

RALLY 'Round the Flag, Boys!

third printing

R.A. Lafferty has never won a major award in the science fiction field.
It's time he did.

Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys! is published irregularly by Raphael Aloysius Lafferty's League of Yeomen, a high literary society devoted to the works of the aforementioned. Vol. 1 #1, January, 1972, Demented Turkish Dwarf Press publication #106. Editors: Guy H. Lillian III; Donald D. Markstein. Mailing address: 7919 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, La. 70118. Watch out for red-headed women and white oaks.

charter members of RALLY

Patrick H. Adkins, address withheld.	John H. Guidry, New Orleans, La.
Norman Elfer, New Orleans, La.	Guy H. Lillian III, Greensboro, N.C.
Dany and Mary Frolich, New Orleans, La.	Donald D. Markstein, New Orleans, La.
Meade and Penny Frierson, Birmingham, Ala.	Don Walsh Jr., Jefferson Parish, La.

Requirements for membership: Members must be devoted to the proposition that R.A. Lafferty is among the Top Ten finest sf writers who have ever lived. They must also be among that not-so-exclusive group permitted to call the illustrious Mr. Lafferty "Ray." No dues or obligations of any kind. Just say you're qualified and interested.

Editorial, by Markstein

As is widely known, Ray Lafferty has had his name before sf audiences for a mere 12 years. He's been well known in the sf field only since 1968, when his first novels were published. In that oh, so short time, however, Ray has become one of those rare writers who *should* have a Hugo on his mantel--never mind what it's for.

Others in this category include Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov and Theodore Sturgeon. Clarke got his Hugo in 1956 for "The Star," a short story. It wasn't his best short story--he even wrote better ones in 1955. But it won a much-deserved Hugo for Arthur C. Clarke.

Similarly, Isaac Asimov won his Hugo in 1966, for "all-time best series"--*Foundation*. The time was right to give him that anachronistic cigar-shaped rocket--he'd been denied it during his active years in the sf field, but everyone felt his output in the field deserved such note. Hence, a "Hall of Fame" Hugo.

And Sturgeon won his in 1971. The story was "Slow Sculpture." It wasn't the best of the year. It wasn't good Sturgeon. It can be argued that it wasn't even science fiction. But it took home a Hugo, and everyone applauded Theodore Sturgeon.

Nobody argues that Sturgeon should have had the most coveted phallic symbol in science fiction a long time ago. And it's fitting that he should get it now. "Slow Sculpture" wasn't the story he deserved it for, but who quibbles?

What hurt RALLY--and a goodly number of like-minded people--is that "Slow Sculpture" competed against Ray's "Continued on Next Rock" for that award, and won by only 15 votes.

RALLY, to a man, voted for "Continued on Next Rock," which, in our opinion, *was* the best sf story of 1970. But public sentiment said "It's time for Sturgeon to win;" Sturgeon has his well-deserved Hugo, and Ray has another loss behind him.

OK, people. RALLY says it's time for Ray to win. Let's go over his award nominations for a moment.

His first nomination was for the 1968 Nebula, for his mind-destroying novel *Past Master*. I assured him at the Nebula Banquet in 1969, which he attended in New Orleans, that he was a shoo-in. The winner was *Rite of Passage*, a highly competent, highly enjoyable, but unspectacular novel.

Later that same year, Ray was nominated for the Hugo, for the same work. Again, I told him he was a shoo-in. I sat at his table at the Hugo Banquet in St. Louis, because he's a great man to be around as well as a great writer. When *Stand on Zanzibar* was announced as the winner, I didn't even want to turn around and see his face.

After the banquet, in a private party attended by New Orleans fandom and a few others, Guy Lillian presented Ray with a drawing of the Hugo he should have won. Guy had commissioned it from Vaughan Bodé, using money he'd won betting against his own choice. Bodé, incidentally, refused payment. He was of our persuasion, apparently.

Ray's next nomination was for the 1969 Phoenix Award, given to the best piece of science fiction written by any author residing in the South (arbitrarily defined to include Oklahoma). He was nominated for *Fourth Mansions*. The award was given at the 1970 DeepSouthCon, held in Atlanta.

Ray lost again, this time to *The Sky is Full of Ships*, by Richard Meredith. Dick wrote a fine novel, but not as fine a novel as Ray's. Curiously, I didn't talk with a single person at that con who had voted for Dick.

The Nebulas for 1970 came up. Ray was nominated three times, and everyone figured he *had* to win at least once. But as one award after another was announced, with no first place for him, I watched faces all around the room--including Ray's--grow more and more dismal. Finally, the banquet was over and the "party" started--though a lot of people weren't in a mood to celebrate.

It must be *hell* to lose to "No Award," even--especially--by a small margin.

One bright spot in an otherwise dreary history: The 1970 Phoenix came to pass, and Ray was an easy winner for "Continued on Next Rock." The result was finalized in time for Dany Frolich to create a painting from that story to serve as the physical embodiment of the award. Be it known that I was the first to applaud for Ray's first award. Be it also known that Dany let the cat out of the bag, so my hands were poised and ready.

And one week later, Sturgeon beat Ray for the Hugo..

OK. Sturgeon has his Hugo. Sturgeon deserves his Hugo. But so does Lafferty, and 1972 is the year he should get it.

Yes, in case you haven't guessed, RALLY has an axe to grind, and you can help us turn the stone.

We're not trying to pressure anybody into voting Our Way without knowledge (big pressure!). But we'd deeply appreciate it if you'd read and consider the following before making out your Hugo nomination ballot.

For best novel: *Arrive at Easterwine* (Scribner's, \$4.95)

For best novella: "World Abounding" (F&SF, December)

For best short story: "Bubbles When They Burst" (Galaxy, November)

Thanks. And while we're on the subject of people who deserve Hugos, and have never had them...you know, Chelsey Bonestell illustrated an Arthur C. Clarke story in *Playboy* during 1971.

Take care. And don't ride any tin cans, baby. They're murder.

If Don Markstein neglected to mention it, *RALLY Pound the Flag* is GHLIII Press Publication #86. The following is typed in a great hurry on my last full day in New Orleans -- but the hurry does not reflect my care for R.A. Lafferty & his works. For the man and his books and stories, I have only awe -- respect -- affection -- and gratitude.

I first met Lafferty at St. Louiscon. Dean Sweatman earned my thanks forever for making the introduction. Back then, R.A. had a bit more weight than I understand he does now, was up for a Hugo for *Past Master* (an award he of course deserved). St. Louiscon would see no Lafferty Hugo ... but his presence warmed him to many fans, & vice versa. At a consolation party to which he was invited after the banquet, I gave him a Vaughan Bodé drawing of a Hugo earned for his being "A FANTASTIC MAN". Bodé would accept no payment for the drawing, although I had 2 bucks, won from other NOLA fans in a wager on the Hugo results. At that party John Guidry told R.A. that, now that he had attended a con. & was known to fans ("You're R.A. Lafferty?!?!") awards would be surely forthcoming.

They haven't. Not yet.

I wrote R.A. a wow-letter a few weeks after the con. A "wow-letter", as you've probably guessed, is a note of eternal subservience & adoration & admiration & all sorts of things. I told him that he was quite probably the grandest man I'd yet met (as he was, and remains). I mentioned the experience of working for Quinn Yarbrow at the St. Louiscon Press Room, & my contacts with him there. I ended the letter with his Indian salute from *The Reefs of Earth*: "Wa-wa-wa-shingay." And sent it off, apprehensive, a little embarrassed, but also very proud. My first lines in a fanzine were devoted to praise of the end of *Past Master*, where "Pottscamp fled as though stricken."

"What? What? How would he flee as though stricken?"

And went on with that quarter's work at Berkeley. It was a bad quarter. How grand it was when R.A. wrote back, telling of *Fourth Mansions*. "You may find yourself a little like Freddy Foley in it," he said, "in youth & openness at least." And he talked about cops, about extremism, about The Center of All Things where wisdom grows, about writing, about Yeats, all in a page. A page I put in my journal -- which I'll never print in full. But his closing words, "May a variety of worlds happen to you" ... those I share, for I'm sure Lafferty wants them shared.

I try. I remember one day a year or so after I read the letter. A girl who worked for me on the Barrington *Bull* came to me, a little Ellay blonde freshman new to the mean Berkeley/Barrington Hall world. She was in tears. Her new roommate had erected a screen around her bed, cutting her off; she was heartbroken at the insult, the coldness, the meanness, the despicableness of life as shown to her. It was a mean thing and this little lady took it meanly.

I had some solution. I took her to my cubicle, & handed her a picture of R.A. Lafferty, taken at a DeepSouthCon. I told her about this grand Irish man, & read to her from those closing pages of *Past Master*, where the arrogant machine flees "as though stricken, and poured dust and ashes over his head" ... all because of a great man. I read her the letter sent to me by the man who conceives of a world full of ghosts (but scared mostly of themselves) & not-men men, & of real evil & real good come up to meet it. Who believes in the Secret Crocodile and that most secret of societies, the Good Guys and the Good Gals, who stir a little (can you feel it?). And this little Ellay girl, with long blonde hair, unhappy because the world slurred her and hurt her, smiled as I read, & looked from the book to the picture, and back again, & back again.

A Hugo for Ray Lafferty? I would give the world to Ray Lafferty if it were mine to give. A Hugo is all we have ... but it's something. Los Angeles is a Hugo for Lafferty.

Guy H. Lillian III