

## *Adaptation*

Our attempts to get used to this area continue. Yesterday, for instance, we puttputted fifty miles south of here to the site of a minor Civil War fracas, the battle of Mansfield, to check out the nicely-preserved battlefield, talk to the friendly ranger about science fiction, and learn something more about the Federals' ill-fated Red River campaign, which ended on that spot. It was great fun – and not just because *our* boys, under the inspired command of General Richard (son of Zachary) Taylor, trashed General N.P. Banks' blue-coated invaders. The Confederate hero of the battle was General Alfred Mouton, who died on the site; I know a lawyer named Mouton; I wonder if he's a descendant. There are several such sites within an hour or so of here; as summer goes on, we'll check'em all out.

Rosy carried with her one of two books we had purchased the night before. Our plan was to hold off reading until a Baton Rouge seminar I'm scheduled to attend at the end of July, but of course we couldn't resist. I started my book, James Lee Burke's *Crusader's Cross*, as soon as I got home, and she has hers, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, open before we left Barnes & Noble.

Shreveport's debut party for the sixth Harry Potter novel was duplicated, I understand, some 700 times across the country. Indeed, I imagine our event was much the same as all the others. By far most of the customers who thronged the aisles were teenagers, something of a surprise – but it shouldn't have been. After all, their generation has grown up with Hogwarts and Dumbledore and He-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named. The increasingly mature – and increasingly dark – novels have marched alongside their own maturing feelings; J.K. Rowling's saga is, in a way, the ongoing saga of their youth. I envied them that youth – the girls were cuter than cute ought to be – and I envy them having such a wise guide.

Okay, that's that; this issue is history. I hope everyone checks out *Challenger* #23, available in print for a fiver, available for free (with extras) at the website, [www.challzine.net](http://www.challzine.net). I should have a new zineful of fanzine reviews, *The Zine Dump* #9, on there by this deadline, but it's also available in print or by e-mail. And I hope to have *Ion Trails* available for perusal in some form or another Real Soon Now. Not I you kid; it's a gem.

Lastly, those of you who make it to Interaction, enjoy the worldcon – weep for my poor fanzine as it loses yet another Hugo – and *keep those e-mails flying*. Help us po' stuck-at-homes stay in the loop, okay?