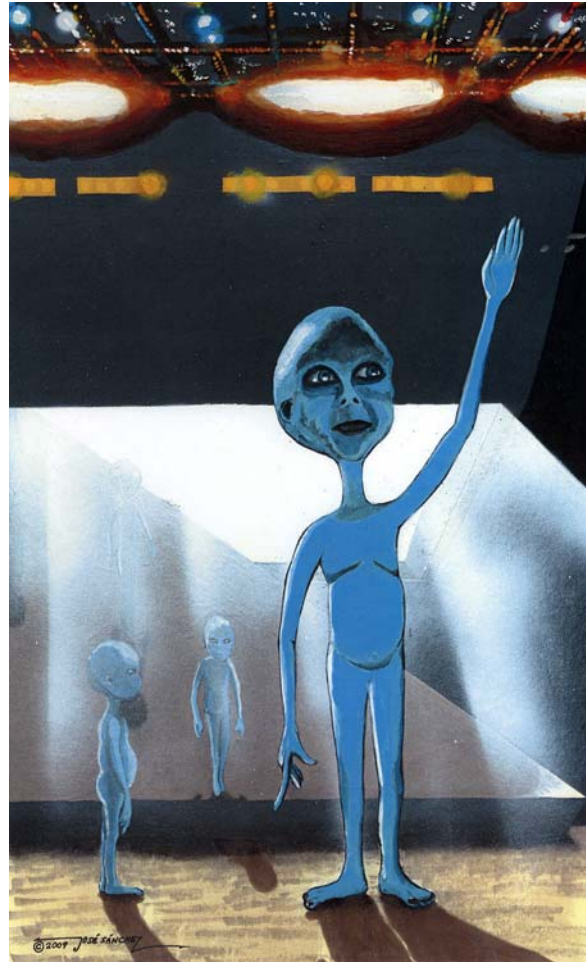


# Visions of Paradise

## #155



# Visions of Paradise

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### Contents

Out of the Depths .....	page 3
<i>The Teaching Company</i>	
It's True-It's All My Fault! .....	page 4
<i>article by Taral Wayne</i>	
The Passing Scene.....	page 7
<i>July 2010</i>	
Wondrous Stories .....	page 10
<i>Cauldron ... In the Company of Others</i>	
Halcyon Days .....	page 11
<i>Gregg Trend ... Greg Benford ... Lloyd Penney</i> <i>Rich Dengrove ... Robert Kennedy</i>	
On the Lighter Side.....	page 15
<i>Jokes by Lloyd Penney</i>	

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*Artwork*

José Sánchez .... cover

Steve Stiles ..... page 3

Taral Wayne ..... page 4

Brad Foster ..... page 7

## Out of the Depths

While reading fiction is my first love, I do enjoy nonfiction too, although I find less time to squeeze it into my reading schedule (although hopefully that will improve now that *school's out forever*, to paraphrase Alice Cooper ())

While I tend to avoid audiobooks for fiction, because I enjoy reading the book myself, I am less picky about nonfiction. Thus I have joined *The Teaching Company* which sells lecture series by college professors. There are so many fascinating lecture series in various categories, but the ones which interest me tend to be in history and archaeology. So far I have ordered 5 series from them: *Ancient Greek Civilization*, *The Civilization of Ancient Rome*, *Early Middle*, *High Middle Ages* and *Late Middle Ages*.

I've started viewing the Ancient Greek Civilization series, which are simple lectures delivered by Professor Jeremy McInerney from U Penn. The early lectures discuss the Minoan culture on Crete, its height during the Bronze Age and its subsequent fall which precipitated what McInerney calls "the Long Twilight," akin to the Dark Ages which followed the fall of the Roman Empire two millennia later.

From there discusses the re-emergence of Greek culture and the development of the well-known city-states. While the series might not appeal to people who prefer video documentaries with lots of images and/or re-creations, for somebody who enjoys getting most of their learning from books, this is fascinating stuff which I highly recommend.

Each series comes with a bibliography which serves as a recommended reading list, but the lectures inspired me to go to the website [http://www.ancient\\_greece.org](http://www.ancient_greece.org) where I researched the areas which particularly interested me in each lecture. If the idea of a lecture series right in your living room appeals to you, go to <http://www.teach12.com/teach12.aspx?ai=16281> and check out which categories interest you. I am certain you'll find several that you will enjoy.





## It's True - It's All My Fault!

*A Very Quick Sketch on the Origins of Furry Fandom and the Pivotal Role I Played in the Creation of One of its Seminal Influences.*

Taral Wayne

The last time I updated my journal on the FurAffinity site, I was fresh out of ideas. A week had gone by, though, and I felt I had to write *something*. As an experienced writer, I fell back on an old dodge – I kidded the reader about having nothing to write.

That got a bit of a laugh and bought some time. Best of all, someone suggested an idea that I could steal.

"You've been around forever, and must have an enormous fund of stories and information about the early history of furry fandom to share," he said. (Or words to that effect.)

That's true, I suppose. I knew many of the key players and participated in the formative processes that led to a sovereign and separate furry fandom. Little of what I know, however, comes neatly packaged in self-contained, amusing anecdotes. Even less of what I think I know leaves the mind ticking over with questions. "What is the meaning of it all?" Buggered if I know. Probably nothing.

Let's start with the beginning. I'll try to keep the story simple, as well.

Where did furry fandom start, anyway? There seems to be more than one answer to the question, depending on what you mean by it. You will get a stiff argument from some "spiritual" furries that they were born different, and felt a mystic connection with their animal natures from a very tender age. Others cite animal figures in fairy tales, or point to animist religions as the origin of furry fandom. But I'm understandably reluctant to acknowledge a band of Paleolithic mammoth hunters, dancing around a fire in skins and imploring the gods for a successful hunt, as a sort of

“fandom.” If that’s the case, furry fandom is about 70,000 years old. And, for that matter, so is every other human activity, from Rap to Economics.

The sensible answer to the question about furry fandom’s origins is that the materials were sitting around, unused for years, at the margins of science fiction conventions. Furrries similarly emerged from anime, comics, gaming or any other group where fans could be found with interests in funny-animal comic books or in Saturday morning animation.

I had been in SF fandom since about 1971, and over the years met a number of people who shared my interests in animated cartoons, in Carl Barks stories, in *Pogo* or the *Muppet Show*. It was part of a wide continuum, really, that had no boundaries. Everything flowed into each other. While a fondness for such things was common enough among all fans, some were more deeply into funny-animals than others. One of those who were was Marc Schirmeister. I met Schirm for the first time at the Phoenix Worldcon in 1978. I also recall encountering Tim Fay, Jerry Collins, Steve Martin, Ken Fletcher and quite a few others at this-or-that con. Some were well-known as SF fans, others were only marginally involved in SF fandom but had nowhere else to be at the time.

Not surprisingly, I was mainly attracted to artists, and was soon drawn into the black & white comics scene. Furrries were also to come from equally valid costuming, gaming, anime and other circles within All Known Fandom. Those circles overlapped in various complicated ways, but pre-furrries overlapped with each other in a way all their own. Nevertheless it was years before anyone realized they *were* furrries.

Why did they become furry fandom when they did, then? Why did this loose confederation of people who knew each other for their shared interests in marginalia become a fandom at all?

The early '80s were a propitious time for it. For one thing, after years of Filmation dreck and Hanna-Barbara re-runs, there was a renaissance of TV animation. They introduced a number of new and interesting stock funny-animal characters that fans liked.

Black & white comics were the rage too. While most of these were imitations of superhero comics, or were surrealist social commentaries with roots in the old undergrounds, some of the best b&ws were about funny-animals. *Omaha the Cat Dancer*, *Cutey Bunny*, *Albedo*, *Usagi Yojimbo*, and *Critters* were an instant, visible genre around which a fandom could form.

Another factor was the death of the old underground comics apa, *Vootie*. When it died in 1984, a new apa was created as a replacement, but it became more than that. *Rowrbrazzle* was meant as the gathering place for many of the artists who did furry comics, but also for animators and other professionals. It didn’t quite come off that way, though. Busy professionals tended to be too busy for fanac. Instead, *Brazzle* attracted many of the loosely drifting individuals who became furry fandom. Other fan pubs followed suit, forming a network of fiction zines, folios, newsletters, and journals.

The first furry convention was held in Southern California in 1989. The first of fourteen successful *ConFurences*, it too was quickly imitated. Within three or four years there was

*Further Confusion* in Northern California, and a third major con on the East Coast that eventually came to be known as *Anthrocon*. Today there are dozens of mid-size and tiny furry cons around the country. Sketchbooks began to circulate very early. The tradition probably began right at the first furry con.

At first, fursuiters were rather a lonely breed – a few brave, or demented, individuals who were willing to mill around in their baggy costumes while everyone else stared at them. But were soon joined by other fursuiters, and formal costume events soon appeared. There was nothing strikingly original in that – costume events had long been a fixture at SF and comics conventions.

When the name "furry" was heard for the first time, it was frankly *not* to everyone's liking. To begin with, no-one was sure whether it meant fans or funny-animals. Worse, it smacked of "furvert."

It all happened remarkably fast, looking back on it.

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That's one answer to where furry fandom came from – the sensible one. But the other answer is that it's all *my* fault.

Before there was furry fandom, I was a late joiner to *Vootie*. The apa was run by Reed Waller and Ken Fletcher, and was best described as a haven for small-time underground comics artists. Big-time underground artists were mainly too busy to belong, and the members of *Vootie* too disorganized or not ambitious enough to be big-time artists. Most of the material the members contributed fell into the category of "odds 'n' ends." There were some stories, but most never exceeded a page or two in length. Over time, the number of members dwindled and their contributions grew shorter and fewer. *Vootie* itself grew shorter and longer between mailings, until it just ceased to be.

Considering how much sex there was in underground comics, I thought it rather odd that there was so little of it in *Vootie*. What could I do but write to Reed Waller and complain? Rather to my surprise, Reed used my critique as the basis of a two-page story in the next mailing. My remarks are read out loud by naked furry babes while they danced, posed, cavorted, balled, screwed and fucked (literally) like mink in every panel.

It was funny at the time. But who knew that one of the cat-girls would reappear in a later Reed Waller story for *Vootie*? Then another. And then appear in her own comic book as *Omaha the Cat Dancer*.

Yes, that's right. I inspired Reed to create *Omaha*. *Omaha* was the mother of all furry comics. Furry comics were perhaps **the** indispensable key to the origin of the fandom.

So when you come right down to, it really *is* my fault that you're all here.

Sorry about that.

The inevitable question comes up – do I still have the original story from *Vootie* number five? Of course I do... along with almost every other mailing.

Strangely, Reed's original *Omaha* story remained "lost" for several years. Few people knew anything about it. In 1990, finally, Kitchen Sink reprinted it in a soft-cover book along with scads of other art Reed had done for fandom. The editors of *The Erotic Art of Reed Waller*, however, made a change to the artwork. In the original appearance, the story was dedicated to me for providing the inspiration. In the reprint, "for Taral Wayne" was carefully whited-out.

I asked Reed about that sometime later. It was in all probability at *ConFurence 10*, the only time we ever actually met. We traded a little art on the occasion, and then I asked the big question. Why was my brief moment of glory omitted from the Kitchen Sink edition? Reed said he had no idea they *had* deleted that vital final line, and couldn't explain why they would make the change without consulting him first.

*Sic transit gloria mundi*. It looks as though I'll have to pursue everlasting fame through my own efforts after all.



## The Passing Scene

The weather has been very hot this month, mostly in the 90° range, actually going over 100° a few times. Jean and I have been going to the pool nearly every afternoon. In past years, several friends belonged to the pool (a spring-fed pool in the middle of the woods, really nice), so Jean went with them while I stayed home and worked and cooked supper. But the others did not join this year, so I go with Jean and, besides swimming a bit, I do most of my reading at the pool. We eat supper a little bit later since I need to cook after I get home. Then I do some work at night to make up that lost time, so it's all right.

I am trying to work on two books this summer: researching the history of the towns along Route

46 for the travel book, and writing specific scenes for the immigrant student book. I will probably write the entire first draft of the latter book doing specific scenes about certain students before linking them all together. I'm not sure if that will work, but for now it seems the best way to approach it.

Jean and I saw *Toy Store 3*, which was a wonderful movie, containing pathos, drama, comedy, human interest, and just about everything I could ask for in a movie. We saw the 2-D version, partly because the 3-D often distracts from a movie which is not a special effects thriller rather than really add anything to it.

### *Outer Banks Trip*

**Saturday, July 17:** Mark, Kate and Andy left from Bridgewater about 7:30am. We left at 8:00am and had no trouble reaching Norfolk Airport in Virginia in about 8 hours. Crossing the Chesapeake bridge-tunnel was fascinating. We picked up Jean's brother Peter and his wife Susan at the airport, then Mark phoned and warned us that traffic was bumper-to-bumper in North Carolina, and shortly afterwards we hit it as well. It took us 4 hours to reach Roanoke Island (which should have been less than a two-hour drive), apparently since everybody going to the Outer Banks for the week had the same 4:00pm check-in time we had. We stopped at a Chinese-American restaurant because it was getting so late and we were all hungry.

Our condo at Pirate's Cove was very large, having 3 bedrooms, a large kitchen/dining/living room, main and master bathrooms, and covered deck. Pirates' Cove is a boating community on the southern tip of Roanoke Island, with 700 residences, most of them owned by individuals, some of them incredibly huge costing several million dollars! All but a handful are on either the sound or channels connecting to the sound.

**Sunday, July 18:** In the morning we walked on the pier along the channel to the pool where we swam and Jean and Andy used the hot tub. Meanwhile Peter and Susan walked through the nearby town of Manteo, then phoned Jean that it is a really nice town, so we all joined them for lunch, after which we visited the Elizabethan Gardens in the woods on the northern end of the island. They were really nice.

Afterwards we returned to the pool awhile, then I made penne and homemade gravy. After dinner we crossed the bridge which was right next to Pirate's Cove and connected Roanoke Island to the main island which has oceanfront beaches. We walked along the shore for an hour.

**Monday, July 19:** In the morning we visited the town of Duck on the main island. That's the island which also has the towns of Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills and Nags Head. We made sandwiches to take for lunch. In late-afternoon we returned to the ocean when the worst of the sun's effects heat had abated a bit. Jean, Mark and Peter used boogey-boards while the rest of us mostly hung out in the surf. Afterwards we stopped at the pool awhile before returning to the condo for showers before dinner.

We ate at Millers, a seafood restaurant on the sound. I had a salad, 2 hushpuppies, and a platter of shrimp, scallops and a crab cake. Jean had flounder stuffed with crabmeat.

**Tuesday, July 20:** Jean, Andy and I started the day feeding ducks on the pier behind the condos. There were dozens of them, all quacking at us to feed them. Ducks are cute, but aggressive, pushing each other out of the way to get at the food. One time I tossed some bread on the water and a group of seagulls immediately swooped down on it. Then the gulls waited on the pilings for us to give them more.

In the afternoon, Peter, Susan, Andy and Jean went kayaking while Mark and Kate went shopping for a hammock. Not being a fan of kayaking, I stayed in the condo reading Julie Czerneda's **In the Company of Others**. When they returned, we all went to the pool, then to *Big Al's* for supper. It is a 1950s style diner which had good food. I had a pulled pork sandwich, while Jean had a reuben, Mark had a tuna melt, Kate had nachos, and Peter had a bowl of clam chowder (Hatarras style).

**Wednesday, July 21:** We all awoke about 7:00am to spend one last morning at the ocean. Except for Jean and me, everybody else left in Mark & Kate's car at 11:30am. They dropped Peter and Susan at Norfolk Airport for their flight back to Dallas. Meanwhile, Jean and I drove to the aquarium on Roanoke Island, which was interesting. Afterwards we drove to a restaurant called Mulligan's in Nags Head, where I had broiled shrimp and Jean had fried mahi. The food was good, but I am getting tired of being served French fries and cole slaw with every meal.

After spending time in the pool, we went out for ice cream at Dairy Queen which shared a parking lot with a miniature golf course, and was absolutely chaotic. We were leaving in frustration when we luckily found a parking space. Jean had a chocolate cone dipped in chocolate, while I had a banana split blizzard.

**Thursday, July 22:** We went to the Wright Brothers Memorial, which we enjoyed. Then we bought 2 cubed steaks which we barbecued for lunch, along with salad. In the afternoon we went on a "dolphin watch" boat ride for nearly two hours. It was very enjoyable, and we saw dozens of dolphins during the ride.

**Friday, July 23:** We drove to Pea Island, which is below the main island on the way to Cape Hattaras. It is largely uninhabited, although there are three small towns which have camping, summer homes and stores. We spent a long time walking through the wildlife preserve, not seeing much wildlife but enjoying the scenery and peacefulness. We ate lunch at Atlantic Coast Café, both of us having fried seafood platters (2 pieces of fish, 4 shrimp, one large crab cake). Then we stopped at Coquina Beach, which was very nice for swimming. Afterwards we came back and, as usual, spent some time at the pool.

**Saturday, July 24:** We left Pirates Cove at 7:45am, which was fortunate since we missed the mad rush of traffic all leaving at the same time, which likely would have slowed us down as much as arriving a week ago had. We made a few stops on the way home (take-out breakfast at McDonald's, lunch at Arby's, gas station), and arrived at 5:30pm.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable week, especially having our family and Jean's brother and sister-in-law with us for most of it. The Outer Banks are a gorgeous area, and we would definitely consider returning there again in the future.

## Wondrous Stories

I've raved about the fiction of Jack McDevitt previously, and *Cauldron* illustrates much of what he does best. It is the concluding novel in the *Academy* series, and it provides closure to several of the mysteries which had been unanswered in previous novels: it explores the origin of the "chindi," from the novel of that name (and does not find at all what they were expecting) and also the origin of the "omega clouds," which have been hovering in the background of all six *Academy* novels, and was the main emphasis of several of them.

The basic premise is that a new, improved faster-than-light drive is discovered which is thirty times faster than the prior drive, and which permits travelers to reach portions of the galaxy which were previously out of reach. Two superluminals containing five people (including the main character of the series, Priscilla Hutchins) go in search of the answers to four mysteries. The trip is thoroughly fascinating, including believable characters whom the reader can empathize with. The long passages spent on a spacecraft are fascinating and the explorations spark thought-provoking implications. One of the novel's major strengths is the sense of wonder evoked by the explorations, especially in the origins of the "omega clouds," which I had not expected to be resolved satisfactorily, but McDevitt did so.

**Cauldron** is more evidence that Jack McDevitt is one of the very best storytellers currently working. I recommend this novel highly (more so if you have read the entire series preceding it.)

\*

Julie Czerneda's *In the Company of Others* is reminiscent of the Union/Alliance novels of C.J. Cherryh with the emphasis on politics replaced by a biological mystery. Earth's emigration to other planets was stopped abruptly by an alien entity called "the Quill," sending all the colonists fleeing to various space stations since Earth refused their return because of fear of contamination by the Quill. All the stations are vastly overcrowded, with their inhabitants forced to live on an alternate-day cycle, sharing work, beds, etc. Food is imported from Earth and tensions are regularly quite high.

The novel's plot is complicated, but fast-paced, involving an attempt by Earth scientist Gail Smith to eliminate the threat of the Quill. But her arrival on an Earth ship at one station has disrupted the delicate balance between various aspects of the station's inhabitants, so the novel deals equally with her struggle against the Quill and the intricate relationship between groups of people on the station, including its longtime residents, the offspring of the stranded immigrants, and the Earthers. The main characters are Smith and two of the stationers Pardell and Malley, all of whom are fairly well-developed, having both positive aspects the reader can relate to, and weaknesses which affect their behavior and the development of the plot.

Important minor characters include Commander Grant (the leader of the security force on Smith's ship who balances his duties with his loyalty to the scientist), Tobo (the ship's captain), and Rosalind (an old-timer on the station). These characters also have balanced personalities, especially Grant who plays a very important role in the events. This was a very satisfying novel which compares favorably to Cherryh's novels. I believe this is Czerneda's only standalone novel, but it has encouraged me to try one of her trilogies as well.

## Halcyon Days

**Gregg T Trend**

trendres@yahoo.com

July 3, 2010

Query: are all your advanced math students from Asia (&/or the Middle East)-- this ct is by names (& the occasional images such as in yr latest issue). I find this somewhat unusual but highly significant. My son (who graduated in 3-years from a private school for advanced/creative students) took AP calculus, etc. (He had one of the highest cumulative scores on APs in MI the year he graduated, 1994.) He started University SoCal one year early on a Trustee scholarship/grant, and finished one year early because he had used up all the \$ for 4 years-- by taking extra courses so we had to pay for 2 German courses. He was NOT a science major: his 2 BAs are in International Relations & Print Journalism. Since 2000, he has been a Foreign Service Officer, US Dept of State. He speaks fluent French, Spanish, Slovak, Serbian & Dari (& is OK in German, better at reading-- he also reads Ukrainian, which is one of our heritages.)

I am a retired archivist (image preservation/project leader) and have been a graphic design, art director & college-level teacher. My late first wife (Nik's mother) was a psychiatric social worker. My father was a metallurgical design engineer & executive at GE (however, he also was working on a PhD in history at the University of Chicago just before WW2) and my mother was a science teacher. Intellectual heritage?

RE yr ct about Jack McDevitt's latest novel. OK. It's a mystery c/w SF. To me Science Fiction has always been about the solving of mysteries. Which probably why as I grew older (now 67), I switched almost entirely to mysteries for entertainment reading (most SF being badly written with a poor to only fair understanding of human psychology.)

[I taught 4 higher-level classes last year (2 Honors Algebra 2, 1 AP Calculus BC and 1 AP Statistics) with a total of about 90 students. I don't have my class lists at home, but I would estimate that 75 of the students were Asian of some type (mostly Chinese and Indian, but as far-ranging as Filipino and Uzbek too). That compares to the total school population of which 35-40% are Asian heritage.

[The reason you see so many references to Asian students in **VoP** is that I have been fortunate to bond well with many of the Asian students, partly because they are the students who spend most of their time in the Math Lab, plus I advise both the Indian Culture Club and the Asian-American club. Those friendships have carried over onto Facebook. Now that I have retired, I am letting former students friend me. Of my 98 former students who are friends, 84 are Asian.

[Contrary to many stereotypes, Asian students are not more naturally-gifted than other nationalities. Their cultures emphasize education and hard work moreso than most others, starting at a very young age and continuing through life. When my boys were young, we saw many other youngsters who had natural ability at that age, but their parents never encouraged the child or supported their education sufficiently for them to maximize their potential. That's the difference in most Asian students--they tend to maximize their potential more than other students.

[I also prefer science fiction which has some mystery component but, paraphrasing Jack McDevitt, not “whodunnits,” but rather either scientific or [future] historical mysteries. Since he is one of the few current writers mining that vein, and an outstanding storyteller as well, it is not surprising McDevitt is my favorite current sf writer.]

**Greg Benford**

July 4, 2010

Congratulations on retiring! It's great fun...

Let's conspire on Hugo voting--I favor Steve Stiles for artist and *Challenger* for fmz, since you didn't get on [the ballot].

Yes, SFBC is fantasy driven, alas--as seems the world.

[Those are two excellent choices for the Hugo Award, especially since neither of them has ever won.

[It frustrates me how fantasy has dominated the so-called science fiction genre in recent years. I was reading the current issue of **Locus** recently, and it too has succumbed to the dark (fantasy) side.]

**Lloyd Penney**

1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON, CANADA M9C 2B2

July 21, 2010

Thank you for **VoP** 154. With those pictures on the front cover, I think this may be the first time I've seen a picture of you! Looks like your students are going to miss you.

Vampires, or sparkly emo vampires, as I've seen them described, are big right now with the *Twilight* series of books and movies, but once they've run their course for the moment, other memes will come along, like fantasy, and hardcore, nuts-n-bolts SF. I'm like you, I have no love for military SF, so I usually stay with used books from the 60s, 70s and 80s, and I am able to keep up.

Worldcons have definitely changed over the years, as these things will, depending on the interests of those who attend. Yvonne and I are lucky in that we find lots of things to do once we're there, and sometimes, we create things to do that others take part in. Anticipation in Montréal was a great time, and I wish we could go to Aussiecon 4, but we are going to Reno for Renovation next year.

So many students you have touched over your career; they love you and will miss you. It's good to see they plan to stay in touch with you. Once you've retired, you will miss having all these

young people around you, so I think you said you might want to be a supply teach from time to time. I think that's a wise move; why give up what you love to do?

My loc...well, I didn't win the Aurora I was nominated for, so I am hoping for that Hugo nomination, hoping I will do well. Thank you, Robert, for your vote; they all count, and single votes can add up to a win, so one never knows.

This past weekend was Polaris 24, the annual fan-run media SF convention in Toronto. Little of it appeals to us, but it is a good opportunity to take a dealer's table and sell some merchandise and handicrafts. We did fairly well, and will be taking two tables next year to sell more. Yvonne will be creating something in line with the new Harry Potter movies next year, as well as the continuing popularity of steampunk, so we should do even better.

Anyway, done once more. Take care, and I guess with it being July, are you now officially retired? Have fun, and stay active.

[I guess you did not realize that was my picture dancing at Mark & Kate's wedding on the cover of **VoP** #143. (

[I plan to take the fall semester off, then decide if I want to do some adjunct teaching at one of the nearby colleges (assuming they will hire me). While that is definitely not the same as teaching secondary students—or spending time with them outside class—it should satisfy some of the itch to teach.

[Teachers do not feel retired until September, since we generally have July and August free anyway; of course, I am not doing curriculum work or prepping my classes, so I am much freer than usual, but I still don't feel retired yet. When my friends and students are back at school in September, that's when it will really sink in that, paraphrasing George Harrison, all things have passed away.

**Rich Dengrove**

[RichD22426@aol.com](mailto:RichD22426@aol.com)

Jul 22, 2010

*Out of the Depths.* About the Kindle, Amazon claims it reads PDFs, which would mean that it would read other documents besides Amazon's. On the other hand, I am still wondering if it would be worth buying. While I buy a lot from Amazon, my reading matter is eccentric; and it would be unlikely that Amazon would put much of it in e-form.

*The Passing Scene.* So you thought you were incoherent when you had to speak off the cuff. I am in Toastmasters and we have to speak off the cuff at every meeting. And, yes, we are incoherent. A few people can come up with coherent logical statements in a few seconds, and then speak on them for two minutes. Those few win contests. The rest of us are incoherent. However, I have found, off the contest circuit, a breezy ramble will satisfy an audience. Just relax and smile; and you will surmount any speech hump you are required to surmount.

So how can we get a Sabella t-shirt?

*Wondrous Stories*. I remember one piece in particular of **Robert Silverberg's** fiction about historical characters and places. It concerned Priester John, who apparently was reputed to have ruled in Asia as well as in Africa during the Dark Ages. Now, he is holding court in a netherworld; and his physician is Albert Schweitzer. By the way, Schweitzer was greatly annoyed by the court music. Too tinkly.

*Halcyon Days*. In **Lloyd Penney's** comment to me, he says that a novel must have some logic to it. There is at least one exception, **Alice in Wonderland**. I saw the Tim Burton movie. It had the distinction, in this illogical era, of being one of the few movies more logical than the novel. It has to do less with the logic of Burton's movie and more with the whimsicality of Dodgson's book.

[You cannot buy a Sabella t-shirt. Students only! I have a large enough cult to satisfy me, no use spreading it among fandom as well. (

[I suspect what Lloyd was really saying was that a *good* novel must have some logic to it. **Alice** is a romp, not a real novel per se. Many books are romps lacking the logic and plotting that really qualify them as novels.]

### **Robert Kennedy**

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<mailto:robertk@gateway.net> July 25, 2010

Well, now you are up to #154 and maybe more before I submit this letter.

In the past I meant to comment on the fine caricature of you on the cover of an issue and the even better subsequent photo of dancing at the wedding.

Great photos in #154.

Now that you are retired you may have more free time. But, I've found out that many times I run out of time. I don't know if it's because I do things more slowly or try to do too many things. I've mentioned this to other retirees and they say the same thing.

I enjoyed your comments concerning the Science Fiction Book Club. It has also been my impression that fantasy was the much greater part of their selections and science fiction a very small part. The ads in **Locus** seem to be much more fantasy than SF. I read very little fantasy any more and just enjoy straight SF.

I agree that **Time Travelers Never Die** is an excellent novel. I've also seen the movie *The Time Travelers Wife* and enjoyed it very much. So, I decided to read the book. When I was checking it out at the library the librarian said that a number of people told her that they were disappointed

in the movie because of so many changes from the book. I don't agree. In my opinion the changes in the movie were necessary to convert the book to a movie. As I was waiting in the Rapid City, South Dakota airport in May, the woman seated next to me was reading the book. I told her that it was excellent, that I had also seen the movie and greatly enjoyed it, what the librarian had said, and recommended that she also see the movie. She thought my comment on the movie was good because she could not see how the book could go straight to a movie.

You think that you have problems in New Jersey? You should live in California. We have an incredibly highly-paid legislature that has bankrupted our state. Also, a Governor who seemed to start out strong, but turned out to be a political wimp.

Excellent "On the Lighter Side" – especially "but deliver us from e-mail."

[My problem in trying to get things done is definitely that I make too many plans to possibly accomplish more than a small fraction of what I intend. I have done that every summer, so it is nothing new for me, and something I need to work on to keep from getting either frustrated or swamped.

[As for **Locus**, see my comments to Greg Benford above.

[We had a political wimp as governor previously, and I would choose him over our current dictator any time!]

## On the Lighter Side

Jokes by Lloyd Penney

A tough old cowboy from South Texas counseled his grandson that if he wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gunpowder on his oatmeal every morning. The grandson did this religiously to the age of 103. When he died, he left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren, 25 great-great-grandchildren...

...and a 15 foot hold where the crematorium used to be!

\*

The Smiths were unable to conceive children and decided to use a surrogate father to start their family. On the day the proxy father was to arrive, Mr. Smith kissed his wife goodbye and said, 'Well, I'm off now. The man should be here soon.'

Half an hour later, just by chance, a door-to-door baby photographer happened to ring the doorbell, hoping to make a sale. 'Good morning, Ma'am', he said, 'I've come to...'

'Oh, no need to explain,' Mrs. Smith cut in, embarrassed, 'I've been expecting you.'

'Have you really?' said the photographer. 'Well, that's good. Did you know babies are my specialty?'

'Well that's what my husband and I had hoped. Please come in and have a seat'.

After a moment she asked, blushing, 'Well, where do we start?'

'Leave everything to me. I usually try two in the bathtub, one on the couch, and perhaps a couple on the bed. And sometimes the living room floor is fun. You can really spread out there.'

'Bathtub, living room floor? No wonder it didn't work out for Harry and me!'

'Well, Ma'am, none of us can guarantee a good one every time. But if we try several different positions and I shoot from six or seven angles, I'm sure you'll be pleased with the results.'

'My, that's a lot!' gasped Mrs. Smith.

'Ma'am, in my line of work a man has to take his time. I'd love to be In and out in five minutes, but I'm sure you'd be disappointed with that.'

'Don't I know it,' said Mrs. Smith quietly.

The photographer opened his briefcase and pulled out a portfolio of his baby pictures. 'This was done on the top of a bus,' he said.

'Oh, my God!' Mrs. Smith exclaimed, grasping at her throat.

'And these twins turned out exceptionally well - when you consider their mother was so difficult to work with.'

'She was difficult?' asked Mrs. Smith.

'Yes, I'm afraid so. I finally had to take her to the park to get the job done right. People were crowding around four and five deep to get a good look'

'Four and five deep?' said Mrs. Smith, her eyes wide with amazement.

'Yes', the photographer replied. 'And for more than three hours, too. The mother was constantly squealing and yelling - I could hardly concentrate, and when darkness approached I had to rush my shots. Finally, when the squirrels began nibbling on my equipment, I just had to pack it all in.'

Mrs. Smith leaned forward. 'Do you mean they actually chewed on your, uh...equipment?'

'It's true, Ma'am, yes. Well, if you're ready, I'll set-up my tripod and we can get to work right away.'

'Tripod?'

'Oh yes, Ma'am. I need to use a tripod to rest my Canon on. It's much too big to be held in the hand very long.'

Mrs. Smith fainted!

\*

After their 11th child, a hillbilly couple decided that was enough as they could not afford a larger bed. So the husband went to his veterinarian and told him that he and his cousin didn't want to have any more children. The doctor told him that there was a procedure called a vasectomy that could fix the problem but that it was expensive.

"A less costly alternative," said the doctor, "is to go home, get a cherry bomb, light it, put it in a

beer can, then hold the can up to your ear and count to 10".

The hillbilly said to the doctor, "I may not be the sharpest tool in the shed, but I don't see how putting a cherry bomb in a beer can next to my ear is going to help me.

"Trust me," said the doctor.

So the man went home, lit a cherry bomb and put it in a beer can. He held the can up to his ear and began to count on one hand...

"1"

"2"

"3"

"4"

"5"

At which point he paused, placed the beer can between his legs and resumed counting on his other hand.

\*

An old man sitting at the mall watched a teenager intently. The teenager had spiked hair in all different colors: green, red, orange, and blue. The old man kept staring at him.

When the teenager was tired of being stared at, he sarcastically asked, "What's the matter, old man? Never did anything wild in your life?"

The old man did not bat an eye when he responded, "Got drunk once and had sex with a peacock. I was just wondering if you were my son."

\*

One day my mother was out and my dad was in charge. I was maybe one-and-a-half years old. Someone had given me a little 'tea set' as a gift and it was one of my favorite toys.

Daddy was in the living room engrossed in the evening news and my brother was playing nearby in the living room when I brought Daddy a little cup of 'tea', which was just water. After several cups of tea and lots of praise for such yummy tea, my Mom came home. My Dad made her wait in the living room to watch me bring him a cup of tea, because it was 'just the cutest thing!!!'

My Mom waited, and sure enough, here I come down the hall with a cup of tea for Daddy and she watches him drink it up, then says, 'Did it ever occur to you that the only place that baby can reach to get water is the toilet??'