



This is AMOR 15, Lion's Gate Press Publication 23, from Susan Wood, 2236 Allison Rd., Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1T6. Welcome to the By-Now-Traditional Hallowe'en Edition of the Amor de Cosmos People's Memorial Lettersubstitute, begun between intervals of dishing out candy bars and pennies-for-UNICEF to assorted neighbourhood witches, gypsies, robots, Wookies, space princesses and other fantasy creatures. Amor is Not Generally Available; if you're on the mailing list, it's because I like you, I owe you a letter, you're my Mummy or my aunt, or some combination of the above. Oct. 31, 1977.

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**MYSTERIOUS MESSAGES** and cryptic utterances: On Sunday, Sept. 4, 1977, I went out for dinner with 17 (or 18) (or so) friends... a quiet, intimate... well, a most enjoyable dinner in Seattle... even though we waited over 2 hours for a table, I got to pretend to be the mother of 6-week-old Robyn Jansson, Denys Howard's son, which was rather a trip (explaining to a nursing mother in the waiting room of The Old Spaghetti Factory that he'd already had his first solid food, and hoping desperately that he wouldn't cry or need changing (he's a very good baby) (Selec-tric fandom lives!) (MORE kids at the door! Help, we only have one candy bar left!) What made this dinner unusual, apart from the presence of various Nice Folks like Denys, Joan Baker and Grant Canfield, lured to Seattle for the Pacific Northwest Noncon, was the fact that I was eating it. The last time I ate dinner on a Hugo night was in 1970, before ENERGUMEN was nominated... but this year, I had assumed that I hadn't any chance of winning. So I went

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8:50

John Singer

TIDE & DICKYGEIS

happily off to consume pasta with my fellow semi-gafiates, feeling that Suncon was Very Far Away indeed. Returning to the motel, I was about to hobble into the elevator when some lingering goshwowness prompted me to ask the desk clerk for messages. "Uh,yeah," he said, looking at me oddly, "something about a tie with Singer."

"WHAAA?" I remarked, with the dignity and grace befitting an almost-30 Ladyprof. And I snatched the message-scrap out of his hands, deciphered it at a glance, shrieked "I won, I won, oh wow" or words to that effect, and hugged as much of doug and Sharon Barbour, who were accompanying me, as I could reach. The desk clerk glared, sour-faced. No sense of wonder, at all...

So thank you, everyone, for my second half-Hugo; I am now the only person in fandom with one and two-half Hugoes... certainly the only person in the UBC English department (I told one of my sf-freak colleagues, who promptly told everyone else, so people I hardly know were asking me the title of my "sci-fi novel"... fame is fine, but I hope the tenure committee doesn't discover what I actually DO write!) I'm enough of a long-time trufan that the Hugo, while unexpected, is really delightful to have... it means something to me, it really does. Thank you.

((It means I feel Terribly Guilty, because I owe articles to Eli for KRATOPHANY, to the Luttrells for STARLING, and to Jan Bogstad and Jeanne Gomoll for JANUS, not to mention pages for two apas. This year I really thought I'd Have More Time. Sure. That's why I'm 2 months behind on the mail already...))

If Sunday evening was the high point of the con (Dena, thank you for calling; I'm sorry you didn't get through, but thanks for collecting the baby) (I tied with Dick Geis; Dena accepted for me, Charlie accepted for Geis... lovely touch!) then Friday was the low point, with a crash. Like a nerd, I raced down the slippery-carpeted, unlit stairs at Loren MacGregor's place, slipped, twisted my ankle too badly to stand up, and lay for too long a time calling for help, unheard above the music, and the cheery voices babbling in the living room. Eventually Eli heard me, came and sat with me for awhile. The sharp pain faded to a throb, so I manoeuvred down the stairs a piece, and sat talking with Jane Hawkins (who proves engineers can be human too, even if she does smoke cigars) and Steve-Loren's-ex-roomate, who decided to Ease My Pain by feeding me large quantities of Washington State white wine..... (dot dot dot the next morning): As a result of all this folly, when I reappeared at Loren's place, aka Harper's Hotel at 8 am next morning, I had four hours' sleep, a hangover, and a swelling the size of an apple on my right ankle. I collected Allyn Cadogan, and we drove out to Sea-Tac Airport so she could meet Grant Canfield (I consider this to be an Act of Heroism on my part), with me merrily using the injured ankle... I was delighted to see Grant. My ankle was less than delighted by the whole performance. By late afternoon, I had a swelling the size of a small grapefruit, interestingly patterned in shades of purple and blue. With rare foresight, I'd brought a pink, purple, black and blue long dress, to match. I got to spend the non-con reclining in state, resting my injury on an ice pack and talking with Elinor Busby, Pauline Palmer, Jessica Salmonson, Denys-with-Robyn, and the Marvellous Indestructible Joan Baker, who told us how she'd delivered a baby, alone, in a cabin in the Oregon woods a few weeks before, when a woman she was visiting went into labour unexpectedly. (Joan, who has the rare talent of bouncing like a red-headed rubber ball from any and all disasters, is now living happily in Los Angeles and rediscovering her family. COA when I get one; meantime, yes, I owe you a letter. Hi!)

We drove home Monday (with me driving part-way; oh, the ankle loved that!) Tuesday, it was back to the Real World.

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*Well, the ugly thorn in today's society, juvenile delinquency has raised its defiant middle finger at the establishment once more, and the result.*

--opening paragraph of an essay written for the province-wide English comprehension and writing skills examination, required of all Gr. 12 students; this and other gems contributed by Bill Gibson. Remember, these students are native English speakers.

## WHY I OWE YOU A LETTER , or happy dissertation,

Howard Cherniak: a continuing saga... (The orator element, by the way, is a birthday present from Eli.) On Tuesday, Sept. 6, 1977 at approximately 8 am, I bounced in to school to run registration for 20 sections of English 202, secure in the knowledge that I had been trouble-shooting for that course all summer, and Nothing Could Go Wrong.

At approximately 7 pm, I limped home, ankle and head throbbing, temper frayed from several hours of being kept under firm control. The paper that night ran a "Peanuts" strip showing Lucy reading a paper on "My Summer Vacation": "As fall approaches, we ask ourselves, 'Where did the summer go?' Once again the answer comes...down the drain." Prophetic lines.

We have a new English department administrator, who had been on the job for 8 months, but who had never been to university, much less had to really deal with the realities of academic life. He's supposed to timetable courses, get rooms, and make sure classes are staffed... He's not supposed to make life harder for the teaching staff (or be rude, or...) Well... everything imaginable Went Wrong. I arrived at school to find 6 major timetabling changes on my 20-section course, not one of which had found its way into the registration handbook (so students signing up for Section 13 at 3:30 pm Monday/Wed./Fri, who didn't read the notices I plastered everywhere, only found out that that class was changed to Tues/Wed/Fri. at 10:30 am when they turned up for the first class and found that The Prof, me, wasn't there.) I spent all of registration week running down five flights of stairs from my office, across two courtyards, down two flights of stairs to English 201 though 207 registration, upstairs four flights to where my fourth year classes were being overbooked, downstairs, back to the office (all the elevators were out of order) and trying to ignore the swelling on my ankle. A whole summer's administrative work went down the tubes in 10 minutes, and there wasn't a damn thing I could do, except be patient and polite with all the instructors and students who were yelling at me, and try to solve problems as best I could (mostly by wholesale transfers of bodies from cancelled or rescheduled sections into other sections.) Well, we can be glad that I'd handled the book orders efficiently-- some other classes didn't even have texts. The first week of classes was even worse, as students banged on my door for course transfers, trying to get into sections that were already over-enrolled, and more Administrative Problems arose. Example... I KNEW it would be a bad week when my home phone rang at 8 am, the first day of classes. It was one of "my" instructors. "What the hell are you doing? I walked into my 202 class and found a notice to say it was cancelled and I was teaching English 100. What the hell are you doing to me? What are my students supposed to do?" "Whaaa?" I replied, since this was the first I'd heard of any such action... turned out 2 sections were cancelled, and neither I nor the instructors concerned were ever "officially" notified. The week bottomed out the second day of classes, when I found that Our Administrator had double-booked a classroom (he did this a lot) so that I met my 50-person fourth year Canadian Novel class (small intimate seminar, yes) in the concrete lobby of my office tower, beside the elevators, because we couldn't get into our classroom. When very politely, I asked Our Administrator to check on this and get me a room for the following day's class (this IS his job) he called me a "goddam interfering bitch" and told me to "get the hell out of" his office... which I admit was comparatively mild language compared to the way he was swearing at other people with the same problems! I managed to keep my temper while staff-and-students yelled at me, and I am very proud of the way I did manage to get things straight, with no damn help at all from the man paid \$16 thou a year to take care of administration... but I had 2-to-3 weeks of unending hassle, followed by continuous storm-warnings-in-the-Straight-of-Georgia atmosphere at work. One damn crisis after another. Sometimes, I even get to relax for an hour, and teach!



The Cliché of The Literature Professor is that of a frustrated writer, hiding from students, idling away, reading books and only "working" 8 or 9 hours a week... Well, gang, you behold in the preceding page the frustration of a would-be teacher, who finds herself (though a very junior member of the English Department) spending 90% of her time and energy doing paperwork and mediating in Crises (Full Canlit Prof vs. The Honours Committee, tune in for today's thrilling installment...) The rest of the energy goes into the usual large classes (which, thank Ghu, are going well; the technical writing class is full of very, very good people, all of whom should end up with marks between a low B and a solid A, a reality which contrasts pleasantly with the panic I felt); into seeing students til 5:30 or so; into marking; into supervising 4 honours' theses and an unpaid overload class on fantasy; into preparing new classes; into being Resident Expert on Canlit, as when the B.C. government wants to consult somebody on proposals for high school Canlit textbooks... And at least 2 nights a week, I mark techwriting papers: "A Technical Description of the Bulldog Model 901 All-Purpose Clip." (Anyone out there with good bad examples of memoes, official documents, how-to instructions that tell how not-to, or anything, send them along!)

Since term began two months ago, I have read one, count it, one book that wasn't something I was teaching next day: Cherry Wilder's *The Luck of Brin's Five* from Atheneum, which I made time for because my ankle had swollen again, and besides, I wanted to review it for *LOCUS*. (It's a lovely sf/fantasy novel set on a truly alien planet, extrapolated from Wilder's life in New Zealand and Australia. The people, for example, are humanoid marsupials... The language flows, and the society, which is nonsexist, is especially well-developed. This has been a plug.) I have also done about 3 hours of real, solid, intellectual *work*, when in a flash of insight I worked out a whole new interpretation of that agrarian Canadian classic, *Settlers of the Marsh*. I know: it sounds faintly ridiculous to ME, too... but I felt supremely happy, for a few minutes, actually doing what I'm "supposed" to be doing: Original Scholarly Work. The 4th year class, which, having recovered from the trauma of Buchanan Tower's lobby, is proving to be one of those Dream Classes full of bright aware people who actually have some background in the subject, helped a lot.... I have NOT done anything with the pile of manuscripts I collected from Ursula Le Guin, during several very pleasant days with her, her family, Vonda McIntyre and assorted racoons in Portland in August. A contract, a fat cheque from Putnam-Berkley, a pile of original Le Guin essays: and no time at all...

((On the same trip, I drove down to Eugene with Vonda and Ursula, to see Kate Wilhelm and Damon Knight, assorted kids, and various cats, and hear Clarion stories. There sat dignified, beautiful Kate Wilhelm, soon to win the Hugo for *Sweet Birds (cheer)*... brazenly, nay, frantically trying to foist kittens off onto her guests. "Here, have a kitten. It likes you. Take it away!" "But, Katie, they aren't weaned yet!" "Well, here. Take some milk with it!" One kitten fell asleep in the crotch of my jeans, prompting Damon to take one of the oddest obscene pictures of me I've ever seen; he gave it to me, bless him, thus ruining a promising career as a blackmailer...))

I seem to be coping with term, partly by ignoring my mail as it piles up... Well, in fact, my body isn't coping. While Eli was away in New York and Pittsburgh, I came down with The Flu That's Going Around, spent most of a week running a high fever, having odd hallucinations, and, yes, losing my voice again. I still feel exhausted most of the time, and would rather be sleeping than marking descriptions of how to run a blueprint machine... When I finally saw my doctor she said a) I have a badly torn ligament in my ankle, and did all the wrong things to it (I **KNEW** that) and b) --mother, do not fret, I am FINE-- I have either a protesting gall bladder, or The Family Ulcer, please avoid interesting food and Stress. Yes. Meantime, I feel like all three Karamazov Brothers (ho!) in the middle of the juggling-scythes trick, tossing various responsibilities into the air and juggling them, sure that any moment something will slip and I'll slice off a hand. So if you've written to me, and expect a reply (eight pages assuring you that There Is No Problem with Women in Fandom, or whatever), be patient. AMOR is a lettersubstitute, and it's substituting for sleep, at the moment.

IS MIMEOGRAPHER'S  
KNEE A TERMINAL  
CONDITION?



...and are these punishments fitting for such offenses as constantly erupting classes?

Juvenile delinquency is the result of inadequate prenatal control.

LATER, THAT SAME FANZINE

It is now Saturday, November 5, as we return you to our letter-substitute, already in progress.

In the intervening days, I have done the laundry, done the ironing, marked 2 sets of technical writing papers, and actually written some Real Letters (hello, Mum.) Isn't that exciting?

Eli read over the preceding stencils, and commented, "There are four Karamazov Brothers." Yes, but as far as I can remember, only three of them play with scythes. All of them, however, seem to be gaining Fame and Fortune in the Bay Area and beyond. Ho! Eli also suggested I write about Cheerful Things, so...

CHEERFUL NEWS from the raincoast: first, *Genre Plat*, Canada's answer to the

genzine drought, is out (sort of.) In mid-September, Allyn Cadogan left for San Francisco, rather sooner than she had planned, after a few frantic nights of typing stencils. In early October, when Eli returned from New York, he, Bill Gibson and I prepared to mimeo the zine. Bill got a crash course in how-to-paste-in-electrostencils, we all said rude things as various mimeographing disasters overtook us (like e-stencils pulling out, that stuff), and we slip-sheeted late and frequently. Two weeks ago, we finished; ten days ago, Bill, John Park, Eli and I collated over 200 copies, and I bundled them into the mail. The remaining copies will go to Allyn via United Parcel Service next week, when we go to Seattle for The Nameless meeting and Vonda's Soirée. If you're on the GP mailing list, hover by your mailbox. If you aren't, send Allyn a dollar (she doesn't have a job) at her NEW ADDRESS. Pencils ready? COA Allyn Cadogan, 28 Atalaya Terrace, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA.

Though Allyn's husband Paul is still at the Vancouver address, I gather that mail-forwarding has not been proceeding with efficiency, so if you've ordered a GP, write to Allyn again, and/or be patient. Issue 3 is In Preparation, Allyn tells me, with all sorts of goodies (yes, Allyn, yes, as soon as I do my column for Eli...) and a shiny-new co-editor.

WPSFA Northwest seems to be moving all over, in fact. COA Rick Mikkelson and Lynne Dollis, 1334A 106th Ave., Dawson Creek, B.C. V1G 2P4. Despite seeing their first snow on Oct. 2, Rick and Lynne seem to be enjoying The Interior (lots of rodeos.) Lynne's doing her articling year to qualify as a lawyer, and is getting lots of varied law work... Rick called two weeks ago, to say he was going to be manager of a bookstore that they were opening in partnership with a couple of lawyers! I'm expecting him on a buying trip sometime soon, since they hope to have the store open for Christmas.

Meantime, the Wood Hotel has vanished as a Fannish Centre... I rashly invited Peter

Roberts to visit Vancouver, while he was in Seattle, and then had to call back the next morning to say "Don't come"... my flu had returned, and besides, I had laryngitis (it was a very strange phonecall!) I'll just have to wait til the 1979 worldcon to see Peter (Lesleigh Luttrell wrote that "seeing Peter Roberts' orange suit made the 3,000-mile drive to Suncon worthwhile.")

Meantime, Seattle has become The Fannish Mecca of the 1970's... travelling fans can now head for (yes, I know you'll thank me for this, Loren), Harper's Hotel, where there is no Harper, but there is, now, a Jerry Kaufman: COA Jerry Kaufman, and Suzle Tompkins in early 1978... 606 15th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112.

I think Eli and I will be spending a lot of time driving 1-5 to Seattle... While Eli was in New York, and I was recovering from flu, I made the trip alone to attend Vonda McIntyre's party for Joanna Russ. Lovely party, even though I was *exhausted* when I got home. Joanna is now teaching writing at the University of Washington, which wanted her so badly they gave her Automatic Tenure immediately. I asked her how tenure felt... her eyes grew round, as if gazing upon a magical Promised Land, and then she grinned... a rather wicked little grin. "Having tenure means you can refuse to be on committees," she said.

I can hardly wait...

Joanna also paid me a marvellous compliment on my women-in-sf paper: "You did *real* research. YOU ACTUALLY read all that stuff!" Yes indeed. (Limited number of copies available on request, suggestions welcome...) She seems very happy, looking for a house, and settling in nicely..."The Northwest reminds me of a terrarium, all green and wet and jungly," she said. Yes. Terrarium-Con in 1981...

My own tenure-decision, by the way, comes up a year from now... I just had another teaching evaluation, and not only did it go well, the examiner took copious notes because he was teaching the same novel the following week... also, in October, I achieved an ambition of many year's standing, when I got my name on the cover of *Canadian Literature* (the leading Scholarly Mag. of Canlit Fandom), and a longish review inside... all this, *and* a cheque for \$15; then I got a copy of a book of essays on The West in US and Canadian literature, with an essay by me inside (look, look, my very own real name on a very own real Publication); and when I got a cheque for £ 21.50, for a four-page article on "Canadian sf" for Peter Nicholl's forthcoming *Encyclopedia of SF*. Naturally, I cashed the cheque the day before the pound started to rise... One of these years, too, I will get on with the Le Guin essay collection for Berkley, as soon as I mark two sets of Canlit essays this month, and the technical writing Formal Reports, and in four weeks our exams start, and then...

And then, I have a plane to catch. Dear Elizabeth, Richard, Rosemary, Norm&Gina, Rosemary & Doctor Bag, and other Easterners, I will be in Ottawa from Dec. 20 to 30th, and I look forward to seeing you. Mum's phone number is (613) 225-2100.

If this letter-thingie is even more disjointed than usual, it's because I'm typing it while defrosting the freezer, before Eli gets back with the groceries, and trying to keep Quin and Samantha out of the food on the counter, out of the refrigerator, and out from under falling ice. (Not that it would make much difference if Sam got beaned by a chunk of ice. An adorable kitty, but stupid. I mean, how many cats do you know who make a regular practice of falling into the bathtub... when it's full of water (and person)? (None of the doors here closes tightly, and your average kitten can open anything with a bent claw.)

Publications: John Berry, who just published another *Hitchhike*, thus sending me back to the keyboard, has been Selling Stuff... like an article on the national anthem of Costa Rica? Anyway, *The Pacific Northwest Review of Books*, edited by John and produced by Loren MacGregor, is being typeset Right Now. Contributors, distributors, advertisers needed: P.O. Box 21566, Seattle, WA 98111, USA.

Speaking of publications, Gloria Andersson, who is one of the people to whom I have owed letters, plural, for Far Too Long, writes that she is now a Published Artist: she's illustrated a book of Lithuanian tales (in English): *Ona*, by V.F. Beliajus, from P.O. Box 1126, Denver, CO 80201, \$4.00. Congratulations!

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*In Columbia, delinquents paint fire hydrants to resemble small people.*

*The delinquent should be punished partially or wholly depending upon the case, no matter whose fault it was.*

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Short break, because Eli arrived home announcing "I think I'm a born consumer. I just spent \$60.00." For the next week, we and the cats can eat... (Turmeric is so expensive, these days.) Eli (best known in these pages, perhaps, as the Talented Author of Last Issue's parody of both *Camelot* and more-faanish-than-thou fandom) has, in fact, re-entered the Consumer Society in a big way. *Eli has a JOB.*

Yes, Eli became a computer programmer with Vancouver General Hospital, three days before he was due to fly back to New York to explain to his parents why he preferred Vancouver. He enjoys his job, likes playing with the computer terminal, likes getting paid, promises us a fanzine about it all Real Soon, and is currently trying to decide which to buy first, a home computer system (only ten tiny connections will turn a Selectric into a print-out terminal) or a piano. (Me, I've become a Consumer too, but I bought a couch for the kittens... Actually, I also got frivolous and bought a new suit. "Howcome you get to buy a velour suit, and all I get to buy is a vacuum cleaner?" protested Vonda McIntyre, who's just been spending the Houghton-Mifflin advance for *Dreamsnake*. "Because I already have a vacuum cleaner," I explained. I'm so domestic...

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*Nursing is a vast career. In nursing, you have to think before you proceed with what you are going to do.*

*When in the home being a housewife or not, there are so many obsticals that can inhibit your well-being. (Yes, that typo is deliberate!)*

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Vonda and I may not talk about vacuum cleaners, but we'll talk about many other things at Wiscon II, Feb. 17-19: I've already suggested a panel on children's lit and fantasy (so I can take notes for my kiddylit class), I'll be talking about sex-role stereotyping, and there will probably be much social-alternatives-in-literature-and-our-lives type programming (the sort of thing that gets reduced to the label "women's programming.") If you have ideas, or want to join the con: information from SF<sup>3</sup>, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701. I'm really looking forward to seeing Madstf and other Good People.

Also... A.E. Van Vogt is GoH at this year's V-Con, U.B.C. (but in a *different* space from Westercon, no shared bathrooms), May 26-26, 1978. "Can you afford air-fare?" I asked Allyn. "Oh, sure. The Fan GoH is local, we'll save there." "Who is it?" "You." "No, really, who?" "You."



Aw. Gee. Since Allyn left, and Fran Skene took over as Chair-plus-programmer, I've been moving into my usual role of making bright suggestions about programming... and leaving them to Fran to implement! I WILL probably be organizing some sort of Room Of Our Own programming as I did at Westercon, though. If you have useful suggestions, the V-Con VI address is: Box 48701, Bentall Station, Vancouver B.C. V7X 1A6. (Memberships: \$6.00 to March, 1978, attention Hélène Flanders.) Now, about that programming...

"Sometimes it's not enough to niggle from within; there are such a lot of men who just wouldn't take any notice of such moderate tactics as quietly talking to them and working away at them. The shock approach can sometimes be very effective, and in that respect organizing a 'women's only' programme or room at a worldcon, in providing something that the more sexist males couldn't participate in even if they wanted to, could be more effective in getting through to them. It would make them angry, and jealous, and just maybe there's an outside chance that one or two would begin to think about the problem.

It is certainly very easy to be a radical in fandom. Fans like to think of themselves as sort of supermen (no doubt we can thank Claude Degler for that) but on the whole fandom tends to be even more reactionary and conventional than the world in general.... Fans, in certain eyes, are male only; any females are either wives or girlfriends and not real fans at all. Maybe that's why there are so few active British female fans: the uphill struggle drives them away. The traditional term 'femmegfan' is pretty obnoxious; who ever heard of a 'hommegfan'?" -- Darroll Pardoe--

"As a white man I do have an advantage over a woman (who is less than beautiful) in many areas that count highly. Fandom is not one of those areas.... Considering Western society, fandom is pretty damned free of oppression due to sex, race, age and religion. Yes, I know it does exist. There are fans who think in terms of niggers and broads and kikes and hippies and old fools, but these closed minds are in the minority. This is one of the joys of fandom. So many fans have been repressed in one way or another that the vast majority are careful not to do the same to another.... People's rights are where it's at, Susan." -- Terry Hughes --

"Look, sweetheart, 'scuse me mentioning this (and, I guess, you can colour me naive) but regarding your comment on women-only-space... isn't it, for crissakes, about time we just had people-only space?" -- Dave Piper --

/re the private Women's Apa suite at Balticon/"I think you can do what you want to do in parallel with the regular convention, but outside it. Raise the money for the suite, and you're in business. It's your suite, after all, and it is the Women's APA or whatever that is excluding men, not to convention.

"I still don't think it is a good idea, because over time it has a strong inclination to drift towards sexism. Institutions have their own dynamic, and once the Women's Suite was established it would take on a life of its own.... I guess the whole point of the letter is that programming by sex at a convention is effectively the beginning of sexual segregation. You are working hard to polarize fandom." -- Alexis Gilliland --

"Diane White's suggestion of a women-only hospitality suite sounds like a good idea. After all, if men really want women around it seems only fair they should have to compete for attention with something specifically aimed at helping women." --Eric Lindsay--

Above are some of the reactions to AMOR 13, and to one line in #14. Yes, I know the reactions are all from men. One woman wrote to say she wouldn't favour an all-woman convention like the one Lee Smoire is discussing, because "I would lack the company of practically all my favorite people in fandom." Well, I like the company of men, too, but there are times right now when I'd like a space to be with some of my "favorite people" in a non-male-dominated/oriented atmosphere. That's all. The other women either wrote with useful programming suggestions, or were off keeping their own sanity by NOT thinking 100% of the time about how-to-deal-with-sexism. For men, it's an intellectual discussion; you can write letters about how liberal fandom is. For women, it's something to live with (under, around); the time for debate is over.

I get the feeling, from some of the letters, that two Ritual Acts of Atonement are expected from me, as a former Honorary Man who's criticized fandom's happy tribe. OK. Ritual One: Of course, I "like men." Or as Avedon Carol says, "Why, my brother's a man. And he's just like one of the family." However, I am learning to enjoy the company of women... which is something our culture doesn't reach us.. and to find occasions when talking to women would proceed much more easily if we didn't have to stop to explain/defend ourselves



to men; if we didn't have to defer to them, ask them to leave, or deal with their sulks; if we could stop being teachers/ego boosters/sex objects/'token women'... and be ourselves.

Ritual Two: No, I won't apologize for criticizing fandom, nor will I agree that it lives up to its white-liberal selfimage. I'm putting a lot of effort into living positively in the "real world"... but I value fandom and the friends I've made there enough to put as much energy as I can spare into making it live up to its ideals, into making it a more comfortable place for.. yes, Dave... people. Especially women-people. (We're tired of being opossums in the walls.)



Now let me be as positive as I can be. Within (North American) society, within fandom these past few years, a number of individuals, myself included, have been learning something. We aren't token men. We're women. Other women are not "competition" or "dull." They're interesting. We share unique problems and experiences. We want to get together, in a supportive and non-sexist atmosphere, to talk, laugh, joke and argue, to share ideas/friendship/emotion: not in a negative way, not because we're "rejecting men" and not because we are excluded from "real" (male) activity (as in the "Ladies Aid" church groups and "Women's Auxiliaries" of political parties) but in a positive way... because we're happy with our individual selves as women, and because we honour and like other women.

In response to this perceived need, to come together in a space free of sex-role game-playing (most of which is unconscious), we now have the Women's apa, various bits of "women's" or "alternate" programming at conventions, feminist-oriented fanzines... and within the last year, hospitality rooms or women's-apa parties. But: but: these are still male-dominated and/or male oriented. At this year's Westercon, I set up A Room of Our Own, open to ALL members of the convention interested in discussing such human-people questions as sex-role stereotyping, alternatives to patriarchal societies in sf, and the impact of feminist ideas on sf, fandom, and their lives. When I opened it, it contained a dozen or so men... and me. I received numerous complaints from women that when they tried to talk to each other, the room was dominated by men. That men interrupted women's conversations and assumed the women were there to argue with men, teach men, and boost the egos of men. "This kid broke in on a perfectly good private conversation, and said something like 'Equal pay is fine, but chicks don't belong on my basketball team,' and he expected me to actually discuss that and approve of him," was the sort of comment I heard, repeatedly. *So much for "people's" rights!*

However: for purely legal reasons I don't think a convention itself should provide "women-only" space (although conventions DO provide space for various functions which exclude members, from the Georgette Heyer tea to the SFWA Suite.) Quite personally, I would like to see a private suite as a discussion space/sanctuary/meeting ground for women during the day... and a space for parties for women *and invited male guests sponsored by women who contributed money to rent the room at night.* (This would, I hope, eliminate the boyfen, especially the let-me-tell-you-what-a-feminist-I-am,-chickie types, while allowing people like Denys Howard and Paul Novitski and John Varley, who have valuable contributions to make to any discussion-- like the ability to listen-- to

participate.) *As long as there is a perceived need in the fan community for women-only space, let's provide it for ourselves, as private space... and as self-destructing space, looking forward to the day when it won't be necessary.* (I do not believe that any man has the right to tell women that they really do not feel the need for such a space. A man who claims to be liberal, but who denies or degrades the reality of women's perceptions of their own experience, has a lot of thinking to do, to say the least.) I'm volunteering to organize space-rental for Iguanacon; more in the next AMOR and in Women's apa.

At the same time, from my Westercon experience, I've concluded that conventions *should* provide some people-space: public space set aside as a comfortable lounge for serious discussion of anything. A quiet room: not the bar, not the Dungeons and Dragons room, not random stairwells where people retreat from smoky parties and superficial social games... a room not for bullshit or harangues or formal programming, but for real talk (and maybe no cigarette smoke?) Perhaps a room with a bulletin board for exchanges of messages (on the style of the informal discussion groups some worldcons ran): "Anyone interested in Arthurian legends, meet here with Anne at 2:30 Sunday." "Gays, open party in 1214 tonight." Whatever. A Room of Our Own filled a need for many, many people at Westercon, female and male, gay and straight, neo, pro, old-fan-and-tired, to come together in the crowds.

I have other things to say about the completely different question of innovations in convention programming, but they'll have to wait for another AMOR or my JANUS article, realsoonnow. Meantime, if you have a positive contribution to make to ideas about... people's programming... don't write to me because I won't have time to answer letters until term ends in the spring, and then I have a book to edit. Write to Curt Stubbs of the Iguanacon committee, P.O. Box 1072, Phoenix, AZ 85001. Write, especially, to Hilde Hildebrand, 5422 E. Bowker, Phoenix, AZ 85040, who with Sharon Maples is organizing the "alternate programming" for Iguanacon. They've already got some exciting ideas; they need yours, to make fandom a space where you (and I) feel at home. ...The effort seems worth it, to me. I've started attending the programme again, at conventions. I've started meeting new people. I've started thinking in new ways. I like it.

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This has been AMOR 15. Typos by Susan, mimeo assistance by Eli Cohen, electrostencils by Victoria Vayne. Artwork: p. 1, Randy Mohr; p. 3, Alexis Gilliland; p. 5, Wm. Gibson; p. 9, Ron Miller and Freff. Thank you all.

Hey, I have a couple of lines left here! OK. This issue is for Ursula at her typewriter, and for Vonda who gives good parties, and for Lizzy who started doing one of These Things herself (keep on swimming, Lizzy!)

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