

Argentus 11

14 November 2011
\$4.00, or, the usual



James Daily
Ryan Davidson
Christopher J Garcia
Deb Geisler
Richard Gilliam
Alexis Gilliland
Fred Lerner
Rich Lynch
Christopher McKitterick
Mark Olson
Steven H Silver
Brianna SpaceKat Wu
Frank Wu

Sheryl Birkhead
Kurt Erichsen
Brad W. Foster
Alexis Gilliland
Steven Pitluk
Stu Shiffman
Taral Wayne
Brianna SpaceKat Wu

Bob Blackwood
Warren Buff
Michael A. Burstein
Rhonda Eudaly
Robert L. Rede
Robert Sabella
Steven H Silver

From the Mine

This issue, being publishing on November 14, 2011, represents two major milestones for me in my fannish career. The most obvious is that it is the tenth anniversary issue of *Argentus*, which was first published in September 2001. Since that time, I've published eleven regular issues as well as three special editions, which appeared on-line. There was also the Mark Twain 'zine that appeared under a different by-line. You can learn about all of those issues by either going to <http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/Argentus.html> or by reading Chris Garcia's retrospective of the magazine that appears later in the issue.

The other anniversary is my own twenty-fifth anniversary in fandom. I attended my first science fiction convention, Windycon XIII on November 14, 1986 (a fortnight after I began dating the woman who would become my wife). I discuss my introduction to fandom a little later in the issue.

Another anniversary, not mine, is that 2011 marked the 40th anniversary of the death of John W. Campbell, and Christopher McKitterick reflects on Campbell's legacy, which dates back to the early days of science fiction. Something else that dates to the early days of science fiction was the *Fancylopedia*, first compiled by Jack Speer. More recently, the advent of wikis has provided a new tool for updating *Fancylopedia*, and Mark Olson discusses the project and describes how people can get involved in this fanhistory project.

Reading comics, especially strips like Dick Tracy, made me realize that comic book heroes, even the ones who theoretically work within the confines of the law, do not have a particularly firm grasp on the Eighth Amendment, which states that *Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted*. The problem is less with the first part (since often the villains never are offered bail or fines), but with the second part. James Daily and Ryan Davidson, who write the excellent blog "Law and the Multiverse: Superheroes, Supervillains, and the Law" have weighed in with a discussion of sentencing villains in a world with superpowers. They will also be following up with a book discussing the law inside the world of comics.

All too often, book covers are overlooked. Artists are not always listed on the copyright page or the cover and reviews tend not to mention them. In what I hope is the first of a series, Frank and Brianna Wu take a look at the cover to Charles Stross's *Saturn's Children* and talks about what works and what doesn't. Richard Gilliam's article that takes a look at how well (or how poorly) the openings of films manage to accomplish what they set out to do. Fred Lerner discusses libraries, the printed word, and the future of bookselling in a world where the printed word doesn't necessarily have to be printed.

I asked Deb Geisler to write about a specific line from *The Lord of the Rings* and the result is a cautionary tale of running conventions and not knowing when to say "no." Alexis Gilliland offers his own thoughts about what we mean when we say we are happy.

And for fun, Rich Lynch talks about his own experiences with nuclear power, explaining why he could be one of those heroes (or villains) discussed by Daily and Davidson.

As always, the mock section proved the most difficult to compile, but I hope you enjoy the look at the obituaries of various sf-nal characters.

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Supervillain Sentencing and the Eighth Amendment

James Daily and Ryan Davidson

Supervillains, particularly those with innate superpowers, present unique challenges to the criminal justice system. While those challenges obviously start with apprehension, they continue on through trial¹ and sentencing. This article considers the lattermost aspect of the problem with a focus on the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.² For example, can the government constitutionally execute a nigh-invulnerable prisoner? And what about special supervillain prisons? Finally, could a particularly dangerous supervillain's powers be forcibly removed?

Nigh-invulnerable Characters and the Death Penalty

While many superpowered characters are tough, they can be killed through conventional means when it comes right down to it. However, others may either be unkillable (e.g. Doomsday, Dr. Manhattan) or extremely difficult to kill (e.g. Wolverine). In the case of a character with a healing factor like Wolverine's, none of the most common modern methods of execution would work: shooting, hanging, lethal injection, electrocution, or the gas chamber. Decapitation might work (Xavier Protocol Code 0-2-1 mentions this as a possibility for Wolverine), but no one has tried it. This uncertainty is problematic.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld the constitutionality of the death penalty, and it has never invalidated a method of punishment on the grounds that it was cruel and unusual.³ However, the Court has stated "[p]unishments are cruel when they involve torture or a lingering death."⁴ Decapitation has been specifically cited as a form of execution that is likely unconstitutional.⁵ Another hypothetical example is "a series of abortive attempts at electrocution," which would present an "objectively intolerable risk of harm."⁶ Since we don't know if a given method of execution would actually work for a regenerating or nigh-invulnerable

supervillain, trial and error would be the only way to determine an effective method. And since regenerating characters are often unaffected by drugs, it may not be possible to mitigate pain. It seems likely, then, that the death penalty may not be constitutionally carried out in such cases.

Supervillain Prisons

Many supervillains could easily break out of a normal prison, so many comic books have developed special methods of incarceration to handle people who can fly or walk through walls. One example is the Marvel Universe's Negative Zone, which housed a prison during the Marvel Civil War. Although conditions at the Negative Zone prison were similar to a normal prison, the Zone itself seems to negatively affect some people's emotions and mental health. Is it cruel and unusual to imprison people in such a place?

In short, probably not. Even regular prisons are seriously depressing, so it's already going to be difficult to prove that a prison in the Negative Zone is worse enough to be considered cruel or unusual punishment. As the Supreme Court has said:

The unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain...constitutes cruel and unusual punishment forbidden by the Eighth Amendment. We have said that among unnecessary and wanton inflictions of pain are those that are totally without penological justification. In making this determination in the context of prison conditions, we must ascertain whether the officials involved acted with deliberate indifference to the inmates' health or safety.⁷

Furthermore, to be "sufficiently serious" to constitute cruel and unusual punishment, "a prison official's act or omission must result in the denial of the minimal civilized measure of life's necessities."⁸ Minimal is the right word; prison officials "must provide humane conditions of confinement; prison officials must ensure that inmates receive adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care, and must take reasonable measures to guarantee the safety of the inmates."⁹ This is a very low bar.

The emotional effects of the Negative Zone are not really part of the punishment but rather a side effect of the place. Because the Negative Zone is the only suitable prison for many supervillains, the side effect is arguably

¹ Consider the difficulties posed by psychic supervillains who could potentially sway the minds of the prosecutor, judge, or jury.

² The Amendment reads in full: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." U.S. CONST. amend VIII.

³ See *Baze v. Rees*, 553 U.S. 35, 48 (2008) ("This Court has never invalidated a State's chosen procedure for carrying out a sentence of death as the infliction of cruel and unusual punishment.")

⁴ *Baze*, 553 U.S. at 46.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Hope v. Pelzer*, 536 U.S. 730, 737-38 (2002) (holding that handcuffing an inmate to a hitching post outdoors for several hours with inadequate water and restroom breaks violated the Eighth Amendment) (quotations and citations omitted).

⁸ *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994).

⁹ *Id.* at 833.

necessary. Further, the side effects are not controlled or intentionally inflicted by anyone. Thus, the effects are not inflicted wantonly (i.e. deliberately and unprovoked). Offering the inmates adequate living conditions and mental health care to offset the effects of the Negative Zone could probably eliminate a charge of deliberate indifference. Finally, it would be difficult to argue that imprisonment in the Negative Zone denies the minimum civilized measure of life's necessities. "The Constitution does not mandate comfortable prisons," as the Farmer court noted, only humane ones, and the Negative Zone is probably not bad enough to run afoul of the Eighth Amendment under the circumstances.

Forcible Removal of Superpowers

The DC supervillain Timothy Karnes had the power to transform into a demonic superbeing (Sabbac) by uttering a word of power. After being caught by Captain Marvel and transformed back into his human form, Karnes's larynx is surgically removed in order to prevent him from turning back into Sabbac. Is this cruel and unusual?

A real-world parallel is chemical castration, where convicted sex offenders, usually pedophiles, are treated with a hormonal drug usually used as a contraceptive. In women, that's basically its only use, but in men, the drug results in a massively reduced sex-drive.

About a dozen states use chemical castration in at least some cases, and there does not appear to have been a successful challenge on constitutional grounds. This may in part be due to the fact that a significant percentage of the offenders who are given the treatment volunteer for it, as it offers a way of controlling their urges. If the person being sentenced does not object, it's hard for anyone else to come up with standing.¹⁰ Either way, despite health and civil rights concerns, this appears to be a viable sentence in the United States legal system.

But it should not be hard to see that physically and permanently removing someone's ability to speak is not exactly the same as putting a reversible chemical damper on their sex drive. It's entirely possible to live an otherwise normal life with a low sex drive, but being mute is a little harder both to deal with and to hide. So while the idea of physical modification to the human body is not unconstitutional on its face, it remains to be seen whether this degree of modification would be permitted. For example, while chemical castration appears to be constitutional, it's pretty likely that physical castration would not be. We can only say "pretty likely" because *Buck v. Bell*, a 1927 Supreme Court case that upheld (eight to one!) a Virginia statute instituting compulsory sterilization of "mental defectives," has never been expressly overturned, and tens of thousands of

compulsory sterilizations occurred in the U.S. after *Buck*, most recently in 1981.¹¹

On the other hand, Karnes isn't your run-of-the-mill offender. He's possessed by six demonic entities and capable of wreaking an immense amount of destruction. Part of the analysis in determining whether or not a punishment is cruel and unusual is whether or not the punishment is grossly disproportionate to the severity of the crime.¹² This is, in part, why the Supreme Court has outlawed the death penalty for rape cases. If no one is dead, execution seems to be a disproportionate response.¹³

The Eighth Amendment also prohibits "the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain," including those "totally without penological justification."¹⁴ Here, though, there is a clear penological justification, namely the prevention of future crimes, and the laryngectomy could be carried out in a humane manner without the infliction of unnecessary pain.

There are other criteria by which a punishment is judged, including whether it accords with human dignity and whether it is shocking or contrary to fundamental fairness, but in a case like this necessity goes a long way, especially because the purpose of the operation is not retributive punishment but rather incapacitation. If the only way to prevent Karnes from assuming his demonic form is to render him mute, then it's possible that the courts would go along with that, particularly if it proved impossible to contain him otherwise and the operation was carried out in a humane manner.

¹¹ *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200 (1927); PAUL A. LOMBARDO, THREE GENERATIONS, NO IMBECILES: EUGENICS, THE SU *Apology*, EUGENE REGISTER-GUARD, Nov. 16, 2002, at 2B (noting that sterilizations occurred in Oregon through 1981).

¹¹ *Ewing v. California*, 538 U.S. 11, 21 (2003).

¹¹ *Kennedy v. Louisiana*, 554 U.S. 407 (2008) ("As it relates to crimes against individuals...the death penalty should not be expanded to instances where the victim's life was not taken.")

¹¹ *Hope v. Pelzer*, 536 U.S. 730, 737-38 (2002). PREME COURT, AND *BUCK V. BELL* (2008) (documenting the history of compulsory sterilization in the United States); *Eugenics Victims to Get Apology*, EUGENE REGISTER-GUARD, Nov. 16, 2002, at 2B (noting that sterilizations occurred in Oregon through 1981).

¹² *Ewing v. California*, 538 U.S. 11, 21 (2003).

¹³ *Kennedy v. Louisiana*, 554 U.S. 407 (2008) ("As it relates to crimes against individuals...the death penalty should not be expanded to instances where the victim's life was not taken.")

¹⁴ *Hope v. Pelzer*, 536 U.S. 730, 737-38 (2002).

¹⁰ That is, to demonstrate that they have suffered a legally cognizable injury, which is required for a lawsuit to go forward.

The Sense of a Beginning

Richard Gilliam

Steven has asked for a few words about motion picture opening title sequences, why some work and some don't. To answer it is useful to know how title sequences developed, and why they often do not appear in current day films. The answer to the latter is simple—many current day directors don't like opening credits. We'll concentrate on films prior to *Star Wars*, since that was a clear moment of change in the limits of what was acceptable as a film opening.

Let's define the opening title sequence as starting with the first frame of the film and ending after the sequence that includes the last functional graphic image.

Simple? It isn't. Let's go back to the start of motion pictures to see why.

The first motion picture in which actors appear is said to be *Blacksmithing Scene* in 1893. Almost all statements of movie firsts include qualifiers. It's only been in recent years that the preservation of early films has become a priority, and more than a few times something has been proclaimed "the first" and later disproven when an earlier example has been discovered.

Blacksmithing Scene depicts three men performing a blacksmithing chore. None of the actors were blacksmiths. They were employees of Thomas Edison. The scene lasts 34 seconds and you can see it, and much else, on YouTube and other internet sources. There are no links in this article to YouTube because there's no assurance the links will continue to work. Everything mentioned here as being on YouTube is easily findable using the YouTube search box (as of early October, 2011, which is when this article was written.)

What you may notice on *Blacksmithing Scene* is that the brief title image appears to have been made later than 1893. It's very common throughout the history of motion pictures that the non-theatrical version of a film has at least a slightly different title sequence than what was originally seen. This is true of films that had 2011 theatrical release, and were released later in 2011 for home viewing. The home viewing version would likely include different or additional corporate logos for the home releasing company. Also, it's common for home releases to include an identifier as an "anti-piracy" protection, ignoring that commercial piracy copies are often created before a film is released to theaters.

Thomas Edison, the motion picture mogul, has a not very nice history as a predatory monopolist who employed street thugs to disrupt the production of films

at rival companies. Edison's attempt to monopolize motion picture production failed, but not before it caused several developments.

Among these was the bankruptcy of French filmmaker George Méliès—Edison had thieves steal a print of his 1902 classic, *Le voyage dans la lune* depriving Méliès of much needed income from distribution in the United States. I don't know what title card was used in 1902 France, but I think it unlikely a portion was in English.

Edison's street thugs covered the East Coast to Chicago. Independent film production went west.

Though some film production elsewhere in California pre-dates it, Cecil B. DeMille's 1914 film *The Squaw Man* is generally recognized as the first feature length film produced in what's now known as Hollywood. In 1915 Edison lost a huge court case declaring his Motion Picture Patents Corporation to be an illegal monopoly. By 1918 Hollywood was the leading film production area in the U.S. That's also the year Edison's court appeals ended. Hollywood had begun and Edison's monopoly was over.

It would be an oversimplification to say that the end of Edison's monopoly led to more complex title sequences. Corporate branding had already become common, even where it suppressed the star's name, as it did with *The Biograph Girl*, Florence Lawrence.

The most famous motion picture branding sequence is a lion inside a circular frame, first used by Goldwyn Pictures in 1917, and used more famously by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer after several companies merged.

Not much was done in the silent era with the title sequences for individual movies. I'm looking as I write this at the Kino Blu-Ray of the 2010 restoration of the 1927 German film *Metropolis*. All that appears to be original is a brief opening image with the title of the film.

U.S. films often didn't have much more. The restoration of the 1925 version of *The Lost World* appears to have only two original title cards (1) the title of the film and production information, and (2) the cast list, all on one screen. (The intertitles are clearly not original.)

Title sequences were commonly corporate branding and functional information in the early sound era, although there are some films where the cast is identified individually with brief clips. A major shift was Universal's 1936 version of *Show Boat* which used an elaborate title sequence to signify this was a prestige picture, and not one of the very shameful monster films that had kept Universal afloat.

About those monster films Universal made in the 1930s—the current day Universal is still cashing in on them. The original version of Universal went bankrupt when *Show Boat* was not the commercial success they needed.

If you want to see the minute and a half title sequence to *Show Boat* with hundreds of paper dolls parading the opening credits, it's on YouTube. A DVD release of the 1936 version of *Show Boat* has long been promised.

A even longer plea for prestige is the six minute opening of the 1968 film, *Oliver!* British cinema had long had an inferiority complex compared to the films from the United States and some other European countries. Many of Britain's best young talents had come to the U. S. to build their careers (Charlie Chaplin, James Whale, and Boris Karloff are good examples) or had started their careers in the U.K. and moved to the U.S. for better offers. (Alfred Hitchcock is an example of the latter.) British cinema got better after World War II, but was still catching up when it had the chance to do the film adaptation of Lionel Bart's landmark stage musical.

Just making an excellent adaptation wasn't enough. The producers of the film made it a road show, that is, movie house tickets had an assigned seat, just like the touring company of the play. The film opens with an "Overture" while patrons settle in their seats, followed by a long credit sequence. The prestige ploy worked. The film was a box-office success and won the Oscar for Best Picture. The bad news was that it excelled at a form of film musical that was out-of-date and didn't win another Best Picture Oscar for 34 years, when *Chicago* won.

It was only seven years later when British stage musicals gave film one its most memorable opening sequences—the "lips" in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

The "lips" opening appears because rights were too expensive to film what was planned, clips from films mentioned the title sequence song, "Science Fiction/Double Feature."



A piano and drum perform a rock-tinged version of the Fox Fanfare with the normal mid-70s 20th Century Fox logo occupying the screen. After a brief fade out,

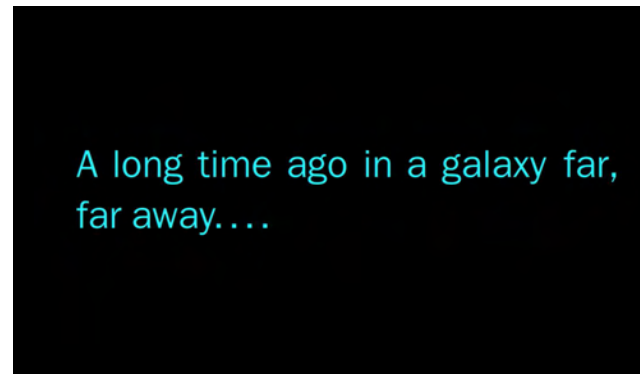
the words "20th Century Fox Presents" redundantly fills the screen, just in case you didn't notice the prior logo.

That's followed by a production company credit: "A Lou Adler—Michael White Production." You'll see those names again in the opening credits.

The music begins as the production credit fades. The lips are actress Patricia Quinn lip-synching to the vocals of Richard O'Brien. In order to perform the full lyrics to the song, the opening credits are unusually thorough. It's not often in mid-70s films that the Production Accountant gets an opening credit.

Two years later 20th Century Fox would release what is arguably the film with the most famous opening sequence: *Star Wars*.

The opening is blue lettering on a dark screen, "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..." That yields to the yellow and black name of the film, *Star Wars*. As the name of the film recedes, the famous crawl begins, reminiscent of the way chapter serials recounted the earlier portions of the story. What's unusual is the crawl appears at the bottom of the screen, moving away into the distance as more text appears.



The original 1977 opening is on YouTube as well as the current day opening which adds "Episode 4: A New Hope" to the title. Incidentally, if you're looking around YouTube take a moment to view the opening of *Star Wars* redone in the style of the television show *Dallas*. It's quite good.

The lack of a director's credit in the opening to *Star Wars* angered the Directors Guild of America. Director George Lucas eventually resigned his DGA membership. Nowadays it's quite common for the cast and production credits to be absent from the beginning of a film.

Science-fiction was uncommon in the early sound era, largely because studios hesitated to put production costs into an unproven film genre. When science-fiction appeared, it was often as an element of some other genre. Also, there was some science-fiction where the technology didn't exist to produce the film credibly—the long history of attempts to develop

Edgar Rice Burroughs *A Princess of Mars*, for example.

An early example is the 1930 musical comedy, *Just Imagine*. Set in 1980, the film depicts a very changed future. It has five opening title cards, looking much like the one from *Metropolis* (and, of course, like the science-fiction pulp magazine art of the era.) Other than the production design of the title card, there's nothing that stands out about the title sequence. *Dr. Who* fans might find interesting the film's dog, K-9.

Science-fiction fared much better in the 1931 horror classic, *Frankenstein*. Again, the title sequence is very ordinary, though there is a brief introductory passage that precedes it. And again, the SF element was a part of some other genre.

A science-fiction film with a good title sequence is the 1936 British film *Things to Come*. The static title cards are unusual in using ascending horizontal perspective.

The opening corporate branding logo is the standard one used by London Films of that era. The first informational card identifies the film as "H. G. Wells'" Note the apostrophe after the name of Wells. The name appears with slightly smaller letters at the left, progressing as if coming from the sky background into the screen. It resembles the path of an airplane taking off at a diagonal toward the viewer,—smaller, receding to the left, progressing growing larger to the right. That motif continues into the second card, revealing the film's title as it is uncovered from a darkened area, with the words *Things to Come* progressively viewable.

The third card identifies Alexander Korda as the producer, as does the fourth card for director William Cameron Menzies. Both cards continue the motif, as do the cards for other production personnel and the cast list, which scrolls upward rather than interrupt it with separate cards.

There is no title card that lists Wells as the screenwriter. Giving a famous writer the card before the title of the film implies that.

Popular in the pre-WWII era was showing a brief clip from the film identifying each primary cast member. A good example of this is the 1940 chapter serial, *Drums of Fu Manchu*.

Like most chapter serials, the opening is fast and efficient. The opening shows the title and the name of the producing studio, Republic Pictures. In small print below is the copyright and technical seals. The title card fades and is replaced by the words, "Suggested by Stories by Sax Rohmer."

The background remains unchanged as the cast credits begin. With a smoldering brazier positioned at the center of the bottom of the screen, a brief clip showing each cast member appears. After the photos conclude, there is a one-screen list of the supporting cast. Following that is a separate title card indicating "Chapter One: Fu Manchu Strikes." Being Chapter One doesn't preclude a written prolog. It explains that Fu Manchu intends to conquer Asia—never mind that in 1940 Japan was already trying to conquer Asia.

In researching this article I found several references extolling the mystery content of *The Drums of Fu Manchu*. Mystery content here seems to mean a lack of the stylish camp of previous Fu Manchu films, particularly the 1932 version, *The Mask of Fu Manchu*, starring Boris Karloff.

In Chapter One we learn Fu Manchu's zombie-henchmen look like a black & white version of Blue Man Group, and the episode ends with two trains, one of them a passenger train with a hundred or so people, have a head-on wreck. At the start of Chapter 2 we learn the hero and the girl jumped from the train just before it collided. There's no mention of anyone being on board or being injured. *The Drums of Fu Manchu* may avoid many of the outlandish motifs of its predecessor, but it's hardly a step forward intellectually.

The individual cast photos appear only in Chapter 1. In the other 14 chapters it's replaced with a recap of prior chapters. There are many other similar title



sequences in the early sound and pre-WWII era. This is one of the better ones.

Filmed science-fiction was mostly dormant during WWII and the late 1940s. In the early 1950s cold war and the space race revived interest in the genre.

Most sci-fi films of the 1950s were lower budget efforts without the resources to produce a complex opening sequence. To a large extent, science-fiction films didn't need them. The opening credits to the 1956 classic *Forbidden Planet* is simple and effective. The credits are in sharp yellow letters flowing against darkness of outer space pinpricked by the occasional star. The credits are curved, implying the curvature of space. It's a very good evocation of a concept that exists in more than the two dimensions of a movie screen.

In 1958 when Ian Fleming released the sixth James Bond novel, Fu Manchu's creator Sax Rohmer (pen name of Arthur Sarsfield Ward) was still alive. Fleming updated Rohmer's villain and changed his name to *Dr. No*. I'm not particularly fond of the opening credits for the first James Bond film, which starts with the memorable "James Bond Theme" and moves ungracefully into a calypso version of "Three Blind Mice." One visual part of the opening endures. The inside view of a gun barrel pointed at Bond. Near-future science-fiction is a strong element of the James Bond series though it is presented as a secret agent spy film.

An obscure science-fiction film with a notable title crawl is Edgar G. Ulmer's 1958 film, *Beyond the Time Barrier*. It's probably not the first film to have the credits disappearing upwards, with the credits starting low, gradually moving back and away from the foreground. It very much reminds of the text flow in the opening to *Star Wars*. The film also has one of the better explanations for time travel. The earth continues to rotate while a jet plane climbs, creating separate time references for each. The pilot finds a brief hole between the two and is cast into the future. That isn't far from what was overlooked in 2011 when real-life scientists briefly thought they had observed neutrinos traveling faster-than-light.

Cinema and filmed science-fiction developed very differently in Europe during this period. The first film movement to develop after World War II is Italian neo-realism. It has no direct connection to science-fiction, but it does offer one of film's masterpieces, *Bicycle Thieves* (sometimes translated *The Bicycle Thief*.) Steven has assured me if you're disappointed in it, he will refund your free subscription to *Argentus Online*.

There's some notable Italian science fiction that followed neo-realism, but that's a different article than this one. What's relevant is that neo-realism led to the second post-WWII European film movement, the French New Wave.

France holds a prominent place in the history of science-fiction. Jules Verne pre-dated H. G. Wells, and *Le voyage dans la lune* is the first important science-fiction film. The French new wave contributed *Alphaville*, which ranks with *Solaris* as a top film in a language other than English.

Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (1965) has a minimalist black & white title sequence, which fits exactly the film's minimalist black & white motifs. The production credits move very fast. Small white letters against a solid black background. There are several single rows of credits, each appearing individually on a row lower than the one above it. The first sound is an electronic pop, followed by the main title of the film. Following that is a picture of a flashing light against a dark background. The final credit shows a mural on a tall wall, bearing the film's secondary title *The Strange Adventure of Lemmy Caution* (in French) and the names of the three primary cast members.

Alphaville presages cyberpunk, and contrasts its technocrat dystopia by having the story revolve around Caution, a film noir detective. In Godard's more than eighty feature films, there's quite a bit of surrealism and fantasy. *Alphaville* is a key film of the French New Wave, and by far Godard's most overtly science-fictional work. It's an example of how a title sequence doesn't need to be lengthy or complex to complement the film that follows.

The 1972 Soviet film *Solaris* also uses simple white lettering on a solid black background. The titles advance slowly, contemplatively, to a subdued music theme. Again, the title sequence sets the mood of the film. *Solaris* is 166 minutes. *Alphaville* is 99 minutes. You probably could have guessed there was a big gap on running times just by looking at the opening credits for each.

Steven Soderbergh is one of the U.S. directors most influenced by European cinema. His 2009 film *The Girlfriend Experience* is a direct attempt to make a Jean-Luc Godard film. In 2002 he remade *Solaris*. Both films had mixed reactions on release, but quickly gained critical reception. *Solaris* consistently gains a spot on lists of the ten best film remakes, even if some George Clooney fans weren't sure what they'd seen.

The opening title sequence for the *Solaris* remake? There isn't one. Its run time is 99 minutes, the same as *Alphaville*. Good remakes don't needlessly copy the source film.

There are many more, probably thousands, of films that include elements of science-fiction that pre-date *Star Wars*. These are only a few of the openings that could have been mentioned. In the era after *Star Wars* directors started paying more artistic attention to the opening title sequence, often choosing to have none at all.

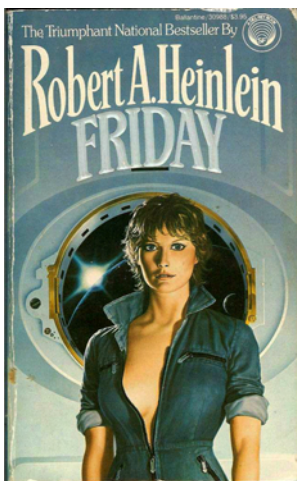
Cover Verdict

Frank and Brianna Spacekat Wu

Reading a book is hard. Frank and Bri just judge the cover.



Bri: I was so excited for *Saturn's Children* before it was released! When I first met Charlie Stross in England, he told me he was working on a novel deliberately evocative of Robert Heinlein, who is my favorite science fiction writer by miles. *Saturn's Children* is the story of Freya Nakamichi-47. She's a gynoid, a robot built to please humans sexually. Yet, humans have become extinct, leaving her without purpose. Many of her sisters have committed suicide. She roams the galaxy, working as a courier. The novel has many allusions to *Friday*, one of my favorite Heinlein stories.



Frank: Oh yeah. Some of the Heinlein covers are classics. Michael Whelan did the cover to *Friday*. He's one of my favorite painters, a true genius. But Whelan's painting of *Friday* works for reasons that

the *Saturn's Children* cover doesn't. Whelan's *Friday* exists in a believable space, with a background with a symbolically ovum-shaped portal. The girl herself is beautifully painted, with delicately tussled hair and a layered expression. Michael has said that guys have asked him for the model's phone number. Thing is, though, that he pulled *Friday* out of his mind—it's not based on a specific person.

The girl on the *Saturn's Children* cover—by Joe Williamsen—is also the product of the artist's mind, in the form of a 3D computer model. They could have sculpted it any way they wanted, with any proportions or facial features they wanted. You can create materials and shapes that don't exist in nature. There was a lot of potential, but it just doesn't work here.

Bri: It's too bad, but I totally agree. My day job is in making videogames, so I know a lot about producing 3D work of attractive women. I don't think this cover works at all, either in being a successful 3D model, or a piece of art in general.

Let's start with the blank expression of Freya on the cover. This is what bothers me the most. Take my word for it that facial rigging is a very complex art. You can accomplish it with blend shapes, morph targets or joints—but when it's done well you have a figure that can display a wide range of emotion. But, this cover shows no emotion. It's just a blank, cheerful stare forward. It's a default state for a female face with very little or no rigging. Just to illustrate, I took one of our models and had her looking forward in a default state, with all the facial rigging zeroed out. Then I took the same model and created a more complex facial emotion for it. See how much more powerful the character is? See how much more of a story it tells?

Frank: Her face explains her personality in the second, but in the first she just looks like another Barbie doll. Freya's expression doesn't work for me because a human face is a complex mass of interconnected muscles, fat and skin. There's reason that Tom Hanks's motion-captured face in *Polar Express* looked fake. Markers were placed on top of his face and tracked with a computer as they moved around as he smiled or frowned. But the markers only measured the distance between points, and not bunching and wrinkling of human flesh. Thus, when Hanks raised his eyebrows, the skin between his eyes and hairline simply disappeared. No forehead wrinkles, no bunching of flesh. When he smiled, there was no conservation of muscle volumes, the cheeks weren't gathered and crumpled. Laugh lines and other wrinkles define expressions. The cheek bunching also



subtly changes the shape of the eyes, pushing up the outside bottom quarter of each eye. Hence the phrase, “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling.” The mouth in the *Saturn’s Children* render is smiling, but the eyes are not. This is the same problem they had in the *theatrical Star Wars Clone Wars* movie and the first few TV episodes.

Bri: Exactly. Because they did minimal facial rigging, they couldn’t capture any of that life. And even if they had tried, the bar is so high with making a believable human. People are used to seeing this work done in movies like it’s no big deal. It’s just a product they expect. They don’t understand the hundreds of hours that can go into it.

Frank: What also bothers me about the modeling of the model is the absence of any believable musculature. My old painting professor Paul Vazquez taught me that the most important part of a portrait is the neck. In the Whelan painting, there is a sense of clavicle (collar bone) and the sterno-mastoid muscle that runs from the middle of the clavicle to the ear. In the *Saturn’s Children* cover, the neck is a simple tube. Again, no wrinkling and bunching on the side where her head’s bent toward her shoulder.

Bri: I think asking the artist to create muscle systems under the model is a bit unrealistic. But they could have faked some of that detail with zBrush and normal mapping. Or, at the very least some clever shading in Photoshop. But, I think the problem is, to make a truly believable human model, the artist needs to put a lot more work into it. With the skin, the artist seems to be using a standard shading material with a texture map for blush.

I also think the model geometry has problems. The artist has gone with a look that’s very realistic human

proportions. But, if you’re going for a realistic art style, there are so many other tricks a 3D artist needs to pull out of their toolbox. One method is to use subsurface scattering to simulate the glow of blood vessels underneath the skin.

Another method, that’s tricky with making an attractive female character, is to use a program like zBrush to paint imperfections into the skin. You can then turn that into a normal map, which doesn’t create new geometry, it just fakes it while the file is being rendered. I’ve made an exaggerated version on a sphere so you can see what I mean. The artist didn’t need to make her pores and skin imperfections even obvious to the camera—it would have made the render look much less plasticky.

Frank: The issue is what we call the “Uncanny Valley.” It’s a psychological phenomenon where a realistically painted face (e.g., Mona Lisa) is attractive. But so is a face purposefully unrealistic, such as a stuffed animal, or a smiley face, or an anime heroine like your work. But faces which are attempting realism but don’t quite achieve it, are actually disturbing. Those not-quite-human near misses include the sick, the dead, and the zombie. And Freya’s portrait.

Bri: That’s really harsh—but pretty fair. So, what do we think works here? I think the artist has actually done a good job on her costume. If you look at the hexagons poking out of her skinsuit, it looks like two different materials, yet they’re right on top of each other. That’s tricky to do. You have to either divide your UV space in half and use two different materials, or extract your mesh and apply a different shader. I also like the shadows they’ve created. The costume looks a lot more alive than her face.

What’s the story with the glass sphere she’s holding, though? The one thing that’s drop dead simple to implement is glass in a 3D render. Mental ray makes dedicated shaders for this—you just drag them onto a sphere, and it does all the hard work for you. Then you make a star and drag it inside. The lack of detail here is just surprising to me. Maybe they’re using a free program like Blender and don’t have access to professional shaders?

So, do you have anything positive to say about this cover?

Frank: Uhm, I like the boobs?

Bri: That kind of expert art opinion is why you have four Hugos.

The Tao Of Happiness

Alexis Gilliland

The following essay was inspired by Joshua Wolf Shenk's article "What Makes Us Happy" in the June 2009 issue of The Atlantic.

Morrie the critic took a sip of green tea. "Happiness is like health," he said pensively. "Each being a state of which you are made aware by its absence. Or you could define happiness as psychological health."

I filled my own cup and stirred in sugar. "Well maybe, maybe not. We humans evolved to be healthy, the sickly and unfit dying out before they could reproduce. Are you saying we also evolved to be happy? A strong case could be made that children cause unhappiness, with more anecdotal evidence than you could shake a stick at."

"You do have a point, Max, a definite point," he replied at last. "Relying on Nietzsche, children could be a case of what doesn't kill me makes me stronger."

"So since children are necessary for evolution, and inimical to happiness, how can you argue that we humans are evolving towards happiness?"

"Well, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is in the Declaration of Independence," he offered, citing an irrelevant authority.

I took a sip of tea. "Yes, but so what? Can you argue that we are evolving in any of those directions?"

"A case could be made in that those parents whose children made them less unhappy would be likely to have more children, I suppose. Therefore, as a survival mechanism, children might be evolving in the direction of making their parents happy."

"That's what grandchildren are for, Morrie."

"Hey, you can't do only one thing, Max. Even if you are right that children are a net source of unhappiness, they also produce some happiness, and that is what gets remembered."

"Well, maybe, maybe not? Okay, a point for you. What about that connection between health and happiness you were talking about, eh?"

He ate a piece of southern sushi, seaweed and rice wrapped around pickled okra and barbecued pork. "Health and psychological health both evolved by overcoming challenges. Consider, the mammalian immune system—that mainstay of human health, evolved over millions of years in the unsanitary conditions of the real world. Our immune system—any immune system, requires a series of biologic challenges in order to develop properly. Alas, in our modern hyper-sanitary conditions overflowing with germicides, bactericides, mouth washes and chlorinated water, we have minimized those challenges

so that the child's autoimmune system often fails to develop properly. As a result of this culturally induced fear of germs the adult may suffer from a variety of autoimmune diseases, such as asthma, arthritis and so on."

"And you are going where with this?"

He shrugged his eyebrows. "Compared to the immune system, the human mind is far more recent, so it is hardly surprising that it hasn't got all the bugs worked out yet. Depression and epilepsy, for example, not to mention paranoia, hallucinations, and megalomania, but to be psychologically healthy the individual needs to have coped with psychological challenges."

"Which is why God invented high school?"

"Surely you jest," said Morrie. "God invented our long maturation period, and made it climax with our peak sexual drive for reasons which must have seemed like a good idea at the time. Only the times they up and changed, and adapting to our civilization requires a much longer maturation period than was needed when we were simply hunter-gatherers."

"Pardon my rhetorical flourish," I conceded. "Who did invent high school, then?"

"School boards, of course. Mark Twain said that God made idiots for practice, and then He made school boards. In fairness, I expect that high schools evolved over time to fill the demand for better educated workers."

"That was then, before everybody went to college."

He sighed. "Growing up is one challenge, getting laid is quite another, and way too many people confuse the one with the other."

"A lot of anecdotal evidence supports that idea, too," I agreed.

"Yes, yes, we both could name any number of smart, talented people who never grew up. You know the Grant study?"

"Those 268 Harvard men from the 1940s who were studied, interviewed and examined repeatedly and in depth until they all died?"

"They aren't all dead yet, but after 72 years of being examined they're getting there, and yes, that's the study. What they found was the seven attributes of a well and happy man."

I spread my hands. "Which were?"

"Mature adaptations: humor, altruism—what I would call generosity of spirit, anticipation, or looking ahead, and impulse control, described as suppression and sublimation."

"Is that the seven, Morrie?"

“No, no.” He took a sip of tea. “Mature adaptations only counts as one. The others are education, a stable marriage, not smoking, not abusing alcohol, some exercise, and a healthy weight.”

“Very scientific, perhaps, but maybe a bit of a fudge to get seven. How do these seven attributes compare with the seven deadly sins?”

He sat back in his chair. “The wisdom of the ancients wasn’t always bogus,

I suppose. Can you recall them, offhand?”

“Back in the day we had to memorize them for Sunday school: Anger, Envy, Gluttony, Greed, Lust, Pride, and Sloth.” I took a bite of northern sushi, seaweed and rice wrapped around bean paste, bacon, and pickled onion. “I was very annoyed to lose a half point on Anger when it should have been Wrath.”

“Well, we do have an elite sample, so I suppose those selected Harvard men might be less sinful than the general population. Clearly gluttony is at odds with a healthy weight, but I don’t think there’s any one to one correspondence with the rest of them.”

“Sloth would mean you exercise less than you should,” I suggested.

“And it might also keep you from getting your damned doctor’s degree,” he agreed. “While anger, lust and envy all work against a stable marriage, but so will greed and pride when they lead you to neglect your wife for your career.” He paused for a moment. “Smoking doesn’t fit with any of them, it’s just a habit that’s adverse to your health. Abusing alcohol, now, that could be caused by depression, or just about anything.”

“Do you think religion makes people happy?”

Morrie put wasabi and pickled ginger on a piece of sushi, ate it in two bites washing it down with a swallow of tea. “For some people, yes, maybe even for some Harvard men. In his novel *The Slave*, Isaac Bashevis Singer wrote of his protagonist: “But now at least he understood his religion: its essence was the relationship between man and his fellows.” Religious teaching places emphasis on mature adaptations, especially for your co-religionists, which a lot of people might never figure out on their own. On the other hand...”

“On the other hand?”

“Dostoyevsky wrote: ‘If God does not exist, then everything is permitted,’ which suggests that religion relies on its theological underpinning. The omniscient God who knows your deeds and knows your thoughts, and passes judgment on your miserable life is the necessary enforcer of your good behavior.

If you don’t believe, you might still be happy if you score four or more of those seven attributes, but religion won’t be pushing you in the direction of happiness.”

“If you don’t believe, it won’t be pushing you in any direction, right?”

“Alas, yes. Without religion-and ours has the look of an increasingly, secular age, the ego and superego have a much harder time reigning in the id.”

“So for the general happiness, we need a secular...what? A secular religion is a contradiction in terms.”

Morrie thought about that for a while. “A secular ethics,” he said at last.

“It should repackage the old religious ethics so that the secular population will pick up on it, putting that good old wine in a new and enticing secular bottle.”

“You mean, do this because Darwin says it will improve your chances of reproductive success? What if they don’t want reproductive success?”

“You’re never going to be getting everybody, Max, and besides, it would be phrased something like: this set of ethics approximates humanity’s evolutionary optimum, with reproductive success hidden in the fine print. For the kids, you can tell them that secular ethics is acting cool, and most of them will buy it.”

“What kids?”

“The ones who don’t buy into religion, Max. As you say, a secular church may be a contradiction in terms, but a non-theistic church that does not rely on an omnipotent, omniscient, and just God to keep the faithful in line would fit with Isaac Bashevis Singer’s definition of religion very nicely.”

“The essence of your Darwinist religion is going to be the relationship of man with his fellows?”

“Except for their theology, all religions are essentially the same, Max, the idea being to encourage people to behave well to each other, at least within the group. Altruism encouraged by social control and enforced by punishment. If it catches on, a good secular humanist in a Darwinist religion will act a lot like a good Christian.”

I excused myself, and when I returned to the table I asked him in a meandering sort of way if he really thought religion could make people happy.

“It can,” Morrie allowed. “Especially if you define happiness in terms of religious fulfillment.”

“How do you define happiness?” I asked.

He thought about that for a bit. “Happiness is your psychic reward for successfully meeting a challenge, any sort of challenge. Which is why people have always had a problem imagining heaven where there were no challenges allowed.”

“Standing around basking in the glory of God 24/7 isn’t much of a challenge, agreed. Some of the early Christian heavens had special balconies, sort of like big old TV screens where you could look down on your enemies suffering in hell.”

“*Schadenfreude*, to be sure, but no challenge.”

“In Valhalla, the Norse heaven, the heroes ate the big breakfast, chose sides, and went out and fought all day, then lo and behold, all the killed and wounded were healed at night. The next day they did it all over again.”

“Lots of exercise, but no challenge.”

“And in Fiddler’s Green, the good sailors were in this great tavern where it was always an hour before they had to catch the tide.”

“Good food and drink, lively music and beautiful barmaids, but the challenge of sailing has been indefinitely postponed.”

“Morrie,” I sighed. “Might it be that you have defined happiness in antireligious terms?”

“Eh?” he shrugged. “I don’t think so. Eternal anything gets boring after a while, which is heaven’s fault and none of my own.”

“Listening to music I like makes me happy,” I said. “Reading a good book, eating a good meal with friends—you included, lots of things make me happy. Mostly they are the felicities of every day life providing a welcome contrast to the usual grind and have nothing to do with overcoming some stupid challenge.”

“In your case, Max, maybe getting through the daily grind might be a challenge, okay?”

I looked at him. “Oh? And has someone just defined ‘challenge’ down to the point where it doesn’t mean anything?” He slowly drank his green tea and said nothing, which I took to be a concession, so I changed the subject. “What does that Grant study say about having friends, anyway?”

“Friends are good,” Morrie said at last. “Having a stable marriage is the biggie, but having friends may be seen as an indicator that the individual has been using mature adaptations in dealing with the world.”

“So having friends is a result and not the cause of being happy?”

“There would be an equilibrium, I think. You’re happy so you have friends, and your friends feed that happiness.” He paused and rubbed his chin. “On the other hand a paranoid or a megalomaniac tends not to have friends, and being depressed a lot tends to lose the ones you do have.”

“Fine and dandy, Morrie, but when you get right down to it, what does the Grant study tell you about happiness?”

“Even if you graduate from Harvard, and the psychiatric department certifies you as well-adjusted, there’s no guarantee that you won’t screw up some

how. Kennedy, who was in the study, was assassinated. Lung cancer from cigarettes, obesity from overeating, drink can kill you all sorts of ways. Over the 72-year course of the study, there were only three individuals, out of 268, who were always among the top ten.

Always happy people turned out to be one percent of a population that should have been as happy as clams at high tide.”

“And the average guys, what about them, eh?”

“There was another study, the Glueck study, which had been looking at juvenile delinquents and had tracked a control group of non-delinquents starting back in 1939. In the 1970s the Grant people went after that control group. The 29 who went to college—about 6 percent, were comparable to the Harvard men. The rest lost about a decade of life due to less education, obesity, smoking, and alcohol abuse.”

“So they were less healthy. Does that mean they were also less happy?”

“The 29 who went to college...”

I interrupted him. “Things that aren’t good for you can make you happy, Morrie. Drinking with your friends, smoking, eating—fine dining if you prefer, they all make you happy even if you get cirrhosis of the liver, lung cancer and seriously fat.”

“You left out fornication, Max, and making a lot of money. Mae West said: ‘I’ve been rich, and I’ve been poor, and believe me rich is better.’”

“Old and rich may be better than old and poor, but what good is it if you can’t take it with you?”

“People love you because you have to leave it behind.”

“Well, yes, a point for you. Besides, making money may have been the only pleasure the Calvinists didn’t forbid, but are you saying that to be happy you need to be a rich, old, lean Harvard graduate who stayed married to the same wife for 60 or 70 years?”

“You left out non-smoking and sober.” He paused. “Maybe not. Some people—even some Harvard men, are just naturally happy, which would help them stay healthy. Maybe the human race is evolving towards happiness?”

“Do you think so?”

“Not really,” he shook his head. “No. Maybe being happy helps you live a long and healthy life, but it doesn’t have a whole hell of a lot to do with your reproductive success. So if happiness is a genetic adaptation, it isn’t spreading worth a damn.”

“What a pity,” I said, as we paid the check and left.

Libraries sans frontières

Fred Lerner

A recent report on book retailing from the market research firm Simba Information noted that “even though bookstores have lost some of their customer base over the years, the channel feeds into the e-book universe by serving as a ‘book showroom’ for the roughly 10% of U.S. adults who buy e-books.” This looks like bad news for booksellers, but I find myself wondering if it might be a glimpse into the real future of book distribution.

The book trade in its present form is one of the most inefficient systems for distributing merchandise in existence. Publishers have no reliable way of knowing how many copies of a book to print. They have no way of knowing how many of the books that they think they have sold will be returned for full credit by bookstores who despair of selling them. These problems stem from the fact that the book in its traditional form is an unwieldy combination of intangible intellectual content and bulky physical container.

The electronic book separates the physical aspect of the book from the intellectual, making it economically more efficient than the printed book. Although the costs of writing, acquiring, and editing a manuscript and preparing it for publication are pretty much the same for both forms, the costs of production, distribution, and storage of the electronic book are minimal. For those readers who are more interested in the content of a book than in its physical form, the printed book and the shop that sells it are increasingly less relevant to their needs.

The most obvious function of the bookstore is to allow customers to obtain immediately either specific books that they want, or books whose authors or titles might be unknown but that meet certain defined characteristics (such as subject matter, level of presentation, or suitability for a particular purpose).

An equally important function is to facilitate the serendipitous discovery of books: to provide customers with the books they needed but didn’t necessarily know that they wanted.

A third function, one probably valued more by the bookstore visitor than by its owner, is that of providing a place where people interested in books can gather to enjoy books in various ways. I use the term “visitor” rather than “customer” because many of them go to the bookstore without the intention of purchasing anything. Booksellers have tended to encourage this behavior, in the expectation that their wares will prove irresistible to people who find comfort in spending time in an environment full of books.

Online vendors can easily provide their customers with known items, but are less efficient at guiding them to desired material whose bibliographic details are unknown. With the aid of crowdsourcing they are improving their ability to foster serendipity. And they are working to create virtual communities of readers with shared

interests—though they have yet to find a way to replicate the pleasure of discussing recently read books with a few friends at a table in a bookstore cafe.

There exists an alternative to the bookstore, one that is much more widely distributed and much less susceptible to the economic pressures that are threatening to make booksellers an endangered species. Public libraries can fulfill practically all the roles played by bookstores, and many of them do. They provide access to books, both from their own collections and from those of affiliated libraries (in many cases on a regional or statewide basis). They provide the ability to discover books either by browsing through the collection or by consulting a staff trained in helping people find information. And they offer places to gather for the enjoyment of books — even, in an increasing number of cases, over a cup of coffee.

The one thing most public libraries do not offer their patrons is the opportunity to purchase for themselves copies of books that they want to own. But there’s no reason that they can’t provide this service. Museums commonly sell books in their gift shops, and I’m told that my book *The Story of Libraries* is on sale at the British Library’s bookshop in London. Like restaurants and coffee shops these provide both a service valued by visitors and needed revenue to the institutions that house them.

At the Harvard Book Store in Cambridge a “book printing robot” called Paige M. Gutenberg offers “nearly five million titles,” putting out-of-print books and books that are no longer under copyright in customers’ hands within minutes. There’s no reason that an ambitious public library couldn’t offer this service. And once the appropriate arrangements have been made with publishers, a wide range of titles still in copyright could also be offered. Providing the infrastructure for this would be a logical task for the jobbers through whom most libraries currently order their printed books.

As long as libraries are in the business of selling printed books, whether in publishers’ editions or printed on demand, they might as well sell electronic books too. A public library that is doing its job properly already has on its premises a showroom where customers can examine printed copies of those titles most likely to interest them.

So instead of the bookstore taking on the role of the public library, and going bankrupt in the process, let’s have the public library take on the role of the bookstore. With the revenue it earns from selling books to its customers it can sustain its traditional function of making information freely available to the public and fostering the cultural life of its community. And it can help to sustain the writers, editors, and publishers who create those books in the first place.

The Day I Went Nuclear

Rich Lynch

It's been just about 25 years since it happened, but the memory is as fresh as if it was yesterday.

Back then I was still living in Chattanooga and working for the Tennessee Valley Authority. The projects I was involved in often took me to the wilds of central Kentucky where one of TVA's largest coal-fired power plants was located. The power plant had just finished construction of a new front-end coal beneficiation facility, as part of its compliance to Clean Air Act regulations, so that the relatively inexpensive high sulfur coal mined nearby could continue to be burned.

The coal beneficiation plant was actually just a big separation process where mineral matter that contained most of the sulfur could be separated from the actual coal by a simple float-sink procedure. The density of the separation liquid (finely-ground magnetite slurry with water) could be adjusted to fine tune the process to where a minimal amount of the high density sulfur-containing material was accepted and a minimal amount of the lower density carboniferous material was rejected. But to make it all work properly, some process control was needed.

That's where I came in. A new technology had just been developed that could, in theory at least, do a real-time elemental analysis on bulk quantities of the "washed" coal. It was called "prompt gamma neutron activation analysis"—the way it worked was that sulfur and other elements in the coal emit gamma rays of various energy levels after absorbing neutrons from a californium-252 source, and the resulting gamma ray spectrum can be computer analyzed to determine the relative abundance of each element. The idea was that the results could be used for feedback control of the beneficiation plant.

In practice, it was a lot more difficult than that. A contractor had developed a prototype, but it turned out to be something much more suited to a pristine laboratory than a dirty coal processing plant. I was lead engineer of the group that was given charge of the analyzer, and to keep it going we had to redevelop the device as the project proceeded. We eventually ended up with a hardened device that could mostly do the job it was intended for, but by then the californium neutron source had

decayed to the point where it needed to be changed out.

When working with nuclear materials, nothing is easy or trivial. We had obtained the neutron source on loan from Oak Ridge National Laboratory and that's where it had to be returned. So we brought in a big and bulky shipping cask, and at that point the TVA nuclear safety people got involved with instructions and indoctrinations of various kinds. The source itself was small, about two inches in length and maybe half an inch in diameter. There were several layers of inert metal cladding to seal in the californium, but we were nevertheless told we had to do a "wipe test" of the source, once it was extracted from the analyzer, to make sure none of the radioactive material had leaked. One other thing we were told was that, because of the design and location of the analyzer, we would have to do an air transfer of the source to get it into the shipping cask.

It turned out, no surprise, that there aren't any written procedures for air transfers of californium neutron sources—we had to make up one that fit our specific circumstances. And Step #1 was that I, as lead project engineer, was the one to do the transfer. So come the day of the big event, there I was, holding one end of a 20-foot length of quarter-inch all-thread, with the other end screwed into the source which was still safely entombed in the analyzer. The nuclear safety guy had taped a small piece of textile of some kind to the side of a nearby conveyor, and had skedaddled after telling me that once I had extracted the source I needed



to rub it against that cloth before I did anything else. My plan was to pull the source out, give it a quick wipe on the fabric, and then also skedaddle—out of the building and through a narrow passage between buildings to the field where the cask was located. A total distance of no more than about 100 feet. It looked fairly easy, and so I thought to myself, “Let’s do this!”

I remember that just before I pulled the source out of the analyzer I had taken a glance at the radiation counter the nuclear safety guy had left behind, which was placidly and audibly detecting background radiation...tick...tick...tick. But as I extracted the source, the counter went into catatonic shock: tick...tick..tick.tick.TICK.TICK.TICK.TI.TI.T.T.T.T.E EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

“Ohhhhhh, crap!” I thought. The needle on the counter’s dial had pegged all the way over and the counter was making this horrible loud shrieking noise. But that was the least of my worries. The twenty-foot length of all-thread was flexing and waving around like a giant insect antenna, and it was damn near impossible to control the position of the nuclear source at the far end of it. My first attempt at completing the wipe test didn’t get the source within three feet of the cloth. It took six tries to get it done, and while that was going on my sense of time became so distorted it seemed like an hour had passed. I finally managed to very briefly touch the source to the cloth, at which point I decided, “The hell with this!” and got out of there.

It didn’t take me very long to get the source to the cask. One of my co-workers later told me he had never

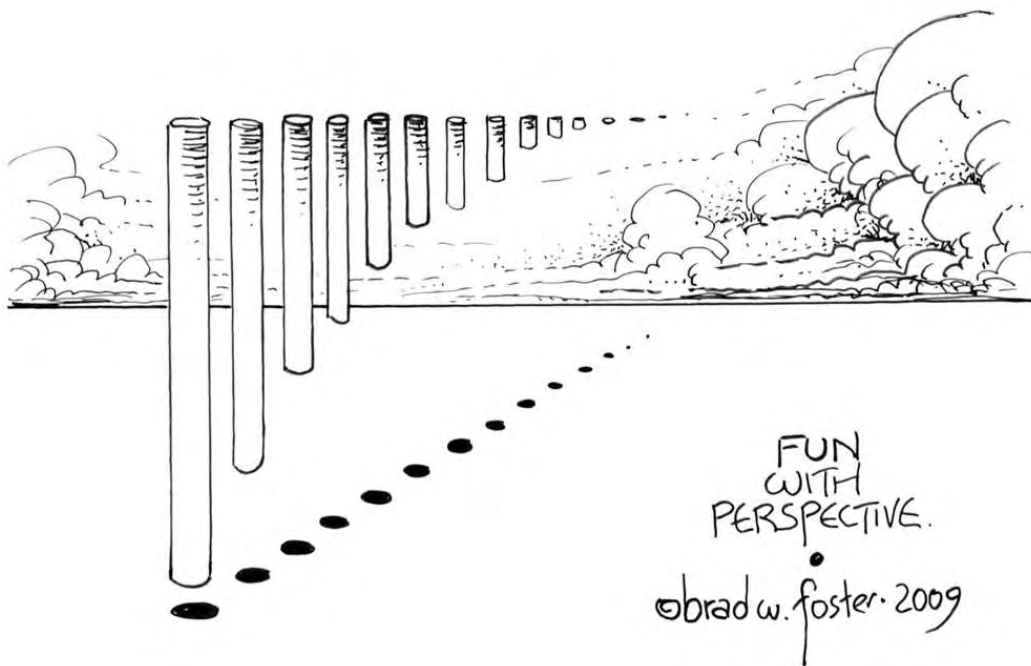


seen me move so fast. We were able to quickly seal off the source, and that was that. In spite of all the unexpected machinations, it turned out that I hadn’t received any significant amount of radiation from this escapade—despite the radiation counter’s sound and fury, the nuclear source really had decayed to where it was unusable.

As I mentioned, all that happened a quarter of a century ago. I’ve long since moved north to Maryland and settled into a new career as a government bureaucrat, or whatever it is an international trade specialist in the federal employ is called. The reason

the memory stays fresh with me is actually because of rock music. The most popular song of the British rock band The Who is “Won’t Get Fooled Again”, which gets played very, very often on Classic Rock Radio and is now even the theme music for one of the CSI television shows.

You know, it’s amazing how much Roger Daltrey’s signature scream just before the end of the song sounds like a pegged-out radiation counter!



Silver's Silver Anniversary

Steven H Silver

Back in 1986, I had attended several Gen Cons (first in Kenosha and later in Milwaukee), but had never been to a science fiction convention. I had been reading SF and fantasy for years, but wasn't really a fan, instead being a gamer. I was aware of science fiction conventions, but that was it, they were really just beginning to get onto my radar.

A few years earlier, in 1983, Joel Rosenberg had published his first novel, *The Sleeping Dragon*, about a group of gamers who found themselves living in the fantasy world in which their game was set. Unlike other the other early gamers-into-fantasy world novel, Andre Norton's *Quag Keep* (1979), the gaming mechanics were left behind once they made the transition into their fantasy world. I enjoyed the series and by 1986, Rosenberg had added two additional books, *The Sword and the Chain* (1984) and *The Silver Crown* (1985). At some point, I wrote a fan letter to Rosenberg and he responded.

Over the course of our correspondence, Joel mentioned that he would be attending a science fiction convention that was local to where I lived, Windycon XIII, in November. Although Windycon was local, I had previously been unaware of it. Unfortunately, it also wasn't particularly local anymore since by November of 1986, I was living in southern Indiana, attending college. However, an actual author was inviting me to meet him if I could get up to Chicago.

I managed to make it home for the weekend and drove out to Schaumburg, where Windycon was held. I got my badge and sat down with the program book, trying to figure out how to find Joel. He was scheduled for a panel and I figured the best way to meet him would be to attend the panel and introduce myself when it was over.

I got to the room early and positioned myself in the

front row on the aisle. I had only been there a few moments when a large bear of a man walked up to me, looked down at my name badge and asked, "Are you Steven Silver?" Joel knew I was planning on attending, knew I hadn't been to any conventions, and had made sure to keep an eye out for me and welcome me when he found me.

Throughout the weekend, Joel invited me to hang out with him and he introduced me to some of the other authors who were attending, including Robin Wayne Bailey, whose work I primarily knew, at the time, from the Thieves' World series, Harry Harrison, who was the guest of honor, and Barry B. Longyear. Although there is a tendency to paint the glory days of cons in brighter colors, that year's Windycon also sported agent Eleanor Wood, publisher Tom Doherty, John Brunner, Wilson Tucker, Lois McMaster Bujold, John Varley, Barry B. Longyear, Donald and Elsie Wollheim, Algis Budrys, Emma Bull & Will Shetterly, Martin H. Greenberg, Mike Resnick, Timothy Zahn, David Zindell, Bradley Denton, Frank Kelly Freas, Michael Kube-McDowell, Jack Williamson, and more. It was an excellent con for an introduction.

And while I probably would have remained in fandom even without Joel's guidance at that first Windycon, it certainly wouldn't have been as welcoming a place for me at the time if I hadn't made a connection. In fact, although I attended various Windycons, Rivercons, and InConJunctions over the years, I did so in relative anonymity until I moved back to Chicago in 1995.

But I wasn't completely anonymous in fandom, just when I attended cons. On-line fandom had begun to exist. I had created the Sidewise Awards with Evelyn Leeper and Robert Schmunk (neither of whom I had met at that point), I had written a couple of pseudonymous articles for fanzines. On one mailing list, I connected with someone who, after I moved back to Chicago and met in person became a very close friend.

I also decided it was time to join the Windycon committee. At my first meeting, I was asked what areas were of interest to me and wound up working under the tutelage of Ross Pavlac. I found out later that as a newcomer to the committee, Ross and Bill Roper had argued who would get to add me to take be under their wing and mold me into a conrunner.

Now, among other things, I help run conventions, or at least try to. When I was chairing Windycons XXIX and XXX, I explained that my goal was to find that magic that Windycon XIII held for me so that people who were attending their first convention would want to come back again and again. And I realized that no matter how close I came, and I think I did come close, I also knew that I could never recapture the feeling I had at Windycon XIII.



The ConRunner:

or There and Back Again
Deb Geisler

“I feel thin, sort of stretched, like butter, scraped over too much bread.”

Bilbo Baggins
on the occasion of his 111st Birthday
- J.R.R. Tolkien

Steven asked me to write about how to avoid the attenuated feelings that come of being spread out over too vast an acreage in working on things fannish—of having, as Bilbo did, a burden that he wasn’t even really aware of, but that was slowly turning him into a wraith of his former self. Steven noted, “I figure you’d be good since you’ve been in that place and have, from what I can tell, managed to extricate yourself.”

And the answer is yes, well. I have a great deal of sympathy for Tolkien’s hapless protagonist, who stumbled into a deal of work because he was flattered to be asked and didn’t take time to consider what this would mean. Like Bilbo, I had my own Gandalf, convinced that there was more to this hobbit than met the eye, and that I would have the skills needed to best the trolls and wargs and dragons. Fortunately for my various nieces and nephews, however, mine is a tale that ends with me, rather than one that embroils them in a multi-generational search for the antidote to ultimate evil.

This is *fandom*, after all, and not the stuff of legends.

So this bit of bitness is going to be an explanation of how one gets involved in a fannish treasure hunt (without pocket kerchiefs or thinking through supply lines), what can happen along the way, and when it is right to cry, “Hold! Enough!” (And, for the record, I didn’t extricate myself until it was really far too late.)

If you want people to give you more and more responsibility and authority, prove that you can handle what you are given over a series of projects and slow stages. (Or, perhaps more honestly, if you want to suck someone into your con-running venture, ease them in with a series of tasks and great rewards of egoboo when they accomplish what you want them to do.) That was my path, starting in 1989, with an unexpected invitation to work on the Worldcon (my first con-running experience) at a fairly high level (woof!)...then continuing through the 1990s as our local group got me involved with Boskone and other Worldcons and a bid to host another Boston (or somewhere) Worldcon.

Along came 1998, and one of our people did an officer poll of the members: if we win the Worldcon, who do you want to run it? I still have the emailed results from that poll, and another one three years later when we *did* win the right to host the Worldcon in Boston. Of 35 responses, 34 people said they wanted me as the chairman.

That was...unprecedented in my life. Like many of us in fandom and con-running, I was the kid *not* picked when, as Janis Ian sang, “choosing sides for basketball.” Suddenly there were people who not only liked me, but wanted to trust me with leading them and managing a million dollar project. So, like Bilbo, I said yes. Unlike Bilbo, I had some time for reflection...and thought I knew what chairing a Worldcon meant: what it would do to me, my friendships, my husband. Even so, I said yes.

So. So, so, so. We lost that bid. We *did* go out in a blaze of excruciatingly pink glory, but we lost none the less. Later, I would think, “Why didn’t I slip away then?” And the answer was that no one blamed me (well, except me); they treated me as a friend, still. They still wanted me as the president of the organization (although I refused to stand for re-election, it was nice to be wanted); they came to me with concerns and troubles (believing, naively, that I could make them right).

Our group was working on another project in the interim, and it proved to be more divisive than it would have been if we’d had a Worldcon in the works. The “treasure” here was not so vast (in terms of egoboo), but there was no longer the greater treasure of the Worldcon plunder to look for. And so people battled over petty things, did harm to themselves and the organization, and I grew lethargic.

And then, suddenly there was the possibility of another bid—shorter, more intense, for our own city. It re-energized people. They cast off the useless, petty squabbling, came together to get the job done, and there we were...another officer poll, and 34 of my friends said, again, they wanted me. So, I did it again. This time, I was that much less naive, that much more aware of what bidding meant. This time, I knew that if we lost again, that would be the end of my time in fandom. Only this time we won.

Which is harder: facing the failed bid, or facing the job of actually *running* the Worldcon? My friends would tell you it is the former. The latter, they would say, is hard, but it is all about creating, not watching one’s hopes go up in smoke.

What I learned from being the chairman of a Worldcon:

- (1) No matter how much you think you know about the job, you're wrong. It is taxing and difficult and exhausting in ways you never thought about.
- (2) You'd better really like your friends at the beginning. Some of them will disappoint you, because you thought you knew who they were. Every one of them will be who they are, but unless you can learn to help motivate and encourage and supervise them, that won't necessarily be a good thing. Personnel issues are down to you to take care of.
- (3) No one tells you the ugly little secret about major projects like this: winning can be just as devastating as losing; being successful can shred you just as quickly as failing. And even if they *did* tell you (and nobody did tell me), you probably wouldn't believe them anyway.
- (4) Former Worldcon chairman Martin Easterbook told me something really profound about halfway through the actual five days of our Worldcon. (He said it wasn't original to him, and I think he credited another former Worldcon chairman.) "Deb," he said with a sad sort of smile, "If you chair a bad Worldcon, thousands of people will be mad at you. And if you chair a perfect Worldcon, hundreds of people will be mad at you." So you can't worry about every single unhappy person in the job—there are times you have to just let go, do your best for the largest number of people, and hope that's going to be enough.
- (5) Eventually, this will end. You have to keep your people moving in the right direction *after* the convention, too. Get the last bits taken care of, finish all of your obligations to everyone. But even so, when the actual convention is over, you'll just want to hide in a hole. This is normal. Listen to me: take the time for yourself afterward.

Be warned that, even if you do #5 correctly, I'm convinced, there is a sense that you may have used up all of a vital resource, with nothing left to give. You feel...stretched thin. (I hadn't thought about the butter-on-bread line of Tolkien's until Steven wrote me about this article, but it is completely on point.) So, what is the single dumbest thing you can then do? That's right: get involved with more projects. That's what I did.

If you need to rest, rest. And if you've just come off of a major project, no matter how flattering it is to be asked, you probably need to rest. Get some other activities in your life. Pick and choose your projects, and have them show short-term results. Avoid situations that will be difficult for you emotionally. Don't listen to people when they say, "But nobody else

has your credibility, your gravitas. They'll *listen* to you," unless you really *want* to become embroiled in the situation.

And if some tiny ass robot, no matter how cute, starts broadcasting a message from a tart wearing cinnamon buns on the sides of her head saying, "Help me, Obi Wan Kenobi! You're our only hope!" Walk. Away. No, I take that back. Run away. (As an aside, it both troubles and tickles me that Microsoft Word knows who Obi Wan Kenobi is.)

See, here's the important thing about that post-major-project feeling: some time later, usually a few months, you'll start feeling like you have energy again. You'll start missing the frenzy and forgetting the terror. Adrenalin rushes can be addictive. But what you don't know—can't really know—is that this is a short-term burst. And when you wear yourself up *this* time, it will take longer to recover, and the spiritual and emotional deficit will be greater.

Okay, back to that wench in white wanting you to save the rebel alliance. She'll tell you you're unique and special and without you it will all falter.

If that's all true, then maybe it's meant to fail. I once wrote to someone about a situation where she was troubled and guilt-ridden because she seemed to be the only one who could keep a fan group going, but she just wanted to quit. She wanted advice about what she should do, because it wasn't fun anymore. My advice, "Save *you*...If the group is meant to survive as a group, it will save itself. As for the club, consider what clubs are for: they are groups of likeminded people who gather together for fun and frolic and education and companionship. If this particular club is meeting the needs of its members, other members, seeing you stepping away, will step in and work to keep it together."

Alas, I didn't take my own advice. My friends needed me! I was convinced. Someone had to do the job, and you're the best hobbit for it! Gandalf said. And so, two and a half years later, I was taken out of our annual convention on a stretcher in the middle of the night, my heart a victim of misplaced feelings of obligation.

Thus began a rather slow process of extricating myself from con-running: finish this obligation, cut the related connection, cauterize the loose ends, move along to the next. By 2009, I had slipped entirely out of the fannish circles that were once my home, missing the people, but realizing that this was perhaps the best thing. Once, in Fall of 2009, I showed up at a local work session, and three different people asked me what they should do about various con-running concerns. They weren't just seeking advice; they wanted someone to make the decision about what to do. That made me disengage still more—the knowledge that

Princess Leia was lurking, somewhere, and I might be stupid enough to shine up my universe-saving staff again.



The simple matter is that nobody but you can decide how much you should engage. Nobody but you can determine your energy, your strength, your tolerance levels. Nobody but you has to pay the consequences when you push too hard, stress your marriage, or wake up the hotel manager in the middle of the night because something is wrong with your heart and you need an ambulance.

Over the last two years, I've tried twice to re-engage at light levels. Once was a failure—not because of what I did or did not do, but because of the people

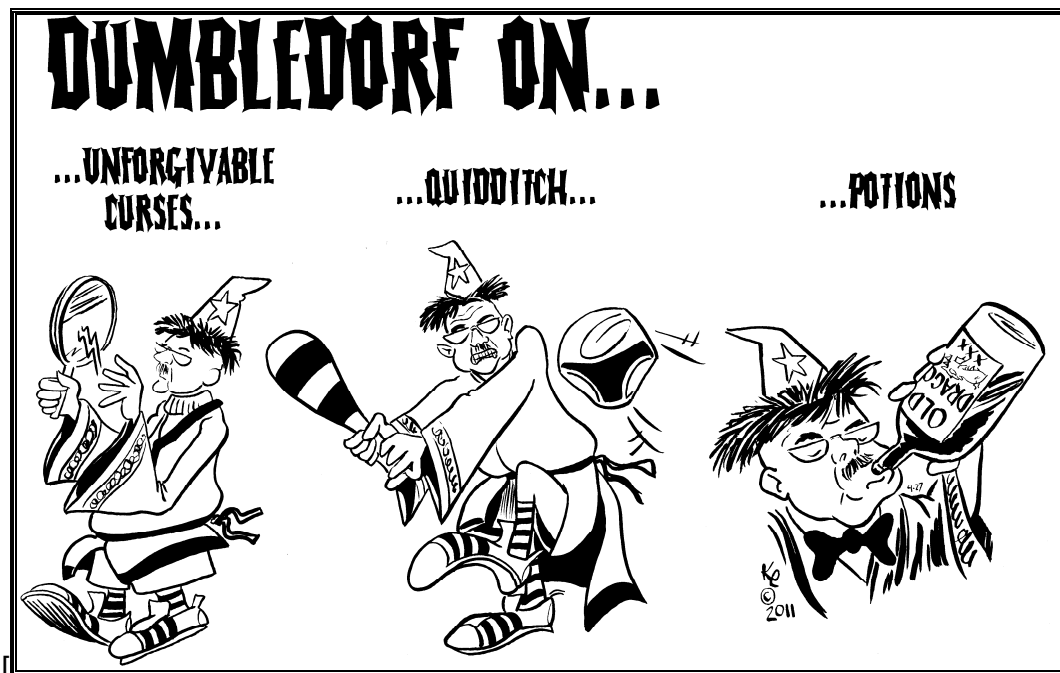
involved. There is this about going to the end of your rope and hanging on for dear life: afterward, you just aren't willing to tolerate pettiness in the same way you once were.

The second re-engagement was to do a project, one single project, for the Reno Worldcon, Renovation. I felt some debt there (and for once, my husband even agreed the debt was real), so I agreed to work on the convention. (As I write this, Renovation is a month away.) But this is collaborative work with one other person, there's a clear chain of command, and I don't have minions. As much as I joke about minions, having them is a heavy responsibility if you're honest with yourself.

And at the Worldcon, I agreed to run slides for a performance, help at the gopher level, and just be a fan. That's damned important, I think: being a fan. Enjoying what Worldcon has to offer. Remembering why it's fun.

How can you avoid the sort of near-burnout (yes, it's still singed around the edges) I experienced? Here are some don'ts: Don't take on the weight of the fannish universe (that never works). Don't assume that you *have* to solve the problems, just because you *can* solve them. Don't angst over the things you have neither the skills nor knowledge to fix. Don't push yourself when you're long past your reserves, just because "someone has to do it." Who died and made you someone? Don't ever make the mistake of thinking you are irreplaceable.

And one "Do": Do listen to the people who love you. At the end of the day, when they convention's all over, who's going home with you at night?



Fancy 3

Mark Olson

About Fancyclopedia.

In 1944, Jack Speer (who, with few dozen other people, invented fandom during the 1930s) published the hundred-page Fancyclopedia to explain around eight hundred-odd definitions: words, slang, and usages of fandom. Fandom grew, and fifteen years later Dick Eney published Fancyclopedia 2, an expanded (more than two hundred pages) and updated new edition of Speer's original volume. That was more than fifty years ago and while fandom has grown enormously since then, no new edition of the Fancyclopedia has appeared.

Why? Probably mainly because fandom has grown enormously since 1959 and the Fancy 3 project was no longer doable. With Fancy 2 weighing in at two hundred pages, an equally encompassing Fancy 3 would be too big a project to contemplate: Too big to write and too big to publish. What's more, a Fancy 3 which followed the same format as the previous two editions would also probably fail to satisfy a fandom which no longer had so much of a single shared set of experiences.

Both Fancy 1 and Fancy 2, while calling themselves "fancyclopedias," were less encyclopedias than encyclopedic dictionaries of unusual fannish terminology. They cover fannish slang wonderfully, and have a few excellent short (and some not-so-short)

general articles, but mostly their coverage of people, clubs, fanzines and conventions is limited to nicknames and a few miscellaneous oddities (e.g., the names of the Futurian Houses) that most fans of their day would not be expected to know. Of course, there was no other possibility given the resources available then.

Today, we have other options. You're probably already thinking "Wikipedia" to yourself: And a wiki is the perfect vehicle for this sort of thing: It is on the web, so publishing costs are negligible and size is no longer a limitation. Being a wiki, it is easy to put in cross-links so that unfamiliar fannish terms and names in an article link to explanations. And being a wiki, it is editable by multiple people so that it is not limited by one fan's energy or knowledge, and is no longer limited by having to stop writing and go to press. It's like someone deliberately invented wikis to eliminate the impediments to Fancy 3.

What we're doing.

To start with, we are seeding Fancy 3 with all of Fancy 1 and Fancy 2 as well as rich brown's Dr Gafia's Dictionary, which together form an excellent base. But Fancy 3 will include much more than that: pages on individual fans, fanzines, clubs, and conventions, as well as real encyclopedic articles. We already have about 2800 articles and aliases, and there are about 3500 links in the existing text which need pages.

We've already created stubs (basically very brief pages containing a short factual summary) for all of the Worldcons and for many regional conventions, and we're beginning to create stubs for more fans, clubs and zines.

We're also writing and looking for articles which cover specific topics in greater depth. For example, we'd love to have articles on the "Growth of Filk" or on "SFLovers" or "Harry Warner, Jr" or the "Plokta Cabal" or "Rivercon" or "Gharlane of Eddore on the Net" or any of hundreds of other topics.

In the slightly longer term we're working to closely integrate Fancy 3 with Fanac's other website, fanac.com, so that people and club pages on Fancy link seamlessly to photos on fanac.org, and fanzine pages on Fancy link to fanzine scans on fanac.org.

Do you want to help?

Fancy 3 is the result of many people's



efforts: Jack Speer and Dick Eney who did the first two editions, and rich brown whose dictionary provided another good chunk. For Fancy 3, it was Jim Caughran who launched the project as its first editor, and the whole FANAC organization. We've made a fair start, but the real growth will come from people who drop in to make their own small (or large) contribution. Come by the website (fancyclopedia.wikidot.com) and contribute something, and don't be shy! The glory of a wiki is that it grows and no one person has to know everything. Don't feel you have to write a perfect article – create a stub, and eventually someone else will add to it. Do you have something to say, but aren't sure of all the facts? Say what you know and note what you don't know for sure – eventually, someone else will come along who does know and the article will get better.

The perfect is the enemy of the good!

Editing Fancy 3 is easy. Here's 99% of what you need to know: Click on a link, and it will take you to a page (click the edit button to edit it). If the page does not already exist, your typing creates it. Just type whatever you want. To create a link to another page, simply surround the name of the page (right in the text) with `[[[three square brackets]]]` and when you save the page, it will appear as a link. Pages have names like "Don Wollheim" and "fanzine" and "LACon III" and the editors make sure to add aliases, so "Harry Warner" and "Harry Warner, Jr." both go to the same place. If you aren't sure, just go ahead and make your best guess. It will probably be right and if it isn't, the editors will fix it up.

And if you aren't sure, just go ahead and enter the text and the editors will tidy up later! No matter what the problem is, the answer is "Do the best job you can now and we'll make it better later."

To join, go to the website and join Wikidot (you need a Wikidot membership to edit anything) and then let us know that you want to edit and we'll quickly add you to the list. (The only thing we ask is that you identify yourself, so we don't have anonymous contributors.)

What can you help with? Everything. How about writing a first draft of that article on Filk? How about adding a stub article on Lee Hoffman? Perhaps you know something about NEcon and could write an article on its history? Tell us about a hoax bid, or your local club. Add some information about Minicon 12/Dododecacon or tell the story of how efanzines.com was created. Write what you know about Iowa City fandom and Icon. Create an article on Orbital and link it in to the list of Eastercons. Or write about something

we haven't even thought about. As long as it is related to fandom and won't get somebody arrested, we're interested.

And remember: Fandom is for fun and Fancy 3 is fun, also.

A Personal Note.

While I'd read bits and pieces from Fancyclopedia 2 over the years, I had never actually sat down and read it through, nor had I ever even seen Fancy 1. Reading them was an eye-opener, giving me a chance to see how fandom viewed itself in 1944 when it was only a teenager and in 1959 when it was still in its 20s.

What was most surprising? Nothing I should have been surprised at! First, fandom was smaller -- much, much smaller. In the late thirties there were only a few dozen really active people (a surprising number of whom stayed active until their deaths – fandom does not seem to easily let its people go.) Yet those fans created the foundations (and a fair amount of the edifice) of fandom today. Doubtless there is some selection effect in that Jack Speer wrote mostly about the people he knew well, but less than a dozen New Yorkers, a few more each from Philly and DC, Tucker and a half-dozen others in the Midwest and another bunch in Los Angeles turned a bunch of kids writing to the prozine letter columns in the early 30s into something recognizable as our fandom ten years later.

And the people were so much younger. First Fandomites who I first met when they were in their fifties (or older) were kids when they built fandom. I always knew this, but I never really understood it. Sam Moskowitz was nineteen years old when he chaired the first Worldcon, and had already been a major fan right in the middle of the fannish wars for years. No wonder All Fandom Was Plunged Into War two or three times a year.

Yet they are still us (or, perhaps better, we are still them). The silly wars they fought, the feuds, the hoaxes are indistinguishable from the flame wars we still fight today on the Internet – just in a different medium. And while they would have been boggled by modern fandom – it has blossomed into far more than they dreamed about – I don't think they would have found it to be foreign.

Finally, having now worked on Fancy 3, I can understand the pleasure Jack Speer and Dick Eney and their contributors must have felt when first documenting fandom in 1944 and 1959. It's a real pleasure for me and I hope you'll find it to be a pleasure for you, also.

John W. Campbell: The Man Who Invented Modern Fantasy and the Golden Age of Science Fiction

Christopher McKitterick

John W. Campbell was born on June 8 in 1910—fifteen years after H.G. Wells published *The Time Machine*, sixteen years before Hugo Gernsback proposed the term “scientifiction” for the genre with the April 1926 issue of *Amazing Stories*, nineteen years before the new *Science Wonder Stories* introduced the term “science fiction,” and 28 years before he took over as editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*—just the right time to change the world of literature.

A tall, barrel-chested man, Campbell was often described as “hawk-featured” in part because of his prominent nose and piercing features. He wore engineer’s glasses and kept his hair short and bristly, and he almost always held a cigarette in a long holder. He was universally considered to fill a room—not just physically, but with his vibrant presence—whenever he entered, demanding everyone’s attention even before he spoke; when he began to talk, conversation shifted to the topics he tossed to his audience and continued long after he left.

Malcolm J. Edwards writes, “More than any other individual, he helped to shape modern SF”; Isaac Asimov says Campbell “was the most powerful force in science fiction ever, and for the first ten years of his editorship he dominated the field completely”; and Barry Malzberg says, “Campbell’s strength was this: he was the best editor. He was the best editor, in this country, in this century. That’s his strength. No one was better.”

Here’s a short look at the man who forever changed speculative fiction.

The Young Author

As Campbell was growing up, the works of A. Merritt, Edgar Allen Poe, Jules Verne, and Wells, were well-known; Edgar Rice Burroughs’s Tarzan and Barsoom books were enjoying wide popularity; and authors such as Edmund Hamilton, E.E. “Doc” Smith, and Jack Williamson were busy inventing Space Opera. The son of an electrical engineer, Campbell earned a B.S. in Physics from Duke University (after being dismissed by MIT), so perhaps it’s not surprising that he, too, would begin writing space adventures—which he did starting at age 18. In his early work, supermen could warp space using mental powers in order to travel faster than light between the stars in their mighty spaceships and engage in adventures bristling with super-science. He became a well-known author even before graduating college, with his first



story appearing in the January 1930 issue of *Amazing Stories*, and he wrote prolifically until turning his vast energies to editing in 1937.

Today, much of Campbell’s most-respected works are those he authored in 1934 and 1935 under the pseudonym Don A. Stewart, a light anagram of his first wife’s maiden name (Dona Stewart): “Twilight,” “The Machine,” and “The Invaders.” One of his last stories, “Who Goes There?” might be his best-known, with screen adaptations in 1951 as *The Thing from Another World*, 1982 as Carpenter’s *The Thing*, and 2011 as another *The Thing*—this time a prequel.

Campbell mostly ceased writing fiction about the time he began his editing career, though some might argue that many of his editorials share more with the supernatural than the fiction he bought and published in the pages of *Astounding* or *Unknown* (more on that in a moment). Campbell felt he could have a greater influence on the development of the fledgling genre by mentoring authors than by writing his own fiction; in a sense, his authors served as multipliers of his own ideas and hopes and dreams.

From 1936—1937, *Astounding* published Campbell’s 18-part series, *The Solar System*, “one of the first ventures of a science fiction writer into the

realm of straightforward science,” according to Isaac Asimov, inspiring other SF authors to do the same—including Asimov, himself, a decade later in the same magazine.

In all, he published more than 20 short stories plus more than 20 novels, anthologies, and nonfiction books, mostly under his own name, not counting the hundreds of editorial pieces that saw print later. His own evolution as author signifies the evolution he was about to harbor in the science fiction and fantasy genres.

At the Helm of *Astounding Science Fiction*

As editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* (formerly *Astounding Stories of Super Science*, which Campbell renamed when he gained full control in March 1938), Campbell’s influence on SF is without peer. He single-handedly transformed the core of the genre from pulpy adventures of super-science to what we now call the Golden Age of SF, during which the focus shifted from the invention or idea to the person affected by these things, never forgetting the reader’s need for a good story. Campbell launched the SF careers of such authors as Isaac Asimov, Hal Clement, Lester Del Rey, Robert Heinlein, Theodore Sturgeon, and A.E. Van Vogt. He nurtured the careers of these authors and many others whose works we still enjoy today and which define the Golden Age, including Alfred Bester, Leigh Brackett, Fredric Brown, James Gunn, Clifford Simak, C.L. Moore, Frederik Pohl, and countless others until his influence began to decline in the late 1960s.

One cannot overstate the influence that Campbell—through these authors and the forum that was *Astounding*—had on the development of the SF genre and literature in general. The all-important SFnal concept of “sense of wonder” glowed from the pages of *Astounding*, encouraging readers to believe in a future that might be glorious or dangerous but was always intellectually gripping and often awe-inspiring.

Campbell also encouraged his authors to work within a consensus future and coined the term “future history” in February 1941, a name Heinlein adopted for his series of short stories and novels, charted in the March issue that year.

In February 1960, Campbell finally changed the name of *Astounding Science Fiction* (he had intended to eliminate the word “astounding” all along, but others pre-empted his preferred, simple title of *Science Fiction*) to *Analog Science Fact/Science Fiction*. He continued to edit the renamed magazine until his death on July 11, 1971. One of Campbell’s authors, Ben Bova, took over *Analog* a year later.

To his authors he provided a venue to tell the kinds of humanistic stories they wanted to write but

previously had no place to publish, while engaging with them via endless correspondence and regular one-on-one meetings in his office. In an interview for the *John W. Campbell’s Golden Age of Science Fiction* documentary, Pohl describes Campbell’s methods: “When John Campbell wrote an editorial, on the first of the month he would think of an idea—what the subject matter was to be, and then he would discuss it with everybody who came into his office for that month. And at the end of 30 days, he had heard every argument that could be advanced against it and found responses for most of them—so he just sat down and wrote the editorial.”

Campbell’s devil’s-advocate nature and prolific idea-generation spawned countless stories in response, some countering his often appalling concepts (such as when he famously posed an argument for slavery) and others flourishing into visions unique to each author. In another interview for the Campbell documentary, Bova says, “His editorials, his crotchets, his challenges—I think they were all attempts to stir people to write stories that he could publish...he would argue you deaf, dumb, and blind until you generated a story. And a lot of those stories were generated to disprove what John was saying.”

Harry Harrison sums up his experience thus: “He took your ideas and bounced them back as mirror images, or warped images. In the *Lunch With John Campbell* [film by Gunn] you can see it on camera. That we were creating something there, and he was creating—it was a tripartite thing, all three of us working together. Maybe Gordie and I were going to write the book later on, but his input was so vital that it would’ve been a different novel if he hadn’t done it.”

Much of SF’s nature as an ongoing dialogue arose from this unprecedented interactivity.

Into the *Unknown*

In 1939, Campbell created another magazine for *Astounding*’s publisher, Street & Smith: *Unknown* (later called *Unknown Worlds*), which shared a number of authors and artists. Campbell wanted to transform fantasy into a more mature genre much as he hoped to do with SF. Notable authors whose work appeared in the pages of *Unknown* include L. Sprague de Camp, H.L. Gold, L. Ron Hubbard, Fritz Leiber, Fletcher Pratt, Eric Frank Russell, Theodore Sturgeon, and Jack Williamson.

December 1939 saw publication of de Camp’s *Lest Darkness Fall*, an alternate history that later grew into the important novel of the same name; in 1939, Campbell also published Leiber’s first Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser story; and the following year he published Williamson’s novelette, “Darker Than You Think,” which also later grew into a notable novel.

Many consider *Unknown* to remain the greatest fantasy magazine of all time, and as with *Astounding* nearly every issue sent shockwaves through the genre that generated new ideas and approaches much the way stars and planets form from similar shocks traveling through interstellar gas and dust.

Campbell's vision for a new type of fantasy was one in which the supernatural elements were treated rigorously and whose plot developed logically from the premise. Thus *Unknown* attracted SF authors such as de Camp and Pratt, who devised a system of magic based on mathematical logic, a concept that appealed to Campbell and his readers. As he did with *Astounding*, Campbell demanded that his *Unknown* authors write thoughtful stories of character rather than the dark horror that mostly comprised fantasy in such earlier magazines as *Weird Tales*.

Unknown was cancelled in 1943 due to wartime paper shortages—Street & Smith forced Campbell to choose between making *Astounding* a bimonthly or killing the fantasy magazine. Even though it perished after only four years, *Unknown's* influence can still be felt today, as it ushered in modern fantasy.

Alienating His Authors—and Much of SF

In his autobiography, Asimov called Campbell “talkative, opinionated, quicksilver-minded, overbearing. Talking to him meant listening to a monologue. Some writers could not endure it and avoided him, but he reminded me of my father, so I was perfectly willing to listen to him indefinitely... Campbell's decline was accelerated by his own quirks of character. He enjoyed dabbling with the fringes of science, slipping over the edge into pseudoscience. He seemed to take seriously such things as extrasensory perception... and even more foolish items called the ‘Dean Drive’ and the ‘Hieronymus machine.’ Most of all, he championed ‘dianetics’ [starting with an *Astounding* article in May 1950], a kind of offbeat mental treatment invented by the science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.”

Though “Asimov was Campbell's creation,” according to Asimov biographer James Gunn, this is when he finally began his split from Campbell, along with many other authors important to *Astounding's* earlier success and influence.

James Blish quantifies Campbell's drift toward the supernatural thus: “*Astounding Science Fiction* continues to center on the editor's preoccupation with extrasensory powers and perceptions (‘psi’)... 113 pages of the total content of the January and February 1957 issues of this magazine are devoted to psi, and 172 to non-psi material.”

However, “by February 1953,” Gunn points out in a review of Campbell's previously unpublished letters in

the final issues of *Fantasy Commentator*, “Campbell had become disenchanted [with *Dianetics*]. He explained his earlier belief in Hubbard's methods because of the way Hubbard had restored himself from a psychological wreck in 1935 to a confident, sparkling person four years later.” Even so, the die was cast.

None of this should be surprising when considering Campbell's enthusiasm for Van Vogt's superhumans and L. Ron Hubbard's later work—especially *Dianetics*—not to mention Campbell's own early writings. Ironically it is Campbell's influence and collaborative-writing editing style that conspired to push away many of his authors, including two of his most important: Asimov and Heinlein. If he had simply been an editor with a keen eye toward good fiction rather than opinionated and mentor-ish, we might have seen *Astounding* remain much as it had been before. But of course it would never have become the giant it was without Campbell's qualities in the first place.

The 1950s saw a further decline in Campbell's influence on SF with the appearance of *Fantasy & Science Fiction* in 1949 and *Galaxy* in 1950. In his collection, *Inside Science Fiction*, James Gunn writes, “In the 1950s, then, three different but equal definitions of SF—Campbell's, Boucher's, and Gold's—battled for the minds and hearts of writers and readers.” In many ways, Gold's *Galaxy* was a 1950s version of *Astounding* at its most humane, much as Boucher's *F&SF* was *Astounding* at its most literary.

The revolution against King Campbell reached its crescendo when Michael Moorcock took over the helm of the British magazine *New Worlds*, ushering in the New Wave of SF whose practitioners sought to overthrow all that Campbell—and Gernsback before him—had built. Ellison's 1967 *Dangerous Visions* anthology carried the revolution to US shores. And during this period of decline, one by one most of the other SF magazines that had sprouted and blossomed during the genre's Golden Age faded and disappeared.

The Golden Age, glorious as it was, had passed into history.

The King Is Dead...but With Us Still Today

Even so, Campbell's influence on the genre continues to this day, and not just with the ongoing success of *Astounding/Analog* and ongoing love for *Astounding*-era fiction. Here are a few examples:

Lunch with John W. Campbell

To see Campbell in action, check out James Gunn's film, *Lunch with John W. Campbell*, part of the Digital Media Zone Productions DVD, *John W. Campbell's Golden Age of Science Fiction*. Among many fine discussions from 20 of the genre's greatest minds is Gunn's recording of one of Campbell's famous working lunches with two of his writers, Harry

Harrison and Gordon Dickson, in 1971, showing them develop an idea that later grew into the 1977 novel, *Lifeboat*.

John W. Campbell Memorial Award for Best SF Novel

At the 1972 Nebula Award ceremony, Harry Harrison, Gordon Dickson, and James Gunn discussed an appropriate memorial for Campbell. Gunn “half seriously suggested a grab-bag of story ideas that SFWA members might contribute for needy authors,” then the three settled on a juried award. Soon after, Harrison and Brian Aldiss established the award the award in Campbell’s name as a way of continuing his efforts to encourage writers to produce their best possible work.

The first five jurors were Aldiss, Harrison, plus Tom Clareson, Willis McNelly, and Leon Stover. The jury has enjoyed varied membership over the years, including Kingsley Amis, Paul A. Carter, Farah Mendlesohn, Eric Rabkin, and others, always a mixture of writers and academics. The current committee is Gregory Benford, Paul Di Filippo, Sheila Finch, James Gunn, Elizabeth Anne Hull, Paul Kincaid, Christopher McKitterick, Pamela Sargent, and T.A. Shippey.

The award was first presented at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago in 1973. In the years following, the award was presented around the world, including in Dublin at the founding meeting for WorldSF. In 1979, Gunn created the Campbell Conference at the University of Kansas in Lawrence as a platform to present it at a regular venue. Except in a 2007 joint event with the SFRA in Kansas City during the Heinlein Centennial Celebration, the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best SF novel of the year is presented each year at KU.

John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer

A year later, Conde Nast Publications established another award in Campbell’s name, given to the best new science fiction or fantasy writer whose first professional science fiction or fantasy publication appeared in the previous two years. It is administered by the Hugo Award committee and given away during the Hugo Award ceremonies at the World SF Convention, but is not a Hugo.

Conde Nast sponsored the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer from 1973-1978, then Davis Publications sponsored it from 1979-1992, and has since been sponsored by Dell Magazines—each the successive owners of *Astounding/Analog*, as a way to honor of the man who built the longest-lived magazine in the genre.

To Infinity and Beyond

The complicated genius who was John W. Campbell helped shape modern SF and fantasy by acting as gatekeeper to two of the most-important magazines of the 20th Century. But more than editor, Campbell was also a generous idea machine whose authors greatly magnified what might have been a single man’s work into entire genres still with us today.

In a note for his Campbell DVD, Eric Solstein writes, “Through the force of his efforts, a third rate popular entertainment—pulp science fiction—became literature. Under his guidance, a cadre of prophets and artists defined the 20th Century, and for a brief Golden Age, showed it the way.”

To get a better idea of how Campbell thought and how he interacted with some of the greatest literary minds of the last century, check out his two-volume collected letters. There’s much left to learn about this complicated man and the authors who invented SF’s Golden Age!

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Argentus through the Ages

Christopher J Garcia

I think the first one I read was *Argentus* 4. I read it and enjoyed it and waited and waited and waited and waited. Then, a year later (three decades in internet time) there was another. It was like magic! Then there was a special, and that was good, and then there was another wait and then another! It was only one issue a year most years, which to a guy with an almost addictive need to have new content in front of him is painful! Eventually, I went back and looked at the issues I'd missed.

And here's what I think of all of them...along with the little nicknames I've given them.

Issue 1—The One I Read Last

Steven introduces us to the zine, which is a nice touch. I think he got the fever and bumped up against the difficulties which delayed it, which is a story most FanEds tell. I like to see the basic discussion of what fans do and how they come up with their zines.

The best pieces here are from David Truesdale about the state of short science fiction, with a chart that I love, and there's an article called "Dumpster Diving and Conspiracy Theory." If there was an article title that was made for me, that is it! It's also a very entertaining title and Michael Andaluz is a helluva writer. There's a good little piece from Tom Whitmore about the then-up-coming San Jose WorldCon.

This was a zine that hit the ground running with excellent writing and some really good art (especially the final piece from Mr. Stu Shiffman: Clarence of the Simians) though it's a bit lighter on the art than a lot of zines.

A pretty darn good debut issue, but it was only in the last few weeks that I'd finally managed to get around to reading it!

Issue 2—The One with the Minneapolis in '73 Stuff

This issue is all about the Mock section. Not that the stuff in the front part of the issue is no good, it's very good, but the bits at the end are fantastic! I did particularly enjoy both Bart Kemper's and Lloyd Penney's pieces. The look at how fandom can be an unwelcoming place, was particularly good and even mentions my good friend Annalee Newitz!

While the stuff in the main section is solid, it's the Twincon faux WorldCon stuff that made me smile and laugh and think. You can easily determine what people find of value, or at least memorable, by what they write about when they are creating it for themselves. The

highlights? For me, it's Guy Lillian and Joyce Scrivner. Certainly!

The only thing that bugs me is the way that the art would be surrounded by text, continuing on the other side of the art. It may be that I'm the kind of reader who isn't actually good at reading, but it made it difficult to keep the thought, which is a shame as the art that breaks up the text is so damn good, especially Foster and Shiffman!

Issue 3—The One That's Tough

Sometimes, reading a zine is a chore. I know that sounds terrible, but it can be. One of my all-time favorite issues of the 1970s, the second issue of *Seamonsters*, is a tough read for me, and I'm not sure why.

Issue three isn't a bad issue at all, it's just, I dunno, thick. Not a ton of pages, but the contents seem to rattle me, slow me down in the same way that *The Dervish House*, because I loved it and savored it, maybe. The best piece of all of them is from Brother Guy of the Vatican Observatory. In it, there is perhaps the most appropriately placed Bill Rotsler cartoon ever. Well, it's more of a sketch, but as I was reading, I was amazed at exactly how ideal it was not only for the subject matter, but for the placement in the article.

Ed Meskys, one of my Dad's favorite "Five Old Men" talked about where he gets his books as a blind gentleman. A nice piece, that I admit tripped me up a couple of times, was Steven's article on the Loss of a Bookstore, something I fear we are all too familiar with these days. Mark Leeper talks about adaptations of *The Lost World*, many of which I've seen, and it's great.

I don't know why, but this issue has always made me move slower. I gotta figure that one out.

Issue 4—The One with Refutation of Heinlein!

Steven says that this is an issue with Travel as a theme. It's interesting because I can see it, but it doesn't feel like a travel issue. There's a nice article about some near-by stars, which I thought was a lot of fun. There's an awesome piece from Taral Wayne that's probably my favorite art I've seen from Taral, whose art I really enjoy. There's a great little piece from one of my faves, Mr. Rich Lynch, called "Thus, We Refute Heinlein." There's no better way to get me to love an article than to refute Heinlein! Actually, it's more of a look at the world of Washington politics, and I love that sort of stuff!

The mock section is pretty cool, with a couple of fake interviews that I thought was a very fun one. The one done by Pat Sayre McCoy with Miles Vorkosigan (who is *not* Armenian!) was a hoot! I thought that was a very cool bit. John Hertz's interview with Svetz (of Larry Niven make) was also a lot of fun.

This issue felt like a fully-realised fanzine in a way that the previous three haven't. The cover, a brilliant Brad W. Foster piece, is one of my all-time favorites. I remember this one as my own personal jumping-on point for *Argentus*. It was the cover that got me!

Argentus Guide to Game Shows—The One About Game Shows

I love game shows, and the guide to game shows that Steven compiled was pretty good. I've tried out for game shows, most notably *Win Ben Stein's Money* and *Beat The Geeks*, and did a local version of *Liar's Club*, but the closest I've come is appearing on *Geek/Chic*, a reality show that was the last thing produced by TechTV while they were still in SF.

Tom Galloway, a pal of mine, wrote about *Greed*, where he did pretty darn well!

I'm a big fan of this issue and it was one that I printed out and had in Fanzine Lounges for a good while...until it walked off, I think at Denvention.

Issue 5—The One That's all Alliterative

This is the gimmicky-est issue yet. It's all about the letters "SS," as in Steven Silver, though that may be a coincidence. It's a lot of fun, though, especially with articles from Stan Schmidt and Steve Stoliar. Stoliar did a great piece about "Life with Groucho." I think I've got his book somewhere around here!

The Mock section here wasn't as awesome as the previous couple. I'm not sure why, they were fake book reviews by some good people, including Julie Czerneda, whose piece was really funny, and Greg Benford, but it's just not for me, I think, as when I went back and reread them last week, I wasn't nearly as impressed as my LoC to the next issue indicates.

I also believe that this is the first time my name appears in the pages of *Argentus* with a LoC that I wrote about the Game Show issue!

Issue 6—The One I First Showed Up In

The first thing I notice is that the cover is a Frank Wu piece, and my all-time second favorite Frank Wu piece, which had previously appeared in the pages of *The Drink Tank!* Still, I think it works wonderfully as a cover here!

This has some great stuff (including my look at BARTCon, which is a traveling convention I really

should try to host again) and a piece from Kevin Standlee about convention badges that I think is one of the best pieces I've read from him. Ted White has a great look at Phillip Klass, which is a wonderful piece of work. "Lies My Jedi Told Me," a fun little piece from Mark Leeper, might have the greatest title ever!

The Mock Section had a great piece about "Thomas: The Positronic Engine," which was supposedly based on an outline by Isaac Asimov. I like that one!

Issue 7—The One With Lots of Book Covers

A gorgeous cover from Deb Kosiba that really sets the stage. The three rockets give a feel to the issue that it's got a lot to do with science fiction. The table was set, and the issue delivered.

The articles deal greatly with books, including a fun and informative piece about out-of-print novels of the SF&F form. I had no idea that *Stand On Zanzibar* was out-of-print or *Lord of Light* for that matter. The look that followed at "Neglected Imaginative Fiction Novels" by Geogres T. Dodd was very interesting. These are the kinds of articles that I love to read because it allows me to make reference to the stories as if I've read them without having read them! It has made many of my WorldConversations possible.

The one that gets me the most interested had to be the Mike Resnick article about Anton LeVay. I know Anton a bit, towards the end of his life he was selling things through the various alternative press mags and we'd pick them up for a song and hang around his place. He was a kook, and when I knew him, a bit of a recluse. Mike's look at him was solid, and meeting Carol Doda was something that I was lucky enough to do over the years. Mike's a helluva writer. The James Nicoll article on his reaction to the politics of the writers he reads is an interesting one and I think it's more like my own concept than I'd normally admit, but then again, when have I ever really had a philosophy.

Issue 8—The One with the Delphyne Cover

A wonderful Delphyne cover that makes me happy. This is one that really reminds me of why I love her work, the richness of the colours and the way it all seems to flow. The issue was the first after *Argentus* was nominated for the Hugo for the first time. It was a good year for it.

There's an interesting article from Paul Kincaid which looks like Hard SF and stories like "The Cold Equations" and *Mission of Gravity* (both of which I know I've read, only one of which I can tell you anything about. It's a good look, right up there with a piece from Al Reynolds on the "Death of Hard SF" and

why it's not such a bad thing that ran in *Journey Planet*. I went back to this one several times as there were points that really raised my eyebrows at various times. I am not an Hard SF dude, not at all, but this one sorta explained why because it showed a brand of thinking I just don't seem to have!

Then there's part of my TAFF report (available in its entirety at Taff.org.uk) with a fine illustration from Brianna SpaceKat-Wu, which is awesome and features one of the shortest skirts possible. Any shorter, and technically it's a belt. That was followed by a classic John Hertz report from his trip to Japan.

This may be the issue that has the most pieces from people I love to see stuff from, but just don't see enough of. Diana Glyer has a great piece, as does Lynne Thomas, whose work I've enjoyed in blog, podcast and other form for ages it seems. Fred Lerner, Alma Alexander, Dan Kimmel, all good people! I enjoy the hell out of it.

The Mock section is fun, but in this one the LoColumn was by-far the best of them so far. I love it, and I'm not usually a fan of lettercols, but this one ruled!

Issue Special 2—The Art of the Con—The One About The Art of the Con

Keywords—Con, conventions, the con, con-running, SMoFs, SMoFing, awesome

This is a great issue that looks at the various aspects of running cons. There's just enough neepery so that you feel like you're really hearing actual SMoFs talking cons! Kevin Standlee's look at Con Badges is an interesting one, though I tend to take a more hard line position on the nature and importance of badges as marker of allowed attendance than any other thing, but you can tell Big Kev's been through all of it and has fully-delivered his thoughts.

There's a great look at Pubs, something I don't understand and will probably never understand. I know, I know, I put out a zine every week, but I don't really understand about convention publications. Go figure. There's also a good look at the Hugo Administration process and philosophy from Mary Kay Kare, who had just finished her reign as the Hugo administrator.

James Bacon, Patty Wells, Me, we all have interesting looks at the various sections of conventions were involved in. This issue has the best layout and art of them all, I really thought this was a beautiful issue, and even if it hadn't been dedicated to the art of con-running, this would have been one of my favorite issues of *Argentus* (or the special editions).

Issue 9—The One With All the Silent Movie Stars

One of the truly great covers. Mo Starkey, my heroine, in what I think was the first cover she'd done for any zine outside *The Drink Tank*. The way she showed the various Silent film stars was great and she really captured something with her take on Fatty and Buster in particular. There's a sadness to the way she shows Buster Keaton that really captures something that's obviously in his face but hidden in his work.

This one's most significant portion has to be the look at the six silent comedians: Ben Turpin, Charlie Chaplin, Mabel Normand, Fatty Arbuckle, Buster Keaton, and the greatest of all the silent comedians, my hero, Harold Lloyd. I love the way Steven looks at all of them, and some of the Bacon Number stuff is fun. I believe I am a 4 to Charlie Chaplin (I was in *Lost Boys!*), but I'm not 100% sure yet. I gotta go back over that!

The rest of the issue is great, with part of Steve Green's TAFF report, Michael D. Thomas' look at Cat Valente's *Palimpsest* tour was really good reading, and a fantastic Ralph Roberts piece about NASA as a job! The Brianna pieces that accompany it is also pretty damn great!

Probably the most fun Mock Section where various writers, including myself, look at reboots of old TV series as SF, Horror or Fantasy. I took a shortcut and turned *ALF* into a Joss Whedon piece. I loved Joel Zakem's take on *WKRP!*

Issue 10—The One Where Dan Kimmel Vindicates Me!

A great steampunk-y type cover. Of course, everything looks Steampunky to me, so there's that.

The focus of this issue is food. At one point that I was supposed to help a chef friend of mine do an article, but alas, these things sometimes fail to happen. One of the best is from Rich Lynch about Luncheon seminars. I've attended those and a lot of what he was talking about was very familiar to me. This was one of the first articles I'd read from Rich in a while, I had only just started reading *My Back Pages* from Rich and this was a nice addition.

Dan Kimmel is my hero. He, much like me, is not a fan of *E.T.* and it was nice to *finally* hear someone say they disliked it as much as I did. Now if I could only find someone who hate *The Iron Giant* as much as I do, I'll finally have some cred!

There's a great piece in the issue about "Steampunk, Disney and The Death of the Future." That's a matter I've written about various places and Michael D. Thomas' take on it seems to dovetail nicely with mine. It's not the same, but it's not so different that I have to go and make sure that he never gets tenure anywhere. It's nice to land in the cornfield, as it were.

There's another TAFF report portion from Brian and Ann Gray, and a bit from Baby Rosy (who is adorable and who did all the right things when eating her birthday cake at WorldCon!) and it's a fun look at the CorFlu portion of their trip. That's one thing I love about *Argentus*. Even when much of an issue might be full of pros and superstars, there's always room for Trip reports from the fan funds and that makes me happy.

A Mock Section looks at newspaper articles of events that happen in books. It's a good one with the piece by my co-hort James Bacon and a shorter Steve Green article being my faves. It's good stuff.

Special *Argentus* Edition 3—Neptune—The One About Neptune

A gorgeous issue about the Planet Neptune in observance of its complete encirclement of the Sun since its discovery. That's awesome. There's a strong look at the politics and arguments in the discovery and naming of the planet, but really it's Michael A. Burstein's bit on learning about Neptune from *Schoolhouse Rock* that really made me happy. That's the exact same way I learned. OK, that's not *all* that the article is about, there's actual information about Neptune in it, but really, the important part is the *Schoolhouse Rock* stuff, at least to this Pop Culture-obsessed thirty-something.

There's some real good art in here, and photos astronomical. The cover is another Mo Starkey and it's a fave, and the Kurt Erichsen work is some of his best. I must be reading the wrong zines lately as I don't see as much of his stuff these days. Add to that Brad Foster, Steve Stiles, and more and you've got a helluva issue!

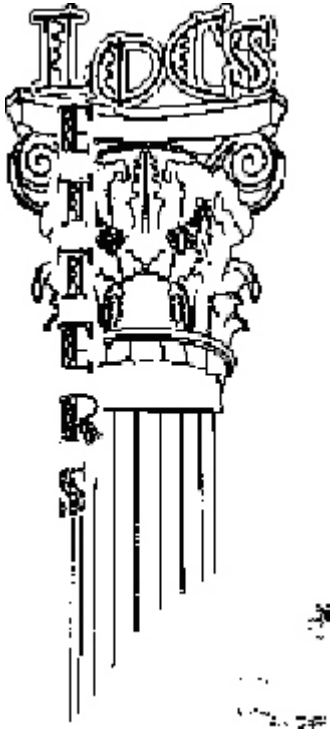
This is an issue that deals with a single topic in a number of different ways and it works. I really think this is right up there with the best issues not only of *Argentus*, but of any fanzine in recent years. It's a theme issue, which can be looked at a little differently than most, but it's such a strong issue that it has to be considered a miniature masterpiece.

***Argentus* 11—The One You're Reading Now**

Ten Years of *Argentus*. Twenty-five years of Steven H Silver in Fandom. Two Silver Anniversaries! The issue itself is pretty darn good, especially with an article that had me running to my DVD collection. Film Title Sequences are a time-honored tradition. There are a great many that have moved me over the years, especially *Casino Royale* and *Panic Room*, not to mention *Sweeney Todd*, which uses the blood running as a theme that sets you up for what the film has to offer. Richard Gilliam does a great job with his piece. Another look at another type of opening, book covers, Frank and Brianna Wu look at the worst cover of the last decade as far as I'm concerned. *Saturn's Children* is a great book hampered by a terrible cover, and the way that Frank and Bri take it apart and look at it made me happy. The highlight of the issue has to be the wonderful "Supervillain Sentencing and the Eighth Amendment," by James Daily and Ryan Davidson. I, with all my legal knowledge of zero, have thought about the law and various issues over the years. Once a set of humanity has powers that greatly exceed those of the vast majority, the legal system has to change greatly to specifically deal with them, including increasing the level of punishment to fit the level of powers held by the new type of villain. All in all, a really strong issue that starts the second decade off right!

So, what's there to say about *Argentus* overall? It's a great zine. Is every article the kind of thing I sit around a table and make sure to bring up to everyone I chat with at a con? Of course not, no zine is (except for *eI*, but that's another article) and it hits a whole lot more than it misses. The minor missteps are there, but they're also not the kind of things that derail a zine (like the issue of *The Drink Tank* where a large chunk of my text was behind an image in the layout) and the good stuff is so good. Look at the list of contributors, names big and small mixing it up in the pages of a zine that treats them all seriously, even the ones who aren't at all serious. Along with *Challenger*, I'd say *Argentus* is one of the few zines that will be remembered from this era for putting out exceptional writing of all types. Not only excellent fannish writing, but exceptional sercon and humor and reports and reviews and other. It's a great place for great work, and I have no doubt that it'll continue to be such!

Letters of Comment



From the Lost Letter Department, sent by Richard Dengrove and Lloyd Penney in response to Argentus 9 back in August 2010.

Dear Steven,

I liked the 2009 *Argentus*. I only had one problem with it: too many items to comment on.

I will start off with your obsession about silent films stars; one I could easily share. I remember I saw many silent films on TV during my childhood, and there is a certain amount of nostalgia for them. This is true even though the genre is basically dead. There is something else your account appealed to: my sense of scandal. It is re-assuring that those silent film stars lived lives as scandalous as the 3-D technicolor ones now. It would be even more re-assuring if the stars today were as discrete. Maybe Lindsay Lohan would have, like Charlie Chaplin, avoided jail. If Lindsay had been exiled rather than imprisoned, it might have satisfied the viewing public far better.

Then we go on to Greg Benford's skepticism in his "Virus Scarred Man." He claims that fusion as a power source for man is more of a romantic concept than a hard headed one. It's par for energy. I've heard Solar Power is more of a romantic concept too. And Wind Power. And Cold Fusion. And Free Energy with Tesla coils. Man would get far more satisfaction grooving on those rainbows rather spending so much blood and treasure to follow them.

Groove on them like Taral Wayne grooved on "Cheng Ho discovers America." The problem with Cheng is who knows? The Chinese had no maps in those days, and no one knew exactly where any Chinese sailor went. Cheng could have discovered America or wafted no farther than extorting tribute from Thailand. Still, we are attracted to predating like White Fang was to the Call of the Wild. The Norse and Saint Brendan send our hearts spinning.

Now we go from times millennial to our own lives. What played a part in Ralph Robert's life was the '50s Winston science fiction series. He says in "NASA, My Dream Job," it led him to a career where he tracked satellites. Readings in youth have led to more improbable careers. I once read an article where a fellow read Lopsang Rampa as a kid. Lopsang claimed to be a Tibetan monk and sport three eyes; and he wrote the most romantic, and absurd things, about Tibet. Reading Lopsang, AKA Cyril Hoskins, led that young reader to a career as an expert on Tibetan Buddhism. On the way, he found out that what Lopsang wrote was totally absurd.

More often, however, like Kevin Bacon in "A Day in East London," readings in youth lead to readings in adulthood. Like a kid, he never stopped being interested in war, and war novels. Therein lays a trap. From what he says, in such novels,

the great man theory of history flourishes. Yes, individuals could have changed history. If it had been Otto Sneer at the German helm rather than Hitler, the Nazis would have won. Or if Lee had turned right rather than left at Gettysburg, the South would have won. Or if Marcus Aurelius hadn't loved Commodus as much, the Roman empire would, like Johnny Walker, still be going strong.

Of course, as Kevin points out on closer inspection, too often it was a myriad of underlings who were harbingers of the future. History is more often a Wallenda pyramid act, where, here and there, a person near the bottom failed and the whole pyramid collapsed. More typical of chances lost was the German explosives team sent to destroy the U.S. industrial capacity. Not only did it fail to convert a single factory into rubble, but it got lost.

A team that messes up, that's the government for you! Also, an airline that fails to reach its destination is the government for you too. Unfortunately, in Larry Sanderson's "Down and Out on the Way to Saigon," it was United Airlines, and free enterprise. There, Larry tells how, under United's tutelage, he had to deplane, replane, stop, brave the elements, and not successfully use vouchers while traveling to Saigon. I gather the problem was that that flight was overbooked, incompetence right there. Enforcing petty bureaucratic rules in that situation: and not allowing the passengers access to their luggage and more appropriate clothing: didn't help either.

At this point, I probably should have commented on your letter column, but then I would be writing all month. I better end with the Mock Section. The two best mocks, in my humble opinion, were "The Mr. Ed Diaries" by Michael D. Thomas and "Alf: Alien Life" by Chris Garcia. Chris

gives us a serious, raw realistic, hard bitten Alf. If I had read it from the first, I might have said: "Hard bitten realism about a silly sock puppet?! Don't be absurd!!" However, I skipped ahead to Chris' account of angst with a silly puppet, skipping the part about it being the Mock section. Without the warning at the beginning of the section, I thought that Chris was being serious. Thinking back on it, I wasn't being that foolish. After all the pretension we've been subjected to, I can't blame myself. While it is true Chris' article was just stark realism patter, pretensions taken seriously are also often just stark realism patter. You could call them, along with Chris' mock, Tragedy Routines.

As for Michael D. Thomas' Mr. Ed Diaries, he might have been onto something. Cross a show about hunky vampires, like *Twilight*, and a show about horses, like *Mr. Ed*, and you make your million with ladies of the teenybop persuasion. One criticism, though: perhaps Michael should have made Mr. Ed shorter and given him a purple color. Then the finished product would be a cross between *Twilight* and a pre-teen fav of a few years ago, *My Little Pony*. Michael shouldn't settle on cashing in on mock when he can cash even more on absurdity.

Thus, with a pound of alternate history and an ounce of TV faves, I end this letter.

Sincere Yours,
Richard Dengrove,
2651 Arlington Drive #302
Alexandra, VA 22306

12/30/2009

Dear Steven:

Thanks for *Argentus* 9, a truly sepia-toned publication with faces from the nearly-distant past. I'd wonder how the estates and descendants of these entertainers would feel about their likenesses on a fan publication...probably

anywhere from pleased to amazed. As long as you're not making money off their trademarked licences, I don't think they'd object. In Toronto, there's been too many companies and businesses that take the likenesses of people like Laurel and Hardy, Humphrey Bogart, James Dean, and Marilyn Monroe and use them to promote themselves without royalty.

TAFF is decided for another year, and congratulations to Anne KG Murphy and Brian Gray on winning. Commiserations to Frank Wu, but he's got a silver rocket to console himself with. DUFF is just starting up, and already two candidates have surfaced, John Purcell and Jeff Boman.

[And Anne and Brian have the first installment of the TAFF report in issue 10 of *Argentus*.]

I've already commented on the Canadian origins of many of these people famous through their time in vaudeville and silent movies, and where I am currently working in the daytime, the Law Society of Upper Canada, I am a short walk away from the Hospital for Sick Children, which has a historical plaque on the corner of the property, indicating that it was the site of the Pickford homestead. Ben Turpin is a name finally connected with the crossed eyes and bowler hat. Also, I have had clarified for me the origins of United Artists, and thank you for that.

I always figured that someone, at some point, would mistake a Hugo award for a weapon, especially a rocket or projectile, or even a bullet of some kind. But, a knife? Long and thin and silvery, I suppose.

Steve Green's TAFF report...he's right, CUFF has never been contested, and probably never will. The last report I had from LeAmber Kensley was that a candidate from the Maritime provinces had stepped forward to run for CUFF, seeing that the Convention for 2010 will

be in Winnipeg. That's one way to meet the TAFF winner...keep him in your car for some hours as you drive him to his first post-Worldcon destination. That was our big contribution to the trip, to save Steve from spending hundreds of dollars on a flight to Toronto.

What got me interested in science fiction in the first place? The marvelous imagination of its writers. Why would I want it harnessed? I'm not even the type that demands factual science in my SF. How about imagination there, too?

I did not know that Calgary is a suburb of East London, South Africa. I'm all too used to the Calgary in the province of Alberta. I guess there are only so many names.

The letter column...I had thought that the rocket lapel pins were tradition, so I imagine some felt a little ripped off when they did not receive the pin. I asked in my letter if Japanese fandom might bid for the Worldcon again, and I can answer myself; yes, they are planning to bid again, for 2017, I believe. Paper fanzines haven't been entirely replaced, and won't be as long as the technology to do so still exists. Someone will always want to do something a little retro.

My loc...Anne KH Murphy has brought MidFanzine back to existence, so I look forward to further issues. I have returned to the Ad Astra committee, and will be a part of that committee for the 2010 convention, but we may have to leave for other reasons. Yvonne's going to school in the new year, and I may need more time for employment reasons, so we may leave the committee, and go back to our retired status.

Vampire horses? Aliens that say "Hah! I kill me!" because they're already dead? You know, I never really watched these shows in their original run, so I'm not likely to

watch them should they be "revised". Well, that's one word for it. "Re-imagined" is another...

Time to fold... Yvonne and I wish you a Happy New Year, and may it hold every success for all of us. Take care, and see you sometime in 2010.

Yours, Lloyd Penney

And on to issue 10 letters.

Dear Steven,

Thank you for *Argentus* #10, to which I would have responded earlier, except when I saw that you intended to publish annually I let tidings slide in favor of the usual, namely indolence and procrastination. The cover, by Steve Stiles, was interesting and well composed but might have suffered from the lack of contrast that resulted when you chose to print it on dark red.

Generally I agree with Daniel Kimmel on Spielberg and E.T. though I have to say that if E.T. is a piece of lightweight fluff—cotton candy he calls it, then it is hard to fault Spielberg for revising his movie in order to pander to the audience du jour when it was re-released some years later. This is the critic trying to have it both ways, "Even if it distorted the meaning of the original," would only be a cut if the original had had a meaning. Spielberg makes entertainments which are highly profitable, and that enables him to try his hand at art, where he sometimes succeeds, as with *Schindler's List*. *Saving Private Ryan*, in my opinion, failed as art because it panders to the American audience but it was highly profitable, and even failed art is likely to be more interesting than cotton candy.

James Bacon's "The Battle of the Bulge; A Retrospective" probably should not have been in the Mock Section. The other pieces were all

short and snappy, referencing well known stories or characters. His was a perfectly respectable short story in which Captain America played a featured role, and should have been off on its own somewhere. Even so, the natural ending would have been the death of Captain America. In a sort of epilogue Thor, "the so-called Nazi God" is subsequently destroyed by an atomic bomb dropped on Munich eight or nine months later. Better Thor should have walked off the battlefield and out of the story with no explanation to let the war follow its natural course.

You asked for a submission for your next issue. A sheet of cartoons is enclosed, and *The Tao of Happiness*, a short essay which I don't remember sending to anyone else. That should do for now. Best wishes,

Alexis Gilliland

Dear Steven:

Translations of Verne are a problem. He was so popular at the time that publishers rushed out translations, and didn't bother to check, or "corrected" the text one way or another. Sometimes it isn't altogether bad—the version of the title given to Jean-Jacques Langévol in *Les Cinq cents millions de la Béguine* (1879) put in the "Fitzroy" translation of 1959 makes a little more sense than the one given in the original.

But a lot of translations cut text, made interpolations, and otherwise maimed the story. I rather fancy that most of them were information-is-free editions, too. Wells had the same problem. Serviss's *Edison's Conquest of Mars* (1898) is a sequel to a rewritten version of *The War of the Worlds* titled *Fighters from Mars*, which among other things moves the setting of the invasion to the Boston area.

Who cares about Buzz Aldrin autographing your car's dashboard? Get him to autograph you and then go to a tattoo parlor to make it permanent.

The food section is nice, but between the number of things I don't eat and the number of things I can't eat, I can't enjoy it quite as much as some. (I used to like some Mexican dishes, but now they don't like me.)

E.T. shares with so many of Spielberg's other works a theme of childhood good, adulthood bad. And a lot of people saw through it, as it were. Thus the cartoon showing spaceships full of E.T. people with the caption, "We've softened them up psychologically, NOW we attack!" Or Mike Resnick's dissection of the movie's total lack of logic.

Since Richard Dengrove is looking out for scandal, he had better pass by Theda Bara. After a remarkably brief career, she got married, retired, and spent the rest of her life reading, interspersed with baking cookies for the local children. Who never knew that that nice Mrs. Brabin had been the woman in a brass bra in *Cleopatra* (1917) — mostly because all the prints of the movie had been destroyed in fires and such.

Robert Bloch knew Buster Keaton, and paints a very effective picture of him in his own "unauthorized autobiography". (As for that book, the one striking about it I remember is sitting in a restaurant reading it. I got to the section describing "Doc" Smith and his daughter Vera. That was when Vera Smith Trestrail came in and took another table.)

As for A&E getting away from "arts" programming and TLC actually teaching something (and, I add SyFy cancelling all its SF shows), I recall a comment by Harry Warner, some fifteen years ago, noting how all the cable

channels seemed to be, whatever their declared purpose, showing nothing but old sitcoms. So that process is hardly new.

In the Mock Section, presumably the disappearance item was explained a couple of days later when the young man in question explained he had gone to New Jersey to accept a scholarship to M.I.T. (He had. Really. The trip just involved a very long detour.) Incidentally, as I pointed out in my book Heinlein's Children (adv. t.) Kip and family live in Missouri.

Namarie,

Joseph T Major

2/3/2011

Dear Steven:

I've waited a little while, since your zine is annual these days, but only now can I sit down and make some comments on *Argentus* 10.

Great Stiles artwork on the cover. Armoured dragonfly-style ornithopters look cool indeed.

Since this issue came out, there's been lots of trouble in Tunisia, Egypt especially, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. The article about living in Yemen should be quite interesting. Given that the Middle East and surrounding areas seem decidedly unstable, any glimpse into the politics of that region should be quite informative. (It was. As a stamp collector in the past, I knew there were two Yemens, but did not know that they became one in 1990. I also knew that Yemen, apart or together, is fairly isolated, and outsiders are restricted as to where in the country they can go.)

I don't envy Leah Zeldes Smith's position...I've seen reviews in the local papers here scathing enough to shut the restaurant down. As a result, the reviewers are relatively anonymous, and if ever the identity

of the reviewer gets out, s/he has to find a new beat. I would find it hard to be objective on this kind of writing; the people who work in restaurants have a job I wouldn't take on a bet. I go past Marah's reviewed restaurant, Taste of China, every day...I go down Spadina Avenue to get to my evening job. However, there are so many restaurants on Spadina...I've never been in any of them.

During the ultranationalism of the war on terrorism in Iraq, the idea of freedom fries and anything anti-French seemed so childish as to be insane. France disagreed with so many things American during this time, endured that childishness, and still stayed a friend to the US. Canada would not follow the US into Iraq, and we endured the same kind of nonsense. Dubya never did think that your friends may agree with you, but sometimes it's your closest friends who will tell you when you're wrong.

Science by consensus...this is when repeated observation and logic go out the door. As a result, right wing commentators decry climate change and evolution, just to name two hot topics. In any other country, such right-wing commentary would be called just inane stupidity.

In the past, I tried to convert friends into SF readers. Back then, I had an anthology edited by Terry Carr called SF For People Who Hate SF. One female co-worker I gave this to read it, and said she hated it. She also failed to give the book back to me, after close to a year of asking and nagging on my part. Guess she hated it so much, she got rid of it.

Michael D. Thomas's article on steampunk... Absolutely right. The future died. Our future may have looked like we were aiming ourselves at the start at one point, but now it looks fairly bleak, with global warming, more and more wars, and religious intolerance and extremism. Those who enjoy

steampunk (and I am among them) reset their selected time period for the Victorian era, where the future looked rosy indeed, and inventions came fast and furious from Edison and his peers. There's been quite an industry that sprung up from steampunk...jewelry, clothing, films, television, books, much more, and when Disney took part of their Magic Kingdom and rechristened it the Mechanical Kingdom, many thought that steampunk had jumped the shark, becoming part of popular culture. No matter what, the steampunk movement is a true version of creative anachronism, and you can't argue with its popularity.

Yvonne and I are aiming to get to London in 2014, assuming of course they win their bid for that year. Should we go for TAFF for that year? Sure hope it's eastbound that year...

And, thanks for the link to my loc. Do I respond too early or too late? Lots of my locs go missing from time to time.

A page and a half will do for the moment...I've got to get ready to go to my evening job, and at least make a few bucks. Just saw on Facebook that H.B. Fenn, the Canadian distributor for Tor Books in Canada, is declaring bankruptcy. More and more, I am in the wrong industry in the wrong country. Still hope springs eternal. Take care, and see you next time around.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

12/23/2010

hi Steven ~

Thank you for *Argentus* 10! All the articles are interesting, and a couple are fascinating (principally "Steampunk, Disney, and the Death of the Future" by Michael Thomas, and "A Science Fiction Fan in Sana'a" by Mark Herrup ~ with those weirdly fantastic Yemenese

trees!). Of course the artwork is splendiferous. I enjoy the Gilliland pieces in the food article. Too bad no Chicago eateries appeared in the "favorites" article despite Chicagoan Leah Zeldes's lengthy discourse on how to exercise critical judgment experiencing commercial cuisine. Sorry if I could not provide any food-involved faeries, dragons, etc., but at least you have one dragon sipping tea. Very glad the Washington DC illustrations were useful.

I am just learning about "steampunk," such a nice surprise. For a while now (for a variety of reasons) I have deliberately distanced myself from sf&f fandom and (sadly) science fiction and fantasy literature itself. Rich's companionship and the friendship of certain other individuals in fandom have been the sole draw for me. "Steampunk" piques my interest because it steps away from the omnipresent dystopian technology-enslaved "blasted

earth" future. Yet for me its charm lies less in advanced 19th-century-style steam technology (fun as it is) but rather a psychological reorientation. Not necessarily a return to Victorian ideals and objectives, nor is it living an outer-spacey Jetson dependence upon exploitative technology, manufacturing and marketing.

Rather ~ it is global consciousness. Learning to live harmoniously with fellow humans and, moreover, with the sea, earth and air of Gaia who gave birth to us all. The compelling new challenge is greater than just repairing environmental damage and restoring balance, but essentially readapting human existence to sustain the planet that sustains us ~ not unlike ancient hunter/gatherers. That is revolutionary on so many levels. Yep, that was the hippie message back in 1966. Finally people are beginning to listen.

The illustration you used on page 13 won first prize for fantasy art at

Reconstruction last August in Raleigh. Interestingly, it is the second exploration of that particular concept. The first effort is mine, living in its custom wooden oval frame, and will never be sold. Surprisingly I have always received a strong response to this simple tiny black and white ink interaction between a water dwelling dragon and his Japanese lady friend. I guess a third incarnation is in the works for Renovation.

I shall give you my USPS address (below), but in truth I do not need a hard copy. My place is far too small to encourage collecting things. I was able to save your transmitted copy to peruse. I love the website with all the previous available issues!

delphyne woods

And Special Edition 3: Neptune...

Dear Steven:

First of all, thank you for *Argentus* Special Edition 3 on the discovery of Neptune. It's been one Neptunian year...where has the time gone? Thanks for a very Neptunian issue, dark and blue. Let's see if I can actually make this into a decent loc.

You've all done your research, with much of the text reading like a good research paper. And, like any good scientific discussion, it is full of politics, both personal and religious. I remember science classes where we were taught the planets of the solar system, and the number and names of the moons around each one. With the changes of number of moons nearly every month, and the demotion of Pluto, is this something that's taught any more? We've discovered so much more detail, a textbook could be out of date even before it's published.

As time goes on, and technology improves, we continue to find more and more bodies orbiting our sun. The larger gas giants will continue to intrigue, but after discoveries like Sedna and Quaoar, I hope they won't be ignored. I hope the entire solar system will continue to be explored, if not by probe, at least by telescope. I fear for the future of its funding.

Thanks again for this special edition...Reno takes place in less than three weeks, and we will be there. We've got panels to be on, fanzines to pick up, the usual Worldcon's worth of fun. And, we will see you there. Congratulations on the Hugo nomination, and remembering the Hugo ceremony in Montréal, may the next Hugo you pick up be your own. Take care, and we will see you soon.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

WAHF: Joe Haldeman



Mock Section

Mayor Salvor Hardin, 63

Michael A. Burstein

Salvor Hardin, who served as the Mayor of Terminus City and kept it independent from the Four Kingdoms during the first two of the Seldon Crises, and who also served as the first Chief Primate of Scientism, died at home peacefully in his bed last night at the age of 63.

Hardin was born on December 23 in the year 19,507 in Terminus. He began his career studying psychohistory under Bor Alurin, but soon abandoned that pursuit to enter politics. He showed great talent as a politician, and quickly ascended to the office of the city's mayor, although at the time the mayor's office was mostly subservient to the Encyclopedia Foundation, who held real power over the city.

Hardin might have gone down in history as a simple caretaker mayor had it not been his fortune to be the mayor at the time of the first Seldon recording in the Time Vault. When the recording was played, Seldon's image revealed that the Encyclopedia being worked on by the Foundation was of little importance. Hardin managed to use that information to place his office in control of Terminus. Furthermore, Hardin's shrewd abilities as a politician allowed him to resolve the First Seldon Crisis. At the time the recording was played, the Empire was weakening and had given license to Anacreon and the other three of the Four Kingdoms to attempt to take Terminus over. Hardin managed to play the Four Kingdoms against each other, so that no one of the kingdoms would allow any of the others to gain a foothold on Terminus. This allowed Hardin to further consolidate his own control over the city.

Hardin also showed great foresight by allowing the scientists and doctors of Terminus to offer assistance to the Four Kingdoms under the auspices of what he termed Scientism, or the Church of Science. Scientism, as promoted among the citizens of the Four Kingdoms, took on the trappings of a mystical religion. When the kingdom of Anacreon, under the leadership of Prince Regent Wienis and King Leopold I, threatened to attack Terminus, it was Hardin's Scientism that kept the crew of the main imperial cruiser from attacking.

Hardin was also well-known for his sayings about politics. His two most famous sayings encapsulated his philosophy as a politician: "Never let your sense of morals prevent you from doing what is right" and "Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent." It is true that Hardin developed a reputation of abusing his

power, but generally it was accepted that he did so for the common good of the city.

Hardin leaves no immediate survivors. His body will lie in state in the Terminus capital before being interred at Beth David Cemetery on the outskirts of the city.

Master Robinton

Rhonda Eudaly

Pern is decidedly different today as everyone comes together to mourn the loss of Masterharper Robinton. Robinton was a fixture in Holder halls and Weys alike and will be missed by a grateful population. No one has been held in higher regard and respect than he.

His musical talent and fondness for good wine, good company, and dragons made him a fixture in Pern's society. As a whole Robinton's contributions to Pern are incalculable and surpass even his legendary musical prowess. Robinton has been part of reconciling many of Pern's major political crises beginning with Fax's Expansion and culminating with the destruction of Thread through the use of AIVAS. Without the Masterharper, Pern may not have survived the Pass much less ensured there would never be another.

Robinton's passing was heralded across Pern by the dragons themselves - an honor reserved for very few. Dragons are not free with their respect, but his ability to communicate with them, and his own attachment to the bronze fire-lizard, Zair, earned him their regard. Thanks to this, the entire planet knew the moment of his passing.

Robinton's death came as a result of failing health and the trauma of being drugged and kidnapped at a Rautha Hold gather. Though he was quickly found by the dragons of Pern, he never quite recovered. He died quietly in the AIVAS chamber about the same time Thread was defeated and AIVAS shut itself down. The words "And a time for every purpose under heaven" were left on an AIVAS screen over Robinton's body.

Robinton retired as Masterharper following his first round of illness when he relocated to Cove Hold. He is succeeded by his cousin and adopted son, Sebell. Robinton is survived by his own son, Camo, of the Harper Hall, Sebell, and Menolly, his daughter-in-law. A celebration of Robinton's life and service to Pern will be held in Cove Hold for all who can attend. Robinton's remains will be laid to rest in the waters that give Cove Hold its name. Those unable to attend are requested to raise a glass of Benden wine at sunset.

Brion Donal Cinhil Urien Haldane, King of Gwynedd

Robert L. Rede

The kingdom of Gwynedd is stunned by the announcement that King Brion died suddenly while hunting deer on Candor Rhea Plain near his palace of Rhemuth. The king received extreme unction from Bishop Denis Arilan, who was among the king's party.

King Brion succeeded his father, King Donal Blaine, in the Year of Our Lord 1095. The early years of his reign were spent cementing foreign treaties with Howicce and Llannedd, as well as Bremagne, a treaty bound by his marriage to Princess Jehana.

During an expedition to put down an uprising led by Earl Rorik of Eastmarch, King Brion was ambushed by Hogan Gwernach, who claimed the right to the throne based on his claimed descent from the ancient Festillic line and despite passage of laws denying anyone tainted with the blood of the Deryni from ascending to the throne of Gwynedd.

The birth of a son to King Brion and Queen Jehana led to another rebellion by Prince Judhael the Rebel, who had previously raised an army against King Brion's father. Although King Brion successfully put down the second Judhaelian uprising, its instigator managed to escape justice and died in exile a few years later. Juhael's death led to a period of peace and prosperity within the kingdom of Gwynedd in which King Brion was able to forge treaties, work closely with the Holy Church, and defend the country against Deryni incursions.

Kelson Cinhil Rhys Anthony Haldane, the late king's son, who was also a member of the hunting party, will be crowned king of Gwynedd as soon as proper arrangements can be made.

Joseph Gallinger

Robert Sabella

Joseph Gallinger died 6/14/2195 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA by his own hand. Gallinger first achieved recognition at the age of 22 when his first collection of poems *Pipes of Krishna* won the Pulitzer Prize. He won another Pulitzer six years later for his second collection *Madrigals Macabre*.

While he was writing his *Madrigals Macabre*, Gallinger became interested in the Martian language, which led to his selection as the first human to visit the Martian Citadel of Tirellian to study the Martian sacred texts with one of the Martian matriarchs. While little is known of Gallinger's time spent on Mars, his subsequent collection upon returning to Earth, *Songs of Petrarch* was considerably darker than his previous works. This, along with the fact that he made two unsuccessful suicide attempts, one while still on Mars,

led critics to surmise that Gallinger underwent a life-changing experience on Mars. He was 38.

Wilhuff Tarkin

Warren Buff, *Yavin News & Record*

Today, the Empire has lost one of its foundation stones. Governor Wilhuff Tarkin gave his life in battle when his space station was destroyed by spacecraft piloted by traitors participating in an armed revolt. Governor Tarkin's sacrifice stands as a reminder of the human cost of the peace and prosperity we enjoy as citizens of the Empire.

Wilhuff Tarkin was born into a family of successful businessmen, and began his career in the navy of the old Republic, rising rapidly to the rank of Captain. He saw action in the Clone Wars, distinguishing himself in the raid on the Citadel prison. Following the war, he was recruited to oversee construction of a new class of mobile battle-capable space station, and given command of the first in the line.

In light of his distinguished military service, Tarkin was asked to serve the Empire as a Governor, and granted the ancient title of Moff in recognition of his service. Working closely with Emperor Palpatine, Tarkin fought to bring down the notorious Hutt crime families, root out remaining Separatist sympathizers, and advised him on matters of Imperial policy. Tarkin was honored for these efforts with the revived title of Grand Moff, and was made governor of the entire Outland Regions.

Tarkin was a shrewd and loyal servant of the Empire, and the Outland Regions prospered under his governance. Seldom do we see a leader with his combination of business acumen and military record, and the Empire is poorer for his loss. Let us not forget the good he has done us, nor the act of treason which has taken him from us.

He is survived by his wife and son. A public memorial service is planned on his home planet of Eriadu.

King Conan and Alice

Bob Blackwood

I'm Bob, a hard-bitten literature professor and film reviewer in a clean trenchcoat and battered beaver hat, who has the misfortune to report on the passing of two classic action heroes: Robert E. Howard's Conan—a.k.a. Conan the Conqueror, King Conan, Conan the Barbarian, with three films, many short stories and one novel-length book to his credit—and Alice, the lively and death-defying heroine of the four "Resident Evil" films. Their passing came to me in a nightmare that woke me up. I had to know the complete truth.

I won't tell you the medium's name nor where she works. Suffice it to say, she is expensive, discrete and hangs out on the Near Northside of Chicago (it figures). The room was dark. Her crystal ball had a sort of pale green glow. I asked for her to try to reach Conan first.

A heavy voice with a heavy, vaguely east of the Rhine accent said, "Bob." I thought it was a put-on at first, until he said: "Yes, you remember me. You read Conan the Conqueror in a paperback when you were 10 years old in an old Ace doublebook. It was your first novel. Then you read Isaac Asimov's Caves of Steel, a step down from the excitement of Robert E. Howard's novel." He was right, though I thought Asimov's novel was always lively and challenging.

"How did you die? And how did you live anyway? You are a fictional character," I said.

"Sure I am, but millions of people want me to be real; so, I sort of am alive—a force, a source of power for many, an energy that young boys and men need. Howard gave that to me, and to Solomon Kane, and King Kull too. He was a genius at story telling."

"So?"

"So then the damn movies came. "Conan the Barbarian" with that overdeveloped kraut wasn't bad. More young people came to me. I was filled with power. "Conan the Destroyer" was fast-moving, but it didn't touch as many souls. Then came Jason Momoa in the 2011 "Conan the Barbarian." Would you believe my power started to shrink. It did. I could feel it shrivel. I couldn't stand it. I kicked a statue of Crom in the balls, and here I am."

"Stop your whining," said a strong female voice. "At least you had a long life. They bumped me off after two years in the sequel film."

"Who the hell are you?" I said, now deprived of my childhood hero.

"I'm Alice, the hero of the "Resident Evil" series of films. You know, I'm played by Milla Jovovich, the ballerina of brawling. I'm beautiful and deadly. Men can't resist me physically, not in any sense of that term."

"Well, if you died in the sequel, how did they make two other films?" I asked.

"Simple, professor, they cloned me. Hell, I've been dead since people saw Resident Evil: Apocalypse in 2004. Hey, Conan, don't get between me and the professor. I can't kill you again, but this spirit sixgun can make you leak ectoplasm all over the Near North."

"I've been threatened by more dangerous people than you," he groused.

"Yeah, but I bet you haven't been threatened by one as attractive," she replied with a lilt in her voice.

"We'll see about that!" I heard what might have been prolonged scuffling or, perhaps, only the wind beating the windows hard. I then heard them again in about 10 minutes.

"Oh, Conan."

"Oh, Alice."

"Hey, what am I supposed to tell the world?" I asked.

"Tell them to put their trust in the U.S. Marines," Conan said.

"Tell them to have more sex and watch fewer movies, professor," Alice giggled at me. "And, oh yes, don't become addicted to video games, not even "Resident Evil." They just rot your brain."

Well, I guess it wasn't my day for a séance on a rainy afternoon. It all sounded more like a therapy session for two actors who have had a bad run of luck. Which reminds me, what do you think Milla will do now that the public has seen her husband's version of "The Three Musketeers"? Of course, her sequences were the best thing in the film. Now if they only had developed the characters of the musketeers more fully...

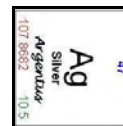
Bobbie Fiore, 34

Steven H Silver, *Decatur Tribune*

Shanghai—Former minor league ballplayer Bobby Fiore is reported to have been killed in a firefight against the alien invaders outside Shanghai, China. Fiore was signed to the Decatur Commodores when the team's train was bombed during the initial alien invasion. Although many members of the team were killed, Fiore was captured and rumored to have been forced to participate in a variety of experiments by the Lizards.

When Fiore's use for experimentation was finished, the Lizards deported him to an internment camp in China, where Fiore taught the locals how to play baseball. His strong throwing arm led to local freedom fighters drafting Fiore into a unit as a grenadier.

Word of Fiore's death was smuggled out of China by one of the leaders of the freedom fighters, Nieh Ho-Ting, who was aware of Fiore's career in Decatur and arranged to get word for those who remember Fiore's activities on the diamond. Ho-Ting further notes that his forces were not able to recover Fiore's body and has called Fiore a glorious martyr to the cause of Human liberation.



Argentus
707 Sapling Lane
Deerfield, IL 60015-3969

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