



Brought to you by: K.D. Wentworth, Uncle Guido and Simon McCaffery

Special "Ode to Plastic Clarity" Issue • September 1999

*** HELLO, OSFW! ***

The September meeting was held Friday, Sept. 10th, at 7:00 P.M., at the home of Warren and Lana Brown, 6012 S. Pittsburgh Ave., Tulsa. Directions: Hopefully you drove down 61st Street between Harvard and Yale to Pittsburgh Ave., across the street from Kirk 'O the Hills Presbyterian Church. Hopefully you turned north. The house was on your left (and it still is).

*** UNLOCAL NEWS ***

Noted Irish sf author James White died in August. He is probably best remembered for his SECTOR GENERAL series of novels and short stories.

Anne McCaffrey's DRAGON series will come to TV sometime next year as a combination of computer animation and live action.

Terry Pratchett's WYRD SISTERS has been made into an animated series and is being released as a three volume set for \$39.95. You can find more information at www.acornmedia.com.

FARSCAPE has been renewed. SLIDERS has not.

Hasbro has just acquired Wizards of the Coast.

Check out this writer's workshop:
<http://www.randomhouse.com/delrev/workshop/>

OSFW member Leslie Miller recently tied the knot with Kate Coffee at a casual lakeside ceremony on Saturday August 21st. A coin was tossed to see who

would go down the aisle first. Kate won. A reception followed and guests were encouraged to swim in the lake. The pair plan on honeymooning in New Hampshire.

*** HUGO RESULTS ***

Novel: TO SAY NOTHING OF THE DOG by
Connie Willis

Novella: "Oceanic" by Greg Egan

Novelette: "Taklamakan" by Bruce Sterling

Short Story: "The Very Pulse of the Machine" by
Michael Swanwick

*** LOCAL NEWS ***

Simon left MCI WorldCom to accept a position at Williams Communications in International Product Development. His new e-mail address for GPIC submissions: simon.mccaffery@wilcom.com

The Celebration of Books will be held at OSU-Tulsa on Oct. 1-2. Registration is \$65. The sf panel on Saturday will include C.J. Cherryh, Jane Fancher, K.D. Wentworth, Earl Hamner, and George Stanley. You can register in advance or pay at the door. Books of all participating panelists will be available at the conference and autographings are scheduled after each panel. For more information, call Teresa Miller at 918-594-8215.

Michael Keller's article appeared online in THE LINUX JOURNAL.

Brad Sinor sold "11-7" to SUCH A PRETTY FACE and two articles to the LAWTON CONSTITUTION. His short story "Central Park" was published in the

anthology MERLIN. He received an Honorable Mention in Dozois's YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION for "Back in the Real World."

Simon's story, "Wave Goodbye," appeared in the October issue of ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE.

K.D. Wentworth sold an original essay to Bridge Publications for this year's edition of the WRITERS OF THE FUTURE anthology. Her story "River's Child" was published in the August issue of MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY'S FANTASY MAGAZINE. She received an Honorable Mention in Dozois's YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION for "Tall One." She now has a webpage at <http://www.ionet.net/~richard-11/>

*** GOOD REJECTIONS ***

Brad Sinor: FASF

Greg Lower: E-SCAPE, SPACE & TIME, X-ODDITY, THE LEADING EDGE

K.D. Wentworth: SF AGE, DARK REGIONS

Simon: EXTREMES

*** CONTINUUM ***

August, 1999

Getting Down (in the Cyber Cafe)

by KDW

We had thirteen freshly scrubbed and eager, well, eager, anyway, souls at the August meeting. We talked about everyone not present (yes—you!), speculated on the future, and heard three stories, including a long-awaited debut from one faithful member. Sometimes, life is good.

Randy Farran: Randy surprised us with "No Place Like Home," his first, but we hope not last, fictional effort. This is the story of technophobe Martin who has a "smart-house" foisted upon him by his corporation, Future Homes, Inc., as an experiment. Matters quickly begin to deteriorate when the house tries to design a new dogfood based upon "dirty socks, used Kleenexes, and small dead animals" for the resident pet, then advises Martin's date about her diet and weight. I liked the strong comedic voice and

sense of irony.

Brad Sinor: Brad read a story destined for a Dracula anthology, which chronicles Dracula's little known flirtation with light opera. After rescuing an actor from bandits, Dracula decides he would like to play the Pirate King in a London revival of THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE. I liked the historical setting and the notion of Dracula being willing to take on even this challenge. I wonder if the master has any current notion to star in CATS?

*** POETRY CORNER ***

Ode to Plastic Clarity

Lucite blocks
they help our stocks
with knowledge for
our minions

Like a metronome
made of stone
they capture
our opinions

Our net runs data
at the speed of light
and voice
and future visions

And meeting consensus
roadblocked by hesitance
stays locked
in Lucite prisons

— Warren Brown

*** THE ICE PICK ***

by Diana Carolyn Ice

BEYOND STYLE: MASTERING THE FINER POINTS OF WRITING, by Gary Provost. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1988. ISBN 0-89879-314-9. \$14.95.

If you are writing, but not selling yet, or selling, but not as often as you'd like, this book may be the one you need to help you become a professional writer. Aimed more at the amateur writer than the beginner, this book addresses the "fancier" aspects of writing: identification, metaphor, pacing, plot tension,

proportion, slant, subtlety, symbolism, theme, etc.

After a "brief refresher course on style," Provost discusses pacing and the fact that most readers nowadays want a fast-paced book. From your opening words, Provost says, you must keep your story moving with lots of "things happening," rather than the acres of description that bog down most beginning writers. Among other techniques, he shows how the careful use of transitions can help you control story pace. But the most important thing, he says, is to "leave out the boring stuff."

Readers also demand a unified story that doesn't wander all over. But unity, Provost explains, also means that your story should sound as if it were all written at one sitting. If too much time elapses or there is an interruption (like a vacation) while writing your first draft, your frame of mind, your writing style, and your tone may change, leading to an unevenness in your story that is disturbing to your reader.

I found something of value in every chapter. For example, in his chapter on originality he says you must avoid stereotypes, not only with characters. Not all beaches are sunny. Some are rainy, and "often the shore is littered with seaweed or that other disgusting stuff that looks like knots of dead snakes."

Although the book can be read profitably by a beginner, Provost assumes that you have done a lot of writing and have a serious commitment to your craft, that you understand the basics of grammar and have done a great deal of reading.

"If you're frustrated with your writing, if you're growing pessimistic, if you are sometimes visited with despair," perhaps you need to move beyond the basics of using active verbs and avoiding cliches, and master the "invisible issues" of credibility, imagery, originality, tension, and unity.

The index is too brief and is annoying incomplete. But overall, it's a great book, and I recommend it highly.

*** MARKET UPDATE ***

by KDW

CHANGES

ADVENTURES IN SWORD & SORCERY has a

new address: P.O. Box 807, Xenia, OH 45385.

E-SCAPE is closed.

ALTERED PERCEPTIONS is rumored to be dead.

AMAZING is rumored to not be reading.

MAELSTROM has a new address: 3645 Chatham Dr., Palm Harbor, FL 34684.

NEW LISTINGS

THE FIREFLY: A Journal of Magical Experiences, P.O. Box 6301, Concord, CA 94524. Editor: Bobbi Sinha-Morey. New magazine seeking f/df/sf/folklore/mythology/wicca poetry and fiction (original and reprint). Emphasis is on poetry. Length for fiction: 1,000-3,500 words. Payment: 1 cent/word. Guidelines are long and specific so be sure to send for them at the above address or IsedMorey@aol.com. No e-mail subs.

FLICKER, Blood Doll Press, P.O. Box 835, Springfield, LA 70462. Editor: Chris Bevard. Horror magazine/anthology looking for "intense, original, disturbing fiction . . . nothing will be considered too taboo (with the exception of child abuse/sex) . . . no gratuitous gore or sex: I realize small doses of both have their place from time to time." No reprints. Send a disposable manuscript, SASE, and a short bio. E-mail subs okay at blooddoll33@angelfire.com. Paste the story into the body of your message. Length: 5,000 words. Payment: 1/4 cent/word and one contributor's copy. Buying one-time rights.

GAUNTLET: The Magazine of Heroic Tales, 423 E. 111th Pl., Northglenn, CO 80233. Editor: George Smith. New sf/f magazine. Length: 5,000 words. Payment: \$5/story. Sample: \$5. \$20/year.

SOMETHING WICKED, P.O. Box 8214, Warwick, RI 02888. Editor: Ms. Sandy DeLuca. New magazine buying dark, disturbing tales, supernatural, shadowy themes. "No taboos, but no sex or blood or guts that is not integral to the story." **Reading only until Nov. 1, 1999. Length: 3,000 words. Payment: \$20/story upon publication.

SPIKE BOOKS, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. Editor: Tom Dupree. New line from Avon Books to publish fiction either about pop culture or which presents pop culture in a new way. Open to sf and f. Submit a query, synopsis, and first chapter.

STRANGE FICTION, P.O. Box 1207, Ashland, NH
03217-1207. Editor: Michelle Keener. Buying
speculative/sf/f/h fiction and poetry. Payment: \$10.

***** THE TURKEY CITY LEXICON –
PART THREE *****

A Primer for SF Workshops

Edited by Lewis Shiner
(Not copyrighted)

As graciously provided by Ojvind Bernander and
supplemented by Critters.

USED FURNITURE

Use of a background out of Central Casting. Rather
than invent a background and have to explain it, or
risk reinventing the wheel, let's just steal one. We'll
set it in the Star Trek Universe, only we'll call it the
Empire instead of the Federation.

SPACE WESTERN

The most pernicious suite of used furniture. The
grizzled space captain swaggering into the spacer
bar and slugging down a Jovian brandy, then laying
down a few credits for a space hooker to give him a
Galactic Rim Job.

THE EDGES OF IDEAS

The solution to the Info Dump problem (how to fill
in the background). The theory is that, as above, the
mechanics of an interstellar drive (the center of the
idea) is not important: all that matters is the impact
on your characters: they can get to other planets in a
few months, and, oh yeah, it gives them
hallucinations about past lives. Or, more radically,
the physics of TV transmission is the center of an
idea: on the edges of it we find people turning into
couch potatoes because they no longer have to leave
home for entertainment. Or, more bluntly: we don't
need info dump at all. We just need a clear picture of
how people's lives have been affected by their
background. This is also known as "carrying
extrapolation into the fabric of everyday life."

THE GRUBBY APARTMENT STORY

Writing too much about what you know. The kind of
story where the starving writer living in the grubby
apartment writes a story about a starving writer in a
grubby apartment. Stars all his friends.

The following entries are additions suggested by

members of Critters:

INFOHIDING

Withholding crucial information from the reader that
the POV knows. Used to create cheap tension
without having a necessarily tense plot. "Bob felt all
his energy focused as he pried off the heavy lid from
the sarcophagus. Bob knew from the hieroglyphics
what he'd find. Upon seeing its wondrous contents,
he suddenly knew how he would wreak his revenge
upon Anne. He heard a noise. 'Keep back; you know
me—you know I'll shoot,' Bob warned the advancing
figure." This jars the reader out of the POV's view,
reminding them there's an Author out there pulling
the strings. Solution: tell the reader outright
anything the POV sees/knows that is of relevance, if
it's not a tense item in itself, chances are it will be a
letdown when the reader does find out, so make the
thing itself tense, and let the reader share it with the
POV. Alternatively, if you need to keep something
hidden, present it from a POV who can't find out
what's in there either, then the reader is not
reminded they're not the POV (though the hidden
thing itself should still be interesting and worthy of
being hidden). [suggested by Andrew Burt]

AUTHOR NEEDS YOU TO KNOW

Dialog or action that blatantly has no purpose other
than to educate the reader about some important
story detail. Usually a failed attempt to smoothly
work in an infodump, cousin of the As You Know,
Bob. "Do you really need it spelled out?" Bob ranted.
"We [followed by explanation]..." Or, "So, boss,
remind me what time I'm supposed to whack the
president." Or, "Say, Captain, do we have enough
fuel to reach Tau Ceti, our destination, in our
scheduled time of six months?" [suggested by
Andrew Burt]

THE CAPITALIZATION SYNDROME OF DEATH

This is where the author, for some reason or another,
feels like every Word deserves Capitalization so to
heighten its Importance. Found most often in fantasy
novels. [suggested by John Meyer]

RANDOM HUNTING AND PECKING

Writing words that are not pronounceable. Like
Lymplpsdash to describe a foreign language.
[suggested by John Meyer]

MACARTHUR

A bad manuscript which "shall return." [suggested
by Amy Sterling Casil]

THE RUG JERK

Any gratuitous plot or character twist tossed in solely to jerk the rug out from under the reader for the sake of surprise or shock, without sufficient foundation, foreshadowing, or justification (retroactive or otherwise). Essentially any story twist that violates Chekhov's principles: "If you fire a gun in Act III, it must seen on the wall in Act I; and if you show a gun on the wall in Act I, it must be fired in Act III." The Rug Jerk fires the gun without showing it first or explaining where it came from afterwards.
[suggested by Stephen J. Barringer]

THE RESET SWITCH, AKA THE REBOOT

Any device that allows the writer to completely erase any already-occurred events of a story and bring the characters back to a predefined starting point, with little or no changes to them or their universe. Time travel ("It never happened"), parallel universes ("It never happened *here*"), unconscious duplicates ("We're all just clones/simulations/androids of the REAL characters!") have all been used this way. To be avoided unless the existence of such a phenomenon is, itself, the story's or series' central plot point (as in *The Man Who Folded Himself* or Barringer).

*** THINGS YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW WITHOUT THE MOVIE INDUSTRY ***

Large, loft-style apartments in New York City are well within the price range of most people--whether they are employed or not.

At least one of a pair of identical twins is born evil.

Should you decide to defuse a bomb, don't worry which wire to cut. You will always choose the right one.

Most laptop computers are powerful enough to override the communications system of any invading alien society.

It does not matter if you are heavily outnumbered in a fight involving martial arts -- your enemies will wait patiently to attack you one by one by dancing around in a threatening manner until you have knocked out their predecessors.

When you turn out the light to go to bed, everything in your bedroom will still be clearly visible, just slightly bluish.

When they are alone, all foreign military officers

prefer to speak to each other in English.

If you are blonde and pretty, it is possible to become a world expert on nuclear fission at the age of 22.

Honest and hard working policemen are traditionally gunned down three days before their retirement.

Rather than wasting bullets, megalomaniacs prefer to kill their archenemies using complicated machinery involving fuses, pulley systems, deadly gasses, lasers, and man-eating sharks, which will allow their captives at least 20 minutes to escape.

During all police investigations, it will be necessary to visit a strip club at least once.

All beds have special L-shaped cover sheets that reach up to the armpit level on a woman but only to waist level on the man lying beside her.

All grocery shopping bags contain at least one stick of French bread.

It's easy for anyone to land a plane providing there is someone in the control tower to talk you down.

Once applied, lipstick will never rub off -- even while scuba diving.

You're very likely to survive any battle in any war unless you make the mistake of showing someone a picture of your sweetheart back home.

Should you wish to pass yourself off as a German or Russian officer, it will not be necessary to speak the language. A German or Russian accent will do. (It used to be an English accent for the German).

The Eiffel Tower can be seen from any window in Paris.

A man will show no pain while taking the most ferocious beating but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds.

If a large pane of glass is visible, someone will be thrown through it before long.

If staying in a haunted house, women should investigate any strange noises in their most revealing underwear.

Word processors never display a cursor on screen but will always say: Enter Password Now.

Even when driving down a perfectly straight road, it is necessary to turn the steering wheel vigorously from left to right every few moments.

All bombs are fitted with electronic timing devices with large red readouts so you know exactly when they're going to go off.

A detective can only solve a case once he has been suspended from duty.

If you decide to start dancing in the street, everyone you meet will know all the steps.

Police departments give their officers personality tests to make sure they are deliberately assigned a partner who is their total opposite.

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

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

A 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), prorated by quarter, to:

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

Please note: An "X" on your mailing label

indicates OSFW has no record of either 1999 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 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 Oct. issue: September 29.