



Brought to you by: K.D. Wentworth, Uncle Guido, Simon McCaffery & Chris Merle

**Special "Space Wagons 'Ho!" Issue •
July 2000**

***** HELLO, OSFW! *****

****Change****

Because of Conestoga Science Fiction Convention in Tulsa, the July meeting is postponed until Friday, July 21st, 7:00 P.M. It will still take place at the Cyber Cafe in the basement of McFarlin Library at the University of Tulsa. The library is closed at that hour, so use the buzzer to alert us to let you in. Paul Batteiger and Amanda Gannon will be this month's hosts and will provide plates, utensils, cups, napkins, and ice. The rest of the goodies will be up to the membership and there will also be snacks and drinks available in vending machines.

Directions: Drive down Harvard to 5th Place and turn west. Park in the lot at the end of the street, even though it says it's limited to cars with campus permits. The library will be west, ahead of you on your left. Enter through the south door. For further information or directions, call K.D. Wentworth at 523-9729.

***** UNLOCAL NEWS *****

Oklahoma writer Brian A. Hopkins tied for the 1999 Stoker Award for Long Fiction with his novella "Five Days in April."

Harlan Ellison is suing an Internet "pirate" for illegal postings of his work on the Internet. This is an increasing problem for professional writers.

Pirated books and stories are being posted daily.

DNA Publications has bought SF CHRONICLE and plans to expand the magazine as well as increase frequency of publication.

***** LOCAL NEWS *****

Brad Sinor published an article in THE LAWTON CONSTITUTION and his short story "Eleven to Seven" appeared in SUCH A PRETTY FACE.

K.D. Wentworth sold "The Battle for Cassville" to GALAXYONLINE and her story "A Taste of Song" was published in SUCH A PRETTY FACE.

***** GOOD REJECTIONS *****

Amanda Gannon: WRITERS OF THE FUTURE

K.D. Wentworth: MARY HIGGINS CLARK MYSTERY MAGAZINE

***** CLICHE STORY BEGINNINGS *****

by
Diana Sharples, Editor of ELECTRIC WINE

Since starting up an Internet magazine (www.electricwine.com) with my best friend, James, I cannot help but notice how many stories come in with opening scenes that -- to me anyway -- are cliché. Perhaps it's just the frequency that makes them so . . .

(1) So and so is doing thus and such . . . and the

story begins with that person's name. Usually the person is doing something mundane, which during the course of the story will change. So and so wakes up when the telephone rings. So and so is watching television and sucking down a beer when someone comes into the apartment. So and so is driving home after a long day of working/traveling/drinking at a bar, and sees something unusual. While in the hands of a competent writer this sort of thing can establish setting and characterization, usually it depicts a scene so commonplace that I have to wonder why I should read further. It depicts moments that the reader may have experienced . . . but instead of feeling empathized, I'm bored. If the person were doing something unusual or unexpected, I'd be interested.

(2) Opening scenes that start with someone running away from something or someone else. (And more often than not *these* begin with the character's name as well!) So and so is running from the thugs he owes money to. So and so is running from the monster/vampire/alien/street bully. So and so is escaping a rapist . . . or his angry master . . . or the brother of the girl he just dumped. While the intent is to infuse immediate tension, and the places the character is running through can establish the setting, I find myself wondering why I should care? I don't know this character yet, and it seems clear that the character will get away *somehow,* otherwise there won't be much of a story . . . or I can expect the writer to switch point of view after the character is beaten up or killed. Or the character will fall through a hole into another world.

I guess my real question here is: Why am I seeing so gosh-darned MANY of these!

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*** THE ICE PICK ***

by Diana Carolyn Ice

THE WRITING LIFE by Annie Dillard. New York : Harper & Row, 1989. ISBN 0-06-016156-6. \$15.95

Why do we read, Dillard asks, "if not in hope of beauty laid bare, life heightened and its deepest mystery probed? . . . What do we ever know that is higher than that power which, from time to time, seizes our lives, and reveals us startlingly to ourselves as creatures set down here bewildered?"

That sets up a breathtaking goal for us as writers, but one which we can aspire to if we choose.

In this collection of lyrical short essays, Dillard gives us a mixture of practical tips and deeper insights on "the actual process of writing."

Among Dillard's technical tidbits, she recommends that you always use the best you have right now rather than "hoard" it for later and warns that you must tend a work in progress every day lest it "turn on you" and become a lion you cannot "assert your mastery over." She explains how to know when you are going in the wrong direction and need to begin anew, and in complaining that commercialism is overrunning and crushing us, she slams those who use "advertising slogans and brand names" in their writing "as a quick, cheap, and perfunctory background."

She speaks poetically of the problems all writers face, of the inevitable gap that develops between our vision and the words we put on paper, explaining that although we are driven to create, to write, "you cannot fill in the vision. You cannot even bring the vision to light. You are wrong if you think that you can in any way take the vision and tame it to the page. . . . You can fly higher than you thought possible—but you can never get off the page."

And in-between, she tells her fascinating anecdotes of flying barrel rolls with a stunt pilot over a salt chuck; of learning how to chop wood outside her one-room log cabin on Puget Sound ("Aim through the wood; aim for the chopping block."); of working late at night in a dark, deserted library in Virginia; of an electric typewriter that explodes in her face, and much more.

This is an excellent book for entertainment, inspiration, and reassurance. And if you'd like to take a "writerly" book along on your vacation to the mountains or the beach, I recommend this one highly.

*** CONTINUUM ***

June, 2000

**FUN
WITH
LOOK**

by KDW

We had eleven in June and brought only a couple of stories to read, a rarity for us these days. There was a bit of unintended comic relief provided by the LOOK (Light Opera Oklahoma) folks who were having a "cafe" upstairs and managed to spend a goodly portion of the night locked out of the building. This prompted them to beat on the windows and use the buzzer to make run up the stairs constantly to let them in. I think I lost five pounds during the meeting. Lucky for them that, as a whole, we're a fairly even-tempered lot.

Stories Read:

Amanda Gannon: Amanda brought the next portion of "Nine Nights Daughter," her epic fantasy about an assassin who takes another man's place in order to kill the Emperor, then finds himself enamored by his would-be victim instead. When he tries to kill himself in remorse for failing to save his lover from a deadly snake, he has an encounter with the goddess he serves in the form of a dragon/snake. I loved the descriptions of the goddess who "reaps the souls of men at ebb-tide" and whose scales are "like thousands of tiny jewels." Shandar thinks he has escaped the encounter with his life, but soon finds out to his sorrow that he is cursed. The section ended with a dead girl expecting a child and the reader's rising anticipation of what will happen next.

K.D. Wentworth: KDW read "All's Fair."

*** MARKET UPDATE ***

CHANGES

ELECTRIC WINE'S fiction contest has been postponed.

ALTAIR is overstocked and closed to subs.

DEADBOLT, INFINITE DISTANCE, and HOURGLASS FICTION are all folding.

NEW LISTINGS

BLACK GATE, 824 Stone Arch Dr., Independence, MO 64052. Editor: David A. Truesdale. New fantasy magazine "looking for accessible epic/heroic fantasy suitable for all ages . . . fiction that incorporates strong elements of heroic myth, adventure-oriented theme and exotic and colorful elements . . . including urban fantasy, humor, horror, s&s, and romantic fantasy, well written and original." Length: up to 25,000 words. Payment: 6 cents/word upon acceptance. Buying first NA serial rights and 12-month electronic publication rights. Prefers snail mail submissions. E-mail: davet@worldinter.net

LEGENDS OF THE PENDRAGON, 15120 West Mayflower Court, New Berlin, WI 53151. Editor: James Lowder. New Arthurian anthology which is a companion volume to THE DOOM OF CAMELOT. Stories should be set in the Arthurian milieu, any time before Arthur's marriage to Guenevere. The stories should center on Uther Pendragon, Vortigen, or any of the other pre-Camelot characters described in Geoffrey of Monmouth's HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF BRITAIN or other traditional Arthurian sources. Do not introduce the concept of the Round Table. "I most want to see stories that explore how events make Britain or specific characters ready for the coming of Arthur and Camelot." Avoid first person viewpoint. Length: 3,000-7,000 words. Payment: 3-5 cents/word within 30 days of acceptance. **Deadline:

December 15th, 2000. No e-mail submissions.
For queries only: gawain@execpc.com

PLANET RELISH. Editor: Mark Rapacioli.
(editor@planetrelish.com) Electronic magazine
of speculative humor fiction. Buys sf/f/h. No
cover letter or list of credits. No erotica or
"outlandish sex humor." e-mail subs only.
Reprints okay. Submit work as text or attach as
Word .doc file or .txt or .rtf file. Write
"Submission" in subject line. Length: 5280
words or less. "Shorter is better." Payment:
\$5/story upon publication

PULP AUDIENCE, 25 Graves Street, North
Mackay, QLD 4740, Australia. Editor: Jamie
McGraw. New magazine buying sf/f/h. First
issue to be published in September. Length: up
to 10,000 words. Payment: 5 cents/word (\$Au).

SPECTRUM SF
(www.spectrumpublishingcompany.com).
Editor: Paul Fraser. This is a British quarterly,
digest-format sf magazine publishing short
fiction and serializing a few longer works. The
magazine has a "pros only" submission policy, so
go to the website and get instructions for an e-
mail query, if you wish to submit a work. No
word limit mentioned. Payment: about 5
cents/word in advance of publication.

CONTEST

The JAMES WHITE AWARD for the best
science fiction short story by a nonprofessional
writer. The winner will be determined by a panel
of judges and the winning story will be published
in INTERZONE. Deadline: August 23, 2000
(received). Each writer may submit up to three
stories, none of which may have been published
before. Length: 2000-4000 words. Fee:
\$4/story. Full rules and guidelines are available
from the website at
<http://www.jameswhiteaward.com>.

*** MANY THANKS TO ***

KDW & Guido
Diana Carolyn Ice
Chris Merle

Warren & Lana Brown

*** SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION ***

A subscription to *Son of GPIC*, the official
newsletter of the Oklahoma Science Fiction Writers,
may be obtained online or by mail. E-mail
subscription is \$7 per year. Snail-mail printed
version is \$13. Mail a check or money order in the
correct amount, prorated by quarter, to:

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6915 New Haven
Tulsa, OK 74136-2844
(Checks should be made out to K.D. Wentworth)

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indicates OSFW has no record of either 2000 dues
or GPIC subscription renewal. This GPIC will be
your last.*

*** OSFW INFORMATION ***

The OSFW meets at members' homes the second
Friday of every month to read, critique, and promote
in general SF, Fantasy, and Horror writing. All
willing to contribute and (after a couple of trial
meetings) pay their dues are welcome. **There is no
age limit but parents should understand that
material with adult themes and language is read
and discussed.**

*** GPIC NEWS AND ARTICLES ***

GPIC solicits news and articles from OSFW
members. We prefer they be on disk or sent via e-
mail. Pseudonyms are OK. We accept files on
either a 3-inch Mac or PC disk. We like RTF files
but we can convert most Word and Word Perfect
files; always include a separate ASCII file just in
case.

Otherwise, arrange to send them by e-mail to
Simon at: simon.mccaffery@wilcom.com.

You retain copyright on material. If this is of special
concern you might let us know who you really are
along with your pseudonym. We reserve the right to
edit (although we try not to).

*** NEXT GPIC DEADLINE ***

Pesky deadline for August issue: August 1.