

# MIMOSA

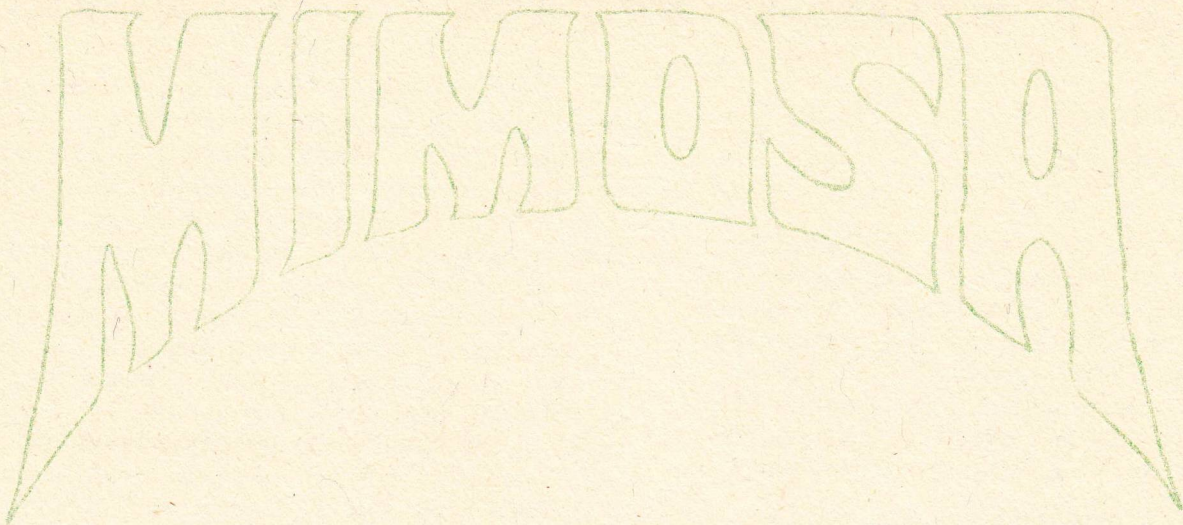


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# Why I Don't Write Fiction

Editorial by  
Nicki Lynch

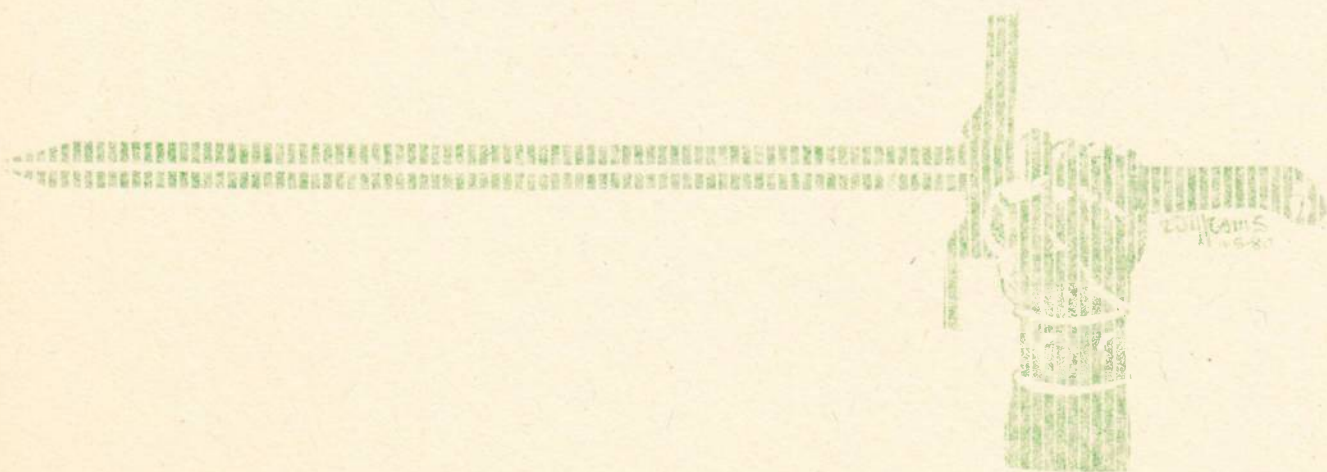
One of the things that has always been a part of science fiction fandom has been fans who wish to write SF themselves. And many fans have gone on to write fiction -- good SF and fantasy -- and been successful. Jack Chalker is a good example of that. As for myself, I'm not interested in writing fiction of any sort.

When the need and ability to write fiction was being handed out to fans, I must have been at the local used bookstore looking for books by my favorite author. I didn't get into fandom armed with a great desire to write fiction, I just enjoyed the genre and the people who read it.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying that a fan shouldn't want to write fiction. Far from it. If one can do something, I say he or she *should* do it! But writing fiction is not for all fans.

The assumption that all fans want to be writers is parallel to my given preference in career -- art. When I told people I was an artist, they wanted to know what I painted. Well, I don't consider painting my avocation as an artist; my main interest for years has been weaving and other textile arts. So I would patiently explain that while I have a degree in art, I don't paint for a living. As confusing as it must have been for others, I did learn something -- be specific and say I was a textile artist. People didn't know what that was, but at least they didn't ask what I painted!

So if you're a fan who writes fiction, ~~w~~right on! And much success to you. And if you're a fan like me who likes to read SF, fantasy, or anything else that is in English (or if you're lucky enough to be fluent, in other languages), don't worry about not being interested in writing fiction. Just writing in general is fun! Either way, if you write fiction or not, I hope you enjoy our first effort in gen-zining!





# An Opposing Point of View

## CHATTACON 6 GoH speech by Jack L. Chalker

At a number of conventions in recent months I've watched presentations by quite a few interest groups promoting space travel, space exploration, and just the space program in general. Almost all of them paint a tremendously rosy picture, along with excellent graphics, of the wonderful L-5 colonies where paradise will reign and bounteous plenty will shower the Earth. Unlimited resources. Unlimited energy. A world for every philosophy and every ideology. The wonders of space will remake us all. And, of course, to an audience of science fiction fans this is an appealing, even irresistible vision of the future, of future potential, of the wonders to come. It's roundly applauded, and you can see the light of a new technocratic religious fervor in the eyes not only of those presenting such programs but, at least by the end of the presentations, in most of the audience as well. This sort of new religion is quite natural among people like us, for science fiction itself was shaped by Hugo Gernsback, the man who said that all things were possible through technological development, and it was this shared dream that was the common link in early SF fandom as well. For forty years the scientists and engineers and their visions have shaped our own hopes, dreams, and aspirations, and a heady vision it is, too. But now, I think, the situation is far too dangerous and far too threatened to keep wallowing in our religious technocracy. It is time, in the words of the TV editorial, for an opposing point of view.

Social science has always been anathema to the hard sciences. It is looked down on, distrusted and abused, by the men in their labs and with their computer consoles. Social science makes hard scientists quake and quiver because it deals exclusively with the study of human behavior. You can't bottle human

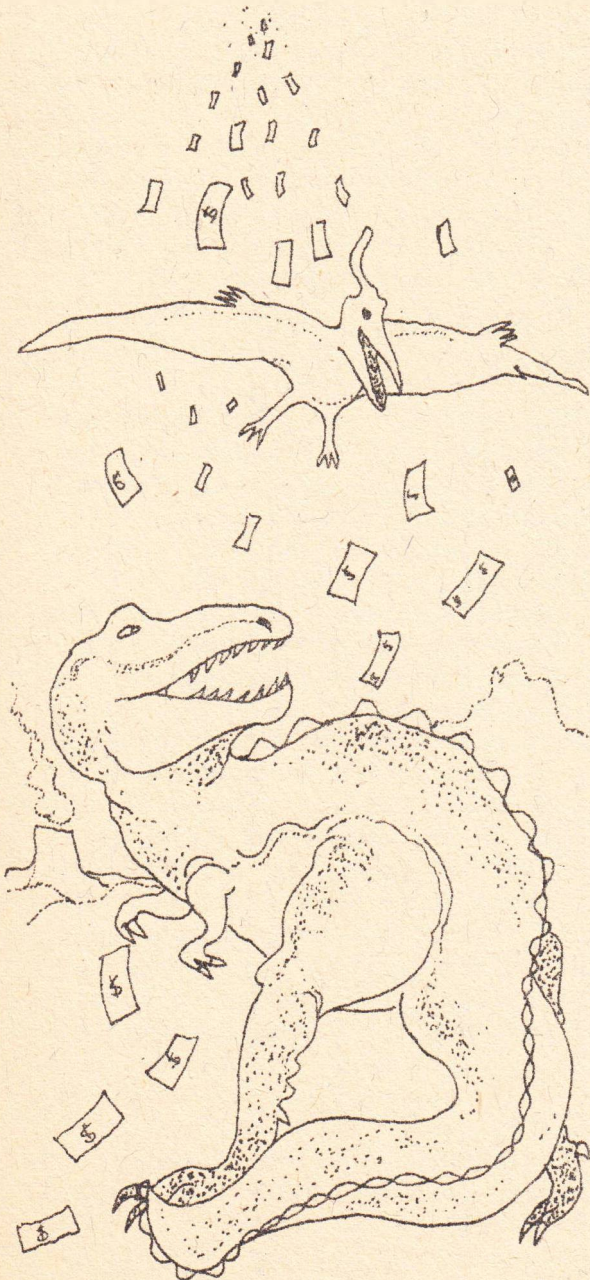
behavior, stick it on a bunsen burner, or boil it down into a bunch of nice little digital dots on a piece of computer tape. As one who came out of the social sciences, I sympathize with them, since it drives us crazy, too. But we're not afraid of it. A scientific study of human behavior is essential, not for what it can not do but because it *can* do a number of things. Without the human factor, technology is meaningless.

Much of science fiction has always been couched in terms of whether or not something was technologically *possible*. I am concerned, rather, with not only how technology can be used, but if it will be. Note that I do not address whether a particular technological ability *should* be used -- I am of the opinion that, once released from the bottle, genies cannot be stuffed back in, whether good or evil.

A good example of whether or not technology can or will be used may be seen in the Sahara Forest. Oh, yes, there was a Sahara forest, and there was a great expanse of fertile grassland and savanna that fed whole civilizations and tremendously abundant wildlife, in an area almost as large as the contiguous 48 United States. What happened to it is the old familiar story -- man became very civilized and cut down the forest along the Atlas and AntiAtlas Mountains to better build his cities and in the process he removed the buffer from the fierce Atlantic storms that were the water source for the entirety of North Africa. Without the forest to soak up the excess water, erosion very quickly took over, turning that lush savanna beyond to so much sand, into which the ancient rivers sank thousands of feet below the now dry surface, rendering the place the desolate, uninhabitable area we now know as the world's greatest desert. It is not my place here to discuss how man destroys, but to give you a most interesting piece of news. This area, which in its original state would be capable of producing enough food to feed almost a third of humanity, *can* be reclaimed. The technology exists now -- and has existed for a decade -- to totally reverse this savaging of the land and return the Sahara to, if not its pristine state, at least to an area



comparable to our midwest in food production per acre and with a stable, subtropical climate. But the entire area must be addressed at once -- you can't reclaim little parts with any success. The result is that we can restore this area and almost double the world's potential food supply -- at a minimum cost of two to three trillion dollars. Yes, I said trillion, a magical number. Two to three trillion seconds ago dinosaurs ruled the Earth. Three trillion dollars is roughly the gross national product of every country in the entire world combined.



In other words, we know *how* to do it, but we simply can't afford it. Worse, even if technology should cut that cost in half, or even more, it is still far too much to be practical. The entire world is not going to take a cut of something like 40% in their standards of living for a 30-year project to reclaim the Sahara. That last is the most important point. People in general are unwilling to make major short-term sacrifices for long-term gain, particularly when that gain is not coming directly to them. Would Americans take a 40% cut in their standard of living for so long at all? I doubt it. But particularly not when it is other countries, not the U.S., who need and will consume that potential food supply. Without that sense of bottom-line, grass-roots support, the overall investment is simply not possible.

In other words, it is not enough to know how to do something -- you must have support to do it.

And that brings us back to space. This country had no use for a space program of any sort unless it was designing a better missile and missile guidance system for ICBMs from the end of World War II until the late 1950s. In 1957, you might recall if you're old enough, the Russians, against whom we were building all those ICBMs, had the absolute gall to launch an orbiting satellite that beeped at us day and night and scared the living shit out of the political powers that be. No less outraged was the American public who, a year before, would have voted out of office any Congressman supporting space, now threatened to vote out of office everybody in office for not having a superior space system in place now. We became a laughing stock in our rush efforts to launch successfully, but, by god, no amount of money was too great, no investment long or short term too much, to get us in the number one position.

By the time the U.S.S.R. was putting people in orbit John Kennedy was in office, and he was feeling the pressure. It wasn't a question of expanding the space program, it was a case of direction that program would take. Kennedy correctly foresaw that the trend of space was towards the military and it bothered him. The only way public support could be developed for the program was through the military, but this would forever color and orient the program to-



wards military goals at the expense of more peaceful applications. He was determined that it would be a civilian-controlled agency, for in this way the military could participate fully but would not be the ultimate maker of policy. Only in this way could both the defense and peaceful scientific pursuits be given equal play. This was an astonishing development, one that we SF people just about missed. Military control of space, sure. Or private enterprise. But a civilian-controlled space agency? It was an unparalleled opportunity. And it gave the Kennedy administration something else -- the ability to locate this new industry in some of the most economically depressed areas, stimulating jobs and economic growth. This would be technologically the equivalent of war -- but without the war. But how do you sell such a concept? You do it by cannily understanding that people understand a football game. Americans love games, contests, races. And that's the way he sold it -- as a football game. We were going to beat the Russians to the moon. He got his support, and that support continued under Johnson even as Vietnam escalated. In the late sixties it was unthinkable that we would not go to the moon. The technological spinoffs from space revolutionized American life in the decade after. It was a program that worked -- but it was based on a false premise.

Kennedy believed that, having sold it as a football game, the obvious technological and economic benefits of the program would become so obvious to the average American that the masses would, by sharing in this technological revolution, keep it going indefinitely.

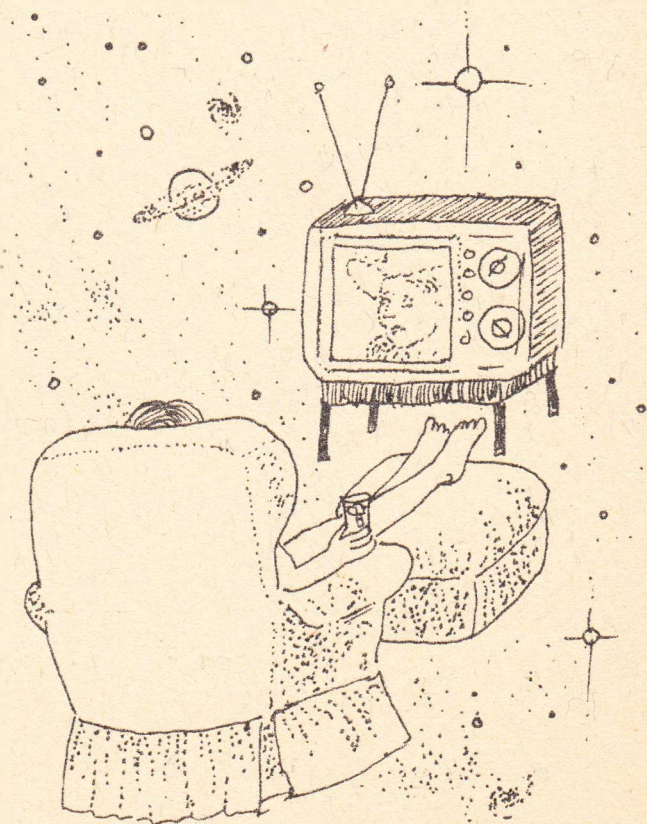
He was wrong.

I suspect, but can't confirm, that Kennedy made the same error that our L-5 advocates make in their SF convention presentations. He forgot that he and virtually all of the people he knew came from an elite that did not represent or relate to the masses of people whose support was essential. Looking around here tonight, there are very poor people and very well-off people from a lot of occupations -- but you are all readers and you all have a large degree of active intelligence and curiosity far beyond the masses of Ameri-

cans. You are more sensitive to technological benefits and sensitized to technological growth and development than the people with whom you live and work.

The majority of Americans buy four or less books a year -- and we all know which ones they buy. In this country alone you can get a hardcover best-seller with sales of only 25,000 copies; a paperback bestseller is two or three hundred thousand. Out of a population of 220 million plus you can see where this leads us. Most major cities have only one newspaper, and its circulation is a fraction, perhaps ten to twenty percent of the metro population -- with, in a majority of those homes, the sports section, comics, and food sections the only ones examined.

These people -- the great majority of Americans -- get almost all their information through television, but even there we're stopped. Just look at the ratings for any newscast versus the top twenty shows. *60 Minutes* survives because it is adversary journalism, three stories chosen for their dramatic value, not necessarily their newsworthiness.

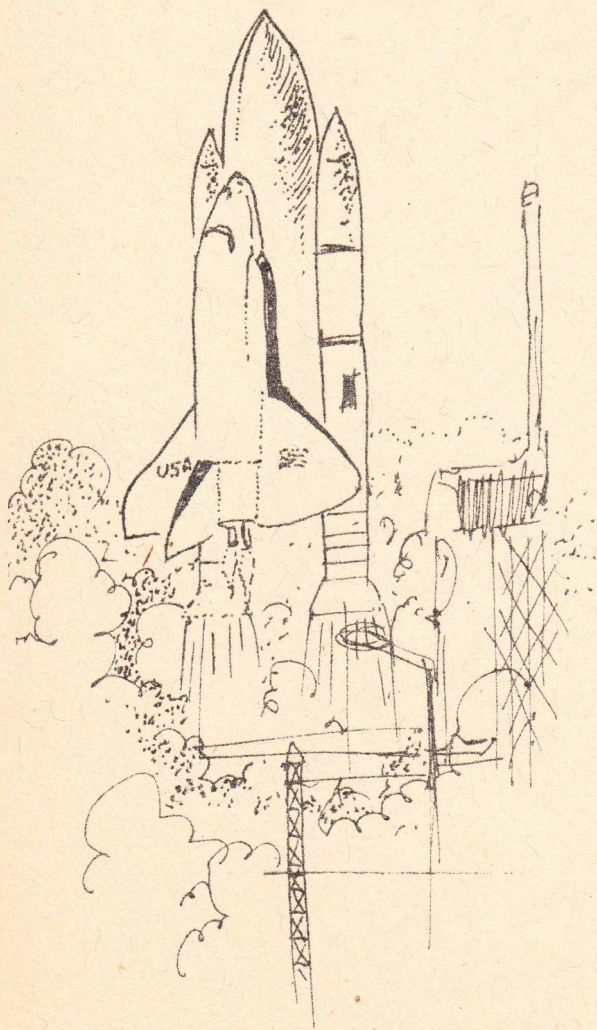




We're not reaching these people.

The spinoff argument is also negated, particularly among the very poor. A revolutionary new furnace liner is of no benefit when you heat your house with a space heater because that's all you can afford. That's 15% or more of our fellow citizens. The other catalog of spinoffs also benefit the middle classes in the main directly. So scratch the poor.

But the middle class isn't in such hot shape anyway. They believe so much in American technocracy that most will tell you that these inventions would have come anyway, without space. But money on such frills can't be excused right now -- we need to find new oil, bring the interest rates down, build cheaper houses, and clean up the air. One Washington columnist said just the other day that much of the problems in this country were caused by the fact that we lavished that money on space rather than on earthly concerns.



Oh, I know, it isn't that way at all. You and I know what space has done to improve life throughout the Earth. I do not dispute the L-5ers and others that the potential of such projects will reach every man, woman, and child on Earth, and may be our only hope. But the masses of people don't see it that way in this country. Like the Sahara Forest, it is something whose gains are too physically and psychologically apart from their daily lives by their own perception to be worth any sort of investment. In other words, whether a project is done or not in this country depends not so much on whether the technology exists -- whether it can be done -- as whether or not the masses of people will allow it to be done.

We have a shuttle program at all only because the Russians obligingly insisted we ban the shuttle in the SALT II Treaty. This turned anti-space politicians such as Carter and Stevenson around. A *weapon* they can sell. That they can understand. So much for the liberals.

David Stockman, our new OMB chief, indicated that he intends to terminate all non-military space expenditures as quickly as possible, turning over the commercial parts to private industry and scrapping all non-military R&D. It is a wonderful extravagance, he told Senator John Glenn last week, that we can not afford. So much for the conservatives.

The space program is now firmly in the hands of the military and probably will remain so, with non-military projects taking a tiny corner of one section when the military can afford to let them come in for PR sake. We're not going to build those L-5s and moon colonies nor terraform Mars and mine the asteroids. Not the United States. We have the world's only shuttle and no place to send it, and no R&D budget or projects to send it some place even if we ultimately decide to do so.

We did it because we can not sell a sense of participation to the majority of Americans in such a project. That's at the heart of it. A sense of participation. We used the football strategem but it proved temporary. We used spinoffs and that is rejected out of a combination of faith and ignorance. The spinoff thing is simply too complex to sell to a generation raised on the virtues of Ivory over Cheer



or worrying about who shot J.R. We have lost the least common denominator demanded of such a project as space.

The one least common denominator that fed the growing technology that built America was the frontier. We are a frontier people. Our westward expansion, followed by westward development, spurred technological growth and innovation, all with mass public support. Why? Because the poorest people profited most directly from such an expanding frontier. The Homestead Act said the poorest immigrant could be a major landholder. The American frontier was the hope and dream of America's masses. And when the frontier ended we had two world wars to keep the technological momentum going full-tilt.

But it's over now. World wars were rendered impractical by that technology, and the frontier is no more. But we can not sell space as a frontier, for it is a frontier that almost none of the people we need to sell it to can participate in. It's a frontier where you come not with an ox and a plow, but with an intimate acquaintance with semiconductors, printed circuits, computer science, and engineering. The specialists are not accompanying the frontiersmen, they are the frontiersmen. It is an age entirely for specialists and dreamers -- and the bunch of us combined compose only six or eight percent of the population, far less than we need.

And those masses one day soon will turn to our technocracy to learn why there is an enormous space station run by the Russian Air Force in the L-5 position, for make no mistake about this talk. Man is not only inevitably going into space; he's already there -- Russian man, and probably Japanese, French, German... you name it.

And when the R&D of those other countries places them in total command of space, and its technological spinoffs are entirely in the control of others, the American masses will demand we go and surpass them. At this time, with the lack of R&D and the long lead time to produce what has never been produced before, we will lose.

I say these things, icy cold water and soaking wet blanket that they may be, not because I want to depress you, but because they need to be said. And because

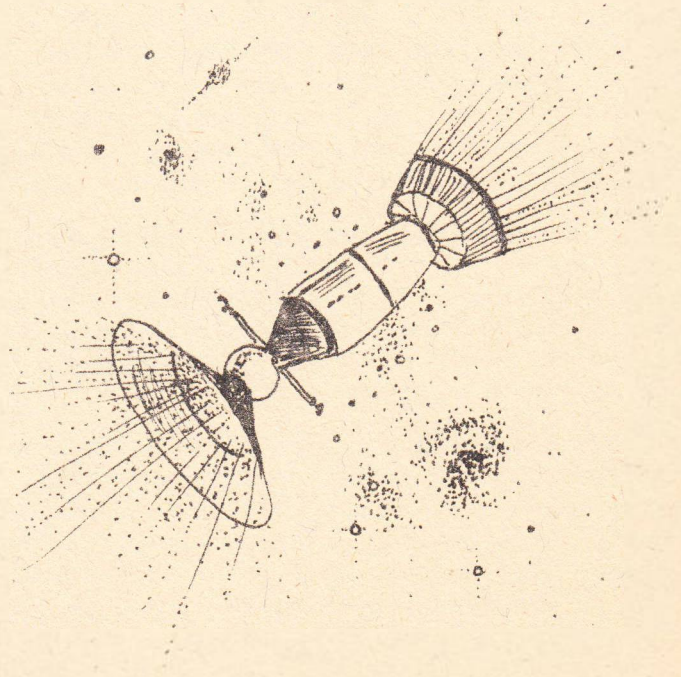
perhaps, out there, somebody -- maybe one of you -- will realistically look at the space program and realistically face the problem that the technology exists for all your dreams, but the sociology does not come up with the answer, the key.

So forget the technology. It's there. We can reforest the Sahara. We can build generation ships to the stars. We can build L-5s. Forget it. We know how to do it. Forget that and come up with the answer to our cultural problem, one borne of the history and development of this country and its culture.

I do not have the solution, but surely there is one -- my American cultural soul tells me that much on faith -- and somebody can come up with it, but it better be soon. The problem is this: how can the masses of Americans, rich and poor, participate directly at all stages of a space program?

Solve that and you can have your dreams -- and perhaps solve the ultimate crises this country will face when we discover that the rest of man has left us behind in the backwater for good. Unless we solve that problem, and soon, the eighties may be looked back upon as the decade our dreams died.

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Above us rose the vault of the enormous room. On the screen suspended from the zenith, as I entered, trailers for old SF flicks and Woody Woodpecker cartoons were projected by four incredible beams of light. A mile or more away, across the supreme expanse of floor, the stage rose, an incredible red-lipped mouth, open, agape, vortex. I knew why I was there. We all knew why we were there. To be swallowed, to be sucked up. So I crossed the enormous room, entered the mass that already gathered near the edge of that bottom lip, close to the stage. I felt old and pitifully establishment, with my 29 years and 8 - 5 job. But I knew what we were doing there.

It was almost 6 PM on Thursday, July 13, 1978. I made one cautious probe into the crowd, retreated to make prudent use of one of the three johnny-on-the-spots, bought a Coke. And went back. And then

# Saint Mick

a remembrance by  
Guy H. Lillian III

Gotta backtrack, set the stage a little better.

The Louisiana Superdome is about a mile, maybe plus a half, from the former Lillian digs on Dauphine Street in New Orleans. My \$13.50 ticket in my pocket, I rushed home from work, fevered with the thought that when the doors to the Dome opened at five the rafters would shudder and I would find only peripheral space for myself once I managed to get there. But no.

The centrally suspended scoreboards of the Dome kept flashing the time and occasional plugs. *Save your ticket stub for a free Doubleburger at Wendy's.* And messages: *Rita Winston call your babysitter.* *Jerry Easter call home.*

The opening act came on at 7:30, and the roar that greeted Van Halen was less excitement at this new California band than relief at finally getting something on the stage. Van Halen: loud, trashy, rock and roll. The lead singer seemed to enjoy the

more people came, and pressed in, cut in, shoved in, crawled in, oozed in, snaked in, fought their way in, bullied their way in, blew their way in, brazened their way in, snuggled their way in, came up, came forward. Until five hours went by, hours of waiting and music, of boredom and tedium and sweetness and beauty and caricature and even a little girl flying through the air. Until I was never so crowded in my life; until I could not even clap my hands unless I held them right overhead, where the a.c. caught them on its regular rounds; until I was packed in sixty feet from the stage. And then columns of light swung over the open mouth, and a crescendo rose and then, then they came dashing onto the stage, all over that stage, and who should be leading the rush but a little ole fella so lively and quick that I knew in a moment that it must be ...





delusion that the mass out there had come to see him, but it's all in the show, right? That's The Secret of Rock And Roll. So this galoot, who reminded me of what Nashville fan Ken Moore will look like after twenty years in Hell, pranced & bumped and the bass player let fly with heavy metallic pumping & hey, man, the lights were something else again, flashing and popping in perfect cadence with the rock, really nice, you know, right *pro*. And even if the set was best described as loud junk suitable mainly for cleaning the tension of two hours of waiting with Walter Lantz in that enormous sweatbox of a Superdome, still they bore watching. Van Halen: great guitarist, mediocre music, good effects, and right fine for clearing the cobwebs out of the old rock-system. The audience was nice -- they even brought 'em back for an encore, when what we *really* wanted, and we all knew it, was to get these twerps off the stage to make way for the Stones, man...

Hot, yeah God, up close to the stage, it was hot, and it was worse closer in, for that red maw was like a neutron star, and closer in you got, the crusher got the gravity (until finally, not even light could escape). In my position, sixty feet back and just left of center, it was like O'Hare International, with incoming and outgoing traffic battling their way through and past. And it was getting pretty bad, because Act Two was upcoming, and man, everybody likes the Doobie Brothers... So I played Adult; when the pressing from behind from the freaks who just *had* to get closer to the source of all that gravity became just too violent, just too much like that panicky moment post-midnight January 1, 1974 when the slap-happy crowd in Times Square had nearly pulled me and a friend off our feet and head first down the steps into the subway, I played Schoolteacher and ordered, "Get Back! We got somebody on the floor here!" In my little pocket of the mass, miraculously, the shoving let up, and I credit myself, who gets far too little credit in this world.

And the people who worked their way out, all night long, sweatmucked, panicked, saying, "It's insane up there! Don't go up there!" None of us wanted to, yet what could we do, for it wasn't pres-

sure from behind, finally, but gravity -- the stage drank it all...

On stage, the Van Halen equipment was stripped away and other speakers and paraphernalia brought out, and soon, quietly, in the dark, without rockish fanfare and ego, the Doobie Brothers Band positioned itself about its instruments. The lights came up on them and the crowd went *hooooooray*, because this was a smooth and mellow band, man (or so went the massed vibes beating about me).

And the Doobies were *great*. No volcanic volume necessary here (and my ears were still muffled from Van Halen) and no sex object adoration. The music did it all, and it was a *smoooooooooooooth* set, running without hassle from "Jesus is Just All Right" on to "Black Water", with a few showy highlights like a gong struck with a flaming hammer, a cloud enveloping the stage, and a shot of fireworks into the inner atmosphere of the Superdome. And incidental showmanship: the sounds, once they worked their way through Van Halen's occluding fog, were prime.

How brilliantly this extravaganza was paced. A loud rockrockrock band to wake us up and the Doobies to smooth us out, to prepare the now-properly roughened canvas of the crowd for the attack -- for the reason we were there. The Doobies played an encore, called for by the striking of ten thousand Bics (the stands about us shined with butane starlight), and we were off -- then a translucent curtain closed off backstage and we were left to wait.

A shirtless, crazy Mexican nearby, who teetered on the edge of incipient O.D., mentioned his home town: San Bernadino, California. Hey, says Lillian, I used to live in Riverside. Hey! You know Jorge Mendoza? No, man, like it's been eight hundred years. You know Rubidoux? Yeah, zero burg. Went to University Heights Junior High. *No shit?* I went there, man; Mr. Hendly, man, remember that motherfucker? Yeah, little guy, principal. No, man; *big* guy, vice-principal. Oh yeah, with the swats paddle... With holes in it, man...

I figure, you've got to meet somebody who knows somebody, everyplace you go. This world is a nexus of people and whom they know; we all know someone, and someone knows us. There's always a connection, be-



cause our race is small, and all our crowding means is that we all have a better chance to connect and know. A sign flashed up on the scoreboard, boasting a new Superdome attendance record: 80,173 people under one roof. Just maybe the largest indoor concert of all time.

My feet hurt. I was dehydrated and reached roofwards often to catch the passing blast of the rotating air conditioner far, far above. There was motion behind the translucent curtain and someone shouted out they could see Charlie Watts. And sure as shit, there he was behind his drums, twirling the sticks like propeller blades, testing his set-up, getting his comfort. And the traffic burrowed in, because no bullshit now, please, that was a Rolling fuckin' Stone on stage... Hey man, that's why we're here, that's why we live...

B-b-but first...

Acrobats? Mass incredulity. 80,173 jaws drop. But no lie, out comes this paunchy Russian and this teensy little pubescent chickie in exercise tights and while we all watched aghast they took a pose, fingers daintily aloft, and oh, what is Jagger doing to us, man...

But hey, lookit that. That little girl is turning full flips onto that fool's palm, man... Jesus! Up and over, handstand to feet. She's really something, and she gets some applause due her, but what's this, they're gonna do *more*? And to stab the crowd through our collective heart, someone let the Russian oaf take the mike. (Anyone can be a star, just hand him a microphone.) Breathlessly he wheezed for a moment or two, and then out they came again, and God damn, that little girl flew...

I don't know who scheduled gymnastics as part of a rock'n'roll show, but ill-placed or not, it was pretty, and even the crowd so hot for the Stones that their sweat ran rock'n'roll appreciated it.

And there was more pushing and more creeps sniveling through towards the front. ("Hey, I left my old lady/brother/people up there, man," and on one occasion, "They got the reefer, man, and I had to drink the beer all by myself!" "Please," said I, "you'll ruin my whole night.") But it could be withstood, and it was, and then the curtain went up on a dark and empty stage, and

groupies so gorgeous they practically sized were seen ducking out to the side. And then colored spotlights played hither and yon across the stage, and the fanfare came up, and I found myself leaping and shouting and out *they came*.....

The reason. All the reason we would ever need.

Black leather pants and a white leather jacket with the sleeves pulled up and a red leather cap and knees pumping up to his chin, Saint Mick came to the runway center, a long red tongue protruding from the immense red mouth. The mike came from nowhere and over the frenzy he began. a cut from the album *Some Girls*. Behind him they took their places: Charlie on the skins and Bill Wyman still as a mannequin. The new Stone Ron Wood was in white pants and vest, and Keith, oh Keith, great leader, in rags and a *strange* haircut... Is that Nicky Hopkins on piano? Maybe so, but who looks at the poor dude behind the ivory 88s when right here, right out *here*, the sweat is already beginning to fly from his face and so close that the glimmer in his eyes is a bright glare in the spots.





He dances, not the old Mick wiggle, but a bizarre and winning puppet's prance -- high-kneed kicks, as if Jagger had just discovered that he had joints. Someone once called him one of the great male dancers, and yeah, I can see that; although Nureyev and Barishnikov can do things in the air impossible to believe or even understand, Mick's dance is just as compelling to the end he desires -- to fly his people starwards. He was 34 then, and would cross the mid-decade mark on July 26th. But Mick Jagger, sixty/eighty feet from me, hadn't gotten older. He'd gotten greater.

The song ends; he comes to stage center and bows, smiling. Says in print that he feels like a whore on stage. Well, he looks happy, and who cares what he says, man. Leave that for later. Now there is only now.

He razzes at us, leaned forward, that well-known maw working over the microphone. From our midst an object -- it looks like a string of Mardi Gras beads -- is launched at him, but with instincts and reflexes buzzed into him by a billion concerts and a million billion missiles he flinches his shoulder away, and it whizzes past. It's a new song, from *Some Girls*. I don't know it but oh, yeah, I like it, like it, yes I do.

More new stuff. The insane reaction brought on by the arrival on stage is supplanted by a steadier excitement. He brings Wood forward, loops an arm around his neck for the chorus to "Star Star": Starfuckastar-fuckastarfuckastarfuckastar...Starfuckastar-fuckastarfuckastarfuckastar... Last time I'd seen the Stones an immense inflatable phallus had risen from the stage in accompaniment to this song; no stupid props like that this time. But more to the point, oh dear God, last time it had been Keith up there with Mick, Keith the boyhood buddy; Keith the guiding light of the Stones since Brian fell and fell and fell (there's a right-wing side to me that holds that the Stones haven't been jackdiddley to what they could have been if Jones had lived). Now here was Wood, erstwhile Face, right up there in front with Mick, Saint Mick himself. I looked at the bag of rags that was Keith Richard and hoped like hell that I wasn't seeing a coup in progress, Wood moving into Keith's place. Was this the last time we'd ever see Keith out there, on stage?





That Canadian heroin bust loomed, loomed larger than the big red lips. It was bad enough to lose Brian, but to lose Keith.

No, it can't be, it just can't. Because this band isn't Mick Jagger and back-up flunkies. Mick is only the surface tension of the Stones; the substance goes deep, in with him and Keith, all the way back to their boyhoods and that train trip when Keith saw Mick and said "I got some albums, here, man; come give a listen." Lose Keith and you lose what the Stones are.

But here Mick was, arm wrapped about Wood's neck, chasing Ron around the stage, pushing his shoulder like the street puck he plays on stage, calling attention to him, and that's a new schtick. Pretty Mick Taylor, the last Stone, was as bad as Wyman up there, statued into immobility except for his hands, which moved like angels. Brian always thought that the screams out there in the mass were for him (you can even see it in the photos; he thought he was the star, the poor bastard). What's this push-push for Wood?

Anyway, on with the show. The AM-familiar opening to "Miss You" rocks the audience and Mick's prance draws louder howls. Sweat pops from his face. His eyeballs glisten; I am *that* close. And it is too tight where I am to move, to applaud, to do more than pump up and down on one's aching feet and suck desperately on the cool air when the blast of air conditioning swings this way. Mick grabs a guitar -- not a wire hooked to it -- and uses it as a prop, a toy; those are soundless strings. Fool, put that junk away. Maybe the old boy's showing his age after all. But he carries the guitar from one edge of the stage to the other, giving everyone he can a close looksee...showman, showman. Yeah, the reason we all came was to see him, see the Stones, feed and be fed.

It was a box up there, a box close up to the light that danced but a box, nonetheless. And it wasn't a desert sort of dry that my body felt, but almost as deep a need for fluid. I knew I shouldn't leave, would damn my own eyes forever if I missed one instant of it from my mashed but scenic place. But wait, wait; I realized that I wasn't just justifying myself, but that the day's ob-

ject was achieved. I'd done what I came for. I'd seen the Stones; I'd seen Mick. I was close enough to see the sweat fly and the smile glimmer. And there comes a time in every man's life when it is either drink or die...

So back, out, through people, and people, and more people, squeezing to get by. Behind me Mick danced and danced, and when the edge of the crowd was reached he still danced and sang, and the booming amps still let fly.

I heard Keith singing "Happy" while I talked a vendor selling beer out of a precious cube of ice. I stepped over kids passed out by the stairs off the floor. Hey, child, you're missing the show. Up on the rim of the seats, I found a water fountain dispensing warm gummy water, and sucked it up like champagne. And sat on a counter and looked out at all the people, trying to find where I'd been. And watched Mick, now a tiny fluttering butterfly out there. No, quicker than a butterfly -- a *hummingbird*. He shouted out "Brown Sugar" and let the crowd hoot out the heights of the song while he led them with a leap, piped-up by their shout, only gravity keeping him in. Finally light itself cannot escape.

And finally Keith and Ron joined him out at the end of the runway, sitting on its edge while he taunted the kids there to get past the protective fence and take him if they could (in the background, ghostly, a black bodyguard, unnoticeable unless you looked *hard*, waited for someone to try it). "Jumping Jack Flash", one of the few classics heard all night, comes as the lights come up in the enormous Dome and Mick climbs to the top of the stage on a ladder and hangs out for a delirious second over all of creation. It's an *encore*, man, an *encore* by the Stones -- something almost unheard of. I'd been starting out, but for us they came back.

And then it was over. From where I sat you could see backstage and see Mick, barechested now, leaving with his black goon and Keith and all the rest... and they disappear from sight.



(A girl I know has this mother, who works in the Royal Orleans, see, where the Stones had reserved the whole 4th floor. She tells me later that they wrecked their rooms and left 8¢ tips and went barefoot to breakfast. The next day, at 11 AM, I would be suffering at my desk, helping the unemployed through a haze and with ringadinging ears, and the Stones would be gone, gone their separate ways.)

I was near an exit. I used it. As I left, just as I left, a couple in front of me stopped suddenly, and the girl heaved

a stream of watery barf to the pavement. And whatever meanings I'd come up with about the Rolling Stones, Jagger, myself as part of that sickeningly huge, hot crowd, or what, no matter how many memories of Altamont (which I *could* have attended; I even had a ride) came up, I knew that something was being said there.

But I didn't know what it meant. I only knew that it was over, and that my feet hated me. That once more, I'd sought, and not been disappointed, by whatever it was I'd found there.





# The Ill-Fated Biocell

a remembrance by  
Jeff Duntemann

Charlie was a high school buddy of mine. We were both class nurds and hung around together. I was building telescopes at the time and he played with electronics. He went through an alternative energy phase long before gas hit the wrong side of 40 cents a gallon.

Charlie had a ten gallon bluish glass water-cooler jug which his father had brought home from work after the bottled water company which served his office went broke. Charlie had read somewhere of the possibility of generating electricity from sewage. He decided it was worth a try. The active ingredients were cheap, and when you're a 14-year-old nurd, that counts.

All through the long summer of 1967 he had this funnel connected through a piece of rubber tubing to a cork crammed into the neck of his water-cooler jug. Charlie refused to relieve anywhere but into the funnel. I helped fill it a time or two if I recall, but I had my doubts about the whole idea. Come September it was full to brimming, a beautiful cloudy yellow, and visions of kilovolts danced in his head.

The active battery elements were a copper rod and a nickel rod he picked up at the American Science Center, battered through another cork and inserted into the neck of the jug. We measured its current producing capacity at 1.5 volts at 3 milliamps (about the same as your average hearing-aid battery).

He was certain the brew was missing something, and kept adding stuff like copper sulfate and kitchen bleach. The corrosion from the copper rod started turning the jug a pretty green. Still no additional power out of it. Charlie threw an old rug over the jug, put it on the shelf in his basement workroom, and gave up on it.

A couple of months later, Charlie's old man lost track of his electric drill, and went poking through Charlie's workroom. He tried to pull the rug off the jug to see what was underneath -- and pulled the jug off the shelf instead.

Charlie and I were out in the back yard broiling giant water bugs with a magnifying glass when his old man emerged from the basement ankle-deep in ripe fermenting green pee. I left hastily, and it was some time before I saw Charlie again.

There is no moral to this story, other than: Thank God I Grew Up.

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# Half the Fun Is Getting There

## a remembrance of UPPERSOUTHCLAVE 10 by Dick Lynch

UpperSouthClave 10 in Bowling Green, Kentucky, was a convention I really looked forward to attending. Besides the usual partying, it was to be the debut of Joint Venture Enterprises, a small business Nicki and I had set up to agent artwork and, not incidentally, provide a nice tax shelter, as convention expenses become business expenses. So about 3 PM on Friday, March 14, 1980, we set out for Bowling Green, with auto filled with art, party supplies, and various personal belongings.

By 6 PM, we had gotten about 20 miles north of Nashville and I was driving, when on a steep downgrade the car gave a \*lurch\* and the engine stopped. We glided to a halt just in front of a sign advertising some gas station at the next exit, three miles ahead. The car would not start; the problem appeared to be something to do with the timing, so I took off the distributor cap and looked. Nothing looked to be wrong (the rotor was still there). I realized at that point that my level of expertise had been exceeded, so there was nothing left but to go for help.

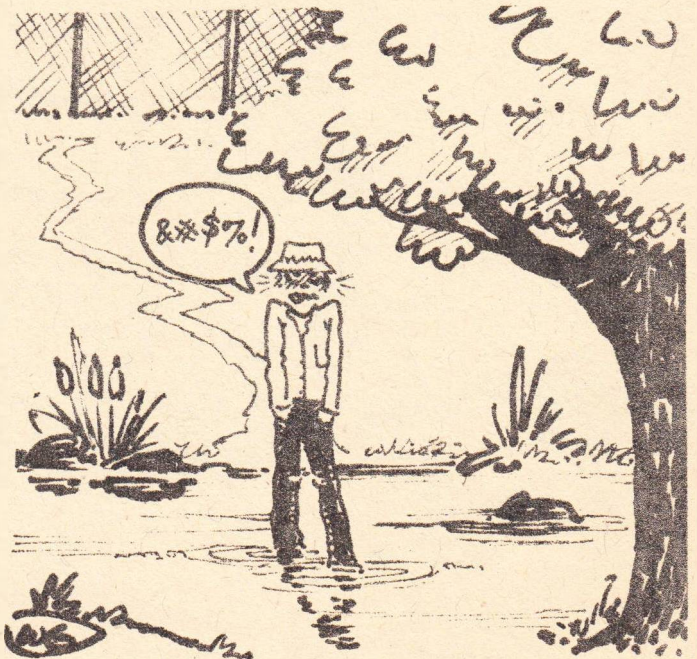
I didn't feel like hiking three miles to the next exit or retreating two miles back up the hill to the previous exit, where I wasn't even sure there was a service station. We were on the side of a tall ridge, and down, off to the right, there were houses in some sort of settlement along U.S. 31, which paralleled interstate 65 at that point. Anyway, it appeared that the shortest route to help was down the hill toward that village, so off I went. There was only one thing that could cause a problem, and I saw it when I reached the bottom of the hill.

There was a creek between me and the houses.

There was nothing to do except go through it. I picked a shallow and narrow looking spot in the gathering twilight, and sort-of tiptoed through the water. Of

course it didn't work; my feet got soaked, and it was the only pair of shoes I'd brought for the weekend. After scrambling up the opposite bank, I walked briskly through the back yard of a run-down-looking house, past two junk autos silently rusting. I didn't feel like getting shot at, so I went directly to the main road and headed toward the likeliest looking place to find or call a tow truck. This was "up the road a ways", according to the manager of a convenience store I stopped at, but was actually only about half a mile. I tried to go at a brisk jog, but soon discovered just how out-of-shape I really was; I walked. The place-of-hope turned out to be a little side-of-the-road used car place. The sign on the wall read "All cars for sale as is. NO REFUNDS!". When I asked to use the restroom, I found they didn't have one, but it was OK to "go around the back and aim at the back wall" (I did).

A long 45 minutes later, the called-for wrecker arrived, and the driver and I were off down the highway to the interstate entrance. Nicki was still in the car all this time, and I had visions of some other wrecker happening along, hauling the car, and leaving me; of course that didn't happen. No one even stopped the whole time, even with the car hood up and a red bandanna tied to the driver's door handle.





The wrecker driver thrilled us with a U-turn complete with car-in-tow on a busy interstate, and eventually we arrived at that garden spot, Bethel, Tennessee, and it's main attraction, the Union-76 truck stop. It took the mechanic about 30 seconds to diagnose the problem as a broken timing belt, so I followed him into his "office" to determine costs and repair time.

I entered just in time to see three one-hundred dollar bills change hands, between two seedy-looking characters who were in there at the time. Now, I'm not saying that anything illegal was going on, but who carries around one-hundred dollar bills to pay for repair work? The money quickly disappeared, and nothing was said. Then, the word came that the car couldn't be fixed until morning, and would cost about \$150, including the tow. Ouch! Nicki was about ready to call the whole thing off, if it were still possible. I didn't blame her; this trip was becoming nightmarish to me as well. Luckily, we were only about fifty miles or so from Bowling Green, so I did the only thing I could think of -- I called the hotel.

Unfortunately, the only phone was in the "office" with about four greasy, dirty mechanics looking on. Have you ever tried to explain over the phone to a hotel that your reservation was booked with a science fiction convention, with a bunch of dumb

non-fans looking on? And have the hotel operator ask you to please speak much louder? In the end, I asked to speak with one of the con committee I knew; it worked out all right, because a friend of ours, Andy Purcell, was also attending, and he called back almost immediately with the word he was leaving at once to come and get us. So we went into the dining room of the truck stop for dinner.

It must have been social night that night, because whole families complete with little kids were also in there; it was damn near standing room only. And they were all locals, from the look of things.

About an hour later Andy showed up with his camper truck (he hucksters, so the truck is made good-use-of, hauling his books). However, it was a Datsun, so there were only two seats. I figured, what the hell. If I was going to be wet, I might as well be sore and wet, so I rode in the middle, between the seats the last stretch to Bowling Green. It wasn't really all that bad, though. I draped my arms over both seat backs, and supported some of my weight that way.

Word had spread quickly of our fate, because when we got to the convention, at least two of the con com asked how things went; I think I recounted the whole sordid affair three or four times that night.

All in all, it was a night that I'll not forget for a long, long time.





# A Look Back at Yesterday

## Commentary by Harry Andruschak

One of the better things about the weekly Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society meeting is a fan named Marty Massoglia, who sets out a whole pile of old SF books for sale, most at reasonable prices. The condition is usually poor, but that's OK, since these books are intended for reading.

I picked up *Rockets Through Space* by Lester Del Rey, an old paperback that was printed in 1960. As you can imagine, I read it with interest. And just how obsolete and comical would the book be after twenty years of hindsight?

Actually, the book stands up very well on basics. But the real surprise was the extrapolation -- all wrong for the right reasons, and yet it may come to pass. Sounds weird? Here is how.

Lester wrote the book in 1960, when the space program was just starting. He knew quite a lot about what was being planned by the USA, and as was the case with most writers of his time, he assumed a logical expansion of the space program. He totally ignored John F. Kennedy, who wasn't yet President, and Dr. Pickering, an obscure scientist at a place called JPL that had put up EXPLORER 1 as a rush job.

So Lester assumed that space would be conquered in a series of steps. First the building of a space station. Then the building of a moon rocket. Then a large expedition to the moon, perhaps with the idea of seeing if a permanent colony could be founded.

For this he assumed a three stage rocket, the first two stages of which would fall back to earth and be reusable, and the third a small glider that could coast back to earth after its mission in space.

If the last two paragraphs seem a little familiar, it's because this seems to be what the USSR is planning, but with Mars instead of the Moon as a target.

And in the 1980s, not the 1960s. What the hell happened in those twenty years?

Enter JFK. Also the Bay of Pigs, and a few other muddles of the time. Kennedy gave the nation a goal -- to land a man on the Moon. To hell with space stations and reusable rocket launchers. Forget the many intermediate steps, and *do* it. And we did.

But as we entered the 1970s, things went queer. Nixon tried to grab all the credit for the Moon landings sponsored by Kennedy and Johnson, then proceeded to slash NASA's budget. As the '70s progressed, the manned space program fell into ruins.





The USSR also had a hard time. On 30 June 1971, they had three of their cosmonauts killed by a capsule failure. So instead of three men in a capsule without spacesuits, they were forced to use two men with spacesuits.

Only as 1980 rolled around did the USSR get going again, but they got going *solid*. Did somebody in the USSR read Del Rey's book? If so, it would account for a lot of what has happened in the last few years. Or, maybe Great Minds Think Alike. The USSR is now in the process of carrying out Del Rey's ideas to the letter, including a small fly-back shuttle on top of recoverable boosters.

Back to Dr. Pickering at JPL. He looked around, and realized that JPL needed some entry into the space program. EXPLORER was more or less a one-shot, doing in 1958 what could have been done in 1956. What about something new? He decided to make JPL specialize in interplanetary spacecraft, and unlike previous spacecraft these would be three-axis stabilized.

And thus came all the marvels that no SF writer had ever dreamed of. How could they? SF is about man conquering

space. Man...singular. How can you write an interesting story about a team working *together* to make *machinery* (but not a robot, Dr. Asimov) take dull scientific measurements?

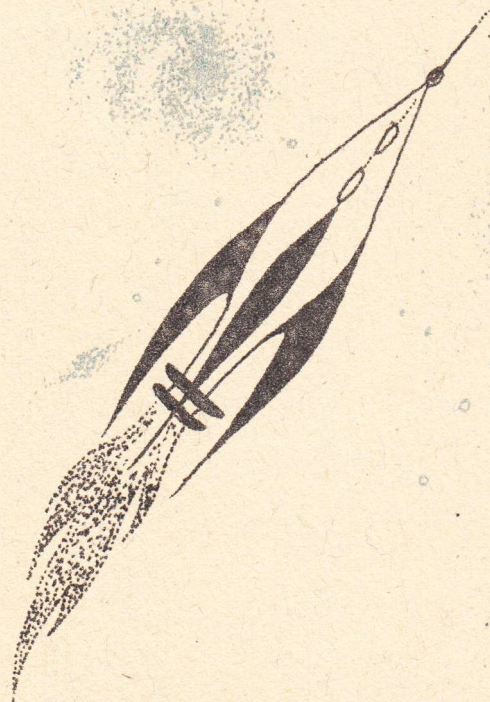
Thus came RANGER, LUNAR ORBITER, SURVEYOR, MARINER, VIKING, VOYAGER... boldly going where no man had gone before and probably never can.

But now has come President Ray-Gun. It seems as if the USA space program is coming to an end. JPL is to shut down all planetary exploration. The shuttle program is to be cut back.

How strange the last twenty years have been.

I wonder what Del Rey would think of his book now if he ever read it again. For me, it was a trip back to a time when the frontiers of space seemed to be open wide, and all one had to do was work hard to get out there. It seemed so *simple* back in 1960. Just a few billion dollars.

We didn't have busing, nor food stamps, nor HEW, nor many of the programs of the New Frontier, or the New Society. Nor did we have Vietnam. All we had was the Unknown facing us -- and we flinched.





# In Defense of the Horrid Pun

commentary by  
Ralph Roberts

As a happy inhabitant of that gray area (ya gotta call me on the "twilight phone") between pro and fan, my writing sometimes merges the two styles resulting in... ahem... certain stylistic 'profanities' committed inbetwixt more serious and respectable projects, much as does that leading proponent of punning, the great Chuck Upmann. A good many of these horrid pun stories are what the French might despairingly refer to as 'objects d'art' (will they get that one, Chuck?), the pub-going British as 'dart objects', and UN fen as.....well, a very few fen do have nasty mouths.

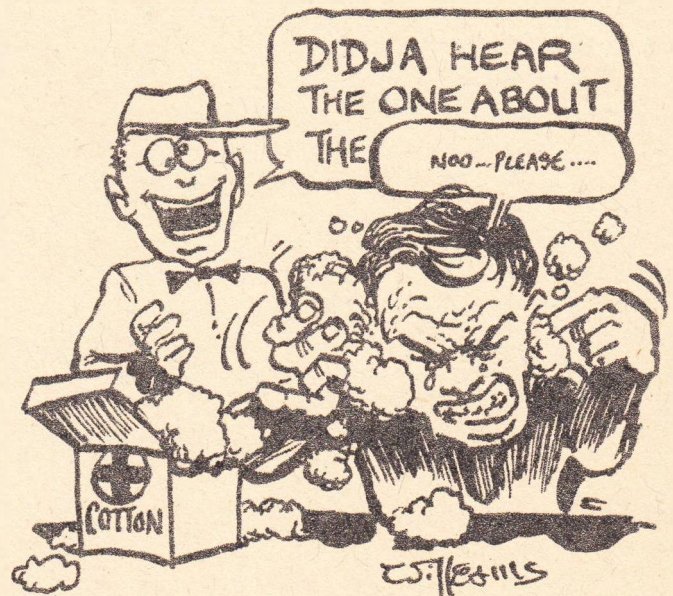
Disregarding all concern for life and limb, I've gone so far as to actually publish a few horrid puns in both pro and fanzines. Even one or two under my own name. So, while not possessing the expertise of a Chuck Upmann, I'm on firm ground and speak from 'no ledge' (contrived but what the heck) when discussing this oft maligned, and occasionally underlined, artform. And one, I might add (or subtract, or multiply) that gives the perspiring young writer a subtle communicative vehicle of sensitivity, imagery, word-sense, and rhythmic patternings. (And if that ain't creative writing about puns, Chuck, I'll turn in my Randall Garrett Fanclub membership card!) Suffice it to say, I enjoy this mode of expression and often make a 'fun' in conversation as well as writing. (Right, Chuck?...Chuck?...)

The forms for horrid punning vary, as do those for that gross cement statuary you see defacing lawns of the less-than-gifted-in-taste homeowner. Webster's defines the pun as, "a play on words of the same sound but different meanings... for witty effect." But the end line of an HP story (note how cleverly I sneak in a plug for a well-known calculator company -- that too is a pun) should fall on the reader with all the force generated by one of those statues being toppled. A great THUMP of inevitability leaving the reader gasping for breath, his senses completely 'punned' so to speak. In other words, it

still must be a story. Good examples of such may be seen in Isaac Asimov's *SF Magazine*, who usually includes at least one per issue. *F&SF* will also, on occasion, lay a groaner on ya.

All right. We now know: (a) I like horrid puns, (b) a definition of criteria for an HP (65?) story, (c) either 'a' or 'b', (d) none of the above. Those choosing 'd' may now go back to their *Battlestar Galactica* coloring books.

Well, we gotta make some kinda conclusions. First, puns are a recognized and enjoyable form of SF humor. (If ya don't agree, ask the people who chose 'd' for a coloring book.) Secondly, from a writer's viewpoint, the construction of horrid pun stories is a pleasurable and relaxing pastime. It'll soothe jangled nerves and give ya a break during snags in your longer, more serious works. Additionally, while drinking and writing don't always mix, composing pun pieces will 'scotch-up' your writing ability; it's good practice (Chuck Upmann says puns are infinitely better if you 'scotch-up' before writing or reading 'em). Finally, a sense of humor benefits a civilized person in coping with the daily frustrations and complexities of modern life. Hence, I leave you with that age old adage; the pun is mightier than the bored. (And for those of you who still think this article serious, the persons choosing 'd' have several coloring books left.)





# "Hawaiian Shirts?!?"

a remembrance of  
**CHATTACON 6** by  
**Dennis D\*\*\*\*\***

*Editors' note: For those unfamiliar with that Great Southern Faan Tradition, the Hoax Convention Report, a word of warning - at least some of what follows is true.*

I shall begin at the beginning, but the beginning was inauspicious. The original plan was for the three of us--myself, Bill Bowles (sometimes referred to as Buffalo) and the Mysterious Faruk von Turk to proceed to ChattaCon in Kermit (my car, so called because of color). The departure time was set for about 5:30 on Friday morning.

About 5:00 Buff arrives. He had gotten some gorgeous piece to drive him down to New Orleans, lucky bastard. But what he found was a very weary DKD.

DKD wasn't in such great shape because Annie, F v T's current girlfriend, wouldn't let me sleep. She kept calling me on the phone wondering just where von Turk was. Calls I don't mind, but calls every half hour are a problem. I was just falling asleep when I'd receive another. It was difficult to tell the exact source of her concern. Faruk had been scheduled to show up earlier, but hadn't; she was somewhat worried about that, considering the very high New Orleans crime rate. On the other hand, von Turk hadn't told her directly about this trip in the first place; and she was *mad* about that. At one point, she was accusing me of conspiring with Faruk to trick her. That blew my mind, as Annie and I have been friends for years--hell hath no fury like a woman who fancies that she's been scorned. I asked her if she wanted to come over to the house to check. Actually, I didn't know where FvT was, and it was worrying me, too. But the last thing I needed at that point was her paranoia.

6:00, and no Faruk. Buffalo and I take a swing by the tent of von Turk to see if he's there. Sure enough, von Turk is asleep in the house, and I mention to him

that Annie would like to get in touch with him, and so he called her house. Which is when the shit hit the fan.

The upshot of all of this was that I decided to play the gentleman and let Faruk out of his commitment to accompany us. To do otherwise would've provoked severe problems betwixt him and Annie and that I wasn't willing to do. So, about an hour late and a passenger short. Bill and I pulled out for Chattanooga, with me in a considerable state of depression for various reasons. Buffalo, good friend that he is, senses this, and realizes that there is but one remedy; get very stoned as soon as possible. By the time we hit the interstate 10 for Slidell, I was bombed worse than Dresden.

One of the things that made the trip bearable was the music. Buff had borrowed an expensive portable cassette recorder--the kind with the stereo speakers, everything. I had obtained a power converter, so we were able to listen to music courtesy of the generator of Kermit's engine. Nice--on the trip to Kubla Khan, we depended on batteries, which wore out rather quickly. Now, we played music every second, and stinted not. And the selection of tapes we had was pretty large, considering the circumstances--I had over 50 in the case I was carrying. But always, one kind of music, one group, one style fit itself to the road. In the first leg of the trip, that group was the Moody Blues, whose flowing melodies and rich harmonies adapted perfectly to the automobile and the long undulating stretches of road. When something like "The Story in Your Eyes" came on--

I've been thinking about our fortunes  
And I've decided that we're really not  
to blame  
For the love that's deep inside us now  
Is Still the same.  
And the sound we make together  
Is the music to the story in your eyes.  
It's been shining down upon us now  
I realize.

--Kermit seemed to sprout enormous wings and fly down the endless stretches of southern highway. The trip went by in a flash.



We stopped to eat at Meridian, and decided on a steak joint. Bill was wearing his semi-Viking attire, and because of chemical midwarp, was starting to act like his SCA Viking persona.

"What'll you boys have?" the waitress asked.

"Raw meat," says Buffalo.

The waitress, a nice Mississippi girl, reels backward. Why did she have to pick these crazies? But she has to make the best of it.

"Uh, do you mean rare? We serve steaks rare, medium rare, med..."

"I mean raw. I don't believe in spoiling good meat."

"Uh, okay. Uh, that comes with French fries, or onion..."

"Lady, when I become a vegetarian, you'll be the first to know!"

"Right...." she was sweating now. "What would you like to drink?"

"Do you have mead?"

"No." Uneasily.

"Coke, then."

"And you?" This with an air of visible apprehension. What is this one going to pull? Is he going to want something alive, so he can kill it himself?

"Salad bar and ice tea, if you please, with lemon." Relieved, she writes down the order. Buff snorts something about rabbit food. In his opinion, I'm prototypical of those soft civilized types that Conan always has such scorn for. I don't even eat raw meat, or meat at all, for that matter! (Actually, I'm no vegetarian, but I don't like to eat meat more than once daily.)

I added something else. "Does he get a vegetable?" She nodded. "Could you bring me his onion rings?" Although that was probably against the rules, she was willing to do anything to get away from these two. I got the onion rings, provoking more disgust from my traveling companion. Now, Buff was convinced that not only did I wear underwear, but also bathed, too, probably more than once a week! Civilization can ruin a man.

Bill decided to try out his malevolent stare on me...the sort of steady glare that people like Conan use on fat merchants they are about to dispatch. No good; my eyes are so glazed it's like trying to stare down a glass of Coke. He has more success with other patrons of the restaurant, none of whom are willing to complain about this large muscular and apparently unbalanced man who's giving them the hairy eyeball. When his steak comes, Bill scorns knife and fork, using his buck knife to cut, and his hands to eat, his daily portion. I fancy he was trying to pretend it was a joint of ox.

The meal over, we proceed on our way. We have a road system; locate someone with a fuzzbuster or CB--preferably both--and shadow them. Speed when they speed, slow down when they do. We make excellent time with this system.

As we reach the foothills of the Great Smokies, Buff curls up in the back seat to get some sleep. We've been smoking steadily since leaving, and by that point I could've tapdanced on Telstar.

Anyhow, after Buff drops off to sleep, I put on the headphones to the stereo, and listen to Tangerine Dream's Phaedra. The entire experience is cosmic. The headphones cut off the external audio environment; I'm conscious only of the Dream's music. And what I'm seeing are the matchless vistas of the foothills of the range. It blends perfectly with the music. Phaedra has blended themes that mingle, one starting low, growing in intensity and complexity and then fading from hearing as another is starting to be developed. Much like my physical environment: valleys opening to view and then closing as you pass them, mountains sighted first in the distance and then growing until you pass beneath their massive bulks; then fading. After a while, I began to think that mountains and the car and me are all part of the music, so perfectly do we compliment each other. But what consciousness I have is glad of one thing: the weather is magnificently clear. That is of itself remarkable to me: Louisiana has so much moisture that a haze is almost always on the horizon. In the mountains, along the Georgia-Tennessee border, you can see forever. But before leaving New Orleans, we got disturbing re-



ports from the Weather Bureau; it was expected to be cold, and if there was precipitation, (and there was a good chance of it) ice would result. That would be a bad scene; we might not be able to get to Chattanooga, or not be able to leave once we were there. But there is not a cloud in the sky; the weather will not close the roads.

We stop at the Tennessee border rest station. I go in to change. I was wearing gym clothes before; this is not suitable for ChattaCon. I am a full member of the Sons of the Sand--in short, a fannish demigod. My clothing must make my status known, and thusly command the deference that is my due. More appropriate than gym clothes is a tweed jacket, new jeans, cowboy boots and a black T-shirt with NEW ORLEANS in glitter across the chest. Suitably attired, I return to the car, where Bill is carefully dividing some of Peru's finest on a small glass surface. Four nostrils amongst us,



four lines. Now, we not only look like demigods, we feel like same; and in triumph we proceed to Chattanooga.

We find the hotel easily enough, and register for convention and rooms. We get a single; the key scam will be called into play once more. Our stuff is deposited.

Bill wants to rest a bit more, and check out the action later. I take a quick look around, and decide that it would be a good time to go get copies of the key made. So, after a quick check in the phonebook and the aid of a city map purchased downstairs, I set out. I see that there is a key shop on Highway 58, which runs right near the hotel! Easy to get off and on, and I proceed.

Amazing how the most simple plans can go awry. After driving what seemed an endless distance, I stop in at a convenience store, and get the information that while I am indeed on Highway 58, I am in fact on Agricola 58 (or somesuch) and the Highway 58 I am looking for is in fact in a different part of town from where I am. But it's too late to turn back now. I accept the directions, and blunder off into the rather unfriendly (and cold) Tennessee night.

I never do find the hardware store I'm looking for. But I do find a Handy City, and I know they sell keys. Indeed they do, but don't have the blank I'm looking for. But a Sears nearby does, and after some maneuvering, I'm back, in good shape, and cruising towards the hotel. In the room, Buff is catatonic, but I lay the keys on the nighttable and walk off in search of friendly faces--to wit, SFPAns.

And I do find Guy Lillian...getting into an elevator. I squeeze aboard at the very last second, and in the crush, am introduced to Sandy Paris and Mike Rogers. Lillian's room is the destination, and we all encamp there. Introductions are exchanged. Paul Flores arrives bearing Shadow, which is distributed and egoscanned immediately. Some pretty good comments this time, I see everyone is interested in a description of the Mongolian Cluster Fuck, as well as some of my more imaginative creations. Photographs of other SFPAns are examined. But most importantly, I'm introduced to a stack of people, my fellow Shadow-ites. Back track a moment:



BOB BARGER and SANDY PARIS: Bob is classic Early Guy Lillian: young, freshfaced, earnest but with the telltale crows feet around the eyes that are the first toll of a life of debauchery. In 10 years, he'll look like Lillian. Sandy is even more fresh-faced than Bob, young and blooming, but--wait, I remember her first fanzines. The image I'm getting--short fur jacket, B-52's button on her left breast, punk rock hairdo and an incredible pair of fuck-me boots--don't jive with the impression I got from those zines. This one, sez I, bears watching. Or should be put in a convent for the next decade or two. They introduce me to:

CHARLIE WILLIAMS: one of the most talented Southern artists. Charlie shakes my hand, and looks me straight, and rather oddly, in the eye: "What do you think about Hawaiian shirts?" he asks abruptly. I'm rather confused. What kind of question is that? "Well, I really don't think much either way, Charlie, I mean..." Charlie reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a long slender object, and presses a button in its side. I'm amazed. I didn't know that they still made switchblades that long. Twirling it lightly in his fingers, letting the blade--perfectly polished--catch the light, he asks me quite carefully, "Are you sure you don't have any opinion about Hawaiian shirts?" "Oh," I reply. "Those Hawaiian shirts. I thought you meant some other Hawaiian shirts--oh, gee, I mean wearing them is just terrible--awful, I..." "That's good," laughs Charlie, passing the blade a few microns from my jugular. "That's a healthy attitude." After him, I met:

VERN CLARK: Now, I'm on better ground. I recognize this type of dude. A biker. Also called "scooter trash". He may masquerade as a fanzine fan, but you can't fool an old rider like myself. Stocky muscular body, with a good sized beer gut, (although not nearly so splendid as mine own) hairy face, jeans, vest, engineers' boots (metal-tipped toes, good for having discussions with other bike gang members). No doubt doesn't wear a helmet when riding, and reads *Easyriders* magazine. Not a member of the Angels, though--a little too soft around the edges for that. I can see him, kicking some rival club member when on the ground, but not, say, extracting said member's tooth with a pliers, a famous Angel

pasttime. Vern probably belongs to some club like *Satan's Brothers*. I can't focus clearly on his bicep, but odds on he's got something tattooed there, like, *Satan's Brothers MC: Knoxville, Tennessee --Ride to live...live to ride*. Or alternate tatoo: *Sworn to fun: loyal to none, or Live free, Ride hard, Die fast*. His T-shirt is plain, but that's just because he doesn't want to give away his identity. His usual T-shirt probably has something like *I'd rather eat a can of worms than ride a Jap Bike* (Vern looks like a Harley man from the word go). Or alternate T-shirt: *Born on a mountain, raised in a cave: Bikin' and Fuckin' is all that I crave*. Personal motto (uttered whilst crushing a beer can with one hand): "a woman's place is in the turn-out room." But Vern is nothing compared to:



RUSTY BURKE: Now, I know a degenerate when I see one, and that is Clark, most assuredly. But there is a significant line of distinction between a degenerate and a



derelict, and Burke has passed that point. In fact, I suspect a hoax, perpetrated by Clarke and Williams on me, specifically. The Burke I know through zines is a scholar of religion and literature, a poet and connoisseur of poetry, an artist and draughtsman of talent. But what I'm looking at I've seen before, and usually on Skid Row or in the Salvation Army. People like the man I'm looking at (at this point I am loath to call him Burke without further corroboration) provide the backbone of the labor there, and one of the tasks assigned to such is to bring heavy objects--like stereos and TV's--out to the cars of purchase. For this, they are paid \$1 a day plus room and board. This doesn't leave much extra dough for a spare bottle of Thunderbird. von Turk and Richard Janeski usually go to such, pay them a few bucks, and have them ferry out various items to their cars...without the formality of paying the purchase price to the cashier, of course. They refer to the program as "Bribe-a-Drunk". Burke looks like a good candidate for the program. The only religious education this guy ever got was from hearing the Salvation Army preach about the evils of drink--necessary if he is to get a bed to flop in for the night. But all thoughts of Burke (?) are eliminated after I meet:

FABULO FRENZINII: Italian poet, movie director, Fabulo comes up, and in his normal speaking roar, says, "Dolbear! I've wanted to meet you!", and extends his...well he puts out his...well, he wanted to shake. After a moment's trepidation, I decide: *"It's at the end of his arm. The odds are overwhelming that it's a hand."* And after I shook hands (?) with him, I finally understood the words on the Statue of Liberty: "wretched refuse of your teeming shore". Also made a mental note to send a donation to the Committee for Stricter Immigration laws.

The next few hours are spent in various places. We camp out a while in the Knoxville room, then go upstairs to the con suite. There I see some folks I haven't seen in a while: Jeanne Corbin and Mike Weber among them. Have lengthy and interesting discussion with Weber about all sorts of topics visual (as in video) and aural (as in stereo). Lillian

is inside the consuite, hobnobbing with the Satyricon folks--he is now GoH, and is acting like one. Cliff Amos, the living breathing spirit of the Confederacy, is there, but Meade Frierson is absent--a sad omission.

The consuite parties die down, but there is one group--the Knoxvilleans--that is still going strong. Clark, for example, never quits, an observation I will reflect on numerous times during the convention. At this time, the juices are still flowing in me, so I've got plenty of energy. Rusty retires early to his room--which he shares with P.L. Carruthers--but those of us without such commitments stay up gabbing until the morning. Vern is excellent companionship, and always has a nice black pill as a pick-me-up on his person somewhere. I last until about 7:00 AM, when I thread my way back to my room. Buffalo has been about all night, in and out of the room, and in and out of catatonia. His usual cycle at conventions.

Sleep is fruitless, and I finish reading Shadow. Miss a breakfast date with Vern, who I cannot find, but go down to the huckster room, where I'm introduced to Liz Stewart, lovely girl, who is under Paul's watchful eye. Interesting experience talking with them--Rusty (who is about 7'11"), and Paul, who is a little shorter (about 6'11") and then being joined by two other absurdly tall persons. Liz and I felt as if we were in the valley of the giants. Finally, I go over and make conversation with someone who is sensibly sized--the very charming Deb Hammer-Johnson, who was trying to turn an honest buck as a huckster, but having only intermittent success. After, I locate Guy, who has found something--a stack of old fanzines being sold by Jerry Alexander. And what is in that stack? We freak, Old SFPA mailings--but whose? A three year run of *Yandro* (which I buy) and other treasures--including the earlier *Spiritus Mundi*--and, wonder of wonders, *Alack*, which marked the fanzine debut of both myself and Lillian, and which appeared in SFPA mailing 34--ancient history, but it seems like yesterday. We buy and buy. After my purchases, I sit with D H-J and discuss literature for a while, particularly



Victorian pornography, a subject of great interest to me.

Guy proposes luncheon-breakfast, and I accept. GHLIII, Rusty, P.L. and I set off in Kermit, who is protesting because of the cold. I can sympathize--cold and bitter outside. But on the way in we meet-CELKO, with his fiancée, a beautiful rabbit, and two close friends, the rabbit's owner and her dog. P.L., who professes to know the city, volunteers to get us lost, and we set off in search of pizza.

Pizza places, we find. And at 11:30 on a Saturday, for God's sake, they are closed. We get to 4 pizza places, and not a one is open. We cruise up and down the strip, without luck. In my rear-view mirror, I see Celko throwing up his hands and moaning in frustration. At a stop-light, he pulls even, and rolls down the window. Deciding that the best defense is a good offense, I yell, "Do you know where the hell you're going, Celko?" at Joe before he can speak. Celko's jaw drops. But fortunately for my continued health, we find a Sambo's and all pile out.

An excellent and convivial brunch follows, after which we return to the hotel. I spent the remainder of the afternoon doing my Portugese Man-of-War imitation: that is, drifting from place to place, talking with those that I encountered, trusting to serendipity. I was well rewarded for my trust in fate, having nice conversations with a number of SFPAns, past and present, who were in attendance.

Later, I'm in the Knoxville room, getting a head start on the evening's chemical ingestion. By this time, I've not had any sleep since Thursday afternoon. But good old Vern, my long lost brother, is treating me right. Everytime I yawn (or indeed, become less than hyper-active) Vern helps me out with some instant chemical energy. Oh well--better living thru chemistry, I always say.

Around twilight, I go with Lillian, Mike Rogers and about 15 others for an intimate pizza dinner. I committed myself earlier, but by that time, I really didn't feel like going. What with the uppers,

the grass, the ludes, and the constant alcohol consumption at this affair, I'm starting to feel like the cement inside of a cement mixer. Death isn't such a bad proposition, just so long as it comes quickly. I reflect back on a guy Markstein told me about once, who used to inject motor oil. Motor oil? "It feels sooooooooooooo good when you stop," he used to explain. I now sympathize.

We got back to the hotel. The wind is whipping up outside, and the temperature is dropping pretty quickly. Inside, I take a quick look around, and go back to the suite for some rest.

Rest I can't get, but settle for showering and shaving. I shower in the usual fashion--hot first, then go to cold water gradually. That's to make sure I wake up. "Water on the back of the tired neck is like rain on wilted lettuce" as Samwise used to say.

The day previous, I had purchased two hits of acid from one of the local druggists. The stuff was of dubious quality; it had been stored in a refrigerator for an unknown number of years. Ahhhhh--well, might as well take both in that case, who knows, I might get a mild buzz out of it.

That was at 9:00 exactly. I go downstairs, and mingle with the throng waiting for the costume ball. No effects from the stuff yet; what a burn.

I look at the various clad participants, discuss the unfortunate tendency away from skimpy costumes (with Celko, of course) wander about some more, go to the filksing room (nothing going on there), go to the hucksters' room (closed), dither about, fiddle about, and sometime around 9:30 two depth charges go off simultaneously in my cerebral cortex.

Ah-hah, thinks I, that is something more like it.

I go to the now-started art auction and talk for a while to Vern, and am starting to admire the varied, (and always changing texture of things such as the wall and the air.) The art show is a little slow for me--the laid back Burke is in charge and apparently thinks he has all night. I'm sitting behind Buff and the



Baton Rouge crowd--Mad Dog Madden, Sheila Strickland, Bennie Whiddon and the rest, noting the changes in the stitching on the backs of their shirts. The stitching is changing and pulsating weirdly. Maybe time to get out of the art show and do something else. I go outside, where the costumers are still milling about, hoping to be noticed.

I spend a long while leaning against walls. Near the elevator, near the art-show. It's all I can do. Deb H-J and someone else are going to throw a sort of ballet for Neanderthals. The Rites of Spring? I don't give it much attention. By this point, the walls are changing colors, the floor shifts, and I'm starting to see some strange things on people's faces. An S.F. convention might not be the best place to do this stuff. Under normal circumstances, you have a pretty good idea of what your environment looks like. If you keep a level head, you can pretty much puzzle out everything. But at a con, you're not really sure whether the guy walking by whose face is colored in a checkerboard pattern really looks like that, or is simply dressed like that, or is just appearing to your drug-crazed mind to be like that. Another odd effect: I have the reverse of tunnel vision. Cinerama? I find that my eyes can concentrate on more than one thing in the field of forms, which ordinarily it cannot do. Not bad, very interesting.

The art auction finally ends. This creates immediate chaos in the hall outside, where I am quietly trembling against the corner, hoping only that I am left completely alone (luckily, I am). Now, everyone is out in the hall. It's very late--if the costume ball runs overtime (and I've never seen one that didn't) the parties are going to start going around 2.

I'm still leaning against the wall, by this point unsure about my ability to locomote. But why move? The spot I've chosen is like a Parisian cafe. The whole world goes by if you wait long enough. One of the reasons why the whole world goes by is because they keep checking in at the door of the costume ballroom to see if anything is close to starting yet.

Lillian passes by, waves and goes on.

I stare at him with glazed eyes. Cliff Biggers is wandering about as well, seemingly on con business. Cliff Amos wanders by; I seem to register the rumor that he will be the MC of the costume ball.

And I look to my left, and what do I see, but six people, coming at me, bearing down on me with speed, three couples, walking in line two abreast. Specifically, in order: Paris and Barger, Flores and Stewart, and Cobb and Fontenay. All of these tall, slender, elegant, fashionable young people, cruising by me, going to wait in line outside the door of the ballroom, as if they were waiting for something. And finally, my poor addled brain breaks down, into two portions, and:

#### LEFT HEMISPHERE

What is this, the Sweethearts of SPFA contest? Are they all going to go onstage in pairs, one at a time, and let the membership (of an apa or convention? This thing I do not know) decide which pair is cutest? The mind croggles.





But, in the right hemisphere, I am taken back to:

THE HEILIGOLAND BIGHT, August 1918:

The guns of August have but recently been fired, and no sea conflict has begun yet. I am Admiral von Dolbhorst, commanding officer of the German High Seas Fleet, at the Heillogoland Bight, the great Imperial Navy base on the North Sea. It is a peaceful August morning, the mist is still heavy on the sea, and I am leaning over the rail of the bridge of my flagship--an old, somewhat battered, but trustworthy battleship of the old style and I love her, but I am uncomfortably aware that if we have to do battle with the English on the North Sea we will have a difficult time of it. The supplementary squadron, of newer and heavier ships, from the Baltic should be here in a few days, however; certainly the Royal Navy will not attack so quickly--but my reverie is suddenly interrupted by a shout from one of the lookouts:

"Warships! To starboard!"

My binoculars come up, train on the ships just emerging from the morning mist --I can see six leading the pack. Damn! The vanguard is six of the new British battle cruiser squadron, those fast sleek, elegant, deadly vessels that are the pride of that Service.

They are cutting towards us quickly, paint gleaming in the morning, bows cutting the whitecaps, advancing in double line ahead towards my squadron. Through the glass, I can see tiny figures climbing on the superstructure, and the great guns --13 inchers? hard to tell at this distance --turning slowly, slowing, training on specific ships in the line.

"What vessels!" I mutter under my breath. The very acme of the shipwright's art. But stronger than my dismay is my pride--my pride as a German officer and a commander in the Kaiser's High Seas Fleet. Live or die, triumph or be vanquished, we shall not disgrace our service.

I turn towards the officer of the deck. "Sound battle stations! Line ahead, quarter turn to starboard....."

Which is about the time that all of

the above faded. I regained ~~semi-conscious~~ control over both halves of my brain, and realized that the costume contest was close to starting. I managed to stagger the entire distance (about 10 feet) into the ballroom and take up a position slumped against the wall.

I don't remember much about the contest itself--I went deaf periodically during Cliff's speech. (I was so distracted I really didn't notice.) But I do remember Fabulo Frenzinii and Valerie Lyle..

Valerie enters wearing the most low cut harem outfit imaginable. "The members of Damsels in Distress Local #69 would like to register a complaint..

---the only hearts being played are cards  
---the only bulging eyes are in the video room

---the only derring do is at the games table...

IS THERE NO ONE LEFT TO SHIMMY FOR??"





Whereupon Fabulo, dressed in white tie and tails, and a burnoose, with wrap-around shades, takes the stage, gathers Valerie in his arms, and declaims:

I'M FABULO FRENZINII, THE NEW WAVE  
SHEIK

I CAN KEEP IT UP FOR ALMOST A WEEK  
I CAN LICK MY EYEBROWS, I'M RICH AS  
SHIT

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ACTION, THEN  
THIS IS IT!!

In response to which, Valerie simpers:  
"Well, at this convention, a hard man is  
good to find."

The audience collapses into laughter,  
and I nearly collapse, period.

After the costume ball, I spend my  
time wandering about the upper floors,  
hampered in my perigrinations by sudden,  
unexpected movements of floor and walls.  
An interesting show is taking place in the  
con suite--a nearby building is burning  
to the ground. Interesting.

But even more interesting is the fact  
that I can sense another rush approaching,  
so I wander down to the room, manage to  
get the key in the lock, and find Bill on  
the bed, in the catatonic part of his  
cycle. I laid down on the floor, rushing  
so hard that I couldn't so much more than  
stare at the ceiling.

Afterwards, I felt human enough to  
get off the floor, and search for action.  
What I'd do with it once I found it was  
not certain, but I didn't want to lay on  
the floor much longer, as I had developed  
a certainty that the floor had tentacles  
and was trying to swallow me. However,  
it couldn't swallow shoes, so as long as  
I kept on my feet, I was safe.

And what do I find but Vern, going  
into the Knoxville suite, bearing liquor  
and other substances. What the hell, go  
with the flow. I go inside and drink and  
smoke and toké and boogie until I (nearly)  
puke.

At first, it's just Vern and I, and  
someone else, (whose name I've unfortuna-  
tely forgotten) but we're later joined by  
the rest of the Knoxville crowd, and all  
of the English battle cruiser squadron,  
who sail in with their typical aplomb.

Fabulo staggers in from Ghod knows where,  
smashed beyond all hope. He collapses on  
the bed, drunkenly snorting and making in-  
teresting gargling sounds.

At some point or another, discussions  
develop downstairs between the members of  
the ChattaCon committee. Dick Lynch  
comes by to say something to Charlie, who  
has a conversation with him outside the  
door.

After a moment he returns. "Dick  
says there was some problem with the hotel,  
but everything's been settled."

"Who?" queries Fabulo.

"Dick."

"Dick who?"

"Dick Lynch."

"WHO??"

"DICK LYNCH! CHATTACON! CHATTANOOGA!  
TENNESSEE! REMEMBER?!"

The light finally dawns on Fabulo.  
"Yeah...ChattaCon...when is that this year?  
I wanna go to that, heard it's a lot of  
fun..."





Charlie is about to reply to this, but gets a quick report that some persons have been seen wearing Hawaiian shirts. He grabs his switchblade and mace, and goes off to collect a posse.

At this point, most of the group is sitting around, too weak with ennui to move. Vern and I (I fortified by some more of Knoxville's solution to the energy crisis) go off looking for parties. We stop and chat with persons in various rooms, and ride down to the ground floor with an anachroniat, dressed in a flowing gown, and somebody who looks like a WWII Japanese military officer, complete with large sword.

I look at Vern. What sort of costume is this? I've seen a number dressed like-wise.

General Tojo departs at the next floor. "They're Dorsai irregulars, Dennis," says Vern. "They have a sort of group based on the characters in Gordon R. Dickson's stories."

"Yeah, I seem to remember reading *The Genetic General* about sometime before that kid was born."

"Right, well it's a popular sort of fringe fandom. They're pretty big right now, but they're sort of recent."

I look towards the Anachronist. "Yeah, I can remember when there were only straight SF fans and the Anachronists. Easy to keep track of everything then."

The Anachronist smiles. "Yeah, those were the good old days."

The doors open a floor later and the Anachronist walks out. "And they were easy to tell apart," I continue. "The fans wore ordinary clothes; the Anachronists wore *dresses*."

The smile dissappears from Sir Galahad's face.

All of you wear dresses!" I rave. "All of you! Even your women wear dresses! We're TRUFANS! OUR WOMEN WEAR PANTS!"

The doors close before he can go get his sword. Vern pulls me back in and collapses against the wall. "Bad craziness," he gasps. "Hunter would've been



proud. Are you planning on shooting up the lobby?"

"Left my gun in the car," I regretfully informed him. "Too cold to get it now. A few hours ago I could control the ambient temperature of the air around me, merely by willing it. I lost that power about 2:30, though. I'll be glad to shoot up in the lobby, however."

"Didn't bring my works with me, more's the pity, or I'd join you."

Up to one of the con suites to join some of the Shadowites meandering around. I talk with Barger and Paris while squished into a small corner of the room...amazing, by contortionist powers. Lillian I search for, but he is not to be found.

Vern and I spend some time wandering about in search of a good time. Since at this point in time, our idea of a good time is senseless, spontaneous violence,



we are greeted with something less than anticipation wherever we go.

Back down to the Knoxville room, and I fetch Bowlus, some dope, and the Negro Home Entertainment Center (tm) our famous portable cassette tape player. Williams has returned, and sports several Hawaiian shirts as trophies, most with hardly any blood on them at all.

At this point, the partying spirit, is starting to wind down, mainly from sheer exhaustion. Fabulo, old man that he is, is starting to feel his age, in the most amazing manner. He's sitting on the edge of the bed, asleep. We know he's asleep because he is *snoring*. But he keeps pitching forward slightly, whereupon he half-wakes, starts, rights himself, goes back to sleep, starts to pitch backwards a little, half-wakes, starts, rights himself, goes back to sleep, pitches forward, etc. Truly amazing. Wished I had a camera. In between watching the show, I discuss with Burke the possibility of absurd Cabinet appointments, following Joe Walsh's eventual election as President of the Woodstock Nation. He accepts the post of Undersecretary in Charge of Giving Out Downs. "I'm pretty good at that."

Charlie comes in with more Hawaiian shirts, and throws everyone out at this point. We got searching for parties, but keep losing people along the way. Ah, only the die hard partiers are left. A move is made to congregate in the room of Bill and myself. That seconded, we split up--Bill and I go to our room, the others to follow "shortly". But after waiting about half an hour for the fools to show, Bill and I give up the ghost and go to sleep. This is about 5:15.

At 6:00, after I've gotten 45 minutes of sleep, just enough to make me groggy, but not enough to do me any good, there's a thunderous knocking at the door. Peering out, spectacleless, I note 3 figures: one short, stocky, black haired; one svelte, green sweated one; and one tall blue thing, which turns out to be Burke. That pisses me off; Burke had promised he'd be along "shortly" but here he is, the same height as ever. The other is Vern and a nice looking piece whose name I've forgotten.

Pleas to the trio that I have a long drive ahead of me are fruitless. We adjourn to Burke's room, where Vern fixes me up with a quick energy booster. I'm getting into the rhythm of things: when most people are tired, they go to sleep, but when these people get tired, they just pop another black one.

In Rusty's room, I alternate between regaling these folk with tales of SFPA history and ogling the scantily clad P.L. as she flits around the room. The Flame has a severe headache, and Rusty has promised aspirin as soon as the drugstores open. No need to wait says DD, always the gentleman; I have such provision in my shaving kit. P.L. accepts the offer with her customarily gracious snarl. Thanks for taking my aspirin, P.L.

Oddly it is Rusty that wears out first, but he has nevertheless covered himself with glory during this con; we are the only live bodies in the hotel, besides the hotel personnel, who of course do not count. All others have been utterly partied out. Only Vern, I, Rusty and the nameless lady remain. We are the only live dogs. But Rusty slumps against the TV looking nothing so much as the beaten wino described earlier, cigarette burning in his hand. Vern and I bet how long he's got before it gets to his finger. (It goes out first, a dead heat.)

Finally, it's decided to go to breakfast. We're a pretty motley crew, Fabulo, Vern, me, Buff, the Lynchi, P.L., and one or two others--Rusty apparently couldn't make it. The orders are generally light--too much partying has upset too many stomachs. I consider a salad bar, but decide on plain coffee instead--playing it safe. Dick Lynch expresses some concern for P.L., who was quite sick all night and is rather pale this morning. She's the last to order.

"Veal Parmesan, with extra-hot mushroom sauce, and a side order of garlic bread."

A great groan arises from our (me, Buff, Fabulo, Vern) end of the table. Oh my GHOD--if you're only as old as you feel, I must be 80. I look at my hands--horny and gnarled, they look like they belong to an aged sharecropper. I call



the waitress over. Coffee is a bit much at this time of the morning. "Just water, please."

Breakfast calls an end, effectively, to our con activity. We return, pack, load the car, and say some hurried good-byes. I do not see the Biggers, Cliff and Susan; that is unfortunate, as I had wanted to make a point of speaking to them. They were early friends of mine in apac. Great people, two of the mainstays of Southern fandom. Like most things that get put off until the last minute, it doesn't get done; I'm told they have departed early for Atlanta. That's bad, but all in all, I've enjoyed the convention as much as any, and a large part of my enjoyment has come from the fact that I am alive at its end. There were some times Saturday when that didn't seem like a likely possibility.

The trip back is quick, and for the most part uneventful. Bill and I stop in Birmingham to have dinner with an old girlfriend of mine, now residing back in her hometown. Birmingham at 4:00 on Sunday is truly the city of the dead; we see no persons, nothing is open, and in fact, there are no Interstate exits with plenty of restaurants clustered around them. Amazing. We finally find this massive Chinese restaurant in an old hotel, which serves good but over-salted Chinese food, and get this--fried ice cream, a most curious dish. How they do it, I don't know, but they fry a dough covering over frozen ice cream. The owner claimed that it was their speciality...it certainly was special.

In the wee, wee hours, we arrived in Baton Rouge; we were finished, but we swore we'd make Satyricon.

□□□□□

#### EDITORIAL ANNOTATIONS:

*ChattaCon*: Chattanooga's annual science fiction convention, held each January.

*Satyricon*: An April, 1981 SF convention held in Knoxville, where SFPA's gala 100th mailing was collated.

*SFPA*: The Southern Fandom Press Alliance, southern fandom's first and still foremost APA. Most of the people

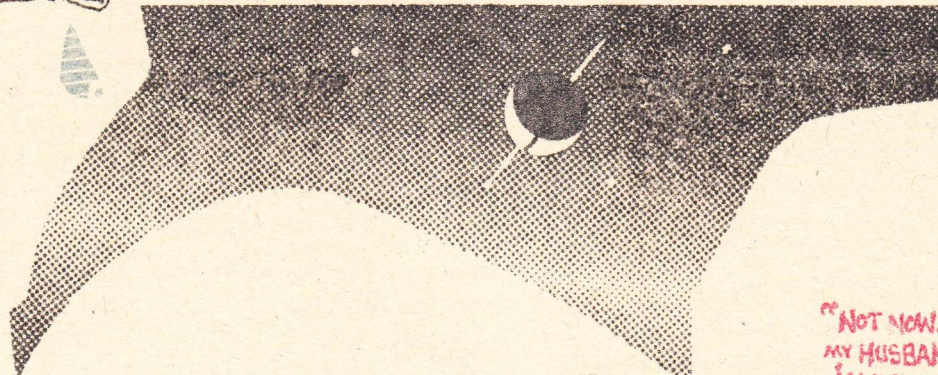
mentioned in the article are or were SFPA members or waitlisters.

*Shadow*: Shadow SFPA, the SFPA waitlisters' APA.

*Sons of the Sand*: A New Orleans fannish organization, famous (or infamous, depending on your point of view) for its, er, Chemistry.

*Mongolian Cluster Fuck*: Don't ask.

**LIFE ON TITAN!** by charlie williams 11-5-80



"NOT NOW...  
MY HUSBAND  
IS WATCHING...!"



# Current Reading

## Reviews by Nicki Lynch

One of the pleasures of doing a fanzine is getting books from publishers for review. Following are reviews of books we've received during the past few months.

From Ace Science Fiction comes *Lost Dorsai* (Ace 49299-1; 287 pp; \$4.95 Illustrated Trade Edition), the latest addition to Gordon R. Dickson's Childe Cycle.

For those unfamiliar, the Childe Cycle is a series of historical novels (some not yet written) that follows mankind's destiny over the course of a thousand years, from the fourteenth through the 24th century. The first written and perhaps most famous of these novels, *Dorsai!*, introduced the Dorsai culture, a splinter culture of mankind that is known for producing great professional soldiers. A portion of the Childe Cycle follows the Dorsai, and through them, the further evolution of mankind in an expanded universe.

*Lost Dorsai* is, strictly speaking, not one of the novels of the Childe Cycle; it's a collection of shorter works that helps to fill in the series.

The first story, the 1981 Hugo Award winning novella "Lost Dorsai", is set on a planet where revolution is brewing. The real story, however, is not how the rebellion draws to a conclusion, but how the 'lost' Dorsai remains a Dorsai without taking up the weapons he has rejected in favor of music. Seen through the eyes of Corunna El Man (a continuing character in the Childe Cycle), the story is a contrast in the idea of being a hero and the reality of being a hero.

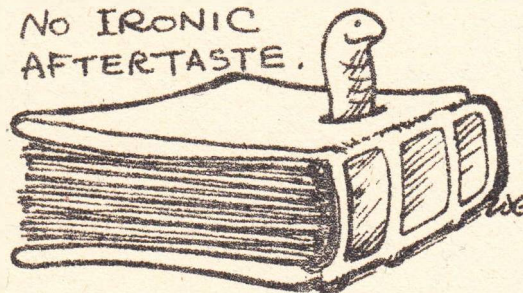
Included in the book is the short story "Warrior", also part of the Childe Cycle, which follows Ian Kensie (another of its continuing characters) as he follows his sense of duty and values in avenging the death of one of his soldiers.

Another inclusion in this volume is an excerpt from *The Final Encyclopedia*, which will culminate the Cycle.

Rounding out the book is an excellent essay by Sandra Miesel about Gordon R. Dickson and his Childe Cycle. Ms. Miesel writes in depth about the relationships between people profiled in the Cycle and the larger ideas in the stories. It's an good introduction to the Cycle for those new to it and a thorough, provoking essay for those already acquainted with it.

*Lost Dorsai* is a fine addition to Dickson's Childe Cycle and an excellent warm-up for the upcoming *The Final Encyclopedia*.

AH, A VINTAGE BOOK.  
A BEAUTIFUL BOUQUET  
OF CHARACTERIZATION, AND  
NO IRONIC  
AFTERTASTE.



From Starblaze/Donning comes *Myth Conceptions* by Robert Asprin (Starblaze SB-12; 162 pp; \$4.95 Illustrated Trade Edition), the sequel to *Another Fine Myth*. This book has been long-awaited by fans of the author, and I can see why. When I picked it up, I was at a disadvantage - I hadn't read the first book. But it turns out that it didn't matter; the characters are the kind who reveal themselves bit by bit all through the novel.

*Myth Conceptions* follows the travels of Skeeve, apprentice magician, and Aahz, a demon who is powerless but who is teaching Skeeve the magic trade. This time Aahz convinces Skeeve that a court magician is a soft job and would provide a pay-as-you-learn opportunity. All this happens when they learn there is an open-



ing for just such a position in the next kingdom. So they lock up the inn and head out for an interview.

When they arrive they blow away the rest of the competition with their "act" and land the job -- only to find out they are to go out immediately on their first assignment. It's hard to decide which is the harder news to accept -- the task, to stop the largest invading army ever assembled, or the news that they don't get paid until the next pay period.

*Myth Conceptions* is a fun book to read; I enjoyed Skeeve and Aahz, and the ways they got in and out of trouble. I also enjoyed the way the author left open the myriad roads to be explored with this charming duo, and finally, the quotes at the top of each chapter, which were the icing on a very tasty cake.

POOR FRED. I  
WARNED HIM ABOUT  
DHALGREN.



Another offering from Starblaze/Donning is Katherine MacLean's *The Trouble With You Earth People* (Starblaze SB-11; 240 pp; \$4.95 Illustrated Trade Edition), a short story collection. As I had not previously read any of MacLean's stories, it was especially delightful.

The book contains the stories: "The Trouble With You Earth People", "Unhuman Sacrifice", "The Gambling Hell and the Sinful Girl", "Syndrome Johnny", "Trouble With Treaties" (with Tom Condit), "The Origin of the Species", "Collision Orbit", "The Fittest", "These Truths", "Contagion", "Brain Wipe", and "The Missing Man".

The tone of the stories ranges from very serious and incisive to light and fanciful visions of the future. In "Unhuman Sacrifice", two astronauts and their passenger (a preacher) land on a

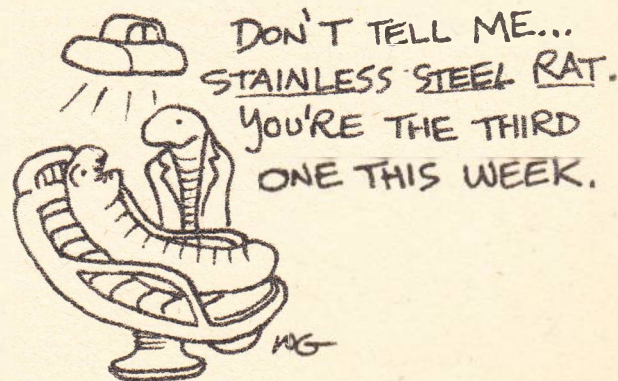
new planet to complete a survey mission. While there, the preacher tries to bring his brand of 'civilization' to the native population with disastrous results.

In "The Gambling Hell and the Sinful Girl", a family of 'barrel people' face their eldest son becoming a miner in the asteroids. They also discover that even a gambling hell can have an angel. It is a totally fun story.

All in all, *The Trouble With You Earth People* is a great way to discover Katherine MacLean's work. If you are already a fan of her writing, it's a fine collection of her works.

Finally, from Starblaze/Donning comes *The Shrouded Planet* by "Robert Randall" (Starblaze SB-13; 150 pp; \$4.95 Illustrated Trade Edition), a very interesting story that leaves the reader hungry for more.

On the most holy day for the inhabitants of Nidor, a planet covered with dense clouds, a never-before heard-of thing happens -- the Elder Leader is taken up into the sky after giving the Final Blessing. When he returns, he tells of a great mission he has been given by the Representatives of the Great Light. They are to build a school which will educate the finest of Nidor's youth in the Law and Scripture of Nidor as well as natural sciences, engineering, and agriculture. And so the school is built as per instructions of the Representatives of the Great Light, also known as Earthmen.

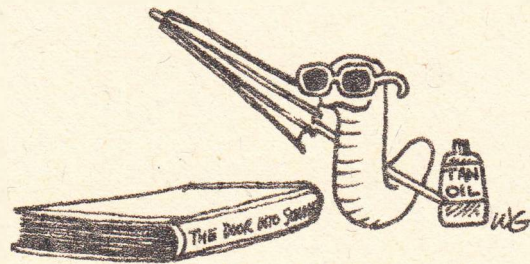




*The Shrouded Planet* follows the fortunes of three generations of the Brajjyd family as they attend the school and affect their planet's history and society. Kiv peGanz Brajjyd discovers a way to eliminate a destructive insect which has plagued farmers for years, thus changing the system of economics that lasted for years. His daughter, Sindi geKiv Brajjyd, breaks social tradition by marrying a distant member of their clan. Her son, Norvis peRahn Brajjyd, is expelled from the school amid a scandal, but triumphs in bringing the populace to doubt their blind faith in an antiquated system of government.

The book is threaded with what the Earthmen are really doing, as seen through the eyes of the Brajjyd family. Unlike many stories of Earthmen landing on a planet and changing society practically overnight, *The Shrouded Planet* has the Earthmen quietly changing things by the education and manipulation of the finest minds of the planet's youth. It's quite a story!

The author "Robert Randall" is really two fine SF authors -- Robert Silverberg and Randall Garrett. The book concludes with essays both authors and how they came to write it. The story hits on many levels and could easily have a sequel. I think I'd like to read one!





# Les Brers in A Minor

## Closing Comments by Dick Lynch

Not much in the way of comments this time.

This first issue has been a real epic to produce. At first, I thought we'd have it out only two or three months after our last general distribution fanzine (CHAT #40), but many things, trivial and consequential, intervened.

Anyway, here it is. We can really

use contributions for the next issue (planned for July). If you've written an interesting or amusing article (previous appearance in an APA is no problem), please consider sending it to us for *Mimosa*. If not, we will still appreciate a letter of comment on the issue. In fact, we would really like to hear from everyone who reads this (if nothing else, it'll assure you of getting the second issue).

I hope the long wait was worth it; see you in #2.





# Artist Credits

Rusty Burke - 3 (logo)

Jeanne Corbin - inside back cover

Wade Gilbreath - 17, 18, 34, 35 (both illos)

Alan Hutchinson - 16

Julia Scott - 6, 7, 8, 9, 19, 20, 37

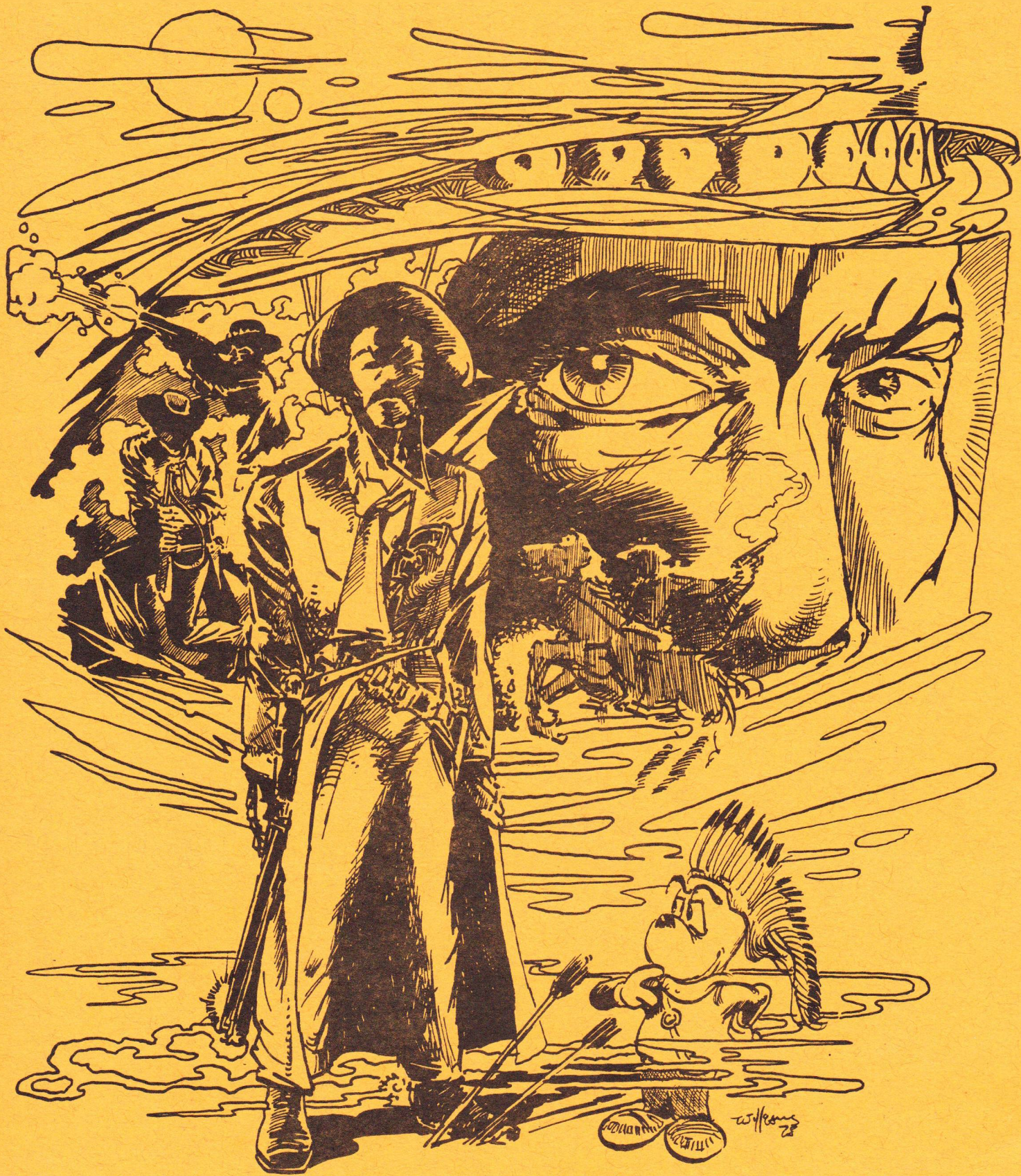
Charlie Williams - front cover, 4, 10, 12, 13, 15, 21, 24, 25, 28,  
29, 30, 31, 33, 38, back cover











Two-GUN KID meets Apache Gremlins from Proxima Centauri