

# The Devniad

## Book 44

un zine de Bob Devney

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### Orbita Dicta

#### Heard in the halls of Ditto 11

#### "A Fun, Friendly, Fanzine Convention" Newport Harbor Hotel, Newport, RI November 7, 1998

*Actually the con ran Friday through Sunday, November 6-8. But I could only make it for Saturday. According to Maureen this limitation was explicitly stated during my wedding vows in 1981; I must have missed it in all the excitement at the time, with the psychic castration and all ...*

*In technical terms, this was a "fanzine relaxacon." The relaxacon part means that the sitting-aroundedness factor was high. There were four scheduled discussion group items, though (one of which actually focused on zines, or at least how technology affects zine style) so that panel junkies like meself wouldn't have to self-medicate with antipsychotics to avoid the unstructured conversation bends.*

*(Did you know that the antipsychotics — neuroleptic drugs such as acetophenazine, mesoridazine, promazine, and our old friend Thorazine — are known familiarly by their own special coterie of devoted, really fun-loving fans as "zines"? Oops ... maybe you did. Sorry.)*

*"Relaxacon" also means the body count was low. I make it 34 people total including Liana Hertel, whose opinions on Ted White's bloody-mindedness, Andy Hooper's putative elitism, the trouble with Corflu, or whether APazines count for, well, anything seemed a tad immature. (Of course, for Liana, Harlie would count as an older man.)*

*Holding the con in Newport meant that my walk from the parking garage was magical, with a fresh breeze off the water. You could see boats bobbing merrily at anchor, too, their sterns*

*festooned with names so simple-mindedly imaginative they might have been fanzines.*

*(I'll attach my own example, The Dittiad one-shot, to the end of this issue, for flavor.)*

*The consuite had a nice view of the harbor, although I didn't see anybody actually look out.*

*And finally, when talk of stencils and prose styles had drained our fuel cells, we all fell massively upon the restaurants of Newport like peckish sumo wrestlers ...*

*[I wasn't there, so have to take Sarah Prince's word [from her photo-bestrewn con report at <http://world.std.com/~ssprince/ditto11.html>] for the events of Friday evening ... but her story has the ring of truth]*

*To begin with, there was a lot of just sitting around.*

*[Once I showed up Saturday afternoon, though, things really got rolling, with scheduled program events and everything; starting with fan-at-law Deb Geisler's discussion on The First Amendment and Fan Writing]*

*To libel somebody, it's got to be injurious to reputation and it's got to be published ...*

*Libel is the serious tort. Slander, you're not going to get much.*

*[Emboldened, Leah Smith promptly slanders a certain fan/editor/controversialist]*

*Actually nobody thinks libel applies to fandom except people who sue Ted White.*

*... Traditionally, it's felt that lawsuits are not fannish.*

*Although there are a variety of fan publications that are specifically designed to libel people.*

*[Dick Smith fondly reminisces about a lawsuit in the mid-1980s centering around a zine yclept The Cult]*

It was an APA founded by Peter *[didn't catch name here]* and Ted White ... there were 13 recipients in the inner circle. They always *did* have the reputation of being the 13 nastiest bastards in fandom ...

I was Number 6.

*[The judge must have found his first look at fandom somewhat surreal]*

George Scithers' copies of *The Cult* going back to the 50s were delivered in evidence.

*[Geisler cautions that fighting grime doesn't pay]*

A recent study found that the average libel suit costs \$180,000 to pursue.

The average verdict is \$160,000.

*[And it seems there's more than one way to pub your ish]*

The definition of what's "publishing" is interesting, of course. Libel hasn't had to be just written since radio.

Radio, TV, of course the Internet — they can all access that significant portion of the population that's required for something to be libelous.

Slander has trouble meeting that "published" standard. Slander is small groups.

*[Con co-organizer Mark Olson]*

That's what we'll do later, then —

*[Geisler feloniously purloins his line]*

— Yes, we'll break up into small slander groups!

*[Apparently it's unlikely, despite a groundswell of opinion among decent fans everywhere, that The Devniad will ever actually get me sent to the electric chair]*

Hyperbole and parody are protected, to a certain extent ... Opinions are protected. Intended statements of fact are not.

*[But that bimbo Sharyn McCrumb was just begging to be hauled aboard the next official mail rocket to the Death Sun]*

If somebody is sufficiently identified *[by context, description, etc.]* ... they don't have to be mentioned by name ...

*[And Geisler better hope she never has to try a case in front of the Supremes, once they get a load of how she really feels]*

The *United States versus Sullivan* was the single worst decision the Supreme Court ever made.

It shifted the traditional burden of proof ... Now a public official or public figure claiming libel must prove the material is false.

*[If John Boardman really believes the following, he doesn't know New York Republicans]*

I doubt that anyone would come down on me for referring to the mayor as Rudi Cthuluiani ...

*[For some reason, Geisler (of all people ... just kidding, Deb) starts talking about chastity]*

In our modern society, when push comes to shove —

*[Co-organizer Priscilla Olson says don't go there]*

I wouldn't use those words ...

*[Although a little later, Leah Smith makes another penetrating comment]*

There are people who feel that fandom isn't any fun unless you're getting up someone's nose.

*[Smith indicates that her colleagues back at the newspaper know how to cover more than just news]*

Nearly every sentence in our Police Blotter section ends with the words, "police said."

*[Dick Smith is also careful to attribute this opinion to someone else]*

Ted White basically wrote that the attendees at Ditto were boring —

*[But not fearless Mark Olson]*

— Truth is a defense!

*[As Priscilla Olson's Proud and Lonely discussion of current fandom gets going, Linda Bushyeager is indeed the first and pretty determined not to let herself feel the second]*

That audience — the younger people coming into the fandom we have to regenerate it — that's gone and it's not coming back. Forget it ... Looking around the room, we're all part of a certain generation of fans. Let's admit it. That new generation is not here ...

Our roots are in Hugo Gernsback and the pulps. These others, their roots are in *Star Trek* ... There may be an SF fandom in 50 years, but it won't be the one we know ... We should just enjoy the fandom we have as long as we can.

*[Leah Smith may agree with Bushyeager's general point, but girlishly differs about one teensy detail]*

I'm sorry, I *don't* consider I'm in the same fannish generation as you.

*[In talking about fandom as a big tent containing all kinds of campers, I untermenschily commit a misquotation]*

As Nietzsche said, "I am large, I contain multitudes."

*[Whereupon half the fans in the room immediately jump me like starving accuracy vampires who haven't seen an exposed neck for centuries)]*

That wasn't Nietzsche ... Not Nietzsche .... Wasn't Nietzsche, wazzit? .... That was Whitman ... Whitman ... Yeah, Walt Whitman!

*[Dick Smith believes some delivery channels are silted up]*

Barnaby Rapaport decided he was going to test one kind of outreach to build more fanzine fans. He put fanzines on freebie tables at cons.

I think this has now been *proven* ... not to work.

*[Younger fan Gary Hunnewell has been LOTR'ing in the row behind me]*

I'm in fringe fandom, in a way. That is, Tolkien fandom. It's really active ...

There were 100 different Tolkien fanzines published last year, easily. And every group has a different slant.

I just got one from Slovenian Tolkien fans ... There are the Norwegians, who are strict and write things. The Swedes, who dress up and put on big banquets. And the Japanese — who *knows* what they do, I can't read their fanzines.

*[Bravely rebounding from my earlier Whitman gaffe, I offer more indisputable wisdom]*

It's not just Tolkien. There are scores of other fanzine fandoms out there.

Several times a year there's a thick magazine, that comes out just with little profiles — and it has a page or two profiling a bunch of our zines, as well as skateboard zines and rock music zines and lots of others. Is it *File 770*?

*[Which Dick Smith promptly disputes]*

I think you mean *Fact Sheet 5*.

*[I know I missed all but the end of this amazing riff from Priscilla about old-line fans and the newer generation, but did I also miss this part in biology class?]*

... Or the dinosaurs adopt the mammals and make little dinosaurs.

*[Later, husband Mark gets in the obligatory reference to Disclave]*

Every once in a while you need a flood to wash away the dinosaur bones.

*[Mark Keller may have Newport mistaken for Nantucket]*

We're on one little island of the huge SF archipelago, looking around and saying, "Where are all the people?"

*[Priscilla Olson breaks all the rules and mentions an actual work of science fiction]*

One of my 6th graders is reading *Mission of Gravity*. Thinks it's a good story but the characters are flat —

*[John Boardman, who has been waiting for someone to say this since Hal Clement published the thing in 1953, pounces]*

— It's a heavy-gravity world. Of course the characters are flat!

*[Ever alert for an opportunity to plug NESFA Press's upcoming three-volume Hal Clement series, Tony Lewis does so with stealthy style]*

Tom Disch just published a book called *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of*. It's a study of SF. And Disch thinks there's one SF author who was worthwhile.

And that's Hal Clement.

*[When I observe that several 20-somethings I've met recently at work, etc., say they like science fiction and give as their favorite author Isaac Asimov, Lewis responds]*

Asimov is still popular because most of his stuff, even these years after his death, is still in print. And that's because he had it written into all his contracts that if a book went out of print, the rights reverted to him.

*[As always, Mark Olson oozes useful historical perspective]*

I can't see that our kind of fandom is shrinking ... For instance, the active membership of NESFA has been stable for 30 years. Counting active members only, now. It's always been about 30 people.

*[Leah Smith thinks fannish reproduction is more hard work and less fun than you might suppose]*

If you want to bring someone into fandom, you have to have dinner with them at every convention for a year.

... I think Linda's point earlier is right. We're dying out ... the analogy to the Shakers is pretty close.

... In the sense of Ditto being for the "fanzine fan," "fanzine" is a kind of code word. You can't just say "trufan" or people get upset.

*[In a fascinating little side discussion, it turns out that Leah knows a cool word for a phrase that describes technology outdated by a later development, said older technology being then labeled by a variant of said newer development]*

— you know, like "silent movie" or "acoustic guitar"?)

It's called a retronym.

*[Somebody sitting around contributed the following nice capper to the discussion, but I can't say who because I was too worried about fandom]*

I was at Boskone II in 1966, and there was the same big discussion of how fandom had changed and we should be worried.

*[After Mark Olson bestows one of the committee's nicest touches — a metal replacement statuette for his lost 1967 fanzine Hugo — Guest of Honor Ed Meekys is interviewed (or, at any rate, listened to) by Tony Lewis, starting with fannish things firsts]*

In the 1950s, the LA fans would gush and gush about something new every few months, in their zine SHAGGY and their APazines. Two things were, John Myers Myers' *Silverlock* — and Tolkien.

This was several years before the paperback editions.

*[Meekys gets the Tolkien hobbit early in the titanic trilogy]*

I finally read *Lord of the Rings* over Christmas '61, on vacation from graduate school — when I was supposed to do all this work on my thesis. I got to the part where the Dark Riders were crossing the river and were swept away ...

I stopped working on my thesis *[audience laughter]*. And started reading it 16 hours a day.

*[Meekys establishes some landmark dates]*

I ran the Tolkien Society for 5 years, starting in 1967, and arranged for it to merge with the Mythopoeic Society ... Got married in '69 ... I lost my sight in November '71.

*[The world is full of dark doppelgangers]*

Then there was Al Lewis.

The tyrannical Al Lewis, I mean.

There were two Al Lewises in fandom: the tyrannical Al Lewis and the friendly Al Lewis ... anyway, at this point the tyrannical Al Lewis decided to make something useful out of the N3F [audience laughter, perhaps at the very idea].

[A big music fan, Meekys got into G&S shortly after F&SF]

At one time, we had about 150 fans at a time going to a single Gilbert and Sullivan performance by the Lamplighters, in San Francisco ... We'd all attend, then party until 4 or 5 a.m. at Tony Boucher's house.

Once we invited the cast, and they came.

[I think Tony Lewis, not Ed, told this one; he must have got a few words in edgewise]

Alma Hill called our Guest of Honor, Damon Knight, and told him we were liars and the con had been canceled! Because she'd called the hotel and they didn't know anything about us.

And we said, "Alma, it isn't at that hotel. It's at —" some other hotel. And she said, "OK, I believe you, but I'll just call the hotel tomorrow and check."

That's the kind of thing she would do.

[Sounds pretty familiar to me]

Her spirit lives on in fandom.

[Meekys isn't averse to modern technology, but some SF net discussion groups can get a little — make that a lot — much]

I was on Timebinders for a while, but got off when there were fifteen hundred messages waiting for me after a week's vacation.

[Meekys talks about his family moniker and his fanzine, neither of which lend themselves to quick sightreading anywhere too far west of Vilnius]

The name is pronounced MES-kish.

Niekas — nuh-YEK-us — is the Lithuanian word for "nothing." Because when I started it, with the June of 1962 N'APA mailing ... it was just my little APA, my little nothing.

It grew out of my genzine *Polhode* ... That name came from a sentence I liked in a physics book: "The polhode rolls without slipping on the herpolhode lying in the invariable plane."

... I remember once Peggy Rae McKnight, now Peggy Rae Pavlat, was doing her own little fanzine, *Etwas*. She sent me *Etwas* for *Niekas* — something for nothing!

[Remember, fans read everything and are prone to addiction; so when a fan named Marcia Brown mailed a Georgette Heyer book to Bjo Trimble, she got a postcard back a week later]

It said, "Pushers are the lowest form of life."

[But that same Regency romance bug also led to the creation of one of the most charming series in SF history ... Lewis takes up the story]

Alex Panshin got it from Marcia too ... and ended up writing the three Anthony Villiers novels.

And sold the fourth one to Ace. Which never got written. There's an outline, but nothing else.

[With all the books SF Chronicle reviewer Don D'Amassa reads (and that's about what he reads: all the books), seems like he'd still like to see that one ... you and me both, Don]

*The Universal Pantograph*.

[Did you ever notice that, since Tony Lewis knows everything, all his questions are statements?]

And you were co-editor with Charley Brown of *Locus*.

[Meekys won't claim much credit]

Yes, I was going to do some of the work. But that didn't last long.

What is interesting is how it got the name *Locus*. It got to where the leading candidates were *Locus* and *Little Green Men*. LGM was what astronomers then were calling pulsars, which were new things. They might be intentional beacons, turned on by LGMs.

Charley didn't feel strongly either way, at the party where it got decided ... What finally settled it was that if a whole bunch of news came out close together and we did all these little separate issues, it would be a plague of *Locuses*.

*[Ditto co-conspirator Bob Webber launches into his program item about Technology's Effects on Style]*

Coming to the end of a stencil or of a page in the typewriter can stimulate a certain kind of creativity. You get to the end of the stencil and you begin to think that maybe you don't have to comment on *everything* somebody said ...

*[And everything is the economy, stupid]*

The costs of printing having gone down, you see more white space in APAs.

*[Meekys hates it when they build nests on the web]*

My biggest gripe against writing that's influenced by technology is that I *wish* people on the net would put the quote at the end. If they have to quote what somebody said, don't put a quote or a quote of a quote right in the middle of what you're saying. Save it for the end for those who need to be reminded of the reference.

I got up to four nested quotes on Timebinders.

*[Some dinosaurs still roam the planet leaving their characteristic ribbon-shaped coprolites and shaking the earth with the pounding of their space bars, according to Mark Olson]*

I got our introduction recently for a Hal Clement book we're doing at NESFA Press. It was from Poul Anderson.

And it was typewritten.

Oh, there were some changes written in. But almost exclusively changing one word for another. I guess when you've been a professional long enough, you can do that ...

*[Dick Smith circles back to Webber's original example]*

When you make a mistake in the stencil, you start to think, well, how can I use this

letter anyway? Let's see, what word starts with "p" ...

*[I'm sure Webber has only heard of the following shameful practice]*

Ego scanning is different in the electronic world. You can do a search, and read only the stuff that's written directly for me.

*[Describing newspaper styles, Leah Smith says only hard news stories need that classic upside-down pyramid]*

A feature story is supposed to be more like an hourglass. The less important stuff is in the middle.

*[To John Boardman, the headline is the thing]*

There was the story about the dentist who raped one of his patients. The headline was "Dentist fills wrong cavity."

*[In the official Ditto one-shot, I think I had Leah Smith talking about first-class permits; but on reviewing my squiggles, I think she moves down a class]*

If you're mailing under a second class permit, the Post Office requires that 25 percent of your content be editorial.

*[So the last panel breaks up, and we all dash out for dinner; I and the Hertels hurtle from one long restaurant waiting line to the other before finding refuge in a midscale Italian joint called Lucia's, where over dindin Mark Hertel recommends Sheri Tepper's Beauty]*

It's a weird retelling of the Sleeping Beauty story. She makes some jokes, and it's all dark and kinda bitter. You'd like it.

*[As current editor of Proper Boskonian, Lisa Hertel indulges in an editor's prerogative]*

In this issue, I take credit for your fan writer career.

*[Liana Hertel has fun aiding my exercise program by throwing her spoon to the floor and making me bend over to pick it up googolplex times, as she delightedly coaches me in the finer points of the Sitting Stomach-Compressing Toe-Touch]*

Gah!

*[Afterwards, everybody gets back to the consuite for some serious sitting around, and, as Elisabeth Carey demonstrates, conversational cluster bombing]*

What got both Galileo and Bruno in trouble was not their science, but that they picked fights with powerful people.

*[I just met the guy, but already it's apparent you can dip into a John Boardman conversation at any point and come out with two or three gems of significant insignificata]*

... There is more information on the front page of the *New York Times* than in a half-hour TV newscast.

... The Bogomil were somewhat more monotheistic than most.

... Did you ever hear the story about the artificial British sovereigns they manufactured in Italy?

*[Tony Lewis is ready for that last point]*

Yes, we told that one while you were out to dinner.

*[Meanwhile, in the bedroom, Leslie Turek and Alexis Layton appear to be constructing some kind of Eiffel-Towerish tesseract plastic construction thingie; Leslie explains how they came by their newest toy]*

We thought it was a science museum, but it turned out to be a science store. So we bought this Chaos toy.

Do we have any more little connectors that go *this way* ...?

*[In a brilliant display of parallel processing, Leslie keeps right on breaking all the laws of topology with her toy while engaging in a literary discussion of Robert Parker's new mystery series that started with Night Passage]*

The town of Paradise is really Marblehead, Massachusetts ... The scene I thought was really funny was the banquet at the yacht club with the horrible food.

Although maybe that was just because — I'm on a diet, so anything that brings up food issues is big with me right now.

*[Meanwhile, in the living room, Linda Bushyeager is bringing Hope Leibowitz up to date on important developments in modern American culture — apparently poor Hope has sadly neglected her critical TV viewing]*

Who's JonBenet Ramsey? A new writer?

*[On the sofa, as I introduce Ed Meekys to the joy of Twix bars, he talks about his constant companion]*

His name is Judge ... The third dog I've had. Yes, a golden retriever ...

No, I wasn't at all a dog person before I lost my sight. I believe that's worked to my advantage. They find in school that people who are too emotionally attached to the animals have trouble, sometimes a lot of trouble, with the disciplining they need to get the dog doing the job right.

*[At some point, Bob Webber, Dick Smith, and I are discussing Jell-O, and then some fan who made Jell-O for a living, and then I decide to display my esoteric knowledge of a Golden Ages SF writer's mundane career]*

And of course you both know what E. E. "Doc" Smith made for a living.

*[Instant riposte from Bob Webber, with a honey-glazed grin]*

I donut.

*[Mark Olson muses on SF Chronicle reviewer Don D'Ammassa and his epic obsession with The White Whale That Is a Page]*

Don reads fast, and he reads *everything*. He wants to be the only man alive who's read all of science fiction.

He figures that he's got a big head start. Years. And anybody who wants to beat him would have to read two or three times as fast to catch up.

*[Olson to your compliment-fishing narrator]*

I think you're the second-best fan writer in New England —

*[OK, drop the other shoe, Mark]*

— After Richard Harter. Have you seen his Web site? Unlike most personal sites,

he's actually doing something very creative and very interesting there.

*[Let's give the last word to Leah Smith, as she archetypally types in the con's single-shot]*

For Ditto, "fanzine fan" is a code word, not necessarily for someone who's currently producing lots of fanzine material. It's a fan who's into fandom itself.

And isn't, you know ... a jerk.



## Squibbles

They ran through some hilarious double-dip translations of movie titles — English to a foreign language and back again — on the Robin Young morning radio show (WBOS-FM) during an otherwise joyless commute one morning this month.

Two favorites:

The Taiwanese I believe translation of Pamela Anderson's big-breasted turkey *Barb Wire*. It ran in Taipei as *Delicate Orbs of Womanhood Bigger Than Your Head Can Hurt You*.

And some other Asian country screened the dreadful *Batman and Robin* under a title that must have been the most entertaining aspect of the entire showing: *Come to My Cave and Wear This Rubber Codpiece, Cute Boy*.

Meanwhile, somewhere on the Internet, the newspaper columnist Dave Barry distilled everything he's learned from his first 50 years into 25 little lessons.

I was particularly taken with No. 1: "The badness of a movie is directly proportional to the number of helicopters in it."

While everyone in SF fandom should take to heart No. 11: "There is a very fine line between 'hobby' and 'mental illness.'"

Finally, C-SPAN's Book TV camera caught SF writer and editor Ben Bova speaking to a big hall at a Sarasota, Florida book festival about his new "nonfiction" work, *Immortality*. Introducing him beforehand, the moderator droned on and on about Bova's scientific and engineering credentials, then mentioned he'd written "over 90 nonfiction works and futuristic fictions."

Which is as close as he or Bova ever got to saying the apparently-still-in-some-quarters-fighting words "science fiction."

## From "Deep Thoughts"

by Jack Handey

(on TV's old *Saturday Night Live*)

"Too bad there's not such a thing as a golden skunk, because you'd probably be proud to be sprayed by one."

## FlimFan

Yes, I saw a few movies this month. *Enemy of the State* was near excellent; *The Siege* and *Meet Joe Black* were good if somewhat disappointing; *What Dreams May Come* was decent though a bigger disappointment.

No, I didn't have time to finish any reviews.

Depending on how cruelly you beg me, maybe next month ...

## Backchat

on APA:NESFA #341, October 1998

### To Jim Mann

If you're hepped on Antarctica after reading Kim Stanley Robinson's book, besides *The Worst Journey in the World* I'd also recommend Roland Huntford's *Scott and Amundsen*, republished in 1985 as *The Last Place on Earth*. (His *Shackleton* is great too.) It was the source for the absolutely fantastic PBS TV dramatization of the same name, debunking Scott and praising Amundsen that year. If you can ever get your hand on the videotapes (might have been 12 parts?), it's some of the best TV ever.

Isn't the Antarctic *cool*?

### To Elisabeth Carey

It's a truism among my siblings that you don't mention the word "cat" to my sister Liz during a phone conversation unless

you've scheduled someone to come by an hour or so later, pluck the phone from your dangling paw, and explain to Liz, still happily burbling away on the other end, that you've gone to sleep now and will have to thrill to more exciting details about furballs and hissy fits next time.

Yet you, Elisabeth, manage to write about Slivovitz, Boone Farm, Gewürztraminer, or whatever your cats are called without inducing involuntary somnolence. In fact, you make it kinda interesting.

How do you *do* that?

### **To Paul Giguere**

Thanks for the answer on the telescope thing. Take glasses off, then apply eye to eyepiece — got it now, I think.

The idea of a NESFA star party does sound intriguing. *Pace* my wife Maureen, I might be interested in attending. After all, I'm a late-night sort of guy.

### **To Tony Lewis**

No one ever responds about the incredible — and incredibly valuable — work you and Mark Olson and perhaps a few others are doing in *The Index*. I silently marvel every time you refer to it ...

Glad you mentioned Vachel Lindsay and *The Congo*. One of my favorite poems as a teenager, perhaps more for the boomlay-boom rhythm than the historical background. I'd forgotten the (apparently richly deserved) slam it took at King Leopold of Belgium.

Once planned a collection of grisly factoids to be called *Devney's Book of Death*. (Should have acted then; have been scooped several times since, notably by Oxford University Press.) One joyous section would have been on unusual suicide methods.

They say Vachel Lindsay died by drinking Lysol.

### **To George Flynn**

Thanks for the date on Dickinson's *Walking Dead*, and all your other precisionamentos. Plus my gratitude for

helping to organize Ditto — I enjoyed myself.

Speaking of maddening English pronunciations, have you seen the many-paged poem circulating on the net? It was supposedly devised to educate (or frustrate) European NATO personnel re our many orthographic vagaries. Has the ones we all know ("Finally, which rhymes with enough — /though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?/ Hiccough has the sound of cup. My advice is to give up!") but other neat stuff too. ("Billet does not rhyme with ballet, / Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet" OR "We say hallowed, but allowed / People, leopard, towed, but vowed." Etc. etc. etc.

### **To Tom Endrey**

Fascinating article on why you won't go to Worldcons anymore, complete with an indictment of the Hugo voting rules and many slams aimed at the Secret Masters of Fandom.

Will be equally fascinating to see how all the SMOFs that get this APA respond ...

I can only say that cons and other fan activities are supposed to be all about enjoyment. If you stop enjoying it, Tom, you stop. Sounds reasonable to me.

Just hope you're still cool with fanzines, and coming to Boskone.

Oh, glad you liked *The Whole Wide World*, the movie about the courtship of Robert E. Howard. Just got a flyer from bookseller/publisher Donald Grant that the book is coming back into print. The picture of the young Novalyne Price Ellis on the flyer doesn't look at all like the actress (Renee Zellweger) who played her, but she's still a girl with a real sparkle in her eyes ...

Just got the new best-SF-art-of-the-year book, *Spectrum 5*. Would love to hear your well-informed opinion.

### **To Joe Ross**

Nice set of quotes, as always.

My favorite Sam Goldwynism was reported by screenwriter Garson Kanin. He'd heard and cherished other Goldwynisms, and on his first business meeting with the great Hollywood studio

head dared to hope that somehow one might arise during the course of their new relationship.

He didn't have long to wait. Kanin walks in the door the first day, and Goldwyn stands up to greet him and says, "David Niven tells me you're a very clever genius."

**To Mark Olson**

From your book roundup, seems like John Keegan's book on World War II and Robert Charles Wilson's bizarre *Darwinia* are the ones I should consider.

Thanks again to you, Priscilla, George F., and Bob Webber for organizing Ditto. Fun time for me. How did it stack up to others you've attended? Or heard about?

**To Anna Hillier**

Neat that you should have a report on your trip to Walt Disney world this issue. For my next issue of *The Devniad* I'm holding a long trip report from my sister Darcy on the very same place. She and her husband went last month, and 2 weeks after they got back they were still tired from having so much fun. One of the great vacations of their lives.

**To Nomi Burstein**

Thanks for the info on Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah. I read it almost simultaneously with a hilarious article on that broad subject in Mark Leeper's e-zine *MT Void*, which had things like this to say, or rather kvetch:

"I won't say that Jewish holidays are all unpleasant — mostly because I have been trained not to say it and I expect some sort of Divine Retribution. But I will say this ... [N]o matter how bad things got when I was growing up, I usually could tell myself at least it wasn't a Jewish holiday."

[Read all about it in the *MT Void* for 11/20/98, Vol 17, No. 21, archived at [www.geocities.com/Athens/4824](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/4824)]