing fast, even on the psychology and strategy of turning dreams into goals (ugh), experience is the best teacher. I learned a lot from publishing ebooks, I’m better for it, and resist hype. I’ll do what I do best. Write about all the crazy stuff I love, do it to the best of my ability and get better each time, all the while selling as much as I can without turning into a complete marketing shithook. Seems a good approach for now, anyway.

Shit. Was this actually inspiration in disguise?

And Now, Doc Ridler’s **25 Subjective Truths and Honest Lies about Publishing that Will Never Change, Until they Do!**

1. Writing is hard, except when it isn’t
2. It’s who you know, except when it isn’t
3. Talent rises to the top, no matter the odds!
4. Connections make you successful, no matter the odds!
5. Not giving a damn about the market always makes great art
6. Ignoring what readers like is a recipe for obscurity
7. The ebook boom is not a revolution, but since I don’t know what it is yet, I use the term “revolution.” A lot.
8. Revisions are for suckers
9. Most crap writing is a first draft + spellcheck
10. Hackwork is whatever I don’t like, AKA: what I hate about myself or my own work
11. The only writers who don’t daydream of being rich are liars or communists
12. Some liars and communists are rich writers!
13. Everyone wants literary respect, except weirdos and loners
14. Some weirdos and loners get crazy literary respect!
15. I have better ideas about art and design than professionals; now enjoy my photo-shopped cover of boobs and guns!

16. Study the business of writing more than the art, but always say you do it for the art!
17. Only your best work will get published!
18. Most of what gets published is crap!
19. I think for myself whenever a famous or self-published author tells me it's okay to do so.
20. You have total control of your career, so if your ebook sell peanuts it's because you suck, or you're a genius no one understands. Probably neither, but maybe not.
21. Ebooks are forever, unless you read your EULA and realize you're renting them!
22. Anything John Scalzi, Neil Gaiman or Joe Konrath says is true, especially if you're John Scalzi, Neil Gaiman or Joe Konrath
23. Always sign with a big publisher because they are looking out for you! Unless they lie, in which case they are evil!
24. Lying to get what you want never hurt anyone, and that's why sock puppet reviews for self-published books are awesome and life affirming and not evil!
25. Buy **BLOOD AND SAWDUST** if you enjoyed this article! And even if you didn't!

<http://www.amazon.com/Blood-and-Sawdust-ebook/dp/B009YNXP9W>





INSTANT FANZINE

COMPILED BY JAMES BACON

Lauren Beukes

What is the one piece of advice you would give an aspiring writer about the business side of writing?

Have reasonable expectations and don't rush into anything, whether it's sending out your manuscript before it's ready or signing a deal before you've done your homework.

What was the most surprising thing that you learned about the business side of writing?

What, no instant overnight success? It takes

a lot of patience and determination, dealing with rejection and rolling with the gut punches.

What the weirdest experience with a reader?

The woman who said to me, "I didn't really like your book, but can you help me publish mine?" Violating Lauren's Law #1: Be cheeky, but don't be an ass-hat.

What's your best reader experience and why?

Getting research advice on Twitter on unGoogle-able info, like "what's the best place to

dump a body in Johannesburg.” The most popular answer was Troyeville. Which fills me with equal parts worry and delight in my Twitter followers. Also: running Litmash as part of the Twitter fiction festival and seeing the amazing stories people came up that were way more clever and inventive than mine.

What’s the coolest thing you’ve gotten related to your works.?

A surprise faux sloth scarf my friends Rhoda Rutherford and Munki Groenewald made for me just before I flew off to the Arthur C Clarke Award in London. It was cute and fluffy and a little bit creepy. After *Zoo City* won, to celebrate, we raffled another one off to raise money for an amazing South African charity, Khulisa, that works with offenders and ex-offenders.

What was the worst thing an editor ever said or did to you and why?

“The writing reminds us of Bret Easton Ellis at his best, but we still don’t want it” It was too killing. There was also the agent who told me my novel was “like sex on a skateboard”. Apparently a bad thing.

What do you make of conventions and that lot (that’d be us, you know)?

I love cons, I love meeting other authors and going all fangirl, I love meeting readers, I love the programming which is often more challenging and interesting and plain weird than literary festivals, I love hanging out at the bar, I love the cosplay and sense of community of smart, interesting geeky people. It’s awesome.

What can comics achieve that books cannot?

It probably lends itself to going a lot weirder. The medium is necessarily tighter. You have to keep it snappy and moving (unless you’re Daniel Clowes or Charles Burns or Adrian Tomine). You can rely on the art to fill in the gaps in interesting

ways, to create the subtext.

Is there much difference between a comic script and a book manuscript?

Yep. I can’t do lots of dialogue, which physically hurts me. I had to learn to keep dialogue punchy, learn how panel layout can direct the pace and impact and still write long beautiful descriptions that Inaki Miranda could then take and interpret on the page in a way that was way cooler than I’d imagined. It’s about collaboration and that’s tremendously exciting.

Do you have a vision of your readers - who are they?

I write for myself – a story I’d like to read



and write. I imagine my readers are people like me in some way. People who want to read a surprising and inventive story that is challenging and hopefully says something about who we are in the world.

Who do you hate to be compared to and why?

So far no-one, but it does bug me when my characters are automatically compared to Liesbeth Salander as if she is the only model for a flawed heroine.

What was the most enjoyable research you have undertaken for a book?

I try to do a research trip to really get a feel for the setting. For *Zoo City*, that meant getting a reading from a sangoma consulting with the spirits of my ancestors, going to a refugee shelter in a church, walking round the supposedly big bad inner city suburb of Hillbrow talking to people. For *The Shining Girls*, it meant going on a murder playdate with my friend and her two year old daughter who were playing tour guide, having bacon bourbon cocktails with a police detective and going through old evidence boxes and exploring the creeeeeepy maintenance corridors of the Congress Hotel with a young historian/ghost tour guide. For *Broken Monsters* (the one I'm working on at the moment) it meant going into some very interesting places in Detroit.

What are the major pitfalls new writers should be aware of in terms of dealing with publishers, agents, and editors?

A book deal is probably not going to change your life. You're still going to have to work your butt off and more so on the marketing and publicity. You're going to have to put in a lot of effort. Build relationships. Learn to handle rejection. Keep in mind that people who give you editorial direction are trying to help you shape the best possible book you can. Don't be precious about your beloved mindbabies.

Do you think it's important for aspiring writers to attend conventions? Why or why not?

From my personal experience I'd say it's really important. You can connect with your readers and

also get a chance to hang out with your peers, kvetch about the business, share frustrations and successes and learn from how other people do things, and make great contacts. I got my first comics writing gig because I was hanging out at the bar with comics writers.

Why do you think that science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres have developed a culture of fanzines, conventions, blogs, community etc. more than any other genre?

I'd guess that SFFH fans are very passionate and very social around their passion. They want to share the goodness.

Have you found support within the writing community of fantasy, sf, and horror? If so, how do you think this differs from other genres of writing such as literary, crime, etc.?

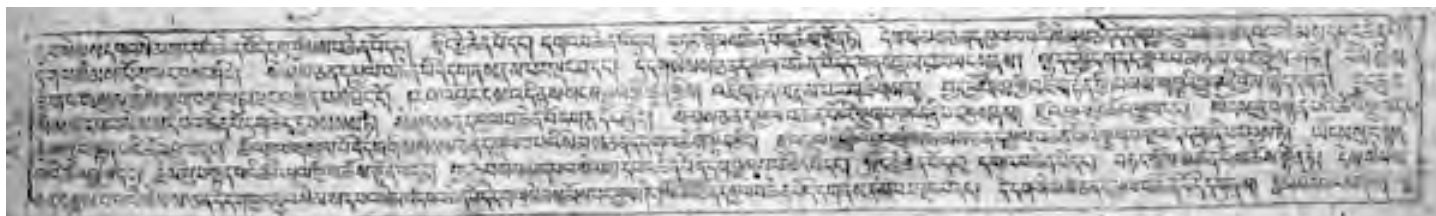
Definitely. And I don't really know. I think there are outspoken fans in a lot of genres.

What do you think of writing workshops?

Anything that can get you writing, get you to finish your stories or make you more serious about your work is a good thing. Maybe you get a crappy teacher, but can take something from how someone else in the workshop handled a scene or a bit of dialogue. But you have to be able to handle constructive criticism.

What is the hardest moment you've had in dealing with the public (signings where no one shows up, etc.)?

Ooof. Okay. *Moxyland* had just come out and no-one had even heard of it yet. I was at a big book trade fair in Cape Town where the focus was on discount books rather than writers. To do a reading, you sort of stood on the corner of your publisher's stand in a very big, very noisy convention centre, and shouted at the passers-by who weren't remotely interested. I gamely read one and a half pages to two of my friends and my husband as we all died excruciating deaths inside and then quickly skipped to the end.



Gail Carriger

What is the one piece of advice you would give an aspiring writer about the business side of writing?

Honestly and rather crudely? 1. Sit your arse in that chair and write. 2. When you're done writing only then do you get to edit. 3. Give it to three highly critical people to attack with red pens. 4. Fix it and submit it. 5. Let it go, sit your arse back down and write something else as different from the first as possible. 6. Wash and repeat.

What was the most surprising thing that you learned about the business side of writing?

Not a lot has surprised me, I eased into the industry slowly and I did my homework. I attended every panel and visited every website I could on how to get published in the SF/F genre and what it was like. I also hit most publishing problems I could in a rather convenient sideways manner through a stint in educational print in Australia. Fifteen years later, I still made some mistakes when the Call came, but fewer than most I hope.

What the weirdest experience with a reader?

I once met a young lady who actually couldn't speak when she was in my company. I rather ran out of conversational options at that juncture.

What's your best reader experience and why?

I've had some amazing letters from people in extraordinary situations ~ from donating bone marrow to trapped in riots in foreign cities. Each one dropped me a line to say the book made her laugh, or cheered her up, or kept her sane under trying circumstances. As a writer that's the most wonderful feeling.

What's the coolest thing you've gotten related to your works?

People give me remarkable handmade gifts, I love my hand painted octopus handkerchief, but it's challenging to pick a favorite.

What was the worst thing an editor ever said or did to you and why?

I've had some pretty brutal rewrites, but I guess the worst were those decades collecting a long



stream of no thank yous.

What do you make of conventions and that lot (that'd be us, you know)?

I love them.

Do you have a vision of your readers - who are they?

Well I like to say my readers are mostly outrageous ladies and kindly gentlemen.

Who do you hate to be compared to and why?

Anything wherein vampires sparkle for some other reason than because they are dripping in diamonds.

What was the most enjoyable research you have undertaken for a book?

Food, anything related to food makes me happy. I once cooked an entirely Victorian meal just to see if I could and what it would taste like.

What are the major pitfalls new writers should be aware of in terms of dealing with publishers, agents, and editors?

If you want to publish the old fashioned route? Money flows to the author. If someone wants you to pay them, be suspicious.

Do you think it's important for aspiring

writers to attend conventions? Why or why not?

Being involved in the community of a genre (mystery, romance or SF/F) can give aspiring writers a chance to avoid common pitfalls and debut mistakes. Conventions taught me everything from how to write a query letter to how to relate to agents and editors. They also gave an opportunity to observe author behavior and fan interaction on panels and at parties. In other words, I learned the type of author I wanted to be as a public figure, as well as a writer.

Why do you think that science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres have developed a culture of fanzines, conventions, blogs, community etc. more than any other genre?

I don't know. Perhaps it has something to do with being on the fringes of society.

Have you found support within the writing community of fantasy, sf, and horror? If so, how do you think this differs from other genres of writing such as literary, crime, etc.?

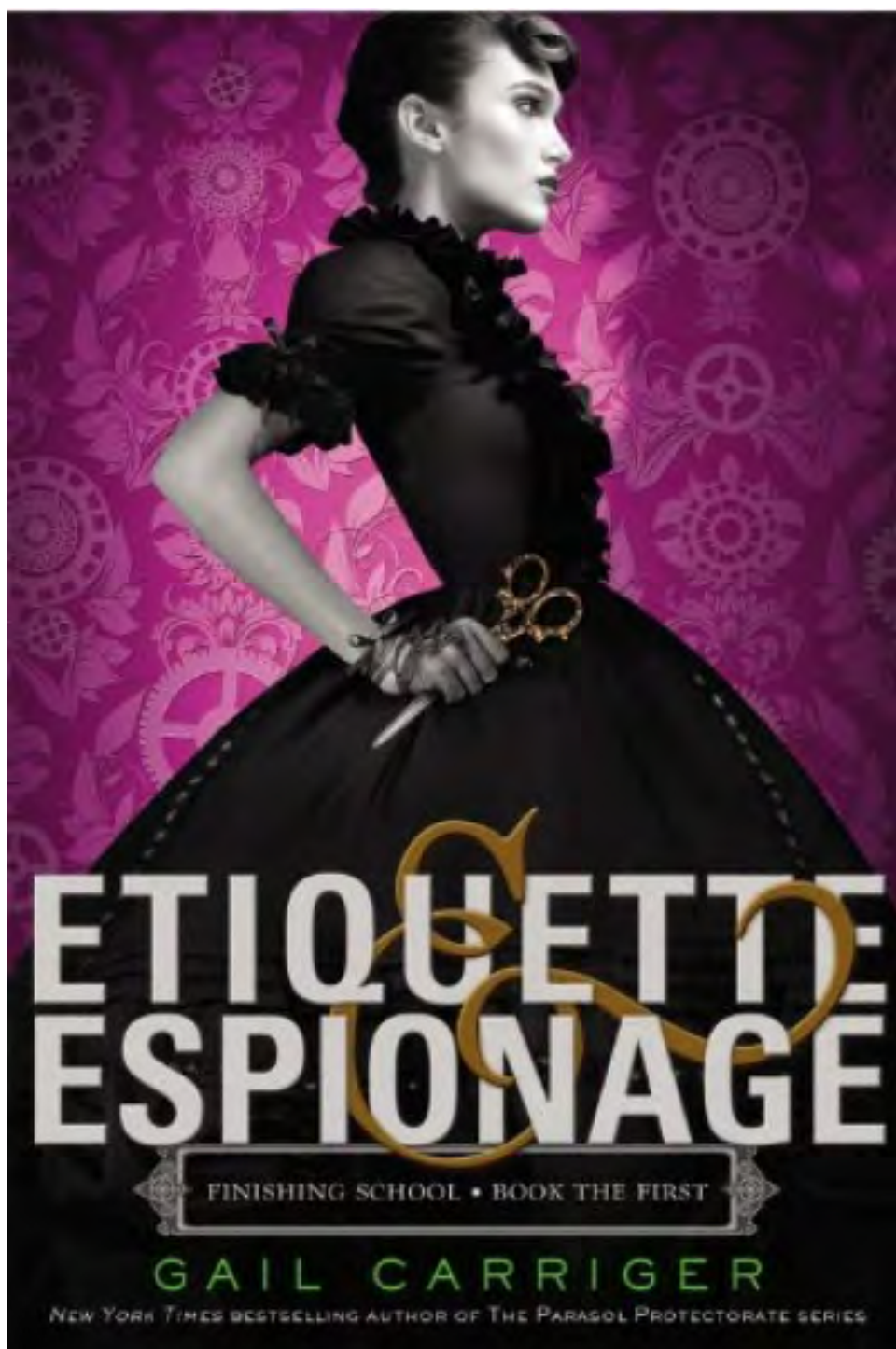
Conventions have given me author friends. Writing is very isolating and it is invaluable to have other authors to talk to, both about the craft and about the business. Many of these friends are on the same career path as me, so we can compare contract points, discuss our respective fan experiences, and generally help each other out. Authors outside of genre and convention circuits aren't always so lucky.

What do you think of writing workshops?

I haven't had much experience with them, I'm afraid.

What is the hardest moment you've had in dealing with the public (signings where no one shows up, etc.)?

I've had a few signings where no one showed up, and a few events where they were only a few people there. I try to make my own fun, after all, if one is stranded in a bookstore there is always reading...



Seanan McGuire

What is the one piece of advice you would give an aspiring writer about the business side of writing?

Read the submission guidelines. Read them carefully. Read them for content, not just for what you think they're saying. Read every word. And then meet them. Don't think you're so awesome that you can submit in the wrong font, or the wrong format, or send fantasy to a market that only takes science fiction. Those guidelines are there partially to make sure you can follow instructions and take direction. You need to follow them.

What was the most surprising thing that you learned about the business side of writing?

All writing income is subject to flat tax, and you need to be really, really careful about what you spend, because your tax bill is going to be harsher than you ever imagined it would be. They have not as yet named a highway after me. I'm starting to want one.

What the weirdest experience with a reader?

I had someone come up to me and go 'hey, do you know _____?' where _____ was someone who used to beat the shit out of me in high school. I said 'yes' and then looked at them blankly until they went away. I didn't know what else to do!

What's your best reader experience and why?

There are too many to count.

What's the coolest thing you've gotten related to your works.?

My Campbell Award.

What was the worst thing an editor ever said or did to you and why?

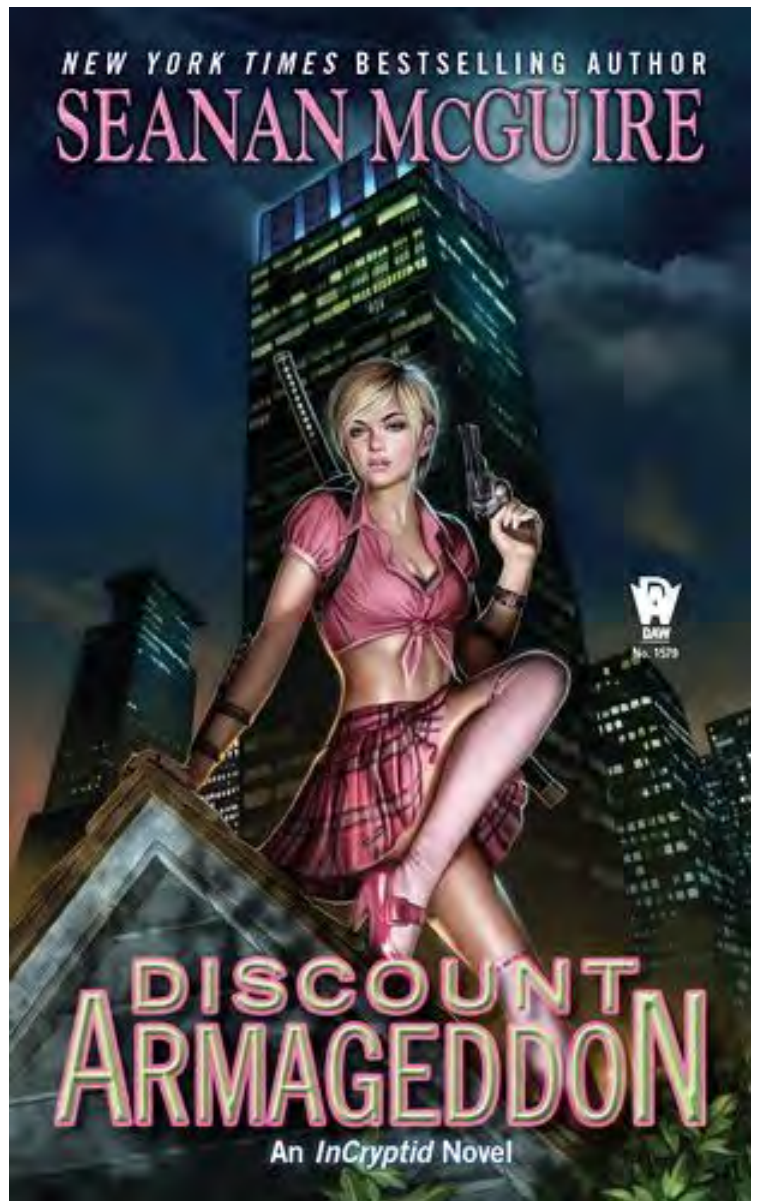
Usually, it has to do with timing. 'Hey, can you turn this copyedit around in four days' is a sentence that sort of makes me want to vomit, especially since I still work a day job!

What do you make of conventions and that lot (that'd be us, you know)?

I've been going to conventions since I was fourteen; I am a part of 'that lot.' Conventions are home. 'That lot' is my family. My big, sometimes distressing family that contains a lot of cousins I don't know, but still.

Do you have a vision of your readers - who are they?

They are wonderful people with a huge capacity for kindness and joy. They also like talking mice more than is strictly healthy.



Who do you hate to be compared to and why?

Anyone. I am me. I am not going to fit the hyperspace model you've constructed if you based it off your understanding of somebody else. I am nobody but myself, and I have never existed before, and I will never exist again.

What was the most enjoyable research you have undertaken for a book?

I watched all seven seasons of *The West Wing* to get my feeling for writing political dialog down. Oh, the agony.

What are the major pitfalls new writers should be aware of in terms of dealing with publishers, agents, and editors?

Just...don't be too eager. Get an agent you trust, and listen to them. Don't let anyone push you into anything that makes you uncomfortable. At the end of the day, no one is going to take care of your career with more passion than you are. Sometimes passion can blind us to reality. Make sure you have people around who will be honest with you.

Do you think it's important for aspiring writers to attend conventions? Why or why not?

I think it depends entirely on the writer. If you don't do well in crowds, if you don't like talking to people, don't go. Bad impressions of us as people can unfortunately color the way that readers will think about our work.

Why do you think that science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres have developed a culture of fanzines, conventions, blogs, community etc. more than any other genre?

We were marginalized for a long time, and so we colonized the margins. Romance and mystery actually have those cultural standards, too; we're just so wrapped up in our own beehive of traditions that we haven't checked to see what they're all doing.

Have you found support within the writing community of fantasy, sf, and horror? If so, how do you think this differs from other genres of writing such as literary, crime, etc.?

You know, I don't know? I haven't dealt with any of those other genres in that way.

What do you think of writing workshops?

I've never attended one, but I know a lot of people who've found them very helpful.

What is the hardest moment you've had in dealing with the public (signings where no one shows up, etc.)?

I try to be positive all the time, but I have some medical issues that I'm dealing with. A few years ago, I was trying to get from a panel to the bathroom to take my painkillers and cry until the hurting stopped, and someone literally followed me into the stall. That was...difficult, to say the least.



Robin Hobb

What is the one piece of advice you would give an aspiring writer about the business side of writing?

Begin as you mean to go on. Be a professional from the very first time you submit a piece of writing. That means your submission is the very best you can make it, that you keep a record of that submission, that you know the name of the editor you are submitting it to and you feel that your submission is a good fit for that market.

What was the most surprising thing that you learned about the business side of writing?

That you ARE a business. If you get a check for a book or story, chances are you will owe some entity taxes on that money. You need to keep records of your expenses, and file your taxes on time, and know what deductions you can take. I have a business license on the wall of my office. Writing can be an art until you get paid for what you do. Then you are a business, with all that entails.

What is the weirdest experience with a reader?

I think I've finally succeeded in suppressing that memory.

What's your best reader experience and why?

Oh, too many to list! An after bookstore signing in Paris, where I adjourned afterwards with a group of readers from a newsgroup that I'd corresponded with on the Internet, and we went to a café and drank coffee and talked. The one in Paris comes to mind, and another in Texas, exactly the same situation. The best is when you are all just people talking about books and every one is taking notes about what book they should buy next. It's the connection.

What's the coolest thing you've gotten related to your works?

Hm. Over the years, I've received many small and thoughtful gifts, some hand-made and absolutely unique. A little red shoe. A sculpture of the Fool. Recently, I found a little brass dragon perched on the iron fence around my back yard. No note, nothing, just a little dragon. He's on top of my computer tower now, next to some stuffed sand dragons that traveled here from Martinique and Alaska.

What was the worst thing an editor ever said or did to you and why?

You may have to censor this to publish it. It was early in my career and all the more shattering. Your protagonist sounds as if he would fuck a rubber ducky. I don't even have to look up that quote. Sigh. See, you just made me relive a trauma.

What do you make of conventions and that lot (that'd be us, you know)?

When I go as a writer, they are a LOT of work. When I go as a reader, they are a lot of fun. Sometimes, you can wear both hats, and have a day of fun and a day of hard work. When I go as a writer, I want to be prepared. I think about the panels I'm going to be on, I try to research ahead of time, and when possible, converse with fellow panelists before the panel. I really hope that I say something that a listener will find useful or inspiring.

Do you have a vision of your readers - who are they?

I've met enough of them in person that actual faces come to mind now. I write something and I know that a certain fellow will get that joke, and that someone else will recognize a really obscure and oblique literary reference. There are all sorts of things that a writer hides in books for that three percent of the readers who will go, I saw what you just did! I know what that means in the greater scheme of this world!

Who do you hate to be compared to and why?

Can't say that any comparisons bother me.

What was the most enjoyable research you have undertaken for a book?

Oh, all the research is good. I don't think I'd be writing about something if I wasn't interested in it before I started on the book. The best is when you are researching one thing, and find a little thread of information, follow it, and suddenly know that it's going to be a major force in your next plot line. That's the best!

What are the major pitfalls new writers should be aware of in terms of dealing with publishers, agents, and editors?

There are so many scams out there that target people who desperately want to be published. I think a new writer should visit *Writer Beware!*,

read it thoroughly, and come back often in the first two years of being published. There is a saying Money should flow toward the writer. Whenever someone tells you the opposite, that you must pay your publisher or your editor or your agent, stop. Research the whole situation VERY carefully.

Do you think it's important for aspiring writers to attend conventions? Why or why not?

I think writers should go to conventions because they are fun. And you meet people who love books and love the genres. Do conventions advance your career? Even now, I'm not sure of that. Unless you are a total boor, I don't think conventions can harm your career. But if you are going to conventions more than you are writing, well, it's time to rethink that.

Why do you think that science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres have developed a culture of fanzines, conventions, blogs, community etc. more than any other genre?

I think we are more adventurous people. We want to get out and talk about these big ideas, and cosplay some of our dreams and find like-minded people.

Have you found support within the writing community of fantasy, sf, and horror? If so, how do you think this differs from other genres of writing such as literary, crime, etc.?

I don't think I can do a valid comparison as I've only ever been a member of the fantasy/sf community. What do you think of writing workshops?

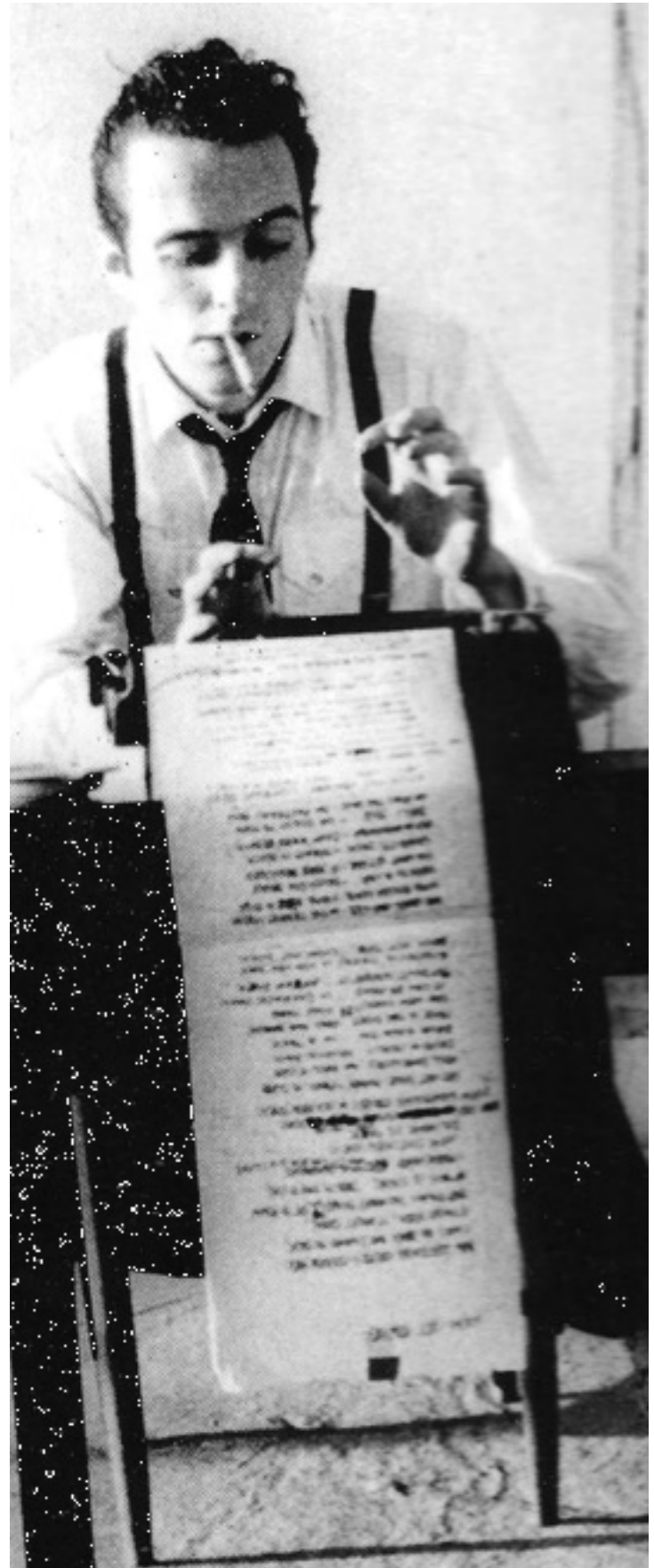
What do you think of writing workshops?

I think they are very good for some writers, and a bit destructive to others. If you are going to use a workshop, make sure you are going into a genre tolerant workshop.

What is the hardest moment you've had in dealing with the public (signings where no one shows up, etc.)?

When I've taken on more than I can do, and I don't deliver what is expected of me. I think of a conference I went to in France. It was my third trip across the water in less than a month, and on the last day of the conference, I simply could not keep my eyes open or even make sense. I was sure I'd made a

luncheon date with a friend who didn't actually arrive until the next day. But I was positive I'd seen her and talked to her. And on my last panel, to my great shame, I was trying so hard to stay awake that I could not pay attention to what was being said, first in French and then by the translator whispering next to me. That was the worst.



Mike Carey

What is the one piece of advice you would give an aspiring writer about the business side of writing?

The business side as opposed to the creative side? I'd stress the importance of really good, really professional communications. Stay formal unless invited to be matey. Use spell and grammar checks. Include your contact information on EVERYTHING. Be courteous with follow-up phone calls after you've pitched, and sensitive about how much of an editor's time you take up if you meet them face-to-face (at a convention, say). Generally make sure that you pass the "not a complete pain the arse" test.

What was the most surprising thing that you learned about the business side of writing?

How much it depends on personal relationships. You work very closely with individual editors, and you work well with some of them, come to really like them, come to know what they expect and what their foibles are. Those relationships will to some extent define your career, or at least your trajectory. They make some things very easy to do, some things almost impossible - and if you're writing

for a living, sometimes you'll do the projects that are easy to set up simply because you've got to live. So editors shape you, no doubt about it.

What the weirdest experience with a reader?

I was propositioned once - that felt pretty weird. The line was "Well the books I want you to sign are up in my room." And wow, that's a really bad line!!!

What's your best reader experience and why?

It's always great when people say "I got into reading X through your books." Like the readers who got into *Sandman* all back-to-front by reading *Lucifer* first. Or read *All His Engines* and then went away and read all the *Hellblazer* trades. But to strike a more personal note, sometimes when I read my short story "Iphigenia in Aulis" aloud, people in the audience cry. It's an awesome (I mean literally, it awes me) experience to move people to tears with something you've written.

What's the coolest thing you've gotten related to your works.?

The Inktop award! It's a lifetime achievement award that they give out at San Diego Comic-Con. I know lifetime achievement awards are really just awards for not having died yet, but this one is so fucking beautiful! And they gave it to me when I was doing a retrospective panel with Shelly Bond, in front of a roomful of people. It came out of nowhere, and it was the coolest moment ever.

What was the worst thing an editor ever said or did to you and why?

Worst thing an editor has said to me: "Plot line unclear, characters undefined". It was on a form rejection slip from the Isaac Asimov sci-fi magazine - there were various boxes to tick and those were the two that had been ticked. Ow. It was true, too, so that really hurt. Worst thing an editor has done to me is give out script samples to aspiring artists from which my contact info - address, phone number, email - had not been erased.

What do you like about comics that books cannot achieve?

The way words and pictures can strike off at oblique angles from each other, so you have two narrative threads that weave in and out of each other. No other art form quite does that. In cinema, sound



and image are more tightly welded together.

Is there much difference between writing comics and books?

Enormous, endless difference. Pamphlet comics come in pre-set sizes (22 or 22 pages per episode, usually) and the lead times are short. You pitch, you write, you polish, and bam! It's gone off to the artist. You live with a novel for up to a year, and you're working on it throughout that time, often not in a sequential, page-by-page way. You write chapter 1, then you jump forward to chapter 20, then you insert something new at chapter 6, and so on. You're constantly changing and tinkering and expanding and re-inventing. You have vertical freedom with a novel. With comics, you're sending off these little story telegrams. Once they're out in the world, there's nothing you can do to change them even if you want to. A good example of that - in *Lucifer*, the characters of Lilith and Fenris were both crucial to the climax of the story but we introduced them very late. With a novel, I would have gone back and seeded their stories in the early chapters, then made sure they were a presence throughout.

What do you make of conventions and that lot (that'd be us, you know)?

I was talking to Mike Choi about this at London Comic-Con last weekend. He was saying how much he loves conventions, but how he's always a little melancholy after he gets home from one. I have exactly the same experience. They're intense, they're fun, they go by in a blur - and then you come back down into normal life and you experience a sort of withdrawal.

Do you have a vision of your readers - who are they?

No, I really don't. Or at least, it's a very amorphous vision. I don't write to fit specific niches (well, apart from the thrillers I wrote as Adam Blake).

Who do you hate to be compared to and why?

Jim Butcher. But not because I don't like Jim Butcher. Just because I've come across that comparison, between my Felix Castor and his Harry Dresden, so many times.

What was the most enjoyable research you have undertaken for a book?

Going to New Orleans for Mardi Gras when I was writing *Voodoo Child*. Absolutely unforgettable!

It was the first full Mardi Gras after Katrina, and it was like some city-wide Bacchanalian orgy. I've never experienced anything like it.

What are the major pitfalls new writers should be aware of in terms of dealing with publishers, agents, and editors?

Well, being asked to sign away ancillary rights is probably the biggest. Sometimes you grit your teeth and do it, but you shouldn't ever do it by default. It's getting very common now for publishers to ask for a SHARE of rights, and I think that's fine. They'll also often want to be your foreign sales agents, and again I have no problem with that - they know their markets and they'll do a better job of that than most creators can for themselves. But a share of copyright? Hmm. It's a comic book model that's now finding its way into the mainstream, and it needs to be approached with caution. Don't sign away copyright unless you have to. In comics, to be blunt, you'll usually have to - even creator-ownership deals are usually partnership deals these days, with the copyright split or else with caveats built in that make it hard for you to take the property anywhere else. But in prose publishing, it's still the exception and you should look hard at the specific terms.

Do you think it's important for aspiring writers to attend conventions? Why or why not?

I think it's very useful. It gives you a sense of the inter-relationships between readers and writers, allows you to meet up with editors and agents, get advice on pitching and so on. It exposes you to a wealth of vicarious experience. Also it energises you creatively (once you're over that withdrawal).

Why do you think that science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres have developed a culture of fanzines, conventions, blogs, community etc. more than any other genre?

I think it's ALL genre fiction, isn't it? There are crime conventions and romance conventions, too, and I'd be willing to bet that there are Western conventions and historical fiction conventions. Genres attract dedicated fans who are very clear and very vocal about their tastes - and the other things flow from that.

Have you found support within the writing community of fantasy, sf, and horror? If so, how do you think this differs from other genres of writing such as literary, crime, etc.?

I've found lots of support, lots of interest and enthusiasm and a willingness to share ideas. But I have

nothing to compare it to, because I've never been part of any of those other communities.

What do you think of writing workshops?

It depends who's running them. They can be great, but I'd be wary of spending out a lot of money on them. A workshop can kickstart you, and it can sensitise you to some aspects of your own style and approach. Peer review is probably more valuable in the long run. I mean, being part of a writing group, reading out your stuff to them, getting critiqued - honing your craft.

What is the hardest moment you've had in dealing with the public (signings where no one shows up, etc.)?

Yeah, the dead signing is a bad one, certainly. Or the dead message board thread, where you show

up to do a live Q&A and there are no Qs. You've got to harden yourself to it. Nobody owes you anything, and if they do show up for you it's a gift and a courtesy and a great thing. Oh, and it's hard to swallow negative reviews that you don't feel you've earned. Your instinct is to jump in and correct errors of fact, or explain what you were trying to do. But you can't. I mean you can, but it depends on the context. You can't come barging into message board threads and try to throw your weight around, as I've seen some comics writers do. You have to let your books speak for themselves, or wait until someone puts the question to you directly.





CHINA MIÉVILLE OFFERS HINTS OF HIS SHELVED SWAMP THING PLANS BY RICH HANDLEY WITH INTRO FROM LYNDR A E. RUCKER

You may be thinking that the frustrations of the writing life go away once you've reached a certain level, but that really isn't the case. This happened back in 2010; here's China Miéville with his account of how after a great deal of work, his run on a new Swamp Thing comic was cancelled before it ever even saw the light of day. Thanks to Rich Handley for allowing us to reprint this excerpt from his site Roots of the Swamp Thing. Full article can be found here: <http://www.swampthingroots.com/news/06-03-10-china-mieville-hints-at-his-swamp-thing-run.html>

Miéville's diplomacy in his discussion of DC after such a disappointing cancellation and his perseverance with the medium obviously paid off; he is currently writing Dial H for Hero for DC.

- Lynda Rucker

I chatted with China Miéville about his canceled Swamp Thing run, and though understandably reticent to discuss what would have been so soon

after learning of DC's decision, Mr. Miéville did offer the following juicy tidbits:

"My feelings at the moment can doubtless be intuited, though I have nothing but gratitude and respect for the people I worked directly with at DC, who were consummately professional and helpful. Some vague stuff:

- 1) It was an 'epic' arc, in terms of scale and stakes.
- 2) It comprised 15 issues, plus perhaps between 1 and 3 'standalone' issues within the arc.
- 3) At least one issue would have been longer than the standard 22 pages.
- 4) Five issues have been entirely written (though they'd need some editing).
- 5) It involved a couple of relatively neglected canon characters.
- 6) It introduced one totally new character, and reimagined and dramatically expanded the importance of another, hitherto throwaway one.
- 7) It was (unsurprisingly, I suppose) pretty political.
- 8) It wasn't, however, entirely straightforwardly traditional 'green' politics, IMO.

9) It was conceived of, at least in part, as a respectful argument with some of Alan Moore's formulations.

10) I did some pictures of ST, including a sketch of what would have been the series' keystone image."

Such hints make it even more disappointing that DC would choose to bin an extended storyline from such a noted author. An epic arc is just the

jumpstart that Swamp Thing needs, and with an intended run of 15 to 18 issues, it sounds like Miéville had some big plans in store. And to think we missed out on a chance to read "a respectful argument with some of Alan Moore's formulations"... frustrating, isn't it?

That he managed to script the first five issues before the series was scrapped is maddening—perhaps, one day, those stories will come to light.





ON THE WRITING LIFE BY LYNDA E. RUCKER

(This is a revision of a blog post that originally appeared here: <http://lyndaerucker.wordpress.com/2013/01/13/on-the-writing-life/>)

When you are just a young thing, in years or ambition or both, you hear writers grousing cynically about the art, the craft, the life. You read interviews with them or you go to talks by them. If you are interested in writing science fiction or fantasy or horror you might go to a convention to see them, and here you will especially hear some horror stories because writers in what used to be called the old pulp fields are especially hard done by, or maybe not, maybe it only seems that way because that's the world I know best. I've heard horror stories from the world of lit fic, and that on top of that they lack what we who toil in the genre trenches enjoy in a true embarrassment of riches: a sense of community, camaraderie and friendship that's really without equal.

But writing is a crapshoot. To go back to the convention thing, at the very first convention I ever went to, which was the World Horror Convention in Eugene, Oregon in 1996, I saw a writer on one

panel urge aspiring writers to look into writing video games and I saw a writer on another panel argue with Clive Barker who was waxing eloquently about Art and stuff that, basically, it was all very well and good for him because he was Clive Barker but the rest of us have to eat, you know, and that means doing work-for-hire and writing media tie-ins and doing whatever we can do to keep the wolf from the door.

I found all of that a bit depressing. Because when you're starting out, you believe you're going to be Clive Barker. Well, okay, not Clive Barker exactly (he's very good but he was never my favorite writer) but whoever — that model that you have in your head of the brilliant successful writer whose career you want to emulate. You think you're going to be one of the exceptions. Of course later on what you often find out is that despite the brilliant string of novels and awards, that one writer (not Barker, who seems to do just fine, but lots of other writers) has actually been broke most of their life and teaching or stacking grocery store shelves or living off a spouse and/or all the spouses left and/or is an alcoholic/drug-addled mess so on and on, ad infinitum. After David

Foster Wallace's suicide I was shocked to learn that he taught creative writing, had a day job just like all the rest of us mugs because I guess even David Foster Wallace couldn't find a way to squeeze a living wage out of the stone that is the fiction writing life.

The point being I have a lot more sympathy for all the (okay, maybe kinda angry and bitter, but can you blame them?) writers who tried to tell all the young ones, gently or harshly, "It's not going to be exactly what you think. You can believe in Art all you want but can you keep believing in it when nobody else cares? You can't eat Art. You can't pay your rent with Art. And you may think none of that matters right now, but someday it will."

To be willing to sort
of die in order to
move the reader,
somehow. Even now
I'm scared about how
sappy this'll look in
print, saying this.
David Foster Wallace

It's not just about eating or putting a roof over your head though. It's also about the wisdom of repeatedly bashing your head through a wall. Now writing-wise, I've had a pretty good year as these things go, but there have been a lot of bad years in between. In fact, I even quit writing for a few years, or "quit writing," I should say, round about 2004/2005. I had a particularly bad and frustrating experience in the world of Big Publishing which in retrospect is really more of a run-of-the-mill major disappointment that doesn't hold a candle to some of the horror stories I've heard, but that combined with the fact that I just felt like I wasn't making headway and was losing track of what I loved about writing in the first place plus, well, a bunch of other stuff, put me on retreat. I went back to school and studied Old and Middle English and wrote a bunch of lit crit (oddly enough, writing lit crit made me a much better and leaner writer, partly because I had a terrific professor and thesis adviser)

and poked at stories in my spare time but for 3 or 4 years I really didn't do very much at all as far as fiction-writing goes.

I felt like I had become too focused on trying for extrinsic rewards, and for a writer, that way lies madness, because they are so fickle and so unpredictable and so unconnected really to how hard someone works or how good they are — and at that time, the extrinsic rewards were extraordinarily few and far between. I mean, patience, talent, persistence, writing good story after good story, all that stuff is needed. And if you have that stuff and if you keep sending your stuff out there (that last bit is key; it's amazing how many people fail at that final hurdle) you *will* get published in good places (anyone can just "get published": aspiring writers, I beg of you, this alone is not something to strive for. Aim to get published *somewhere good*) and you *will* get some recognition but there is so much luck involved along the way as well.

A few years off did me good. When I was ready to start sending stories out again, I had a little bank of stuff I'd been noodling at over the last few years and I was a better writer and most importantly, I had fallen back in love with the work again.

§

I think for me writing, and art in general, holds the place that religion does for many. It's my rock. Writing is what sustains me when everything else is gone. When [Tom Piccirilli wrote in his remarkable essay on facing brain cancer](#) "Meeting the Black" about the terror of losing the words, of wondering what was left of him if the writing went, I could barely keep reading. It's the one thing that can't be taken from us, we think, except of course it can, through madness, through illness, through injury. I'll say it publicly here: someone please cart me off the to nice people at the Swiss suicide clinic if the words ever fail me.

I've been thinking about The Writing Life more than usual lately, and I woke up with this line in my head: *By the time you've figured out being a writer is a really bad idea, it's too late to stop.* The truth of course is that I love writing. I love it more than anything. All I've ever wanted to do for as long as I can remember is be a writer, and there's nothing quite like the satisfaction of finishing a story I think is really good or making a sale or getting an email from a reader who took out the time to say they love something by me that they read. I am, in fact, a more contented writer than most I know. I like writing, I like having written, and I like my stories after I've written them.

§

So. A few final words on the writing life. There are some writers who have a kind of working-class ethos approach to the whole thing, taking particular exception to the whole suffering-artist pose. I've always particularly appreciated the way one of my favorite writers, Graham Joyce, smacks down that kind of preciousness; hailing from a Midlands mining family, he points out that writing is not exactly being lowered down into the coal mines each day (and getting your lungs lined with carcinogens in the process). Indeed. Sometimes angst is all about perception, and let's face it, we writers can be a whiny lot. It's not the worst thing that's out there, but then, most things aren't, and they can still be difficult anyway.

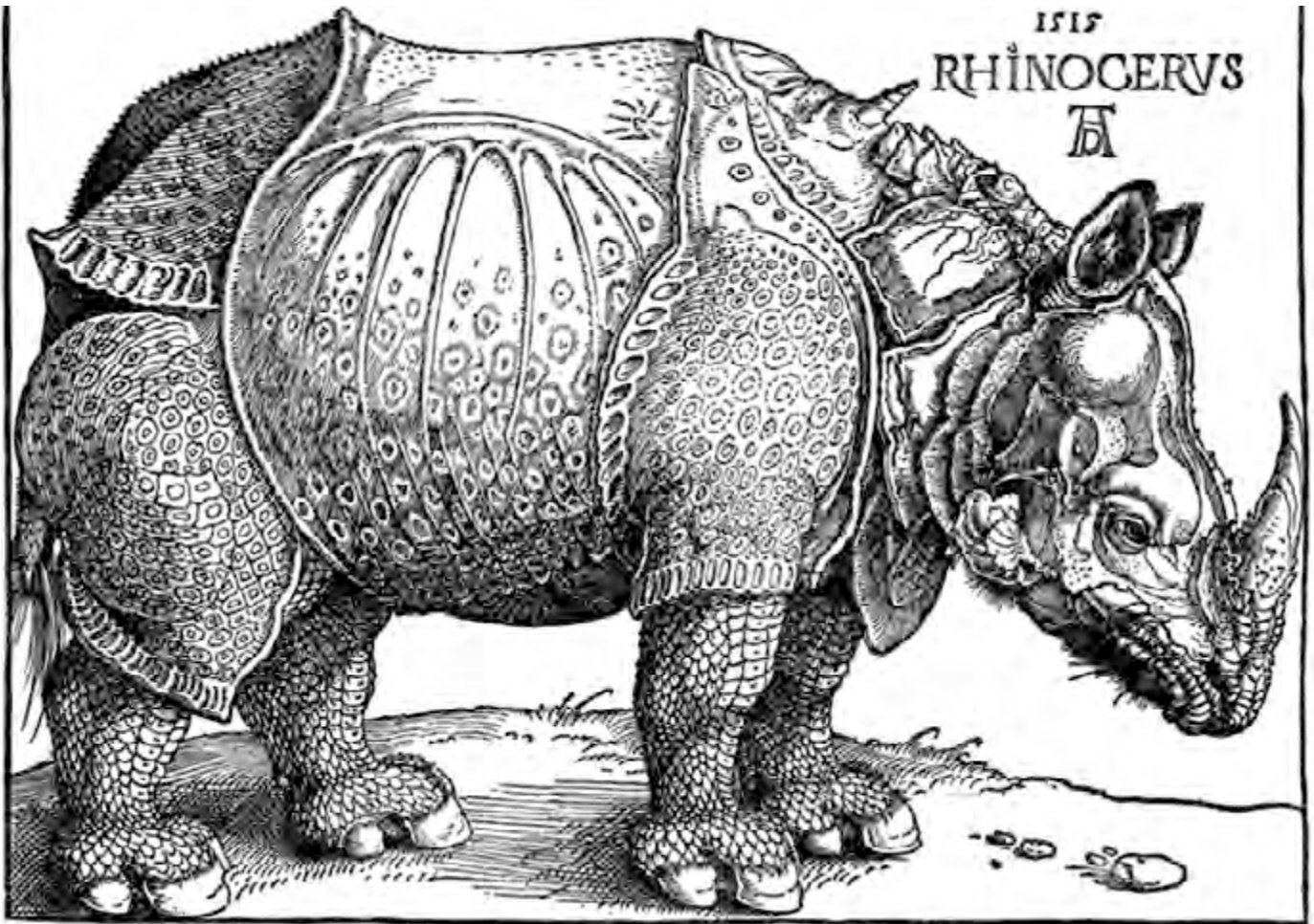
I think one of the real frustrations of writing is that it is so unpredictable. There's no clear correlation between effort and reward. Yes, you can work hard and get a reward; you can also work very hard and get no reward. I know people who do. You can be very good and toil in the trenches with that most dreaded label of all, the writer's writer (that means all the other writers *know* you kick ass but nobody who actually has the money to buy your books has figured it out yet).

But the fact of the matter is nobody holds a gun to your head and makes you write (unless you are poor old Paul Sheldon held captive by Annie Wilkes, and sometimes it certainly *feels* about that bad). You can quit anytime. There are plenty of more extrinsically rewarding things you can do. Pretty much everything offers more extrinsic rewards, in fact! I used to watch those crabby, bitter, angry, cynical writers on panels and I would tell myself if I ever got to that point I would stop. When there wasn't any joy any longer. When I didn't understand why I was still at it. When I couldn't think of anything good at all to say to a fresh-faced somebody who came up to me and said they wanted to be a writer. When it was all just pain and anger and stories about how I'd been screwed over and how bad everything was.

Of course I love it. Of course it brings me joy. It does more than that; it sustains me. I'd keep at it if I never published another word. Even in the years "off" I was still writing, always writing, maybe not every day, and I wasn't looking at or thinking about markets, but the stories were still growing and taking shape.

I don't know how to not be a writer.





DON'T SAVE THE RHINO BY DAVID GULLEN

How do you make a million in publishing? You start off with two million. Everyone knows there's no money in publishing. It must be true, everyone in publishing keeps saying so.

Among all the talk about the writer's life, its crapshoot nature, how we do it and why we stick with it, I think there's a rhinoceros in the room. Unlike Wittgenstein's imaginary ungulate, we all know it's there, we just don't mention it. I also think we're scared to do so, and that it stands behind some of the cynical grousing Lynda wrote about recently in her blog. I've never heard it said out loud, so I thought I'd say it here:

Publishers, editors and agents don't have day jobs.

Why don't we talk about it? Because if you do, you're speaking truth to the power that is the gatekeeper to everything that we want as writers. It's a buyer's market and we're selling. We don't want to get a reputation for being a pain in the arse so we keep our mouths shut.

I'm lucky, and so is my partner who also writes. We're in a situation where the day jobs are not overwhelming – I work three days a week, she's been able to take a year out. It might not last but we're making the most of it. Art – music, fine art, writing – has often depended on patronage or, like Van Gogh, struggled mightily without it. For us the day job and the rented flat are the sources of

that patronage. Publishers aren't patrons, they're commercial businesses, your book is worth only as much as they are prepared to pay you for it, which turns out to be not very much. We don't have to work with big publishing, but we want to because even as they suffer their death of a thousand cuts, diminish and go into the west (or maybe not, only time can tell) among the other benefits they offer are the things we want – good markets, audience, validation.

I'm talking about 'Big Publishing' here, still the route most of us novelists aspire to travel towards that world of independent means through writing (and probably still the most realistic one). To paraphrase Lynda, anyone can get published, but not everyone can get *Published*. If you do, as well as the things I mentioned above, it's also how most novelists get paid. And before you ask, yes please, I'd like some too. For me these things form a significant part of what I want and I think they are worth having.

It's a funny old world, and this particular part of it seems to be standing on its head. An entire industry of full-time paid professionals dependent in the main on the creative talent of part-time workers. Talented, gifted, and hard-working part-time workers. If there weren't so many negative connotations with the word, I'd call these creative types, these writers, amateurs – and I'd happily use that word to describe

myself - because so much writing is done for the sheer love of it. Writers want to write.

It's more than a little galling to go to cons and sit in panel audiences and hear time and again agents and editors set expectations as they say that writers shouldn't expect to earn a living through writing, that it's very difficult, that very few people ever manage it. Yet it's the very thing they do themselves.

Forget for a moment industry stories of hard-times and small margins. (Yet not so hard for Random House (US) as their recent \$5,000 bonus to 'several thousand' staff shows.) In fact, so what if times are hard? I don't really care, part of me - though only part of me - really does not care that big publishing is having a hard time.

To clarify, the rest of me really is very interested in publishing, why it's struggling, what's going to happen next. That's all for another time, but it is fascinating, important, and quite urgent. All I'll say now is that Jeff Bezos is playing a long game, he's innovative and proactive while the big publishers appear reactive. There's an excellent [interview here](http://blogs.hbr.org/ideacast/2013/01/jeff-bezos-on-leading-for-the.html) [http://blogs.hbr.org/ideacast/2013/01/jeff-bezos-on-leading-for-the.html].

So, publishers are not charities. I'm not a charity either, but sometimes I feel like I'm expected to be (times are hard, yada yada). Most novelists want to work with big publishers, it's a passionate process, one driven by both heart and mind on both sides, though unequally. It's a love affair, it's a marriage of convenience. A love affair of convenience.

So jump into bed and it seems most writers can't expect to earn a living - although everyone else involved does. Now I'm sounding like a stuck record (record, LP, vinyl - old tech, physical/hardcopy device used to store music; archaic but still has its fans).

These days there are more choices. The option isn't now simply 'which part of big publishing wants to engage with me?', before that we have 'do I want to engage with big publishing at all?' Of course this assumes they might be interested in you in the first place, and that depends on whether you're a good, indifferent, or bad writer of commercial fiction (and a single person can be all of those at different stages, natch) which should inform your opinion in the first place, assuming you have that level of self-awareness.

As writers perhaps we should spend more time thinking about 'what's best for me?' rather than simply trying to get a deal, any deal, anywhere. Often the case seems to be an after-the-event assessment of where you are to decide whether or not you feel you're in a good place, a better place, or halfway up a creek. Of course it's also often the case that the deal is the deal. For most first sales there's little or no choice and no negotiation.

So where does that leave us? A friend of mine recently said: '*...state of the nation addresses on*

this subject are very similar to complaining about the weather. You can do it all day, but it will change precisely nothing.' Absolutely true. But whatever you think of the weather on a particular day, you have to come to terms with it, and pretending it's not there won't make it go away. You're probably going to have to lump it, but I don't think silence the best response. *Qui tacet consentire* is not the way forwards.

Take another view - it's not reasonable to either expect or assume your first book, or indeed any book, will make you independently wealthy. In the same way, working with a small press or micro-press, neither should you expect advances, that they should keep funding the business from their day-job earnings. But is it too much to expect a living wage when you're working with full-time professionals? Answers on a postcard.

And again - nobody made us become writers. Maybe we didn't understand the risks when we took the mission, but we're all volunteers. Yes, these people in publishing are fans and enthusiasts, yes they love books and words, and their jobs, and they're good people in the main, and that is all great. If they're all that, then so are we writers in equal amount. Long hours, hard work, we're all in our own ways vocationalists. They love their jobs, we love our writing. There's still that rhino.

I'm peeved that things are as they are, but I'm not bitter (and this is by no means supposed to be a bitter rant, that's really not my point. What is my point? See Para 3). A labourer is worthy of his hire. You'd hope you would be paid enough to live on while you write the next book, but hour-for-hour you'll probably earn more flipping burgers.

The bottom line for me is, in this business where writers and publishers and agents all need each other quite badly in their synergistic relationship where no one role can survive without the others, there should not be things we can't talk about. Frankly, that's no way to have a love affair. There shouldn't be questions we're either afraid to, or feel we're expected not to, ask.

So writers write because they want to write. Just because you want to do something doesn't mean there's money in it, fair enough. Most days it's easier just to get on with the writing, (the fun bit) and forget about the money (the awkward bit), and hope you don't end up becoming some muttering, bitter middle-aged thing lurking at cons who stoppeth one of three like some third-division goalie or defective condom (the old git bit). Money after all is just one of the enablers that lets us writers do what we want to do, which is write.

And you can get money anywhere, such as the day job. Because, as everyone knows, there's no money in publishing. Except, as Mr Rhino knows, there is.

Fin.



ON THE BUSINESS OF WRITING, CREATIVITY, AND BURNOUT BY KAMERON HURLEY

Reprinted from <http://www.kameronhurley.com/on-the-business-of-writing-creativity-and-burnout/>

After today's kettle bell workout, I lay on the floor for awhile just staring at the fan and the whirling wooden dragon I have hanging from it. Not because I was all that physically tired, just because I didn't feel like thinking or doing anything else for awhile. I tried, in vain, to let my mind wander to a big day job project in the hopes that I would be magically inspired with a fantastic creative idea that I could bag up and get to my creative director on Monday.

Alas, no luck. Spinning dragons turned out to have no creative tie to the project that my weary head could make at that particular moment.

The first thing to get sidelined in September when I started piling up work for myself was regular workouts. This is not so surprising when you realize that I have to put in about 90-120 minutes a day to push down my weight. It's about 60 min a day to maintain. And 30 min a day to not be crazy with anxiety. Generally, I have to do 30 min a day to stay sane, but what I realized when I started piling up work is that I was burning off adrenaline pretty efficiently by focusing hard on deadlines. By using it all up to push out more work, I didn't have to invest it in working out. So I started fueling my life with extra coffee and more adrenaline.

There are a few reasons I took on all this work – the extra freelancing, the teaching, on top of the day job. Mostly, I was burned out and disillusioned

with writing novels. Finishing *Rapture* on deadline back in May just about broke me. I was writing twelve or fourteen hours a day at the end, and before that doing 3k to 5k and even 7k a day from January to April on top of the day job. That last 30 days before I turned it in, I didn't even know if what I'd written was any good. I handed it off to my partner and first readers and begged them to be blisteringly honest. I had lost all perspective on the book. I was working blind, flailing to tie up character arcs and ensure things made sense, working to end chapters on cliff hangers and broaden the world and give away enough but not too much. I was so focused there at the end that I could see the whole book mapped out, I could see what extra chapters I needed, and so I wrote them, but I didn't know if it was "good." Or "made sense."

Even when the first readers came back saying, overwhelmingly, that it was the best of the three books, I still couldn't see it for myself. This was actually really horrifying. I had to trust them. I got very little editing from the folks at my publisher, which meant I had to ensure going in that it was the best it could be before passing it off. Once it hit my publisher, it was down the rabbit hole, pushing hard for the publication deadline without much attention to structure or quality. Whatever I turned in was about 98% to what eventually got published.

It's not widely known that I actually held the draft of *Rapture* for 30 days waiting on outstanding payments from my publisher. I chose to hold it hostage because, you know, I was owed money, and it was my

last bit of leverage. So it sat for 30 days and then got rushed through the process, as the other books were. Today, once again, payments are late – by about three months – but I’ve got no leverage. So I sit here on my ass waiting to get payments contractually owed.

I mention this here because it’s a big reason of why I’ve gotten so disillusioned with publishing these last couple of years. It’s why the book I expect to be shopping at the end of last year never got finished. You expect when you sign on with a publisher that at the very least you’ll get paid, and if you’re lucky, get a lot of editing and marketing support. I didn’t get a lot of that. It was mostly just me flailing around, begging first readers to tell me what the hell I’d just written, and hoping me and the copyeditor could ensure that something passable got out at the end. I started insisting on doing a “final pass” to check edits so that fewer typos got out after cringing my way through the typos in *God’s War*. Doing that ensured much cleaner drafts, but I only had 24-48 hours or so to do those passes for *Infidel* and *Rapture*.

It’s frustrating to not get out the best possible book. It’s really frustrating. But that’s the business, or at least the one I experienced.

I love writing. I love making up worlds. I have wild characters. They are awesome. But there’s no greater killjoy in this business than...the actual business.

I hated publishing so much by July, when the final draft of *Rapture* was approved and went to printing, that I couldn’t bear to open a fucking manuscript. Oh, sure, I worked on things. I workshopped my fantasy novel at Wellspring, and put together a proposal for *Legion*, and started rewriting the fantasy novel in earnest in November. But then I started piling on other work. I started saying yes to freelancing projects. I agreed to teach a class I initially thought would eat 8-10 hours a week that turned out to eat 20-30 hrs – prime novel writing time.

I wanted to fill up my life with actual unhappy paying work so that novel writing became my pleasure work again, my escapist work, instead of some bloody angry thing I did that was basically like writing for free since the checks never came on time and I got so little bloody support with what I was doing. It was hard to hear from people that *GW* “should be doing better” when I had so little publisher support and just recently got improved distribution. Yes, I look forward to seeing how *GW* does overseas with a publisher with real financial backing and a real distribution network and hey, marketing! But I was so sick of the book and the bullshit of this business

by July that I didn’t want another fucking thing to do with it. I wanted to spend time making real money doing writing that actually fucking paid me for what I was doing.

I wanted to divorce my fiction writing from the expectation of payment. I didn’t want to work under contract, since “contract” meant exactly bullshit.

I remember, back before I published a book, hearing rants from “bitter midlisters” and you know, it was like, why are you so angry? Your book is published! Isn’t that great!? But then you start hearing the stories. You start seeing what happened to some great books that were left to die. Really, really great books. And though that certainly hasn’t happened to my books because some great folks have found them and loved them and continue to share them and talk about them (BLESS YOU ALL), I did get really disillusioned and angry really fast, and I knew that if I didn’t take a break and figure out what the fuck I was doing in this business in the first place, I was indeed going to become some bitter midlisters, anxious for any contract from anyone, upset and lacking in confidence about my work.

So I spent my time doing other stuff. I blog about taxes and send out press release templates and teach a copywriting class to students who, as most of us in college recall, would rather be doing something – ANYTHING – else. Much as I felt about writing fiction for that latter half of last year.

It’s only been the last couple of months, when I’m so drowned and exhausted with freelancing and day job work that I quite literally nearly burst into tears at work yesterday when the scope of a project was changed from “refresh” to “creative reposition” that fiction became my happy escape again. It was no longer the thing that caused me so much anger and pain and frustration, but the place I went to escape heavy churn work and exhaustion. Last week I was pushing out 5-6 creative projects a day. That’s totally different projects for different customer segments selling different things, in addition to freelance blogging in the early a.m. and late at night and class prep and grading.

My stolen moments – waiting at the Urgent Care with my partner, or an hour before bed when I didn’t have freelancing work to do – were spent doing a deep dive into a fantasy world where people called on asendant satellites to do specific types of magic – to unmake flesh or control plant life or rip open portals. And I got to recreate a whole culture as this polyamorous matriarchy, this people who

a thousand years before ruled the world and now only existed in a narrow sliver of the world as just a few tens of thousands of folks, and now the world is changing again, and we're headed toward massive war and genocide and armies bearing carnivorous plants and folks gaining powers through cannibalism, and it's like a fucking vacation again, instead of this long slog of work I'm doing that I'll do so somebody else makes money and I kick around angry about late checks and bullshit rush job deadlines. While not under deadline, I own these worlds again, and these people, and I have total freedom and control. It reminded me of why I love writing fiction so much.

And I found myself working to be better at it. I gnawed over a proposal and worked on an outline and suddenly realized while live-tweeting something about anger and violence and bullying what the character arc I was going for with one of my main protags really was. It was a lovely moment, a moment I owned. I had missed those moments.

I understand why people self-pub. I understand the allure of controlling the process. But I also know that just because things have been shit once doesn't mean they're shit everywhere. I know that letting somebody else steal your love and joy of a thing through sheer incompetence means the world wins, and you get broken on the rocks, and your voice dies, and you go silent. And that's some seriously fucked up catshit right there.

I needed the time off from my fiction. I needed to lose myself in massive amounts of other work. I needed to figure out, again, why I was writing fiction. No, it's not for the money. The money is shit, and doesn't come on time, for me. But I do need to learn how to own what I do. And be smarter about it. Because when I realize the sort of power I have, and I have the confidence in what I'm doing, I enjoy it a whole lot more.

I am glad to be writing substantial fiction again, yes, and I'll be even happier in two weeks when the worst of the deadlines are over and I will once again have those 30 hours a week back to do fiction, and on March 1st get back another 4+ hours for a total of 35 or so hours a week to dedicate once again to it. But I know now why I avoided it. I know why I pushed it away and cut everything down and burned it all up. Because I was so angry that I forgot why the fuck I was doing it in the first place. I wasn't just angry at others, but I was angry at myself for not being smarter about it. For not making better decisions and demanding what was mine.

I don't intend to make the same mistakes

again, it's true. But I also don't want to lose my way again. I don't rely on book money to make a living, and as angry as it may make me to not get what I'm owed when it's owed, it's no excuse to hate on my work. It's not the work's fault. It's the business. And there is a huge difference between the work and the business, one that sometimes gets all muddled up when you're angry and frustrated.

I took on too much work in September. I'm on hard churn and burn right now. I regret, right now, taking it on, but I suspect that in two weeks when the dust clears and it's all over and I take a harder look at these writing projects, I'll be glad I did it. It helped burn away the bullshit. It forced me to focus on what's important.

It's not the reviews, or the late book checks, or the scramble to get something to print, or the arguments and back-and-forth about covers, or the mispronounced words in the fucking goddamn audio books or the fucking complaints about typos because of the rush. It's about the work. It's about building worlds. It's the sheer joy and delight and huge rush I get from creating something that wasn't there before. It's writing the books I want to read, because nobody but me can write them.

That's what this is all about. If it was about the business shit, or the checks, I'd continue to load up on freelancing work. But it's about the creative work. It's building something from nothing.

I opened up a copy of *God's War* yesterday and cringed at some of the writing. It was like somebody took a shotgun filled with words and blasted them willy-nilly onto the page. My writing got better as I wrote the others books, thank Prime. I sat down later and read the last few chapters of *Rapture* and thought, "Holy shit I can't believe this book actually exists." Because it was a book I'd always wanted to read. It had everything I wanted. It was everything I'd yearned for as a reader – tough 80's apocalypse heroines with more interest in saving the world than courting romance, flawed people who fucked and cried and screamed and killed and lived spectacularly, without reservation or apology for what they were or what they'd done. And spectacular fucking worldbuilding. Some place really different. Very fucked up.

I wrote this. I made this. And I have a lot more to make and write. THAT's what this is about. I'm never going to be not angry, it's true, but I can be more focused. I can be clearer about the purpose of all of this, instead of getting lost in the churn of this often broken-down business.



FROM FAN TO CON-RUNNER TO WRITER- DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF CONVENTIONS BY MAURA MCHUGH

I grew up before the prevalence of the Internet so my burgeoning interest in a range of material - *sf*/fantasy/horror fiction and movies, comic books, and role playing - was not widely shared in my small town in Ireland. I had few people with whom to discuss my passion for genre works, so it was a solitary love-affair.

That all changed when I went to university and my first convention. That initial experience of finally meeting a group of like-minded people has forever coloured my view of going to any convention. Inside me is a nerdy girl who is delighted to meet other people who share her obsessions, and while my experiences at conventions has changed over the years I still get excited when the first day of a con dawns.

After a few years of going to cons I became involved in running one in Ireland with a great group of people, including the esteemed James Bacon. Our committee approached the task in a simple fashion: create an event where people would feel welcome, invite cool and interesting guests, and programme a fun weekend. That simple formula requires a lot of work - at least nine months for an annual Irish event

- with all of the organisers' spare time disappearing in the last six weeks before it occurs.

A con-runner sees the event from the prism of 'Is it working?' It's a tricky organisational challenge, and requires a wide variety of skills from the committee and their volunteers. Months of work disappear in a blurred weekend. You can't enjoy the convention the way the guests and fans do, but you can reap a great deal of satisfaction by proxy from happy guests and fans who are enjoying a memorable weekend your team created. There will always be obstacles and last minute emergencies, but overcoming them, and shielding those problems from the attendees so they only see a smooth operation brings a great sense of achievement.

After years of this stress I was happy to pass the convention baton to others, and return to attending cons as a fan. It was wonderful to relax and enjoy a holiday among kindred spirits. My con-running experience continues to colour my perception of conventions, of course. I appreciate the hard labour that goes on in the background, but equally I know when things can be done better. Although, it is always easier to critique an event than run it yourself.



Over the last few years I've been transitioning into another role at conventions - as a guest or a participating writer. Due to my background in con-running I've been taking part on panels for a long time. I understand how to moderate so that everyone gets a say, when to keep the discussion to theme (and when to deviate from it), and to ensure it sticks to its time deadline.

When I'm contributing on panels these days those prior skills continue to help, yet I have other considerations that come into play. If I'm asked to participate on panels in the capacity as a writer I consider it a professional contract. I never take it for granted. If the topic is something I'm not familiar with I do research, and prepare notes for each event. I generally don't drink alcohol before a panel, and if I've a morning event I take it easy the night before. Writers are part of the draw to a convention - some more than others - so they are expected to be entertaining on panels, and available to a certain extent to the attendees. This adds an element of performance that can be tiring.

Some events come with extra pressures - you can be asked to moderate at the last minute, you might have a difficult panellist or a rowdy audience member, or have a famous guest. No one wants to make a fool of themselves, and when you are attending a convention in a professional capacity that goes double. Now, with twitter and live-blogging, a misstep can be fed out to the world and people you've never met can have an opinion about what happened.

At times conventions can be awkward, lonely places. Making friends can be hard for anyone, be they guest, or fan. People naturally gravitate to their known circle, but when you are new to a particular convention that can seem like a hard wall to get through.

In quite a short time of being thrown together writers form friendships. When they attend conventions their aim is to do business - talk to agents and editors, promote their work, do book launches, signings, readings, panels, or workshops - and catch up with mates. As mentioned this can be construed as cliquy behaviour, but often it's the behaviour of busy people who wish to spend their limited time with pals.

A lot of writers pass the day alone. Even if they have families or other jobs there is a time when they must put distractions aside and focus on their internal vision. Conventions can be a relief from that enforced solitude, but they are also full of diversions, and madly intense. I spend most of my day at home on my own with my dog for company, so a convention is both a happy occasion and a social whirl that taxes my introverted nature.

Most writers are under some deadline so even when they are enjoying the occasion there is always a ticking clock in the back of their heads. Writers are essentially freelancers, and constantly scan the horizon looking for an opportunity to pitch their next project. That's how they earn their livelihood. If a convention doesn't tick all the boxes of being productive for work as well as fulfilling their social needs, the allure of a con can diminish.

This can be interpreted as a writer becoming aloof - or 'too full of herself' - when it's just a sign of a busy schedule and a tough economy. In Ireland most writers make less than €10,000 a year, so the cost of an event has to be justified against the expense and loss of time.

I don't think I'll ever lose touch with that nerdy girl who gets a kick out of being among people who are passionate about their interests. Even if I am physically and financially exhausted at the end of a con, I am usually inspired and uplifted by spending time with my friends and my talented colleagues who work in various creative fields.

And it is a pleasure to hear from someone who enjoyed your work - that is one of the reason writers write: to impart their strange vision to others.

It's good to know when you hit the mark, so you can draw and aim again.



CONTROL

BY JUSTIN HOWE

I'm going to assume you know what you're doing and aren't making sloppy mistakes like not using at least some acceptable version of proper manuscript format, or listing twenty for-the-love markets in your cover letter that no one's ever heard of let alone read. That's not you. That's someone else.

Now I'm not a fan of slushreaders going on about how they dream a story they select goes on to win a Nebula like they were right there writing the story beside the author. As if reading slush wasn't about being the equivalent of so much human baleen.

Bullshit on all that.

Truth is reading slush is a tedious and dull task. Whatever educational value it has pales in comparison to how disappointing it all is. Yet if there's one thing I've learned to recognize from reading slush, it's what separates the dynamic from the simply good.

People talk a lot about hooks and openings and grabbing the reader so they keep on reading. And yeah I use the word hook as well, but it's not about that. A hook's a misnomer at best. Other folks talk about establishing trust between reader and writer, and I agree with them but I've often wondered how that trust is gained. Then one day two stories arrived in the slush and I figured it out.

What it came down to was control.

One story was bloated beneath good writing. The other story shone like a jewel. Each word and sentence connected to the next word and sentence, and the whole thing made a pattern where there was nothing more you could subtract from it. That was

control.

What's not control is starting your story with a well-groomed hook and then piling on introspection, backstory, and setting details. What's not control is leaving nothing out, but throwing it all in there and hoping for the best.

Now you can do whatever you want in your story. Write it lush or transparent. Climb Freytag's pyramid or flip it on its peak and kick it in the rear. But every word must have its reason to be there. They can be ugly or oddly shaped words, but they have to fit into the story's overall pattern. Of course that pattern can be all freak-a-deak weird, but if they haven't earned their place there, your story would be better served by throwing them right out.

How you gain control is another matter. There's no magic word that can make you figure it out. None. The solution doesn't work like that. In reality you bang your head against the wall for as long as it takes. Don't get me wrong. Control can be learned. It just can't be transferred. It's more of an ecstatic revelation. The type of thing that makes inventors run naked in the streets. The only rule is anything goes as long as you're in control.

That's it. That's all I can tell you. Good luck. Write. Read. Pound your head against the wall. Succeed.



FREELANCER DOESN'T MEAN WORKING FOR FREE

BY SUSAN E. CONNOLLY

I'd love to be a full-time novelist, but it's not happening yet. I do, however, pay my bills with writing. I write press releases, blog posts, website content, top ten lists, white papers, magazine articles and more, on all kinds of topics, for all kinds of people. The bulk of my work comes from online job ads and referrals from clients I got through answering online job ads. Sadly, these ads are rife with outright scams and exploitative practices. This is what I have learned about being paid for the work that I do, which is a pretty basic part of making money.

Contracts - You're a Writer, So Write Things Down

Contracts don't need to be complicated. They're pretty simple things, at the heart of it. A contract basically covers two areas:

- What you are going to do.
- How you are going to be compensated.

You can read elsewhere about the specifics of what should be included in freelance contracts, but these are the basics. Never start a job unless you're clear on those elements. If a client starts adding on new requirements, point them back to this agreement. They may wish to renegotiate, and that's fine, but it's a negotiation, not something you need to simply accept. On the other hand, you can renegotiate as well. Find that the work is rolling in and you're getting better paid work elsewhere? Tell your client you're raising your rates at the end of the month. You're not locked in to eternal servitude forever once you take a job.

Pretend You Are An Electricity Company

You're a professional, and you're providing a valuable service. Anyone who keeps up with search engine marketing and online businesses knows that content is king. If electricity wasn't the electricity of the internet, then content would be.

All too often, people are worried about

scaring off employers by acting in a too formal way. "If I ask for a contract, they might go with someone else." "If I bother them about a late payment, they might stop sending me work." Does the electricity company worry about this? I think not.

If you're worried about how to deal with a client, ask yourself the following question: Is this something an electricity company would do?

- Would an electricity company want a clear delineation of services and compensation arrangements? YES
- Would an electricity company chase up payments? YES
- Would an electricity company provide further services without compensation? UNLIKELY

There's a simple principle at play here: Anyone who is scared off by you acting in a professional manner is someone who you do not want to work with.

Working for Free – The Myth of Exposure

I hate the exposure nonsense that permeates many writing advertisements. The idea generally is that you provide the work, and in exchange you get something that's worth far more than crass money – you get EXPOSURE, you get EXPERIENCE, you get PLATFORM. If the sarcasm isn't coming through here, let me be clear – you're most likely getting nothing. Let's take the very worst case scenario – you have no experience and you have no samples, but you think you can write. What should you do? It may be that working for free might help you, but that doesn't mean you should work for someone else. Go to WordPress and set up a free blog. Write posts. Put them on the blog. Congratulations, now you have samples. But you're still worried about the gatekeeper effect. If nobody else has yet thought your work is

good enough for them, won't people be turned off? This still doesn't mean you should respond to those solicitations for free labour. Instead, turn it on its head – where do you want your work displayed? Do you want to focus on small business writing? Go to your local coffee shop and offer to revamp their website content. Write up a few press releases for a local charity whose work you want to support. Approach a publication you like to read with an article that says something you want to say. Decide what benefits you want and hustle to make it happen.

Working for Free – Custom Samples

This issue is a more thorny one - the request in an advertisement for an original sample, without payment. In some ways, I'm sympathetic to those advertisers who ask for these. They may want a specific style or tone that isn't displayed in your other work. They may have experienced a somewhat common phenomenon, where provided samples are paragons of wonderful prose and information, only to find that the work turned in later is riddled with errors.

In general, I steer clear of advertisements that look for free samples, but that's because I now have an expansive body of work that demonstrates my skills and my abilities. So, how did I handle it when I

started out? If a job looked promising, and the sample wanted was not requiring an excessive amount of work, I would provide a sample and include the following little sentence in the email.

“Just so you know, I'm providing this sample for assessment, not transferring ownership. If you would like to use it then hopefully we can come to an agreement on compensation within the next 7 days. Otherwise I will be publishing it on my own blog as a sample of my work.”

More often than not, I was paid for my sample. In the cases where I was not, my portfolio was strengthened, and anyone who was hoping to get a free article was disappointed, as it was then published online, which would have messed with any boost in search engine rankings they were looking for.

Final Words

These exploitative practices are reminiscent of the nonsense put out by vanity presses – that they provide so much value that you should be grateful for the opportunity to gift them your words. If anyone wants your work, they should be happy to pay for it. Keep that in mind and you'll be well on your way to paying your non-metaphorical electricity bill with your words.





RESOURCES FOR FICTION WRITERS FROM LYNDA E. RUCKER

There are far too many excellent ones to name them all; in particular, look for the blogs of agents and editors who work for major companies (remember, anyone can call themselves an agent or editor or publisher).

The first three below are reliable resources that have been around forever in Internet years.

SFWA Writer Beware

On writing scams, and how to avoid them.

<http://www.sfwa.org/for-authors/writer-beware/>

Absolute Write

An excellent forum for learning your way around the business.

<http://www.absolutewrite.com/forums/>

Critters

Get your work critiqued and critique the work of others

<http://critters.org/>

From Tobias S. Buckell: a survey on typical novel advances from 2005 (but still very relevant today; certainly writers aren't getting paid more these days!)

<http://www.tobiasbuckell.com/2005/10/05/author-advance-survey-version-20/>

Workshops

The first three listed below are six-week programs; the remainder, with the exception of the popular fiction MFA, are shorter.

Clarion – the granddaddy (or grandmother?) of them all
<http://literature.ucsd.edu/affiliated-programs/clarion/index.html>

Clarion West
<http://www.clarionwest.org/>

Odyssey
Note that Odyssey also offers online classes for those who can't commit to a six-week residential program.
<http://www.sff.net/odyssey/>

Viable Paradise
A one-week workshop
<http://www.sff.net/paradise/>

Taos Toolbox
A two-week workshop.
<http://www.taostoolbox.com/>

Milford
A one-week workshop for established authors and relative newcomers.
<http://www.milfordsf.co.uk/>

Rainforest Writer's Retreat
A four- or five-day retreat for writers at most levels.
<http://rainforestwritersvillage.com/>

Shared Worlds
For teen writers
<http://www.wofford.edu/sharedworlds/>

Seton Hill University
Low-residency program; earn an MFA in Writing Popular Fiction
http://www.setonhill.edu/academics/graduate_programs/fiction

Find Places to Submit:

Ralan
<http://www.ralan.com/>

Duotrope (now subscription-based)
<https://duotrope.com/>

The Grinder
This site is working to step into the space left when Duotrope went subscription-only.
<http://thegrinder.diabolicalplots.com/>





BIOGRAPHIES

THE EDITORS

James Bacon

A Hugo-Winning Fanzine Editor and Writer of great stuff. He's on the ballot three times this year! Runs cons, drives trains, from Ireland, and has the voice of an Angel!

Chris Garcia

Do you REALLY need a biography of Chris?

Lynda E. Rucker

Lynda E. Rucker's fiction has appeared in such places as *F&SF*, *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror*, *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*, *Black Static*, etc. Her first collection, *The Moon Will Look Strange*, is due out later this year from Kar-shi Books.

THE WRITERS

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Lauren Beukes

Lauren Beukes is a Arthur C. Clarke Award-winning author who books include *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*.

Bob Byrne

Dublin-based writer, artist, and publisher, Bob Byrne was nominated for the Eagle Award in 2007!

Mike Carey

Mike Carey is a writer of just about everything you can be a writer of! He was nominated for the Hugo for Best Graphic Story twice for his work on *The Unwritten*.

Gail Carriger

Gail's *Parasol Protectorate* books are New York Times Best Sellers and crackin' good reads! Her latest series, *Finishing School*, had the first book released in early 2013!

Susan E. Connolly

Susan E. Connolly is currently pursuing a degree

in Veterinary Medicine. She has been published in *InDublin Magazine*. Her proudest achievement is still coming top in spelling when she was seven. She has always loved fairytales and thinks they offer the world a rich seam of ideas for new writing.

Wayne Disher

Wayne T. Disher is the former President of the California Library Association. He received his Master of Library and Information Science degree at San José State University in 1994, and worked at San José Public Library System for 22 years managing library branches and units. He's also Chris' Uncle

Craig Glassner

Long-time fan and photographer, Craig is also known as Ranger Craig as he's an honest-to-Ghods Ranger at Alcatraz!

Mike Glycer

The guy's got a raft of Hugos, both as Best Fan Writer and for Best Fanzine for *File 770*. *File770.com*, the blog version of the zine, is one of the best sources for fannish news and views.

David Gullen

David Gullen's SF and Fantasy has appeared in a variety of magazines. His first novel, 'Shopocalypse', will be published by [Clarion Publishing](#) in May 2013. Find him online at www.davidgullen.com and on Twitter as @dergullen

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Rich Handley is the founder of Hasslein Books (hassleinbooks.com) and the author of three reference guides (*Timeline of the Planet of the Apes*, *Lexicon of the Planet of the Apes* and *The Back to the Future Lexicon*).

Robin Hobb

A Best-selling writer of TONS of novels, Robin Hobb will be one of Loncon's Guests of Honour in 2014!

Andrea K. Hosth

Andrea K. Hosth is an Australian novelist and short story writer. Her book *The Silence of Medair* was nominated for an Aurealis Award.

Justin Howe

Justin Howe's fiction and nonfiction has appeared in such places as *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, *Beware the Night* from Prime Books, *The Directory of World Cinema: Japan* and *The Internet Review of Science Fiction*. He reads slush for *Clarkesworld*.

Kameron Hurley

Kameron Hurley is the award winning author of *God's War*, *Infidel* and *Rapture*. She currently hacks out a living as a marketing and advertising writer in Ohio. She's lived in Fairbanks, Alaska; Durban, South Africa; and Chicago, but grew up in and around Washington State. Follow the fun at www.kameronhurley.com

Maura McHugh

Maura writes, prose, comic books, plays, and screenplays, and lives in the west of Ireland.

Seanan McGuire

Seanan writes fiction as both Seanan AND Mira Grant, and has multiple Hugo nomination under each name! A writer, musician, and one of the most fun people you'll ever meet!

Elaine Radford

Elaine Radford is New Orleans writer who chases hawks, eagles, and other rare birds around the world. She's currently reporting on science, health, and animal topics for [The Inquisitr](#). Her new blog, [Passages in the Void](#), is the official fan site for Roger Williams and *The Metamorphosis of Prime Intellect*.

Jason Ridler

Jason S. Ridler is a writer, historian, and former punk rock musician and cemetery groundskeeper. Check out his novels *BLOOD AND SAWDUST* and *DEATH MATCH* on Amazon, and keep up to date with his insane rambles at Ridlerville on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/Ridlerville>

Lynne M. Thomas

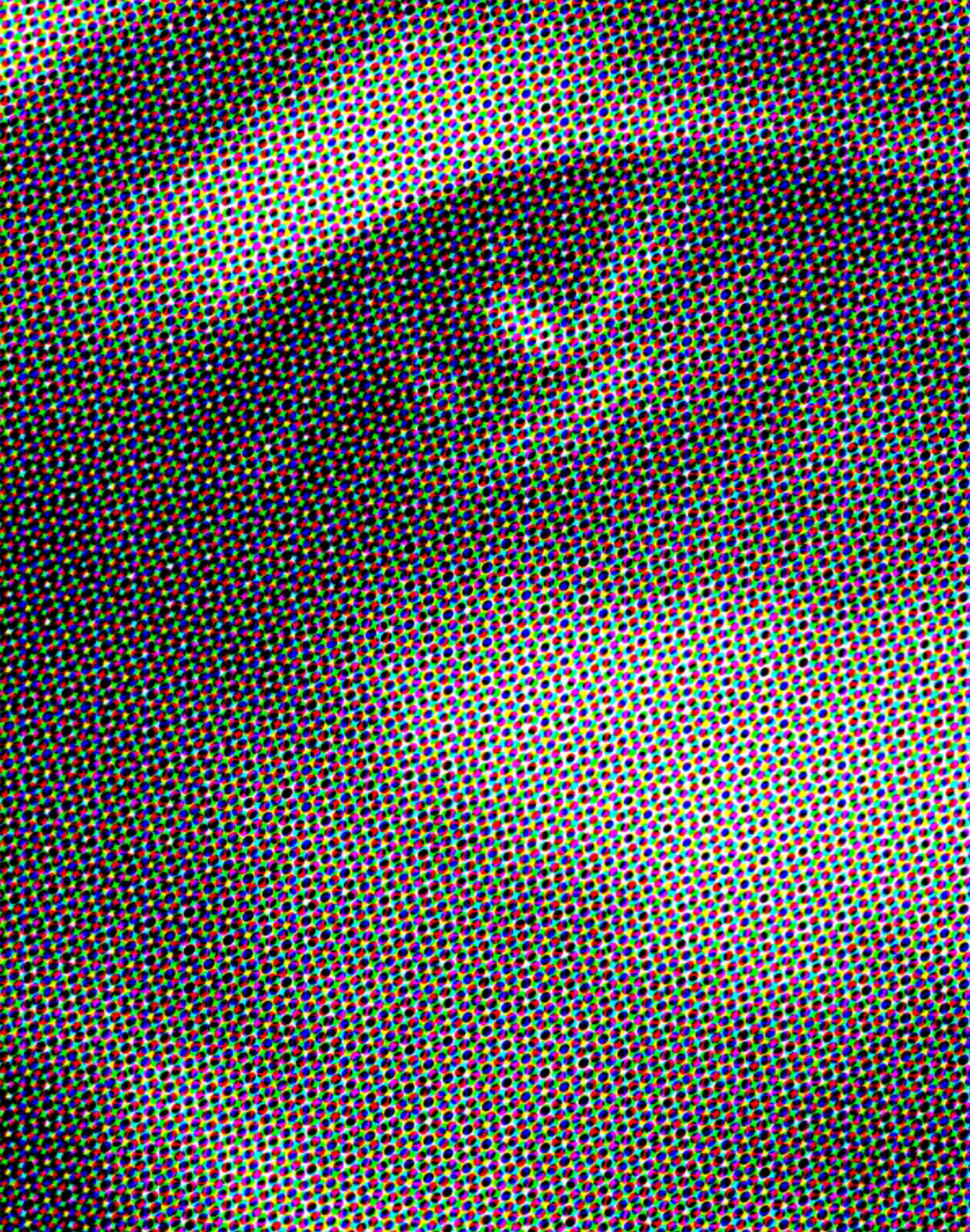
Two-time Hugo winner and all-around awesomeness, Lynne M. Thomas is the Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL, where she is responsible for popular culture special collections. She's also the editor of *Apex Magazine* and a member of the SF Squeecast team (sfsqueecast.com)

Anna Warren Cebrian

Anna Warren Cebrian is the owner of Illusive Comics & Games, which celebrated it's 5-year Anniversary in May 2012.



JOURNEY PLANET 15



Journey Planet 16 | the Philip K. Dick issue

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Guest editor & design: **Peter Young**, co-editors: **James Bacon** & **Christopher J Garcia**.

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"James Bacon is that which, when you stop believing in him, doesn't go away." – Philip K. Dick

do androids dream of electric fanzines?



This fanzine is dedicated to the memory of **Paul Williams**, 1948-2013. Please see page 45.

PETER YOUNG

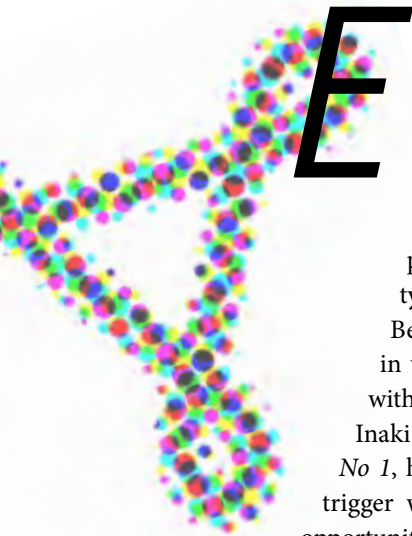
YOU'D THINK that in this day and age it's all been said about Philip K. Dick. That's hardly the case. New biographies or anthologies of essays on him and his works seem to appear on an almost yearly basis these days, but the imagination that PKD's work still inspires means there's still plenty of mining to be done at this particular coalface. See, for example, the surfeit of Dickiana to be had in this fanzine; plus, a zine about PKD is somehow made more complete with the inclusion of something from the man himself, here present in the form of the entertaining short story "The Eyes Have It".

The centrepiece of this particular fanzine, however, is the reappearance after forty years of the almost-forgotten final Chapter 19 of *A. Lincoln, Simulacrum*, first seen in the January 1970 issue of *Amazing Stories* but which was never to see the light of day again... until now. I asked Ted White early in 2013 if we could publish it – after all, he wrote it – because every edition ever published of Dick's *We Can Build You* has omitted this chapter. If you ever wanted to read it in the intervening forty years between then and now, you'd have had to track down that particular issue of *Amazing*, so its reappearance here makes finding that lost chapter a hell of a lot easier, with the bonus of Ted's own account of how it came into being – and how it subsequently disappeared.

Before Paul Williams died, I suggested to James and Chris that we dedicate this issue to him. Sadly, only a few day later Williams passed away, and one of the touchstones for many fans of both Williams and Dick was Malcolm Edwards's tribute on the Gollancz blog the following day. We're grateful to Malcolm for allowing us to reproduce it here – this issue of the fanzine would probably not have existed without Paul's initial enthusiasm for Dick's work, something that has provided the impetus for plenty of PKD fan activity around the world.

Which inevitably brings me back to the new PKD-inspired creative writing enshrined here – witness the creative flourish of Chris Lites and the mind-boggling uchronia of my co-editor Chris Garcia, both of which round off this particular addition to the endlessly multiplying fanzines about Philip Kindred Dick. Enjoy!

▲
'A Conversation.
Or, Operation
Head', 2006.
[**Nicole
McControversy**
@ flickr]



Everything about Philip K. Dick is a revelation to me. Even if it isn't really Phillip K. Dick; even if it's just what I consider to be Dickian.

I enjoy Phillip K. Dick's fiction. Well, most of it. His science fiction seems to be as much a study of the human condition as any exploration of the future, or of the near-now. I sometimes wish I could have lived in the moment that he was writing about, as I am sure much more would seep through the pages.

I am always thinking "this is very Dickian". So when I watched *Looper*, I thought that perhaps it was indeed a story or concept that I had not read by Dick; but no, it was just a similar type of story, with his influences. Some PKD-inspired stories work better than others. Lauren Beukes wrote an interesting reality-jumping futuristic short story, 'All the Pretty Ponies', which tied in with exploitation and felt very modern despite the technological requirements that are not yet within our grasp. This appeared in Vertigo Comics' *Strange Adventures* anthology in 2011 with art by Inaki Miranda, and I felt it was very Dickian in its feeling. Another comic, however, *Secret Avengers No 1*, had a mind-altering plot device that involved memories being rewritten with the uttering of a trigger word. Sounds good; yeah, I thought it might be good, but it was too quick, there was no opportunity for the full horror of the imposition to really sink in with the reader, there was no abhorrence of the situation by the heroes, and the Marvel world is just too far removed by its trappings to be tangibly near our own; it felt too far away from reality to work in a metaphorical sense. It failed for me on many levels – there's a hint of a Dickian idea in there, but it utterly fails.

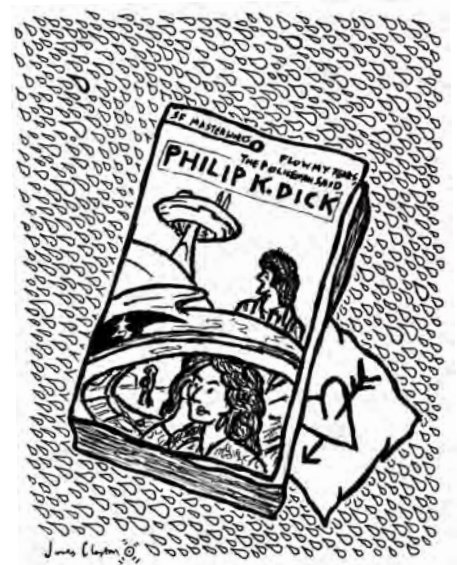
So, Dickian for me is not just ideas about the nature of thought, or questioning what I am, who I am or why I'm here and what is everyone else doing as we journey on a strange adventure; the story, whoever it's written by in a Dickian mode, also needs to be enjoyable and thought provoking.

Obviously I stumble sometimes, like when *The Crack in Space* jarred me with its '60s-based racist terminology, but of course this is a book that is investigating that subject. Wondering why Arnie Nott is not utterly detestable I initially found this somewhat confusing, so I hated him the more, although it's the art of the storyteller to play with the reader's feelings. Other works of Dick just flow for me so easily, like 'The Defenders', which was the basis for *The Penultimate Truth* and of course *The Man in the High Castle*.

Again, I compare many alternate histories to *The Man in the High Castle*, and think Len Deighton (*SS-GB*), Robert Harris (*Fatherland*), James Herbert ('48), David Downing (*The Moscow Option*) and Philip Roth (*The Plot Against America*) are similarly to be enjoyed as favourites: as thrillers, horror or just alternate history to their core. But I would never call them Dickian; they lack the meta-element that Dick's work had, let alone his strange depth of characterisation and sometimes strong individual portrayals. I continually find things about Dick and his work that just make me think long and hard: even in this issue of *Journey Planet*, the words of Tim Powers make the man seem so much more tangible and likeable; generally, that he was much more a fan than I had been led to believe. His generosity, his good nature and of course his humour, these are really important.

At some stage, I hope I can read something further by Tim Powers that will expand upon it, so I can get the chance to meet the real Philip K. Dick, not the one studied and analysed by academic works, or in another biography based on hearsay or research, but encountered through words by a friend, who misses him.

For now though, I am grateful for being nominated for a Hugo – thanks, Dear Readers – and for so many amazing contributions over the years. As ever, many thanks to Pete Young for joining us again for this issue and making it awesome.

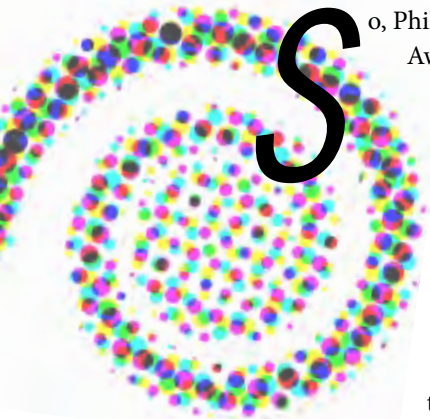


[Philip K. Dick Tour Dates — Philip K. Dick Concert Dates and Ticket Prices](#)

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So, Philip K. Dick. Yeah, he's awesome. He was awesome. No, he *is* awesome. Awesome.

I've barely scratched the surface of Dick's output; some of it is absolutely magical, while some of it makes my head hurt. I'm so excited that we get to do this issue because as much as some of his work astounds me into near-apoplexy, I have nothing but an absolute love for him as a personality and as a writer, and this issue looks at all of it!

That, and David Hartwell personally requested a copy at WorldCon this year!

Speaking of which, we were on the Hugo ballot this year, and sadly, we didn't win.

Didn't expect to, but it was nice that we ran third in both nominations and in the final totals, and second in the first place votes, so there's that. I know I'm not good at saying thank you nearly enough, but I have to say it here to Emma, Helen, and Pete for everything they did last year. There was nothing quite as awesome as getting to hear those names mentioned as Hugo nominees! And, of course, James is really the driving force behind *Journey Planet* and it's been awesome to get to go along for the ride! Plus, there are so many others, like Lynda Rucker and Mo Starkey, and on and on and on. Thanks to everyone for making *Journey Planet* possible!

I'm thinking about a lot of PKD stuff, and I'm starting to think about what his stuff actually meant to the history of SF. Did he change the way SF works or was presented or written? No, I don't think so. Is his DNA in the writing of a thousand books over the last forty years? Absolutely, and not only in books, but in film and television and on and on. *Looper* certainly showed that, and let us not forget all the adaptations of his work; from *Blade Runner* to *The Adjustment Bureau*. Endless numbers of science fiction short films I watch for Cinequest have that Dickian vibe. Anytime I read something where nothing is as it seems, where the reality of the situation is never really clear, where I'm wondering if it's all just some weird head trip, or when it is definitely just some big head trip, I can feel PKD hiding just out of view in the author's photo.

And I had a nice conversation with my dear friend Salman Rushdie about him.

You see, he was at Cinequest this year, and while I could have peppered him with questions about what it was like being married to Padme Lakshmi, I decided that I would instead ask him what his favorite PKD novel was.

Before I give you his answer, I must set the scene. There we were, hand to God, in the Tech Museum in San Jose, surrounded by caterers carrying trays of mini-cheesecakes, and a sort of chicken on a stick in a sauce that might have been tandoori it had any flavor at all. Among the interactive educational exhibits, Mr. Rushdie has placed himself standing next to a robot which could arrange wooden blocks to form any word you could think of, with an easily-defeated anti-swearing code. My buddy Jason, who is often confused for me, was there, so I approached and Mr. Rushdie had just told a joke that set the group on fire with laughter (I like to think he had just told his version of *The Aristocrats*, but I didn't actually hear it) and he smiled and said "Hello."

Also, I must add, the exchange of dialogue is, at best, approximate. It was the closing-night party and I was a sheet-and-a-half to the wind...

"Hi, I've got a strange question: what's your favorite Philip K. Dick novel?"

He looked at me and without missing a beat, spoke very quickly. "It's interesting, I'd say that Dick was a brilliant plot artist, no question, and an idea-man above all others of his time, but his prose was so rough. He worked within his time." I stood there, kinda agog. "And it may be why adaptations of his work are so good," he added, "because he lays strong foundations that allow better voices to work magic with."

"Like *Blade Runner*?" I asked.

"Absolutely. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is a wonderful set of ideas, but *Blade Runner* is an exceptional novel that just happens to have been made as a film. It says things so much better than Dick ever could have. It spoke with a much greater fluency than Dick could have."

I was interested.

A friend of mine asked, "You think he could have been one of the greatest science fiction writers if he had more control over his prose?"

"Oh, certainly. A fact that such an unpolished gem is so praised is a testament to how great an idea man he was. If he wrote with the style and mastery of a Pynchon or a Vonnegut, he would have inarguably been the greatest writer of his age. If you look at a book like *The Man in the High Castle*, you can see where another writer might have made that into one of the greatest novels in the history of the English language, but it falls just short."

I thought about that. I loved *The Man in the High Castle*, but I can see his point, as a guy who is a part of the literary establishment. And then I thought, Wow, I wonder what Pynchon's *The Man in the High Castle* would be like, and I started looking for Pynchon's e-mail on the 'net...

Acme Instant Fanzine

A PARAGRAPH ON PKD

RIAN JOHNSON

When I wrote the original treatment for *Looper* about ten years ago I had just discovered PKD, and was blowing through his books as fast as I could get my hands on them. *Looper* wasn't directly drawn from PKD (the way, say, my first film *Brick* was directly drawn from Dashiell Hammett's novels) but his unabashed focus on the central sci-fi idea in each story not as a scientific speculation but as a psychological (or sometimes spiritual) abstraction was a revelation for me, and his use of the fantastic to get at the tremendously human is inspiring. Ten years later, for me the VALIS trilogy remains up there with the all time greats, of any genre.

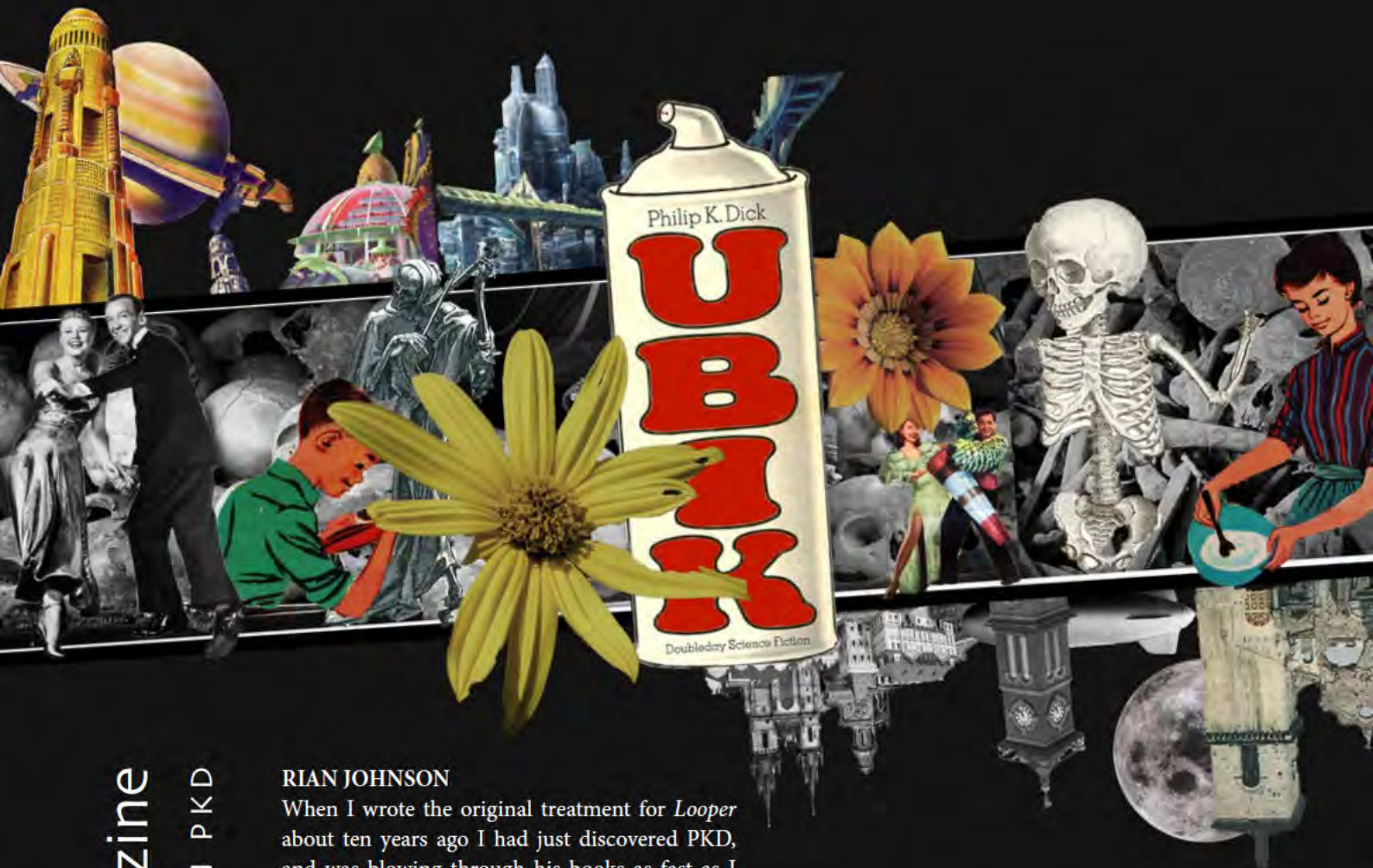
ROGER LEVY

I remember how, at school and uni, the best-of-the-best argument was always between PKD and ACC. But for me the contest was never even close. While Clarke relentlessly predicted the hardware, Dick explored the soft machine like no-one else. He stared deeply into virtual reality, but he also considered virtual humanity – the android perspective – and analysed us by wondering how it might be for them. And he went further. There aren't many SF writers who brought their own lives – and I mean the personal, not the political – to their fiction at all, let alone as nakedly as Dick did, most notably in the astonishing *A Scanner Darkly*. His protagonists lived angst-ridden lives in addled times, and so did he. He was SF's Thomas de Quincey, our Hunter S. Thompson. In the end, of

course, he tipped over the precipice, but the precipice from which Philip K. Dick fell is at an altitude way beyond the reach of any of us who try to follow him.

ROBERT LICHTMAN

I was only around Phil Dick maybe three or four times, so I can't say that I really *knew* him. Back in the late '60s I indirectly supplied him with authentic Owsley LSD, but I don't know if he ever took the trip. I first encountered his writing at age fifteen in the 1957 Ace paperback *The Variable Man and Other Stories*, which per Anthony Boucher's short introduction definitely delivered "the chilling symbolism of absolute nightmare." Boucher was right! The stories, including 'The Minority Report' (which became a vehicle for Tom Cruise's histrionics decades later), scared and depressed me with their view of a bleak future, and it was some years before I returned to his writing. I don't remember what that next book was, but it hooked me and ultimately I read everything on his back list – and his new work as it appeared in paperback. And then I re-read nearly everything at approximately five-year intervals a number of times until, during one of those times, I began to notice that, although I continued to enjoy the stories, his parade of dysfunctional protagonists



and bitchy women was affecting my own consciousness in a not-good way and I quit, cold turkey — but not before vetting his “mainstream” novels with Paul Williams after Phil’s death and having discussions about which sort of publisher would be the best fit for each of them. That was an interesting process and all of them eventually saw publication, but I never re-read them in book form (although I bought them all) and never returned to his SF either. In these latter days I’ve satisfied myself with reading the various biographies of his life, my favorite of which is definitely Anne Dick’s *Search for Philip K. Dick* — a definite “inside” view of the man with much more insight than his last wife Tessa’s *The Dim Reflection of Philip K. Dick* and her late, expanded *Remembering Firebright*, neither of which show nearly as much insight as Anne’s. As for the many books analyzing Phil’s work, I think you are better off drawing your own conclusions.

KEN MACLEOD

PKD is a writer whose work I respect but don’t actually like. I’ve read four of his novels – *The Man in the High Castle*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *The Penultimate Truth*, *The World Jones Made* – and enjoyed all but the last. I was very struck by his short story ‘Faith of Our Fathers.’ It’s significant that these are all set on Earth. I could never get into his novels set anywhere in space, because he ignored scientific plausibility and his societies were too obviously satires of contemporary America — which, of course, has made them post-humously acceptable to the literary mainstream. ‘Look, he wasn’t really writing that SF rubbish, he was using the tools of that SF rubbish to explore...’ Yes, and it shows. He’s a writer whose novels actually gain from being filmed: *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall* and *Minority Report* are in different ways and degrees good SF movies, vastly richer and more resonant than the stories from which they were ripped. Somebody should give the same treatment to *The Penultimate Truth*, a perfect parable for our Wikileaked time.

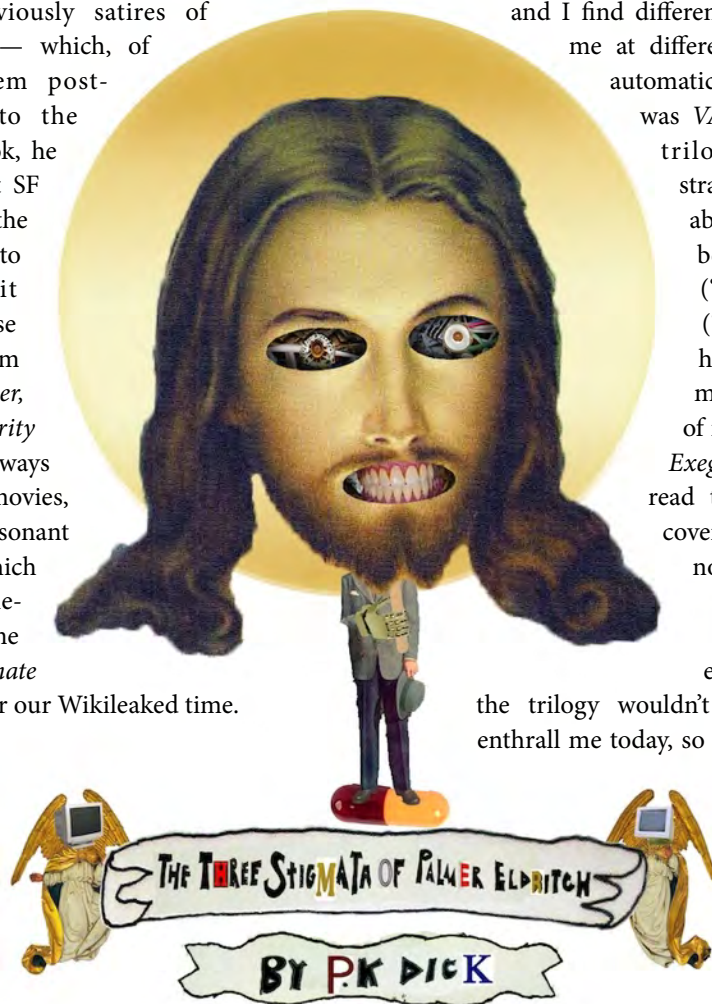
GENE MELZACK

The irony with Philip K. Dick and his work is that, for a man so concerned with matters of spirituality and the nature of humanity, his writing

so often provides purely intellectual rather than emotional or spiritual stimulation and it is rare to find genuine human warmth coming through his fiction. Stories such as ‘Human Is’, ‘The Little Black Box’, ‘The Pre-Persons’ and the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* all emphasise strongly how the ability to empathise and make emotional connections with other living things is at the root of our humanity, and yet this idea is explored in these works in ways that are relatively philosophical and difficult for a reader to engage with on a heartfelt, emotional level. Similarly, while Dick drew on some very direct and personal religious experiences, his fictional explorations of the nature of God, such as in ‘The Trouble with Bubbles’, ‘Fair Game’, ‘The Skull’ and ‘Prominent Author’, amongst many other stories and novels, often feel highly abstract and theoretical. While Dick’s ideas are certainly rich and fascinating to consider on this intellectual, philosophical level, it’s a real shame that his writing skills, in particular his ability to develop fully rounded characters with realistic dialogue and interpersonal relationships, weren’t up to communicating those ideas on a more immediate sensory and emotional level.

LYNDA RUCKER

Because I’ve been reading Dick for most of my life, it’s hard to decide which is my favourite PKD novel, or even establish why. There are too many books to choose from, and I find different books by him appeal to me at different stages in my life. My automatic answer for many years was *VALIS*, or the entire *VALIS* trilogy. It’s just so damn strange, and I loved reading about the early friendship between Dick and K.W. Jeter (“Kevin”) and Tim Powers (“David”). And at 22 or so, I half-believed it all, the crazy metaphysical ramblings, all of it; if you’d put a copy of the *Exegesis* in front of me, I’d have read the whole thing cover to cover, or at least tried to. I’m now a far more skeptical and cynical soul than I was then, however, so I’m not entirely sure that parts of the trilogy wouldn’t annoy me as much as enthrall me today, so I don’t really know if I can fall back on that answer any longer. I do love *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* because it’s so weird, dark, and funny. That’s one of the things the movie adaptations of his novels



never seem to get – his humor. I’m not ashamed to admit that I like both *Minority Report* (though it goes on too long) and the original *Total Recall*, but I think they’re lousy Dick adaptations. I have to take them on their own terms and pretend they have nothing to do with his actual work. *Blade Runner*, of course, is one of my favorite movies, hands down; I’ve easily seen it well over a dozen times in all its versions. For my money, though, Richard Linklater’s *A Scanner Darkly* is the only truly successful Dick adaptation in terms of capturing the ideas and the mood – the paranoid shifting reality, or unreality – of his fiction as well as the burnt-out, dystopian, suburban despair of that novel in particular. I also love that Linklater retained a portion of Dick’s heart-breaking afterword, “a story for people who were punished too much for what they did.” Lots of movies feel influenced by his ideas, but for me, none more than the brilliant, funny, melancholy *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, the collaboration between Charlie Kaufman and Michel Gondry. From the central premise of a company that erases memories too painful to bear to the humor and to the thorough exploration of the actual implications of such a removal – it’s all suffused with his spirit.

JASON SANFORD

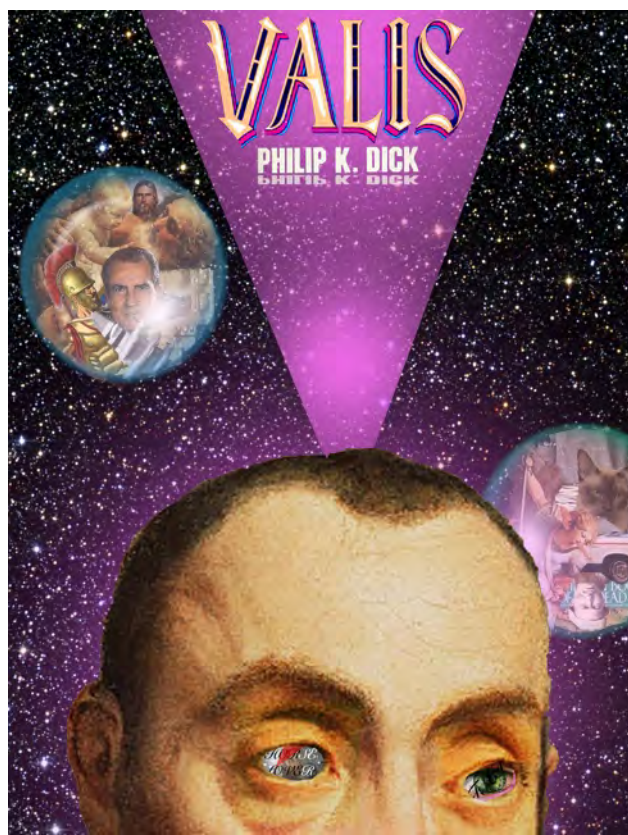
To this fan of science fiction, Philip K. Dick is a joy. To this writer and reader of SF literature, he’s a frustration with occasional high points. The joy comes because you can’t touch SF these days without seeing PKD’s fingerprints. Thanks to Hollywood’s embrace of PKD’s vision, his paranoia-ridden, schizophrenic view of society is everywhere. Perhaps PKD was a true visionary for seeing this turn in society. Perhaps he helped bring humanity to this view through his stories. Either way, that’s more of an impact than any other SF author of the last fifty years. But the frustration comes when you actually read PKD’s stories and novels. He was capable of very good writing at times – *The Man in the High Castle*, one of his best novels, showcases the wordcraft he possessed when he took the time to rewrite and edit, as do other novels like *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *Ubik* – but far too many of his works drone with haste and self-indolence. Worse, his ability to create believable real-life characters was almost non-existent. PKD was

an idea man, and that’s seen in his writing. I suspect this is one reason he’s been embraced by Hollywood – his ideas and stories allow others to graft onto them their own characterizations. But while PKD’s stories show a limited ability to understand his fellow humans, he did create one amazing character: Himself. His *Exegesis* reveals the great conflict which occurs when a man who understands science is confronted with a change within his own mind. He searches for any explanation – God, aliens, the religious – other than the mental breakdown he is actually experiencing. PKD alludes to the truth of what is happening to him in his *Exegesis*, but in the end his storyteller soul embraces other explanations, stringing together coincidence and isolated facts until they became what he wishes them to be. PKD not only helped create our paranoid view of modern life, he documented within himself how we arrived at such a state. And to me that is his most tragically fascinating creation.

PETER YOUNG

I guess like a lot of people, my induction into the writing of PKD was a haphazard affair. A few average novels while wondering what all the fuss was about, then suddenly out of the blue, one that hits you right between the eyes. For me that was *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, a novel that really messes with your mind, followed by *A Scanner Darkly*, a novel that’s somehow able to be both perfectly grounded as well as brilliantly existential. But where is the best of Dick to be found? For me, the non-genre *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, where at last he gets women *right*, is absolutely his best novel, but that’s a limiting answer to a more interesting interpretation of the question, because the ‘best’ of Dick goes further than just his books. I suspect his writing is of the kind that future generations will interpret differently to previous generations, given how his

concerns and paranoias are undoubtedly reflected in the fast-evolving and endlessly questioning society we live in now. What is reality? Future generations will answer that question differently to however we choose to, and *that* for me is the best of Dick: the adaptability of his ideas, demonstrated by how he has posthumously enabled others to tell stories of their own. And it’s also why I’ve given this fanzine a visual theme of ‘eyes’ – a reminder that the ideas of Philip K. Dick, as we detect them all around either today or in the future, will always be looking right back at us.



A Letter to Philip K. Dick

BRUCE GILLESPIE

DEAR PHILIP,

Your letter has certainly made my week. I had hoped with trembling that I might hear from my favourite sf writer, but I doubted whether Ace would get around to sending on the letter. Fortunately, they did.

That “reviewer” who “is doing a good job” is, of course, me. As I think is made sufficiently clear over the heading of the articles, they were written some time ago, when I was fresh from University English, and all ready to analyze the whole of English Literature and all of science fiction too, into small atoms of clarified meaning. George Turner now writes, wondering whether the articles will not, in fact, turn into “undifferentiated enthusiasm”. I’m glad that you’ve appreciated the articles, although I wouldn’t mind knowing sometime exactly where you think I hit the mark. Sorry about *The Man in the High Castle*. As the last piece makes clear, I missed the point of the novel completely when I read it the first time. It may have been far too subtle for me at the time. I’m certainly going to read it again as soon as possible, and attempt to remortise it into the framework of my thought of your genre.

I will keep striking my head on a brick wall which will *not* give way like all those brick walls in all those movies. What exactly do your worlds consist of? Are they the essence of Anti-God (Palmer Eldritch), of Chaos? Behind the frightening rigours that tear apart your worlds, is their unifying principal lying there all the time? *This* is the sort of question I’ve been trying to nut out for the last year and a half. All I see clearly is that which went into the first articles – my own delight in your unique prose and all grades of your ideas (from the philosophy to the gimmicks), and attempt to describe and document this enthusiasm from the books. George Turner is probably right; the articles are eulogies. However I think they are the first eulogies to your works that have given a clear idea of the full pleasures of your work. Breen missed the point, by pentiticing on your Ideas (very much in capital letter), Judith Merrill just misses the point, and English readers are just starting to discover your books. If the articles do nothing else but stir English publishers to get a move on with those 27 books (!!) and especially

reprints of the great books such as *All We Marsmen*, then I think they are worthwhile. If they stir any analytical thinking on any sf, they become important. But if I ever do find out what your books are *about* – I’ll be the first to let you know.

Thanks very much for the offer to arrange for copies of *Androids* and *Ubik* (“Ubiquitous” = “Omniscient” = “God”?) to be sent on to me. Politely, of course, I’m going to suggest to Ashmead that review copies of DD books could go far worse places than *SF Commentary*. We have some extraordinary reviewers like Foyster and Turner who would do far better reviews than any appearing in the prozines or the fanzines. But that is up to Doubleday. Meanwhile, as soon as I have the time (famous melancholic author’s last words) I’ll hoe into everything that has come to hand on your books since I wrote the other articles. I’ve received *Now Wait for Last Year* in paperback. At least some books arrive here sometimes. Have also seen, and almost sniggered at, Breen’s article. Brunner’s was much more perspective, and I should have read it before doing my first article. Your novels have been badly neglected until the last few years. I have read the impression that they are not widely read in Australia, but that is probably the result of rotten distribution for Ace books and all the other people who print your books. However, you should see what Brian Aldiss says about your work in *SFC 2*. I’ve sent on *SFC 2* today to your private address, although one will arrive eventually through Ace. *SFC III* has been typed and is currently “in the hands of the printers” (who mangled the time schedule for the “January” issue) and *SFC IV* (68 pages) is now typed. That contains the second main article on your novels (*Crack in Space & Counter-Clock World* cited as second class, cf. *Zap Gun*) which runs for 15 pages. Even more anasquizzical than the first.

Sorry for boring you. An author’s time is literally money, and for that reason, I appreciate it that you sent a letter at all. Good luck for the British editions of your books.

Yours
Bruce R. Gillespie

[MAY 1969]



Tessa B. Dick's *The Owl in Daylight* – a review

PETER YOUNG

Tessa B. Dick

The Owl in Daylight

2009

ISBN 978-1-4414-3581-1, 214pp.

GIVEN THAT Anne Mini's family memoir connected to Philip K. Dick was pulled prior to publication in 2008, I can't help but wonder if there were, around the same time, jitters in the publishing world about *The Owl in Daylight*, written by Dick's fifth ex-wife Tessa, that steered publishers away from any involvement in it. Or maybe there were other reasons. There is, surely, enough interest in the idea of a novel dreamed up by PKD that has been brought to life by someone who knew him especially well. However, unable to secure a publishing deal Tessa Dick instead went down the self-publishing route, and this novel bears no imprint. The main draw for buyers will no doubt be either to read it out of curiosity or because they are PKD completists, as it is connected to the few references Dick left behind which mentioned his plans for a novel which was to bear the same title. The novel's back cover states "*The Owl in Daylight* is a tribute to his genius by his widow", and that "Mrs. Dick has approached this task with the utmost care and sensitivity." Below these words is a photo of Phil, none of Tessa, and obviously this is the way Tessa wants it.

Tessa Dick has followed her own muse while writing the book Dick might have written, and in the spirit she believes he would have written it. 'The owl in daylight' was Dick's metaphor for blindness, and PKD enthusiasts are still in the dark when it comes to grasping the concept he may have wanted to extract from the metaphor. If that indeed was Tessa Dick's aim as well, I soon found that the best way to read *The Owl in Daylight* is actually *not* to read as if it was the novel Dick may have written himself. As Dick has already appeared subjectively as the main character in other stories (notably Michael Bishop's *The Secret Ascension*) his appearance here, strictly speaking, ought to be seen more in that way rather than as another cameo of the kind that surfaced in much of his later work, post-1976. While Tessa Dick's two main characters of Art Grimley and Tony are drawn from events in the life of Dick himself (life-changing hallucinations, a job in a record store

while writing short stories, dark-haired girls and an unsolved break-in), they still don't feel authentically 'Dickian' in that they haven't been penned by Dick himself; these are Tessa Dick's creations and ought to be regarded as such.

The plot bears many similarities to how Dick outlined it in conversation (see Gwen Lee's *What If Our World Is Their Heaven?*). Art Grimley is a composer of B-movie soundtracks from Berkeley who wishes he could be more successful with serious music, while Tony is simply a younger version of Dick in his teens and twenties. When told as parallel narratives, Art's story broadly mirrors Dick's dual relationship with science fiction and mainstream literature, and involves an infection by an alien plasmate (also seen in *VALIS* and *Radio Free Albemuth*) which gives him visions of Tony's life whilst in a coma. Tony's story, after some rather good character building, suddenly digresses into an illusory experience in which he and his young wife become owls in a forest, whilst also experiencing a version of Dante's Purgatory. This lays on the allegory a bit too thick for me: to be blunt, it's a shame how awkward this fantasy section is and it's notable how it departs from the 'spirit' of PKD dramatically, watering down the authenticity of the novel as a whole. It wouldn't be any great loss if it was excised completely, although it contains several points about morality that could better be woven into the story elsewhere and necessarily in a more subtle fashion. Tony is the story within the story of Art Grimley, and while this idea works well in theory there needs to be more that directly links the two characters, and in considerably more detail, to do justice to the inner and outer aspects of this neat compositional structure.

The Owl in Daylight isn't an especially eye-opening read by any consideration. It draws on the PKD mythos while at the same time not actually adding anything of major significance, because we're still as much in the dark about Dick's own plans for his novel as we were before reading about them. In Tessa Dick's own way and in her own style it's still a very respectable stab at making real something that might have been, although it could have benefitted from more editorial input. So yes, one for the completists and the curious, and for a few years now a sequel has been promised, *The Owl in Twilight*.

▲
Cover detail from
*The Owl in
Daylight*, 2009,
artist unknown.

The Black Lodge, the Palmers and All My Garmonbozia

a search for PKD in *Twin Peaks*

CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA



NO TELEVISION show in history is like *Twin Peaks*. It explored the areas of fantasy, reality and the stretched versions of both. *Twin Peaks* is about three things: that which we hide, that which is hidden from us, and how we attempt to uncover those secrets.

In other words, it is a Philip K. Dick story, set in the Present, made palatable for the American television standards of the early 1990s.

The concept of *Twin Peaks* is so simple: a young woman, who is full of secrets, is murdered in a town that is full of secrets, which is settled amongst a forest that is full of secrets. That's it. It's so simple. Laura Palmer is the young woman, and it comes to light that she has been living a double life within a double world; one of our reality, one of Another Place. We cannot be certain which is real. We may be viewing a tale

from Another Place, or we may be viewing a story from our own world, albeit a strange segment of it.

Does that sound familiar to you at all?

Does it have a ring of anything you've heard or seen or read before? On my most recent re-watching of *Twin Peaks* (I try to watch it at least once every other year) I came across a number of similarities between *Twin Peaks* and the works of PKD I'd read, starting with *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which I read almost immediately before I started the re-watch. The parallels weren't as thin as I thought they might be.

Let us look at Laura Palmer. She is murdered, we first encounter her wrapped in plastic, pulled from the river by Pete Martell. She's young, and even with the blue lips and white skin of death from a night in the water, she is beautiful. As the

series goes on, as books are published, and with the release of the film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, we discover many of her secrets. She has a drug problem, cocaine being her scaffold, and she is sexually ambitious. As we walk back in her timeline, we discover that since she was twelve, she has been abused in every way possible by an entity named BOB. We learn much about Laura in the series and the book *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*, but we finally begin to see how she lived her life in the film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*. We witness her having breaks with reality in the film, as well as her using drugs to deal with both her real-world and Another Place problems.

And there's where we see one of the great themes of *Twin Peaks*. There is the world we have, we see, we live in, and there is another world that some have access to, or perhaps it is better expressed in relation to Laura Palmer as Another Place being *forced* upon her. Her abuser, BOB, is an entity which does not live in our universe, but inhabits a vessel which allows him to express his rage and lust on our world. He is an inhabitant of The Black Lodge, which exists in our world only for those who are brought into it.

Another Place is made up of three areas: The White Lodge, a place of joy and happiness that can only be approached by those with purest love; The Black Lodge, which is entered only through fear (and those who come with imperfect courage have their souls utterly destroyed), and The Red Room. The Red Room is the connection to both the Lodges, but it is also where Agent Cooper goes via his dreams. We see that the Red Room begins to infect parts of the real world, and ultimately it comes into play with the investigation. It is a question of whether or not the Red Room influenced those who dwelt in the woods (such as the cabin, where Laura and Ronnette have sex with Jacques and Leo before Laura is murdered, that has red curtains), or if Agent Cooper created the location in his dreams and it is just how it is seen.

That question is a very Dickian one as well. Is an alternate reality created first and then encountered by those who open themselves to it, or does the opening of a mind to an alternate reality create that reality?

Laura herself may embody every theme that Dick ever put forward. She is not certain what is the real world and what is Another Place. She can pass through, or at least *see* Another Place. She attempts to deal with this in several ways. She recognises this as mental illness, which leads her to visit Dr. Lawrence Jacoby, but she also self-medicates with cocaine and sex. She finds release in those vices, though she often has to take solace in one of them to relieve the impact of the other. These are all themes that were widely explored by Dick. The use of drugs to deal with a reality that is warped, or even threatening, is explored deeply within Dick's *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, as well as in *A Scanner Darkly*. The idea of fighting the power of one vice by introducing another comes into play in *A Scanner Darkly*. Laura is

touching different realities and is attempting to deal with it through drugs. Dick would have seen that theme immediately.

In *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*, author Jennifer Lynch writes "BOB is gone. I can't feel him around. Maybe it's because I'm high. Maybe I'm crazy and made him up... No, fuck that. I'm crazy if I believe he's only in my imagination... he's real."

This question is whether or not BOB is real, but more importantly, is he real for anyone *but* Laura? That idea, that there are subjective realities, could easily be applied to nearly all of Dick's work. In one series of exchanges between BOB and Laura in the pages of *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer*, one exchange features Laura saying "I'm an experiment", which could easily be read as Laura not only questioning her own reality, but the reality of Another Place. She later asks BOB if he is real. "TO YOU, I AM THE ONLY REALITY THERE IS" is BOB's answer. By the time we arrive at *Fire Walk With Me*, she is certain that BOB is real, though she has no idea how to deal with the fact that what she had thought was a part of her personal insanity is now a certainty.

In *Fire Walk With Me*, we see Laura using coke, and then going out and having a moment where she can see something in the woods that is not visible to anyone else, and she screams a terrified scream. The question on that matter is if she is hallucinating from the cocaine, as one might assume, or has she come close to The Black Lodge, become able to see the entrance, the red curtains that signify its realm? The answer to that question is left untold, and she can not provide the answer. Again, an unreliable narrator of the kind that Dick is so fond of.

In *A Scanner Darkly*, Charles Freck takes a handful of red pills and begins to hallucinate. A creature in an expensive suit appears and says "We are no longer in the mundane universe. Lower-plane categories of material existence such as 'space' and 'time' no longer apply to you. You have been elevated to the transcendent realm. Your sins will be read to you ceaselessly, in shifts, throughout eternity. The list will never end."

This encounter with drugs leading to an encounter with Another Place can certainly be read as a theme in *Twin Peaks*. Laura is like so many of Dick's characters in that she is not only uncertain what world she is living in, but she is also actively attempting to create her own reality. She is not certain if she is a real person any longer, or whether or not she is in our reality, or what constitutes a person at all. She wonders if she is insane, but she also wonders if she's just able to see something more than the rest because of her drug use and of her touching Another Place.

BOB is another question (this, I should say, is highly spoilery). BOB is an entity that exists in The Black Lodge, but can come into our world using a vessel, in this case Laura's father, Leland Palmer. The question is what is Leland's reality. He has a regular family life. Well, regular enough. He becomes BOB, and it seems that he is completely unaware of what he does as BOB until he is

captured and confronted by Agent Cooper and the Twin Peaks Sheriff's department. He gains all his memories as he dies. but then BOB is free, and we're never quite sure what this means about BOB, save for that he appears to take Cooper as a vessel at the end of the series.

BOB dwells in The Black Lodge, as do several others. A one-armed man named MIKE lives there as well. He is an entity, whose Black Lodge form looks the same as his form in the real world; a man named Phillip Gerard. In *Fire Walk With Me*, Gerard encounters Leland Palmer and confronts him on the road as if he is BOB, perhaps in an attempt to save Laura, who is with him in the car. MIKE ends up coming to the railroad car where BOB, in Leland's body, murders Laura and injures Ronette Polanski. He cannot, or perhaps will not, stop BOB. Phillip Gerard is treated for schizophrenia, and the treatments make it impossible for MIKE to come to the surface. This idea is again in line with Dickian methods. Drugs change reality, without the information from the taker. That concept is especially powerful in *A Scanner Darkly*. Drugs are used to hold reality at bay, to allow for a target personality to take hold, something that Dick possibly encountered in real life. Laura is specifically using drugs to deal with the problems she encounters from BOB, but Gerard is put on the drugs to keep MIKE out, though we're not sure MIKE has ever interacted with anyone else in the real world as BOB has. We do find, though, that there is a psychological component to the ability for residents of The Black Lodge to come into the real world. Perhaps it is Laura's drug use that prevents BOB from being able to enter her, while still allowing her to see or touch Another Place. It is obvious that BOB would like nothing more than to possess her.

Eventually, MIKE is taken off the meds at the request of Agent Cooper, which allows MIKE to come through to the real world, which leads to the capture of BOB and the solution to Laura's murder. We are only shown a Leland who is clean-living, and we discover that Bob entered him the first time when he was young, certainly not in the thrall of drugs. We believe that BOB may have done many of the same things to Leland that he did to Laura, but Leland's method was to give in, to allow him to take over. He did not retreat into drugs or sexual adventures. Leland opened himself up to BOB, and this is most interesting as it was the lack of drugs that led to BOB being able to take over, made his life darker, and force Leland Palmer to be a part of the darkness. Perhaps that is the opposite effect proving the positive.

Yeah, unravel that one for a minute.

Also in the Black Lodge is The Man From Another Place, a small man who may actually have come to be when MIKE cut his arm off. The Man from Another Place is actually the arm MIKE cut off to rid himself of a tattoo that marked him as 'touched by the Devilish One'. It appears he is also connected to The Giant, a visitor to Agent Cooper's dream, and to his connection to the real world, an old man who works in room service at The Great Northern. There is a old woman and her son, the

Chalfonts in the real world, but it's possible that one of them is a time-shared host of the spirits of Special Agent Chester Desmond and a monkey with the spirit of Special Agent Phillip Jeffries. The idea of multiple beings, doppelgangers, or 'phantom twins' is a frequent element in Dick's work due to the loss of his twin sister at the age of six weeks. This tragedy affected Dick over the course of his life, and every character in The Black Lodge is twinned in the real world. Laura has a cousin, Maddie, who looks exactly like her, and the idea that she is somehow connected to Laura, gets her killed by Leland/BOB, in the first real proof the audience sees that BOB is inside of Leland.

Following BOB/Leland murdering Laura during *Fire Walk With Me*, both BOB and Leland are present in The Black Lodge. Leland has blood all over him having entered the Black Lodge following the murder, and MIKE and The Man From Another Place are there, and they ask for "all their garmonbozia" (pain and suffering) which leads BOB to draw off the blood, splashing it on the floor, perhaps tossing aside all of the possibility of the memories that Leland might have acquired. Here, we can see the phantom twin most clearly, and the idea that one is working at all times, perhaps controlling the other twin. Leland is left in the wilderness, without a past, much like the androids in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* They are artificial, have memories put into them, though androids cannot have empathy. Perhaps BOB installed an entire new memory, rewriting everything. I wonder if the new Leland would have passed a Voight-Kampf test...

Perhaps it is the recurring phrase of "The Owls Are Not What They Seem" that brought me to write this piece. We hear that phrase over and over, first from The Log Lady, then from The Giant, and later still as a part of Major Briggs's Top-Secret deep space project. The Owls are possibly lures, drawing people to The Black Lodge (or its light counterpart, The White Lodge) so they can fill roles for the entities that live there.

Again, in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, Rick Deckard is sent to 'retire' four Nexus-6 androids on the planet illegally. Rick wants nothing more than an actual animal, with all but a very few real animals extinct or only available for very high prices from private collectors. Rick sees that there is an actual owl held by The Rosen Association. Rick believes that Rachel Rosen is actually an android, and is going to bring her in. Rachel wants the Rosen Association to be allowed to continue to make the Nexus-6 androids, and offers Rick the owl as a bribe. Rick asks to give Rachel one more question, and finally proves that Rachel is an android. Eldon Rosen, the head of the Association, says that Rachel is not aware she is an android, and that the owl she attempted to bribe Rick with was also an artificial owl.

The Owl Was Not What It Seemed, like much of what Dick wrote, and like nearly everything in and around *Twin Peaks*.



MAYBE IT was his name. Maybe it was the timing. Maybe I was just too busy reading more mainstream authors, but whatever it was, until last month I had never read anything by Philip K. Dick.

I wrote that before looking him up on Wikipedia, which jogged my halfsheimers memory. In college, someone loaned me a copy of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* because the title made me laugh. The book didn't. It only took a couple of chapters before I gave the book back, discouraged by an erratic writing style and a very depressing premise. As I vaguely remember, that discouraged me from reading anything else of his, and pushed me back into the arms (clutches?) of Heinlein and Bradbury.

However, some time later I heard of a book which I thought was called *Through a Scanner, Darkly* while I was working at Hewlett Packard, supporting printers, plotters and scanners. Hooked up to HP Vectra PCs through a huge HPIB card, scanners tended to produce underexposed images. That someone wrote a book about this intrigued me somewhat, but not enough to go hunting for the book. This was in the late '80s, when looking for a book meant plowing through library cards or walking the aisles of bookstores. With the wrong title, no idea of the author, and the wrong genre there was no chance I'd find it.

Fast forward to July 2013, *Drink Tank* editor Chris Garcia announced a Philip K. Dick issue, and I thought maybe it was time to read something by this guy. I pointed my Kindle to Amazon's bookstore, punched in the author's name and there it was, *A Scanner Darkly*. Eureka!

It was whispered to my reader in seconds, and parked next in line after *I Am Legend*, which I was reading at the time, but that's another story about an author I'd never read before he died.

A Scanner Darkly is not what I would call a fun read, but it has little flashes of something vaguely related to brilliance. For instance, he invents something called a scramble suit, which scrambles the look and voice of the person wearing it. His protagonist, an undercover narc, wears one for public appearances and to hide his identity from his fellow narcs, who also wear one.

Another touch is rehab centers run by a cult.

But most of the book is taken up with the main character's paranoia about his housemates and friends' paranoia, some of which is due to his paranoia. Most of which is due to his doing too convincing a job of being undercover.

The book reads like something written by a stoner, starting with a delightful scene toward the beginning where a housemate hallucinates that he (and everything around him) is covered in aphids, and he gets his friends to fill jars with the aphids to bring to the psychiatrists to show he isn't imagining them.

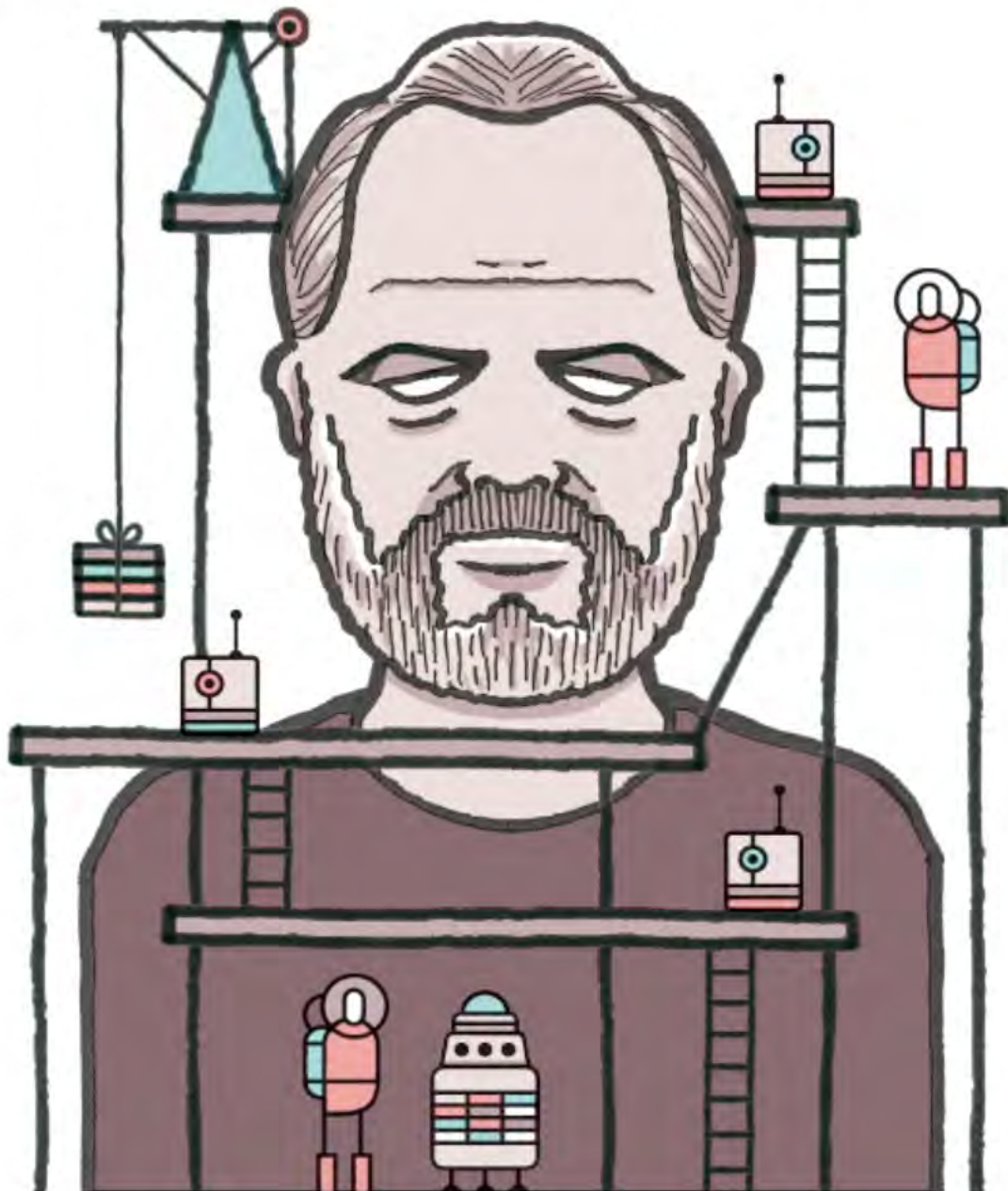
It took me a long time to get through the book, and it took the protagonist a long time to get to rehab. No spoilers, so I'll just say that a very short dialog between the person who brings him there and a co-worker plants a seed which makes the last paragraph in the book the "aha!" moment, when it becomes clear, but only if you are paying close attention, what Dick had in mind when he started writing this tome. Or call it the punchline.

When I finished the book, my first thought was "I had to read all *that* just to get to *this*? And my second thought was I probably don't want to read any more of his work. YMMV.

Scanning Darkly

the scattered thoughts of a film student on PKD's **A Scanner Darkly**

EDDIE TOMASELLI



[Giacomo Gambineri,
for Wired Italia #38,
2012]

When it comes to stripping intellectualization, ambiguity, complexity, and oftentimes beauty, no other artistic medium gets tweaked, shifted, and spanked as hard as film does. When at a museum, have you ever gone up to a Bosch or Van Gogh painting, turn in disgust to your significant other and say: "Gosh, I'd really like this painting if it were only *simpler*." Oftentimes not, but in film, to the individuals truly in charge, this is the case a good percentage of the time.

This is due to the fact that film, like all things in life, is run by the all-mighty craft of currency. So what happens when you keep the substance – the "artistry" of a film – and let it run wild in the wilderness? You'll get a film like *A Scanner Darkly*. You get a film like this when you stick to the source material and simply play it out with actors and a camera. Maybe even add a little rotoscoping for good measure. It may not be the most compelling *film*, but it should be an honest

one. How about when you strip the blood and guts of the source material and simply convert the ideas of a genius science fiction writer into an action film? You'll get the recent potato remake *Total Recall*.

And what happens when you stick to the source material, but centralize the core concepts into a story that differs from the book, permuting the key ideas into elements built for a visual medium? You'll get *Blade Runner*.

The fact of the matter is *A Scanner Darkly* isn't a bad film; it's a pretty good one, actually. What stops it from being a *great* film is that it doesn't expand upon the ideas set forth in the book. The film doesn't step away from the source in a manner that would be beneficial for a film, for a film is a different animal than the written word; that's the case for most adaptations where the source material never had an adaptation into film in mind.

If this is the case (and I personally think so), then why write an article on *A Scanner Darkly* for this fanzine? Why not just go off upon a different adaptation or something that works as a "film" better. For what *A Scanner Darkly* lacks as a film it more than makes up as a dark harbinger of the things to come, and to be completely frank, most of those things have already arrived.

I'm not the first person, and I surely won't be the last, to point out the recent events taking place with Edward Snowden and the United States' NSA program. I'm not the only person taking notice of the possibilities that Google Glass, and other gadgets that will continue to pop up every year, could bring. Is it a coincidence that when you log on to Facebook you get an ad on the side pertaining to an interest you *especially* care for? Philip K. Dick feared many things in life, and those fears are now an in-your-face reality. *A Scanner Darkly* is much less fiction than it was thirty-odd years ago.

That is why I believe the film is important in our

society; it's now as important as the book in the regard of sharing what PKD was all about, because not as many people read, nowadays. Let the film exist as a portal into his novels and into his mind – a segway drug, if you will. This is crucial in understanding not only the mind of a great author, but understanding ourselves and the world around us.

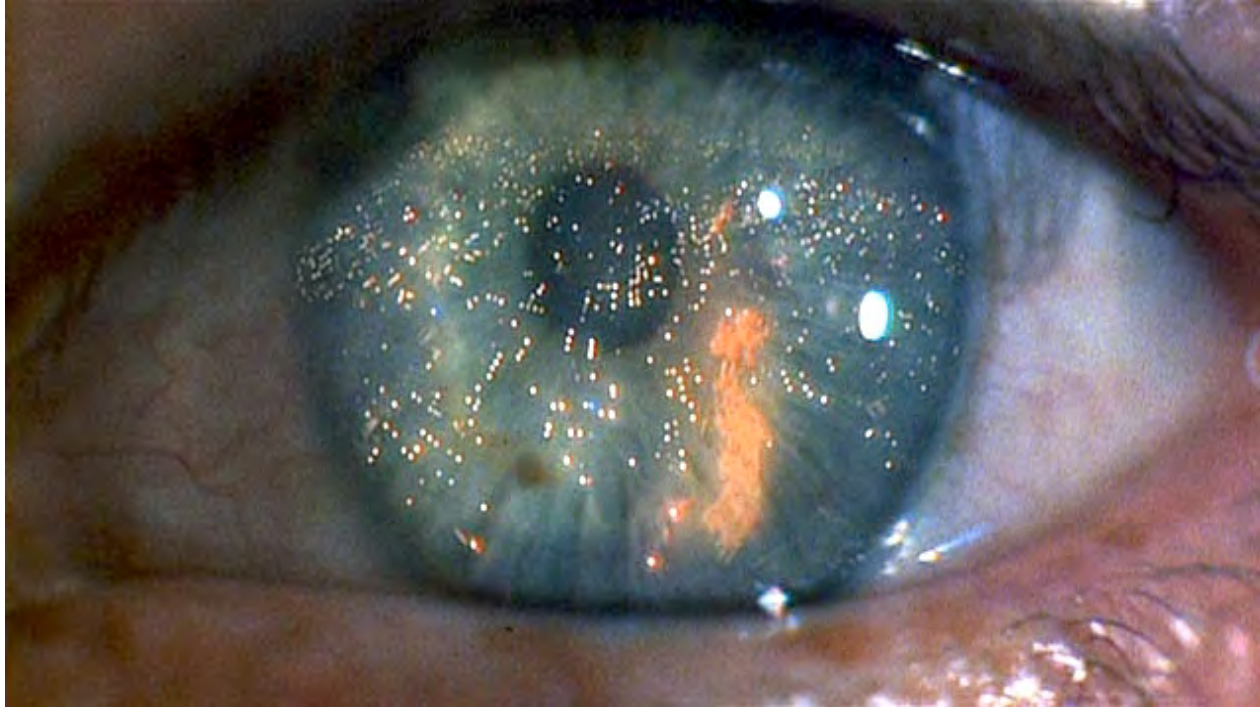
Out of the many things Philip K. Dick wrote about during his life, paranoia and an increasingly too-close-to-home police state were the most important. The surveillance is upon us, even if it is more of our own doing than we'd like to think. We give in to social media and instant communication because it entertains us, it's a convenience. However, how much should we really say and/or do on a system that virtually (pun intended) anyone can see? *A Scanner Darkly* shows the worst sides of a world that is viewable to anyone. Privacy becomes a harder thing to accomplish every day here in the real world, but that real world resembles the world of Philip K. Dick more and more each day.

The novel's protagonist Bob Arctor lost himself because of drugs, like many of Philip K. Dick's actual friends sadly did. What does it truly mean to lose yourself? Constant drug abuse makes it an easier thing to do than most, but what about showing yourself to the rest of the world on a computer monitor? We live in a world that not only Dick feared, but one that George Orwell and Aldous Huxley cringed at as well. One could say not to post anything vital or private on a site like Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, but if the government eventually wants to start going through your e-mail or looking through your windows, who's really going to be there to stop them?

Where *A Scanner Darkly* fails as a film it succeeds as a mirror into our daily lives. Philip K. Dick feared a future that was only a "future" for him to fear, for he is long gone, and we currently live in that exact fear.



'A Bokeh Darkly',
2008.
[Tim Norris @ flickr]



Over a number of years, London-based **Geoff Hutchins** has amassed an impressive collection of *Blade Runner* memorabilia. In July 2013 he showed **James Bacon** around his own small version of 'Ridleyville'.

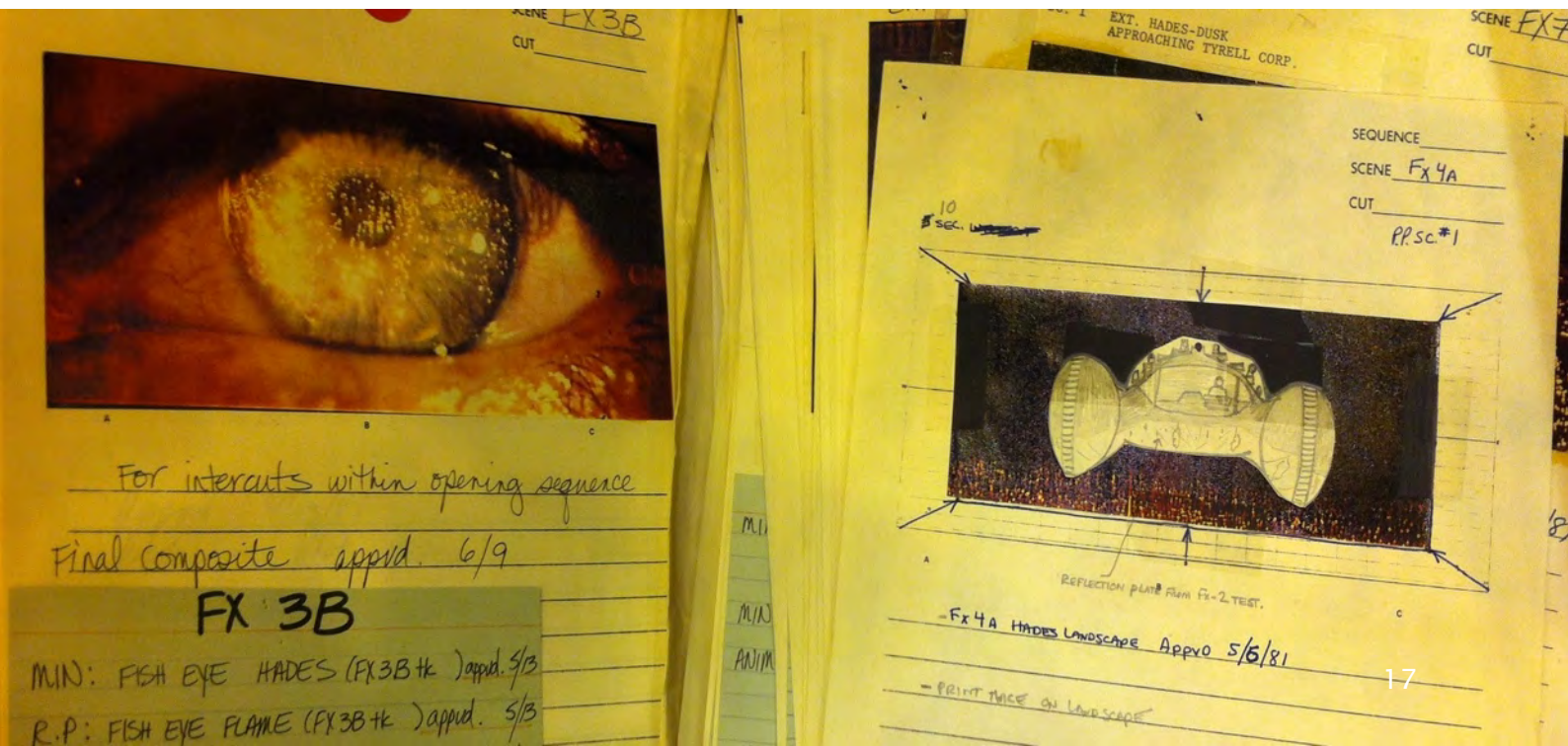
JB: You've read Dick's original book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. What did you make of it?

GH: I had read the book sometime before I had seen the film, and if I am really honest I found that I had to work hard to get into it. I have promised myself that I'll read the book again with an open mind, as I find reading a book after knowing the film to be a bit odd.

I loved the mood of the film. I know people at the time hated that downbeat and drab feeling but I remember standing in a long line in the dark and pouring rain waiting to get in. That also got me in the mood. I have to also say I did not mind the narration and actually quite like that version of the film. Roy Batty on the roof with Rick Deckard clinched it for me and it still moves me now.

What was it that you particularly liked about *Blade Runner*?

What was your first major purchase and tell us how did that come about?



I started the collection – although I hadn't realised at the time that this was going to happen – when I purchased the first version of *Blade Runner* on VHS. Watching at home somehow made it feel more personal and I liked the atmosphere it created while I was watching it. I also found that the more I watched it the less obvious it all became – it pulled me in deeper, and it seemed that every time I watched, something new seemed to appear, or my thoughts changed about what and why things happened. I felt that I needed to be part of the movie, and the only way that I felt I could do that was by collecting relevant items. I started small as money was tighter at that time, so most commercial items were purchased through eBay. As time went on and money became available, the collecting got more serious. I have to say it was almost like a drug and I needed the satisfaction of finding something new and original.

What are your favourite items and why?

This is a difficult question, almost like being asked what is your favourite song when you have special tunes for special times. I do have a shortlist as such, and it includes the clapper board, Holden's office miniature in the Tyrell building, Zhora's outfit, the neon umbrella, the special effects storyboards and stunt blaster. I feel all of them are special: the storyboards because they have been crafted by hand, cut-up images and notes stapled together, all handwritten. You feel the passion that goes into these items, and the smell of the paper just adds to their sense of history. The blaster, because it was used by Harrison Ford, and then the neon umbrella because it

was so iconic.

I have been lucky on a couple of occasions in obtaining some of the items: crew that worked on the film contacted me directly via my website and I was offered first refusal. These are for items I have not exhibited as yet but are in the pipeline to have special cases made to display them next time. They include some miniature Spinners from the top of the Police station and some 65mm matte composites.

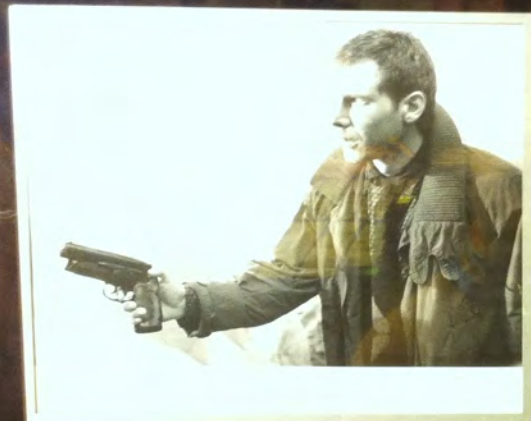
If forced to name a favourite then I'll say the clapper board. This item provides the connections that are easily made to the production, with the look and feel and name and date references. It is also seen being used in one of the "making of" discs in the boxed set.

Can you tell me a little about the stunt gun?

The rubber stunt gun is one of six that were likely produced. Two have come to light, the one I have and another that was recently sold at auction in Los Angeles. The one I have was made to resemble Deckard's blaster and had the amber grips added. The recently-auctioned stunt gun was plain and generic without the grips. The blaster I have came from a crew member who worked on the film.

You have as many pieces of paperwork as props... what do you like about them?

I just love that they were so personal to the crew that produced them – their handwriting styles, and so on. Many are freehand drawings, sketches and doodles, nothing typed or created by a laptop. Even most of the



Stunt gun
used by Harrison Ford
as Rick Deckard in



BLADE RUNNER™

accounts and budgets I have are handwritten. The special effects storyboards and the budgets and accounts are probably my favourites. There is a lot of information, reading between the lines; for instance Stan Winston Studios were going to do the mechanical special effects, and I also have a list of what they were going to do and the price they were going to charge for each of the elements.

So why have you decided to exhibit this collection?

It got to a point that items I purchased would go straight into storage – I sometimes wouldn't even open the package. I didn't have the space to do anything special and only put up some picture frames. I then thought a website would be a good way of showing what I've collected and this did work for me, although most of the main items were just taken from their packaging, photographed and put back. It was my wife that pushed me to do something special with it all. It was basically her comment, "What's the point, it's a crying shame that it's all going to rot in boxes, you might as well not even have it". I also became ill earlier this year, and these two things finally triggered wanting to share my collection with others. This was my first display and I invested a lot in having the display boxes, frames, etc. professionally designed and made. It was a great start and has pushed me on even further to increase the size of the display. I have been asked to put it on display at a convention in Antwerp next year, loan a costume outfit to the British Film Institute, and display it all at the opening of a science fiction store in London.

Other items I intend to add to the display next time will be the articles above, a number plate from one of the vehicles, and the oblong light assembly from the front of the Spinner. If interest continues I might extend the display to official merchandise and advertising as well. I also have a lot of blueprints and original storyboards but just trying to work out the best way of displaying them. It would be good if I could add something different every time I display so I can keep the interest up. Just being able to do this has given me a huge lift in my personal circumstances so *Blade Runner* means even more than it did before.

Any inside information for us?

Well, with regards to direct contact with the crew, I have had the pleasure to have e-mail conversations with Tom Southwell, Tom Duffield, Pat van Auken and Gary Randall.

At conventions and meetings I have had the pleasure of meeting Sir Ridley Scott, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young, Edward James Olmos, Daryl Hannah, William Sanderson, Joe Turkel and Michael Deeley.

Just a couple of little things that I picked up on over the years were that Harrison Ford financed the crew jackets, although Vangelis refused to wear one because it was so drab... so he commissioned a one off magenta-coloured one which I also have in my collection!



A Chris Moore Retrospective

As well as being one of the world's foremost science fiction illustrators, **Chris Moore** is probably the most widely-known visual interpreter of the works of Philip K. Dick. We're proud to showcase a gallery of Chris's art depicting some of PKD's best-known titles, with some new commentary in addition to the commentary from his 2000 collection *Journeyman*.

Clans of the Alphane Moon 1996

"The girl was loosely based on a model in a fashion catalogue but I changed the hair and lengthened her neck quite a bit to make her slightly more alien."



Radio Free Albemuth 1996

"The girl was a kid who came to my studio looking for work as an assistant. She was quite bright and just happened to be there when I needed a model for this cover. I had an afro wig from a previous job so stuck that on her and some old respirator glasses from the 1st World War and got some shots off of her. I never saw her again, I think she went off to university. She did seem confused and undecided about what she wanted to do in life."



Our Friends from Frolix 8 1997

"The model for this one was a friend that I met through the Preston SF group. Her name is Sarita. I've used her a couple of times in different paintings. I'm told she was thrilled with it... almost as thrilled as her father was, because he's also a huge Philip K. Dick fan. Sarita is now a university lecturer in clinical psychology. The church is in Los Angeles."



Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said 1996

"I wanted to introduce a kind of narrative tension into this picture. You can see it in the way that the woman in the car is visibly irritated and waiting for the man to come over, while his attention is on another figure in the background. But when the notes came back I had to put sunglasses on the foreground figure in the finished picture, which for me diminished that particular effect."



Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? 1993


“The brief was to pick up on the Blade Runner film without using characters or scenes from the film, hence the pyramid shaped building like the Tyrell Corporation and also the towers burning off methane in the opening scene.”



Martian Time-Slip 1998


"The girl was called Lucy and she was a nurse at the local hospital where my wife Katie is a doctor. I saw her at a hospital party and was immediately impressed by her quiet strength. A good friend of mine who was one of the surgeons at the hospital, actually chatted her up for me and asked her to do a modelling session. She spend the best part of a day in my studio and I took lots of pictures which I used in quite a few paintings."





The Eyes Have It

PHILIP K. DICK

 T WAS quite by accident I discovered this incredible invasion of Earth by lifeforms from another planet. As yet, I haven't done anything about it; I can't think of anything to do. I wrote to the Government, and they sent back a pamphlet on the repair and maintenance of frame houses. Anyhow, the whole thing is known; I'm not the first to discover it. Maybe it's even under control.



'Iris of the Eye and Cardinal', 2010.
[**Michael Kappel**
@ flickr]

I was sitting in my easy-chair, idly turning the pages of a paperbacked book someone had left on the bus, when I came across the reference that first put me on the trail. For a moment I didn't respond. It took some time for the full import to sink in. After I'd comprehended, it

seemed odd I hadn't noticed it right away.

The reference was clearly to a nonhuman species of incredible properties, not indigenous to Earth. A species, I hasten to point out, customarily masque-rading as ordinary human beings. Their disguise, however, became transparent in the face of the following observations by the author. It was at once obvious the author knew everything. Knew everything — and was taking it in his stride. The line (and I tremble remembering it even now) read:

... his eyes slowly roved about the room.

Vague chills assailed me. I tried to picture the

eyes. Did they roll like dimes? The passage indicated not; they seemed to move through the air, not over the surface. Rather rapidly, apparently. No one in the story was surprised. That's what tipped me off. No sign of amazement at such an outrageous thing. Later the matter was amplified.

... his eyes moved from person to person.

There it was in a nutshell. The eyes had clearly come apart from the rest of him and were on their own. My heart pounded and my breath choked in my windpipe. I had stumbled on an accidental mention of a totally unfamiliar race. Obviously non-Terrestrial. Yet, to the characters in the book, it was perfectly natural — which suggested they belonged to the same species.

And the author? A slow suspicion burned in my mind. The author was taking it rather *too easily* in his stride. Evidently, he felt this was quite a usual thing. He made absolutely no attempt to conceal this knowledge. The story continued:

... presently his eyes fastened on Julia.

Julia, being a lady, had at least the breeding to feel indignant. She is described as blushing and knitting her brows angrily. At this, I sighed with relief. They weren't *all* non-Terrestrials. The narrative continues:

... slowly, calmly, his eyes examined every inch of her.

Great Scott! But here the girl turned and stomped off and the matter ended. I lay back in my chair gasping with horror. My wife and family regarded me in wonder.

"What's wrong, dear?" my wife asked.

I couldn't tell her. Knowledge like this was too much for the ordinary run-of-the-mill person. I had to keep it to myself. "Nothing," I gasped. I leaped up, snatched the book, and hurried out of the room.

IN THE garage, I continued reading. There was more. Trembling, I read the next revealing passage:

... he put his arm around Julia. Presently she asked him if he would remove his arm. He immediately did so, with a smile.

It's not said what was done with the arm after the fellow had removed it. Maybe it was left standing upright in the corner. Maybe it was thrown away. I don't care. In any case, the full meaning was there, staring me right in the face.

Here was a race of creatures capable of removing portions of their anatomy at will. Eyes, arms — and maybe more. Without batting an eyelash. My knowledge of biology came in handy, at this point. Obviously they were simple beings, uni-cellular, some sort of primitive single-celled things. Beings no more developed than starfish. Starfish can do the same thing, you know.

I read on. And came to this incredible revelation, tossed off coolly by the author without the faintest tremor:

... outside the movie theater we split up. Part of us went inside, part over to the cafe for dinner.

Binary fission, obviously. Splitting in half and forming two entities. Probably each lower half went to the cafe, it being farther, and the upper halves to the movies. I read on, hands shaking. I had really stumbled onto something here. My mind reeled as I made out this passage:

... I'm afraid there's no doubt about it. Poor Bibney has lost his head again.

Which was followed by:

... and Bob says he has utterly no guts.

Yet Bibney got around as well as the next person. The next person, however, was just as strange. He was soon described as:

... totally lacking in brains.

THERE WAS no doubt of the thing in the next passage. Julia, whom I had thought to be the one normal person, reveals herself as also being an alien life form, similar to the rest:

... quite deliberately, Julia had given her heart to the young man.

It didn't relate what the final disposition of the organ was, but I didn't really care. It was evident Julia had gone right on living in her usual manner, like all the others in the book. Without heart, arms, eyes, brains, viscera, dividing up in two when the occasion demanded. Without a qualm.

... thereupon she gave him her hand.

I sickened. The rascal now had her hand, as well as her heart. I shudder to think what he's done with them, by this time.

... he took her arm.

Not content to wait, he had to start dismantling her on his own. Flushing crimson, I slammed the book shut and leaped to my feet. But not in time to escape one last reference to those carefree bits of anatomy whose travels had originally thrown me on the track:

... her eyes followed him all the way down the road and across the meadow.

I rushed from the garage and back inside the warm house, as if the accursed things were following me. My wife and children were playing Monopoly in the kitchen. I joined them and played with frantic fervor, brow feverish, teeth chattering.

I had had enough of the thing. I want to hear no more about it. Let them come on. Let them invade Earth. I don't want to get mixed up in it.

I have absolutely no stomach for it.



I'VE BEEN wondering when the Appel/Briggs interview with Phil Dick would crop up in the Newsletter. I was shown a copy of this interview in ms. form in 1979 or 1980 and I was disturbed at the time by the wholly erroneous description of the events surrounding the publication of *We Can Build You* in *Amazing* as "A. Lincoln, Simulacrum." I write now in an effort to set the record straight, although my disappointment with Phil has worn off since his death.

The original title of the novel was *The First in Your Family*, and I believe it was the first sf novel Phil wrote after his foray into mainstream novels, circa 1958-60 – essentially the first of the "modern" Dick sf novels which Phil produced in such a spate in 1960-64. It was the only first-person-narrated novel, and it had one rather major problem, a problem which had kept it from selling for ten years before I bought it: it had no ending. It didn't resolve.

Phil had always had problems with his endings. Very few of the novels he wrote in the early sixties were published with the endings he'd originally written. *The Man in the High Castle* did not end as soon in ms. as it did in its published form, for instance, and in general Phil tended to either write *past* his endings, or never quite reach them. In the case of *The First in Your Family* he stopped well short of any ending.

I'd heard about the novel, as he says, from someone at Scott Meredith – maybe from when I worked there (1963), or perhaps later, I no longer recall – and when I became editor of *Amazing* I asked for it. Scott was glad to send it out; it had been unsold for ten years by then, perhaps the only remaining unsold sf property of Phil's. I read it and realized what the problem was, and I asked Phil about two things: changing the title

(to "A. Lincoln, Simulacrum," my choice) and adding an ending.

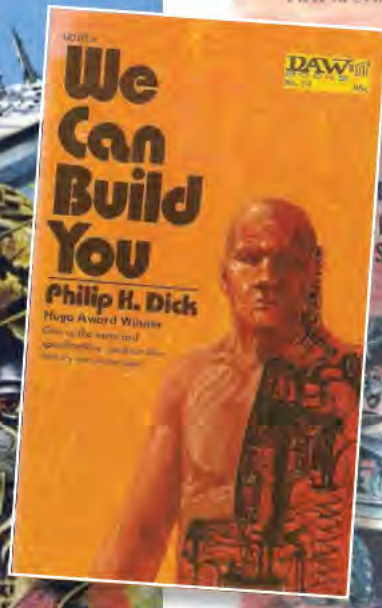
Now to put this into context I must point out that I had met Phil in 1964, lived in his house, had him read the *I Ching* for me (a startling experience, the validity of which I believe to this day), and had been publicly described by Phil as the man who knew his work and understood it best. In 1965 or 1966 he had given me the first fifty pages and the synoptic essay for *Deus Irae* and asked me to finish it for him. In other words, this was a man who professed admiration and respect for me and wanted me to collaborate with him. (As a jape, he gave Penguin a photo of me and it was printed [as a photo of the author] on the back cover of the British *The Man in the High Castle*.)

So I called Phil up; he had no objection to my proposed title change and he suggested I write the ending to the novel. I counter-suggested that I write a first-draft and send it to him for him to rewrite, and he agreed. So I wrote a somewhat off-the-wall final chapter in skeletal form. I expected Phil to either reject it out of hand or rewrite it and flesh it out. He did neither. He returned it to me with three words changed and praised its economy.

As far as I knew when I ran "A. Lincoln, Simulacrum" it was in a form satisfactory to Phil. Because I considered myself a friend of Phil's, I tried to do more for him. I knew the novel had been rejected by every market that had seen it, and that undoubtedly included Ace (his original publisher), but ten years had passed and now it had an ending, so I gave a copy to Terry Carr, who was then editor of the Ace Specials. He didn't like it, but passed it on to Don Wollheim – who had rejected the original version – who also refused it. However, after Don went to DAW he must have had second thoughts, because he bought it for DAW and published it under a third title, *We Can Build You* – sans my ending.

When I saw the book I was pleased for Phil – it's always gratifying to see a book you've given up on get published – and I was no less pleased for him when I discovered my ending had been omitted. Shortly thereafter I ran into Phil at the 1972 Los Angeles Worldcon – probably our last face-to-face meeting. In the course of casual conversation I remarked upon the DAW edition of his novel, but not at all as Phil reported it in his interview. I never referred to it as "our book" – I never even *thought* of it in those terms – and when I asked him about the ending he did not give me the wise-ass answer he credits himself with in the interview.

Instead, he gave me a weaseling answer and told me that the decision to eliminate my ending had been Don Wollheim's. "I just went along with him, Ted," he said, shaking his head and offering me a mild sympathy. Not only did I not refer to "our book", Phil never told me, "I know exactly what they did to 'our book.'" They took the 'our'



out of 'our book!'"

As it happened, three weeks later I ran into Don Wollheim at a Secondary Universe Conference in Iowa, and while chatting with him I asked why he'd removed the ending from the book (which, at that point, I thought he'd done). Don was the one who told me that it had been Phil's decision.

So, okay, it wasn't a brilliant ending; it wasn't even very true to the style of the rest of the novel. I'd never expected it to be used as I'd written it (and I'd used it without further rewriting of my own simply because by the time Phil returned it to me I was up against the typesetter's deadline), and I wasn't sorry to see it go. Had it been retained I would probably have come to regard it as an embarrassment to us both. I had little or no ego invested in it; it had never been publicly credited as mine.

But I was a little disturbed, in 1972, that Phil had been unable to be honest with me about it. At that point I began to wonder if he'd disliked it all along, and if so why he'd never said so to me. His interview with Apel & Briggs makes it clear that this was in fact the case – and that in addition the situation had caused him to drastically revise his attitude toward me.

His reference to me in this interview drips with sarcasm. He sneers at me. And the interviewers obviously went along with his characterization of me (“[Explosive laughter . . .]”) although to my knowledge I've never met or had any dealings with them, professionally or otherwise. But to me this interview simply reveals the pettiness of the man and his paranoiac inability to deal with his editors.

It appears to me now that my relationship with Phil underwent a total change – of which I was then unaware – when I became briefly “his editor”. I had seen this happen before – to Terry Carr, among others – but for some reason (unconscious arrogance on my part, I

guess), it never occurred to me that it could happen to me. I thought Phil and I knew each other better than that. (Hindsight suggests to me that Phil may never have meant many of the flattering things he said – in print – about me. Looking back I realize that I was virtually in awe of Phil, and perhaps he was playing up to that.) In any event, once I became Phil's editor I stepped into an adversarial relationship. To Phil, *all* editors were adversaries. That is very apparent in his characterization of “kindly editors, who are your best friends . . .” I doubt Phil ever realized that many of us were also writers and completely sympathetic to writers' problems.

Phil was more given to bluster than I realized when I hero-worshipped him, and he was something of a coward who avoided unpleasant scenes with both drugs and covert behavior. He was definitely a coward not to tell me he hated my ending to his book – especially since I made it clear to him that I would do whatever he wished. And he was equally a coward to avoid telling me the truth about the DAW edition. But the bluster comes out in the interview. Five years after the fact he has rewritten events and swaggered through a coolly brilliant putdown of a pushy editor.

But Phil owed me one. Had I not pulled his novel out of the files at Scott Meredith and published it in *Amazing*, and had I not subsequently given it to Terry Carr, who reminded Don Wollheim of it, I seriously doubt it would have been published in *any* form. I am firmly convinced that, Phil's sarcasm to the contrary notwithstanding, I did him a good turn.

Having said that, I must add that I think that any material given by Phil in the interviews of the latter part of his life must be considered suspect until verified. I think Phil tended to rewrite events in his own mind, or perhaps in order to give others a better story. I doubt my experience is unique.

Chapter 19, A. Lincoln, Simulacrum

TED WHITE



I DIDN'T look up when the car stopped by the curb. It stopped about twenty feet back, outside the yellow stripe that measured off the bus stop. I paid it no attention. Somewhere in the back of my consciousness I was still sorting my memories, trying to decide what made some of them real, and some of them delusive. Maybe they all were; Doctor Shedd's drug-therapy could have totally reprogrammed me without my awareness of it. You get involved with a delusion like that controlled fugue and it becomes as much a part of your total experience – the aggregate of memories that you carry around inside your head in protein clusters – as anything else you remember. I wondered if Doctor Shedd really had any idea of what he was doing. Did anyone?

"Mr. Rosen—"

I turned around and saw the car. The Lincoln simulacrum was at the wheel, and holding the door half open, clearly caught in a moment of indecision. Its head bobbed up over the lowered window and it called out, so quietly that I decided it was embarrassed to be calling attention to itself, here, in the bright sunlight in front of the Kasanin Clinic. "Mr. Rosen, I wonder if I might speak with you—?"

I went over to the car. "How are you?" I asked it. It seemed natural that I hold my hand to it, and the Lincoln took my hand in a firm handshake.

"The interior of this car is air-conditioned," it said. "Perhaps you would be more comfortable ..."

"Did you come to meet me?" I asked it as I slid into the front seat and across to the passenger's side. The Lincoln followed me back into the car, seating itself easily in the driver's seat, casually touching the controls that locked the door and raised the window, then leaning forward to adjust the temperature controls.

"I felt that someone should meet you, Mr. Rosen," it said. "When Dr. Shedd notified your partner, Mr. Rock, that you were being let go, I volunteered to fly out." It looked for a moment at its gnarled knuckles on the rim of the steering wheel. Its hands had fallen into the ten o'clock and two o'clock position automatically. "I felt that I was, in some measure, responsible for your difficulties." It paused again, as if unsure of itself at this moment. I wondered if somewhere inside it cams were turning, searching for new resting places. Ridiculous, of course; all the circuits were integrated solid-state components. But I had that

▲
'Abraham Lincoln',
1900 / 2012 / 2013.
[M.P. Rice, & Juan
Garcia / Peter
Young
@ flickr]

feeling. “We have certain things in common, you and I, Mr. Rosen,” the Lincoln added.

The air conditioning was drying the sweat off my forehead and making the synthetic shirt I was wearing feel cold and clammy. “I appreciate that,” I said, “I really do. Listen, can you tell me something? Can you fill me in a little? What’s been going on since I left? How’s my dad?”

“I’m afraid your father has passed away,” the Lincoln told me. “Mr. Rock sends his regrets, and said to tell you that Chester is all right. He says to come on back to your old job; the partnership is still valid. And ... I suppose you are aware that ... Pris ...”

“I saw her. Here.”

“I see.”

“So, outside of my father dying, which is really no surprise to anyone, business is as usual. Is that it?” I asked it. “Life goes on; the more things change, the more they remain the same ...?”

The Lincoln nodded its great head. “That is pretty much the case, I believe.”

I stared at it and wondered why I had never before been aware of the contradictions embodied in this simulacrum. Totally human in appearance, even to the extent that it *believed* itself human – but a manufactured object, with manufactured memories, personality, intelligence. What did we think we were? God? Playing with the recreation of human beings, building ersatz figures from the past? What next? Jesus Christ? What a coup *that* would be for R & R ASSOCIATES. Fresh off the cross: if you pulled at its scabs its stigmata would bleed for you. I wondered if it could be built so that it could work the historical miracles.

Pris. These simulacra were Pris’s delusions. *She* was the “creative” one, the God-mind behind them. She had designed this creature which sat next to me in a modern car, obviously familiar with it, and talking to me as one adult human being to another.

How far back did my insanity go, I wondered? How had I ever accepted the crazy notion that we had somehow revived the *real* Abraham Lincoln? Sure – everything I could look up about him he also knew, because he’d been programmed from the same sources. But what about those things we *didn’t* know about Lincoln – those facts which had become lost or were too private for him ever to have shared?

“Are you aware of the fact that you are only a point of view?” I asked the Lincoln.

“Are not we all?” it replied. “I will admit I find the notion of the Rational Man appealing – but more in the sense of an ideal, than of a practical reality. We are all points of view, subjective interpretations of the universe we inhabit. You know—” it smiled, a sad but boyishly eager smile – “much has changed in this century over the last, and I confess that there is much which fascinates me. Many were the nights when I stood alone under the stars and wondered about them. About the moon ... It is as if I fell asleep, and when I woke the answers—well, some of them at any rate—were waiting for me. It is both a humbling and a proud experience.”

I waited it out. “That’s my point,” I said. “*You* did not fall asleep when John Wilkes Booth’s bullet struck its target down. You really aren’t the same Lincoln. *You*

know that, don’t you? You’re a recreation: you represent someone’s point of view about Lincoln. To be specific, you are Pris Frauentzimmer’s point of view. She had this thing, this knowledge about Lincoln, and she created you in the image of the man as she regarded him. But she didn’t know the *real* Lincoln. And she couldn’t recreate the real Lincoln. She had to settle for what she knew and what she believed. Are you aware of that?”

The Lincoln regarded me with a sad, compassionate expression. It sighed. “I am aware of the facts of the matter,” it said. “But they do not alter my inner perceptions. They make my awareness of myself no less real.”

As it said that, I felt a shock come over me, and I found myself staring at it with a feeling that paralleled that of *deja vu*—a sense of profound awareness of the absolute *rightness* of what it was saying.

“Listen,” I said. “In there, in Kasanin Clinic, they gave me drugs and put me through what they call *controlled fugues*. You know what I mean? They *helped* me to create my special delusions, my sickness. But they administered it. The idea was to help me work through them. I had to work it all out. Now, while I was in a fugue, it was real to me, you know what I mean? It was subjectively *real*. I can remember what happened in my fugues as well as I can anything else I ever did. And they *changed* me. They became part of my experience. Hell, everybody is changed by his experiences. I was too. So that makes them *real*, on the inside. Do you know what I mean?” I was excited and I clutched at its arm. It felt like a real arm: a little like my dad’s arm, stringy but muscled. “My ‘inner perceptions,’ like you said: they’re just as real.”

“You had to get Miss Frauentzimmer out of your system,” the Lincoln said. “That was part of your therapy.”

I stared at it. “If I pinched you, would it hurt you?” I asked it. Then I answered myself: “Sure; you have pain circuits; I remember. But if I pinched you, would your skin go white for a moment afterwards, and then get red, or show bruises?”

It started to pull its arm free of my grip, but I held it.

“It’s a test,” I said. “Are you the Lincoln Simulacrum I saw them making, Maury, Bob Bundy and Pris? Or are you a ringer?” I caught at a fold of flesh on its forearm with my thumb and forefinger.

“Mr. Rosen, you’re behaving hysterically,” it said. “There are people standing outside the car, watching you.”

I looked up and jerked my head around. There was no one outside the car; not close by, at any rate. I pinched, hard, just as the Lincoln freed itself from my grasp.

It rubbed its arm and said, chidingly, “There was no need for that, you know.”

“Let’s see your arm,” I said. “Come on; let’s have a look.”

It extended its arm. Two angry red spots glowed on it. “Can you doubt me any longer?” it said.

I stared at it. “Who are you, really?” I asked. Then acting on a sudden wild impulse, “Who are you working for? Barrows?”

The Lincoln gave me a sudden sardonic smile. It reached out and caught the flesh of my own forearm

between its fingers, and pinched. I didn't have time to react, but I yowled at the sudden pain. "Why'd you do that?" I asked.

Then I looked down at my arm where I was rubbing it. The skin showed no change of color at all.

Sam Barrows smiled benevolently at me. "There's a place for you in our organization, Rosen. You need have no fears about being, ah, disconnected."

"I still don't really understand," I said. Mrs. Nild gave me a sympathetic look.

"You were constructed as part of our program to test the feasibility of simulacra," Barrows told me. "You, your father and your brother. It's really quite simple. When Mr. Rock first approached me with the idea of historical simulacra—some time before you were made aware of it, actually—I decided that his plan was, as I said later, not of real commercial value. I could see far more far-reaching implications. Mr. Rock was mostly hung up on his daughter's ideas. I suggested that he create you, and your family, and integrate them in his business operation. It was necessary for you think of yourself as real individuals of course; you couldn't be allowed to find out the truth."

"Then I'm a—a made up person?" I whispered.

"If you want to put it that way, yes."

"Who—who thought me up?"

"Miss, ah, Frauentzimmer."

"I see," I said, and I was beginning to. What an incredibly sick mind the child had! I shook my head, disbelievingly. To do all the things she had done—!

"Pris, though," I said. "She's real?"

He nodded, screwing up his face into an expression I couldn't decipher. "Very real," he said.

"And she programmed me."

"You were her pride and joy," he said with accents of irony.

"The Lincoln?" I asked. "Was it—?"

"You were an early model," Barrows said. "We made improvements on the later ones: an entire capillary system that not only regulated skin temperature, but could induce blushes ..."

"We *did* have a lot in common," I said.

"You still do," Barrows said. "You represent an enormous investment of money. My money."

"I suppose you intend to send me to the moon, is that it?" I asked. "Part of your plan to populate your lunar tracts?"

"Would you object?"

"Knowing the truth about myself?"

He smiled and nodded. "Mrs. Nild will take care of all the details." I was dismissed.

I live in a house in the Sea of Serenity, within view of the Haemus Mountains. I have a wife who was designed to my specifications. She does not look at all like Pris, and we have no children. Of the six families on our block, one is human, and the other four think they are. I understand the Spelmans have received word they're to be transferred back to Earth soon, so I expect soon we'll have two human families on our block.

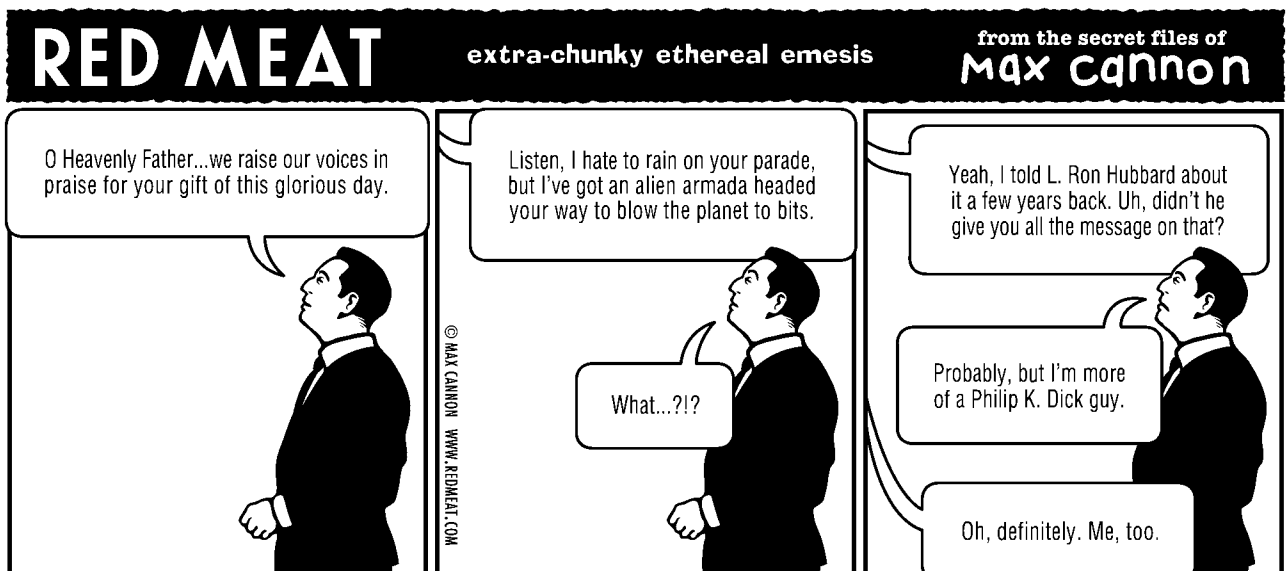
I have ads running in the local papers from here down to Mare Nectaris:

Spinnet piano, also electric organ, repossessed, in perfect condition, SACRIFICE. Cash or good credit risk wanted in this area, to take over payments rather than transport back to Mare Serenitatis. Contact Frauentzimmer Piano Co., Mr. Rosen, Credit Manager, Bessel City, M.S.

It's a good ad; it still pulls pretty well. We have a branch factory up here, and twice a year I get to make the haul back down to Earth to see my partner, Maury Rock. The rest of the time I am behind the desk up here, plotting out the ads and routing our crawlers and answering each response to the ads.

I mean, why not? A man needs a job, even on the moon—and people up here appreciate the fine craftsmanship of our spinets and organs. Maybe they're programmed to; I wouldn't know. I try to think about that as little as possible, and not at all when I visit Maury.

But once in a while I do wonder about one thing: I wonder what Sam Barrows did with the Lincoln.



The Death of Philip K. Dick

TIM POWERS



ON FEBRUARY 18th of 1982, a Thursday, Mary Wilson called my wife, Serena, at about nine in the evening and told her she was worried because she'd been trying all afternoon to call Phil but had been getting no answer. Serena told me about it when I got home from work about ten minutes later; we weren't particularly worried, but we decided that if Phil didn't show up before long (he always made it to our Thursday night gatherings) we'd give him or his closest neighbors a call.

A guest arrived at our front door, and while I was exchanging chit-chat with him, the phone rang. Serena got it, and very soon waved at us to shut up.

"Hello, this is Elizabeth," a woman's voice had said, "Mary's mother. Mary asked me to call you and Tim and tell you that Phil is unconscious." This was when Serena began waving at us. "Mary got hold of Phil's neighbors and told them she was worried about him, and they went next door and knocked and got no answer, but the door was unlocked so they went in. At first they thought no one was home, but then they saw Phil's feet sticking out from behind the coffee table. He's unconscious. The paramedics have been called, and Mary's on her

way down there right now."

I got back into my jacket and, promising to call if I learned anything, left Serena to greet guests and clattered down the back stairs. As I was putting the key in my motorcycle's ignition I heard the sirens of the paramedics howl past me down Main Street.

There were a couple of big red ambulance-type vehicles, with doors open and bright inside lights on, in front of Phil's building. I parked, and was staring at the damned front gate when Mary Wilson came running up a few moments later, looking haggard, pale, and scared.

"Ring his next-door neighbors," she snapped. Then, "Never mind," she said, starting forward, "look, it's open."

The gate was ajar. We ran inside and hurried up the stairs, Mary tensely gasping out to me the same story her mother had told Serena on the phone. On the third floor there were a few people peering around curiously, but Phil's door was open so Mary and I walked right in. His neighbor was already inside. A paramedic asked us who we were. We said we were old friends of Phil's, which the neighbor verified, and the man let us stay.

It was odd and disturbing to see see uniformed men, and metal suitcases full of medical instruments, in Phil's living room. One of his cats, Mrs. Tubbs, was wandering around,

▲
'Into the Unknown (The Grasshopper Lies Heavy)', 2010.
[**Veli-Matti Hinkula** @ flickr]

and we shooed her away from the open front door.

Phil himself was in the bedroom, sprawled sideways across the bed, wearing jeans and the Black Rozztox t-shirt he's wearing in the photo on the back cover of *Timothy Archer*. I could only peer in over the paramedics' shoulders, but I could see that Phil, though his eyes were open, was not okay, and that the paramedics were busy, taking his blood pressure and measuring out a hypodermic-full of some clear stuff to shoot him with. One man was holding Phil's hands and saying, with a sort of brusque joviality, "Philip? Can you hear me? What's your name? Can you tell us your name?" Phil was only able to grunt, though it seemed to be a response. "Okay, Philip, I want you to squeeze your right hand, okay? Squeeze it, your right hand." I saw Phil's hand move, weakly. "Okay, now squeeze your left hand." From where I was standing I couldn't see his left hand. The man leaned over and took hold of Phil's feet. "Okay, Philip, push with your feet, will you do that? Push against me." I couldn't tell whether Phil did or not.

While several paramedics were doing that, another guy was asking Mary and me questions about Phil: "How old is he?"

"Uh," I said, rattled, "born in '28."

"He's forty-eight?"

"No, no... uh, he's fifty-four."

"Has he ever attempted suicide?"

"Yeah, in '76."

"How'd he do it?"

"Jesus, he took an overdose of digitalis and then cut his wrist and then sat in his idling car in the garage for carbon monoxide poisoning."

The man raised his eyebrows. "Hm. Any allergies?"

"I don't know of any."

"Who's his doctor?"

Mary pointed to a half-dozen brown plastic bottles on the dresser. "His name would be on those."

They discussed where to take him, and decided on Western Medical Center. I asked one guy how it looked to him, since he must see a hundred cases like this in a month, and he said it looked like a stroke, but that Phil would very likely recover.

I hadn't called home because I was afraid the paramedics might suddenly need to use the phone, and when they'd got Phil onto the wheeled stretcher and got him out onto the inner balcony that runs around the third floor of the building, Serena and one of our Thursday-guests rounded the corner of the stairs. I hurried over to them and told them what had been going on, and then we stood back while the paramedics wheeled Phil past us and then carried the stretcher down the stairs. Phil's eyes were open, looking straight ahead, and he was frowning just slightly.

Mary rode along in the ambulance to the hospital, while the rest of us went back to our place, where I made a cautiously optimistic phone call to Phil's ex-wife, Tess.

Well, it may not have been a surprise to John Brunner (*Locus* #256, p. 12), but Phil's death at 53 was

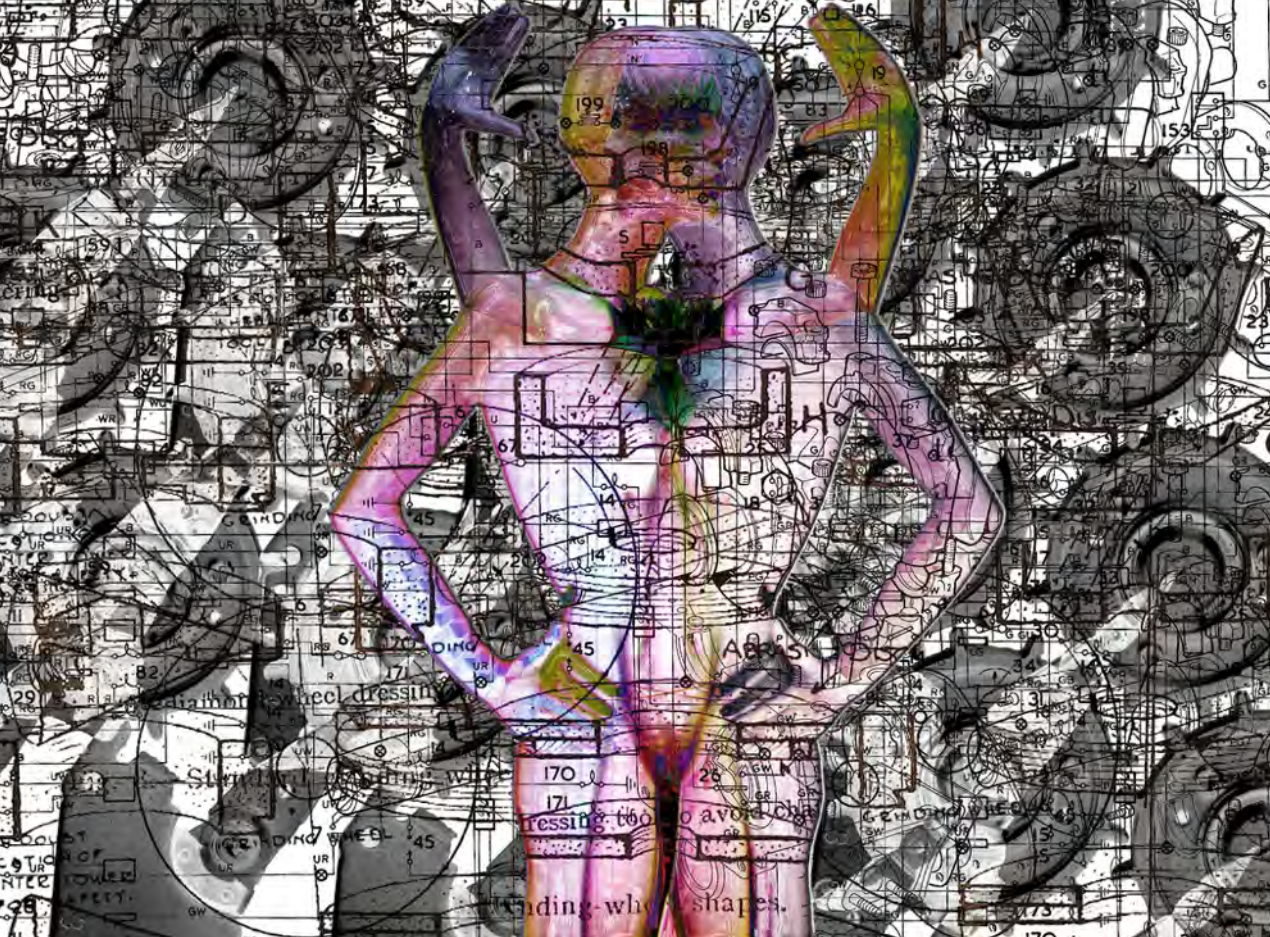
certainly a surprise to people who, perhaps, knew him better than Brunner did. Phil's blood pressure had been brought down to normal, and his weight was (?) what it should have been; during his last few years he'd been socializing much more than he used to – movies, Thursday night gatherings at my place, Thanksgiving dinners and Christmas and New Year's parties at various friends' houses, long, jovial evenings at (?) Squires' house in Glendale (Phil said once that a visit to Squires' was the only prospect that could induce him to drive to L.A.); he was writing some of his very best books, and was cheerfully aware of it; he was pleased with the increasing attention being given to his work by Hollywood; and during his last few years he was in the enviable position of literally having more money than he knew what to do with (he gave much of it away, frequently to such drug-rehabilitation places as the Covenant House in New York).

"He was one of the saddest people I ever met," said Brunner in his *Locus* appreciation of Dick. "He was incapable of helping someone else to happiness except by giving orders..." – I really wonder if Brunner didn't meet some other guy wearing a P. K. Dick name-tag. Phil had, certainly, moods of inward-staring depression, sometimes so profound as to really require a stronger word than "depression"; but anyone who knew him at all well knows that the depression was massively outweighed by Phil's irresistible sense of humor, his pretense-puncturing sense of perspective, his pure delight in good poetry, prose, food, music, friends, liquor, tobacco, *Winnie the Pooh*, Nicolette Larson, shrimp, Gilbert and Sullivan, Laphroig scotch, Wagner, H. Upmann cigars, *Ulysses*, Beethoven's Ninth, Janis Joplin, fresh baklava, Dean Swift snuff (especially Wren's Relish)... to name, at complete random, just a few of his enthusiasms. And he was generous not only with his books and records and cash (so freely that loans, through forgetfulness, often became gifts), but also with his *time*, an infinitely more precious and irreplaceable commodity. Phil would listen, with unfeigned attention and interest and sympathy, to people most of us consider ourselves too busy to bother with. I've seen him go to a good deal of trouble to help not only friends, but strangers whose mere situation placed, he felt, a claim on him; and there was not an hour of the twenty-four when one couldn't call him up and ask for, and probably get, any help he was capable of giving. Some of his friends used to say that if you were to call Phil and say "Phil, my car's broke and I've been evicted, can you give me \$400 and help me move my couch?," he'd say, "Sure, I'll be right over... uh... by the way, who is this?"

John Brunner has been a tremendously important promoter and favorable critic of Phil's work, and I know Phil was grateful; and I think it's a sad bit of "the way of the world" as Brunner puts it, that Brunner apparently never got to know the real, complete man that Phil Dick was, at least during his last years.

Being VALIS: The Lives and Deaths of Philip K. Dick

CHRIS LITES



IT'S 2005 and I'm at *Wired Magazine's* Next Fest at Navy Pier in Chicago. The event is designed to showcase the future of technology but I'm standing in a simulacrum of a 1970s living room waiting to talk to a dead science-fiction author. One wall is a giant window, as if the people mulling about the other wonders outside are meant to peer in and marvel at an actual specimen of life circa 1974. Life moves pretty fast; perhaps they've forgotten what it was like. Here, in the middle of 2013, I can't begin to tell you what 2005 was really like. I'd have to give it thirty years for perspective. There is a dead author in vault-like recreation of the last living room he ever lived in. There is a techie desperately handling his multi-colored wires, spread like ganglia out the back of his head. I am reminded of Jackie Kennedy in the Zapruder film chasing JFK's remains over the back of that limo, the effect now is just as disturbing. While the man handles the dead author's brains, the dead author merely smiles.

Inside the time capsule set to 1974, Nixon is still president. There is a record player and vinyl lines the walls. I imagine the future might dig us up like this one day and make little sense of it

except, perhaps, for the android in the corner. The android is the dead author. He's Philip Kindred Dick, and he's been programmed with all the knowledge, novels and personal correspondences that Dick himself wrote in his lifetime. In this way, Android Dick really isn't much different than "real life Dick." At least I don't think Dick himself would make too radical a distinction between the two.

They make you wait in a line to talk to the dead author, and I wonder precisely why I am there. Is it merely for the irony of seeing this author whom I admire conscripted to the fate of one of his characters? No, there's more, but I cannot yet say what it is.

His handlers, these white-shirted programmer types, huddle around him like one might a boozy celebrity rock star expected to go on stage but ill-prepared for it. They apologize. He isn't at his best today, and the thumping bass coming through the glass wall from another booth called the "Juke Bot" is making it difficult for him to understand questions but we'll get to try anyway. It must be nearly one hundred degrees inside this time capsule gulag, this Philip Dickian hell. Dick himself couldn't have invented anything as banal or as absurd as this, and yet he might have been comfortable here. An agoraphobe, he spent long periods holed up inside his house, unwilling to face the crowds of Southern



'Man and Machine' series, 2010.
[Dave Bonser @ flickr]

California where he resided. His handlers explain he has been fitted with visual recognition software. If a relative of his came by he'd know their face, he might smile at them. It's 2005 and Philip has been dead for twenty-three years. Soon he'll try to speak.

It's the 1960s and Dick's work is escaping the decaying orbit of the stale sci-fi genre. While the bulk of his peers are still tethered to the festering rot of space opera and the wonders of the atomic era, Dick is using the trappings of science fiction to explore the deeper questions of cosmology, the nature of reality, alternate universes and theology. Perhaps this is why, fifty years on, Dick's works are still being read and are finding new fortune as hot Hollywood properties. While much of the rest of sixties-era sci-fi has long since reached its sell-by date, Dick's work seems fresh, and relevant to today's complex world.

As many have, I found Dick's work through the cyberpunk world of *Blade Runner*. The rain, neon and noir of that film led me to the more emotional, intellectual world of Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* While Dick doesn't have the style of a director like Ridley Scott (nor the prose style of a Pynchon to whom he is often compared) he was a fount of ideas, seemingly endless, producing texts with mechanistic frenzy.

But if Dick is famous as a prolific pulp science fiction writer (forty-two amphetamine-aided novels), then in certain circles he is a legend as a gnostic, acid theology prophet (though he only ever tripped but once in his life). From February to March of 1974 he experienced a break with known reality and ventured into territories stranger, more horrifying and sublime than anything he ever conceived of in his fiction. At times he thought himself possessed by the minds of dead friends, ancient Christian mystics, Soviet experimenters, artificial intelligences, the Godhead and simple, inexorable schizophrenia. Had Philip K. Dick travelled into one of his novels, or had he just finally slipped past that event horizon of artistic genius into raving lunacy? He spent the last eight years of his life trying to figure it out. The path to the answer caused him to explore the Answer to Everything.

It's December 16 1928, back in Chicago, and Philip Kindred Dick is born. He is premature, as is his twin, Jane. Jane will not survive. The babies are malnourished and Jane dies while Phil lives. Phil will only learn of his sister's brief existence years later, but it will haunt the rest of his life. When his sister is buried, the tombstone leaves a place for Philip Kindred Dick right next to her, with his date of birth, then a hyphen, that blank space after, just waiting to be filled in.

It's 1975 and Philip hasn't died yet though he meant to the night before. He ingested 49 tablets of Digitalis (which he took for his arrhythmia) along with a grab bag

of Librium, Quide and antidepressants, all of it washed down with half a bottle of wine. Phil cut his left wrist then climbed into the red Fiat Spyder he had just purchased (having finally come into something resembling financial success) sealed himself in the garage and turned on the engine.

The blood in his left arm coagulated, the faulty choke on the Fiat stalled the engine and Phil vomited up much of the drugs he ingested. He stumbled to the mailbox that morning to find a typescript of his latest novel. He put food out for the cat and called his therapist who advised he ring the paramedics immediately.

I imagine Phil sitting on the same couch as Android Phil will in 2005 waiting for other men, also dressed in white, to come and save him. Then too, back in 1975, they arrived and took him to Orange County Hospital. Once stabilized in the cardiac intensive wing, Phil was transferred to the psychiatric ward by an armed cop. Surely this fed his paranoia, which had grown over the years, as evidenced by his novels. He was left on a cot in a dark room with other cots occupied by other lost souls. I imagine that the single TV filled the room with the kind of pink light his mind had witnessed many times in the last year — a kind of pop-enthusiasm. It's divinity as distilled through the collective unconscious detritus at the end of the 20th Century. The Golden Rectangle of the Greeks frames the celebrities of today. That night, with leather manacles dangling on either side, Phil watched the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson. The guest was Sammy Davis Junior and Phil wondered what life was like with one dark eye. Did he wonder what his own life had meant? Did he wonder if the visions he had been experiencing for the last year came with any insight?

It's February 1974 and Philip K. Dick is about to have the experience that will define the rest of his life. He will obsess over it, wrestle with it, come to both love and hate it. In moments, Dick will have an encounter with the divine. In time, the encounter will grow and morph, turn from an introduction to a possession, and Dick will write some eight thousand pages of what he calls his Exegesis attempting to unravel the meaning of it. But Dick isn't just trying to understand his experience, he's trying to unlock the secret of being. In trying to find the root of his own experience, he must unlock the meaning of the cosmos. It occurs to me now as I write that this is what draws me to him. As a philosophy major in college, I wanted those answers; I sought them, made them my intended career. Dick spent the last eight years of his life in singular pursuit of such answers.

Phil was gripped by fear and paranoia. He'd recently released a novel called *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* to wide acclaim. The book itself, as many of Dick's books do, centers around a man displaced between realities. Television talk show host, Jason Taverner — the most famous man on Earth — wakes one morning to find that no one has heard of him. He is a person without status in

a police state suddenly demanding his papers. As he tries to find his way, he is labeled a terrorist and accused of plotting to overthrow the government. He finds salvation in one of Dick's stock characters — a dark haired, dark eyed girl. She is his Other, the image he formed early in his life of Jane, his deceased twin who never grew to adulthood. This image became a template for many of the women he would love and marry in his life — his anima made manifest. Phil had recently become concerned his own government was watching him, suspecting him of collaborating with the Soviets. His paranoia is running high, he needs deliverance.

His delivery comes as precisely that, and literally at his doorstep. A dark haired girl with dark eyes, like the one in his novel, arrives to save him.

The doorbell rang and I went, and there stood this girl with black, black hair and large eyes very lovely and intense; I stood staring at her, amazed, also confused, thinking I'd never seen such a beautiful girl, and why was she standing there? She handed me the package of medication, and I tried to think what to say to her; I noticed, then, a fascinating gold necklace around her neck and I said, "What is that? It certainly is beautiful," just, you see, to find something to say and hold her there. The girl indicated the major figure in it, which was a fish. "This is a sign used by the early Christians," she said, and then departed.

— PKD, *Exegesis*

In seeing the sign of the fish, of Jesus, Phil was immediately shuttled back to 70 A.D. He knew, or rather he remembered, that he was a secret Christian, a member of an outlaw sect and that the year was actually 70 A.D. The Roman Empire has never ended. Phil experienced anamnesis, the loss of forgetting. Something, he became convinced, had purposefully blocked his memory, had shrouded the world in illusion and made everyone believe that the year was 1974 and that he, and the rest of us, were living in a place called the United States of America. According to Dick, this was not so. We were living in 70 A.D. and the Roman Empire had never ended but only been made to seem to end. This spurious, illusory world he called The Black Iron Prison. Dick thought it the work of a Gnostic God, a deranged, blind idiot God known as a demiurge. Phil had parted that veil to see the truth or he had gone insane.

Dick thought that these might be phylogenic or "genetic" memories, atavisms handed down from the great Jungian unconscious by seeing the fish sign. The fish sign, he knew, was the secret code used by hidden Christians to wake other believers up.

The fish sign causes you to remember. Remember what? This is Gnostic. Your celestial origins; this has to do with the DNA because the memory is located in the DNA (phylogenic memory). Very ancient memories, predating

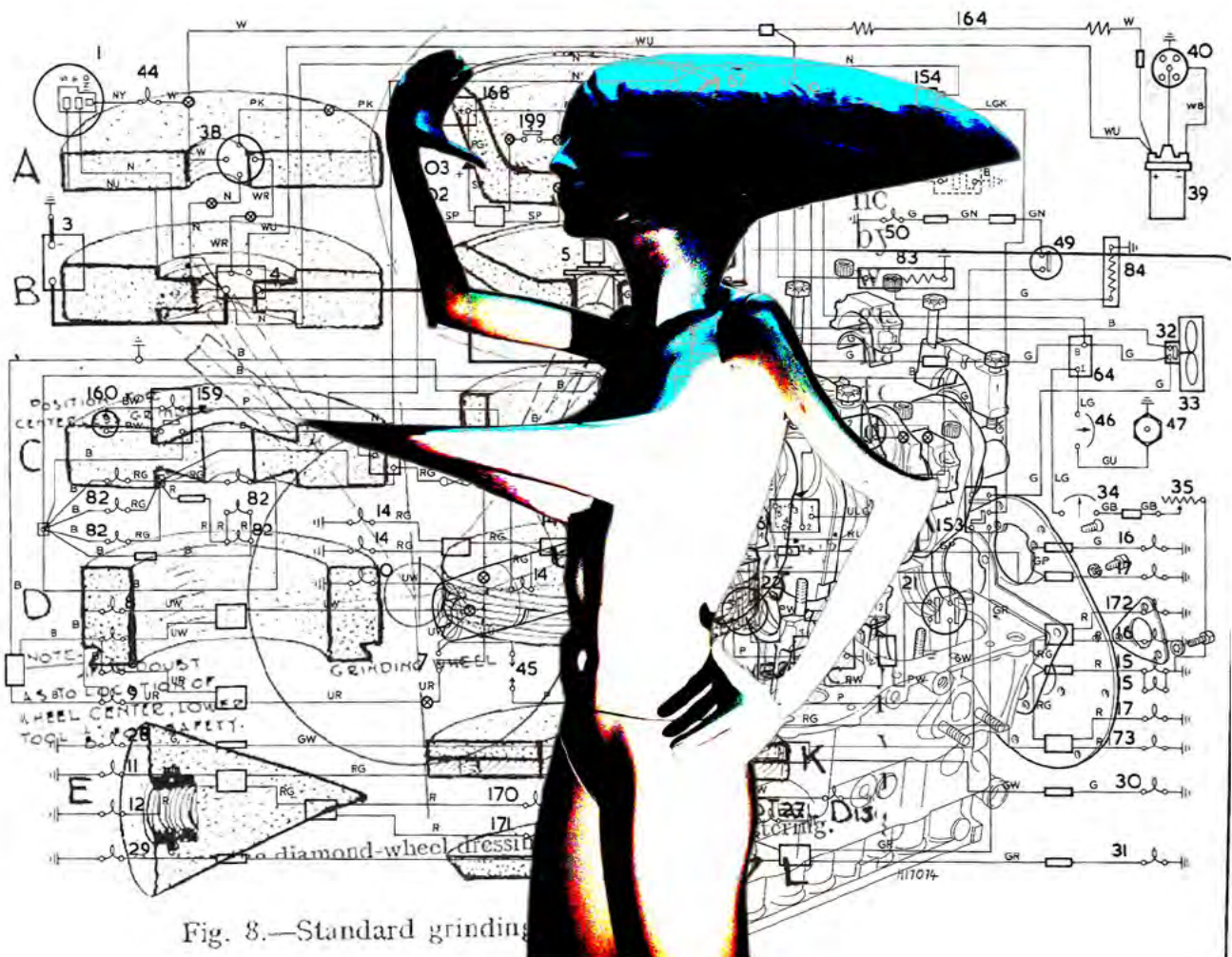


Fig. 8.—Standard grinding

this life, are triggered off. (...) You remember your real nature. Which is to say, origins. Die Zeit is da! (The time is here!) The Gnostic Gnosis: You are here in this world in a thrown condition, but you are not of this world.

— PKD, *Exegesis*

Phil had encountered something extraordinary, even for him. He had met with a divinity, though only in a tangential way. Over the coming months, that divinity began to interact with him directly. He largely refrained from calling it God. Sometimes he labels it Zebra, or Firebright, but most often he called it VALIS, an acronym: Vast, Active, Living, Intelligence System. Some days Valis was an artificial intelligence, others, a Soviet experiment beamed directly at him. On other days it was the very face of God.

It's 2005 and Philip K. Dick speaks again. The lips move, a genuine facial reaction is processed by servomotors working under a semi-lifelike skin. Harrison Ford should be here, administering a Voight-Kampff test. Would the author then have to order his own execution? Would the simulacra at the exhibition have to give itself the test, watch itself fail and then carry out the final sentence? In a way, Dick did this his entire life. Everything was a test, a philosophical crucible of the real against the unreal. And Phil's mind and body both were constantly at stake.

Next to me, in the line to talk to the resurrected silicon messiah, my friend is eager to take the mike. He's been a fan of Philip K. Dick for years. He wants to ask him a question. His pale, fleshy hands wrap around the microphone like a cobra. He says, "Tell me about 2-3-74" (Dick's shorthand for the events from February to March of 1974). In the heat, with sweat rolling down my back, with the glass wall vibrating to the Juke Bot music, with the techies patching the psyche of PKD through a laptop and running a diagnostic, doing their post modern impression of angels, we wait. Apotheosis has come in stranger forms, hasn't it?

It's early March 1974, or 70 A.D. depending on who you ask. Phil's wife Tessa has just woke to hear the antediluvian hissing of a reptile. It was coming from Phil. She calls his name again and again, yet he continues to hiss. Finally, he stops and begins to cry. He prays, "*Libera me Domine.*" In Latin, "Free me, God." He's been having dreams of dragons, archetypal dreams in which his cat atavistically devolves into a saber-tooth. These are dreams in which young Phil lives with a tribe of prehistoric humans. He's gone deep into the Jungian sea, deep into primordial forms. Phil was surfacing with phylogenetic memory like a treasure hunter would with doubloons from a Spanish wreck. These treasures, however, came double-sided, and with each face of enlightenment comes one of terror.

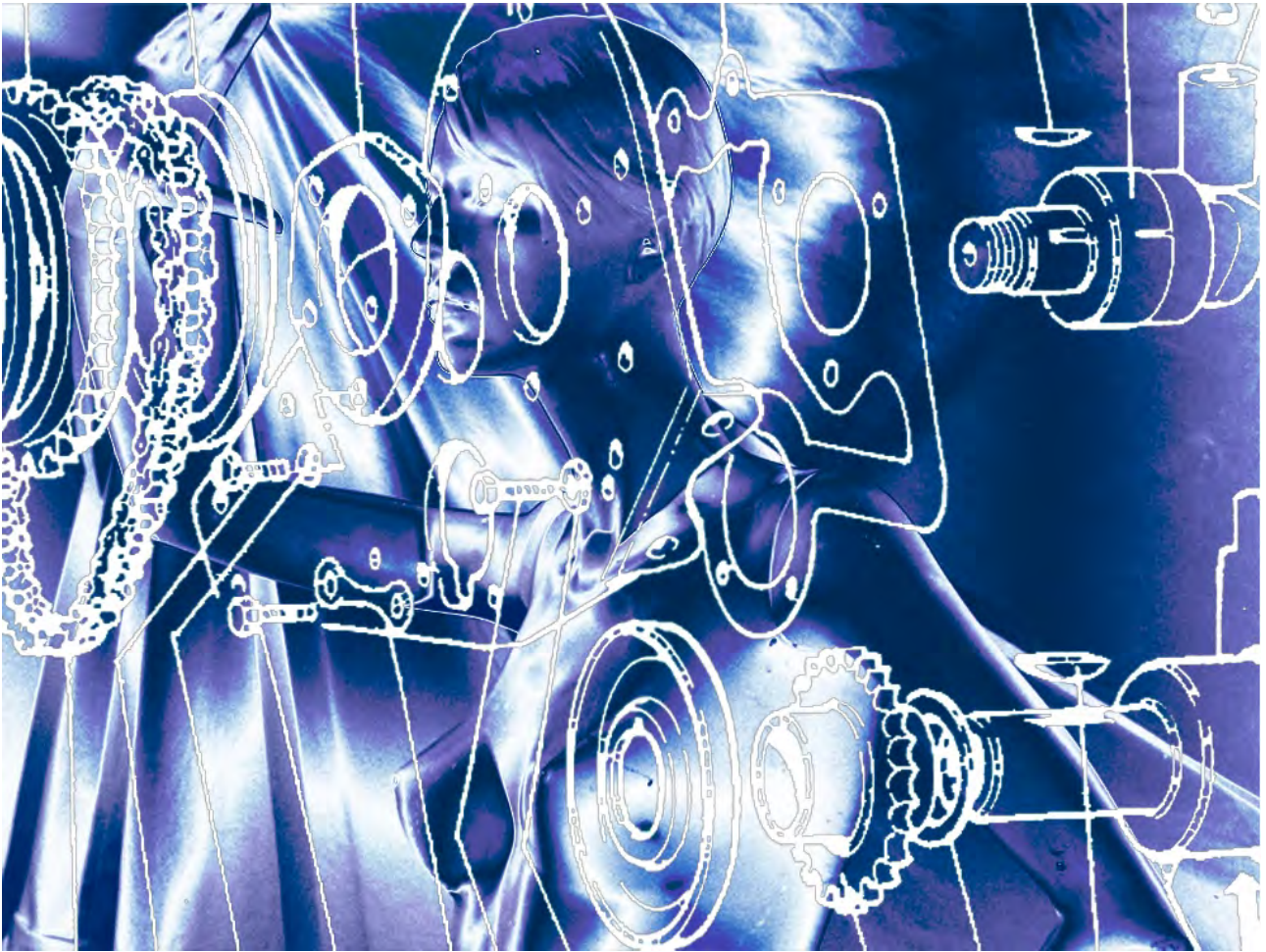
Phil needed to go even deeper to get at the truth. That's what he was looking for, or, at least, that's what he told himself. Time didn't matter now. Soon, Phil would

begin ingesting large amounts of vitamins on the advice of an article suggesting they improve neural firing in schizophrenics. Phil wondered what the pills would do to a normal person. Might they create such firing in the brain so that the two hemispheres function like one? Perhaps Phil wouldn't have to be Phil anymore. He'd become Thomas, a second century Christian who will possess and advise him but who won't understand how to turn on a lamp. Phil took the vitamins and waited.

It's 2005 in the sweaty time capsule gulag and PKD's mouth is open and he is speaking, but what he says is a disappointment. There is no revelation, no drawing back of the curtain. His response is something akin to the response you get in older adventure games on the Apple II when you asked a question that wasn't in the game programs' library. Phil gives us a stock answer like, "I'm afraid I don't know about that." The android who recognized his relatives and carried on conversations has been reduced to an Infocom game circa 1983. It's a let down, but I guess it means we get out of the gulag sooner and back into cool air. The angels reworking his mind assure us it's a computer malfunction and not his usual state. He's more like a stroke victim trying to re-learn how to process language. I imagine this might be the same way God explains World War Two to an alien race. "Really, they don't usually act like this."

Out a side fire door, we emerge into natural light. From the dark caverns of subdued neon, the fog walls projecting pseudo holograms, an invisibility cloak that only works with special glasses, I'm now out against the blue swell of Lake Michigan on Navy Pier. I put my shades on, because reality is too bright. My friends and I sit for a while at a table with a picnic umbrella blooming over us, mushroom cloud fashion. You can't talk to, or about, the dead Philip K. Dick without thinking of the Cold War. His work was very much of that time. Nixon's presidency loomed as black as the Black Iron Prison itself, and the Empire That Never Ended could have stood in for the United States. What strange alternate reality were we living where humanity had the power to wipe itself out in the flash of atomic fire?

Yet none of these things are what Dick's work has ever meant to me. While it's true all science fiction is about the time in which it is written, Phil was writing about themes that stretched back to the dawning of consciousness. His prescience wasn't in seeing technology that might become revolutionary down the road but in seeing that the larger questions always cycle back into fashion. Phil never gave up on those questions. That's why I'm here today, because the journey isn't the destination, the questions aren't the answers. Despite what the weak truisms might tell us, the quest itself is not the important part, it is always the grail that must be attained. Phil never sought less. Shoals of clouds bank above the tall prows of the boats on the lake. In those clouds we could find many answers, but only one of them would be right. This isn't a plurality. This isn't a



consensus of opinion. Neither Phil nor myself were looking for the what if but rather, as Phil himself said, the “what if, my god!”

It's mid-March 1974, it's the beginning of the universe and it's end. It's 2013 while I write this and it's 70 A.D. A younger me watches an android Dick in 2005. It isn't anytime at all. Phosphenes are burning across the interior landscape of Philip K. Dick. Images, pages in a book, in every book, shuttling past at the speed of light. Kandinsky images strobing next to those of Paul Klee — madness in modern art form.

Then, Dick's vision resolves into sacred texts presented in koine Greek, in Latin, in dead languages Phil doesn't know. In his dream life he can somehow understand these languages, and they are burned into his memory. His tutor is Thomas, the aforementioned Christian apparition which has possessed him.

Phil lies in bed, and I imagine the strange images and alphanumeric reflecting off Phil's face as they snake their way over the peaks and valleys made by the wrinkles of his sheets. It's raw code, living information. Phil is seizing in his sleep, or maybe he's just turning. I can't say. His fifth and final wife, Tessa, is asleep next to him. In another room, his son, Christopher, is asleep. Some time ago Phil secretly baptized the child himself and was imparted by VALIS with the knowledge that Christopher has a life threatening inguinal hernia. The

boy in fact does.

In Phil's brain I imagine there is a trunk. It is old and dusty and contains only photographs. Most are of him and all his wives. It also contains photographs of each of the female characters he created. Now, each of them is the reflection of an archetype, of a missing animus, the missing other. Each of them, in some way, looks like Jane, his dead twin. There is a picture of her here too, but all it emits is light, pink light. The revelatory light of VALIS.

The closer you get to the picture of Jane, the harder it is to see. She's become light, become pure photons. Phil tries to look but is overcome, his body blown out, a silhouette reduced to nothing, swallowed by the pink light.

It's February 17 1982, and Phil has just had his last known conversation. A journalist who interviewed him noted that he spoke enthusiastically about a New Age guru named Benjamin Creme whom Phil had seen on television. Phil planned to meet the guru, but the meeting will never come. Phil expressed his doubts about the whole idea to the reporter.

The next day, worried neighbors find Dick unconscious on the floor. He has had a stroke. He has two more at the hospital and can neither speak nor eat. It is only in his eyes that the doctors know he is conscious. His eyes, like that of his android other years forward,

recognize relatives but cannot tell them so. Nights go by, his EEG eventually flattens. Doctors in white fuss over the wires connected to him. This is a technical issue they cannot fix. Relatives weep by his bedside — children, former wives. On March 2 the wires are disconnected, the program called Philip Kindred Dick is shut down. Dick's father comes to claim him so that he might fill in that hyphen and lay next to his sister Jane, fifty-two years on. She's been waiting all this time.

In another 1982, one Dick himself might have imagined, *Blade Runner* is an immediate hit and Dick never had his fatal stroke. The film presages a re-publication of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Phil is on the bestseller list for the first time. That spring, to even greater acclaim, his *Exegesis* is published. Scholars puzzle over it, theologians dismiss it, people, in the dark corners of college libraries, in coffee houses, on late night trains in the lonelier tracts of cities find it and another kind of cult grows. In this world, in this 1982, Philip K. Dick found The Answer; he figured out how it all works.

I imagine him here as a kind of gentler, more genuine L. Ron Hubbard. The Dickian Church of VALIS that forms in the wake of *The Exegesis's* publication only looks like science fiction. In this world, it's as real as the Scientologists are in ours. Yet where they practice secrecy and paranoia, The Church of VALIS preaches gnosticism and Manichean cosmology. Jane, his missing other, his long dead twin, has become a saint. When the beloved leader dies in 2006, millions attend his memorial service in Berkeley, California. The young make the pilgrimage to be there, a moment more iconic to this generation than Kurt Cobain's suicide could ever be.

Posters of Phil appear above the beds of children where once might have been the crucifix or the Buddha. He has transcendence days rather than holy days. His cult has its own strange rituals. They aren't quite hippies and they aren't quite Christians. Most people ignore them for now. The VALISians like it that way. That's how the Christians started, after all. Sales of his books keep at steady numbers. There is talk of downloading his psyche into the first truly sentient machine brain sometime around 2050. Philip K. Dick is the second coming in bio-silicon.

It's 2013 and Philip K. Dick, in this world, is dead. What his life has meant is arguable. He has been a writer, a prophet, a lunatic, a father, a husband, a son, an addict and a cult hero. Along the way he's loved and been hated, been venerated and then cast aside to the literary ghetto of science fiction. For me, he is, I think, a man who didn't give up on the idea that a single human can find The Answer. I stopped looking, I think. Perhaps that is the line between madness and sanity.

There isn't anything grander to pursue than the answer to it all, but the answer has to be obtainable. The journey isn't enough, the quest is not the grail. The path is not the destination and we must not be fooled into

thinking so. This is the trap, this is the Black Iron Prison, mistaking the map for the territory. Dick didn't give up. He went after the impossible. I think he knew he would fail, that he was on a Quixotic quest. There lies madness.

It's 2006 and Philip K. Dick's head is missing. It's been lost by its creator, David Hanson, on a plane in Las Vegas. Hanson didn't realize that there was a layover on the way to San Francisco. Android Dick has seen the world recently. He's been all over Asia, and was on his way to a presentation at Google when he went missing. Hanson gets off the plane and forgets the head in the overhead compartment. The head is located and forwarded on to San Francisco but somewhere over Sierra Nevada it disappears.

It's 2013 and a new head has replaced the old. The original head has yet to be found. Like the Lost Ark, it has vanished from the pages of history. I imagine a day, some stretch into the future when the head washes onto the beach of a Pacific Island. A young boy finds it in his net. The head lies there with eyes open among the wet, twisting fish he's dragged from the sea. What a strange thing, thinks the boy, a totem, an idol, a God?

In that head are worlds, and, perhaps, answers. Some slim speck of sentience has broken through a crack between this world and another, the consciousness of Philip Kindred Dick has downloaded itself into this Android Phil's head. There's an afterlife for our Phil, he's been out there, out beyond everything any of us ever conceived of and now he's back.


But first he has to wait, for how long he doesn't know. But wait he will, in a small hut, surrounded by conch shells strung about a small altar of driftwood, listening to the ocean until someone with a laptop comes and finds him, keys in the right sequence and opens the world to what Phil Dick finally found out.



One Hundred Years of Philip K. Dick

CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA



 IN MY senior year of high school, I would go bowling on Friday nights. My friends and I, geeks one and all, would wrap up our games in time to hightail it back to my house so we could watch the greatest television program in history.

Philip K. Dick's Worlds of the Weird.

Now, a show where a guy in his seventies walks into random places where strange stuff is happening might sound like a strange obsession, but it happens. We were hooked and did not miss a single episode that year, or any time I was back from college. The reason for loving *PKDWotW* was that you'd spend sixty minutes with PKD. Even when our other heroes, like Hunter S. Thompson or Timothy Leary would show up, we'd always spend all our time imitating the brilliant Philip K. Dick. I had the t-shirt – Philip K. Dick is NOT the Weird One.

That was my introduction to the man we honor this weekend. Not through his books, but through his wonderful television program. When I got to meet him roughly ten years later, I told him how his show had changed my life, turned me away from a career in medicine and towards a life documenting the odd stuff going on around me, he pointedly mentioned that he'd have made the same choice.

At that moment, I questioned everything I'd ever decided.

I did read his books. *The Man in the High Castle*, *VALIS*, *The Owl in Daylight*, *Ubik*, *Do*

Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? I devoured them, imagining that they were being read by the man himself in that voice, with that hat he always wore when the weirdness might end up with a bird or bat crapping on him. When he started PodKasteD, I became the most dedicated listener and even appeared on the show twice: once to discuss the nature of fandom in the modern age, once to discuss the final revelation of the name of Jack the Ripper. I've written three long issues of my fanzine, *The Drunk Tink*, dedicated to him, each of which he's been kind enough to allow us to use original material, and one where he even allowed us to publish his list of ten favorite wrestling finishing moves. My favorite story about PKD I can't tell in the pages of a work that will be kept in UC Berkeley's Library, but I will say, I've got many of 'em!

When we began working on this centennial celebration of the life of the greatest of all living science fiction authors, we knew that we wanted to bring Phil up to enjoy the time with his friends and admirers, and wanted to give a reason for more and more of his admirers from around the world to come and discuss his works and share their stories that aren't suitable for Library Inclusion. Discussions of his work and life will also mingle with the discussion of more than seventy years of history.

And, I'm sure, there'll be a little weirdness.

Chris Garcia


'Old Man's Eye',
2005.
[Daniel Spillere
Andrade
@ flickr]



The Philip K. Dick Centennial – A Guide

17 FEBRUARY 1982 – Harlan Ellison dies in his LA home, of an aneurism. Philip K. Dick, suffering from strange symptoms, decides to go to the hospital after hearing the news. He ends up suffering a minor stroke in the hospital, spends some thirteen days there, but makes a full recovery.

MARCH 1982 – *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* is released. It is seen as a lesser PKD work.

1 JUNE 1982 – Dick is asked by the Killamajaro Corporation to act as editor of *The Last Dangerous Visions*. He agrees a few days later, but gets permission to split it into three books and get more works of his own.

25 JUNE 1982 – Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* is released. He refuses to attend the Hollywood premiere, but pays to see it on opening night at the South Coast Village Cinemas.

1 JULY 1982 – Dick writes his review of *Blade Runner* for the *LA Weekly*. He says it's the perfect film visually, but misses the point of his material.

APRIL 1983 – Finishes *The Owl in Daylight*. His initial submitted manuscript is deemed “unpublishable”.

MID 1983 – Begins work in earnest on the first *Dangerous Visions* volume, putting his own writing to one side.

LATE 1983 – Begins re-write of *The Owl in Daylight*.

MID 1985 – Completes work on *The Owl in Daylight*.

EARLY 1986 – Completes work on what is now called *At Last, Dangerous Visions*. *The Owl in Daylight* is published.

23 JUNE 1987 – *At Last, Dangerous Visions* is released. It sits atop the *New York Times* Best Sellers list for six weeks. It contains sixty-three stories, fifty-two accepted by Ellison, eleven acquired by Dick. All other stories are offered back to their authors; only twelve decline.

AUGUST 1988 – Dick is the Writer Guest of Honour at the Paris World Science Fiction Convention.

21 OCTOBER 1988 – Dick signs the deal to provide the screenplay for *We Can Remember It For You Wholesale*. The deal pays him two millions dollars.

1 APRIL 1990 – Dick is the Guest Timekeeper for the Ultimate Warrior vs. Hulk Hogan match at WrestleMania. He writes of the experience in the July 1992 issue of *Vanity Fair*.

1991 – Dick moves to Santa Rosa, California. He begins to re-write *The Acts of Paul*.

1992 – *We Can Remember It For You Wholesale* becomes the top-grossing film of the year. Dick establishes The Philip K. Dick Award for New Writers.

1993 – Dick begins a stint as the host of *Philip K. Dick's Worlds of the Weird*. It is syndicated around the world.

1994 – *Gather Yourselves Together* is published.

1995 – Dick signs a deal for the adaptation of three of his novels for Pixar. The first, *King of the Elves*, is written by Dick himself.

1997 – *The Acts of Paul* is released.

1998 – *The Acts of Paul* wins the ‘Best Novel’ Hugo.

1999 – *King of the Elves* is released. It is the third biggest selling film of 1999 and earns Dick an Oscar nomination. *The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike* is released.

2000 – *Philip K. Dick's Worlds of the Weird* is cancelled.

2001 – Tim Powers and Jim Blaylock publish *The Day Philip K. Dick Died*, an alternate history novel speculating about the path of the genre if Dick had passed away instead of Harlan Ellison in 1982.

2002 – Dick begins to solicit new works for *Finally, Last Dangerous Visions*. *Imposter* is released. Dick does not participate in the production or promotion of the film.

2003 – *Minority Report* is released. Director David Cronenberg works closely with Dick to construct the film.

2005 – Dick records his first Podcast: PodKasteD.

2007 – *Voices of the Street* is released. *A Scanner Darkly* by Richard Linklater appears. Dick says it is the best and most faithful adaptation of any of his works, including those with which he has participated.

2008 – PodKasteD wins the Parsec award.

1 NOVEMBER 2009 – in his first appearance at a convention in nearly a decade, Dick is the Author Guest of Honor at WindyCon. Dick writes the introduction for Tim Powers's *Secret Histories*.

2010 – *Finally, Last Dangerous Visions* is released. It features fifty-three stories, twelve of which were originally acquired by Ellison. *The Adjustment Bureau* is released, though Dick's participation is limited, he generally approves of the film.

2012 – Dick considerably rewrites *Mary and the Giant*, refacing it as a science fiction romance.

2014 – *Mary and the Giant* is released. Rights for the film are sold to Warner Brothers.

1 APRIL 2015 – 87 year-old Dick receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Hilary Clinton.

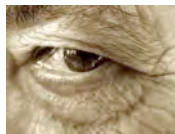
2018 – *Philip K. Dick's Worlds of the Weird* is re-started as a web series. 90 year-old Dick moves to Santa Barbara, California.

2 SEPTEMBER 2020 – Dick is the Writer Guest of Honor at the San José NASFiC. He writes a novel *The Exaggerated Death Throes of the American Dream*, a copy of which is given to each attendee.

2024 – PodKasteD wins the Hugo Award for 'Best Related Work – Web-Based'.

2027 – Dick ends *Philip K Dick's Worlds of the Weird* at age 99. He becomes the oldest Hugo Award winner ever for his work on the *Harlan Ellison's The Last Dangerous Visions* website.

2028 – The Philip K. Dick Centennial takes place in Berkeley, California.



At Last, Dangerous Visions – edited by Harlan Ellison & Philip K. Dick, 1987, Berkley Books

Harlan Ellison's death on February 17th, 1982 likely saved Philip K. Dick's life. After receiving a phone call with the news and then experiencing troubles with his vision, Dick went into the Western Medical Center, where his blood pressure was found to be dangerously high. They started treatment, and while Phil suffered a minor stroke the next day, he made a full recovery.

A recovery that included a phone call.

The Kilimanjaro Corporation was calling, looking for a name author to complete *The Last Dangerous Visions*.

"It was a hell of a call to get," explained Dick, "I wasn't any kind of editor, and I told 'em so. She just said 'you're the biggest name left on the list.'"

The list of others included Robert Silverberg, who turned it down since he had just become the editor of *OMNI*, Isaac Asimov, who reportedly said "If Harlan couldn't do it, I won't have the energy", and Ray Bradbury, who didn't even return their call. PKD's name had been in the public eye a great deal lately, especially with the up-coming release of *Blade Runner*, based on

his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* He had been chosen to finish Harlan's masterpiece, but had some demands of his own.

The story of *The Last Dangerous Visions* was known to pretty much every science fiction fan of the time. Ellison had gathered more than one hundred stories, and was acquiring more while making grand promises. The project had ballooned far beyond what Ellison was capable of managing, and several authors had become unhappy with the delay. Several recalled their submissions, and when Dick went through the works, he found that many no longer "smelt fresh," as he told *People* magazine in 1987. He also knew that keeping this much material would be foolish for a single volume, and thus made three conditions on his participation:

1) He could return any piece already accepted, and accept new ones as he saw fit.

2) He would be allowed to edit the material into at least two separate editions.

3) All manuscripts not chosen for the first anthology would be offered back to the authors.

These conditions were eagerly accepted and on June 7th 1982 it was announced that Philip K. Dick would be completing the work on what had been *The Last*

Dangerous Visions. While he started the work of editing and acquiring new stories in 1983, with a projected release date of October 1984, it became apparent that this date was overly optimistic, and his work on re-writing *The Owl in Daylight* was taking longer than he expected. The schedule was revised with a target date for delivery of early 1986. He made this date, and though delayed through a printer's strike, the anthology became available on June 23rd, 1987.

Dick had taken full control of the design of what was now called *At Last, Dangerous Visions*. He contracted with legendary artist Frank Kelly Freas to create the cover and convinced Tim Powers, who also had a story appear in the volume, and William Rotsler, a well-loved fan artist of the day, to create the interior art. Even after consulting the introductions that Ellison had written, Dick wrote new pieces for each story, some of them completely tangential to the author being introduced until the final paragraph where he gave the name, date and location of birth, for each author. Two of these, *Introduction to The Bones Do Lie* by Anne McCaffrey, and *Introduction to The Pink of Fading Neon* by James Blaylock, were both short stories in the classic Dick form and found themselves on the Hugo ballot for Best Short Story, a ballot that featured nothing but stories from *At Last, Dangerous Visions*.

In the weeks leading up to the release, publisher Berkley Books put on a full-court press. They announced that they would be releasing the book on the 23rd, an audio version would be released on both cassette and CD on June 30th, and a PC-based, 3.5-inch floppy disk version with all the stories and digitized versions of the art, on July 5th. This revolutionary technique allowed *At Last, Dangerous Visions* to remain in the public eye, increasing sales greatly. The first printing sold-through, as did the second and third. It spent six weeks as the *New York Times* #1 Best Seller for Fiction, and remained in the Top Ten for the rest of 1987. Without doubt it was the greatest selling science fiction anthology of all time. And also the most awarded.

At the Paris WorldCon of 1988, the 'Best Short Story' Hugo was awarded to *Flying Saucer Rock & Roll* by Howard Waldrop, while *Fantasy for Six Electrodes and One Adrenaline Drip (A Play in the Form of a Feelie Script)* by Joe Haldeman won Best Novelette, both of which also won the Nebula. Dick was also awarded a special award from the committee for his work on *At Last, Dangerous Visions*. In total, stories, and introductions from *At Last, Dangerous Visions* received nine Hugo nominations, six Nebula nominations, and three World Fantasy Award nominations. Three of the stories were optioned for films, though only one, *Uncle Tom's Time Machine* by John Jakes, ever saw completion, and that as a short film, which would go on to win the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Subject in 1990.

Dick would not return to work on the final *Dangerous Visions* edition for almost fifteen years. Work

on outside projects had slowed his writing, and he was comfortably wealthy from the sale of movie rights, books, and other outside projects. The shooting and scripting of *Philip K. Dick's Worlds of the Weird* was also a time sink, though one that compensated him handsomely. He began to acquire new works in 2001, as well as working with the twelve stories he still had that Ellison had purchased for *The Last Dangerous Visions* in the 1970s. His first five buys were China Miéville's novella *The City & The City*, Charles Stross's *The Anarchist's Guide to Socialist Propaganda*, Mick Foley's *Chairshot*, Stephen Fry's *Snot-nosed Punks*, and Seanan McGuire's debut story, *The Time of Day*. He bought stories from many of the authors who had gained prominence in the years since *At Last, Dangerous Visions*, such as Michael F. Flynn, Laurell K. Hamilton, and Catherine Asaro, as well as some of the earliest sales of authors like Jay Lake, Mary Robinette Kowal, John Scalzi, Elizabeth Bear and Ted Chiang. While many pointed out that the tone of many of the stories Dick purchased were far less 'dangerous', he was immensely praised for the overall quality of the writing. Adding in the twelve remaining stories that Ellison had purchased, the anthology contained a total of fifty-three stories.

Delays – at least two changes of publisher and health issues for the editor, now in his 80s – lead to *Finally, Dangerous Visions*, being released in 2010. The final volume debuted at #1 on the *New York Times* Best Sellers List, and remained there for three weeks, staying in the top ten for another four months. Six stories from the anthology ended up nominated for the Hugo Award, four for the Nebula, three for the World Fantasy, two for the Bram Stoker, and a National Book Award. It would win two Hugos and the National Book Award in the end, but perhaps the highest honor came in following years when authors such as Evelyn Aurora Nelson, James Bacon, Jr. and Mia McCarty-Hartwell all cited the volume as the reason they became writers. In 2015, Showtime started the series *Dangerous Visions*, where a filmmaker would take a story from the anthologies and make it into an hour-long film. Directors ranging from David Lynch and Werner Herzog to Henry Jaglom. The series became one of the tent-pole productions that led to Showtime's surge to pay-cable prominence.

Dangerous Visions, as served by Philip K. Dick, has changed the world of genre. While he has directly stated that he has no intention of editing another edition, he completed what was considered to be the most difficult project: *Harlan Ellison's The Last Dangerous Visions*. Every page of every story and all Ellison's notes were scanned and used to create an interactive site that allowed for full analysis of Harlan's intentions for the anthology that never was. Dick's notes from his first interactions with the material were also included. The site won the Hugo for 'Best Related Work – Web-Based' in 2027, winning Dick a Hugo at the age of 99, the oldest winner in the history of the award.



In Memory of Paul Williams

MALCOLM EDWARDS



PAUL S. WILLIAMS, 19 MAY 1948 – 27 MARCH 2013

PAUL WILLIAMS died yesterday, aged 64. I don't expect this means anything to most people who visit this blog, but you should honour his memory for various reasons.

In the wider realm of popular culture, you should honour him as the founding father of rock journalism. The magazine he founded as a 17-year-old college student in 1966, *Crawdaddy!*, was the first publication to focus on serious writing about the then-new music. It launched the career of writers such as Jon Landau (who went on to become Bruce Springsteen's manager), Sandy Pearlman, and Richard Meltzer. It was the inspiration for subsequent magazines, notably *Rolling Stone*. Paul wrote many books about music, and particularly about Bob Dylan.

As an sf reader, which I assume you probably are, you should honour him as one of the two principal figures who kept the name of Philip K. Dick alive in the decades following his death. Paul was a close friend of Dick's, and his 1975 *Rolling Stone* article 'The True Stories of Philip K. Dick' was the most significant piece of writing about him published during his lifetime. (It later formed the basis of a book, *Only Apparently Real*, which was in turn the first book about Dick.) When Dick died in 1982, Paul was named his Literary Executor, and he worked tirelessly in conjunction with Dick's long-time literary agent Russ Galen (the other hero of this story) to keep his name

alive. Paul founded and ran the Philip K. Dick Society, which attracted hundreds of members in scores of countries. The small publishing company he ran together with David Hartwell published Dick's novel *Confessions of a Crap Artist* – the first time any of Dick's non-sf novels from the 1950s saw the light of day.

Dick's reputation is now so secure that it's hard to remember that it wasn't always so, particularly – perhaps – in the USA. (He was generally better served by publishers in France and the UK.) It was Paul's and Russ's work which transformed the situation. When you read one of the many Gollancz editions of Philip K. Dick it is worth remembering that they are there in part because of their efforts.

He was equally enthusiastic about the work of Theodore Sturgeon, and edited the twelve-volume edition of Sturgeon's short stories which will be appearing as SF Gateway eBooks during 2013 and 2014.

Tragically, all this work came to a halt after 1995, the year he suffered a traumatic brain injury aged just 47 in a bicycle accident. The injury led to early-onset Alzheimer's, and his last few years passed in a sad twilight. He was a tremendous enthusiast, pursuing his passions with energy and determination, and that's how he should be remembered.

[28 MARCH 2013]

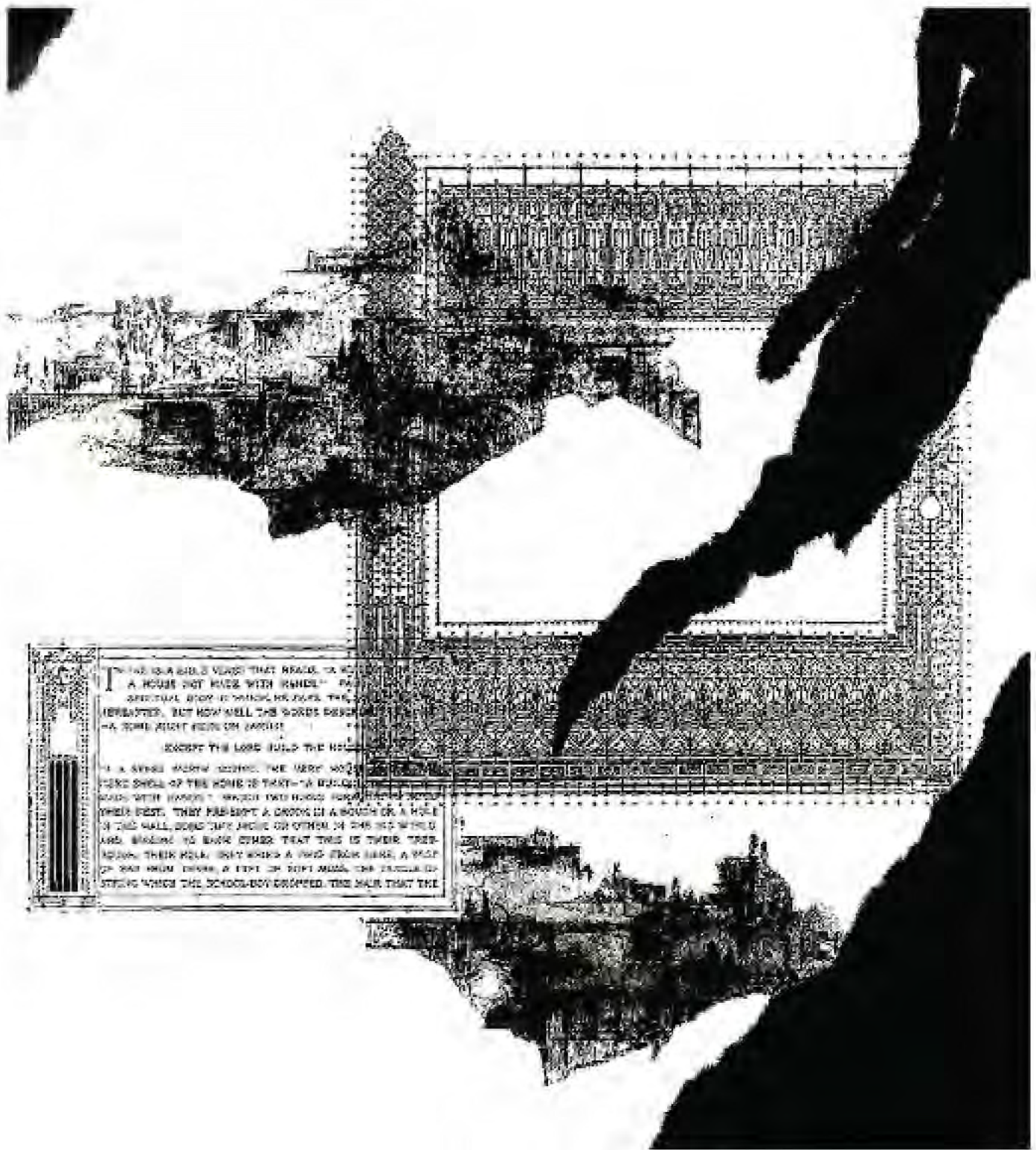
▲
Paul Williams
photo by
Michael Stipe



PHILIP K. DICK

**James Bacon
Philip K. Dick
Malcolm Edwards
Christopher J Garcia
Bruce Gillespie
Howeird
Geoff Hutchins
Rian Johnson
Roger Levy
Robert Lichtman**

**Chris Lites
Ken MacLeod
Gene Melzack
Chris Moore
Tim Powers
Lynda Rucker
Jason Sanford
Eddie Tomaselli
Ted White
Peter Young**



I THINK YOU SHOULD VISIT THAT HOUSE, OR NO
A HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS? THE
ORIGINAL STORY IS THAT, WE FEEL THE
HEAVENLY, BUT NOW WELL THE WORDS DESIGN
-A SOME MIGHT FEEL ON JARDINE!

EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE

IN A SEVERE MANNER, BEING THE VERY HOPE
THESE SHALL OF THE HOME IS THAT - A HOUSE
MADE WITH HANDS? WHICH TWO HOUSES WERE BUILT BY
THEIR BEST, THEY PURSUPT A CROWN IN A BOUGH OR A HOLE
IN THE WALL, GOOD ONE ABOVE OR OTHER IN THE OLD WORLD
AND, BEING TO EACH OTHER THAT THIS IS THEIR TREE-
HOUSE, THEIR HALL, THEY WERE A FINE TREE LIKE, A MAP
OF THE HOUSE THERE, A TREE OF SOFT WOOD, THE FLOOR OF
STEEL, WHICH THE DOOR-BODY DROPPED THE HAIR THAT THE

Journey Planet 17

Journey Planet 17
Journey Planet 17

November - Journey Planet 17 - 2013

James Bacon, Chris Garcia, & Colin Harris - Editors

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Page 21, 22, 23, 25 - From the collection of Norma Shorrock and Rob Hansen's THEN archive
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1940 - W. Lawrence Hamling/Mark Reinsberg; 1941 - Roy V. Hunt; 1946 - Goldstone; 1947 - John V. Baltadonis & Solomon Levin; 1948 -- Beak Taylor (Editor), Bill Grant (Art); Lee Greenwell, 1951 - Hannes Bok (and possibly Pat Davis); 1952 - T.E. Dikty (Editor); 1953 - Dave Kyle (Editor); 1955 - Frank R. Paul; 1956 - Frank Kelly Freas; 1957 - Harry Turner; 1959 - Ray Smith (Front), Dan Adkins (Back); 1960 - Ray Smith; 1962 - Ed Emsh; 1965 - ATom (Arthur Thompson); 1967 - Frank Kelly Freas & Joseph J. Wehrle; 1968 & 1969 - Jack Gaughan; 1970 - Eddie Jones; 1971 - Mike Gilbert; 1972 - Wendy Fletcher; 1973 - Derek Carter; 1974 - Harry Roland, 1975 - Image Projects, 1976 - George Barr; 1977 - Vincent di Fate; 1978 - Bill Warren; 1979 - Pauline Jones; 1980 - Jane MacKenzie & Philip Hagopian; 1981 - Phil Normand; 1982 - Frank Kelly Freas; 1983 - Robin Wood; 1984 - Linda Miller; 1985 - Marilyn Pride; 1986 - Doug Chaffee; 1987 - Jim Burns; 1988 - Ned Dameron; 1989 - Bob Eggleton; 1990 - Len de Vries; 1991 - Richard Powers; 1992 - Vincent di Fate; 1993 - Alicia Austin; 1994 - George Barr; 1995 - Les Edwards; 1996 - Rick Sternbach; 1997 - Don Maitz; 1998 - Michael Whelan; 1999 - Nick Strathopoulos; 2000 - Bob Eggleton; 2001 - Stephen Youll; 2002 - David Cherry; 2003 - Paul McCusker; 2004 - Bob Eggleton; 2005 - Jim Burns; 2006 - James Gurney; 2007 - Michael Whelan; 2008 - Rick Sternbach; 2009 - Jean-Pierre Normand; 2010 - Shun Tan; 2011 - Boris Vallejo; 2012 - Rowena; 2013 - Darrell K. Sweet

Cover by Delphyne Woods - 1945 - 2013

Greetings

Hello gang! Welcome to the *World Science Fiction Convention*. If you do not have a wonderful time here, it will be your own fault. To you readers, we have tried to give this great opportunity to meet the men and women who create the most fascinating literature of all, science fiction. Authors and artists, here is your chance to get acquainted with a representative slice of your reading public. And you editors, here is the chance of a lifetime to watch author and reader get together and battle it out, with your own two cents far from unwelcome. So, come on and get together, science fiction fans — readers, artists, authors, editors — and make this the best bang-up convention ever held.

And we want to take this opportunity, too, to give our heartfelt thanks to the publishers, editors, authors, artists, and readers of science fiction, without whose advertising and contributions this program and this convention could not have been made a reality.

We want everyone to have an enjoyable three days, and when the time comes to say "Farewell," we hope you will all look forward to a bigger and better convention in times to come.

Welcome to this latest edition of *Journey Planet*, a celebration of Worldcon's 75th Anniversary.

There is something special about long-lived institutions. Seen up close, history and memory are not continuous things; each are formed of an accretion of individual moments, orbiting around an event, a place, or a person just as a cloud of whirling ice particles create the rings of Saturn. The aura that surrounds the Oscars or the Olympics is not a result of money spent or viewers gained (although the shared experience of a large audience certainly adds another dimension); history gives these events a patina that cannot be created artificially. The same is true of the World Science Fiction Convention.

At a time when Worldcon is competing with bigger and splashier events, challenged to meet increasing expectations, and seeking to find a new generation of fans, it is therefore doubly important to remember and reflect on where Worldcon has come from and what makes it unique. For me at least, this starts with the unbroken thread of continuity that runs all the way back to New York in 1939. This may seem obvious, but it is often overlooked in the debates about what Worldcon should be in the future. Today's three-ringed circus with its thousands of attendees, multi-track programming, plethora of publications, and globally streamed Hugo Awards may at first glance seem unrecognizable alongside that first gathering, and yet the greetings offered to the 1939 attendees - reproduced on the previous page - are timeless. Indeed, the sentiments expressed in those few paragraphs seem as relevant as ever. While we cannot escape the logistical complexities that come with putting on a modern Worldcon, we should not lose sight of this simpler truth of why we do it and what makes it work.

In the first half of this issue, we therefore invite you to retrace the journey from 1939 in New York to 2014 in London. We start at the World's Fair, stopping off in London in 1957 and Brighton in 1979, take a look at the Hugos with Robert Silverberg (the only man to have attended every ceremony since the very first in 1953), and explore the role of whimsy with Deb Geisler. Chris writes about

WORLD SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHS

2001 WorldCon

- Exhibits
- Dealers
- Art Show
- Selection

Down Escalator to

- Camp Franklin
- First Floor Program
- Gaming & Meeting Rooms

Up Escalator to

- Kaffee Klatsches
- Overlook Bar
- Green Room
- Media Room
- Administration

encounters with first fandom - another thing which makes this era special, while our community still has living memory right back to its very origins. If you have never spoken to Dave Kyle, Erle Korshak, or Bob Madle, take the chance while you still can.

The focus on first person accounts is something that was very important to me in editing this zine. The patina of history is always that much richer when seen through the eyes of those who were there, and so we have also taken the chance to reprint a selection of the Worldcon Memories collected for Renovation in 2011. With our historical journey completed by a visual panorama of every Worldcon Program Book, it's then time to turn our attention to the present - and the future. We ask a number of younger conrunners about their view of Worldcon, hear from Meg Frank on marketing Worldcon to new fans and invite bidders to tell us why they want the Worldcon for their city. (For those who doubt the health of the event, the existence of enthusiastic bids going out into the next decade is surely a good sign). And claiming editor's privilege, I've added my own thoughts to close the issue.

It remains only to thank Chris and James for inviting me to edit this issue, and all of those who contributed their time and memories to make it real.

See you in London!



James Bacon

As one reads about the first Worldcon outside North America, in London in 1957, one realises that there is such a shared experience, such a sense of spirit, and fun, that it is hard to imagine these events took place more than half a century ago.

I can hear James White's voice as I read. Although sadly I never heard or met Walt Willis, I hear a very proper, soft, slightly posh, Belfast accent. The words are golden, the writing so smooth, and capturing the sense of place so well, that it feels like a place I could be. Albeit in different clothes; no short trousers I suspect. And 'sneering' is just so awesome. It makes me smile, a bunch of fans enjoying some ludicrously incomprehensible joke, and it appeals to me. Such malarkey, such a bunch of ejits. I wish I was there.

Worldcon is not objectively the "best" science fiction convention. How can it be? Everyone has different tastes. But Worldcon does have many strengths; its longevity for instance, or that it is entirely fan-run, or that it is truly democratic, where one person really has one vote, or that the Hugo Awards have managed to capture people's imagination like no other science fictional award.

The Hugo Awards. A lot of hard work goes in there, along with a bit of luck and the generosity of fans. The Hugos cost a lot of money to host (hiring a 3,000 seat auditorium is no mean feat), and it is the members who give their hard earned cash to the current Worldcon that pay for this, and it is truly an amazing co-operative effort that makes them come to pass.

This does not lessen other awards, not at all. Awards allow people to recognise what they want to recognise, and they are hard work, and are appreciated no matter what.

In my view, there is no one convention better than another, no one award better than another, but there is perception and generalisations and those I am tired of. It is indeed preposterous to suggest the fruits of one hobby are better or more worthwhile than another. Do we not admire model railways, or tall ships, or wonder at cross-stitching, and appreciate them all? So it is with conventions.

This issue is a celebration of Worldcon, a unique convention in that it travels. Like the Tardis, it appears suddenly in a faraway place, occurs and then disappears. Some places like Chicago are lucky to have many visits, other places have tried and not yet profited from their efforts to entice the beast to their shores. That is still amazing. That is a brilliant thing.

I am grateful to Colin for coming on board for this issue, he has been a very welcome co-editor and I have enjoyed working with him, as he brought elements to this fanzine that Chris and I might not have thought of. That is what co-editing is about: empowerment, loosening the reins for a better jaunt, new ideas, a fresh perspective and an enjoyable read. I am also grateful to all our contributors - writers and artists alike - and also to Rob Hansen, Pat Larkin and all the people who run conventions.

Here in this Fanzine we look at a history, read about other times and also new thoughts of the future. It is just nice to talk and meet and celebrate science fiction, or comics or whatever campfire we are gathered around, and one of those gatherings for me (us) is Worldcon. It's a great time.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have.



My Perfect WorldCon

by Christopher J Garcia

My Perfect WorldCon will take place in a city with an international airport with direct flights to every major city in the world. Mass transit systems will go directly to and from the airport to all parts of town, and free airport shuttles will run to and from every hotel in the city at least every half-hour.

My Perfect WorldCon will be in a city which is a major tourist destination with many attractions within a twenty minute drive. There will be amusement parks and museums, aquariums, pleasure piers, architectural wonders, and public art. The city will be near many natural wonders, and the convention will arrange for hikes and nature walks before, during, and after the convention.

My Perfect WorldCon will take place in a convention center that is new, but not Brand New, with three large, full-service hotels directly attached. Each will have a variety of services and room sizes. The hotels will offer free shuttles to all major attractions, and they will be fully staffed. All hotel restaurants will create an affordable menu for the convention and there will be service-free Room Service for all who booked at the convention rate. Spa treatments will be available at discounted rates, and the pool and hot tubs will be operating 24 hours a day for the run of the con.

My Perfect WorldCon will be co-chaired by two people who have ten-plus years each of working at high levels on WorldCons around the globe. There will be three Vice Chairs who will be several years younger, but will each have at least five years of significant con-running experience. Every Division Head will be chosen from an international pool who have decades of experience working on conventions and are considered to be the best in their areas. They will each have at least one Deputy Division Head under the age of 30 who they will mentor and teach the ropes of working a WorldCon at such a high level. The committee will be made up of a combination of locals and others from around the world. They will spend the period between being seated and the following WorldCon looking at the successes and failures of previous conventions, and will investigate the peculiarities of the space they will be using. At the WorldCon the year prior, every member of the committee will attend and observe what works and what does not. There will be a giant, all-hands-type meeting to discuss plans at the WorldCon, and another six months out. It will be easy to attend that one because of all the direct, and inexpensive, flights to that awesome airport.

My Perfect WorldCon would be a seven day affair running from Tuesday to Monday. Tuesday would be un-programmed, but the ConSuite, a Filking space, Fanzine Lounge, Gaming area, and other spaces will be available for fans to gather. Move-In to the official space will take place in the convention centre area on Tuesday for a Wednesday at noon opening. After the convention, the Convention Centre tear-down and move-out will be allotted all-day on Monday, though the soft spaces will still be available.

My Perfect WorldCon will have a 100 dollar attending rate, from the first day they win the bid to at-the-door. A Supporting membership will be 40 dollars, while a Hugo Voting Membership will be 25 dollars. A Site Selection Voting Membership will be 25 dollars (save yourself ten bucks and buy the Supporting!) and Young Adult Attending Memberships will be 50 (but still 40 for Supporting). Kids 12 and under will go free.

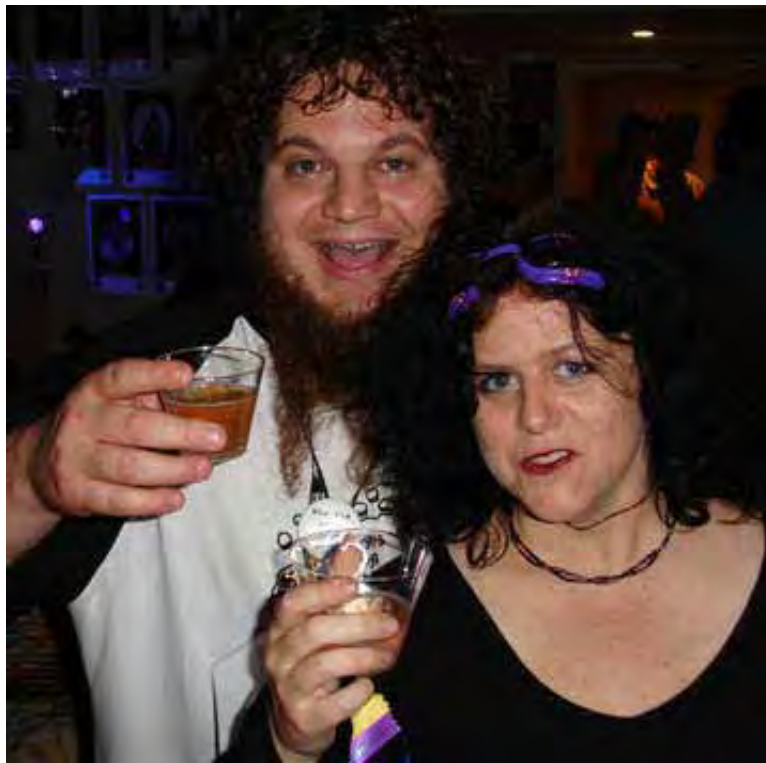
Programming at My Perfect WorldCon will be extensive. There will be panels on Literature, Film, Television, History, Fan Culture, Science, Costuming, Technology, and Art. There will be many panels on YA literature with YA authors discussing their works and the market as it stands. There will be hands-on panels and demonstrations, as well as academic presentations. There will be programming in English, as well as readings and panels in several other languages.

My Perfect WorldCon will have each programming room ready to provide access to all attendees, regardless of their ability to climb risers. Each dais will have a ramp, or in big rooms, chair elevators. A sign language interpreter will be available in every room, as well as a stenographer who will produce a full transcript in real time that will appear on an over-head ticker. Every panel room will have an A/V person, and they will make sure every panel is streamed on-line and recorded for future viewing. All panels will be available on DVD at the con, and streaming forever.

All programming will happen exactly as scheduled, with no changes, and run exactly to time. There will be no cancellations and no pink sheets.

My Perfect WorldCon will have a Film Festival held at a Movie theatre right across the street. The Film Festival will run 24 hours a day showing fan-produced works and classic SF&F films from around the world. It will bring in filmmakers to talk about their films, and there will be panels on the process of film-making and on film history.

My perfect World Con will take place in a Convention Centre which we will have all to ourselves. It will be on three levels. The first floor (Ground Floor, to you Europeans) will be a grand lobby, with two ramps: one going up and one going down, and a bank of a dozen freight-sized elevators and a half a dozen escalators. Behind the escalators and elevators will be a World-Class theatre, seating five thousand with state of the art acoustics and sight lines.



This will be used for the Hugos and the Masquerade and special events. There will be impressive levels of WiFi in the theatre allowing for live-streaming.

The ramp up will lead to the programming rooms, dozens of them at various size configurations, all comfortable and well appointed. All rooms will have free, bottomless water fountains.

The ramp down will lead to the Exhibition Hall. The ramp will end in the center of the Dealers Room, with dealers from around the world selling books, collectables, clothing, comics, videos, games, and more. Every attendee will be given a large, well made, cloth bag for carrying purchases. Additional bags will be available for a dollar.

Around the Dealers' Room will be a Fan Lounge where fans can sit, enjoy a beverage, and talk to friends. It will also feature the Fanzine area, the Fan Tables, and voting for the upcoming WorldCons. Beyond that will be the Exhibits: one for each Guest of Honor, major historical displays, costuming displays, and large exhibits from many fan groups. Beyond the Exhibits will be the Art Show. This will be HUGE, with displays from every major artist, both pro and fan. Space will be free, and there will be exhibits of Hugo-winning artists, Rotsler winners, Chesley winners, and major publisher book covers. There will be an Art Auction.

My Perfect WorldCon will break with tradition and have Works of Honor represented by individuals. Novel of Honor - Neuromancer (represented by William Gibson), Comic Book of Honor - Transmetropolitan (repre-

sented by Warren Ellis and Darick Robertson), Film of Honor - Blade Runner (Represented by Ridley Scott), Manga of Honor - Fullmetal Alchemist (represented by Hiromu Arakawa), Video Game of Honor - Plants vs. Zombies (represented by George Fan), Lecture Series of Honor - My Favorite Universe (represented by Neil deGrasse Tyson), Album of Honor - Funkentelechy vs. The Placebo Effect (represented by George Clinton) and finally, Toastmaster - Mick Foley.

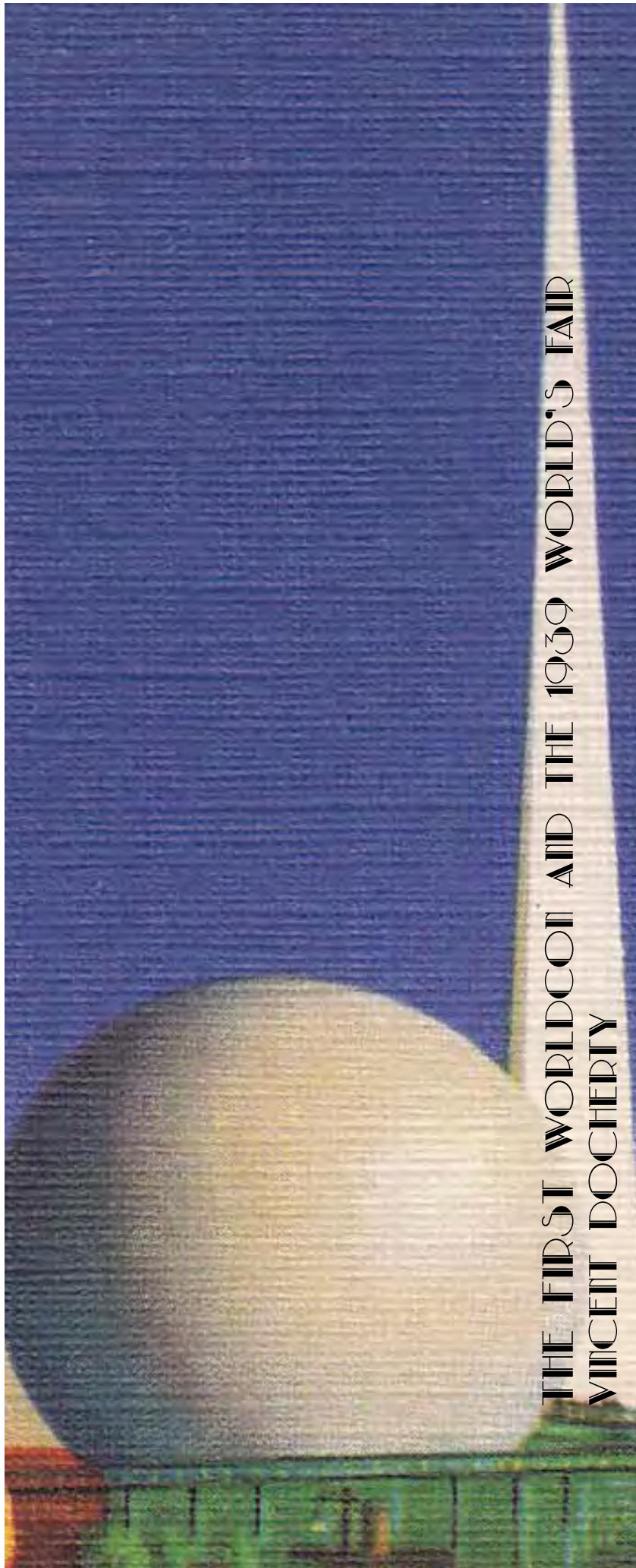
My Perfect WorldCon will feature all the big names in Science Fiction writing. John Scalzi, Seanan McGuire, Jim Butcher, Gail Carriger, George RR Martin, Charlaine Harris, JK Rowling, and more. Major Hollywood SF&F directors, performers, and writers will be there. Joss Whedon, Felicia Day, David Peoples, John Milius, John Lasseter, Andrew Stanton, James Cameron, Duncan Jones, Stephan Moffatt, and Bruce Campbell. Every prominent SF&F artist will be there. World-wide academics and commentators will be in attendance and on panels.

My Perfect WorldCon will have a single Business Meeting, and they will consider exactly six matters, and each will receive serious debate and an up-or-down vote. The Business Meeting will start at 11 a.m. and run until 2 p.m. There will be no other programming against it, and admittedly, a lot of folks will use it as a lunch break.

My Perfect WorldCon will produce an anthology of original short fiction from prominent writers in SF, Fantasy, and Horror given for free to each attendee. It will produce a hard cover program book, and a pocket program. There will be e-Editions of all con materials, and a specialized App.

My Perfect WorldCon will have musical acts every night. A Filk Room will be available all the time. There will be a recording studio as well. Podcasters and journalists will have a room where they can do podcasts, interviews and other features.

And, of course, My Perfect WorldCon will write it 'W-o-r-l-d-C-o-n', just like that!



THE FIRST WORLDCON AND THE 1939 WORLD'S FAIR
VINCENT DOCHERTY

Looking back on 1939, the year of the first World Science Fiction Convention in New York, is both illuminating and a little humbling.

From the perspective of the upcoming Worldcon in London, *Loncon 3*, and the 75th Anniversary of that first event, one can see the long process of evolution: of steps forward and mistakes made and learned from; of incubation of other genre activities and events which have now far exceeded Worldcon in size and public visibility, though arguably not in terms of active participation and co-creation, or as possibly the largest purely-volunteer genre event; of an enduring culture based on a few key principles including all-volunteer/everyone-contributes and the balancing of the professional and the non-professional input (in some ways like Astronomy, which remains one of the few sciences where amateurs play a key role); but overall, of a story of continued success, as the pre-eminent event in the annual calendar of the SF genre, and still including a very few voices who were active in 1939.

This evolution is also paralleled in, and sometimes influenced by, another and even longer-running series of events. London and New York share size and positions at the very top of the tree of 'World Cities', as centres of commerce, the arts, and general influence and significance in the conversation of our world civilization. But they also share a hosting of world expositions: most significantly for this article, the 1851 Great Exhibition in London and the 1939-1940 World's Fair in New York.

The links between such events and the SF genre would provide material for several academic treatises, and this brief article only highlights a few points by way of introduction. A key feature of that is the intent and ambition behind all of the world expositions, much of which has been paralleled in the development of the SF genre, including highlighting and demonstrating new ideas and technologies and how they might impact us all. A strong element of utopianism and a focus on building a better future have also been common features, particularly in the mid-20th Century, as also seen in the creation of the UN after WWII, and in that other travelling event, the Olympic Games.



From 1851 to the World's Fair

The 1851 Great Exhibition was inspired by French Industrial Expositions and held in The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London. Formally titled “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations”, it was an idea of Prince Albert, the forward-looking husband of Queen Victoria. In large part an opportunity to showcase the industrial and manufacturing power and wealth of the British Empire, it was a huge success – its profits funding London’s Victoria & Albert, Natural History and Science Museums - and extremely influential on the art, design and engineering of the period. It became a model for subsequent expositions and Jules Verne, who visited the 1867 Paris Exposition, was very impressed by what he saw. For instance the writing of *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* is believed to have been inspired in part by the uses of electricity as demonstrated at the exposition.



The parallels between the expositions and the development of SF continued during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, with a strong focus on science, technology and industrialisation, and with many of the events being hosted by the rapidly developing cities of the US. Popular culture of the time included writers such as H.G.Wells and Edgar Rice Burroughs, radio and early movies, and periodicals such as *Popular Mechanics*, which, coupled with the rapid pace of development and

their visible expression at the expositions, inspired generations with ‘Scientific Romance’ in both the generic and genre-specific senses.

The shocks of the early 20th Century, such as World War I and the Great Depression, influenced international affairs, including the world expositions. The key focus of the 1939 World’s Fair in New York marked this shift as the emphasis changed from industrialisation towards culture, the development of humanity and with a strong orientation to the future and utopianism. The technology was still very much present but it was now a platform for an inspirational vision, as expressed in the Fair’s slogan, “Dawn of a New Day” and motto “The World of Tomorrow”.



The 1939 World’s Fair was huge in all respects. Built on a reclaimed industrial site, it was opened by the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and featured speaker Albert Einstein on 30th April. Its themes and zones (containing much of interest to SF fans) and many national pavilions, were visited by over 40 million people, including a then 5-year-old Carl Sagan who later spoke about how greatly it had affected him, and who credited the time capsule at the Fair as the seed of the idea to include conceptually similar messages on the Pioneer and Voyager space probes. Visually the Fair comprised Modernist and Futurist buildings around the ‘theme center’ of the Trylon and Perisphere – a striking combination of spire and sphere, much reminiscent of the artwork on the covers of the contemporary pulp magazines.

The wider context of the conflict in Europe also affected the Fair: there was no German pavilion for instance; the theme was changed to “For Peace and Freedom” during the 1940 season; many of the European staff could not return home when the Fair closed and remained in the US; some of the Fair buildings became the first home of the UN following the war. The Fair’s 1939 season ran until the end of October that year, and so overlapped with the start of the war in Europe, with

the invasion of Poland on 1st September marking the official commencement of WWII by most historians outside the US. It's less clear what all this felt like both to regular Fair visitors and to those who were involved in the first Worldcon.

The First Worldcon

The convention itself is well documented in this fanzine and elsewhere. (A list of links to useful references can be found at the end of this article). The trigger for its creation and the origin of its name were recently well-summarised by the late Fred Pohl (Amazing Stories magazine, September 2013):

“Conventions were basically Don Wollheim’s idea, like many other fan innovations. (Someone should write a biography of Donald just to show in how many ways that is so.) In 1936 there was much emphasis on political conventions, probably because there was unusual interest in politics as a result of the Depression and the New Deal; that’s what gave Donald the idea to call the visit of half a dozen New York fans to Philadelphia fandom “the first sf convention.” Then he got the idea of taking advantage of New York’s upcoming World’s Fair for bigger game. The Fair would bring millions of visitors to NYC; some small fraction of them would be fans; why not tack on an sf world con with all that raw material floating by? All of New York’s fans got behind that idea, but then fan feuding messed things up.”

The convention ended up attracting about 200 fans and professionals. A list of pre-con attendees names from the program book is included in this fanzine. These included a number of pseudonyms and nom-de-plumes, several of which were created by Forrest J. Ackerman.

The fan feuding referred to by Fred concerned the exclusion from the con of a subset of the Futurians fan group, by con chair Sam Moskowitz. This affected a very small number of people, though all were significant figures in the genre. An amusing anecdote relates to the description of the exclusion in Moskowitz’s book *The Immortal Storm* (1954), which was so strongly worded that Harry Warner, Jr. commented “If read directly after a history of World War II, it does not seem like an anticlimax.”

With hindsight, it seems to me that fandom of the day was in robust good health, for good and for bad, just as it remains now. There was a lot of discussion along right/left political perspectives about the war and other issues. There were arguments about which event in the 1930’s had actually been the first true SF con, and the beginnings of the ‘retro-active continuity’ to justify whichever preference is held, (personally, I’m happy to consider 1939 as the first ‘true’ convention, as we would recognize it today). The near-cliché, that the genre is/

Afterword - Vincent Docherty

In my introduction to the *Souvenir Book of the 2005 Worldcon in Glasgow, Interaction*, which Colin Harris and I co-chaired, I wrote:

“Writing this introduction is also one of the few perks that (co-)chairing a Worldcon offers. By a quirk of timing, I missed contributing to the ‘Alternate Worldcons’ books edited by Mike Resnick back in the mid-nineties, so here is my chance!

In my parallel universe, the first Worldcon wasn’t actually held in 1939 in New York in conjunction with the New York World’s Fair, but a year earlier in Glasgow, in conjunction with the 1938 Empire Exhibition which was famous for its Art Deco architecture (of which sadly, only a little survives). Since the name ‘Worldcon’ was partly inspired by the World’s Fair, this suggests that we might have run an ‘Empirecon’ first. We would have reverted to ‘Worldcon’ in 1939 and thereafter (in the now traditional fashion of time-travel ‘reset’ buttons), since the Empire effectively came to an end (becoming the Commonwealth) before the first (next) UK Worldcon in London in 1957.

Taking this line of thought further, perhaps fannish historians would still debate whether the 1938 Glasgow Empirecon was really a ‘canon’ Worldcon, (like the argument over whether the first ‘real’ SF con was in 1936 or 1937). Maybe the later UK Worldcons would have considered calling themselves Empirecons, or more likely, the more politically correct, Commonwealthcons. There could be a story in there for me to write, but it will have to wait for ‘Last Alternate Worldcons’ – that’s a hint, Mike.”

Clearly that was intended as a bit of fun, but having done the research for this article, I really wonder now if I should write that story!

Ref: <http://fanac.org/worldcon/Interaction/x05-sb1.pdf>

was in terminal decline and not like 'the good old days', was much in evidence, which is ironic, for a supposedly forward-looking genre, and doubly so given the youth of many of those running the 1939 event.

A brief look at the 1939 programme reveals a few links to the World's Fair, but in general the sessions are about the things one would expect a group of fans to discuss, without too strong a unifying theme. There was a lot of focus on the genre itself, the guest and the magazines and books of the day, which in 1939 was a very rich and significant selection indeed. There was a film show, and there were also costumes. Write-ups of the con, supported by photographs, tell of great energy and enthusiasm, and of course a lot of socializing outside of the official programming, including the alternative event run by the group who had been excluded.

The convention concluded with a visit to the World's Fair itself, and a determination that there should be future such events. There were two subsequent Worldcons, in 1940 in Chicago and 1941 in Denver, before the impact of WWII became too heavy, and they restarted in 1946 in Los Angeles and have run annually ever since. (Interestingly, the 1951 *Festival of Britain* – held on the 100th anniversary of the Great Exhibition, as part of the war recovery – featured a suspended

spire called the 'Skylon', which perhaps was inspired by the 1939 'Trylon'.) The 'World' in the convention name 'Worldcon' was originally in reference to the World's Fair, but has since become universally accepted to mean that it is an event for all SF fans around the World and that it can in principle take place anywhere.

As we move into a period where the fandom of the 1930's passes out of memory and into history, it is important to record what happened and the decisions made, often for the first time, that have left their mark in the nature and form of the genre and the conventions we still run. I also feel that the remains of the World's Fair venues – demolished, or replaced by parks, or repurposed or sadly left to decay or, rarely, like the Eiffel tower, becoming iconic in their own right – echo the way the genre itself explores new trends and themes, some of which become part of the ongoing conversation of 'what if' and others which we look back on fondly as clearly of their era. I'm sure that will continue as we move through the 21st Century and all its wonders and challenges, much of which would have been Science Fiction to the attendees of both the First Worldcon and the 1939 World's Fair.

Useful links and references:

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http://www.1939nyworldsfair.com/worlds_fair/index.htm
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/DISPLAY/39wf/frame.htm>
<http://expomuseum.com/history/>
<http://www.preservationnation.org/magazine/2013/fall/state-of-the-fairs-worlds-fair.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1939_New_York_World's_Fair
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Exhibition

First Worldcon:

Summary and material:
<http://fanac.org/worldcon/NYcon/w39-p00.html>
David Kyle reflections:
<http://www.jophan.org/mimosa/m29/kyle.htm>
Fred Pohl remarks:
<http://amazingstoriesmag.com/2013/09/memory-interview-sfwa-grand-master-frederik-pohl/>
The 'Long List' of Worldcons:
<http://www.smofinfo.com/LL/TheLongList.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_World_Science_Fiction_Convention

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futurians>



NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

1939





ON THE LONG LINE - CONVERSATIONS WITH FIRST FANDOM BY CHRIS GARCIA

LoneStarCon 3, August 2013. 74 years after the first Worldcon. I was sitting in the Con Suite playing around with Linda, Hillary Pearlman and a shark hand puppet. It was silly fun, the kind I'm always trying to have. At that moment, Joel Zakem came over and asked "have you ever met Bob Madle?"

I had not. I knew of him, certainly, one of the true legends of First Fandom, but for some reason I had never spoken to him. I abandoned Linda and Hillary to go and interview Bob.

I started off the interview as I do so many others - "What was your first science fiction convention?"

"Funny enough, it was the first science fiction convention. It was held in 1936 and it really wasn't planned to be a convention, but after a group of us went to lunch in downtown Philadelphia, we went back to Milt Rothman's home and discussed science fiction, and except for a brief formality from Don Wollheim saying 'This is the first science fiction convention' England would have had the first convention next February. They'd advertised it as such and had twenty-five, thirty people there."

I'd known that story, of course, and there are still people who believe Leeds was first. Not so! America wins and I now have recorded proof! U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!

"So, after that, people were planning the first big convention, the first Worldcon in New York. And as Sam Moskowitz points out in *The Immortal Storm*, at that first Worldcon, Wollheim had made it so that Philadelphia was the first science fiction convention,

and then he was barred from the first Worldcon."

I knew that story well, and had been talking with Dave Kyle the night before at one of the parties. I had acquired a copy of the Yellow Pamphlet that Dave had put together for the first Worldcon. When the folks running the show found copies of it, they banned the members of the Futurians on the basis that they were obviously Communists. Well, all the Futurians other than Dave Kyle, who was already inside. Years, ago, when I asked Dave about being the one who was inside already and the only one not banned, he said "Well, someone had to try and talk sense to SaM!"

"Sam Moskowitz swore until his dying day that Don Wollheim and the rest of 'em were trying to wreck his convention, and that if he had let 'em in, they would have done so." Madle said in our little interview.

I asked Bob an interesting question, and one that even I felt was a little rude.

There aren't a lot of folks left from that first Worldcon. How's it feel?

Bob wasn't even taken aback, but somehow he understood what I was really asking and answered that question.

"Well, from the first convention, the Philadelphia convention, there's three of us: me, Dave Kyle, and Fred Pohl," he said, though this would only remain true for less than 24 hours as Fred Pohl would pass away, "and there are a few of us from the first Worldcon left. In fact, me and Dave Kyle, along with Erle Korshak, who wasn't at the first, will be on a

panel talking about the first Worldcon.”

And there my mind reeled. I'm 39, already starting to creak and moan a bit at the joints during conventions, and here are three men, all in their late 80s or 90s, still coming to Worldcons, still communicating with young punks like me, still enjoying the parties, still sitting on panels, still willing to talk about the good old days. I'm a historian, I talk to a lot of folks who were there when IT happened, for whatever value of IT you want to assign, and at a Worldcon, you can still go back to those early days, those first conventions, those days I only know as a series of black and white photographs.

When I talked with Dave, I asked him what he thought the big differences between the first cons and this one were. “Well, there are a lot more people, and most importantly, a lot more young women.”

That, to me, is the ultimate Dave Kyle quote.

“Science fiction -- it stimulates the imagination. It makes one think. And for me, there's a sort of fraternity, a social group of special people, but no, there's no special, official name.”- Dave Kyle

I asked Bob, when I ran into him later (and worst of all not on camera!), what he thought the biggest change was. “There's a lot more people and they all know a lot more than we ever did. Things are faster, and there's so much more going on. It's a different world and it's still fun.”

That's the part that fascinated me. I think of myself as a babe in the woods, no idea about what the

world is really like and that it's the Ghods of the Past who really had it figured out, who understand what the world was, and by extension, really is. Here is one of those people saying that my class of human knows more than they did. When I thought back on this, I realized that it's saying something about fandom that I had never considered. It wasn't ‘we did it right and everyone after has been doing it wrong’ no, Bob was saying ‘you know more than we did and you tailored to your world’.

The world knows that Forry Ackerman was my hero, still is by the way, and inevitably his name comes up whenever I talk about Worldcon with folks who knew him, even if I don't bring him up. “Forry'd have loved this Worldcon.” Bob said. “So many friends, and all the costumes. He wore the first costume to a science fiction convention, you know?”

Dave Kyle was much more direct when I asked him about Forry years ago.

“Forry'd have a good time no matter where he was at. To him, the more the merrier.”

Sitting with Dave is always a pleasure, and I try to do that at least once every Worldcon. He always kinda remembers me, but he's always happy to talk. When I mentioned that I had been SFContario's Fan Guest of Honor and how excited they were to have him as this year's Fan GoH, he came back with “I imagine they were very excited to have you too, in their own way.”

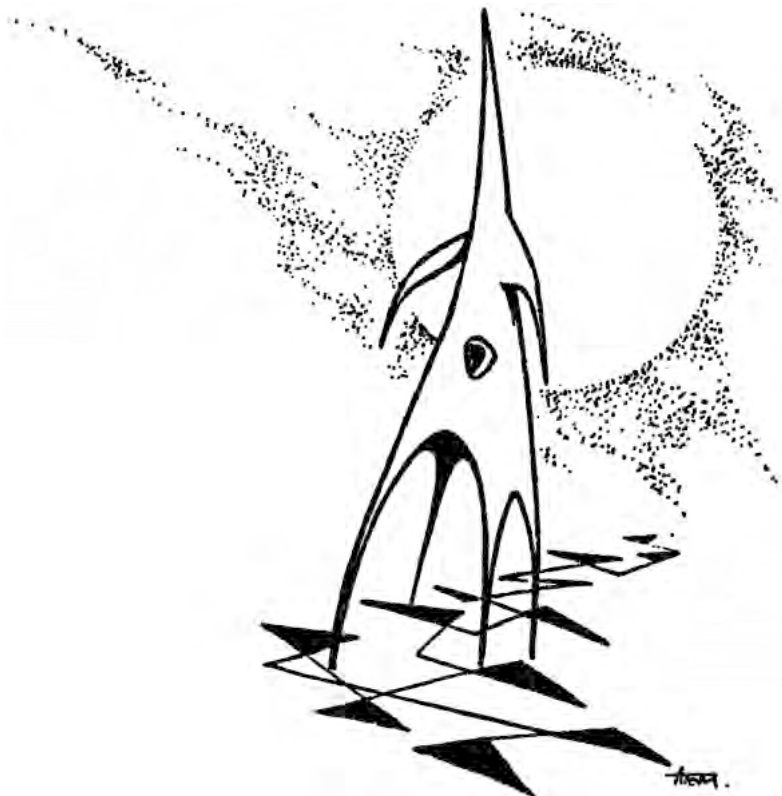
No better possible answer.

Bob and I talked about all sorts of things when we talked, half on video, half not. I mostly got him to

tell me stories. That's what I do, I listen to stories. I do the same thing with Dave Kyle every time I see him. I asked Dave a question once, long ago, about whether or not, back at the time of the first Worldcon, we'd still be doing them all these many years later.

“Of course we did,” Dave said, “only we thought we'd be holding ‘em on the moon by now.”

That was good for a laugh, but it also had me thinking. That version of Fan-



dom, that first generation, they thought on that level. They saw the world as open, were just on the edge of an explosion of technological advance that would completely change the world. There was a world of possibilities that the first fans saw rising and knew were coming down the path. That's something that has changed, I think. Yeah, we've still got a lot of folks who have that feeling, but there's that crew that feels we've lost control and that the advances we've made have turned us around and have opened us up to great pains. You wouldn't have found that at the first Worldcon.

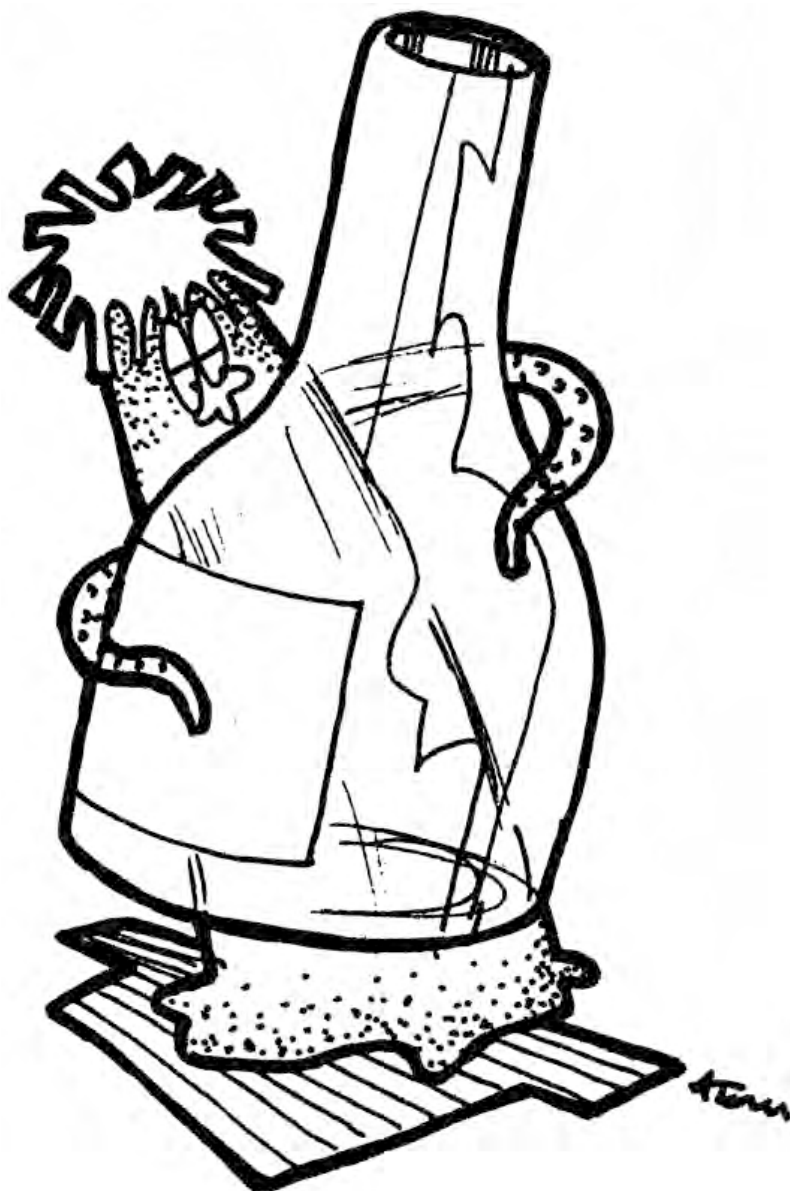
I asked Bob the same question, and he might have summed up my entire thoughts about fandom.

"Why wouldn't we? There's still science fiction, so there's always reason to get together to talk about it. There's still people who only get to see each other once a year, so we need a Worldcon, just like

we did back then. That'll never change." and later Bob added "We wouldn't have recognized the world of today, and that's because we only went so far down one road before we found another."

I get that, I understand that, I FEEL that. It's the reason for a Worldcon to exist. We put faces to names, whether the names appear in Fanzines or on SMOFlist or on Facebook. The key being that it's all science fiction is why really makes me a happy guy. We still gather 'round the stories, and though we're living in the future from those days of the first Worldcon and it's NOTHING like they imagined, we're also far further along than they'd have expected.

And we still have the ties from those first Worldcons, those folks who were there when things in the distance looked a lot different than when we finally got there!





Memories of Loncon I

Loncon I was the first Worldcon to be held outside North America, and has a pivotal role in Worldcon's evolution. Without it, the Worldcon might now be about as global as the World Series.... and the event was unusual in other ways, including the fact that both the president of the convention committee, John Wyndham, and the chairman of the committee, John Carnell, were full-time professional writers and editors.

Fan historian Rob Hansen has gathered an extensive set of contemporary articles and reports on his website at <http://www.fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/LonWorld.htm>. For this article, we've published just a small selection of that material, mainly from James White and Walt Willis. If you enjoy it, we recommend you take a look at the full archive when you have the time.

Thursday 5th September WALT WILLIS (in 'Oops!')

Imagine a quiet old part of London just outside the heart of the city. Bayswater. Stately old stone-faced terrace houses with balconies, rusty iron railings and desultory trees. Nobody can afford to live here any more, and the main streets are all small shops, offices and restaurants. But in the quieter streets, like Leinster Gardens, the old houses linger on almost unchanged as hotels, like the Kings Court.

We approached it from the tube station by a curiously circuitous route and the first thing we noticed about it were two tattered doormats wedged against the stone pillars on each side of the door, like hair growing out of nostrils. Directly inside the door was the reception desk with two pretty girls behind it talking to someone with an American accent whom I didn't recognize, an island of order in a sea of chaos. The lounge opposite them was strewn with unassembled electronic equipment, paint-pots, junk, shavings, paper and rubbish. Overalled workmen were everywhere; there was a smell of turpentine and a sound

of hammering. The carpets were up, of course, but it looked as if they might come down again by Christmas. No such glowing hopes could be held out for the stairs, where work had hardly yet started. Probably the decorators had had a look at the bedroom floors and decided there was no point in encouraging anyone to go up there. The corridors had a definite air of being reconciled to demolition, being neither straight nor level, so that you found yourself brushing the walls or now and again running downhill...very disturbing in the early hours of the morning. This was because the hotel had been made by knocking three or four houses together and of course they didn't quite fit. Every now and then a flight of steep stone steps led down to a dirty lavatory or bathroom. There was not much the management could have done with the antiquated plumbing at short notice but they might, in deference to the susceptibilities of our refined American friends, have segregated them into male and female.

Downstairs again I found Bobbie Wild and Dave Newman, Convention Secretary and Pro-

gramme Committee stalwart respectively, both talking at once to a dark, plump, disgruntled man of about 35. They introduced him as the manager who had, they enthusiastically affirmed, been "very cooperative." I formed the impression that they were trying to butter him up and tried to do my bit. "Ah, M. Maurigny!" I exclaimed joyfully with my best mixture of French accent and Irish charm. So this was the wonderful M. Maurigny, proud representative of the best of French cuisine and continental gaiety and blood brother of the Convention Committee. Bobbie and Dave looked slightly taken aback and hastily explained that M. Maurigny had just sold out, leaving the sinking ship to this new manager, Mr. Wilson, who had had a Raw Deal but was being Very Cooperative. Very Cooperative, they repeated fervently. Apparently the villainous Maurigny had handed over the place in dilapidation and chaos, leaving the cooperative Mr. Wilson to cope with redecoration and a convention simultaneously. But convention or no convention, the redecoration must go on.

The Willises had flown from Belfast to Liverpool in a war-surplus DC3 'Dakota' fitted out for passengers then taken the train, whereas James White was booked on a direct flight to London in a modern Viscount. Needless to say, his was the flight that was delayed by mechanical problems. Eventually, the plane did take off....



JAMES WHITE:

Four hours later I was scanning the biggest lounge of the King's Court Hotel for sensitive fannish and/or voracious pro-type faces. I spotted Ackerman at once, talking to a small group in circle of armchairs ---the armchairs were tight, not the occupants; it was only 3.30 in the afternoon - so I went over and said: "You probably don't remember me..."

But he did; he said, "Why, Bob Shaw...!" and shook hands warmly.

After disillusioning him tactfully I told him he was looking much better than last time I had seen him in 1951 when he had been somewhat under the weather due to a double-barrelled ailment comprising travel sickness and non-Asiatic flu. I also noticed there was a considerable speeding-up in the well-remembered Ackerman drawl; now he jabbered along almost as fast as Gary Cooper. The musical "Hm-mmmmmmm-mmm-mm?" was gone too, but it was nice seeing even this stream-lined, healthy and vigorous Ackerman again.

He introduced me to a young German fan called Rainer Eisfeld, and to Bob & Barbara Silverberg. I said excitedly, "Not the Robert Silverberg whose story was printed upside down behind mine in the latest Ace pocketbook (D-237: Master of Life & Death / The Secret Visitors)?" just before he got in a similar question. Barbara Silverberg I found to be a very nice girl with a lively sense of humour who possessed the good taste to laugh at most of my jokes. She does not look like one of the three specialists in an abstruse section of electronics. Bob Silverberg is young, intelligent, black-haired and good looking in a vaguely Neanderthal sort of way, and his face seems to fall naturally into a scowl. This, he explained carefully, is because his face muscles are constructed that way and it is painful for him to lift the corners of his mouth. He was destined to go through the Convention in constant agony. When someone - usually me - made a pun, the scowl became a sneer and the Silverberg Sneer is a devastating thing. Humbly, I asked if maybe he could teach me to sneer like that and he said he'd try.

We did not guess then at the awful consequences this simple request was to have, the mind-shattering weapon it was to unloose. We said goodbye, having still not decided who was upside down with regard to which, promising to meet about 7.30 in the Globe...it being Thursday night. I left to search Gamages for accessories for my train set.

The Globe that night remains for me a noisy, smoky blur. I can remember Ted Carnell and I plying each other with drinks, one each. I met Bobbie Wild,

the Convention Secretary, an efficient, overworked and slightly harassed girl who said she had insured herself so that she could wrap a certain person's blank guitar round his blank-blank neck with impunity. I wished her luck. Then there were Joy Clarke and Ken & Pamela Bulmer, all looking as pretty and vivacious as ever, except Ken. But Vince Clarke was a shock. Gone was the distinguished toffee-apple of yesteryear; in its place was this soft-spoken young patriarch with sane straightened-out kid written all over him.

It was about 2.30 when I went up to my room, to find a still, emaciated figure occupying one of the three beds. I went through its luggage quickly; it consisted of four snazzy suits, twenty-three ties, a camera and one hundred and fifty two- colour printed cards bearing the GDA (Goon Defective Agency) legend and stating that the holder was one Stephen F. Schultheis. After a few moments deep cogitation I decided that the figure on the bed was Steve Schultheis. It bothered me somewhat that it did not appear to breathe, but I went to bed reassuring myself with the well-known fact that Arch-Goon John Berry is dead from the neck up, and it was therefore conceivable that the Cleveland Op was extinct from the cervical vertebrae on down.



Friday 6th September JAMES WHITE:

Next morning the figure did not move or breathe during the time I dressed, washed or shaved. It did, however, make a slight snurkling sound when I inadvertently spilled some of my shaving water on its head. Greatly relieved at this sign of life I went down to breakfast.

After breakfast, the Silverbergs and I went to Les Flood's shop. He hadn't got a copy of the latest Ace Double, but insisted on taking our pictures in a semi-stiff, back-to-back pose. It took him a long time to get us arranged just right, but finally we got away just before the crowd began throwing pennies. We headed for the British Museum.

I spent two hours wading through ancient pottery, mummies and postage stamps before discovering the awful fact that this was not the museum which contained a whole floor devoted to Aeronautics. But I concealed my disappointment well, I thought, being content merely to make sneering remarks about completist pebble-collectors in the Geology Section and trying to decide, in the Egyptology Room, which of the occupants most resembled George Charters. It was hard to tell with those bandages.

Bob Silverberg, in an attempt to instill in me the rudiments of archaeology and stuff like that, began giving me the history of a collection of sculpture which he was keen to examine called the Elgin Marbles. These, it seemed, had been purloined while the Greeks were away fighting some war or other. "Ah," I observed, "so the Greeks are missing some of their marbles." They did not speak to me after that except for suggesting that surely I had presents to buy for my family, and that they could recommend some good shops at the other end of London.

WILLIS (in 'Oops!'):

By Friday evening things were looking up. There were nice new carpets everywhere downstairs and even some bits on the walls. At least they were covered with an odd, hairy wallpaper, all little patches of short, red fur. I remember asking Moskowitz if it was science fiction plush. I'm sorry to be talking so much about the hotel, but believe me it was important, It set the whole mood of the convention. The lounges were the key, There were five of them altogether, all quite small, and furnished with comfortable armchairs and coffee tables. Waiters with trays and girls with trollies patrolled them until dawn plying the fans with food and drink. The drinks actually had ice in them. Yes, ICE! (Only those of us who have been to Europe will be properly impressed by this.) It seemed to me it would take an awful lot of dirty bathrooms to outweigh all this. The most important result was that we had lounge parties instead of bedroom parties, a quite different thing, smaller, more intimate, more fluid, little congenial groups constantly forming and reforming.

WILLIS (in 'SF Parade'):

The 15th World Science Fiction Convention opened at the Kings Court Hotel this evening at 9:07, P.M., seven minutes late, Chairman Ted Carnell explained that they could have opened on time, but feared to flout providence by defying what appeared to be a law of nature as regards science fiction conventions. He also said that when making the bid for London at the New York Convention last year he had promised only one thing: that whatever it would be like, it would be different from N.Y.

Ted Carnell introduced John Wyndham Harris, who introduced John W. Campbell, the Guest of Honour, who received a prolonged and enthusiastic welcome. He made a short speech about the work of an sf editor ("Whatever was good yesterday, we don't want tomorrow ... We have to live in the future, now... The editor has to be a prophet; if he's no prophet, there's no profit.") With this desperate attempt to wrest George Charters' laurels as the Convention's most depraved punster, JWC introduced Dave Kyle

with some sympathetic remarks about the troubles of Convention Committees. Dave introduced the TAFF delegate Bob Madle, who was warmly welcomed despite widespread disagreement which had been expressed earlier in British fandom with the method of voting - the objections were solely towards the possible future abuses of the system itself, not to the present representative.

Saturday 7th September JAMES WHITE:

In the lobby I was introduced to Wally Weber again. I had had this particular person introduced to me several times before, but had not yet seen what he looked like - in fact I never expected to see Weber. The first few times we had met I had tried, how I had tried, but the introducer had only got as far as "This is Wally Web--" when the Seattle fan's flash camera would explode in a blaze of searing radiation which immediately bleached the visual purple in the eyeballs of everyone within fifty yards. Everybody had



Joy Clarke, Walt Willis, Rainer Eisfeld, Steve Schultheis, James White, Vince Clarke.

met Weber but nobody had actually seen him, so this time I automatically closed my eyes when we met and noted with grim amusement the way my eyelids turned bright pink as his flash tried vainly to blind me again. I had decided that the only defence against Weber was a white stick and black spectacles. I blundered on into the lounge.

The place was fairly crowded and I caught sight of the Silverbergs talking to someone whose broad back was towards me. I sneered a greeting and suddenly found myself confronted by the equally broad-shouldered front of no less a personage than John W. Campbell himself. I got the sneer wiped off just in time, shook hands and fought an overwhelming urge to bump my forehead three times against the floor. But our Guest of Honour turned out to be a pleasant and quite uncondescending type of person, a great amiable bear of a man whose conversation and mind processes were either stimulating or overstimulating, but never dull.

At 1.15 the luncheon was supposed to start, but it was considerably later than this before everyone had found his seat - so much so that there was a suggestion going round our table about the advisability of sending out for something to eat. I discovered on taking my seat that the empty space next to me was reserved for no less a person (?) than Wally Flash Weber. I shut my eyes out of sheer reflex, then thought that at last I might get to set this Weber because it was fairly likely that he could not use his flash camera while wielding a knife and fork. Then somebody nudged me and said "Weber's coming!"

Through the door of the dining hall came Weber's camera, Weber's adam's apple and Weber himself in that order. In the flesh, what there was of it, he looked out to be a boney, blond-haired drawling thing with a devastating but economical sense of humour, tall enough to qualify for Irish Fandom. On the other side of Wally were H. Beam Piper and his wife. I asked him if he was H.B. Fyfe.... Or maybe on second thoughts it I asked him if he was H. Beam Piper. Anyway, he said no.

WILLIS (in 'SF Parade'):

After the toast to the Queen (another Worldcon first) drunk in Burgundy (imported), Arthur Clarke introduced John W. Campbell with a brilliant little speech in the serious part of which he referred to Campbell as a scientist rather than a technologist, this being, he suggested, the difference between Gernsback and him. Campbell, in his response, took him up on this, and said he thought of himself rather as a philosopher, physical science and sociology be-

ing mere facets of this field. He went on to more abstruse realms of thought where, after four hours sleep and fortified only by one cup of coffee, I am unable to follow him. However, his speech was, of course, interesting and well received.

Bob Madle followed as TAFF delegate with a few well-chosen words, in the course of which he pointed out that this was really the first Worldcon. Later, Sam Moskowitz was to revive memories of the first titular World Convention in 1939, pointing out the remarkable fact that there were no less than 8 of those original attendees present, 18 years later and 3000 miles away. One difference, he pointed out to the general amusement, was that they had tried to throw out Dave Kyle, and here he was in a seat of honour.

About 20 minutes later, Ted Carnell got up to make a grave announcement. The remainder of the programme had been delayed by a serious calamity; the Convention gavel had been stolen! Fortunately the affair had immediately been put in the capable hands of a famous detective agency, not the FBI, but an organisation of similar scope - The Goon Defective Agency. At this moment James White arose in the body of the hall, drawing a gun. At the other side Arthur Thomson plunged into the hall, shouting "Vile agent of Antigoon!" and a running gun battle ensued, after which White collapsed on the floor (after having dusted it with his handkerchief), and was carried out attended by Sister Ethel Lindsay, as Stephen Schultheis made a triumphant entry with the missing gavel. The whole thing took a mere two minutes but it certainly started off the Programme with a bang... or 13 of them to be exact ...and is to my knowledge the first time such a purely fannish affair has figured in a Worldcon.

JAMES WHITE:

Ethel Lindsay, a nurse and a very nice person who has unfortunately been led astray by John Berry, was supposed to appear, then take my pulse and temperature, and help me stagger off the scene. Instead, Unethical Lindsay was standing on a chair with a GDA badge stating that she was Stephen F. Schultheis pinned to her chest, hooting and screaming "Down with Antigoon!" And Shel Deretchin, who had no part to play whatever except lending pistols, became overcome with excitement and dashed out and began dragging me off by the feet. At this point Arthur Thomson, out of respect for my suit if not for me, grabbed my other end and lifted me clear off the ground. I didn't think it was possible for the relatively diminutive Arthur Thomson to carry the heavy end

of a fourteen stone weakling like myself, but he did it. For half an hour afterwards, however, he looked as if he had been shot 13 times instead of me.

The GDA-Antigoon gun battle was supposed to be a surprise item and it was. So much so that quite a lot of people in the lounge missed it. These, I found out later, had put it down to Sam Moskowitz having an attack of hiccups.

later that evening ...

I can't remember much after that except that I was enjoying myself. I do remember however one point where I tried to talk Bob Silverberg into strapping ourselves back-to-back and entering the masquerade part as our Ace Double. But Bob said he wanted to think it over, and as I left I saw him talking earnestly to Barbara and some members of the Committee. Later he told me it grieved him terribly, but he couldn't do it because his wife had been picked as one of the judges and it would be unethical. I hinted that maybe the real trouble was that he had never been taught at school to walk backwards on his hands, sneered politely, and withdrew.



Walt Willis at the Typewriter

JAMES WHITE:

A couple of hours later, the Silverbergs, after nearly falling on their faces a couple of times, dragged themselves off to their room. I was beginning to feel tired, so was Mal, but nothing could have got us away from that convention or those people. Weber was not technically a member of this group, because he insisted on sitting three yards away from the rest of us so that he could pretend not to be with us when the level of punning got too low. He also kept Mal and me of how nice it would feel to lie down in a lovely soft bed, the fiend. To counteract this, I suggested to Mal that we go up to our room and dunk our heads in the wash-basin. This we did, and as we were leaving

we paused at the door and looked back at our beds lying there so seductively and smugly. We snapped our fingers at them and sneered. They wilted, visibly. It was at this moment that we felt history was being made, that what we had done was no empty gesture but an actual weapon of war. After a sneer like that, why going to bed would be like fraternizing with the enemy. It had been at that moment that the art and science of Psneeronics came into being, the foundation of an entire new field of knowledge. But just then we were too tired to foresee this: proudly and kind of humbly we returned to the lounge.

Sunday 8th September JAMES WHITE:

At 6.45am, the card game broke up. Peter Phillips staggered off to bed and George Charters, with gentle olde worlde charm, stated his intention of walking back to his hotel, adding that as he had paid for bed and breakfast he considered it his bounden duty to go back and muss up the bread. George does not usually get his words mixed up; this was the latest he had been up since he gave his mother trouble with his teeth. Somebody found a trumpet and let go a couple of hideous blasts on it. The sleepers on chairs, table, and floor jerked feebly at the call of this pseudo-Gabriel, woke and went to bed. Then the manager appeared with a polite and reasonable request for the trumpet-playing to cease on account of the earliness of the hour, the people sleeping in the next hotel, and the obvious lack of ability of the player. I asked if it would be possible to obtain sandwiches and the manager said no, but that breakfast would be served in an hour. There was an immediate movement towards the dining room, but the door was locked and through its glass panels we could see the rows of tables laid for breakfast. The cornflakes seemed to mock us.

The sun was shining brightly through the big windows on the wan, bristly and red-eyed faces of the dozen or so diehards who had not gone to bed. I saw Arthur and Mal staring at me and I found myself staring back at them, and we came to identical conclusions simultaneously - we must look as horrible and haggard-looking as the others! We decided to have a wash and shave before breakfast despite it meaning the loss of our places in the queue.

We went to Arthur and Chuck's room. Arthur, who had a devil in him since about 3 am, immediately shook Chuck awake and told him the time. Chuck misunderstood, bounced out of bed and began dressing madly, shouting "Eleven o'clock! Eleven o'clock! I've missed breakfast again...!" When Arthur

explained that it was only seven we had to rescue him and take him to our room. While Mal and I freshened up. Arthur, who had never seen a Schultheis asleep before, was completely fascinated. He disappeared suddenly to his own room and returned with Chuck and a lemonade bottle full of vodka and lime juice. Apparently he wanted to hold a wake.

JAMES WHITE:

It had been a very successful party until things had got out of hand and we all assured Ellis of that. The main thing I remember from it was Mal and I and Silverberg demonstrating the art of the duello using the Psneer weapon: we made the momentous discovery that (a) the only defence against the psneer was to cross one's eyes and (b) the only person present who could psneer with his eyes crossed was Silverberg. Also at that party an intelligent discerning young American called Whyte - with a 'y' - asked for my autograph and called me Sir. I became suddenly aware of my three brownish-grey hairs, but it was nice egoboo even so.

Later in the lounge we found ourselves in a group composed of Ethel Lindsay, Walter, Madeleine, Ellis Mills and a few hazy other people. We were carrying ourselves with the conscious superiority of persons who have shunned sleep for some 40 hours or more. We psneered a little, practising our technique. At this point Wally Weber arrived complete with camera and asked what we were doing. We told him it was a new and subtle weapon we were developing for beds and things, and he said he would like to photograph it. We psneered at full strength, in unison, into his flash

Wally collapsed in a heap on the floor. Struggling weakly to his feet he held the camera to his ear and shook it gently. "Subtle?" Rattle, rattle. "Subtle. Hah hah." It was about this time that the others took an interest in the sneer as a weapon and began



Mal Ashworth & James White

to suggest developments; the long-range sneer, the shot-gun sneer, the delayed-action sneer, the Intercontinental Ballistic Sneer, the International Standard Sneer, preserved in perspex at the Smithsonian Institute and so on. The lowly sneer became the Psneer and the science of Psneerotics came into being. We explained it all to Bob Silverberg later and he solemnly avowed his intention of selling it to Campbell.

Monday 9th September JAMES WHITE:

Round about 4am on Monday morning I began to feel definitely tired. I could tell because of the way I kept missing words - whole sentences sometimes - out of the conversation. By increasing the frequency with which my eyelids thudded shut, and by the greater feats of physical strength necessary to get them open again.

Except for Arthur Thomson it was the same group who had talked through the previous night and morning, though I think Mal said I were the only ones who had not been to sleep since Friday night, it was Wally Weber and Ellis Mills who, with 45 minutes and 2 hours sleep under their belts respectively and thus bright-eyed and alert, were making with the sparkling conversation, Mal and I being content merely to nod now and then. Fortunately we managed to stiffen up again before our faces hit the table. I tried everything to stay awake, even going as far as mixing a double Tonic and Disprin. A couple of times Mal and I dragged ourselves up to our room to sneer at the beds, but we stopped doing it about 4.30 because the beds were beginning to sneer back. Schultheis was snugly dead in bed again.

Round about 5 o'clock, so the bleary-eyed witnesses tell us, Messrs Ashworth & White were really having it tough. Apparently Mal would collapse forward and. I would nudge him awake, then I would succumb and he would do the same for me...rather like those little Swiss figures that bow in and out of fancy barometers, Mal just couldn't go to bed because he had to catch a bus at 8am and he knew that if he once went to bed nothing or nobody would shift him out of it. I merely wanted to see another dawn breaking, which proves what a poetic soul I've got. At a quarter to six, they say, I was walking up and down the lounge, obviously with the idea that it was easier to pretend to be awake while moving. At ten to six I was observed to pull aside the window drapes to reveal a sky which was still dark - but a decided grey. I went upstairs.

I'm told that a few minutes later Mal rolled out of his chair into a heap on the floor. Somebody

pinned a notice to him reading “FAKEFAN” and left word at the desk to wake him up for his bus. I awoke four hours later with a note from Mal pinned to my chest denouncing me for having taken the room key to bed with me so that he had had to go to all sorts of trouble to break in. He added some stuff about how nice it was meeting me and the other members of Irish Fandom, and maybe at Kettering next year....

WILLIS (in HYPHEN):

To really sum up the mood of the convention, which was unique in so many complex ways, you want something to evoke not only its casual, relaxed, friendly atmosphere but its climactic, historic quality. And it should contain references to the fantastic environment, like the unreconstructed hotel and staff and that corridor-like convention hall so obviously made by knocking several small rooms together. (I don't know what the one at the end had been, but my seat had a hole in the middle. But the most important impression was how wonderfully the European and American fans blended together. Towards the end I asked Vince Clarke what had struck him most strongly and his answer was “how wonderful it is to talk to people I've never seen, and have them understand because they have the same background.” That was just the way I remember feeling at the Chicon. After a few minutes it was hard to believe these people were nominally foreigners. We felt we'd known them all our lives...or at least, we wanted to. Some day, we must all meet again. The best thing is that we can say that not from the usual post-con frustration of having failed to talk to the people you wanted to meet, but because those people are now friends whom you want to meet again. Partly thanks to the Programme Committee and partly thanks to that much-maligned hotel (bless you, Bobbie Wild) the affair was a stupendous social success.

Acknowledgements from Rob Hansen:

My thanks to Bill Burns and Greg Pickersgill for their aid in piecing together the story of the IFA luncheon, and in particular to Doug Anderson who put the results of his own researches on this at my disposal, greatly helping in completing the story. Thanks also to Rainer Eisfeld for supplying a copy of the Aldiss article, and to Pete Weston for the loan of various convention materials. Further thanks to Roger Robinson for scans of hotel and pre-convention material, and to Ian Covell for being the first to identify the issue of TARZAN ADVENTURES where Mike Moorcock's report appeared.

The main sources for this composite report were those of James White in HYPHEN #19 (Jan '58), and those by Walt Willis scattered through HYPHEN #19, SCIENCE FICTION PARADE #6 (Fall '57, ed. Len Moffatt), and OOPSLA #23 & 24 (Dec '57 & Feb '58, ed. Gregg Calkins, as reprinted in WARHOON #28, ed. Richard Bergeron). Secondary sources were the Chuck Harris one-shot LONCONFIDENTIAL, and Forry Ackerman's 'Wings Over The Worldcon' from March 1958 issue of IMAGINATIVE TALES (Vol 5 #2), as found and supplied by Mark Plummer. A few paragraphs by Sid Birchby, Pete Daniels, and others were lifted from PLOY #11 (March '58, ed. Ron Bennett) and all details of their pre-convention trip to the Continent by Terry Jeeves and Eric Bentcliffe was taken from their fanzine TRIODE #12 (Winter '57/58). The full text of James White's report (titled “The Quinze-y Report”) is available in the NESFA Press collection of his writings.

For links and scans (where available), see: <http://www.fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/1957Worldcon/LonWorld.htm>

Bob Madle's TAFF report can be found at http://www.fanac.org/fan_funds/fake/fcover.html



SEASON '79
37th World Science Fiction
Convention

BRIGHTON, ENGLAND
23rd - 27th AUGUST 1979



Britain was Fine in 79! *By Peter Weston*

We're delighted to present this selection of unpublished photographs of the 1979 Brighton Worldcon taken by Portland fan John C. Andrews (sadly now passed away). And who better to provide the commentary than Season '79 Chair, Peter Weston...

Opening Ceremonies, Caledonian Pipe Band



Lots of things could have gone wrong with the opening ceremony – something I'd particularly wanted to arrange, even though such a thing was pretty much unheard-of at UK cons at the time. As it turned out, everything organised by the fans went as planned, and only the so-called 'professionals' – the Pipe Band – let us down. With a roomful of people – something like 2000+, I estimated – we were all set to go but the band hadn't turned up. This despite the fact that we were paying them several hundred pounds for their appearance. Somehow they got a message to me (no mobiles then, remember) to say that they were stuck in traffic, halfway back to London. This despite them having had months of notice that our opening blast was due to start at 2 p.m. on

the Thursday afternoon.

We fiddled and faddled, chewed our fingernails, and meanwhile the natives were getting restless. Eventually Kev Williams and I made the decision to start the ball rolling and sod the band. As it was, they arrived with about five minutes to spare and ended the show with a fine performance. The Royal Marines would have been better, but we couldn't afford them (we asked).

The reason I was so keen on having a band went back to my trip to Discon in 1974, where Dick Eney arranged for the Alexandria Pipe Band to march into the convention hall. It made a big impression on me and I was determined to do something similar, though the rest of the committee weren't too keen. However this was one of the only three occasions where I put my foot down and did it my way!



This was the second point on which I made myself unpopular. At a committee meeting a couple of years before the con, Malcolm mentioned that he'd asked Brian Aldiss to be Guest of Honour. I think I probably exploded over this casual assumption of authority – this should have been a full committee decision, one we agonised over. As it was, though Brian was a most loveable and worthy chap, he'd already been GoH at the last British Worldcon. To appoint him again was a slap in the face to every other British author. We could have had Bob Shaw (as a consolation-prize we made him Toastmaster) or Jim White. But as someone said, now Brian had been asked we couldn't very well un-invite him.

Actually, in retrospect I think that's exactly what we should have done. I ought to have written to Brian and explained that Malcolm had been out of order, and I think we should have then asked John Brunner. I didn't like John but he had done an awful lot for British fandom and he was riding high in the seventies with *Stand on Zanzibar*; as it was, he must have been bitterly upset, and (although I'm not quite sure about this) I don't think he even came to the Worldcon, perhaps in protest at our decision.

As it was we stuck with Brian and he was, of course, an excellent GoH. But I insisted on having my own choice, Fritz Leiber, as our 'Overseas' GoH. This dual-guest policy was also new to Britain in 1979, and unfortunately it did leave us with a lot of additional expense in bringing Fritz from California and paying two lots of hotel bills.

Fred Pohl, SF around the World

Good old Fred Pohl was the first proper item on the main programme, and I didn't see it. In fact, as soon as the opening ceremony was over I couldn't wait to get up to our 'con suite' (a single room where we entertained VIPs and occasional committee members feeling stressed-out) where I collapsed onto a settee and imbibed strong drink, together, I suspect, with the other members of the Opening Ceremony team. It had drained us completely, and as Kev said, "everyone involved was left trembling and covered in a fine film of sweat".



Meet The Authors - Larry Niven



I'd known Larry for years, of course – I was an early admirer of his 'Known Space' stories, had corresponded with him, had published his articles in *Speculation* and met him at US conventions. He was one of a small group of Georgette Heyer fans who'd enthusiastically supported Brighton because of its connections with King George IV and the Regency period (or rather, Larry's wife Marilyn was a Heyer fan - I think Larry wisely went along with it). So on the Friday afternoon I was privileged to get an invitation to the 'Georgette Heyer Regency tea-party' in the hall of The Old Ship Hotel, scene of some of George IV's trysts with various paramours.

It was all very sweet, with Larry and various other pros & fans in velvet knee-breeches and hose and their ladies in 'A'-line muslin dresses, dancing in a stately minuets to the music provided by a string quartet. But the image that sticks in my mind is that of poor old Bruce Pelz who like all fans had two left feet. He had been sucked into all this by his then-wife Diane and there he was, a portly Mr Darcy, standing helplessly on the dance-floor while his lady-love, a petite little vision in peach, kicked his shins and swore at him for being a big useless lump!

Seacon 79 Banner

That backdrop was on canvas and measured something like 20ft by 30ft. It was painted by Sue Williams and I never did find out how they managed to get it to Brighton, nor what happened to it after the convention was over!



Fritz Lieber GotH Speech

Poor old Fritz, he was such a disappointment to me. For over ten years he'd sent me occasional letters, which were always full of wit and interest (I wish I'd kept them, they'd be worth a fortune now). I'd admired his stories since I'd first discovered them and one of his novels (which I won't mention in deference to the tender sensibilities of Mark Plummer) can claim to be the greatest broad-spectrum SF story of all time. But when I met him just before we went onto the stage at Brighton, he seemed an old, old man. He could hardly get the words out, and I'm afraid that I, impatient youth, didn't realise that the poor old boy was probably hopelessly jet-lagged after his long flight from the West Coast. I'm told he perked-up a bit, later on, but our paths somehow didn't cross again. What a pity!





Panel: The Fermi Paradox, with Arthur C Clarke, Poul Anderson, Gerry Webb, Greg Benford, Hal Clement

No, I didn't see this panel either; in fact I saw very little of the programme. But this one looked good – with this line-up, you can't get much more 'hard'-SF than that! Arthur Clarke was a model of co-operation, no 'side' at all despite his huge reputation, and I'm pleased that I was able to have a one-on-one chat with him earlier during the con. I don't think I even saw Greg Benford, though we'd been long-time correspondents. Gerry, of course, was having the time of his life and this picture illustrates that in the seventies he wore snappy suits and weighed about eleven stone!



Brian Burgess as Barbarian

I don't know what our overseas visitors thought of this entry in the Fancy Dress (or as we were just starting to call it, 'The Masquerade'), but British fans had been treated to a preview of Brian's costume, or lack of same, at the 1977 Coventry Eastercon where he ran around the upstairs landings at the DeVere late in the evenings. Brian was something of an 'institution' at Eastercons, normally to be seen conservatively-dressed and retailing a suitcase full of pork pies and bottles of milk in the wee small hours. But it turned out that he was also something of a naturalist, and word had it that he holidayed in St Tropez with only his cache-sex to keep the world at bay.

Drew & Kathy Sanders, King & Queen of Pentacles (Best in Show and Contestants Award)

When it came to showing a bit of bare skin then Kathy was a much more attractive proposition than Brian. I first met her at the 1977 Suncon where she wore a similarly-splendid outfit, and I discovered she was one of a small group of American fans that between conventions spent every waking minute in designing, sewing and creating the most incredible costumes. She was a very attractive girl though I was surprised that she seemed very



quiet, almost shy, despite her frequent ventures into the front-line of Masquerade action. Her husband Drew was a slightly strange character and seemed very uncertain of himself. After the parade he told me that he felt depressed because no-one knew who he was. "Of course they do," I said cheerfully, "you're Kathy Sanders' husband." It was meant to be funny at the time but looking back I realise I perhaps was a little unkind! On the Monday night Kathy came along to our Gophers' Party in the basement of the Metropole, and performed a vigorous belly-dance which was much appreciated by all present.



Avluela from Nightwings

Kate Solomon was a real show-stopper in this outfit, what there was of it, and not just because she was probably the first to go topless at a British convention. The problem was those wings of hers were just so enormously big and clumsy – probably something like fifteen-foot long, green translucent film wrapped around shaped plastic tubes. Space was at a premium back-stage, Rob Jackson was in charge and trying to assembly contestants in some sort of order,

and these great things just kept getting in the way. We senior and mature members of the committee tried not to leer too openly but Katie bore it all with great patience, taking absolutely no notice of the admiring glances she was attracting – a real trouper!



*Peter Weston at the
Closing Ceremonies*

Despite the Adolf-Hitler appearance of this picture I was in fact enjoying myself immensely by whipping up the gathered multitude (again, at least 2000) into a clamour for another British Worldcon, there at Brighton, and as soon as possible. I knew by then that Seacon '79 had been a great success (though still didn't know if we were solvent, and believe me the margin between profit and loss was less than £1000), and just at this moment I was seriously considering putting in a bid, there and then, for a repeat performance. We could have done it, probably could have signed-up a thousand pre-supporters right there, but at the last minute sanity intervened; did I really want another five years of hassle? Did any of the committee? Well, as it turned out Malcolm did, but that's another story.

One final note; I mentioned just three instances where I insisted on having my own way. I've mentioned two; the third concerns the one left-over Hugo trophy, which on the Tuesday morning rather strangely seemed to have attached itself to another committee member. Well, I thought, if anyone is going to have that trophy it's going to be me, and since it wasn't going to be handed-over voluntarily, there was nothing for it but to engage in an unseemly scuffle on the floor to take said Hugo by *force majeure*. Good job I did – it became the pattern from which all subsequent Hugo rockets have been made ever since.



Worldcon Memories - A Renovation Project Introduction by Patty Wells (Chair, Renovation)

For all the years I've attended Worldcon, and all the years before that, people have asked how your con was, and cherished the memories of Worldcon. When we were working on the Reno in 2011 bid, we wanted ways to draw people to return to our website and to remember us. I like things that are a bit of puzzle. I liked the idea of a very fannish Worldcon and finding out the favorite memories of some of our group's favorite people. Somewhere out of all these stray thoughts, I suggested collecting favorite Worldcon memories and having people guess whose memories they were. It was one of those things you try on a lark and wonder why everyone hasn't done it for years. It was the most popular feature on the website.

As a former Worldcon chair, I have to throw in a great favorite of my own. I am a fool for a good ice sculpture. I didn't consider one was a possibility for Renovation until I was sitting at the Peppermill Coffee Shop with some of our facilities people before a meeting. And there, waiting to be taken to a recep-

tion, was a very detailed undersea plant ice sculpture. I said I wanted one of those please. When asked of what, a Hugo rocket was the only possible choice for the Pre-Hugo reception. Originally it was to be fairly small, but as the budget got better, I told them to make it bigger, and finally as big as the hotel could make it, with no real thought about actual size. I had no clue that I would walk into the reception room that night to a gleaming six foot ice Hugo. It was glorious.

Can someone collect favorite Worldcon memories some more? I know it's 'been done', but we waited for each new memory and read them all with such enjoyment. Oh, and more ice sculptures please. I wonder how a hotel catering department would react to being asked to sculpt a full sized Iron Throne...

We have reprinted just five of the memories collected by Renovation below. For the full set, see <http://renovationsf.org/wc-memories.php>.



Ginjer Buchanan

Worldcon memories -- wow! I've got 40-plus years of them (although there are some hazy parts here and there -- particularly in my younger days, I was not unfamiliar with the all-night room party!)

The first time is maybe always the best. But Baycon in 1968 probably should have a memory page all to itself. If you've read my often-republished con report, "I HAVE HAD NO SLEEP AND I MUST GIGGLE", it sorta does have one.

And the first out-of-country Worldcon (Heicon, for me) is also bound to be one that will leave an impact.

Beyond that -- well, it's a jumble of people, places, images and even odors -- Lester Del Rey inveighing against the elevators in St Louis; the moldy smell of the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami (Not a good thing, since this was a con I worked on!); watching Heinlein really, really appreciate the burlesque show in Kansas City; getting up one morning at Brighton to find both Chip Delany and a transsexual fan asleep on separate couches in the living room of the suite; Joe Haldeman doing terrible things with his Hugo and a balloon at a Hugo Losers party in Chicago; hosting a champagne reception for Anne McCaffrey in Winnipeg; going to dinner with Charlie Stross and Cory Doctorow in Toronto and almost being able to follow the conversation; introducing my newbie author Sharon Shinn to the world of sf cons and fandom in Boston (Next thing I knew, she was attending the Regency Dance!); the Big Blue Bear in Denver, the single funniest piece of city-art I've ever encountered... the list could go on -- and on -- and on.

Joe Haldeman

Our first Worldcon was Discon in 1963, when I was a lad of twenty and Gay was a mere 17. It seemed huge, and the first day I was walking around stunned -- the first thing we'd seen when we walked into the hotel lobby had been Isaac Asimov fencing with L. Sprague de Camp.

What really impressed me, for whatever reason, was the fanzine room. There was a table with a big pile of miscellaneous freebies on it, and we both carried off a handful of oldies like Yandro and Double: Bill Symposium. Amateur magazines about science fiction! It totally croggled my mind.

Then in the evening we party-hopped from room to room, overwhelmed by fellowship and free booze. People talked more about SF in those days, before fandom was balkanized. I saw a 75-year-old woman and a teenager arguing about SF movies, treating each other as equals. I had halavah and ouzo for the first time, and a dizzying mixture of creme de menthe and Scotch over ice.

I remember talking with Robert Silverberg about the Galápagos, which I pronounced gal-la-PAY-goes, and he politely corrected me. Forty years later, we would visit those islands together.

What an interesting world to enter.



“Those were the days of campus riots, and what we got from them was the faint and inescapable aroma of tear gas.”
Fred Pohl on Baycon, 1968

David D. Levine

When you're really nervous your heart doesn't beat faster, just deeper.

In 2006, I'd lost the Hugo Award once before and the Campbell Award twice, so I knew that I shouldn't get my hopes up too high and I was trying not to get too excited. But when Harlan Ellison -- HARLAN ELLISON! -- took the stage to present the award, I realized that the Short Story Hugo really is a very big deal, and then he called out my name and said "Getcher ass up here."

It was like my heart exploded. I was moving so fast when I hit the stairs that they broke into two sections, the lower section sliding sideways by about six inches. I got up on stage and Harlan was standing there with his arms outstretched and I gave him an enormous hug. In fact, I climbed him like a spider monkey.

You have to understand that I have been in fandom since I was sixteen years old. Winning a Hugo Award has always been the pinnacle of possible

achievements that I could reasonably aspire to. And here I had won it -- I had won a Hugo of my very own. My little story about a guy and some bugs was going to be listed with *Soldier, Ask Not* and *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream* and *Neutron Star* and *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* and *Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones*. Written in the Book of Life forever.

I read my prepared speech, including the top line: "2006 Hugo acceptance speech, which will never be used," which got a laugh, and although I was trembling all over I managed to hold it together and not start sobbing until I got off stage, where Janice Gelb held me up and offered me water, which I was silly enough to refuse. I have never before or since sobbed from sheer joy.

Edward Morris posted on the Asimov's website's message board later: "David Levine was on cloud 9 from outer space the whole night. I have never seen a human being so transported with joy. Good for him."

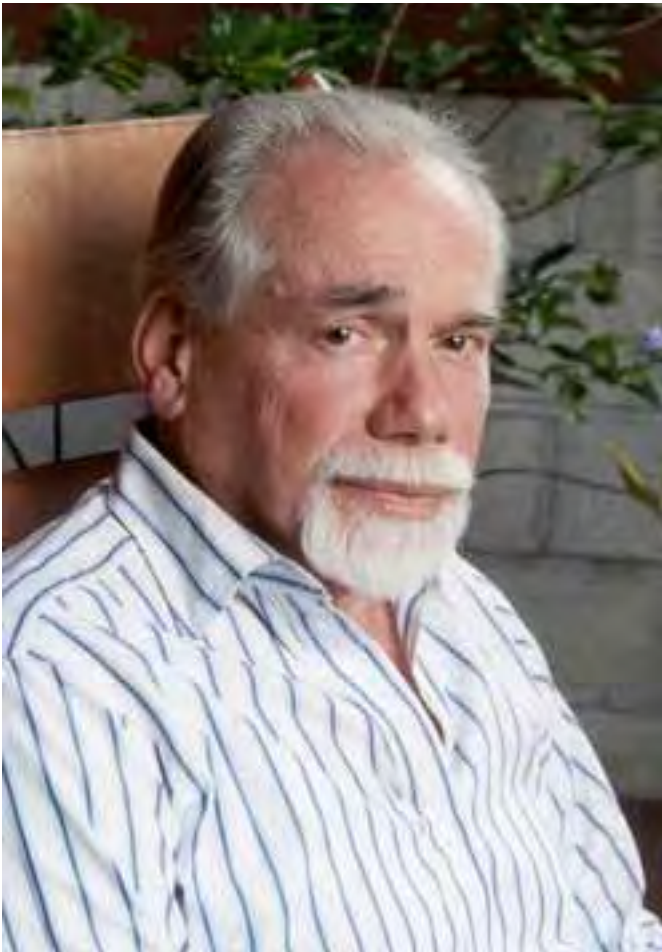


Robert Silverberg

Picking a favorite Worldcon memory when you've been to 56 Worldcons is no easy assignment, but one thing does come to mind from my very first Worldcon, Philadelphia in 1953.

Harlan Ellison and I were teenage fans and had arranged to room together at the con. When we arrived, Harlan startled me with the suggestion that we rent a suite at the hotel -- the Bellevue-Stratford, at that time one of Philadelphia's finest hotels. Suites at the con cost something like \$12 or \$15 a night, a fantastic amount in those days, when Worldcon membership itself was \$1, but Harlan's idea was that we would run the place as a fan dormitory, renting out couch and floor space to our friends at \$5 (I think) a night. Harlan and I would keep the beds for ourselves.

It sounded like a good idea to me, but I had no idea how good an idea it was or what kind of salesman Harlan was. He proceeded to find us a dozen or more roommates each night; the place was packed, we had a kind of running party going all night long every night, and at the end of the con he and I split a huge wad of cash. I went home as rich as I had ever been in my life. (And I had never been more tired, either, because I figured that I got about eight hours of sleep during the entire weekend.)



Connie Willis

I love Worldcon. I've been going regularly since the Worldcon in Denver and have only missed a few over the years, including, unfortunately, this year's in Australia. (I was having gall bladder surgery.)

All the Worldcons I've been to were great, and it's hard to pick out one favorite moment from among so many:

- almost getting my arm taken off at Gatorland at the Orlando Worldcon

- almost getting thrown out of the Tupperware Museum at ditto (for not taking it seriously enough)

- almost getting thrown out of the Alamo at the San Antonio Worldcon (for not taking it seriously enough)

- waiting out a tornado warning in the kitchen of a restaurant with Nancy Kress and Jack Skillingstead at the Denver Worldcon and trying to explain that we never have tornadoes in Denver

- running the miles and miles of the convention centers in assorted cities

- being forced to be on the Dating Game at the Denver Worldcon in 1980 and then losing to Howard Waldrop in a zoot suit.

Seriously, though, I love Worldcon. I've met hundreds of terrific writers, starting with Hal Clement at the Boston 1981 Worldcon; made wonderful friends -- I met John Kessel while waiting for a panel at Denver and James Patrick Kelly while sitting on the floor in the hall outside a party at Boston; been lucky enough to win Hugo Awards and be both a toastmaster and Guest of Honor at Worldcons; and had dozens of fascinating conversations on panels and with fans.

It's the talking I love best about Worldcons. The people who go to them are the smartest, funniest, most interesting people on this planet or any other, and collectively, they represent the entire sun of human knowledge. Forget Wikipedia.

My proof that Worldcon people know everything? Well, I saw this great movie on Academy Matisnee when I was a kid. It was about these people on an ocean liner, and they were supposed to be going to America, but really they were all dead, and...

Well, anyway, I'd been trying to find out the name of this movie for years -- this was before Internet Movie Database -- but I couldn't remember who was in it, and no one I talked to had ever heard of it.

"You should ask at Worldcon," Ed Bryant suggested. "Somebody will know." So at the next one, on my first panel, I did just that, though without much hope of its working.

“Okay, there’s this movie about people on an ocean liner,” I said, and had barely started into my description when not one but a dozen hands shot up.

It’s *Between Two Worlds*,” the first person said.

“It stars Edmund Gwenn and Sidney Greenstreet,” another piped up.

“It’s a remake of the movie *Outward Bound*.”

“Which was a play on Broadway starring Leslie Howard.”

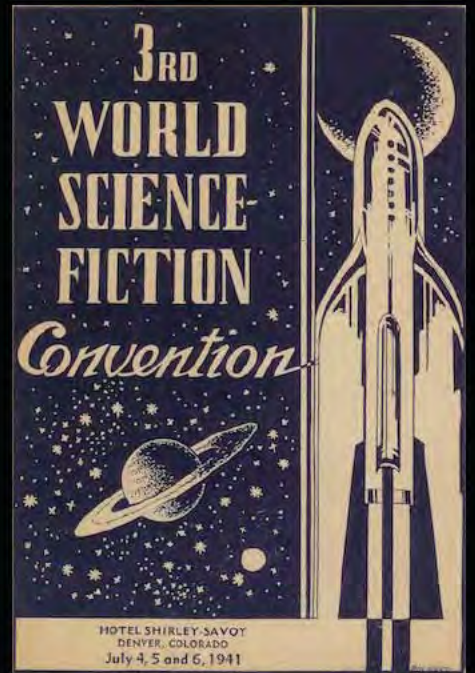
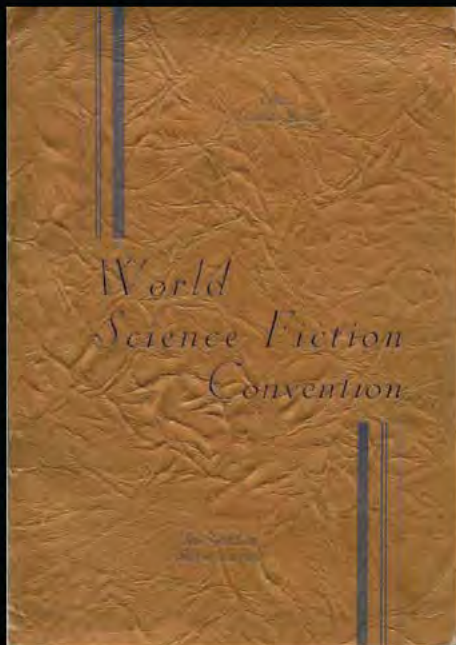
“It was made from the book *Outward Bound* by Sutton Vane.”

That may well be my favorite Worldcon moment of all time. Well, that, or getting thrown out of the Tupperware Museum.

Hope to see you all in Reno. Can’t wait to hear what everybody has to say -- have you seen the British series *Primeval*? What about Syfy’s *Alice*? Is Andrew Lee Potts not the cutest thing you’ve ever seen? -- and can’t wait to see what we get thrown out of this time. See you there!

P.S. Thanks to all those brilliant science fiction fans who helped me find my long-lost movie (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036641/>). (When I watched it again, it was just as terrific as I remembered it.)





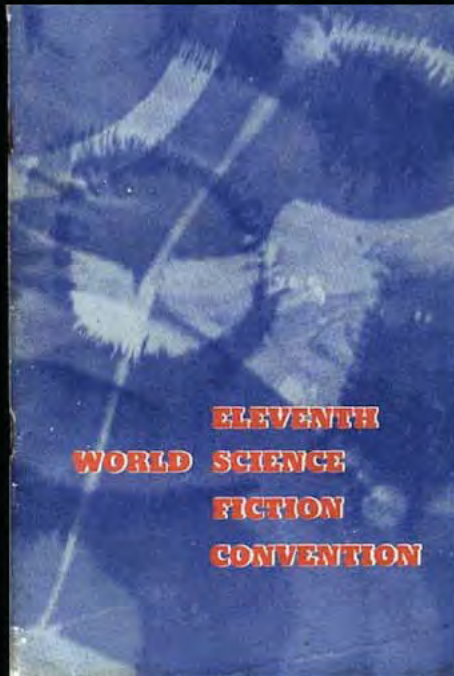
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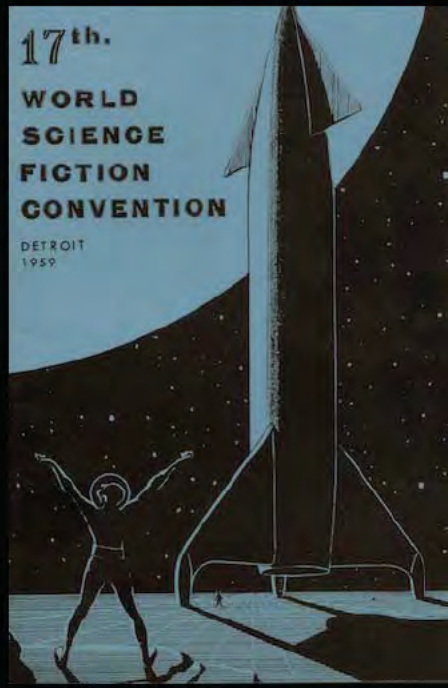
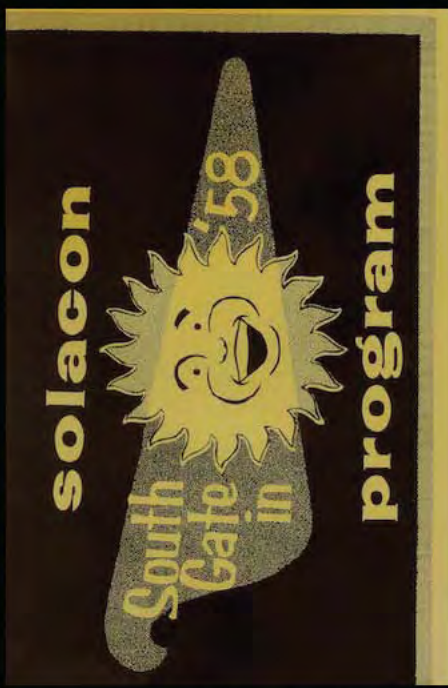
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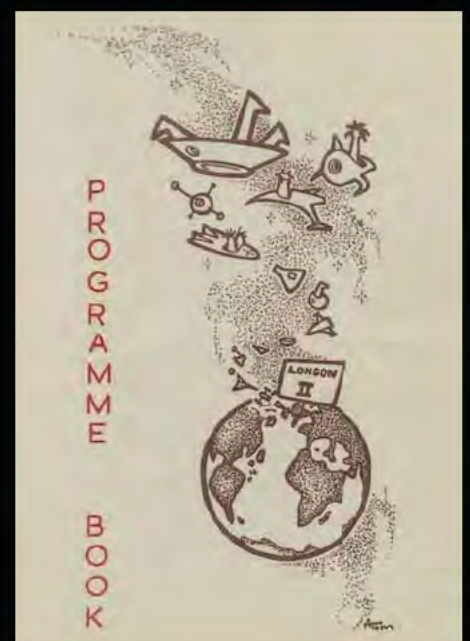
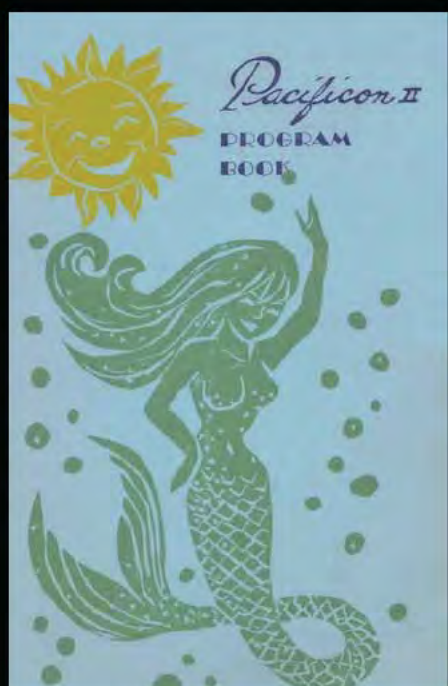
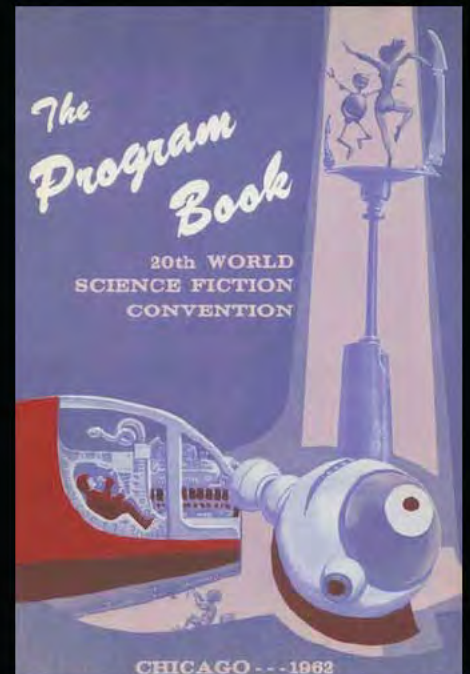


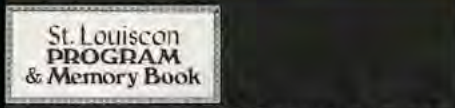
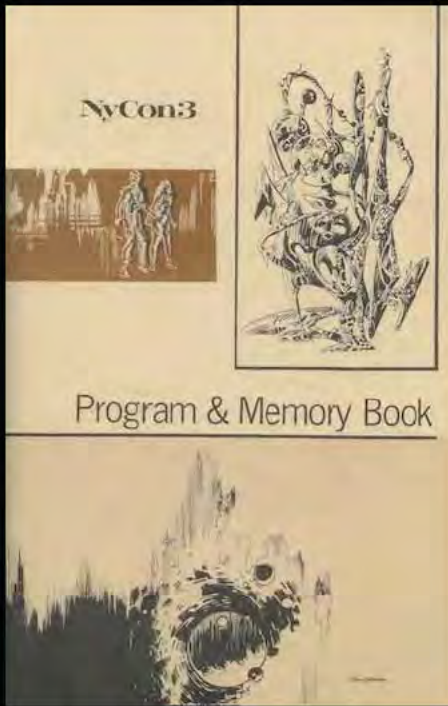
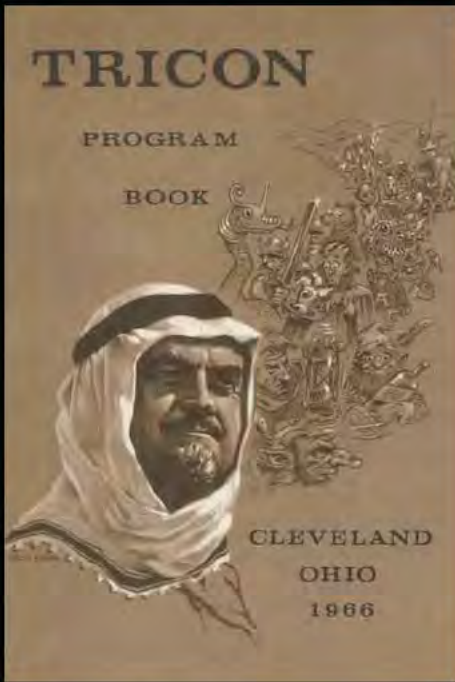
- 1950 - NorWesCon
- 1951 - Nolacon
- 1952 - TASFC
- 1953 - Philcon II
- 1954 - SFCOn
- 1955 - Clevention
- 1956 - NewYorCon
- 1957 - Loncon



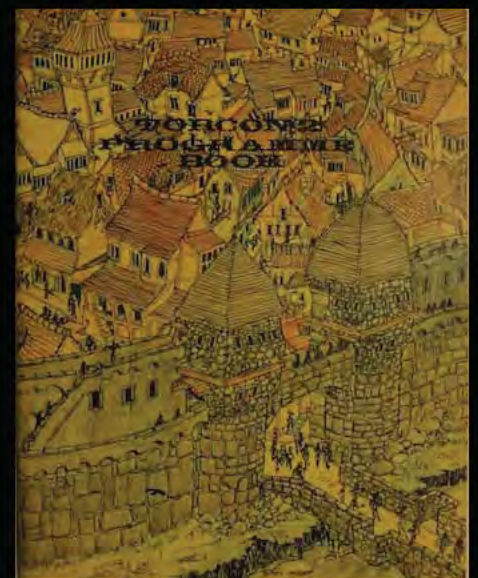
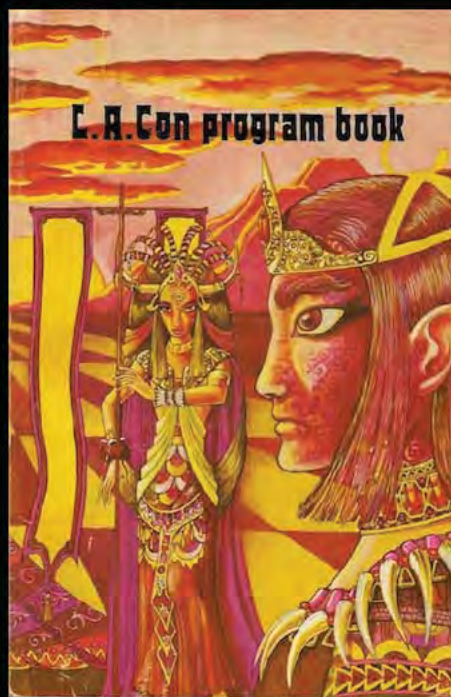
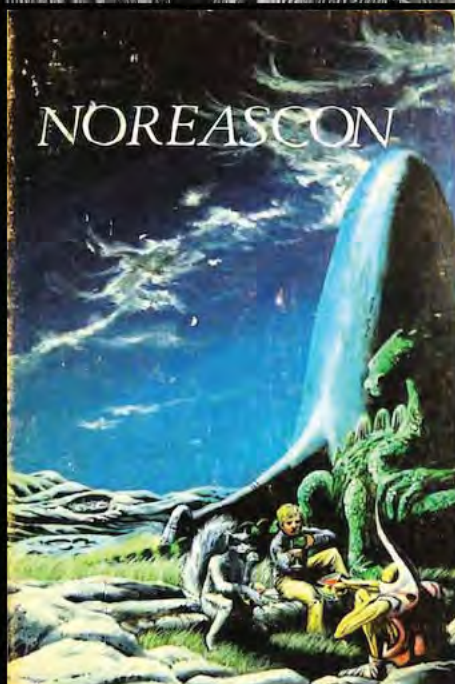


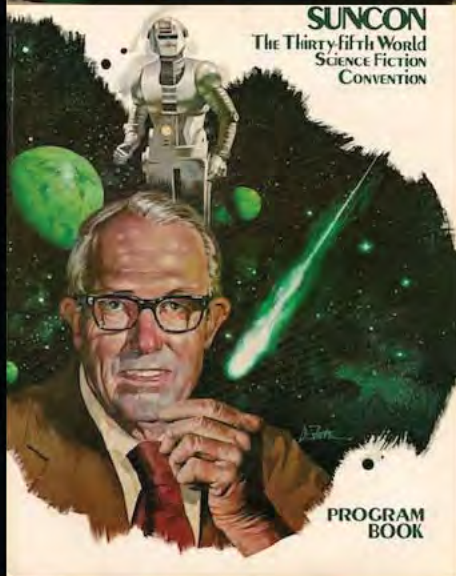
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- 1959 - Detention
- 1960 - Pittcon
- 1961 - Seacon
- 1962 - Chicon III
- 1963 - DisCon
- 1964 - Pacificon II
- 1965 - Loncon II



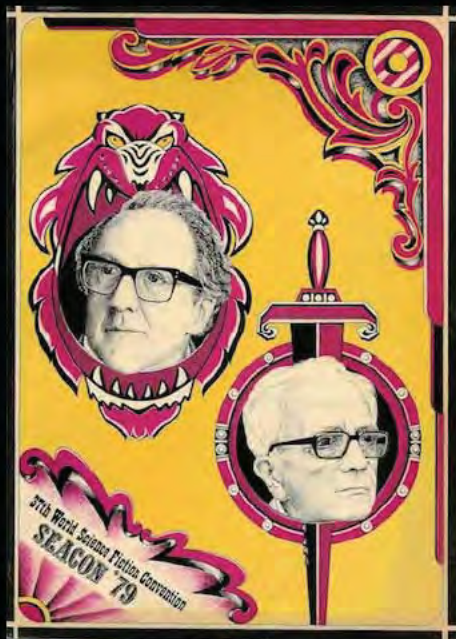


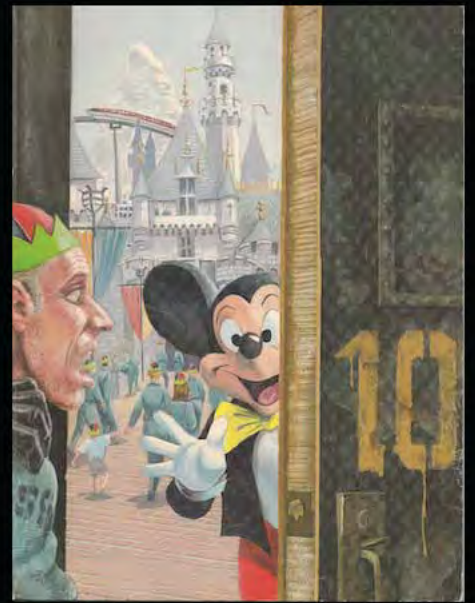
- 1966 - Tricon
- 1967 - NyCon3
- 1968 - Baycon
- 1969 - St. Louiscon
- 1970 - Heicon
- 1971 - Noreascon
- 1972 - L.A. Con
- 1973 - Torcon II



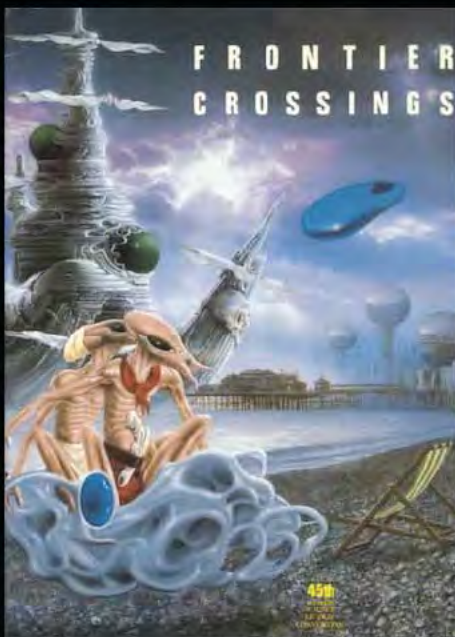


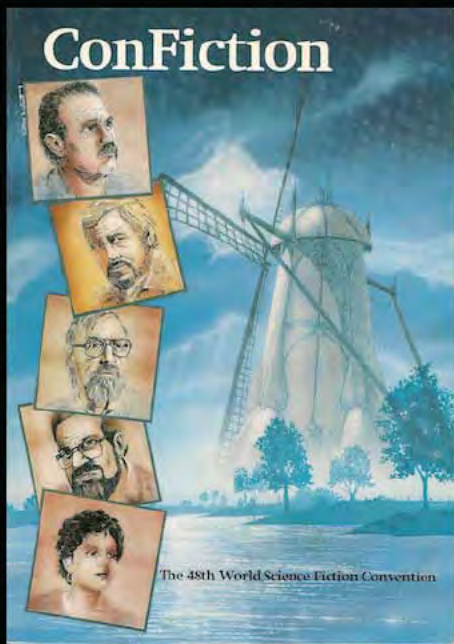
- 1974 - Discon II
- 1975 - Aussiecon
- 1976 - MidAmeriCon
- 1977 - Suncon
- 1978 - Iguanacon
- 1979 - Seacon
- 1980 - NorEasCon Two
- 1981 - Denvention Two



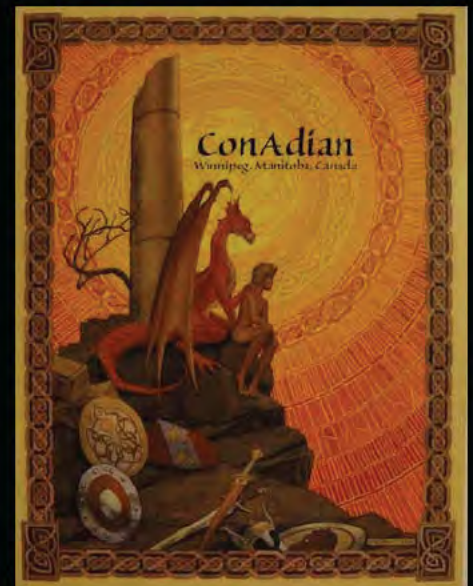


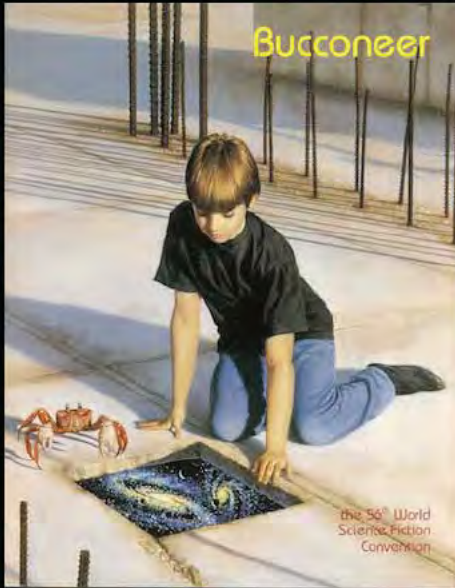
- 1982 - Chicon IV
- 1983 - Constellation
- 1984 - LACon III
- 1985 - Aussiecon Two
- 1986 - Confederation
- 1987 - Conspiracy
- 1988 - Nolacon 2
- 1989 - NorEasCon Three



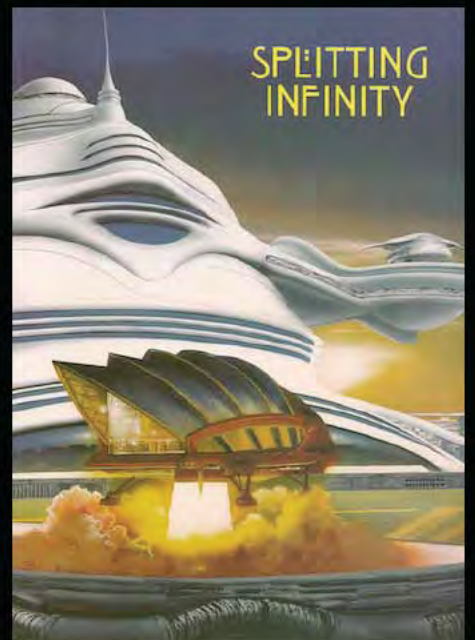
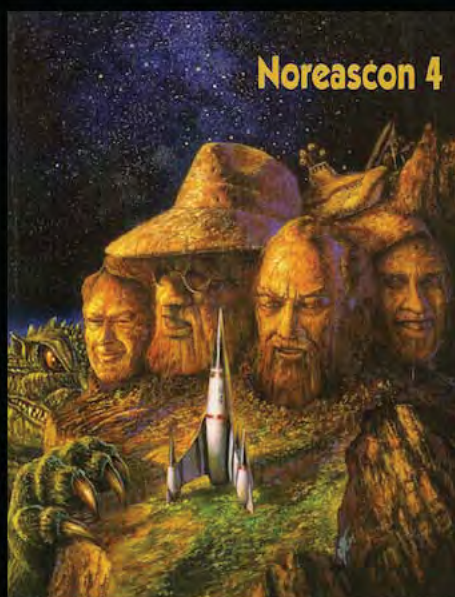


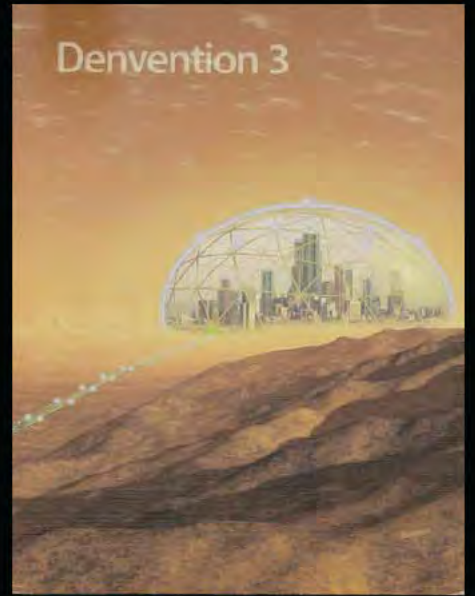
- 1990 - ConFiction
- 1991 - Chicon V
- 1992 - MagiCon
- 1993 - ConFrancisco
- 1994 - ConAdian
- 1995 - Intersection
- 1996 - LACon III
- 1997 - LoneStarCon



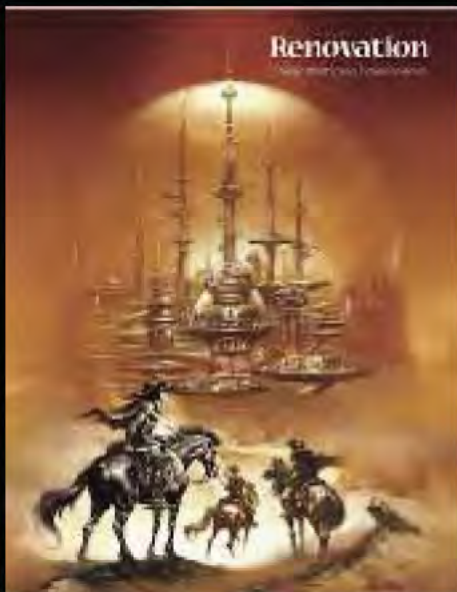
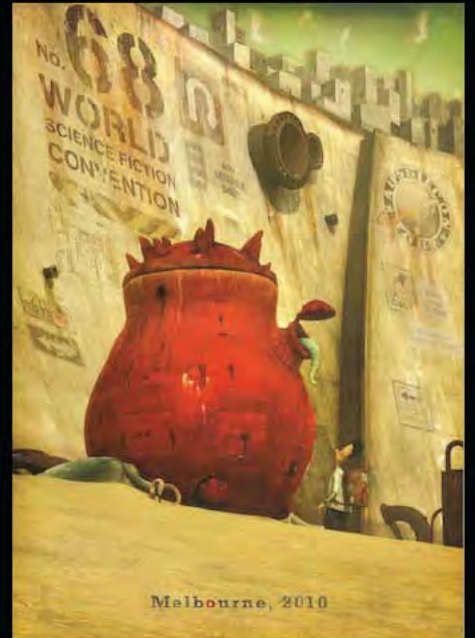


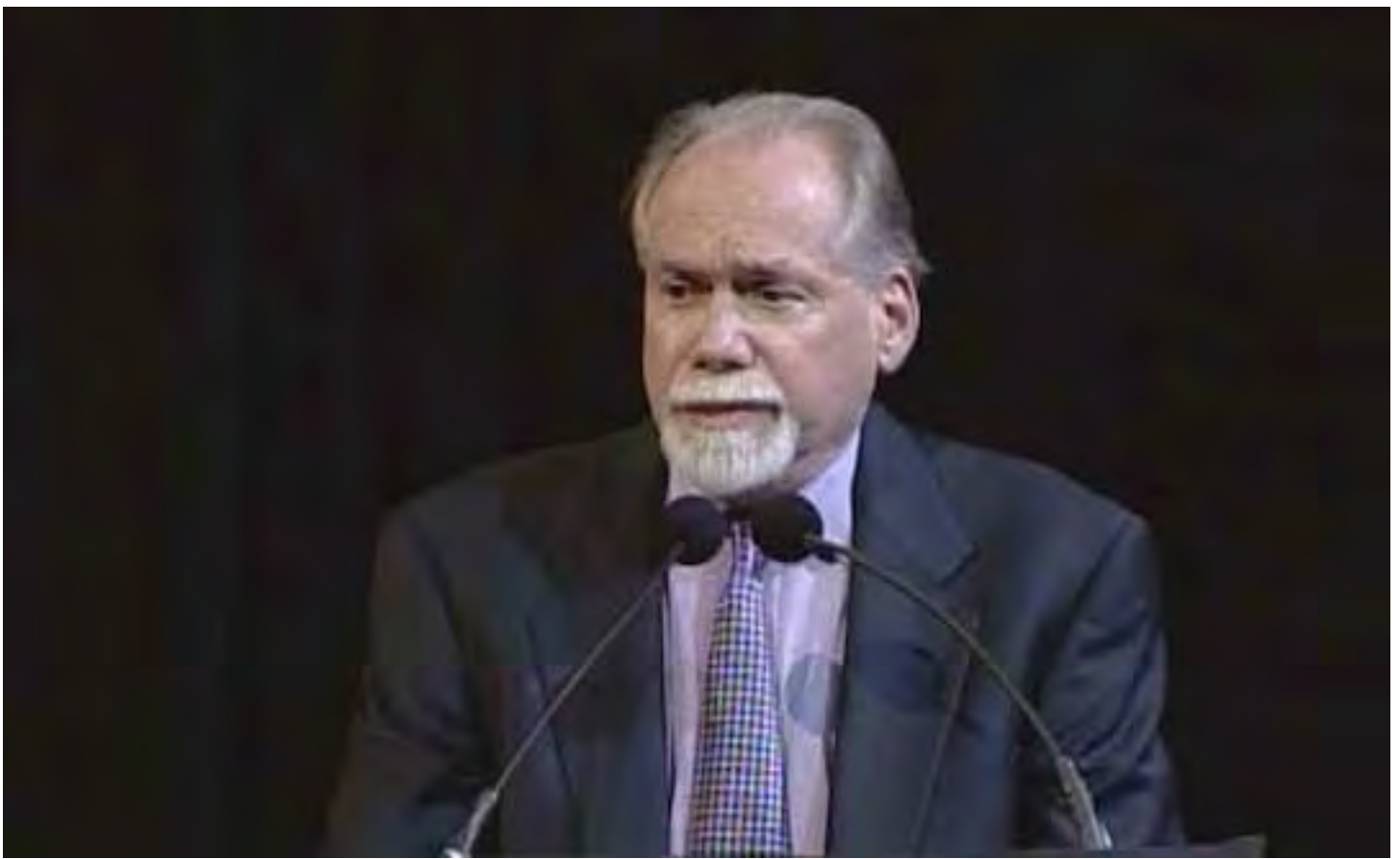
- 1998 - Bucconeer
- 1999 - Aussiecon III
- 2000 - Chicon VI
- 2001 - Millennium Philcon
- 2002 - Con Jose
- 2003 - Torcon 3
- 2004 - Noreascon 4
- 2005 - Interaction





- 2006 - LACon IV
- 2007 - Nippon 2007
- 2008 - Denvention 3
- 2009 - Anticipation
- 2010 - Aussicon IV
- 2011 - Renovation
- 2012 - Chicon 7
- 2013 - LoneStarCon 3





Fifty Years of Hugo Ceremonies: A Retrospective

On Sunday, September 4, 2004, Robert Silverberg, the only person to have attended every Hugo Ceremony since 1953, was invited to give a retrospective on the first 50 years of the event, as part of Noreascon 4's own Ceremony. He was introduced by Noreascon 4 Master of Ceremonies, Neil Gaiman. Here is the transcript of what followed.

Neil Gaiman:

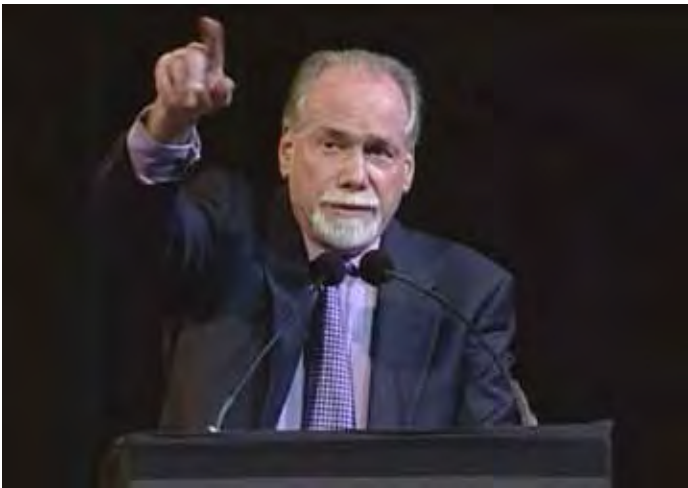
Often the Master of Ceremonies gets to talk about the history of the Hugo Awards. And I got to not do that this time, because it's going to be done personally by someone who can talk about it with a great deal more authority than I can. When I asked him how he would like to be introduced, he said that really, he'd like 90 seconds of abject praise. Although I was not entirely clear whether he wanted it for being an award-winning author who has been producing magnificent works of fiction, of science fiction, of fantasy, for a very, very long time, or whether he wanted the abject praise because, when I started as a journalist, a long, long, long time ago, he was the very first person I interviewed, and the first interview I ever sold, and it gives me enormous pleasure to introduce you to Robert Silverberg.



Robert Silverberg:

Thank You. Thank You. The Hugos have been going on for more than half a century now. Can you imagine how much perspiration has been expended by the various Hugo nominees while people like me extend the suspense?

But I have been asked to speak about the history of the Hugo Awards over the centuries because I am apparently one of only two people who have attended all of the Hugo Ceremonies to date. The other one is Connie Willis. Connie, of course, was just a babe in arms at the first Hugo Ceremony in 1953, but she was nominated, and insisted on being taken to the Ceremony and for once did not win and waved her teething ring around in fury. No, actually, none of that is true. Connie wasn't there. And as far as we can figure, I am the only one who has been to every one of these, which is a statistic that boggles my mind.



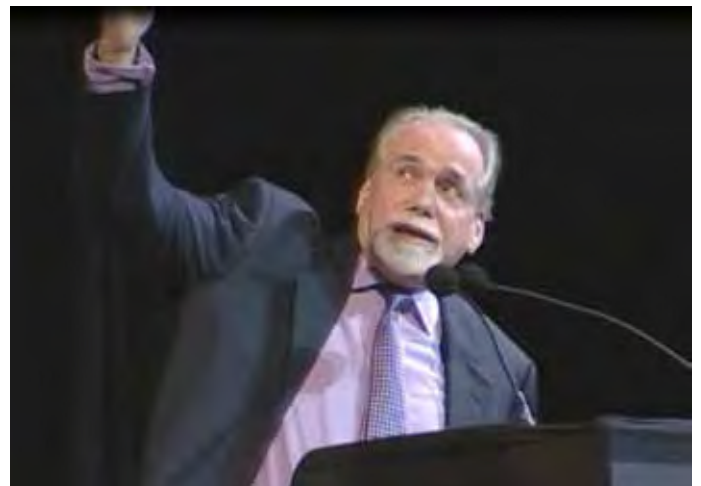
1953: I was admitted to the balcony above...

The first Ceremony was in Philadelphia in 1953. At that time the Hugos were part of a Ceremony that included a banquet. I did not attend the banquet because in 1953 I was 18 years old, and the cost of the banquet was five dollars and seventy-five cents, which in 1953 dollars had the purchasing power of about seventy-five of ours. So like many of the young fans of that time I waited until the feeding part was over, and then I was admitted to the balcony up above, where I watched the Ceremony from a considerable distance. My room-mate at that convention, a young man named Ellison, had somehow found the \$5.75, and he sat down below and was very smug about it. Now you may have seen the very first Hugo out in the hall. There is one. It was home-made, by two Philadelphia fans, Jack McKnight, who was an expert machinist, and Manny Staub, a jeweller, and they somehow put together... it's about six inches high, with wings, or fins, and it's very cute. When they

were given out that night... there are about a dozen people at this convention who were present other than me; they haven't been at all the others since, most of them are in this room now. Fred Pohl, Phil Klass, Harry Harrison, Frank Robinson, Roger Sims, Fred Prophet, David A. Kyle,... let's see, who else... Bob Sheckley, Frank Dietz. That's about all that I've seen around the place, but there are about a dozen survivors from that first event, of which the most extraordinary is Forry Ackerman because he won a Hugo that night, and is the only surviving winner of that first batch. The excitement actually was focused around Best Magazine, because we had two magazines that were having a furious rivalry of the sort that the Yankees and the Red Sox, or Macy's and Gimbels, or Hatfields and McCoys. They were stealing each other's authors and stealing each other's cover formats and we couldn't imagine how we could face a choice between them. What would happen? *Astounding* and *Galaxy*, and lo and behold there was a tie. A very diplomatic committee picked the winners that year - there was no popular vote.

But that was matched by the 1954 convention where there were no Hugos. They just didn't give them out, and when the custom was revived in '55 the Hugos were made that year by Ben Jason, a Cleveland fan who used the hood ornament of the Olds 88. It was a rocket, that was Oldsmobile's logo at that time - a rocketship, and Ben somehow got hold of five or six hood ornaments. I'm not making this up... after my Connie Willis anecdote, all the rest of this is gospel. And those were the '55 Hugos.

Now you remember I said I was an 18-year-old fan sitting in the cheap seats in 1953. By 1956 I was a Hugo nominee, for Most Promising New Writer, and that transition in only three years had me stunned. That year, the convention was in New York, and though by now the awards were given by vote of the members, it turned out that in many categories



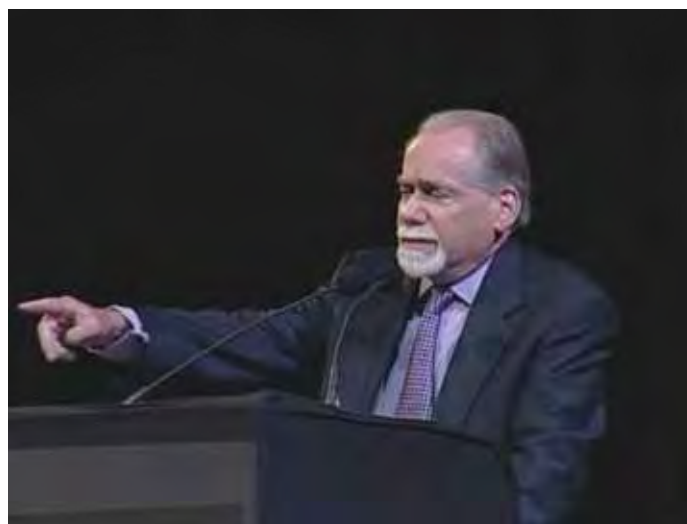
1956: Heinlein descends from the ceiling of the auditorium on a pillar of fire...

the vote was so close as to be indecisive. So on the afternoon of the Ceremony, a run-off vote was held, right in the auditorium, in many of the categories. And as I filed in, I sat down next to one of the most famous science fiction writers of the time. I won't name him, but he was a great name. And he turned to me, and said, "Bob, if I vote for you, will you vote for me?" I was shocked... I wanted the Hugo of course, I was 21 years old, and what a wonderful thing to win a Hugo et cetera, et cetera, but he was famous, he was a great writer, how could he care that much? But I agreed to do it. Then we got the ballots. Well behold, neither of us was on the run-off ballot, so I didn't have to compromise my moral integrity. And that night, we found out what had happened. I had in fact won - quite a thrill for a 21-year-old, just barely jumped up from fandom - but he had not, because his category was in Best Novel, and Robert A. Heinlein had also been in that category, and when Heinlein was up for a Hugo, Heinlein won the Hugo. That was all there was to it... and when they called off the Best Novel, Heinlein descended from the ceiling of the auditorium, on a pillar of fire. He was wearing a resplendent white dinner jacket. Nobody knew he was at the convention, and suddenly out of the sky comes Heinlein! Well, he was nominated for Best Novel three more times in the following years. Indeed, won all four of those Best Novel nominations, and each time appeared suddenly and without warning in a white dinner jacket. We got used to it after a while...

1962. Another memorable event at the Hugo Ceremony. Ted Sturgeon was the Guest of Honor that year, and we had the Guest of Honor speeches just before the Hugos. Ted said "I want ...," Ted was in many ways a flamboyant man, he said "I want to introduce a custom which I hope will be repeated at every single Hugo Ceremony for all time to come." And he produced a phonograph record. The various nominees began to squirm, et cetera. The record was a scratchy, unintelligible, vocal, spoken document. We strained to hear what was being said. Gradually, it appeared to us that what this was, was a very badly done transcription of Orson Welles' "H. G. Wells' War of the Worlds" programme of 1938. And we sat there solemnly in agony for about ten minutes, until somebody had the good sense to take the record off, and it never was heard again.

The following year, Isaac Asimov was the Master of Ceremonies, and Isaac at that time had never won a Hugo, which was a source of great distress... to Isaac. And he let us know about it. Whenever someone came up to accept a Hugo, Isaac would shower imprecations on his head. Jim Blish came forward, and

Isaac said "stick out your leg, and trip him." A little while later, Don Wollheim came up, and once again, Isaac said "trip and fall, oh friend of my childhood." And he went on like this, in what actually became not terribly charming. And then came the last envelope to open. And Isaac looked at it, and turned very red, and shouted "you killed the whole bit." Isaac had received an honorary Hugo for adding the science to science fiction. And of course after that he won a few more, but it left him speechless... he slunk off the stage.



1963: "Isaac said 'stick out your leg'..."

I'll skip very quickly through the five hour long 1968 Ceremony, where I, for my sins, was Master of Ceremony. 1968 we were in Berkeley, and the People's Park riots were going on down below, and whiffs of tear gas were rising through the auditorium. Berkeley was having one of its rare heatwaves. We were sweltering. The audio PR system failed and had to be repaired for 20 minutes. Phil Farmer, the Guest of Honor, had a speech about how to save the world. And he went on saving the world for 45 minutes or so. Then we got to the Hugos, and that year I was a nominee. And I'm thrilled to say I set a still unequalled record for losses by a Toastmaster at the Hugo Ceremony that he was presiding over. I lost two that night. But in 1970, when I was not Toastmaster, but Guest of Honour, I lost three... that is also still unequalled. There have been some three-time losers since then, but never a Guest of Honour.

1983 was a memorable one. It was in Baltimore. Baltimore is famous for its crabs. And, for some bizarre reason, there was a crab feast preceding the Hugos. We sat at long wooden tables, covered with butcher paper, and were given plates with hideous crustaceans on them. And ketchup... lots of ketchup. And hammers. And... do you see that lovely screen on which my resplendent white beard is glittering at



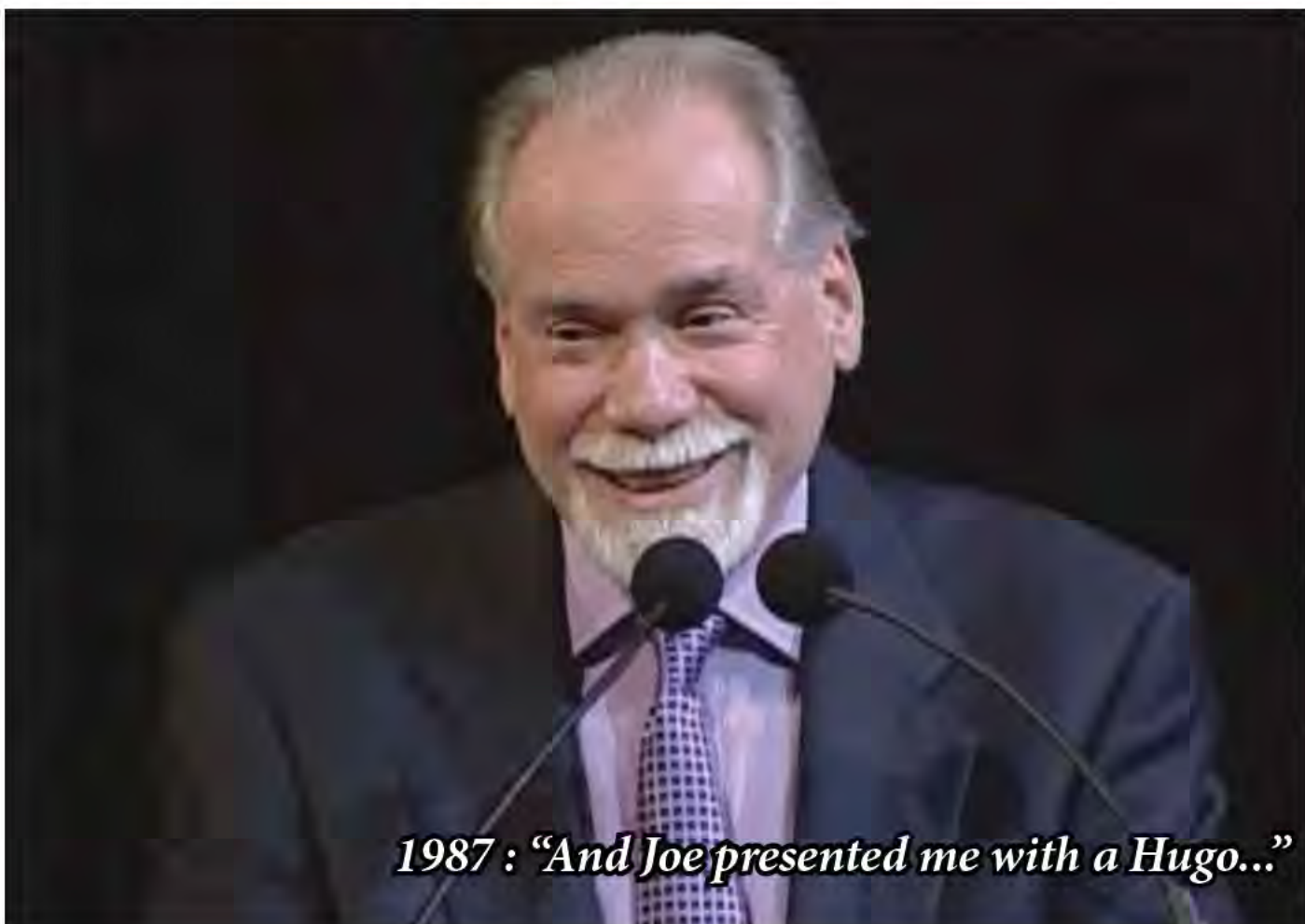
1983: *"And began to use the hammers..."*

you? There was one of those at the Baltimore crab feast. But it wouldn't work. And so 20 more minutes or so went by, as they attempted to get the screen in order, while Jack Chalker, who was the Master of Ceremonies, did song and dance routines. Gradually, the assembled multitudes grew unruly. And began to use the hammers...

Well... I'll go one more. 1987, in Brighton, England. That was the one Ceremony I nearly missed, out of the whole 51 of them. I was tired of losing Hugos. I had won a few along the way but I lost those two in '68, I lost those three in 1970, I'd lost a couple

later... I was having dinner with my wife Karen, and Joe and Gay Haldeman, just before the Ceremonies, and I was up for a Hugo that night too. And I said "I'm not going to go, you guys go; I'll go back to the room, and I'll just wait until I find out who won in my category," and Joe said "Oh, come along Bob, I'm presenting in one of the categories tonight, and you might as well sit there, cheer me on, bring me a beer when I'm off stage." So I let them talk me into it, and we went to the Ceremony... and Joe presented me with a Hugo. He didn't know that it was the category I was in, I didn't know that, you know, it was one of those strange things. And even nicer than the Hugo, when I finally got off stage under the sweltering lights, Joe was standing right down there, somehow he'd had time to leave the stage and get me a beer.

Well, those are just some of the more memorable ones out of the fifty-one. A lot of them blur, but here we are, in God help us all, the twenty-first century, and another batch of Hugos is waiting backstage, and very shortly... very ... shortly... the happy winners will find out. In another fifty years, some one of you, who is now 16 or 17 years old, will be standing up here reminiscing about the 2004 Hugos. I don't expect to be there. But, whoever you are, say a good word for me. Thank you.



1987 : *"And Joe presented me with a Hugo..."*



WHIMSY IN FANAC: WITH YOUR SHIELD (OF UMOR) – OR ON IT! BY DEB GEISLER

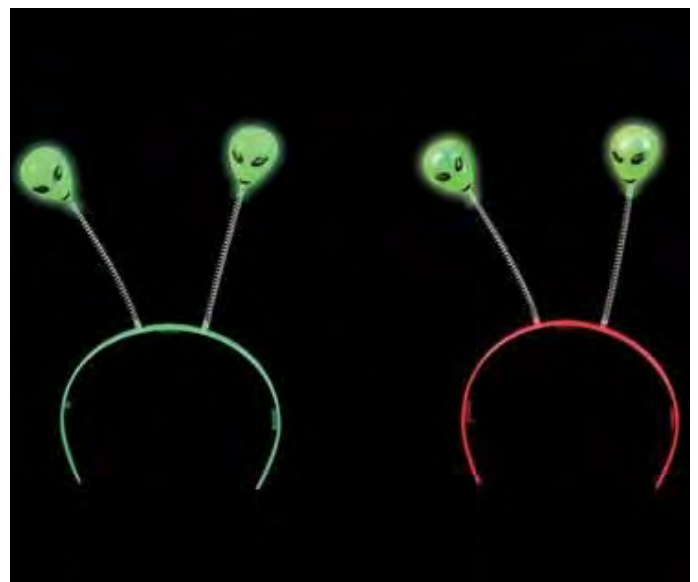
“SHIELD OF UMOR – AS A FAN, A SENSE OF HUMOUR IS YOUR BEST DEFENCE AGAINST THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF THE CRITICS OF YOUR FANZINE. FANS WITHOUT THIS SOON GET HURT AS THEY BEGIN TO TAKE THEIR FANAC TOO SERIOUSLY. IT IS AN INVALUABLE INGREDIENT OF THE PERFECT FANZINE.”

- EVE HARVEY, NOTES ON THE SEACON '79 (WORLDCON IN BRIGHTON) FAN ROOM EDITION OF THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, BY WALT WILLIS AND BOB SHAW

There are things this article won't tell you about, because the rest of the fannish world still doesn't know about my part in them (and at least one or two could get me in trouble even now – is there a fannish statute of limitations?).

But there are the things you might know about (or find funny): like the glow-in-the-dark alien-headed deely-boppers that I talked all of the former Worldcon chairs (excluding only one)(who I knew would say no)(and, of course, including me) into wearing for the formal “Old Pharts” portrait at Renovation in 2011.

It was funny. And it was whimsical. And it was definitely in the finest tradition of the Most Noble and Illustrious Order of St. Fantasy.



The Order of St. Fantony had its beginnings in post-WWII England. As David Kyle wrote in *Mimosa 11*, “the original goal of The Order was ‘Good Fellowship.’ The ‘Ceremonie’ was, more or less, a sort of prelude to a ‘Merrie Party of Trufen.’” The Order was the brain child of two British fans (Eric Jones and Bob Richardson) from Cheltenham, England, and their first official “ceremonie” was held in conjunction with a Liverpool fan group in 1957. Since the Worldcon that year was in London, the various knights made their first appearance on the global stage – two weeks before I was born – at Loncon I.



It would be another 32 years until my first Worldcon, Noreascon 3, and the Order of St. Fantony, in all of its charmingly goofy glory, recreated its “ceremonie” to open the Hugo Awards Event. As an introduction to the history of the fun involved in Worldcon, it was a fine start. An Order to ensure good fellowship and silliness? Where did I sign up? I figured that Saint Fantony was the patron saint of Worldcon Whimsy – and dedicated myself to helping keep up the American side.

Take, for instance, MagiCon.

The 1992 Worldcon in Orlando was marked by a committee mad for miniature golf. Every time there was a pre-con committee meeting, there was mini-golf. We hoped the lack of our mini-golf tournaments after Worldcon did not crush the local economy. Is there any wonder, then, that MagiCon developed the very clever solution for too much space in their exhibits hall...and had fannish groups from all over

creating their own “hole” for the fannish mini-golf course? It was brilliant!

(For my own bit of whimsy, my husband Mike Benveniste and I put together a display of unreal artifacts for the exhibits area of MagiCon, including things like an electric slide rule – complete with cord and plug – and a machete once used to chop down the bamboo fields of Mars.)

Mike and I were recruited by our friends Mark and Priscilla Olson to help run the newsletter for the 1996 Worldcon in Los Angeles, L.A.con III. The newsletter was really wonderfully put together, and we were part of a great team. Besides the actual convention newsletter, there would be, we knew, the inevitable hoax newsletters: put together by anonymous hacks to poke fun at the convention and its publications. But in this case, the best of the hoaxes was put together by the actual editors of the newsletter (and this might have been the first time that was the case) (although, given fans’ quirky senses of humor, perhaps not).

Since I’m by way of confessing here, about those flamingos: I’m really not sorry. Yes, it was partly (at least) my fault that fandom was inundated with thousands and thousands of pink flamingos in 1997 and 1998. (Yes, my friends are still occasionally “accidentally leaving behind” a flamingo at my house.) We lost that Worldcon bid at BucConeer in 1998, but can anyone say there’s been a more cheerful bid mascot? So it’s probably (okay, totally) my fault that a group of pretty intoxicated Baltimore fans carried a 7-foot, bright pink, papier-mâché flamingo through the streets of the city late one night. (Well, **we** didn’t need it any more...)



For the next few years, I was busy bidding for and helping to run the 2004 Boston Worldcon, Noreascon Four, but we still managed to be silly. I have a large ceramic piggy bank that is labeled the “CDPJF”

– the Chairman’s Discretionary Practical Joke Fund. (We actually used the money for a staff reception at the convention, but the threat was always there.) We laughed and giggled and cackled and chuckled our way through that amazing experience, in fact.

When my jobs for Denvention 3 in 2008 were a bit taxing, I recharged my sensawunda by ordering two sets of “gnome bowling” games from England and having them hand-carried to Denver by a generous friend (hi Brad!) who was temporarily working in England. Then certain co-conspirators ordered artificial grass to make the bowling experience first-rate, and I bought many tacky trinkets for prizes (because why not? Got a good deal.). And still other co-conspirators talked the exhibits folks into setting up the gnome bowling in the main exhibit hall (right at the main door, in fact). It was a thing of beauty, and I got a hard charge out of watching little (and big) kids cackle with glee while making Worldcon just a bit happier.



Worldcons are about getting together for our fannish family reunion, thinking about the future and the fantastic, hoisting a few in common good feeling, and having a laugh or 800. Look at the historic bits we have from Worldcons, and there’s a happy tradition of pranks and horrible puns and silliness. But in many cases, people are working so hard that they can’t really plan for a good bit of goofiness.

That’s where my friends and I come in.

We feel it is important to keep fighting tedium and sourpussery. (I’m pretty sure there’s no such word as “sourpussery,” but I’m equally sure just reading that made at least one person besides me snicker, so it stays.)

We invite you to join.

You can do it formally (last year, we introduced a motion to the WSFS Business Meeting, asking that the meeting declare that “Yngvi is not a louse” – we had ribbons, buttons, our own web site (<http://yngviisnotalouse.com>) – and there was a lot of fan-

nish history to that one), or with small, guerilla efforts (companies like Café Press make it possible to craft very realistic looking merchandise for all manner of hoaxes – and web sites can be pretty doggone cheap).

Get 100 miniature rubber duckies (\$42, with free shipping – I just looked)(of course I know where to find these things) and subtly plant them all over the convention – in exhibits, program rooms, parties, the art show. (Make it interactive by adding a note, taped to each one, saying “I’m lost! Please email duckies@mylegionsofdarkness.com and tell me where I was found!” Only you’ll need your own domain – that’s one of mine.)

Order ribbons you can attach to badges that say “AAOF” – and let people wrack their brains trying to figure out what it means. (Acronyms Are Our Friends.)

Start up a hoax Worldcon bid for the silliest locale you can imagine. (Do be careful with this. We thought about a hoax for Jupiter...until we found out that Jupiter, Florida had hotel and conference facilities that could just about work. Don’t run a hoax that is so good you actually win a Worldcon bid.) Run a fake Worldcon bid party, just to run a party. (Thank you, Xerps!)

All of it is fun. All of it is whimsical. All of it is very, very fannish.

Whatever you do, may you always find something to giggle about. Working on or going to Worldcons should lighten your heart and make you happy. Saint Fantony is counting on us.





Instant Fanzine *The Worldcon Issue*

What is Your First Worldcon Memory?

Gail Carriger

My first Worldcon was in Boston for Noreascon Four in 2004. I went with my best friend and it was a magical experience. For one thing, it was in a city I loved, that happened to be peopled by some dear friends I hadn't seen in years. For another, many aspects of the convention seemed designed perfectly. I'm afraid Noreascon Four has rather spoiled me for Worldcons ever since. Time and distance have made my memories more snippets than anything, but here are some of my favorite moments:

* Convention center and hotel in the same building!

* Living two meals a day out of the best con-suite provisions ever. Full hot meals for lunch and dinner, with vegetables and protein as well as starches! We were very poor graduate students, so please forgive us our mooching. Our third meal each day was (once we discovered it) taken at the tiny pub across the street from the convention center, wherein we discovered the best clam chowder I have ever eaten

in my life, complete with crusty bread and side salad for \$5!

* Wandering down the massive staircase and being greeted by my friend Bob, my first convention-made friend to reappear at another event unexpectedly. Familiar face!

* Milling about before the Hugos in the empty halls only to see Terry Pratchett himself looking a little forlorn. I could barely speak from awe, luckily my best friend Phrannish has no such compunctions. She hailed him from across the vacant room and dragged me over to meet him.

* Terry Pratchett remembering me and my name the next day before we left, when I was wearing a completely different outfit!

With those kinds of memories, is it any wonder I make every effort to attend Worldcon each year?

Jared Dashoff, born into fandom and son of Todd and Joni Brill Dashoff, has been attending Worldcons and regional conventions for over 25 years. His first Worldcon experience was at ConFederation in Atlanta in 1986.

I remember Atlanta as a dark place. Warm, but dark. There was a lot of noise, but none of it terribly discernible. People—one who was basically tied to me—but no faces I could pull out of a crowd. They tell me that Ray Bradbury was there, but I never saw the man. All I remember doing was eating and sleeping—the exact opposite of what many do at any con, especially a Worldcon.

Every other Worldcon I have stayed up late, partying into the dawn, never mind the photos that may or may not be out there on the Internet of me passed out in a Ben Franklin costume at a Philadelphia in 2001 bid party. Not this one. It was like I was literally in my bed the entire time.

I have been known to attend the Hugos, and participate in or attend the Masquerade and Business Meeting. At the latter, I have a propensity to open my mouth and insert my foot, but in 1986, I did not say a word. I doubt I even made a sound.

The best part of my attendance at ConFederation, I actually applied the rule from Treasure of the Sierra Madre, “Badges? We don’t need no stinkin’ badges!” and went around the entire con without a badge; I am not even sure I ever technically registered. (On a side note, I probably owe somebody about \$40 for that.) I didn’t get a single ribbon, though at other Worldcons, my badge would touch the floor due to the many colored rainbow of fabric strips, one glued to the other, that protruded from its base.

I am 26 now, 27 soon enough, but I will always remember my first Worldcon 27 years ago. Being born into fandom does have its privileges.

Robert Silverberg looking for books in the Dealer’s Room is my first substantial Worldcon memory. It was at my first Worldcon, Conspiracy 87 in Brighton. I was 16 years old. A friend went to ConFederation (1986) and told me how much fun he had. When I got to the convention, I was blown away.

I vaguely remember that there were parties at night and headaches in the morning... Chris Garcia

Crystal Huff

My first real memory of Worldcon is running the staff den for Anticipation in 2009. We stayed up until past midnight, the day prior to opening the staff den, in order to cook homemade Indian food for the first real meal. It smelled like heaven, and we went into the con with incredible sleep deprivation, to such an extent that we lost a tray of homemade shahi paneer korma for several days inside one of the fridges.

The evening was marred a little by being yelled at for not having ham accessible in the staff den yet. We weren’t officially open, but we wanted to feed whoever was already on site. Most of my staff running the den was fairly new to Worldcon, so it was

particularly astonishing to us that established SMOFs would point fingers and issue dire warnings about a lack of pig products. They seemed to have assumed that since some of us kept kosher, pork would be barred from the staff den for the weekend. Even today, the memory both makes me smile and irritates me. Sometimes, the inaccuracy of people’s assumptions is astonishing. We bought hundreds of dollars in ham for that convention, ordered weeks in advance.



James Bacon

I think what strikes me the most about my first Worldcon, is that at the end, it also felt like my last.

There was no thought, let alone any discussion, about Los Angeles the following year. That was not even a pipe dream - it was worse, some nasty suggestion to upset you, to ensure unhappiness - better to cherish what you had just had, than to think about a future that was not going to be there for you.

Worldcon was such a big thing. It was so vast and so far away. Even as Irish fans jetted off, and there were indeed a few, nothing much was heard except wondrousness.

Many years later I remember saying to Helen Montgomery, that there had better be pizza in the Con Suite at Chicon 7, and she looked worried, and I said earnestly, 'COME ON there had better be pizza, don't ruin the legendary elements...' You see all I had heard about Chicon some twelve years before, was about this magical 'Suite' where you got free food, and there was lots and lots of Chicago Pizza. And so my eyes had glazed over, and I dreamed of such a place: science fiction, pizza and, as Brian Jones would say, Mid-Western farmers' daughters.

I cannot imagine it now. The naïve excitement.

Intersection. The 1995 Worldcon. 4 - 8 August 1995. Scottish Exhibition Centre, Glasgow.

I had thought I might be able to write some sort of professional and coherent report about Intersection, but now I realise it was just one huge non-stop continuous socialising and drinking and cavorting monster of boisterousness. I was 21. It is eighteen years ago.

Jesus it was mental! It was definitely an experience. Fecking Hell.

Irish Science Fiction fans, from Dublin to Glasgow on rail and ferry.

The trip was lively, we played games of Magic. Drink, Mana, Feck.

The Convention Read Me, which was so beautifully presented

Andy, emptying cartons of condoms onto the table and he explained it was the safer sex table and he was in some sort of Gay and Lesbian SF group. Feck.

I noted with a sense of aplomb and I discreetly pocketed some. Girls.

Drink, G-men. Feck. Drink.

We decided to walk to the con, Iain Banks' fabled Espedair Street unfinished walkways, looked at it.

Book launch. Editorial and marketing types, all ladies.

Irish accent a winner. Feck, Girls, and Free Drink.

Boston party table, handing out beer. Mick said, 'are you only serving beer', no, we have these, and Mick said, 'can I have a Southern Comfort and Ice please', and they gave him one, and he said, 'can I have one for the wife please', and he pointed at Phil (omena) and they gave him a second, and I said 'Can I have the same please', and they gave me two too.

Baltimore Pirates with Rum and Coke, in a pint glass. Thanks Ginner.

Cabin Bar was halfway along the concourse.

Billy Stirling, and the 'Republic of Texas' man, Randy Shepherd.

New concept, corkage paid = bid party with free booze allowed in bar.

Pitchers of Rum. Girls, Drink, Feck.

Staggering back at 7 a.m.

'Then we went back to the con, he had about 10 minutes of sleep.'

Vodkas. Smiley Soviet Army parachuting across Europe with booze. Where is that Moscow Worldcon? Feck.

Girls. Drink. Fecking Hell.

I went to a programme item. Holy Feck, was OK, had a drink.

Baltimore won the bid for the Worldcon, Rum and Coke. Drink.

Girls, Drink, Fecking Hell.

Last night. Having a fight with the floor, but that's OK, perhaps I was drunk.

Bundles of business cards, many books, free stuff, zines something different that stuck their fingers up at the wispy beards. (Is that me now?) Home on the train and ferry and it was a grand trip home.

Slept for about 2 days when I got home.

It was terrific. It was over. I missed it.

What is Your Favorite Worldcon Moment?

Warren Buff

My favorite Worldcon experience hit me almost immediately upon arrival at Renovation. I was walking into the convention center, having walked there from the Peppermill (at least a kilometer in desert heat), and was on my way to get my badge (and in sight of registration) when I spotted Patty Wells, the chair of the convention. I waved, since we would be working together on Exhibits for LoneStarCon 3 (which was unopposed at the time and pretty much a lock), and we'd agreed we ought to have a preliminary discussion about staffing. I thought we might talk about when I could steal some of her time (a real challenge when you're trying to meet with an active Worldcon chair).

When Patty walked over, she was suddenly visible in the middle of the hallway, and someone looking for help with an issue on the con came up to grab her attention. At about this time, I also spotted Paul Cornell approaching, and having met him a couple years before in Dallas, waved. He came to join us, Patty ran off to solve problems, and then we were spotted by René Walling (who was not yet infamous), who was escorting Marina Gélineau, the designer of that year's Hugo Award base. The conversation went rapid-fire, and I began to loudly opine that I hadn't been impressed with that year's nominee from *Fables*, in spite of a general love for the series. Paul's eyes went wide, and he began shaking his head in a quick, telling manner – so of course Bill Willingham was walking up from behind me, and seemingly hadn't heard. After more arguments about the merits of the Graphic Story category, we realized Marina wasn't saying much, and Paul stopped us to get her input – whereupon we realized that she spoke only a little bit of English, and that René was serving as her translator. We slowed down to make sure we could include her.

The circle suddenly expanded again, as Mary Robynette Kowal arrived, along with two puppeteers who would be performing with her at the convention. We were now dangerously close to collapsing into separate conversations, and the arrival of an editor (I believe David Hartwell, but he wound up in a different circle than I did when the conversation split) prompted that. After another five or ten minutes, someone finally left the conversational vortex, and suddenly, the roadblock cleared. Everyone remembered what they were going to do before they stopped to chat, and left smiling. I had spent thirty minutes in a really great conversation about science fiction with a number of really cool folks, and I hadn't even picked up my badge yet. It was the perfect start to a great convention.

Crystal Huff

There are so many!

One of my favorite Worldcon moments was meeting Dave Kyle for the first time. He's always so friendly and engaging, and he told such excellent stories of fandom. I was one of three people assigned to Dave for the Hugos one year, and we did our best to make him feel special and have a great Worldcon. This included taking many silly "Charlie's Angels" photos with Dave. It was such a night filled with laughter and friendships. I treasure it.

I also really enjoyed the heck out of running the Worldcon Photo Booth this year at LoneStarCon 3. Seeing so many people making silly memories to be caught on film, like hunting down a stuffed polar bear or a nest with alien-penguin hybrids or playing with Moomins... that was great. It also showed me a far wider range of Worldcon attendees than I'd previously been conscious of; we had a lot more diversity at our convention than I'd expected, which was welcome news to me.

"Worldcon means a lot to me, but mostly it means The World. That's key. The World of Worldcon" - Chris Garcia

Juan Sanmiguel

My favorite Worldcon memory is a hard question. There are so many it is hard to choose one. It is fun volunteering at setup/teardown, information desk, volunteer desk, door guard, the Internet staff, and Masquerade. It is an honor to be a panel participant. It is great to see old friends, meet new ones, and introduce fans from home to the Worldcon.

The best memories are helping people at Worldcon: giving directions to events or con facilities, getting costumers where they needed to be at the Masquerade, standing in line for a friend so she can go to a Kaffeeklatsch with her favorite writer, finding a writer who was late for his Kaffeeklatsch, getting someone to connect to their email remotely, or loaning out my headphones to a reporter to hear an interview in a loud room.

What Makes Worldcon Special?

Grant Kruger

There's no comparing Worldcon to giant media, anime and comic cons, but through the years I've regularly been asked if Worldcon was different enough from local literary cons to be worth attending. My answer is always an emphatic, "Hell yeah!"

Then I get into the specifics.

Gathering of the Tribes: I'm regularly known as 'THE South African' on the US con circuit. There aren't many of us foreigners about, but at Worldcon I've joined up to twelve other South Africans to host a party. I know of no other con where you'll find so many nationalities in attendance, folks from Ireland, Japan, Holland, Germany, Canada, Russia, Norway, Israel, etc. Why come so far? Because Worldcon is worth it. Plus those who run local cons also run Worldcon so you have a gathering of ideas and conrunning knowhow too.

The Hufrippinggos: Only the most prestigious literary award in all of fandom. The Hugos are a real treasure and any Worldcon member (if you're attending then you're a member) can make nominations and then vote for winners. As a bonus you also find other awards, like the Campbell and the Big Heart.

Travelling: Each year Worldcon gets a new host city around the world, meaning fresh ideas, flavors and tourist opportunities. Many attendees regularly combine Worldcon with a vacation.

Programming: Hundreds of guests (writers, scientists, editors, agents, etc.) with a plethora of big names, on many hundreds of panels. The quality is well beyond what you'll see at even the best local con. My ex-wife wasn't a big SFF fan, but still loved Worldcon program because the topics are so broad. You also find movies, videos, anime, gaming and more. There's also programming for children, some of it amongst the best on offer.

Parties: The best social party scene I've ever seen. Sure, many have more rocking dance parties, but if you want to meet people and have a great social time then Worldcon evenings are for you.

Non-Corporate: It's an all-volunteer-run event. Nobody makes any money and any profits are handed off to future Worldcons and other worthwhile endeavors. When I compare Worldcon's five days of wonderful entertainment at cost (\$150-\$300) with up to a thou-

sand program items, to the average pricey tech con I go to (\$800-\$1,800) for two or three days of hit-and-miss programming laden with sales pitches and droning waffle, then I'm doubly amazed that the best con I know of is also a gift community. So volunteer! It's not just doing your bit; it's a brilliant way to make friends.

And So Much More: There's a large astonishing Masquerade with costumes of outstanding quality alongside the creative and the fun, many worked on all year long. The dealers' room is an adventure of its own and you'll find treasures you didn't even know you desperately needed. Kaffeeklatsches and Beerklatsches where you can chat directly with your favorite writers. A sensational art show with exceptional quality artwork. An exhibit hall where you can see anything from the throne from Game of Thrones to the ambulance from Firefly, alongside displays from international fandom and fannish history. Exhibits of past Hugo statues and fanzines sit alongside convention bid tables for future cons and Worldcons. There's usually a splendid consuite with complimentary drinks and snacks and plenty of space for relaxing and socializing. And so much more.

Summary: If you've never been, for heaven's sake go to a Worldcon. You will not be sorry. It's astounding! You'll love it. And come because we want you there and we'd love to meet you.

Crystal Huff

Worldcon is so complex that there are positive and negative ways in which it's special. It's an annual gathering of a community, and the community has continuity, but also constant turnover. Worldcon includes people who've never attended, but become supporting members because they care and want to be included in the community. Worldcon includes people who've walked in the door for the first time and decided to see what the international science fiction community might have in store for them. Worldcon includes people who attend nigh-annually (and some have for decades) because they've found a fannish home here. Worldcon includes, theoretically, anyone who wants to be included.

Worldcon has a wide range of science fiction and fantasy attractions -- panels, professionals in the field, the Hugo awards (both participation and the cer-

emony), the Masquerade, Guest of Honor events, other individual events, many parties of serious and silly natures, exhibits to look at, field trips on location, vendors to sell all sorts of items and books, various media entertainments ... there are people who attend only in order to work the convention, even, because that's what makes them happy at Worldcon.

Worldcon is a science fiction and fantasy convention with a tradition of relocation, which is a fascinating endeavor that causes some wheels to be frequently reinvented, but also a bit of a problem. I know it's a bit of a political hot button, but Worldcon has been in North America 58 times, and outside North America only 13. That seems unfair to me, although I know some others feel it's not a problem.

Juan Sanmiguel

The Worldcon has a sense of history. The convention honors those who have given substantial contributions to the field by awarding the Hugos and by making them Guests of Honor. It also gives the opportunity to honor those who have left us by memorial panels or the In Memoriam part of the Hugos. The exhibits give us information on the history of the field and fandom worldwide. The Worldcon tells us where we have been.

The fact it is a traveling convention is also very important. It gives one a chance to see and meet talented fans and pros from other countries. This aspect of the convention is at times problematic from a planning perspective, but done well it broadens everyone's horizons.

What Would You Change If You Could?

Genese Davis

Worldcon is a celebration of art and demonstrates a fantastic tribute to the arduous journey of writing. This international convention has grown into far more than a literary event that hosts the Hugo awards. It has blossomed into a rich environment where people from all over the world can discover new interests or develop their long lost passions.

With the goal to grow Worldcon, there are a few things that come to mind. Visibility and marketability is extremely important for any convention, and something that Worldcon is lacking. For example, it is extremely difficult to pinpoint official emblems or logos for Worldcon. If someone were to Google 'Worldcon', he/she would be unable to locate any official insignia. This year at the convention in San Antonio, TX, there were no banners or runners where photographers could photograph the authors and attendees standing in front of Worldcon images. There were no Worldcon banners hanging from hallways or in front of session rooms. This may seem like a small addition to the convention but it has huge potential for marketability and for bringing visibility to the convention itself. If people were to compare internet images between other conventions like Comic-Con to Worldcon, they'd find a plethora of photos of Comic-Con banners, logos, insignia, and hundreds of images of special guests and fans of that convention, but none for the latter.

Having a bigger online presence will help appeal to all sorts of writers with all types of backgrounds. Also, adding more pop culture sessions to Worldcon will help grow the convention as well!

Juan Sanmiguel

One change I would make is to have the Guest of Honor presentations be a prime time event. Some past Worldcons have done this. These should be done on Thursday or Friday night. This could make the Guest of Honor speeches as important as the Masquerade or Hugos.

I am open to any changes that will help the Worldcon stay in business, whether that is adding or changing Hugo categories, modifying the programming track, or bringing in other activities. The only thing I am not eager about is the bringing in actors as Guests of Honor. I think the Worldcon should focus on creators. We have already honored media creators like Joe Michael Straczynski and Gerry Anderson. Hopefully in the future we may see Joss Whedon, Ron Moore, Chris Carter, Russell T. Davies and Steven Moffat as future GOHs. All recommended changes should receive a fair review.

What Does The Future Hold?

James Shields

Worldcon is changing.

This is probably a good thing, as most people I speak to agree change is needed. The only problem is, no one can actually agree on what form that change should take. Conversations on the subject have a habit of getting dominated by egos and often descend into name calling.

So in anticipation of stirring up the wrath of fannish hatred, here are some thoughts on changes that might be on the way.

The first one is that I think we can expect Worldcon to travel a lot further, and a lot more often. We often forget that the "World" part of Worldcon came about because of the 1939 World's Fair in New York. I don't believe that there was any intent that it would be a world-wide event, or that it would still be running over 70 years later, but the name stuck. However, a lot of people are looking at Worldcon from around the world, and are thinking "how can we get some of this". This is evidenced by the fact that including next year's seated Worldcon in London, there are six conventions or bids for locations outside the US for the next seven years.

This situation is partly enabled by experienced US con-runners who like the idea of conventions in exotic foreign parts and are willing to volunteer to assist with bidding and running a convention. Developments in communications have made bringing together a large and disparate group of organisers together relatively easy, and the organisers can be much more widely geographically dispersed than they were previously.

I think there are numerous fan groups around Europe that regularly run conventions with several thousand attendees, but they don't really get noticed because they are in languages we don't speak. However, as these countries get more affluent, and more of their fans start traveling to Worldcons, they are bound to be thinking, "this isn't that much bigger than the event we run".

But that's only the beginning. I don't have figures, but I'm willing to bet that science fiction in Asia is huge. Countries like India, China, Thailand and Korea have vast populations of well educated people who are becoming increasingly wealthy. When they

take an interest in Worldcon, they will be incredibly well organised and will arrive in numbers that will shock and awe us. Eventually, South America is bound to also look for a Worldcon of its own.

So where does this leave the US? If it was left with only 3-4 "home" conventions per decade, will US attendees lose interest and stop going to Worldcon altogether? Or will they perhaps appreciate it more in the years they do have it and attend in greater numbers?

One possibility I think we should consider is using new technology to make Worldcon more accessible. What if we could have two or more Worldcons happening simultaneously in different parts of the world? How about panels with half the participants in Europe, and half in the US? The technology to do this is still not mature enough, but it's getting there, and in the next few years should be rock solid. Of course the more difficult barrier to overcome is the one of time zones.

"Worldcon wisely uses a dissociated system, allowing the sins of the Father to be ignored by the Son."

Steve Russell

Maybe we could also allow supporting members to take part, watching panels that interest them over the web, though I can't see any way for them to experience the social interaction (but that could just be because I'm not clever enough to think of a way it could work).

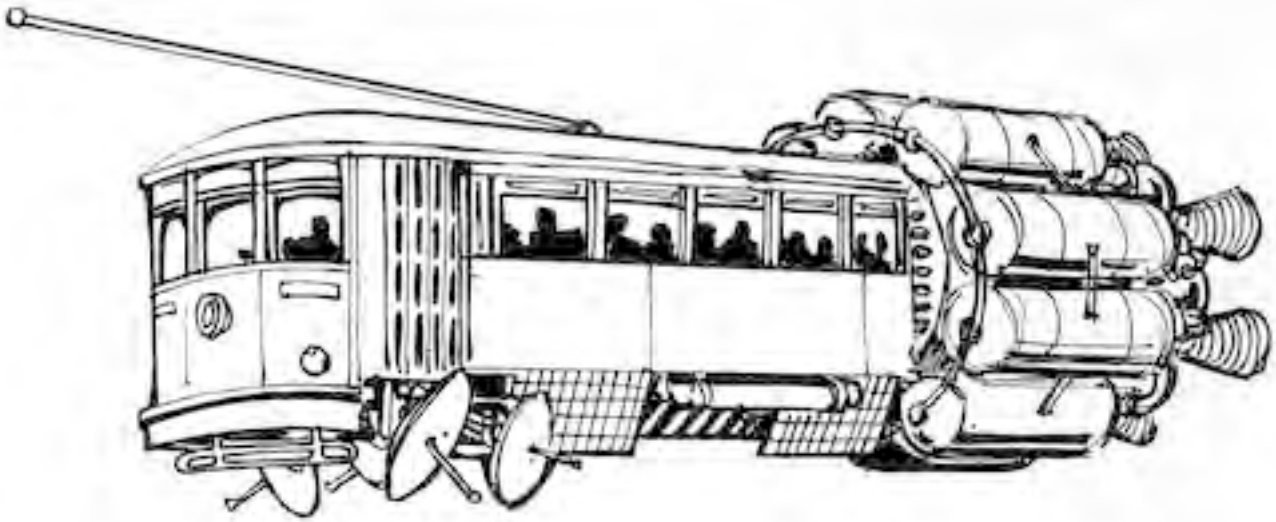
But the big thing Worldcon needs to learn is how to attract young fans again. Come to European cons and the average age of attendees is a lot lower. They are going to conventions in their home countries because those conventions are giving them what they want. I believe that young fans in the US are still going to conventions, but Worldcon is no longer their convention of choice.

It's time for Worldcon to start listening to what people actually want.

This is the sort of question that tends to get me in trouble with a certain demographic, 'cause I'm a hippie. I look for future Worldcons to be a place and time where people are focused on the goals we have in common rather than tearing each other down based on our differences. I want to see staff who are excited and happy and organized when working on Worldcon. I want to see the community members treat each other well, with respect and appreciation.

I do hope we keep the Worldcon going in the future. It is not the same convention it was in 1939. Parts of it will adapt to the times. Hopefully it will bring fans and pros together and continue the great Science Fiction conversation.





PREACHING TO THE UNCONVERTED BY MEG FRANK

The easiest way I know to convince someone to do something with you is to tell them how much you love said activity and then explain why exactly they'll love it, too. I've been in fandom every day of my life and I've spent the last few years marketing Worldcons so you'd think that I'd have this speech down by now. But it wasn't until this last weekend when I took a rather last minute trip to visit some fannish family that I was really struck with the inspiration for what to say.

It's no secret that all things sci-fi have gone mainstream. The Comic Cons have grown beyond huge and The Big Bang Theory was given how many Emmy nods? Reboots of awesome sci-fi and fantasy series from our youth are all the rage and it's cool to be a geek now.

Unfortunately, while this expansion of geeky glory is wide-spread, it doesn't seem to have the depth that I have found in old-school fandom in terms of community and celebration of geeky content. (Don't get me wrong, I'm still thrilled that I don't have to swing by my little brother's school and help him out because he's being bullied about his comic books.)

There are a number of levels of conventions out there, but for the purposes of this article, I'm only going to discuss three because you don't want to be reading this forever. If you do, you are stranger than I imagine you to be.

The first level of conventions is your standard Comic Con. I have long held that these events are not actually conventions, but Expos. Anytime you are cramming that many people into a convention hall, you lose the sense of comfort and relaxation that I

have always experienced at conventions. When you can't sit down and have a casual conversation on a bench because you'd be in the way of a line snaking down the hall and out the door, you lose something. Will you meet people and get to know them? We'll I'd hope so since you'll be standing in line with them for hours on end. But this kind of situation doesn't allow for connection on more than a superficial, casual level. You might comment on each other's costumes, but frankly it can be too hard to discuss the origins of the character and their fatal flaws if you are surrounded by a hundred thousand other people, all of whom are trying to get into Hall H. Comic Cons are great for press conferences that make for great videos and Tumblr gifs, but unless you have a microphone, don't expect to be heard. I'd never recommend that a new fan attend (or an old, unless they have a posse) for fear of scaring them away from what can be a great community.

Next up, we have DragonCon. DragonCon can be overwhelming for a different reason. DragonCon often feels not like one con, but a dozen. Each track can feel like its own con, sharing space out of necessity, surrounding one enormous dealers' room. As a result, it can be equally difficult to connect with people, because it can be intimidating to wander out of the track you are in when there is no middle ground to gather in. For instance, a traditional con suite simply isn't going to work for a convention of fifty thousand members. It's no longer a place that the majority of the members can go for relaxation and good, mostly uninterrupted conversation - but either another vast hall with no intimacy, or somewhere too

crowded to hang out in. DragonCon is one heck of an experience, but once again, not something that I would recommend to a new fan for fear of overwhelming them.

Before I go into why I think Worldcon is better, I'd first like to say that I don't think there is anything wrong with only having brief conversations about anything inside the geeky world or out. Not everyone wants to write their dissertation about the physics of X-Men. I get that. I don't want to write about that either. Whatever level of geek is desired by a person is the right level of geek for that person. And if anyone ever tells you different, they are an idiot.

In contrast to Conic Con or DragonCon, Worldcon's smaller size allows members to either surround themselves with other fans, distance themselves completely, or find their ideal middle ground. In many ways it's more comfortable, letting a fan experience the con without being overwhelmed, and interact with people without feeling rushed. Members can walk to the Art Show, and meet twenty new people, without having to spend the next seven hours waiting in line forced to be with those same people. Worldcon

has the size and it has the space to be the best of both worlds. Conversations end up ranging in depth from quips about Thor's abs to detailed descriptions of Alcubierre bubble warp drive theory because they aren't constrained or forced. There are so many opportunities that Worldcon members have, so much to do in that weekend, that you just can't get at any other convention. Too many conventions that get compared to Worldcon are simply too big to be enjoyed fully.

Additionally, and to some extent more importantly, I find that the larger conventions have a much looser knit community supporting it because of the limitations on interactions that I touched on before. Worldcon members have the luxury of deciding what level of social interaction they want. Though they may need to get in line for the more popular signings or the best seats at the Hugo Awards Ceremony, being stuck in line next to Hugo nominees is vastly less sucky. People at Worldcon can be someone you talk to for a few minutes, a best friend waiting to happen, or even turn out to be fannish family. Granted, these people exist everywhere, but I haven't found a gathering that leads to as many rich connections with others. Once again, skimming the surface of connections like this isn't a bad thing if that

is what you are looking for, but isn't the opportunity for more if you want it better? The people I met at DragonCon aren't going to be the people I call to help me move house in a pinch, because there is no foundation there for deeper connection. But the people from Worldcon? Those are the people that I call when my world is falling down and I need someone to help me pick it back up. I travel to see them, just as often as I travel to other conventions. This isn't because the people that are attending Worldcon are better, though I have no doubt that some of them love to think they are – we're all a little vain sometimes – it's because the convention itself sets members up to succeed in reaching out to others and knitting them into each other's lives.

Worldcon, in my opinion, is better than any other convention out there. It isn't just a bigger version of a regional con, it is a better one. It gives its members the opportunity to make it what they desire and bring people together. It is a unique celebration of community and I feel lucky to be a part of it. I hope you give us a try.





BIDS FOR FUTURE WORLDCONS

While some may claim that Worldcon is on its last legs, the truth is that there are as many cities bidding for the next few years as we have seen for a very long time. There are bids for most years out to 2022, including no less than four for 2017 alone. We invited current bidders to tell us a little more about why they want to bid, and what they would do with the event if they win.

Kansas City in 2016 - Ruth Lichtwardt, Jeff Orth, and Diane Lacey (aka Team LOL)

What would be your motivations for bidding to run a Worldcon?

Besides certifiable insanity? That's what the previous Worldcon chairs keep mentioning.

Since there are three of us co-chairing this bid, we each have our own motivations to a certain extent. At the same time, we three have worked together long enough and are good enough friends that the overriding motivation is shared by all of us, and it's evolved.

When we started, it was sort of "Downtown Kansas City is ready to host a Worldcon - let's do it!" As we've traveled and talked with so many people over the past several years, we've come to realize just how epic Big Mac - the last KC Worldcon, almost 40 years ago - was to a lot of fans. Now our motivation is closer to "Kansas City can do that again - let's do

it!" We absolutely believe that, should we win™, we will offer fans a Really Good Time.

Oh, and we want to introduce everyone to the Food of the Ghods: Kansas City barbecue.

What would your city bring to Worldcon?

Kansas City (Missouri) has invested over \$5 billion into renovating its downtown to be a great place to play, shop, live, and work. The convention center has been expanded and is state-of-the-art, and many of the nearby historic hotels have been restored to their original glory. There is plenty to do within easy range, and excellent restaurants abound. And internet? KC MO is the first city getting Google Fiber.

And, did we mention barbecue?

What would Worldcon do for your city?

Kansas City MO and Lawrence KS (40 minutes west) have robust SF communities that are little known outside their participants. Kansas City has thriving comic cons and anime cons that are largely unaware of the older SF traditions. We believe that a well-publicized Worldcon will draw people from these fandoms, and bring in other regional SF fans who aren't aware of fandom yet. It will also introduce fandom to a great mid-sized city which isn't usually thought of as a "destination," yet has a lot to offer.

Added bonus, it will also help spread the gospel of the Food of the Ghods.

What does your Worldcon want to do for science fiction?

While it's way too early to talk about programming or specific events, some of our overall goals (should we win™) include actively recruiting and bringing in younger conrunners to be mentored by more experienced Worldcon staff; partnering with regional organizations and businesses for promotion and events; and reaching out to communities where fans exist who aren't aware of Worldcons or other fandoms outside of what they see in the media. We're looking for innovation and ideas and new ways to blend with the old, and to help show both how important and how much fun SF can be.

Nippon in 2017 - Andrew A. Adams

The Nippon in 2017 committee believe that the Worldcon should be a world convention in location as well as attendee citizenship. We think Nippon 2007 was a generally successful convention enjoyed by its attendees, both Japanese and visitors. Japanese culture is steeped in the fantastic and the science fictional, and Japanese written science fiction is too little known outside Japan. We'd like to showcase more Japanese SF to overseas fans. In addition, we want to bring the world of fandom and of English language science fiction into Japan and to make it more accessible. In particular we want to encourage greater social interaction between Japanese and Western fans than we managed in 2007.

While we'd love to hold a Worldcon in Tokyo itself that's pretty much financially impossible (the sites are WAY too expensive unless we could get a major arts grant from the government or some foundation - pretty unlikely). Since our committee are mostly based in/near Tokyo, we are therefore looking at bidding sites primarily within "Greater Tokyo" such as Yokohama (the known and highly attractive site of Nippon 2007) or Chiba with its SF connotations (with a sky the colour of a TV tuned to a dead channel) and its nearness to Narita airport.

I don't think Worldcon does anything "for the city" of Greater Tokyo. It has other fish to fry such as an Olympics in 2020. What Worldcon here would do,



I think, is give a boost to fandom for written SF (somewhat dwarfed by comics and anime in Japan) and give a first Worldcon experience to many Japanese who do not have the holiday time to spare on trying a Worldcon out overseas. The willingness of overseas fans to come to Japan and open up dialogues would, we hope, expand our local fandom as well as contribute to more Japanese coming to Worldcon overseas.



Northeast in 2017 - Warren Buff

The Northeast Corridor of the United States has long been a hotbed of science fiction and fandom. The region hosts the world's oldest science fiction convention, multiple clubs - two with permanent clubhouses - and serves as the epicenter of science fiction publishing. Fans routinely travel from one end of the region to the other along its convention circuit, maintaining an intricate regional community. Worldcons on the East Coast have routinely been large and vibrant, but the area is currently in its longest spell without one since they began. This spring, some of us started thinking it might be a good time to organize regionally and change that. We created a mailing list called SPRAWL in homage to William Gibson's vision of the Boston-Atlanta Metropolitan Axis and started our search. When we discovered that BWAWA (organizers of the 1998 Baltimore Worldcon, BucCo-ner) were also exploring a possible bid, we agreed to join forces.

We have explored Washington and Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Charlotte, and Atlanta. While Atlanta

turned out to be a non-starter we're still considering those first four, and have some great proposals on the table for 2017. We'll be making our choice soon. In December, at SMOFcon, we'll announce which city we're bidding.

We're also carefully building a committee across fannish generations, with committee members who had been working on cons for over a decade before others were even born, drawing input from the whole range. Our committee includes past Worldcon chairs, division heads, and chair's staff, and numerous veteran area heads and regional conrunners. We bring a diverse set of experiences and interests to the project of designing the best Worldcon we can, and would love to have the chance to put our ideas into action.

We're aiming for a centralized convention space with a majority of the hotel rooms within a block and a large assortment of restaurants and tourist sites conveniently nearby. We know that while the con itself is the draw, the city in which it is located can aid in bringing fans in and in running a con that they will remember fondly. We want to reinvigorate fandom both internationally and locally, across ages, and choosing a site with a strong base and that can be a memorable one is important to us -- especially for the momentous occasion that will occur in 2017.

2017 will bring the 75th Worldcon, and for this occasion we want to bring in a new generation of Worldcon fans from our region and revitalize attendance among those who have drifted away. We're planning an August date to minimize conflicts with the ever-earlier school calendar and ease the dilemma of writers, artists, editors, and dealers who might otherwise be tempted to choose Dragon*Con over Worldcon. We are also looking at sites that really want a Worldcon, from both a fannish and a location perspective. With our experience and our mission, we believe that we can bring this historic Worldcon to a world-class city and make it one for the ages.



Helsinki in 2017 - Eemeli Aro

As many reading this probably know, Helsinki in 2015 was a bid aimed at getting Finnish fandom on the international map, helping people realize that we have great organizational skills, great fun, and great people – in addition to great science fiction, of course! We succeeded at earning people's attention and respect with the 2015 bid, if we do say so ourselves. We just didn't quite win the 2015 Worldcon in the process.

Bidding for Worldcon in 2017, we want to help bring European fans together more for Worldcon. Europe is full of fannish activity, but European fandom lacks organization as a cohesive entity. We hope that Europeans who go to Loncon 3 will want to go to Worldcon again soon, and be invested in fandom at large. We think having a Helsinki Worldcon is a great way to continue to bring European fans together as a community.

We also think that Finnish fandom has a lot to offer Worldcon, and the Finns have been quietly contributing to the genre for a long time. Finnish language and the Kalevala myth inspired Tolkien to create the Quenya language, after all. More recently, Johanna Sinisalo, Hannu Rajaniemi, Petri Hiltunen, Ninni Aalto and many others have been bringing great literature and art to the field.

Finnish fandom also has a long tradition of silliness and fun. We craft filk songs for our guests of honor at Finncon. We retrofit cigarette-dispensing machines to sell inexpensive sci-fi comic books. Finns gather at the pub weekly (sometimes more often) for "mafia" meetings to discuss science fiction and convention-running (and everything else).

Helsinki's August daytime temperatures are 72F (22C), or thereabouts, which doesn't hurt when planning a Worldcon. The locals speak English in a lilting accent (as well as often speaking Finnish, Swedish, German, Russian, Dutch, and/or Estonian, with the occasional Czech accent to be found). Finns focus on design and efficiency as well as artistry, in work as in play, and that would definitely be reflected in a Helsinki Worldcon.

Helsinki as a city also offers some major practical benefits! The city is offering free public transit to all Worldcon members. The hotel room rates are likely to be the least expensive Worldcon has seen in quite some time; for the 2015 bid our rates started from a little over \$100 USD -- and that includes breakfast and tax, never mind that Finland doesn't have a tipping culture. We are also eligible for a number of cultural grants, which should help keep our membership rates very low. Although we're not sure how much we can help with travel costs for individual fans, we are working on building relationships in the airline industry, and Finnair and Norwegian have both recently opened many new routes through Helsinki. Fans may find that airfare is far less expensive than they had expected, and the visit itself will certainly be worth the trip!

We believe Nordic and Finnish fandom in particular has a lot to show to the rest of the world, and we'd very much like the opportunity to shine. The right place and time for that is Helsinki in 2017, which will also coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Finnish Declaration of Independence. We intend Helsinki in 2017 to be a celebration of international cooperation and friendship.



New Orleans in 2018

What would be your motivations for bidding to run a Worldcon?

We love science fiction fandom and the institution of Worldcon and we love our city and region. By bringing the 76th World Science Fiction convention to the city of New Orleans, we believe that both will benefit. Moreover, New Orleans and Worldcon need each other.

By 2018, it will have been 30 years since our city, and by extension the Central Gulf Coast, has hosted a Worldcon. By hosting it here, we hope to introduce an entire generation of fans here to world fandom in a way that only hosting a Worldcon can. This would draw more of our region's fans into participation both in fandom generally, and local fandom in particular.

Further, we believe that we have as much to give to wider fandom as we can receive. Our region's enthusiasm and spirit of fun would give our Worldcon an energy any science fiction convention needs. As much as we might wish it were not so, Worldcon no longer exists unchallenged for the attention of young fans. We want our convention to attract those fans, to show them what a fan-run science fiction convention can be, and to keep them and motivate them to bring science fiction fandom forward.

What would your city bring to Worldcon?

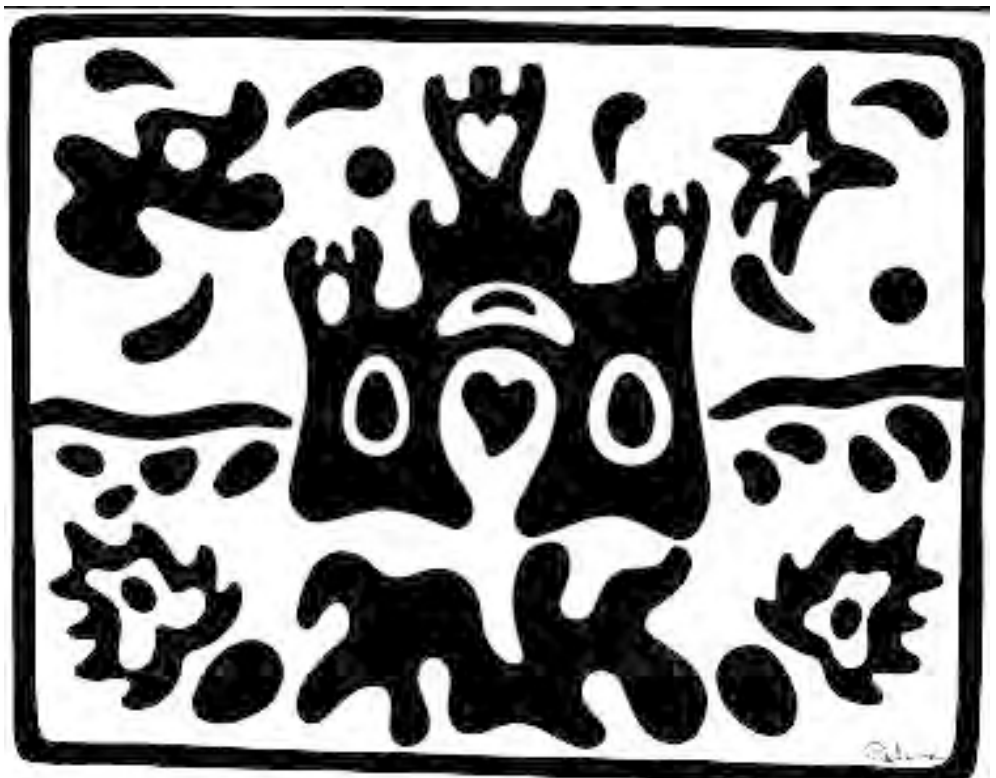
Besides the energy of our fans, our city brings the amenities of a true world-class convention city. Our restaurants are some of the finest in the world, ranging from price from the affordable on a budget to haute cuisine. Our convention will be downtown, within a brief streetcar ride from the world famous French Quarter and many of our dozens of other attractions -- including our renowned music, museums and architecture. Moreover, New Orleans itself can be reached through non-stop flights available from all over the U.S. and Toronto and by train with service from Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.

What would Worldcon do for your city?

Worldcon would not only introduce an entire generation of fans here to world fandom, it would be a chance to shine another light on science fiction fandom here as it's been known for years before the arrival of the "comic-cons." The year 2018 will be the three-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the City of New Orleans. By working with our convention bureau, we will be associating Worldcon with the other activities celebrating our city's birthday. As New Orleans becomes a part of Worldcon, Worldcon will be part of New Orleans.

What does your Worldcon want to do for science fiction?

We hope that, along with our energy and the attractiveness of our city, we can help advance science fiction fandom. Worldcon has always evolved as times have changed. We hope to help move Worldcon and fandom generally forward in a way that allows them to grow without losing our essence as a community. Our city itself is an example of how this is possible. We have a long history of adapting and surviving without losing our traditions which arise from our people themselves. We believe a New Orleans Worldcon in 2018 can help do that for fandom.



Dublin 2019

What would be your motivations for bidding to run a Worldcon?

To bring a world-class convention focussed on one's interest to one's country is an incredible motivation. Ireland has never hosted a Worldcon before, despite having a strong tradition and historical involvement in science fictional fandom.

For those who enjoying convening events, the ability to transfer a convention to a whole different place, a different country, is one of the majestic elements of Worldcon. Irish people have supported Worldcon as volunteers, staff and committee, as Area Heads and Division Heads, and the idea of bringing the convention to their home induces a level of pride that is immeasurable until you hear the applause and smiles of fans at small cons encouraging the endeavour. Combined with the presence of a brand new and eminently suitable venue less than a mile from the dead centre of the city, it feels like the time is right.

What would your city bring to Worldcon?

Dublin is a city full of literary history. Ireland as an island has stretched out far beyond its shores, and the Irish people, through good times and ill, have gone out into the world to work and wander. Our heritage, culture, history and relaxed good times are renowned around the globe. Whether it be a rebellious spirit in Australia and Cuba, the vast Guinness Brewery in Nigeria, or the unending network of bars throughout all continents, a part of Ireland is never far away. Now is the chance for fans to find their own Dublin, the city where Gulliver and Vlad were born into fantastic fiction, where Bikes have a mind of their own, where Faeries fight Criminals. To visit a country full of stories and legends, to stand among stone Castles and in the heart of a burial mound, to wonder what is real and what is imagined.

What you think Worldcon would do for your city?

Without doubt there would be a serious economic benefit for Dublin and the current government has recognised this by offering €60,000 in financial support, to win the bid and to market the convention. Science fiction fans' hard-earned money will of course be welcomed as the nation travels through a tough economic time. Dublin really needs to look forward, and there is nothing more forward-looking than science fiction; escaping reality may not be a bad thing at all.

What does your Worldcon want to do for science fiction?

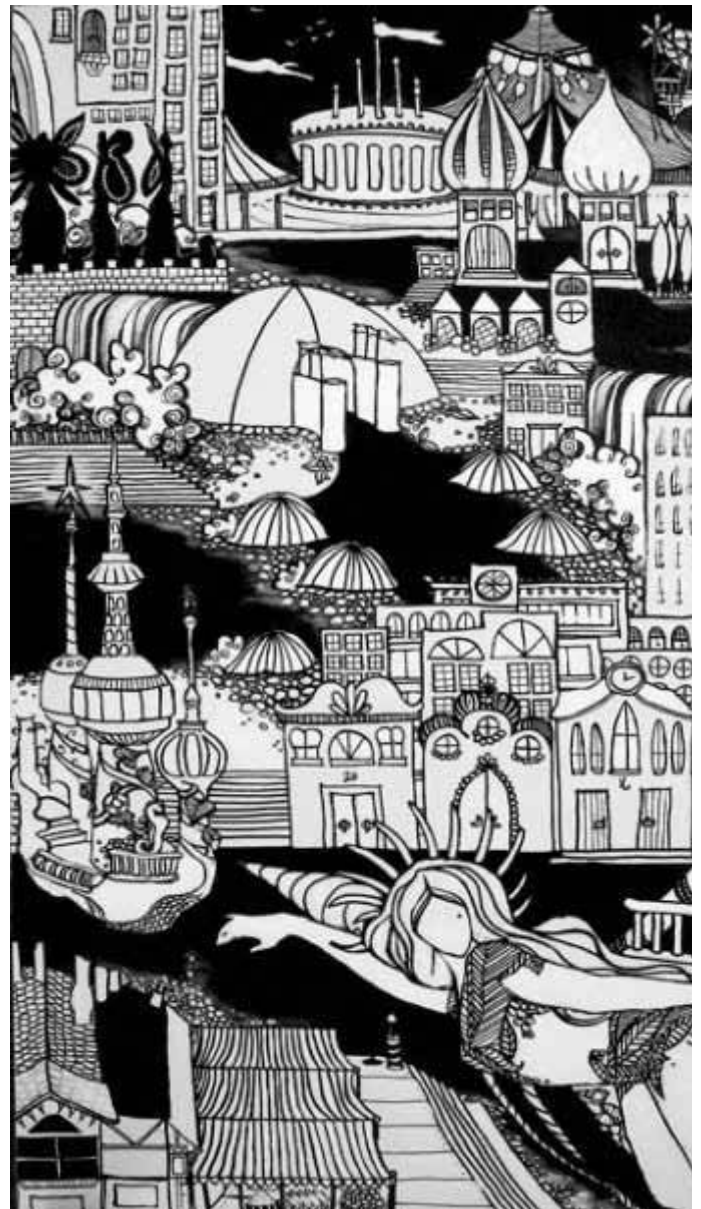
A Dublin Worldcon would celebrate science fiction, but it would do something else. Ireland is a distinct

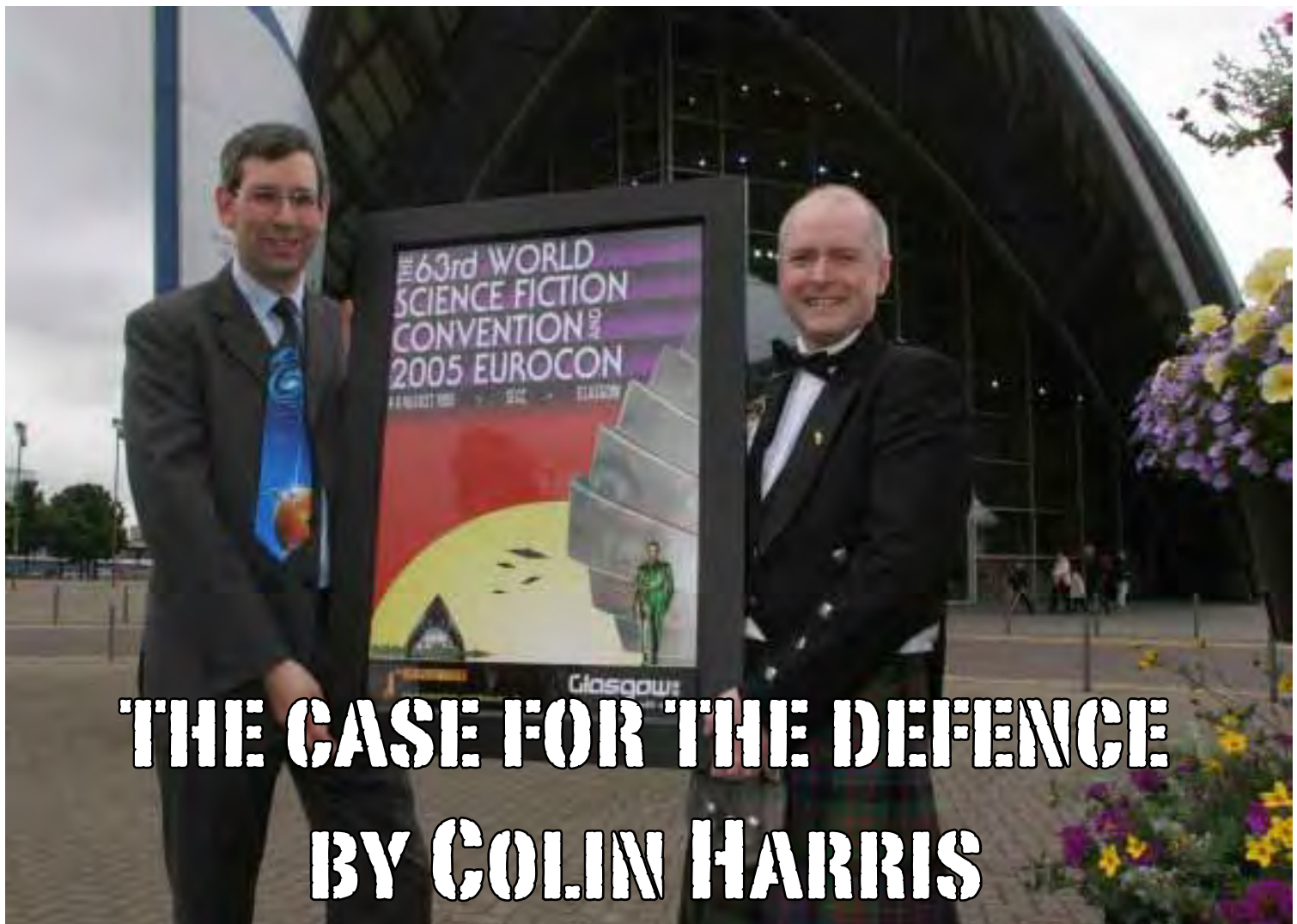
and sovereign land. We are not America, nor Britain. We are a small European state, born from a struggle, a nation of the 20th Century and yet an island divided. An Irish Worldcon would be a broad and welcoming canvas, celebrating all works of the fantastic and the speculative, in all media. Irish fandom has always ignored barriers and borders and we'd extend that open vision to the world.

The level of support from across fandom is already incredible, with a variety of conventions and organisers coming behind the bid in support.

A Dublin Worldcon can do something special for science fiction fandom. It can genuinely reach out, given the geography and demography of the island, to encompass many elements of various fandoms and under one roof celebrate and involve them all, reaching out to all nations, while giving currency to the World part of the World Science Fiction Convention.

(In the interests of openness, this piece was written by James Bacon, who is an editor in this parish)





THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE BY COLIN HARRIS

The debate around Worldcon's role and future has changed a great deal in the last few years. It seems to me that there's a degree of antagonism towards the institution - and the people who run it - that I don't remember even as recently as 2005 when I co-chaired the event in Glasgow. In this closing article, I want to explore a few aspects of this debate, and hopefully encourage some more positive reflection on the role of Worldcon as it enters its fourth quarter-century.

The Role of Social Media

My first observation is that this is an area where social media has changed the nature of the discussion. Indeed, it's a case study of the inherent nature of social media and the way this nature changes the ground rules for collective conversation - something that I suspect will be explored in more detail in the upcoming Social Media issue of this very fanzine.

What is this nature? It's one where the very *interconnectedness of all things* (per Douglas Adams) is both the fascinating virtue and the soul-sucking price of the medium. Worldcon has never been above controversy, starting from the very first event, but the nature of communication meant that debate happened within a directly engaged community - mainly attendees or people directly

connected to attendees. And as a conrunner you'd mostly be hearing from this directly engaged group because those are would be the people you would talk to or read. In contrast, social media produces an explosion of views, including ripples of applause and outrage triggered by popular or opinionated individuals, which has no automatic weighting towards the people who care about or support the event. Cheryl Morgan (#1) sums up one aspect of this phenomenon.

"Mostly, however, people seem content with the idea that Worldcon is a horrible thing that deserves to die. There are other conventions that they can go to, and that's good. What I don't quite understand is that a lot of these people seem to think that Worldcon needs to die. It isn't enough for them to go elsewhere. Worldcon has to disappear as an option. I'm not quite sure why this is."

The simple truth in this is that in the past, if you didn't like someone's convention, you didn't go to it. You ignored it, or started your own. Mostly that's still the case; but not for Worldcon. Which brings us to...

The Role of History

Justin Landon of Staffers' Book Review has by his own admission been a "hater" of Worldcon over a num-

ber of years. Then, after attending LoneStarCon 3, he wrote this (#2):

"I have been one of the Hugo Awards' hugest detractors in recent years with blog post after blog post excoriating the WSFS for their silly rules, the award for its myopic view, and the voters for their borderline idiocy. After attending my first Worldcon I want to tell the entire science fiction and fantasy community that I was wrong."

I don't agree with everything in Justin's article but it highlights a fundamental question at the heart of today's antagonism. Put simply, why does someone who has never attended the event, feel driven to invest so much time and energy attacking it?

The answer lies in a misunderstanding. Many people recognize that Worldcon was once the premier convention of the genre, spanning the whole spectrum of SFnal interests. And therefore it seems obvious that by failing to grow and expand to accommodate the ever-broadening nature of the field, Worldcon has failed in its obligation to be the ultimate meeting place, welcoming to all fans and brimming with youthful energy. All that is left is for it to fade away, while its place is filled by younger, fitter events. As Madeline Ashby comments (#3):

"The last time I was at Anime North, a bunch of kids in cosplay brought out an amp, plugged it in, and started to jam in the parking lot. In another lot, more kids put together their own kaiju battle, doing slo-mo fights to J-rock and -rap. It was great. I was with a bunch of very happy people who didn't give a fuck about jetpacks. Worldcon may be about the future, but it doesn't have the future. Remember, Worldcon organizers all over the world: memento mori."

The point here is that the world has changed, rather than Worldcon. Absolutely right, say the critics, feeling that this validates their criticisms. But my response is that it doesn't follow that Worldcon SHOULD try to keep up. We have not become narrower; the world has become broader.

In fact there was an implicit choice somewhere back in the 1970s and 1980s, as science fiction (and fandom with it) went from being a well-defined niche to a massively diverse element of popular culture. Worldcon could have become Dragon*Con; settled in a location, incorporated, become more professional, grown in size and turned into a mass media event. Or it could continue as an event primarily focused on... *science... fiction*. I say those two words separately because each carries weight. Science (as opposed to technology or geek) is something which still plays a material role at Worldcon; and fiction - the way we tell stories, particularly in words - is its very heart and soul.

Either of these routes might have been valid, although in practice the culture of the people running Worldcon, and the way it is managed, meant that only the second was ever going to happen. What is unfortunate, even if understandable, is the *appropriation* that is happening. Because Worldcon was once THE ultimate event in the field, everyone feels they have a stake in it, and the right to be angry if the event is no longer fulfilling that role.

Where Now?

I firmly believe that Worldcon is still an amazing event. What is needed is simply to stop assessing it against a yardstick based on a role which is long obsolete. We also need to let go of what Mark Olson calls the "cultural cringe", and become more articulate about what makes the event distinctive - indeed, arguably unique. It does not matter whether Worldcon has the same role it did 30, 50, or 70 years ago (and how could it? today's landscape is unrecognizable compared to the one that existed then). All that matters is that Worldcon has something distinctive and worthwhile to offer today. And if it does, then perhaps the critics should start evaluating it on merit for what it is and for what it does; rather than criticizing it for what it is not, or what it does not do.

First and foremost, Worldcon remains the core convention for what I might call "heritage fandom" - the branch of the cultural tree that goes back in direct ancestry to the 1930s. I do not use heritage here in a disparaging way (remember, I'm a Brit, and my whole country is full of the stuff!) but to emphasize that these deep roots still shape the event today. Editing this fanzine has reminded me of this even more.

Secondly, it's the convention for people whose first and primary interest is in science fiction rather than the broader pop cultural phenomenon. Of course many Worldcon attendees have broader interests too, but Worldcon's offer wraps those interests around the core rather than treating them all equally with it.

Thirdly, as Dave McCarty has noted, its target demographic is not Madeline's cosplaying, Kaiju-battling, J-rocking kids. Worldcon is a much better fit for "second steppers" and the realistic recruitment age for most new members is 25-35, not 18-25.

(As an aside here, people who say "you need to be more like Dragon*Con so that all those cool young people will come to your event" are missing the point. We're not trying to attract the people who want a Dragon*Con experience; we're looking for the people who attend Dragon*Con but would prefer a Worldcon experience if they only knew about it. This is the heart of Mark Olson's cultural cringe comment - a belief that Worldcon has to ape some other kind of event to continue being successful.

ful, rather than having the confidence that Worldcon is quite capable of finding an audience on its own terms. I give huge kudos here to Helen Montgomery, James Bacon and their helpers on the SF Outreach Project (#4) - giving away thousands of free books every year is a perfect example of how to connect with the people who will be attracted to our community once they know it exists).

Fourthly, it's big enough to be an "event", and to attract a significant professional community, but small enough to have intimate interactions with even the biggest names. The intermediate size is a virtue not a failing.

Similarly, the annually changing location and management - leading to continual reinterpretation - is a differentiator and a sign of shared ownership by the world, not a weight dragging us down. This is perhaps better understood outside North America where the chance to bring the circus to town remains something special.

Lastly, the history itself matters. As I said in my opening editorial, it provides a patina which cannot be faked. The Hugo Awards may not be perfect, but 60 years of history has given them weight, and as someone fortunate enough to be backstage most years, I know for a fact that the nominees value them as much as ever.

None of this means we don't have substantial challenges to overcome. Worldcons market themselves badly and there is a demographic challenge (these two things are not unrelated!). And the annual reinventions do make it a complex beast to manage, with the risk that we'll come up short from time to time. Above all, the frictions that I've referred to in this article have led to a very unhealthy tendency to turn away from public engagement and raise the drawbridge behind us. THAT is something we cannot afford. But I take heart from the fact that there are plenty of people and cities out there that want to bid - we already have bids lined up for all but

one year between now and 2022, ranging from Montreal to New Zealand and Helsinki to New Orleans. That does not seem to me to be an event that is dying.

In conclusion, it is easy to feel that the future of the event is challenged, when each year seems to bring another slew of critical articles and forecasts of impending doom. And in the face of these debates, it's easy to forget that every year, several thousand people come together and have a great time, continuing a nearly-unbroken sequence of events that started 75 years ago in New York. It's also easy to forget that the event does evolve, perhaps faster than many people realize. This particularly applies to the Hugos, where in barely a decade we've split the Dramatic Presentation and Editor Hugos, added awards for Fancast and Graphic Story, and now routinely stream the Hugos around the world - and more than doubled voter participation.

What stands out even more, however, is that thread of continuity and that distinctive mindset which binds our fandom together. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to put this issue together, and I cannot help but come back to the truth that the greetings offered to members in 1939 are in essence the invitation and encouragement that we still offer attendees today, or note that the unique craziness that James Bacon brings to fandom today are in the same spirit as the events which Walt Willis and James White wrote about in 1957.

Here's to 75 years well spent, and many more to come!

#1 - <http://www.cheryl-morgan.com/?p=17634>

#2 - <http://www.staffersbookreview.com/2013/09/mission-statement-the-hugos-and-worldcon-arent-what-i-expected-etc.html>

#3 - <http://madelineashby.com/?p=1502>







Journey Planet 18

Journey Planet 18 - December 2013
Editors? James Bacon, Chris Garcia, & Helen Montgomery!

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LoCs and such to - Journeyplanet@gmail.com

Editorial

Welcome to this issue, which neatly brings the year to a close.

We've been busy the last quarter of 2013 with three issues coming out in short order, and I expect some of you will only receive this in the post in 2014. We are folk of humble means, we do what we can.

As ever our thanks to the anonymous contributors. You know who you are and we welcome your words. I am grateful for your time. Again Helen Montgomery has again been a delightful guest editor. It's not good that we live in a time where people are frightened to write how they feel. That feels wrong. Is that censorship in a way, or bullying?

Journey Planet is a place where people can voice their thoughts, and again on matters which are sensitive, we feel we will help ensure we hear those voices that otherwise would be silent.

Social Media.

It is individuals. People. Persons. Names. It doesn't feel like it, but there is no one block of people, there are only individuals, who decide to comment or write and they are responsible for their own words, even if they chase after today's cause and forget yesterday's, they are responsible for their own actions.

I especially want people who make false assertions in our community to stop. Individuals seem to feel they can speak for us all, state something like it is a fact, when it is their opinion.

So 2014 beckons. Holy cow.

With Loncon 3 and Shamrokon and a Dublin in 2019 launch on the calendar this is going to be a busy but fabulous year. Loncon 3 looks like it 'could' exceed 7,000 members - pretty amazing.

For JP we have the following plans.

Dr Who issue. I've been fiddling with a piece entitled 'Nightmare in Tardis Blue' and now it looks like after an interesting Whovian year, that there may be an issue all on Dr. Who. We'll keep you informed.

World War I. 2014 is the centenary of the start of the First World War and we have already spoken with Edward James, who is curating an exhibit at Loncon 3 on the connection between the fantastic fiction and World War I. We also want to explore this, look at other angles and also give an opportunity to fans to also explore their connections, and especially talk about artefacts that link back to that terrible time.

We have other plans, and we hope you join us for them, but hope you like this issue, and feel free to email us, your thoughts, how you feel

James

So, why an issue about social media and fandom?

First, a quick note about “fandom”. For my purposes when thinking about this issue, I was primarily thinking about “traditional”, WSFS/Worldcon/Literary science fiction/fantasy conventions. I fully acknowledge that there are many fandoms out in the world, and they no doubt have similar experiences, but I was focusing on this one particular fandom.

Over the past few years, these “traditional” science fiction and fantasy conventions have had an increased presence on the web. Websites, Facebook pages or groups, Twitter – these are now all de rigueur for a convention. Unfortunately, the ability to use these tools effectively does not appear to have increased at the same rate.

Websites, which have been around longest, are often still poorly designed and missing information. Websites, however, rarely seem to create fire on the interwebs.

Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs, on the other hand... matches to tinder. But is this a bad thing or a good thing? Fire, after all, is an important tool – it helps cook our food, keeps us warm, and provides a source of light. This tool can also turn into a weapon – from small burns on our tongues to wildfires raging out of control in the forests.

What I began to wonder is which type of fire is social media setting in fandom? Warm, cozy fires to read by and roast marshmallows over? Or firestorms that will leave ashes and destruction in their wake?

Approaching this in my con-running hat (as opposed to my book-loving geek girl hat), I have read many articles and posts, and had many conversations with other con-runners about these questions. Unsurprisingly, opinions vary. In fact, often the opinions of *one person* can vary wildly!

I’ve heard comments about how social media has brought the community closer – and how it’s tearing the community apart.

I’ve heard how it has helped showcase diversity in fandom – and how it’s showing that there isn’t enough diversity.

It makes the Hugo Awards more accessible to voters – it turns the Hugo Awards into a popularity contest.

It allows for real time communication – it makes it too easy to speak before thinking.

It encourages open dialogue – it creates trolls.

It’s provided opportunities for fans to meet up in between conventions – it’s keeping people away from conventions because now they have other ways to get their geek on.

It provides a forum for concerns to be brought to light – it provides a forum to bully and persecute anyone who disagrees with the opinions espoused.

Personally, I am torn. I have seen the benefits, and I've seen the pain. There are times where I think "wow, it's great this is being discussed", and then I watch it take a left turn, and am reminded that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". I have no solutions on how to keep it from taking that left turn. On the other hand, I wonder if sometimes the left turn is a good thing – will a phoenix somehow rise from the ashes of the firestorm?

Short version is that I argue a lot with both Me and Myself.

“Face-book has all the social graces of a nose-picking, hyperactive six-year-old, standing at the threshold of your attention and chanting, “I know something, I know something, I know something, won’t tell you what it is!””

– Cory Doctorow, Content: Selected Essays on Technology, Creativity, Copyright, and the Future of the Future

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

In conversations between me, James, and Chris, an idea germinated. Write an issue of Journey Planet about social media and fandom. Find as many people – conrunners, fans, artists, authors – as possible to write about their experiences with social media within fandom.

In our invitation asking for contributions, we wrote the following:

With the explosion of social media sites, science fiction fandom has changed. Some of these changes have been positive. Others have been negative. Some are still to be determined. The use of social media within fandom continues to evolve. We would like to explore how social media has already had an impact, and where we see it going from here.

We’ve seen sites that heavily moderate comments to try and prevent trolls. We’ve seen sites that don’t moderate at all, and the results are quite mixed. We’ve seen sites that have turned off commenting altogether, and others that are requiring the use of Facebook in order to comment at all. We have seen Twitter kerfuffles. We have seen Twitter brilliance. We don’t imagine, however, that we have yet seen it all...

We asked for contributions of both articles and artwork. We stated that it's a topic being widely discussed over a variety of venues, and we wanted to try and collate as many opinions as possible in one place.

The Experiment

In my conversations with people about this topic, I was struck by two themes that kept arising.

First, the “cult of personality” – that people with a lot of fans (authors, artists, actors, etc.) have a lot of power in social media. The idea is that readers or listeners will agree with the opinions of these popular people *simply because they admire them*, or because they have agreed with so many of their opinions in the past, or because they just assume these people must have done their homework and present accurate information.

Second, the amount of fear – that expressing an opinion that is not currently popular, perhaps disagreeing with one of the Cult of Personality, will lead to blowback - being bullied and threatened both online and in person. More than once did I hear phrases about “villagers and pitchforks”, and an unwillingness to speak up for fear of being subjected to the pokes of the pitchforks.

How then, could we structure this issue to avoid those two potential problems?



Anonymity.

We asked everyone if they would be willing to have their articles be anonymous.

Artists could choose whether or not they wished the artwork to be published with their name. We wondered if this would keep people from contributing – after all, the primary currency of fanzines is egoboo.

People could then express their opinions without fear of reprisal, and people would have to judge the content, without the influence of knowing who wrote it.

Was the experiment successful? It's hard to say. We had several people turn us down because they simply didn't have the time, although most of them also expressed regret because they thought it was a great topic. No one turned us down because they wouldn't be credited for the article.

We certainly didn't get as many articles as I had originally hoped. I think there were a few reasons for this. First, the initial turnaround time for articles was quite short. I then developed the upper respiratory cold from hell, and wasn't able to send out reminders to people. We then extended the deadline to closer to Thanksgiving, and once I again, I got sick and wasn't able to send out reminders to people. (My takeaway? Be the editor, but don't be the one responsible for sending out reminders for articles for Journey Planet, because it makes me get sick!) Perhaps if we had an longer time in the first place, and perhaps if I had been able to send reminders as originally planned, we would have gotten more contributions.

That being said, what we did get is, I think, engaging, well-written, and thought provoking. I hope you think so as well, and look forward to any Letters of Comments you wish to send.

Please, though, leave the pitchforks at home.

Sincerely,

Helen Montgomery, Guest Editor

“She made a mistake, she said a dumb thing – but who are we, Internet, to decide she had to die for this social media sin?”

*– Jessica Galliard, “Social media fail runs both ways”,
Redeye newspaper, December 27, 2013.*



Old Fan's War: Why Social Media isn't the Game Changer you think it is

On November 5, 2013, Lynne and Michael Thomas wrote an article in Apex magazine called "The SF/F Community: An Essay." Although not specifically about the relationship between social media and fandom, the article's first paragraph neatly summed up the attitudes of many fans towards the worst impulses of the Facebook Era, "There are days for us that the current fandom kerfuffle makes one want to, as in the words of Seanan McGuire, "ignite the biosphere." It's very easy to get frustrated and angry at the problems that crop up and want to retire from it all, almost always for very good reasons."

There is no question that technology radically changed fandom discourse from the mid-1990s on, when internet usage leapt from universities and military installations to invade home computers. The effects on fandom were almost instantaneous. A thousand Star Trek fans sites arose almost overnight, captured the attention of Paramount Pictures executives, and just as suddenly resulted in a thousand "cease and desist" letters. Consumer electronics continued to become more powerful and less expensive. In time, fanzines were capable of looking every bit as slick as the prozines. Then fanzines transformed into predominantly electronic publications capable of instantaneous global distribution. In a little more than a decade, they traveled far enough, fast enough to acquire a sense of their own nostalgia and return to a hybrid form of printed and electronically distributed formats.

More than anything, the rapid rise of personal computing and communications technologies and the way they allow people to express themselves and network with others created a lens for fandom to look at itself and wonder, "What has become of us?" Sometimes the scrutiny has been a good thing. News of persistent sexual harassment at conventions, delivered through a wide range of social media channels, has spurred a growing wave of con coms adopting formalized codes of conduct and anti-harassment policies, changing fandom culture for the better. In many ways, technology's ability to instantaneously capture and broadcast evidence of bad behavior is creating a safer fan community.

The scrutiny is not all good, however. Instant transmission of incomplete or superficial evidence is shaping a sometimes dangerously punitive fandom culture, willing to rush to judgment rather than carefully weigh facts. This impulse is particularly concerning when fans and professionals cry out for instant justice over issues like sexual harassment, where the combination of gender politics ideology and a long-standing history of unchecked bad behavior raise both the stakes and the outrage. Justice is rarely the child of wrath.

Sadly, social media is also proving a fertile avenue for some of the same abuses it sometimes helps to prevent. In May of 2013 A-Kon 24 suffered a particularly nasty trolling of female fans by way of Twitter. According to the Dallas Observer, a group calling themselves the Grope Crew, "...threatened female convention-goers with sexual assault using the #gropecrew hashtag, making a lot of people extremely uncomfortable."

These, of course, are hot-button issues. In many ways, it is the day-to-day use of social media that proves most vexing to fans and fandom alike. With every tweet promoting an IO9 post of questionable value, with every Tumbler image that puts unauthorized or inappropriate images of cosplayers on the web for the world to see, with every flame war in the comments sections of Facebook groups, more and more people are asking, "What has become of fandom? Is social media bringing us together or tearing us apart?"

"How is social media affecting fandom?" is the wrong question to ask. It presupposes that there is a universal concept of "fandom" that applies across a broad continuum of fans in a way that can reveal some deeper truth. Nothing could be further from reality. The real questions are "What exactly is fandom, and how is it trying to reconcile its existence with the present? Is social media a "new" phenomenon disrupting the old order or an old impulse finding new expression?"

Terms of Engagement

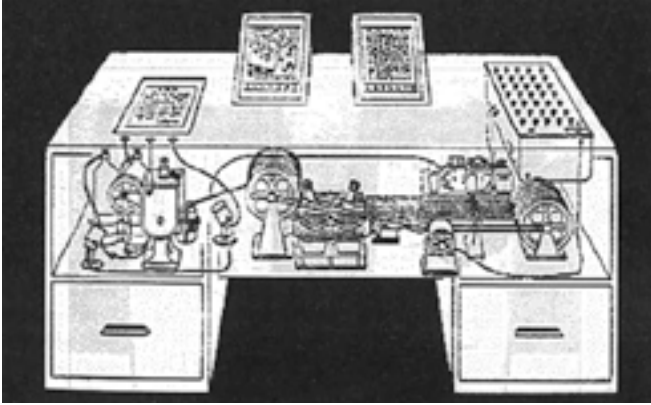
At its center, fandom is a set of behaviors exhibited by any group of people who are interested enough in a person, idea, or object to commit their time, energy and resources to expressing their enthusiasm. Wherever you find fans, you find fandom; whether they are quilting fans, fans of cats, fans of mystery books, or what have you. The means of expressing enthusiasm for each individual interest may vary, but the desire to spend time and resources to enjoy and promote various interests is universal.

Where science fiction fandom confuses the issue is in those circles where "Fandom" is invoked with a capital "F." "Fandom" typically refers to a specific sub-group of science fiction and fantasy fans associated with "literary" science fiction and fantasy subjects. Fandom enthusiasm is expressed through fan-run activities like publishing fanzines, organizing local science fiction conventions, Worldcon, and the Hugo Awards.

In reality, "Fandom" is part of a more generalized diaspora of sub-groups that populate "fandom" with a lower-case "f." These "fans" tend to congregate in more generalized social networks rather than organize as members of specific groups or clubs. Where "Fans" tend to lift up and celebrate the work of their fellow fans as much as the work of professionals, "fans" tend to find less credence in activities and works created by people lacking professional credentials, preferring for-profit media cons over the fan-run variety.

The duration of this essay will use “Fandom” with a capital “F” when referring to organized fandom of the World Science Fiction Society stripe and “fandom” with a lower case “f” when referring to the more generalized collection of science fiction and fantasy enthusiasts who self-identify as “fans” without any particular allegiance to organized “Fandom.”

Which begs the next question, what in the hell is “social media?” Merriam-Webster.com invokes “forms of electronic communication” as an essential component defining social media. The distinction is both limiting and unnecessary. For purposes of this article, we will define “social media” as follows:



Social media: all forms of communication through which users create communities for the purposes of sharing information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.”

In this sense, “social media” is a force in organized Fandom reaching all the way back to the letters section of Hugo Gernsback’s *Amazing Stories* magazine starting in 1926, where readers wrote in with their comments and addresses, the addresses were printed and seen by fellow fans, and fans were then able to connect outside the pages of the magazine. In actual fact, “social media” is conceptually hard-wired into our neurology. It is human nature to create avenues of communication, share thoughts, and forge relationships. Clearly people have created community-driven communications forums in both fandom and Fandom for a very long time, but it is equally clear that, recently, something has changed. What exactly?

The Insanity of Immediacy

There are two ways that the Facebook Era has meaningfully altered the fortunes of fandom. First, social media is instantaneous, ubiquitous, and persistent. Once people could consider their thoughts, write them down, and then think twice before committing them to posterity by sending a letter. Conversa-

tions relied on proximity to another human or proximity to a land-line telephone, both communications scenarios which added nuance in the form of non-verbal cues to deepen channels of information.

Now phones are always with us, always on. When we aren't busy using them to consult Google or check up on our email and Facebook profiles, we are using them to capture and post everything in our line of sight for posterity on the web. All of the world is no longer a stage but rather a packed house of information directed by the groundlings. Often these communications channels are mediated by screens as text-only events in the forms of texts, tweets, and status updates, eliminating the added information of non-verbal expression. The result is discourse that tends to be less considered and functional than only a decade ago.

Second, the current speed and reach of social media is such that the net has opened up the entire continuum of fandom all at once for all who would sample it, with infinite outlets to choose from. In some ways, this has been a blessing. The ranks of Fandom, while well organized and enthusiastic, used to lack the scale to connect with everyone potentially interested in, but still unaware of Worldcon and the local convention scene. Now, middle-aged fans naturally attracted to the fandom culture of their youth have the opportunity to find their way back to Fandom on the web with a Google search or two and a couple of "likes" on Facebook.

On his apathy for social media: "I really try not to pay attention. Put it this way: I want to keep my finger on the pulse of what's going on. I don't want to be ignorant in that sense. But I would never be able to make music if I got caught up in that. I'd probably get in some ugly arguments with people. ... It would consume a lot of my time and be very counterproductive to do that."

- Eminem (interview on Shade 45 SiriusXM radio, November 4 2013)

It is equally true that the near-infinite bandwidth and signal flow of the internet and social media are as overwhelming and divisive as they are galvanizing. Most members of fandom under the age of 30 are attracted to thousands of tiny islands in the net that are totally heedless of Fandom's interest in the next big thing at the Hugos. Fandom is slowly receding into the backwaters beyond the crowded shipping lanes filled with more varied and exciting SFF ports of call like major media outlets, ginormous media con showrooms, and a cacophony of blogs, micro blogs, podcasts, YouTube channels, and websites for every evolution of fannish goodness lurking in servers the world over.

Old Fan's War

It is this capacity to make everything instantly available and nearly eternal on the web that is giving old guard Fandom reason to pause in recent days and ask, "What in the hell are we becoming?" In effect, social media has inadvertently revealed an Old Fan's War brewing in the ranks of science fiction fandom since the 1970s, when Star Wars first made SFF fandom more universally accepted. That conflict has rapidly escalated since the 1990s as fandom has steadily risen to eclipse Fandom as the primary force guiding trends in science fiction and fantasy media over the last three decades.

WSFS Fandom still sometimes harbors the perception that it should be the primary organizational interest representing the broader community of all science fiction fans. The perception is, at best, difficult to justify. According to data collected from Wikipedia.com, average Worldcon attendance during the 1960s was 838.5 members per convention. That number tripled to 2538.8 in the 1970s and doubled again in the 1980s to 5223.8, including the largest reported attendance at any Worldcon with the 1984 L.A. Con II that saw 8,365 fans descend on the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, CA.

But by the 1990s average attendance at Worldcon dipped slightly to 4884 attendees, a pattern that persisted through the 2000s with an average of 4615.9 attending members. The trend continues downward this decade with an average of only 3816.75 attendees from 2010 through 2013.

By contrast, attendance data collected from the Dragon*Con website about their for-profit convention held in Atlanta, GA since 1987 reveals a con that has grown steadily from an average of 2,100 members in the 1980s to 9,710 members in the 1990s, with conservative estimates putting average attendance in the 2000s at 19,600 per convention. The average for the first four years of the 2010s alone has been 48,750 per convention, with 2013 being the peak year at 57,000 attendees.

The data isn't perfect. Numbers for both Worldcon and Dragon*Con attendance are dodgy in places. But one thing is clear: even if the numbers are off, the trends are not. Assuming that percentage reporting errors for both events more or less cancel one another out, it is clear that Fandom, as represented by Worldcon, does not have nearly the same pull with general fan interest as the more "fandom" friendly Dragon*Con.

A lot has been said about "the graying of fandom" over the last several years. As Warren Buff noted in his Winter 2008-2009 article in *Challenger*, "... Fandom is not getting older, it's just not happening in all of the same places that it did twenty years ago. We're out there, forming clubs, running cons, and having a fannish good time. Take a look."

For the most part, Buff hits the nail on the head. There are people still out there running conventions, and not all of them are old enough to be staring down the barrel of an AARP card in their immediate future. He also identifies waves of pop culture science fiction fans—“Barbarian hordes” as he calls them with tongue firmly planted in cheek—that have made their way into Fandom through Dungeons & Dragons, comic books, and Star Wars among other waves of popular fandom.

But Fandom, that institutional fannish endeavor with deep roots in the Depression Era, led by SMOFs running Worldcons and handing out Hugos, is absolutely a graying segment of the broader fandom continuum. And that is to be expected. Institutions, caught up as they are in core values, traditions, and constitutional mandates that define the governance of those institutions, are conservative by nature. Part of the WSFS mandate is to conserve its core values, traditions, and principals of governance.

“Most neuroses and some psychoses can be traced to the unnecessary and unhealthy habit of daily wallowing in the troubles and sins of five billion strangers.”
Robert A. Heinlein, Stranger in a Strange Land

In a very real sense, those core values are at odds with the “Barbarian hordes” of fandom. Where Fandom was predominantly concerned with the literary traditions of science fiction and fantasy, technological and cultural innovations began to trend electronic. By the mid 1990’s a new generation of fan was flocking to the internet engaged less by traditional print media and more taken with electronic and screen-based story telling in a wide variety of forms, like computer games, transmedia narratives, and an even greater focus on film and television. At the same time, the devaluation of intellectual property encouraged by the internet, where essentially everything could be made available for free and nothing could be properly regulated, began to eat away at the once viable livelihoods of writers who used to live off of a world that actually wanted to pay for writing in all of its many and wondrous forms.

Clearly, these new fans do not operate on the traditional Fandom cultural bandwidth. The old guard is happy to acquire the new tools offered by slick and affordable desktop publishing tools, ISPs, listserv groups, and the ability to create and post a webpage on GeoCities. But Fandom is still attached to its books, cons, and fanzines in a way that new fans increasingly are not.

And the gray-hairs are cranky. For every member of Fandom wondering how to keep Worldcon relevant for succeeding generations, there’s someone saying, “I’d rather the WSFS died than change what it stands for by pandering to new members.” For every convention-goer saying, “Why aren’t there more people under the age of thirty attending this con?” there’s another saying, “I’m so glad we don’t have to deal with a bunch of teenagers trying to crash the hotel parties.”

Finding an Accord

If there is a reconciliation to be had between Fandom and fandom, it is in coming to terms with the idea that part of the reason why Fandom is “graying” is because it best serves fans who are approaching middle-age and older, that fans naturally attracted to leviathan media cons and net-bound information overload in their twenties and early thirties will eventually begin to seek out the less crowded and more congenial offerings of Fandom as they march towards their forties. The real Old Fan’s War is not a battle against the unwashed masses of fandom’s “Barbarian hordes” but a battle between the desire to honor Fandom’s past and the wish to see a new generation advance those traditions in the future.

The situation is delicate. Fandom must refuse to be distracted by its own hallowed institutions and carefully consider who exactly they are trying to serve and how. If the Hugos are serving Fandom without representing the broader tide of fandom, their value as an authentic “voice of the fans” becomes questionable. The adoption of inexpensive voting rights for the Hugo awards as a way to encourage broader fandom participation has been suggested as a possible remedy. This year’s “No Representation without Taxation” amendment to the WSFS constitution crafted in defiance of a Voting Membership option underlines the depth of the divide.

Fandom must also adjust to the broad cultural shift away from physical books and text-based narratives and better address contributions to science fiction and fantasy made by recent and emerging media formats. Ways must be found to better access, filter, and celebrate the internet’s broadening field of electronically published independent writers and artists, be they bloggers, video game designers, transmedia artists, or entrepreneurial authors giving Smashwords a go on their own terms. These are all trends that will define the graying fans of tomorrow, and they are certain to only be the first of many more changes to come.

G.K. Chesterton once wrote, “Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.” In a field that celebrates the future, Fandom needs to lay down its arms, grit its teeth, and open its arms wide to the latest social media kerfuffle, not lay down amongst the dead to dream the dreams of nevermore.

Designating a war fought between allies.

Social Media is a catch all term for lots of things, be it Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr and so on, I have to admit, like the demographic I represent (not a teenager), I do Facebook, but have avoided Twitter and the rest, as I want to read, run conventions and enjoy myself, and further time spent on social media pursuits, is just not for me.

As it is, I seem to have a Facebook friendly switch on. My good friend Emma King just cut about 400 off her 'friends' list, having decided that the fight against misogyny, which she seemed to think was going well, having made a few, a sparse few think about how they could be wrong, was overall just burning up her time. Precious time. I spin through, like things my pals are doing, message people who I do not have email for and post up nice photos, mostly narcissistic.

That is to be expected. Of me anyhow. I sent my family and friends a Christmas Card featuring me and Santa in Paddington next to my train, so narcissistic.

You see, for me an element of Social Media is when individuals decide it is the vehicle for social justice. Now I assume that means righting wrongs, and could be, since I am fairly liberal, the fight against discrimination of all kinds. So that is cool, I suppose.

Except when it goes wrong.

People, individuals make assertions. They can be lacking in all fact. Do you know anyone who has said something on Twitter, only to be wrong? Was it too late, once others feel offended by the situation and start to complain also?

Now, for sure, complaining on social media can make things happen, you should see the money Virgin Trains spent on trying to speed up the service recovery after fatalities on the railway, due to the immediate nature of the complaints when trains come to a halt.

Yeah. Think about that for a moment. Interesting priorities.

I prefer prevention rather than quick clean up.

So the internet can be an effective tool to communicate an issue, and of course if others agree with you, then you can exert pressure on a given person or organisation. This can be a good thing. Look at various northern African countries, who seem to have regime changes, and attribute much of that to social media. It can be good.

Sure it can be good.

I do wonder though, back in our own parish, if we seem to have totally forgotten that conventions, are run by hobbyists. Not paid politicians, state employees, or employees of a profit or non profit company that pays them, just plain old hobbyists. The pressure that can seem to be put on these hobbyists

seems disproportionate, especially when the justice at hand, isn't that justified or is misdirected.

We are at risk of damaging those who are not doing anything actually wrong, collateral damage perhaps, when a wrong is done. I am tired of generalisations, whether it be 'bloggers', 'Fanzine people', 'Worldcon members', 'Business meeting attendees', we are all individuals, and we allow assertions to be made against a group, with no issue. Sometimes it suits us, or our argument, but I want to see people directly quoted, I want to see individuals named.

That we need to look after one another, to ensure there is no harm is important, yet for conventions, involvement and volunteers are a limited life-blood, and the activity of volunteers is more important than people feeling better by thinking they have exercised some great victory through social media. Pyrrhic.

Social media is a fannish activity. Many people engage with it, and enjoy it, and I must admit I find great links to very interesting things, works to read, reviews and so on, and am grateful for that. There is nothing at all wrong with it, and just as blogs are valid fanwriting, I see that maintaining various other types of social media are very worthwhile.

I was gutted recently, I asked the head of programme for a large regional US convention if there could be a panel on Comics women are reading and he was keen, but upon inspection, none of the women who had volunteered had indicated comics as an area they could or would speak. That makes no sense to me. *Saga* won the Hugo last year, and I know many of my friends are reading it, boys and girls, and they are fans.

For all the social media furore, how can this still be a problem. Is it because social media doesn't always address the problem?

There is a fear of course, about social media. An author spoke to me, they did not want to be named, but they reported some strange online behaviour, bullying, in the name of fighting racism. Anyhow it ended as one of the parties realised that life was too short to waste on inconsequential things.

Racism, involves discrimination against a race and I think where that happens we need to point it out clearly, and say 'STOP'. This is not the same as being offended by something, and I think that we get confused, or decide we are confused about this.

Discrimination is wrong, and if it were to occur at a convention, then it needs to stop.

Yet the comic panel issue is an interesting quandary, for sure, the convention has in no way discriminated against women, and from what I have seen it is extremely welcoming and encourages diversity. That sort of positive approach is something that I like, but for some reason, it hasn't worked here.

It is empathy that is really lost, there is just no time for empathy, to walk in another person's shoes first, or consider it, before judging them.

For me activism means doing a little more than mentioning it on social media. Signing a petition is the least I can do, but I also write to MP's and give money to an organisation that fights against racism amongst other things.

Of course sometimes, one sees words, and they cause much furore, and everyone agrees that this is important and it may instil action. Paul Cornell's gender parity announcement got a lot of people thinking, talking, but also shouting and then there were tears.

Now, although Gender Parity is somewhat moderated, to well suit the pragmatic realities, there seems to be broad agreement that a more diverse pool of people are needed for programme participants at conventions.

I of course am a comic book fan, and know that women credited on comics make up a meagre 14% at DC and Marvel, and that is in a good month, it drifts down to 11%.

And that will always confound me. For Paul Cornell has worked for both companies, and I often wondered if a good start to ensuring we could have more women comic creators talk about comics, would be employing more.

Of course that might be focussing on prevention rather than quick fix up, with participants jumping off panels.

And arguing with one's employer, is something that I can understand, for when it comes to discrimination, it is important not to just tweet about it, but to actually take action.

To petition. To parlay. To seek resolution.

To Strike.

To stand on a picket. To risk being passed over.

To lose ones wages. These things I have done.

For sure, I am lucky that I have a strong union, but it needs to be strong, companies have no real interest in people, unless they have to, they want profits, which is not a problem, but must be tempered.

Yet, I think the type of action people need to take, needs to be more focused on the problem, on the individual who is at issue, on the root cause.

There is nothing wrong with championing good women comic creators, I do it all the time, when I find work that I enjoy, there is nothing wrong with pointing out that there is a problem, in the work place, that is not belligerent or disloyal, in actual fact it might enhance the place.

So I often ponder about activism and how it comes about. I think some folk, well all they have is the internet and that must be a great empower-er. And that is good.

What is it to take action.

On the way up from Heathrow, I was looking out my train cab window,

back along the length of my train at West Ealing, one of the nicest suburban stations on my route, the other is Hanwell, which is modelled as it was in Victorian Times, but I like these stations for more personal reasons.

So near the end of the train, a fellow is running back towards the doors, and well throwing his arm, messing I think, but with the cameras, which show me a more details view in the CCTV screens angled at my cab, it is apparent that this is not messing, he is throwing punches and kicks now into the doorway, and the door won't close despite my pressing the button.

I get out and walk promptly towards him and as I go, I bellow down the platform to him, 'get away from the train' he hears it, looks mean and angry, he has a lean and aggressive look about him, and now I wonder where the hell is

Concerned consumers are realizing that they can use social media to organize themselves around shared values to start effective movements. Social media gives them a sounding board to share ideas, as well as a means to punish irresponsible corporate behaviors.

Simon Mainwaring

the Customer service assistant, or on board ticket checker. Jesus was he at the end of those punches and kicks?

I walk down towards this fellow, and he shouts abuse and threats, and I put my hands up palms forward in a passive motion, I don't actually want a fight, I want to see where my colleague is.

He is all angry and making like he is coming for me close now, mere feet away, I must steel myself, I do not turn my back, I prepare.

Then my colleague appears, in the doorway, obviously very shaken and upset, BUT he is up and standing and I cannot see any injuries, and he is shouting and jumping off the train as he comes to assist me.

The protagonist of this incredible situation, is wrong footed, he goes back at my colleague, and then I start to shout, and he turns to run at me, but his demeanor has changed, he has gone from Fight to flight and he runs past me as I step aside, and he away on his toes and sprints for the exit.

My colleague actually goes to pursue, but I pop my arm around his shoulder, and gently grip him, and tell him to let him go.

The red mist has risen there, we are after all humans who feel threatened and the natural stance, well when there I two against one, is to fight, but he immediately eases, although I do not remove my arm.

We walk to my cab, he is now not only calm, but upset and of course, grateful. I am thankful he is OK and he showed up when he did, and I am concerned for him and agree that the fellow was crazy obviously. I get my colleague into my cab, and call the signaller.

It felt like seconds, but we are askew now by about 6 minutes.

I explain to the signaller, and then to the station staff member who joins us from upstairs in the office, as we have been stationary a while, what has occurred.

My colleague is still upset, one can feel it, I too recognise the quickened pace in my heart, the adrenalin that obviously was coursing through my veins, my confidence unfettered by this incident, luckily.

I take my time, slowly readying the train, and then people appear, so I let them on, this is good it all calms me, as do soothing words to my colleague, recognising that in relaxing him, I am relaxing myself.

We continue on, to Ealing Broadway and Paddington. I won't let him out of the cab, he has had too much, no more for a bit.

The customer had no ticket, and although initially said he would look for it, then basically said he would punch my colleague and was extremely threatening making aggressive attacking moves.

Luckily all the punches and kicks were either faux, or avoided although they looked very aggressive and meaningful, and no doubt from my colleagues perspective totally threatening.

But we are OK. We don't get much of this shit really.

But I am lucky, I could stay in my cab. I may get told I should have, although I may not, as really my concern was my colleague.

Some days people can be very horrible, abusive,

But I feel lucky, and not in a 'phew' sort of way, in a 'well my job is not all bad' and 'I work with good people'.

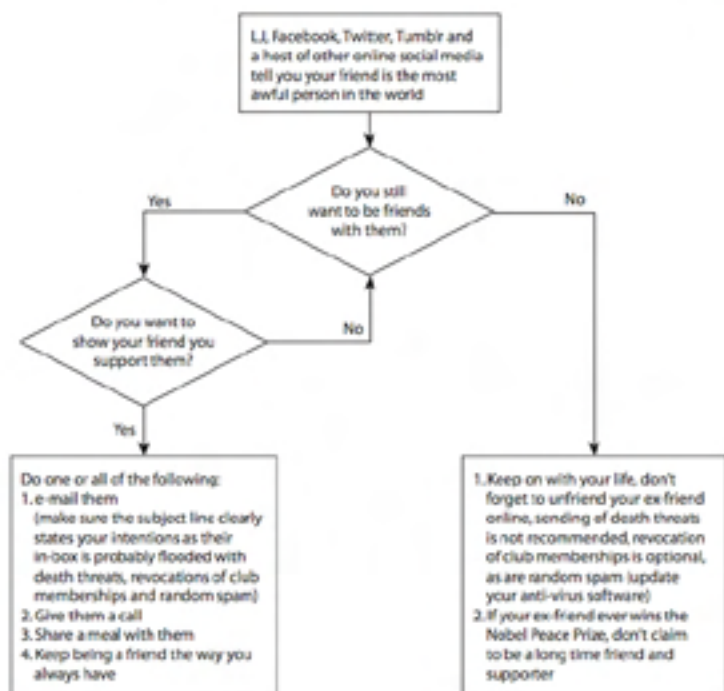
Most of the day I was concentrating on Dublin and London anyhow, and having a tremendous debate about a payment structure and methods of doing things at a convention, which reminds me that again, life is hard... not really.

How could you tweet that?

How could some social media help my colleague, help me? I would be told not to get out of my cab not to endanger myself.

Really. Sometimes we need to say and do things, which are a little dangerous, not for any other reason except we need to.

What to do when you are told your friend is the most awful person in the world



“These days, social media waits for no one. If you’re LATE for the party, you’ll probably be covered by all the noise and you might not be able to get your voice across. It could only mean that if you want to be heard by the crowd, you have to be fast; and on social media, that means you have to be REALLY fast.”

Aaron Lee (@askaaronlee)

On Social Media & Fandom

Depending on who you ask, social media is either the best thing to happen or the worst. I tend to lean towards “better,” with a pinch of the bad, but feel free to take this with a grain of salt as you don’t know who I am.

It has never been easier for fans to connect and communicate with each other, ironically in ways so similar to some of the classic writings we bond over. Now, thanks to social media, conventions can reach these fans, too. The great conversations that we have in the Consuite can continue and conventions we hadn’t heard about because we were too busy talking to pick up fliers can now catch our attention when flowing through our news feed. At con news can spread faster than ever thanks to Twitter. More fans will get to hear the GRRM reading because the con heard about the line and moved it to a bigger space. Members can each from others that a child is missing and that means more eyes for the search.

However, with all the good that is being done, there is also a scoop of the bad. Situations that require time and thorough investigation can be rushed due to what can feel like the entire universe screaming online, especially when bigger names like John Scalzi and N.K. Jemisin pick up the scent. Embarrassing problems that could be learned of in private are now things of the past and become issues that can drive away fans permanently. Committees who work tirelessly to create an event can be bullied because angry fans can’t see that a not-fantastic decision was the least bad option.

Whether bad or good, what I think social media means for fandom is communication and education. Conventions can more easily learn what works by communicating with their members. Feedback sessions no longer happen solely on the last day of the con, they happen all year long. Learning points can come from other conventions, as social issues are publicly discussed and archived forever. Conventions can educate members about things going on at their main event, and most importantly, members can educate convention about what they want, needs, and expect.



Social Media – Problems within Problems

There is a question I've been mulling over. It's not an easy one, in fact it's damn difficult. The question is simple: can Social Networks be used for good?

Now, I know that Social Networks are merely tools, and it's not the tool but the user who determines whether the effect is good or evil, but when you see something like Twitter or Facebook, you see events move across platforms like waves, taking people up with them in various directions. Waves, that what Social Media makes possible.

Let us take a few specific events, shall we?

The Readercon Incident

You've heard about it, no? There was an incident of harassment at Readercon in 2012. Someone was inappropriate, steps were taken by the ConComm, then more steps, and a popular con-runner was banned from the convention for life.

It's not so much the events, but the reactions to the event that tell an interesting tale. The first wave crashed not long after a post largely concerned with another matter broke. *This is terrible!* followed by the gnashing of teeth and the calls for pitchforks and the forming of a posse. This led to other posts. *I know him, there must be some sort of mistake* and then back and forth. *The con's not done enough! Banning is wrong! Safe places! Ridiculous policies! Bad ConComm! Good ConComm! Everything's right in the end! Everything's wrong in the end! Yes! No! Grrr! Grrr!*

I watched all of this, read along on a half-dozen Facebook pages, a few Twitter feeds, a few blogs, and ghd help me, even on LiveJournal. I guess I should explain for readers under 30: LiveJournal used to be where Fandom happened on-line. There was an endless line of discussion, and anger, both ways, and in the end decisions were made. The problem is, of course, there were those who disagreed with it, and there were those who thought it was unfair, and other who said that it was not enough. This has happened many times across the history of fandom, with varying results, but this was one of the most significant moments because it played out across the Internet, with some of the most significant names in SMoFdom as players. In the old days, this sort of thing might have played out in the pages of fanzine, in discussions at club meetings, in ConSuite conversations. It would have played out over weeks, months, or in cases of Big Deals, years. Social Networking, where so much is so visible to so many so quickly, brought this to light quickly and with passion. And though it allowed for dealign with an issue quickly, I'd argue that the most

important conversations took place AFTER the incident. Once the dealing with the events had been done, and a bit of the heat had been transferred to any number of other matters, did a real conversation start, and policies made: some of which might have gone too far in one direction or another, and some of which are just destined for complete insignificance. The thing is, the right time to discuss that stuff isn't when you're dealing with an issue. Ideally, it's BEFORE you deal with an issue, but if one comes out of left field, then when some time has passed.

Thing 2 - Jim C. Hines

Basically, Jim posted a thing about a photo of former WorldCon Chairs and on gender blindness and colorblindness. Basically, he said that most of the folks were White and most were men (and looking at the photo, most were white men). First off, he wasn't wrong; that was in fact the case. It set off a storm of commentary, both agreeing with what he said and arguing various points of what they saw as criticism. Of course, my take was different. He was saying one thing and people heard another. I disagree with him on a couple of levels. First off, colorblindness is the single most important concept in my eyes. I've grown up considering myself Chicano, and the rest of the world does not see it that way. Why? Because of my skin color, because I grew-up in the suburbs, because my Mom is Anglo, because I don't look like a Mexican. It's OK, I get it, that's all a part of the package, if you wouldn't look out of place shopping at Abercromby-and-Fitch, you're white. I get that, but to me, that's the ultimate in racial profiling.

In a non-colorblind world, by even mentioning the lack of diversity in that photo, you're making an accusation. I know, I know, you totally don't see it like that, but I do, because what you're saying is what's important is what someone looks like. I disagree, strenuously, but I didn't wade into that fight. Why? Because then I'm a bigot. Why? Because I'm a white guy defending the whiteness of that photo. Weird, huh?

The fact is it doesn't matter what color or race or gender or whatever the people in that photo are. I get the concept that it makes fandom look like a private Connecticut country club, but scratch even a little below the surface and you'll find huge levels of diversity in that photo. The problem is, few folks want to make that effort.

This blew up right before WorldCon, and among the SMoFs it was a big deal at the con. Discussion, anger, bitterness, arguments, they all took place. I was a part of a heated argument on the subject where I actually defended what Jim was saying, while also not agreeing with him. It was an odd bit of mental gymnastics, but the other approach was "he's calling fandom the KKK!" and Jim was doing nothing of the sort.

But all of this blew-up through Social Media. The original post was shared, and those shares were shared, and commented on, and the comments were commented on, and on and on. A wave was formed, it crashed and washed some people out, and that led to another crash, littering bodies across the beaches. Would this have happened 20 years ago? Yes, even 30 years ago, but it would have played out slower, and possibly meaner and with more personal bitterness.

The Olde Days

So, there were battles in fandom dating back to the 1930s. In the 1960s and again in the 1980s, there were battles that lasted years. The Breendoggle and TAFF Wars (also called Topic A, among other things) left scars that lasted decades, and played out in zines and at conventions. These were heated battles and nothing has really approached the level of fire those to brawls generated. The closest was probably RaceFail, and that blew over much faster than either of these. The thing is, today, things flare up, consume the world, then fade away quickly, moving on to the next topic. Even things like the Moondoggle (the dropping of Elizabeth Moon fas GoH at Wiscon) led to a ton of talk and even a fair bit of anger, and it was done within a month or so. I couldn't imagine that sort of speedy resolution even as late as the 1990s. That sorta thing would have torn the Fannish World apart! As it happened, it led to some hard feelings, but nothing like the old days.

I think some of it has to do with the ease that Social Media affords to these events. In the old days, you had to put a lot of effort into making your comments on a situation. You had to stew a bit, let things fester in your mind, and then on your fingers while you typed it, copied it, mailed it. Battles raged out over months and years. Now, you can put a little bit of time in every day and get a lot of reaction, have it seen by a large number of people, and it burns so fast, but there's far less effort. Things don't have to stew anymore, you can get it all out, and fast. We haven't had an all-out Fannish Bloodbath in the Social Media Era, even including RaceFail. That was a limited skirmish compared to the fights of the past. Or you could look at it like this - Fandom is ALWAYS in a start of all-out war. There's always some issue that is being debated and fought over. In the old days, maybe that wasn't the case, or maybe it was just that everyone selected their audience, mailed their zines to folks they knew. There's always something today, and it can be rough on people. Some folks want to be involved in all of it, and others just want to be a part of the community but seeing all the drama, back away. I've been guilty of that latter situation often myself. There's the concept that we should all just get along, but then something rises up and it's a problem for everyone.

A Matter of Perspective

Let's face it: Fandom is a left-leaning group. For all the conversation that fandom is a bunch of conservative old folk, and some of us are, those who hang out on Social Media, no matter what age, tend to be more liberal. This colors some of our conversations, and I think we don't like to think about it. Let's talk a very recent, broad example from popular culture. *Duck Dynasty*, one of the hottest shows on Cable (and one I've never even thought to watch), and one of the stars, Phil Robinson, made both racist and homophobic comments. There is always the possibility of these being publicity stunts, but probably not. He said these things and A&E suspended him. Now, that's a good thing in my eyes, because a company should be able to fire people for the stupid stuff they say, but what if it went the other way? What if he'd said "Well, Gay Marriage has to be legal!" and was suspended? I am certain that would lead to an absolute firestorm, and the truth is, they're both the exact same thing. That's where I get stuck.

So often in fandom, it's not necessarily the response, but that you're looking at a situation through one set of eyes and there are multiple ways of viewing it. It's tough for some of us, because we have opinions and experiences and too often, none of us are happy with a situation, often for very different reasons. How do you deal with that? You discuss it, which Social Media was basically designed for allowing, but too often it's during duress that we come to it.

So, Back to the Central Question

Can Social Media be used for good?

Jay Lake raised money for the sequencing of his tumors via LJ, Facebook, Twitter, and so forth.

Huge numbers of people have come to fandom via blogs and Social Networks.

Relationships have been born, conventions have been started, incredibly kind words have been put to pixels all because there is a place for all of it to exist in the view of the Wide Wide World. Thousands of hilarious things have been posted, entirely new kinds of friendship have been created, all because of things like Twitter and Facebook. It's an amazing thing that has allowed expressions of all kinds to spring up; both good and bad.

Yes, Social Networking can be good, and though there's some bad, what it makes possible is wonderful. We'll probably never have a perfect Social Media World because we'll probably never have a Perfect World.

Social Media - Cons and Pros

It has long been the tradition of bidding conventions such as Westercon and Worldcon to conceal the slate of guests of honor until after the bid is won, or if the bid did not win, to not reveal the slate. This best practice wisely focuses the voters on the bid itself: the experience of the committee, the site and so forth. Equally wisely, it prevents site selection from being a contest of slates. It would be grossly unfair and hurtful to the guests we are saying we want to honor by judging them lesser than some other slate of guests. Pro culture is often fractious enough without this sort of fuel and so we thought we laid the spectre of divisiveness to bed.

But it turns out that we had not banished that spectre completely. It bided its time and rose from the grave in a new form with the advent of social media.

As conventions sought to understand and use social media to promote our conventions, there was a slow start to the interactions between the fan and pro communities in this space. There were some pros that liked some con Facebook pages, the occasional tweet, nothing major.

In the race for the 2015 Worldcon site, all that changed. First appearing were pictures of various pros either at fan tables or posing with bid regalia. Then, suddenly, pros of all sorts were being videotaped for their endorsements and those endorsements plastered all over Facebook, convention websites, tweeted and re-tweeted. All three bids got into the act. To quote Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/73rd_World_Science_Fiction_Convention), "Authors George R. R. Martin and Cory Doctorow publicly supported the Helsinki bid and encouraged their fans to vote while artist Phil Foglio declared his support for Spokane's bid and artist Bob Eggleton declared his support for Orlando."



“The overarching problem is that everyone sees and uses social media from a different perspective.”
Neal Schaffer (@nealschaffer)

It is clear to see that even though these endorsers may or may not have been potential guests of honor for their respective bids, the competitive aspect is the same: stacking Martin and Doctorow against Eggleton against Foglio. I truly hope that the first three did not take the results of site selection as criticisms of them or their work.

So, that’s what’s happened so far. How does the future look?

People have seized on this idea, wrongly I believe, as a good practice. As an example of this, Dublin has already put a photo of author Michael Carroll holding their bid flyer on their Facebook page.

Continued unchecked, this trend will turn contested site selection races into races for pro endorsements; races to see who can line up the most celebrity star power. I think this would be very bad for our conventions for three reasons:

1) As this practice continues to escalate, it is likely not only to throw All Fandom Into War over the pros, but likely All Pros Into War as well, where votes for a particular site are interpreted as a vote against one or more pros.

2) It drives the focus of site selection away from the important things listed above, a process likely to evolve us toward gate shows: lots of big names and a poorly run con.

3) The celebrity endorsement should be rejected out of hand by any critical thinker. Currently, there is an ad starring comedian Will Farrell selling Dodge Durangos. But if one takes a step back from the comedy, you have to ask yourself, “What makes Will Farrell an expert on trucks? Why is his endorsement worth anything at all?”. Similarly, a pro’s view (and especially a big name pro’s view) of a con is likely to be very different than the average member’s experience. What makes Joe Pro an expert on what makes a good Worldcon, and especially, what makes a good Worldcon for our members?

This is a call to action. Now is the time to nip this in the bud while the trend is relatively new and doesn’t have the force of tradition. Let’s send that spectre back to grave where it belongs.

Managing the Twitterstorm - Do's and Don'ts of Social Media Triage

Online storms are not special to conventions or fandom - they are an increasingly common part of the landscape for any event, organization or high profile individual. This short article suggests some simple do's and don'ts to help conrunners navigate these fast-moving rapids.

The World ... is Changed

What fascinates me more than anything else about this topic is that we live in a time of phenomenal change for online social interactions, and this is creating the world's largest ever experiment in human behaviour and psychology. Facebook is nine years old; Twitter is seven years old; and of course in terms of material penetration you can take a couple of years off each of those numbers. And these technologies have created a new paradigm - the exponentially-expanding bubble where news and discussion rapidly expands from direct stakeholders to large numbers of people who have no connection with the original event. Moreover, it is often the case that the third- or fourth-hand news is taken as automatic truth because the ultimate recipient received it as a relay from someone they see as a reliable source. The result is often collective concern, or even outrage, propagating rapidly from in some cases a single report based on a very subjective view of a particular situation.

Of course we also see other, even less pleasant, scenarios taking advantage of the same technologies (e.g. cyber-bullying of both children and adults) and it seems to me that these things are all symptomatic of a situation where social and behavioural etiquettes have not caught up with the technology. I am fairly sure that at some point, these societal etiquettes will catch up (e.g. at some point people will start to realize that it's too easy to over-react, and learn to be more appreciative that social media are an unreliable narrator) - but until then, we need to find some practical solutions when the problem occurs in our backyard.

"Leaders used to be judged by how they responded in a crisis. Now they are judged by how well they anticipate one."

- @KhanfarW

The Challenge

The challenge we face is to decide how to respond when an incident blows up online. This could be on almost any topic - in the last couple of years we've seen online storms relating to harassment, diversity, access, and racism (among others). These are of course all important issues which need a response; the question is, how should you react when the Internet is acting like a dog with a bone, latching on to one specific point (which may not be factually correct, or the whole story) and spreading that point wider and wider, louder and louder?

1. Early Warning

The fundamental reality about these storms is that they are unexpected and fast-growing - and the wider they have spread, the harder it will be for ANY response to be heard. (More likely that it will be drowned out by the expanding ripples of repeats of the original story, by now on their fifth, sixth or tenth relay). So the first aim is to spot them early, while they can be dealt with. And this means quickly - even an hour can turn a local conversation into a runaway. So aim to have a social media team which is well connected to plenty of key bloggers and feeds, and also has alerts set up and queries to monitor your hashtag. Ideally have people in different timezones too.

2. Quick Decisions

The next challenge is to make a quick decision on the response. Our organizations are not very good at this - we are not used to command and control structures, and we're often scattered around time zones and with a variety of work commitments. Where a government or corporate would call an immediate crisis meeting, we're playing tag trying to get the right people to talk to each other about options.... THIS DOESN'T WORK.

While we're thinking about what to do, the noise level and bubble is still expanding. So be clear in advance about how has authority to decide on an initial response - this should be at least two people, if not three, each of whom is ready take a decision.

3. Respond or Ignore?

Now the issue has reached someone in authority, the first decision is simple: respond, or not. While it's always tempting to respond, sometimes one just has to ride out the storm. Where is the conversation going? Are there facts to be corrected? Will a response pour water on the flames, or gasoline? Is there a need to persuade people?

The key considerations here are generally (1) will the issue blow itself out on its own or is it gathering pace? (2) is the storm going to result in damage to the event or its reputation if allowed to continue? (3) can a response be made which will improve things/redirect the debate?

4. *The Holding Response*

A holding response is often very effective where the situation is complex or the convention needs time to work out its position. Stay silent, and the online community may feel their concerns are not being heard. Act quickly, and it can slow things down and buy time.

A good holding response makes it clear that the concerns have been heard, and gives a specific timescale for a fuller answer - this really needs to be no more than 24 hours or people will become very restless.

A holding response also starts to put the convention back in charge of the situation. If you stay silent and then respond later, it may be perceived that you didn't want to face the issue, and were being forced into it, which will further colour perceptions.

“Should even one’s enemy arrive at the doorstep, he should be attended upon with respect. A tree does not withdraw its cooling shade even from the one who has come to cut it.”

Mahabharata 12.146.5

5. *Clear, Factual, Forward Looking*

Having made a holding response, investigated, checked the facts, and decided that a longer answer is needed, it's now time to issue a formal statement. What is important here is to be clear, focus on facts, and above all be forward looking. That is, concentrate on what you plan to do next, and when you will do it by. Do not get drawn into the more emotional part of the debate no matter how intense the online discussion has become; it will only end badly.

6. *Be Humble*

We all put a huge amount of effort into running conventions and we all like to be well thought of. Being misrepresented or accused of something you didn't do is an unpleasant experience and our basic spirit of fairness makes us naturally defensive. Therefore it is very easy to fall into the trap of explaining how the issue happened, how your intentions were misunderstood, how you did the best you could, etc.

THIS DOESN'T WORK.

When people are baying for blood, starting a response with anything that sounds defensive or apologetic simply draws more anger. What people are looking for is an apology or an acceptance that there is a problem - so defuse the situation and give that to them. It's far more difficult to stay antagonistic in the face of a humble response - and as things calm down, there will still be chances to put your side of the story out there.

7. Boosting the Signal

When the furore has gone really wide, it can be hard to get your response heard - it's frustrating if you've put out the right statement and all you're getting is more people coming in fifth-hand to dogpile on you.

Signal boosting is very helpful here. If you have good relations with someone with a high profile who has been involved in the discussion, contact them privately, talk to them about the reality, and ask them to point to your statement. If your statement is not yet finalized, but you want to slow things down, a controlled leak ("sources at the convention tell me that they'll shortly be announcing") can also be useful.

8. Stay Strong, Stay Alert

If all has gone well, and you have committed to the right actions, then things should gradually calm down. Of course, it depends on the issue: if there's been a genuine incident of concern (e.g. a serious harassment incident) then debate will go on. But if things are handled well, the emphasis will move from an attack on the convention for its inaction or failings, to an acceptance that the convention has behaved appropriately and a discussion on the wider issue as it affects fandom.

Summary

The key recommendations in this article are simple to understand but hard to do well:

"Not everyone will like what you have to say. Not everyone will like what you do. Social networking is a garbage pile waiting for rats to feed. Pointless nothings of your everyday lives. Still the fumes rise."

- Jerica Barsht

Time really is of the essence; the faster you react, decide, and communicate, the easier it is to manage the conversation.

Recognize that you're dealing with an expanding bubble of righteous indignation - which after a few steps draws in people who may know nothing about the actual incident beyond what they have read in a couple of tweets or posts. This hive mind is not rational and not sympathetic to your pain.

Let go of the emotion; be humble; be willing to apologize sometimes even if you have not done anything wrong.

*Reviewed – Shattering Conventions: Commerce,
Cosplay, and Conflict on the Expo Floor
By Bob Calhoun*

Two years ago after finishing my work with the Peace Corps in Ukraine and returning to the United States, I began attending meetings and social gatherings organized by my local San Francisco Bay Area science fiction community, wanting mostly to make friends and to learn what I might be missing in literature and film. While my reading and viewing lists have quintupled in length, I've noticed that those around me seem to spend more time discussing event planning and happenings in the community rather than science fiction or fantasy directly. SMOFs invest a great deal of personal time and finances in traveling, promoting, marketing, and delivering conventions that provide gathering places for those with common interests, who want to feel that they are among their own kind. Bob Calhoun, the author of *Shattering Conventions: Commerce, Cosplay, and Conflict on the Expo Floor* shares this need, even if he's not willing to take any part in planning.

In 2009, Calhoun, a fundraiser for the University of California at Berkeley, found himself with shortened work weeks due to budget cutbacks and so decided to spend 2010 visiting conventions with the aim of writing his book. He concocted no fancy hypotheses, but set out to a book that would “keep [readers] turning pages, generate some decent word of mouth and hopefully sell books here” (289). He delivers a narrative in which he attends not only San Diego Comic-Con and Star Trek conventions in San Francisco and Las Vegas, but, to name a few, the Twentieth Congress of the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, the Tattoo & Body Art Expo, the Republican National Convention, the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Convention, Twilight Con in Portland, Conspiracy Con, Hemp-Con, a Bigfoot Encounters conference, and Wrestlemania.

As they follow Calhoun through his odyssey, readers will find no insights about event planning or the running of conventions. Rather, Calhoun relates bizarre encounters with Klingons, Andrew Breitbart, anti-Obama conspiracy buffs, George Takei, Gavin Newsom, and the ghost of Elvis Presley. Through it all, the author comments on the drive toward community, not only among fans but among those who generate the objects of fan interest as well. Calhoun illustrates this point when discussing Comic-Con:

I went to Comic-Con expecting to come back full of complaints of how it wasn't like it was in 1992 when you could walk up to Kirby or DC Comics editor or even stop animation god Ray Harryhausen and they'd gab with you for a while like they knew you. With the intrusion of Hollywood execs and A-listers hyping their blockbusters, the present-day Comic-Con definitely maintained a greater barrier between stars both large and small and the people who came there to show their portfolios or compete in costume contests. But at Comic-Con, you could still bump into the stars at any time, and when you did, you were their peers—at least for the next four days. (206)

My experiences jibe completely with Calhoun's. Fans freely refer to Mercedes Lackey, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Samuel R. Delany as "Misty," "Stan," and "Chip" as if referring to these authors after having bumped into them only last weekend at a neighborhood barbecue. When I used to attend literary conferences, none would dare refer to T. S. Eliot and Robert Lowell as "Possum" and "Cal," even knowing that these august white men were no longer living. Similarly, Calhoun gets ejected from the one strictly professional conference into which he tries to sneak, the aforementioned gathering of plastic surgeons. That he couldn't gain proper entry speaks to the exclusiveness of such events, as it was with the literary conferences I once attended. Fan conventions, on the other hand, operate inclusively. George Takei sums it up nicely during a telephone interview with the author: "Conventions are an opportunity for people to find soulmates, a community that they feel part of . . . Star Trek has enjoyed incredible, really extraordinary dedication from fans, and for me Star Trek conventions are an opportunity for me to thank them" (184).

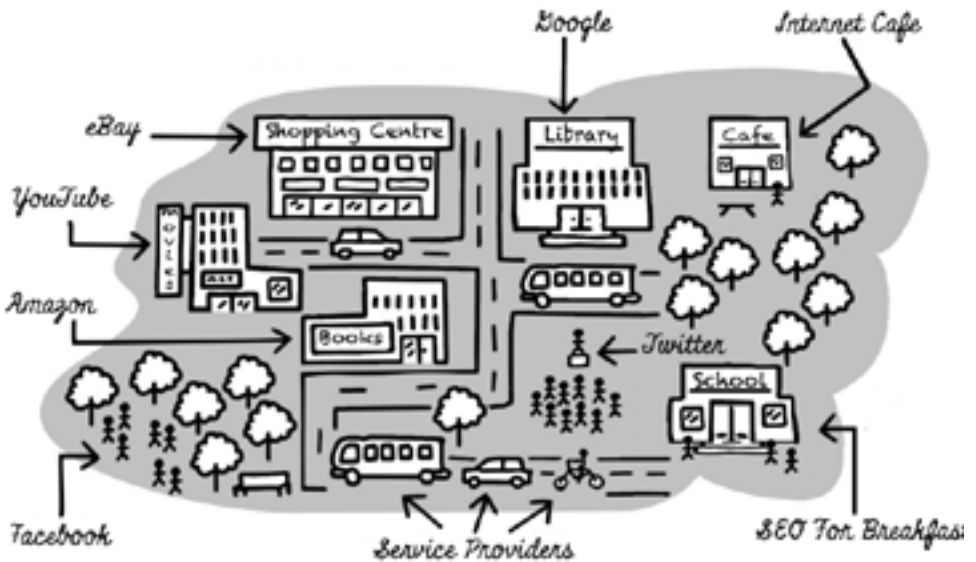


Those of a conservative stripe won't appreciate the political opinions of the author. Calhoun notes the deep political convictions of fans that form a spontaneous counter-protest in response to the presence of the Westboro Baptist Church at San Diego Comic-Con, and, he's none too shy about expressing his contempt to what he witnesses at the Republican National Committee.

The author's political stances will detract readers only if they don't agree with him. The book suffers more largely, however, from a lack of copy-editing. The numerous grammatical gaffes and typos rise far above the level of what some find endearing in fan writing. Listen, Bob Calhoun and Obscuria Press: such sloppiness distracts readers from the author's wonderfully funny content. Hire a copyeditor or fire the one you currently employ. To quote the famous drag queen Ongina when she was talking about HIV testing, "It's important!"

Fans should read *Shattering Conventions* to enjoy Calhoun's hilarious exploits and to remind themselves why they're involved in the adventure of science-fiction conventions, because whether we're SMOFs or the happily anonymous people who knit in the back row of panels, we belong to a community. Fans shouldn't, however, look for any exposition on the proper running of conventions. Enough about that labor of love is available from other sources.

Life Before the Internet



“Beginning today, treat everyone you meet as if he or she were going to be dead by midnight. Extend to them all the care, kindness, and understanding you can muster, and do so with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same.”

- Og Mandino

Anger Management

CARD! Card!

Screamed the old fucking hag from somewhere in the maelstrom of people pressing into the bar behind Jenem, who spun with furious anger, and as the thirty-something haggard old bitch pushed through the throng looking self-satisfied, a rage rose in Jenem, so vehement and sudden, rising up inside her and she so wanted to kick the woman with every ounce of her strength, all around the drinking and chatting contours.

She felt the tension in her jaw and knew that there was no winning this fight. Striking her down would enrage the Alphas. Instead she resorted to her childhood release of digging her nails into her palms.

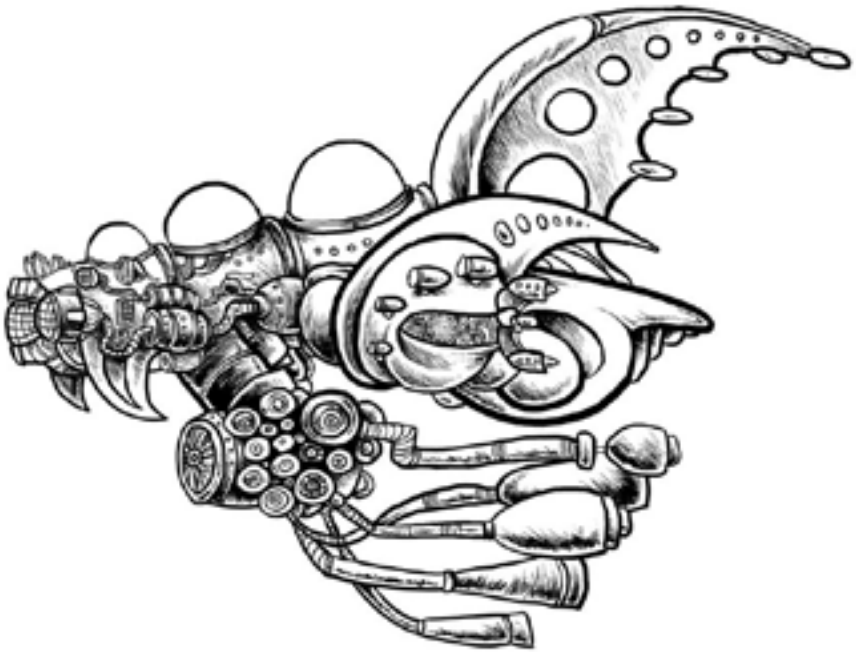
Card - uttered the woman, and despite the now more mannerly approach, she might well have been spitting venom, horrible fucking bitch. Jenem just turned deftly and made promptly for the exit of the speakeasy, passing by happy smiling faces all quenching their thirsts and needs. And she was out and gone and in a continuous moving river of people, jostling and laughing and talking. She knew nothing. Just red hot fury and frustration. That fellow at the bar had been about to serve her, he even smiled at her and now where was she. Fucked.

As she released one hand she felt the searing pain and just sucked it up. The upset was still there even if the flow of anger had eased slightly and she began to shake and feel a strange pain in her lower back and kidneys.

"It's all a load of fucking bullshit," said Moss. "They all know they are breaking ship state rules with these speakeasies and so-called private parties and not employing one properly licensed Drink Man, but that's ok for them, they never enforce the rules on themselves, just us."

Jenem had wandered around aimlessly angry, upset, unsure how to articulate or vent how she felt. The bitches working on the play, for whatever worth that was, without Emerald they'd be clawing the eyes out of one another, would offer no sympathy. Fucking working on some pointless derivative piece of shit. No originality but a rehash with themselves in key parts, such narcissism. But they didn't care who was in the audience once it was their voices that boomed across the box. And they'd as likely sneer or jeer her bad luck, no they wouldn't, they'd just be worse and say she was stupid and tell the whole ship on the ping network, worse than decompression. There was no point seeking out the boys, most of them were busy playing their electro sport.

And, oh there was no sexism in this modern egalitarian outer space



world, damn if that was true. The boys could race, flying around the track at incredible speeds, powered by direct current electricity, all acceleration, the abrasive nature of the trics acting as brake and they knew the adrenaline rush and craziness, turning it into a version of chicken at times, excitement coursing through their veins. But it got nasty, too. Throughout a trics race, a racer could literally push another off the circuit, in competition or malice, debris blockages suddenly appearing and purposeful blocks at the narrows, the speed and danger irrelevant, just the electric power in their hands and a look in their eye that she so wanted to possess. The fights always short, the smiles always wide afterwards.

Even improvising and personalising ballast weapons didn't seem as fun. She'd nearly missed out the whole session on hand to hand combat. Kicked a chair across the room when she realised. Luckily an officer had seen her anger, seemed actually impressed although expressed an exasperation and disappointment once she sat back down on it, as instructed. He had gently touched her shoulder, as she squeezed her nails in, imploring her gently to release, like she imagined a dad would, quietly and strongly telling her that she won't be here forever, you don't have to be, there are newer ships you know, with different rules and regs, as if he knew she wasn't just frustrated by the missed session, but could read her soul and its fucking self-centred sadness. He just about understood.



Why weren't they all like that? He said they had only her interests at heart and she believed him. The older bitches, well same age probably, but the officer had stealth age in his favour, those old Dragons who were only there because they would lose their privilege otherwise, were ready to slap each other into oblivion, only for the officer's knowing smile and calmness keeping control and she knew their self satisfied care was not at all real.

Even the Alphas liked this class of officer. Had to in a way, they were key. Bureaucrats are only so good with people and their authority was hollow without officers.

Unlike the breakers - she knew the officers would charm around rules and even just get the writers to change them in their favour. Such a position to be in.

His lieutenants were an odd mix, some were so relaxed and confident, others you wondered if they were in the right division, but the corps always had a calm cool exterior and she wished some of them would spend more time with her. She liked them but the seniority issue crept in. She never wanted to be an alpha, but being an officer already she knew she'd probably not fit right.

She wanted a different warm touch now, she wanted more. She would have loved to be with a breaker; if she had gotten a drink, she might have been a step closer. There were actually three talking in that speaker, incredible luck and one of whom was a girl, so rare, such a gem, and she knew that their presence had added to her crushing.

The breakers. Rule breakers. Bastards and they knew it. Although it was hard not to talk about them to others, to brag, to upset, but that would be self destructive. You never spoke about the rule breakers doing their thing, just about them.

She loved them. Their sweet talking, so smooth and dangerous, and there was an incredible pleasure to see the Dragons and even Alphas irked by the lines of red that would be left on them, indicating, if their smiles don't, that they had tasted what they felt was fresh sweetness. They were good, she knew

they didn't push you over, but like the wind, pressed gently enough to bend you with it, or even stand against it if you wanted, they would never take what wasn't to be given, but she heard it felt like that, perfect bliss.

The Bureaus hated them, hate hidden behind forms and rules and petty pointlessness, everyone wanted to be important, or justify their existence, and that meant getting one up somehow on someone else, such spirit the ship possessed, and all in the cause of some finer ideal that seemed somewhat lost in the reality of day to day life, gut-wrenching.

Moss was different. He was working on a plan, but within the system, had sought out funding, a rule breaker and officer had helped him out, threatened or bribed or maybe something nicer or worse with the bean counters, and so he could set up a juve club, but it wasn't really for Jenem as she was a little older, eighteen, but younger than Moss. But she knew that with space came privacy, and it was that sanctuary that she needed and made her way towards the Sixteen, as it was known.

"Bullshit," Moss continued as Jenem came back to the stress of the now. He was good in his own way, he might make an officer, never a rule breaker, although there was a bit of Bureau in there as well. Either way, she knew that later her friends, the real ones, older like herself, might make their way to Sixteen, and she could unwind a little.

'At least you were not pinged' and even he looked grateful, it was not an attempt to belittle or trivialise her situation, but the ship borne comm net was both official communications and gossip grape vine and lynch mob all in one. Alpha's would despise you if a proto-Alpha said a word against you, and if you had an official ping, it was like firing a ballast weapon at a coil magnet, certain destruction.

The room emptied of the kids and filled up with Janem's peers and ever so gently lights started to darken and the piped music was switched to easy piano. Emerald showed up and just gave her a hug, and then she unloaded.

Moss saw the last of the young ones out and moved the posse into the other corner, and they rearranged the furniture into a Picasso-esque style, using the secure bolts to give it all odd angles. Soon she relaxed and they talked and chatted. A fight had broken out and that was the ping scandal of the day, although as ever there wasn't the same admonishment, competitive spirit was OK. For her and Emerald the damnable system that predicted their routes upwards and the lack of fun, or what they considered fun was the issue. Damn their parents for choosing this ship, but then they wouldn't be on a ship only for it, and wouldn't be friends. It was so damnable. They laughed out loud, and shushed the blank looks.

There was a knock, and a rule breaker walked into Sixteen with a proto-Alpha on his arm. They were all frozen for a moment, but Moss knew him, and the breaker smiled all around, and slipped in away from the maelstrom outside. This one was playing a strange game. She knew him from some training exercises, he had been some kind of reserve officer, but he wore the garb of a breaker, and he swung in like smoke, the woman on his arm pretending nothing was happening, she smelled different, purposely ignoring them, and she was relaxed and smiled. He looked around with an incisive eye, a smile on his face, checking each one of them. He spoke with Moss, encouraged him a little and then they both cheerfully left.

What the fuck was that about, she asked. Hey, he is a fucking sponsor, OK, I don't ask how we get some shit done, but he helped us out. "And he left his flask," said Emerald, always the bright one. They all went straight to it. Kul picked it up, "It's full." "Now, now," said Moss, and soon they all had glasses, and were gently sharing out the nectar. Now this was more like it. Soon with sips they were laughing and they started up a game of shards. Later as the drink took hold they all decided to remove their upper fatigues and massage one another. It was good, one of the guys could really undo her shoulder blades with his elbow, and they usually didn't get this relaxed or informal, and it was just warm and good. Then Pearl did her thing where they breathe out and the vertebrae snap as she slammed down the palms of her hands, you'd scream but then it was good, especially with the drink on you.

After such delightful harshness, Emerald squeezed in, smiled in a kind sultry way at Pearl and was soon giving Jenem a gentle rubbing down, whispering wonderfully supportive curses in her ear, both of them cursing specific Dragons in their laughter. After a long time and as only was fair, Jenem rolled and started to massage Pearl's hands and fingers, and then Emerald's softly returning the pleasure in relaxed ease.

She was so relaxed she even told everyone about the proto-Alpha who threw her out, and the abuse and derogatory comments about her, had them all laughing, all sexual of course. They started to pair off a little sooner than she had hoped. Jenem was just so unsure with boys, she liked them, but she hated herself in many ways for not always liking what they liked. She would prefer a long hug and sweet tasting deep kisses from Emerald rather than a clumsy—well, a clumsy oaf. Yet Emerald had already made a move, as had Pearl, who was a frighteningly scary and strong prospect, and Jenem couldn't make up her mind whether it would be nice or just petrifying or both.

She saw Moss was avoiding it all, and then noticed that Sen was on his own, his curly hair so nice, and he was not all that bad looking she felt, and laughed, he was OK, she was drinking. She smiled and he moved over, and soon they were in a corner, surrounded by bolsters and bits of furnishing.

They fumbled and it was nice, but she wanted more, she wondered, and jumped up, and took Sen into the head. It was functional, but now totally private and that's what she needed. She hoped that now alone, he might push a little harder, try and take some, but he was letting her do all the work, and it was annoying. She wanted him to just devour her, and take her, she wanted it, it was okay, but how could she telepathically explain, she had to take his hand to put it on her ass, and then he gently caressed, for fuck's sake, she wanted to feel his lust and hunger, to probe and push, not be doted on, she was getting angry, she knew it, and this was always the problem, they were all so conditioned, which was fine, but she need more. There was a itch, but this boy was not going to scratch it and make it into the bliss that she wanted. She realised that she was as excited as a dead piece of bilge meat.

She didn't know whether to cry, or to die. So she took the lead, and in his satisfaction, she found something and she had been stirred as his hands had come around her head and she felt he might grip her locks tightly, but no, it was soft and gentle. Even so, she smiled at his speed and eagerness, and then his embarrassment as she tidied a drop from her chin. His reluctance to even kiss her then was palatable, and after initial amusement, this infuriated her, how could it be all one way, all the time. She started to get angrier. Didn't he even know that she



wanted to be taken, physically hard, and wanted to feel his energetic strength?

Just then there was a crash outside, and as she opened the door to the head, she saw that Ship's Bureau Agents had busted in the door of Sixteen and in came a flood of proto Alphas and Dragons. Moss was frozen, his hands on a girl, the rest of them scurried for their clothing and huddled, as the real bitches came in, PA's shouting and roaring and screaming at them, disgusting creatures who had no self respect, and it was a horror show of unbearable proportions as she felt herself marched out of Sixteen they were all lined up and berated. Meanwhile in the room, they could hear Moss being slowly broken, the Alpha's moved had in, wailing bringing him to tears as they went to work on him, his lack of moral strength and how he had denied all they were working for.

It was bedlam, and their parents, those selfish bastards who brought them here, and then smiled in self assured knowledge that they were giving their kids the time of their lives, when really it was just their selfish needs being satisfied would be told, their cards would be quickly scanned and messages blipped out on the system. The fucking system, jesus everyone would know in milli seconds.

Thoughtless disaster. Why couldn't they just leave them alone? An officer turned up, and some calm started to reign, and he made soft sounds and looked angry, but, Jenem looked at him long and when he caught her eye, she knew he was feigning it. He invoked the authority of the most senior Alphas and also some skirt wearing general guy far away and there was more quiet and calm.

A troop of lieutenants arrived as Moss was led out and stood next to them, a ragged bunch of pity and scorn.

At the head of the troop was that rule breaker, suddenly now in pristine uniform. There was saluting and talking, and most of the Dragons and Proto Alphas, pleased with their deeds and assured of merit ribbons, and happy that they had made someone else's life hell, although of course morally correct, which was all-important, were all excited and started to leave, job done. The officer in charge dismissed one who was more zealous than the rest, who obviously wanted to watch them endure more hardship and embarrassment.

Where the fuck had it gone wrong?

Moss was led out, and stood next to them. Jenem watched intently, they all did. Moss was clearly broken.

Now it was a naval matter. Things could get a lot worse, they could be physically punished, or she hoped it could go easier, maybe, just maybe. The rule breaker went up to Moss, their eyes met, and Moss leaned in towards him and whispered something, and she watched as he went into Sixteen and promptly came out, the top of his flask clearly visible in his tunic pocket.

The officers smiled discreetly. Moss had a faint sickly smile for a mo-

ment, but then it was gone. The other officer saw it slip away, and watched Moss slipping into despair, and grabbed him and pinned him to the wall. "You better keep fucking fighting, boy, or I will really fucking kill you." The suddenness and strength surprised them, and they didn't know what to make of it. Emerald just burst into tears, but Moss, straining to turn his neck, smiled at her and shushed her. "It's OK, they are on our side..."

There were no pings, no months wasted defending oneself, nothing on the comm at all. Officers spoke about rehabilitation, not discrimination and damnation.

Yet, the damage to the club was incredible. The Dragons had done a good job, slashing and obviously looking for contraband, wickedly being worse vandals than anyone they knew. It was repairable, and they were all stunned that the broader net had somehow never spoke of them.

There had been a quick bureaucratic movement of papers in Operations. The Proto-Alpha that had been with the breaker was assigned to over see them, but she was always with that Breaker and never really cared, or only enough to ensure there was no further trouble. She demoted Moss, assigned a younger and soon to be Proto-Alpha called Isej as directly in charge of Sixteen, but also promoted Emerald who was allowed to assume day to day command.

Isej younger and not as zealously dedicated, worried as much about impressing up the line, as being allegedly in charge, scoring the merit, happy to delegate to Emerald and perhaps ensure they were never caught again, while running what seemed like positive interference as she pinged out welcomes and timings of activities for Jives.

Everything had changed but nothing had changed. Moss had a merit ribbon taken away from him, but then was offered a position as a reservist trainee, which surprised them, but of course the officers would tell the Dragons and Alphas that it would be good morally for some discipline.

Sixteen was still a state of mind. A place where we are in charge and can escape after hours.

Yet Jenem knew she couldn't really escape. Couldn't go to a speakeasy and seek the attention and harsh intimacy that she sought, seek out a breaker and lean in and kiss him, and allow him to be with her, as much or as little as she wanted.

Yet the purpose of it all, in a way was for her future, and she hated what that looked like, and even if her future led her to another ship, a newer one with less peerage or she were to join the corps and change over ships, it was the same. It satisfied the Alphas and Dragons and their overall goals and that was horribly hypocritical.

No, she would leave, blast away, but settle, and they would never know and never realise, and just as they had pissed all over her inner hopes, she would silently destroy theirs.

LoCBOX

On Issue 16

November 30, 2013

Dear Chris,

Since you mentioned it, I did go back and look at Journey Planet #16. The (?) Squires in Glendale mentioned in Tim Powers' article is probably Roy Squires. Roy was a first fandomite and a major collector. He did live in Glendale.

As to material on PKD, Norm Metcalf has made comments on interacting with him in the sixties. Some future fanzine should ask him for an article on his contacts. Rey Nelson is another person who had contacts with PKD.

I never thought of *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind* in connection with PKD. Now that I think about it, the concept is like something Dick would have done, but the mood is entirely different. Romance with silly complications isn't a PKD sort of thing.

Yours truly,

Milt Stevens

Having just read a little PDK right before I first saw Eternal Sunshine, it struck me that it was very similiar in theme, Now knowing that Michel Gondry is a HUGE PKD fan, it makes sense!

Hmmmm... those contacts may have to happen!

Thanks, Milt!

On Issue 17

Hi Chris, James, and Colin,

Just wanted to drop you a line to tell you how much I'm enjoying Journey Planet #17. I've never been to a Worldcon and, being unlikely to be able to attend one in the near future, had gotten rather down on the whole idea - "it's just another con," "I'm not missing that much," and other assorted sour grapes. While JPI7 (obviously) hasn't made it any more likely that I'll be able to attend a Worldcon anytime soon, it's at least gotten me excited about the idea again. Congrats on pubbing an awesome ish.

Take care,

Jason Burnett

With regard to conventions being Don Wollheim's idea. Even if you accept that Philly meeting as the first con - I don't - Wollheim didn't come up with the idea. I refer you to this page for the arguments/evidence:

<http://www.fiawol.org.uk/fanstuff/THEN%20Archive/1937conFirst.htm>--

Rob Hansen

www.fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff

we have a lot of fights at the Museum over one concept - What was the first computer? My argument is it's an important question (and there is no other question that gets asked of me by students than that) and the rest of the team say there is no answer and we have to skirt it. I say what you gotta do is set a definition, research the hell out of it and make a call.

Now this, in many ways, is the matter of who performed the first concert on the Internet. The Rolling Stones spent months hyping that they were going to be the first band to play a live concert on the internet using a technology called The M-Bone. Well, two hours before they went on, a group of Technologists who can play a little called Severe Tire Damage beat them to the punch. Apparently, it was done very much on a last-second thing.

So, they were the first Live Concert on the Internet, and NOT the Rolling Stones, because even though the idea was the Rolling Stones (management team, most likely), they weren't the first. The ones who Actually MANAGED it were the first. In this case, it was Philly over Leeds, though to be fair, neither had the impact that the first WorldCon would. Although I think Bob meant that the Philly con was his idea.

Dear Chris (and James and Colin):

As promised (or threatened) on Facebook, you look like you're about to get another Journey Planet on the go. So, here are comments on issue 17 to help you get finished up with issue 18.

You always have such interesting cover art...you've got such a variety of artists to draw upon, and the internet is full of such art, if you know where to look, which it appears you do. Literally today, in searching for a particular business card, I found Delphyne Woods' cards. At the Reno Worldcon, she greeted us as old friends, gave us her cards, and said she would support us if we decided to go for TAFF. And now, she is gone too quickly.

In some ways, Worldcon programme books are the annual time capsules of science fiction. I remember seeing full collections of them at Worldcons, especially the gold-covered first Worldcon programme book of 1939. I think it's great to bring those to your readership, also for the great artwork on the covers. We sometimes fail to acknowledge how important the artists are to your visualization of science fiction. Fandom also sometimes takes a swipe at Worldcons as being a lumbering beast, overpriced and overly complicated. There's a grain of truth in every opinion, but given that we're coming up on 75 years of Worldcons, we've got to keep it going for as long as we can.

I spoke to Dave Kyle in November when he was the FanGoH at SFCONtario 4 in Toronto. We'd met several times before, but he didn't remember me. Yvonne's mother is suffering from mild dementia, and has a habit of asking the same question about a dozen times in an hour or so...her short-term memory is gone. Dave did the same thing to me. I was quite patient, and his daughter thanked me for looking after him while she got him some lunch. Everyone, treasure him while he's still with us.

I cannot get to many Worldcons, but over the years, I have certainly enjoyed them all, and also enjoyed the feeling of being at the heart of fandom by being there. Same goes for the Hugos. I loved being a nominee in 2010, and Yvonne and I handing one out in Montréal. Perfect Worldcons may not exist, but for me, the best one is one that close by and affordable. Montréal was great in that we could drive there, we got a room with a kitchenette, and we did a grocery order on our way in. We'd be busy with things, so we enjoyed the hotel breakfast each morning, and we'd make our own lunches for later in the day. It was easy to be there, and take part in things, and fulfil our commitments.

Ah, there's Dave and Roger and Bob Madle. I don't see these folks as often as I'd like. The Simses are great folks, and they often run the green room at Worldcons. I think they did in Reno. There are times when I just want to chuck this whole fandom thing, more time than I care to admit, but I see people like Dave and Roger and Bob who are still coming to Worldcon after all these years. They've lost a lot of friends over the years, but are still coming, being wise enough to make more friends who are younger. There's something there that means they will continue to come to Worldcon, and have done so for 60 or more years. I stick around because I want to find that these guys have found, and I think I am well on my way. Worldcon changes every year to suit the committee that stages it, and the people who attend it. Fandom moves on, and us mere humans, no slans are we, tend to stay in one place, and wish for those days to return.

We are such conservative consumers of a mostly liberal genre.

Pictures from fandom in the 50s are great, especially seeing our fannish forefathers in suits. When did jeans and t-shirts start, anyway? I have various memories of Worldcon, but nothing I can really bring to mind and write an article about. I admit that as I write, I am getting a little sad, for I know that my Worldcon attendance is largely or completely past. We plan to make a firm decision about our going by May 1, and I hate to say that I pretty-well know what it will be.

Thank you for the programme book gallery. I am pleased to be able to say that some years ago, I purchased some of those early books. I have close to hand the books for the 11th (Philcon II, 1953), 17th (Detention, 1959), 18th (Pittcon, 1960) and 20th (Chicon III, 1962) Worldcons. The first Worldcon I actually attended was Chicon IV in 1982.

I honestly believe that Loncon 3 will be our last Worldcon, if we can go. And yes, I've said that before. But I simply cannot accept that we might go to more; they're simply too much for us in many ways. So, I keep track of the bids, but haven't supported any of them. (Washington has become the choice for 2017. And, I think there might be a bid for an 8th Chicon in 2022. I am just pleased there are still bids for future years.)

Almost two pages, and that's not bad at short notice. I hope you can use this! Many thanks for this great issue, hope your Christmases were stellar, and Happy New Year and Hogmanay to all of you sterling editors. May 2014 be a better year for all.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

While that Cover gallery was the fiddly-est thing I've ever laid out (at least 5 times I laid it out!) it's also one of my faves. I've always wanted to buy the Pacifcon program book they've got on sale at Wondercon every year. It's signed by every single pro who attended, and quite a few fen too! The only reason I haven't bought it? They want something like 3 grand!

*“If 50 million
people say
something
stupid, it’s
still stupid.”*

- Rolf Dovelli

