

# **The Devniad**

## **Book 79c**

un zine de Bob Devney  
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### **News from the OI' Web-Slinger**

After years in suspended animation, *The Devniad* has its own up-to-date Web site again. Calooh, callay!

Credit goes to Webmaster Extraordinaire Dr. Robert Kuhn, my brother-in-law. Sensing I might not get around to this project unless prolong drugs got commercialized relatively soon, and knowing I remained perversely ignorant of the trifling technical requirements anyway, he selflessly did all the work himself. Curiously, without even asking me to supervise.

For maximum convenience (ours not yours of course, he said cheerfully), it's set up strictly as an archive site; click on a topic or ish number to download an Adobe Acrobat PDF of the entire relevant issue.

We promise fixes for the occasional blank pages and perhaps more-than-occasional typos sometime by the *next* millennium.

Oh, and while we're talking zine housekeeping: all of you now receiving *The Devniad* in a vanilla text e-mail version? Remember you can choose instead to receive it as a Word 2000 PC attached document, with the original more elegant formatting. Just zoom me an e-request and I'll jump right to it.

### **Random Quotation**

"Buying books would be a good thing if one could also buy the time to read them in; but as a rule the purchase of books is mistaken for the appropriation of their contents."

— Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

### **Orbita Dicta**

**Heard in the Halls of Boskone 39  
Sheraton Framingham Hotel  
Framingham, Massachusetts, U.S.A.  
February 15-17, 2002**

So I go to a science fiction convention and take (inadequate) notes on cool stuff I hear or overhear or imagine, then assemble them all for you with my own comments in brackets before.

At Boskone I also had the help of myriad operatives skulking in the shadows just when you thought you were safe because I wasn't around. A million thanks go to the invaluable James Marshall, the incredible Darcy Devney, the indomitable Bob Kuhn, and the inimitable Michael Devney, as well as to Richard Duffy, Sarah O'Connor, James Wolf, Faye Ringel, and Greer Gilman et al.

*[At dinner Friday, bro-in-law Bob Kuhn has so many good (if a little late) ideas for program items that I inquire why he doesn't just help with the programming beforehand; he's unconvinced]*

But you know I use my secret powers only for destruction ...

*[At the panel on Women Warriors, the eponymous E. J. McClure disses the flyboys with a scorn proper to a newly promoted Commander U.S.N.]*

If you need the Air Force, you have to schedule them 6 months in advance.

*[Her new husband, editor Ernest Lilley of www.sfrevu.com, already knows how to push another of her buttons]*

So E. J., how are women working out in the Navy?

[McClure is fearless]

– I'm just going to go for it here. They work out great until they get pregnant ... We have 30 percent more attrition after their initial obligation of service.

The *guys* who don't want to deploy overseas shoot themselves in the foot or have sudden strange sports injuries.

[Writer Katya Reimann waxes practical]

Women with babies can't go hunting. You're out there in the thickets, and the baby goes Wahhhhh! and the game runs off.

[Lilley looks at a cinematic role model]

Ripley's really not there looking for a fight ... Whatever group she's in, she's there to protect the group.

[For writer Barbara Chepaitis, it's all about lessons learned]

Women warriors in film teach us how to take their battles and apply them to our world, and find the strength we need.

[From the panel on Will and Emma's (Excellent?) Adventures in Hollywood, is writer Will Shetterly a tad bitter?]

One of the assumptions about Hollywood is that everyone on the production side is an idiot ... and it's not a bad assumption.

[His wife writer Emma Bull, however, found something about LA to love]

It's where all the cars I loved as a youth went to *not* die.

[Shetterly gets in the last word about turning books into movies]

Basically, you're not prostituting your child. You're prostituting something with your child's *name*.

[In the panel on fragmenting fandom, NESFAn Priscilla Olson asks Nomi Burstein why she sticks with NESFA; Nomi is matter-of-fact]

These are our people.

[Although her husband, writer Michael Burstein, has a slightly different take on the same question]

– Mostly because of the hot chicks.

[Mary Kay Kare starts the panel about Tolkien, Lord of the Geeks on a dark note]

My husband's domain name was [www.mordor.gov](http://www.mordor.gov). It was Lawrence Livermore labs.

[Editor Ginjer Buchanan remembers the 60s well]

It was not so much geeks as people who wanted to *be* Tom Bombadil and Goldenberry.

[Writer Brenda Clough comes prepared, if not indeed frothing at the bit]

I prepared for this panel by reading *The Inklings* by Humphrey Carpenter.

... Although somehow I thought we were going to discuss the relative cuteness of Orlando Bloom and Viggo Mortensen. And there's nothing wrong with Sean Bean either!

[Buchanan agrees with a point by Kare about the kinship of SF/F and historical fiction]

– My husband, the editor John Douglas, thinks the best first contact novel ever done is *Shogun*, by James Clavell.

[Fan and current Worldcon head Tom Whitmore doesn't neglect publicity for his fabulous Bay Area bookstore]

I'm co-owner of Another Change of Hobbit, which has been around for 25 years now.

[But Clough's more attuned to Tolkien Time]

Many of the major characters do not change. You're an Elf, you're 6,000 years old, you've kind of settled down.

[Editor Kathryn Cramer champions teamwork]

It took three people to get that ring into that volcano –

[From the audience, I speak just a sec too late]

– Spoiler warning!

[Cramer's dad self-diagnoses]

My father, who is a physicist, swears there is a form of mental illness that causes people to come up with new ideas in physics.

*[For Clough, J. R. R. was certainly shot through with geekworthy obsessiveness]*

Tolkien was very good at what writers call cat vacuuming: doing the background that doesn't actually contribute to getting the work out ...

Instead of working on page proofs, he was designing tapestries to hang in Elven living rooms.

*[When Tom Whitmore's phone beeps and he answers, Kare has a friendly reproof]*

Strictly speaking, you're supposed to set that on stun.

*[When it's observed that Tolkien would have disapproved of many things done in his name, I get a Big Idea]*

He'd like it if we did something like Israel. How about if everybody plants a tree in the English Midlands for Tolkien?

*[Cramer's got a hot property here]*

When she was in college, Joanna Russ wrote a play of *The Hobbit* ... We have this manuscript somewhere in our basement.

With stuff in the margin, in Tolkien's very recognizable handwriting, that says, "No, no, no, hobbit s do *not* wear hats with red pompoms on them!"

*[Here's the toast I prepared but was too busy master-of-ceremoseying to give at the fannish wedding reception for E. J. McClure (Navy commander and fan) and Ernest Lilley (technojournalist and webzine editor)]*

To America's fighting editors — and the women who protect them.

*[Pressed-ganged into service as the reception's last-minute MC, I end up trying to get plates under the googolplex slices of wedding cake NESFAn Gay Ellen Dennett is shoveling my way, all the while trying to push the plates onto the crowd before the front table fills up]*

Get your cake here. Fresh cake! Cake for everybody!

*[This is all E.J. will say about what her ship did on the recent 6-month deployment that took her away from Ernest; suspect it has something to do with hurling missiles Afghanistanwards ...]*

See the front page of *USA Today*, October 10.

*[At the opening ceremonies, writer and wiseguy Michael A. Burstein precedes the Boskone Chair to the microphone; this is the text of his entire speech]*

And now a woman who needs no introduction ... *[leaves stage]*

*[But Pam Fremon is soon laying them in the aisles, with one about widely worshipped Guest of Honor Neil Gaiman]*

To his most devoted followers, Neil is of course a verb.

*[At one point, randy fan Rusty Hevelin embraces either Emma Bull or Lorraine Garland, I can't see which past his long white beard]*

Hey, we haven't done this since last night!

*[Pro movie critic Dan Kimmel has achieved a happy fanboyish daze]*

This is already one of my all-time favorite conventions.

I met Robert Sheckley! I've been reading him since I was 12.

*[In the panel on Rediscovery: Olaf Stapledon and Other Classics, writer/critic Greg Feeley takes the contrarian route]*

I don't think anyone today reads Olaf Stapledon ... There is something a bit rote and dutiful about including his name in the lists of those to be recommended ... I tried to read three of his best-known novels this week, and couldn't.

... Stapledon shares a kinship with writers such as David Lindsay, author of *A Voyage to Arcturus* ... and E. R. Eddison.

All of whom were writing, around 1930 ... a kind of visionary literature that absolutely abjures characterization and quotation marks.

It's nothing but description about a character viewpoint commenting on what it sees, as eons pass.

[Editor David G. Hartwell agrees, in part]

None of them were really popular writers even in their day ... [Lindsay's] writings were published in editions of less than 2000, and they didn't sell out.

... But if you've read Arthur C. Clarke, you're reading somebody tremendously influenced by Stapledon.

.... Part of this is the theory of literary progress. That the work of the Golden Age was of a higher literary nature than the works that went before it, then in the 1950s there was another evolutionary thing ... This myth of progress, which says you must discard the past because it is primitive and debased.

[Writer/horror scholar Darrel Schweitzer kens well the pattern]

The Two Peaks and a Valley Theory. That the 20s was sealed off hermetically by Gernsback, but the 1890s and the 1930s were great ...

[He recommends someone from the later part of that curve]

... Francis Stevens, pseudonym of Gertrude Bennett. Her *The Heads of Cerebrus* and *Citadel of Fear* are actually very good.

[Hartwell sees another, larger cycle]

The January issue of *Harper's* had the every-10-years attack on science fiction ... from Lucian of Samosata on down to the present.

[New writer Alex Irvine looks to a later mythmaker (Salman Rushdie)]

How many have read *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*? That's a tremendously important book for how we assimilated the idea of storytelling into our minds.

[Trust Schweitzer to recall the good weird tales]

John Collier — most don't even remember him anymore ... Quite a technically advanced writer ... Good early novel, *His Monkey Wife*, or *Married to a Chimp* ...

[Fan Robert Katz hasn't run out of recs]

A *Double Shadow* by Frederick Turner. I thought it was brilliant; I've just found out that Mr. Hartwell was his editor!

... And Doris Piserchia, from the 70s and 80s: her characters were powerful idiot savants wandering around fighting monsters.

[Feeley has his own favorites]

Edgar Pangborn. His least-known novel, set in the early 18th century, *A Wilderness of Spring* ... is scheduled to be reprinted soon.

[By Old Earth Books]

... Then there's a *brand new* neglected author, Tom La Farge ... His most recent novel, *Zuntig*, is an honest-to-god animal fantasy!

[Hartwell has a fine eye for smart satire]

From many possibilities, one suggestion: John Sladek ... The Roderick novels are great stuff.

His first book, *The Reproductive System*, is a satirical SF novel of the late 60s that has considerable wit and power. His eight or nine parodies of science fiction novels, Heinlein and Philip K. Dick and Asimov's robot novels are very fine and funny ... They're being reprinted in expensive hardcovers from Northpoint.

I thought of suggesting Thomas M. Disch; they've started to bring him back.

[For Hartwell, novels have the best chance to last]

The secret of being obscure is to write only short stories and never be collected.

[Before the Trivia Bowl, Mark Olson looks askance at my brand-new Handspring Visor PDA-and-foldup-keyboard setup]

I was able to take unreadable notes without electronics.

[I love questions that teach you something, like this beauty from Olson]

Who was the only science fiction writer who worked as an assistant to Thomas Alva Edison?

[Nobody knows]

Ray Cummings.

[Priscilla Olson tries us on a great first line]

"The bureaucrat fell from the sky."

Anybody? Michael Swanwick, *Stations of the Tide*.

[At the trivia masters' table, Mark Mandel accidentally spills wine, some of which appears to soak into one pile of chocolates to be thrown; beside me in the audience, fan Karen von Haam perks up]

I want those chocolates!

[Eventual Trivia Bowl scores are Jonathan Turner 48, Karen 35, Jon Meltzer 29, and me a paltry (yet tasty) 22]

[Fan/writer/friend Fred Lerner and I buttonhole each other outside the Art Show reception; he spots my Palm clone]

A friend of mine who knows how I feel about those things give me this ... [Shows me a PDA-sized packet labeled Paper Palm, which proves to contain spiral notebook and pencil stub]

[When I rave about Geoff Ryman's 253, Fred recalls a novel detailing the production of an opera at a Midwestern university, told from all the viewpoints of the many participants]

Vance Bourjaily's *Now Playing at Canterbury* ... If Geoffrey Chaucer were alive in the 1970s, this is the novel he would have written. Talk to Joe Haldeman, he knew him. [Who, Chaucer?]

[At the Art Show reception with a gaggle of booksellers, Chris Logan Edwards eggs me on to ask Art Henderson a question]

So Art, how many video players do you have?

[Henderson playbacks along]

Functioning? Well, there's the five VHSs, and then the two Betas ... and that's not counting the two laser disc players and pair of DVD players.

[NESFA's Michael Benveniste brings me reverently to where hangs an illustration he's arranged to purchase: a splendid Rayyan commissioned for the cover of NESFA Press's *Expecting Beowulf*, by Tom Holt (which by the way Michael's wife Deb Geisler edited), depicting among other things a red-tinged sailing ship; OK, get all that straight, you'll need a clear head for Michael's pun coming up ... now]

Here it is. The original Ruby Yacht of Omar Rayyan.

[Saturday morning in the Helmuth office, when I show editor Gary McGath my great quote from chairperson Pam Fremon about Neil's being a verb]

Were you at the Dealer's Room for his signing? At this convention, Neil is a verb meaning "to block traffic."

[In the panel on Unforgettable Characters, writer Esther Friesner admits the heroine of *Druid's Blood* is modeled on, well, herself; writer James D. Macdonald is chuffed]

I loved her!

[Friesner's blasé about it]

— Well, of course, everyone did — sequentially ... She was basically a hooker.

[So Barbara Chepaitis basically admits that she depended on men for her first inspiration]

I sat down one day, thought, I can't find a man I can get along with, so I'll write one.

[While Friesner admits *Wuthering Heights'* Heathcliff is not as much her type anymore]

Okay, you're brooding ... and you're brooding ... [Checks her watch] ... and you're brooding ... Can you get on with it? We have theater tickets.

[In the Improvisational Workshop, according to fan James Wolf, Mike Macfee runs a riff on the famous (never heard of it) kid's book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*]

If you give a monk a muffin ...

[In the dealers' room, fan Victor Stevko hints at a movie mystery]

I heard Jeff Goldblum on *Fresh Air*, and Terry Gross asked him about *Buckaroo Banzai*. He stopped and said, "I don't talk about that."

[Dealer and APA:NESFA contributor Chris Logan-Edwards has a good thought; how about it, APAziners?]

Here's an idea for you. Let's have an APA:NESFA dinner! Although people would be too busy here: how about at Readercon? We'll all go to the mall food court in a van or three ...

*[In the panel on Denaturing Narnia, James Macdonald tackles Narnia's essential Christianity from the get-go]*

Because we have grown up immersed in this Western Civilization atmosphere, without noticing, as the fish doesn't notice the water – we are all essentially Catholics. *[Protestant, Jewish, Agnostic, Pagan, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, I dunno, Shinto, Jain, Zoroastrian etc. hands shoot up all over the room]*

I want to make this controversial here.

*[Later, Macdonald disses the witches' sabbath]*

In Harry Potter, she calls them witches and wizards, but they are clearly Anglicans – they go to church every Sunday.

*[Ann Tonsor Zeddies is in touch with her inner goddess]*

Speaking as an author, my work is a holy text and shouldn't be touched.

*[Panelist Brian Wightman says C. S. Lewis was in touch with his inner child]*

Lewis wrote *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* as a Christmas pageant.

*[From the audience, fan and friend Bonnie Black is delightfully snotty about Macdonald's books]*

So you're talking Bible fan fiction, basically.

*[But Macdonald is thinking about even cooler future fusions]*

Aslan of Gor ... [pause] By golly, we could do that!

*[In the panel on the implications of personal jet packs, when I bring up (of course) sex and use the phrase "Mile High Club," my panelmates, starting with Jim Mann, jump right on board]*

– It would give new meaning to the phrase "Dropped by your girl"!

*[Ditto Joe Haldman]*

– And how about "burnt by a relationship"?

*[From the audience, fan Erwin "Filthy Pierre" Strauss wonders about the implications for homeland security]*

As Ben Franklin said about the balloon threat, "Where is the prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense?"

*[But writer James Patrick Kelly is skeptical about whether such packs would ever even get to the consumer market]*

Follow the lawsuits. If GM is going to get sued, GM is not *making* them.

*[Mark Olson thinks location, location, location]*

My company is paying for expensive real estate in Cambridge because it's relatively easy for everybody who works there to get there. If it were relatively easy to get somewhere cheaper ...

*[Kelly avers we didn't think all this through]*

When you take this jet pack idea and ignore all the technical aspects, what you get is *Futurama*.

*[In the audience, though, NESFAn Kurt Baty has an even deeper thought]*

If you look somewhere on the net, there's this diagram of all the transportation modes and efficiencies ... And there's this big hole in the middle of the diagram.

Which they're now beginning to realize can be filled by something called wing-in-ground-effect vehicles, or ekranoplans. They're these huge vehicles that can carry big loads a few feet above the ground or water.

*[In the panel on the Oddness of America, it may have been Will Shetterly who's talking about the impact of certain unlikely theme parks and roadside attractions]*

You feel them somehow connected to the numinous –

*[And perhaps it was Guest of Honor Neil Gaiman who says some sites are]*

– Not so much connected to the *generic* numinous as to the Alfred E. Numinous.

*[When he revisited his old neighborhood, writer Michael Swanwick realized that not all of America is odd and memorable]*

It's exactly as I failed to remember it.

*[Neil Gaiman attempts to explain a great but fairly inexplicable locale in American Gods]*

Has anyone here been to the House on the Rock? *[A few scattered hands]* I may need you later to convince the others I'm not lying.

... It's the world's largest collection of world's largest collections.

*[In our panel on The Trouble with Trailers, Dan Kimmel had trouble with The Lord of the Rings]*

Watching that movie, I felt like I should be taking notes for the final exam.

*[The net's longest-toiling-in-obscurity movie reviewer, Mark R. Leeper, is resigned by now]*

Nobody ever built a monument to a critic.

*[Fresh new net critic MaryAnn Johanson has news for the audience the trailers for Hart's War are trying to drag in]*

All these teenage boys are going to expect to see Bruce Willis kick some Nazi ass, and it just isn't that movie. So they leave pissed off.

*[Steve Sawicki, how do the deep insights we reviewers develop especially enrich the lives of our loved ones?]*

One of the things all our friends have learned is not to go to the movies with us.

*[Dan Kimmel, for one, has learned to be a trifle skeptical about trailers]*

I see the trailer and get all excited, and then I think, stop, wait – I've *seen* this movie, and it's no good.

... If they can't make me want to see a movie in 2 minutes, someone really slipped up!

*[Johanson sounds another sour note]*

It seems like trailers now are just ads for the soundtrack –

*[To which one audience member is attuned]*

– There are whole *movies* now that seem like just an ad for the soundtrack.

*[Johanson sums up]*

There are two kinds of trailers. One, "In a world that ..." And two, "There was a man ..."

*[For the panel on how pop culture influences writing, Michael Swanwick has a point to raise]*

A lot of fantasy has been a raised fist against pop culture ... Tolkien talks about this old oak tree outside his office, cut down and "mourned only by myself and two owls."

*[Veteran writer John Morressy says pop success has a thousand fathers]*

I can't name any one influence or person who produced the pop culture of today: it just pops up ... Suddenly, snowboarding is an Olympic sport.

*[Swanwick throws in an example from deep left coast]*

I was in Seattle, it was like a museum of American pop culture. This little cluster of hippies went by ... and then this cluster of greasers ... and then these punks. One of them had the spiked blue Mohawk! I just wanted to go up to him and *[mimes pinching a cheek]*.

*[Swanwick kicks some trilogy butts]*

Commodity fantasy is like a pack of cigarettes. It must not quite satisfy us, so we want some more.

*[On the One-Hour Novelist panel, Will Shetterly and Emma Bull agree that flawed heroes are best; Shetterly has an elementary example]*

Sherlock Holmes isn't interesting because he's a great detective. He's interesting because he's an asshole who's a great detective –

*[Bull clarifies]*

– He's a *crazy* asshole who's a great detective.

*[In the panel on terrorism, writer Paul Levinson has been polishing the Apple]*

One thing I've noticed in myself is a certain tenderness in my attitude toward New York City ... Prior to that *[9/11/01 attack]*, like most New Yorkers I had a sarcastic attitude.

[New writer Walter H. Hunt thinks we're seized with new insight]

We Americans are beginning to recognize that this is new for us, but not new for the world ... Like Israel, which has been dealing with something similar in a *petit mal* syndrome.

[Forget how this is relevant, but James Macdonald has a good line here about knowing the score]

Cubs versus Red Sox: "The game will be called on account of a rain of blood."

[Veteran writer Joe Haldeman gets serious]

Science fiction is not about cheering us up about who we are, but about turning a searchlight on who we are and *doing* something about it.

... How many children do you think died of starvation and dehydration on September 11? More than 5000. You won't read that in your fucking newspaper ... because we don't care about those children ...

We live on top of a seething cauldron of misery and pain.

[Levinson agrees]

It's not a question of overreacting to September 11. It's a case that we should have reacted just as strongly to similar things.

[Haldeman has been there, written that]

I probably have the best experience of any science fiction writer in the world about this. I wrote a story called "To Howard Hughes: A Modest Proposal." It ran in *Fantasy & Science Fiction* years ago. About a millionaire who put together several bombs from plutonium shavings ... and I included plans.

About a month later, the mayor of Los Angeles got a terrorist call. With plans. Chapter and verse from my story ...

They took the money down to the park, and by that time every stroller was full of an FBI agent ... They jumped on this 16-year-old kid who came to collect, and he had read the story.

Would I write those plans in a story now? I don't think so.

[Hunt has a plan for dealing with the terrorists]  
They'll like us when we win. To quote *The West Wing*.

[The mood changes as Haldeman regards a suddenly ringing cell phone that had been left on the table in front of him, and proves he remembers Starship Troopers]

"I'm a 20 minute bomb."

[Levinson is a little impatient]

– Can you turn it off?

[Haldeman is still regarding it calmly]

– It's not mine. I don't have a cell phone.

[Voice from the audience]

– RUN!

[A later exclusive Devniad investigation determines the phone was the misplaced property of SFRevu editor Ernest Lilley, who was calling himself so he could find his phone; said suspect was whisked away by a federal officer (his wife) and has not been sighted since]

[On the panel about Creator Rights, speaking of the true horror stories of publishing, Keith R. A. DeCandido shakes his head]

I wish I was making that up.

[The panel discusses new technologies for publishing books and combining functions (phone, fax, PDA, Internet), and Leigh Grossman wonders if technology might go too far]

No one wants their refrigerator to download the Internet.

[About last night's wedding reception frenzy, I compliment Gay Ellen Dennett]

Instead of the Lady of the Lake, to me you will always be The Lady of the Cake.

[The panel on Kavalier and Klay somehow turns onto the topic of Wonder Woman; editor Teresa Nielsen Hayden mentions]

My shrink loves Wonder Woman –

[And Neil Gaiman ties up a neat explanation]

– It's the bondage.

[After Gaiman describes the nastiness of Norse myths, Nielsen Hayden sums up]

This is not a religion, it's a protection racket!

[Hurling down Route 9 toward dinner, MaryAnn Johanson's thoughts are nevertheless, like those of many women in attendance, curled up back there with Neil]

When I heard that Jane Yolen had to leave the con – I thought maybe I could replace her in doing the Neil Gaiman interview.

But actually my only questions would be: "Could I come to Minnesota, and would you marry me or would we just be lovers?"

[At Gaiman's interview with (shucks) writer Madeline Robins, she tosses a few softballs herself]

What's a nice Englishman like you doing in a country like this?

[Gaiman's at a loss, frankly]

– Sometimes I wonder, myself.

[Good thing he's a writer, because]

No one's ever going to hire me to drive a taxi, not if they value their taxi license ... the health of pedestrians ... or, indeed, their car.

[Gaiman revisits a location from his latest book; what is it about the amazing Rock City?]

Twelve million Americans come there every year, and twelve million Americans leave there wondering, "What the fuck was that?"

[In the panel on Hugo Recommendations (by the way, if you come across an empty ballot slot marked Fan Writer, that's B-O-B D-E-V-N-E-Y), Jim Mann has something to, well, you know]

Tim Powers' *Declare* is a great book, one of the best he's written. But it came out in a small press edition of about 400 copies in 2000, so it's ineligible for the Hugo.

[Mark Olson's enthused nevertheless]

I think this is far and away his best: a secret history of the Cold War.

[Ditto Priscilla Olson (and me)]

Mark and I have very divergent tastes, but we both agree this is a great book!

[Priscilla shows a great grasp of GOH worship]

One of the strongest books of the year is *American Gods*. You should read the weblog, which tells more about it ... If you think Neil Gaiman's kind of a fantasy/gaming/comic booky kind of guy, read this. He shows a great grasp of mythology and drama.

[Mark keys in on an homage à clef, Donald Kingbury's *Psychohistorical Crisis*]

It's Asimov's *Foundation* with every proper noun changed ... It just came out last month.

[He's gotta little list]

I've got at least 8 books I need to read in the next 45 days in order to make good nominations.

[Because unlike the case in Florida, here every vote counts (Did I mention that's B-O-B ...?)]

About 500 people nominate, about 1000 vote.

[Jim Mann is almost embarrassed by the riches in one category]

The two best fantasy film of the last 20 years both came out in the same year.

[And Mark plucks another bunch of winners]

The related book category is one of the strongest in years. My personal choice is the Tolkien bio by Tom Shippey; marvelous. Also, *The Art of Chesley Bonestell* is a wonderful art book.

[Of course, I get in my own plugs]

In the brand-new Web site category, the *Internet Speculative Fiction* site is just a spectacular reference. You've got to hit *Locus Online* regularly. Everybody in NESFA is nuts about Richard Harter's very funny site. And I think you'd really enjoy *www.sfrevu.com* by, full disclosure, my friend Ernest Lilley: it's a monthly webzine that's got a great mix of stuff on books, movies, fandom, everything.

[Mann is a people (or, well, editor) person]

Remember that book editors are eligible too; people like Patrick Nielsen Hayden and David Hartwell.

[In the audience, fan/publisher Michael Walsh cracks Tor's code]

Any book by Tor not credited is by Beth Meacham.

[Starting off the Cabaret, Emma Bull eschews the usual fannish amateur standard]

I want to confess that we practiced –

[Although Patrick Nielsen Hayden avers we won't be blinded by the polish]

– By e-mail!

[LoJo may be the stage name of Lorraine Garland; La Lo's sure of one thing]

Girls rule. If you don't believe that, ask the Queen of England.

[Around midnight Saturday, in our room, when I discover I have only one more chance to get Neil Gaiman quotes tomorrow, and it's opposite a panel I'm on, my Baldrickian bro Michael has a very clever plan]

I've got it! I'll dress in your clothes and go to the panel as you.

[At breakfast Sunday morn, NESFAn and good friend Lisa Hertel has the SMOF scuttlebutt]

Stephen Boucher always comes to Boskone. He comes from Australia to Boston to see Janice Gelb, who lives in California.

[By the lobby elevators, writer Walter Hunt savors a sweetly unsolicited compliment from a more experienced pro about his new military/aliens SF thriller, Dark Wing]

Katherine Kurtz sent me something wonderful after we met at Arisia last month.

She e-mailed that her editor was bugging her about another writing project, but she wasn't getting to it because she was caught up wanting to finish my book!

[The panel on When History Went Wrong catches Michael Flynn more prepared than many]

I thought about this panel topic long and hard. This morning.

[He proffers an interesting little tidbit from Mexican War history]

Grant found Santa Anna's leg.

[Esther Friesner won't be outdone]

Grant also invented chewing gum.

[Leigh Grossman has an early story about free agents]

During the Napoleonic Wars, the British spy system was run on a freelance basis. So if you were a spy and didn't find a conspiracy, you didn't get paid.

[Evelyn Leeper rocks our ideas on music history]

Now there's an interesting theory – that Woodstock was only 15 people, and the rest were time travelers.

[On the panel re Images of Loss in Lord of the Rings, SMOF Tom Whitmore assigns a root cause to the entire LOTR phenomenon]

When philologists go bad.

[According to fan Richard Duffy, Michael Swanwick talks a good game about tough love]

I'm skeptical about this idea of children and innocence. Speaking as a father, I think the best you can say is that they're not guilty.

[In our panel on the Next Great Fantasy Flick, I lead off with a preemptive strike]

Discussing this topic at breakfast, my friend Lisa Hertel answered without hesitation. The next great fantasy flick we're all waiting for is ... *The Two Towers*.

[In the audience, fan Winton Matthews has an unfamiliar but intriguing choice]

As a librarian, I can tell you a book teenagers would like to see at the movies: T. A. Barron's *The Lost Years of Merlin*. It's Merlin as a teenager. A really popular book.

[Screenwriter/comics writer Special Guest Marv Wolfman's wife works at Steven Spielberg's movie studio Dreamworks, seeing lots of good stuff first]

Noel says on the new *Time Machine* movie, the early word was really bad, but she saw it, and said it was actually pretty good.

[Wolfman is looking forward to one big flick this year]

About the release of *Spiderman*: the director is the perfect director for this. Sam

Raimi did things like *Darkman* before, and he's a huge Spiderman fan.

[On the panel *Monsters in the Maze*, grandmaster Robert Sheckley reveals exactly why we like the big ugly lugs]

The monster does what we want to do.

[Neil Gaiman has undivided loyalties]

Generally, I'm not a very good monster writer, because my sympathies are always with the monster. Speaking of Theseus and the Minotaur, I know who I'd put my money on.

[Literarily, Sheckley's not an "outie"]

If I were to write about the monster in *me*, that would be mainstream, not science fiction or fantasy.

[Emma Bull is more inner-directed]

As soon as you kill the bad guy, then the monster is in you.

[Ginjer Buchanan deftly combines the classical with the comic]

Doesn't some capricious god visit the passion on Pasiphae [*the Minotaur's mom*]? It's not that she wakes up one morning and says, "Woah, look at that cow!"

[Gaiman doubts you'd want to be a vampire in the traditional sense, describing them as things of]

... Deep vulnerability: garlic, crosses, running water ... *daylight* ... you're totally fucked.

[Bull puts authors in their proper place]

Specifically, as a writer, you are the story's God.

[Gaiman feels tied to the Tree]

As an author, you certainly don't have free will. But neither do you have predestination.

As soon as you put that first word on the page, you have the endless possibilities branching out, you can see them ... Some branches have fallen off, some already have Dutch Elm disease.

[Gaiman muses about his personal monsters]

Coraline [*his forthcoming children's book*] has my favorite monster, the Other Mother.

[More personal examples?]

Blank sheets of paper. Blank screens ...

Six months into *Sandman*, I discovered when I woke up from a nightmare, the kind where your heart is pounding, and you're sweating, saying oh God, they were dead people and they were eating each other, and yet having sex with each other, and Oh my God, Oh my God [*pause*] I can use that.

... I have odd dreams. [*Audience laughs hard for at least 1 solid minute*]

[Sheckley ends on an up note]

Hyde is a lot more energetic than Jekyll and seems to have a lot more fun.

[John Morressy looks back from near the summit of the panel on the Stages of a Writer's Career]

I sold my first story to a pulp magazine in the 50s, I sold my latest to *F&SF* a couple months ago, and I plan to keep writing ... I have an awful lot I still want to do, and just hope I can keep doing it.

[Robert Sheckley ditto]

I sold my first story in 1951 to *Imagination* ... and I'm still at it, too.

[Morressy likes to keep to our bank of the stream]

One of the main reasons I keep writing science fiction and fantasy is because I've looked at mainstream fiction. [*Pause; big audience laugh.*] Whiners and losers and scroungy people — I can see that by walking down the street.

Look at *Lord of the Rings*, and ask why so many people like it. It's about friendship, devotion, sacrifice, honor.

[Moderator Katya Reimann is at a crossroads]

I'm at the stage where I'm having awkward conversations. Publishers are saying, OK, you're a talented writer. Where do you go from here?

[Walter Hunt wants a place to park a theme]

I told my agent I have this story idea, about a place that's like an evil Disney —

[Writer Shane Tourtellotte is very quick]

– Like an evil Disney?

[Sheckley recalls when he was at their stage]

I had a simple gauge. I felt that when I could no longer remember how many stories I had published, I was a pro.

And with *my* memory, that point arrived fairly quickly.

[Morressy finds the well is never really dry]

I've written 9 books and I guess 40 stories about this one small set of characters. And I'm watching them change and grow. You find that fresh things happen.

[Reimann gets personal]

Then I got married, which was *disastrous* for my writing ...

[*But there was one point when*] he cooked, cleaned, and took care of our twin 2-year-olds for 5 weeks while I was writing the novel.

[Morressy once had a good agent]

We had an arrangement. "You send me the good news and the checks. You keep all the rejections to yourself."

[Sheckley liked his too]

Fred Pohl was an agent then. And he said the most golden words I ever heard: "Sheckley, I'll sell every word of science fiction you write."

[Reimann never quite got the call]

An excellent way to get agents sniffing around you is go to Clarion ... You get to know how the field works, who people are ...

I didn't go to Clarion. When I first met Gardner Dozois – I asked him what he did.

He said, "I'm a professional asshole."

[For Sheckley, writing isn't as hard as some people make out]

You don't need a lot of vitality to sit in front of a computer.

[Though Reimann points out the virtual paperwork's a killer]

– I think you need a *lot* of vitality to sit in front of a computer ... and not answer e-mails.

[About the necessity of not wasting time on the wrong writing project; I think this was Sheckley, or maybe Morressy; definitely not Tourtellotte ...]

I feel like an old mare that thinks she has a couple of foals left in her, but she wants to be sure to pick the right mate.

[*Hunt is not for hire*]

My editor warned me about writing for hire. He told me about a writer who wrote three or four really good Battletech books. Then he wanted to write his own novel – and it read like a Battletech book. You can ruin yourself ...

[Reimann gestures toward Morressy and Sheckley at her right]

We are all aspiring toward this end of the table –

[Sheckley mimes a tumble]

– I'm *falling off* this end of the table!

[On the 10 Worst Ideas panel, Craig Shaw Gardner knows what he writes]

There is a very thin line between "epic" and "absurd." And I cross it many, many, many times.

[Panelist Michael Rennie knows why he's here]

I'm a specially trained stunt psychologist.

[In the panel on *When the Dead Walk*, writer Greer Gilman announces her speciality]

I write obscure, knotted things that Michael Swanwick has to explain to me.

[Marv Wolfman is properly proud]

... I created the character of Blade the Vampire Hunter –

[From the audience, writer Faye Ringel gives him his props]

– He's got dead cred!

[Michael Swanwick muses amusingly]

I can't think of any good stories where the dead coming to life is a *good* thing.

[Gilman on the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*; I like that new flickslang, Greer]

It's a romcom, but it understands how deeply wrong it is to welcome the dead back, after the first 15 minutes anyway.

[For *Wolfman*, some parallels are obvious]

The Western vampire mythology is just an absolute reverse Christianity. The coming back after 3 days, the blood, yeah the communion feast ...

[All right, now you're scaring me, Greer]

The dead are beating their hands against the window ... It's why moths are frightening.

... There's something about the blind, desperate, terrifying desire to *get back in*.

[*Swanwick* chills it out]

A minimal definition of maturity is that if you're dead, you accept it.

[Moderator Will Shetterly has a cool take on a *Burroughs* classic; no, the other *Burroughs*]

John Carter of Mars could be seen as essentially an overwritten version of Bierce's "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" ... He died in a cave, and goes to a place where there are adventures and a princess.

[*Swanwick* just keeps the quips coming]

*Memento mori*, remember to die. It's on your list of things to do.

[From the audience, I ask when we stopped seeing the monster as *Other* and started grooving with him/her/it]

Maybe in the 1950s, the readers begin to identify with the monster?

[*Swanwick* has a specific history in mind]

The sexy vampire began in the 60s, but it really exploded with AIDS.

[*Wolfman* cleverly revisits a classic]

One of the cleverest things about *Dracula* is that it's written by everyone but *Dracula*. You never get his thoughts or viewpoint, so he stays essentially soulless.

[Shetterly puts the seal on the panel]

I loved *The Seventh Seal* — or at least I did the last time I saw it. But I also felt a little sorry for Death. He's just trying to do his job, and this guy is tricking him ...

[After the panel, Faye Ringel and Greer Gilman tell me a story about some earlier panel; we are laughing so much my notes are totally illegible, but as I recall the joke rests on the fact that verbs ending in "er," "le," and "el" can be understood as repetitive actions; perhaps it is Greer who first determines that]

Swivel is the frequentative of swive!

[In the panel on *What Do You Want in a Worldcon?*, ConJose's Tom Whitmore's stoked]

I'm a mean, lean, convention-running machine.

[Boston in 2004 Worldcon chair Deb Geisler on how to phrase a delicate question to potential program participants]

"Do you want to be on an early program panel?" But then you get the answer, "Yes, I get up at the crack of noon."

[Geisler is calling in the big guns]

Terry Pratchett — he's planning to be at our Worldcon too.

[A female audience member is pleased, but]

— He's such a slut!

[Geisler is the Fan with the Plan]

The first Progress Report was mailed out bulk rate ... We're going to use your money, but we're going to use it slowly.

... We won't make the same mistakes. We will make brand-new creative errors you've never seen before!

[In the Green Room, NESFAn Leslie Turek wonders about an item I and artist Bill Neville had to cancel due to complete lack of figuring out how the hell we'd actually pull it off]

What happened to the Illustrated Orbita Dicta? —

[NESFAn Alex Layton answers with terminal velocity]

— It decayed.

[In the panel on *Taking Ourselves Too Seriously*, editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden disses the old SF/sci-fi debate]

– It's the Trekkie/Trekker thing. Or "I'm a Fluffer, not a Fluffy!"

[He gets serious for a moment]

SF is very much an artifact of intellect at play, not taking itself too seriously.

[Artist Bob Eggleton has seen the type of fans we're talking about]

I gave a presentation at the Planetary Society once, and got into this room full of fanatical L5 people. They were saying, "We're going to go!" And singing hymns, and it was like Lyndon LaRouche –

[Nielsen Hayden pounces like lightning]

– Yes, they're going to the LaRouche Points. The exact points where capitalism and socialism balance themselves out.

[Eggleton has solid media cred]

... I worked on *Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius* ... I was the conceptual artist ... The director, John Davis, and I found very quickly that we were on the same wavelength. He'd say, "You know that thing in *Stingray*?" and hum the theme song, and I'd draw something.

[Noel Wolfman (wife of special guest Marv Wolfman) has lived in La La Land awhile]

You get pulled over by the police in Hollywood, they give you a ticket and their screenplay.

[It would be that perhaps the single best pun of the con would be uttered by a name completely indecipherable in my herpetambulatory notes; it was probably Tom Whitmore or just possibly Patrick; but if not, here's to you, ah, *Tha Snitrang*]

Did you ever think that Humbert Humbert is an Umberto Eco?

[Nielsen Hayden disses spousal connections?]

I don't know how Art Spiegelman, who's basically an underground comics guy, managed to ascend to the literary heights lately. Getting his wife named art editor of *The New Yorker* probably helped.

[After Whitmore quotes a Richard Thompson lyric, Nielsen Hayden elaborates]

Richard Thompson described his songwriting technique as, "Boy meets girl, blood everywhere."

[Wolfman turns a cliché down under]

Never worry about the future. Remember, it's already tomorrow in Australia.

[The panel on *How Stories End* is enlivened by Walter Hunt's reaction to somewhat intimidating writer Shariann Lewitt]

No, no, no!

I'm agreeing with you because I'm scared of you.

[Writer Tamora Pierce talks about the arc's end]

If you start at the beginning of the war, it makes sense if you end at the end of the war. If you start at the beginning of the epidemic, you end at the end of the epidemic –

[Lewitt's been there, ended like that]

– Yes, everybody is dead. I wrote that book.

[Hunt does yet another take]

– Yes, I can believe *you* wrote that book.

[In the *Gripe Session/Whither Boskone?*, Chair Pam Fremon runs the numbers for us]

The last warm body count was 1040.

[Next year's Chair Sharon Sbarsky looks ahead]

We currently have a 3-year contract with the Sheraton Boston. So for 2003, 2004, 2005 at least, Boskone will be back in Boston.

... Our guests next year will include David Brin, Jim Burns, special guest Charlie Brown, and the filk group Clam Chowder.

[As the con winds to a close, Deb Geisler packs up the Boston in 2004 Worldcon table]

Ninety-nine new attending and one new supporting. We did very well.

And so did Boskone this year, as usual. See you all next year in the Hub of the Universe!

## Ego Scanners (Shall Not) Live in Vain

[From Queensland's own **Eric Lindsay** ([eric@wrevenge.com.au](mailto:eric@wrevenge.com.au)):

Dan Kimmel's comment that he is "less excited about the first *Lord of the Rings* films because the books bored me to tears" reminds me that I thought the first *Ring* book so boring I gave up half way through, and have steadfastly declined to read anything blurred as "in the tradition of ..." ever since. I feel this has saved me vast amounts of wasted time. I'll continue to save time by avoiding the movie also (after all, I've seen New Zealand).

Lloyd Penney says "The current exchange rate of US\$1 now equaling Can\$1.60 will make going to ConJose impossible unless my own resources are greatly increased" — to which I respond "luxury!" I wish I got a US\$1 for A\$1.60.

Leah Zeldes Smith writes "If it's an e-zine, then you've got all the space you need. And how can it be more intrusive to hand out someone's e-mail address than his or her postal address?"

I can see it not being a problem for a paper zine or a zine sent by email, however it is apparent that spammers are harvesting email addresses that appear on the web and in other places that are freely downloadable.

I'm getting about 30 spams a day (vs. 1 or 2 real emails) on this address, and figure I'll have to provide myself with better filtering sometime real soon, even at the risk of automatically deleting some real emails before they are downloaded. Meanwhile, I plan to remove all email addresses from the web version of my fanzine in future.

If fans want an email address, they will have to ask me for it (and as for spammers, I'd cheerfully boot them off a tall cliff).

[But Eric did say I could pub his e-mail address for now ... Thanks for sticking up for me, guy.]

[From Ontario's own **Lloyd Penney** (1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON, CANADA M9C 2B2; [penneys@netcom.ca](mailto:penneys@netcom.ca))]

Bob, here are some comments on *Devniad* issue 76 and 77.

*Devniad* 76 ... Silly Molecules ...

Unununium is actually not a silly name, but the official name for element 111 on the periodic table. Those in charge of element-naming decided on three prefixes for each number. In this case, un-un-un for 111. Number 112 is ununbium, un-un-bi. Number 108 is unniloctium, un-nil-oct, but is also called hassium. Highest to date is element 118, or ununoctium.

I suppose Torcon should show Rick Mercer's *Talking to Americans* special, but I rather think that we're all there to enjoy the convention, and not have one group laugh at another. I know there were Americans and Canadians alike a little uncomfortable with the Mercer special.

*Devniad* 77 ... *Lord of The Rings* was a marvellous movie. Beautiful landscapes, excellent characters, graceful environment, Peter Jackson crammed as much as he could in a movie about three hours long ... The most noticeable absences in the movie were those of Tom Bombadil and Farmer Maggot, but I can certainly understand. The long passages through the Shire and through to Rivendell were trimmed; the level of adventure has to be maintained. Long walks are fine to be read, but not to be watched in a movie. Perhaps the movie didn't present to me the long walk towards Mordor the way I expected it to be, it still looked wondrous. Ian McKellen was a great Gandalf, but I didn't like the way John Rhys-Davies was presented as Gimli the dwarf. Only good camera work and body doubles would give the faint impression that Rhys-Davies (a rather large man) could be a dwarf.

Me, a hobbit? (blush) Well, I've got the hair (discounting the bald spot), the height (5'4") and the hobbit appetite (I could easily have a second breakfast everyday, but I soon wouldn't fit through the doorway). I could dig some hobbitish clothes out of my wardrobe ... my feet aren't hairy, and they're only a size 8. Besides, even though the hobbits in the movie were just over five feet tall, weren't they supposed to be anywhere between three and four feet tall in the book? Yvonne admits to being more of a hobbit than I...

Guess which movie we've seen twice and will be seeing soon on an IMAX screen? *Monsters, Inc.*, my favorite of the bunch this year. *Monsters, Inc.* has the innovative setting, colourful characters and most imaginative chase scene at the end. The unsuccessful merchandising of this movie has taken a little of the blush off my LIKE! of this movie, but that hasn't changed much.

Yvonne and I have made the hard decision ... we are not going to ConJosé. We estimate that to pay for everything and overcome the exchange rate, we'd need to suddenly have about Can\$10,000 on hand, and that won't happen outside of winning one of the lotteries ... I've also been accepted by VoicePrint, the news reading service, and my first orientation meeting is this Wednesday. Many thanks for your good words, Bob. Lots of feelgood and egoboo helps.

Just for the record, by all means, publish my mailing address and e-mail address. [*Lloyd, official or not, Ununinium in fact strikes me as among the silliest names on the list. Not a name I'd give to a dog. For one thing, how would you call him in a hurry?*]

[*From New Jersey's own Jukka Halme (162 Linden Lane, Princeton, NJ 08540 USA, jukkahoo@excite.com)*]

I'm "finding" the American fanzine-scene, though I must say I have a looooooong way to go. I used to read some issues that the Helsinki University SF Club received occasionally, liked them quite a lot, but for some reason I never "dared" to make contact with the fandom. Dunno why, must be my Finnishness?

... As you so cleverly noticed already, I/we live currently in Princeton, but after March 26th, we'll move back to Helsinki, Finland. This year here has been an ... experience and then some.

I pondered a while upon whether to read the *LotR* again after all these years, but decided to go with the "feeling" and memories. And I think it was a good idea. I have never read the books in English, always just read the Finnish translation. Everybody says it is stunningly good a translation and I can buy that. It flows on with a very natural

rhythm and it sounds just like it'd be originally Finnish. And the names... Järin Möyremä, Kontu, kuolleitten kulkutie, Rankkivuo, Klonkku. Brilliant! Hated Tom ... Mr X. too. After all, I am of the Barrowdowns smial myself...

Oh yes, the movie is great!

The Dark Lord of Reading? (guffaw) I should have heard that a month ago when I was writing my DLoR-article for a Finnish fanzine ( [www.tahtivaeltaja.com](http://www.tahtivaeltaja.com) ). Sorry to see you all so miserable after losing (yet) again to his Dark Lordship. But he is brilliant and funny and... well, His Lordshipness!

*Monsters Inc.* OK/good, but not *very* good in my mind. On the other hand it may be just me getting a tad bored with the fact that modern animation, with all this fabulous technology and possibilities, is still churning out only kiddie-mation. And when occasionally making a adult-feature, falling into the usual trap of form without substance (*Final Fantasy*).

... I also wrote a Worldcon-report, read the whole thing "as-it-happened" from the archives of the Avoim kirja ( [leban.lasipalatsi.net](http://leban.lasipalatsi.net) ). In Finnish ... Worldcon was very agreeable and a lot of fun. My 2nd one (first one was the Scottish WC in 1995) and my first ever American con. Also my first ever connection with the typical American hotel breakfast... Sugar, more sugar and then some ... Tried it twice, afterwards it was just a cup of tea and a jog to the nearby bakery for a piece of bread.

If you want to learn Finnish filking, you haven't got a too long way to go. Filking is very uncommon phenomenon in Finnish fandom. I don't remember that any larger national conventions have had *any* kind of filking on the program.

I loved the categories on the *Win Tom Galloway's Money!* ... I begun to think that maybe I could bring one of those shows to Finncons (our national SF-con). Fandom Feud probably, that one sounds to me most like one that would work at Finncon.

[*Jukka, great to hear from you ... Got to love those Finnish hobbit names. Sorry it looks like we won't be meeting unvirtually anytime soon. But as long as the wires run to Helsinki, by all means send me your Finnish e-mail address.*]

## FlimFan

[From Brookline, Massachusetts' own  
Dan Kimmel]

I must be slipping. I'm quoted three times in *The Devniad* and each time it's for quoting someone else! (Actually, the third time it's for quoting YOU by wearing my Bartlett vs. Bush '04 button.)

I'll try to be more original at Boskone.

Or did someone already say that?

[Dan, is there an echo in here?]

No time or space here to do anything except tell you to run out and try to catch two of my late favorites, *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *Gosford Park*, at maybe a second-run moviehouse before they disappear into the long night and you have to wait for the video.

More in what may turn out to be my big movie ish next month.

## Quotes from the Rings Master

Director Peter Jackson gave a decent 1-hour interview that aired on PBS-TV's *Charlie Rose Show* the night of FR 2/22/02. Subject: his latest movie. Little 12-reeler with the initials *LOTR*? OK, to be technical, *LOTR:TFOTR*.

In appearance, speech, and subject matter, Jackson would look completely at home in any con suite I know.

Being in a quote-collecting mood after Boskone, I happened to jot down the few bits that follow.

"Through loving movies as an audience, I have come to love making them."

"Hitchcock came up with my favorite thing as a film quote: 'Some people's movies are slices of life. Mine are slices of cake.'"

"The original *King Kong* was my all-time favorite film ... *That's* an escapist film."

"We studied ... If you were an elf, and you were immortal, what would your knife and fork be like?"

"Last week, before I came over here, I finished doing a cut for the DVD that's 30 minutes longer ... There are lots of little extra character moments."

## Backchat on APA:NESFA #380, January 2002

### To Anna Hillier

So Hugo Gernsback is still pubbing articles in magazines! Pretty good for someone born in 1884. I bet Oscar is jealous.

### To Chris Logan Edwards

Welcome to the ranks of probationary homeowners! You won't truly belong, of course, until you're sick of the sight of stuff you personally picked out, and your plumber suggests you might as well go with a monthly retainer.

### To Tony Lewis

For a title of that David Brin 2003 Boskone book, might I suggest *The Brin Effect*, *Full to the Brin*, or *Uplifting Stories*?

### To Tom Endrey

I liked your bad news about the supervolcano brewing under Yellowstone Park, timed for a big surprise sometime in the next 10,000 years. You're assuming here that the toxic effects of watching Fox TV don't exterminate us all first.

### To Joe Ross

Sorry about using the word "pirated" in re the first U.S. paperback *Lord of the Rings*. Perhaps "informally usufructed" would have been pithier ... Loved the human-toes-in-chewing-tobacco court decision, especially the

line "it seems to us that somebody has been very careless."

#### To Mark Olson

That 1983 biography of Henry II by H. L. Warren indeed sounds like a winner: the best historical biography you've ever read says a lot, since I'd say you've read a lot. Must get it. Also your list of flaws in the *LOTR* movie you otherwise quite liked was very well observed. Even to the point of catching a production error, where the rain didn't exist on the other side of the gate at the entrance to Bree. Good eye, guy!

#### To Paul Giguere

Getting your doctorate (October) and getting married (June) in the same year (2002)! Double congratulations, my friend. Leslie must be an amazing woman. (Of course, I mean that several ways.)

So how did you meet? What's she do for a living? Is she a fan of anything besides you?

And does she have any clue what's she's getting into with this SF fandom world? Not for fair maidens with faint hearts, as my own Queen Maureen wouldst attest at the far reach of her sweet lungs.

#### To Pam Fremon

Nice Boskone you had there, madame. Many thanks from all of us happy attendees.

Loved your survey of the leading baby names in USA, England, and Sweden. Have copied it right over to the expectant mother in my office, who's desperate for a girl's name. I'm going to suggest "Moa," which you indicate graced 581 little flickas born in 2000. Something really exotic and charming in being named after a 12-foot extinct flightless bird ...

#### To Elisabeth Carey

Yay! You've discovered the Lymond chronicles of Dorothy Dunnett. Aren't they among the greatest historical novels you've ever seen? A favorite of my youth that has continued right into my old age, through Lymond into the House of Niccolo series. What wonders lie ahead of you yet. You know Dame Dorothy died only a few months ago. But if you beg me, I'll tell you the

story of how I met her once, on Newbury Street ...

#### To Ray Bowie

Great to see you back in the APA again, Ray! Have missed your scathing wit and encyclopedic knowledge of antique flicks.

Been trying to get to the Fenway General Cinema since it was built several years ago, and now I hear there's an even newer cineplex downtown, Loews Boston Common. Hard for us rubes to keep up with you cityfolk.

#### To George Flynn

About your comments on my comments on *LOTR*: looked up the Roger Ebert review you mentioned. Think I agree with both of us. The *book* makes heroes of the little guys; the *movie* switches the emphasis (perhaps inescapably) to the more visually dramatic doings of heroic Men and Elves.