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Lan's Lantern 27

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To Maia, as always;

To Clifford Simak, his stories and his memory; Long may the writings of this gentle man be read;

To Robert A. Heinlein and E. Hoffman Price -- two treasures who will never be replaced.

Dedication

LAN'S LANTERN #27 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 USA. Phone (313) 642-5670. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, art, letters of comment, even money (US\$3 post paid) and the whim of the editor. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and may or may not be those of the editor. This is Lantern Publication #13, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN #27 is copyright (c) August, 1988, by George J Laskowski Jr., except where otherwise noted. Contributions (art, articles, reviews, letters) become the property of LanShack Press, but will be returned upon request. All rights return to the contributors upon publication. Business manager: Maia Cowan.

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Why You Are Receiving This

- Contribution (art, article, review, loc) in this issue
- Contribution (art, article, review, loc) received, to be used in a future issue
- Trade You wanted one
- We're in an apa together
- Mentioned in Letter Column
- Your book, zine, or tape is reviewed (see page 45, 86 or 89)
- Mentioned in my Conreports & Ramblings
- I thought you might find this interesting.
- I would like you to contribute to one of the special issues coming up -- see page 2.
- This is your last issue unless you do something

From the Editor

THREE STARS

E. Hoffman Price, Robert A. Heinlein, and Clifford D. Simak. We have lost three stars from the science fiction field.

E. Hoffman Price was a pulp writer, selling his first story in 1924. He wrote for any market, but the major association for him was the fiction he wrote for Weird Tales. He was one of the few who was able to make a living solely from his writing.

Robert A. Heinlein. He is considered the master of science fiction. Many cried when they heard of his death. His passing is a real blow to the SF field.

I met him once, only briefly.

CONCLAVE II had a blood drive. About a month earlier I had given blood at the Worldcon, so I could not give again. Robert Heinlein showed up to autograph books of those who gave blood, or tried to and failed. When I arrived to have my book signed, he did so quickly, and as he turned his head up to talk to me, someone was led from the "donation room" by one of the nurses. The woman was ashen white, and Robert went over to assist. I understood, and figured that I would see him again.

I never did, much to my regret, though I am grateful for that brief encounter.

I hold a very special place in my heart for Clifford Simak. I got to know him quite well when I did the Special issue on him several years ago (I still have copies, if anyone is interested); I regret not being able to see him for the past few years. And I especially am sad that he won't see me as the fan GoH at MINICON in 1989.

I have described Cliff as "A Gentleman and a Gentle Man." He was always kind and polite, and in his later years worked hard at his writing to make Earth the "Home of Mankind." His ties to the earth and Earth came through in his writing, and many of his stories told of the few who stayed behind on Earth "to keep the home fires burning."

I'd like to think that he is doing that now. Farewell, Cliff. I will miss you most of all.

by Lan

ERRORS and CORRECTIONS

Yes, aside from the multitude of typos, I occasionally make other goof-ups. In my England Trip and Worldcon report last issue I mentioned that Alan Dean Foster was getting a divorce. Well, it turned out that he and JoAnn reconciled quite soon after that, and so he was never divorced. It took him a back to read about it several months later, and quickly sent me a postcard to correct the information. His comments are in the lettercolumn.

In this issue's "Conreports and Ramblings", I make mention of the lunch I had with Linda Melnick, T.J. Burnside and Kristof Klover -- and the two ladies talking about The Phantom of the Opera. Where they were seated during the operetta, they find themselves in the balcony about twenty feet from the Phantom atop a gargoyle, "during the rooftop scene," not his first appearance as I report. (Those pages were printed well before I read the libretto of the operetta.)

IN THIS ISSUE

Lots of good stuff, including "His Award-Winning Science Fiction Story" by Mike Resnick, lavishly illustrated by Diana Stein.

I had hoped to drop the pages of this issue to under 100, but.... And once again I have lots of stuff left for the next general issue. We'll see what happens then.

Read and enjoy (and loc!). And contribute to the special issues next year. See below.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE

Next year several authors are celebrating their Golden Anniversaries, fifty years of writing science fiction and fantasy. As with the special issues I have put out before, I would like some contributions to help honor these fine authors. Contributions can be articles, art, anecdotes and reminiscences, cartoons, reviews and so forth. Please help me honor these special people in our field. The deadline is June 30, 1989, though that is somewhat flexible (write for extensions).

Two authors will have memorial issues: Robert A. Heinlein and Theodore Sturgeon. The other "Golden Authors" will be tributes to their long standing in the field: Isaac Asimov, Fritz Leiber, and A.E. Van Vogt. Please help me honor these writers who have given us so much pleasure for the past half-century.

I am often asked for the names of women science fiction writers, or suggestions of books that might appeal to feminists. Hence the following reading list, which is presented in alphabetical order by author.

First, a few disclaimers. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or representative of what's available in women's science fiction. It's very much a starter kit -- a list of some of my favorite science fiction books by women writers, on feminist themes. (My fantasy favorites will make another list.)

A few general comments on the books: if they have any features in common, it's the use of strong female leads and a tendency to emphasize characterization and social or biological factors rather than hardware and physics. Their problem-solving revolves around people rather than things.

This list was very hard to compile. First was the problem, not of what to include, but of what to leave out. Second was my tendency to start re-reading all my favorite stories, some of which I haven't read in several years. The second problem helped solve the first: if I simply couldn't stop myself reading, that work definitely went on the list; if I had no trouble putting the book back on the shelf, it likely didn't make the list.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

Bradley's Darkover series includes three overtly feminist books: The Shattered Chain (1976), Thendara House (1983), and City Of Sorcery (1984). Each deals with members of the Guild of Renunciates of "Free Amazons," women who have chosen not to live subservient to men. Some take men as lovers, but do not marry them; others have women lovers. Many suffer great confusion and indecision over their life-choices. Although set in the future on another planet, these books explore many important social problems in our society today: male-female roles, attitudes toward female homosexuality, love and marriage, and prejudice. The term "freemate," popular in some fannish circles, comes from these books. Several women's communities are modelled on the Free Amazons.

Bradley has also written and edited numerous other books, not all of them in the Darkover series, which may be of interest. Most are published by DAW, and the Darkover books tend to be reprinted frequently, so they should be readily available.

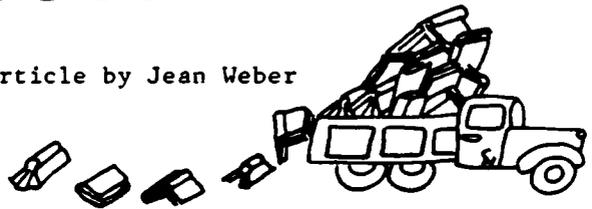
C. J. CHERRYH

A prolific writer, Cherryh has several books with strong female leads. She does not write overtly feminist books: her societies tend to be non-sexist without making a big deal about it. Her themes and topics vary, and include fantasy and science fantasy as well as science fiction. I'll only mention a few here.

Downbelow Station (1981) and its sequel Merchanter's Luck (1982) will appeal to those who like their SF with plenty of action. The Earth stellar empire and its rebellious colonies struggle for control of a

A FEMINIST'S INTRODUCTORY READING LIST of WOMEN'S SCIENCE FICTION

An article by Jean Weber



space station on the fringes of the empire. The merchanters are caught in the middle: families who live aboard their trading ships; families in which sex roles aren't an issue. I found the descriptions of life on shipboard or space station the most believable I can recall every reading.

Set in the same universe, but told from the point of view of non-human species, is the Chanur series (Pride of Chanur, 1981; Chanur's Venture, 1984; The Kif Strike Back, 1985; Chanur's Homecoming, 1986), also action-packed SF adventure. These books more overtly discuss male-female relationships; in the Hani, the roles of the sexes are largely reversed. I recommend the first volume, but the others deteriorate as the characterization becomes lost in the action. You really can't keep up with the players without a scorecard. They are, however, a fascinating study of several quite different views of reality.

The Morgaine series (Gate of Ivrel, 1976; Well of Shiuan, 1978; Fires of Azeroth, 1979; Exile's Gate, 1987) is SF masquerading as fantasy (don't be fooled by the covers, which depict typical sword-and-sorcery scenes). Morgaine was one of the first female heroes I stumbled upon whose gender *wasn't* a big deal in the context of her adventures; I was very impressed. Her duty is to destroy the time-space gates through which would-be conquerors (human or otherwise) can travel to other planets.

SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN

Native Tongue (1984) and its sequel, The Judas Rose (1987) are satirical sendups of all the silliest sexist clichés of our society. In these books, women have been for several hundred years legally totally subservient to men. All the men are very authoritarian towards the women, and the government is authoritarian towards everybody. The economy is dependent upon certain families (the linguists), who train their children to be able to talk with aliens and thus carry on interstellar commerce. The linguist women, allowed to pursue a career because there aren't enough men to do the job, spend their spare time developing a women's language and getting around the men in various devious ways. The men, believing women to be silly creatures, don't notice what the women are doing. There are many stereotyped characters in these books, especially among the men, and many readers find this annoying. Many other readers, myself among them, find it hilarious.

MARY GENTLE

Golden Witchbreed (1983) and its sequel, Ancient Light (1987) look at an alien society through the eyes of a human woman, Lynne, who inadvertently gets caught up in the politics of the planet's inhabitants and later their relationship with the humans. The ethics of non-interference are strained by "the company," a human business conglomerate wishing trade with the aliens. There's a terrible secret in the planet's past, which the humans may force into the open again, with disastrous consequences. Can Lynne save the day?

One touch that I really like in these books is the fact that the Ortheans are neuter until puberty, when they become one sex or the other for the rest of their lives. By that time, however, they've learned a trade and have begun to make a place for themselves in society; since no one knows which sex a child will turn out to be, all are raised the same, and the idea that males and females are inherently different is utterly absent.

SANDI HALL

The Godmothers (1972), a strongly feminist book, encompasses several timestreams, among which the main characters jump frequently. Somewhen in the future is a society of women trying to affect their past (to create their own present?); their society has utopian elements, depicted mainly in contrast with the tensions between men and women in their own times. One nice touch is the complete inability of the men to grasp the concept of a guerrilla group without leaders.

URSULA K. LeGUIN

LeGuin has written many novels and short stories, only three of which I'll note here.

Feminist readers will probably delight in anything she's done. She frequently explores themes of anarchy and non-violence, but does not fall into the trap of assuming that everyone in her happy little communities likes this way of life. There are the rebels and the misfits, the quarrelsome and the violent, but they are dealt with rather differently than we do -- on the whole.

In The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), the members of an alien society are neuter most of the time, but at intervals (similar to human females' menstrual periods) they become either male or female. Because every member of society is potentially a mother, and because sex is exceptionally important only during the periods of "kemmer," these aliens have a society which is not differentiated by sex, and indeed they find the concept absurd. The male human in their midst has some trouble adjusting.

The Dispossessed pits two societies against each other. The anarchic, communistic society of Anarres doesn't have specialized male-female role differences. The hierarchical, capitalist society of Urras has clear role differences. When Shevek of Anarres visits Urras, he makes a real fool of himself at times. The book is about far more than sex roles, however. LeGuin is exploring one of her favorite themes: how would a peaceful, anarchistic society conduct itself?

In Always Coming Home (1985), LeGuin has taken her vision of a pacifist society based on consensus and an appreciation of the individual to a step further than in any of her previous works. Through their own eyes we learn about the lives of these people, and as they meet outsiders, about their assumptions on the ways things are or should be. Thus we should also learn a bit more than our own assumptions on these matters.

ELIZABETH LYNN

Lynn writes overtly feminist works, often with an emphasis on homosexuals and the handicapped; her works are often utopian or dystopian. In addition to her fantasy novels, and various short stories, Lynn has written The Sardonyx Net (1981). Her themes include homosexuality, incest, sadism, slavery, and drug addiction. This is not a delightful book, but it's a thoughtful one. I was introduced to several new points of view on these unsavory topics.

ANNE McCAFFREY

McCaffrey is a prolific writer. Although her works are not particularly feminist, they often include strong female characters. Her Dragonriders of Pern series is particularly popular, and her other works are also enjoyable.

One book I particularly recommend is The Ship Who Sang (1969), a series of related short stories. Helva was born severely handicapped and raised (and conditioned) to be the living human brain in a spacecraft. Such Ships choose their own scouts, and form close attachments with them. The death of

Helva's first scout, Jennan, is poignantly portrayed.

VONDA McINTYRE

McIntyre has written many short works and a few novels which will appeal to feminists; some are reprinted in Fireflood and other Stories (1979).

"Aztecs" was first published in 2076: The American Tricentennial (1977) and formed the basis of the novel Superluminal (1983). To be a starship pilot, one must undergo certain physical modifications, including the replacement of one's heart by a non-organic model. Pilots are an elite, but forever different from non-pilots. By making the choice, one cuts off other possibilities. This is true in everyone's life, but made poignant here by the unusual setting.

Dreamsnake similarly grew out of "Of Mist, and Grass, and Sand" (originally published in Analog, 1973). In a post-holocaust world, biotechnology is married with superstitions to help people survive in a harsh, primitive, but cooperative society. The woman Snake is a healer who gets caught up in power struggles at a much greater level.

MARGE PIERCY

A modern "classic," and one of the finest feminist SF novels I've ever read, is Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time (1976), reprinted by The Women's Press. Two main (and one minor) timestreams overlap in the mind of Connie Ramos, a Mexican-American woman living in NYC on welfare. Connie has been confined to a mental hospital for being "violent" (i.e. sticking up for herself); while there, she visits Luciente, a woman who lives 150 years in the future in a form of feminist utopia. Some of the future society's solutions for male-female relationship problems are deliberately shocking, but serve to jar readers into questioning their own assumptions.

JOANNA RUSS

Russ is one of the most outspoken feminist SF writers around whose works are often mistaken to be man-hating tracts. Several have been reprinted by The Women's Press.

In The Female Man (1975), women from several different centuries and alternative Earths meet. This book pulls no punches in describing the negative side of our society, while comparing it to an alternative "present day" that is somewhat worse than our own, and two futures: one that is far worse than today (the "war between the sexes" has reached the mass killing stage) and one that is idealistic: the woman-only world of Whileaway. Whileaway also featured, in a slightly different form, in the short story "When It Changed," a delightful look at the reactions when a shipload of men arrives in an all-female society after 900 years of isolation.

The Adventures of Alyx (1983) is a collection of stories published between 1967

and 1970, mostly in ORBIT. A Phoenician woman warrior, Alyx is eventually selected to be a Trans-Temporal Agent and proceeds to have adventures in a world not unlike our own century, and another 4,000 years in her future. ("Picnic on Paradise," the longest story in the collection, was originally published in a separate volume in 1968.)

Other Russ books with strong female leads are We Who Are About To... (1977) and The Two of Them (1978). Short story collections include Extraordinary People (1984) and The Zanzibar Cat (1984).

PAMELA SARGENT

Sargent has written many novels, some for young readers. She also edited Women of Wonder (1974), More Women of Wonder (1976), and The New Women of Wonder (1977), which remain excellent introductions to women's SF and contain some famous stories. They may be hard to find.

Venus of Dreams (1986) is an ambitious book, tackling the complicated politics of space exploration and colonization versus "improving the quality of life on Earth." The book focuses on one woman, Iris, who lives in a communal farming community in what used to be the USA. Iris has dreams of working on Venus, and must overcome a great deal of pressure and prejudice from her mother and other relatives to achieve her goals. One nice touch in the book comes when Iris' son rejects his parents' dreams to pursue his own -- Iris' reaction is almost identical to that of her mother years before. A fine blend of the political and the personal in this book, and very believably done.

Cloned Lives (1976) looks at a family of children cloned from a famous, talented father. Many children suffer under the expectations of the adults in their lives, but these have additional burdens to bear. This was one of the earliest treatments of this theme which I read, and I still think it's excellent.

ALICE SHELDON

(writing as James Tiptree, Jr.)

There are at least four volumes of Sheldon's collected short works, titled Ten Thousand Light Years from Home (1973), Warm Worlds and Otherwise (1975), Star Songs of an Old Primate (1978), and Out of The Everywhere (1981). Warm Worlds contains the famous introduction by Robert Silverberg in which he insisted that Tiptree must be a man, and a postscript, also by Silverberg, noting that he was wrong.

"The Women Men Don't See," in The New Women of Wonder and Warm Worlds, and "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" in Star Songs are two of Sheldon's best-known stories, but there are many other marvelous ones. "Houston" is another variation on the theme of the all-woman society suddenly being confronted by men; her treatment is often hilarious, sending up many sexist cliches. "The Women Men Don't See" is more biting, but similarly exposes male blind spots.

Sheldon's two novels (Up the Walls of the

World 1978, and Brightness Falls from the Air, 1985) were less satisfying to me, but if you like her stories, do try the novels as well. In Up the Walls, three story lines interact and finally converge, bringing together humans, very convincing aliens, and a vast sentience floating among the stars. Male and female characters are portrayed as equally having strengths and weaknesses. Among the aliens child-rearing is high status and is done by males.

"Houston" makes a delightfully satirical point when three male astronauts return from a tinewarp to an Earth populated only by women. Each of the men takes one of the stereotyped male responses to the situation: the messiah, the stud, and the chivalric rescuer. The women, of course, have never known men and don't miss them, viewing these specimens merely as exotic curiosities (one of my all-time favorite scenes is the one in which a rape attempt turns into an opportunity for the woman to collect a sperm sample).

JOAN SLONCZEWSKI

A Door into Ocean (1986) explores the interactions between individuals from two cultures with vastly different views of reality. One society, Valedon, is dictatorial and militaristic; the other, Shora, is collective and pacifist, conducting its affairs through consensus. Shora's inhabitants, who call themselves Sharers, are the product of a deliberate genetic engineering program they conducted on themselves. They and the Valens find each other's attitudes incomprehensible; the Valens in particular cannot comprehend some one or group who cannot be forced to do something, and even more bizarrely who try to help their enemies see the error of their ways by ignoring them until they behave acceptably.

JOAN D. VINGE

Of Joan D. Vinge's novels, The Snow Queen (1980) and The Outcasts of Heaven Belt (1978) are my favorites. She has written several more, and numerous shorter works.

The Snow Queen follows a young woman, Moon, who grew up ignorant of her fate: she is a clone of the Snow Queen and must take her place when the Queen dies. This story is based on an old fantasy theme but is given a thoroughly science-fictional treatment, complete with offworlders who want to exploit the resources of the planet -- including possibly sentient sea creatures. Ethics are discussed on several levels, including cultural interference.

Outcasts examines the clash of two cultures: in one, a group living on old starships, group marriage is common and women are equal with men, sharing all duties. In the other, a spacefaring group with planetary bases, great concern about sterility and mutation keeps the women planet-bound. Themes include solutions to a common problem of dwindling resources and mistrust in the aftermath of war.

Phoenix in the Ashes (1985) collects some of Vinge's short stories, including the famous "Mother and Child," first published in Orbit 16 (1975). This story explores the problems of a girl with good hearing and vision in a society of deaf, nearsighted people. "Eyes of Amber," first published in Analog (1977) and anthologized in The New Women of Wonder (ed. P. Sargent, 1977), is also excellent.

CHERRY WILDER

The Torn series (The Luck of Brin's Five, 1979; The Nearest Fire, 1980; The Tapestry Warriors, 1983) is suitable for younger readers, but enjoyable for adults, too. The Moruians of the planet Torin are marsupial humanoids with a non-sexist culture, who form marriage groups of five adults (and resulting children), which typically include a non-breeding member (the "Luck"). The arrival of humans on this planet shakes up some of the society's assumptions, despite -- or perhaps because of -- the humans' attempts at non-interference.

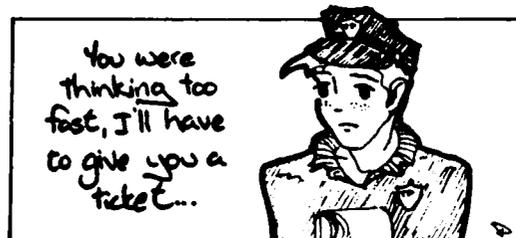
KATE WILHELM

Wilhelm is a prolific writer, with far too many books to mention here. Many of Wilhelm's stories have a delicious tinge of horror to them. She is also very concerned with matters of ethics, particularly in situations where sticking to your view of right and wrong could get you hurt badly. If you've ever felt paranoid and later learned that "they" really were plotting against you, especially if you're a woman in a predominantly man's field, you'll appreciate her books.

In The Clewiston Test (1976), a woman makes a scientific breakthrough that would make her employers rich; but is it safe to use it on humans? She believes others, including her husband, are trying to exploit the drug prematurely, and trying to prevent her from questioning or stopping them.

Juniper Time (1979) follows a woman caught between her hatred for technology and her knowledge that could affect international peace.

Welcome, Chaos (1983) addresses the question: who decides who lives forever? Whoever controls the means of achieving immortality has great power; obviously governments, corporations, organized crime, and just about anyone else rich and powerful is going to be struggling for control. A woman who stumbles onto some key information is caught in the middle.



MORE GEMS
of SHORT FICTION
by WOMEN WRITERS

An article by Jessica Amanda Salmonson



Okay, Lan, now you've done it -- encouraged me to blather off my opinions on books more people ought to read! Here're some more "gems of short fiction" by women.

Constance G. Taylor self-published Four Stories (Vantage, 1984) and so of course nobody read it, but the slim volume is quite good, and Taylor could certainly have been a Saturday Evening Post regular in its heyday of the 50s. "Supper at Lompere's" is a first-rate ghost story. "Prisoner of Venice" is a decadent, lesbian fantasy of rejuvenation.

The Scarecrow and Other Stories (Dutton, 1918) by G(wendolyn) Ranger Wormser is the author's only book. The title story is about a scarecrow in Civil War garb haunting a mother who is trying to keep her son from joining the then-current war effort. Haunting, Machenesque. At least half the collection is supernatural.

Renee Vivien's The Woman of the Wolf (Gay Press, 1983) is likely still in print. The author was an American expatriot who wrote these stories in French under the influence of Baudelaire. Title story: a superior contes cruel. "Prince Charming:" a lesbian fable. "Snickering Thirst," "Crocodile Lady," "White as Foam," and especially "The Hell Club" are all great fantasies.

Mary Barnard, a well-known American poet, has a little-known collection of stories called Three Fables, all short and cruel. Though the slender volume takes ten minutes to read, it's a truly memorable ten minutes.

Laura E. Richards has two books you can look for in the children's book sections of used book shops: The Golden Windows (1903) and The Silver Crown (1906) with several editions including an omnibus of both of them. These miniature stories, or poems-in-prose, range from whimsical to grotesque. Today's conservative children's publishers would never touch them. They're worthy of adult attention, to be sure.

Maria Luisa Bombal lived in the USA much of her adult life but wrote in Spanish. Her short stories were finally translated as New Islands (FSG, 1982). "The Unknown" is about a crew of pirates at the bottom of the sea unaware that they are dead. The other stories are fine feminist fantasies.

Emma Frances Dawson's An Itinerant House (Doxey, 1897) is famous among collectors. It had 500 copies printed, most of them proba-

bly destroyed in the San Francisco fire. A near-fine copy is one of the high spots of my collection. However, anyone can read it if they take the time as it is available in libraries on microfilm. Emma was a chum of Bierce. Her horror stories are decadent and beautifully grotesque.

Gertrude Hall had three collections that I know of: Foam of the Sea, The Hundred, and Far from Today, each with some fantasy in them. "Sylvanus" in the latter book is about a childless couple attempting against all odds, and failing in the long run, to raise a satyr as a normal; child. Lovely and strange. (I've been trying a long time to find her poetry collection Allegreto -- if anyone can help?)

Mildred Cram's Stranger Things (Cassell, 1923) is well known though it only has a couple supernatural stories in it. Less recognized are two slim books, about 60 pages each, which read together form a kind of epic of supernatural lovers. Forever (Knopf, 1938) and The Promise (Knopf, 1949) are fairly easy to locate once you know they exist.

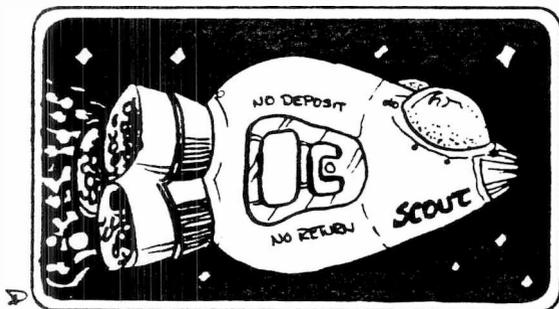
Miss Etta de Camp, perhaps a relation of L. Sprague de Camp but he didn't know of her, an occult crackpot who wrote The Return of Frank R. Stockton in 1913, purporting to have got these stories from the dead author himself. "The Man Who Always Turned Up" is a fine ghost story but the rest of the collection is lamentably bad.

Finally, I add two more books to the list, mere pamphlets really but excellent ones by women influenced very strongly by M. R. James. One is The Angry Dead by Mary Ann Allen (who is actually Rosemary Pardoe of The Haunted Library, 36 Hamilton St., Hoole, Chester CH2 3JQ, ENGLAND). It's out of print now, but Rosemary is constantly bringing out new things, so write. One of the stories from this booklet will be included in my forthcoming Tor Books anthology Tales by Moonlight II. The other Jamesian is A. F. "Chico" Kidd whose Change and Decay is probably out of print, but she will be issuing a second collection soon: 39 Mayfield Rd., off Cobbold Road, London W.12, ENGLAND. If you've admired M.R. James, you'll get a kick out of these modern variants.

There is no end to material like this, but if I bother you with such notes again, mayhap I'll evaluate some overlooked males.

His Award-Winning

Science Fiction Story



by Mike Resnick

Illustrated by Diana Stein

Chapter 2

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

Chapter 2

Lance Stalwart and Conan Kinnison sat at the controls of their tiny two-man scout ship, a good dozen parsecs in advance of the Terran Fleet, debating their possible courses of action, reviewing all their options.

One moment they had been all alone in the Universe, or so it seemed; then all space was filled with the Arcturian navy, millions upon millions of ships, some short and squat, a few saucer-shaped, a handful piercing the void like glowing silver needles, all made of an impenetrable titanium alloy, well over half of them equipped for hyperspatial jumps, all girded for warfare, each and every one manned by a crew of malicious, malignant, hate-filled Arcs, each of whom had been schooled in spacial warfare since earliest infancy, each a precisely-functioning cog in the vast, seemingly impervious and unconquerable Arc war machine that had smashed its way to victory after victory against the undermanned Terrans and was even now plunging toward the Terran home system in a drive that was not to be denied unless Stalwart and Kinnison managed to pull a couple of magical rabbits out of their tactical hat.

"Jesus H. Christ!" muttered Stalwart disgustedly. "If I'd ever written a sentence like that they'd have thrown me out of school."

"I'd sure like to have the purple prose concession on this guy's word processor," agreed Kinnison.

"And here we are, risking our asses in the middle of God knows where, and we don't even know what a goddamned Arc looks like," complained Stalwart. "If I were writing this story, that's the very first thing I'd put in."

It walked in the woods.

It was never born. It existed. Under the pine needles the fires burn, deep and smokeless in the mold. In heat and in darkness and decay there is growth. It grew, but it was not alive. It walked unbreathing through the woods, and thought and saw and was hideous and strong, and it was not born and it did not live. And -- perhaps it could not be destroyed.

"No good!" snapped Kinnison. "It's not enough that you're going to get sued over my name. Now you've gone and swiped an entire opening from Theodore Sturgeon. You'd better go back right now and describe an Arc properly."

"Right," said Resnick.

Chapter 2

He walked in the woods.

He was never born. He existed. He grew, but he was not alive. He walked unbreathing through the woods, and thought and saw and was hideous and strong, and he was not born and he did not live. And --

"You are not exactly the swiftest learner I ever came across," said Kinnison.

"I've had it with this crap!" snapped Stalwart. "Screw you, Resnick! I'm going to Chapter 20. Maybe things will get a little better by then."

He set off at a slow trot, vanishing into the distant haze.

"That's funny," mused Kinnison. "I always thought Chapter 20 was more to the left."

"Only if you're writing in Arabic," said his companion.

"Who the hell are you?" demanded Kinnison.

"Harvey Wallbanger," said Harvey Wallbanger.

"Should I know you?"

"I'm from the Space Opera Stock Character Replacement Center," said Harvey Wallbanger. He stretched vigorously. "Ah, it feels good to be back in harness! I've been sitting on the sidelines for years. I would

have preferred a Hawk Carse reprint, but my agent says that the main thing for a stock character it to keep working."

"I suppose so," said Kinnison, eying him warily.

"By the way," said Wallbanger, "why are you eying me warily?"

"Oh, no reason," said Kinnison, averting his eyes.

"Go ahead, tell me," urged Wallbanger. "I won't be offended. Really I won't."

"You don't have any facial features," said Kinnison.

"I don't need them," answered Wallbanger. "I'm just here so you won't have to talk to yourself."

"This is crazy!" snapped Kinnison. "I don't know who I'm fighting, or why they're mad at me, or what they look like, and my shipmate is doing God knows what in Chapter 20, and now they've given me a faceless assistant, and I'm going on strike."

"What?" said Wallbanger, fulfilling his literary function to perfection.

"This just doesn't make any sense," said Kinnison, "and I'm not going back to work until I've got some motivation."

Suddenly a cloud of dust arose in the Altair sector. The sound of hoofbeats grew louder and louder until a magnificent coal-black stallion galloped into view, steam rising in little clouds from his heavily-lathered body.

The Great Masked Writer of the Planes dismounted and approached Kinnison and Wallbanger. He was tall, debonaire, handsome in a masculine, ruddy sort of way, incredibly erudite, and unquestionably the world's greatest lay. He

HA!

"What the hell was that?" asked Kinnison.

"Just my wife, dusting the computer keyboard," said Resnick. "It certainly shouldn't be construed as an editorial comment."

I REPEAT: HA!

"At least tell her to use lower-case letters," whined Kinnison. "She's giving me a headache." He paused. "What are you doing here, anyway? It's really most irregular."

Resnick patted the stallion's beautifully-arched neck. "Steady there, big fella," he said in tones that inspired instant confidence. He turned back to Kinnison.

"He'll give you a half-mile in 47 seconds any time you ask for it. He performs best with blinkers and a run-out bit, and he doesn't like muddy tracks."

"Why are you telling me all this?" asked Kinnison.



"Because he's yours now," said Resnick, handing over the reins. "Take him."

"What's his name?"

"Motivation."

"But he's a horse!"

"Look -- you asked for Motivation, I'm giving you Motivation. Now do you want him or not?"

"I'm terribly confused," said Kinnison. "Maybe we ought to go back to the beginning and see if it works out any better this time."

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

Chapter 2

"You've lost me already," complained Kinnison, scratching his shaggy head. "I mean, like, who the hell is Ishmael?"

"It's a sure-fire beginning," said Resnick, shoving Wallbanger into the murky background. "Every great American novel begins with 'Call me Ishmael'."

"How many novels is that, at a rough guess?" asked Kinnison.

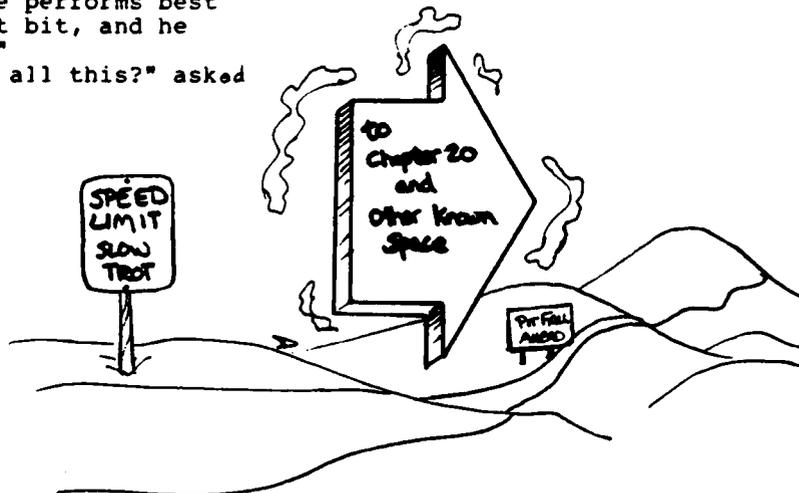
"Well, the downstate returns aren't all in yet," replied Resnick, "but so far, rounded off, it comes to one."

"Hah!" snapped Kinnison. "And how the hell many Ishmaels do you know?"

"One," said Resnick, delighted at how neatly it was all working out.

"Who?"

"Ishmael Valenzuela," said Resnick, who may have overstated the case originally, but was unquestionably the greatest lay in the sovereign state of Ohio.



HA!

"Who the hell is Ishmael Valenzuela?" demanded Kinnison.

"A jockey," answered Resnick. "He rode Kelso and Tim Tam and Mister Gus."

"What's he got to do with this story?"

"I thought he might ride Motivation in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe," explained Resnick. "It's the biggest race in Europe. Then I'll have an Ishmael and an Arc all in the same plac, and it'll make it much easier to tie up all the loose ends."

"It'll never work," said Kinnison. "What if they call it the Prix instead of the Arc?"

"They wouldn't dare! This is a G-rated story."

"Still, it would make me very happy if you'd go back to the beginning and get rid of Ishmael."

"Well, I don't know..."

"Come on," urged Kinnison. "After all, you got in your dirty pun, bad as it was."

"Yeah," said Resnick. "But that was five sentences ago. We could have used a little something right here."

Chapter 1

And call me Conrad.

Chapter 2

"I don't think I'm getting through to you at all," complained Kinnison. "Now you've ripped off a Roger Zelazny title."

"Boy, nothing pleases you!" muttered Resnick.

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

Chapter 2

"You sure as hell haven't gotten very far," said Lance Stalwart, strolling in from the northeast.

"Are you back already?" asked Kinnison, startled.

"There's nothing much happening up ahead. Resnick makes it with Loni Anderson 30 or 40 times between Chapter 12 and Chapter 18, but that's about it. I'm still trying to figure out what she's doing in a science fiction story."

"I've always been a Goldie Hawn man myself," said Kinnison, apropos of nothing.

"No way," said Resnick. "Loni Anderson has two insurmountable advantages."



Mike Resnick

"You can't keep making filthy jokes like that!" roared Kinnison. "This is supposed to be a serious space opera, and here you are talking about Loni Anderson's boobs, for Christ's sake!"

"Yeah!" chimed in Stalwart. "You can't go around talking about her tits in print! Don't you know kids are going to be reading this, you stupid fucking bastard?"

"This chapter," said Kinnison, "is turning into an udder disaster."

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

Chapter 2

Conan Kinnison, a retarded Albanian dwarf, hobbled over to Lance Stalwart, whose wrought-iron lung had stopped functioning. The ship's temperature had risen to 44 degrees Centigrade, the oxygen content was down to six percent, and all the toilets were backing up.

"Is it too late to apologize?" rasped Kinnison through his hideously deformed lips.

The most fantastic bed partner in Hamilton County, Ohio

HA!

nodded his acquiescence, mercy being one of his many unadvertised virtues.

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

Chapter 2

"Ahh, that's better!" said Lance Stalwart, stretching his bronzed, muscular, six-foot seven-inch frame. "You know, I think the problem may be that you don't know where this story is going. It really hasn't got much direction."

"It's got Motivation, though," said Resnick sulkily.

"Maybe what it needs is a title," offered Kinnison. "Most of the stories I've read have had titles."

"Why bother?" said Resnick wearily. "The editors always change them anyway."

"Only if they make sense," said Kinnison.

Chapter 3: The Search for a Title

"The floor is now open for suggestions," said the most skillful lover living at 1409 Throop Street in Cincinnati, Ohio.

WHAT ABOUT THE GARDENER?

Chapter 3: The Search for a Title

"The floor is now open for suggestions," said the most skillful lover (possibly excepting the gardener) living at 1409 Throop Street in Cincinnati, Ohio.

BIG DEAL.

"It's got to sound science-fictional, grip the reader, and give me a little direction," continued Resnick. "I will now entertain recommendations."

"The Mote in God's Thigh," said Loni Anderson.

"Buckets of Gor," suggested John Norman.

"Call Me Ishmael," said Valenzula.

"Tarzan Stripes Forever," said Harvey Wallbanger.

"I don't like any of them," said Kinnison.

"Me neither," agreed Stalwart. "It is my considered opinion that the title ought to be: His Award-Winning Science Fiction Story. That way, when Resnick's next collection comes out, the editor can put a blurb on the cover stating that the volume includes His Award-Winning Science Fiction Story."

"I like that idea!" said Resnick enthusiastically.

"Then it's settled," said Kinnison with a sigh of relief. "I feel like a new man."

"Me, too," said Loni Anderson. "Where's the gardener?"

Chapter 2

"You know," said Kinnison wearily, "if you'd spend a little less time watching the Bengals' defense blow one lead after another and a little more time trying to write this goddamned story, I'd be willing to meet you halfway. But as things stand now, I don't have the energy for a whole novel. I keep getting this sense of deja vu."

"Me, too," said John Carter, who had wandered over from the Barsoom set. "Only it's spelled Dejah vu."

"Why not make a short story out of it?" Continued Kinnison.

"Well, it's not really an Omni or Playboy type of story," responded Resnick, "and no one else pays very well."

"How about selling it to Harlan Ellison for The Last Dangerous Visions?" suggested Kinnison. "Word has it that it'll be coming out in another ten years or so."

"Hah! Call that stuff dangerous visions?" snorted Stalwart contemptuously. "I've got

an uncle who can't see a redwood tree at ten paces, and he drives a school bus. Now that's what I call dangerous vision!"

"Well, I was saving it for a smash ending," said Resnick, "but if we've all decided that this is a short story, I might as well bring it out now."

So saying, he produced a little gadget which could blow up approximately half the known universe. The patents on the various parts were held by Murray Leinster, Jack Williamson, Edmund Hamilton, and E. E. Smith (who also invented half of Conan Kinnison, but I can't say which half because this is a G-rated story.)

"I think I've seen one of those before," said Lance Stalwart. "What do you call it?"

"This," explained Resnick, "is a pocket frammistan, guaranteed to get you out of any jams you may get into, except for those requiring massive doses of penicillin."

"It's a nice idea," said Kinnison, "but we can't use it."

"Why not?" demanded Resnick.

"We can't use a pocket frammistan," explained Kinnison patiently, "because none of us has any pockets. In fact, until you insert a few descriptive paragraphs into this story, none of us is even wearing any pants."

"You'd better solve this one quick," warned Stalwart, "or you stand in considerable danger of having this damned thing turn into a novelet."

"Let's backtrack a little," suggested Resnick, "and see if there is anything we missed."

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

Chapter 2

"Ah, here it is!" said Resnick, picking up a crumpled piece of paper off the floor.

"What is it?" asked Kinnison, peeking over his shoulder.

"Our salvation," said Resnick, uncrumpling the paper. On it was scribbled a single word: Laskowski.

"It's just an old piece of correspondence," said Kinnison despondently.

"Not any more," said Resnick.

"But what does it mean?" asked Stalwart.

"That's the beauty of it," said Resnick. "This is a science fiction story, so we can make it do or mean anything we want."

"Not quite anything," said Kinnison fussily. "Unless, of course, you want this to wind up as a fantasy story."

"I'll keep that in mind," said Resnick, who was anxious to get on with the show and move ahead to chapters 12 through 18.

"Give us an idea how it works," said Stalwart.

"Right," said Kinnison. "If we're going to have to depend on a laskowski, we at least deserve some say in its function."

"Fair enough," agreed Resnick, walking to the blackboard.



Chapter 3: The Creation of the Laskowski

Students will be allowed 40 minutes, no more and no less, and must mark their papers with a Number One Lead Pencil. Anyone disobeying the honor system will have bamboo splints driven under his fingernails, or maybe be forced to read Dhalgren.

What Laskowski Means To Me:

- A) "Your Highness, may I present Arx Kreegah, the Grand Laskowski of the star system of..."
- B) "Hey, Harry, get a load of the laskowskis on that babe, willya?"
- C) Kinnison touched the button once, and the dread Laskowski Ray shot out, destroying all life in its path, except for one pathetic little flower...
- D) "Ah, Earthman, just because I have two laskowskis where Terran females have but one, does that make me any less a woman?"
- E) "The rare eight-legged laskowski mosquito, though seemingly harmless, can, when engorged with the blood of a lefthanded Turkish rabbi..."
- F) "They're closing on us fast!" cried Stalwart. "If we don't get the Laskowski Drive wotking in the next ten seconds, we're up Paddle Creek without a..."
- G) "Chess is fine for children," said Poorht Knish, waving a tentacle disdainfully, "but out here we play a real game: laskowski."
- H) "No thanks," panted Kinnison. "I couldn't laskwoski again for hours!"
- I) None of the above.

Chapter 4

"Well, how did it come out?" asked Stalwart.

"We've got six votes for None of the Above, two didn't understand the question, and seventeen voted for Harold Stassen," said Resnick grimly.

"Then we're back where we started?" asked Kinnison, choking back a manly little sob.

"Not quite," said Resnick. "We got all the way up to Chapter 4 this time."

"While you guys have been talking, I've been reading some market reports," said Wallbanger, "and I've come to the conclusion that a short story is just about the hardest thing to sell."

"So what do you suggest?" asked Resnick.

"A vignette."

"A what?"

"You know -- a short-short story," replied Wallbanger. "They get rejected much faster. Why, you could get a rejection every four days with a vignette, whereas a short story might not be bounced more than once a month. As for a novel" -- he shrugged disdainfully -- "hell, it could take ten years to get turned down by everyone."

"I don't know," said Resnick unhappily.

"I sort of had my heart set on a rip-roaring space opera, with about 35 chapters, glittering with wit and action and a subtle sense of poetic tragedy."

"Couldn't you condense it all into a vignette?" said Kinnison. "I'm exhausted. I don't think I could go through all this again."

"Or maybe even a poem," suggested Stalwart hopefully.

"Or a nasty book review," added Wallbanger. "There's a huge market for them, especially if you misuse a lot of five-syllable words."

"No," said Kinnison decisively. "Let him stick with what he does best."

"Right," said Resnick, sitting down at the word processor.

Chapter 1

Call me Ishmael.

The End



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AN ALTERNATE VIEW

by Alex Bouchard

The Next Generation

I read Laurel Gugin's article on Star Trek: The Next Generation in LL #25, and was surprised, to say the least. It seems that she and I aren't watching the same series.

Let me jot down my responses to her article as she broke down the article itself:

Jean-Luc Picard

Where, oh where did she get the idea that Captain Picard studied at the "James T. Kirk School of Starship Command"? The command styles of the two are nothing alike. Picard is more like a captain should be; decisive without being rash, confident without arrogance, and secure enough in his knowledge and abilities to know that there is always the possibility that he's misread the situation. This is why he allows so much discussion among his prime crew; on the chance he could be wrong. (Something old Jimmy T. couldn't -- or wouldn't -- admit, even to himself.)

William T. Riker

Number One has been developed quite a bit since the first few episodes that Ms. Gugin had seen in writing her article; Riker has had more to do since those first few shows. And he does take things a bit too seriously at times, but we've seen him relax with his jazz, blowin' his 'bone. Here, too, a bit more than we saw previously.

Deanna Troi

Now here, Ms. Gugin and I don't disagree much; in the first few episodes, Troi, for the most part, has been merely decorative. However, as the writers are finding her, she is developing more shipboard functions, such as her interplay with operational commander Geordi in the episode "Arsenal of Freedom". Her advice to him about how to handle the inexperienced Ops and Conn officers he had was cogent, pithy, and necessary. She will find her balance, her focus, and her strengths.

Lt. Worf

I enjoy the idea of a Klingon on the bridge. There is much there that can be brought out, about the warrior heart sworn to hold the peace, and the natures of honor and duty conflicting with the drives of a violent race. The episode where the Enterprise picked up escaped renegade Klingons, who were trying to seduce Worf into joining them (title: "Heart of Glory"), serves as my example on this point. Worf's speech on the warrior's need for duty and honor, not just blood and death, showed to me many of the inner conflicts that drive him.

Dr. Crusher

There isn't much I can add to Ms. Gugin's statements about Dr. Crusher; I enjoy her character. She is a McCoy-like presence without having to be McCoy, and that in and of itself is no mean feat. Now, as to the backstory about the Doctor's late husband and Captain Picard, I know what the Writer's Guide says, which is that Jack Crusher served under Jean-Luc Picard on the Star-gazer, was killed in an accident, and Picard feels responsible for his death. But, to use James T. Kirk as an example, didn't he feel responsible for the death of every crewman on a mission? (Even the Security redshirts, who got offed in case lots?)

Which moves us on to . . .

Wesley

I wonder why Ms. Gugin takes off on poor Wes the way she does? Sixteen-year-old males do tend to act like shits quite often; I used to be one myself, thirty or forty millenia ago, it seems like, and I know I was insufferable. Having one in a high tech environment, like a Galaxy-class starship, especially a sixteen-year-old with a power-assisted sponge for a brain, could prove to be one unholy hell of a problem; fortunately, Wes and the Captain (and more importantly, Gene Roddenberry and the writers) are handling it.

Lt. Tasha Yar

From what we know now, Denise Crosby won't be back as Lt. Yar next season. How they get rid of Tasha, and whether they leave her exit open to allow for a return, will be interesting to see. However, I must take issue with the article saying that Tasha does not possess the "air of command necessary to be in charge of others"; I find her, given her backstory in the Writer's Guide to be believable, competent, and authoritative enough for me.

However, since this is all now moot, as first season filming is completed, let us move on to . . .

Geordi

I like Geordi, too; and I have confidence that Geordi can be a competent commander, having seen him in operational command of the ship now in two episodes. The Writer's Guide says that "Geordi wants to be Captain Picard when he grows up." I think he's well on the way.

Data

Data is one of the most powerful statements on humanity that Gene Roddenberry has come up with; sort of the quintessence of Spock, Questor (from the much-loved Questor Tapes), and a touch of Pinocchio thrown in. (Remember Questor admitting to being fully functional to Lady Helena Trimble?) And since we now know more about him from the episode with the crystal entity, and his imperfect "brother", Lor, he is more understandable to me. (And I'll be *damned* if I can remember that episode's title!) I see Data as a decisive asset to the Enterprise in three ways: first, as a repository of vast knowledge with virtually instant recall, and as probably the most skilled at information retrieval, Data is the logical crewmember to conduct briefings before an Away Team beams into a situation. Second,

Data's superior physical strength, speed, and stamina provide an invaluable support for Riker, when he is commanding an Away Team. Third, Data's attempts to become more human give us a chance to look at (and laugh at) ourselves, as an outsider (in the traditions of Spock, Valentine Michael Smith, John Carter, and Tarzan) sees us.

At this point, Ms. Gugin went into an episode-by-episode breakdown of the shows. Space does not permit this on my part, seeing as how I write from the viewpoint of near the end of the season. However, I will indulge in a bit of editorializing, as she did at the end of her article.

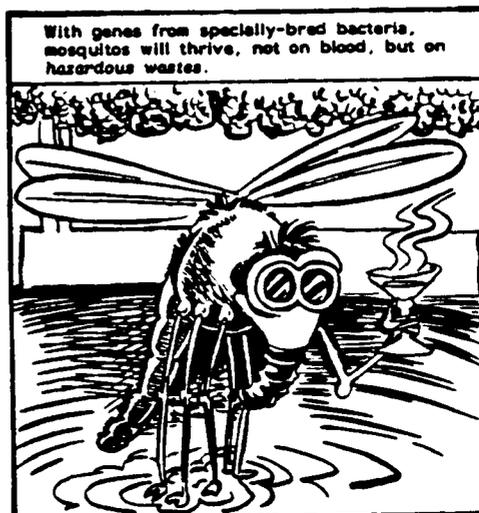
The first few hour-long episodes were somewhat derivative of the original series. Is that so bad? The producers were, and are, trying to find their stride, their unique voice. The original series didn't begin to find itself, to my mind, until at least halfway through the first season. They're trying to show that this is almost one hundred years after the voyages of Kirk and Company; things have changed, people have changed, but problems, and the resources we fallible humans must find (or make) to deal with those problems haven't changed.

As I read it, the message of The Next Generation is still that there is hope. It was needed in the Sixties, with the Vietnam War, peace demonstrations, riots in the cities, and young-old and black-white polarization; it is still needed here, in the Eighties and Nineties, with our class polarizations, Central America, the Persian Gulf, the drug epidemic, the AIDS epidemic, and all the other day-to-day imbroglios that life thrusts us into. And there's Gene Roddenberry, smiling his Big Producer grin, thrusting wickedly funny little comments into the midst of things, to see what'll happen.

I don't mind seeing that, myself. I think it's needed, and healthy, in American television in the 1980's.

Mosquito + Hungry Bacteria

the GENETIC ENGINEER'S BESTIARY
by Kurt Erichsen



Of Milk Duds and Minsky

Comments by Mark R. Leeper
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A while back I got a bad Milk Dud.

When I was growing up I would often get Milk Duds at the movies. They are a lump of good caramel wrapped in chocolate. A friend of mine liked to go to the zoo and give handfuls of them to the monkeys. The idea was that once you sink your teeth into good caramel it holds onto your teeth and you can't open your mouth for a while until some of the caramel dissolves. Cheap caramel does not have the same problem. It is kind of granular in consistency and just sort of falls apart in your mouth.

A few years ago I got a package of Milk Duds and from this package the monkeys would have had nothing to fear. These Milk Duds lived up to their name and were duds; Milk Duds with cheap caramel are pretty bad. Now Milk Duds may have gone back to using good caramel. They may even have had an ad campaign claiming to returning to being "original Milk Duds." If so, I missed it. I think of how they were the last time I ate them and the bad Milk Dud which was the last one I ate remains the last Milk Dud I ate.

But that does not mean I do not think about companies like the one that made Milk Duds. I ask myself who makes a decision like "we are going to start using cheap caramel in Milk Duds." This is not a simple decision. Cheapening caramel saves the company money and improves profits, but then there are people like me whom Milk Duds loses as customers. This loss is only semi-reversible. For all I know, Milk Duds may have used cheap caramel for only a one-month period and this may have been many years ago, but they still have lost me as a customer for decades to come. They mortgaged a piece of their future for a stretch of years for a short-term profit.

The person who decided to cheapen Milk Duds saved his company a lot of money and probably left his position a hero, moving on to make other parts of the company more profitable. That is one of the American dreams: to be the kind of person who can go around a company bringing higher profits wherever he goes and then moving on. Twenty years later when sales are down, nobody really remembers who it was who made the decision to cheapen Milk Duds. Most American businesses have rewards systems that are geared to the short-term profit. Nobody gets rewarded for a decision that will mean a lot of money to the company in another twenty years, much less a decision that will mean a little bit to the company over a whole range from ten to thirty years in the future. If Milk Duds went

back to their original formula, they probably did it at least on the basis of short-term gain. How so? Well, to choose another candy -- Chunky a while back started advertising it was going back to being "Original Chunky" with all the original quality. It was a lie, incidentally, but at least they did start improving their product. But it was a lot of hoopla so it could be turned into a short-term gain.

And this philosophy of applauding and rewarding the short-term gain does not apply to just the candy business. Airlines used to want to give the feel of supreme safety in a superbly maintained craft. Now they have decided to save money and improve the bottom-line profit picture by letting their planes and airports go a little bit downhill. While writing this article I flew on a plane that gave me much the same feel I get when I ride the New York subway system: that things have been let slip. The tray/table had been warped out of shape somehow and it took me and two stewardesses to force it into "the full upright position." It probably will remain that way for many flights. This may seem like a cosmetic problem but this seat back did not just suddenly warp. This plane has not been well-maintained and this is from what I consider among the most reliable American airlines, United. Others are worse. The government is currently investigating Eastern Airlines' safety. One day an executive of the company said, with some bravado, that he hoped the investigation would be open and public. He got his wish. The next day's news said the government ordered two operating Eastern planes grounded for problems like "a one-inch crack in the wing." Airlines have cut back on maintenance to improve the profit picture. Now we get daily reports of air disasters and near-disasters.

Richard Nixon was able to get some nice short-term cash into the budget by cutting funding for the National Science Foundation. After all, what does the NSF offer us? Pie-in-the-sky. Stuff of questionable results years down the road. Well, now we are years down the road and have lost our technological edge. Nixon decided not to pay for pie-in-the-sky and now we are in that sky and starving to death. And I choose Nixon just because I was more aware when he cut funding than when other Presidents made the same dangerous decision to cut back on math and science funding.

Marvin Minsky has said -- with supreme accuracy, I might add -- "The Soviet Union

is still training people in math, where the United States seems to be engaged in unilateral intellectual disarmament." But why is that? Is mathematics more interesting in the Soviet Union? Is it more rewarding? Well, perhaps yes on both counts. I do not know what the situation is in the Soviet Union but I can see why it is neither interesting nor rewarding in the United States. It is because math beyond algebra does not give a short-term gain. It is an investment in the future. The National Science Foundation, which funds among other things educational programs to make mathematics interesting to students, is being cut to the bone for the short-term gain of diverting that funding elsewhere. There is no funding for the educational programs that would make math interesting to students.

But real estate is not intrinsically interesting either for most people, or law, or finance. Yet these fields seem to have no shortage of people. These fields attract new blood by use of a simple device known as ... "money." Even without the government making an investment in the training of the young in math and science, those fields would still attract the young if they were financially rewarding. At the very least those fields could compete with others that were financially rewarding. But the simple fact is that very few people find careers in mathematics and science lucrative. Throughout most of industry the lucrative positions are in management. That situation may be related to the fact that it is management that decides what ideas are going to be financially rewarding and usually means the well-paid ones are those who bring in tangible short-term profits and those who manage. Of course, for a lucky few basic science can lead to recognition, perhaps a Nobel Prize, and that recognition leads to advancement with financial advantages. And the advancement usually takes the form of



taking the prized research person away from doing research and moving the person into management. But American industry is not investing much in pure research that may not pay off for decades.

So the simple fact is that not many people are interested in going into research. Very few of the young want to go into a field with so little status or rewards. The fascination that I and many of my friends had in our youth with the lives of the great scientists and mathematicians has been supplanted with a fascination among the young with the lives of the great rock stars.

And with less basic research being done and fewer young people even considering going into math and science, we see one-by-one the technical areas in which we lead the world technologically being stripped away by other countries. American companies who find they cannot compete abroad (because twenty and thirty years ago foreign companies were preparing for today) are instead trying to keep foreign technology out of the United States so they do not have to compete with it at home.

The government and the corporations who have insufficient faith in the future to match other countries' investment in pie-in-the-sky technology research are facing a future that there is less and less reason to have faith in.

The Royal Widow Ails

by Thomas A. Easton

Surgery, says the prophet,
Will energize the widow.
Intromit a fertilizing organ.
Let her belly accept our blessing.

But the budget has no room
For a sentient planet.
The great bride is dead
At the hands of her own child.

I have failed.
My diaries praised the soaring dreams,
But a parasite infests my generous forecast.
And the new bride summons a religious fiction.

No more the electronic future
To call the alien Space Patrol,
To take a cruise,
To film the whole fantastic Solar System.

Flowers will nourish Earth's final hour,
But not the orchids of the prom.
Our world's last gasp will
Inhale the lillies of the grave.

The World's Worst Science Fiction Writer

An article by Dennis Fischer

Perhaps it is a measure of man's desire for boundaries, but along with the quest to discover who is the best of something comes a parallel quest for the worst, so the entire spectrum of the field can be comfortably ensconced therein. Just as there are pleasures in the best works in any endeavor, so too is there enjoyment in the utterly putrid.

It is a mistake to assume that in the aesthetic universe all art strives towards just one goal, that of artistic goodness, however imperfectly. How else can one explain works that appear to aim at wretchedness and achieve it so completely, either deliberately or because of a mistaken vision that conceived the execrable results as something deserving to be admired? Plus, as some best-selling authors could no doubt relate, there can be big bucks in glitz and trash.

Anti-art or anti-masterpieces can hold a perverse fascination, especially to those who have a sense of the absurd. One sits back and looks at the end product with a tinge of awe. How could a person have made so many mistaken choices in approaching the final result? These works don't represent run-of-the-mill mediocrity, which is all too common and usually dull besides. Rather, they are the result of an energetic imagination run wild, blithely ignoring the actual content of the work produced in a head-long effort to complete it and earn a few dollars or pounds.

In film making, the Poverty Row productions of Edward D. Wood, Jr., have achieved such a distinction. Wood is best known for his incredible Plan Nine from Outer Space. Plan 9 has often been touted as the worst film ever made, something of which it miraculously falls far short because it proves so entertainingly inept. Wood had one of the most (I hesitate to write it) wooden ears for dialogue, falling into some hilarious declarations in an apparently sincere effort to sound profound. As he himself declared in his starring role in the autobiographical film Glen or Glenda, "My mind's in a muddle -- like a thick fog. I can't even make sense to myself sometimes!" But then, Wood is often clearer than a William Burroughs, an Ishmael Reed, or even a James Joyce. If he had found favor with a different intellectual crowd, he might have been hailed as a brilliant precursor to Andy Warhol who made New York intellectuals stop and think about the purpose of film.

In mystery writing, Bill Pronzini produced Gun in Cheek (Mysterious Press, \$8.95), which chronicles the absolute worst in mystery fiction since its inception. It abounds in dunderhead plots, queerly quirky characters, and abysmal dialogue. It doesn't just examine the bad, it lays bare the real rank.

Damon Knight, in a famous chapter of his pioneering SF criticism In Search of Wonder dubbed some of the worst science fiction writers "Chuckleheads." Indeed, he uncovered some wondrous examples of the "idiot plot" -- a plot which only works because everyone in it acts like an idiot. Some parts of fandom has already hailed as the worst SF story every published a little ditty known infamously as "The Eye of Argon" by Jim Theiss. This thud-and-blunder sword-and-sorcery at its worst was published in a fanzine and has been circulated often since then. I can remember "Eye of Argon" contests in which a reader had to make it through reading a page aloud without cracking up at some hilariously horrendous howler that Theiss had unwittingly unleashed. Its awfulness was so perfect, many have speculated that the effort must have been deliberate.

Until now, no one seems to have put forward a contender for the King of Bad SF. This neglect, though much deserved, should end. One energetic science fiction writer has published a massive volume of work under various pseudonyms, whose work must be recognized for the truly wondrous stuff it is.

That man is...the envelope please....

ROBERT LIONEL FANTHORPE.

Who? I hear the average widely-read SF fan cry. Have no fear, Fanthorpe exists, though most of his work mercifully appears to have lapsed out of print. He is a British writer born in 1935, according to Peter Nicholls' Science Fiction Encyclopedia, and a school teacher by profession. He was incredibly prolific from 1954 to 1965, writing under a plethora of pseudonyms including Lionel Roberts, Neil Balfort, Othello Baron, Noel Bertram, Oben Lerteth, Elton T. Neef, Peter O'Flinn, Rene Rolant, and Robin Tate -- those are just the ones that are anagrams of his name. There are also Deutero Spartacus, Victor La Salle (the house name of John Spencer & Co., also used by other writers), John E. Muller (a house name at Badger Books), Karl Zeigfreid (another Badger house name), Pel Torro, Phil Nobel, Bron Fane, Neil Thanet, Trebor Thorpe, and Olaf Trent.

Whew. Quite a mouthful, eh?



Speaking of mouths, that is what Fanthorpe used to compose most of his unusual works. They were dictated into a battery of tape recorders, and transcribed by family members or friends. The results, when inspiration began to fail, were unusual to say the least.

Fanthorpe reputedly never devoted more than a weekend to any of his works, collecting a magnificent 25 pounds a tome. As a result, according to Malcolm Edwards, "The rushed endings of many of his novels are the consequences of batches of typing being completed, showing the allotted word length being almost used up, with the story still in mid-plot."

Fanthorpe is notable mostly for his unusual handling of ideas and interesting conception of what constitutes readable prose. One of his favorite concepts, apparently, is the Thing Which Is Not What It Appears. In UFO 517, he has UFO inhabitants who are not extraterrestrials; in Dark Continuum, a thing that looks like an eye but is not. Escape to Infinity postulates the question: "If Man can mutate -- why not the universe itself?" The Uninvited offers the come-on, "His mind was disintegrating...the face couldn't be real, but it was." Perilous Galaxy says, "He was a conscript astronaut; a galley-slave of space..." There is even a series following the adventures of a science-fictional Bulldog Drummond character names Val Stearman.

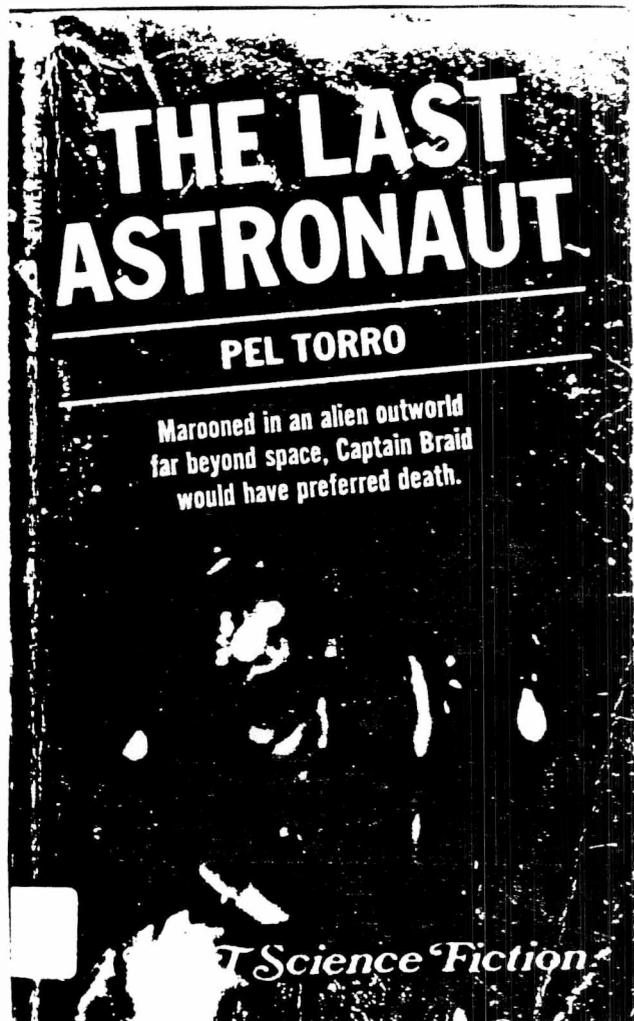
To give you the flavor of a Fanthorpe without the bother of actually reading one, here is the blurb to The Last Astronaut by "Pel Torro." It not only neatly sums up the entire work, but was probably written by Fanthorpe himself:

Alex was a pioneer. Like other pioneers he had problems. He has more problems than most. When things start to go wrong in space they go wrong in a big way. One by one the perils of the void took their toll of his companions. Alex was along, alone with a vision, a vision of a town, home.

Only thoughts of home kept him alive. He remembered trees, houses, shops, churches, people...people.

"At last he reached earth...or perhaps it wasn't earth? Things had changed unbelievably. Perhaps he had changed? How long had he been away? How far had he drifted? There was a sinister possibility that this wasn't home at all. If the things that looked like people weren't people, but aliens, what was he to do?"

Alex was a realist. He knew what space could do to a man's mind. He was disinclined to trust the evidence of his own senses. A mind that has had more than it can take can produce some very peculiar perceptions...



Here, from the same book, is a great example of what happened when the author got stuck while dictating:

"Here we go again," agreed the co-pilot; it didn't seem a particularly original remark, but he couldn't think of anything else to say. A conversational gambit like "here we go again" isn't the kind of scintillating witticism that calls for a reply which would have delighted Dr. Johnson or Voltaire!

Fanthorpe offers the brawniest heroes with the clumsiest introductions this side of an E. E. Smith space opera. In Lightning World, the hero is introduced this way:

Tony Brant, lean and tough as a whipcord (sic), with that sharp ageless cast of feature that personified the men of the 25th century. Neither physically, mentally nor biologically, Brant hadn't aged a day since he was twenty.

Or how about this from Flame Mass:

"I'll introduce myself. Name's Lt. John MacGregor, as a matter of fact, in the I.P.F."

"Interplanetary Force," goggled Fred.



95c

No man escaped the tyranny of Rajak unless he dared
the even more horrible fate at the end of time

TIME ECHO

ROBERT LIONEL



"Precisely," said MacGregor with an exaggerated bow. "My man, you are now in the presence of the John MacGregor who has shot down seventeen of the Martian invasion fleet."

Heroes in Fanthorpe's fiction are lantern-jawed and smiling. In fact, Fanthorpe gets incredible mileage out of just stopping to contemplate a small detail such as a hero's smile. Here is an example from Flame Mass:

"I'm not getting at you. I'm glad to know a man who can take things with a smile. Take it on the chin with a grin. Stiff upper lip, and all that jazz." Hal Delaney smiled too. A cynical smile, there were too many blisters on his face for it to be anything else. It was one of those wry, painful smiles that only a hero can produce, in moments of extremity.

Another aspect of Fanthorpe's talent is his mastery of the elements of suspense. Witness this selection from The Last Astronaut:

"How much air have we got left in our emergency supplies?" asked Conrad Danes.

"Three, four hours, perhaps."

"As narrow as that!" exclaimed Alex.

"'Fraid so," replied Jerry. "Pretty grim, isn't it?"

A hallmark of a Fanthorpe hero is the diplomatic way he handles others. Here's an exchange from Lightning World:

"My name is Brant," said Tony. "I'm the leader of this expedition. We come from the planet earth. It's so far away I don't suppose your half-wit chemists have ever heard of it!"

"That's the stuff!" applauded Joe. "Put the fatheads in their place! Did you ever see such a crummy lot of 'em?"

But of course, Fanthorpe didn't only handle heroes. He proves equally adept in depicting his heroines. Here's a letter from one in The Last Astronaut:

Darling Alex,

Something had to be done. I have destroyed the thing in the engine room. Unfortunately there was rather a lot of radiation and I didn't fancy going that way, so I went through the lock instead. I expect it will be quite fun in hyperspace.

Fanthorpe knew that women have skills men don't, and decided to apply that knowledge to his fiction. Here's an example from Projection Infinity:

Helen Powell kept her head and began working away bravely at the gag. She was glad that she had washed her cardigan in soft, gentle soap flakes, in

accordance with the instructions on its ticket. She would not have fancied chewing her way through wool that might have been flavoured with powerful detergent!

No, how many modern SF writers would think up a telling detail like that?

Of course, as in most SF, women have other concerns, such as Orlande in The Last Astronaut:

Orlande Price struggled with forces that were pulling her facial contours out of shape. Her struggles seemed to epitomise woman's life-long struggles to keep up with fashion and not to keep up with the passage of the years.

Fanthorpe even co-authored a book with his wife, The Black Lion, which includes this immortal description:

The first was a woman of about forty-five and she'd been attractive until someone had hewn her almost in half.

Naturally, in any science fiction writer, knowledge of science and scientists helps greatly in producing a feeling of verisimilitude. Nobody, but nobody, however, depicts scientists quite the way Fanthorpe does:

"Oooohhh!" the psychiatrist's voice was loaded with meaning and interrogation. (from Flame Mass)

Or here's a crafty female who has just thrown together a batch of super-chlorophyll to prevent everyone aboard ship from expiring from a lack of air:

"I've never seen anything like them before," said Jerry.

"No, they're a new species," said Ursula. "I've just made them."

"Fantastic!" said Jerry.

(The Last Astronaut)

In fact, Ursula is so keen, she can even predict with uncanny certainty the exact reactions of other human beings in a given situation. Could even Hari Seldon have come up with the following?

"In a moment I predict that you will do one of two things. You will either get up and hit me, or you will burst into jolly, jovial, tension-releasing laughter, and we may soon be the best of friends...." (ibid.)

In Lightning World,

Kel produced a bottle of powerful antibiotic. "This kills nearly every known bug in the universe, let's hope it's going to work."

Though they have their foibles and moments of apprehension, Fanthorpe's scientists are depicted as intelligent men --it's



clear from their reading materials. Here, writing as Karl Zeigfreid in Projection Infinity, Fanthorpe describes such a scientist:

"Some kind of force field -- these boffins are experimenting with them, I believe." Jinks was an intelligent man. He read and understood the novels of Fanthorpe, Muller, and Fane.

In fact, Fanthorpe was very concerned that his books be received properly and that he be considered in the proper company. Indeed, he may well be one of the most self-referential writers of science fiction, as witness this excerpt from Power Sphere which he wrote as Leo Brett:

A lot of those old science fiction writers had some incredibly good ideas ... Men like Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, John E. Muller, Karl Zeigfreid, Fanthorpe and their contemporaries...

But who could blame him for feeling misunderstood given some of the incredible typos that have appeared in his work. Here are some choice examples, beginning with the question that causes the Flame Mass to "dissolve in a kaliedescope of stars":

"What happens when an irrisitable force meets an immovable object?"
(Flame Mass)

"Say! You're sarong for a little guy." (ibid)

"You're no more a solicitor than I am, are you?"

The fat man shook his head. Most of the fight seemed to have gone out of him. "No, I'm not," he snarled savagely. "I'm an occult philosopher. But you wouldn't understand that."

(The Golden Chalice)

Jerry Hilton...lived in a world of his own. He was an almost perfect example of the introvert. His was almost a clinical example of introversion. His mind was entirely concerned with its own interval functioning."

(The Last Astronaut)

Philip K. Dick often in his work juxtaposed the mundane and the sublime. Notice how Fanthorpe does the same in this passage from Projection Infinity:

As soon as "evening had let her curtain down, and pinned it with a star" (as the poet sings), the saboteur slipped away on the pretext of going to the toilet.

Here are some more:

It was as though his soul, like some infernal yo-yo on the end of a demonic string, had been lowered to within inches of the very caverns of Hell itself, and now was reascending by that same strange method.

(The Golden Chalice)

"Am I flotsam and jetsam on the tidal beaches of life?"

(The Triple Man)

"The melbar instantaneous transmitter," answered Knight, "is not functioning. So we're like a blind man lost in a desert without a camel."

(Micro Infinity)

He had to keep moving, it was like groping your way through a thick fog. The beams of your headlights throwing the fog back at you. It was like that, yet it wasn't.

(The Asteroid Man)

There was something about his appearance that was almost scrofulous, he might have been the spurious founder of the celebrated Disumbrationist school!

(Projection Infinity)

Fanthorpe was a master of accents and dialects as well, as this sample from Projection Infinity proves:

Despite his Central European origins, Zakminsky was a brilliant lin-

guist. He could not only speak impeccable English, he could put on a Scottish accent that sounded plausible and natural to the English sailors on board the gunboat.

"Hoots! I thocht I was lost the noo!" exclaimed Zamonsky with a tight-lipped smile.

Or these Somerset and Rustic accents from The Golden Chalice:

"That b'ain't no joke, bless my heart and sould, zur, that b'ain't no joke!" retorted the old station master. "There's some things a man do joke about, and there's some things a man don't joke about -- and Long Barrow 'All ain't go nothin' to do with a sense of humor at all. You couldn't find two things farther apart. Poles apart, they are, poles apart! Ha, there's dark doin's up there! Dark and dreadful doin's...When we've had a yarn I dare say you'll change your mind about goin' up the 'All, arter I've told you some o' the things what happen up there!"

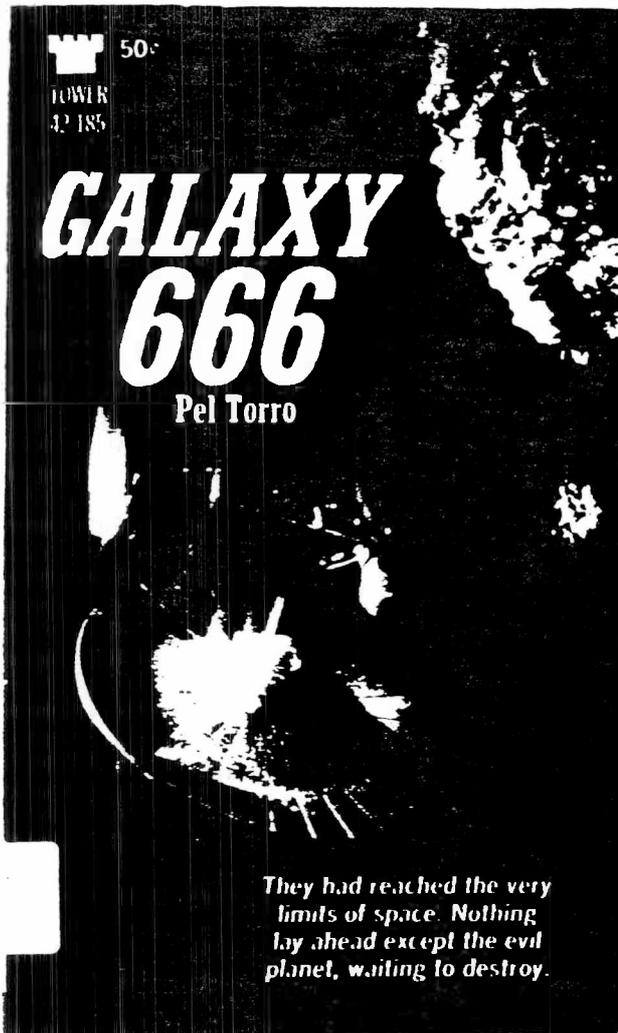
"Boy George, he's down the line a few mile, and he sorta over here now and agin just to have a look and give a helpin' hand, like. I ain't so young as I used to be, as I said afore. Now, you can have that old Coronation mug, here y'are!"

Of all of Fanthorpe's myriad works there must be one that stands head-and-shoulders above the rest, one of special distinction, and indeed there is. Galaxy 666 (1968) is a veritable anti-masterpiece, a mindbogglingly bad book of (dare I say it) penultimate dimensions. Indeed, I believe this wondrous work to be the worst piece of science fiction ever written, the Holy Grail of the searcher for the most searingly puerile, inept, execrable, and jejune of books.

Released in the U. S. by Tower, a publisher that specialized in "erotic masterworks," and sporting a blurry shot of a Dinky Toy model of the starship Enterprise on the cover, the book would not by outward appearances be significantly different than scads of similar drek unleashed upon an unsuspecting and often indiscriminating public. However, as one proceeds, into its strange tale of a paradoxical "galaxy," the effect seems not unlike that derived from the abuse of psychedelic drugs. The reader shakes his head and has to reassure himself of reality. "I can't possibly be reading this!" he might insist.

The book begins with the nadir of cliché -- an old spacer in a bar who, in exchange for some "alco," will tell his story of what happened to him in Galaxy 666. Fanthorpe in his cosmic imagination has spacemen warping from galaxy to galaxy, though each galaxy seems to contain only one planet and one star apiece. When Milka asks the spacer whether he's ever been to Galaxy 666, the spacer, Bion, responds yes,

"And I wish by the seven green moons of Gongle that I hadn't!"



They had reached the very limits of space. Nothing lay ahead except the evil planet, waiting to destroy.

"That's a strong oath for a spaceman to use," said Milka.

"By the seven green moons of Gongle," repeated Bion.

Bion's stale tale relates how, in Galaxy 666, his ship encountered a discrepancy between v.p. (visual perception) and auto-data (what their instruments told them) that resulted in the ship he was aboard spiraling into the sun. Only Bion escaped in a space capsule. He lands on a planet, but an unseen alien race hurls him and his capsule homeward at almost warp speed.

This story intrigues Korzaak, Milka's young son, who is in the process of trying to reconcile the contradictory data about Galaxy 666 that has been collected by the Empire. Talking it over with Ischklah, they decide they must visit the "apocryphal" planet to gather more data with their portable data receiver (because "My God man, you can't shift the computer!"). "We'll find that Galaxy 666 is the kind of place that would make Einstein look like a kindergarten infant and Newton look like a babe in arms," predicts Korzaak.

They enlist the services of the ship Space Greyhound, which Fanthorpe assures us "could nip in and out of the Warp like a high-speed sewing machine making nylon dresses." Their fellow shipmates are a Captain named Bronet and a crewman named

Oski. Together they spend considerable time traveling, philosophizing, discussing the fact that racial discrimination has disappeared due to the mongrelization of the human race, discussing religion, trading instrument readings and checks, and otherwise filling up pages with some of the most unrealistic discussions ever put to paper.

Finally they land on the planet and are puzzled by the nebulously described things that they see there. They embark on more pointless discussions, as in the following sample:

"I don't like this. I don't like this place at all," said Korzaak.

"It's like a maze."

"I'd agree with that," said Ischklah. "To me it's like being in a vault, or a house full of furniture with secret drawers and hidden panels."

"I get the feeling," said Bronet, "that there are nooks and crannies, holes, niches, corners, secret passages and underground rooms here that house things I would rather not see."

"There is also the feeling," said Oski, "that there are things in concealment here. It's like walking on the edge of an ambush all the time. It's as though the whole place were strangely camouflaged, as though it were a mask, a visor, or a veil drawn down over a face that it was better one did not see. Somewhere something is hiding, lurking, skulking. This planet is a wolf in sheep's clothing. Under the wool, or behind the masquerade, there is an imposter. Who or what it is I do not know. It's an obfuscating planet; it's a disguised planet. This whole galaxy is a strange mystery, a mystery to which we seem to be no nearer a solution than when we were back in the happier parts of the empire. It's a furtive planet, it's reticent. I get the feeling that it's a screening, that it's hiding something."

"It's a very taciturn place," said Korzaak. "There are things ensconced here that are best left concealed. It's a planet lying in wait, a whole galaxy lying in wait."

Thesaurus in hand, Fanthorpe manages to devise some of the most outrageous metaphors in science fiction. Bronet says in the book,

"Galaxy 666 is a piece of punctuation that brings the empire's prose to a rather savage halt."

While the characters debate what is real or not real, a spaceship lands and disgorges "a number of other mirages," as one character dryly puts it. There follows one of the most extraordinary passages of "revoltingly gelatinous" aliens in all of science fiction:

The things were odd, weird, grotesque. There was something horribly uncanny and unwonted about them.

They were completely unfamiliar. Their appearance was outlandish and extraordinary. There was something quite phenomenal about them. They were supernatural; they were unparalleled; they were unexampled. The shape of the aliens was singular in every sense. They were curious, odd, queer, peculiar, and fantastic, and yet when every adjective had been used on them, when every preternatural epithet had been applied to their aberrant and freakish appearance, when everything that could be said about such eccentric, exceptional, anomalous creatures has been said, they still remain indescribable in any concrete terms.

With the touch of a pseudopod, the four-some realize the aliens are telepathic and they can communicate with them. They discover that the aliens are claiming the planet in the name of their empire, but this presents a problems. As Bronet puts it,

"You can't divide it up! It's already part of our empire. You can't go giving chunks of the empire away to the first alien that comes along!"

While they are debating what is ethically the correct thing to do, the aliens pull out something that paralyzes the spacemen.

The final part of the book deals with the now-kidnapped spacemen escaping from the alien's maggoty spaceship and settling the question of what to do about Galaxy 666 (not to mention getting home). They decide the place is a vortex of chaos in an otherwise ordered universe, not unlike the book named after it.

Abysmally written as it is, Galaxy 666 nonetheless takes itself quite seriously and can be very entertaining for all the wrong reasons. Such artistry should not go unrecognized. It takes all kinds of people to make up a field of endeavor, and Fanthorpe is just an idiosyncratic and enigmatic one who happened to have been particularly prolific. While his works may not be astounding in the Golden Age sense of the word, his is a unique and now oft-neglected voice. I feel there is something to be learned from his efforts, mostly in the area of what not to do.

* * * * *

For help in presenting this information to you, I am indebted to the late Mike Hodel, Malcolm J. Edwards' piece in The Science Fiction Encyclopedia, and Neil Gaiman and Kim Newman's Ghastly Beyond Belief for help in tracking down extracts of Fanthorpe's work. Happy reading.

A Celebration of Cover Art

by Gary Lovisi

The collecting of vintage (1939-1959) and newer paperbacks is largely a celebration of illustrative cover art. It is a rather new hobby that has yet to hit the heights of such stalwarts as baseball cards and comic book collecting.

The books that are of prime interest to most collectors are the older mass-market paperbacks published during the pioneer days of the forties and fifties. These books include all genres, as well as so-called mainstream best-sellers, all with illustrative cover paintings -- a format later to be abandoned on many of the paperbacks (especially on mainstream novels and best-sellers) of the sixties to the present.

Today, in most cases, illustrative cover art no longer graces paperback books, except for the growing segment of the genre paperback market -- westerns, fantasy, mysteries, and science fiction. And this is also one big reason for the success of these genres, their authors, and the growth in sales volume over the years.

A lot of the new stuff being produced today seems to pale by comparison with some of the older material -- many paperback publishers constantly recycle old themes and images; others do not like to take chances with artwork that might seem to innovative, confusing to the reader, or possibly offensive to one group or another. It's understandable when you realize just how much money is tied up in these books and how important those cover images can be to a book's sales as well as a publisher's bottom

line. Nevertheless, there is a lot of fine new material being produced today on the covers of genre paperbacks -- mostly in the science fiction and fantasy fields where the talent of many paperback cover-artists is truly staggering.

In the mainstream or best-seller market we are inundated by a blur of simplistic or stylistic symbols and fancy logos, all in a pretentious legerdemain of making "this week's" book "the book" that the paperback browser cannot pass by. In many cases, however, the paperback browser does just that with many mainstream books -- and goes over to buy a genre paperback. And who can blame them?! With few exceptions, the very best of genre fiction equals -- and often surpasses -- that of more mundane dreck. In recent years (especially in the science fiction and fantasy images and story devices) genre fiction has been heralded by critics, made best-seller lists, and made a lot of money for some authors and publishers.

It is about time that genre fiction and its authors got some of the recognition they've deserved for so long. Part of the reason for this is because of the those great illustrative covers by artists such as Fra-zetta, Whelan, Maitz, Hickman, Sweet, Lundgren, Warhola, Freas, Steranko, and a host of other greats and near-greats who have given so much joy to paperback readers of SF over the years. SF paperback cover art is a celebration of the genre and of genre fiction in general. It shows some of the best work being done in the illustration field in our country today.

by R. Allen Jervis

POINT ONE:

Fans understand one another

There are more things under the earth than have been slanged by man... You know "Strek," "Cyberpunk," "Grok," "Slan," even "Fen" itself. If I said to you "I feel like I went on the Thousand-Year Picnic and only brought a few carrot sticks and a twinkie -- and I don't like twinkies," you'd understand that I was kinda disappointed in something.

Some sharper folk in the mundane sector would doubtlessly got that much from it too, if they didn't stumble at the "thousand year" part. But if your wife finishes talking to her boss on the phone and you scribble a note to her that reads Status report, Mr. Chekov," she may just give you one of her patented blank stares or look behind her for the person you're addressing.

That's one form of understanding. The other is an almost telepathically clear intuitive jump between what one fan starts to say and another finishes. I can't tell you the number of times I've experienced this when walking down a street with fen-friend. All I've said is a short phrase or even a single word and I'm understood perfectly. Though I assume it exists elsewhere, I've never encountered it with anyone outside of fandom's broad auspices.

There has oft been the times when I've been heard mentioning the "ether" that flows at night. I can't help myself; I simply must do something to scratch the fannish urge when it hits and it hits hardest at night.

I was reading a copy of Lan's Lantern in Azar's on my dinner break when I realized that the blessing or curse of working nightshift is that self-same ethereal tie. Either there is a special wavelength that all of fandom is tapped into and, being awake, I'm only picking up the signal bleed, OR there isn't one and I get to stay up all night thinking of things to spring on the unsuspecting fen in the morning...(cue maniacal laugh).

POINT TWO:

Fans will suffer greatly
for the sake of fandom

Those of you who don't want to hear me belly-aching rejoice! I just deleted a page or so of junk on what I go through to get to cons. Suffice it to say that I'll go through some very strange gyrations for a few minutes of fannish radiation -- to take a big enough piece of the fannish pie home so that I can survive in mundania till the next one. I night mention also that fans will put up with everything from starvation to abstinence -- if there's a good con at the end of the rainbow. You know who you are.

POINT THREE:

Fans overlap the fannish and the mundane
-- at every opportunity

I've mentioned above reading fanzines in a *gasp!* public place but that's not the feat at 4:00 AM that it becomes on day shift. I will go with my in-laws to rummage sales and dig through piles of cast-off detritus, but unlike ma-in-law I'm trying to find just that perfect piece to complete my Doctor Who costume, or enough fur pieces to make a barbarian cape and shoe covers...

I will go to hardware stores and endure the stares of uncomprehending clerks and try to explain that I really do want to buy the round styrofoam cooler without the lid, "because it makes a good mold for my Dalek's head."

POINT FOUR:

Fans have a different set of values
to judge reality by

I was talking to a friend of mine over the weekend. I consider him a pseudo-fan, which is either someone who has a few fannish bones in his body but is still rooted in the Here/Now, or the result of one of the wonder-drugs for colds that makes you see cats running across the road an hour or so into its "12 hour relief."

So I say to him, "Ya know what I did yesterday? I went out and rented all three of the Star Wars movies and watched them back to back...about six hours with time out for intrusions."

Now here's where the pseudo-fan showed in him: he asked, "Why?"

I could have told him that I thought everyone had wanted to do that as some point in his/her life, and how I longed through all those months in between sequels for the ability to sit down and see the next part. But the truth is that I was just feeling nostalgic.

Here was a new use of nostalgic that hadn't really occurred to him, but seemed perfectly normal to me. Can you think of other words that you use in a fannish context even when conversing with unsuspecting mundanes? (You can relax; it's a take-home quiz.) How about the use of "mundanes" herein?

I'm sure there's been the tendency to develop an internal slang since man started gathering in groups, and our words like grok and skiffy are just as unintelligible to others as "rad" or "gnarly" would be to us had we not had to endure a bit of what passes for culture these days...

As my friend Steve Saffel once remarked from his desk at Marvel: "Rich, you're an hour's drive from Chicago! Go get some culture, see the big city, go to a play or the museums, pretend it's New York on a budget..." The last time I took Steve's culture comments to heart it cost me the left side of my beard and 56 dollars. (But

that is another story.)

The point is, unless there was a con in Chicago I wouldn't think of going there. Sure there are borderline fannish things to do and see, like the Museum of Art and Sciences, and the Shedd Aquarium, and Rush Street, but that's not worth the hassle and expense. There's just no percentage in it for me with my dose of fannish radiation... unless of course I'm going with other fen. There must be a buzz word for what I'm describing: Fen wave? Fringeworthy? Conmode? Filk-fix? I don't know, but if I know my telepathy like you think I do, you know exactly what I mean.

A Taste for Survival

An article by Mark R. Leeper
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I have been giving more thought to how survival characteristics have been bred into us by evolution. I have written in the past about how the reason that we hate snakes and spiders is that this was a survival characteristic in our ancestors. I picture one set of troglodyte humans who hate and fear snakes, another who love and want to pet them. The ones who feared snakes have an evolutionary advantage. Petting some snakes is not a good idea. Then there can be conflicting messages left in our genes by our ancestors. There is survival value in liking and wanting to fondle things that are young and cute. This is fine when it expresses itself in fondling babies or even puppies. (It is another one of my "pet" theories that we co-evolved with canines and perhaps cats. It has been noted that human blood pressure is higher than usual when we are under stress, but lower than usual when we are with pets. That could indicate that we are under a constant low-level stress when there are no animals around to relieve it. That low-level stress has come to be accepted as normal.) In any case, the urge to fondle small helpless things could have been downright dangerous to our ancestors when they did things like cuddle cute, little, helpless wild bear cubs, but those incidents were rare enough that they didn't leave much of a record in our genetic message.

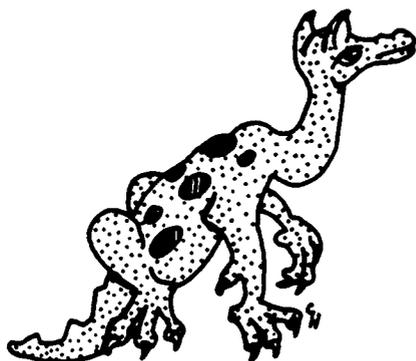
Well, let me add one more behavior that could go way back. Why do we like ice in our drinks? Well obviously because it makes the drinks colder. But why do we like that? Why is a cold beverage more pleasing than a warm one? Again posit two sets of troglodyte ancestors, one who likes to drink cold water, one who likes to drink warm. The cold water is more likely to have been recently melted from ice. The warm water has stagnated. There are things in it that look ugly and make you feel worse than you do driving down the New Jersey Turnpike. The colder water was safer and that was adopted

into our aesthetics.

So, if I am right, much of our aesthetics have reasons to be what they are going back to our prehistoric ancestors. Let us take another example. I got a big, sweet piece of cake from a local restaurant last night. Horribly fattening. Now most people would think that it was fattening because it was sweet. More accurately it was fattening because it is rich in sugars and sugars are sweet. I think it was sweet because it was fattening. Sweet is to us a pleasant flavor. (Someone who might disagree is my wife Evelyn who thinks a pleasant snack is to eat cooked kale or radishes, but then everyone knows she has peculiar tastes in some things. She picked me, didn't she?) The things that give us quick energy and then some to store up and use later had survival value to eat. Those who found they tasted pleasant survived. Those who hated high-energy foods had a harder time outrunning mammoths and one such male would be more likely to end up a pate than a pater. So finding high-energy foods pleasant-tasting is a survival characteristic, particularly for carnivores like our ancestors.

Now notice that rabbits seem not so fond of what we consider sweet foods. They like leafy vegetation and other things that to us seem bitter and unpleasant tasting. Also some vegetation we don't find so unpleasant. Is that because it tastes bitter to them and they like bitter? Probably not since other foods that we don't like rabbits don't either. My suspicion is that you evolve so that what is useful to your survival tastes sweet and pleasant to you. And the reason that big, unhealthy piece of cake still tastes so good is that evolution lags behind reality. When us cake fans die off early without heirs for long enough, the human palate will slowly find healthy things taste better to them than unhealthy ones. And then everyone will like radishes and kale as a snack.

Perhaps Evelyn's tastes are the wave of the future. Hmm! Naaaah!



Stuffed Animals

by Matanooska



My name is Matanooska. I am a brown bear puppet stuffed animal. I live in a large house in St. Paul, Minnesota, with my mother Gerri Balter, my father Herman Schouten, and over 1,200 stuffed animal relatives.

I was one of the first stuffed animals Gerri bought. She found me in a trading post in Alaska. I saw her walk in with Herman and David Cummer, a friend of theirs. At first she didn't notice me. She was too interested in the jewelry. But I saw her. She looked cuddly, and had such a nice smile I stared at her, hoping she would see me.

It seemed forever, but finally she walked over to where I was sitting. "Oh, how cute," she said, picking me up and holding me. It felt so good to be held. She stroked my fur ever so gently. I thought, "Buy me!" as hard as I could. And she did. She named me after the first glacier she saw.

At first, she didn't pay much attention to me. I could tell she didn't know much about stuffed animals. I was patient, though, until the breakthrough happened. It was the middle of the night. She woke up, shaking. She cried softly, looking around for something or someone. When she saw me, she picked me up and held me. I held out my paws to comfort her. She rubbed her cheek against my fur. It felt good. She put me down on the bed beside her and told me how scared she was. She had been in her first car accident. She wasn't hurt badly, but she had been so busy comforting the others, she hadn't realized how scared she was. I thought warm thoughts at her until she fell asleep. From then on, I became her special pal. Every time she needs someone to talk to, and Herman is not there, she talks to me.

At first I was her only bear. I was lonely. There was no one to talk to or play with while she was at work. She was gone lots of evenings, too. She wasn't married to Herman then, but she was dating him a lot. Even when she was home, she was often too busy to notice me.

She saw how lonely I was and decided the solution was to adopt other stuffed animals. She went to department stores and toy stores to look at stuffed animals. She was pretty finicky, even at the start. She would hug different brands of stuffed animals until she found one she liked and bought it. The stuffed animal had to be soft and cuddly. Once she found a brand she liked, then she would look at each face. Although most of

us are machine made, each one of us looks a bit different. She has a weakness for furry ears, a smile, and a wistful face. She's not partial to bears. She also buys dogs, cats, rabbits, squirrels, dinosaurs, and dragons, to name a few. She tries not to buy too many white stuffed animals because they get dirty awfully easily. Being in the washing machine is a traumatic experience, one we would rather not go through.

The more of us she bought, the more we wanted her to buy. When she announced that she and Herman were going to move in together, we realized we would have to make sure Herman liked us. We had nothing to worry about. He loves us as much as she did and bought more of us to live with them.

When Herman and Gerri moved in together, Gerri's life changed. She stayed home more and concentrated on her writing. Both of them decided that we should work for the hugs we received.

Several relatives now live at Gerri's office at the University of Minnesota and at Herman's office at 3M. There are stuffed animals who keep Gerri's computer company. Others sit on her desk and guard her pens and pencils or her calendar. In Herman's office, they guard his blueprints. Many of us have visited their offices for a day. We get lots of hugs from co-workers.

Some of us go shopping with them. Gerri tells people they are to keep her from buying more stuffed animals. Wrong! We convince her to buy more than she originally intended she would buy. She never catches on.

Some of us go with her out to restaurants and to the movies. She says she would rather squish us than hurt Herman during the scary parts of the movies. The truth is that with one hand holding one of us, and the other holding Herman's hand, she isn't tempted to eat popcorn or candy.

We go travelling with Gerri and Herman. Herman takes some of us with him when he goes out of town on business. We also go on vacation with them. Once, on a flight back from California, one of the stewardesses fell in love with one of the bears they bought. She asked permission to introduce the bear to her boyfriend, who was the pilot. Gerri pretended to be upset because the bear got to meet the pilot and she didn't.

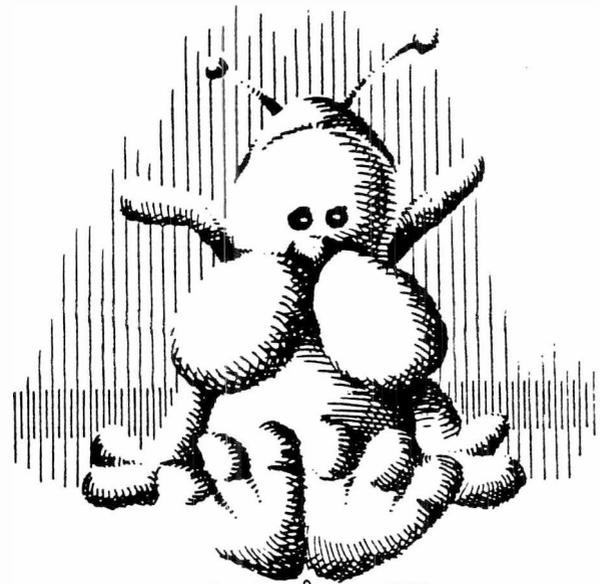
Some of us have been to science fiction conventions and have met people like Ray

Bradbury, James P. Hogan, and David Brin. We like science fiction conventions because that is one of the few places we meet other stuffed animals. There are stuffed animal conventions, too, which are like science fiction conventions only the registration fee is often more than \$100, more than Gerri and Herman are willing to spend.

One of the most prestigious things we can do is help Gerri with her writing. Every day she picks two of us to be her inspiration. We sit beside her while she writes. We whisper words of encouragement when she needs it. We are her audience when she needs someone to read her stories to. When she hits a rough spot, we hug her until she feels better.

We enjoy all the things we do with and for Gerri and Herman because we get paid in hugs, the best pay possible.

When we aren't working, we sit around the house. We do a great deal of reading, mostly science fiction and mysteries as well as the books and magazines published for stuffed animal lovers. We watch TV sometimes, mostly with Herman and Gerri. We love to eat. Our favorite food is Purina Stuffed Animal Chow. We are very clean and never make a mess even when we have wild parties in the middle of the night. We are lucky because we don't have to watch what we eat. We are supposed to be fat.



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The next time you see a stuffed animal in a store, why not pick it up and hug it? If one hug leads to another and you find yourself taking it home, you will find out how nice it is to have us around.

I will give you one word of warning. One is not enough.

sheep's clothing

An article by Marc Ortlieb

The nature of alien thought and behavior patterns is something that has concerned thinking science fiction writers and readers since Wells had us invaded by creatures based on intelligent leeches. Unfortunately, too many writers have created creatures that, for all their extra limbs and exotic sexual habits, are from their thought patterns clearly human beings in costume. Sometimes the masquerade is carried a step further in that the humans are behaving as their morphotypes would. Insect aliens behave like humans acting like ants, or humans acting like bees, while feline aliens behave like humans acting out tiger or pussy cat roles. It is arguable that a human writer will never create a true alien, as the writer merely translates his or her personal experience to paper. What, then, can aliens tell us? Why should aliens appear in science fiction?

The roles are many and varied. Some are used as the ultimate in evil and disgust, thus giving the hero something that can be blown away without the nasty questions about the sanctity of life. Others allow the author to tell the reader something about the bizarre nature of human society -- Vonnegut

does this delightfully, as does Heinlein in Stranger in a Strange Land. Aliens are allowed to ask silly questions like, "Why should people starve in a land of plenty?" Yet others act as Pancho to the human's Cisco Kid, or allow the author to act out the fantasy of being able to really talk to his pet cat/dog/aardvark. In most stories that feature aliens, the role is sufficiently obvious that the readers don't need to concern themselves about it. The story can be read and enjoyed on its merits.

What I find more worrying are those stories that deal with aliens without humans. What is the point of such stories? On the surface they are merely tales of strange habits and customs for the entertainment of the readers. As such, they are on a par with a visit to see the Elephant Man or National Geographic documentaries about the coprophagic tribes of Outer Coonawaristan. Herodotus and others have been spinning such yarns



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since the species found enough time to hang around the village square nattering. Unfortunately, the stories must still have a basis in the culture and mores of the writer. Here they are more insidious. The message is still there, but the reader is off guard. After all, this is simply a story of the inhabitants of Warfwoffe IV, right? It's got nothing to do with humans.

Such a story is Mary Caraker's "Out of the Cradle" in the July, 1987, Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. It concerns a race of amphibious aliens. They have a life-style that is somewhat froglike -- they start life as eggs deposited in water and left to find their own way out to sea as hatchlings. They become swimmers, guarded by the elders -- the final stage in the metamorphosis. Having received some of the tribe's culture from the elders, they swim back to their birthplace, their gills are absorbed, and they become bipedal air-breathing land creatures. This is the breeding stage and the stage where the creatures can build shelters and weapons. For some reason not clearly explained, internal fertilization is necessary before eggs are laid in the breeding pools. (For such a life cycle, a quick squirt of sperm into the breeding pool would seem more than adequate for fertilization and would avoid the specialized sexual organs required for internal fertilization.) After a certain time on land, the creatures develop fins, gills, and fat layers and become the sea-dwelling elders.

The main problem is that the climate is changing. The ocean is becoming inhospitable. The food supply isn't adequate. The predators are becoming more dangerous. The elders are dying and the swimmers are coming to land before they are fully mature. Previously the creatures were absolute anarchists. They fended for themselves as soon as they left the water, the youngsters being expected to forage for themselves and build their own shelters. There is some cooperation, in hunting parties and in trade, but any youngster not capable of fending for itself is left to the elements. The bad times force changes to this and one of the tribe defends three poorly-developed new arrivals.

The central character is Embri, an immature and undersized female for whom Rintu, the character through whose viewpoint the story unfolds, feels pity. He gives her a cloak and eventually sponsors her entry into the tribe. She has revolting habits. She eats anything she can get down her throat and she has this strange idea that, rather than allowing the hatchlings to swim out to sea, they should be protected. She also, once she reaches breeding age, insists on mating with Rintu twice, whereas anonymous fatherhood had been the tribe's norm. Other members see a threat in her behavior. They don't want to be "saddled with mewling young" like the shureks -- hairy creatures that dwell in the forests. Such behavior is considered animal-like and beneath the dignity of the tribe.

By the end of the story, which appears to be part of a longer work, Embri's ideas are obviously correct. The tribe is going

through an evolutionary change and Embri and Rintu return to the tribe to set up house with the new landing -- carefully nurtured. In a coy attempt at subtlety, having accepted the situation, Rintu says, "...someone will make up a new word. One that means 'female who keeps her young.'" The word, of course, is "mother."

So what does the story have to tell us? To my mind, it is one of the most reactionary stories I've read in a long while. In making the species the sort that is driven into a mating frenzy by the female's musk, Caraker is digging up the old "Men are driven to sex by instinct" argument. There are two occasions in the story where this mating instinct overcomes rational thought. That the bright shining note in the story is that motherhood is discovered makes certain suggestions, too. All that fostering and lack of responsibility were very well when things were good, but, when the bad times come, sex roles are asserted. Rintu and Embri return to the village where Embri can look after their child while Rintu houses and feeds them. Embri has one enemy -- an ex-lover of Rintu's who, in the course of the story, completes her change into an elder and is driven out to sea where she dies, washed up onto the shore. The elders seem rather like dolphins, singing to the young and transmitting the oral history and guidelines for the race.

The entire story has very much the feeling that the 1960s are over, dolphin power and like are dead, and it's about time that people started getting sensible again. I suppose what I dislike most about the story is the way it builds its message. Though not particularly subtle, the story draws one to the inescapable conclusion that the mammalian way of raising young and its attendant social strictures are the only way to do things. It is a blatant piece of chauvinism and reinforces the idea that evolution will direct life-forms toward the perfection found in ourselves. That's fine, in that everyone is entitled to an opinion. I'm sure that a lot of the people reading the story will agree with its sentiments and will probably fail to notice its subtext. For them the story's message is common sense. For me it's another misuse of an alien culture to shore up a particular political and moral stance.

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against motherhood. I just don't see the need to encumber alien lifeforms with the nuclear family.



The Perils and Pleasures of Publishing a Fanzine

by Lan

FAN GUEST OF HONOR SPEECH — MILLENNICON -13

I thought I'd talk about fanzines, using mine as an example: how to start one, how to put one together, and how much work it is. Something as thin as this issue of Lan's Lantern (* hold up #24 -- 30 pages long*) is not as much work as this issue (* hold up #25 -- 141 pages long*).

First, decide what you want to do with it. That will determine what sort of contributions you want to ask for. If you want to put out a personalzine, fine. That means you write all about yourself, you do all the writing yourself, edit yourself, and so on. Your friends are safe from your nagging, and may remain your friends even after you've thrust a copy of your work into their hands. Of course, if you've talked about them, you may have to hire some protection.

If you decide to put out something other than a personalzine, then you need to solicit contributions. And your friends are usually the first source. Be careful; some are budding writers and you might get things you don't want.

I publish very little fiction. I want articles about SF, about fans and fandom and conventions; articles about writing; book and movie reviews; articles about SF on TV; art related to SF and fantasy. Most people, when you ask them to contribute something to your fanzine, tell you they have all these stories they've written. If you want to publish fiction, you are set. However, this is probably what you'll get:

Stories ending in lines like "His name was Adam and her name was Eve," or "They called this new planet -- their new home -- Earth."

Star Trek stories with Kirk, Spock, and the rest of the crew, more than likely with the author fantasizing about his/her joining the crew of the Enterprise and being the best at everything.

Stories about elves and wolves bearing only a *slight* resemblance to Tolkien, or Wendy and Richard Pini's Elfquest.

A computer or role-playing game disguised as a story, where you can usually hear the rattle of the dice in every paragraph.

Stories along the lines of: "Mark HeavenTreader and Princess Lyra, with the aid of Hal Silo and his faithful Ionian companion Tobacco, fight against the evil Death Vazer who is out to conquer the universe and has

succumbed to the dark side of *The Power*".

Sometimes you might even get re-writes or scripts of "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.", "Dr. Who", "Superman", and many other popular shows and series.

Reviews are popular and usually easy to get. Remember that reviews are opinions, and the writers of reviews should make clear what their interests are, what their prejudices are, which could color their opinions. Usually the writers are competent enough not to say something as clumsy as:

"I didn't like this book. It's a bad book."

Occasionally a reviewer does commit this fallacy, but the writing style is such that the correlation is disguised under flowery prose:

"The approach that the author takes with his study of the problem of evil affecting the lives of the fantasy folk in this realm is one of light-heartedness with comedic affectation. Tackling evil in this manner is an abhorrent rendering of the true complexity of the topic, and one which does not sit well with this reviewer. Therefore the book does not effectively accomplish the goal it should, and thus falls well short of an effective treatment.

"Don't waste your time with this novel."

Translation: The writer writes a funny book about evil affecting the lives of the people in a fantasy world. He doesn't like such an approach, therefore the book is bad. But it sure sounds impressive!

Convention reports can add some spice to a fanzine, if they are well done. Some rehash the same thing report after report; what makes a conreport successful is variety and personal experience. Trying to write a conreport objectively, or worse yet, like a newspaper reporter, makes it dry and dull. Consider this:

I went to this convention and wandered through the huckster room which was small and had little to offer. Since the con attendance was small,

some hucksters sold very little, though a couple sold almost everything they had.

The art show was okay; small, but some of the art was good.

It doesn't sparkle, does it. Now try this:

I like small conventions. It gives me a chance to get to talk with almost everyone and get to know them.

When I got to Last-of-the-MohiCon, I found that the attendance was just enough for the con to break even. True, the concon had expected more people, but they would survive.

The small numbers might have been bad news for the hucksters, but it gave me time to chat with all of them without the already small room being too overcrowded. I had some particularly good conversations with Buck and Juanita Coulson, Barry and Sally Childs-Helton, Mary-the-Mystery-Lady, and others. Some complained that their art prints or t-shirts weren't going over very well, but those who sold buttons, or some of the latest books, managed to pay their expenses and more.

The art show was small as well, but very good. There were pieces by Carl Lundgren, Robert Daniels, Dexter Dickenson, Keith Berdak, Diana Gallagher-Wu, Richard Corbin, Lucy Synck, and Mark Martel. The "Egyptian" paintings by Jean Martin were very good. I especially liked "What's up, pup?" by Jennifer Platts which depicted a small alien and a curious puppy dog.

So, when writing a con report, personalizing it, naming names, makes all the difference. Besides, if you send a copy to the people named, it gives them a chance to see their name in print, and makes them feel good.

And speaking of art, how do you get some to put into the fanzine? Beg. Sometimes you might have a friend who likes to draw, and that person might be a regular contributor. Do be careful, or you might end up with stuff like this (* hold up color blotch *) which is entitled "Sundeath" -- inappropriate since you surely DON'T want to go through the expense of printing in color, or this (* hold up "unicorn" *), or this (* hold up other sketch of "unicorn" *). One the other hand, sometimes you get this (* hold up Darlene Coltrain drawing*). I was fortunate. I drew all the art for my first fanzine, and the other artists who received a copy took great pity on my efforts and sent me some illos.

Now, armed with articles, stories, art and determination, you are ready to start putting the fanzine together. But you should decide what method of reproduction you are going to use. I mean, how you are going to reproduce, uh, copy, your fanzine.

Ditto: it's cheap, and fast if you only have a hundred or so. It does leave you with purple fingers.

Mimeo: this too is fairly cheap, and you can use high-tech methods for preparing the mimeo stencils, especially if you own, or have access to, an electrostenciller. Otherwise, you more than likely will get more correction fluid in your typewriter than on the stencil.

Off-set and photocopy: not cheap, but clean, and you can definitely use high-tech gear to help you.

Laserprinter: If you have your own laserprinter, talk to me after this -- I WANT IT!

By "high-tech," I really mean -- computer and word-processing. There are some very nice word-processing and editing programs out there, which even include spellcheckers. These are wonderful to use, but you still have to proofread. The spellchecker determines whether or not the word is spelled correctly as it appears in the dictionary; it does not check for content.



Examples of bad art.

Example of good art.



Consider this:

I saw the guardian at the door who checkered by mane badger and said I could going in.

All the words are spelled correctly, but are incorrect in context.

Then there is the special fannish vocabulary which will have the computer beeping at you with each hit of the space-bar. Words like "fan", "fen", "con", "huckster", Buck and Rusty are all in the dictionary, though they mean something different to fen. I've had to add to my dictionary such exotic words as "filk, filker, and filksing," including their plurals, capitalizations, and possessives; consute, concom, smoff, Lan, Meia, Juanita, Coulson, Clement, Childs-Helton, Asimov, Heinlein, Simak and other fannish household words.

Once you get your material put together and have the masters ready for printing, then you have to get the copies made. Take the master copies down to the nearest Kinko's or Speedy Print, and ask how much it costs to run 150 copies of 24 pages. After you recover from passing out, you go to the bank and withdraw the bulk of your savings -- not all of it; you'll need that later -- or take out a loan.

When you get your printing home, unless you've asked them to collate the copies for you -- which is more expensive --, you have the next few evenings tied up with going in circles.

This (* hold up #25 again *) is 140 pages, plus cover. 71 sheets of paper. That's a lot to collate by hand. Especially 600 copies. If you can collate at the rate of 1 sheet per second, that's 71 seconds for one copy, plus some time to straighten the pages, staple them (three staples with the center one stapled from the back instead of the front), and put it into a box, that would run you about 2 minutes per copy. That is, of course, if there are no other problems, like the stapler jamming, or not stapling all the way through. Or dropping an almost collated copy all over the floor. So in an ideal situation, 2 minutes times 600 copies divided by 60 minutes in an hour, gives you 20 hours of work.

Naturally, one doesn't always work "the ideal," so it will take longer -- usually twice as long, if not more. And you don't do it all at once. You take frequent breaks. Collate a 15 issues, have a beer. Collate 10 more, have another beer. Collate a few more, drop one, drink two beers, go to the bathroom. Collate 3 issues, drink 3 beers. Collate three beers, drink an issue. Collate something -- if you can still walk.

One way around this is to invite some friends over for a collating party. You might spend more for refreshments than you would have paying for the printer to collate it, but at least you would have fun. On the other hand, you might lose some friends, or they might be busy the next time you want to throw another collating party. Remember, though, the more people you have collating, especially if they take the "party" literally, the more mistakes there are. The more fanzines you have to take apart to correct the mistakes. And in the long run, it probably takes 4 to 5 times as long as you originally had figured to put all the pages together correctly.

If you are going to a convention within a month of collation, you always bring the fanzines with you to hand out to people. Yes, you DO want to hand them out. Give them in person to your friends; find a BNF at a con and thrust a copy into their hands asking them to read it and send you a letter of comment, or a contribution. If you're lucky, they won't burn it outright, though you may find it tucked away somewhere "safe" -- like the nearest garbage can. "Nobody will look for it there!" Hand out as many as possible. The alternative is mailing them out.

Mailing the fanzine is expensive. If you have 200 or more copies to mail out, you can use bulk mail -- if you have a permit. You could opt to send it fourth-class book rate. First class is out of the question, unless your fanzine is no more than 8 pages -- four sheets of paper, or one ounce. But whichever way you send it by mail, it will use up any money left in your savings account, and then some.

For bulk mail, you have to put the envelopes in ascending, zip-code order; group the

envelopes in bundles of not more than 15 and not less than 5, aiming for an ideal of 10; arrange the bundles by all the same zip code, which is then labeled with a red sticker with a "D" on it; or group them for the same city, affixing a yellow sticker with a "C" on it; or group the envelopes by the same first three digits of the zip code, and affix a green "3" to the top envelope; or group the envelopes of the same state together, putting an orange "S" on the top envelope. If there aren't at least five from the same state, you can put different states together and use the orange "S" sticker, adding "Mixed States" to the label in indelible pen. And each bundle must be bound both horizontally and vertically.

I'm sure this thrills you no end, and would immediately turn you off from producing a fanzine, if nothing else has yet.

Once it's in the mail, or handed out, or

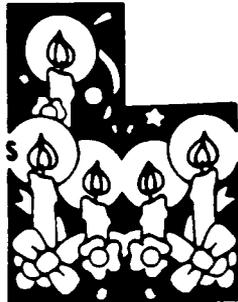
slipped into the neighbor's mailbox late at night when no moon is out, you wait for the feedback. When the letters start coming in -- and usually the return is about 1 in 4, or 1 in 5, unless it's real bad in which case you'll be lucky to get any mail -- and a few people include an article or a review, or some art, that makes all the work and all the expense well worthwhile.

Which means that you start all over again -- deciding what to do, typing up the article on stencil or into the computer, and so on -- and especially saving money for printing and mailing. It's enough to drive you directly to the collating section of producing a fanzine -- you know, where you invite a few friends over for a party -- which is what I think we should all do now: go out and party.

Thank you for listening.

SNUFF

by Arlan Andrews



Dr. Panlener Spoon, forensic scientist extraordinaire, stood over the body of the murder victim.

"The man was obviously killed by suffocation, gentlemen," he said to the ring of police and detectives surrounding the corpse on the carpet of the Diplomatic Corps ballroom. He bent over, drew his thumb and forefinger through a glossy blob of material, and pulled up a piece to display to the anxious on-lookers.

"Look at this -- the victim's face has been entirely covered by paraffin." Spoon's gray eyes shut in concentration and he turned to view a group of aliens huddled against a far wall. "Apparently our new friends can become violent."

Dr. Spoon referred to the Candelabrans, newly-arrived extraterrestrials who owned the embassy next door and were guests of honor at the reception. These intelligent, human-sized waxy cylinders were the latest rage at all the Capital's diplomatic parties. Unusual they were, too, even for Out-system beings: their metabolism depended upon the successful ignition and continuous burning of the fibrous tentacle that emerged from the cephalic region. A wick, in other words. They were thought to be perfectly peaceful and non-aggressive -- until now. Would Capital Brasilia ever live down this outre event?

Dr. Spoon called for an interpreter to arrange a formal meeting with the Candelabran contingent. She arrived quickly. The

two humans walked across the large ballroom and approached the waxy beings whose flames now flickered in an excitement that needed no translation. The eldest alien -- the shorter, the older -- Uachxx, responded before the interpreter could begin. Its voice came from barely a foot off the floor.

"English I speak. Regret to terminate one human."

A hush wafted through the humans and other aliens present. A policeman mumbled something into a wristceiver. Dr. Spoon shook his head and rubbed his goatee thoughtfully. Uachxx's head flame stopped flickering and formed an unwavering cone.

"That means he's being perfectly truthful," the interpreter whispered to Dr. Spoon. "It's the 'Flame of Absolute Truth.'"

Spoon replied in a low voice, "If humans had those, I'd be out of a job."

Uachxx continued, "Human being attempted to take tall offspring as item for sale. Inexperienced offspring resisted and sacred bodily fluid accidentally gushed from head onto attacker's face. So sorry. Candelabrans desire no trouble."

"Can human's combustion be re-ignited?" the alien asked.

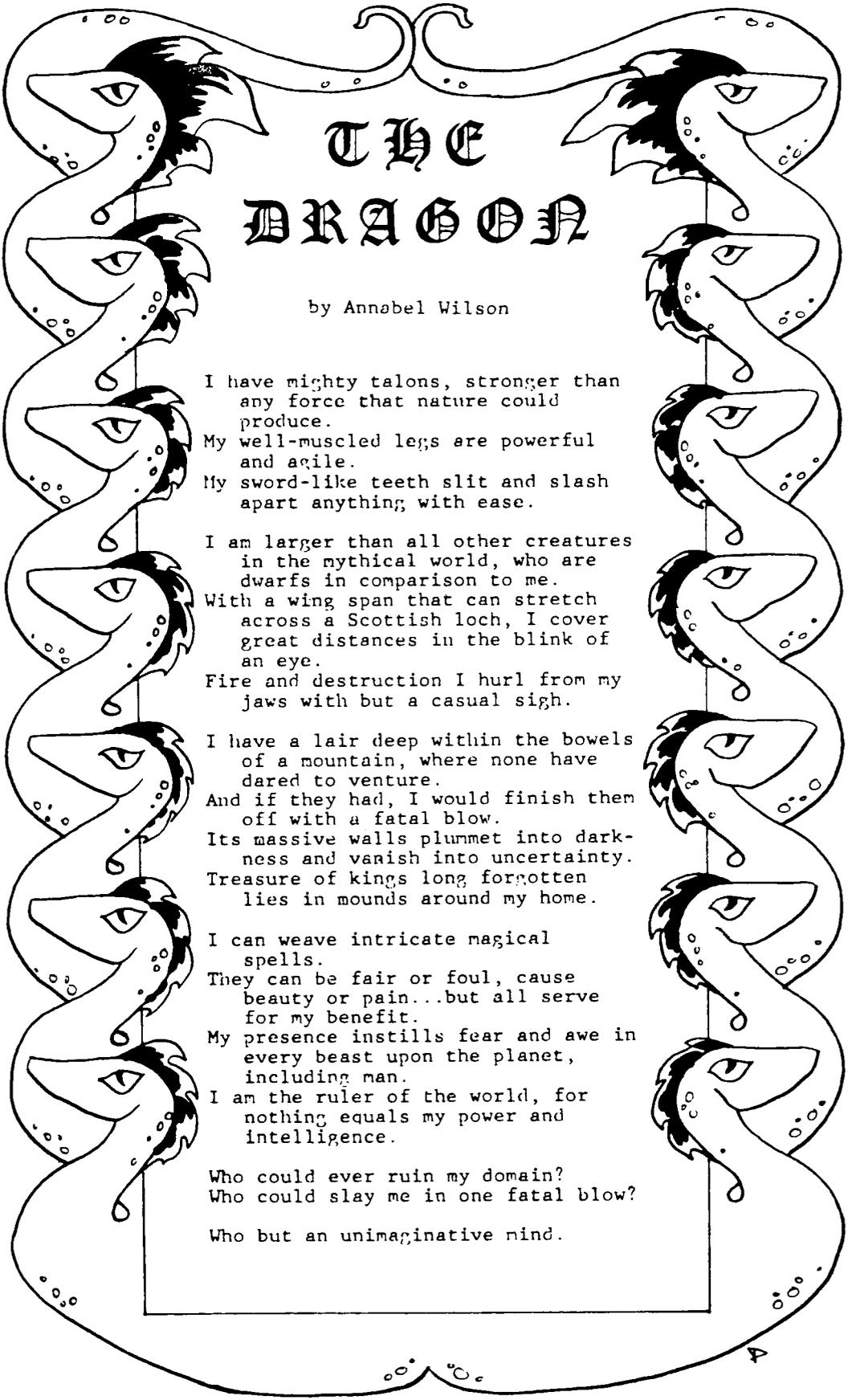
Spoon shook his head slowly and gestured for the paramedics to remove the body. As the procession left the ballroom, all of the aliens bowed, their beautiful cones of combustion a reverent tribute to the dead human.

"Doesn't deserve any pity in my book," Spoon harrumphed. "Child molester!"

A harried representative of the United Democracies shoved his way through as Spoon and the police began to leave. "Dr. Spoon!" he cried. "May I have a word with you? I don't want a diplomatic incident here! Can we talk?"

Dr. Spoon turned slowly and motioned for the police to wait and listen. "No need to worry, Mr. Mailer. You see, this was a simple case of self-defense by an alien who has diplomatic immunity and who is a minor in any case.

"My report will read" -- he smiled -- "no arrest for the wicked."



THE DRAGON

by Annabel Wilson

I have mighty talons, stronger than
any force that nature could
produce.

My well-muscled legs are powerful
and agile.

My sword-like teeth slit and slash
apart anything with ease.

I am larger than all other creatures
in the mythical world, who are
dwarfs in comparison to me.

With a wing span that can stretch
across a Scottish loch, I cover
great distances in the blink of
an eye.

Fire and destruction I hurl from my
jaws with but a casual sigh.

I have a lair deep within the bowels
of a mountain, where none have
dared to venture.

And if they had, I would finish them
off with a fatal blow.

Its massive walls plummet into dark-
ness and vanish into uncertainty.

Treasure of kings long forgotten
lies in mounds around my home.

I can weave intricate magical
spells.

They can be fair or foul, cause
beauty or pain...but all serve
for my benefit.

My presence instills fear and awe in
every beast upon the planet,
including man.

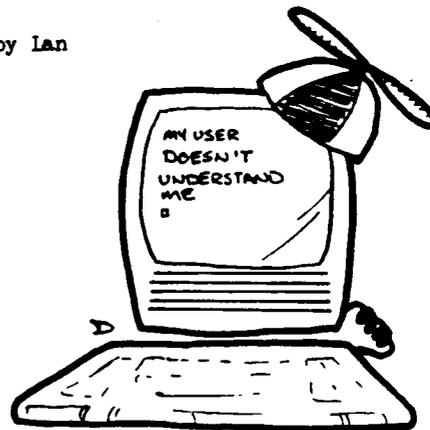
I am the ruler of the world, for
nothing equals my power and
intelligence.

Who could ever ruin my domain?
Who could slay me in one fatal blow?

Who but an unimaginative mind.

CONREPORTS and RAMBLINGS 27

by Lan



RAMBLINGS 27.1

BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR
September, 1987

The School year started after Labor Day. We had our usual meetings, mostly lots of information that did not get us fired up to start the new school year. Since no one had any idea what to do about the duty schedule for the dormitory, I took the program I had done last year, updated things for it, and suddenly it became my job to do the complete schedule for the year. I didn't mind too much, though, since I was able to make sure that MY weekends on duty were over quickly and didn't conflict with ones I wanted off for cons and other special fannish activities.

When classes started, I had a difficult time trying to reconcile the Geometry text with what should be a rigorous logic course, but had little success. The other teachers of Geometry were having as tough a time as I was. We decided that we would be changing to a different book in a couple of years -- hopefully one of the last two previous texts. The reason the change would be in two years was that things MIGHT be better after teaching with this text; and after going through it a year, we can see if it is "salvageable". My Algebra IIB classes seemed to be pretty good, and I was very familiar with the text.

I scheduled myself for the first weekend of the school year (September 18-20) on Friday and Saturday. I figured that experienced people would be needed then, and it would get one weekend out of the way for me. I also scheduled myself for two more in October, and two more during the rest of the year at times when things are quite slow. On the Sunday of that weekend Maia and I had the the family over to celebrate my parents' Wedding anniversary and my father's birthday.

I also had a birthday and Maia purchased for me a VHS VCR. I was surprised to say the least, and in the first three and a half weeks that we had it has been put to good use. I started collecting Avengers episodes, which were running at 3:30 AM during the week. This made my sleeping habits rather strange. I got up to watch the episode and edit out the commercials, then return to bed and rise at 6 AM for work. I thought about changing those morning habits and not get up until 7, get to school by 7:30 and be ready for classes by 8, but I survived the interrupted sleep quite well and continued to keep to that schedule through most of the school year.

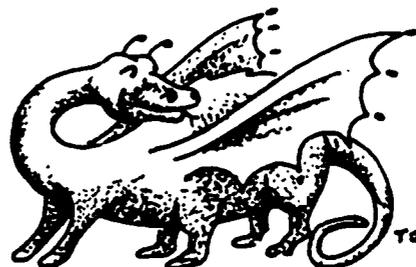
We also recorded and watched other shows. I eventually saw Strong Poison (a PBS adaptation of the Dorothy Sayers novel on Mystery!), after we taped all three parts. Mystery! is on Thursday nights opposite Cheers and Night Court, which made taping a good idea. At some point, when Mystery! starts to rebroadcast the Sherlock Holmes series, I want to get them all on tape. Jeremy Brett is a wonderful Holmes, and David Burke makes an impeccable Dr. Watson. I've enjoyed these episodes more than any other I've seen of Sherlock Holmes.

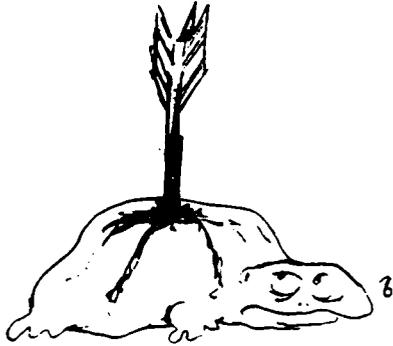
Yes, and Star Trek: The New Generation. I was looking forward to the series. The pilot had some good teasers, but several flaws as well. I hoped that everyone wouldn't stare off into space as much in the weekly episodes, that Wes wouldn't be the only kid shown, that there would be more Klingons, Vulcans, and members of other races on board the new Enterprise, and they would use more original plots than the ones I heard proposed. I wanted to see that \$1 million-per-episode special effects budget to good use.

TOLCON

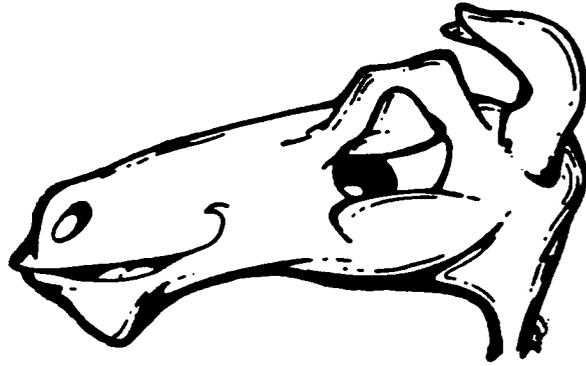
I was invited as a guest to TOLCON, a convention in Toledo, Ohio. After I had accepted, a Tim Eldred and Eileen Kane said they were getting married and invited us to their wedding. Yes, it was the same weekend as TOLCON. Maia went to the wedding; I went to the convention.

I spent most of the time with the SCA group and talking to a couple other friends (Alan Dormire and Robin Nakkula) who had come from East Lansing to visit the seneschal (?) of the Toledo SCA group. Robin sang (she is a filker), we all had some interesting conversations, we went out to lunch together, and I walked through the halls of the Toledo University Student Union which had been turned into the hucksters





Hah!



room. I purchased the second issue of Honor Among Thieves, a few issues of the Renegade Press Cases of Sherlock Holmes, and a couple of books. I never did meet the "chairman" of the con, but I did come away with a definite impression that it was a gaming convention.

I should have gone to the wedding.

CONTRADICTION

Maia had work to do both in preparation for CONCLAVE and the freelance writing assignment she had, so she did not go with me to Naigra Falls and CONTRADICTION. I drove alone across Canada from Port Huron/ Sarnia to the juncture of Lakes Erie and Ontario, and met the Dragon Lady herself, Anne McCaffrey. She was a very nice and interesting Guest of Honor. Mike Glicksohn was the Fan GoH, and special guests included T.S. Huff, Donald Kingsbury, Joan D. Vinge, Jim Frenkel and Nancy Kress.

The convention was in most instances rather boring, especially with only one track of programming (and occasional readings) to keep amused about 500 attendees. There was a small hucksters room and an adequate art show, but not much in the way of entertainment value. There were also some very young (mentally) fans who got drunk (or high) and stayed that way for the entire weekend.

Still, I had a very good time talking to several fans, in particular Jo Anselm. I talked briefly with Dave and Carol Yoder who told me of their search for a child to adopt. Ann Cecil and I talked about books for a long time, and I talked less with Meg MacDonald and Polly Vedder than I would have liked. They told me that their novel was at Ace and they were hoping for a positive response. Jim Frenkel told them to send it to him if Ace rejects it. (Frenkel had it at Bluejay before the company folded, and was interested in purchasing it then. He's now agenting for Tor.)

CONCLAVE

CONCLAVE was the second weekend in October, and I had a great time, though once again I did not spend as much time with certain people as I would have liked. Gene Wolfe was the GoH, and Joey Shoji was the Fan Guest. I missed Gene's GoH speech which I heard was hilarious. Fortunately, Larry Tucker (CONFUSION's Fan GoH) videotaped the speeches, and we gave him some money for a copy of them. I didn't get a chance to talk at any length to Joey until the dead dog

party on Sunday, at which time we spent a couple of hours in non-stop conversation.

I spent more time at the filksing -- seemingly a more pleasant pasttime now than a few years ago. Julia Ecklar, Joey, Mitchell Clapp, Tom Smith and others made it a fun time. I did have a good talk with Mitchell. When he leaves for the West Coast to learn to fly various aircraft, he will be leaving a void here in Midwest filking that will be hard to fill. I had some good short conversations with Robin Sneed, who I hope will continue to come to conventions even after Mitchell moves to the West Coast.

RAMBLINGS 27.2

The next weekend was the long, three-day weekend for the CEC community. I was on duty once again, as I was the next weekend. Two in a row is unusual, but remember, I scheduled myself that way. That second weekend was Parents' Weekend and Homecoming. Since I had to be here anyway, I figured that I might as well be on duty. That would leave me with two weekends of duty left during the rest of the school year.

Looking beyond those weekends, I saw that I had OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST III on Halloween, and following that was WINDYCON -- Gift-orama at school, and comment weekend. I planned to get all my comments written before I left for Chicago and WINDYCON.

OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST III

Maia and I went to OVFF specifically because Bill Sutton and Brenda Sinclair Craven Sinclair were getting married at the con. I had an absolutely marvelous time, and a somewhat boring time as well. Everyone was filking, which I liked, but not all the time. When I wanted some quiet conversation, everyone was filking. So I did some reading.

The schedule for the Filk Concert had to be revised and placed in the afternoon because the new hotel management hired a live band to perform in the bar, which was right across the lobby from the function rooms. Yes, the music was fairly loud but not too distracting; the problem was that the bass was felt throughout the whole hotel. However, there were some marvelous high points.

The best part was Buck Coulson officiating the wedding ceremony of Bill and Brenda. Each sang a song to the other (written specifically for the wedding), and the best-lady, Jane Mailender, sang one (written by Brenda) called "This Man is Crazy". Bill

Roper and Mary Ellen Wessels sang a duet "By My Side". Buck ad libbed the closing lines, "You are now free to unleash your passions!" At which point the Jane laid a guitar in front of the bride and groom. They stepped up to the six-string, looked at each other and smiled. Brenda gathered her skirts. They both stepped back, raised their left foot, and leapt over the guitar. Wonderful!

Barry and Sally Childs-Helton released their tape, Escape from Mundania. The two did their own mastering, then sent the master tapes to Wail Songs in California for copying. I have heard many of the songs in concert, so the polished version on the tape sounds a bit strange, but I can hear all the words now. The balance is good, and the multi-track background supports, played either by them or a friend (neither can't play more than one instrument at a time at a filk), adds to the music. It is definitely a tape worth getting. They also introduced me to their friend Beryl, who was wearing a sweat-shirt with a quote from Krista McAuliffe: "I touch the future; I teach!" I wanted one, and got her address so I could send her some money to pick up and mail one to me.

Two-thirds of "Technical Difficulties" were there. I had a wonderful time talking to Linda Melnick, and found out from T.J. Burnside what the "T" in her name stands for. We had sort of a lunch together with Kristoff (I had soup and coffee while the others ate), and realized how wonderful it is going to be to have TJ as GoH at CONCLAVE next year. Now if we can convince Linda Melnick and Shiela Willis (the other third of TD) to come as well, then the filking will be absolutely marvelous.

During the meal I found out that Linda and TJ were at CONSPIRACY, and had stayed in London after the Worldcon. They saw 7 shows in 6 days, including Starlight Express, Les Miserable and The Phantom of the Opera. My eyes widened when they mentioned the last one.

"It was sold out when we were there, so we didn't even try for tickets to see Phantom," I told them.

Linda smiled and said they were told the same thing, but went to the theatre in hopes of getting some no-show or cancelled tickets. When they arrived at the window and asked if there were four tickets (there were two other people accompanying them), the clerk said, "Yes."

"We'll take them!"

"But..."

"We'll take them!"

"...they're..."

"We'll take them!"

"...sixty..."

"We'll take them!"

"...pounds..."

"We'll take them!"

"...each..."

"We'll take them!"

So they got to see the show and loved it. The seats they had were paired in two places -- two seats in the balcony and two on the main floor. TJ and Linda took the balcony, which were supposedly the poorer seats, since some of the scenery was lowered from the ceiling and blocked some of the stage action. Sure enough, in the middle of the

first act a gargoyle was lowered twenty feet in front of them which blocked their view -- then a spotlight hit it and on the gargoyle they get a close-up view of the first appearance of the Phantom! They weren't bad seats after all!

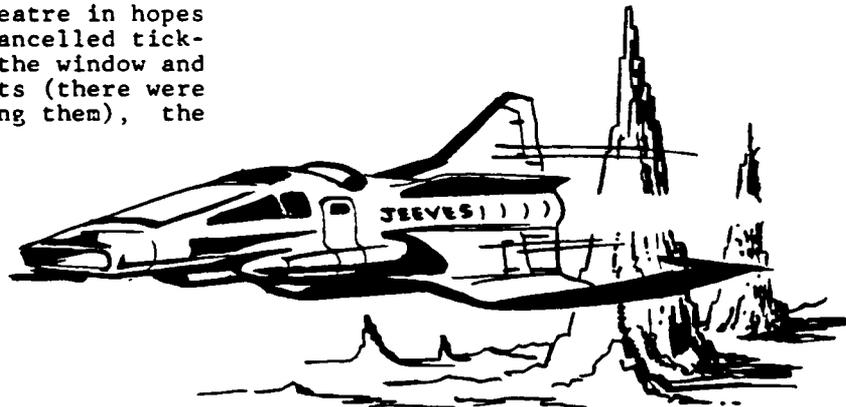
I knew that Phantom would be coming to New York, but I also knew that we probably would not be able to afford to go there, stay overnight, and see the show -- too expensive overall. I was hoping that we could get the tape of the original cast. It would be worth it just to hear the music and songs.

Linda also let Mark Bernstein, Maia and me hear a rough cut of "The Tree of Swords", a song that will be on their new tape which is scheduled for release at NOLACON II.

TJ and Linda did "Lies", a Stan Rogers song, during the Filk Concert. They did it in three parts, with Linda signing the third. It was beautifully done, and set me to tears, as well as several other people; one person even ran out of the room crying.

Among the other nice people I met and talked to were Mercedes (Misty) Lackey and Robin Sneed. Misty and I exchanged pleasantries in the consuite on Friday night -- I was surprised she knew who I was -- and of course ran into each other throughout the con. I guess I will have to pull her novels off the "to-be-read shelf" and read them. Does she write as well as she is a nice person? And Barb Reidel and Carol Poore--I did not get a chance to talk much to these two Wisconsin fans, but I sure listened to them sing.

Robin Sneed came to the con for Saturday only, with Mitchell Clapp. This was his last convention in the Midwest. He was transferring to Edwards Air Force Base for aviation engineering training. It is unlikely that he will be sent back to this area. I'm hope to talk some con committees into asking him back as a GoH. Robin will remain in the area at Wright Patterson AFB. I asked her about attending other cons, and she said that she didn't know about them; she always came with Mitchell. She would



soon be receiving a note from me with some flyers from upcoming cons. Robin is the person who has a nifty "Robin" costume (as in Batman and Robin).

Finally, Tom Smith did what he has been threatening to do for the last year or so: he wrote, produced, directed, and starred in

his version of The Rocky Horror Muppet Show! It was slow in spots, but what do you want for a first read-through by the cast? It was like The Muppet Show, with the crew putting on Rocky Horror, and all the problems that might occur. Animal ate the music, so Rolf (Joe Ellis) ad libbed with anything that might scan with the words. One song was sung to "Ode to Joy", and "The Time Warp" scanned to "The Yellow Rose of Texas".

On Sunday morning Kathy Mar and several others were still singing. Linda joined them and started singing Peter, Paul and Mary songs, and I even added my voice to those.

I think I'll go back next year.

WINDYCON

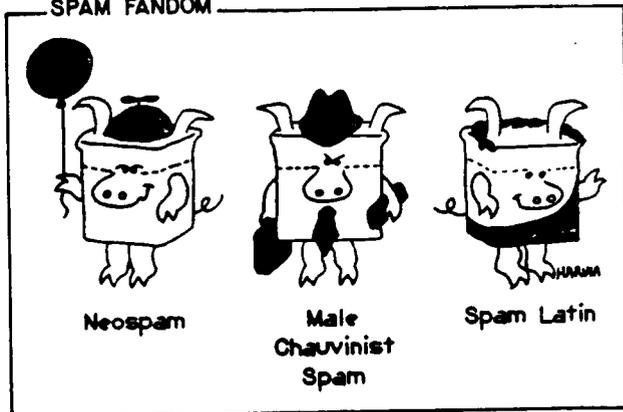
WINDYCON weekend coincided with Giftorama at school, and comment weekend. I did get all my comments written before I left for Chicago and the convention. Maia and I took Tara Edwards (the several-times chairman for CONFUSION) with us and she was a marvelous driving companion.

The convention was fun, though after 5 cons in the last seven weeks I was suffering a little from burnout. Dick Spelman had his usual assortment of latest books, and Greg Ketter of Dreamhaven Books was handing out free copies of Vernor Vinge's The Peace War and the latest copy of Amazing magazine. I picked up the two Yolen books I was missing from her "Pit Dragon" series, A Sending of Dragons from Dick, and Heart's Dragon from Greg. From the Garcias' table I bought the last two issues of American Fantasy, the latest having an interview with Lionel Fenn which I found hilarious because of the references to Charlie Grant and Felicia Andrews (all the same person, Charlie).

Special Conversations: talking with Mike Resnick, Polly Peterson (who wants me to be on programming at MINICON this coming year), Dolsa Sciaky (my former student at Kingswood), Roxanne Mieda, Lynn Granville, Erin McKee (whose back I rearrange whenever we meet), John Stanley, Karen and Ida, and Fred Pohl (to whom I apologized for not having the Special LL issue out yet), Kathy Nerat, her daughter Jennifer and husband Bill (her son Josh was there too, but we didn't talk), Somtow Sucharitkul, Mike Glyer, Kurt Erichsen, Barbara Geraud, David and Diana Stein and Lynn Meserole.

Other high points: I went to Mike Resnick's reading, and found myself alone in the room with Carol Resnick and Mike. He gave me the manuscript to read on my own. After I was about half-way through, someone else walked in, and I gave what I had finished to her. She read faster than I did, and we finished about the same time. The three of us then talked about the story, about Mike's plans for the multiple sequels to it. This one is part of a shared-world put together by Orson Scott Card called Eutopias a series of asteroids are moved into orbit around Earth, and each is maintained and given over to any group who wants a Utopia. The authors were given strict rules to follow, but each was given free reign as to the kind of utopia s/he wanted

SPAM FANDOM



to write about. Both Mike and I (and others whom I talk to about this) are anxious to read these stories. From his recent trip to Africa (see LL #26) Mike got several ideas that fit into his Eutopian world, and will be collecting these stories into a single book. Meanwhile, Ed Ferman will publish the first one in F&SF this spring, and the others Mike has written throughout the following year or so. All this is with Scott's permission (it IS his world!).

Tim Zahn's reading of the first three chapters of Deadman Switch included the killing of Bob Trembley. His friends from Michigan Tech bought his death at the first Polly Freas auction at the 1987 CONFUSION. There was a bit of a surprise, though. Since Tim needed names for several incidental characters, and Maia had sent a list of those people who contributed the \$100 for the "kill", Tim used some of the names in the story -- not all in the first three chapters, but throughout the book. If you know these people, look for the Tuckerisms when the novel comes out. We also had a wonderful brunch together on Sunday with Tim, Anna and Corwin.

My panel with Jane Yolen, Lynn Meserole and Mary Zambreno went over very well. I was the moderator, and we talked mostly about why more young adults are attracted to fantasy as opposed to SF. In general, the conclusion was that there is more fantasy available, through myths, fairy tales and other fantasy, for pre-schoolers on than SF. This is a wide open field for writers, but there also needs to be editors to handle children's SF.

RAMBLINGS 27.3

The week after WINDYCON was another hectic one at school (aren't they all? Well this one was moreso than the others.) There was a long faculty meeting on Monday afternoon, I was on duty on Tuesday evening, Wednesday I stayed home and worked on the quizzes I was giving to all my classes on Thursday, attended the D & E Grade Review meeting Thursday evening (I also took care of the refreshments for that meeting), and Friday was Fathers' Visiting Day, so I had dads in the classroom.

That next weekend I tried to catch up on apa writing, enter some articles for the Pohl/deCamp issue of LL, do some Christmas

shopping, tape a couple of shows on TV, and relax. I started coaching swimming on Monday, November 16, which I realized would eat about 3 to 3-1/2 hours an evening during the week. I had a feeling that something might fall by the wayside (me, probably, from exhaustion while trying to maintain doing everything I still want to do).

The next weekend found me hard at work on the fanzine, along with going to three birthday parties. I had commissioned a student from school to sketch a likeness of Fred Pohl for a cover, and she turned it in within a couple of days. It was a marvelous pencil sketch, and it impressed everyone who saw it. By the time the weekend was over, I had most of the fanzine finished, had helped celebrate the birthdays of Denice Brown, Karen (Ida's roommate) and Joshua Rotarius (my nephew). Thanksgiving was coming, and I was happy to have only to teach two days that week. Dinner at my sister's and some pleasant time spent doing the fanzine work was what I was looking forward to.

And Chambanacón.

CHAMBANACON

It was a long but pleasant drive to Champaign this year, and for the first time since I had been going to this convention it rained almost the entire weekend. There was some snow falling on Sunday morning, but the further North we drove, the higher the temperature got. A steady drizzle blanketed southern lower Michigan.

As soon as we got in to the hotel and registered for both the room and the con, Maia and I got into our bathing suits and relaxed in the pool and jacuzzi. More people arrived for the convention as the day turned into night, and I began handing out the Pohl/de Camp issue of LL. The first comments were almost universally, "Oh, it's an Ace double!"

Tim and Anna Zahn had us over for our traditional lasagna dinner, and once again Kelly Cornell joined us for the meal. Afterwards we relaxed and looked at our pictures from England, talked about Tim's stories, and his upcoming projects. When we returned to the con, I wandered around talking to fans until I went on lifeguard duty at 11PM. CHAMBANACON has traditionally had a "midnight swim" from 11 PM to 1 AM on both Friday and Saturday nights. And I have been the traditional guard which allows the convention to have the pool open after hours.



I also foolishly signed up to be on the "Fan Panel" scheduled for 9 AM on Saturday. Amazingly enough, there were some other people up at that time -- or maybe they hadn't been to bed. I did manage to spend money in the hucksters room, mostly buying gifts for people, though I did get some books, too.

The art show was very nice, as usual. Steve Scherer was in the back of the room performing his feats of lampwork and molding figurines out of glass. Maia bought one of his pieces for my mother for Christmas. Darlene Coltrain sold me a print which I will use in the letter column for comments on the Pohl/deCamp issue (and as an example of "good art" in my Millennicon GoH speech-- see page 29).

On Saturday afternoon Sam, Mary and David Long came in from Springfield and visited. Maia had another commitment so I went with them to the restaurant and had coffee while they had some lunch. The conversation varied from our respective jobs to friends who had been in the Vietnam war.

I did see Michael Brim, the con chairman, but only briefly. He was ill the entire weekend.

The people (other than those mentioned above) with whom I had interesting conversations were: Mike Kube-McDowell, Gwen Zak, Ben James, Mick Hamblen, Al & Penny Tegen, Buck Coulson, Glen Cook, Ken Moore, Andy Offutt, Paula Robinson, Barbara Reidel, Kathy Traacy, Alan Dormire, Barry and Sally Childs-Helton, Mary and Chris Stasheff, and many others whom I've probably forgotten.

RAMBLINGS 27.4

We had thirteen class days between the end of Thanksgiving vacation and the beginning of Christmas vacation. I had to write letters to the parents of my advisees, write mid-quarter comments on any student getting a D or and E in my classes (or on academic probation), continue to assist in coaching swimming, do shopping for Christmas, collate the Lantern, write correct and grade tests and quizzes, and prepare for an evaluation of my teaching by my department chairman. I also wanted to work on the next issue of LL and get that ready to go out ASAP. The Pohl/de Camp special was very small; very few people contributed to it. And I had stacks of material and letters to put into #25--and I already had the cover printed and ready to go. So I was anxious to get moving on it.

We had our first swim meet on Thursday (10 Dec 87), and won by three points. Last year we lost to this team by one point. We should have won by more but we had three disqualifications: in one relay one person false-started, in another relay (same event -- Medley Relay) the butterflyer let his feet separate in the kick, and one of the backstrokers stopped after 50 yards because he swallowed water coming out of the turn. The practices should be harder; we lost two races in the last couple of lengths. The swimmers need to build up their endurance.

Our next meet was on the 15th of December against one of our perennial rivals, Detroit Country Day. We did all right in that one, but again there were a couple of disqualifications which should not have happened. We won, but by far less than we should have.



A Mini Vacation

After school let out on Thursday, December 17, I cleaned up my classroom from the parties I had had and wrapped up a few things that had been left hanging -- like writing some college recommendations. On Friday I got my paycheck, went to the bank, and Maia and I headed for Toronto to begin our week vacation.

Mike Glicksohn and Doris Bercarich were our host and hostess for the weekend. Doris met us at the door and ushered us into the living room to visit with "the gimp". Mike's foot and lower leg were encased in plaster. The night before he and Doris were at a party and in the midst of dancing Mike fell off the dance floor -- a whole quarter of an inch. He broke the fifth metatarsal, and would be in the cast for about three weeks, all of his vacation and then some.

Saturday afternoon Maia and I went to the Ontario Science Center and spent a lot of time marveling at the exhibits. I got sidetracked by one of the computer games -- matching the color of the inside square with its outer band. I was very good, getting mostly perfect matches. We returned to the house in time to get cleaned up, dressed, and ready for the party Doris and Mike were having that evening. We had a good time talking with the many people who showed up, especially Jack Brooks, Tanya Huff and her friend Fiona.

We awoke late on Sunday, and decided to go see The Princess Bride. Doris accompanied us, and we had a wonderful time window shopping, seeing the movie (I recommend it), and a nice dinner. Since we were all to be up early on Monday except for Mike, we hit the sack early. Doris made sure that we were up when she left, and we quietly slipped away without waking Michael.

South through Ontario to Niagra Falls we drove, across the Rainbow Bridge, then along Lake Ontario and the Parkway towards Rochester. Our ultimate destination that day was Pittsburgh, but we made a small side trip to Rochester to have lunch with Jo Anselm. She surprised us by inviting John and Joanne Hall to join us, and we spent a great hour and a half together.

The trip to Pittsburgh from Rochester was pleasant. The countryside was beautiful. Once inside the city, the hills were formidable, and there were a couple of steep places I was sure that the car was not going to be able to negotiate. We, however, did survive, and were welcomed by Ann Cecil, Charlie Terry and her daughter Sasha. That evening was spent talking, reading and eating.

On Tuesday Maia and I were treated to a tour of Pittsburgh. We traveled up and down the hills, through tunnels and across bridges, and were shown many of the sites. I think the most impressive place we saw was the Cathedral of Learning.

Situated on the University of Pittsburgh campus, the Cathedral is designed as a Gothic church inside, with huge vaulted ceilings

and colonnades, side chapels and rooms, all designated for study and classes. The upper levels of the tower are offices. It was gorgeous and impressive.

After dinner, we all got dressed in our good clothes and headed for the Benedum Theatre in the downtown area to see the ballet performance of The Nutcracker. This was the first time I had seen it, and it was fascinating. Sasha sat entranced through the entire performance, though she did fidget a little during some of the slow spots (well, she is only 3-1/2 years old).

We left the next morning for Columbus, Ohio, to visit with family. We saw Maia's father and step-mother, her sister Christina and husband Paul (who were in visiting from Washington DC), and her sister Joy, husband Dale and the kids. It was a pleasant time, especially the dinner we had with Daddy & Mary, Chris & Paul, in Circleville, and the marvelous meal with Joy & Dale and the family. The children enjoyed the gifts we gave them, and we got a game called By Jove!, a Greek/Roman mythological game of Monopoly.

On Christmas Eve about 8 PM, we packed up and headed home. It had been raining, a condition which held through the night. It didn't freeze, and again we had a snowless Christmas.

In the morning Maia and I got up fairly late and exchanged gifts. I got her several videotapes (blank and otherwise), for the times she would be home alone without me while I worked with the swim team. She also received some candy, cassette audio tapes, and a pair of opal earrings to match the necklace I had gotten her in England. From Maia I received a sweatshirt which had a quote from Krista McAuliffe -- "I touch the future; I teach." (I never did get around to mailing money to Beryl for it.) She also gave me a shirt and the original British cast album of Starlight Express.

The family gathering at my parents house was as hectic and frenzied as usual. The gift exchange went well, and the kids were overloaded with presents.

I continued to get up in the middle of the night (well, morning, really, though the station did change the broadcast time from 3:30 AM to 2:30 AM) to record episodes of The Avengers. I had most of the Emma Peel shows and all but one of the Tara King episodes. I was really excited about that. This project might be finished up very soon; on the other hand, getting that last Tara King episode ("Fog") would probably take another few months until it came around again.

Maia and Mark Bernstein and I saw the musical Promises, Promises. I had never seen this show, though I was very familiar with



the Burt Bacharach/Hal David music and lyrics. I found it fascinating. I had some idea of what it was about from the songs, but it wasn't quite the same as the real show. Chuck Baxter, a young executive on the rise in a big company, allows his bosses to use his apartment in the evening, during the week so they can meet their mistresses there. In return, he gets special consideration and moves slowly up the corporate ladder. Although he is in love with Fran Kubelik, one of the waitresses in the executive lunchroom, she is the mistress of J. D. Sheldrake, personnel director and one of the executives using his apartment. On Christmas Eve, Fran and Sheldrake have an argument, and she attempts suicide. She is saved by Baxter, who eventually quits the company. The play ends with them kissing.

It was a lot of fun to see. The dancing was nice, the songs wonderfully done. I keep telling myself I should get to more plays and musicals -- if only I had time and money enough...

During vacation I also saw the Barbara Cartland romance, a made-for-TV movie, called Hazards of the Heart with Diana Rigg. Diana made a wonderful villainess. Can't wait to see what else she'll be doing. Diana took time out from her career to raise her daughter; now that her daughter is old enough to be on her own, Diana has been doing more acting. I'm anxious to see more of her roles.

AMBULATORY CONFUSION

CONFUSION happened and I had a good time. Marta Randall was a wonderful Toastmaster, Joe Haldeman a great Pro GoH, David Cherry a superb and witty Artist GoH, and Larry Tucker a marvelous Fan GoH. The panel I was on with Marta, Algis Budrys, and Maia, about "What Readers Read", went off very well. No big, startling conclusions here; it mainly boiled down to opinions, and the naming of various books as examples of likes/don't likes.

I stayed after and was invited to help out Steve Leigh, Ted Reynolds, and Bob Asprin on their "Godhead in Science Fiction" panel. Somtow showed up a little late. Although Bob tried to hijack the panel onto other topics, we kept coming back to the idea of godhead and how SF authors use God in their various stories. Some questions and comments from the audience about the relationship of science and religion sparked interesting discussions.

When I went by the room to sit in on the "Men in Science Fiction" panel, people were hanging out the door so I skipped it. I wanted to see and hear it since Maia and other friends were on it, but it was much too crowded. Instead, we gave Larry Tucker a blank tape and money for postage for a copy, since, as usual, he was taping some of the events of the con.

I enjoyed conversations with Dr. Halina Harding and Lisa Leutheuser (both former students from Kingswood), Al Salmi, Doris Bercarich, Nike Glicksohn, David Cherry, Marta Randall, Somtow, Julia Ecklar and Joey Shoji, Michael Kube-McDowell, Mary Kay Jackson, David and Diana Stein, Mitch and Joanne Radelt, and many, many others.



Bruce Schneier had a birthday party and I saw lots of people going in and out of his room. He has lots of friends from all over the Midwest. I talked for a while with Roxanne Meida and several other people at that party.

When we went back in the evening for the Dead Dog party, Tom Smith, Joey, Mary Ellen Wessels, Kathy Mar, Michael K-M, and others were filking near the function rooms. There was some activity in the consuite, and I even babysat Morgan Radelt for a while.

RAMBLINGS 27.5

I was on duty the weekend following CONFUSION, and it was very quiet. Exams were the week after and the kids were studying their little brains out. Most of my students did well on their exams, although I lost one student who got an E in my course. She is no longer at Cranbrook Kingswood.

The swim team's record stood at 5 wins and 2 losses. The kids were not working as hard as they should have been. Several said they wanted to go to the State meet, but they were not putting the effort into practice that they should. Ruth Lessard, the head coach, said that I should not be discouraged about that. Some of the team members were there more for the socializing aspect than for the competition, though they all wanted to compete. When they wanted to work hard they did; yelling at them helped a little, but caused more resentment than anything else. I recalled what I had done when I was on a swim team in high school: I tried to get out of the hard workouts; I "cheated" a little by not always swimming to the wall in the shallow end of the pool. I did not put forth the effort I should have to become



a state-class swimmer. These kids were much more aware of how demanding the workouts needed to be, but aren't willing to work.

I was uncertain whether or not I would assist whoever is swim coach next year. I was afraid I would not be able to get out of some sort of sports commitment since I have now started. I'll see, though. Since the Latin teacher who has taught here for 43 years will be retiring, I told the Head of the upper school that I was interested in maybe taking some of his classes--straddling two departments again. Arlyce Siebert, the head of the upper school, thanked me for my interest, but told me I would have to wait until schedules are set up for next year. I might not know until August. So I would know still be teaching five classes, and thus not coaching.

Ruth was considering taking the Head position of the Kingswood Dorm, thus becoming the assistant Director of Residence. She would be good at it, but could not coach while in that position. And I wouldn't consider working with anyone else. She also might not be here at all, since her husband Ron has finished his doctoral work and is looking for a Post-Doc position. They may be moving to wherever that job is; Ruth would then go back to school to get her doctorate.

But that would be next year. I thought I'd finish out this year and see how I feel after I get some distance from the team.

I worked on Lan's Lantern and made some headway. It was going to be a large one, again, mostly because I was thrown off my "schedule" by Maia's broken leg last summer. I didn't get things done as I had wanted. So, I had a lot of reviews I wanted to put in, and that would be the bulk of the issue. I postponed a number of articles until the next one, hoping that people would be understanding, and severely edited the letter column.

In general the months of February and March were quiet. On Thursday, March 3, I gave tests in my two Geometry classes --with partners. I paired people up the day before and had them working together on problems in preparation for the test. To some it may seem strange that I have allowed people to work together on tests. I have done so periodically throughout the year particularly in my Geometry classes. There are some good reasons for this.

Last year when I taught my Algebra IIB classes, I was told that those students would be kept together in the same Geometry classes, so I recommended all of them for Geometry. This did not happen. These students with less ability were scattered among all the Geometry classes, and many were not doing very well. Had I known this would happen, I would have recommended them for different course. So, by allowing this pair-

testing, they had a better chance of learning, as well as getting a passing grade.

In addition, since most of the students will be going into business, or into something where they are going to have to work with other people as a team. This would be preparation for that. This also reduces anxiety about the test, that they will have someone to help them. And it gives me fewer tests to grade (each person gets the same grade).

The next day I did not have class. I was the GoH at MILLENNICON, and they asked that I be there early -- not the 8:30 PM I'd probably arrive if I would teach the full day. So I cleared my day off with the administration in January, and I'm glad I did. We had a snowstorm the day Mother's Visiting Day was scheduled, and thus classes were cancelled. The Visiting Day was rescheduled for March 4. I was happy that I wouldn't have to deal with mothers in the classroom.

MILLENNICON

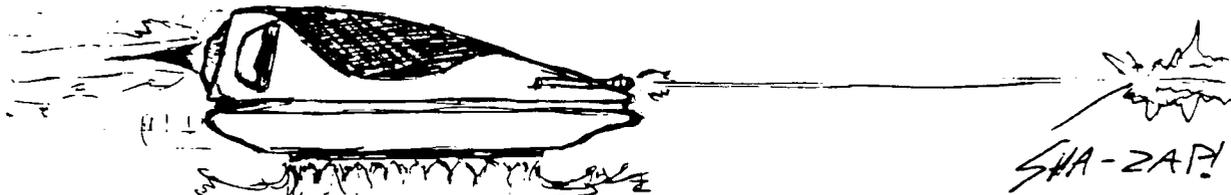
The drive down to Dayton was interesting; it got colder and the ground became more snow-covered the further south we went. By the time we hit the outskirts of Dayton, the trees and bushes along I-75 were encased in ice. A severe ice storm had passed through southern Ohio on Thursday night which knocked out power in several places. The Airport Inn was not affected.

The convention was once again fun. I talked to a lot of people, bought a few books, completed my paperback collection of The Avengers (I needed #7 of the series and picked it up from one of the hucksters), and had a great time on the panels and at the filksings. The art show had a remarkable collection of pieces from very talented artists. For the first time in several years I bid on a piece and picked it up for minimum bid.

I handed out several copies of the Pohl/de Camp issue, as well as copies of the new Lantern to people on my mailing list. The size was up to massive proportions -- 140 pages plus cover.

Hal Clement (last year's Pro GoH), Juanita Coulson (this year's Pro GoH), Arlan Andrews, Joe Faust, and Lois McMaster Bujold were among the professional authors there. Lois had copies of her latest book, Falling Free, for sale -- a month before the release date.

The speeches that Juanita Coulson and I gave were fairly short -- at least no one walked out on us. Juanita's was a little more serious than mine, but it set us to thinking. My topic, "The Perils and Pleasures of Publishing a Fanzine" probably got people to thinking too -- about NOT pubbing a zine. (The speech is printed on page 29).



RAMBLINGS 27.6

Unlike last year, we did not have any bomb threats. School proceeded in its usual fashion, mixing teaching with testing, assemblies with sports, and special consideration for Black History Month. Four members of the swim team went to the State Tournament and did fairly well. One placed 16th in the 50 yard freestyle, another 11th in the individual medley and 7th in the 100 yard backstroke. The medley relay placed 7th. Not bad for students who didn't work out as hard as they might have.

Two weeks before Spring Break the leaders for the Wilderness Expedition left for the Smokey Mountains of Tennessee. In the process of packing up to leave, they emptied a half-dozen cases of copy paper so they could have the boxes. The rest of us who stayed behind were fortunate that the humidity level was low so that the paper ran through the Kodak copy machine without much trouble. I marvel at the stupidity of the faculty at times, like those who leave a quarter inch of coffee in the pot and the warmer still on. Another example of educated people having no common sense--only thinking of their immediate desires and nothing of others.

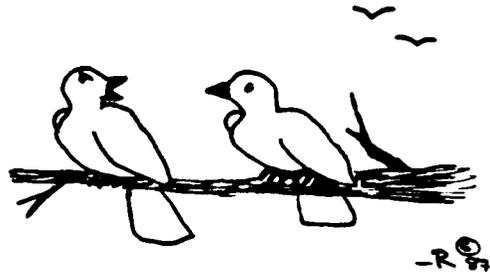
A week later the sophomores who were scheduled to go on the trip left and the school was a bit quieter. During that last week the students were bombarded with all sorts of testing, sort of a "wrapup" before vacation. And as usual, some kids left early. A few had legitimate reasons (one of my students was standing up in a wedding and had to be there on Thursday), but many just left early because their parents wanted them to. In a way I couldn't blame them; I was anxious to be away from the classroom for a while too.

SPRING BREAK

That first weekend (March 18-20) Maia and I headed south to Marion, Columbus, and Asheville, Ohio. Maia's father had been in the hospital as a result of some side-effects to the medicine he was taking for his emphysema. He was home when we visited him, and was doing much better. On our trip down to Dad's place we stopped for a visit -- and lunch -- with Lois McMaster Bujold and her family in Marion. We had a pleasant time, and we were sorry to leave so soon. Lois and John showed us a copy of one of the fanzines that she had put out, and they gave us a copy of Decalomania, a parody of a tourist guide for this fictional country that John and his friends had made up while they were in high school. One of them finally put everything together into this book.

While in Columbus, we visited Maia's sister Joy and her family. We ordered pizza for everyone, and had a pleasant evening talking, eating, and socializing.

Sunday we headed home by way of Jackson, Michigan, and celebrated my nephew's seventh birthday. Nicholas, after a seemingly slow start academically, has taken to reading like the rest of the family. We got him a pair of jeans and a stuffed dinosaur and book: Maia: A Dinosaur Grows Up. I read the book before we wrapped it up, and it deals



"We'll wait 'em out, Milo.
Another sixty million years
and we'll rule the earth
again."

with the dinosaur Maia from her birth, her growing to adulthood, and becoming a mother herself. The story incorporates the latest research and information found in the dinosaur digs in Montana and Alberta, including the existence of the Iowan Sea. Nick might not appreciate the accuracy now, but will later. I know his mother (my sister) will.

The anniversary of our meeting and engagement passed fairly quietly. We went out to dinner, and I gave Maia a small gift. She in turn gave me the original cast recording of The Phantom of the Opera. Even before the first side (of four) was finished, I knew what all the fuss was about in regard to this operetta. It is beautiful!

The rest of vacation dealt with working on the Lantern. #25 was put in the mail before the rates went up, and #26 was progressing nicely. I was aiming for a distribution of LL #26 for CONTRAPTION. There was a good chance I would make it.

I did discover a new author in the area -- John Stchur. Dean Lambe wrote a review of his first novel, Down on the Farm, in LL #25. He gave it a thumb's-up, so when I saw it in the bookstore (hardcover) I picked it up, read it, saw on the back flap that he lived in Troy, Michigan, and looked his address up in the phone book. I sent him a copy of the LANTERN with the review, contacted the programming person for CONTRAPTION (April 29-May 1), and relayed the information to Halina so she could contact him about the con. On April 7, Maia told me we got a call from John to thank me for the copy of the review, and Maia pushed the convention. He is busy, but might be able to make it.

Last year Keith Allan Hunter mentioned a book called An Exaltation of Larks by James Lipton. It dealt with venery, terms of the hunt. I checked a copy of the book out of the local library and both Maia and I read and enjoyed it. In the Detroit Free Press Maia read a short note that Patricia Hooper was going to be reading some children's poems that she wrote and had published about venery. We bought A Bundle of Beasts and read along with her as she read to the small group of children and parents gathered at a local mall. When we asked her to autograph the book, I asked about anything else she had had published. Patricia pulled out copies of Other Lives, a collection of poems for adults, and winner of the Norma Farber First Book Award for 1984. Inside I read that she lives in Birmingham, Michigan -- closer to us than John Stchur.

SCHOOL AGAIN

Spring Break was all too short. We started back on the Monday after Easter with faculty meetings. The math departmental meeting in the morning actually accomplished something, though the afternoon meeting was rather boring. All we talked about was the sports requirement for the kids.

Things were up and down for the next week and a half. I reminded my student of the papers that were due on April 11, and most people got them in on time. By Thursday, I had read them all, graded them and had marks for the third quarter. Many were amazed that read and graded them so fast; their English teachers never do it that quickly.

I had all but three episodes of The Avengers on tape by this time. Since we discovered early on that the local station broadcasting them was running the episodes in alphabetical order (mostly), I figured that it would be months before the three I needed would be shown. In the Barnes & Noble catalogue that arrived, I saw that "The Bird Who Knew Too Much" was available for \$9.98 (plus shipping and handling). With that one purchased commercially, all I would need were two -- the Diana Rigg "Town of No Return" and the Linda Thorson "Fog". No sooner had I sent in my money than "The Bird Who Knew Too Much" was shown -- out of order, of course. So I taped it (though the commercial tape is slightly longer -- some material was cut for local broadcasting). But, to my surprise, astonishment and utter amazement, a couple days later the station broadcasted the last two episodes I needed on consecutive mornings (remember, 2:30 AM). I can now happily say I have all those Avengers episodes.



During the last quarter we the faculty started to have problems with some of the seniors. They thought they didn't have to do any work since they were accepted in colleges already. In fact, the senior class organized a "skip day" unsanctioned by the school. I blew my top at this. I had scheduled an announced test for my Algebra classes, and 3 seniors did not show up. Most of the seniors in my Geometry classes were failing. I had planned an in-class assignment which I would collect and grade which would help boost their average. No senior showed up, and I gave zeros to all of them; I would not accept their absences as "excused", even if they were "excused" by the

office. I was told later that I had to accept such absences as excused if the office said so. So, I did, but I didn't like it. Instead of giving those kids a zero out of 24 pts, they got nothing; they were not hurt by their miss of the class, but they would not be helped by an easy "A" (which is what most people got).

One frightening fact that came out of this was that a lot of the parents called the office to excuse their kids from school. I mean, of the 140 senior boys who were not in school on Friday, April 22, 120 had parents call in to excuse them. What a poor example set by the parents! No wonder this particular class had their values messed up.

I told several of my seniors that I was personally hurt by what they did -- I had helped many of them pass the year by giving extra help, fairly easy tests, letting them work with partners, and gave many the benefit of the doubt and "breaks" with grades. Things would be different this last quarter. As I said, most are failing now; and that does not bode well for the rest of the quarter.

I still tried to be objective for the rest of the school year, but it was difficult. I did come to a good understanding with one of my seniors who was doing well, and whom I would not have objected to her skipping a day. Gwen has always been honest with me about what she does -- she is probably more active than any other senior in the class (Manager for the Madrigal Singers, head RA in the dorm, does driving for the dorm, is involved in some after-school activities, an officer of the Student Council, to name a few), but she still fulfills her obligations. If all my seniors were like her, I would have no trouble excusing them. However, I had handed back a test on the Wednesday before, and 8 students had failed, 7 of them seniors.

Oh well, I'm going on a bit longer than I should right now, so I'll stop.

I collated about 150 copies of the Lantern to take to CONTRAPTION. I passed out about 80 of them, which was pretty good, considering that many people who would have come to CONTRAPTION went to MARCON instead -- an unfortunate clash of dates which should not happen again.

CONTRAPTION

Octavia Butler and Arthur Hlavaty were the Guests of Honor. Both were marvelous. Sontow Sucharitkul was also there, as well as Leo Frankowski, Arthur's wife Bernadette Bosky, Mike Glicksohn, and new author John Stchur. The con was held in the same hotel as a Mensa convention, and the memberships were reciprocated for programming.

I was on two panels. One dealt with fanzines, the other with horror writing. Both went over quite well, though I had more fun listening to John Stchur and Bernadette talking about horror than me talking about fanzines. If you haven't read Down on the Farm, you might want to try it. Although marketed as horror, it is SF.

Rusty Hevelin moderated a panel on "Fans Helping Fans" -- with Howard DeVore, Lynn



frightfully early for work, so didn't get a chance to see them off. They were all still sound asleep when I left. We told them that they were all invited back for a longer stay this summer. And we hope that they will take us up on the offer.

RAMBLINGS 27.7

That's about all for now. In the next "Conreports and Ramblings" I'll talk about the end of the school year, AD ASTRA, IHCON-JUNCTION, several parties and small trips, gardening, preparation of the special issues, and NOLACON II, the Worldcon. I'm hoping for another Hugo (does this surprise anyone?), so I might have news about that too. The next genral LL will be #30. #28 and #29 will be special author issues. See you then.

Hickman (both members of First Fandom) and Roger Sims (NOLACON II fan GoH), and they talked about the different ways fans have helped each other.

Nate Bucklin flew in for the con, and I heard him sing and play guitar in the filk. He is excellent. I can't wait to hear him again.

Marshall Muller and his fiancée Jean had been sending us flyers about the SF group they started in nearby Farmington Hills. We had not been able to attend the monthly meetings mostly because of my evening commitments, but we told them at the con that we would try to be at the next one.

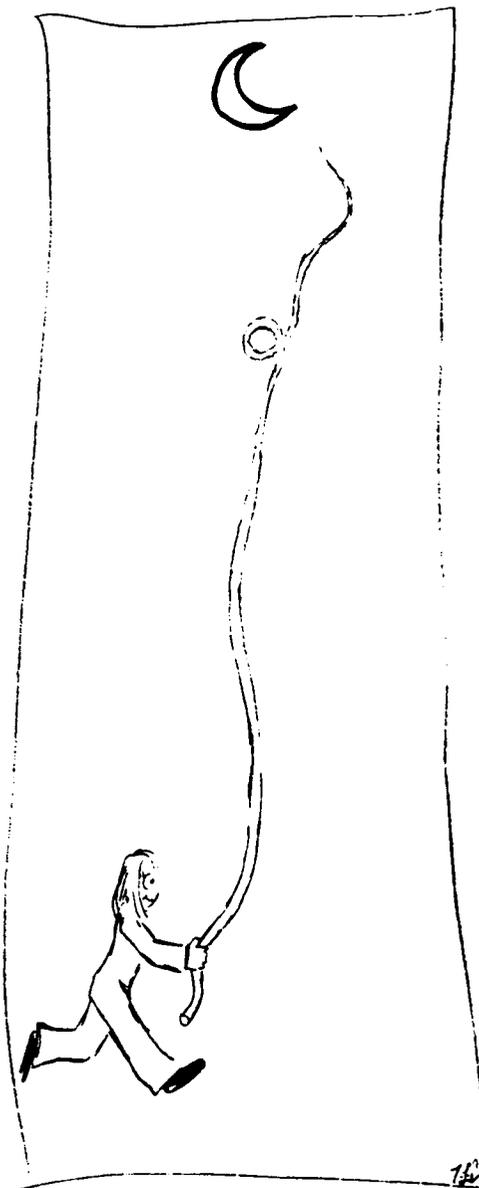
Dr. Halina Harding was exuberant throughout the con as she ran programming. Halina proudly announced that she was pregnant. Her life was pretty much going according to her plans for herself. She would be starting her residency at Oakland General Hospital in Warren, Michigan, at the beginning of August. The hospital already knew that Halina was planning to get pregnant, and she had a commitment on Labor Day weekend, when they hired her. She and Jamie McQuinn will be sharing a room with us at the Worldcon in New Orleans.

The Fish and Ships Players did their usual musical parody of some SF movie/TV show. This time, they did one titled: "The Planet of the Jogging Blonde Bimbos" to the tunes of The Wizard of Oz. It was hilarious. Kirk (Julia Ecklar) is transported to the future by Q (Joe Ellis), who was an O before the operation. In a purple gingham dress, Kirk tries to reason with an unthinking Picard, and the other crew members of The New Generation.

Three cameras were used to tape the show, so there will be a version of it out eventually. I'm still waiting for The Once and Future Jedi, which the tape editor says will be out this summer.

I was asked by the concom to introduce the Guests for the speeches, which I gladly did. Although I did not know that much about Octavia and her writings, I knew enough to give her a good intro (I met her once earlier at a worldcon). Arthur I've known for some time. Both talked about their lives and how they ended up where they are today -- Octavia as a writer, Arthur as a fan writer.

On Sunday Ann Cecil, Charlie Terry and her daughter Sasha and friend Kevin, stayed with us overnight so they didn't have to drive back to Pittsburgh until Monday. Unfortunately, both Maia and I had to leave





Pulp & Celluloid

Book, film, tape, graphic novel, comic, and record reviews by: Clifton Amsbury, Lan, Evelyn C. Leeper, Mark R. Leeper, Danny Low, Elizabeth Osborne, Sharon Porath, David M. Shea, Marti Stuessy, Sally A. Syrjala, Laura Todd, and Taras Wolansky.



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Book Reviews by Evelyn C Leeper

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A PERFECT VACUUM

by Stanislaw Lem
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,
1979 (c 1971), \$3.95

ONE HUMAN MINUTE

by Stanislaw Lem
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,
1986 (c 1985), \$4.95

This is a review of two real books of reviews of 18 imaginary books and one real one. The real book reviewed is A Perfect Vacuum, which is the first book reviewed in A Perfect Vacuum itself.

Though these are called reviews, they are more summaries of the works than the sort of "thumbs-up/thumbs-down" writing that people think of when they hear the word "review." So what we have here is really Lem writing about various philosophical concepts that would normally take a full book in a condensed format. In many ways these "reviews" are more like "Cliff's Notes" for non-existent books.

Some of the books described are take-offs on recognized literature. Gigamesh (yes, that is how it is spelled) is to the Gilgamesh legend what Joyce's Ulysses is to the Odyssey and Lem spends his review doing the same sort of dissection on it, word by word, phoneme by phoneme, that critics have been doing to Joyce for years. Gruppenfuhrer Louis XVI is a novel about how an ex-Nazi in Argentina recreates the pre-Revolutionary French Court in the jungle; Lem's description of it makes it sound as though it descended from the literary surrealism of that country. Being Inc. shows us the world as the result of elaborate computer planning of individual lives, a huge choreography of humanity; it reminded me immediately of Borges' story "The Babylon Lottery."

Many of the philosophical points are intriguing enough that one wishes for more elucidation on them. In Die Kultur als Fehler (Civilization as Mistake) Lem postulates that humanity has tried to give meaning to its frailties and weaknesses by claiming they are part of the larger plan of things, the way to a higher state of being. When Kultur --technological civilization-- comes along and shows us a way to overcome these handicaps, to accept them we must accept the meaningless, the futility of all that has gone before. People had for millennia explained that pain in childbirth was a necessary part of some plan; when anesthetics came along, people at first rejected it. An acceptance of it would, after all, negate all their rationalizations and mean that the pain women had gone through for so many centuries was unnecessary. Even though various means of "correcting" nature have now been developed, many people cling to the old

ways rather than admit the "unnecessity" of all the suffering that has gone before.

The New Cosmogony presents a startling yet consistent answer to the Fermi Paradox ("If life is as common in the universe as calculations would indicate, why haven't we been contacted yet?") Whether Carl Sagan would buy into it is another story entirely.

De Impossibilitate Vitae and De Impossibilitate Prognoscendi are "must reading" for alternate history fans. The former consists almost entirely of tracking all the things that must have happened for the supposed author to have been born: his father must have married his mother, which in turn depended on them meeting during the War, which in turn depended on dozens, nay, hundreds of other events. For those alternate history authors who think that they can change one thing without changing others, this chapter should some as a revelation.

Many of the books described are larks. Rien du tout, ou la consequence is a book written entirely in negations ("The train did not arrive. He did not come."). U-Write-It gives the reader blank pages and strips containing fragments of some great novel and lets her re-arrange them at will (has Gary Gygax patented this yet?).

Lem gets his shot at reviewers (of real books, presumably) in his review of Pericalypsis when he says,

Joachim Fersen, a German, wrote his Pericalypsis in Dutch (he hardly knows the language, which he himself admits in the introduction) and published in France, a country notorious for its dreadful proofreading. The writer of these words [i.e., Lem] also does not, strictly speaking, know dutch, but going by the title of the book, the English Introduction, and a few understandable expressions here and there in the text, he has concluded that he can muster as a reviewer after all.

Given that the premise of Pericalypsis is that so much bad art is produced that the good art is hopelessly swamped, and hence all of it should be destroyed to simplify things, the need for reviewers would be greatly diminished were it taken seriously at all.

in One Human Minute, Lem restricts himself to only three books, and hence can devote more time to each one. One Human Minute is an encyclopedic description of what everyone in the world is doing in a single minute, sort of like those photographic books of a day in America and a day in the Soviet Union, but much more thorough and restricted. Lem describes it as deriving from the Guinness Book and books such as The First Three Minutes. For example, he claims that 53.4 billion liters of human blood are pumped per minute (I assume that those are

American billions rather than British billions. If you assume 5 billion people, that's 10.7 liters per minute per person. Sounds about right. Of course, this is set in the 21st century, so 5 billion may be a little off.)

The Upside-Down Evolution says that since insects are much less susceptible to radiation than huge computers, future weaponry will consist of swarms of specially engineered synthetic insects. (Has anyone thought of Lem as one of the original cyberpunk authors? He has certainly dealt with robots and computers for longer than all these new upstarts.) And The World as Cataclysm is just another way of looking at catastrophe theory.

Both books are interesting exercises in fantasy, or perhaps meta-fantasy. Another of Lem's works, Imaginary Magnitude, is a collection of introductions to imaginary works, and I hope to get to that soon. Of these two, however, I would recommend A Perfect Vacuum first. If you enjoy that, you might try One Human Minute, but the former does offer a more varied menu than the latter. And I think the former has some far more interesting ideas to provide food for thought for the reader.

BECOMING ALIEN

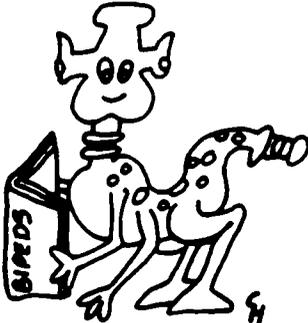
by Rebecca Ore
Tor, 1988, \$3.50

NATIVE TONGUE

by Suzette Haden Elgin
DAW, 1984, \$3.50

The science of linguistics has largely been neglected by science fiction, so I found it an odd coincidence (or for the Jungians out there, just another example of synchronicity) that I read in quick succession two novels dealing with the subject, the more so because one is a new novel and the other is a four-year-old novel that I recently decided to read.

Becoming Alien is a "Ben Bova Discovery" and considerably better than the two previous entries in that series. (You'd never know it from the cover, of course, which rips off Enemy Mine to a fare-thee-well.) Tom finds a crashed alien ship and tries to save the occupant. He fails, but the being who come after the alien decide he is not entirely xenophobic and recruit him for the Space Academy. Part -- a very important part -- of his training involves learning alien languages, and to do this effectively he



must have his brain modified to cope with them. There is a lot more to his "becoming alien", but it's all connected to language.

Ore does an excellent job of conveying alien ideas and concepts, although I found her choice of main character (the brother of a small-time drug dealer) to be less than totally satisfying. Bova and Spider Robinson both compare Becoming Alien to The Left Hand of Darkness, which may be overdoing it a bit, but it is a novel worth reading.

Native Tongue is based on the same premise as Margaret Atwood's Handmaid's Tale (though it predates it by a couple of years): that women have been relegated to second-class status, kept as chattel by their fathers or husbands. This is brought about by the 24th Amendment, which repealed the 19th, and the 25th Amendment, which deemed women legally minors. I suppose this makes this an alternate history since the actual 24th Amendment (ratified in 1967) outlawed poll taxes and the actual 25th Amendment (ratified in 1971) described the procedure for filling vacancies in the Vice-Presidency, etc. However, since the rest of the novel seems to presuppose our current reality, I can only conclude that Elgin did her research from a copy of the Constitution printed before 1967. Such sloppy research does not encourage one regarding the rest of the book.

There is another premise, however: that we have been contacted by aliens and certain families ("Lines") are especially adept at learning languages, both human and alien. That women are as good at this as men is one factor that keeps them from total subjugation -- there is too great a shortage of translators to waste anyone. The plot of Native Tongue revolves around this situation and the attempt of women to create their own language.

I disliked this novel for three reasons: two minor and one major. The first minor reason is the sloppy research already mentioned, but this could have been corrected by a good editor, apparently not at DAW when the manuscript arrived. The other minor reason is that the children in the novel all learn three to five unrelated Earth languages and one alien one from infancy. If the purpose of learning languages is to communicate with aliens and English is a universal Earth language (as it seems to be), why have the children learn Hopi and Swedish when they could be learning alien languages -- especially when alien translators are in such short supply that a given alien language probably has only three human speakers, including one toddler and one woman? It's not from some abstract desire to keep these languages alive, because the men of the Lines are obviously too cold-blooded for that.

The major reason I disliked this book is that I found it so stridently "women's lib" as to be positively reprehensible. Most books which postulate a male-dominated society of the future show some moderating influences. Atwood's book, for example, localized the situation to the United States and even then there were men who didn't entirely support it. There was also a justification for the change in society (a decrease in

fertility) and the idea that women in such organizations as Women Against Pornography did as much to bring it about as men. Elgin's androcracy is world-wide (hard to explain on the basis of two amendments to the United States Constitution), brought about against the wishes of all women (so far as we can tell), and every man -- without exception -- fully supports it. All women, even ones who go around poisoning people, are to be admired; all men are scum. I know some men on this planet and the only conclusion I can draw is that Elgin is writing about an alien planet with an alien species on it. The extremism of her premise and her characters makes it and them impossible to believe and the idea that a language invented just for women would help the situation is just one more impossibility piled on top. This is the sort of literature often deemed "hate-literature" and I cannot recommend it.

THE CHRONICLES OF BUSTOS DOMEQ

by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy-Casares
Translated by Norman Thomas Giovanni
Dutton, 1979, \$2.95

I reviewed Stanislaw Lem's A Perfect Vacuum above, which was written in 1971, though not published in this country until 1978. The Chronicles of Bustos Domecq was written in 1967 and appeared in this country in parts between then and 1979 when the entire volume was published. Since Lem wrote in Polish and Borges and Bioy-Casares in Spanish, it is unlikely that one influenced the other, so the fact that two literary giants produced such similar works at basically the same time must be attributed to the sort of situation best summed up by Robert Heinlein: "When it's time to railroad, you railroad." And when it's time to write essays satirizing reviews and art...well, you do.

This volume is, quite briefly put, a gem. The twenty essays are not designed to be gulped down one after the other, but savored separately, each for its own flavor. The "Homage to Cesar Paladion" reminds one of "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote" in its sly examination with the topic of plagiarism. "An Evening with Ramon Bonavena" discusses a literary work which consists entirely of a precise and detailed description of one corner of a table. In another essay, Borges and Bioy-Casares examine one supposed author's works, each of which consists solely of a single word. "Gradus ad Parnassum" melds the idea of encoding ideas into words with the Humpty Dumptian concept of words meaning just what we intend them to mean, neither more nor less.

The other arts are not exempt from Borges and Bioy-Casares' attacks. In "An Abstract Art" they show what might happen if the sense of taste were used as an art form by the same sort of artists one finds painting or sculpting. "The Flowering of an Art" is an examination of what would happen to architecture. "The Selective Eye" and "On Universal Theater" carries the modern concept of "art" perhaps to its ultimate conclusion, but to say more would spoil the fun. "What's Missing Hurts Not" tries to see if art by omission is any better (it isn't). After all of these, the reader is convinced that Bustos Domecq (the alleged author of all these essays) would be right at home writing art criticism for any one of a number of pretentious, artsy magazines.

"The Brotherhood Movement" reminded me of an idea I had many years ago -- a convention for people whose license plates all started with "ABC" (or some other combination). Of course, I thought it was just a nifty idea, but Borges/Bioy-Casares turned it into a whole philosophy.

Just as many films have little jokes hidden among their credits, this book has little jokes tucked away in unlikely places -- the reverse of the title page, the footnotes, even the index. Of course, the book itself, purportedly written by one "Bustos Domecq," could be said to fall into this category as well. This has been done before (for example, William Goldman's Princess Bride and Silent Gondoliers were supposedly written by Morgenstern). This book does frankly admit on the outside who really wrote it, however, even if throughout the inside the charade is maintained.

This book will undoubtedly be hard to find -- most of Borges' work is. I found this, along with several of his books in a used book store, and that may be your best bet if you're not near a university book store. This and Lem's books go nicely with Rotten Reviews by Bill Henderson, a recently published collection of real reviews of real books that are just as off the mark as the reviews of imaginary works were. One superb example is Harry Thurston Peck's (say who?) 1901 evaluation of Mark Twain, "A hundred years from now it is very likely that 'The Celebrated Jumping Frog' alone will be remembered." While there's still another 13 years to go, I'll go out on a limb and say I think he's wrong. But which is more laughable, the Manchester Guardian's estimation of The Heart of Darkness that "It would be useless to pretend that [it] can be very widely read" or Bustos Domecq's adulation of the novel Moon (consisting of the single word "moon") I leave as an exercise for the reader.



Book Reviews by Taras Wolansky

JOHN W. CAMPBELL IS ALIVE
and is the publisher of Baen Books

An essay and reviews by Taras Wolansky

New Destinies: The Paperback Magazine
of Science Fiction and Speculative Fact.
Volume IV (Summer, 1988)

Edited by Jim Baen
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.50

Sheepfarmer's Daughter:
The Deed of Faksenarrion, Book 1

by Elizabeth Moon
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.95

Marching through Georgia

by S. M. Stirling
Baen Books, 1988, \$3.50

Yes, it is true. John W. Campbell, the greatest of science fiction editors, rumored to have passed on in 1971, is living in spirit) in the offices of Baen Books, publishers. The three books to be considered here provide ample evidence. But they are more particularly linked as well.

New Destinies, Jim Baen's paperback magazine, is the successor to Far Frontiers, which itself followed Destinies. Over the years the character of the publications has not varied overmuch, though it seems that the proportion of nonfiction has been growing lately. The Summer, 1988, issue includes five pieces of fiction and five nonfiction, not counting the editorial, in which Baen makes a case for the legalization of cocaine (with onerous restrictions).

The best story in the book is F. Paul Wilson's novelette, "Wires," a sequel to last year's award nominee, "Dydeetown Girl." In Wilson's future of draconian population control, extra-quota children have no legal existence; so when they start disappearing no one is interested except a brainwire-addicted private eye. (Are those then the "wires" of the title? Uh-uh.)

A close second is another novelette, Timothy Zahn's "Time Bomb." This beguiling ingenious story takes what at first glance is an absurd premise -- that artificial things fall apart if kept in proximity to one particular man -- and makes us believe it!

Like a good many of his stories, Poul Anderson's "The Deserter" concerns the declining years of a great empire. He effectively depicts the crisis of conscience of a faithful servant of the empire who must choose between his loyalty to a lost cause and his desire to look after his family and local community.

Evan B. Sayers' short story, "Turning of the Wheel," is very interesting but does not entirely work as a story. Sayers is trying to link a dying Indian railroad engineer's love for his engines, about to be sold for scrap, and the remarkable, high-tech use to

which this steel is eventually put; but the transition jars.

Bringing up the rear is Harry Turtle-dove's short story, "Clash of Arms," which involves a contest between two self-styled experts in heraldry in a German town some time in the late Middle Ages. I didn't know enough heraldry to enjoy it.

New Destinies and its predecessors have consistently featured a lot of first-rate nonfiction, what Baen calls speculative fact. This issue is no exception. "Unclear Winter" by Charles Sheffield is a survey of all the natural disasters that could finish us off. His conclusion is that we are more likely to do it to ourselves. "How David's Sling Met Hypercard" by Marc Stiegler briefly describes the creation of "the first hypertext novel." Steigler's compelling tale can be read as an ordinary book (which is how I encountered it) or, with the help of a computer, in any order the reader wishes; e.g., following one character through the story. Donald Frederick Robertson's "Which Road to Mars?" considers the problems and alternatives of a Mars mission. (Baen takes the opportunity to warn against a one-shot "stunt" mission that leaves us at the end with nothing but a pile of rocks). Martin Caidin's "Fiction This Ain't" is a diatribe or rant about Caidin's experiments with psychokinesis and arch-debunker James Randi's alleged refusal to look at the evidence. It is so badly written and takes so long to get to the point that I can only assume Baen printed it as is rather than offend best-selling author Caidin. (Baen's introduction recalls John W. Campbell's interest in "psionics" and points out that nothing came of it that time.)

And then there is S. M. Stirling's article, "The Woman Warrior: or, Rebutting the Editor," which particularly links the three volumes discussed here. The article grew out of arguments Stirling had with Baen on the occasion of submitting his alternate-world novel, Marching through Georgia, for publication. In his introduction to the essay, Baen tells of how both he and another editor had rejected a medieval fantasy by a woman author because they did not believe "ladies" could "hack it with a broadsword," only to discover the woman author is an ex-Marine. The book was Sheepfarmer's Daughter by Elizabeth Moon.

To get back to his article, Stirling does make some telling points, particularly when he shows that heavy labor is considered the proper role of women in many cultures (especially in Africa, the number one continent for woman-abuse). However, he is almost certainly wrong when he claims that killing a woman is no more damaging to a society's reproductive potential than killing a man. Even in a hypothetical absolutely monogamous society which bans divorce, women can make up for lost men by going after ones that would otherwise have been rejected as too old, too sick, too nerdy, too stupid, too

improvident, too violent, etc. In a more realistic society women can steal other women's husbands (divorce and remarriage) or just borrow them (informal polygamy).

One measure of the expedients by which women deal with a severe man-shortage is the fact that there were 10,000 black children born to West German women in the years immediately following World War II. Considering that Germany, right after Hitler's fall, is not a society widely acclaimed for its racial tolerance, this is saying something.

To sum up my personal reaction to New Destinies, I have found it consistently interesting. Indeed, it is the only prozine I read cover to cover -- and I subscribe to all the major ones. Part of the appeal may be the character of its editor. Like John W. Campbell, Jim Baen is not only interested in the literary quality and marketability of what his authors produce, he is also engaged in a kind of dialogue with them. He recognizes that the peculiar strength of science fiction as a literary genre is that it is not just a literary genre.

Sheepfarmer's Daughter by Elizabeth Moon is, as you will have gathered by now, a medieval fantasy about the exploits of a woman warrior -- the first of a series. It is, in fact, just the kind of book I ordinarily do my best to avoid. On the other hand, it is the first novel by an author who has been doing good work in Analog for a couple of years (not at all the background of a typical woman fantasy author). But what really piqued my curiosity, as Jim Baen intended it should, was the blurb on the back cover that identified the author as a former Marine officer who was drawing upon her military background to give the book "a gritty realism that is all too rare in most current fantasy."

For once the promises are borne out. Sheepfarmer's Daughter is an advance in realism. As the story begins, Paksenarrion, a strapping tomboy, decides to become a mercenary rather than obey her father and marry the pig farmer next door. It seems that some mercenary troops accept women recruits, though not too many women choose this line of work. In any event, about one quarter of the troop "Paks" joins is female.

We follow her through her training in weapons, and see her military career almost aborted before it begins due to the violent aftermath of an attempted rape. As she embarks on her first campaigns, we see her gradually establishing her reputation as a smart and courageous fighter.

One aspect of the book's realism is its approach to the idea of the woman warrior. Moon does not try to claim that there are no differences between men and women. Instead, her point is that there is a great deal of variation within each of the sexes, so that even if most women neither have the desire nor the aptitude for soldiering, still some will have both, and some may even excel.

One of Paks' adventures has her trapped behind enemy lines with just two of her comrades and no weapons, and a crucial message to deliver. Hardly an original situation, yet Moon makes it come to life by showing just how hard it is to survive under those circumstances.

I can only say that I eagerly await whatever Elizabeth Moon chooses to write next.

Marching through Georgia is undeniably a powerful, even harrowing novel. I found it hard to get to sleep after reading it in the evening; but then that is not so strange, considering that in Stirling's alternate universe World War II is won by somebody worse than the Nazis (though Stirling may not have realized the "Draka", as he pictured them, were that).

It seems to be happening more and more often today that when an author sits down to write his first novel he already has mapped out a multi-millennial future history. At any rate, Stirling appears to have a goal in mind -- a Greater United States dominating the Western Hemisphere pitted against an evil Draka empire that owns the rest of the world -- and doesn't care how he gets there. The idea of a United States that includes Canada and Mexico is not hard to swallow (it would just take a little extra dose of imperialism). But the Draka culture Stirling develops from an origin in the colonization of South Africa by American Tories just doesn't hold water.

Let us begin at the Draka beginnings. They start out at the southern tip of Africa and conquer their way north over the next century, starting in the late 18th century. This means that, for their first 100 years, they would have been enslaving blacks exclusively. Yet, when we meet them, they have no doctrine of white supremacy; they enslave whites as cheerfully as blacks. It seems almost inevitable (and has proved to be inevitable in all analogous cases in our world) that they would resolve the conflict between their Christian-derived ethics and what they were doing to blacks by giving whites a natural right to rule over blacks. Surely they would do this before they would throw out Christianity, as Stirling has them do, particularly when we remember the Tories were the traditionalists -- their opponents were the religious radicals and free-thinkers.

Mind you, I understand why Stirling did it: for the same reason Harriet Beecher Stowe made her protagonist a black so light-skinned he looked like a Spaniard.

The Draka origins also make their extraordinary military prowess surprising. After all, for over a century they would have been fighting poorly armed and untrained African tribesmen. Under those circumstances they would have undoubtedly thought themselves great warriors -- until they ran into a real army. This indeed would be a scenario to make them super-soldiers by the 1940s (defeat had something of that effect on Germany in our world) but Stirling's chronology has them going from victory to victory. (One of the irritating things about this book is that everything the Draka tries against the Nazis works; war isn't like that!)

Stirling's alternate history suffers from a problem not uncommon in this type of SF. Very often the author wants to make a major change to history, rooted many years in the past, yet still leave the story's "present" closely resembling the same period of our world's history. Thus, for example, the Draka help the Confederacy in America's Civil



War, with no affect on the outcome. (Why they helped is unclear.) Much more serious, Stirling sets up a World War II situation in spite of the radically altered geopolitics of his world by the time the forties roll around. In our world, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union only when he felt he had all other fronts well under control. In Stirling's world (setting aside the implausibility of there even being a Hitler and a Nazi Germany under such different circumstances) Germany could never attack the Soviet Union with its flank and its long supply lines so exposed to a huge and aggressive enemy to the south. In fact, Marching through Georgia is about what would obviously follow such a move: a Draka attack on Germany's exposed flank.

More precisely, the novel is about what amounts to a suicide mission, carried out by a group of paratroopers led by a young Draka aristocrat named Eric von Shrakenberg, going deep behind German lines to hold open a critical military highway in the Caucasus for the Draka advance. Shrakenberg is considered a subversive character by the Draka secret police because he illegally sent his daughter, born of a beloved slave girl, to America. Certainly he is unorthodox by Draka

standards: to carry out his mission and maybe stay alive, he makes deals with local villagers to get labor to build fortifications, and with Soviet P.O.W.s who fall into his hands to fight the Nazis.

Fortunately the Nazis are buffoons and do not think to catch and interrogate any of the villagers once Shrakenberg lets them go, or his ambush would have failed. Even more problematic is the behavior of the Soviets. The "liberated" P.O.W.s agree to fight on the Draka side because, we are told, Shrakenberg promises to let them -- that is, the survivors -- emigrate to America, something he has no power to do. If these soldiers really wanted to run away, they should have done so as soon as Shrakenberg released them. If they wanted to fight the Soviet Union's enemies, they should have declared war on the Draka as soon as the Nazis were defeated.

Particularly bizarre is the behavior of the Soviet agent Valentina, who helps defeat the Nazis and immediately advocates unconditional surrender to the Draka. The first question we might ask is, why does she help defeat the Nazis when it is obvious the best the Soviet government can hope for is a stalemate between its enemies? She should be undermining whichever side appears stronger, in this case the Draka. We can excuse the behavior of the P.O.W.s on the grounds of ignorance of the strategic situation, but Valentina is an insider.

It is not clear if, in the absence of any definite information, we are to assume the Nazis of this alternate world are like the ones we knew, or if Stirling's Nazis are so bad that defeating them is worth even submitting to Draka enslavement and seeing one's children grow up as ignorant serfs unto the farthest generations. If we take our Nazis as a model, it is likely most people in the Soviet Union would prefer them to the Draka, at least on the basis of what they had been up to so far; indeed, in our world many people in the Soviet Union initially saw the Germans as liberators, though they learned better quickly. (Even so, a vast number of Soviet citizens fought on the German side against Stalin. After all, Hitler never even came close to matching Stalin's body count.) Mind you, there is every reason to suppose the Nazis would have become more Draka-like had they been victorious; and given their notions of racial purity, they could have easily outdone the Draka in brutality. But that was in the future: the Draka, according to Stirling's chronology, had a proven track record of utterly degrading subject populations and killing huge numbers of people.

The position of women among the Draka deserves comment. As Stirling has it, the shortage of Draka fighters has led to giving Draka women an equal role in combat, and the shortage of Draka in general has had the same effect on the rest of society. As far as increasing the number of Draka is concerned, this is like eating seed corn. A male combat soldier can be at the front for an entire year, save a week's leave, and a child will still be born in nine months. For that matter, he can be killed a half hour after he leaves his wife's bed, and a child

will still be born in nine months. This is obviously not true of the female soldier; even if she is not killed or maimed, the years she spends a-soldiering are years taken out of her fertile period. (To a lesser extent this is true of other occupations as well, as the experience of the last few decades attests.)

Stirling's determination to attain his desired conclusion -- the evil empire of the East confronting the good empire of the West -- without regard to plausibility is nowhere clearer than in how he deals with the development of nuclear weapons in his chronology. To permit the evil empire to conquer the Eastern Hemisphere, on the one hand, yet on the other hand to leave the Western Hemisphere free, he must arrange that both sides develop nuclear weapons simultaneously.

The problem is obvious when we look at the population figures for 1942 given in the novel's appendix. United States: 179 million; Domination of the Draka (basically Africa, the Middle East and a chunk of Asia, at this time): 38 million free, 501 million serfs. Given that (we are told) the serfs are completely uneducated, this means that where intellectual competition is concerned the Draka are outnumbered more than four to one. Add to this the Draka emphasis on military training and physical fitness and the situation looks even worse for them. One could make a good case for the Draka keeping up in military applications of technology, but nuclear physics was just airy-fairy speculation until just a few years before the first atomic bomb.

There is a certain amount of poetic justice in the world. A culture that contradicts reality in some respect must pay a price. The Nazis paid a price for their mistaken notions of racial superiority when they exterminated some of their most productive citizens, the Jews of Germany, and when they drove all the Jewish physicists in Europe to work for the Allies. Their belief in Slavic inferiority led them to drastically

underestimate the cost of invading the Soviet Union, and prevented them from making allies of the people there once they invaded.

Now compare the Draka with the tyranny that won World War II in our world, the Soviet Union. The Soviets are meritocratic on the whole (though in recent years it's been hard for Jews to get ahead in the sciences); in the Domination absolutely no social mobility is permitted for talented serfs, even if their fathers were Draka. Which do you think will have the better physicists and engineers?

By its nature Draka ideology can appeal only to a Draka; Soviet ideology can be made appealing to many outside the Soviet Union. Which side will find friends in the enemy camp to reveal its secrets?

Under these circumstances the Soviet Union was able to overtake the West in nuclear technology in only a few years, but how long would it take the Draka?

It is no accident that the kind of society represented by the Draka, once the dominant social form over large parts of the globe, is now virtually extinct. Caste societies waste the abilities of their members and cannot compete with meritocratic systems. A science fiction writer who wants to establish a high-tech tyranny must either make it a meritocratic tyranny, or first set up a world state which might therefore develop in the direction of castes. Or the writer may simply declare the caste society militarily invincible and technologically superior without bothering to justify anything, which is Stirling's approach.

On the positive side, Marching through Georgia is thought-provoking (he said after writing 2200 words about it), and is an exciting adventure as long as you don't mind not having anyone to root for. I can't say I am looking forward to the inevitable sequel -- this book is too implausible and depressing -- but it is well-written enough to make me curious about whatever else the author comes up with.

Book Reviews by David M Shea

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FIRESHAPER'S DOOM

by Tom Deitz
Avon, 1987, \$3.50

In the first volume of this series (Windmaster's Bane, 1986; see my review in Lan's Lantern #22), we followed the adventures of Georgia teenager David Sullivan as he and his friends Alec and Liz encountered the Sidhe, the warlike Faeries of Celtic lore, and travelled the Tracks between Worlds to a magical showdown in Tir-Nan-Og, the undying land. In the process, however, a blameless Faery youth suffered the Death of Iron (upercase sic, throughout) as David's arch-rival, Ailill the Windmaster, was punished by Lugh High King. This provides the segue to the present volume, as two Faery witches

are not satisfied with the status quo, and each in her own fashion entangles the mortal youths again in the affairs of the Fair Folk. David is required to invade Tir-Nan-Og in quest of a magical talisman, while Alec and a distraught Liz join a Faery company attempting to solve the problem, as it were, from the other side.

Is it sufficient that a book be well-written, adventurous fun? If so (and I suppose it ought to be so), on those terms Fireshaper's Doom is an admirable success, marred only slightly by a last-minute, heavy-handed Christian apologia which apparently serves the needs of the writer rather more than those of the reader. The characters, especially the humans, are well drawn and appealing; magical spells and strange creatures abound; the action is constant and

well paced, though perhaps somewhat undercut by a certain air of inevitable success-- one never really entertains the thought that the characters might fail, that someone who matters might get (permanently) killed off. Those whose tastes run to Celtic fantasy will probably enjoy the book a great deal. Whether this reader's interest will be sustained through a promised "several" more volumes in this series remains to be seen. Mr. Deitz is obviously a talented writer; it would be unfortunate to see him get bogged down for the rest of his career in the potentially lucrative but overdone ghetto of Celtic fantasy. There are other stories to be written, other legends to be explored.

IN CONQUEST BORN

C. S. Friedman
1986, DAW Books, \$3.95

I was a little reluctant to buy this book (notwithstanding double-sided embossed Michael Whelan cover and heavy promotional campaign) on the simple grounds that I hesitated to jump into 511 pages by an unknown writer. However, I got some good word-of-mouth about this book. As in, "Ought to make the Nebula ballot...." THAT kind of word-of-mouth.

Well, gimme a break. In Conquest Born is a fair imitation of what it aspires to be (which is a C. J. Cherryh novel). Given the constructive editing which DAW books somehow don't seem to get, it might have been a pretty good imitation. Nebula material? Hardly.

Zatar is the scion of a noble family of the Braxana, a racist sexist militarist imperialist society. He is handsome, cool, ruthless, ambitious -- in short, a textbook Mephistophelean antihero. John Milton did the definitive job in 1667, and writers have been attempting since then to improve on it, with arguable success. Anzha lyu (lower case sic) is the freak daughter of an influential couple in the Azean Empire, which is also racist militarist imperialist, though evidently not sexist. Anzha has the potential to be a Functional Telepath (uppercase sic), and so the Institute is interested in her. However, in the racial purity of the gene-manipulating Azean society, she doesn't measure up: she's too short, her hair and skin are the wrong shades, etc. So she becomes a rebel and a killer, determined to reach power through the back door if she can't get in the front. In other words, a standard anti-heroine.

There is also a cast of thousands, or so it seems, many of whom seemed to this reader to be entirely superfluous. Where a C. J. Cherry novel is densely textured with detail, this is simply cluttered with all sorts of extraneous sociocultural details, which seem to spill off the pages, fall to the floor, and vanish, never to be seen again. The style is disconcertingly inconsistent. It starts out in present tense, then abruptly shifts to past tense. On page 100, the book suddenly jumps from third person into first person from the viewpoint of a previously unknown character. Chapter 5

is 44 pages long. Chapter 6 is 11 pages.

There's nothing irreparably wrong with this book, nothing that couldn't have been fixed if someone had taken the time and trouble. The story is there, the ideas are there, the characters are, or could have been made to be, passably credible. Someone at DAW should have taken Friedman aside, patted a shoulder, and said kindly, "Yes, dear, very nice. Now chop it by a third, and give it some semblance of organization." Unfortunately, no one did this. Given the book as it stands, I can't honestly recommend you go out and plunk down your hard-earned \$3.95 for this well-intended but deeply flawed book.

CHARON'S ARK

Rick Gauger
1987, DelRey, \$3.50

What is this thing we have about dinosaurs? They've all been dead for millions of years; they were never a particularly efficient life form; they were abysmally stupid. We could never share with one of them the genuine mutual affection that we have with dogs, or cats, or horses. Is it just because they were big? Are we rubes gawking at the Empire State Building of the animal kingdom? Or is it some regressive Great White Hunter fantasy we have about getting out there with some hefty artillery and committing sauricide? Let's go, Mugumba, O faithful gun-bearer.

We don't seem to have much difficulty getting at the critters, either. Either it's time travel (Ray Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder," Clifford Simak's Mastodonia), or another planet (Anne McCaffrey's Dinosaur Planet books), or an alternate Earth (Piers Anthony's Orn). Or else someone has deliberately preserved them in a secret space habitat (Bischoff & Monteleone's Dragonstar novels).

Charon's Ark is a book of the latter school. It begins with a bunch of high school students flying across the Pacific on an improbable field trip. Suddenly a big UFO swoops down, captures their 747, and drags it off to orbit. (Yes, the old alien kidnap shtick; and how this group of students came to be on this flight is attributed to a conspiracy, so farfetched that it really stretches one's suspension of disbelief. And would you charter a 747 to carry 30 people?) An alien computer which has learned English from watching television informs the group that they are off to Pluto. There they discover that the satellite of Pluto is not a moon at all, but an artificial habitat, powered by a black hole, and stocked with Mesozoic flora and fauna. The kids -- and their teacher and the flight crew -- have been drafted as new crew members to run the artificial planetoid. It is up to Charlie, the fat unhappy unpopular smart dork with which every high school comes equipped, to sort out the sneaky factions among the aliens. He does so eventually, but in the interim there are casualties, separations, and a mixed bag of brisk adventure--including, yes, some dinosaur hunting.

This book is thus assembled out of familiar components, but it is skillfully put together. The characters are generally well drawn and believable people -- Gauger has a good grasp on the childish-erotic zeitgeist of adolescent interaction. Separate subplots are all kept going simultaneously, and most brought together in the resolution, with only a few loose ends left dangling. There are one or two trivial faults. The author couldn't resist the urge to add the obligatory gratuitous screw scene, and one of his major characters does mother jokes (as in, "yo' momma!") until it becomes tiresome. But on the whole it's good, crisp, well-written adventure, briskly paced, and with a sufficient diversity of interests to hold the attention of a variety of readers. I had fun with this book.

TALES OF THE WITCH WORLD

created and edited by Andre Norton
1987, TOR, \$15.95

One of the best known and best loved of the fantasy realms is the Witch World, explicated by Andrew Norton in some fourteen novels and a considerable body of short fiction. Ms. Norton has now thrown this magical playground open to other writers.

A brief introduction for the uninitiated: The Witch World is an alternate Earth (I could explicate on that for paragraphs, but just take my word for it) which has a lower technological level than our world, but has pursued other abilities. The extant fiction is about evenly divided between the eastern continent where the witch-ruled nation of Estcarp defends itself by magical means against barbarian neighbors; and the western continent, where the independent people of the rugged land known as High Hallack fight off brutal invaders and explore the ancient realm of Arvon. There is some interaction between the two main spheres of action.

This volume -- the first of at least three -- contains seventeen stories, most rather brief; to comment on them all individually would require more space than would be justified in this review. There are several good stories. Ann Crispin's dark and violent "Blood Spell," on the early history of the Were Riders, stands out as probably the best work in the book. Marylois Dunn's whimsical "Cat and the Other" lends a welcome touch of humor with its droll viewpoint character, an arrogant feline. Mercedes Lackey's vivid "Were Hunter" begins in our world, and captures the Norton style extremely well. Amid a pother of mismatched couples, the characters in Sasha Miller's interesting "To Rebuild the Eyrie" stand out. Robert E. Vardeman's "The Road of Dreams and Death" would probably have seemed more enjoyable did it not, by the vagaries of alphabetization, fall at the end of the book after a clutter of similar through less well-written stories.

Truth to tell, a distressing percentage of the stories are sadly amateurish; mainly by people I never heard of, although one or two of the "name" writers don't fare too well, either. The overall level of writing

is not as high as one might have hoped. It remains interesting, however, throughout to see a familiar world through styles which diverge widely from Ms. Norton's own style, as in Wilanne S. Belden's effective though clinical "Fenneca." Norton completists (among whom I classify myself) will find *Tales* a must buy. Anyone who has at least a working knowledge of the Witch World will find enough interesting material, on the whole, to make the book worth their while. For general readers of SF/fantasy, there are other Norton books I would recommend more highly.

FIVE TWELFTHS OF HEAVEN

by Melissa Scott
1985, Baen, \$2.95

THE KINDLY ONES

by Melissa Scott
1987, Baen, \$2.95

Melissa Scott, the 1986 Campbell Award winner, is one of those writers I've been meaning to get around to reading for a while now. Both of these books are well written and worth reading, though both suffer from the same flaw of a too-hasty ending. As a writer, Scott could be described as a paler C. J. Cherryh, without the aliens.

Five Twelfths of Heaven centers on Silence Leigh, a female starship pilot. In a society where women are not allowed to speak for themselves, Silence is forced to accept as "guardian" a foreign starship captain. Denis Balthazar and his partner, Julian Chase Mago, need a pilot; but mainly they want her to agree to a three-cornered "marriage" of convenience which will work to their advantage under the laws of their world.

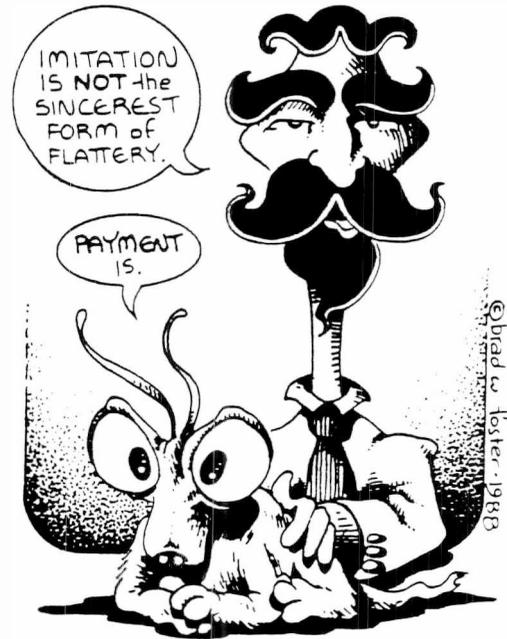
This premise could easily have slipped off into tendentious crypto-feminist dialectic on the one side, or sleazy group-grope porno on the other. To the author's credit, she takes it down the straight and narrow of solid thoughtful story telling, as these believable characters meld themselves into an efficient team and cope as best they can with an unwanted war and an unpleasant imprisonment. The book's curious treatment of spaceflight, described entirely in mystical/religious rather than technological terms, gives it an unusual though not unattractive flavor. I did find the end of the book somewhat abrupt; it doesn't exactly conclude, it merely stops. The ending as written is not necessarily wrong, but it did seem as if there were more story which could have been told. Certainly the door is wide open for a sequel.

The Kindly Ones similarly portrays a rigid society, based on a nearly feudal honor-code in which loyalty to one of the five ruling Families is the cardinal virtue. It has a large underclass of "ghosts," legal unpersons who have been sentenced to symbolic "death" for offenses real or imagined. It is the more rigid societies which are the most vulnerable to disruption, and so it proves here, as a clan feud boils over into

a genocidal war which in turn triggers a "ghost" rebellion, as seen through the eyes of offworld mailship captain Leith Moraghan; shuttle pilot Guil exTam'ne; and Trey Maturin, a local "Medium" (sort of a herald).

This society draws on familiar models, but the characterization and plotting are again very well done. Curiously, though, this later book is the less polished, the less stylistically consistent, of the two. Some passages are crammed with detail -- the sport of snow-sled racing is minutely described -- while other scenes are done in a sort of stark minimalism. One gets the feeling of a book which could really have used one more draft to smooth over the rough edges. The conclusion is again very abrupt; from the point at which a ceasefire is declared, Scott sprints to the end in less than five pages, leaving several loose ends dangling.

Each of these books has considerable merit; each in its own way held my interest throughout. Melissa Scott is still a step or two away from the top rank of modern SF writers, but given some time and perhaps a little more patience, she has a good chance to get there. Her career from this point on bears watching.



Film Reviews by *Mark R Leeper*

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THE SEVENTH SIGN

CAPSULE REVIEW: In the year of the baby film, a pregnant yuppie (Demi Moore) finds herself entangled in Biblical prophecy, not just as a student but she herself is a sign of coming destruction. A few too many coincidences in the plot, but an okay little film. Rating: +1.

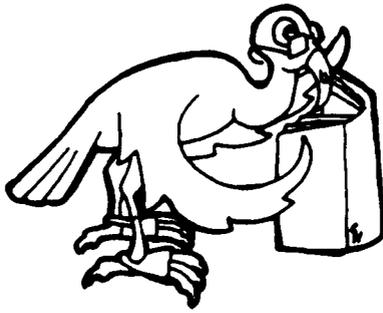
Following the success of first Rosemary's Baby and then The Exorcist, there were a number of "Biblical prophecy" horror films. In them, the word of the Bible took on new relevance as young people in them discovered that all the prophecies and stange symbolism are true and perfectly relevant to our times -- films like The Sentinel, Holocaust 2000 (aka The Chosen), and the three-film Omen series. As the run of this sort of film goes, The Seventh Sign is probably above average. Even without the big Hollywood treatment that Twentieth Century Fox gave The Omen, this is a nice suspenseful story well told.

There are funny things happening in the world. Off Haiti there are fish dying and washing up on shore. In the Negev Desert an entire village is found frozen. But then weird things happen every day. We see them on the news over dinner and they they become forgotten. Abby Quinn (played by Demi Moore) sees and forgets a lot of news. Her interests are more worrying about the baby that she will very soon have. She also worries about her husband's career as a criminal de-

fense lawyer (he is played by Michael Biehn) and about the mysterious boarder (played by Jurgen Prochnow) who has come to live above her garage. The audience knows this mysterious figure has been present at each of the strange events that has happened fulfilling some sort of mission. It all has to do with a prophecy of seven signs that the end of the world is coming. One of the signs has something to do with Abby, but what sign, and why? Well, since even the film is confused about what the signs are (in fact, it outright contradicts itself), it is not surprising that Abby does not know the signs. The story unravels to a nice piece of fantasy as well as a good horror story.

It is nice to see Demi Moore in a film that calls for her to be a little more than just a yuppie. On the other hand, this may be Michael Biehn's most forgettable role--as a lawyer with little personality. Not that he had a lot of personality in Terminator or Aliens, but in those films there was enough action so that you did not notice. John Heard has a cameo as a likable Catholic priest, somewhat recreating his role from Heaven Help Us. The Seventh Sign is not a great horror film. A year from now it will play one month on cable (guaranteed! It's a Tri-Star film) and then probably be forgotten. But it is a reasonable little exercise in Bible horror.

Rate it a +1.



INTO THE WOODS

The very idea of making a great Broadway musical out of the old penny-dreadful story of Sweeney Todd seems absurd. But Stephen Sondheim proved his immense talent with Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street. The idea of making a great Broadway musical out of Grimms' Fairy Tales seems absurd too. And after seeing Stephen Sondheim's Into the Woods it seems just as absurd. For Sweeney Todd Sondheim crafted a play of revenge and rage and passion with a musical score that expresses those emotions and yet is beautiful. For Into the Woods he crafted a "Fractured Fairy Tale" that is momentarily amusing but shallow and forgettable. There is nothing wrong with an occasional light musical comedy from Sondheim, but with so many cotton candy plays on Broadway, I was hoping for steak.

Into the Woods is a tying-together of several famous Grimms' fairy tales, starting with "Cinderella," "Jack and the Beanstalk," and "The Baker and His Wife." [What? You've never heard of "The Baker and His Wife"? That's because it is a famous Grimms' fairy tale invented by author James Lapine to make the rest of the play mesh.] Along the way the plot also works in "Little Red Riding Hood," "Rapunzel," and -- in brief cameos -- "Snow White," "Sleeping Beauty," and "The Goose That Lays the Golden Eggs." All these fairy-tale people have their problems, but finally everything works out and they live happily ever after. And that's the end of Act One.

Act Two is essentially a sequel to Act One rather than the second half of a story. The characters all come back but in a different story. The second story tells you a little more about the characters but remains a different story with a distinctly different and darker tone. It is almost like a different writer and director was making Into the Woods II.

Much of Sondheim's music is reminiscent of Sondheim's less interesting themes from Sweeney Todd. There are no themes as powerful or as grabbing as the better music from Sweeney Todd. The play's two leads are Bernadette Peters as the witch and Joanna Gleason as the Baker's Wife. They seem to act reasonably well together in spite of the fact that the lesser-known Gleason is roughly 8.6 times the actress Peters is and runs away with the show. Such a light play is not so hard for Gleason to run away with, but if she didn't do it the play would just lie there.

Into the Woods is mediocre stuff.

BEETLEJUICE

CAPSULE REVIEW: An incredibly forgettable film about ghosts trying to scare away new owners of their house. The very minimal plot is an excuse to load on piles of gratuitous special effects that do very little for the story. Rating: -1

I just saw Beetlejuice, an extremely forgettable fantasy film --so much so that even as I walked out of the theater large pieces of the film were being forgotten forever. Why is Beetlejuice so forgettable? I guess because the producers had so much budget and so little story. It is not that it was a bad story. It was co-authored by Michael McDowell, one of the leading modern horror writers, but it was about four pages worth of story and the rest was just lathered-on special effects. Remembering the film entails remembering the list of special effects, mostly totally gratuitous, that were laid on at various points in the minimal story.

The story of Beetlejuice involves ... (oh rats, what was it about? Oh, yes!) a young couple who live in a rustic little town and love their old house. They are in a car accident and are killed. Now, is this where we see the ghost with the shrunken head and the smoker who was charred to a cinder? No, I think that's later in the plot. Oh, well, it doesn't really matter. Anyway, they go back to their house and can get in but can't get out again. Yeah, I'm pretty sure this is where they had the alien landscape special effects and the giant sandworm. That's what they face if they leave the house. Wait, that doesn't make sense -- they were just outside the house. Well, I guess making sense doesn't matter.

And then, yes, that's it, some not very nice people buy the house and start to remodel it. The ghosts don't like that, so try to scare the new owners. Now is this where they just stretch their faces into funny shapes? Doesn't matter, I guess.

So where does Beetlejuice fit into this? Well, first off there is nobody named "Beetlejuice." There is someone named "Betelgeuse," like the star, and that's pronounced "beetle juice," but then why isn't the film called Betelgeuse? Darned if I know! Anyway, Betelgeuse fits in later in the plot. But don't worry about the plot. The filmmakers didn't.

The star of the film is Geena Davis who is attractive enough to occasionally upstage the special effects. She may be familiar from television work or from her role in the remake of The Fly. Alec Baldwin is forgettable as her husband. Jeffrey Jones as the new owner is used to being upstaged by special effects as in Howard the Duck. And Michael Keaton was on hand as (uh, give me a second), oh yes, in the title role. No, wait, there was nobody in the title role.

Well, anyway, give this tournee of mediocre special effects a -1.

FRANK NITTI: THE ENFORCER

CAPSULE REVIEW: In gangster films, fidelity to the truth is a rarity. Frank Nitti, who has been misrepresented many times in film,

finally gets an almost reasonable treatment in a film. There are still lots of liberties, but fewer than in most films of the genre. Rating: low +2.

Last summer when Brian DePalma's The Untouchables was released, I made a comment that nobody seemed to get the facts right about Frank Nitti, a gangster who was misrepresented by the papers in his own time and who became the regular arch-rival of Eliot Ness in television's Untouchables after the series had their Capone go to prison. DePalma had Nitti dying before Capone ever got to prison. Each had a polished pre-shaped image for Nitti to fit into the story they wanted to tell. Now ABC has made a film to tell just the story of Nitti himself. I watched it with curiosity to find out if someone was finally going to get down to the real gritty Nitti.

Well, something everybody gets wrong about Nitti was the idea that he ran the Capone gang after Big Al got sent up (DePalma got it wrong differently but even less accurately). The contemporary newspapers wanted to write about a single person running the gang and with Al gone they wrote the story as if Nitti ran the gang. In truth the organization of the gang became pretty complicated with different people having power in different areas. Nitti may have even thought that he was running the show, but in truth he did not command much obedience.

Well, Frank Nitti: The Enforcer makes pretty much the same mistake; at least if Nitti had competition running the mob, the film understates it for many of the years it was going on. Beyond that as far as I have been able to verify the facts in Carl Sifaki's authoritative Encyclopedia of American Crime and Mafia Encyclopedia, the film has a sort of 50-50 hold on the truth. They get off to a bad start by saying that Nitti was born in 1888, making him four years younger than he actually was. Then the film has him seeking out Capone out of respect. Not so -- Nitti had parlayed his job as a barber for small-time hoods into a fencing job before he ever met Capone. The Capone gang sought Nitti out to sell him stolen booze. His skill at organization, not so much at killing, was the reason he rose in the organization. It did leave him in a good position when Capone went to prison, but not the undisputed head the papers made him out to be. Speaking of the papers, the film did get right that Elliot Ness was a headline hound who had little serious effect on the mob, but who was a hero in the papers. That seems to be the truth.

By padding the film with a love story and showing scenes of incidents like the St.

DEATH WISH 50



AFTER MANY YEARS OF CLEANING UP
THE CRIMINALS OF EARTH AND WITH
FEWER AND FEWER RELATIVES TO
AVENGE BRONSON TURNS TO SPACE

GSF '88'

Valentine's Day Massacre without telling what led up to them, the filmmakers have produced a story much of which is neither really accurate nor inaccurate. There is also some speculation stated as fact. The killing of Chicago Mayor Cermack is usually assumed to be an accident when he got in the way of an assassin's bullet intended for FDR. The film's claim that the assassin Zangora was actually trying to kill Cermack under orders from the Capone mob is only a minority opinion. Beyond that, much of the plot and particularly the muscling into the entertainment business and how it led to Nitti's death was all square with the encyclopedia facts.

Frank Nitti: The Enforcer is nicely photographed in subdued colors that both satisfy the network's requirement for color and evoke some of the black-and-white feel of the classic gangster films or the sepia tone of the photography of the period. Anthony LaPaglia (playing Nitti) leads a cast of unfamiliar faces (one exception is Michael Moriarty playing a lawman). LaPaglia's troubled, introspective crime lord who kills for strategic ends but never for personal anger looks amazingly like a cross between Robert DeNiro and Sam Waterston. Overall, Frank Nitti: The Enforcer is nearly as subdued as its colors, but as gangster films go it is not all that far from being accurate. As a fan of this sort of film, I would say that Frank Nitti: The Enforcer, with a 50-50 record for accuracy, is far closer to being true than 99% of gangster films. And Frank Nitti, whom I have always claimed was misrepresented to the public, gets about the fairest shake from this film as any gangster ever gets from the movies.

Rate it a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. Not bad for a made-for-TV movie.

BELLMAN AND TRUE

CAPSULE REVIEW: Enjoyable heist film from England has a plot that should interest engineers. Not a bad little film, if not up to some of the crime films that have come from Britain of late. Unfortunately the soundtrack is indistinct and much of the dialogue is lost. Rating: +1.

One tends to think of the United States for crime films. (I distinguish between crime films and detective films; a crime film is seen mostly from the criminal's point of view.) Having had a large piece of English-speaking crime, we have also been more ready to make crime films than has England. Yet there have always been a number of modest little crime films made in England. Films like League of Gentlemen, The Long Arm, The Lavender Hill Mob, and The Ladykillers have been likable but have not gotten much attention. More recently some better films have been made, including The Long Good Friday and Mona Lisa. Bellman and True is a throwback to the earlier, more modest British heist film.

Bernard Hill plays Hiller, an electronics systems analyst who has accepted a 1000pound advance to pass bank data to some criminals. Unable to deliver the data in any form but

on magnetic tape, he runs away, only to be kidnapped (along with his stepson) by the people he was fleeing. They want more than their money back: they want an electronics expert to help them rob a bank. The film is evenly divided between the story of the heist and Hiller's relationship with his son as they are caught up in the robbery scheme.

Frankly, being an engineer myself, I have a fondness for films in which engineering plays an important part and even tips the scales. The Dam Busters -- one of my favorite war films -- is as much a film about solving wartime engineering problems as it is about soldiering. In a sense engineering is the core of F/X. Engineering plays as big a role in this heist film as it does in the very enjoyable Australian heist film Malcolm. One sequence in the film, in fact, appears to be a direct theft from Malcolm. In a few places, the engineering in Bellman and True seems to have gotten the facts wrong or underestimated the time to put together a sophisticated piece of toy robotics, but that can be forgiven.

The serious engineering problems, and the reason I really have to qualify my recommendation, is in the production, not the story. The simple fact is that the film needed subtitles. I had little trouble cutting through the thick Cockney accents of The Long Good Friday or Mona Lisa. But I missed just too darn much of Bellman and True because the soundtrack seemed muddled. There are some clever and witty lines in the film, but some can be made out only by comparing notes with others.

So as much of the film I could understand I rate a +1.

LADY IN WHITE

CAPSULE REVIEW: Twenty years from now Lady in White will be considered one of the best ghost stories ever put on film. Frank LaPaglia has made a beautiful film that raises more than a little gooseflesh. Rating: +3.

Oddly enough, while the ghost story is probably the most commonly written breed of horror story, it is very uncommon as a type of horror film. Perhaps there is a feeling that they do not translate well to film. Ghost stories are usually mood pieces and directors who know how to capture moods generally have other kinds of films they want to make. Ghost stories that have really worked well on film have done so by hinting and by creating a -- let's be frank -- morbid mood in the audience. The good ones have been The Haunting, The Innocents, The Uninvited, and perhaps The Changeling. (Hmmm, I never noticed before how similar the titles were.)

Two films that definitely do not make it as ghost stories are Ghost Story and Poltergeist. While I liked Poltergeist, it was really more science fiction on the astral plane than a ghost story. Each of these two films has been too overpowering to make it as the subtle mood piece that a good ghost tale should be. In fact, of the classic ghost stories I mentioned, only one was even in color. The other three depended on a dark

mood that is very hard to achieve in color.

Now a ghost story has come along on film that ranks with the classics -- perhaps even surpasses them. Lady in White is a ghost story in color, but it never overwhelms. It is a very fine mood piece and the use of color in the film enhances the mood rather than fighting it. And the story is worthy of the mood, and the photography is worthy of the story.

Lady in White was written, directed, scored, and produced by Frank LaLoggia. That can either be a very good sign or a very bad sign in a low-budget film. Lady in White is very clearly one man's vision and dream brought to the screen. I grew up in New England and I can tell you that no other place have I seen where autumn is so melodramatic. The world turns bright hues of red and brown and yellow as it rages against the dying of the warm. LaLoggia captures the melancholic autumn with a small town feel somewhere between To Kill a Mockingbird and Something Wicked This Way Comes. Like those films, this is a story of children and growth, but it also raises gooseflesh in ways that are all too rare in horror films.

It is, in fact, the story of Frankie Scarlatti, whom I suspect is made up in no

small part of little Frankie LaLoggia from about 25 years ago. Frankie loves Halloween and monsters of all sorts. He tells such a good Halloween story of the "prehysterical" monster that stomps London that jealous classmates arrange for him to be locked in the cloakroom closet. In the old school that has served generations, years mean very little and he is visited by the spirit of a little girl his own age, or the age she was when she died eleven years earlier... a death that the spirit must re-live over and over.

Even if the main story were not good -- and it is -- this would be a marvelously textured film. Characters like Frankie's grandfather, his father, and his brother are drawn with a loving pen. Frankie himself is played by Lucas Haas who, young as he is, is the veteran of films like Testament and Witness. The film carries the viewer along, often to unexpected vistas, without making one false move until the final five minutes. LaLoggia has problems ending the story without making it a little goofy and a little cliched. But until the final minutes of the film, Lady in White is a positive gem of filmmaking. Even mistakes in the special effects work for the film.

Rate it an admiring +3.

Film & Book Reviews by Sally A Syrjala

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RETURN TO SNOWY RIVER

There was something about The Man From Snowy River which managed to reach out to the heart. It had to do with love, honor, and freedom.

Return to Snowy River picks up some years after the first film ended. It retains the flavor of the first film. The main cast of characters is the same. They remain in character, which is not always something which happens in a sequel.

Australian films have held a lure for my husband and me since we first saw Walkabout. The Man From Snowy River arrived on the scene during the last of the wave of Australian films to hit this country. Snowy River, like the other Australian films, created an atmosphere that was so real you could almost feel yourself step into the film. Return to Snowy River has Jim Craig returning as he said he would at the end of the first film, with the means to start a life for him and Jessica. The problem is that Jessica's father was not too keen on the match. He had his sights set on someone of higher social standing for his daughter.

You know that true love will ultimately prevail in the film. You also know there will be villains to overcome, and treachery to undo. There will be expert horsemanship to please all those who take pleasure in seeing a skill expertly mastered. If you like a good romance with a happy ending, or a film set in Victorian times, or good horsemanship -- working, not "show" -- then this is the film for you.

This is a film I would not mind seeing again. Knowing its outcome does not spoil subsequent viewings in the least. It is a film which I can recommend highly to all who found The Man from Snowy River to their liking.

THE PRESIDIO

Sean Connery has been a favorite actor of mine since his days as 007. Since then there have been such interesting roles as that portrayed in Zardoz. Unfortunately, his role in The Presidio does not do justice to his acting ability. The film is neither good nor bad. It is rather mediocre.

The most exciting parts come in the very beginning of the film. The rest are rather standard fare without much excitement being generated. Connery does do a good job with his character, but the script does not support him. Connery is shown in an adversarial conflict with Mark Harmon's character. This is naturally shown as being the foundation of a likeness between the two of them. You are pretty much able to figure out who the bad guys are early on. Then it is simply a matter of establishing proof against them.

There were good actors in this film and it had promise. It just failed to deliver what it promised. There was no great tension or conflict; the film simply rolled along.

It is not bad fare, but it is not something I would specifically seek out. I do hope Sean Connery's next film will be something of which he is worthy. It is too bad

that there are not more good scripts out there for people of his calibre. Perhaps next time he will be presented with something more suitable to his talents.

DOVER BEACH

by Richard Bowker
Bantam Spectra, 1987, \$3.95

Dover Beach is a variation on the post-holocaust novel. It is a private eye post-holocaust novel, and that is indeed a novel approach to the mixing of genre.

The central character is Wally Sands, a 22-year-old who was born just after the war and who has decided that being a private eye would allow him to help people. He has commandeered a seedy walk-up apartment in Boston to carry on in the Spencer tradition.

Only, there are no Red Sox to cheer, no great centers of learning, and no great cultural gatherings. A "limited" war has turned the country back to the Dark Ages. For some reason, England was spared the fall of the bombs. It is looked to as the Promised Land.

Wally's life is typical of his time. He was orphaned at an early age and has had to learn street smarts to stay alive. He has formed a small "family" who live together in what remains of a townhouse in Boston. There is no electricity, and buildings are normally cold. Food is hard to get, but things are better than they were in the months and years immediately after the limited exchange took place.

Places like California and Florida are relatively normal, but they are that way because they keep people from getting into their states. So, you learn to live with the cold winters and take one day at a time.

In this setting Wally puts an ad in the newly recreated Boston Globe, announcing himself as a private investigator ready to take on clients. His first client is a doctor from Florida who claims to be a clone -- the product of an experiment conducted just before the war. He is trying to find the man from whose genes he was constructed. This brings our hero into the comparative Eden of England, where he is presented with the continuing dilemma of trying to tell fact from fiction.

This is an interesting and entertaining book. I finished it in one sitting. It was a nice blending of styles. It even had a characters in the book whose hobby was collecting post-holocaust novels; one of his "finds" is Brin's The Postman.

Dover Beach is for those who follow post-holocaust novels as well as those who do not particularly find them to their liking.

RED HEAT

Just when people in our area were beginning to complain about the complete lack of foreign films being shown locally, we are presented a treat by Arnold Schwarzenegger by way of a movie filmed in Moscow, Budapest and Chicago. It is even partially subtitled! Not only that, it is extremely entertaining.

Schwarzenegger has progressed immensely

since his film creation of Conan the Barbarian. He is able to present an action film that holds no punches back, but still manages to stay on this side of civilization. Arnie has even managed to create some nice humor that has been tossed into this film.

It amazes me to be saying these words, but I have come to look forward to a new Schwarzenegger film more than a new Harrison Ford film or a new Sean Connery film. Red Heat far surpasses both Frantic and The Presidio in what I look for in a film. While the latter two lack the interest to hold me for more than one viewing, Red Heat is something I could easily rewatch.

The film's central character is that of Ivan Danko, a captain in the Moscow militia. The Soviets are shown as neither saints nor devils, but as people with problems not unlike those we ourselves face. In this case it is a matter of drug dealing and the organization that controls the drugs. The leader of the organization manages to escape the Soviet Union and gravitates to Chicago. It is here that Danko meets up with James Belushi's rendition of a Chicago detective. In spite of the very real differences between the two, they are shown as being of like souls underneath all the camouflage. Neither plays completely by the rules and they manage to form a good working relationship.

Schwarzenegger handles his character very well. His accent is quite natural in the setting the film gives it. While Arnie is not yet in any danger of winning an Oscar, he is becoming a competent actor. His films are also improving.

Yes, there is action and violence. This is an R-rated film and such things are the hallmark of a Schwarzenegger film. Two people walked out of the screening we went to even before the credits had finished flashing across the screen. However, I do not view this as being an overly or randomly violent film. Rules are observed and it is primarily a conflict between Danko and the drug dealer, Viktor, who killed Danko's friend.

I enjoyed this film and would recommend it. See this one before Schwarzenegger teams up with Danny DeVito for his next film. Seriously! I await the film AFTER that one. There Arnie will play the World War II comic book hero, Sgt. Rock. It will be interesting to see that character played with an almost German accent.

Learn to cultivate a taste for Schwarzenegger films. As a convert to them myself, I can bear witness to their entertaining qualities and their ability to keep you interested until the end of the film.

CHRONOSEQUENCE

by Hilbert Schenck
Tor, 1988, \$17.95

Once you read a book by an author that especially catches your imagination, you will look for other titles that they may produce. Such is the case with Hilbert Schenck. His first book was a collection of short stories -- Wave Rider. Then came along

his first novel, At the Eye of Ocean, followed by his second, A Rose for Armageddon.

Both of these novels were wonders I found most intriguing. They were imaginative, speculative fiction at its best. As an extra added attraction they were set in a locale that was close to that of my own -- the waters off Cape Cod and the Islands. While they focused more on the islands themselves, they still spoke of the currents and features of the ocean itself so that the setting could be readily conjured into the mind's eye.

Mr. Schenck was also accurate in his descriptions. In fact his rendition of a life saving drill using the Breech Buoy was so good that I gave a copy of Wave Rider to an employee of the National Park system who had participated in a re-creation of the life-saving technique at one of the life saving stations in Provincetown. It is a part of history that people often forget. Members of the life saving crews had to walk the beaches in the worst kinds of weather. There was no radar and no radio. You were also duty-bound to go out in all types of gales and storms with nothing but a dory for transport to try and save the lives of those who were in danger of being lost to the forces of the ocean.

Many ships blew onto the shoals and many lives were lost around the cape and the Islands before the Cape Cod Canal became a reality. Even with lighthouses, storms could blot out warning lights. Winds could take a ship and make her part of the shifting sands about the region.

These events are captured very well by Mr. Schenck. He also has a way of conveying the duty of the ocean to the reader. Until you have seen an ocean storm of any magnitude, you do not really respect the forces of the element. Once you have such an experience, you will never forget it.

Cape Cod was shaped by the ocean and is continually being changed by the ocean. The currents take sand from one portion and shift it to another. One portion shrinks while another portion grows. The perimeters are never at a status quo; they are always in motion, ever changing and growing. The tides and currents make the land and effect the ability of the people to survive on the shifting sands. Land, people, and water are united in their effects on each other.

Chronosequence has a beginning quote from Time Lapse Ecology, Muskeget Island, Nantucket, Massachusetts by David Wetherbee, Raymond Coppinger and Richard Walsh (New York: MSS Educational Publishing Co. 1972). It says:

Muskeget is wild, beautiful, productive, enlightening and unique. It is vulnerable to man, ephemeral even without man. Ephemeral for the sea will eventually claim it all. It is saltating in response to natural forces -- its time is funning out: so may be ours.

This may be a very fitting beginning for this tale. Even more fitting is its beginning set in England. The tale begins to unwind at a book auction. The heroine by chance finds a journal about Muskeget island, a place she vacationed as a child.

Then the mystery begins to reveal itself. It seems there are others who desire to possess the journal. There is nothing about it to indicate why such an interested is being manifested by the hand-written journal. It is described as "relating supposedly supernatural events witnessed by Nantucket (American) fishing captain and wife, mostly on the small island (Muskeget) near Nantucket, dated 1892.

This seemingly innocuous journal sets off series of events that begins to unravel a tale of extraterrestrial beings with powers to manipulate our actions, and the interests of governments in crying out these powers for themselves.

I found this book to be able to control time enough for me that I finished it in the same day in which I went to the bookshop to pick it up. Presented within it are some fascinating concepts to keep the mind occupied. The heroine is realistic and heroic. The presentation of the 1984 tendencies of our government are also all too realistic.

This, as with Hilbert Schenck's other novels, is recommended. I look forward to his next listed title, Steam Bird.

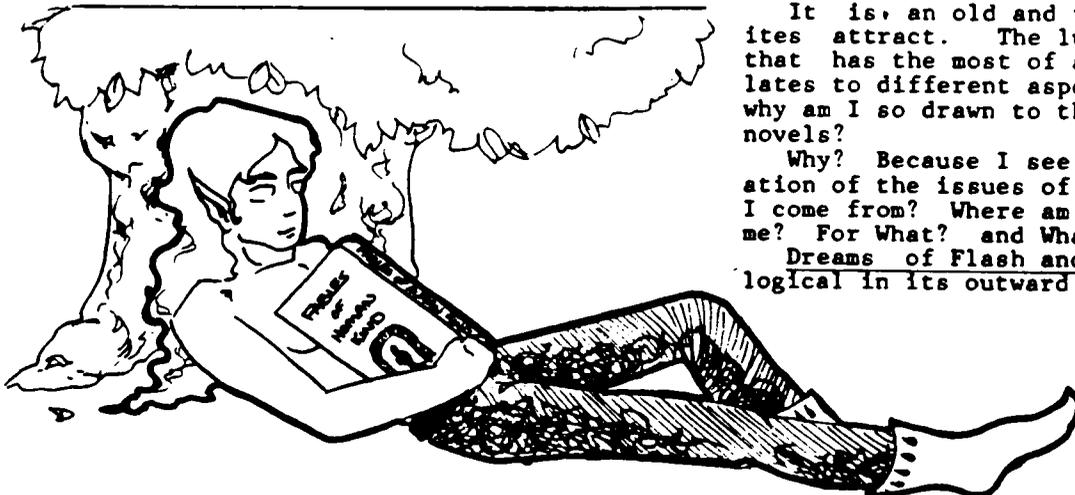
DREAMS OF FLESH AND SAND

by W. T. Quick
Signet/NAL, 1988, \$3.50

It is, an old and true axiom that opposites attract. The lure of science fiction that has the most of a hold on me often relates to different aspects of theology. So why am I so drawn to the so-called cyberpunk novels?

Why? Because I see in them a new exploration of the issues of: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Who created me? For What? and What does it all mean?

Dreams of Flash and Sand is only technological in its outward appearance. I suppose



it is something that could be termed cyberpunk without difficulty. Yes, it gets into computer matrices and has the cowboy hackers who are trying either to build defensive systems which cannot be broken or attack systems to break that which could not be broken.

Cyberpunk typically has the corporate structure as having called into existence the purgatory of human life on this planet. Computer systems are depicted almost as the promised land, the next step on the plane of evolution toward a more civilized type of being.

In fact, the personal computer can almost be looked upon as a tool to set the individual free. It allows almost unlimited data access and the addition of a modem to the system gives almost global communications possibilities. So computers can be looked to not so much as a technological device but an extension of the human mind and soul. In this manner computers can be seen also as a poetical expression of our minds.

Dreams of Flesh and Sand is almost poetic in its title. The Flesh is typified by "ashes to ashes." Our bodies are of the earth and it is here they must reside. We have taken grains of sand to create another type of being: the silicon chip. This novel sees it as being the grand experiment into immortality of being.

In fact, the plot has the head of one of the megabusineses in this land of super business try to attain immortality through a linkage with a LARGE, a VERY LARGE, artificial intelligence network.

The mission to try to break this linkage is given, or forced upon, two hackers. One of the hackers is an expert in programming defensive systems that will withstand all kinds of attack systems. The other is an expert in attack systems to break the best defensive systems around. It just happens that these two people were once married to one another.

The book takes a look at how business might become the next controlling force in our lives with governments taking a second place to the empires created when great masses of data are consolidated into the hands of a relatively few. Mystery is also contained within these pages. Someone is killing people. Who is doing so, and why?

We have opposites meeting once more in the form of the ex-husband and wife team. It shows how that linkage was not, really severed and examines the feelings each has for the other.



This was a much better book than I expected it to be. For those who have a fondness for cyberpunk, it is a very entertaining reading experience. For those who want material besides the contemplation of our minds upon the microchip navel, it has an action-packed format to keep the mind involved with the book. It was a book I did find enjoyable to read.

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SLUGGER McBATT: Baseball Stories

by W. P. Kinsella
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988, \$7.95

What is fantasy but a state of mind, a place where heart and soul exist over logic. Fantasy inhabits a slightly different realm for each of us; some see their magic land inhabited by elves and gnomes and wizards and witches.

My fantasy land is defined by the geometric hardness of a diamond. You can take a stick and draw the land into being. You draw 90 feet exactly from base to base and you then draw a line 60 feet 6 inches from home plate and put in a pitcher's mound. Then you let your imagination go to work.

Every springtime this geometric design emerges to transform the ice-clad soil into a world of hope and dreams. The configuration is enough to make the most cynical take heart and dream of what might come to pass, if only...

W. P. Kinsella has a hold on this magical world. The first baseball book I read by him was Shoeless Joe. There is no way to properly describe that book. It has a place in the fringes of our imaginations that can rarely make the transition to the concrete world. Yet Shoeless Joe did make the transition. It was the living essence of what is at the very heart of a baseball fan's imaginings.

The Iowa Baseball Confederacy followed Shoeless Joe. It spoke of an alternate history and spoke of a world whose state was determined by the outcome of one baseball game into which the essence of the player's beings were cast.

The magic did not end with those two books. The Further Adventures of Slugger McBatt allows an entrance into this marvelous world once more. It holds the magic number of player stories -- nine. They range from the Earthbound "Distances" which speaks of a baseball con-man and his activities in a small Iowa town the the extra-terrestrial "Reports Concerning the Death of the Seattle Albatross Are Somewhat Exaggerated."

Baseball is the all-American game. It is, therefore, no surprise to find one of the stories concern itself with a former president of the land. "Frank Pierce, Iowa" tells of Brigadoon coming to Iowa with a ghostly presence.

"The Further Adventures of Slugger McBatt" speaks of adolescent alienation and how a comic strip could overcome that which peer pressure inflicted.

The standardized Americana of apple pie, baseball and Chevrolet is expanding to the middle of the alphabet. K-Mart now takes its

place in this pantheon. "K-Mart" is an extremely poignant story that speaks of the might-have-beens in our lives. It speaks of "memory ... left forever ... pure and fresh, cut into his heart." Maybe this is the heart of baseball -- memory of that which has been and might have been. It is the Siren's call luring us into another dimension where chaos does not exist and heroism is rampant. It obliterates the confusion which reigns in our world and recalls more orderly times when things were exactly as we thought they would be; and yet would be so never more.

"The Valley of the Schmoon" is a good trip down memory lane. In its own way it finds the Lost Horizon of yesterday that once was baseball. It leaves the pin-striped suits behind and goes to the humanity behind them. The mechanical era of today's game is actually able to take on a smile with this story.

"Punchlines" delves into why certain people act the way they do and how to truly comprehend the story -- the punchline -- you have to know the whole tale.

Another story that rings all-too-true is "The Eddie Scissors Syndrome." It tells of people needing to feel important and needing to feel as if they have accomplished something in their lives and of those who need the false "importance" of pulling others down. As with most of Kinsella's creations, it manages to seep into the soul and makes you feel the injuries suffered by others.

"Diehard" speaks of a paradise for a baseball. It has a "true Fan" being given the best of all worlds and being able to pass judgement on the game for ever and ever.

The mystique of the game is kept alive in "Searching for Freddie." It concerns a fairy god-father of base stealers who went about the country touching those who had promise with his special gift. The search for the perfect base-stealer is his Holy Grail. Once that elusive prize is found there will no longer be the need to search.

Some of these stories could well have been the basis for a Twilight Zone episode. They speak of things of which they do not speak. They are poetical. Yet most important of all, they are human and they speak to the very heart of our beings.

If you have not yet had the privilege of "discovering" W. P. Kinsella and the magical way he has with words, do go and give his books a try. His baseball books are some of the very best stories of any type of which I have been fortunate to read. I cannot recommend his books too highly. Once you have found your way into his world, you are addicted and constantly strive to find that land you have been able to visit for one brief shining moment for one more time. Enchanting books.

SHE'S ON FIRST

by Barbara Gregorich
Paperjacks Fiction, 1988, \$4.50

Baseball is something that has a way of entering your soul so that you can never be free of its call. That something which is

"the game" always calls to you. It is the lost land that ever beckons.

I seek to enter this land through different means. Books are one of them. As anyone who has read any of my words on baseball stories knows, W. P. Kinsella is the best baseball conjurer I have yet encountered.

There is a book by another author that had a magical sphere on the cover -- a nice baseball. One never knows if what they find will be gold or glitter -- a winning season or a losing one. You only know you have to look to see if this might be something which will make you dance with finder's joy.

Therefore, I spent more money on a mainstream novel that I would normally do. Alas, She's on First uses baseball as the basis against which to tell its story, but it is not of the game itself. Oh, it tells about games being played, but it doesn't really locate that elusive pathway to what makes the game something special.

The story could have been told against almost any backdrop. It didn't really need baseball. As said, it simply used it. It spoke of baseball as being a game of equality wherein power and strength were not the most important criteria -- that speed and skill were of equal importance. Because of this fact, baseball could be the sport that would be the first to allow women to play on an equal footing with men.

As children we can play equally. Children -- both boys and girls -- play baseball together until they get old enough to realize that each has their "place" and the separate but equal form of segregation must prevail, no matter the feelings on the issue. Then girls must play softball and only boys are allowed the rarefied air of the hardball field.

When I was a child I played hardball. There exists a photograph of me taken before I went to school. I was wearing my brother's Little League uniform which was much, much too big for me. There was a bat in my hand which was taller than I was. It was during this era that I would go to all the baseball games my brother played. The team manager drove a convertible and I would sit up front and be ferried to the games with the rest of the players.

Then my brother got older and played in the Bath Ruth League, on the high school team and eventually with the Marine Corps team. My father was fond of baseball. He and I would sit in front of the old Philco black and white and watch the Red Sox during their most dismal years. These were the years Jimmy Piersall would climb the flag pole and perch above it all. In a way we fans were as unbalanced as was he. It could well be that we were each seeking the same thing in our own ways.

My brother joined the Marine Corps during his 17th year which meant I was then the lone baseball fan my father had left in the house. We would criticize the latest Red Sox manager and speak of the Country Club coloration of the club in those years. They were one of the last clubs to have other than the ranks of the lily-white within their ranks.

My adolescent rebellion even involved baseball. For one season -- the one in which Roger Maris hit 61 home runs -- I did the

unspeakable: I rooted for the Yankees. Thankfully that phase did not last long and I was back bleeding Red Sox red.

Poppa never did get to experience that wonderful year of 1967 when the spell came THAT close to being fully cast. He had died a couple of years before. He would have enjoyed that season. I know I did. It was spent staying up until 2 AM some nights listening to the night games begin broadcast from the West Coast. You could tell the "real" fans by how tired they were at work the next morning. You would see someone barely able to keep their eyelids propped open and you would know here was a fan and an instant camaraderie would be formed.

This is what I am looking for in books purporting to be about baseball. Perhaps I am looking for a portion of me that no longer exists. Maybe I am seeking my childhood. In any event, it is a quest I keep making.

Unfortunately, She's on First was not a book for which I search. It was pleasant, but not special. It was more concerned with an issue than with baseball. Baseball does not need the Bigs to exist. Some of the best flavor of the game can be tasted from barnstorming and backlot games, games where people who truly love the game gather to do homage to the sport. Perhaps I am looking for gospels to capture that feeling when I look to baseball stories, something which will speak to the spirit more than to that part of the mind looking for mere "entertainment."

For such entertainment purposes, She's on First is okay. It is about a little girl who likes to play baseball and does so well. It is about her breaking into the majors with a few soap-opera twists thrown in to make it in the mainstream world.

Alas, it is but an average book, not one of those special ones for which you search.

THE SCALEHUNTER'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER

by Lucius Shepard
Mark V. Ziesing, 1988, \$16.95
(Box 806, Willimantic, CT 06266
Limited Edition: \$35.00)

Lucius Shepard is a bright shining light in today's mass of writers. He dares to assume that those reading his works might have a slight amount of intelligence and be able to appreciate the beauty of his word strings. He also writes "fantasy" with realism. His worlds are not made up of the fluff of never-never land where nary a drop of anguish falls and always unknown rescuers are only a beck and call away.

No, his worlds are much more human than that. They acknowledge not only our human strengths, but our weaknesses as well. While Joseph Campbell may have been the greatest myth interpreter of them all, Lucius Shepard may be the greatest myth teller of the age.

At the beginning of Shepard's short story, "The Man Who Painted the Dragon Griaule," a description is made of a man who paints a self-portrait. That painting shows him imprisoned within a blackness that has but two golden bars shining within it. The thought of the existence of light beyond the

prison confines is torture from which there is no escape. It is also remarked upon that this imprisonment is self-imposed and that the subject could easily have broken free of his captivity, but that the very imprisonment was an essential part of his ambition. Therefore he clung to it, as to life itself.

That could also be an apt description of this new tale involving the paralyzed dragon, Griaule. Only this time the prisoner is a lovely young woman who is described as having had her beauty give "rise to a certain egocentricity and shallowness of character." She is said to have taken "half-steps" in the resolution of her faults. She is further described as being like most people, having no strong moral principles to guide her actions, but rather having such actions being decided by social pressure, without them being a stronghold of her character.

The community in which she lives dwells within the realm of the paralyzed dragon whose will it is that gets blamed for all the "wrongful" actions the people might take. After all, it was not our decision, but HIS dominance over us that caused us to perform such and such an act. In other words the cycle becomes complete and the god-image becomes the scapegoat.

Here the "imprisoned" princess is confined not to a tower, but to the innards of a dragon. She must find the means within herself to seek her freedom. This is not a fairy tale of a dashing young prince arriving on the scene to perform heroic exploits to slay the dragon and carry off the fair young thing.

In this world the fair young thing becomes a person who comes to realize her actions do make a difference in the long run and that a bond may "serve through gentle constancy to enhance and not further delimit the boundaries of this prison world." In other words, some limits can actually further your horizons.

For anyone who is seeking a novel that will go beyond the normal limits of today's fiction, Lucius Shepard's works are ones to explore. They take you into the inner core of yourself from which all worlds are built and they help you to better understand the foundation upon which those worlds are situated.

To read the telling of the new mythos, Lucius Shepard is the source to seek.

PSYCHLONE

by Greg Bear
Tor, 1988 (c 1979), \$3.95

In the beginning of this novel is a page blank except for a time and date that have come to live in infamy: 8:16 AM, August 6th, 1945.

At first the novel seems to belie any involvement with this beginning/ending. It tells of things that could be found in almost any run-of-the-mill disaster novel, things that cannot be explained in the form of sudden freezings of animals and even the mad destruction of an entire town by itself.

But the book is more than a routine dis-

aster novel, much more. As the mystery about it begins to unravel, you begin to grasp what is at the core of the tale. It is not so much that weapons have done to us, but what we have done to each other. In the way Rod Serling's Twilight Zone episode, "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street" showed how easily it would be to take the basest part of human nature and turn it into a weapon to be used for internal destruction, this novel shows just how terrible an outcome this can create.

I have read many books about Hiroshima, but this is perhaps the most unsettling. The Black Rain is a book that was published a few years ago that presented diaries as a source for trying to portray the loss and tragedy of the situation in individual terms which could be comprehended more readily by the reader than the mass destruction which is almost too much for the mind to absorb.

Psychlone speaks of the souls that were taken and twisted by the bomb which fell from the lone mosquito in the sky that day in early August. In the way Lucius Shepard told of the war being brought home in his short story, "R & R," this novel tells of those soul-searing moments being brought home by those seeking revenge for what was done to them and their families. It tells of tormented souls who cannot escape from their man-made hell.

Perhaps even more frightening, it speaks of our endeavors to go to create the absolute weapon, too terrible to be used. Of course, there are always people ready to use such weaponry without a moment's hesitation and with all "good" intentions. (Weapons too terrible to use are first used on what are considered lower animals to test the effectiveness of the kill. Once used at all, is there any stopping such things when pressures get high enough?)

This book tells not only of how we may have invented a way to incinerate our planet, but also our very souls as well --having found a way to create a complete nothingness from the life we were given.

Psychlone was a book much better than I had originally thought it to be. It far transcended the first-impression disaster novel and went on to present some truly frightening concepts.

This is a book that is very much worth the reading.

NUCLEAR WAR

by Gregory Benford and
Martin Harry Greenberg
Ace, 1988, \$3.50

With the approach of the anniversary of Hiroshima it is well to think, to feel, and to remember. Maybe the memories will help us to seek sanity. Indeed, "deep in December" it is well to remember. If the memories will help us to find a new future that does not have the great powers of the world playing chicken in the global skies, such thoughts will be worth their price many, many times over.

Nuclear War is a collection of stories by such people as Pamela Sargent, Norman Spin-



rad, Theodore Sturgeon, Joe Haldeman, Ben Bova and Gregory Benford. The stories are an assortment of of hope and despair: hope that maybe there is some bit of humanity in us that will seek to keep the species alive and the planet green; despair in seeing how little we learn from history and how quickly we resort back to old hatreds and squabbles and power plays.

"Triggerman" by J. F. Bone was one of the stories of hope. It contained a bit of sanity that managed to survive in a world all too ready to blindly strike back without considering anything but rage and revenge. In that type of world justice and truth do not often come up winners. However, this story manages to make them victorious.

Norman Spinrad's "The Big Flash" contains more despair than hope. It shows how easily skilled public relations firms can use the media to brainwash us into accepting that which is not acceptable and into opting for mass suicide. The scary thing about this tale is that it is all too plausible.

Theodore Sturgeon's "Thunder and Roses" also manages to show one of the brighter sides of humanity. This one also manages to have warmth and love and self-sacrifice win out over the forces who clamor for universal destruction.

Chin Davis presents "The Nightmare." This speaks of how the centralization of our cities has made it all too easy for someone to be able to use the force of terrorism to cause the cities to walk a tightrope of survival.

Frederic Brown's "The Weapon" speaks of the moral responsibility the scientific community faces in the search for the "ultimate" weapon.

There are no startling new revelations in this book. However, it does bring back into focus that which we tend to forget: that nuclear war is not something we should accept. It is something we should fight BEFORE the warning are sounded. Then it will be too late. Now is the time we must work to see that the scenarios presented within these pages never become a reality. We have come too far to let provincialism bring us to the point of extinction. We need to achieve maturity and wisdom quickly.

This book is not necessarily "enjoyable" reading, but it is thoughtful reading and it

is a subject that needs to be contemplated while there is still time for us to have the luxury of such musings.

ZODIAC: THE ECO-THRILLER

by Neal Stephenson
The Atlantic Monthly, 1988, \$7.95

One of the things that can incite me to purchase a book is a cover that is sufficiently interesting to cause me to pick up the book to see if the contents have the promise of being as potentially fascinating. Zodiac has this lovely cover of someone in a Red Sox shirt (that is enough of a lure for me) who is carrying a flag with a skull and crossbones which has the universal sign language symbol of the "banned" across it (the red circle with the red diagonal line within it). He is also wearing a gas mask and being transported through an obviously polluted source of water in a rubber raft. Now this cover is enough to cause me to wonder if this book might be for me.

As it turned out, it was a very lovely book, quite worthy of the cover treatment it underwent. The story concerns itself with one Sangamon Taylor who works for an organization that is vaguely reminiscent of Greenpeace. ST, in the "dark ages of [his] life" worked for a commercial outfit called Massachusetts Analytical Chemical Systems, Mass Anal for short. Then along came fate to get him involved in the discovery of a toxic waste dump. Within a short time he found himself on the steps of the State House chained to a drum of toxic waste materials. Soon thereafter he found himself working outside of Corporate Americana within the organization known as GEE, the Group of Environmental Extremists.

It is said these are the people who "staged their own invasion of the Soviet Union ... sneak[ed] a supposedly disabled, heavily guarded ship out of Amsterdam ... skim[med] across the oceans in high-powered Zodiacs held together with bubble gum and bobby pins, coming to the rescue of innocent marine mammals.

In between such episodes as cementing up illegal discharge pipes which are transporting carcinogens into our presence, ST gets mixed up with fans of the Poyzen Boyzen who are a rock band fond of pit bulls. These fans have taken over the wreck of a barge beached on an island in Boston Harbor composed of garbage. The description "composed of garbage" can easily be used as a descriptive phrase for either the Harbor or the Island. Satanic rites are taking place on this island. A polluter is also involved.

Actually, the polluter is the greatest source of evil. PCBs are getting into the Harbor in great quantity. They are naturally poisoning that with which they come in contact. As this happens to be sea life such as fish and lobsters, the dioxin poisoning is transferred to humans who consume this variety of food.

Gene engineering comes into play. There is the question of whether or not the escape of some manufactured "bugs" will cause global dioxin contamination or if the danger

can be diverted in time.

There is a nice quality of "throw-offism" to this book. It is written in the style of a Sam Spade who happens to be dabbling in environmental detective work instead of that which we had come to expect this hard-boiled type to seek out.

There is plenty of action. There are bombings and "invasions" of such foreign lands as Jersey to help clean up at least some of what the "chemical toilet bowl" of America produced to that folks in Utah might enjoy plastic lawn ornaments.

I do recommend this book. It is fun and it is fascinating. However, it also has a warning of how our technology may be far more advanced than our morality. Our greed and our taste for power have kept up with the scientific advances; unfortunately our spirituality has lagged behind.

Do read this book. It is one of those rare breeds: a "fun," intelligent, disaster novel, one that is written with tongue-in-cheek and manages to convey some information on what we are doing to our environment and how the future of the effects of our indiscriminate dumping may be no longer something of the future, but all too much of the present.

THE JOURNAL OF NICHOLAS THE AMERICAN

by Leigh Kennedy
St. Martin's Press, 1988, \$3.50

Reading is something I enjoy very very much. Why is a good question. Part of the answer is in sharing experiences through the written word. There is also an answer to this question that appears in The Journal of Nicholas the American that I find to be an accurate answer as well, "my own self-inflicted empathy."

Reading is indeed a good way to participate in the feelings and ideas of another. However, this is a way that is controlled. You enter the state when you choose and you leave the territory when you desire. However, what if you could not determine when and how you would share in the feelings of others? What if they came at you from all sides and you were powerless to shut out those emotions? This is what The Journal of Nicholas the American addresses.

The central character is Nicholas Dal. He has inherited his family's gift/curse that, like hemophilia, is passed on only to the male members of the family. The females act only as carriers and do not suffer the incapable affinity themselves.

Kolya is concerned that he may go mad from being subjected to all this emotional overload. His uncle had "short-circuited" and had gone on a rampage killing the members of his own family. Kolya believes the only two remaining male members of his family to be himself and his father and he does not want to inflict his inheritance on any others.

He is different, and that difference has been noted by others. He cannot go into hospitals because of the emotional overload such a visit inflicts upon him. He cannot explain his condition to others; they think

him to be an alcoholic as he has found vodka to be a great emotional deadener. It helps to numb the emotional centers and to make him unresponsive to the feelings being emitted by others for at least a portion of the time.

There is someone who is actively seeking him and his family. He doesn't know why, but he does know that when he was a child he was institutionalized and while he was in the hospital, he "absorbed" the emotional disturbances of those about him: autism and paranoia being only a small sampling of those emotions sent out to him. He has, therefore, come to distrust psychiatrists who refuse to believe anything other than the accepted norm of being. Yet here he has one of these people actively trying to find him. What will happen when Koyla is located?

In the midst of this, he meets a woman who is dying and whose family refuses to openly discuss this reality. He finds himself drawn to her and her feelings. How will it be to share her feelings at death? Will he survive such an experience?

This is a very thoughtful and empathic book. It presents a picture of someone different trying to blend into a culture that considers itself the Great Melting Pot of the world where homogenization is the norm. It asks the question of what happens when someone has a difference that is not easily disguised.

It was a very interesting reading experience.

TIMETRAP
(A Star Trek Novel)

by David Dvorkin
Pocket Books, 1988, \$3.95

Star Trek books are something I usually don't read. Most of them have been big disappointments which have absolutely no relationship between the universe that I have come to accept as being the Star Trek Universe and that which appears within the covers of the books. However, every so often I find I cannot completely resist one of these novels. Maybe it is because I have not read a ST fanzine in too long a while.

Another reason this book called out to me is because James T. Kirk is its central character. Too many of these books are written around Spock, and it is Kirk who is my favorite character and who I like to see portrayed in ST stories.

Timetrapp was a good book as far as the ST books go. It was one that I could read completely from cover to cover without having the temptation to hurl it against the nearest wall in frustration over characterization. The James Kirk of the series could have been the James Kirk of this book. This is a major accomplishment for the ST novels. Spock also acted within the range of his character.

The plot is nothing spectacular and contained nothing "significant". It is standard fare. It seems Kirk has been shifted in time. There is also the possibility that he can return to his own time as the central character in the act that brings the forces

of the Federation and the Klingon Empire to become as one with each other. Now he has to rely on his instincts in this regard. I think it was a shortcoming of the book not to show more of how Kirk thought and what his reactions were to the set of circumstances in which he found himself.

I also think the plot would have been enhanced, at least the reading thereof, if we had been shown the way Kirk often presented one image while another lurked under the surface. Overt action and reactions are not always the truth of the matter. Yet, this Kirk was rather straightforward, almost too much so. However, this is a very minor criticism and one that relates to how each of us personally "sees" the character,

This is by no means a "great" book, but it is pleasant beach reading. Nothing to stretch the mind, but a plot that nonetheless does manage to hold your interest and which is presented in an entertaining manner.

There are a few good professional ST books, but overall I don't care for their quality. My Enemy, My Ally by Diane Duane was one of the better ones. The Idic Epidemic was not bad either. I guess if you look long enough there will be some good books coming out of the mass system, if only by accident.

If you are looking for some light reading, this book is one to serve the purpose. It is one of the more "acceptable" ST novels.



Book Reviews by Laura Todd

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2061: ODYSSEY THREE

by Arthur C. Clarke
Del Rey, 1987, \$17.95

In this third novel of Clarke's 2001 series, Clarke continues with his future visions of space explorations and of humanity's encounters with the black monolith that watches over our destiny.

In the first book, 2001: A Space Odyssey, the mysterious artifact was connected with the emergence of intelligence in our proto-human ancestors. In the second book, 2010: Odyssey Two, a monolith was involved in the transformation of the planet Jupiter into a small sun. Jupiter's satellite were thereby thawed out and opened for human colonization -- with one caveat: the world of Europa has been placed strictly offlimits.

In this novel, astronaut Heywood Floyd and several public figures go on an expedition to the returning Halley's Comet. While these tourists explore the eerie, tiny world of the comet, other human explorers are veering dangerously close to the forbidden Europa. Of course, something goes amiss and they are forced to make an emergency landing. And of course Floyd and his fellow interstellar tourists are summoned to make a rescue attempt.

This novel mostly consists of what Clarke does best: cosmic travelogue. Better than any other author, he uses his astronomical expertise to paint breathtaking images: the ice geysers of Halley's Comet, the primeval oceans and raw landscapes of Europa.

Yet I found this novel to be somewhat disappointing. Having set up a great scenario, Clarke doesn't go nearly far enough with it. He presents mysteries and doesn't solve them. And he leaves the most intriguing aspect of his story, the evolving life of Europa, as a mere coda at the end. There are so many loose ends that I wonder if the author is trying to sucker us into yet another sequel.

Still, in spite of this book's novelistic shortcomings, I could not help but be captivated by Clarke's evocative portrayal of the grandeur and mystery of the universe. If nothing else, this book makes a wonderful astronomy text.

TRUE JAGUAR

by Warren C. Norwood
Bantam, 1988, \$3.95

There are a lot of "generic" or "standard" fantasy novels around, but this book isn't one of them.

It starts when O'Hara, a modern man of Hispanic ancestry, is confronted by a Guatemalan shaman named Cacabe who calls him a descendant of the Mayan demi-god True Tiger. O'Hara, says the shaman, must recognize his true identity and destiny, which is to save

the world. After wreaking havoc with O'Hara's life, Cacabe and his cousin Shirlito drag O'Hara on a mysterious journey to Xibalba, the Mayan underworld. Why? Because a comet is on its way to strike Earth, and the comet is under the control of the "Lords of Xibalba." True Jaguar is the only one who can defeat these Demons and save Earth.

As they journey, Cacabe spins on of those rambling aboriginal myths which abound in talking birds, sentient knives, bodily transformations and the like. Soon the protagonist's adventures begin to parallel these tales. They're forced to undergo one nasty ordeal after another, crossing the Pus River and spending a night in Razor House (where the sentient knives live). They are supposed to play a game of basketball with a degenerate crowd of demons, such as Trash Master and Bloody Teeth and Jaundice Master.

Surprisingly, the novel's tone is rather light. There is a lot of humorous interaction between the characters, and lots of witty asides and tidbits of pseudo-information. For instance, one time the group meets up with a hummingbird who turns out to be a bloodthirsty Aztec god -- only the has-been deity whines that he never wanted the human sacrifices and was maligned by a scheming Aztec minister. In revenge, the god arranged to have the Aztecs overthrown. I'll bet you never knew that!

The hero's climactic battle is an analog of event that occur in the heavens. This is a neat gimmick...but still, toward the end the book started to drag for me. Since Xibalba is a place where myths come alive, there is little logic to what happens. Some people stay dead; others come back in different forms. I did not know whether the characters' experiences were "real" and how seriously to take it all. Consequently, I didn't care too much.

I was also disappointed that the author did not delve deeper into real Mayan culture and history. After all, I picked up this book chiefly because of my interest in this civilization.

Still, I'd recommend this book for its originality alone. Anyone who has an interest in the Aztecs or Mayans, or would just like to be taken somewhere they've never been before, ought to give it a try. It's a fun read.

O-ZONE

by Paul Theroux
Ballantine, 1986, \$4.95

A recent reviewer in LL made the statement, "It is important to read SF written by authors outside the SF ghetto." This statement came to my mind when I read O-Zone, Paul Theroux's first venture into SF. I am familiar with Theroux mostly from the movie version of Mosquito Coast, which depicts an

eccentric inventor who escapes to a jungle paradise. Theroux also wrote The Old Patagonian Express, about a train trip through South America.

In this book, Theroux takes us on a journey to O-zone, an area in the Ozarks which was contaminated by a nuclear accident and declared off-limits some 15 years before the novel's present. The book takes place in a near-future milieu which extrapolates on the current widening gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots." The protagonists belong to the wealthy "Owner" class, living in a high-security high-tech enclave of New York City. They are surrounded by a wretched underclass referred to as "aliens," "trolls," and "roaches." These "aliens," having no IDs, are considered subhuman and are hunted at will by roving vigilante squads.

Theroux writes with a travel writer's realism, with an eye for fine details a subtle observations. He skirts all the cliches. The privileged Owners are shown as real human beings, pathetic and insecure, hiding behind their gadgets and wealth. The "mutants" and "aliens" they dread so much are neither monsters nor noble savages, merely vagrants down on their luck.

The story starts when the Owner Hooper takes some relatives and friends to spend a party weekend in the deserted O-zone. Among them is his teenage nephew Fisher, a genetically-engineered supergenius who is so emotionally immature he is terrified to leave his room. While playing with his high-resolution camera, Fisher discovers the O-zone is not uninhabited after all. Obsessed with security, Hooper and friends make a surveillance flight over the camp of the "mutant"

squatters. Pictures are taken. An "accident" occurs. Two of the squatters are killed.

Our heroes return to New York, but the trip has left its mark on all of them. Buried resentments and hidden longings come to the surface. The lonely Hooper becomes obsessed with a young O-zone woman he has captured on his film. Though she is illegal, an unperson, and probably contaminated, she comes to represent everything his over-civilized world has denied him: innocence, honesty, simplicity. In his mind, O-zone becomes a symbolic primeval Eden to which he must return. When he does, bringing Fisher to man the equipment, he finds the women but loses Fisher.

The best sequence of the book follows the adventures of this youth as he is taken hostage by the aliens. Fisher starts out as a pathetic nerd, catatonic with fear of strangers and dirt. He undergoes a total transformation, to emerge as the vagabonds' brash leader.

The book does have its faults. It gets a little long-winded at times. It leaves several key development off-stage, while including scenes which I thought unnecessary. I wish Theroux had portrayed the alien woman and her group in greater depth, rather than merely letting them be props with whom the main characters interact.

In spite of these faults, I recommend this book highly. It would be a real shame if SF readers missed it simply because it happened to be placed on the "bestseller" rack, rather than in the SF ghetto of their local bookstore.

Tape & Book Reviews by Lan

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DEATH IN THE SPIRIT HOUSE

by Craig Strete
Foundation/Doubleday, 1988, \$14.95

The Spirit House is an English translation of the Indian name for a mountain in Colorado. The slopes are steep, riddled with craggy ridges and deep valleys. The animals and the Indians who live on and around Spirit House are under the protection of the Mountain Spirit.

The Spirit is angry with two of her people. Red Hawk, disowned by his parents Solomon Hawk and Lianna because of his love and desire to kill, is a hero from the Viet Nam war, who purchased his heroism with lies. Red Hawk also treads the forbidden ground of the Spirit House for money -- he guides "white hunters" through the Mountain's passes and help them satisfy their desire to kill her animals.

John Skydancer is a lawyer, a graduate of Harvard. He essentially gave up his Indian heritage, being raised as a orphan by a white family. He works for a mining company and tricks his people into signing a con-

tract to release the company from the responsibility of the damage that the uranium radiation is doing to the tribe.

The Spirit of the Mountain begins her revenge by taking the form of a black cougar and attacking Red Hawk's mare and colt. Red Hawk seeks to destroy this cougar which ends up hunting him instead. Skydancer is brought to Spirit House when the plane he is flying in crashes on the mountainside. He is the only survivor and he drags his briefcase (with the precious contract) with him as he tries to get down from the mountain and to San Francisco to file the agreement. Then he meets Red Hawk. Instead of helping Skydancer, Red Hawk is consumed by greed and heads back to the plane to loot the dead passengers. And the Spirit of the Mountain likes this even less. She will have her say about this. Meanwhile, the FAA and local authorities mobilize a search for the fallen plane with hopes of finding survivors.

This is a story of the supernatural, using the lore of the American Indians of Colorado, combined with the search and rescue operation, and the tense action of the hunt. The Spirit of Spirit House is vengeful but

fair, and there are surprises. It is an enjoyable novel, wonderfully descriptive in detail, and I highly recommend it.

BEASTMAKER

by James V. Smith, Jr.
Dell, 1988, \$3.95

Warren Howell is the beastmaker. Through genetic engineering and implantation of fetuses, he has created numerous unnatural beasts -- in the lab. His backers are patient, but they do want results. Then one of the beasts escapes and begins a killing and raping rampage in the west Texas countryside. Beth Howell, Warren's wife, was almost killed, though the blame is put on her brother Mark Payne.

Payne, with help from friends and his lover Pam Larson, try to track down this beast and destroy it. But there is something else that is going on, a secret more deadly than this killing beast and more sinister than the escaped Warren Howell would have his superiors believe.

The book is fairly well-written. I think Smith went a little overboard in creating characters with problems, but this is a good first novel. The horror is wet, but fits in with the concept of the beast. Smith has researched the necessary background well, which is obvious from the descriptions.

The pacing is excellent. Each "Book" within the novel ends with something of a cliffhanger, and is picked up in the next Book. The clues are set cleverly, and one could probably have guessed the final horror if the action weren't so fast-paced. The breathing spaces Smith set in the novel were just that -- a short span of time before the action began again.

It looked interesting when I read the summary and selection inside the cover, but some recent horror has just been a rehash of earlier concepts done better. Smith has an idea that could actually happen. Yes, I enjoyed the book and recommend it to horror fans. (Non-horror fans might find it too "squishy".)

RIFLES & RHYMES

by Juanita Coulson & Martha Keller
Off Centaur, 1984, \$9.00
(PO Box 424, El Cerrito, CA 94530)

The American history poems of Martha Keller have been set to music, mostly by Juanita Coulson who is the vocalist on this tape. Juanita's voice is strong, covering three octaves, and very clear here. Of course, once you hear Juanita in concert, or at a filksing, you tend to remember that voice. Here it is very controlled, but she has blown out microphones when she "lets loose". The production is well done; then again, it is difficult to overpower Juanita's voice.

The songs are not really filk; they cover American history from the Revolutionary War through the Civil War to the Old West. "Herbs and Simples" is a song about witches. And there is an occasional love song. In addition to Juanita Coulson as the composer to

Keller's poems, the credits also list Lori Coulson, Bill Roper, Leslie Fish, Mike Longcor, and Poul Anderson.

The topics covered aren't really of interest to me, but the songs are impeccably done by Juanita, and fans of her voice, or fans of American history, should find this interesting.

OTHER TIMES, OTHER PLACES

by Various Artists
DAG Publications, 1986, \$9.00
(1810 14th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404)

This is a collection of filksongs and singers from the West coast. I bought it on Buck Coulson's recommendation, and was surprised and delighted at the both the quality and the performances herein. We in the Midwest know our own filkers fairly well and we have heard of the more popular filkers from either coast, but this tape shows and highlights other singers who should be featured more. Jeff Moline and Larry Warner are two male vocalists who deserve more exposure. Cynthia McQuillon is fairly well known already. Then there is this person responsible for 7 of the 20 songs featured here--Brenda Craven -- who is apparently very well known on the West Coast. We in the Midwest and South are fortunate to have her in our area now, since she married filker Bill Sutton (whose song "Caretaker" is sung by Jeff Moline).

There is a wide variety of songs presented here. Elfquest, space, Star Trek and fantasy fans would find a song or two to interest them. Some are light-hearted ("Slight Idiosyncrasies," "In the Blood," "Ecology"), some are serious ("This Turn of the Wheel," "Outcast," "Challenge of the Phoenix"), some carry messages ("Caretaker," "Seven Stars"), but all are well-done.

One very noticeable feature is the sound quality. Brenda's voice is light, but no volume adjustment is necessary because the tape was engineered to compensate for it. I would hope that other filk recording companies would follow suit.

Buy this tape; I doubt you'll be disappointed.

FLYING ISLAND
(Recorded live at MARCON 22)

Wail Songs, 1987, \$9.00
(PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604)

Wail Songs has been recording the filks at MARCON for several years now, and releasing tapes of the "Best Of" these sessions. Now "best" is not necessarily defined as the "most technically perfect;" best here means something more like "unusual, different, what hasn't been on other MARCON tapes before."

There are a variety of performers on Flying Island, some doing songs of their own creation, some writing the words or music to others' music or words, and some performing other persons' works. The performance in toto is dedicated to Bill Maraschiello who

had died in November of 1986. The opening and closing songs were specifically written to honor Bill. "Flying Island Farewell" (lyrics by Barry Childs-Helton with traditional music) talks of fandom as a Flying Island that touches down once a weekend for a convention. Mike Stein's "For All Friends of the Piper" immortalizes Bill as piper and singer.

The other filkers on the tape include Naomi Pardue (singing three of her own songs), Clif Flynt and Bill Roper (each singing separate songs), Kathy Mar, Mary Ellen Wessels (singing with Clif Flynt and Bill Roper in a trio, with Bill in duet), Mitchell Clapp, Juanita Coulson, Carole Poore, and Diedre Rittenhouse.

The standouts on the tape are Barry and Sally Childs-Helton and Mitchell Clapp. The Childs-Heltons have each played professionally, Sally as a percussionist with groups from classical to jazz, Barry from folk music in coffee-houses to rhythm and vocals in rock bands, and they blend their talents admirably. In addition to the title song, they sing "Dull Mundane Woman" (music from Mick Jagger & Keith Richard), and "Two Moon Blues", an original composition from Barry about Mars.

Mitchell Clapp has finally on tape "Bloody Rotten Audience" (by Tony Miles) which he frequently uses as a closing number. His composition, "Snequel Blues", was placed nicely after Carol Poore's "Series Junkie" -- Carol's song (written with Barb Riedel) talks about a reader who starts with short stories then graduates to reading series of books ("No less than a couple thousand pages/ Till satisfaction is assured"). Mitchell admonishes publishers who don't warn the reader that the novel in hand is the first of a series, and suggests that they "Print on every cover, I think, /In two inch letters, dayglow pink, /FIRST IN A TRILOGY OF FOUR!" (which gets a hearty burst of laughter).

Of special note is Naomi Pardue's "Ain't It Tragic," particularly for any literature major. The song talks about tragedy and the methods used by earlier writers "to make sales". It's quite humorous and the audience helps with some added background accompaniment.

The overall quality is okay. Naomi's singing is soft, and she tends to be farther away from the recording mike than some other performers, so even with some level adjustment from the sound engineer, a cough from the audience throws the level off. Juanita

Coulson is heard no matter where she is in relation to the mike. This is also true for Barry and Sally, Carol Poore and Mitchell Clapp. Wail Songs did a good job with what they had.

Overall, I recommend the tape. There are some delightful songs on it, and some of the lesser-known Midwestern filkers get to show what they can do.

PLEASURE IN THE OVFFing
(Recorded Live at the
OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST III)
((October/November, 1987))

Wail Songs, 1988, \$9.00
(PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604)

This is another live recording, this time from THE OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST II. Like Flying Island, there are a variety of singers, this time however from both coasts as well as the Midwest and South. The filkers include: Mercedes Lackey, Mitchell Clapp, Duane Elms, Naomi Pardue, Kathy Mar, Brenda and Bill Sutton, T.J. Burnside and Linda Melnick, Barb Riedel and Carol Poore, Tom Smith, Jane Robinson, Kritsoph Klover, Mark Bernstein, and B.J. Willinger. As before, there are a variety of compositions, written by the filkers themselves, or by, or in collaboration with, someone else.

Mercedes Lackey begins with Dave Luckett's "Eagles". Later she sings "Ilin," written by her and C.J. Cherryh. Mercedes' voice is emotional, but not that good. She admits to having a mediocre voice and tries her best. Mercedes also sings backup to Jane Robinson's songs.

"Red Star Rising" written and performed by Mitchell Clapp is the second song, which admonishes the US space program, such as it is, for falling behind, for on the horizon rises an O'Neill colony, built by the Russians.

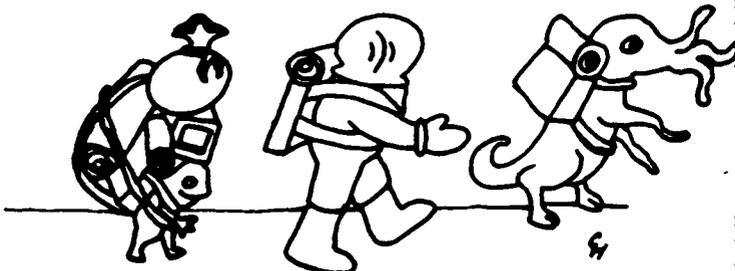
This one is followed by Duane Elms' "We're Going Back," a somewhat cautionary but hopeful song about the US returning to the moon. It fits well in following Mitchell's song. Duane too has admitted that he does not have a good voice, but his lyrics and guitar musicianship make up for that.

"God Speed" by Naomi Pardue pushes mankind beyond the solar system. It's a sad/hopeful song of adventure.

In "No Heroes," Kathy Mar laments the friction between the Soviets and the Americans, stating that there would be no winners, no heroes, if a nuclear strike happens. We would all be losers.

Brenda Sutton sings "In the Blood," a hopeful funny song about flying -- from the first barnstormers to the moon shuttle. Flying has been in the family blood, and so it stays. In another song, performed by her and Bill Sutton, Brenda brings the audience to tears and laughter by talking about "My Mama's Hands." The phrases that her mother used on her and she swore she would never use on her kids, seem to pop out at the appropriate times -- "When did my Mama slip inside of me?"

TJ Burnside and Linda Melnick performed "Dreamer's Lament" (written by TJ) and "Last



SPACE CADETS

"Great Waltz" (written by Mason Williams). The blending of their voices is marvelous. "Last Great Waltz" is a funny song about a male waltzer who is a perfectionist, and a female waltzer who has three legs. "Dreamer's Lament" tells of a young girl whose youth was filled with dreams of fantasy and science fiction, who grows up to push these fancies aside, except in her dreams. She then longs for the final release when she can stay with her dreams.

TJ also sings a solo piece she wrote -- "Robin Hood" -- which advocates a child's imagination. It's a pretty song, well done.

Barb Riedel and Carol Poore both have strong voices, and individually can sing powerful songs. Together on the same melody line their different timbres blend well. When they separate to harmonize, they blend infrequently. This is unfortunate, since when the harmony works, it really sounds good. Barb and Carol need to work more on their blending in harmony.

The two songs they have on this tape, "Image of Perfection" and "New World Lullaby," were both written by this pair, and are good, interesting pieces. "Image" is about a mirror that reflects truth; "New World Lullaby" is a lullaby. The powerful voices work okay in "Image of Perfection", though the harmony problem is there. Their voices are too loud for the "Lullaby". The lyrics and music are definite compensations, but I would like to hear them blending better. Barb and Carol have the ability; they need the control.

Tom Smith sings two pieces, one straight, and one a parody. "Hellraiser," based on the Clive Barker movie of the same name, won the song-writing contest at OVFF (the theme was Holloween). It is a chilling song that well-deserved the award. "Hands of Ron" was written to the tune of Julia Ecklar's "Hands of God" and had people laughing all the way through. We are all in the Hands of Ronald Reagan, who "won't call for the bomb, / His jelly-bean jar's in the way." Tom has a soft voice but is practicing daily to make it stronger; he also works at his guitar playing as well. I hope that he puts out a tape soon.

Dr. Jane Robinson has two songs from her own tape, Dr. Jane's Science Notes. The difference is that here she has some back-up singers in the form of Mercedes Lackey and Kristoph Klover. Kristoph's strong baritone carries the melody in portions of "A Look at Things that Don't Exist," a song about the scientific method. "Doo-Da-Rock-Rock" is a song about geology which is filled with clever twists of phrasing using geological terms.

Mark Bernstein makes his debut on a tape with his "Heroic Fantasy Blues." There is a background bee-bop which isn't heard well, mostly because his backup crew was too far back from the mike. Mark is one of the few (if not the only) filker who sings a cappel-la and carries it off. This song is about a fantasy hero who laments his fate -- "my siamese twin is hangin' dead at my side, / and the dog don't like the smell." I look forward to hearing more from Mark.

"Closet SF Fan" by B.J. Willinger (to the tune of Larry Groce's "Junk-food Junkie")

had people snickering. By day the singer is mundane and normal and "reads" the best sellers. By night "I'm a closet SF fan --/Great Ghu have pity on me!"

Technically, the tape is about the best Wail Songs has put out (as far as the ones I've heard). There is little need to adjust the volume once set, and most background noise that comes through (inevitable in most Live Performance recordings) helps to create the appropriate atmosphere. A plus is the recording of Bill and Brenda Sutton's "My Mama's Hands." Brenda's quiet voice is NOT overpowered by Bill's piano. The lyrics are clearly heard.

Highly recommended.

LOVERS, HEROES & ROGUES

by Mike Longcor
Off Centaur, 1988, \$11.00
(PO Box 424, El Cerrito, CA 94530)

This tape was first made available at INCONJUNCTION VIII. Mike "Moonwolf" Longcor was at the convention, and when I asked him how he liked the results, he said he was mostly pleased. I inquired further and Moonwolf elaborated. The original recording was done by Buck Coulson at Buck's place in Indiana. The tapes were then sent to Off Centaur for mastering. "They added some back-ups," Moonwolf finished. I shuddered in sympathy.

Thus I approached listening to this tape with some trepidation. Other recordings had been ruined by the backgrounds that OCP had backed up in the tapes. I hoped that they had not completely ruined Moonwolf's work.

Much to my surprise, they hadn't. The flute in the first song, "Privateer" (one for which Moonwolf is well known), was a bit overdone, and which is used somewhat too much in other songs, is the only really bad spot on the tape. The other instrumentation that Off Centaur put in actually added to Moonwolf's rendition of the songs.

Twenty-one songs fill this tape. Among them are many associated with Mike Longcor/Moonwolf: "Chainmail Mama," "Blacksmith of Brandywine," "Roddy McCorley," "Silver Bullet Blues," and "The Bold Marauder". One of his most recent songs, written in honor of the Challenger 7, "Pillar of Hell," is also included. The other songs cover fantasy, SF, history, love; they are serious and humorous. Moonwolf also sings the Poul Anderson/Anne Passovoy song: "Mary O'Meara."

It's a wonderful tape, though \$11.00 is a little steep in price for it. Remember, though, that you are getting a lot of music for that money -- almost twice one gets from a rock-star tape. And here you can understand the words! Well-recommended.

FOREST OF THE NIGHT

by Marti Steussy
Del Rey, 1987, \$2.95

I heard that Ms. Steussy was going to be at INCONJUNCTION VIII so I dug the book out of the collection but didn't have time to

Created by Christopher Zavisca
Warner Books, 1988, \$17.95

read it before the con. Marti signed the copy (actually, she signed a special bookplate which she then adhered to the inside front cover), and we spent some time talking about various things. She is in the process of moving from Tennessee where her husband has a medical practice to Indianapolis where Martie will be teaching religious studies at one of the local colleges. I came home with a favorable impression of her, and knowing that I was going to read Forest of the Night. Would this first novel be a good one? Or would I have to write an admonishing review?

I needn't have worried. It was wonderful. It could have been more tightly edited in spots, but overall the novel is a very good one; I wish I had read it in time for the John Campbell Award nominees for this year. Yes, it's that good.

New Lebanon is a poor planet, just settled, and its colonists are trying to justify the investment in them by logging the forest. There is very little machinery, so the operation is run like an 1800's logging camp: Axes and saws, horses, communal kitchen and living quarters. The expense of shipping machinery is prohibitive. But this set-up does give a more colorful background to this story of first-contact.

There are few real dangers from the planet's fauna, unless you eat the meat (which must happen in order for the colony to be as self sufficient as possible). The chemistry of life is copper-based, so supplements are essential. It is when the "tigers," feathered carnivores that look like earth tigers, begin to pounce on the earthmen that the situation and conflict begins.

First-Inners (those who are "First In" on a planet) ruled that there was no intelligent life on the planet. The first criterion of manipulation with tools was not met so the planet was declared safe. But Hashti's encounters with Khan, one of the tigers, told her differently. Hashti, the horsemistress, with the consent of the First-Inners who help guide the colony, decides to go with Khan, learn his language and show that these creatures are indeed intelligent and have a civilization.

Meanwhile, the humans become jittery and the situation explosive as both tigers and humans are killed.

Marti handles several difficult concepts quite well: the tigers' language and methods for learning it, the concept of this alien civilization without manipulative limbs and tools, the interaction of the two cultures symbolized by Hashti and Khan, the conflicts within each culture -- human and tiger. She manages to keep all the balls in the air without dropping any, and comes up with a very good novel. I heartily recommend it, and I look forward to her next one.

This book might be out-of-print now. It will be re-released when Marti's second novel is out this fall.

ODDKINS
A Fable for All Ages

by Dean R. Koontz
Illustrations by Phil Parks

Oddkins are little cuddly toys that are filled with magic, and whose mission in life is to help children weather bad times and grow up to be responsible adults. Opposing the Oddkins are other toys who delight in hurting children. These two forces of good and evil are the heart of this book. Oddkins is, as its subtitle suggests, "A Fable for All Ages."

Isaac Bodkins, the old toymaker is dead. Amos the bear was entrusted with the leadership of the Oddkins to find the replacement toymaker Colleen Shannon, who lives twenty miles away in the city. Opposing them is the former toymaker whose evil creations are now awakening and threaten to stop Amos and company from succeeding. They want Nick Jagg, a criminal just released from prison, to be the next toymaker in power, and have evil rule the toyworld.

The trip to find Ms. Shannon is a hard one. They are subjected to dangers that become object lessons in the narrative. Rex the marionette and leader of the evil toys follows close behind and nearly captures the "good guys", in the end "killing" one of them. The toys' actions are somewhat mirrored by Nick Jagg and Victor Bodkins, Isaac's brother who only wants to sell the toy house and its surrounding land for a profit. But Victor has seen the magic toys and is skeptical when Nick approaches him with more than two million dollars in cash (supplied to him by the forces of evil).

The story is scary, funny and silly, sad and loving, lavishly illustrated in color by Phil Parks, and contains lessons for kids of all ages. When it's released in October, I suggest that you look through it. I think you'll find it appealing.



BUCK GODOT:
PSmIth

by Phil Foglio
Starblaze/Donning, 1987, \$7.95

This is described as "An Illustrated Science Fiction Adventure." It's a comic book, basically, with some interesting ideas and characters.

Buck Godot is a mercenary who is hired to guard some gadget by an unknown alien who pays him very well. Meanwhile, at Asteroid Al's, a bar that Buck and his friends hang out at, a humanoid alien, PSmIth, keeps popping up drunk to accuse Al of killing him and attempts to exact revenge. At the same time, Talikam, of the same species as Al, is trying to get Al to sell his bar.

It all gets somewhat confusing, especially when Buck and Al find out that the PSmIth are clones, and are after the thing Buck is guarding.

The plot is reasonably complex and the art nice, but I found it somewhat tedious to get through. If you happen to like Phil Foglio's art (he is a Hugo winner) you might pick it up for that.

DUNCAN & MALLORY
The Raiders

by Robert Asprin & Mel. White
Starblaze/Donning, 1988, \$7.95

Duncan and Mallory are at it again -- getting into trouble. Their boat runs aground near a village that periodically gets sacked by "The Raiders". Duncan tries to convince the villagers to fight back, but they have their reasons for letting the raiders come and go as they will; it's easier than fighting. Mallory advocates peaceful coexistence too. In scouting ahead to see if the raiders are still around, the two get captured by them. And Duncan is sent to get ransom money for their release.

Back in town, Duncan approaches Bilgewater and Sadie (con artists from the previous two books) in hopes that they'll help (along with Humphrey, the innkeeper this time)--and they do, if only to get part of the "treasure" that Duncan has dreamed up to enlist their cooperation to rescue Mallory.

Mallory, meanwhile, lets himself loose, but the "fantastic four" in disguises get captured and try to get out of it by claiming they wanted to join the raiders. As a test, they get to scout out the village that the raiders are going to sack again -- yes, the one they just raided two days earlier.

From there the story gets sillier, but it's a lot of fun to read. Mel. White's art blends well with Bob Asprin's writing. She puts in a lot of little jokes in the background, and I kept going back to find them because I would get so caught up in the regular story that I would miss them. I enjoyed this much better than Foglio's Buck Godot, and recommend it. Mel. and Bob seem to have kept their liveliness and creativity in this latest of the series. I hope they continue to do so.

THE COMPLETE
Phantom of the Opera

by George Perry
Henry Holt and Company, 1988 (c1987), \$24.95

Maia asked me what I wanted for our wedding anniversary. The question came at a good time. For our engagement anniversary she gave me tapes of The Phantom of the Opera, the original London cast recording. I had listened to them several times while working on and/or collating the Lantern. And the day before she put the question to me I was in a bookstore and spotted George Perry's The Complete Phantom of the Opera. I must have spent 20 minutes paging through the book before putting it back on the stand -- I couldn't afford to get it just then. Considering Maia's question, I didn't have to buy it for myself either.

I feigned surprise when Maia gave it to me. Included, though, was another book: A copy of Gaston Leroux's original novel, The Phantom of the Opera, with original color plates. A nice bonus.

The book is an oversized, "coffee-table" type of production, lavishly illustrated with plates and pictures and paintings. George Perry goes into the background of the French opera theatre, Leroux's life and works and his creation of the Phantom legend, the story's incarnations in film, and finally the operetta by Andrew Lloyd Webber, including the libretto from the musical.

If you are at all interested in the legend of the Phantom, this is the book to get. Leroux was an investigative reporter and researched the building of Le Opera, saw the underground lake and passages, heard about some of the stories connected with the opera house (like the falling of the chandelier which killed one person), and melded them into a fictional story that he claimed was true. Gaston Leroux may well have invented this form of novelization, "faction" writing -- writing a plausible story around actual facts and events.

There is lots of background information about Webber's musical itself: the pre-production, decisions as to the main thrust of the story (it is changed somewhat from Leroux's original, which is still different from the movie versions, but remains closer to Leroux's novel than any other rendition of the story), using Charles Hart as the lyricist (he was a virtual unknown before this, catching the eye of Webber in a musical writer's competition (which he did not even win), the dancing, make-up, costumes, effects, and so on. This last part was of great interest, especially with all the photos from the London stage production, since I have not yet seen the musical.

And then the libretto. Following along with the tape of the show and the libretto made things all fall into place. Gaps in the action, references in the lyrics, were made clear by the intermittent dialogue and stage directions. Now I long to see the complete production. And to read the original novel.

The book is a bit pricey, but well worth it for the information it offers. Excuse me while I page through it again, and sing some of the songs to myself.

Tape & Book Reviews by *Elizabeth Osborne*

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THE SECRET OF DOMINION A Science Fiction Adventure in 13 Episodes

by Susan Bayer and Richard Teneau
From an original concept
by Steven Walter Dudley
Cygnus III Productions, 1987, \$???.??
(PO Box 220096, St. Louis, MO 63122)

The new format of audio book cassettes is a form that is becoming more and more popular. Here we have an original work that is a five hour Scienc Fiction drama. It is a rather standard plot with the evil Dominion warlords, the plucky and brave rebels of Cygnus III, space pirates, cute and nasty robots, super-powerful aliens, a duchess, space rats, wise scientists, and a secret that can bring unlimited power to those who find it. In all, it's quite a bit like the stories written thirty years ago.

This is not a complex tale. The evil empire controls quite a number of solar systems, yet its commanders spend most of their time fighting each other or making dumb mistakes on the battelfield. Our heros make all the right moves and manages to survive the worst events uninjured. The clues to the secret are rather easy to figure out near the end and the result can leave one with more questions than answers. The writers also confuse the terms galaxy, solar system and star system, using one when they mean another. They could have used a better editor.

Despite the problems, the story is interesting in a boo-the-villain type melodrama. It was a pleasant way to spend the five hours it took me to drive from my home to Naples, Florida, and could be a good plot for a film club (if they could do the special effects). I have no idea how much this costs, but it is good mindless fun for a long afternoon.

STRANGERS FROM THE SKY A dramatic reading by Leonard Nimoy and George Takei

by Margaret Wander Bonanno
Simon & Schuster Audioworks, 1987, \$???.??

I have to admit that I read the book before I got the tape, and I still feel that Strangers from the Sky is a dumb story that is not greatly improved in this format. The story itself is better, the result of noticeable cutting of the padding that was in the book, but quite a few of the book's problems remained, including a confusing point of view, two trips back in time, major problems with Star Trek culture, and a character straight out of fantasy who lives inside a pyramid and lives backwards. The story is not helped by having George Takei read all the characters while Leonard Nimoy does only the narrative.

I cannot guess what Simon and Schuster were doing when they picked this story to put on cassette, especially while wonderful works like Yesterday's Son or The Wounded Sky are around. In all, the tape version of Strangers from the Sky has very little improvement over its poor book and should be bought only by those who must buy everything with Trek in it.

THE BEST OF SCIENCE FICTION TV: The Critic's Choice from Captain Video to Star Trek from The Jetsons to Robotech

by John Javana
Harmony Books, 1987, \$???.??

This is the most recent book on the popular subject of science fiction television shows. The result is disappointing to someone who has read the much better Fantastic Television. Javana's book does look at the more recent SF shows -- Amazing Stories, Mork and Mindy (yes, Mork and Mindy), V, The Powers of Matthew Star -- and uses the gimmick of having television critics and SF writers rate the best and worst shows.

The book is divided into three parts: the best, the worst, and cult favorites (everything else). While the book does cover some of the newer shows, many are better covered elsewhere, and all coverage is limited by the small size of the volume. An interesting note is that while the author and the title state that this is the "Critic's Choice" of SF, most of the quotes seem to come from other SF fans and writers rather than professional television critics, and even then the quotes come off as short sentences rather than an in-depth look at SF television.

This is an interesting buy if you want to argue over the choices, but almost any other book can give you more information about any of these shows.

MY SCRAPBOOK MEMORIES OF Dark Shadows

by Kathryn Leigh Scott
Pomegranate Press, Ltd., 1986, \$???.??

Dark Shadows fandom is small compared to other media fandoms, but its fans do have annual conventions around the country and print up fanzines. This is one of the first media books about the series (if one does not count the paperback novels or the comic book) written by Kathryn Leigh Scott who played in the dual role of Maggie Evans and Josette, and many others. This book is a collection of her personal memories as well as information about the program. In addition to describing her life in New York while filming the Dark Shadows program and

the first Dark Shadows movie, she tells how the program was shot and talks about her fellow actors and of her decision to leave the show. Unlike some shows, Dark Shadows has not been written to death so this information is welcome. Scott also includes something I have been looking for for three years: a complete synopsis for the entire run of the series. This includes the lost first six weeks and the famous last season which has never been seen in syndication.

As a final note: I would have been pleased with twice the amount of information I received here, but that is a reaction to just how much I enjoyed this book. If you have any interest at all in the show Dark Shadows, get this book and enjoy.

SCREENING SPACE:

The American Science Fiction Film

by Vivian Sobchack
-----, 198?, \$??.??

This interesting volume on science fiction films is an expanded version of Professor Sobchack's doctoral dissertation. First published in 1980 under the title of The Limits of Infinity: The American Science Fiction Film, this edition has an additional chapter and enlarged bibliography. I know that academic life is tough, but little excuses this rather silly rehash of an older work into a new volume.

The book's older chapters are broken down into themes, the first being an examination of what science fiction is, secondly "The Look of Science Fiction," and finally "The Sounds of Science Fiction." This part of the book deals with films up to 1977, the pre-Star Wars movies. The last chapter, entitled "Postfuturism," is completely new and discusses the SF films of the last decade. The author mostly espouses the views of Fredric Jameson from his work "Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (which I read in order to better understand this book), from which the author quotes extensively.

There is very little interweaving between the two sections of this book. In fact, it looks like the last chapter was simply tacked on to the end of the book. Nor is Fredric Jameson quoted in the older section to the extent that he is in the newer part. Despite this, the author does make some interesting points about recent SF films. She notes the shift away from aliens as unfriendly and dangerous beings, the nostalgia of recent SF films, the "flattering" of space, and the differences between "mainstream" and "independent" films. Such ideas are interesting, to say the least, but they are buried under such political and critical gobbledegook that they fail to enlighten the reader.

So, if you want a very intellectual and political discussion of the genre of science fiction films, especially the last decade's worth, look to this book. It does make some good points, but this is not a popular work and I would not recommend it to anyone except perhaps a college professor who wanted to collect books on this subject. It also has a bibliography and index.

FUTUREVISIONS: The New Golden Age of Science Fiction Film

by Douglas Memville and R. Reginald
-----, 1987, \$??.??

This slim volume is a much more popular work on recent SF films than Screening Space. Written by one of the Memville brothers and Robert Reginald and with an introduction by William F. Nolan, this is a sequel to their book Things to Come: An Illustrated History of the Science Fiction Films. Futurevisions is a close look at the SF films of the past decade up to early 1986. Unlike Vivian Sobchack, the authors do not involve themselves with much editorializing on the genre. Generally, each film or television show is mentioned, and the producer, a list of the major actors and a short outline of the plot are given. The authors may then see fit to give an opinion on the project, but in-depth analysis is rare. The items are listed by year and theme. At the end there is some summing up of all of this and what it means, but the style is still low-key. In all, the authors claim that the SF boom that followed Star Wars is over and hope that better films can and will be made.

There are many black and white pictures, and a bibliography and title index. The only thing more I could have asked for was a little in-depth writing and better editorial control. On one page a photograph is printed upside down. In discussing the movie Coma, Genevieve Bujold's role is described as a nurse, not as an intern.

In short, a quick and easy read. If you don't own any books dealing with the last ten years of SF films, this is one you could easily use and like, but it is a bit of fluff work without any major value.



More Film & Book Reviews

RETREAD SHOP

by T. Jackson King
Warner Books (Questar), 1988, \$3.95

A book review by Marti Steussy

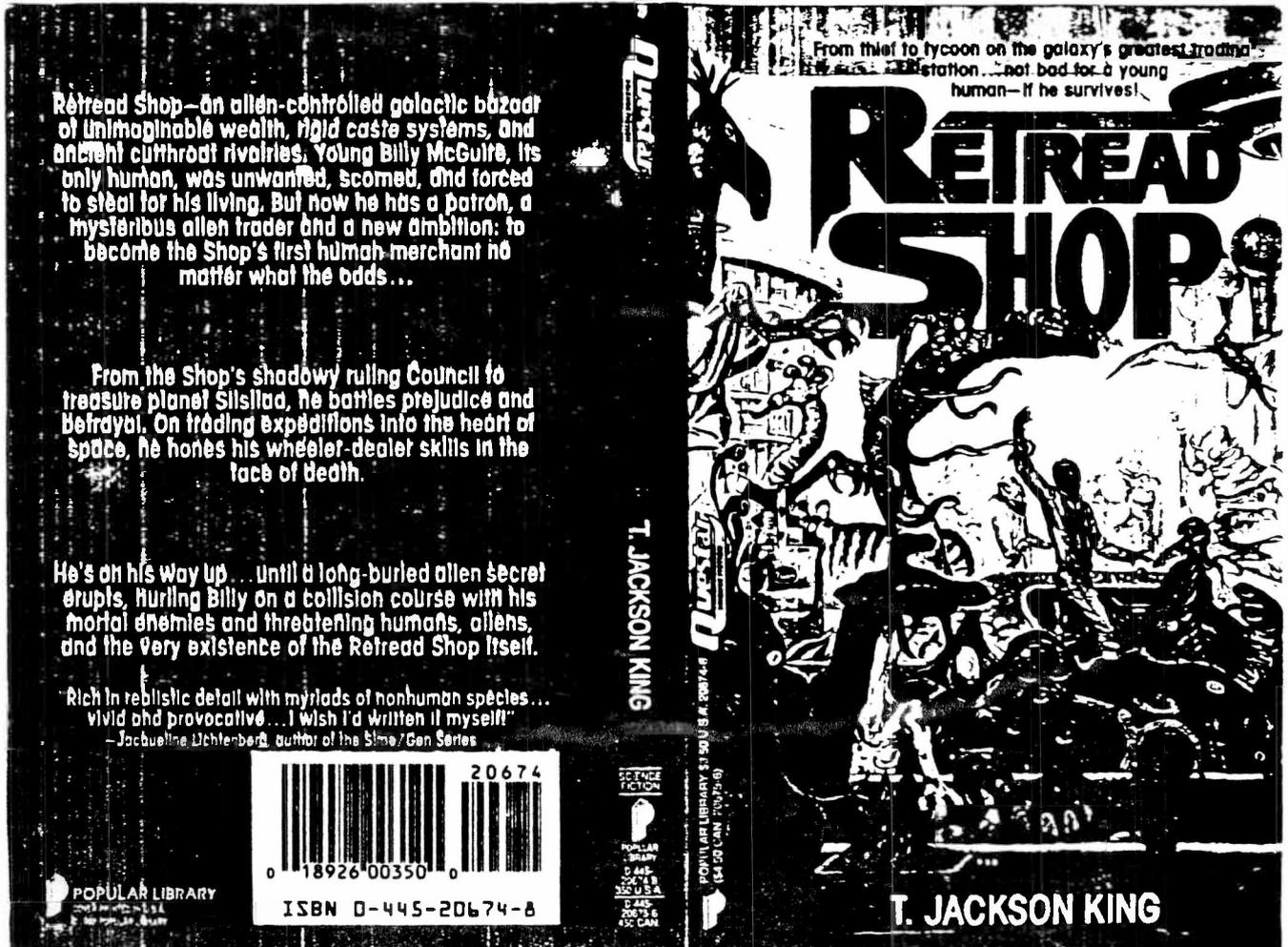
Sentient peoples swarm along the arms of the Milky Way, scavenging the debris of past civilizations. At vast interstellar stations they gather to analyze and refurbish their finds; trade supplies, artifacts, and information; and jockey for position in the race of survival. Sixteen-year-old Billy McGuire sleeps among the compressor pipes of such a Retread Shop. Can he beg, barter, or steal enough to keep himself alive?

Billy's plight evokes instant sympathy; his rise through the Shop's interspecies Trader's Guild makes for a gritty, action-filled story. This reviewer found herself most caught by Billy's loneliness (tough to be the only Human, especially when teenage hormones flare) and his relationships to the aliens who sometimes befriend, sometimes exploit him. Others will enjoy the shop's tough ethos (TANSTAAFL) or the high-tech gadgets Billy moves among (ready for Deut-Li drives? maglev disks? personal gravity fields? memory crystals?).

As the cover reveals, the Shop harbors a plethora of aliens, including telepathic, panda-like Melisay who shares her memories with Nilly; Zekzek the curious blue-leaved bush; Flickering-Blue-Embers who feeds on the death screams of dying sapients; and the bright-orange, salamanderish Tet who threatens Billy's dreams. My own favorite was Trader Ding do-wort (with a husband nearly always atop her), who greets Billy with the order, "Tell me, Human, what is the meaning of existence?" (Read the book to discover Ding's own proposal.) Shop pans across dozens of species without covering them in depth; I hop future books treat a few of these non-human cultures more extensively.

In this first published novel, King shows fertile imagination and a sense for action. His prose is occasionally clumsy but always clear. Shop will appeal to readers who like exotic aliens, high technology and a fast pace -- or those with a soft spot in for orphans. All of us can look forward to the authors next book, Alien Blood, due out from Warner in 1989.

The Author Writes: I promise to mail a signed bookplate to anyone who buys a copy of Retread Shop and lets me know by way of a postcard sent to:



T. Jackson King
c/o Popular Library
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

I welcome all comments, pro and con. Before I wrote and sold two SF novels (Shop is the first to come out), I read SF for 30 years -- ever since the fourth grade. I write the kind of SF I enjoyed reading as a young person, and I write it to be read and enjoyed by other folk.

I welcome any Lantern readers to drop by and see me at bookstores in Portland, Bend and Medford, Oregon, where I will be signing books in August. I will also be attending the Worldcon in September. Fans are welcome to look me up in New Orleans.

THE DARK LADY

by Mike Resnick
1987, TOR, \$3.50

A book review by Sharon Porath

How many of you out there have read this one? Raise your hands. Now -- how many of you understood the ending? Anybody? No?

Me neither.

Seriously, THE DARK LADY is a good read, with an interesting theme, and a well-developed alien protagonist. Leonardo is an alien art expert, and a member of a race which sets virtually all its value on the House and the society, and none on the individual. His gradually evolving views as he interacts with strong-willed and individualistic Ter-rans provide an interesting subplot, though like the primary plot, it seems to come to no satisfactory conclusion.

The main story is Leonardo's search for a Dark Lady who has been the subject of portraits for thousands of years. The one thread common to all her appearances is that she seemed to visit only male humans in imminent risk of death. As he follows the clues that establish her physical existence, he is simultaneously searching for the meaning behind her appearances ... behind her very existence. The book builds to a final astonishing revelation, which unfortunately is astonishing primarily in its obscurity.

Through the book, I developed numerous theories -- and discarded all of them. Was she a personification of death? Too obvious. Some vampire-type thing that feeds on death? Wrong feel. By the time the two plot lines came together (as much as they were ever going to), I thought perhaps she was a symbol of men's undying individualism -- the willingness to risk everything in order to be what they want to be.

At the end of the book, Leonardo has it all figured out.

I still don't.

NIGHTFLYERS

A film review by Danny Low

This movie is based on the George R.R. Martin story of the same name. Despite high production values and decent actors, this is

definitely a grade B movie. There was an elaborate promotion of the movie at CONSTELLATION, but the movie got the usual B movie distribution. It was released to the theaters for a very brief run and quickly released on videotape.

The film is remarkably true to the original story. Of necessity, much of the detail that a written story can be filled with are eliminated to fit within the constraints imposed by a movie. For example, the detailed information on the volcryns and Karoly D'Branin's search for them has been deleted. A voice-over in the beginning does explain that the purpose of the expedition is to contact the volcryns and hints that they may not exist. In all, a very good translation of the written story to the cinema.

Judged on its own merits, this is a well-done entertaining movie. Compared to the original story the movie is a failure. The basic problem is that the movie is not scary at all. This is fatal, as the basic plot is a haunted house story. The "feel" of the movie is that of an action story. It is interesting to watch the movie and see that all the details of the original story are translated correctly to the screen and yet, the atmosphere of the original story is totally missing. Instead of a group of humans facing a deadly ghost, the story is of a group of humans facing an unknown but material menace. The ending was changed to be a happy one. This further destroys the haunted atmosphere of the original story. However, the whole tone of the original story was lost once the expedition entered the ship's lounge. The decor is totally inappropriate. The background music is inappropriate. Only the dimness of the sets is correct. Alien showed that a haunted house story can be done in a spaceship so the task is not impossible.

The movie is worthwhile watching. It is just not the same story that Martin wrote, despite the faithful rendering of his words.

HITLER VICTORIOUS

by Gregory Benford
and Martin Harry Greenberg
Berkeley, 1987, \$3.95

A book analysis by Clifton Amsbury

Reviewer's Note: This analysis of Hitler Victorious is NOT from a literary or aesthetic point of view, but a content and likelihood analysis. You might say, a lack of suspension of disbelief.

It is indeed ironic that having chosen such a name, the editors and publishers chose to lead off with C. M. Kornbluth's "Two Doms." The Hitler of this story was "an imposter," early eliminated from a world whose departure-point from ours was obviously before 1930. A point apologized for by Benford was Kornbluth's Hopi Reservation near the Los Alamos mesa. Well, the Hopi were way over in Arizona, but there were pueblos very close (5 or 10 miles) and an old Hopi could have been living in any of

them. You see, Kornbluth needed a Hopi for the language peculiarity he used for time/dimension travel. His world, starting far enough back, might have worked. Sometime around 1931 or 33, Stalin told his Central Committee that if the Soviet Union did not become a foremost industrial nation within ten years, they were doomed. They barely made it. They didn't have ten years. Without the extra years they bought when Chamberlain threw them to the Nazis, modern history would have been very different.

"The Fall of Frenchy Steiner" is a bit different. It's a world where they did invade England, or make a political settlement, and the US was not brought into the war. The predicted breakup on Hitler's death is wishful thinking, but revolts could have been triggered.

Greg Bear sidestepped all of that with his little "let's go back and try it over" fantasy. Nice to think of, but the original Axis world is not so nice, so I'd prefer to skip it.

"Weinachtsabend" is a fairly standard non-Retief Keith Laumer adventure/nobility tale, told with his usual competence and laid in a combined German-English empire under fascist leadership and with King Edward VIII as king of England, presumably connected to his ties with the English fascist, Mosley. Laumer has used the combined European monarchy and a neverfascist Herman Goering in the Imperium series. It is unclear whether the negotiated union was before or after 1939. Certainly the alternate future split off before then in order that Edward remain king.

"Thor Meets Captain America" is not only an alternate world, it's fantasy and has no victorious Hitler. But it's a fascinating study.

"Moon of Ice," Brad Linaweaver's Goebbels monologue, has passages which hold interest, but most of it is talky and boring. It is, however, a tour de force in the sense that in the end you don't know whether the author despised or admired the Joseph Goebbels he created here, or the one he assumed existed in Nazi Germany.

"Jewish Question" and "Final Solution," however, we do not know about. Nurtured through the Middle Ages, on hold during much of the century of Prussian militarism and (after 1870) an additional half-century of militarism of the German Empire, anti-Semitism came together with that discipline and other of the rich ancient symbolisms of Nazi propaganda. Germans were schooled through attacks on Communists, Socialists, and Jews to destroy both labor organization and intellectual internationalism. The program produced the nation of "Good Germans," most of whom were both victims and contributors to their own victimization. But we who have lived through all these years of Reaganism with consistent scores of "Reagan is doing a good job," we have no cause to look down our noses at "Good Germans."

All but a postscript of this story purports to be "Entries from the Diary of Dr. Joseph Goebbels," yet in one passage he records without comment that during a conversation he is addressed as "herr Goebbels." I recall a mild-mannered, pleasant European

anthropologist -- a Netherlander, not even a German -- who was livid with rage because someone to whom he had introduced himself as "Doctor" had later addressed him as "Mister." And Ursula Le Guin, in the days when she wasted some of her precious writing time by participating in correspondence, once excused Stanislaw Lem's unpleasantries by stating that "he plays the European scholarly game." I assured her that it was not a game -- it's deadly serious.

"Reichs-peace" a negotiated German-British coalition against the Soviet Union -- rings true. I also like the anti-fantasy angle. The American isolationist (i.e., profascist) angle I also accept, but not the anti-technology development. "Anything can happen," but at any particular time the preceding situations only allow certain subsequent "alternates." That one seems doubtful to me, but it's inherent in the story-line, so be it. Remember the name: Sheila Finch!

"Never Meet Again" by Algis Budrys rings true. It is indeed a story of possible alternates.

Howard Goldsmith's "Do You Hear the Children Weeping?" is a well-done "non-fantasy" horror tale in a Germany with Nazis still in power and the death-camps a bad memory they were trying to live down. Except when they lost, they simply repudiated and denied such memories; it's well done.

"Enemy Transmissions," Tom Shippey's "first piece of fiction" is written around the idea that the second Anschluss (England and Germany) was based upon German development of atom bombs and of jet fighters which swept away both US and British bombers. Those (and the action of the story) were based upon a method of dreaming the future, or dreaming from the future. (Such an idea that dreams, or many dreams, are visions of future events actually exists.) This story also, like some others here, suggests that later Germans in an Axis World are revolted at suggestions of death camps and beatings to death. Either they never happened or have been washed out of history. Odd, I was raised on the glories of wiping out "hostiles and runnagates." Lynchings were not really approved of in Kansas and California, but they did happen in Omaha and San Jose.

The other kind of revulsion inspires Gregory Benford's "Valhalla," of an android tempter come to the Hitler Bunker to entice Hitler forward to a people of an alternate future. These future folk wish a scape-goat Hitler from the falling bunker to punish for the sins of the Hitler of their own past. Sounds like the Demjanjuk trial proceeding to the accompaniment of the shootings and beatings in occupied Palestine. But of course, it was written a year or two ago.

Norman Spidrad wrote in the Introduction: "the Nazis directly inflicted their reality not upon the English-speaking world but on the vast checkerboard of peoples and cultures between the Pyrenees and the Urals." Spinrad and I have had other differences over the Nazi history, notably when he challenged my pointing out that Hitler was never elected; he was appointed. In this case he might be challenged by the corpse of Guernica and Coventry and by the statistics of war-resources shipped from Franco's Spain

and Salazar's Portugal to feed the German "reality." There are also the South African Nazis who have become the government of South Africa and the embittered European Zionists who became terrorists in postwar Palestine and are now the government of Israel.

When Spinrad says, "It does not seem likely that Hitler deliberately set out to do evil by his own lights," it raises questions about us. When our government finances terrorists who concentrate on schools and hospitals, while our own health and education services are on the one hand starved for funding and on the other hand priced for the wealthy only, what are we to think of it? Evil, of course.

When a tobacco Institute executive says that the industry's strategy is to create "doubt about the health charges without actually denying it," what are we to think? The same as with the Nazis: "no petty lies; their too obvious."

On other things we agree, though our data bases may exhibit differences; statistics and unemployment, for instance. He mentions putting them in the army. I have the figures for Vienna. Similarly with the US. Before WWII our labor leaders consistently charged that our official figures on unemployment were far too low. At least four times since WWII the methods of preparing those figures have been changed to reduce the count. At least three of those were by Republican administrations, and the most drastic was under Reagan.

Vienna? Well:



UNEMPLOYMENT IN VIENNA
(Official figures before and after Anschluss)

Jan 1938 (Schuschnigg)	138,000	
(Paid 50 pfennig a week and found)		
Jan 1939 (Hitler)	97,000	
Unemployment reduced by - - - - -	41,000	
Mobilized for Army - - - - -	33,000	
Mobilized for SS and SA - - - - -	9,700	42,700
Concentration Camps and Prisons - - -	12,000	
Arbeitsdienst (Rural Labor Service)- -	31,500	43,500
Sent to Germany for fortification work-	- - -	10,000
Non-Aryan Christians discharged - - - -	- - -	79,000
(But counted as unemployed)		175,200

(And Jews, Fired, but not even mentioned.)

So there were liars, damn liars, and statisticians. And now we have people who use printouts from computers.

The 5 ^{Best} _{Worst} Science Fiction TV Shows of All Time

An article by Alan David Laska

Television has been with us since the late 1940s, and there have been thousands of TV programs -- some good, some bad, and a few that the networks would like to forget. Out of the history of television have come a few science fiction programs -- some good, some bad.... The following is a list of what I consider the best and worst of television SF. You may agree or disagree with my choices, but that's fandom.

* * * * *

The BEST of TV Science Fiction

- 1) The Twilight Zone, CBS-TV 1959-1964. Half-hour series, one-hour in the 1962-63 season. 151 episodes.

Created by the late Rod Serling, The Twilight Zone was one of the few television series that became a bit of "Americana." This show which won several Emmy Awards as well as SF's Hugo Award is still as enjoyable today as it was when it first premiered on CBS back in 1959. Although not a big ratings success, its influence is felt today in its inspiration of many new science fiction writers and producers.

Unfortunately, the Twilight Zone film, released in 1983 and based on several of the original TV episodes, was a flop. Only one of the stories, a remake of "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" starring John Lidglo in the part originally done by William Shatner, captured the spirit of the series.

In 1985, CBS-TV decided to do a second generation of the original series. The network got Harlan Ellison to be the head writer and creative consultant. Unfortunately, problems of creativity developed after CBS forced an episode -- written and directed by Harlan Ellison -- to be scrapped in the middle of filming. Ellison quit in protest, and the quality of the stories went downhill after that.

Still, the original 1959-64 series is the best of TV science fiction, as well as television overall.

- 2) The Outer Limits, ABC-TV, 1963-1964. One hour series. 48 episodes.

This science fiction series was created by Leslie Stevens and had an unusual opening. Each program started with the words: "There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling...." Something like this would get the viewers' attention.

Many of the scripts were of a more serious nature than the combination of humor and drama that The Twilight Zone used. The first show, "The Galaxy Being," became an instant classic. Other classic episodes included

"The Sixth Finger," "Soldier," "Demon with a Glass Hand," and "The Zanti Misfits." ABC-TV renewed the series for a second year and ran it against the highly-rated The Jackie Gleason Show on Saturday, which of course caused The Outer Limits to be cancelled in mid-season.

There has been some talk going around Hollywood about making an Outer Limits Motion Picture. No one seems to know the exact status on this.

- 3) Star Trek, NBC-TV, 1966-1969. One-hour series. 78 Episodes.

I can probably say a hundred things about this program and people will tell me that I didn't say enough. Created by Gene Roddenberry, this show became a classic more and more after it went off the air in 1969. Star Trek never scored high in the Neilson Ratings; it stayed on the air mostly because of viewer support.

After the second year, NBC-TV wanted to cancel the show, but a letter-writing campaign kept it on for another year. After the third year, more than a million letters poured into NBC-TV's offices. Unfortunately, the network paid more attention to the ratings than the mail. It is rumored that some network people were fired because of this.

In 1975, the new NBC-TV show Saturday Night Live did a spoof on the cancelling of the series called "The Final Voyage of the Starship Enterprise" which became a classic itself among Star Trek fans.

After four successful motion pictures since 1979, two which were directed by Leonard Nimoy who played Mr. Spock, there is a fifth movie in the works, and Star Trek: The Next Generation has been renewed for another season.

Need I say more?

- 4) Doctor Who, BBC-TV syndicated in the USA mostly on PBS-TV stations, 1963-present.

This import from England has the honor of being the longest running science fiction series in history. The series started out as something like a trip through history, but later changed when, in one episode, the "Daleks" were introduced as one of the Doctor's enemies. This sparked more stories about other worlds and space travel.

The producers came up with a method to keep the show and main character going. When the actor playing Dr. Who left the series, his body -- since he was from another planet -- would regenerate into a different form along with a difference in his character and habits. There have been a total of seven different actors playing the role of "The Doctor", the latest being Sylvester McCoy.

The only fault of the program is the low

quality of special effects and sets because everything is on a shoestring budget, but this is offset by the witty and clever scripts and stories.

Now the show is going into its 25th year and hopefully will go on for another 25.

Jelly babies anyone?

- 5) The Prisoner, ITC Productions released in the USA on CBS-TV in 1968. 17 episodes.

Unlike most of the shows that have appeared on television, The Prisoner was a limited run series. This show was a summer replacement for the highly popular The Jackie Gleason Show. Created by Patrick McGoohan, the story takes place in a mysterious place called "The Village." Patrick McGoohan plays a resigned secret agent who finds himself in The Village where he is given the name "Number 6."

McGoohan, who wrote and directed some of the episodes, has said that his series is not science fiction. I wonder....

Some people have said that the show is a version of a 1984 society in the future, and others say that the show has a different way of showing the freedom we take for granted is not really freedom at all.

A little known fact about the series was that the "Rovers", the large weather balloons that keep people in The Village, was originally a hovercraft. According to the story, the day before shooting (at the grounds of the Hotel Portmeirion at Pehrhyndeuadraeth in North Wales) the production company took the hovercraft out for a test on the ocean when mechanical problems occurred. As a result, the craft sunk to the bottom of the sea.

The Hovercraft Rover which cost quite a bit was not replaceable and sinking the day before the bog shoot was extremely difficult on morale. One of the heads of the film company saw a weather balloon launched from the nearby government weather station and decided to use those things as Rovers. A quick trip to the weather station and buying a lot of the balloons saved the series. The weather balloons had advantages over the hovercraft; they could be put inside, go down narrow streets, and were easier to operate.

The WORST of TV Science Fiction

- 1) Misfits of Science, NBC-TV, 1985-1986. One hour series.

This was a sort of super hero type program. Some of the main characters of the program had strange powers: one could shrink himself, another was electrically charged (due to a faulty electric guitar, another was so used to the cold he spent most of the time in the refrigerator (maybe he could answer the question if the little light goes out).

This was so bad that some of the television critics who saw preview screenings of it said it wouldn't be on long, and it wasn't.

- 2) Voyagers, NBC-TV, 1982-1983. One hour series.

This program was an educational series which seemed to combined The Time Tunnel with Time Bandits. A special time-traveling repairman named Phineas Bogg lands accidentally outside his assigned time frame, picking up a young boy in the process and losing his guidebook which tells him what to do. Phineas Bogg looks like a clone of Han Solo and even acts a little like him. The young boy named Jeffrey Jones is a history buff and tells him what to do.

The writers of the program apparently knew little about history (or writing, for that matter). For example, Douglas McArthur was in the Phillipines when Pearl Harbor was bombed, the first pictures of the Apollo 11 walk were in black & white not color, and the Wright Brothers were one of many people working on motorized flight; they happened to get theirs off the ground first and with evidence to back up their claim.

The bad news was that at the time a certain right-wing religious group claimed the show was too violent (WHAT VIOLENCE???), but the good news was that educators said the program distorted some things about history.

Time ran out on this program.

- 3) Galactica: 1980, ABC-TV. One hour show.

When Battlestar: Galactica appeared in 1978, it was one of the most expensive series at the time. It was cancelled after one year, but fans of the show used a letter-writing campaign to try to force the network to change its mind. Producer Glen Larson also lobbied for a second chance.

In January, 1980, the series called Galactica: 1980 premiered, and most of the original cast (Lorne Green opted out) were still with the show. The budget was cut, and, being in the 7:00 PM (EST) time-slot, the show had to be more educational for children. It was a disaster in everything; even the fans did not like the new format.

In a 1983 edition of the now-defunk magazine, Fantastic Film, William Adams had an article called "Who Kill the Galactica?" While doing research for it, he found that Battlestar: Galactica was ranked only 24th in the Neilsen Ratings compared to Star Trek which was 52nd when it was on NBC-TV. In his article Mr. Adams says that BG did not make as much money as ABC-TV was looking for and thus dropped the show. When mail and complaints about the show's cancellation piled up, the network came up with a different format so cheap in budget and script quality that even the die-hard fans dropped the "complaint flood" they (ABC-TV) were getting. Apparently the ABC-TV network did not think too highly of the new format to start with; the title suggested how long they expected it to last.

Unfortunately, some books about television have said Battlestar: Galactica and Galactica: 1980 were one and the same show, which, of course, they are not. Today fans don't even mention Galactica: 1980 in their club meetings. Some wish it had never happened.

- 4) Whiz Kids, CBS-TV, 1983-1984. One hour show.

This program was apparently an attempted effort to get the thrill and excitement of Universal's hit film Wargames of the 1983 summer movie season onto TV. This program was about a group of young computer hackers who help the police and a friendly reporter of the local newspaper solve crimes. What this program really needed was a technical advisor and somebody who knew more about computers than the producers and writers.

In one episode a criminal was using the police mobile computer systems to sabotage response time to an area where crime was occurring. The kids made a radio direction finder and located exactly where the crook's transmitter is. The writers did not know anything about electronics; you need two radio direction finders to get this information. One will only tell what direction the transmission is coming from -- either from the next block or the next county.

In another episode we see the kids using a computer terminal in the local police station squad room (they did not have permission from anybody) and in full view of the officers in the room. Didn't one of the policeman ask, "What are you kids doing here?" or "Who gave you permission to use our terminals?" If security at the local station is so lax, no wonder the police have so many problems.

This program was cancelled by the computerized Neilson Ratings system. SYNTAX ERROR.

5) Project: UFO, NBC-TV, 1978-1979. One hour series.

In December, 1977, the movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind came out. Because of the heavy advanced publicity months before it was released, it seemed appropriate to have a television show about the subject of UFOs. The late Jack Webb, who had produced shows like Dragnet, Adam-12, etc., came up with a program based on the files of the US Air Force Project: Bluebook called

Project: UFO. The show made one believe, "Oh, they're going to take actual cases and recreate them." Unfortunately this was not the case, though it would have been much better if Jack Webb had done it that way.

The show was based on 30% fact and 70% fiction. And if that wasn't bad enough, the writers took several cases that were either several miles and years apart and tried to link the sightings together. Also, many of the stories based on actual cases were given an unexplained answer to which there were logical explanations, and vice-versa.

The late astronomer and UFO expert Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who served as scientific advisor to the USAF Project: Bluebook for its entire 22 year history and as technical advisor to Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters film, said this about the series: "The Air Force's Project: Bluebook was more of a public relations department and the government did not investigate cases like that in the series. Very little on-the-sight investigation was done (if any at all)." Jack Webb did hire Ol. William T. Coleman (ret.) as producer to the series. Coleman worked for Project: Bluebook as public relations officer, but only for about nine months in that USAF department.

This was a mid-season program and was renewed for the 1978-1979 season, which also turned out to be its last year. Some UFO investigators and experts who have seen the program said that Jack Webb should have stuck to police shows. Project: UFO became Reject: UFO (in quality) and disappeared from the television screen without a trace.

* * * * *

NOTE: Before 1977 when the movie Star Wars hit the movie theaters and told people in Hollywood that there was a market for science fiction material, the 1965-68 CBS-TV series Lost in Space was considered to be the worst. Since then, the networks came up with some real losers, and Lost in Space can now feel safe and sound.

the GENETIC ENGINEER'S BESTIARY

by Kurt Erichsen

Corn + Bald Eagle
+ Chicken



HUGGING

a short demo

Researched by Jet Thomas

[The narrator should look something like Dr. Hellstrom in the Hellstrom Chronicles. He should wear a lab coat and carry a clipboard or lab notebook which may really contain notes and prompts. He should maintain a dry, deadpan style, until the section on rejection when he may be consoling, and gradually rising excitement toward the end. The female model should feel like she looks gorgeous. This is more important than for her photo to look pretty to someone who didn't know her. Everyone else should build up her self-confidence before the demonstration. She may wear whatever she likes. The male model should be a good actor, capable of expressing eager anticipation, rutting lust, physical anguish, and bleak despair. In a pinch the narrator may fill this role also. In this case he should make lightning transitions from model emotional display to lecturer clinical detachment.]

Here is a quick rundown on one of the rituals of fandom, hugging.

What does it mean to hug someone? The only possible answer in fandom is: "It depends." Some people don't hug anybody they're not married to at the moment. Some people hug everybody who holds still for it. There are probably some people who are very promiscuous who don't hug anybody in public, while some people who hug a lot are quite chaste. It isn't safe to assume anything about someone who hugs you or doesn't hug you, beyond the fact itself. If you want to get things clear, you'd better ask or something.

It's much better not to hug someone unless they want to be hugged. But people may still hug you when you don't want them to. It's your responsibility to discourage this. When our customs are broken it's bad for all of us.

There are several rituals designed to teach people not to hug those who don't want it. First, if a man touches a woman any way she doesn't want him to, she can scream "Don't Touch Me!" and cringe. He'll be very embarrassed and will probably slink off. [Demonstrate.] If he doesn't stop, lots of men will be eager for the chance to protect the woman. (1)

If the woman doesn't want to attract attention, she can discourage him quietly. She reaches down to his inner thigh. He likely misunderstands at this point. Then she pinches him hard on the upper inner thigh. He feels very vulnerable. Then she smiles maliciously. [Demonstrate. Audience shouldn't see anything except perhaps sudden look of

shock on man, woman's malicious smile.] He's certain to treat her with a great deal more respect in the future. (2)

If a woman hugs a man and he doesn't want her to, he must be more subtle. Women have delicate egos and can't stand rejection. If you scream you can't expect other women to rescue you and if you pinch her she might misunderstand. You'll just be getting in deeper. No, you want to discourage her without making it plain that you're rejecting her. Be awkward. Breathe in her face. Step on her foot. Kiss her on the mouth, but miss and plant a big, wet kiss on her nose. In extreme cases you might slobber over her. Try not to accidentally gross out spectators that you'd like to hug later. [Maybe an underplayed demo? Or really stylized oafishness?] (3)

Plainly it's risky to hug people who don't want to be hugged. Of course, you can take those risks if you want. But you don't have to. Luckily, fandom has rituals set up to let you know when to hug. If you want to hug someone, first get her attention. Then make the first tentative movements toward hugging. If she makes similar movements, relax. She'll come closer and hug you. If not, maybe she doesn't want to hug you and maybe she didn't notice. You decide whether you want to let it go at that or else make sure she notices. [Demonstrate. Exaggerate for teaching purposes.]

If someone shows that he wants to hug you and you don't want him to, the polite thing is not to notice. [Burlesque demonstration: Man spreads arms unmistakably, crouches slightly, puckers lips; woman says (for example), "Oh, look! Out the window! Is it a bird or a plane?"] If he persists, you can make it gradually clear that you are ignoring him. Or you can get the point across quicker by hugging someone else, using the same signals. A third way, which seems unkind but which is usually taken better, is to respond reluctantly. Hesitate, reluctantly stiffly hug him, back off. Then it's clear that you aren't just choosing to snub him. You really don't feel like it. He got what he thought he wanted and it wasn't fun.

If you find out for sure that someone doesn't want to hug you, it's only natural to feel bad about it. It's natural, but not good. Remember there's no agreement that hugging has any particular meaning. The person who didn't hug you has lost out on a good experience: It's their loss. Don't give it much thought. Don't take it too seriously. It's better not to keep score. Best of

all, if you keep your signal so subtle that she might not have noticed it, then not thinking about it is easier. Also, it's less likely that other people noticed. If the one you want to hug doesn't notice, though, you won't get hugged.

So, if you aren't sure if someone is making such a signal, but you want them to, you can give the signal back, but a little bit stronger. Then if they respond stronger still, and you make it stronger, pretty soon someone will be sure. Some people recommend starting out so slight that even you don't know whether you're doing it or not. I think this is carrying things to extremes. But it works. If both people want to hug, they'll do it and no one can tell who made the first signal, and if they don't hug no one feels rejected. [Demonstrate. Again, slow motion and exaggerated, going slowly from something that no one can tell is happening to something they can tell, so gradually that no one can say when they knew.]

These are customs of fandom, but like most fannish customs, if you do it your own way nobody will get after you for not following the custom, unless they feel like it. These ways work, and if you come up with something else that works for you, use it if you like the results. As Bjorn of the Laes-

* * * * *

CONCLAVE XII

An Essay by Alexander Bouchard

CONCLAVE XII, with Gene Wolfe as Pro GoH, Joey Shoji as Fan GoH, and a display by the National Space Society, was held at the Southfield Hilton in Southfield, Michigan, on the 9th, 10th and 11th of October, 1987. This is the second convention of the Detroit-area major triad (CONCLAVE, CONFUSION and CONTRAPTION) that was held at this hotel.

From what I saw of the convention, it ran well and smoothly; some of the panels were running on Fannish Standard Time, and there were a few problems with not being able to find the location of the Art Show, or the gamers, or a panel you particularly wanted to see, but many of the problems were addressed by the concom at the bitch session on Sunday. As they said, "We're still breaking in the hotel." We'll see how CONFUSION fares in January.

The hotel had no complaints about the con, or about any of the parties. This was a definite change from the first BALTICON I attended in 1978 where drunken SCA people from Johns Hopkins were having swordfights with naked steel in the hallways of the Hilton on Reisterstown Road. Also, there was no furniture thrown out of the windows, no vomiting in the elevators, no urinating in the ice machines, and no rampant techies dismantling an elevator master control in the lobby at 3 AM.

The major complaint I heard about the hotel was that there was no indoor pool. The concom said that all Hilton hotels are being

trygonians told Space Captain Roadstrum, "There are no rules. We do whatever seems the most fun." (4)

(1) The primary researcher found this phase of data-collection to be intensely embarrassing, and wishes the results to be published widely in hope that no one else ever must independently replicate the work.

(2) This phase suffers from a small sample. The primary researcher became increasingly unwilling to repeat the experiment.

(3) This phase suffered from a lack of experimental subjects. There were not enough undesirable women who wanted to hug the researcher. Limited research with desirable subjects tended to confirm the hypothesis, but was too expensive to follow up.

(4) Literary note: The Roadstrum quote is from Space Chantey by R.A. Lafferty, page 27 of the Ace Double edition, 1968. It is taken out of context; the original continues, "Fight where you will. We like to come zooming at each other on the stone slabs and transfix each other with our spears as we crash together." This surely doesn't have anything to do with us, now does it?

upgraded, enclosing their outdoor pools, or building new indoor ones. It's just a question of when the funds will be available to the hotel. The concom said that letters mentioning this will be forwarded to the Hilton management for consideration as to when funds will be cut loose. (So write, already!) The address is:

Southfield Hilton
17017 W. Nine Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48075
Attn: Manager

I missed the GoH speeches and the performance by Moebius Theater of Chicago, which I was told were both very good. I saw the opening ceremonies, with the Fish and Ships Players, starring Julia Ecklar, with the Enterprise crew as guests of "Donahue." I laughed quite a lot.

There was quite a bit of huckster room space, and it was effectively utilized. There was no crowding that I could see, and no major traffic bottlenecks. The program room used for the opening ceremonies, GoH speeches, Moebius Theater performances and masquerade ball was very nice and of sufficient size. The Art Show used its space well, despite an inconvenient location which was not director Mark Bernstein's fault.

All in all, my opinion of this year's CONCLAVE was a good one. Let's see if the other major Detroit conventions can live up to this one.



Tape & Book Reviews by *Maia*

ALTERNITIES

by Michael P. Kube-McDowell
1988, Ace, \$3.95

PRELUDE: TOMORROW'S PROMISE
CODA: THOUGHTS OF YESTERDAY

Thor Records, 1988, \$9.00 each
(P.O. Box 40312, Downey, CA 90241)

Tapes reviewed by Maia Cowan

These two anthology tapes mix folk and folk, somber and side-splitting. CODA has a few too many ballads with repetitive lyrics for my taste, but it also has Larry Warner's wicked "Houseguests" (complete with side comments by the elves), and the even wickeder "A Chat with Your Mother," along with more serious songs.

PRELUDE has a sprightly rendition of an old favorite, "The Richter Scale," the thoroughly irreverent "Alfred G. Packer Memorial Cafeteria Theme Song," and Jordin Kare's stirring "Fire in the Sky," along with other satisfying songs, both serious and silly.

Performers include Kathy Mar, Technical Difficulties, Jordin Kare, Mary Ellen Wessels, and Peter Thiessen; their names should be familiar to all dedicated folkers, though their voices are too seldom heard outside their home territories. The tapes are a showcase not just for the musicians and songwriters, but for Chris Thorsen's considerable technical skill. The sound is clear and as well-balanced as the selections. This is the first I've heard of Thor Records, but I certainly hope to hear more!

[[Editor's note: Kathy Mar has just finished a new tape for Thor Records called Plus Ca Change. The release of this new tape is NOLACON II, so look for it at the 1988 Worldcon. Michael Kube-McDowell plays viola and sings back-ups for Kathy; other back-up singers include Mary Ellen Wessels, Larry Warner, and Gwen Zak.]]

Alternities combines a classic science fiction concept with contemporary cynicism towards politicians to create a fast-moving thriller.

"Alternities" are alternate realities, from which the United States government of the Home Alternity "imports" technology, and occasionally scientists, in an attempt to bolster its steadily declining status in world affairs. When it becomes clear that this is not enough to counter the Soviet Union's growing dominance -- and perceived arrogance -- the President's advisers convince him that another Alternity would make the ultimate bomb shelter.

The reader sees very little of the various Alternities, but enough to understand their differences, and particularly the points at which the histories diverged. Kube-McDowell concentrates on the people caught up in the events: Walter Endicott, who stumbles into the Home Alternity and has the strength to make a place for himself but not the strength to come to terms with the implications of multiple realities; Rayne Wallace, a low-status National Resource Center employee whose sojourns in the other Alternities give him an escape from an unsatisfying marriage; Ruthann Wallace, increasingly frustrated by her husband's withdrawal and the limited opportunities her world allows her; President Peter Robinson, high on charm but low on wisdom; Gregory O'Neill, the only one of the President's advisers to hold personal honor higher than national prestige.

None of these are particularly likable people, but they are complex and completely human. I couldn't always keep track of exactly what was happening, and why, but I could always understand why people like these would behave as they do.

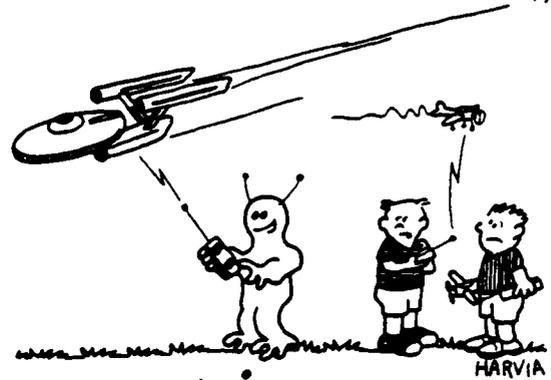
Alternities is not a cheerful book; in fact, at times it seems more pessimistic than otherwise. But individual integrity achieves small victories in the face of seemingly uncontrollable circumstances, and that may be the whole point of the story.



SF

Fandom:

The Next Generation



An essay by Kathleen Gallagher

It's happening, and it didn't take 100 years or four feature films. It's more like 9 months on the average. Fandom is spawning, and bringing their children to cons. Little or no consideration is being given to fan-nish parents.

Fandom is growing up, growing older, and taking seriously its biological imperative to go forth and multiply. As a result, fan-nish parents are accompanied by a variety of young fen.

If no child care is provided at a con, those of us who multiplied (and hot with a calculator) are at the mercy of our biological reproductions. If the kid is good, we get to see the con. If the kid is normal, we get to spend the weekend in our rooms. Like many fen, I don't go to cons to spend the weekend in a hotel room. (Maybe those who take their biological drive to procreate seriously and need the practice.)

I love my child and he is reasonably well-behaved (actually much better behaved than some adult fen I have met at cons). With child in tow, however, it is difficult to have the luxury of engaging in a few adult con activities -- like going to the bathroom alone, eating at a restaurant that isn't Fast Food From Kid's Favorite Place, or talking to a friend without being interrupted (these are a few of my favorite things). There are several options for the care of fen children at cons, but their expediency is open to debate.

The simplest and quickest method that comes to mind is to stick them in a portable time warp. The children would then be out of the way. This method still has several flaws. You may not get back the child you put in. (You must remember what the portable time warp in your dryer does to your socks.) Your child may age at a different rate and could be much older or much younger when you get him out. You may even get back a different child.

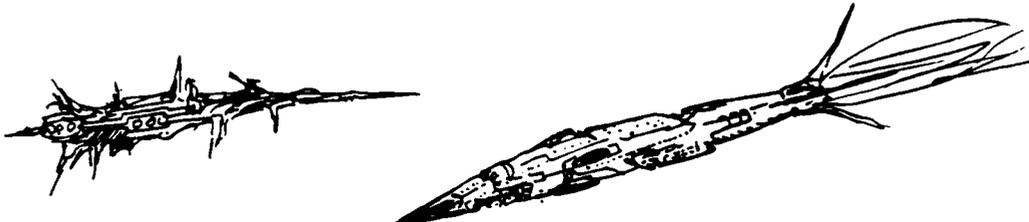
If the time warp is defective, the child may actually end up in an alternate universe. In that case he may be exposed to cultural concepts his parents disapprove of. (Then again, maybe not, since his parents brought him to a science fiction convention.)

Because of the experimental nature of time warps, consoms are generally reluctant to make them available. More than one convention committee has an attorney studying legal precedent regarding its liability and responsibility of such a method. (It is commonly rumored that, due to skyrocketing mal-practice rates, all attorneys studying this issue are reluctant to issue an opinion, be wrong and be sued by an irate concom.)

Until the lawyers and the courts rule on the use of the portable time warp, I suppose we could consider more mundane methods of child care. Cons can provide:

1. A babysitting service from fees charged for a child's membership.
2. A space to an individual or babysitting service who would charge a fee and supervise the children.
3. A space and gofers to staff it.
4. Children's programming during the most popular functions of the convention -- to keep children from being bored by the GoH and irate guests from throttling bratty children.

Children are a growing phenomena at cons and the changing needs of older fans should be taken into consideration. Remember, some day these little tykes may be running a con, and it sure would be nice for them not to get even with us for our lack of consideration.

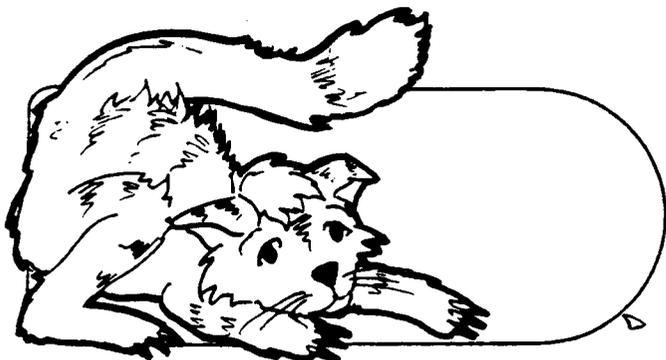


Always Set the Cat on Fire

Tune: "Never Set the Cat on Fire" by Frank Hayes

by Raoul I. "Saint Iggy" Benefiche

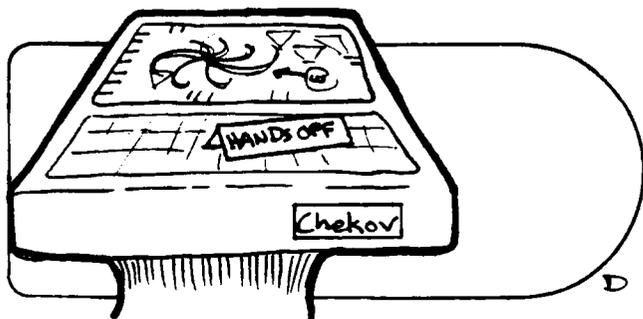
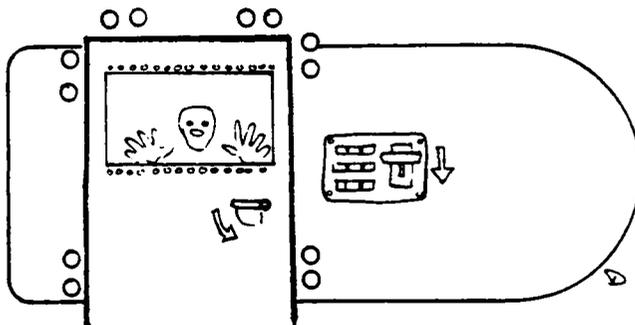
(With ABSOLUTELY NO apologies to Frank Hayes or anyone else)



Always set the cat on fire,
Because I am allergic.
Ignite her in a funeral pyre.
That furry beast makes me sick.
I suffer a condition chronic.
It makes me almost cat-atonic.
So always set the cat on fire.

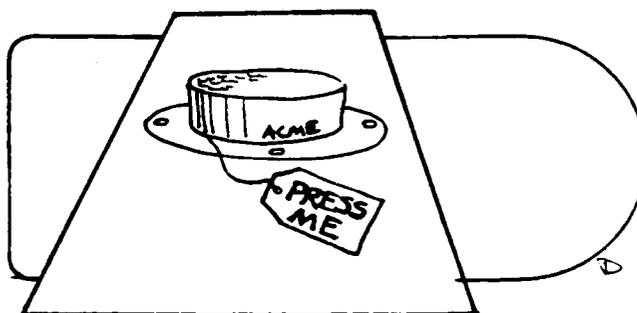
REFRAIN: Don't mind your manners.
Tact is a thing I don't admire,
So always set the cat on fire.

Please open up the cabin hatch,
This ship is getting stuffy.
Step to it now and turn the latch,
But do not do it roughly,
For if you make a lot of noise,
The captain's sure to lose his poise.
Please open the reactor door.
REFRAIN:



Please change the navigator's data,
It's bound to make you famous,
For there's a star out there somewhere
That's all alone and nameless.
We'll lose our way quick as you please,
Discover whole new galaxies...
Please change the navigator's data.
REFRAIN:

Please start an interstellar war,
We all need some excitement.
As soon as we blow up their sun
They'll wonder where the night went.
Don't hand that peacenik crap to me.
It's good for the economy.
Please start an interstellar war.
REFRAIN:



Fanzines

by Lan

In the past few months I have collected a stack of fanzines about 15 inches tall - quite a few new ones asking for trades. I wonder if printing the addresses of the Fanzine Hugo Nominees (which was the suggestion of Maia and me to the Hugo Committee -- the last couple of years) had something to do with it. Anyway, I will be listing those that I got, and making a comment or two, but don't expect much. I'll do what I can. All are available for the usual unless mentioned otherwise. Please make checks out to the editor, not the name of the zine.

A & A #111-112. Frances Valery, 11 rue des Vignerones, 33800 BORDEAUX, FRANCE. This is a publication of l'ACADEMIE DE L'ESPACE; 100 francs for 8 issues. Phillipe Gauthier (see Samizdat) suggested that I send LL to Frances Valery, and in addition to a nice letter of comment, I also received this fanzine. Nice production, nice printing, but I can't read French.

Aboriginal Science Fiction: Annual Anthology. Charles C. Ryan, editor, PO Box 2449, Woburn, MA 01888-0849, USA. \$14/6 issues, \$3.00 + \$.50 postage per single issue. This Anthology is \$4.50. The Anthology is a "best of" from Aboriginal SF's first two years of publication. The interior art is in color and very much augments the stories within. The stories themselves range from very good to excellent. Editor Ryan says that they have now passed the 10,000 subscription mark and the magazine is now a "prozine". Keep this in mind for next year's Hugo nominations. This year ABO has been nominated for the Best Semiprozine Hugo. The stories in this Anthology show you why.

Airglow #1-3. Terry L. Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, Vermont 05043 USA. \$1/2 issues. This is Terry's personalzine and one of the more interesting ones that have come my way in a while. I grab a coke, sit and read about Terry's experiences. Marvelous writing.

Andruschak-zines. Harry Andruschak, PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309 USA. Harry sends these two zines, Intermediate Vector Bosons #5 and Norman Natter #2, in lieu of writing comprehensive locs; they give an account of things personal in his life. In addition, however, I did get a loc from him.

The Brass Potato I. Cathy Howard, PO Box 70104, Louisville, KY 40270, USA. This is Cathy's FAPazine which she had a notion to send to me. Good interesting stuff about a person I've never met, but whose art I use frequently in LL.

Bruzzfuzzel News #53-55. Baton Rouge Science Fiction League, PO Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4238, USA. Typical clubzine with occasionally exceptional reviews, locs, etc.

The Centaur Gatherum Newsletter #11 & 12. Dave Alway, 1101 Eggeston, Kalamazoo, MI 49001-3819, USA. A fanzine/newsletter about centaurs -- art. stories, et al.

Centaur Notes #2. PO Box 424, El Cerrito, CA 94530, USA. The newsletter from Off Centaur

Publications, maker and producer of filk tapes. Interesting reviews by Jane Mailander.

Chris Drumm, Books, Book catalogues. PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. Catalogues, obviously; Chris also puts out his own line of little books which are well worth looking at. (And I have three backed up for reading, I'm ashamed to admit. I WILL get to them soon!)

Circular Janus, The. Don Eamon, 7331 Hearthstone Way, Indianapolis, IN 46227, USA. The Circle of Janus Newsletter, with the usual for a clubzine, and some perceptive reviews by Don Eamon and others. Don has just given up the editorship, and I can't find the copy he gave me at INCONJUNCTION VIII to determine who the new editor is.

Convention Log #50. R Laurraine Tutihasi, Katnip Manor, 5876 Bowcroft Street #4, Los Angeles, CA 90016, USA. Whim. Laurraine's diary/personalzine; has some reviews and conreports, locs; summarizes her life and feelings. This issue features "Physicians' Handy Guide to Medspeak."

Cosmic Debris. Bill Ware, 1233 Surry Place, Cleburne, TX 76031, USA. Bill put out Car Trek and got some response, so not is publishing this so he can pub the locs and comments he received. He includes more personal life traumas and chuckles. I had a lot of fun reading it.

Crystal Ship #14. John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 9AZ, UNITED KINGDOM. There are a couple of serious articles -- Mary Gentle talking about her fascination with Hunchbacks, and Andy Sawyer discussing three novels by Lord Dunsany. And lots of letters.

Dave's Secular Lens #8. Dave D'Amassa, 323 Dodge St., East Providence, RI 02914, USA. \$1.50/issue. Dave's continues to do an interesting personalzine.

De Profundis #196-198. Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The official newsletter of LASFS, filled with con and fan information, reviews, minutes, etc.

Desert Sun #4. Craig Chrissinger, 915 Idlewild Lane SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108, USA. A zinee filled with poetry, art (some excellent), articles, reviews, cartoons, etc. Pleasant reading, and Craig would love contributions.

Dropbear Digest #2. Lucy Huntzinger, 2215-R Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114 USA. The DUFF newsletter, edited by the 1987 DUFF Winner. Lucy announces Terry Dowling as the DUFF winner.

Eldritch Science #1. George Phillies, 87-6 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA 01605 USA. \$10/4 issues. A genzine looking for fiction of all aspects of SF subgenre, though recognizable characters are not welcome (i.e., Holmes & Watson, Kirk, Spock, etc.).

Empties 8. Martin Tudor, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH, ENGLAND. Some interesting personal essays by Martin himself and Maureen Porter.

Erg Quarterly, #102-3. Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, E. Yorkshire UNITED KINGDOM. LOC, \$5/6 issues in US bills (not check -- costs too much to process). These zines continue to be wonderfully interesting. I must force myself to write a loc to Terry. Highly recommended

Factsheet Five #26. Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502. USA. \$2/issue, bulk or surface; \$2.75 1st class, \$5.00 overseas first class. This has the most complete listing of fanzines I've seen in the US. So this is where Mike has been hiding these last few years.

Famous Icks Coloring Book. Bill Ware, 1233 Surry Place, Cleburne, TX 76031, USA. Bill put out Car Trek and Cosmic Debris (see above), and this is an added bit of insanity for no particular reason but to do it. (He did a Hideous Ick cover for me -- #23.)

FILE:770. Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Ave., #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. 5/\$5 The premiere fannish newsletter. Wjicj reminds me, I must renew!

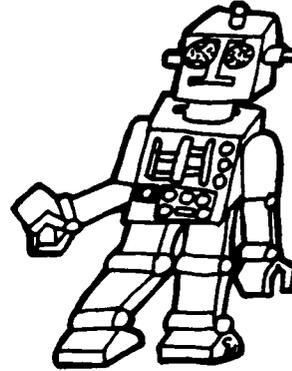
Fosfax #126-129. Fosfa, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA. A fairly large, consistently produced monthly clubzine filled with reviews, commentary and locs. #129 has last month's INCONJUNCTION 8 report already. Does its editor Tim Lane ever sleep? Recommended.

Full Circle. Joseph G. Colgan, 4618 Mia Circle, San Jose, CA 95136. A comics fanzine that critiques the superhero comic books.

Gegenschein #54. Eric Lindsey, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. Eric's diary, some book reviews, and a few letters. Eric's stuff is always interesting to read.

Generic Fandom News #11. Brian Youmans, PO Box 993, Troy, NY 12181-0993, USA. No price listed, but Brian sent this in trade. It looks good and is filled with all the sorts of things and genzine has, though he does include a section of local fannish news. Quite interesting.

Harpings #15. The Filk Foundation, 34 Barbara Drive, Little Rock AR 72204. USA. Available to Filk Foundation members, con-



tribution of news, and editorial whim. Contains news of interest to filkers and those who enjoy filking.

Hi-Tech Terror #32-34. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325, USA. Craig continues his excellent coverage of Grade-B horror films and home videos. #33 has a good overview of British "gore" fanzines, whose addresses are printed in #34.

Holier Than Thou. Marty Cantor, 11565 Archwood St., N. Hollywood, CA 916061703 USA. None received in a while; has Marty stopped printing?

Horizons (Various issues). Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740 USA. The issues I have are from 1974 through the present, and are copies of Harry's FAPazine. I admit I have not read them all, but I am intrigued by what I have read.

I-94 #2. Spike Parsons (PO Box 535, Madison, WI 53701 USA) A zine about traveling the interstate highways. Spike talks about her experiences working on highway construction. Other contributors talk about their road experiences.

IBID #63. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamorer Avenue, Teaneck, NY 07666 USA. This is Ben's apa/fanzine for THE ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON, and he included his Theatre Beat with it. Good and interesting stuff.

In the Paint #1. Richard M. Johnson, 7622 N. Rogers Avenue #3, Chicago IL, 60626 USA. I've received zines about highways (I-94) and about baseball (9-Innings), so it comes as no surprise that this one is about basketball. RJ does include other fannish news from Chicago.

Kipple #3-8. John Annas, Box 39, 280 40 Skanes-Fagerhult, SWEDEN. Written in Swedish that I can't read, these zines come as trade for LL. The art is very nice, especially the covers. Any Swedish-speaking fan is welcome to see these. #3 is especially nice since it was soaked (accidentally) in wine.

MLR #5. Sign of the Drunken Dragon, 217 Beverly St. #2, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1Z4, CANADA. Michael Dennis Skeet, editor. Canadian fannish newszine, concentrating on Toronto fandom.

The Mad 3 Party #19 & 27. Leslie Turek, NOR-EASCON 3, Box 46, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 01239, USA. \$1/issue. This is the newsletter for the members of the NOREASCON bid, the 1989 Worldcon. It contains information about running a Worldcon. This is also a Hugo Nominee for this year.

Paul Maita: SF & Fantasy Books. Lists #36 & 37. 1539 Colorado, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, USA. Paul runs a mail-order bookstore, and his lists come regularly. Many prices are very good.

Matalan Rave, The, #14. Michael Hailstone, 204 Station Street, Box Hill, Victoria 3128, AUSTRALIA. Some articles, some personal stuff, locs, etc. Some interesting comparisons about Australia and North America -- the US in particular.

Mentor, The, #63. Ron Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, AUSTRALIA. A mixture of articles, locs and fiction. Good, pleasant reading, with a variety of articles (one by Buck Coulson), reviews, a short story, poetry and locs. Some excellent art, very well re-produced.

Metaphysical Review #11/12/13. Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA. \$25/6 issues, and limited usual. A huge issue this time (as is indicated by the numbering), filled with excellent articles. There are several outstanding pieces, including a discussion of Carole S. Vance's Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality by Russell Blackford, and an interesting piece called "Counter-Earth and Counter Humanity: A Consideration of the Gor Series by John Norman" by Martin Bridgstock.

Mimosa #4. Dick & Nicki Lynch, 4207 Davis Lane, Chattanooga, TN 37416 USA. An excellent genzine, but this one is unusual in that it was done live. That is, Nicki and Dick recorded the events of CHATTACON #13, calling it MIMOSA 3.5, and transcribed them for this issue. A fascinating experience.

NASFA Shuttle (Vol 8, #2-7). NASFA, PO Box 4857, Huntsville, AL 358154857, USA. Current Editor: Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, 7907 Charlotte Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35802, USA. The newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association. Locs, reviews, meeting & club news, etc. It continues to be interesting.

National Fantasy Fan, The (TNFF), Vol 47, #6. David Heath Jr., PO Box 862, South Gate, CA 90280, USA. Comes with membership in N3F. The official newsletter of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F).

Nebulousfan No. X. David Thayer, 7209 Deville Drive, North Richland hills, TX 76180, USA. (The Usual, but send him a buck for postage and I know you'll get a copy.) This is a fanzine a long time in coming. Even I have a loc in it that reminded me we had an Interim period at school -something we have not had in several years. Still, the articles and humor holds up after all these years. Now I hope that we don't need to wait

another 8 years before the next Nebulousfan.

Neology Vol. 13 #2. Kathleen Moore-Freeman, ESFACAS Box 4071 PSSE, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8. \$12/year, quarterly. The Edmonton Science Fiction And Comic Arts Society clubzine. Some good articles and reviews, active loccol, and club news. The zine has also displayed some excellent art.

9-Innings, #3. Andrew P. Hooper, 315 N. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703. A fanzine about baseball -- not of great interest to me, but I'll trade. Besides, there's room enough in fandom for special interest groups. (I hope Andrew sees the baseball book reviews by Sally Syrjala.) Andrew does have some fanzine reviews, and he compliments David D'Amassa's article last issue: "People Are Raving." I'd like him to explain calling me a "goof" though.

Nowhere Fast #3. Harry Bond, 6 Elizabeth Avenue, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5NX, ENGLAND. The usual or \$1. Cheap for the number of pages. There is some improvement over his first two, but needs decent art -- badly. Still, it's an enjoyable read.

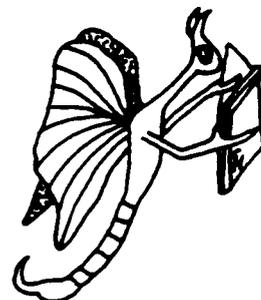
Other Worlds #1. Edited by Gary Lovisi, Gryphon Publications, Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0209, USA. A small press publication of new stories in the tradition of the original Other Worlds edited by Ray Palmer. This issue tend a little towards fantasy, but Gary wants to correct that for next issue. He is soliciting submissions; payment is in 2 copies of the issue in which the story appears.

OtheRealms #21. Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd., Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560, USA. An excellent reviewzine, with an active lettercol. Highly recommended. This issue has tributes to Heinlein and Simak.

Outworlds #56. Bill Bowers, 1874 Sunset Ave, Apt. 56, Cincinnati, OH 45238-3142. Whim, \$2.50/issue, \$10/5 issues. A very personal personalzine. This issue has mostly letters of comment.

Ozo 5. John Annas, Box 39, 280 40 Skanes-Fagerhult, SWEDEN. Written in Swedish that I can't read, this zine came as part of the package trade for LL. There is a loc in English in this issue. Any Swedish-speaking fan is welcome to see these.

Pablo Lennis #14, July 1988. John Thiel, 30 N. 19th St., Lafayette, IN 47904, USA. Strange art; stranger writing.



Paperback Parade #6. Gary Lovisi, Gryphon Publications, Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0209, USA. A book for the paperback collector and reader. Contains articles about paperbacks, filled with pictures, and some useful and/or interesting information (like the article about Gypsy Rose Lee as a detective).

Passamezzo. John Annas, Box 39, 280 40 Skanes-Fagerhult, SWEDEN. Written in Swedish that I can't read, this zine also came as part of the package trade for LL. This appears to be a fiction issue, and included is a comic story (i.e., a story told in the comicbook format). Any Swedishspeaking fan is welcome to see these.

Pirate Jenny #1. Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX 75116, USA. \$3/issue. Pat has broken away/was fired from The Texas SF Inquirer. With this her first solo issue, she has shown what she can do with layout and personal production values. The contents still contain news about Texas fandom and she offers a Convention calendar, but she also has some very well-written articles. I'll wait until I see issues #2 and #3 before I decide if I have to worry about her new zine competing with me for the Hugos.

Poke in the Eye with a Sharp Stick. A. Erik Biever, 1731 Eustis Street, Lauderdale, MN 55113, USA. A very thin zine to help Erik get back slowly into fan pubbing. Included is the return of "Ask Dr. Mimeo", which originally appeared in Rune.

Pulsar #9. A.E. Ubelhor, 2425 Highway 41 North, Suite 134, Evansville, IN 47711-4063, USA. \$9/year (6 issues). A clubzine, magazine size, filled with reviews, locs, articles, and club news. It includes interviews with Fred Pohl and Jack Williamson, and the first of a two part article about Star Trek: The Next Generation.

Quintessential Space Debris #2. Kathleen Gallagher, 490 Poe Ave, Worthington, OH 43085, USA, and Michael A. Carroll, PO Box 645, Worthington, OH 43085, USA. A fanzine "devoted to humor in SF, Fantasy, Horror, and Comics etc. and is intended as a gentle tongue in cheek poke at fandom, fanzines and conventions. We don't intend to take ourselves or anyone else seriously." This about sums it up. It's an improvement over their first effort, but they had a little trouble with pagination.

Riverside Quarterly, Vol. 8, #1 (whole #29). Leland Sapiro, Box 833-044, Richardson, TX 75083, USA. \$6/4 issues. A wonderful sercon fanzine with lots of interesting articles. Mary Weinkauff has an excellent article about language and "Future Talk", and Dana Martin Batory's article about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fourth Professor Challenger story heightened my interest in another aspect of Sir Arthur's imagination.

Robots and RoadRunners, Vol. 2, #5, Vol. 3, #1. R. Slate, 5502 Timber Jack, San Antonio, TX 78250 USA. \$1.50/issue. The clubzine/newszine Ursa Major (formerly the San Anto-

nio SF Association). Some enlightening articles. The former issue has two fairly decent stories in it: "Siren Song" by Dennis Chandler, and "City Limit Blues" by Amy Hartman. (I wonder if Amy is the same one who used to live in Ann Arbor, Michigan?) The latter is mostly about fanzines, from the editorial through the letter column. R&R has a letter from Ted White which once again degrades LL. The article by Lynn Garcia comparing LL with Anvil could have been a little more critically constructive.

Rune #77. Jeanne Mealy and David Romm, MNSTff, PO Box 8297 Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA. Rune under new editorship. "Let's see what they do with it," I said a couple of issues ago. Well, it looks very good, and the articles are interesting as well. Of course, there is a lot of talent in MinnSTF, so Jeanne and David should be able to get excellent copy there. So as not to become insular, they are asking for contributions.

Samizdat #11/12, 13. Philippe Gauthier, 197 Du Bearn, Saint-Lambert, Quebec J4S 1L2 CANADA, and Claude J. Pelletier, 20 Chemin du Mistral, Iles Laval, Laval, Quebec H7Y 1S1. \$3/issue. A genzine for French-Canadian fans, written in French. It has cartoons, pro and fan reviews, locs, etc.

Scavenger's Newsletter, #53. Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329. Monthly, \$9/year (\$12.50 1st class); other rates available. "A marketing co-op for the sf/fantasy/horror writer/artist interested in the small press. Listings of markets, and a lively letter column.

Secant #4. Greg Hills, GPO 972 G, Melbourne 3001, AUSTRALIA. A personalzine, mainly dealing with Greg's life up to June 1985. Has some letters, articles dealing with travels, fanzine reviews and book reviews.

Smut #2. Lynn Hickman, 413 Ottokee Street, Wauseon, Ohio 43567, USA. Lynn's SFPazine, reintroducing himself to that apa.

Solaris #79. Luc Pomerleau, Case Postale 25, Succursale A, Hull, Quebec, J8Y 6M7 CANADA. \$3.50/issue. This is the semiprozine of French-speaking Canada. This is a nicely produced zine with reviews, stories, interviews, and lavish illustrations. Since it is written in French, I have trouble reading it, but Maia can make some of it out and says it's nicely done. The French teachers at school marvel at its quality.

Some Like It Chilled #3. Dennis K. Fischer, 366 N Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036, USA. \$10/4 issues. A collection of articles about horror films. Distinction between articles is a little vague, but with a little work the reader can figure them out.

Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin, The, #2. SFC, P. L. Caruthers-Montgomery, 2629 Norwood Avenue, Anniston, AL 36201-2871, USA. A well-laid-out zine filled with news, convention listings, club roster, fanzine guide and some nice art from Southern fans. PLCM's clligraphy adds to the issue.

Spectra #34. David Griffin, Mulbarsstigen 7, 196 31 Kungsängen, SWEDEN. Lars-Arne Karlsson, Ekas Gallared, 310 60 Ullared. A reviewzine from Sweden, beautifully printed with wonderful artwork.

TAFFiles #4. Jeanne Gomoll, Box 1443, Madison, WI 53701-1443 USA. Jeanne's zine for reports about TAFF, since she was the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund winner for 1987. Donate \$\$, and get copies. Nominations are now open for the 1989 NA - UK race.

Thrust - Science Fiction and Fantasy Review, #30. D. Douglas Fratz, editor. Thrust Publications, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, USA. Quarterly, \$8/year. An excellent semi-prozine with reviews, interviews, articles and locs.

Tightbeam #152, 154. Current editor is Lynne Holdom, 3808 Macalaster Dr. NE #25, St. Anthony, MN 55421, USA. The letterzine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), and it also contains some reviews.

Torch #41-44. Dwight Decker, PO Box 2217, Northlake, IL 60164 USA. Apazines for CAPA-Alpha, with some interesting articles in #41 & 42. #43 & #44 lead off with lengthy stories that Dwight has written before launching into the mailing comments.

Torus #3. Lloyd Penney, Keith Soltys, Michael Dennis Skeet & Michael Wallis. PO Box 186, Sataion M, Toronto, Ontario M6S 4T3 CANADA. A good third issue; highlights include an Elisabeth Vonarburg and Donald Kingsbury interviews, and Phyllis Gottlieb's short story "Let's Shoot Pool Body English,"

and lots of good art.

Wail Songs, Spring 1988 Catalogue. Wail Songs, PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604, USA. A catalogue for filk tapes produced by Wail Songs. Prices for tapes range from \$6-\$8 and filk books are also available.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge, Vol 5, #7. Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Wonderfully written, feminist oriented (though not exclusively) fanzine. I enjoy it immensely. This issue is mostly a letterzine.

Worlds of Wonder, Vol. 2, #3 & #4. c/o Mary Schiermann, 5304 Dixieland Road, Birmingham, AL 35210, USA. Clubzine of Magic City Fantasy Club. Articles, reviews, poetry, fiction, a mixture of the usual of a clubzine. Some good art. Mary is the new editor and is working on collecting material for the next issues. All of the above gratefully accepted. Please contribute, pleads Robert Cooke, the former editor.

Vox #1. Richard Bergeron, Box 5989, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico 00905. Richard's FAPazine.

Xeno-File, #1. Cris Stroup, editor. PO Box 1088 Station M, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2K9, CANADA. A good first attempt at a fanzine. Has a lot of potential; can use contributions.

YHOS #43. Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, USA. As Art's FAPazine, he does a remarkable fanzine. The articles are interesting and thoughtful, and not just by him. Lots of letters this time.

Post Scriptings



General Comments:

Ian's Lantern
and fanzines

Francis Valery: Many thanks for LL #25; the usual mountain of very good articles, fine and informative reviews, and the big batch of locs. I like it; certainly one of the best fanzines I know and enjoy. I have sent you the latest issue of my own zine, A&A, eleven years in the field and more than 100 issues published. Of course it is smaller in size and content than LL, with an average of 40 pages, but remember we are in France. One or two hundred people attend our national convention. Less than ten native novels and collections are published every year (if I don't count the popular and low-grade series "Fleuve Noir"), only one professional magazine (Fiction, the French edition of F&SF) with a monthly circulation of some thousand copies (what they said) and an annual anthology, Univers, one apa and two or three semi-regular fanzines sharing a potential fannish readership of a couple hundred people. What a pity to a French SF fan and writer!

[[I sympathize with you. I hope that some other fan editors will send you their

zines --whether in trade or not-- just to let you know what's going on in other areas of the fannish world.]]

Gregory Litchfield: As an SF-fandom neofan (I've only begun reading SF fanzines this year, though I've read the SF semi-prozines for five years, and SF pro fiction for almost twenty years), I am amazed at the quantity and quality of #26. How you found time to write, edit and publish its 124 pages between your day job and your convention activities is beyond me. You state in your editorial that the next issue will "drop below 100 pages" due to the postal rate increase. I hope that this means that future issues of Lan's Lantern will be smaller in size but higher in frequency (say six times a year?) in order to accommodate all the excellent material by yourself and your contributors.

[[That's a nice thought -- to increase frequency, but it'd be less expensive just to put out the larger zine. Anyway, I had HOPED to drop below 100 pages. As you can see, that didn't happen this issue. The next two issues of LL will be Author Anniversary specials, and will be smaller. The next one after that will be BIG again.]]

Dean Lambe: By the bye, what is that idiot printer with the ridiculous reverse bracket "L"? I've seen it before, but chiefly in places where the principal operations are numbercrunching, and thus "el" isn't confused with "one." If it's simply a matter of replacing a daisy wheel, I'll be glad to take up a collection for a new one, so that "collection" back there won't always have little happy feet.

[[Glen Cook also pointed this out to me. I have gotten a new printwheel so that problem should not occur again -- I hope.]]

Skel: Do you remember those old pulp stories where the spaceship's hull was always at least a foot thick and invariably made of some compressed element with a name like "superpermium" or somesuch? Well I think you should try to get hold of some for your envelopes. Lan's Lantern invariably arrives here accompanied by the tatters of a totally destroyed envelop. Of course in the old stories the material was always used to keep out immense forces, but I don't see why it shouldn't also be used to contain the tremendous stresses imposed by the inertia of an object as massive as LL #25. If Lan's Lantern gets any more massive you're going to have a problem. Already its own gravity is so strong that lifting its pages against its pull takes superhuman effort. I place it on the table to LoC, and the typewriter starts orbiting it. Any more mass and the issue will begin its inevitable collapse to a point, a discontinuity in the fanzine continuum. You will have created the first "Black Fanzine", down into which all articles and book reviews will be drawn, never to reappear. For you, time will slow down almost to a dead stop. Your following issue,

which you'll be producing "Real Soon Now" from your point of view, will seem to the rest of us to take forever.

Hey, that seems awfully familiar. Could it be? Have I perhaps, inadvertently stumbled upon the universe's hidden machineries of gafia? Their book and fanzine collections become so massive they start this collapse. Of course in its early stages this proceeds relatively slowly so that, whilst they're fanning away just as furiously as ever they were in their ever-slowing time-frame, to the rest of us outside it just seems that their letters and zines come out at progressively longer intervals, until eventually the intervals become longer than the lifetime of any individual, and effectively they have ceased to exist in our universe. Yes, yes -- GAFIA: Grown Absolutely Fucking Immense Already. The term refers not to the fan, but to the fan's book and zine collection. The acronym positively gives it away. It's so obvious -- how come nobody ever saw it before? Excuse me whilst I go and pour myself another pint of beer.

So, I look more like you than you do, do I? Well, I shall resist the doubtless justifiable urge to top myself. I shall merely point out that if I'm more you than you are, I'm the one who's entitled to file copies of Lan's Lantern and if I'm entitled to it, then I didn't ought to have to loc in the future. You should write my locs, for if I'm more like you than you are, it goes without saying that you must be more like me than I am. Of course taken to its logical conclusion this means that I would have to start putting out regular issues of 140-page fanzines. Probably easier all around if we both simply put out a contract on Mike Glicksohn.

Roy Lavender: I have grim memories of putting out a small fanzine called The Committeeman. It was the result of Deedee and I taking over the sec/treas post of NFFF after the CINVENTION. I put it out as an internal newsletter to keep the scattered officers informed.

I was working up to 70 hours per week at North American Aviation (35 miles away). Plus rebuilding the house into two apartments, a few details attendant to two small offspring, assembling a hi-fi and so on.

There was no time for details like rough drafting and editing. Everything went directly onto stencil and only the more horrid typos got corflu. My Royal portable had to be struck with tack hammer force to make a clean stencil. It survived, but the clatter!

My mimeo was a second-hand Sears and Roebuck SOB. Not housebroken. For sanitary reasons it was relegated to a cubby hole under the roof of the added kitchen. Access was by a hatch behind some bookshelves. Headroom was about five feet at the high end. The legs were sawn off an old dresser to make a workbench about eighteen inches high. In turn that was covered by an inch of old newspapers. (I told you it wasn't housebroken.)

Completist fanzine collectors (only such rabid types would bother) hate The Committeeman. No two were in the same format. I bought whichever stencils were cheapest at the moment. Invariably, they were for church

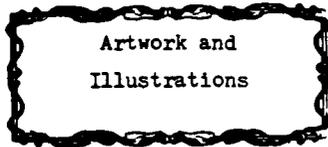
bulletins, with folding designed by an origami buff. Some folded the 11 inch way, some had two folds. Others folded the 8-1/2 way.

You can play with Fold Fan and Tired if you want.

How did Deedee and I get to be sec/treas? At the Cinvention, at an informal meeting in Room 100, the sad state of the club was mentioned. Bob Tucker made the suggestion that N3F be voted one dollar to disband. For some reason, that seemed like a poor fate for the club that introduced so many scattered and lonely fans to SF Fandom and we volunteered. (Deedee became an officer of the N3F before she became a member.)

Which is a long-winded way of telling you that I have no concept of the effort involved in putting out a 140 page zine. It just ain't possible.

[[Thanks for telling me, Roy. You mean I'm really not supposed to be able to do what I'm doing. Excuse me, I have to talk to this bumblebee about flying.]]



Dean Lambe: As for Paula Robinson's cartoon on page 129, frame it immediately as a fanzine classic!

[[Yes, that is a clever one. I'll run it again here; it deserves the extra "exposure."]]

Harry Bond: I congratulate your stock of friendly artists -- and especially Darlene Coltrain for her fine back cover of #25.

Terry Jeeves: Liked the color cover on #25, even though I wasn't sure just what it portrayed. Likewise, the interior art was also very good, varied and plentiful -- although I would like to have seen a few more artistic headings rather than plain text. Oh well, can't have everything, can we?

I also liked the cover to #26, and the interior art -- there wasn't a great deal of it, but what there was I liked. I'll try to include a few oddments for you to pack into the odd corner.

[[The subject of the cover to #25 was a "bug light", a device that attracts bugs at night and zaps them with an electrical charge. // I'll see what I can do about more artistic types of headings. And about putting more art in this issue.]]

Clifton Amsbury: The cover to #26 looks a bit more decayent from my taste. I don't

run to the morbid and was disgusted by the first Covenant Chronicle -- the only Donaldson I read.

Teddy Harvia: Kurt Erichsen's adventures in genetic engineering were a riot. I particularly liked his Man + Tortoise + Microcomputer. His jokes in hex were too much. I entered them into my computer and it laughed so hard it crashed right on his head.

Was PL Caruthers-Montgomery's line about me having a "god eye for symmetry" a creative typo? I'm not ready for deification.

[[I think it was a typo, though I have gotten some rather strong support for you for the Fan Artist Hugo. Can deification be far off?]]

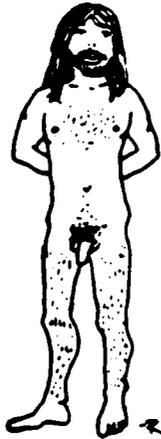
Gregory Litchfield: Kurt Erichsen's four "Genetic Engineer's Bestiary" single-panel cartoons were mindbendingly funny, especially Man + Tortoise + Microcomputer, and I hope there will be more from Kurt in future issues. Teddy Harvia's three cartoons were also quite witty -- my favorite being the punny "Heir Transparent". Terry Jeeves is another promising artist I hope to see more of in LL.

[[Since this is one of the first fanzines you have received, you've no way of knowing that Terry Jeeves has been in fandom for more than 30 years, and has been producing fanart all that time. His own fanzine, Erg, has just recently passed its 100th issue. But keep reading and keep learning -- we all have had to go through this process of finding our way through fannish names and traditions.]]

Paula Robinson: From a biased observer (so keep it in perspective), the cartoon on page 19 lacked taste. What's so funny about a frightened woman with torn clothing and bruises, for God's sake? Especially given the sexual assaults of women by non-fans at a recent con, resulting in a flood of protest letters to the Midwestern hotel that refused to do anything about the crimes? The caption -- "Secret Victim of Fandom" -- is ludicrous. Male fans, with the exception of mentally deranged individuals, simply would not treat women that way. Perhaps this is the point. However, the cartoon is tasteless, and unfunny to those of us who must constantly watch out for the possibility of sexual assault. Again, my view is biased -- some of the would-be rapists at the con in question were actually knocking on my door, folks, but this dame don't unbolt locks for drunk strangers -- yet I suspect a few other fans will be sensitive to the subject of the cartoon anyway.

[[Apologies to you and to all who were offended. I considered the statement as opposed to the actual picture in placing the cartoon with David Shea's article about "What's Wrong with Fandom?" See also the comments that Steven Fox made in this lettercolumn -- under the David Shea heading.

[[Regarding the convention in Louisville,



HI! I'M A
NAKED
MAN, AND
I'M HERE
THANKS
TO
AFFIRMA-
TIVE
ACTION
IN THE
ART
WORLD!

I heard about what happened there after the issue was printed; this was bound to happen when hotels keep booking other immature groups (in this case high school basketball teams) in with a SF convention. I had friends who were combing the halls rescuing female fans from these drunk, teenage, nonfans. I hear a lawsuit is pending.]]



Craig Ledbetter: Mike Glicksohn's perceptive comments on The Last Deadloss Visions was appreciated and motivated me to send off for the Christopher Priest fanzine. That's about as high praise as I can give such an article. Has Ellison ever commented on the contents of this zine?

Lloyd Penney: Christopher Priest's fanzine should be worth a read...I'd be very interested to find out if a copy has been sent to Ellison. Ellison's reaction should be even more interesting. Combinations of pure fact (in this case, Ellison's bibliography), followed by opinion lend the ring of truth from the facts preceding it, which can be extremely dangerous in its own right.

[[Ellison has heard about it, while he is currently struggling to actually bring The Last Dangerous Visions out. I'm hoping that he succeeds soon so that this can be put to rest.]]

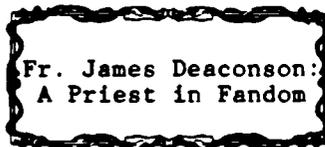
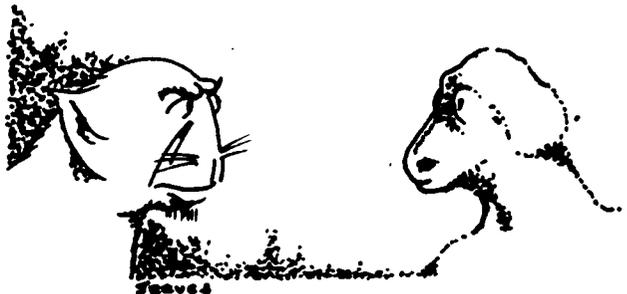
Skel: Mike Glicksohn's piece on/advert for The Last Deadloss Visions was fascinating but far too short. Mike isn't doing enough fanwriting these days. I'd like to have gotten more of a feel for Priest's TLDV. I've never seen a copy and likely never will (it costs money). Now there's an idea! If Harlan's TLDV is unlikely to appear because of its sheer size, why don't you publish it? Of course you'd have to leave out as much as 30% of your book reviews to get it all into one issue, but surely it'd be worth it?

[[Hm, that sounds reasonable, but I think I'd have to run a few more than 600+ copies to satisfy all the fans and pros who would want a copy. On the other hand I could charge up to \$5 for it. Maybe I SHOULD contact Harlan...]]

David Palter: It does say something about the importance of Harlan Ellison and his Dangerous Visions series that Mike Glicksohn can enthusiastically recommend to us a 26 page study of the circumstances surrounding the extreme delay in publication of the final anthology in the series. Almost any other case I can think of, in which a book is planned and begun but not completed, barely deserves a mention, much less 26 pages. Well, if (as it appears) Harlan is never going to complete LDV, then it may fall to a posthumous collaborator to do so. We shall

see. J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, H. Beam Piper and others have had posthumous collaborators, so any unfinished projects left behind by Harlan Ellison could well follow in that tradition. Perhaps Martin H. Greenberg, our field's most industrious anthropologist, could do the job.

Robert Sabella: At the Clarion West SF Writers' Workshop in 1972, Harlan Ellison was busily buying stories for The Last Dangerous Visions. For several of the writers that was their first sale -- and what a prestigious one it was! Now, sixteen years later, some are out of science fiction entirely and still waiting for that first sale to appear. I've always thought it unconscionable of Harlan to put off publishing those stories for so long. Sure he's overburdened with projects and unable to keep up to date, but a more scrupulous person would cut back on his commitments in order to fulfill his legal obligations. I mean, how do you suppose Harlan would react if somebody held one of his stories for an entire generation?



Roy Lavender: All the comments about a priest/fan. There have been several in fandom over the years. With one exception, they were people I was glad to know. In many sects, education to the doctorate level is a requirement for priests. When you add to that the sense of wonder that SF releases, you have a good start on a fan you'd like to know.

Lloyd Penney: I do not attend church, and my wife attends mass from time to time, but I think that a multidenominational mass at a Worldcon is an excellent idea. Father, your first intro to the pros at the NASFiC was quite an achievement; many of us attempt the same thing; and are rebuffed or ignored. The ways of God are indeed mysterious, and the Lord would not have given us such a limitless imagination if we were not to exercise it and stretch it beyond infinity. Please continue to teach that science fiction and its associated unorthodoxy is not evil or a tool of the devil, as so many parents used to teach, but a gift to share with others, as fandom does. I hope you'll approach NOLA-CON II (might be too late at this date) and NOREASCON 3 about a large room for a Worldcon mass. If nothing else, it would improve

the public perception of fandom and conventions as an excuse for juvenile delinquents of any age to get together and party.

Harry Andruschak: I am curious about Jim the Priest. I hope you can get him to write about his feelings af being in fandom with a huge membership of atheists, agnostics, deists, and humanists of every shade of opinion. I am not sure if the Roman Catholic Church still wants to burn atheists like me at the stake, or is just content to let us fry in hell forever and ever....proof of how wonderful God is.

Michael W. Waite: A priest in fandom? What is the church coming to? (mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa) Wait, come to think of it, L. Ron Hubbard got his start in science fiction. Is it possible? Could it be? Deaconetics?! Just kidding, Father. Your article "A Priest in Fandom" was most enjoyable and may even provide the motivation I need to attend my first convention. I find the concept of God an apt topic for science fiction and will be looking forward to reading something from the pen of the "con" priest. (Have you read The Jehovah Contract by Victor Koman?) Dominus vobiscum.

Lynne Ann Morse: I was about to give you a very bad time for neglecting to include Jim Deaconson's address in the list of contributors. But Roelof pointed out that you may not have neglected it at all, but rather had a very good reason (namely to ensure Fr. Jim's privacy). So, instead of a letter of unjust abuse, I'm writing to ask you to forward the enclosed letter to Jim.

[[You would have been justified in heaping abuse upon me for not putting Fr. Jim's address in the contributor's section of LL #25. I forgot his and few other people's addresses, which I added in #26, and now here:

Fr. James Deaconson
Box 566
Pound, VA 24279
USA

[[I may have had some notion not to print his address with the reasons as Roelof suggests, but had decided to go ahead. I just never got around to it when the final copy was finished. The letter has been sent to Fr. Jim.]]

Francis Valery: I deeply appreciate the contribution of Jim Deaconson. I wanted to write to this fine gentleman but unfortunately you missed including his address on the contributors' page.

[[Yes, I know. See his address above.]]

Craig Ledbetter: The revelations of a Priest in fandom was certainly different. As an Aggie graduate engineer, I enjoyed reading his comments on AGGIECON.

Scott Merritt: I met Fr. Deaconson at AGGIECON last year and had a wonderful time talking to him. He made a most appreciative audience for Corrie's and my filking. It's always nice to see what someone you've met and haven't kept track of is doing with himself.

Skel: Fr. Jim Deaconson's writings were fascinating, in a different way. I've always thought of Science Fiction as the fiction for the inquiring mind, prone as it is to investigate the potentials of the possible (or even of the impossib;e), rather than of what is. To me organized religion -- any organized religion, has always seemed the very antithesis of this. What an organized religion offers is "The Answer", not arrived at by inquiry, but taken on board as an act of faith. Self-evident really. If you didn't have to accept it on faith, you wouldn't have a religion, you'd have a science.

We all need certainties. Some of us are "either/or". One or the other. We take the whole thing on faith, or we insist we're capable of trying to understand and comprehend it. Religion seems to say that nobody can fully comprehend any of it. Science accepts that nobody, no one person, can comprehend all of it, but that everyone can comprehend some part and that when those parts are integrated in a consistent methodology, then if the whole is finite, it can be known.

But apparently some people don't see it as an "either/or" situation. To them there are areas that have to be worked out, and areas that must be accepted on faith. To these people perhaps inquiry and religion are not alternatives, but instead complimentary approaches. Presumably Fr. Jim Deaconson is just such a person.

It's still odd though to read lines like, "I found myself attempting conversations

FANOMENON



DIANA STEIN

with C.J. Cherryh, L. Sprague deCamp, Chad Oliver, Steven Gould. What little sense of priestly professionalism I tried to clutch vanished into childish awe." I mean, here's a guy who talks to God. No, I don't believe he does, but the salient point is that he believes he does. And yet talking with SF authors still fills him with childish awe. It's the difference between "to" and "with" that seems to count here. Authors, compared to God, may be of significant importance, but unlike God they do talk back. You can't get into a conversation with God about your favorite miracle, or ask him when the next one is due out. Authors though are more approachable, more responsive. They will discuss their stories with you and, noticing your empty glass, but you a drink. God never discusses his works with you, and he doesn't stand his round. Mind you, I guess that last isn't strictly true. There is one instance where he, indirectly, said effectively, "Hey guys, the drinks are on me." But when you consider the length of recorded history, and the offerings he's had in that time, that's a piss-poor record. You can be assured, if he ever makes himself known to me, he'll be buying his own bleeding drinks. His wallet must have cobwebs on it.

Terry Jeeves: I was intrigued by "A Priest in Fandom," as I've never heard of one entering before. I can't think of any valid reason why not. Nice to have comments from Fr. Jim, and more power to his elbow (for duper cranking, not boozing). Cons seem to be regarded as dens of depravity by outsiders -- a reputation not entirely undeserved, so may he continue to enjoy the fraternizing side at future cons.

David Palter: I am a bit skeptical of Fr. Jim Deaconson's proposal that the introduction of some Christianity to the SF world will contribute to the role we fans may play in making a better world. However, whether or not the end result will be a better world, there is room in fandom for this approach -- as there is for fans aligned with many other religious or non-religious viewpoints. My religious opinions differ drastically from those of Fr. Deaconson, but I respect him as a fellow fan.

Robert Sabella: Was it intentional on your part to place the two "priest" titles back-to-back? [[Yes.]] This was a very interesting article. Jim Deaconson certainly seems to have found his niche in fandom--and quickly. I mean, moderating a panel at his very first convention? (Yes, yes, twinges of envy here from a person whose never been on a panel and probably never will.)

Wendy Council: As a non-theist, fairly outspoken anti-Catholic, I was surprised to find myself liking Father Deaconson (in print, having not yet met him in person). It is to your credit, Lan, that you encourage input by such varied fans.



Dick Napoli:
SF Telecomputing

Lloyd Penney: While computer networks like CompuServe are great to have, they are expensive to use, and personally I cannot justify such an expense in my home. A friend has nicknamed it the Electronic Money Funnel. However, I still do communicate via computer, with the Opus network of electronic bulletin boards. Certainly, it's not instantaneous or near-so communications, but the messages still get transmitted, and you communicate. Many Opus boards are free, or have a nominal cost of say \$1 per month, and there are many Opus message areas available. Boards in your area may have different areas.

Terry Jeeves: Over here we have Micronet and the like, but the catch is our phone rates are so much higher than yours, I fancy. Offhand, I can't quote exact costs, but they vary from about 5p for three minutes to 30p or more for the same time depending on time of day and type of service. Clock up a half an hour on your bulletin board, and you're into the read FAST.

Skel: There's a British telefanzine called EARTHLIGHT which I know about, not to mention the fact that seemingly every other UK fan lists their JANET number in their fanzine colophons. Just what Janet is or who, I have no idea, but they seem to do a lot of it. Maybe this is where the future of fanzines lies; for instance, Lan, just think of the postage it'd save you if you could print the Lantern on television instead of paper! You'd have to beware of crazed Gibson-Cyberpunk fans, though.

Scott Merritt: I was very suprized to see CompuServe left out of Napoli's article on "Sf Telecomputing". Other than that, the article was well done. SMOF BBS is still up and running (512/ UFO-SMOF). It is, to my knowledge, the oldest continuously running BBS devoted to SF and Fantasy in the country. As the sysop is now of the FACT Board of Directors, the latest breaking FACT news, as well as excerpts from the Texas SF Inquirer can be found there. We also have a good SF BBS in Dallas; FIAWOL can be reached 24 hours a day at 214/ 790-6472.

Jim Harris: I have checked out SF sections on GENIE and Compuserve, I have started SF sections on local bulletin boards, and I have followed a national "echo" for SF. The results have been disappointing. I was hoping for a level of communication beyond conversation, but less than fanzine articles. However, written messages on computer bulletin boards are about as interesting as talking to strangers at a SF convention. It's fun, but conversation isn't very deep. Most of the conversations are extremely shallow. I guess it has it's place, but I was disappointed. I think fanzines are a much better medium of communication.

Of course the two might be combined. Fan editors could publish electronic editions, and then get locs by E-Mail or on a national echo. I downloaded a couple of issues of OtheRealms, but quickly switched to a paper subscription. I didn't like the time it took to print it out. Although, if laser printers become widespread and cheap, and modem speeds go up, and a highly compressible page definition language that includes graphics is develop, then online fanzines may be worthwhile.

The loc writing in your zine is so good that I wished I could reply to the writers in a more timely nature. Most of the writing on bulletin boards is off the cuff and not as well thought out as a letter. It might be worth while if we could download all the letters a fanzine receives, and then zap back carefully written replies. Sort of create an electronic apa.

Lan, if you had a bulletin board, you could upload your zine, and locs, and create a new type of medium. I was hoping that bulletin boards could be electronic magazines or fanzines, but they aren't. They aren't because people only chat, and don't compose well thought out messages or articles.

[[Seeing how easy it is to handle material sent to me on disk, I have though about setting up a bulletin board. It would be somewhat expensive, and something I don't want to think about right now. Maybe if I win the lottery.... If you belong to DELPHI, you could leave messages for me through MAIACOWAN. Maia and I sign on there irregularly on Wednesday nights and chat in the SF forum, pick up messages, and find out how everyone is.]]

Dave D'Amassa:
People Are Raving

Lloyd Penney: What must people think... Whitley Streiber forges for himself a reputation as one of he best new horror writers, and he announces this account of a UFO abduction. Does this shoot his career down in flames? Sure sounds like it. I do not doubt his sincerity, but was his desire to blurt out his story not blunted by his common sense, which should have said, "Keep your mouth shut, they'll never believe you"?

Harry Bond: I think that overall I'd like to award top honors of LL #25 to Dave D'Amassa for his extremely, nay, excessively cynical demolition of the saucer loonies. People like that (the loonies, not Dave!) deserve fates such as this, for not only are they frequently imple fraudsters but they've got SF a bad name which it's found impossible so far to throw off.

Skel: I wish I'd remembered Dave D'Amassa's article more clearly when I picked up a copy of Whitley Streiber's The Wolfen for 20p at a Goodwill shop. The blurb made it sound interesting, but now that I'm reminded

that the guy is doolally I figure even that 20p might be a bit iver the top.

Dennis Fischer: I thought Dave D'Amassa's article a very on-target and disheartening view of the exploitation of craziness and weirdness in these United States. I've never read any of Whitley Streiber's horror novels, but it's sad to learn of a once validly creative person going into embarrassing public dodderinghood. The usual penalty for that is prison or tax exile.

Taras Wolansky: Dave D'Amassa speaks too soon when he labels Whitley Streiber a "loony". In his latest book, UFO-Abductions: A Dangerous Game, veteran UFO debunker Philip J. Klass points out that when people who have strange experiences are told the only alternative explanations are 1) mental illness, or 2) it really happened, they naturally opt for #2. In fact, Klass goes on, hallucinations of the kind Streiber apparently suffered are not terribly uncommon, especially among the small percentage of the population that is "fantasy-prone" a la Walter Mitty. Add to this the fact that people fabulate when they are questioned under hypnosis and you can pretty well account for all the alleged abductions, without calling upon insanity (and fraud).

The funniest part of the whole thing is that Streiber now admits that his book on the environment, Nature's End, is partly based upon information given him by the space aliens! Talk about eco-freaks. Eco-jerks, more likely.



David M. Shea:
What's Wrong
with Fandom

David Stein: Mr. David Shea, in a recent issue of the Lantern, wrote a rather scathing article on the current state of fandom ("What's Wrong with Fandom?" LL #26). After a dramatic reading of the article in the con suite at CONTRAPTION, I, along with the group there assembled, must recommend to Mr. Shea that he attend a convention outside of the East Coast!

Not knowing Mr. Shea, I don't know which conventions he attends, but on the weight of his convention descriptions and his own admission, he must ONLY attend BOSKONE and BALCON. I have attended conventions all around the country and safely state that the

problems that Mr. Shea states ate almost exclusively confined to the bigger East Coast conventions. Granted the problems of "drunken partier teenagers" is growing, but the East Coast cons seem to be the only ones incapable of handling the problems (and it appears to be passing). Many conventions have nipped this in the bud. It's not Fandom that has become this, it's the non-fannish elements that have tried to move in on our good time.

Mr. Shea also seems to be upset at the diversity that fandom has achieved. I take great exception to his lump dismissal of elements.

Costumers: Not all people who wear outfits are costumers. Granted, I am not thrilled to see a four hundred pound guy from Ohio wearing tights and adopting a Robin Hood persona, but who are we to deny someone just because we don't like the appearance of it. Costumers have been around as long as conventions have (I have a wonderful picture of Forrey Ackerman standing in front of the hotel of one of the 1930 conventions wearing purple tights, gold shorts and goggles, his cape flowing in the wind).

Video and Film Cultists: Cultists of anything (including literature) are a little worrisome. I cringe whenever I run into a frantic Tolkien fan who can spout each line like Biblical quotes and consider the trilogy the only books ever written. I am a tremendous movie and TV fan. I have a substantial collection of items pertaining to movie and video productions and am proud to call myself a "Trekkie." I think it's just out and out snobbery to consider one form of story presentation superior to another. Being "hide bound" to any one can really tunnel your vision. I maintain a balance of all forms of presentation, be it book, movie, video, comic book or cave paintings. The story is the thing; how it's told is secondary.

Gamers: Gaming does have a place in SF. I agree that it is a bit silly to spend money on a convention membership just to lock yourself up in a room and game all weekend, but that's their problem. As long as they behave themselves, I've got no quips with them.

Filking: I think Mr. Shea has missed the point about filking. The whole concept of filking is not to get together and see who sings best, it's to get together and sing!

Or just listen to others sing. There are some tremendously talented musicians in fandom. We should be proud of them, but we shouldn't push others aside because they aren't Julia Ecklar, or Bill Roper, or T.J. Burnside.

Medievalists: Yes, the sole topic of discussion of these groups is fighting and handcraft and battle tactics and battle re-counting because that's what those people got into it for.

Mystics: Unfortunately I agree with David on this one. I feel sorry for people who truly believe they can perform mystic acts. I think it's their stab at individuality. The Neo-Pagan irritates me also. 99% of them just profess Paganism to be different, but I want to see one out there slitting a goat's throat at the solstice. I have met people who truly believe the Pagan ways and that's fine, but the Neo-Pagan is just a sad case.

Spacers and other Hard Sciences: What's wrong with believing in a peaceful future? I think it's a wonderful thing to believe in. And just now and then, wishing does make it so. If Mr. Shea wants to poo-poo an idea just because current evidence points to the contrary, then we might as well crawl back into the caves because we sure as hell wouldn't be going anywhere forward.

I feel sorry if Mr. Shea doesn't feel at home in fandom anymore. I feel sorry that he has grown cynical and blind. The fandom of the old days is still here; you can find it, it's all around you. Fandom never gets rid of anything; it just assimilates and grows. Maybe if BSFS didn't try to run a money-maker (A Clubhouse?!? They've got a CLUBHOUSE?!?), they could get back to running a decent convention.

[[David, you didn't mention that you too are a gamer, you read three or four SF/Fantasy novels a week, are interested in Japanimation, act in SF plays, and write stories and articles, as well as the other things you mentioned above. You are the the most active fan I know. I wish there were more fans like you.]]

Lloyd Penney: Mr. Shea, what's wrong with fandom is they didn't look or act like you, or share your interest. What's wrong with fandom is that it's diversified, active and creative. While once is was only pulps, the odd convention, pub your ish, and science lessons, it is now a smorgasbord of activi-

FANOMENON

DIANA STEIN



ties, to be asmpled for a taste or feasted on, each individual interest. Concentrate on one activity, or spread yourself around to sample many, whatever channels your creativity. I hear so many fans (or pros) bitching because of mediafans, costumers, filkers, and SCAdians, and their only justification is that they don't like them. Fandom has expanded over the years it incorporate many avenues of creativity, many of which have their origins in fandom in its early years. 4SJ wore costumes, Bjo Trimble invented the art show, video cultists were there enjoying some of the early SFish shows like Rocky Jones. Sure, in the various fringes, as you call them, there are dorks, but in my own experiences, the dorks in the so-called mainstream fandom out-number those in the fringes.

Look at it this way: the conventions we enjoy so much could not now take place unless it was open to a wider group of people. You can call them dorks, but their money's as good as anybody else's, and by sheer numbers, they help pay the shot. Take it easy on them, and save yourself high blood pressure. Better yet, take a look at what they are doing -- you'll find that what they're doing is not only based on something of intelligence and creativity, but also on something from a science fiction book. Check with some of the pros you know...you'll find that they participate in, or have participated in, those fringe areas you don't like. Mike Resnick has been in masquerades with his wife Carol, L. Sprague de Camp is involved with SCA, various authors have written filks or games, and James Blish (among many others) wrote Trek, or novelized movies. Are you going to call them dorks, too? Or are you going to realize that fandom and science fiction encompass much more than you knew, and that you are suffering from a severe case of generation gap?

Duane Elms: Generally, when someone says that people don't spend much time talking any more, what he means is that people don't spend a lot of time listening to him anymore. It's interesting to note that all the "geeks" her refers to are people who are "doing something." Some of the things they are doing may not be particularly interesting to me or others, but at least they are doing things. Unfortunately for them, this takes them out of the category of "audience" for David and therefore relegates them to cultist geekdom. 'Tis a heavy cross, but one I guess we'll have to bear.

I suppose I never expected as much from fandom as David seems to. I never expected to walk into any con anywhere and fit in with everyone. I never expected to be able to talk to everyone at a con. I'm kinda happy that I can walk in and feel like there's just someone there I can talk to.

[[Duane, you have made a small name for yourself in Filking circles, so there is a group you can attach yourself to. Besides this, you read, work in scientific research, and are interested in other things -- you've just joined an active apa, and you are now writing for fanzines. You're doing great!]]

Sally Syrjala: I suppose you could call David Shea's article the Red Neck outlook. According to its parables, I should not be allowed to commingle with SF fans. For, you see, Star Trek was my first fandom. Yes, sireee, I am a Trekker. The credentials are in order. I have written for ST fanzines and have had letters published in ST letterzines. This does show Trekkers are at least literate, folks. This is something I think SF fans sometimes like to think otherwise. ST Fandom is international. Fanzines from Southern California to Scotland to Australia have published my Trek fiction. An editor from Switzerland who published a Central European ST newsletter once asked permission to translate a story of mine into German for her readers. Admittedly, I no longer consider myself an active element of its structure, yet it is the foundation of my fannish interest.

Then there is my involvement with Star Wars fandom. That is still very much active. I have written SW fanfiction, have many SW fanzines, and still participate in the letter column of Southern Enclave, a very LITERATE SW letterzine.

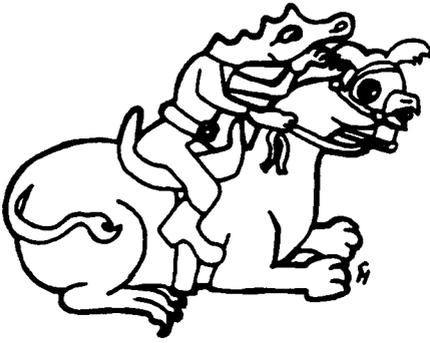
Well, the Mark Hamill Fan Club was mentioned. I do not belong to that. I do not overly LIKE the character of Luke so membership there would be slightly hypocritical. However, I have had a few stories published in Flip of a Coin which is a fanzine which specializes in fanfiction relating to media presentations in which Harrison Ford has been featured. You will find fiction in those pages ranging from Star Wars to Heores to Blade Runner to Witness and so on.

Gez whiz, I can even say that New Agers are folks with whom I don't mind hanging about. Their ideas can even be found in many SF books today. Memory Wire concerns itself with crystals. Computers concern themselves with crystals as well. They shine at the heart of their microchips. Precognitive dreams find their way into SF novels. Speculative fiction is what SF is about. New Age themes fit perfectly into that category.

If you want New Age thinking, go to the works of H. Rider Haggard. His books have a continual theme of reincarnation of the souls of lovers and the cyclical nature of being. This I thought was early SF. Therefore, maybe we are simply getting back to the roots of the genre from which it has wandered in the past few decades?

It would seem that many would have SF be an elitist group limited to a single concept and refusing to extrapolate on any concepts other than a limited group. Now this seems to me to be contrary to what science fiction is all about. It is not about limiting your horizons, but expanding them. It is about speculation in fields you may not have previously explored. It is showing the mind many different facets of being so that an overall perception can be attained that is more accurate than that offered by a single field of vision.

Yes, I have read Heinlein, as well as Tolkien. In fact, Lord of the Rings is very reminiscent of Star Wars. I once wrote a loc about the comparisons of these two creations to a SW letterzine called Jundland Wastes. Luke is the bearer of the force/ring. He is tempted by the power behind the force/ring.



Just as Aragon travels in the company of the dead in the gray mist, Han also makes this voyage via carbon freeze. I see Han as being the main character in SW, not Luke. It is Han who makes the transition from seemingly non-caring space wanderer to a leader in the Rebel Alliance -- a general. Stryder also makes the transformation. I find this an intriguing mythological likeness with the two works.

There are those who would like to see SF as being an elitist cult that closes its doors to all except those of a narrow, limited mind frame. I tend to see SF as a field that is open to all, a field where ideas are allowed the room to cascade from one side to the other. In short, an area of speculation on all types of notions.

Admittance to SF fandom should not be limited to an interest in a narrow field of published works, but open to all to create an ever-expanding kaleidoscope of mental excursions, a place where new ideas are not treated as threats, but as welcomed guests to be nurtured and given a place in the world.

The threat to SF fandom does not come from so-called fringe fandoms who are only showing different vistas of the SF theme, but from those who would limit the scope of fandom to include only those with whom they found total agreement and affinity. How boring such a world would be! The ubiquitous Star Trek ideal of IDIC -- Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations -- is what I would much prefer, a place where I could partake of different world and universal views, a place where people are not afraid to look at new concepts and try them on for size. Yes, many will be rejected on the part of that individual, however, because one concept does not fit one individual does not mean it cannot be a perfect fit for another.

Indeed, another quote could find its place here as well. "I may not believe in what you say, but will fight to the death your right to say it." All aspects of speculative fiction -- even the Lost in Space group -- have a right to be. Who is to say which of us has the most exclusive rights? It has to be a universal right. And fandom should be the place where all peoples can find welcome to be as they are and to explore the realms that are currently of interest to them.

Long may fandom live and prosper and long may it be a place for those of differing ideas to come together with people who are willing to debate those ideas and not to automatically condemn because of difference.

Buck Coulson: Oh god, another disenchant-ed fan. And as usual, one with initially excess expectations. Of course David Shea could in the past have walked into any convention in the world and talked to anyone. The chance of their talking back was somewhat less. Well, I have no intention of defending all the groups he listed, especially the mystics -- though from my observation, they're a smaller percentage of fandom than they are of the general population. Filkers, though... David has just announced that Gordon Dickson, C.J. Cherryh, Robert Asprin, Suzette Haden Elgin, Mercedes Lackey, Juanita Coulson, myself, Kelly Freas (and Poul Anderson, if you want to go back far enough) don't belong at science fiction conventions. Bruce Pelz used to be a filker; maybe he shouldn't have been chairman of LACON I. Bjo Trimble, who made the convention Art Shows possible more or less singlehandedly, has also chaired a filk convention. And so on and on.

Mark Schulzinger: David Shea's opinion of "What's Wrong with Fandom" reflected an opinion I formed after my 15 years of gafia. My memories of fandom included Worldcons with only 800 attendees, regional cons small enough to hold in tiny motels, and at least a nodding acquaintanceship with everyone I met. Emphasis was on the written genre, and films had better be scientifically accurate if they wanted to win the fannish seal of approval. Fanpubbers were legion and every con saw me stagger homeward laden with their zines. The "hall costume" consisted of a propeller beanie and a water pistol.

Imagine my surprise when I ran into current hall costumes and folks running around with milliwatt cadmium lasers! I recall that I kept my eyes shut whenever I entered a particular party room. The poise -- and I refer to averdu-poise -- of the femmefen in miniscule costumes was overwhelming. I have never been a subscriber to "Big Mamma", nor even an occasional reader, and encounters were sufficient to leave me with absolutely no interest in such matters. At least it's comforting to know that there are some paraphiliacs that fail to move me.

The number of youngsters around did not surprise me. I used to be one of them myself. Fandom must attract young people if it is not to go the way of the Shakers. The fact that there are young around is, at least, proof that fans breed. One was wearing a costume that had a large China-Burma-India insignia on the back, but with six-pointed stars on it instead of the usual five-pointers. I congratulated him on his China-Burma-Israel uniform, and he indignantly informed me that he was a something-or-other (I can't remember what). It was then I realized the only problem with the youngsters was their appalling lack of knowledge of history.

I don't see that all these diverse types of fans really hurt fandom (although I admit that the Whosits seem to be the most narrow of them). All of them represent fans of something which has some connection with science fiction, no matter how tenuous. Usually they don't bother me; their interest and mine are totally dissimilar. As David

accurately pointed out: they help pay the bills.

David Palter: David Shea makes his point most eloquently, and it is true that the great influx of people into fandom who are primarily interested in the the various special interests that the article lists (cos-tuming, video & film, games, filk, medievalism, mysticism, and space colonization) rather than good old SF per se, has changed the nature of fandom. However, I feel that all of these special interests are quite legitimately connected to SF, and that they do belong under the great SF umbrella. I find that although I am a true SF fan in the grand tradition, and I read at least a few SF books every week, along with a healthy diet of both prozines and fanzines, I am still interested (in varying degrees) in every one of those special interests which form their own subfandoms. And I have gotten to know some people whose fannish interests primarily lie in those areas, and some of them are well worth knowing. They are, in their own way, fans who are endowed with those special qualities -- a love of imaginative speculation, a refusal to be limited by conventional expectations, an intellectual playfulness, and a feeling of community with those of like mind -- that I expect from a fan. These people are not invaders or gatecrashers or infiltrators. They are in fandom because they belong in fandom. (Even if they haven't read Heinlein.)

There is, however, something wrong with fandom. The assorted problems that I have had with fandom stem very simply from the fact that although we fans would like to think of ourselves as being above the foolish and short-sighted squabbling and the destructive and constant conflicts at every level of mundane human society -- from parents fighting with their kids all the way to international war -- we are nonetheless all human beings, and all are heir to the sociobiological weaknesses of our species. So, when I have problems with fans, they are much the same as the problems I have with non-fans. Fans are not so different as they may think.

Steven Fox: One article which I found interesting in past issues of LL was the one on Convention Etiquette. I was a bit miffed to see that there were no letters of comment or no follow-up articles.

[[But there were -- both locs and two other articles in succeeding issues of LL: One article dealt with etiquette at filksings, and the other with etiquette of approaching pro writers. Much of what Mark Bernstein had in the original article has been continued on in Panels at local conventions. Eventually he hopes to put together a comprehensive handbook on the subject.]]

Oddly enough, you had a similar article by David Shea. Too bad these articles were not run together; they would have complimented one another very well.

Both articles deal with aspects of fandom that I and some of my friends find annoying

about fandom. The Shea article looks at a larger aspect of what is wrong with fandom, while the convention etiquette article deals with a more personal look at some types of behavior of fans.

There is one point that both articles did not go deep enough into. I heard a lot of stuff about how tolerant fans are. I've found in some of my experiences with fans that they are not as tolerant as the myth keeps telling us.

One good example is the constant use of the word "mundanes" by SF fans. The word used to describe non science fiction fans as dull-witted, boring and unimaginative. These so-called tolerant individuals don't seem to understand that not everybody is interested in SF or fantasy. A lot of people just don't have the time or the money to spend on all those books. Also too many fans are obsessive about their fannish interest to the extent of excluding all other types of outside interests or pastimes. I said to a friend at a local con that SF is generally good reading for ideas about alternate societies, far out places, or just plain fun, but all the science fiction and fantasy in the world won't put food on their tables, keep you warm, or provide good instruction of how to get along with real people and real problems in the real world.

The tolerant myth sort of grows out of the notion that fans will not make fun of a "weird individual." They won't put down any annoying behavior, even when that person's behavior is grossly annoying to people near them. This sort of thing creates an atmosphere where people with less sense, or social grace, or real mental or emotional problems can feel free to let loose with their brand of nonsense. This sort of stuff is what gives the mainstream public a bad impression of SF & F conventions and fandom.

One type of behavior problem I've become aware of through first-hand experience and through discussions with other fans is similar to one mentioned in the Etiquette article: Conversations. In this instance, the person was not trying to invade a conversation as much as he was intruding upon someone else's relationship -- mine. There were three instances of fans trying to pick up my girlfriend -- once while I was standing right next to her, another when I was discussing some point with her some asshole takes it on himself to offer an opinion, and the third time at this same convention while I am massaging her feet up pops another male fan who tries to do her back (neither she nor I knew the fellow) and she told him, "Please stop." I told him to stop in a less-nice manner. The three different men were actually shocked and hurt that I or she would not let them cop feels off her.



Here's the really strange part: I was approached later by some busybody who called me "not nice" for not allowing these oddballs to feel up my girlfriend, but it was okay for these three male fans to ignore the fact that the lady was with me and not "fair game." Some other male fans expressed to me that they feel the same way: they don't like it when strange men try to get their girlfriends' attention, but they also don't like being called ogres because they don't want to share their girlfriends. Maybe it has something to do with the notion that fans try too hard to be liked and won't police themselves for fear of not being accepted in the fold as it were. The cartoon on page 19 of LL #26 sort of sums it up well.

[[What about the female's feelings? She should speak up too, and ultimately it is her wishes that should be honored, and the male she is with to uphold it, if the offending males don't understand the word "no". Besides, if those people are being so offensive, why should those other males care if they are liked and accepted by the offenders? // Here in the Midwest there are security people who will deal with such matters. A complaint made by an individual about sexual harassment will be addressed, and if a warning is not heeded, the person's membership in the convention will be pulled. An additional pressure is that there are three major cons in the Detroit area, and being thrown out at one means you are carefully watched at the other two. And yes, someone was thrown out of a con for sexual harassment, and another has been barred from all three cons for passing bad checks.]]

At LUNACON in '88, I had a conversation with a fellow who said he had problems with women, or to quote him: "I can't get fucked at these cons as much as I would like." So much for subtlety. I didn't say much to him afterward, but my girlfriend who was with me told me her opinion of this "gentleman" (it was not good, of course). She made a list of things that some males in fandom really need to do if they want to be attractive to the opposite sex. Her words:

- 1) Wash -- we women don't like men who smell like sheep, and soap and water won't hurt you.



- 2) Cut your hair and your ragged beards, or at least trim them more often.
- 3) Try not to wear the same clothing from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon (at least not at a con).
- 4) While on clothes, try to dress like a human being; nothing is as silly as a man dressed in clothes that are so out of date it's obvious -- people, especially we women, notice these things.
- 5) Please, please learn some manners! I'm tired of men who can't act like adults. And stop interrupting conversations, or contradicting people who are not speaking to you. Or you might at least introduce yourself first.
- 6) Finally, get the hell out of the house more often. Or to quote William Shatner: "Get a life!!"

So, if you can do some of these things, you're on your way.

I must agree with David Shea's article. I keep asking myself sometimes, "what does all this stuff have to do with SF?"

On many occasions I've met people who will tell me that they're only into Gaming, or Trek, or Costuming, and don't read science fiction. I always found that kind of attitude very odd. The filkers are sometimes almost as bad; some don't seem to have any musical talent and they hinder themselves by doing only one type of music. These other fandom types should have their own conventions and not expect SF cons to always cater to them.

Sometimes I feel that SF cons should go back to a format where the emphasis is strictly on science fiction and the authors. I know there are some cons that do this, but I feel more should do it. Or at least the film programs should deal with good science fiction films and the masquerade sections should stress costumes based on characters from science fiction books, not bad SF films or TV.

On too many occasions I have found myself an outsider at a con because of my interest strictly with SF. It was a lot easier a few years ago to find people at a con you had something in common with. Not any more.

[[There are a number of special interest conventions nowadays, as you yourself noted about the serious SF cons. Filkers, costumers, even how-to-run-conventions cons exist. Midwest conventions do provide for a number of avenues of fannish expressions, but they do revolve around SF. I hope you read the other letters in this section -- they tell a lot of what happens at cons in other areas of the country. Some of the problems David Shea mentions are unique to the East Coast.]]

It was my understanding that a certain large SF con closed its doors to the general public and had its convention members attend by invitation only. They worked their invite system by using a list of people who had attended the three previous cons and Club members. I think this is sort of a good idea in some respects; it keeps some amount of control over the attendance size, and I would

guess some of the types of attendees. Another strategy, one used by PHILCON, will not allow children under 16 to attend without a parent or guardian. Not to mention the weapons policies some cons have adopted. Someone once said this was fandom's way of trimming the fat, or removing the deadwood at cons. We shall see.

[[Some of these things are good ideas, though if I decide that I would like to attend a convention that is invitation only, I couldn't. I'm not sure whose loss that would be. // Policies implemented to remove undesirable characters from cons have to be thought out carefully. The prime focus should be safety for the membership, and obedience with local laws (like drugs, drinking, sexual age-of-consent limits, pornography, etc). Otherwise, discrimination suits might be filed, and that would not be good for fandom.]]

Harry Andruschak: I am probably one of the more famous L-5 geeks in fandom.

I wonder when it changed? Back when I was a teenager, I read all the SF magazines. This was in the 1950s, mind you. We had lots of magazines, and every one of them had a regular science column. Two in particular had a profound influence on me. One was Isaac Asimov in F&SF, and the other was Willey Ley in Galaxy.

And Willey and the rest of the science writers wrote about space. Somehow, it was just assumed that SF fans were also pro-space. And that may have been true in the 1950s. When did it change? After Astounding became Analog? After the 1969 Worldcon honored Apollo 11? The drive to make Science Fiction respectable and literary?

I do know one thing. Oasis, the local L-5 group, long ago gave up on fandom and SF conventions as a source of recruits. We just faced underwhelming response to our tables and exhibits. It was a waste of time and money to show up at conventions.

I've lost track as to how many fans have told me I was a goddam fool to waste money on a Lifetime Membership ion the L-5 Society. Maybe they were right. The L-5 Society is no more. In theory we merged with the NSI, the National Space Institute. In practice, the resulting NSS (National Space Society) has chosen to let the former L-5 local chapters wither on the vine.

As you know, Lan, I lost my job at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory after working there for 13 years -- in the wake of the Challenger disaster. I was unemployed a full year since nobody wanted to hire a technician over the age of forty who wasted 13 years of his life at a dead-end place like JPL. I had no retirement or pension rights, no health insurance, and after one year I also had no savings.

So at age 43 I have had to start over, at the USPS. It pays well, has good retirement plans, health plans, and security. All it lacks is dreams and hopes to improve the future of the human race.

In fact, sitting here and thinking about it, I guess that is why I have mostly stopped going to SF conventions. I am an

outsider with my pro-space orientation from the 1950s. Nobody seems to give a shit about the future of the NASA unmanned science programs, for example.

I remain your friendly L-5 Lifetime *geek* Member....

Margaret Middleton: I don't know what all filk David Shea has heard, but I strongly resent his categorizing filkers as one of the groups "whose interests include(d) science fiction only marginally". After all, filk as we know it was invented when Juanita Coulson set Heinlein's "Along the Grand Canal" to music. Quite a few other writers, including Tolkien, (Everyone had read Heinlein. Everyone had read Tolkien") have written lyric or even epic poetry into their stories and have subsequently been confronted with fannish musical settings thereof. (I won't debate quality. Filk is no more exempt from Sturgeon's Law than fanzining.) As to being "interested in hearing anyone else's music but their own...", we can hear everyone else's music just by turning on the radio or TV. We can even hear our own filking by singing to ourselves; to hear someone else's filk, though, we have to go to conventions.

[[Fortunately there are also filk tapes, so we can hear other filkers songs without having to attend all the other conventions!]]

Paula Robinson: Here's one that really kicked me in the thought gland. Mr. Shea is, in my opinion, making dangerous generalizations. Most folks who costume, watch videos/films, game, filk, dress in medieval costume, look into mysticism, or have an interest in the L-5 Society do not suffer "virtually total ignorance of science fiction." I've been interested in all of these at various times, and now I write and sell SF. Most of the people in these groups with whom I conversed were far from ignorant. Rather, they were extremely knowledgeable about a particular author or sub-genre, and certainly aware of others. Mr. Shea may be misjudging people because they have not read his required curriculum of SF, which, although certainly not a bad one, is not the only one.



The sense of alienation Mr. Shea feels, however, struck a chord in me. The convention scene had tended to grow less friendly with time. Much of this, I suspect, is due to the sheer volume of fans -- including "fringe fans" -- attending cons. The few clods who show up looking to take advantage of trusting people have done some damage to the formerly open spirit of things. This, plus the obvious diversity of interests in such a large group, can make finding someone who has "something in common" with you more difficult.

Another problem the SF community faces is the strong fears engendered by the very technology that used to be a rich source of speculative conversation. For the majority of this century sci-tech was viewed as a source of "miracle cures." Now, however, the unpleasant side effects of technology are becoming more and more evident to all of us. Technology has gone from speculation to experimentation -- a very painful yet necessary phase of growth -- and the distress has led to the "fringe fans" Mr. Shea describes. When lasers, neutron bombs, and exploding Challengers were mere possibilities, they were interesting. Now, they are frightening realities. The SF field reflects this in its shift away from "nuts and bolts" SF to fantasy, where the threats are removed from everyday reality. Consider the list: every single fringe group is exploring the possibilities. Their interests do not touch on present scientific reality. Why? Because it's simply too frightening. (What if you were the poor clod handed the privilege of unanesthetized laser retinal surgery?) Until people in and out of the SF world begin to accept the emotional realities of massive technological change, the fringe element will continue to dominate fandom.

AIDS has also introduced problems into fandom which touch on the above-mentioned fears. The former easygoing, "modern" attitudes about sex are changing, and these changes cannot help but overlap into non-sexual interactions. Many people make the illogical intuitive leap that insists that since it isn't safe to be physically intimate, it can't be safe to be intimate in other ways -- even with mere friendliness. (The point that the risk is relatively low with "protected" sex with a few carefully chosen, trustworthy people does not counterbalance the fact that good ole sci-tech doesn't have the "miracle cure" you'd need if infected.

Mercedes Lackey: Normally I am not inspired to take the time to take anybody on in a fanzine, but that bit of bigoted garbage on "What's Wrong with Fandom?" raised my ire.

The minute the labels go on, the fences go up -- and the minute the fences go up, communication stops. And along with the other labels you used the one that shows all too clearly where your real sentiments lie. They are Geeks. Implying that you are somehow superior.

All I know is that I write some of this sf/f stuff, so I suppose I'm in a position to be an authority. I get letters now and again -- from fourteen-year-olds, from the

Crystal Conversationalists, and from True Fen. Funny thing, you all sound alike to me. You all hurt, because the "real world" doesn't understand/accept/like you. You're all poorly socialized, because the "real world" doesn't know how to deal with people with a little imagination. You all found some small solace in something I wrote. Your concerns are much alike, your fears, and your sorrows. And I'll bet every other author who isn't buried in his/her own ego trip will tell you the same.

The "Fringe Fen" are reaching out to you for acceptance in the only way they know how -- by being visible. You might try to exercise your under-used organ of humanity and reach back.

And -- by the way -- I used to be in the SCA (along with Poul and Karen Anderson, Katherine Kurtz, Gordy Dickson, Diana Paxson, Bob Asprin, and Marion Zimmer Bradley) and the only reason we quit was because it required time we couldn't spare from writing. I used to costume; Barbara Hambly still does. I wrote for a Star Wars fictionzine before I became a pro. I wargame -- along with Lawrence Watt-Evans and Tanya Huff. I still filk, it being one of the few things I can still taketime from my schedule to do. So does my fellow Oklahoman, C. J. Cherryh. I don't much appreciate being called a Geek and a subhuman, and I don't imagine they would either.

Join the larger world, sweets. You just might find a whole new set of friends.

Robert Rodgers: This is a discussion of something many fans can (and will) argue about forever. It would be more interesting to discuss how fandom has changed over the past twenty years. From what I've heard and read, it's always been open, and does not have the means nor the desire to excommunicate anybody, even for such gauche behavior as wearing Mr. Spock ears.

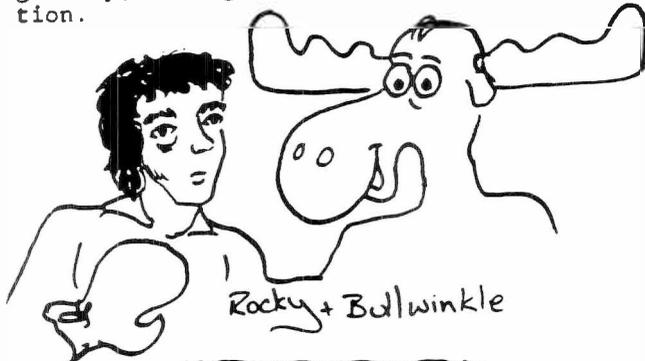
It seems that there is no one group that can be called Fandom anymore. Cons will accept anybody who pays their membership and will expel them only for cause. In size, the Worldcons and large regionals have gone from being villages where everybody knew everybody else and had similar interests to being small cities with all the diversity this entails. Mr. Shea has pointed out that the consoms have encouraged this growth, so they brought it on themselves.

The question of what a fan is will never be answered to everybody's satisfaction, but I agree with Mr. Shea that many of the groups he lists are only peripherally involved with the traditional interests of fans, but most are harmless.

I suspect that there have always been individuals in Fandom with interests similar to those of the groups he mentioned, but they were too few to be noticeable. As the size of cons mushroomed, the fringe groups become bigger, better organized and more visible. Also, some of these groups didn't exist or were very small twenty years ago. The SCA wasn't formed until 1965, and I think the first D&D set wasn't sold until 1974. L-5 wasn't founded until the late 70s. But the costumers and filkers are indigenous to Fandom.

It seems that there's always been some interest in occultism by fans and by some of the pros. Of the older generation of writers, L. Sprague de Camp has written much non-fiction on the subject, though from a skeptical viewpoint. Much of this was written over thirty years ago and first appeared in Astounding. From the things he mentioned in passing in his fiction, it appears that Robert A. Heinlein had studied the subject in depth at some time in his life, but he seems to have been another skeptic. (It sometimes seemed that Heinlein had studied every subject under the sun well enough to make people think he knew all about it. Much of the time I think he did.) I know from talking to them at cons that some of the younger writers are actively involved in occultism. On the other hand, it's only been a couple of times that I've seen occult bookstores buy tables in the huckster room at cons, and they didn't seem to be doing much business.

On the whole, it seems that Mr. Shea is complaining that things aren't like they used to be in Fandom and he's right. But they won't change back and talking to some of the teenagers gives me the impression that Fandom is going to change more as they grow up, though I can't say in which direction.



Kathleen Gallagher:
The Modern Office

Anonymous: Yes, let's hear it for the modern office, that repository of office supplies just ripe for the finger-pickin' of the average worker. Pens, pencils, page protectors, index cards, looseleaf, scratch paper, markers, boxes of staples, post-it notes, typing paper ... yep, I've swiped them all. And thanks to the office copier, I've never paid for the copying of a single apa contrib. If only my employer knew what a two-bit thief I am. They'd take away about three or four paychecks and say "Account Closed."

Cathy Howard: Everything Kathy Gallagher has to say about offices is frustratingly true. Amusingly enough my office skills have been overwhelmed by technology and are now obsolete. I know typing and shorthand. What is now wanted is knowledge of running a word processor.

Paula Robinson: "The Modern Office" was hilarious. The comments about the "D.P.

(Dumb Person) department" in relation to data processing had me in fits. I once spent six months doing that sort of work; my mind narrowly escaped permanent conversion to oatmeal. Also apt and funny were the observations about typewriters. While working temporary positions, one of the hardest things to handle was figuring out what all those funny little keys at either side of the keyboard actually did. Often the only way to find out was --God help us-- pushing one. This generally made the text do backflips of no discernible pattern. I think they build in such keys to keep us low-echelon folks humble.

Terry Jeeves: I enjoyed Kathleen Gallagher on "The Modern Office." Her same comments apply to most appliances (and cars) -- you need a degree in epizootics to operate microwave, cooker, washer, freezer, blender, mixer, deep fryer, and as for cars -- once upon a time the handbooks gave electrical circuit diagrams and you could trace a wiring fault. Nowadays with black boxes, printed circuits and solid state components, even the blokes at the garage which sold you the car are baffled.

Mike Resnick:
The African Trip

Lloyd Penney: Sounds like a great trip through a beautiful land. I read that several authors are headed to Africa to safari through the grasslands. I get the feeling that we can think of the natives as being perhaps a little naive, but they often show themselves to have more sense than the average tourist who waltzes through, feigning the status of a wealth of experience and intelligence -- "you don't have to tell me what to do."

A trip like this shows you just how spoiled we are with modern conveniences...and the inconveniences that Mike had to put up with are a part of everyday life there.

Mike, WHY shouldn't I eat African pizza? Do the cannibals own a Domino's franchise, and when you ask for ham on your slab, you get a different kind of pig?

Ben Schilling: About African Pizza, Kenya pizza might be bad, but Egyptian pizza is okay, provided you can live without pork sausage (of any variety) on yours. Egyptian beer is really poor, too.

Sam Long: I especially enjoyed Mike Resnick's safari tales. Back in '72 I took a month-long trip around Ethiopia. To get there I flew from London to Nairobi and thence to Addis Ababa; and the reverse returning. So Mike's adventures brought back memories. My trip was in January, however, and so I didn't suffer from the insects etc. as much as the R's did. One of my friends at the IEPA was in the British Army in Kenya during the Mau Mau Emergency, but he doesn't say much about it.

Ahh... the wildebeest, or gnu. That name is derived from a native name, ng. Not much

of an improvement, is it? Are you, or Mike, familiar with the Flanders and Swann song, "I'm a Gnu"? [[Yes, I have their albums.]] Mike's right about them.

By the way, east African beer is quite good. The beer I had in Ethiopia was excellent -- but hard to find in this country, of course.

Terry Jeeves: I'm afraid Resnick's African trip was too much like reading a diary than reliving things through his eyes. Africa itself, well I was there briefly (4 days off a troop ship) in 1942, and the colour bar was frightening then (park benches labelled "Europeans Only"; busses likewise). Can't say I'm greatly interested in the place. One thing I feel is for sure, the natives will eventually rise up in mass revolt against apartheid, and it will be a mass massacre like our St. Brice's Day ... and the pro-black anti-apartheid whites will go down along with the rest.

David Palter: Mike Resnick certainly conveys what it is like to tour Africa; fascinatingly exotic, but too hazardous and arduous for me.

Gregory Litchfield: "What I did on My Summer Vacation" told me more about Africa in its seven pages than I have read in my life. I envy Mike Resnick's ability to condense events into such an entertaining article. Diana Stein's illustrations did much to add to the enjoyment of reading Mr. Resnick's article, and I think she should have been credited as such on the article's title page instead of just on the contents page.

[[I had originally thought of doing that, but when paste-up time came around, it slipped my mind. Diana receives credit with Mike's story in this issue (see page 8) and will do so next time. See Mike's comments below.]]

Paula Robinson: Mike Resnick's trip report caught and maintained my interest. Blame this on my fondness for animals. The wildebeest theme was funny, and the accompanying cartoon of the cerebral plant next to a be-dunce-capped wildebeest was quite apt, given Mr. Resnick's descriptions of the critters. His good-humored account of the marvelous plumbing, hotel management, and air transportation was both hilarious and eye-opening.



The account of the grazing elephant naturally caught my interest. Anyone who knows anything about wild elephants knows that Thou Shalt Not Mess With Rogue Bulls. The words "solitary elephant" and "peacefully feeding" with no immediate reassurance that nobody was hurt were red flags. I hope the unfortunate musician who walked into the bull recovers -- and stops drinking when elephants are around. The fact that he survived at all is remarkable.

Teddy Harvia: Mike Resnick's summer vacation was thoroughly entertaining as were Diana Stein's accompanying illos.

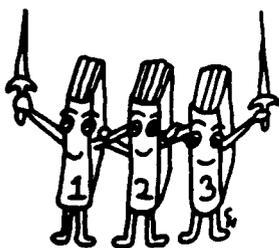
Mike Resnick: Just a note to let you know that I think Diana Stein's illos for my trip diary in LL #26 were absolutely brilliant. Carol and I will be visiting Cairo, taking a Nile cruise, and continuing on to Tanzania next February; on the assumption that I'll be writing it up for you, let me put in my request for Diana as my illustrator right now.

[[Diana was thrilled with your comment, and she is very willing to illustrate your next trip -- as I am to print it. I think she did a fabulous job with your story -- after three other artists told me they couldn't do it.]]



Paula Robinson: Eric Bentcliffe surprised me with his serious tone in "There Are Cosmic Cowpats in the Science Fiction Field." Well, yes, of course there are; cowpats exist in any field of literature. Mr. Bentcliffe may not realize that his criticism might best be directed toward the publishers rather than the writers, who must sell their work to the former group, and therefore must write to their specifications. The adventure/fantasy cliches which he finds so annoying (a sentiment I share, incidentally) simply happen to sell. The lack of originality is encouraged by the market. As for the poor writing Mr. Bentcliffe cites -- yes, many semicompetent people finagle their way into print. However, few stay there.

Lloyd Penney: Around here, reader and SF bookseller alike will agree that while it is difficult to find a good SF novel these days, it is uncommonly easy to find a horrible fantasy novel, jacketed like a cheap romance novel, selling like the proverbial hotcakes. It seems any hack can thump out a fantasy novel, get it published, and the publisher can write it off. I long for the days when a story could be tightly told in a single book, about 200 pages long, and not for today's fluffy tales in a trilogy or tetralogy, each book adequately replacing a hefty doorstep. If there have to be trilogies, let each book stand on its own, and not rely on its two or three partners in the series to make sense.



**ALL FOR ONE
AND ONE FOR
ALL!**

David Palter: Eric Bentcliffe offers a complaint that I have grown accustomed to seeing in fanzines periodically, which is that SF ain't what it used to be. Personally, I still enjoy both F&SF and ANALOG (and IA's SFM too) and I was not daunted by the awesome complexity of the plot of Julian May's Saga of the Exiles (which I found wholly delightful) and I had no trouble with Golden Witchbreed. I do agree that there are serious problems with the Pelbar Cycle, although on the whole I enjoyed reading it anyway. But aside from these, the field of SF today is more richly productive than ever. Eric should read some of the recent novels of Orson Scott Card, David Brin, Lois McMaster Bujold, Stephen Leigh or John Stirling; they are fabulously good. SF is hardly in a decline.

Buck Coulson: I sympathize with Eric Bentcliffe; Sturgeon's Law is no more or less accurate than it was when he proposed it, but it's easier to weed out the crap when the field consists of a dozen (or even 30) magazines and a few reprint books than it is with the overwhelming flow of today. I can't even keep up with all the new authors and I get paid for reviewing. But the good new authors are there -- Donald Kingsbury, David Drake when he stays out of a series, Michael F. Flynn (who has so far produced only shorts and novelets), Judith Tarr for fantasy, Esther Friesner for humor, Lois McMaster Bujold.

Terry Jeeves: For me the best piece of #26 was Bentcliffe's on current (so-called) SF. Analog is bland, and as for paperbacks, well I shall SCREAM if I meet another heroic saga of the good guy (or girl) who has magical powers and must fight against the repeating (well they're ALWAYS trilogies) forces of the Dark Lord Of Satanic Evil From The Ghastly Other World Pit -- who has usually stolen the magic jewel, stone, sword, dildo or whatever -- and if the writer/perpetrator can work in a dragon or some corny verse, I not only give up, I throw up. Oh yes, those maps. Have you ever wondered what it must be like to live in such lands where rivers cross -- or run OVER mountain ranges?

Another peeve of mine, over and above Eric's complaint, is the current state of Analog art -- since this is the only SF prozine I take now (only out of sheer habit; I'm only 12 short of a full set), I can only comment on the one mag. I am sick and tired of finding story after story therein 'illustrated' by one or two faces, head and shoulders or two people looking at each other -- usually surging a power cut if the overall dark-

ness of the illo is to be believed. Janet Aulisio is a prime offender in this way, but most others are of the same ilk. In the old days (good old days?) we had Bob Tucker's Society For The Preservation of Staples in Science Fiction Magazines -- can we not organize a Society to Abolish Faces and Bring Back Wonder to Science Fiction Illustration? Back I be a Founding Member.

[[Stan Schmidt gets LL; I'll make sure he takes note of your comments. // Okay, Terry. Get it rolling. What do we do? If anyone else is interested in forming such a Society, do they contact you?]]

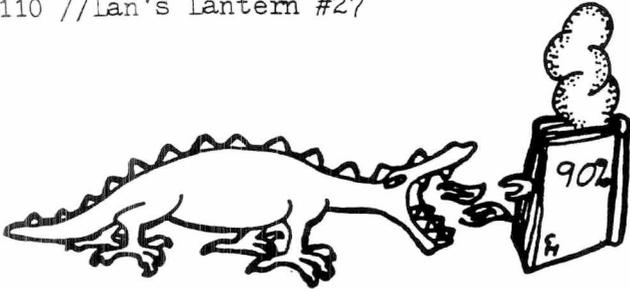
Mark Schulzinger: I was raised on Sense of Wonder, cut my teeth on Bob Heinlein and Doc Smith, giggled at Dianetics and fiddled with Heironymous machines. Too often I find myself reading a book which has gotten the most extravagant praise from readers and reviewers only to discover that it's not worth the effort to finish. I usually do finish it out of professional curiosity, and vow never to make the same mistakes in my own writing. Recently I read two fantasies. In the first the author wrote an excellent yarn in which the fantasy element was totally unnecessary. It would have made an excellent historical adventure (and would probably have brought in more money as such). The second was a typical first novel -- choppy, strained, contrived, and hokey. I still can't figure out how it got published.

Another of my concerns revolves around the necessity of angst in current stories. A friend of mine summed it up nicely when he told me he no longer read a particular magazine because the level of emotional pain the protagonist had to endure in each story was too painful. I am coming to the conclusion that our culture has become so schizophrenic that individuals are no longer aware of external realities, and react only to internal states. They can only be entertained by descriptions of their own pathological emotionality, but are not even aware that this is what entertains them.

Duane Elms: I too have tired of quest novels (very shortly after reading Lord of the Rings). I'm less interested in covering territory than I am in covering ideas. I suppose that's why it's so easy to get me hooked on a "First Contact" story. You know you are going to have to do something to understand this new thing; you can't simply pass it off as a sideshow wonder. Unfortunately, there's not a lot for us "hard" SF fans to be excited about these days. Ah, well, maybe better days lie ahead.

Ben Schilling: Is the statement that there's a lot of trash published as SF so surprising? Sturgeon's Law applies to everything, just like it says. There's always someone trying to make a fast buck by publishing cheap books at astounding prices. It's always happened, and I don't see it changing.

Cathy Howard: I agree with Bentcliffe's comments on maps. If a map has to be included to understand the story, it needs to be rewritten.



Laura Todd: Thanks for saying something that needed to be said about books that promise "unimaginable wonders" and then leave you disappointed. What you said about Golden Witchbreed is ten times as true for M. Z. Bradley's City of Sorcery (of which Golden Witchbreed appeared to be a copy). The whole of this book consisted of a mountain climbing expedition to the mysterious city. At the end, there was one battle at the city's gates. The protagonists never even went inside!

Yes, I personally have had it up to here with books that raise concepts, pique curiosity, and promise wonders -- only to leave me hanging at the end. I think a major culprit here is the ubiquity of the sequel and the trilogy. An author doesn't need to show us those wonders or even resolve the plot if she/he can say "continued in part II". By then, the author hopes, the readers have forgotten what was supposed to happen, so they can be once more led down the garden path in some new and equally inconclusive adventure.

Paul Tilley's Amtrak Wars series is a major offender here. I was not warned that Book One was not a complete novel. I then waded through two more volumes of pointless intrigue which got me no closer to the final showdown. By now I'm tired of being jerked around, so I don't plan to read any further.

It's gotten to the point that I won't buy any books that's part of a series of I can help it. Some of them seem no better than endless soap-opera. I may be wrong, but I feel that the current prevalence of trilogies and series is doing great harm to the cause of coherent writing. Doesn't anyone know how to plot a complete novel anymore?



Lloyd Penney: I've often thought that instead of actual content of stories, fans vote for the name. This article certainly doesn't prove that thought to be true, but does lend some credence to it. There are the names -- Heinlein, Asimov, Clarke -- who have won many awards, but with the waning of those careers (and the death of Heinlein, of course) there are others (Pohl, Silverberg, Ellison, Leiber) who enjoy popularity, but not what the Big Three had, and that isn't

really fair. There are just so many writers many of us remember from the 40s and 50s, and although there should be, there doesn't seem to be enough recognition to go around.

Jim Harris: Interesting piece of research. I wonder if there is any way to analyze awards to see how much relation there is between a big name and winning. How often does a new writer jump into the field with something so outstanding that he or she wins an award right off the bat?

I must plead guilty to turning to my favorite "big name" writers whenever I get a new SF mag to read. One reason why I like to read fanzines is to find references to new writers that I have overlooked.

Francis Valery: An attractive article by Robert Sabella about the Award winners. I agree with him when he concludes that most of the people in the field today know nothing about incredibly important writers like Stanley Weinbaum or Cyril Kornbluth. It is crazy to realize that many books -- if not all the books -- of the best SF writers of the 40s, 50s and 60s are out of print and sometimes very hard to find. I think of Alfred Bester ... certainly one of the most wonderful writers in the field. SF writers and publishers have a short memory; they forget that the money they make today with the low-low-grade so-called fantasy (mostly shit) or "neoclassic" SF by over-rated writers is due to these late fine gentlemen who pioneered the field in the golden period, and who today die in misery and oblivion. In my opinion, the Golden Age runs from Weinbaum to the 50s issues of Galaxy and F&SF. I read and appreciate new magazines, for instance IASFM, but I have too often had the strong feeling that Bester, Sturgeon, Dick, Simak, Kuttner, Moore, Heinlein, Weinbaum, and many others will never be replaced.

Terry Jeeves: Sorry, but I can't raise much of a head of steam over League Tables of the Big Winners as I have no interest in the Awards. My own personal view is that nobody can (a) read ALL published and eligible works, (b) remember just which are eligible and (c) arrange them into a reasonable order of merit. You might add (d) and not be outweighed by the finagling which I gather gets in the way of the results anyway. My own memory tends to let a story sink into Limbo within a few weeks of reading it, so as far as I'm concerned, my vote wouldn't be worth a plugged (or unplugged) nickel.

Roy Lavender: Robert Sabella's twiddling with statistics of SF awards omits one important category. Among those who received one Hugo was Lou Tabakow, who received the award for the award for the Best Unpublished Story. It was a real Hugo, received for a real work.

He is right, though, about the slighting of writers of earlier times. This is something that First Fandom attempts to correct. In past years the First Fandom Hall of Fame Award has gone to E.E. Smith, David H. Keller, Ed Hamilton, Jack Williamson, Murray Leinster, Virgil Finlay, John W. Campbell, Catherine L. Moore, Clifford Simak, Don

Wollheim, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., E. Hoffman Price, Raymond Z. Gallun, George O. Smith, Stanton A. Coblentz, William Crawford, Manly Wade Wellman, Robert Bloch, Bea Mahaffey, and a couple of others I can't remember at the moment.

I guess my point is that the FF Hall of Fame Award comes from contemporaries of those receiving the award and so carries its own meaning to the recipients. And they're the ones we intended to honor in the first place. All others are observers. They may applaud if they wish.

Skel: One point Robert Sabella missed out on was when he listed the original magazines which serialized award-winning novels; of the (I think) 33 Hugo novels and must-be-20-odd Nebula ones, he didn't mention how many were not serialized in magazines, but published as originals. Well, it is a point; how many recent winners can you think of that were serialized?

Milt Stevens: Robert Sabella's dissection of the Hugo and Nebula Awards reminded me of Mike Glycer's analysis of the Hugo Awards in Starlog. Mike used the ratio of nominations to wins. Using that ratio gives a different picture of the situation. As I recall, Gardner Dozois has the worst success ratio with ten nominations and no wins. If you include volume of published work as a factor, you would get yet another view. Eventually we could create a mass of statistics that might rival baseball. While I've never had the slightest interest in baseball, I've always been impressed by the pure volume of numbers baseball statisticians can produce.

Forrey Ackerman once proposed the idea of retroactive Hugos. The idea later developed into the Gernsback Award Stories. Since the proposed awards were going to be selected by one person (Forrie) rather than by a popular vote, it was felt it would be misleading to call the proposed awards Hugos.

Scott Merritt: Sadly, I tend to agree with Robert Sabella; many of the field's classics languish out of print while junk fills the stands. It's not that all of it is trash, it's just that as with so many things Sturgeon's Law holds true more than ever.



Lloyd Penney: I'm enjoying it, and I have discussed it with friends and in the local apa. I like most of the characters, and though the first half of the season was bad, the second half was much, much better. I'm accepting it for what it is, and that's an attempt at entertainment. I think they're succeeding to a certain extent, but there's always room for improvement. I can yawn too, but at the amount of discussion of the new series, not at the content. I hear so much drivel about The Next Generation, all I can say is shut up and turn the set to another channel or turn it off. End of discussion, I can only hope, but I won't hold my breath.

Dennis Fischer: I agree with much of what Laruel Gugin said. Here we have such characters as a sage Captain who takes the first opportunity available to surrender, abandon his ship, forsake his command, etc. True, he doesn't take the fisticuff approach of a Captain Kirk and is willing to talk things through to a conclusion, but sometimes his actions bely a strange sense of what he thinks his responsibilities are. And he's one of the better characters.

The actor playing Ryker has a background as a model and it shows in his unfortunate tendency to pose whenever possible. He can't simply stand, he has to strike poses and at all times represent the superior aspects of the Federation. Troi, the empathic alien, originally didn't seem to do much more than bellyache about what feelings she sensed in other aliens, a tiresome approach. However, I must give the new show credit in rectifying at least some of their mistakes. They have relegated her more to the background and finally stopped trying to showcase every character in every episode, taking a more reasonable approach of concentrating on whichever characters would be most important in any given story.

They still haven't done much with the Klingon, Dr. Crusher only really looked fetching when vamping about a '40s style private dick story, and Tasha Yar is a gung-ho cadet who can amusingly walk sexily but can't seem to get a coherent character together. Geordi is a navigator who is an adult, but acts like a kid and wears a banana clip on his face. Can we really take him seriously? Data has worked out better than one might have expected, but he can really slow the show down when everyone has to explain things to him all the time, especially when they are already obvious to us.

The less said about Wesley Crusher the better. Nobody likes a smartass kid, even if he's a "Mozart" of engineering. The show was beginning to look like "Leave it to Wes," as he saved the ship time after time. If only the show's creators had made him a normal teen rather than a grating, idealized wish fulfillment figure.

Jim Harris: I find it surprising that someone should hold logic against this new Star Trek show. Oh, I enjoyed the old show, but if you thought about it much, you would know that a real Spock would have puked over it's total illogic nature.

I also enjoy the new show, and know a lot of people who like it much better than the original. Star Trek, either old or new, is best enjoyed with your left brain turned off.

Terry Jeeves: I enjoyed Laurel Gugin (could that be a pseudopod for Ursula LeGuin?? [[No, but that's an interesting thought.]]) on the new Star Trek. Sensibly she hasn't rushed into abuse or decrying the series only after one episode. Whenever old friends are resuscitated in new guise (James Bond, The Saint, The Avengers, etc.) people take a while to adjust -- Laurel did that before outlining her objections. I look forward to seeing the series reach here so I can find out for myself.

Robert Sabella: Laurel Gugin seems to me to be so in love with the original Star Trek that she is unable to view the new one objectively. People tend to forget how awful many of the original episodes were. I've always thought that one-third were poor, one-half good, and one-sixth excellent. Overall, I've seen no episodes of The Next Generation that fall into the poor category. Admittedly, few fall into the excellent category but they are getting closer. And the plots generally have more depth and thought to them, less simplistic action and clever denouements. Yes, there are similarities to many of the original episodes, but they are better than mere imitations.

And the cast is better than the original. Surely there was a lot of clever interplay between Kirk, McCoy and Scotty but the latter two were little more than caricatures and certainly not believable members of a starship. And how realistic was it that whenever there was danger on a planet the away team consisted of the captain, science officer, chief engineer and ship's doctor, for crying out loud? The new crew is better, more logical and, overall, better actors. The exception is probably Captain Ryker who is a second-rate Captain Kirk. Even Data, an obvious parallel to Mr. Spock, has enough differences to make him interesting. My favorite character is Worf who so far has been underused except for one fine episode which examined the difficulties for a Klingon serving on a human starship.

David Palter: I entirely agree with Laurel Gugin's detailed and perceptive analysis of Star Trek: The New Generation. I will always have a special fondness for the original Star Trek, and not (as is sometimes claimed) because I first saw it in my tender and receptive adolescence, but because when you got past the implausible pseudo-science, illogical and contrived plots, and blatant moralizing, there were real characterizations, humor, and dramatic poignance; it achieved sporadic brilliance. The Next Generation is more smoothly executed, but does not have the depth of the original. It is amusing, but not moving.

Steven Fox: I've seen a lot of reviews of ST:TNG, a lot of them bad because the fan criticism is based only on a few shows, in some cases only 1 or 2. I've had the chance

to see them all. Let me say a few things about the show -- these are only opinions, and for the record I am not a Trekkie or Trekker (whatever that is).

There is a lot of borrowing from past shows. I really don't mind this because like most TV shows, it's formula. They (the producers and writers) of Trek know what stories work for an audience. But also, the fact that there are really only so many story ideas that there are really only so many story ideas you can do for the type of show that Star Trek is. Plus the fact that most television shows are for a larger mass audience in this country, not necessarily for the hard-core (as in this case) Trek fan. Add to this the problems in trying to get stories done despite deadline considerations, Network executives interference, possible budget problems, the horrors of trying to do good special effects and do them correctly without going way over budget. Then they have to deal with the censors, getting a good cast. Then on top of all this bullsh*t and ballyhoo they must do a show that is fresh and new without being a totally different show altogether.

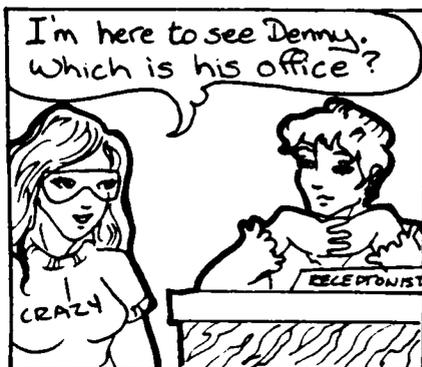
Apparently some of the fan critics of the show have little or no idea how much hard work for all involved it is. I'm also a bit surprised that some fans can't conceive of the notion that the Klingons and the Federation have become allies. For people who are the first to tell me how imaginative and intelligent they are, they seem to forget that some of the best ideas in science fiction come out of history, or general present-day world events (social, technological, or philosophical in nature). In the Trek universe it would make perfect sense for historical events over an 85 year period to produce a peace between these two factions.

One of the other aspects of the show I must mention is the ship -- which is great; it looks like a starship is supposed to look (more or less).

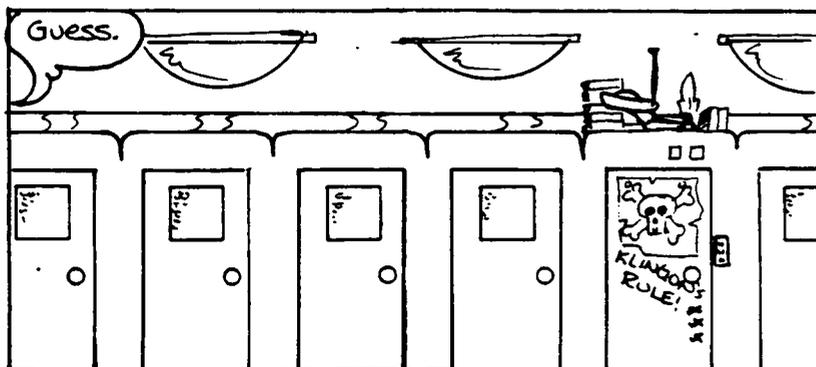
The Characters on the new show act like I would think Star Fleet personnel would--more professional. So far we have no one calling any of the alien officers on the ship things like "pointed-ear Vulcan" or "green blooded so and so."

There's a lot less sex in the new show (fortunately). Or rather, I was always a bit put off by the fact that Kirk in the old show was always on the make, or falling in

FANOMENON



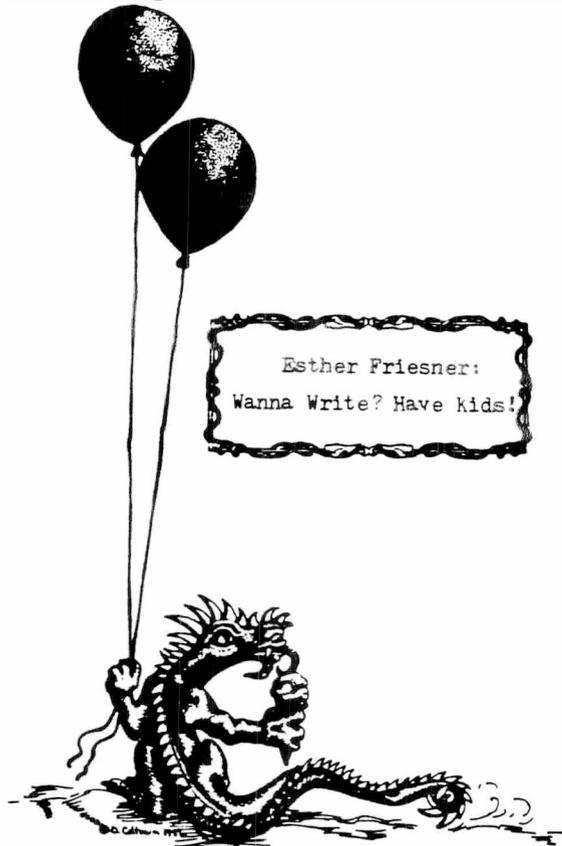
DIANA STEIN



love with some female alien. The Captain of the new *Enterprise* is good; his character is of someone who acts like a Captain. Glad to see that the folks down in engineering don't always need "a little more time" during a crisis.

The fact that they killed off a member of the crew was good for two reasons. It brought an element of realism into the show. Of course people got killed on the old show, but here a main character was done in. The story involved was also excellent. Another reason is that with one less main character the remaining ones will have more breathing space in the stories. Hopefully the writers will give more things for the remaining cast to do and say.

My reason for going on and on like this is mainly because I feel the criticisms about the show by real Trek fans is unnecessary. For years the Trekkies wanted the old show back on the air. When the first movie was produced, there was a lot of moaning and groaning about how it was not like the original show, or how bad this was or that was. Now the new show is on the air, and despite good special effects, good acting, and the fact that in some cities it comes on twice on specific days, these folks are still not satisfied. *Star Trek* is a good show. It may have its faults, but so what? Nothing is ever perfect. The Trek fans are lucky: you have your show back on the air. Because of it there's less chance of Trek fandom going slowly into oblivion. So stop complaining and moaning and over-analyzing the show. It's only a program.



Laura Todd: Thank you for your great article. It really hit the proverbial nail on the head. Glad to hear from someone else who

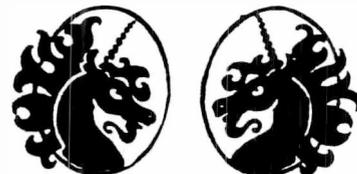
has been through it -- sometimes it seems I'm the only writer in the world who has the little rug-rats. More ways in which kids enhance writing: Writing for Sanity. When you're stuck in the house washing your millionth load of dishes while the baby screams and the elder two jump on the couch ... constructing imaginary worlds and characters and vicariously living their adventures can be the only way to keep from going totally bonkers. Oh, there are good parts too, like when your children share your fantasy world. You can show them drawings of your characters and tell them your plots -- and then listen to them playacting your stories. It's sort of like having your own following of fans! Then there's the pressure to create, like when you're out camping and they want to tell stories by the campfire, and they want you to come up with a story right off the top of your head.

One last word. I think we as adults tend to be very linear, ossified and logical. It's good to have kids around to stimulate that primeval, right-brained, spontaneous part of ourselves. We need that part very much if we're to write soul-stirring material.

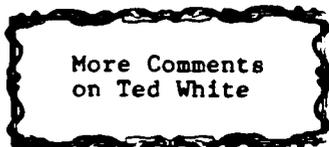
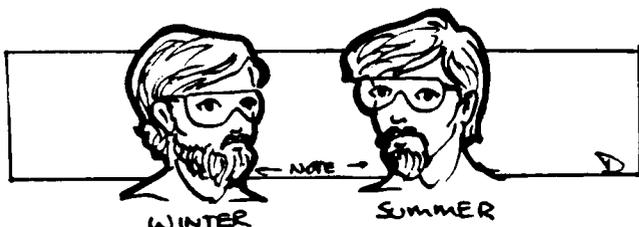
Francis Valery: I am a writer and I have a little girl, so I know what Esther probably feels. Her opinion is funny but probably right -- well, right in the USA! I have a full-time job as a SF bookseller, and I thank God I do have it. It puts food on the table everyday for my little girl and wife. In France, a SF best-seller (for a French writer) is a 50,000 word book sold out at 10,000 copies in six months in the popular series "Fleuve Noir" (with about \$1,500 of royalties), or a full-length novel (70,000 to 100,000 words) selling 5,000 to 8,000 copies over two or three years as in the most ambitious series like "Presence du Futur" or "Ailleurs et Demain." In this case royalties run from \$2,000 to \$4,500.

Certainly, I would like to quit my job and turn to full-time writing, but I don't know how I would be able to live....

Ruth Berman: Esther M. Friesner's article was clever. I found it particularly interesting, as I just finished reading her *Elf Defense*, which I enjoyed very much (up until the ending, where I thought the wrapping up was implausible both politically and in the individual characterizations) for the ingenious comedy of her high Elven lords astray in present-day Connecticut. She might have mentioned that having small kids around the house tends to make it easier to write small kids into the story convincingly (*Elf Defense* has two). The use of horse-crazy little girls as a defense against unicorns is especially funny.



HOW TO SPOT THE WILD LASKOWSKI:



Lloyd Penney: Not so long ago, I would have been critical of fandom for certain fans adopting self-imposed nicknames or strange pieces of clothing (or headgear), citing pretentiousness and ego. I took some time to try to figure out why some fans do that ... and I figure it's part of the release from the humdrum world we escape when we get involved in this weird fannish world. Perhaps it's also a part of the persona we pick up when we want to quickly become a part of fandom people recognize. I can readily say that the nickname and the coonskin cap are part of your fannish lifestyle, and you're now easily picked out of a crowd. Maybe Ted White still sees them as pretentiousness. However we may feel, I'm certain that you're not Lan-in-the-cap in the classroom. It's a way of enjoying the fannish life that much more. Milt Stevens is right ... they're a source of diversion, and you produce the fanzine the way you want to. There's no Ten Commandments of Fanzine Production graven on stone.

[[I probably would have given up wearing the cap by now (I seldom wear it at local cons), but it is such a distinctive mark for me. I will be meeting several people whom I've never met before at the Worldcon. I've told them to look for the coonskin cap. // I think Ted White has some Commandments of Fanzine Production engraved on his heart.]]

Martin Tudor: I agree with the majority of your loccers that the tone of Ted's letter was offensive, which did detract from his legitimate criticisms. But although I tended to agree with most of Ted's points, I couldn't help but sympathize with you, as his accusations engendered a strong feeling of *deja vu*.

Many of the accusations that I've heard and read, both from Ted and many others (who frequently haven't even seen a copy of Lan's Lantern), are accusations that were levelled at me. Around five years ago I was publishing around 600 copies of my genzine Empties on a regular (and quite frequent) basis. With, as far as I can tell, pretty much the same aim as you -- to cover as wide a spectrum of fandom as possible, publishing a "fannish fanzine" only in that it was writ-

ten by and for fans, covering any topic of interest to those fans. Unfortunately, Empties was even less successful than the Lantern in attracting "quality articles." Obviously at the time I published them I thought the material was pretty damn good. With hindsight, however, I appreciate the fact that although varied the articles were almost all weak. As with the Lantern, the letters page became the strongest feature, which, I might add, is no bad thing. In the end it wasn't criticism that stopped me publishing (if you can't stand the heat you never go into a kitchen in the first place), but the sheer expense of printing and mailing such a fanzine.

Milt Stevens: Some of the opinions expressed in the letter column regarding fanzines of the past seem a little strange. The biggest change in fanzines over the last 50 years has been the improvement in printing technology. Fanzines today generally look better than those of the forties and fifties. I'd also say they are easier to read except the reduced type largely eliminates that advantage. The second biggest change in the increasing average age of fanzine publishers. Hyperactive teenage fanzine publishers were fairly common up into the sixties. They've virtually disappeared now. The teenage fans of yore tended to be more enthusiastic, more idealistic, and more prone to making really dumb statements. Now for the things that haven't changed. There always was some really good material and a lot of so-so material published. There were always a wide variety of opinions on sex, politics, and religion. There were always discussions of hot new writers versus the old masters. There were always arguments about conventions and fan organizations in general. There were always wise asses. I've read fanzines from all different periods without experiencing any culture shock, and I imagine anyone who is reading this could do the same thing.

Harry Bond: I am glad to see Ted White getting the short shrift he so richly deserves in the letters. In his original letter he had some good points, but totally invalidated them by phrasing his epistle the way he did. Anyone has the right to publish the sort of fanzine that they like; and it's an old fannish truism that you'll always find someone else who likes your fanzine, be it never so bad or lacking in critical quality. And besides, what nobody seems to have pointed out (amazingly, since I spotted it at once) is that Ted was indulging in a case of having his cake and eating it that might be envied by any politician; he castigated you for not printing fannish articles, and when you did, he castigated you because (he claimed) your audience wouldn't appreciate it. Stand up, Mr. Ted White! What I would like to see (if we're all spared that long) is the 50th Anniversary Special issue for him.

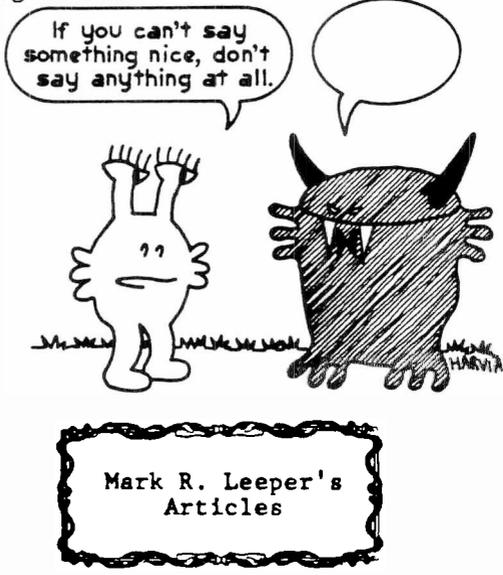
[[A 50th Anniversary issue? You've a mean streak I didn't know you had, Harry. You'll have to wait and see.]]

Scott Merritt: I thought that Ted White's attack on you showed why so many fans are turned off completely by the "SMOFFing crowd." Who is he to become the sole arbitrator of things "fannish"? I don't see him producing a zine that attracts as many varied parts of fandom as Lan's Lantern.

[[Ted will never publish something like I do; it's not "fannish", and only something he does will be "fannish" enough for him. He still has not stated what fanzine(s) are "good" enough for the Hugos. I wonder if he ever will.]]

Terry Bohman: Obtaining the White letter for publication was quite a coup and I congratulate you. The simple fact that he was compelled to spend 15 or 20 seconds "paging through the issue" and as much as a minute and a half writing his letter is a monument to compulsiveness. Why he should spend so much time on material he loathed when he could be reading and looting hundreds of unnamed quality fanzines will remain a question for students and scholars for years to come.

Wendy Council: I read the comments on Ted White's criticisms of you and your genzine with mixed amazement and horror. Though I hated missing an issue of your zine, I'm glad to have missed White's letter. That many fans spend so much energy on nastiness, politics and other negative actions is disgusting to me.



What's So Good About Star Wars?

Lloyd Penney: My own feelings about the Star Wars trilogy shoots down my other tirade about trilogies. This one I liked. Visual popcorn, but tasty popcorn, nevertheless. I'd like Mark Leeper to do a similar essay on what some call the Star Trek Trilogy -- the second, third and fourth movies.

Sally A. Syrjala: As to my preference of films in the SW saga, they are first and foremost The Empire Strikes Back. This is the film that made a Star Wars fan out of me. Until it came along. I thought SW was

okay, but no big deal. A New Hope did not have the humanity about it that TESB did. You could get involved with the characters in TESB. It showed love and duty and honor.

The worst film to my mind of the middle trilogy was Chapter VI: Return of the Jedi. This film was so mechanical that you could never really get caught up with any of the characters. SF is not mere technology; it is alive and needs to speak to our souls. Jedi was not a film that could do this. Its edges were too clearly drawn and defined. You could find no way to allow yourself into this film. I think the best word to describe it would be "cold."

SW:ANH was not a bad film. I went to see it ONCE and enjoyed it. It was not special to me. The characters did not come truly alive with it. This is what happened with TESB. There the characters became human, Wookiee, or what have you. I was introduced to new characters in this film: those the first film had only fleshed out. This film let me see them as struggling, fragile people/Wookies/whatever they were.

Were it not for Empire, I would never have entered SW fandom and would never have been a fan. For me, that middle film of the middle trilogy holds that magic that is SW. Maybe this is just. For it is the middle sandwich layer between the two crisp outer layers confining it: ANH and RotJ.

TESB I went to see so many times I forget the number. I even was admitted for children's fare because the ticket-seller started to recognize me after a while. There was something in the film that I enjoyed very much. It is still the film that I play over and over on the VCR. The others are okay, but that are not anywhere in the league of TESB. That one is something quite special.

David Palter: Mark Leeper's detailed evaluation of the movie Star Wars is completely accurate. I find it to be a very nearly perfect movie (it's only flaw, a trivial one, is one incorrect use of the term "parsec").

Buck Coulson: Uh, Mark Leeper thinks the attack on the Death Star in Star Wars was done "reasonably realistically"? For Hollywood, maybe, since it included scenes parodying movie versions of WW II dogfights, but tactically it was a washout. Great fun to watch, but not realistic. Still, I agree with him that it was a marvelously entertaining movie, and that the sequels weren't as good. (When were sequels ever as good?)

Steven Fox: After reading Mark Leeper's article, I have to agree in part that Star Wars was a good film.

I remember the first time I saw those first few seconds of the film. The great ship flying overhead was very impressive. I remember looking at my friend Marvin and him looking at me. I said, "This is going to be good!" He agreed.

Star Wars did two things: it showed Hollywood and other filmmakers that SF was marketable. We all know right after SW we saw SF film after SF film across the big screen, some bad, some good. Oddly enough the SF films that followed in the wake of SW con-

tinued the momentum in the production of other SF films that were not SW-rip-offs, but totally different kinds of SF films. Alien, Neverending Story, Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai, Back to the Future, and so on. The central feature that all these films share with Star Wars is their execution. That is, Star Wars set a standard for SF films! Gone are the days of cardboard space ships or bad backdrops or hokey-looking facial make-up on actors supposing to be aliens. Star Wars visual execution demanded that if you want your SF film to be nearly as successful as others it had to look convincing. No more cheap sets, no more bad acting (more or less). Star Wars showed the general public science fiction and indirectly SF fandom.

Some would say this also made the publishing industry take note and publish a lot more SF, producing good and bad SF. So I guess you can say Star Wars was a good film.

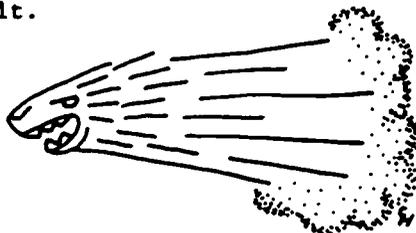
Milt Stevens: Aside from the virtues that Mark Leeper mentions, Star Wars had a good mythic understructure. If you read Joseph Campbell's book The Hero with a Thousand Faces, you can find the complete plot of Star Wars. George Lucas must have figured that a story which has worked since the beginning of time would work for him too. He was right.

Duane Elms: There are some experiences in your life that you never forget. While this one doesn't rank high on the scale of cosmic significance, seeing the first 30 seconds or so of Star Wars for the first time is one of those experiences. There was no doubt in my mind that at that instant, the world of film making had changed, and that the standard by which films were to be judged had increased an order of magnitude.

The Theory and Origins of HOT FOOD

Paula Robinson: Very funny. "...little humans come along and say to littler humans still, 'Here, have something nice to eat from the tree.' The next ten seconds gave the man the idea for the air-raid siren." This was perhaps the most solidly written essay in the issue, well organized and full of genuine wry wit. Those who cannot stand so much as a sprinkling of black pepper will find as much humor in the essay as those who actually enjoy feeling their sinuses run for cover.

The worst hot food I ever encountered was a jar of pickled chili peppers from Mexico. Bought 'em for a boyfriend who claimed he loved mouth-fryers of that sort. He bit into one, made a funny face, and ran for water. The nasty sneak left 'em in the fridge until I gave in to curiosity, by the way, but my tongue has healed and I married someone else as a result.



Conreports and Ramblings

Lloyd Penney: You gave me LL #26 at AD ASTRA 8 and I just read about AD ASTRA 7...a little freaky. Glad you enjoyed the con... there was extra work to do because it was the CONVENTION, but I like to think we pulled it off. I don't get to too many Michigan conventions, and when you attend AD ASTRA, I'm too busy running around to talk to you. Maybe see you at NOLACON II?

[[I'll be there; if we chance to meet and we both have some time, let's talk.]]

Duane Elms: Lan, I think a year is a little long to hold a con report. I found myself reading the AD ASTRA report and thinking to myself, "Wait a minute, I didn't see any of this stuff," and discovering that the report was about last year's con. I'm sure I don't understand the difficulties of publishing as complex a zine as the Lantern, but after a few months, a report on an event loses its immediacy. I would suggest dropping the function reports about happenings prior to the editorial deadline of the previous issue.

[[Thanks for the suggestion, but what I write in the "Conreports and Ramblings" is my "diary" of what's happened to me, and if anyone has a complete run of my fanzine, they have a full history of my fannish career. I realize the danger of the overlap, but that's what I do.]]

Milt Stevens: I can understand why some of the Asian kids at your school would be reluctant to drink milk. There are several parts of Asia where milk is dangerous stuff. In the Philippines tuberculosis was common in cows, and US servicemen were warned not to drink the local milk. In most other places, aside from Japan, milk was a good thing to avoid.

[[I understand this, and so do the kids, especially those with lactose intolerance. The point was that the summer program was caught in a bind -- if the kids didn't take the milk (didn't have to drink it, mind you), USDA funds would be cut, and if those funds were cut, the program would not be affordable. The kids were reluctant to cooperate, mainly because they saw the adults not cooperating. It seemed that I cared more for the program as a peripheral staff person than those directly involved.]]

Cathy Howard: Your conreports are delightful. A total extrovert is what you are. Sorry to hear of Maia breaking her leg. I hope it's healed beautifully, and I'm glad it didn't slow her down.

Paula Robinson: Your Fan GoH speech from INCONJUNCTION VII was, uh, "inspirational".

"Fandom Under God" (FUG) certainly lends itself to some fun wordplay. You might be interested to know that the concept you put forth has come up in conversation at more than one con I've attended. Most of those who discussed fandom-as-religion found the comparison surprisingly apt. Your light-hearted treatment of the subject was wise -- otherwise, you might have started a real "FUG" cult.

ENGLAND and CONSPIRACY

Gregory Litchfield: Your informal essay on your trip to England and last year's Worldcon was easily my favorite article, and made me feel as though I had been there with you myself.

Terry Jeeves: I enjoyed reading your Worldcon comments -- I gather much stinkeroo has been stirred up over the Hubbard hype there -- and a few other interesting but unprintable offshoots. Pity they have settled on having the annual UK cons down there; I couldn't afford to take the two of us there from Sheffield, and from Scarborough where we now live it costs even more. Ok, I know travel from the States is even higher than that, but most Stateside fens coming here make it part of a holiday. For Val and I to attend Brighton cons would cost me MORE than a Continental package deal. After adding up rail fare, con fees, hotel (3 days), food, drink, huckstering, we'd have spent around £300. To a couple of pensioners that ain't chicken feed.

Lloyd Penney: Aside from the hotel (nothing can be said that hasn't already been said), the most striking aspect seemed to be the negative attitude in programming. Besides being anti-American, it seemed to be anti-fandom. Most panel titles and themes were negative...who needs this, what's wrong with, etc.

Alan Dean Foster: JoAnn and I have been reconciled since last October. It's a bit embarrassing at this stage to have the details of my mid-life crisis appear in June (as they do however briefly in your England trip report) since I am not and never was divorced. I realize that news is news, but old news can be haunting. Nothing to do about it now, and not your fault, but you might mention in #27 that I did not get divorced and that I'm still living in Arizona, as I have been for the past nine years.

If all this sounds confusing, it was.

[[I mentioned it on my editorial page, and here I print your comments. I hope that the situation is all corrected, now. I realize now that when you sent your last postcard correcting your address I should have wrote and asked for details.]]

Paula Robinson: This trip inspired some envy. Catalina Island, off the coast of California, is the farthest I've been overseas.

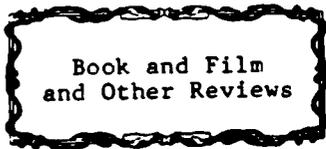


WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE IN A
CAST, I THOUGHT THAT MEANT
YOU'D PASSED THE AUDITION!

Travelogues are usually nit my cup of tea (forgive me, I couldn't resist that one); however, your account of your and Maia's experience was very complete. You answered most of the questions people ask about other countries -- how were the hotels/food/people/public and tourist facilities/museums/etc. The problems Maia's cast presented gave the travelogue more of a "human interest" angle than it otherwise would have had, and will probably be helpful to those who have various sorts of mobility problems and wish to travel. The anecdote about the Japanese businessmen was charming.

Buck Coulson: I enjoyed your trip report, and of course compared it to our impression of England in 1979. I suppose the biggest difference came in your comment, "I found the food rather good." We found the food good when it was cooked by someone other than an Englishman. Cath Piper cooked French style, and the various Indian and Chinese restaurants were okay. Well, the one restaurant the Pipers took us to (well, technically we took them, but they picked the place) was good, but we never located another one. You obviously spent a lot more time in London than we did; I'd have liked to see more, but our prime targets were, except for the Tower, out of town. Actually, if we went back I'd rent a car immediately instead of putting it off because I was worried about driving on the left. It takes maybe an hour to get used to, and if you rent at Heathrow instead of downtown London, you spend most of that hour on an expressway. I see the Metropole has learned nasty things since 1979; no idiocy about having to have a room there at that con.

Ben Indick: Your excellent report on Britain made me smile with pleasure and recollection; Janet and I are, as you know, incurable Anglophiles. I am happy you liked Starlight Express even if you were not fortunate enough to have a couple of six-year-olds nearby to infect you anew with a sense of wonder. At what the cynical adult mind would find juvenile folderol. (I understand the New York version is not as good; certainly, it lacks those sweeping ramps.)



GENERAL COMMENTS

Dean Lambe: As usual, Lan, #25 was a fine issue. I particularly liked the opposition reviews where two or more took on the same work, often with rather different opinions. Amazingly, in one such case, Ann Cecil and I actually agreed about the Michael Blumlein first novel, something I wouldn't expect again before Halley's Comet returns -- Cecil is such a "C" serpent about most SF novels.

I noticed that you didn't run my address as a contributor. It's certainly OK for you to do so:

Dean R. Lambe
P. O. Box 14
Watertown, OH 45787

[[I missed quite a few addresses that issue, like Fr. Jim Deaconson's, which several people pointed out to me. Things like this keep me on my toes!]]

Robert Sabella: I like the new format a lot. Not only does it give egoboo to the reviewers to have an entire section devoted to each of them, but it is very helpful for readers evaluating the reviews. For me, a review (as opposed to a critique) is only helpful if I am familiar with the reviewer's taste. With reviews scattered throughout a review section, I may recognize a familiar name but have no idea if I share the reviewer's tastes or not. With the reviews grouped together, I can read reviews of works I am already familiar with, giving me a basis for accepting or rejecting the other reviews. Thus, for example, Dean Lambe reviewed Empy and The Smoke Ring, both of which I read. Hence I knew where he was coming from with his opinions of The Net and Intervention.

Jim Harris: As I get more involved with fanzines, reading reviews and articles, also inspires me to read more SF. So with each new issue of LL, it seems that I have read more and more of the books and movies reviewed. A vicious cycle. By reading reviews, I tend to keep an eye out for authors that sound interesting, and then try their new books without seeing reviews.

Scott Merritt: The new arrangement of the reviews was nice. When I have enough different reviewers for TSFI I think I'll do something similar. It certainly helps the reader to do it this way. Perhaps the nicest thing about Lan's Lantern is the sheer number of reviews.

Milt Stevens: By the time I was ten pages into the book reviews in LL #26, the Germans had already won WW II three times. This didn't seem to be a good trend. I've sometimes worried that if Hollywood replayed WW II enough times the Germans were bound to win eventually. Now science ficiton is doing

it too. Of course, Hollywood's depictions of WW II are frequently not all that realistic. I recall reading a critique of Hollywood's version of the war published in American Legion Magazine. In Hollywood films, the Germans are always shown as an absolute model of military precision. There never appears to be as much as one unbuttoned button in the entire German Army. In contrast, the American Army is shown in slovenly disarray as it mufles vaguely towards the front. As the writer in American Legion Magazine pointed out, if the Germans were really that good, and we were really that bad, they would have won the war.

Cathy Howard: The book reviews were useful. I make a list of whatever sounds interesting when I read about it going to be published. The list gets thinned as I read reviews or take a peek at the books when they arrive at stores. I figure anything good I miss this way will eventually turn up in used book stores, and I'll buy a copy then on spec. Most of the time I'm wrong about these lost "treasures" and I quietly dump them, glad that at least I didn't pay full price for them.

Lars-Arne Karlsson: Amazing amount of reviews; I particularly liked the multiple ones (although I sometimes felt the reviewers wrote too little on the subject) and the coverage of the films and even some music. It was also nice to find the more humorous and witty articles which weigh up against the more serious parts.

Craig Ledbetter: I was glad to see the graphics' side of SF being reviewed in LL. I'm especially heartened to see Europe's contributions finally being translated and given exposure here in the US. I hope someone will review the series of graphic novels by Moebius being distributed by Marvel/Epic. Truly an outstanding line of SF books.

BOOK REVIEWS

Alan Appel: Time After Time

Steve Green: Next time Evelyn Leeper chooses to splatter her reviews with superfluous references, she might be wise to do some solid research first. Somewhere in Time was based not on Jack Finney's Time and Again, but on Richard Matheson's Bid Time Return (Matheson actually has a cameo role). Karl Alexander's Time after Time did not inspire the movie with that title, but it is in fact a novelization (though to be fair, Alexander did co-author the script with Steve Hayes). Sorry if this sound like nit-picking, but the flaws in the opening paragraph of her review of Alan Appel's Time After Time totally undermined my faith in her opinions.

Greg Benford & Martin Harry Greenberg
Hitler Victorious

Evelyn Leeper: Greg Benford points out that Finch's story can be seen as portraying a better world. Apparently this wasn't

strong enough to make it stick out in my mind, but, yes, it's true. I think Benford's point of personal revenge being distinct from diplomatic posture is also true. However, I have this gut feeling that a lot of diplomatic decisions are made based on personal feelings (which may be why the whole [world] is in the mess it's in today), and I have a philosophical difficulty sympathizing with stories which deal with revenge in a favorable way. (On the other hand, I love stories where the villain gets hoisted by his own petard--William Jennings Bryan in the Scopes trial is a good example from real life--so maybe I'm just being hypocritical.)

Joel Rosenberg's comments about the trivialization of the Holocaust are also valid. I prefer, however, to save my contempt for those authors who write novels which use the Holocaust to excite the reader with long descriptions of sex and/or violence (and, yes, there are plenty of these). That the authors in Hitler Victorious failed to deal completely successfully with the Holocaust is not necessarily because they didn't try, and I would rather praise what is good than fault them for failing in what may well be an impossible task.

Note that Rosenberg is too modest about his own story, "The Emigrant," which was the best short fiction of its year, in my opinion. I strongly urge everyone to go read it.

Clifton Ansbury: I had intentionally avoided Hitler Victorious because it is impossible to do the subject justice and also get it published, but lately I had been wondering if I maybe should get it for curiosity's sake, and the comments in LL #25 have convinced me. I'll set down here my reactions to those comments, then put this on hold till I've read the book itself. [[Your review is on page 78.]]

Joel Rosenberg and Taras Wolansky between them are correct that two important keys to an Axis world would be the Holocaust and the Cold War.

With an Axis world there could be no Cold War. What there would be would depend upon the nature of the victory: whether negotiated with the West or done by World Conquest. I'll comment on this later, but I insist that even if we had remained unconquered, there would have been no "evil empire" charges against Nazi Germany by any of the governments we have had since 1945. They represented here for the most part the same sort of interests which Hitler represented in Germany: the most militaristic sections of Big Business. This was slightly less true of Kennedy and Carter, but not much. Despite the "beware of the military-industrial complex" reference, Eisenhower was all Brass. A better quality of Brass than most of his fellow officers, but recall that he was a good comrade of Joseph McCarthy until (in the early stages of a brain tumor) McCarthy attacked the army as harboring Communists.

I once presented a paper at a Southwestern Anthropological Association meeting wherein I traced the US hostility to the Soviets to the pre-existing government and business policies with regard to US organized labor, and I noted the US military tendency to be ready for "the last war," then

observed that in 1941 their "last war" was not that against the Central Powers which ended in 1918, but the intervention in Russia which started in 1918. (And of course the "bandit suppression campaigns" in China.) Events since 1944 have clearly shown that our military (and much of US businesses) have never forgiven us for the war we had them fight in 1941. One result of this was mentioned by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Cal). Science Vol. 240, p. 19 (4-7-88) quotes him that the Department of Defense spends more in 18 months on R & D than the National Institute of Health has spent in the entire 100 years of its existence.

The question of Budspy, if Dean Lambe's review is correct, taps a different set of mis-assumptions. In a world of triumphant fascism, the "Russians" would not exist as a third power. East Europe would be a set of German colonies. In a world of "interminable war on the Eastern Front," the situation of Europe would not have allowed a forty-year duration, even if the US had stayed aloof. (The one situation which could have led to an Axis victory, the one which Nazi diplomacy almost pulled off, was for the US and Britain to remain aloof (or join) and for Japan to attack Siberia instead of the US. But Japan's armies were over-extended in China already and their Navy was beginning to be a useless expense and not likely to be of much use in a mainland war.)

After an Axis victory, the holocaust would have been much more complete. It was not just for Jews, but for all types of untermensch: gypsies, non-Aryan Christians (mostly Finns and Hungarians) and Slavs (in German it's the same word as "slave"). In an Axis world it would have gone on and on to make lebensraum for Germans. Between the Slave Camps and the Babi Yars the holocaust would have continued. And don't forget the American "mongrels."

The Slave Camps were run by the big corporations with war contracts. On the same terms on which the good German housewife could get a slavegirl: No Extra Ration Tickets.

The nature of an Axis victory depends on various things: On Stalin not having been as ruthless as he was either in industrializing the Soviet Union or in wiping out the anti-Soviet people inside the country; on Roosevelt not living as long as he did; on the US military and the pro-fascists in England being a little stronger politically than they were; perhaps on Churchill not taking over from Chamberlain (both were committed to a Soviet defeat, but to the defense of England and the Empire).

At no time was an American defeat by Japan possible, but a longer war in the Pacific might well have been. And then there was the vast number of Americans who asked why we were fighting Germany and Italy when it was Japan that attacked us. They often refuse to believe me when I said, "Because they declared war on us."

Michael Bishop
Ancient of Days

Taras Wolansky: I think Laura Todd was too kind to Michael Bishop's Ancient of

Days. "Her Habiline Husband" was a wonderful, funny story set in the subgenre of humor that might be titled, "Is She Really Going Out With Him?". However, it is the kind of story that must not be too long, or we have time to think about it: to realize that what we have is a woman who chooses to mate with a mentally retarded dwarf.

I guess part of the reason the novel's "habiline husband" eventually turns out to be filled with all sorts of ancient wisdom is that Bishop also recognized the problem. The other part of the reason has to do with left-wing ideology: if different species of genus homo are permitted to differ in intelligence, what about different races? Bishop may have felt that under these circumstances, distortion was the better part of valor.

The only good thing about Ancient of Days is that it got Roger McBride Allen mad enough to do the job right in Orphan of Creation. Allen movingly establishes the humanity of his "subhumans" (australopithecenes) without descending to falsification.

I haven't even mentioned the ending of Ancient of Days which, if I can trust my flinching memory, involves a whole tribe of anciently-wise habilenes, plus a lot of drivel about voodoo gods.

Terry Bisson
Talking Man

Robert Sabella: I was somewhat taken aback by the first two paragraphs of Sally Sryjala's review of Talking Man. Does she really expect that much from the first lines of a novel? And does she really reject any novel which does not affect her immediately? If so, she must miss a lot of good books.

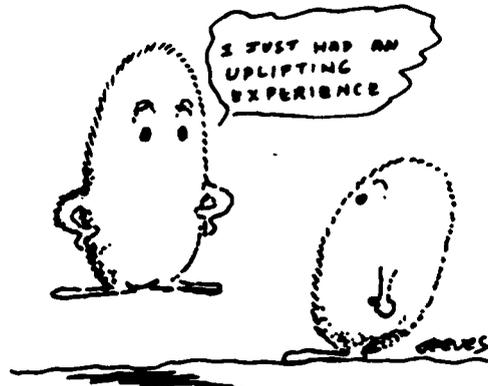
Orson Scott Card
Wyrms

Michael Waite: When looking at the cover art of the hardback edition the expression "Don't judge a book by its cover" was never truer. I did not purchase the book because the poorly executed "dime novel" adventure cover left me cold. I should know better. (A "dime novel" adventure cover by Boris illustrating this particular scene would have been interesting, although it would have had trouble getting by the censors.) The paperback edition is much more attractive. The cover doesn't change the book's contents, but it certainly has a lot to do with catching your eye which, in turn, gets you to pick up the book, which in this case garnered my \$3.95. So much for cover illustration.

Wyrms is a brilliantly conceived novel and deserves to be read by all.

Bent Corydon & L. Ron Hubbard Jr.
L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman

David Palter: It is tempting to agree with Ben Schilling that L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman, being an outstanding biography of an SF writer, should win a Hugo in the non-fiction category. However, there is an even better biography of L. Ron Hubbard, also published this year, which is Bare-



Faced Messiah by Russell Miller. This is one which truly deserves a Hugo.

John Crowley: Aegypt

Bob Rodgers: John Crowley wrote a very strange novel in that virtually nothing happens to any of the characters, but for some reason it kept me reading until I had finished it. His research into some odd aspects of history is both thorough and accurate.

Wendy Council: I found Ann Cecil's review of John Crowley's Aegypt very intelligent. Aegypt was a difficult book, though a masterful one, and I cringe to think of having to write my own review of it later this year for my personalzine.

Jeanne Van Buren Dann & Jack Dann
In the Field of Fire

Robert Sabella: It is seldom that a book reviewer particularly excites me either positively or negatively, but Terry O'Brien made two statements that raised my hackles.

In reviewing In the Field of Fire, he said, "Wars, especially those of the past several decades, are depressing." That's a rather parochial view, isn't it? Just because recent wars occurred recently or involved people we know personally, does that necessarily make them worse than those involving strangers? This sounds akin to people who don't care much about people being killed in the streets of Los Angeles or Newark, but how dare they do it in my home town!

In the same review he made reference to "a writer's unique empathy." It is a myth that writers have a special empathy that nonwriters do not share. It is more correct to say that each person has a unique empathy different from that of every other person. What good writers have is the ability to share their empathy with their readers. Perhaps we should say that writers have public empathy while nonwriters have private empathy. (And, no, I am not attacking writers here; rightly or wrongly, I consider myself a writer.)

Frank Herbert
Dune

Mark Schulzinger: I recently watched the television release of the De Laurentis movie. It was the "expanded" version, with 50 or so inserted minutes of muddle that failed

to clarify anything. I hadn't read the story since it was first serialized in Astounding some twenty plus years ago, and hauled out the paperback to read again. I was sorely disappointed. I hadn't realized that Herbert had so changed the novel from the serials, moving chapters around, letting various cats out of the bag very early in the book and then revealing the same material later on as startling discoveries.

Case in point: One of the big questions in the first book involved the origin of the Sardaukar, the Paddishah Emperor's fanatical personal army. As I recall it took two serials to discover that they came from Salusa Secundus, the Emperor's private prison world. In the novelization, Herbert gives the reader this information within the first hundred pages. At the end of the book he gives the information yet again, and all and sundry are stunned by the revelation.

One interesting matter that Herbert saw fit to insert into the novelization, but did not bother to deal with it at all, was the fact that the Emperor's personal army and the Fremen of Arrakis were from the same stock, i.e., they were Arabic peoples who had been captured and sold into slavery. The irony of Sardaukar fighting Fremen, brother against brother, was totally ignored despite all the Fremen wailing and gnashing of teeth about their long-lost kin.

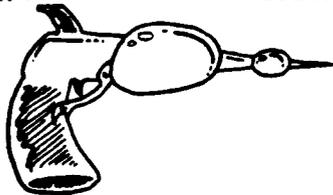
In rereading the story I was constantly amazed at Paul's casual acceptance of his "terrible purpose." Said purpose was a horse that Herbert killed in the first chapter and continued to flog throughout the book (and well into the next one, as I recall). While Herbert's view of the universe is Jungian, Paul Atreides is such a Freudian character - so driven by unconscious impulses -- that he totally lacks any self-motivation. He is no more than a robot going through the paces that his creator has preprogrammed for him. I never felt sympathetic toward Paul; one can have no emotions about a machine.

To rid myself of the bad taste of Dune, I immediately re-read Doon, the National Lampoon spoof. While not as good as Bored of the Rings, the author did a pretty good job of satirizing Herbert's convoluted prose and deliberately confusing language constructions (who wants to learn Arabic just to discover that Bene Gesserit means "sons of the bridge" anyway?).

Sam Long: It may be of some interest to the devotees of the writings of Frank Herbert that the star mu Draconis is sometimes called "Arrakis." But I find no "Caladan" in the heavens.

Michael P. Kube-McDowell
Robot City

Evelyn Leeper: Regarding my own review of Robot City, I know now that it's the first of a septology, rather than a trilogy. Ptui!



I'll add my vote to the thousands of other that a novel in seven parts should not be packaged as seven novels -- whatever happened to the "truth-in-packaging" laws?

Comments on Dean Lambe's Reviews

Taras Wolansky: I was struck by Dean Lambe's reviews because my reactions to a couple of the books were so different from his.

Take Kube-McDowell's Empry, for one. Before we consider this book, we should perhaps recall that an earlier book in this trilogy of which it is a part featured the discovery that there had been a high civilization on Earth during the last ice age, which traveled the stars in ships made of (what else) ice!

Having established this baseline for what Kube-McDowell thinks plausible, we should not be surprised at some of what he comes up with in Empry. The head of one of the Earth's most important space bureaucracies goes on a seventy-year space voyage, incommunicado most of the time due to relativistic effects, yet keeps his position for the entire time. The head of the military arm decides to attack the aliens that destroyed Earth's civilization 20,000 years ago -- in spite of the fact that he knows nothing about them, and that having been tough enough to wreck the Earth before they now have had 20,000 years to improve their technology! Then there is the character of Janell Sujata (the book is coming back to me, a little), a woman who has attained a high position -- at any rate we are told she attained it, but how is a mystery. She is weepy and "womanish" in the old, pejorative sense. I couldn't see her as a Jeane Kirkpatrick or Maggie Thatcher; for that matter she did not measure up to the women managers I have encountered in the DP field.

Then there is John McLoughlin's Toolmaker Koan. While the book does have some problems, chiefly in that its logic points towards the extinction of the human race but the author doesn't want to go there, the book is strong where Lambe thinks it is weak. His reference to "comic book Commies and cartoon Capitalists" is unjustified. (Perhaps Lambe was seduced by the sound of this phrase. I suggest that alliteration is no substitute for intellection.) Perhaps he finds the book's depiction of a resurgent Marxism implausible; but then, if some SF writer had submitted a story about a resurgence of Islam to the pulps of fifty years ago, it would have been rejected with derision. Marxism may be on the ropes in China and the Soviet Union, but it is still alive and well in Africa, and every place where the people on the bottom need somewhere to put the envy and resentment they feel toward the people on the top. I certainly hope McLoughlin turns out to be a poor prophet, but that would make him no less a good writer.

[[I don't recall the earlier civilization on Earth making ships out of ice. And with Janell, remember that we saw the private side of the woman in the novel, and that's where she was "weepy" and uncertain of what she should do. When in public, she was strong. Your other

comments might be valid criticisms; it has been a couple of years (and many other novels) since I read it.]]

Patricia McKillip
Fool's Run

Robert Sabella: Every so often a review strikes me that I run out and buy the book. In this case, both Maia's and Ann Cecil's rave reviews of Fool's Run affected me that way even though I've been trying intentionally to cut back on my buying until I catch up on my reading. No, I haven't read it yet so I have no cogent comments to make about it. I will probably not get around to reading it until I finish another dozen or so books sitting on top of my shelf as well as the half-dozen or so books soon to arrive from my latest entry into the Science Fiction Book Club. Why do I do these things?

[[You're a fan and you love SF. Why else would you do such things?]]

Pat Murphy

Michael Waite: Who is Pat Murphy? That was my initial response when I heard she won two 1987 Nebulas (awarded in May, 1988) for: Best Novel, The Falling Woman; Best Novellette, "Rachel in Love." Her name does not appear in the list of Hugo Nominations nor does it appear in the "Pulp & Celluloid" section of Lan's Lantern #25. Even my bookseller was unaware of her writing talents and couldn't remember an advertising campaign, of any significance, to promote The Falling Woman. Considering some of the "trash" publishers spend tens of thousands of dollars promoting, it would seem that they could have put more money, time and effort in promoting a book of this caliber.

I had to go to a number of new and used bookstores before I was able to find a copy of The Falling Woman. There were no hardback copies to be found (perhaps it has been remaindered?). I did find one in paperback -- which I quickly bought.

The Falling Woman is a great read and will have you running to your local library in an effort to learn more about the magnificent Mayan civilization. This lady can write!

"Rachel in Love" was a bit easier to find. It appeared in the April 1987 issue of IASF. It also appears in the more readily available The Year's Best Science Fiction: Fifth Annual Collection edited by Gardner Dozois. "Rachel in Love" captures your interest from the very first paragraph and builds from there. Don't miss it.

[[Pat Murphy's "Rachel in Love" is on the Hugo ballot. The Falling Woman was reviewed by Sally Syrjala in LL #26. I don't think it has been remaindered.]]

David Pringle
Science Fiction: The Hundred Best Novels

David Palter: Although Chuq Von Rospach finds it odd that (among others) Harlan Ellison has been omitted from David Pringle's selection of the 100 best SF novels, there

is a reasonable explanation for this, which is that Harlan Ellison has never written an SF novel. Now, if someone were to attempt to identify the 100 best SF novellas, then Harlan Ellison's "A Boy and His Doy" clearly should be included. And a listing of the best short stories should include "The Hour That Stretches," among other Ellisonian jewels. But no novels, as yet. He may still write one.

FILM & THEATRE REVIEWS

Mark Leeper's Reviews

Dennis Fischer: Mark Leeper puts together his arguments most coherently but from time to time I must quibble with him. I think he underrates Solaris, though that is easy to do because the film is contemplative, very slow moving by western standards, and involves itself with metaphysics asserting itself over science. The main character's emotional breakdown during the film is subtle and seemingly endless. As one person I know commented about watching a similar Tarkovsky film, "You've heard of watching paint dry? Well, this was like watching dry paint." Nonetheless, there really is something happening in the film constantly and it needs the elongated time frame to develop its special and unique mood and atmosphere.

On the other hand I find the short La Jete to be rather ponderous at 25 minutes and in the light of other SF stories I've read, rather trite, though its use of stills to tell a story is interesting and unusual for a short period of time.

I particularly have to cringe when I read that Leeper thinks Prince of Darkness to be Carpenter's best film. True, it's a grab bag of ideas, but is it really better than Dark Star's humanism or Elvis' portrait of the King? Many of the horror poses seem to be imitated from Dario Argento's giallo movies and the script breaks down into silliness as video images are broadcast from the future and received as dreams in the present and Satan is revealed to be a container that swirls like a psychedelic sixties lamp. Bleh. Even the horrific possibilities of possession are badly muffed as Carpenter fails to generate suspense from the same situation as Campbell's "Who Goes There?" (which he'd previously muffed when he did his version of The Thing).

I found The Princess Bride to be a pure delight -- what fairy tale ever has fully fleshed characters? Mostly, they all deal in Jungian archetypes and Goldman wittily sends up the genre royally. True, the book was better, but when is it not? (Yeah, ok, I know -- The Godfather and a few other examples like The 39 Steps which were bad to mediocre books that made good movies, but that's as rare as a sequel that's better than the original).

However, I agree most heartily with Leeper's trashing of the overrated Near Dark. Just 'cuz it has some style doesn't mean a story is well told, but the gore lovers have fallen for this particular scuzzbag tale.

I was most interested in Leeper's Phantom of the Opera review. I had my doubts when

Leeper began to parade his musical illiteracy from the first paragraph. Just because Leeper is not familiar with Lehar's The Merry Widow, or Straus' The Chocolate Soldier, or Kalman's Countess Maritza, or Straus' Die Fledermaus, or such other operettas as Fredrika, The Gypsy Princess, The Count of Luxembourg, or Frasquita, or Gypsy Love, or The Gypsy Baron, doesn't mean that no one else is. (Countess Maritza and Frasquita are both post WW I, by-the-by.) The operetta was once an incredibly popular format until it was supplanted by the Broadway musical comedy.

Of course, one of the problems is that opera, operetta and musical are almost interchangeable terms. Some people have tried to set up definitions whereby in opera people never have dialogue; they only sing, but recognized operas like Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro obviously have dialogue. Like science fiction, it's pretty much become a case of any dramatic composition set to music being whatever it is called. (Though the original Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Coat was clearly a cantata.)

There have also been more than three remakes of The Phantom of the Opera, beginning in 1927 with The Last Performance starring Conrad Veidt as Erik who is in love with his assistant (Mary Philbin again). There was also The Phantom of Paris (1931) which is actually an adaptation of Leroux's novel Ceri-Beri. The Claude Rains "Phantom" was almost immediately reprised as The Climax with Boris Karloff in the lead in 1944. There are also an Argentine and a Mexican film I have not seen entitled El Fantasma de la Opereta. There's an Italian film, Monster of the Opera (1961) in which the phantom is made a vampire who prowls the Paris Opera House. The character of the Phantom has also appeared in other films in addition to the Hammer and Telefilm remakes and the variations (Phantom of the Paradise, Phantom of Hollywood) that Leeper mentions.

Additionally, the "hit songs" were songs that made the charts in England, not the US. Apparently there is a wider range of music played on British radio stations than American ones.

[[According to George Perry's The Complete PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, there were video releases of the songs.]]

It's also interesting to discover that when Leeper says something is the best play, he means "most enjoyable, and even the most meaningful," rather than referring to a play's artistic merits. If The Phantom of the Opera is the most meaningful play he's ever seen, then I recommend he see a lot more plays. True, the story is a fun pot-boiler and even poignant in its way, but "the most meaningful"? It certainly employs some grandiose themes ("unrequited and pure love," "things not being what they seem," "the suffering of the artist," "judging people on appearances," "the vanity of prima donnas," etc. as well as dedication to one's craft) but I more concur with Leeper when he mentions that the lyrics often fall short of being divinely inspired and some are downright clumsy and awkward.

I would be interested in discovering why

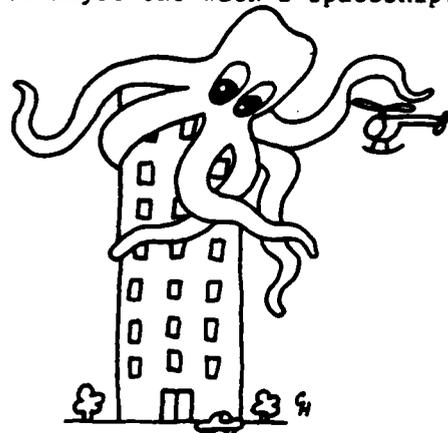
Leeper thought the pseudo-opera presented during The Phantom of the Opera was not in an "operatic style." Upon what would he base that judgement?

Again, I emphasize that these are quibbles, and that overall I have found The Phantom of the Opera to be an entertaining spectacle and certainly one of the better productions that Broadway has seen in several years. And lest it be thought that I am incapable of error, somehow in my review of Radio K.A.O.S. that you published, Lan, my synopsis did a trick in which a radio station's "new age" music got typed out "new wave" music without my spotting the need for a correction.

Craig Ledbetter: Martin Quatermass is indeed John Carpenter. It was his tribute to the series of British SF TV and films by Nigel Kneale. Mark Leeper also blew it badly by condemning Near Dark. It's only one man's opinion, but it was one of the better films of 1987. Obviously Mark won't agree, but that's what makes horse-races....

About Nightflyers -- with this review I agree 100%. However if Mark thinks Beverly Hills Cop was a suspense film, I have some swamp land in Florida.... I'm not trying to pick on Mark, but it's becoming obvious that I now use his reviews exactly opposite of the way I normally would. If he hates Near Dark and Hellraiser, I'll probably enjoy the hell out of it. That's still a valuable tool for me to use in future LLs. However it gets old when a reviewer tells you to seek therapy because you may be like a movie he thinks is beneath him. I realize Mark wasn't serious (at least I hope not) but it's criticism like that I would expect my great, great grandfather to hand out.

John Thiel: Mark Leeper's review column makes me do what his name implies. Tracing the Living Dead bunch back to Matheson's I Am Legend is SF research at its best, and I think your reviewer has correctly isolated Richard Matheson's influence out of the movie Night of the Living Dead, but he should not ignore the fact that there is a false analogy in that Matheson's book is a superior SF-Fantasy tour de force and does have some moral point whereas the only point in the movie is "after they mouse around awhile zombies will eat you, if you go outside." As far as sequels on this theme are concerned, I am waiting for The Living Dead Go to Japan, then maybe one with a spaceship.



The Serpent and the Rainbow

Bob Rodgers: This movie was very roughly based on a non-fiction book of the same name by Wade Davis. The book didn't say that anything supernatural was going on. In fact, it said the opposite. Also, Davis was never tortured as shown in the movie. Tetrodotoxin had already been studied in fair depth by the Japanese. (Davis footnotes some Japanese English-language scientific journals on the subject.) They are familiar with it as the poisoning which can result from eating fugu.

Time

Valli Hoski: One of the higher points of my trip to England in 1987 was the chance to see Time. I agree that the opening and closing are the blockbuster parts. The storyline didn't seem quite so banal as Ben Indick describes, at least not during the show. In retrospect it doesn't seem to have much bite or substance.

But the main thing about Time was the technology. That was its main reason for existence. And certainly my main reason for enjoyment. In fact, I spent more time during Time trying to figure out "how did they do it? how does it work?" than actually following the story. Or more succinctly, I spent more time watching the technology than the actors. And I still don't know how they worked the pseudo-hologram....

TAPE & RECORD REVIEWS

Scott Merritt: I appreciate the reviews of The Barbequed Songbook and The Kha-Khan's Lament. However, in the interest of fairness I believe that the following should be made known. Kha-Khan's Lament is not a "polished tape" as you indicated. It was recorded live in front of a small audience over a four hour period three weeks before the SCA's Twentieth Year Celebration. I'd been asking Bob for a long time to do a tape, and on this trip to Dallas Fantasy Fair he surprised me by wanting to do the tape. We set up gear in my living room, and the results were quite nice considering the equipment used, lack of rehearsal time (Bob hadn't done some of the songs in years), and rush to release the tape for the TYC.

[[Yes, considering the conditions, it did come off quite well. Congratulations.]]

Robert Sabella: I've always considered experimentation vital to rock and roll. By 1965 it was treading on repetition but was saved by a burst of creativity that incorporated such diverse influences as folk music (notably Dylan), country music (The Byrds), poetry (Simon & Garfunkel), classical music (The Moody Blues) and such innovators as Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane and Pink Floyd, all legitimized by the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper. This creative period lasted until the mid-70s whereupon rock and roll settled into a commercial period where creative artists became corporate entities, the quest for the almighty dollar overwhelmed art and freeform radio stations shifted into top-40 formats. Since the death of "punk rock" a decade ago there has been precious little



YOKO ONO HAD TO GO AND MAKE THAT REMARK ABOUT THE BEATLES' C.D.'S BEING MORE POPULAR THAN CHRIST!

experimentation other than the emergence of "heavy metal" music. Admittedly, most heavy metal is crap but doesn't Sturgeon's Law predict that? At least it is a vital force in rock and roll that has the potential to evolve into something more interesting than the current plethora of pop pap as practiced by the likes of Huey Lewis and the News! What heavy metal needs is a super-talent along the lines of Elvis or the Beatles to carry it over the hump of legitimacy.

Besides, I can put up with such dregs as Iron Maiden and Cinderella just to get more of Slade, my choice for the best rock and roll band in the world!

I think I've gotten off the point here. I enjoyed Radio K.A.O.S. because it is not commercial pap but is an attempt at artistry. It is not up to the very best of Pink Floyd (such as The Dark Side of the Moon or Ummagumma), but that would be expecting too much. I do not consider it Hugo-worthy because the album's weakness was its ill-thought-out storyline. Not only was it simplistic but quite unbelievable.

FANZINE REVIEWS

Jim Harris: I wish you could get the people who send in fanzines for trade and review to list a price for a sample copy. "The regular" is just too vague for me. How do I locate a zine I haven't seen? Must I publish a zine so I can trade? It would be much easier if they would just list a sample issue price. I order fanzines from your list, but generally skip the ones without a single issue price. Of course, if any of the fan editors out there just want to send me a copy of their zine, Lan lists my address in the back.

[[Usually fans write to the editor of a zine that looks interesting, asks for a sample copy stating that s/he saw a review in another zine, and includes a dollar or two to cover postage. (Fourth class book rate is 90 cents for the first pound, and even one of my zines does NOT weigh a pound.)]]

Sheryl Birkhead: The fanzine listing boggles the mind -- a quick scan through shows I've gotten only 24 of the entries -- titles, I didn't count multiple issues). Gee, there really are a whole lot of them out there.

Gregory Litchfield: You're doing a great service to SF fandom's neofans such as myself with Lan's Lantern. The "Fanzines Reviewed" section is an excellent way of discovering new zines, and your publishing the addresses of your contributors is a nice way of contacting other fen with similar interests. Lan, long may your Lantern glow.

[[Thank you. I keep hoping that I can attract some new readers, writers, and contributors to fanzine fandom through LL. Whether they write for me, or for another fanzine, or to each other, that does not matter; as long as they do write, and communicate. You seem to be headed in the right direction, Greg; welcome aboard.]]



Kris Gilpin:

The Raspberry Awards

Lloyd Penney: It's always great to hear the latest Razzies, and if anyone deserves to be in a Razzie Hall of Fame, it's the Stallones. They've set new lows in acting ability. I think I know who the Canadian member is...I think he's a local DJ in Toronto. I'm surprised to learnt that the Stallones didn't win any awards this year, but I guess they've received so many Razzies, anything they do is taken for granted as being bad.

Craig Ledbetter: I hope Gilpin's coverage of the Razzies continues to be a tradition at LL. I've said it all before, but Kris reports on the event without trying to be cute and witty. He submerges his distinctive personality so that we readers can get a true feeling for the event. Now that's talented writing!.

Terry Jeeves:
G-8 and His Bottle Aces

Milt Stevens: "G-8 and His Bottle Aces Meet the Cucumber of Death" certainly should suggest a comment of some kind. It certainly should. Unfortunately, airborne magnetic cucumbers are sort of difficult to discuss. Unless you're a Freudian, of course. Since this is a family fanzine, we can't really discuss the Freudian aspects of the situation. It's probably a good thing that airborne cucumbers were outlawed by the Geneva Convention.

David Palter: Terry Jeeves' G-8 satire is superb, although it will only be understood by fans who are acquainted with the old pulps, surely a dwindling number.

Paula Robinson: "G-8 and His Bottle Aces Meet the Cucumber of Death" certainly was different. I think he spoofed just about every ridiculous derring-do story I've seen or read, ever. Quite a feat. The story itself is hard to take seriously, but then, that's the point, isn't it? The "science" of how the cucumber was made to float had me hooting.

Ben Indick: I enjoyed seeing good old G-8 come to life again in the Hokum (?) story. Except that G-8 was too deadpan for all this nonsense. He was among my earliest reading, back in the 30s, and maybe I was the deadpan one!

Craig Ledbetter:
Confessions of a Video
Reviewer Crap Artist

Lloyd Penney: One brand of videos that bother me somewhat are the "Making Of" shows. Fill in the blank: Making of STAR WARS, EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, RETURN OF THE JEDI, RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM, etc., etc. They're interesting to see, but they seem gratuitous and easily made. They fill half-hours for TV stations, and they're sometimes available at local video stores. Perhaps if they'd just load up a 3-hour tape with "Making of" shows, I'd be a little happier.

Ben Indick: I know Craig Ledbetter only wants to enlarge our video horizons, and he does love the genre, but I remain unamused by splatter and S&M flicks and as editor would have ungraciously blue-pencilled such, apologizing at the same time, and encouraging sending the piece to a more receptive journal...like Christian Science Monitor. (I should add that in Amsterdam, sex services advertise on legal signs on city lampposts and magazines that they also offer S&M, or SM, if you prefer.)

Paula Robinson: Craig Ledbetter's article was welcome in that it justifies the deliberate waste of perfectly good Sunday afternoons watching "bad" movies. Few will confess to the vice. Yet who isn't guilty of it? Once my father and I actually watched a "Grizzly Adams" movie clear through, with a running stream of commentary. "You kinda keep watching just to see if it's going to get worse," he admitted. Yup.

Thea Hutcheson:
Robots in SF

Lloyd Penney: The man-made creature theme stated goes back to the golem, and continues on even today. It begins with a fear of something that looks like or is shaped like a human, but is manufacture, which is to say, soulless. Continue on in this vein, and if God didn't make it, then the Devil did. Robots were unpredictable and moralless, which meant that they could be easily controlled, especially by evil characters. Asimov's Laws put the robots and androids in a much more positive light, once those ficti-

tious, but plausible safeguards were installed.

Paula Robinson: Thea Hutcheson's "The Historical Tradition of the Robotic Theme in Science Fiction" could not help but draw my interest; as a recent English literature graduate, I was obliged to write several research papers of this type. This paper was rather well done, considering that it had only one listed reference text, but I would have liked to see a wider analysis of the subject. Perhaps we can look forward to one in upcoming issues of LL?

Milt Stevens: I presume Thea Hutcheson's essay on robotics is one of her first attempts at academic writing. It does show some signs of inexperience. The first problem is putting limits on the topic. If you limited the topic to 100% mechanical humanoid robots from 1920 to 1960, you could easily produce a book on the topic. For a short article you need a much more limited topic. The second problem is drawing very broad conclusions from very limited data. Robot stories do not conform to trends nearly as well as Ms. Hutcheson suggests. The third problem is factual errors, like putting Frankenstein in the 18th rather than the 19th century and changing Beirce's story "Moxon's Master" to "Moxon's Monster."

[[The last two errors might have been my typos. I can't find the original manuscript to determine if that were the case.]]

Lisa Freitag's Articles

Paula Robinson: Lisa C. Freitag's "Richard Brautigan Meets Charles Schulz" was fun/funny. I kind of sat there saying "Whaa-a-at?" after finishing it -- which says a lot for how well Ms. Freitag portrayed a downright bizarre attitude in her character(s). A few more clues about who and where they are might be helpful in this short-short -- or it might destroy it. I don't know. Whaa-a-at?

Ben Indick: To Lisa Freitag, I wish a whole closet filled with badge-laden towels by ten years from now -- and the patience to want more!

Alex Bouchard:
Getting Back into It All

Lloyd Penney: I guess I should say welcome back to the insanity. We didn't have much time to talk during the AD ASTRA you attended. Sorry to hear that Dave has gaffed; his monster costume Death and Taxes was a hit at AD ASTRA. Mishelle from Cleveland is Michelle Canterbury; she and Chandra Lea Morgan ran the short-lived Cleveland in '94 Worldcon bid. Barb Schofield's friend Jackie is Jacqui Ward, who's won a prize or two. Steve with the hearse id the itinerant Steve Carey (Hi, Shteeve), dealer extraordinaire, travelling jiant, fanatic devourer of Chinese food and Canadian candy bars. Alex, it sounds like you're chosing your fanac like a smorgasbord, sampling here and there

to see what suits your tastes. Keep it up; you won't be sorry. See you at NOLACON II.

Bob Shaw:
Campus Fugit

Terry Jeeves: I'd read the BoSh piece elsewhere, but it was still enjoyable -- and since Bob has a rather low, deep voice and Irish brogue, reading it enabled me to get the bits often missed when hearing his speeches.

Harry Bond: As far as I know you're only the third to have published Shaw's "Campus Fugit"...the first in the US anyway. It was in Dave Wood's Xyster, and also serialized in Tommy Ferguson's Tash, though we have yet to see the last part of that one. I think the fact that so many people were eager to reprint it shows more than anything I could say as to its quality.

[[Yes, but did they also have the nifty illustrations that I had from fanartist Diana Stein?]]

Lars-Arne Karlsson: I visited CONSPIRACY but was unable to attend when Bob Shaw held his "highly scientific" speech (did we possibly do some futile elbow-fighting outside the entrance?) [[Could be]], so I'm grateful that you got to publish it. By the way, really flattering illo, the one on Bob; he's quite a guy, but I really cannot remember ever seeing him like that -- with eyes wide open.

Tom Easton:
Hard Work

Sam Long: Note to Tom Easton: you've been varking too aard.

Ben Schilling: The story by Tom Easton was unbelievable. Is he a follower of Set, the Egyptian god of aardvarks (no joke)?

Paula Robinson: Thomas Easton's short story, "Hard Times," gave me a rather mixed reaction. The theme of man locked into an animal's body is not especially new. Even so, Mr. Easton used it to make his point: no matter how much we complain about our circumstances, as humans we can usually do something to improve them. That's a good thought, and well-shown in the character development.

Judith Moffett:
In Her Own Words

Cathy Howard: How odd that her writing should metamorphose from poetry to stories. I can see how it happened through her most clear statements, but it must have given her a very weird feeling for quite some time.

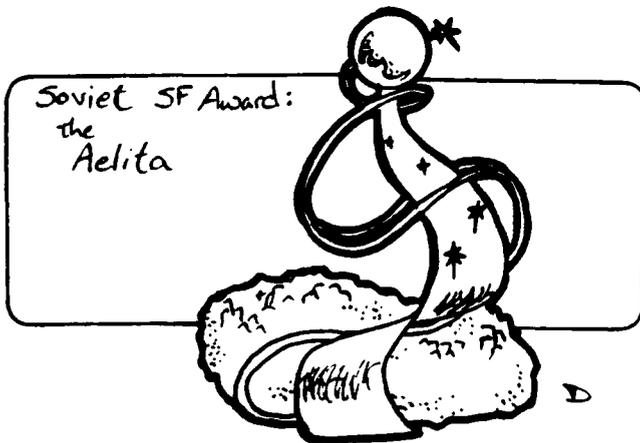
Wendy Council: The standout article in LL #26 was "Judith Moffett: In her own words" by Bill Unger. A good interviewer can make his subject fgsascinating without intruding his own personality. Unger is obviously a

top interviewer. He must have edited drastically and inserted numerous questions which kept Ms Moffett speaking, yet his presence is invisible. A fine job! (I found Ms. Moffett an interesting and likable person, and do not mean to detract from her in praising Unger!)

Tom Jackson:
Dimitri Bilenkin

Tom Jackson: As a footnote to my article, I should mention that Bilenkin posthumously received the Ivan Efremov Award in May, 1988, at the Aelita Convention, held in Sverdlovsk in the Soviet Union. The award is named after a famous SF writer best known for the novel Andromeda. The Aelita convention is a big annual convention where the Aelita award, Russia's top SF prize, is handed out. This year's winner was Victor Kolupaev of Tomsk, Siberia. A translation of some of Kolupaev's stories, Hermit's Swing, was published in the US by MacMillan. I've read it and it's a good collection.

Like other Russian writers, Bilenkin's name can be spelled in various ways in English. I wished I had used "Dmitri" because it seems to be the most common English spelling. I've also seen the name spelled "Dmitrii." The spelling I used, Dimitri, seems to be unique to the annals of literary criticism. Hope this doesn't wreck my credentials as a Sovietologist.



The Anniversary Special Issues
Jim Mann: Del Rey Books
(and related topics)

Cathy Howard: As I'm sure you're aware, another on your list (Robert A. Heinlein) has gone to the great beyond. It makes me cringe when I think of the ages of what is a whole generation of the best SF writers. The situation cannot improve; it's all downhill. I try to cheer myself up by remembering authors who are both good writers and younger. It is pleasant to have writers who should be around, but there's no such thing as replacing those who are gone.

[[As indicated in the front of the zine, I am still doing a Special on Heinlein -- a Memorial Issue. I have a fair number of pieces already, but I am hoping for more contributions.]]

Dave Gorecki: With all the anniversaries in SF this year, one that's been overlooked is the hundredth anniversary of the appearance of the first version of H. G. Wells' Time Machine, under the name of "The Chronic Argonauts" (Science Schools Journal, for April, May & June of 1888, edited by Wells himself). This first version differed radically from the novel with which we're familiar. It features unsolved murders, a house that seems to be haunted, disappearances, and a mob of superstitious villagers--which makes it sound closer to The Invisible Man. In addition, there is no description of any trip to the future taken by the hero (who, unlike Wells' later protagonist, has a villainous streak -- and a name, Moses Nebogipfel). Interested readers may be able to find a copy of Bernard Bergonzi's book, The Early H. G. Wells, which reprints the original story.

I'd be interested to hear if anyone has read the prior version, and if they share Jack Williamson's opinion that it's "melodramatic claptrap."

Lester Boutillier: Yes, the SF writers of the golden age are all completing their 50th anniversaries as writers (ths who remain alive), and what would be a better tribute than for all of their works to be reprinted in paperback books? Jim Mann lauds Del Rey Books' reprint policy of the 70s. But how many SF classics by important SF authors are in current paperback print? Walk into any bookstore with an SF section and you'll likely find the complete works of Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke and Heinlein -- plus maybe Herbert and Zelazny. But what about other giants of the SF field? Their past work is poorly represented on today's bookshelves.

In mainstream fiction, major works by important authors are in continuous print. Not just the most popular writers like Hemingway or the Victorian writers like Hardy and Dickens are constantly in print, but many more "lesser" books by "lesser" writers are always to be found in any wellstocked bookstore. Go into the SF section of a Waldenbooks or a B. Dalton, and what do you find? Very few reprints of books ten or more years old -- what you mainly see are the kinds of "big think books with dragons in them" that Eric Bentcliffe decries in his article.

I know that fantasy is immensely popular now, but along with the dragon books a good bookstore should also be selling the major books of Van Vogt, Sturgeon, Del Rey, Leiber, Silverberg, Dick, and others.

Like Bentcliffe I'm down to reading only one of the SF magazine. With him it's F&SF, while with me it's Analog, and I pass over the dragon books for "real" science fiction from the pens of Greg Bear, David Brin, and others. But there are still many books by important SF authors that I haven't read yet, and I can't find them in today's bookstores. Why aren't these books being reprinted? It's a crying shame that they're not.

[[I hope that the publishers who get copies of LL read this and start examining which copyrights of the old masters they hold, and think about reprinting those works.]]

Convention Etiquette:
The Filksing

Valli Hoski: Seemed useful and common sense enough during the first reading. But then again -- regarding the shushing up done in filk rooms: I suggest a distinction between conversation and questions. Filkers, like any other fannish subgroup, have their own lingo, in-jokes, shared references. Walking into a filk can be like a poetry major walking into an engineering discussion; in particular, if this is one's first filk. Questions which increase one's understanding of the filk, singer, or song's significance should be respected and answered appropriately. If a lengthy discussion or explanation is needed, then certainly adjourn to another location.

This obviously does not mean casual conversation, smuffing, etc. But do filkers really want to tell someone quite rudely, both verbally and non-verbally, that they are dumb, stupid, oafish and a cretin just because they might ask, "Who's this singer?", "Is this fantasy filk or techie filk?", or maybe even "I've never been to one of these before. What's filk?". The filker/filk audience who does so is really oafish and exclusive. Taking a minute to answer enthusiastically and quietly might encourage a future filker. Tell them to go to hell (in so many words) will only antagonize, kill interest, and create ill-will.

Then again I see convention-sponsored filksings as a con-goers' public access event. Private filk parties can set their own rules. But accessible ones should expect the same regard, not more, given to any other programming event.

Jamie McQuinn:
SF Books on Cassette

Paula Robinson: This article is an excellent reference source. Many people who are able to read normal-sized print are not necessarily comfortable doing so, and as the article points out, the cassettes are also perfectly useful for commuters, etc. Knowing where to locate books-on-tape will doubtless be helpful to many fans. Jamie McQuinn is to be commended for making the information available.

Sally Syrjala: This would seem to show a lack of reading even among SF fans. I disagree with the statement that The White Plague was greatly improved by abridgement. This book was a favorite of mine. Good writing will describe environments so that you can see, feel and touch them. I enjoyed the "tediously described Irish landscape." I like a good philosophical discussion in a science fiction book. If I wanted no thinking, I would simply pick up another run-of-the-mill disaster novel.

Books are all about the beauty of words. Authors are artists who string together lines of words to make a landscape or an abstract or a still-life that will allow us to better see what is about us. An oral rendition can be beautiful in its own way, but the written word is a song that is sung directly to the soul. Sound patterns are not needed the way they are with the spoken

words. Mental images can be imprinted and then a passage can be reread so that image can be echoed back in an increasingly more vivid manner.

I do enjoy cassette tapes from time to time, but give me the unabridged books where I can appreciate them in their full creation and not be handed a synopsis that has cut out the detail that gives background and understanding to the cardboard antics taking shape in the foreground.

Robert Teague:
The Periodic Table of Fannish Elements

Paula Robinson: Now what can I say about this one? Such intellectual goofiness is to be praised and practiced liberally! So many science addicts take themselves too seriously. Teague spoofs the so-called scientific attitude -- to be kept mentally separate from the scientific method, please -- beautifully. (Urp: banquet. Bob: Tucker, never separated from BC: Beam's Choice. Wheee!)

Bob Rodgers: But the table left out Calvorite and Dilithium.

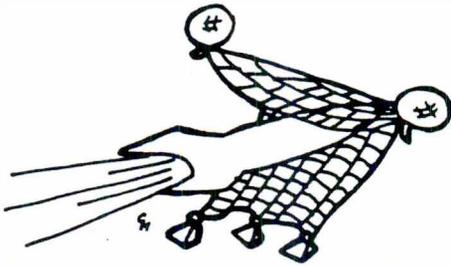
Sam Long: Some while ago the scientific equipment company I²R published a periodic table of elements that were thought to have existed, ought to have existed, or did exist under different names. Included were phlogiston, ofium (which came in the sequence Universitium, ofium, Californium, Berkelium), and Illinium. I wish I could find my copy of it; I'd send it to you.

David Shea:
The Ides of March

Sam Long: Interesting, but Dave, the Romans had a 7-day week before Christianity; they got it from the East, where a 7-day week based on the seven planets (sun, moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn, in that order). Certainly, however, the Jewish influence helped make the 7-day cycle the standard. The word "hour" comes from the Greek word for "season", as in the season of the day. "Minute" and "second" come from Latin. They were originally subdivisions of angle or arc, and were the first small part (pars minuta prima), and the second small part (pars minuta secunda) of a degree. And "day" does not begin in the middle of the night. That's merely our convention. Historically the day began either at sunrise or sunset. The Sabbath begins on sunset Friday and lasts until sunset Saturday. This holds true in Medieval times as well.

We are told that the good King Wenceslas looked out on the feast of Stephen. The feast of St. Stephen Protomartyr is 26 December, and the King would have looked out on the evening before, the day beginning at sunset. The feast would have been on what we would call the evening of Christmas day, but he would have called it the day of St. Stephen.

The festivities associated with Saints' Day generally occur on the eve(ning before), as in Walpurgisnacht (the night of 30



April-1 May, before the Feast of St. Walpurga, 1 May), St. John's Eve (before 24 June), All Hallows Eve (Hallowe'en), the evening before the Feast of All Saints (1 Nov). Astronomers count the days from noon, so that the night is in one calendar period (day); and so did sailors, for the same reason, until recently.

The Ethiopian Coptic calendar uses 12 months of 30 days plus one month of 5 days (6 in a leap year), and count from 284 AD. The French Revolutionary Calendar is an interesting curio indeed. The months were: Vintage, Misty, Frosty, Snowy, Rainy, Windy, Seed-time, Flowery, Meadowy, Harvest, Hot, and Fruitful. The French Revolutionary Calendar began about the Autumnal Equinox. Tolkien's calendars are interesting: the Hobbit calendar names are generally Anglo-Saxon ones suitably modified, being, of course, translations of the actual names in the Common Speech.

David Palter: In his suggestion that the asymmetry of our calendar could be remedied by speeding up the Earth's orbit so that the year is exactly 270 days, David Shea may not be aware of the fact that, orbital mechanics being what they are, this would necessarily entail moving the Earth quite a bit closer to the sun. I think the climatic consequences would be unacceptable. If anything, I think that our planet is already in danger of overheating (due to the greenhouse effect) and might benefit by being moved to a slightly more distant orbit, yielding perhaps a 400 day long year. This lends itself to a fairly neat calendrical scheme of ten months, each forty days long, and each month being divided into four weeks, each ten days long. The increased use of factors of ten make this closer to the metric system, which appeals to me.

Alternately, we could leave the length of the year unchanged, but alter the length of the day by speeding or slowing down the Earth's rotation. Once again, we could arrive at the 400 day year through a slight increase in rotational speed, but personally I favor a slightly longer day, which could be done to give us an exactly 360 day year, which would then give us twelve months of thirty days each, and each month possibly being divided into three weeks of ten days each. Or for people who prefer shorter weeks, perhaps six weeks of five days each. (It does seem sloppy to divide a thirty day month into four and two-sevenths weeks of seven days each.)

However, I really believe that there is too much wrong with the planet Earth (troublesome plate tectonics, etc.) and that it **would be better to just build an entirely new planet from scratch to more desirable specifications, including suitable lengths for the day and year.**

Ben Schilling: The Islamic calendar moves forward about ten days every year, relative to the Gregorian calendar. In roughly thirty five years, the Islamic New Year will be back to the middle of August. Muharram 1,1409 AH is August 13, 1988 AD.

Dear Graying Lensman

Gregory Litchfield: "Dear Graying Lensman" (I love the pun!) was hysterically funny, and GL's answer to "Equipment Junkie" was by far his best quip.

Replies to letters
in the Lettercol

James W. Harris
The Skeptical Inquirer
The Author Replies to

David Palter:

One reason I suggested that books should be labeled "science fiction" and "fantasy" is so that when I go to a bookstore I could go straight to the SF section, and not have to wade through hundreds of fantasy books. Or if I'm in the mood for a fantasy novel, I'd go to that section. It's like mixing westerns and mysteries together. My other thought was if we trained kids to think that some books are not to be believed, that would help encourage them to think that not all things can be believed. Sure, people need to learn to think for themselves. I wasn't saying we should tell people what to read, but only tell them not to believe everything they read. Unfortunately the book publishers put out things like COMMUNION as nonfiction. This only confuses the issue. A lot of people who read New Age, Occult, UFO and other metaphysical type books, shelved in non-fiction areas of bookstores, also like to read SF and fantasy. And since SF and fantasy deal with similar ideas, they add even more strange ideas to their belief system.

Don't get me wrong, I think most people are level headed, except they are gullible to a lot of flaky popular ideas, such as UFOs, telepathy, out of body experiences, crystal power and religion. Part of the problem can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle. Essentially they taught that ideals and concepts were more important than good old hard reality. The concepts of UFOs or telepathy are so strong, so appealing, so powerful that they exist in people's mind as real. Whether or not they are real is beside the point.

R'ykandar Korra'ti:

Quite true, we don't know everything. But we must act like we do, even though we can admit that we don't. Have you watched James Burke's The Day the Universe Changed? The whole point of the show is that our universe changes every time we acquire a new set of beliefs. But for a belief system to work, we

just believe in them. Science works because it's willing to throw out any belief that gets in the way of understanding reality. But you still work with the current hypothesis until it's ready to be tossed out.

Modern science isn't perfect, but it has tremendous momentum behind it. Metaphysical people claim that skeptics have closed their minds. But most skeptics will admit that they don't know everything and anything theoretically could be possible. All they are saying look around and THINK.

Read "Are We Alone?" by Gregg Easterbrock in the August, 1988 issue of Atlantic. Here is a good comprehensive overview of what science is doing to find out if there is other life, especially intelligent life in our galaxy. It's a complicated issue, and goes beyond such simple logic as there are billions of stars in our galaxy, so there's gotta be more life somewhere.

Yes, we don't know everything, but we can't ignore what we do know just to "keep" concepts that we desire.

Arthur Hlavaty:

I like Arthur's analysis of my article. At first I wanted to say no way. I'm totally non-religious, so I don't want to accept the idea I'm acting like a religious convert. However, I'm willing to admit that campaigning for any belief system has its similarities. Also, I'm willing to own up to being dogmatic, at least by one definition given in my dictionary, "Marked by authoritative, often arrogant, assertion of opinions or beliefs; positive; overbearing." I can't claim to be authoritative, but I'll lead guilty to arrogant, positive and overbearing. Sure I come on pretty strong attacking metaphysical beliefs, but I believe someone should, since most everyone else seems to be swallowing such concepts whole, without chewing, and no burping. I will also admit that I could be wrong about many of the ideas examined in The Skeptical Inquirer. I also agree that you can't disprove something's existence by lack of evidence, or visa versa. I just say that I'm betting that metaphysical concepts are phony.

I'll try and track down Robert Anton Wilson's The New Inquisition.

Buck Coulson:

I'll probably have to give in to you and David Palter that labeling books different won't help much. I "wished" that words were used more carefully, but that is wishful thinking. For my own lazy self, it would be nice if books were better labeled in bookstore just to make shopping easier. And I want to emphasize that I'm not against fantasy. Even though I'm not religious I'm a real sucker for stories with angels coming to Earth, or things like the old Thorne Smith books (why aren't they reprinted?).

Lloyd Penney:

Yes, yes, metaphysical ideas are perfect for stories. Stories are for fun. And like you, I like to read a book that speculates about the future that adheres to everything

we know now. It's just that people don't write and publish very many of these kinds of books.

Ruth Berman:

Tachyons are only mathematical toys. I also love stories which use faster than light travel in their plots (the most recent have been David Brin's Uplift series). I would just like to read some stories where they postulate space travel to the stars in a more possible manner.

Milt Stevens:

I've been accused by several people, that if I had been religious, I would have been a Jesuit. But remember, the best the Jesuits could do with logic was to reiterate the concept of faith, which is quite elegant. Ultimately our universe is the one we believe in. Gods, hobbits, ESP, UFOs will all live as long as people have faith in them. (Speaking in Aristotilian terms.) I don't like the connotation of the word "faith, but can accept that others will consider my faith to be in Science.

Martin Morse Wooster:

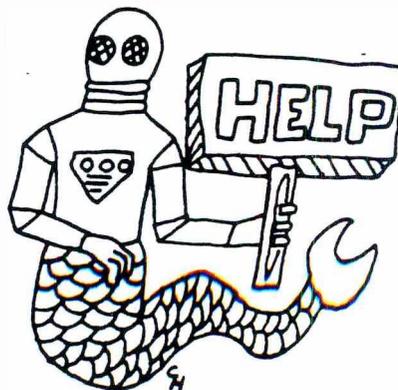
I'm not familiar with Aldiss' idea of thinking and dreaming as poles of SF, but I will investigate. Sounds good.

Joe Sanders:

As I've pointed out before I enjoy fantasy and science fantasy. Fantasy is the ultimate literary tool, and very powerful. I would never say that people shouldn't read fantasy. I'm saying they need to learn the difference between hard reality and soft. The enemy isn't fantasy but false perceptions. Because no matter how much we all enjoy fantasy, there is a real world out there we must live in, and it appears to be going down the tube. Unless we change our perceptions and act, it will. Apparently there are no metaphysical beings out there to help us, nor do we possess magic powers to solve the problems ourselves without effort.

Taras Wolansky:

I envy you. I wish I had been reading The Skeptical Inquirer since volume 1, number 1. It would have saved me a lot of time researching and chasing after metaphysical ideas.



* * * Other Replies * * *

To All

L. Sprague de Camp: I am grateful for the kind remarks about my writings by the letter writers in the last issue. Several say they have read some of my books and would like to obtain more. Here is a list of books of mine currently in print:

Fiction:

Conan Books. I contributed as author or co-author to 16 of the first 20-odd volumes by Ace and Bantam; what with mergers &c. I can't be sure which are now available.

The Hand of Zei (Owlswick Press)
The Incorporated Knight* (Phantasia Press)
The Intrepid Enchanter (the 5 Harold Shea stories; Sphere. By mail order only.)
The Reluctant King (the three Jorian stories; Nelson Doubleday.)
The Tritonian Ring (Owlswick Press)

Non-Fiction:

The Ancient Engineers (Ballantine)
Dark Valley Destiny: The Life of Robert E. Howard* (Bluejay-St. Martin's Press)
The Day of the Dinosaur* (Outlet Books)
Footprints on Sand* (Advent)
The Fringe of the Unknown (Prometheus Press)
Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers (Arkham House)
The Ragged Edge of Science (Owlswick Press)
Spirits, Stars, and Spells: The Profits and Perils of Magic* (Owlswick Press)

Verse:

Heroes and Hobgoblins (Donald Grant)

In Press:

The Incorporated Knight* (paperback; Baen)
The Intrepid Enchanter (Baen)
The Stones of Nomuru* (Donning)

Completed but not yet sold:

The Honorable Barbarian
The Swords of Zinjaban*

Those marked with an asterisk, *, are in collaboration with my wife Catherine. Of the foregoing, of the fiction titles, Zei, Nomuru, and Zinjaban are science fiction; the rest are fantasy. All the books listed as forthcoming are fiction. What with remaindering and unexpected reprinting, I am never completely sure what is in print and what is not.

To Mike Glicksohn

David Langford: Mike Glicksohn and PED XING leaves me totally baffled. Subtle British in-joke? I've never seen such a sign in Britain, where pedestrian crossings are marked with either traffic lights or (old version) orange globes on striped poles. I was suitably amazed at my first PED XING sign, which I saw not in Britain but in America, a country Mike really should visit.

To David Griffin

Evelyn Leeper: In answer to David Griffin's question: Yes, Mark Leeper does do things other than watch films (though obviously writing locs isn't one of them!). It may be of interest to note that Lan actually only prints about half of Mark's reviews. (Most of the rest are non-SF films.) How does he do it? Well, since he gets up at 5 AM, he can knock off a movie before we even go to work. And we average about one theatrical film per week, plus watching movies on the VCR, so it adds up.

Robert Sabella: I debated for a long while whether to ignore David Griffin's snide comment about my essay, "Newer Waves." I finally decided that his condescending attitude compels me to defend myself.

Mr. Griffin refutes my claim that Michael Bishop is a New Wave writer. First he demands, "What has Robert read by Bishop," then wonders if "Bishop is such a good writer that Robert has been fooled?"

Actually I have read virtually everything Bishop has written since he is my favorite science fiction writer. And, no, I don't think I am so dimwitted as to be fooled by good writing. Apparently Mr. Griffin forgets (or does not realize) that twenty years ago there was considerable disagreement over what constituted New Wave writing. Some people claimed it was only the most outre experimental science fiction (as Mr. Griffin apparently feels). Others (myself included) defined it as any science fiction which attempts to integrate literary values and techniques with traditional science fiction. Under that definition writers such as Roger Zelazny, Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. LeGuin, and, yes, even Michael Bishop are New Wave writers. Or doesn't Mr. Griffin believe that Bishop's writing contains the very best literary values as well as its traditional science fictional content?

Mr. Griffin may not accept the broader definition of New Wave, but since neither definition has ever been officially accepted, he should allow me to choose the one I wish rather than the one he would force upon me.

To Jack Herman

David Langford: "Commendable is the article on Cordwainer Smith"? Puzzled was the reaction of David Langford. Inverted is the syntax of Jack Herman. Odd is the opening line of that letter.

To Mark Olson

Wendy Council: Thanks for your comments on my article on "Beautiful Books." You not only point an important omission in my article, you hit a dead-on stricke on my own dilemma in book collecting: owning excellent and expensive editions makes me terrified to touch them!

To David Palmer

Julia Ecklar: I was appalled to see a professional writer respond to a book review in such a juvenile and unprofessional man-

ner. I was taught on softball fields at age seven to keep my mouth shut when umpires made calls, no matter what I thought. My coach told me then that such behavior was unsportsmanlike; I've grown up since, and understand now that such behavior is also discourteous and degrading.

We've all had to listen to unfair, unpleasant, and sometimes downright spiteful things said about us -- in print or in person. Voluntarily exposing yourself through a high-profile profession means that you understand that you will be open to even more criticism, and that you accept with grace the consequences of the profession you've chosen. Mr. Palmer demonstrated little understanding of common human courtesy, much less an understanding of the super-human courtesy required of his craft.

In his rebuttal, Mr. Palmer resorts to using the very same tactics of which he accuses his reviewers (unsupported conclusions, prejudice, crudity), and even engages in name-calling (something writer should possess enough literary ability to be able to avoid). The entire rebuttal left me wondering why it was all right for him to yell at the umpire, but not all right for the umpire to make the original call.

I have not read Threshold, and I can't say I'm interested in doing so now. Mr. Palmer's rebuttal was not only poorly written, but it was poorly felt. I have no interest in encouraging a professional of that calibre in any way.

To Jessica Amanda Salmonson

David Palter: Now that Jessica Amanda Salmonson has revealed that she was kidnapped by light-bulb-headed aliens a few years ago, and subjected to hypnosis and various painful indignities, I find that certain previously puzzling aspects of her personality are now more understandable. That sort of experience does leave its mark.

To Martin Morse Wooster

Wendy Council: Good for you for understanding ROBOCOP and Verhoeven's point of view.

Susan Schwartz: Sigh. Despite my better judgment, I think I really must address Martin Morse Wooster's comments. Whether or not I've understood him correctly before, the message in his most recent letter comes through loud and clear. Unfortunately, it contains many of the verbal strategies that weaken "fannish" (and the quotation marks are to make everyone know that I'm not slamming all fans when I use that term) criticism.

Let me specify:

1. Shifting of ground. Wooster claims that I didn't understand him. Whether or not this is true, it's a good way to avoid dealing with my issues and shifting back to his.

2. One-upsmanship. I-know-more-facts-than-you-do. Very probably Wooster does read more critics than I do; they're scarce on Wall Street. It was always my experience,

however, that it wasn't the quantity but the quality of the criticism that counted. I may not get paid to read criticism, but I certainly do get paid to write it.

3. Distinctions without a difference. The old chestnut about book-reviewing vs. criticism. Really, Marty, at the risk of being called sarcastic, let me remind you that, ideally, reviews should be more than data leading to a buy or no-buy decision or How To Separate Joe From His Bheer Money. They can and should contain some information on the writer, other works, and what the book is about as well as its plot; ideally, they set the work in its proper context. And I am surprised that, given all of the criticism Marty has read, he has apparently decided to ignore the review article. Question: what do you call The Jewel-Hinged Jaw? And what's the difference between a high quality "fan" press and a "small" press? Snobbery, snobbery...

4. Professor-bashing. Marty's "always baffled by the inability of most Ph.D.'s to construct a stylish sentences." Observe the satisfaction with which he brings out that particular chestnut. Given the choice between Wooster's pronunciamientos and those of the people he has so much fun knocking, I'll stick with the Ph.D.'s.

5. Conestoga configuration. In the same text in which Wooster trashes Delany's "fan" press, he observes that he doubts that Lewis' and Tolkien's articles would be considered by Science Fiction Studies or Extrapolation. Were either writer alive, those magazines should only be so lucky! If their editorial boards didn't accept them, they'd be total idiots -- which they are not. Even if they were, however, I suspect that Lewis and Tolkien might well have made to with the Time Literary Supplement and the university presses of Oxford and Cambridge, not to mention Ballantine Del Rey.

I call this strategy "Conestoga configuration" because, in it, Wooster draws his arguments into a self-protective ring. There are other critical markets and critics reviewers, and/or both than those that he mentions; there are writers and reviewers outside his circle who are thriving and growing ...among them even some of the academics he deplores, who seem more tolerant and able to change their ways than Marty, in dealing with them.

I suspect that I've misunderstood Marty once again, and I'll apologize in advance for that and for perpetrating a verbal strategy that I have long deplored in criticism: the overly long, overly elaborate, and overly sarcastic rebuttal.

Who will, Marty asks, be the next SF writer to fill Blish's [critical] mantle? (That's a mixed metaphor; one wears a mantle.) I don't know, Marty. But I do know that I'd like, maybe, to acquire at least a corner of it.

THE GALACTIC CARTOGRAPHERS SOCIETY

TO ALL WHO MIGHT HAVE ANY CARE IN THE WORLD OR GALAXY

The Detroit Metropolitan Area has once again given birth to another Science Fiction/Fantasy club. Introducing the Galactic Cartographers Society, a club geared to raising the mundane consciousness to new heights through exposure to science fiction. Located in the basement of the Farmington Hills Public Library, we have an active charter membership of fifteen to twenty members. We encourage any and all interested persons (human or otherwise) to contact us (see below).

We are currently running a series of programs on any aspect of the subject we can easily exploit. For example, last month the special effects people from Moontrap, a SF movie soon to be released, came in and gave an interview with Metrovision about the background happenings of the movie.

We hope to do more in the future. Any questions, please write to:

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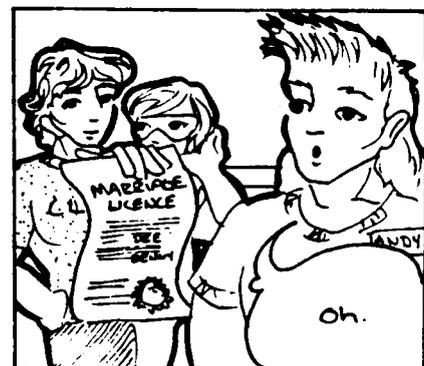
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