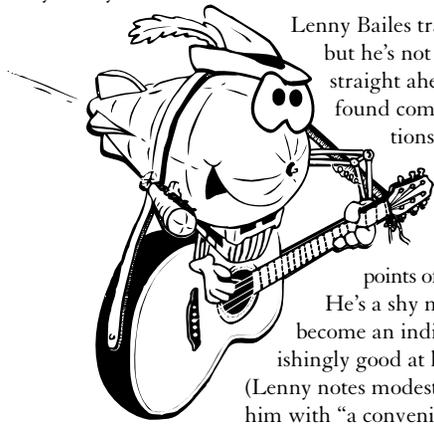


Spiraling Upward with Lenny Bailes

by Kathy Routliffe



Lenny Bailes travels in spirals: he's going somewhere good, but he's not about to miss anything on the way by simply going straight ahead. Along the path he's followed so far, Lenny has found comic books, science fiction, fandom, fanzines, conventions, philosophies, paradigm shifts, music, gafiation, and ultimate return.

But Lenny, Minicon 35's Fan Guest of Honor, is more than the places he's been.

A poll of people who know him comes up with these points of information.

He's a shy man who will ask if he can join the dinner party, then become an indispensable guest. He's a computer whiz who's astonishingly good at helping people with their Windows problems. (Lenny notes modestly that the advent of the personal computer provided him with "a convenient means to earn cat-food scrip without leaving the house." What he means is he's an award-winning writer in the field.)

More points: He's a musician who plays at Minicon music parties, happy to add texture to the tapestry. His first musical love was Gilbert & Sullivan, who he says taught him to question authority.

That's part of what he likes about fandom, too: "It's a learning process where I learn to question authority gracefully — not to scream, not use bad logical arguments, not insult people to get my points across."

Lenny found and loved fandom while growing up in New York during the 1950s and 1960s. It was a place where grown-ups didn't dismiss kids who read books and used big words, he says: "It told me there were other worlds out there, people who wanted to think and use their minds."

He read *Amazing* and *Astounding*. He and his buddy Arnie Katz published fanzines — not very good, Lenny remembers — and discovered other fans like Buck Coulson, Bruce Pelz and a 17-year-old Fred Haskell.

After that, the flood.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation; New York FISTFA and Fanoclast meetings; decamping from New York to North Carolina and the Southern Fandom Press Alliance; becoming a charter member of APA-L, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society weekly *apa*; surviving, he says, "a withering, but constructive review by Terry Carr of the latest Katz-Bailes production."

Production of the Katz-Bailes Quip, running from 1965-67 as Lenny crossed the continent to UCLA in Los Angeles; west coast 'zine work like co-editing *Shaggy* and joining FAPA; more fannish activities, more conventions, *After Lunch*.

For a time Lenny spiraled away from fandom. As he says, he switched paradigms in the late 1960s and spent the 1970s finding out about the world outside of fandom, "making the transition from words on pages to people." That meant moving to San Francisco, and discovering philosophy, politics and rock and roll.

Then in 1983 he re-discovered what he used to love about fandom when he ran across old fanzines at Constellation.

"It was a love affair with the ability to express all kinds of feelings; satire, humor, personal essays, parody. With the best fanzines, what you feel when they come in the mail is that 'I'm not alone today. Here are my friends and we can communicate through this.'"

Inspired, he published again himself, 'zines like *After Lunch #2* and *Whistlestar*. He became active in running, programming and taking part in small cons like CORFLU.

More, he circled into the personal computer frontier. He jumped into the WELL and spoke out on GENie, earning kudos as a thoughtful, assertive spokesman for old-fashioned liberal values.

What do I know about Lenny Bailes? He's a Minicon regular. He's soft-spoken. He's slyly funny. He believes in things and he won't back down about them unless you convince him to do so with logic. He's a polite pit bull about those things he considers ethical and good.

Or, as Patrick Nielsen Hayden says, "He's a very focused, morally earnest, hardworking space cowboy."

Absolutely. Find him, meet him, talk to him, listen to him (talk and play). You won't regret joining him for a short time on his spiraling journey to something good.

Visit our GoH's webpages:

Lenny: <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/lennyb>

Maureen: <http://www.en.com/users/mcq/>

Maureen F. McHugh

by Anne Gay

Maureen F. McHugh doesn't (just) write conventional sf. Her award-winning *China Mountain Zhang* has been described as a coming-of-age novel, but it is a far departure from the space-operatic teen-changes-world-grows-beard-and-impresses-girl type of plot that such a label might bring to mind. *Zhang* is about a young man growing into adulthood. China is ascendant; his position as an American Born Chinese and an engineer gives him a precariously respectable position in a world that is officially repressive of people who, like him, are homosexual. Now, if you're looking for answers on how to transcend and fix ethnic and gender prejudice, you won't find them here. But as R.A. Heinlein once said about himself, an author might be "trying to shake the reader loose from some preconceptions and induce him to think for himself, along new and fresh lines." This is what you experience in Maureen's writing. You won't be disappointed. As Heinlein went on to say:

A rational human being does not need answers, spoon-fed to him on 'faith'; he needs questions to worry over serious ones. The quality of the answers then depends on *him*... (*Grumbles from the Grave*, p 246)

Our Writer Guest of Honor is good at posing critical questions. In a presentation to the PSFS <www.en.com/users/mcq/antisf.html>, she challenged many of the conventional dogmas of science fiction. "Science fiction and fantasy taught me that if I was an outsider, but a bright outsider, then if I waited a bit my destiny would come upon me. It didn't, of course."

I have no doubt that Maureen F. McHugh will be the center of some fascinating discussions at Minicon 35.

