

# Don-o-saur

49



A personal journal of science fiction commentary (and just about every other conceivable kind), published about four times a year by Don C. Thompson, 7498 Canosa Court, Westminster, Colo. 80030. Phone (303) 429-6562. Available for trade, letters of comment, artwork, or money.

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Press run this issue is about 550, done entirely on offset.

DEDICATIONS: The dedication for issue 48 (unfortunately done in invisible ink) actually read: *To poet, artist, scientist, scholar, world traveler, musician -- Renaissance woman: GAIL BARTON.*

And issue 49 is dedicated: *To BARB -- with infinite regret and equal affection.*



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## Art Credits

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# AUTOCLAVE 2

July 22-24, 1977      Detroit

*GoHs.* Don D'Ammassa  
Don C. Thompson

*Toastmaster.* Jon Singer

**PROGRAMMING:** Once again AutoClave will orient its programming toward fannish fandom, fanzine fandom, and fans and fandom in general. We plan a series of panels and seminars that will outdo even last year as well as some special surprises unique to AutoClave.

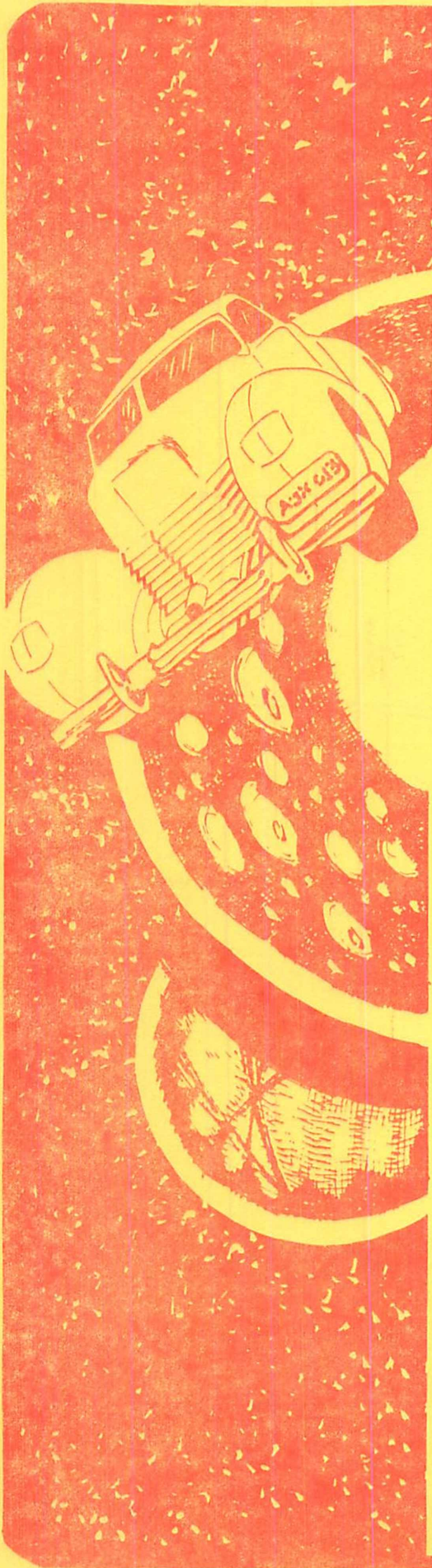
**REGISTRATION:** \$5 in advance, \$6 after July 1, 1977, \$7 at the door. Make checks payable to the Metro Detroit Science Fiction Society, Inc.

**HUCKSTERS' ROOM:** Hucksters' tables are \$10 for the first table, \$7 for the second. To reserve a table contact Howard DeVore, 4705 Weddel St., Dearborn Heights, MI 48125, (313) 105-4157.

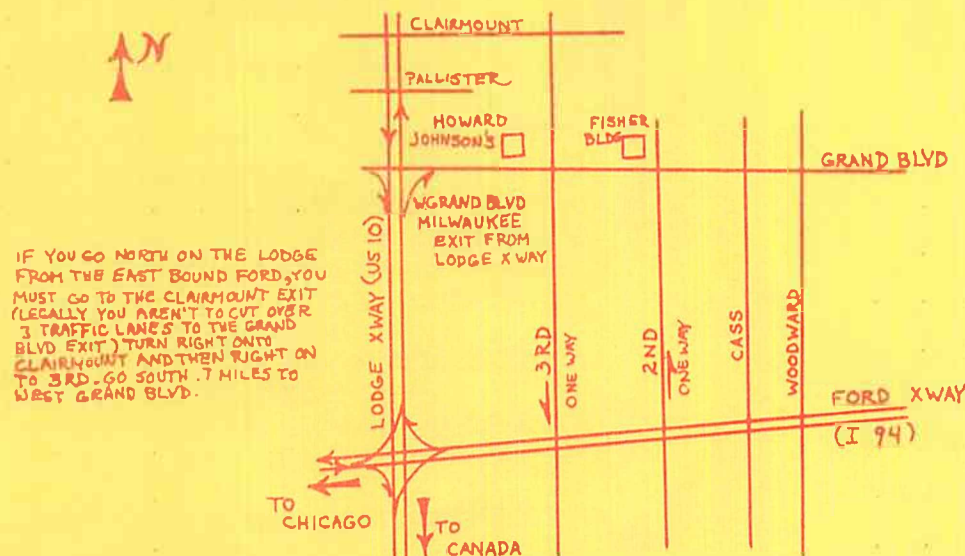
**ART SHOW:** For information about the art show and auction contact John R. Benson, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224, (313) VE9-8355.

**BANQUET:** This year's banquet will be a buffet and we promise a significant improvement over last year. **MENU:** Variety of cold salads, assorted jello molds, relish tray; hot vegetable and potato; carved round of beef, hickory smoked ham, baked spring chicken; sheet cake and ice cream; beverage. Tickets are \$7.50. The hotel requires a guarantee 48 hours in advance, so if you want to be sure to get tickets please purchase them in advance.

**PROGRAM BOOK:** Advertising in the AutoClave program book is \$10 per page. Send 4½ x 7 camera ready copy only. Deadline for ads is July 1, 1977.



**HOTEL:** Howard Johnson's New Center Motor Lodge, West Grand Boulevard at Third Avenue, Detroit, MI 48202, (313) 872-0400. **RATES:** Single (one person/one bed) \$20; Double (two people/one bed) \$25; Twin (two people/two beds) \$28; Triple (three people/two beds) \$33; Quad (four people/two beds) \$36. All rooms have double beds. If you make your reservations by phone be sure and mention AutoClave 2. Howard Johnson's facilities include a heated indoor pool, which will be available to members of the convention after its regular closing time, as well as during the day. Parking is \$1 per day.



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Illo by Kucharski. Cartography by Benson.

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# AUTOCLAVE 2

c/o Leah A Zeldes  
21961 Parklawn, Oak Park, MI 48237





It's midnight, between Friday, May 27, and Saturday, May 28, and I have just now finally gotten started on this issue. To put it another way, I consider myself halfway through. All that remains is the work. The really difficult part -- overcoming inertia -- has now been accomplished.

I have only a vague idea of what this issue will be like; I don't have any major innovations in mind -- no special features or supplements, no fancy new printing equipment that I'm dying to show off (although you may see some experimentation with colored ink because I'm learning that it is actually possible to use different colors on my press without making an un-clean-uppable mess). I don't even have any immediately compelling revelations from my personal life to unload on you -- but that situation could easily change before my monologue has run its course.

So what's going to happen is that I will just talk for a while about whatever occurs to me to talk about, and maybe before long the random thoughts will start organizing themselves into an essay or discourse and then I can start worrying about holding it down to a decent length.

My target date for completion of DoS 49, incidentally, is June 15. That's for finishing the writing part, I mean. I give myself until the end of the month -- until Westercon, that is -- to do the printing, collating and mailing. It can be done.

Matter of fact, I have done some prior thinking about what to talk about in this issue. Several different things have been uppermost in my mind at different times in recent weeks. For example, it has occurred to me, not for the first time, by any means, that even though I have mentioned to you previously, almost in passing, that I am an alcoholic, I have never told anything much about my drinking years (there were about ten of them, I can see now, during which the increasingly heavy drinking became a really serious problem -- that doesn't seem like such a terribly long time, now, inasmuch as it's already been longer than that since I quit drinking); nor have I talked about my deep-down reasons for drinking, or my deep-down reasons for quitting. And it occurred to me that since I was able to tell about my burglaries without precipitating the end of the world, I might also be able to discuss my alcoholism. Well, I'm not going to do it, but not because it would be at all difficult. It wouldn't; at least not in the psychological-torment sense of difficult. I'm afraid it would just be dull. For me it would be. I have discovered, upon reflection, that my drinking problem has long since ceased to seem important to me, and the memories of the idiotic things I did and said and thought

during that era are more boring than they are amusing or interesting or disturbing.

I feel almost like I should have some guilt twinges for even expressing that attitude, because I know as well as anyone that a dried-out alcoholic does have a certain moral obligation to help other alcoholics who are still trying to dry out. And how can I discharge that obligation if the whole subject just bores me? Well, I like to think that I have, in spite of everything, helped a few people and will be able, still, to help others. And it could be that my example of apathy -- showing that alcohol need not be the most important thing in an alcoholic's life-- has some value in itself. I don't really know. For whatever reason, though, I don't have the guilt feelings that might be expected.

And so I don't want to write about my days of wine and roses (or bourbon and dandelions, or whatever).

Well, there's death . . .

Yeah, only one thing -- the fact that I have already written a good deal more about death than many of you care to hear -- prevents me from filling a dozen pages or so with morose reflections on the death of Michael Berk, because it has taken up a lot of my thinking time since around the middle of April, when it happened.

I suppose that, in fairness, I must now tell at least enough about Michael to explain why I mentioned him at all and why I would write about him at length here if I hadn't already written too much about deaths.

I hardly knew Michael Berk, actually. I would doubtless never have known him at all except for Barb. (You remember Barb; I've written about her two or three times before: former student, believer in rainbows, pursuer of dreams. She's going to be a jockey -- the first woman rider to win the Kentucky Derby).

This is a story of star-crossed lovers if there ever was one. When I first met Barb, more than two years ago, she had two desires in life. One was Michael and the other was riding, and both seemed unattainable, and Barb was in a state of near-total despair. Fortunately she was able and willing to talk about it, once she'd found someone willing to listen -- and I was more than willing. In several intense sessions, Barb poured out all her dreams and despair, and just in the process of talking, I think, talked herself into not giving up. (I did some talking -- trying to convince her that life was worth what it cost -- but it was her own talking that saved her). So I learned most of what there was to know about Michael before I even met him.

Michael's family and Barb's family live near each other in Crystal Lake, Ill. Barb and Michael's sister had been close friends in childhood but Michael was not at home when Barb first became a frequent visitor in the Berk household. He was already a fugitive, a draft evader. (Remember the 60s?). He was some nine or ten years older than Barb. She fell in love with his picture. When he was home on one of his rare and furtive visits, she fell hopelessly, totally and eternally in love with him. He became central to her existence.



Hey, I'm going to ask one favor of you as I tell what I can of this story: Try not to make judgments, okay? Remember that I am not telling the story here. If I ever do tell it all, if I ever learn enough of it to tell, it will be in the book that I will someday write about Barb, and even there I will ask the readers to please not make judgments, because I will not have been able to provide enough background information to make fair and balanced judgments possible; and that becomes even more important here, where I'm telling hardly anything -- only a few isolated incidents in an effort only to explain why I would (and eventually will) write of this at length, under different circumstances.

So when I tell you, for instance, that Michael's father killed himself, I can't fill in all the intricacies of motivation and character and circumstance that would enable you to understand that as a unique event, and what I am asking is that you try to refrain from making the standard moral judgments that you might automatically make in response to the word "suicide." Maybe what I am asking is impossible, but it's important to me (partly because I am trying very hard to not make any judgments myself) and I'll appreciate your effort.

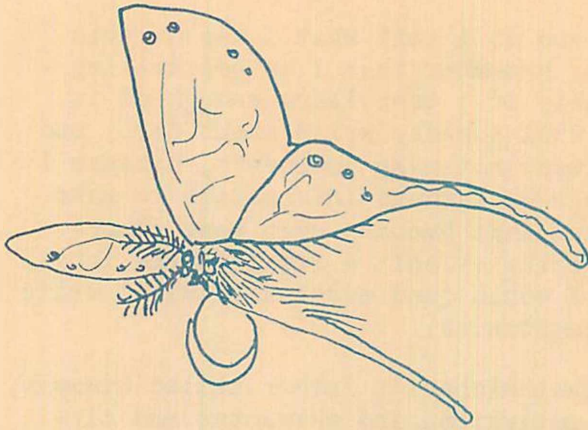
All right, then. Michael's father killed himself. And all I know about it is what Barb told me: Mr. Berk was a compulsive gambler; he had run up debts beyond his ability to pay. He faced bankruptcy and financial ruin. He killed himself, but in such a way that the death was declared accidental. The insurance company paid; the debts were cleared; the family was able to stay where it was. Except for Michael, of course, who was and remained for something like ten years a quarry of the FBI.

I never got many of the details of Michael's career as a fugitive. Barb told me some. Michael told me a little, and he'd agreed to tell me the whole story -- someday. He refused, for whatever reason, to stay safely in Canada. He hid out with friends in various parts of the U.S. He took odd jobs occasionally but seldom dared take steady employment, always feeling that the authorities were close behind him. He became an expert pool hustler and adept at various other con games. He sponged shamelessly from his friends when he had to -- girl friends, primarily. Including Barb.

Barb was a rebellious and unmanageable teen-ager, maybe even before she met and fell in love with Michael, but afterwards, for certain. She ran away from home several times to be with him, spending occasional weekends with him in motels around Chicago, or as far away as California and Nevada. They never had much time together. When they were together, it was Barb who paid the expenses, either from money she'd earned in factory jobs near home or from any kind of temporary work she could get on the run. Michael always needed money. Barb told me that she once had to pay \$1,000 to get Michael out of jail.

Somehow, sometime during this period, Michael developed a heroin addiction. Somehow he overcame it.

Somehow Barb graduated from high school, and she set out immediately in pursuit of the dream of making a permanent life with Michael. The quest took her to Colorado Springs, and then to Denver early in 1975.



For reasons bordering on hopelessness and simple desperation, Barb enrolled as a freshman student at Metropolitan State College. It was something to do while she tried to think, to get her life to make some kind of sense. Michael was living with two girl friends who had well-paying jobs (nurses, I believe). He was comfortable, relatively safe. And the girls, apparently, considered him theirs. They resented Barb. She was most unwelcome. Barb had a weekend job as a cafeteria worker in one of

the Denver hospitals and was living in a one-room apartment about halfway between work and school. She had nothing at all to offer Michael except herself and her love -- and she was by no means sure that he loved her at all. He was willing to spend a night or two with her about once a month, but he wouldn't even talk about any kind of permanent arrangement.

In her pain and humiliation and sheer frustration, Barb was thinking and talking seriously about ending her own life. She also talked herself out of it.

I had no way of knowing it at the time, but it was really her other dream that came to her rescue.

And I don't know how far back in her life the other dream goes. It was not something new, by any means. She had loved horses all her life, had in fact owned two horses -- Barbelle and Ballerina. But being a jockey was not something she had really worked at -- not in the same sense that she'd worked at winning Michael.

Now however, possibly for the first time, she saw the one dream as a means of achieving the other. She fantasized herself in jockey's silks, triumphant, in the winner's circle, and Michael in the crowd, admiring her, respecting her, loving her . . .

She described the fantasy to me in just about those terms, and I concealed my amazement as best I could, shaking my head sadly.

"Oh, Barb, if he doesn't love you already, for what you are now . . . "

But she had decided. That was the way it was going to be. It was the only way she could see that it could be. I am ashamed now of how little confidence I had in the strength of Barb's dream. After all, girls do sometimes have some pretty foolish fantasies; and though Barb was a lot different from any girl I had ever known before, I did not yet realize just how different.

"Do you believe I'll be able to do this?" she asked me, challengingly. This was near the end of June, 1975. She had spent a month after the end of school, trying to get any kind of work at the Centennial race track. It was after a particularly tiring and frustrating day. "Do you believe?"

Unwilling to lie, unable to believe, I spread my hands helplessly. "Oh, Barb, I just don't know. I don't see how."



I had a lot to learn.

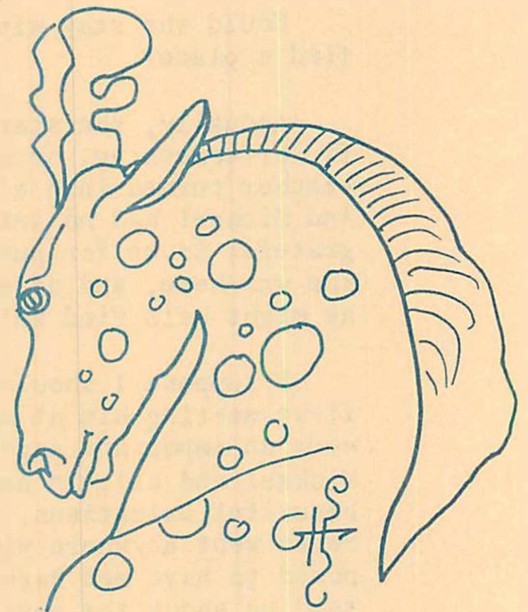
I met Michael for the first time during that month. Barb had left her job at the hospital and had moved into a converted motel room apartment near the race track while she was trying, first, to get on at Centennial, and then, accepting failure in that, trying to decide whether to get some other kind of job or leave Denver entirely, go back home, try other race tracks . . . or what.

Michael had borrowed a car from one of his other girl friends and was taking Barb into the mountains camping for a weekend, and I happened to be with Barb when he arrived -- helping her wait, because he was an hour or so late and Barb wasn't even certain he would make it. But he did.

He was a perfectly ordinary young man, as far as I could tell -- of medium height and build, clean shaven, with pleasant enough features, rather soft-spoken. By no means the demi-god that Barb had described. He called Barb "Barbie," which irritated me more than it should have for reasons I didn't care to examine. He was in very much of a hurry, so I had no chance to get acquainted with him.

It was eight months before I saw him again.

Barb left Denver, beaten, defeated, but still unvanquished, on July 5, 1975. I had no real hope of ever seeing her again (and I had no real idea yet of how much I was going to miss her); and Barb had no clear notion of what she was going to do. She was going back to Crystal Lake. There were factory jobs there; there were race tracks around Chicago. Sooner or later she would get work with one of the racing stables, if not in the Chicago area then someplace else. That was her only plan.



It happened much sooner than I would have believed possible. In a matter of weeks, rather than months or years, I got a note from her telling me that she'd been hired as a groom and stable hand by Sarad Stables-- a name that meant nothing at all to me then (and in fact the only thing it means now is Barb).

I heard from her only at infrequent intervals after that -- a couple of times by telephone, and two or three postcards or short notes. She went to Kentucky, where the stables was headquartered, then to Florida. Then, for three or four months, nothing at all.

And then, one bright and shining afternoon early in March 1976 (it may have been snowing, but it suddenly seemed bright and shiny) there was another phone call, and it was Barb. And she was in Denver. She and Michael were at a motel near the airport. She had flown from Florida and arrived the night before. They would stay at the motel for another night.

But then . . . Michael had written to her, pleading with her to come

back, begging her, saying he was leaving the girls he was living with, that he already had a job, but that he needed her. Barb flew back. Even though she was finally starting to get some riding experience in her job and she was afraid that if she left it now she might never get back to racing, she quit the job and returned to Michael.

But Michael had no place for her to stay. He had not yet left the other girls. His job paid almost literally nothing. He had belatedly taken advantage of the Ford amnesty program and he was serving as a counselor at a boys camp. He liked the work and there was a good chance he would be placed on salary later.

However, for the present, he had no place for Barb to stay. She was paying for the motel. She had about \$200 -- enough to get a cheap apartment for a month and live on until she could find a job as a waitress or something. Michael would move in with her -- sometime.

Could she stay with me for a few days? Just until she and Michael could find a place?

Actually, she stayed about a week, because she was sick (some kind of virus; flu or something, or maybe tonsillitis; nothing lethal or contagious) and the weather turned into a blizzard, rendering apartment hunting an impossibility. And Michael had no interest in helping to find a place. He was extravagantly grateful to me for putting Barb up, the couple of times that I saw him while she was here, and afterwards too. But it never seemed to occur to him that he might help find an apartment. I helped her find one.

I suppose I should have mentioned Michael's dogs, back when I told about first meeting him at Barb's motel apartment. They were with him then; they were an important aspect of Michael, and they are all that Carolyn knows about Michael and all, in her view, that she needed to know. Bacon and Hammer, two beautiful Dalmatians, a father-and-son pair. He'd had them for years and he never went anywhere without them. He called the house once when he was supposed to have met Barb at her new apartment. Only Carolyn was home, and she told me about the conversation later.

"He was hysterical, almost in tears. The dogs ran off (chasing a bitch in heat, Michael told me later) and he'd been looking for them for hours and hadn't found them. He was frantic. He kept telling me how much he loved those dogs, how much they meant to me. He never did ask how Barb was."

The dogs did turn up, after Michael had spent that day and all night driving and walking around looking for them, placing ads in the papers and calling everybody he could think of. And he paid \$20 reward to the kids who finally led him to them -- getting the money from Barb.

Barb stayed in the apartment only a couple of weeks. Reluctantly and a bit slowly (it seemed to me) she faced the fact that she was miserable. Michael wanted her to get a job and stay put in the apartment. He would visit her occasionally and then, when his job was on a paying basis, he would move in with her. They could be happy together, if Barb could just be patient and wait for him.

During several long, long talks while she was living with me and Carolyn, and additional long talks after she'd moved into the apartment, Barb told me



something of what incredibly hard and dangerous work being a groom was -- and how much she loved it; and I got some idea of how much she cared about the horses that she cared for.

The thought of a future without horses, without at least being able to work toward what she was beginning to consider the impossible dream of being a jockey, was making her physically sick. Or keeping her sick. She was very slow recovering from the virus. She had a couple of relapses just when she seemed almost well enough to start looking for a job. And it seemed to her that she hardly ever saw Michael. She wouldn't even hear from him for three or four days at a time, and then he might show up and spend a few minutes or a few hours, rarely an entire night.

One afternoon in the middle of March, after Michael had spent the night with Barb and then left again, Barb asked me if I could take her to the bus station. Immediately.

"I love him, but I've got to leave. This just isn't going to work. But if I don't leave right now I'm not sure I ever can. I can't even tell Michael I'm leaving. He would talk me out of it; he could, easily. Do you suppose you could . . . do it for me? Explain to him why I have to leave? Talk to him, or write him a letter? Try to get him to understand. I don't want him to feel too bad."

"I'll try," I promised as I kissed her and put her on the bus for Chicago -- for the second time. It was not yet to be the last.

I did write a letter to Michael, trying to explain Barb to him, trying to make him understand why she'd had to leave without even telling him. I left the letter in the apartment. Michael had one key to it; Barb had given me the other. When I checked back a few days later, the letter was still there, but it had been moved and so I knew Michael had seen it. A week or so later, on one of the times when I stopped in at the apartment, Michael was there, and I had, really for the first time, a longish talk with him. But the dogs were with him, and he talked mostly about them; it was very much just surface talk. He was genuinely disappointed, hurt and unhappy at Barb's leaving, but he wouldn't talk much about it.

"If she'd just been willing to wait. I had just been put on salary there the camp, just starting to get paid. Barb could've gotten a job. We'd have had plenty of money, man, we'd have had it made. Why couldn't she just have held on for a while?"

All I could do was repeat some of the things I'd said in the letter -- that the work with horses had become an obsession with Barb, that she loved him but would be miserable doing any kind of work except having something to do with racing. Michael would not discuss the issue.

I kind of lost track of Michael after the rent on the apartment ran out. I heard, from Barb, I guess, that he had started drinking heavily and wasn't able to hold on to the camp counselor job, but it was quite a while before I heard anything directly from Michael again.

With phone calls and occasional notes, Barb kept me more or less

up to date on her activities. For several reasons, she didn't want to go back to the stables she had left. She had borrowed a lot of money from her sister, for one thing. So she went back to Crystal Lake, got a factory job, paid off her sister, then took a bus part way and hitch-hiked the rest of the way to Boston or some such place. I never did get it straight what that was all about -- I don't remember exactly where she went and I never knew why she went there. She had to borrow money to get back home again. She worked another month or so in the factory and then she wrote to me from the Potomoc Horse Center in Gaithersburg, Md., a place name that should sound familiar to many of you, but I don't think Sheryl Birkhead was there at the time; I would have liked for Barb and Sheryl to meet.

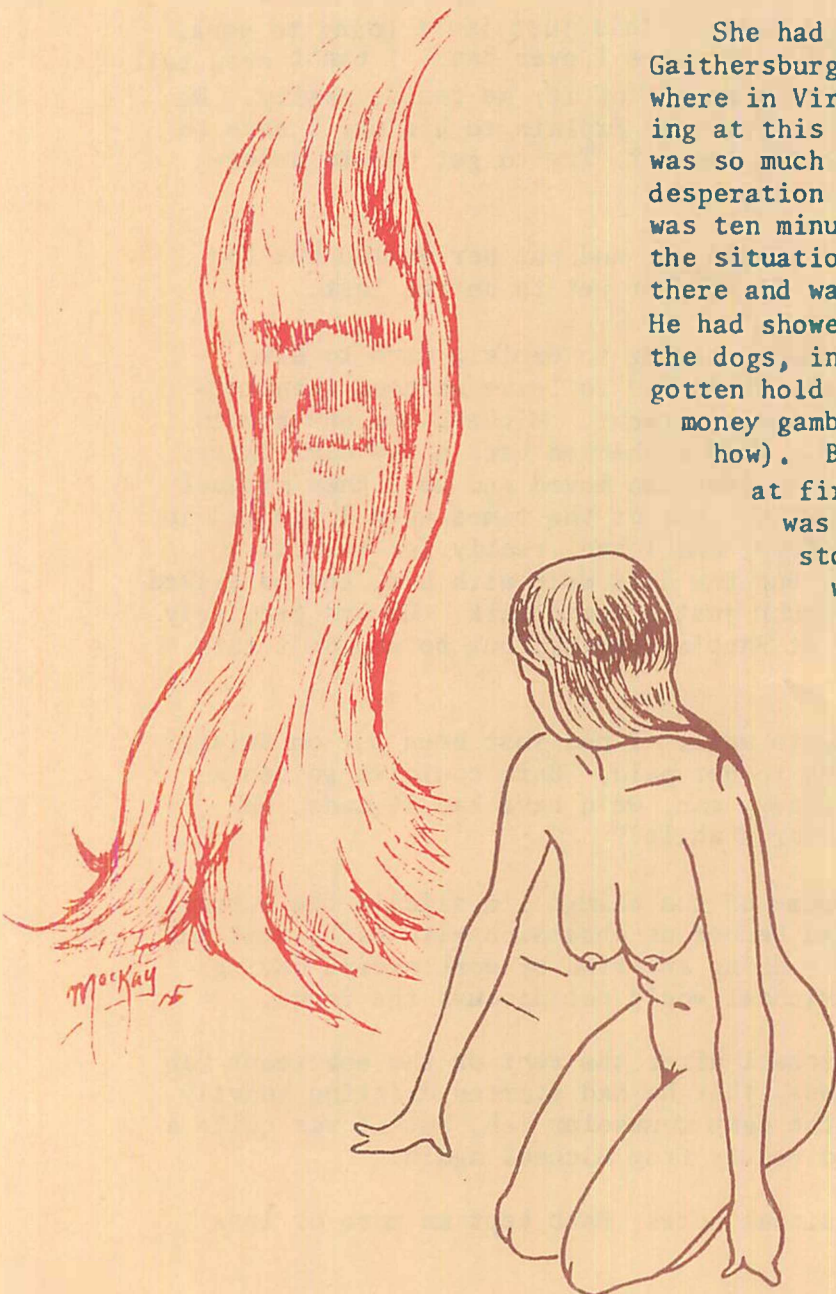
It was six weeks or so before I heard from Barb again, and then it was a phone call at about 3 o'clock in the morning, just as I was about to get ready for bed (3 a.m. is more or less my normal bedtime, but it was later than Barb usually calls).

She had graduated from the riding school in Gaithersburg and was now at a horse farm somewhere in Virginia. And the reason she was calling at this unlikely hour, and the reason there was so much apprehension, panic, exhaustion, desperation in her voice (and incoherency; it was ten minutes or so before I was able to get the situation sorted out) was that Michael was there and was demanding that she leave with him. He had showed up a couple of days before, with the dogs, in a pickup truck that he had somehow gotten hold of enough money to buy. (He got the money gambling, but I never found out where or how). Barb was surprised and delighted --

at first. The woman who ran the farm was not at all delighted when she understood they were not married but still wanted to share the same bedroom.

She was, in effect, chasing Michael away, but Michael wasn't leaving without Barb. Barb did not really want to leave, but:

"He's out in the truck now, waiting for me. We've had a terrible fight. He says I don't love him, that all I care about is my silly little career, but he can't see how important the riding is to me. I don't think he loves me, really; he just needs someone to take care of him. I'm not sure that I do love him anymore. I don't know how I feel about him. He scares me.





He's said he'll kill himself if I don't go with him, and I don't know, I think he really might. Oh, Don, I'm too tired to think. What am I going to do?"

"You're probably going to go with him, aren't you? But be careful. Don't let him do anything to hurt you. Try."

We talked for an hour, until Barb was so tired she couldn't talk any more. And then I didn't hear anything more from her for weeks -- at least a couple, though it seemed much longer. By then they were in Phoenix. Barb had been trying to get some kind of work at the race track there. The general plan was that Barb would continue working with horses -- Michael had agreed to that concept. They would follow the race tracks with the seasons and Barb would work at the tracks and Michael would work at whatever he could find. But it wasn't working. They weren't finding the jobs, and they had been plagued with breakdowns of the truck all the way across the country. So that now, in Phoenix, with no jobs and no prospects, they were broke, with not even enough money left to pay the motel or to buy gas or dog food. Barb was borrowing a few hundred dollars from her parents, but it might be a few days before it arrived. And meanwhile . . .

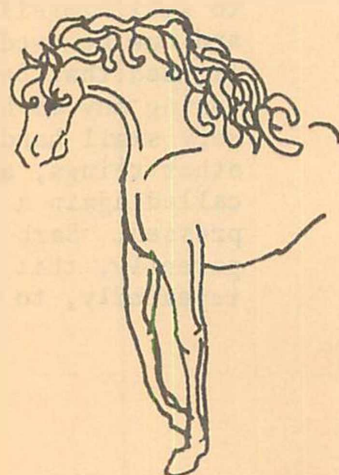
I wired them some money; I don't even remember how much. More than the \$20 Barb asked for, but less than \$100. When the money from home arrived, they started out for Denver, but the truck broke down in southern Colorado, and there went that money.

When they finally got to Denver, around the middle of October, I guess it was, Michael was feeling thoroughly defeated.

"This was supposed to be my big turning point, you know? I'd gotten myself together, had some luck, some money. I had some big plans. I was going to take charge, prove my competence, show that I could handle things, you know? But everything's gone wrong. Everything that could go wrong has -- and there's nothing left. Just a beat up old truck and a bunch of broken dreams. I might as well . . . " He was laughing at himself, but it was hurting him.

Their situation wasn't quite as desperate as it might have been. I had rented an apartment for them (it was very close to the building where I taught, so I was able to visit them frequently) so at least Barb didn't have to crash with me again (not that I would have minded). And they had plans. Michael would sell the truck; they would both get jobs, pay off their debts and start over again. Michael could see no reason why it wouldn't work out.

Is this all starting to sound very repetitious? It's because it was, and it was to become even more so, but I'm getting close to the end of my account, and I apologize for taking so long to tell what I said I wasn't going to tell, but I'll try to summarize the .



rest of it as briefly as possible. You've probably seen ahead to the ending (I'm not trying to make a suspense thriller out of it). And the ending might have been inevitable already, at this stage, for anyone perceptive enough to see it. It does seem inevitable now, in retrospect.

And repetitious, certainly. Michael did, I believe, apply for jobs at a few places, but he had nothing like the thick-skinned imperviousness to insult and rejection that a successful job hunter must have. He started drinking heavily (doing some pool-hustling for liquor and grocery money). He would take the dogs and the truck and stay away for days at a time, returning in a state of helpless and incoherent drunkenness.

Barb took it upon herself this time to tell him she was leaving, and why. But she did love him, and she couldn't bring herself to hurt him any more than necessary.

The first time I went to pick her up to take her to the bus station, Michael was crying hysterically, threatening to kill himself if she left. Barb couldn't leave. She took another day to calm him down and work out an agreement with him. She got him to see that there was nothing they could do here. She would go back to Illinois or Kentucky and get a race track job or a factory job if she had to, and she would send Michael enough money to join her when she was settled. He had to agree. There was nothing else.

The next morning, early, I put Barb on the bus for Chicago one more time. That was in November.

Early in January I got a letter from Michael. He was in Hollywood, Fla. He had an apartment. Barb would be joining him there in six days when Sarad Stables (which Barb had rejoined almost immediately after leaving here) moved south from Kentucky. Could I send the kitchenware and other stuff from the Denver apartment? I could and did, promptly.

Only a day or two later, there was a phone call from Barb in Kentucky. Sarad stables wasn't going to Florida, after all. Michael wanted Barb to leave the stables and join him anyway, but she wasn't going to do it, but she wasn't sure she could tell Michael that. I offered to do it for her, but she saw it was something she had to do herself.

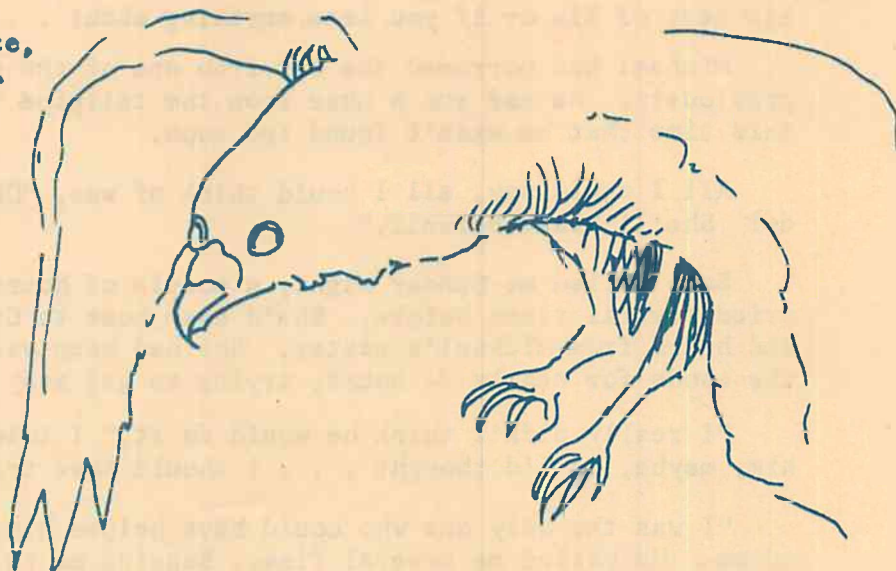
I'm not sure how long Michael stayed in Flordia; not long, really. He left before the packages of apartment supplies arrived, but I think Barb sent him some money for the drive back to Denver (he had sold the truck and bought a smaller car).

He was back in Denver in February, anyway. He called me a couple of times. The first time he was angry and depressed. He told me he had tried to kill himself but had been found too soon and rushed off to the hospital and now he owed the hospital a lot of money that he couldn't pay. He figured that Barb owed him some money yet. Barb had left Denver without taking any of her personal belongings except what she could carry in a very small handbag. Michael had her trunk full of clothes and a box of other things, and he wasn't giving them up until Barb sent him \$500. He called again a week or ten days later, less angry and seemingly less depressed. Barb had sent him a check for \$500, making it pretty clear, apparently, that that was to be the end of it. Michael had challenged her, repeatedly, to choose between him and racing. She wanted both but finally,



forced to make the choice, she was choosing racing. Michael seemed to have accepted it. He had the check (though he needed my help cashing it) and he was willing to turn over the trunk and box of belongings so I could ship them to Barb. We met at the bank, cashed the check, transferred the box and trunk to my car. We talked for a while.

Michael was proud of the fact that he hadn't been drinking and was attending therapy sessions regularly. He had no real plans for the future but was seemingly not without hope. About Barb, he was sad, but not particularly bitter.



"She really isn't coming back, you know?" he said to me in a tone of wonderment. "She really isn't coming back."

I offered to help Michael any way that I could. I asked him to keep in touch with me. He said he would, but I never heard from him and never saw him again.

Sarad Stables, and Barb, moved to Chicago just a day or two before the big fire at Washington Park. Barb watched the fire, feeling as though the whole world was burning. She stayed up all night, guarding her horses, ready to ride them away if a spark had caught their barn.

Some time in March, one of Barb's favorite horses gave her a playful nip, nearly tearing her lip off. Barb had it sewed up and kept right on working. A couple of weeks later that same horse, Bidson, the one that had been in the Kentucky Derby last year, the one the stables was counting on to make a lot of money, fell on the track and was injured so badly it had to be destroyed and its carcass sold for dog food. Another fine horse broke a leg and had to be retired to a breeding farm. Barb's letters contained no vestiges of illusion about race track life, or any real hope of becoming a jockey very soon, if ever. But there was also no hint in them that she would ever think of quitting the race track.

I was in Fort Collins, at YuccaCon, the weekend of April 15-17. I drove up Friday afternoon. Carolyn joined me Saturday evening, after she got off work at the library.

As soon as she got settled in the motel room, she said, "There's something I'd better lay on you right away, no point waiting till the con's over."

I was already sitting down, so I nodded.

"There was a phone call for you last night. It was from the Adams County coroner. It was Barb's boyfriend -- Michael? They'd found his

body in a car on a little country road somewhere. He had your name and address in his wallet I guess. They wanted to know if you had an address for his next of kin or if you knew anything about . . ."

Michael had borrowed the car from one of the girls he had lived with previously. He had run a hose from the tailpipe to the inside, making sure this time that he wasn't found too soon.

All I could say, all I could think of was, "Oh God, what's Barb going to do? She'll blame herself."

Barb called me Sunday night, a couple of hours after I got home. She had tried several times before. She'd come home to Crystal Lake for the weekend and heard from Michael's sister. She had been walking and running through the woods for nearly 24 hours, trying to get away from her thoughts.

"I really didn't think he would do it," I told her. "I could have helped him, maybe, if I'd thought . . . I should have tried harder to help him."

"I was the only one who could have helped him," Barb insisted. "He needed me. He called me several times, begging me to come back to him. He said he'd kill himself if I didn't. I told him I would join him if he did. I wonder if lovers really are reunited in death?"

"Barb, you've got a long, long time to find out!" I said just as firmly as I could. "Don't, don't, don't you do anything!"

Barb talked, and cried, until she was exhausted. I asked her to call me again soon. She said, "I guess I better go get some sleep."

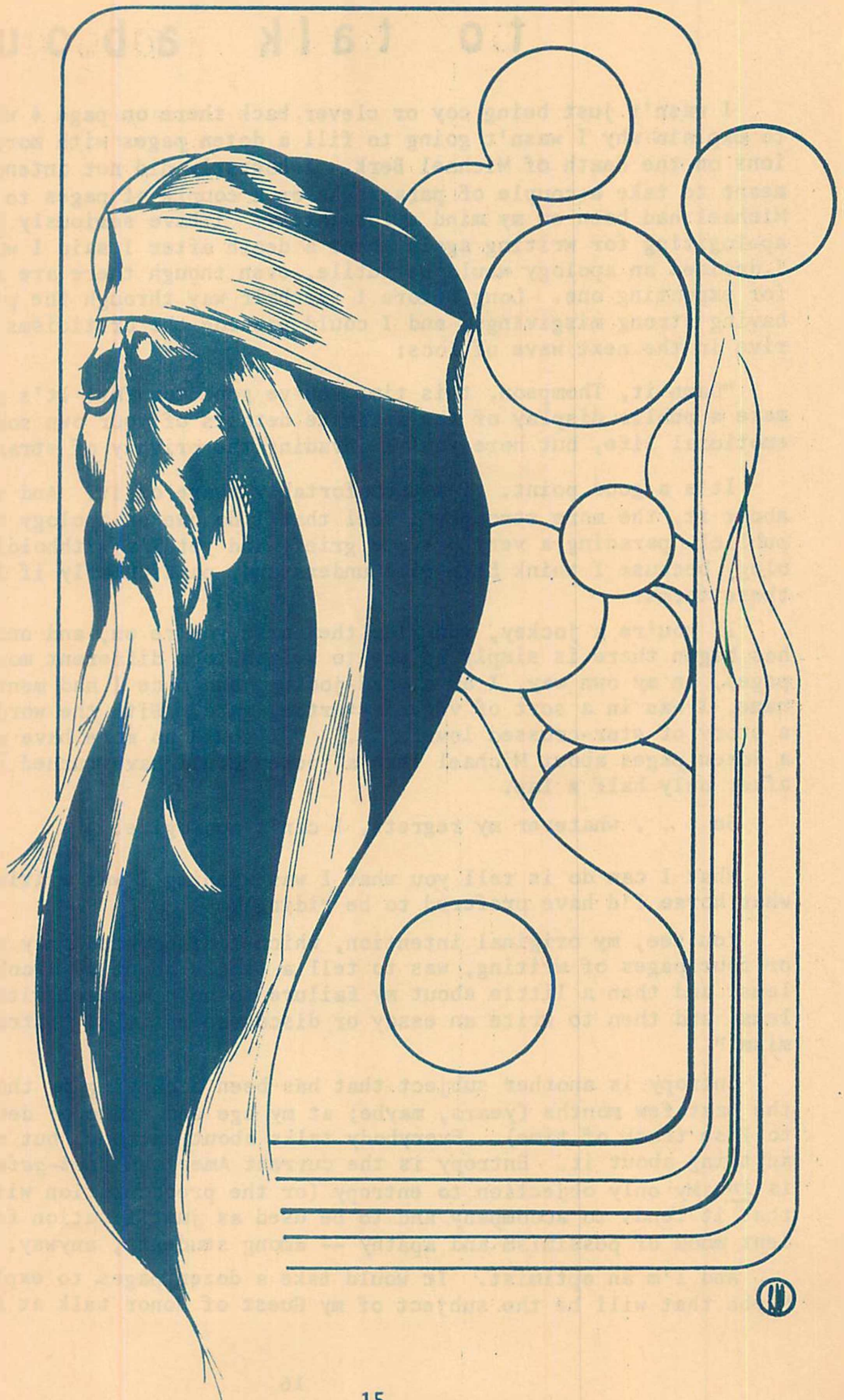
For a week I waited, in a state of near-paralysis, to hear something more from her. At last I called her parents' home in Crystal Lake. Her mother answered. I talked with her for a half an hour or so.

Barb had attended Michael's funeral, flying to Denver with his mother and sister (I don't know why Michael was buried in Denver rather than in Crystal Lake, but I guess I do understand why Barb didn't call me while she was here; I'm sure she didn't feel like talking to anyone), and then back home immediately. Barb had rejoined the stables; she was working hard. I managed to suggest what I had been so worried about, and Mrs. Feltz said:

"Oh, Barb won't ever kill herself. She's just not the type, she's too alive. She's taking Michael's death pretty hard, though. She never had any other boyfriends, you know, just Mike, and she considered herself married to him, so it was like losing her husband. But she'll get over it. She'll find someone else. Like I told her, the world is full of nice boys . . ."

There's a good chance, presumptuous as it may sound, that I know Barb better than her mother does. (I didn't tell Mrs. Feltz that I thought so). Barb considered herself more than just married to Michael. She never really believed in reincarnation or even a life after death, and even though she had broken off with Michael and knew she might never see him again, in a very strong sense she considered herself linked to him through eternity. So I don't think she'll ever get over her love for Michael. She may fall in love again, though never in the same way. She may someday marry, though I doubt that. If she kills herself it'll be working with horses. I doubt that she'll ever be happy, but I hope she succeeds as a jockey. Most of all, I hope she can someday understand that she was not responsible for Michael's death. I hope she'll give me a chance to convince her of that.





# What I Meant

## to talk about...

I wasn't just being coy or clever back there on page 4 when I started to explain why I wasn't going to fill a dozen pages with morose reflections on the death of Michael Berk. I honestly did not intend to. I only meant to take a couple of paragraphs or a couple of pages to tell why Michael had been on my mind a lot lately. I have seriously considered apologizing for writing again about a death after I said I wouldn't, but I decided an apology would be futile, even though there are ample grounds for expecting one. Long before I was half way through the piece, I was having strong misgivings, and I could pre-cog the criticisms that will arrive in the next wave of locs:

"Damn it, Thompson, this time you've gone too far! It's one thing to make a public display of the intimate details of your own sodden, soapish emotional life, but here you're invading the privacy of strangers!"

It's a good point. I'm uncomfortably aware of it. And the more I think about it, the more strongly I feel that I do owe an apology to Barb for publicly parading a very private grief, and yet I'm withholding the apology because I think Barb will understand, particularly if I put it in these terms:

If you're a jockey, you ride the horse you're on, and once the race has begun there is simply no way to switch to a different mount. In these pages, in my own way, I am a word-jockey, and once I had mentioned Michael's name, I was in a sort of verbal starting gate. With the words, "This is a story of star-crossed lovers . . ." I could no more have not written a dozen pages about Michael than a jockey could have turned the horse around after only half a lap.

So . . . whatever my regrets, I can't apologize.

What I can do is tell you what I was wishing I was writing about (or what horse I'd have preferred to be riding).

You see, my original intention, which I discovered only after three or four pages of writing, was to tell a little about my alcoholism problems, and then a little about my failure to help Michael with his problems, and then to write an essay or discourse entitled "Entropy and Optimism."

Entropy is another subject that has been occupying my thoughts for the past few months (years, maybe; at my age and state of decay, I tend to lose track of time). Everybody talks about entropy, but no one does anything about it. Entropy is the current American *Ziet-geist*. Entropy is in. My only objection to entropy (or the preoccupation with it) is that it tends to accompany and to be used as justification for a prevalent mood of pessimism and apathy -- among students, anyway.

And I'm an optimist. It would take a dozen pages to explain why. Maybe that will be the subject of my Guest of Honor talk at Autoclave.



OCT. 28, 29, 30

Sheraton Airport Inn

DENVER

# MILEHICON 9

"The Con With the Extra Hour"

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*Roger Zelazny*

FAN GUEST OF HONOR

*Bruce Arthurs*

TOASTMASTER

*Ed Bryant*

Ninth annual Denver area Science Fiction Convention

MEMBERSHIPS: \$5 until October 15, 1977, \$6 thereafter and at the door.

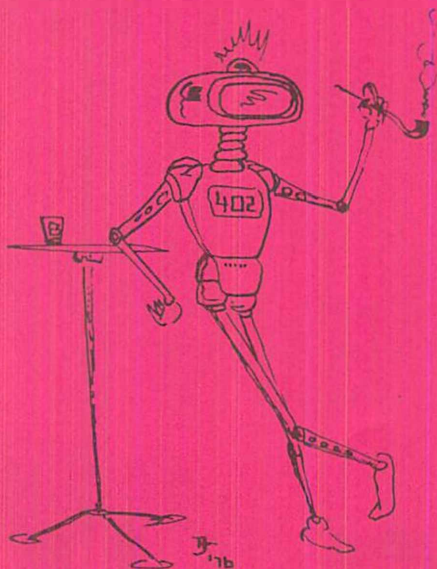
BRUNCH: \$6 until October 15, 1977, \$7 thereafter.

(Please make checks payable to DASFA)

HOTEL ROOM RATES:	Single	Double
Facing pool (south)	\$26	\$32
Facing parking lot (north)	23	29

MILEHICON IX  
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(See reverse side for details)



# MILEHICON 9

D E N V E R

Oct. 28, 29, and 30, 1977

*Sheraton Airport Inn*

*"The Con With the Extra Hour"*

PROGRAMMING will include Trivia Bowl, Art Show, Masquerade, Huckster Room, Art Auction, meet-the-authors party, movies, panel discussions, works-in-progress readings, not to mention parties, parties, and more parties, and a Setting-the-Clocks-Back ceremony!

TRIVIA BOWL: A perennially popular MileHiCon event. Form your teams now and start practicing; or teams may be organized after the con begins. Contact Jeff Slaten or Fred Goldstein.

ART SHOW: Cash prizes will be given for Art Show winners -- \$15 for first, \$10 for second, and \$5 for third. Get complete Art Show rules from Carol Angel, 2885 S. Raleigh St., Denver 80236. Entries may be sent to Carol or to MileHiCon at the address below. Deadline is 11 a.m. Oct. 29.

*SPECIAL ART CONTEST: There's an annual contest for the Program Booklet cover. Winner gets a free con membership; runner-up gets the center-fold position in the booklet. Entries must be camera-ready, wrap-around cover size, 13 inches horizontally by 8 vertically. Send entries to address below.*

HUCKSTER ROOM: Space is strictly limited. Get table reservations in promptly.

Contact Doug or Allie Bennett, 2606 River Drive, Denver 80211; phone (303) 455-6787.

## PROGRAM BOOKLET ADVERTISING RATES:

Full page (6 inches by 7½ inches) -- \$15  
Half page (6 inches by 3½ inches) -- \$12  
Quarter page (3 inches by 3½ inches) -- \$ 7

(Copy must be exact size and camera ready)

DEADLINE FOR PROGRAM BOOKLET ADVERTISING IS Oct. 15, 1977

CON REGISTRATION: Send checks or money orders (payable to DASFA, please) to address below. If you are purchasing for more than one person, please include names and mailing address for each person.

MILEHICON 9  
7498 Canosa Court  
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Philip Stephensen-Payne  
'Lindon'  
1, Levell Ave.  
Old Marston  
OXFORD  
OX3 0RL

I did not  
enjoy DoS 48  
anything like  
as much as usual  
despite the fine  
cover and the in-  
itial pleasure of  
seeing Donny again.

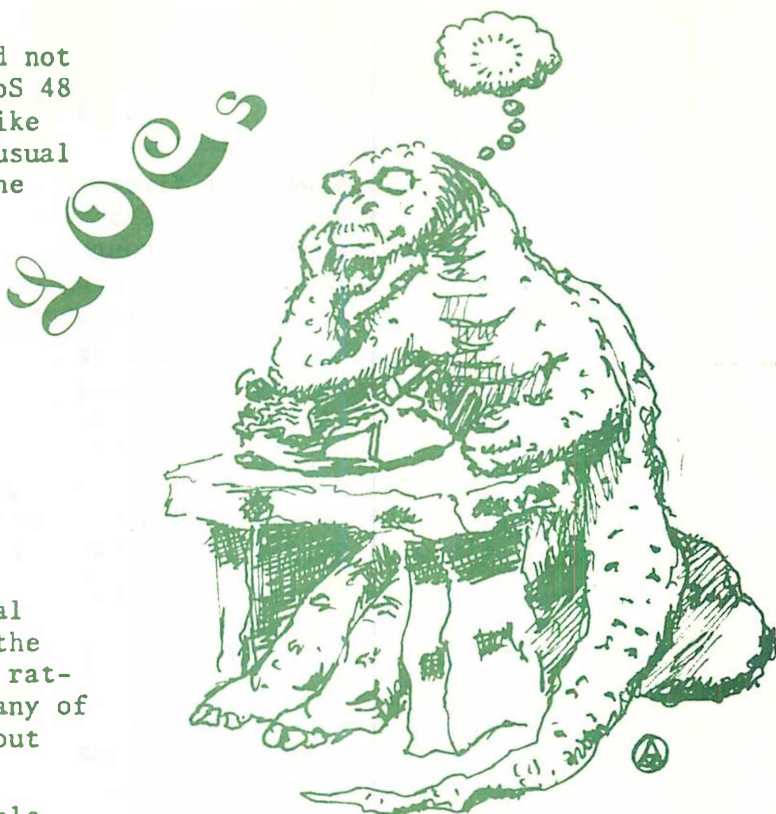
Your editorial did give  
a great impression of speed,  
not only from the statement  
that you would spend only  
ten days on it, nor for  
the reference to the  
dedication (I dutifully did  
look back, but there was nothing  
remotely answering that descrip-  
tion on my issue), but from a general  
feeling that you were putting out the  
issue because you felt you had to, rat-  
her than because you wanted to. Many of  
the later contents seemed to bear out  
the initial impression.

You did make a couple of valuable  
points in the "Thief in the Night" piece.  
Firstly the persistence of a Christian con-  
science for years after throwing off the  
dogmatic shackles of religion -- a sad fate shared by many of us, and foster-  
ed by the 'Christian' society we live in. It is the only thing Christianity  
has been really successful in -- infusing a sense of guilt in millions of  
people for doing things they had no reason to feel guilty for. The other  
was your closing point that the pain to your mother was more of a punish-  
ment for you than the legal one. Oh, how true. I think the one shackle  
that binds us all tighter than the laws is the feeling that we shouldn't  
do certain things because it would hurt our parents or other loved ones. I  
sometimes wonder if anyone can ever be free before death.

Australian laws seem vicious, though anyone in possession of a Gestetner  
2001 Offset deserves all he gets. I would agree though, that often the real  
crime is being found out. If I disagree with a law I feel at liberty to  
break it -- as long as I'm not caught (which is usually true). If I get  
caught then "it's a fair cop" and I feel it quite reasonable to punish me  
according to the 'law.'

Then the fiction. You cannot honestly believe that anything written to  
order, from scratch, in one hour and 20 minutes can possibly have any value  
other than in the context of the class?? In one way the pieces were better  
than much fanfiction -- they were less pretentious -- but what a waste of  
12 pages of paper! What conceivable value was there in them to want to  
display them to all your readers? If people really enjoy this level of  
'fiction' then no wonder Perry Rhodan sells so well.

[Phil's reaction to the fiction, I am pleased and relieved  
to note, was not typical. Most loccers who mentioned the  
supplement found, if not value, at least some degree of  
entertainment. As for example . . . ]



Bob Tucker  
34 Greenbriar Drive  
Jacksonville, IL 62650

Thank you very much for DoS 48. It was the very best issue I've yet seen and this time it was read from cover to cover . . . no skimming. Any reader who skims this

issue is a dope! (or a fake fan.)

Your own writings were of first interest; they always are, and your teenage revelations were not as shocking to me as you imagine them to be. Perhaps it is because of my own rough childhood, or perhaps I'm now so aged and decrepit that hardly anything bothers me, but I wasn't shocked or astonished or even outraged, although I read with a close interest.

Next in interest were the head stories in the fiction supplement. I almost skimmed because I've grown weary of fiction in fanzines, but I decided to read Malori Allen's story thoroughly -- no skimming -- just to see what you thought so highly of. Well, wow! I agree, it was good, and I hope you told all the writers that their work was truly worthwhile. Especially Allen, the best of the lot. (Were you grading those submissions in class? If so, I suspect you gave them high marks!)

The letters were third in interest. I just don't get very excited about words, labels, catch-phrases and jingoism, unless I am using words to build a story. I know that I can use them, fashion them, to play on the reader's emotions, and so do your letter-writers. I even suspect some of them were baiting you. All interesting, all good reading, but from a detached viewpoint. I can be drawn into an argument, but none of your respondents have yet found the way to accomplish it.

Marty Levine  
1023 Elizabeth St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

I found it extremely interesting that though good and evil, right and wrong were banished from your life as an atheist, SIN remained (sin, the Christian concept that

they slap on kids even before they take their first breath--even before they have a chance to do anything good or bad, they have an 'original sin' to feel guilty for.)

As a Jew, I didn't have that. I was taught, and believe, that God forgives everyone when they die, and that only the worst tyrants are 'eternally condemned.' (to no physical hell, though). Yet I could never steal anything. I have never figured out why I am still basically moral (within my own self-interest) when I know that it doesn't matter what I do. The guilt I feel when I do do things I consider wrong is a vague but persistent thing. When I do something wrong I feel that I am not satisfying myself. I still don't understand why, with no overwhelming threat of eternal damnation hanging over my head, I don't just go around doing anything I want. (Actually I do, come to think of it, but what I want 99% of the time is within the law, which most times coincides with my morality. Yet I have no qualms about telling my parents (I'm 17) that I think a certain rule they make is ridiculous, or about some things against the law that I think are harmless, and are for personal pleasure).

From all this, the lack of guilt over everything, coupled with the high sense of morality (according to society's norm, and thanks to my parents), I am left with a good feeling about myself. I think it's a better system than constantly worrying over hell and damnation.

ON LAW: Why does Don D'Amassa, though he thinks that men are basic-



ally amoral and motivated largely by self interest, turn around and say that all of the laws, created by men, must be followed? Aren't those same laws created to give the best deal to those who made them, by his reasoning?

I think Don D. is a great fanwriter and fanned, and I agree that, left along, most people will work for their own self interest. But sometimes that self interest can include or be the same as concern for others, besides one's self.

I, too, Don T., know people who scorn silly laws but have great respect for other laws.

Don D. brings another point to mind. I believe everyone is working for their own self interest, including me, you, and Don D. If he obeys every law because he says he wants to, he is not doing it for the victim, obvious or otherwise. He is doing it for himself, because he would not be satisfied with himself if he didn't.

I absolutely loved the 'Women in SF trading cards,' and I found the DON-o-SAUR TALES delightful. The first story was the best.

Harry Warner Jr.  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

This was a painless sort of fiction supplement. None of the stories is really bad, a couple of them show genuine writing talent, and the most impressive thing about the entire supplement is that everyone wrote in the short-short format, which is the hardest sort of fiction to write. When you think of all the dozens of absolutely first-rate writers of SF down through the decades, and then you run over mentally the rolls of several hundred other thoroughly capable pros, and you realize that out of all those write-for-pay authors, only one, Fredric Brown, was a real master of this length of fiction, why then you appreciate all the more the feat accomplished by anyone who writes a short-short for a fanzine.

Something else that pleased me about the supplement is the way these stories are genuine fiction, obviously conceived as written stories. More and more often I notice in fanzine fiction the tendency to write stories which are little more than a description of a television episode, capable of being transformed into a script with a minimum of changes. Of course, fans aren't the only guilty persons in this respect. One recent Zelazny book contains in a number of places flash-forwards exactly like those that are presented at the beginning of some television crime shows.

More specifically, either Sharon Nastick has read a good bit of Saki's short fiction or she is his reincarnation. Her little tale is exactly in the spirit of that celebrated master of the ironic little shocker. Gary Singh Myers seems to have demonstrated the most ingenuity in working out your basic premise. Malori Allen sounds capable of writing the kind of contemporary science fiction that is selling to anthologies nowadays. And I can't believe that these stories were written with an 80-minute deadline without some sort of advance hints about the theme they would receive.

[Excuse me for interrupting Harry's letter, but his expression of doubt jogs my memory. The stories were written with no advance notification as to theme; I wasn't lying to you. But I didn't quite tell everything, either. What I forgot to mention was that when I announced my desire to publish the stories, most of the students asked for (and were granted)



an opportunity to revise, polish, or (in the case of Gary Myers at least) finish their stories. It was perceptive of Harry to realize that the stories really couldn't have reached their published state in the limited time allotted. Sorry about that. My intent wasn't to deceive. Back to Harry.]

'Thief in the Night' didn't shock me. Long ago, I used to do those 30 years ago, 40 years ago, 50 years ago squibs for the local newspapers. This caused me to look thoroughly at a lot of old newspapers from the era when juvenile offenders had their names published when charged. Every so often I would come across an item which could involve nobody other than an individual I knew as an adult, because of the unusual name or because he was still living at the same address or because of some other clues in the old news item. Quite often, the adult I knew had been living a blameless and highly respectable life ever since he grew up. So I already knew that crimes in kid-hood don't necessarily foretell a criminal career in adulthood, and that probation or some trivial punishment for the offenses isn't always an inducement to repeat indefinitely the crimes out of pride in having gotten off so easy. I'm sure I don't know what the answer is, because it's obvious that some other juvenile offenders don't stop when they get caught the first time and are given leniency, and many of the worst criminals have records stretching back into boyhood. I'm glad you emerged with no more scars than these. Maybe the hard way your mother took the revelation had something to do with the way you developed. Some of the tough young criminals I know have parents who seem to grow unhappy only when their offspring is careless enough to get caught for a crime. I remember in particular one youthful offender who got hauled into court time after time, and each time the evidence indicated strongly that his grandmother had been his active accomplice.

I appreciated the appreciation of Gail Barton.

Laurine White  
5408 Leader Ave.  
Sacramento, CA  
95841

That was a really nice appreciation of Gail Barton. The artwork and poetry were especially nice.

You shouldn't have even mentioned a fan feud. That had me all eager to read the cons you are involved in. And no feud!

Of those Images of Women cards, I prefer the Warrior Maiden. The One Who Trips and Falls is practically the same as the Monster Bait. It is when she is being pursued by the monsters that she trips and falls.

Actually, the only reason I'm writing is to mention how much I love the dinosaurs this issue. The ones by Clay Fourrier and McKay throughout this issue are irresistible! And also that darling cover. I also like the dumb-looking horse by Grant Canfield on page 26.

Ben Indick  
428 Sagamore Ave  
Teaneck, NJ 07666

This is an even prettier DOS than usual. A parchment-like paper cover for Harry Bell's ingratiating drawing, many amusing Barry Kent McKays, lovely Gail

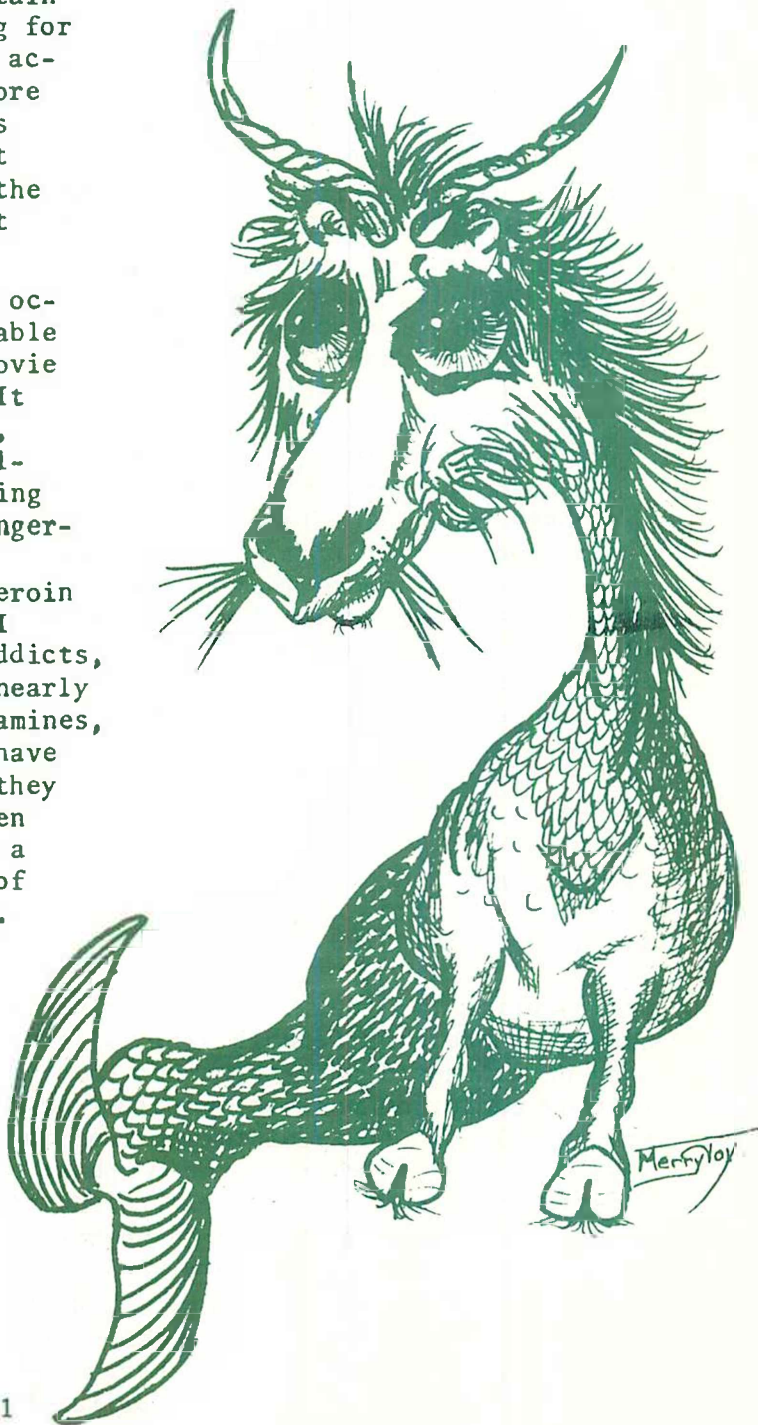
Bartons and neat, neat, neat printing!. I chose, for unknown reasons, to read the head-fic first, and because there was such a varied approach to



the suggested plot, I found it rewarding. I think I most appreciated the vignettes by Allen, Nastick and Kennedy, but each was capably done, enough to make me red-faced, thinking I would have been so unimaginative as to concentrate on only the head itself, instead of the rather light, offhand story style of your students. Considering they are all based on the same gimmick, you have pulled off a considerable tour-de force here.

'Thief' is perhaps your most moving personal document yet -- or at least since you wrote with such love and pain of your sister. It shown restraint when you could have delved into a Raskalnikoffian subworld, and perhaps the last lines are the more effective for it. I regret that a young Don Thompson -- for whatever reason--thought thievery solved a need, but I'm certain today's DCT is more of a human being for the experience. I hope you finally accepted it for what it was, and no more than that. Who can say whether this or the later disillusionment in what had seemed personal revelation was the more traumatic for you? Perhaps not even you yourself can know.

In re DD'A's letter: On several occasions I have smelled the unmistakable aroma of pot in a theatre, once a movie house, twice in N.Y. off-Broadway. It annoys me because, first, the stuff, whether or not properly, is still illegal, and second, any kind of smoking in a theatre is both illegal and dangerous. As for stronger drugs, quite truthfully, I would hate to carry heroin in my pharmacy, legally, that is. I have had too much experience with addicts, whether for Dilauded, a legal drug nearly as potent as "H", methadone, amphetamines, or barbiturates. I can only say I have changed from a sympathetic person (they could have called me "mother"--I even gave money to the poor slobs to get a fix when I had no RXs to take care of them legally) to quite the opposite. Dealing with these cheating, robbing, lying, pilfering individuals destroys something of one's own humanity when one despises them! Is this elliptical? Cynical? It is nevertheless true. I won't go into it further now; once I could have written a book on this sad subject, and the sad and sometimes hilarious people involved. Maybe most sad is the infant born as an addict, thanks to its mother and her by-now involuntary lifestyle.



Fred Jakobcio  
113 W. Ohio Apt. 4  
Marquette, MI 49855

I have nothing to back up my stand on heroin, but I'm against legalizing it, and think it's wrong. It is a weakness of our society, and people, that they need to turn to heroin, or other drugs. Is the cause future shock? Involuntary heroin addicts? Really? I cannot agree with that. How do you force one to become a heroin addict or any other? By the use of physical force? When you come right down to it, even after the first forced use of the drug, isn't it the individual's own weakness within that relents? In the final analysis, one is responsible for one's own weaknesses and uses of drugs.

[What a terribly harsh and ultra-puritanical-sounding judgment: "One is responsible for one's own weaknesses . . ." I certainly hope Fred is willing to do some more thinking about that point. Ben mentioned one type of involuntary heroin addiction -- a child born to an addict mother. Is that child responsible for its weakness? Really? Oh, do keep thinking! I can't disagree with Ben Indick's description of the heroin addicts he knows as 'cheating, robbing, lying, pilfering.' It saddens me that anything could arouse such bitterness in such a kind, gentle and basically tolerant and understanding person. But I would beg Ben to consider the possibility that he is misplacing the blame. I know some nicotine addicts who would not hesitate to rob, cheat, lie, use violence, anything to get a cigarette if they should be deprived of tobacco. But because tobacco is legal and relatively inexpensive and socially condoned, these weak-charactered individuals are not regarded as a major problem. Now, I am not suggesting that heroin should be legalized in the same sense that tobacco and alcohol are. The most I would propose is that we start making genuine efforts to control the addiction problem. The most sensible, humane and effective control program that I know of is the British system. (Well, possibly the Japanese system of cold-turkey enforced kill-or-cure withdrawal is more effective, but it seems lacking in the humaneness category -- which I hope is of some importance to Americans). George Fergus has a sort of essay on this question:]

George Fergus  
1810 Hemlock Place Apt. 204  
Schaumburg, IL 60195

I must correct Don's statement that heroin addiction and related crime have increased in England in spite of heroin's legality there. A mild increase did occur during the '60s, when an influx of heroin addicts from the U.S. and Canada caused considerable official alarm. The attendant publicity, as it does here, caused a further rise in experimentation among young Britons. The rate of addiction rose to over 100 new cases per year. (In comparison, there are over 10,000 new addicts per year in the U.S.) However, a new plan was developed in 1966 whereby the morphine and methadone typically used by older addicts could continue to be obtained from any physician, but heroin now had to be obtained from clinics which were staffed by persons trained to give psychological help to the new class of heroin abusers.

With this slight revision, the British program continues to be quite successful. The most recent assertion of its failure, widely disseminated in the United States, originated because of the new system of reporting addicts that went into effect in Britain in 1968. It created penalties for



any doctor who failed to report the dispensation of narcotics to any addict at any time during the year. Since the same addict may go to several different doctors during the course of a year, there was an increase in the number of cases reported at year's end. However, a check of the number of addicts being recorded for a specific day of each year has confirmed that the apparent rise was purely a statistical artifact, and that the number of addicts in Britain is again decreasing.

It appears to be nothing but our smug ignorance that prevents the establishment of a decent British-style maintenance program here. Even if the British program were not working, U.S. officials would hardly have much reason to be smug, since our own laws are demonstrably unsuccessful in solving the problems associated with heroin addiction. Even the present U.S. methadone program is a farce and a failure -- the clinics are overcrowded, treat addicts like dirt, and are still trying to wean them away from narcotics rather than maintain them. A maintenance program like Britain's may not be able to reduce the number of addicts to zero, but it certainly eliminates most heroin-related crime. An amount of morphine equivalent to the four \$5 bags of heroin required daily by the average addict, if obtained in the U.S. legally by prescription, costs less than a package of cigarettes. The daily dose of methadone dispensed at U.S. clinics costs about a quarter. (Heroin is a compound of morphine that is not metabolized as easily, so that more of it reaches the brain, where it is converted back to morphine. Methadone is a substance similar to morphine, but is so poorly metabolized that it can be taken orally and lasts all day).

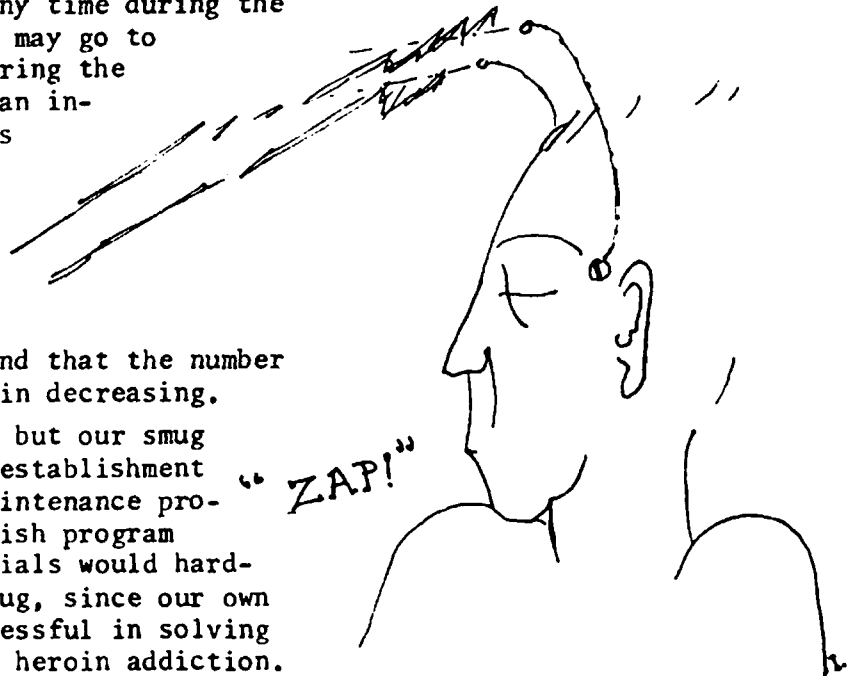
The notion that the use of heroin is progressively debilitating is another myth without factual basis. Morphine has side-effects, like any other drug, but it does not cause cumulative deterioration like alcohol or barbiturates. Those who are able to obtain morphine legally and regularly from a physician typically live out their lives quite normally.

[George's letter consists of two other equally incisive essays, one on sexism-in-language and the other on lawbreaking. I hope to use at least parts of both when we get back to those subjects, as we seem destined to do. . .]

Dave Langford  
22 Northumberland Ave.  
Reading, Berks  
RG2 7PW, U.K.

John Alderson's notes on Australian law, where possession can be the crime no matter what's possessed, have an exact parallel in the British law of conspiracy. If I say to a friend, "Let's

rob a bank," and he replies, "Why not?" -- no matter how much in joke-- we have conspired and every man's hand is set against us. It was a favourite ploy of the police a year or two ago: not to arrest on the trivial



charge relating to the crime committed (which might be . . . oh, dropping litter in the streets), but to prove by tortuous means that the evil-doer conspired with one or more friends before his vile offence. Why bother? Well, littering is punishable by a fine; conspiracy by anything up to life imprisonment. Fortunately judicial precedents have discouraged over-use of this strange law; our current pother concerns the Official Secrets Act, by which you can in theory be prosecuted for looking at a billboard, should someone have written even mildly classified information upon one.

It's easy to make the law seem an ass. But in Britain, though too slowly for anyone's liking, bad laws are gradually strangled by adverse precedents -- in the States, I suppose, they would ultimately be ruled unconstitutional. Avoiding the passing of such laws in the first place -- that's too high an evolutionary stage for our enlightened legislators to comprehend.

*Eric Lindsay*  
6 Hillcrest Ave.  
Faulconbridge, N.S.W.  
Australia 2776

While I'm not going to get into an argument on poets in fandom, I'll certainly agree with you about Gail Barton being underrated as an artist, but perhaps at least some of this is that much of her work is in color, which fanzines can't print, or is on convention name tags, which are admired, but whoever asks who the artist is? Certainly I'll have to mention at length when I'm doing my trip report all the help she gave me; I learnt more about the geography of Colorado than I would ever have picked up on my own during the times Gail was driving me round.

I agree with Don D'Amassa, on his view that the best way to preserve a society in which people can live without fear is his way (I refuse to call it either a good or moral society, because those are value judgments which I think insufficiently considered), for all to follow the law. However, I would like to consider the case of a participatory democracy, in which all laws are derived directly from the freely expressed will of the people. Now, if a person were by their actions sufficiently disliked (a slum landlord perhaps, or someone who derided the gods or morality of the society in blatant terms), then there could be a law passed making their past actions illegal, and setting the penalty at death, or say, depriving the landlord of their property. Would we consider such a law fair? Despite it being the will of the majority, I would not feel it was just. From which I conclude that the simple will of the people need not be justice. So this implies there is a justice which takes precedence over the will of the people. But who can generate this justice? For if one lawgiver appears, how do we know his laws are any better than those of everyone en masse? And if we can not be sure of this, why should they be obeyed? The fundamental assumption is always that society deserves preserving; I don't believe it.

Actually I agree with Diane White in asking by what standard you judge laws, and in concluding there is in fact no standard, in which case you either have to obey all laws or ignore all laws or ignore all laws. I consider the latter a more logical argument (which implies that you then have to devise your own morality, and if everyone does this, you'd want to be careful about the morality of those with whom you associate or interact). But laws are obeyed then because they either happen (by coincidence) to agree with your morality, or because you are in fear of the consequences of being caught breaking them. The conclusion is that laws are totally



oppressive, and if you disagree with, and are caught breaking a law, you should, in conformity with your morality, then resist the actions of the law (in short, if the law uses or attempts to use violence against you, use violence in your defence).

*Milton F. Stevens  
14535 Saticoy St. #105  
Van Nuys, CA 91405*

After seven years in the law enforcement business, I have generated a few opinions on the subject of law. One point that I haven't seen mentioned during the discussion in Don-o-Saur is that nobody, but nobody, knows all the laws which are now in existence. I would estimate that a complete set of all the laws which might affect a citizen in Los Angeles would run to about 20 or 30 500-page volumes. The judicial interpretations of those laws would run to four or five times that volume. Nobody knows it all. I encounter previously unknown laws fairly frequently. A few weeks ago, I began encountering a law which is now being used to eliminate Consenting Adults Clubs (i.e. whore houses). The law was Los Angeles Municipal Code section 103.103, Operating a Social Club Without a License. I have no personal objection to outlawing whore houses, but that seems like a strange legal way of doing it.

Laws can be either good or bad. Bad laws are usually useless rather than being actively evil. (That generalization only applies to our own age and country). While it would be nice to eliminate all the useless mechanisms in our legal system, legislative inertia makes that a rather difficult task. So in most cases, ignoring useless laws seems like the most practical alternative.

*George Fergus  
strikes again;  
address as before*

I discard the idea of an absolute morality. People's ideas of right and wrong vary with the individual, with the prevailing culture, and with the time period. Even such an obvious wrong as killing another person may be considered moral (and legal) by some society for any of various religious reasons (sacrifices to the gods, burning at the stake for heresy, driving from the Holy Land for infidelity, drowning or stoning for witchery) or when committed in self-defense or during war, when perpetrated by the authorities on a criminal, when performed on a person close to death and in great pain or on a fetus before birth, etc.

My dictionary says that morality is measured by prevailing standards of rectitude, which at least appears to agree with the Supreme Court's present way of looking at it. Now it is certainly possible to argue that some laws do not really represent a consensus of the population but are pushed through by special interest groups. However, let us assume that all laws really do represent the majority opinion of those who are subject to them.

What, then, of minority rights? My dictionary defines a "right" as that which is due to anyone by law, tradition, or nature. Therefore, it appears impossible to say that one has any "right" to break a law. But what if the majority persecutes the minority? What if I live in Nazi Germany and help a Jew escape, or in the pre-Civil War South and help a slave escape? (The historical record on the reaction of organized religion to fascism and slavery does not lead me to expect much help from that sphere). I apparently have no "right" to defy the law in such cases, and can justify my actions only to myself and perhaps a few like-minded friends. According

to Don D'Amassa and Diane White, I presumably should feel guilty rather than righteous, and ought to turn myself in to the authorities for punishment. This makes absolutely no sense to me.

I must conclude, therefore, that it is inherently impossible to come to an adequate philosophical resolution of the question of minority rights versus majority law. One can defend the majority laws as necessary for the society to function, but can also defend an individual's failure to obey the law because of his own personal morality.

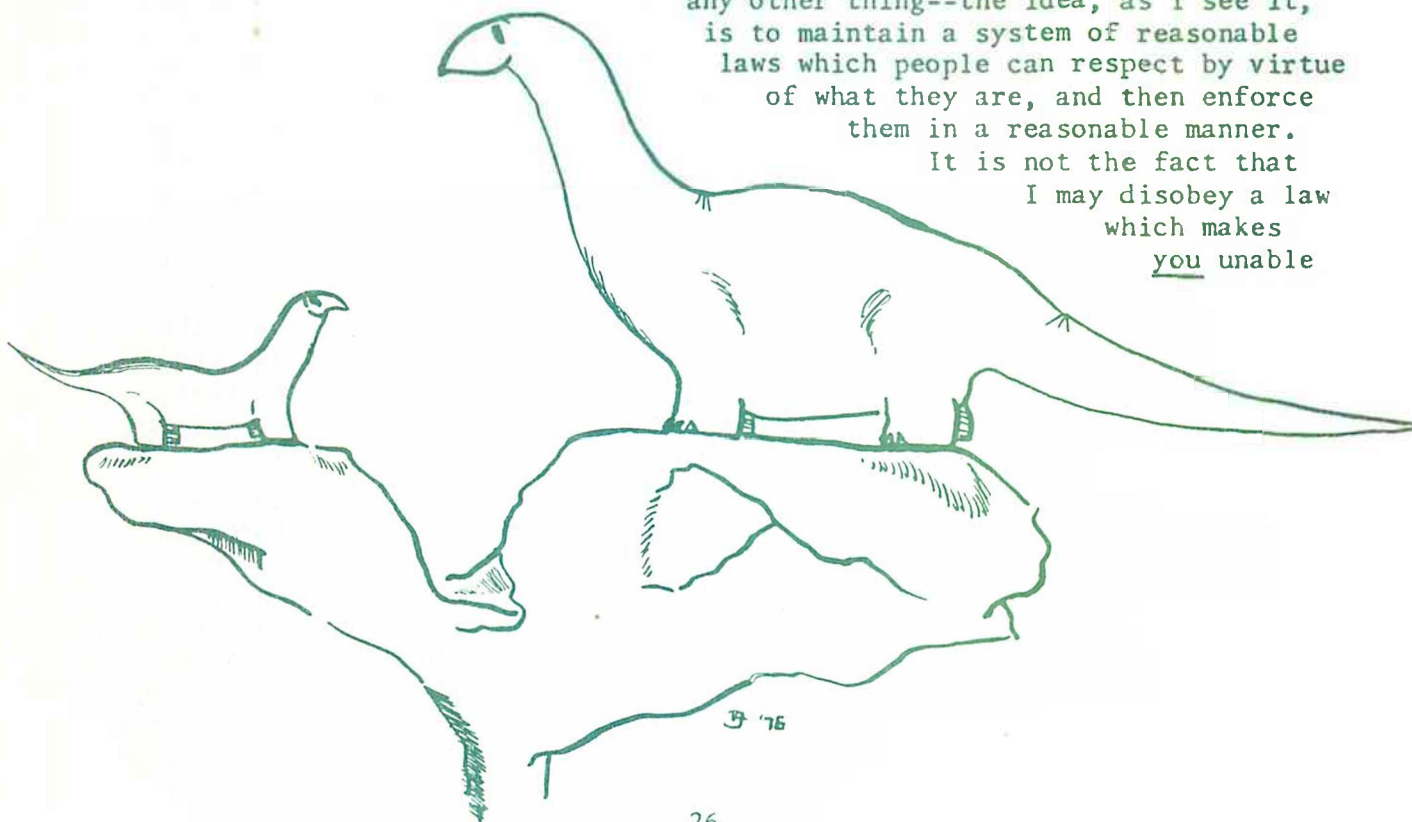
Don D'Amassa says that this is equivalent to advocating anarchy. I must demur. Society still has the right and the obligation to deter those who would break its laws. Theoretically, then, society will keep lawbreakers from being generally successful, unless there are enough of them to make the law unenforceable, or enough people sympathetic to the lawbreakers to keep the authorities from catching them. This dynamic balance applies whether the lawbreaking is based on the individual's moral principles, transitory personal pleasure, or simple laziness. (I will leave you to figure out in which category to put pacifists, speakeasy patrons, highway speeders, abortionists, pornographers, or prostitutes).

I might mention another way in which stupid laws force people to act immorally. In Illinois there are no legal grounds for an amicable divorce. The standard procedure is that you find a couple of friends who are willing to lie under oath that your spouse has committed adultery, or physically abuses you. The spouse then admits guilt, the divorce is granted, and everyone is happy. Ridiculous, but the only legal way.

Avedon Carol  
4409 Woodfield Rd.  
Kensington, MD 20795

Seems to me that Don D'Amassa already does not respect some laws if he thinks they are silly. It doesn't really matter if we assume that people are dishonest or any other thing--the idea, as I see it, is to maintain a system of reasonable laws which people can respect by virtue of what they are, and then enforce them in a reasonable manner.

It is not the fact that  
I may disobey a law  
which makes  
you unable





to respect the law; it is probably the fact that the law is stupid, or perhaps that enforcement is inconsistent. It is difficult for us to have much respect for the law in general when we see that laws which allegedly protect us are not enforced, but laws which only hinder us are enforced with a vengance. I can respect a law against rape or murder because I know I wouldn't like to be the victim of such a crime. But what am I really being protected against by laws which forbid the use of pot? Good lord, some one might *smoke* at me! It is all very well and good, I suppose, for someone to point out that my life could conceivably be endangered by someone using or selling grass, but I believe it is far more reasonable to assume that I could be hurt as a direct result of someone trying to rape or kill me than as a direct result of someone trying to smoke pot. There are men walking around Washington, D.C., with upwards of 15 acquittals for rape, while there are people serving sentences that go as high as 50 years for possession of marijuana. Part of this is because of an unavoidable disrespect for the law which stems from bad laws and selective enforcement. Many of the protections for the defendant which have been achieved in the courts over the past ten years exist because there had to be some way to protect pot smokers from the kind of lunacy that was getting them thrown in jails. But those protections are now being used to keep rapists and murderers out of jails.

The point is, if we want the law to be respected, we have to have respectable laws. If people are continually being exposed to laws which are stupid and often injurious to human lives, it will be hard to see the difference when a good law shows itself.

I must know why, if language is so unimportant, Roy Tackett would pick up a club and hit anyone (he says "him," which I must assume to mean he would hit only a man under those conditions. I consider myself excluded from any group identified as 'him' or 'man' or anything like that) who called him a "media person."

If you don't believe that the words we use affect the way people think, try changing your own name. Run around introducing yourself as "Jack" rather than "John", or "Ariel" rather than "Susan", and see if it doesn't make a difference. And, by the way, you can learn a lot about who your friends are when you do. Those people who value you and take you seriously will be quite conscientious about trying to adjust to your new name, but those who don't will refer to you by your old name forever.

Robert Bloch  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles CA 90046

#48 is a very interesting issue -- not only for its appreciation of Gail Barton and its fiction supplement, but because of the lettercol. Obviously,

the law and order problem seems to have touched a nerve, though few of those who comment seem to do so on the basis of personal experience such as yours. Oddly enough the semantic arguments seem almost as heated. Taken together, I'd say these responses are indications that we're living in an increasingly aggressive society, and may, if this trend continues, find ourselves dying in it: particularly if the feminists decide to take the law into their own hands.

Roy Tackett  
915 Green Valley Road NW  
Albuquerque NM 87107

Nonsense, Don, I would never think of calling a woman a man. What we are referring to are positions, not people. A woman can fill the position

of, say, chairman but she is still the chairman. And a tip of the fedora

to Jodie Offutt.

Which seems to bring us to Christine Pasanen. Yes. She does have one advantage over me. She can, rightly, of course, refer to me as "Mr." Tackett but, alas, how am I to refer to her? As Miss, Mrs., or Ms. . . ?

Please, dear Ms. Pasanen, do not put words in my mouth or thoughts in my head. You don't know me and are not qualified to make assumptions based on one brief letter. If you knew me you would know that wars and guerrilla uprisings don't bother me -- they used to be my profession.

And, really, I was using "FemLib" as a polite euphemism. Don Thompson's true confessions fanzine is, after all, family reading. And no, I don't refer to that group in the Middle East as "Pal-libs." I refer to them as stinking Arabs. And as for the group who allegedly kidnaped Sister Tania . . . Simpletons would seem to fit, don't you think?

Mike Glicksohn  
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M6P 2S3 Canada

Christine Pasanen seems to be picking on poor old Tackett for the wrong reason, I think. It happens we live in a society that seems to be hung up on acronyms and short forms, but not everyone who uses

these convenient labels does so in order to demean the concepts they stand for. It would seem to me that it's far more important to discuss the concept and implementation of liberation for women than the particular name we're going to give to that movement so the media can have a simple label to refer to it by. (Besides, how can anyone who's been known as RoyTac for decades do anything but succumb to popular short forms?!)

Michael T. Shoemaker  
2123 North Early St.  
Alexandria, VA 22302

Denys Howard is an excellent example of a person trying to understand a foreign language through a dictionary and falling flat on his face in doing

so. I don't know what dictionary he consulted, but even Langensheidt's pocket dictionary lists "people" for "man." Aside from this, however, he seems to have little understanding of the subtleties of language. Let's consider the words he lists for "people." "Leute" would be the most common direct equivalent as in such a sentence as "The people are gathering to hear him speak." "Menschen" is more generalized and elevated, more akin to "mankind." "Volk" is more familiar and akin to "folk." "Man" is an idiomatic generalized pronoun. Line 588 from Faust, Part I by Goethe reads: "Ja, was man so erkennen heisst!" This is translated, "Oh yes, they like to call it knowledge!" Even a simple word like "they" has multiple subtleties, depending on its degree of specificity. The quote, in context, means "people" (in general) like to call it knowledge."

Regarding the etymology of the English suffix "man," I cannot find my original source, possibly it was an article I don't possess. Nevertheless, I have found a source which supports my contention. The following is from a discussion of singular pronouns of neuter gender in H.L. Mencken's The American Language: "This 'on' in the 15th Century, seems to have fostered the English pronoun 'one' (to replace the Old English 'man,' which had become indistinguishable from the common noun)..." This leaves open the question of whether the suffix derives from the common noun or the OE indefinite pronoun. Not being a fanatic with an ax to grind I will gladly



concede the point if Howard can quote me a scholarly source; unfortunately all the sources I've consulted are silent on this point. I am a lover of language, and wish only that it be properly understood.

I have a few related points to make. The dictionaries I have consulted all define "mailman" as "one who delivers the mail," and similarly for other job designations.

[Try the Random House (unabridged and College edition, too). Mailman is "a man, usually employed by the post office, who delivers the mail." Postman, however, is "a postal employee who carries and delivers the mail" -- in the unabridged. In the college edition, Postman is simply defined as mailman! Words seem to mean what people think they mean. The person who wrote that entry for Random House obviously thought "mailman" meant man. A lot of people do, whether it's etymologically accurate or not. Sorry for interrupting].

I have a question: If we eliminate "-man" in the name of sexism, then isn't it logical that we should also eliminate "-ster?" I quote from Mario Pei's The Story of English: "Old English used '-ster' as a feminine noun suffix to denote the doer of an action, but the feminine connotation was soon lost; today we have not only spinster, but youngster, gangster, teamster."

Don D'Amassa is at his condescending best. I do realize the power of words, but that does not mean I approve of the irrational influence of that power. I also realize the power of a criminal armed with a gun, but I don't approve of that either.

I think you owe it to me to print this letter, inasmuch as I have been attacked, and my facts questioned.

[Mario Pei answers the question: "the feminine connotation (of -ster) was soon lost;" -man, on the other hand, still has (or perhaps through error has acquired) strongly masculine connotations. But I don't know of anyone who wants to eliminate the suffix -man.

[I know that many of you are growing weary of this discussion, and so am I, somewhat; I think it has almost run its course, and so there won't be any more of it than absolutely necessary in future issues. For this issue, though, I still have three more letters that I consider it absolutely necessary to include.]

*George Fergus*  
(for the third time)  
1810 Hemlock Place #204  
Schamburg, IL 60195

I take a back seat to no one, I suspect, in my dislike of the use of "he" to refer to anyone of unspecified gender or the use of "man" to refer to all our ancestors (which logically

ought to lead to their discussing the male man and the female man). However, I am relatively unsympathetic to the efforts to replace the occurrence of "-man" in every compound word by "-person." This is because so many compound words (such as eavesdropper) easily lose whatever connotations their component parts may originally have had.

If a word like "chairman" retains male connotations, I submit that it does so for the same reason that "doctor" does.

Tracing etymologies does not appear to have much usefulness in this

context. Is it of any contemporary relevance that in Old English and Old German "mann" or "man" referred to any human being, with wer and wif applied as male and female prefixes, respectively? Of what importance is it to the world of today to know that "-ster" was originally a feminine ending, with "huckster" originally being as feminine as "spinster?" The meaning of words depends on how people use them now (at least those people who write dictionaries), and their meanings can easily change again in the future. Is "person" a non-sexist word? Not according to the Supreme Court in 1894, which ruled that women could be denied entry to the bar in Virginia because, although the Virginia law applied to any person, a woman was not a "person."



According to most dictionaries, words such as chairman, mailman and policeman refer to persons in these occupations, regardless of sex. When women have entered such areas previously restricted to men, new words have often been invented to describe them, but the purpose of this has traditionally been to call attention to the incongruity, to describe a special class of individuals, such as policewomen, who cannot be expected to perform the duties of ordinary policemen. This applies also to "aviatrix," "poetess," "heroine," "sculptress," and even "actress."

Why do male and female actors compete for separate achievement awards? Because originally it was thought that women could not equal men in acting ability, so could not aspire to the lofty label of "actor." But they were allowed to compete among themselves for the lesser title of "best actress." We can laugh at the statement by renowned lexicographer H.W. Fowler (in his oft-reprinted Dictionary of Modern English Usage) that a woman writer should call herself an "authoress," rather than attempting to "raise herself to the level of the male author by asserting her right to his name." But the practice of treating male and female actors separately continues, and I have heard little outcry that this truly sexist practice be discontinued.

I am against words like chairwoman for the same reason that I would be against a word like "doctoress". I see no reason to categorize occupational titles by sex. The male connotations of both "doctor" and "policeman" are unlikely to disappear until there are more female doctors and policemen. Referring to "police officers" instead won't make things happen any faster, but it does tend to legitimize the original ghettoization of women under the "policewoman" label, which is nearly as patronizing and denigrating as "authoress."

Do you really want to call back all those women with Bachelor's and Master's degrees and provide them instead with Spinster's and Mistresses degrees? And then replace the whole bunch with non-sexist Unmarried Persons and Head of Household's degrees? What about Fellowships? Animal Husbandry? I am serious about this: do you really want to change permanship, sportsmanship, first baseman, manslaughter, manhole covers, and all the rest? It seems to me that one has to draw the line somewhere, and I can think of only two changes that are really necessary: (1) to get rid



of the prejudicially ambiguous dual meaning for the word "man" itself (I can also see a case being made for words with it used in the same sense as a prefix, such as man-made and mankind) and (2) to supply a new set of pronouns which can be used instead of the awkward "he or she."

[I had never really thought about the actor-actress dichotomy before, and now that I do, I can't help wondering why there isn't an uproar about it. Good point. And I suppose there's nothing can be done about Master's and Bachelor's degrees. In the academic context they don't carry any noticeably sexist connotations (or at least not to me; not yet, anyway), so I would hope there's no need to do anything about them. I'm not really interested in trying to remake the language. All I can do is use a little care and thought when I'm writing or talking (and editing for the newspaper) and try to avoid terms that are clearly and blatantly prejudicial and derogatory -- or dumb. Like a few weeks ago, I was able to prevent the phrase, "he had been employed as a male nurse" from getting into print. Unfortunately I have not been able to persuade the others on the copy desk to help me try to abolish the word "coed." All I can do is refuse to let it be used in a story or headline that I handle personally.

[But come on, I still have two more letters that must be printed!]

John Alderson  
Havelock, Victoria  
Australia 3465

There is of course  
considerable sexism in  
words, but it's not the  
sexism you think. When

the typewriter was invented it was natural to call the operator a "typist," and this, the addition of the "ist" to the noun, as happened with motorist, mechanist, communist and feminist, had no sexual connotations. However, it was the women who insisted that they were typistes, though to this day in Australia a typist is a person of either sex (but only to the men). As the difference between "typist" and "typiste" requires an inflection which Australians will not use, the women hit on the term "stenographer" which technically means one who types from dictation. But the use of this term is denied to men, who are simply "shorthand typists."

As Don D'Amassa says, "there is obviously a great deal of power attached to the word chairman," but there is more power attached to the word chairperson, and his illuminating remark that "the situation does in fact say an awful lot about our society" is very true but hits the nail on the wrong end. It is the women who wish to make capital out of these words, not the males. The correct usage of "chairman" makes this plain. The terms of address are "Mr. Chairman," and "Madam Chairman." If the women did not wish to make capital out of this matter and the use of the term "man" was offensive to them, they would simply have used the term "president," which (to my limited imagination) does not carry any sexism about it.

"Man" is not derived from the German, or even from the Icelandic as



some have valiantly tried to make out. It is derived from the Eponymous ancestor of the Indo-European race whom we know as Manu. Like the word "mother" it is derived from the root "ma" to make. Hitherto Manu has been regarded as a male, but my own researches into these dim times makes me believe that Manu was a woman, the "mu" being feminine and in any case the word is simply the child's ma ma and hardly likely to be applied to the father. So everyone of her clan (the sex really doesn't matter for the sake of argument) was referred to as "man" or descendant of Manu. One can easily imagine what shortly happened: Some femlibist started saying, "Look, we are different from those dirty, hulking great brutes, we have a womb and have children," so they called themselves "womb-men" or women. This age-old struggle to be one up on men is still going on. The next generation will see someone discover that a person is masculine and the women will start wanting to chaircharacters or somesuch.

The point is, and one which every one of your locs have missed, is that women make or mar our language. It is from women we learn it. One could consult Sir James Frazer, "Some Suggestions as to the Origin of Gender in Language" to get some idea of their power over something as fundamental as language.

The history of mankind is the struggle between males who regard both sexes as of equal importance, and the females who as ardent sexists wish to emphasize their difference and superiority.

[But where, alas, were those egalitarian males in 1894 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that women, not being persons, could not be members of the bar? In fact, I have trouble finding those males anywhere in the history books I have read. And in the absence of evidence to the contrary, on the basis of pure plausibility, I suspect it was some neolithic Fowler who decreed that "womb-men" shouldn't assert their right to the same name as their superiors.]

Ann Weiser  
2491 Sycamore Lane #12  
West Lafayette, IN  
47906

I like you because you love. Because you love, you think about people and what hurts them, and you change, and you ask others to change. I'm speaking now specifically about fem-

inism: Your support of non-sexist language about women, etc. It's hard for me to feel that I'm expressing myself adequately on this subject; I'm so full of emotion about it. But I can say this: it is so important to me that people like you are speaking out. I am a linguist myself, and one of my specialties is women and language. I wouldn't wave the "I-am-an-expert" flag, except that I'll do anything to be heard on this subject.

Denys Howard very ably sets straight the misconception about the meaning of -man suffixes which Michael Shoemaker was perpetuating. Except that the situation is a bit more complicated. English is not derived from German; they are related languages, derived from a common ancestor (Proto-Germanic), so you can sometimes tell things about English by looking at German, and sometimes not. Now it happens that there was a word mann in Old English (spoken before 1066) that meant "person; a human being of either sex." One text reads (language modernized): "His mother was a very full-of-faith man." We don't use man in that sense now; in fact, the language has changed, as is the habit of languages. But it was at that stage of the language that the word wifmann occurred, which has become our modern woman. Wifmann meant female person. There was also carlman, which



meant male person. What happened since then is that men appropriated to themselves, to speak anthropomorpholinguistically, the word for "person."

What, then, is the situation today? Some people who use chairman and mailman assert that they refer to women, too. Man, as a general term for humanity, is supposed to include women. But I can't say that my mother is a very pious man. How can we decide whether the -man suffix has the "male" meaning or the "person" meaning?

There is a very interesting study, which has been done in various ways both with elementary school children and with college students. Basically it involves asking the subjects to select pictures to illustrate sentences such as these: "Around the world man is happy." "Primitive man invented agriculture." Another set of subjects chooses pictures to illustrate the same sentences with the word people used instead of man. Significantly, overwhelmingly, the word man called forth many more pictures of men, male people. It is a male image that accompanies phrases like "mankind's destiny," now isn't it? Mike Glicksohn would not like to think that he's being sexist when he uses words like mailman, but he is, unless the mailman is a man.

Mike Glicksohn seems to be reluctant to assume that anything he does naturally and comfortably could be sexist. But being sexist in this society doesn't take an effort; all men were taught to do it, and all women were taught to buy it.

Language does affect the way we think. Erich Fromm, who should know better, was fooled enough in his thinking to describe "Man's vital interests" as "food, shelter, and access to females."

Words present images to our minds. We change our thoughts when our experience changes, and words are a form of experience. Buck Coulson says: "Language will change when we've learned to think differently." But he gives no indication that he wishes to change his thoughts; in fact, one suspects him of perfect complacency with the status quo. He begs the question of how to change thoughts.

The best way I know to affect someone's thoughts is through love. Every time I make loving contact with someone and we reveal ideas, we both change. Though language change is not the best way to change thoughts it's a good way. Language is an amazing, utterly unique phenomenon. For one thing, it is preconscious behavior; i.e. behavior that is usually unconscious but can be brought to consciousness through attention. For another thing, it forms a powerful link between people: a common experience which we can point to. Language is form. It is possible to deceive using language, to evade, smokescreen, and lie. It is also possible to feel incredibly close to someone because you have used words to reveal yourself.

I hardly have patience for people who reject using one of the many useful alternatives for the he in a sentence like "Everyone please raise his hand" on the grounds that he or she, his or her sounds silly, they sounds ungrammatical, etc. "I'd like to, but I'd sound silly." "You have the choice between sounding silly and being sexist, and you're choosing the latter," I'd say to them.

Sexism hurts me so deeply. And it hurts people I love. I can only suppose that some people haven't realized yet how much I'm hurt. I don't say I'm offended by sexist language. It hurts me.

[And that is enough to persuade me, at least, to try even harder to avoid it.]

# I A H F

Don Ayres (read Ann Weiser's letter, carefully; keep thinking); Ruth Berman (one of fandom's very fine poets, with about two dozen poems published); Alan Bostick, Richard Brandt, Bill Bridget (two, actually, and thanks for buying the con membership even though can't attend!); Brian Earl Brown, George Brown, Rick Dey (Yes! Yes! I meant to tell you: I did love the tribute to Thorne Smith in STARLING!); Graham England,

Hank Heath, Irvin Koch (in charge of both the ChattaCon Story Contest and the N3F Story Contest. Irvin's address is 835 Chattanooga Bk. Bldg., Chattanooga, TN 37402); Charles Korbas (who is gafiating and is selling his collection of over 3,300 fanzines for \$5,000. 816 Birch St. #103, Honolulu HI 96814); Randall Larson (who sent a cute dinosaur fable which I enjoyed); Steve McDonald, David C. Merkel, Russ Parkhurst (how good to hear from him again!); Nick Polak, Jessica Salmonson, Ronald Salomon (a courageous card written on the day his father died--your loss is mine, too, Ron; I love you for sharing it with me); Mark R. Sharpe, Mae Strelkov (welcome back; I've missed you); Dave Szurek (You'll never know what agonies I went through in deciding not to print the portion of your earlier letter that you refer to; I really should have printed it the first time around, and my regrets are deep indeed); John Thiel, R. Laurraine Tutihasi, Gail White, Dr. A.D. Wallace, and Leah Zeldes.

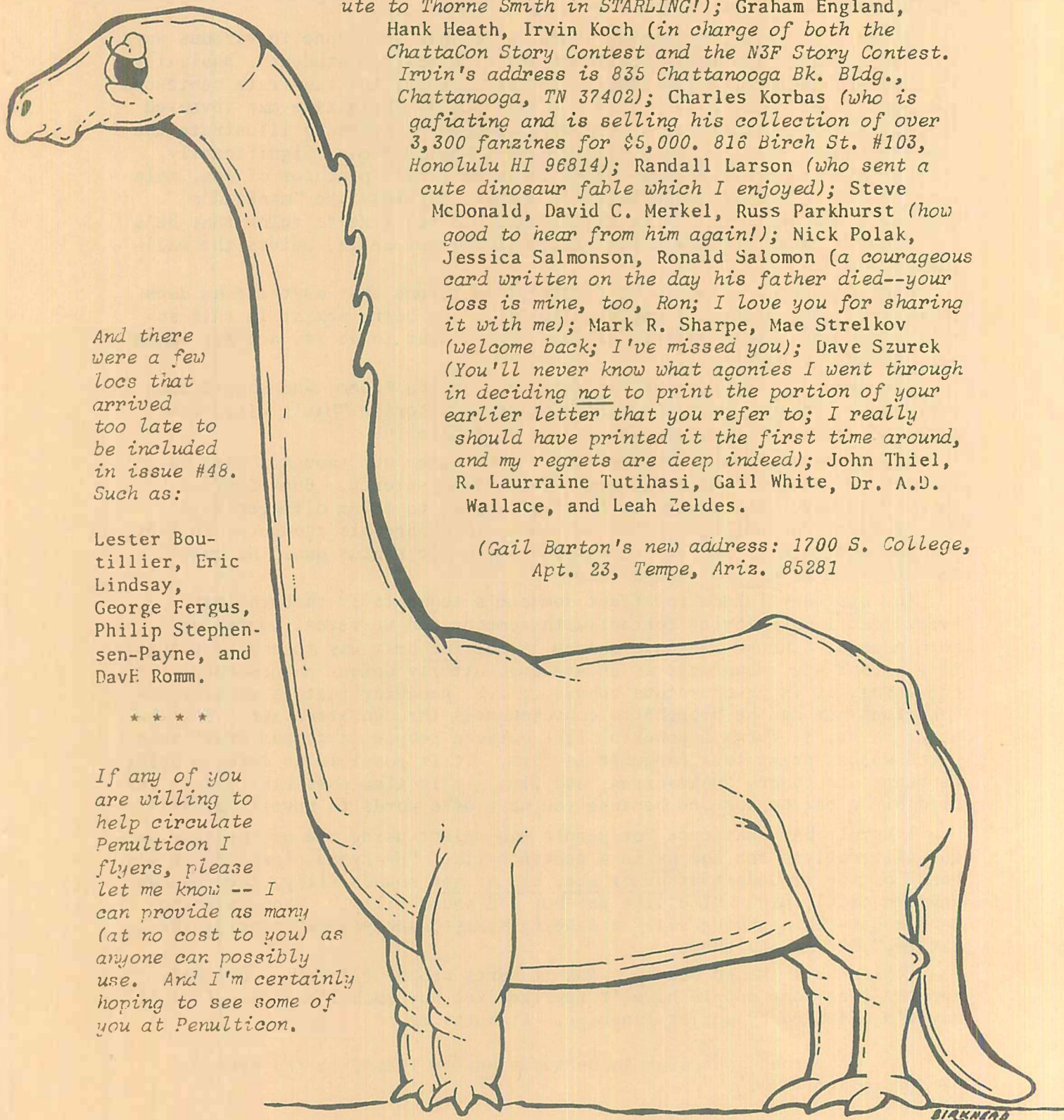
(Gail Barton's new address: 1700 S. College, Apt. 23, Tempe, Ariz. 85281)

And there were a few locs that arrived too late to be included in issue #48. Such as:

Lester Bou-tillier, Eric Lindsay, George Fergus, Philip Stephen-sen-Payne, and Dave Romm.

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If any of you are willing to help circulate Penulticon I flyers, please let me know -- I can provide as many (at no cost to you) as anyone can possibly use. And I'm certainly hoping to see some of you at Penulticon.



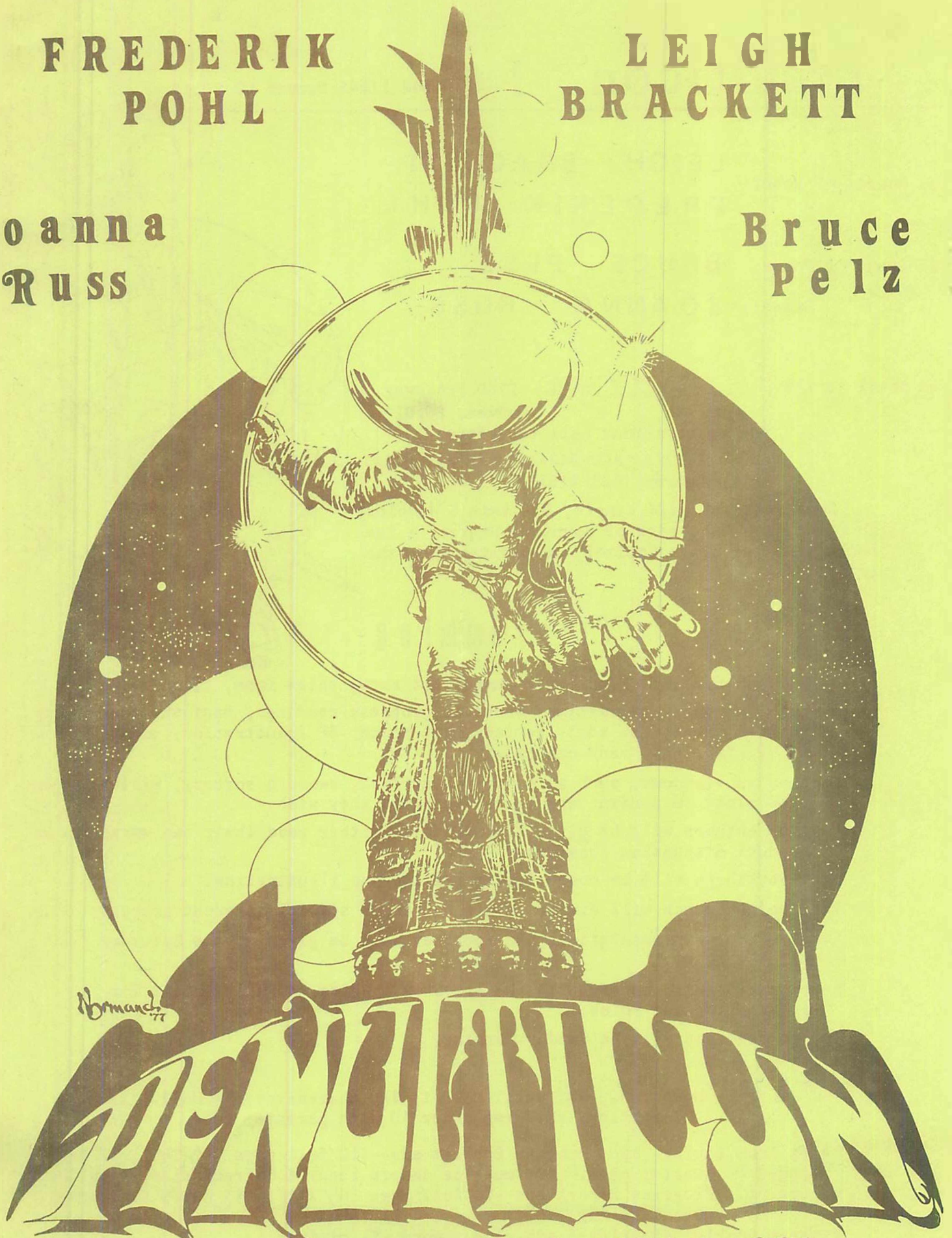


FREDERIK  
POHL

LEIGH  
BRACKETT

Joanna  
Russ

Bruce  
Pelz



Norman  
77

DENVER - NOVEMBER 18, 19 & 20 1977



# Penulticon I

P.O.Box 11545 Denver CO 80211

Pro Guests of Honor: LEIGH BRACKETT  
FREDERIK POHL

Fan Guest of Honor: BRUCE PELZ

Emcee: JOANNA RUSS

The hotel is the **Cosmopolitan** 1780 Broadway  
Denver, 80202  
For reservations call toll free:  
800-323-1776 (800-942-8888 in Illinois)  
or in Denver, 623 2181

Room rates are \$24 single, \$30 twin & doubles.  
The Cosmo is on the edge of downtown Denver, a few  
blocks from the State Capitol, 20 minutes from the  
airport.



## Programming

CONTINUOUS EVENTS: Electronic games, art show, sales room, films

SPECIAL EVENTS: Tea tasting, works in progress readings, meet-the-pros  
parties, panels on adult fantasy, sun spots, SF illustration, women  
in SF, fanzines, many others.

Various sub-fandoms, such as comics, Star Trek, sword & sorcery, will be given  
time slots to present any kind of program they wish.

Various authors will be given time slots to either read their own works or to  
conduct discussion sessions.

Mini-workshops will be conducted in writing and illustration.

The Sunday Brunch will divide into a number of special interest groups.

Guest of Honor presentations and speeches will be given at the Saturday  
night banquet.

Seven awards will be given in the Art Show. Write to Phil Normand for  
information and rules.

The art auction will be Sunday morning.

**costs:** Membership--\$7 until Nov. 1; \$10 thereafter; \$4 daily, \$3 sup-  
porting; children under 10 with parents, free.

Sales Room tables--\$20; Program Booklet ads--\$12 full page (6"x7½"), \$7 half  
page, \$4 quarter page. Ads must be camera ready & correct size. Deadline  
Oct. 1. Progress Report ads--\$5 full page (8½"x11"), \$3 half, \$2 quarter.  
(Deadline Aug. 15).

Program Booklet classified ads--10¢ a word, \$1 minimum.