

Yikes! Look at that **sexist** cover! Shocking! Disgusting! A female Rocketeer we can accept, but ... those ...? Unreal!

Well, guys, that's why they call it *science fiction*!

Before you, in your hands or on the computer screen, behold *Challenger* no. 22, the summer 2005 issue. Even though I haven't distributed more than a few hard copies of *Challenger* no. 21, I have to pub another issue before worldcon, if only to thank Interaction for its Hugo nomination – *Challenger*'s sixth. I've already given spoken gratitude to con chairman Vince Doherty, at DeepSouthCon, but here and now let me include the readers who nominated us. Thanks, people. You make it possible for an energy-challenged faned to carry on.

I'll yap more about my real-world problems and their impact on my fanac in *The Zine Dump*, the ninth edition of which should be available soon on our website or for trade. Here in *Chall* – well, what do we have here, anyway?

Persistent *Chall* pals and champions **Mike Resnick** and **Greg Benford** are present with a remembrance of a magnificent friend and an interview, respectively. (Have I told those guys how much I appreciate their contributions to our every issue? Not often enough ...) **James Hogan** honors us with a funny piece of short fiction. It's been too long, Jim. We also welcome **Alex Slate** and **Gene Stewart** back onto our contents. Newcomer **Jim Sullivan**'s wit is welcome here. Fan art is given due notice in the latest of **Sheryl Birkhead**'s fanartist autobiographies – this one by **Taral Wayne**. Our bacover's by Taral – the basis, he says, for the color cover to a comic called *Gremlin Trouble*. Also, **Jerry Page** eulogizes the great Southern fan and artist, **Jerry Burge** – whom I met only once, and to whom Southern fandom owes a posthumous Rebel Award. Reprinted from *Chall* no. 11, we have **Charlotte & Jerry Proctor**'s hilarious "his/her" account of how their family faced Y2K.

Finally, since I pay for the printing, I have articles: a tale of New Orleans fandom, a legal war story, and an odd little reminiscence to cap things off. Plus, there's the fourth chapter of my DUFF report, an account of our days in Melbourne after Swancon. Again I must indulge myself in thanks, to **Craig & Julia Hilton** for putting us up (and putting up with us), and Craig in particular for his camaraderie and kindness in guiding me through the testosterone-soaked thickets of Australian Rules Football. (I don't know if the "footy" season will coincide at all with the 2010 worldcon, but if so, I call for a mass descent of fandom upon the Melbourne Cricket Grounds to witness a game. But remember Craig's warning: whichever team you support, do *not* say that you "root" for them. Not in Australia.)

Not a bad little fanzine, if I do say so.

Now ... about that cover ...

What can I say? Yes, *Challenger* has on hand beautiful *color* pieces from Brad Foster, plus exceptional art by Victoria White, Sergio Aragonés, and others. So why choose **John Dell**'s uplifting – and uplifted – Rocketeeress? Well, do I dare call the illo a *grabber*? Betcha if I tried, its subject would bust my head with her helmet. Best simply to say that I think it – and her – stunning. The artist, a fine fella I met at "Mr. Carl" Tupper's BSI Comics Shop in Nawlins, has made quite a name for himself as an inker in the comics biz; he's currently working on Marvel's *Young Avengers*. Eventually you'll see another piece by Dell, the Void ... just as beautifully drawn, but not as beautiful, if you get my drift. Thanks, John, for sharing this beauty with us.

And thank *you*, for reading this issue. Enjoy the worldcon! Rosy and I can't make it to Scotland – our work on Cheryl Morgan's *Ion Trails* will have to stand in for us. But we *will* be at L.A.Con IV – and, in the meantime, we'll see you in the pages.

WELCOME