

# UNC Grad Barlow Wins Place in Sci-Fi Anthology

The former comic took first prize in the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future contest for new sci-fi writers.

By JOANNA PEARSON  
Staff Writer

A long time ago (1999, actually), in a galaxy far, far away (that's Durham), UNC alumnus Dan Barlow was named one of the best up-and-coming writers of science fiction.

Apparently, the force was with him. Barlow won first place in the internationally recognized L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Contest for new and aspiring writers of speculative fiction.

Along with a cash prize and an all-expense paid trip to Hollywood to hobnob with the best science fiction writers in the business, Barlow's winning story has also been published in "L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future-Vol. XVI."

Not bad for a guy who'd never even read science fiction before entering the contest.

"I've never really been interested in it. It's pretty new," Barlow said. "But my wife's been writing it since before we were married, and she's been entering (the Writers of the Future Contest) for awhile."

After hearing about the contest from

his wife, Barlow decided he had an idea for a story. The idea evolved into a short story about a famous scientist and a friend who discuss a contraption that has appeared in the scientist's house, and whether or not this contraption is a time machine.

Unlike other stories in the genre, Barlow's story aims for a little laughter.

"My story is more humor than science fiction," he said.

This is not surprising considering Barlow's background as a humorist. He has worked as stand-up comedian and written humorous columns and essays for various publications.

Barlow has also published several books on a rather unusual topic - the card game cribbage. After winning the 1980 National Open Cribbage Tournament, Barlow wrote a lot about the strategy of the game.

As an L. Ron Hubbard Writer of the Future, Barlow and his wife were whisked to Hollywood for a gala awards ceremony with all the major names in the world of science fiction, along with a writing workshop led by acclaimed authors Algis Budrys and Tim Powers.

"We were put up in a hotel, there were limo rides, it was almost like being at the Oscars," Barlow said.

With his recent success, Barlow has turned his attention more seriously to science fiction. Besides boning up on the science-fiction classics like "Dune" and



DTH/CHRISTINE NGUYEN

UNC alumnus Dan Barlow's first work of science fiction appears in "Writers of the Future Vol. XVI," which hits bookstores this month.

"The Martian Chronicles," Barlow said he has found a new favorite author, Philip K. Dick, and a new set of aspirations.

"I'm about a third of the way through a funny sci-fi novel. I'm also trying to start a small press for science fiction and fantasy," Barlow said.

This former math-turned-English-major is serious about his plans to affect the science-fiction writing and publishing scene.

"For the last 25 or 30 years, I thought I should have stayed in math, but now possibilities are opening up. I'm going to be focused more on the press for a little while. I'm getting lots of manuscripts, and I'm a slow reader," Barlow

said. "If it's successful, I'll stick with the press. It'd be nice to put out some best-sellers."

And who knows? Maybe some of those bestsellers will end up being written by Barlow - or his wife. She, after all, told him about the contest in the first place.

"She was mildly annoyed that I won the first time," Barlow said. "But she's already entered again."

For more information on the Writers of the Future contest and anthology, see [www.writersofthefuture.com](http://www.writersofthefuture.com).

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# Conniving Caroline Sucks The Interest Out of College

As registration has come and gone (for me, at least), I'm left with a slight burning deep within the cockles of my heart. It is not from the thought of the bittersweet farewell kiss that I will blow to Carolina upon my graduation in May. Nor is it from the acknowledgement of the fact that I have but half a year left of these four "best years of my life."

No, my dear friends, the burning deep inside is actually one of intense hatred and rage, contempt and loathing. After being shut out for the umpteenth and final time from every single class that I had ever even slightly considered enrolling in out of genuine interest in the topic, I now have a mission.

I am going to hunt down this so-called "Caroline," throw her down a flight of stairs, set fire to her hair and plant my foot so far up her "request-denying" ass that she'll be spitting out toe jam.

Registration is a complete joke, and although I have no suggestions on how to improve the process, I don't believe that should stop me from berating the people responsible for the utterly wretched current state of affairs.

To those responsible for setting up the current registration system, I say, "You suck!" Who decided that everyone should register on the same day?

Didn't they stop for a second to think about whether that was going to be logistically possible? Even the Carolina Athletic Association can come up with better ways to fairly and equitably



## DAVID POVILL SO ... HOW'S YOUR GIRL?

address student needs. And they're a bunch of Communists!

Certainly, there are students who are happy with the process, the ones who smiled at me on Monday asking, "How did your registration go? Mine was so easy. I got into 'Intro to Sleeping' and my 'History of Pez Dispensers: From Popeye to Pickachu,' and I have no classes before one and no class on Fridays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Mondays!" To these people, I say, "You die! You die, and you go to hell!"

Not that I wish these people any actual physical harm. I just think they might enjoy hell, as they can see how it measures up to Dante's "Inferno," which they had to read for their "Daily Double: All You Need to Know to Win at Jeopardy" class.

I once heard that everything you learn in your undergraduate career is good for one thing: feigning intelligence at dinner parties. Well, personally, I had planned to attend many a dinner party in my lifetime, until I came to Carolina.

Here, my dreams of one day waxing philosophical on the cultural subtexts of Coltrane's "Alabama" were dashed, leaving me to only hope that I might be able to pontificate on the technological advancements in rice cultivation in Java to a crowd of uninterested N.C. State University students who are waiting impatiently for me to finish, so they might counter by explaining to me the finer points of poultry science ("Ya gots ta pluck 'em before ya cook 'em, see.")

I'm going to found my own college, and things will be different; I can promise you that. For starters, the curriculum will be selected by students, and ample faculty will be available to teach each and every student who decides that he or she might like to learn about which toilet paper holds up the best under repetitive use, or a life-skills course entitled, "Oodles of Noodles: 365 Ways to Spice Up Your Ramen."

There will be a telephone registration system, but the omnipotent voice on the other end of the line will be named Guy, and when forced to deny a request, will say empathetically, "Aww, man. Sorry, buddy. I bet you wouldn't have liked that course anyway. You're too smart for that." To which the slightly disheartened student will reply, with a twinkle of hope in his eye, "Thanks, Guy. You're the coolest registration system ever."

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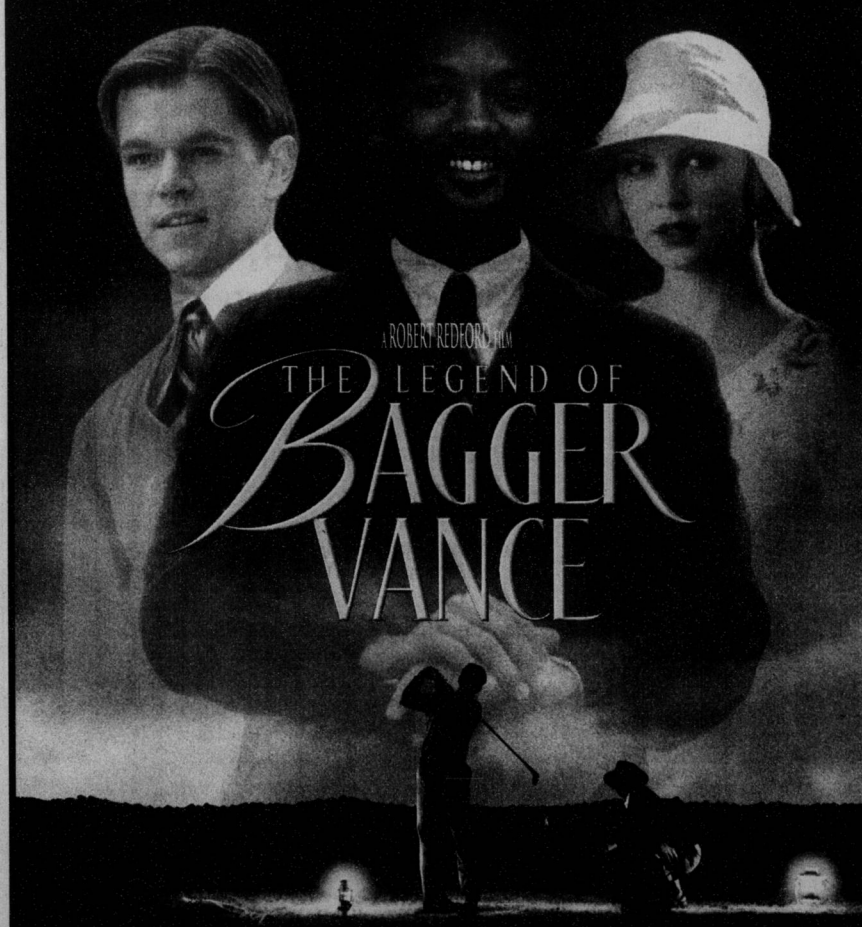
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2. Nobody - Soulmates (Ubiquity)
3. Kev Hopper - Whispering Fools (Drag City)
4. Analogue - Rock Proper (Rubric/Op Pop Pop)
5. Malt Swagger - The Lost Pilot (self-released)
6. Terem Quartet - No, Russia Cannot Be Perceived by Wit (Intuition)
7. Various Artists - Deep River of Song: Virginia and the Piedmont (Rounder)
8. Hot Club of Cowtown - Devilish Mary (Hightone)
9. Lucky Stars - Hollywood & Western (Ipecac)
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