
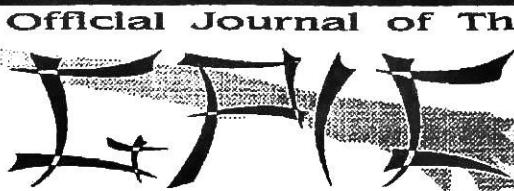



**Son
Of:**



Official Journal of The



(Great Pagoda Insurance Company)



Otherwise Known as: **The Oklahoma Science Fiction Writers Newsletter**

Brought To You By: K. D. Wentworth, Barbara Thrower and Simon McCaffery

Special Expository Lumps Issue • June 1996

***** HELLO OSFW *****

The June meeting will be held at Warren and Lana Brown's new house on June 14th, at 7:00 P.M. The address is 6012 S. Pittsburg Ave. in Tulsa. The easiest way to get there is to drive down 61st St. and turn north on Pittsburg Ave., right across the street from the Kirk of the Hills Church. The house will be on your left.

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

ConDiablo/Westercon, a rotating West Coast sf convention, will take place July 4th-7th in El Paso this year, the farthest east it ever occurs. Guests of Honor are James P. Blaylock, Howard Waldrop, Brad Foster, Pat Cadigan, and Arnie and Joyce Katz. Memberships are \$30 through July 3rd. Make checks payable to Westercon 49, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso, TX 79923.

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

There will be two Star Trek cons in Tulsa this summer:

- Trek Expo '96, July 19-21, will be held at the Tulsa Marriott, Southern Hills, featuring Claudia Christian (BABYLON 5) and Terry Farrel (DEEP SPACE 9).

- DefCon 3, Sept. 6th-8th, also will be held at the Tulsa Marriott, Southern Hills, featuring Kevin J. Anderson, Len Wein, and Dan Fraga.

Barbara Thrower won the First OSFW Read-Off of Published Spectacularly Bad SF/Mystery/Time Travel Prose with an entry gleaned from the pages of SILVER WEB. Fortunately, or unfortunately, there was no shortage of bad prose so we hope to make this an annual event. The winner received a used copy of WIZARD'S FIRST RULE in keeping with the spirit of the occasion.

Brad Sinor's story "Oaths" was published in DAW's anthology, TIME OF THE VAMPIRE.

***** DO SEND YOUR NEXT!
(GOOD REJECTS) *****

BJT: EULOGY, SWORD AND SORCERESS,
FASF, ASIMOV'S

KDW: REALMS OF FANTASY,

Brad: BONES, BENDING THE LANDSCAPE

Greg Lower: ZONE 9, ABSOLUTE MAGNITUDE, TERRA INCOGNITA

Susan Bischoff: Walker Publications

R.R. Bodine: I WAITED A CENTURY

***** EDDY-A-BILIA *****

SEX BIMBOS AND FLYING PIGS CONQUER
MARS II:

PORK AND ROCKETS

Chapter Three

"Duty Calls"—Our hero Bobb flies to Bangladesh in search of a meaningful life without his beloved bimbo. As he wanders the salt-tanged beaches and meditates, he comes to realize that red really is the proper color for a Martian pig after all, and that it is his duty to father an entire nation of flying red piglets—as soon as possible. Unfortunately, he is thinking so hard that he doesn't hear a band of hungry Bangladeshans creeping up behind him who are about to make clear the reason why pigs of any sort are so rare in that particular part of the world.

Meanwhile, Xenia and Arnold search for Bobb in every five-star restaurant in Paris without success. Just when they are about to admit failure, Xenia orders dessert.

Chapter Four

"Somewhere Over the Bromo"—Xenia Kenn is laid low by food poisoning transmitted in an elderly chocolate mousse. When Arnold S. braves Parisian traffic to search for a Bromoseltzer for her, he is captured by a band of off-white slavers, who, although actually looking for women, know good pecs when they see them.

Meanwhile, Bobb, still mourning the loss of his bimbo in Bangladesh, narrowly avoids an impromptu luau when the sun glints off the giant fork brandished behind his back by a starving native. Spreading his wings, he takes to the skies in search of something more exciting and rewarding—like lunch.

*** CONTINUUM ***

By SM

*May, 1996 on
The Human Threat, Escorting
the Dead and Android Stunt
Driving*

An even dozen OSFWans gathered at Barb Throwers' parents home to discuss a passel of interesting topics, such as "computers," "expository lumps," and "where's the adventure?" There were no sales to report, and we all missed KDW. Our thoughts were with Richard, whose mother recently passed away.

Things got off to a late start, mainly because of "presidential tardiness," but we did hear several stories and chapters.

Rocky got things started with a tongue-in-cheek short story, "Renn's Triumphant Solution." A race of aliens with pulp-sf-ish gibberish names is threatened by a psychic connection between their race and humanity. Fortunately, a group of seven alien elders devises an unusual solution to stop humanity from spreading its illogic and insanity across the galaxy.

Warren read Chapter Seven of his novel, *Underland*. "Death on the Road" opens with Laura, aka the Mystery Woman in the Blue Mazda, convincing Jack of: a) her extreme talent

with a handgun; b) that she isn't the enemy Jack believes she is; and c) that it is imperative that Jack's interrogation wait until they catch Pam and her parents. On the drive, Laura reveals some startling information to Jack — that people's lives exist in other times and dimensions, and that the "Pam" they have all seen is a different Pam than the one Jack and his in-laws buried. Laura claims that she does not control this "other" Pam. Instead, she reveals she is some sort of guide, charged with escorting the dead to meet the living. Laura and Jack eventually catch up with his in-laws' station wagon, but in the next moment it hits a logging truck and bursts into flame...

Greg read Chapters 15 and 16 of his YA sf novel, *The Olympia Kid*. Halicari gives Andrew an eye exam, having restored his sight. Meanwhile, the police have identified his deceased attacker at the stadium as a government agent. Andrew goes for a walk, enjoying his restored visual senses and thinking of Christy. He spies a car shadowing him and ducks into an alley, where he runs into his sister, Mae. She tells him they have a plan to get him out of trouble with marauding agents, arms dealers, etc. Christy is kidnapped (again)...Andrew and Mae are taken by an agent to be interrogated, but escape...and become involved in a car chase...and escape with the help of his racing training...they see a house engulfed in flames...Andrew stops and runs into the house, rescuing a small boy...but his enemies are waiting when he emerges, and he goes with them without a struggle...and is flown out of the country again to another military compound...(Hey, it ain't easy being a teenage cyborg).

*** SKETCHING A NOVEL
IN AN HOUR ***

Based on an exercise designed by Alicia Rasley

written by Chris and J. Steven York

This is a quick exercise designed to sketch out the major events of your novel. It only gives you a map—you have to make the drive yourself! You can have fun with this. Do anything that comes into your head. After all, you don't have to write the book!

The outline exercise is really brainstorming for very early in the writing process. You won't learn how to write a synopsis from it. Get a kitchen timer or set your alarm. You're going to free-write for five minutes (or

three minutes, if you'd like a shorter exercise) on several questions.

In free-writing, you put your fingers to keyboard, or pen to paper and write, without regard to grammar, spelling, sense, or organization for a specified period of time. The trick is—you can't stop until the bell rings. If you can't think of anything to say, you just write your last word over and over. Pretty quickly, you'll get bored and think of something else to say. But remember, turn off the editor. This is exploration, not real writing.

Type or write the question, then set the clock, read the question aloud, and go.

1. At the start of your book, what distinguishes your protagonist from other people? What makes your protagonist special enough to be worth writing about?

2. When the novel opens, what interesting or important thing is s/he on the brink of doing?

3. What external situation will influence, shape, or affect your protagonist's life throughout the course of the book? This can be as intimate as a love affair, or as sweeping as a war or famine over which they have no possible control.

4. What is the protagonist's goal for the period of time your book will cover?

5. What are at least three obstacles in the way of achieving that goal?

6. What is your protagonist's darkest moment? What will make things so bad that they seem to be hopeless?

7. What qualities within the protagonist will help or hinder them in overcoming those obstacles?

8. How will the protagonist change or grow because of confronting these obstacles?

9. What do you want to happen at the end of the book? Will they overcome the obstacles, or fail to overcome them? Will they grow from the experience, or become bitter and dejected?

10. What price will your protagonist pay, what pain/indignity will they endure, or what sacrifice will they make in order to have your ending come about?

As you can see, this will outline a plot driven by the protagonist's motivation and interaction with the world. Please note, not all books rely so heavily on the

protagonist's personality. This works best with popular genre novels or novels with a "quest" structure. The answers to these questions can help you determine where you're going and how you're going to get there.

Okay, time's up. Now how do you make a story out of this? Think of the answers to questions 1 and 2 as your starting point. The answer to question 9 is your ending point (all subject to change, of course!); everything else represents landmarks along the way.

Use 2 to craft an opening scene that involves the reader right away. A character on the brink of some action provides a lot of forward momentum. Consider, for example, a soldier about to parachute into enemy territory.

That action, whether it's allowed to happen or not, can involve the reader in the external situation described in 3 (the military operation the soldier is involved in, say), and/or be in pursuit of the goal you defined in 4. If it happens, what unforeseen consequences does it have? If it doesn't happen, what has prevented it? Now what is the protagonist going to do?

Answer 4 gives the protagonist's intended destination. Consider why the protagonist wants to achieve this goal and how pursuit of it will involve him/her further in the external situation described in 3. (The soldier might have the goal of freeing a group of POW's from a prison camp.) How is the goal related to answer 1, whatever sets this person apart from everyone else? (The soldier might be trained in dismantling electronic warning systems.)

The goal should be related to the external situation, but probably include some internal component too (he wants to win Dad's approval by becoming a war hero). The obstacles too might arise from the external situation as well as from within.

Question 5 listed obstacles to the achievement of this goal. Which of these are internal (fear of heights, moral objections to killing) and which are external (the electrified fence, the enemy sentry)?

How do these relate to the external situation? Sketch at least one scene around each of these—or toss a couple out and have a single obstacle repeatedly plague the protagonist. Show the protagonist encountering each obstacle, taking stock, and acting or reacting.

Probably the obstacle will win at least once. Then what? The special qualities you defined in 7 should come into play here, both strengths (brilliant strategic skills) and weaknesses you have noted in this character (terrible fear of failure). What will cause self-doubt and

failure? What will bring back confidence? Can you show a gradually ascending level of achievement, as small defeats are overcome to bring on small victories?

What's important is to make the interaction with the obstacles individual to this character and the success or failure have some effect on him/her—the growth (positive or negative) you described in 8.

The answer to 6 gives you the character's darkest moment, when despair seems ready to consume them, and it would be as easy to give up as to go on. This can be used in two ways. It can appear near the middle of the book, and offer a turning point, when the character's decline halts and can lead into the climax of the tale, when your character must confront the forces aligned against them, and either succeed or fail.

Will the goal be achieved? Either way, the final approach to that goal can be the climb up to the climax. The special quality and motivation of the protagonist, the most difficult obstacle, an important event in the external situation, and the goal, can all meet and explode in the climax.

In the resolution, however, your own ending takes over. The achievement of the goal can be fulfilling or empty—the soldier makes Dad proud of him, but dies in the attempt. Or the soldier might learn not to need Dad's approval. You might want to resolve the protagonist's internal conflicts and leave the POW's still imprisoned. Just remember, your ending is going to help determine the message your reader will retain after closing the book.

Remember, this is only an exercise, not a set of rules. Use what is illuminating, discard everything else. Your novel should find its own path.

But knowing where you're going and some of the landmarks you'll pass can make the journey a little less daunting.

Copyright 1994, J. Steven York. This handout may be reproduced for nonprofit use if done so in its entire and unmodified form, including this notice.

*** SYD CYNIC 2.9 ***

*** REVIEW ***

IF YOU PUBLISH IT, I WILL SCREAM

by Syd Sycic*

all new writers issue, F&SF, June 1996

This review was inspired by the OSFW bad

© 1996 Oklahoma Science Fiction Writers. All contributions © the authors. Pg.4

fiction contest, by the scathing Locus review of every story in the latest Aboriginal SF, and because this particular issue of F&SF deserves notice.

Here's a gem of wisdom from editor KKR's column in the June issue, "And, if the truth be told, sometimes the new writer's story must be better [than by someone whose name is already familiar.]" "Sometimes," but apparently not ALL the time.

"Spelunking at the Cavern" by Michael A. Martin, is riddled with sf cliches: "time jaunts," "temporal trails"; sf silliness: "my palmtop" (psst—it's a computer); and plain bad writing: "I literally ran into Trench" (guy wearing trenchcoat). Can you spot the weak writing and throwaway line(s) in this sample paragraph? KKR didn't. "A buxom sandy-haired barmaid laid two pints of Guinness before us. I didn't remember ordering anything. He took a long quaff while I regarded my mug more reticently. I suppose on some of the time-lines of the multiverse, I'm quite the tippler." Hunnh? The Subject of interest to twin time dudes from the future, John Lennon, has been done in sf before and much better than this.

The emotional effectiveness of Amy Sterling Casil's "Jonny Punkinhead," a story of virally-mutated, monster children and the clinic director who loves them, is stifled by noticeable faults. Repetitive prose: "—came from perforated condom, that much we do know. [next P] When I first came, my friends would ask—"; a scene where the director encounters a menacing driver that doesn't further the storyline; and an explanation for Jonny's demise that in no way suspends disbelief. Poor Jonny, not only does he have a punkinhead, he's (naturally?) a black kid from that old whipping post, the ghetto.

On the surface, Michael Libling's "Sitters" is a chilling, original horror story, but give it time to percolate after you finish and you're baffled. WHO was the Sand Woman? What did the neighbor's murder mean? Who killed HIM? Just what happened in this story, anyway? Author and editor should also be wary of, count 'em, 14 breaks for individual paragraphs and even single sentences in a first person narration.

The cover story, and it's a great cover by artist Kent Bash, is "The Auschwitz Circus" by Matthew Welles. Terrific opening paragraph; a man's wife is obsessed with repeatedly murdering Adolf Hitler before he comes to power, which she can handily do in any scenario in the Alternate Reality room of the (oh-oh) PMS, the Post Modern Saloon. We are in third person, and BOOM, suddenly switch to first person. Who is this new character? Do not care. I already liked the third person guys 'n gals. Cool idea, the best of the short stories, but it needed to be polished.

By citing the examples above, Syd sees a lack of editorial conviction in KKR's "new writers have to be better" line when it comes to the speculative short fiction she's been buying, but he does agree that this

usually IS true when it comes to longer fiction pieces, notably two of the three novelettes in the issue.

OK, I could nitpick about improper usage of semicolons and dashes, and the manic pacing of Arinn Dembo's "Sisterhood of the Skin," a hard sf piece, but I really liked it. It has a complex and believable setting on a faraway ocean world, aboard a ship that plies both the water and the stars. The protag is a human female med-tech surrounded by perfect cyborg officers, who discovers a new sentient species that can in the end—with gross-out effects that fit the storyline—save her from her own "imperfections." Dembo is talented, we'll see her name again.

So too "Acheter," by Jacquelyn Hooper, though I still haven't the slightest idea what the title means, is about a street woman's brief, wondrous journey into the luxury of a near-future, where most people are denied luxury. I liked it a lot.

Do NOT feel sorry for the writers I've dissed, for surely KKR will make them professionals, even before they're ready to be. The insidious Clarion factor is here. Of the seven featured writers, three attended exorbitantly-priced Clarion workshops, and I'm not even going to start on the WotF bias at this major genre market.

Yet when I hear exciting, original, better-presented material from both new and pro writers on a fairly regular basis at OSFW meetings, some of these rejected by KKR in favor of flawed stories like the ones in this issue, <takes breath> honey, I don't get mad—I just get you-know-what.

*theopinionsexpressedinthisreviewarethoseofsydanddon'tnecessaril
yreflecttheopinionsoftheOSFWmembership.

*** MARKET UPDATE ***

CHANGES

Laura Anne Gilman has left Ace to take over the position of Executive Editor at Roc.

DRAGON is only publishing solicited game-related fiction for the rest of the year.

The editor of PIRATE WRITINGS says he hates both cats and stories with cats in them.

ANALOG and ASIMOV'S will have a new address as of June 22nd: 1270 Avenue of the Americas, 10th Floor, New York, New York 10020.

OMNI's print edition is officially dead now, but they are still publishing an on-line edition. From a recent press release: "Our commitment to science fiction,

fantasy, and horror is just as strong as ever. It is still our mandate to publish the best short fiction in these genres that we can find. But in keeping with our new medium, Cyberspace, OMNI will be able to offer the SF community other things as well. With the leadership of our accomplished long-time fiction editor, Ellen Datlow, we hope to create, under the OMNI umbrella, a hub for your community inside our site. We will offer chat spaces, workshops, roundtables, and bulletin boards for those who want a place to pursue their passion, or just 'hang.' And, Ellen has already begun the process of opening the OMNI doors to the best, most distinguished, and most interesting of the SF, fantasy, and horror groups. Please contact her if you are interested in becoming part of the OMNI site as well. Also feel free to e-mail me (Pamela Weintraub) at pam.weintraub@generalmedia.com or Ellen at EllenDat@aol.com or ellen.datlow@generalmedia.com with any ideas.

I talked during ConQuest to Stephel Pagel, one of the co-editors for the BENDING THE LANDSCAPE anthology series. Although the fantasy and sf volumes are now full, they have only filled about 20 percent of the horror volume so it's still worth your time and postage to submit something there.

NEW LISTINGS

BRANDED MONKEY, P.O. Box 892586, Oklahoma City, OK 73189-2586. Fiction Editor: Eldridge Stimmel. Poetry Editor: Amanda Price. New small press magazine scheduled to debut the first week of September. They are reading through Aug. 10, 1996, for the premiere issue. Length: 3,000 words. Payment: 2 copies. "No splatterpunk, erotica, or stories promoting hate. No simultaneous submissions. Reprints are acceptable. Novel chapters or portions of longer works acceptable as long as they stand on their own. Submit 2-6 poems, any style, no minimum or maximum lengths. Each poem should be titled and on a separate sheet." Asking for one-time rights. Return time: 2 months or less.

DEADLY BEAUTIES, P.O. Box 63017, Dundas, Ontario L9H 4H0, Canada. Editor: Dawn Brookes. An erotic sf anthology buying stories with strong female characters "who use their charm, wit, and sexual power to achieve their objectives. In futuristic societies and alternate world scenarios these independent femme fatales are lust and destruction in one intriguing character . . . stories must have intriguing plots built on the sf premise and sensual erotic thrills involving well defined characters . . . please keep horror and supernatural elements to the absolute minimum." Length: 3,500-7,500 words. Payment: 2 cents/word (more for

exceptional work at the editors' discretion) upon publication.

NEW WORLDS, West Grange, Ferring Grange Gardens, Ferring, West Sussex, BN12 5HS, United Kingdom. Editor: David Garnett. White Wolf Press has contracted to publish the next two volumes of **NEW WORLDS**. The first will come out in Aug., 1997, the second a year after that. Send disposable manuscripts with either two international reply coupons or a dollar bill to cover return postage. Wants the best in contemporary sf, no fantasy or horror. Payment: £70/thousand words.

SHOCKWAVES, Permeable Press, 2336 Market St. #14, San Francisco, CA 94114. Editor: Brian Clark. A new quarterly "high quality zine/art book . . . I'm my usual open-minded very picky self—surprise me!" Length: up to 15,000 words. Payment: 1/2 cent/word upon publication. Return time: 2 months. Sample: \$4. 1 year: \$12.

SYMPHONIE'S GIFT, SG Print, 2512 Loveland Ave. #3, Erie, PA 16506. Editor: None listed. Magazine looking for "action/adventure stories based upon a real or fictitious past or a vision of the future." Length: up to 10,000 words. Payment: \$10 per story up to 2 cents/word, depending on length. Return time: usually under 2 weeks.



"Boy, everyone's really out wandering the streets tonight. . . I tell you, Charles, we're getting to be real home zombies."

***** MANY THANKS TO *****

KDW
Barbara
Richard
Steven J. York
Syd Synic
Alicia Rasley
Chris and J. Steven York

***** SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION *****

One year's subscription to *Son of GPIC*, the official newsletter of the Oklahoma Science Fiction Writers, may be obtained by mailing a check or money order in the amount of \$13.00 (\$18 per household) to:

K.D. Wentworth, Treasurer
10804 E. 27th Street
Tulsa, OK 74129
(Checks should be made out to K.D. Wentworth)

Please note: An "X" on your mailing label indicates OSFW has no record of either 1996 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.** Membership dues are \$13.00 per year, adjusted by nearest quarter, which includes a subscription to GPIC. Checks should be made out to K.D. Wentworth, and may be sent to K.D. at the address above.

***** 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 DOS disk (720k or 1.4 meg. — no 2.8 meg). 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 internet:mccaffes.vyvx1@gw.twc.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 July issue: June 25

We look forward to seeing you all!