

# Jiant Shoulders



*A Fanthology for Corflu Pangloss—October 21-23, 2022*

# GIANT SHOULDERS

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***Jiant Shoulders*** is a Fanthology compiled for the members of Corflu Pangloss in 2022.

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Cover and illos pages 26, 33, 43, 65, 68, 73 and 91 by Ulrika O'Brien.

Illos by Bill Rotsler on pages 2, 15, 19, 31, 42, 47, 51, 55, 58, 84 are many from a cache found by Kate Schaefer in the collection of the late Jane Hawkins. Remainder from Hooper's stash-o-illos.

Rob Jackson provided the ATom illo on page 57, Ingrid Neilson illo on page 30, and Harry Bell illos on pages 36 and 62.

The illos by Kurt Reichel on page 27, Steven A. Fox on page 37, Jack Gaughan on page 49, Jim Barker on page 75, and Joan Hanke Woods on page 85 were captured from issues of Ed Meksy's ***Niekas***.

Illos in Ted White's article "A Day with Calvin Thomas Beck" are by Andy Reiss, reprinted from ***Void*** #21.

In Earl Kemp's "Ballad of Killer Kemp", illo on page 23 is by Bjo Trimble, photos on pages 24 and 25 by Bruce Pelz.

Illo on page 38 accompanying Rob Jackson's introduction to Peter Weston's is by Ivor Latto, courtesy of the Fishlifters.

Robert Lichtman provided for the photo of the book cover on page 66 of "The Big Dummy Boondoggle"

Illos in Dave Langford's "You Do It With Mirrors" include art by Steve Stiles on pages 76, 78, 80 and 82, and by Harry Bell on page 77.

Layout by Carrie Root using Microsoft Word.

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### An Introduction

Welcome to *Jiant Shoulders*, an anthology published by the committee of Corflu Pangloss, the 2022 edition of the convention for fanzine fans. All of the writers collected here have been recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award, an honor bestowed annually by the Corflu Committee since 2010. Living recipients were asked to choose something from their extensive body of written work to be reprinted here. In the case of recipients who are now deceased, close friends and collaborators were consulted to find an appropriate work.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is an extension of the Fan Activity Achievement Awards, created by a committee in the 1970s and revived by Arnie Katz at Corflu Vegas in 1995. The awards have become a regular feature of Corflu's Sunday banquet program, even though the list of categories often changes from year to year.

The first LAA was voted on alongside the other FAAn award categories in 2010. But subsequent committees have treated it as a separate function, frequently forming a small jury or committee solely for the purpose of deciding who should be honored for their body of work in fandom.

Different committees have had different priorities in mind while making their choice. Some have had a local or regional connection to the convention and others, like Ted White and Art Widner, a long history of involvement with Corflu. Others were a source of great inspiration to the convention organizers and worked for decades in fanzine fandom, even if their connection to Corflu might be tenuous or non-existent.

Taken together, the group of fans recognized by the Lifetime Achievement Award make a pretty impressive collection of talented, creative, productive and supremely fannish characters. I feel proud to have been part of the same community where all these fans came together and glad to say that I know or knew so many of them.

The world has changed dramatically since the first Corflu was held in the winter of 1984. Back then, the only way to be exposed to writing in fanzines was to secure copies of those fanzines. Only a handful of pieces were reprinted in collections like this one. But when we went to

find the various works included in *Jiant Shoulders*, we found that most of our subjects had a large volume of their writing available at several large archives on the web. The sprawling library of fanzines maintained by fanac.org was of particular value to us.

However, the material archived online to date still represents a relatively small fraction of fandom's actual output. There is at least one item in this collection which was published only in an APA with a very limited membership and which no archive or special collection would likely consider worthy of digitization.

Corflu regulars have a keen sense of fan history, but they have a different set of priorities than those documenting pulp magazines, convention history or cosplay. Names like Charles Burbee, Dean Grennell, Ethel Lindsay and Susan Wood have some resonance in fandom at large, but at Corflu they are still Jiants of their fields. To the Corflu stalwart, their work remains as relevant as when it was cut onto stencil 40 or 50 or 60 years ago.

I have contributed the bulk of the editorial material in the collection, but many people have contributed to its creation. Carrie Root is responsible for the design and actual completion of the fanzine. This is her fourth Fanthology; she has previously worked similar wonders on *Fanthology 1989*, *Fanthology 1994*, and *How Green was My Vagrant*.

Claire Brialey and Jerry Kaufman have proofread miles of text and Jerry helped throughout the process of searching for and selecting the works reprinted here. Tom Becker, Rob Jackson and Nigel Rowe selected items by John Bangsund, Peter Weston and Art Widner and contributed substantial introductions for all three. Gordon Eklund consulted on Elinor Busby's work in *lilapa*. Thanks to Bruce Gillespie, Dave Langford, Robert Lichtman, Paul Skelton, Geri Sullivan and Ted White for help in selecting work from their own catalogs. I hope they will be pleased to see their work presented here.

Mark Plummer and Kate Schaefer passed on art that was used in *Jiant Shoulders*. Other illustrations were collected from the fanzines in which they were originally published; the artists and editors involved have our gratitude.

Andy Hooper

10-16-2022.

## Ted White – Honored in 2010 at Corflu Cobalt

**A Brief Bio:** Ted White was born in February, 1938 in Washington DC.

An active publisher since his middle teens, Ted has edited or co-edited fanzines including:

- **Blat!**
- **Campaign Liar**
- **Crank**
- **Double Whamm,**
- **Egoboo**
- **Egoscan**
- **F**
- **Fanac** (2 hoax issues)
- **Gafia Newsheet**
- **The Gafiate's Intelligencer**
- **Gambit**
- **Mini**
- **Minac**
- **Null-F**
- **Pong**
- **Spam**
- **Spung**
- **Stellar**
- **Thirteen O'Clock**
- **Triple Whammy**
- **Void**
- **Zip**

Ted's professional career and an author, editor and music critic is equally extensive. He has edited publications including **Amazing Stories**, **Fantastic**, **Heavy Metal** and **Star Date** and is the author of more than 20 novels in the sf and mystery genre. He also wrote fiction pseudonymously as Ron Archer, Jacob Edwards and Norman Edwards.



Ted White, circa 1957

In 1968, he won the Hugo Award for Best Fan writer, and declined a nomination for the same award in 1969. He was nominated for the Hugo for Best Professional Editor from 1972 to 1975 and again in 1977.

Ted and Dave Van Arnam were the Co-Chairs of Nycon 3, the 1967 World Science Fiction Convention. He was chosen as the Fan Guest of Honor at St. Louiscon in 1969 but declined the honor to draw more attention to Eddie Jones, the winner of the Transatlantic Fan Fund. In 1985, he was chosen as the Fan Guest of Honor for Aussiecon II and traveled to Melbourne, Australia.

In the 1960s, Ted was arguably one of the world's few professional fanzine

publishers, as he was an employee of Greenwich Village's Metropolitan Mimeo, a shop he dubbed "Towner Hall," and from which a stream of memorable fanzines by a platoon of writers and editors flowed.

He was a founding member of the Fanoclasts, a member of the Lunarians, the 1950s Futurians, was briefly President of the WSFA and hosted the Falls Church Second Friday Group.

Ted founded the Fan Writers of America during a party at the 1984 World Convention in Los Angeles. (It's first "Past President" was Suzle Tompkins.) He supervised the election of more than a score of future Past Presidents at subsequent Corflus. He was retroactively elected Past President for 1980 at Corflu 3 in 1986.

Ted's article "A Day with Calvin Thomas Beck" is reprinted from **Void** #21, April 1960. Selected illos from that original version were by Andy Reiss.

**Interlude: Where Did the Lifetime Achievement Award Come From?**

Rob Jackson wrote:

“Thanks for asking for some extra info about the LAAs and how they started. My memory on all this is imperfect, though I think the first iteration of the LAA was voted by the FAAn electorate like any other FAAn category. Having a judging panel was the decision of a later Corflu organizing group – perhaps the Sunnyvale crew supporting Chris G. Why we added the category is lost in the sludge of my memory, but we certainly thought it was a Good Idea At The Time. This was undertaken by the Corflu Cobalt committee, including Sandra Bond, Claire Brialey, Pat Charnock, Mike Meara and Mark Plummer. Mike Meara was actually in charge of the FAAns that year.”

Subsequent to this, Claire Brialey unearthed Rob’s original remarks which ultimately led to the award:

“I was just doing the washing up and thinking about this GoH issue, when I suddenly had what might even be a brainwave.

“Why isn't there a FAAn Award for Lifetime Achievement? A bit like the ones they give to revered Elder Ghods at things like the Baftas. Or even the Grand Master Award. Now I come to think about it, I think it's daft that there isn't.

“As long as there is at least some positive response here, I might ask this question on fmzfen, which is probably the right forum to check out the views of a wider constituency.

“The obvious possible candidates (at least first off) include people like Art W, Earl and Ted - though it's not for me to tell people how to vote if we go ahead.

“And if the response is positive, who do we consult if we want to add this as a new category at Corflu Cobalt? Is it Ted who's sort of in charge?”

Rob continues, in 2022:

“The upshot was eventually obviously that Ted won the vote. You might think it wise to omit my thinking aloud about possible recipients, and my naïve question about who should be consulted, as I was obviously a bit ahead of myself!” (Err, no.)

“About the move to a jury-led process, you will need to consult Spike, who the Corflu archive website confirms was organising the 2011 awards. (I wasn't involved in that decision.)”

All of this serves to confirm that Ted is unique among the recipients of Lifetime Achievement Award to date, having been chosen for the honor by a popular vote.

## A Day with Calvin Thomas Beck

By Ted White

Originally published in *Void* #21, April 1960.

I spent a day with Calvin Thomas Beck—twenty-four hours—yes, I did, actually and literally.

Now, long before we moved to New York, I had heard stories about Beck; stories which grew long and fabulous in the retelling. Stories about Calvin Thomas Beck and his mother, without whom he was never... And since coming to New York, it had crossed my mind several times that here at long last was a chance to lay a legend, to see if the Beck Mythos was only that, or whether there was a flesh and blood substantiation to the stories I had heard.

Luck was with me in the person of Larry Ivie, a fringe fan and professional artist, and a long-time EC fan. Larry Ivie had found himself doing the layout for the second issue of Calvin T. Beck's prozine, THE JOURNAL OF FRANKENSTEIN. For a week, Ivie had been taking the bus over to New Jersey to the Becks' home early each morning, worked a long day, and returned late at night, and whenever he had the chance, he would regale me with stories about the Becks. Finally I could stand it no longer. I asked Larry if I might go along with him to meet these fabulous people.

"Well, it's your life..." is the way he put it. "But I could use someone to run interference; the way they keep wanting to talk to me all the time I never can get any work done." So, it was agreed. Sunday morning at 9:00 I would meet Ivie at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, and we would ride out together to North Bergen, New Jersey.

The Beck house is a duplex, with the Becks on the left side. It is in effect a two-story, with a "basement" on the ground floor, and a "first floor" which is reached by climbing half a flight of outside steps to the porch. Fortunately, the house is about three doors away from the bus stop. The neighborhood

is a seedy residential one, made up of lower-middle-class homes and cheap housing projects, with a run-down "business section" of a couple of blocks a half mile away. Like most of New Jersey, it is singularly depressing.

Larry knocked several times on the door, and finally it was opened by a small, plump, grey-haired woman in a house-coat. It seemed the Becks had just arisen. We entered through a crowded living room with an unmade studio couch-bed and two large bird cages, and Larry introduced me to Mrs. Beck. "This is Ted White," he said. "He came along to help me, since we're pushing so close to the deadline."

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Beck said, not for an instant questioning my qualifications, but simply accepting me. "Hello, Teddy," she said to me with a strange chirping-bird sort of accent. (Later I asked Calvin, who said it was a mixture of French and Greek accent.) I was to be "Teddy" for the rest of my stay. We were then ushered down into the "basement" where Larry began showing me what had been done, while the Becks presumably prepared themselves for the day.

The basement had been newly done over, into what amounted to an apartment, with separate (but equal), kitchen and bathroom facilities. (Calvin later said they intend to rent it as an apartment come spring. Here's a great opportunity for someone who wants to do a psychological study, close-up...) It was light and attractive and spread out all over the main room floor were layout sheets. "It was the only place where we had room," Larry explained, and started showing me what he had done. The layouts were rather good, I thought, but conventional and not very world-shaking. Larry had done lots of picture paste-ups, montages, etc. , and a fair amount of title

lettering. The latter I nearly uniformly deplored. (Later, Larry agreed: "I'm an artist, not a letterer. I don't know why people think artists make good letterers.")

The deal was this: the first issue of THE JOURNAL OF FRANKENSTEIN had been a serious "work of love," and looked pretty lousy. It had also received lousy distribution, and lost money. But Beck (who also publishes various cheap physical culture magazines—"Queer bait," Larry calls them; he will have nothing to do with them) managed to find a better distributor: the one who handles PLAYBOY. The distributor wanted something to compete with Ackerman's mag, so the slant of the mag was being changed 190 degrees. It was also getting better printing and would at least not look like a scrapbook, as the first issue had. The catch at this point was that the distributor wanted to see the final preliminary dummy the next day. And the issue was only half completed. Larry was still explaining this when we were called up for coffee.

"Coffee" turned out to be "Coffee, with." In this case, with two fried eggs and loads of unevenly burned toast, plus cheese sauce. It happens that I am not an egg fan, and have only learned how to eat (and enjoy, that is) hard-boiled eggs and deviled eggs in the last year, and had never attempted fried eggs. Manfully, with a great spirit of adventure, and mindful of the fact that I had not eaten since rising that morning, I ate the two fried eggs.

I am still not a fried egg fan.

We were joined at this breakfast by Calvin Thomas himself, who turned out to be thirty-ish, plump, medium height, dark, and rather pleasant. It is difficult to imagine a man at thirty still bound to his mother as Calvin is, but the marvel is that Calvin seems to have adjusted to this as a life-long fact, and has accepted it with remarkable humor. (He often kids his mother, and puts her down, but still refers to her with child-like affection.) Calvin strikes me as a shy man, introverted, weak-willed, and aware of

it. Much of this can be credited to his mother's dominance.

Strangely (particularly, in light of reports I'd heard), I found neither Beck unpleasant, but in the long run only wearing. Yet, Mrs. Beck has certainly some very strange attitudes, which came out during the hour-long discussion we held as we ate. The Becks were pumping me of course, about my background, so I played my bearded role to the hilt with such remarks as, "I had to leave Washington DC of course. It is a beautiful town, but so dull. There are no real opportunities, and nothing ever happens there; there's nothing to do." I was actually referring to career opportunities in writing and editing, but Mrs. Beck took this as a comment on social life—which it could also easily be. "Well," she said, "I should think a man of letters would not mind that. It is not good to leave the home too much."

The Mama Beck philosophy seems to be one of Staying Behind Locked Doors, one which was to bear itself out several times later. Larry had earlier in the week told me her rather interesting views on social life between the sexes: "You know what boys and girls do now? They date. If I had a daughter and she told me she wanted to go out on a date, you know what I would do? I would hit her over the head and put some sense into her! Of course, I have never had that problem with Calvin... He used to go to the YMCA. But finally he was going to the YMCA too much, and we had to move out here to New Jersey." Mrs. Beck still thinks highly of the YMCA, however. "You know the 23rd St. YMCA?" (Larry had lived there a short time before he found an apartment—"The queers scrawl messages and advertisements on the walls in the halls!") "That's a very goot place for boys, you know?" She nodded her head in approval.

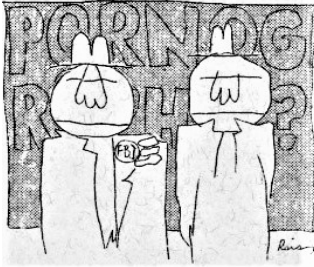
The effect this has had on Calvin, a very malleable individual with apparently a very malleable sex-drive, was to drive him into the introvert's fascination for sexological studies, and a vicarious approach to what in his house is an unapproachable subject. He told a rather funny story (funny more in the



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way he told it than for its intrinsic humor) about how at one time he had published a pseudo-SEXOLOGY type magazine, and George Wetzel, who had decided he no longer liked Beck, complained to the FBI that Beck was a publisher of pornography.

“These two men came around one day from the FBI, and demanded to see my magazine. I stalled them a bit, and told them I didn’t have any copies of it around, because I didn’t like their methods, but I was pretty



nervous, because it isn’t every day you’re visited by the FBI. They said that if I didn’t produce a copy immediately, they’d get a

search warrant. Of course immediately I got them a copy, because I didn’t want them looking around through everything. You see, er, ha-ha, I did have one little item of pornography in the house; something I’d just picked up for curiosity, of course. I had it in my files, under ‘P’...”

Little indications of Mama Beck’s strong will and natural determination to take care of everything were amusing. For instance, she added milk and sugar to our coffee before serving it, and without asking if we wanted it. When I asked for salt, she salted my eggs (and Larry’s, too, before he could object) herself. Later on in the day, when we were again having coffee, served the same way, I asked for a spoon, since I like to sip my coffee when it is hot. Calvin relayed the request, and back from the kitchen came, “What does he want a spoon for? I have already stirred the sugar and milk!”

Past reports (including the one of when Mama Beck, having decided that Calvin had spent too much time in a men’s room, charged in after him, calling “Caaaal-vin, where are you?!”—which I can easily believe) of Mrs. Beck’s activities have been pretty incredible, usually amusing if they

don’t involve you, and almost always indicative of the sort of busv-body-ish, PTA-ish, American “Mom” you’d love to hate. Mrs. Beck in person does not measure up to this. In person she is a humorously pathetic, plaintive, insisting, ingenuous stereotype of the Old World Mama, a simple person bound up in the success of her son. Unfortunately, in this case, someone forgot to cut the umbilical cord.

We didn’t see much of Mrs. Beck as we worked, which surprised Larry, who said she was in the habit of bringing him coffee every ten minutes on previous days. “No kidding. I couldn’t drink it all, and at one point I had lined up along one wall ten cups full of cold coffee. And every little while, she’d come down with another cup of the stuff.”

When we returned to the basement, Larry began to letter a thing which read “Zachereley’s Wife Contest.” When he had finished, after a couple of brief minutes, I said, slowly, “Larry...that looks terrible.”

“Yes,” he agreed. “Now that- you mention it, it does.” The outcome of this was that I found myself re-lettering the page and handling nearly all of the remaining title lettering. I’m not that proud of it—it was done for same-size reproduction, which I thought was a mistake, and was a little uneven—but it was reasonably esthetically pleasing to the eye. (Especially at a distance. The further away one holds it, the better it looks.... two blocks away seems about best, and I recommend it.)

The way we operated was that Calvin T. would type up some text on his electric IBM, and bring it down and Larry would cut it to fit and past it up into a layout with photos and I would letter in the titles, usually hand lettering but sometimes using artype. (I’m rather proud of the one I did with artype for “The Hound of the Baskervilles”—you’d think it had appeared in FANTASTIC UNIVERSE...) Unfortunately, it was difficult to keep Calvin upstairs and banging away at his typewriter. After we had run out of material to paste up, and had ushered him

upstairs to compose some more deathless prose, we would almost immediately hear this sound like two large barrels falling down the steps, and there would be Calvin, with a question, a joke, or two unusable lines of caption for a photo we'd previously decided not to use. This caused a considerable bottleneck, and was apparently the main reason for the previous week's slow progress.

In all fairness to Calvin, however, I should point out that he was apparently starved for fannish news of any sort, and seemed really very lonely. I was a new contact to the fandom he'd lost touch with—Larry had mentioned that I put out a fanzine, remaining purposefully vague—and he wanted to soak up all the news he could. Most of the fans he asked about have since departed the scene, although we did discuss in detail the Wetzel mess. Beck had at one time been friendly with Wetzel, like many other well-meaning people, because Wetzel and he shared an interest in fantasy and supernatural fiction. Beck had been one of those whom Wetzel had used to mail off letters with other cities' postmarks on them. One day Beck had investigated one of these letters and found it to be a poison pen letter to a friend of his, and had broken off relations with Wetzel. Shortly thereafter came the FBI episode.

Around midafternoon, we ran out of India ink. Calvin wanted us to try water colors which we patiently informed him would not flow well through a pen, and black fountain-pen ink, which worked extremely badly, so finally we decided in desperation to set out and try to find a place which sold india ink, despite the fact that it was Sunday.

We were just climbing the stairs from the basement ("But why does Teddy want to go with you, Larry?" asked Mama Beck; "I take him around with me for good luck," Larry replied, truthfully) when we made, an astounding discovery! We discovered Mr. Beck! I had asked Larry earlier if there was a Mr. Beck, and he said he assumed that if there ever was one, he'd since been swallowed up by the earth, since he'd not

heard a word or reference to any such person.

But there at the top of the stairs, shuffling about aimlessly in the hall in front of us was a tall, thin, aging man whom we could only glimpse, as through a dimensional rift, before Mrs. Beck, who had been ahead of us, hurriedly ushered him into a room.

"Mr. Beck has hurt himself," we were told. "He tried to cut a corn off his foot with a razor blade, which he had no business doing, and now it is bleeding, so please get for me also a—a—" and here Mrs. Beck produced a series of inarticulate foreign-sounding-noises. "Like, a—a—a—bandage, you know?"

"A band-aid?" I asked.

"No, no, no! A—a—" and again the inability to communicate. Inspiration suddenly struck, and she said, "Like this!" and pressed into my hand an extremely filthy, used band-aid.

"Yeah, band-aids," I said.

New Jersey has Sunday Blue Laws, and as I've pointed out, today was Sunday. We trudged over most of North Bergen's dumpy "Business section," finding open only one drugstore, which had no India ink, and probably couldn't have sold it even if it had. We did get the band-aids, however.

So, after about an hour, we returned to the Becks, Larry betting that Calvin would have accomplished nothing during our absence (he won the bet), and there the decision was made to get out the car and drive around looking for a place which sold india ink. By now we were all very hung up on india ink.

Mrs. Beck was not going to be left behind, so she followed the three of us back out of the house. I watched in amazement as she took a small padlock from off a hook and padlocked the door shut from the outside, leaving Mr. Beck locked inside! (To enlighten you about Mr. Beck, I later pieced together enough information to discover that he was connected with a restaurant somewhere, and came home only one day a week, during which he was kept in his room.

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It sort of fits in to the Beck Mythos after all...)

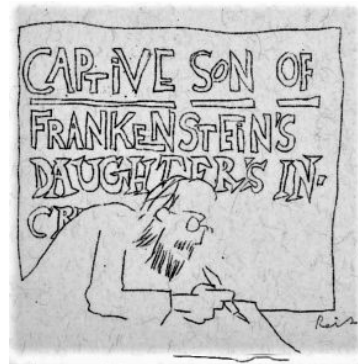
The four of us set off in the Becks' 1955 Buick and after searching most of New Jersey in vain, Calvin muttering all the while about how things were far worse than he had imagined—"I haven't been out on Sunday in four or five years..."—we finally headed over the George Washington Bridge to uptown Manhattan. On the way we talked about various things inspired by the subject of Blue Laws, finally settling upon a discussion of the Mormon control of Utah (Larry's home state) which is so strong that bus passengers passing through the state must stop smoking at the state line, and the morals of Salt Lake City's youth. Their morals turned out to be rather good, and I jokingly said, in a semi-non-sequitur, "I don't know about their morals, but the girls in Salt Lake City are prettier than in any other city I've ever travelled through." (The Society of American Girl Watchers And Letchers, formed by Bob Pavlat and myself on our various long trips to conventions several years back, using a one-to-five star rating system for the incidence of pretty girls observed in various cities passed through, gave Salt Lake City forty-eight stars!) Mama Beck took this to mean that I thought pretty girls were immoral, and over the protests of Calvin, Larry and myself, she lectured us on the morality of beauty, and how it was immoral to keep a beautiful girl locked up inside a house where no one could see and admire her beauty. We didn't think, then, to question this in light of some of Mrs. Beck's other statements.

We found ink in Manhattan without difficulty, and finally returned to New Jersey, Mrs. Beck pointing out "scenic vistas" every time the car rounded a turn and a new garbage dump was visible, and soon we were back at the Becks'.

From there on, it was work, work, work. Fortunately, when necessary, I could talk to Calvin Thomas and work at the same time, thus keeping him off Larry's back. I also freed Ivie from the drudgery of lettering, and thus speeded up his other work. By this

point we were working on the latter portion of the mag, where a number of stills from a horror movie, plus captions, will be run, one movie to a page or two. Thus, I was really grinding out titles, like "Have Rocket - Will Travel," "The Woman Eater," and "Horror Film Cavalcade."

The magazine calls for a humorous approach, ala Ackerman, and Beck certainly has a weird and corny sense of humor. One of his "better" jokes was to name the magazine's new club the National Frankenstein Fan Federation, or N3F for



short... I began riding him about this, making caustic jokes about some of his worst attempts, and I think this upset him a bit,

but it did prod him into a slightly more productive vein...

It also kept him out of our hair and at his typewriter where he belonged.

Around eight o'clock, we were called up at long last for dinner. We had had no lunch, and were famished, but the food was plentiful enough to quell our hunger. It consisted of a plate for each of us heaped perilously high with potatoes cooked with still-raw onions, navy beans, and overcooked lamb. It was fairly tasty, albeit overstocked on carbohydrates.

After dinner we hit the final stretch, monotonously pasting up photos and captions, and lettering titles. "My layout is going to pieces," Larry said. When you have to create a new layout every page for twenty pages or so, it is impossible to keep them consistent to each other and make them all good. We were also getting tired (it hadn't helped that Larry, Sylvia and I had been up till two or so Sunday morning watching old

films over at Dave Foley's, and had thus gotten rather little sleep before coming out to the Becks'...), and feeling less creative.

It was a rather momentous occasion, then, when Calvin T. said quietly, "I think this will be enough." We were finally through! I glanced at my watch...it was four a.m. — four a.m.?! "The buses have stopped running," Calvin said brightly. "They don't start again till six. And look! It's snowing!" Yes, it was. And that precluded any chance of Calvin—who was as -tired as we were anyway—driving us to New York. We decided to wait the two hours till six, and then catch a bus. The Becks offered us a single narrow cot to sleep on, but somehow Larry and I both thought we'd prefer to sleep in our own beds at home. So we sat around, those two hours long and indeterminable, filled with aimless talking and overpowering drowsiness. Finally six came, and we were ushered out the front door into the still-falling snow by the still up and awake Mrs. Beck, and after three minutes or less we were on a bus to New York.

From there on, the trip assumed a surrealistic quality. Safely on our way, we relaxed, but could not sleep. We took the A train uptown from the Port Authority Terminal, and split up at Columbus Circle, where Larry changed to the AA local, and I transferred to the down-town local IRT train. I boarded it with a crowd of bright, almost cheerful looking people who had just risen and were on their way to work. I slumped down in my parka in my seat and regarded them fuzzily through my tangled beard, and reflected upon the differences between us. I preferred it my way. I had put in my own hours, and now I was free for as long as I wished. I was going home and to bed, and would probably sleep for a good twelve hours; and they, poor slobs, were off to work, probably still not recuperated from their weekends, and with eight hours of boredom, drudgery, or hard work ahead of them.

At 42nd St., four or five college types got on, carrying a six-pack of beer. Here were

people who were marginally my kind, still drunk (not yet even hung over) and returning from a weekend not yet quite finished. They split up and drank the beer and sang songs to each other at the top of their lungs all the way down to 14th St., where one of them, exclaimed, "Boy! You know I gotta make it home and change my clothes and be at work in two hours—!" I sympathized with him, but I don't think he made it... Especially since they were all on the wrong train, and thought they were getting off at Union Square, which is on east 14th St., and this was west 14th... The other passengers made an interesting study, as they attempted to ignore the college types (it has been said that if you disrobed on the subway, no one would stare directly at you, and probably most people would not notice), who made a little too much noise to be easily ignored. The whole scene—particularly when one fellow offered another passenger a can of beer (which was turned down)—furnished me with enough amusement to keep me awake until I'd reached the Christopher St. stop, and regained the street, where it was still snowing lightly. The sky was grey and darkly overcast, and I was still in a sleepy mood. I entered the apartment quietly, and surreptitiously slipped into bed, so as not to awaken Sylvia.

It was the end of a long day.

An amusing aftermath occurred when Larry Ivie and I were discussing that day several days later. "You know, I had noticed that door to the room where they keep Mr. Beck, but I hadn't known he was there. It's real funny, though; the door opens inwards, and they have a rope tied to it from the outside, so that no one can open it without untying all these knots and everything."

"How strange," I said. How strange indeed.

-Ted White

## Art Widner – Honored in 2011 at E CorFlu Vitus

**A Brief Bio:** Art Widner was born September 16th, 1917 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Died April 17th, 2015 in Gualala, California.

Art Winder was a true member of First Fandom, writing his first letters to ***Astounding Science Fiction*** in 1934. He was a founding member of The Stranger Club, Boston's first science fiction fan group. He chaired Boskone I and II, Boston's first sf conventions and edited its first club fanzine.

In 1942, Art joined with Louis Russell Chauvenet and Damon Knight to found the National Fantasy Fan Federations, an organization which has persisted to the present day. Art also edited its first fanzine, ***Bonfire***.

As a young man, Art enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps and worked for most of two years building a dam in western Massachusetts. The hard work enhanced his naturally powerful physique, and in fandom it was said that Art was "built like a gorilla."

Art attended the first World Science Fiction convention in July of 1939, escaping from a family memorial service to reach the convention. He played right field in the baseball



game played on the second day of the convention and drove in several runs.

He was one of three fen to attend Mainecon in 1943, where it was decreed that "fen" is the plural of "fan."

He organized carpools which drove from Boston to Chicago and Denver and back for the 1940 and 1941 World Conventions, on which it was alleged that "Art Widner drove with the strength of ten men." He attended all of the first five World conventions, one of very few fans or pros to do so.

Inspired by Forry Ackerman's Gray Lensman outfit at the Nycon, Art was one of several fans who decided

to dress up in Chicago and Denver the following two years, and therefore invented Cosplay at conventions. He dressed as Giles Habibula from Jack Williamson's ***Legion of Space*** in Chicago and as "Old Granny" from Van Vogt's ***Slan*** in Denver.

Fanzines attributed to Art include:

- ***Bonfire***
- ***Boskonian***
- ***Fanfare***
- ***Fighting Fan***
- ***Poll Cat***
- ***Quare*** (for SAPS)
- ***Short Shift***
- ***Yhos*** (for FAPA)

Art and other survivors of The Stranger Club were the Fan Guests of Honor at Noreascon 3 in 1989, the "50th Anniversary Worldcon".

Art won the Down Under Fan Fund in 1991 and attended the Australian National Convention in Brisbane.

He was elected to the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 1992. In 1996, he was nominated for the 1946 Retro-Hugo in the category of Best Fan Writer.

He was Corflu Guest of Honor in 1999 and elected Past President of fwa in 2001.

## Introduction by Tom Becker

Art Widner's distinctions include First Fandom, First Fandom Hall of Fame, Big Heart Award, DUFF, Lifetime Member of FAPA, Past President of FWA, and the FAAn Award for Lifetime Achievement. Art is also famous for having had two fannish lifetimes, and the longest gap between issues of a fanzine.

In his first fannish lifetime, Art Widner was a founder of The Stranger Club. For *Fanfare*, the clubzine, he drew covers, wrote articles, did the regular "DOTS" (Doings Of The Strangers) column, wrote fanzine reviews, and conducted polls. He became the editor, publisher and keeper of the club mimeograph.

Art's road trips are legendary. Most fans at the time did not have a car. In 1940 he drove to Chicon, the second Worldcon, with a car full of fans. In 1941 he did it again, driving to Denvention with a side-trip to see the Rockies on the way home. His third great fannish road trip, to visit fans in New York City, was on a bicycle, due to wartime fuel rationing. Art's trip reports are epic adventures, and wonderful views of the fan personalities and community at the time. Harry Warner, Jr. said "I

believe Art was the pioneer in the creation of long, detailed con reports that included material not directly related to the con itself."

Art chaired the first two Boskones, in 1941 and 1942. Also in 1942, Art invented the board game Interplanetary.

Unfortunately, it did not take off, because the technology needed to make it easy to play would not exist for another fifty years.

Art co-founded the N3F and was an editor of *Bonfire*, the N3F official organ, later renamed to *The National Fantasy Fan*.

Art published 13 issues of *YHOS* from 1941 to 1945.

In 1948, Art gafiated. This deserves some explanation. Growing up poor in the Depression, Art had to work. After his military service in WW II, he was married, had a family to support, and was working factory jobs with no future. So they moved to Los Angeles and Art went to college. He earned his Bachelors and Masters degrees in Education in two years. He got a position teaching English at Diablo Valley College, and taught there until he retired. Art loved all kinds of literature and was dedicated to the craft of teaching. At the same time

he was still a fan. His favorite novel to teach was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. He happily accepted class assignments that were done in the form of fanzines. I think Art's gafiation was one of his greatest lifetime achievements.

Art's second fannish lifetime began in the 1970s and went on for the next four decades. With more time on his hands, Art started going to cons again. He was in multiple APAs. He wrote LOCs to fanzines. He published 45 issues of *YHOS*, and it evolved from a FAPA zine to a genzine. Art's second act was not a nostalgia tour. Art had a very active and open mind, and was reading the new writers and discussing the latest ideas. Art was very progressive politically. A lot of things were not academic for him. He really cared about people and communities. This comes through in his fan writing and editing. It could be about almost anything. No matter what, it is very likely to be intelligent and interesting.

Even a person as great as Art is not without a few flaws. In Art's case, there were three. His snoring was titanic. Yet he had many repeat roommates at conventions over the years. So his virtues were

## JIANT SHOULDERS

greater. He did not have a healthy diet. But he had an extremely robust constitution. What would have killed a normal person was merely fuel for him. He used a condensed phonetic spelling system in his fanzines. Which I cannot explain, sorry. He was a college English teacher and a good one, he knew what he was doing. It could be a very subtle joke.

The piece you are about to read is Art's Fan Guest of Honor speech at Baycon 1986. It seems like a charming fairy tale, but it is not nostalgic. It is about where fandom is going. What will our community be like in the future? As a special bonus, because it was written as a speech, it uses normal spelling.

Coincidentally, that Baycon was the first

science fiction convention I ever attended. Art was the first person I met. He greeted me at the door and handed me a copy of **YHOS**. Sadly, I had no clue at the time. It took me five years to get to know him, and another thirty years later I am still discovering what a treasure we had.

## The Tale of the Tail that Wagged the Dog

By Art Widner

(FanGOH Speech at Baycon, 1986)

"The old dog barked backward  
without getting up.  
I can remember when he was a pup"  
- Robert Frost

Just the other day in a nearby galaxy, there was a little boy and his doggie. The boy's name was Fandom, and the dog's name was Skiffy.<sup>1</sup> The boy loved his dog and his dog loved him and they were very happy together.

The boy grew, but the dog grew faster. You could tell by the size of his feet that he was going to be a very big dog. And he was. He grew into a fine hunting dog—a pointer. He helped the boy (who was now a young man) find out What's What.<sup>2</sup>

The young man would say, "Gee Whillikers, Skiffy, I'm doggoned if I know What's What!" and Skiffy would say, "Arf" (meaning THAT's What's What) and then he'd point right at it. and the boy would say, "Oh, I see."

One day the young man said, "Y'know, Skiffy? — I'm all grown up now, and going to college and everything—it's time I

stopped this baby talk. From now on, your name is SCIENCE FICTION!"

Skiffy liked that and he said "Arf, Arf" — and pointed exactly between art and money, where David Hartwell<sup>3</sup> happened to be standing.

But he was a very unusual dog, who kept on growing even when the boy (pardon me. Young Man) stopped. One day a Young Woman came along and patted Skiffy (I mean Science Fiction) on the head and said, "My, what a fine, big dog you have, and what a huge, bushy tail he has!" And the Young Man said to himself, "Hey, this woman is not only a fine judge of hunting dogs, but somewhat of a fox in the bargain." So they got married.

Finally the dog stopped growing, but the trouble was, his tail didn't. People would stop by to visit, and they would stare at this Great Bushy Thing filling up half the living room, and say, "What's THAT?" and the Young Woman would say, "That's our dog. Science Fiction—Essef for short."

Then the people would say, "C'mon, we know Old Essef. You used to call him

'Skiffy,' didn't you? THATs not him. THATs not even a dog! Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. and Mrs. Fandom<sup>4</sup> would get offended and say, "It is so a dog! Our Essef is under there—you just can't see him. C'mon, Essef, boy! Show them What's What!"

Skiffy-Esseg would get all excited and go ARF ARF ARF! — and wag his tail and try to point between money and art, but the tail had grown so huge that it wagged *him*, so that nobody could tell where he was pointing, even when they caught a brief glimpse of him between wags.

"Ha ha ha," said the people, "that's weird. You ought to give the *Tail* a name. Ha ha ha, because that sure ain't the animal it was before!"

Well—Mr. and Mrs. Fandom thought it over and they did give the tail a name. They called it Media. But sometimes they would go back to calling him Skiffy again. One day a man with the unlikely name of Roddenberry came by and said he'd like to buy Skiffy-Esseg-Media.

Mr. and Mrs. F said no they couldn't do that, and Skiffy-Esseg-Media didn't like the idea either and went ARF ARF ARF ARF four times and tried to point and show them What's What. He got so excited, and the tail wagged him so hard, that he cracked his head on the coffee table and dislocated his brains and was never quite the same again. The boy sort of missed his dog, but didn't know what to do about It.

*As you may have guessed, there isn't any ending to this tail so you'll have to provide your own, as with one of those computer games. (See below, if you're not very creative, for some exciting possibilities.)*

**MORAL: IT'S FINE TO HAVE A GREAT BIG BEAUTIFUL TAIL—BUT IT SHOULDN'T WAG THE DOG**

#### Footnotes:

1. From "Sci-Fi," coined by 4SJ Ackerman, pronounced "Skiffy" in derision, and indicating only the schlocky side of Science Fiction, as in most Hollywood products.

2. See *Island*, by Aldous Huxley. It occurs fairly early in the book, so if you're allergic to reading, you don't have to read the whole thing, but I recommend it. It addresses the questions that *Brave New World* ducked.
3. *Age of Wonders*, McGraw-Hill, 1985. Ch. 11, "Let's Get SF Back in the Gutter Where It Belongs," p. 194.
4. I.e., *Fanzine* Fandom. (All the other Fandoms don't much care. One gets the impression that they would be just as happy at a Shriners' convention—they get to party hearty and dress up in funny suits, don't they?)

#### ALTERNATE ENDINGS

- A. Mr. & Mrs. Fandom call up Mr. Roddenberry and accept his generous offer. Mr. R. takes S-E-M to his three-ring circus and tries to teach him to jump thru fiery hoops and other fun stuff like that, but SEM languishes, refuses to eat, and dies. Everybody else lives uneasily ever after.
- B. They decide the kindest thing is just to put SEM to sleep. The dog dies all right and they cut off the tail so it will fit into a standard-size coffin, but the tail is still alive and escapes into the sewers, eats New York, and marries Godzilla.
- C. A wandering Airedale comes by and discovers SEM is a she, who promptly has a litter of puppies named Corflu, Filk, Costumer, Gamer, Trekkie, and Hooey. The trufen keep Corflu, give away the rest, and all five happily ever after.





## Shelby Vick – Honored in 2012 at Corflu Glitter

**A Brief Bio:** Shelby Vick was born September 1st, 1928 in Panama City, Florida. Died June 18th, 2018 in Panama City Beach, Florida.

Active from the late 1940s, Shelby Vick rose to prominence through his correspondence and publishing activities in the early 1950s and was one of the names associated with Sixth Fandom. He was a frequent correspondent of Walt Willis and Lee Hoffman. He famously introduced LeeH to Bob Tucker while Tucker and most of fandom still assumed that she was a man.

He was the first to imagine a fund to enable Walt Willis to attend the 1951 World Convention in New Orleans. Although this did not come about, the WAW with the Crew in '52 fund succeeded in bringing its object to the Worldcon in Chicago. From this seed the Transatlantic Fan Fund – and all other fannish travel funds – would grow.

Fanzines attributed to Shelby Vick include

- ***The Corflu Courier***
- ***Confusion***
- ***ConfuSon***
- ***Countdown X-10***
- ***Egad!***
- ***Embers***
- ***Hyphen Tribute Issue***
- ***Hyphen Tribute Thumbnail***

- ***Lesser Feats***
- ***Planetary Stories***
- ***Pulp Spirit***
- ***Tired Feet***
- ***Wonderlust***

He is credited with inventing the “Lazy Letter,” a pre-addressed sheet of mimeo paper with a place for a message and to add the sender’s return address, Vick’s address was already present.

After graduating from Bay City High School in 1947, Shelby worked as the produce manager for the A&P Supermarket in Panama City. He operated a print shop for some time and was the editor and publisher of the first newspaper in Lynn Haven, Florida.

Shelby was the librarian of Panama City’s first Public Library. In the 1950 Census, he listed his profession as “Dusting Books.”

Eventually he became a salesman for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, which employed him for 28 years. After retiring from the insurance field, he went to work for the Bay County Property Appraiser for an additional 13 years.

Shelby became a frequent correspondent of Las Vegas fandom in the 1990s, writing letters of comment to their many



Shelby and Suzanne Vick, 1972

fanzines, including ***Folly*** and ***Wild Heirs***. In 2012, he was the recipient of the Corflu 50 fund and was able to accept his Lifetime award in person at Corflu Glitter. He also hosted one of the smallest editions of Corflu to date, Corflu Sunsplash in 1999, at which he was elected Past President of fwa.

Two pieces of Shelby’s writing are included here, his column “Blue Pencil” from Vernon L. McCain’s fanzine ***Wastebasket*** Vol. 1, No. 3, published in the spring of 1951. In it, he first coins the fateful phrase “WaW with the Crew in '52!” which had enormous consequences for fandom. The second piece, “I Remember Willis” is a column published by Vic Ryan in his fanzine ***Bane*** #6 in May of 1962. It promotes the second Willis trip to America and particularly anticipates Madeleine Willis’ first trip to America.

## The Blue Pencil

By Shelby Vick

Originally published in *Wastebasket* #3 in 1951

I *liked* ROCKETSHIP X-M!

Really.

The only thing I'm criticizing is fandom's reaction to the picture.

Tho I haven't seen it, I imagine I'd even have liked THE MAN FROM PLANET X.

And I was *nuts* about the Flash Gordon serials!

It can't be my second childhood — maybe I just haven't outgrown my first...

In any case, I think it would be a good idea for some Hwood film company to dig up those old FG and Buck Rogers props and launch a line of B-grade steffilms — VENGEANCE OF MARS, starring Jon Rogers and his spaceship, Trigger!

Seriously — they could write out most of the troublesome physic phenomena; lack of gravity, for instance, can be done away with by gravplates (or -belts). Same thing for variance of gravity on other planets. And most of the aliens could be explainably humanoid, or similar to the many monsters left over from horror movies. Or why couldn't Disney draw in the monster — or George Pal fix up a puppet? And it's simple enough to rig a man up in a space suit and breather helmet. Alien scenery? Hollywood has never been at a loss for that — tabletop stuff does good for distant shots, and they can always arrange props for close-ups.

Harmful?

You think such out-and-out spacepics would ruin science-fiction?

Why?

What harm has been done by the Saturday Western epics to the classic Technicolor extravaganzas? Have they caused such authors as Luke Short to cease turning out slick-quality material for Satevepost, Colliers, or book publication?

With the science minimized, such films could help spread the popularity of sf; an introduction for beginners, or such-like.

And I'd sit in the darkened mezzanine, joyfully masticating popcorn and shouting to Captain Putrin: "They went thataway!"

###

Is it necessary to tack -con or -vention onto the name of every sf con? It's getting monotonous. The Little Men produced at least a favorable variation at the Nolacon — they proposed calling the convention (if they got it) the Leprechon. And Chicago is in favor of certain changes — calling the '52 con the 10th *Annual SF Con* instead of the usual '10th World SF con' — it's never truly been a world con.... now if they would go a step further and call it something besides the Chicon... Maybe, since the gals are supposed to be in charge of things, they could call it LADIES DAZE...

—OKAY! I don't like it either. But there should be *some* bright fan who could come up with a good suggestion. Might be they could hold a contest...

###

WAW with the crew in fifty-two!

And it has a meaning.

Yus.

WAW, decoded, reads: Walter A. Willis. The crew is, notcherly, fandom. And what is the important fan event of the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred fifty two AD?

Chicago, of course.

Meaning, let's have Willis at Chicago. We can do it. After all, we *only* need *money*.

And cooperation.

Well?

## I Remember Willis

By Shelby Vick

Originally published in issue #6 of *BANE*, March 1962

I may have forgotten Lemuria, But I remember Sixth Fandom. I remember Quandry, The Nolacon and Out of This World Adventures. But, most of all, I remember Willis.

It started with a harp that rang out once or twice yet strangely enough was heard quite often throughout the fannish world. In sympathetic resonance, its ringing was answered by peals of laughter, punctuated by groans as deeper meaning of some puns sank in. From there, I was led to recall a small Irish fanzine that I eyed askew as it was printed on a bit of a slope and its editor showed an inclination to look aslant at serious subjects. I recalled the striped ink that was used for its printed covers, which soon showed up on the covers of Quandry and led to Vicolor on Confusion covers.

Then there was the letter from Walter Alexander Willis in which he was trying to break it gently to a brash young southern fan that he was being too exuberant; a letter in which he expressed gratitude for the thought behind the effort to get him to the New Orleans convention, but still gallantly showed that he wasn't going to be at all hurt by the fact that the effort couldn't succeed. On looking back, it seems that Willis might have realized even then that such a drive would entail great effort and strain on his part, and perhaps he was trying to indicate that it would be better left undone. But this southern fan was never any good at taking hints, and blundered on, pulling Willis into a situation which led to many thousands on thousands of Willis words—and nearly as many puns -- an ocean trip, Chicon II, and

many harrowing experiences with the Greyhound Bus Company and enough sleepless nights and mental exhaustion to lead to pneumonia and much time in sickbed.

I remember Willis at the Chicon, reciting limerick after limerick, and someone—Mack Reynolds, I think—marveling, “The man’s a well, I tell you; a veritable well!”

I remember Willis soaking in the Gulf of Mexico and commenting that it was undoubtedly man’s greatest invention.

I remember Willis commenting, as for the dozenth time we pushed the truck we were using for a conveyance (sometimes it only started with human motive urge behind it), “Truculent...”

I remember the sparkle in his eye, the ready grin that was at the same time subdued (maybe it was just tired?), the enormous vitality of the man. I also remember his intrigue when he found a few pages of an article by Vernon McCain dissecting the Willis personality for Confusion -- his intrigue, and his chagrin when he discovered that I had misplaced the original before I had finished stenciling the article. (To this day, I haven’t found the rest of the item...)

Yes, I remember Willis. But still, my memory isn’t the best in the world, and people do change over a ten-year period—and I’ve never met Madeleine. So, I’m looking forward to seeing them again in 1962.

And you?

# GIANT SHOULDERS



## Earl Kemp – Honored in 2012 at Corflu Glitter

**A Brief Bio:** Finis Earl Kemp, born November 24th, 1929 in Old Crossett Camp, Arkansas. Died February 29th, 2020 in Kingman, Arizona.

Earl Kemp discovered fandom in 1949, corresponding with Mari Wolf, then editor of the letter-column in *Imagination* magazine. He joined the University of Chicago Science Fiction Club in 1950 and would serve as its president for more than a decade.

In his early 20s Earl was employed in a Chicago print shop and learned elements of composition with offset press.

Professionally, Earl was an author, editor and publisher, his work spanning several fields and genre. He was most notorious as a publisher of porn and eventually served three months in federal prison. Ironically, Earl was convicted after publishing an illustrated edition of the Nixon administration's *Report on Pornography*.

Earl was one of the founding partners of Advent Publishing, one of the most important of the "fannish" small presses.



He was the Chairman on the 1962 Worldcon in Chicago, Chicon III.

His most noteworthy fanzine, *SaFari*, was submitted to both FAPA and SAPS. Its first and second "Annual" issues were large collections of answers to the questions *Who Killed Science Fiction?* and *What is a Fan?* The first of these won the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine in 1961.

Fanzines attributed to Earl include:

- *be forgot, and never...*
- *Destiny*
- *e\*I*
- *Feliz Navidad*
- *Racing to Lemuria*
- *SaFari*
- *TS*

*e\*I* won the FAAn Award as Best Fanzine in 2009. Earl was elected Past President of fwa in 2011. He was elected to the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2013.

**Interlude:** Why were there two Lifetime Achievement Awards given in 2012?

2012 was the first year in which a separate committee was formed for the purpose of choosing a fan to honor with the Lifetime Achievement Award. There were six members on the committee, and it ultimately came down to three votes for Shelby Vick and three for Earl Kemp. Both of them were very popular with the Las Vegas fans who were putting on Corflu Glitter and both were expected to attend the convention. Earl's genzine *eI* had won considerable attention and represented a return to fanzine fandom after many years away.

Rather than ask the chairman to break the tie, we decided to give both Shelby and Earl the award. Given the ages of both men and the ages of most of the people we had discussed in our deliberations, it seemed like honoring two candidates at once was a prudent idea. It turned out that no subsequent committee – which usually have an odd number of members – has chosen two honorees in a single year. The gap in 2017, when no award was given, means there have been 13 awards in 13 years.

## The Ballad of Killer Kemp \*

By Earl Kemp

Originally published in Earl's *e\*I* 1 (Vol. 1 No. 1), January 2002

When I was a kid (I was 11 years old in 1940), you could get an awful lot for a dime. The problem was coming up with a dime in the first place.

When I had that dime, the best way I knew of to spend it was to go to the Saturday afternoon matinee showing at the movie theater. If I was lucky enough to have another dime to spend, I could eat enough popcorn and drink enough soda pop during the run of that show to make me puke.

I finally figured out that if I wanted to have that dime, I had to work for it. I delivered handbills for the theater every week in exchange for free passes to some of the movies. There was only one theater in town, of course. The features changed five times weekly plus a sixth, midnight special showing every Friday and Saturday late night.

There was always this serial, too, something like Bela Lugosi as *Chandu the Magician*, Clyde Beatty as *The King of the Jungle*, Buster Crabbe as *Flash Gordon*, and their like, that kept all us kids right on the edge of our seats until the very last frame flickered across the screen.

My cowboy heroes were people like Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Johnny Mack Brown, Bob Livingston, Tim Holt, Lash LaRue, and the big-timers, Gene Autrey, Roy Rogers, and Hopalong Cassidy.

I acquired a Western Americana heritage that stuck with me all of my life. It helped a great deal that I was what passed for a farm boy. I was surrounded by saddles and tack and the smell of alfalfa and leather. I had cowboy boots and hat. I had my own horse and could ride wherever I thought of going with my fellow preteen cowboys. In later life, it was just this background that stepped forward for years where I lived on mythical Rancho Viejo amid tons of soft black Italian glove leather and rode along with the biggest cowboys in the whole damned National Finals Rodeo arena, but that story will have to wait until later. This story started out trying to lead up to a point.

#

In the 1960s, after the Porno Factory moved to California and when I was boss, one of my biggest thrills was posing for the covers of some of our books. And, later, when we began using lots of photographs, I enjoyed that one as well for different reasons. The cover artists who worked for us quickly learned of my addiction and would occasionally conspire to involve me a bit more directly.

I remember one particular cover of one of our books that I was very proud of for a number of reasons. I seem to remember it as being an exceptionally good novel and one that I singled out for special handling. It was GC222, *Song of Aaron*, by Richard

... matinee this Saturday ... always a Western with banal dialogue and unreloadable guns and the next exciting episode of some raunchy cliff-hanger that never, somehow, started just where last Saturday's had ended. That, a Betty Boop, a newsreel, something unmentionable by Pete Smith, and Previews Of Coming Attractions.

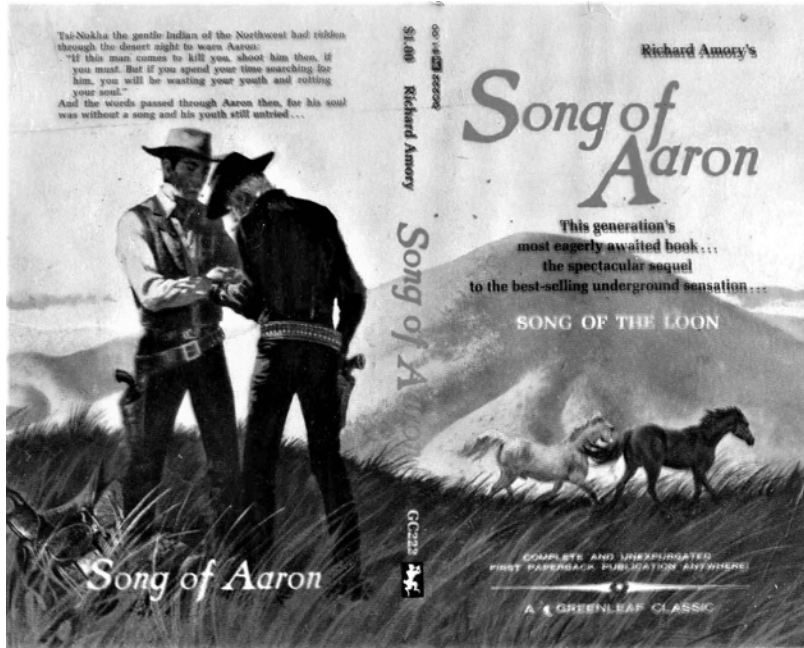
... That and the popcorn and the circus peanuts and exploration in the flickering shadows.

— Earl Kemp (33 years old), Editorial, SaFari Vol. II No. I, FAPA, dated 1962

## GIANT SHOULDERS

Amory, a sort-of sequel to his best-selling *Song of the Loon* from the previous year.

I had Robert Bonfils, our in-house Art Director, do a wrap-around painting for the cover. It shows two cowboys in the middle of forever (two hills over from Corflu Creek) stopping, dismounting, and stretching. I posed for both cowboys in this painting.



In the foreground, dressed all in Killer Kemp black, wearing my own cowboy outfit and my own six-shooter, I really felt like Killer Kemp, heading for the last showdown. Only I seem to be getting a bit ahead of myself again.

#

I was starting to feel pretty good about myself in 1961, and many things were looking up for me. In the world scene, my hero Major Yuri A. Gagarin, rode into history aboard *Vostok I*. At home, President Kennedy messed up royally when he tried to invade the Bay of Pigs in Cuba and, as if that wasn't enough, began sending "advisors" to Vietnam almost like we're doing in Colombia and Peru these days. Ernest Hemingway, the *Pride of Paris* and *Havana*, died inside the self-constructed closet he could never out himself from.

*Ralph 124C 41+* Hugo Gernsback wrote a letter congratulating and thanking me for producing *Who Killed Science Fiction?* Praise from The Master. *I walked on air for awhile after that.*

As a science fiction fan, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I was producing copies of my fanzine *SaFari* for FAPA and was

hard at work on my second *SaFari* annual, *Why Is A Fan?* I had been president of the University of Chicago Science Fiction Club for almost a decade and the club was growing by leaps and bounds. Club members were everywhere, at every convention and every party and every picnic, politicking for the next world convention and partying for all we were worth.

I had just begun working as an editor under Ajay Budrys at Blake Pharmaceuticals in Evanston, Illinois, producing pornography for William Hamling. No one would believe that I knew

absolutely nothing about the subject area and had never even encountered any. I was actively trying to locate some stag films (they would be my first) and researching the history of pornography while taking voice lessons calculated to teach me how to say the word "fuck" aloud while blushing copiously on the inside.

And that wasn't enough for me.

I had been working very hard at politicking for a number of goals for several different reasons and they were starting to pay off big-time. Everything seemed to be coming to a head for me, climaxing with the World Science Fiction Convention held in Seattle over the Labor Day weekend.

During the masquerade ball, my costume was judged "Best Science Fantasy Costume."



During the awards banquet, my first *SaFari* annual, *Who Killed Science Fiction?*, was awarded the Hugo as “Best Fanzine.”

Robert Heinlein made an unsuccessful attempt to apologize to me for some of his voracious egoness.

During the business meeting, Chicago won the bid to host the 1962 World Science Fiction Convention, with Theodore Sturgeon as guest of honor and me as convention chair.

Then, like chocolate sauce atop the best ice cream sundae imaginable, the LASFS (Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society) dragged me right up on top of the hill and just left me there screaming in joy and bellowing out my delight at the top of my lungs.

They screened the all-fan 1960 Unicorn Productions production, *The Musquite Kid Rides Again*. An honor I appreciated and probably deserved.

#

I published my fanzine *SaFari* for SAPS (Spectator Amateur Press Society) during the 1950s and into the '60s (then switching over to FAPA in 1961). My zine was regularly accompanied in the SAPS mailings by zines of the famous and notorious. I could hardly compete with them on any level. These were people like Lee Jacobs, Howard DeVore, Wrai Ballard, F.M. Busby, etc.

Lee Jacobs was an exceptionally good writer. At that particular moment in time, he was regaling SAPS with a series he called “The Ballard Chronicles.” Each installment of the Chronicles contained a complete narrative story itself in a different theme and was not a continuation of a single story.

The third installment of “The Ballard Chronicles” was an American Western named *The Musquite Kid Rides Again*. It was included with the 51st SAPS mailing in April 1960.

I am the central villain of the piece, thinly disguised as Killer Kemp.

The story, by Lee Jacobs, is replete with fannish references and clichés but, besides



The Ballard Chronicles Installment 3 front cover by Bjo Trimble. Dated April 1960.

that, it is a stand-alone work of real genius. It not only incorporates all these many science fiction references but manages to remain true to the form itself, that of a classic American Western. It could have appeared in any issue of *Ranch Romances* or been converted into half a Saturday afternoon matinee double-feature from Monogram starring Johnny Mack Brown.

It was a singular honor to be pilloried by Lee Jacobs. And by the others who followed after Jacobs and took what he had created to the next logical step...humiliating and glorifying me...thank Ghod for Unicorn Productions.

#



## JIANT SHOULDERS

Following are a few brief excerpts from Lee Jacobs' Chronicles (mistakes intact):

Big Daddy Effem Busby ... kinda frowned a bit. "Corflu Creek is 'bout a half-days wagon ride, 'cordin' to the map, but Mother an' me was goin' around it. Afore we started cross country, we heered a fast gun by the name of Kemp took over the town. I ain't agoin' t'expose the women-folk to a town what's run by no outlaw."

"Jist a furshlugginer minute," interrupts the Kid. "Did you say Kemp? Would he be known as Killer Kemp?"

"That's what they calls him." Big Daddy sneered. "He allus has some Young Guns with him. Prob'ly some neos what jist seen their names in print an' likes t'think they's BNF's with a big iron. A youngun like Terry would run 'em off the stencil if he ain't been winged by them injuns."

I looks at the Kid real significant. "Killer Kemp was a real mean son. He was purty fast, so I heered. Kemp started out, 'cordin to the talk, by robin' stages to subsidize his pocketbook collection, an' sorta graduated to switchin' votes at conventions. He'd ride into a town with a bunch o' Young Guns, do a leetle shootin' to scare the old folks, do a little killin' to scare the young folks, an' then collect a percentage from all the businesses in town...."

#

Pecos blusters, "but yuh better clear out o' town fast. I'm gonna tell Earl 'bout what happened an' he's goin' t'come lookin' for yuh."

"Yarst on rasty you," says the Kid. "You tell Kemp that Corflu Creek ain't big enough for the both of us. We'll be back in the Surplus Stock Saloon before sundown, an' he better be hyar or on his way outa town."

#

"Fandom is a way of life," Bjo says, real beligerent.

"Fandom is jist a hobby," returns the Kid, rememberin' Mister Toskey's instructions.

Bjo relaxed, an' shut the door. "I never know when Kemp's gonna send somebody to check on me," she explains. She gives us a searching, professional look. "But you ain't like most of my customers. You don't look like you've lost yore sense of wonder. How come Mister Toskey sent you to me?"



Ernie Wheatley as Killer Kemp. Photo from the collection, and used with the permission, of Bruce Pelz. Also featured on LASFS.org web site. Dated 1960.

The Kid explains what happened in town. "I know 'bout Killer Kemp," he says. "An' it'll be a real interestin' gunfight, since I ain't met nobody yet thet c'n out draw me." He warn't boastin', jist statin' the facts. "But I gotta know how many boys

Kemp has with him, so Cyclone hyar can take care o' the strays."

"Killer's purty fast," agrees Bjo, "but you gotta real good reputation, Musquito. Shore wish I could be thar to see it, but I reckon I better stick around here, less'n Li'l Eva git suspicious."

"Kemp has three Young Guns ridin' with him, Musquito," she explains. "You've already met Pecos Pelz. The second is Rebel Lee. He's not real bad, yet. Heered talk 'bout his pappy bein' a BNF back East, an' young Lee got his nickname rebellin' agin his pappy's fanac. The third gun is a furrin' hombre by name of Stranger Stone. He can't talk American too well, since he hails from Canada, but he talks right well with a six-gun."

"Any special way Kemp likes to place his boys?" the Kid asks, real serious and constructive.

"Well," Bjo pauses a moment, "did y'ever tell Pecos Pelz who you were?"

"Nope," I says, grinnin' a little. "Pecos saw us with a settler's wagon, so he thinks we're a couple of homesteaders. Reckon he might be a leetle suspicious, cos of the way Wrai looked in the Surplus Stock, but he don't know the gents he thinks of as sodbusters is really Wrai Ballard, the Musquite Kid, and Cyclone Coswal."

## Earl Kemp

"Then he'll prob'ly feel real confident," Bjo says firmly. "Kemp likes to do most of the killin' himself to set an example 'round town. He'll have his boys around him to watch how a real BNF does things if'n the play is made inside the Surplus Stock. If'n things are moved outside, Stranger Stone might disappear to pick you off, Cyclone, so y'better watch him."

"Don't you worry 'bout me none, Bjo," I growls. "I'm a biapan an' know all 'bout suspicious characters. Wetzel's off the FAPA waiting list."

"Here," she gives the Kid a stencilled illustration. "Take this with you, an' show it to Li'l Eva, so she'll think I've been workin'. Shore hope you gits him, Musquito. I had a good life 'til I met Kemp. I don't want no more girls to wind up like me, doin' other people's fanac. Now git!"

#

The main street of Corflu Creek was deserted as we rides up to the Surplus Stock Saloon. Reckon Killer Kemp and the Young Guns had tole people there was goin' t'be some shootin'. But I noticed the faces peerin' out of windows, followin' us with their eyes as we rides into town. Reckon they was real tired of havin' Kemp a-ridin' herd, but y'can't argue much with a six-gun.

#

Following are a few brief excerpts from the shooting script (mistakes intact):

INT. SURPLUS STOCK SALOON



Shootout photo by and used with the permission of Bruce Pelz. Left to right: Pecos [Bruce] Pelz, Killer Kemp [Ernie Wheatley], and Rebel Lee [Robert Lichtman]. Courtesy Bruce Pelz Collection. Dated 1960

### The Musquite Kid Rides Again Cast

Wrai Ballard the Musquite Kid	Ron Ellik
Cyclone Coswal	John Trimble
Big Daddy Busby	Charles Burbee
Mother Busby	Ingrid Fritsch
Terry Carr	Terry Carr
Pecos Pelz	Bruce Pelz
Rebel Lee	Robert Lichtman
Tombstone Johnstone	Ted Johnstone
Killer Kemp	Ernie Wheatley
B.R. Toskey, Editor	Jack Harness
Doc Eney	Jim Caughran
L'il Eva Firestone	Karen Anderson
Bjo Trimble	Bjo Trimble
Bartender	Dean Dickensheet

MED. LONG GROUP SHOT - KEMP, PELZ, LEE AND JOHNSTONE, BIG DADDY

LEE and JOHNSTONE are conversing, at the bar. KEMP and PELZ lean against bar with drinks in hand. BIG DADDY stands at end of bar, pretending he doesn't know anyone.

KID and COSWAL enter, go to bar, and signal BARTENDER, who gets up drinks.

PELZ whispers something to KEMP, who looks KID and COSWAL over carefully.

#

EXT. STREET - DAY

LONG SHOT OF STREET - TWO GROUPS OF MEN ARE WALKING TOWARD EACH OTHER. P.O.V. FROM TOP OF UPPER STORY OF A BUILDING (IF POSSIBLE).

SOUND of shot rings out. JOHNSTONE staggers from behind something and falls in street behind KID and COSWAL. They take no notice and continue.

CLOSE SHOT - KEMP

At sound of shot and sight of JOHNSTONE falling in street, KEMP's face flinches slightly at the knowledge that his ace-in-the-hole is gone. But KEMP keeps walking toward the impending gunfight.

CLOSE SHOT - KEMP'S EYES NARROWING.

CLOSE SHOT - KEMP'S HAND, REACHING FOR GUN.

## GIANT SHOULDERS

MED. CLOSE SHOT – KID AND COSWAL,  
WITH DRAWN GUNS, LOOKING AT GROUND.

MED. CLOSE SHOT – KEMP AND PELZ ON  
GROUND, WITH LEE STANDING BETWEEN  
THEM, HOLDING HURT HAND AND LOOKING  
DAZED.

#

---

### The Ballad of Killer Kemp

Lyrics written ??? and performed by Ted  
Johnstone on the soundtrack of The  
Musquite Kid Rides Again

INSERT LYRICS HERE

Who has a copy...?

---

In his 1960 SAPSzine, (17-year-old) Robert  
Lichtman wrote a long article called “I Was  
An Angry Young Man For Unicorn  
Productions, or Through Darkest Calico  
With Camera and Confusion.” This was a  
detailed account of gathering the cast and  
crew and getting them all together in Calico  
Ghost Town, the forerunner of Knott’s Berry  
Farm. This was to be used as Corflu Creek  
for Unicorn Production’s film *The Musquite  
Kid Rides Again*.

Robert Lichtman wrote (mistakes intact):

“Then we moved out into the street in front  
of the saloon for the show-down. This is  
where Cyclone Coswal (John Trimble) and  
the Musquite Kid (Squirrel-Ron Ellik) face  
Killer Kemp (Ernie Wheatley), Pecos Pelz  
(who else?) and Rebel Lee (me). The action  
of the scene is about as follows: Coswal  
and the Kid start walking toward Kemp,  
Pelz, and Lee. As they get partway up the  
street, out jumps Tombstone Johnstone  
who is shot by Big Daddy Busby who is  
behind a building. Johnstone is there on the  
ground while the gun battle takes place.  
Finally the two groups stop. They draw.  
Kemp and Pelz are shot while Lee is merely  
wounded in the hand.

“It came off quite nicely; everything went as  
scheduled, and I’d swear that Bruce  
bounced as he hit ground. Right after the

scene was over, Al Lewis ran up shouting  
‘Stay where you are!’ and we went into the  
next scene, in which Ellik and Burbee shake  
hands over Wheatley’s dead body and  
Trimble-brave fellow-motions to me to move  
out of the way, or else. It took about fifteen  
minutes to finish up this scene and just as  
we did, the sun went down over the hill off  
to the west....”

#

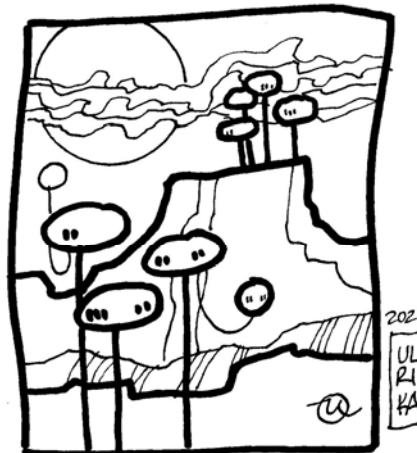
The film faded to black and ended as the  
houselights slowly reached their maximum  
glow.

It must have been a very good movie to have  
such an effect on me. I only saw the film  
once, and that was over forty years ago. Just  
goes to show that good things leave their  
lasting marks on our memories and the bad  
things just take their chances with whatever  
comes along.

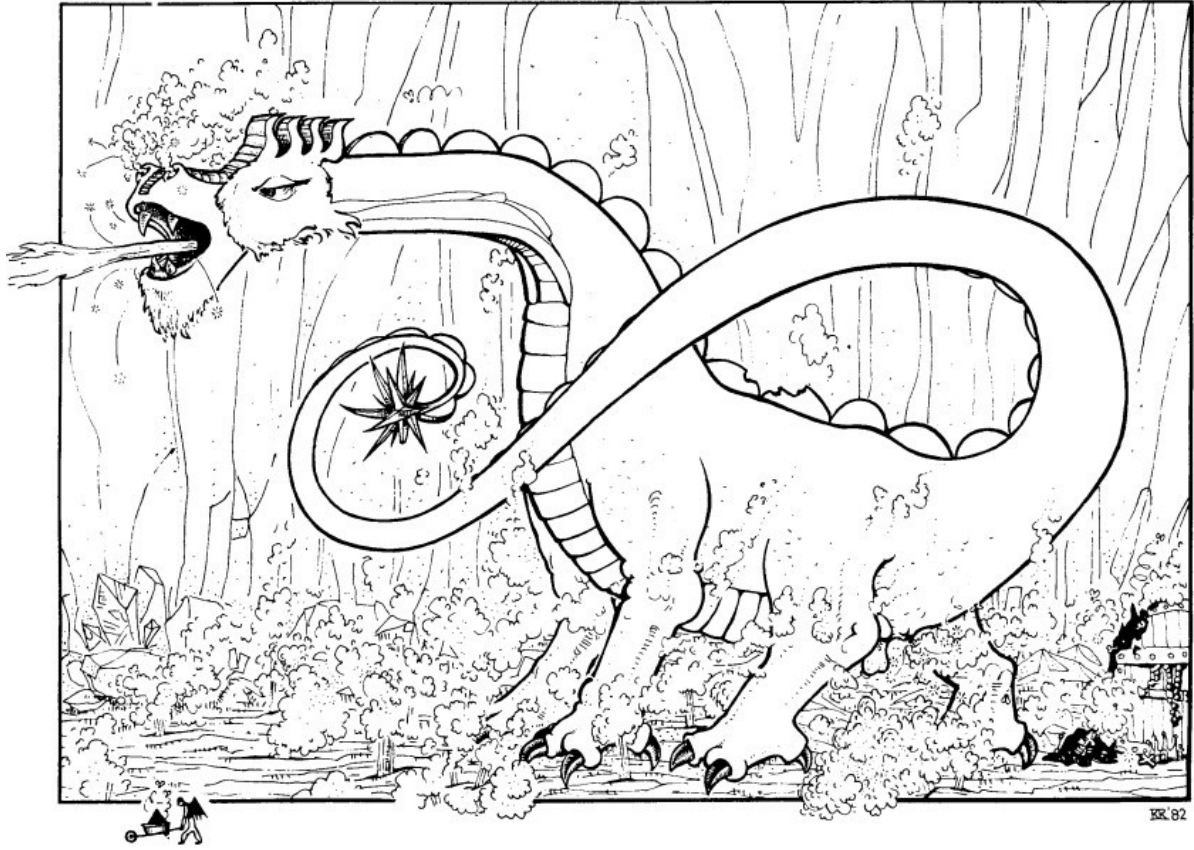
The only thing that would make the whole  
experience perfect would be for me to be  
able to see the movie again....

---

\*In memory of my sidekicks Pecos Pelz and  
Rebel Lee; it was a damned fine ridealong,  
pardners. Special thanks to Howard DeVore,  
Bruce Pelz, and Robert Lichtman for helping  
corral the pieces of this memory. Copyright  
© 2001 by Earl Kemp. All rights reserved.  
Dated September 2001.



# GIANT SHOULDERS



## Elinor Busby – Honored in 2013 at Corflu XXX

**A Brief Bio:** Marjorie Elinor Doub Busby was born September, 1924 in Tacoma, Washington.

As a student at Stadium High School in Tacoma, “Ellie” Daub was a member of the Actors Club, Sculpture club and the Thespians. Her 1940 yearbook featured photos of the Tacoma Narrow Bridge, later known as “Gallopig Gertie,” then under construction.

Elinor Doub entered fandom as a member of The Nameless Ones, a Seattle fan club which coalesced following the 1950 World Convention in Portland, Oregon. After marrying Francis Marion (Buz) Busby in 1954, she became one of the editors of the club fanzine, ***Cry of the Nameless***.

As co-editor of ***Cry of the Nameless***, Elinor shared the 1960 Hugo Award for Best Fanzine and was the first woman to win a Hugo. (***Cry*** was also nominated in 1959 and 1962.)

She was an important member of the Committee of Seacon, the 1961 World Science Fiction Convention.

She was the Guest of Honor at Corflu Zed in 2009.

She was a Guest of Honor at Westercon 16 in 1963



and again at Westercon 37 in 1984.

After ***Cry*** ended its run in the late 1960s, Elinor submitted most of her fan writing to one of several APAs. She was a dedicated member of Apanage, Apassemblage and Lilapa for their entire histories, and also submitted many fanzines to FAPA, OMPA and SAPS.

Rather than using one of her “Hwyl” columns from ***Cry of the Nameless***, which have been reprinted previously, we have chosen to present a piece submitted to an APA, which has almost certainly never been seen by anyone outside of its membership before.

Fanzines published by Elinor include

- ***Cry of the Nameless***
- ***Dolphin***
- ***Fapulous***
- ***Fendenizen***
- ***Gosling***
- ***Memory Lane***

- ***Polarity***
- ***Rain Arrow***
- ***Salud***

Her short story, “Time to Kill,” was published in ***Amazing Stories*** in 1977. Another short, “The Night of the Red, Red Moon,” appeared in **Tales by Moonlight**, edited by Jessica Amanda Salmonson. Her two-part children’s fantasy, **The Throwaway Princess** and **The Quest Requested** are available from Amazon.com.

### **A Note From Gordon Eklund:**

This piece was first published in Lilapa, a small invitational group founded in July 1965. Elinor and her husband Buz were charter members. By the time this piece appeared in 1969, twice monthly mailings regularly exceeded 200 pages. Members included Bob Tucker, Walt Willis, Greg and Jim Benford, Bob Silverberg, Terry and Carol Carr, Bill Rotsler, and myself. Elinor’s piece here was neither the first nor likely the last of its kind but one of the more memorable, I think. So far as I know this is its first appearance outside of Lilapa.

## My Very First Acid Trip

By Elinor Busby

Originally published in Lilapa 111, April 1970

Those of you who feel you really can't bear to read one more account of anybody's first acid trip can just turn their eyes elsewhere. I've writ this stuff and I'm set on pubbing it!

Our trip took place entirely on March 21. I got up in the morning and cleaned the bird's cage. "There!" I said enthusiastically. "You have a nice clean cage and nice clean food and water. How do you like that?" He danced back and forth on the bottom of the cages, looked up and me and said, "Pretty bird." There are times that I feel he and I have good communication.

Then we walked around Green Lake and had lunch, and came home and re-arranged the house, and I picked some fresh flowers and arranged them in bowls here and there, and we got a big stack of records that we might want to hear. At five to three we dropped. We lay on the floor and listened to music and waited to get high. After perhaps half an hour, we weren't high enough, so we took some more. Shortly after that the shit hit the fans. Actually, I'd started feeling nauseated even before we took the additional 1/2 hit, so my taking more proved that I was already nutty as a fruitcake. The confinement of my brassiere was intolerable, so I took my blouse and bra off and huddled in a blanket. I felt very chilly. I felt very, very nauseated and quite knocked out. Didn't feel the slightest possibility of throwing up. Didn't even care to try. I also felt very, very sexed up. After awhile I said to Buz, "For the last hour I've been feeling VERY nauseated and VERY sexually turned on – a strange combination." Buz said, "I feel like a goddam saint."

After awhile Buz went next door to see if our nextdoor neighbors were home. While he was gone I suddenly found myself breathing very deeply. This started by itself, but once started, I kept it up because it was making me feel better.

Buz came back and suggested I go over next door too. I went into the bedroom and put on a big heavy sweater. In the bathroom I started to hallucinate a tiny bit, as a chair seemed to come to me. I wasn't eager to go next door, as I was still feeling definitely in heat, but I needed to be around people. So I hunched in a corner on the floor, watching color tv, watching the muscles jump in my pistachio-slack clad thighs, and laughing ironically from time to time. At that point I really thought the whole thing was a big cosmic joke. The carpet rippled slightly, but I didn't think it was all that interesting to watch a carpet ripple. The dinette table pulsed in time to the rock music on the stereo, but I didn't think pulsation improved a basically unesthetic object. The color TV was okay, especially the commercials which were stony, and I felt I was finally seeing them in the state for which they were intended. I laughed at everything, even when a skier took a terrible fall. Then I realized I'd been laughing at a fellow human's possible disaster/injury/death and felt very ashamed. I was watching tv as much to avoid the people in the room as anything else. I needed the comfort of their presence, but I didn't want to try and relate to them. Buz kept talking. I kept hearing his voice talking, and it seemed weird to me. I couldn't imagine wanting to talk. I felt that it was wrong to talk all the life out of things. I tried to make him stop talking but he didn't seem to understand, and I realized that after all we were on separate trips. Everybody always is, or so I thought at that time.

## GIANT SHOULDERS

Buz went back home. Then there was a commercial for a car. It was so unbelievably ugly that I thought perhaps I was hallucinating without realizing it, which frightened me. I cried out in protest and looked at Bruce. He nodded sympathetically. "It's very ugly, isn't it?" he said. I was reassured. Then I went home.

I looked at all of our little preparations, flowers and so forth, and was struck by a sense of tremendous irony. "How naive!" I said. "How unutterably naïve!"

But around this time things began to improve. The nausea began to leave and the sex feeling began to be pleasurable. Buz and I took our clothes off and lay on the floor and began to kiss and play and Grow Closer. Then we got hungry, and I got some corned beef and cheese out of the refrigerator and sliced it. "Where's the paper plates?" asked Buz. "Why not regular plates?" I suggested. "Because with paper plates it's a picnic," he said. So I put the corned beef and cheese on a paper plate, and we lay on the living room floor and ate it. It tasted very good and I felt Then we made our big mistake. Buz answered the phone. It was Vera on the other end, and she's really not a very happy person. She's involved in an uncongenial marriage and lifestyle. Buz talked to her for some time, and when they were through the phone rang again and it was Bill Austin wanting to know if we knew anybody who knew about FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES. He was ready to talk for an hour or so, but I turned him over to Buz who chopped him off quite quickly.

Buz was thoroughly brought down, and I was brought down too after I realized how brought down he was. It was our own fault for answering the phone. We should have known better. We did know better – we just got overconfident. We thought we were high enough to bring the world up with us.

But we'd had an hour or two that were very, very groovy. I found out the flowers hadn't been so naive after all. I had a bowl of magnolias that were very alive and beautiful. The insides of the petals were

white and leathery, and the outsides, which were a strong mauve, contrasted most pleasingly. The stamens had character, and were maroon and yellow, and I noticed for the first time since we've had the tree that the flowers were very slightly fragrant. But the Growing Close was the best part of the groovy time.

After the thing turned sourish, we went over and visited next door again for a while. Rich was alone there, and we chatted until midnight. Rich told us about his trip back to Holland last summer, and how he had been born there during the war. Toward the end of the war a German soldier had come to the



house looking for his father, and his mother had said his father was in Rotterdam, and Rich, proud to know better, had corrected her and said no, his father was sitting in the closet. However, the German soldier had been a late-in-the-war draftee who really hadn't wanted to get involved, and he'd just said, 'forget it, kid' and gone away.

The next day we talked it all over. At first we thought, never again. Then – well, yeah, maybe. Then we thought sure! But next time we won't answer the phone, and next time we won't overdose.

Next time...

### **Afterthoughts**

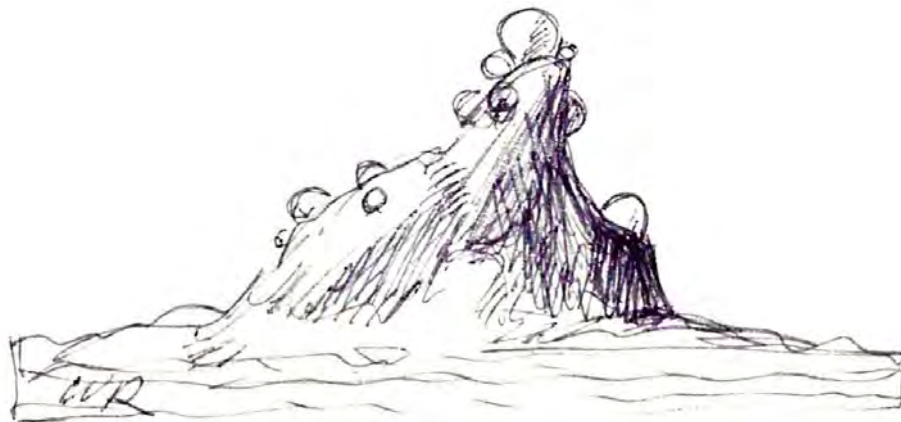
Talking on the phone wasn't a mistake because Vera and Bill were downers. It was a mistake because it was a mistake. Talking to the grooviest people on earth would have been a downer then.

Hallucinations are to me basically rather boring. I seem to hallucinate very little and very uninterestingly.

Acid differed remarkably from peyote. We took one peyote trip, in 1955. At that time my mind whirled vividly the entire time; I got numerous vivid and valid-for-me insights – things that I already knew vaguely, but now perceived in vivid and useable form. & when I closed my eyes I saw geometrics whirling, bright, attractive and inescapable. – Acid was rather different. NO geometrics. Only a few insights, and those concerned entirely with sex. I saw that my sexual hangups were due primarily to a fear of the power of my own sexual feelings.

It will be interesting to see what I get out of the next time. But I won't tell you unless it's something really dramatic. Okay?

Elinor





### Ray Nelson - Honored in 2014 at Corflu31

#### **A Brief Bio:** Radell

Faraday Nelson was born October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1931 in Schenectady, New York.

Ray Nelson bonded for life with science fiction at the age of 8, when his parents brought him to the 1939 New York World's Fair, famously themed "The World of Tomorrow". He became an active fan in his teen years, after his family had relocated to Cadillac, Michigan.

He achieved fannish immortality while still a tenth grader at Cadillac High School, by fabricating the first propeller beanie. He assembled it from strips of cloth and plastic and topped with the prop from a model airplane on a stiff piece of wire, with a few beads above and below to make it spin freely. The hat was worn by Michigan fan George Young for a series of gag photos at a fan gathering in 1947. By 1949, Bob Bloch complained of a "Beanie Brigade" at the Cinvention, where "Goons with propeller beanies, false beards and Buck Rogers ray guns" menaced rational fen.

Ray drew a character wearing the beanie and submitted it to a design contest while on a trip to visit family in California, also in 1947. He was convinced that this



Ray Nelson in the 1950s

drawing inspired Bob Clampett to create the character of "Beanie," in the TV series Time for Beanie, which aired from 1949 to 1954.

After High School, Ray studied Theology at the University of Chicago. After graduating, he traveled to Paris for a further four years of study, during which he met Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre. While in France, he also made the acquaintance of Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsburg, William S. Burroughs and other Beat Generation literary figures, who had an enormous effect on his personal philosophy.

During his time in France, Ray worked with author Michael Moorcock in a smuggling ring, carrying copies of novels by Henry Miller, then banned in both the U.K. and the U.S.

As a professional, Ray may be best known for the short story "Eight O'Clock in the Morning," published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* in 1963. Nelson adapted the story with graphic artist Bill Wray under the title "Nada" in 1986. This was then adapted by Director John Carpenter into his film *They Live* in 1988.

He collaborated with Phillip K Dick on the 1967 novel The Ganymede Takeover. A close friend of Dick, Nelson maintains that the only time the writer ever tried LSD was on two occasions when Nelson gave it to him.

He conducted a writers' workshop in a Unitarian Church in San Francisco for many years. One of his pupils was Anne Rice.

His contributions to fanzines, both as a writer and a cartoonist, were considerable. Much of his best work was published by fellow Bay Area fans in the 1950s and 1960s, but he continued to write and draw well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Ray Nelson

Fanzines attributed to Ray Nelson include:

- ***Beauty and the Beast***
- ***Beret***
- ***The Berkeley Bohemian***
- ***The Berkeley Pops***
- ***Big Cat***
- ***Café Bohemian***
- ***The Existentialist Eye***
- ***Garden Library***
- ***Garden Party***
- ***Les Marche Aux Puces Fantastique***
- ***L'il Poo***
- ***The Michifan***
- ***Quoth***
- ***The Raven***
- ***Stupefying Stories***

- ***Sunflower***
- ***Universal Fanvariety***
- ***Universe***
- ***Which Witch***
- ***Wireline***

He received a special citation from the Philip K. Dick awards in 1982 for his novel **The Promethean Man**. He received the Rotsler Award for his fan art in 2003. And he was inducted into the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2019.

The piece reprinted here, "What Does Music Mean?"

was published by Bill Donaho in Volume 2, Number One of his fanzine ***Habakkuk***, which appeared in May of 1966. It was very typical of Nelson to write about the intersection of aesthetics and semantics. His devotion to the principles of Zen frequently informed his fan writing. (Ray's 1996 novel **Virtual Zen** is a science fictional take on the subject.)



## What Does Music Mean?

By Ray Nelson

From *Habakkuk* V.2, #1, May 1966

That music means anything at all is a plain miracle in itself. I can't explain why a certain combination of noises arbitrarily chosen from the infinity of all possible noises should make us feel happy, while another combination of noises makes us feel sad. Nor can anyone else.

Explanations of the meaning of music in terms of "rules" and quantitative measurements such as Poul Anderson's "Art and Communication" give us a larger vocabulary but bring us not one jot closer to an understanding of the miracle.

The sad truth is that if rules and conventions were the basis of music's meaning, all compositions following the same rules would produce the same result. Such is clearly not the case. The great composers of any given period follow the same general rules as the mediocre composers. If anything, the mediocre composers follow those rules more carefully. Often two compositions make use of the same basic chord progressions, structure, even the same basic melody, yet one of the compositions will be immortal and the other a crashing bore.

And it is often the case that the composer who eventually wins immortality rides roughshod over the rules of his time. If he knows the rules, as Debussy did, he deliberately breaks them. Sometimes, like Moussorgsky, he doesn't even know the rules. Many of the early jazz greats couldn't even read music, yet the music they created is still with us today while the compositions of the "composing professors" of their time is now mercifully forgotten.

It is a natural but deplorable human trait to mistake one's personal taste for an objective fact. If Poul Anderson doesn't like turreted houses, he is entitled to his opinion, but somebody must have liked them or they

never would have been built. Unless Poul can produce a stone tablet brought from the mountaintop on which God has written the words "Turreted houses are in bad taste" I will continue to regard his arguments with suspicion. Even if he does show up with the tablets, I still may disagree with him on the grounds that his tablets are fake or that God is a clod.

It is also a natural but deplorable human trait to regard those people whose tastes differ from one's own as lowbrows or phonies or worse, as Bill Donaho regards jazz fans.

It doesn't help to try to make a distinction between the intellectual and the emotional in music, since not only jazz but all music is simultaneously completely intellectual and completely emotional. Let's face it. You can't play a musical instrument at all without going through the intellectual routine of learning how. You can't produce even the simplest nursery tune on a toy harmonica without first learning when to blow and when to suck. On the other hand this blowing and sucking must produce a "meaningful" pattern, a noise which communicates some sort of emotion or at least is pretty. Thus it is meaningless to call jazz "emotional" or "intellectualized". All music is both at the same time, and some of the most "intellectual" music is at the same time also the most "emotional".

The "tone-row" music mentioned by Britt Schweitzer is a clear example of what happens when music is composed by rules. Here indeed one should need to learn the rules to get at the message – if any – yet where the twelve-tone technique is used to convey a musical inspiration, as in the operas of Alban Berg, it comes alive, even for mass audiences.

My own notion is that the thing which makes a composition great is some kind of magic, some unexplainable witchcraft in the hands of a genius. He can make any musical system or lack of system produce musical meaning. A clod will produce only noise. Even after twenty years of study under the greatest musicians of our time.

The reason why fans of different types of music are so often at war with each other is just exactly this great and unexplainable "meaning" in music. Music that one likes is music that reflects one's own world-view, one's own philosophy of life. Thus the war between different kinds of music fans is almost a political or religious war. When I hear music that I really like, I tend to nod my head and say, "Yep, that's what Life is Like." When I don't like a piece of music, it is usually because I disagree what it says. "That's a lie!" I snarl at it.

Just so you'll know where I stand, let me tell you that my favorite kind of music is blues and my favorite blues is "Careless Love." On guitar. My favorite blues guitar player is myself.

However, I also like some individual pieces in almost every style known to man, from Jazz to classical to folk to rock and roll to the music of Bali, Japan and India. (No, Poul, not China.)

Once I read a very interesting analysis of the songs of about two hundred well-known operas. The author discovered certain characteristics and patterns that turned up time and again to express certain specific emotions. Some were pretty obvious, like a slow tempo and minor key for sad parts, and fast tempo major key for happy parts, or the melody rising in pitch for a climax. Other patterns were clearly imitations of natural sounds like footsteps, birdsongs, storms, etc. Still others were references to musical phrases having some special meaning, like bugle calls, hunting horns, etc. But some were harder to analyze. For instance, laments showed a marked tendency to move stepwise up the scale and then drop a half-tone. What moving stepwise up the scale

has to do with lamenting I'm sure I don't know. But I tried it out on my guitar in a number of variations and it sure seems to work.

Another time I played a lot of LPs of classical program music to my wife who had never heard any of them, as far as she knew. She guessed what the music meant while I quietly checked her guesses against the program notes on the jacket. She guessed right almost every time. In some cases it was pretty obvious, but how she got such a detailed and correct interpretation of the Pastoral Symphony I'll never know. There is very little actual imitation of natural sounds in that piece.

Yet another time a Hindu friend of mine was trying to teach me to play the sitar. I learned to play "Down by the Riverside" on it, but actual Hindu music was too much for me. I could play the right notes, but it still didn't make sense. I did learn a great deal about Hindu musical theory just the same. Where we have only two commonly used musical modes, the major and the minor, the Hindus have a seemingly infinite number. Where we have only two-beat and three-beat basic rhythms, they have five-, seven-, and eleven-beat rhythms in common use. Thus they are way ahead of us in rhythm and melody. But in harmony they seldom get past a simple bagpipe-like drone and their counterpoint is almost non-existent.

In spite of the fact that Hindu music is very different from the music of the west, it takes only a little exposure to it before it becomes almost an addiction. Once I got used to the twangy sharp timbres of the instruments, I found that all the moods that the different ragas were supposed to contain really were there, even to my tin, equally-tempered ear.

When I heard an ancient story-telling ballad from the Middle Ages, I didn't need any breaking in at all. I was floored by my first hearing. I'm still floored by almost anything in the Dorian mode, yet that too is very different from the kind of music I had been used to up to that time.

## GIANT SHOULDERS

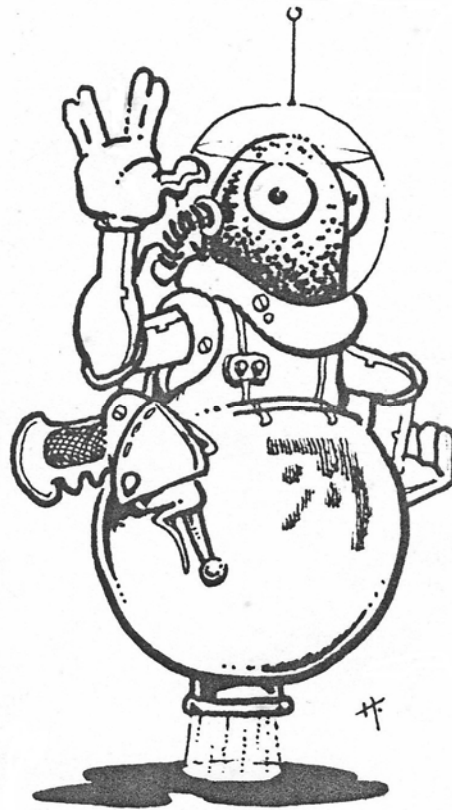
These and many other experiences have led me to believe that almost any kind of music has something to say to me if only I can put myself “in tune” with it. I think that if someone doesn’t like some type of music, it is either because they are not tuned in to its message, or, if they are tuned in, they don’t agree with it.

Someone who claps his hands with the rhythm and shouts “Go Man Go!” at a symphony concert is clearly not with it. Symphony music simply isn’t meant to be taken that way. Most classical music is “music to daydream by.” It is intended to seduce and ravish a largely passive audience, and the cruder forms of audience participation are frowned upon.

But someone who sits quietly with his hands folded waiting for jazz to “do something” to him probably has a long wait ahead of him. Jazz is fundamentally dance music, and someone who doesn’t dance or at least tap his foot or twitch rhythmically – at least in his head – simply won’t be in tune with it. Certain kinds of “cool” jazz and “progressive” jazz are intended in the same way as classical music, but traditional jazz, swing and “funky” modern jazz are dance music, and if you don’t dance, you are the loser.

The emotional “message” of jazz is that life is a sort of dance, that no matter how bad things get, you have to keep swinging; you have to stay with it. Because of jazz’s two-beat rhythm, the rhythm of walking, of heartbeat and pulse, it reaches anybody who is ready to dance the dance of life, whether they live in America, England, Europe or even Asia. If it really had to be learned, how is it that it makes an instant appeal even to Asians and other people brought up in a very different environment, both musically and socially, than ours?

No one knows what makes music have the effects it does. It isn’t anything we have a name for. I call it Magic.



# GIANT SHOULDERS





## Peter Weston – Honored in 2015 at Tynescon III: The Corflu

**A Brief Bio:** Peter Raymond Weston was born October 19th, 1943 in Birmingham, West Midlands.

Died January 5th, 2017 in Birmingham, West Midlands.

An incredibly energetic, ambitious and organized fan, Peter Weston was active from the early 1960s and participated in virtually every facet of fandom.

Weston founded the Birmingham Science Fiction Group in 1971, serving as its first chairman. He also helped start Novacon later that year.

He won the Transatlantic Fan Fund in 1974 and attended Discon II in Washington DC.

He won the Doc Weir Award in 1975.

Between 1976 and 1978, Weston edited the 3-volume **Andromeda** series of original



anthologies, featuring work by Fritz Leiber, Larry Niven, Christopher Priest and Ian Watson.

Peter was the Chair of the 1979 World Science Fiction Convention, the first held in Brighton.

Fanzines published by Peter Weston include:

- **Nadir**
- **Prolapse**
- **Relapse**
- **Speculation**
- **Zenith**
- **Zenith-Speculation**

The fanzine known variously as **Zenith** and **Speculation** received 4

nominations for the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine in 1965, 1966, 1970 and 1971. **Speculation** won the Nova Award in 1973.

Peter was the fan guest of honor at Noreascon 4 in 2004. His memoir of British Fandom, **With Stars in My Eyes**, was nominated for the Hugo Award as Best Related Work in 2005.

At Cytricon V in 2008, Peter Weston and Rog Peyton were inducted into the Knights of Saint Fanthony at a special ceremony, the first such proceedings held in more than 30 years.

**Prolapse** won the FAAn Award as Best Genzine in 2008.

Since 1984, the Hugo Awards have been cast at the automotive parts factory which Peter owned and managed until his retirement.

### Introduction by Rob Jackson

It has been a delight to help compile this fanthology by choosing the most appropriate writing by one of the most influential British fans in the whole history of

fandom. Peter Weston's name as an influential fan was initially cemented by his editorship of his critical fanzine **Speculation** (originally **Zenith**) which he published in the 1960s

and early 70s. Though he made his reputation as a sercon fan, it was increasingly obvious in his later years that he had always had a lot of empathy with the more

fannish side of fandom. This showed up more clearly the more he did other fanac such as running conventions, Eastercon 22 (1971) and Seacon 79 in particular, and in his later years publishing the equally excellent fanhistorical fanzine

### **Prolapse/Relapse.**

When editing both his major fanzines he showed an almost magical ability to obtain unique and eye-opening work from major contributors from whom almost no other fanzine editor could have commissioned anything. It is as an editor as well as a convention organiser that he will best be remembered, but he also became an increasingly skilled writer as time went on.

I played a minor part in helping his reputation as a fannish fan when I published five iterations of his autobiographical column *Slice Of Life* in my fanzine **Maya** in the 1970s. As they are enjoyable and at times amusing as well as instructive, I was very tempted to suggest one or other of these pieces, but this would have seemed like lazy decision making or special pleading. More to the point, he used the *Slice Of Life* columns as the seed corn from which he grew his fine fannish autobiography **With Stars In My Eyes**, published by

NESFA Press when he was Fan Guest of Honour at the 2004 Worldcon, Noreascon 4. If you really want to know about Peter's life as a fan, get hold of a copy!

As ***Speculation*** is the foundation of Peter's reputation, it has been much more instructive to search the fanzine's archives on fanac.org (for which all gratitude to Joe Siclari, Edie Stern and Mark Olson, as ever!). Finding relevance in writing about science fiction itself 50 years or more after it was first published is riskier and more of a challenge than finding interest in fannish or autobiographical work, and sure enough, some of Peter's editorials in ***Speculation*** were bitty and only relevant to their time.

However, the two extracts I have chosen here still seem relevant now. One shows much about Peter's fascination with the work of Robert Heinlein. The other says a lot about the importance of critical thinking in the development of the genre, and by implication the pivotal role ***Speculation*** played, perhaps as much as any other fanzine of the time, in promoting critical standards in SF

(Art below is courtesy of the Fishlifters. "The artist is Ivor Latto and it's dated 1972. Peter sent us some bits and pieces in 2014 including several [unpublished] Latto pieces he'd had sitting in his art files since ***Speculation*** days.)





## ***Speculation* 24 editorial – extracts**

Peter Weston

Original publication September 1969

This issue of *Speculation* is devoted to commentary on the work of Robert A. Heinlein.

Two months late as it is, this issue was intended to appear in August, exactly thirty years after the publication of Mr Heinlein's first story, 'LifeLine', in *Astounding*. With publication, an interesting nine months of work comes to an end for me during which I have been fascinated to see once again how many different meanings can be read by different people into the same story (or stories). As a result I think some of the material in the following pages will reveal slightly more about its writers than about Robert Heinlein. Compare the contrasting viewpoints of Robert A.W. Lowndes, and M. John Harrison, or Richard Gordon with Daniel F. Galouye, (\*1) to see what I mean!

The idea behind this 'anniversary' number came from Algis Budrys' column in *Galaxy*, June 1968, in his review of Alexei Panshin's critical volume *Heinlein In Dimension* where he said, slightly inaccurately: "... science fiction writers for, oh, thirty years, have been actively learning from Robert A. Heinlein. All of us, I think, have influenced our own careers by our private assessments of his technical accomplishments and his professional criteria."

To an enterprising fanzine editor this was a perfect opportunity, although until Daniel F. Galouye pointed it out to me I did not realise how closely this August 1969 anniversary coincided with the launching of the Apollo XI mission to make the first moon-landing. And so, through a rather grand piece of stage-management by Fate, on the 30th year of his entry into speculative fiction almost to the week Robert Heinlein was an honoured guest at Cape Kennedy to watch the Apollo blast-off. That seems a particularly fine way to celebrate the occasion.

(That paragraph, incidentally, comes from a letter from Daniel F. Galouye when I contacted him about this symposium and I also used it to begin an article about Heinlein which I wrote for *Books and Bookmen*. It seemed a good opportunity to try and give some mention of Heinlein to the general literary public who read *B&B* and who, since they presumably read little SF have probably never heard of Heinlein, and I was very pleased indeed to see it appear in their October issue.)

Some of you may regard this Heinlein number with resignation, since with the possible exception of J.G. Ballard, Heinlein is the most-discussed of all SF authors. But although there might seem very little left to say about his work, particularly since the publication of Alexei Panshin's book last year, I don't think there has been any recent study of contemporary attitudes towards Heinlein.

While I suspect that only the future can make the final evaluation, in the meantime I have collected together some current sentiments which range from the once-universal adulation to what Harlan Ellison terms in his somewhat back-handed compliments (p.17) "a vague disrepute". One of the interesting things I've noticed is that American writers seem to like Heinlein rather more than do their British colleagues featured here; another observation of mine is that if Heinlein is really as bad as some maintain, then why have the rest of us thought he was so good for so long?

To enlarge on this last point a little, Heinlein was once considered so beyond criticism that even Damon Knight could make only two complaints, both of which he regarded as trivial, in *In Search Of Wonder*. It seems to me that if this present "vague disrepute" has any meaning at all it must be because either i) Heinlein wasn't really a

good, an entertaining, an important writer (in which case the judgement of the whole field has been wrong over a 20-year period and critics like Knight and more recently Budrys have missed consideration of a whole area of evaluation); or ii), more likely, that Heinlein was good for, and at, the time, but the general upheaval in science fiction has somehow knocked standards so topsy-turvy that he is now suddenly 'dated' and must take a back seat. I think both possibilities could stand a little more discussion.

One of the things I wanted to do with this issue (and which to be honest I don't think we have succeeded in doing) was to present a reasoned case both for and especially against Heinlein. This is by no means a 'tribute', you see, in the sense that the following pages contain unanimous praise of Heinlein's work. I would genuinely be interested to hear why Heinlein has fallen from favour in the eyes of some people – but I hope it is through reasons more relevant than his supposed politics or his supposed personal beliefs.

My own feelings? That there have always been flaws in Heinlein's writing, particularly noticeable ones in his last six books (Panshin's 'Period of Alienation'), but that he remains to me an intensely readable author with a tremendous flair for imagination and innovation. If Mr Heinlein himself is reading this, I would like to thank him, personally, for the many hours of pleasure his stories have given me over the years.

In Chris Priest's words, he is a compulsive writer; and as Brian Aldiss says, it is fashionable to knock Heinlein but (paraphrasing Budrys now) we need a great deal more perspective before we can do so with impunity. And when Charles Platt expresses admiration for John Russell Fearn but not Heinlein; when Michael Moorcock calls Heinlein a 'trivial writer with the same faults as Fleming' and 'just as unreadable' (*Speculation* 20), I really wonder what kind of standards they are using.

\* \* \* \*

If someone were to ask me just what I thought *Speculation* was all about I could do a great deal worse than quote briefly from a letter by John Foyster. He says "...if people keep building up castles with bricks of straw (as many SF writers tend to do about their own work or about the work of their buddies) then I'm not averse to leaning against them occasionally – and I wish more people would. Many could." Or I might quote Damon Knight's more precise sentiments from his book *In Search Of Wonder* (Advent): "... science fiction is a field of literature worth taking seriously, and ... ordinary critical standards can be meaningfully applied to it: ego, originality, sincerity, style, construction, logic, coherence, sanity, garden-variety grammar."

However you define the end-product, the fact is that genuine science fiction criticism is very hard to find and there should be more of it. Plenty of humbug is written by and about the field, and countless reams of plot synopses circulate each year disguised as reviews, but talking about the real thing doesn't make it any more plentiful in supply. At the present moment the only professional critic regularly writing in the SF field who has any perceptivity is Algis Budrys in *Galaxy*, despite the arguments his reviews seem to provoke. We have lost Messrs Blish, Knight, Pohl, Silverberg and one or two others from regular review departments at the time we need them most, because, for instance, times have changed and Knight's decade-old rule-of-thumb above might be thought no longer to apply in some quarters. We only occasionally see critical pieces from writers such as Aldiss and Ellison: I don't know what the answer is.

#### **Editorial footnote:**

(\*1) This refers to the Heinlein symposium that follows in *Speculation* 24. The full list of contributors reads like a Who's Who of major sf writers of the time, and speaks

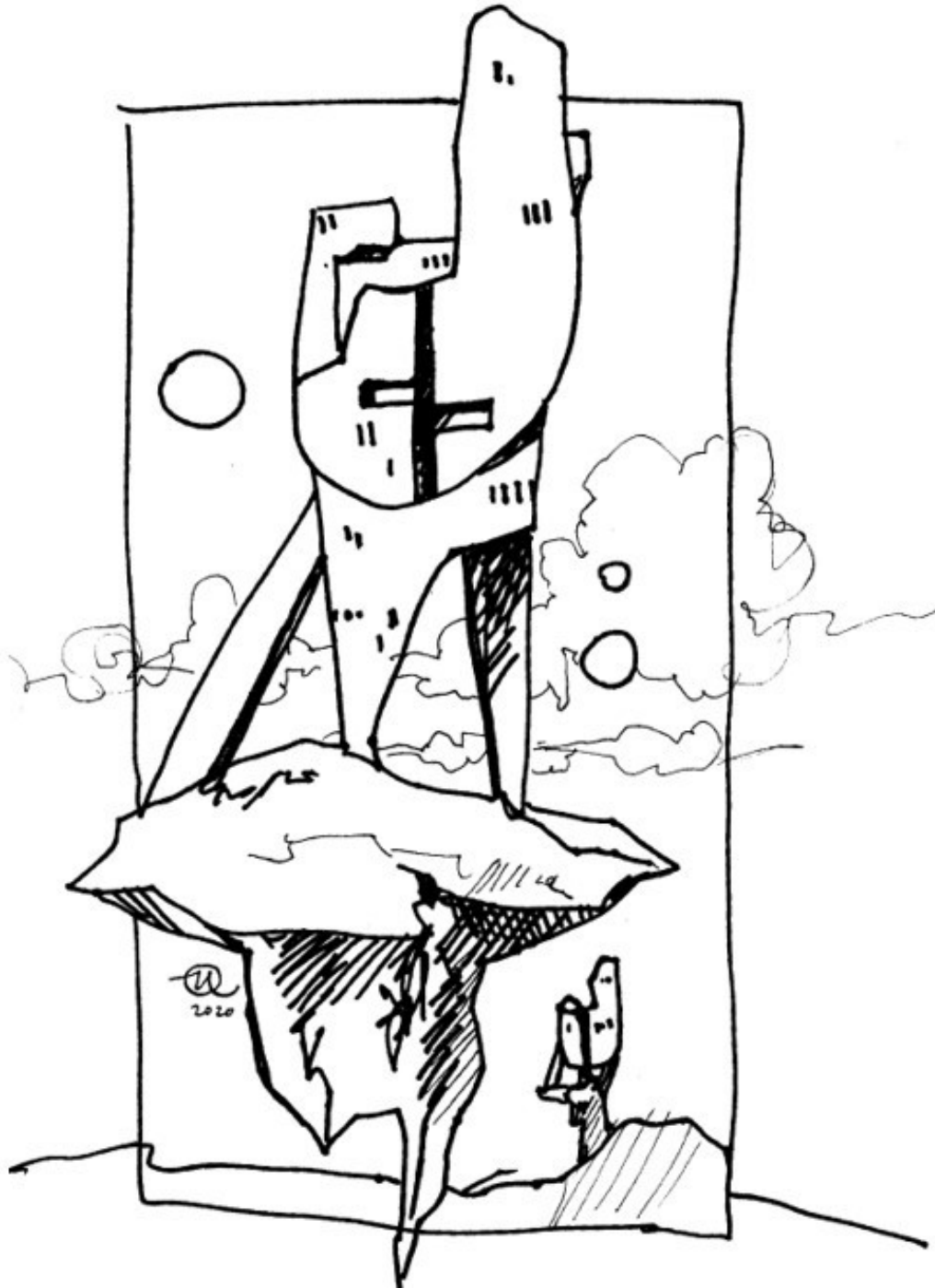
## GIANT SHOULDERS

volumes about Peter's level of influence and perhaps his persuasiveness and enthusiasm as an editor:

Harry Harrison; Fritz Leiber; Algis Budrys; Daniel F. Galouye; John Brunner; Richard Gordon; Brian Aldiss; Robert A. W. Lowndes; Harlan Ellison; Harry Warner (reprint from elsewhere); G. D. Doherty; Kenneth Bulmer; F. M. Busby (also a reprint); Poul Anderson; M. John Harrison; Jack Williamson; Norman Spinrad; Christopher Priest.



# JIANT SHOULDERS



## John Bangsund – Honored in 2016 at Chiflu

**A Brief Bio:** John Gordon Bangsund was born April 21st, 1939 in Northcote, Melbourne, Victoria. He died August 22nd, 2020 in Collingwood, Victoria.

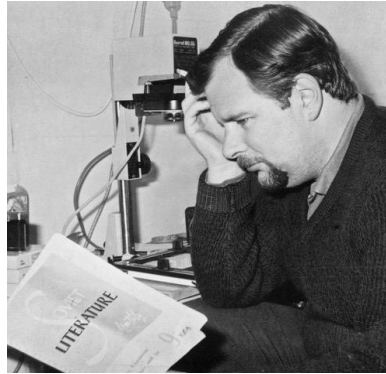
John Bangsund was an active science fiction fan beginning in 1963. He was a founding member of the Nova Mob and the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. He worked for years to secure the 1975 World Science Fiction Convention for Melbourne, and served as the event's Toastmaster.

Under his direction, *Australian Science Fiction Review* was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine in 1966 and 1967.

John was also nominated for the Hugo in 1975, as Best fan writer.

### Introduction by Nigel Rowe

John was one of the first fannish writers I truly admired. I relished everything I could lay my hands on. He was so funny, and clever. Much too smart for me and his fanzines had a style I desperately wanted to



He met his wife Sally Yeoland in 1973, by answering an ad she had placed in the "Dalliances" column of *Nation Review*. They married in 1974 and divorced in 1998, although they remained neighbors for years after.

Bangsund may have published fanzines under more titles than anyone else in this volume, including:

- *ANZAPA Book*
- *Australian Science Fiction Monthly*
- *Australian Science Fiction Review*

emulate. For years I tried in vain to be a poor man's John Bangsund, it did not go well. But the experience helped me get better at writing and thinking purposefully about fanzine design, rather than just haphazardly

- *Bundaloh Quarterly*
- *John W. Campbell – An Australian Tribute*
- *Clarion Fannish*
- *The Cosmic Dustbag*
- *Crog*
- *Fibonacci and Mehitabel*
- *First Draft*
- *Hanrahan*
- *Les Souris Dansent*
- *Lodbrog*
- *The New Millennial Harbinger,*
- *Parergon Papers*
- *Philosophical Gas*
- *Private Cellar Club*
- *Proceedings of the Thomas Love Peacock Society of Australia*
- *Procrustean Papers*
- *Revolting Tales of Sex and Super-Science*
- *Scythrop*
- *Society of Editors Newsletter*
- *Stunned Mullet*
- *Threepenny Planet*
- *Winding Up*

Bangsund was also a founding member of ANZAPA, and several of the titles listed above were submitted for distribution there.

assembling and publishing material. John was both a distant mentor and a spirit guide. Alas, I never met him in person, nor did I ever share the high regard I had, but in 2014 we became Facebook friends, and obviously everyone

knows that meant we were now best mates.

In a Facebook post, John once wrote that his mother, Ivy, at one time was in the Guinness Book of Records for having sat and rocked longest in a rocking chair. It was a matter-of-fact statement and while I have no reason to doubt its factualness, it's fun to imagine John believing he had to at least try and emulate this feat by embarking upon a career which involved a lot of sitting down.

In the early sixties, John was involved with Melbourne fandom, and in no short order became a central figure in the rebirth of Australian fandom. First with publishing the monthly **Australian SF Review** (ASFR), and then later with organizing and encouraging cons. ASFR became well known not only for the quality of its reviewing, keen insights and humour, but many readers went on to become established writers and critics in their own right. The publication attracted a stellar cast of other well-known contributors like Ursula Le Guin and Brian Aldiss who engaged in lively and intelligent discussion.

His many other achievements include being the original inspiration and the toastmaster at the first Australian SF Worldcon

(Aussiecon) in 1975, three Hugo nominations, fan guest of honour at the 1974 Australian Natcon, and winner of the 2001 A. Bertram Chandler and Ditmar awards. After being a candidate for the 1974 DUFF race, he withdrew from consideration, but as Irwin Hirsh has pointed out, he may have received write-in votes in more fan fund races than any other person in subsequent years.

Over five decades he enthusiastically edited and published well over 200 personal fanzines, including classics like: **Philosophical Gas**, **The New Millennial Harbinger**, **Scythrop** and many more. In 1968 he was a founding member of ANZAPA.

John was, first and foremost, an editor, including editing the highly regarded publication, **John W. Campbell: An Australian Tribute**. In recognition of these talents, the Victorian Society of Editors honoured John by making him a life member. To quote Julian Warner, "In editing the newsletter of the Victorian Society of Editors John became the editor's Editor." That's no little feat. His Curriculum Vitae scrolls through several screens of densely packed professional achievements, and far too many to recount here. (See:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20160908174634/http://home.pacific.net.au/~bangsund/cv.htm>)

In 1992, he invented the adage *Muphry's Law*, which is used widely: "If you write anything criticising editing or proofreading, there will be a fault of some kind in what you have written."

In 2016 I was thrilled to suggest and support him against other contenders for the 2016 FAAN Lifetime Achievement Award presented at Corflu Chiflu. He was the hands-down top choice of the nominating committee, and I was honored to accept the award on his behalf as Corflu organizer. He later wrote, "Pay no heed to what I say in Facebook. I am aware enough to be humble in the presence of such previous—do you say 'winners'?—as Art Widner. I am suddenly very tired, Nigel. It's hard being a fan at 77."

Sadly, John contracted Covid-19 and passed away on August 22, 2020. He was 81.

A wonderful appreciation of John's life was published in The Age newspaper: <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/those-who-lived-loved-and-are-gone-john-bangsund-20201023-p567zr.html>

## GIANT SHOULDERS

This piece was originally published in the quarterly journal of the Australian Society of Authors in 1973. When John reprinted the article in FAPA sometime

later, there was some criticism, as he recalled, of historical inaccuracies and what might loosely be called "my central thesis." It is a quintessential

example of John writing about something he loves, to an audience that doesn't yet know what they are in for.

## The Fanzine Phenomenon

John Bangsund

*The Australian Author*, January 1973

John Bangsund publishes fanzines including (Scythrop) in his capacious bathroom in Kingston, ACT. To support this activity he works as a sub-editor with Hansard. He has recently published John W. Campbell: An Australian Tribute.

"The mystique of the group -- the surrogate of love." Thus André Maurois, summing up brilliantly one aspect of that remarkable fellow Balzac. It could almost have been written of that strange phenomenon, science fiction fandom -- and its prime vehicle, the fanzine.

A fanzine is a magazine produced by fans. In particular, since they coined the Orwellian word in the first place, a fanzine is a magazine produced by science fiction fans. It is, one might say, a kind of little magazine -- but not usually the kind of little magazine that Michael Wilding wrote about in this journal a few issues back. It is more like the sort of publication John Willett wrote about in the 1967 *Penrose Annual*: "Little magazines are essentially magazines -- or vaguely magazine-like publications that can be anything from a young portfolio to a single sheet -- which are produced for fun, love or conviction, in defiance of alleged economic good sense . . . No editor, however, has yet managed to make such a magazine look other than shoddy." John Willett presumably had not seen many fanzines when he wrote that. In general, what he has to say about his little magazines is true of fanzines, but I have quite a few fanzines in my accumulation that are more elegant in appearance than *The Australian Author*, for example.

Science fiction has existed for a long time -- if you are in any doubt about that, read W.H.G. Armytage's excellent *Yesterday's Tomorrows* (a volume, incidentally, in which fanzines are referred to as such, without quotation marks or explanations) -- but Hugo Gernsback gave it a name. (Actually he preferred "scientifiction", but that didn't last.) It is not a good name, but it serves. Since 1926, when Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* launched the genre as something distinct from the mainstream of literature, something special, there has grown with sf the curious complex of relationships, the amorphous, heterogeneous, constantly changing yet undeniably existent universal non-organization called fandom.

There was nothing unique about the fan clubs started by Gernsback, his successors and competitors. Fan clubs have existed for a long time, and will spring up (or be organized) wherever there is enthusiasm (or a need for it). There is nothing unique about fan magazines either. They go along with the fan clubs. They serve their (usually commercial) purpose. They spring up, they flourish, they die. Their memorial is the nostalgia of the few.

The early sf fan clubs ranged from the commercially promoted Captain Galaxy's Space League kind of thing to the British Interplanetary Society, which started off messing about with backyard rockets and is now a respectable institution. Today there are still clubs orientated basically to

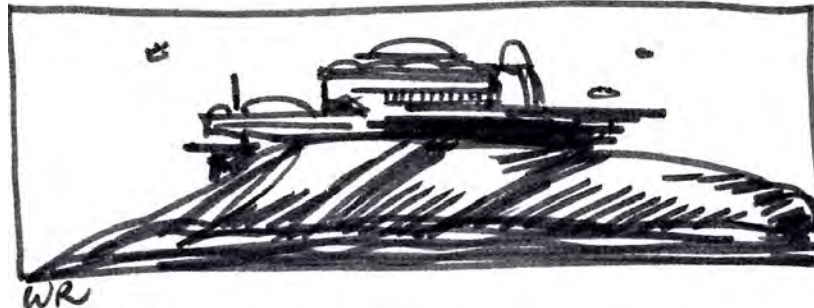
particular magazines (such as the enormous Perry Rhodan club in Germany) or television series (such as the proliferation of Star Trek clubs, which still linger on). Most of these clubs consist of enthusiastic youngsters who some time or other will decide that their studies or their jobs are more important, or will discover sex or pot or classical music or something, and they drift away from the club and become more or less normal people. Some, however, graduate into fandom.

The three recognizable outward manifestations of fandom are fanzines, conventions and clubs and groups of various kinds. I will not talk about conventions and clubs here, beyond mentioning that there are usually about three conventions each year in Australia, and last time I looked there were about a dozen clubs. *The* convention is the annual World SF Convention, and Australia is bidding this year in Toronto for the honor of holding it in 1975.

enjoy themselves hugely, and they write for, publish or at least receive in the mail, fanzines.

Historically the fanzine is said to have started when the sf magazines reduced or eliminated their letter columns. I do not know whether that is correct, but there is something of the personal quality of a letter about most fanzines, and certainly this is true of the best.

There are as many kinds of fanzine as there are people who publish them. In purpose, they range from the letterzine (a duplicated letter-substitute) to the ultimate in fan publishing -- the pro fanzine (large circulation, professional reproduction and content). At what point the pro fanzine turns into a prozine, I am not sure. The British *New Worlds* started as a kind of fanzine, became a quite professional magazine by issue no.4, was impossible to label in its latter years, and is now a quarterly paperback. The Spanish *Nueva Dimensión* is widely distributed, most



Fandom consists of people whose initial mutual interest is science fiction. They might lose interest in sf, but as long as they remain interested in each other they are fans. At any given time, probably most of the Big Name Fans have relegated sf to a minor interest. They have become more interested in marriage, religion, literature, politics, medieval brass rubbings -- it could be anything -- but they remain fans. Along with the greenest 15-year-old neofan who has just been transported into ecstasy by the writings of A. Bertram Chandler, Andre Norton or J.G. Ballard (and won't shut up about it!), they attend conventions and

handsomely produced, and it pays (unhandsomely) for material, but I regard it as basically a fanzine. The Japanese fanzine *Uchujin*, the Hungarian *Pozitron*, and many others, are similarly professional in approach.

In subject matter, fanzines are as diverse as the world we live in. If you can think of it, someone has written about it in a fanzine. In writing style, the range is from almost illiterate to surpassingly brilliant, but you do not find much of those extremes. The average is workmanlike. In appearance, fanzines range from the sloppiest, most indecipherable mess to utterly professional



## GIANT SHOULDERS

work, superbly laid-out, sometimes using full-color artwork. Again, the average is workmanlike, the majority using stencil duplicators of some kind. Experimentation is characteristic: fanzine production is a craft. For some the medium is far more important than the message, the craft more important than the content.

A special kind of fanzine is the apazine. Amateur publishing associations (hence "apa") were not invented by and are not unique to fandom, but the activity flourishes here as perhaps nowhere else. Such an association usually has an "official editor" or mailing officer, to whom each member sends a stated number of copies of his publication for distribution to the rest of the members. Communication, the interplay of diverse personalities, is the essence of the fannish apa. Apart from talking and drinking with fans, this is for me the most pleasant and rewarding of fan activities. I am a member of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (USA), the Off-trail Magazine Publishers Association (UK) and the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association. There are many others.

Fanzines are published just about wherever sf is read -- and that means practically everywhere. The majority probably (the English-language majority certainly) emanates from America. How many fanzines are there? I have no idea. Thousands perhaps. For a start, the three apas I belong to have a total membership of about 120. The "Fanzines received" column of the American newszine *Locus* usually runs for several pages. Frequency of publication? Many have maintained a monthly schedule for years, some even weekly, but most appear irregularly. Lee Hoffman's *Science Fiction Five-Yearly* has never missed a deadline.

It would be difficult to say how many fanzines are published in Australia. Among the better local publications are Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* (nominated for the Hugo Award last year, and our best and most regular fanzine), David Grigg's *The*

*Fanarchist*, Eric Lindsay's *Gegenschein*, John Alderson's *Chai*, Ron Clarke's *The Mentor*, Dennis Stocks' *Mithral*, John Foyster's *Chunder!*, Shayne McCormack's *Something Else* and Bill Wright's *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*. All the local clubs and groups publish things from time to time. If you would like to contact any of these publishers, write to the Space Age Bookshop, 317 Swanston Street, Melbourne. (The Space Age is a kind of four-dimensional fanzine, published daily except Sundays, thinly disguised as a commercial enterprise.)

At the eleventh Australian Science Fiction Convention in Sydney last August I led a discussion on the subject "Why Fanzines?" I was delighted to find no less than sixteen fanzine publishers in my audience, including our American guest of honor, Lesleigh Luttrell, and I asked them in turn why they went to the immense effort and expense of publishing these things. Leigh Edmonds said something about weaving baskets (and promptly went to sleep); Bruce Gillespie talked profoundly about communication; John Foyster said it kept people off the streets. After I had badgered them all, and received all the expected answers, they turned on me and demanded to know why I publish fanzines. I said: "Because I am lonely." There was a momentary silence, until someone realized there must be more to it than that and asked whether I would stop publishing fanzines if I stopped being lonely. I sidestepped the question, and answered it, simultaneously. Every now and then I want to give up this foolishness, and whenever I feel this way my immediate impulse is to rush to the typewriter and start producing a fanzine explaining why I have stopped publishing fanzines. Make of that what you will.

"It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan." Robert Bloch said it, years ago, in a story called "A Way of Life", in *Fantastic Universe*. The pride is discernible immediately. I am proud to have published original material by Bob Bloch, Bert Chandler, Ursula Le Guin, George Turner,

David Compton, Mungo MacCallum, Jim Blish, John Brunner, John Boyd, Mike Moorcock, Ted Carnell -- and a host of others, famous, not yet famous and never to be famous. The loneliness is less easily discerned.

The trufan finds in fandom "the mystique of the group" -- something he has possibly experienced before, in a church (as I did), at university, in some association or other, and has lost. Or perhaps he has never experienced it before. It doesn't matter. Here in fandom he mixes with an elite group. He meets Bert Chandler or Isaac Asimov at a convention. He gets a letter from Brian Aldiss or Stanislaw Lem. He asks L. Sprague de Camp for an article for his fanzine, and gets it by return mail. He does not know it yet perhaps, but this is his "surrogate of love".

When, if, he finds love -- personal, immediate love -- he might very well give up fandom and rejoin mundania. Or he might continue his fanactivity, realizing that love is universal and fandom one of its multifarious forms. It depends a lot on what he wants from life.

Applying André Maurois's words to fandom is, I think, not unseemly or inappropriate. The mystique of the group *can* be the surrogate of love, and for many of my fannish friends is just that. But for some, the group becomes a means of spreading love. I like to think of fandom in that way, and to regard the fanzine as the best way for me to do a bit of that spreading.

And (pardon me, Dr Johnson) who ever wrote, except for love?



## Bruce Gillespie - Honored in 2018 at Corflu 35



Bruce Gillespie and  
Apple Blossom, 1979

**A Brief Bio:** Bruce Richard Gillespie was born February, 1947.

Perpetually active in science fiction fandom since the late 1960s, Bruce Gillespie is best known for his fanzine **Science Fiction Commentary**. It has been published with few interruptions since 1969. It was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine in 1972, 1973 and 1975. And it has won a record five Ditmar Awards at the Australian National Convention, in 1972, 1973, 1977, 1980 and 2002.

Bruce Gillespie, Rob Gerrand and Carey Handfield were the founding editors of **Norstrilia Press**, an important small press

specializing in science fiction that operated between 1975 and 1986. Among its editions was Greg Egan's first novel, **An Unusual Angle**.

Fanzines published by Gillespie include

- **American Kindness**
- **\*brg\***
- **Collingwood Capers**
- **Dreams and False Alarms**
- **Good Night, Sweet Prince**
- **The Great Cosmic Donut of Life**
- **Invisible Whistling**
- **Bunyips**
- **Journal of Omphalistic Epistemology**
- **Kisses Sweeter than Cactus**
- **The Marshian Chronicle**
- **Mellow**
- **The Metaphysical Review**
- **Notes of a Naif Son**
- **Norstrilian News**
- **Norstrilian Reviews**
- **Raw Bits**
- **Scratch**
- **SF Commentary**
- **Shark Infested Custard**
- **Steam Engine Time**
- **Supersonic Snail**
- **Treasure**
- **Wordy Gurdy**
- **The Year of Living Frantically**.

He has a Life Membership in the Melbourne Science Fiction Club.

Bruce has also been an enthusiastic member of several amateur press associations, including Acnestis, ANZAPA, APA-45 and FAPA. Several of the fanzines listed above were submitted to one or more of these.

Bruce was the Fan Guest of Honor at Aussiecon III, the 1999 World Science Fiction Convention.

In 2005, the "Bring Bruce Bayside" fund was collected to help Bruce attend Corflu in San Francisco. Gillespie also visited several other centers of fan activity in the Western U.S.

In 2007, he received the A. Bertram Chandler Award, which is Australian Fandom's highest honor for service to the field.

In 2010, Australia hosted its 4th World SF Convention. As a kind of celebration, Bruce Gillespie floated a hoax bid to host the Australian National Convention in Melbourne, Florida that year. Not to be outdone, Kevin Standlee began a rival bid for Brisbane, California.

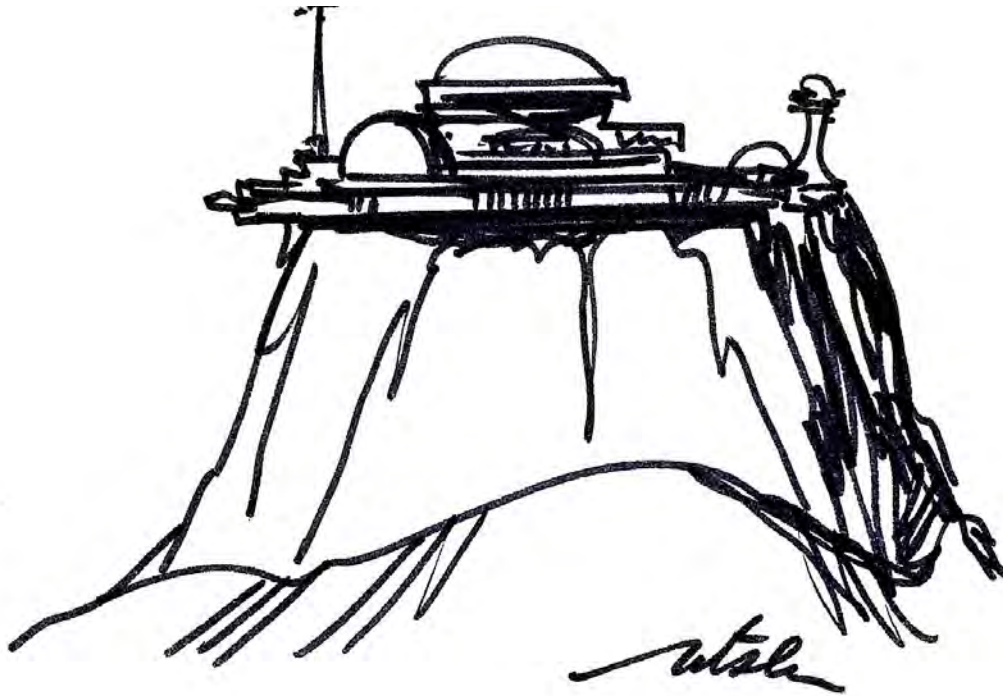
Like many fan writers, Bruce has a myriad of

## Bruce Gillespie

interests outside of science fiction and fantasy. He has written enthusiastically about music of multiple genres, and compiles annotated lists of favorites in many other media.

The article included here originally appeared in issue #14 of *Sikander*, published by Irwin Hirsh in August of 1987, just in time for Irwin's GUFF trip to the Worldcon in Brighton. Irwin also

collected it in 2004 in *The Incomplete Bruce Gillespie: A Selection of Bruce Gillespie's Fanzine Writing*. It was Bruce's personal choice to represent him here.



## Trains in the Distance

By Bruce Gillespie

[First published in *Sikander* 14, August 1987, edited by Irwin Hirsh. Republished in *The Incomplete Bruce Gillespie: A Selection of Bruce Gillespie's Fanzine Writing*, edited by Irwin Hirsh, 2004.]

'Everybody loves the sound of a train in the distance', sings Paul Simon, 'Everybody thinks it's true ... The thought that life could be better/Is woven indelibly/Into our hearts/And our brains.'

And it is true, about trains, and life, and hearts, but I didn't know that when I was four years old. In 1952 a train — the one with the electric thingie (pantograph) on top — was our way of getting to the centre of Melbourne. Other trains — the exciting ones that chuffed smoke and snorted steam — played shuttle on the line that was over the road from the front of our house. For hours each night they batted goods wagons at each other along the shunting rails.

And there were other trains that hurled themselves past our house, roaring at me to stay in my safe garden on our side of the road. These workhorses of the Victorian Railways were headed for a mysterious region called 'Gippsland'. Such an engine would drag behind it a long line of goods wagons that sometimes took five or ten minutes to pass our house.

No wonder I wanted to be an engine driver when I grew up. Trains were all-powerful. They went very fast on long journeys. They played mysterious Brobdignagian games just over the road and beyond a slight fence. From the parapet of the verandah at the front of our house I could watch their endless antics. And one day I might even have my own set to play with.

In every childhood there is a day that is so magical or terrifying or ambiguous that forever after you wonder whether or not you

lived it; perhaps it was your first very vivid childhood dream. For years I had such a memory, a dream-feeling. I remembered that my father opened the door of the front lounge-room, a door that was almost never opened to anyone, let alone to children, and let me glimpse an entire model-railway set laid out on the floor. Lines made a circle on the carpet. A bridge crossed it; a railway station was there beside it. My father picked up the railway engine, wound a key, and let the little green object scoot around the circle until it jumped the rails and clattered towards the wall. My father attached carriages to the engine. This slowed it, and the whole regalia trundled off demurely around the circle.

This went on for some time. It seemed that the set had two engines, a little green one and a black one, both driven by clockwork, and lots of carriages. We tried out all the possibilities. Various combinations of carriages circled the track. I wound up the engines until the clockwork broke on one of them.

That was that. I wasn't old enough for the train set yet. I was bundled off to bed, and in the morning there was no sign of the miraculous layout. Nor did it show itself again for about four years, which is so long a time in a child's life that I really thought I had dreamed the whole episode.

It's still not clear to me how parents decide that a child is 'old enough' for something. In their endless attempt to get me to do something in life beside reading books, Mum and Dad revealed one day during the particularly long and hot school holidays at the end of 1956 that the model train set really existed. It had been my father's when he was a boy. Dad showed me the Hornby catalogue for the year, sometime in the late 1920s, when he had started the collection. The catalogue was more exciting than the set of model trains. All the engines and carriages shown were based on famous

English trains of the early twentieth century, and each of them bore mysterious initials, such as LNER, LMS, and GW. My father explained that these letters showed which English railway company each belonged to. The idea of private ownership of railway lines was new to me, and somehow indecent. No matter. English railway engines and carriages, as shown in the catalogue, looked much prettier than the humble black chuffers and red rattlers that passed our house every day.

I have always been bored by games of any sort. Once you know the rules of any game, there is no more interest in it; you give up such a useless activity and go back to reading books. So what do you do with a model-railway layout? It was very exciting to get everything out of the tin trunk in which the set had been stored for thirty years. It was rather nice putting together the first circular track, and running trains around it. But watching things go around in circles was boring after the first half hour. To beat the boredom, I connected the straight rails, and put aside the circular rails for when the line went round corners. Off we went, and soon had a track that stretched from the kitchen, through the living room, and into the front passage. This was fun for a while. We could invent place names for destinations, and use blocks and toys as part of the layout. There was one snag: my mother wanted to use the house as well. After she had tripped over unsuspected rails and carriages a few times, she decided that maybe I could go back to reading books. Not so, for I had glimpsed a new idea: that of 'destination'. Where could we take the railway lines so that they stretched out into the distance, like a real railway line? How could I make their destinations mysterious and variable?

One night I had a dream, one that excites me still. Somehow the Oakleigh railway line curved over Haughton Road, came up the side of our house, made itself small, climbed up through some passage in the floor, went through the living room, out the other side, and eventually rejoined the main railway-

line. (Years later I discovered that someone had written a song: 'The Railroad Goes Through the Middle of the House'.) It was during the hot days of the January annual school holidays, in that long-gone era when summer began in December and ended in February. The lawn was dry, and there was no danger of sudden showers. Why not set up the whole layout on the back lawn? The back lawn was a large oblong, with a grassed gutter down the middle. A chunk at one end of the oblong had been turned back into garden. It looked to me like a map of the United States of America, with the gutter as the Mississippi River, and the chunk as the Gulf of Mexico. My obsession the previous year had been the films, comic books, and stories about Davy Crockett, so by the end of Grade Four I knew everything there was to know about American history and geography. In 1954, during the visit to Australia of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, my parents had bought an atlas. It was, naturally enough, called The New Elizabethan World Atlas. One double-page spread in it showed the USA. I spread out the atlas in front of me. The double-page map was filled with possible destinations, including many that I had never heard mentioned in films or comic books or on the radio. 'Natchez' — what a wonderful name. There was no name in Australia with that kind of sound. Waco, Texas. You could journey towards a place with a name like that. Tampa, Florida: let's head for there. There was one difficulty: the line could go to Florida, or over to St Louis. Seattle or Los Angeles were quite out of the question unless, of course, you started from there. Nope. New York was always the starting place. We needed new railway lines so that the layout, with the help of points and a bridge across the Mississippi, could cover the continent. From then on my parents and relatives were faced with expensive requests at each birthday and Christmas time: more railway lines! extra carriages! Even at the age of nine I was afflicted with the collecting disease, which merely gets worse with age.

The model-railway idyll lasted only three summers. The weather was too damp during

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the May and September holidays for us to set up the railway layout, and we didn't get many ideal days even during the summer holidays. By the beginning of the summer of 1958–59 the crunch had already come. My parents had decided to move from Haughton Road, ironically because they were increasingly irritated by the noise from the Melbourne-to-Gippsland railway line across the road. We moved to Syndal on 17 February 1959, and I took the lines and engines and carriages out of their tin trunk only once again in my life. Yet, somehow, by summer 1958 — that last, regretful period of six weeks at Oakleigh — I had collected enough lines to cross the American continent, via Saint Louis, and send a branch line to Florida as well. We had extra accessories and lots of extra carriages, but never a bridge that crossed the Mississippi safely. (The carriages always fell off the bridge my father had built to cross the gutter.) The clockwork mechanism had failed in both engines. The rails had already begun to rust. The whole layout is still with my parents. In its tin trunk it was dragged up to Bacchus Marsh and back to East Preston, up to South Belgrave and down to Rosebud, but it's never been played with again. Maybe it's valuable — perhaps very valuable — to someone. Whatever happens to those model railways, they already have given their special pleasure, not because of what they are, but because of the way they attached themselves to my imagination.

Why did I choose America as the basis of that model railway layout? Why didn't I choose Australia, which has roughly the same shape and size as the USA?

Because there's nothing in the middle of Australia except desert. Only one line, the Transcontinental, crosses the continent. In the middle of Australia there is no Des Moines, Iowa, no Grand Rapids, Michigan, no Wichita, Kansas, where tired railway passengers can alight for a good night's rest before going on with their journeys. When I was nine or ten, Australia did not seem to hold out possibilities; it seemed empty in

the middle. I felt the same about Melbourne and its suburbs. You rode through Murrumbeena or Caulfield or Toorak in real and very suburban carriages; they were built merely to carry people; they left nothing to the imagination. The suburbs, your own home turf, were home, parents, relatives, houses and gardens, everyday practicalities, boredom. Could anything ever be better, except over there somewhere in New York or the middle of America?

It was only much later that I found out that Victoria's railway system was not built wholly according to boring ironbound practicalities. The people in charge of Melbourne's most important growth period, from 1870 to 1890, used the suburban rail system as a way of letting their imaginations go. Also, of course, they wanted to line their pockets. They bought undeveloped land way off the edge of the suburban perimeter and then bribed somebody in parliament to run a railway line through it. This procedure often worked. The Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn, for instance, was built around its railway station.

Victoria's rail system radiates out from Melbourne. During the 1880s country towns, no matter how small, were able to persuade politicians that one railway station could buy lots of votes. Lines spread across wide plains and previously unheard-of rivers and climbed into desolate mountain forests. Most of these lines were never profitable.

Therefore during the 1880s Victoria's rail system became a model railway set that used real engines and carriages. Its imaginative purpose, as opposed to its practical purpose, was to give Victorians the feeling that they could travel safely from anywhere in the colony to anywhere else. And this remained true until the late 1960s, when suddenly the railway system began to make huge losses and politicians began planning ways of shutting it down.

Railway trains are symbols of power, especially when carried along by steam engines. All that prancing and chuffing and

speed and prevailing against relentless gravity and distance! But railways are also a symbol of domesticity. If you get on a passenger train, it carries you to the place shown on the destination board. It doesn't crash, except in the most exceptional circumstances. A land filled with railways, like the USA of my atlas, is a settled land. People can move as they like. No wonder Paul Simon feels that the sound of a train in the distance reassures you that life could be better. All you have to do is travel far enough and you reach that better life. Something like this thought must have occurred to the people who built Melbourne. Suburban houses fill the spaces between railways. Why not, then, build a railway that did not stretch out directly from the city, but instead made a great loop that would link all the radiating railways?

Such a plan was made in the 1880s. It was called the Outer Circle Line, and was the most gloriously silly episode in Melbourne's long history of absurdly disastrous public projects. It would go north from near Hughesdale station (now on the Oakleigh line), and cross three other lines until it arched in from the north at Clifton Hill station (very near where I live now). It would provide jobs and guarantee the growth of suburbia. And it would, although nobody said so at the time, symbolise Melbourne's maternal quality, its desire to give total security to its citizens, enclosed as they would be by railways.

The Outer Circle Line was actually built during the 1890s, but as the last sections were opened, the first sections were about to be closed down. Graeme Davison, in his *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*



(Melbourne University Press, 1979), writes that 'The new line was built to the most generous engineering standards with wide double-track cuttings and embankments and closely spaced stations.' However, 'in its first nine months of operation [the Outer Circle Line] attracted only 5153 passengers (most of them joy-riders?)'. The Outer Circle Line was Melbourne's great model-railway line. Hour after hour, trains would trundle across deserted paddocks and past empty stations. I see on each of these stations a lonely station master standing forlornly while waiting for the passenger-of-the-week to turn up.

The Outer Circle Line might have succeeded if it had been opened ten years earlier, in 1881 instead of 1891. 1891 was the beginning of Australia's worst depression, an event that stopped Melbourne's growth for nearly thirty years and ensured Sydney's win in the battle between the Australian cities. Davison records that entire new suburbs, built during the boom of the 1880s, lay empty, their home-owners forced to give up their houses because nobody had the money to take over their mortgages. Many of the paddocks beside the Outer Circle Line were filled with buildings only during the late 1950s. By that time most of the line had been demolished. It left only odd patterns of streets through the 'garden suburbs' — patterns so irregular and striking that you can still use a street map to trace the old path of the line. I'm told that there are also plenty of remnants of the line — sleepers, rusty steel bits — hidden behind suburban fences or in unexplained little parks.

There will never be another Outer Circle Line, not even among those grandiose schemes that governments announce every few years. At one stage there was going to be a line from Huntingdale Station to Monash University (demolishing how many millions of dollars' worth of factories and houses?), and even six years ago Victoria's Cain Labor Government still talked of a line from Frankston to Dandenong. This didn't



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happen. Instead the government built a freeway covering the same distance.

Cars have made railways very unprofitable in Victoria, and now politicians and bureaucrats seem to spend their nights tossing and turning, trying to think up acceptable ways to kill the railway system. Most people are still as emotionally attached to the suburban railway system as I am, so the government cannot destroy the system at one go. But only seven per cent of Melbourne's people still travel on the system. Most Melbournites live in one outer suburb and travel to work in another outer suburb. The railways may still radiate from the centre of Melbourne, but Melbournites' lives do not.

If the railways go, the Melbourne I grew up in will have gone. Maybe it has already. When I was a boy, Oakleigh was on the edge of the suburbs. Now Oakleigh feels like an inner suburb, and the sprawl stretches another 40 kilometres to the east. Only a small proportion of Melbourne's people lives within walking distance of a railway station. And if we can no longer hear the sound of a train in the distance, can we still hope that life will be better?

There is only one remedy. One day in the future, when Melbourne lies in ruins because it no longer has its suburban railway system, and when we've won Tattsлото and can afford to retire to a large, comfortable house set on wide lawns surrounded by hedges, I will take out a rusted tin trunk from where it has been hidden for many years. In it I will find all those railway lines, carriages, engines, and accessories. They will be very rusted by then, perhaps unrecognizable. But if the wheels of the carriages and engines still turn, I will lay out the lines across the lawn.

I will not, however, return to the map of America in my old atlas. Instead I will turn to the map on page 156 of Graeme Davison's The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne. I will call the central station of my system Melbourne. Straight lines will stretch out to a station which I will name Hughesdale.

Circular lines will veer off to the north. With a combination of straight and circular lines I will bring the trains back to their destination at Clifton Hill, and finally into Melbourne. Hour after hour trains will travel through the long grass. No passenger will ever step on or off that train. But I will know where those carriages are and will keep them all moving.

At last I will recreate the Outer Circle Line. In this way I will create the real Melbourne – the marvellous Melbourne that never quite came into existence – on that lawn in the future.

– Bruce Gillespie, 1987

### **P.S. December 2021:**

Much has changed since then.

Elaine and I moved from Collingwood (a Melbourne inner suburb) to Greensborough (an outer suburb) in 2004. Before she died in 2007 at the age of 89, my mother gave away the trunk full of the rusting Hornby train set to a collectors' society somewhere in the eastern suburbs. She kept only one locomotive.

And we have even less ready cash than we did in 1987, so I will never be able to buy another model train set.

However, the Outer Circle Line dream has never disappeared. The current Labor government in Victoria, led by Premier Dan Andrews, has done more to improve Melbourne's public transport system in seven years than all previous governments have managed since 1900. The government proposes to build a new Outer Circle line linking all the current radiant lines. It will be much longer than the old line. It will cost many billions of dollars. It will not happen, because despite all the climate change predictors, all Australian governments are still addicted to cars.

But I would like to think that some time before my 120th birthday I might be able to travel on at least a small section of the new Outer Circle Line.

# GIANT SHOULDERS



## Paul Skelton – Honored in 2019 at Corflu FIAWOL



Paul and Cas Skelton

**A Brief Bio:** Paul A. Skelton was born July 1947 in Staincross, Yorkshire, West Riding.

Paul “Skel” Skelton has been active in science fiction fandom since the late 1960s but has been almost exclusively involved in publishing and writing for science fiction

fanzines. He has had very occasional forays into convention running and helped to put on Mancon V in 1976.

He has been particularly recognized for the quality of his letters of comment, submitted to many fanzines over more than fifty years in fandom. He

was recognized with the Harry Warner Junior Memorial Award for Best Letterhack (a FAAn Award) for three consecutive years from 2015 to 2017 and again in 2019.

Fanzines edited or co-edited by Paul Skelton include

- *1220*
- *All New or Reprint*
- *Alyson Wonderland*
- *Desert Island Eric*
- *Don't Go Columbus*
- *You'll Fall Off The Crunchy Bit*
- *Ego Sextarius*
- *The Fannish Four Go to the Seaside*
- *Hell*
- *Inferno*
- *King Con*
- *Skel's a Poppin*
- *Small Friendly Dog (SFD)*
- *The Zine That Has No Name.*



### Interlude: The FAAn Award in the Age of Donald Trump

In 2019, Corflu Chairman Michael Dobson decided to expand the FAAn Awards into something resembling a Soviet May Day parade, with a total of 28 awards given in a widely expanded set of categories. Paul Skelton, who, with his wife Catherine “Cas” Skelton, pointedly chose to visit Susan Glicksohn in Toronto rather than attend the convention, ended up winning two of these, the Best Letterhack Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award.

When the expanded list of award categories was revealed, the small cabal of cranky malcontents working on the Lifetime Achievement Award decided to scrap their previous short list and added more than a dozen new possible candidates. We spent some time arguing furiously over the minimum number of decades which a candidate had to have been active in fandom in order to receive consideration and added several more people that had become active in the 1970s.

Eventually, we worked back to a final list of three candidates, two primarily known for graphic art and one known primarily for correspondence and letters of comment. As there had never been anyone recognized primarily for the act of reading and responding to fanzines, Skel finally emerged as our favorite candidate. On the other hand, we also agreed that more artists ought to be recognized and that’s still true today.

### Second Interlude: A Letter from Walter A. Willis to

Paul Skelton, October 6th, 1984

“I read your old fanzine.

“I have considered sending you a postcard. I might even have done so if I’d had a copy of the one I sent to Vince showing me pointing out to sea, talking to an attentive young bicycle, but I think I would have written some sort of letter as well if only because after making excuses for myself there would not have been enough room to tell you how enormously impressed I was by your

piece about ‘Through Paris in a Sports Car.’ I have been thinking about it ever since the second time I read it and I have come to the conclusion, measured and deliberate, that it is one of the finest things that I have ever read. And I don’t mean just fannish thing, though it is indeed the apotheosis of fannish writing. On any level, human or literary, it ranks in my mind with the best there is. No. don’t argue, my mind is made up.”

(Having received this spontaneous expression of admiration, and understandably recalling it quite vividly, Skel told me that he could not imagine choosing anything else when I approached him about a contribution to *Jiant Shoulders*.)

## Through Paris in a Sports Car

By Skel

From HOLIER THAN THOU #18 in January 1984

It was Gerald Lawrence who re-introduced me to Marianne Faithful. I was not optimistic. Gerald, however, was terribly enthusiastic, so it seemed best to humour him. I girded my mental loins and prepared myself for a couple of wasted hours listening to the two LPs Gerald had brought round for taping. Gerald does not have any record-playing equipment but, with a typically fannish disregard for such minor technical difficulties, does not let this happenstance prevent him from buying LPs. He has friends who do have such equipment and they are only too pleased to tape things for him, often taking a copy for themselves as a sort of quid-pro-quo. This time, though, I doubted if the quo would be worth a cent, let alone the "quid" required to buy a decent blank tape.

My recollections of Marianne Faithful were fairly negative. I remembered her from the sixties, my impression being of a no-talent nobody who had strutted her brief hour in the spotlight and then returned, via drugs and Mick Jagger, to the oblivion she merited. She had been gang-banged by The Biz. The system had chewed her up and spat her out. She appears, however, to have been made of much sterner stuff. She chewed back.

The LPs Gerald had brought, at the time her latest albums, were "Broken English" and "Dangerous Acquaintances". Despite my prejudices I was impressed. She has a voice like a garbage-disposal and it mangled me, prejudices and all. I survived, but my prejudices didn't, at least not intact. The pictures on the album covers supported the image I'd started with - a slag. Someone you wouldn't touch with a bargepole (good grief, you don't know where she's been). Well, yes, she would appear to have lived neither wisely nor well, but then we already knew this. The years do not appear to have been

kind to her, and yet... she has lived. Life has moulded her, and her life is mirrored in her voice and in her songs.

I have neither the specialised knowledge nor the vocabulary to discuss the music on these albums. Nor do I particularly wish to. It works. It supports the lyrics. It is never boring. Where it needs to be "driving", it drives. It does its job. It enhances the lyrics without distracting from them and is sufficiently catchy to get you humming bits of it, bringing the lyrics back to mind once more. Like I said, it works, but you do keep coming back to the lyrics. It is the lyrics which make the powerful statements on these albums. The lyrics delivered by a voice which rapes your soul.

Oddly enough, I don't particularly want to discuss the songs either. Not here and not now. It's just that listening to these songs, and particularly to "The Ballad of Lucy Jordan", has set my mind to wandering through landscapes of its own, and I must follow it, down well-worn pathways of my past. Odd that someone who sings with a voice like a barbed-wire turd should make me wax poetic.

"The Ballad of Lucy Jordan", from the "Broken English" album, is about many things. I have the feeling, whenever I listen to it, that this song has singled me out and is speaking personally to only me, and my reactions to it depend not only upon the song itself but also upon the background that I bring to my appreciation of it. They depend upon, whilst at the same time forming a part of, the unique interface area between the song and myself. To me the song is about the crises of middle-age, of the re-appraisal and re-evaluation of one's life and achievements. It is about the dreams and hopes of our youth, about coming to terms with reduced expectations, with realizing that one's course is already set. It's

about accepting one's mortality by the rejection of the never-never-land in which one's unfulfilled ambitions lie like a pot of gold at the end of life's rainbow.

“At the age of thirty-seven  
She realized she'd never ride  
Through Paris, in a sportscar,  
With the warm wind in her hair.”

It's such a deceptively simple little lyric, yet every time I hit it I get trapped in the quicksand of my own vague dreams. In a way it's a bit like “Tron”. One minute I'm on the outside, listening to the song, and the next I'm inside, living it... wondering where it all went. What happened to all those vague dreams and hopes which sat like a bowl of brightly polished apples on the sideboard of my future? Like she says in “Truth, Bitter Truth” on the “Dangerous Acquaintances” album:

“Where did it go, my youth?  
Where did it all fade away to?  
Who was it told the truth,  
The bitter truth,  
The truth we didn't want to know?”

In my own case, I suppose that just about everybody was a sayer of bitter sooths, not that I ever paid any mind. I don't remember too much about my own youthful expectations, over and above the fact that they were fairly optimistic. For those of us who sprouted through the fifties and ripened during the sixties, optimism was the norm. I wasn't aware at the time that I was basically an under-achiever. The future, in a reasonable degree of rosiness, would take care of itself. I'd be satisfied just to get by, providing I didn't have to actually work at it. “Getting by” translated as having plenty of money, a nice lifestyle involving being virtually my own boss, lots of free time, travel all over the globe, all the material wants I might reasonably require (a nice house, a better-than-average car, etc. Nothing too ostentatious). Later on, as I grew older, I added a stunningly attractive nymphomaniac wife with a terrific personality. The problem was that “getting by” at this level, without working at it, is a

bit tricky - unless you happen to be Prince Charles. And even he works at it. Still, I always assumed that I'd make it to the top and earn the respect, the admiration even, of my colleagues in whatever field I happened to settle upon. Actually, truth to tell, I suppose it was a little more specific than that.

As a child, a lot of my time was spent at school. I never actually did much while I was there, but I was there...most of the time anyway. At school you find yourself in a very special hierarchy. Most of the time very low down in the hierarchy, but one climbs inexorably upwards with the passing of the years and so it seemed to me only natural to assume that this process would continue almost indefinitely until one got to the top. Kindergarten - Primary School - Secondary School (first years, second years, middle school, upper school, sixth form) - University - Teacher Training College - Teacher - Senior Master - Head of Department - Assistant Head - Headmaster - ...God. That basically was the hierarchy of the environment I found myself in and therefore this was the direction and progression I assumed my career would follow. One of my careers, anyway. There was more than one.

(In a way, isn't the s.f. concept of parallel universes stemming from decision points in history simply another example of wish-fulfillment? You make the decisions and march off down your ever narrowing road, but you haven't really cut off all those other options. They're still there somewhere. Does the popularity of the “parallel universe” concept really just stem from the desire to avoid responsibility for the results of one's actions, one's decisions? I don't know, but I hate making decisions and have always been a sucker for stories like the “paratime” series.)

Another one of my vaguely imagined, futures stemmed from another environment in which I spent a lot of my time - science fiction. I was always reading s.f. It was important to me and, again, what could have been more natural than to assume it

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would become even more so? This career prospect was far more enticing than going into teaching, as there were far fewer steps or stages to go through before one obtained the pinnacle of one's profession; s.f. reader - s.f. writer - Hugo-winning s.f. writer - Best-selling Hugo-winning s.f. writer - God - Heinlein. For an idle, good-for-nothing like me, this speedier path to the top was a far more attractive proposition, for, again, I didn't actually want to work at all.

Why should I? After all, I'd no real desire to write, no burning ambition, no driving need. I just wanted to "have written." The fawning adulation of my peers (Not of course, that I'd actually have any peers, but I wouldn't want to hurt their feelings) would have been perfectly satisfactory. I'd have been quite happy to write all of my stunningly successful best-sellers in my sleep. In fact, this would have been downright preferable as it would have left me free to eat more lotus (notice how the sports car motif is rewoven into the piece there. Don't believe it when they tell you that my articles aren't carefully structured).

I never expected to make it right to the top, at least not as laid out in the progression laid out above. Mind you, when Heinlein came to shuffle off this mortal coil, I didn't expect people to take too long to realise who his natural successor would be (...and so

young, too!). It never occurred to me that Heinlein would die by installments, his brain several novels ahead of his body. Even with his latest opus, *Friday*, which he apparently wrote to prove he could still write stories like he used to, he displays further evidence of his decaying mental faculties. He absent-mindedly left out the story. However, back in my salad days, all this was unthinkable as nuclear war actually breaking out, or Ronald Reagan becoming President of the U.S.A. The future, my future, still beckoned from behind an s.f. writer's typewriter.

The best part about this vague dream was that it was fairly open-ended. The one in which I took the teaching profession by storm was shot down in flames when my lack of scholastic effort resulted in grades so abysmal as to convince all and sundry, even me, that my best prospects lay in other directions. Any other direction. My competence was called into question. "Why," they said, "if he was running a lavatory, he'd end up with less shit than he started with." I could sense that they lacked confidence in me. However, it was always possible that one day a latent talent would develop. One day I would emerge from my chrysalis and ~~start eating cabbage leaves~~ astound the world. I would show them! Of course, to keep this dream alive it was essential that I never do anything quite so silly as to try writing.

I'm not quite sure exactly when I realized that this devoutly-wished-consummation was also a non-starter, but I suspect it came about as a gradually accumulating awareness based upon my reading the potted biographies of the authors that are found inside the dust-jackets or on the lead-in pages.

Until then I'd never really thought about how unsuited I'd be for winning all those Hugos and Nebulas year after year. Foolishly I'd left school and gone straight to work in an office for a few years, then gone to work in another for a few more. Why, I couldn't even drive a car, let alone a JCB....and the last time I'd drilled for oil in



the Amazon rain-forest was never. My helicopter-piloting experience was sadly non-existent and I'd never been involved in deep-sea salvage work on a sunken aircraft-carrier. Strangely, selling encyclopaedias in Ohio or life insurance in Afghanistan was also missing from my resume and not once had I mucked out the elephants for one of the Ringling brothers. Any blurb writer worth his salt could have told you at a glance that this meant there was simply nothing for me when it came to becoming a writer of science fiction. It appeared to be compulsory for every s.f. author to have at least a dozen exotic Jobs on his brag sheet, so that "writing s.f." was usually the dullest, squarest entry.

Apparently the kind of guy who went on to become an s.f. author was also the kind who used to take that sage old advice, "Write about what you know, kid", to heart in a rather unique way. Rather than limit themselves to what they knew, they attempted to know everything. Only after repeated and unsuccessful attempts to write the Great American Novel about one lone life insurance salesman's battle to salvage an aircraft-carrier from below the murky, elephant-infested waters of the mighty Amazon, did they give it up and turn to writing science fiction.

I often wondered about all these weird Jobs that filled out the s.f.-writers' biographies. I mean, which was "cause" and which was "effect"? I'd love to have been a fly on the wall of that employment bureau...

"Got a great one here, buddy - 'Camel Sexer' for the French Foreign Legion. Ever sold to 'Astounding'?"

"Er - no."

"Tough. Sorry, but right here under 'qualifications required' it says - 'Degree in Animal Husbandry and four sales to Campbell'. Never mind, how about this one - 'Brain Surgeon - no experience necessary, must have at least one Hugo'?"

"Er - no."

"Gee, that's too bad. Maybe they'd accept a Nebula. One qualification is pretty much like another these days. No Nebula, uh? How about this one then? 'Nuclear Physicist - must be able to do simple addition and subtraction...'"

"That'll do! I can do that!"

"...oh, oh, sorry, they want a Hugo too. Tell you what, why don't you go along and see them about this anyway? I'm pretty sure they'll accept a losing nominee...."

\*\*\*\*\*

So, I've given up saving space on my mantelpiece for all those rocketships. I'll never be a chapter in a history book. I haven't done much of anything with my life. I even flunked the material rewards. Money is tight. My pleasures are, of necessity, inexpensive. (I cannot help but give a wry smile when pompous asses, who lack the imagination to envisage people in circumstances significantly different from their own, say that TAFF is obsolete, basing their assertion on the premise that "Anyone can afford to visit the States if they really want to". Hah!!!)

Double hah! As I write this I don't even have a secure Job (hopefully about to change), never mind one in which I am my own boss. I even owe some rent-arrears on my somewhat dilapidated council house. As for my "better-than average" car, I couldn't even afford to run an old banger. I have a push-bike. Nope, it does not take a Sherlock Holmes to discern that I haven't attained the lifestyle I naively dreamed of...but do I feel sorry for myself?

Too fucking true, squire!

Well, I must admit that there are moments when I'd cheerfully settle for another probability-line but, what the hell, there's too many bleedin' sportscars in Paris anyway.

At least I got the good-looking nympho.

--Skel



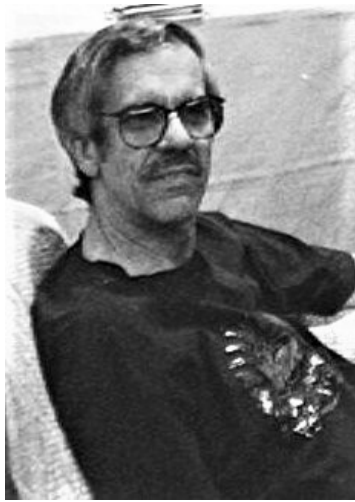
## Robert Lichtman – Honored in 2020 at Corflu Heatwave

**A Brief Bio:** Robert Alexander Lichtman was born August 27th, 1942 in Cleveland, Ohio. Died July 6th, 2022 in Oakland, California.

Active from roughly 1958, Robert Lichtman was a lifelong fanzine enthusiast. Like Art Widner, Robert had two distinct careers in fandom, separated by a little more than a decade spent working and caring for a family. But it was hardly correct to say that he retreated into mundane life. Members of The Farm, a legendary cooperative community, Robert and his first wife lived by principles that would have been right at home in a New Wave sf novel.

As a young fan, he was a member of the Young Science Fiction Reading Group, the N3F and the LASFS, where he was a cast member in their film *The Musquite Kid Rides Again*. (see “The Ballad of Killer Kemp,” elsewhere in this volume.

When he returned to fan activity in the early 1980s, Robert made it a point to forge connections between the fans who had been his correspondents and peers in the 1960s, and those who were active 25 years later. Every issue of his fanzine *Trap Door* featured a letter from a fan



not generally heard of in fanzine circles for 20 years or more, and many of these old and tired fen received an unexpected wave of new fanzines after writing to TD.

Robert also edited or co-edited several annual collections of fan-writing, including *Fanthology 1989, 1992, 1993* and *1994*. He edited *Ah, Sweet Laney!*, a massive collection of work by Francis Towner Laney, published at Corflu Quire. He also wrote *The Amateur Press Association in Science Fiction Fandom* for the N3F in 1962.

*Trap Door* is one of the most-honored fanzines of the Corflu era. Between 2000 and 2015, it won the FAAn Award for Best Fanzine or Best Single Issue 6 times. It was also nominated for the Hugo

Award for Best Fanzine in 1987 and 1992.

He received the most FAAn Award votes across all categories on three different occasions, which led to his recognition as “Fan Face #1.” As this was in some regard an award which Forry Ackerman had received in 1953 from the committee of Philcon II, Robert took an outsized degree of pleasure in winning it.

Robert was also one of the great correspondents of fandom, writing dozens of letters of comment every year. His letters were almost always sympathetic; he tried to judge fanzines by the editor’s goals, however questionable. On the other hand, his knowledge of fan history was formidable and he could always be counted on to correct errors in your story. His efforts were recognized with the Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Letterhack eight times between 2001 and 2018.

He was a long-serving member of numerous APAs and served as an officer or editor for several of them. A partial list would include The Cult, FAPA, Lilapa, N’APA, OMPA and SAPS.

In 1989, Robert won the Transatlantic Fan Fund

Robert Lichtman

and attended Contrivance on the island of Jersey.

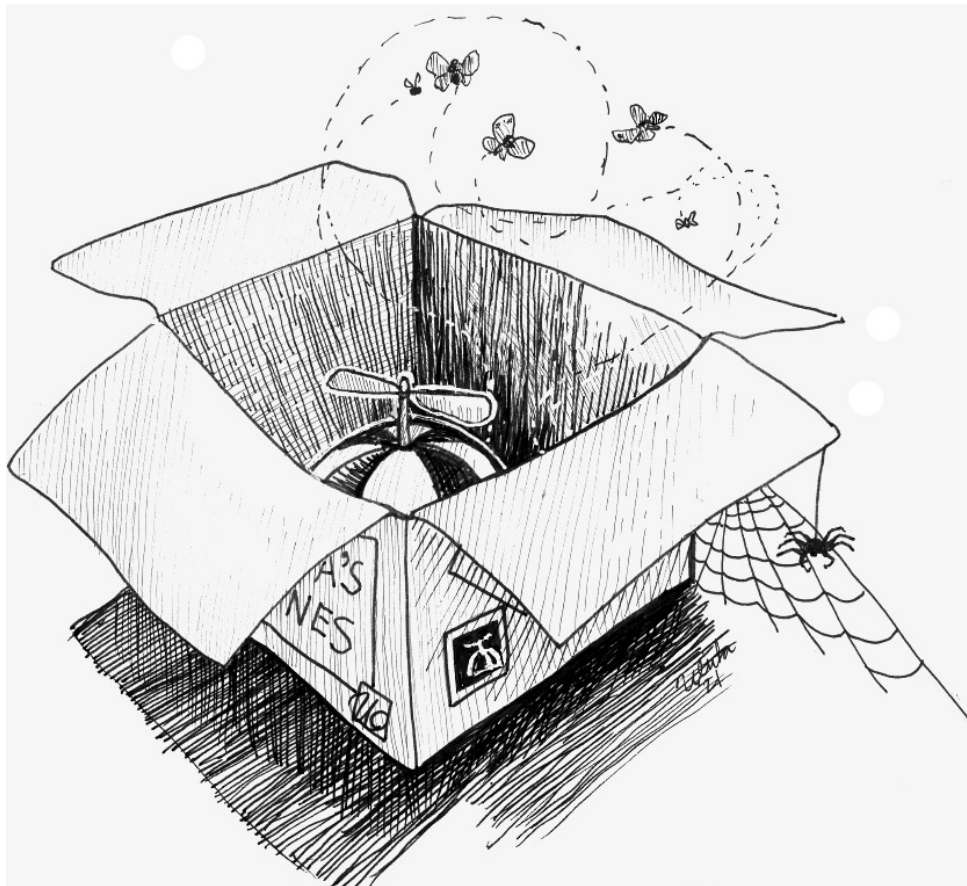
Fanzines edited or co-edited by Robert include:

- **100% Whole Wheat**
- **Acculturations**
- **Amnesia**
- **The Bem & I**
- **The Best of Frap**
- **“Burp” Said the Turtle**
- **Door Knob**
- **Frap**
- **Fustian**
- **Here There Be Saps**
- **Innuendo**
- **Ishbah**
- **King Biscuit Time**
- **Ktp**
- **Night-Dreams and Daymares**
- **Northern Californian**
- **Not Ready for Prime Time Fapazine**

- **Outworlds**
- **Psi-Phi**
- **Quel Dommage**
- **Some of the Best from Quandry**
- **TAFF-Door**
- **Trap Door**
- **Two Heads are Better Than One**
- **Watling Street**
- **Zounds.**

When this project was coalescing in early 2022, Robert was kind enough to send me a selection of five different pieces that he was willing to see collected here. Naturally, the problem was in choosing one of them. And so, I have cheated by including both a story from

his era working to support The Farm published by Pat Charnock in **Raucous Caucus** and part of a memoir on music originally published in his FAPA fanzine **King Biscuit Time**. Given that legendary disc jockey Art LaBoe, whom Robert mentions here, has only just passed away at the age of 97, it seemed fitting to remember him as well. If you are interested in reading the conclusion, contact me and I will forward the original file.



## The Big Dummy Boondoogle

By Robert Lichtman

From *Raucous Caucus #1, 2012*

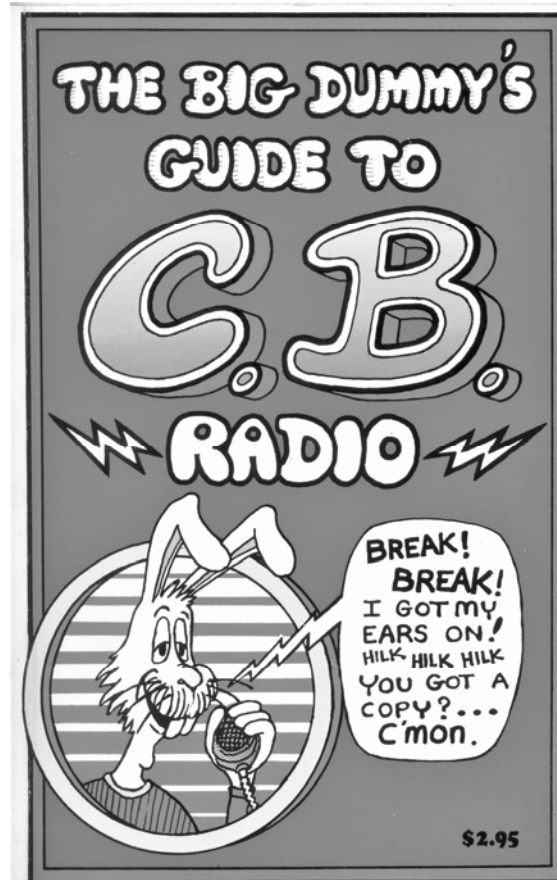
Although “citizens’ band” (CB) radio began in the United States in 1945, it initially saw limited use and was mostly the province of radio hobbyists for many years. We on the Farm had begun using CB around 1973 as a means of quick communication between our emergency crews. Its short range was ideal for the purpose. We could talk back and forth with little danger of impinging on other area users, and we picked a couple channels that appeared to have little or no traffic. That was the same year a nationally imposed 55 mile-per-hour speed limit (to save fuel during the first “oil crisis”) led to CB’s wider use, at first primarily by long-haul truckers to inform each other about speed traps and gas stations with ample supplies of fuel. Then, thanks to popular media coverage of the truckers (who struck in 1974 over the low speed limit) it wasn’t long before CB radio caught on with the general public and CB radios became available inexpensively at numerous retail outlets.

In order to educate all these new users, a handful of instruction manuals were quickly published. What nearly all of them had in common was a deadly dull approach to the subject. Surveying these books, a group of our radio technicians thought we could do better. They got together with some of our artists and cartoonists and hit upon the idea of creating a humorous and yet still completely instructive CB book in hopes of cashing in on the fad. We at the Book Publishing Company, where I was working at the time, gave them the green light, and *The Big Dummy’s Guide to CB Radio*, with a cartoon rabbit speaking CB jargon into a mike on the brightly colored front cover, was the result early in 1976.

The CB-using public agreed with our approach. Before long *The Big Dummy’s Guide* became our biggest seller ever, with copies flying off the presses by the mega-

thousands into the hundreds of CB radio shops that sprang up in the salad years of the 1976/77 CB radio craze. We were ecstatic at the (for us) big money that was pouring into the Book Publishing Company’s coffers, much of which was passed on to the Farm’s money managers. It couldn’t have been more timely, since the overall Farm’s finances were in dire straits, especially the actual farming operation, which had racked up thousands in debt due to over-optimistic and inept management.

However, due to overreaching and a stroke of bad luck that originated from outside and was completely out of our control, eventually a major scandal took place around that book—what you might call the



Deal That Went Sour—that nearly pushed us into bankruptcy.

The Book Publishing Company's most aggressive sales person, Jerry, was constantly trying to push the envelope on sales of the book. At one point he spent hours on the phone every day for weeks trying to land big deals with major chains for mass quantities of the *Big Dummy's Guide*. "Good luck with that!" we all thought somewhat cynically. He struck out time after time, but was unwilling (or unable) to get discouraged and give up the effort. Then one day he leaped up from his crowded corner desk, a big smile on his bearded face, and announced to everyone, "I've just sold 100,000 copies of the CB book to K-Mart!"

Jaws dropped, eyes bugged out—this was more copies in one sale than of all our book titles combined, ever, at the time. To celebrate, joints materialized out of nowhere, were lit, and word quickly went out around the Farm about what a fabulous thing had just happened. This appeared to many to be a sign that some of what Farm guru Stephen Gaskin loved to refer to as "Beatles-type money" was finally going to come our way.

We would not print any of these books on the Farm. Our modest facilities weren't up to it. As we'd been doing with the *Big Dummy's Guide* since it exploded into mass popularity, we would have them printed over in Kingsport, Tennessee, and shipped from there directly to the 700 K-Mart stores spread all over the U.S. and in Canada. Each store was to receive 150 copies. The remote presses rolled, the books hit all the stores, and about a month later a huge check arrived in the mail, which we promptly deposited and—things being how they were on the Farm—promptly spent.

And then something happened out in the Real World not long after we got that check. Having heard loud and clear from the public that the 23 existing channels in the citizens band radio spectrum weren't enough to handle the traffic at the height of the craze,

the Federal Communications Commission, the agency responsible for assigning and policing all frequencies on the radio spectrum, opened up 17 new channels for CB.

Suddenly, our books were obsolete. And very soon we learned that Jerry had made a huge mistake in his arrangements with K-Mart. In the tradition of the book publishing industry, all books are returnable if not sold—and he had not strayed from that tradition. Before long we were overwhelmed with carton after carton of the *Big Dummy's Guide* from K-Marts near and far. Ultimately we received back nearly 95,000 copies.

With each day's new batch of returns, our mood darkened—and not just because of the sheer quantities. Each store had opened at least one of the two cartons, most had opened both, and put them on display—and nearly every copy had a K-Mart price sticker on the front cover. To resell them these stickers would have to be removed, but that was easier said than done. They didn't just peel off, and our attempts to use a knife edge or a razor blade to scrape them off resulted in the part of the book cover under the label to separate and leave an unsightly white spot.

Collectively furious at Jerry for having caused this situation, we assigned him to come up with a way to remove the labels that would work. I recall suggesting that perhaps heat would soften the adhesive on the labels and make their removal easier. Jerry ran with that, and the next day he appeared at the Book Publishing Company with an electric steam iron. Plugging it in, warming it up, and with the steam down way down, he applied the tip of the iron to one of the labels and slowly moved it around. In a matter of seconds, he confidently put the edge of a fingernail to the edge of the label, pushed it under the edge, and—the label came off, leaving no mark. Cheers and sighs of relief all around!

There was no way everyday Book Publishing Company staff could deal with all those

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books. Jerry and I got assigned to getting together a work crew. We bought a dozen irons and set up shop in a large warehouse in nearby Columbia where our “Farm Hands” temporary work agency had its office and where we’d moved the returned books so they wouldn’t overwhelm every inch of space in our building on the Farm. Every morning we drove a crew to town, warmed up the irons, and put them to work. Eventually all the labels were removed and the boxes repacked.

Meanwhile, a new edition of the book was being created, *The Big Dummy’s Guide to 40-Channel CB Radio*. The head of the Book Publishing Company went back to K-Mart and made it clear that we could never repay the money we owed them for all the returns. They agreed to take enough copies of the new edition to cover the debt on a non-returnable basis, and our collective asses were saved. Many of the “ordinary people” on the Farm actually never knew about any of this.

What to do with the repaired books was our next concern. In the time-honored tradition of American businesses dumping merchandise on other countries that had

become unsaleable here, we learned that the CB craze had just hit Australia. Because *The Big Dummy’s Guide* had become one of a small number of CB books to achieve mass popularity, a major electronics wholesaler there was overjoyed at the opportunity to take all of our books at twenty-five cents apiece. It had cost us about five cents more than that to print them in the first place, but we were happy to get rid of them in one massive sale.

They would be shipped by sea, and the nearest port was in New Orleans. From there they would cross the Gulf of Mexico, go through the Panama Canal, and then across the Pacific. As the shipping manager, it fell upon me to prepare the paperwork and get the books to the docks. I got a large one-way rental truck, had a crew load up the books, and set out not so bright and early one morning headed south. My firstborn son Ben, who was a little over six years old at the time, was my traveling companion, and was very excited to be making such a long journey with his dad.

Because of our late start and the need to drive at 55 miles per hour—that being the national maximum speed limit at the time—



we only got as far as Birmingham, Alabama, that first day. Checking into a cheap motel after eating inexpensively at a not-so-great Chinese restaurant, we stayed up late unwinding from the day's journey. Driving a large truck takes more out of you than a car. Late in the evening Ben experienced an epiphany of sorts. He finally got to see an episode of a TV show that was legendary to him because he'd heard grown-ups discussing it for months but never had the opportunity himself because it came on so late. That was "Mary Hartman Mary Hartman," of course, it being one of the Farm's favorite TV shows (the other was "Saturday Night Live," still with its original cast at that time). He loved it. (For those of you who may not be familiar with "MHMH," please see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Hartman\\_Mary\\_Hartman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Hartman_Mary_Hartman) for details on the show's origins and basic plotlines. And to see an episode that creator Norman Lear thinks "may contain the best performance in the history of television," check out... [ed: *youtube link removed as Sony Pictures has blocked the video*]. My own view is that while good, this isn't a "typical" show; but there are a few others available (whole shows and clips) also available on YouTube. Of course, you may find these dated and/or uninteresting—perhaps a case of "you had to be there.")

Because the motel was noisy, we were up and hit the road early the following morning. We made decent time getting to New Orleans and using the map we'd been given by the shipping company found the proper place on the vast docks. As a gang of burly stevedores unloaded the books onto pallets, Ben and I spotted a truck dispensing a New Orleans favorite, red beans and rice. I got us each a large steaming bowl and we consumed them rapidly, not having had much in the way of breakfast back in Birmingham. They tasted great, living up completely to their fabled reputation. With little bits of pork in them, they weren't quite vegetarian but I ate them with relish and Ben apparently didn't notice because he didn't comment. We were vegans at the

time, and that may have been his first taste of pork.

We turned in the empty truck at the rental yard, not far from the docks and conveniently located just a few blocks from the interstate highway that ran through New Orleans. I broke out a two-channel CB walkie-talkie that I'd brought with me—I'd traded some copies of the Big Dummy's Guide for it earlier in the year at a CB shop in Cleveland—and began calling for rides as we neared one of the entrances. That didn't get us any results, but once there we soon got picked up by an obvious hippie in a beat-up old pickup truck.

"I'm only going as far as Slidell," he told us after I said where we were heading, "but I'll leave you off where you can for sure get a ride up I-59." We would have liked a longer ride, but at least that got us out of New Orleans, and we gladly climbed up into the cab.

After a couple miles he asked if we minded if he smoked. Although I hadn't been around intense tobacco smoke for years—and Ben never had—I nodded affirmatively. And then was totally surprised and pleased when he pulled a large joint out of his shirt pocket and fired it up. "I hope you like it," he said with a smile as he passed it my way.

It was smooth and flavorful. "No complaints!" I told him we were headed back to the Farm after a few puffs. That got him excited. He'd heard of the place but had never met anyone who lived there, and this gave us plenty to talk about until we reached Slidell and he dropped us off at an entrance ramp he said was the best one for getting a quick ride.

He was right. We were there no more than fifteen minutes when a large van pulled up. The side door opened and a wave of thick incense smoke wafted out. Inside were maybe half a dozen shaved-headed, saffron-robe-wearing Hari Krishna devotees. Never having lived anywhere but the Farm, Ben was totally mindblown at their appearance. And I was pretty surprised, too. They said they could take us a long way up I-59, so we

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hopped in and settled down on some cushions strewn around the back of the van.

“You know of us?” one of them asked. I told them that I used to see their people when I lived in San Francisco back in the ‘60s. “Good,” another one said, “then you know about Krishna consciousness and all that.” I was still feeling the effects of the joint, so I smiled broadly and joined them in one round of their mantra. And then another. Ben caught on and joined the chanting, too.

After a few miles they said they were about to make lunch and did we want to eat with them. Our rice and beans had worn off, so we were happy to accept. They had a propane hotplate to warm their food, and before long fed us some tasty dal spread on chapatis and rolled up. After many miles passed in relative silence after eating, one of them told us they were going to turn off soon to go to their ashram about thirty miles off the interstate. Did we want to come with them to see the place and perhaps spend the night?

A Hari Krishna ashram in Mississippi! I marveled. It might have been interesting, but I wanted to get home so I graciously thanked them for the ride and for their hospitality, and joined them (as did Ben) in another round of their mantra.

Their exit was truly in the middle of nowhere. There were no businesses, not even any houses nearby, so there wasn’t going to be any rides available there. We walked up the on-ramp and stood just past it on the edge of the highway. While Ben held out his thumb, I broke out the walkie-talkie again and began asking for rides.

It didn’t look good. Time passed, and then more time. It was late afternoon when finally a middle-aged man wearing a suit and driving a big American car pulled over and picked us up. He was a salesman on his way home to Meridian and glad for the company. We told him about the Farm, and

it turned out that like the Hare Krishnas he’d heard of it and was interested to know firsthand from a resident about what it was like living there.

By the time we reached Meridian it was beginning to get dark. It didn’t look good for getting home that day, and I didn’t have enough money with me for another night in a motel and the possibility of having to take a bus the next morning. Our salesman friend must have picked up on my vibes, because he invited us to stay at his apartment—he was single and lived alone, he said, so it would be no imposition—and he would find out when the next bus headed towards Nashville left in the morning and would take us to the terminal.

That turned out to be very early: around 4:30 the next morning. He fed us dinner and offered us his couch and an easy chair on which to get some sleep before turning in himself. In the dark of the early morning he fed us breakfast and got us to the Greyhound station in plenty of time. He was a true Good Samaritan.

The rest of the trip was pretty uneventful. We switched buses in Birmingham for one that went directly and with a minimum of stops all the way to Nashville. Once there we made our way to a big rented house west of downtown and in the shadow of the large, verdant Vanderbilt University campus. A few Farm families who worked at full-time jobs in Nashville lived there. Together with a rotating crew of people with short-term jobs, they shuttled back and forth in a large van from Nashville to spend weekends on the Farm. Because we had turned up on a Friday afternoon, we didn’t have to wait long until we caught a ride with them.

There was a joint passed around once we got on the interstate, but it wasn’t as good as the one the day before. It didn’t matter. We were happy to be going home—mission accomplished!

## Excerpt, *King Biscuit Time* #54, May 2009

I fell off the record-buying bandwagon after graduating from high school in 1960 and beginning college at UCLA. The reason was partly economic— by then I was an active fan and wanted to devote what little money I had to publishing fanzines. But also the music on the radio (still the primary way I heard new songs) had gotten less interesting to me, and I didn't need to own copies of any of it.

Because my mother listened to the radio constantly as she went about her household chores, odd bits of music were a part of my life from a very early age. She had two main interests. One was her morning soap operas (“My True Story” and “Whispering Streets”), the musical themes from which used to play in my head at unwelcome moments. The other was pop music stations, where she picked up the lyrics of various songs and almost literally went through the house whistling while she worked. Although her capella choices ranged widely among the pop tunes of the day, she had a particularly abiding affection for “novelty” tunes. For instance, even before I was out of diapers I was bombarded with her spirited rendition of “Mairsy Doats.” And many years later she might suddenly burst forth with choruses of “Flying Purple People Eater.” Yes, she was indeed a strange lady.

My memory skips ahead to 1949, when I was seven and Gene Autry's original version of “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” became a huge hit. Years later, when I gained some taste and a dollop of attitude, I would change the station just to avoid it. And I believe it was only shortly afterwards that “the singing rage, Miss Patti Page” had her own monster single with “Tennessee Waltz,” which assaulted my ears with its syrupy romanticism. My mother, on the other hand, put it on her personal hit parade and sang it while dusting the many knick-knacks around the house.

When I was nine or ten, I was given a small single-disc record player and a modest stack

of children's story records. The only one I remember is “The Teddy Bears' Picnic.” It's still one of my guilty pleasures. But here we fast-forward a couple-three years to the first “grown-up” record I ever bought, a 78 of Johnny Ray's “Hernando's Hideaway.” For some reason it appealed to me in a big way. Perhaps it was the hint of sin in lyrics such as, “I know a dark secluded place, a place where no one knows your face,” since by this time I was approaching my early teens and beginning to realize that the life of suburban L.A. was not what I wanted for my future.

I didn't buy any more records for a few years. By then both rock 'n' roll and rhythm & blues had come to pop radio, and I discovered a couple of afternoon L.A. disc jockeys who played music that really captured my imagination and whose shows began around the time I arrived home from school. Hunter Hancock's show came on first and focused on what a few years earlier would have been called “race music.” Although Hunter was white, all the music he played was by black performers. Some of it was pretty obscure and never broke out into the mainstream.

His show was followed by Art Laboe's, whose introductory theme was Les Paul's instrumental, “Walking and Whistling Blues” (the flip side of the more famous “How High the Moon”). Laboe was also white and he played a mix of R&R and R&B. His and Hancock's playlists sometimes overlapped, and where they diverged was in the direction of black music (Hancock) and white music (Laboe). An additional appeal for me was that he broadcast from a teen hang-out, Scrivner's Drive-In, and walked around as he took dedications from people eating and socializing in their cars. At fourteen or so, I was definitely too young for this scene, but it was where I wanted to be as soon as possible and it fascinated me to hear stuff like “I wanna dedicate ‘Happy Happy Birthday, Baby’ to my sweetheart Maggie!”



## GIANT SHOULDERS

I had a paper route that brought in some money, and eventually I just had to have some of this music for myself. Along the way I'd moved up to a semi-portable record player with an actual newfangled changer, and I couldn't wait to use it.

But first I had to have some records. This led a symbiotic relationship with a middle-aged guy who ran a hole-in-the-wall record store a five-minute bike ride away. He was always mouthing a stinky cigar when I came in waving copies of the latest KRLA Top Thirty. ("Top" inflation hadn't yet struck—in a few years it would be the Top Forty.) Most records he either had in stock or could get within a week, but when it came to some of the truly obscure stuff Hunter Hancock played it was a different story. Apparently those were on record labels that didn't submit listings to the giant looseleaf reference book he kept on his counter, and I'd be out of luck. Even so, within a short time my record changer was working overtime.

Around then I was also traveling by Los Angeles's user-unfriendly bus system to Hollywood every Saturday to take judo classes. Afterwards I would walk around the neighborhood, and one afternoon I went a little further than usual to Wallach's Music City, which advertised on radio and boasted of its huge selection. I thought that maybe I'd found a source for some of those obscure tunes Hunter Hancock played, but alas they were beyond their reach as well.

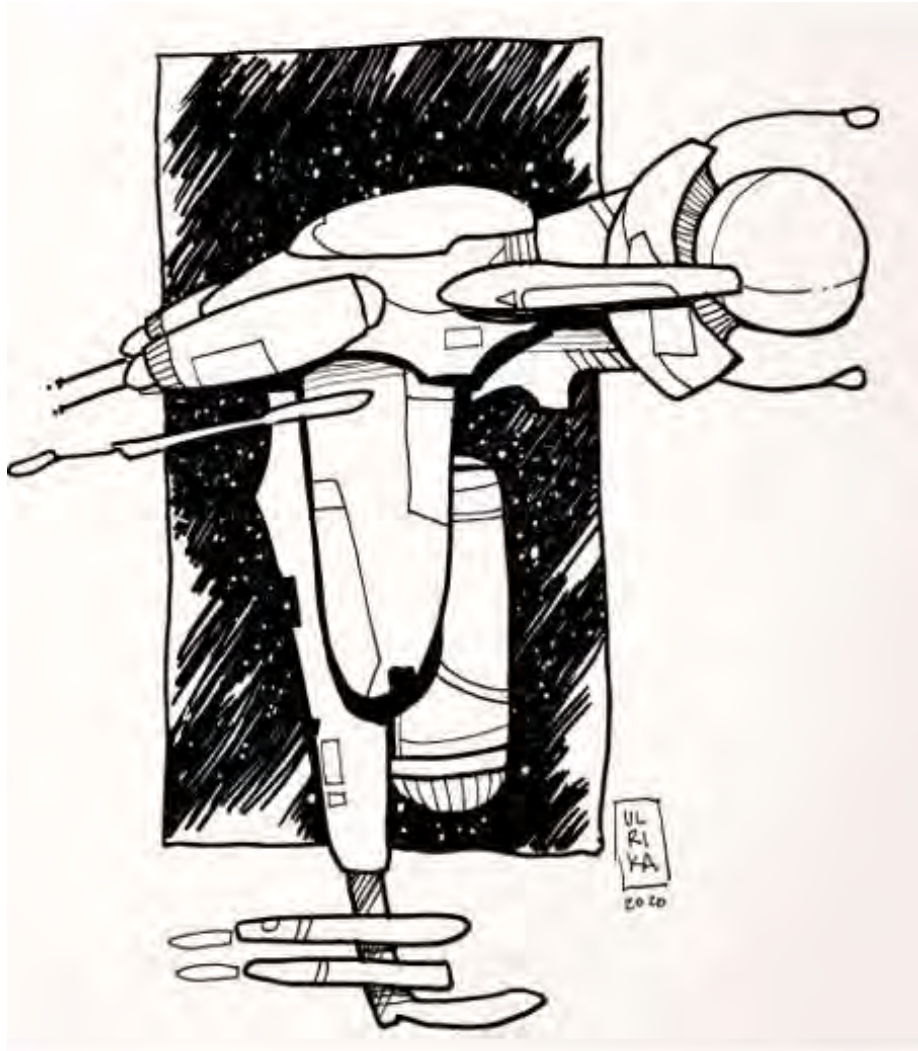
I was disappointed, but being young, resilient and highly motivated, I soon learned of another store. Dolphin's of Hollywood had just begun advertising on Hancock's show. The spots were read by Hunter himself, and he was enthusiastic about Dolphin's inventory, claiming that everything he played could be bought there. I called them up and, sure enough, they did stock the records I wanted. Despite the store's name, it wasn't located in Hollywood, but in the part of Los Angeles that later became known as South Central. Although the area was already largely

populated by African Americans, this was many years before the Watts riots in the mid '60s and I didn't have any trepidation about going there. On the other hand, I didn't tell my parents because they would have freaked out about the "bad neighborhood" (anywhere non-white people lived).

So one day I headed for Dolphin's on my four-speed bike, music in my ears and some cash in my pocket. It was much farther than I'd thought, with a couple of steep hills along the way, so I was sweating when I pulled up to their door. I was the only white person there that day, but apparently visits from our kind were not all that rare. I was treated courteously and spent some time checking out their record bins and the posters of some of the groups I liked. They played a couple tunes I wasn't familiar with by performers I liked, and in the end I bought a couple more records than I'd planned. With a smile on my face, I clamped the bag of disks to my bike's carryrack and pedaled the long way home. I'd traveled a good twenty miles that day, and it was with a delicious combination of elation and exhaustion that I listened to my new purchases.

By the end of the '50s I had nearly three hundred 45 rpm singles, neatly labeled in little boxes that held fifty apiece with numbered dividers. Do I have them anymore? I wish. But they went to a good home. When I was getting rid of stuff in 1971 before moving to The Farm in Tennessee I gave them all to Greg Shaw (he of Mojo Navigator R&R News and as a fan, Karnis Bottle's Metanoia), who was overjoyed.

I fell off the record-buying bandwagon after graduating from high school in 1960 and beginning college at UCLA. The reason was partly economic— by then I was an active fan and wanted to devote what little money I had to publishing fanzines. But also the music on the radio (still the primary way I heard new songs) had gotten less interesting to me, and I didn't need to own copies of any of it.



## Dave Langford – Honored in 2021 at Corflu Concorde

**A Brief Bio:** David Rowland Langford was born February, April 1953 in Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales

Hyperactive in science fiction fandom since the mid-1970s, Dave Langford is the source of one of fandom's most insoluble mysteries – is he the most professional science fiction fan ever, or the most fannish of science fiction professionals?

His fanzine **Ansible** has provided news and rumors of the world of science fiction since 1979 (with some interruptions). This monthly summary of planned events, milestones and small follies has been so consistently popular that it is tempting to believe that the Internet was invented principally to allow Dave to promulgate “Thog’s Master Class” more efficiently.

There is little question that Langford is the most decorated fanzine publisher of the past 70 years. He has won the Best Fan Writer Hugo Award 21 times, in 1985, 1987 and every year from 1989 to 2007. **Ansible** has won the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine a mere five times, in 1986, 1987, 1995, 1999 and 2002. Rebranded a semiprozine, it won a Hugo Award for that, too, in 2005. His



Dave Langford in 2007

editorial work on the 3rd Edition of **The Science Fiction Encyclopedia** was also recognized with a Hugo for Best Related Work in 2012. And perhaps most worthy of envy, his short story “Different Kinds of Darkness” also received a Hugo in 2001.

Dave also won the FAAn Award for Best Fan Writer in 1980; and as the 1981 awards were never given, he was the last writer to be so recognized for 15 years. Curiously, neither he nor **Ansible** had won a FAAn Award since their resumption in 1995, before receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award, irrefutably confirming the sheer bitterness of the Corflu community.

Trained in physics, one of Langford’s first jobs after University was work as a

Weapons Physicist at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston. His experiences there inspired his 1984 work **The Leaky Establishment**, still the funniest novel ever written about the discreet theft of fissionable materials.

He won the Transatlantic Fan Fund in 1980 and attended Noreascon II in Boston. His trip report, **The Transatlantic Hearing Aid**, is one of the best such accounts to date. He maintains the online repository of all information connected to the fan funds and his **Ansible Editions** series is an increasingly complete library of fan history.

Fanzines edited or co-edited by Dave Langford include:

- **Another Bloody Fanzine**
- **Ansible**
- **Cloud Chamber**
- **Diolch Yn Fawr**
- **Drilkjis**
- **Gonad Comes Again**
- **Heliograph**
- **Hidden Shallows**
- **Jackie!**
- **Sglodion**
- **TAFF Talk**
- **Twll-Ddu**
- **Visitor’s Pass.**

The memoir which Dave selected had many virtues: It describes events at a major convention and concerns the production of a lengthy series of fanzines, all using that

Dave Langford

most fannish of reproduction methods, the mimeograph. It is startling for some to consider that these events took place nearly 20 years ago; others will be equally croggled to see that the Eastercon daily zine was

duplicated by mimeo as recently as 1993!

Also, Dave's tale is possibly the single most British piece of writing I have ever had to edit; I would swear that someone's favourite colour is mentioned in most

paragraphs, and his wilderness of mini-caps, italics and quotes within quotes would be enough to test any fan's soul. I consider myself fortunate to have found my way out again.



## You Do it With Mirrors

by Dave Langford

from MIMOSA #14, August 1993



*Fourteen Months Before.* It was one of those incautious moments. I was at Boskone 29, enjoying the heady sensation of being a guest and looking forward to liberal supplies of bourbon, groupies, contracts and coffee. 'We can get them all for you,' Ben Yalow explained, 'except perhaps for the bourbon, groupies and contracts.'

The Boskone newsletter (*Helmuth ... Speaking for Boskone*) had just been impressing me with its deeply professional policy of printing anything I submitted. After a few too many beers in the hotel bar I heard my mouth say, 'British con newsletters are usually so boring and stark and functional.' Interested in what I would declare next, I began to pay attention and found my lips issuing the statement, 'What they need is better production, and traces of literacy, and more funny bits so fans will read the whole thing including the tedious programme changes.' My tongue went madly on to utter, 'In fact I could —'

Suddenly I found that even here in kindly America I was surrounded by committee members of Helicon, the 1993 British Eastercon, all wearing wide, fanged smiles. 'You're on, Dave,' someone cried.

'Glmmmmmmpf,' said my nostril as I choked on the beer.

\*

The Langford theory of newsletters was no more than a few vague prejudices at the time. Keeping it simple seemed a cunning plan: no elaborate DTP systems that encouraged the priests of the inner mystery to spend hours at a time laying out perfect paragraphs like exquisite corpses in satin-lined caskets. An independent survey of what I was already using for *Ansible* favoured WordPerfect, into which any fool can type text.

(*Technical Bit Which May Be Skipped:* a non-Windows WordPerfect 5.1 with Bitstream FaceLift fonts, if you really must know. The committee's weird idea that we

could move stuff between the computers using Laplink was rapidly superseded by my own high-tech solution known as Hurling Floppy Disks Across The Table.)

What was the thing going to be called? Helicon was named for its site, St Helier in Jersey, and the last con newsletter there had been called *Jersey Yarns*, which made me gently puke. Helicon used a 'sun' logo. Sun ... writing ... *Heliograph*. 'I am not afraid,' I wrote to the con committee, 'of the totally bleeding obvious.' Harry Bell drew a newsletter logo and we were in business.



Some months in advance I started writing news items. Editorial policy regarded any white space as a tacit admission of failure. And no matter how boring the lists of programme changes, I wanted the whole thing larded with funny bits to ensure it got read from end to end.

Strange anniversaries were ruthlessly researched (with help from Andy Porter's *SF Chronicle* birthday list, to remind the revelling fans that time's winged chariot was parked outside the door and blowing the horn). Besides the complete new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of SF*, which I luckily had on disk, I consulted that useful reference *The Perpetual Pessimist: an Everlasting Calendar of Gloom and Almanac of Woe* (by Daniel George) ... so the first issue on 8 April 1993 not only had birthday messages for E.J. Carnell, S.P. Meek and Ralph Milne Farley but also revealed that Helicon was auspiciously beginning on the anniversary

of a failed prediction of worldwide deluge in 1524.

Thus, helped by the fact that the convention was also a noted fictional birthplace, we were ready for the traditional First Issue of Newsletter problem (i.e. no news)...

WELCOME TO HELICON. And welcome to *Heliograph* — the newsletter which we understand is pronounced something like 'Heliogrrrraph'. As noted by Helicon's most famous native, 'I have the Heliconian stress on the letter "r".' (Harrri Seldon, in *Forrrward the Foundation* by Isaac Asimov.)

BICENTENNIAL: in April 1793, the New England inventor Eli Whitney did a huge service to all sf professionals by inventing gin. (*A Pedant Writes*: That was the cotton gin, you fool. *Heliograph*: There's no pleasing some fans.)

The first item duly provoked an outraged response in #2, for the benefit of esoterica fans:

COMPLAINT: 'What's this in issue #1 about some parvenu called Seldon being the most famous person from Helicon? What about us, then?' *Signed*: Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia and Urania.

But I'm getting ahead of events. All too many thrills and spills lay between the hapless editor and the first printed copy of *Heliograph 1*. I flew to Jersey days early, leaving Hazel to enjoy herself at home ... our different attitudes can be detected from the phone call when I got there. *Me*: 'It was great fun, I had a window by the landing gear and the plane stopped at Guernsey on the way so I got to go up and down twice for one fare!' *Hazel*: 'Oh! Oh, that must have been so horrible for you...' Being paranoid about electromagnetic damage to disks, I had one set in my pocket, another in my suitcase and a third travelling with Martin Hoare on a Channel ferry. *Martin*: 'It's great fun, the crossing lasts hours and hours, and you can drink yourself silly all the way over and watch other fans get seasick and vomit



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all over the bar!' *Me*: 'What a pity that I foolishly booked a plane.'

After the usual adventures I was introduced to my newsroom, which in the interests of total security had a combination lock on the door. Fortunately this didn't block traffic too much, since vast numbers of British fans remembered the unchanged code from previous conventions. (Later remark by Chris O'Shea, quoted in a post-final *Heliograph*: 'The secure store isn't, Ops doesn't, and the newsletter hasn't.')

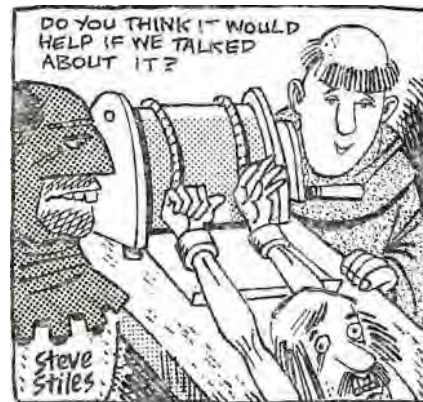
As it finally took shape, the awesome newsletter production equipment consisted of a couple of IBMs as I'd requested, a late-arriving laser printer (with an interesting scar on its drum that led to exciting black marks in every left margin and regular hotel-wide searches for Liquid Paper), and the Chris Suslowicz Museum of Industrial Archaeology. Yes, after each master sheet slid smoothly from the 1990s DTP system it was carried across the room and backwards through yawning gulfs of time to an ancient, rickety electrostencil cutter and a Gestetner mimeograph that had seen service with the Panzer corps.

While I first stared in awe, the committee broke it to me that Chris Suslowicz, the owner and understander of all this heavy-metal hardware, wouldn't be arriving until — according to my timetable — about half-way through issue three. I retreated to the bar and don't remember any more that day.

Next morning, with large tracts of the newsroom still commandeered for dynamic, last-minute badge production, I and all-around technical supremo John Dallman cut two dozen electrostencils of a dummy front page I'd brought with me. Or, to be precise, we cut or failed to cut the same one two dozen times, fiddling with all the controls (and wincing at the tactless comments of badgemakers who evidently hadn't enough work to do) until in a blazing burst of Null-A insight John noticed that the stylus was bent and changed it. Sparks flew and the characteristic atmosphere of the *Heliograph* newsroom immediately made itself felt: a

billowing mix of ozone and random carcinogens as the cutter burned its way through acres of vinyl. The fine black dust that rapidly accumulated on the computer screens was a useful index of the state of one's lungs, and to conjure up a Lovecraftian vision of nameless, blasphemous ichor you had only to blow your nose.

Then came the mimeograph, which after an hour or two I decided had not after all seen service with Rommel but with Torquemada.



Let us draw a veil over this, mentioning only the anguished cries of 'Can we fucking ink it from side to side, not up and down?' ... the discovery that, Roneo men all, we none of us knew where you put ink in a Gestetner ... the ransacking of countless hotel rooms for complimentary packs of tissues after agreeing that we certainly knew how to make ink come *out* of a Gestetner.

(By happy chance we'd picked the right electrostenciller. Con chairman Tim Illingworth had provided a second machine out of the goodness of his heart, having bought it in a junk shop and being sublimely unaware of whether it worked — he thought we could have fun finding out. To add to the 'Lady or the Tiger' excitement there was also a second mimeo which, days later, proved to be utterly unusable owing to damage in transit...)

As the first interestingly tilted and blotchy issue hit the stands, a part-blind fan labelled as 'Blind Pew' popped in with a request that all issues of *Heliograph* be clearly printed in

black ink for the benefit of those with dodgy vision. 'Gladly,' I cried, and as an afterthought went to check the huge pile of ink-tubes thoughtfully provided with the hardware. One was red and the rest were green.

\*

IAIN BANKS perpetuated a noble sf tradition by breaking his bed on the first night of Helicon. (As Bob Shaw discovered after Brian Aldiss broke a bed during a party there, Tynecon '74 was 'a five-bed convention'. Go for it, Iain!)

After cruel treatment by the Style Police, the *Read-Me* authors promise never again to write about 'medias' (see *But What Can Replace a Fanzine*, 1100 Monday). 'We have now been told correct datas and rethought our criterias,' said a spokesman. 'There will be no more such erratas.'

ARCTOPHILES 'are warned that the note on an exhibit in the Art Show *means* it. Do Not Open The Box if you care about cuddlies!' (*Chris Bell*)

BREAKFAST NOTES. Q. What's red and invisible? A: No tomatoes... The Action Committee for Mushrooms At All Con Breakfasts wishes to thank Helicon for ... sorry, *what* was the message?

HOW TO WRITE GOOD. Jane Barnett (aged 15 ¼), when told by her father that her writing showed poor control of nuance: 'I wouldn't recognize nuance if it came up and gently brushed my leg.'

... But most attempts to give the flavour of *Heliograph* as it turned out run slap into the 'You had to be there' syndrome. Famous author Iain Banks is a reliable source of eccentric news at British conventions, and later provided us with another fascinating snippet by crawling around underneath the carpet in the hotel bar. The 'arctophiles' item heralded a running gag about Tom Abba's bear-in-the-box in the Helicon art show, which was shielded from unwary eyes because this unfortunate teddy-bear had been strung up with ghastly torture-hooks inspired by *Hellraiser*. (BEAR HORROR

SHOCK,' began a later item. 'A copy of *Eon* was sold...' Jane Barnett's father Paul writes as John Grant and under this name was technical editor of the new *SF Encyclopaedia*; he realized what a paltry and trivial job that had been when he came to work more or less full-time on *Heliograph*.

JOHN JARROLD becomes President of the World! Well, of World SF. Interviewed by *Heliograph*, the new President prised a beerglass momentarily from his mouth and said, 'I didn't know what was happening, I wasn't even there, don't blame *me*.'

BRIAN ALDISS demonstrated his mature technique for persuading one of Jenny and Ramsey Campbell's offspring to go to bed, culminating in a stentorian cry of 'FUCK OFF!' (It worked.)

STOP PRESS UPDATE: Matt Campbell wishes to announce *Very Loudly Indeed* that Brian Aldiss's amazing Getting-the-Little-Swine-to-Bed technique (*Heliograph* #2) **DIDN'T ACTUALLY WORK.**

This was our first taste of controversy, when Mr. Aldiss put a mildly stropky note under the newsroom door complaining of 'anti-Aldiss material' and asserting that 'I told no kiddies, not even Brian Burgess, to "Fuck Off".' Assured by witnesses that the first report was accurate, our protagonist having been a trifle off-sober at the time, we contented ourselves by printing his rebuttal prefaced by 'BRIAN ALDISS, Sci Fi author, corrects...' Meanwhile he'd given the newsroom a new euphemism, heavily used for the rest of Helicon whenever alleged abuse was to be recorded: 'Go to bed!'

QUESTION. Why exactly did *Lawrence Watt-Evans* think that he was Brian Aldiss and that John Brunner should go to bed?

Trying to make every item at least a bit amusing was a continuing policy. One slight hitch was noted... Helicon had an influx of 52 Romanians, who all arrived in suits and strange tall pointy hats, like a delegation of heavily politicized garden gnomes. My idle



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fingers recorded the figure and on impulse (the line looked as if it could do with a bit more text) made it '52.02'. Well, at least I didn't add 'plus or minus 0.06', but the

newsroom had a procession of puzzled visitors. 'We have had trouble with newsletter. Here it says [*etc, etc*]. Is special meaning or' (in tones of deepening menace) 'your Western sense of humour?'

Strange tongues were heard everywhere at Helicon, and to aid translation a complex system of colour-coded ribbons and little spots on con badges was supposed to indicate who could interpret between what. Fandom soon reduced the system to chaos. The 'I speak Romanian' ribbons ran out within 52.02 nanoseconds, and others lasted only a bit longer; soon the committee was running round trying to clip bits from the over-long and generous ribbons issued on the first day. Meanwhile one heard explanations like: 'And that one-quarter of a tartan spot on my badge stands for how much Gaelic I know...' Your reporter confirmed himself to be deaf in seventeen languages.

My biggest linguistic mistake on *Heliograph* was in allowing my eyes to glaze over each time I tried to read a contribution from Colin Fine which appeared to be an essay on the artificial language Lojban. 'Too long,' I kept saying. 'Maybe *next* issue.' Colin had neglected to hint in his headline that, just after the point at which I invariably fell asleep, this piece announced a new and imminent programme item in which Lojban would be discussed. Oops.

Besides Romanians there were Russians, who were doing a roaring trade in obsolete KGB credentials at their dealers' room table...

RED SALES IN THE SUNSET: 30 people had joined the KGB at last count. Beware the midnight knock on the door from *Brian Aldiss*, the entire *Family Harrison* and *Anne McCaffrey* (who will be carrying a small, monogrammed flame-thrower).

TRICENTENNIAL CYBERPUNK. In 1693 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz of calculus fame invented the first mechanical calculator that could multiply and divide, thus heralding an exciting new era of arguments over the restaurant bill. ('Fie on you and your Engine, *f*ir, I had only a *f*small *f*alad and a *f*ep~~f~~i.')'

JOHN CLUTE tergiversates: 'Text is terrifying!'

OVERHEARD: 'If this were a normal con all you'd have to do would be to find someone...' [*And then you'd know where they were* — Ed.] • In Ops: 'We printed out all the programme participant letters and A. N. Other's was three pages long...' • Programming subcommitteeirregular verbs: 'I reschedule, you slip, he runs late.'

TRUTH SHALL BE TOLD. The spellcheck on the mighty *Heliograph* computer, confronted by 'committees', suggests 'comatose'...

TEN DAY WONDER TANDOORI. The *Taj Mahal* appears to work on the Lovecraftian approach to cuisine: 'I am excited not so much by the actual *presence* of mysterious Bengali dishes before me as I am by the eldritch *rumour* and *suggestion* that these exotic apparitions might one day appear.' Be warned... (*Ramsey Campbell*)

EROTIC SF panel: 'The French are suggesting installing teledildonic machines in hotel rooms...' *Mike Cule*: 'I'm not sure I would want to put anything of mine into any such orifices.' *Dave Clements*: 'What about your credit card?' *Mike Abbott*: 'By barcoding suitable portions of anatomy you could pay at the same time.' *Brian Ameringen*: 'Surely, when you cross a teledildonics machine with a cashpoint you get someone coming into money?'

DISCRETION. We are not allowed to reveal the number of the room in which GoH *Karel Thole* and *Jean Owen* broke the bed.

In a more serious and scientific vein, the Hotel de France venue has a built-in chocolate factory and shop, leading to a blitz of useful information:

HELICON STATISTICS! We have filled 7 Jersey hotels and drunk 1,600 pints of real ale, as at 1300 Saturday. Chocolate sales: 2,500 champagne truffles, 55\* of the 5kg blocks, 7 large rabbits, 82 Easter eggs, 1 lifesize Tim Illingworth, and 20 people have taken the behind-the-scenes tour. (Still 3,000 truffles and 8,500 other chocs to go. Must Try Harder.)

\* By the end of Helicon, it was 238.

Quite a respectable team of *Heliograph* newsroom regulars had somehow coalesced out of all this insanity. I dutifully credited them all, one of my own favourite ideas being to end each issue with a credits box using linked literary 'job titles'. It was sheer luck that, having picked *The Hunting of the Snark* for the first such theme, I needed to credit Amanda Baker:

.....  
*Heliograph* 1, 8/4/93. Bellman: Dave Langford. Baker: Amanda. Boots: Dave Clements. Boojum: Caroline Mullan. Snark: John Dallman. Ocean Chart: Harry Bell. Strange Creepy Creatures: John Stewart, Mark Young  
.....

I hugely enjoyed watching fans in the bar turn straight to the end of each newsletter to find what daft link the credits had this time. The sequence went on through Niven (Thrint: Dave Langford. Grog: Paul Barnett. Speaker-to-Duplicators ...), Asimov (First Speaker: Dave Langford. Emperor: John Dallman. Mayor: Boo Webber. Mule: Chris Suslowicz. Encyclopaedists: John Grant, John Clute. Prime Radiants: Amanda Baker, Pam Wells. Second Foundation: sshh!), Dick (Glimmung, Kipple, Conapt, Pink Beam, Vugs), Wolfe (Autarch, Hierodules ... the large person who got to be the Group of Seventeen was unamused), Ballard (Drained swimming pool, Spinal landscape, Marilyn

Monroe, Traven, Talbot, Travers, Talbert, Travis etc) and more. The real mind-burster that no one could guess was based on an obscure passage of Aldiss's *Report on Probability A: Impaler of Distortions, Impersonator of Sorrows, Suppressor of the Archives, Wandering Virgin* — 'Thank you for making me a virgin again!' cried Lynne Ann Morse with mixed feelings, and was duly quoted out of context in the upcoming issue.

Incidentally, *The Hunting of the Snark* also gave us Rule 42: 'No one shall speak to the Man at the Helm.' This, alas, was not rigorously applied despite all my efforts, and urgent stints of *Heliograph* typing were apt to be interrupted by arcane queries in strange international accents. Once, overwhelmed by too many satirical birthday congratulations (I was 40 on the Saturday of Helicon), I must admit that the editor rose up and told all the chatterers present to 'Go to bed.'

CLOSING CREDITS. *Heliograph* could not have been brought into existence without the help of very many people, but nevertheless it was. (*Chorus*: 'Start again, Langford!')

\*

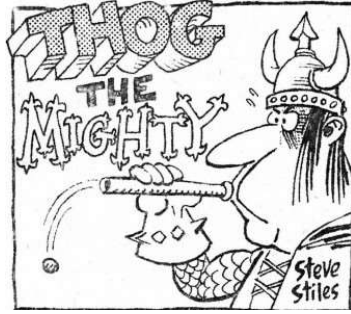
Newsroom madness grew more and more uncontrollable. Short quotations aside, I'd resolved to rewrite every single story until it was maximally terse, funny and comprehensible, or at least the first two. Meanwhile Paul toiled over increasingly excruciating headlines... Helicon had a crowd of weird emaciated punk Finns with nose-rings and things ('Differently intelligenced ... or differently nostrilled?' I mused) who claimed to be zombies and sent in countless bulletins on their rotted state: at one point I found Paul unable to decide between ZOMBIE FACTOID — IT'S DEAD TRUE! and DEATH IS NOT THE FINNISH, and could only break the impasse by using them both.

And then there was Thog the Mighty.

Although we dutifully recorded programme changes, *Heliograph* production was more

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or less incompatible with seeing any of Helicon's programme. (The exception in my case was the banquet, which I had to attend because I was giving a speech, on particularly revolting meals in sf. Later in *Heliograph*: MARY CELESTE MYSTERY SOLVED BY IAN SORENSON! 'Dave Langford did the after-dinner speech.') One item, however, spread all over the convention and newsletter like some rampant fungal growth: the scabrous 'If I Ruled the Universe' election campaign.



This featured various mighty beings attempting to sway an ultimate audience vote and thus become Universal Ruler. The candidates were Sir Edmund Blackadder (Neale Mittenshaw-Hodge), Boadicea/Boudicca (KIM Campbell), Genghis Khan (Mike Cule, whose cheerleaders' chant of 'Yak Fat! Yak Fat!' still haunts me), Tim Illingworth (Chris O'Shea), Ming the Merciless (Alison Scott) and Stupendous Man of *Calvin and Hobbes* fame (John Richards with mask, cape and of course Hobbes — a battery-powered growly tiger which remorselessly crept along tables and fell off the end). Helicon was duly plastered with campaign posters, mostly vile lies from Blackadder ('ILLINGWORTH plays with Barbie dolls!') illustrated with grossly libelous Sue Mason cartoons. In the end the audience vote for Universal Ruler went to a last-minute write-in ... Hobbes.

My favourite silly moment in all this came when, after talking to a press photographer and coming away muttering that the bastard wasn't interested in sf but just wanted pictures of weirdly dressed fans, John Richards found a particularly insulting Blackadder poster in the hotel foyer. He faded into the secure store and, seconds later, the awesome masked figure of Stupendous Man lumbered along the

corridors. With heroic and theatrical gestures the offending poster was wrenched from the wall; our superhero turned majestically away to discover that same pressman with mouth hanging open, fumbling frantically for his camera. After one ghastly frozen moment, Stupendous Man demonstrated super-speed.

This is where Thog came in. Idly filling out a paragraph in which potential world rulers abused each other, Paul remembered a bit-part character from his own fantasy novels and typed: 'Thog the Mighty doesn't want to rule the world.' This could have been a mistake. From commenting on the hustings ('Thog the Mighty spells universe "glib".'), this brutish entity swiftly overran the whole newsletter with fire and the sword. Even my carefully researched birthday lists sprouted addenda like: 'Every day my birthday — Thog.' If towards the end of Helicon there was a *Heliograph* gestalt, a newsroom group mind, it was undoubtedly named Thog the Mighty. Wrestling wildly over the semicolons, grown men found themselves talking in Thog. 'Stop nitpicking and let's print the thing.' 'Hah! When Thog the Mighty nitpick, nit know it have been picked.'

Somewhere out there the convention was reeling along out of control: 'Oh God,' cried a passing committee member, 'the organization's a shambles, we're just about managing to paper over the cracks, and that's *not for the newsletter*.' There were fewer and fewer programme changes to record, and the news items that filtered in grew sillier. When soft toys start sending in contributions, you know it's time to stop:

LEWIS P. BEAR complains formally about the anti-bear and bearist artworks in the Art Show. Arnold Schwarzenbear... [aw, go to bed — Ed.]



One can even be reduced to raiding the newspapers:

*THE INDEPENDENT's* article on Helicon today catches the subtle, elusive flavour of fandom: 'Otherwise it is unclear who these people are. They could be someone's neighbour or relative...'

But the manic *Heliograph* staff made the dangerous discovery that news items from 'outside' were hardly necessary. Desperately witty things — well, they seemed witty at the time — were constantly being said in our own fume-filled room, and could instantly be quoted. If Helicon had lasted a few more days the newsroom might have become a self-perpetuating news vortex, feeding madly on itself and generating endless one-liners to be listed in our ever-longer sections titled OVERHEARD, VOX POP and the like.

'You mean I'm — wow! — a CROSS REFERENCE in the *SF Encyclopaedia*?' • 'Are you claiming to be nubile?' • 'Someone bit me last night and I don't know whom...' • 'Isn't it sad when the snappiest dressers in fandom are the soft toys?' • 'Even Iain Banks doesn't know why he crawled under that carpet...' • 'If I turn the Gestetner up to full speed I can make it to the Banq — oh dear.' • 'I want to complain! You didn't credit my comment!' (Anon) • 'A draft of artists?' • 'An acquisition of publishers?' • 'A whinge of writers.' • 'A spittoon of *Heliograph* staffers.' • 'Why Thog not in *Heliograph* credits?' • 'I have a Complaint. Too much chit-chat; not enough news.'

I actually sought out the one aged fan who complained, in the hope of making soothing noises. The conversation went something like this... *Aged Fan*: 'Yes, your newsletter is full of in-jokes and I'm not an "in" person.' *Me*: 'But that "bear" stuff is about the Helicon art show...' *AF*: 'Never go to art shows.' *Me*: 'And this is all to do with the *Read-Me* booklet —' *AF*: 'Couldn't be bothered with that.' *Me*: 'And "Tim Illingworth" is the convention chairman —' *AF*: 'Never heard of him.' *Me*: 'And this credits line is actually an sf reference to **The**

**Book of the New Sun....'** *AF*: 'Like I said: all *in-crowd* jokes.'

Suddenly it was Monday evening. Helicon was miraculously over. I could start eating again, and perhaps even sleeping! To hammer home the message, I changed the subtitle box of the ninth issue from *Helicon's Newspaper* to *The Last Dangerous Heliograph* and made sure that all subsection titles referred to sf stories about entropy or the closing down of universes ('Travellers in Black', 'The Voices of Time', 'Running Down'). The final, post-closing-ceremony item was typed ... since nothing hugely newsy had happened, this merely offered an 'AT-A-GLANCE SUMMARY OF THE CLOSING CEREMONY. See pages 94-146.' It was all over.

(Actually there was no room to write up the full horror of the closing multi-channel slide show based on 1,000 embarrassing snaps taken at Helicon itself. Forty-five minutes after the ceremony was due to start, Martin Hoare and his team of ace technocrats carried in the projectors and began to set them up. The audience thrilled as the very first slide that actually appeared read: 'That's All Folks!' Every possible permutation of the guests' pictures and names was shown, with John Brunner labelled as George R.R. Martin and artist Karel Thole as fan guest Larry van der Putte ... then Brunner as Martin and Thole as Brunner ... and so endlessly on, to a stream of esoteric technical remarks like 'Now John Brunner's head's in the way of the *side* screen.' Afterwards Mr. Hoare exulted that the committee had confessed they'd never believed he could put on the slide show at all.)

It was, as I said, all over. Unfortunately several people said interesting or appalling things at Monday night's final party, and on Tuesday, as the convention was being dismantled around me, I found myself typing up a supplementary *Dead Dog Memorandum*. Our mimeo experts were not in evidence; the laser printer glowed white-hot as hundreds of copies churned out to

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meet the delirious demand. Then I went home.

But *Heliograph* was the newsletter that would not die. Chris Suslowicz and Cathryn Easthope had a hotel room full of computer gear, and two more ersatz issues rolled out of my fax machine, the *Undead Dog Memorandum* and *Embalmed Dog Missive*. Excerpts follow, as rewritten by me for the unbelievably rare *Heliograph Souvenir Edition*:

IT IS TUESDAY, the newsletter office is deserted and the equipment has been packed for its eventual return to the mainland. *Thog the Mighty* has discovered that his transportation (Horde, one, for the use of) has been misbooked for the previous day and is sharpening his sword. (*Alex Stewart*: 'Thog say, plane for wimps. Thog swim.') Langford has departed for the mainland to avoid the likely bloodshed, pausing briefly to Blu-Tack™ 5,271,009 copies of the *Dead Dog Memorandum* to various walls. 'Stop that man and nail his feet to the floor,' screamed an enraged *Martin Easterbrook*, engaged in convention poster removal. Too late — the denuded corridors had been fetchingly redecorated...

FOOD CORNER. There are no restaurant reports because with typical selfishness all the reporters are still in the restaurants. There is also an absence of newsroom — the final wording on the door was 'go away in a huff and never return', so copy is not

arriving, and the Alternative Newsroom is making it all up from a secret location. Stay tuned.

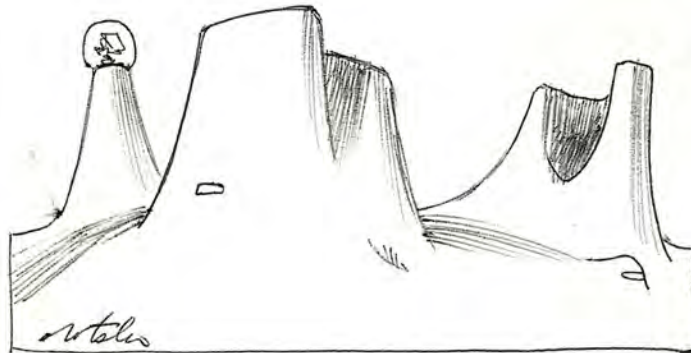
.....  
*Heliograph 10-ish*, 13/4/93. Wook: Dave Langford. Clattuc: Chris Suslowicz. Chilke: Thog the Mighty. Tamm: Cathryn Easthope. LPFers: BSFA Council. Yips: Ops.  
.....

And then it was really over. The egoboo was tremendous (as editor I probably got an altogether unfair share, but that's life). The physical and mental debilitation lasted three weeks. I wonder what it would have been like to attend Helicon?

\*

*Three Weeks After*. It was one of those incautious moments. I was at Jean Owen's and Martin Hoare's wedding party, reduced to a slithering moral jelly by heady speechmaking and champagne cocktails, and Caroline Mullan was telling me what she thought of *Heliograph*. 'All right for a mere Eastercon,' she allowed grudgingly, 'but your approach just wouldn't work for a Worldcon newsletter like ours at ConFiction.'

'Oh, I don't agree ...' my mouth began to say, until I suddenly noticed we were surrounded by a horde of feral, red-eyed 1995 Worldcon committee members, licking their lips and closing slowly in. For once my brain managed to insert a few words of its own. 'Er, I mean, you're *absolutely right*, Caroline.'



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## Gerri Sullivan – Honored in 2022 at Corflu Pangloss

**A Brief Bio:** Gerri Fitzgerald Sullivan was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1954.

Gerri Sullivan discovered fandom in 1979 when she met Minneapolis author and musician Emma Bull at a party thrown by mutual, mundane friends. The two talked for six hours, at the end of which Gerri was a member of Minneapolis fandom. She served as the President of Mn-Stf and worked on many Minneapolis area conventions. Her home there, known as Toad Hall, hosted innumerable fannish parties and provided comfortable lodging for dozens of visiting fans.

She had a particular affinity for the members of Northern Irish fandom which had been important members of Sixth Fandom in the 1950s. She did much to rekindle contact between Walter and Madeleine Willis and American fanzine fandom; likewise, she introduced many younger fanzine fans to James White, who was guest of honor at a Minneapolis relaxacon soon after appearing at the 1992 World Convention in Orlando.



She also became friends with Lee Hoffman and would eventually be the principal editor of Hoffman's fanzine **Science Fiction Five Yearly**. The final issue of SFFY won the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine in 2007. The award was shared with Randy Byers and (posthumously) with Hoffman.

She was the principal organizer of the sixth Corflu, which brought British fan Chuch Harris to the United States for the first time.

She was a member of both Minneapa and Stipple-Apa.

When "Fanzine Lounges" became a fashionable accoutrement at the Worldcon, Sullivan organized several of the most memorable

examples. These were oases of good company, fascinating reading materials, lavish supplies of chocolate and other treats, and when condition permitted, Real Good Beer.

Her fanzine **Idea** was a landmark composite of modern desktop design and impeccable mimeography, much of it executed by her then partner Jeff Schalles.

**Idea** won the FAAn Award as Best Fanzine in 1998 and 2001. In 1998, she garnered more votes across all categories than anyone else and was therefore acclaimed as Fan Face #1.

She was elected Past President of fwa in 1999. She has been a Guest of Honor at ten different science fiction conventions.

She won the Transatlantic Fan Fund in 2019 in a field of four candidates, attending the 2019 Eastercon at the Park Row hotel in Heathrow. She has also supervised several limited-run and one-off fan funds, including the Mystery Fan Fund, the Wimpy Zone Fan Fund and the Harris Fund.

For MidAmerican II in 2019, she worked on a



project to digitize many hours of video footage taken at MidAmericon in 1976.

Fanzines attributed to Gerri include:

- the **2005 Confusion One Shot**
- the **BaggieCon Program Book**
- **CHARRISMAMA**
- **Dare to Be Stupid**
- **From Mist to Missed**
- **gfs**
- **Idea**
- **No Goat's Kneecap**
- **No Goat's Toe**
- **Roscoe Honor Roll**
- **Science Fiction Five Yearly**
- **Small and Far Away**

- **Ten Design Tips**
- **The Story of George.**

She also published **Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator... To the Enchanted Convention** by Walt Willis and James White, the 1991 sequel to **The Enchanted Duplicator.**

Her article "A Different Shade of Corflu" appealed to me on several levels. Her account of the 1992 Corflu presents one of the convention's best attributes, namely the chance to visit locations in Hollywood and other Los Angeles neighborhoods. I will always envy the

personal visit which Moshe Feder and Stu Shiffman made to the home of composer Raymond Scott that same weekend. And it provides a vivid picture of several fans, particularly the late Robert Lichtman, who was at the center of so many things in fanzine fandom.

Stories like "A Different Shade of Corflu" are all we have of Robert now, and of Bill Rotsler, Bruce Pelz, George Flynn, and many other names mentioned here. As time passes, we will come to prize these accounts all the more.

## A Different Shade of Corflu

By Gerri Sullivan

From **Idea** #5, 1992

The pilot's voice came over the loudspeaker as we flew west: "It's sunny and 73 degrees in Los Angeles."

Those who know my playful obsession with the Minneapolis in '73 Worldcon bid will understand the fannish significance of the pilot's weather report. It boded well for the weekend I would be spending in Los Angeles at Corflu 9.

I found the hotel with ease and moved into room 720, which was on the third floor. A useful security measure perhaps, but the room keys didn't sport the number anyway. I rather liked the Cockatoo hotel. Sure, it was run down in spots, but it had personality, and you got to walk outside to get from place to place. That's a real plus to a Minnesotan. So much warmth, at the end of February. Even the rain was nice.

I spent the first few hours taking care of the usual: getting registered, handing out

fanzines, meeting Joyce and Arnie Katz, delivering genuine Halloween-blizzard snow to Don Fitch, and making puff pastry fruit tarts for people to enjoy in the consuite. It was good to see so many friends and friendly new faces. I missed Corflu 8, and two years without Corflu had been Too Long.

Corflu 9 scheduled a minimum of programming or other group activities, leaving us the maximum amount of time for small group conversations with friends old and new. Unfortunately, this didn't fit my mood until Saturday afternoon. I don't know if it's a sign of spending too many hours in my attic office, working the night away, but I was conversationally-impaired for most of Friday and Saturday. "What am I doing here? Why does it matter? What do I have to contribute?"



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It was fun, though, watching Laurie Yates. Her energy and enthusiasm reminded me of my own first Corflu, six years ago. And I gained a deeper appreciation for how Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden must have felt back in 1986 when I approached them about coming to Not-A-D-Con over Memorial Day weekend, compliments of the soon-to-be-invented Wimpy Zone Fan Fund. I remember Patrick looking at me in critical confusion and saying, “Well, sure, we’d come, but WHY are you inviting US? We’ve only just met.”

“When are you coming to Las Vegas?” demanded the neo-fannish chorus of Laurie Yates and Woody Bernardi, six years later. Yes, it was flattering. But it was overwhelming, too. They didn’t even know me. Here I was, trying to mentally sort out why I was even at Corflu, and they were clamoring for me to come to Las Vegas.

This confusing conversation took place over dinner, on Friday night. We were with Joyce and Arnie, Robert Lichtman, Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins. Jerry and Suzle ran into some friends as we were leaving Canter’s deli, and Robert and I ended up returning to the hotel via his old neighborhood. Conversation worked better one-to-one, but I still felt out of it.

What limited conversation skills I could drag up from the depths of experience were further quashed Friday night by my presence at the historic reunion of Ted White and Arnie Katz. I forget which one of them said it but the first words spoken as they shook hands were something to the effect of, “Well, I guess you’re not going to punch me out.” Time passed quickly, lost in the serconnish atmosphere as Ted, Arnie, Joyce, and Robert got re-acquainted. I remember Andy Hooper fitting a few words in, and Joyce and I fell into a brief chat as Joyce tried to catch up on the last 17 years or so in the lives of Jim Young, Ken Fletcher, and Fred A. Levy Haskell. At least I know each of them, so could at least provide some reasonably accurate facts even when words were the last thing on my mind.

Throughout the weekend, I admired the way Vijay Bowen, Arnie, and Laurie kept jotting notes so as not to lose events in haze of yesterday. And others were writing away at the computer, creating their contributions for the *Seventh Inning*, the official Corflu 1-shot. It was published Saturday afternoon, before I’d figured out how to make words work. Given my state of mind, it was too early to write impressions of the con, and I couldn’t conceive an interesting contribution about my life as an entrepreneurial desktop publisher cum book designer cum food writer. I knew I missed the sense of family I’d found at previous Corflus. The unique community-building interactions flashed only briefly during the auctions and the banquet. But people were clearly having a good time, and I knew I would be, too, if I could only click into things.

Saturday flowed along, with me looking for one then another of the do-it-yourself program items that never came to fruition. I was hanging out in the consuite late in the afternoon and at last fell into conversation with Elst Weinstein. Curious. My first real conversation of the day was with someone I’d never met, and knew so little about. We both love good/interesting architecture and chatted on about favorite buildings in San Francisco, Toronto, and New York.

After that there was no turning back. I caught up with friends like Moshe Feder and made new ones like Jeanne Bowman. Great conversations, each one different, just kept happening. Even as I was making my way back to my room, I fell into a deep and wonderful conversation with Art Widner. I don’t know how long we stood talking in the courtyard; I just savored the feeling of being able to talk about anything, and to follow the conversation as it made its way through a variety of life experiences, some thrilling, some nothing but hard. This was the Corflu I’d come for. It just took me a day to find it.

# # #

Three Corflu groups made their way to The Pelican restaurant for dinner Saturday

night. Ours included Mike Glycer, Elst, Dick and Nicki Lynch, Moshe, Nigel Rowe, Art Widner, and Dave Rike. We walked down to the ocean afterwards. A high wave caught Moshe unaware and he high-tailed it up the beach, only to fall, laughing, onto the damp sand as the sea subsided. It was good to hear him laugh so much. Nigel and I tried playing fanzine volleyball, only to discover that when you serve three fanzines at the same time, they scatter in the wind. If only we'd had a copy of the new *Outworlds*.

Corflu shared its Sunday banquet with the Regency Dancers, who were also convening at the Cockatoo that weekend. We'd conducted most of the usual business earlier in the weekend, what with auctions held both Friday and Saturday, and Robert Lichtman's election as the 1991 past president of fwa on Saturday. Like the rest of Corflu, the banquet was good for small group interaction. Our table included Don Fitch, Art Widner, Jeanne Bowman, Andy Hooper, Barnaby Rapoport, Spike, Tom Becker, and me. William Rotsler was at the next table, and he provided the banquet's highlight by drawing on plates, cups, saucers, bowls, a salt shaker, food, and the like — much to the delight of the fans and the bemusement of the hotel staff.

Socializing was intense at the end of the banquet. Many were leaving and it was time to say goodbye. The Regency fans departed for their own program while we grew anxious for Linda Bushyager's speech. (Corflu has a tradition of drawing the GoH from a hat at the convention. Linda's name was drawn early Saturday evening and it therefore became her responsibility to give a GoH speech at the banquet.)

Linda's years of fan writing served her well, and her speech reminded us of the basic tenets of fandom in the guise of fannish entertainment.

Sunday afternoon found me hanging out in the consuite. Robert Lichtman invited me on a tour of LA, to include dinner at Canter's. Robert was eating there at every possible occasion while he was in town. The

tour sounded like fun, but I had a hard time tearing myself away from the pleasantness of the Corflu consuite. Don Fitch clearly had the time of his life running it and we all appreciated his efforts.

At last I was ready to go, and we made it to Venice Beach in time to wander along the beachfront in the late afternoon sun. It was the quintessential California experience, complete with new age hippies, rollerbladers, body builders at the beachside gym, and blocks of shops.

Fannish reader, I am compelled at this point to continue my factual reporting of the day's events, no matter how shocking it might be to fanzine fandom. The information revealed to me that sunny afternoon might well prove useful to you in your future travels. To some it might be a startling expose — it was to me. If you're a long-time friend of Robert's, my discovery may come as no surprise. Whatever, the truth must be told.

Robert Lichtman — TAFF winner and talented editor of *Trap Door* — likes to shop.

Yes, dear reader, be prepared as I was not. Beware on the day he offers you a tour about San Francisco, say, during next year's worldcon.

This startling truth was an onion — revealing itself in many thin layers. It started early on in our walk. There, tucked between t-shirt and tie-dye shops galore, stood a friendly bookstore. No B. Dalton this, or Borders books, too brightly lit, open and impersonal. Robert appeared ready to stroll by, but it was just a ruse. The second I turned toward the door, he said, "So you're another one of those people who has to go in every bookstore, like me? This is a particularly good one."

So he wouldn't get the wrong impression and think my book browsing habits were in the same league as those of Vinç Clarke or Eric Lindsay, I replied that while I greatly enjoy wandering through bookstores, I often

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resist temptation and walk out empty-handed.

“I do the same.” His words reassured me as we walked inside. The bargain table caught my immediate attention, but nothing leapt into my hands. Confident that I was in normal bookstore mode, and that my few dollars would remain safely tucked away for my upcoming trip to England, I moved on to an exhibit of black history books, where Robert caught up with me after a brief check of other sections.

Children’s books were next. I would have liked to have shown him *Tuesday*, but the shelf held no copies of that delightful story showing how on a Tuesday night the lily pads rose and the frogs rode them to grand adventures in town. A paper bound Dr. Seuss drawing book reminded me that I’d love to find a couple paperback copies of Seuss’ *On Beyond Zebra*. Besides wanting an intact reading copy, I hope to some day frame the Seuss-abet provided at the back of the book. In the book, Seuss picks up where “Z is for zebra” ends and shows us letters we never learned in grade school. It’s a wonderful exercise in creativity for the literal-minded.

Alas, they had no other paperback Seuss books, but I used the convenient excuse of being on vacation to pick up the hardbound copy of *On Beyond Zebra* that sat on the shelf.

Several shelves of personal travel books caught my eye, but a quick look at two confirmed my suspicion that choosing a really good one would take more than a bit of time, so I moved on with Robert to the SF shelves. The usual assortment of familiar titles offered comparative safety. Robert didn’t point out any exciting recent releases, and while I plan to read more Philip K. Dick, I wouldn’t buy a specific title without first checking Jeff’s collection.

While I had a book in hand, it appeared Robert would escape unscathed until a check-out display of well-bound miniature autobiographies snared him and he selected one by Robert Creeley, a favored poet. So

much for our mutual habit of walking out of bookstores empty-handed.

Robert’s book fit in his jacket pocket while I was forced to carry mine in a bag. I ought to have recognized this indicator of Robert’s shopping expertise as we continued to make our way down the concrete walkway beside the beach.

When we turned back toward the car, passing stores offering muscle shirts and other beach paraphernalia, I remarked that the clothes I’d liked best were those we’d seen first. Ever helpful, Robert pointed out we’d be passing those shops again.

I still didn’t catch on.

# # #

I fully deserved what happened next. Supershipper Lichtman brought my attention to a Guatemalan woven cotton patchwork jacket hanging above a shop. It was fully lined, ideal for a Minnesota spring. Or, for that matter, an English or Irish spring, all of which I hoped to experience in the weeks ahead.

“These Guatemalan jackets are quite popular here right now. Have they made it to Minneapolis?” he asked.

“Not yet — or not that I’ve noticed.” I don’t follow fashion trends all that closely.

I think I was the first to actually enter the shop, to look at several similar jackets on display, but it’s hard to know when one is unknowingly under the influence of an expert shopper. Before I knew it, Robert was helping me remove my outdated world map jacket (with the F.S.U. — Former Soviet Union — taking up most of the back). I slipped my arms into the bulkier (and even more colorful) Guatemalan one he held.

The game was almost up when he straightened the collar, and when he commented “That’s a good price,” I at last knew I was in the company of a shopping professional.

I checked things out in the shop’s mirror. Robert, no doubt, would have pulled a

reflective surface from his pocket if the shop hadn't been able to oblige.

The jacket was Almost Right. Like so many highly-patterned pieces, it... well, 'clashed' is too strong a word. It didn't clash, exactly, with my body and coloring. It just didn't compliment them to my satisfaction. I was reminded of the First Rule of Shopping: If it looks better on the hanger than it does on you, don't buy it.

Robert was quick to pull out the other size large jacket from the selection. The colors harmonized as only fuchsia, sky blue, emerald, purple, lime, red, orange, turquoise, burgundy, yellow, and black can. I looked in the mirror and knew that I'd Found It. The price was low enough that I settled for an unobtrusive quality check: smooth seams, non-binding zipper, tightly stitched cuffs and waistband. I'd noticed Robert checking out similar details as he looked through the selection and knew he'd point me to any out-of-the ordinary construction defects.

So when we left the store I had two (count 'em, two) bags to carry. Still empty-handed (if not empty pocketed), Robert stopped to admire several batik patchwork jackets as we strolled toward the car. My comparative neohood showed most clearly as I failed to even try to get him to try one on.

At last, we were safely back in the car. I got out of our stroll along the beach for less than the price of a room night at the Cockatoo Inn, and picked up two needed items, so I can't complain too much. But I hadn't parted with a penny during the walk on the beach the night before!

# # #

From Venice Beach we drove up Santa Monica Blvd, a familiar sight to any eye exposed to movies and tv. We passed through more quintessential California as we made our way onto Wilshire Blvd, then past UCLA toward Beverly Hills.

Dusk was settling but we saw several mini-mansions and gated driveways as we made our roundabout way to Rodeo Drive. Robert



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drove up one side and down the other, giving me full view of all the shops, then headed for Hollywood Blvd, where we found a convenient parking place and walked up the star-studded boulevard to Mann's Chinese Theater to gaze at the hand and footprints left by stars for the past ~60 years. Or, in the case of Jimmy Durante, hand and nose prints.

We checked out a few tourist shops along the boulevard, but I was curiously immune to the usual magnet-postcard-coffee mug compulsion. I settled instead for souvenirs from the Universal News Service, probably the largest newsstand in LA. I picked up a heavy metal magazine for Jeff and B-grade erotica less often seen on the few Minneapolis newsstands I've encountered. Good Hollywood souvenirs.

Our next stop was Canter's, where I made the mistake of ordering the large Cobb salad. The bowl was significantly larger than the dinner plate it came on, and deep enough to hold a salad for six or maybe eight, if you have an Irish fan or two in the bunch.

On our way back to Corflu, we stopped by Robert's hotel (just a few blocks away from the Cockatoo and a third cheaper). He settled with the desk so as not to disturb the owner when he left early the next morning. In the process, I got to see a vibrant Navajo rug Robert had purchased on his trip to LA. He also had a book showing a variety of regional Navajo weaving styles. I could have happily read the entire book rather than just skimming it, but the Corflu consuite beckoned.

It was Sunday night, after all, and there was tradition for me to pursue. Sunday night at the Seattle Corflu I spent hour after hour talking in the elevator lobby with Gary Farber while a friend slept and snored the night away back in the second bed of what was supposedly my single room for the night. It wasn't the snoring that led to my night in the elevator lobby. Nor was it the wet spot left on my bed earlier in the evening by two other friends. Rather, I

credit the newly emerging "Sunday night of Corflu" spell. Curious and ultimately wonderful things seem to happen to me Sunday nights at Corflu, especially if there's some Canadian beer to add to the equation.

The next year, at Corflu 6 in Minneapolis, Chuck Harris adopted me as his fan mother late Sunday night. I left tucking-in duties to Sue Harris, so I don't know if he got to hear "Around the World in 80 Lays," one of the bedtime stories suggested by Rob Hansen at the time.

Sunday night of the New York Corflu is forever lost in the serconnish haze of conversations that permeated that weekend, and I didn't want to miss what might happen in 1992.

As we pulled up to the Cockatoo, I consolidated the bags that had piled around my feet and ankles in Robert's car, toted them back to my room, slipped on my new jacket, and made my way to the consuite, where the party lived on, albeit smaller than it had been all weekend.

The primary source of entertainment came from making sure Don Fitch spent what remained of the night partying rather than working. If the man had told us where the rope was, we would have tied him to a chair. (Surely there was a hank of rope among the seemingly hundreds of Rubbermaid carry-bins Don used to tote consuite supplies to and from the convention.)

We did pretty well sans rope. As the night progressed, more fans took on spotting duty, bringing it to my befuddled attention whenever the ever-wily Don escaped sight, usually to be found packing supplies, sorting garbage, or straightening pictures on the hotel room walls. Bill Bowers was especially vigilant, and between us, Don didn't stand a chance.

The party broke up around 3:30 am and I wandered back to my room for most of a night's sleep before packing and checking out Monday morning. The bag that carried snow, whipped cream, and puff pastry from

Minnesota was filled with fanzines for the trip home.

I caught up with Pat Virzi, Bill Bowers, Eric Lindsay, George Flynn, and Barnaby Rapoport in the restaurant for a late morning breakfast. Afterwards, Eric, Bill B. and I wandered down to the smoking consuite (Don's room) only to find a note taped to the door: "Gerri: Up. Alive. Soaking in hot water. Don."

Re-using the tape endpaper, I left a note of my own: "Don: I hope you're a happy prune. Gerri."

I checked out of my room, storing my bags in Eric's and seeing a small portion of the books he'd purchased during his 6-week stay in the States. (He'd previously shipped back ~80 lbs, but fell prey to the predictable malady of Minneapolis visitors who dare to go on Denny Lien's bookstore tour.)

Back in the lobby, we were joined by a suspiciously smooth-skinned Don Fitch. Only a later check of his room verified that he hadn't snuck off with a load of the food and supplies he was donating to a Native American group instead of soaking in the tub.

Don must have been a bit daunted by the packing job ahead, for he allowed me to pitch in with minimal fuss. We made a noticeable dent before I had to catch the airport shuttle.

Saying goodbye to Don and Eric Lindsay bore a resemblance to my Tropicon parting 3+ years ago. We watched and we waved, knowing we'd reached the end of something special.

Bad news and good awaited me at the airport. My flight had been cancelled, due to "weather" in Minneapolis. They were able, however, to get me on an earlier flight — one that had been due to leave 30 minutes before my arrival at the airport. It had been delayed in Minneapolis by the same ominous "weather." I called Jeff to tell him my anticipated arrival time and was relieved to hear the weather was merely foggy, rather than Toad Hall being ensconced by the more typical spring blizzard or ice storm. As the plane headed east, I wrote the notes that formed the basis of this convention report. "Sunny and 73 degrees" was soon but a memory of friendships formed and strengthened.