

# The Daily Degler!

The World of Yesterday, Today!\*

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*The Daily Degler!* is published for Midwestcon 2004 by Andy Porter, 55 Pineapple St. #3J, Brooklyn NY 11201, <andyporter@ix.netcom.com>. I started this zine in 1964 for apa-F, then it became a newszine which later became *S.F. Weekly* [not to be confused with the modern e-zine] and then appeared every so often over the passing decades. This has gotta be at least #300. Oh, and this issue is Joe Siclari's fault. \*With apologies to the ghost of Jimmy Taurasi.

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## 40 Years, That's Not Too Many

When I pointed out to Moshe Feder that this year's Midwestcon was the 40th anniversary of my very first one, he said that I "was ancient." Me, ancient? Never, I protested. Actually, at times I really do feel decrepit, on the outskirts of geezerhood, feeling all stretched like a character in *The Lord of the Rings*, yes indeed. But not ancient...gee, why is my nose growing longer?

I remember my first Midwestcon, and a whole bunch of the ones shortly after. The hotels blur together. The first one, in 1964, was on a stub of expressway north of Cincinnati, a Holiday Inn, I think. Years later we went back to another Midwestcon there and the place was twice as big, the pool now between two wings, boxed in by glass so you had this chlorine-stinky enclosed space with a glass ceiling. The expressway was finished and full of cars, and the cornfields beyond the expressway had been replaced by suburban homes out to the horizon.

We drove out, starting early Friday morning and arriving in the evening, in Ted White's Chevy Suburban—no air-conditioning, of course—and the route took us along the Pennsylvania Turnpike, then somewhere south of Pittsburgh and through the narrow streets of Wheeling, WV, over a two lane bridge then linking up with a highway in Ohio that took us through, or maybe around, Columbus. The interstate highway system then was spotty, finished in some places, still being worked on in others.

We stopped at Stuckey's (was it there that I learned to say, "Don't get stuck at Stuckey's"?), which I think was a front for the international pecan pie syndicate, and road-side stands that sold fruit juices by the paper cup (you bought a cup and could refill it as often as you wanted), and more fruit pies, and other delicious things. Gasoline, as I recall, was about 28 cents a gallon—it kept getting cheaper as you inched your way through traffic toward that bridge in Wheeling, then suddenly was higher, and you could never turn back for the last cheap price—so split four ways (I think it was Ted, me, rich brown, and Mike McInerney on that first trip), the cost of the trip was less than \$50 each. The hotel room must have been about \$20 a night, split four ways.

I met Bob Tucker at that first Midwestcon. I'm croggled now to realize that Bob then was only 49, though already long a legendary figure. He held court in a deck chair surrounded by fans and, as we said back then, femmefans.

There are so many other people I met then and in the ensuing years, including many Midwestern fans no longer with us: Lou Tabakow, Dale Tarr, Jeanne Bogert, Don Ford...

I remember Rusty Hevelin was beardless, his hair bright red. Howard DeVore sold paperbacks out of the back of his station wagon, as did Buck Coulson. I think I remember Joe Hensley, Bill Mallardi, Bill Bowers...

But, frankly, the Midwestcons I got to, most in the 60's and the early 70's, all flow together. So although I still have memories of that first one, they're overlaid with memories of the

North Plaza, with its basement connection between wings, with the Carrousel, with its unfinished high-rise wing, the year at the Quality Inn Central when the skinny dipping fans were being observed by the Mundanes in the top floor, a bunch of pre-teen cheer-leaders whose little faces lined all the windows. My receipt from 1977 shows I paid \$21 a night.

The pool hosted an all-day "Chaos" tournament, the only rules involving getting rid of the ball as fast as you could. At night, we went to the Frisch's Big Boy restaurant, and I learned to play miniature golf. And there were the parties, of course, flowing around the pool, at all hours.

Me old? Geez, my long gray beard is all tangled up in my keyboard...

## Where's Monadnock?

Okay, so calling a zine—the one I distributed at Torcon, if you weren't there—*Monadnock* wasn't the greatest idea in the world. Blame my continued fascination with words and their derivations. Previous generations have literally carved Monadnock into stone: there are buildings with that name in NYC, Chicago, and San Francisco. Probably other places that I don't know about, too.

So many people were confused by the name, and how to pronounce it, that I'm saying the hell with it (I went down that route with *Algol* decades ago). Is *Degler!* (with the explanation point) the name I'm going to stick with? Damned if I know. I just thought I'd use it now, because of its ties to Midwest (esp. Indianapolis) fandom.

Meanwhile, I announced at Lunacon that I was going to revive *Algol*. However, everyone seems to think I'm going to do that zine as it was, aka "The Magazine About Science Fiction". And some people have been submitting material along those lines. To use a very tired cliché, I've been there and done that (ditto the newszine route, twice). Not going to repeat past mistakes and triumphs. Is the idea of an irregular personalzine better? Well, it's less taxing, less stressful (the *SF Chronicle* deadline nightmares have mostly stopped, thank you). I will, as they say, ponder this...

## My Worldcon Report

Here's the worldcon report I did for *Publishers Weekly for Booksellers*, the daily e-zine from *Publishers Weekly*.

SARS and a power blackout couldn't stop the 61st annual World Science Fiction Convention from taking place Labor Day weekend in downtown Toronto, but Canada's national sales tax, the GST, prevented many US booksellers, professional artists and purveyors of the wide and weird variety of stuff normally sold at a Worldcon, as it's called, from setting up shop in the convention's Dealers Room and Art Show in the usual numbers. The US economy certainly didn't help. Most attendees aren't professionals, and for them, attending wasn't tax deductible.

Despite this, overall registration was 4,700, with some 4,000 readers, hardcore enthusiasts, editors, publishers, agents and artists at the convention at the downtown hotels and Toronto Convention Center. The Province of Ontario, recovering from the tourist downturn brought on by fear of SARS, helped by not

charging its Provincial Sales Tax on hotel rooms.

The Worldcon can be serious business. There are two dozen programming tracks, round the clock films and videos, book launch parties and publisher-sponsored parties. Ace Books celebrated its 50th anniversary in a ballroom at the Fairmont Royal York with a cake the size of an SUV; Tor Books threw its usual crowded party, with cover flats covering the walls of a suite, and fans and writers proving that they were as thirsty for book industry conversation as they are for hard liquor. Other publishers were in evidence, and agents were off in the corners of numerous hotel bars, doing business with editors and publishers.

The overall mood was not exactly optimistic. Science fiction has fallen on hard times, with many of America's small SF and fantasy-only bookstores closing in recent years, victims of the stiff competition from chain stores and the internet. The attendees and the major authors are growing older. Fantasy is outselling science fiction for many publishers, and the hoped-for boost for books from films like Star Wars never materialized. The hot category now is comics, graphic novels and Japanimation, all areas that the convention, held annually since 1939 with a break during the Second World War, is not strong in.

A sampling of one days program includes panels on SARS and its implications; trends of SF in Japan; scientific mistake as a plot hook; what to expect in online writers groups; the evolution of womens roles in SF; imaginary and future genders; quantum dots and programmable matter; book production; design of non-humans in fantasy; does alternate history need a science fiction element?; middle eastern dancing costumes and belly dancing; Buffy the Vampire Slayer: serious literature?; dying is easy, comedy is hard (with Terry Pratchett); cliches in military SF; building a world class SF collection; writing gay characters; writing for children; erotica in SF and fantasy; the economics and sociology of abundance; is it censorship when you clean up a book for children?; transparency and privacy in an era of terrorism.

There were coffeeklatches, readings, panels by publishers heralding their fall and winter books; concerts, sing-alongs, a separate programming track for children; and every day, autograph sessions by several score authors. Not to mention presentation of the Aurora Canadian book awards, the Sidewise in Time alternate-history book awards, the Chesley art awards, and other awards in a genre which already has too many awards for its own good.

The worldcon is noted for the access attendees have with authors. Terry Pratchett, for example, is a solitary figure, easily approachable. No one who attends is paid; the only people whose expenses are paid are the Guests of Honor. The committee, volunteers and hundreds of tech-support people are likewise unpaid. This allows the convention to charge as little as \$60 for an attending fee, which slowly rises to an at-the-door charge of \$200. Next year the convention will be held in Boston. In 2005, it will be in Glasgow, Scotland, and then in Anaheim in 2006, a venue familiar to many older BEA attendees.

## Local Content Section

2003 Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest Dishonorable Men-tion: "I won't delay this story with any fancy 'Once upon a time' nonsense, preferring to dive right in, like Pete Rose bowling over Ray Fosse at home plate in the 1970 All-Star game at Riverfront Stadium, erupting a controversy over the point of the All-Star contest since that infamous slide did end Fosse's season and compromise his career in a seemingly pointless exhibition

game, which was nothing compared to the subsequent controversies surrounding Charlie Hustle's tax fraud, betting habits, and haircuts."

—Elizabeth Metz, Cincinnati

## July Pro/Fan Birthdays

Otis A. Kline, 7/1/1891; Rich Brown, 7/1/42; Karina Girsdansky, 7/1/56; Leah Zeldes, 7/1/59; Hannes Bok, 7/2/14; Lois Lavender, 7/2/45; Arnie Katz, 7/2/46; E. Hoffman Price, 7/3/1898; Bill Rotsler, 7/3/26; Mel Gilden, 7/3/47; Guy Endore, 7/4/1900; John Schoenherr, 7/5/35; Cathy Hill, 7/5/44; Richard Labonté, 7/5/49; Rick Sneary, 7/6/27; Jim Schumacher, 7/6; Rick Sternbach, 7/6/51; Robert A. Heinlein, 7/7/07; Robert Prehoda, 7/7/29; Jane Gaskell, 7/7/41; Hans Santesson, 7/8/14; Lan Wright, 7/8/23; George Young, 7/8/30; Mark Blackman, 7/8/53; John Wyndham, 7/10/03; Ken Kreuger, 7/10/26; Dave Hartwell, 7/10/41; Hugh Cave, 7/11/10; Cordwainer Smith, 7/11/13; Roy Krenkel, 7/11/18; Ed Bielfeldt, 7/11/15; James Ransom, 7/11/52; James Gunn, 7/12/23; Hen Flanders, 7/12/44; Dik Daniels, 7/13/26; Robert Conquest, 7/15/17; Phyllis Economou, 7/16; Paul Freehafer, 7/16/16; Stan Woolston, 7/16/20; Robert Sheckley, 7/16/28; Jay Kinney, 7/18/50; Dick Geis, 7/19/27; Bill Danner, 7/20/06; Diana Rigg, 7/20/38; Guy Lillian III, 7/20/49; Martha Soukup, 7/20/59; M.P. Shiel, 7/21/1865; Dean McLaughlin, 7/22/31; A. Hyatt Verrill, 7/23/1871; Virgil Finlay, 7/23/14; Cyril Kornbluth, 7/23/22; Gardner Dozois, 7/23/47; Lew Wolkoff, 7/23/48; Lord Dunsany, 7/24/1878; Lee Brown Coye, 7/24/07; John D. MacDonald, 7/24/16; Barry Malzberg, 7/24/39; Gordon Eklund, 7/24/45; Kendall Foster Crossen, 7/25/10; Brian Stableford, 7/25/48; Sydney Van Scyoc, 7/27/39; Ed Green, 7/28/55; Reg Bretnor, 7/30/11; John Stith, 7/30/47; Janice Eisen, 7/30/63; Waldemar Kumming, 7/31/24; Jay Kay Klein, 7/31/31; Dave Van Arnam, 7/31/35. Unless stated otherwise, all birthdays are in the 20th century.

Preview of advert in Noreascon 4 Program Book:

## The International Society of Ex-Worldcon Fan Guests of Honor is delighted to induct our newest members, **Jack Speer & Peter Weston**

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### Active Members

Forrest J. Ackerman, George Barr, Harry Bell, John Berry, Bill Bowers, Juanita Coulson, Walt Daugherty, Tom Digby, Dick Eney, Jan Howard Finder, Bruce Gillespie, Mike Glicksohn, Mike Glyer, Rusty Hevelin, Lee Hoffman, Jay Kay Klein, David A. Kyle, Dave Langford, Bob Madle, Bob & Anne Passovoy, Andrew Porter, Robert Runté, George Scithers, Elliot Shorter, Takumi & Sachito Shibano, Roger Sims, Joyce & Ken Slater, Jon Stopa, Bjo & John Trimble, Bob Tucker, Ted White

### Emeritus Members

E.J. "Ted" Carnell, Terry Carr, Vincent Clarke, Robert "Buck" Coulson, Bruce E. Pelz, Milton A. Rothman, Bill Rotsler, Joni Stopa, The Stranger Club, Roy Tackett, Harry Warner Jr., Walter A. Willis, Susan Wood

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For more info on the Society and its activities: social get-togethers, annual picnic, travel discounts, Claude Degler Ozarks Rest Home, Chromium Hotline, etc., contact ISEWFGOH c/o Andrew Porter, 55 Pineapple St. #3J, Brooklyn NY 11201, e-mail <aporter55@gmail.com>. FIAWOL!