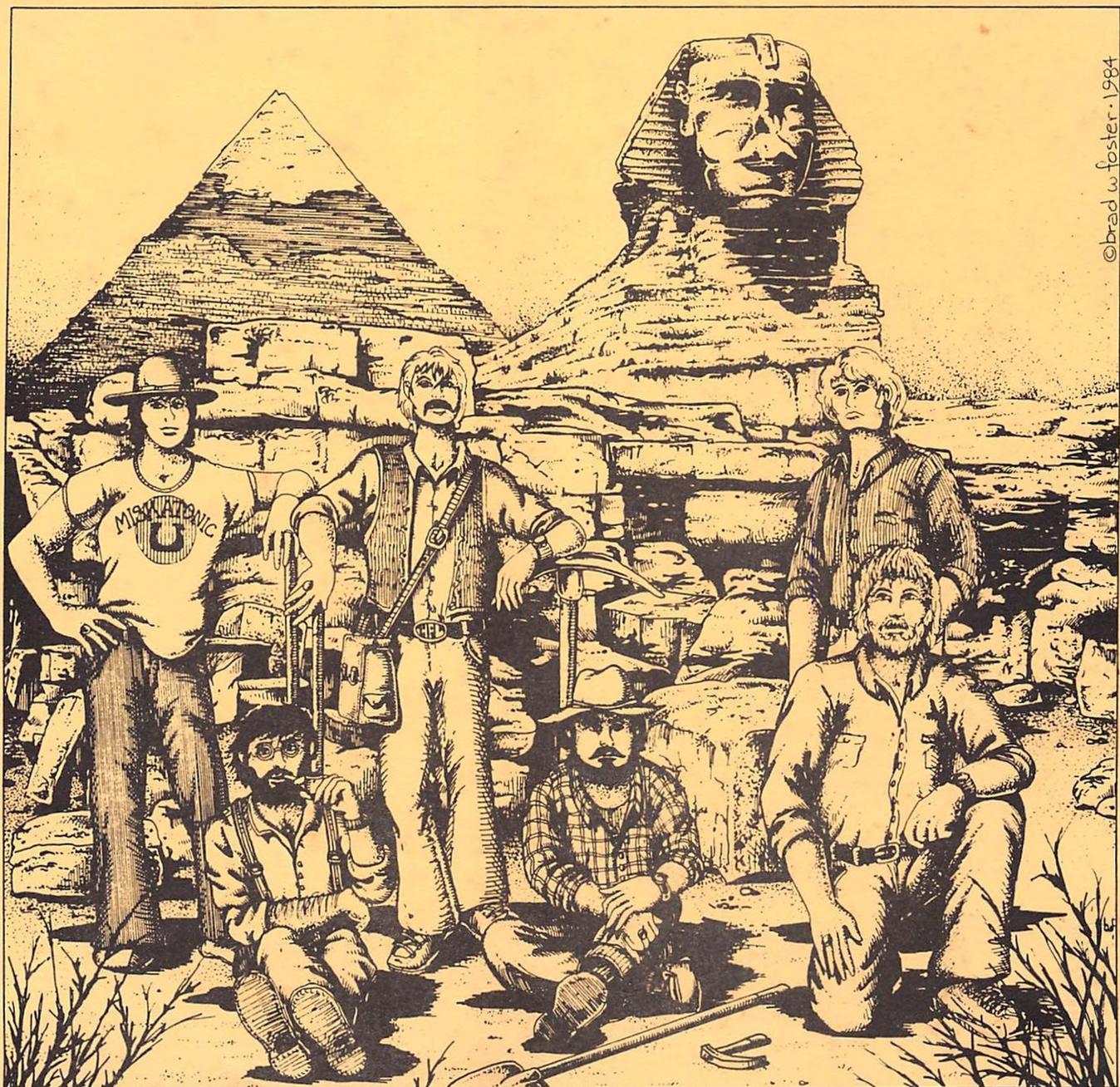
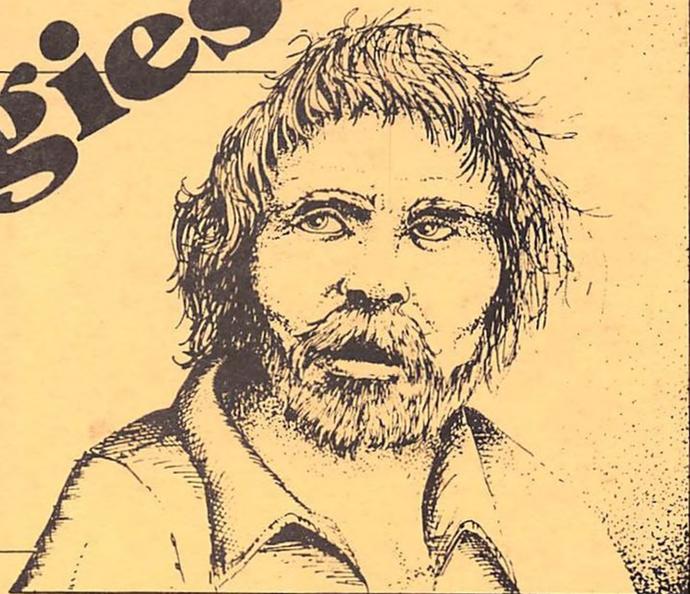


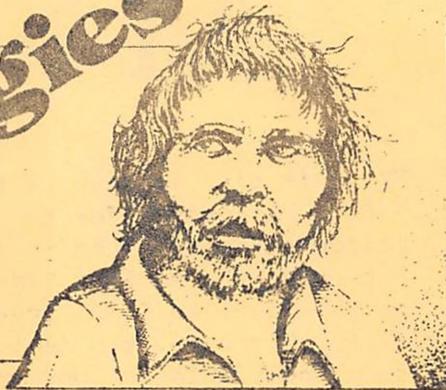
# Mythologies 16



©brad w foster. 1984

# Mythologies

## 16



EDITOR: Don D'Ammassa

Editorial Address: 323 Dodge Street, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

Repro: Sheila D'Ammassa

This is the July 1984 issue. Circulation 275.

All contents are © Copyright 1984 by Don D'Ammassa. All rights revert immediately to the individual contributors.

MYTHOLOGIES is published approximately two or three times annually. It is available for \$3.00 per issue, one issue at a time, or for odd reasons, contributions, or substantial letter of comment. All uncredited material and anything enclosed in triple parens like (((this))) is the fault of the editor.

Art Credits: Cover by BRAD FOSTER

Interiors: Brad Foster pages 1, 17, & 37

Sheryl Birkhead page 10

Al Sirois page 58 and heading, page 28

"Let us compare mythologies; I have learned my elaborate lie."

---Leonard Cohen

"The purpose of argument is to change the nature of truth."

--- Frank Herbert

COA: Alyson Abramowitz, 10 Pine Ridge Road, Arlington, MA 02174 supersedes the address listed on page 65 of this issue.

### CONTENTS

MYTH.....	Page 2
BYPASSING TIME & SPACE WITH ISABELLA FIGHOLLER.....	Page 6
BIZARRE EVENTS.....	Page 8
PLAYING WITH YOURSELF.....	Page 11
GHASTLY TALES.....	Page 15
THE DOMS.....	Page 19
CRITICAL MASS.....	Page 24
ELABORATE LIES.....	The Readers.....Page 28

# MYTH

The subject of MYTH this time is rape, a topic about which I obviously have no first hand experience. Some background for the selection of this topic might be appropriate under the circumstances. Insofar as I know, none of my acquaintances have ever been raped; however, the subject became slightly more personal as the result of the recent Big Dan rape case in Fall River. For those who have somehow missed the national publicity in this case, the incident occurred at Big Dan's bar. A young woman was raped on a pool table by four or more men while the rest of the patrons looked on and/or cheered. While I don't know any of the central figures in the case, I do know people who personally know one or more of the defendants in the case.

We'll get back to Big Dan later. Suffice it for now to say that currents and situations which arose locally led me to do some research into the subject of rape. Difficult as that turned out to be. This is not a trivial point. Despite the fact that reported rapes are the third largest crime of violence, and that 80 - 90 per cent of all rapes go unreported, the scarcity of material on the subject is quite telling in itself. I visited three bookstores in and around the Brown University campus. Even in the section of Women's Studies I found only Brownmiller's AGAINST OUR WILL and two short books on how to adjust to being raped. I checked indices of others in this section, and in sociology, crime, and psychology, and found only fleeting references, mostly to Bangladesh. I even browsed through the history section and could find reference only to the rape of the Sabine women.

Perforce then Brownmiller was my major source of input. In general, the book was convincing, thorough, and closely reasoned. The historical analysis of rape seems to me to be excellent. With some minor quibbles, her analysis of the psychology of rape seems sensible, although superficial. In the waning chapters she seems to try to cover a variety of side issues, with mixed success. In some cases she is thorough, in others she fails to substantiate her points. Her discussion of the prosecution of rapists only brushes the surface, overlooking a number of difficult issues. The book has in some cases been outstripped by events: at the time of her writing, there were apparently no states with laws specifying rape within marriage. I know for a fact that there has been such a law in Rhode Island for several years now; in fact, there is currently a bill to widen the definition of spouse rape to cover some cases not within the scope of the original legislation. I doubt that Rhode Island has the most progressive laws on the subject.

I'll deal with the points of disagreement a bit later. First let's develop an overview of the subject. Brownmiller, who alternates between scholarly and personal approaches in her book, presents a large number of statistics. For the most part, when figures she has gleaned from various sources conflict, she has taken the most conservative figure, so the figures shown below are probably slanted in that direction. Not all of these are from Brownmiller.

1. 60% of all rape is committed against women 25 years old or younger.
2. Approximately half of all rapes are conducted by two or more men acting together.
3. Over 70% of all rapes are planned in advance. There was either a specific target in mind, or a plan to grab the first available victim.
4. 30 - 50% of all rapes occur in the victim's home.

5. 10 - 20% occur in automobiles.
6. 80 - 90% are never reported.
7. 60% of reported rapes are ignored by police because they doubt either the credibility of the victim or their possible chances of proving anything. Most of the remaining 40% never come to trial.
8. 75% of attempted rapes are completed.
9. 2% of all reported rapes are probably false accusations.
10. Physical resistance on the part of the victim seems to have no effect on the degree of violence inflicted upon her. That is, a woman who attempts to fight off her attacker seems no more or less likely to be beaten.
11. There are approximately 400 rape murders annually in the US.
12. Most rapists are known by their victims. At least 60% of all rapes occur during a date.
13. Date rape is most common with teenagers. Unsurprisingly, rape is more common on weekends, in nice weather, etc.
14. Approximately 50% of all college students believe that forced sex is permissible under some circumstances. The survey indicated this was the position of 54% of the men and a surprising 42% of the women.
15. Approximately one third of all convicted rapists seem to honestly believe that they did nothing wrong.
16. The rape capital of the continent is not Boston or New York City, it is Denver. The ratio of rape to population is higher in urban centers, but geographically the Southwest is considerably far ahead of the rest of the country.

Enough statistics. What is a typical rape case? Is there a typical rapist? The depiction we see in movies and books is generally that of the psychotic personality, probably overly attached to his mother and sexually repressed, or alternatively, the big rough drunken and/or dope crazed redneck/hippie. The actual case seems to be otherwise. Since more than half of all rapes occurring during dates, and since better than half of all males admit to having forced sexual advances (usually but not always short of rape) on a woman, this stereotyping doesn't stand up.

If we have to generalize, there seem to be two main types. The first is the male who participates in rape with one or more companions, possibly on a date, as an attempt to prove his virility and/or be one of the regular guys. The second is the solo date rapist who is either convinced that his desirability is such that the woman will not object, or who has convinced himself that women really want to be taken against their will, or consider it a normal part of a date, or who know that it is unlikely that the woman will file a complaint. Remember that the overwhelming majority of rapes are not reported, and the percentage for date rape may be over 90%. The solitary prowler for unattached females to prey upon exists, but he is a very small minority.

Why then the need (if that's the right word?) to rape? Partly because of the scarcity of good research on the subject, I'm on shaky grounds here, but the analysis provided by Brownmiller seems substantially correct. It boils down to the following points.

1. Men use rape as a method of group-bonding, i.e., in gang and pair rapes, the act of violence is designed to solidify the fellowship of the males involved.
2. Men view women as property, as in fact historically they were. The marriage price was paid to the father in return for the right to take the daughter's chastity. In many societies women were in fact the property of males in the most explicit sense of the word, and in virtually all women enjoy less rights than do men.

3. The act of rape is often used to bolster the individual's own sense of masculinity. A rapist was quoted in NEWSWEEK as saying: "The whole time I'm thinking that she expects me to have sex...I'd be a real wimp to let her get away."
4. Men use the act of rape to assert their own ability to exert power over women. Although Brownmiller does not explore this outside of rape, I think it is a subset of the general need to employ power over others. Males exert power over other males by beating them up; they exert power over females by raping them. Brownmiller seems to assume that these are two separate behaviors with two separate motivations, where I see them as differing manifestations of the same ever present xenophobia. The unacknowledged hatred that people feel for each other manifests itself in different forms.

There is no question, however, that rape is a particularly virulent expression of this hatred, and I do confess that there seems to be a particular viciousness in male-female dominance confrontations. It has always amazed me how frequently men will denigrate their wives or girlfriends in public, using brutally biological terms, even in front of casual acquaintances. How much of this is the desire to achieve peer approval and how much of it really masks deeprooted animosity is beyond my power to determine. I think the callousness of this was brought home to me most dramatically during a recent business luncheon (all male of course). The subject of conversation turned to nude beaches, during the course of which one married man summed up his opinion of women quite succinctly: "Take their clothes off and turn them upside down and they all look like sisters."

While I found Brownmiller's analysis of the motivation for rape to be quite convincing, I was disappointed in her discussion of the special qualities of rape trials. One of the reasons, in my estimation, that rape continues to be a largely unreported crime, and with a low success rate when it is reported, is the various special considerations that apply only to rape trials. In most cases, the media have a policy of not publishing the name of the victim, which automatically sets it apart from other assault cases. The purpose is to protect the victim, of course, since - in Brownmiller's words - "Rape is the only crime of violence in which a victim is expected or required to resist." There are other problems as well. The courts have ruled that the woman's sexual history is relevant to the case. The man's sexual history cannot be raised except during cross examination, and the accused rapist may not ever have to take the stand.

Naturally there are cases in which the sexual history of the victim may be relevant. If, for example, she has a history of reporting false rapes, it may be relevant in the case at hand, and the accused should certainly have the right to make that fact a part of his defense. On the other hand, if the male has a record of sex crimes, that is highly relevant to the case as well. The difficulty with prosecuting most rape cases is the lack of corroboration. Given our assumption before the law that the accused is innocent until proven guilty, it becomes very difficult for a jury to unanimously agree that a man should go to jail on the unsupported word of a single woman. Even assuming that only 2% of all reported rapes are false, no one wants to be responsible for sentencing an innocent man to prison.

The result of this and other factors is (1) reluctance of the victim to report the crime and allow the public to know what has happened to her (2) reluctance of the police to press for prosecution faced with the low conviction rate (3) severe emotional problems for the victim who agrees to take part in the trial and (4) a very low conviction rate since the very privateness of the crime makes it hard to

substantiate the facts. The conviction rate in rape cases brought to trial isn't all that different from the conviction rate on regular assault cases: the problem is getting to trial in the first place.

Before leaving Brownmiller, I must deal with some minor reservations I had.

1. 'Indeed, one of the earliest forms of male bonding must have been the gang rape of one woman by a band of marauding men.' Plausible certainly but offered with no supporting evidence.

2. At one point Brownmiller contends that Dean Allen Corll is not as well remembered as are other mass murderers because he attacked men, but Richard Speck, Charles Manson, Albert De Salvo, and Jack the Ripper all attacked women. Leaving aside the fact that Manson and his group (which included women) also killed men, we can also point to the Son of Sam and Zodiac murders, which numbered men among their victims, and which have not escaped modern memory. I grant that Jack the Ripper in particular has, as a legend, accumulated an overtly sexual mystique, but I suspect that is drawn largely from the fact that he was never caught and that he mutilated his victims as much as because they were female. Brownmiller's conclusions here seem to exceed the evidence.

3. She states that A CLOCKWORK ORANGE, book and movie, glorify Alex as a hero and quotes Kubrick to the effect that Alex is some kind of a noble savage. I can't comment on the Kubrick statement, lacking its context, but the movie certainly did not seem to me a glorification of Alex. I thought it portrayed him as a cheap, selfish punk who deserved very much everything he got, even though the State was revealed to be equally corrupt.

4. '(Rape) is a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.' I can't speak for all women, who may well be kept in a state of fear of all men by the possibility of rape. Nor can I speak for all men, many of whom may well consciously employ the possibility of rape as a means of intimidating females. But the statement as written is ridiculous. I can accept the possibility that unconsciously all men consider rape as a method of advancing their own personal power. I don't believe it, but I can consider it. The emphasis added, incidentally, is hers, not mine.

With all that behind us, let's now look at the Big Dan case. First two scenarios. The first is from the point of view of the victim, and is a generalized summary since the details of her story varied at times. She came to the tavern to meet another woman and while there had two drinks. Her friend left before she had finished the second one, so she was alone among about a dozen men. Some of the men made suggestive remarks and prevented her from leaving the bar. Eventually she was taken at knifepoint to the pool table where she was raped and forced to perform oral sex with from four to eight men. Meanwhile, the rest of the men in the bar either ignored the situation or applauded. Eventually she escaped and was discovered semi-naked by a passing motorist, who called the police. Most of the accused men were still in the bar when the police arrived.

Second scenario. This is, mind you, the best possible case from the point of view of the defendants. The woman was drinking alone in the bar and had had several drinks (physical examination indicated an alcohol content in her blood consistent with the consumption of at least eight cocktails). She began flirting with one of the defendants, asked him to take her home, eventually agreed to have oral sex with him for money. Three of the other men then got carried away, but since she

had egged them on, she deserved what she got. This, I repeat, was the story that was offered by the defense. Even if their version was true in every detail, three of the men were guilty of rape. The truth, one supposes, is somewhere in between.

Now comes the complicated part. All six of the men originally brought to trial are Portuguese immigrants. Four were subsequently convicted, two acquitted. Despite the fact that the victim was also Portuguese, as well as the prosecutor, half of the jury, and several of the investigating police officers, the convictions became a rallying point for the Portuguese immigrant community, resulting in mass marches, death threats, and so forth. Two thirds of the people where I work took the loss of a half day's pay to skip work and demonstrate. The defendants were viewed as heroes, hounded by an unfriendly press and Anglo bigots.

Although the immigrant community was the most vocal, a sampling of radio talk shows in the Providence area indicated most people thought the men should have been acquitted. The victim (as well as the prosecutor) has been forced to move out of the Fall River area. What was the rationale? Here are a few paraphrases:

1. If she had been home with her kids like she should have been, this never would have happened.
2. If a girl in Portugal had gone into a place like that, she would have been expecting that sort of thing.
3. She was asking for it and she got it. Why punish the boys?
4. If she had really wanted them to stop, she could have made them stop. None of them had any tooth marks. Why didn't she bite them?
5. The whole mess could have been avoided if they had just thrown some money on the bar for her afterward. The only reason she called the police is she expected to get paid and they held out on her.
6. She should be going to jail not them. What could the boys expect a girl like that would want?

I should mention that three of these six remarks came from women. A talk show host made the point that the victim may have shown bad judgment in going to that bar alone, but so does the person who carries \$1000 in cash and gets mugged. Do we pardon the robber in that case as well? A point that Brownmiller makes is that telling women to take elaborate precautions to avoid rape -- don't go to bars alone, don't list your first name in the phone book, don't hang your underwear out to dry, don't walk alone at night - may be well intentioned, but telling a woman she cannot do the things that a man takes for granted is not only unfair, it causes many of the same unpleasant psychological effects that rape does, even among those who have never been assaulted.

The prevalence of date rape compounds the situation. Even when the woman plays by the rules, she is vulnerable. She may carefully screen the men who court her, but she may still choose wrong. Women in this situation begin to worry that they cannot trust their own judgment about men any more, or even that they are somehow responsible for having provoked the attack.

While I am unwilling to wholeheartedly accept Brownmiller's analysis of the psychology of rape, much of it seems unavoidable. The incidence of rape is so high that it is inarguably a profound part of the human psychological makeup. I

am reminded of the short story "Death Therapy" by James Patrick Kelly. He contends that the urge to rape is so powerful that the only aversive conditioning that will deter a recurrence is for the rapist to experience traumatic death itself, after which he can be resurrected and released to society, a safe but utterly crushed personality.

Brownmiller's book had a significant impact on public consciousness about rape, but the subject still remains so taboo that I see no likelihood of a concerted effort to deal with the causes of the problem. Does this mean that we are resigned to accepting that, for the foreseeable future, nearly half the women born in this country will be raped?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### BYPASSING TIME AND SPACE WITH ISABELLA FIGFOLLER

Although lycanthropy was only a superstition on Earth, various forms of physical transformation were known among the intelligent species of the galaxy. At one point, in fact, Isabella Figfoller was serving as special emissary to the planet Fenris, whose vaguely humanoid inhabitants experienced a period in their lifecycle where they became considerably more vulpine and hirsute, and their normally diurnal life cycle became markedly nocturnal. The early stages of this transformation were frequently accompanied by temporary insanity, as their bodies went through hormonal cataclysm in an attempt to accommodate their new form. The change was strictly one way, however, a permanent change indicating old age.

Isabella was working with the Fenrian agricultural authorities because of an unfavorable mutation that had cropped up in their livestock. Certain animals began showing an affinity for certain metals. A strain of pigs had so much lead impregnated in their flesh that they were inedible. Although this was the most serious disorder, various other animals had acquired unpleasant tastes. There was, for example, an iron horse, an antimonial sheep, a golden duck -- which actually laid golden eggs, and similarly diverse aberrations.

Her chief contact was Doctor Vrast, who was detached from the Fenrian navy to head the project. He still wore his naval uniform, however, and Isabella could not refrain from thinking of him as a wolf in sheep's clothing. Their research involved genetic manipulation in order to reverse the mutation and purify the stock. Vrast favored a tiny alteration that would, over a period of generations, restore the normal genetic balance. Isabella, who wanted desperately to complete her assignment and transfer to a more pleasant world, favored a tailored virus that would selectively sterilize the mutated strains, allowing only the original stock to reproduce.

Although their disagreement frequently resulted in raised voices, there was one night when Vrast became violent. They were working alone in the breeding pens when he seemed to take disproportionate exception to a remark she made. When he swung his arm at her, she instinctively blocked it, noticing in the dim light a ridge of hair running across the back of his hand. Vrast was about to undergo the change.

She pushed him suddenly into the nearest stall and slammed the door. His eyes aflame, he turned on its occupant and attacked with teeth and claws. Moments later, he dropped to the floor, choking, and expired. With great regret, Isabella notified the authorities that Vrast had been killed by a silver pullet.

# BIZARRE EVENTS

## 1. FOUL PLAY

Some years ago, I was called upon to serve on a petit jury, an experience that quite honestly did a lot to restore my faith in the legal system. We sat on a number of civil suits, covering a period of from seven to fourteen years previously, which gives you an idea of the backlog in the judicial system. One of the most discouraging cases was the elderly gentleman whose suit against the city of Providence had finally come to trial after eight years, only to be dismissed out of hand when it turned out his lawyer had filed suit against the wrong city. So it goes.

Before picking a jury (by lot) from the pool of jurors, the judge gives a brief synopsis of the case, so that any potential juror who knows one or more of the principals or who is any other way biased can disqualify him or herself. The judge to which we were assigned was a crusty veteran who was quite obviously bored with the proceedings, although his frequent terse comments during the hearings made it clear he didn't miss a trick. One day we heard the case of three residents against the owner of a nearby chickenfarm.

It seems that the farmer had been adding various chemical supplements to his feed in order to improve the quality and quantity of his eggs. The waste products from the chicken coops were washed into a nearby stream, which meandered down through the property of the three residents. The chemical additives may have helped the chickens, but they killed off various trees, shrubs, and other vegetation downstream thereby lessening the value of the real estate. The owners of the latter were suing for damages.

When he had completed his recital, he put down his notes, removed his glasses, and ran his hand over his face and hair. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said at last.

During the forty years I've occupied this bench I've run into numerous cases that were too ridiculous for words. But this has got to be the first case I've ever been involved in where all of the parties will agree the case is chickenshit.

## 2. STRIKE THREE

Our son David is very uneasy about lightning, always has been. At first we thought he was kidding and didn't pay much attention to it. Later we decided to reason with him. I explained the astronomical odds against actually being struck, told him that if he took reasonable precautions he had nothing to worry about. But that kind of nervousness isn't dispelled by cool rationality.

I am reminded of my sole experience of being mortared while serving in Vietnam. We were in a fairly secure zone, so we knew that any attack of this nature was limited to no more than a couple of dozen shells before the Viet Cong would hare off into the jungle to evade helicopter gunships. As I crouched between two revetments, I calculated the kill ratio of a mortar round, divided it into the size of our compound, and figured the odds against getting hit at about one thousand to one. Guess what? It didn't help one damned bit. You're still half convinced that the next one is going to have your name on it and why did I ever get involved in this mess anyway.

One evening David and I were sitting at the supper table, discussing lightning, in the midst of a thunderstorm. No sooner had I restated my opinion about the unlikelihood of even being near a lightning strike than one of our pine trees was struck, showering sparks and severing a large limb. This did not help. Nor could I now say that the odds were enormous against him seeing two near strikes -- a few months later the same tree was struck again, this time running the length of its trunk, and killing it.

Months later yet, David arrived home from school and called Sheila at work to tell her that he had nearly been struck by lightning at school. Considering his unease, we tended to discount this until that evening, when David brought us down to the school. While David was crossing from one building to another, passing under an eighty foot willow, lightning had struck the tree, literally exploding it. Chunks of wood were all over the place. The same strike (or another) ricocheted through one of the classrooms, shattering nine windows. A separate strike on the far side of the school had singed several smaller trees. No one was hurt. And I have nothing further to say to anyone on the subject of lightning and its rarity.

### 3. IN UNION THERE IS STRENGTH

This time we need a little technical background first. One of the areas which reports to me on my job is the shipping department. Three of the men in this area are on an incentive plan, whereby the more they work, the more pay they get. These three are the order-picker, who selects merchandise from the warehouse to fill the customer's order, and the shippers, who pack the items in shipping cartons and send them down to the freight room. They are paid as follows:

1. They have a standard rate depending upon their longevity with the company, which runs from \$2.50 to \$3.00.
2. They get a bonus depending upon the number of pounds they pack per hour over the course of a week.
3. Since sometimes we have a lot of very small, light orders, they get a second bonus based on the number of orders per hour they pack per week.
4. In some cases, where customers have special packing instructions that slow them down, we provide a set bonus. A set bonus of 50 would mean that they get credit that week for 50 extra orders when their orders per hour are calculated.

Now some personalities. John is the order picker. He is not particularly well liked by the two shippers, Nelson and Frank. Although a lot of the tension is purely personal, part of it is because (1) John works harder and makes more money than they do, and (2) John is a lead person, that is, under some circumstances, he functions as the department supervisor. Nelson is the Union steward for the shipping department, another important point.

One day recently we received a very large order from a new account. The order specified special packing instructions. The shipping room supervisor referred it to me and I decided that the extra work was insufficient to merit the set bonus. An hour later he called again: the Union disagreed with me. I had a conversation with Nelson, who wanted a set bonus of 100. He showed me the problems they were having and I offered a bonus of 50 for the two shippers, but not for the order picker. They agreed.

An hour later I received another call. The order picker felt that he should be getting the bonus also. I met with him and the steward, Nelson, and told him that I would investigate and check back. An analysis of the way the accounting is done indicated, much to my surprise, that a slowdown of the shippers also impacted on

the order picker's pay, although the degree was impossible to determine precisely. So I calculated the maximum impact and found that giving the order picker the same 50 set bonus could not result in more than two dollars over the course of a week. For such a small amount of money, I wasn't going to argue the case so I informed John and the Union that the order picker would also get the bonus.

An hour later the Union requested another meeting. Puzzled, I met with Nelson who told me that the Union was going to file a grievance because I was paying John. "Wait a minute," I said. "You are going to grieve because I'm paying too much?" When he assured me that I had understood correctly, I called and set up an appointment with the personnel manager. This had become too complicated to settle casually.

After several unsuccessful attempts to explain to Nelson how mathematically there was an effect on John's pay, I threw up my hands in exasperation. "Nelson, you're saying that if we pay John, the Union will file a grievance on your request, and if we don't pay John, the Union will file a grievance on his request. What do you expect us to do?" The personnel manager did me one better. "Nelson, if we don't pay John and he files a grievance, you're his Union representative. You'll have to come to us and tell us to pay him, and we'll say okay, and pay him. Then you are going to file a grievance yourself, and come to us and tell us not to pay John, and we're going to say, but you told us to."

"That's right," he insisted. "John shouldn't get any money because we have to do more work."

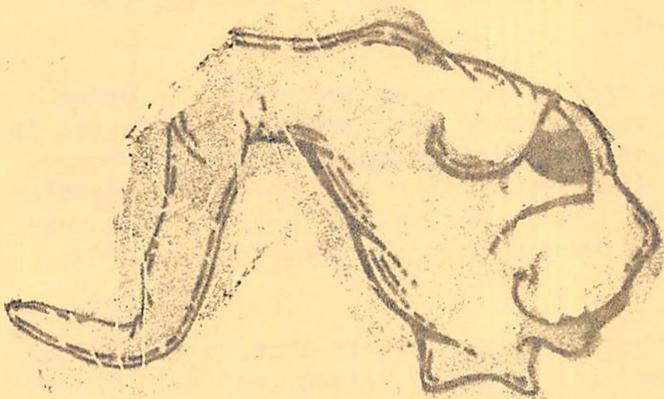
"Look, Nelson," we suggested at last. "How do you think you should be paid for the job?"

"Day rate." Day rate is yet another pay scale, used when there is no incentive work for them to do.

"But Nelson," I said. "If we pay you day rate, all three of you will lose about twenty dollars each."

"That's all right. At least it'll be fair."

So we agreed to pay them day rate, and Nelson and Frank lost approximately sixteen dollars each and John lost nine dollars. And I remain very, very confused.



# PLAYING WITH YOURSELF

The first installment of this column dealt with science fiction and fantasy games. That was only appropriate, considering that this is, more or less, a science fiction fanzine. But although SF is probably the single largest thematic area within home video games, it is far from the only one. This time I'm going to look at what else is available.

**COMBAT GAMES:** A lot of the SF games are really combat games too. After all, it doesn't matter to gameplay whether the targets are alien ships, hamburgers, or tanks.

Atari has the most titles in this area - indeed they have the most titles in every area. COMBAT was originally packaged with the game; I think it's PACMAN now. A very basic cartridge, COMBAT allows two players with tanks to fire at each other over a variety of landscapes, with and without ricochet. It's very boring when compared to the new generation of games. AIR SEA COMBAT has a similar drawback, but is still engaging despite its crudity. There are a number of scenarios in which stationary or moving artillery pieces fire at targets which traverse the upper part of the screen. Alternatively, they might be ships and the cannons replaced by submarines, but the effect is the same.

In CANYON BOMBER, your plane traverses a valley full of multicolored bricks. The goal is to drop bombs to detonate the bricks and clean out the valley. Although pretty, this one loses its novelty fast. TANKS BUT NO TANKS is so primitive a game, we played it only twice before filing it. SUP COMMANDER isn't much better; it's an unimaginative surface and shoot at targets game far surpassed by other cartridges. CHOPPER COMMAND is a variant of the SF game, DEFENDER, with your helicopter traversing left and right across a multiscreen landscape, attempting to destroy all attackers before your convoy of trucks is destroyed. If you have DEFENDER, you don't need this.

ARTILLERY DUEL is considerably better, although the graphics aren't all that hot. You and an opponent trade shots at each other over varied landscapes, correcting for distance, windage, and intervening obstacles. It plays quite well for such a simple game. CHUCK NORRIS is a martial arts combat cartridge with your protagonist fighting a series of Oriental assassins by a combination of jumps, kicks, and slashes. The only problem with it is that once you have reached the inner fortress, there is no further challenge to the game. A recent title, ROBOT TANK, is quite good. You face out the front of your tank, armed with sighting equipment, radar, and a one hundred percent destructive gun, but your computer controlled opponents move quickly and randomly. In addition to clear terrain, you may be faced with night battle, rain, fog, or snow. Very playable and with fine graphics.

My favorite combat game is easily RIVER RAID, and better variations are available for the other systems. You pilot a plane down a river, firing at ships, other aircraft, bridges, etc., periodically stopping for fuel. Unless you are an incredibly good player, you'll never penetrate far enough that the landscapes begin to repeat.

INTELLIVISION, as usual, has fewer but better games. ARMOR BATTLE is a vastly improved version of COMBAT, with each player guiding two tanks across more realistic terrain. SUB HUNT is a one player game, in which you must pilot your submarine to intercept attacking convoys, decide method of attack, direction, etc. The perspectives of the approaching targets is particularly well done. SEA BATTLE is the best combat game for any system. Two players each control fleets of ships with varying abilities through an island studded sea, laying mines, launching torpedoes, firing guns, etc. Strategy as well as tactics is important. P17 BOMBER is a complex but highly playable game in which you pilot a bomber from England to Europe, using various instruments to measure damage, spot targets, fight off fighter planes, etc. This is playable with or without the Intellivoice attachment, but is better with it. MISSION X is a disappointing bombing game, which becomes quite repetitive and uninteresting.

Colecovision is still sparse in this, as in other, categories. FRONTLINE features a figure who must use pistol fire and hand grenades to avoid infantry, tanks, and gun emplacements as he travels up the screen. LOOPING is a bizarre sort of game, during which you must first traverse a city, avoiding ascending balloons that try to ram your aircraft, then pass through a narrow lip into a playing field of pipes. If you navigate your way through this maze, there are still more menaces to contend with.

SPORTS: I'm going to change formats here and discuss each major sport as it is offered for each system. Baseball has been offered in two variations for Atari. HOME RUN is almost painfully silly, with three stick figures for fielders with no independent movement. Their new Realsports version is much better, but is still a poor imitation of the Intellivision BASEBALL. This cartridge allows you to move each of nine players, make realistic plays, etc. Even more realistic is the Colecovision baseball game (packaged with their super action controllers) but which is so complex I found it unplayable, although David says it's quite good if you stick with it long enough.

Football is my favorite sport, but it has not done well for video games. The original Atari game has the same format as the baseball game and, frankly, stinks. I have not seen their Realsports version. Intellivision is much better, allowing a variety of plays, but if you play conservative defense, it is almost impossible for the other player to score and the game becomes quite boring.

Boxing for Atari is a view from directly above the fighters. Although pretty good, it is very, very wearing and the loser is usually the player whose hand becomes sore soonest. Intellivision's version is far better, a side view, with choice of boxer attributes. Bowling is almost a push. Atari's is simpler and easier to learn; Intellivision allows many more variables, but they don't have much effect on game play. Basketball for Atari is stilted and unnatural. Intellivision's BASKETBALL is one of the best sports cartridges, allowing many of the actual strategies used on the court.

Atari offers a number of sports not available to other systems. Intellivision does have golf and hockey, but I have not seen them. Atari has regular golf, which is quite boring, and ARCADE GOLF, set in nine abstract playfields, which is actually a far better game. They also offer a very difficult to play SOCCER. AND a very boring VOLLEYBALL. FISHING DERBY is rather fun for a while, but soon loses its novelty. SKIING (also available for Intellivision) is pretty good, offering a variety of courses as you race down trying to break your record time. VIDEO OLYMPICS is a series of abstract Pong games, variations of the very first

videogames, with paddles sliding back and forth to intersect and deflect the course of a moving blip. TENNIS, as offered by Activision, is extremely good, a simple but well animated game.

RACING GAMES: Atari's INDY 500 isn't a bad game, but it takes a special set of controllers used for no other cartridge. SLOT RACERS is a maze game with two poorly drawn vehicles wandering about, firing at one another. This is pretty good despite the poor graphics. STREET RACER is another so primitive that it is now unplayable. DRAGSTER is primarily a game of gear shifting, and is very boring, as is STEEPLECHASE, which is pretty much what it's name implies.

Intellivision has two excellent racing games. AUTO RACING allows a variety of courses, interaction between the two racers, and good controlling. MOTORCROSS is even better, featuring motorcycles, jumps, and sharp curves, and also allows you to design your own course. The only Colecovision racing game I have seen is PIT STOP, which is mild fun, but becomes very monotonous after a few plays.

TARGET SHOOTING: There is a target shoot variation on AIR SEA BATTLE, but this is a category that doesn't do well. DEMONS TO DIAMONDS was remaindered almost as soon as it appeared, and I never bothered to pick it up. OUTLAW is a wild variant, with the target your opponent's figure. This is probably a combat game rather than a target game, but I had to talk about something here. There is also a very mediocre game called GANGSTER ALLEY, in which you shoot at villains as they appear in windows, while avoiding shooting at innocent faces.

Colecovision offers two good target games. CARNIVAL is almost archetypal, as you shoot a variety of moving targets for bonuses and penalties. SLITHER, a variation of CENTIPEDE, allows you to battle writhing snakes, flying dinosaurs, and vultures. SLITHER comes with the rollerball controller and is quite good.

#### MAZES AND LADDERS, SCROLLING AND JUMPING

Atari's PACMAN falls in this category, a game I quickly found silly. A more interesting game was DODGE 'EM, wherein you pilot a car through a maze, avoiding suicidal vehicles intent upon ramming you. Atari also offered MAZE CRAZE, which features abstract mazes with many variations but none very interesting. LONDON BLITZ is also available, a combination of mazes and puzzles as you attempt to locate and disarm live bombs.

A variation of this is the adventure games, many of which are quite good. PITFALL requires you to move your character through a jungle of mazes and tunnels, and to avoid disappearing pits, scorpions, snakes, alligators, and the like. In KEYSTONE KAPERS, another fine game, you pursue a criminal through a department store, ascending and descending by means of elevators and escalators, at the same time avoiding various rolling, bouncing, and flying objects. Somewhat similar is STAMPEDE. Your cowpoke must move up and down the left hand side of the screen, lassoing a number of cattle whom he is overtaking before they slip past him and out of sight.

Yet another variation is the quest to move from bottom to top of screen across a series of moving objects. You must jump a frog from log to log in FROGGER, the best known. Personally I prefer FREEWAY in which you must steer a duck across several lanes of traffic. Inferior forms of these games can also be found in PIKE'S PEAK, AIRLOCK, and KABOOM, a popular cartridge that I quickly found to have worn out its welcome.

This is another area where Intellivision is very poorly represented. NIGHT STALKER is a shooting-in-the-maze game of no particular merit. LOCOMOTIVE is rather more fun. You control a series of track sections which you continuously move in order to present a continuous track to a locomotive.

Colecovision has many of the better known ladder games. DONKEY KONG and DONKEY KONG JR are obviously the best known, although I found both to be rather silly. POPPYE is a bit better. You must guide him through a series of ladders, jumps, balloon lifts, etc., avoiding Bluto and other menaces, and capturing hearts dropped by Olive Oil. Far better are LADYBUG and MOUSETRAP. In each of these cases, you must negotiate your way through a maze, gaining points for each object you pass over, and missing menacing insects, birds, dogs, etc. In each case you can as well open and close doors in the maze to facilitate your own escape and impede the progress of your pursuers.

#### BOARDGAMES

As usual, Atari offers the greatest variety of board games. CHESS has truly lousy graphics, but once you pass the lower difficulty levels, game play is so slow that you're probably going to read between computer moves anyway. CHECKERS is not only faster, it has better graphics. OTHELLO is a perfect adaptation of the game, and offers solo or two player games. BRIDGE (for one) suffers some limitations, but does offer some interesting gameplay. BACKGAMMON plays well, but the graphics are nothing special. VIDEO PINBALL suffers because there is only one screen, and it is too simple to sustain interest.

Not really board games, but in the same general category are TRICK SHOT, a pool game which I continue to enjoy but which was apparently not very popular, SLOT MACHINE, just as boring as the real thing, CASINO, which offers Poker and Blackjack, BRAIN GAMES, a series of very rudimentary memory games, CODEBREAKER, no real visual effects but a fair adaptation of the game Mastermind, HUNT AND SCORE (also called A GAME OF CONCENTRATION, based on the TV show), and HANGMAN, which is just what you would expect it to be. THREE DIMENSIONAL TIC TAC TOE doesn't work very well. SURROUND offers two players the opportunity to corral each other as their respective cursors move about the screen, laying an impenetrable trail behind them.

Intellivision has fewer but better games. ROYAL DEALER offers Hearts, Rummy, Gin Rummy, and Crazy Eights. REVERSI is OTHELLO, but with more game variations. SNAFU is a more complex and interesting version of SURROUND. ROULETTE is a loyal but dull interpretation of casino gambling. HORSE RACING concentrates on handicapping and betting rather than manipulating the horses, and ends up being a far more interesting game than I had expected.

#### MISCELLANEOUS GAMES:

One of the early hits from Atari was BREAKOUT, followed later by SUPERBREAKOUT. In each case you bounce a blip at a wall of multi-colored bricks, getting points for each one you strike. Both cartridges are good, as is FIPBALL (available only with the Supercharger, which I'll discuss next time). A variation of this is CIRCUS, wherein you move seesaws under bouncing clowns to send them up to pop rows of balloons. Another fine cartridge that probably should have been mentioned under racing is NIGHT DRIVER. The effect of travelling down a poorly lit highway is quite well done considering the limitations of the Atari 2600 system. Minor cartridges which you would be best of avoiding include SNEAK 'N' PEAK, FIRE FIGHTER, FLAG CAPTURE, HUMAN CANNONBALL, and the abysmal BASIC PROGRAMMING.

Finally, we have two odd cartridges for Intellivision. SHARK SWARM is an under water contest. Each player starts with a small fish, and must consume others of equal or lesser size until his fish grows. At the same time you must avoid sharks, jellyfish, crabs, and larger fishes. TRIPLE ACTION offers three disparate games, a car race, a simple tank battle, and an air combat game. Only the lattermost is particularly interesting.

The recommended cartridges this time then are:

Atari: RIVER RAID, TENNIS, KEYSTONE KAPERS, PITFALL, STAMPEDE, FREeway, CHECKERS, OSMELLO

Intellivision: ARMOR BATTLE, B17 BOMBER, SUB HUNT, SEA BATTLE, PASFBALL, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, BOXING, AUTO RACING, MOTORCROSS, SNAFU, REVERSI

Colecovision: POPEYE, LADYBUG, MOUSETRAP, LOOPING, SLITHER, CARNIVAL

Next time I'll discuss the hardware briefly, different types of controllers, and the relative merits of the software companies. And I'll almost certainly have invested in more cartridges by then as well.

\* \* \* \* \*

## GHASTLY TALES

There were several requests that I supply publication information when this feature appeared last time, so retroactively, here are the books that were sampled last issue. PLANET THA and PRF-GARGANTUA, both by Neil Charles, were both released by Curtis Books in the United Kingdom around 1953. MOONSPIN by Elmer Carpenter was published by Flagship Books in 1967. MARS 5 by Hugh Brown appeared from Westsonian Press in 1976 and DEMON SAMURAI by Clay Grant in 1978. GALACTIC ARENA by Christopher Dane was brought to us in 1981 courtesy of Carousel Books, America's answer to Badger Books of England. They will be featured again this issue.

BOHACK: SYMBIOTIC WORLDS by L.L. Lineham, Carousel Books, 1982

This is a novel of planetary ecology and wondrous maneuverings in space as...but how could I say it better than the author himself: They had come riding through space on the planet Pomial, turned loose from that planet's orbit when the gaseous globe Fira-E began its final heat mold toward disintegration.

They find a new star: The Old ones had docked their planet in orbit around Hacksolm-II. Thus, the two planets, if really comparatively equal in size, were made a moon of each other, turning about each other like gears of a machine, the cogs of those gears being the interlocking atmospheres of the two planets.

Naturally, the Old ones re-engineered the ecology of each world:

Because of the old ones, there was now the Deity Geyser, erupting maxo-lictic gas to the atmosphere once a tireum during the Mysolian Thaw, mingling with the gas rysicnide exuded by the Millinum Ponds on Borial, the mixture forming the breathable atmosphere for both planets.

Put all is not right. Disturbances in the ecological balance result in social upheaval and unrest.

The din of the multitudes, heard as it was from the main chamber, was a dull roar, its volume really not appreciated until considering that the chamber was soundproof under all normal circumstances.

Not that the Aristocrats had been made completely helpless by the circumstances which had made the Xxlxx-IVB suddenly an unfeasible weapon. They still had their maxo-zaps.

SPACE VOID by John Muller (Robert Lionel Fanthorpe), Padger Books, circa 1953

Our intrepid heroes are returning from an expedition to the planet Venus: 'During that time, they had all been...crushed by a gravity beyond all previous experience.'

'Seen from the point of view of the sun, we were travelling too slowly to stay in the Earth's orbit.'

'Isn't it true that a person, who is quite normal outwardly, can carry recessive genes -- and later pass them on?'

THE BLUE SATELLITE by Varco Statten (probably John Russell Fearn), Scion Books, early 1950's

Mercury has inexplicably disappeared. Scientists ponder: 'Worlds die...It just happened. I can't see any other explanation.'

The terror spreads: 'Word has been received from the world's observatories that the Moon is in a state of advanced disintegration and might at any moment break up. Take cover.'

A cause for the spreading catastrophe is sought for by the world's scientific community. 'Now isn't it just possible that an internal change might occur in a planet which from some reason causes the planet to change color? And later, if things mutate, why not planets? Why not indeed.'

The latter proves to be the case. 'I myself and several other scientists recently arrived at a similar conclusion...Now that you, a layman, have also made the discovery unaided, it bears us out. How's that again?'

A final lesson in science before we leave this adventure:

The Earth is spinning round rapidly and generates its own electricity -- as most people with a scientific turn of mind already know.

BEYOND THE 13TH SUN by Mark Walden, Carousel Books, 1981

The woman's voice was an evil purr. She smiled, her scarlet lips curving upward sardonically in an obscene parody of birth.

Thank Monan's blood for his crewdroids' thought the Duke.

"We spend much of our lives in another dimension entirely.

These two pirates, menacing as they were, struck him as an annoying waste of time. Nevertheless, he thought with a sigh here they were and he was the one who had to deal with them.

**TW SKYSCRAPER DOOM** by Normal Fierold, Arbor House, 1972

The world is shaken by a sudden threat: the top stories of skyscrapers are beginning to melt.

"I can't believe it... This is structural material turned liquid. It should be boiling hot, but it isn't. It's cool.

"Something weird is happening to the chemical composition of the TV tower.

Does this phenomenon, as you call it, have anything to do with the new World Trade Center?

Naturally, scientists are called in. When we first started analyzing this liquid, we were puzzled, because we seemed to have a hybrid on our hands, a liquid metal that had certain characteristics of iron, but not others; certain characteristics of silver and copper, but not others, and so on. We also measured a high amount of evaporation. This should make for a very dense liquid.

Eventually the source of the menace is discovered. I had made contact with life at the earth's core, where the trouble is coming from.



'Friends. Another outmoded form. A box on relatives and friends and their ilk in toto.'

We eventually learn that the problem is that the tall buildings we are creating exert too much pressure on the Earth's shell and it is becoming increasingly uncomfortable for those in the center. Right.

EUCOBIS IN FADE by W. Lambert III, Carousel Books, 1981

'He would cross white Kalama sand when the door swung open. Although, knowing it was white Kalama sand was really no big deal! They always used white sand in the arena, having ventured from that policy only once in the past, during the period wherein Generals Theis and Fin were corresponding rulers of the Major Zones. The white had a nice way of contrasting with the brilliant red of Quasinic blood, giving a clash of color and an absence of color, together which made for an immediate registering on the senses.'

So, in the last days of Epoch 294, no doubt brought about mainly by riots and a computer read out that warned the present consumption of bodies via slaughter would soon see recruitment and volunteers inadequate supply to meet the projected demand, the white Kalama sand was brought back to assure proper contrast.

'There should have been more guards. There had certainly been guards before. There were now none. There had been many at one time...So, where were the guards now? Garil could only sense their presence. Or, perhaps, he only sensed what had once been. For the guards, if there had really ever been guards, were now merely ghostly rists that existed around him.'

'He was tempted to spit a blob of blood and phlegm to Tosol's ugly face but was prudently decided against it by a renewal of realization regarding the extreme precariousness of his situation.'

'Besides the octo-operation which had removed Finger's voice box, allowing him to speak only programmed words via audio-interfazzation, besides the drugs which had left him far less coordinated than he might have been, a sin-sinto guidance plate had been inserted inside his brain.'

'He, also, knew that the upper body of the alien was a massive display of scalloped muscles encased within a dark coating of skin that looked as solid as rock but sliced as easily as gel beneath the blade of any sword put to it. Flesh would split to ooze a pale green slime that was striated with purple. The mutant wal's waist was narrow, socketed so that the upper torso could make one complete, three-hundred-and-sixty degree turn before the torquing of the skin necessitated an unwind from either the top or the bottom. Bottom being a tree-like structure whose root system was really some thirty-two tentacle legs that might have done considerable damage to an opponent had they been able to function as defensive weaponry instead of mere implementers of locomotion.'

'There was only the continual fading. So much fading, from the beginning of the dreaming up to this particular part of the repeat, that he was now unable to remember just what there was which had been before it.'

Oh, perhaps NOTHING was a misnomer, in that there had been SOMETHING there, even if that something was merely a sense of what had once been at some other time other times, in the past. Just as there was the unmistakable sense of his really not being alone here now.

# The Dons

A couple of people last time commented on the list of Basic Books that they would rather have seen what I thought were the 100 best books. Well, this is as close as I am likely to come to that. The following are lists of each year's four best science fiction novels, in descending order. In other words, the ones I think should have been on the Hugo ballot. For most years I have also listed the best fantasy novel (F) and the best horror novel (H). All definitions are mine.

1982 CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH ---- Gene Wolfe  
NO ENEMY BUT TIME --- Michael Bishop  
FALL OF THE SWELL --- Paul Williams  
THE SMARKOUT BOYS AND THE AVOCADO OF DOOM - D. Manus Pinkwater  
THE BEAST - Robert Stallman (F)  
FIVRE DREAM --- George R.R. Martin (H)

1981 PRIDE OF CHANUR - C.J. Cherryh  
THE BREAKING OF NORTHWALL - Paul Williams  
CLAW OF THE CONCILIATOR - Gene Wolfe  
DOWNBELLY STATION - C.J. Cherryh  
THE CAPTIVE ---- Robert Stallman (F)  
THE VAMPIRE TAPESTRY - Suzy McKee Charnas (H)

1980 SHADOW OF THE TORTURER - Gene Wolfe  
GOLEM 100 - Alfred Bester  
THE SNOW QUEEN - Joan Vinge  
FIRESTARTER - Stephen King  
THE ORPHAN - Robert Stallman (F)  
BLOOD GAMES - Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (H)

1979 ON WINGS OF SONG - Thomas Disch  
THE ROAD TO CORLAY - Richard Cowper  
DARK IS THE SUN - Philip Jose Farmer  
THE TRIAL OF ADOLF HITLER - Phillippe Van Rijnst  
DEATH'S MASTER - Tanith Lee (F)  
GHOST STORY - Peter Straub (H)

1978 THE STAND - Stephen King  
BLIND VOICES - Tom Reamy  
THE RUINS OF ISIS - Marion Zimmer Bradley  
DEATHBEAST - David Gerrold  
GLORIANA - Michael Moorcock (F)  
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA - Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (H)

1977 DYING OF THE LIGHT - George R.R. Martin  
GATHWAY - Fred Pohl  
TIMESTORM - Gordon Dickson  
DRINKING SAPPHIRE WINE - Tanith Lee  
THE ILLFARTY WAR - Stephen Donaldson (F)  
THE SHINING - Stephen King (H)

- 1976 FLOATING WORLDS - Ceceilia Holland  
 SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE - Robert Silverberg  
 THE MALACIA TAPESTRY - Brian Aldiss  
 CLONED LIVES - Pamela Sargent  
 CAREER OF CULDI - Katherine Kurtz (F)  
 MAGIC - William Goldman (H)
- 1975 A FUNERAL FOR THE EYES OF FIRE - Michael Bishop  
 THE STOCHASTIC MAN - Robert Silverberg  
 THE BIRTHINGRAVE - Tanith Lee  
 BLAKE'S PROGRESS - Ray Nelson  
 THE GREY KING - Susan Cooper (F)  
 SALFINS' LOT - Stephen King (H)
- 1974 THE GODWHALE - T.J. Bass  
 RINGS OF ICE - Piers Anthony  
 THE NOTE IN GOD'S EYE - Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle  
 THE DISPOSSESSED - Ursula LeGuin  
 FORGOTTEN BEASTS OF FLD - Patricia McKillip (F)  
 THE SEARCH FOR JOSEPH TULLY - William Hallahan (H)
- 1973 TRULLION ALASTOR 2262 - Jack Vance  
 THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF - David Gerrold  
 RENDEZVOUS WITH PAMA - Arthur C. Clarke  
 HEROVIT'S WORLD - Barry Malzberg  
 THE PRINCESS BRIDE - William Goldman (F)  
 THE NIGHT STALKER - Jeff Rice (H)
- 1972 DYING INSIDE - Robert Silverberg  
 WHEN HARLIE WAS ONE - David Gerrold  
 BEYOND APOLLO - Barry Malzberg  
 334 - Thomas Disch  
 DERYNI CHOCOLATE - Katherine Kurtz (F)
- 1971 HALF PAST HUMAN - T.J. Bass  
 THE TACTICS OF MISTAKE - Gordon Dickson  
 THE FALLING ASTRONAUTS - Barry Malzberg  
 REDUCTION IN ARMS - Tom Purdon  
 GRENDEL - John Gardner (F)
- 1970 RINGWORLD - Larry Niven  
 THE STEEL CROCODILE - D.G. Compton  
 TOWER OF GLASS - Robert Silverberg  
 YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN - Wilson Tucker  
 THE CRYSTAL CAVE - Gary Stewart (F)  
 DAY AFTER JUDGMENT - James Blish (H)
- 1969 BUG JACK PARRON - Norman Spinrad  
 FOURTH MANSIONS - R.A. Lafferty  
 SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5 - Kurt Vonnegut  
 NIGHTWINGS - Robert Silverberg  
 ISLAND UNDER THE EARTH - Avram Davidson (F)  
 THE REVENGE OF INCREASE SIVALL - Heinrich Graat (H)
- 1968 STAND ON ZANEFIR - John Brunner

- A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING TEXAS - Fritz Leiber  
 RITE OF PASSAGE - Alexei Panshin  
 THE RING OF RITORNEL - Charles Harness  
 THE LAST UNICORN - Peter Beagle (F)
- 1967 THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION - Samuel Delany  
 LORD OF LIGHT - Roger Zelazny  
 CHTHON - Piers Anthony  
 SOLDIER ASK NOT - Gordon Dickson  
 GOG - Andrew Sinclair (F)  
 BLACK EASTER - James Blish (E)
- 1966 PABEL 17 - Samuel Delany  
 THE WITCHES OF KARRIS - James Schmitz  
 FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON - Daniel Keyes  
 MAKE ROOM MAKE ROOM - Harry Harrison  
 GILES GOAT BOY - John Barth (F)
- 1965 DUNE - Frank Herbert  
 THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS - Robert Heinlein  
 THIS IMMORTAL - Roger Zelazny  
 SQUARES OF THE CITY - John Brunner  
 THE WEIRWOODS - Thomas Burnett Swann (F)  
 PROGENY OF THE ADDER - Leslie Whitten (E)
- 1964 DAVY - Edgar Panboorn  
 CRYSTAL WORLD - J.G. Ballard  
 THE WHOLE MAN - John Brunner  
 STAR FOX - Poul Anderson  
 DAY OF THE MINOTAUR - Thomas Burnett Swann (E)
- 1963 CAP'S CRADLE - Kurt Vonnegut  
 GAMEPLAYERS OF TITAN - Philip Dick  
 MARTIAN TIMESLIP - Philip Dick  
 WAY STATION - Clifford Simak  
 WITCH WORLD - Andre Norton (E)
- 1962 THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE - Philip Dick  
 JEWELS OF APTOR - Samuel Delany  
 THE GIRL, THE GOLD WATCH, AND EVERYTHING - John D. MacDonald  
 LITTLE FUZZY - L. Beam Piper  
 SYIVA - Vercors (F)  
 SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES - Fay Bradbury (E)
- 1961 THE LONG AFTERNOON OF EARTH - Brian Aldiss  
 DARK UNIVERSE - Daniel Galouye  
 A FALL OF MOONDUST - Arthur C. Clarke  
 STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND - Robert Heinlein  
 THE PHANTOM TOLLFOOT - Justin Norton (E)  
 SOME OF YOUR BLOOD - Theodore Sturgeon (E)
- 1960 ROGUE MOON - Algis Budrys  
 VENUS PLUS X - Theodore Sturgeon  
 THE STATUS CIVILIZATION - Robert Shackley  
 STORM OVER WARLOCK - Andre Norton  
 A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE - Peter Beagle (F)

- 1959 A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ - Walter Miller  
 THE SIRENS OF TITAN - Kurt Vonnegut  
 THE GENETIC GENERAL - Gordon Dickson  
 STARSHIP - Brian Aldiss  
 THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE - Shirley Jackson (E)
- 1958 THE SILVER EGGHEADS - Fritz Leiber  
 THE LINCOLN HUNTERS - Wilson Tucker  
 COSMIC RAPT - Theodore Sturgeon  
 IMMORTALITY INC - Robert Sheckley
- 1957 THE DEEP RANGE - Arthur C. Clarke  
 WASP - Eric Frank Russell  
 THE GREEN ODYSSEY - Philip Jose Farmer  
 THE BLACK CLOUD - Fred Hoyle  
 FIRE BURN - John Dickson Carr (F)
- 1956 THE STARS MY DESTINATION - Alfred Bester  
 DOUBLE STAR - Robert Heinlein  
 THE DOOR INTO SUMMER - Robert Heinlein  
 NERVES - Lester Del Rey  
 FEAR IS THE SAME - John Dickson Carr (F)
- 1955 PERIRTE - John Wyndham  
 UNDER PRESSURE - Frank Herbert  
 TUNNEL IN THE SKY - Robert Heinlein  
 GLADIATOR AT LAW - Fred Pohl & C.M. Kornbluth  
 RETURN OF THE KING - J.R.R. Tolkien (F)  
 THE QUIET SPIRIT - Marguerite Steen (E)
- 1954 A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS - Edgar Pangborn  
 MESSIAH - Gore Vidal  
 CAVES OF STEEL - Isaac Asimov  
 THE STAR DEAST - Robert Heinlein  
 FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING - J.R.R. Tolkien (F)
- 1953 MORE THAN HUMAN - Theodore Sturgeon  
 A CASE OF CONSCIENCE - James Blish  
 CHILDHOOD'S END - Arthur C. Clarke  
 YOU SHALL KNOW THEM - Vercors  
 PALM WINE DRUNKARD - Amos Tutuola (F)  
 THE DOLMAKER - Sarban (E)
- 1952 LIMBO - Bernard Wolfe  
 THE SECRET MASTERS - Gerald Kersh  
 UTOPIA 14 - Kurt Vonnegut  
 BRING THE JUBILEE - Ward Moore
- 1951 THE DEMOLISHED MAN - Alfred Bester  
 DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS - John Wyndham  
 THE PUPPET MASTERS - Robert Heinlein  
 TIME AND AGAIN - Clifford Simak  
 THE DEVIL IN VELVET - John Dickson Carr (F)  
 RINGSTONTS - Sarban (E)

- 1950 THE SYNTHETIC MAN - Theodore Sturgeon  
 GATHER DARKNESS - Fritz Leiber  
 THE HAND OF ZEI - L. Sprague de Camp  
 THE STARS LIKE DUST - Isaac Asimov  
 THE DYING EARTH - Jack Vance (F)
- 1949 1984 - George Orwell  
 NEEDLE - Hal Clement  
 EARTH ABIDES - George Stewart  
 WHAT MAD UNIVERSE - Fred Brown  
 FARMER GILES OF HAM - J.R.R. Tolkien (F)
- 1948 AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT - Arthur C. Clarke  
 THE HUMANOIDS - Jack Williamson  
 DREADFUL SANCTUARY - Eric Frank Russell
- 1947 GREENER THAN YOU THINK - Ward Moore  
 FURY - Henry Kuttner
- 1946 OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET - C.S. Lewis  
 ANIMAL FARM - George Orwell
- 1945 THE WORLD OF NULLA - A.E. van Vogt  
 HERCULES MY SHIPMATE - Robert Graves (F)  
 WITCH HOUSE - Evangeline Walton (H)
- 1944 RENAISSANCE - Raymond Jones  
 PERILANDRA - C.S. Lewis (F)
- 1943 Nothing
- 1942 BEYOND THIS HORIZON - Robert Heinlein
- 1941 METHUSELAN'S CHILDREN - Robert Heinlein  
 LAND OF UNREASON - L. Sprague de Camp (F)
- 1940 FINAL BLACKOUT - L. Ron Hubbard  
 THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER - L. Sprague de Camp & Fletcher Pratt (F)
- 1939 SLAM - A.E. van Vogt  
 SINISTER BARRIER - Eric Frank Russell  
 LOST DARKNESS FALL - L. Sprague de Camp (F)  
 THE QUIET CORPSE - William Sloane (H)
- 1930's Honorable Mentions: THE FACE IN THE ABYSS - A. Merritt (F)  
 WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE - Philip Hylie & Edwin Balmer  
 BRAVE NEW WORLD - Aldous Huxley  
 DUTTLERS IN THE MIRAGE - A. Merritt (F)  
 TRENCH OF PARIS - Guy Endore (H)  
 THE SHIP OF ISHTAR - A. Merritt (F)  
 COME THE CONQUEROR - Robert Howard (F)  
 IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE - Sinclair Lewis  
 WAR WITH THE MERTS - Karel Capek  
 ISLAND OF THE MIGHTY - Evangeline Walton (F)

Honorable Mentions even earlier: THE WORM OUBOROS - F. R. Edgison, THE  
 UPLAND - Max Brand, CITADEL OF FEAR - Francis Stevens, THE MOON POOL - A. Merritt,  
 OM - Talbot Mundy, TROS OF SAMOTHRACE - Talbot Mundy, THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND  
 by William Hope Hodgson, WAR OF THE WORLDS and THE TIME MACHINE by H.G. Wells,  
 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA and JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH by Jules  
 Verne, and THE GREATEST ADVENTURE - John Taine.

# CRITICAL MASS

Wherein we continue to look at some of the short story writers of the genre.

## JAMES PATRICK KELLY

Although his first novel will probably be appearing at approximately the same time as this issue, James Patrick Kelly has been for nearly ten years one of the more interesting short story writers. Although his first story, 'Dea Ex Machina', was a funny but trivial story of a real goddess rattling a human bureau specializing in the control of deities, it was soon followed by 'Death Therapy', a totally different and far more serious story. Scientists experiment with inflicting a convicted rapist with an actual death experience to cause aversive conditioning to the act of rape, convinced that this is the only negative reinforcement powerful enough to overcome the sex drive.

Ethical questions arise again in 'Not To the Swift'. An aging man participates in painful memory recall experiments in order to carry his weight in the community. As with 'Death Therapy', Kelly presents the ethical question in a credible setting, in such fashion that we are forced to examine both sides of the issue. An even better story is 'Home Neuter'. A lonely mutant spends years looking for another of his type, finally locates a young boy, but his own lack of emotional involvement poisons their relationship. This is one of Kelly's finest stories.

Less significant is 'Flight of Fancy' wherein a young man's dreams of flying turn all too real, and 'Last Contact', which features aliens who avoid Earth after sampling the mindless violence of children. This latter is a bit too didactic to work as a story. An interesting idea is found in 'Identity Crisis', in which a famous man has a false personality imprinted over his own in order to find a life of privacy, but the story just doesn't work. It is too concerned with the surprise ending to really come to grips with the issues. Similarly, a culty family comes with the public broadcast of a eulogy for a dead relative in 'In Memory Of...', but once again the story treats the subject only superficially.

'Still Time' is a turnabout of the survivalist creed. When a nuclear war really starts, the protagonist finds he cannot turn his back on those in need of help. This is a more optimistic sign than most in Kelly's fiction. Some of his best characterization appears in 'The Cruellest Month', a story only peripherally SF. A woman who has become successful in the business world retreats into apparent hallucination as that world begins to disintegrate around her. 'Friend', written in collaboration with John Kessel, was discussed last issue: a story of interpersonal relations aboard a spaceship. 'The F&SF Diet' is a fairly grimly humorous fantasy.

The most recent Kelly story I have encountered, 'St. Theresa of the Aliens' reverts to his concern with moral issues, and is another of his best stories. Aliens have contacted Earth, primarily the Russians, as their own culture is essentially Communist. Naturally a movement to ban them from this country arises with its

fanatic supporters. A very fine story that contains enough material for at least a novella.

Kelly's first novel, *PLANET OF WHISPERS*, is an other worlds adventure, and an above average one of its type. My main disappointment is that it seems inferior in quality to his shorter fiction, which has generally been quite high. Possibly we will see more evidence of this in the future as he makes the transition to novelist and hones his skills at greater lengths.

#### WILLIAM GIBSON

William Gibson is a highly stylish writer who makes considerable use of high-tech jargon in most of his stories. At the same time, some of his stories have an almost dreamlike quality. "The Gernsback Continuum", for example, shows us a man who has glimpses of an alternate world that parallels the paintings of Frank R. Paul. The perfection of this world is so sterile, however, that it reminds the protagonist of Nazi Germany. "The Belonging Kind", written in collaboration with John Shirley, has a less grandiose theme and is considerably more effective. Non-human creatures pose as humans engaged in the fast nightlife of the modern city, a chilling, convincing bit of the macabre with lasting power.

"Winterlands" is a more traditional story. An anomalous condition in space allows some astronauts to travel to the stars but not others. Sometimes those travellers acquire artifacts on their travels, but the specifics of their trips are uncertain because the invariable result of their journey is madness or death. The people who operate the program are those who were unable to journey, but who are compulsively tied to the project despite the horrible things that happen in its operation. "Red Star, Winter Orbit" concerns the abandonment of their last space station by the government of the USSR. A space hero unable to return to Earth because of his physical impairment faces an uncertain future, but when part of the staff mutinies, every problem is ultimately resolved. This is an unusually straightforward story, perhaps reflecting the influence of Gibson's collaborator, Bruce Sterling.

Two other stories "Johnny Menmonic" and "Burning Chrome", make use of extensive jargon. In one, a man is programmed with secret information and must avoid the agents of a criminal syndicate intent upon having that information. In the other, two computer pirates must deal with a virus program. Although the stories are colorful, the jargon seems to interfere at shorter lengths. Parts of these stories were incorporated in Gibson's first novel, *NEUROMANCER*, which is far more successful, probably because the greater length allows the reader to adjust to the altered language. The protagonist of the novel is able to blend his consciousness into a computer network. His attempt to steal secret programs almost dooms him, but a cure is available if he will involve himself in more serious criminal activities. A highly inventive and rewarding novel if you take the time to work at it. Gibson is not generally an easy author to read.

#### LUCIUS SHEPARD

Shepard may turn out to be one of the most original new voices in the genre to appear in the last few years. His first story, "Solitario's Eyes", is a mystical encounter set in Latin America that cannot be described without sounding silly. The conflict is almost lyrical and although the ending is not as clearcut as most readers seem to desire, there is clearly a powerful intellect working behind the scenes. This is more evident in "The Taylorsville Reconstruction". A device is able to convey beliefs with absolute conviction, causing the South to indeed rise

again. The North, lacking these artificially imposed restrictions, is unequal to the challenge.

Shepard has at least three more stories set in the Caribbean and Central America. 'Salvador' is a horror tale reminiscent of some of the stories of David Drake, in which a group of US soldiers encounters an Indian curse in the jungle. Two other stories which are strong on color but less so in plot are 'A Traveler's Tale' and 'Black Coral'.

Shepard's real strength seems to be most evident in his first novel, GREEN EYES. Just as James Blish legitimized the werewolf in 'There Shall Be No Darkness', so now Shepard rationalize and make credible the zombie. Reanimated bodies can last only a short time, but while they do, they exhibit powerful personalities capable of remarkable advances in the arts and sciences. But the personalities revealed are not the same that inhabited the body prior to its death, in fact, they may not be real people at all.

#### DONALD KINGSBURY

Donald Kingsbury is undoubtedly best known for his highly successful novel of an alien culture, COURTESHIP RITE. One would not have expected this from the author of 'Ghost Town', a fairly dull story of an elaborate plot to save a city on the moon as the single outpost of man's space program, published in 1952. The thirty years made a considerable difference. In his recent story 'Shipwright', for example, we are shown a well conceived planet dominated by women. The male minority are bred for their engineering ability and trained to reproduce almost as prostitutes. One young genius, approached by women from another world, decides to leave with her in order to help develop the next generation of starships. The scope of the story is wide, but it is fairly successful nevertheless.

Even better is 'The Moon Goddess and the Son' (which I believe has been expanded into a novel). A young woman with an obsession about the moon runs away from home, has various adventures, and ultimately seduces the son of a prominent lunar figure out of his ennui and into enthusiasm for space. It's a very fine story, quite superior to its predecessors. So too is 'To Bring in the Steel', which deals with an unemotional man who hires a woman of unsavory reputation to act as governess for his daughter in order to strike back at the conventions of his society. These two stories may it more than evident that Kingsbury is potentially one of the stronger voices in the field.

#### CARTER SCHOLZ

Scholz has had only a few stories published, but many of them have been controversial. Generally overly intellectualized for most readers, they rely upon philosophical discussion and involuted prose rather than the traditional story telling values. I first encountered him in 'Closed Circuit', an unimpressive story in which synthesized TV replaces reality, but the next several stories made a decidedly stronger impression.

'The Ninth Symphony of Ludwig von Beethoven and Other Lost Songs' concerns a musicologist's mental travels back to the time of Beethoven, and the effect that his observations have on the composer, ultimately changing the course of history. The convoluted, intellectualized style works well in this case, and the story attracted considerable attention. It worked less well in 'Travel'. The stray thoughts of Marco Polo encounter a computer thousands of light years away in space. Unfortunately, nothing really seems to be done with the there this time.

An excellent story of an ex-astronautic hero whose life is slowly collapsing appeared next, "The Eve of the Last Apollo". The Johann Sebastian Bach Memorial Barbecue and Nervous Breakdown presented us with another time travelling musical-ologist, still entertainingly, but not as successfully as before. The musical theme also appears in a minor vignette, "The Last Concert of Pierre Valdegar."

An interesting story about space travel appeared in UNIVERSE 11. "In Reticulum" follows a crew of space travellers as they explore an enigmatic planet, then return to a dying Earth. The odd viewpoints Scholz attributes to his characters make this an intriguing piece. Easily his best work, however, is "The Catastrophe Machine". A young man discovers that his experiment with mathematic theories actually allows him to cause catastrophes. This is a far more subtle story than its theme might indicate, and it is handled extremely well.

"Ultima" is another time travel story, this time an artist's visit to Van Eyck, but by now Scholz seems to have worked this theme for all that it is worth. The recent "Menagerie of Fabel" has interesting moments and some interesting philosophical convolutions, but doesn't work as well as a story as does most of Scholz's work. In general, he is a highly intellectualized writer, which will limit his appeal, particularly at novel length. His better short stories, on the other hand, are likely to be among the best the field has to offer.

#### LEWIS SHINER

After an inauspicious beginning with "Tinker's Dawn", Lewis Shiner provided a string of short stories that has marked him as one of the more promising writers to emerge in the 1980's. "The Stuff of Dreams" is an oddly appealing story of a drug addiction that allows travel to another world, whose inhabitants in turn travel to ours when they are high. "The Snowbirds" had a similar theme. People from the future have fled its unpleasantness to our own time, but their respite is brief, and they begin snapping out of our existence and back to their own. He demonstrated his sense of humor in "Things That Go Quack in the Night" (written with Edith Shiner) which features a wereduck.

Less successful stories appeared simultaneously. "Blood relations" starts out well, a horror tale about a swamp thing seeking its ancient prey, but the quality of the prose outstrips the coherence of the plot. A young man has an affair with a sorceress in "Brujo", which is entertaining but slight. A young boy encounters aliens in the vignette, "Promises". Mutating humans subvert their ship's computer in "Plague".

"Circle" is a very successful horror story. A radically cursed story causes its readers and listeners to become enmeshed in a circle of causality. "Tommy and the Talking Dog", which is pretty well summarized by its title, is a pretty strange and oddly appealing story. "Nine Hard Questions About the Nature of the Universe" is equally strange, this time dealing with a young boy kidnapped by aliens who are looking for God.

"Deserted Cities of the Heart" is one of his best, a story about explorations in the Mayan ruins and the nature of the end of the world. "Twilight Time" is a fair potboiler and repeats the theme of people from the future, this time going back through time to combat aliens in our past. His most recent story, "Till Human Voices Wake Us", about an artificially created mermaid, is also worth your time. Shiner has a first novel coming out soon. It will be interesting to see if he can make the transition well.

# ELABORATE LIES

((Since it has been six years between issues, I thought it was only appropriate to allow people to bring us up to date about what has been happening in their lives since MYTHOLOGIES 14 appeared.)))

## UPDATE 7

(DEN INDICK) It was nice to see MYTH again, and it feels like more than six years. We change, we grow old (older, in my case, alas!) and yet some things remain. A love of communication, for one, so you were at last driven back to your magazine. Some years back, indeed, about the same time as you, I dropped much of fanac, and thought of complete gafia. I could not, however, abandon IRID and EOD, and so on a reduced level, I remain in fandom.

((Not least among the motivations for the revival of MYTHOLOGIES was the wish to nag certain old friends into writing me letters, out of a sense of guilt if for no other reason. I am happy to say I was largely successful this time round.)))

(AL SIPOIS) MYTH really struck home on several points! Briefly, a system update: I am now divorced, and am working as Art Director for an educational software firm in New Haven. For sundry reasons, therefore, I've had lots of occasion to reflect on friendship, video games, sex discrimination, and science fiction...I'm gonna be at Lunacon, as a guest panellist on some New Writers panel. Well, my first story was published in 1973, and I haven't written a word of fiction since last June. So I guess it figures. I got a Nebula nomination last year for a particularly wretched co-authored story.

Tomorrow is my thirty-fourth birthday. Put on the Coasters and let's dance! I discovered this summer that I like to dance. I wouldn't say I'm particularly good at it, but when ya got the beat, ya got the beat. I would dearly love to learn how to do the backwards moonlide or whatever that step is that Michael Jackson does.

((I stopped dancing shortly after leaving high school and for all practical purposes didn't dance again in any style until last year. I'm at ease doing slow dances now but, even though I have watched and know that most people nowadays don't even dance in time to the music, I still feel uneasy at fast dancing. At Boskone, scratch that, at Constellation this year, they had a sock hop, and Beth Cohen talked me into dancing in the style I'm used to, and I still enjoy the old jitterbug. I don't understand how you can dance not in time to the music.)))

(LEE CARSON) Since I last saw you, we latched onto Charlie, now 14 1/2 months. Since last August, I've been handling all homicide cases. In September, I got stuck handling our church's entire finances indefinitely when the financial officer had a heart attack, but I unloaded that back on him in January when some sheriff swerved out into my lane of traffic and hit me head on a second later. Luckily, I got out with just a broken nose. On Valentine's Day, after trying a couple of murders within the fortnight (and only one acquittal), I had surgery, ignorant of my astrology. It was not as bad as the conjunction of Mars and Saturn might suggest, fortunate for you scoffers whose frantic faith in reason caused me to

.....

neglect such a major indicator. Nevertheless, I'm still recovering, trying to get used to contact lenses for the first time (you can't wear glasses for a month or two unless you tape them to your forehead), trying to get on track at work.

(SHEPPYL SMITH) MYTHOLOGIES arrived today like a breath of unreality and made me feel about a million years old. How flattering that anyone should still remember such a relic of the Age of Sercon as myself. For the past year and a half I've been living in Fremont, California, with Ten Sano and four cats. He works in Silicon Valley and I work for a PR firm in San Francisco. I still edit poetry for Riverside Quarterly, which comes out only a little less often than MYTHOLOGIES. I go to the cons but I'm no longer a hacker of locs. In fact, I owe everybody letters even Iafferty. This is the first one I've written in about a year. I also talk about phoning people much more often than I do it.

((I fully intend to nag you for more letters in the future. My own level of activity in fandom comes in waves and I'm anxious to bestir the more interesting people I've encountered in the past.))

(BRETT COX) I graduated from Coastal Carolina College of the University of South Carolina in December, 1981, with a B.A. in English and philosophy. From August 1981 to August 1982 I lived in Myrtle Beach (with a brief pause to finish school) and worked at Paperback Booksmith, a bookstore. In August 1982 I moved to Columbia and entered graduate school at the University of South Carolina, where I'm working on a M.A. in English with emphasis in creative writing. I've also been working as a graduate instructor at USC, teaching two classes of freshman English each semester. If all goes according to schedule, I should be graduating in December of this year. It would take pages and pages to adequately recount all the changes I've been through over the past several years: suffice it to say that I'm a vastly different and, I think, improved person for it all.

(BRAD FOSTER) So your car was locked in a garage at CONSTELLATION? I can top that one. While working in a building in downtown Dallas on a blue collar job, I had to park in their underground garage. It was a long job and I wasn't finished until about 10:30 at night. I loaded my equipment back on the truck in what was now a totally deserted and definitely eerie large underground room, and headed up the long ramp to what I thought was the road to the office, then to home and bed. A large door thought otherwise. Your car was locked up. I was locked up with my van. Wonderfully the door to the building was set to lock behind me, so I was there with a pay phone and about 60¢ in change. At 20¢ a pop I was lucky to get someone who could help me on the second try, but it took four hours to get the guy with the key down there to let me out. I think I read all the "Exit" signs several million times before he arrived. Now I know why solitary confinement is considered such a horrible thing.

(WAYNE HOOKS) Certainly the mundane intrudes, from my teaching, to my farming, to courses I am taking, yet my inactivity stemmed from a far deeper, cut level reaction. When I left Richmond I had to trash several years of fanzines. Weltschmerz may have been the problem. GRANDFALLOON was dead. MYTH was no more. TITLE had disappeared along with KNIGHTS and other fanzines. Several people had died. Somehow or another, with other demands, I drifted away. New names came in; old ones faded, which is a natural phenomenon, but constitutionally I resist change. At any rate, I feel I have remained the same while everything else changed, which,

.....  
 I suppose, means I have changed albeit against my will. I am glad to see MYTH back again and next time, don't wait so long.

((Oddly enough, I feel that I have changed immensely, even in the six years since the first wave of MYTHOLOGIES. For the most part, I have tried to keep its new incarnation as close to the original as possible, although there are clearly some differences in format. A groping for solidarity in a sea of change, or something like that. I hope you'll stay around for the ride.))

(STIVE BIELER) By the way, I was born in Fall River and grew up in Somerset and Boston. Is Jake's still serving ice cream on Thayer Street? Is Dodge St. anywhere near a place called Chicken City?

((It's coincidence day in East Providence. Sheila works at Jo-Art Copy, which is one block from Jake's, which is indeed still open. We live two blocks from Chicken City, which went out of business a couple of years ago and reopened this week as a liquor store. Maybe the world isn't as big as they would lead us to believe.))

(SHERYL BIRKHEAD) I'm sitting around, drowning in a sea of Kleenex, cough lozenges and OJ, waiting to go out for lunch. I thought while I was waiting, I would get the tale (or tail if you prefer - you'll see why) down on paper...

The Grrs Come From Der Voodverk Out. It all ended when I dragged the hapless but firmly wedged kitten out of the hole in the living room wall. (Okay, have I got your attention? If so, let's go...back - ta-dah - to the beginning. Fade to slowly dying music.)

It began...uh, well let me give a bit of the background. I have returned to the ranks of students and found myself to be a bit (HAH!) more inflexible than the 18 year old college freshman. In other words, when I began looking for a cheap place to stay, I also wanted all the amenities I was now used to (like running water). I intended to take two felines with me and got a bit upset to hear that I would A) have to take a two bedroom apartment if I had any pets and B) would have to pay \$10/cat/month extra rent along with \$100 more in the security deposit. Hmpf -- not me.

So, cut to an idyllic scene -- mountainside trailer park??? Yup, I bought a mobile home but, boy, did I luck out. I got it from some students who had redone the whole place, put in a solar heater, landscaped the yard, put in trees/shrubs/flowers and...well, you name it... 'twas gorgeous and could be all mine. So, the deed (poor choice of words) was done and I was, again, broke.

Now, here I am on a mountainside, ten minutes from class, out where the air is clear. Within three days all the stray cats in the neighborhood had figured out that I was a soft touch. Hey, Fluffy, the dingaling up second from the end puts out a spread twice a day, drop in and see. First to arrive was Sweetheart (I just name them, but I felt like a fool running around the park yelling for "Sweetheart") with three little balls of fluff in tow. Then came Spectre, the cat no one can 'sex' (get your mind out of the gutter; even the vet in town wouldn't tell me definitely whether it is a he or a she, and the name is non-sex so it stays). Big help that I was told not to worry, with spring I would know in a few months. Thanks, I needed more little mouths to feed. Then Rudge arrived and CC (Candy Corn

CAT) and...but you get the picture.

Well, I managed to tell the sex of the three kittens (some challenge; one was a tricolor. In case you didn't know, 99.99999+% of all tri-colored cats are female), had the mother spayed, and faced what to do about the female kitten, now that I was honestly out of money. Two things happened. The Vet school approached me about "taking" the strays off my hands (I don't think I want to go into that one) and a friend at home who happens to be a vet said he would spay the kitten for free if I could get her home. Now the plot thickens and we are approaching the real story.

Two days before mid-terms (which occur every four weeks) I got a dilly of a cold and felt miserable. After the test, I vowed to head home no matter how awful I felt. I bundled up Hap and Tuxe (my two brain damaged cats from home) into their carrier for the six hour drive and "tried" to catch the Princess (haughty tri-color kitten). A half hour later I was ready to start. Cut to a late night shot, about 10:30. Picture flashing red lights and siren approaching from the rear...

I still don't know why the officer believed me; I mean it was a farfetched story. He was very nice about the whole mess. He asked for my license and registration, but for the life of me nothing would click. I sat there like an idiot (no comments please) thinking...okay, turn off the radio, put the car in neutral, put on the brake, take foot off clutch. Now, officer, what did you say? Yes, I'm really working at it, I just have to get organized...I had tests today, I'm really tired and have a load of cats in here...Even I realized that sounded stupid.

"Uh, do you have any idea why I stopped you?"

"Er, not really." (Please don't give me a speeding ticket; I can't pay it.)

"Well, you've been all over the road and I'd hate to see you get hit, so I think you ought to pull over at the next rest stop."

Right then I was as awake as I've ever been. Two cups of coffee and forty miles later I was home -- and wired for sound -- and VERY grateful I didn't get a ticket. At least it had been a divided highway and we were all going the same way so other drivers could see the nut driving and give me a lot of room.

So how did Princess get in the wall? This cat is not a house cat and I felt that the least I could do was to get her used to being inside, since she was scheduled for surgery real soon now. Fine, put cat on sofa, watch cat get sleepy looking and fall asleep, leave room (very bad move). When I came back one of the other cats was sitting in front of this hole in the baseboard, pretending he was waiting for a passing mouse. The hole is there due to a recent small repair to a pipe.

Anyway, I looked on the sofa - no Princess. Panic not. Look around first, behind sofa, under bookcase, behind piano. NOW panic. Naw, couldn't be. Well, just in case, go ahead and stick your hand in the hole in the wall. Euh? Cat fur. The front end came out more or less fine, but manipulating the hind end was accompanied by a neat series of screeches and threats to do bodily injury when the cat got hold of me. If you've seen the labyrinth opening up inside a wall you can appreciate why I didn't dare let go of her once I had some part of the anatomy grasped. Tug, nothing SHOULD break off. So the cat came from the woodwork out, but not without a lot of protest.

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) I no longer write the massive multi-page locs commenting on every part of a fanzine that were once my trademark. In fact, come to think of it, I don't even write the shorter page and a half locs commenting in depth on certain carefully-selected parts of the fanzines I still get and read...for that matter, now that I get right down to it, I don't write locs much at all any more. Still, such an auspicious occasion as the resurrection of the nearly fabulous MYTHOLOGIES deserves at least some recognition from this particularly peaceful glade of cafia. And while I don't respond as often as I used to to the ever-decreasing trickle of fanzines I still get, I still enjoy reading the better ones and MYTHOLOGIES always was one of the better ones and probably will be again now that you've started it up again. And I'd like to keep on getting it.

A couple of things surprised me in your list of short quotations from previous locs. Since I don't even remember writing to you, I was surprised that you quoted me more often than anyone else. (Who says egoscanning is a lost art?) I was even more pleasantly surprised to discover that I was neither embarrassed by nor ashamed of any of the things you quoted me as having written. And I was actually shocked to realize how many once-familiar names have completely gone from the pages of fanzines in such a relatively short time as the few years between issues of MYTHOLOGIES. Where are the likes of Roger Sween, Mike Flake, Sheryl Smith, Jackie Hilles, Tom Collins, Sam Long, Don Ayres, et al? It is to wonder.

((Actually you didn't write me. I made all those quotes up. Actually, you wrote to me on July 27, 1976, June 18, 1975, April blur, 1976, April 23, 1977, April 11, 1975 (you seem to like Aprils), December 14, 1974, January 6, 1975, October 7, 1974, December 21, 1973, February 9, 1977, February 5, 1973, and March 5, 1977, plus two undated postcards. Do I have files or do I have files?

Of the people you mentioned, all but Jackie Hilles received MYTHOLOGIES 15. I have no idea where she went to. And I received letters from several people who have largely disappeared from the fannish scene. I'm working on the others. My own activity tends to come in spurts of a few years each, and obviously one of the upswings is underway.)))

(LARRY DOWNES) What a surprise to receive MYTHOLOGIES, and what a terror to discover it has been six years since the last one. I remember quite well being in high school and getting a phone call from Leah Zeldes to say the latest issue had arrived at her mailbox before mine. Since she would already have read and responded to it within the hour, I naturally insisted she loan me her copy to read until mine arrived. No doubt I could have driven over to her house (eight blocks away) or ridden my bicycle that afternoon to pick it up. Such was the interest which we both shared for your essays and your letter columns. It was unquestionably one of my favorite fanzines, along with Donn Brazier's TITLE, anything Bill Bowers or Mike Glicksohn did, and Dave Gorman's CORBETT.

Six years. Since you last published I graduated high school, spent a year at the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop, graduated from Northwestern, got a job as a systems consultant with a giant accounting firm, and have been working 3½ years. I left Detroit forever, and have been settled in Chicago for over five years. My job has me constantly travelling. The last year and a half has been spent commuting every week to New York from Chicago. (Presently I'm working on an "expert system" system that will write computer programs for other systems, including part of itself). Unlike you, my fan activity is not cyclic --it rather disappeared once I

.....

got to college, and except for occasional letters of comment to Bill Powers (which he doesn't print) the last few years I haven't done anything. (Visiting Lynn Parks, Derek Carter, and their beautiful daughter in Indiana doesn't count.) The last convention I attended was a Confusion in Ann Arbor about three years ago, about the time I last gave up on Apa50. I hardly ever see or hear from Leah, Cy Chauvin, Diane Drutowski, or Brad Parks. I write one or two letters a year to Roger Sween. By strange coincidence I was dating briefly a niece of Isaac Asimov last year and when I met Isaac and he asked me if I read much science fiction, I had to answer honestly that I don't.

(IAN COVELL) Six years? Are you sure it's been six years? Gods above, I now have two nephews and a niece, all less than two and a half years old. They weren't even conceived when we last spoke? You were 31, in another place. I was...younger. I have been jolted in recent months to pick up a favored book while mentioning it to friends and saying "This is fairly new..." only to glance at the copyright page and realize it's been out nearly ten years.

(HARRY J.M. ANDRUSCHAK) This morning I went to the AA meeting at the Chantry Flats picnic ground. A most unusual place for an AA meeting, 1000 feet up in the Los Angeles National Forest. The picnic grounds had families from all over Los Angeles out at the bar-b-q pits and tables. They played loud radios, had ice chests piled with beer, noisy kids, and much talk.

I wonder what they thought about that mixed group over at the tables to one side? We were 30 very assorted people under the spreading oak trees, most of us smoking away. We had 15 gay alcoholic/drug addicts from West Hollywood show up, and they were welcomed into the fellowship.

We talked about our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows, and how we had kept sober this last week. We told stories about the days when we were drunk. We told every one how we had progressed on the twelve steps. We shared our emotions and feelings frankly and openly to strangers knowing that they would share too, and all would keep anonymity.

The other picnickers could not hear us talk, but they could surely hear us laugh at times. And they must have heard us all when we gathered into a circle, held hands, and recited the Lord's Prayer to end the meeting. ("Keep coming back, it works!")

FRIENDSHIP

(GENE WOLFE) You're trying to make something complex out of friendship, when it's actually one of the great, shining simplicities. A friend is someone who will let you drink from his canteen and watch while you sleep. It has nothing to do with social circles or any such nonsense.

For what it's worth, two of my friends are people I knew before high school. And to say that there can be no friendship between men and women without a sexual element is just one of the myriad ways of clouding the issue. I have such friendships, and so does every other man who is willing to be a friend, and not just have one. So do you, I'm sure.

(I didn't mean to imply that intersexual friendships were impossible, just that

the assumptions of most people that a sexual element is involved causes pressures to be put on that sort of relationship that are absent otherwise.)))

(JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON) Although I can't say I generally have a great belief in fandom as a hotbed of friendship (though perhaps it is a real place of community) in recent years more and more of the people I could seriously call "friends" by the limited definition are people I met through fandom. They are not, by and large, exceedingly or singlemindedly involved in fandom, but still I have to confess where I met them...The people I know outside of fandom are not so dear to me because they are, by and large, not terribly literate. I think that's the missing ingredient. When feminist politics was the meat of my everyday requirements, I had a lot of non-fan acquaintances, some it seems were good friends, several were lovers in my "promiscuous year," but in retrospect we must not have been such good friends or I'd still be in touch despite the fact that they don't read much.

(ARTUR D. HLAVATY) Bernadette and I are not officially married, but we do have a pledged, committed relationship. Each of us has close friends of the opposite sex, and intends to keep it that way. I agree with you that such is the exception, rather than the rule, but you may hear from some people who didn't know there was a problem. In an apa discussion, someone was using the term "open marriage" to refer to a marriage in which both partners are allowed to have close friends of the opposite sex. Someone else said, "Why have a special term for that? Doesn't everybody do that?" The latter person was, unsurprisingly, someone who has mostly hung out with sophisticated urban crowds.

I think the comment on male and female friendships in the next paragraphs is over-simplified. There are many other factors, such as socioeconomic class. For instance, white working-class males tend to form strong male-bonded groups with little thought of the strategic values of such friendships, but these groups tend to treat women, including wives, as utter aliens. (See BLUE-COLLAR ARISTOCRATS by D.E. Le Masters.) On the other hand, men in the executive hierarchy often have either rivalries or strategic friendships with other males, but frequently see some women (wives, secretaries) as at least allies. It would appear that women moving into executive positions tend to set up the same pattern of friendships. And of course even this is a generalization, with individual exceptions wherever you look.

As to friends, I distinguish between "trust" and "rely on". If I can't trust someone (i.e., if I suspect they're going to lie to me) they're not going to be my friend. But some of my best friends are world-class fuckups (I have a horrible feeling that if you do the same kind of lettercool next time as this time, this will be the phrase I am immortalized by), and I would rather not have to rely on their competence and responsibility.

((I always thought an "open marriage" meant that each partner was permitted to have sexual relationships outside of the marriage. Or is that automatically implied by "close friends"?))

(AL SIPOIS) I know who my friends are. My friends are the ones who helped me get through my divorce, who cared enough about me to call me and insist that I go out for a drink when I was feeling rotten. But my biggest and best friend is myself. When I was so low that I was flirting with the idea of suicide, I pulled myself

out of it: I gave blood, I adopted a kid through Save-the-Children, I did some volunteer work for the Nuclear Freeze, I cut my hair, I went out dancing, I bought a VW and learned how to adjust its valves, I wrote a book I had been aching to complete...I learned that I was there for myself. And the people whom I admire and respect were those who wouldn't let me feel bad. They were there for talking, drinking, lovemaking, crying...I know who my friends are. They are the men and women who accept me as I am and want me to be my own person. I owe these people all the love and respect I can give them. If that's sort of selfish, then so be it.

The people I wanted to trust, who betrayed me, well, I learned from them as well. Yes, we do build walls around ourselves. I think that maturity is recognizing when to let the drawbridge down. I pity those who never can. I've been hurt, sure, but I hope I never lose the capacity to be hurt. Someone once told me that the depths of our depression help to define the heights of our happiness. That makes sense to me. Having been so miserable, I feel that I may be able to know happiness when it rears up and sucks my face.

I do agree that part of friendship is the ability to make oneself vulnerable to another. Trust has to be there. I have a few close friends, say three or four. These friendships have been operative for at least ten years each, twice that long in one case.

(LEE CARSON) I have always thought of you as my friend. Although there has always been some distance between us, I think you know me well enough to know that I do not select friends with an eye to worldly advancement. Friendships frequently arise from some mutual activity, cooperative expression of similar or related affinities. I would say that shared affinities are the essence of natural, common (and limited) friendship. We certainly have shared an affinity or two, at least. I am your friend even though you print on hot pink paper with (almost) no illos.

((As a matter of fact, yes, you were one of the people I was thinking of as a friend, even though we see each other maybe every four years.))

(DAVID PALTER) Your discussion of friendship is a thoughtful one, and extremely relevant to fandom, which more than anything else remains a group of people who either are or would like to be friends with each other. Judging by what I have read in this fanzine, I think that you are a person with whom I might very well be able to develop a genuine friendship. There is a certain trick to doing this solely by mail with people whom one has never met, but it can be done.

((Perceptions of people through the mail are often misleading though. Frank Palazs and I first met at a Boskone several years ago. Somewhere during the course of the convention, he asked me how come I was such a nice person in person but such an argumentative bastard in print. I had never realized the dichotomy in the two images I project, and as a consequence, I always hold my opinions of people I've never met as somewhat suspect.))

(CHRIS ERLIS) Was I the feminist referred to in your bit about friendship? I seem to remember exchanging letters with you on the subject of male-male vs female-female friendships a year or two ago. If so, you still haven't passed by me. With rare exceptions, I don't think men are capable of friendship in our society. To a lesser extent, this is true of women as well. I'll stretch the analogy. The white plantation owners in the antebellum South were an aristocracy of sorts, dominant

over the middle class, the po' white trash, and the darkies. As a concession to your sensibilities, let's compare the male-female relationship in our society to that between the aristocracy and the southern middle class.

There was then (and remains now) a pervasive theme in this country, more prevalent in the South than elsewhere today, although this wasn't true originally, that stressed the importance of the individual man, the frontiersman. Now exactly this became a cult thing for the southerner I couldn't tell you, but it did. Lately, the mystique has been adopted by the middle and lower class southerner, but originally it was the sole preserve of the plantation owner and his peers. Self reliance was everything. One did not confess inner weaknesses to one's equals, let alone one's inferiors. The middle class, much of which aspired to be rich, strove to imitate the mores and temperament of those who dominated them, and adopted the same mystique.

Now we have the dominant male class driven to prove their virility by remaining independent (although it is not a real independence), by dominating their families, competing successfully in the marketplace, admitting to no weakness lest it be used to exploit them. With more and more women finally entering the same job markets, striving for the same positions, success, and dominance, they are perforce adopting even the most unsavory positions of the dominant class. It is ironic that the feminist movement may have failed in its very success; by encouraging women to participate in the world on men's terms they are encouraging them to adopt the same foreshortened view of life. That was, as you may remember, the reason for my own departure from the purview of organized feminism (although I do still occasionally stick my fingers into that sort of thing, she confessed in a small voice.)

No, I'm not about to digress into another discussion of the wonders of communal living. I know that it won't work in any community much larger than the Farm, and it doesn't always work well here. How do you divide up a number of disparate chores equally anyway? Is time of completion the criterion, foot pounds of energy expended? What do you do when someone actively likes doing a specific task; should he or she be given additional workload to compensate for those who hate everything menial? Some people like being housewives; some of them are even women. (Did you dredge up that quote from Pournelle just to see me froth vituperation onto the pages again? It won't work.)

((No, you weren't the feminist I had in mind. You told me you weren't one any more, remember? I think your distasteful childhood in the South has distorted your views somewhat, and you're really straining at that analogy.)))

(BRAD FOSTER) I know I would feel uncomfortable if someone walked up to me and said "I really like you and want you to be my friend." That is a little too strong, almost an all or nothing thing. Friendships might grow, but I don't think forcing one will work too well. It hits me on the same level of how love is approached on such insipid programs like "The Love Boat" and "Fantasy Island", where it just suddenly happens. Neither love nor friendship suddenly occur. I very recently got to thinking about what friendship was as just this morning I attended the wedding of a friend, a man I've known since we were both in elementary school 20 years ago. I started to think about how people I've known that I've maintained contact with for such a long period, and there aren't many. My own definition of friendship, which includes parts of many of the comments you recorded from the parents, also would include that a friend is someone you might not see for a year or

more yet when you do get together, even if for an hour, you feel good and comfortable. I spent five hours to drive from Dallas to Houston to attend the wedding, hug his beautiful bride and talk to him for maybe three minutes, then turn around and drive back. The workload here is too much right now for more than that, but I knew there was no way I was going to miss being there for such a major event in his life. He's my friend.

A thought I had while reading your essay on friendship was how, by going back and inserting 'love' in place of 'friendship', it often made just as much sense.

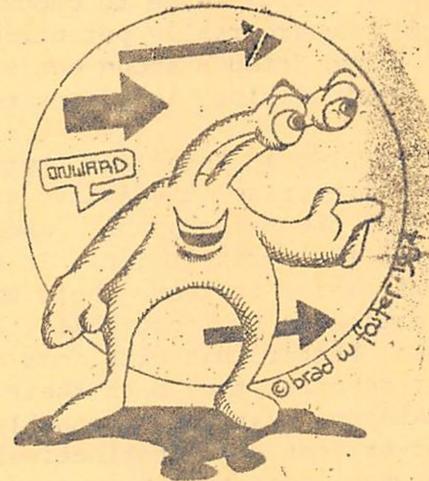
I'm curious why you find it scary that you could list only 26 people you could really consider friends. Why? Is the value in the number of friends one has? If so, what do you consider the right number of friends to have, and why?

((I didn't mean that people should walk up out of the blue and indicate their friendship. I was referring to a reluctance even among people who privately consider themselves friends to publicly, explicitly acknowledge it. The point about 'love' and 'friendship' is not coincidental. For a long time, that was going to be the subject of the essay. I discovered that I was unclear about where one stops and the other begins, if there is such a demarcation at all. As to your last paragraph, I capitulate completely. Your points are, of course, inarguably correct.)))

(ALYSON ABRAMONITZ) I don't agree with your statement 'We don't 'make' friends; we discover them.' No, I believe we grow into friendships over (generally) long periods of time. I've been lucky enough, recently, to have experienced the growing of just such a new friendship (of the true sort you describe). Going quite gradually from acquaintance to marginal friend and growing into true friendship (for want of a better phrase). The friendship wasn't discovered. It was created with work on both sides, each trusting more over time.

I do agree with you that having a person be a true friend does mean admitting vulnerability and particularly the possibility of rejection. That's exactly why friendships are things that must grow over time: as each person comes to know, trust, admire the other person, the ability to open up to another person becomes a lot less scary.

((I think we have here a failure to communicate. The friendship you described is what I consider discovering a friend. As time passes and you are more exposed to the person, you find more and more attributes you like, more things you have in common, more that you can share. Discovery is work too. If the potential for friendship wasn't there, you wouldn't succeed, so you are discovering that potential, as opposed to coldbloodedly deciding to 'make' friends with someone. Most people who make friends with their immediate neighbors or closest co-workers are



allowing circumstance to choose for them rather than working at discovering those people who are really potentially close friends. That's not to say that one cannot have close friends among one's neighbors and co-workers, but the preponderance of such "friendships" indicates to me their very shallowness.))

(SUP ANDERSON) Interface "Myth and Unfunny Business". At work, I'm involved in a new enterprise: the active solicitation and sale of appraisals. One fellow provides the salesmanship; another provides the "Gemologist" degree required; I provide the wordsmithing. It seems to be taking off -- customers are much pleased at not having to leave their valuables with the firm for two weeks, since the evaluation is now done while they wait. Now, I get along all right with these two people, better than with most of the rest of the staff (male and female), but every so often they open their bigot mouths. "How do you react if a friend makes a statement that you personally find distasteful?" Well, how do you react if your employer does so? Instinctively working on the theory that these people need me, right now, more than they need not to be reprimanded... Bill, I hate that expression and wish you wouldn't use it." "Oo, I never do, really, I don't know what happened." And then later, of course, they turn on me in my absence. The idea is to do a bit of observation before deciding "This is my friend", or be prepared to live with a loose definition and the occasional dilemma. We need a word between "friend" and "acquaintance". Or two or three words. This is a person I see frequently and can be cordial with, exchange favors, converse, but wouldn't trust beyond a certain point. "This is a person who thinks that having "Fanhood" (etc.) in common obligates us to be a lot closer than I want to be." "This is someone I instinctively like and know nothing about whatever.

((I don't entirely agree. Even among close friends, there are differences of opinion, sometimes quite substantially. For example, abortion is a highly volatile issue. People with divergent views can still be friends. I have some close friends who are bigoted. Well, I'm at least occasionally bigoted myself. Part of a friendship is, I think, accepting those "faults" in others. If there was the potential for a close friendship between you and Bill, you would presumably be able to live with (while still strongly protesting) his lapses into bigotry, while he would presumably learn to live with what he probably would see as your occasional stuffiness and supersensitivity on some issues.))

(FD ROM) Your piece on friendship was very interesting, and led me to think of my own personal life. I have only a very few people of whom I can think of as friends, but I don't think of myself as being worse off than other people. I actually think that it is impossible to have more than a few real friends, because I feel people need much time to truly become friends. Thus, the "hale fellow well met" does not really have friends, for the simple reason that he has too many acquaintances. It is hard to get to know someone well enough for friendship when you have too many people in your life. You can't spend enough time with any given individual.

(DOUGLAS BARBOUR) friends friends friends

this is how the false "i" ends" says bp Nichol in what I believe is the most important long ongoing poem now being written in Canada, and perhaps in English; elsewhere he speaks of "friends as family" which seems to point to another aspect of the problem you pointed out: that we all move around so much. I mean we often don't remain very close to the other members of our family either.

.....

Indeed, the structure of most NA families, small, etc., seems to lead to a lack of the kind of closeness which the extended family used to feed. How many of us don't really have that much in common with our brothers and sisters, let alone our parents? So, as Nichol implies, we seek another ind of "we" in which to live, a (often small) community which is friendship. I do however take your point that "real" friendship, the closest kind, which includes the knowledge that you can depend on the other no matter what, is hard to find, and is possibly something we often fear to seek because it does require of us that we go naked before the other. I would envisage three levels of friendship (with any number of levels within each level, except the highest): acquaintanceship -- those people we can talk easily with, or work with (I imagine a lot of fannish connections are such); what we call friendship -- closer, involving a true sharing of interests, ability to talk longer, at deeper levels, some trust, yet probably with some holding back on both sides; true (heavy) friendship -- hard to find, hard to hold onto, because it requires a lot of work on both sides to maintain the closeness, what might even be called the "passion" of friendship. I know I have a few people whom I feel are almost that kind of friend but I'm not sure we are quite that close. Sharon has one such friend, and she spends a lot of time, I mean a lot, keeping it in balance. Do most of us have or are we willing to give the kind of time such friendship demands of its participants. Perhaps we have been spoiled for the work of true friendship. Yet I suspect we do desire it, as we still desire, most of us, a working love.

(AVEDON CAROL) When you ask if we should 86 a friendship when the friend -- through bad judgment and thoughtlessness -- does us a disservice, my response is, "How often does this happen?" Presumably, if you've known someone for a while, you have some idea of whether they make a habit of luring you out on a limb and then cutting it off. Of course, people change -- someone who used to be reliable can lose it (I've had a couple of friends of mine fall into a bottle and start demonstrating alcoholic psychosis that left a lot of people feeling shocked and betrayed). When someone starts to show a pattern of screwing people who trust her/him, you do have to dig in your heels. That doesn't necessarily mean you just cut them off, but if it's something like alcoholism, you really have no choice but to say, "I can't control this person's behavior; all I can do is protect myself by staying away from this person in situations where they could do this sort of thing to me again." Okay, maybe in the case you mentioned, your friend was under unusual and temporary stresses, and you just say, "This isn't going to happen very often, so let's just forgive and forget." But there's always some sort of ledger in any friendship, and when you reach the point where you realize you're putting out a lot more than you're getting back in a relationship, you feel used, and you may wonder whether the other person only continues to behave the way they do because suckers like you keep letting him/her get away with it.

When a friend of mine starts letting me down in unexpected ways, I start watching them. Sometimes it really is something that means you're going to have to cut them loose -- I learned this the hard way when one of my closest friends became a drunk. It took me a good long time and some pretty heavy losses before it finally dawned on me that by hanging around I was doing no good and just letting myself in for more of the same. Alcoholics don't usually start trying to get themselves fixed until long after they've lost everything that has real importance to them. As long as their friends stick around, they haven't lost enough to know what they're doing.

But sometimes people can't really be held responsible for their fuckups. I've seen

a perfectly sensible person get pretty nuts when she was in love with someone who was irresponsible and manipulative of that love. In cases like that, all you can do is hope you can be there to catch your friends when they fall, which they invariably will. Being in love like that depletes your resources real fast, and you don't usually have much ability to draw on anyone else -- but you need to be continually reminded that the rest of the world still exists, that your friends are still there. That's something that's pretty hard to see from the outside -- you've got a friend who's really making a mess of her perfectly good life over some jerk, and who is becoming unreliable because she can't make friends without consulting him -- he's always late, he comes along and is rude or whatever -- a lot of people in love see their friends fleeing like rats from a sinking ship because they don't want to put up with the creep their friend loves. "What do you SEE in him?" they might say, or they might say nothing at all and simply fade away. No one feels much obligation to stick by a person who is in love -- after all, they're happy, aren't they? They have what they want. And a friend has the feeling that all of those years of friendship are being thrown out the window, eclipsed by a relative stranger. So, feeling rejected, you reject. And where does that leave your friend? Well, now she's lost all of her friends for this creep, so she has a real stake in hanging onto the relationship even tighter -- she's got an investment in it. So now she's in a relationship where she's being rejected on a continuous basis by someone who no doubt claims to love her, and she has to believe him because the creep is the only one left. He'll probably dump her anyway, and that leaves her in the embarrassing position of having to feel like she's crawling back to her friends if she wants to start up with them again. At a time when she probably feels like she has no life left at all. Great. And that leaves you trying to deal with a totally damaged, depressed person -- great fun.

I don't know what really works in a situation like that; I think the best thing my friends ever did for me was, once, when I was involved with an asshole, tell me, "You know we love you and you're always welcome in our home, but don't bring him here." And then they kept inviting me over, including me in their plans, meeting me individually for lunch and such, but always excluding him. It kept me from ever getting so attached to him that I couldn't dump him when I saw what he was doing. The worst thing my friends ever did in a similar situation was keep on acting like he was wonderful (different relationship) and they didn't want to interfere with the relationship long after it was obvious that he was a horish creep. I know, people have told me over and over that you just don't mix into people's relationships like that, but I don't know what I would have done in that first case if people had not made a decision to go out of their way to show me that they cared about me and they weren't going to abandon me to that creep. Probably go into a lengthy, almost suicidal depression, like I did in the second case. I guess the hardest part about being a friend is knowing when to give support that someone doesn't know they need, and when to cut them loose.

(JIM MANN) Friend and friendship cannot be easily defined not only because they have personal meanings but because they apply to a range of relationships. What I mean when I say friend not only differs from some degree from what you mean when you say it, it also differs to some degree from what I mean when I use the same word to apply to a different person. I don't think that this means that the words are now meaningless, as you state at the start of the article. Certainly when stretched too widely, the word can lose meaning. However, even at best, abstract concepts must be fluid and must be able to apply to a range of situations. There is a hazy border between friend and acquaintance, just as there is a hazy border

border between blue and green. The words still have meaning. The meaning just tends to depend upon the context. Most of the time, it is clear.

I disagree with you (and LaFontaine) that friendship is rarer than love. Friendship is an essential part of true love. I don't believe that love can exist without friendship.

((I differ on two points. First, I don't think the meaning is clear in context most of the time. In fact, I don't think most people know themselves what they mean by the word "friend". Second, I agree that friendship should be an integral part of love, but I suspect it rarely is, at least that which we generally call love.))

(RICHARD BRANDT) Your piece on the nature of friendship strikes close to home. I have for a long time considered myself a man with no real friends -- unless I am mistaking the nature of the bonds of friendship that exist between others. I get along famously with my colleagues at work, but I do absolutely no socializing with them after hours. I sometimes tag along when my wife visits (e.g. goes out drinking with) her friends, but I don't consider myself close to any of them. In fact, I'd say the one exception to this rule is my wife, Monica (or "the only friend I have in the world", as she no doubt tires of hearing herself addressed).

It is true, in our own case, that Monica more readily discusses intimate matters with her female friends than I with my "buddies", but then, I hardly consider myself a representative sample for comparison.

A side bar on all this is that I have come to consider, over the years, some people I have never met as "friends". This may have been more common in the general populace when the habit of correspondence was more widely indulged in; but of course I am referring to the spectacle of fandom, and to interests and intimacies shared through the public mails. It may not be that fannish ties constitute "friendship", but when I was a younger fan, discovering others that not only shared by interests but showed what seemed to me considerable kindness toward a fledgeling fanzine publisher, well, it certainly seemed so to me.

((Despite all of its parochialism and various other limitations, fanzine fandom (and to a lesser extent, fandom as a whole) does seem to meet a definite need. People with even peripheral interests in science fiction remain active in fandom, simply because it provides a forum for conversations, friendships, and the like. If it were better known to the world at large, I suspect we'd be inundated in a tide of lonely persons.))

(MONICA KRAUSSE) This is sort of a postscript to Richard Brandt's loc: I sneaked up behind him as he was typing it and I read the first part before he realized I was there. Richard was dismayed; I guess it's awkward to tell anyone she's your best and only friend, even if she's your wife. But it put me in a good mood for the rest of the week.

Later that afternoon, by the way, Richard phoned his old high school fannish friend, David Swanger (in Mobile) and chatted with him for most of two hours. They only see each other once every year or two, but that friendship's still going strong. I think there are all levels of friendships, and the kind of friends you have now are probably the kind of friends you need. In my turbulent

college days, when I had to cope with an impossible school load, vindictive faculty, and an unrequited love affair (with Richard), I had a dozen shoulders to cry on. But four years later, though I think back on all these friends with fondness, I wouldn't phone them long distance just to chat. Our friendships were based on mutual crises that no longer exist. On the other hand, I don't bare my soul to people at work, but I still enjoy going out for a beer with them, and count them as friends. I can think of only one whom I would awaken at 2 A.M. for help, but then, I'm not having any crises right now.

(ERNEST HERAMIA) It has not been my experience to have friends appear suddenly in my life. Friendships for me happen like trees, rather than mushrooms; they grow slowly from an anonymous mass of humanity. A name is assigned to a face, the face takes on a physical presence, the physical presence reveals a personality, the personality becomes a person, I empathize with the person, my empathy turns to affection, sometimes that affection turns to love. Like a seed, much depends upon "chemistry". There are people with whom I, for all possible reasons, should have hit it off fabulously, but didn't. There are some people with whom I have nothing in common, sometimes we are even on opposing sides of volatile issues, but our friendship is close. Like a seedling, a newly formed relationship is fragile and has to be nurtured. With new friends I measure my words carefully, feel out their likes and dislikes, pay them a little more attention than my old friends. Like full grown trees, old friends can take a little more abuse. You can take them for granted, "leave them out in the snow", hang a hammock from them, and know that they are still going to be there for you.

You are right about the vulnerability when you open yourself up to another person. You cannot only get your heart broken, but also your head. Look at the "soil" in which friendships must grow. When we are children, we trust everybody who doesn't outrightly frighten us, and are uninhibited in the expression of our emotions. We talk freely to strangers, we believe whatever we are told. When we are happy, we squeal and jump up and down, when we are angry we throw a tantrum, and when we are sad we cry. As we grow up all this changes. We learn that you can't trust everybody. There are child molesters, liars, thieves, religious fanatics, and practical jokers to watch out for. We learn that only babies and the guilty cry. We learn that it isn't cool to jump for joy and squeal with delight. Later in life we learn that we can't trust ANYBODY, not the people in the government, not the historians, not the teachers, not the preachers, not the businessmen, not the police, not the military, not even our parents. When we go out to make a living, we learn that the professional world is a predatory world just a little more sophisticated than a wolf pack. This is the "soil" in which friendship must grow.

We don't really trust each other. Why should we, given what we have been taught? What we have to do is survive. Before we can have a friend, we must win a person's trust, and this cannot be done overnight. You can't do it with four legged wolves; why should you expect to be able to do it with two legged wolves? I think we use the word 'friend' in place of "acquaintance" out of wishful thinking. We want to trust people, to open up, to shed the pelt of the Lone Wolf, to be children again, to be friends, but we are afraid to. We are torn between our fears and our longings, so we open up by degrees, test the results, and either trust more or huddle deeper in our wolf pelt.

I have noticed that the degree to which I trust a person with my material possessions is in direct proportion to the amount of emotional sharing I do with that

.....

person. If a stranger stops me on the street and asks me what time it is, I will give him a few seconds of my time. If somebody I know by association asks me for a dime to make a telephone call, I will give one to him. To a "partner in crime" I would lend a few dollars. To a friend I would lend my car, and spend money on gifts. If a friend who was to me as a brother needed a kidney transplant, I would donate one of mine. The key here isn't that friendship can be measured by gifts, but that a person's worth to us as a friend causes the worth of other things in our lives to diminish. A millionaire might give his chauffeur's son a Corvette for a sixteenth birthday present, while Manny the baker at Dunkin Donuts would sooner donate a kidney to a friend than let him borrow his 1965 Mustang.

I agree whole heartedly with your feminist friend that we will all use each other, but feel that she is being quixotic in condemning this tendency. Think of the most altruistic reasoning for wanting a friend. Isn't there some personal profit in it? Let's say I want to be friends with a person because I "like" him. Why do I like him? Is he fun to be with -- then I want to receive amusement from him. Is he clever -- then I want him to give me wisdom. Does he care about my well-being -- then I want him to be to me a brother. I would say that to exploit a person emotionally is far more reprehensible than to exploit him socially or financially; you can always get more money, and a social climber's boot print will wash away in time. But you never completely forget having your heart stomped on.

I don't mind being used by my friends; it makes me feel useful. My close friends feel offended when I don't draw upon their resources when I am in need. Back in Bible School we called this "robbing people of a blessing". So long as the exploitation is mutual I see nothing wrong with it. Matter of fact, I can't imagine a friendship without mutual exploitation. The only people I know who don't exploit each other are strangers.

(PAUL SKELTON) I think I'm one of those people you were talking about, the ones who've devalued the word "friendship". You see you are absolutely correct when you say that we all define it differently, and that there's no benefit to be gained from discussing it insofar as there are no universal truths to be plumbed from the depths of a term that is all things to all people. Except...in that my own approach/definition of friendship being so diametrically opposite to your own statements, there may at least be some benefit in just putting my own interpretation on display.

You see, to me an acquaintance is someone I know who I don't give a toss about. OK, so I wouldn't want ANYBODY to fall under a bus, but over and above such general considerations, I don't give a fuck. My definition of "friend" however is simply someone that I care about, and whom I assume cares about me. It doesn't have to be a strong caring, but if I care just the slightest amount then I place them on the friendship spectrum, though flickering feebly down toward the lower end. Friendships come in all shapes and sizes and you can't define all friendships in the terms you'd use for a "close" friendship.

By my definition, caring, friendship belongs on the same spectrum as love. This might also explain why it's so difficult to talk about, why we shy away from it. As you pointed out, close friendships tend to be restricted to people of the same sex, and close friendships are way up toward the love end of the spectrum. "Hi Bill, I think I nearly love you!" is a concept we are awfully uncomfortable with. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

.....

I have acquaintances - their car breaks down, I don't give a shit. Who cares? Your car problems I care about. I assume a friendship, by my definition. Now it doesn't matter to me that you don't consider me to be your friend BY YOUR definition. But I said, "...that I care about, and whom I assume cares about me." So I assume you care about me. Not much, but enough. Let's face it, we haven't had enough intercourse to establish, by my terms, other than the minimum requirements for my kind of friendship, but the very fact that we are exchanging this amount of our feelings and attitudes, opening up as it were, becoming vulnerable to an ill-considered response, indicates to me that the relationship at least meets my minimum requirements.

To me, friendship isn't such a big deal -- not at its lowest level. I make them easily, I break them easily. Because they are easy, they are also fragile. It's that two-way aspect that is essential. If I discover that someone doesn't care about me, then my minimum requirement isn't satisfied, and what I thought was a casual friendship is revealed to be something else. I make very few close friendships. It's these close friendships where you don't say, "You hurt me. I'm going to be less of a friend to you in the future." You don't go around balancing the books in this sort of friendship, certainly not in the short term.

(GIL GAIER) The comments on love/friendship by Ignace Lepp were most thought provoking...It's wonderful having you drop in again -- like a friend who's been on a long trip coming home. The texture of your personality seems the same as before. Even the new lumps are oddly familiar.

(IAN COVELL) I don't know if this is universal, but when we had a particularly uncontrollable bully at school who picked on me, I sought to appease him by pretending friendship, by performing all the acts of friendship in such a way they appeared real. A conscious creation of fake friendship. Could there be a taint in such thinking so that in later years when we find we are friends with someone we wonder a) just why are we friends? b) am I their friend for reasons I fully understand? Cynical, perhaps, but since the appearance of friendship can be a survival factor, fake friendships must exist.

(DENNIS JAROG) I sat here for a few minutes contemplating the friendships I have made and as you suggest while the numbers made for short counting, contemplation of the subject took a lot longer. One of the reasons that friendship is limited is that it is as you suggest coexistent with vulnerability. We are taught from childhood not to leave ourselves vulnerable to others so from the first we are taught that we are an island. Thus there exists a conflict; we want to coexist with others, yet we don't want to be vulnerable. This conflict balances on a fulcrum; too far in one direction and we are perceived as aloof, as considering ourselves better than others, or as hopelessly introverted. Too far in the other direction and on the surface things seem fine. One can be considered a social mover, but it is often entirely superficial with little substance underlying it. The question of friendship goes back to the notion that no man is an island. Some people may treasure being alone. From personal experience, there are times when the thing I treasure most are periods of prolonged solitude. Even at a convention, I find the need of retreating from friend and acquaintance when the pressures build too high.

((Ah, but don't you still want the reassurance of knowing your friends are there when you want company once more?)))

.....

(RUTH MINYARD SHIELDS) I found myself agreeing with most of your definitions and conclusions. First of all, I am one of the lucky ones in that I do have one person I feel I can call a Friend: my husband, Rickey. But I can't say I am fully satisfied with that; to tell the truth, I really long for a friend of my own sex. I think your cartoon is right in saying that men and women tend to form different kinds of friendships. I would add that we all need both. I've had a few other friends, of course, but separation is hard on friendships; the feelings may still be there, but at least in my case, it is hard to maintain intimacy with letters or phone calls. I have one male friend, a young man whom I've known for years and in some ways helped bring up, but as he has matured, we've grown apart. Other men I thought of as friends have drifted away since my marriage. The curse of the Southern male, too much concern for appearances!

It does indeed hurt when you realize that someone you think of as a friend has a different concept of the relationship. My sister-in-law is someone I once thought of as my best friend; but during her first two years in college, I gradually realized that my confidences and interest in her life were not being returned. I was learning about important events in her life from third persons, and she was making new friends and had no time for her old ones. I know this sounds very juvenile -- in fact I went through similar agonies in the sixth grade -- but it really was hurtful and for months I was uncomfortable in her presence. I could never bring myself to discuss it with her; it took her two months to notice my avoidance of her. Perhaps if either of us had been able to overcome that inability to say, "I want to be your friend", we could have found some common ground. Ironically enough, she brought it up indirectly several months ago, when she told me how her dearest friends at college had disappeared from her life when they graduated a year ahead of her. She was very hurt at the way they had no time for her, and has now decided that it's best not to try to be friends with other women. Sad. Perhaps if she settles here in Jackson, I may try to change her mind about that. But I'm still timid about the concept of saying, "Can we be friends?" I don't know if I CAN be friends with someone who is as secretive as I have now learned she is.

I wonder how many of my acquaintances think of themselves as friends of mine? My definition of friendship involves a lot of trust and interest in one another. I don't know many people who seem to feel the same way. Or perhaps to them I am indeed just one of the gang. Isn't it funny how I am particular myself about whom I call friend, but it rankles to think that others leave me off their list.

((In the case of your sister-in-law, the drifting away may also be a function of the changeability of the human personality. Now that I'm old enough to have seen two or three people I know well pass through their early twenties, it amazes me how much personalities change during that period, compared to other periods. When you consider how many people are married by then, the high divorce rate becomes not only explicable, but not even particularly alarming. Most people have probably grown so thoroughly different during those years, it's like being married to a different person entirely.)))

(JOHN BETANCOURT) I want to comment upon your somewhat bizarre (to my tastes) view of friends and friendship. To me, a friend is someone whom I know and associate with, and have at least some affection for. "Friend" is, whether you like it or not, a widely used word, and I believe it's used correctly more than not. I have a number of friends whom I see only at conventions once or twice a year; these are not close friends, but I would be hurt if they suddenly died or became hostile to

me. On the other hand, people I have met but have never gotten to know are acquaintances -- people whose actions are inconsequential to my emotional balance. If these hypothetical people were to go around trying to feud with me, it would not be the same as a friend's sudden betrayal. See what I mean?

There are grades of knowing people that are really too subtle for English. I'd start with a total stranger and progress to slight acquaintance to acquaintance to business relationship to friendship to close friendship to intimate friendship -- those you seem to list as "friends" alone -- and from there to lover.

(JEANNE MEALY) "Friend" has become such a generic buzz word that includes such a wide range of relationships that it's almost a joke. I liked the folksy definitions that people came up with at the parents' forum. I too have had the experience of someone I didn't care for claiming me as a friend, rather nonplussing me.

I've been thinking over the various points in the friendship article. One such point is the question whether we speak to be liked or to reveal ourselves. I caught myself evaluating my motives as well as the other person's possible motives and found they can switch quite a bit in a conversation. Too much of this analysis can make one overly suspicious and feeling of a lack of "pure" motive. Do we ever offer ourselves just to do it, or always to get something back? In a way I found that I didn't care -- as long as both sides got something out of the encounter, maybe even grew a little, learned a new idea, it was OK.

(DEBBIE NOTKIN) Your opening editorial treats one of the subjects really close to my heart, and nonetheless I find it difficult to respond to; half the time it would seem that you and I are in complete agreement, and then we diverge so thoroughly as to make communication difficult. Although you never say it in so many words, I get the distinct feeling that your at base sense of "friendship" is non-sexual intimacy. I'd find your article a lot closer to my own sensibilities if the "non-sexual" could simply be dropped. I have friends who are lovers and friends who are not lovers, and the only real difference I know of between the two categories is that it's easier to make friends in bed -- not better, just easier.

Do you really think friendship is an uncomfortable subject for people to talk about? Is that the same as having difficulty going up to someone and saying either "I consider you my friend" or "I want to be your friend"? Any kind of offering oneself up for rejection is difficult. I want to be your friend/I want to go to bed with you/I want to be invited to your party/I want to do an article for your fanzine -- all of those are difficult to say. But asking for something is difference from talking about something. Talking about relationships is undervalued in this culture (and rarely taught) but people take to it readily, and often hungrily, in my experience. As far as friendship not being explicit is concerned, I think you skirt the difference between "I want you to be my friend" which courts potential rejection, and "I think of you as my friend". Undoubtedly, these verbal confirmations of friendship are not used as often as they should be, but there are a lot of them, and they're a lot simpler to say than the ones you delineate. I try to make my friendships explicit not by saying "We're friends", but by doing my level best to make it clear, in words and otherwise, that my resources are available to my friends, who then, knowing what I am willing to offer, make their offers in return.

I've long claimed that the most pernicious phrase we learn while growing up is "They lived happily ever after". It implies that the struggle of romance ends at

.....

the altar. Equivalently, no one ever teaches us that friendship is work, that it requires constant (or minimally, regular) tending. Any gardener knows that you can't expect the flowers and vegetables if you aren't willing to do the weeding and other chores; few people realize that friendship requires the same sort of conscious input. So we make a few gestures toward friendship, maybe spend one evening or afternoon together, write a letter or two, and then expect it to develop on its own accord. If at least one of the two potential friends isn't a worker in the field of relationships, nothing will happen. Another interference is that since friendships do entail work, they take up time, which is the most valuable commodity to many of us. So many potentially fine friendships are turned away because the time available is full (or feels full).

I'm very glad I haven't read the Ignace Lepp book; sounds like it wouldn't be good for my blood pressure. Love is not exclusive, theoretically or any other way. The only thing that's even theoretically exclusive is sexual love, and that theory is almost as pernicious as "They lived happily ever after" and for similar reasons. I don't believe you can fall in love against your wishes (against your better judgment, perhaps). If you are in love with one person, and that person isn't one of your very closest friends, you're in big trouble.

Aside from Tom, whom I've lived with for almost ten years, my closest friend lives 3000 miles away. We've known each other since college, and we didn't like each other very much when we met. But we were hitchhiking in the same place in the pouring rain and when I smiled and said, "How are you?", he said, "Miserable." So I invited him home to talk. For almost a year, we talked about him in every conceivable way, to the point where he once said, "You and I have one thing in common. We're both fascinated with my personality." (We were also lovers for a short, not particularly satisfactory time.) Toward the end of that year, he cornered me and absolutely demanded that I talk about myself, something I was uncomfortable doing and completely amateur at. But he was very patient and very determined, and aside from teaching me to talk about myself (greater gift is hard to imagine), he taught me that a real friendship had to be mutual. Since then, he and I have survived some pretty amazing storms, but we both value our bond too much to let it break. (And you're right, I do get misty eyed just thinking about what we have together and how hard we've worked for it.)

I'm really surprised that you think your friends and acquaintances wouldn't know what category they fall into (this has to do with my feeling that friendship is more explicit than you make it sound). I think/hope that all of my close friends know that I feel close to them. For one thing, I try to tell them; for another, I touch most of them a lot; for a third, I think that they are as aware of my efforts to nurture the bond between us as I am of theirs. I think you might be a little happier with yourself if you looked at the friendships you do have, and how they came about, than you are when looking at the ones that didn't happen. Whether the subject is friendship or fishing, the ones that got away have two things in common -- they get bigger after you lose them, and they're gone.

Yes, friendship is rare and precious and also yes, there is a great web of true friendships out here. Why are those two things in contradiction? It doesn't take a lot of strands from any one nexus to make a web, and while the intimacy of friendship is not commutative, many of its benefits are. ("While you're in Rhode Island, if you need anything you can call my friend Don D'Amassa.") Every instance of passing on the benefits strengthens the web, and sometimes makes a new

friendship as well. That web is, to my mind, the single most important thing in the world, and the only chance we really have for survival.

As for discovering friends rather than making them, I would humbly suggest that if you really feel that way, perhaps your friends are doing more than their share of the work of the friendship -- and perhaps that's why you feel so forlorn about the topic.

((Actually, I don't feel all that forlorn. Discovering friends is meant to imply that there is some subset of humanity who are potentially friends of any given individual, and another, presumably larger subset who are not. No matter how much work we exert with the wrong subset, we aren't going to make friends. That never was meant to imply that we don't have to work to develop the others into friendships. But you cannot "make" someone into a friend.

Neither did I mean to specifically imply that friendships are non-sexual. Sex is certainly something two friends can do together. On the other hand, that doesn't mean I accept your assertion that making friends is easier in bed. That seems to indicate that good sex makes good friends, and I don't think that is necessarily true. (Might be fun finding out though.)

Just as bad as "happily ever after" is "It was the happiest moment of her life." This presumably means that life goes steadily downhill from the marriage ceremony, which may be true, but is certainly not good news. And before I leave, I'd like to re-emphasize that I said our society makes love exclusive, because it brings great pressures to bear on inter-sexual friendships outside of marriage. I grant the potential for an individual to love more than one person, deeply, at the same time, but it's highly unlikely that circumstances will smile upon such an arrangement.))

(BILL PATTERSON) You put a number to your close friendships, and I find that very difficult to do. My own metaphor is something like the cross section of an onion with discrete boundaries going from the outside (casual acquaintances) to the center (most profound relationships). The problems are a) where do you draw the line; whom do you include and whom exclude; and b) there has been a certain amount of migration from one layer to the next. Then, too, there are bizarre classification problems. One of my most profound and enduring relationships has been with a woman who has the bizarre notion that she need do nothing to maintain a relationship. Consequently we fall out of touch for years at a time (in fact, I don't even know where she is at this moment). But we always pick up just where we leave off, in terms of affection and sentiment and even our intellectual lives seem to live in a degree of consonance. I suppose that is possible only among people who are relatively constant. Certainly that "closeness" is at least partly a function of psychological visibility, a complex phenomenon which deals in part with the most fundamental and stable elements of a personality, in part with the most transient, particular, and ephemeral elements, and in another part, purely subjective on both sides of the relationship. How much, I wonder, of love is WANTING to love or be loved?

(STEVE SIKORA) I have few close friends. I attribute this in some large, or at least interesting, part to literacy. I started reading voraciously in the third or fourth grade, the usual run of kids' books: science fiction, boy adventures, and lots of animal stories. It may be germane to the argument that friendship, fidelity, and comrades in arms figured prominently in such books, going along with the venerable

.....

notion that we read in order to escape or to confront through indirection our immediate experience. But more important than the reason for reading is the simple fact of one's preference for books as daily companions. I was hooked. In the worst time (which was also the best) the needed fix rose to half a dozen in one day. I imagine many grew up similarly. What happens in the throes of such addiction?

Here are some possible answers. (1) The avid reader finds much more pleasure in listening to the voices coming from the pages than to those of kin, teachers, friends, and foes. So much more expansive than the world of one's body, the life of the mind offers unlimited possibilities, pure freedom, utter transcendence. One comes to prefer the far voices. (2) In addition to pleasure, these voices offer almost unlimited safety. Proust once commented on the resemblance between friendship and reading, and pointed out the latter's many points of superiority. "No more deference," he wrote, "we laugh at what Moliere says only to the exact degree we find him funny; when he bores us, we are not afraid to appear bored, and when we decidedly have had enough of him, we put him back in his place as bluntly as if he had neither genius nor fame." The security is almost unlimited. When a book disturbs, we simply close it and reach for another. No worry at all about how its writer might react to our behavior. "What did they think of us?" (Proust again) "Didn't we lack tact? Did we please? All these agitations of friendship come to an end at the threshold of that pure and calm friendship that reading is." (3) Proust speaks here as an adult. Bring adolescence into the picture and you have a fair argument for the damage which literacy inflicts. Especially when one is young and vulnerable, and taking first awkward steps toward other people as reciprocating peers, reading can raise all kinds of hell. Habits of youth are the hardest to break.

Pleasure, safety, and adolescence. Let me add one more ingredient which was just appearing on the cultural horizon in Proust's time, the modern celebration of Art, and literacy in particular. The waning of traditional religious belief left a great vacuum. The new priests of Art were only too happy to step in. A select few grabbed up the robes of holy office as Writers. For the new laity -- all the rest of us -- the Book became books and prayer became reading. In immediate terms, I'm suggesting that the joys of our adolescent addiction to books are compounded exponentially by this cultural veneration of literacy. My parents glowed at the sight of my nose in a book. Teachers praised such devotion to the heavens, little suspecting, perhaps, that duty and prayer played little part in what I was doing... Who needs people? Who needs to learn how to live with them when the benefits of books are so many, obvious, and wonderful? I think I fine tuned my ears back then, closing off all immediate noise. Amidst the noises from afar I had no need of other friends. Nor reason to acquire a taste for them.

Reading breeds asocial animals? Am I just repeating a time-worn hypothesis here? I don't know. I'd like to hear from others about this since I see lots of interesting twists. The phenomenal socialability of science fiction fans is one of these twists. The role of the solitary hero in almost all of our literature is another. The social and cultural pressure exerted upon the young to become like their betters and to become solitary and named heros in turn, in the literature of the present, is a third.

((I suspect that many if not most obsessive readers, myself included, were already suffering from an inability to function well in social situations when we turned to reading, rather than the other way around.)))

## BASIC SF BOOKS

(JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON) I thought THOUSAND SHRINE WARRIOR belonged on the all-time best fantasy list, but then I'm prejudiced in its favor.

((The list of books was NOT supposed to be the best, it was supposed to represent the spectrum of fiction so that a novice reader would be exposed to the field as a whole. If I were doing a list of the best, I would probably have included TOMOE GOZEN, rather than the third volume.))

(MAIA COWAN) Of the books on your list that I've read, I largely agree with their inclusion. My only trivial quibble is that I'd call THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS "Satire" rather than "Future War", since it deals with far more than just fighting. I also think Patricia McKillup's THE RIDDLEMASTER OF FUD and/or the others in that series deserve inclusion on the fantasy list. Also COURTHSHIP RITE on the SF list. There's one book that deserves to be a classic, but do books become classics because they deserve to be?

((I had not yet read COURTHSHIP RITE when I made up that list.))

(JOEL ROSENBERG) Your list of basic books in the field was, I suspect, intended to provoke cries of outrage. Well, I've got one or two. In general, you seem to give the innovators more space than the realizers, which means that Heinlein's importance is vastly understated, despite the four book mention. How about Twain? CONNECTICUT YANKEE is, depending upon who you talk to, either one of the more seminal science fiction or fantasy books that ever there was. Why THE HUMANOIDS? The short story, yes, the rest of it, no. And where is THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE? Granted it's more of a realization than an innovation, but it's probably the best space opera we've had in the field. And how about BILL THE GALACTIC HERO? Is there no room for parody?

((CONNECTICUT YANKEE is fantasy. THE HUMANOIDS, for all its failings, is still a book whose ideas are frequently talked about in the field. THE MOTE could be substituted for any of several others on the list, but I think you could have a good grasp of the field without having read it. BILL should have been included.))

(RICHARD BRANDT) It might be instructive to hear which books you consider the really bad ones. I wonder why the FOUNDATION series isn't included, unless you take the justifiable exception that it isn't composed of novels.

((That, and the fact that it is three volumes, is why I left it off. I thought of doing a supplementary list of shorts and series, but it was too long as it was. Bad books on the list? SKYLARK OF SPACE, A PRINCESS OF MARS, WORLD OF NULL A, BRIGANDS OF THE MOON. But I enjoyed each of them just the same.))

(PAUL SKELTON) Your basic book list doesn't exactly reveal a man who likes to laugh. Looking at that you do come across as old sobersides himself. Maybe some of the books aren't what you'd call serious, but there's nothing there that could be described as funny. A basic booklist that doesn't include anything that makes you laugh is a trifle suspect, I feel.

((Unfair, I included THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM for just that reason, and have admitted above to having overlooked BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO. But most SF humor is rather poorly done.))

(GIL GAIER) I've always been intrigued by your insights into SF/Fantasy books and authors. How about a list of one hundred authors and your favorites from their novels?

((The retroactive Hugos this issue should be of some interest to you, then.)))

(BILL PATTERSON) I found your "Back to Basics" list somewhat wanting. For example, in your fantasy list, you have completely omitted the Unknown type fantasy best represented by WALDO and MAGIC INC or by Poul Anderson's OPERATION CHAOS. In the SF list, you include THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, THE WORLD SHUFFLER, WHAT MAD UNIVERSE, TOO MANY MAGICIANS, and PAVANE in the "Alternate World" classification, but omit BRING THE JUBILEE, certainly one of the finest, at least as available as WHAT MAD UNIVERSE. Poul Anderson is represented only by WAR OF THE WINGMEN, Niven only by RINGWORLD. Asimov, one of the most influential writers in our brief history is represented by only a single robot novel. You have represented Dickson by THE GENETIC GENERAL rather than by SOLIDER ASK NOT, which I find bizarre, and if it is the quest aspect of Delany's work you are looking for, surely NOVA is a better selection than either EINSTEIN INTERSECTION or BABEL 17.

((I call foul. Unknown-type fantasies on my list included THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER, THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG, LAND OF UNREASON, and THE SLAVES OF SLEEP. WALDO isn't even fantasy; it's straight sf. Asimov is under represented because the Foundation series and I ROBOT were to have been included in a short story/series listing. The Dickson novel you mention is a viable alternate, but remember I was not necessarily listing what I considered the best books. Having recently re-read Delany, I think I would have preferred to see NOVA on the list, but the same argument applies here as with Dickson.)))

(IAN COVELL) I very much doubt you'll get total agreement from any reader about this list, though it does contain a great deal I would recommend. I don't have your outlook and could never recommend a book I didn't like. A notable exception on your list is Stanley Weinbaum, perhaps neglected because he wrote mostly short stories, but whose long works like THE BLACK FLAME culminate and expand much of the earlier forms of SF. I wouldn't recommend Pangborn on all counts but I'd have said A MIRROR FOR OBSERVORS rather than DAVY, and I'd have said THE DREAMING JEWELS rather than VENUS PLUS X for Sturgeon. I'd classify Bradley's novels as propaganda rather than adventure, and mention Galouye's THE INFINITE MAN alongside DARK UNIVERSE. I would also have found space for George O. Smith's VENUS EQUILATERAL and THE FOURTH R, and probably picked BLUE WORLD rather than STAR KING for Vance.

I don't think Sturgeon would thank you for putting SOME OF YOUR BLOOD in the horror section, since it's anything but. I don't see how you could miss William Morris, but am glad you included Bramah's work. Where's Pratt's THE BLUE STAR, Moorcock's WARHOUND AND THE WORLD'S PAIN or GLORIANA? Anderson's MIDSUMMER TEMPEST? Lin Carter is not as good as Brian Daley or Jaan Kangilaski? And where is Piers Anthony or Ken Bulmer?

((Weinbaum was omitted because his best work is all short stories. SOME OF YOUR BLOOD has been marketed as a mystery and as a horror novel in the US. Horror does not have to be supernatural, and the idea of drinking menstrual blood as a form of psychological horror is very disturbing to some people. GLORIANA should have been included. So should one Xanth book. Lin Carter definitely should not.)))

(ARTHUR D. HLAVATY) You've probably seen by now that Kim Stanley Robinson did the first in the new Ace Specials series. John Kessel is a neighbor of sorts, living in Raleigh. He's a nice guy and I agree with you (and the Nebula voters) that "Another Orphan" is an excellent story.

((Yes, in fact I heartily recommend THE WILD SHORE to readers. He also had a fine story, "Lucky Strike", in the newest UNIVERSE anthology.))

(SHERYL SMITH) I suppose you are still reading practically everything in the field. I haven't been keeping up myself much lately. I get the impression that there isn't anything really exciting out there. I keep rereading things from the glory days of the late 1960's, early 1970's. The last thing that really excited me was Donaldson in his first Covenant trilogy, which I first read in 1978 when something similar was happening to me. My most recent aesthetic passion has been for silent film (particularly Keaton and Lloyd). Are you still among that most exclusive circle of David R. Bunch fans? Me too. Wildly quirky, but he holds up well.

((There's still some interesting things being done. Paul Williams, Kim Stanley Robinson, sometimes Nancy Kress, and a few others. Yes, I still like Bunch, altho there's not been much new in the past few years.))

(JIM MANN) I was glad to see your "Critical Mass" column. The field has grown so big that it is hard to keep up on the new writers, to know who is good and who isn't. This is especially true with short stories. I don't keep up with the magazines as well as I did a few years ago. I was familiar with Robinson and Kessel, and have liked both since I began reading their works. I was not familiar with the other two, beyond perhaps one short story each. I plan to go back and read more of their stories.

(DENNIS JAROG) I can't argue with the substance of your top 25 save for STAND ON ZANZIBAR, which I have always found unreadable. Agreed with your placing the Paul Williams book where you did; indeed the entire Pelbar cycle is one of the better series of its kind around. Am a little surprised that you don't list Miller's A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ.

((But it wasn't supposed to be the best 100. And I did list CANTICLE, which is probably my favorite SF novel of all time. Agree on the Pelbar books. Except for DOME IN THE FOREST, I have found them all to be superior.))

#### GHASTLY TALES

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) I simultaneously hope you'll be able to keep up the "Ghastly Tales" section of MYTH and hope that such examples are rare enough that you'll have trouble coming up with others as bad for future issues. It isn't pleasant for someone like myself to admit that the field he professes to love can produce such published rubbish but on the other hand I howled over the unintentional humor of the complete ineptitude the writers portrayed. Do continue to share such gems of mediocrity with us...but don't find TOO MANY.

(AL SIROIS) I LOVED the Ghastly Tales quotes. God, that stuff was funny. It gives me hope for a book of my own one day. I couldn't be that funny intentionally, and I hope I'm not that funny unintentionally. MOONSPIN sounds like a real provoker -- I'd have to read it just to satisfy myself it really exists.

(DAVID PALTER) In your list of horrible sentences from published works of SF, the first one listed is truly breathtakingly horrible. I do think this is the worst sentence I have ever seen anywhere. Truly, if this can be published, anything can be.

(BRAD FOSTER) Ghastly Tales was wonderful. I trust you've heard of the infamous Robert Fanthorpe? He was an SF writer in England in the early 1960's whom I've recently discovered from David Langford. To quote just a short passage from the book, 'Neuron World': "This is the stygian darkness of which poets wrote. This was the pit of Acheron of which the creators of classic prose made mention. This was the kind of darkness which made thick, black velvet seem like chiffon by contrast. This was the kind of darkness that turned pitch into translucent polythene, when the two were placed side by side..." We are talking MAJOR darkness here. How about giving fuller information, publisher, date, etc. I've got to track MOONSPIN down.

((Since several people asked about publication information on the titles in GHASTLY TALES, it has been included in this issue's installment of what is, I am afraid to say, probably an ongoing feature. There are scores of titles just as bad into which I have yet to delve. )))

(SUE ANDERSON) I must say "Ghastly Tales" is an idea whose time is long overdue. The backlog you must have! This stuff rivals the undigested dictation of the people I work for. (Not since "Night of the Puudly" has there been a critter to rival Simsimul the Megatat-tat.) Question is, which of these books are vanity press publications, which are written by the editor of the line, and which, if any, are real books. How about doing THE FLOATING DRAGON some time?

((Publisher's info is provided this time around. MARS 5 from last issue is probably suspect. I think Brown, the author, owns Westsonian, the publisher. THE FLOATING DRAGON mixes fairly good writing with really stupid plotting, and a stupid plot isn't necessarily as funny. Straub can write well; he just never bothered to do the work necessary to make his plot make sense, and then obscured it all with such an overkill of supernatural events that the reader has been battered into uncritical stupor... But his earlier, far superior, work indicates that he does have talent when he is ambitious enough to use it.)))

(ED ROM) The first item to catch my attention was "Ghastly Tales" Where in the world do you find these masterpieces of dysliteracy? I found them to be terrifically funny, especially when read out loud.

((I collect science fiction, and have this odd shortcoming in that I feel I should read everything I buy. Some likely candidates for inclusion in future installments have been read aloud at local club meetings. ENCORES IN FADE, excerpted in this issue, has reduced a dozen adults to grovelling, hysterical wrecks when read aloud. It is my nominee for worst SF novel of all time.)))

(RICHARD BRANDT) Your Ghastly Tales section avoids any mention of Robert Lionel Fanthorpe, in any of his incarnations -- although it amply demonstrates that he does not stand alone.

((He is included this issue, and will undoubtedly do so again and again...)))

## VIDEO GAMES

(MARTY CANTOR) We have an Atari 2600 and recently purchased an Atari 600, which is really a small computer although we got it for gaming. The game over which I have gone the most bananas is RIVER RAID. Constant playing brought my score to 123,000; however, as I am now too busy to play it very often, my usual score when I do play is about half my all time score. I hope to find a RIVER RAID cartridge for the 600. As I understand it, the graphics are much better; the river walls are jagged not straight, and there is more action (your plane is shot at by tanks on the river banks).

My experience with the Atari 5200 (played at the Niven's) is DO NOT BUY ONE. Better graphics than the 2600, but the built in controller is lousy. It does have a pause button, but you can get that on the 600. One of these days I expect to get a WICO track-ball, at which point I will get CENTIPEDE on a 600 cartridge.

((I now have RIVER RAID for Colecovision, which is much as you describe. Some of the helicopters fire also, although they are so inept it is almost impossible for them to hit you. Still it is far superior to the Atari 2600 version. I have the roller ball for Coleco, which comes with SLITHER, a variant of CENTIPEDE which I think is far superior. I expect to discuss the hardware of the various systems in next issue's installment.)))

(ERIC MAYER) I was interested in your video game accounts and look forward to more. We have a 2600. (And I rue the day I bought it considering how much better I could do now for the same price.) We also have quite a lot of games, most bought last fall when the stores were cleaning out their inventories. My trouble is that with two children under 3½, I have little time to play them. The damn things always look so neat, but when I actually get them home the charm wears off. I have a few games given to us that I haven't even looked at yet. Oddly enough, the space games are not my favorites, unless DEMON ATTACK counts. I find COSMIC ARK kind of amusing but the games where you're sitting at a spaceship control panel, looking into a viewscreen in effect, boggle me. My favorite games are from Activision, because with their club patches you have something to shoot for. Kathy and I play each other, but invariably one of us quickly becomes the master of any individual game. With Activision I can at least try to "beat the game". So far I've managed FREEWAY BARNSTORMING, and DRAGSTER. All short games, you'll note, which can be attempted while babysitting. I've been working on ENDURO but guess I don't have the endurance.

Certain games, such as RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX, which I only fiddled with a couple of times, would have put me in Seventh Heaven while I was 12 or 13, but I don't have the patience any more to sit for hours on end. The games are, on the whole, very interesting, but too many of them have been put out. There are only so many variations with a joystick that moves a limited number of ways and a button and often, though the names differ, the games are the same. I might mention two games that confound me. I cannot for the life of me work KABOOM, though that seems a popular game. I can't even reach the first plateau of proficiency. The other game that stumps me, the worst one of all, is REACTOR. I'm worse at that than I am with the games at the arcades where I routinely get blown to smithereens practically before my quarter disappears into the slot. REACTOR sounds sensational but I can't seem to exercise the slightest control over it.

## UNFUNNY BUSINESS

(IAN COVELL) I happen to know for a fact that when a firm received 600 applications for 12 jobs, the systematic procedure for allowing each a fair chance was to eliminate: everyone who didn't fill in a form neatly, regardless of qualifications; reject everyone above a certain age range, and everyone below another, even though age was not stated in the initial advertisement; reject anyone who didn't list a phone number (too hard to get in touch with quickly)...and similar inanities ending with having put the forms in alphabetical order, choose the first thirty six, then begin to interview. I also know that sexism is ripe in these endeavors, both ways; an all female staff would -- it is presumed -- not be pleased to have a lone male added. Think of the toilet problem, for example.

The problem is one that my late father once calmly informed me about just after we'd driven over a humpback ridge only to be confronted at the top by a car speeding up the other side in the middle of the road. Its headlights glared at us angrily as its driver did as we passed each other inches apart. My father looked in the mirror, watching the idiot creep back toward the middle of the road. What he said was, "The trouble with being a good driver is that few others are." In short, of course, doing your job well works only when those who do their work badly don't manage to fuck you up.

(MARK M. KELLER) Your stories of managerial decision-making remind me of one of my side interests: business appreciation. Just as art appreciation is for people who look but don't paint and music appreciation is for those who listen but can't play, so business appreciation is for those who are not part of the wild world of free enterprise but who like to hear stories about the strange events that happen there. What was that SF story about the inhabitants of the dull hive cities of the 30th Century who are thrilled time-viewing the exciting life of a 1950's account executive for an ad agency; the dealing, the psychic tensions, the fear of losing an account, the joy of beating out a rival? No doubt in the alternate world next door where magic rules and the laws are medieval, there are wizards who on their days off play role-playing games like PAYROLLS AND PENSIONS about our world.

I have held a range of jobs but somehow never had what you could call the traditional "office" job -- that is to say, paper shuffling or (more dignified) information processing. That's why tales about office politics, so prominent in "Thrilling Work Stories" sessions at RISFA still sound curious and exotic to me.

The style of guidebooks for the rising executive has changed quite a bit over the last decade. My collection contains some of the typical pieces produced in 1970-72, when US industry was riding high, the envy and fear of Europe: stuff like THE WILL TO MANAGE, or MANAGEMENT AND MACHIAVELLI, or THE CORPORATE PRINCE. Stress was on getting power by stabbing and out-maneuvering your fellow manager (always referred to as "he"). All was politics, all was impressing or snowing the boss. Nothing about teamwork, cooperation, or making the product better.

Lots of these show up at yard sales today, and I am on the lookout for them. My favorites are by Chester Burger, who has great titles like "Survival in the Executive Jungle" (1964) and "Executives Under Fire" (1967) and "Walking the Executive Plank" (1972). The ultimate fate of these books was to end up satirized in the musical, HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING. Even Burger

though, began to display a little unease toward the last fat days of US prosperity in 1972. After describing the failures of "Mr Nice Guy" company president who could not bring himself to fire anyone, and thereby loaded his company with so much ungrateful deadwood it nearly went bankrupt, Burger devotes a puzzled chapter to the policies of Japanese companies.

He talked this over with a PR man from San Francisco who worked with both Japanese and US clients. By Burger's rules, a "no-firing" policy should fail: it showed weakness and indecision. But here came these outfits from Tokyo with just such a policy, and they were grabbing the US market in motorcycles, cameras, and small radios. (The really big push in automobiles and computer parts had not yet begun at that time.)

Well, Burger decided that maybe they did have something, but maybe it wasn't transferable to US managers.

Ten years later, there were a dozen books on the market, and twenty more coming, on how US companies could be more like Japanese. Co-operation was the key word, how to motivate the competing executives and employees to pull together for the good of the company and how to make "service to customers" a near religious obligation. The new cult readings for executives have titles like "In Search of Excellence", which describes US firms that succeed by generating team excitement. It's definitely a switch from the old backstabbing style recommended in the 1960's.

((Actually, much of the advantage the Japanese have is not in fact transferable to this country. For one thing, we don't have the active government support that they enjoy, which allows them always to be expanding, hence no necessity for any layoffs. In Taiwan, this is already causing problems and some of the larger manufacturers are already petitioning the government to allow them to cutback when necessary. The uncertainty has caused them to be more cautious about expanding their existing work force, and now they cannot meet the demand of incoming orders, and probably won't. As a consequence, US importers are moving on to India, Singapore, Korea, and other sources. The Kanban theory of manufacturing (also known as JIT for Just in Time) also presupposes a degree of inter-company co-operation that just doesn't exist. General Motors must pad its inventory with safety stock buffers at crucial operations because they cannot rely on their suppliers to deliver every day on schedule. Mazda and Toyota can. American companies cannot expect employees to come in on their own time, at no pay, to correct their mistakes and catch up on backlogs when they fall below production standards. The Japanese can.))

(ERNEST HERAMIA) I can't agree with your conclusion in "Unfunny Business". It sounds too akin to the reasoning of slave keepers: "Any race that allows itself to be enslaved deserves to be enslaved. I don't chain up my slaves; if they want to be free, they can just take off any time they please, and go north." "My obligation is primarily to present them with a copy of "The Book of Exodus" and "The Life of Spartacus" and get out of the way." "We have no right to pamper our own sense of righteousness at the expense of some slave, who might be less interested in a piece of paper proclaiming him to be a freeman than in how he is going to feed himself and his family."

Such a "throw up your hands and surrender" attitude seems to typify what is happen-

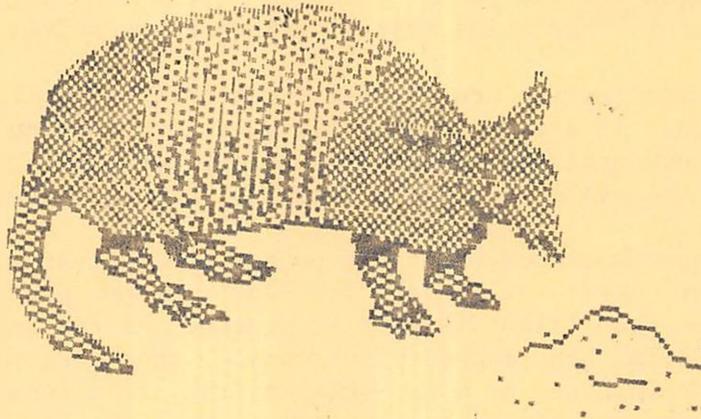
ing to liberals here in America. They are losing their nerve, getting squeamish about sweat, tears, and blood. They have sold their swords for sacks of rice. If equal rights for women and all other oppressed people is a noble cause, then let us fight on unafraid of the hardships that it brings to ourselves and others.

Freedom, equality, and justice are expensive commodities that have always been purchased with blood. If the modern-day slave masters continue to beat their slaves in spite of our protests, then let us place ourselves between the slave and the lash, and dare the master to beat a freeman. Now who's being quixotic?

While I am in a censorious mood. Does it bother you just as much when "Welsh" or "gyp" is used for "cheat" as it does for "Jew", or how about when J.A.P. is pronounced "Jap", or when "flip" is used as a noun. As for Andy killing himself if he was a young Jewish handicapped black female, there are worst things to be, say an American Indo-Chinese, or a pro-shah Iranian, or a Russian Jew or Christian, or a dozen other oppressed minorities that don't have the clout to keep themselves a "fashionable cause". What I am harping on is the "wheels that squeak get the oil" attitude that we seem to operate by. Just like hemlines, causes are taken up and dropped as they go in and out of vogue. Heaven help the Blacks, Jews, Women, and Handicapped if ever the Press loses interest in them, because they will go the way to oblivion as did the Gypsies, the Nisei, the American Indian, and the Polynesians.

((First of all, I think your analogy is false. There is a difference between active and passive discrimination. If the management of my company were to take an action clearly involving discrimination, I'd be very loud about it. I think that's my obligation. But it's a different case where you have people conditioned to believe they cannot progress within the company because of their sex or race or whatever. To draw an analogy with slavery in the US, I believe that there was an obligation to end slavery and provide the basics for setting the ex-slaves up to be self reliant. On the other hand, I do not think there is any right, let alone obligation, for the white abolitionist to now invade the personal lives of the ex-slaves and say, "Hey, you're not acting properly as a free person. This is what you have to do." That only perpetuates the slavery on another level. For a male manager to orchestrate the progress of his subordinate female is an unwarranted intrusion into her own life. Among other things, it forces her to continue as a dependent person. Her income may go up and her job title improve, but she is still a ward of a male. All we are doing is substituting velvet chains for steel.

Yes, "welsh" and "Jap" do offend me, and I have never heard "flip" used. I assume it must refer to Filipino? But to your point, no, I have never objected to the use of "gyp", which I never realized derived from gypsy until I read your letter. This may not be a totally satisfactory answer, but the fact is that I object to any term that causes offense. Some women are really annoyed to be referred to as "Ms", so I avoid that as well. There is obviously a great deal of truth to the "squeaky wheel" theory, and generally speaking I agree that many worthy causes languish because of low visibility. But I do not agree with you that an outsider has the right or obligation to take up that cause unless the oppressed minority is of the same mind. I am not sure enough of my own opinions that I feel I can unilaterally intervene. I believe, for example, that women are treated unfairly in the Mormon Church, but I'm not about to make it one of my personal issues.))



(JIM MANN) I agree; there's little those below upper management can do to eliminate sexism/racism/whateverism in a large company. Certainly the idealist approach -- quitting your job in protest -- won't work. A large company won't even notice, except indirectly (that is, they'll notice that something isn't going as smoothly/cheaply as before, but they won't be able to tell why). Major protests also don't work; they just tend to make the working environment uncomfortable for all concerned. I also agree with your point that it can be wrong for a man to help a woman pastt obstacles, that this somehow defeats the point of eliminating racism and sexism. However a number of things can help to chip away at sexist attitudes. For example, as a technical editor, I enforce nonsexist writing in work that goes through me. It is also helpful to sometimes simply call sexism/racism to the attention of those around you. Often people don't really know that they have sexist attitudes. When you point it out to them, they may make an effort to change. Even if they do know it, if they know that someone around them does not approve of the attitude, they may be less prone to act that way. This doesn't work with all people, but it works with some.

((I have no objection to making the working environment uncomfortable from time to time. It is impossible to manage a company without some strife among middle and top managers, much of it on a personal level. I doubt that you will find many people who will change their sexist attitudes simply because it is pointed out to them. If anything, you may reinforce it. What works is to make it more uncomfortable for them when they perform sexist acts. You can't really do that unless you are in a position of power yourself, which is why I consider the quitting-in-protest ploy to be totally useless.)))

(ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ) I wish I had read "Unfunny Business" back when I was in high school rather than learning a lot of it by trial and error. It was particularly interesting to see the discrimination situation from the manager's point of view. You wouldn't want to come be my manager, would you?

Your example of Andy really rang true to me. Your six alternatives for his future seemed to leave out what I suspect is the most common solution: a hybrid of pienes from many of your alternatives.

You don't point out that the "correct" solution will vary greatly depending upon what industry one is in. For example, in my own field (computer science) it is quite normal and even expected for one to change companies in relatively short periods of time. Indeed, unless one does, one's salary becomes extremely off from the average for one's position. Seniority is much less of a factor than it appears to be in your own field.

One thing you don't mention is the downright awkwardness of being in a minority. I am the only woman in my own work department. Although there are other women around, they are significantly less in number (and particularly in power) than the men. One comment Sheila made at a RISFA North meeting was that David's generation of kids is growing up in a society where women are in all fields in more significant numbers. I have less hope, particularly in the scientific professions, which are still heavily male. The small percentage of women can be a discrimination of its very own, since there isn't the ability to use a strong woman as a mentor.

((I've read that computer science is actually the most promising field for women, so your comments seem to indicate that even there it is a small hope. The point about women and power is important. Let me provide an actual example. We have a female employee in middle management of considerable intelligence. Her job title indicates considerable authority, although in actual fact she seems to defer all decisions to others. She is aggressive and would like a higher position. She is unlikely to attain one, or keep one if she were provided the chance, and the cause would not be sexism. The cause would be that she misunderstands power and the ways to get it and exercise it.

For example, she objects to taking notes and writing up minutes of meetings, on the right grounds that she is not a secretary any longer. On the other hand, I ALWAYS take notes and write the minutes of meetings I attend, because this provides power. Not only can I exercise retroactive judgment in emphasizing and de-emphasizing things, I also become the nexus for future action on the same subject. I am far more likely to be told about changes in plans so that I can amend the minutes than I would be if I were merely listed on distribution.

Another example, I spend time talking to people, including clerical, the switch-board operators, etc. I try to treat everyone as co-workers rather than as bosses and subordinates. I am polite to the ones I don't personally like, and I try to be supportive of the ones I like. The young woman in question is openly contemptuous of anyone she doesn't like, and has developed some enemies among the clerical staff (and elsewhere). If, somewhere in the future, she has to depend on those same people for support, she's in a world of hurt. She does not understand that aside from all considerations of common manners, you just can't survive as a manager without at least a minimum of respect from those you manage.))

(ROY TACKETT) I thought "Unfunny Business" was funny. A matter of perspective. As a blue collar worker, I really cannot work up much sympathy for the problems of management teams. We are natural antagonists and if the managers are busy cutting each other's throats I will happily cheer them on. I know you are discussing the evils of discrimination, but discrimination at that level is not something I would get worked up about. From my point of view all bosses are alike anyway.

((But it does impact on the blue collar worker. For one thing, the effectiveness

of the management team affects the profitability of the company, which has impact on blue collar wages, benefits and job security. For another, almost all of our middle managers are drawn from blue collar workers. At that level, we have always been very good about promotion from within. Blue collar workers definitely have a stake in white collar problems.)))

(ERIC MAVER) I'm not in management myself and don't expect to be. As an Editor/Professional I figure I have a good deal -- big office, decent pay, all the secretarial and clerical help I want but no management headaches. Managers' headaches are especially severe here at the Coop since the Editorial Division managers are virtually powerless, every move being dictated by the higher ups and much of their authority over workers being usurped by personnel. We've had quite a stink here this past year, what with firings and general discontent in the Division and having seen the number of editors reduced from 140 to 83 in my three years on the job. I feel like a kind of survivor. A unionizing attempt lost by a handful of votes and now the company is studying a report put together by a management consulting firm. The problem is incompetent managers who know nothing about managing people. Numbers they are fine with people, well, people like you to say "Hi" to them in the hallway. Like you, I've been asked why I stay on in such a lunatic asylum, how I can live with myself wearing a tie to work, being involved in a large business when I detest business and the business mentality. My answer is less complicated than yours. I have a family to support and I recall what it's like to be unemployed.

The Coop blatantly discriminates. Always has. It recently lost a discrimination suit brought by a former female employee and various other suits are pending. For editors here there are five niches -- associate editor, senior editor, project editor, manager. The senior woman, who just retired, was here 30 years and never got to project editor. Currently there are no female senior editors -- the first supervisory position. (No, there's one.) We also have black editors. This isn't to say the company doesn't try to hire black editors to avoid the appearance of impropriety. It's just that when they interview, or work here a few months, it becomes obvious that they're not going to go anywhere and they leave. A few years ago the company was approached by a native of India. He'd apparently been deported for government corruption and caught on with a legal publishing firm elsewhere. There was a lot of talk about discrimination in hiring when he applied and the company was a bit jittery. To appease him they offered him some freelance work. He did it and shipped it back. Our writing is done on copy slips which are stored in boxes. The boxes went into storage until publication approached. Then someone finally looked at his work, it was discovered he hadn't actually done any. In some cases you might say there was an example of a company's good faith attempt to avoid discrimination backfiring. But for the Coop it was exactly what they deserved.

(MIMI ROGERS) I am not in management. I process words for a living these days, so I get to see some of the inner workings of the major regional bank I work for, perhaps better than I could if I worked in only one area. We have quite a few lending officers of the feminine gender -- one or two have moved up one step to manage small areas. The word processing area I work in is managed by women -- as one might expect, however, the managers over them are male. I get the feeling the lot of women in business will improve over the next decade or so as more women reach middle management levels. But how long will it take for it to no longer be odd to see a woman CFO at a major corporation? That will be the real barrier. What makes your essay ring true is your illustration of how right does not always prevail in the corporate

.....

world, and why. Maybe a few people will realize that these matters are much more complex than they seem to outsiders and will be a bit more understanding of the poor schmucks caught in the middle in these situations.

(CHRIS EBLIS) I've never held the kind of job that exposes one to corporate pulls and tugs and the need to progress through a hierarchy. I suppose the first "job" I held was as a migrant farm worker, although the pay (such as it was) went through my parents' names (and they kept the cash as well). The string of crummy jobs I held in Philadelphia and D.C. were just that, crummy, and when I met you out in Old High Anus I was already making it with mediocre articles and bad fiction. About the closest I ever came to a "professional" position was my brief stint as a reporter when old Maggie used her influence to get me hired. (I did a damn good job too, but they canned me right after I finally got to go to a Presidential news conference. I asked old Trickie if he'd have the same policy in Viet Nam if half the combat troops were women. Never got an answer to the question either.)

But I have heard variations of that remark about women not being able to make a decision. 's funny, but I've noticed that most men really don't want to make decisions either. Wasn't it you who told me the story of management by consensus? The representative form of government by its very nature reduces our ability to make decisions about our lives, and men -- theoretically more politically active than women -- seem just as agreeable to conceding responsibility and decisiveness to others in their stead. We don't force people to make decisions any more; often we don't even allow them to. As acerbic as some of the group sessions here often are, we still ALL participate in every significant decision affecting the community.

On the other hand, sometimes it is wise not to make a hasty decision. I don't know the context of the incident you describe, but some times a thoughtful delay is better than a rash act. A bad decision quickly made isn't likely to be of much help in running a business.

Point well taken, incidentally, about championing the underdog. I regret to say that isn't an exclusively male prerogative either. Some "feminist" figures with national credentials are not above hyping their own reputation by making a cause celebre out of someone else's life. I give a lot of credit to Honegger, who has been very careful not to become someone else's battle standard after her expulsion from Casablanca. It's bad enough that she'll spend the rest of her life with the spectre of the bunny suit remark hovering, the uninvited guest at her table. (I'll be a bit bitchy here though and tell you to drop reference to the Bendix people. I'd bet half my farm shares she screwed her way to the top, or as near the top as she got.)

While I feel a twinge of sympathy for Carol, the bored secretary, I'm elitist enough to quash it. The vast majority of people are twits; they haven't the courage to use their intelligence, the intelligence to spot their lack of will, the will to overcome their loss of freedom, or the freedom to bypass whatever else is hampering their progress. If she's stuck in a boring, no-future job, she should do something about it. Get educated. Get aggressive. Seduce the boss. Do something. Cory's method might not sit too well with most people, but it sounds like she doesn't give a shit about their opinions anyway. Why should she? You can't let the opinions of other people put constraints on your own life unless you share those opinions. It won't work.

Travis is another twit. Oh, yes, I know about how the older generation is conditioned by society to hold values that are hard to throw off. We throw off old opinions every day. The problem with Travis isn't that he wants to protect women, or that he feels that women can't deal with the realities of the marketplace. His problem is that he's afraid we'll steal his job (or even worse, become his boss), humiliate him in front of his wife and friends, poison the minds of his children, rip off his balls, and shuffle him off to the Home for the Mentally Degenerate. Cindy didn't just show him that his job was less important than he thought it was, she told him his entire life was meaningless, and maybe it is. What she should have done was invite him out behind the building and beaten him to a pulp. Failing that, she just has to find a lever to work in her favor, something that HE isn't quite perfect at, and use it as a counterthreat. Life is a perpetual balance of power.

(JOEL ROSENBERG) Do you ever send two-woman cop teams on foot patrols in, say, Bed-Sty, where you know that they're going to be challenged -- and more likely to end up either killing, or dead, or both -- more often than men would be? Or, alternately, do you keep the women cops in the stationhouse, and thereby deny them the ability to earn promotions in the same way that men do? If a firefighter is appropriately expected to have exceptional upper body strength, do you lower your standards for female applicants because insufficient female applicants do? Should there -- in this society, as it is -- be a legal supposition in divorce proceedings that the mother is the better custodial parent?

Should individuals seeking alimony be prosecuted under anti-prostitution laws? (No, not "fair division of community property" -- whatever that means -- I'm talking about paying for housekeeping and intercourse on a court-determined installment plan.) Would mixed sex combat teams be as effective as all-male ones? Can we take the chance that they wouldn't be? Can we take the chance that they would?

Or, to take a more SFional type of question: should members of a society support sexual egalitarianism in a situation where the institution of such would likely result in that society being wiped out? I'm NOT talking about late 20th Century America, but constructing that sort of situation is a trivial exercise. (It's possible to argue -- and I'll go through the whole rap sometime if you'd like -- that the appropriateness of most (though not quite all) equal rights legislation and practice is inversely related to infant mortality and the frequency of death during labor.)

(MAIA COWAN) D. Gary Grady says: "There is no reason, for example, for the law to require a man to support his family without making some similar demand on women." For the record, last I checked there IS no law, in any state, that REQUIRES a man to provide financial support for his family. The only exception is in the case of separation or divorce decree, where the financial settlement is part of the action. Then, the spouse with the greater resources is expected to contribute to the support of the spouse with the lesser -- and in virtually all cases, which is the husband and which is the wife? I think it would be really nifty if women had the resources to make an equal contribution.

((The quote I abstracted from Gary's letter did in fact deal with a divorce settlement.))

(MIKE GLICKSOHN) Your description of the regular activities that take place in the world of business made me realize yet again how glad I am not to be earning my living in that area. I realize that I'm not likely to convince you of the joys of teaching as a career but for me at least it's an ideal way of working. Female teachers get exactly the same salaries as male teachers and have exactly the same responsibilities. In thirteen years as a high school teacher I cannot recall a single instance of a woman who was sexually harassed on the job, discriminated against because of her sex or treated any differently than I was. (I'm not naive enough to believe this situation exists everywhere, of course, but in my own school and my own board it seems to be true.) The situations you describe as being so commonplace appall me and I agree that the worst aspect of all is the seeming inability of those concerned by what's going on to DO anything about it. Women who want a fair shake in the working world could do a lot worse than go into teaching. At least in Canada.

(ED ROM) "Unfunny Business" was extremely interesting, and not a little depressing. It strikes me that many, if not most, people in management today are more concerned with prestige and money than with doing their most effective job. This may spell the doom of our civilization; individualism is only a productive force so long as the individuals in question operate from a collective moral basis that is higher than the principle of self-aggrandizement.

This unthinking egotism is, I feel, responsible for a lot of real unhappiness -- the sex discrimination you spoke of, low profile discrimination, and so forth. It is easier for a person to hold the unthinking prejudices you discuss when his prime directive is "Me First"; he can rationalize the most outrageous actions, because he personally is the beneficiary, at least in the short run. This is different from enlightened self interest. If one possesses this quality, he will treat people as they deserve, if for no other reason than to safeguard himself from vengeance.

I have what I believe is an interesting observation. Nowhere in this article could I find any mention of what it is your company produces. Are you yourself so caught up in the "office politics" mentality that your actual job (as opposed to position) has become of secondary importance to you?

((No, the omission was intentional, designed to emphasize that this situation is not particular to any company or industry. As a matter of fact, we manufacture silverplated holloware, such as tea sets, water pitchers, trays, etc.)))

## MISCELLANEOUS

(ARTHUR D. HLAVATY) I do not claim to understand WANDERING, but I like it. Lots.

(ED ROM) The piece "Wandering" struck me as being a waste of time, pretentious avant-garde silliness. I hope SOMEONE enjoyed it, because I didn't.

((One of the nice things about having your own fanzine is that you can write and publish pretentious avant-garde silliness if you want, and no one can stop you.)))

(PAUL SKELTON) Regarding "The Hunchback & the Amputees": "The amputee was rubbing his forehead and smiling triumphantly." Well, I'm not surprised -- a neat trick that, for an amputee. Presumably he was rubbing it down the wall, though in truth I

can't see what comfort he could draw from such an action. Of course, I hope the story is open ended and that Quasi didn't simply give up after his first two hunch...er, setbacks. After all, if he'd taken ship across the Atlantic Ocean and trekked up to the frozen north he would surely have stumbled across the fabled female eskimo pulp-fiction writer, Kay Hack, whose campanological prowess was celebrated in the famous "The Ballad of Eskimo Knell".

Of course, I hope you realize that this little tale, superficially harmless (oh my ghod!) as it may seem is in reality highly offensive to amputees in that it suggests that all amputees are also thick in the head, bong-brains in the ultimate sense of the word -- el dimmo! So, in an issue in which you address some of the evils of sexist behavior, you reveal yourself to be...stumpist. This is a stumpist article you have published if ever I've read one. I cannot let you get away with this. After all, some of my best friends are basket cases. Well, nearly. Well, actually the silly Baskets are all head-cases, but that's near enough. The thing is, I think you've been out of it so long that you've forgotten how easily some wazzock-heads will take offense at even the most innocent remark. Gotta watch it these days, boss. Some people don't seem to have no sensayumor.

(SUE ANDERSON) David's writing style is impressive. His subject...well, we were all young onst. Oncet? Wunst? Beats Feghoots...Mind "Wandering"? Free association? "The difference between the Land of Mordor and the Land of Oz is that in the Land of Oz the shadows tell the truth." See how it all hangs together, because if it didn't, it would all hang separately? Two can play at this game. "The Last straw" indeed.

(DAVID D'AMMASSA) For those concerned over the little loophole in "The Hunchback" where a man minus his arms begins rubbing his head: Indeed, this is very strange. Perhaps he is a new race and grew arms when Quasi's back was turned. Perhaps he was rubbing his head with his knee. Have mercy, I wrote this when I was twelve. Regarding the story you told about the bug that flew in your ear...since when would, even me, go to school on a "summer" morning? I was helping you, against my will, clean the garage and you drove off to get breakfast. On your way you had a window open and this thing flew in your ear.

((No, actually it flew in as I was on the way to the car, but I didn't realize what had happened for a few minutes.)))

(RICHARD BRANDT) Ha ha! Our car still runs after 100,000 miles.

((Ha yourself. Our rotary Mazda has nearly 200,000 miles on it, and the only part of the engine we've had to replace is the water pump.)))

(ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ) I particularly enjoyed the many different episodes of Isabella Figholler you published. I must say that I was, however, rather surprised to see one written by the late Paul Alan Sheffield. I mourned his death greatly when I had to publish your account of it in ALVEGA many years ago. However, I had not realized that there was even more of his work undiscovered. It is delightful to see something of his published.

((Sheffield was such a devoted craftsman that I feel certain he would not allow a little setback like death to hamper his career.)))

(IAN COVELL) I'm not sure how to react to the series of punny stories, some extremely elaborate and almost science fiction proper: I have a feeling that puns slide by quickly and make no contribution to the language. In short, of course, "The pun is slightier than the word."

(RICHARD BRANDT) Finally I have a beef with you. The bane of my existence are critical writers who get their facts fucked up. John Kessel's "Another Orphan" did NOT win a Hugo as well as a Nebula. It lost to Joanna Russ's "Souls".

(( ( MEA CULPA, MEA MAXIMA CULPA. )))

(JOSEPH NICHOLAS)

If you think I'm likely to write you a letter of comment on MYTHOLOGIES 15 after the insulting garbage you wrote about me in HOLIER THAN THOU 18, then you have another think coming.

(( (What's the problem, Joseph? I thought it was only American fans who didn't have a sense of humor? )))

WAHF: Jeanne Gomoll, Sam Long, David Stever, Tony Alsobrook-Renner, Randy Reichardt, Alan Beatty, Ken Nahigian, Lee Carson again, Sheryl Birkhead again, Brad Foster again, Ben Indick again, and Steven Sikora again.

Among the many people who contributed to this issue are the following, but with special thanks to Sheila who ran the mimeograph.

Alyson Abramowitz, 33 Sylvia Street, Lexington, MA 02173  
 Sue Anderson, 19 Summit Street, East Providence, RI 02914  
 Harry Andruschak, PO BOX 606, La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91011  
 Doug Barbour, 10808 75th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1K2, Canada  
 John Betancourt, 410 Chester Ave, Moorestown, NJ 08057  
 Steven Bieler, Box 1870, Seattle, WA 98111  
 Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20760  
 Richard Brandt, 322 Limonite Circle, El Paso, TX 79932  
 Marty Cantor, 11565 Archwood Street, N. Hollywood, CA 91606  
 Avedon Carol, 4409 Woodfield Road, Kensington, MD 20895  
 Lee Carson, 3304 Calwagner Avenue, Franklin Park, IL 60131  
 Ian Covell, 2 Copgrove Close, Berwick Hills, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS3 7BP,  
 England  
 Maia Cowan, 652 Cranbrook Rd #3, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013  
 Brett Cox, 16 Forest Avenue, Tabor City, NC 28463  
 David D'Amrassa, 323 Dodge Street, East Providence, RI 02914  
 Larry Downes, 2330 N. Clark St #301, Chicago, IL 60614  
 Brad Foster, 4109 Pleasant Run, Irving, TX 75038  
 Gil Gaier, 1016 Beech Avenue, Torrance, California  
 Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3C6, Canada  
 Ernest Heramia, 167 Central Avenue, East Providence, RI 02914  
 Arthur D. Klavaty, 819 W. Markham Avenue, Durham, NC 27701

Wayne Hooks, Rt 4 Box 677, Nichols, SC 29581  
Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666  
Dennis Jarog, PO Box 48461, Niles, IL 60648  
Mark M. Keller, 134 Rochambeau, Providence, Rhode Island 02906  
Jim Mann, 87A Pearl Street, Newton, MA 02158  
Eric Mayer, 1771 Ridge Road E., Rochester, NY 14622  
Jeanne Mealy, 2633 Dupont Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55408  
Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, United Kingdom  
Debbie Notkin, 1903 Virginia Street #3, Berkley, CA 94709  
David Palter, 1811 Tamarind Avenue #22, Hollywood, CA 90028  
Bill Patterson, 537 Jones Street # 9943, San Francisco, CA 94102  
Mike Rogers, PO Box 19933, Atlanta, GA 30325  
Joel Rosenberg, 1477 Chapel Street Apt B-4, New Haven, CT 06511  
Jessica Amanda Salmonson, PO Box 20610, Seattle, WA 98102  
Ed Rom, PO Box 685, Mankato, MN 56002  
Steven Sikora, PO Box 6218, Albany, CA 94706  
Al Sirois, Box 512, 258 Park Street, New Haven, CT 06511  
Paul Skelton, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK2 5NW, England  
Sheryl Smith, 40425 Chapel Way #310, Fremont, CA 94538  
Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107  
Gene Wolfe, Box 69, Barrington, IL 60010

And my apologies to anyone else whom I might have missed inadvertently.

As this last stencil was being typed, I received letters from Joy Hibbert and Dave Rowley, parts of which will appear in MYTHOLOGIES 17, which is due out toward the end of 1984.

I am still looking for addresses for the following people: Mike Bracken, John Leland, John Curlovich, Loren MacGregor, Jennifer Bankier, Joe Napolitano, Chris Sherman, and Bill Breiding. Thank all of you who provided information on some of the people I was looking for last time.

I am seriously considering reprinting a run of MYTHOLOGIES 14. Because of the six year gap between issues, the letters of comment on that 116 page issue were never printed. There is a possibility that I will do a second edition of that issue sometime between now and the next regular issue. If I do so, copies will be mailed to those who loc this current issue and a few selected others only, so it will not be a general mailing. But I promise nothing.

Despite its genzine format, MYTHOLOGIES has always been designed to be primarily a personalzine and a letterzine. Nevertheless, I do use occasional pieces by outside contributors. I have very fussy and not particularly explicit standards, however, and am looking for things that will spark discussions rather than even well written pieces which are much like what you read elsewhere. For example, Ken Nahigian sent me an extremely cogent discussion of the Creationist view of the world, which I found fascinating, but which was a bit too long for even my tastes. (It would have run about 25 pages.) Nevertheless, that is the kind of material I am looking for; something that doesn't quite fit in elsewhere.

I also am an appreciative recipient of interior artwork, although in small quantities. This does not imply that I don't enjoy the artwork, but rather reflects my orientation toward the printed word and my grudging relinquishment of space for anything else.