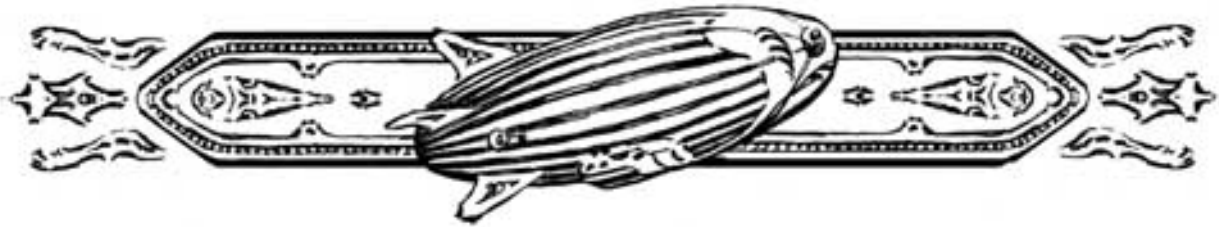


Albacon 2002 News



Iron Author / Tin Illustrator Edition

During the Saturday Night Extravaganza (SNE) the Iron Author / Tin Illustrator competition was held. Mike Resnick as the Science Fiction author, Josepha Sherman as the Fantasy author, Keith DeCandido as the Media author, and Tom Kidd as the Illustrator faced off. The live audience selected the following items to incorporate in the creative works:

- a book on horse training
- a bullwhip (expertly wielded by our own Joe Berlant)
- a three faced totem pole
- “the sound of three hands clapping” gadget
- a wooden log
- Sylvia Wendell’s cat

The contestants were allowed 15 minutes to create their works, during which the Master’s of Ceremonies, Jan Finder and Chuck Rothman, regaled the audience with their amazing wit. Mike and Josepha wrote longhand on lines paper, Keith on his laptop, and Tom on his paper and clipboard.

Mike was the first to complete his work, noticeably before the 15 minutes had elapsed, Josepha and Keith finished on time, and Tom was still putting final touches on his work when the time limit expired. Each of the four competitors then presented their works.

Audience reaction was enthusiastic to all three, with Keith just edging out Mike for the top honors. Here now are the creations of our Iron Authors and Tin Illustrator.

Josepha Sherman and the Cat of Doom

by Mike Resnick

“Damn!” said Josepha, “This feline creature is fearsome. I’d bullwhip it if I had a bull.”

“It can’t be a horse,” said Corporal Finder. “According to my book on horse training, horses are 16 hands high. This is only 3 hands high.”

“I saw something like this on a Totem pole once,” replied Josepha.

“Interesting things, Totem poles,” said Finder. “I think they make them out of wooden logs.”

“Why does it make that purring noise?” asked Josepha. “Is it trying to assuage my fears?”

“It seems less alien when it meows,” said Finder.

“It looks just like a cat,” said Josepha. “I wonder why the sign says beware of the Nick-DiChario-like alien!”

She reached a hand out to pet it.

The medics were able to save her arm just above the elbow.

“But why?” asked Josepha.

“I read your latest book,” said the cat-like alien.

No other answer is needed.

End

The Amazing Kitty

by Tom Kidd

The amazing kitty, whose skill at juggling entertained the three-armed alien to such an extent that he decided to spare the Earth from destruction. The sound of three hands clapping has never been so well received.



The Book of Wisdom

by **Josepha Sherman**

Once in the land of Kat cat there was a princess who had a very good gift of art. She had a fine feline.

But one catnap later in the day, a catastrophe occurred. The catalog of the land, the totem file was stolen! So Abby the Princess Cat grabbed her magic Whip of Doom and went in search of the Book of Wisdom.

On the way, she was trapped by the clappers of despair. But a nip of cat was enough to soothe the clappers to a catnap.

On went Princess Abby to the evil Doggy Snoop Snoop, who held the Book of Wisdom. "Begone, Whippersnapper!" he cried.

But she snapped back at him, "I want the book!"

But by now, she was no longer a cat. She had become a little horse.

"Leave me a roan!" Doggy Snoop Snoop cried.

"You are no palomino!" cried Abby. "Forget that old chestnut and give me the book!"

She snapped the whip and cut Dog Snoopy Snoop across the nose. But he held up the log of catalogs. And her whip carved faces on it. Now the faces were alive. But Abby was a horse -- a happy hooper -- she kicked the catalog away. Aha!

She snatched up the Book of Wisdom and was trained by it. In fact, she was Amtrackted by it -- right back into cat form.

Feeling kittenish, she took the train back home and purred happily ever after.

Star Trek®: For the World is Silly and I Have Chased a Cat

by **Keith R.A. DeCandido**

Star Trek created by Gene Roddenberry (spinning in his grave even as I type...)

Captain James T. Kirk sat in his quarters on the Starship Enterprise, reading an old book on the care of horses. The book dated back to the 19th century on old Earth, and the binding was cracked and falling apart. Luckily, a plot contrivance from the second feature film meant that he collected antediluvian items like books.

The intercom beeped and the voice of his first officer, Mr. Spock, sounded over the speakers. "Bridge to Captain Kirk."

"What is it, Spock?" Kirk said, setting the book aside and almost breaking the spine.

"We are approaching Contrivance IV, Captain. Entering standard orbit."

"Good. Have Uhura contact Dr. McCoy and meet us in the transporter room. Leave Mr. Scott in charge of the bridge."

"Of course, Captain."

Within minutes, both senior officers and the doctor beamed down to the planet. The budget didn't call for any extras this week, so no security guards beamed down. Besides, Kirk was tired of all their funerals. They cut into his reading time, and he was tired of reading the same eulogy over and over.

As soon as they materialized on the planet, a giant cat approached and said, "MROW!"

"Analysis, Spock."

"It is a feline, Captain," Spock said after checking his tricorder readings. "Identical in almost every respect to a common Earth house cat."

McCoy shouted, "The blasted thing is the size of a house, Spock!"

"I did say in almost every respect, Doctor."

"Damn literal-minded green-blooded—"

"Gentlemen," Kirk said, "this isn't the time for your snappy banter."

The cat chose that moment to run off, leaping over a very large log. Kirk chased after the feline, because, after all, it was his duty to seek out new life, and if a cat the size of Iowa didn't qualify, he didn't know what did.

He leapt over the log, but it was late in the season, so he was a little round around the middle and was unable to clear the large piece of wood.

Kirk landed facefirst right in front of a miniature totem pole.

"Odd," Spock said. "Logically, a planet that would support a life form as large as that feline would not have such items a small as this. Not to mention the fact that cats do not have opposable thumbs."

"Dammit, Spock!" McCoy screamed, "there isn't time for this damn logical analysis! Jim's hurt!"

Spock walked up to him. "Jim, are you all right? What is the sound of three hands clapping?"

"What the hell is that, Spock?" McCoy bellowed.

"It is a common philosophical technique among Vulcans used to see if injured people are still rational."

"Don't worry," Kirk said, getting up. "I'm so healthy, I could crack a bullwhip."

"Captain," Spock said, "I believe I know what the situation is. We are on a planet called Contrivance IV."

"We all know that, Spock, get to the point!" McCoy uttered at a large volume.

"Therefore everything we've seen has been inserted by an author who put it in for no compellingly good reason. My suggestion is that we beam back to the ship and find a new writer."

Kirk gestured emphatically. "Are you sure, Spock? I still haven't overemoted, and Bones hasn't said someone's dead yet."

"Well, that's your own damn fault for not taking security down!" McCoy cried.

"Kirk to Scotty," Kirk said, opening his communicator. "Three to beam up. Let's get the hell out of here."

Within minutes, the Enterprise warped away at ludicrous speed....