

# Hard Science TALES

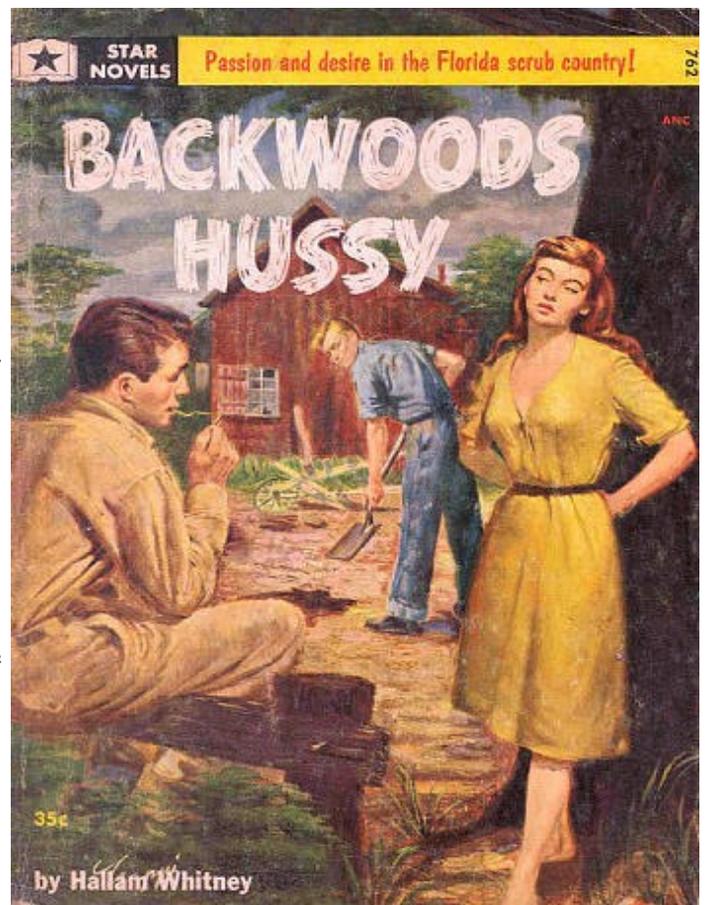
## Seventh Issue

Science is a disturbing element in many people's lives; something with which they never get completely comfortable. I've noticed that it sometimes helps them feel better about it if they adopt an instinctive understanding rather than a textbook knowledge. They might not hit on exactly the Truth (but What Is Truth?) yet they work things out to a formula that promotes their own comfort.

My uncle had a very clear understanding of jet planes. I remember clearly the first jet passing over Poplar Bluff. I was in the city's swimming pool when we all heard an enormous "boom", and saw the metal needle streaking across the summer sky, with a beautiful contrail marking its path. Some people screamed; almost everyone stopped what they were doing to point and stare.

It was the subject of much discussion around the dinner tables of Hometown USA. But my uncle quickly brought tranquility back with his explanation that the boom we heard was the jet breaking the sound barrier. However, he went on to explain, the danger was that if the jet poked too many holes in the sound barrier, the atmosphere would leak out into space, depriving Earth of its air.

At no point did he ever revive his explanation. It worked for him; once he had codified the risks, he knew just how much or how little to worry about any future booms that he might hear.



Perhaps this represents a kind of instinctive wisdom. After all, it doesn't so much matter if you are right or wrong, just if you are comfortable.

**Hard Science Tales Volume 2, Issue 4, Whole Number 7** comes to you from Joyce Worley Katz, PMB 152, 330 South Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107, on July 8, 2005. This is created for SNAFFU members and other Vegas fan friends, for the fourth distribution of SNAPS (The Southern Nevada Amateur Press Society.) Hard Science Tales is also posted to [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) for the amusement of the rest of fandom. Thanks to Arnie Katz for production help and for this nifty template. The pix is the cover of a forgotten novel.

## Letters

### Lloyd Penney:

Who wouldn't like to fly? I'd like to just to get where I'd like to go at a moment's notice. Sometimes, cars are too bulky, and gasoline is simply too pricy these days. An anti-grav in each back pocket would do fine, and I could swim around in an ocean of air.

As you say, fans are fans, no matter the fandom. I find that convention committees these days are making running a con very complex. I always looked at conventions as running a business, but I also wanted to make it easy to run. New laws and regulations have meant you must be as business-like as possible, and as a result, running the con is quite complex. I've chaired conventions before, but I don't think I could do it today. Yvonne is a little disillusioned with the way her experiences in space advocacy have turned out, but meeting some well-known people has more than made up for it.

I've run some green rooms at conventions, and most of the pros are nice people. Some of them demand the adulation they believe they are due, and some bitch and whine incessantly if their unvoiced expectations are not met in the fullest. However, there was one author who was not only bitchy, but vicious in her criticisms of conventions, and she was rude and spread rumors. Because she was well-known and loved by others, her tales were believed, and we were considered incompetent based on her stories. When she passed away, Yvonne and I were probably the only ones in the community not to shed any tears for her...I wish not to speak ill of the dead, but I speak of Judith Merril. She was the only truly negative blotch for all of the green rooms and con suites we've run over the past 25 years.

*I've chaired, co-chaired, and otherwise assisted on numerous conventions of varying sizes in the past. But even if I were physically and fiscally sound, I'd never agree to do it again for anything larger than a Corflu or Toner. I simply do not care about great masses of anonymous fans (or pros) enough to work that hard for their comfort. What I think is interesting is that I've seen this pattern of volunteering, growing disillusioned, and gradually becoming (like me) more reclusive, in non-fan convention circles. Convention hosting can be very unrewarding work, if you're not having enough fun while you do it.*

### Chris Garcia:

Another fine issue. You know, I'm glad that the Great Unwashed (like myself) gets a look at Hard Science Tales. It's really a nice little piece and even having SNAPS on the SNAFFU site is great. I'm glad I get a chance to see what's goin' on out there along with VFW.

It also shouldn't surprise me that the LoCs you printed were from Lloyd Penney, Eric Mayer and Myself. It seems that no matter what I'm reading on eFanzines, the three of us are in there!

I will not argue with your description of personal flight abilities, because I'm certain I did the exact same thing when I was a kid. My Mom said I must have been able to fly since

I kept getting caught up high in trees and there's no way anyone would be dumb enough to climb up. My technique must have been considerably different than yours, since we always lived in a one-story house.

Ah, I didn't realize that you too Understood the joy that is Pro Wrestling, though I imagine that I should have at least guessed you tolerated it with The Kingfish around the house. I've been watching since I was too young to know that I was too young to be watching. It's part of the love. My dear friend Josh said it best: Wrestling is the only sport with the decided benefit of good writers.

*Several fans have confided that they, too, used to fly. As I research this more, I conclude that We Are Onto Something Here. I propose we conduct trials to perfect our technique.*

*Some people just don't Get wrestling; all they see is blood, spit and over-muscled hunks. And that's the good part! Me, I only watch it for the sex.*

*You, Eric, Lloyd and sometimes Robert seem to be all that's keeping the letter cols alive. But here's an unexpected message from an old friend:*

### Hank Luttrell:

Your mention of my friendship with David Hall was interesting, provocative. You know, I've always had best friends who were Big Guys. I've come to suspect that I have a thing for Big Guys. I recall making both Dave's friend Paul Willis and Dave's father Jim mad, when I published their work in a fanzine. I don't remember why Paul got mad, it might have been over some typographical errors; I've always been good at those. Jim was mad about some inappropriate illustrations I created for an article. I suspect that Dave might have complained about those incidents. You might be right about our different personalities causing friction between us, but I do think there was a more immediate and most common sort of cause for our estrangement: our interest in the same woman. Now that I remember having disagreements about.

I felt a little defensive when you mentioned that I was not very political...but of course you are certainly correct. But it might put your history in better context to recall that we were very young back then. In the years leading up to the first Ozarkon, I was a teenager. I graduated from high school about that time, and was looking at going away to college. I wouldn't have presumed to offer a strong political opinion to an adult, like you or Ray. A few years later, while I was living in Columbia, MO, I attended SDS meetings, wrote for underground newspapers, and participated in campus demonstrations against the war, and in support of freedom of speech. You might recall, I had my own way of resisting the draft: I fasted to make sure I was under the minimum required weight for my height.

*Wish you and I could sit down and reconstruct the history of St. Louis fandom. I know my memory is very selective. Rich Wannan has contributed a lot to the history of St. Louiscon, but the early days of the club are very Foggy in my mind. Well, it was 40 years ago or so — one thing for sure, we were Much Younger and Impassioned about everything*

*that touched our lives, especially fandom.*

*I don't remember the publishing incidents you mention. But I do remember the rivalry over *The Woman*. And, I certainly recall your political activism in college. Well, it was the 60s. Only a *Dead Man* could be nonpolitical at that time.*

*I also recall your and Lesleigh's Great Contributions in founding Columbia fandom. I've often wondered what happened to all those guys. I guess the last one I heard from was Steve Shucart, and that was, oh, roughly a hundred years or so ago.*

## **Alien Voices (Mailing Comments)**

### **Chris Haraway**

It is heartening to believe that men begin to have a parental feeling toward the unborn baby when it stirs in the womb. I had always assumed those feelings didn't awaken for most men until after the baby was born. Lucky little Alien to have a dad that's tracking his growth! When is the baby due?

You write so elegantly about the casino; I'm glad you are enjoying being back at work. I would imagine that it is interesting to meet so many diverse people. However, I would guess that many of them are Stressed because they're losing their money.

I rarely go to the casinos, only if there are out-of-town guests who want to be there. But when I do, I enjoy watching the people. And of course I enjoy the pretty décor of the City's finest. Never got into gambling, though. Well, gee, I'm basically a Missouri girl, and I guess that explains it.

### **Eutrapelia (David Gordon)**

You're right. Everyone needs someone to stand behind them whispering in their ears "You are but a man." In fact, I have always thought some of the saddest personalities are those who have risen so high that they have no one to tell them they're full of shit. They just go on feeding their own egos, and often end as parodies as their former selves.

I don't really mind political and/or religious discussions, until someone gets offended and turns ugly. I've actually seen pleasant social evenings turned bad. In one case (long ago, far away, and involving non-fans) a friend from Arkansas actually picked up a chair and started swinging it at someone who was endorsing school integration. (That tells you how long ago it was.) Now, That was a party-ender!

I'll admit I find it hard to "suffer fools gladly" and if the topic is sufficiently meritorious, can restrain my anger only with difficulty. Once or twice (like my Arkansasian friend so long ago) another person's opinion has been so opposite to my own that it was friendship-ending. I think what that sows is that I am as intolerant as the next guy. But, I hope (and strive to be) more likely to be on the side of the angels.

### **Mid-Life Crisis (Linda Bushyager)**

Linda, you are so intrepid! I probably would have loved white water rafting when I was a kid. But now? I really hand it to you and Ron, and loved hearing about the adventure.

I've never been to the Grand Canyon. But I love the films shot from light planes flying through it. Your adventure sounds like it was a nightmare for anyone who's not really

fit. Even leaving aside the difficulty getting in and out of the boat (for me that would be insurmountable) the lack of facilities, causing you to have to limit your liquid intake, would keep me on shore forever.

Have you and Ron gone up to Valley of Fire? It vies with Red Rock Canyon, in my opinion, as the top tourist site around these parts.

Command Performance is, as you guessed, fabulous entertainment, with the great stars of yesteryear. I love the blend of a little dose of history and the sentiment of support for the Troops. And when you hear a program with Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Dinah Shore, Jimmy Durante, and one or two other equally luminous stars, you know you've heard something special.

### **Bat Signals (Teresa Cochran)**

I liked your Ocean poem even better than the Seti one.

In fact, being only one drop in a big puddle bothers a lot of people. I've noticed that a certain number of neofan are completely turned off by realizing that there is a Great Big Fandom full of people out there.

I suspect this phenomena occurs because of lack of confidence, the thought that "I'm not good enough to compete in that circle," or "I can never become important in such a large group." I've never particularly been bothered by this. On the one hand, I've always felt if I was good enough, I'd rise to the top like cream on milk. And if I'm not good enough, I am safely hid down in the middle of the bottle with the rest.

Besides, I like to be part of a really good movement. I guess that's one of the main attractions of fandom to me.

### **Softcore Fantasy Adventures (Arnie Katz)**

I think the first issue of a fanzine is the hardest, and then it gets progressively easier as you work the kinks out of the template, and get more in publishing form.

It appears that all of us have agreed to go all-electronic with SNAPS. Although the assembly did add a certain, uh....Snap...to Snaffu, the savings in money and trouble seem to outweigh that point.

### **Vegas Notion (Ross Chamberlain)**

Your zine is so elegant-looking!

I have a theory of time travel, too. I don't believe we will physically go there, because that might cause us to interfere and change the time line (the step-on-a-butterfly phenomenon). But I think we will be able to go there emotionally and be witnesses.

You know how you can return to a moment of great significance in your own past....some trauma or loss (for example.) and relive the moment. You can feel the same pain as before, relive the event. This is how I think time-travel will work

### **Jojadoq (Lori Forbes)**

I imagine your job must make you even more cynical, as people tend to exaggerate the value of their lost possessions. I have also noted the peculiar behavior of people who seem to believe anything goes in Vegas. I think it accounts for

most of the pedestrian deaths — people who'll just step out in front of cars, jaywalk in the middle of a block, cross against the lights. They think since they're in Vegas they're somehow immune from the normal safety rules. It's the same phenomenon that makes the virtuous housewife from Indiana take off her shirt in New Orleans.

Thanks for explaining Jojatoq . That's cute. Wouldn't work for me, though, I have nine nieces and nephews, and uncountable (well, not on my fingers) great- and great-grands.

### **Wood Pulp (Woody Bernardi)**

I think it's terrific that you and Rebecca got to go to the Premiere Party. See, volunteering does pay off!

I haven't seen all that many independent films, particularly not many of the small low-budget films made around Vegas. I really enjoyed the one that Alan White showed to us at the White's Cthulu Brunch. It reminded me a lot of how the kids in my neighborhood used to play adventures, way back when. It took a certain amount of imagination to make a tree into an office building (where we had our detective agency) or Old Man Cook's row of corn into jungle trails or canyons. But when you suspended belief just a little, it all made more sense, like in the movie (which was **Six String Samurai**.)

Speaking of Alan, that's a great back cover cartoon!

### **My Double Life (Ayesha Ashley)**

I know that this is actually part of Woody's contribution, but I'm going to write about it, and about Rebecca's page, separately, to draw attention to it. But full kudos should go to Woody for having the good sense to get you and Rebecca to let him publish your pieces.

What a terrible disappointment! Now that I've heard you sing a few times, I know that you really should be in a working band. And it's a damn shame to come so close and then have it fall through.

You mentioned having a band in England. When were you in England, and for how long? What was the name of your band?

### **It Could Be Worse (Rebecca Hardin)**

What a harrowing ordeal! I think you used a remarkable amount of self-restraint, not to punch out the woman behind the counter! (No, of course I wouldn't have done that either. But I imagine I would have wanted to!)

I've never been caught in a great big road accident like that. I have been caught in massive subway delays that kept the train stalled underground for a couple of hours, so I understand the discomfort and frustration.

When I worked in Manhattan my biggest fear was always getting caught in a packed elevator during a power outage. At 5 pm, they're generally like sardine cans, stuffed with people who just want to get home, get a drink, get to the bathroom.....who just don't want to be stuck standing in a hot over-crowded box in the innards of a skyscraper.

### **SNAPPY Thoughts**

Well, here we are at distribution #4! I'm pleased at how we've got this apa off the ground. I'm also pleased that we are ready to go all electronic, since I know this will help several of the participants to continue activity.

Now I'm hoping some of the others will join in the fun. Since we've broken the ice, it shouldn't be so hard to get them to jump into the pool!

### **A Few Personal Remarks**

I saw the regular medical doctor this week. His once-over seemed to indicate that I'm recovering nicely. And, he promised me things will get better, which is heartening.

As it is, I am well enough that he gave permission for me to go ahead with cataract surgery on the left eye. I'll start that string of appointments and tests, etc., next week. I'm really glad to get to do this, because that means I should be fully recovered and seeing much better by next January, when I'll have to take an eye exam to renew my driver's license.

The next shoe that falls will be the appointment with the cardiologist at the end of July. Assuming all goes well, and that the blood tests I took this week are good, I hope she will allow me to schedule the ankle surgery I need. I would really love to have this over and done before the end of our long summer.

### **Dog Days in Las Vegas**

Getting the Las Vegas Music Circle off the ground has been a lot of fun. I enjoyed the sing at the Vegrants Meeting a couple weeks back. And, it was fun to go to Steve Brust's house last Tuesday for a musicale evening.

The fun was only slightly nipped in the bud when the Brust Hound From Hell bit me. It's a Great Pyrenees, which is to say a massive animal. So this was pretty damn scary.

It really was my fault. I was the first guest through the door. I saw the dog, and having had one of the magnificent creatures as a kid, my heart swelled with Love. Rather than freezing on the spot, as anyone should do when coming abruptly face to mussel with one of these behemoths, I moved toward the dog. No doubt this alarmed him; he growled and lunged, and got me on the thigh (of the bad leg. Of course.)

The doc looked it over and agreed with me that it's not serious; the dog merely grazed me. So I have a story to tell, but not too much damage. And next time, you can bet I'll let someone else walk in first!

