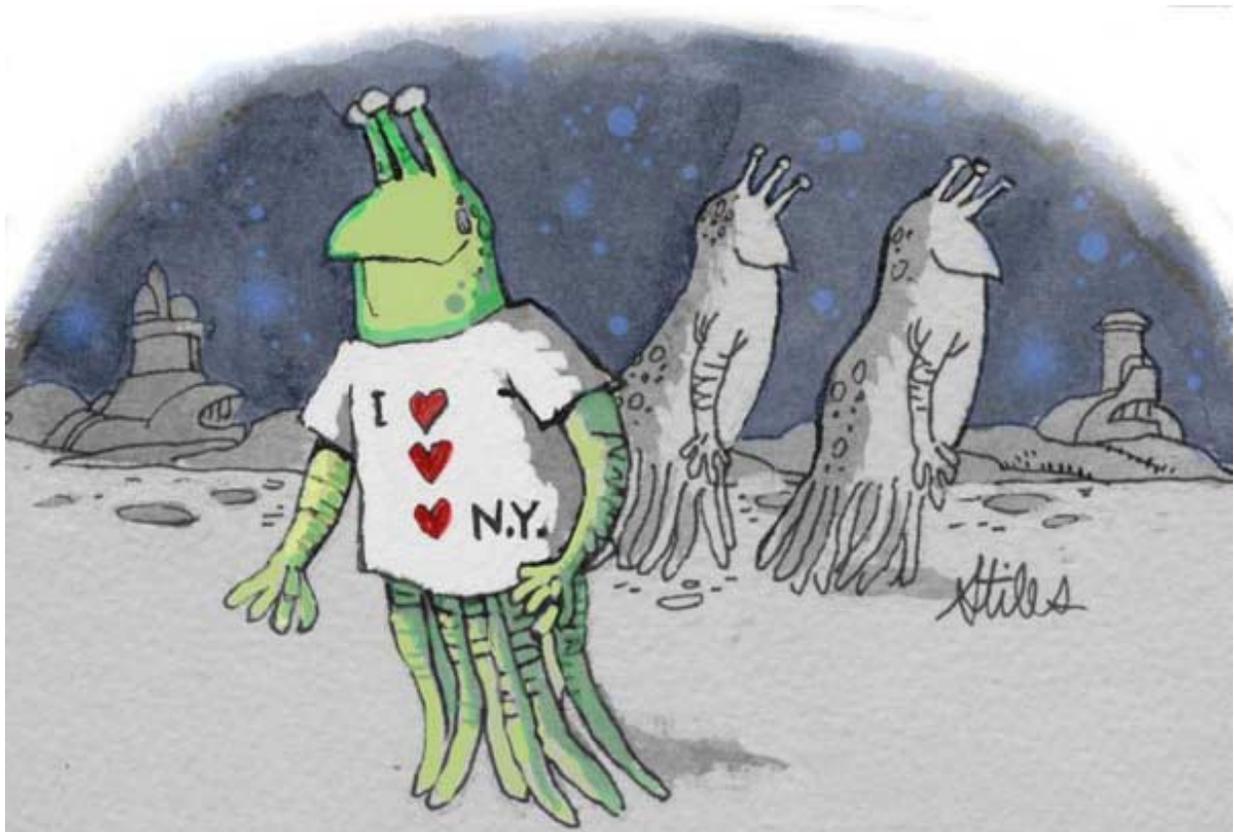




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**"He loves New York,"** by Steve Stiles

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[Sliding Down Mount Shasta](#), by Earl Kemp

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The two prime movers in the Universe are Time and Luck.  
--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

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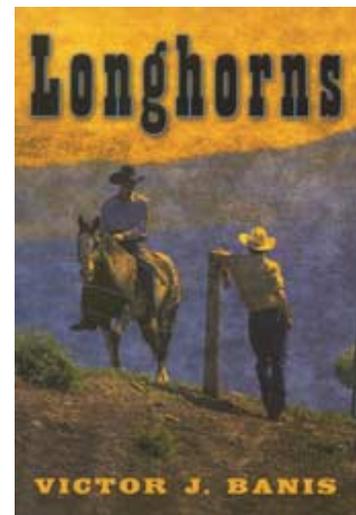
**THIS ISSUE OF *eI*** is in memory of my old friend Fred Saberhagen and the glory years of the University of Chicago Science Fiction Club.

In the exclusively science fiction world, it is also in memory of Walter J. Daugherty, Douglas Hill, and Roy Lavender.

#

**Me...!** My friend and frequent contributor to *eI*, Victor Banis, has a new novel that has just been published... productive guy that he is. The name of it is *Longhorns* and, as you might suspect, it's about all those exciting things that cowboys do with each other on the range when they're not poking cows. The book is extra special to me because it's dedicated to me. [Buy a copy of it!](#)

#



As always, everything in this issue of *eI* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions, anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and thank you in advance for all your help.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *eI* whatever it is.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Gregory Benford, Robert Bloch, Ed Gorman, Patrick Kearney, Earl Terry Kemp, Jim Linwood, Charles Nuetzel, and Bob Toomey.

**ARTWORK:** This issue of *eI* features artwork by Steve Stiles, and recycled artwork by William Rotsler.

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Maturity is a bitter disappointment for which no remedy exists, unless laughter can be said to remedy anything.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

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## ...Return to sender, address unknown.... 23

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) or by snail mail to P.O. Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 and thank you.

Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

This is the official Letter Column of *eI*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *eI*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *eI* so you can look for them when they appear here.

**Wednesday June 13, 2007:**

Neat! Really enjoyed the piece by Ed Gorman, whose *CILN #5* was responsible for making me think that, maybe, pubbing a fanzine was a good idea.

--Dave Locke

#

That's an awesome Stiles on the cover there. There's an EC Comics vibe to it that I really like. Then again, all the horror stuff feels EC to me. I blame it on my Dad's old comics.

I always love the Ray Nelson art and I don't really get to see a lot of it anymore other than old zines that come my way. He's a talented guy. I like his writing too. Add to that the photos. I always love old fannish photos because the entire world shown in them seems so different from the fannish world I live in. Yeah, people still do fan parties that draw folks from all over (and stuff still disappears from bookshelves) but they're so different now. I'm reminded of the party I went to when Jay Lake came by the BArea a few weeks ago. There were all the regular folks I expected and around 1am, we were all sitting on the stairs or on the floor or lying under the table with our sodas or wine and a plate of cheese or stuff. We must have looked just like those folks lounging on the porch, but there was something so different to the whole feel of the image we'd present. It's a hard thing to explain. I would love to see more of the stuff from James O'Meara's collection. It's just as important that we hold on to the photos as we do to the zines.

It turns out that Matt Groening was a fan. I have no proof, but it's odd that Van Houton, Terwilliger, Flanders, and more that are all names I've found while reading various fan histories. It's odd. I love those old zines. Just seeing the covers make me want to read more. I've read most of the *Xeros* over the years. I still haven't bought the *Best of Book*. I must do that. I'd absolutely love to see more *Cilns*. They sound like one of those zines that I would have been big on in the day.

Ah, Graham Charnock. He's the man. It was a delight to get to chat with Michael Moorcock. He was such a nice guy. As was Graham. Sadly, he seems to think that he had to go and humiliate me. There's a minor problem: I'm unhumiliatable. First off, to be humiliated, one must have a shred of dignity or pride. I traded both of those for unmatched productivity. The other is that I do a much better job of humiliating myself than anyone else I've ever met. Keep tryin' Graham! It was a great CorFlu. There hasn't been as much coverage of this year's event as previous years, it would seem. There needs to be more! Where's *Chunga!!!*



I love Victor Banis' stuff. I certainly must buy the *Drag Thing* novel. I was just pulled in and want more more more.

Pete Weston mentioned Derek Pickles. I've been having a conversation with Mark Plummer in the pages of *The Drink Tank* about my steadfast belief that Pickles is just too strange a name to have ever lived and so he's obviously imaginary. Pete is merely playing along!

Gotta love Robert Bloch. I've read a lot of his shorter pieces and I've never read *Psycho* for some reason. The movie? Seen it a hundred times. The various other books influenced by and about Gein (including one that had extensive interviews with Bloch, I think it was called *The Psycho Named Ed Gein*) but never *Psycho*. I've come across a few of his articles in old fanzines (including a couple of N3F rags from the 1950s) and they're always good stuff. Those photos from Karen Anderson's collection are really important too. I'm fairly certain she has a lot of great old photos that should be out there for history.

And Vampira. There's nothing I can say about her. I think she was the hottest Horror Host ever, far ahead of Elvira. There are a couple of nude photos of her from the 1950s out there. I was looking for one for a while, but couldn't find it again! I hate those moments!

Again, the whole thing of a con is different from what we know today. Just looking at the photos you get a totally different vibe. I really wanna understand how fandom has changed, but it's hard when all you hear about from those folks who were around is how much better things were back then. I wish there was some way to really 'understand' fandom then and now, but I don't think that's possible without video of the old days.

Hey, a mention of The Little Men!!! We're having a Little Men meeting, the first one in almost a decade, at Westercon. I'm excited to see who shows up as R Twidner said he'd come by and who knows who else. The zine is a wonderful piece of ephemera. I've just started working on my Cocktail issue of *The Drink Tank* and of course, here's proof (pun slightly intended) that it was done long ago by those far better than I. Go figure. I do have to say, those are some interesting drinks, though I'm not sure how many of them I'd actually enjoy.

Another long and joyish read, Earl. Really enjoyed it.

--Chris Garcia

#### **Thursday June 14, 2007:**

Haven't read all of it yet, but I did have to skim the Bloch piece. One correction: the name of the opera bar was "Vieni Vieni." That and the Bocce Ball were landmarks.

--Karen Anderson

#### **Sunday June 17, 2007:**

I was amused to read of Mike Tuckerising himself as "Moorcock of the Yard" because Mike well and truly tuckered me in his first novel [Caribbean Crisis](#) which he wrote for the

Sexton Blake Library series under the name of Desmond Reid in 1962. I'm "A man called Linwood—Jim Linwood. I never met him. He was an assistant Harben hired while I was away. Some bum mechanic who used to hang around the waterfront cafes." I seemingly come to a sticky end in a bathysphere in chapter one...but all is not what it seems. I still have the autographed copy Mike gave me—must be worth a few bob now.

Robert Bloch at a 1969 party given by Ella Parker in her flat in honor of Bob who was in England working on film scripts for Amicus.

Photo by Patrick Kearney from Jim Linwood, courtesy Patrick Kearney Collection.



Bob Bloch's Frisco 1954 conrep conjured up the golden days of fandom. I met Bob at a party in his honour at Ella Parker's flat in 1969. He was over in England to work on scripts for Amicus Productions' films like *The House That Dripped Blood* and *Asylum*. Pat Kearney and I literally sat at his feet as he carefully dissected the Rod Steiger film *No Way To Treat A Lady*, then showing in London. He had spotted a basic flaw in the plot: the mother-fixated cop (George Segal) would never have left his mother alone in her flat while Steiger's serial killer of middle-aged ladies was on the loose nearby. I also realised at the time that Bob had also been acting in movies for years under the name of "Walter Matthau".



Bob Bloch



"Walter Matthau"

Peter Weston's mention of Derek Pickles and his fanzine *Phantasmagoria* brought back memories of my discovery of fandom. I was on holiday with my parents on the Isle of Man in 1954 and bought a remaindered copy of the *Vargo Statten Magazine*. Among the trashy fiction was a column by "Inquisitor" (whom I later found out was Vince Clarke) writing about the strange world of "Fandom" and "fanzines". What's more, these

“fanzines” cost less money than prozines. I wrote off for a few and the first one I received was Derek’s *Phantasmagoria*. I was disappointed, instead of fact and fiction about spaceships and life on other planets there was all this stuff about going to hotels with zap-guns, wearing beanies, and getting drunk. I wrote the archetypal neoish letter to Derek complaining about all this “fannish” stuff and tried to put things right by submitting a “real” sf story *Colonist*. Derek published my letter and story and everyone thought I was a hoax.

--Jim Linwood

#

This is probably the fastest I have ever read through your zine, which probably says a lot about the contents. But, first things first...

“Unworthy newbies like John Purcell” ?!?! WTF?? I suppose my tenure in fandom is rather short compared to the likes of you, Graham Charnock, Michael Moorcock, Ted White, and the rest of you boring *old*pharts. Taken that way, my 34 years in and out of fandom may indeed make me sort of new, especially since I’ve only been really active again since 2003. Besides, I know you’re full of shit, and that’s okay; I like you anyway.

This particular issue has some fun Corflu related material in it, which certainly brings back a lot of pleasant memories—and *you* are even in some of them. I really enjoyed reading Graham’s warped recollection of the con, inter-spliced with your “Duet” and the exchange between you and Peter Weston leading up to Robert Bloch’s San Francisco WorldCon report, which I also thoroughly enjoyed. Both Bloch’s and Juanita Coulson’s articles were very historically interesting and fun reads, enhanced by the photographs you wisely included. I mean, check out that picture on page 18 where you are sitting next to Rosemary Hickey. Look how *young* you were then, and probably still an unworthy newbie yourself at that time. This just proves that there is hope for me yet. You, too, for that matter.

That cover by Steve Stiles is truly wonderful, and reminds me of the gardens my family had back when we lived in Marshalltown, Iowa. Just about anything could grow in that soil. All we really had to do was dig up the sod, till the dark, rich soil a bit, toss some seeds in, cover them up, and water a bit, then in practically no time at all everything was growing. Juanita’s gardens were probably bigger, but we also had corn, snap peas and beans, peppers, onions, lettuce, kale, carrots, radishes, and so on, even a separate herb garden next to the Rose of Sharon hedge. It was a lot of work, but worth it.

Speaking of Iowa, I wonder if Ed Gorman ever attended the first couple DemiCons, which my wife and I attended back in 1990 and 1991. That picture of him on page 22 looks vaguely familiar. If he didn’t, then he looks a lot like a professor I had at the University of Minnesota.

Once again, a fun issue, Earl, and I enjoyed it very much even though you consider me an “unworthy newbie.” And you know something? I forgive you, mainly because I know that

you're just a cranky and crusty old curmudgeon slowly going to pot out in the desert. Isn't that awfully white of me?

--John Purcell

### Thursday June 21, 2007:

That's a wonderfully creepy cover Steve did for this issue! It's only too bad that he didn't take advantage of the possibility it could be displayed in full color.

In his letter Eric Mayer writes, "I admire the encouraging attitude Rog apparently took in his fanzine reviews. It's always seemed to me that publications (or other creative efforts) that are done for the love of it and with good intentions (not to mention given away free) should not be subjected to harsh criticism. Those who don't like such amateur offerings should maybe just avoid them and direct their righteous indignation at stuff people are getting paid to do. The enthusiasm of a fanzine editor can be practically palpable and can be enjoyable in itself, even though the zine might feature sloppy writing and bad repro." I agree that in the case of "The Club House" Rog's having a universally positive attitude about the fanzines being discussed was a good thing in that the whole point of his column was to attract people's interest in participating in fandom. Perhaps he simply didn't review the more dire examples of the fannish muse that were sent his way. (I don't have copies of those *Amazings* to check for myself.) But I also feel that not to provide peer criticism of fanzine efforts would constitute a failure to communicate honestly within our microcosm. True, there are those who will shrink and withdraw in the face of critical comments, no matter how true and well-intentioned; but there are others who will take the criticism to heart, apply it to what they've done, and strive to do better in future. On balance, I think critical comments are not only warranted, they're necessary if people are to grow in their writing and editing skills (and not just in fandom).



Lloyd Penney writes, "I wish there was once again a fannish column in the prozines...not only would it be an initial contact for readers who might wonder if there's a network out there of similarly interested people, but it would also provide another way of fans and pros connecting. Isn't that how this whole thing started? Could it restart it? Or, are we flogging a dead horse with the low circulation of most modern SF magazines? The list of involvements between fans and pros in the Phillips columns would be a godsend today..." I don't know the answer to Lloyd's question about "flogging a dead horse," but I'd love to see some enterprising SF magazine editor undertake writing

such a column to see what results. Many years ago I offered to write a fan column for *Aboriginal SF* but was rebuffed by its editors even though I wished no payment for my efforts.

It was sad to read in Juanita Coulson's reminiscences of fannish thievery: "And eventually, possibly inevitably, items began 'disappearing' from our bookshelves, never to be seen again after the crowds went home. (We had strong suspicions who might have lifted said items, but had no proof. The probable perp definitely was NOT one of our trusted, invited friends.) That was the end of the Coulson 'picnics.' It was fun while it lasted, and it was with regrets we closed down the shop." I assume that although he was a resident of Indiana, Claude Degler was not one of the people who showed up at these gatherings. He had a reputation for lifting valuable stfnal items from some of the homes he visited back in the '40s.

In Ed Gorman's article, the correct spelling of the last name of the editor of *Twig* was Guy Terwilleger. If I'd been editing this article for my own fanzine, I would have checked around and edited out Ed's parenthetical comment about the spelling. In your case, you could have asked me or any number of other fans who were around at the time. That aside, I enjoyed but have no other comment on Ed's article except to be very, very glad that he has so far escaped the end game of his "incurable but treatable cancer."

In Graham's article, it's good to know for sure who it was had "burned down Charles Platt's flat." I recently read Linda Weber's *Lily, Where's Your Daddy?* and wondered what fan had done the deed.

Those scary cat photos almost dissuaded me from reading Victor Banis's story, but once I overcame my trepidation and did I found it enjoyable. And I liked your and Peter Weston's semi-matching articles, and of course your presentation of Bloch's "San Francisco Confidential," which I reread completely for the first time in ages (despite being the person who sent it to you, I only skimmed it at the time)—actually, since reading it originally in the '60s after that issue of *Le Zombie* came into my life. (And I'm looking forward to "Hitting The Fan," also by Bloch, about which you insert a teaser.

As for *The No Holds Barred Guide*, it's a good thing I read Karen's note at the end about who Ted Shane was before asking you Who Was This Fan. I have an original copy of this in my collection, and must say you did an excellent job of reproducing it.

--Robert Lichtman

#

Just finished the latest *eI32* and it's been too long since I've done any loccking. Time to loc on. I have a list of favorite fan writers that renders the word "favorite" meaningless due to its sheer length. Many of these fine fen folk show up often in *eI*, so it came as no surprise to see bits on and by Ted White, Robert Bloch, and the Andersons. At the same time, it was a quite pleasant (surprise). My copy of *Eighth Stage of Fandom* remains one of my most treasured possessions with many pages bookmarked just so I can easily find certain passages to share with other people. If I ever get around to producing a *SoH* #3, I'd love to find a Bloch piece to use as the fanhistory feature. Like Ed Gorman, I find

much of what Ted writes to be interesting and entertaining--not always a combination guaranteed to work. I think maybe one reason why Ted White scares Ed Gorman (et alia) is because Ted writes with such confidence and self-authority that even those who disagree with him, or possess alternate memories (or have some personal feud in the works), find it difficult to find a clear opening for dissension. (Difficult, maybe, but not impossible as many would likely respond.) In any case, I agree with Ed in that there is never a dull moment in his prose and I look forward to every essay of his I stumble across. "No Holds Barred" was a lot of fun to see. While it may not necessarily apply, it reminds me that bartenders who "never touch the stuff" often make the best drinks. Great ish!

--John Teehan

### **Friday June 29, 2007:**

The following is copied from *The Zine Dump* No. 16:

**eI32** / Earl Kemp, [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) / eFanzines.com / Outstanding zine by a master of the medium—and if you think that label more GHLIII hyperbole, *eI32* is all the **evidence** I need HAHAHAHA \*ahem\* Opening with LoCs on his April issue, almost all awed by its article on Ed Emshwiller, Earl next brings us a personal piece by Juanita Coulson on fannish life in rural Indiana, ca. 1966. The illos by Ray Nelson are hilarious, and as elsewhere in this issue, the photos are wonderfully evocative. Ed Gorman writes about the classic fanzines which introduced him to the hobby—*Habakkuk*, *Xero*, *Yandro*—the reproduced mimeo covers are a hoot. Jumping to contemporary times, there's a rich & funny & moderately insane Corflu report by Graham Charnock—I lied about the "moderately"—and "Frankenpussy", an excerpt from Victor Banis' novel *Drag Thing* which lives up to its title. Fine as this stuff is, the truly epic portion of the zine follows, Bob Bloch's "San Francisco Confidential", a scandalous report on the 1954 worldcon, reprinted (with editing) from a 1955 *Le Zombie*, introduced by Peter Weston and Kemp, illustrated with awesome photos from the Karen Anderson Collection. Bloch's humor jumps from every word, of course, but so does his love for SFdom—it's wondrous stuff. 13-14 years later, I'd meet a lot of the great people herein depicted (Anthony Boucher, Harlan, Poul Anderson, Bloch himself)—but never Vampira. She too showed at the convention, a year or so before immortalizing herself in *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (so much for her "show-biz shrewdness"). Best photo: the small-screen vamp dancing with Poul Anderson. Speaking of Poul, his greatest collaboration with Karen, Astrid, is depicted as a baby, and a facsimile edition of their *No Holds Barred*, a mixological treatise subtitled *How to Get Stinko Fannishly*, finishes this epic issue. *eI* is amazing, a zine of incalculable value to all who would know SF fandom, and who share my astonishment and gratitude that such a nifty krewe allows us to share in their joy.

--Guy Lillian

### **Sunday July 1, 2007:**

Some comments on *eI32*.

Perhaps I misread Michael Moorcock's intent, but he appears to be saying that his first novel was *The Chinese Agent*. I always thought that honor went to the "Edward P. Bradbury" Mars trilogy, published by Lancer books in its infancy. And perhaps he would relate his creation of the Tarzan comic strip, filled with fan-names, for the characters.



I had only the briefest contact with Lee Hoffman, during her New York stay, but I found her to be charming, witty and a delightful person. Her presence at a convention inspired John Boardman to remark: "Lee Hoffman would be more attractive in a nun's habit than (name deleted) would be stark naked."

Gads—I do remember *TWIG*: bold graphics and inspired text by some of the best in the business, under the skilled hands of a moonlighting high school teacher. *Yandro* was less ostentatious but throbbled with the vibrant personalities of the Coulsons.

Robert Bloch's convention report was a delight, as is anything from him. Most of the attractions he describes are still in existence, albeit costlier and more restrictive.

Bloch speaks highly of "...a lovely gal named McCarthy who does sketches and cartoons..." Was this Bjo?

And belatedly, the first chapter of the Emshwiller biography in the prior issue was a gem. If only the entire book was reprinted in *el*, a clear impracticality. I loved the way he contrasted Emshwiller's ascendancy with Gold's and *Galaxy's* and how they dovetailed and were nurtured by one another.

--Mike Deckinger

### **Wednesday July 4, 2007:**

It's been great to read Michael Moorcock's fannish reminiscences. There has to be more, Mike's opened the door, and there's no closing it now. Rog Phillips' positive attitude toward new faneds is reflected today. I haven't seen anyone demanding that another get out of fanzine fandom, and that's very much good. Right now, we need all the publications we can get. Eric Mayer mentions a SFnal artist that later went on to do Wildlife illustration, and the name that came to mind was Barry Kent Mackay.

We used to do some big parties as well. We called them Aparticons because they were parties in our apartment, and they were semi-invitation only. They did get to a large size, about 50 or so people, and we also found the same kind of petty thievery Juanita Coulson wrote about. We did have special parties, especially for Yvonne's birthday as she turned

40 and then 50, but we haven't had one in a while. We'd need a bulldozer to get this place fit for a party again, and we'd need to save our shekels to do it. People were quite happy to come to our parties, but since we've stopped, or momentarily ceased, no one has decided to do the same thing. Our pubnights seem to have made up for it.

Ah, that's why you needed pictures of cats baring their fangs...

Going to torture me some more with pictures from Corflu Quire, hm? Well, Mr. Kemp, you won't torture me next year! Yvonne and I are coming to Las Vegas for Corflu Silver to be a part of the big event. We finally get to meet! I don't know if Silver will match or surpass Quire, but I can trust the Katzes to give it their best shot.

Elly Bloch was buried in Canada? Where? Was she Canadian? Could this be the reason the only time I met Robert Bloch was at a convention in London, Ontario? I did not know that there had been a bid to bring the Worldcon to Buffalo. There's a bit of fanhistory I'd like to hear more about...perhaps I should pester Joe Fillinger a bit more. He's my prime suspect...

A fannish bartender's guide...looks like the Andersons did it first and best. Some *Star Trek* fans tried their best much later on. The one recipe from that guide I remember best was a rum and Coke, but in the opposite quantities.

--Lloyd Penney

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If you wish to study a granfalloon, just remove the skin of a toy balloon.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Cat's Cradle*

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# Dad & I\*

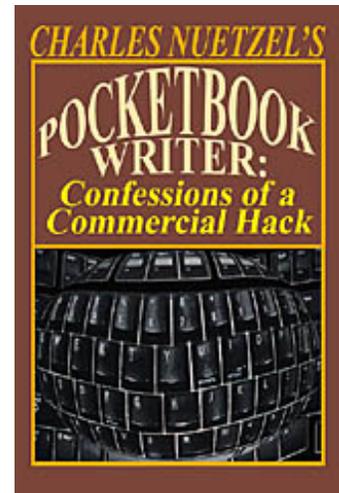
By Charles Nuetzel

And what makes us want to write?

To present a message we consider of value to the world around us. Our ego or our needs or our natural human instinct to add to humanity drives us to have this mad desire to communicate our ideas we consider original concepts.

As for me?

I think it was a desire and need to communicate my thoughts and ideas to a father with whom I shared a lot of love, but with a father who, at times, had difficulty in verbal exchanges. Mother was a talker. Dad was a painter (commercial artist); he didn't think in words so much as in images. He had an older brother who was gifted with words, who talked in a very interesting and intelligent way about many things, and had traveled the world over his years of living. But Dad? Well he was an artist and expressed himself creatively through art rather than through words. Not that he was a dummy. Heck no. Not that. Just that his communicating talents were channeled mainly through his art. He didn't like to argue, have debating exchanges, mental fencing. I loved to work out problems of the world and everything in a verbal way. But my mouth always stumbled over the words. And I found it very difficult to have complete, satisfying conversations that were conclusive. I've been told by a life-long friend that I write more clearly than I speak. Okay? Debate ended.



Dad was born 1901, and died some 68 years later, mere weeks before Man landed on the Moon.

Throughout the 1930's Dad worked for Fox West Coast Theaters, at which he painted huge poster like things that were used to hang in the lobbies of movie theaters in San Francisco. They didn't have the printed posters in those days. At least not in the first run movie houses. During these years we saw all the first run movies for free; dad just called the manager and said we were coming!

Later we moved to Southern California and what followed in Hollywood simply reinforced this dedication, though we had to pay for the films by then, but Dad was making a lot more money, so it all evened out. And it was during war times. Gas was rationed, so was food. Dad did, though, get some food under the counter, so to speak, for over the counter art work. I remember the thrill of Dad meeting the man at a street corner and exchanging

“gifts”—it was the other side of going out and gathering cans or buying those War Bonds. Black-market meat for a bit of commercial art.

My father wanted me to go into show business as a singer. I’d been given private vocal lessons since I was around nine years old and done my normal appearances here and there. In time I had developed a style and professional level that opened some very interesting doors and fed me into the very beginnings of a career in that business. But that wasn’t my dream.

When I finally sold my first story, ah, what a thrill that was. I made a life-altering decision.

Dad felt: “You can do both!” Meaning I’d out-grow my interest in writing and pay attention to realistic matters: a singing career.

Ah, the passion of it all.



I mean: Dad’s passion was all vested in my becoming the second Sinatra, or the Mario Lanza of my day. Sure. Dreams are made up of such illusions. Many a parent has driven their child down the road to self-destruction via great success, or simply great success, or simply down a dead end road. Many Super Stars were pushed into fame by a mother or father possessed with the idea of their child’s name in lights.

I told Dad: “Well, I think I want to be a writer!”

“Wonderful, son,” he probably said, verbally giving me a generous pat on the head, “that will be nice. You can write *and* sing!” The implication, of course, was that I would probably outgrow this silly impractical ambition and could then place all my attention on the practical manner of a successful career in show business.

Sure. Sound, loving advice, missing one vital point of order: My passion was writing, not singing.

#

I still have vague memories of being a young child in San Francisco. Dad worked for Fox West Coast theaters and did those grand large paintings used in the lobby of the theaters to promote the movie playing at that very moment. For a while Dad had a few of them in, of all places, his garage, all of which, sad to say, are now long gone.

But I remember going backstage, usually upstairs, or elsewhere in the theater in downtown San Francisco, and watching Dad work.

Mostly, though, for me, it was a natural education in art. I simply picked up a lot of

pointers by watching and listening. At times he did work on ads for newspapers—freelance work. And also did some cover art for small pamphlets on the California Missions, some of which I still have.

When I was seven we moved a few dozen miles south of San Francisco to Milbrae, where the folks bought their first home. We stayed there for one year before moving all the way to Los Angeles, when Dad got a job at Pacific Title & Arts Studio, in Hollywood.

Returning to Southern California we settled not far from 20th Century Fox Studios and even closer to Westwood Village, a few minutes from Santa Monica. And then there was Hollywood, not far by bus or car. It was the beginning of the war, the big one, the Popular One, to say nothing about the bloody one. We tend to ignore all that. Not only thousands of Americans, but people from all over, including German, lost their lives in the retaking of Europe, away from the Nasty Nazi Monsters of Germany's Third Reich—under the Master Leader of the savage fanatic crazies of that government, Adolf Hitler, Mein Fuehrer! Those few years of history were difficult for all concerned and a disgusting blot on an otherwise noble nation.

The nation was up in arms and totally supportive of the war. We'd been attacked without warning by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor and rallied around the President and flag. It was a time when being an American, when saluting the flag, when proudly standing together in a solid firm front, was not only popular but a total devotion to a common cause and a belief in ourselves and our good place in history and our mission to stop the monsters in Europe and then in Asia.

The Russian front slowly swelled away from Moscow and right into what was Poland and in the last months of the war my wife's family was rushing to escape the on-coming armies, for she (Brigitte) came from Prussia in a town named Elbing. Her story is a feast of horror and reveals the human side of war for the German population. She was far too young to be anything but a child rushed though the last days and weeks just ahead of the Russian invasion forces.

And me? Heck I was having fun playing war and going to school and just being a kid. I had wonderful parents, even if not perfect, but very loving and caring and protective.

Dad did his daily job, which had given him safe exit from the draft—his work involved movies that were also made for the government and exempted him from military duty. We also lived in a rationed society, a welcomed state of affairs. All people recognized the importance of winning the war and being a part of it, doing our duty for our country and our men in uniform. We were totally supportive!

We thrilled to movies with John Wayne single handedly defeating the monsters of the Pacific and, I believe, did his number against the African and/or European front. He was a master of battle. And I remember the first Gregory Peck film, *Days of Glory* (1944), where he was introduced and played a Russian. This was when they were on our side thus that was a hero role. We had many actors that went into the army by choice when they could

have avoided it for any of a number of reasons. And, of course, there was Glenn Miller who sought to bring his whole popular civilian band into the armed forces. That didn't happen, but he got his commission and formed one of the best bands ever! (And certainly his best musical organization.) And he, like many other heroes of the time, died in the war.

My Dad, being in the motion picture business, gave me access to a lot of interesting things. We saw one heck of a lot of films, so that when TV came along later, that was a natural for us. The whole Hollywood scene was my childhood in many ways. And the war years were certainly important.

Now the company he worked for did the screen credits for studios like MGM and Warner Brothers, and a few other top film producing enterprises. One of Dad's jobs was to paint backgrounds for the titles and screen credits, which others in the art department hand lettered, many times on glass plates.

I can't remember any of the films Dad actually did, too many years ago, but I do know he had done the Alfred Hitchcock drawing that was featured in the television series under that name! I don't think he originated it, but did do the version actually photographed for the show.

Most of his life was involved making a living as a commercial artist in order to feed his family. And that was, at times, a drag. Even if working in the film industry, which got him deferred from the draft, kept him safe at home, since Pacific Title did work on government films from time to time, the job was at times creatively draining on him.

But for me, there were other advantages of having an artist for a father! One of these was the Easter Eggs. He could make some very fancy designs on eggshells. And then, too, there were other little pluses. He made a number of additions to my childhood through his art. Alas, most of that is lost to memory.

I usually got A's in art class. Never knew if that was because of any native, personal, talent or the fact that the teacher maybe wanted to impress my father. Dad claimed that I showed more artistic talent as a teenager than he did at that same age. Of course, he was somewhat biased, my being his one and only son!

His influence was very strong in the department of using one's natural talents in a commercial way, rather than as pure art. Though Dad was hung in the San Francisco Legion of Honor, which wasn't no crab apples!

I might leap ahead at this point and confess to one incident that took place between Dad and myself, which was far from enjoyable. He was doing a cover with Mars in the background (the planet hanging high in



the upper part of the sky—into which a magazine logo could easily be placed. But he didn't do Mars justice. And so I figured I'd try to show him the way. And I tried, by God I tried, and he showed me the way how not to help him do a cover! He was furious! I was sadly impressed and depressed over the whole thing. But we both did learn a lesson: he to be more scientifically correct and me to limit my suggestions to verbal ones when working with him on covers.

I didn't start reading compulsively until around age twelve, and I had my nose stuck in a book from then on. It became my social life, more than the real life around me. But then, the folks left West LA in a few years to move across the hills to San Fernando Valley after the war and settle in the small town of Encino, right next to Tarzana. Even more importantly, where Edgar Rice Burroughs was to live his last years and die. But, alas, I didn't know about that. I only knew that I was reading his books at a hungry rate and that in the coming years I'd spend a lot of time going to Hollywood and Los Angeles by bus and streetcar. And one day in a second hand bookstore I run into a nice fella who asked if I had read anything by Ray Bradbury. This was followed up with his announcing he *was* Ray Bradbury: What followed had nothing to do with world wars and nothing to do with anything but the world of science fiction! I had never heard of s-f fandom, nor people like Forrest J Ackerman until that accidental meeting with one hell of a nice young writer! What later followed created swift connections which were in a few years to help launch not only my career as a writer, but would result in my meeting of that young German lady destined to be my wife.

Throughout all this was that singing thing that Dad had in mind for my future career. And against that was my fannish sci-fi collection, ever growing. Once I went to an early convention in San Diego I was more than hooked.

It was around this time that our lifetime work together began. I wanted some original cover art, like they sold at science fiction conventions; publishers offering manuscripts and art to help support these early gatherings. And thus started our collaborative efforts that continued over the years.

And that's the story I want to relate, for it opened doors in several ways, and even to this day has been effective in my designing covers on books for Wildside Press. Some of the covers are self-designed, from the ground up, such for *Dimensions: Past, Present & Future*, for *The Ersatz for Any One Can Die*. And a number of others, such as *Epic Dialogs of Mhyo* were mostly designed totally by me outside of some art (in this case, the dragon). Most of the rest are a combination of elements gathered together from bits of original art Dad did. In a few cases I adapted the covers that appeared on the original pocketbook editions so many years ago. Others, I simply did in part or in whole.

The point being: I'm not an artist, but I learned a lot about art and about composition and about covers over the years. All of this experience made it possible to do some work professionally, even being hired by one of the top pulp publishers, Leo Margulies, who, in his later years, came out west in semi-retirement. He was still publishing magazines such as *Charlie Chan Mystery Magazine*, *Weird Tales*, *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine*, and

*Zane Gray Western*. He had done something like 40 different titles during the forties back east. But in the early '70s he came to Los Angeles and needed somebody to put together the covers for these magazines. Forry Ackerman suggested me and I was doing that for about a year.

A lot had taken place between the early years of working with Dad on covers for the sci-fi magazines and then with Leo. I even sold one of Dad's covers to him for the *Mike Shayne*, January 1974 issue.

What a delightful man Leo was, too. This was a tough professional, but a wonderfully open and giving mensch. He would look at something you brought into his offices and either frown, saying: "Can't use it!" or give off a wide generous grin and see that a check was instantly written out. If he had said he couldn't use it, I'd find out what was needed, do it and deliver on deadline! He was amazed and delighted when I came in with just what he needed and had that check in my hands before I left his office.

The short time I worked with him was quite a learning experience, too.

This all occurred during a period shortly after my mother's death. I was in a very bad space, emotionally drained. His offices were in the Hollywood area, almost an hour away from Thousand Oaks. He seemed to be interested in having me do the total magazine layouts, paste-ups, but that would have meant coming to his offices on a daily basis. He also encouraged me to offer him some manuscripts, but I simply wasn't able to write at that time. I might have learned a lot from him if things had been different. But what a delightful man he was.

Again, I keep getting ahead of the story.

I almost forgot to clear up a point. It has to do with the extra L in Dad's signature for magazine covers. The name is Nuetzel and he added an extra l so that it balanced out to: Nuetzell.

Magazine and pocketbook covers were totally alien fields for Dad. He wasn't a heavy reader, for one thing and for another he knew less than nothing about science fiction. That was my department! I had become an avid reader and collector for a number of years. By the time I started writing, things had changed for me to mainly collecting copies of magazines containing stories I'd written—and later copies of my books.

Leaping ahead too far into the future, again...

I thought, maybe it might be possible to get Dad to do some covers and I could have the original art returned into our hands.

What a wonderful thought; and what a wonderful idea. And what a fantastic learning experience that would open doors I had never imagined possible that day I met Ray Bradbury in a second-hand bookstore in Hollywood.

Who would have believed this chanced meeting would have so many dramatic effects over my life?

Heck, if it weren't for Ray I would never have met my wife! And he never has met her!

Links and twists and turns all gathered together and around the future developments that lead to a partnership between father and son. And it all started somewhere in the beginning of the 1950's.

Some times fathers and sons work very well together. It may take a bit of time in order to get to the point where they can work smoothly together. We had our moments. For us it was a mixed bag.

The silk screening project was one thing that sometimes worked, and other times didn't. One of my first collaborative efforts with him was on the Egyptian project. He had developed an outlet for silk-screened prints of his art where he did the design and the screens. Then the printing was done with the help of my mother and my cousin Carl and, of course, myself. Many of these projects went just so far into commercial success. But one of the most successful ones was based on a suggestion I made:

“Dad, how about a series of Egyptian pictures? Start with a litho of a wall and then we can silk screen over that with pictures like they have on Egyptian tombs and ruins.” Well, that's exactly what we did. I filled the original order of 1,000 prints of a twelve-set series. They were sold to a framing house that did so well with them they wanted to order more. At that time we decided, for reasons I've forgotten, to just sell the design to them, which we did, along with the litho negative so they would have the background to silkscreen the pictures on. I don't know what happened after that insofar as the numbers of sales, but we walked away from that project with a wee-profit.



I won't go into any more details concerning these projects Dad was involved in and I mention this only as a matter of record and illustrating how we were able to work hand-in-hand on some things. In this case he was top dog, so to speak.

In cover work it was a totally different matter.

Here I was in a somewhat better position. The first cover I sold by myself, agenting and going through the whole selling process. Ray A. Palmer was an established sci-fi pulp editor who was publishing his own digest magazines [*Other Worlds* and *Science Stories*] out of the mid-west and had, previously, been editor of *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic*

*Stories for Ziff-Davis.*

The first items we sent to RAP, as he was generally called, were turned down flat, but we learned a lot about cover design from him and made a new sketch idea I submitted. They returned it with a suggested change. This was done and accepted and appeared on *Science Stories*, the February 1954 issue, which had a cover story by John Bloodstone (pennname belonging to Stu Byrne) titled *The Last Days of Thronas* and a requested bio concerning Dad. Well, it was supposed to have been written by the artist in question, but was my first published writing; for I ghosted it for him.

I still have letters from the editor accepting this cover for publication and I was thrilled to the ends of the known universe! My head was swimming in galactic dust and didn't come out for a very long time.

This sale caught Forry Ackerman's attention and we signed on with him, with me playing in-between man. The deal always was: the art returns to the artist. This meant, though, in reality to the son of artist: me! Over the years I ended up giving the originals to Forry for his Ackermansion. Many of them have now fallen into the hands of sci-fi collectors. But for a period of time, long enough to satisfy my hunger for such things, I owned each and every one. And some of them I actually had designed. I'd come up with the ideas, Dad would execute them, and I would hand them over to Forry who managed to rack up quite a nice list of sales.

When conventions arrived I was able to rap with the pros, get into parties and private places only open to professionals—things that were purposely isolated from the fans. My “glory days” were beginning to open up to me in wonderful ways.

It was through these connections that I ended up handing Forry Ackerman a few manuscripts he was kind enough to look at, submitting a few to magazine editors. Suddenly I got an acceptance for *Country Boy* [originally titled: *Flowers for the Lady*]. That was a far cry from the sci-fi mags I really wanted to get published in; but it was a beginning.

That sale went to *Cocktail*, a girlie magazine, filled with lots of nude ladies (only airbrushed to keep the women somewhat modestly mysterious) showing off their well-developed bustlines. Today called Hooters or Boobies. And the airbrushing has been long gone; cause today anything goes —well, everything goes, come to think of it. The censorship doors were blasted wide open a long time ago, after a very prolonged struggle between people who wanted to reveal and see all and those who wished to restrict visual and graphic images of all and any kind!

Heaven forbid a young kid might discover what a nude body looked like. I remember, as a child, being exposed to pictures of naked men and women. Heck, I was the son of an



artist, and commercial or not, he was no prude about concerning these kinds of images. Not “naughty” but pure respectable visual information. So, I never really had much interest in such things as “French postcards” which merely offered shots of naked women. My attitude was: “Well, so what?” Of course this was before a bit of “maturity” would spark different kinds of reactions.

But back to the magazine *Cocktail* and the publication of *Country Boy* by Alexis Charles. (Yes, I used a penname for that story!)

The editor who bought the story used the editorial penname of Larry Maddox. I don’t feel it right to expose his real name here, though it is well known and not much of a secret any more—a long time exposed.

Larry was a sci-fi fan and writer and one of those who circled around the Ackermansion. He had me come into his offices at Art Enterprises in Sherman Oaks, and went over the manuscript line by line telling me what was needed to make it a winner. And, of course, I went about doing as instructed. He bought a few other manuscripts over the next months, but became resistant as I became more and more prolific in grinding out one story and/or article after another as fast as I could type.

Forry found other publishers who grabbed up things from time to time, keeping me continually encouraged to keep tappin’ away at the keyboard that first year! One thing led to another. A little issue of seven stories for seven titles, led to my first novel sale to David Zentner and to meeting Bob Pike, who was to become an important factor in the work with Dad.

Dad had some contracts of his own, also. Such as Vera Radcliffe, whom Dad had known for some time socially through a fellow artist, and helped in the original contact with David Zentner, whom she knew on a personal level. Well, she knew a lot of interesting people and one of them was connected with a local, developing, serious pocketbook publisher, who owned “Book Company of America” and had managed to get 1st class national distribution of his books through his contacts. In any case, they had an office in Beverly Hills. Dad was introduced to them as a cover artist—they hired him to do on work several of their current books in production. Dad introduced me to them and they signed me to write a book on Hollywood, which came out under their suggested title: *Whodunit? Hollywood Style*. This was the first book published under my own name and for a multiple of reasons I dedicated the original printing to Vera. It later saw print in French, Dutch, and who knows where else it was translated; and later was reprinted as *Hollywood Mysteries* by Powell Publications and now as *True Stories of Scandal and Hollywood Mysteries*, again by Wildside Press, in a modernized, updated, and expanded edition.

Selling Dad’s sci-fi magazine covers was topped only by having my father do a cover for one of my books! Now that was one big thrill and five-halves!

Once he started doing the covers, which were done to please his son, we begin our connections with the professional world of science fiction. We had made a serious

connection with the Ackerman Agency and I was doing the in-between stuff between 4e (Forrest J “no period” Ackerman) and Dad.

Dad was in place, and now the agent was in place, and I was ready to start really writing for publication. What followed then was the publications of my first short stories and finally my first pocketbooks.

It was Bob Pike who was the first editor/publisher/packager to buy one of Dad’s covers for one of my books he’d released. Then he suggested we consider actually packaging books, bypassing publishers like himself!

One good thing led to another.

My real relationship with Bob started when he got his deal with a local distributor to package (publish) pocket books, called me and asked if I had something for his new publishing company, Pike Books. Bob had met me at David Zentner’s office. Reputations are built very rapidly once you’ve made one sale. He had, in fact, edited my first pocket book *Hot Cargo* for Zentner’s Epic Books line.

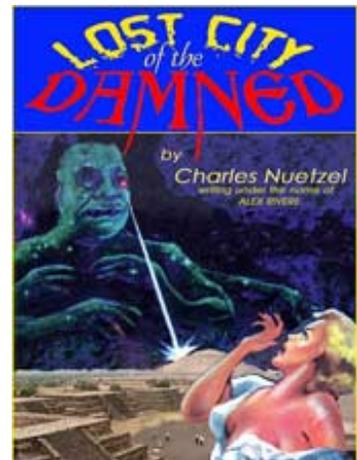
Well, Bob contracted to package two books a month and for the first month he took an un-produced film script, converted it into a short novel, did a photo cover for it, and used it as one of his first months’ release.

Well now he needed a second novel and cover for this opening month’s release of Pike Books.

Did I have a deal for him: A manuscript which I was willing to sell at the drop of a “cover by Dad” being added into the deal!

*Lost City of the Damned* hit the stands with Dad’s cover on it. [An updated, revised version, both story and cover, is now published by Wildside Press.]

An interesting side-point concerning this cover is two-fold: Dad hated it! And many people liked it, enough so that Jeffrey Luther used it on one of his many postcards sold as prime examples of this kind of cover art. What a tribute to Dad!

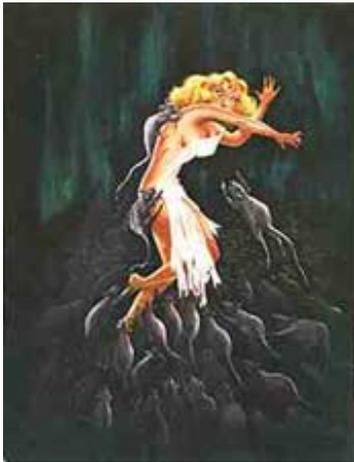


But back a few decades to when *Lost City of the Damned* by Alex Rivere (yes, another penname!) was released.

A major fact of life was taught me when that came out on the stands. My Dad’s brother, Uncle Carl, and his second wife, wanna-be writers themselves, were so very impressed by Dad’s cover, and had nothing whatsoever to say at all concerning the book.

Now, that hurt like blazes! It took some time for me to understand the obvious: it is far easier to look at a visual object and compliment that than to actually spend time reading a book! Can you blame them for being impressed with the art and not at all interested with the writing? To say nothing about the fact that my words were in print and theirs never did reach that level of achievement. I have always wondered if it was merely the obvious easy take on art vs. writing or if something else had entered into their judgment concerning *Lost City!* Since I happened to have liked it to some degree, I find it difficult to imagine they were all that contemptuous of the bloody thing. Like many people who attempt to write, they didn't seem willing to bend to the demands of the market in order to get published. Or, perhaps they didn't want to write what could be acceptable, or maybe they simply had their own ideas as to what was worthy of publication.

The fact is, though, that they did write a number of things that never got past any editor's desk. That does not mean these stories weren't good. It simply means they weren't commercial enough to reach the markets that would, perhaps, have been possible buyers.



Reasons aren't important. The issue here is that in order to get published you have to develop a hard skin and a determination to do whatever is necessary to appeal to the editors/publishers who are willing to pay to put your words in print and into the reading public's hands.

There are other factors, of course, involved in such matters: determination, connections, and most important a market willing to take on the challenge of a new, unknown writer. Sometimes a publisher's doors are closed to anybody other than a few select writers. It can be just that simple.

Like Bob Pike calling me by phone and asking for a book. I happened to be in the same general area and within easy driving distance from where he was setting up business. I was willing to cooperate with him, and not hard to get, nor unable to slant or revise to his demands.

In this case we delivered manuscript and cover together as a packaged deal. Plus tossed in for good measure: cover lines and flyleaf copy (teaser which is published on the page upon opening the book, previous to the title page).

We sold several double packages to Bob, and in at least one case he did a photographic cover for a book of mine. At the same time he commissioned Dad to do the cover for *Coming of the Rats* by another author.

So, that's how things opened up; one deal ran right into another.

In fact, it was Bob Pike who said: "You should bypass me and go directly to the distributor and do the whole thing yourself!"

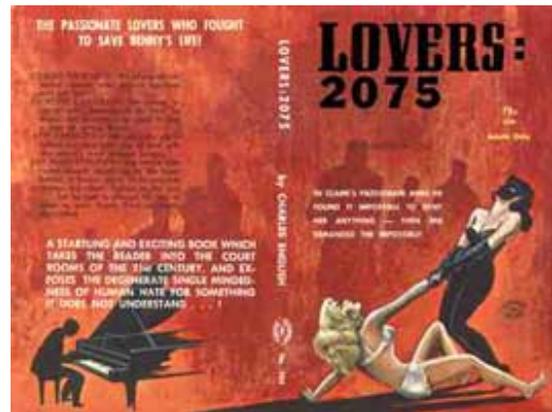
How things progress, step by amazing step!

But for that simple side remark from Bob, the “books with a sting” would never have come into being. I did just what Bob suggested and came out with a deal that turned into Scorpion Books! Though I had total creative control of this line, it wasn’t done without checks and double checks. Most of these books have been reprinted elsewhere and in translation, so I felt pretty good about that.

But Dad did all the covers for the Scorpion books and I wrote cover lines, flyleaf copy, and the books themselves, including any and all ads concerning them. I owned all the covers for many years, until I sold them via the Tom Lesser Pocket Book Show.

One of these books was titled: *Lovers: 2075* by Charles English and later was totally revised to become *The Ersatz* in *Images of Tomorrow*, a collection of my sci-fi fiction for Powell Sci-Fi, and now again updated and totally revised as *The Ersatz* and *The Talisman* for Wildside Press. Another bit of business concerning the original edition was its translation in Europe under my own name.

It is always nice to have a winner!



The first book for Scorpion Books was....

Oh, but maybe I should let that be told some other time.

The final chapter, working with Dad, all started with meeting Bill Trotter in his offices previous to his going independent as a publisher all on his own.

He was a small man [in size, only], delightful in many ways, but quite serious and business-like. Plus an important factor: dependable insofar as delivering payment upon verbal contract.

His background was simple enough: he had been involved with *Playboy*, early on, in the distribution department, then later with setting things up for some adult publishers in the mid-west, and apparently involved with William Hamling for a while, even when they went to San Diego. Then his connection with Richard Sherwin in Venice Books set things up for our meeting one afternoon in 1968.

Bill Trotter happened to be a friendly guy who invited me into his office, when I was there to just pick up a copy of the current Carson Davis book.

I'd brought copies of a few things I'd done in the past, like *If This Goes On*. I mentioned some of these things to Bill during this rather light and social meeting and showed these

samples of what I'd done. He was interested, and impressed.

He confided that he was planning to go out on his own, forming a publishing house, and doing more than just "sex book" such as the Carson Davis line. Legit books, with first line distribution! That would set things up in a totally different way. In many situations the sex books and magazines didn't get frontline distribution, and even when displayed, it was not up front in the quality section with all the other major publications. But what Bill was planning would be a totally different setup. Very exciting.

Obviously I mentioned my own experiences and contacts, Forry Ackerman and the *If This Goes On* book I edited. I even suggested a science fiction line, and how I could probably get some very top named authors. He took my name and phone number and said he'd give me a call when he was ready.

Sure. Of course he would. I decided to be excited about the wild possibility of that happening, but not overly so. In fact, I'd pretty much forgotten all about it by the time I got a phone call. "This is Bill Trotter" and probably a "remember me" kind of statement. He was set up to publish books, wanted to know if I had some things for him, originals or reprints. I said something could be worked out. We arranged for a meeting that very day, I do believe. I simply closed up shop and drove to his office, about 30 minutes away. We talked for perhaps an hour.

When I came home I had a deal where I'd give him two books a month with covers by Dad, and I'd write all the cover lines and promo copy and not even delivery them to his office, but to the printer. They would be originals or reprints of things previously published, but sexed up a bit to meet the present day market demands for more erotic material. They would be for Tiger Books, his sexy line. He had hired me on my reputation and didn't have an editorial staff to supervise the production of his books. In other words, he had hired me as a packager. We planned on doing the "quality" book and a sci-fi line in the very near future.

Strangely enough I believed him! Actually, here was the kind of man who was

### **REED ENTERPRISES, INC.**

was William Hamling's distributing arm of his Greenleaf publishing complex in Mission Valley, San Diego.

From all the employees signed on originally as the firm was established, two quit the company early on and went into business as publisher/distributor on their own. Presumably having learned quite a lot about what that entails under Hamling's employ.

The first of those, and by far the most successful, was Donald Partric, who formed Publisher's Export Corporation (PEC) and operated it from his A-frame residence in the Fletcher Hills sector of El Cajon, where coincidentally I happened to live.

And Bill Trotter was the other. Trotter lived in the Shady Lane Apartments just off Second and Madison Streets in El Cajon...and I lived two streets from him on Roselle Avenue. There were numbers of times, after the editorial division of Greenleaf was fully operating along with Reed Enterprises in San Diego, when Bill and I would, for convenience or necessity, share the ride and drive into the office together.

He named his company Powell Books.

--Earl Kemp

straightforward, direct to a blunt point, and didn't bullshit. So I knew he was as good as his word!

I offered up an original manuscript that I titled *Nympho* and got Dad to do the cover for that and another book, I believe was *Blowout!* In this case a sex-up version of a book I'd done for Zentner, thus making it, in many ways, an original, new novel. That was the beginning of our publishing "partnership" and what a delightful experience it turned out to be.

I was to get original stories from other authors, or use my own books as reprints. In a short time I got the offer to do the sci-fi line and suggested he call it Powell Sci-Fi, beginning with two books a month. I used the Ackerman Agency, exclusively. [What better expert could I consult for material? And most of all he had connections to named sci-fi writers, well established in the world of science fiction—worldwide!]

The opening month one book was by A.E. Van Vogt, and his wife E. Mayne Hull, containing all the stories from their hard cover edition of *Out of the Unknown* along with an original story never before published. As for the other book, that was my *Swordmen of Vistar* selected at Forry's recommendation.

In the months that followed, I picked for publication books like *Starman* by Stu Byrne and *Godman* by John Bloodstone (both the same writer). Even some of my own books were included, again at Forry's recommendation.

I wanted to release the most impressive books possible. And the deal was that rights were sold for only one year and the author got the original cover art for their book! Just a little sweetener for raking in established writers into the fold, since the rates of the advance to them was not as inviting as those offered by New York publishers. While Bill Trotter had great distribution, he could hardly compete with the Big Boys on the East Coast. He was just beginning a publishing house more as a fun thing, and as a moneymaker, sure, but it was something he had wanted to do, apparently, for a long time!

Almost all writers, no matter how big they get, have something special they'd like to have released and for whatever reason have not found a publisher willing to take these products, and I was open to any kind of deal possible that was inviting.

Doors were closed in all this packaging for Powell. I had total control of the sci-fi line and the doors were shut to any other agency or writer or packager. And I would only buy manuscripts and/or reprints through the Ackerman Agency.

This is "dirty" business for the freelancing writers struggling to get through publisher's doors. Mine had to be closed and locked tight cause I was pretty much a one-man



operation, writing and packaging. The only “staff” I had was Dad, who took care of the art side of things. He painted the covers. Sometimes he did the paste-up, but most of the time I wound up doing that for one reason or another. But it was always done under a joint effort with him. Dad was not well and in fact dying, though we didn’t realize it at the time. The last book he did for me was for my *Images of Tomorrow*. I suggested a cover design that would be very easy for him to do: clouds for the background and a few simple objects in the foreground.

These paintings were done on a large hard canvas for wrapped around covers, which meant they went from front, through the spine, and around to the back of the book. And designed too also look good on the author’s wall in a frame! We were a small closed market.

I had the pick of the Ackerman Agency’s suggested books to consider. A number of L. Ron Hubbard books were offered and I planned on doing *Kingslayer* after replacing one story, which was dated, with a different one. That was a can-do idea. It just happened not to take place, cause the line didn’t last forever and I was over-worked and things changed. Dad died shortly after doing the *Images* cover.

It is enough to know that Dad had cancer of the spine, and was hospitalized for most of the last months of his life. I had to find someone to replace him as a cover artist. Of course, we figured this would be a short-term thing. Only when it became evident that he would not be coming out of the hospital did I have to face some hard decisions. Those were dark days for me, for all of us, in fact.

Luckily, during a previous conversation with Bill Hughes, we exchanged phone numbers. Some time later, when Dad couldn’t do any more covers, I remembered Bill. I needed a cover for the adult line of Tiger Books, for *Take Me, I’m Yours*. I called Bill asking: “Can you deliver almost immediately? Like tomorrow?”

I was quite serious about that. I had Uncle Louis doing the “serious” mystery and sci-fi covers and now was about to add Bill Hughes as my main guy.

He invited me over to his office; I believe I drove over immediately. We talked about the subject matter of the cover and the necessity of having it the next day or so. He did a quick pencil sketch based on our running conversation in his small two-room bungalow-type office. I said something like do it, and a cover was delivered to the printer within days.

Bill Trotter wasn’t even notified about the cover-artist change. It was all happening so fast. We figured Dad would be okay, since he was in and out of the hospital for a short time before going in forevermore. I remember that we did some fixing on the *Warrior of Noomas* cover, laying it out. After that, Dad was lost to me forever as a cover artist, and a few months later he was to die in a convalescent hospital.

By then I was deeply involved with making full use of Bill. He was not only able to do covers, to meet deadline, but also “traffic direct” the whole operation, laying them out,

doing all the art direction, and final paste-up. In other words, I didn't have to do anything other than tell him the title of the book and okay the final artwork. He would take the copy I gave him for cover lines and get them all set up in type, put it all together, and that was it.

With Dad, I'd had to do a lot of that work myself, for we'd literally designed covers together. Plus this wasn't his natural creative field.

With Bill, it was totally different. He was basically a cover artist and art director. He had been doing this kind of thing for a long time and knew the business. I was able to turn that side of the operation over to him, thus freeing myself up for writing.

I'd actually done the layouts in the months previous to working with Bill Hughes. I remember that *Images of Tomorrow* had to be done almost on the fly. We'd gone on some weekend trip, Brigitte and I, and mother had "baby sat" our dog, Spatz. When we got home there were messages from Powell Publications and elsewhere. I don't remember all the details, but do remember putting the *Images* cover together on the kitchen table.

Everything was done very fast, and delivered directly to the printer. It was the rushing deadlines that force me to make fast, instant solutions to getting covers when Dad was ill.

From Bill Trotter's POV I'd kind of surprised him. He wondered why I simply didn't call him to assign the covers to one of his artist connections, who did covers for some of his other books. He was working with a number of people like me.

In any case, I showed him the results of my instant decision, pointing out there hadn't been time to consult with him—and not admitting that I didn't want to lose total creative control over the books I was commissioned to release, including things like the Harlan Ellison book, and the Powell Sci-Fi line, which, to be truthful, I considered "my personal property" even though it wasn't in any way such a thing. I'd convinced Bill Trotter to do the line as Powell Sci-Fi and had managed to get the packages together for the opening months with covers Dad did. I had Uncle Louis doing the two *Noomas* covers and then hired Bill Hughes to fill in for Dad.



Over the years between his first magazine sale and last pocket book cover Dad managed to produce around 40 covers. When he started sci-fi work, in the early '50s, it was considered impossible to break into the New York market from the West Coast. But he managed. By the mid '50s Dad was getting assignments from such magazines as *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Stories*, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*—along with many pocket book commissions.

To me, personally, the final painting my father did—for my book *Images of Tomorrow*—combines both his commercial and artistic talents in the very finest level. It was my personal treasure, and I have the original hanging in my home. It was a final statement—a perfect combination of what he stood for as an artist. It said it all.

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\*Excerpted from *Pocketbook Writer: Confessions of a Commercial Hack* and edited by Earl Terry Kemp. All of Mr. Nuetzel's newly released books can be accessed via his website <http://haldolen.com/wscan/WScan.html> or directly through [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

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We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful what we pretend to be.  
--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Mother Night*

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# Hitting the Fan\*

By Robert Bloch



This is one of my favorite photos of Robert Bloch. It was his column head for the *Rogue Magazine* columns he wrote in the 1960s.

It has often been stated that Fandom is a Way of Life.

If this is so (and who am I to dispute it, after living as a fan for twenty years—if you care to call this living) then one thing is surprising.

Fandom keeps talking about the Way of Life. But seldom bothers to think about the Facts of Life.

Fannish life, that is, as opposed to the biological life (but who's opposing?).

And yet there are certain facts which should be self-evident but seem to be ignored, by and large, by a great number of fans. They come into the field with certain preconceived notions of just how Fandom should be. And, finding it otherwise, they grow disappointed and leave.

To my way of thinking, the lack is not in Fandom as it is presently constituted, but in the individuals who enter it expecting too much.

Fandom, while a Way of Life, is not the ultimate answer to problems of social existence, nor a golden key to a fabulous future.

I don't say this despairingly; I offer it merely as a conclusion which should be self-evident, but seems to be ignored by and large by many neo-fans.

Roughly, neo-fans can be divided into two groups on the basis of chronology—youngsters and adults. Remember, I arbitrarily selected chronology. This doesn't imply that there aren't brilliant youngsters, intellectually capable of holding their own in adult fields, nor that there aren't immature and scholastically deficient adults. You'll find both in Fandom, as in every other stratum of society. But it is practical and logical to consider our neo-fans in terms of age groupings.

Why do they enter Fandom?

Youngsters, obviously, have transparent motivations. In Fandom they can obtain a

comparatively quick and easy acceptance and achieve equality status with adults, which they highly desire to do. A teenager can put out a fine fanzine, or write an intelligent letter or article, and there's no question that it will be accepted and that it will be recognized as such, without reservations. Such a teenager is understandably pleased with the results of his efforts, and naturally assumes that now he's on a first-name basis with BNF's and dirty pros and he's really "in."

Then he goes to a convention and he's crushed to learn that his acceptance is limited to fannish pursuits only. The teenager often refuses to accept the fact that in Fandom, as in every other walk of life, there is a degree of social intimacy unattainable with people five, ten or twenty years his senior.

Frequently, the result is bitterness on the part of the young-fan. To me, the bitterness is understandable, but unjustified. For there are limits to the social give-and-take of youth and age; that's self-evident, or should be.

No matter how brilliant, or how rebellious, or how unconventional or how scathingly critical a youngster may be—and no matter how much attention he or she receives in Fandom because of those attributes—a teenager is still a teenager, physically and in terms of social intimacy—and the final gap remains unclosed. That isn't Fandom; that's the Facts of Life.



This photo of Ethel Lindsay and Robert Bloch was taken at the 1969 party given by Ella Parker in her flat, in honor of Bob who was in England working on film scripts for Amicus. Photo by Patrick Kearney from Jim Linwood, courtesy Patrick Kearney Collection.

Now what about the older recruits to Fandom? They seek, basically, the same thing; acceptance and/or affection. On the social level their age usually enables them to find acceptance more easily. Their dissatisfaction stems from another source. They want to turn Fandom into an "adult" hobby and they demand a lot more from its parties and gatherings in terms of behavior and performance. To my way of thinking, this viewpoint is just as unrealistic, in its demands, as that of the juvenile. The juvenile thinks Fandom is all glamour and his beef is that he isn't automatically included in everything or invited to all the convention parties. The adult thinks that Fandom is an exclusive social club and his beef is that there are too many youngsters messing up the details.

Me, I'm more or less a middle-of-the-roader. I believe that there will always be two

chronological elements—youngsters and adults—with inevitable clashes due to disparity of drives. But that the clashes needn't be as violent or vociferous if both groups recognize the fact that the other group has the right to conduct its own social pattern.

And, more important, that neither group will find satisfaction unless they are willing to accept Fandom for what it is, not for what they think it should be.

Fandom is not a Lonely Hearts Club nor a literary society nor a professional organization nor a Rebel Bohemian Cult. The happiest fans are those who enjoy the field for what it offers to their own age level in terms of entertainment and opportunity for achievement. Personally, I'm not in favor of crude, adolescent exhibitionism in public or print and at the same time I'm not in favor of purist pedantry, either. I try to do a bit now and then to state my views, but in the main I'm satisfied with what exists.

I don't look (nor do I advise anyone else, young or old, to look) for Fandom to provide or offer any substitute for the normal goals and satisfactions of everyday existence.

Fandom is a place where I've met some nice people and had a lot of fun. To me, that's all it should be. For any little bit I've ever contributed, I've always received at least threefold in return of pleasure and entertainment.

If you're looking for more than that, buster, then Fandom isn't the place for you.

Try Las Vegas.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rand Blau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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\*Reprinted from *Ciln* 5, 1961, with permission of Ed Gorman.

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New knowledge is the most valuable commodity on Earth. The more truth we have to work with, the richer we become.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Breakfast of Champions*

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# The Improbability of Being Sidney Coleman

By Bob Toomey

Terry Carr introduced me to Sid Coleman in 1969 or 1970. At the time Terry and Carol were hosting regular charades games in their apartment in Brooklyn Heights, and they invited me and Lee Hoffman and a number of others to come over and play along. Sid joined in whenever he was in town and, like me, he was a smoker. Terry had an illness that was aggravated by cigarette smoke, so he'd set aside a room for the nicotine junkies. Nowadays we'd be unceremoniously pitched out into the street, but that was a more tolerant time.

Sid and I became acquainted between puffs, and we discovered we lived only about an hour and a half away from each other in Massachusetts. He incautiously suggested I visit him in his place on Prescott Street in Cambridge. I took him up on it, and then suggested he visit me in Springfield. And what with one thing and another, we've continued to visit each other to this very day.

So what can I tell you about Sidney Coleman? He's a fellow of infinite jest, of course, but you already know that. An example? He once devised a multiple-choice question that went as follows: "Mean, brutish, and short.' With these words, Thomas Hobbes described (a) Life and the lot of mankind, (b) Harlan Ellison, (c) Sex with Harlan Ellison."

What else? He's the smartest man in the room, any room, but you already know that too. And he manages to be smart without being a snob or a pain in the ass about it, which is not such an easy trick. But he does have his quirks. I've never known a man who's walked out on more movies than Sid. And not just bad movies either. One time we went down to Harvard Square to see *Hard Boiled*, a picture directed by John Woo and starring Chow Yun-Fat. This was before Woo and Chow had become internationally famous. About ten minutes into the movie, in the middle of a raging gunfight, ten thousand bullets in the air, blood spurting everywhere, bodies falling in slow motion, Chow blazing away with a .45 automatic in each fist, I realized I was watching the coolest actor in the world. I turned to Sidney to share this revelation, and he wasn't there. I looked up just in time to glimpse the back of his head as he slipped through the exit. He was walking out on a John Woo shootout. Unbelievable. On the other hand, he loves Miyazaki and Kurasawa and Chuck



"Sidney and Bob." Taken Thanksgiving mid to late eighties. The sleepy guy to my left is Jim Smith, a computer programmer and master bridge player. Everything I know about bridge I learned from Jim. Unfortunately I didn't learn much.

—Bob Toomey

Jones, so there may yet be hope for him. On the other other hand, he loves Peter Greenaway, whose films even I walk out on.

“He’s boring,” I say.

“Yes,” says Sid, “but brilliantly boring.” Oh, well. Sid is a serious game player. Charades I’ve already mentioned. He’s an excellent and highly efficient mime, although not, perhaps, as he once suggested, as graceful as a gazelle. Very competitive at Scrabble, poker, and Trivial Pursuit. Forget Clue. The only time he ever played it, he instantly devised a record-keeping system that automatically arrived at the correct solution. Simply ruined the game.



“Teaching Sidney DOS.” Sid’s study on Richdale Avenue. Probably taken sometime in the early nineties. Sid had just acquired a laptop computer and asked me to show him how to use it. He became quite proficient at DOS and, like me, sneered at effete Windows users. But we all know how that worked out in the end. Note my Irish prayer shawl. Sid liked to keep the temperature in his place just a few degrees below bearable.

—Bob Toomey

Unlike me and his wife Diana, Sid doesn’t care for cats. An obvious blind spot. Some years ago, one of my cats became diabetic, and required insulin injections twice a day. Whenever Margie and I visited someone overnight, we had to bring DiDi along. Sid didn’t open his heart to the cat, but he did open his door to her, once we assured him she’d behave herself. And she did. She visited Sid many times over the years, and always conducted herself like a perfect lady. As far as I know, she was the only cat that ever crossed his threshold. I don’t believe he ever petted her, but he didn’t kick her either. More than that one cannot ask. Near the end of DiDi’s life, Sid became diabetic himself. He claimed he caught it from our cat.

Diabetes turned Sid into something of a fitness freak. He would ride his bicycle for hours and climb mountains and do all sorts of healthful things. I love exercise myself. I could watch people do it for hours. Sid said his goal was to become the world's most perfectly developed quantum field theorist, and for all I know he succeeded.

“Sidney and Trillium” is an even more uncharacteristic pose, in my living room, with my late Siamese cat, Trillium, in his lap. Treasure this one. I'm certain it's the only picture in existence of Sid with a cat in his lap. Looks pretty uncomfortable, doesn't he? Note that he's reaching out to her. It's conceivable he's about to pet her, because that's the social thing to do, and Sid is nothing if not social. But I suspect he's about to give her a little shove in hopes of quietly dislodging her. Thanksgiving, early to middle eighties.

–Bob Toomey



A last tiny anecdote before I go. Sid and I were out drinking one night, and a man at the bar asked Sid what he did for a living.

“I'm a teacher,” Sid said, which seemed a bit modest.

If the fellow had asked me what Sid did for a living, I might have said, “He's the best and most popular physics professor at Harvard,” or maybe, “He's the world's most perfectly developed quantum field theorist.” But now I'd have to say Sid got it exactly right, as usual. He's a teacher, and a good one. Not such a bad thing, when you think about it.

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I am eternally grateful...for my knack of finding in great books, some of them very funny books, reason enough to feel honored to be alive, no matter what else might be going on.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Timequake*

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# The Complete Toomey Experience

By Gregory Benford

I met Bob Toomey in Sid Coleman's apartment, near the Harvard campus in the early 1980s. This reminiscence remains riveted in my mind, for reasons soon to emerge.

I liked Bob on sight; he's just odd enough to be interesting. He had a girl friend with him (comely, friendly, scent of maryjane) and we spent a pleasant afternoon touring the bookshops and cloistered lanes of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Compared with California, it is soft, rounded, steeped in history. It's like England, though without the culture.

Bob was a character various in his pursuits: artist, writer, computer specialist, even a private detective for a while. Various, indeed. An sf and fanzine fan, he had met Sid a long time ago in the ancient era of great fanzines and much mirth. Sid cared about sf and had even written reviews for *Fantasy and Science Fiction*. It was an engaging hobby alongside his immense reputation as a theoretical physicist, known for dissecting pretentious theories and a penetrating, scalpel wit.

In one of these bookshops I saw a new Elwood-edited anthology containing an original Ted White story. One of the lead characters, I found, was Dr. Gregory Benford. *Oh my God, I've been Tuckerized!* Did this make it not sf, but faaaan fiction? This somewhat unsettled me, though it's happened several times since at the hands of Allen Steele and Steve Baxter—but this was only openers.

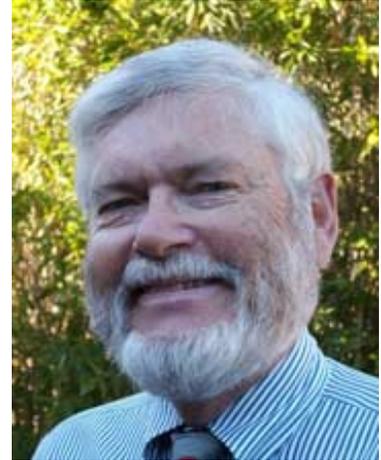
We left Sid at Harvard, where he had to orally examine a student (well, that's what he said, with a sly grin). Soon enough, time for my departure airport ward arrived, and I looked about for a cab.

"Oh, no," Bob Toomey said. "I'll drive you."

"Well, I don't want to trouble you, it's out of your way, etc. etc." I tugged at my tie. I had been giving a seminar at Harvard and felt a Californian discomfort at being confined. Time to get out of the claustrophobic East. The air now seemed moistly cloying.

"No, no! We're going out of Cambridge that way. We'll take you."

It was one hour until my plane took off for Philadelphia. (This will remind you nostalgically of how the world was when people dressed well to fly, did not face endless



Gregory Benford

security screenings, and so could show up half an hour before departure. A loooong time ago.)

We were near Toomey's car, a huge Detroit product of uncertain age. I shrugged and got in. The deceptively warm autumnal sunshine had lulled me.

Perhaps some of you recall the subway entrance at Harvard Square. It sits on a traffic island, accompanied by a small newspaper kiosk and a gallery of drug dealers. In the lumbering Detroit iron we approached this island in the crawl of traffic when Bob, in a moment akin to John the Baptist's revelation in a bleak desert, decided we were going the wrong way.

With masterly control he swung into the left lane, next to the island.

"I'm going to turn around," he said.

"It's illegal," his girl said, alarmed.

"I wouldn't do that," I said from the back seat.

"I'm going to," he said. "Gotta."

"I wouldn't—" I said, but too late.

Toomey turned...across the island...with the élan of a natural. We cleared the first curb fine, and enjoyed a few pleasant microseconds of smooth ride across the concrete—drug dealers scattering like bowling pins—and the blurred face of the kiosk owner appeared briefly at my window. Alas, all paradises fade. Without pause for a gasp, we then went over the second curb into the oncoming lane of traffic.

*East coast traffic*, I reminded myself. *Nothing very fast, probably nothing fatal*. Blaring horns, that's all.

Coming off the curb, something scraped.

A screech like the talons of Satan, say, when that angel was sliding down the granite resolve of God's rocky face, down into hell. Something like that.



"Sid and Diana Looking Spiffy" is a rather uncharacteristic shot of Sid in his Cuban Gangster mode.

The color of his shirt doesn't come through too clearly, but was, as I recall, purple, a color Sid loved not wisely but too well.

Diana is his charming wife. This shot was taken in front of his house on Richdale Avenue in Cambridge. Probably sometime in the late seventies. —Bob

Toomey

“Damn, the muffler,” Bob said. I mourned the muffler but was distracted by a bus coming at us broadside.

“I think we lost the muffler,” he said.

“Bus!” I said.

“Oh.” A pause that ran on like a magazine serial. “Yeah.”

Screech of bus brakes, wrenching of wheel by good ol’ Bob Toomey—and we were into another, relatively clear, lane of traffic. No buses, anyway. I noticed a knot of onlookers, all smiling, one clapping. Like an Olympic event in slowmo.

We sped away. Two blocks further the muffler scrape became unbearable, like a heavy metal garage band on steroids. We were dragging the muffler. Sparks flew from it; leaning out my window, I could see them. Toomey sighed. We stopped.

“I’ll have to crawl under and repair it,” Bob said. “Stand and direct traffic away, so’s they don’t run over my legs.”

I did so. About ten minutes passed. Whole cosmologies danced before my anxious eyes, suns born and crushed, megaparsecs waving as they passed by. Horns blaring, buses farting fumes, the ruby sun gone now.

Toomey emerged, hands wrapped in cloth to keep away from the hot muffler. “Can’t get it.”

“Uh, I would be happy to take a cab—”

“No, no, I’ll be just a minute.” He crawled under again. And emerged victorious! Some muffled wrenches, of course, and the dirty job was done.

Hands fluttering like birds, Toomey got back behind the wheel and we were off into traffic again. I wondered why things kept changing in my mind. Adrenaline is a wonderful drug.

Nothing happened for three or four whole minutes. Then we lost our way, stopped to ask an Italian gentleman for directions, and were treated to a 5-minute lecture on avoiding traffic patterns at rush hour. We eventually located the general direction of the Mass Pike and were off again.

We came to an intersection carrying heavy commuter traffic, all bound for Mass Pike.

Toomey leaned out the window and asked a nearby driver for advice, who pointed off along one road.

“That’s not the way the Italian said,” I volunteer.

“Hang on,” Bob says. We followed the road.

“Doesn’t look right,” his girl friend said emphatically. I noticed that she was smoking a joint. I joined in. After all, it might well be my last. The unexpected flavor of Indica was somehow comforting as the smoke curled around me and into my eyes.

“Let’s stop for directions,” Bob decided, wrenching to a stop. I volunteered and got out and approached a gas station attendant. He gestured in the opposite direction, the Italian’s direction.

We turned around, slid into oncoming traffic, and got in the mix. Brick buildings flashed by, open-air groceries appeared and dissolved like metaphors; everything is very Eastern metaphysical. I drew in the aromas of soft air from passing restaurants, laced with frying sausages and burning rubber.

A lot of time had passed by, a whole lifetime in Einsteinian terms—I thought of Sid’s “oral exam”—but I am relaxed. I know we are not going to make it to the airport in time. Now the game is simply to see how close we can come without catching the plane. *Think of it as existentialism in action.*

Events telescope, as though we are in an experimental story. Involuntarily, of course. The world slips into, inevitably, the present tense—the way we actually live it.

We find the Mass Pike, a concrete ribbon. A torrent of cars comes rushing on the onramp and we follow. Suddenly the muffler breaks loose and begins to bang around under the car. Traffic brackets us; all moving at 40 mph.

Toomey stops. He backs up. Instead of rear-ending us, a large truck swerves to the side, horn blaring, and vanishes into the thickening gloom of the Boston night. Toomey backs up until we reach a dead spot to the side, a nook away from the lanes, and parks.

We get out and find the muffler split and beyond repair. Toomey sees nothing for it, and neither do I. We wrench the muffler out, struggle with the joint connections, and snap it off.

With one unperturbed gesture, the classic nonchalance of the elite, Toomey throws it in



“Bob Margie Elizabeth Soyokaze” That’s me, the only male in the shot, along with my wife of 35 years, Margie Drake, my lovely daughter, Elizabeth Dover, and Soyokaze, one of my cats. Soyokaze is Japanese for ‘Gentle Breeze.’ If we’d known her better, we would have named her Kamikaze.

—Bob Toomey

the back seat. We get back in. The muffler reeks of tortured excess next to me. I had chosen to get into the back seat, since there is a small chance that, there in the slick plastic seating, I could survive this free ride.

The muffler cacophony is really bad now, roaring like a wounded Moskowitz from the fabled fan days of yore. But we are on the Mass Pike now, we pass through a tollbooth and suddenly there looms the turnoff for the airport. We rush through the lanes, find the right terminal and...stop.

I thank Toomey profusely, snatch up my bags, and trot into the station. There are 4 minutes until the flight. I check in. Breathing easy now.

I find out that the plane is ailing. Takeoff will be delayed an hour.

Another example of relativity, I suppose. It ain't easy, y'know, being a theoretical physicist; the metaphors come all too intensely.

I decide to have a drink. On the way across the terminal I spot a taxi driver and ask him how far it is to Harvard Square.

"Not very far," he says. "You wanna--?"

"No. How much time, by cab?"

"Oh, well now," he ponders, frowning, "ten minutes, I'd say."

I have two drinks. Doubles.

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Another flaw in the human character is that everybody wants to build and nobody wants to do maintenance.

--Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

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# Sliding Down Mount Shasta

By Earl Kemp

After attending the 1952 World Science Fiction Convention in Chicago, my growing need to belong to that hypnotic world burst out into flamboyant smoke and embers. Everyone I could ever want to know in the whole world had been there, and somehow I had almost managed to make contact with them all. Or so it felt to me at the time.



Ted Dikty

Judy Dikty [Julian C. May] was a logical object of my obsession because she had Chaired ChiCon II, seemed to know every one of the right people, and her husband, Ted, was involved in some manner with a local publishing company named Shasta. Shasta had published a few of my favorite novels by some of my favorite writers, so how could I not like them?

In those days (I was 22 years old at the time) I was still very much the country bumpkin, devoid of much polish and finishing. My manners had to be the worst sort imaginable. Otherwise, how could I have managed to force myself upon so many reasonably established people and whatever possessed them to put up with me?

I also had inexhaustible energy. The way I remember it, possibly not the way it was, had me getting up early every morning and rushing off to work at whatever job I was doing at the time and near poverty conditions dictated that I not only have that job but hold on to it securely until the next better opportunity would be firmly arranged. After finishing that day's work, I would take the Rapid Transit to a part-time job where I would work a few additional hours.

After that, when I would get back to my apartment, I would begin my fanac for the day, whatever that involved. Something to do with fanzines and getting them and reading them and wanting to emulate them and... Whatever it was certainly involved a lot of correspondence with a lot of like-minded people all over the place on a lot of subjects.

And I still managed to attend regular meetings of the University of Chicago SF Club, to visit the gang of magazine pros in Evanston regularly, people like the Hamblings in their basement double office where they produced *Imagination*, or like Bea Mahaffey over at Ray Palmer's place where they produced *Other Worlds*. And there were occasional movies, bookstore visits, etc.

Where did all that time and energy come from? How did it happen in the first place? Where did it go to now that I so desperately need it...?

By 1953 I had experienced first hand how difficult it was to produce a fanzine without either equipment or money. My first efforts were done on a purple-ink-jelly-mat thing remembered as a Hectograph. And were they ever awful, physically and content-wise. And a bit later in the same year I began experimenting with photolithography, and tried my hand at an offset fanzine named *Destiny*.

I didn't know it but I was really starting to learn the publishing and printing processes that would dominate the rest of my life, and I was doing it the hard way, all by myself and by trial and error.

At the same time I was spending more and more time with Ted Dikty in his apartment on Blackstone Avenue on Chicago's south side. I was frequently in the area anyway, going to or coming from the University of Chicago, and Ida Noyes Hall, and the UofCSFClub. And I didn't know I was learning things from him; mostly I thought we were just gossiping and even at that it was all about fans before my time, names that were beginning to have vague structure inside my memory. At the same time, Ted didn't seem to know much about the newer generation of fans, the local fans who were actively taking fanac over from the previous decade's BNFs.

And it bothered me a bit that Shasta didn't seem to be doing much Shastaing. I was ready and willing to help do most anything, just for the experience of doing it, only there wasn't anything to do.

Mel Korshak was almost never there. Whenever he would make a brief appearance, he would be terribly rushed and preoccupied. The best I ever got out of him was a perfunctory acknowledgement of my existence but most of the time he didn't even seem to notice the kid sitting over there in the corner doing something like fondling galley proofs or dustjacket color proofs. He was too big a man and much too busy to stop and socialize, or even to talk.

And when Korshak wasn't there, Dikty didn't have anything to do. Now and then he would do some work on the *Best* anthology series he did with Everett Bleiler for Frederick Fell in New York. That was about as close as I could get to hands-on working for Shasta, because Ted would let me back him up by proofreading the galley printouts. I felt so professional.

By the end of that year, my fanac had progressed considerably and the Winter issue of *Destiny* featured a short story by Mari Wolf called "Prejudice" with an original illustration by Julian C. May. My visits with the Diktys were paying off just a bit....

By 1954 there was still nothing to do resembling publishing work around Ted's place. That gave us more time to talk about that year's edition of the Bleiler/Dikty *Best*. Ted would question me at length about the stories elected for possible inclusion in the anthology, and I'd tell him what I thought of them and how I rated them on a one-to-ten scale. Then I got to do my proofreading thing with the galleys again. And, miracle of miracle, I actually got to do some real work for the soundly sleeping Shasta.

There was a filmed version of Raymond F. Jones' *This Island Earth* and Korshak arranged some form of tie-in with the production company. Korshak had stars in his eyes from hanging around Hollywood too much with nothing to do. Shasta quickly produced a new dustjacket touting the movie, wrapped those jackets around Doubleday book club edition copies of the book, and recirculated them as a new Shasta edition. *One dustjacket in three years...and affixed to a cut-rate package...? My, oh my....*

By 1955, things began taking on different complexions. I began seeing what was going on differently. I wasn't so much as learning from Dikty as he was learning from me, or at least picking my brains for whatever he needed at the moment. And he needed a lot just then. For some reason I never knew, Bleiler dropped out of the *Best* series and Fell wanted to cancel it entirely.

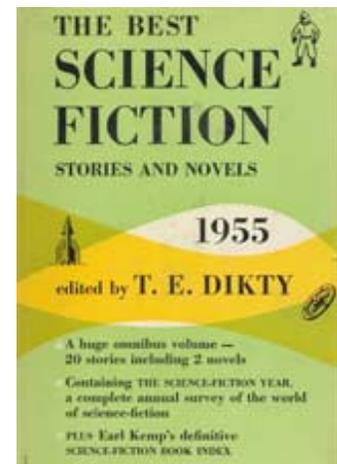
Dikty prevailed and Fell agreed to continue the series under the Dikty name alone, and changing the title to include "and novels." Also, there was a tidbit in it for me for a change, Dikty decided to run my annual Index listing of all sf titles published that year. It gave me a big name on the front cover of the book and a little recognition, but no money.

And no acknowledgment that by that time I was quite aware that the *Best* was being edited almost totally by my suggestions and directions alone. *Call me Everett...?*

I was paid though, in other ways, and I was never an employee, not even part time, or even an intern, but I was, unacknowledged or not. And, I was paid in trash. It was trash to Ted and less than that to Korshak. Whatever it was was destined for the dump eventually anyway, both of them thought. But to me they were precious gems of sparkling brilliance and endless hours of joy just looking at them or fondling them and knowing that I got them for free...whatever they were.

There were a number of defective books, bound wrong or something like that causing them to be unsellable. There were dustjackets galore for whatever beat up old copies of Shasta books I could get my hands on. And, most precious of all, those much-coveted progressive printers color proofs for all those wonderful Hannes Bok dustjackets. Hogheaven for one such as me....

In those frequent times when Ted and I had nothing better to do, we goofed off. Goofing off consisted of pouring through the Shasta files and pulling out things like contracts with the rich and famous science fiction writers signatures on them, arguing correspondence from irate literary agents, grumbles from printers about late payments...and Ted would share them with me and tell me backup stories of little or no interest. But the outcome was, by the time we closed that last filing cabinet I knew much more about publishing than I ever thought I could want to know.

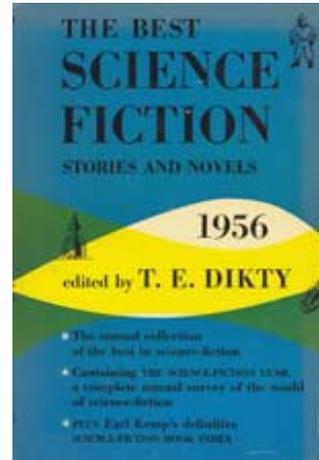


I need to remind myself that through all of this, Ted and I became rather good friends. Regardless of the way it sounds or might appear, I really liked him and Judy too. Beneath their closeted staid facades, they were good people at the core.

By 1956 there was still no action going on at Shasta. Nevertheless, Ted and I went our usual way with Fell's *Best* volume for the year. I did more of the editing and Ted did more of the usual nothing. By that time I was firmly convinced that Ted Dikty hadn't read any science fiction published within the most recent five-year time span, much less evaluated any of it or compared it against contemporary output.

Dikty and I reverted to default position No. 1. I did one hell of a lot of work on the project and Dikty did one hell of a lot of encouraging me to do just that. This time was a little different though. While I had none of the credit, in print or otherwise, I did get direct-contact hands-on experience with some of the writers and some of the agents, arranging the rights and permissions with them. *What was it I didn't know about the whole process? What was it I wasn't doing to produce the anthology?*

What neither of us knew at the time but Frederic Fell did, was that it would be his final number in the series.



But all hell was about to break loose. Korshak had landed A Really Big One! He was so excited he could hardly squat. While the whole world eagerly waited, and all the Big Time Publishers weeped, Korshak scored *The Westmore Beauty Book*.

*The Westmore Beauty Book?* You gotta be kidding....

The only thing the Westmores ever did that thrilled me was to create the makeup for Universal Studios better black and white horror flicks, most notably of all the werewolf makeup worn by Lon Chaney, Jr. in the film of the same name. But not a word of any of that appeared in the book.

At the time I was still employed full time by the Pullman Company, and traveling around visiting fans and conventions on free passes and often with empty pockets as well. Plus I had a part-time job typesetting for *The American Book Collector* and I was able to use that connection to receive review copies of most new sf books and, in addition, I wrote reviews of those books for the *ABC*. This, along with my fanzine production, further increased my knowledge of printing production, makeup, etc.

On the home front, being unable to exercise an urge to procreate in print with my closest alleged publisher, Shasta, I came up with a scheme known as Advent Publishers.

It was really formed as a partnership between some close-friend fellow-members of the

UofCSFClub with one intent and purpose alone, to make enough profit to pay for the partners' participation in each year's WorldCon. But aside from having no money, equipment, talent, or prospects, we plodded along and published Damon Knight's *In Search of Wonder*. Take that, Blackstone Avenue!

So there we were up to our asses with rush work at Shasta. Shasta? The very same? Home of world-class science fiction? *The Westmore Beauty Book*?

In order to protect the innocent, for reasons never discussed with me, the name was changed from Shasta to Melvin Korshak Publishers. But it still occupied the same nonoffice space inside Ted Dikty's apartment on Blackstone Avenue where it had never even once been a Shasta office either.

And for the first time in too many years there was lots of work to be done at Shasta...er...at Korshak's at Dikty's.... And it all had to be done in a hurry. Korshak kept running in and out occasionally but still didn't manage to stay there any length of time between his chortling and giggling about all the money he...er...they were going to make Real Soon Now...and out again. After all, Melvin had Really Big Things to take care of, none the least being his brother Sidney's exclusive high-end courtier salon on Michigan Avenue in the Loop...and special fashion-related showings/book signing combos at places like Marshal Field's and Company.

Ted and I plowed over the galley proofs and the illustrations, trying to make sure everything was keyed into the correct places within the text, and all that jazz. It was unbelievably deadly boring work. Not one word of any of it interested either me or Ted, but it was what Korshak wanted and whatever Korshak wanted he got....

Finally it was all finished, printed, delivered, stocked, placed on sale, announced, galaed, and PRed. There were signings and special events and grand unveilings and Now On Sales but no one gave a damn.

The book plummeted to the top of the most disremembered list and Korshak bit the bullet.

#

Near the end of 1956 the handwriting was on the wall for all and sundry to see. The rats began deserting the ship and not the least of all among them was Robert A. Heinlein. For years Heinlein had been the single most bestselling writer on Shasta's list, but he was fed up with many things associated with doing business with Korshak and Co., and pulled his work from Shasta.

He hand-delivered the manuscript for *Methuselah's Children* to Marty Greenberg at Gnome Press. Along the way, he stopped off in Chicago to among other things see me. He gloated about how Shasta wouldn't have his book and Gnome would. He had it with him and he let me examine it, actually hold that revised and retyped manuscript in my hands and lust for it with a huge, throbbing need.

“Would you believe I’m giving it to Marty for \$500?” he asked.

“Would you believe I’d give you \$500 for it right now?” I asked.

“But that wouldn’t do me any good,” he said, “all you’d do with it would be to keep it. Marty’ll get it out there where it can be seen like Shasta never could.”

And he was right, damn him again.

[What Heinlein didn’t know was that Martin Greenberg and I were rather good friends. For years I had been typesetting Marty’s Gnome Press ephemera. Book lists, advertising copy, newsletters, dustjacket back cover and flap text, all the usual. Larry Shaw wrote the copy and I set it into type. I don’t know what Larry got out of it but I was getting all the Edd Cartier dinosaur bookplates I could handle and an advance copy of each new Gnome Press Book as it was published.]

#

In 1957, Shasta actually published a book, A.E. VanVogt’s *Empire of the Atom*, and I got to proofread it. At last, actually working on a Shasta title after all those years. And, that year, Frederic Fell didn’t. No *Best...?* Advent published *Frank Kelly Freas: A Portfolio*, a total sellout at \$1.50 per....

Also, in 1957, I began working for a large direct mailing firm in downtown Chicago. I landed a job in their graphics production department on the strength of my experience producing fanzines and my contacts with Shasta. In reality I didn’t know the first thing about the process or techniques or anything else but they took pity on me and taught me many things about looking good in type. And, another world was slowly opening up for my fanzines, a world where I could do things like experiment with colored inks, with varieties of paper, some of the good stuff....

In 1958, out of the blue, I received a confused and garbled message that Timothy Seldes was urgently trying to reach me, and everything was about to make an abrupt change of direction. Seldes was, at the time, in charge of Nelson Doubleday’s Doubleday Book Club. Nelson Doubleday was the printing division of the greater Doubleday multi-corporate complex.

“I’m in an emergency situation here and I need help getting out of it,” he said.

“Tell me,” I said.

“A book fell off the schedule for the Book Club and I need something immediately to plug the hole with....”

“I can do that,” I said automatically, without thinking, not even aware of the consequences

of my actions. “Give me a bit to think about it. I’ll call you back.”

Instead, I picked up the phone and called Ted Dikty. When he answered, I said, “Ted, a miracle has just happened. I’ve placed *Best 9* with the Book Club. We’ll do it the usual way; you’ll front it and I’ll do the work. Get started on an ‘Introduction’ right away.” We made the deal and agreed on Dikty’s take and I was off and running solo for the very first time like a virgin....

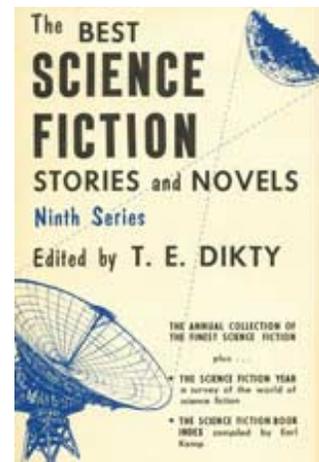
Then I phoned Seldes and told him I had it and what it would be and that he would get it within a week and then I got started....

I did it all from scratch. I picked out my first-choice stories for the contents of the anthology and a couple of good backup titles, and grabbed the phone. For days without stop it felt like I had that instrument glued to my ear. I was phoning all over the country talking to writers and agents and locking up those stories. It was all done on telephone word-of-mouth guarantee that the paperwork would be forthcoming immediately...all on good faith, and it all worked out perfectly. Everyone got paid and everyone was happy.

With manuscript in hand, I wrote all the non-fiction text copy, as I had done for previous year’s volumes, and faked out the dustjacket (credited to Julian C. May) from clipart pieces and an old caricature of Ted that Judy had previously drawn. I airmailed the parcel to Timothy Seldes.

When he received the package, Seldes put the entire project on overtime. The galleys were prepared overnight and airshipped to me the next morning for proofreading. I worked them over but as a courtesy to Ted (after all his name and reputation was residing on my workmanship) I had him read through them as well. About time he knew what was in one of his books. And damn if he didn’t make errors in it by deleting correct data from nonfiction text. Go figure...!

The package was rushed back to New York via airmail, corrections made within two days and it was on the press and running on the third day out of my hands.



And it was on the press and running without the rights and permissions to reprint any of those stories in the book having yet been obtained. That was the next order of business, remaining totally legal.

Now, as could be expected, Timothy Seldes was unusually kind to me and to Advent. While it is customary to print the trade edition of publisher’s Book Club titles at the same time, on a better quality paper stock, they didn’t have to do it. For Advent, because we had saved their asses, they gave us very competitive printing prices for our initial run of 1,000 copies plus making a paper transfer of money as payment for that printing as advance against club royalties.

[Much later, when I was chairing ChiCon III, Timothy again came through with flying colors. He cleaned out Nelson Doubleday's art department and shipped several years running of Book Club announcement flyers to the convention auction. The original art and corresponding paste-ups, in two colors, for several years, all together and ready to go on auction to benefit the convention.]

#

When the *Best* hit the fan, Judith Merrill was extremely pissed off. She phoned me in a shouting, ranting rage and if you knew Judy at all, you knew she was one hell of a shouting, ranting rager.

"Goddamnit! You've stolen my best material," she said. "I've got to remake the whole fucking book." Judy was known for her delicacy.

"Gee, Judy," I said, "I didn't know...I'm sorry...."

"Yes! You are!"

#

Ted and Judy Dikty were moving to Montana soon but not to raise a lovely crop of dental floss... Everything had to go, all those stacks of paper and piles of seeming debris and half empty boxes of...what? *Come and help....*

It was quite a mess, a big household full of stuff plus a big den/office even fuller of stuff. As far as the Diktys were concerned, most of that was just trash. Fortunately for me, some of it was my kind of trash. There were years of accumulated files, correspondence, old contracts, agreements, past due bills, all the usual and Ted was having real problems deciding which ones to take along with them to Montana.

And finally it was all packed up and waiting to be picked up in the big cross-country moving van, leaving Chicago and Shasta behind forever...and Korshak as well....

#

In 1982 the World Science Fiction Convention was held in Chicago; ChiCon IV.

To mark that occasion, Judy Dikty, Chair of ChiCon II (1952), and Ted Dikty returned to Chicago for a rare visit backward into fandom.

Coincidentally, Martha Beck and various members of Chicago fandom past and then present and others, decided to run a fan fund to bring me out of seclusion and to ChiCon IV...after all, I was Chair of ChiCon III and deserved some kind of recognition. Not however anything like I received as I was dragged purring and giggling from one new-

generation Chicago fan to the next, each determined to prove to me that they alone had the best weed in town.

It's a miracle that I managed to spend any time at the convention itself. Not only were there the new Chicago fans who had honored me by bringing me to the convention in the first place, but there were still numbers of the 1950-60 era fans left around town and several of them managed to visit with me, reliving old times, while I was in Chicago.

My fabulous old friends, Don and Betty Gilmore (see "[The King of Somewhere Hot](#)," *eI2*, April 2002) had recently relocated to Chicago suburban Millwood. They were the couple most responsible for the single most thrilling period of my life...the Jalisco period. It was so fantastic, in fact, that I doubt if much of it ever really happened...too highly improbable. And, it was the Gilmores who, more than a decade before ChiCon IV, hosted my Great Going to Prison Party in San Diego.

They came to the Hyatt, picked me up, and rushed me off to a whirlwind remember session. They took me to a very posh restaurant (Don was well known for demanding the best of everything at all times) and treated me to the whole smear from cocktails to after-dinner drinks and all stops between. We relived our wonderful times in Mexico together, got up to date about our children and all the hack pulp porno writers we had once lavished so much time, attention, and affection on.

They wanted to continue after our meal and make a night of it, but I begged off and asked to be returned to the Hyatt where, surely, something involving me was going on. It was the last time I ever saw either of them.

Arriving back at ChiCon IV, I blew it for Ted White, hiding beneath a monk's cloak, by greeting him by name in an elevator. "High, Ted!" And both of us were. He feigned sulking because he had been getting away with not being recognized...only he couldn't hide those eyes, peering out of the darkness of the shrouding hood.

At Chicon IV, Joan Harrison sought me out and chastised me severely for forgetting her. I drew a total blank and, crushed, she began filling in the pieces about when she and Harry had lived in suburban San Diego and we shared a few grand times together. Embarrassingly slowly, a decade slipped away, and it was indeed the lovely Joan.



At ChiCon IV, Takumi Shibano sought me out and chastised me for ignoring him. Both of us had so changed that I hadn't even recognized him after a decade apart. He insisted I accompany him back to their suite where he and his wife Sachiko were hosting a private all-chocolate party. I had never heard of anything quite so delicious, and it was, in far too many forms to remember. Nothing is quite as overwhelming as Japanese hospitality.

At ChiCon IV, Judy Dikty sought me out and invited me to their Grand Reunion Party. They were pulling out all the stops and having a Dinosaur Party for all the old fart fans they could dredge up from their past. She insisted that it wouldn't be the same without me. So I went, and it wasn't, and it was one hell of a grand party, complete with Mammoth Piss beer brewed and bottled specially for the party by Ted and Judy's son.

It was the last time I saw either of them....

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Everything was beautiful and nothing hurt.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

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[Copyright material removed at request of author.]

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All great literature is about what a bummer it is to be a human being

--Kurt Vonnegut, 4/17/04,

Get Lit!, Eastern Washington University's annual celebration of all things

written

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