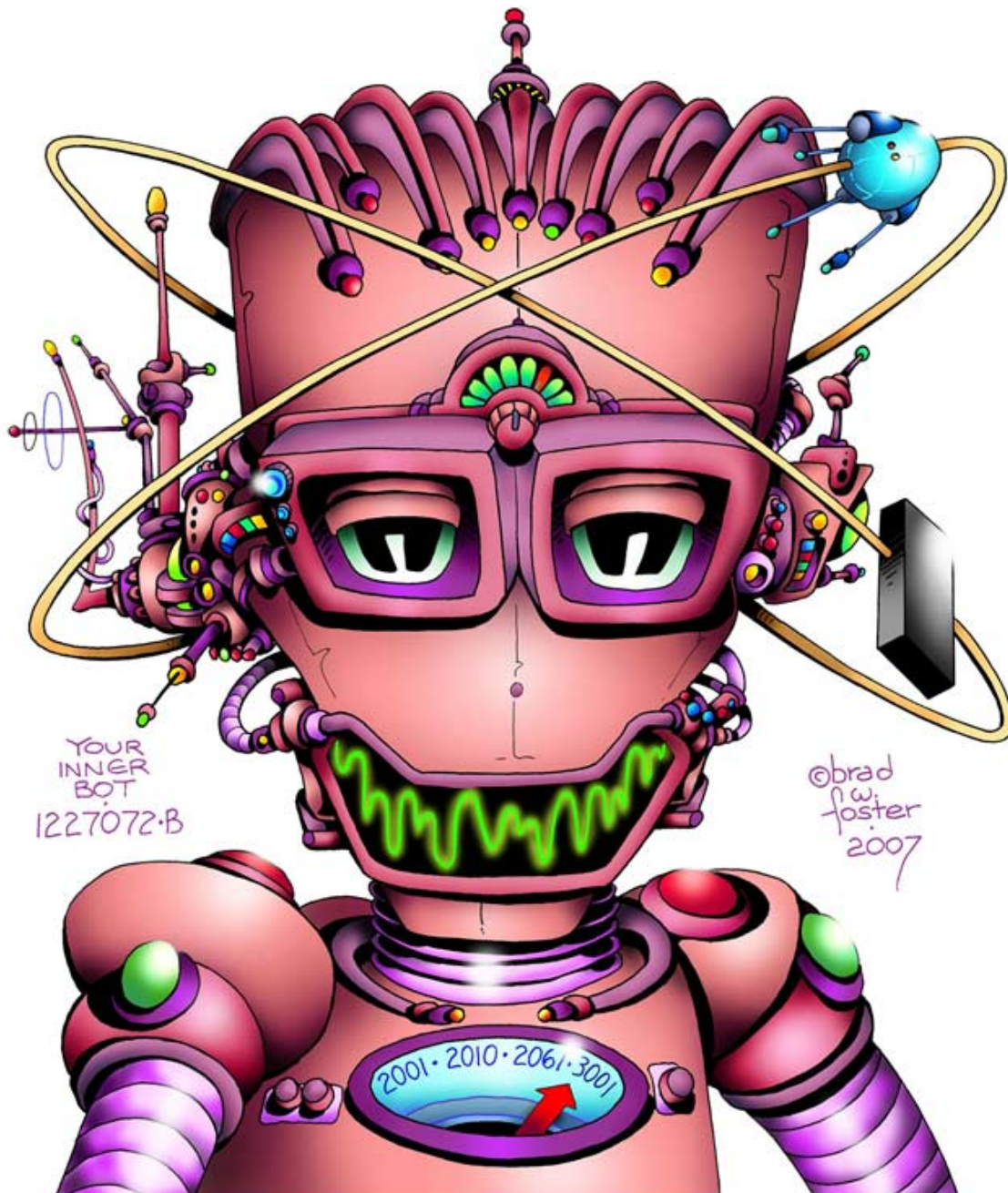




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**“Clarke”** by Brad Foster

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I define a saint as a person who behaves decently in an indecent society.  
—Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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**THIS ISSUE OF *eI*** is in memory of Bill Blackbeard, Terry Jeeves, and Joanna Russ.

#

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 [earl@earlkemp.com](mailto:earl@earlkemp.com) 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: Victor J. Banis, Lawrence Block, Ron Blum, Bruce Brenner, Jacques Hamon, Earl Terry Kemp, Roy Kettle, Brett Pouliot, Art Scott, Robert Silverberg, Robert Speray, and John Teehan.

**ARTWORK:** This issue of *eI* features original artwork by Harry Bell, Ditmar, and Brad Foster, and recycled artwork by William Rotsler.

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What we have created instead, as customers and employees and investors, is mountains of paper wealth so enormous that a handful of people in charge of them can take millions and billions for themselves without hurting anyone. Apparently.

—Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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## ...Return to sender, address unknown.... 46

### The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to [earl@earlkemp.com](mailto:earl@earlkemp.com) or by snail mail to P.O. Box 369, PMB 205, Tecate, CA 91980 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.

#

**Tuesday April 5, 2011:**

**Graham Charnock** (FmzFen): Does he never know when to stop. He is the Chris Garcia of his generation. You'll be lucky if you get another fanzine out of me before I die.

#

**Chris Garcia:** I just wanted to talk about the Eaton Conference. I loved the 2009 edition which was focused on Verne, and when I heard that Chine Miéville was going to be there, I started thinking of all the great times I had hanging out with the likes of Greg Benford and Howard Hendrix in 2009 and that I might be able to get myself invited along to dinner with China and grill him about his books, which I consider to be the finest written in the last decade. It's him, Baxter, Reynolds, and Priest battling for the title Best Writer of the Century! I had all these wonderful visions of the sessions.

And then I realized that it was, in fact, the weekend I had chosen for CorFlu, just as you noted in your response to my LoC.

True, if I had known at the moment I started looking for dates, I would have changed the weekend (which would have made folks even more unhappy as the only direction it could have gone was earlier) but reading the report, it sounds like I missed a great weekend. I'm often surprised that I have, at times, the sensibilities of an academic. These times are pretty rare, but they do happen! I just wish I had managed to catch Nalo Hopkinson speaking. She's great and I've heard her talk a couple of times and she always has amazing

insights, even if I disagree with a lot of them.

And the emphasis on the BEST FANZINE IN THE WORLD is well-deserved.

I continue to be amazed at Victor Banis. He's a stud writer who should be sitting on a pile of National Book Awards, if there were any justice. This was a mouth-wateringly tantalizing excerpt. The funny thing is one of my former colleagues at The Computer History Museum was Jeremy Clark, and he loved Victor's bio when I loaned it to him. Go figure...

I love Michael Moorcock's criticism, though I'm woefully under-read when it comes to his novels. I have to say that I'll be reading *A Nomad in the Time Stream* shortly, since it's one of the core Steampunk pieces that I haven't yet explored. I would have loved to have met JG Ballard, though I've still yet to read *Crash*. I'm working on getting an old copy so I can get into it. I loved the movie and wish to hell that David Lynch, who was supposedly attached to it at one point, had actually directed it. I'm working on an issue of *The Drink Tank* about *Doctor Who* and should really try and get Michael to write a little something for it. I'll get on that immediately!



I've met Ebert at least once (I was very young) and I've grown to enjoy his reviewing more as I've read more and more of his history work. You can somewhat see the influence of his time in fandom in his reviewing. He still has something of a 'Gosh-Wow!' about his view of film. When he ran an Underrepresented Film festival, he used *TRON* as the opening film. That's ballsy, and I think it speaks to a fact that you can never extinguish the fan, even if that fan floats away into The Other.

Ed's description of *Xero* reminds me of my reaction to zines like *Chunga* and *eI*. The key isn't that they're the best known zines in the world, but they have amazing lists of contributors and some of the coolest writing you'll ever find. I'd love to be able to put out a zine like *Xero*, or any of the other ones that I've fallen in love with over the years, but alas, I'm that rare combination of talentless and stuck in his ways. Such a thing happens.

**Monday April 11, 2011:**

**Ralph Carlson (VintagePaperbacks):** I just started reading these *eI*'s after finding out about them here. I am really enjoying them. I am only on issue 5 so I have a long way to go.

I want to thank whoever mentioned them here, otherwise I would not have known about them.

#

**Ian Covell (VintagePaperbacks):** Me, and thanks, but I was probably only half an email ahead of a thousand others.

Earl's ezines are eagerly awaited and swiftly noticed, The memoirs and reminiscences and letters and photographs and covers and bibliographies and commentary and everything else good, fill every issue...and you have another 50 to go!

You will be amazed at who was behind what, and who published what, and who edited it.

You will find yourself a thousand times wishing you had a complete set of *those* books, but at least glad you know which books are in the set.

You will start to ration yourself to one or two a day, because the information is so dense and startlingly complete.

You will enjoy them all.

Guaranteed.

I am not so much one IN a million on this, as one OF a million...any of your readers would say the same, and by now, should have.

### **Wednesday April 13, 2011:**

**Guy Lillian** (Zine Dump): Here's an issue to which I wish I'd contributed—a special Harlan Ellison tribute. Apparently Harlan recently won the 2011 Eaton Award for Lifetime Achievement in Science Fiction from UC-Riverside, prompting this issue.

Earl Terry Kemp leads off with an evisceration of the terribly early stories in *A Touch of Infinity*, several of which strike him badly: "Reading Ellison is like listening to a Wagnerian opera, played on a cheap tin harmonica." This is a *tribute*?

Ted White follows with a story—dating from the Mesoproterozoic Era—about Harlan's sudden desire for Ted's typewriter. Lynn Monroe talks about Harlan's early job writing back covers for Nightstand novels; Linda Moorcock describes the joys of working for the guy (dinner with Robin Williams, etc.) whom she describes as "My buddy forever." Michael Moorcock simply closes with "I love him."

Rob Latham looks back on *Again, Dangerous Visions*; Patricia Rodgers—whom I think is terrific but have somehow offended—writes wonderfully about Ellison's Nebula appearance for his Grand Master Award. And there's much more.

Damn! I wish I'd sent Earl my Harlan stories: the nightmare at Iguanacon, the SFWA banquet described in *ADV* where his good-natured joke on LeGuin badly backfired, and—most personally—how at a Little Men meeting in 1967 he responded to my silly question relating *Dangerous Visions* with *Ulysses* with "Have you tried writing? Well, please do. You're the first person to make the connection ..." Which is why I say I owe Harlan Ellison, almost as much as I owe Lillian Hellman and Julie Schwartz, and despair of ever repaying them.

*eI55* is a normal issue, which is to say that it is stuffed with fine articles—Hari Kunzru's piece on Michael Moorcock is a standout—and photos. Loved the picture of Roger Ebert as a whelp (in Ed Gorman's squib on the club where he was a member). Great zine, Earl. *Great zine.*

### **Tuesday April 19, 2011:**

**Lloyd Penney**: Always great to see another *eI*. Thank you for issue 55, and I will attempt to make this look good and coherent. The key word here is try....

I think we all knew that Mike Glicksohn was ill, but still when the worst happened, it was still a shock. We attended Mike's remembrance, and the massive wake afterward. We plan to keep in touch with Mike's widow Susan Manchester, and see what we can do to help out, and help recover from such a loss. Susan is quite aware of how many people thought so much of Mike, and it's going to be quite a process to try to cope with all of this.

Harlan called Chris Garcia the Devil? Hey, *El Diablo Garcia! Muy loco hombre!* Good for you, man! Maybe you can go to the Eaton Conference next year. I saw pictures in this issue and elsewhere, and it looks like a

fine event.

The Bill Hamling interview...no, he didn't want to do that interview, so he kept his answers short and non-informative. Maybe Chris O'Brien caught him off-guard, or on his way out somewhere else. Looks like Hamling doesn't think much of SF anymore, so maybe that's why O'Brien got pretty short shrift.

That's why I like the fact that while Roger Ebert has been making a living in movie reviews and writing, he doesn't put fandom down, and still reminisces fondly. I'd like to meet Roger and chat with him some time; he's in Toronto a lot, usually for the Toronto International Film Festival and other movie-type events.

Many years ago, I went to Bakka Books, our local SF bookstore, and picked up my regular issue of *Locus*. The cashier at Bakka was none other than Nalo Hopkinson. The next month, I picked up *Locus* again, and instead of being behind the counter, Nalo was on the cover of that issue. She's the new creative writing professor at UCRiverside? Good for her! She has worked very hard to get to where she is now. Another local SF success story.

Yvonne and I have finally decided to go to Reno for this year's Worldcon. So much was planned for it, we got our hotel room arranged, got our memberships, and it looks like it will be some real fun. I know how people feel about the Worldcon, but I have always had a good time there, and I feel like part of the crowd, which does feel good. Chris Garcia is running the fanzine lounge this year, so if nothing else, we will have ourselves a time there.

Thank you for another issue, and please pass along my greetings to Terry. Maybe he'll have more research to write about next time. See you then.

### **Wednesday May 11, 2011**

**John-Henri Holmberg:** You continue publishing a fabulous fanzine. Back in the days when things like that still counted, you should have had a Hugo for it.

### **Sunday May 15, 2011:**

**Bill Trojan:** Love your ezine! Have just read most of 51 & 11. Somewhere have a run of *Rogue* (or maybe *Rouge*). Would like to read *Darkhouse*, by Alva Rogers.

BTW, while I am sure we probably met at some convention in the 1970's, probably at the Advent table, we most recently conversed at Tom Lesser's party in March before the LAPB show.

### **Monday May 16, 2011:**

**Ian Williams:** I'm still reading every issue of *eI* you put out on efanazines, I'm just busy with odds and sods. I blog a lot a lot—one on pop culture, the other about cat rescuing. I've also just self-published an sf novel on Kindle—*All The Worlds At Once*—for which, despite not have started to publicise it, has actually sold one copy and received a 5-star review from someone I don't know and who actually seems quite sane. Apart from voluntarily reviewing regularly for Amazon (I'm at this moment ranked 207) I'm also on their Vine scheme where I get up to four freebies a month to review. I (try to) swim five mornings a week, sleep a lot (there may be a relationship there, or not), plus marital duties like keeping the house tidy, etc, and looking after eight cats. Despite this I seem to spend most of my time pottering about on the Internet and playing spider solitaire on the PC.

Anyway, I always look forward to reading *eI*.

### **Friday May 20, 2011:**

**Robert Lichtman:** A few comments on e155 before it's too late.

Chris Garcia can't think of any other SF anthologies besides Harlan's two that might qualify as "most important." What about Terry Carr's *Universe* series that were, like Harlan's, all original material? As for anthologies collecting previously published work, I'd venture that Terry's *Best Science Fiction of the Year* series, published in the same time stream, is also a contender. Going further back, I have a certain fondness for Groff Conklin's huge collections: *The Best of Science Fiction* (1946), *A Treasury of Science Fiction* (1948) and *Omnibus of Science Fiction* (1952). The latter was my introduction to "adult" SF anthologies, being one of my three-books-for-a-dollar selections when I joined the Science Fiction Book Club circa 1955 or thereabouts.



His comment about loving typewriters rang a bell with me, too. I never owned a Selectric II, but the earliest issues of *Trap Door* were done on Paul Williams's dual-pitch machine—pica type for the articles, elite for the editorial and letters, all reduced to 77%. My own typer nostalgia is for the Hermes 3000 I had back in the late '60s before I went to The Farm. I took it with me and tried to hang on to it, but eventually it got "borrowed" and never returned, and before long it was dead. It had the same typeface Redd Boggs was using back then, but in a size between pica and elite that I thought was Really Neat. I see a number of them on eBay and am sort of tempted, but no doubt a dose of reality (Would I Actually Use It?) will rescue me from

buying one.

In O'Brien's interview with Hamling I was somewhat stunned to see how dismissive he is of *Stardust*—"I got old enough to outgrow it"—which I have a complete set of, and which I consider to be in many ways a more successful venture in terms of an interesting mix of material than Bill Crawford's earlier *Marvel Tales* and *Unusual Stories* (although not from contributors who became as iconic as Crawford's) and definitely with far superior production values.

The rest of the issue made for entertaining reading, but the above items were the only ones that gave me good comment hooks.

**Saturday May 21, 2011:**

**James Reasoner:** ...unfortunately those "other Tony Calvano books on my shelves" went up in smoke with all my other books in the fire that destroyed my house and studio back in '08. But I'm starting to put together a Nightstand, etc. collection again, got a stack of John Dexters, a few of Bob's Don Elliotts, and a couple of Don Hollidays (Hal Dresner). Also a Don Bellmore, although I'm not sure who that was. Seems like I remember reading somewhere that Bellmore was one of the George H. Smiths, but I could certainly be wrong about that. While some of the books are better than others, I have yet to encounter any book from the various Hamling lines that wasn't very readable and entertaining. The authors really had the knack of pacing their books well, as most of them have demonstrated a multitude of times in other genres.

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We are here to help each other get through this thing, whatever it is.  
—Mark Vonnegut (Kurt's son)

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# Under the Counter\*

by Victor J. Banis

FBI agent Roby Chang and LAPD officer Jess Conners troll Hollywood Boulevard, on the trail of kiddie pornsters.

Late night Hollywood Boulevard was an open-air loony bin, in Chang's oft-expressed opinion: dealers, users and losers, pimps and prosties, gangbangers, preachers, and curb trawlers.

"Every kind of crazy in the world," she told Conners. He looked even more the innocent surrounded by all this nuttiness. She felt like a babysitter giving her charge a lesson in nightlife reality.

Though technically, Hollywood was its own community, it was to her just another neighborhood in the admittedly wacky city of Los Angeles. Oddly, she loved L.A., the way a seasoned tar loves the sea, rolling with its waves, ever mindful of the sharks and reefs and sudden storms that await the unwary sailor, and yet cheerfully embracing all to her bosom.

"Who're we looking for anyway?" she asked.

"There's a couple of informers I've used from time to time; I thought we'd do a little digging." A transvestite hooker in garish makeup looked him over with interest from a doorway, glanced at Chang, and lost her interest.

"What made you become a cop?" Chang asked out of the blue.

If he was surprised he didn't show it. "The bucks, what else? Plus I heard women fall all over you."

"Well," Chang said and glanced back at the hooker. "There you are."

"She did think I was cute, didn't she?"

"She thought you had the money for a blow job."

"What?" He gave her a look of mock surprise. "You don't think I'm cute?"

She did, but she wasn't about to tell him that. "I think I don't like guys who fish for compliments." He laughed, flashing those perfect teeth. You couldn't dent this guy.

The owner of a food stand, Mediterranean Cuisine, according to the faded paint of its sign, recognized Conners and called to offer him a falafel sandwich, which Conners declined with a smile and a wave.

"Actually, a falafel sandwich sounds good," Chang said.

"Not his sandwich. Trust me."

"You think his establishment isn't up to the most exacting hygienic standards?"

"That place isn't up to dumpster standards. I had a snack there once, spent the weekend married to my toilet."

"Listen, I was thinking, the Desmond thing," she said, "At the time, you said it was weird ballsy, the way it was done. What did you mean, exactly?"

"Just that. The other snatchings, they took the kids from inside crowded malls, you can be clear away before the alarm is given. That one was so out in the open, where they could be seen. If Desmond had been a man...."

"You mean, if her husband had been the one to go after the little girl?"

He shrugged. "Might not have made any difference. The guy had a gun. You can shoot a man as easy as a woman."

"So, what do you make of it? Why the difference in m.o. on that one?"

"Might have been just opportunity. Maybe they had a special order to fill. You know, some scumbag customer specifically asks for a girl that age, blonde hair, so on. They see the kid, go for it. They had the father distracted, didn't expect the mother back so quick. Ah, here's my boy now."

"My boy" turned out to be a twenty something speed freak with bad teeth and long, unwashed hair. He saw them bearing down on him, looked around as if seeking an escape route and, finding none, waited for them resignedly.

"Weasel, my man," Connors greeted him with a clap on the shoulder that produced a wince and a pallid smile. "How's it hanging, fella?"

"Officer Connors. What brings you to our star-studded street this time of night?" Weasel asked with regret in his voice. There was a trace of the south in it, too. Probably he had run away from West Virginia years ago, Chang thought, headed for the bright lights of the big city, and had decayed like most of them did. The town ate up kids like him and spit the shells back out to litter the streets.

"We're looking for some information. I told my friend here nobody knows the town better than old Weasel."

Weasel twitched and tried for another smile that refused to come off. He was in constant motion, eyes rolling, hands and feet doing a meth-jitterbug. "Always glad to help, Officer Connors," he said, swallowing rapidly a couple of times.

"Kiddie porn," Connors said.

Weasel jumped as if he had gotten a jolt of electricity and his eyes spun convulsively. "I don't do that shit," he said in a voice several octaves higher. "I don't go near that stuff."

"Wease. Wease," Connors said, putting his hand on the bony shoulder again, "Like I told my friend here, there isn't anything comes down on the Boulevard The Weasel doesn't know about it."

"Drugs, sure, whores, shit like that. The kid stuff—no way, man, you can't pin that on me." He looked around again, appeared ready to bolt.



Victor Banis

"We aren't trying to pin anything on you," Chang said in her most soothing voice.

"But we could, Wease, we could," Conners added. "If we wanted to be hard-assed. Course, we don't, you understand. We just want some help."

Chang reached into her shoulder bag and found her wallet. She peeled off a twenty, saw the gleam of interest in The Weasel's eyes, added a second one to it. "All's we want is information," she said. "Like, who on the street is peddling it? Movies, pics, whatever. Somebody is. We just need to know where to look."

Weasel stared at the money, his eyes for a change almost still, and licked his lips. He looked around again, to see who might be watching them, and looked back at the twenties. Chang added a third one.

"There's a newsstand down by Wallace. I heard he's got some shit like that, under the counter. Just for regular customers, people he knows really well, you know what I mean. Like, I haven't seen it myself, I wouldn't even look at that shit. That's just what someone told me."

He shuffled a step closer to her, one trembling hand lifted slightly toward the money. She held it toward him and he snatched it in a quick, frantic gesture and before they could say anything else, he darted past them and was hurrying down the street, shoving the money into the pocket of his filthy jeans.

"Nervous type," Conners said.

#

They found the newsstand, a dingy and dimly lit cave. A few newspapers and an array of girlie magazines, most of them undisguised porn, lined one wall, and a cash register and a counter occupied the other, a dirty glass top covering an assortment of stale candies and gum. A customer leafing through the magazines saw them enter, stuffed the magazine back on the shelf, and slid past them out of the store, his gaze carefully downward. A swarthy bearded man with large, nearly black eyes stood behind the register and looked them over warily, his expression suggesting that he too would like to disappear.

"You the proprietor?" Chang asked.

"Who wants to know?" His tone was surly, but he began to breathe rapidly as his blood pressure mounted.

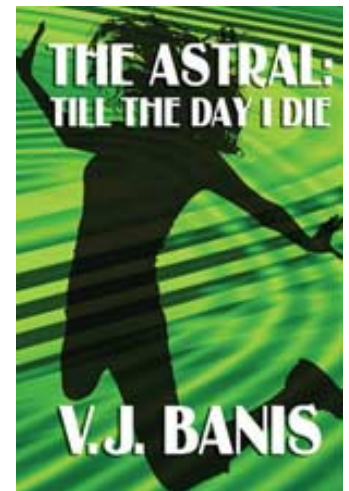
Chang flipped her badge open for him. "We want the kiddie porn," she said.

He looked from one to the other of them, and past them to the girlie magazines on the wall behind. "It's all legal stuff," he said, nodding in that direction. "Go ahead, take a look for yourself. No kiddies there."

"The under the counter stuff," Chang said. "For the special customers. We're special, see."

"I don't know what you're talking about. I never seen anything like that. This is a legit business."

Chang sighed, assumed a sad expression. "Well, sir, I thought we could handle this discreetly, just between the three of us," she said in an aggrieved voice. "See, we've got an informant says you've got some goodies under the counter. What we could do, now, is I can call in for a warrant, and my partner and I will wait here till it comes, just to make certain you don't dispose of anything, and then when we find it, we'll take you in. These days the D.A. gets real livid about kiddie porn. But, see, this is the thing for you to understand: we're



not interested in you, not really. What we want is your distributor. So, here's what I suggest. You give us your stash, all of it, and you write down your distributor's name for us, and we go away. And as long as you don't get anything more in stock—and, understand, we will come back from time to time to check on you—but, as long as you don't, well, we won't make you any trouble. Now, what do you say, could anything be fairer?"

His eyes went back and forth again. His breathing was really fast now, and his face had broken out in sweat. He looked inches away from a real cardio-problem. After a moment, he reached under the counter, opened a drawer, and took out a large manila envelope.

"It's all I got," he said. "I swear to Christ."

Chang picked up the ballpoint pen next to the register and handed it to him. "Don't forget the name," she said. "And phone number."

-

\*Excerpted from *The Astral: Till the Day I Die* with the permission of Victor J. Banis.

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Think a little! Don't be afraid of straining your brains. They won't break.  
—Kurt Vonnegut, *Cat's Cradle*

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# Blame it on me...please....\*

Artwork by Harry Bell

by Earl Kemp

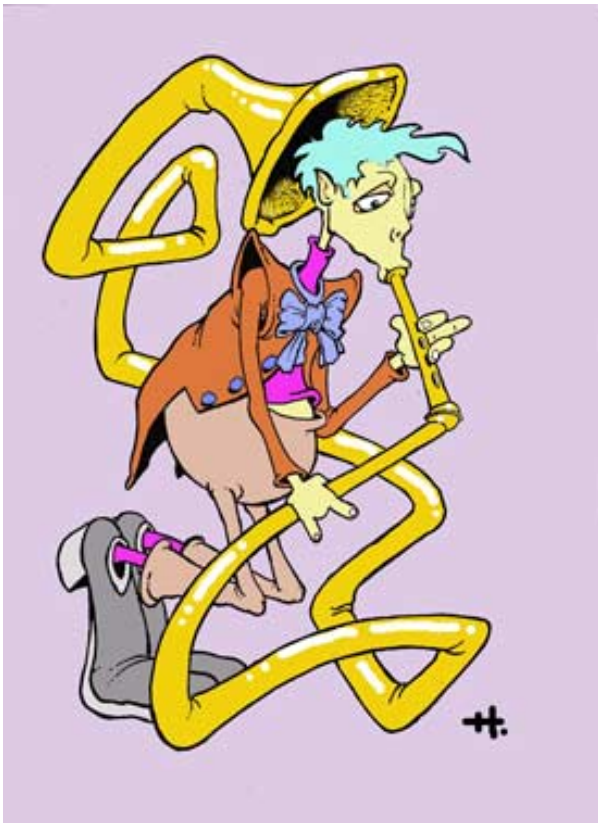
As I keep telling you guys (and gals), I'm a voracious reader. If I don't have my one-a-day fix, I slip further into stupidity.

During the '60s and '70s, when I was working at Greenleaf producing 50 books a month, I had the absolutely certain knowledge that I was doing something very good for the US English language reading public. I was helping liberate them. It was a very good feeling.

It was reinforced by all the legal and extremely illegal efforts on the part of law-enforcement, nut fringe religious fanatics, and other useless busybodies to crush us into dust and blow us away.

Now, these days, reading my allotment of novels, mostly crime fiction, I am constantly astonished at the things I read within those novels.

This is particularly true in two areas, the first being kiddie porn.



As Greenleaf was an early version of POD (we depended on suggestions from our readers for directions to go with our novels; we received many, many such letters daily requesting the reader's favorites), and by far the most overwhelming request, as nauseating as it was for us, was for kiddie porn. And, if it was incestuous within the core family, that would make the books just that more sellable.

And, it was my memory that kiddie porn had been totally forbidden by the feds and carried with it some very heavy penalties. Apparently that only applies to visuals these days, not to written words.

I think this because I can't believe the number of those crime books involved with kidnapping, torturing, and having all kinds of sex (including some I've never thought of) with children from the ages of 9 through 15 that I find myself reading (which seems to be the most preferred ages by the readers involved). This isn't a subject of choice...the genre is...and these books are written by very popular, prolific, well respected writers. Who go into extreme detail with the way those children are treated, ripped apart, tortured, etc....

What is kiddie porn if those bestselling novels are not?

#

The second area is a bit more broad and very much more respectable. I suppose it started with Harlequin

romances but today's female "romance" novels are something else again.

Today's book that I am reading is a female romance novel. It is a Ballantine Book. You can't hardly get more respectable than that. Yet the book is definitely much more a porno novel than it is a female romance. The pages (allegedly written by a woman; I'll not name either her or the book title) are filthier than anything we ever published at Greenleaf, going on and on for page after page of very, very graphic descriptions of genitalia, of playing with it, of using it, of "hot monkey sex" of "fucking your brains out" (these are direct quotes from the book).

Again, this is a Ballantine book. Ballantine Books, these days, is a property of Random House, Inc. This particular writer (I'll never stoop low enough to call her an "author") has some twenty-plus novels to her credit, many of them *New York Times* bestsellers.

So, that's Ballantine Books, Random House, and *New York Times* bestsellers. How is it possible to be more respectable than that? Where were Random House and the *New York Times*, in the 1960's and '70s when we needed them the most?

I knew where Ian and Betty Ballantine were, and where their morals and convictions resided.

#

Let us digress at this point for just a moment, while I do a bit of comparative analysis.

When we at Greenleaf were publishing our sleazebooks, however ridiculous this might appear to some people, our emphasis was on eroticism. There is a huge gap separating eroticism from the blatant pornography of this particular Ballantine Book.

Eroticism is remarkably close to love. The porno inside the book under discussion here has moved right up against hate; in it while everything is dressed in cupid's clothing, the sex portrayed is extremely harsh, unrealistic, passing just slightly beyond the borders of pain. (In one regard, reading this book makes me feel extremely sorry for the writer. However much she profits from her *New York Times* bestsellerhood, she clearly doesn't know what sex is.) The sex portrayed is presented in the form of eroticism with a slow buildup of irresistible desire between the two principal characters but then, when it comes to the sex act(s) described, it switches over into this harsh, very unhuman-like punishing sex.

Too close to bondage and S&M for my taste. I do hope I am not that far removed from commonplace realities. I've been around a long time, been there and done that, both good and bad. I have lifetime experiences of the emotional and physical interactions between real people. They/we/I don't do it the way it is done in this book.

This writer's sex moves, without hesitation, into the ridiculous. The first scene in the book has the male

You forgot to take the credit...er... blame for the current state of porn video.

There are such issues to consider as your hand in corrupting bin Laden. Details of his extensive porn stash hopefully will follow the recent news release of same. One can only wonder what type he was looking at. It is quite likely that his acquisition of same via his "courier" created the security breach that located him.

Then there are other issues as the "monkey-see-monkey-do" behavior of viewers. Stemming from your seminal work producing such groundbreaking movies as *Adultery for Fun and Profit* we now have a mainstream acceptance of girl-girl sex as never before.

Time and time again acquaintances at the local watering hole cozy up to me and tell me that it's perfectly acceptable for girls to dance (and more) with each other there. In fact such behavior is encouraged.

What a Brave New World you have created.

Now stop with the mea culpas. We all agree that it is entirely all your fault...shame on you!

So what are you doing for an encore? —Earl Terry Kemp

protagonist raising the female's arms over her head, shackling them to a rigid pipe, stretching her upward until her tiptoes just touch the floor, and, as she is stripped nude and so helplessly restricted, literally straining her muscles just to remain in that crude, ridiculous position, the male attacks her with various forms of "loving" (sure!) torture until she is writhing in pain and agony. Then, while she is still so shackled, stretched, standing up, he has his way with her (sure again!).

Later in the book, she turns the tables on him and does the same thing to him.

And these are lovers, potential husband and wife (by book's end they are married, she has somehow learned how to accommodate his abnormally huge penis, and they are pregnant). Do you live this way? How could you?

Absolutely no eroticism as we knew it and portrayed it years ago. My, how the world has changed...and as far as I am concerned much for the worse.

#

I admit that there is a lot of innocent, painless role-playing going on even in the best of consensual sexual situations. But those games never approach the harshness, the painfulness of the sex portrayed in this particular book.

#

Now, back to Ballantine where this rant began. In the '60s, in Greenleaf's first federal indictment [I covered this rather extensively in "Beauty and the Beast Otra Vez" in <http://efanzines.com/EK/eI4/index.htm> which see.] for publishing porno (very, very tame stuff without one single known offensive word in any book), in Houston, among other people of significance, Ian and Betty Ballantine were there throughout most of the trial (several weeks) as witnesses for the defense.

It was my pleasure to spend lots of time with them. They both championed and supported what we were doing at Greenleaf and did everything they could do to help get us off the charges made against us. The trial was ultimately dismissed after Hamling spent an alarming amount of hundreds of thousands of dollars in our defense...but that was the fed's intent...if they couldn't make us criminals, they'd force us to waste all of our money to prove that we weren't.

And I'm willing to bet that if either Ian or Betty, today, would read this book they would be appalled at what today's Ballantine labels as romance.

#

So blame it on me...please.

Not that what is clearly hard-core pornography is instantly available from a "class" publisher, but that there is the freedom to produce such books for those who really want to read them, feel they need them, etc.

And, because it is my fault, should I be ashamed of what they are doing these days? Where's the 24/7 federal surveillance on those producers? Are the writers and editors dragged into police stations and routinely debased and degraded? Are those writers, when returning to the States from visits outside the country taken into seclusion, strip searched, asshole probed, ridiculed for the size of their genitalia, criticized for destroying moral values? *Protect and serve? My, oh my!*

Where are the crucifiers when they are most needed?

What did I do wrong?

Will I ever recover from this evil curse?

#

Thank God I was able to endure it all...and help make freedom ring....

#

I am content with my accomplishments.

Love always, Earl

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\*Revised and expanded from a posting InTheBar, May 13, 2011.

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On reading: "With my brains all fired up, I do the nearly impossible thing that you are doing now, dear reader. I make sense of idiosyncratic arrangements, in horizontal lines, of nothing but twenty-six phonetic symbols, ten Arabic numerals, and perhaps eight punctuation marks, on a sheet of bleached and flattened wood pulp!"  
—Kurt Vonnegut, intro to the collection *Bagombo Snuff Box*

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# Did Done What Did

by John Teehan

Back in 2000, when I was just entering fandom, I read Mike Resnick's "The Literature of Fandom" in *Mimosa 21*. Of the many books mentioned, Mike noted a one-shot by Earl Kemp (who I didn't know at the time) called *Who Killed Science Fiction?*. There wasn't a lot of detail about it, although I'd heard it mentioned here and there elsewhere. I didn't know much about the work other than that it was very difficult to find.

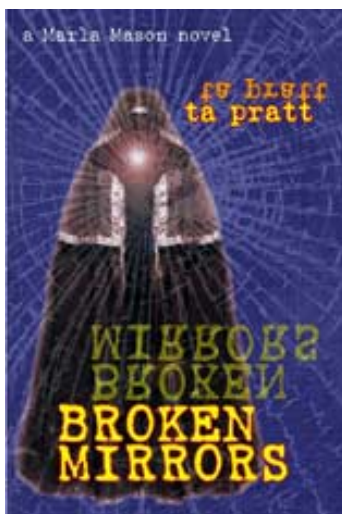
Fast-forward six years later...Earl, who I'd gotten to know a little better on the faanish mailing lists, put out a Very Special Edition of his online fanzine, *eI* which featured a compleat and unexpurgated text for the "long lost" classic *WKSF?* I was, at best, fringing in fandom in 2006. I had no intention of gafiating or anything, but I was immersed in some real world distractions and wasn't as active on the faanish lists or in fandom as I would have ideally liked. I still monitored the faanish lists, however, and still regularly checked out *efanzines.com* for good reading. It was there that I came across Earl's posting of *WKSF?* and subsequently devoured it.



John Teehan

Who wouldn't? It was a treasure-trove of the thoughts and opinions of some of the Great Names of SF prodom, fandom, and in-between. And it was a hell of a lot easier to read than my bulky, unwieldy copy of *PITFCS*.

Fast forward another few years. After bumping my head or succumbing to an odd eldritch curse, I decided to start my own small press. I had been working for years for other small presses, and was pretty handy doing layout. Print-On-Demand technology had refined itself over the years where the final product had become both affordable and of decent quality. I realized that the most expensive part of running a small press was the hiring of freelancers like me to do the layout and design work. Seeing as how I already did that, and did it fairly well, more than half the battle was done. The rest was setting something up with a printer, getting a webpage up, learning some of the basics of the business from friends and colleagues, and hunting down some authors.



I got lucky right out the gate when I saw a tweet by Tim Pratt suggesting that he might try to find a small press to publish a dead-tree version of his recent ebook from his orphaned Marla Mason series. With little more than a name ("The Merry Blacksmith" is the name of a popular traditional Irish reel), I contacted Tim and made my pitch. Perhaps also having bumped his head or angered a witch, he set me up with his agent who helped me hammer out my first MBP contract. The resulting book, *Broken Mirrors*, was a big success and remains, still, my best selling fiction title.

Soon after, Bud Webster contacted me about publishing a collection of his Anthopology 101 columns from the *SFWA Bulletin*. I'd been the production manager/art director (and occasional editor) of the *Bulletin* for several years and I knew Bud's work well. It had a pretty good following among readers, and Bud was pretty much one of the Authorities of the history of short SF fiction. That led to the next best selling title in the Merry Blacksmith corral.

And now we're back to the future—well, present day. I remembered how impressed I was with *WKSF?* when

I read it in 2006. A little bit of research confirmed that there have been no print editions available since its original in 1960—and that was a very limited run.

Will people pay for a book they can read for free online?

Why not? While I read ebooks on occasion, they pale in comparison to the number of physical books I read. I still prefer the tactile experience of fingers flipping pages, and of reading anywhere—even in direct sunlight—without worrying about battery life. What's more, being a bit of a bibliophile myself, I understood that some people just like to own certain titles. I like having books on my shelves. And I'm not alone. What's more, *WKSF?* is considered a classic. You hear or read about it every so often as one of the Great Books of fandom. Why was there not a proper dead-tree edition available?

What the hell. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I contacted Earl, made a pitch, and he said yes. Wow. That was easy.

He sent me the most recently-edited version of the text. He sent me some graphics. I did what I do, and turned it into a book. There were some layout challenges...to be sure. How should I handle the insets? They weren't in the original book—not that I had a copy to refer to. How should I handle the signatures? Some were pretty rough. While it was very convenient that Earl was online...snail mail was not an easy option given Earl's address. That, and I didn't want to make a nuisance of myself. So I hammered out a book using what I had in the best way I could think of.

Make the layout interesting, not boring. But don't make it so interesting that it's difficult to follow. The reader shouldn't have to work at it. Punch it up here and there with some old covers from books and magazines that feature the contributors. Just enough to give a sense of context, but not so much that it overwhelms. What else? Well...this is a fan publication at its very heart. What's a fan pub without a couple of faanish illos?

Proof, proof, proof. What do I do about typos or inconsistent spellings between the various contributors? That was a tough call. Who am I to edit John Campbell or Kurt Vonnegut? In the end, I decided that these were letters, notes and correspondences, written between friends and family. To edit out minor inconsistencies would be to take away from the inherent spirit of the overall book. Leave them as they are.

Then there was the index. Oi. That was more work than I anticipated. I've never had to pull together an index before and it was exceedingly tedious. Still, I think I pulled it off fairly well. The trickiest part was making sure I was using the correct title or name of an index item, but still manage to include the page number of an appearance in which said title or name was presented in a slightly different manner (e.g., including all appearances of deCamp, de Camp, and De Camp in the index entry for "de Camp. L. Sprague"). I'm sure I still missed a few, but on the whole I'm pretty happy with how the index turned out.

Proof, proof, proof. Thank ghu for the Internet, eh? Earl and I passed the PDF proof back and forth a couple of times. I added a short introduction to the print edition, and sent it off to the printer, and awaited the physical proof. Having copies available at Corflu was my goal. I received the physical proof from the printer and liked what I saw. I approved it and started ordering copies for stock and copies to be sent directly to Corflu. I set up ordering webpages and offered free shipping for a month, and decided to set up a special "secret" order page for fans "in the know" which knocked an additional buck off the cover price.



No one was happier than I to learn that the box of 20 or so copies that arrived at Corflu were sold out by Saturday morning, thanks to helpful Bill Burns. And orders started coming in. Terry Kemp arranged for

copies to appear at the LA paperback show, and I've seen retailers ordering a dozen copies at once through Amazon. And it's nice to have played a small role in the history of one of the legendary books of fandom. I couldn't have done it without Earl. He's the guy who did what he did.

So what's next? A lot of things, hopefully. So far, The Merry Blacksmith Press's second year looks like it will be as fun and as successful as the first year. There are a few interesting titles coming up which will be of particular interest to the *eI* audience. Details to be released as i's are crossed and t's dotted. Now that the dust has settled on an editing job that's consumed a good part of the last couple of months, I'm getting back to work on a fanthology project I'm hoping to have out before Renovation. As of this writing, I'm about to release a collection of short fiction by Don D'ammassa which I'm very excited by—lots of fun space opera, and I'll soon be coming out with a new, updated edition of Bud Webster's *The Joy of Booking*. So, yeah... MBP's second year is starting off well.

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In real life, as in Grand Opera, arias only make hopeless situations worse.  
—Kilgore Trout, in Kurt Vonnegut's *Timequake*

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# Who Killed LAPB?

by Earl Terry Kemp

Once again it was finally time for the Main Event.

It had been two years since the last time, and many things had changed. People had moved. Things were... different.

The Gang had been itching for one more Last Hurrah for some time. Certain events had been set in motion. Plans were being entertained for the coming year. It could be a really big year. Maybe even the biggest.

Go ChicaGO!

Another Hugo could happen. Not really beyond the realm of possibilities.

The Gang heard the word. They were all True Believers. Not only that, this time they had...The Book!

*Who Killed Science Fiction?*

(Applause!)

Morning came. The Gang got loaded and then loaded up the bus. The Merry Pranksters had nothing on us as we sped down the deserted desert during a dazzling dawn in our day-glo roadster after several tepid glasses of Kool-aid each.

Several hours later the green debate book hung heavy in the air and on our minds. Carlos demanded that we stop at the sacred spot once again in order to make the ritual sacrifice. Going off-road in a giant day-glo bus is much more difficult than it sounds, but we managed to find the spot. Only got stuck once.

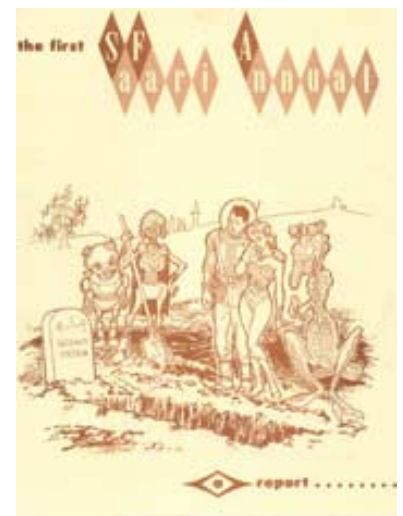
After the mandatory cleansing the debate was over. As The Gang staggered back onto the bus surrounded by a cloud of reeking fumes, Carlos decided to stay behind. This had been expected. But still tear-filled eyes, and not just from the clinging smoke, looked back over soggy shoulders as our driver ground gears finding the freeway.

The Gang was undaunted by the loss of our spiritual guide. We were determined. We had a mission. We were ready to kill in LA.

But first another delay.

In a vision of inspiration, Carlos had sent The Gang on a Pilgrimage.

It was a big side-step away from the City of Lost Angels down to the border.



The first edition of *Who Killed Science Fiction?*  
Cover art by Ed Emsch  
Published in 1961 in an extremely limited print run  
1962 Hugo award winner



Bob Bonfils' house. As close as we got to him. Close but no cigar.  
Another dream gone in a puff of smoke.

“Going to the border, eh, horny right!” Zachariah chortled out with a puff of smoke. His snicker was the only contract The Gang needed to accept The Pilgrimage.

Cowboy Bob and the Hun were so horny they made their way down elusive trails into the hinterlands beyond the border into places not marked on any map. Their goal...to eat the “special” at The Blue Fox. Visiting with Pop was something incidental.

Their loss to The Gang was almost unendurable, but the rest of us continued on with The Pilgrimage.

“Oh, we’re off to see The Wizard!” was our litany.



Annual postcard announcement for the LAPP show. Please note: The original artwork is well-hung at Tom's.

We made it all the way to the magic blue door, hoping to see what was behind the shimmering, wiggling curtain. Not even the driving rain or the death-seeking maniacs in their vehicles of doom could stop us. We had found our way to the heart of the maze.

But, alas, Bob Bonfils, The Wizard, was not home.

The plan to cajole, coerce, badger, or kidnap Bob into coming along was dashed.

The Gang huddled at the door to The Wizard's palace, trying to be strong and continue with The Mission, the pouring rain hiding salty tears never shed.

With fervent feverish fleeting flights of fancy we finally fled, still ready to complete our task. We would be there, rain or shine, despite an onslaught of death-dealing California drivers, on Sunday, March 27, at the Black Ace Books yearly Paperback Collectors Show & Sale, host Tom Lesser's annual blast.

The tale of the nearly week-long journey from the border deep into the darkly lit heart of LA is a story better kept secret until all the participants have departed this mortal coil.

By Saturday The Gang had all also departed into diverse directions, each following some quasi-mythical

path. Plans were made to meet on The Day.

Pop and I got our typical pre-dawn start for the one-hour drive to Mission Hills. The day-glo gas guzzling bus was abandoned for a rattling clinker. The ramshackle, hillbilly look to our not-so-fancy vehicle added to by the near ton of books and props threatening to burst out in a blizzard of paper as we zig-zagged down the winding road at top speed.

We were ready for anything carrying four times what we could ever need or use.

It would remain to be seen if the pros and fans were ready for us.

No rain, but heavy traffic. Crazy drivers everywhere. Strange glows coming from their bat-like eyes as four-handed drivers shifted gears, drank coffee, texted, and gabbed on cell phones resting ghost-like in mid-air as their rapidly moving hands manipulated them.

With urgent need for relief we finally came to a stop at the Valley Inn and Conference Center, located at 10621 Sepulveda Blvd., Mission Hills, California.

The Mission (ha ha) completed, we were ready to check in. We needed, desperately to check-in.

We were four hours too early.

So, down a nearby alley I made friends with a very big, angry mastiff as I watered his tulips. It was an epic deluge, punctuated by savage barking announcing threats of imminent termination.

Content for now, continence attained, we strolled the scenic, colorful, fragrant nearby streets, careful to avoid stepping on one of the hordes of homeless littering every doorstep, homeless apparently invisible to locals.

Finally we sat down in a fast-food taco stand to drink coffee for the next three hours. And a great time we had over the worst coffee imaginable. We discussed...The Book.

*Who Killed Science Fiction?*

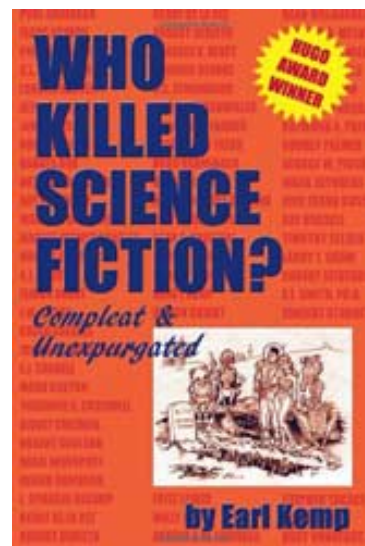
The Compleat & Unexpurgated version.  
Published by The Merry Blacksmith Press.  
[www.merryblacksmith.com](http://www.merryblacksmith.com)

(Applause!)

John Teehan, the publisher, is well on his way making his press one of the central new-wave of POD imprints. Issuing the second edition, which is really in most every way a first edition of Pop's 1962 Hugo winning fanzine, is an ambitious next step.

There's talk on the table of reissuing the Advent publication of *The Proceedings: Chicon III* for distribution at the upcoming 2012 World Science Fiction Convention planned for Chicago. Ta, da!

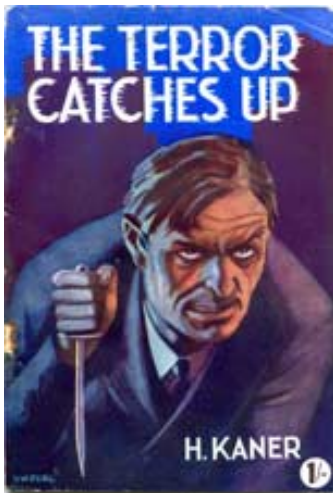
John has already developed a growing number of publications. Go to his website and buy them!



Technically the second edition, but for all practical purposes the true first edition. Buy it! This is your only real opportunity to ever read it.



Pop and I were just having the most fascinating conversation about SMOF's, when the phone rang, the clock belled, and someone knocked on our door. It was The Gathering. The Gang was beginning to arrive in preparation for Tom's.



Now, I had a special interest this year, beyond the usual special interests, in seeing Tom. Many e-mails had been exchanged with various people regarding one of the subjects of my ongoing project, *The Anthem Series*. For those who have not been following the on-line posting of this work in progress, it is a complete work-up (dust jacket, bibliographic info, contents, synopsis, and critique) of the specialty publishers such as Arkham House, Fantasy Press, FPCI, Gnome Press, Shasta, and Advent.

Word had come to me that Tom Lesser had copies of work printed by one of the most illusive pioneers in the field, Hyman Kaner...work previously unknown to me.

Also mentioned as seen, but not by me, *Hot Swag*. Although the title makes it seem likely that it falls outside the topic of interest, i.e. science fiction.

*The Terror Catches Up*, 65 pages, pamphlet, 1/-

Well, I was just tickled pink to examine the copy, and even more so when Tom gave it to me. I just had to give him a copy of *WKSF*? For those keeping track, one of the very few, rare, illusive copies containing my autograph!

Have I mentioned what a great guy Tom is?

Content, I proceeded to coast through the rest of that night in a high of elation. Another Kaner found. What joy!



Early morning set-up at The Event - One of The Gang  
Tony Jacobs of Sideshow Books, 1132 Idaho Ave., LA, CA 90025. [www.vintagesleaze.com](http://www.vintagesleaze.com)

Early Sunday morning finds Pop and me ready to go. Breakfast and quick tour of the convention site, and once again we are too early. They are still setting up. We leave thinking we might be in the way. But I am already handing out flyers for The Merry Blacksmith Press, making sure I tell all that Pop is going to be

signing copies at high noon.

Thus commenced a difficult juggling act. In the past I had worn the hat of collector and fan. This time one more was added, that of entrepreneur.



While trying to look for goodies, and get my books signed by the various attending pros, I was also busy selling one of my own projects, *The Golden Age of Pulp*.

*The Golden Age of Pulp* is an MS Access database application. It is the nearly complete digital database of all pulp, digest, and magazine science fiction, fantasy, and horror, with pseudonyms and thumbnail graphics. Indexed are contributions to 1,300 different magazine titles, a total of 19,122 separate issues (with over 13,333 cover scans), with contributions by 33,861 writers (with over 1,171 pseudonyms), as well as contributions by over 3,016 cover artists. Indexed are 171,851 total entries and serial segments, containing 24, 295 poems, and 44,999 articles and columns.

The Golden Age of Pulp  
The definitive database!

As another feature there is a complete index to the Anthem Series, over 2,257 associated stories are linked to dust cover scans (224 dust jackets) from their first appearance in the specialty press of

the Golden Era (Arkham House, Fantasy Press, FPCI, Gnome Press, Prime Press, Shasta, and more).

The item is available directly from me: [tkempxsh@citlink.net](mailto:tkempxsh@citlink.net) It's a bargain at \$40.00, shipping included.

Time and again I was cautioned that the LAPB is a sleaze book convention, not science fiction, but I did all right moving my own product.

Help the Cause! Buy one!



Earl Kemp with his immortal flame, Ann Bannon.  
That's one of my book she's profusely autographing!

And then there was Ann Bannon, a personal favorite, signing my books. I was nearly overwhelmed later when we ended up chatting for nearly half an hour about her writing a specific period autobiography of her

life and times and writing it for me.

Ann was seated next to Barbara Hambly, another regular pro in attendance. Just as their hour of duty in the trenches was finishing, and I was maneuvering to reach Barbara, clutching one of her tomes in hand, I literally ran headlong into George Clayton Johnson.



Earl Kemp with pal, George Clayton Johnson. George was hawking his current bestseller, *Twilight Zone: Scripts & Stories*, 2009; Streamline Pictures.

[Available on Amazon.com for \\$21.99](#)

Now, I've known George for all my life. I've written about several of our fantastic encounters before. This one was just more icing on the cake.

As we smile at each other, he tears into me, which mystifies me at first. And then it dawns on me. I am wearing a sports coat. I look like my father. He thinks that is who I am.



We all got a big kick out of this typo.  
After all is said and done, Larry is the Number One draw of the event!

Confusion cleared up, we chat. I show him mine. *WKSF?* He shows me his. *The Twilight Zone*. We exchange signed copies. Another first. Second copy ever signed by me. I feel like I am knocking on Heaven's Gate.

As we are chatting, Barbara chimes in, giving me the opportunity to engage her in our signing fest, not only that, I fall instantly in love, she is backing up everything that I am telling George.



So, at last, the apprentice has become a master.

Gee, I become so overwhelmed after this that I nearly forget to take more photos.

But the shudder-bug (sic) still has some juice left. Note the sign for Larry Niven. Larry was number one on my list of must see, and the line so long I missed both Larry and his lifelong pal, Jerry Pournelle. Only major disappointment for me at this event. Not enough time.

The LAPB proper is really about the vendors, the dealers, the hucksters.

(Note: I wanted to include a list of all the vendors, but space constraints and editorial style did not allow for this addition.)

An unintentional treasure.  
One bookdealer's junk is a  
neo-collector's goodie.  
This one rang all the bells!  
Ember Book, EB925

First I want to introduce Ron Blum.

Ron Blum of Kayo Books, 814 Post St., San Francisco, CA 94109 [www.kayobooks.com](http://www.kayobooks.com)

Ron carries mostly high-end product. Great artwork. Overall best quality items. Ron's a real mensch too, willing to make that deal, and sweeten it.



A delighted Ron Blum having a very successful day.

At the end of the show, when everyone was standing around packing to leave, Ron handed me a dozen sleaze books.

"Here, kid, you look needy."

"Thanks mister," I answered nervously as I greedily took, with both of my grubby hands. "I've only got one

question,” I continued, “what are these?”

What else could a guy who doesn't know sleaze from porn say?



Lynn Monroe. Over his right shoulder is the finest display of sleaze ever!



Rose Idlet at Black Ace

Later Pop and I carefully went over each title, amusing ourselves while waiting for the after show blow-off. Most of the titles were elusive, but one rang all the big bells. How lucky can a guy get? And all for free. What would I get if I ever spent any money?

And then Pop introduced me to Rose Idlet, maven of Black Ace Books, 1658 Griffith Park Blvd., Los Angeles, California.



Fans at Work!  
Best photo of the event.  
Ann Bannon taking photo of Pat & Dick Lupoff.  
That's Mike Kurland cupped in her arms in the distance.

Next there was Lynn Munroe who had the best display in the entire show. I tried to take photos of it, but the resolution does not do justice to the quality of the books, a complete, immaculate set of 0008 Greenleaf

Classics. If you are interested write him at PO Box 1736, Orange, CA 92856.



Still trucking! June Moffatt, widow of the late and much lamented superfan, Len.  
SouthGate in '58!

There was James Van Hise. When I saw his display I did a double-take. For years I have been bidding on his items on eBay. Jim carries a cross-section of some of the more elusive science fiction and fantasy items. Well worth taking that second look, or write him for his catalog at 57754 Onaga Trail, Yucca Valley, CA 92284.

Best picture of the event was of Dick and Pat Lupoff with Ann Bannon. I tried several times to get Michael Kurland and his lovely wife in the same shot, but camera limitations prevented this.



Unknown fan, Karen Anderson, martinet, Peter S. Beagle

Dick, Pat and Mike are without a doubt the most enterprising pros/fans/collectors. They are regulars not only at the main event, but a real thrill at Tom's pre-show bash.

I always get a big kick out of seeing Pop and Dick huddled together planning their next great coup. The upcoming one is a reprint of the Dorrance publication of *Away From the Here and Now*, the collected works of Claire Winger Harris. This to be done by Surinam Press.

While wandering around the huckster tables, passing through the throngs, there are several notable celebrities, some even collecting.

There was Karen Anderson chatting with Peter S. Beagle.

There was June Moffatt. Can I, or should I say more?

Before leaving the hucksters, there is another notable mention.

As always there was Marty Massoglia, of Massoglia Books, 940 W. Grant Rd., Tucson, AZ 85705.

Marty is an old-time book dealer and has the most interesting stories.

Like there was the time someone brought him one of the 75 sets of Doc Smith's collected works by Fantasy Press. Unlike many dealers, Marty sent him to someone who could pay what they were worth instead of taking advantage.

The guy in the red-tie became the bane of all attending. This guy was hired to direct traffic. Instead he gave all martinetes such a bad name that they'd all prefer to be prima donnas rather than remain in the same class as this red-tied traffic cop.

But it was all there, sleaze, science fiction, and fantasy, those old-time and very comfortable partners. An amazing amount of pulps were available, at even better prices, which is one of the hidden secrets of this convention, the ability to find some real forgotten and hidden gems.

High noon was fast approaching, time for Earl to put on his dog-and-pony show.

Pop was primed and ready.

But first there was Tim Powers.

Tim was going to be there longer, but he was going to sit next to Pop and sign his books at the same time. So I got there early to scope out the seating arrangement.

The last time I had seen Tim was in 1988 at the late, much lamented, Change of Hobbit bookstore in Santa Monica. He was there at the time signing his *On Stranger Tides*. Of course, I took his photo (with the same camera as in 2011). I asked him to sign the 1988 photo, and my favorite book (*Dinner at Deviant's Palace*).



Tim Powers obliging me by signing my very raggedy, ratty copy of *Dinner at Deviant's Palace*. If you look very close (use a magnifying glass) you can see the photo from 1988 on the table. For those not in the know. Tim Powers book *On Stranger Tides* is the basis of the upcoming, soon-to-be-released Disney movie, starring Johnny Depp, "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides." Congratulations!

He was more than gracious.

Not only that, but during their hour together, he was cordial and keenly interested in Pop, asking questions and just generally chatting to beat the band. Quite remarkable.



A much younger Tim Powers.

Photo taken at A Change of Hobbit, Saturday, November 21, 1988 between 3-5 p.m. He is signing my copy of the recently released *On Stranger Tides*. If you look very close (don't complain, get out your magnifying glass) you can see a slight bump under his shirt. While signing my book (in 1988) Tim told me the tale of his recent adventure on the high-seas that included hunting a shark. The sharks tooth ended up on a chain under his shirt. I asked him (2011) if he still had it, as he was no longer wearing it. He replied that it is in an honored place resting with other such trophies.

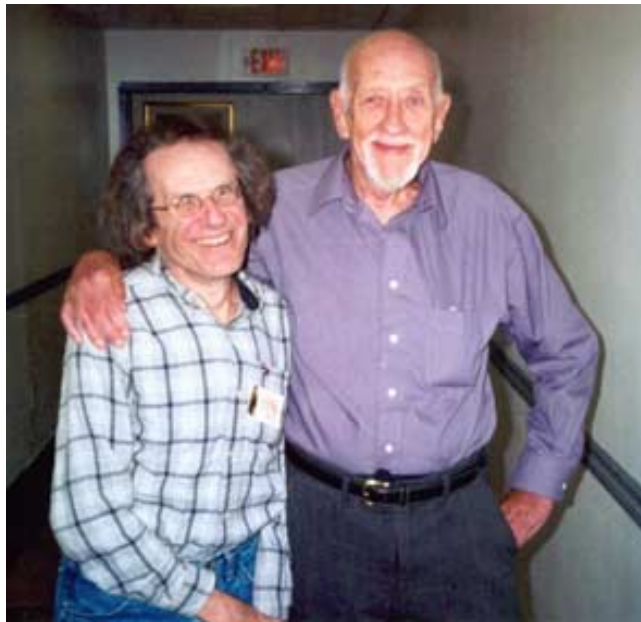


You can just see the back of the ubiquitous red-tie traffic cop, then there is Tim Powers counting out the big bucks as he purchases a copy of *WKSF?* and my database, *The Golden Age of Pulps*. Pop is ardently personalizing a copy for Tim.

Please note, Tim Powers bought not only a copy of *The Book*, *WKSF?*, and had Pop sign it to him, but also a copy of my database, *The Golden Age of Pulps*. With endorsements like this, who needs advertisement?

Later, after the event was winding down for the day, all three of us bumped into each other again in the hall. Pop and I had been chatting with Steve Shaw in the corridor. Steve is the son of Larry and Noreen Shaw. I was asking Steve if he had any photos of Noreen with Honey Graham, wife of famous golden age science fiction writer, Rog Phillips (my godfather). By coincidence earlier that week I had reread Dave Kyle's (Gnome Press publishing partner) article about these two sexy females in *Mimosa*.

Alas, Steve's brother Michael has all the family photos under lock and key.



Steven Shaw, son of science fiction editor Larry Shaw, and the notorious (according to Dave Kyle) Noreen. You can see by the look in Earl Kemp's eyes that he has just spotted Tim Powers trying to slink past.

It was at this point, hiding my disappointment (about the access to another set of photographs of Rog and Honey), that I eyed Tim Powers trying to slink past the three of us as we posed as Keepers of the Way. With a look of identification we stopped him dead in his tracks, just like a deer-in-the-headlights. This enabled me to remark to him on his most peculiar attribute, from my point of view. He was a collector. He had stacks of stuff barely contained under his arms. Treasures he had found in his afternoon of plundering booty.

He smiled, a tad chagrined at being found out.

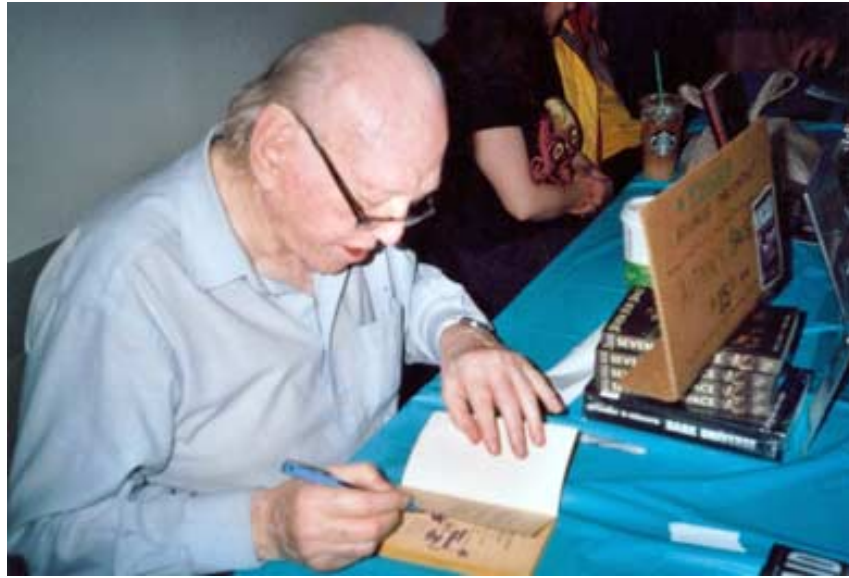
What is it about pros? Once they become one, they mostly stop being fans. It is always a delight to see one that remains a lifelong fan.

For this point I am reminded of a visit I made to see Frank M. Robinson at his house in San Francisco. I wasn't interested in his heaps of moldering pulps. I was interested in his decaying books, especially the set of personally autographed Shasta, of which *Sidewise in Time*, by Leinster, was in particular long, effusive, and touching.

Pros can be fans!

Thank you Tim for restoring my faith.

(Applause!)



The consummate fan/pro!  
Here's William F. Nolan signing yet another copy of *Logan's Run* for me.  
He is busy personalizing it drawing a cartoon by way of covering up a bookstore stamp.

There were two other writers of note that I just had to see. One, a perennial favorite, William F. Nolan. The other a new meeting for me, seeing Charles Nuetzel.



A chance photo. I just had a second to catch these three together. George had just taken a seat at the "Twilight Zone" table. George Clayton Johnson, Dennis Etchison, and Richard Christian Matheson

One just can not see George Clayton Johnson without seeing the other runner, William F. Nolan. At least

that's how it is in my book. I've gone out of my way to parade family members past the duo and have photos taken. It's just something I do.

Nuetzel was of a more personal interest. I transcribed his article, *Dad and I*, for Pop's ezine some time ago. It was an intriguing article because I could relate in so many ways to the father/son situations in the same career field.

Of similar interest and for many of the same reasons were Dennis Etchison, who is damned clever, and Richard Christian Matheson.

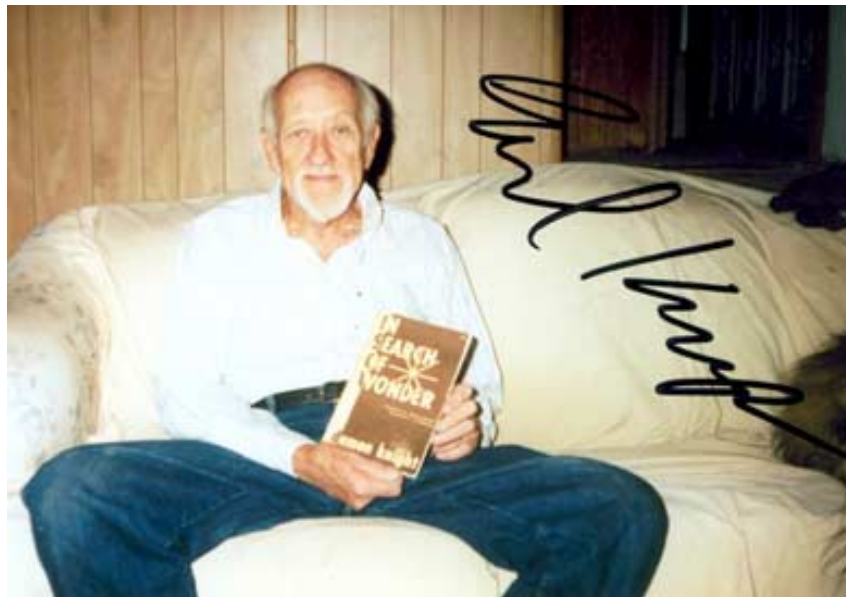
Some day I would love to hear more of Matheson's father/son stories. Like the Nuetzel's, there aren't many of us father/son teams.

In fact, when all was said and done, Pop and I concluded that we are the only father/son team in which both are currently active in science fiction.

High Noon came and went. The hour flashed by. Pop signing. Me hustling books, handing out flyers. We killed!

Success!

(Applause!)



We tried very hard to stage several photos of Pop with a copy of the new edition of *WKSF*? Alas, it was not to be. However, as chance would have it, I had just taken this one. That's Pop holding the rarest of all the Advent:Publishers titles, the "secret" limited run of *In Search of Wonder*.  
And that's how it al began!

The rest of the show raced past at breakneck speed. There was a tasty lunch, but exhaustion, after all the build-up and excitement, kicked in. I remember wandering around the show, just looking at every exciting thing.

Too exhausted to chat. So exhausted I forgot to take any more photos. And it was over.

Pop was so done in that we skipped the after-show dinner, which was a first. The after-show dinner and get-together are the most sought after highlights of the event. This year excitement, and fatigue, took hold, and both of these events were missed.

Too bad.

Oh well.

We Killed in LAPB!

(One Last Hurrah!)

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Peculiar travel suggestions are dancing lessons from God.  
—Kurt Vonnegut

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# Rediscovering Rousseau

by Earl Kemp

I'm frequently the last to know. Most of the time I'm too busy doing my own thing to even notice that other people are also doing theirs. Morgan Wallace is one of them. Even though, as Spectre Library, he has been publishing books for some time, I have only recently discovered him. Actually he discovered me.

Apparently Morgan is a specialist and, for now at least, his focus is on Victor Rousseau Emanuel, and Morgan has resurrected three books by that early days early pulp fiction writer. I suspect he has more of them in the works.

According to Wikipedia, Emanuel wrote his fiction under the pseudonyms of Victor Rousseau and H.M. Egbert. When he wasn't writing, he was a reporter for the *New York World* and an editor of *Harper's Weekly*. As a writer, Rousseau worked in several popular fiction genres of his day, the first half of the 20th Century, including historical, frontier stories, western, romance, crime fiction, and...especially...science fiction and fantasy. He also wrote one screenplay, based on his novel *The Devil's Tower*, and several of his stories were adapted into Western films.



Morgan Wallace under the pier.

Rousseau also wrote several of the "Jim Anthony, Super Detective" novels, imitating the popular character of Doc Savage.

Let's look at some of the Spectre Library books, shall we?



*The Tracer of Egos* is a collection of short stories all involved with the same subject, reincarnation. Rousseau examines his thesis from a number of different directions, but all of them leading to the same conclusion: there is no escaping the repeating lives that everyone must endure. Regardless of how he approaches the topic in each story, the inevitable sameness reoccurs every time, eventually, to every one.

A second, and much more interesting novel is *The Devil Chair*. This, while composed of a number of different pieces, is still a complete novel. It is an inexcusable revenge novel. Inexcusable because it uses the viewpoint of a man wronged, John Haynes, who sets out to correct things as he sees them...by murdering every person the protagonist feels was somehow responsible for his personal downfall.

Don't be mistaken, it is not a routine crime novel, of punishment and redemption...it is simply a trip through the madman's mind striking back at those persons he hates the most...one after the other...serial killing before there was such a thing.

In *The Devil Chair*, the protagonist, while in prison for things he didn't do, manages to perfect a miracle gyroscope that, when attached to any sort of vehicle, makes it move faster than most other motor-driven vehicles could possibly move. In this case, our hero attaches that gyroscope to a wheel chair and takes off in rapid pursuit of his targeted prey. Nothing, no one can catch him when he's running at top speed.

Ultimately, the protagonist's fate is, ironically, right up my ezine partner's most obsessive alley. *Cable!* Specifically the undersea cable connecting the US with Europe. It comes about this way:

With the authorities trying to capture Haynes grasping closely at his heels, he devises yet another magical invention, a metal cocoon-like arrangement that can not only surround and enclose him, but the devil chair as well. Then, just at the last minute before the gendarmes reach him, he launches himself, the chair, and the surrounding casing into the Atlantic and onto the cable.

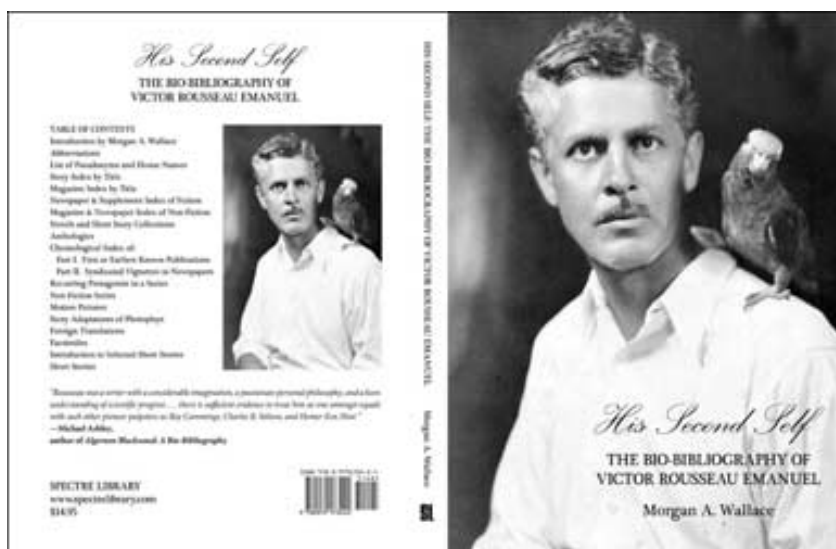
Exactly as Haynes had planned, the gyroscope attaches itself to the cable and man, chair, and reinforced metal cocoon zoom off into the murky depths at an incredible rate of speed.

It would not be fair to the reader for me to give away the novel's conclusion. I'll leave discovering that up to you.

I should mention that this volume has an Introduction by the ever popular and extremely authoritative Mike Ashley, who can do no wrong.

#

Both of these books are very professionally produced and printed on a superior grade of book paper and, most miraculous of all, each sports something almost unseen in far too many years, a genuine, honest to Guttenberg cloth binding. How unique indeed.



And, reading them was a special thrill for a number of other reasons. As an example, throughout both of these books the characters go around ejaculating all over the place. This isn't the kind of ejaculation that men most like, but the kind that once upon a time was commonplace in antique fiction...that was replaced, in later years, by the word "said." When I was a simple, hotly pursued pornographer, target of every illegal law-enforcement group up to and including the dog-catcher and the mailman, there was an inviolate list of words that we were specifically forbidden to use in any context in any of our books, and ejaculated was on that list. Every even remotely sex-related word was forbidden...the first job of all our editors was to make sure that there was not even one single offensive word in any of our pristinely clean publications. From the sublime to the ridiculous...thanks to Uncle Sam.

Plus reading Rousseau provides the added thrill of revisiting simple times of simple, uncomplicated living.

Far too many of us began our science fiction careers reading stuff just like Rousseau's output, with all the antiqueness intact, and this revisitation allows us a glimpse into our own long-forgotten pasts.

We all need to go home again now and then, even if Wolfe said that was impossible.

#

The third of the Spectre Library's Rousseau books is the pride of the litter: *His Second Self (the bibliography of Victor Rousseau Emanuel)*, meticulously written and compiled by Morgan Wallace himself. This, the third Spectre Library Rousseau title, is huge. Besides the biography it contains a comprehensive bibliography of all of Rousseau's writings. It is a must have for period science fiction collecting completists.

Surely Morgan Wallace is doing sterling service for SF collectors. Do yourself a favor and relive things you thought you would never forget the first time you encountered them but nevertheless did.

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The big trouble with dumb bastards is that they are too dumb to believe there is such a thing as being smart.  
—Kurt Vonnegut, *Sirens of Titan*

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# Frankie goes to London

Artwork by Harry Bell

by Roy Kettle



As I sat down I was suddenly hit by the loudest sound I'd heard in a theatre since my son caught his finger in a seat. To the left of me, in the aisle, a monk had crept in and pulled the rope hanging from a large bell near the ceiling. The monk left. My nerves were jangling a few minutes before the play was due to start and they rarely stopped once it got going. It certainly got the audience buzzing.

Kathleen and I were in the Olivier Theatre, the largest of the three stages of the National Theatre in London, to see *Frankenstein* directed by the film-maker Danny Boyle. You need a special play for it to work in the Olivier's huge amphitheatre and we had been anticipating this one for some time. And we were both fans of Boyle's film work as was our young nephew Eoin who accompanied us—he'll be starting a film studies course at York University later this year.

After the initial surprise of the bell, which was rung again at times during the performance, we looked out at the stage. On it was a large vertical disc of some barely translucent material the colour of parchment. We waited for the play to begin and, probably, I thought, for Victor Frankenstein to walk onto the stage. But what happened was that the creature—who had obviously been lying behind the membrane all the time—gradually began to emerge through the middle of it, struggling out and finally flopping naked onto the floor. As this happened, an enormous dagger of light-bulbs in the roof flashed, so many that it pumped heat down on those of us sitting directly below. The heat/light continued bursting out over us as the creature writhed and jerked on the stage, to the sound of a huge booming heart, gradually finding some power over his limbs and eventually developing a form of normal human movement. His birth and the first stage of his life complete, he staggered off.



Left: Miller as Frankenstein and Cumberbatch as the creature.

Right: Johnny Lee Miller with Frankenstein's wife.

This was a *tour de force* by Jonny Lee Miller, a demonstration of terrific, sometimes graceful athleticism that continued throughout the play. And a brave performance too as acting naked in front of a large audience—well, any audience—must be difficult. Miller played the creature but Boyle's interesting idea was to alternate that casting with Benedict Cumberbatch, the evening's Frankenstein. It was difficult envisaging them swapping roles but apparently the taller and thinner Cumberbatch was also excellent as the creature

though, almost inevitably if you know the sort of characters he has played on TV, was wonderful as Victor.



The opening that had focussed on the creature rather set the emphasis for the play. This was *Frankenstein* told from the creature's point of view. Victor didn't appear until some while in and there was much less time spent on him and his life than in the novel. The play, while being pretty faithful to the book in overall plot, individual scenes, and a lot of dialogue, obviously had to be pared down a great deal, though having the creature at its heart was clearly a decision of the writer and director rather than simply the result of translation from one medium to another. And it worked brilliantly. We felt enormous sympathy for the creature, while recognising him as an (unintended and unwanted) monster. The sympathy felt for Victor, as in the book, is much less—he brings about his own downfall through arrogance and single-mindedness, though he is no less driven by those forces beyond his control than is the

creature by his.

Boyle uses the stage extremely well, though perhaps the great visual set-pieces are a product of his time making films. At one point, the back of the stage opens and a train comes out covered in steam and steampunks simply to show that the time of industrialised science has arrived and act as an ominous sign of its power. Huge sets spiralled up out of the floor to become, for example, the inside of Victor's laboratory or sank back into the ground to leave a giant pit.

On the other hand, the de Lacey cottage where the creature eventually takes refuge is a simple set with the walls transparent so we can see the people inside as we watch the creature watching them. His amazing intellectual progress is shown well and convincingly with de Lacey literally blind to his flaws, so when his son and his wife reappear to find the creature there, it's a shock to find them so horrified that they drive the creature into burning the cottage down.



Another powerful scene is Victor in a makeshift laboratory in Scotland giving in to the creature's desire for a mate (which had led to him hunting down his creator). Victor creates a woman (sensitive readers of *eI*, if there are any, will be pleased to know she was wearing flesh-coloured tights) but, realising what this might mean if they breed, he destroys her to desperate cries from his first creation and threats of vengeance that

he believes are aimed at him.

But they are aimed at his wife who, in a genuinely shocking scene, the creature rapes and kills. Another bit of cinema by Boyle, it seemed to me, was to have had the creature in Elizabeth's bed all the time, deceiving not just her but the audience who reacted as one as he leapt out.

The play ends with the creature capering into the Arctic wastes, taunting Frankenstein who lumbers after him, ill and weak, barely able to tug a sledge, he doomed to pursue uselessly and both (probably) doomed to die. The creature will get further revenge and Victor (an ironic name if ever there was one) still hopes to ensure that the creature dies too. The creature's last words are "He lives for my destruction. I live to lead him on." The bell tolls again.

On the way out, I resisted the temptation to ring the bell. But it was close.

It's a great play—Boyle went up another notch in Eoin's estimation—a lot of which is in Boyle's production perhaps rather than just the writing—from a book which has been filmed a great deal but never like this and never better than this. It was certainly the most spectacular play I've ever seen. And with an excellent score from Underworld. The National Theatre has been showing a filmed version of it and if it appears near you, take the opportunity to see it.



Roy Kettle bragging about size again. Photo by Earl Kemp, Corflu Cobalt, Winchester, March 2010.

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You stand outside a society and a culture and realize that it is an invention and that you can improve it. Well, I like the American culture, such as it is, but let's get rid of the fucking guns.

—Kurt Vonnegut

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# Fifty Years Away

by Robert Speray

In 1961, a 22-year-old Lawrence Block sat in front of a typewriter in his room and let his unconscious imagine up another story to fuel the sexual interest of the reader, while avoiding any coarse and vulgar language. The story was typed out. The manuscript was sent along through the Scott Meredith agency and into the Hamling Organization as an anonymous manuscript, turning into *\$20 Lust* as by Andrew Shaw. It was the 46th book manufactured at the Porn Factory. The 9th book written by Block in his new professional gig as an anonymous writer of sex novels.



In that same month in 1961, a 26-year-old Robert Silverberg sat in front of his typewriter, with a clear story ending in mind, and blank paper in the typewriter. For six days, he typed, finding a way to move couples in and out of situations, and in and out of bed, until they reached the end, and another story was done. He sent that manuscript into the Hamling Porn Factory, where it turned into *Convention Girl* as by Don Elliott. It was the 47th book for Hamling's company. The 15th book Silverberg had written for them.

Earl, it was a great evening. I had a wonderful time. That sort of shared reminiscence unlocks doors in the memory; I thought of things I'd forgotten years ago. And the audience seemed inclined to pay rapt attention as long as we were willing to go on. Sold a ton of books, too, which made everybody happy, not least of all M. Hachette.

Earl is a legend in the worlds of science fiction and midcentury paperback erotica, and gets out an indispensable ezine.

—Lawrence Block (email)

It was the second year in the Hamling adult book business and it was going strong. The Porn Factory was publishing and distributing four books a month, twelve months a year. Within a year, title releases would double. The demand was high and going up.

No one had seen anything like the books before. The reading audience was ready for well written sex stories with modern prose and recognizable descriptions of their American life. They enjoyed having their sexual imagination stirred up. They even wrote to the publisher suggesting specific types of sex scenes they'd like to see written, to be read and enjoyed.

These two young kids were getting a wonderful start in their careers. They learned to write quickly in one draft. They were paid a fortune, at the today equivalent of \$15,000 to \$20,000 per manuscript, and their books were distributed widely and enjoyed by tens of thousands.

It was a success story all around.

After a few years, both guys tired of the job. They moved on to other work and other genres. The accumulated hours of typing those stories did not ruin their talent. It could be said their later success was helped by those years of practicing their craft while getting paid well and enjoying the process.

The only thing they did not get was fame. Their name was never a byline. They remained unknown to every one except those at the Scott Meredith agency. Staff in the Hamling Organization could recognize a manuscript format and sometimes a writing style as another from "that" guy, but they did not know who the actual writers were.

Both Block and Silverberg are now at periods in their grand masters careers where they can revisit their past and have those early books be seen by a new public, as examples of a writer's beginning work.

Both writers are embracing the anonymous books from their early days, identifying them, acknowledging them, allowing them to be reprinted and publicized for fans to enjoy. Their history is getting known in mainstream markets and their early books are selling again.

Robert Silverberg has written a new introduction to the Stark House double novel reprint of Nightstand Books *Gang Girl* and *Sex Bum*. He titles it *Those Good Old Soft Core Days*. It is an informative essay on how he worked, and about the books he wrote during that time. The reprint includes a full listing of all the sex novels he wrote anonymously.

Lawrence Block has reprinted *\$20 Lust* under its original manuscript title, *Cinderella Sims*. Not only is it published in a standard book format, it's also available in a Kindle edition.

This same process is happening for another prolific and popular writer from the Greenleaf bullpen—Victor Banis. Many of his early Porn Factory novels are being reprinted in both book and ebook formats. He is being re-discovered and recognized for his anonymous work.

A swell evening indeed, We do a good double act. And thank M. Hachette for picking up the dinner tab.

—Robert Silverberg (email)

Readers of *eI* have read plenty of episodes in the history of the Porn Factory that Earl Kemp has told, starting with detailed events of the very early years in the second issue of *eI*. Vol. 1 No. 2; "Have Typewriter; Will Whore For Food." <http://efanzines.com/EK/eI2/index.htm> Now we are hearing about that same period, from the memories of the authors who were writing the stories.

In 1961, the Porn Factory published books #46 and #47, written anonymously and acquired through an intermediary agency. They were shipped together from the printer to the newsstand where they were shelved together waiting to be scooped up by a waiting audience. Two good writers working the same game had their books published at the same time ending up on the same shelf.

Fifty years later, on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, those same two writers shared a stage for an evening, and talked about writing those books.



Lawrence Block and Robert Silverberg  
Belmont, CA library

Lawrence Block described the event on his May schedule this way, "This event is something special: a joint program with Science Fiction Grand Master and multiple award-winner Robert Silverberg. Bob and I have had similar careers in our separate genres, and boast (if that's the word) a shared past in the field of 1950s paperback original erotica. We'll interview each other on stage, sharing stories of the paths we've taken from Then all the way to Now."

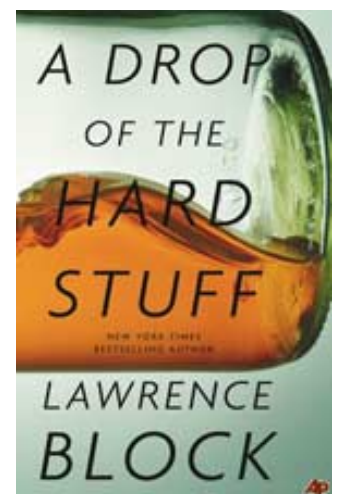
It happened at the Belmont California Library, while Lawrence Block was on a book signing tour for his new Scudder book, *A Drop of the Hard Stuff*. It was organized by a local mystery specialty store, and expanded to include Robert Silverberg in the event, since he lived in the area.

It was an inspired plan, to have these guys sit on stage together and reminisce about their days writing what Silverberg says were called "sex novels" and what Block now calls "mid-20th Century Erotica." The events of that time are hidden by the anonymous nature of the work, and the intentional efforts at the time to hide what was happening.

It's getting safer to talk about it now, fifty years later. That history and the contribution of these writers is becoming accessible, known, understood, and appreciated. Their story is known only by them, so it is moments like this when they tell what happened that it becomes real.

The framework for the evening was perfect. Two guys taking turns talking a bit, telling stories, playing off each other's comments to describe the events of that time.

Later, questions from the audience were answered by each, with some questions leading into another set of

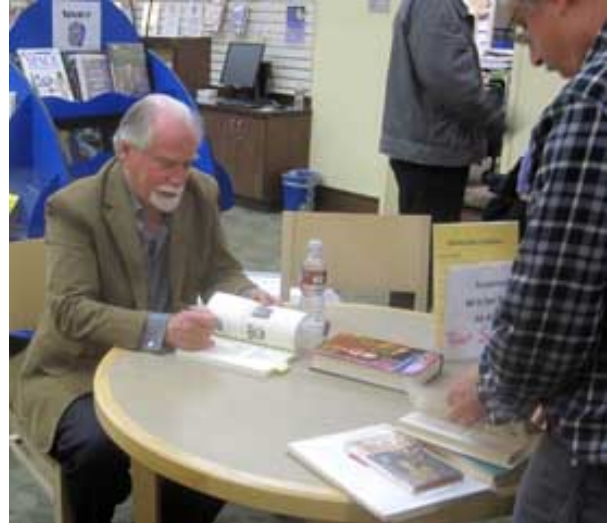


exchanges.

These guys did it with great style, excellent timing, and just the right tone and charm to underscore the reason they have won so many awards for their writing. They are top-notch story tellers, even when doing it live.



Block & Silverberg  
Belmont CA library



Robert Silverberg  
Signing Books

Some stories were drawn from ones they've told before but there were plenty of new ones, and lots of improvising on the older ones. The interaction was smooth and tight, with both showing their quick wit and sense of humor. Their voices were clear, personal, and engaging.

After the presentation part of the evening, both set up at tables to meet with fans face-to-face who waited in line to have a personal moment while getting their books signed.

Ron Blum of Kayo Books in San Francisco was in the audience with his digital camera. On a whim he used it in video-mode to film various sections of the evening, managing to capture about 40 minutes of the 90 minute event. That video footage is now posted to YouTube with each of five sections available to watch at your leisure.

Here are the five sections in time line order, although there may be gaps of time between them.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mF3MNsmC9g>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaBO03WF9UQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJHVqynuB9A>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha8JQtu8gs0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qh8F6-SlcIQ>

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Following are some transcriptions of moments from the evening. It is based on sparse notes and memory, and does not capture the voice, warmth, and humor, or all the details of the conversations. Watch the YouTube videos for the full show for the sections that were recorded.

Encourage both authors to have another evening together in your area, and stop by for an entertaining and informative time.

This is not the first time that Lawrence Block and Robert Silverberg did a double act together. See [e/14, June 2004](#) where you will find much about and by both of them. This includes fiction from both: "Lie Back and Enjoy it," by Lawrence Block and "I'll be Glad When You're Dead," by Robert Silverberg. And, it is important to note that Block furnished the copy for both of those stories.

—Earl Kemp

#

**RS:** The rules of the client did not allow any four-letter words or graphic descriptions of sexual activity. Phrases such as "do it" were used instead. But even that became too much. A memo came down from Hamling saying that from now on, "do it" was out.

Now it was "do that". That kind of guideline didn't make any sense. I got that memo and ignored it. I added more "do its" to my next story. The edict was dropped.

The FBI came to visit me one time. It was related to a court case down in Houston. I don't know how they got my name. I prepared for the visit. I had a little stack of these children's books in the living room, like *The History of Physics*. When they asked if I was a writer I showed them the books and they took a look at them. Then they asked if I had ever worked for Reed Enterprises, the name of the distributing company used by the Hamling outfit.

Since all my checks had come from Blake Pharmaceuticals and Reed Enterprises was a new name to me, I could truthfully say that I had never worked for that company. They puttered around a bit more, then left. I never heard from them again.

[Silverberg wrote of this FBI interview in "This is my FBI Story", [e/14, October 2002](#), in which he said that his entire collection of Nightstand books was upstairs in his library on blatant display while they were inside his house.]

**RS:** I started at \$1,000 a manuscript and worked up to \$1,200 a manuscript fairly soon. A thousand dollars in those days was equivalent to ten or fifteen thousand dollars in today's purchasing power.

**LB:** From the start, I got \$1,200 a manuscript. My checks came from the Scott Meredith company.

**RS:** My checks were directly from the Hamling's front company Blake Pharmaceuticals.

**LB:** Those books were sold for the prevention of disease only.

**RS:** I wrote 150 of those books. It took six days for each one. 196 pages per book. My writing pace was 36 pages a day. This was on a typewriter. My place was noisy as I worked. I would type one draft and it was

done.

[Note: It has been reported many times by Earl Kemp that the best, cleanest, and most error-free manuscripts he has ever seen were the ones hand typed in one draft by Robert Silverberg.]

**RS:** It was really good money. I made enough to buy the La Guardia mansion in New York City.

**LB:** I could only do two a month. It got to the point where I couldn't do that, so I hired a ghost writer, Bill Coons. He'd write one book a month and it would be submitted under my name and I'd get a few hundred dollars off the top. I was a capitalist swine.

**RS:** You were an entrepreneur.

**LB:** An Entrepreneur of Mid 20th Century Erotica. That's better. I do prefer that.

One reason that I've tended to disown the books in recent years, until I decided to hell with it, was that I could handle the idea of having to be associated with the books that I wrote, but being tarred with the brush of books that I hadn't written, I really didn't want.

At one point I wrote a couple of chapters of a book and didn't like it and was sick of it. I suggested to Bill that we collaborate on it. He could finish it up and we'd submit it and split some extra money that month. So I brought the stuff to him and he put it on the shelf while we went out for a drink. His wife found the manuscript and read it while we were out. When he came back she told him, she said (and this is the portion I had told him was really lousy, that I couldn't stand and maybe he could make something out of it), "I think you're really getting better. This is far and away the best thing you've ever written."



**RS:** One time and one time only I had a friend do a manuscript that I submitted. But I forgot which one it was. Later, I pulled one of the books off the shelf to read, and realized that it was the one. I've never told anyone which it is.

**LB:** On last Friday in Orange, at a book signing at Book Carnival, Lynn Munroe showed me a copy of a *Dapper* magazine having a short story with my byline that had not been published in a collection yet. It had my name as the writer, but I've never heard of the magazine and never received payment from the magazine. I did not recognize it. He gave me an extra copy, which I read back in the hotel that night. It was mine. There was a twist at the end that rang a muted bell. It may be that it was a story submitted to Scott Meredith, just before I broke off using them. They may have placed the story, been paid, but did not pay me.

**RS:** Everything that was written 50 years ago is not going to be remembered. Hard Case Crime publishers are looking for good material to reprint. I have copies of all my sex novels. They look nice spread out on several shelves in one of my bookcases. I've been reading through them, looking for material for reprinting. It's been a pleasure, discovering a good story, with no memory of writing it, and seeing some twists that are new to me.

**Q:** When did the two of you first meet?

**LB:** It was quite recent. It was three or four years, something like that.

**RS:** He's getting old. Actually we met in the '60s at a science fiction party. He doesn't remember it. You and Westlake came to the Hydra Club somewhere in Manhattan.

**LB:** It must have been someone else. I never went to the Hydra Club.

**RS:** I remember you and Westlake walking in. You both looked so young.

A few years ago I was visiting in New York and I called you up and said, "Let's have dinner" and we did.

**LB:** We became acquainted through a friend by email and have been in touch since.

**RS:** Yeah, we do throw each other market tips, at this late date. Have you heard, this one is buying rights to the old crap that we wrote?

**Q:** Have you guys collaborated together?

**RS:** I'm not a collaborator at heart. I have done a little.

**LB:** I did a couple very early on with Donald Westlake. And those have recently been re-issued. There were three novels we did. And that was some of the most fun I've had writing. Because we didn't discuss the book at all. One of us would write a chapter and give it to the other. We just passed it back and forth. I killed off his viewpoint character.

He did something equally unpleasant to mine. The book went to the end. The form was so forgiving, like any mid century erotica.

It was a wonderfully forgiving form as long as the story moved along and every once in a while someone would get laid. That was all that was really required.

**RS:** At the very beginning of my career I had a collaborator. An alcoholic science fiction writer named Randy Garret. He was very old. He was eight years older than I was. He could never get any work done because he was drunk. It worked because he'd do some bit of writing before he got too drunk. He fell asleep early every night. I'd work on the manuscript late into the night and put it down. When I'd wake up late the next day, he'd have been up early, adding to it before he got to drinking. Between us, we did quite a few magazine stories that were collected recently into the book *A Little Intelligence*.

**LB:** Randy is the only guy I knew who would drink bar whiskey by choice. He solved the problem of Election Day. Don't know if they do it anymore but on election day all the bars in New York City would shut down. On election day Randy would head over to the UN building and drink in their bar. Randy had a tremendous wit, a quick mind, and loved puns. One time we were visiting a church talking to the priest and Randy was going to tell a dirty joke but wasn't sure it was proper to do it in front of a priest.

He asked the priest if was okay for him to listen to a dirty joke, and the priest said sure, even if it didn't appeal to him, he could always use it as fodder for his weekly sermon.

Randy immediately had a response. He said, "It's a wise canon that knows its own fodder."

**RS:** Randy was short, round, and a bit bald. He looked a lot like Isaac Asimov. One time the two of them happened to be in the same elevator at a Science Fiction event and Harlan Ellison glanced in and saw them there and commented, "Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee". Randy said, "I'm Dee".

**LB:** The Bernie Rhodenbarr Burglar stories appear to be intricately plotted, but there are times when writing one and the story will get toward the end and Bernie is saying, "I suppose you're wondering why I've summoned you all here," and I'm wondering too.

**RS:** Now that's the sign of a real pro— to make it APPEAR well plotted.

**Q:** What do you consider your best work?

**RS:** *Die Inside* is one I recommend.

**LB:** The Scudder series and *Small Town*.

**Q:** Do you plot or outline before you write?

**LB:** I like to have something of the story in mind before sitting down, besides the opening. But the opening's enough. If I write that and it comes to life, and that's the book I'm meant to be writing then something will occur to me and it'll continue, and it'll be fine. I don't outline. I find that all it does is tell the unconscious, "I already know what I'm doing here, I don't need any help from you." So I'd rather not do that.

**RS:** I used to do fairly elaborate outlines. One so elaborate that it has been published and republished as an object in itself. As time went along, my outlines got shorter and shorter. If I have the beginning and the end, I think the middle will take care of itself.

I've been doing this for forty or fifty years. But I do need to know the end. I can't build a bridge without knowing which shore I'm heading for.

**Q:** What do you read for enjoyment?

**RS:** Not Science Fiction writers. Graham Greene. Charles Dickens. I read very little contemporary fiction because I don't like the contemporary world very much. I'm going on a trip next week and am taking a novel by Anthony Trollope with me to read. That's who I read for pleasure. And I read *him* for pleasure sometimes (nodding toward **LB**).

**LB:** I get asked this a lot and have trouble answering so that I don't lose friends in the process. I can say that in the past year, the most enjoyable book has been *The Informant*, by Thomas Perry.

**Q:** How do you feel about ebooks?

**LB:** I'm a big fan. I must be. I've just recently arranged for the e publication of 45 out-of-print books of mine, and for the publication as e-originals of two new books for writers which represent previously uncollected columns of mine now gathered in ebook form. I think one effect of it is that it allows one's backlist to be available forever. And gives the reading public access to books that wouldn't be available

otherwise, and especially wouldn't be available otherwise as publishers stop printing backlist titles. I'm happy to see ebooks.

**RS:** Your question can be taken in several different ways. I'm with Larry. I think they're wonderful for writers. I don't have a Kindle. I don't have any use for ebooks myself. I like turning pages. I like putting a bookmark in. But I'm an old guy.

**LB:** You can put a bookmark in.

**RS:** Yeah, you can, but... You can't turn the page the same way.

**LB:** Faster.

**Audience:** The pages don't stick together like they do on books.

**LB:** No they don't, and God only knows they did on our early work.

[Aside to the audience] You throw it over the plate belt high, you can't expect anything else.

**RS:** I don't want to read books electronically. But I live in the 21st century. I'm a professional writer in the 21st century. I think this is a marvelous development for those of us who want our audiences to continue being our audiences.

**LB:** I remember Don Westlake when Hard Case crime was reprinting his books. A bookseller/publisher asked Don, "Why are you doing this. There isn't enough money to matter. Why do you bother?" Don's line was, "The difference between being in print and out of print is the difference between being alive and being dead." So I would just as soon have the work in print.

**RS:** I'd just as soon be alive.

**Q:** Normally only one author does a book signing. Why is it two tonight?

**RS:** It's not a tag-team type kind of thing. I don't much like doing signings and rarely bother doing them.

But Larry said, "I'm going to be in your neighborhood. Why don't you come out and join me. I said "Great idea. Let's have dinner and we'll do the signing" and that's why I'm here.

**LB:** We figured it would be fun. So far it has been.

**RS:** But we don't go around the country doing this.

**Q:** Do you edit your manuscripts?

**RS:** I do one draft. I used a typewriter for most of my career. Revisions meant that the entire page would need to be retyped. At age 32, I started to do some revisions. By 1982 computers were around, and it became easier to edit manuscripts. It's intuitive to know when to stop editing.

**LB:** I do one draft. Often, newly published writers will ask me for advice. I tell them don't expect much.

**Q:** Why did you become a professional writer?

**LB:** It is something that I'm good at. It's my *métier*. I refer back to a quote from Gloria Steinem on the three things that are the test of a *métier*:

1. When I'm doing it, I don't feel like I should be doing something else instead.
2. It produces a sense of accomplishment, and sometimes pride.
3. And it's frightening.

**RS:** I'm really good at it. You should do something you're good at. Early in my life I was on a subway watching the crowds of people going off to work in some building somewhere, dressed up in suits. I decided I did not want to do that. Writing has allowed me to work at home. Plus, it's fun.

**Special thanks to** Ron Blum (Kayo Books, San Francisco) for the video and to Brett Pouliot, Art Scott, and Robert Speray for sharing their photography of this event with *eI*. Nightstand cover scans courtesy Bruce Brenner Collection.

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## Sidebar

by Lawrence Block

Earl, I promised you a sidebar on the Belmont Library event, but it's hard to guess what to write that you won't already have.

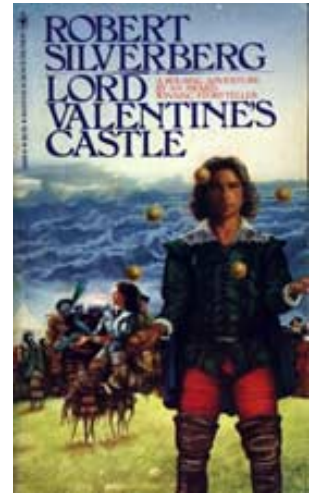
I had a wonderful time. Ed Kaufman of *M is for Mystery* in San Mateo sponsored the event. He's a great fellow, retired from the practice of law to open a mystery bookstore, and brought to it good business sense and a true collector's passion, two attributes that don't always go hand in hand. We knew the crowd would be more than his store could handle, and he thus booked the library for the occasion.



Photo by Art Scott.

Bob and Karen Silverberg and I met for dinner at a good Italian restaurant a couple of blocks away, and were accompanied by my nephew, Brett Pouliot, a Silverbob fan of long standing. (*Lord Valentine's Castle* was the first book he got wholly lost in as a lad, and he brought his copy along to get signed.) Brett, it should be noted, is my son-in-law, which I offer as further evidence of his good taste and solid judgment.

Bob and I met four years ago after getting acquainted through email. He remembers our having met back in the day, at a party of the Hydra Club, when I was accompanied by Don Westlake. I was often in Westlake's company, but I was never at the Hydra Club, with or without him. Never mind. One of us is probably correct. One at the most.



The other night we got to reminiscing at dinner, and when the meal was over we moved to the library and essentially continued the dinner table conversation. We talked about the old days, predictably enough, and about people we'd known along the way—Scott Meredith (bless his heart, as my southern kinfolks would say) and Larry Janifer, Randy Garrett, and, oh, I forget who all else. We took questions, and got some lively ones. I could have gone on for another couple of hours, windbag that I am, and the audience seemed inclined to go on taking it all in, but finally we got down to the happy business of signing books, and signed a ton of them.

A great evening.

A few days earlier, in Orange, Lynn Munroe brought me a copy of a story I couldn't remember ever having written. (But I looked it over later, and can recognize it as my work, and now do remember aspects of it.) I know I was never advised of the sale (to *Dapper* in 1967, a magazine I never sold to before or since). I know I was never paid for the story. My guess is I wrote the story in 1962-3 and sent it to Scott, that it was submitted to *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, that it came back and was sent around to one market after another, and that it finally sold to *Dapper* a few years after Scott and I had parted company.



Photo by Brett Pouliot

I wonder if there are any other stories like that lurking out there. Title of this one's "Part of the Job," by Lawrence Block. It's not O. Henry Award material, but it's not awful; I'd have included it in *One Night Stands & Lost Weekends* if I'd known it existed. Maybe I'll publish it somewhere. . .

Be well, Earl. My best to you and all your loyal readers.

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I couldn't survive my own pessimism if I didn't have some kind of sunny little dream.  
—Kurt Vonnegut

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**“Contemplation”** by Ditmar [Martin James Ditmar Jensen]