

Science Fiction Book Club

Interview with Nat Segaloff and Tim Richmond, July 2019

Nat Segaloff is a writer, broadcaster, teacher, film historian, and raconteur with a varied background in motion picture publicity, journalism, and producing. He is the author of A Lit Fuse: The Provocative Life of Harlan Ellison <https://www.nesfa.org/book/a-lit-fuse/>

Tim Richmond wrote the authorized bibliography of Ellison's work, "Fingerprints on the Sky." It was the product of 20 years of research and chronicles the entire canon of Ellison's work over nearly seven decades and across all mediums.

Gary Denton: What is the best explanation to what happened to 'The Last Dangerous Visions'?

Nat Segaloff: Tim has a more detailed answer but, in my opinion, Harlan got involved in other projects with tighter deadlines. He also, I suspect, was intimidated by the expectation of people who bought the Dangerous Visions® books not only for the stories but for his remarkable introductions. Those took time and energy and, moreover, demanded a chunk of his emotional energy. There is a difference between writing fiction (which Harlan could do efficiently) and writing literary analysis, which is what the Dangerous Visions® books demand.

Tim Richmond: The tome that is LDV sits in a filing cabinet unfinished. There are a number of reasons for this which I will try to explain although it is/was a touchy subject for Harlan. For starts he really wasn't keen on doing it from the outset. The process that he had established was arduous and took away from other writing projects. Nevertheless he chose to take it on and purchased the rights to an unnecessary amount of stories which compounded the problem. There is no doubt in my mind he intended to deliver it, but was never able to get through the editing process as intended. For better or worse Harlan had a formula which required him to line edit each story, re-bake it, and write a rousing introduction to each one. There were too many stories, he'd gotten in over his head and always regretted disappointing (although not publically), regardless, he remained overwhelmed at the task of completing it in the fashion that his proclivities demanded. We talked about revisiting it in some fashion, but the same issues arose and on top of it, he became quite ill.

Ed Newsom: J. Michael Straczynski has described Ellison's consultation work on Babylon 5 as a series of lunch conversations. Can you lend insight into how and to what degree Ellison helped shape the series?

Nat: I'm not able to answer this, though I can speculate. Just because something involves lunch doesn't mean the conversations weren't full-course dinners. Harlan had the ability to help others focus their thinking. Moreover, as a Writers Guild member, Harlan could talk all he wanted but, if actual writing was involved, it would require an employment contract.

Ed Newsom: Is Straczynski still planning on adapting Repent Harlequin to the screen? Is there any progress on that?

Nat: The 2011 film "In Time," which was blatantly based on "Repent, Harlequin," polluted the waters for the Ellison-Straczynski adaptation for the near future. Although IMDb's trivia page says that Harlan sued the production company, I have no record of this as Harlan did not want to be connected with that debacle. (I wouldn't be surprised if the "Logan's Run" folks also had a problem with the film.)

Ed Newsom: What qualities do you think made Ellison and Straczynski such good friends?

Nat: For starters, they are both creative, hard workers, and have blue collar origins. They also have a code of ethics.

Tim: I'll answer these [Straczynski] questions all together as best I can.

Joe, like others, myself included, who grew up in the late 60's and early seventies and were enamored by or attracted to fantastic literature, films and associated art forms, knew who the writers were. Ray Bradbury, Charles Beaumont, Richard Matheson and Harlan being the coolest guy on the block, the great iconoclast was a natural favorite of the rock n' roll generation of readers. He even hung out with the Laurel Canyon crowd; David Crosby, Paul Kantner and Grace Slick. I believe Joe aspired to be that kind of writing so his go to was Harlan. Like Asimov Harlan used to be accessible by phone to anyone brave enough to dial the number. One day Joe did and Harlan entertained the call which Joe described as an attempt to get publishing advice. According to Joe, HE's advice was, "Stop writing crap. If you weren't writing crap you would be published." I know they eventually worked together on the "Twilight Zone" story adaptations which brought about the consulting position on B5. They worked well together, socialized and had an effective way of playing off each for an audience in what might otherwise have been a dry convention panel offering. Harlan also contributed to specific B5 scripts as well as a cameo.

Ed Newsom: *Spider Kiss* is an excellent novel. Why did Ellison work almost exclusively in shorter prose forms like essays and short stories?

Nat: Harlan would probably have had more Hollywood success if he had written novels. His agent and others lamented that to me. But Harlan always said that writing longer works bored him and that, if he knew where the story was going, so would the reader. That's why he focused on short stories. Having tried to adapt several of his stories into feature films myself, I can testify that they are lean and invariably complete as-is. There's no way to expand them into features without obvious padding, and one cannot combine two or more of them into an amalgam, because each has such a distinctive set of characters and plot that there is no meshing without making massive changes.

Tim: Harlan believed that the short story was the purest form of storytelling. You say what you have to say in a concise, clean, direct manner and you get off stage. He didn't dislike reading extended work of others if the writing held up, (although he hated trilogies) but not for himself. On a personal level, I think it also reflected how Harlan operated in general. Even as he got older Harlan moved at the speed of light. He didn't like wasting time; not in conversation that bored him, not in having to repeat himself, not in deciding where to eat, what route to take, where to park the car. He swallowed and spit fire. At the typewriter, it was the same and in his heyday the work was completed usually in one shot with very little editing if you look at the ribbon copy.

Marco BP: Is there any chance to see Harlan Ellison's complete short stories to be published any time? I think that would be an amazing publishing project cherished by most fans.

Nat: Publishing is changing. It is inevitable that, at some point, Harlan's complete oeuvre will be available online, no doubt for a subscription fee. Jason Davis at www.HarlanEllisonBooks.com is working on making sure that Harlan's stuff gets out there. Of course, an immense amount is already either in print or in used bookstores. Here is a link to a remarkably useful website listing his works and where they appear. But good luck; there are around 1700 of them: <http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?25>

Tim: Perhaps this question troubles me the most. Harlan's hope for an afterlife, his dream of posterity largely only existed in regards to his work and was almost the same as the present. On the one hand he wanted to linger in the ether-world of Poe, Doyle & Borges, but in the present, while he was here, he expected to be included as a writer, free of genre or label and accessible to everyone. That meant when he walked into a bookstore he wanted to be next to Ralph, the other Ellison, and not have "Sci-fi," a term which he hated, stamped on the spine of "Spider Kiss," and cast into the fantasy section. He would sometimes go into bookstores and ask if they had any Harlan Ellison®. In those days, they usually did, which always pleased him and he would offer to sign copies for the store to reshell.

The problem is systemic; people (those who actually still read books) are reading on glowing Kindles, or ordering books on-line. The experience of going to a bookstore, or two, on a rainy day is a rarity because there's no place to go. For the bookworm, for the book-stroker the game has changed. The trouble that Harlan would go through not only perfecting the copy and the textural appearance of his children, but the artwork, design and material from cover to endpapers the quality of the stock now has only a niche audience. Needless to say, despite a small reappearance of boutique first-run bookstores with the new Howard Stern book proudly displayed (nothing wrong with that), and with perhaps the exception of an anthology appearance, Harlan's distribution no longer finds him on the shelf. Having said that, I am pleased Jason is doing what he can to keep the work, his words, out there, my lament is for the loss of how things used to be.

As far as a complete collection, it's been done most recently by eReads. It has to be a series; there are too many stories to inhabit one volume. The "Essential" is as close to that as you can get and that's a smidgen. A spiffy, hardcover attempt was made by White Wolf in the early 90's, which is its own saga.

Marco BP: Bradbury was a great short story writer. He shared many of his writing habits/techniques/advice as, for example, to write a short story every week, to read a poem/short story/essay before going to sleep, etc... I am wondering if Harlan Ellison had similar writing advice to give? (of course he was a terrific writer too)

Tim: Interestingly, of all the time spent, we never talked about writing all that much. It was a given. There were incidental things, as Nat points out, that he would offer up as an aside, or specifics about contracts or submitting manuscripts. He line edited some of my work, made a suggestion, or fixed a glitch here and there. Otherwise, he believed you hear the music and respond to it, or you don't.

Nat: A writer writes, period. Harlan gave innumerable workshops and tutorials over the years, including at the Clarion Writers Conference. Everything boiled down to his view that writing is not something mysterious that requires a muse, it is a job and you are supposed to do it. Perhaps that sounds disingenuous, but that's the bottom line. When we discussed writing while I was interviewing him for the book his only advice -- this is for writing fiction -- was that if you know where a storyline was heading, so will the reader, so you'd better change it. That said, he was specific about certain mechanical things and cited one of his early copy editors, Gypsy Da Silva, at Doubleday, as teaching him a lesson. This is from my book:

One of the gifts of cracking the freelance market in New York at this time was meeting Gypsy Da Silva. For nearly half a century, Da Silva was legendary as the best copy editor in the publishing industry. Ellison first encountered her at Doubleday when his 1956 short story, "Rain, Rain, Go Away," was being readied for galleys. "She was the Queen of Correction," he says admiringly. "She took me under her wing and said, 'Here's what you did wrong here. You can't "look up at the sky. [The sky is already up].'" She was the first editor to teach me about 'said-bookisms,' which are unacceptable insertions for I said, he said, she said. She's also the one who warned me away from telling stories in present tense. She said, 'Amateur writers think it gives a sense of immediacy. It doesn't. It's obtrusive.' That was her word: Ob-tru-sive. Gypsy Da Silva literally took me by the nose and walked me through a story, and I never forgot a word of what she said."

I tried to locate and interview Ms. DaSilva but she had just retired and Doubleday was unsuccessful connecting us.

Lucius Sorrentino: It might be interesting to learn how he and Robin Williams became friends and what that friendship meant to Harlan.

Tim: I'm unsure of the details of their first meeting, however, I do know that Harlan knew him for many years and Robin had participated in the Harlan Ellison Roast in the early 80's. Also, in speaking with Robin, he thought a lot of Harlan noting a lasting and affectionate friendship.

Nat: Like Tim, I'm vague about how Harlan and Robin met, but I am not vague that their friendship meant the world to him. They would hang out together and play with Harlan's massive collection of toy soldiers, or just talk and free-associate. As Robin got huge, he came to regard visits to Harlan's house as an escape valve -- kind of a safe house. The Lost Aztec Temple of Mars provided shelter to many embattled people over the years from actor Richard Dreyfuss to writer Ted Sturgeon (who lounged around naked and once answered the door that way when the Avon lady rang the bell). Both Robin and Harlan were bright, quick-witted, and completely unfazed by each other's celebrity. Robin's death slammed Harlan badly.

David Stuckey: A two parter - Ellison worked with Ben Bova once or twice, the most notable result being "Brillo" for ANALOG SF & FACT, later the centre of a copyright dispute. First; How was the

relationship between two very different authors such as them like, do we know? And secondly; Did that relationship survive the 1970s, particularly after Bova published "The Starcrossed"?

Nat: Take it, Tim.

Tim: Like Nat, besides "Brillo," I am not aware other than their periodic crosshatching that includes both of them working on "Land of the Lost" at some point and "Starlost," which is the impetus for "The Starcrossed." Ben also edited Omni during a time in the early 80's when Harlan was contributing as well.

Eva Sable: Was there any story of his own that he cherished more?

Nat: Funny, but I never ask interview subjects questions like this because I'm not interested in hearing an answer that they invariably have been asked a thousand times before. Tim had the cojones to ask, however.

Tim: Like Nat said, the answer is obvious; clearly he loved "Jeffty is Five," and "Paladin." Harlan was also extremely proud of the "Demon with a Glass Hand," script. It happened to be on the tube one afternoon when I was at the house. We stopped whatever we were about to do and watched it. He sat staring and said, "Boy I was good. I really knew what I was doing. I nailed it."

Harlan did say that his favorite book was Mind Fields. It allowed him to explore/demonstrate the breadth of his talents. Here you have the poetry of "The Creation of Water", the surreal, "Truancy at the Pond," and the unfortunately prophetic, personal and tear jerking, "Susan," all surrounded by fantastic and unique paintings by Yerka. He was initially approached to write an introduction to a volume of Yerka's paintings, however, was so moved he chose to write a short story for each one instead, - an exercise he had begun years before with Leo and Dianne Dillon. The fact that it came relatively later in his career makes it even more of an achievement.

Harris Coverley: Was there ever any talk of a TV anthology show based on Ellison's short stories?

Nat: This is a sore point with me. With Harlan's permission while he was alive I pitched an anthology series variously titled "Harlan Ellison's® Dangerous Visions®" or "Harlan Ellison's® Dream Corridor®" and even wrote a pilot script. My manager and I were appalled that nobody was interested. In the television industry, the "A" word (Anthology) is anathema. Programming executives believe that if you don't have continuing characters in a TV series (the host doesn't count), nobody will keep watching. Never mind how many times this is disproved ("The Twilight Zone," "Amazing Stories," "Black Mirror," "American Horror Story," "True Detective," etc.). That said, some execs also told us that they were afraid of dealing with Harlan, and we could not disabuse them of that belief. But I'm not giving up.

Tim: Nat answered this from a development point of view better than I can.

What I do recall is that "Dream Corridor," was something that was pitched even *before* the comic was conceived. I believe the comic grew out of the difficulty in dealing with adapting it for television at the time and the idea that having his own comic was more appealing.

John Grayshaw: Ellison was known for his public persona of an outspoken and combative personality, but what was it like to be his friend?

Nat: This is going to sound saccharine but, as his biographer and friend for nearly 25 years, I never had one of those run-ins that others carry either as a badge or as a scar. Part of this is that our writing interests didn't overlap, so we weren't competitors. Also, we agreed on politics and religion and respected each other's professionalism. He was supportive, generous, trustworthy, and vulnerable (Yes, vulnerable). I was not passive -- I was not a fanboy -- I had no trouble going up against him when the conversation called for it. I could pick up the phone and call him any time and he would answer with his impatient "Yeah?" but, when he heard my voice, he relaxed and we would talk (except if he was writing). He would also phone me out of the blue to talk about a book he had read (especially one of mine) or just to chat.

Tim: I can only speak for myself as Harlan's relationships varied and were very particular. I traveled around the country with Harlan and Susan for over twenty years. I also visited their home Los Angeles countless times. We watched movies, went out to eat, made dinner, watched jeopardy. The Ellisons were Aunt and Uncle to our daughter, Alexa, who he loved and wrote a nod to in the script for the "Discarded," with Josh Olsen. It didn't play out the way he intended which made him angry, but he tried.

As a friend there was nothing he wouldn't do for you. Sometimes his moods would overtake him and you had to love him through it. That's what friends do. There were times when we would have tiny disputes regarding "Our" book or whether to get another order of onion rings. In both instances it could get loud. I am not thinned skinned, nor do I take any of this kind of normal interaction between friends to heart, especially when dealing with creative people. Animation is part of the package; as a musician I've been around it my whole life.

Harlan often told me I was the real little brother he never had and that was how we got on. A week before he passed away he called me at work. I was surprised because out-of-the-blue calls had become less frequent. He asked me if I was alright, everything good. I told him it was and that I was in a good place. Great, he said, that's all I wanted to know. And he said goodbye. I miss him terribly.

John Grayshaw: What are your personal favorites of his works?

Tim: Short Stories: Lonelyache, Try a Dull Knife, Jeffty is Five, Paladin of the Lost Hour

Non-Fiction: Reaping the Whirlwind (Introduction to Approaching Oblivion), Mortal Dreads (Introduction to Shatterday)

Book: Mind Fields

Nat: In addition to the expected ones (*A Boy and His Dog*, "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman," "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream," "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs," etc.) I have been most profoundly moved by "The Function of Dream Sleep," "Grail," "Jeffty is Five," "Along the Scenic Route," "Midnight in the Sunken Cathedral," "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes," "All the Lies that Are My Life," "The

Deathbird," and "Nackles," a teleplay he was to direct for "The Twilight Zone" but which got canceled by the network on the first day of shooting. Knowing quite well the man who wrote them makes them more moving. You will note that most of my favorite stories involve loss -- loss of a father, loss of friends, or loss of innocence. I think those are the stories into which Harlan poured more of his soul. He lost his own father when he was 14, about the same time he lost his innocence. (This relates to your later question about his becoming an adult at 13.)

John Grayshaw: Do you think the Ellison Estate will sue C.A. Fletcher for his recent familiarly titled sci-fi novel "A Boy and His Dog at the End of the World: a Novel"

Nat: I have to be careful here. In my opinion it is a clear violation of the Lanham Act. The Estate has recently compelled an editor of a proposed anthology that included the trademarked name "Dangerous Visions®" to find a different title.

Tim: I differ to Nat's comment only to add that with the level of either brazenness, ignorance or both, they're lucky HE hasn't climbed over Houdini's back and gone after them himself.

John Grayshaw: What did Ellison say about his childhood where he ran away from home and took a number of odd jobs? It seems like he became an adult at 13.

Nat: To add to the above, he may have run away at 13 but at first they kept on bringing him back. I am sure that there was some hyperbole in his job resume but, if there was, he was consistent and began it at an early age. As we learn from *Memo from Purgatory*, where he ran with a teenage gang for research, Harlan was fearless and indomitable. Granted, young people think they're indestructible (which is why they and not older people get drafted and eat fast food), but Harlan really pushed it. He must have developed an unflappable sense of self-assurance early-on.

Tim: Harlan was probably always restless and fidgety and sought adventure from an early age. The time he ran away at 13 he was recovered and brought home by his parents after being arrested and thrown in the hole with the circus geek. He had literally joined the circus and was taken in with the rest of the carneys for an ordinance violation. He always claimed it was the reason he never drank; the smell of the alcoholic sweat oozing from the man's body as he thrashed about in delirium tremens forever sickened him. After his father passed, as Nat noted, Harlan was on the road.

John Grayshaw: Since you got to know them both, why do you think Ellison's marriage to Susan Toth worked while his others didn't?

Nat: Susan is an extraordinary woman - bright and resourceful as well as supportive and understanding. She is her own person and gave Harlan sass right from the start. They met in 1985 at a sf convention in Scotland while "Paladin of the Lost Hour" was in editing in LA for "The Twilight Zone." Harlan's four previous marriages fell apart because of (in order of disappearance) betrayal, incompatibility, betrayal, betrayal. Susan and Harlan lasted (to my observation) because of loyalty and decency. I joke that Harlan found Susan by process of elimination.

Tim: Timing is everything. Given the climate of the 70's I have no idea why he even married the others - He should have just waited for Susan. Despite his daunting shadow, she is and has always been her own person. Susan's strength smarts and humor maintained the flow of things and she stood beside and up to him. They were a fantastic team; they could read each other with a thousand people in the room. Harlan adored her and she him.

John Grayshaw: What is going to happen to Ellison's extensive comic collection? And his manuscripts and correspondence?

Nat: The Estate maintains them. Harlan's papers are being preserved by his editor/publisher Jason Davis in the Harlan Ellison Preservation Project. As you know, Harlan ordered that his unfinished works be destroyed on his death, and this is pending. His vast collection of comics, posters, art, ephemera, and tchotchkes are being maintained in a secure location.

Tim: As Nat said everything is secure at the moment. My concern and my experience is that nothing lasts forever and while technology will allow for the preservation of his actual work, the entire Lost Temple and its contents are another matter. I'd like to see it all preserved, like Mark Twain's house in Hartford. It is a unique reflection of the man, that if civilization in some relative form survives, I hope will exist for other generations in a more evolved society to assimilate. How's that for cautiously optimistic?

John Grayshaw: Ellison said in his 1979 Comics Journal interview "I swear to God just one day I'd like to get up and not be angry." Did Harlan ever mellow with age at all?

Nat: If he were alive he'd kill me for saying that he had mellowed, so let's just say that his priorities shifted. Once he had his stroke in October 2014 his frustration turned to rehabilitation, which meant that he could only get angry at himself, although now and then a physical therapist caught flack. Perhaps his anger led to his stroke; that said, he outlived his father by decades, so perhaps his anger was an ameliorating factor. In the end he had outlived many of his irritants and had patched relations with a couple of others but, as I wrote, his biggest antagonist at the end was himself.

Tim: I think he got gentler to some degree, but never mellow. As Nat pointed out his health became his struggle. His engagement with the world was filtered through that. It was very discouraging to him.

John Grayshaw: Ellison said that when he asked Erik Nelson why he didn't interview any of his enemies for the "Dreams With Sharp Teeth" documentary Nelson said "Well, we don't really need to go find any of your enemies, Harlan because you're your own worst enemy." Do you think this is accurate? Why or why not?

Nat: Some creative people need an enemy to blame for their own shortcomings. I never found that Harlan sought enemies, but many sprung up from who he was. Some of them doubtless drew strength, if not notoriety, from engaging him in combat. Like Groucho Marx, it got to the point where people would slight him just to come away with the badge of a Harlan Ellison insult. Now then, as to Erik's not wanting to interview Harlan's enemies, I think he was being glib. His remarkable documentary is a rich portrait of Harlan. When I was writing *A Lit Fuse* I contacted, or tried to contact, a number of people

who were identified as his enemies. Some declined, some never responded, some spoke but not for attribution, some I couldn't find, and several already had statements on the record. But that wasn't the kind of book I was writing. Interestingly, after it came out, I met some of these so-called enemies and, to a person, each has been charming, reasonable, and, in some cases, justified.

Tim: When I sat to be interviewed for DWST I deliberately avoided answering that question. He is/was my friend and whatever personal feelings I had about his behavior belonged with me, not strangers. I couldn't conjure up anything particularly pithy or remotely clever, so I ended up on the cutting room floor. Not that I cared, I'm quite sure I looked like utter crap anyway, which is probably the real/reel reason.

The truth is everyone is their own worst enemy. Our strengths can sometimes play a part in our downfall. In Harlan's case there was always more at stake than for the average person and it was often made public. Sometimes more was made of an incident than had actually occurred and he paid an unfortunate price and/or solidified some notion of reputation. Unfortunately many things bothered him and he reacted, a lot of energy wasted sometimes, other times the cause demanded his attention and he was consumed by them.

On the one hand you could say that he could have squirreled away a lot more of Hollywood money if he'd been willing to sell his soul once in a while. On the other hand he doesn't have a film like, "The Lawnmower Man," lying around either. (Note: The Oscar doesn't really count!)

John Grayshaw: Did he have a writing routine he stuck with?

Tim: It changed over the years, but I would agree with Nat, overall he wrote when he wrote. Deadlines, burning thoughts, more lucrative projects, the one constant, at least when at home, was the music blaring and the pounding of the keys in his upstairs office.

Nat: Tim and I agree on this from observation: Harlan wrote when he had something to write. This can be defined as when he had an idea, or when he was hired to write, or when he had to earn money, or some combination. He worked mostly in his upstairs office, often playing music loudly in his soundproofed surroundings. The type of music varied with the theme of his story. (He said he favored Ennio Morricone.) He would write until he was finished no matter how long it took, and oftentimes he would do so in his bathrobe. He was a compulsive writer but, at the same time, would often be writing up against deadline. Somewhere there's a story about a producer who locked Harlan in an office so make him finish a script, but Harlan escaped out the window.

John Grayshaw: Do you know of any upcoming TV or movie adaptations of his works?

Tim: Unfortunately, I do not.

Nat: No. Nothing firm. I guess they're too busy remaking -- oops, sorry, "rebooting" -- last year's popcorn movies to attempt anything more profound.

John Grayshaw: What can you tell us about his friendships with other writers like Theodore Sturgeon? Dan Simmons? Neil Gaiman? Or others?

Nat: All I can do is speculate that fellow professionals appreciate each other. Harlan had a profound early friendship with Robert Bloch and Charles Beaumont who sustained him when he moved to California in the 60s. Ted Sturgeon stayed in his house for a while. Neil Gaiman would drop in on him after he had his stroke. Of course he adored Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury, although he thought Ray was sometimes too busy being Ray. Alan Brennert, David Gerrold, and Len Wein were extremely close to him. I guess his friendships with other writers can be summed up in Ethel Merman's comment about Mary Martin: "Oh, she's okay...if you happen to like talent."

Tim: Like Nat said. I know HE was very fond of them.

John Grayshaw: What were some of his hobbies other than writing?

Nat: Harlan collected. Collected everything: Lalique crystal fishes, prints and paintings, T-shirts, toy soldiers, mementoes, games, Big Little Books, wristwatches, drinking glasses, plates -- name it. Visiting him was like Show and Tell. He would refer to something, then scurry off to bring it back to show you. Visiting him was like going over to Harlan's house to play. But he didn't paint, do flower arranging, or build bookshelves for fun, if that defines a hobby is. He had a cadre of craftspeople who could do that if he needed something done around the house.

Tim: As Nat indicated, Harlan didn't have hobbies or activities as much as he had interests. He liked to collect things, lots of things. It was very dangerous to move around the house, not a place to spontaneously break into the Jitterbug.

John Grayshaw: What is his legacy?

Nat: Harlan Ellison's legacy is not only his work but an awareness of the existence and the demystification of writers. As time goes on a fewer people remember who he was as a person, they will surely remember what he wrote. Had he written more novels that got made into more movies, his legacy would be better known. But the lack of movie adaptations hasn't hurt short story writers like O. Henry, Shirley Jackson, Roald Dahl, Jack London, Robert A. Heinlein, Guy de Maupassant, Edith Wharton, Joyce Carol Oates, or Saki, of all of whom he is their equal.

Tim: What I hope it will be and what it will be is up to disturbing social, cultural, technological and political factors that are reaching an unnerving crescendo. As I am nearly sixty I have experienced the loss of more things cherished than I can tell you. Harlan was not just a writer he was an activist, a live speaker, an essayist, a critic and for a time he *really* mattered. I am certain as long as we don't end up on all fours again, he will continue to find an audience. The shape of who he was, the many aspects of it will begin to form in some secret corner of the universe and draw people in. The Man and the work speak to who it speaks to and with any luck those kinds of souls will continue to exist long after we're gone.

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Photo captions:

HE-15: Ray Harryhausen, Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison, Julius Schwartz at DragonCon, Atlanta, Georgia, September 6, 1998. (credit: photo by John L. Coker, III)

HE-57: Harlan and Susan Ellison celebrate the completion of the Keep, a free-standing storage vault built atop (but not connected to) the Lost Aztec Temple of Mars. (circa 2013) (photo by Steven Barber)

Harlan and his bibliographer, Tim Richmond (photo by Andrea Richmond)

Harlan and his biographer, Nat Segaloff

Harlan in the days when he smoked a pipe (photo by Stathis Orphanos)

Harlan and Robin Williams (photo by Lee Cohen)

Harlan's workspace