

Number Twelve
Fall 2002

SCOPUS:3001



Two contestants from the winning MilPhil masquerade entry, celebrating the original Twilight Zone.

Trip Report from MilPhil
with photo gallery
and more!
{even if you didn't ask for it}

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EDITORIAL

Funny how things change, isn't it?

Just a week after we got home from MilPhil, everything changed... and there's not a way short of time travel to set it back to where it was before that fateful day.

September 11, 2001. Another date which will live in infamy, at least to us Americans.



The previous number of this zine, which I put together quickly in order to get it out the door, has raised a question or two.

Mostly from closer friends, it turns out.

"Where's Megan's stuff? Is Megan all right? You two aren't divorced, are you? What's going on?"

Megan is relatively well. She had a bad asthma attack last November, and had to be hospitalized for three days, and is just recovering from the effects of the IV steroids she was given in hospital. This situation has definitely altered the way we're thinking about how we will be living our lives, and we're working on that process right now.

More as it develops.



Thisish is going out as both a deadtree version and as a PDF, posted to efanazines.com. I do believe I've got the technology down, and I intend to use it.

I'm also putting plans through the works to have a multispectrum fannish website up; when it happens, you'll know.

Hey, stranger things have happened!

Enjoy the ish.

Shredded paper packaging material!

@



Centauri embassy staff at MilPhil were seen denying this being's existence.

Photo by @

THE LEGAL FANDANGO

This is *scopus:3007* Number Twelve, dated Fall 2002, and hopefully out before Labor Day.

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Publisher: **Megan J. Stirlen Bouchard**. Official mascot, distraction, and lap warmer: **Ada Jane Stirlen Bouchard**.

This is a science fiction fanzine, which means that science fiction or fandom may be discussed at any time. **You've been warned.**

This zine is available for trade, letter of comment, editorial whim, article, artwork, large cash bribes, almond M&M's, other valuable considerations, a player to be named later, or other agreed-upon transaction, and is published as often as I can get to it.

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Use no hooks. It makes them soggy and hard to light. Open twenty-four hours a day, no cover charge anytime.



Megan's Turn...

The continuing story

In the last issue of this fanzine I was telling how things had been going since Baltimore. Such as how Al's uncle had to be rushed to the hospital the day after we came back and how I knocked my self out again and the strange feeling of doom I had on Friday, Nov 6, 1998, well here comes more of the tale.

On Sunday Al was helping me clean up and I became aware of how depressed he was and asked him if he would like me to call the doctor on Monday and make an appointment, he said yes. On Monday, I was excited, it would be one of the first solo trips I would have had since August, when I had knocked myself out cold. My migraines were easing up and I could find my way out of a paper bag. I had a doctor's appointment at 10am, so I decided to go get the mail and call Al's doctor after my appointment, his office wasn't open yet. I went and got the mail and was thrilled to see the check from the Art Show, it had taken so long, and I was beginning to think I had lost all the sales. I was on a high for the first time in months, and headed for my appointment. I got home at about 12 noon and there was a message from Al's union steward Anne, saying she would call him later. I called the Post Office to let Al know of the message and a clerk named Jackie told me Al wasn't there. In fact, she said he had been arrested, I was shocked and asked for what! Jackie said it was for opening mail. I was a nervous wreck, Al wasn't home and she said that this happened about 10:30, about 1/2 hour after I had picked up our mail. I was frantic to know where he was, especially since I had become aware of how depressed he was now. I called everywhere I could to try and find him, yet he was no where. At 12:30 pm he walked into the house and I could tell he was devastated. I was desperate to know what was going on and how was he doing.

Al was in shock, but said he had come from an attorney's office and we needed \$2500 for a retainer fee because he had to go to the Main Postal Inspection office in Detroit in two days and be arraigned. I was confused and angry, I knew that this was a set up because his injury was considered permanent and he could no longer carry mail, but why set him up this way? Al was suicidal and homicidal at the same time. He was so confused and lost, I knew that I had to act fast. I called our GP and he said that he wanted Al to increase his medications now, and to see the Psychiatrist. Al said he had made an appointment with his therapist that afternoon, so we went. It was during this session that I found out some of the details, Al was pretty fuzzy about what happened. He just said that everyday at work, fellow employees would come up and tell him to watch his back, that management was out to get him. Al's depression was so out of control at this time, he just struggled not to make any mistakes. In his attempt not to make a mistake, he did something that other employees did every day, yet he was arrested. Al was in charge of dumping waste mail into the Dumpster, part of his light duty job. Sometimes he found first and second class mail in the waste mail, so he searched it carefully. He also so other employees, including management reading ads and magazines in the waste mail, so he came across an ad, and put it in his pocket to read later. He also found a package and was concerned he made a mistake so he opened it to find a better address, unfortunately it had a beeper in it that went off. He saw that it was waste mail and was putting it into the dumpster, when a woman came up to him and told him to put his hands up. Al backed up to the Dumpster with his hands up and she started to frisk him. A city police officer came up to the woman and questioned what she was doing, because a resident thought a mail carrier was being robbed. The women said she was a postal inspector. Al was taken into the postmasters office and questioned by the postal inspector. Al said that the only thing he could remember to do, is say that

he was getting a lawyer and that they would have to talk with him. Al was then escorted out of the building and left to go home. As I listened to what Al was saying, I noticed that he was still shaking. He was in shock and my concern was that he would get into a dangerous downward spiral that I would not be able to help him out of. My world was crumbling around me and I was watching this man I loved fall into a million pieces. Would I even have the chance to help him put the pieces in order? I could only pray.

Things started to get crazy, we had to find the money for the lawyer and also, I had just bought a small fixer upper house that we were going to move into, because we thought Al should try for a medical retirement in January. I was due to close on the house Nov 11, two days away. I didn't know what to do, my brain still wasn't processing things well, and the stress made me short-circuit like mad. All I could think of was to get Al medical and legal help and in the meantime hang onto to this house and put in my name only. Considering I was buying on a land-contract from a family friend, it turned out I could do it. So the day before my husband had to go to court, I closed on the house, not realizing that it was the smartest decision I could make. I was naïve as to the power of the government, but was going to find out soon.

Al and I did not sleep the night before we had to go to the court. I did not know what to expect, but the lawyer we hired said to show up and a partner of his would be there. I didn't know who he was or what he looked like, but I was putting my husband's life in his hands. We drive down to the Main Post Office and were early, we were afraid to be late. The postal inspector took us back to a room and started to question Al and fingerprint him and photograph him. They did the prints and photos about 15 times, just as a form of harassment. We were locked up in the holding area while they did this and I watched Al start to fall to pieces and I started to get mad. I knew not to lose it, but my brain was struggling to stay civil. I made the remark that maybe a better camera could save the post office some film. I had to go to the bathroom, we had been there for two hours, and I had to ask four

times before the female postal inspector escorted me to the bathroom. I asked her why such a production and she said that Al had broken federal law, and I told her, you've been suckered, this was the post master's way of getting rid of him. I looked her straight in the eye and told her, my husband is suicidal over this and is on medication, and I have emergency medication with me and I expected that he be given it if needed. I also had a letter from his psychiatrist that stated the same thing. I then told her: You better return my husband to me in the same condition that I delivered him to you. If anything happens to him, you have no idea of what I would do, I was not a federal employee and did not have to follow the same rules. She looked away from me and said, let's go back to the holding cell. I followed her back. She went and spoke with her supervisor and they asked me for the medication and the letter, I turned both over to them. Then they nervously asked me, how would we know if he needs it, and I said, I think it will be pretty obvious.

Then I witnessed something that shattered my heart into a million pieces, they told Al to turn around and they handcuffed him. I gasped in horror, why in the world would they need to do this, for a piece of junk mail? Another form of intimidation. As they clicked the handcuffs onto him, Al just shrank before my eyes; he pulled his shoulders into his chest and hung his head. He had done nothing wrong, but was being treated like a major criminal. As the tears started to well up in my eyes and my throat started to choke shut, I saw a shadow put his hand onto Al's shoulder and heard my dad say; "Don't let the son of bitches see you cry, remember you are tougher than them. You are the daughter of two marines and I will watch over him for you." I gulped back the sobs and shook my head so the postal inspectors and Al could not see the tears. I called out to Al; "I'll see you over at the courthouse honey, love you." Al turned his head in shame. His mother had just arrived and she was allowed to say good-bye to him also.

I headed for the elevator with his mom and could barely make it. The suppressed tears started to come and I gasped for breath. Georgia, his mom, was in a state of total rage. She was ranting and raving about

the government, and I knew I had to get her out of the building, before her torment ended up putting her in jail. We got down to the car and drove over to the courthouse. The Union president, Polly met us over there. I was so confused and dazed; I set off the security alarms, because I had brought my beadwork with me, because we had to wait for hours. Georgia got upset with the security and started to rage at them. When we got into the courthouse I begged her to get some control, I didn't have any more strength; I sure couldn't go through this to get her out of jail also. We waited for almost four hours before the court started. Still no lawyer in sight. I so hoped that things would go well.

My horror was that when they brought in the three prisoners, one of them Al, they were all handcuffed. My Al was so humiliated he couldn't even look our way. I sobbed quietly and tried to keep a smile on my face for him. I looked his way until he finally looked my way; I gave him the thumbs up. I love him I mouthed. He just looked away and hung his head. How I wanted to go and beat the living hell out of that post master.

The courtroom doors swung open and a large, ro-tund man came confidently strolling in. I whispered to Georgia, I wonder if that is our lawyer, sure hope so, he looks comfortable here. The federal lawyers said high to him in a friendly manner, until he said he was there to represent Mr. Bouchard, then they backed away from him I was relieved to see that he was ours. The lawyer was at the podium with Al during the arrangement; the judge told Al that he was releasing him on \$10,000 bond with the condition that he continues his psychiatric care. They led Al away and the lawyer introduced himself and led us outside. He was very cautious at what he allowed us to say outloud and told me that he would discuss things at our lawyer's office that I had to go and sign Al out.

Well things don't go that easy to get a person out on bond. For one thing the court wants all your assets and all your family and friends names and numbers. Al could not go out of the Detroit area and could not drive or do other things while on bond. The court was threatening to both of us. I reminded

them that I was not under arrest and they still were rude. As soon as the papers were signed, Al, Georgia and I went to the car and I dropped Georgia off at her car. As I started to back up my car, I had to stop. I started to cry uncontrollable and hang on to Al for dear life. I told him that I would not allow these assholes to get away with this crap. I would fight with every ounce of strength that I had, but I needed him to go along for the ride and to try and get better. We sat and cried in each other's arms for a while and then drove home. We knew that the government had just taken our house and our bank accounts, so I decided to move into the house I had just bought the day before. Lucky I did that, it was in my name and they couldn't touch it. I told Al, let them take our house, we had been there for 12 years and it was time to leave. So I called our friends and the packing started. I was driven to find a place that they would leave us alone. Little did I realize we were being followed most of the time, and that our phones were tapped. I am so appalled at the waste of money the government used on this case, a case that should have never been.



scopus:3007
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WIL-MA!!!

Philly Photo Phun and Phannish Phollies

Photos by @ (except where noted)



There seemed to be something going on at the con all the time...



*Music has charms.
So does this musician...*



Dave Kyle's not sitting there...



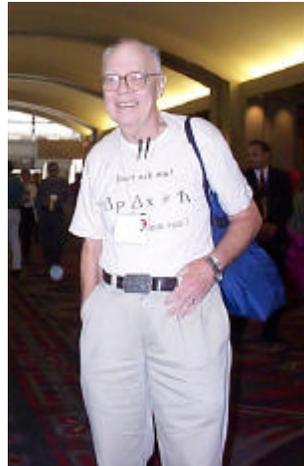
Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, in their matching Rotsler-tribute shirts



Guy H. Lillian III and his bride, Rose-Marie, at the Masquerade.



Megan's costume, "Liberty Belle", which she didn't get to wear on stage.



Hal Clement, on his way from there to here...

Jack Speer, standing still — an unusual occurrence, so I'm told...



Rusty Hevelin in the Dealer's Room, obviously enjoying him-



Megan as "Liberty Belle" and our friend Bill Merriman in his alien costume.

Philly Photo Phun (continued)

ROAD TRIPPING WITH AL & MEGAN

YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION...

*Or, The Further Adventures of Michigan Bouchard
And The Raiders of the Eastern Worldcon*

PART THE FIRST:

WHAT LIES BEFORE...

Whether we were even going to go to Philadelphia for the Millennium Philcon was in doubt before the last week of August. My uncle, who was the closest thing I've ever had to a father, died on the 24th of July. Then, on our eighteenth anniversary, 21 August, my mother had a heart attack, and needed to have three pacemakers installed in three days.

The first pacemaker was a temporary one, what they call a transvenous pacemaker, the lead being inserted up to the heart from a vein in the leg. The second was supposed to be a permanent one, but because it was installed in her upper left chest, and since she's left handed, she pulled out one of the leads. They had to go in the next day and rewire it, and immobilize her left arm for a time.

We had, by that point, resigned ourselves that we weren't going to be able to go. Then, my mother told us that we weren't to let her stand in our way of going, and the arrangements were made to take care of our cats while we were gone.

Since it was now just a day or so before we had intended to drive, and we didn't have the time to finish packing in order to do it, Megan started searching the net for comparison fares for train and air.

Orbitz.com presented her with a bargain airfare, which we took advantage of, and we got set to leave at 6:45 AM on Thursday, the 30th of August. Because of where we live in relation to Detroit Metropolitan Airport, that would mean we had to get up about 4:00 AM.

Urgh.

Do you know what the "oh" in "oh-four-hundred hours" stands for? "Oh, my God, it's early."

Our traveling companion, Bill, came over Wednesday night and spent the night; we thought we had everything set for the departure.

The thing is, I should have remembered that nothing goes exactly as planned for us. Megan and I neglect this at our own peril.

PART THE SECOND:

INTO THE AIR, JUNIOR BIRDMEN...

Oh-dark-hundred came far too quickly, as it has a tendency to do. Megan and I got maybe two hours of sleep, having stayed up to make sure we'd finished packing.

We hadn't.

The last-minute crap took up some of the time we'd planned to use to drive to the airport, and we finished packing the car and us somewhat behind schedule. The drive to Metro Airport wasn't that bad for five o'clock in the morning; we made pretty good time.

Because we didn't have time to stop at an off-airport parking company as we'd thought to, I dropped Megan and Bill off at the Delta curbside check-in with most of the luggage and the mobies, and I went to park the car. Because time was beginning to get short, I went into the Long-Term Parking Deck. I then tried to find a place to park.

The place I finally found made B.F.E. look close by; the deck shuttle came up, and I made it back to the terminal just slightly ahead of time.

I still had to get through security. I kept setting off the metal detector; it turns out, after taking off almost everything else, that my new pewter belt buckle had been setting off the detector. To top it off, while I was stuck in security, the final boarding call page with my name came through.

Of course, the gate our plane was at was at the far end of the concourse; I had no wheelchair, and my mobie had gone with Megan and Bill. I was gimping down the concourse as fast as I could, which I am not supposed to do; when I got to the gate, the Delta gate agent said the plane door had

There's nothing like travel for broadening the mind.
Except, perhaps, taking it out and beating on it with a hammer.

already been closed. She took pity on me, though, and carded us both into the jetway; she ran ahead to get the ramp agent to see if they could get me onto the plane before it detached. I was coming along behind her as best I could, my knee feeling like it was about to fall off, and my decidedly out-of-shape lungs complaining to beat the band.

The ramp agent had managed to get the flight attendants to open the door just before the plane was going to pull away; I stumbled in after the last minute, with less than no time to spare.

The flight to Cincinnati was uneventful after that. I was nearly recovered by the time we landed.

We had an almost three-hour layover in Cincinnati, which included changing planes. We ate, and waited for our plane. The flight from Cincinnati to Philadelphia was routine, for the most part, except that Megan was “working the plane”, as she has a tendency to do.

I will explain...

Megan’s mother raised her and her siblings to do what we call “working the room”; striking up conversations with other people, making their acquaintance, and promoting whatever she wants to promote. I’ve seen her mother “working the room” at almost every large function we’ve been to with her, and Megan has learned well.

Megan was wire wrapping a cameo on the flight to Philadelphia, and got to talking with an older lady across the aisle... it turns out this lady was the head of the Cincinnati Arts Council, going to a jazz festival in New Jersey, across the river from Philadelphia. This proved to be a lucky contact, as will be seen later.

Our mobies were brought up to the gate when we arrived. Delta had treated us extremely well, and we would definitely fly them again. We then went to get our checked luggage, and went to the ground transportation desk to call the accessible van company we’d made reservations with from home.

To our surprise, they backed out on us once Megan called from the airport. They had assured her that they had accessible vans that could handle the mobies when she called from Detroit, but said “We don’t do that” once we’d arrived.

Megan then called several other transportation companies, including the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (otherwise known as

SEPTA) for their ParaTransit service. ParaTransit told Megan that the only way we could use them was if we were Philadelphia residents, registered with them (which would take something like two months), and with at least a day’s advance notice.

Needless to say, this was not what we wanted to hear. Megan informed the company that, since they accepted Federal funding, they were required by the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide transportation, and they refused once more.

The lady at the ground transportation counter suggested, under rigorous questioning by Megan, that we take the train in to downtown. There being no other viable alternative, we did so.

We hooked up with Johnny Carruthers, regular columnist for FOSFAX, at the airport, and he most graciously helped us get on the train. The train crew was most helpful and accommodating, and we disembarked from the train at the Market East Station downtown. We were told that the station was only about two blocks from the hotel; it was more like six or seven. Megan and I, along with Bill and Johnny, lugged our baggage from the station to the Hilton Garden Inn, where Johnny was staying, and we redistributed the load and proceeded to our hotel, the Hawthorn Suites.

It turns out there was another screwup; the hotel had rented out the room we reserved, and was going to give us a room that was totally unsuitable for our needs. The concierge went to see what could be done, and we ended up in the Presidential Suite, a large, airy corner room with better facilities than we’d reserved, for the same price.

This wasn’t a bad thing at all.

We settled in, and Bill and I went over to the Convention Center to pick up our badges. I talked to the people in charge of the Art Show, and they agreed to let us set up the following morning, since the entire series of events getting in from the airport had just about wiped us out. Bill and I found where the Con Suite was, and I got something of an idea where the Fanzine Lounge was in the Marriott. We found out another reason why we were glad we didn’t stay at the Marriott; the corridors there were barely wide enough for one mobie to pass through at a time, let alone two going in opposite (or the same) directions.

The hotel had a complimentary buffet Monday

Wherever you go, there you are. (Dammit.)

through Thursday evenings, so we ate dinner at the hotel, and then began to unpack and arrange things.

The remainder of Thursday was spent getting things ready to bring over, and crashing in the hotel room. I had brought my one laptop computer and portable printer, to try to make sure the Art Show forms were typed in before we came over; we found that the ribbon for my portable printer was dead, and the office supply store we were referred to was closed by that time.

PART THE THIRD:

(UN)CONVENTIONAL BUSINESS

Friday morning, we ate breakfast at the complimentary hotel breakfast buffet, and then went to set up the Art Show. Because we'd prepared much of it the night before, we were able to get it done relatively quickly. The Art Show forms I couldn't print out the night before were printed for us by the hotel, and we were able to get things done.

After that, we wandered around the con independently for a while; I went to the Fanzine Lounge, and saw several people we knew, and schmoozed. I spent some time in the Fanzine Lounge, talking with several faneds.

In the afternoon, we went wheeling out to see the Liberty Bell and the Old State House, now known as Independence Hall. We ate a Philly cheese steak at a little joint down on Market Street, near the river, except Megan had one without the cheese. We then wheeled down to Penn's Landing and saw the Delaware River. Because Bill was tired from the walk down, we took the bus back to the Convention Center area. The bus system has vehicles equipped with lifts to get chairs and scooters on board, and it was relatively easy. Friday night we crashed early.

Saturday morning, the three of us frequented different parts of the convention, until the afternoon, when we got ready to go to the Masquerade that night. During the afternoon, we pre-supported Boston (we'd already pre-supported Charlotte earlier), and voted for Site Selection. Due to some sort of screwup with the Masquerade Director, Megan was not able to register to be in the Masquerade; she finished her costume with her mini sewing machine we'd brought along, and wore it to the Masquerade.

We left after the last entry, but before the judging was done. Megan and I went back to the room, while Bill hit a party or two.

Sunday, Megan and I converted our memberships for Boston, started paying for ConJosé on their installment plan, and hit the Masquerade wrap-up meeting. I spent some time in the fanzine lounge, hit a program item or two, and we then got ready to go see the Hugo Awards. Megan left after the fan awards, and I stuck it out till the end. When I came out, I found Megan, who had been in the Costumers Suite, and we went back to the room.

Pierre and Sandy Pettinger, who are running the masquerade at ConJosé next year, had been wheeling us to come to San José, guaranteeing Megan a slot in next year's masquerade. They finally wore us down. We're now committed to San José, Toronto, and Boston. (If we're not committed, then we should be.)

Monday, the final day of the con, I did our laundry in the morning. We'd figured that coming home with clean laundry was a better idea, as compared to having to wash our laundry first thing at home. We spent time in the Art Show checking out what hadn't sold, and then we were in the Dealers Room until it closed. We bought some stuff, and then went back to the room. The hotel dinner buffet was on, so the three of us ate there; we went to bed relatively early, after packing everything up.

PART THE FOURTH:

YOU BETTER FREE YOUR MIND INSTEAD...

Tuesday, our day of return, dawned bright and clear, and we started trying to make arrangements to get ourselves and our stuff back to the airport in time for our flight home.

We had ourselves, the hotel staff, and several other people working on trying to get some sort of accessible transportation. The Mayor's office couldn't help; ParaTransit, and SEPTA as a whole, are Pennsylvania state agencies, not answerable to the City of Philadelphia. None of the private transportation companies that we or our helpers called were equipped to handle mobility carts. It was looking like Plan B (sending Bill and our luggage in a taxi, and Megan and I taking the train) was going to be in effect.

The three laws of thermogoddamics: 1. You can't win. 2. You can't break even. 3. You can't quit the game.

At almost the last minute, a solution was found; an accessible van was sent out from a company called Metro, and loaded us, our stuff, and the mobs on board, getting us to the airport with sufficient time to catch our flight home on Delta.

But before we left Philadelphia, Megan ended up speaking to the attorney who had been suing SEPTA in Federal Court for violations of the ADA, and filed a complaint with him. The judge's verdict had been front-page news in the Philadelphia newspapers for a couple of days. I personally suspect that the assistance of this attorney was a major reason we got the accessible van.

Now, you'd think we'd all have learned from my experiences at the security station at Detroit Metro, don't you? Well, I certainly had... I had everything metal of mine packed in our luggage or in a carry-on bag, and I came damned close to holding my pants up with one hand in lieu of a belt.

Bill, on the other hand, forgot a roll of film in his pocket... he was the one stopped by Security this time. But it didn't make us horribly late.

It turns out that our flight out of Philadelphia was delayed for three hours; the plane wouldn't even be in until almost 3:30. We bided our time, Megan working the room again, with the arts council lady from Cincinnati on the same return flight as we were. Megan also was chatting up another lady, who turned out to own a boutique in Florida. This lady bought a piece that Megan had been working on, and was interested in having Megan and her partners, Sue and Gail, produce jewelry that this woman would buy, then sell in her boutique.

Because the first leg of our flight was late, we missed our connection in Cincinnati, and got booked on a later flight. We had to go on the inter-terminal train to get to the gate we were re-booked on. We got to the gate, and Bill said he would go get us some water bottles at a nearby store on the concourse. So we waited... and waited... and waited... Megan's thought was "Oh, no... not another almost missing the plane situation!" They started boarding the plane, and Bill came up. He had to go almost to the end of the concourse to find a store. We boarded, ready to head home on the final leg of the trip.

The flight was uneventful... Our plane landed at Detroit Metro, we claimed our luggage, and I

went to get the shuttle bus to the long-term parking deck to get our car.

Remember how we didn't have enough time to go to an off-airport lot? The long-term parking deck cost us \$72.00.

Ouch. And then some.

I got the minivan back to where Megan and Bill were waiting, and several buttheads were starting to bitch at us because I was parking at a handicap ramp to load us up. We have a valid handicap parking sticker, two mobility carts, and these people are trying to raise a stink because we're inconveniencing them. And *they're* not handicapped.

We knew we were back home in Detroit when the yammerheads started in.

The freeways were as bad as ever on our way home, and Bill's wife (and Megan's partner), Sue, met us at our house to pick him up. When we got in the house, Ada Jane, our psychokitty, made a flying leap from the floor into Megan's arms. She missed us that much, it seems.

And so ended another adventure, as the Worldcon sank slowly into the eastern sky. Next year in San José, it looks like... oh, my.

AFTERWORDS

IN THE WAKE OF THE TRAGEDIES...

It's now October. About a week after we came home, the hijacked jetliners hit the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Things are about as up-in-the-air as they ever have been, and it's even money we'll not make it to San José next year.

I'm of two minds about this... I don't want to miss a Worldcon, but if we can't afford to go, or it's not safe to travel for Megan, I'll just have to take a pass.

Stay tuned... we'll find out what happens when it happens.

AFTERWORDS II

AFTER THE AFTERMATH...

Welcome to February of 2K2, as the new year's come to be called. Things are still up in the air (no pun intended), but it looks like we may end up going to Dragon*Con in Atlanta instead of Worldcon in San José. This would be a purely business decision, since Megan would be doing a dealers table.

It's also more attractive for her because we can drive to Atlanta. (We passed through Atlanta on our way to and from Orlando ten years ago, in '92.)

As it stands, we will probably go where the money is this year. Until whenever, then...



scopus:3007
Dragon*Con Special
Coming soon!

Honest, officer, I didn't know the LoC was loaded...

Harry Potter and the Conundrum of Censorship

Well, the *Harry Potter* books have become popular enough that they've come into the radar screen of religious fundamental-types (with emphasis on the "mental" - as in subsapient mental capacity). These wowsers are raising a ruckus about the portrayal of magic powers, and ignoring the depiction that magic is never good or evil of itself, but only in the uses to which it is put. Lord Voldemort, the foremost evil sorcerer, was once a brilliant student at the same school as Harry, the hero, attends; Voldemort's inclinations, toward power and control, drove him to learn the Dark Arts. Harry and his friends at the school are young, unspoiled, and intent on doing the right thing, ethically as well as magically.

As Randall Garrett said in his Lord Darcy stories, "Black Magic is a matter of symbolism and intent." (So, indeed, is White Magic, but it is the black against which they are warned.)

These fundamentalists object to the depiction of any magic, attributing it all to their Devil. They feel that any exposure will seduce children into lives of godless evil and debauchery, leading to everlasting damnation for their souls.

Being something past childhood myself, I can say that depictions of people doing the right thing, for the right reasons, is more powerful a message than any depiction of evil. Harry and his friends show loyalty, courage, logical thinking, self-sacrifice, and a firm belief in the right... not bad messages to send, in my opinion. Look at other heroic figures... Superman, Luke Skywalker, the Lone Ranger... sacrificing personal aggrandizement for the sake of doing what they'd sworn to do... upholding the right, protecting the weak, battling for Truth and Justice.

Isn't this a better message to send than the one promulgated by blustery, sanctimonious types who say one thing and do quite another behind closed doors? Or do we want to have children look up to spoiled brats who have no concept of anything but themselves?

(And, as a side note, no, I'm not just talking about professional athletics. Just look at politics... or organized religion... or show business... You can add many more ex-

amples.)

Now, you may notice that I haven't spoken of the trend of censorship in general. I was saving it for now.

My understanding of the concept of censorship is that someone must decide whether a particular expression of views is "suitable" or "dangerous" for general consumption. This viewpoint, it seems to me, is predicated on the assumption that the general public is not capable of making such decisions on its own.

I find a great deal to be disturbed about with this mindset... This assumption that most people aren't capable of deciding what's best for them seems to me to be fundamentally opposed to our American (and Canadian, for that matter) way of life, especially as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." This does not mean, as George Orwell said in *Animal Farm*, that some are more equal than others. There are circumstances where some sectors of the populace should be protected - underage children, or the mentally deficient, for example - but I hold that once a person reaches the age of adulthood (whatever you reckon that age to be) that the person alone is responsible for determining what they should see, hear, or do. Advice, in the form of ratings, reviews, parental advisory stickers, and the like, is a useful tool, but it should not be used instead of individual judgement.

Personally, I'd much rather be at Hogwarts School than live in the kind of world that these censors would have us inhabit.

So, wizard on, young Harry... so that magic shall not disappear from the world - or our imaginations.



MOVIE REVIEW

Harry Potter And The Sorcerer's Stone

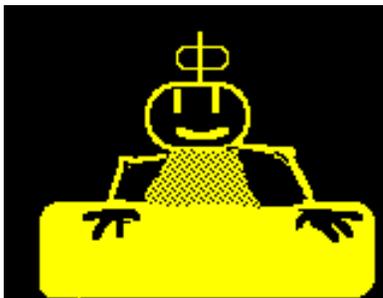
After all the foofaraw about fundamentalists damning J. K. Rowling's series of books, which topic I address elsewhere in thisish, it was almost inevitable that Megan and I go and see the movie version of the first book.

Having some small knowledge of how wrong a movie of a popular book can go, and being aware (thanks to my not-quite-wasted days in film school these many millennia ago) of the process involved in making a movie in the first place, I was half expecting the effort to be filed under "Nice try, but no go". I was pleasantly surprised at the result.

This movie is suitably atmospheric, from the humdrum lives of Harry's relatives, the Dursleys, in their boringly normal place on Privet Drive, to the wizardly places of Diagon Alley, Gringotts Bank, Hogwarts School, and the quidditch pitch. The truncations and emendations made by the screenwriter are understandable, if regrettable. Still, for a movie that runs as long as it does, it does well.

I have read about some quibbles over the casting. Some say Maggie Smith's turn as Professor McGonnigle is limp; I think not. The books, after all, did portray her as a highly controlled person. And Richard Harris as Albus Dumbledore, while criticized in some reviews, is in my opinion very nearly right for the part, giving Dumbledore the proper mix of genius and "absent-minded professor" for the character.

I don't feel my money was wasted on this movie, nor do I think yours would be.



THE WHOLE ENCHILADA...

Musings about food

The subject of food is one most fen seem to take great comfort in arguing about. (Pun partially intended.) Which restaurant provides the best/worst/hottest Thai food, what untraditional ethnic food restaurant is near the con hotel, what restaurant are we going to make a run to, who do we want to get together to go for dinner, that sort of thing. Among others. (I'm morally certain I left out many important questions.)

In its most basic form, food is merely a source of fuel for the metabolic processes that sustain life. Drinking a brew of various amino acids, simple carbohydrates, and basic sugars will keep you going. That would hardly be considered *fine dining*, however.

Food is judged by its smell, its taste, its appearance and presentation, its texture, and by several other measuring guides too subtle to be noticed by the average sort. We know that fat content enhances the taste of an item; how else do you explain the popularity of such fast food as Burger Queen, McDeath's, Tacky Taco, or Unlucky Fried Chicken? This also accounts for the cravings some people have for super-premium ice creams, like Haagen-Dazs, Edy's, and Breyers.

There are some fen who have more educated palates, and can converse knowledgeably about things like paella, escargots, and authentic "native cuisine" from wherever they've gone. Some can discuss regional differences in Indian curry, or the variations on bouillabaise from restaurant to restaurant in the entire Marseilles area.

This category does not include me.

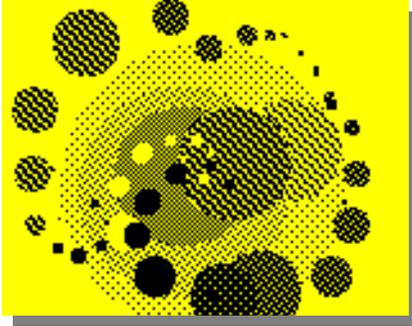
Some of my "gourmet" meals of fond memory were the chili cheeseburgers at Tommy's in Los Angeles, crab soup at a down-at-the-heels little carryout joint across from Stemmers Run Junior High School in Baltimore County, Maryland, or the dinner-plate sized hamburgers at a tacky little drive-in in Joplin, Missouri about thirty years ago.

This is not *haute cuisine*; neither are the eighteen-inch pepperoni and extra grease pizzas from a little joint called Mustang Pizza, or A&W foot-long hot dogs, back when A&W was real, and you could get the root beer in the waxed paper cones.

I'm sure each of us have a series of memories

such as these... reminders of good times and happy days in that time long gone. And, lest we all wax nostalgic (and nostalgic is shiny enough as it is), let's end this now.

Good eating.



Art Credits for thisish

Trinlay Khadro.....12, 13, 14
Ian Gunn.....14



WHACK 'EM & STACK 'EM The Letter Column

A few notes up front...

Since it's been so long since my last full ish, and because of all the troubles we've been through in the meantime, I do not have all the LoC's at hand for the previous issues.

My bad, as they say.

I do have some that came in on #11, the short "interim" issue that I put out a little bit ago. And anyone else I missed, please forgive me. Mea maxima fricking culpa, as I've said before.

Anything else I remember I missed, I'll try to get in the WAHF box.

{Y'know, some days it don't pay to pull yourself out of the crypt...}

Anyway, onward...



Oooooops...

Dammit, it happened again. I can't find the **<unbelievably gross and disgusting expletives deleted>** files.

This has got to stop.

So sez I..

WAHF

Henry & Letha Welch, Howard Devore, Jim Overmyer, Gail Goodhand, Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, Murray Moore, Mike Glicksohn, Larry Tucker, the gang on Timebinders, the gang on Trufen, and a cast of thousands (some of whose names I've forgotten, and some I've never known).

Requiescant in Pace

Sir Frederick Hoyle, Damon Knight, Bruce Pelz, Suzanne Elaine Ross Vick., and anybody else I missed between the time I wrote this and the time it went to press.

The only problem I have with government conspiracy theories is that there are so few people in government who are both competent enough to plan and execute these conspiracies and who have enough free time

Foto Fun from Fusion (Confusion 2002)

January 2002, Van Dyke Park Hotel, Warren, Michigan

This was the first convention I'd been to by myself in quite a while. Interesting experience...

Photos by @ except for the one with Hal Clement
(taken by another fan whose name I did not catch)

"When I'm bad, I'm better..."



As long as you're not allergic to feathers...

"Can someone show me the way to the anime"

The often-imitated, never duplicated Canadian Original, Mike Glicksohn



Hal Clement and Ye Humble Editor in the hotel lobby.



The one, the only Big Hearted Howard DeVore.



Overheard:
"I'm not walking around the hotel in my underwear!"

(Not Quite) The Last Word

Enough shilly-shallying...

This, the twelfth issue, of *scopus*, is now as done as it's going to get.

All the felgercarb from Dragon*Con is going into the next issue, out sooner than I like to think possible.

I should have articles from some of my old regulars, like Thea (remember the costuming column? If you don't, I can't blame you...).

Still and all, there are a few thoughts I'll insert here *vis-à-vis* Dragon*Con and Con José...

The attendance figures for D*C 2002 were something on the order of 27,000. As I understand it, Con José was lucky to have 5000. (The word I

got was they were about a thousand under the number they needed to break even.)

The art show sales at D*C were reported as approximately **one-fifth** the amount that Worldcon did.

There was reporting of significant "shrinkage" (a polite term for theft) in the D*C art show. I don't know, and I haven't heard, about Worldcon.

For my full impression of what I saw, heard, and thought of D*C, you'll have to tune in next time... but I'll add this one thing.

See you in Toronto!

@

And the reason i'm doing this is...

i I'm insane.
i You're insane.
i I owe you.
i I want you to owe me.
i It doesn't matter.
i Just for spits and giggles.