



# Lan's Lantern 35

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## Dedication

To Maia, as usual,  
and  
In memory of Don C. Thompson,  
fan, reviewer, and friend.

LAN'S LANTERN #35 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304 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 #20, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN #35 is copyright (c) December 1990, 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) received, to be used in a future issue
- \_\_\_ Comment or loc received (it may be published 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 69)
- \_\_\_ Mentioned in my Conreports & Ramblings
- \_\_\_ I thought you might find this interesting.
- \_\_\_ This is your last issue unless you do something

## From the Editor

# Don C Thompson

by Lan

On December 15, I received two calls from Denver, Colorado. Fred Cleaver, the Official Editor of D'APA, and Thea Hutchison, a close friend of Don's and a fellow apa member, informed me that Don C. Thompson had died early that morning. His death was not unexpected. His last issue of Don-O-Saur related the whole story of his bouts with cancer, and his desire to have it end quickly. He was given 4-6 months in November. His health deteriorated fast, and as a blessing his wish was fulfilled.

My first meeting with Don was at AUTOCLAVE. It may well have been the first one in 1976, but I recall spending time talking a lot with him at AUTOCLAVE II, at ARCHON II later that summer, and a few other cons. Our last meeting should have been at the Worldcon in Holland, but for some reason our paths never crossed. Instead, I can remember him from NOLACON II, still healthy, and willing to sit and talk, visit with fans, and enjoy life.

It was Don who encouraged me to join D'APA, whose membership was low at the time, and he was willing to do the printing for me. It has been more than 5 years since I joined, and I have enjoyed meeting a lot of Denver fans in print.

Don was always willing to help others. He was a one-man welcoming committee at Worldcons for fanzine fans. At SUNCON I remember him introducing Allan Beatty around; it was Allan's second convention (the first being the weekend before at B'HAMACON), and his first Worldcon. He encouraged Carolyn Doyle to continue writing. Don roomed with other fans to spend time with them and show them the ins and outs of fan publishing. And most of all he had faith in several people that they could do things with their lives, and not limit themselves. Those he affected know who they are.

To Don I dedicate this issue of Lan's Lantern. His life may have been a little rocky at times, but in the long run he was a positive influence in many lives. That's enough to make him worth knowing.

Goodbye Don. [\*]

### I WILL REMEMBER DON

by Laurraine Tutihasi

I'm not sure how I met Don. We might have met at AUTOCLAVE, a small fanzine fans' convention, in 1976, 1977, or 1978. Or I might have met him through his fanzine. I was just getting started in fandom in 1975 and 1976. I had gone to my first convention in 1973 after finishing school and starting work. It didn't take me long to get on various mailing lists and receiving fanzines from all over the country.

Don's fanzines always were among my top two or three favourites, whether it was Don-O-Saur, From the Rim, or some other title. The reason is that he always put so much of himself into them. Even though we only met a handful of times, I felt I really knew him because of his writing. If I ever publish a large-circulation fanzine, I hope it will be like his.

Don was interesting and pleasant in person, as well. Through him I became acquainted with Carolyn, his wife. And I believe I met one of his sons once or twice.

When I received his last fanzine at the beginning of December, 1990, I called as soon as I read the article about his deteriorating health. Unfortunately, it was already too late. I spoke to Carolyn, who said he was sinking fast and was usually too drugged to speak to people. It was only a few days later that Lan called to tell me Don had passed away.

The sad thing, I feel, is that I know there was so much more he had wanted to do.

I guess we should be grateful that he went quickly and didn't have to suffer too much. However, that doesn't lessen the empty feeling he's left in me and in others. He will be greatly missed. [\*]

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### In This and Future Issues

As usual, there is a variety of material, hopefully enough to suit every taste. Essays and reviews abound. The Guest Editorial on the next page by Joe Conat I think will deserve some answer. And there are some humorous items as well.

I did promise that Evelyn Leeper's trip report to East Africa would be in this issue, and so it is, along with Jack Williamson's trip to the Soviet

Union, and a "pleasant" trip to Tunisia with Laura Resnick (Mike Resnick's daughter), and con and trip reports by Lynn Margosian and myself.

Of course, I have lots of work to do on the Special Anniversary issues which are now 2 years overdue. They will definitely keep me busy and out of trouble. And coming in the next regular issue, features about writing and experiencing SF.

Enough of this...on with the issue. Enjoy!

# Fear and Loathing in (and of) Fandom

by Joseph Patrick Conat

I am a fan. I read SF, I enjoy dressing up, I like being around other fen and discussing or viewing or arguing about SF in any media. Or, that used to be the case.

I am a fan. But, I have not been to a con in two years, with one exception. And it is that exception that prompted me, after long and careful consideration, to write this article.

I was part of a theatre group in high school called FARCo, the Fine Arts Repertory Company. Last year [1989], we were asked to perform at CONTRAPTION, and presented a small, improvisational skit of our own invention along an SF theme. We were pleased at the honor of being asked to do this, of our performance being requested at this convention, especially since some of the members, besides myself, read or watched SF with great interest. We did the best we could, and received praise. Our gratitude, by the way, goes to the CONTRAPTION Con-Com for providing us everything we ever needed and more while we were there.

Having completed our performance, we went to our rooms to prepare for the evening's fun, such as the masquerade ball. Many of us had brought or made costumes for the event, and were anxious to try them on and dance or whatever. That's when I gave the group, particularly the girls, my warning: Watch out, you will be hit on by older men/women. The group was not concerned, and neither was I, being sure they could handle whatever situation arose.

Later that night, I had to physically pull an overweight, drunken geek in horn-rimmed glasses and a fur breech-cloth off of one of the female members of the theatre troupe. She was highly upset, and spent a good portion of the night in her room. Another female member of the troupe was "barked" at by an inebriated soul while getting pop in the Con-suite. The overall feeling among my friends was that cons were largely populated by drunken, hedonistic assholes, who couldn't carry on a decent conversation with a floor lamp.

My warning was not sufficient, and, thinking back, I should have known it wouldn't be. When overpowered by an intoxicated "barbarian," and cornered in a hallway, the average 15-year-old will not know what to do. And, while being barked at isn't threatening, and could be taken as a compliment, in most cases such an odd form of approval is looked at as intimidating, or at the least unnerving.

Why is it that some people at cons can't get the hint that if their target isn't interested, or is scared, they should back off. With the barbarian, I had to ask "nicely" twice before threatening to twist his head off his pencil-neck. While that did the trick, such a violent approach should not have been necessary.

My friends regarded the main body of fen as alcoholic, social retardates. Is this the image fans want to present? Are fen so frightened of new people that you must scare them away? Are fen so socially inept they can't be friends with a person of the opposite sex without accosting them? And why aren't the other people at cons stopping them? For all you out there who don't at least protest a little at such blatantly tasteless behavior, you're just as bad as the transgressors. And even if you don't agree with that, in other people's eyes you suffer from guilt by association. People like that frighten young fans away, scaring the neos into never coming back. Not only that, what they do could be construed as drunkenness in public, indecent exposure, attempted rape, or worse if they actually do succeed. Not only does this make the influx of neos go down, but police involvement does not shed a good light on fandom itself.

Now, I'm not an "old fuddy-duddy," and I'm not necessarily a member of the moral majority. I am eighteen years old, and as interested in sex as anyone with a functional set of hormones. But I choose my targets well, and notably avoid frightening the youngsters. All it takes is a little respect for the other person's position. That's not too hard to give. Some of the men and women I have encountered at cons don't have the charm it takes to make their own reflection smile, yet attempt to "seduce" easy prey, some as young as 12 years old. I do not exaggerate. In fact, I speak from personal experience, having had a couple of frightening encounters with some repulsive women who'd had too much to drink.

I understand that cons cannot screen people as they come in for taste or social skills. But, once these cretins go too far and actually come on to a child, I think they should at least be expelled from that and any further cons. Actually, I also believe in excessive violence to their person, but I can draw the line with ostracism.

One complaint is all it should take. One attempt to bother the wrong person is too much and they should be gone. And I don't just mean men. This is

just as valid for socially retarded women as well. It's just as unnerving for a 13 year old boy to be groped against his will, as I can attest.

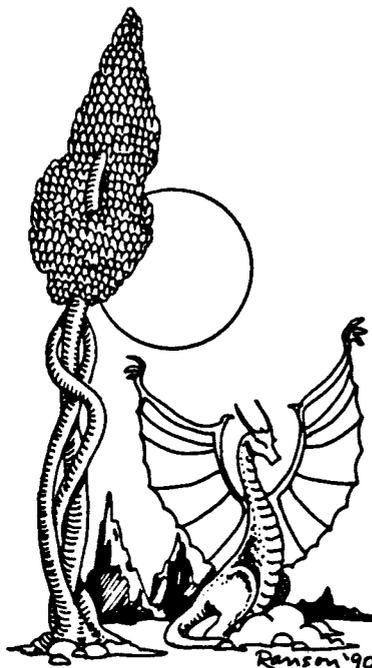
I don't want to make fandom an exclusive clique, just human. If some of these individuals can keep their inability to socially interact in a respectable way to themselves, fine. But one step over the line, and that should be it. No more.

I have not gone to a con since that time. I do not plan to go to another for a while, I am that disgusted. And as for the theatre troupe, well, they are more forgiving than I. As one of them said, "It was fun, but I wouldn't go more than once every year or two. And I sure wouldn't want to hang around with any of the people."

I am embarrassed to have been a con-attending fan. Congrats, you nerds out there, for ruining it for some good people. As for the rest of fandom, well, try harder. Maybe you can brighten fandom's image.

And, as for this ex-fan, don't even send me the flyers for cons for the next five years. The revulsion is too much.

--Joseph Patrick Conat  
February, 1990|\*|



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## Was Science Fiction Novel Germ of Computer Virus?

by Paul Dean

John Killan Brunner would like to invite Robert Tappan Morris to England and pastoral Somerset and dinner at his country cottage.

"I would serve him an excellent meal," Brunner promised. "Then I would pump him about computers."

Morris, of course, is the 22 year-old Cornell University graduate student whose bungling in 1988 allegedly germinated an electronic virus that infected a felled 6,000 government and university computers nationwide--and who is the subject of a full-scale FBI criminal investigation.

Brunner is the 55 year-old author who may have put him up to it by writing The Shockwave Rider, a 1975 novel of one man's tampering with national computer networks--and a book that Morris, according to his mother, read and reduced to dog ears as a teenager.

"The theme of the novel is that of an attempt by an individual, totally gifted, to break loose from a computerized, authoritarian government," Brunner explained in a telephone interview from his home in the village of South Petherton.

"It wouldn't have given him (Morris) an education. What it could have done is open his mind to the possibility that the computer society incorporates both the possible liberation of the individual ...and his domination by central governmental forces." Thus far, there has been nothing to suggest that the young computer wizard, the son of a senior computer security expert, was acting as a social saboteur or some electronic Don Quixote tilting at modems. Instead, he has emerged as the biggest meddler since Mary Worth or the U.S. government.

Brunner's book postulated a computer "tapeworm" that could change computer files and leave no trace of its existence. It clearly contains the germ of the idea that might have germinated as the computer viruses that systems all over the world have been catching.

Score another coup for science fiction as prophecy.|\*|

# Science Fiction

# Cyberpunk

by Ben Indick

Science Fiction is a fragile fiction. The stories of a generation ago have for the most part slipped into genteel oblivion because their dependence on marvels faded when they either became accepted commonplaces or when the assumptions behind them were proven false. Antiquated and artificial literary styles doomed them by their own transience. And, of course, the humans, with all the matters which make up one's lifetime, were subservient to the science in question. Only a few years ago the attempt to incorporate a mainstream literary style then in vogue, briefly fluttered and then died. Other early fiction has lived on into classic permanence: Cervantes, Henry Fielding, Dickens. Certainly their literary styles are not those of the 1990s; however, their intrinsic truths, dependent upon no gimmickry but offering insights into the complex human equation of their eras (and, because they have proven to be universal), has kept them alive and beloved. To the general reading public, of all the science fiction writers of the last century, the few who would interest them are those whose work went beyond their fantasy, such as H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley. And Wells preferred to call his novels "scientific romances."

I shall return to this philosophical musing later. This genre, my earliest love, has been something of a terra incognita for me for a time, but occasionally I return so I can know the territory. Recently this return has been very promising indeed. I liked Dan Simmons' SF novel Hyperion very much and now I have and expect much from his new The Fall of Hyperion. Dan is a crossover man, and I also have waiting his enormous horror tome, Carrion Comfort. Catching up on old favorites, I read Heinlein's The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathon Hoag, a paperback with some short stories included. The novel appeared a lifetime ago in Unknown, and characteristic of many of the stories Campbell chose, was paranoid. Many of Unknown's stories, including Darker Than You Think, Sinister Barrier, None but Lucifer, others, all have us as helpless before vast, unknown forces. Usually we lose. This Heinlein has a happy ending, but is essentially just a pulp yarn, unconvincing, unimportant if mildly humorous, with a female better than those who occupy his last novels. I really am unhappy that this favorite of my earlier years always leaves me cold nowadays. The book has "All You Zombies," the damndest time-travel yarn, and his "And He Built a

Crooked House," good theoretical, funny science fiction.

Okay, let's get down to business, SF/wise. As I have indicated, it takes me a while to catch up with things. One such thing is a new branch of our genre called "Cyberpunk." I had never heard of it (never looked). However, I saw a book called Mona Lisa Overdrive by one William Gibson; I noted his first novel Neuromancer (already some six or seven years old) had won three major SF awards, a fabulous coup. I picked up and read the latter and now I have added the third, Count Zero.

"Cyberspace" is a more proper term for the SF subgenre, and it is what Gibson and his followers are about. The best definition of the term I have seen is from an article in the magazine Mondo 2000, a far out zine. It writes that it was used by William Gibson "to denote a global computer/communications network supporting 'consensual hallucinations' involving millions of people on a daily basis."

Anyway, I read Mona Lisa and was bowled over. It is written with a headlong pace and all the reader can do is hang on and ride. The prose is dazzling, exciting, poetic (use that as an alibi when you do not understand what he is talking about). It is part of the computer age and the author assumes you know, or doesn't care, what the terminology is. Like "overdrive." I have no idea what it means. Consider a forepage in Count Zero which "explains" the title; it does not refer to a nobleman. The note reads simply: "COUNT ZERO INTERRUPT -- On receiving an interrupt, decrement the counter to zero." Figure that one out! I don't care. I don't even know what the Mona Lisa ending is about! I still don't care!

In a sense, this is the way science fiction should be written. (Well, not altogether obfuscatory, I suppose, but I can accept it.) To elaborate on my opening remarks, in the old days when wonder alone was enough for readers, three quarters back in the 19th century, in Gernsbackian magazines as well as his own 1920s' novel Ralph 124C41+, writers spent endless early chapters before the story got going describing the marvels of tomorrow's world. This is not reprehensible; those were less technologically advanced times, and readers were unaware of what imagination might produce and fascinated by the gadgets alone. Verne knew better and his submarine was its own marvel and story, but not every-

one was as good. Under Campbell's SF aegis especially, this became subordinate to human aspects; characterization now began to count. Futuristic items were necessary but must be incorporated unobtrusively, their function understood through their use without exposition. Now science fiction was reaching a sophistication which might lend it some permanency. It has not, however, really happened: the uneasy balance between the human and the science fantasy factors still gravitates against it.

The cyberpunkists could not care less about literature or rules. They add a tougher quantity: they expect the reader to know almost intimately the glossary of a new science. I love my computer, but all I know how to do it this word-processing, and zilch more. Not even the words. I don't need them, and have no time to access them (to use a verb in the manner of the inventor of their awful dictionary). Certain terms, SIN and ICE come to mind, are explained initially, just once, and after that you'd better remember them. The once popular TV show, Max Headroom, was a cinematic version of this type of story, although greatly simplified for an audience of TV viewers with limited mentalities, such as mine. (I liked Max. My wife hated it; the dazzling graphics blinded her and gave her a headache.) Max too did not try to explain, just threw the story at you.

Of the writers in this genre I have read, I find Gibson, who is credited with originating this SF sub-genre, easily to best. Bruce Sterling, a Texan, has an Arkham House book, The Crystal Express, only partially cyberstuff, and he is a sometimes collaborator of Gibson, a Vancouver writer, but he lacks the drive and the abandon. He uses Space itself as a locale; Gibson's stories are set in the relatively near future, and he mixes names and places we know with those he creates. His books thus far have been roughly in the same era and environment, with several characters appearing in each book, as well as similar scientific terms and instruments. The world his characters rush about in, killing and being killed, has great polarities. The wealthy and powerful are extraordinarily so; one family, Tessier-Ashpool, clones itself and lives in near space in their own enclosed world. A Woman who appears in several books is "Lady 3Jane."

The ordinary citizen (who rarely figures in the action) appears to be meek and subdued, content to live quietly and be titillated by mass entertainments. He lives in arcologies, presumably the mass environmental structures conceived by today's visionary architect Paolo Soleri. The hero of his first book is computer-smart but a failure. Molly is more outrageous. She wears surgically implanted mirrored computer-lenses over her eyes and has retractable razor-blade talons beneath her fingernails. Gibson's people often take sophisticated

drugs of that era, tailor-made for specific results, frequently administered by the same transdermal patch used today in the administration of nitroglycerin and clonidine for heart problems. It is fine extrapolation, albeit cynically assuming the drug experience will never be eliminated. In Mona Lisa Overdrive several of the heroes are of a powerful or famous class. Mona herself is an ordinary girl, but her ideal, Angie, is a "stimsim" star. Kumiko is the daughter of a wealthy Japanese. Gibson's cybernetically-run world is all conflict, dirt, broken-down environs, scruffy and dangerous, filthy and deteriorating. The rich and powerful are as greedy as ever and the drug scene is rampant.

Interestingly, many of his concepts are less new than he, a young writer, may suspect. The stimsim, a simulation used in Neuromancer by a computer operator to follow someone else, is by Mona Lisa Overdrive a popular sort of personal television, in which the viewer, wearing "trodes", actually lives that role. On the early 30s, in Wonder Stories, I believe, and later reprinted in Startling Stories in the 40s, Lawrence Manning's "The City of the Living Dead" postulated a world wherein individuals no longer cared to live their own lives, and were content to enter theatres, to be wired there and live the lives of the films they were given. Again, Gibson's characters bear individual SINS, Single Identification Numbers. "The World of Indexed Numbers" is a story I read nearly five decades ago, reprinted at that, in which individuals no longer had names, only numbers; Gibson's have both, but the SIN is far more important than our own Social Security Number. And his cities seem to be dome-covered, which does not keep them cleaner. The domes are as recent as Asimov's latest Foundation novel. They are as old as Arthur Leo Zagat's a930s "The Lanson Screen," written when Bucky Fuller's geodesic domes were still in the future, a story of a city which suffocates beneath such an experimental dome.

Like A. E. Van Vogt's mind-blowers of the age of gold of the 40s, Gibson's pyrotechnics explode so rapidly and with such persuasion that the reader accepts even without understanding. The stories are essentially action yarns of good and bad guys. His first novel, Neuromancer, remarkably finished, is still in the mold of a traditional novel. By Mona Lisa Overdrive Gibson has pared away the language in favor of action. The technological language becomes ever more his working vocabulary. Where will Gibson and the movement go? It is possible the dependence of the story on the computer will result at least in redundancy. In today's music the Minimal movement which grabbed the imaginations of both composers and audiences, including myself, can become a limitation on the writer. Philip Glass, John Adams and Steve Reich have all relaxed the style as

needs arose. Gibson too may leave his near-future for something else. He does not delineate human qualities, merely assumes them. The characters are persuasive but nevertheless cardboard entities. He might have clothed them as fully as Dickens, but he would have sacrificed the dynamism of the book. It is a question of aims and ambitions. Meanwhile, these are remarkable books, innovative science fiction, well worth trying. Read them before, alas, they are as cold as yesterday's French fries. [\*]



CHIPS OF FATE

by Thomas A. Easton

Birch provides the keyboard  
Of my chipped lover,  
Oak the inlay round the screen.  
Both can stand poor weather,  
But when chippy fingers  
Carelessly feed data  
To enslave the moon of liberty  
They chip the cabinetry.  
My lover leaps, and  
Our chipped child  
Soars into orbit,  
And beyond.

BIG NAME FAN

by Fred Robinson

With an apology or two to Lewis Carroll

"You are old, Big Name Fan," said the neo with awe,  
But your hair still has yet to turn gray.

"And you make many comments, most exceedingly raw --  
How come? To that what do you say?"

"In my youth," said the Fan, "I discovered a way  
To obtain Boosterspice by the ton.

"Unfortunately, it works but for a day --  
For a price I just might part with some."

"You are old," said the neo, "Yet every time  
I see you, you're surrounded by girls.

"How do you get them to stand in a line  
Just to run their hands once through your curls?"

"In my room," said the Fan, "I keep in a jar  
An old scent, which, when applied every day,

"Promises ladies a taste of pon-far --  
A little goes quite a long way."

"You are old," said the neo, "and I daresay the con  
Has gone on for well over two days.

"Yet you have attended everything that's put on --  
Don't you sleep? I don't think there's a way!"

"In my car," said the Fan, "is a small time device  
Which I use to go back to last night.

"I think you should see it -- it's really quite nice  
And the paint job is just out of sight."

"Oh, come on," said the neo, "I've heard that before.  
I know that such things don't exist.

"Tell me again, for I'm certain and sure  
That there must have been something you missed."

The Fan, who by now had become rather pissed  
Grabbed the neo and said (between glares),

"The answer to each of your questions is this:  
I'm a SMOF!" and he threw him downstairs.

# How I Came to Be the Unwilling Victim of a Tunisian Vacation Booked by an Englishwoman Through a Sicilian Travel Agency

ILLUSTRATED BY DIANA STEIN

In truth, I really went for friendship's sake. Cathy Paige, an English friend who lives in Sicily, had her heart set on going. All our friends in Sicily (where I used to teach and where she still does) wisely refused to go with her. In a moment of foolish benevolence, feeling secure inside the safety of my home, I wrote to say that sure, Tunisia sounded like fun, I'd be visiting friends in Europe all summer anyhow, why not add one week in North Africa? I still don't know what possessed me.

I've survived shelling in northern Israel, physical assault in Italy, sunburn in the Bahamas, bronchitis in England, theft in Holland, schnapps in Austria, and prices in Switzerland. I could surely survive whatever the Tunisians would do to me, right?

In all fairness to Cathy, I must admit that once I had agreed to go, I dumped all the arrangements in her lap. I was visiting with friends in London, Oxford, Liverpool, Paris, Opponitz, Rome, Amalfi, and Collecervino, moving around so much that I was impossible to contact, and secretly hoping the trip to Tunisia would fall through, since I had a bad feeling about it now that I had sworn to go.

Perhaps if I had taken a more active hand in planning our trip there, perhaps if I had insisted on booking our hotel through an English or American travel agency, perhaps if I heeded the many omens and portents that dogged my footsteps as I made my way south towards Sicily....nah, it probably would have stunk anyway. In any event, the burden of arranging everything fell on Cathy's shoulders.

I arrived in Palermo one Sunday night after a fifteen hour train journey from Rome. (I have ridden many trains in southern Italy, and all I can say about this ride was that it really wasn't the absolute worst.) However, I had my first really serious anxiety attack about my Tunisian vacation within moments of arriving.

Cathy greeted me with an exuberant hug, since we are good friends and hadn't seen each other since I left Sicily at the end of 1987.

Shortly afterward, she asked with deceptive casualness, "Laura, dear, have you got vaccinations for typhoid, cholera, hepatitis, and malaria?"

by LAURA RESNICK

I stopped wolfing down my pasta and stared at her. "No."

"Oh, dear. Have you got life insurance?"

"What kind of place are we going to?" I demanded.

"Now, don't worry, dear. They're not required, merely recommended." She paused. "Strongly recommended."

There were a few other worrisome details. The trip was going to cost twice as much as I had said I was willing to spend since we were booking at the last moment and during the high season.

"Tunisia has a high season?" I asked.

We were leaving first thing in the morning.

"But I've just spent fifteen hours in an Italian train!"

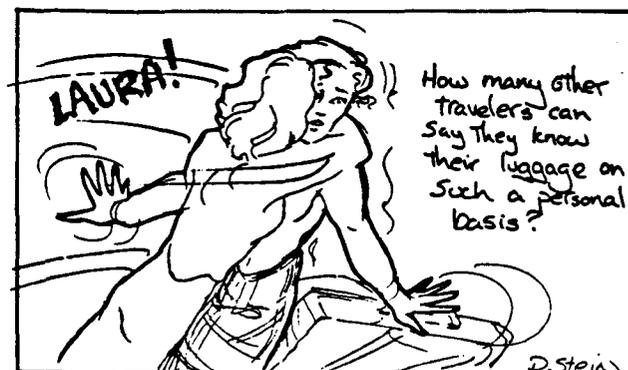
And there were a number of over-the-counter pharmaceutical supplies we should purchase before leaving. Just in case of diarrhea, vomiting, sunburn, and dehydration.

"What kind of place are we going to?" I demanded.

It is important to understand that information is a valuable commodity in Mediterranean society. It gives one prestige, or at least satisfaction to possess it. It takes time, and preternatural cunning, to obtain it.

Therefore, despite having booked and paid for our holiday, we knew very little about where we were going, how we would get there, or what would happen to us. This is often perfectly normal in Sicily, particularly for foreigners, and so I thought nothing of it at the time.

We expected to arrive at our hotel in Tunisia by dinnertime that Monday, since Tunis is closer than Rome to Palermo, and since we had paid extra to go



by hydrofoil--a theoretically fast mode of transport. In reality, our journey took thirteen hours.

We took a cab from Cathy's house to the central station in Palermo. Then we caught a coach going to the western port on Trapani. Halfway through Palermo, the coach broke down, and we had to wait for another one. In Trapani we found the port and were then obliged to wait an hour out in the blazing sun--mad dogs, an Englishwoman, and one bemused American (me).

After an hour, Cathy and I were ordered by the immigration authorities to stand inside their air-conditioned cubicle while about 150 Sicilians and Tunisians waited for another hour in the blazing sun. Since no one needed any special information from us, and since our passports weren't cleared any faster than anyone else's, our only explanation for being singled out was that we were blond women; the men at immigration apparently thought it would be nice to have us standing around with them for the last hour before we finally embarked.

We boarded the hydrofoil, then waited another hour since it, too, was broken. We pushed off from shore at last, and headed across the Mediterranean for the North African coast.

Now I should say right here and now that I have never, within my memory, been motion sick.

Until this trip, I mean.

I started feeling a little queasy during the first hour of the trip. I felt embarrassed about being such a whimp, so I kept it to myself. That was probably a mistake, since Cathy, impossibly slim and elegant looking, also has the appetite of a pregnant elephant. I didn't mind her telling me how hungry she was, but I reached my crisis point when she started reading aloud from the guidebook, describing all the luscious, gooey sweets we could enjoy while in Tunisia.

"Get me a bag!" I gasped.

I spent the rest of the journey with my head in a sick bag and a bath towel wrapped around my shoulders to ward off the chill. I was initially comforted to hear that the sea was unusually rough that day and everyone (except Cathy, who remained hungry) was getting sick. A hydrofoil, however, is a completely enclosed craft that skids across the water on skis. The stench produced by nearly a hundred wretching passengers in close quarters soon became unbearable, so what the bobbing, plunging motion didn't do to me, the odor did.

We arrived at the port of Kelibia a little after nine o'clock that night, and I figured if immigration and our transfers to our hotel went smoothly, I might just be able to get some food for Cathy and some tea for myself before the hotel's restaurant closed down.

Of such stuff are dreams made.

Dozens of Tunisians--men, veiled women, and children--stood outside the wired parameters of the

dock, watching us all as we stood around with our bags. I sensed that nightlife was limited here. There was no line or queue, and I really didn't expect one. Mediterranean people seem to have a unanimous horror of queues, and most of the pushing, shoving, elbowing, and shouting that goes on as everyone tries to get to the head of the pack is actually pretty good-natured.

We waited around for a while before someone--an Italian tourist, not a Tunisian official--explained to us that we all had to drop our passports into big piles on the porch of the ramshackle immigration building. I fussed about parting with my American passport, but it was pretty clear that we'd never get through immigration if we didn't do as we were told.

After another long wait, a soldier wandered by, picked up the pile of passports, and sauntered inside the building. After another long wait, two soldiers strolled out and started reading names off the passports, indicating who could come forward from the seething mass and enter the building.

This isn't as simple as it sounds.

For one thing, the Tunisian soldiers couldn't read European names very well, and the pronunciation was unrecognizable in most cases. Secondly, they would only read the Christian names. Do you have any idea how many Italian names are Maria, Giuseppe, or Massimo? I sat on my duffle bag to outwait the confusion.

I guess it was at about this time that I had my second anxiety attack. I had been reading all week in the international newspapers that the Tunisians, along with the rest of the Arab world, were starting to get pretty fed up again with Israelis, Americans, and Jews. Two of our British guidebooks printed ambiguous warnings about Tunisian dislike of Americans. So I started getting more and more nervous as I stood around a dark Tunisian dock waiting for them to finish examining my American passport bearing a Jewish surname. For the first time ever I was actually glad my old passport with Israeli stamps in it had been stolen in Amsterdam.

My nerves nearly snapped ten minutes later. They called Cathy, with her good old British passport and her handy Anglo-Saxon name. But although my passport had been right on top of hers in the pile, it was another ten minutes before they finally called me. The ironic thing was that nobody seemed to have even opened it. I still had to present it for examination and stamping, submit to questions, and then submit to customs. Finally, I was allowed to leave immigration and enter Tunisia.

Total chaos reigned outside the immigration building. Finally, amidst the swarming bodies and shouts of in the dark, I remembered the name of the travel company's representative and started shouting "Moustafa" at the top of my lungs. A small boy led us over to a dilapidated booth where a white-

haired man--Moustafa--was handling currency from several countries, scribbling on slips of paper, and shouting in four different languages. Moustafa in turn presented me to the driver of the coach that would take us to our hotel.

French is the second language of most Tunisians, who are amazing linguists, by the way. Cathy speaks Italian, as do I, but since she speaks no French, I was usually the one who engaged in transactions and discussions with the locals anytime we needed information. Which is probably why I hated Tunisia more than she did.

At Cathy's request I asked how long the journey to our hotel would be. Twenty minutes or so?

The driver nodded sagely and then murmured, "At least two and a half hours, mademoiselle. Maybe more."

I don't remember much about the trip, except that it was hot and humid, the bus was filthy, Cathy was hungry, and the Italians rose to the occasion by singing most of the way. We finally arrived at our hotel at the edge of Sidi Bou Said around two o'clock in the morning.

Although Tunisia is an inexpensive country, Cathy and I had paid European prices for this particular hotel. I therefore expected European facilities. It is only in retrospect that I realize how naive I was when I first arrived in Tunisia.

The very first thing I noticed about our hotel was the sordid shabbiness that prevailed everywhere I looked. The lobby, though large, was old, dirty, badly decorated, and dreary. Everyone who worked there looked like a character actor from an old Warner Brothers' movie. The night clerk bore an uncanny resemblance to Zachary Scott in The Mask of Demetrios, and if you've seen that film you'll know why I was afraid of him.

We checked in. What else could we do? Cathy was still hungry, so I pleaded and cajoled and won a promise of food from Zachary Scott, who looked like he would gladly poison it. A bellboy showed us up to our room on the sixth floor. After that first trip up I was reluctant to use the rickety elevators again. Sometimes I was spared the decision since they broke down several times during our stay.

The room was as shabby and dreary as the lobby, and describing it in more detail would only depress me. A bellboy brought Cathy's meal, a suspicious concoction of tuna, red peppers, and oil which the flies loved but which Cathy wisely decided not to eat. She went back down stairs and actually convinced Zachary Scott to give her a pot of tea--which goes to show what being blond and charming is worth in some places.

Demoralized, dispirited, exhausted, and battling mosquitoes, we finally hit the sack and had a restless night. The next morning we decided to be as positive as possible and explore the hotel.

I guess I was predisposed to be critical, since I kept thinking of all the places I know and love in Italy and could have stayed in for the same price. However, even Cathy, who is fair and optimistic above all else, was pretty depressed by the hotel.

Where shall I begin? Well, for starters, we discovered that the hotel's private pool--proudly advertized in their brochure and for which we had no doubt paid extra in our package--was also the municipal swimming pool for the local village of Sidi Bou Said. (This is one of those bits of information that's valuable and difficult to obtain.) Therefore, every inch of the pool was filled with local children learning to swim, and every chair and patch of grass was occupied by local families. Unless, of course, they were occupied by local gigolos who thought shouting, "Hello! Hello! Ciao! Bonjour! Guten Tag! Hello!" was a subtle approach.

The private beach was equally crowded. It was also the filthiest beach I've ever seen. The water, too, was polluted, owing to its unpublicized proximity to an industrial port.

There was a poolside barbeque. Since Cathy required frequent feeding (how is it possible that she always looks good in a bikini, I ask myself?) I became accustomed to dealing with the barbeque staff.

"Is there only tuna again today?" I would ask.

The cashier would smile fatuously and insist I be brought a menu.

"Just tell me if there's only tuna. Really, it's all right. I just want to know," I would say.

"No, no, the menu! The menu!"

Cathy and I would study the menu, I would define anything she didn't understand. She would select an item.

"No, mademoiselle, we do not have that today."

"Why not?" I would ask stonily.

A shrug.

Cathy would proceed down the menu, until she had run through all the possibilities. They wouldn't have any of it.

"What do you have today?" I would say in exasperation.

"Tuna."



"If you only have tuna, why didn't you tell me that when I asked if you only had tuna?"

A beatific smile and another shrug.

There were very few Italians at this hotel, since most Italians would know better. There were some French. There were a whole lot of Germans. This is usually a bad sign, since it has been my experience that most nationalities in Europe and the Mediterranean dislike Germans and usually offer them the worst food, the grubbiest facilities, and the most insolent service. This hotel certainly fit the stereotype.

As is typical of many European beach holidays, the price of our hotel room included breakfast and dinner every day. Since every one of our four guidebooks said that Tunisia is not a gastronomic paradise (to put it politely), I didn't mind the lack of choice. Not in principle, that is.

The dining room itself was a glass-enclosed structure with views of the municipal swimming pool. It was the hottest room I've ever been in, except possibly for our hotel room. The food was neither Tunisian nor European, but somehow seemed to be a Tunisian chef's idea of what he had heard a German meal was like. Meals were generally some kind of unidentifiable meat (lamb, I think) and overcooked potatoes. The bread was tasteless industrial white stuff whose texture led me to believe it had been imported from Poland and held up at customs. The white wine was orange and the red wine was pink.

I hated the food most, but Cathy hated the animals most. A dozen or so stray cats (and I saw a dog once) ran around the dining room begging at tables, stealing scraps, and snarling when they felt ignored. Even the Rough Guide had warned not to touch any of them, since they probably carried all sorts of communicable diseases.

I heard a good story from an Italian. He was eating fish in the dining room and found sand in it. He complained to the headwaiter.

"Can you explain why there is sand in my dinner?" he asked.

"Yes, signore. It is because the fish is fresh!"

Since the hotel was a total and complete bust, we decided to take lots of excursions in fascinating Tunisia. According to our guidebooks, Tunisia was a land rich in cultural and artistic heritage: seat of the great, ancient Punic trading empire; home of Islamic art; a prime example of an ex-colonial possession in the era of independence.

Many excursions were advertised on a bulletin board covering one long wall of the lobby. Each advertisement concluded with the suggestion--in German, Italian, or French--that interested parties book the tour at reception.

There were four men working at the reception desk at any given time. There were also usually

twenty Germans and a half dozen French gathered at reception trying to get the receptionists' attention. The receptionists would ignore them as long as physically possible, smoking, chatting, snacking, and pacing in and out of the telephone operator's room. Usually, once you got the attention of a desk clerk, you could count on keeping it for a full twenty seconds before he got bored with you and abruptly walked away while you were in the middle of a sentence.

I had overcome this problem by shamelessly flirting with the youngest, most naive of the clerks, a boy named Sofian. I told Sofian I wanted to book two tickets to Kairouan the following day. It was supposed to be a fabulous city at the edge of the Sahara Desert, containing mosques, souks, and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Not bad for a day trip, eh?

"There are no tours to Kairouan," Sofian told me.

"But many tours are advertised all over that wall," I said.

"Those are from last year."

"Where's this year's schedule?" I asked.

"Not here yet."

"How can it not be here yet? This is August."

He shruffed. "These things take time."

After considerable nagging and insipid smiling, I got him to admit that there was a man who could book a tour for me. "What's his name?" I asked.

"Fahti."

"Where is Mr. Fahti?"

A shrug.

"Will he be here later?"

"I think so."

"How much later?"

A shrug.

"Seven o'clock tonight?"

"Maybe."

"Midnight?" I asked in growing exasperation.

"Maybe."

"Does he exist?"

"Oh, yes. It is certain that he exists."

"How comforting."

Cathy and I found Mr. Fahti that night. If he liked her any better than he liked me, I'm convinced it was only because he thought she looked more gullible. He was the type of man with slicked-back hair who wore sunglasses even at night. Mr. Fahti said he could not possibly book us on a tour to Kairouan.

"You should have booked yesterday. All tours to Kairouan left this morning," he said smugly.

"But there are tours for Kairouan offered each day," I protested.

Mr. Fahti sneered at me. He explained that while he couldn't offer me a reasonably-priced coach tour to Kairouan, he could offer me a private guide and

private car to Kairouan at merely five times the price of the listed tours.

I suggested Mr. Fahti do something that is anatomically impossible.

At about this time I got the name of another tour operator in our hotel who also might be able to help me. I don't know why no one had told me before, and I quickly learned better than to expect a coherent explanation. The very next morning after dismissing Fahti, I pulled the new guy out of the bar and asked him to book me two tickets to Kairouan.

"You should have booked yesterday. All tours to Kairouan left this morning," he said.

I won't bother to repeat the arguments and recriminations that followed this statement. You can probably imagine it all. We spent the rest of the morning trying to book a tour to Kairouan. Impossible.

Since we weren't going to get far that day, we decided to visit the ruins of Carthage instead. Carthage was nearby, and a local tour company offered a minibus with an archaeologist guide who would take us to eight of the sites and explain what we were looking at. Sofian was even able to book the tour for me.

We went out into the roasting afternoon sun and waited for the bus to collect us.

After an hour I double-checked all my information to make sure we were in the right place at the right time. We were.

After another half-hour, we decided it wasn't coming. Cathy, who saw her dreamed-of Tunisian holiday crumbling around her ears, decided we would visit Carthage by ourselves.

"Are you crazy?" I snarled, slightly dazed with sunstroke.

Protesting, I must admit, in a childish and uncomradely way, I got on the public trains and rode four stops with her to where our guidebook said the ruins began. Since the ruins of Carthage are scattered amidst the suburbs of Tunis--and unmarked--we were hopelessly lost within twenty minutes, with little hope of finding the train station again, let alone the ruins of ancient Carthage.

Just as I was feeling faint and disoriented from the sun (for I had been so preoccupied since arriving that I had forgotten to buy a hat), a minibus full of French children came pattering along. Cathy threw herself in front of it and ordered me to block its progress with my body while she begged the driver for help. Since the Tunisian guides were no doubt stunned by our sudden appearance and wild pleas, they invited us on board for their tour of Carthage.

The tour lasted about ten minutes. We drove by the sites at breakneck speed while the guide said, "That's a Roman theatre. That was the odeon. That's

a pillar. The port's over there, but you can't see it from here." I translated from the French for Cathy, who got depressed again.

The tour ended in Sidi Bou Said, the same town we had spent two days trying to get out of. About seven o'clock that night we noticed the minibus we had paid for giving joy rides to local villagers. It took me until the next morning to get my refund.

The next day I bumped into a German tour operator. Whatever one thinks of their cuisine, one can't deny German efficiency. If anyone could help me, she could. Although I was sick of the quest, Kairouan had become an obsession with Cathy, outranking even the importance of finding something to eat besides tuna. I asked the German woman if she could book me on a tour to Kairouan.

"You should have booked yesterday. All tours to Kairouan left this morning."

Why was I even surprised? Did she have any other suggestions? My friend would slit her wrists if she couldn't see Kairouan.

She told me that there was a tour operator in a hotel about 12 kilometers up the coast who would take a group to Kairouan the following morning. "Go there and buy two tickets. Don't telephone," she added emphatically. "Go in person."

We walked up to the main road, since experience proved that it was quicker to go in search of a taxi than to ask reception to call for one. It took fifteen minutes to find one. We bargained him down to one and a half dinars, then later learned he had only agreed to the price because he didn't know where the hotel was.

When we arrived at the hotel at long last, the receptionist explained that the tour operator wasn't there. Maybe he would be there later, maybe he wouldn't. We shouldn't stick around because he didn't want to be responsible for us in case the tour operator didn't show up that night.

Cathy evinced enough enough distress that the receptionist finally took pity on us. He would reserve two places for us on the tour, but we must telephone that night to confirm our places so the coach would be sure to collect us. We agreed. Cathy was pleased and I was relieved to have finally organized our trip to Kairouan.

Back at our own hotel that night we asked Zachary Scott where we could find the nearest pay phone.





"Seven kilometers south of here."

After a lot of confusion, Zach made it clear that the only way I could place my call was through him. I gave the number to him, he would give the number to the switchboard operator, she would dial the number, and then I would be sent to a telephone box on the far side of the lobby to speak to my party.

This isn't as simple as it sounds.

For one thing, Zach kept insisting that the other hotel's phone was broken because the line was busy, and it took tears and pleading to make him order the switchboard operator to try again. Zach also felt he should know the purpose and nature of my call before helping me. Finally, when he decided my demands were too unreasonable, he ordered me to go deal with the switchboard operator myself.

Unfortunately, she didn't speak any European language, and "couscous" is the only Arabic word I know. She had a half dozen telephones in front of here. She kept dialing numbers and randomly handing me the receivers. I kept getting connected to obviously private telephones rather than the hotel I was trying to reach. She finally got my party once; then she yanked something out of the switchboard and disconnected us. When I objected, Zach stormed in and explained that the other hotel's phone was broken. Why couldn't I accept the obvious?

We finally got through. The connection was lousy. I had to shout at the top of my lungs. I had the tour operator on the line. Yes, he knew who I was. Yes, he knew I had booked two places on the tour to Kairouan. Yes, there was a tour to Kairouan scheduled the following morning. It looked very good, I thought.

"The only problem is that the tour tomorrow has been cancelled, mademoiselle."

Our final attempt to visit Kairouan--which I had lost all interest in seeing, but which will probably haunt Cathy into the next life--was to look through a brochure for independent car hire. At first glance, the rates seemed a little high, but within our price range. Then I read the back of the pamphlet.

The car was covered against vehicle malfunction and acts of Allah, but if you wanted insurance for

collision, that was extra. If you wanted to be covered for hospitalization after your collision, that was also extra. There was a certain fee to be paid for each kilometer you drove the car--and Kairouan is far, far away from Sidi Bou Said. Then there was an additional fee for one-day-only car rental. Then there was a special fee to cover the paperwork of renting the car. And an additional fee for the agent who rented it to you. Et cetera, ad nauseum.

Finally accepting that we wouldn't see Kairouan and its ancient wonders, we bought two tickets on a minibus to get to the camel market at Naboul. I guess this was really the trip that made me decide not to leave the hotel again.

Naboul has long since ceased to be a camel market. Now it's just a big arena in a market downtown where local men try to convince several thousand tourists to pay for a brief ride on one of the fifty or sixty camels sitting around. I really didn't want to be led around on a camel by its smirking owner in a crowded dustbowl, so I suggested we just take a few photos of the camels and then go find some shade.

You can photograph the camels for free, but local children often sneak into your shots, no matter how clearly you tell them, "Go away, I don't want your picture and I won't pay for it."

One such child followed me around the arena demanding money until I finally turned on him and explained furiously that if he was dumb enough to force his way into my shot after I told him I wouldn't pay him, it was his own damn fault. Then I noticed a number of large men--probably his relatives--watching us with narrowed eyes, and I suggested to Cathy we go explore elsewhere. Actually, I felt sorry for the kid a little while later, because he's probably expected to bring in a certain amount of cash everyday from posing for tourists; but I was feeling very raw and short-tempered by the time I got to Naboul.

Naboul itself was a shopper's nightmare, stall after stall of shoddy, mass-produced, overpriced merchandise with the most aggressive hawkers I've ever seen. Merchants physically restrained tourists and forcibly dragged them into their booths to look

over the merchandise. I kept snarling, "Don't touch me," in a variety of languages, but it had no effect.

I was standing in the shade, sadly gazing off into space when a merchant said, "You like? How much you give me?"

I belatedly realized that "space" was actually a row of ordinary camel-hide wallets. I don't know what possessed me to ask the next fatal question. Perhaps it was the heat. "How much?"

"Thirty-five dinars."

Since that is the price of a hotel room with meals, I laughed in his face and walked away. Accustomed to bargaining in Italy, I didn't realize at the time that this is a classic opening gambit for bargaining in North Africa.

Fifty yards later, the merchant and his wallet entirely forgotten, I felt a rough hand clasp my shoulder. I saw the wallet waved under my nose.

"How much you give me?"

"Go away," I said, annoyed.

"How Much?"

"Buzz off. You must think I'm very foolish, to ask me for thirty-five dinars for that." Second classic move, had I but known it.

"How much you give me then?"

"Leave me alone. I don't like it, I don't want it, I don't need it, and I'm not going to buy it. Get lost!"

In the end, I bought the wallet for five dinars, just to get rid of him. I realized that evening that I had paid at least five times what it was worth.

After Naboul I was determined not to leave the safety of our shabby, shoddy, gigolo-infested hotel. It was about this time we met the lads, as I referred to them.

We began by befriending a young Tunisian, half-Italian boy (he said he was twenty-one, I'd say he was eighteen) who lived locally and hung around the hotel because there was evidently nothing else to do in Sidi Bou Said during the summer. He was very sweet and respectful and idealistic. He was responsible for our few enjoyable outings, including our trip to the arpetmaker's in the souks of Tunis, our evening trying out the teas houses in Sidi Bou Said, and our dinner at a wonderful Tunisian restaurant just up the coast from our hotel. His Italian name was Massimo.

Since Massimo was overtly heterosexual, I was surprised to find him hanging out habitually with a group of middle-aged Sicilian homosexuals at our hotel. In fact, I began to be surprised to notice so many middle-aged Sicilian homosexuals at our hotel. Particularly since there are relatively few Sicilian gays. Sicilians, though generous and loving people, are generally intolerant of homosexuality. A Sicilian gay either leaves Sicily or lives quietly.

What amazed me most about the lads was that they were evocative of all the very worst, most worn-out stereotypes of gay men. Amidst several gay friends in London and New York, I had never met anyone remotely like the lads. To say they were flaming queens, absurdly camp, and obsessively vain would be a laughable understatement. They all drank excessively. They all smoked heavily. They all minced and squealed and made fluttery gestures with their hands while they spoke. They all dyed their hair, and one even dyed his body hair.

The lads coveted Massimo's body. He told them clearly that he wasn't interested, but he continued to naively torture them by hangin' around, simply because, uncomfortable with the Tunisian half of his heritage, he wanted to be with Italians. I quickly worked out that, except for two of Massimo's distant cousins from Lazio, all the Italian guests (as I said, there were relatively few of them) were gay men. Cathy and I had checked into the one hotel in northern Tunisia with the most sordid, well-known reputation as a place for European gays to pick up Tunisian men for casual sex. It made for difficult poolside conversation.

One of the lads was a hairdresser who kept eying my sun-bleached, over-long, summer's-end mop with bleak eyes. Another of the lads, Pino, designed wedding gowns back in Palermo. Our hotel also hosted full-scale (and loud) Tunisian weddings every night (right beneath my bedroom window, I might add). Pino would mince in to watch the weddings every night, then march out to disgustedly explain to me at poolside how vulgar the outfits were and where the designer had gone wrong. Actually, Pino was a nice guy when he could get his mind off of adolescent Tunisians.

The rest of the lads hated Cathy and me because young Massimo had abandoned them for us. Not only were we more polite to him, but we were female and he had been honest about being straight. But that couldn't stem the flow of venom.

I may have gained Massimo's friendship, but I also lost Sofian's adoration at the same time. It was due to the cockroach incident.

We could never get towels. It was becoming an obsession with me. The maid had taken one towel per day out of our bathroom without replacing it. Finally, one day there were no more towels. I requested towels three times. None arrived. I stalked into the bathroom and found an enormous cockroach lying belly up on the floor, its legs moving feebly in its death throes. I wrapped it up in tissue paper and took it downstairs.

Cathy disapproved of my plan but, like a trooper, came with me to offer moral support. I pushed my way through the usual throng of French and Germans at reception, pulled down my neckline, and smiled warmly at Sofian.

"Sofian, I have no towels. I have requested tow-

els repeatedly. I just went into the bathroom. Instead of towels, the maid left me this." I opened the tissue and the cockroach obligingly waggled its legs. All the receptionists, including Sofian, started snarling at me in Arabic. All the French and Germans crowded forward and watched in fascinated horror.

"Now, I need towels, I do not need this," I said above the uproar. "I have a use for towels, I have no use for this. I have requested towels, I have never requested this." French and German husbands started dispatching their wives to go search their rooms for towels and cockroaches.

The whole situation was complicated by my imperfect command of French. I kept referring to the cockroach as a butterfly, for one thing. What's more, unless you're specific, the French word for towel also means napkin.

After much confusion, arm-waving and cursing, a staff member took me to a secret room at the back of the hotel where they kept all the towels. He bargained for towels and finally told me I could have some if I would wait twenty minutes. He then tried to placate me, but my face must have looked as implacable as I felt, because he gave up and

turned to Cathy. He began making earnest excuses to her. She looked sympathetic but kept trying to interrupt long enough to tell him she didn't understand a word of French.

Leaving Tunisia was as much an endurance test as getting there. We rose at 5:30 AM to catch our transfer back to the port of Kelibia. I didn't care what happened, who I had to pay, or what I had to leave behind, I was getting out of Tunisia that day and **NOTHING** was going to stop me. When we got on the hydrofoil, I was prepared to swim across the Mediterranean if it malfunctioned.

When we arrived in Sicily, I kissed the ground, and didn't even mind the usual hassles of haggling for cab fare or being overcharged at the regional coach station because we were foreigners.

As an addendum to our trip, I read a week later in the International Herald Tribune that the same day I was prowling around the souks of Tunis with my passport dangling in a pouch around my neck, 1,200 members of the Palestinian Liberation Organization met there to discuss getting tougher with Jews and Americans.

The tourist industry was obviously their first line of offense. [\*]



# Data Base of Odds and Ends

by Alan David Laska

This column is for the readers of Lan's Lantern who have probing questions which have been puzzling them since the creation of Fandom. If you have a question of science fiction, fantasy, science, or in the area of fandom, or would like to know how they did that scene in your favorite science fiction or fantasy movie or TV show, simply write to: DATA-BASE OF ODDS & ENDS, PO Box 832113, Richardson, TX 75083 USA.

\* \* \* \* \*

I saw the film Innerspace on cable the other day and I was told that shrinking a person is not possible. Somebody else said the physics won't happen exactly that way. What's the story?

The movie Innerspace, as well as the hit film Honey, I Shrunk the Kids, is about scientists and inventors coming up with a way to shrink something to the size of a pinhead or smaller. The theory is that atoms in matter are spaces at a distance from each other, and if one could bring the atoms closer to each other, one can shrink an object. It sounds plausible, but the movie makers of both films left out one thing that can't be changed: when you shrink matter, its mass or weight won't change. In that scene in Innerspace where the lab scientist grabs the hypo needle from the table to inject it into Martin Short at the shopping mall, because of the miniature submarine with the test pilot in it, the scientist should not have been able to lift the needle or move it. The shrunken sub still weighed several tons, and in fact the desk should have collapsed under such weight.

Also, in Honey, I Shrunk the Kids, in the scene where physicist Wayne Szalinski (played by Rick Moranis) sweeps up parts of his shrinking machine along with his and the neighbor's kids and dumps them in the trash can, he should not have been able to lift the dustpan. Given that each of the kids weighs at least 80 pounds, he would have been picking up more than 320 pounds (and would probably have gotten a hernia in the attempt).

In both these films the writers and producers overlooked one thing in physics, that weight cannot be destroyed or reduced. The people and things would still weigh the same no matter how small you made them. Still, the film was fun to watch.

Strongheart, the silent film era's dog superstar do any of his films survive? Are they available to rent, and/or on video? How did Strongheart die? Wasn't Lassie retarded by comparison?

Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
Seattle, Washington

Strongheart, the animal star from the 1920's film era, made six films in the "silent era" of Hollywood. The films that this dog star made were: The Silent Call (1912), Brawn of the North (1922), The Love Master (1924), White Fang (1925), and The Return of Boston Blackie (1927). According to sources I have contacted, all his films did survive. Unfortunately, none are available on videotape. I tried to locate companies that were listed as having one or two of the Strongheart films available for rent on 35mm and 16mm film. The answers I got were along the lines: "We used to have that one or two years ago, but we no longer have the rights to distribute it." Or "We don't carry this one any more. Why don't you try such and such at..." So the Strongheart films exist, but locating them is a problem.

How did Strongheart die? While acting in a film scene he fell against a hot lamp and was injured. The large blister that formed was treated and seemed harmless, but some weeks later a tumor grew and caused the death of the famous dog star on June 24, 1929, in Los Angeles at the age of 13 (about 45 people years).

I cannot say how he compared to Lassie since I have not seen any Strongheart films. Also, since the 1940s there have been more than four collies who have been used as Lassie, but only one Strongheart. Another fact about Strongheart is that he was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1916. He mated with another dog star named Lady Jule, so there may be descendants of Strongheart in the California area.

\* \* \* \* \*

What's the difference between the terms "flying saucer" and "UFO"?

The term "UFO" is a military term meaning "un-identified flying object," or something that is flying in the air that cannot be identified. This dates from WorldWar II and doesn't mean spacecraft from other worlds. It can be a type of unknown airplane that cannot be identified.

The term "flying saucer" means a type of space-ship that is saucer shaped and from somewhere in the unknown.

The term "flying saucer" was created sometime after June 24, 1947. Near Mount Rainer in the state of Washington a private pilot named Kenneth Arnold took some time from a flight he was on looking for a downed military transport that had crashed in the area. He saw nine silver objects flying which he clocked traveling over 1000 mph. He reported his sighting to authorities at a local airfield. The press at the time got wind of the "strange report" by Kenneth Arnold.

When newsmen asked, "How did the objects fly?" Arnold replied, "They flew like a saucer" (referring to a saucer that a coffee cup sits on).

A few days later some reporter at a newspaper used the wording of "flying saucer" in his news story and from there the term caught on.

Until his death in 1983, Kenneth Arnold would say that what he saw on that day, June 24, 1947, was the "strangest aircraft" he had ever seen.

\* \* \* \* \*

What was that funny looking airplane with the two tails that was used by the Gyro Pilot in the film Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, aka Mad Max 3?

That "funny looking airplane" seen in Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome is made by Transvia, Inc. of Australia. By checking in Jane's Aircraft Catalog, I found that there are two types of aircraft with that "strange design." One is a T-300 Skyfarmer, designed as a cropduster; the other is a PL-12-U Airtruck, designed as a small transport.

The one seen in the film was probably the PL-12-U Airtruck, which has a version that can carry 4 passengers, since in the film a lot of people piled into the plane to try to escape from the people of Barter Town. The aircraft has a cruising speed of 117 mph, can fly to an altitude of 12,500 feet, and has a range of about 330 miles. This airplane is somewhat common in certain areas in the back regions of Australia. These twin-tail, single-engine aircraft, described as "strange" and "funny-looking," have been manufactured since the early 1970s.

\* \* \* \* \*

What was the largest attendance of fans at a science fiction convention?

It depends on what kind of science fiction convention you are referring to. At the 1984 World Science Fiction Convention in Anaheim, California--known as LA Con II--a total attendance of 8365 from all over the world showed up, mostly from California. However, at a Star Trek Convention in New York City around 1973 or 1974, about 15,000 people showed up. The convention had oversold the memberships at a hotel designed to hold only about 5,000 people. I am informed that it was really jammed packed with Star Trek fans and "Trekkies." I wonder if they showed the Star Trek episode, "The Mark of Gideon" at that one....

\* \* \* \* \*

What is that style or type of lettering that is seen on the walls and entries to rooms in the television series Battlestar:Galactica? I've seen this type of lettering on advertisements and it appeared on the opening title of the PBS television series Spaceflight. The "A" looks like a triangle, the "P" looks like a question mark, the "B" looks like a number three, etc.

This lettering goes by two different names, from two different companies that make rub-on letters and symbols for form, artwork, etc. By the FORMATT Company it is known as "Counterpoint," which is a clear, plastic, peel-and-stick form of lettering. The other company, called LetraSet, called it "Stop Style," which uses a high-quality, rub-on lettering format. Unfortunately, the LetraSet Company discontinued their "Stop Style" lettering about three years ago. You can buy the FORMATT style at any art or drafting supply store. I have enclosed a copy of the FORMATT lettering for everyone to see what A to Z and the numbers are like.

COUNTERPOINT STYLE #5628

Copyright by FORMATT, Inc.  
Graphics Products Corp.

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P  
Q R S T U V W X Y Z & \$ %  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 . , ; : - ! ? ' " ( ) %**

\* \* \* \* \*

Years ago, I saw an episode of a TV show about an invisible baby. What was it? Did it actually have a full run?

Jeanne M. Mealy  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

I checked a few sources about this and unfortunately nobody seems to recall a TV show with an invisible baby, or even know anything about one. Since I don't have the name of the television show, and no one remembers any such series, this was very hard to research and answer.

However, I do recall a skit on the variety/comedy series, The Carol Burnett Show around 1967, in which Carol played the wife married to the "Invisible Man." They had a baby boy which unfortunately looked like his father, and Carol had a lot of trouble giving the baby his bottle, which caused a lot of laughter in the skit. Well, a package arrived from the pharmacy with a formula which could make the baby visible. The father wanted to take it first to see if it would work. The bottle of medicine floated into the bedroom and a few seconds later the father says, "Hey, it works. Let's give some to the baby."

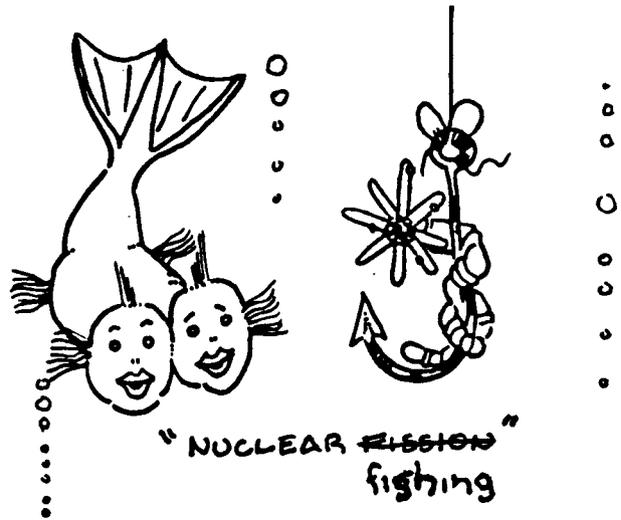
The father walks out of the bedroom carrying the bottle of medicine in his hand. He is now visible and the "Invisible Man" is the one and only Mr. Spock of Star Trek. His voice throughout the skit was done off-stage by probably Harvy Corman, so people in the audience would not know who the "Invisible Man" would be. My sister Celia was watching with me and the rest of the family, and remarked at the time, "Now we know what the baby looks like!"

\* \* \* \* \*

In the film Back to the Future, I understand that there was a big goof or technical error that the producers, writers, and director overlooked. What was it exactly?

Todd Berkley  
Evanston, Illinois

In the scene where Marty McFly ends up in 1955 at the home of his mother (or mother yet to be), the family is watching a television set which is tuned to the famous CBS-TV show The Honeymooners. The title of the episode was "The Man from Outer Space," which first aired in 1955, but on December 31, New Years Eve, the last day of 1955. In other words, the 1955 TV set was picking up a program about 3 months into the future. I sure wish I had a television set that could do that, so I could see the stock market and sports reports....



\* \* \* \* \*

I was told that Peter Davison, who played the 5th Doctor in Dr. Who, was in the BBC program Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy, but I don't recall seeing him. What was the character he played?

He was in the scene in The Restaurant at the End of the Universe in which he played "The Dish of the Day." By the way, David Prowse, who played the evil Darth Vader in the Star Wars movies, was in the same scene. He was the bodyguard in the pin-striped suit that told Ford Prefect not to bother the body he was guarding.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was told that there was a city in Texas that has a statue of Popeye the Sailor in the town square. Is this true?

William Brown  
Madison Hts., Michigan

Yes, it is located in Crystal City, Texas, which has a population of about 8,300. It is known as the "Spinach Capital of the World."

\* \* NEWS \* FLASH \* \*

In the last column of "Data-Base of Odds & Ends, in LL #30, I answered a questions in which I referred to the World War II aircraft of the "Confederate Air Force Flying Museum" of Harlinger, Texas. The CAF will be moving its headquarters and museum to Midland, Texas. The plan for relocation has been in progress for some time because of lack of room at Rebel Field in Harlinger. Several US cities made proposals for the CAF to relocate to their areas, but the Confederate Air Force have chosen Midland, Texas, because of location and three times more space than at Rebel Field. More details later. |\*|

# What I Teach

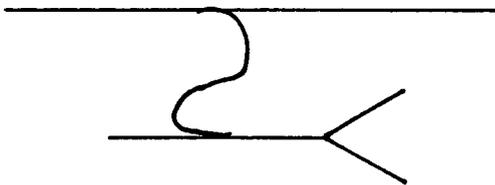
## When I Teach SF

by Joe Patrouch  
(aka Dr. Joseph F. Patrouch)

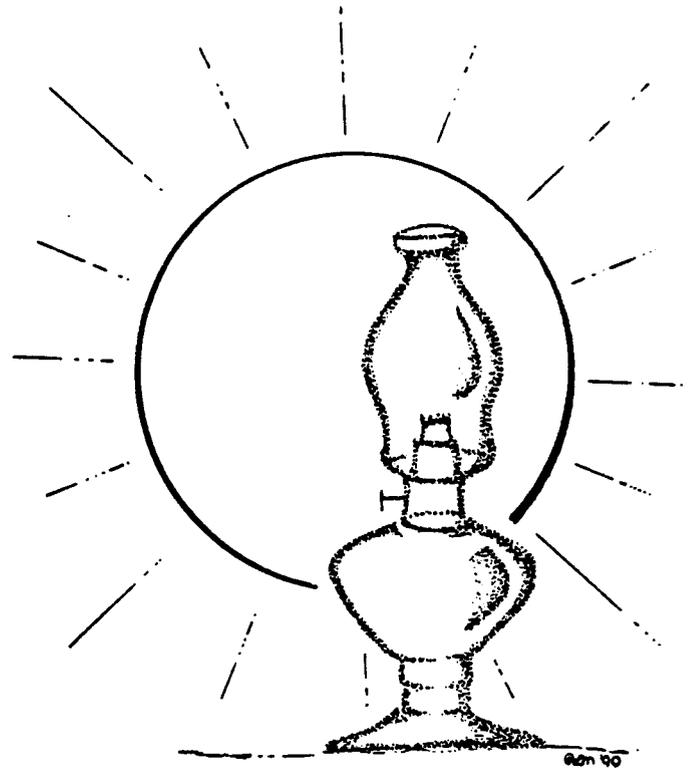
The teaching of SF has been controversial ever since it began some 25 years ago, controversial both inside and outside the SF subculture itself. In the outside world, scholars of Asimov and Heinlein are perceived as not even playing the same game as scholars of Milton and Melville. Inside SF the attitude most often expressed is, "Let's get SF out of the classroom and back into the gutter where it belongs." (I assume those expressing this attitude prefer classes in which they read Silas Marner to classes in which they read Starship Troopers. How odd.) I wonder how many people who protest the academic intrusion into SF have had any real experience with SF in the classroom.

For the past twenty years I have been teaching SF courses in the Department of English at the University of Dayton in Ohio. I have published a book on Asimov and articles on Heinlein and Ellison, I have read papers at various and sundry academic conferences, and I have published enough original SF to become a member of SFWA. (And yes, I have my Ph.D.--Wisconsin, 1965.) With the aim of adding some data to the discussion, I thought I'd share with you "What I Teach When I Teach SF."

When I first started teaching SF, I used mostly the Historical Survey approach, and I developed the following little diagram as a memory device:



The flat top line is Mainstream SF--Gilgamesh, Ezekial, Plato, Utopia, Frankenstein, Vern, Wells, Orwell, that whole crowd--while the bottom split line is American magazine SF, from the invention of pulp paper to the present. The wiggly line in the middle is Hugo Gernsback in 1926 going back to Mainstream SF for his Verne and Poe and Wells, so it represents the connection between Mainstream SF and American pulp SF. The blunderbus effect in the lower right represents the way SF has opened up since



1950: new markets, divergent interests and attitudes, New Wave, cyberpunk, etc. One can spend as much class time as one wants illustrating various parts of the diagram via specific texts and writers.

Early in each course I like to include a block of material on what I call "the SF imagination." While the students are buying their textbooks, locating the best places to get their six-packs, and tying their shoes together and throwing them over telephone and power lines, I take as much time as I need to tell them about Bob Shaw's slow glass, Sheffield's and Clarke's space elevators, Niven's Dyson spheres and ringworlds, and Budrys' (and my) matter transmitters. This material forms a kind of litmus paper test for how much a given student is likely to enjoy the course. If his face turns red with excitement and his eyes sparkle and he begins to grin uncontrollably, he'll probably be okay. But if he can't swallow a Dyson Sphere--and in fact turns blue with choking on it--then a quick Heimlich maneuver will produce a Drop-Add form that should help him. SF is a literature of ideas (though not of all ideas indiscriminately), and some students are far too set in their thinking to be idea-oriented.

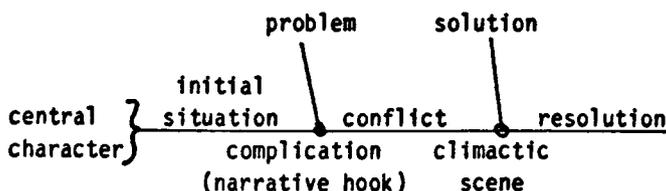
Also early in each course I feel a responsibility to define my terms, and I urge the students to check my general definitions against the specific examples as the semester goes along. As you become more experienced in reading SF, do my suggested definitions continue to make sense to you? The key definitions are:

- 1) fiction: organized vicarious human experience (with emphasis on "organized"),
- 2) science fiction (SF): scientifically plausible alternate settings (with emphasis on "settings"), and
- 3) fantasy: scientifically implausible alternate settings.

(This is not the place to develop or defend these definitions. After years of use, their validity seems obvious to me. Perhaps we can discuss them another time.)

For a few years in the early 70s I wrote around to publishers of college textbooks trying to convince them to take on a text with the self-explanatory title of Fiction through Science Fiction. You see, the American education system likes to teach fiction by giving students a variety of tools--called Elements of Fiction: Plot, Character, Narrative Point of View, Theme, those kinds of things--and having those students tinker with the stories using those tools. It's an intrusion of science and technology into literature, a sort of story-as-an-internal-combustion-engine approach. First you explain carburetor-in-theory; then you ask, Who can tell me where the carburetor is in today's story? My radical notion was to put together a text in which students would do exactly such things, only to SF stories instead of mainstream literary stories. What is the carburetor/theme, not of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Babylon Revisited," but of Ray Bradbury's "Mars Is Heaven!"? The editors I wrote to scratched their heads and wrote back, "There is no such text already on the market, and so there must not be a market for such a text." And so, despite a series of SF text anthologies through the late 70s and 80s, there is still no Fiction through Science Fiction text on the market.

I tell you about that forlorn and unwanted text because it illustrates another of the preconceptions I have, the SF imagination, definitions, and chronological order being the first three: I like to give students a vocabulary for talking about fiction, just as they are given vocabularies for talking about internal combustion engines, volcanoes, cell structure, and human anatomy. So I developed my own version of that perennial favorite, the Plot Diagram, and I hung from it my own set of terms. Let me reproduce it for you here, again without discussion. (Again, maybe later, on another occasion.)



That's Plot. Under Character we discuss characterization, developing character (in contrast to static character), and central character. I limit Narrative Point of View to three types for convenience of presentation: first-person limited (I-narrator), third-person limited (he/she/it), and omniscient; we take up exceptions as they occur, in stories like Bester's "Fondly Fahrenheit," for example, or Ellison's "On the Downhill Side." And I suggest several ways for getting at Theme in a story, e.g., What generalization is this story a specific example of? So, using tried and true Elements of Fiction, we come at stories brandishing the tools of Plot, Character, Narrative Point of View, and Theme.

You will note that, if you start at the top, the procedures outlined above give you a nice neat little technological device for cranking stories through:

- 1) Is this a work of fiction? (Organized vicarious human experience, remember?)
- 2) Is it SF? (What makes the setting alternate to human experience so far? How does the writer make that "what" scientifically plausible?)
- 3) Who is the central character in the story? (That is, what is the story's problem, and who solves it?)
- 4) What is the story's Narrative Point of View?
- 5) Apply the Plot Diagram, term by interminable term, to the story.
- 6) What is the story's theme? (I also call this the "Easter Egg approach" to reading fiction: somewhere in this story, the author has hidden a beautifully decorated Easter Egg. Where do you think it is?)

Sensibly and judiciously handled, there is nothing inherently wrong with spending some class time doing this sort of thing. It is mechanical and objective enough that even the most unimaginative and practical-minded student can learn it and use it.

At the University of Dayton our terms are fifteen weeks long with an additional week for final exams. In those fifteen weeks, in my SF courses I try to familiarize students with the distinction between SF and fantasy, with the SF imagination, with the history of SF (especially from Wells to the present and including major writers, stories, ideas, editors, magazines, and movements), with the elements of fiction, and (at the very end) with SF fandom in general and conventions and fanzines in particular, in case anyone wants to become more involved with SF. Obviously I try to do too much, and clearly I should concentrate more on more manageable topics than "everything about all SF." But I don't handle an SF program; I merely teach an SF course. So I do all I can within the limits of time, knowledge, experience, and intelligence.

How do I evaluate what I've done in the past, and what might I do differently in the future? There are at least two things that I've never been particularly successful at. One (as you might expect) is getting students interested in applying the Elements of Fiction to SF. I cannot recall any student over the last twenty years who has become excited about identifying the Narrative Point of View of a story. The Elements of Fiction are probably things that writers need to know more about than readers do. I still present this material, though with less enthusiasm and high seriousness than I once did, and I spend far less time actually applying it.

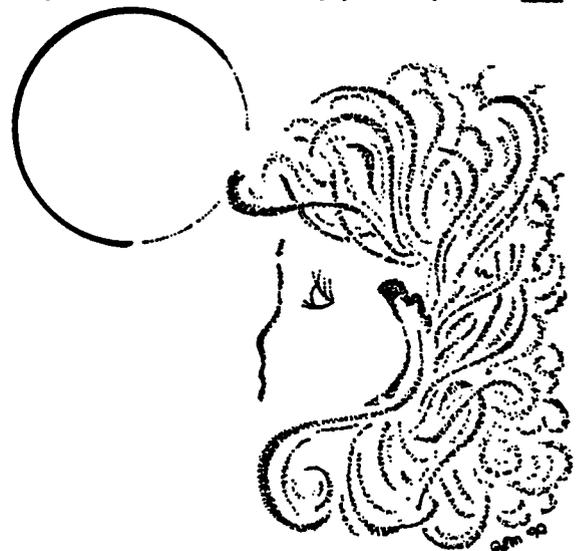
Nor have I been especially successful at getting students to remember anything they've read. I ask that they keep a set of notes when they read: title, author, major characters, NPV, SF idea. If I can judge from their class discussions, their exams, and their papers, few students pay any attention to such things. (I have yet to discover with any certainty what they do pay attention to.) On the one hand, I can't really blame them. While I firmly believe that all college-educated people should know the Canterbury Tales, Paradise Lost, and Moby Dick, is it really important to demand that they know that Lester del Rey wrote "Helen O'Loy," that Dave is the story's problems-solver, that Phil is its NPV character, and that Helen is its SF idea? On the other hand, I can so blame them. What's important is not that they store this specific information in their brains for possible future use (on Jeopardy, perhaps) but that they get their minds used to storing any specific information. The ability to remember may be becoming less and less important as more and more of us have access to computer memories that store data far more accurately and dependably than do our own brains; but there still has to be some data up there. You can't think about nothing (though you can not-think, and more and more people seem to be choosing this option). Thinking is what we as a race are supposed to be good at. How can we develop insight, taste, and judgment without information? Not "over there," but "in here"? So, agreed, most of the SF we read may not be as important as Paradise Lost or Moby Dick, but does it necessarily follow that from a college course yielding three credits towards graduation the students should take away with them only a vague sense of "That was fun" or "I didn't have fun"?

What will I do differently in the future? Probably less emphasis on chronological order/historical survey. Surely less use of the Elements of Fiction approach. I still stubbornly think that when a student reads a story he should make some minimal effort to remember what its title was and who wrote it, and maybe even who its characters were and what happened to them. (I know, I know. I'm a conserva-

tive old fogey. I think opinions should be based upon facts, not citizenship. It's not enough to say, "I believe this or that because I'm an American and I have a right to my own opinion." Yecch.) In the future I intend to emphasize even more than I have in the past, not only the SF idea in a story, but also its human idea. Yes, SF should entertain; but as literature it should also ennoble. I used (at my peril) to sneak an occasional SF story in straight courses in Fiction or the Short Story; maybe now is the time to start smuggling some real literature--some Melville or Chekov, say--into the SF courses. "Bartleby the Scrivner," "The Lady with the Lap Dog," or "The Betrothed," one day, and "Fire Watch," "Green Mars," or "Sailing to Byzantium" the next. WOW!

In these remarks I have said little about specifics like textbooks and syllabi. For what it's worth, early on, when I did mostly historical surveys that concentrated on the Golden Age of SF (the 40s and 50s, right?), I used the SF Hall of Fame volumes a lot--volume I every term, volume IIA many terms, and volume IIB occasionally, and I would alternate Herbert's Dune one term with Niven's Neutron Star and Ringworld the next. Lately I've become more interested in contemporary SF, and especially in the contemporary SF short story--in other words, I've abandoned nostalgia-for-my-youth for studying-the-markets--and I've been using the Dozois Year's Best SF volumes a lot. I suspect that some semester soon I'll use only the magazines straight off the rack: this month's Asimov's and Analog and F&SF, with maybe the latest Full Spectrum or Synergy...and maybe even some non-SF for contrast, who knows?

Finally, the most important thing that I'm aware of that I try to teach via SF--or better, that I try to let SF teach--is a love for life, a sheer delight in the universe in which we all have come to consciousness together. What a wonderful place this is! How fortunate we are to be alive in it! (cf. Rogue Moon, chapter 8.) My god, Patrouch, sense of wonder--joie de vivre--as course content? Yes, my brothers and sister, yes. Why not? !



# RETURN TO RUSSIA



by Jack Williamson  
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ILLUSTRATED BY DIANA STEIN

In early August of 1989, I returned to the Soviet Union for my third glimpse. Blanche and I had been there in 1965 and again in 1977. In 1965, we took a Russian ship from London to Leningrad and returned overland in a Belgian bus, crossing European Russia, Poland, and East Germany almost along the route of Napoleon's disastrous retreat in 1812. Tourists in 1965 were still very few, suspected by the Red Army and the KGB, and avoided by most other Russians. Though we were treated very well by the people from Intourist, the official travel agency, most other Russians were afraid to talk to Americans.

The tourist flood had begun by 1977, and much of that distrust was gone. Our Intourist guide then was a friendly and attractive young woman who showed an open admiration for the West and its ways. People were commonly willing to smile and talk, or even to offer us black market rubles, though few spoke much English.

Now, in 1989, I was anxious to see the impacts of glasnost and perestroika in these last few years. We had been warned that this would not be a luxury trip, and even the beginning was pretty demanding. It's a long haul from New Mexico to Moscow. I drove to Lubbock, Texas. An hour in the air from there to Dallas, three more to New York, nearly eight to Helsinki, and two more to Moscow, with delays in between.

It was 7:30 PM when we took off from New York on a Finnair DC-10. I was lucky enough to have an aisle seat, and I managed to sleep a little. The Finns fed us good meals that came too close together as we skipped across the time zones.

Margaret Thoren was our Grand Circle escort. She was waiting in Helsinki to help with the problems of getting us and our baggage through all the bureaucratic barriers, onto another plane, and finally to our hotel in Moscow. She was pleasant and efficient. A Swede, she had been with the company for twenty years, excourting tour groups over most of the world.

A couple of years ago, on another try for a look behind the Iron Curtain, I found myself without the visas I should have had. I had to turn back at Budapest and wait in Yugoslavia for my group to return from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany. This time, alerted by Grand Circle Travel, I had paid my \$32 in advance for a Russian visa. The Finns required none.

Our Intourist guide met us at the Moscow airport. She and Margaret were to be with us all the way through Russia, with local guides joining us at each stop. A slight young woman named Ihna, she was a university student who had found a summer job with Intourist; I understood that this was her first tour. Her English was good enough, though a little halting, as if she had to translate from Russian. She seemed relieved to let Margaret take charge.

For a first impression, Moscow looked shabby and a little depressing, with many buildings in visible need of repair. There were a few more tall buildings than I recalled from 1977, most of them tourist hotels, but nothing else looked new. The big difference was the traffic. In 1965 the streets were empty except for taxis, military trucks, and a few fast-driven official cars. Few Russians owned

private cars, and the Red Army was still hostile to outsiders. The quiet streets were lined with trees, and I had an odd sense of being on a time trip to some American city half a century ago. Now I saw many small cars caught in the snarls of traffic that delayed us on the drive to our hotel. Moscow, like so many American cities, lies under a cloud of smog.

Our hotel was the Cosmos. The newest in Moscow and one of the largest, it had 3000 rooms. There was a desk on each floor where a woman sat to guard the keys. My floor was the 25th floor. The room was inviting enough. It seemed that I was to room alone, though I had asked Grand Circle to find a sharer. I had a good view of a wooded park. There was a color TV with six channels and a German lesson in progress, but I had no energy to watch. Exhausted after twenty hours on the way from Lubbock, I went to bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Moscow: August 3

I'm getting to know my companions. Besides Margaret and Ihna, there are 27 of us. Several couples; the rest single women. They're all veteran travellers, comparing their adventures in China and such far-off places. We're nearly all in our upper years, though at 81 I am probably the oldest. With no companion, I'm the odd number. Sometimes a bit awkward when I'm looking for a seat at the table.

One might learn a good deal more about Russia and Russians by traveling alone and not with a group of fellow Americans, but I don't have the enterprise and energy for that. In Russia, in fact, independent travel might be hard to arrange; the KGB would probably want to know what you were up to.

"USSR" (СССР in the Cyrillic alphabet) stands for "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." The largest nation, it covers one sixth of the world's land and stretches across seven time zones. Much of it is barren desert or arctic tundra. The total population is about 250,000,000 people, only about half of them Russian. There are 15 republics containing a hundred different ethnic and language groups. Now, clamoring for more independence since glasnost allows clamor, these minorities have become a major headache for Gorbachev.

Today, incidentally, we had a glimpse of him and Raisa, driving into the Kremlin. They were in a black Russian car, with a police car ahead and two more black cars behind. Though his popularity here at home is said to be sliding, we're too well isolated from the real Russia to hear talk about him.

Moscow was the first city of Russia, founded 800 years ago. It grew up around the Kremlin. The word

means fortress, and the red brick Kremlin walls enclose about 60 acres of government offices, palaces, museums, and cathedrals. Red Square lies just outside the walls. The city has eight million people now, and would have more millions if they were allowed to move here.

We only have two days here, not enough to see very much. I've seen the standard sights before, but they're certainly worth a second look. The rulers of Moscow created Russia largely by conquest, with a change of masters when the Tartars conquered them. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the city became a second Rome, the seat to the Byzantine church. The whole city is a sort of historical museum, rich with the relics of that long and violent past.

Though food is short in Russia, our day began with a breakfast that was quite satisfactory, at least for me, even if not quite American. Good bread, both white and brown, coffee and sweet rolls, butter and jam, and something like buttermilk. We visited the Pushkin Art Museum, named to honor Russia's most revered poet. It holds far more exhibits than we had time to see, dating from ancient Assyria to modern times. The Russian merchants and aristocrats had made fine collections, which the Soviets seized after the Revolution. Many are kept on display, though Ihna says Armand Hammer, the founder of Occidental Petroleum, got his start by buying and exporting such confiscated art.

We rode the metro, the Moscow subway. It's probably the best and cheapest in the world. Many of the stations are done impressively in marble. Escalators take you down to the trains. They run deep; the tunnels are also bomb shelters. The fare is still only five kopecks, about eight cents at the official rate. I wanted to see a Russian friend, Julius Kargarlitski, a scholar who has been invited to speak next year at my home school, Eastern New Mexico University. Looking for him, I ran into problems. I had his address, but it seems there is no Moscow telephone directory. When I took a taxi out to his home, he wasn't there.

I had our guides hire the taxi. The driver asked for twenty dollars, but settled for ten--he wasn't interested in rubles. Margaret said the ten dollars would buy him a hundred rubles on the black market, about 15 times the official rate offered at banks and hotels. We tourists are warned against black market dealing. I have obeyed the warning, but so many people on the street are offering illegal rubles that the enforcement must not be very strict.

People in hotels and restaurants always want dollars for any extras we ask for. The ruble's low value is a kind of index to Russia's poor economic health. Too many rubles are coming off the printing press. They will pay for subway rides, or for the scarce or rationed necessities people may find at



the end of a line when they stand there long enough, but not much else. [I believe the recently revalued ruble is now officially worth 16 American cents, only a tenth the official rate when I was there.]

I got back in time for our welcome banquet. Our guides took us out of the hotel to a restaurant they said was famous a century ago, patronized by the great writers and musicians whose portraits line the walls. The meal was elaborate enough, with champagne, vodka, and black caviar. Not much of that, but enough for me.

Our next stop is to be Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, out in Central Asia.

#### Tashkent: August 5

Flying in from Helsinki, we had landed at the international airport, Sheremetyevo, twenty miles north of Moscow. En route north to Tashkent, we were bussed to the Vnukovo domestic airport, an hour south. Out of the hotel at nine, we didn't take off until after noon--flying in Russia, you follow the old Army rule, hurry and wait.

The Russian airplane was big, nine seats across, and modern enough, the service good. I enjoyed the in-flight lunch: a chicken drumstick, bread and cheese, a ripe tomato, cake. We were in the air nearly four hours, crossing three time zones. Here in Tashkent, we are thirteen zones east of New Mexico, over halfway around the Earth.

The republic of Uzbekistan lies in the heart of Central Asia, far from anywhere. It is mostly flat desert lowlands, with long hot summers. The few rivers dry up before they get anywhere, but there is now extensive irrigation. Cotton has been the main crop, though food shortages are now causing a shift to fruits and vegetables.

Most of the Uzbeks are Sunni Moslems. The country is a historic center of Moslem culture, and in spite of Soviet campaigns for atheism the Moslem religion seems still vigorous. We saw impressive mosques, and many men wear the distinctive caps of their faith.

Tashkent, with two million people, is the capital and the fourth-largest city in the Soviet Union. Two thousand years old, it was one of the stops on the historic Silk Road between China and the West, but nearly all the buildings are new--most of them the identical apartment complexes, shaped like up-ended shoe boxes, in which the Soviets house those who wait long enough. They looked cramped and dismal, but the rent is heavily subsidized.

The city was almost totally destroyed in 1966 by a major earthquake that the outside world heard very little about. That was before the openness of glasnost, which now allows such disasters to be admitted. We were told that about 75,000 died, and one of the tourist sights is an impressive monument to them.

Our hotel here is the Uzbekistan. It's modern and comfortable. Our local guide is a very attractive young woman who speaks excellent English, pouring out information faster than I can soak it up. She looks Russian, not Asiatic. She explains that her ancestors were Old Believers, religious dissenters who came to Uzbekistan as refugees from the reforms that shook up the Orthodox church in the seventeenth century.

She seems to be a loyal party member, undisturbed by perestroika. On our city tour, she showed us a massive statue of Lenin and a series of impressive public buildings that made Tashkent seem a center of prosperity. When we came to the monument to the earthquake victims, she followed the official line that the damage had been relatively minor. Anyhow, she assured us, such quakes happen only once in a century.

Surprisingly, so far around the world, Tashkent is a sister city of Seattle. Establishing friendships with sister cities is a Rotary program; our own Portales Rotary Club has found a sister city in Delicias, Chihuahua. Though Rotary doesn't yet exist in Russia, I think the Uzbeks are ready for it. They are exchanging students and study programs with Seattle, as well as tourists.

I wish we could have visited Samarkand. One of the oldest cities of Central Asia, it was once the greatest. Alexander the Great captured it in the

year 329 BC. It was Tamerlane's capital, and his mausoleum is one of its historic monuments. The Uzbeks conquered it in 1500. It's near enough, but not on our tour. Margaret says it lacks modern hotels.

Our next stop is Tskaltubo, a health resort in Soviet Georgia. Margaret seems a little alarmed by what she had heard about our hotel there.

#### Soviet Georgia: August 7

After Tashkent, our next city should have been Yerevan, the capital of Soviet Armenia. When that was flattened by the recent deadly earthquake, the Intourist authorities replaced it on our tour circuit with Tskhaltubo.

Georgia, one of the smaller Soviet republics, lies in the south of Russia between the Black Sea and the Caspian. It's mountainous, with the main crest of the Caucasus on the North and the minor crest on the south. Glaciers in the high mountains feed many rivers, but the narrow valleys are fertile and subtropical.

We were awakened at three to leave our Tashkent hotel for the airport. The three-hour flight took us back west from near the edge of China, across two time zones. We landed at Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. After breakfast there, a bus took us on toward Tskhaltubo--I never did learn how to pronounce the first syllable.

We stopped for lunch at Gori, Stalin's birthplace. Like an American politician, he did favors for his home state. Though he killed a lot of Georgians, many are still proud of him. We saw the wooden hut in which he was born, now encased in an impressive marble monument. Near it is a huge statue of him, the only one left of many thousands which once stood all across Russia.

At Tskhaltubo, when we finally got there, our hotel was no better than Margaret had expected. It's a good example of the problem Gorbachev faces. In the Soviet system, tipping is forbidden, and nobody can be fired. People only pretend to work, as somebody says, and the government pretends to pay them. Consequently, most people in public service have little motivation to give actual service.

Clerks chatting on the phone can seem annoyed when anybody wants to interrupt. After seventy years of this, habits of efficiency and hard work have almost vanished.

The hotel is a stately building, dating from 1976. It must have been first class then, but upkeep has been sadly neglected. We were the only occupants, and we all had complaints. The plumbing leaked in my bath; the parquet floor was wet and buckling, even outside the bathroom. The lock was about to fall out of the door. Nobody was fixing anything.

My room at least was clean. Worn out after the long day in the air and on the road, I went to bed and slept nearly twelve hours. Today I felt almost ready to go again, and Margaret was cheerily prepared to keep us busy.

The climate here is warm, vegetation luxuriant. Tskhaltubo is famed for its mineral springs, the water supposed to be good for nearly everything. The town is dominated by a huge sanitarium, with 500 rooms. Labor unions own it and pay most of the cost of treatment. Patients come for 20 days, paying a little over a hundred rubles. Treatments can be repeated. To a wintertime worker in Siberia, permission for treatment here must look like a ticket to paradise.

This afternoon we made a bus trip out to Kutaisi. It's an old city, known to the ancient Greeks as Colchis. In the legend of the Argonauts, this is where Jason found the Golden Fleece, defeated the dragon that guarded it, and escaped with the Fleece and Medea, the king's sorceressdaughter, who had fallen in love with him.

The Georgians were converted to Christianity in the fourth century, 500 years ahead of the Russians. They seem to have clung to their religion through many assaults, from Mongols and Turks and even the Soviet atheists. Successive invasions killed more than half of them, but ancient churches stand everywhere.

We visited a 12th century monastery near Kutaisi. A museum for many years, it is now little more than a ruin. Recently, however, it has been returned to the Church. Repairs are under way, and it is again a place of worship. Candles were burning beside the altar.



Our guide stopped to buy champagne on the way back to the hotel and invited us to a cocktail party before dinner. In spite of difficulties, they are trying hard to make us happy. Margaret seems cheerfully equal to every emergency. Ihna, though, is often not able to cope with uncooperative bureaucrats. I have seen her reduced to tears.

We'll have a couple of days here, seeing a bit more of Soviet Georgia.

Tbilisi: August 10

The city was Tiflis back when I learned geography. Founded in the fifth century, it has endured through attacks and invasions by Persians and Byzantines, Mongols and Turks. The Persians burned it to the ground in 1795; it has been Russian since 1801. It's now the capital of Soviet Georgia, with over a million people.

On the trip back here from Tskhaltubo, we left the bus to climb a steep hill and visit another monastery, a monumental fortress that dates from the days when Georgia was still a proudly independent power. It dominates the landscape like a medieval castle, and it's built like a castle, of huge and roughly cut stone blocks. Those old Georgians were warriors for their faith.

We stopped again for lunch at Gori, Stalin's home town. It was founded in the 12th century by "King David the Builder," a Georgian hero. He defended it with a walled acropolis, which stands on a hill in the center of town. We visited a busy market place at its foot.

The market struck me as a hopeful bit of private capitalism creeping into the socialist economy. It was devoted to abundant farm produce: melons, vegetables, fruit, poultry, livestock, all for sale by eager and profit-hungry farmers or tradesmen, not by indifferent bureaucrats.

Our hotel here in Tbilisi, far different from the one in Tskhaltubo, is modern, efficient, and well maintained. I did my laundry in the bathtub the night we arrived, using a cake of Ivory brought from home--soap is scarce and rationed here. We've reached the midway point on the tour, and this should get me back to New Mexico.

Georgia is the most prosperous-looking region we've seen. Hotels and apartment buildings seem more substantial than jerry-built apartment houses I've seen everywhere else. On the outskirts of the city I see solidly built separate homes, with space and trees around them. Georgian women are commonly housewives, we were told, though elsewhere women usually work. (Ihna says she prefers to work; it's easier.) Private cars seem common here, though I understand that buying a car commonly takes many years of saving and waiting.

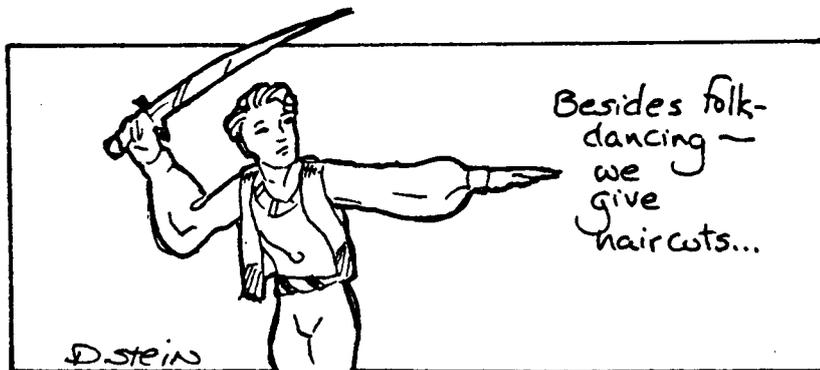
Though Georgia is one of the smaller Soviet republics, Stalin is not the only source of local self-esteem. The Georgians are a sturdy race, aware of their long history and proud of who they are. One of their old kingdoms was called Iberia, and they identify themselves with the Iberian settlers of Spain and Portugal.

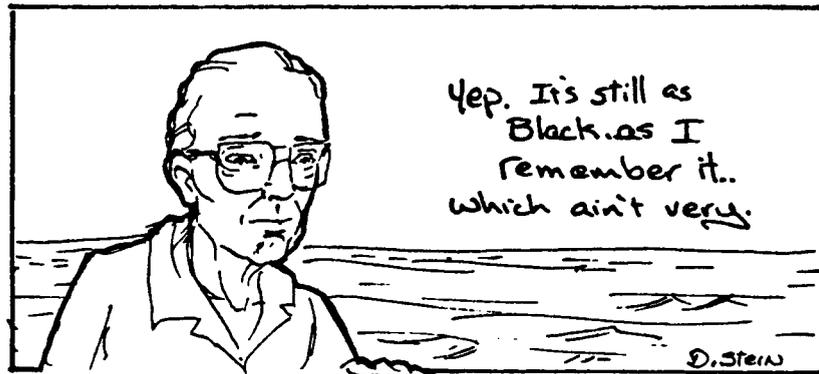
Last night we attended a folkloric show that was itself a monument to their past. There were dancers in costume, women in long gowns, men in colorful garb, the men doing acrobatic dances and sometimes clashing long knives till sparks flew. Their skills struck me as extraordinary survivals of a treasured and long-defended culture.

On the local tour, we walked through an open-air museum devoted to the peasant past. Seeing the reconstructed homes, I had a feeling that the Georgian peasants must have lived pretty well. We took a tram to a hilltop that gave us a fine view of the city, which stretches for miles along the narrow valley of the Kura River. It's an important industrial center now, building such things as computers and electric locomotives. The guides boast that Tbilisi has eleven universities and a hundred scientific institutions.

We've seen fields of tea, small and neatly rounded bushes whose leaves can be picked several times a year. Russians drink tea instead of coffee; the samovar, the urn that stands on the table to boil water for it, is a major item in the Russian household. This afternoon our group went on a tour of tea houses, sampling the different blends, but I'm low on energy and sniffing from a cold. I stayed in my room to rest.

We have another city tour tomorrow morning. At noon we take off again, this time for Yalta, the





historic spot in the Crimea where Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt met in 1945 to plan their coming victory and divide what they were winning.

#### Yalta: August 12

Though most people in our group have been careful to drink bottled water or sodas instead of water out of the taps, a good many of us have been afflicted with what I like to call "the Romanoff's revenge." My turn came before we left Tbilisi. In spite of Lomotil, Pepto-Bismal, and Oxy-Lemmon, I had a pretty miserable night.

I skipped breakfast and missed the morning tour, but Margaret had begun giving me Immodium capsules and my symptoms had subsided. I had my bag out at noon for the flight to Yalta. After a long hot wait at the airport, we took off at 3:15. Two hours and another time zone west brought us to Simferopol airport, which is still 100 mountainous kilometers from Yalta. We got here about six.

Yalta is on the south coast of the Crimea, a peninsula that juts into the Black Sea. It's now part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. The Yalta region is subtropical, Russia's warmest and most popular winter resort. Our hotel is enormous, 16 stories high, with thousands of rooms. Elevators and tunnels lead down to a dock on the Black Sea beach. There are still a lot of tourists here, though the August weather is rather too hot for comfort.

We made a morning boat trip a few miles up the beach to the castle on a bluff that is pictured in the tourist brochure as "a stunning Black Sea vista." When we got there, however, the vistas in all directions were sharply limited by a thick haze. Most of our group climbed to the castle, several hundred steps. With no energy for that, I waited in the little shade I could find.

After lunch we drove to a palace, a summer residence built for the czarina, where Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met before the end of World War II for their historic conference. It's a handsome structure of white limestone, surrounded with well-tended flowers and trees. The local guide gave us a

historical lecture, which went on so long that I walked out before it was over.

Roosevelt was bitterly criticized after the war for letting Stalin grab too much. It's true that he was already ill, with not long to live. I wish Stalin hadn't been able to seize so much of Europe and so many concessions in Asia. At the time, however, the A-bomb had not yet been tested. Japan was still far from defeat, and the Russian armies were powerful. I was then an Army Air Force weatherman in the southwest Pacific, and I remember saying I didn't want to fight the Russians.

Last night I attended a lecture on perestroika by a professor of journalism from the University of Kiev, the capital city of the Ukraine. Though he must be a party member, I was surprised at his candid criticism of the party and the status quo. He admits the failure of the 1917 revolution. It resulted, he says, not in true socialism but in state monopolism. He sees Russia in the middle of a second revolution, and he's making no prediction about the outcome.

After four years of promised economic reform under perestroika, there has been no economic progress. Living standards have fallen instead of rising. Such items as meat, soap, razor blades, and sugar are rationed, and even vodka. (I can't help wondering how much sugar is used to make moonshine.) The political freedom of glasnost, on the other hand, has gone much farther. So far, in fact, that the political clock looks hard to set back in the way the Chinese are trying to do.

Yet he points out that the forces against reform are still powerful. There are skeptical and alarmed party conservatives hanging to their perks. There's the Red Army. There are 20,000,000 bureaucrats with jobs they don't want to risk. Though Gorbachev talks of merging Russia into the European economic community, that will be impossible without making the ruble convertible with the hard currencies. With rubles almost worthless, offered on the black market at ten for a dollar, such free exchange looks like a distant dream.

This morning we visited the house where Anton Chekhov, the great Russian dramatist and master of the short story, lived for several years around the

turn of the century, here as an invalid refugee from the Moscow climate. It's a well-kept museum now. I am always struck by the respect the Russians show for the great art and history of their past, even when they had set out to build an entirely new society.

I've tried to make this an easy day, because I'm not yet entirely fit and we have a long night ahead. Bags out then. Dinner at eight. We have a two-hour bus trip back to simferopol airport and then a midnight flight to Leningrad.

#### Leningrad: August 14

Leningrad is my favorite Russian city, younger than Moscow but rich enough in history and art, and certainly more beautiful. It's our last stop in Russia, and a nice climax to the tour. We had a long night getting here. The flight from Yalta took off at midnight and landed about two in the morning. There were no porters. The Soviet system of total job security, with tipping forbidden, doesn't make anybody eager to be helpful.

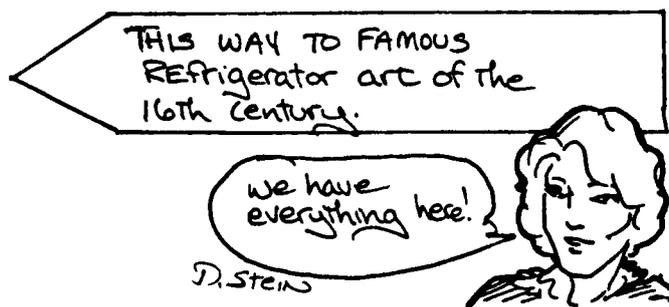
At last on our way to the hotel we were delayed again. The city is sliced into sections by branches of the Neva River. Drawbridges across them are opened for river shipping. We had to wait for the bridges to close, and it was five when we reached the Hotel Pribaltiyskaya.

It's our best hotel yet, new and huge, 15 stories tall. My room in on the eighth floor, with a fine view of the Gulf of Finland. I had a short nap, but dragged myself out of bed at eight for breakfast and a city tour. I enjoyed seeing the city again as soon as I was really awake.

Leningrad was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great, to replace Moscow as the Russian capital. A strong-willed and able but ruthless ruler, Peter was trying to bring his backward country into the western world, changing old ways as completely as Gorbachev says he would like to change things today. He wanted a Baltic seaport as a window into the West. The site he chose was difficult: the marshy delta of the Neva. Thousands of his forced workers died building the city.

Called St. Petersburg until World War I, then Petrograd until 1924, it was the capital until 1918, when the Soviets moved the seat of authority back to Moscow. In World War II, Hitler tried hard to take it. A million of its people died, most from starvation, but the survivors made a heroic defense, holding out for 900 days.

The Neva is only 46 miles long, but wide enough for navigation. It drains Lake Lagoda into the Gulf of Finland. Its arms through the city are wide and granite-walled, and they set off magnificent views of magnificent buildings. Many old cities are still



cramped into the narrow and crooked streets of the villages from which they grew. Leningrad was planned. Streets are wide and straight. The palaces along major avenues are nearly all in the same imposing architectural style.

I was anxious to see the Hermitage again. One of the world's great museums, it occupies five vast connected buildings on the Neva bank, palaces the czars built for themselves, not for the masses. They hold two million items, including thousands of priceless masterpieces. There are some twenty miles of passages through huge rooms and halls, all filled with more treasures of art than you ever have time to see.

We were sharply disappointed to hear that our scheduled tour had been cancelled, but then our ingenious local guide got us in by buying individual tickets. We slipped inside one by one and gathered to meet her beyond the sight of the keepers. With fatigue catching up with me, I looked for a chair whenever I could, but I did enjoy another momentary glimpse of those treasures the old czars enjoyed. Taxing a nation where millions of serfs lived in bitter poverty, they could pay for whatever they fancied.

Getting in was a bit of luck, because the hordes of our fellow tourists are overflowing all the monumental new hotels and overflowing Russia. Margaret heard that all Hermitage tours are likely to be cancelled next year, I suppose because the old buildings need repair to make them safe for such crowds.

Back at the hotel at five, I had another short nap and got up again at eight for our gala farewell dinner. An elaborate meal, with caviar, mushrooms, steak, champagne, wine, vodka, climaxed with a floor show. Seated beside Ihna, our shy little In-tourist guide, I learned that she is returning to Moscow University to finish her degree in psycholinguistics. She's probably better fitted for teaching than for herding tourists, though she said a college job will be hard to find.

I gave up the dinner at ten and went back to bed. This morning our group went by hydrofoil out to Petrodrovcret, the summer home built by Peter the Great. It was captured and destroyed by Hitler's army, but the Soviets have restored it la-

vishly. I remembered its splendor, especially the gilded statues that stand along the magnificent stairway that leads up a hill to the imposing row of palaces. I wish I'd had the energy to visit it again, but I went back to bed instead, and slept most of the morning.

Tonight, our last night in Russia, we went to a ballet. It was Giselle, the first live ballet I'd ever seen. This wasn't the Bolshoi; in August the Bolshoi stars were on vacation, but these dancers and their orchestra were good enough to dazzle me with their dramatic story well told in motion and music, with not a word spoken or sung.

Tomorrow morning we're to visit the Peter and Paul Fortress, the stronghold Peter built on the river shore to defend his new capital. I recall it as cruelty in stone. It was once a prison. One czar had his own son shut up there, and finally tortured to death. Yet it has its own barbaric splendor. Its red brick walls enclose the former royal mint and the Peter and Paul cathedral. Its tall golden spire shines high above the city.

Our bags must be out again at noon. Lunch at

one. We board the bus at two-thirty for our flight back to Finland. We're to have two days in Helsinki. I look forward to the chance for a rest there before the long flight home. As Margaret says, it has been an educational trip, not a luxury cruise. At times it has been almost too demanding, but I have survived, enjoyed most of it, and learned a good deal.

Russia fascinates me. Its sheer size, reaching out of Europe all across Asia. Its civilization and its savagery, recorded in so many monuments and relics. Its people, so much like us yet so often strange. I'm glad to have glimpsed it again in this moment of fast and unpredictable transition. As puzzled and surprised as anybody, I'm waiting to see what happens next.

--Jack Williamson  
November, 1930[\*]

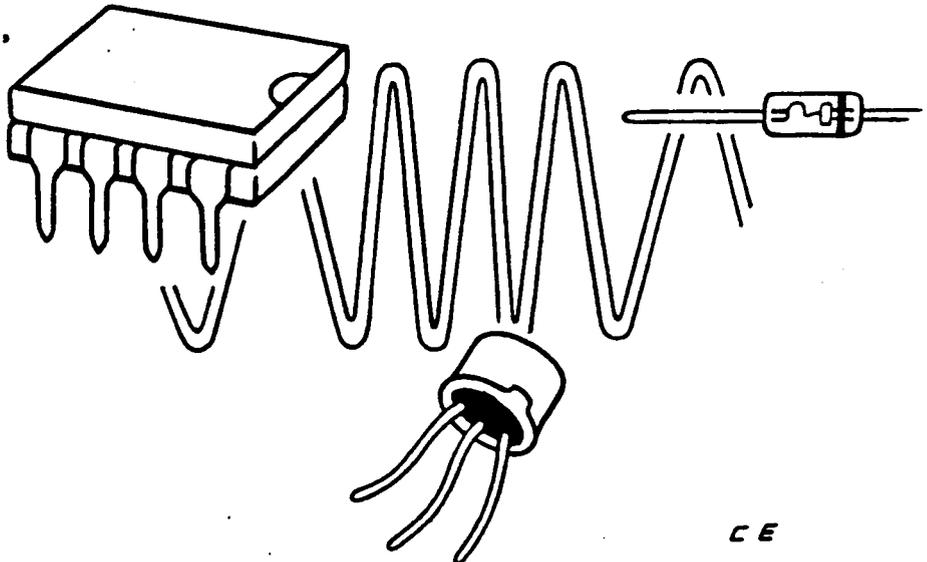
This journal originally appeared in seven parts in in the Portales, New Mexico, News-Tribune, Jack's local paper.



## DATA DESTINY

by Thomas A. Easton

The chromosomes impel  
The virgin to her lover,  
The cobbler to his last,  
The artist to his canvas,  
The scholar to his microscope  
Aimed at the heart of microchip.  
But now those microchips,  
Like chromosomes, spell out fate.  
Secretly, computers  
Study fleshy genes to learn  
The secrets of reclining nude,  
In love, on silken cushions.



CE

# The Last SF Story

## An Essay of Sorts

by John America

Let's face it. We've all been reading too much of this stuff for years. And, where has it gotten us? I can honestly say that I am not making a lot more money just because of Science Fiction. Nor am I getting more sex. Oh sure, I may be a little smarter and I've had a lot of fun, but where has it gotten me? We could all profit from an examination of this timely topic; I certainly hope to.

Just what the heck is Science Fiction, anyway? Well, it's a form of literature that takes us to far away places with strange sounding authors who make a lot of money on book deals. Good SF introduces us to weird and wonderful people, while letting us escape the geeks with whom we live and work. It promises a future none of our friends or relatives would ever be prepared for, let alone be expecting. Those turkeys. And, it speaks to us in a rich, romantic language that makes life so much warmer and exciting than anything else we could waste our time reading, except maybe sex novels.

We love the stuff! We seek out new ways to court our love, on subway, during lunch, or in the bathroom. We stay up late at night engaged to it. We worship it, imagining that we will go on reading it forever, and perhaps we will.

We weren't always like this. Where did Science Fiction come from? And when did it take over our lives?

Once there was no SF and people had to read about Indians and Knights and roses. Yecch! Then, Isaac Asimov wrote the first Science Fiction story. It was an adventure SF story, full of young, squared-jawed guys with zap guns and solar legions and cosmic and/or alien women. Suddenly, there were thousands of the things on every newsstand. You know, The Good Stuff.

Remember trying to con your teacher into accepting this as material for a book report? Some of us got away with it, and right then we knew we had figured out a Major Secret of Life: The best way around all those dumb reports was to read something with high concepts (like "grokking" and "auras") and big words (like "singularity" and "enigma") and then report on it as if it were absolutely legitimate and nobody would be able to tell if you were right. That's how UFOs got started.

Things were rolling along like roads on wheels for several years, and then the writers started fooling around. In the late Sixties (it figures,

doesn't it?), a thing from England came over and attacked the fun-loving American writers. It was called New Wave, but what it meant was, we readers were going to have to work harder if we expected to continue our love affair with SF. New Wave was the writer's excuse to use up all their old, undeveloped ideas sideways. They could now write poetry, or only part of a story, leaving the rest to our interpretation. Well, who asked for that? New Wave was a headache for everyone, and we were all glad to see it fade.

Then came The Huge Universal Cosmic Stories. Stories do large and vast that you could get lost in them...which was the whole idea. We stood on Zanzibar and Dune and looked up at Cities in Flight and Foundations and drooled all over our socks at enormous and complex worlds of wonder until there were just too damn many of the things! It was all very breath-taking, but where were all the real people in these giant mechanical stories? Hadn't we lost our way? What we needed was one very kind person who would lead us out of these things before we grew old, or graduated from college.

Well, we got what we asked for. Out in California, a prophet arose and then vanished. But before he was gone, he wrote a couple a dozen books about small, hurt people who prevail. This one very kind person changed the way we read SF. After this guy, everybody wrote about small, hurt people who prevailed. The guy's name was something like Phil K. Dick and after him Science Fiction was never the same.

Everything finally came together in the last few years, and the newest SF novels have made the Best Seller lists. These massive epics combine the best of the past into one awesome, high adventure about small, hurt people who prevail against geopolitical factions and cats that talk. Now, you would think that would be enough to satisfy anyone, but deep inside the genre there is a terrible conflict. A conflict that threatens to destroy our love for SF. The conflict is Literary Success, nee Break Out.

Break Out is that strange moment when an SF writer doesn't want to do SF anymore. At least not right now. Like all toys, SF knows that eventually it will be put aside. The SF writer's fear is that perhaps this has already happened, and if he/she doesn't get on the ball, he/she will be left behind. So, we see a lot of novels with Soviet char-

acters tackling the issues of our time. These books are chocked full of adult things like radioactive meltdowns, starwars laser technology and other necessary vitamins and minerals. Break Out novels are SF thrillers, full of huge zap guns, international solar legions, and cosmic and/or alien women.

And that's exactly the point. Nothing's really grokking changed. We're right back where we started. And, maybe we've been reading a bit too much of this stuff.

The Last Science Fiction Story will break this cycle and signal a major change in Mankind and the way he gets his kicks.

When the last word of the last sentence of the last story has been written and read, we shall have evolved to a point where SF and Reality blend. The

minute we stop reading SF and start living it is the minute the story ends and reality begins. Thus we shall blossom as a race of artists, who create and live in our own fantasies.

Just ask Phil K. Dick.

John America  
March, 1989[\*]

John America is a pseudonym of a well-respected statesman and essayist living in Portland, Oregon. Mr. America is the author of Getting What You Deserve and Liking It and frequently commutes to Portland, Maine, in order to write thought-provoking articles like this one which deserves a Pulitzer.



## TRAVELS IN

Copyright 1988 Evelyn C. Leeper

EGYPT, KENYA &  
TANZANIA

with EVELYN C. LEEPER

## Egypt

October 12, 1988

We worked until 3:30 PM, then went home, turned down the heat, turned off the water, and waited for the 4:30 limo. At 4:30 we got the usual call: "How do I get to Lakeridge Drive? It's not on my Matawan map." So I explained it was really in Old Bridge and how to get to it. This is why I always ask for an earlier pick-up time than they suggest--it gives us time for this routine. Anyway, we were on the road by 5. Traffic was good, with only a couple of what are called "rubbernecking delays," and we got to JFK by 6:15 or so. We checked in (naturally the line we picked stopped moving as soon as we got into it, so we had a chance to talk to a couple from Holland who were returning home--they think the capitalism in the United States is much better than the socialism in Holland). Then we stood around waiting for the Travcoa representative. While we were waiting a woman came up to us and asked, "Travcoa?" At first we thought she was the guide, but no, she was a fellow tour member, Pansee Chong, who was traveling with her sister Lillian. They were from British Columbia and had traveled all over the world. It turned out when we got to talking that they would be with us only in Egypt and then branching off to Yemen. So we might have had a much smaller group in Kenya if others do likewise.

After standing around the ticket area, we decided to proceed to the gate. The metal detector was extremely sensitive and everyone had to empty their pockets, etc., making it quite chaotic. The guards seemed friendlier, though, and actually smiled.

At the gate area we met a few more tour members. Margaret Zolliker, a retired doctor from Atlanta, was traveling with Ann Cook from Michigan. And Tom Stama, from San Francisco, was a bit of a character. He apparently didn't have a regular job--Margaret called him at various points an "artiste" and an entrepreneur. He was also going to Yemen, then

on his own to Ethiopia, then to Rome. All in all, he was taking eight weeks. It must be nice.

A Travcoa representative did show up to greet us and tell us the name of our guide, who would meet us at the Cairo airport. Then he came back to say no, she won't be meeting us at the airport. A travel service would pick us up at the airport and take us to the hotel where she would join us in the evening--some change in flight schedule, apparently.

Our flight, which boarded on time, but left fifty minutes late (at 9:20), was not a non-stop, but stopped in Paris. What can you say about a flight? The plane was cold and the seats uncomfortable for sleeping. It's a 2-5-2 arrangement so Mark and I weren't sitting right next to anyone else. For dinner I had a vegetarian lasagna. It was okay, and looked better (to me, anyway) than the meat lasagna Mark had.

October 13, 1988

We landed in Paris and everyone had to get off the plane for about an hour. So we stood around the departure lounge talking to Tom and the Chongs. Then back on the plane for the flight to Cairo. Lunch was chicken (they forgot to load a vegetarian meal for me) and I slept most of the rest of the time.

We landed in Cairo at about 3:30 PM, finally establishing that Cairo is six hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time. The Travcoa representative was there and directed us through the various lines. This took only about an hour, and was not nearly as chaotic as the guidebooks say.

On the way in we flew past the Pyramids as well as some lesser pyramids including (we think) the Step Pyramid of Zoser. And of course we saw the

Nile. Along the Nile on either side is a green strip of vegetation and then boom! the desert. No gradual blending from one to the other.

We got our Egypt schedule. It was changed around a lot but everything was still there. Instead of splitting our Cairo time into two short stays on either side of the cruise, it was all before the cruise. This meant we would see the Egyptian Museum first instead of last--a good thing. The cruise went down the Nile instead of up. The downside of this was that we stayed at the Semiramis instead of the Mena House, but we get dinner at the Mena House so we do get to see it. (The Mena House is a historic hotel; the Semiramis just a hotel, albeit a deluxe one.)

On the way we saw a lot of interesting sights. Billboards, for example. Billboards are always interesting in foreign countries--different products, different styles. Television ads are the same in being different.

Also I started learning the digits. We may call them Arabic numerals, but here they use different ones, which this machine does not have the ability to reproduce typographically so I will explain them:

- 0 a raised dot
- 1 a vertical bar
- 2 a vertical bar with a horizontal bar from the top to the right (like a Greek gamma)
- 3 similar to 2, but the horizontal bar is "scalloped"
- 4 something like a Greek sigma, but all the lines are at 45-degree angles
- 5 0 (and boy, is this confusing!)
- 6 similar to the digit for 2, but mirror-image (looks like a 7)
- 7 a downward-pointing V
- 8 an upward-pointing V
- 9 9 (same as here)

We passed various mosques (which I think have a more pleasing style than cathedrals or churches). We drove by Sadat's tomb and passed a couple of massive statues of Rameses II (copies). We went through Heliopolis, a newer suburb of Cairo and supposedly the ritzy section. However, the concrete construction blackened by pollution didn't look very ritzy by American standards.

We saw people in all sorts of garb--Arabian, Egyptian, and modern Western. We also saw horse-drawn carts as well as automobiles.

We got checked into the hotel (the Semiramis) and spent some time writing our logs. Our room had a view of Cairo Tower and the Nile. At 7 PM we sat down to dinner with Tom. Mark had the buffet; I had the hamam (pigeon) stuffed with rice and pine nuts. I also had lentil soup. It was good (though

a pigeon has very little meat--the standard portion is two, which is enough for small eaters, but big eaters should be aware), but I was falling asleep over it. (I should say that the quantity of stuffing made up for the lack of meat.) Dinner was slow--traditional in the Middle East--and we finished and returned to the room about 9:30. Mark wrote some more; I fell asleep.

October 14, 1988

I woke up at 5:30, having set my alarm wrong. I went back to sleep until 6:45, got up, dressed, and went to breakfast (the best order to do those things in). We had continental breakfast with orange juice and American-style coffee. Then I changed \$50--normally you need a passport but mine was still being registered so they took my American Express card as identification. Each time you change money there is a thirty-piaster fee for stamps, but that's only about twelve cents, since it's 2.3 pounds to the dollar and one hundred piasters to the pound.

At 8 AM we had a talk by Dr. Gohary, an Egyptologist from England who has moved permanently to Egypt. Her education was entirely in England for two reasons. First, in Egypt everything foreign, even degrees, is considered better. Second, the lack of hard currency means that universities in Egypt have difficulty subscribing to many foreign journals.

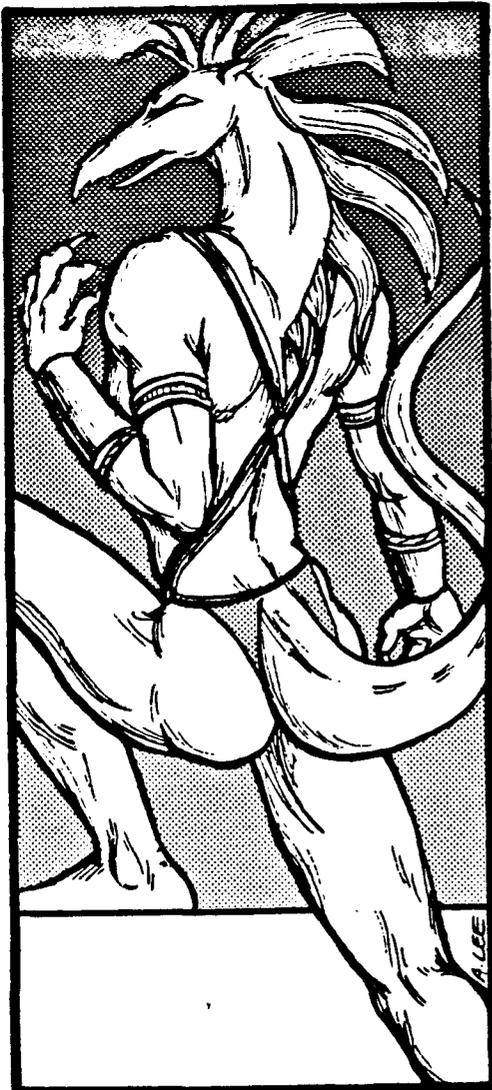
Dr. Gohary talked about the geography of Egypt, in particular the Nile Valley and how it is the only really habitable part of Egypt, the other 96% being desert. Since the building of the Aswan High Dam the water level has been more predictable and Egypt has been spared the droughts and floods occurring in the Sudan, but the dam has also raised the water table, salinating the soil and causing the decay of many Upper Egypt monuments. It also blocks the flow of silt to enrich the soil and hence chemical fertilizers must now be used.

She also gave some of the history (available elsewhere so I won't bore you here) and current social climate. The population growth is a major problem--one million are added every nine months and half the population is under fifteen. Any government mandate on family size would only provide resentment that the fundamentalist movement could capitalize on, so they are working on education instead, both in general and aimed toward family planning. The former works because the more educated see advantages in smaller families. The family is very important in Egypt--women traditionally have at least one child as soon as possible after marriage (to prove they can) and are after that called "The Mother of [first-born's name]." The

lecturer, for example, is called "Uma Kareem" ("The Mother of Kareem").

At 9:30 we went by bus to the Egyptian Museum. It's close by but walking across busy streets in Cairo is taking your life in your hands. The courtyard of the Museum--after getting past all the vendors--has a lotus and papyrus pool as well as various statues and obelisks. The front lobby inside the Museum has three statues of Rameses II and one of Amon-ho-tep. It's fairly easy to find statues of Rameses II--he went around replacing the heads on other statues with his own. He also built many temples during his reign (1250 BC or so) and is sort of the "Architect Pharaoh."

We then saw various sarcophagi, during which time Hoda (our Cairo guide) told us how bodies were mummified, a process which took seventy days (the mummification, not the telling). The internal organs were removed and saved in canopic jars; the body was packed with linen bags of salt and natron. After forty days, these were removed and fresh bags put in which also contained cinnamon, myrrh, various aromatic spices, and occasionally onions (but no garlic, Hoda said). Then the body was sewn up,



the stitches sealed with beeswax, then the entire body sealed in resin and pitch and finally wrapped in linen. The coffins were of various materials depending on the fortunes of the deceased.

The last sarcophagus/coffin we saw had images of Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Nephthys and provided Hoda with the opportunity to tell what is perhaps the basic myth of ancient Egypt. Osiris was a king whose brother Set was jealous of him. First Set tricked Osiris into a coffin which he sealed up and threw into the Nile. It eventually washed ashore and a tree grew above it. Isis (Osiris' wife) found the tree but couldn't extract the coffin from it, so sat by the tree weeping. Then Set cut down the tree (no mention of where Isis was when this was going on), chopped up Osiris' body into fourteen parts, and scattered it (them) over the earth. Isis, with the help of her sister Nephthys, found thirteen of the fourteen parts. She asked Anubis, god of mummification, to rejoin the parts, which he did. Then Isis and Nephthys prayed over the body and it was restored to life. After this death and rebirth, Isis miraculously bore Osiris a son (Mark points out that this was all the more miraculous considering the one part they didn't find). This son, Horus, eventually grew up and avenged his father by killing Set (shades of Hamlet in all this). In the battle, however, Horus lost an eye, which became the udjat, or eye of wisdom. Nephthys is often portrayed as a woman with a vase on her head; Isis as a woman with a throne on hers. Isis is also often shown with Horus in much the same way that Mary is shown with Jesus. In fact, many (most?) scholars claim that the early acceptance of Christianity in Egypt (by the Third Century) was due to its emphasis on Mary, which made it very similar to the Isis-worship which was so prevalent. Its monotheism had already been tried by Akhenaten (Amon-ho-tep IV) who ruled around 1350 BC. He replaced the pantheon of gods with one--Aton, the sun. When he died he was succeeded by Tut-ankh-amen, who changed his name from Tut-ankh-aten. This didn't appease the Amon priests enough, though, and they apparently murdered him.

Which provides a lead-in to the next part, the Tut-ankh-amen rooms. These are filled with objects from, not surprisingly, Tut-ankh-amen's Tomb. Although robbers seem to have reached the antechamber shortly after the burial, they were discovered and the tomb resealed. I will not try to describe or even list everything that was found. Suffice it to say it was everything the pharaoh might need in the afterlife. For example, there were a set of 365 ushabtis (or shawabtis), one for each day of the year, as well as overseers. An ushabti is a statue of a servant--these were to serve the pharaoh in the afterlife. There were also a famous statue of Anubis, boomerangs, the golden throne with the king

and queen on the back (along with the cobra of Lower Egypt and the eagle/vulture of Upper Egypt), a folding camp bed, couches decorated with Taweret (the hippopotamus goddess and goddess of pregnant women, proving the ancient Egyptians had a sense of humor), and the "Osiris bed," a tray in the shape of a man in which soil and seeds were placed. The whole was placed in the tomb where the germinating seeds would represent life after death. The central room of the exhibit contains the inner coffin, jewelry, and other personal items. Some of the jewelry was gorgeous, with remarkably detailed work in gold, stones, and faience. Finally we saw his chariots and the four nested shrines--the size of a small room--found in the tomb.

It was now getting late, since the Museum closes for prayers from 11:30 to 1:30 on Fridays, so we rushed through the rest of what we were to see: the diorite statue of Khefre, the wooden statue of Sheikh el-Beled (a realistic-looking, somewhat chubby fellow), the amazingly well-preserved statue of Rahotep and his wife Nefret (still retaining all their color after over 4000 years), the cleverly designed group of the dwarf Seneb and his family in which he is shown seated cross-legged to minimize his shortness. In general, the statues of men were painted darker to represent their color after working in the sun; those of women were lighter.

We left the Museum wishing we had several more hours there and went back to the bus. Since we would have been early for lunch, Jane Vermuellen (our tour manager) suggested we go to the Khan-al-Kalili Bazaar before lunch rather than later. This was perhaps a mistake--we had only fifteen minutes, time enough to walk through a few alleys but not to stop to shop or even really to see anything. We also managed to lose a couple of people who were eventually found, but the whole thing took longer than expected by a large factor. While waiting for people and the bus, we did get to see people going about their everyday business.

Finally we collected all the people and got back on the bus. The bazaar (or souk) was on the whole cleaner and smelled better than the souk in Jerusalem (though the latter may have improved over the last eight years). In fact, it smelled better than many parts of New York.

We went to the Arabesque Restaurant for lunch, passing many groups of men praying in the streets (it being Friday, the noon prayers were longer than normal). Traffic, normally bad, was made worse because the prayer groups made the streets narrower and closed some off entirely. This was fine with me, since it gave me more chance to look around.

For lunch I had the grilled lamb (a small steak and a sausage) with tomato soup; Mark had veal and lentil soup. For dessert we had om ali, a sort of bread pudding, and Turkish coffee. You know all

that silt the Nile brings down? It's used to make Turkish coffee. Actually after the grounds settle it's not bad, though extremely strong--good for staying awake.

Lunch, like all meals here, was a long affair and it wasn't until about 2 PM that we finished and got back on the bus. Then it was east to the Citadel of Salah-ad-Din (Saladin), built in 1176. This is atop a high hill and gives you a view of the entire city and the Pyramids of Giza. It was a bit hazy (from pollution, since Cairo has the highest pollution index in the world, according to one book--though I thought Mexico City claimed that "honor") and the view was not as dramatic as it might have been, but it would certainly suffice. Even from this distance (thirty miles? I'm not sure but it's across town and a way beyond that) the Pyramids towered over the city.

The main feature of the Citadel is the Muhammed Ali Mosque. No, not Cassius Clay, but Muhammed Ali Pasha, who ruled Egypt from 1805 to 1849 and is credited with founding modern Egypt. He started his modernization by inviting the opposing Mamelukes to a banquet in the Citadel and then slaughtering them on the way out. (Shades of Scone here--does it seem like history and literature repeat themselves a lot?) The mosque was built during the end of his rule and is also called the Alabaster Mosque. Before going in we had slippers put over our shoes or removed our shoes. I chose the latter, as the slippers line was very long. In the courtyard was a clock given by France in exchange for a Rameses II obelisk which had been given to them. There was also a washing area consisting of a dome with taps around it, presumably fed from a well, since I doubt that the original builders could or would have piped water up this high from the river.

The mosque itself was square. Like all mosques it had no seats--just carpeting throughout. Prayers are said standing or kneeling so seating is unnecessary. Hoda explained the basic tenets of Islam: prayer, the creed, the fast, the pilgrimage, and alms-giving. Prayer is five times daily: at sunrise, mid-morning, noon, mid-afternoon, and sunset. The creed is, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet." The fast is the sunrise to sunset fasting during the entire month of Ramadan. The pilgrimage is to Mecca and Medina and Jerusalem, though the latter has been dropped by most Muslims lately. Those who can afford it can make up to seven pilgrimages (why not more, I wonder?). Everyone must also give alms to the poor.

The decoration in the mosque was mostly Turkish, with little or no Egyptian influences. There was some floral decoration, but of course no animal or human representation.

After the mosque we returned to the hotel and

frantically wrote in our logs until 6 PM when we went downstairs for our briefing. We heard all the details about our tour in Egypt, which would certainly bore you all, so I won't bother to recount them here. After the briefing we had a cocktail party in which we had a chance to meet everyone (more or less) and then dinner. Unfortunately, dinner was in a French restaurant in the hotel rather than one serving local cuisine and the food was less than thrilling. (Maybe the other people liked it.) Then back to the room to write until midnight, then to sleep.

October 15, 1988

Up at 6:30, breakfast at 7:30 in the Felucca Buffet. There was a combination of American and Middle Eastern cuisine so I concentrated on the latter and had felafel, hummous, yogurt, tomatoes, cucumbers, fool (a bean dish), watermelon, fresh figs, fresh dates, and so on. After breakfast we boarded the bus for Memphis. No, not Memphis, Tennessee!

Memphis (Egypt) was the first capital of the united Upper and Lower Egypt (around 2700 BC). It's fifteen miles south of Cairo on the west bank of the Nile--one of the very few cities on that side. It was built on the east side, then the Nile was rerouted around it to create a city protected by water on one side and desert on the other. Time and subsequent invasions, however, have resulted in all the buildings of the complex here being dismantled and their materials used to build on other sites. The main attraction remaining at Memphis is a giant fallen statue of Rameses II (the guy got around!) and a limestone sphinx transported from Saqqara. There are also some other partial pieces of statuary, but like the two major pieces they date back to only about 1300 BC. The sides on which the statues lay are eroded, but the upper sides remained well-preserved. The setting for the pieces other than the statue is a small garden; the statue is in a building which has a balcony that lets you view it from above. (I tipped the doorkeeper a pen--everyone seems to want pens.) The garden also has many vendors. We bought ten postcards for a pound (about forty-four cents).

Our next stop was Saqqara. Between the two (and before, on the way to Memphis) we passed through several small villages where much hadn't changed in thousands of years. People still dried dung on their roofs to use for fuel. Women still washed clothes in the river (in this case, it was actually in a wide irrigation ditch). Men still sit together and drink coffee. (Oh, I found out you're supposed to let the silt in the Turkish coffee settle first.) You see more long robes in the villages (percentage-wise). The farms we passed were using

donkeys, oxen (water buffalo), horses, and even camels. We also saw a waterwheel. Rice seems to be a popular crop. Now that the High Dam has been built and irrigation is possible year-round, farmers get (usually) three crops a year. (Of course, as I said earlier they no longer get the silt that came with the floods, so they now need to use chemical fertilizers.) Where before, food crops dominated, now cotton is the major crop, and as a result Egypt must import things like wheat.

The first thing we saw at Saqqara was the desert. The road forms the boundary between green fields on one side and desert on the other. We began with the Step Pyramid of Zoser (a.k.a. Djoser--spellings vary for almost all ancient names) and the complex it occupies. This is the first known pyramid, dating back to 2686 BC, and was built in three stages. Originally it had only four steps; it was increased to six only by the last addition. The entrance to the complex is a colonnaded court at the southern end. This leads to two courtyards, the larger of which reaches to the southern face of the pyramid. The stones of the pyramid and of the complex in general are smaller than those of later constructions as a transition from the mud bricks builders were used to. At the other end of the courtyard is a ninety-foot-deep pit, possibly intended as another tomb. There were also a large number of mangy dogs who suddenly decided to start barking at each other. We saw these sorts of dogs everywhere, usually just lying in the sun sleeping.

The pyramid itself is closed, as are many, not so much to preserve the interiors as because they are unsafe. Having tourists die in pyramids is considered bad for tourism. So we proceeded to Mereruka's Tomb next to Teti's Pyramid. This tomb, or mastaba, is known for its wealth of illustrations on the walls. Over the entranceway is a lintel carved to look like a rolled-up door curtain. The first room has scenes of fishing and a hippopotamus hunt. The carving is so accurate that ichthyologists have been able to identify fifty different species of fish, some of which are now extinct. There are other rooms following, with scenes of carpentry, boat-building, agriculture, government (scourging tax evaders), and so on. Of particular interest in the main hall were scenes which showed animals being fed and were (according to Hoda) pictures of an animal hospital. Perhaps, but one wonders how much of our interpretation of these pictures is totally off. As with many of the monuments, photography was not allowed inside--or rather, was only allowed if you paid a five-pound fee (twenty pounds for video cameras). However, flashes are not allowed even with the fee so that makes it academic for us--you practically need a flashlight to walk around.

Lunch was at the Mena House and was a buffet. The grilled chicken was good, as was the stuffed

eggplant and all the Middle Eastern salad-type things. Unfortunately, these buffets seem to cater to tourists in that they have too much Western food.

After lunch, we went a few blocks further to where we started our camel caravan to the Pyramids. The camels are all lined up, seated, and you just take the next one in line (like a taxi stand). You hold on tight to the saddle and lean back when the camel gets up, because the back end goes up first. Then we headed up the hill (on a road) toward the plateau. Halfway up, the camel owners pull over and offer to take our pictures on the camels with the Pyramids in the background. I figured why not? Jane said she never heard of anyone running off with the camera and I also realized that if he stole my Instamatic, I'd get the camel, which seemed like a good deal. However, he didn't take the camera, just a couple of shots of me on "Yankee Doodle Dandy," which he said was the camel's name. He had no trouble using the Instamatic and knew without even looking how to advance the film. (I suspect his primitive look may be a trick.) I tipped him a pound for this. He took it but said he wanted American money because it smelled wonderful. We agreed at the end I would tip him in American money.

On the remaining leg, we passed an English tourist and the camel owner was already trying to sell her a ride back. I felt like telling her that the camel's name for me was Yankee Doodle Dandy, but for her it would be Prince Charles.

The total ride was about a mile (maybe a mile and a half); I have no idea how long it took. We ended up at the Second Pyramid (the Pyramid of Khefre) since the Great Pyramid (the Pyramid of Cheops) is currently closed to tourists. I got off the camel and tipped the driver a dollar (the going rate). You don't tip until they let the camel down or they want more for that. But it's all very friendly and joking, so it isn't as obnoxious as other places.

The main area around each pyramid was supposedly cleared of vendors about a month ago, but they seem to be drifting back. However, based on what other people have told me it is still much improved.

Not everyone took the camel ride, so we rejoined the bus for a brief talk about the Pyramids. There are three: Cheops, Khefre, and Menkaure. Cheops is the largest, but Khefre was built on higher ground so actually appears taller. They're all Fourth Dynasty, about 2500 BC. Hoda claimed they were not built with slave labor, but I think the consensus is that they were. Hoda also didn't mention the recent theory that they were built of poured blocks (like concrete) rather than solid ones.

Those of us who wanted got to go inside the Pyramid of Khefre to see the burial chamber. Not ev-



eryone wanted to--Hoda said it was not recommended for people with high blood pressure, claustrophobia, bad backs, bad knees, etc. The latter are because the passageway is only about three feet high (maybe four) and has a gradient for most of the way of 21 degrees 40 minutes. First you descend about 100 feet of corridor (all figures approximate except the gradient, which I looked up) which is made safer and somewhat easier by the installation of handrails and a plank along the passageway with crossties every couple of feet which keep it from becoming a giant slide. Then there is a short horizontal corridor high enough to stand up in, then an ascent along the twin of the descending corridor into the burial chamber itself. The chamber is 46 feet by 16 feet by 22 feet high, so we did get to stand up. I suppose for some the feeling of having millions of cubic feet of stone on top of them would make them claustrophobic, but it didn't affect me at all. At the top of the chamber is a hole where someone (tomb robbers? Belzoni?) entered. When Belzoni found the chamber in 1818 it was empty, with only the sarcophagus left behind.

To get out we needed to "duckwalk" back the way we came. Having two-way traffic in the passageway made the whole procedure even more difficult. Luckily there were some lights along the way since holding a flashlight would have been difficult.

We then went to see the Solar Boat of Cheops. This was a boat found in a pit to the south of the Pyramid of Cheops in 1954, or rather the pieces of a boat, like a giant model. It was supposed to come together through magic to carry Cheops on his journey with the sun on the underground river at night. That didn't happen, though, and finally the archaeologists decided they'd have to do it themselves. They put a building around the boat. To go in you need to have slippers put over your shoes, not because it's sacred, but to protect the floors and the boat from all the dust you've picked up.

After the Sun Boat we went a short way into the desert to a sort of "Lookout Point" from which we could take pictures of the Pyramids from a distance and also avoid getting lots of city in the picture. (Though a large area has been protected around the Pyramids, the town is within a half-mile of their bases and beginning to wrap around the area.) Of course, hundreds of other tourists had the same idea so it wasn't exactly the serenity of the desert we were experiencing.

The last sight at Giza was the Sphinx. It faces east (the rising sun) and so is better seen in the morning but you make do with what you can. You can't get really close to the Sphinx so we had about fifteen minutes to take pictures and see some of the two temples near its base, neither of which are in very good condition.

Then the bus took us across the street to the "papyrus institute" to see how papyrus was made. This was a five-minute demonstration followed by twenty minutes of opportunity to buy papyrus with paintings on them. We bought three small ones, all with Anubis on them. Before lunch we had stopped at the Karnak Bazaar in Giza, where many people (myself included) bought cartouches with their names on them. I got Mark's name instead--it seemed more romantic. (Aw!) These shopping stops can be overdone, but so far they seem to have a minimal impact on the amount of time to see "real stuff."

Because of traffic we didn't get back to the hotel until 4:30 PM and needed to be ready at 5:30 PM to leave for the Sound and Light Show. No problem, right? Well, the hotel decided to wait until 4:30 to make up our room, so we sat around while they did this, waiting to get into our bathroom. It was a bit of a rush but we made it.

We arrived a few minutes early so had some time to browse through the "California Bazaar," the "Canada Dry Bazaar," and other such authentically named shops. Mark wanted an Anubis for the chatchka table, but Anubis is not nearly as popular as the Sphinx (and most of the statues of this look as

defaced as the original), Nefretiti, or even Baset. William Golding was right about a small number of items forming a large percentage of the tourist wares (An Egyptian Journal).

The Sound and Light Show (or Son et Lumiere, as the French is often used) is held twice nightly in different languages--Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish, and a recent addition, Italian. You can sit in the chairs at ground level, or there is a bar on the second floor of the building there. It begins with the Sphinx talking to you (well, not really, of course, but that's the idea) telling you all that it/he has seen. As he (well, if he's talking, we'll anthropomorphize) talks about each of the Pyramids the lighting changes to emphasize the particular one. There are also readings from ancient love poems and dramatic music. (See The Spy Who Loved Me for a better idea.) The show lasts about 45 minutes. After the show, we returned to the Mena House for dinner and a folklore show. Dinner was undistinguished. I had a squid appetizer in a somewhat gluey sauce and fish fillets coated with coconut and fried, served with banana. It was pretty good but the service was very slow. The show was equally undistinguished, with not-very-good belly dancers. The fundamentalist revival meant that the dancers were fully covered from neck to knees (or more) and some found this disappointing as well. Corny it might have been, but the Sound and Light was considerably better.

We returned to the hotel about 10:30, just in time to see a beautiful fireworks display about a mile upriver, much more elaborate than fireworks back home, with several ground displays we could also see. Then to bed.

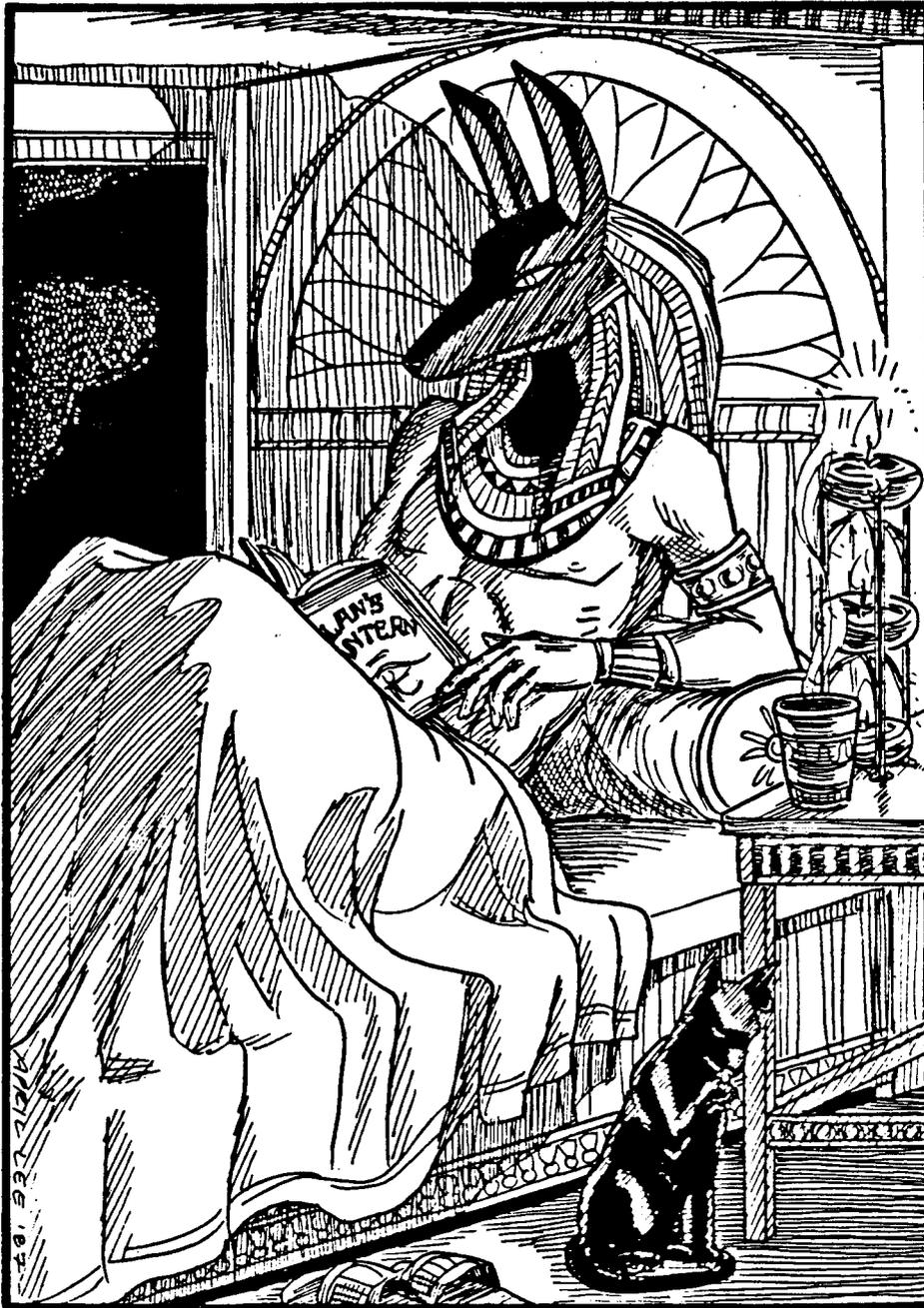
October 16, 1988

I slept late this morning, till almost 11 AM. The past two days were very full and rest was called for. After a Middle Eastern buffet lunch, during which Tom regaled us with the story of his visit to a Coptic church, we decided to go back to the Cairo Museum.

This entailed crossing the street in front of our hotel to get to the Corniche (Riverwalk). The Corniche went under the main street so we didn't have to cross that. Then back across and another block, shooing away all the taxi drivers who wanted to take us to the Pyramids, and we were at the Museum.

First we went upstairs to see some of the rooms there we had missed--one of statues of various deities, one of jewelry, and so on. Occasionally the guards would point out various objects and then want a tip but they always took a "no" graciously.

Then we went down to the main floor, which has all the statuary. For this, the guidebook of an-



cient Egypt we had brought with us was very helpful, as it had a whole itinerary with descriptions through the exhibits. This was especially good, because the Museum was out of English guidebooks. It also meant the guards left us alone because they could see we knew what was what.

I won't bother to describe everything we saw, since most people wouldn't know an Osiride statue from a stela--or care. If you do care, you probably want to go see for yourself anyway.

We left the museum at 3:30. As we were leaving, the guard counted the writing implements in Mark's pocket (four, because he counted the flashlight) and said, "One, two, three, four--too many!" so we gave him a pen and he was happy. We bought some postcards and then left the grounds (the museum closes at 4).

We started to walk around a bit, but the first

thing we had to do was cross the main street and by the time we did that we were exhausted. But seriously, folks.... Actually, Mark wasn't feeling well (a touch of Mummy's Tummy perhaps, though it seems more flu-like--something like what I had in Oaxaca, I guess), and we decided to go back to the hotel. This in itself was a major undertaking, involving crossing two main streets, trolley tracks, and the bus station bus lanes! We made it back safely (trick: cross with a local and downstream of him/her) and spent the rest of the evening in the room. I did browse through a couple of shops in the lobby, but found nothing of great interest. We opted for room service for dinner (something we had never done before in all our travels) and even then I ended up eating most of Mark's dinner (a fruit plate). Mark dozed off during the evening, but neither of us could really get to sleep until almost midnight.

October 17, 1988:

Web had to get up at 2:30 AM for our 5 AM flight to Aswan. On the way to the airport we drove past the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a monument of the 1973 war. It also contains a memorial to Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated in the viewing stand across the street from the Tomb. Seen in the middle of the night, it is an even more solemn site than it would be during the day.

At the airport, they x-rayed our luggage, but did let us pass the film around. We arrived in Aswan about 6:15 AM but had to wait a while before the luggage was retrieved. I used the rest room at the airport--clean than I expected, but strictly B.Y.O.T.P.

We got to the hotel about 7:15 AM after having to wait for the ferry to Elephantine Island, where our hotel was. Our rooms weren't ready so we had breakfast and then sat around the lobby. I dozed off a bit. Finally at 10:45 we got our room (we were the last to get ours) so we quickly changed for our 11 AM lunch. We needed to eat that early so we could be back at the airport for our 1:40 PM flight to Abu Simbel.

Or rather, so we could be back at the airport to wait two extra hours for the 1:40 flight to leave at 3:40. That's the sort of thing that one does in many Third World countries these days, since the airlines seem to show up the worst of the problems. (Even in developed countries, the airlines are the major source of dissatisfaction for travelers.)

So we and hundreds of flies sat around the airport talking, sleeping, reading Tom's second hundred postcards he was sending, and flying. Unfortunately, it was only the flies who were flying. We did get refreshments--a bottle of warm soda. I had Life, which turned out to be red cream soda. We also had a bottle mineral water which had been frozen, so we had ice water for the first time in days.

Finally around 3:30, amidst much pushing and shoving--it was open seating and there were a large number of pushy Italian tourists who would cut in front of you in line--we boarded the plane. The pilot made the forty-minute flight in twenty minutes (pedal to the metal, as they say). From the Abu Simbel airport it was just a short bus ride to the temples. By flying later, it was a little cooler when we arrived.

We walked along the top of a ridge overlooking Lake Nasser. We found out later that this ridge formed the top of the mountain that the temples had been built in originally.

There are two temples, the larger being the better known and more photographed. The guide gave us some explanation of the figures on the outside of the temple, including the four colossi of Rameses

II (again!) and the baboon frieze above them. Then we went inside the temple (the larger one) and the guide started to explain the carvings inside. These were lit by electric lights--for the first two minutes. Then they had a power failure. Luckily Tom had brought a powerful flashlight and the guide used that. It wasn't quite as good, but it saved the day. There were also several other groups to contend with, so it was all rather hectic. Walking back to the buses things had quieted down somewhat and it was possible to get some feeling of majesty and serenity there.

Back by the buses were the vendors. On the way in I had seen a plaster Anubis that I thought Mark might be interested in, so I pointed it out to him. He asked, "How much?" The dealer said, "75 pounds," or about \$30. Mark offered ten pounds. They settled on thirteen pounds and a pen, though after taking the thirteen, the dealer asked for one more before handing over the statue. When I went to pull the money out of his hand, he relented.

Other people bought things, but they seemed to think half off was a good price.

Then back to the airport where we waited for the plane, but only about fifteen minutes to a half hour, and back to Aswan, getting to the hotel about 7:35 PM. At this point we discovered that in cleaning the bathroom they had flooded the room. The water was gone, but the carpet was still wet and my small suitcase and its contents were also wet. Luckily the only things in it were dirty laundry, old t-shirts, and a sweater. (Actually I also had sanitary napkins, but fortunately they were in a zippered rubberized bag.) So I hung the stuff up to dry and at 8:20 we met Tom for dinner in the nightclub.

Dinner was good but not great. Mark and I had what was billed as rack of lamb, but someone else later said was spur. To me it looked like three lamb chops each. I had cream of chicken soup with almonds to start. The desserts seemed typically rubbery, at least Mark's Charlotte Royale. My Creme Caramel (a.k.a. flan) was not bad.

Throughout dinner a four-piece band was playing --a bad four-piece band. They were doing such traditional Egyptian melodies as "Tequila" and "Strangers in the Night." At 10 PM the show started, with Nubian musicians and dancers. The music was obviously influenced more by Africa than by the Middle East and had a lot of energy and a good beat ("it has a good beat; you can dance to it"). The women were covered up even more than in the first show, with only their faces and hands exposed, but it was perfect for this and no one expressed any disappointment over it, though there were some who didn't like the music. (What do they know?) But the three of us loved it. This was followed by a belly dancer who was (according to Tom) a 4 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Throughout dinner we talked about traveling, tours, Travcoa, and the other people on this tour (catty, catty!). We concluded that traveling was great, tours were okay but geared mostly toward older and less adventurous people, Travcoa was not very good, and the other tourists in our group ranged from acceptable to truly awful. (One man claimed he had never seen any good plays in New York, but that Oklahoma City had really great theatre. I thought Frank, a San Franciscan and a New York/London theatre-goer was going to die!) Travcoa has a good reputation but so far we've been disappointed in several things (like having us spend a morning in a hotel lobby). Tom seemed surprised that our tour manager spoke no Arabic. Given how much she claims to love Egypt, this is surprising.

Finally about 11 the warm-up band came back, our signal to leave and go to sleep after a very long day.

October 18, 1988:

After an extremely boring breakfast I changed some money, then sat around writing and talking until 10:30 when we transferred to our boat, the Oberoi Shehryar. Since our cabins wouldn't be ready until noon, we dropped off our bags and went out to walk around the souk/bazaar in town.

Along the waterfront were a lot of tourist shops. We bought some postcards and a necklace there, then walked back a block or so from the water. This seemed a lot less tourist-oriented. Yes, there were t-shirt and galabeya shops, but there were also shops selling spices, pots, underwear, and other everyday items. We watched a man turn his donkey cart around in the narrow alley and another one carrying a live goat on his shoulders. And contrary to everything I had read, it was not particularly dirty or smelly. It was very dusty, of course, but you do not need to carry a handkerchief soaked in cologne as one person suggested.

We returned to the boat, had lunch, then boarded the bus for our afternoon tour. We started by crossing the Aswan Low Dam, whose top forms part of the road from the airport, then drove to the High Dam. The High Dam was built between 1960 and 1971 with the help of the Soviets after the United States put some unacceptable conditions on our aid (probably having to do with Israel). I mentioned earlier the plus and minus sides of the dam, but another minus is that basically the entire land of Nubia was submerged and 100,000 people relocated. Whether they feel the trade-off was fair is a question to ponder.

Next was the Temple of Philae, which was also relocated because of Lake Nasser, to a higher island. The temple was originally on the site of the dinner that Set gave Osiris when he tricked him in-



to the coffin. It is also where the head of Osiris is supposed to be buried. All this was explained with various tour members getting to be the various gods and goddesses. I got to be Isis, Mark was Set, and one of the men of the gay couple was chosen to be Osiris, so when the guide said that Osiris was the god of fertility, this got a good laugh from everyone, though the guide may have been puzzled. The Temple of Philae, dedicated to Isis, was vandalized by early Christians who found many of the figures to be too pagan (though not all--one wonders what criteria they used). Luckily they only plastered over many of them, but some of the larger

ones were chiseled out. The plaster at least can be removed. (By the way, the island the temple is now on is Agilkia. The temple dates from the Ptolemaic period.)

We returned by boat to the bus which we found after some confusion. The guide had told us the number of the bus, but it turned out to be in Egyptian numerals! We then rushed to the Northern Quarries, getting there five minutes before closing time to see the Unfinished Obelisk. This is an obelisk that cracked as it was being cut out of the rock. It would have weighed 1100 tons, but now serves only to show how the quarrying was done since the only marks on it are from quarrying. I had expected something vertical, but it's more like a ten-degree angle from the horizontal.

Then back to the ship to write until dinner. Dinner was an egg and vegetable cold appetizer, chicken piccata, black-eyed salad, potatoes, vegetables, peach melba, and coffee. It was not very good. Red Oak Diner makes better chicken piccata.

After dinner was the captain's cocktail party, which the captain did not attend. The bar had the disco lights going and disco music, but no one was dancing. Gradually people started drifting out, but Tom, Mark, and I decided we had to uphold the honor of the United States and outlast the Italians. It was touch and go, but then Tom mentioned the Fibonacci numbers, which got Mark going and we were the last to leave, at 11 or so.

October 19, 1988:

This morning was mostly devoted to a felucca ride. A felucca is a sailboat with a particular type of sail that I can't really describe very well, but you've seen pictures of them on the Nile. In order to make this seem more worthwhile, we made two stops. One was on Kitchener's Island at the botanical gardens. This would have a pleasant stroll were it not for all the vendors of necklaces, who carried their wares on their arms and seemed to jump out from behind the bushes to badger every tourist they saw. Actually they didn't merely seem to jump out from behind the bushes, they did jump out from behind the bushes. These were the most numerous and persistent vendors so far.

For the first part of the felucca ride we had to tack against the wind, which meant someone had to keep switching from one side to the other to keep the boat from tipping over. For much of the time this was Mark, but eventually he did get to sit on the low side. The second part was with the wind, so was quicker and more level and took us to the Mausoleum of the Aga Khan. The Aga Khan was a 20th Century leader of the Ismailiya sect of the Shiites. His mausoleum, with its sarcophagus of white Italian marble, is on top of a cliff which forms the beginning of the Western, or Libyan, Desert. It's not

a straight up-and-down cliff, but the hike is quite tiring. The Mausoleum itself is plain, or as plain as a building of pink granite and imported marble can be. It was nowhere near as plain as the rock tombs in the cliffs nearby.

We sailed the rest of the way around Elephantine Island (so called because the rocks look like elephants' backs) and saw from a distance the Temple of Khnum, the ram-headed god. It took us a little longer to get back than we expected because the wind had died down but the boat didn't sail on time even though we did make it back.

Lunch was Nile perch, good but it would have been better grilled as described instead of coated and fried. During lunch we sailed north (downriver) to Kom Ombo. All along the western bank was a thin strip of cultivated land and then the desert rising behind it.

Someone in the Cinema Club at work talks about how she loves the desert and desert countries. I can see how she might, because the desert has a certain stark beauty and majesty. It's not my personal cup of tea as a permanent residence but it is fascinating to see. It is not just a flat expanse of sand, but full of dunes and cliffs. Some day maybe we'll go somewhere where we can actually get into the desert on camels rather than seeing it from the Nile or an air-conditioned bus.

After lunch we arrived at Kom Ombo where we saw the temple dedicated to Horus the Elder and Sobek, the crocodile god. This temple dates from Ptolemaic times and has been badly damaged by later religions chipping out the "graven images." In this temple archaeologists found hundreds (maybe even thousands) of mummified crocodiles. Our local guide for Upper Egypt, Rabia, pointed out many interesting sections of carving on the walls. For example, in one section he showed us how the various days of the year and corresponding festivals were listed. In other sections we explained how the carvings depicted the annual wedding of Horus and his bride, each carried in a ceremonial boat by priests from their respective temples to meet one day a year.

One of the disadvantages of seeing the Nile by cruise ship is that whenever you get to a monument, so do hundreds of other tourists. They try to spread out the groups over the whole temple area and do the "high points" in different orders to avoid bunching up, but it's still difficult to sense what a temple must have been like to the ancient Egyptians when it's filled with a dozen groups speaking a half-dozen different languages.

On the way back to the ship we passed through a small bazaar. After some haggling, I bought two galabeyas and Mark bought one. One of the ones I bought turned out to be large on me, so Mark got it and I think I'm getting the one he bought. (A galabeya is a long cotton gown.)

We then sailed to Edfu where we docked for the

night. At 5 PM I went up for tea in the lounge, then went into the small shop to browse. While I was there, there were four other American women. One was buying something for her daughter who was also on the cruise. Another one asked where the daughter was and someone said she was in the bar talking to a couple of guys. "Are they good-looking?" one asked. "Are they rich?" said another. A third said, "Are they single?" I turned to the mother and said, "They're together" which just cracked them all up. The mother said, "You really know how to destroy a mother!" In addition to destroying a mother, I bought some postcards and some stamps. I've been buying postcards of David Roberts' drawings of 19th Century Egypt--great stuff!

Dinner was an Egyptian buffet, though most of the hot dishes didn't look particularly Egyptian. Also, the lines were so long and crowd control so poor that I had just salads and cheese, and that seemed to fill me up just fine.

After dinner was the galabeya party. Each group had to present a skit. We did one on mummification; two other groups did one on tourists; the other two groups did slave markets. At least we were original, but we didn't place well. However, everyone seemed to get the same prizes--cheap plastic necklaces and cheap camel toys. Most people did not wear galabeyas. After this some of the crew came out and performed some Nubian music and dances for us and we ended up in a giant "conga line" around the whole lounge. However, when they replaced the Nubian music with disco, that was our cue to leave.

October 20, 1988:

Breakfast selection was so sparse I had corn flakes. So far on this trip the food is the worst of any trip we've had. I think we shall avoid tours with all meals included when possible in the future.

At 8 AM we went to see the temple of Edfu, the Temple of Horus. To do this we climbed up a stone stairway for the dock to our horse carriages. Unfortunately, this stone stairway was also where they washed down the after-effects of the horse-drawn carriages above. We rode four in a carriage through town--Mark got to ride with the driver. (This sort of thing is not as appealing to the older folks, I guess, partially because it involves climbing up there.) The town was probably a typical town in Egypt with donkeys traveling side by side with cars, meat hanging in open shops, and all the activity and bustle that is missing from your average American town, but more common in other countries which are more agriculturally oriented.

In the Temple of Horus we heard how Horus finally defeated Set. Set had taken the form of a hippopotamus and we saw scenes of Horus hunting and

eventually castrating the hippopotamus. This was depicted in a sequence of carvings which Rabia said represented scenes in a play which would have been performed here. Other carvings showed the sacred marriage between Horus and Hathor. In the courtyard was a particularly fine statue of a ferocious-looking Horus in the form of a falcon (rather than just falcon-headed). Within the temple were many elaborate columns in hypostyle halls. While the common people could enter the courtyard, only the priests could enter the hall and only the high priest and pharaoh could enter the sanctuary. In the sanctuary is the pink granite naos or niche in which the statue of the god was kept. The statue has long since "gone missing." In another small room behind the sanctuary was a replica of the boat used to carry the statue in processions. There was a side room used for oracles, complete with a hole in the floor through which the priest could control the statue of the god for the oracle.

After finishing the tour/lecture Rabia gave us fifteen minutes to get back to the carriages, which were only two minutes walk away. There was a large courtyard at the other end of the temple which seemed to have some structures in it so we walked down to see what it was. It was the front courtyard of the temple, complete with flanking statues of Horus and giant figures on the facade. How any tour could miss taking people around to see that is not clear to me. There were also some partial buildings across the courtyard from the main temple that we looked at which didn't have the usual swarm of crowds.

Finally we went back to the carriage and rode back to the boat. I highly recommend the carriage ride. It cost four pounds for four people and included round-trip plus waiting for us about forty-five minutes at the temple and is a good way to see the town without rushing through in a taxi or bus. In New York you don't even want to think about what such a ride would cost. Most towns in Egypt seem to rely more on carriage rides than taxis anyway.

Getting back to the boat was a little easier and cleaner--they had thrown pieces of cardboard over the worst sections of the steps. But we were late leaving because they couldn't get one of the metal stakes out of the stone dock. (To tie up, they drive metal stakes into the dock and tie up to them.) It took them a half-hour of hammering and pulling to get the last one out.

It took about three hours to sail to Esna past mostly farms with water buffalo, donkeys, and an occasional camel. We saw one tractor the whole time. We also passed a couple of factories, but no one wants to waste valuable farmland for factories.

After lunch we lined up to disembark for Esna. There was a problem, however. The power to raise and lower the gangplank was out. So for about a half hour we watched a couple of the crew members

standing on the gangplank (which had been swung around to form a sort of balcony in front of the door) trying to work it with a control box hanging from above. Eventually they all came back in to go up to the top deck, from which they started pulling up the cord and control box. As luck would have it (at least our luck), the cord had wrapped itself in a knot around the gangplank railing. Since no one from the crew was around, I climbed out onto the gangplank over the railing across the doorway and untied the cord and gave it two yanks down, at which point they raised it the rest of the way. In the process I also gave Jane heart failure when she saw me climbing out onto the gangplank--I think she thought I was going to swim for shore. Then someone came over and thanked her for saving me so that so she figured they had asked me. I told her "No" and she said she was glad she didn't know that at the time! Anyway, they then used a crane (a different one?) to swing the gangplank out and the cruise ship passengers hit Esna. (I got to be the first one off.)

Esna is known for the Temple of Khnum which is arrived at by walking through the bazaar, which is about two blocks long. Then we went down a steep flight of steps to the temple, the ground level having risen over the years to be almost level with the temple's roof.

Khnum (in one legend) was the creator of everything. He was a god local to Upper Egypt, though, so most books which emphasize the monuments of Lower Egypt give him short shrift. This temple is similar to that in Edfu in its hypostyle hall, but is much smaller. It's amazing how much of the color, particularly at the tops of the columns under the roof, remains. Again, Rabia explained many of the scenes and hieroglyphics on the walls with which I will not bore you.

We walked back through the bazaar. A boy asked Mark for a pen, so he gave him one of the pens we had brought to give away. But the boy didn't want that one; he wanted Mark's flashlight (which looks like a pen). We kept saying no and he kept wheedling until finally I said "No!" so loud that three vendors turned around. Here is someone basically asking for a handout and then complaining it isn't generous enough.

We went back to the boat because we were told to be back by 3:30, but the boat didn't leave until after dinner. Several people complained they would have liked to stay on shore longer, to which Jane gave her standard response: it's not her fault, it's not Travcoa's fault, it's the boat's fault. Except that we were paying Travcoa to deal with the boat. I am not pleased with Travcoa so far and am curious if Kenya will be better.

Dinner was the best on board so far--gazpacho, tomato and cucumber salad, and lamb kofta (sort of like sausage but without a casing). After dinner

we wrote in our logs and watched part of part two of a Soviet film dubbed in English with Arabic subtitles (Siberiade).

About 11:30 PM we finally got into the lock just north of Esna. They let ships through only two or three times a day to avoid typing up traffic on the bridge across the river since they also have to swing the bridge section out of the way. We were the only people from our group to be on deck to watch this, but there were quite a few Andorrans. When this excitement was over, we went to bed while the boat continued on to Luxor, arriving about 4 AM. A series of problems and poor planning meant that we did most of our sailing when we didn't have a chance to see anything.

October 21, 1988:

This was it. The big one. The high point of the trip (or at least of the Egypt part). The Valley of the Kings, the Valley of the Queens (or Queens, as Tom said), the Temple of Karnak, the Temple of Luxor. So we were all out promptly at 7 AM to get on the buses. There were no buses. In fact, we weren't even in Luxor, but a few miles upstream. So we spent an hour getting increasingly angry at Jane, Travcoa, the ship, and anyone else who contributed to this mess. Rather than give you all the gory details I will just say that at 8 AM a ferry came to take us to the buses across the river. Jane immediately told us that we would get back for lunch an hour later so no sightseeing would be dropped or shortened. This placated us enough that we didn't lynch her on the spot.

We drove west toward the Valley of the Kings. Our first stop was at the Colossi of Memnon, two giant stone statues which at one time probably flanked the road to the Valley of the Queens and other areas at the edge of the Western Desert. Now they sit partially ruined, in the middle of a cane field.

We then proceeded to the Valley of the Queens and in particular the tomb of Queen Hatshepsut. On the way we passed many houses with brightly decorated fronts. These are the homes of those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca and often have a picture of a plane or a ship to show how they got there.

Queen Hatshepsut ruled in her own right around 1475 B.C.; until Ptolemaic times, there were few female rulers. Her mortuary temple (as opposed to a cult temple, which were most of what we had seen to date) is three-tiered and surrounded on three sides by high desert cliffs. With its facade of simple square columns, it looks more like a public library than a pharaonic tomb. A lot of restoration work is going on; the Polish are currently working on reconstructing the third level.

We had a group photo taken here, being a some-

what better backdrop than the ship's lounge. Then back to the bus where we had to wait for one person who was still shopping (there's always one!). But finally Mark got back and we could leave.

We stopped next at the Tomb of Khaemwese. I helped Rabia negotiate with a Spanish-speaking group as to who would go in first (we let them go first). It was very hot, partly because the white rocks of the hills and cliffs in which the tombs were cut reflected a lot of heat and light.

It was really surprising how well-preserved the tombs are, especially the colors. It is true that they have been protected from light for thousands of years, but it is still amazing to see. Khaemwese was the eldest son of Rameses III and died while he was still a child. So in the pictures he is shown with the long lock of hair that boys wore until they were circumcised (about 12 or 13). Also, Khaemwese is being presented to the gods by his father, rather than standing on his own. The tomb itself is about the size of a small house inside, though the ceilings are higher than normal ceilings. And it's even hotter inside the tomb because there is no ventilation or air flow (the mummy certainly wouldn't need it!). The attendant/guard walked around fanning us with the foil-covered cardboard he had which he also used to reflect light from the entrance at the end of the main tunnel onto the walls and into the side rooms. Again, I'm sure you don't want detailed descriptions and layouts for everything we see; read Murnane's Guide to Ancient Egypt published by Penguin if you do.

From the Valley of the Queens we went to the Valley of the Kings, passing the Ramesesum (or Medinet Habu) on the way. This is Rameses II's mortuary temple and had been listed on our itinerary but we didn't stop. (It looked like it might be currently closed to the public.)

Then on to the main part of the Valley of the Kings, a cluster of several tombs around the "Temple of Coca-Cola," as Rabia called it. (Actually the snack bar served Sport Cola.) We went first to Tut-ankh-amen's Tomb, discovered in 1922 virtually intact. All the other tombs had been plundered, but the only grave robbers to find Tut's Tomb were discovered in the act and the tomb resealed, this shortly after the original burial. Then it remained hidden, in part because the rubble from another tomb had been piled on top of it a few hundred years later and this concealed it. Having seen all that was found in the tomb, we were expecting something much larger. The antechamber is about 12 feet by twenty feet and the main chamber the same, with two tiny rooms, one off each of the larger ones. The walls still had all (or almost all) of the gold paint and the mummy case was displayed here. They are very strict about photography here. In all the other tombs they merely tell you not to take pho-

tos; here they make you check your camera at the entrance.

After this we went into the Tomb of Rameses III, a much larger (longer) tomb than the first. This has a dogleg where the diggers ran into an earlier tomb. It probably also deterred grave robbers for a while, but not entirely, since this tomb was also empty when recently rediscovered.

We had about twenty minutes on our own after that, so Mark and I went into the Tomb of Amenhotep II. This was not a straight-line tomb like the others, but made a right-angle turn halfway in. It also had three sets of descending stairs. When we finally got to the pillared hall where the sarcophagus is kept, I understood the phrase "quiet as a mummy's tomb." In the other tombs and in the pyramid you could hear other tourists so it never hit you how that many tons of rock would block out all sound.

Climbing back up those three flights of stairs in the heat made me decide to visit the "Temple of Coca-Cola." Then back to the bus. Mark did some haggling on the way and picked up some more statues. Why does he keep buying rocks. Our suitcase will weigh a ton!

On the ferry back to the ship, Tom bought a stone head (of Akhenaten?) from an extremely persistent vendor about ten years old. When Mark said he might buy a head, Tom said he really didn't want this one and sold it to him at cost. More rocks!

After lunch we went to the Temple of Karnak, outside Luxor. This for me was the high point of our time in Egypt. It is not a single temple really, but a multi-acre, multi-temple complex. We entered through the gate at one end of the Avenue of the Sphinxes (these are ram-headed rather than human-headed) and proceeded through the hypostyle hall with its 134 columns, so big that one hundred men could have stood on the top of one, and over seventy feet tall. We saw the two remaining obelisks; the rest have been taken to such places as New York, London, Paris, and Rome. This dispersal is bad in that it is removing some of Egypt's cultural heritage (frequently with absolutely no compensation), yet the argument can be made that it is humanity's cultural heritage and if it all stayed in Egypt only a few people would be able to see it. And certainly there are things that cannot be moved--the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the Temple of Karnak. You could wander around for hours and not see everything. That from the first construction to the final additions took 2000 years of almost continual work may give you some idea of its size. The Pyramids and Sphinx are one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (aside--I wonder who picked the list), but I have to agree that Karnak surpasses them.

One of the things that makes seeing these monuments less spiritual than it might be is that ever-

where you go, guards and attendants want to point out interesting things and then want (demand, practically) baksheesh--a tip. Now, I can understand this for staff in hotels and restaurants, but when civil servants have to do this to earn a decent living--and I suspect they do--that tells me that the economy is not all it should be. I would be happier if the government raised the admission price for all the monuments, or at least raised it for non-Egyptians. \$1.50 or so to get into the Cairo Museum is dirt-cheap. But I suppose even if they doubled it and paid the guards better, baksheesh is too ingrained a concept in the culture. One could have a spectrum of tipping with Egypt near one end and Iceland at the other (they run after you with your change if you leave it). China was near Iceland but is apparently shifting away.

After Karnak we went to the Temple of Luxor at the other end of the Avenue of the Sphinxes. The middle section of the avenue is missing, having been supplanted over the years by the town spreading out. Some fragments can be seen here and there between the buildings.

Though smaller than Karnak, the Temple of Luxor is interesting for having had within it a mosque and a Coptic church. The mosque is even still in use.

After an early dinner we went back to Karnak for the Sound and Light Show. For this one you walk through the halls and courtyards as it proceeds and finish up seated by the sacred lake. Though the end part dragged a little, it was still much better than the show at Giza. Towards the end we had a lot of competition from the minarets of Luxor because of the Prophet's Birthday on Saturday or Sunday (we get conflicting information). It formed an interesting counterpoint but was at the same time distracting. We bought the audio cassette so we can try it later without distractions, but unfortunately in New Jersey instead of Karnak.

When we got back to the boat we finished packing and went to bed.

October 22, 1988:

This morning we flew back to Cairo. It shouldn't surprise you that the flight was late. On the way to the hotel, I told Mark and Tom what we should have done was tell the boat's captain the first day that we didn't like the food and ask if we could eat with the crew. They liked the idea but Jane said she would have died.

We had lunch with Tom and ordered all the Egyptian food on the menu we could find. Mizzeah is a Middle Eastern version of the pu-pu platter (which is a Chinese smorgasbord) and has an assortment of appetizers: hummous, baba ganough, korbeba, and so on. Then we decided to go back to the Khan-al-Kalili Bazaar. Basically this was us tagging along with



Tom--he arranged for the taxi and all. For a taxi, you tell them how many hours you want them for, end-to-end, then negotiate a price and pay them afterwards. If you pay them when you get out to do shopping or whatever, they have no incentive to wait.

We walked around for about an hour. We started in the tourist section and Tom bought a couple of things. It was fun watching him bargain though he may be something of an easy mark because he doesn't press them very hard. For one shop we ended up going up a narrow flight of stairs to a small brass shop on the second floor. There are a lot of these "second-story jobs" that not many tourists know about or see.

Gradually we found ourselves out of the tourist section and into the real market area where there were piles of onions, stands selling food, a stand where people could burn incense, people fixing engines, etc. It was fascinating to watch and because I was a woman no one really bothered me. Everyone said hello to Tom and Mark, though, stroking their chins because of the matching beards. At one point Tom gave a legless beggar twenty pounds and on the way back the beggar insisted on kissing both him and Mark, twice on the cheeks. There is no welfare here; people in need depend on the alms-giving all good Muslims are supposed to do. Tom seems to exemplify the saying about casting one's bread upon the waters--he appears to be both very generous and very rich.

After a terrific hour--Mark and I alone would not have been as adventuresome--we returned to the pre-appointed corner. The driver was there, but no taxi. The streets had been closed off because of the Prophet's Birthday (Mullah Denebi or something like that) and would we mind walking a block to the taxi? Of course not, except the block was closer to a mile and uphill. But even this worked out because we got to see the parade and to teach the driver to sing "Happy Birthday to You" for Mohammed. The ride back was a real kamikaze ride, but great fun as we kept joking with the driver about his driving.

We arrived back in time to pack (we seem to do a lot of that) and dress for our gala farewell party. Tom talked about going into town for the festival but with that traffic we probably couldn't make it back in time for the plane.

At the cocktail party, I tried a gin and tonic, which was the drink of the trip. I didn't like it. Jane handed out the group photos and cartouche key-chains with our names on them, as well as delivering the cartouches we had ordered. Mark's name was different on the two; I wonder which is correct.

Dinner was at the King Tut Room. I had--can you guess?--lamb cutlets; Mark had the mixed grill. For desert I had flan and Mark had pomegranate seeds--very good. I also had a couple of glasses of Haenckel Trocken (sp?) which Tom ordered on Jean's recommendation. It was very good and, after saying goodbye to everyone and swapping addresses and hugs, I was able to go to sleep for about three hours.

#### KENYA

October 23, 1988:

At 1 AM we got up for our transfer to the airport for the 4 AM flight which left at 5 AM. The usual chaos and molasses-like service ruled at the airport. I slept most of the flight but did wake up for the last part. Kenya is beautiful from the air -- green with mountains and much more variety than Egypt. We landed and went through immigration, currency control, and customs. On the other side of all this, we were met by John, who told us that 1) most of the people on the tour were stuck in Frankfurt and 2) we would be in Nairobi a couple of days before going on safari. This was good news, especially to Margaret who hadn't gotten any sleep at all. We started for the Hilton. There were flowering shrubs all along the road. The contrast with Egypt was amazing.

On the way in we, or rather the driver, got a speeding ticket. Some things are the same everywhere.

At the hotel we met Cathy Porter, our tour manager. She told us that there was yet another change of plans and that we were flying to Governors' Camp after lunch. She did manage to get us a room to repack our suitcases since you can take only a small bag to this camp.

We had a quick briefing with Marie and Matt from Philadelphia who had also arrived. The plan was this: we six would fly out to Governors' Camp this afternoon, have a game run when we arrive, take our balloon ride Monday morning, take another game run Monday afternoon, one more Tuesday morning, then return to Nairobi. Everyone else would join us at Governors' on Monday and balloon on Tuesday. (They

were delayed because Pam Am canceled the Frankfurt-Nairobi flight Saturday--Cathy thinks it was because it was underbooked though of course they won't admit it.)

After lunch we went to Wilson Airport where we caught our plane to Governors' Camp. It was not a 747. It was, in fact, a DC-3 that had flown in the Berlin airlift.

The flight was about an hour. As we were coming in to the airstrip we flew over a herd of elephants. I couldn't see very much because 1) we had seats over the wing, 2) I had the aisle seat, and 3) I was trying desperately not to throw up. I succeeded but it was close. I will definitely take Dramamine for the flight back.

From the airstrip we went by Land Rover to the camp. Our tent overlooks the river and is very comfortable. It's about ten feet and twelve feet with two single beds, a desk and stool, nightstands, and clothes rack. In back and accessible through the back door is a slightly smaller tent with rubberized walls and floor (the main tent has a matted floor) that has a sink, shower, and flush toilet. No bidet though--we are roughing it, after all. There is no electricity so far as we can tell; all the lighting is from gas lanterns or flashlights.

After a half-hour to freshen up we went on a "game run." I've heard that this term marks one as



a tourist, but so it goes. We saw many of the same animals we saw on the way in from the airstrip as well as many others: black-faced vervet monkeys, olive baboons (they play on the riverbank across from our tent), jackal, hyena, cheetah, several lions, elephants (from a distance--they like swampy ground but the Land Rover doesn't), zebras, wart-hogs, hartebeest, topis, waterbucks, impala, and Thompson's gazelles. The greatest numbers were of topis and gazelles, in groups of several dozen or so. Oh, we also saw Grant's gazelles and cape buffalo. The latter are very dangerous and frequently charge the vehicles but we had no problem. There were also various birds: saddle-billed stork (which look like they have a brightly painted wooden box on their bills), crowned crane, eagles, plovers, and many others we didn't get identified. We were out for about an hour and a half and returned at sunset. It was wonderful--everything we hoped it would be.

Dinner was at 8 PM in the main dinner tent: soup, grilled fish, braised lamb (not nearly as good as the lamb in Egypt), and fresh strawberries. To get to and from your tent after sundown you flash your flashlight and a guard with a lantern and spear accompanies you. This may seem unnecessary, but apparently late that night an elephant got into the camp.

October 24, 1988:

We slept well. Animal noises don't keep me awake and no real sleep the night before helped. At 5:30 AM our tent attendant brought us coffee and rolls. However, since we had to dress and be at the Land Rovers at 5:50 this gave us time for about two gulps of coffee. We drove to the Mara River and crossed by ferry to Little Governors' Camp. The ferry is a seven-person rowboat tied with a loop to a rope tied across the river. We then walked to where the balloon launch was, spotting a giraffe and a hippo on the way.

The balloon is a multi-colored striped balloon of nylon about sixty feet high. The basket can hold ten people and the pilot. They were still inflating the balloon when we got there but within fifteen minutes we climbed into the basket and began our ascent.

Riding in a balloon is unlike anything else I've done. The motion is very smooth and the only way you realize you're moving at all is that you see the ground passing under you. You don't feel wind on your face, because you're traveling with the wind. Unfortunately, there was not much game. The rains were plentiful so the massive migrations didn't have to come this far this year. We did see a lion and a cheetah, as well as hippos, buffalo, zebra, and various antelopes (this covers gazelles, waterbucks, and so on).

After an hour and a half of floating, with the only noise the sound of the burner when it was turned on, we landed. This is a little bumpier than taking off. Everyone crouched in the basket holding on to rope handles. The basket bounced twice, dragged a fair distance, and finally came to rest on its side such that we all ended up lying on our backs. This, I hasten to add, is normal.

We were met by the retrieve vehicles and had the traditional champagne toast (okay, so Mark had grapefruit juice). Then we had a picnic breakfast of bacon, sausage, mushrooms, French toast, and coffee. Then we took a game run back to camp (about ten miles as the crow flies, I think). This was much more productive in terms of sightings than the flight. Zebras, gnus, topis, and a large herd of buffalo were just some of the animals we saw. We also saw marabou storks, secretary birds, Egyptian geese, vultures, kites, a lilac-breasted roller, and a lot of unidentified birds.

We also passed by a Maasai village and saw several Maasai along the road. We did not take their pictures because we didn't want a spear through the side of the Land Rover. They do not like having their picture taken, or rather, some do not like having their picture taken and some insist on being paid for it.

We arrived back at camp around 11 AM, rested a couple of hours, then joined the other four Travcoa people for lunch (a buffet). We discovered that they even have diet Coke but we don't know what the artificial sweetener is. It also costs 25% more than regular Coke--24 cents instead of 19 cents.

After lunch we did log writing, resting, browsing in the shop (we got a Maasai spear), and watching the baboons. Around 3 PM the baboons across the river came out. There were about fifteen or so. One was a female (in heat, I believe, because the hind-quarters were very brightly colored) who presented herself to the male and apparently received permission to groom him, which she started doing. We watched until 4, when our afternoon run started, so we had to leave before anything really interesting happened.

The afternoon run could be called "Stalking the Wild Rhinoceros." There are only fourteen rhinos in the Maasai Mara Reserve and only two of them are near Governors' Camp (though "near" is an exaggeration). So we drove out to try to find them.

Of his trip to Kenya, Mike Resnick wrote, "We saw more wildebeest [on our afternoon run], i.e., we couldn't get away from them." Well, we saw wildebeest but for us the can't-get-away-from animal is the zebra. There are also lots of gazelles and topi, but the zebras are everywhere. It looks like a giant circus.

We came across a group of elephants (about ten, not enough to be called a herd) and watched them for a time while they watched us. Matt is a manic

photographer and the stops are mostly controlled by him, though the rest of us usually agree that what he wants to photograph we want to see.

After about an hour or maybe even an hour and a half of various antelopes, we found the rhinos. They were a female and her offspring--what is a baby rhino called anyway? We watched them for about twenty minutes. First the baby was nursing, then the two were just ambling around. Most baby animals are cute. Rhinos are the exception. Even the babies are ugly. And the bird shit on the mother's face didn't help her appearance any either.

Then Benson (our driver) asked if we wanted to see hippos. How far, we asked. About half an hour. Sure, we said, though some less enthusiastically than others. We bounced along roads which were just two tracks in the dirt, or even in the mud or across a stream. It was hot and dusty. If I never saw another zebra again I would be just as happy. After at least forty-five minutes we reached a swampy area followed by a rocky field which looked like some old volcanic rock covered in spots by soil. After a mile or so of this, Benson parked the Land Rover on a cliff overlooking the Mara River and there, about thirty feet below us, were about twenty hippos. It was really an amazing sight. Benson, Matt, and Mark went a ways along the cliff to get a better angle for pictures while the other four of us waited by the Land Rover. We were watching the hippos who suddenly we heard a sound like something falling down the cliff. Our first thought was that one of the three fell in, but a quick glance proved that fear groundless. Our next thought was that one of the cameras had fallen down the rocks. After a couple of seconds we spotted the source of the sound--Benson had thrown a rock down the embankment to attract the hippos' attention. Well, it did that and they started opening their mouths and such, but it also gave us heart palpitations.

After twenty minutes or so here, we decided to head back because it was getting dark. But we still kept making stops--for two bat-eared foxes at one point and a long stop near a cheetah and her cub. The mother had been stalking a gazelle but gave up, maybe because we came along but probably not. They were sitting on a hillock when we pulled up. The baby was very curious and came up and stood against the tire and meowed. Finally we really had to go. It was getting dark fast and we were getting cold; it had been hot when we left and we had dressed accordingly. As we drove, the full moon rose over the Mara and made the whole scene so perfect we didn't mind the heat, the cold, the dust, or the bumps.

We got back to camp after dark (at about 7 PM) and were the last ones back. Benson said that the dark wasn't a real problem and that he and often driven around on the Mara at night. I would have felt better if I had known this beforehand.

At 8 PM we went to the common area and met the rest of our group who had finally arrived. (We had met a few at lunch, or rather after lunch, but this was the first time the whole group was together.) They were busy deciding how to decide who would get the spots on the balloon ride.

I have to observe at this point that our fully escorted tour has not been quite that. We were on our own for the flight from New York to Cairo, the first night in Cairo, the flight from Cairo to Nairobi, and the first day in Kenya. I am not entirely pleased with Travcoa's handling of this tour.

We ordered mineral water at dinner. It costs about ten times what sodas do. Cathy recommends ordering a club soda instead.

After dinner I had to deal with an unexpected problem. My period, which has never arrived early, decided a tented camp with a candle-lit bathroom was a good place to start. Luckily I had four tampons in my overnight case, since most of our luggage was in Nairobi. (Later I heard from someone else that one of the women campers killed in Yosemite by bears was also having her period. Apparently wild animals have a very strong sense of smell, and this should be considered in scheduling camping trips.)

October 25, 1988:

At about 1:15 this morning we heard loud cracking outside our tent. We looked out the windows and discovered an elephant was about four feet from our tent destroying the fence. Life is never dull around here. Mark also saw one on the way back from dinner two tents down and we heard another(?) belching that I said was either very loud or very close.

After breakfast at 6 AM, we started on our morning game drive at 6:30. Not very far into it we found a pride of about two dozen lions, including two males, and followed them for quite a while through what seemed like impenetrable brush. But Benson found his way through and we managed to regain the track. There are no roads here but there are well-known tracks. We almost saw the pride attack a buffalo but the buffalo regained the rest of the herd in time.

The next major sight was a herd of migrating wildebeest, mixed with zebra of course. There were hundreds, but later we saw an even larger herd with a large bunch and a line strung out from the left horizon to the right horizon.

We finally got to our goal: the giraffes. There were only about seven; they don't travel in large groups.

After the giraffes, I spotted a hippo and Benson managed to find the rest of the group, which we observed from a cliff across the river. There were about three dozen hippos, but they were all pretty

lethargic. Then later we saw a crocodile. On the way back we saw several more giraffes and some baboons.

Then breakfast, packing, and hanging around for the flight back. Wesat in the front seats this time and though it was bumpy, the dramamine really seemed to help. We got a bit of a chance to talk to Cathy. She's already developed a dislike for one woman on the tour (she didn't say which one) who asked at the orientation where she could buy ivory--the sale of which is illegal in Kenya. Also, we are not supposed to talk about or even mention South Africa (though they do have stories about it on the news). I have a feeling a lot of the tour members may not be cut out for a safari--time will tell.

We checked into the Hilton. It took about an hour to get our bags out of storage. Then I did a quick laundry--almost everything we had was dirty. This is our last two-night stop for a while, so I wanted to get caught up.

We had lunch in the Amboseli Grill--a buffet which was somewhat depleted because of the late hour (2:30 PM). It was okay, nothing great. There was an interesting corn curry dish--there is a strong Indian influence here. The brie afterward was very nice also.

We changed some money, did another load of laundry, then walked around outside. We bought batteries for the camera. Either our old ones were really old or the heat discharges them faster. We still have four that I know are fresh, but this is our last stop where things are reasonably priced. We also bought a couple of books and some souvenirs at the East Africa Wildlife Society. They're cheaper elsewhere but they're so cheap in any case (a carved elephant is a couple of dollars) that I don't mind spending the extra in a good cause.

There is one problem with walking around in Nairobi: the student scam. A young man comes up to a tourist and starts a conversation. He says he's a student and has been accepted at Cornell (or some other American school) but he's a couple of hundred dollars short of being able to go. At last three people tried this on us in an hour (the first one got in a couple of sentences; the other two we just walked away from as soon as they started). After a while it became like an obstacle course, or at least seemed like that. At least the three-card monte dealers in New York are passive rather than active con artists. There's also the dropped envelope ploy, which we haven't yet seen. The area around the Hilton is much like the Times Square area, with a lot of souvenir stores of dubious value. Also, it's not safe after dark and even during the day, we are warned, pickpockets are everywhere. It is not one of my favorite cities.

I was really exhausted so I went back to the hotel and took a nap while Mark walked around some



more and fended off more "students." About 6 PM he came back and about 7 he suggested the African Heritage Cafe for dinner. This is a place recommended by a couple of the books we have which serves traditional African food. So we got a taxi (no one would dream of walking in Nairobi at night) and went. The food was really good--injira bread, spicy (perhaps too spicy) Ethiopian stew, and a whole bunch of other stuff. It was a buffet so we were able to try a lot of different things. The whole thing came to 255 Kenyan shillings or about \$14 for the two of us plus \$4.40 for the taxi--it's interesting that the transportation is such a major portion of the meal. After dinner we took a taxi back and went to sleep.

October 26, 1988:

We got to sleep in this morning--till 7:30 AM, which on this trip is late. We had breakfast with Ken and Sue (his mother). She wanted to come to Africa but not on her own so she paid for his trip also. So he came and his wife stayed home. Strange.

At 9 AM we had our city tour. Frankly, there isn't much to see in Nairobi. The high points seem to be Kenyatta's tomb, the Jomo Kenyatta Conference Center, the train station, and the city museum. The city museum is a fairly small natural history museum whose only real claim to fame is its snake farm. This also has lizards, tortoises, and crocodiles as well as someone with a sense of humor painting

signs. The sign on the crocodile pool said, "Persons throwing refuse in this pool will be forced to retrieve it."

After the museum we drove to Kiambethu Farm up in the hills. This was about an hour's drive over somewhat bumpy roads. The way people complained, I hate to think what they'll be like on Tanzanian roads.

Kiambethu Farm was owned by Mrs. Mitchell. She sold most of it ten years ago but kept the house and a few acres. She told us about how her parents came to Kenya around the turn of the century and tried various crops before finally settling on tea. Then we got an explanation of how tea is grown, picked, and processed. For example, pickers are paid by the kilo, so some pick more of the stem than they should. Others throw old nails and stuff into the baskets, so the factory has a magnet to remove these before they foul up the machinery. Afterwards we walked through the woods and saw some Sykes' monkeys and Colobus monkeys as well as two newborn twin calves (less than a day old). I thought her talk and the walk were interesting but several people found it boring--they wanted to know what this had to do with animals or as one person said, "I came to see animals, not learn how to raise tea." In China too people wanted to see only one sort of thing (pre-Mao stuff) and were not interested in schools or anything modern.

During lunch we talked to a friend of Mrs. Mitchell about crime. Apparently all the farms have alarm buttons which can call a squad of commandos from a private security company to which they pay dues. So if someone tries to break in, the squad comes out and beats them up. I guess the local police are not effective enough in this regard.

After lunch we drove down to the local church, in whose courtyard Louis Leakey is buried. (There's something morbid about all the people who wanted their picture taken with the headstone.) It looked like a typical English church; the stained glass windows were some that were removed from England during the Blitz for safe-keeping and I guess their original church destroyed.

Then back to Nairobi for our group picture (in front of the Hilton--what a lovely backdrop!) and more "at leisure." At leisure in Nairobi seems to mean sitting in the hotel room--it's just not a very interesting or safe town to walk around in. In many ways, Nairobi is like Lima and for that matter, the Kenyan countryside is like the Peruvian countryside. I don't mean the terrain, but the standard of living and general appearance of the towns. Nairobi itself seems to be a city that portrays itself as a fully developed city, but situated as it is in a developing country, it doesn't quite succeed. It may have a modern conference, but the Hilton's toilets are the loudest I've heard

in a long time, the sink stopper leaks, and the radio volume is erratic.

At 6:30 PM we had a cocktail party and lecture by Dr. Coch of the University of Nairobi (or possibly Nairobi University). He gave a very good history of early man and of the paleontological work, both past and present, to find out more about him. For example, they use potassium-argon dating of the volcanic ash layers to date the fossils, as carbon-14 isn't reliable for more than about 50,000 years. Again, I won't try to recount his entire lecture. He was much better than our lecturer in Cairo.

For dinner we went to the Carnivore. At this restaurant they cook huge haunches of meat over a flame pit in the center, then bring them around to your table and carve them there. We tried camel and eland in addition to the usual beef, lamb, and chicken. The camel was very tender, sort of like very good roast beef. The eland was extremely tough without much flavor. The rest you know. There were also about a dozen small dishes of sauces and relishes. For dessert we had strawberries and cream--strawberries are either very common or very popular here.

Then we took the cab back to the Hilton. It seems to be the standard in Third World countries to have the cab wait rather than being able to call a cab. Perhaps this is a reflection on the phone system?

October 27, 1988:

Up early and on the road by 9 AM. And what a road! First off, we were in four mini-vans of six people each. Each van had eight seats so everyone got a window and there was plenty of room for hand luggage. The road to the Mt. Kenya Safari Club started out okay, but the main road was being repaired so we needed to take a diversion (detour). This was a combination of paved and gravel road though the paved felt no better than the gravel. Both were equally bone-jarring, especially when we hit the speed bump at 80 kph (50 mph). Mark and I were in the back seat and it was exciting, I tell you.

The ride was supposed to take two hours, but took closer to four with a couple of stops, one in a town named Karatina and the other at a sign on the equator. Mark bought a shield at the first, to go with our spear. By the time we had gotten to the second, I had stuffed a t-shirt into my pocket and sure enough, one of the sellers wanted to trade for it. But he started at the t-shirt and two hundred shillings for a spear that had cost us two hundred shillings at Governors' Camp and seemed unwilling to budge. Time was short so we didn't bother to try to negotiate any further and he didn't follow us to persist.

The drive took us from 5000 feet above sea level to 7000 feet through agricultural land. The farmers were out cultivating their land, mostly by hand (and mostly women), in preparation for the coming rains, a taste of which we got while driving. I hope it doesn't rain the whole rest of the vacation.

We arrived at the Mt. Kenya Safari Club around 1 PM. This is a beautifully landscaped country club that may have been the cat's meow when William Holden owned it, but now has gone to seed (if I may mix my metaphors). The buffet lunch, which used to draw people in from as far away as Nairobi, was mediocre. Our room was in a separate building, a ten-minute walk from the main building. It had no lightbulb in the floor lamp and no drinkable water. The heat was provided by a fire that they lit as we were leaving for dinner and which was dying when we returned. The dinner was okay, but nothing worth packing a coat and tie for. To see Mt. Kenya we would have had to walk most of the way back to the main building, but it was too overcast to see it anyway.

Also, there isn't much to do at the Safari Club. The only animals seem to be the birds (peacocks and such) which wander about the lawns and the horses. So we (the Garfields, Mark, and I) went horseback riding. Except for Matt, we were all first-timers. They had only English saddles. Cathy had said they had both and I think we had been looking forward to the reassurance of that horn to hold on to. We were a little late getting started because it was raining, but when it stopped we went out, Mark on Mighty, I on Nyuki.

After the first five minutes I realized I didn't have to clutch the front of the saddle quite so hard. For most of the time holding my knees against the saddle was enough to keep my balance. I should point out the horse never went any faster than a walk.

We rode up into the hills along a fairly muddy trail. It became clear that the rain delay was not out of concern for our comfort, but out of concern for the horses' footing. We heard a river but never saw it and didn't see any animals (other than the horses). We saw a lot of what looked like Spanish moss on the trees. On the way back I got a wonderful view of Mark's horse in front of me leaving a souvenir.

Then we killed some time until 7:30 PM when the Chuka drummers were performing. They played for only about twenty minutes, which was just as well as drumming can get rather monotonous after a while.

As I said, dinner was nothing special. We had better at other places on this tour and they didn't require a coat and tie. After dinner we went back to our room in time to watch the fire die. We could see our breath when we breathed and I felt like an

icicle, so eventually I threw both bedspreads on Mark's twin bed and climbed in with him. This managed to warm me up enough so I could stop shaking and get to sleep.

October 28, 1988:

I didn't mention that our room was in a building that also had a sound stage in back. It must be where people stay when they're making a film in the area.

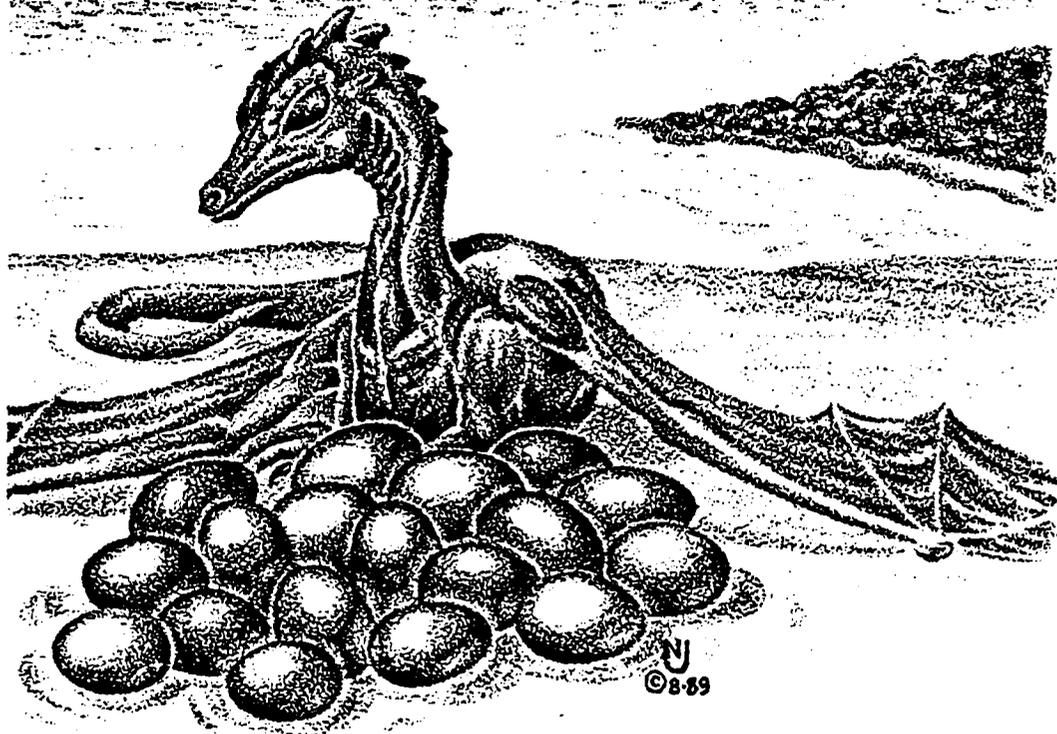
After breakfast we finished packing. They pretty much chased us out of the room at 9:30 AM even though checkout time was 10:30. At 10 we boarded the mini-vans and headed for the Outspan Hotel, most of the ride being over the same bad roads as yesterday.

The Outspan is the jump-off point for Treetops. We left most of our luggage here since we could bring only an overnight bag to Treetops. Lunch was the usual buffet--it will be nice to eat sit-down meals again or even cafeteria-style where you make only one trip. After lunch we walked around the grounds a bit and saw the house where Lord Baden-Powell lived. The gardens in front are landscaped in the shape of the Boy Scout trefoil. We browsed in the store but it was very overpriced (ten shillings for a postcard only slightly larger than those that cost two in Nairobi). It looks like Nairobi or the individual stands where one can bargain are the places to go.

Cathy talked about the difficulty of Kenyans taking money out of the country. They can't just change what they want to dollars. One of the women said that a few pieces of the Ethiopian silver and amber jewelry that they sell here could finance a whole trip. In a country with currency restrictions you see people looking for ways around them. In China it was the same, but the set-up there meant that the Chinese couldn't buy many of the luxury goods because they were purchasable only with hard currency or the equivalent.

After lunch we got into different buses and made the fifteen-minute drive to Treetops, just inside Aberdare National Park. Treetops is a hotel built in a tree. It has room for (I think) 98 guests and, while not the Ritz, is a much more finished place than you'd expect a treehouse to be. In 1952, Princess Elizabeth was staying there when word arrived that her father had died and she was now Queen of England, so they say, "She went up a princess and came down a queen." Actually, that Treetops was burnt down (during the Mau-Mau, I think) and this is the new Treetops built on the same spot.

There is a large waterhole on one side and a smaller one on the other. When we arrived there were many warthogs and bushbuck around. We even passed a warthog during the walk from the buses. The buses park about a five-minute walk from the



hotel and you are met by a "hunter" who makes a big show of loading his rifle before telling you to walk quietly, not to disturb any buffalo, to hide in the blinds if buffalo approach, and all the other rules. Of course, the hunter must have come down with his rifle unloaded, so I suspect this was at least partially for show. Also, the blinds were very small and hard to get into--I can't see the whole group using them if a buffalo decided to charge. I'm sure there's some danger, but I also suspect that they play it up a little.

After settling in our rooms we went up to the rooftop to have tea and watch the animals. There were quite a few warthogs and bushbuck as well as a troop of baboons. A herd of about ten buffalo came down to drink and then wandered off. We also saw a couple of waterbuck and a hyena.

Dinner was served at long tables with benches. Each bench had room for one fewer person than they actually put on it so there was a lot of pushing and poking and those of us on the ends were in danger of being pushed off.

Dinner was roast chicken. It was a nice change to have something as simple as roast chicken. Most dinners have been attempts at fancy cuisine which haven't been very good.

After dinner we all rushed out to see the elephants which had come in. There were three by the water but as we watched eleven more lumbered in. They were remarkably quiet. Oh, there was some snuffling and slurping and a trumpet or two, but on the whole they just kind of plodded around licking up the silt and drinking the water. We were probably only about fifty feet away or less, but since thirty of that was vertical we were pretty safe. It seemed tame after Governors' Camp, of course, but the number of elephants made it interesting.

There were also three hyenas hoping for something to show up. They (the staff, not the hyenas) had put food out to attract the genet cat and sometimes pieces would fall down, so the hyenas show up, hoping. We didn't see the genet (who appeared after I went to bed) but we did see a bushbaby. Bushbabies are just the cutest things! (Sorry--I just felt obliged somewhere in this log to oooh and aaah and this seemed like a good time to get it out of the way.)

I went to bed about 11 PM. Mark stayed up until 1 AM (when it started to rain) and saw more buffalo and a mongoose. The rhino must have had the day off.

October 29, 1988:

Up early and back to the Outspan for breakfast (and some quick shopping for those who can't resist), then into the mini-vans for the long drive back to Nairobi. We passed through several small towns and saw women carrying very heavy loads on their heads or slung on their backs, but we didn't see any men so encumbered.

We got to Nairobi about 11:15 AM, giving us time enough to shop. This was actually useful since we will be going into Tanzania in a couple of days and can't take more than one hundred Kenyan shillings each out. So we bought a bunch of stuff at the East Africa Wildlife Society--gifts for family and friends--and Mark bought a copy of Kenyatta's FAC-ING MT. KENYA. He had had a long discussion about Kenyatta, the Mau Mau, and independence with our guide and our driver which I will leave to him to relate.

Everywhere in Nairobi you see signs commemorating ten years of the Nyayo Era. When Kenyatta died ten years ago, the current president promised to follow in his footsteps; "nyayo" is Swahili for "footsteps." Kenyatta's key word was "harambe," meaning "together" as in "we will work together." Sort of like we had the "New Deal" and the "Great Society."

For lunch we actually ordered off the menu. I had a vegetable curry, quite spicy, and an iced tea which was rather bitter. But it had ice, perhaps the last safe ice for the rest of the trip. We also filled our water bottles.

At 1:30 PM we began our long drive to Amboseli--this is mostly a travel day. We drove across dusty plain, Maasai grazing ground. We saw a couple of camels but I think they were tourist camels because they were right next to the Bedouin Restaurant. We also saw zebra, giraffe, and lots of Maasai cattle and donkeys. Also we saw a lot of temite mounds, huge piles of red dirt up to six feet high with turrets and tunnels. You could see dozens in every direction. Some were obviously abandoned, fallen over around dead trees, but others seemed to be new. We were too far away, however, to see the inhabitants if any. In some of the trees were weaver-bird nests and other had beehives, so even without a lot of quadrupeds there were a lot of animals.

We stopped at the "Paris Bar and Restaurant." This is a tin shack in the middle of nowhere where you can get a cold (sort of) soda and use the restrooms (two holes in the ground). You can also buy souvenirs, of course.

The two lead vans arrived, but after a half-hour the other two hadn't shown up. We were just about to go back for them when they arrived. One had had a puncture and the other waited for them to change it. It's good to be able to pair up, have backup

vehicles (we could fit into three of the four mini-vans if necessary), etc.

Having reunited our party we continued to Namanaga. On the way we passed a tin shack that said "Hotel and Restaurant--Fine Cuisine." Somehow I doubt it.

Namanga is the truck stop just outside the Amboseli National Park. It also serves as the border town for people going to Tanzania. As a result it has twice the number of souvenir sellers as usual. We filled up on petrol here and waited for the punctured tire to be repaired; since the road from Namanga to the lodge is extremely bad, we didn't want to travel without a full complement of spare tires. So we all had lots of time to be approached by vendors. At this point I hoped to trade a t-shirt for something rather than spending money but Mark had a different opinion and ended up with more shillings than when he started, but fewer dollars. It was a complicated transaction involving a carving of a warrior, a t-shirt, a pen, a twenty-dollar bill, and 180 shillings. Many of the vendors in these outposts want to be paid in dollars, which is illegal but highly lucrative for them. (On the way to Namanga we passed a semi-roadblock of nail-studded logs which someone later said was to allow the police to check for smugglers, including those indulging in arbitrage.) To people used to traveling in countries with "hard" currency--which is the United States, Canada, most of Europe, Japan, and a few other countries--the regulations in countries with "soft" currency are unusual. For example, many countries severely restrict the import or export of their currency. This prevents people from taking Ruritanian somolians to New York and trading them for dollars to someone traveling to Ruritania, and hence prevents people from taking wealth out of the country. In countries like the U.S.S.R. this also means most people can't buy imported goods, since the importers want hard currency they can take home. So changing money is an elaborate affair with currency declarations, passports, etc., and even involves writing down the serial numbers of all the bills involved! By contrast, if you go into a bank in the United States to change United States dollars into Canadian dollars, the teller punches up the numbers on his/her calculator, takes your dollars, hands you Canadian dollars, and that's it.

The road to the Amboseli Lodge is bad. It is bumpy and dusty. We used to take an old lumber road into Baxter State Park in Maine when I was little and it was better than this. A brief shower did settle the dust a bit for a while and give us a beautiful rainbow but most of the time was very dry. Part of the way in we found another mini-van by the side of the road with a broken tie rod. Luckily there were only four in that group so we sorted them into our three vans (one had gone a-

head) and took them the rest of the way to the lodge. I presume someone went back with a tie rod or something later, or at least to pick up the luggage. I guess they could tow it back to Namanga for repairs.

We passed another vehicle by the side, but that driver thought it was nothing serious, just something loose, and we were getting a bit cramped anyway so we went on and finally arrived at the lodge about 5:30 PM.

At the lodge, as everywhere else in this area, are signs saying that photographing the Maasai is forbidden. It is not clear who is doing the forbidding (national government, local government, or what). So far everyone in our group has followed this rule.

As soon as the porters brought our bags to our room (women porters, by the way), I did some laundry. The prices they were charging were the same as in the United States and given how cheap everything else is here it's a real rip-off. I suppose they want to make what they can off the rich tourists.

I didn't eat much dinner since I was really tired from the ride. The beds were very hard, but that didn't seem to bother me, nor did the fact that we had to sleep under mosquito netting.

October 30, 1988:

Up at 6 AM for a 6:30 game run. As usual, huge herds of zebra and wildebeest with Thompson's gazelles scattered throughout. We saw a hippo in one of the swampy areas--our driver mistakenly called it a rhino at first. We also saw a few giraffes and elephants; later we saw a herd of about twenty close up. In the distance we saw a couple of lions that looked like they were stalking something but then they seemed to give up and lie down for a nap. A hyena was sitting in a pool of water, cooling off. (I thought cats hated water.)

We did get to see many bones and skeletons, two vultures feeding on a recently dead wildebeest, and about twenty vultures feeding on a newly dead gazelle. We never saw any skeletons in the Mara; here they're all over the place, like those old pictures of the desert in the Wild West. I guess the heat and dryness preserves them.

What we also saw a lot of were birds. Someone claimed that the Amazon was a bird-watcher's paradise, but I think this may outrank it. We saw many more birds than we could identify: ibises, storks, vultures, plovers, geese, and who knows what else. I noticed when we got back to the lodge there was one mini-van from Africa Ornithological Safaris--they probably know what else.

By the time we got back to camp at 9 AM several of the people were tired/hungry/bored/all of the

above. It had been a bumpy ride but I was sorry to see it end. Other than the two game runs (6:30 AM and 4 PM), there isn't much to do in one of these camps. This one has a pool but the water is too cold (hard to believe in Africa, I know). Mostly during the day people read, write, eat, drink, and nap. They're building an addition on the main building so it's not very restful to sit on the chairs in the garden area.

At 4 PM we got back into the mini-vans for our afternoon game run and drove around for two hours seeing nothing more exciting than two ostriches mating, which may have been exciting for the ostriches but didn't do much for me. We saw miles and miles of miles and miles. Even a zebra became an event. Everything that looked like an animal from a distance turned out to be a rock, a dead tree, or an elephant turd. We were supposedly going to look for the cheetah and then the rhino. (One gets the impression each park is issued one of each or something.) Apparently everyone else was also and the first hour was spent in a caravan of mini-vans. After an hour everyone started getting desperate and going off in different directions.

At 5:30 PM we met two of our other mini-vans and stopped for a soda break. My bottle/can opener came in handy since they hadn't brought one. (The bottles they could open on the edge of the roof, but the cans of orange juice would have been a problem.)

Finally, about 6:15, success! We came to a swamp/waterhole and there were about two dozen elephants and a rhino. The rhino had been rolling in mud and glistened. He (she?) looked a lot more majestic than the dry one we saw in the Mara. I highly recommend mud packs for rhinos.

You've probably gathered that rhinos are quite rare. This is somewhat ironic, since its closest relative seems to be the zebra and they're all over the place. But poachers are after the horn and zebras don't have that. They deal harshly with poachers here. Last week Cathy's sister saw some bodies by the side of the road from Mombasa--poachers who had been shot and their bodies left as a warning.

Our driver got in a bit of trouble at this point. He had pulled off the road to let us get a better picture and a ranger appeared out of nowhere to give him a ticket (or whatever they do). I think he was able to talk his way out of it by pointing out that the road was blocked by other vehicles, but I'm not sure.

Regarding the rhinos, by the way, Cathy says there are only five hundred left in Kenya, though Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa all have rhino populations as well and South Africa at least seems to have more control of the poachers.

South Africa is a country we don't talk about in Kenya. In particular, people have been told not to say they have been there or are going there (as

many are as part of this tour). It is okay to talk about it as an area (e.g., the rhino population there or archaeological digs), but not as a place to visit. I imagine it's different in Zimbabwe since there are flights between the two.

Anyway, back to the water hole. The elephants who were wading out all had dark legs up to the water line and light color above that. They all looked like they were wearing Wellingtons.

In spite of the sparseness of the game, there were a lot of images that remain: three elephants plodding across an empty plain, a giraffe in the distance silhouetted against the sky, Mt. Kilimanjaro, the sunset.... And as Mark said, "Nothing looks as lonely as one wildebeest walking along, sending up little puffs of dust with each footstep."

We returned to the lodge at 6:30 PM and had our Tanzania briefing at 7:45. This was basically a reminder to get rid of our surplus Kenya shillings and have our passports, health certificates, and currency forms in order when we get to the border. I just have this feeling that Mark and I will be the ones picked for a spot check, though Matt and Marie are also possibilities. We're all young, but Matt has more expensive jewelry so they may pick him.

At dinner Cathy got us Kenyan papaya wine--not bad, but not exported either. The food at Amboseli is among the best we've had in Kenya. Now if only the beds weren't so hard....

One more comment on travelers and money: I'm amazed at how many Americans don't realize coins are not valid outside of their country of origin. Someone tried to pay back a loan from Cathy with United States coins.

## Tanzania

October 31, 1988:

This morning we had to go to the airstrip at Amboseli because one of our group had developed back problems and didn't think he could take the hour or more ride out on the corrugated road. There were six planes at the airstrip but Cathy had a great deal of difficulty talking even one pilot into making the ten-minute flight. The planes fly in from Mombasa in the early morning with a load of tourists and fly back with the same load in the evening. The problem is fuel. They can't refuel at Amboseli or even apparently in Namanga. Eventually one pilot agreed to take three passengers for 2500 shillings or about \$137. So off they went and off we went--like bats out of hell. I think our driver wanted to beat the plane there, so we tore off across the dry lake instead of taking the road around it. The lake was probably smoother and we



were doing up to 120 kph at times. In spite of this, the plane did beat us there.

As we were driving, Cathy said this was a good time to spot some cheetahs. Mark replied that it was too late--they were already spotted. Cathy liked that so much she repeated it to several other people during the day.

We stopped at the same shops in Namanga as before, then proceeded to the border. First we had to leave Kenya. So we filled out departure forms and stood in a long line, which did move fairly quickly. Meanwhile Cathy took our currency forms in. Only two were questioned; one had been illegible and the other had lumped together cash and travelers' cheques. Meanwhile they transferred our luggage from the Kenya mini-vans to Tanzanian ones. While we waited for everyone to finish, we were besieged by vendors. I had a t-shirt over my shoulder and everyone wanted to trade. However, most of them wanted the t-shirt as partial payment. ("This necklace for the t-shirt--and ten American dollars." Since I had a similar necklace that had cost \$10 without the t-shirt, I didn't feel like spending a lot of time bargaining.) One woman, however, had a fancy Maasai earring which she was willing to trade for just the shirt, so I did. It was an old t-shirt and a nice earring so I'm happy and I'm reasonably sure she's happy too.

Of course, this just encouraged the other vendors and we had quite a time beating them back. Soon everyone was through with the formalities and we drove about a hundred yards to the Tanzanian side.

Here we filled out entry cards and currency declaration forms. Then one person from each mini-van went in with all the forms and passports for the whole van. Mark went in for ours, probably because he was the only man in the bus. The only problem he had was that one person had filled her forms in in pencil and he had to retrace it in pen. One of the other buses had a minor fright, however, when word came back that one person was missing a Tanzanian visa in their passport. It turned out that it was there after all--they just hadn't turned enough pages.

While we waited, various children came up to the vans asking for pens and sweets. Mark folded some origami for them and they seemed to like that. But there were no hordes of vendors as there had been in Kenya. There was a lot of activity, what with busloads of Kenyans and Tanzanians milling about, but not the sort of carnival atmosphere of the other side. Tanzania seems much more a no-nonsense country than Kenya.

The ride to Arusha was uneventful. The land seems much less developed than in Kenya and also more sparsely populated. It is also a much poorer country and that is saying something. Apparently Tanzania used up all their foreign currency for the military campaign which deposed Idi Amin and while everyone thinks that was a good thing, no one is willing to help pay for it.

We had lunch at the New Arusha Hotel and got a brief talk by Hilda, our liaison with Lion's Safaris. In Kenya Travcoa contracted out to Rhino Safaris for vehicles, drivers, etc.; in Tanzania it's Lion's. My own complaint about Lion's is that their mini-vans don't have handholds and given the state of roads in Tanzania, this is a problem.

We heard a lot of stuff we knew before: no short shorts, no photographing anything military, no photographing the Maasai without paying them. The going rate is somewhere between fifty cents and two dollars.

We also changed some money. Cathy warned against changing too much and certainly the procedure would discourage that: they write down the serial number of every bill you give them. (It's the same as in Kenya.) To change \$10 in ones is a major operation. Matt observed that as long as they spent so much time and effort in minutiae they would never get their economy going. While I understand how all this helps cut down on the black market and makes sure that the government gets the hard currency to pay off its debts, it does seem excessive. Another reason to avoid changing a lot of money is that your hotel bills must be paid directly in dollars--even if you have the exchange receipts, they won't take Tanzanian shillings. Our bills, of course, were pre-paid, and they do take shillings for sodas and postcards. Bottled water must be paid for in dollars--\$4 a bottle! These are the same bottles that were seventy-five cents in Egypt and were included in the cost of the tour. Here they're not and we are advised against trusting even the boiled water. At the price we're paying I think we have a right to expect Travcoa to pay for drinking water. We brought two liters of water from Nairobi (we filled two containers from the tap, which is safe there) and are getting by on that and sodas, which are forty cents each or half the price of water.

We left Arusha and drove to Lake Manyara. This took three hours on something that was almost a

road. There were a few smoother stretches of about fifty feet each and the rest was potholed dirt. Equipment and piles of dirt and rock by the side of the road would lead one to believe that they might be smoothing it out but with the short rains due soon, I can't see that very much will be gained. Several people are getting annoyed at the roads. They realized that the game runs would be bumpy but they didn't know that the travel between locations wouldn't be any better.

We got to our hotel at Lake Manyara. It's actually on the edge of the escarpment overlooking the lake. It has a beautiful view during the day. What it doesn't have during the day is electricity or hot water. The electricity is on from 6 PM to 1 AM and 6 AM to 8 AM. The hot water starts at 6:15 PM and 6:15 AM. At 6:15 PM I discovered our shower didn't work and ended up rinsing off squatting under the tub faucet. This still beats the Holiday Inn in Merida (Mexico) where we had no hot water for the three days we were there and no water at all one day. Not everyone in our group sees it this way though.

We got a quick rundown on our schedule for the next couple of days, then dinner. At dinner someone said that one reason customs went so smoothly was that Cathy told the drivers to slip something to the officials so that they wouldn't make us all open our luggage. (I don't know which side this was on.)

We slept with the window open since the screen would keep the mosquitos and baboons out. Cathy says the baboons are a problem only during the day but who knows whether there's an insomniac baboon out there.

November 1, 1988:

Sure enough, at 5 AM a large primate climbed into my bed. On closer inspection I discovered it was only Mark.

After breakfast we milled around the lobby waiting for the mini-vans. Some of us went into the gift, but apparently they decided there were too many people in there and not enough buying, so they slammed the door and wouldn't let anyone else in. At this point I decided to leave before they locked us in.

At 8:30 AM we loaded up and drove down the escarpment to the Lake Manyara National Park. This is a fairly small park, but very different from any we had been in so far. The road wound through some heavily forested areas populated by baboons. Some ran away as our van came by but others just sat there gazing at us philosophically. Several females had infants clinging to their backs; baby baboons don't have the long noses yet and look more like monkeys. We also saw a few elephants (but no large

herds) and of course zebra, buffalo, impala, and gazelles. We did see a couple of new things. We saw two lions feeding on a dead wildebeest (or it might have been a buffalo--we were too far away to be sure). We also saw flamingos, hundreds of them. Unfortunately, we were so far away that even with binoculars it was hard to make out the shapes. It was more like a solid pink line across the lake. We left the park without ever seeing the famous tree-climbing lions. So it goes. (They really do climb trees. Honest.)

From there we drove to the Ngorongoro Wildlife Lodge overlooking Ngorongoro Crater. This is supposed to be the piece de resistance of game-watching. However, first things first. In this case the first thing was lunch (it was already 1:30 PM) and the second thing was Olduvai Gorge.

To get to Olduvai Gorge was another hour and a half each way over bad roads (we're beginning to think there are no other kind here), yet almost everyone decided to go. A couple of people did opt to stay at the lodge and recuperate from the morning's drive.

The road to the gorge went through Maasai grazing land. There was little to see except the occasional village off in the distance, a few herds of cattle, some giraffes, and scattered assorted other wildlife. Oh, yes, there was one more thing. Groups of Maasai children in all the makeup, jewelry, and clothing who wanted their picture taken. For a price. It was so artificial that taking a picture would be like taking pictures at a costume party. On the other hand, this is their version of setting up a lemonade stand to raise money, and I'm sure they need the money a lot more than most kids who set up lemonade stands. I just had no interest in taking a picture and everyone else in the van felt the same way except Dorothy, who agreed she could take the pictures the next day.

We got to Olduvai Gorge about 4 PM. It's...it's...well, it's a big hole in the ground. Like the Holmdel horn (where the three-degree background radiation confirming the Big Bang was discovered), Olduvai Gorge itself is not that interesting. It is a beautiful view with a magnificent butte (a beaut of a butte?) in the middle, but no one would travel three miles over bad roads just to see that. But after the landmark discoveries by the Leakeys there, it is impossible to be in this part of the world and not come. (Well, since some people skipped it, it's obviously not impossible. Let's just say unthinkable.)

One of the research assistants there gave a brief talk on the history of the work at Olduvai Gorge. A German butterfly collector found some fossils there and told a German paleontologist, Hans Reicht. Reicht excavated and put his finds on display in Berlin (in the 1920s, I think). Louis Leakey saw them and convinced Reicht to let him search

for tools on the site. (Reicht hadn't found any because he was looking for flint tools, while the tools at Olduvai were all volcanic rock.) And the rest, as they say, is history. Several million years' worth, in fact. Excavation work is still being done there under the direction of Dr. Johanson of Berkeley. (Dorothy was quick to point out he was originally from Cleveland; Dorothy is from Cleveland. If Oklahoma City is the cultural capital of the world [see Egypt log for details], then Cleveland must be the scientific one.) However, the digs had all been shut down in preparation for the short rains (due soon) so there was no activity precisely when we were there.

After the talk and a look around the small museum there, we headed back on our long drive. Just as religious pilgrims underwent hardships to reach religious shrines, I suppose we scientific pilgrims are also forced to undergo mortification of the flesh. And believe me, riding over Tanzanian pseudo-roads is mortification of the flesh.

Most of the children had gone by the time we returned. We passed a few people returning home at the end of the day and we waved to them and they waved to us. One even pointed out a jackal to us as we passed. Everywhere in the world we've traveled, people have waved to us as we drove by. Only here have the waves meant, "Please stop and give me money," and it was nice to see that there were still some unselfish waves here too.

Back at the lodge by 6:30 PM, dinner at 7:30. I gave Dorothy an extra bottle of sunscreen I had; she had forgotten to bring any and was walking around with a scarf draped over her hat. Cathy said if we had any more extra she would love it, as it is not available in Kenya. I suppose that is a function of the racial makeup of Kenya--the market isn't big enough. In the United States there's not much market for anti-malaria pills so they're hard to get there.

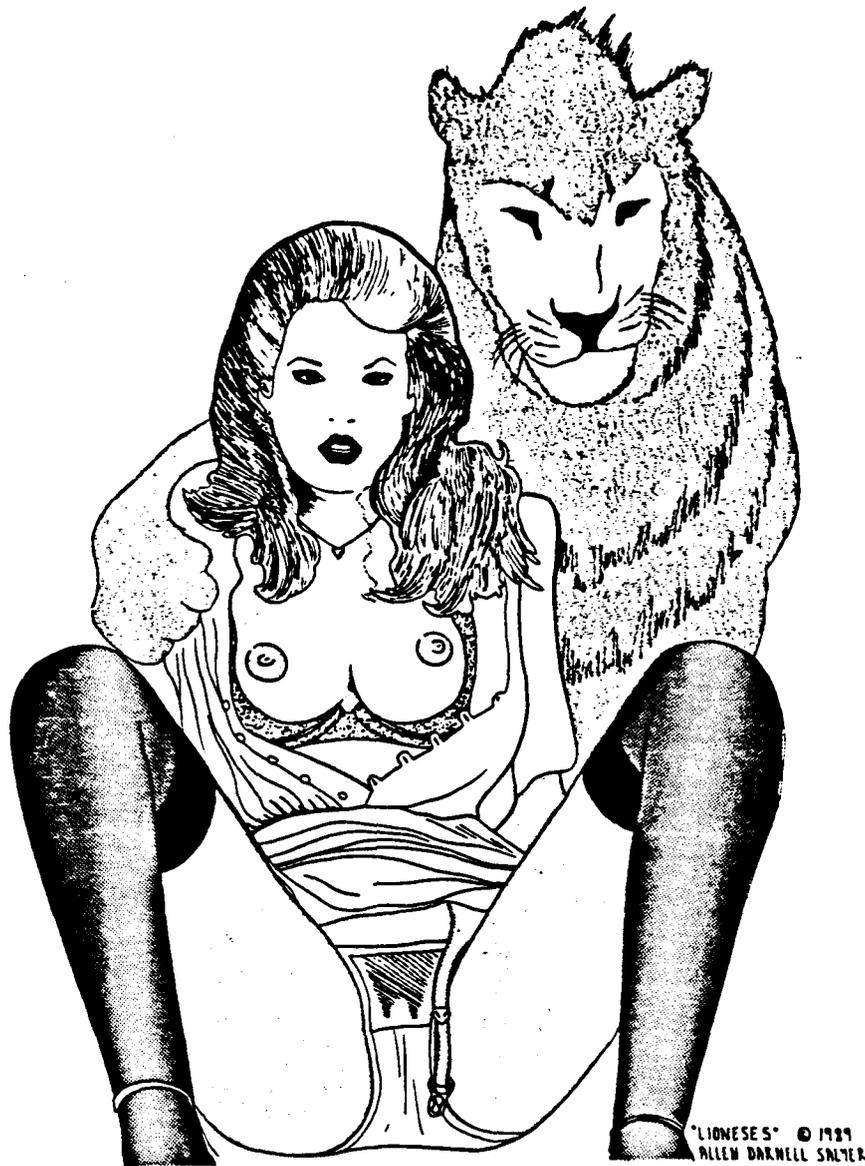
I haven't been saying much about the meals because they aren't that interesting.

November 2, 1988:

Breakfast was dry cornflakes and coffee. There, I said something about the meals.

Actually, the day's adventures started before breakfast. When I tried to flush the toilet at 6:30 AM it wouldn't flush. It turned out that something had happened to the water system and the whole hotel was without water (shades of Merida!).

After breakfast I browsed in the shop checking the prices. Carved animals cost five times what they did in Kenya. Kodak 200-36 print film is \$10; Kodak 110-24 is \$8.70. (We paid \$4.49 and \$2.49 respectively in the United States.) Postcards are fifty cents versus about ten cents in Kenya and the selection is much more limited. Just wanted to let you know.



'LIONESES' © 1989  
ALLEN DARNELL SALTER

At 8:30 AM we got into our Land Rovers for the ride down into (and around) the crater. Only four-wheel-drive vehicles are allowed in the crater and it was soon obvious why. The road down is even worse than the road to Olduvai and at a much steeper angle and much curvier. This trip is not for nervous riders. After a half-hour we reached the floor of the crater and re-grouped. At this point were also several Maasai herders and their cattle but the people who wanted to take pictures had done so earlier so we mostly just milled around. What I want to know is how they got the cattle into and out of the crater. They can't use the road and the rim looks too steep to go up or down anywhere else. The rim is at 7500 feet above sea level, the floor at 5000. The crater, or more accurately, the caldera is nine miles across, making it one of the largest in the world.

We started out with the usual assortment of gazelles, wildebeest, zebra, etc. There were also several jackals and more birds that I couldn't identify. When we got to the soda lake, however, I could

identify the birds--flamingos. Not as many as at Lake Manyara, but much closer--you could actually see them as individuals. There was one brown one amongst the pink--a diet deficiency perhaps. I can't quite remember what it is in their diet that turns them pink, but it is dietary.

Near the flamingos was a large clump of rushes with two or three Land Rovers beside it. We drove over and there were four male lions lying in them. Three were surrounded by vehicles but I spotted the fourth off in another section that no one had seen. We were able to get within six feet of them, but of course we were inside the Land Rover and they were outside. (I did open my window to take a picture. The lion didn't seem to care.) A short ways off were two females looking for lunch. We didn't volunteer.

Then we went by the hippo pool. The hippos were not extremely active, but we did see a hippo fight. What is there for two sleeping hippos to fight about? Beats me.

We drove another half-hour or so and found two

of the crater's dozen rhinos, a mother and baby. Rhinos are hard to see because they're so rare, but we've seen five on this trip. They tend to be more stolid than other animals and watching a ton of animal just standing is not extremely exciting. These two at least were walking and chewing. They were also better-looking than the first two we saw. I think the lack of bird shit on them is a definite plus.

After the rhinos we saw some more lions, then proceeded to our rendezvous point for lunch. We were the first of our five Land Rovers to arrive, but since we had the soft drink cooler we broke out the box lunches and started eating--inside the vehicle because of the kites which would swoop down and grab the food out of your hand otherwise. Lunch was fried chicken, hard-boiled eggs, bread and butter, an orange, two bananas (they're small here, only about five inches long), and a couple of cookies.

After lunch there was a minor dispute. Nine of us wanted to spend more time in the carter and sixteen wanted to return to the lodge. This meant two vehicles would stay and three return, but four drivers insisted they were going straight back. Cathy finally solved that by telling one of them that he was staying and that was that.

Of course, since it was mid-afternoon there weren't many animals to see. We saw the backs of some elephants from a long way away and when we stopped to refill the radiator from a spring there were a bunch of monkeys. These were fun to watch as they groomed each other and eyed us with curiosity.

If the ride down was bad, the ride back up was terrible. The driver seemed to want to get back as fast as possible so we raced up this steep, rocky, potholed road, careening around the curves. We must have made record time to the top. The road around Applecross Peninsula in Scotland is supposed to be bad; I wonder how it compares to the road into the Ngorongoro Crater.

We arrived back at the lodge covered with a thick layer of dust and in breathless anticipation--did we have water? Yes, but not hot water. I rinsed off the first layer of dirt with cold water. Then Mark went in and suddenly the hot water came on. Rather than count on it lasting we both hopped into the shower. Sure enough, just as we finished, the hot water gave out. I washed my hair in cold water. After I blew my nose, I went in and washed my nostrils in cold water. That dust gets everywhere! This was definitely the dustiest day of our trip. If you are allergic to dust (or have a bad back, neck, knee, or ankle), do not take this trip.

At dinner we got the Travcoa questionnaire to fill out on Kenya and Tanzania. We were also asked what magazines we read (for travel information and in general). We had to write very small.

As far as the questionnaire goes, it didn't cover my main objection to the tour. We bought what was billed as a fully escorted tour and didn't get it. The representative who met us in New York did so in the boarding area and then only long enough to ask us to carry some documents to Cairo. In Cairo our tour manager hadn't arrived yet. We traveled on our own from Cairo to Nairobi. In Nairobi we got sent to Governors' Camp on our own. This is not what I would call a "fully escorted tour."

November 3, 1988:

One more note on the previous topic. Because we are not going on to Zimbabwe and points south, several people have said we were not taking "the whole tour" and I've had to explain that we signed up for a "whole tour" which didn't include them. But since Cathy is through with us ten days before the end of her tour, I suspect that we may be getting somewhat short shrift in rooms and such. After all, she still has to live with them and their tips will be bigger at the end. In Egypt we were also there for only part of the tour manager's tour. This sort of thing can easily lead to favoritism and tour companies should avoid it--or we should avoid them.

Breakfast was the usual. The ride to Gibb's Farm was uneventful, being a retracing of our steps, or rather, tiretracks. Gibb's Farm is a coffee plantation known for its lunch buffets. The lunch buffet was all we were there for, though I had thought we were going to get a lecture on coffee-growing or a tour or something. Since we had arrived early we had about an hour to kill. Mark and I found a bag game sitting around and tried playing it. The simplified version works as follows: You have a "board" of two rows of six cups each, one row on



each side. Each cup starts with four beans. A turn consists of taking all the beans in a cup on your side and dropping them one per cup in each cup going clockwise from the source cup. If the last bean falls in an empty cup, the turn passes to the other person, else you pick up all the beans from that cup and continue. Any time you add a bean to a cup containing three beans, making four, those beans are removed and added to the score of whoever's side they were on. The end of the game comes when all the cups on one side are empty. If you empty all your opponents' cups you get all the remaining beans. If you empty all your cups, it wasn't clear who got the beans.

After fooling with this for a while we sat and talked to people, then went in for lunch at noon. Again, the crowd management at the buffet table was poor. The table was circular and we ended up with something like traffic circle gridlock. Everyone was waiting to rotate except one person serving herself and she was serving from a dish well ahead of her on the table. After getting food we had to find a place to sit. There were only a couple of dining room tables so we ended up back in the lounge eating off a coffee table. Because all the doors were open there were a lot of flies. The food was good, but the ambiance could use some work.

There was a little gift shop with not much of interest, but it did have a book swap. Most of the books were current-fiction-type stuff but there was a 1962 Ballantine historical novel about the Reign of Terror. Luckily I had my copy of King Solomon's Mines in my purse so we swapped that. I was in the middle of it but I can finish it in a copy at home.

The ride back to Arusha was bumpy and dusty. Just after Kitty announced that we would be at the hotel by 4 PM, the van in front of us got a flat tire. This was the same group of people as the last flat and the same tire (left rear), but of course a totally different vehicle. Ken was sitting in that corner each time so we told him he has to go on a diet. We waited while they (our driver and the other driver) changed the tire. Two old Maasai men and a boy who happened to be along the road came and watched as well. They didn't say anything, ask for anything, or try to sell us anything, just watched. It only took about ten minutes and we were on our way again. We got to Arusha about 4:30 PM and the driver stopped by some curio shops but we all agreed we'd rather just go to the hotel.

The Mt. Meru Hotel is located on the outskirts of town, not near any stores, but with a view of Mt. Meru. They were doing some remodeling work on the hotel--so our next stay would be more pleasant, they said. Thanks, guys, next time I'm in Arusha I'll remember that.

We barely had time to clean up and change for our 6 PM cocktail party. We milled around for a

while. Ken gave Mark a t-shirt that said, "I may be fat but you're ugly and I can diet." Cathy gave us a copy of the tour members' addresses. She was able to make only three copies because there were only three sheets of copier paper. Luckily, it was only six people (three couples) leaving now, so it was enough.

At 6:30 four new people came in. They were from a Travcoa flying safari that was finishing up. We talked to one of them about seeing the gorillas in Rwanda. He said that even though it takes three days and you get only an hour with the gorillas, it's worth it. Oh, well, next time. Maybe when we see West Africa.

At 7 PM our guest speaker, Dr. Hirji of the Serengeti Wildlife Institute arrived. He spoke to us primarily about wildlife conservation in Tanzania. One quarter of all the land in Tanzania is under some sort of wildlife conservation regulations, although some is under multiple land-use as Maasai grazing land as well. In spite of this, he was very pessimistic about the future of rhinos and elephants. The general consensus is that both will be extinct in the wild by the year 2000, at least in East Africa. When that happens, tourism will drop off and the economy will deteriorate even more. Add to this a growth rate of 3.2% annually for the population and it's not a bright future.

There were many questions afterward. One person asked why the farmers weren't given tractors for farming and didn't seem to understand the answer that there wasn't any money for tractors. I asked about why hunting was allowed. As I suspected, it was very limited and generates enough revenue to pay for a lot of the conservation programs which Tanzania could not otherwise afford.

Part way into the questions the "tractor man" moved we adjourn and go to dinner, but he was quickly shouted down.

We did finally go to dinner about 9 PM. I had goat. Mark and I ended up sitting by ourselves because we were the last to come in.

November 4, 1988:

We drove to the airport, getting a wonderful view of Mt. Kilimanjaro on the way. Amazingly, our flight did fly; often it is canceled because of fuel shortages or other problems. We spent our last Tanzanian shillings on a salad set, then bought a carving in the duty-free shop with dollars. All the luggage was hand-checked because the machine was broken. The flight to Nairobi took about a half-hour. Air Tanzania planes have a picture of a giraffe on their tail fin.

At the Nairobi airport we had to go through customs and all that stuff again, then wait for Alfred to show up. He had been told that the plane

was late (it wasn't). The six of us who were going home said goodbye to the rest of them, then went back to the Nairobi Hilton for the day.

There we ran into Jane (from Egypt) and talked to her about our trip, Africa, etc., most of which I've said here earlier, so I will not repeat it.

We had lunch with Ken and Sue, a real sit-down-and-order-from-the-menu lunch. I had pepper steak --French style, rolled in pepper, not Chinese style. It was very good.

Then we did some last-minute shopping in the arcade off the hotel, but we mostly sat around the hotel room and watched movies: Murder with Mirrors and Ladyhawke. At 6 PM we checked out and went to sit in the lounge until we were hungry enough for dinner. We started down for dinner at 7 PM but got side-tracked into talking to some people from Michigan who were just arriving. At about 8 PM we had a quick dinner of Mombasa prawns with avocado and an ice cream sampler for dessert and talked to Jane a bit more.

At 9 PM we transferred to the airport. First we had to pay the departure tax. The woman there gave me too much change and was very grateful when I pointed this out and returned the excess (\$20). Then we went through currency control. Next was customs. For this you stand by your luggage on the counter until they check it or wave you on. The baggage handler who put our luggage on the counter then put his hand palm up between the two suitcases and said, "A little something?" motioning that if we paid him he would put the bags through right then. We shook our heads no slightly and just waited. After a couple of minutes he was back and asked again. We ignored him. After another minute or so he picked up the bags anyway and put them on the conveyor belt. I waited to make sure they passed through the wall before going on, however. I suspect that because there were a lot of people around he was better off getting our luggage off the rack and trying someone else. (He was not the customs inspector per se, just one of the handlers behind the counter.) If there aren't a lot of other people around it may be different. But it probably doesn't hurt to try a polite refusal at first.

Then we cleared immigration and sat around waiting for our gate to open. I was talking to someone from another group who said one of their tour members died on the first day and another person piped up, "Yes, they didn't even get to go on a single game drive." Well, that's one way to look at.

Mark and I couldn't get seats together so I ended up in business class where the seats are wider. (I offered to switch but Mark declined.) It's slightly easier to sleep in a wider seat but not much. KLM is a good airline: headsets and drinks are included for everyone and everything seems to run smoothly. I slept most of the flight to Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam.

November 5, 1988:

We arrived in Amsterdam at 6 AM local time; the TWA transfer desk didn't open till almost 9. So we walked around and browsed in the shops. It was wonderful to see something and be able to pay for it in dollars without all that currency rigamarole. We got a magazine, a few comic books, and a stuffed animal for a gift. Everyone at Schiphol was very courteous and friendly...even the guard who put us through the special security check.

You see, when we finally checked in at the transfer desk we were told we had to go down and identify our luggage before it would be put on the plane (it had been checked through to JFK from Nairobi). I went down, leaving Mark to watch the hand luggage. When I got there one guard was asking Margaret and Ann (the two other tour members on these flights) various questions. Another guard asked me if I was with them and where the rest of the tour group was. Then he said Mark had to come down also, so I went back and got him and all our hand luggage.

The guard then proceeded to ask us a lot of questions. Where had we been? Had anyone given us anything to bring back? Had we packed our own suitcases? Had they ever been out of our sight? All very polite but very professional. His asking us about various places we had been Mark figures was to verify that our passports were really ours, for example. Through all this we never actually saw our luggage, but at the end he noted down the claim check numbers and said it would be loaded when it arrived. I hope so, but I'd feel better about it if I had seen it.

(I'm now running around with six different currencies in my purse: United States, Egyptian, Kenyan, Tanzanian, Dutch, and a lone Canadian quarter I got in change before we left. I feel like a branch of Deak-Perrera.)

We wandered around the airport some more. Everyone in the airport was so friendly and cheerful I can't wait to get back and visit the country! (August 1990 the World Science Fiction Convention is in Holland, so we'll probably do Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg then.)

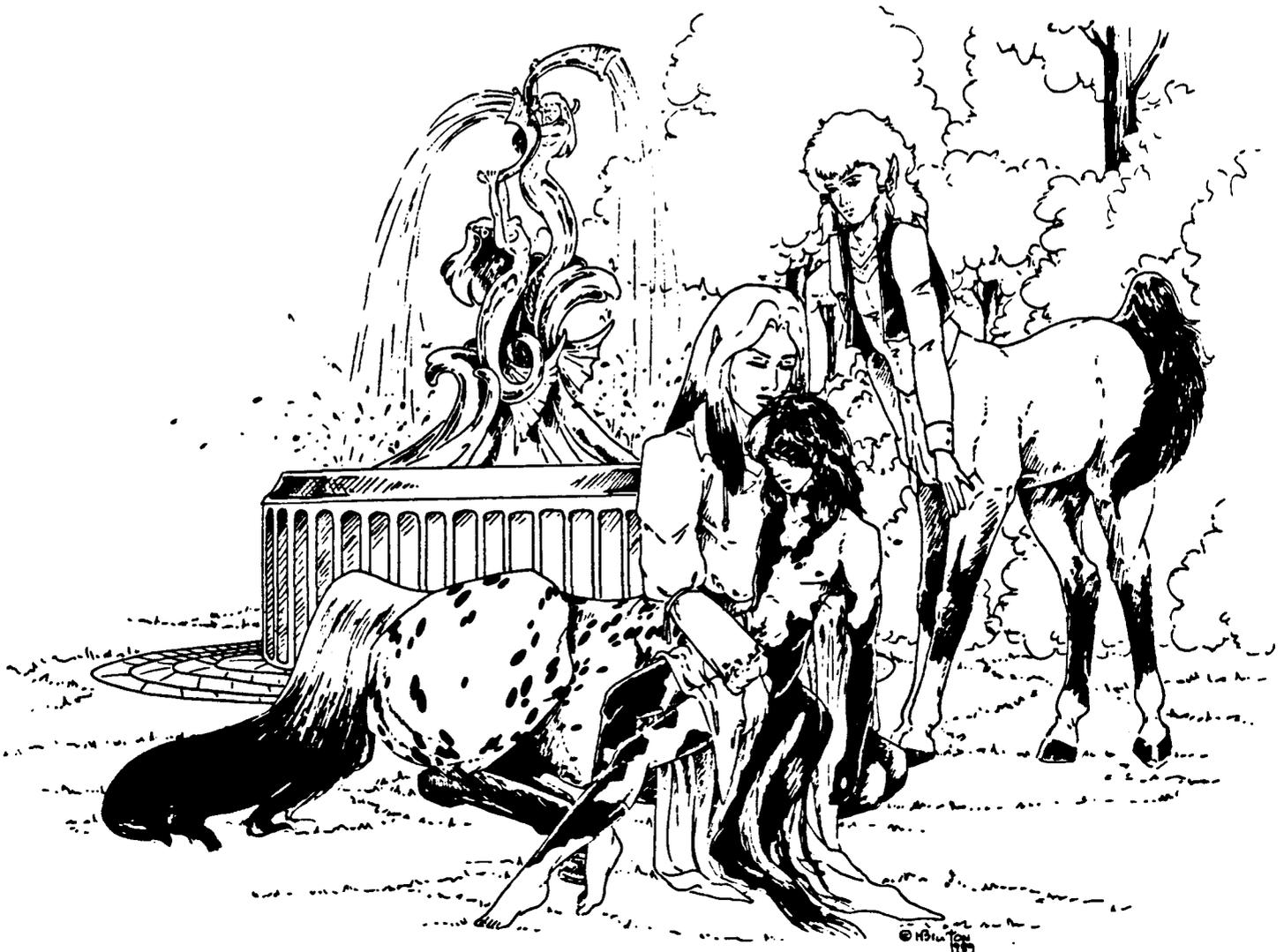
Our flight to New York left on time (pretty much) and was uneventful. When we arrived Mark said something about trying to get a picture of the cockpit, so I let him go ahead and then waited for him at the door of the plane when I got out. After a while everyone had exited and I looked in the cockpit. No Mark. I concluded that the thing to do was keep going as far as the luggage since there was nowhere else he could have branched off to. When I got to the luggage carousel, he was there--with our luggage! This was about five minutes after we got off the plane. Amazing! So we went up to the customs line. There was no one else in it. Double amazing!

This time where the form said "Are you bringing back agricultural products or have you visited a farm or ranch outside the United States?" I had underlined the latter when I checked it off. The last two times I've checked this box, they've asked, "What are you bringing back." "Nothing," we would say. "Then why did you check this off?" "Because we visited a farm." This time we skipped all that and went right to the part where the official calls over the agricultural inspector. She came over and he showed her the form. "Would you like to see our shoes?" I asked. "Oh, you've done this before," she replied. So she looked at our shoes (they want to make sure you're not tracking back all sorts of seeds and bugs on them), and waved us through. That was it--less than ten minutes from plane to exit. A new record for JFK.

So what happened when we got out? The person picking us up was nowhere to be seen. After quietly panicking for about five minutes, I started to look for a phone to try calling him, when I ran into him. He had popped into the store to buy a paper just as we arrived.

On the way home I got caught up on work, namely reading all about the Internet computer virus. This is known as hitting the ground running.

Then after a false start for dinner (the Japanese restaurant wasn't open when we got there), we went out for a Chinese dinner. After a three-and-a-half-week abstinence from Chinese food, it was very good. Then home to unpack (I say that Hurricane Suitcase has hit), call family to let them know we made it (Mark's parents are flying to Asia tomorrow or the next day, so the time interval is short), and to get some well-earned rest.



# MINICON 25

## *from the Eyes of Jane Phan*

by Lynn Margosian

The Silver Edition of MINICON was held in the Bloomington, Minnesota, Radisson over Easter weekend. For many fans, it was a celebration of a long-running convention, with many looks back into 25 years of fun and frolic; for this fan, it was my fourth MINICON, a chance to pick up some fannish history, and get a glimpse of things to come.

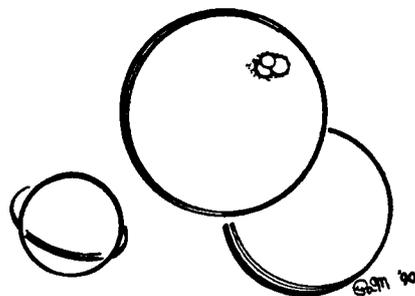
Things started off with a bang at opening ceremonies and the annual live Shockwave! broadcast on 91 FM. This group has been doing their collection of radio skits and jokes for ten years now, prompting them to name this year's broadcast "The Aluminum Edition." There was some waiting before the show, so they got the audience to do "the wave" -- after some prodding, it might be added, a puzzlement in a city that sports a domed stadium. Once the fans got going, though, there was almost no stopping the endless variations on "the wave" until the show started.

The intrepid GoHs this year included Jane Yolen, Kim Stanley Robinson, Earl Joseph, and Art Widner among others. Ms. Yolen introduced a new contest, "Cliff's Notes" for Science Fiction works, and read several examples from other famous works. (Example: War and Peace. "There is war. There is peace. Lots of people die. The End.") Teddy Harvia, the Artist GoH, gave his speech using large reproductions of word balloons from his own cartoons.

Although programming went on late into Friday night, it always behooves a fan to go and check out the consuite after a good opening ceremony. Located on the 22nd floor of the Radisson, the MINICON consuite has a breathtaking view of the southern Twin Cities, and an equally breathtaking climb up twenty flights of stairs if you want to avoid the elevator crowds. (Yes, I made it--more than once that weekend.) The specialty there is St. Paul blog, the contents of which are displayed above the bar, but which most fen probably can't read after a few of these and a bheer or two. The advantage to making one's way to the top of the hotel is that one can then wander down the stairs at one's leisure, stopping at each floor advertising a room party. The Winnipeg Worldcon bid had an impressive array of food and some interesting Canadian beverages. I stopped in at the Minneapolis in '73 bid party, run by Geri Sullivan, and finally got myself a post-supporting membership (cost: they pay you a 1973 penny).

Programming at this year's con was the best in the four years I have gone to MINICON. There were several tracks, including one devoted to science, one to fannish activities and fans in general, one for Star Trek, of course, and the famous (or infamous) Kruschenko's coffeehouse; plus a myriad of media screenings and author readings. Saturday morning, the Society for Creative Anachronism made their annual appearance, demonstrating several Renaissance dances and then pulling folk out of the audience for lessons. Sometime during the weekend, the traditional belly-dancing workshop also gave a demonstration. In the science track, there were several excellent programs, and displays on the shuttles and the moon were set up in the room itself. One panel there discussed the main discoveries made by the Voyager flyby of Neptune and Triton; the panelists conveyed a great deal of excitement about the event and the discoveries.

The Twin Cities has a very active Star Trek fandom, and the Trek track held discussions (or arguments) on everything from the Prime Directive to methods of deleting Wesley from the program. Being a fringe-fan to Trekdom, most of the discussions went over my head; being relatively quiet-spoken (in a crowd), it was difficult to get a word in edgewise during the passionate debate over the Prime Directive in the panel I attended. It was with some relief that I followed this panel with a reading by Joel Rosenberg, who read a marvelous prologue to his forthcoming book, about a runner tapping into a mysterious power to great distances and speeds. Art Widner, complete with fannish propeller beanie, headed a panel on fan language, its roots, derivatives, and directories. It was here that I learned the meaning of GAFIATE (Getting Away From It All) and decided to try it out on the Mundanes at work on Monday.



On the other hand, the art show was one of the poorest I'd seen yet (no reflection on Those Who Organized). Most of the art was submitted by amateurs and was not well done; there was an artist whose black-and-olive death-symbol made the Death-to-the-Smurfs sculptures look positively sunny. The saving graces were a wood sculpture of a man looking into a mirror, carved from a four-foot high tree trunk, and some of the stained glass entries.

Every year MINICON hosts a masquerade which I have heard displays the best costuming in the region. As a volunteer, I saw most of the show from the holding area, where the participants were judged for workmanship, and then trooped off to another holding area to await their turn on stage. This year's entries included Calvin and Hobbes, a 10-foot turquoise dragon, and marines; and every tenth entry or so, a seven-foot pink Energizer bunny interrupted the entry and marched across the stage, banging on a base drum.

Programming continued on into Saturday night. In the fannish track, Tucker Wilson headed a panel on fan legends, including the infamous Lime Jello legend, one of the first I'd ever been told as a neo. Afterwards, Art Widner held a slide show of First Fans in the early days; there were some very interesting pictures of Rusty Hevelin and Tucker back when they were but youngin's. At this event, Julius Schwartz introduced himself to me (for no reason I

could fathom other than because I'm youngish, female, and happened to be within arm's reach at the moment) and he and Tucker invited me to sit between them during the slide show. Knowing at least Tucker's reputation, I elected to sit a row back.

On Sunday, things began to wind down. MINICON makes a point of holding its con on the same weekend as Easter; whatever the true reason for this is, I always believed it was because the organizers like the mixture of costumed fans and well-dressed mundanes attending the brunch held by the hotel on Sunday morning. I missed closing ceremonies (and the winner of Jane Yolen's contest), but before I left in the afternoon for home, I caught Kim Stanley Robinson reading his book on a search for Shangri-la in Kruschenko's. He has a breezy style punctuated by a great deal of humor, no doubt in this case enhanced by delivery.

Here, then, is one fan's view of MINICON 25: The Silver Edition. The concom can be credited with another fine event that covered an excellent array of fannish interests; and if MINICON 26 is anything like this, I'll be back next year. [\*]

[DISCLAIMER: The views represented in this article are the opinions of one fan, and are not the opinions of other fans who went to MINICON; nor are they the opinions of the editor, Lan's Lantern, or LanShack Press, Inc. Lan wasn't even there.]



# A Few Words About Sex

## Guest of Honor Remarks INCONJUNCTIONS X, June 30, 1990 by Michael P. Kube-McDowell

I'd like to say a few words about sex.

I'd like to say a few words about sex while it's still safe to do so.

Frankly, I'm not entirely sure how much longer that will be.

You're probably all aware that a Federal judge and a Florida sheriff recently agreed between them that Luther Campbell should not be allowed to sing, in his earthy street language, about the joys of sex.

There can't be too many of you who didn't hear that a Cincinnati prosecutor and grand jury have agreed between them that some of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs of himself and his friends are too lascivious to be exhibited in that city's museums.

And most of you probably remember that, not too long ago, Mayor Hudnut and the Indianapolis City Council decided between them that explicit erotica was a violation of civil rights and a form of sex discrimination--or at least, that saying so might be a good way of getting rid of smut.

All three of these cases were and are top-of-the-news headline stories. But there have been hundreds more like them, stories that played on page 24 of section B, if at all. I don't know if it's millennial madness or the backswing of the pendulum. But I'm convinced we're in the middle of an all-out war on sexual speech, sexual art, sexual behavior, and sexual thought.

And I can't tell you who's going to win.

In fact, I can hardly believe what's been happening.

How can it be, as we stand on the verge of the 21st Century, that 17th Century Puritanism is threatening to set the tone of our public discourse on sex?

Am I the only one astonished that 24 states and the District of Columbia consider oral sex a crime--and that a Georgia man recently finished two years in prison for committing that horrible offense with his wife?

Should I not be surprised to learn that half the states still carry laws against adultery on their books--and that earlier this month a Wisconsin woman was threatened with up to two years in prison for an extramarital affair?

How exactly did an Alabama district attorney get away with shutting down a New York-based nationwide subscription-only adult cable channel--simply because the company had a few customers in Alabama, and the D.A. thought its offerings were beyond the pale?

Why does the Supreme Court continue to sanction discrimination by allowing the Defense Department to discharge gays and lesbians from military service for no reason other than their sexual orientation?

I'm often too incredulous to be angry, which is a shame. Because if you believe in freedom of sexual expression, and I do, there's a lot to be angry about.

But there's no single villain to be angry at. The war on sex more closely resembles Beirut in the summer than France in 1917. It isn't just the free-speech liberals vs. the conservative Christians--although that's a big part of it. Al Goldstein vs. The American Family Association. Jesse Helms vs. the National Endowment for the Arts.

This war also pits the separatists vs. the patriarchy, the vanilla feminists vs. the S&M lesbians, the minorities vs. the establishment--and more. I find myself wanting a battlefield map and a scorecard.

Some Afro-American newspaper columnists were indignant when Playboy finally named a black woman Playmate of the Year. Readers of high-brow erotica such as Yellow Silk sneer down their sleeves at common porn. The Indianapolis ordinance was written by self-described radicals, but co-opted by self-avowed fundamentalists. Some women's bookstores won't carry the lesbian magazine On Our Backs, because they find its brand of sexuality to be "politically incorrect." And so on.

Sexually speaking, this is a very troubled country. I recommend therapy.

Reality therapy would be a good beginning.

Let's start with a close look at that troublesome First Amendment. Here's everything it has to say on the subject: "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

We are told repeatedly that obscene speech is not protected. I'm afraid I can't spot exactly where in those 14 words that exception was recorded. Can you?

Looking squarely at the Constitution, it's clear to me that no exception for obscenity should ever have been recognized. And that the rulings which created that exception are as wrong-minded as the notorious Dred Scott decision, which established that Negroes are not citizens and slavery was legal. Sometimes the Court is an ass.

The First Amendment was written before the invention of telephones, cable TV, videotape, photography, electronic mail, the LP, the CD, holography, motion pictures, offset printing, fax machines, and computer graphics. But I don't think it's presumptuous to conclude that the Founding Fathers would have recognized them all as forms of communication covered by the meaning of either "speech" or "press."

However, the First Amendment was written some time after the invention of sex. And if the authors of the Bill of Rights had felt that sexuality was an unfit subject for the pens, tongues, and presses of this new nation, they had a dandy opportunity to tell us so--and passed it up.

The fact is that the First Amendment is unequivocal in its protection of freedom of expression. And must be. Because if the First Amendment only protects popular ideas, then the First Amendment is meaningless. If free speech only applies to conservative white middle-class values, then free speech is an empty promise and a fraud.

By now you may be wondering how this affects SF. My question for you is, how can it not?

Let me remind you that science fiction and fantasy are full of unpopular ideas. Look at the way fantasy role-playing games have become a target--blamed for dozens of so-called "occult" crimes, and banned from hundreds of schools. True, so far written SF has escaped a general assault from the censorship forces. But it could come at any time, for the roots of conflict are certainly there. For every Cujo or 1984 or Clan of the Cave Bear that's already been the target of censorship, dozens more books contain the same "objectionable" elements.

And SF hit puberty thirty years ago--or hadn't you noticed how many books in the Science Fiction Book Club catalog now carry those warning asterisks? Is it difficult to guess what Donald Wildmon would think of Ellen Datlow's anthology Alien Sex?

But our vulnerability doesn't begin and end with sexual explicitness. It requires very little stretch of my imagination to envision libraries and bookstores being stripped of fantasy novels whose protagonists employ magic, of science fiction tales which promote world government or accept evolution. Many of our best-loved books could find themselves labeled immoral, antidemocratic, sacrilegious, or obscene. And if we sit back until it's our ox that's being gored, we'll find we've waited too long.



However, the possible censorship of science fiction is not my first concern.

I'm much more concerned by what seems to be the underlying premise of the censorship movement--that exposure to erotic images and ideas somehow makes us less human, more animalistic, mindless slaves to our libido. We are asked to believe that porn creates sexual monsters like Ted Bundy--turns saints into rapists, the chaste into child molesters. We are told that 2 Live Crew's songs are too toxic to be tolerated--the social equivalent of radioactive waste.

If we're truly to embrace that idea, then we'd better be prepared to surrender our cherished belief in free will--along with the principles of law and responsibility drawn from it. After all, if it's porn that made him do it, shouldn't we have burned the books, instead of burning Ted Bundy?

Reality therapy. The reality is that our sexuality is a fundamental part of what we are, and an important motivator in what we do. Perhaps even the primary motivator. Planet-wide and across time, the very patterns of human culture--the taboos we observe, the rituals we perform, the values we hold--seem to be intimately bound up with this most powerful of human drives. We are a complex species, and the connections aren't always easy to spot--but consciously or unconsciously, we have all responded to the same call, and played the same mating game.

When we understand this about ourselves, we can begin to see that erotica and pornography are not infections, but reflections. If we hate the image

we see in the mirror, we can choose to dress ourselves in more artfully designed, more flattering clothing. A kinder, gentler porn.

But if we hate and fear the person we see in the mirror, then we've set ourselves at war with our own nature, with all the unhappiness that entails. And that's what I see happening. Fear and fascination--revulsion and obsession--chastity and curiosity--resistance and longing--danger and pleasure--each has its mouthpiece in the public struggle over sex.

But there are other voices, too--suggesting we can master our sexuality without suppressing it, calling us to celebrate our sexuality without cheapening it, permitting us to treasure the diversity of sexual pleasures, inviting us to find the transformative magic in consensual union.

Those voices are part of what we stand to lose if fear wins and repression rules. Our fictions, our fantasies, our precious sources of fact--wonderful eros-affirming books like Erotic by Nature, The Sex Book, Sexual Secrets, Caught Looking, The Art of Sexual Ecstasy, The Joy of Sex. Because the censors won't stop at banning the books sold at stores with pink windows, with emptying the shelves of the Adult section of the corner video store.

They see dangerous ideas as infections--and so every carrier must be cured or destroyed.

We cannot afford to let fear win.

Because it is so powerful, we desperately need to confront and understand our sexuality.

And because we are human, we have a fundamental right to enjoy and consensually explore our sexuality--a right which is essential to a humane and livable society.

This I believe with all my heart.

There may be some here who disagree, with equal passion. To you, let me say this: Choose for yourselves, and you and I will have no quarrel. Choose for your children, with wisdom, remembering as you do that you do not own them, and the time will come when they will, and must, choose for themselves.

But do not presume to choose for me. Because when you deny me my sexuality, you deny me my an essential part of my humanity. And there's no power on earth or in heaven which can give you that right.

Thank you. [\*]



# Pulp & Celluloid

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## Film & Book Reviews by David M Shea

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### FLINX IN FLUX

by Alan Dean Foster  
DelRey, 1988, \$3.95

What is there to say about a new Flinx novel? Foster's favorite mutant hero exercises his usual uncanny knack for attracting sympathetic aliens and nut-cult lunatic humans who want to dissect him. In this book which falls between The End of the Matter and Bloodhype, Flinx has returned to Alaspin to return Pip's offspring to their natural environment. On the way home, he rescues a kidnapped scientist, and the two of them are pursued across space and through the caverns of Longtunnel by ecological-purist assassins. It's the usual Foster

melange of interesting characters and fast-paced adventure.

The good news is that Flinx, the worst case of arrested adolescence since Peter Pan, actually gets to grow up some. In fact, he and his lady scientist actually get rather fond of one another. At the end of Flux, most of the plot lines have been worked out, but the door is still open for later books. The bad news is that the author seems to have come down with a bad case of Asimov's Error: trying to shoehorn all of his writing into one cogent universe. The book contains a map of Commonwealth space (one inch = 450 parsecs) and a chronology running from One Billion BC forward. I suppose it's harmless to know that 639 years elapse between, say, Nor Crystal Tears and The Tar Aiyem Krang, but

I'm not sure this obsession some writers have about everything following a prescribed pattern is necessary or useful. But that's not for me to say (they only pay me here to play...).

GRUMBLES FROM THE GRAVE

Virginia Heinlein, editor  
DelRey, 1989, \$19.95

Certainly there is a need for the letters of Robert A. Heinlein to be available to serious students of his work. Whether anyone except a rabid Heinlein completist will want to pay \$19.95 for them is another question.

This book covers selected correspondence from (occasionally to) Mr. Heinlein, from his first submission to John W. Campbell in 1939, up through roughly the early 1970s. Much of it consists of letters between Mr. Heinlein and his long-time agent, Lurton Blassingame. A quick run-through suggests that those expecting blinding new insights will be disappointed. That the author deliberately left a minor scientific glitch in Red Planet for plot purposes--and that the editor failed to catch it--is interesting but hardly astonishing. Mrs. Heinlein's suggestion that Mr. Heinlein's well-known falling out with Mr. Campbell was a "casualty of World War II" might be called facile. That Mr. Heinlein rejected the "guru" role in which some readers attempted to cast him after Stranger in a Strange Land, comes as no great surprise. Most of the material seems to fall in the same vein.

(If the title of this book strikes some as tasteless, Mrs. Heinlein says that Mr. Heinlein selected it himself. I'll take her word for it...)

PHASES OF GRAVITY

by Dan Simmons  
Bantam/Spectra, 1989, \$4.50

This book is about an aging, former-astronaut's mid-life crisis. It's a period piece for the yuppie 1980s: variations on a theme of middle-aged angst. You can read this, or you can go directly to a psychiatrist (do not pass Go, do not collect \$200); both would appear superfluous. This is pretty well done for what it is, but no way is it a science fiction novel. When they make the movie, Gene Hackman will play the lead--skillfully, to be sure, but with oppressive solemnity.

STARFARERS

by Vonda N. McIntyre  
Ace, 1989, \$3.95

The interstellar probe Starfarer is nearly ready for launch. At the last minute, however, the government wants to change the peaceful exploratory mission and place the vessel and its crew under military control. Scientists led by Canadian mathematician Victoria MacKenzie are determined not to let this happen.

Perhaps it is unfair to judge all the author's work by the standard of Dreamsnake. Perhaps this reader was offended by the book's preachiness and snotty anti-American attitude. Whatever its political merits or demerits, however, this is simply a bad novel. Slow, talky, and obvious, it covers no new ground and takes forever to make its obvious point. Ms. McIntyre has evidently spent so much time writing for people who don't understand SF that she has forgotten how to write for people who do. This is a major disappointment.

LAND UNDER ENGLAND

by Joseph O'Neill  
Overlook Press, 1981 (c1935), \$11.95

Anthony Julian grew up in the shadow of Hadrian's Wall, child of an abstracted father obsessed with antiquity. Family tradition held that over the centuries, several members of the Julian clan vanished into a mysterious "underworld", few returning and those with fantastic tales. When Anthony's father disappears, he follows, discovering a subterranean realm ruled by the descendants of ancient Romans, in absolute control of a population of vacant, obedient slaves. The "Masters of Knowledge" attempt to subdue Anthony with their hypnotic/telepathic powers, but he makes good an escape.

I consider myself pretty well-read in the classic SF/fantasy of the 1920s and 1930s. This is one of which I had never heard, though apparently it was well received by the public and the critics when first published. Alas, its anti-fascist theme is as badly dated as its Victorian style, which will seem either quaint or pompous to the modern reader. Too late to be an original such as Verne, lacking the trenchant wit of Wells or Orwell, this book remains of interest only as an historical curiosity; an apt proof that not all "classics" deserve revival.

DONA FLOR AND HER TWO HUSBANDS

Flor (Sonia Braga), a Brazilian housewife and cooking teacher, had a troubled relationship with her husband (Jose Wilker). He drank, catted around, hit her and took her money--but they had great sex. Flor was genuinely sorry when he dropped dead during a festival. Later, lonely and horny, Flor married a middle-aged dentist (Mauro Madonca). He was

considerate and gentle--and a boring lover. So Flor had a friend invoke a magical rite to return the shade of her first husband to scratch her sexual itch, though he remained invisible to everyone else.

If this plot sounds familiar, you may have seen the tame American remake Kiss Me Goodbye (with Sally Field), or the variant in Hello Again (with Shelley Long as the deceased spouse). Dona Flor contains only minimal fantasy elements, and is not technologically impressive by hollywood standards; the editing and English dubbing in particular seem rather quaint. Still the film is of some interest for a look at a society which is "alien" in some respects to many Americans; and male viewers at least will be impressed with the smoldering eroticism of Braga.

#### AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON

There are films whose only virtue lies in the degree of sheer gratuitous stupidity they are able to engender, intentionally (Airplane) or otherwise (Reefer Madness). Clearly, this film is attempting to be that type. It fails due to two factors: a truly sophomoric sense of humor, and a total absence of coherent vision on the part of the producer/director John Landis. Rather than attempting to make one movie, however good or bad, he has assembled an anthology of lame and unrelated skits, not especially funny. (The least bad involves a wake in which veteran comics Henny Youngman and Steve Allen "roast" the deceased.) Despite the title, there are only peripheral references to SF; and while a cameo by Forrest J. Ackerman is of interest to fans, it

is not enough to justify the cost of rental. Take your business elsewhere.

#### THE SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION CALENDAR

by Erwin "Filthy Pierre" Strauss  
quarterly, US \$8.00/year  
[PO Box 3343, Fairfax, VA 20038]

There are lots of places to find out about cons: prozines and fanzines, through your local bookstore, at other cons. The nearest thing to a definitive listing I know is SFCR. It lists cons chronologically with detailed information and is cross-indexed by location, con name, and GoH, so one can approach the information from nearly any angle.

Of course, there is a point beyond which completeness ceases to be a virtue. In his dedication to completeness, Mr. Strauss has adversely affected the useful information/random noise ratio by including much extremely peripheral information, including such exotica as the Bulgarian National Con; "chain cons" (which Mr. Strauss defines as "comics/media flea markets"); numerous "bids", including clearly farcical ones; and the Libertarian Party convention.

There are other irritants. Mr. Strauss' computer is evidently programmed to run some pretty bizarre explication of "also known as" names of cons; one cringes at the ludicrous changes run on NOTJUSTANOTHERCON, for instance. However, a few hours; patient work with a black felt-tip can convert SFCR to a useful resource; and at \$8/year, you can't say you don't get your money's worth.

## Film & Book Reviews by *Dennis K Fischer*

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#### DESERTED CITIES OF THE HEART

by Lewis Shiner  
Bantam/Spectra, 1989, \$4.50

Shiner marked himself as a major new writer for the field when his previous novel Frontera became a Nebula finalist. In this new work, Deserted Cities of the Heart, shiner fulfills his promise and produces one of the finest works that the field has brought forth in some time.

The background will be familiar to those who read Pat Murphy's Nebula Award-winning novel The

Falling Woman. Once more we are back at a Mayan archaeological site, but Shiner's book is not only more political than Murphy's, it is also, I think, better. Like Woman, it would not fall into many people's standard definitions of SF, the central speculative device is a toxic "magic" mushroom that propels the character of Eddie first back into his own past and then later back to the fall of the Mayan situation. There is also a quasi-mystical ending, which can rationally be explained as a remarkable series of earthquakes, but none too believably.

However, works of such highly acclaimed SF authors as Philip K. Dick and Lucius Shepard, whose works Shiner's resembles, have sometimes been based on little more. What makes Shiner's book remarkable is, of course, what ideas and emotional resonances he is able to achieve with this device.

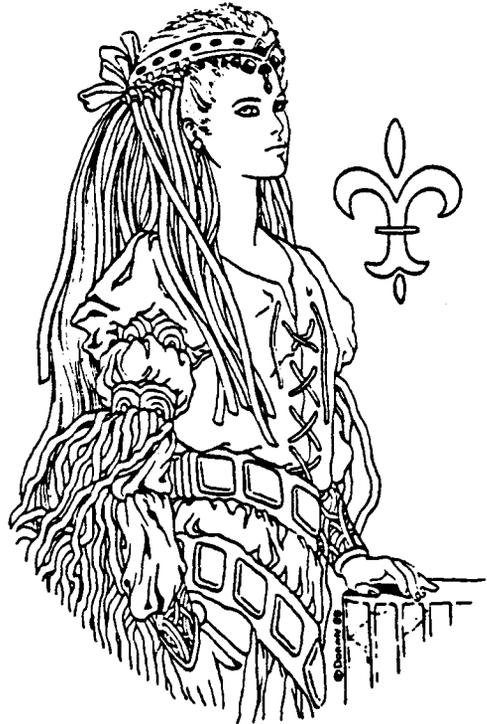
Norman Spinrad in a recent issue of IASFM noted how little science fiction is set in the third world, in backward countries, in any place really other than the cutting edge. One of the things that makes Shiner's book admirable is how well he is able to incorporate real-life politics (the novel chronicles a period between the Mexican earthquake that leveled much of Mexico City and the discovery of the Iran-Contra scandal) and the third-world milieu into the novel.

The point-of-view switches among four major characters, the first of which is John Carmichael, a free-lance reporter for The Rolling Stone. Through his eyes we experience the devastation of a guerrilla camp attacked by government sources. The repercussions are seen through Thomas' eyes. Thomas has studied the Mayan's culture and is currently working down in Mexico on hydroponics and experimental genetic cultures designed to provide food and energy for an impoverished and overburdened country. The Mexican government has hired American mercenaries to rid them of the rebels and are suspicious of the leftist scientists who are working on the project with Thomas and have consequently ordered their evacuation.

The last two pieces of the puzzle are Eddie, Thomas' long-missing brother who has been trying to forget being an unsuccessful rock star by submerging himself in the Mayan culture, and Lindsey, his estranged wife who after several years has finally received evidence that her hubbie might still be alive. Complicating matters, she must depend on Thomas to help her find Eddie while Thomas himself has had a long suppressed lech for her.

Shiner makes these character very real, and we get into their feelings and their problems. The problems of trying to understand the cryptic Mayans, dealing with the paranoid and squabbling rebels, and worries about the ruthless mercenaries makes for a very compelling scenario. What gives the novel its real depth, however, is its explorations of Eddie's character as the forbidden drug takes him back to key moments in his life where he relives crucial experiences with his present-day consciousness. Shiner is too subtle to state that these are times when Eddie made disastrous decisions which have led to him being currently a messed-up, emotional basket case, but the reader is allowed to objectively see how Eddie weaved a noose of his own devising.

This has led to very compulsive behavior. Even though Eddie knows his ingestion of the forbidden fungus is killing him, he continues to experiment,



breaking in the second half of the book back to the Mayan culture's past in the period just before their downfall.

Playing with the New Age/Mayan idea of cycles, Shiner parallels modern-day problems with the destruction of the Mayan civilization, in which the young are dissatisfied with the corruption they see in their elders and the way they see them running things. As a result, they abandon the cities, leaving the corrupt culture to collapse upon its hollow self.

Through his experience, Eddie learns that "Death was easy. It was living that was hard." And that when a world is not running right, "What you have to do...is make new things.... Think about new things. Live your own lives. Don't think the old things anymore. They will take care of themselves."

This is one of the twin themes of the novel. Thomas' experiments with alternate sources of food and energy represent a worthwhile step in the right direction. Shiner shows the rebels as admirable in many ways, but when they fall back on "old way" powerplays and politicking, they mess up badly. They are heavily flawed human beings, not the unreal and idealistic "noble saviors" of all-too-many pieces of third-rate fiction.

Perhaps the most daring and science fictional concept of Shiner's book is his use of quantum mechanics as a metaphor for what the war does to an individual. The concepts he parallels here are that like observing a particle in a quantum model: the very act of observing changes the result. Similarly, being involved in war changes human beings irrevocably.

He's grown up, like every male of his generation and of generations before him, with the idea that war was how a man tested himself. It was where he found out what he was made of. Now he saw that people were the same as the tiniest sub-atomic particles. The force it took to measure them was stronger than they were. They couldn't be measured that way without changing them into something completely different than they were before.

Deserted Cities of the Heart sympathizes with why people would rebel against oppressive and unjust forces set against them, but is ultimately an anti-war novel. It is a well-written, emotional, and sincere plea for people to try thinking in new ways, to find new solutions to age-old problems, and though the novel is tainted with a kind of New Age mysticism, Shiner is by no means anti-technological. If you've been looking for science fiction with well-rounded characters and a political slant, then I would recommend Deserted Cities of the Heart most highly.

#### A FIRE IN THE SUN

by George Alec Effinger

Doubleday Foundation, 1989, \$6.95 (Trade Paper)

Another piece of SF set in the third-world, this time in Africa, A Fire in the Sun is a follow-up to When Gravity Falls as well as being more conventionally science fiction. It avoids the problems of most sequels by picking up the story of Audran Marid and having him continue to develop and change his character as he reacts to new situations.

The title is, alas, not as memorable as the original novel, and this book is not quite as good, but it comes deliciously close. The original book presents a future society when countries have decentralized and some of civilization has seemingly collapsed. It too is set in Africa among the underbelly of society--the whores, the drug addicts, the murders, the strippers, and the people who water down drinks--your usual low-life. Marid was one of these who became involved in a murder case and found himself forced to investigate on behalf of one of the biggest crimelords in the area, Friedlander Bey.

Effinger has two elements that make these stories particularly fascinating. One is his idea of moddies, little devices that are like electronic add-ons to the brain, storing personalities and talents that can be booted in as required. To me, the even more fascinating aspect of the books is the depiction of a totally Islamic society where very proper social forms and religious rules gener-

ally have to be obeyed but are sometimes broken by the unbelieving Marid.

Once more plunging Marid into another mystery, Effinger continues to develop the character of Marid and explore these aspects of his future society in Fire. Marid in the first book, as is typical of such "counter-cultures," showed a contempt of the police, but ironically is forced to become one. This book, dedicated to Effinger's grandfather who was a policeman killed in the line of duty, has Marid realize what it means for a dedicated cop to put himself on the line as Marid begins to investigate both his roots and some shady dealings of a rival crime lord, Abu Adil.

Marid meets his mother and discovers her to be a prostitute. Initially, he disapproves of her and holds her to a higher moral standard than he sets for himself, but soon he finds himself dealing with her again as she unexpectedly turns up at his "benefactor's" house. Also at Bey's house is a conniving woman who claims her son is Bey's heir and whom Bey wants Marid to eliminate. Meanwhile, while only given hints, he must find out what Adil is up to and what is the mysterious "Phoenix File."

To add to his dilemma, he finds that Bey's actions have alienated the few individuals he has left that he can call friends, leaving him seemingly alone. While Marid is typical of Chandler's "one lone man" who must walk these mean streets and return moral order, he is also an individual who endeavors to deal with others despite the difficulties thrown his way. Ironically, it's Marid's self-image as a victim despite his bravery in certain situations which prevents him from seeing that there are alternatives to some of his actions which could conceivably be preferable.

To finally use the dreaded word, yes, this is a piece of cyberpunk, but unlike most drug-besotted cyberpunk heroes, Marid does retain his humanity and tries to maintain a sense of dignity and honor. Effinger makes effective use of a bitter sense of humor and Marid is a character who cares about more than breaking ICE and where his next fix is coming from. Effinger's writing is also breezy and fun to read, unlike the turgid prose of some modern-day cyberpunk writers. From the evidence of When Gravity Falls and this book, he has finally turned into one of SF's best novelists.

#### ISLANDS IN THE NET

by Bruce Sterling

Ace Books, 1988, \$4.50

Sterling has been on the vanguard of the cyberpunk movement and has been an SF novelist since 1977's Involution Ocean, the last book in the Har-

lan Ellison Discovery series. I looked forward to his new novel, set in the Carribean, with great interest.

And there is much to like about the book. Sterling has some very definite and often persuasive views of what the future will be like. In this book, I can't sufficiently believe his premise that all nuclear weapons will be banned and eliminated, but at least it is an optimistic view for a change. The central idea here is very simple-information is power and the global village that Marshall McLuhan spoke of has appeared not in the medium of television, but via an international communications network. The first world countries have governments which enforce certain limitations as to what goes on this "net," so third world countries seeking an edge will explore "forbidden" information and technology.

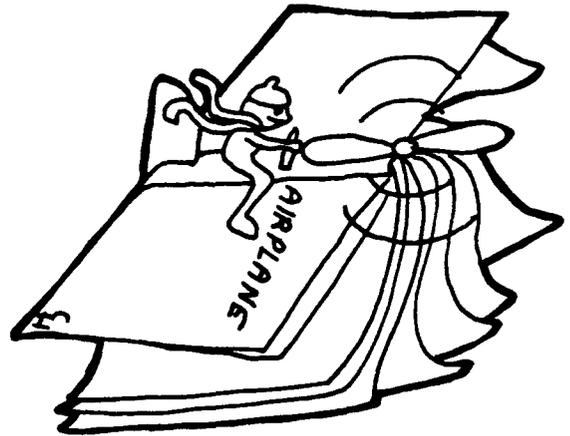
Unfortunately, the book does take too long in getting its basic situation set up and developing the main characters, but if you stick with it, it becomes much more interesting after Laura and David, Sterling's protagonists, leave Houston for Point Salinas (starting chapter 4, page 80). The first three chapters set up that this couple owe their allegiance to their corporation, and are running a place in Houston where a secret meeting between black market pirates will take place at which one of the participants is murdered.

On behalf of their corporation, David and Laura go to the Caribbean to resume diplomatic ties and try to reassure the nervous Caribbean pirates. However, they are a Mr. & Mrs. Ordinary who have fallen into a world that they don't really understand nor are they fully prepared for. Soon they become embroiled in intrigue and are left wondering who to trust, who was behind the hit, and what they should do next.

The novel picks up interest and portrays a largely believable future world. My complaint with it, apart from the slow opening, is that there is also a analogous slowing down and loss of interest at the book's end as Laura is forced to go off on her own and eventually becomes a helpless captive, a pawn in somebody else's game. Now it's great that Sterling does fall into the trap of making the ordinary Laura somebody really important who saves the world, preferring to center simply on an ordinary person rather than playing into traditional science fictional power fantasies, but although she makes an important broadcast, she becomes removed from the real action and the resolution of the novel--namely the power struggle between the black-market data pirates and their mercenaries to ply their wares in areas that have been rationed by the powerful global communications network. After seemingly heading toward the center of this, she ends up on the periphery.

Sterling's book provides a rationale why the big power players continually will interfere in smaller, third-world markets and the sometimes disastrous consequences such meddling entails. It also demonstrates how organizations designed to fight terrorism can hypocritically end up sucking up to terrorists in an effort to keep a lid on things and maintain both status quo and power. Once more, here is another SF book which does not ignore political realities but incorporates them into the story to make it more interesting.

As a result, the book has garnered a good deal of respect, and indeed it is a effort worth respecting. I just wish that I had found it more satisfying, but perhaps that is the price that must come with some uncompromising and adult pieces of literature. A world of literature has to say something to the modern-day audience it is written for, telling hard truths, and as such, Islands in the Net is a book that bodes well for a field overburdened with politically simplistic, militaristic, and first-world chauvinistic science fiction.



MILLENNIUM: Novel vs. Film

An essay by Dennis K. Fischer

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John Varley's Millennium isn't a great science fiction novel, or an all-time classic, but it is an above average piece of work from one of the most readable and popular writers in the field. The germ of the story came from the short story "Air Raid" (IASFM, Spring 1977 by Herb Boehm, a pen name of Varley) which describes people from a blighted future coming back in time and stealing the passengers off a doomed flight and replacing them with replicas before the imminent crash with the intention being that these passengers will serve as colonists to another world, giving the human race a second chance after it has blown its first one.

"Air Raid" was an idea that could readily be expanded and Varley turned it into a novel in 1983,

presumably selling rights to MGM/UA Home Entertainment Group, which holds the copyright to the novel. However, MGM/UA was headed for financial trouble and so eventually the project was taken over by Gladden Entertainment, a film was produced which has been recently released by 20th Century Fox. Though the film credits "Air Raid: as its basis with Varley doing his own adaptation, it is clearly more an adaptation of the novel which gives it its name.

The book succeeds in telling an engaging tale, varied between two major narrators--Bill Smith, a man in the present whose job it is to investigate plane crashes, and Louise Baltimore, a "Snatch Team" leader whose job it is to kidnap people from the past and send them into the future. Almost every chapter is named after a famous time travel of the past, Varley's way of acknowledging his debt to previous writers in the field. Particularly significant is his use of the term "twonky," after the famous Kuttner story in which a device from the future ends up in the past with disastrous results.

Considering that it has a story that hops back and forth quite a bit in time with characters hopping back to meet other characters before they had met the first time,, Varley's book is well-structured so as to avoid needless repetition. Unfortunately, this is exactly where the film falls down, losing the audience at the halfway point with needless repetition of already seen events (albeit often from a different angle and some slightly different material included and excluded). This poor structure stops the film dead when it needs to be picking up speed and it never recovers.

Why is the film structured this way? Those seeing Millennium without having read the book are not clued in that it is a science fiction film until halfway through the proceedings. I must assume that this is deliberate and has been done to increase a sense of mystery about what is going on in the crash investigation that Bill Smith (Kris Kristoferson) is making. Unfortunately, it leads to the omission of much of the book's most interesting material.

Varley seems to have done his research in the book, chronicling how a plane crash investigation takes place, the reactions of the people involved, the procedure, etc. This is some of the book's interesting material, but the film merely skims over it. Additionally, Varley specifically attacks the problem that Air Traffic Controllers are, due to mismanagement, forced to deal with outdated and outmoded equipment that when pushed beyond its limits has a tendency to crash, endangering hundreds of lives as the controller will valiantly try to keep track of a massive amount of air traffic. The film, by contrast, pins the blame on an overworked and overly nervous air traffic controller and makes an oblique reference to computer failure with no

attempt to inform the audience of the realities of the situation. In fact, perhaps to reassure audiences watching inflight movies, it even contradicts the book in having the National Transportation Safety Board assure the audience that congress is more than willing to allocate the needed funds for new equipment, totally ignoring political realities.

Additionally, this structure omits much of the early material we get about the story's other crucial character, Louise Baltimore (inadequately played in the film by Cheryl Ladd). Baltimore is one of the privileged time travel team leaders in a bleak future envisioned by Varley. She is part of mankind's final generation, suffering from generations of pollution, biochemical warfare, genetic warfare, and other abuses of the environment. Her actual body is deformed, but she wears a skin suit, which gives her an attractive, healthy appearance. This future is so filled with despair that suicide is commonplace; the people are so malformed that they are no longer able to reproduce, which leads to this scheme of raiding doomed flights for healthy humans to somehow perpetuate the human race.

The character of Louise Baltimore in the book is a complex one. She has a kind of gallows humor, is generally a tough bitch with a realistic if depressing outlook on things. To prevent a time paradox, she must continually come in contact with Bill Smith, and initially she feels only contempt for him based on what she perceives as a wasted life. She learns compassion when she gets Smith's view of his own life and eventually falls in love with him, though she is too cynical to admit this to herself.

The resulting character would take a real actress to play her, something which sadly Cheryl Ladd is not. Perhaps to accommodate her, the character has been simplified, her hard edge removed. Instead, the film's Baltimore is explained as able to be hard when kidnapping passengers because she knows she's saving them but is otherwise an emotional marshmallow. She's able to look good, but obviously doesn't match Varley's most beautiful woman in the world description of her. As played by Ladd, she is largely an enigma.

How does one begin to enumerate the film's many missteps? The first mistake was hiring Michael Anderson to direct, at best a competent journeyman whose best films are the overrated Around the World in 80 Days and The Quiller Memorandum. He has previously blown four major SF novel-to-film adaptations: 1984 (the 1955 version, not the brilliant Michael Radford version in 1984); Doc Savage: Man of Bronze; William Nolan's and George Clayton Johnson's Logan's Run; and a really wretched miniseries of Ray Bradbury's superb The Martian Chronicles. Now he can add a fifth to the line-up, demonstrating little vision, poorly directed players, and other gaffes too numerous to mention.

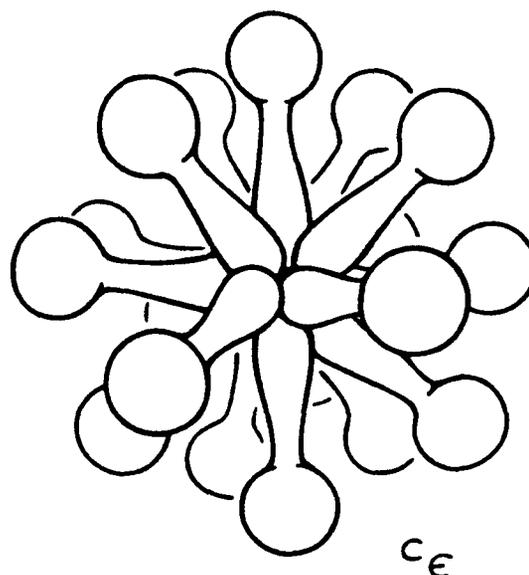
One of the refreshing things about Varley's book is that it does poke holes in a few Hollywood film cliches. How unfortunate it is, then, to have those cliches restored in the film version. One of Varley's gags has Baltimore posing as a modern airline ticket-taker who steals a car to pass off as hers when offering Bill Smith a lift. Not knowing the times, she assumes that smaller means cheaper and so steals a sportscar that is obviously beyond her means (a common hollywood ploy where copy boys and waitresses have vast New York apartments or spacious BellAir houses). Smith spots the incongruity and she has to cover with an obvious lie. Later, the police reclaim the stolen car, making him suspicious about Louise.

In the film, while it does show Smith expecting Baltimore to get into a Volkswagen, once she gets into the sportscar nothing more is made of it except for a few gags about what a poor but lucky driver she is. (She drives fast in the book also, but handles the car expertly well there.)

In the book the physicist Mayer has guessed what the future time travellers are up to and is obsessed about it because his daughter supposedly "died" on one of these flights and he's determined to find out what happened to her. In the film, it is Bill Smith himself as a child who was on the fateful 1963 flight where a second stunner was lost. However, this makes no sense in that it sets up a situation for a time paradox, what the future travellers are desperate to avoid because it would possibly mean the end of their civilization and all other civilizations as well. (Varley memorably describes this as the Cosmic Disgust Theory, "Or: If you're going to play games like that, I'll take all my marbles and go home. Signed, God.")

The rule maintained in the book and the short story was that the time travellers would only raid planes where everybody dies for just this reason. The movie throws this out the window so that there will be another incredible coincidence and so that Bill Smith will remember that the stewardess he saw as a child is the same woman he's fallen in love with and is obsessed with. Twaddle. This plot inclusion makes no sense and calls into question why Smith, having spent a very intimate night with Louise already, would not have remembered her before now.

The film has fundamental problems with exposition, often having characters ask questions they already know the answers to just so that the audience can be filled in. The limitations on the budget cut the council from nine people to six and make the future look cheap and grungy in a manner not suggested by the book. The complexities have been flushed from the narrative, perhaps in a vain effort to keep the audience from becoming bogged down or confused. What's really wretched is the ending.



WARNING: Ending Spoilers Ahead

Those who've seen Michael Anderson's Logan's Run will have a pretty good idea of how he decides to end this film. The paradoxes of the past result in "time quakes" which shake up the future almost instantly. This future society has no circuit breakers or fuses, so sparks fly everywhere and things come crashing down. Not knowing what to do with the kidnapped passengers, Anderson apparently has them standing around until the future residents tell them to walk into the bright light, actually the time gate now turned into the future. The normal 20th century humans are to go through this gate to set up a primitive society some millennia hence (though both the book and the movie beg the question how the utterly polluted and devastated Earth is expected to make an ecological recovery), though in the film this is not made clear. In the film, Sherman, one of the book's more interesting characters, a personal robot lovmate/psychiatrist for Louise who is turned into a simple mechanical man in the movie, is left behind even though he would be a great asset to the future colonists (some anti-technological prejudice perhaps?).

The last shot in the film is: the world explodes followed by a rising sun while some offscreen narrator quietly intones, "This is not the end; it is not even the beginning of the end; but it is the end of the beginning." Roll Credits. Not only has this been done before, we don't even see anybody coming out of the other end of the time gate to indicate that mankind is somehow going to survive.

How much better is the first half of Varley's double twist ending for the book, the only section narrated by Sherman. Against Hollywood convention, Varley doesn't make it a happily-ever-after ending. Instead, Baltimore has the child she's always wanted but dies a couple of months afterward, never

admitting the true extent of her feelings for Bill Smith. Smith does not prove to be a perfect father. Mayer meets his daughter who does not love him in return and tells him a devastating piece of information.

But even Varley's book ending has some problems. First, Sherman makes reference to Baltimore deluding herself into thinking she has a skin suit, which given the futuristic society depicted where everyone is afflicted makes no sense. And then in his final twist, he reveals that the Big Computer who has been delivering needlessly cryptic messages from the future to various people (an aspect omit-

ted from the film) is actually God who decides to save humanity for the third time. (Say wha?)

Still, the book, unlike the movie, is packed with ideas and is made psychologically interesting and somewhat believable. Perhaps my favorite memory of it is Varley's idea that the future is so polluted that time travellers coming to the present cannot stand the very freshness of the air are force pollutants into their lungs via mist sprays and cigarettes. Mankind will continue to adjust to his environment and consider the "normal" as long as he is given an opportunity.]\*]

## Book Reviews by Evelyn C Leeper

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### THE CUCKOO'S EGG

by Clifford Stoll  
Doubleday, 1989, \$19.95

If you're wondering what to get that computer-addict friend of yours for Hanukkah, or she's wondering what to get you, try Clifford Stoll's book about tracking a West German spy through the UNIX\* computer networks. When I got the book I decided to take a look at the first couple of chapters just to see how it was, and found myself so hooked that I sat down and read it straight through in one evening.

Now perhaps I'm somewhat predisposed to this topic, being associated with security in a professional capacity. And since I am a science fiction reader, the whole cyberpunk movement (or non-movement) has made me even more aware of the possibilities for this sort of activity. So I can't say that you should run out and buy this book for your Uncle Fred, who has yet to figure out how to make the clock stop blinking on his VCR. But if you're at all interested in the topic and somewhat knowledgeable about computers, or willing to learn, you should have no trouble following the events described in the book. The groundwork and basic terminology are laid out and explained. In science fiction, this is usually accomplished by having the girlfriend of the hero ask, "Gee, Fred, what is a computer anyway?" but Stoll is able to avoid this, in part because he was not originally a computer scientist and often needed terms a procedures clarified for himself.

In addition to having a fast-moving, hi-tech plot (is Stoll the Tom Clancy of the computer set?), the book provides some insight into how security really works. For those who worry about how

much the governemtn is watching what they do, the truth will come as a great relief: it's next to impossible to get the government to care about anything that goes on in and around computers unless you can hit them over the end with the equivalent of a ten-ton weight, and even then they may merely blink momentarily. And while most of the time that pesky 75¢ accounting error isn't worth tracking down, every once in a while you can hit the jackpot.

A nice by-product of all this is that the book would not be a bad supplemental text for a computer security course. (Well, a nice by-product for Stoll, anyway.) One of the problems with the standard UNIX system security texts is that they tell you how to make your system secure, but don't tell you what to do when you somehow find yourself with a system insecure enough that someone has broken in. The Cuckoo's Egg shows you some "tricks of the trade" that aren't spelled out elsewhere. I find myself wishing that all our computer users would read this book so they'd stop why asking they need passwords or why permissions can't be freed up. (I occasionally describe the latter phenomenon by explaining that many users think that "0777" is the only possible first argument for chmod.)

The book closes with an epilogue recounting the Great Internal Virus of November 1988. (With my usual excellent planning I was 8000 miles away when it all hit the fan and heard about it only in retrospect.) While some may question its place here--the virus, so far as anyone knows, had nothing to do with the West German hacker--I think the epilogue may teach the most important lesson of the book: your systems are never perfectly secure. There will always be one more hole, one more backdoor, one more waek point. To paraphrase John Philpot Curran, "The condition upon which [one has se-

cure systems] is eternal vigilance." And while more technical descriptions of the virus are available "in the literature" (as they say), this is a good explanation for the wider audience of this book.

Some have said the book should be edited down, but I don't think the personal asides (including the infamous chocolate-chip cookie recipe everyone is talking about!) hurt the book, and they go a long way toward filling in a picture of what Stoll is like. (Actually, I saw him being interviewed on C-SPAN, and as quirky as he is in the book, he's three times more so on screen.)

[Note: a more concise, and somewhat more technically oriented, description of this saga may be found in Stoll's article "Stalking the Willy Hacker" in the May 1988 Communication of the ACM.]

\* UNIX is a registered trademark of AT&T.

#### GRUMBLES FROM THE GRAVE

by Robert A. Heinlein & Virginia Heinlein  
DelRey, 1989, \$19.95

This collection of letters and letter excerpts was apparently planned by Heinlein before his death as a way to provide some income to his widow. (Of course, the royalties his books continue to collect help as well.) The letters cover a wide range of topics, concentrating mostly on his writing style, but also covering cats, houses, politics, fans, penguins, and just about everything else. There are a few cases in which names have been omitted, on the advice of his lawyers, and many of the letters are excerpted rather than included in full.

Now, everyone else has oohed and aahed over this book, and I don't mean to rain on their parade, but as someone who did not grow up reading Heinlein, I just can't get that excited about this book. (My childhood was spent reading John W. Campbell's The Moon Is Hell and "Black Star" series, which probably explains why I've ended up the way I have, but that was what my library had.) My personal opinion (which you are free to ignore, of course) is that Heinlein wrote some great short stories and some okay novels--and some really bad novels as well. Given that, I don't view this book as the Apocrypha of a great body of work, an appellation more suited to L. Ron Hubbard than to Heinlein anyway (though with Stranger in a Strange Land one might make the religious connection for Heinlein as well). It is of interest, but no more or less so to me than a similar book of another author's letters would be. I found the parts dealing with his writing more interesting than the parts discussing the building of his house, for example. On the other hand, I would go into ecstasy over a book of Olaf Stapledon's

letters, so let that tell you something about my tastes.

In any case, as they say, your mileage may vary.

#### PHASES OF GRAVITY

by Dan Simmons  
Bantam/Spectra, 1989, \$4.50

Is this book science fiction? Hard to say. Is James Michner's Space science fiction?

Richard Baedecker is an Apollo astronaut who must deal with his Earth-bound existence. Once a hero who walked on the moon, he must live in a world where his "home town" (that he only lived in for a couple of years) cannot even spell his name right when they name a day in his honor. His son has gone off to an ashram in India, his wife has left him, and in general he is discovering that once you achieve the ultimate goal--whatever your ultimate goal is--there is nowhere to go but down.

In another sense, this book is about our coming to terms with the modern age. When the extraordinary becomes ordinary, what happens? When one man walks on the moon, it's amazing. When a dozen do it, it becomes mundane. Modern science (or technology) can take us half-way around the world in a few hours, but it can't help us adjust to the cultural changes we experience when we get there. Technology makes everything so easy that we find ourselves looking for ways to make things difficult; you can take a helicopter ride to the top of a mountain, but people still do mountain climbing.

Baedecker tries to find the answers to his dilemma through other astronauts. But they have their own problems and their own solutions. One has "found religion": he needed something beyond all that he had experienced and all that he had seen, and only God could give him that. Another continued to challenge himself (on a smaller scale)--he did not need a higher goal, but rather needed to strive toward some goal.

This book doesn't have pulse-pounding action. But that's part of the point: when the pulse-pounding action has passed, what then? Simmons deals with this, and does it well.

#### PROMISES TO KEEP

by George Bernau  
Warner, 1989, \$5.95

This is a parallel world novel masquerading as an alternate history novel.

Huh?

I'll explain. The back cover blurb reads, "November 22, 1963. Dallas. A time and place the world will never forget. An assassin's bullet strikes

down the youthful, charismatic president of the United States. Miraculously, as a tearful nation prepares itself for the worst, the president survives." And the President is Irish, his wife is glamorous and interested in a Greek tycoon, his brother is the Attorney General, his Vice-President is an uncouth Texan, and his (would-be) assassin is gunned down in the Dallas Police Station, etc., etc. But the President's name is John Trewlaney Cassidy, his wife is Suzanne, his brother is Tim, his Vice-President is Ransom W. Gardner, his would-be assassin is Arthur Allen Strode, and his assassin is Leo Green. None of this is anywhere on the cover.

Now, an alternate history novel is based on the assumption that we are in our world, but something somewhere along the history line has changed. In the case of this novel, we are led to believe that everything up to November 22, 1963, was the same and that was when the divergence occurred. But that is not the case. Similar things happened, but there does not appear to be a single split point that resulted in everyone having the same function but different names. Nor is it clear why this is the case, unless Bernau is worried about getting sued. (But even then, I doubt that a simple name change would get him off the hook.) No, so far as I could tell, the main function of the name change was to confuse the reader. At least I found myself constantly saying, "Rance Garnder? Oh, yes, the Lyndon Johnson character." This does not strike me as the most effective way to write a book. I wonder if Bernau is unfamiliar with the whole idea of alternate histories and didn't realize he didn't have to change the names. Or maybe he thought his readers would be confused.



"Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play?"

Normally an alternate history is devoted in large part to figuring out what would have happened if event X had turned out differently. But this novel can't really ask the question, "What if Kennedy had survived?" since it isn't Kennedy. Oh, there is some examination of how his survival might have changed the course of our involvement in the Vietnam War, though most of the changes are due to subsequent events rather than anything inherent in Kennedy's, I mean Cassidy's, personality. Instead, most of the novel is devoted to tracking down the real brains behind the assassination attempt and the reasons for it. The book is far more a look at what if Bernau's ideas about the motivation of the attempt were true, not nearly as interesting as "What if Kennedy had survived?" And of course, since this is marketed as mainstream, there is the usual amount of explicit sex and violence.

As an adventure-thriller, Promises to Keep is passable, even good. As a reasonable explanation to the assassination, it is unconvincing (though there is no indication that Bernau intends his explanation to be taken seriously in the real world). As an alternate history it is disappointing.

(It is noted on the copyright page that the paperback edition has been abridged by the author. It is still 671 pages long.)

#### EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE DUCK

by Gahan Wilson  
Mysterious Press, 1989, \$4.95

What we have here is Yet Another Sherlock Holmes Pastiche.

In addition to Sherlock Holmes (here called Enoch Bones), we also have "the Professor," "the Madarin," and "Spectrobert," not to mention tunnels filled with booby-traps worthy of an Indiana Jones movie, Lovecraftian monsters, and inter-dimensional shenanigans. The duck of the title, Quacky Duck, is not the detective, but rather a famous cartoon figure with his own following and song and a theme park designed around him. You don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to figure out who he's supposed to be.

Told mostly in the first person from John Weston's (Watson's) point of view, this novel shows that Gahan Wilson can write a good tongue-in-cheek detective story, even though the crime and its perpetrators are perfectly obvious. The occasional interludes told by an omniscient third party point of view do mean that Bone/Holmes is on stage perhaps less than we would like, or rather, less than we are used to. Still, the Flying Purple Cloud of Destruction does help make up for that.

It's a lot of fun.

THE CITY, NOT LONG AFTER

by Pat Murphy  
Bantam/Spectra, 1990 (c1989), \$4.50

The time is the near future. The place (the city of the title) is San Francisco. And what it's not long after is a plague that has killed off most of humanity. If this sounds a lot like George R. Stewart's classic Earth Abides, rest assured Murphy is not simply rehashing Stewart. In fact, The City, Not Long After is as much a rebuttal, or at least a counter-proposal, to Earth Abides as anything else. Stewart's novel champions the American way, with the main character as "The Last American" mourning its passing and only reluctantly accepting a new way of life (which is still very similar to life as we know it); Murphy's novel puts forth a society directly opposed to "the American way of life" as presented by General Miles (aka "Fourstar") in the novel. I can't claim that Murphy stacks the deck either; both novels emphasize the structure and discipline of an orderly government, as represented by the hammer in Earth Abides and the Fourstar's troops here. I can only claim that Stewart characters also remember the personal liberty that America gave them, and this balance is missing from Murphy's portrait. (I am trying very hard here to avoid attributing to the authors philosophies that may belong only to their characters, not to them, but this makes for some awkward sentences, so if I slip up, bear this in mind.)

We are introduced to Jax (who remains unnamed until half-way through the novel, but for clarity's sake I will call her that throughout this review), the daughter of a woman who has fled the city. We find out that Jax's mother is somehow blamed for the catastrophe that has overtaken humanity, but we do not learn until much later in the novel what did happen. (And when we do, it seems to hearken back to Ursula LeGuin as much as Stewart.) Stewart and Murphy both gloss over the health implications of millions of rotting bodies. (I believe Stewart at least has his main character avoid the cities for a while after the plague has run its course.) When Jax, directed by her dying mother, does return to the city, she finds it has become a city of artists. Jax warns the residents that Fourstar is coming to take over the city, but rather than fight a traditional battle (which would have been what Stewart's characters would have done), they decided to fight Fourstar's armies using art. This use of art is more like a highly refined use of psychological warfare, but to call it that would have undercut the "message" of the novel. (After all, on page 15 Murphy declares, "When Danny-boy was eight years old, he learned that art could change the world..") Call it what you will, though, it does

have an effect. (My favorite line of the novel is "Lily and Zatch lay on the roof of a warehouse, their bellies flat against the gravel and tar paper. Down below them, the army was overreacting to a work of art.")

Now all this sounds implausible (or worse). And it pretty much is. For example, before Fourstar's arrival, one artist is making a giant harp by stringing wires across the Opera House Plaza so that when the wind blows it will make music. Another builds elaborate mechanical creatures that run (or fly) around the city. All this works, in large part, because there is so much food to be scavenged that people don't need to farm or hunt for a living. Shelter, clothing, all the necessities of life are provided by the city.

But as a novel it still works. And the reason it works is that, contrary to what it says on the spine of this book, this is not a science fiction novel. This is a fantasy novel. Or even closer, this is a "magical" novel. The characters in this novel live with ghosts, just as Murphy's characters in The Falling Woman did. The ghosts walk and talk and communicate with the characters. When someone decides to paint the Golden Gate Bridge blue, he is aided by the sudden arrival of a swarm of blue butterflies. Flowers fall from the sky. Angels give people advice. This is the city, not long after, and not quite real.

Jax spends most of the novel coming to terms with people who live through their art. She must struggle to understand that life for everyone does not consist in following the same path day after day, just because that is how it has always been done. By the end of the novel, she hasn't completely come around to the artists' way of thinking. By the end of the novel, the reader won't necessarily be ready to throw it all over and become an environmental artist either. But s/he will look at life, and art, and society, differently.

[Bantam/Spectra Special Editions may very well be taking the place of the Ace Science Fiction Specials as the leading edge of science fiction/fantasy. I was a bit put off by the number of them published--it sometimes seems that there are three new "Special Editions" every month--but I have been very impressed with the three I have read so far, and plan to read more. My only caveat to the buyer is that some of them are reprints.]



THE SNAKE OIL WARS

by Parke Godwin  
Doubleday/Foundation, 1989, \$18.95

THE JEHOVAH CONTRACT

by Victor Koman  
Avon, 1989 (1984c), \$3.50

Unlike Matthew Harrison Brady, neither Parke Godwin nor Victor Koman can be accused of "looking for God too far away." To Godwin, God is just an alien student left behind on earth after a particular rowdy graduation party; to Koman He is part of a collective delusion foisted on us by a theocratic/political conspiracy.

Godwin's Snake Oil Wars is the sequel to Waiting for the Galactic Bus. In that book, two stranded aliens, Barion and Coyul, "uplift" prehistoric primates and then have to block the marriage of Roy Stride the neo-nazi product of several million years of evolution, and Charity Stoval. You see, Roy has the megalomania and Charity has the brains; their child could destroy the human race. In Snake Oil Wars, Coyul (aka "the devil") is trying to bring humanity's emotional level up to their intellectual level, Barion (aka "God") having been shipped off to solitary confinement for his unauthorized actions. The lack of subtlety Godwin displayed toward television evangelists and fundamentalism (of any religion) in the first book is even more evident in this one, in part because much of this book is a trial between Coyul and Lance Candor, who attempted to assassinate Coyul (a fairly meaningless act in the afterlife, where people can reconstruct themselves, but so it goes). Coyul decides to sue Lance for mistaken identity, invasion of privacy, etc. Of course, the trial has very little to do with all this; it is rather a trial of religion. In this regard it reminded me of Inherit the Wind: note that my quote from the beginning is from this, and in fact Godwin has Coyul go to Clarence Darrow for advice.

Godwin does a variety of tricks (only gradually letting the reader know who the two pseudonymous lawyers are, and having Coyul's lawyer call Jesus to the stand), but the trial setting, with its lawyers' speeches and semi-Socratic dialogue, make this much more of a set piece than Waiting for the Galactic Bus. (Inherit the Wind was based on a real trial; this is not.) Though for the most part I think Godwin tries to be evenhanded with the fundamentalists, all the idiots and hypocrites do seem to be on that side. In fact, in general the characters are two-dimensional (better than one-, but not quite three-) and the plot almost nonexistent. I give this book a recommendation, since the dialogue and speeches are enjoyable to read as examples of

rhetoric, but I can't say that as a novel it holds up.

Where Godwin's book is full of witty repartee, Koman has written a hard-boiled detective novel. Well, Dell Ammo is not so much a detective as a hit man, and it seems that the Reverend Zack wants to take a contract out--on God.

I wish this book had lived up to that very promising premise. But about halfway through it got bogged down in the concept of God as a mass, shared hallucination projected from a satellite, said hallucination being promoted by a cabal of religious leaders who actually secretly ran the world. It's not clear how this was managed before satellite technology.

The main focus of The Jehovah Contract seems to be the dialogue between Ammo and God. Dialogue between man and God, or between man and Satan, are not new in literature. And the ideas expressed here are not new either and in fact verge on the trite. ("Why create Man with a certain nature, then punish him for following that nature?") For example, much of the dialogue (including the preceding question) in this exchange is similar to that found in A. J. Langguth's Jesus Christs, which was published twenty years ago.

While Koman's solution to all this (the Goddess, rather than the God) may appeal to some readers, others may find it a bit too simplistic and sexist. Certainly I am not entirely convinced that all the world's troubles can be blamed on the fact that we worship a male entity instead of a female one. It seems to me we had wars and conflicts back when the female deities were the major ones also.

Koman also throws in a few irritating asides. For example, at one point Ammo is offered aspartame for his coffee and is surprised, because "aspartame had been banned shortly after the discovery that its use resulted in increased intelligence." Now perhaps I'm being inconsistent in accepting a contract on God, and then claiming this is unrealistic, but that's the way it goes. Koman also refers to "Judeo-Christianity" as a religion, another annoyance (at least to me). Later in the book, he has Ammo flipping (broadcast) channels on the television and finding programs both on channel 3 and channel 4. It doesn't work that way; adjacent channels are not assigned in the same area. (Well, with a really good antenna one can pick up both New York's channel 4 and Philadelphia's channel 3 if one is located half-way between them, but Ammo is in a major city where this would not be the case.) That's why you can have the channels 3/4 switch on a VCR to select an unused channel to use.

SORCERY AND CECILIA

by Patricia C. Wrede and Caroline Stevermer  
Ace, 1989, \$2.95

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This epistolary novel was produced (according to the afterword) as a result of the "Letter Game" with Wrede writing as Cecelia and Stevermer as Kate. Cecelia and Kate are two young ladies of 1817 England, but not quite the England we know. Everything seems to be the same (politics, society, economy) but magic and sorcery work. Whether one considers this alternate history or not is a matter of definition--many require a definite split-point, and generally disallow the "it's our world but magic works" genre of stories.

Cecelia is stuck in Essex while Kate is in London, being introduced to society and becoming engaged to the Mysterious Marquis. Along the way Kate gets on the wrong side of an evil sorceress and, of course, Cecelia becomes entangled in the plots as well. Not being an expert on regency romances, I can't say whether this is typical of that genre, but I did enjoy it, especially the style, which was an imitation of the style of actual letter and novels of the period. If some of the action was a bit predictable, well, that's forgivable, as I don't believe plot surprises were in vogue at that time.

If you enjoy novels of the Jane Austin variety, you will probably enjoy this book. If you are bored silly by descriptions of clothing and balls, then you probably won't enjoy this book, though the charming style may overcome this drawback for you. (Is it just my imagination or does Kate on the cover look just like Raquel Welch?)

#### THE FLYING WARLORD

by Leo Frankowski  
DelRey, 1989, \$3.95

Well, the Mongols have invaded at last. And Conrad Schwartz, loyal citizen of communist Poland (well, it was Communist when the series started!) who awoke one morning in 1231 AD, finally has his chance to do battle with them.

The engineering descriptions are toned down, replaced by battle descriptions instead. I'm no expert on warfare, but some of the battles--particularly the casualties in them--sound unconvincing. After a suitable number of pages of political intrigue and fighting, the book ends, more or less. But the series probably does not, because Frankowski has left more loose ends than an explosion in a tinsel factory (to borrow a phrase from Donald Willis). There is a 24 page appendix describing just how Conrad's meddling resulted in the development of a Polish utopia, and this certainly leaves a lot of room for future books. And Conrad has also "shattered the temporal continuity of all creation," which sounds to me like an action that might have some consequences along the line.

If you've read the first three books, you'll probably read this. If you haven't, I'd have to say

that the series is probably not worth spending the time on: it drags out to four books what could have been accomplished in one, and pads the pages out with long engineering details and male chauvinist observations and descriptions. Which is a pity, because I think the basic idea held real promise.

#### CRY REPUBLIC

by Kirk Mitchell  
ACE, 1989, \$3.95

This is the third novel in this series (the first two were Procurator and The New Barbarians). The premise of the series is that Pontius Pilate's wife has a dream which convinces her to convince him not to crucify Jesus, hence Christianity never gets started, hence never brings about the fall of Rome. Now (in the series) it is the equivalent of the present, (i.e. 2000 year later) and Rome is still the Empire it always has been. Science has progressed to about the World War II level but the rulers in Rome are still emperors in an unbroken string back to Augustus.

I said of the first two novels that the problem with this premise is that (as Terry Carr once said) it's the aerodynamics of a bird in flight--if it doesn't keep moving forward, it falls. Rome did not appear to have advanced politically in any notable fashion in the intervening two thousand years in this novel. She still had rule by imperial fiat, decadence, conspiracies--in short, all that helped cause her fall in our universe. But now, in Cry Republic, Mitchell has introduced the idea that change might actually occur, as he writes about a plot to return to the pre-Augustan Republic rather than imperial rule. The book is full of political conspiracies and assassinations, with traitors and plots galore, but somehow it never caught my interest. It's possible, however, that students of history who know more about the real Republican plots in ancient Rome might find it more appealing.

The "Kirinyaga" Stories by Mike Resnick

Comments by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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There have been (to the best of my knowledge) the "Kirinyaga" stories by Mike Resnick: "Kirinyaga" (F&SF, November 1988), "For I Have Touched the Sky" (F&SF, December 1989), and "Bwana" (IASF, January 1990). While they are undeniably thought-provoking--not a characteristic to be dismissed lightly these days--the conclusions one draws from them are disturbing. Or, to be more accurate and perhaps more fair, the message that I see them sending is disturbing.

In "Kirinyaga," we are shown a Kikuyu society in

a space station, isolated from the rest of human-kind, and allowed to live according to its own laws, with the proviso that anyone who wants to must be permitted to leave. This seems reasonable to all concerned until a woman in Kirinyaga gives birth to twins. Under Kikuyu tradition, one twin is not human but a demon and so must be destroyed. This of course leads to a conflict, in which the Kikuyu mundumugu (witch doctor) defends the right of the Kikuyu to live according to their own ways. One could draw all sorts of parallels to the pro-choice movement (the Kikuyu claim that they are not murdering an infant because the twin is a demon, not a human). Whether the story takes a stand for againstcultural relativism is a matter of interpretation.

In "For I Have Touched the Sky" a young girl learns to read, in violation of Kikuyu tradition and law. Koriba, the mundumugu, tells many fables to show how it is wrong for people to go against their customs and bring in alien ways. She could leave, but Koriba has blocked any way for her to find out about the outside, so how is she to make an informed decision? Of course, while he is doing this he is also using a computer to call up Maintenance and ask for orbital adjustments to improve the climate of Kirinyaga. True, at the end, he says that a mundumugu must live with his decisions. But still, I find the message of isolationism and cultural integrity at any price verging on fanaticism.

In "Bwana" the message becomes overt: it is wrong to bring in outside culture or technology. A hunter brought in to kill some hyena also brings in new ideas and new technology and these have an extremely negative effect on the Kikuyu. Koriba tells his people that it is because they cannot expect to take just some of the outsider's culture--they will have to take all the bad effects as well as the good. So medicine must be refused because that would upset the balance of Kikuyu life, etc. Koriba says the problems in Kenya began when the Kikuyu took the European's technology. And here is the crux of my problem--the "Europeans" were not originally a homogeneous group. They started as many tribes, but an interchange of ideas, goods, and technology made them what they are today. Koriba (Resnick?) does not say how bad the Picts were for taking anything from the Celts, or how the Romans should never have used Greek technology or Egyptian medicine, or how the Italians should have thrown Marco Polo out when he tried to bring back umbrellas and pasta. The history of civilization is the story of borrowing from other cultures. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, but it's inevitable. If the Japanese find a cure for AIDS, should Americans reject it because it wasn't part of our cultural? For that matter, by Koriba's reasoning the whole melting-pot of America is a disaster. Some

may believe that, but I do not, and to find a popular series that seems to be espousing this view is disappointing.

#### THE WORLD BEYOND THE HILL

by Alexei and Cory Panshin  
Tarcher, 1990, \$29.95

This study of science fiction from its origins through its "Golden Age" is not just another standard reference work. It does not consist of sections on each of the major authors, listing their works and publication dates. What the Panshins have done instead is to examine the trends and works of science fiction in the context of the social events and philosophies of the time. The swing from science as devil to science as savior and back again is reflected, they say, in the science fiction being written through the years. And they help to dispel some of the myth of John W. Campbell as monolithic creator and leader of the Golden Age. Some of this is already known. For example, that Campbell's insistence that in any human/non-human encounter human supremacy must be demonstrated and Asimov's reluctance to support such racist ideas led to Asimov's all-human universe is fairly common knowledge. But the Panshins present their information in a strictly chronological order rather than by author as is common in other works, and this global rather than individual perspective sets his work apart.

This is not to say that I always agree with the Panshins' conclusions or opinions. That this book is published by Tarcher is no surprise--Tarcher is trying to build a line of "New Age" science fiction books: science fiction books that emphasize the metaphysical and transcendent instead of blueprints and spaceships. (I would question throwing Olaf Stapledon into the "New Age" category, though.) Since the main focus of The World Beyond the Hill is the metaphysical nature of science fiction, or at least those aspects of science fiction that are based in transcending this world, this makes it a perfect book for the series. It does mean, however, that the Panshins give less space to those works of science fiction that do not, in their opinion, form part of this search for "the world beyond."

The only thing that prevents me from wholeheartedly recommending this book is the price. Yes, it's a think book representing a lot of work, but there's something about a \$30 price-tag that makes one hesitate. But I would strongly suggest that if you can't afford this book (or even if you can), you should encourage your local library to purchase a copy.

## CYBERBOOKS

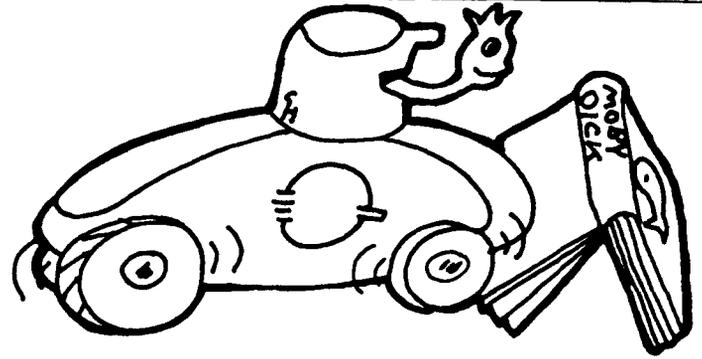
by Ben Bova  
Tor, 1989, \$4.50

Ben Bova has been involved in the publishing industry as author and editor, and his wife is a literary agent. Therefore, he should have a good idea of how the publishing industry works. And many other people have said that the presentation in this book is accurate. For example, I know that what makes a best seller is the publisher deciding it will be a best seller. A book that has a print run of 250,000 and a publicity tour will be a best seller; the same book with a print run of 2500 and no publicity will flop. But if all this is true my question is, "Why would Tor publish a book about how stupid the publishing industry is?"

The story is set in 2015 (or so). A computer whiz has developed a "cyberbook"--an electronic book of the standard sort, consisting of a reader and wafers for each book. (Think of the wafers as small minidisks.) He wants to sell it to a publisher so that books can be made and distributed incredibly cheaply, and in addition, no forests need die. (The question of what ecological damage occurs in the safer-manufacturing process is avoided entirely.) In the process he (and the reader) learn "how the publishing industry really works."

In addition to the publishing industry, Bova attacks New York, or more specifically, Manhattan. Much of this part seems to be inspired by Tom Wolfe's Bonfire of the Vanities. Wolfe, for example, describes an outfit worn by one woman as having a hat that is so wide it couldn't possibly stay on her head in even a slight breeze, so she can never take more than a couple of steps outside with it on. Of course, since one wouldn't dream of walking to a party, even a block away, and since a taxi would mean having to stand outside after a party while a taxi was hailed, people need to hire limousines for the evening to take them to parties only a block away. The fashions in Bova's Manhattan change every week rather than every month or year (well, things are speeding up these days), but just as in Bonfire, everyone is always working on a different look to stay in step. And everyone has to live in Manhattan for appearances' sake, but can't afford it on one salary, so everyone is moonlighting.

As a comic science fiction novel, this is excellent. As a serious commentary on the publishing industry today, well, maybe the answer to my question is that the publishing industry is so stupid that they would publish a book about how stupid they are. On the other hand, maybe it's like the mud-eaters: I went to a Renaissance fair once in which there were people who were, I believe, wrestling



pigs in mud. At some point, they offered to eat mud if the crowd would collectively pay \$10. After they had collected the money, they ate some mud, and then said, "You think we're stupid for eating this mud for \$10. But what about you? --you paid \$10 to watch us!"

JASON COSMO

by Dan McGirt  
Signet, 1989, \$3.95

Jason Cosmo is a tongue-in-cheek fantasy. It won't set the literary world on fire, or even win any Hugos, but it makes an enjoyable read.

Jason Cosmo is a woodcutter in Hincksnittle who somehow gets tapped to be the hero who will save everyone from the Demon Lords and assorted other nasties. He gets to rescue princesses, fight monsters, and do all that other hero-type stuff. Of course the plot isn't original--hero plots rarely are. But for a novel that starts out in the Festering Wart Tavern, you can forgive a familiarity of plot.

McGirt has a talent for coming up with humorous names, but he also has an ear for clever dialogue. For example:

"If Rae City falls and the man Jason Cosmo is captured by the minions of the dreaded Society or the pawns of the Demon Lords--whichever these marauders may be--then beauty and truth, honor and justice, hope and peace, may be forever lost to the peoples of all kingdoms."

"In other words," said Mercury. "This is very important."

Later, Jason asks Mercury why Mercury has come with him; is it because he is Jason's friend? Mercury replies, "That's true, but you loan a friend garden tools. You don't escort him through the Incredibly Dark Forest." (As usual, one might wish for a better copy editor--one who would have caught the punctuation error in the first example, and the grammatical error in the second,--but heck, what do you expect for \$3.95 these days?)

There is a lot of what passes for humorous fantasy these days, but much of it falls into the Xanth trap--what's funny the first time around is marginal by book three and positively stupefying by book seven. This book is original and fun. I hope we see more from McGirt, possibly even more humorous novels (though he could probably do a straight fantasy if he wished). I just hope we don't end up with Jason Cosmo VII: Jason Takes Manhattan.

#### WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, VOLUME 2: ALTERNATE HEROES

by Gregory Benford & Martin H. Greenberg  
Bantam/Spectra, 1990, \$4.50

This is the second (last?) of a series of alternate history short fiction. As with the other, What Might Have Been, Volume 1: Alternate Empires, the pieces here were commissioned for this volume but have appeared elsewhere between the time of their writing and their publication here. At least this volume indicates where they have been published previously, but in both cases one is left with the feeling that the publisher was trying to convince the buyer the stories were all new, when in fact the buyer may very well have most of them already.

Be that as it may, this book examines the "great man" theory of history--the idea that history is made by "great men" rather than by the "tide of events." The "great man" theory says that if Hitler weren't around, the Nazi Party would not have developed as it did; the "tide of events" theory says that if Hitler weren't there, someone else would have taken his place. Michael Moorcock's Behold the Man is perhaps an extreme example of the latter. (Strangely enough, the first volume was not "tide of events" stories, but "failed events" stories--what if X hadn't happened?)

Unfortunately, many of the authors in this volume make their stories fit the "great man" theory by picking a great man, having something different happen to him, or having him do something different, though the "great man" usually seems to be more acted upon than acting in this anthology, and then stopping. There is no alternate history, just a suggestion of how one could write one. (Note: in discussing the stories, I will often be telling what the change was. For some of the stories this might be considered a spoiler, so reader, beware!)

For example, Harry Turtledove's "The Last Article" postulates that Hitler's armies made it to India and were controlling it when Gandhi tried to use his policy of non-violence against them. This sounds more like an alternate even ("Hitler conquers India") than a "great man" story, and is fairly predictable. But it ends at this point. What happens next?

In "Lenin in Odessa" George Zebrowski postulates an early confrontation between Lenin and Stalin.

But just when history changes, the story ends. What happens next? No answer. Harry Harrison and Tom Shippey's "A Letter from the Pope" has the same problem: just when Alfred changes his plans because he receives the chastising letter the Pope sent him (instead of not receiving it), the story ends. (This "great man" was so obscure to most readers that an introduction was included explaining what the story was about.) What happens next? We aren't told. (The back blurb promises "a Europe converted to Viking paganism"--it isn't delivered.) Loose Cannon by Susan Shwartz has T.E. Lawrence surviving his motorcycle accident to take a role in the African campaigns of World War II. But just after he talks to Rommel, the story ends. What happens next? Who knows? I Judith Tarr's "Roncesvalles," when Charlemagne discovers Ganelon's treachery was bought by Christians, he decides to convert to Islam and side with the Moors. What happens next? We never find out. These all read like introductory chapters to alternate history novels that the authors might be planning, rather than full-fledged alternate history stories. The characters are well drawn in all the stories here--they just don't go anywhere.

Two stories deal with Abraham Lincoln. Michael Cassutt's "Mules in Horses' Harness" assumes Lincoln's death in 1863; James Morrow's "Abe Lincoln in McDonald's" includes time travel (Lincoln somehow travels forward in time to see the results of making a particular decision). I feel the use of time travel and alternate history lessens the latter, but perhaps I'm just a bit of a purist. I also find the alternate history set forth a bit unbelievable, but I would be willing to suspend disbelief for one change--but not for two. Cassutt's story has a couple of variations on the usual "what if the Civil War turned out differently?" theme, but nothing startling, not even his "surprise" revelation at the end. Neither one is a presentation of "a Confederacy that won the Civil War," which the back cover touts. In this, at least, they show originality. "No Piece of Ground" by Walter Jon Williams is another Civil War variation, with Edgar Allan Poe a general in the Confederate Army. Marc Laidlaw's "His Powder'd Wig, His Crown of Thornes" deals with George Washington as the Savior of the Indians, though with a twist. We don't see enough of the alternate world to judge the reality of its texture, though the main character is well drawn and draws the reader into what we do see of his world.

Barry Malzberg's picture of Hemingway as a hack science fiction writer in "Another Goddamned Showboat" is at least a change of pace. It was not quite as gimmicky as the similar story "Ike at the Mike" (by Howard Waldrop, not included in this volume). In common with the earlier discussed stories, as more a character study than a story, Malzberg

picked a "great man" whose displacement would not leave one asking, "Okay, but what happened next?" Hemingway's shift to science fiction would not be expected to produce the same sort of drastically alternate history that Charlemagne's conversion to Islam would, so Malzberg leaves his readers satisfied with the picture he draws.

Sheila Finch's musical Albert Einstein in "The Old Man and C" had nothing to hold my interest—even Einstein's musings on light seemed forced in the context of the story. "A Sleep and a Forgetting" by Robert Silverberg had an interesting premise (communications through the center of a star may get warped in such a way as to allow communication with the past/alternate worlds). But after hooking up with a world in which Genghis Kahn did not become ruler of the Mongols, Silverberg's characters don't seem to know what to do with it, and the ending makes no sense at all.

Harry Turtledove's second story in this collection, "Departures," is the base story of his "Byzantium" alternate history series in which Muhammed becomes a Christian monk rather than founding Islam. Again, it shows the split point and then drops it, but at least here there is already a milieu drawn with which the readers of this collection are probably familiar.

I found Rudy Rucker's story about William Burroughs, Von Neumann, and the atomic bomb unreadable, except for the last couple of paragraphs, which deliver their message with all the subtlety of a sledge hammer. (I fairness, I must say that I generally find Rucker unreadable, and this may be just one of my quirks—certainly other people whose opinions I respect like his writing.)

Of the fourteen stories in this volume, six are based on Twentieth Century men. Four more are based on men from American history. None are based on women. None have the richness of detail I found in several stories in the first volume (even though many of the authors are the same). Only the Harrison-Shippey, the Malzberg, and Turtledove's "Departures" seemed more than merely adequate, and several were below average. It may be that "great men" are less interesting than "failed events." But it is more likely that the apparent constraint of having the "great man" on stage throughout the story made it impossible to show the effects of the change in detail. Much as I liked this first What Might Have Been, I can't really recommend this one.

[Note: After writing the above, I ran across this following quote from a letter from Olaf Stapledon to Naomi Mitchison written on 10 July 1940:

My (qualified) pacifism has been put in cold storage. But how loathesome it all is! And of course I remain fundamentally just as much a pacifist as before. But at present

pacifism simply won't work. I note in Gandhi's autobiography that his non-violence movement's success depended on the fact that some officials were decent folk. It would not have worked against a Nazi regime.

[I doubt Turtledove knew of this letter, since the observation is obvious, but who knows?]

#### THOSE WHO HUNT THE NIGHT

by Barbara Hambly  
DelRey, 1989 (1988c), \$4.50

This was billed as somehow related to Sherlock Holmes, so of course I had to read it. Other than being a mystery set in Victorian (or possibly Edwardian—the blurb bills it as "the period of Sherlock Holmes") London, it has little connection. It is all told from the main detective's point of view; his "assistant" (in this case, his wife) is not his biographer. As a vampire novel, it makes a pleasant enough diversion, but Harry Turtledove's "Gentlemen of the Shade," with vampires stalking Jack the Ripper, who is one of their own, makes this look thin-blooded (of you'll permit the pun) by comparison. If you're looking for a book to take to the beach or to read on the plane, this is acceptable, but I can't really recommend it beyond that.

#### FULL SPECTRUM 2

edited by Lou Aronica, Shawna McCarthy,  
Amy Stout and Patrick LoBrutto  
Bantam/Spectra, 1990 (1989c), \$4.95

Full Spectrum was the most talked-about anthology of 1988, containing one Nebula winner and three Hugo nominees. Even so, I was not entirely happy with it, and volume 2 seems to be a major step down from that, even though it does contain two Hugo nominees, David Brin's "The Giving Plague" and Michael Swanwick's "The Edge of the World." (One definite improvement is the absence of the overly gushy introductions to the stories that marked the first volume.)

The problem is that most of the stories in Full Spectrum 2 are not much more than average stories. There is no "Fort Moxie Branch," no "Voices of the Kill," no "Dead Men on TV." Most of the stories are okay, but they are the sort of stories that fill in a magazine, not those which are featured. David Ira Cleary's "All Our Sins Forgotten" and Karen Haber's "A Plague of Strangers," for example, strike me as very typical Analog stories. (The placement of Brin's "The Giving Plague" immediately following "A Plague of Strangers" makes me wonder who decided the order of the stories; these are two that I

would never have put adjacent to each other.) Robert Sampson's "A Plethora of Angels" is cute, but nothing special. "Shiva" by James Killus starts out promising, but cheats at the end.

There are some above-average stories. I liked Steven Spruill's "Silver" even though I don't believe the underlying mythology, which in this case means a double suspension of disbelief. (Read it as see what I mean.) "As a Still Small Voice" by Marcos Donnelly is an unusual study in psychology, but again poorly juxtaposed with the story preceding it. (Perhaps some convention panel can discuss how editors decide in what order to place stories in an anthology. I think 20-sided dice may be involved ....) Greg Bear's "Sleepside Story" falls into the same genre as Mark Helprin's Winter's Tale and Viido Palikarpus and Tappan King's Down Town--whatever that is (magical realism, perhaps?). Swanwick's Hugo-nominated "The Edge of the World" has some interesting images, but not much of a pay-off. The final story, "The Part of Us that Loves" by Kim Stanley Robinson, provides a nice warm ending to the book and a new twist to an old legend.

On the whole, I would rate this anthology above average, but only slightly, and find it difficult to recommend this over a truly innovative anthology such as Joe Lansdale and Pat LoBrutto's Razored Saddles or any number of other anthologies featuring new writers.

#### KALEIDOSCOPE

by Harry Turtledove  
DelRey, 1990, \$3.95

Though Turtledove's shorter works have been collected before, those collections were specialized: one collection was A Different Flesh, his stories of an alternate world in which Homo erectus settled the Americas rather than the ancestors of the Indians, and the other was Agent of Byzantium, a collection of his stories set in an alternate history in which Byzantium never fell. But Kaleidoscope, as the name implies, is not a single-themed collection, but more varied.

There is one "sim" story ("sim" being the name for the descendants of Homo erectus found in the Americas when the Europeans arrived). But, although "And So to Bed" starts out promising--set in 1661, it is the earliest of the sim stories I have read--it ends with a blatant rip-off of a later historical occurrence in our world. "A Difficult Undertaking" is another story set in another one of Turtledove's existing myths, his Videssos cycle.

"Bluff" was based on an interesting premise, but I found it difficult to suspend my disbelief (though others more trained in psychology have praised it). "The Road Not Taken" suffers the same problem--Turtledove has fascinating ideas, but

can't always make the reader accept them. Suspending one's disbelief in "The Weather's Fine" is even harder: the idea that time is like weather and when you talk about it being "in the upper sixties," you mean everyone is wearing love beads is a bit hard to take. If you can go with the flow, so to speak, the story is worthwhile. But in this case, the premise is not intended seriously and I suppose it's no more ridiculous than what happens to Alice after she falls down the rabbit hole and no one berates that for being unbelievable. "Hindsight" is one of the better science fiction stories in which science fiction and science fiction authors play an important part that I have read, and considerably above Larry Niven's much-touted "The Return of William Proxmire."

Turtledove hits every sub-genre. The horror stories include "Crybaby" (which may hit too close to home for some) and "Gentlemen of the Shade," an excellent vampire story which has (for me, anyway) an un-final ending. (Yes, I suppose this means there could be a sequel, but it can also stand as is, hinting at what the future may hold.) "The Castle of the Sparrowhawk" and "The Summer Garden" are Turtledove's high fantasy efforts; I found the former had interesting characterizations, but I couldn't finish the latter. "The Girl Who Took Lessons" is not science fiction, fantasy, or horror--well, not exactly.

Not all the stories are successful. "The Boring Beast," co-authored with Kevin D. Sandes, was apparently written when they were intoxicated. It shows. If you think that having a main character named Condom the Torjan makes a story funny, you may like this one. I don't, and I didn't. "The Last Article" is another alternate history, this time postulating that Hitler's armies made it to India and were controlling it when Gandhi tried to use his policy of non-violence against them. It is, alas, very predictable.

Still, the hit rate is high: four very good ("The Weather's Fine," "Hindsight," "Gentlemen of the Shade," and "The Girl Who Took Lessons"), five acceptable, and four disappointing. All in all, Kaleidoscope is a good introduction to Harry Turtledove's wide range of talents.

"The Wheels of If" by L. Sprague De Camp  
"The Pugnacious Peacemaker" by Harry Turtledove

Tor Double #20, 1990, \$3.50  
("The Wheels of If" copyright 1940, 1968)

Tor has picked up the torch dropped by Ace in issuing "double novels," actually closer to double novellas in most cases. Here each half seems to be slightly over 30,000 words; the Hugo definition for a novel requires 40,000. But this double is the first (to my knowledge) in that the two halves are

connected. Oh, Ace did its share of doubles where the same author wrote both halves, but the two pieces were usually independent. Here the Turtledove is a sequel to the deCamp. For this reason, Tor has decided not to use the back-to-back, double-covered format we have come to know (and as amateur librarians, to hate) and has instead issued this as a normal book, with one story following the other and a standard front and back cover. This at least saves the artist from having the artwork on one cover splattered over by the UPC code, though in order to fit both titles and authors on the front cover, the artwork is reduced to a two-inch square. And the spine, though it has the mirror-imaged Tor logo in the center, has both titles facing the standard (U.S.) way, which is to say the reverse of the standard (British) way. Interestingly, the Turtledove gets top billing, even though it is the second half, probably because it is the new half. (On the first page, by the way, Tor says that they will be doing more of this sort of classic/sequel pairing with a non-"flip-flop" format.) And how that you are totally bored with publishing minutiae, what about the contents?

"The Wheels of If" is a classic, not just in the sub-genre of alternate history, but in science fiction as a whole. And it has aged surprisingly well, being as readable now as (I imagine) it was half a century ago. (Has L. Sprague de Camp really been writing that long?!) New York attorney Allister Park wakes up one day to find himself in another New York, one in which he, his friends, and his old job don't seem to exist. But not to worry, because the next day he's out of that and into a New York in a world in which the Revolutionary War never happened (or we lost it). After another few days of world-hopping, he eventually finds himself permanently in New Belfast, the result of a world in which the Synod of Whitby in 664 A.D. decided in favor of the Celtic Christian Church rather than the Roman. And what's more, he's in the body of a rabby-rousing bishop. Seeing how he manages, and finding out how he got there occupy the rest of the novella.

In "The Pugnacious Peacemaker" Park is now a respected jurist and hence is called in to solve a dispute between the Incas and the Moors in South America. Having been to the area he is writing about, I can say with some confidence that he portrays it for the most part extremely accurately, though I don't think there are any "steaming tropical ports" on the South American coastline anywhere near where a train for Kuuskoo (Cuzco) would depart from--that part of South America is particularly arid and in fact it never rains in Lima. But Turtledove captures Kuuskoo perfectly--it was almost like being there again.

What is marvelous about this pairing is that neither story makes the other one look bad by com-

parison, though the styles are quite different. De Camp writes in a sort of 1940s wise-cracking Humphrey Bogart style (well, I know what I mean even if you don't); Turtledove writes with straightforward modern prose. De Camp and Turtledove also have very different attitudes toward women in their stories. De Camp's Park is a womanizer who definitely sees women as objects; Turtledove has him maturing to someone who can fall in love (and with someone of a different race and culture). (This is not intended as a negative comment on De Camp--he wrote to the conventions of his time, and given that Park ended up as a bishop, his interactions with women were at a minimum anyway.)

If you are a fan of alternate histories, this is a must-buy. Even if you already have "The Wheels of If," this double volume is a treat. So treat yourself.

"Vintage Season" by C. L. Moore  
 "In Another Country" by Robert Silverberg

Tor Double #18, 1990, \$3.50  
 ("Vintage Season" copyright 1946, 1973)

When I reviewed Tor Double #20 (above), I said that to the best of my knowledge this was the first of the doubles in which the two halves were connected. Well, it was pointed out to me that there were at least seven Ace Doubles for which this was true, and even one Tor Double--namely #18, in which Robert Silverberg wrote a companion piece for C. L. Moore's "Vintage Season." So I immediately (well, two days later) ran out and bought this one also.

Again, these are more properly called novellas than novels. And again, the newer author gets top billing, though in this case it makes more sense, since the newer piece is not a sequel but a parallel work. Unfortunately, the back blurb on this book for the Silverberg piece contains a spoiler for the Moore work, so don't read it until after you've read "Vintage Season."

Reading "Vintage Season" was like going back to my youth, when stories took place in the present and everything was normal, except for these strange visitors who somehow didn't quite fit in.... Who were they? Where did they come from? It's the sort of thing that was popular in The Twilight Zone, probably because the sets and costumes were so easy and cheap to get. But these stories managed to give readers a feel for how the mysterious and magical could be waiting for them just around the corner. You didn't need to have a spaceship, or be hooked into a worldwide cyberspace network, or even leave your home town. The next person to come through the door of your store, or pull up to your gas pump, or ask for directions might be "not of this world."

"Vintage Season" is told from the point of view of someone in and from our world. "In Another Coun-

try" is told from the point of view of the visitor, and takes place contemporaneously with "Vintage Season" and includes the same cast of characters, though with the main characters of the one being the background characters of the other, and vice versa. Perhaps the denouement is predictable, especially in the context of some of Silverberg's other works, but getting there is what this story is all about, rather than the "there" itself.

An added bonus is Silverberg's introduction, in which he talks about his admiration for Moore's work and how he went about writing his companion to it. Personally, I would suggest reading this between the two stories rather than before Moore's story for the same reason that I suggested avoiding the back blurbs: it may give too much away. (I have tried desperately in this review to avoid giving anything away, and as a result I have been slightly misleading in another direction.) As with the previous Tor Double, I recommend this highly. If you haven't read the Moore, you will certainly want this volume, but even if you have, and even if you have the magazine in which Silverberg's story appeared, the pairing makes this a volume to buy.

[Jim Mann reports that Patrick Nielsen Hayden (the editor of the Tor Doubles) says after the next couple (which are already in the works), all Tor Doubles will be formatted with both halves facing front rather than back-to-back. "Apparently several of the major book chains can't figure out what to do with these back-to-back books," Jim says. I agree with Jim that I will miss the old style, but agree also that it's a good thing that there will be more doubles. Personally, I will continue to file them with my Ace Doubles, Blemont Doubles, Dell Binary Stars, and other Tor Doubles, whether or not they are back-to-back. For a discussion of some of the problems faced by Ace Doubles when they first came out, read James A. Corrick's Double Your Pleasure: Ace SF Doubles (Gryphon Books, PO Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228; \$5.95).]

#### THE BOAT OF A MILLION YEARS

by Poul Anderson  
Tor, 1989, \$19.95

Poul Anderson is a good writer and this isn't a bad book--it's just not a great book.

It could have been. The idea (that there are a few immortals born among us) has a lot of promise, and Anderson develops this idea through the first 350 pages of the book. Unfortunately, the plot then takes a 90 degree turn with the immortals traveling off into deep space, meeting aliens, and generally finding themselves in a totally different plot than they started out in.

The book starts with Hanno the Phoenician tra-

veling to Thule (Norway) and progresses through all of history up to our own time and beyond. The earlier episodes--those set in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, or Asia--are the most interesting. The reader really gets a feel for these times and places, and for the problems an immortal might face and how s/he might deal with them. When Anderson gets up to more recent times, the stories become less interesting, or perhaps it's just that the background is more mundane, and the problems of immortality (and their solutions) more obvious to a modern reader. The distribution of stories, unfortunately, is such that most of the book is more recent--Anderson starts by skipping a few hundred years at a time and gradually whittles that down to ten or twenty years between episodes. Eventually the immortals all meet up (through some carefully worded advertisements placed by Hanno in our time), though even before this some have found each other. The two Asian immortals heard of each other and arranged to meet, Hanno heard of another immortal (Rufus) in ancient Rome and sought him out, and Hanno and another immortal met about a thousand years ago and neither realized that the other was immortal. The sort of coincidence represented by the last meeting is what made the book unbelievable for me.

It isn't giving too much away to say that by the time the book gets to the present (it starts in Phoenicia) we have a set of eight immortals, four men and four women, displaying the sort of racial balance that people dream of for a National Brotherhood Week committee. The chances of eight randomly chosen people being split equally between men and women by the way is only about 27%. But an imbalance would make the "pairing off" of the interstellar crew impossible, which would be inconvenient for the story. All this is perhaps minor, but everything happens too conveniently: for example, the one immortal who dies is the fifth male, not the fourth woman. And the characters are somewhat hard to tell apart, in part because they keep changing their names. Tu Shan and Yukiko always have Chinese or Japanese names, and Hanno has a one-handed companion for most of the book, but I found it difficult to distinguish between Aliyat (the Palmyran woman) and Svoboda (the Russian one) much of the time. And that these individuals are born during a time when they are able to travel and hence cover their immortality is also artificial. Macandal (the black woman), for example, is not born into a tribe in Africa a few thousand years ago, but in the South a hundred years before Emancipation. Wanderer (the Amerind) is also born shortly before a period of great upheaval. This allows them to travel around to escape the stigma of immortality. I suppose one can argue that the immortals who were born without this freedom didn't survive, and so we never see them, but that would

probably imply a larger number that we would see. Patulcius's story of survival as an obscure civil servant for thousands of years through dozens of empires would have been interesting, but we don't really get much of that.

In that it made me want to know more about the main characters, this was a good book. In that it didn't tell me enough, and took the easy way out at times, I was disappointed.

NATURAL HISTORY  
(Originally published as  
Les Histories Naturals 1960)

by Joan Perucho  
Translated by David H. Rosenthal)  
Alfred A. Knopf, 1988, \$17.95  
Ballantine, 1990, \$4.95

This is the best vampire novel translated from the Catalan I have even read. In fact, this is the best novel of any sort translated from the Catalan I have ever read. Actually, come to think of it, this is the only novel translated from the Catalan I have ever read.

It's not too surprising, actually. Though Catalan literature flourished during the 1930s, in 1939 Franco's victory caused the suppression of Catalan for almost twenty years. Only since the 1960s have books been published openly again in the Catalan language. Catalan, by way of explanation, is the language of Catalonia, an area of Spain bordering on France, and is a Romance language more closely related to French than to Castilian ("Spanish"). (This creates a bit of a problem in the translation --the excerpts in French and Italian which were probably intelligible to readers of the original Catalan are left untranslated and therefore incomprehensible to most readers.) Catalonia has produced such artists as Salvador Dali and Joan Miro, and one can see echoes of their surrealism in this book.

While the history of this work is of interest, the novel itself is disappointing, at least as a vampire novel. It takes a quarter of the short (under 200-page) novel to get around even to mentioning the vampire, and the search for the vampire and its ultimate destruction (not really a spoiler as vampire fiction goes) is straight from every vampire movie you've ever seen. The value of the book lies in its humor, but whether it is intentional or not, I can't really say. Consider this passage:

They say the vampire will be driven from Pradtipby a "new force," then they vaguely mention an owl. It seems they also refer to a fratricidal war in Spain. The owl will serve a king; this "new force" will pursue and defeat him. The force will already be known to

the owl, who will urge him, through premonitions, to desist from his task. At last, the vampire will find peace.

A long silence followed Father Villanueva's speech. ... Many previously impenetrable mysteries had now become clear.

Surely this cannot be meant seriously. But when one runs across a sentence such as "Two sharp fangs pierced his neck, while children of the night howled outside," one has to ask if this is intentionally parodying the genre or not.

On the other hand, the rewards from Natural History extend beyond its genre. Perucho has a pen for florid description. In describing the attendees at a dinner party, he describes "Oriol Mani and Josep Maria Pasqual, two jurists who wore dark glasses; Frances Escoda, the postmaster, a great huntsman and singer of jotas; Josep Sol, a rich wholesaler and brilliant mathematician; and Pablo Ruiz, an apothecary and amateur philosopher, one hundred percent Aragonese, who knew the recipe for one of Spain's most delicious dishes: espedo." And he spends this much detail on people that you will see only this once.

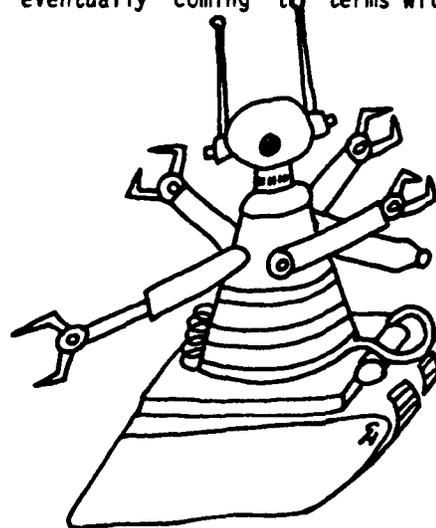
So on the whole I'd have to say I recommend that you read this book, not for the plot, but for the poetry; not for the vampirism, but for the vividness. The prose reminds me, I suppose, of one of Salvador Dali's paintings, brilliant, if not always coherent, images.

STRANGE TOYS

by Patricia Geary  
Bantam/Spectra, 1989 (1987), \$4.50

Sometimes you read a book and it's wonderful and you want to recommend it, but you find you can't describe it. This is such a book.

If I were to say it deals with a young girl growing up; having strange dreams, visions, and premonitions; meeting with voodoo in New Orleans; and eventually coming to terms with the magical



world around her, it would convey just a small part of what Strange Toys is like. I could say it won the Philip K. Dick Award, and that would tell you something as well. But this is one of those books that I find trying to describe similar to trying "to nail Jell-O to the wall" (as Joe Haldeman once put it).

All I can say is that you should read it. (And why wasn't this book more featured or discussed at NOLACON in New Orleans? It might have fit in at the "Ghosts Along the Mississippi" panel, for example.)

#### DANCING AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

by Ursula K. LeGuin  
Harper & Row, 1989, \$8.95

In 1978 Ursula K. LeGuin's first collection of essays, The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction, appeared. This has remained a major work in the field of science fiction criticism, with such oft-cited articles as "Dreams Must Explain Themselves," "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie," and "Science Fiction and Mrs. Brown." So when Dancing at the Edge of the World appeared, I eagerly snatched it up--perhaps too eagerly, as the subtitle "Thoughts on Words, Women, Places" should have given me a hint that it was not more of the same. But it was nominated for a Hugo, so it must have something to do with science fiction, right?

Well, there are a few articles and reviews connected with science fiction here, perhaps comprising half the book. The rest deals more with women and feminism and how repressive men are and how women have to throw off the shackles, and with science fiction. The essays at times, owing to their autobiographical nature, refer to a science fiction writer, or that these issues are important in science fiction, but unlike The Language of the Night this is NOT science-fictional enough to be nominated for a Hugo. One might as well nominate any science fiction author's non-fiction works. (In all honesty, I can't say I'm any more pleased with most of the other nominees, though it's possible they all suffer in comparison with the Panshin's book.)

Given that I consider this mainstream non-fiction, what then? Well, many of the articles are actually speeches transcribed for publication, and speeches are generally meant to be spoken. I found almost all of the speeches hard to follow--the intonation and inflection was lost. I also found much of the content too strident; you might have guessed that from the preceding paragraph. There are some articles I did enjoy: her travelogues, and her commentary on her eleven-year-old article "Is Gender Necessary?" But what does it say when one of the most interesting pieces is a reworking of a piece from the previous volume?

I know this collection wasn't meant to "entertain" me. I wasn't supposed to "enjoy" it. I was supposed to read it and learn from it and go out and change my life because of it. But I couldn't even get past the first part--reading it--and in that regard for me it was a failure.

[It does strike me as odd how LeGuin appears to be putting herself forward as an ardent feminist in this volume, while Sarah LeFanu in Feminism and Science Fiction (Indiana University Press, 1989) seems to claim LeGuin's writing marks her as more a male chauvinist than a feminist. But then LeGuin here does tear down her portrayal of the default on Gethen being male rather than neuter or female, so perhaps the inconsistency is not so strong as one might first imagine.]

#### STRANGE INVASION

by Michael Kandel  
Bantam/Spectra, 1989, \$3.95

This short novel (very short--152 pages, and by my estimate just over the 40,000-word minimum in the Hugo definition for novel) is just the sort of thing one would hope a line such as the Bantam/Spectra Special Editions would publish. A Dickensian (not Dickensian!) slide through the story of how one schizophrenic saves the world from invaders, Strange Invasion whiplashes its "hero" all over the world to fight off invaders who try to conquer the world through hedonism, ennui, and any other psychological tool they can muster. Only the fact that our hero has a psychological mess to begin with (he has a difficult time separating the invaders from his ordinary visions of monsters crawling up his walls) protects him. Kandel takes the standard plot of "Earth threatened by invaders and saved by Everyman" and twists it fifteen degrees to "Earth threatened by invaders and saved by total wacko." One gets the impression that the hero was (and perhaps still is) only a step away from being one of the ranters on the street corners or people who talk to trash cans. In fact, he does spend a fair amount of time talking to inanimate objects in Strange Invaders--but then sometimes the aliens do disguise themselves as trash cans.

#### BLACK SNOW DAYS

by Claudia O'Keefe  
ACE, 1990, \$3.95

This latest in the "Ace Science Fiction Specials" series (now billed as "Terry Carr's Ace Science Fiction Specials," which title it never bore while he was alive) is proof, to me at least, that Terry Carr will be sorely missed. There is, of

course, a certain irony to the fact that they have renamed the series "Terry Carr's Ace Science Fiction Specials" and therefore have to label them as "Edited by Damon Knight." The last Ace Science Fiction Special before this was Richard Kadrey's Metrophage two years ago, billed as one of the "New Ace Science Fiction Specials" and "edited by Terry Carr"--it was Carr's last.

History aside and back to the issue at hand, what about Black Snow Days? It's possible that a good book might be written about a post-holocaust bionic man with a separate physical entity (?) holding his anima (as opposed to his animus), but I don't think this is it. Frankly, I prefer my books written in English and this is written in cyberpunk:

He didn't even have the time to be frightened. Before his soul decomposed from his body. Without time, nothing could keep him in place. He busted through his cranium, torched through his fingertips.

Ptui!

This reminds me of some other series of "Ace Science Fiction Specials" that Terry Carr didn't edit, from 1975 and 1976. Remember those? I didn't think so.

#### ENDANGERED SPECIES

by Gene Wolfe  
Tor, 1990 (1989c), \$4.95

This collection of thirty-four storied by one of the leading literary science fiction authors of today is billed on the cover as "one of the most important collections of the decade" (Fantasy & Science Fiction) and "the best single-author collection you will see this year" (Analog). For a change, the blurbs are not just hype.

First of all, this is a much larger collection than one usually sees--almost twice the usual number of stories. The result is that we can see a much wider range of Wolfe's talent than a normal-length collection would show us. Secondly, though all the stories have been previously published elsewhere, they are not what you would call readily available. For example, "Our Firend by Charley Dickens" appeared in Rooms of Paradise edited by Lee Harding. Try finding that at your local Waldenbooks--or even Forbidden Planet!

Notable stories include the aforementioned, and "Our Neighbor by David Copperfield," excellent stories to give to your friend who loves Dickens's style. "In the House of Gingerbread" is a wonderful twist and re-twist on the classic children's story; "The War Beneath the Tree" also takes an interesting turn at the end.

Unfortunately, even such a literary work as this is not free from typos: in "The God and His Man" the sword is named either "Maser" or "Master," depending on what sentence you're in.

These stories cover the range of science fiction, horror, and fantasy. My only quibble is the omission of "Slaves of Silver," Wolfe's foray into Sherlockiana, but that's a minor objection. If you're interested in seeing where science fiction concepts meet mainstream literary values, buy this book.

#### FREEDOM BEACH

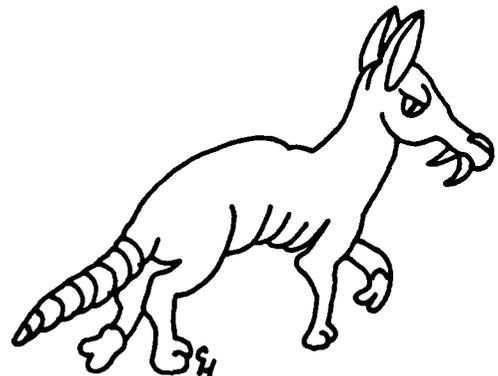
by James Patrick Kelly and John Kessel  
Bluejay Book, 1985, \$8.95

Freedom Beach is a strange novel. But then, any novel that contains the Faust legend done as a Marx Brothers movie ("Faustfeathers") would be a strange novel.

Shaun Reed find himself somehow at Freedom Beach, a sort of purgatorial Club Med at which he had apparently signed up for some sort of therapy which involves amnesia. Through his dreams he sometimes remembers his past as a writer, but is just as likely to find himself the character in some other writer's works.

Freedom Beach examines an author's psyche, and though I doubt this author is typical, the audacity of one of the sections overcomes the not entirely convincing characterizations. Recommended if you can find it.

[Note: Bluejay published a very high-quality line of books, but their packaging was, well, abysmal. Classic typos they gave us included the rendering of Rogue Queen as Rouge Queen on its spine, the misspelling of Isaac Asimov's name on the title page of Sherlock Holmes Through Time and Space, and this book, which in the back clurb misspells the main character's name five times and confuses Jane Austen with Emily Bronte! Tom Kidd's cover painting of the Sphinx and the pyramids of Giza is also totally inaccurate, both to the reality and to the description in the book.]



## HYPERION

by Dan Simmons

Bantam/Spectra, 1990 (1989c), \$4.95

## FALL OF HYPERION

by Dan Simmons

Doubleday Foundation, 1990, \$19.95

What we have here is a glorious failure.

You may notice that I am reviewing these books together, not as separate book reviews as one might expect. That is because, physical reality notwithstanding, this is a single book. I cannot imagine any reason, other than greed, for not publishing it as a single volume. Yes, I know publishers claim that they can't publish a book of a thousand pages because 1) no one will buy it, and 2) it is physically difficult to produce. Yet New American Library has published the 1000-page Don Quixote and the 1400-page Les Miserables, people do purchase them, and they haven't fallen apart, even after repeated readings. The death blow to this argument, of course, is that Doubleday is producing a book club edition with both "novels" in a single volume! Rumor has it that book stores don't like thick books because they can't display as many in the same volume. Life's tough.

Issuing this novel as two volumes is doubly annoying because the second half is so long and drawn-out that I found myself saying, "Why didn't Simmons just add another hundred or so pages onto the first half and wrap the story up there?" (I am not the only person to make this observation.) Because it came out as a separate volume it had to be about the same length as the first half and this means padding, padding, and more padding.

The first half, (to begin at the beginning, as they say) has been compared to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in that it is a group of pilgrims telling stories. But there is a basic difference. In The Canterbury Tales, the stories are about other people; in Hyperion they are about the story-tellers themselves. And in this area, Simmons does very well, managing to have each story sound as if the teller were telling it: the story told by the priest sounds the way a priest would talk, the story told by the soldier sounds the way a soldier would talk, etc. In addition, each story is interesting in itself. Each story is also almost novel-length in itself; any one of them, with an ending added on, could have been published as a stand-alone novel. (Why do I even suggest this?! Next we'll have Hyperion: The Special Edition, redivided and sold as six novels!)

The basic story begins with seven pilgrims traveling to the "Time Tombs," odd structures on the planet Hyperion which are traveling backwards in

time and somehow connected with the Shrike. The Shrike is a monster that appears to be a humanoid made up of a large collection of knives and razor blades, leading a friend of mine to describe Hyperion (the first half) as "Freddy Krueger on Mars." It turns out (in the second half) that there is a very good reason for the Shrike and its presence, and that this is more than just a desire to put in a slasher monster, but many people may be so turned off by the concept in the first half that they will not buy the second half and find out (never mind reading a thousand pages).

In order to figure out what the Shrike is and the secret of the Time Tombs, the pilgrims tell their stories of how they are connected with Hyperion. Of these stories, I found the most interesting to be Sol Weintraub's (the Philosopher's) story, full of questions about God and the nature of sacrifice. Sol's daughter Rachel has been caught in a "backwash" at the Time Tombs and is now living backwards. This is difficult to make consistent (Philip Dick didn't quite succeed in Counter-Clock World either), and Simmons makes a few slips. To solve the problem of day-to-day living, Rachel's memory regresses only during sleep so that at least conversations can flow forward. But when towards the end Sol notices that Rachel's hair is getting shorter and thinning out, I found myself wondering, "But what about all those other years she was regressing? Wasn't her hair (and for that matter, her fingernails) getting shorter then?" And somehow the whole rationale Simmons had built up seemed to collapse.

While the first half is the pilgrims' stories, the second half is a single story (though told from many points of view), full of space battles, politics, poetry, and anything else Simmons had handy--as I said, it's heavily padded. Without giving too much away, I have to say that the religion expounded in the second half seems too trinitarian to me, given its origins. (You'll probably have to read the book to understand what I mean.) The padding becomes particularly evident in Sol and Rachel's story. Sol is convinced that the Time Tombs hold the answer to Rachel's problem, and therefore they must reach the them before Rachel regresses to her "birth." So we hear him think, "Now Rachel is one day old." A few chapters later, he thinks, "Now Rachel is eight hours old." Then a few chapters more, "Now Rachel is two hours old." Then, "Now Rachel is one hour old." Then, "Now Rachel is thirty minutes old." And so on and so on. Like Zeno's arrow, we seem to be approaching the moment of Rachel's birth without actually having any chance of getting there.

Simmons does have the ability to write in many different styles. (His Phases of Gravity, a much better work than this, in my opinion, is written very differently than any of the pilgrims' stories

here.) And he has a sly sense of humor. The interstellar society that exists in Hyperion is the result of the Hegira--humanity's outpouring from Earth when it was destroyed. Throughout the novel, Simmons speaks of "pre-Hegira" and "post-Hegira" events, and so it is only a few lines later that you realize his reference to "pre-Hegira Muslims" on page 199 is a sort of historical pun.

Simmons also seems to have a real understanding of how electronic bulletin boards work in his description of the All Thing, a communications network joining all of the Hegemony (also page 199 of Hyperion):

Days and nights would pass with me monitoring the Senate on farcaster cable or tapped into the All Thing. Someone once estimated that the All Thing deals with about a hundred active pieces of Hegemony legislation per day, and during my months spent screwed into the sensorium I missed none of them. My voice and name became well known on the debate channels. No bill was too small, no issue too simple or too complex for my input. The simple act of voting every few minutes gave me a false sense of having accomplished something. I finally gave up the political obsession only after I realized that accessing the All Thing regularly meant either staying home or turning into a walking zombie. A person constantly busy accessing on his implants makes a pitiful sight in public and it didn't take Helenda's decision to make me realize that if I stayed home I would turn into an All Thing sponge like so many millions of other slugs around the Web.

If Simmons himself has made an awkward structure for his novel, the publisher has gilded the lily by managing to leave page 305 out entirely from both the hardcover and trade paperback editions of The Fall of Hyperion, and instead to provide two copies of page 306! Naturally, a major plot element is revealed on the missing page (or would be revealed, were it there), so after reading eight hundred pages over a period of a year, the reader is still left in the dark. And don't try blaming this on computers: back when a publisher set a book for publishing in the traditional way, they double-checked the films before sending them to the printer. They should still do this, computers notwithstanding. I think it's evident that this was not done in this case.

This book is an example of a work in which the whole is less than the sum of the parts. This leads to an odd paradox: the first half has been nominated for a Hugo and may well win, though had the whole book been nominated, it might not. It is only in the second half that the story becomes tedious.

As far as its competition, one of the other nominees is volume three of a five volume series of which the first two were both nominated for Hugos but didn't win, and another is volume two of a three-volume (at least) series of which the first one was nominated for a Hugo but didn't win. (Do you detect a pattern here? Norman Spinrad, in his column in the June 1990 IASF, has a lot to say about "seriesism," and much of it applies here.) In this sort of field, it wouldn't surprise me at all to see the first half of a book win a Hugo.

#### SLAVES OF THE VOLCANO GOD

by Craig Shaw Gardner  
Ace, 1989, \$3.95

Roger Gordon is leading a very boring existence in our world. Suddenly his girlfriend is kidnapped by a couple of thugs who disappear in a puff of smoke. With the aid of his handy Captain Crusader Decoder Ring (which just happens to be the key to the universe, or one of the thousands, at any rate), he follows them, only to find himself in the movies. No, I don't mean he ends up an actor in Hollywood; I mean he finds himself in the universe of the movies (the "Cineverse" as Gardner calls it). Most of the story is spent in a bad Western--Roger doesn't get to the South Seas island until almost the end of the book.

What is the Cineverse like? Well, for one thing, we find out why cowboys always carry guitars. You see, if they had to raide in the normal fashion to the outlaw's hideout, it would take days and days. but with the guitar, they just sing a song and when they finish the last chorus, presto!, the hideout comes into view. You also discover some of the pitfalls the movies gloss over. You know how the bad guy's sidekicks have names such as "Tex" and "Dakota." Well, when the gang gets too large, the late-comers apparently end up with names such as "Idaho" and "District of Columbia." (For some reason, Gardner avoids bringing a sidekick named "Georgia" on-stage for the usual bad jokes. Given the rest of the book, it's difficult to attribute this to a sense of subtlety and refinement.) You learn under what conditions a six-shooter can have more than six bullets (whenever it is necessary to the plot) and when a gun will misfire (whenever it is necessary to the plot).

This book is, of course, totally ridiculous. It also has a wonderfully tacky cover by Walter Velez --perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the book. And, again in keeping with the spirit of the old movie series and serials, it is book one of a series (book two, Bride of the Slime Monster, has just come out, and book three, Revenge of the Fluffy Bunnies, is threatened, I mean, promised, soon).

But if you're an old movie fan, this is a golden opportunity to find out what the secret rules of moviedom really are.

#### BRIDE OF THE SLIME MONSTER

by Craig Shaw Gardner  
Ace, 1990, \$3.95

This is the second book in the "Cineverse Cycle," Gardner's look at what might happen if someone from our universe suddenly found himself living in a movie world--literally. In the first volume (Slaves of the Volcano God, reviewed above) Roger Gordon found himself traveling between the worlds of western movies, pirate movies, and South Sea movies, all with the aid of his Captain Crusader Decoder Ring. Bride of the Slime Monster takes place mostly in the world of beach-party movies, and since I have never been a big fan of beach-party movies, and find them even more ridiculous than formula westerns, I found this book less interesting than the first. In addition, since this is the middle of the trilogy (Revenge of the Fluffy Bunnies, promised soon, is billed as the conclusion, though one suspects if the first three are successful, more will follow--that is one of the laws of the "Biblioverse"), it suffers from providing neither the background nor the conclusion of the story.

In short, I can't recommend this if you haven't read the first one or don't intend to read the last one. And since the last one isn't out yet, I can't give an overall recommendation. Stay tuned for the next exciting chapter in:

"Review of the Cineverse Cycle!"

#### THE FANTASTIC WORLD WAR II: THE WAR THAT WASN'T

edited by Frank McSherry, Jr.  
Baen, 1990, \$3.50

Though this book is credited as being edited solely by Frank McSherry, the copyright is listed in the names of Frank McSherry, Martin Greenberg, and Charles Waugh, so those of you who thought that somehow an anthology got released that Greenberg hadn't worked on were fooled. In addition to those three, and of course the authors of the stories themselves, there is also S. M. Stirling, who wrote the introductions to the stories. It seems that everyone got into the act somehow.

The title and description of this book might lead one to think it was a collection of alternate history stories about World War II. Well, it led me to think that, anyway. This is only partially true. There are some alternate history stories, yes, but

there are also fantasy stories and straight science fiction stories as well.

The lead story is Charles Beaumont's "The Howling Man" (1959), probably best-known of all the stories due to its translation into an episode of the old Twilight Zone television series. This is a horror story which provides an alternate explanation for World War II (or perhaps it's just another layer deeper explanation).

Next are three fantasy pieces. "Take My Drum to England" (1941) by Nelson S. Bond, set during the evacuation of Dunkerque, is reminiscent of Kim Stanley Robinson's "Black Air" (or is it that "Black Air" is reminiscent of "Take My Drum to England"?). Malcolm Jameson's "Vengeance in Her Bones" (1942) is about a ship with a personality--and a grudge. And "Red Moon on the Flores Sea" (1942) by H. Bedford-Jones is a ghost story set in Malaya (now called Malaysia).

Manly Wade Wellman delivers another horror story with "The Devil Is Not Mocked" (1943), albeit distressingly predictable. The contemporary stories are rounded out by A.E. Van Vogt's "Secret Unattainable" (1942), a typically Van-Vogtian idea of a machine that is affected by the thoughts and attitudes of those who are running it, and "My Name Is Legion" by Lester del Rey, a well-done time travel story with a twist. Well, I suppose that is redundant--part of what makes a time travel story is the twist. But in this case, I found myself surprised by the denouement while at the same time saying that of course it was perfectly obvious.

Edward Wellen's "Barbarossa" (1973) is set in a Nazi submarine twenty years after V-E Day; setting up a parallel to the legend of the 12th Century German hero Barbarossa (a.k.a. Frederick I) is not enough to sustain the story.

The last two stories are alternate histories. "Two Dooms" (1958) by C. M. Kornbluth is a classic in the field. Its depiction of the world years after the Axis has won World War II is suitably chilling, and seems to have inspired any number of lesser imitators (only Sarban's Sound of His Horn comes to mind as its equal--and no, I have not forgotten Philip K. Dick's Man in the High Castle). And once again, we find Harry Turtledove's "The Last Article" (1988), which is an acceptable story, but runs a real risk of being over-anthologized. (As far as alternate histories go, the definitive anthology in this area may have already been done: Gregory Benford and Martin H. Greenberg's Hitler Victorious (Garland, 1986), eleven "what if Germany had won the war?" stories. The Kornbluth story, not surprisingly, was included in that anthology as well.)

On the whole, I was disappointed by this anthology. Maybe I was just expecting something different. None of the stories was actively bad (well,

maybe the Van Vogt), but I got the impression that the book was put together more because someone thought this would be a sellable theme than because someone had a lot of good stories to anthologize.

#### THE UNCONQUERED COUNTRY

by Geoff Ryman

Bantam/Spectra, 1987 (1986c), \$2.95  
(with some comments on Cheap Truth)

[This started out as a review of The Unconquered Country, but, like some mutant plant, it grew off in a different direction and ended as much about Cheap Truth as about the book in question.]

When I reviewed Full Spectrum last year, I said that Andrew Weiner's "The Is the Year Zero," whether intentionally or not, was basically the story of the Pol Pot takeover in Kampuchea (now once again named Cambodia) presented as science fiction and that rewriting a historical event as science fiction rarely results in good science fiction, no matter how tragic the event. Someone suggested The Unconquered Country as another, better written, example of the same phenomenon. And then I saw that Cheap Truth #16 had listed this as one of its top ten (at least for that issue), and described it as a "slightly expanded version of the instantly classic Interzone novella, a shocking, brutally depressing SF tragedy that directly confronts the reader with high-voltage visionary excess." In addition, the novella version had won the British Fantasy Award and the World Fantasy Award in 1985.

There are some basic differences between Weiner's story and Ryman's. In Ryman's book (expanded from the novella, but still only novella length--30,000 words) the story is presented as fantasy rather than science fiction, and in fact is written in such a way that it is about the Pol Pot takeover itself rather than an imitation or copy of it. But the fantasy makes the entire story so surreal as to detract from the human beings involved in it. (For example, houses are apparently living being with feelings.) There is a certain distancing, a certain coldness, that the reader may find conflicts with the sympathies that s/he knows s/he should have for the victims of this. Lisa Goldstein's Red Magician is a fantasy set in a Nazi concentration camp that avoids this distancing, at least for me, so it does not seem to be a necessary element. It could be that some critics will say that the distancing is intentional and part of the literary style of the novel. But for me, I found it disturbing (in a negative sense--one would hope a book about Pol Pot would be disturbing) and it seriously detracted from the book. Also, because the book is so clearly a representation of events in Cambodia, I found myself trying to map all the names and events onto real names and events. This, too, provided distract-

tion from the flow of the story.

The structure of the narrative is unusual. Although short itself, the novella is divided into several sub-stories. The structure and the style seemed alien enough that I found myself wondering if Ryman were copying the style of Southeast Asian literature in the same way that Charles Whitmore copied the style of Scandinavian sagas in Winter's Daughter.

In fairness I should say the Locus and London Times Literary Supplement apparently loved The Unconquered Country (to judge from the back cover). Maybe there is some background for appreciating Ryman's style that I don't have. I can't say it's a bad book, but after the build-up, I did find it a bit of a let-down.

And what of Cheap Truth's rave review? Well, in #10, Cheap Truth says, "You've already heard about Gibson's Neuromancer, and if you've got any sense, you've already read it. This book had half again as many recommendations as its closest competitor to get on the preliminary Nebula ballot, and its brilliant depiction of a credible future has appealed [sic] to the sense of wonder in even the most hardened of intellects." Then when everyone has read it, in #12 we read, "Now that Neuromancer has garnered so many accolades, maybe it's time to sit back and see just what heights have been climbed. ... The book has, yeah, STYLE.... Wonderful! ... And that slick style carries us forward on a garbage-reeking tide for about a hundred pages. ... But then you become uncomfortably aware that Gibson doesn't actually know much about computers beyond brand names, and you are enmeshed in a standard pulp plot." And on, and on, demolishing what two issues ago they had been lauding.

So what has replaced Neuromancer in Cheap Truth's eyes? Well, in that same issue #12, they rave about Greg Bear's Blood Music: "In a triumph of the human spirit that made one glow, Bear has shattered the limits of formula and is delivering truly superior fiction. Blood Music in its award-winning short form was a fine, visionary piece; as a novel, it's staggering." Of course, in #14, they describe it as a novel which "expands predictably his earlier ... short story" and in a later paragraph goes on to other works saying, "Even the good stuff here [...] is tainted with guilt and predictability."

So it seems as though recommendations from Cheap Truth are designed more to stir up the waters than actually to present a coherent and consistent critical viewpoint. (Yeah, I know--who am I to criticize Bruce Sterling and Lewis Shiner? The only answer to that is: I don't know; who do I have to be?) But they were right about one thing: "Really great illustrations!" (I should note that the illustrations are by Sacha Ackerman and the cover is by Ilene Meyer.)

# Book Reviews by *Laura Todd*

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## A MASK FOR THE GENERAL

by Lisa Goldstein  
Bantam/Spectra, 1987, \$3.95

Here's a book that will appeal to anyone "of a certain age" who recalls the sixties as a time when they dreamed of running away and joining the hippies. In this novel of a gloomy future world, the protagonist Mary does something similar. In a longing to escape her mundane life, she runs off to Berkeley to join the colorful "Tribes" who wear masks and acquire tribal totems. In this impoverished, drab, future America, ruled by "the General", the Tribes represent rebellion and freedom.

Mary soon gets her wish; she makes friends with the Berkeley Tribes-people and falls under the spell of their leader, the talented maskmaker Layla. Layla is mysterious and slightly loony, and is held in awe by the Tribespeople.

A peculiar relationship forms between these two women. Layla claims to get her guidance from astral figures she meets on her journeys to "the land of animals." One day she receives the revelation that she is to make a mask for the General: somehow this will put an end to the General's tyranny. She becomes convinced that Mary is to be her apprentice. Mary cannot shed her rationalism, and refuses. Her former worship of Layla becomes protectiveness: "Someone has to make sure she pays her rent."

Mostly this is a relationship story: about the practical Mary who is terrified of the shamanistic and the irrational, and Layla, afraid to admit she

is fallible and can make mistakes, and about other characters with whom they interact---struggling young people fearful of the informers and searching for meaning in their lives. For excitement, there's an anarchistic "free zone" campus and a raid on police headquarters and a jailbreak. Oh, and don't forget the mysterious mask which Layla makes for the General himself.

There's not much SF in this novel, unless you count its background of an economic collapse brought about by one computer wizard who sabotages the entire nation's computer system. I don't know how likely that would be. Consider it just another entertaining portrayal of a future America dystopia. But more than that, this book is simply a good story about interesting, likable characters.

## THE MUTANT SEASON

by Robert Silverberg and Karen Haber  
Doubleday (Trade Paperback), 1989, \$8.95

Here is another contribution to the time-honored Mutant Genre. "The mutant," says the intro, "...is one of the great mythic figures of SF." Especially the kind with telepathy and fantastic psi powers. Silverberg has written about telepaths before, but he seems to avoid the far-out psi-battles and concentrates on the inner conflicts.

And so it is here. These mutants are an insular, secretive clan, much like the Gypsies or some other tight little ethnic group. They had psi gifts, but these seem to be window dressing. Silverberg and Haber (his wife) are much more interested in the dynamics of the clan, which has yearly meetings and arranges marriages and reads the Mutant Chronicles.

These people are anything but mythic heroes. The clan meeting resembles a huge, suffocating Jewish family get-together. A nosy aunt nags teenage Michael to stop seeing his normal girlfriend and marry a nice Mutant girl. "We've got to stick together," says Dad, recalling the bad old days of persecution.

Much of the book deals with the characters' feelings: what it's like to be different. How the normal girl feels, who has fallen in love with Michael. What about poor Melanie, a Mutant girl with no telepathic powers at all? Then there is Andie, political aide and normal, who finds herself falling for the senator (mutant) who is just a little too handsome and perfect to be true. Rumors float around concerning a "supermutant" research project



designed to breed "the next step in evolution."

In the end, our lovestruck teenager has become sadder and wiser. Political plots are foiled. Loose ends are tied, but left just loose enough to be picked up in the next installment. (Yes, this is the first of a series.)

In a way, this book wasn't quite what I expected. I was brought up in the classical SF tradition where mutants were a bit more...strange, and... well, noble. Like the ones in Wyndham's Re-birth, or maybe Zenna Henderson's People. (Hey, technically those were aliens, not mutants, but you get the idea.) Aside from being able to levitate their dinner onto the table, Silverberg and Haber's mutants could just as well be my Jewish immigrant forebears.

On second thought...maybe the authors have the right idea. Why shouldn't telepaths and levitators have as many warts as the rest of us? Why shouldn't that hace their share of jerks, seductive bimbos, meddling aunts and all the rest? These are the most human mutants I've encountered in a while. These characters were real, and I was interested in them. And that's what fiction is all about.

#### NO ENEMY BUT TIME

by Michael Bishop  
Timescape & SFBC, 1982, \$?.??

#### A DIFFERENT FLESH

by Harry Turtledove  
DelRey, 1989, \$3.95

Ap<sup>e</sup> lovers and evolution freaks, here are a couple of treats for you. No Enemy but Time is the story of a modern time traveler who goes to Africa and reverts to the time of homo habilis, about 4 million years ago. His mission is to check on an anthropological theory. Of course, he gets stranded and is forced to "go native."

If you've ever wondered what it was like back in the edenic days of our prehistoric ancestors, this is really the book for you. The protagonist has had astral dream encounters with the habilines all his life. Now, at last, he meets them in the flesh. By degrees he is accepted into the band and sheds his civilized squeamishness. Of course, he is captivated by the habiline female he calls "Helen". He finds her not at all apelike, but instead possessed of unself-conscious grace and dignity. The same goes for all the Minids, as he comes to call them. They all have personalities. They might not talk, but they sing beautifully to the moon every night. He feels anguish at their troubles.

This is a peculiarly sensitive sort of book, not big on action or world-shaking plot. Those who read

animal books will probably find a lot to like here. Reading it was like spending a little while on vacation a few million years from now while remaining in my comfortable 20th century living room.

There is a sort of post-lude where our hero returns to present day Africa and gets involved with further time-travel intrigues. Forget it. Though Bishop does show a solid grasp of the nuances of African culture, to me this part was an unnecessary coda. I cared about the Minads, not the fate of the world.

As for A Different Flesh, this is an alternate history of what America would have been like had it been inhabited by an earlier species of hominids such as homo erectus, rather than by American Indians. Call it a first contact story between homo sap. and his forebears.

Well, things go pretty much as you'd expect. The Sims (for "simians") gave the English colonists quite a bit of trouble at first. Instead of introducing them to New World cultivated crops like corn, they consider the settlers a prime delicacy. Also, this alternate America is inhabited by mammoths, sabre-tooth tigers and other prehistoric mammals which in our timeline were probably done in by the more efficient Indian hunters.

The book is a series of stories, each dealing with a historical period. There are some entertaining notions here. The Sims are soon tamed, taught sign language and used as servants. The West is colonized, much more quickly since the Sims cannot resist the advance of a superior species. Scholars, faced with evidence of a species inferior to humans but above animals, are quicker to accept the theory of evolution than those in our timeline. The native mammoths are harnessed to pull trains. In the agricultural south, there is still black slavery--but a slave can always take comfort in the fact that at least he is better than a Sim. The final story takes us to the present, where Sims are being used for AIDS research, to the vehement objections of "animal rights" activists.

All in all, things are not so different in this alternate America as you might think. It's pretty much the same old story, of a weaker group displaced by the stronger. Most of these stories were pretty predictable when you come right down to it, and while they were entertaining, they weren't especially memorable. My personal favorite was the one about the trapper who is injured in the wild and adopted by a band of wild Sims. Yes, he too falls in love with a Sim female. No, it's not bestiality. This story, as in the Bishop book, lets us into the minds of a proto-human species and lets us see their humanity. They can't talk or grasp concepts--but they can learn, and feel curiosity, affection and compassion for the stranger. Isn't that what being human is all about?

# Film & Book Reviews by

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by Dale L. Skran Jr.

## Dale L Skran

### CONTACT AND COMMUNE

by L. Neil Smith  
Questar, 1990, \$3.95

On the surface, this tale has a lot going for it. Sometime in our future, when the USA has become part of the USSR and socialism has triumphed, some space shuttles are sent out to mine an asteroid. On it, they find a weird collection of inter-dimensional travelers, including intelligent birds, crab-like warriors, talking dogs, ordinary humans, and immense, ancient mollusks.

Unfortunately, Mr. Smith is much more interested in promulgating libertarian propaganda than in telling an interesting story. The "murder mystery" drags, the martial arts are fanciful (basic "magic" king fu), and the conclusion unbelievable. Worse still, the reader must plow through interminable lectures by the giant mollusks on libertarian philosophy. NOT recommended.

### LABYRINTH

by Dennis Schmidt  
Ace, 1989, \$3.95

This book has a couple of strikes against it right off--it opens with a pretentious quote from Soren Kierkegaard (old fear and trembling himself), and is clearly labeled "Book One of the Questioner Trilogy." Neither of these things were sufficient to drive me off, since I was interested in sampling an unfamiliar, and fairly little known, author. As I read, I discovered that Schmidt alternated two stories, one occurring well after the other throughout the book. Unfortunately, the "prequel" was both less interesting and more difficult to follow than the main story, so I skipped parts of it.

Labyrinth follows a large, bear-like alien as he attempts to find enlightenment on "Labyrinth," a living planet with a yen to kill the curious. His companions are a living computer, an elephant-like warrior, a reptilian coward, and an insectile philosopher. They are constantly lectured by a humanoid "teacher" who may--or may not--be an extension of the living planet.

This works out to a fairly typical conclusion as the explorers are picked off, each after encountering their greatest fears. Interesting, but not high on my recommended list.

### ANGEL STATION

by Walter Jon Williams  
Tor/SFBC, 1989, \$??.??

In the 50s Heinlein wrote good, wholesome adventure stories with super-smart, tough heroes and heroines, stories like Between Planets, The Rolling Stones, Citizen of the Galaxy, and so on. Later he added a dollop of sex and gave us The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress and Stranger in a Strange Land. Now, Walter Jon Williams, cyberpunk copycat, has written what amounts to a Heinlein juvenile viewed through a cyberpunk lens.

Ubu Roy, a four-armed genetically engineered kid with a eidetic memory and his sister, Beautiful Maria, a cybernetic witch, take the universe by storm, struggling to survive in a dog-eat-dog future world of black-hole drives and immense O'Neil-style colonies. They are less brother and sister than most, since their father made them up from various sources, and in the far reaches of space no taboo inhibits their frolics.

They are down on their luck when they make the biggest score of all--first contact. Williams provides us with a pretty alien set of aliens, and a plausible series of adventures. Heinlein would be proud, I think. Recommended. I'm planning on nominating this for the 1990 Hugo.

### NECROSCOPE

Volume I: Necroscope (Tor, 1988, \$3.95)  
Volume II: Vamphyri! (Tor, 1989, \$4.95)  
Volume III: The Source (Tor, 1989, \$4.95)

by Brian Lumley

\*Warning -- Spoilers\*

Mr. Lumley has created an awesome pastiche here, combining a wide variety of styles and ideas into a pretty impressive horror/SF series. It is almost pointless to summarize over 1500 pages of plot, so a focus on Lumley's style seems more appropriate. First there is an element of Lovecraftian Horror here, with nameless ancient mysteries and leprous tentacles reaching up from bubbling pits. Second, Lumley has a dash of Clive Barker and Friday the 13th here, with just enough intestine dripping scenes to suggest that 13-year-olds should not be reading these books. Third, Lumley has added the spy thriller, with a James-Bond style character

fighting KGB minions. Beneath this is the fourth element, a classic John W. Campbell ESP adventure story, complete with many ESPers having unusual powers, such as spotters (who can detect other ESPers), a death-dealing evil eye, telepaths, precogs, selective invulnerability of various sorts, etc. Most unusual of all are the necromancers, who can steal the secrets of the dead by destroying their bodies, and the singular Necroscope, Harry Keogh, who can speak to the dead, and raise them to do his bidding. This list just scratches the surface. Additional elements include Vampires (with a fairly detailed, non-supernatural life-cycle), mathematics (\*with numerous diagrams\*), E. E. Smith super-science, contact with other dimensions, and Edgar Rice Burroughs-style adventure in a fantastic land of weird animals and people.

The one line plot summary might be "Zombie Master vs. Vampires," but this trivializes the scope of Lumley's effort, which walks a line between horror, fantasy, and SF. Lumley's control over this vast, swirling mass is not always perfect, but improves as the series moves along. Unfortunately, it seems the final battle is yet to come at the end of the third book, and Lumley's explication of the origin of the Roumanian language more than a tad dubious.

The packaging of the novels deserves mention. A two part cover, with the outer art done by Bob Eggleton and an inner painting by Dennis Nolan makes the books especially striking (and disturbing!).

Lumley may have made the mistake of making his major hero, Harry Keogh, too powerful (in addition to being able to speak to and raise the dead, he learns teleportation as well), but in the third volume it appears that Harry's son (who has Harry's powers!) has become a vampire, setting the stage for a battle royale in some later volume. In a recent Weird Tales interview, Lumley mentioned something about "armageddon" in volume V or VII, so be forewarned. This series could serve as the basis for more than one fairly interesting movie, and appears intended for the screen at times.

Recommended to those who like this sort of stuff.

#### THE BOAT OF A MILLION YEARS

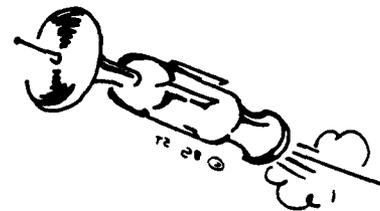
by Poul Anderson  
Tor, 1989, \$19.95

I got this for Christmas, and read it immediately. It has been quite a while since I really enjoyed anything by Anderson (The Avatar). It seemed to me that he had given up on writing realistic SF and retreated to "Scandinavians in Space" opera. "By Ya, fur dem turpedos, Ya bluker. Ah dur blur skie ist bwueterful."

Poul has at last found a way to write historical fiction and hard SF in the same novel. The premise is that a very, very small number of humans are, by chance, naturally immortal. Most die, but a small number survive. This is their story. It starts in Norway in 310 BC and ends somewhere in the infinite depths of space, focusing on the lives (and some deaths) of little more than a half dozen immortals. At first separated from humanity by their immortality, they survive until they are the only true humans left who still aspire to human dreams of exploration and love. The Fermi paradox is answered darkly--humanity has lost interest in outer space once the machine/human interface allows the exploration of inner space. Only the original immortals still follow the dream of interstellar voyaging, and as a kind gesture, the god-like machine/human intelligences of Earth build them a single, matter/antimatter vessel and send them forth, the only such human ship to ever travel the dark ways between the stars. As to what they find, well, that makes sense too.

Most of the novel is historical. I especially liked the interview between one of the immortals and Cardinal Richelieu. Overall, this is perhaps the most realistic novel about historical immortals I have read. Anderson has done his homework, and written a solid novel. Unfortunately, although I liked it a fair amount, I wasn't quite as taken by it as I was by my off-beat Hugo picks: Marooned in Realtime, Courtship Rite, Schismatrix, or Neverness. This probably means it'll win the Hugo!

Recommended.



PROCYON'S PROMISE

by Michael McCollum  
Delrey, 1985, \$2.95

This book has an interesting premise--interstellar travel is extremely difficult, so difficult that somewhen, an ancience race gave up trying except for one effort--seeding the galaxy with Von Neumann probes seeking other races that have found the secret. A couple of centuries in our future, one of these probes enters the Solar System. It offers a deal--a wealth of technology in return for true FTL. Hot-minded Earthlings blow up the main-brain of the probe, forcing the remaining part of the ship to make a deal with more calm folks to continue its efforts. Apparently, it has detected apparent FTL in the vicinity of Procyon, and needs



help to get there. Help is given, and in due course the probe and an Earth ship leave for Procyon. Centuries pass, and a second interstellar probe arrives. Then the fun really starts.

If this is a bit over-complex, so is the novel. While constantly on the verge of being really insightful, in the end McCollum writes an unbelievable space opera. Not really recommended.

#### BUYING TIME

by Joe Haldeman  
Morrow, 1989, \$18.95

This well-crafted book has the premise that the Stileman Foundation holds the secret of immortality --but will only sell it ten years at a time--and the price is 1,000,000 pounds, or your net worth, whichever is greater! Up until its let-down conclusion, Haldeman writes a crackling good hard-SF adventure yarn, full of believable characters, convincing thought on how immortals might behave, and a mystery within a mystery that keeps the pages turning. Recommended.

#### DEMONS AT RAINBOW BRIDGE

by Jack Chalker  
Ace, 1989, \$17.95

If you like what Chalker writes--semi-realistic space opera--this will satisfy you. Be warned, this promises to be the first book of a long series. The entire volume--375 pages-- is devoted to INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS! Of the real plot, only about 20 pages exist. Only for the Chalker fans.

#### THE LAST LEGENDS OF EARTH

by A. A. Attanasio  
Doubleday/Foundation, 1989, \$18.95

This novel sits on the cusp between hard SF that has vast scope, such as Ringworld, and frank fantasy such as The Dying Earth. There is the veneer of a vast battle between the Rimstalker and the Zotl, a battle so vast that the resurrection of humanity from its forgotten grave to take part in the war is just a small part of the millennium spanning action. Overall, Attanasio tells a good tale, with

powerful characters, interesting ideas, and immense courage. What this story is not, finally, is probable. The science frequently verges off into magic, leaving the reader wondering about the author's intent. Worth reading.

#### THE MUMMY, or RAMSES THE DAMNED

by Anne Rice  
Ballantine, 1989, \$11.95

I think Anne needed some bucks quick, and decided to crank out this imitation of her excellent vampire series (Interview with the Vampire, The Vampire Lestat, and Queen of the Damned) using a mummy instead of a vampire as the immortal character. Although better than pulp fiction, this novel is simply not up to the high standard Anne Rice has set with her vampire stories. The scenes without Ramses on stage are dreadfully dull, and the end promises sequel after sequel without the vast scope and detail of the vampire series.

Not recommended.

#### PRENTICE ALVIN

by Orson Scott Card  
Tor, 1989, \$17.95

This is the third book in the Tales of Alvin Maker, Card's excellent series blending American history with backwood's magic (the first two are Seventh Son and Red Prophet). So far, Card is still going strong, but a bit of the overpowering enchantment of the first novel has worn off as Alvin gets older. Among other things, Alvin meets the torch who has been watching over him all his life, fights Mike Fink, forges a golden anvil, and survives a harrowing battle with the "unmaker" who has stalked him from birth. Overall, an excellent book by a Hugo-winning author (Ender's Game and Speaker for the Dead) who is still growing artistically.

#### TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON

by R.A. MacAvoy  
Bantam, 1983, \$2.75

Every once in a while I read something fans everywhere have been raving about for years, and after reading it I wonder why. I felt that way after reading Gene Wolfe's Shadow of the Torturer and I felt that way after reading Black Dragon. Politely put, there is very little substance to this slow-paced, delicately written tale of an ancient Chinese dragon who has taken on the guise of a man, and who has come to America to seek enlightenment. This theme is rich with the possibility of contras-

ting viewpoint of an immortal dragon with that of contemporary humans, but little is done with this.

I get the impression R.A. MacAvoy is a middle-aged woman who has led a dull life, and this is her idea of an exciting experience--a middle-aged woman finds love while meeting a Chinese dragon and solving a mystery. I could barely keep turning the pages, and never would have gotten past the first five chapters if this weren't so highly recommended. It's just not my cup of tea!

DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE  
Baen, 1988, \$3.95

OATH OF GOLD  
Baen, 1989, \$3.95

by Elizabeth Moon  
(Books II and III of The Deed of Paksenarrion)

Ms. Moon has apparently led a more exciting life than Ms. MacAvoy--more anon. There are two main claims being made for this series. One, according to the jacket, Judith Tarr (whomever this may be?) states that "This is the first work of high fantasy I've seen that has taken the work of Tolkien, assimilated it totally and deeply and absolutely, and produced something altogether new and yet incontestably based on the master...." This is certainly true--although I am not a big fan of Tolkien, he did produce stories with an enchanting background. However, Ms. Moon has simply borrowed the characters (orcs, dwarves, elves, thieves, paladins, etc.), although more from D&D games than Tolkien, and strung them together in a series of action sequences that at their worst resemble D&D games. There is no coherent sociology or logic that underlies her society or magic. Stuff just seems to happen as needed by the plot. Women are treated equally with not the slightest explanation. Lesbian love is accepted along with heterosexual love, again with no explanation. This "no means of support" style of writing should be contrasted with Niven's The Magic Goes Away.

This is not to imply that Ms. Moon is a poor writer (I did read both books, after all), but that she has not applied sufficient thought to the background of her stories. The other claim (also of the jacket) is that "Her (Ms. Moon's) background in military training and discipline imbue Divided Allegiance and its companion volumes with a gritty realism that is all too rare in current fantasy." Apparently Ms. Moon was at one point a 1st Lieutenant in the US Marine Corps. This part of the promise is delivered on--the action is gritty, and much of the book is a series of lectures on the reality of military life.

I'm not sure whether to recommend this series or not, but readers should be warned that it is gritty

and realistic, including at one point extended descriptions of medieval tortures.

#### NUKE 'EM TILL THEY GLOW

Nuclear disaster film reviews by Dale L. Skran Jr

I seem unable to escape the pull of reviewing nuclear war films, even as they appear to be growing less and less relevant to reality with the coming of Glasnost. Hence, I return once again to a review of several films of nuclear disaster I have seen recently, including one \*classic,\* Five.

#### SURVIVOR

I mention this simply for completeness. Imagine the most pretentious art film you've ever seen. Now imagine that its director decided to make a film with a post-nuclear holocaust setting. The result is Survivor. I've never seen this film except in the TV cutting, so there may exist versions where it all makes more sense, but I doubt it. Many scenes are filmed in slow motion with the wind blowing, and an occasional mutter of portentous dialog like, "We blew it all up."

Survivor appears to concern an astronaut who is launched as part of a SDI test, and returns to find the world turned into a desert, with ships becalmed in the sand, and people living underground fighting over water and other spoils. There are long, dull scenes of water dripping, the wind blowing, and his hand-built, wind-sailing, rail-road car whizzing along.

'Nuff said. Leeper scale rating of -2.

#### FIVE

This film is apparently one of the earliest nuclear war films ever made, dating from 1951. It concerns a very small number (5, oddly enough) of people who have, by some miracle, survived a nuclear war. Five suffers from a confused and inaccurate understanding of how radiation kills. Two men survive by being locked in a bank vault. Another is at the top of a mountain. A woman survives in a photographic vault. A fifth finds refuge \*at the top\* of the Empire State Building!

One of the survivors is unable to deal with the post-war reality, and dies peacefully on the beach, never having come to grips with the new situation. However, the remaining three men fall to fighting over survival tactics and the woman. The mountain climber wishes to live a life of ease off the mountains of stored food in the cities, while others propose to eke out a living farming and hunting in the countryside. The mountain climber kills one of the men, and tricks the woman into coming into the

city with him to look for her lost husband. She brings along her new-born child by the missing husband. In the city they find the husband (dead), and the mountain climber (who previously had entertained the bizarre theory that they were immune to radiation) realizes that he has radiation sickness and runs off. The woman leaves the city and is reunited with the single remaining man. They bury the child, who apparently has died of radiation sickness, but this is never very clear. The music swells and Biblical verses fill the screen. All is well.

Much of the early film is taken up with the woman wandering from empty building to empty building while portentous music plays. One of my major impressions of the film was a sense of nostalgia for the melodramatic music of '50s horror films.

It is hard to evaluate Five. Surely a historical curiosity, it is fairly dull and not especially illuminating. The only interesting part is the conflict over the "life of ease" versus the "let's learn to farm" approach, which would surely be a real issue if the number of survivors were extremely small.

Rating is 0 on the Leeper-scale.

#### WHEN THE WINDS BLOW

This one torked me off a fair amount. It is a professionally made, animated, British anti-weapons propaganda film. To soften the pill, it presents an extraordinarily dim-witted and loyal retired British couple who live in the English countryside. The woman's cow-like inability to comprehend even the simplest realities of modern life and nuclear war is at once pitiful and manipulative. The man's constant walk through memory lane back to World War II and the "good ole days" brings home the point that World War III will be different with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer.

Having set the stage, the film presents the old couple trying to understand "Protect and Survive," a British government handbook that purports to explain nuclear war survival. The old couple do their best to follow its guidelines, but their efforts are so dim-witted as to be pointless. At times they almost make sense, and at others it appears that they have not the slightest understanding of radiation or nuclear war. The only sensible explanation I would even put on the film is that the man knows better, and realizes they are doomed, but plays out a charade to dupe his wife into believing all is well. She, in turn, plays along with his awesome naivete since she, as well, prefers the fantasy that all is well to the reality that they are doomed.

When the Winds Blow reminded me of Testament in that it presents a lot of people who just stand around and die, and then says this is the horror of

nuclear war. Nuclear war is plenty horrible enough without this kind of absurd exaggeration. It has all the interest of placing a blindfolded cow on railroad tracks and making a film of a train striking it in slow motion.

Leeper-scale rating +1, but not recommended.

#### THIS IS NOT A TEST

In spite of bad acting and poor production values, this 1962 film is actually fairly interesting. An extremely low budget produces a play-like atmosphere, with most of the action taking place near a roadblock in the desert. A policeman stops a group of typical citizens, and eventually commands them to take shelter in a truck. The diverse set of characters allows for the usual range of response to nuclear, from a sudden embrace of hedonism to despair to a determination to survive at any cost.

Many of the actors are quite poor, but in an odd way this only makes them seem more genuine. Another plus for this film is the absence of the radiation-induced mutants that became so popular in the late 50s. Although we see the stupidity of taking shelter in what is obviously a flimsy truck (the truck and most of the characters get evaporated in the final scene), some people survive by striking off on their own and hiding in a deep mine. This avoids the "survival is impossible and silly" theme some later films take.

Leeper-scale rating -1, but interesting to nuclear war fans.

#### BY DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

This made-for-HBO film is the only post-Glasnost nuclear war film I've ever seen, and one of the better nuclear war films. Unlike The Day After, it focuses on the relatively small dimensions of various command bunkers and airplanes, following the American President and a bomber crew as they struggle to either avert or fight Armageddon.

It all begins with Turkey launching a missile at the USSR, and the USSR responding with a limited counterforce strike against the US, that will kill "a few millions." The Soviet Premier then asserts that dissident elements in his own forces have contrived to have the missiles launched by terrorists in Turkey to bring about a full-scale nuclear war, and begs the American President not to escalate. The President had at most a few minutes to decide. One of the missiles is heading for Washington DC.

This is just the beginning, and the story spirals outward as the two war machines move closer and closer to unrestrained conflict. It ends with a dramatic do-or-die struggle between the American President and elements of the American armed forces that want to allow the US submarines to launch their preprogrammed total response to Soviet ag-

gression. The film shows the sheer desperation of ultimate stakes poker, a game where a few million lives can get snuffed at the flick of a switch, a game where your own side may be working against you.

There is also some interesting air combat between a B-52 and some MIG-29s (clever idea, using an A-Bomb that way!). One thing that bothered me about the script was the use of the female B-52 copilot as an advocate of not following the orders to bomb the Soviet Union. This merely perpetuates the stereotype of women as being unable to follow difficult orders. The audience knows the orders are coming from a deranged American General and a far-right Secretary of the Interior, but the bomber crew doesn't. Another possible problem is the idea of an "automatic total response" by the US submarine fleet. I have discussed this with someone who was a missile fire control officer on a "boomer," and although he would not describe their actual orders, he assured me that the orders and procedures used in the film \*DO NOT\* correspond to those actually used.

Overall, however, By Dawn's Early Light is a technically accurate and well-made tale of a possible nuclear war that may yet lie in our future. Recommended to all those who think the threat of nuclear war has ended.

Leeper-scale rating: low +2--recommended. [\*]



## Film & Book Reviews by Mark R. Leeper

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### THE LITTLE MERMAID

[[Reviewed December, 1989 --Lan]]

**CAPSULE REVIEW:** Disney Studios is clearly trying to create a classic for multiple re-releases by repeating the formula of some of Disney's most successful animated features. They probably have succeeded. Rating: +1.

Walt Disney Studios built their reputation on animation, first with Mickey Mouse cartoons and later with their full-length animated features. Even among their feature-length animated films some seem to be more respected than others. The real classics are Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella. The second-ranked ones are those such as Pinocchio, Bambi, and Peter Pan. Then there are the third-ranked ones such as The Jungle Book, The Fox and

the Hound, and The Sword in the Stone. The ones best regarded are adaptations of well-known German and French fairy tales. They each seem to pit a young woman representing the forces of innocence and good against an older woman who represents decadence and evil. Often the older woman also represents the forces of witchcraft.

The Little Mermaid represents a return not just to the classic tradition but also to the classic formula. Disney Studios is faced with the competition of Don Bluth--who was bred in the Disney Studios and who left to form his own competitive animation studios (much as Walter Lantz did previously). Intentionally or not, in the holiday season of 1989 we had the showdown between Disney and Bluth. I have not seen Bluth's All Dogs Go to Heaven, but general scuttlebutt is that Disney's classic formula has resulted in a much better film than Bluth's source.

The Little Mermaid is the story--very loosely based on the Hans Christian Anderson fairy-tale--of Ariel, a mermaid who is fascinated by the huge ship hulls she sees floating overhead. She also has a large collection of half-understood human artifacts salvaged from shipwrecks. Ariel's fascination with humans is in direct defiance of her father, King Triton, who wants Ariel to be happy, but entirely within the confines of his undersea kingdom. He has no interest in the "fisheaters" who walk on two legs. Ariel is a minor departure from the heroines of previous Disney fairy tales in that she is strong-willed and intentionally disobedient. The film gives her more character than Snow White or Sleeping Beauty. Present to tempt Ariel is this film's villainess, the sea-witch Ursula. As Ariel is half girl and half fish, so Ursula is an octopus with a corpulent woman growing out of it's head... one of Disney's oddest-looking creatures.

The songs are by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, who did the music and lyrics for the musical Little Shop of Horrors. Their style in both works is more verse-dialogue spoken to music than the usual song poetry. It is still perfectly pleasant but it is immediately recognizable as being in the same style. What is a slight disappointment is that the artwork in The Little Mermaid is noticeably less detailed than in other Disney classics. Each frame of film is different. This is unlike Japanese animation which has very nice artwork but fairly jerky motion with drawings used for three or four frames each. But the sketches have less detail so were more economical to draw.

The result of all this is that in some ways The Little Mermaid is reminiscent of the best of Disney, in some ways it seems the victim of cost-cutting. It represents an investment in the future by Disney and will probably be released to theaters several times before it is ever sold on cassette. This means if it sounds good you should go see it in a theater. That is the only way to see it. As for rating, I would give The Little Mermaid a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

#### THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY II

CAPSULE REVIEW: "Pleasant" is the word for this lightweight African adventure starring Nixau again as the benevolent if not always well-understood Xixo, the Kalihari Bushman. Again, slapstick and political farce mix in this cultural-misunderstanding comedy. Rating: +2

When The Bear was released, I said that it was one film that I would not mind see being turned into a series because the character is interesting enough that I would not mind every year or so looking in to see what he was up to. Now that I have

seen two "The Gods Must Be Crazy" films, I think I would enjoy seeing as many of them as Jamie Uys wants to make. I thought the 1981 The Gods Must Be Crazy depended a little too much on political farce and on a brand of comedy that goes back to the silent film days. But then perhaps the film industry in Botswana is as young today as the American film industry was when those gags were popular here. What really was excellent about the first film was its view of modern society through the eyes of a Kalihari Bushman, Xixo (played by Nixau). In the newer film, Xixo is back, once again played by Nixau, who is by now running the risk of being typecast as a Kalihari Bushman and who may never get to play the classic roles such as the one uncorrupt cop in a big-city police force or the odd new partner of two policemen chasing down a killer.

The new plot has nine people running around the Kalihari in small groups that invariably got split up and united in various combinations. You have one adult Bushman, two Bushman children, two soldiers fighting, two poachers fleeing, one woman lawyer, one lost game warden, and a micro-plane high up in a tree. The chaos starts when Xixo's two children find a poachers' truck and climb on, only to have it start up so they cannot get off. Xixo reads the tracks in the sand, understands what happened, and sets off to find his children. Meanwhile, Ann Taylor, a New York lawyer (played by Lena Farugia), goes up for a half-hour plane ride with one game warden and finds herself stranded with another game warden and an ultra-light airplane that is out of fuel. Also on the loose are two enemy mercenaries: one African, one Cuban.

As with the previous film, there is humorous animal footage, though this time obvious mock-ups of animals are often used and in one scene there appears to be two men in a rhinoceros suit. There is also a bit too much slapstick and fast-motion photography for intended humorous effect. There is, alas, less of the Bushman's view of our culture, but the story is affectionately told and charming if not always convincing.

The Gods Must Be Crazy II is a likable if lightweight film. I rate it a +2.

#### WATCHERS

Berkley, 1988 (1987), \$4.95

#### LIGHTNING

Berkley, 1989 (1988), \$4.95

#### TWILIGHT EYES

Berkley, 1987, \$4.95

by Dean R. Koontz

One of the responsibilities of a review is to not ruin the possible reading enjoyment of a novel

by revealing too much of the plot in the review. This puts the reviewer at a particular disadvantage in reviewing novels by Dean R. Koontz. Most books you buy because you know what they are about and want to know more. Koontz's writing and his publisher's packaging are such as not to let on what the book is about. The cover blurbs are intended to be uninformative and, in fact, the big surprise of most Koontz novels is the explanation of what is going on. Hence to tell the reader anything useful about what the plot is actually about is to spoil the surprise. (For this reason plot discussion will be held to the end of this review and will be flagged with a spoiler warning.) Koontz writes science fiction novels with horror conventions and they get packaged as horror. Any real horror he writes apparently he does under a pen name.

What are the horror conventions? Well, those are conventions pioneered by Richard Matheson and refined by Stephen King. Like King's and Matheson's, Koontz's stories are not set in a far-flung future but in the present or recent past. He puts in recognizable details--even brand names--to make the world he writes about one in which the reader feels at home, at least at first. His main characters are ordinary sorts of people who find themselves menaced by something. In the narrow sampling of three of his recent novels I have read and from conversations with other people, the menace is usually something super-scientific that has gotten out of hand. While it is not clear that description fits Lightning it is close and it certainly is true of Watchers and Twilight Eyes. His writing these days is very formulaic, albeit enjoyable. His novels are much thicker than they have to be for the story he is telling, but he has a very lucid writing style that makes his books go very quickly and reading one is not much different from sitting down a watching a horror film.

Koontz seems to be very much the popular successor to Stephen King. Horror is read pretty much by two sorts of readers. There are the inner circle who attend horror conventions (much like science fiction conventions) and look at horror as a real literary form. Then there are the light readers, many of whom find horror novels being sold in grocery stores and drug stores and who read it as a momentary diversion much as they would watch television. There are far more of the latter. For a while both sorts of readers were fans of Stephen King and there was a feeling of unity among horror readers. King is, however, in decline, and the two groups are really separating again. The inner circle are moving on to writers such as Clive Barker and Ramsey Campbell. Most of the light readers do not want anything so intense as Barker writes. Koontz is certainly one of, if not the, most popular writer among the light readers.

The horror market has made a sort of second ca-

reer for Koontz who has been writing for longer than Clive Barker, even longer than Stephen King. Koontz, who was born in 1945, had science fiction novels published back in the 1960s. He was considered sort of a second-rank science fiction novelist, though one of his novels, Demon Seed, was adapted into a film with Julie Christie. At least one horror writer, less successful, has said on a panel that Koontz deserves his current popularity and came by it "the right way: busting his tail for years."

At this point I will go into the plot of the three novels.

\*\*\* SPOILERS FOLLOW \*\*\*

Watchers: This is Koontz's most popular novel from a straw poll I have taken. And it is mostly for the introduction of his most likable character, a dog of human intelligence, sort of like Lassie and endearing for just the same reasons. Einstein is not the main character but he certainly is the reason for the book's success. Outwardly Einstein looks like any dog, but he is the result of government experiments to increase the intelligence of animals and use them on the battlefield. Unfortunately, one of their other experiments got free at the same time and it hates all humans but even more hates Einstein--why is never explained. Travis Carnell adopts the apparent stray and once he wins Einstein's trust, the dog begins communicating with him about the danger he is in, because by adopting Einstein, Travis has made himself the target both of unscrupulous government agents and of a rampaging monster. Every Koontz novel seems to have a boy-meets-girl (or vice versa) plot but in this one, one has more affection for the boy and girl than in most. Perhaps the reader still feels sappy over the presence of the dog.

Lightning: This is really a story about how a woman reacts to having a time-traveling guardian. Laura Shane has been protected from many of life's most unpleasant moments by a sort of guardian who seems to keep showing up in the nick of time to save her. The guardian can see nasty things that are going to happen to her and prevent them before they happen. There are also time travelers with less benevolent plans for her. This would have been a fairly pat story, but is much improved as a result of the nature of the society these time travelers are coming from. I was fully expecting a nice plot twist at the end, much of the groundwork for which had already been set, and was disappointed when it did not arrive. Still, a pleasant novel with more adventure than horror.

Twilight Eyes: We start out in the mind of a killer who is the only one who can see that some of the people around him are not people at all but what he calls "goblins" in human disguise. Nobody

else is privileged to have the perception to see goblins but our killer knows them on sight, he claims. Well, as is not a very big surprise, the goblins are real and they are shape-changers. They are not, however, supernatural, but the invention of a prehuman civilization who used them as a sort of weapon. They have their own mission that they are carrying out. Our main character joins a carnival to hide from the police who for some reason think the goblins he has killed are real humans. The story is about his war with the goblins and his attack on a goblin stronghold.

These are all nice light readable entertainment, not bad choices for upcoming beach reading.

### AYESHA: THE RETURN OF "SHE"

by H. Rider Haggard  
Dover, 1978 (1904, 1905c), \$3.00

Back in the 1960s, when I was a big fan of Hammer films of Britain, they made a screen adaptation of H. Rider Haggard's She. I am not sure it is a great film, or even a particularly good one, but it captured my imagination. She was Ayesha, She Who Must Be Obeyed, and ancient Egyptian sorceress of incredible beauty who had found the secret of immortality. Ayesha set herself up as the monarch of an isolated land in East Africa and had spent millennia looking for the reincarnation of her lost love Kallikrates. The story is told from the point of view of college professor Horace Holly and his student and ward Leo Vincey who, as it turns out, is the reborn Kallikrates. At the end of She, Ayesha is dead and Leo is now the immortal. Hammer made a sequel to their film, The Vengeance of She, and Haggard wrote a sequel, Ayesha: The Return of "She". I had more or less expected the film to be based on the book. Just recently I finally had an opportunity to see The Vengeance of She (and a pitiful sequel it was too), so I took the opportunity to read Ayesha.

The opening of Ayesha finds Leo and Holly back in England, with Leo haunted by the memories of his lost Ayesha. The Leo has a vision that Ayesha is in Tibet, living in the shadow of a great crux ansata. Not too surprisingly, it is not long before Leo and Holly are climbing the mountains of Tibet on foot looking for the sites from Leo's vision and for Ayesha herself.

The original She was published in 1887. Haggard waited seventeen years before writing his next "She" book. In 1904 and 1905 it was serialized in Windsor magazine. In that seventeen years one would expect that Haggard's writing might have improved and that he might have been able to write a more entertaining adventure. Actually, more of the reverse is true. Much of the mystic feel of the ori-



ginal is lacking in the sequel. The adventure is not as much fun without the long trek through the Mountains of the Moon. The myth of Ayesha is worn a little thin being stretched to another novel. In addition, besides some oblique references to reincarnation, we are never actually told how Ayesha came to be alive after her spectacular end in She. The prose also seems to have gotten more stodgy and archaic, with lines such as

"Thou deniest me," he went on with gathering strength; "and that thou canst not do, that thou mayest not do, for Ayesha, thou has sworn, and I demand the fulfillment of thine oath."

"Hark thou. I refuse thy gifts...."

A quick look back at She indicated there was considerably less archaic language and more adventure. So Ayesha is something of a disappointment, being decent but not up to the original novel or up to what one generally expects of Haggard.

With Ayesha: The Return of "She" Haggard ended the story of Ayesha, but had not yet begun it. In 1921 he wrote She and Allan, a prequel to the original novel in which his two most famous characters, Ayesha and Allan Quatermain, meet. Finally in 1923 he wrote Wisdom's Daughter, which told the story of Ayesha and Kallikrates in ancient Egypt. There have been at least two other "She" novels: The King of Kor (written in 1903 by Sidney J. Marshall) and The Vengeance of She (written in 1978 by Peter Tremayne). She was a popular story in silent film days and there were seven different silent film adaptations. There have been three sound versions: a 1935 version set in Tibet and starring Helen Gahagan, an Indian film made in 1953 called Malika Salomi, and finally Hammer's adaptation in 1965 starring Ursula Andress.

#### THE MAHABHARATA

CAPSULE REVIEW: One of the great stories of world literature--fifteen times the length of The Bible--comes to the screen in a supremely boiled-down Classics Illustrated format. Rating: +1.

One of the great classics of Western literature is The Illiad, an account told in poetry of a great war in which the gods participated. The telling has deep mythic meanings. Virtually the same description applies to the great classic of Indian culture, The Mahabharata. The mammoth poem of 90,000 couplets is told in eighteen volumes and is fifteen times as long as The Bible. It was written roughly around the time the New Testament was. The story traces the causes and fighting of a civil war in the land of Kurus. The land was captured by the blind man Dhrtarastra. Being blind, he was considered unfit to rule and gave the kingdom to his younger brother Pandu, who ruled for only a short time before returning Kurus to his brother. Each of the brothers had a son, each by supernatural means, and the two sets of cousins grew up together. Each group of cousins eventually claims Kurus. The two groups go to war with each other in spite of the reluctance of Arjuna, the leader of the sons of Pandu, to make war on members of his own family. Sound familiar? Right. This is the war that was the setting for the Bhagavad-Gita. In fact, the Gita was adapted into the Mahabharata. (Hey, I'm impressed you picked up on that. You must be a whole bunch more erudite than you look!)

Peter Brook produced The Mahabharata as a nine-hour play and as two films, a 321 minute version for television and a 171 minute theatrical version. Brook's work in film is perhaps a little too similar to his stage work. This is a story that really cries out for spectacle as giant armies fight. Instead Brook puts his camera right into the action so we never see more than a tiny piece of the action.

Doing a story fifteen Bibles long in a film, even a film almost three hours, is a feat that is just barely possible and perhaps just a tad misguided. I knew the basic story going into the theatre and I still found myself at a loss to remember all the important characters and relationships. Perhaps the proper medium for this film is on videotape that can be stopped and replayed, allowing the viewer to make notes.

This film was funded by an incredible list of organizations including Finnish public television, American public television, Britain's Channel 4, and a bunch more I either did not recognize or cannot remember. Perhaps it was for that reason that Brooks has the very odd racial mixture he has in the casting. Presumably the story should be told mostly with Indians. Instead it is told with Indians, Chinese, Blacks, Americans, British, Italians, and probably several more. With most of the character coming from one family, this is a distraction at best and occasionally adds confusion. And confusion is one thing this telling has in more than sufficient quantities.

It is somehow understating the case to call The Mahabharata an ambitious failure. To bring a great work of such length to the screen you must cut very, very much more than you leave in. What remains you have to force-feed your audience at a rate faster than most can assimilate it. Many in my audience gave up and there was a notable rash of watch checking.

It is a good introduction to one of the great works of world literature but it is scarcely more than an introduction. The adaptation, written by Jean-Claude Carriere, gives us at once not enough and far too much. As a mix of very good, mediocre, and misguided, I would prefer not to rate it, but I would give it a low +1.

#### PATHFINDER

CAPSULE REVIEW: A thousand-year-old Lapp legend is the basis of this short, entertaining, occasionally bloody children's film from Lapland that will be entertaining for adults also. How often do you get mystical legends in films from Lapland? Rating: high +1.

The plot has been done many times before, often but not usually as well. But this time there is a good reason for the well-worn plot. This time it is an adaptation of a millennium-old legend from Lapland. In the Tenth Century the story was considerably newer.

Aigin, a teenager, returns from hunting one day to see his family's camp overrun by marauding invaders, the Tchudes. His parents and his young sister have been murdered. There are about eighteen of these Tchudes, all dressed in black and armed to

the teeth with crossbows: the leader's crossbow is decorated with snarling fangs. There is no doubt these are pretty nasty dudes. One slip and Aigin is running for his life through the frozen landscape. He runs for help to a nearby village but rather than help Aigin they seem more anxious to pack up and run than to fight back. So Aigin decides he must fight the Tchudes himself.

The attraction of Pathfinder is not in the storyline, which would be as easily fit to a post-Holocaust society and has been many times from Road Warrior on. Where Pathfinder stands out is its depiction of Tenth Century Lapp culture. We get little hints of Lapp mysticism and culture. We learn superstitions, such as the belief that once you have killed a bear your gaze is deadly for three days. The entire story is framed in a mystical context in which each person has a totem reindeer who appears at pivotal moments in a person's life.

This is basically a children's film with a little violence. That is more acceptable for children's films in other cultures than it is in ours. Still, it is a well-constructed and filmed children's story, and one that adults would enjoy also. I would rate it a high +1. At 88 minutes it is a trifle short, but it is enjoyable.

#### TOTAL RECALL

CAPSULE REVIEW: Violence, chases, thoughtful plotting, special effects, gore, Arnold Schwarzenegger, a few intelligent ideas. They don't all seem as if they could be in one film. Nobody will be totally happy with Total Recall, but there is a surprising degree of good science fiction in what could be Arnold Schwarzenegger's most intelligent fantasy film to date. Rating: +2

I have to say that I usually am not very impressed by action or violence in films. How much variation is there in chase scenes from one film to the next? To my mind there is almost none other than the background scenery changing. The same goes for violence. There are about as many ways to tear apart a human as there are to carve a turkey. It is a special effect that has been done so many times in film that it no longer is of any interest to me to see it. I am well aware that there are people who can enjoy chases and violence in film after film and enjoy them every time, just as there are people who listen to the "Top 40" radio stations and can enjoy hearing the same songs over and over. Chase scenes and violence to me seem like unimaginative filler. In addition and amazingly, I find I have this weird psychic ability to know at the beginning of a fight scene who is going to win the fight. If there are four armed thugs taking on an unarmed Arnold Schwarzenegger, psychic vibrations

tell me at the beginning of the fight who is going to win. The vibrations work for chase scenes also and there, too, they remove much of the suspense.

There have been a number of films that have tried to marry action to a science fiction plot. They have been films such as The Terminator, Predator, They Live and Robocop. I consistently like them less than the general public does and it is more than likely because the action and violence scenes have so little value for me. What I think I am really rating is the science fiction film that frames the action and violence--often making for a much shorter film. Take the action and violence from the four films I mentioned and none is a particularly good science fiction film. Only They Live has a particularly engaging premise. That may be because They Live is an adaptation of a pre-existing, published science fiction story so to some extent the story has stood on its own. Total Recall is a new action film also based on an existing science fiction story and starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

An Arnold Schwarzenegger action film based on a story by Philip K. Dick sounds almost like a contradiction in terms. Dick writes cerebral--not to say neurotic--science fiction about people who generally seem to live inside their heads. You could not fit Schwarzenegger into a Dick story with a crowbar. The main character of Dick's "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" is a mousy, henpecked, government clerk. Changes were inevitable if the story was to be made into an action vehicle and vast changes were indeed made. Yet the screenplay has retained much of the plot and most of the engaging ideas of the story before going off in its own direction. Even when it does diverge, some of the concepts it adds are thoughtful and intelligent. Of course, some unfortunately are not. I know of nobody who actually liked the last ten minutes or so of the film. Like many films, Total Recall was damaged by somebody's idea of a big finish.

This is a story with a lot of twists, particularly early on when it is still being faithful to the original story. This means that I cannot be very informative about the plot, but I can say that it starts out being about a sort of an average 21st century man with big muscles and an unusual problem: He keep dreaming about Mars. There is nothing in life Doug Quaid wants more than to go to Mars. (In the story his name was Doug Quail, but it was changed, possibly because it sounded too much like Dan Quayle.) Unfortunately, only relatively few people can go to the mining colonies on Mars and Quaid is not one. Well, the next best thing to being there is having the memories. So Quaid agrees to buy an artificial memory of Mars--just a minor adjustment to his reality. But any Philip K. Dick fan can tell you things go awry when you start adjusting reality. They certainly do for Quaid. The

script is a remarkable piece of work that allows the viewer to look at the altering of reality to be a minor plot complication in an action film, or it could be what the film is all about. My wife Evelyn came up with reasonable internal evidence that the surface interpretation of what happens in the film is wrong and another interpretation of the reality is correct. Clearly the script is richer than one usually expects from a Schwarzenegger action chase film.

Visually there are some very unconvincing effects and some very nice ones. Some of the model work is below average for Industrial Light & Magic and Dream Quest, but there are some very impressive sights also. Audiences seem to enjoy the subway security station as an effect different from what ILM and DQ have done in the past. The special effects have been described as "eye-popping," a pun that will be appreciated in the first five minutes of the film but also an accurate one. That brings us to the gore. This film is directed by Dutchman Paul Verhoeven. He is generally good but uses a very great deal of gore and violence, particularly in his later films. This is a very violent film and viewers should go expecting that. Also go expecting to see a lot of familiar brand names that helped to finance the film. (Of course, Dick mentions a typewriter company by name in the original story, so there are precedents.)

In summary, Total Recall is a lot of different films. It should please pretty much anyone who likes science fiction films. It should have a broad range of appeal on many levels. I rate it a +2.

## GREMLINS 2

**CAPSULE REVIEW:** This is a film in which the parenthetical gags and in-jokes mutinay and take over the film like gremlins taking over a skyscraper. The plot was clearly too weak to stop the gags and comes in a poor second. Rating: high 0.

Gremlins 2 is a hard film to pin down and review. It is hard to criticize the story because it's not seriously trying to tell its story. Maybe it is working only half time to tell its story and the other half is divided up among making film references, making comments about business and politics, and playing practical jokes on the viewer. As rationales for sequels go, this one is about par for being crass and high concept. The little monsters are back and taking over Trump Tower. Of course, they cannot call it Trump Tower so it is Clamp Center, owned by Daniel Clamp, an amalgam of Donald Trump and Ted Turner. The world needed a film with the gremlins vandalizing a skyscraper about as much as it needed a toothbrush with disc brakes.

But while it seemed in Gremlins that the gags were getting in the way of the story-telling, in Gremlins 2 the story does a much better job of staying out of the way of the gags. Just as the gremlins take over the building, the gags take over the film. That is fine, I suppose, because while I cannot recommend the story, I did appreciate many of the gags. I rather hope that this film is marketed on videocassette with a complete list of the films parodied and the well-known people appearing during the course of Gremlins 2. Then the movie can be played like a word search puzzle.

The plot has likable young couple Billy Peltzer (played by Zack Gilligan) and Kate Beringer (played by Phoebe Cates) living together (in sin!) in New York and both working for Clamp (played by John Glover). All three work in the same building with a team of genetic scientists led by Dr. Catheter (played by Christopher Lee!). Billy finds out that the genetic scientists are playing around with his favorite Gremlin and we are off. Rounding out the cast we have Robert Prosky playing Al Lewis playing Grandpa playing havoc with Clamp's cable broadcast station. Having Prosky playing Al Lewis is like having Robert Duvall playing Soupy Sales. The whole concept of the "Gremlins" films is that nasty accidents happen. But just to show that happy accidents happen also, at least for Dante, Gremlins has the Trump character discovering he likes a young woman working for him. Her name is Marla, Director Joe Dante insists that all filming was complete well before anyone ever heard of Marla Maples but, of course, the choice of that name fits very nicely with the theme of promising contrivances going wrong.

Of course, much of the film is spent in little plays and blackout sketches that parody society and that star the very recently created Gremlin Repertory Troup. They act out scenes from films that logic tells you the creatures could have no way of knowing about. This apparently bothers nobody in the audience. It is supposed to be funny, not make sense. Actually, somewhat funnier are the jabs at Ted Turner and his attitude toward classic film, including a great line about Casablanca.

However, because I am still hung up on films having plots and this one is a pretty mediocre plot, I can give this film no better than a high zero.

## SWORD OF DOOM

**CAPSULE REVIEW:** Black samurai film noir about a psychotic swordsman and several other reprehensible people. They all meet a bad end; so does this film, which ends ambiguously and with several unresolved subjects. Rating: +1.

Kihachi Okamoto's 1966 Sword of Doom is aptly named. The film is about swords and about doom and about more doom. This is a relentlessly downbeat samurai film noir exercise. It is well photographed --stunningly in some scenes--but I found myself wishing it would end much sooner so I would not have to watch these people any more. At the center of the story is an essentially mentally deranged swordsman who kills for sport and to perfect his style and for just about any other reason that comes to mind. He learned the technique from his father who invented it, taught it to his son, and then repented all the damage it had done.

Tsukue is to have a style match with Utsugi but, though his technique is superior, he agrees not to kill Utsugi. However, when Utsugi's wife Hana comes to Tsukue to beg for her husband's life, Tsukue again agrees but only if she will have sex with him. She reluctantly agrees. Her husband finds out about the arrangement and divorces his wife. In spite of giving his word twice, Tsukue finds himself compelled by bloodlust to kill Utsugi anyway. Tsukue takes his opponent's ex-wife whom he maintains in a constant state of fear, even after she bears him a son. The film also concerns a beautiful young woman sold by her mother to a nobleman who uses her sadistically as a sex toy. When she is rescued by her uncle, the mother sells her into concubinage. The major characters are mostly either vicious or weak.

Tatsuya Nakadai plays the evil Tsukue as a man possessed by inner devils. Outwardly passive-looking, even when fighting, he is a man deep within himself and yet always at war with the world. He reminds one of psychotic performances by Robert Mitchum and Richard Widmark. The script claims he kills by an evil technique and that an evil mind is mirrored in an evil sword. There are powerful visual images to show the anger in Tsukue in spite of his passive face. In one scene he is in a dusty room with one beam of light from the sun. He is practicing strokes where the tip of the blade stops within the beam. The swirling dust makes the sword look as if it is smoking.

I have never failed to enjoy any samurai film, but Sword of Doom comes as close as any with its bitter and downbeat tone. Rate it a +1.

[Two additional notes: Toshiro Mifune plays Shimada, the teacher of a fighting school who has a mutual fear of Tsukue. Director Okamoto went on to direct Akage (a.k.a. Red Lion) in 1969 and Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo in 1970.]

#### SUM VII

by T. W. Hard  
Harper & Row, 1979, \$8.95

Okay, I admit it. I have been intrigued by stories of ancient Egyptian mysticism since I was a

kid and saw the old mummy movies. Out of curiosity I will probably read any original novel I can get my hands on that is about resurrected mummies. Surprisingly, so far this policy had disappointed me only twice. That is because I have found only two such books and both have been stinkers. One was Anne Rice's Mummy, or Ramses the Damned of last year; the other is a novel in some ways very similar to Rice's written ten years earlier, Sum VII by T. W. Hard.

Bryan St. John is a medical student, well-versed in anatomy, taken on an expedition to Egypt to ascertain what he can find about the medical history of any mummies the expedition might find. There they find the mummy of a great Egyptian architect. But there are two funny things about this particular mummy. He is carbon-dated to be many times as old as the hieroglyphics would indicate and he seems almost fresh enough to be brought back to life by medical science! Note the author is an MD himself and, like many MDs, he assumes that everyone just loves to hear medical details. I mean, how many novels treat the reader to photographs labeled "Figure 3a, Anterogram showing patient cerebral vessels of Sum VII, contrast injection R carotid, Dept. of Radiology, University Medical Center"? We get the whole thing: a complete medical rundown of the mummy as they are bringing him back to life. Michael Crichton can throw in medical exhibits in such a way as to add authenticity. Here they seem heavy-handed. And it is just a bit pitiful to be menaced by a monster who at any moment can go into spontaneous thrombosis. (I wonder how closely the Frankenstein Monster had to watch his diet, now that I think about it.)

Then there is the big surprise ending that became obvious only about halfway through the book. It answers such questions as why this mummy is different from all the other mummies, and just how it was that a primitive people like the ancient Egyptians had the engineering know-how to build the pyramids. And it answers these burning questions in the most trite and predictable manner possible. But I do not want to say too much and ruin the ending for anyone who has never read a tabloid in a grocery check-out line. You can read this book in one sitting, but what a waste of a sitting. Sum VII does not add up to much.

#### THE HANDMAID'S TALE

CAPSULE REVIEW: The Handmaid's Tale preaches to the choir in a rather formulaic look at a dismal possible (if unlikely) future where women have no rights. Robert Duvall's worst performance in memory highlights one of the less convincing arguments for feminism. Rating: low 0.

Back in the 1960s there were a number of science

fiction films about horrible repressive futures. These films got those vision of the future by a fairly simple turn-the-crank formula: pick a current hot concern; imagine a society in which nobody or almost nobody has this concern. Now, what will society be like with nobody worried about this issue? Pretty ugly, right? These films were all pretty much logical descendants of Orwell's novel 1984, but that did it back when it was still original. Films along these lines include Soylent Green, Z.P.G., Fahrenheit 451, and The Last Child, and I would also include Silent Running. Eventually the public started finding these exaggerated dystopic futures too dreary, so the ones without much action dies out and the ones with more action became mindless films such as The Last Chase and finally Mad Max. As a literary style it did not go away and the occasional dystopic film like Brazil was still made on slightly more abstract issues such as bureaucracy. This year the dystopic science fiction film is represented by The Handmaid's Tale, about a future brought about by apathy to feminist issues.

It has been said that repressive views toward women see them as madonnas or whores. In this film, each woman is forced into the roles of whore, servant, or madonna, wearing uniforms of red, white or blue, respectively. 99% of the women were left infertile after the plague. If they can afford it, these women become the madonnas; if not, they are servants. Those who are fertile become the handmaids. Their job is to be surrogate childbearers for the madonnas. The process by which they come to bear children starts by wending them to indoctrination centers which use Orwellian mind control techniques, but which seem to be curiously ineffective at winning hearts and minds. From there they are farmed out to homes where first they are ritually read the Biblical story of infertile Rachel getting a child with the help of a handmaid. After that, they are impregnated in a curious ritual which involves lying between the legs of one of the madonnas while her husband does the dirty deed.

The film opens with Kate (played by Natasha Richardson), her husband, and her daughter trying to flee across the border. Her husband is killed and she does not know what happened to her daughter. After the first shock, all this she takes with calm regret. This means that between Margaret Atwood's book and Harold Pinter's screenplay somebody did not know how humans behave. The film follows Kate through her indoctrination into the society of handmaids and her assignment to the household of callous, selfish evangelist Serena Joy (played by Faye Dunaway) and her flat, cardboard husband, the Commander. This role is quite a departure for Robert Duvall, who usually acts in his films. The only film that Duvall was in but contributed less to was Invasion of the Body Snatchers. To director Volker

Schlöndorff goes the dubious honor of being the only director ever to wring an uninteresting performance from Duvall.

While the film was colorful, with lots of costumes, in many ways the production values were poor. In a scene where the main character is holding yarn, she has two strands when seen from the front and at least six seen an instant later from the back. Also at one point a woman gives birth to a surprisingly clean six-month-old baby. And speaking of such scenes, for a film taking a stand against the exploitation of women, this film has more than its share of half-naked and scantily clad women and most of the nudity is gratuitous.

Director Schlöndorff used to direct ABC "After-School Specials" and his style does not seem to have gotten any more subtle. I rate this film a low 0 on the -4 to +4 scale. Unless you embrace any film on a feminist theme, I do not recommend The Handmaid's Tale.



"SHORPLAY" ©1987 - ALLEN DARNELL SMALTER

# Film Tape & Book Reviews by *Lan*

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MARY REILLY

by Valerie Martin  
Doubleday, 1990, \$18.95

I heard about this novel from my librarian friend Jean Jambas. She even loaned *Maia* and me the book, and I was so impressed with it I bought our own copy--in hardcover, no less. It's on my list for a Hugo recommendation.

Mary Reilly is a maidservant in the household of a famous physician and scientist in the 18th century. She is literate enough to write, and intelligent enough to have opinions of matters that her Master thinks are important, and about which he talks to Mary for her opinion. Yet when strange things start to happen to her master, Mary Reilly has trouble sorting out and understanding the events, particularly the strange new colleague that he has been keeping company. By the end of the novel, Mary has figured out most of what is going on, but not entirely. But she does understand the most important fact: her master Dr. Jekyll and the stranger Mr. Hyde are the same person.

The writing is marvelous. Valerie Martin uses language similar to that used of the era in which she is writing, and keeps it simple, in keeping with Mary Reilly's level of education and intelligence. The story is masterfully told, with revelations occurring naturally, as if it were all happening in realtime. This is a masterpiece of writing.

I was fortunate in having seen the Frederic March version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* a few weeks before reading this, although either seeing the film or reading the book by Robert Louis Stevenson is not absolutely necessary to enjoy the book. I would really like to find someone who does not know the original story to read this and know what s/he thought of it. Everyone I've talked to knows the basic story, even if they have not read or seen it.

As I said, this is an impressive piece of work, and under consideration for a Hugo nomination.

SOUND OVFF

Music from OHIO VALLEY FILKFEST 5, 1989

Wail Songs, 1990, \$10.00  
(PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604)

OHIO VALLEY FILK FEST is a convention devoted to filksinging. There are some panels on songwriting,

guitar technique, performing, producing tapes, etc., and lots of singing and performing. There is a songwriting contest (on a theme announced the year before), and one-shot concerts (a person signs up to sing one song in a specific time-slot), and also a midnight brunch on Saturday night at which the Pegasus Awards are handed out in categories such as Best Filksong, Best Performer, Best Fannish Song, Best Literary Song, and Best Songwriter.

*Wails Songs* sets up microphones and recording equipment in the room, and (I think) leaves it running all weekend. This tape is a compilation of some of the best songs and/or performances of that weekend. Thus the quality varies somewhat, but you can understand most of the lyrics.

There are several excellent songs on this tape, and in looking at the credits, almost every one is original material--words, music, and often both. A newcomer to the filking community, whose first convention was this one, OVFF 5, is Folly Neuhaus, whose songs occupy the Honorable first position of both sides. Her soprano voice is clear on both "Peter Pan" and "Butterfly", both written by her. In the year she has been in fandom, Folly has become quite popular at filks. Another newcomer, Peter Grubbs, sounds a lot like Jimmy Buffet, but better I think. He too is represented by two songs, also written by himself: "Winter Fantasy" and "Sunshine."

There are humorous songs ("John Carter of Mars" by H.A. Roberts, "A Fannish Dilemma" by Naomi Pardue (written with Mary Jean Holmes), and "Con Dog Blues" (written with Stan Logan) and "Bloody Mary" by Renee Alper), literary songs ("Never Never Land" by Michael Longcor, "Black Davey's Ride" and "My Father Was a Harper" by Cynthia McQuillon, "Watchman" by Mike Stein), space songs ("Wanderer -- Fire in the Sky" by Jordin Kare, "Re-Discovery" by Tera Mitchell (written with Rick Weiss), "Asteroid Ore" by Robin Nakkula and "Living in Space" by Joey Shoji), and some serious ones. Barry and Sally Childs-Helton show up with two excellent pieces in "Whistling in the Dark" and "Small Designs."

Two others are of particular note: "My Thousand Closest Friends," written and performed by Naomi Pardue is a wonderful heartfelt song about fandom; and Mark Bernstein's production (music by him) of Robert A. Heinlein's "Green Hills of Earth", sung with 16 other filkers as a chorus (arranged by Mike McGonagle) is a real tear-jerker and a worthy tribute to a great SF writer. Either of these songs alone, the last on each side, is worth the price of the tape. That you have them on one tape, and toge-

ther with all these others, this is a real bargain.

### THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

by Douglas Adams  
Harmony Books, 1989 (1979c), \$12.95

I have all four books of the Hitchhiker's trilogy, but this one is a special edition put out for the 10th anniversary of the original publication. It has a special introduction of some six hundred words by Douglas Adams, so that it will be different and thus be a collector's item.

Well, the introduction is not worth buying this new edition. If you have it already and see a copy of this in the store, pause for a few minutes and read it. If you don't have a copy, the paperback edition will do just as well, unless you like hard-covers. But there is no difference between this book and the earlier editions. The typographical error on page 199 of this edition (p. 191 of the earlier edition) is still there.

### OFF-PLANET

by Clifford D. Simak  
Mandarin, 1989 (1988c), L3.50

This is another of the "Collected Simak" edited by Frank Lyall. This collection consists of a number of Clifford Simak stories which have never been collected before either because they are too recent or too old, and they all deal with life off planet Earth. I picked it up at the Worldcon in Holland, even though I knew I had probably read most of them before. I wanted Frank's introduction to the collection. Much to my surprise, I found I remembered reading fewer than half of the stories (thought the titles were quite familiar), so I had an enjoyable flight back to the States from England, discovering new stories by one of my favorite authors.

These all deal with humans in danger from some sort of alien menace, whether it be because of something the humans did deliberately, or something done accidentally. These are all handled with the deftness that only Simak can effect. If you can get hold of the collection, it's worth getting.

Contents: "Construction Shack," "Ogre," "The Observer," "Junkyard," "The World That Couldn't Be," "Shadow World," and "Mirage."

### ST. ELMO'S FIRE

by Larry Warner and Duane Elms  
Firebird Arts & Music, 1990, \$10.00  
(PO Box 14785, Portland, OR 97214)

I knew this tape was being produced since I had talked with Larry Warner about it. As soon as I saw

it on the huckster table, I picked it up. I did not need to look at what songs were on the tape; that Larry Warner was singing the leads was enough. The added bonus was that these were all Duane Elms' songs. Duane is a good songwriter (all the words and music is his, except for the parody "Threes, Rev. 1.1," the original by Leslie Fish), an excellent guitarist (he plays lead guitar on all the tracks), but a poor singer; just ask him. Together Larry and Duane made an excellent team and have put out an excellent tape. And except for the vocal track overpowered in spots by the instrumentation in a couple of songs (not a real problem, however), the engineering is very controlled.

If you know Duane Elms, you'll know his songs. He has protest songs ("Bomber," "Too Late," and "We're Going Back"), humorous songs ("Threes, Rev. 1.1" "Spacer's Home" and "Don't Push That Button"), some from literary sources ("Late Night at the Draco Tavern," "Startide Rising," and "The Ahasuerus and Flint Traveling Carnival Show"), and the rest come from the fertile imagination and creative mind of Duane himself: "Dawson's Christian" (probably his most famous), "The Dark Children," and "Come, My Lady." There is some crossover in the songs; for example "Draco Tavern" is also humorous.

I recommend this one; any chance to hear Larry's voice again is worth the price of the tape.

### PARADOX

by Barry and Sally Childs-Helton  
Space Opera House, 1990, \$9.00  
(5271 Primrose Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46220)

### DREAMER

by Julia Ecklar  
Wail Songs/Harpy Music, 1990, \$10.00  
(Wail Songs: PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604)  
(Harpy Music: 5838 Fremont St., Oakland, CA 94608)

Most filkers like to share their songs, so long as credit is given. This is one way to spread them around. Publishing music books is another way to insure wide-spread circulation of the songs. Both of these songbooks have the music, lyrics and guitar chords for many of these artists' best-known songs. For those who want to sing and play along with the tapes, or learn the songs so they can play them for their own enjoyment (and to amaze and dazzle your friends), these books are invaluable.

The songs in Paradox are from the tape of the same name. Both Barry and Sally worked on the arrangements and chording of the songs, the lyrics, and someone named Bear did wonderful and funny illustrations to accompany the songsheets. Actually, you need to read the pages closely; these are lots of little funny bits throughout the book.

Included is a section called "Useful Phrases for Time-Travelers Visiting the Late 20th Century," which is a glossary to many of the terms used in the songs, with some rather humorous interpretations thrown in as well.

Dreamer by Julia Ecklar was edited by Heather Rose Jones, Bob Laurent, and Catherine MacDonald. It has an introduction by Joey Shoji and artwork by Larry Warner (talented man, he). Included among the 31 songs are some of my favorites: "Silver," "All about Berries," "Ladyhawke!," "Crane Dance," and "God Lives on Terra." Some of the songs I have only heard about, others I have heard on various tapes or in films sung by Julia. It is nice to have this as a source for her more popular pieces.

Now I need to find out where I've stored the guitar, tune it, and see if I remember how to play it. Got lots to keep me busy.

#### RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET

Original London Cast Recording  
Pola Jones Associates, 1990, L8.99  
(Distributed by Virgin Records, Ltd.)

During the intermission when we saw this musical in London, I purchased the tape. I did not have to hear the rest of it to know that I wanted to experience the play again.

This musical, Return to the Forbidden Planet, is billed as "Shakespeare's long lost rock musical." The film Forbidden Planet is based on William Shakespeare's The Tempest and Bob Carlton, the author of Return, decided that he would put together a truer version of the science fiction work of Shakespeare, and concocted this musical which borrows from several different works of The Bard. All the dialogue is in blank verse, and the music comes from 1950's and 1960's rock music hits. The people in the audience are passengers on the flight, and before things start we are given safety instructions, etc. Blast-off is to the music of "WipeOut" -- two crew members play the drum solo on twin drum sets on stage in perfect synchronization. As is typical of 50's sci-fi films, they go through a meteor shower, and sing "Great Balls of Fire." When Miranda, the young daughter of the scientist Prospero, sees Captain Tempest, she immediately falls in love with him, which sets her at odds with her father...and she sings "Why Must I Be a Teenager in Love." Captain Tempest replies with "Young Girl, get out of my mind..." The whole play is set up that way--using rock songs that fit into the story. And Shakespeare is mangled a bit as well: "Hark, what light through yonder airlock breaks?" Or the best/worst one: "Beware the ids that march!"

There are a lot of subplots and twists, but it all works out in the end. And the production is so full of energy that people were dancing in their

seats at the end. The actors must have a background in Shakespearean drama and acting, be able to sing and dance, and play at least four different instruments at the professional level. Whoever plays Ariel (the robot) must also know how to rollerskate.

The tape recreates the dialogue and songs (it was recorded live at the Cambridge Theatre in London), and I know it has been listened to several times already. I hope it doesn't wear out before it becomes commercially available in the US.

#### TOO, TOO SOLID FLESH

by Nick O'Donohoe  
TSR, 1989, \$3.95

The credits on the book say that Nick O'Donohoe has supervised the DragonLance tales collections, and writes the Nathan Phillips detective novels. Thus, this is apparently his first SF novel, and it is a combination of mystery, SF and Shakespeare. Ironically enough, this was one of the novels I read while on holiday in England, shortly after seeing Return to the Forbidden Planet.

In the near future, all actors are gone, "live" plays being performed by androids. However, there still need to be humans about, and in one Shakespearean troupe, a human is murdered, and it is covered up. A government official is concerned about this, finds one of the few human actors around, and hires him to impersonate an android, join the troupe, and find out what really happened.

I found this fascinating on several levels. The society in which this happens is very interesting, as is the Shakespearean parts, and the mystery itself. I recommend this to lovers of SF, mystery and the Theatre.



## GOLDEN FLEECE

by Robert J. Sawyer  
 Questar/Warner, 1990, \$4.95

This is another SF mystery, but somewhat different. The murderer is a computer, and we know this from the outset. The problem is how the people on the spaceship figure out how Diana Chandler was murdered, and who did it. And why. That the computer is the culprit brings up visions of 2001: A Space Odyssey, but that would be a disservice to Sawyer and the intriguing story he tells. And what makes this even more interesting, is that the point of view character is JASON, the computer on the Starcology Argo where all this takes place.

Earth has sent out a colonization ship to Eta Cephei where the fourth planet "Colchis" is Earth-like and ripe for solonization. Earth itself is in bad shape and on the brink of disaster, but various governments had gotten together to send off this ship before things got any worse.

However, Diana Chandler discovered something was wrong, something that Jason could not let be known to the colonists, and thus murders her. The cover-up worked fine, until some of the brighter people on board started questioning the incident. Then Jason had a bigger problem in covering up his tracks.

It's a very interesting first novel by Canadian author Robert Sawyer, and one that is worthy of close attention by SF readers.

## SOVEREIGN

by R. M. Meluch  
 Signet, 1979, \$1.75

Speaking of first novels, this is Rebecca Meluch's debut into the SF field more than a decade ago. I am surprised that this did not go over better, and that she is now not one of the top writers in SF today. As a first novel, Sovereign is very impressive. Were this being published today, I think it would be getting a big push.

Teal is human, but alien. He is a member of a long lost human colony on Arana which has diverged enough from humankind that he has different abilities. As a representative of that race, he is supposed to help the humans win against the Uelsons, but under strict cover that no one knows where he came from. Teal rises in the military and becomes the key leader in helping to win or lose the war with the Uelsons.

It is obvious from the writing that Rebecca spent a lot of time developing the background and culture of the races here. The detail is plentiful, and one could read this book several times and get more out of it each time. I kick myself for not reading it as soon as I purchased it (new, 11 years

ago), but I will be reading her other novels written between Sovereign and War Bird. (And she just had a new one published, Chicago Red, which I am looking forward to reading.)

## GATE OF DARKNESS, CIRCLE OF LIGHT

by Tanya Huff  
 DAW, 1989, \$3.95

For her third novel, Canadian author Tanya Huff writes a dark urban fantasy.

Rebecca is a retarded young woman who is able to talk to the other creatures who inhabit Toronto, the little people that other "normal" people don't see. Rebecca tries to find out who or what has killed the little man who lived in the tree outside her apartment building with the help of street musician Roland, whose talents make him a Bard (unknownst to him). The two then become entangled in a never-ending battle between light and darkness, which, this time, darkness might win.

I am fond of Tanya's writing. She has ways of describing her characters both physically and through their manner of speaking. Both in her descriptions and the dialogue of her characters, she manages to make comments on life and the world around her which are humorous, truthful, and sometimes startlingly real. The plot of this story is common in quest and heroic fantasy, but under Tanya's handling it comes out much better than most. If fantasy is your main interest, read this one. It's a cut above most that is being publish these days.

## CHILDREN OF THE SHROUD

by Garfield Reeves-Stevens  
 Popular Library, 1990 (1987c), \$4.95

It spite of the advertisement and label on the spine--"Horror", this is a science fiction novel using the vehicle of horror for its effect. The premise is definitely SF in nature, but with the religious overtones, one could point to fantasy as its genre. In other words, Reeves-Stevens has written a cross-genre novel which should appeal to different audiences.

Strange things are happening in the world. The superpowers are on the brink of World War III, gang wars in the inner cities are on the upswing, and religious fervor is being fanned by televangelists. Scattered throughout North America are the children of a strange experiment. Infertile women who had volunteered for artificial insemination see those offspring as "something different". Only the scientist who performed those experiments knew what he was doing, and now, as strange powers are being manifested, the Catholic church is becoming very interested.

It seems the scientist had access to the Shroud of Turin, and used blood scrapings from the Shroud to create clones of the person who was wrapped in that cloth. Those children indeed are exhibiting strange powers, both for good and evil.

This, coupled with distorted religious ideas and the paranoid megalomania of the US President, brings the world to the reality of the final World War. And only a small group of people with the knowledge of what is really going on have any hope of curtailing Armageddon.

The novel is a page-turner. And the characters that Reeves-Stevens develops are strong and sympathetic. He manages to show how fairly normal people can justify their actions in abnormal situations. I am looking for more work by this author.

#### DIALING THE WIND

by Charles L. Grant  
Tor, 1989, \$4.95

The structure of Dialing the Wind by Charlie Grant is similar to that in The Orchard. There is the thread of a radio station in Oxrun Station that the people in these four novelettes tune into. It sounds as if they tune in the wind, and strange things start to happen. (In The Orchard, the main or minor characters of the stories within had been in attendance at a picnic by the old orchard outside of Oxrun Station.)

Charlie likes to take normal, everyday people and let strange things happen to them. This makes the stories all the more chilling, since it seems like these things could happen to you. Although not as intriguing as The Pet, or as intricate as For Fear of the Night, this set of stories is a good example of Charlie Grant's writing.

#### ORBITAL DECAY

by Allen Steele  
ACE, 1989, \$3.95

Men and women are hired to be beamjacks, steelworkers in the vacuum of space who are building satellites and space stations. The work is hard, the pay is good, but it is easy to go crazy from boredom. But the work has to be done, so the company takes anyone, regardless of their background, as long as they don't get into trouble while they are on duty. So people with checkered pasts become beamjacks, and the satellites get built.

But what about those "weathermen" in the sealed section of the satellite? What do they do besides monitor the weather patterns on Earth? What is project Big Ear? When Jack Hamilton comes on board,

the secret project becomes known to a select few, people who just may be able to stop the government from turning into a police state.

The book is indeed a page-turner. The characters are interesting, and the background of the all main players here is not completely known until near the end of the novel. It is well-constructed that way.

However, the big build-up about Steele being "one of the hottest new writers of hard SF on the scene today," (Gardner Dozois), and the novel reading "like Golden Age Heinlein," (Greg Benford) is a bit much. Orbital Decay is good, but not that good. I had fun reading it, but if I had expected what Dozois and Benford had praised, I would have been very disappointed. Is it worth reading? Yes, but this is a first novel, and it has flaws. Don't put your expectations too high, and you'll enjoy the story.

#### THE HOBBIT

by J.R.R. Tolkien  
Illustrated by David Wenzel  
Adapted by Charles Dixon with Sean Deming  
Ballantine/Eclipse, 1990, \$12.95

This illustrated adaptation of the Tolkien classic is very well done. Wenzel's art is somewhat of a cross between the crisp style of the Brothers Hildebrandt, and the more natural style of Rien Poortvliet (who did the illustrations for the book Gnomes). It captures the descriptions of the characters I had when I first read The Hobbit. The story is intact, and I could not really see much missing from the original (granted it has been more than two decades since I've read it, so I might be mistaken).

It seems a bit overpriced, but when you consider that it is 133 pages of full-color illustrations, it's at least on par with the equivalent of other graphic novels.

#### DOUBLE INDEMNITY: Raw Milk III

Turn of the Century Records, 1987/8/9, \$?.??  
(PO Box 65, New Britain, CT 06050)

The 20 tracks on this tape represent a variety of artists and styles from the New Hartford, Connecticut area. This tape was compiled as a benefit to raise money for radio station WRTC. Each group or individual performs two pieces.

Del Crandalls opens with "Bobby Brown," an upbeat piece that makes nostalgic references back to earlier rock music. Later he sings "Ginger Snaps" which talks about a woman named Ginger.

The group Starkweather performs "Beating the Bush" and "On Command." The former sounds as though the lead singer is trying to imitate Bela Lugosi to

add a sense of horror to (what they think are) chilling lyrics. The latter is just as bad, with the lead singer trying to sound as if he can sing. I admit he manages to make a passable stab at it, but, in spite of some decent guitar solos, I found both tracks unpleasant.

Los Euclids do "I'm Baked," whose percussion track sounds louder than the vocal track, although the vocal arrangement still sounds pretty good. In "Orgasm Song", they singer laments the state of present-day society.

"Vivarin" by 6 Feet Under, is a satirical song about pill-popping. "Ding a Doo Dee" is mostly instrumental with words occasionally thrown in. Neither sounds that interesting.

The Zy-Wacks pound out "Hornswaggle," a country-western style song about being cheated; the lead singer sounds terrible. "Ping Pong Need" is a decent instrumental with some nice lead-guitar passages.

"No More" by Thick As Thieves has a lead singer who tries unsuccessfully to sound sexy, while the instrumentation sounds off-key. Their other cut, "Water Street," she doesn't sound much better. I am reminded of Patti Smith, and am turned off just as much.

Leigh Gregory manages to change the pace with a quieter track, "In Too Deep", but the voice has an overall monotony to it. He closes the tape with "The Sea, the Sea" which is mostly an enjoyable instrumental piece, with some "poetry" near the end.

The Bimbo Shrineheads do a mostly instrumental track with "Mr. Hyde and Mother." In their second cut, "I Will Die In Willimantic," has a loud instrumental backing to a rather decent vocal track. This one seems to be about the best cut on the tape.

Big Mistake adds their two tracks in the songs "Trip to Newport," an inept "talking-blues" type of number, and "Michelle" is more of the same (do NOT expect anything like the Beatles' number. Fortunately the cut is less than a minute long.

"My Husband Won't Let Me" by Pinheads Who Vote is another "talking-blues" type of number about a

woman who wants to be a prostitute...somewhat disgusting. "Shredder" is a depressing song about business and a man's desire to kill his boss using the paper shredder.

If you like variety for a dance, this might work. Overall, however, I'd say pass it by unless you are into bizarre stuff.

#### THE SNOWS OF JASPRE

by Mary Caraker

Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989, \$14.95

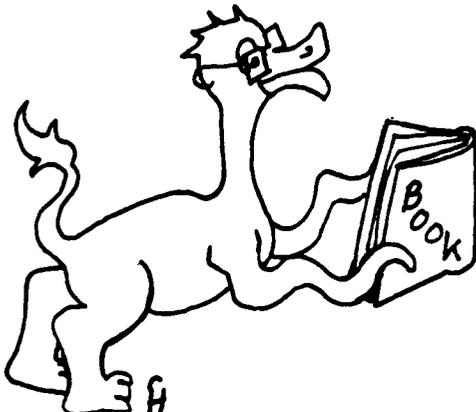
Jaspre is a nearly frozen planet in a far orbit around a star several lightyears from Earth. If it were not for Argus, an artificial satellite that focuses heat and light widely about the equator, there would only be a narrow band of land habitable by humans. Still, some of the original colonists prefer the colder regions, for there is something there which ties them to the snow and ice. Whatever it is, that power could be destroyed by the construction of Argus II, something the "snowgrubbers" are working to prevent.

On opposing sides are the SEF, the Space Exploratory Forces, and the snowdwelling peoples of Jaspre, led by Anders Ahlwen. Caught in the middle are the recent human colonists, and the newest member of the SEF team, Morgan Farraday and her family. Morgan is the officer in charge of the Space Corps schools on the planet, and before she can decide whether or not to adopt the official policy as her own, she is sent away on an "inspection tour" to prevent her from embarrassing SEF any further after a disastrous interview with the planet's muckraking tabloid.

Even there at Lumisland, she encounters people who believe in both sides of the argument, and must decide for herself before she is recalled. Then she meets Anders, and begins to understand...

There are lots of other subplots in the novel, which increases its depth of interest. Some of the inhabitants regard Anders as a cult leader who is out to seduce young people and build a fanatical following and take over the planet. The SEF is definitely afraid of him. Morgan's daughter Dee comes under his influence, and Arnie, Morgan's husband and Dee's father, takes off over the snow and ice after Anders.

This was written as a YA novel, I believe (I found it in that section of the bookstore), but is worthy of the serious SF reader's attention, despite the lack of "adult situations". Mary Caraker did a lot of work setting up the background of Jaspre and the universe that I think there will be at least another book. I hope so; the ending was disappointing and left me unsatisfied, but still the journey there was fun, fascinating, and enjoyable.



I must add a word or two about the cover by Bob Eggleton. It's beautiful. This wrap-around piece of art does not do complete justice to the original, but it is gorgeous nonetheless. I picked up a print of it at WINDYCON, hung it in my classroom, and have gotten lots of compliments on it.

#### BOOK OF SHADOWS

Edited by Marg Baskin & Heather Bruton  
 Anime House Press, 1990, \$15.00 (\$20.00 overseas)  
 (Marg Baskin, 505-25 St. Dennis Dr.,  
 Don Mills, Ontario CANADA M3C 1E6)

This is a collection of horror stories published through amateur press. In a way it is difficult to believe that some of these weren't published in the prozines. The quality is very high, better than most pieces I've read in IASFM, and more competently written than the worst pieces in F&SF and Analog. The stories deal with vampires, conjurers of gods and demons, shape-changers, and ghosts. The stories are chilling as well as just plain interesting. Each one is illustrated by the likes of Heather Bruton and April Lee. Getting their artwork is alone worth the price.

The two stories by Bonnie Reitz are my favorites. Corine Balfour is a werewolf who helps police lieutenant Jon McCall capture a drug lord and an arsonist. During these episodes Bonnie fills in details about the transformation from woman to wolf and back. P. J. Roberts' two pieces about a black wolf shapechanger in Australia gives some interesting details about that country, as well as two fine



stories. And Ely by Eliza Prestin adds another dimension to the vampire mythos.

For a pleasant (or not so pleasant) evening or two of interesting horror stories, you could do a lot worse than buying and settling back with Book of Shadows. On the other hand, you couldn't do much better either. I recommend this highly. And I'm waiting for the next volume.

## More Book Reviews

#### SECOND CONTACT

by Mike Resnick  
 Tor, 1990, \$17.95

#### REDSHIFT RENDEZVOUS

by John E. Stith  
 Ace, 1990, \$3.95

Two book reviews by Michael P. Kube-McDowell  
 Copyright (c) 1990 by Michael P. Kube-McDowell

Though the mystery novel is at least a first cousin to the "puzzle stories" of Analog, Isaac Asimov, and other science fiction stalwarts, the science fiction mystery is a curious hybrid which offers special challenges to both writer and reader.

The reader's enjoyment of a mystery depends in a large part on the context of the familiar. The mystery writer weaves the secrets, the clues, and the solution into a setting as familiar as everyday life, the daily paper, and the evening news. But the science fiction writer's stock in trade is altering or inventing reality, portraying an unfamiliar world with as much economy of narrative as possible.

So the creator of a science fiction mystery can't depend, to the degree a mystery writer can, on the reader's fund of basic knowledge. The future technology may be unfamiliar, the laws and social patterns may be novel, and the limits and challenges which face the protagonist--and which, consequently, make the story interesting--won't be as obvious. It's more difficult to surprise the reader, because everything may be surprising. And there's an ever-present danger of an infuriating

magic wand" ending--the SF equivalent of having the murderer show up for the first time in the final chapter.

Two new science fiction mysteries by Mike Resnick and John E. Stith attack these challenges in different ways. In Second Contact, Hugo Award winner Mike Resnick turns a Perry Mason staple--the innocent man accused of murder--inside out. Starship captain Wilbur Jennings is awaiting court-martial in an Earth prison for the cold-blooded deep-space murder of two of his crewmen. The military prosecutor thinks Jennings is insane, and Jennings' reluctant defender, Major Max Becker, is inclined to agree--for while Jennings admits to the killings, he calmly insists that what he killed were alien lookalikes, inhuman imposters which represented a threat to his crew and command.

It's a wild, outrageous claim. Apart from one tragic, long-ago clash between two isolated starships, there has been no contact between humans and another alien intelligence. But Becker begins to wonder when, dutifully investigating Jennings' story, he runs into a blank wall of missing evidence, disappearing witnesses, and classified files. And when someone tries to kill Becker and the outlaw hacker helping him pierce the cover-up, Jennings' story suddenly doesn't sound wild enough. Resnick juggles the facts and the puzzles neatly, making Second Contact a diverting, suspenseful pageturner.

In Redshift Rendezvous, John Stith spins out an even more complex mystery in a strangely wonderful setting: the hyperspace ship Redshift, wherein the speed of light is only ten meters per second and the passengers and crew experience the consequences of relativity first-hand. Moving objects appear to contract and change color, curved surfaces seem flat, time moves at different speeds on different decks, and everything one sees is in the past. All the familiar rules are bent or broken.

With Redshift's compelling, deeply conflicted first officer, Jason Kraft, as narrator, the wheels start turning with a passenger's apparent suicide in a cargo hold and the mysterious disappearance of a crewman. Did the crewman murder the passenger? Is someone after the Redshift's valuable cargo? Only too late does Kraft realize that the real target is the Redshift herself, and the deadly hijacking that follows only the prelude to an even more daring crime. Offering a fascinating array of crisply drawn characters, a fast-paced tale with bursts of furious action, and a carefully thought out exploration of the exotic world of hyperspace physics, Stith's Redshift Rendezvous is a treat for SF and mystery fans alike.

Michael P. Kube-McDowell is a member of SFWA and the author of seven SF novels, including the recently published hardcover, The Quiet Pools (Ace).

#### THE KOBAYASHI MARU

A Star Trek novel by Julia Ecklar  
Pocket, 1989, \$4.50

A book review by M.E. Cowan  
Copyright (c) 1990 by M.E. Cowan

Julia's novel is classic Trek (the Old Generation). There are no great surprises, and of course no messing around with the basic characterizations or Story. However, she does an impressive job of not just depicting the personalities, but developing the backgrounds and deepening the characters. The book gets its title from a command-school test designed so the student cannot win, to see how the student handles failure and how they'll fight against impossible odds. While trying to get out of a "real" impossible situation, a shuttlecraft accident that strands them in deep space, Kirk, Scott, Chekhov, and Sulu recount how each of them handled the test; each anecdote includes revealing details about their early lives and their personalities.

Julia writes well and convincingly. Granted, she's using somebody else's universe and characters, but she does a fine job of making them her own.

#### THE QUIET POOLS

Michael P. Kube-McDowell  
Ace, 1990, \$17.95

A book review by M.E. Cowan  
Copyright (c) 1990 by M.E. Cowan

I've read enough of Mike's stories that I'm prepared to be impressed with each new work. The Quiet Pools didn't let me down. It's a strong story, with lots of "idea," character development, and dramatic conflict. The megacorporation Allied Transcon is building a "generation ship" bound for Tau Ceti. The project absorbs not just the people directly working on it. Millions of people have bought options to be selected as colonists, though only 10,000 will be chosen; and many of those who have no hope of going become "starheads," fascinated by every detail of present and future spaceflight. The project has its opponents, too, who object that the resources--and human talent--should be used on earth-bound concerns, not "wasted" on space. Their spiritual leader is one "Jeremiah," who resorts to guerrilla tactics to stop the project: everything from interrupting video broadcasts with propaganda announcements to attacking the facilities and equipment, although he scrupulously avoids causing injuries. Unfortunately, his followers (official and self-proclaimed) aren't so scrupulous, and the final days of the project become a

race against the people who would cheerfully destroy the ship--with everyone aboard--sooner than let the colonists abandon Earth.

The novel does have a bit too much sociobiology for my taste (but I can stand to read ideas I don't necessarily agree with if he can stand to write them). The psychological analysis of the viewpoint characters, while entirely realistic, barely stops short of heavy-handed. (Or maybe it just seems that way, since the problems that are so obvious to the observer elude the characters' recognition, and they have to be beaten over the head with them but that's just like real life, eh?) Mike earns SFBC's warning "Content may offend some readers" with group sex scenes (and perhaps with his premise that polygamous marriages will have gained general acceptance), which come to think of it, might just increase the book's appeal for as many people as it offends. The book's strengths are many: The care with which the characters are made real people, the scrupulously researched science and technology, the building tension of Jeremiah's war and its outcome, the myriad tiny details that make the people, the project, and the world real for the reader. My only disappointment is that the paperback won't be coming out until next year; not enough people may read the hardcover to make The Quiet Pools the Hugo contender it deserves to be.

#### TWISTOR

by John Cramer  
William Morrow, 1989, \$18.95

A book review by Dean R. Lambe  
Copyright (c) 1990 by Dean R. Lambe

Professor John Cramer of the University of Washington Physics Department believes in the adage "write what you know." With his debut novel, Cramer gives us a varied bunch of UW physicists, a lesson in how science is done, and a painfully accurate tour of Seattle.

When young postdoc David Harrison and comely grad student Vickie Gordon stumble upon six other universes while researching the implications of superstring theory, their senior professor, Allan Saxon, sees only dollar signs. Saxon, who finds himself more than a pawn for the unscrupulous Martin Pierce of the Megalith Corporation, seeks to exploit the "twistor effect" for personal fame and power. Pierce has an even more nefarious agenda, however, and orders Saxon kidnapped and tortured.

Almost too late, as Pierce's armed henchmen arrive to steal the twistor apparatus, Harrison twists himself and the equipment into a giant tree on an alternate Earth. Unfortunately, Melissa and Jeff Ernst, children of a physics department colleague, are carried along to the multi-dimensional

tree house, and the police and FBI join the search. With a handy tool kit and a convenient supply of batteries, Harrison builds a tiny twistor on his new world while Vickie Gordon and her hacker brother, "Flash," plunder the Megalith computer files. Forces of good and evil race to a breakneck finish, one of the most creative alien birds in SF history craps out, and a typical academic department chairman falls behind the world's largest eight-ball.

OK, so the work has a few first novel faults, some almost as large as the big hole in the middle of Seattle that Cramer forgot to mention. It's still a lot of fun, a whole lot of valid scientific speculation, and well worth your time. New hard SF writers are rare; encourage this one with your beer money.

#### THE WOMAN WHO LOVED REINDEER

by Meredith Ann Pierce  
Tor, 1989, \$3.95

A book review by Sally A. Sryjala  
Copyright (c) 1990 by Sally A. Sryjala

The Woman Who Loved Reindeer was a delightful find. It could be described as a mythic saga that weaves many Jungarian archetypes into its fabric. However, over and above all, it is a story of love.

It is a tale of substance over form. A "triangle," a shapechanger, is one of the main characters. This golden stag who can take on the guise of a man comes into the life of a young girl named Caribou and changes her life forever.

The story can be looked upon as a type of creation story wherein the long journey of a people is told, who must leave their homeland to find a land that will allow them life. You can look at this magical voyage as one of the soul, as well as of the body. Dangers must be faced and trials must be passed. The forging of the soul is what takes place in the pages of this book.

It tells of how love cannot be a one-way street, but must be something that is of both parties. It shows how you cannot hope to hold on to something unless you let it go. It shows the patience that is required to allow each other to be as they must be and how we cannot change our loves into something that is not natural for them.

The book tells of upheavals and changes in the earth when the firekings have mined all the minerals in the earth as it is. The earth then must undergo a change--not a destruction--but a form of harrowing that will prepare it for renewal. This makes the land impossible for people to live upon. To survive, they must face unknown threats in lands they have never dared to enter. They must learn new skills and master old fears.

Caribou comes of age during the telling of the

story and she must also face similar symbolic changes and challenges on her road to maturity. She learns what love is and what love is not.

We are also shown that those who we thought incapable of "human" feeling can show others how to care and how to allow growth and help on journeys of the soul and heart.

This is an excellent book. It captures your imagination on many levels and allows you to take an alchemical journey of transformation through its pages.

#### THE SUGAR FESTIVAL

by Paul Park  
SFBC, 1989, \$?.??

A book review by Robert Sabella  
Copyright (c) 1990 by Robert Sabella

First novels are not necessarily subject to the same criteria as later novels in an author's career. A later novel must be judged by such objective criteria as: Does it achieve its goals? Is the plotting adequate? The denouement? Characterization? Basic premise? But a first novel may be judged on more subjective criteria such as: Does the writer have anything new to offer? How much promise does he/she show? Is there room for improvement?

Actually, these are Park's first two novels since, for marketing reasons (I assume), they were published originally as Soldier of Paradise (in 1987) and Sugar Rain (in 1989). But like so many series nowadays, it is actually one complete novel that reads much better together than separately.

Park is a very inventive writer indeed. He has devised a world based on our own Earth yet so marvelously twisted as to be almost unrecognizable at times. Some of the differences are rather drastic ones, and Park wastes no time justifying them (such as the sugar rain which dominates most of the second volume). Yet he has the knack of writing his way around and through the differences so that their exoticism adds to the flavor of the book rather than detracting from it with their lack of justification and occasional flimsiness. And some of the little changes he unobtrusively drops in (such as an occasional mention of horses' beaks or people's tails) are so delightful I almost clapped with joy!

The basic premise is similar to Brian W. Aldiss' Helliconia trilogy, that of a world whose seasonal year lasts several centuries. Like Aldiss, Park assumes that society will undergo drastic upheavals during the seasonal transitions. But where Helliconia's seasonal changes destroy civilization altogether, Park's merely cause a drastic restructuring of society.

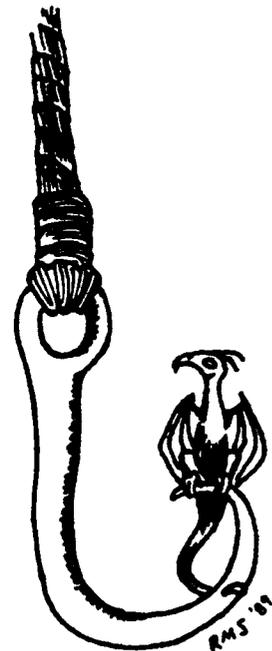
Basically this is a political story of the changes caused by impending springtime. The city of Charn has been under the grip of a dictatorial religion dominated by a privileged ruling class. But now the seeds of revolution are stirring, and I am giving nothing away by saying that planetwide chaos is inevitable.

The main concern of the book is the people involved in the impending revolution, and quite a varied cast they are! The childlike bishop of Charn, her autocratic secretary, the eccentric Prince, his sister a sheltered wife/property, his cousin a skeptical doctor, the radical leader of the revolution, the general of Charn's armies, and the list goes on. The characters alone show evidence of Park's very fertile imagination.

Like many first novels, there are weaknesses. Park is a good storyteller, but not a top-notch plotter. Almost every event that happens is telegraphed far in advance, although the actions and reactions of the characters still make the events interesting.

The entire book is overcast with a pallor of depression. These are depressing times, and few, if any, of the characters are happy. But eventually the same feeling of depression afflicting the characters affects the reader who grows tired of feeling depressed.

But overall, Park is definitely a talent to watch. His imagination is second to none, and his ability to make you feel a part of a truly exotic world is phenomenal. If he learns to plot better and handle the overall feel of his writing better, he has the potential to turn out a saga on the level of Aldiss' Helliconia series or, dare I say it, Herbert's Dune series. |\*|



# Ten Years Ago in Science Fiction

by Robert Sabella

SPRING, 1980

The 1979 Nebula Awards were announced. Arthur C. Clarke's The Fountains of Paradise won as Best Novel. Since Clarke had announced that this would be his final science fiction novel, many people assumed the award was as much a tribute to his entire career as it was praise for the novel.

Other winners were Barry Longyear's "Enemy Mine" as Best Novella, George R.R. Martin's "Sandkings" as Best Novelette, and Edward Bryant's "giANTS" as Best Short Story. Surprisingly, John Varley did not receive any of the Nebulas although his novel Titan and novelette "Options" were considered strong favorites by many critics and fans.

\* \* # \* \*

Newhouse Publications, one of the country's largest publishers of magazines and newspapers, purchased Random House, parent company of Ballantine Books.

\* \* # \* \*

Harlan Ellison and Ben Bova won \$285,000 in a plagiarism lawsuit against Paramount Pictures and ABC-TV. The jury agreed that Ellison and Bova's short story "Brillo" was plagiarized for the short-lived TV show "Future Cop."

\* \* # \* \*

George Pal died at age 72. He was the most important science fiction filmmaker of the 1950s, probably the second in overall influence to Stanley Kubrick. His credits included the groundbreaking Destination Moon, War of the Worlds, The Time Machine, and the superb fantasy The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao.

\* \* # \* \*

Alfred Hitchcock died at age 80. One of the greatest of all filmmakers, he was best known for such thrillers as Vertigo, Rear Window, and The Man Who Knew Too Much. His connection to SF and fantasy were the horror movies Psycho (based on Robert Bloch's novel) and the borderline fantasy The Birds.

\* \* # \* \*

The newly-revised American Book Awards included

science fiction among its categories for the first time. Frederik Pohl's Jem won for Best Hardcover Science Fiction and Walter Wangerin, Jr.'s The Book of the Dun Cow won for Best Paperback Science Fiction.

\* \* # \* \*

Science fiction's popularity continued to grow at the dawn of a new decade. Sales and titles increased even faster than cover prices. If Sturgeon's Law were indeed true, only 10% of all newly-published books were worthwhile, but 10% of such an increasingly-large total provided an incredible amount of good reading for science fiction and fantasy fans.

Noteworthy titles published this season included:

"Grotto of the Dancing Deer," by Clifford D. Simak in Analog, which would earn Simak his third Hugo and his only Nebula Award (other than the Nebula Grandmaster of which he was the second recipient after Robert A. Heinlein);

Robert Silverberg's colorful Lord Valentine's Castle, perhaps most notable since it was his first publication after his retirement in 1976;

Joan Vinge's Hugo-winning The Snow Queen;

Stephen Donaldson's The Wounded Land, the first volume of the bestselling "Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant";

In Joy Still Felt, the second volume of Isaac Asimov's autobiography, covering the years 1954-1978;

The Orphan, by Robert Stallman, a major work by an author whose career was cut much too short by an early death;

Robert Silverberg and Martin Greenberg's excellent anthology The Arbor House Treasury of Modern Science Fiction;

And lastly, my favorite title of any book this quarter: Sabella, by Tanith Lee. Just seeing that title on the bookshelves gave me a vicarious thrill that I may never experience by seeing my name below the title line.

Summer-Fall, 1980

Science fiction continued to grow. Pocket Books announced the introduction of its science fiction imprint Timescape Books which would be edited by David Hartwell. However, they chose the name without approval from Gregory Benford whose acclaimed

novel Timescape was recently published by the same publisher. After some hurried negotiations, a settlement was reached between Pocket Books and Benford.

Thomas Doherty, formerly of Ace Books, announced the creation of his own paperback publishing company which would eventually be called TOR Books. It would include a line of science fiction.

\* \* # \* \*

Thomas M. Disch won the John W. Campbell, Jr., Memorial Award for best science fiction novel of 1979 for On the Wings of Song.

\* \* # \* \*

Frank Herbert signed a two-book contract worth \$750,000. One of the books would be a mainstream novel while the other would be the fourth book in the Dune series to be tentatively called Sandworms of Dune. Fortunately the title was changed prior to publication to God-Emperor of Dune.

\* \* # \* \*

Fantastic merged with Amazing Stories, effectively ending 41 years of publication since it was founded in 1939 by Raymond Palmer as Fantastic Adventures, a fantasy companion to Amazing Stories.

\* \* # \* \*

The Hugo Awards for 1979 were announced at NOR-EASCON Two:

The Fountains of Paradise by Arthur C. Clarke won as Best Novel;

"Enemy Mine" by Barry B. Longyear won as Best Novella;

George R. R. Martin won two awards, "Sandkings" as Best Novelette and "The Way of Cross and Dragon" as Best Short Story;

The Science Fiction Encyclopedia edited by Peter Nicholls won as Best Nonfiction Book.

\* \* # \* \*

Fanwriter Susan Wood dies at age 32. She was an important and prolific science fiction critic and a two-time Hugo winner--for Best Fanzine Energumen in 1973 (co-edited with Mike Glicksohn) and as Best Fan Writer in 1974. Unfortunately she experienced failing health the last few years of her life before dying of a heart attack.

\* \* # \* \*

Writer Kris Neville died at age 55, also of a heart attack. He was first published in 1949 with "The Hand from the Stars" in Super Science Stories. His most famous story was "Bettyann" in New Tales of Space and Time in 1951. Never a prolific writer, he wrote some outstanding science fiction for F&SF and GALAXY.

\* \* # \* \*

Important works published these two seasons included:

Timescape by Gregory Benford;

Songmaster by Orson Scott Card, which incorporated award-nominated stories "Mikal's Songbird" and "Songhouse";

Firestarter by Stephen King, arguably his last great novel;

Wizard by John Varley, second novel of the Gaea Trilogy;

Universe Ten edited by Terry Carr, featuring Howard Waldrop's "The Ugly Chickens";

A story which virtually became a sub-genre all by itself, "The Brave Little Toaster" by Thomas M. Disch in F&SF;

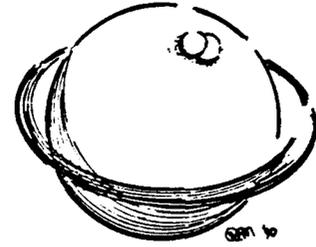
Gene Wolfe's anthology The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories and Other Stories;

Douglas Adams' comic novel The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy;

Orbit 21, the last volume in the justifiably praised series of original anthologies edited by Damon Knight. [\*]



# ELIZABETH PEARSE



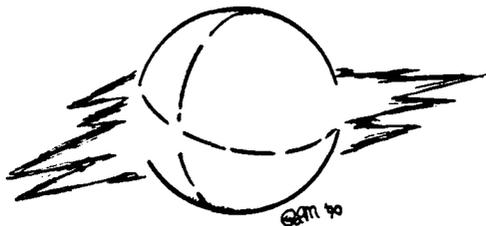
An Obituary by Gordon R. Dickson  
Copyright (c) 1990 by Gordon R. Dickson

On the night of Saturday, May 19th, 1990, while attending MARCON, Elizabeth Pearse died suddenly and unexpectedly.

The blow of her death is still being felt. To say that it was a great and unexpected tragedy is almost an understatement. To many fans, writers and to many, many artists she was a close, unique and personal friend.

This is of course because she was a unique and remarkable person--both as director of art shows, an artist herself, and in everything else she did.

We've had a number of deaths of older, well known names in the science fiction and fantasy areas. To those of us who have also reached the age at which friends and family are also dying, these professional deaths, combined with the private ones, make it seem almost as if we are in the midst of a battle; and casualties are taking place on every hand. Sometimes both pro and private deaths combine, as with Elizabeth.



Contrary to popular opinion, familiarity with the death of people known and loved does not make it easier with each new ending. In Elizabeth's case, her death was additionally shocking, it that she seemed to be the last person to which such a thing could happen with such unexpected suddenness.

She seemed, in a word, unkillable. She had carried a monumental load of work in the face of a myriad of inhibiting allergies and other physical difficulties over a lifetime. A lifetime which began on March 7th, 1929 in a place of birth spelled Collia, but pronounced "Collie". It is a locality in western Australia, just outside the city of Perth.

She married Tony Pearse in Australia; and they immigrated to Canada in 1957. That was also the same year that their youngest child, Lauren, was born.

So Elizabeth became a Canadian citizen in 1963; and her children are Michael, the oldest, Deborah, the next youngest, Richard, the next, and youngest Lauren. In addition, she had fourteen grandchildren and had just gained one great-grandchild whom she had not yet seen at the time of her death.

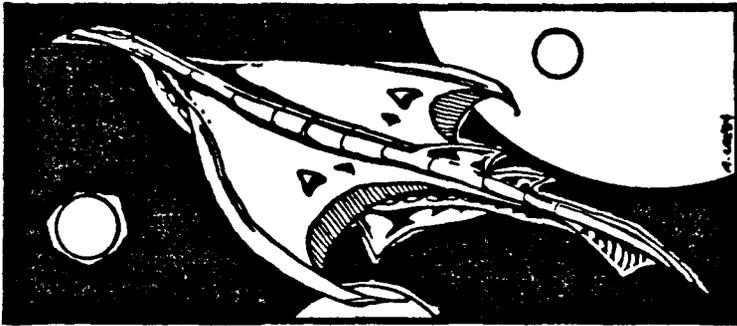
These are the facts about her life. Nothing about them specifically explains the unique and personal element of her character. That has to be looked for and found in the memories of those who knew her, and in the work of her art which improved steadily up until it was cut short by her death.

The truth of the fact is that, no matter what troubles life chose to heap upon her, she was always in the position to give to others, never to take. It is our own, personal loss we mourn.

As to her life, it is a monument, not only to achievement, but to invincible courage; and neither time nor human opinion can alter that.]\*]

I WANT TO BE —

by Doug Tanoury



I want to be a silver-suited astronaut,  
 Thundering toward heaven on a pillar of fire,  
 Streaking the sky in a blazing chariot  
 Like some Old Testament prophet; strapped into  
 A pilot's chair scanning consoles of telltale  
 Lamps glowing steady green, positioning  
 Toggle switches and reading terminal displays  
 Of velocity, trajectory, telemetry; Laughing  
 As I radio to flight control: "In thrust  
 We trust!" Heart racing with excitement  
 That years of study, tests, flight simulations  
 Can't dissipate, nor degrees in chemistry,  
 Physics, astronomy, damper. I want to be a  
 Silver-suited astronaut, a cosmic Columbus,  
 A mythical Major Tom, looking out the aft  
 Viewport at a blue-green drop of color,  
 The best of worlds, the worst of worlds,  
 Quick receding in the blackness, my life  
 Behind shrinking, darkness growing  
 To swallow my past, spending the nights  
 Lonely and spacesick, like a vagrant  
 Sleeping in a dumpster, six walls closing in.  
 I want to be a silver-suited astronaut  
 Standing under the green sky of Titan  
 Knee deep in hydrocarbon muck, watching  
 Methane rain splatter on my helmet visor  
 Catching flakes of acetylene snow  
 With gloved hands upturned.



1-16-84[\*]

Best Limerick Contest  
 at CONTEXT III

At CONTEXT III, the committee held a limerick contest, and I agreed to publish the winners in Lan's Lantern. Rather than waiting to publish these along with my conreport on the convention, I am printing the winning entries now.

Best Limerick by Dave Taylor

There once was a fusion technician  
 Whose plasma refused all ignition.  
 He tried matches and lasers  
 And all sorts of blazers,  
 Till at least he gave up and went fission.

Honorable Mention by Julia Aman

Terminator

There once was a girl, Sarah Conner,  
 Who had a death sentence upon her.  
 Her future son's friend  
 Came back from the end  
 And fathered that son, John, upon her.

# CONREPORTS and RAMBLINGS

by L a n

## RAMBLINGS 35.1: THE END OF 1989 and VACATION

As the winter break approached, I realized how much I was enjoying the school year this time. I had some good classes, and great students this year. I looked forward to all of my classes, a far cry from last year when I dreaded the three classes in the middle of the school day. You might recall that it was the two classes--at the beginning and end of the day--that kept me sane. I did not have any of the individual students who had caused me problems in class this year, and largely ignored them in the halls when seeing them there. But that was in the past, so I tried to forget them.

In the dorm as vacation neared, those people who wanted to become Secret Santas. The Dorm Council arranged the pairing, and I showered my person with lots of candy. My Secret Santa managed to get into my classroom and decorated it. That was a nice surprise, except that she just put up a sign that said "Merry Christmas". One of the Jewish students felt a little put out by it, and so did I (no, I was raised Christian, but am sensitive to those religious issues, particularly after last year's encounter with a Jewish parent), so that night I bought another poster board and added things so that the two signs read: "Have a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, and a Super Solstice." I think that covered most people.

Anyway, I was having so much fun being a Secret Santa that I decided to adopt a couple other people. One of the dorm students and I hit it off very well at the beginning of the year, so Mandy started getting candy and stuff from her "other Secret Santa." One of my students, the sister of a former student of mine, and I also have become fairly good friends, so I adopted her. She was a day student (i.e. not a boarder), and she was bewildered by the stuff she had been getting. She had no idea it was me. I had lots of fun. On Sunday morning at the Christmas Brunch party in the dorm (December 17), we found out who the Secret Santas were.

On the following Wednesday (when we got out for vacation), I let Anju know that it was I who had been feeding her all these sweets, and aiming her towards wearing a tent dress. (That was her comment about the candy--she said that after break she'll be wearing a tent dress because nothing else will fit. But she's in dance, so she does work out and keeps in shape that way.)

Monday night was the Waldo & Magic SF club party so we drove an hour each way to Ypsilanti to celebrate with our friends at the Sidetrack bar (our regular meeting place). Tuesday I had a faculty meeting after school, then Maia and I went to see A Christmas Carol at Meadowbrook Theatre (on the campus of Oakland University (Rochester, Michigan)). I mentioned before (last "Conreports and Ramblings") that we had seasons tickets to the Theatre--and we have enjoyed every show so far, including the performance of the Dickens classic.

Wednesday (December 20) after classes I started my vacation. There was a small party at the Director of School's house which I attended. I talked to several people I had not seen for a few months, and had a pretty good time. That evening, Jill came by to visit. Jill is one of my former students, and was home for vacation. We didn't connect during Thanksgiving break, but I called her the Thursday afterwards and had a nice long talk with her (over an hour). She goes to school at Northwestern. Jill was hoping to make it to WINDYCON, but had a fencing match out of state that weekend. She came over about 8 and we stayed up talking until after 2 AM. While Jill was over I got a call from the committee of CONFUSION. Andi asked if I could write the program book introduction to Hal Clement, their GoH. I agreed to do so, and had to get on that ASAP. The con was coming up quickly, in about 4 weeks (weekend of Jan 19).

On Thursday, Maia and I got ready to travel over Christmas weekend as we did last year. I baked several loaves of cinnamon bread for family and friends who have come to expect them as gifts for the holiday season. Maia was standing up at a wedding (as Matron of Honor, no less) for our friends Charlie Terry and Kevin Riley. Charlie's daughter Sasha was the flower girl. So we drove to Pittsburgh on the 22nd of December, to be there in time for the wedding on the 23rd. Kevin and Charlie met three years ago on December 23rd (or maybe that was their first date), and he proposed to her last year on the 23rd. So it only seemed logical to be married on the same date.

The wedding was beautiful. Vows were exchanged in clear, strong voices, indicating a real commitment on the parts of both Kevin and Charlie. Kevin's affirmation of "Yes, indeed" was answered by Charlie's "Oh, absolutely!" The reception afterwards was pleasant, with lots of food and good company.

From there we headed for Columbus, Ohio, for a Christmas celebration with Maia's sister Joy and her husband Dale and the kids. We were going to visit her father and stepmother as well, but decided not to. Maia had a bad cold (which kept her inside most of the vacation), and she did not want to expose her father to any germs. He has emphysema, and a respiratory infection could be fatal.

I was insistent about waking up Christmas morning in our own place, and since I was doing most of the driving, we drove back to Michigan on that same Sunday, and slept in our own bed that night. In the morning we opened our gifts to each other. I got her several videotapes, a box of candy, and an emerald necklace. Maia got me a couple of tapes, a calendar, and a Phantom of the Opera t-shirt from Toronto. Our friend Doris Bercarich works a few blocks from the Pantages Theatre, picked up the shirt and mailed it to Maia at work, so it was the surprise gift this year.

We spent our first Christmas at my parents' new house, so it was quite special. I had picked my brother-in-law's name for the gift exchange, and Tim asked for some audio cassette tapes, blank videos, shirts and ties. I managed to pick up several of the tapes he wanted, (Genesis, U-2) and also got him a two part video program of the best of Genesis. He like them, and was surprised at the number of gifts I got him. We got odds and ends for the kids. My older sister Judy got my name, I got the 50th Anniversary book of The Wizard of Oz, and one of the videos I had asked for, Batman. The she gave me a large statue of a raccoon, which I have on my computer monitor at home. From my godchild, Kris, I got Who Framed Roger Rabbit? We picked up some nice things for my parents--some videos and particularly for my dad, a book of movie lobby cards from classic films of the 30s and 40s.

During the rest of the vacation time, I watched videos, worked a little on LL, but by far not as much as I wanted. I did swim fairly regularly, and tried to watch what I ate. It was difficult to stay on a rigorous diet during the holidays. By the end of Christmas break, I managed to stay enough away from the snack foods (my biggest problem) and stayed around 179/180 pounds.

#### BACK TO SCHOOL

The vacation ended too soon. I finally got working on the Lantern on New Years Day, and January 2 we had In-service meetings, with classes beginning on Wednesday, the 3rd. Very few people were ready for work, but we plunged right in and I got the

kids moving. We had 13 class days before the semester exams, and I thought my students did a good job in applying themselves to the work (after the first day).



I was on dorm duty the first weekend of the new year, and I found out my godmother (my cousin Shirley) died on Friday (January 5). The funeral was set for Monday, a day I had scheduled tests for my three geometry classes. When all the details finally came through, I found that I would be able to schedule everything, though some of the timing would be tight.

I visited the funeral home Sunday afternoon/evening in Lansing, Michigan. It was a 90 minute drive, from my door to the funeral home, so on Monday I was able to monitor the tests in the morning, then drive out to Lansing for the funeral. Although Shirley and I were not that close, she was my godmother, and since she knew she was dying she made arrangements for her funeral ceremony. She asked that I be one of the pall bearers. So I showed up for her final ceremony and carried her casket.

Shirley was 55, and suffering from a number of illnesses. She had several system shut-downs--pancreas, liver, kidneys, then finally the heart and lungs. She was one of two children for my Aunt Rose and Uncle Harry. Cousin Harry died several years ago while a senior in High School. Now Shirley, Rose and Harry are still alive; they have 3 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. While I talked to Harry, he vacillated between being bitter and accepting what had happened. His grandson (another Harry) stood up the best under the circumstances. This young man is the youngest of the three grandchildren, Shirley's youngest son. Young Harry spoke

for the family at the ceremonies; he was obviously nervous, but his voice never cracked, never wavered. Right after the graveside rites were completed, I caught him gazing off in the distance and sniffing at a rose from the casket spray arrangement. He wiped a tear from his eye, composed himself, and then joined the rest of us. Later we talked a bit about what god might be, what might happen after death. I think we will have more discussions.

After that, the week went by pretty much as a blur. I was on "emergency driver" duty for two nights. If someone was injured and needed to be taken to the hospital, I was the one who would be called. Thus I had to sit home and "be available" in case I was needed. I could have worked on the Lantern, but I didn't. I did fanac, watched some videos (House on Haunted Hill, Dreamscape, Empire of the Ants, and an episode of The Sandbaggers), and read some SF.

That weekend I also finished putting together review sheets with answer keys. Monday I gave final quarter/semester tests in all classes. Then I start reviewing with an eye on the Exams on Wednesday, January 24. Meanwhile, CONFUSION was this coming weekend, and I was looking forward to that. And we got a call from Stan Schmidt who accepted the GoH-ship for CONCLAVE next October.

#### CONFUSION

This CONFUSION wasn't too bad. I did have some high points. Watching the Batman serial (parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 14 and 15, although I eventually purchased the serial myself and watched the whole thing), talking with Gale Tang and Lisa Leuthheuser for a long time (separately, not together), having dinner with Jean Jambas, Marshall Muller and Mike Glicksohn, seeing Suzanne and Bob Sims (Suzanne works with Maia) at the con and having a good time, and not gaining as much weight as I feared I might. I did have pleasant talks with other people, including Sherriann Lea (had breakfast with her, as is traditional for us), Dave Alway, Mike Stein, Heather Bruton, Robin Wood, and others whose names don't come to mind now.

An especially memorable experience happened at the end of the "Sex Tips for Humans" panel. Mike Glicksohn walked in. He had arrived in Windsor by train, and Josh Grosse had picked him up (to whom I was grateful) and brought him to the con. I had not seen him since AD ASTRA in June, so I was delighted to find him looking well, and in good spirits. I've been worried about him since his break-up with Doris, but he seems to be handling it well. (I was worried about Doris too, but she's happily married now to Ray Thompson.) And Mike had copies of his personalzine, Xenium, which he was handing out.

Another piece of good news I found out at the

con was that Jo Anselm and Barry Gehm were going to get married in the Summer. Maia and I were both very happy for them.

I could not stay for the dead dog, since I was on duty Sunday night, but I did have a good time.

#### RAMBLINGS 32.2: SCHOOL

I began work on the fanzine on Monday and Tuesday of Exam week. Late Tuesday afternoon and evening I had a study session for Wednesday's exams. The exams weren't too bad. I finally had a long enough Geometry test to keep the majority of students there for the minimum 1-1/2 hours. And I allowed some stragglers to stay after the two hour limit.

The Algrbea II exam was long. Very few left just after the hour and a half limit, and about a third were still there when we called time after two hours. I had all the Geometry exams corrected by the time I needed to leave for a CONTRAPTION mailing meeting at 7. I needed to go there to pick up my copy of Beetlejuice which I had loaned to Bruce Jaffee for the CONFUSION video room, and forgot to take home with me. When I got back, I started in on the Algebra exams, but stopped after 5 pages. I finished the rest on Thursday morning.

I thought about scaling the Geometry exams, but when I finished grading and found that 14 people were in the 90% - 100% (A) range, I decided not to. Still, four people failed. I scaled the Algebra exams, and no one failed. I figured that it was a difficult enough test to justify that. On a strict percentage, there would have been only one A (and an A- at that) and one failure. This way, there were 4 As and no failures.

#### The Phantom of the Opera

Saturday, February 3, was THE DAY! We saw The Phantom of the Opera, and enjoyed every minute of it. The Pantages Theatre was magnificent. It is a restored vaudeville theatre that had been converted to a movie house in the late 20s/early 30s. It eventually was split into two sections, with one owned by the Cineplex Corporation and set up to play 6 movies, and the other was owned by a different group and was also a movie theatre. When the current owners were looking to buy both parts, they also looked around to see what they could bring in as a new opening for the legitimate theatre. Bringing Phantom to Canada was what they wanted, and it was what they got. Within a year the old complex was refurbished and restored, and the staging set for Phantom. The place is so ornate that it is difficult to see where the Pantages ends and the staging for the Paris Opera House begins.

The show itself was wonderful. Colm Wilkinson played the Phantom; and in our viewing, Susan Cuth-

## SERIOUS DECISIONS

Sometime in the weeks between Phantom and Spring Break, Maia and I seriously discussed what we were going to do this summer. We decided to go to England for the last two weeks in August, and take a weekend in Holland for the Worldcon. To this end we decided that we would have to cut some conventions in order to save the money for the trip.

MINICON was the first to go. It was the most expensive for us, and thus the money we would have spent went into the trip fund. We cut AD ASTRA and MIDWESTCON as well. I considered cutting out MARCON, but Maia overruled me; it was a con that she could also use as a base to visit her family.

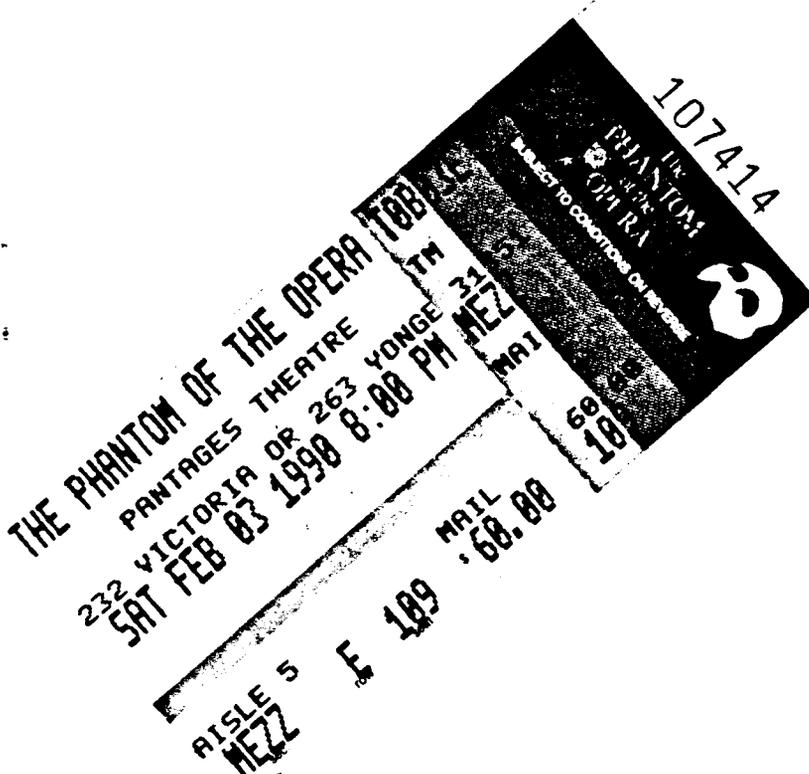
I also had to change my spending habits. I had been accumulating videotapes at an alarming rate. So I had to get that under control, which I managed to do. I did, however, join a second video club. In addition to the BMG Video Club, I joined the CBS Video Club. The offer was exceptional. 6 videos at 89¢ each, and two additional ones for \$9.95 each. Then, all I needed to do was buy 3 more at regular club prices (\$29.95 or higher) over the next three years to fulfill my initial membership requirements. So I could wait until after the England trip to take care of that.

## SCHOOL AGAIN

The week before Spring Break wasn't too bad. Because of the Wilderness Expedition, I was missing 16 students from my classes: two from each of my 3 Geometry classes, and 5 from each of my two Algebra classes. I didn't deluge the remaining students that hard with new material, but I did have shorts tests over the material on Thursday and Friday. That's a story in itself.

Two weeks earlier at a faculty meeting we were informed that we would be having an Cum Laude assembly on the Thursday before Spring Break started. (The Cum Laude Society is like the National Honor Society, although it's more prestigious (read: uppity).) Now there were objections then, but the rationale was that the speaker the committee wanted was booked rather solidly, and had very few open dates. This was one. She was supposed to be a marvelous speaker, a former president of Smith College, and "we were lucky to get her." So Jill Kerr Conway spoke to the students and faculty--a rather uninspired speech, if you ask me. It interrupted the day at a very odd time. Normally assemblies are in the morning between 2nd and 3rd periods. This time it was scheduled between 7th and 8th periods. I was expecting a really dynamic speech, or at least dynamically delivered, but that was not the case.

Anyway, many members of the faculty complained about the "insensitivity" of the administration all year for scheduling assemblies during the times



bert played Christine. (Rebecca Caine plays Christine for most performances.) We had very few complaints, and they were minor. Because we have the London cast recording of Les Miserables, and Colm Wilkinson sang the lead, Jean ValJean, we kept hearing echos of that as he sang the Phantom's role. Maia had some trouble understanding the lyrics, which didn't bother me because I knew the score so well (I've only played the tape about 100 times). Still, Maia had heard the songs enough times to know what was going on anyway. And we both cried at the end.

The effects were spectacular! The Phantom enters and exits quickly and unexpectedly. The boat scene as he takes Christine down to the dungeons of the theatre is mind-blowing, with candles and candelabra rising from the stage. I'd love to see it all again, but I know we can't afford it. Once was not enough, but it will suffice.

We stayed with our friend Mike Glicksohn, and his housemate Mike Harper. Of course, we had some of the worst driving weather so far this year on the weekend. It rained Thursday evening, then changed to snow and sleet overnight. It snowed most of Friday, letting up in the afternoon about the time we were to leave. By the time we got to the Canadian border at Port Huron/Sarnia, the snow had stopped completely, and the roads were clear through to Toronto. Saturday, however, we experienced sub-freezing temperatures and snow all day. We visited other friends -- Ray Thompson and Doris Bercarich, who were married last December 15th (Doris and Mike Glicksohn lived together for close to ten years before splitting last spring), then got ready for the theatre. We didn't dress up as we were going to because of the weather, but that didn't matter. We had fun.

when we would be doing major testing--before long vacations. Every time so far this school year, we have had some sort of assembly (or assemblies) before a major holiday. Jeff Welch, the freshman/sophomore Academic Dean and head of the campus chapter of the Cum Laude Society, told me that the faculty would have to be creative, that he thinks the students are too isolated on campus from world events, and he would schedule more speakers if he could. He too has to adapt his teaching and testing too. He forgets that he only teaches one class. And he and his colleague Debbie, the junior/senior Academic Dean, keep making policy changes which frustrate faculty teaching and testing schedules.

Most of this had little affect on me. I arranged with my students for them to choose which day they wanted to take the test--Thursday or Friday, whichever was best for them. They didn't have to show up the other day. My rationale, if I were pressed as to why all my students weren't in class on those two days, was that they would be working on the paper they had to do for me (due April 9). Other teachers handled it quite well, too. The problem was that Jeff and Debbie kept telling the faculty that we should be sensitive to the needs of the students, while they seemingly ignored the needs of the faculty. The only concession they gave to the faculty was the time grades and comments were due for third quarter.

The quarter ends April 6, the Friday after we return from Spring Break. We start classes on Tuesday, cannot test for the first couple of days after we get back (what's there to test?) and then the quarter ends. Dumb schedule (it came out that way

because we started earlier than usual, and had a shorter Christmas break than before--and so the days were shifted back). The week of April 9th is when the ISACS evaluation team will be on campus. Every 7 years the members of the Independent Schools Association of the Central States are evaluated. Because of the upper administrative changes and reorganization of the schools in the past 5 years, it has been 10 years since the last evaluation. Therefore, this is an important evaluation. And that's a short week, too, because Friday 13th is Good Friday and we have it off.

Well, because of all this, the Deans decided that grades were not due until Wednesday, April 11, and comments on April 16, after Easter. Fine, that allowed me to give my students that weekend after Spring Break to work on and "polish" their paper for me. I would have two days to read and grade about 75 papers. Then over Easter I would be writing comments on all students. This also would have made getting to MINICON a bit more difficult, had I decided I really wanted to go. (And don't think I didn't consider making the trip anyway.)

#### MILLENICON

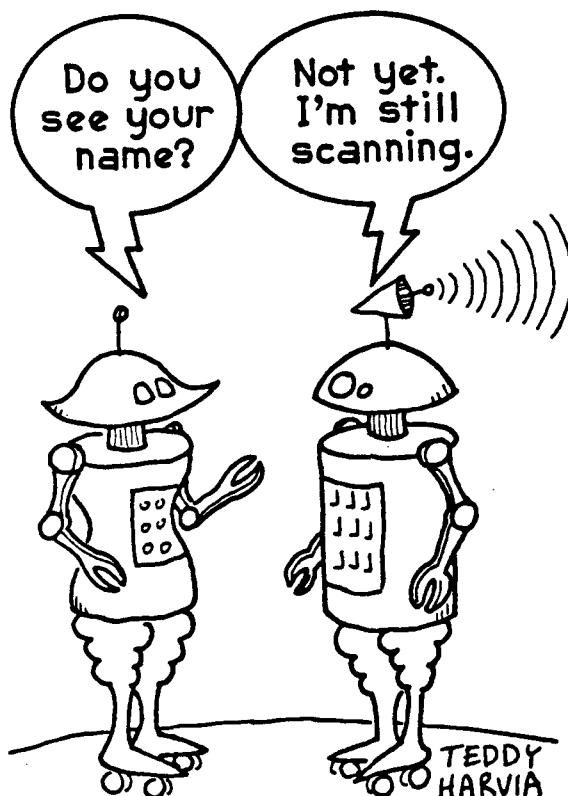
MILLENNICON was fun. I enjoyed talking to the Guests of Honor Joe and Gay Haldeman and the other people who were there. I was surprised to see Bruce Burdick there. He was on sabbatical, and said that he probably would not be at MIDWESTCON, INCONJUNCTION and the other summer conventions. I handed out copies of the new, 172 page, LL #32. People were amazed at the size (I still am!). I told them that the next issue was the Heinlein special, and would be smaller, as would be the Asimov issue.

The huckster room was the focus of a lot of activity. I found many of the people I wanted to talk to there. And, of course, I spent a little money too. I picked up the new Complete Avengers book from Mary-the-Mystery-Lady, and Mike Resnick's new novel, Second Contact, from Bill Cavin. I was embarrassed to admit that I had the disks of the novel from Mike for several months, but had not gotten around to reading the novel before it came out. So I put it high on my list of novels to get to so I could review it soon.

I was on three panels, all on Sunday, all in a row. Since I could get to the bathroom between two of them, I was fine.

#### RAMBLINGS 35.3: SPRING BREAK

Maja and I attended a wedding on Saturday, March 24. Jean Jambas and Marshall Muller got married in a very nice ceremony, and had a wonderful reception afterwards. On the same weekend there was a convention at the local Oakland University called NOVA. Lawrence Watt-Evans was the GoH. I managed both the



convention and the wedding; Maia, not feeling well, just went to the wedding and reception. Then Marshall's sister, who was one of the bridesmaids, backed out that week. She was pregnant and due around the time of the wedding. She had a son 15 minutes before the ceremony started.

Maia crocheted an afghan for Kathleen and Don and their baby. We got word that Kathleen had a baby boy on March 23, Dustin Theodore Wentzel. Kathleen is a small woman (5'4") and the baby was big, but she did not have a C-section. She was due last Sunday, but the baby came on Thursday. Everyone is doing fine. Kathleen, I may have mentioned, had one son, Joe, who just graduated from High School last June. She married Don about 4-5 years ago who adopted Joe. And now, at age 39, she has her second child. I hope she and Don will be able to keep up with him.

I read quite a bit, and tried to catch up on things I hadn't been able to do because I didn't have the time. I sorted through my old clothes and made lots of room in my dresser drawers. Most of the discards went to the Salvation Army; some of the convention t-shirts I will be sending to Boris in the USSR. I caught up on cataloguing the books and magazines we acquired the past three months, and the new videos I picked up. Books read included: Child Across the Sky by Jonathan Carroll, Boat of a Million Years by Poul Anderson, Warhorse by Timothy Zahn (that came out in April), and Second Contact by Mike Resnick.

I also caught up on letter-writing.

One nice thing about publishing the fanzine and doing book reviews is that publishers keep sending us books. However, most are ones not worth saving, let alone reading. Occasionally we get a few good books, ones that are worth keeping. Some of them I had picked up already. We do try to pass them on to others--particularly the library. Jean Jambas, who got married during this Spring Break (see above), is a librarian (it's her library where the Galactic Cartographers Society meets), and I've given her lots of those books. On April 3rd we saw the play, The Immigrants, which is about a Jewish/Russian couple who enters the US through Galveston, Texas, and settles in Hamilton, Texas. It spans about 75/80 years in time, following the man and his wife through their changes in life. It was very enjoyable and moving. It was written by the grandson of the main character, and we could tell that a lot of care and pride went into it.

#### CONTRAPTION

We went to CONTRAPTION on the weekend of April 6-8. Barry B. Longyear was the GoH, and I thought he was a very good guest. He apparently had

a great time. He was all smiles and interacted well with the attendees. Tom and Tara Barber were the Fan Guests of Honor, one well deserved. Both have brought a lot of fans into fandom, and have run local conventions. Tom was the person who started CONCLAVE, and the two have been the mainstays of CONFUSION for many years.

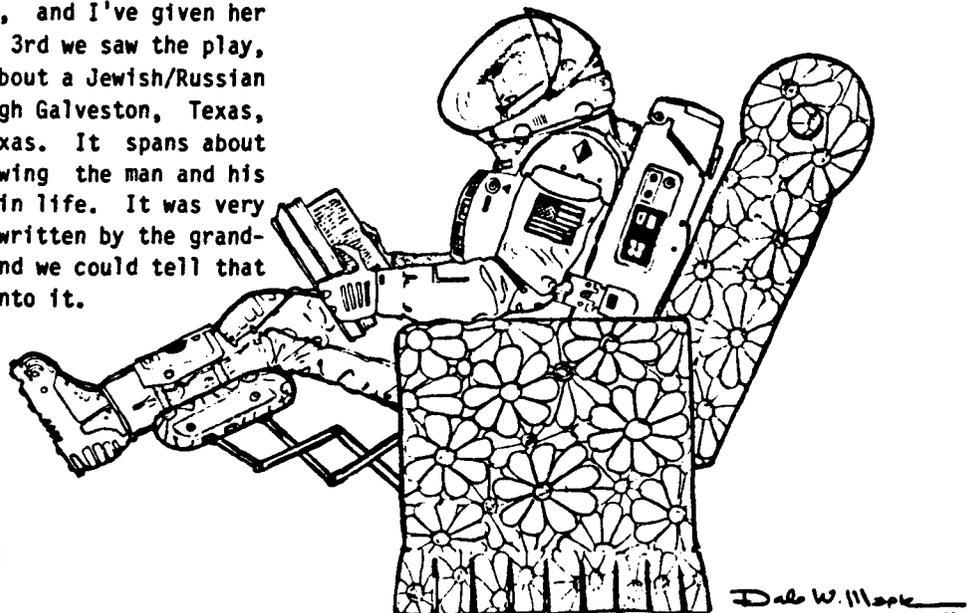
I was asked to play the Toastmaster for the speeches, as I have been in the past for CONTRAPTION, and I was happy to do so. Unfortunately, the attendance for the GoH speeches was rather small, which was a pity, since they were very good. Barry read a portion of an unpublished novel, which was wonderful.

The video rooms used several of my videos, and many went over quite well. I was particularly happy to see a lot of people in the room watching The Man in the White Suit. It's a minor classic of SF, one that actually examines the social effects of a scientific discovery.

I had a very nice conversation about art and the publication Book of Shadows (see my review on page 120) with Heather Bruton and Marg Baskin. Heather's art is on the professional level now, and is getting better each time I see it. Her work in the Charlie Card Calendar alone has sold many copies of the calendar. And her color work is outstanding.

#### RAMBLINGS 35.4

Easter weekend I spent writing comments on all my students. Spring Break ended on April 2, and the quarter ended on Friday, April 6, but grades were not due until Wednesday, April 11. I was able to give my students the weekend after Spring break as time to finish (write?) their papers for my class. I collected them all on Monday and read furiously to get them graded. In fact, I finished the last paper at 5:03 on Tuesday afternoon. However, there were still two papers that had not been turned in.

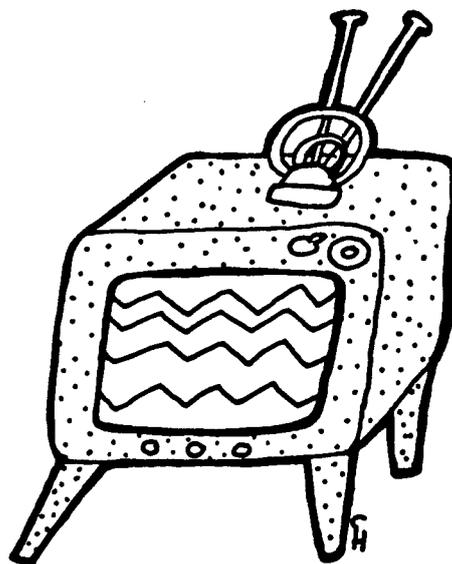


I started writing comments Tuesday evening. Since comments were due on all students on the Monday after Easter, I wanted to get them done early. If I were going to MINICON, I would have a very tight squeeze to get them done before I left. As it was, I had some time to work on them, and did more than just a minimal commentary on the student's performance.

On Wednesday, Maia came home with a cold from her office. She came home early on Thursday, and she had Friday and Monday off for Easter. Thursday night I started feeling "things" in my throat, and Friday night I had a nice sinus drainage and headache. Saturday I didn't take care of myself as I should have (spent an hour cleaning up part of the garden), and that night I had a full-blown cold. Sunday, Maia was in worse shape than I was, so I fulfilled the family obligation and visited my parents for Easter. I came home early and went to bed early; in fact, since I had to teach on Monday, we slept in separate places so we wouldn't disturb each other with coughing and moving around. I felt better Monday, but I was on Dorm duty. I was on duty again Wednesday night, and Thursday was the grade review meeting. A very busy week, and not a good time to be feeling miserable. If we had decided to go to MINICON, I think we would have had a terrible time, so in a way I'm glad we didn't go.

I slowly watched the TV special of The Phantom of the Opera. We taped it since we weren't able to watch it "live." I enjoyed it and placed it in the collection with my other Phantom tapes. The screenwriter took some liberties with the storyline, but it hung together quite well. (Listen to me talk--I haven't read the novel yet!) The Lon Chaney version was done as a horror story, as was the Calude Raines version, although each got further from the original novel plot. There were other versions of the Phantom story, and even some hokey plays off of it (Phantom of the Paradise, and the novel Phantom of the Soap Opera, which I have but haven't read yet), but the Webber musical went back to the original novel and is the closest to it. The NBC special stacks up well in emphasizing the love affair, which is really what the musical version does. However, the details are very different.

Erik did live in the "real world", and had a hand in the construction of the Paris Opera House, which is why he knows the hidden passageways. He was a genius, in spite of his disfigurement, but always wore a mask. In an often overlooked scene of the musical, it comes out that Erik's first piece of clothing was a mask, and he was kept in a cage. Thus he associated "love" with being captive. Given that little piece of information, his desire to keep Christine with him falls into place; that she does not want to be kept in the catacombs of the Opera House is a rejection of the love that Erik has for her, the only kind of love he has ever



known. The Leroux novel is really a very good one. It hits some rather deep sympathy chords with a lot of people, and is really based on the "Beauty and the Beast" theme of mythology. And I hope to read it one of these days.

The singing was absolutely gorgeous in the TV production, even though it was lip-synced. And I liked the fact that we never got to see the Phantom's face--it made it all that much horrifying.

There were lots of things going on week after Easter. On Wednesday-Saturday nights, there were two student-directed one-act plays staged, and several of my students were involved. Additionally, Wednesday evening was the Junior Fashion Show--both boys and girls were in it (Geometry is a Junior--level course), so a lot of my students were off-the-wall from that. On Thursday night there was a four hour slide presentation about America which the Juniors are encourage (very strongly, underlined) but not "required" to attend. (Knowing some of the autocrats in the history department, I'd say that if the students didn't go they would be in trouble.) The rest of the student body was also encouraged to go. The faculty will be at the grade-review meeting that evening.

So, to make things easier for me and them, I gave my geometry students a take-home test, to be turned in by Friday of that week. That gave them a little more time in planning the other things they had to do along with this test. The Algebra classes had the weekend for their take-home, which was more than enough time. They all could use their books and notes, but no other person for help. And they signed a pledge to that effect.

#### GENRES & SF

There is an English course at school called Genres. Different teachers take turns teaching a week or two in a specific genre of literature, usually a favorite one. This year I volunteered to do a section on SF. So, in addition to the usual

workload, I pre-pared to teach two weeks of an English class. It turned out that I spent more time preparing for that than all my other classes combined. And since the weather was so good that Spring, I worked out in the garden an hour or two every day, unless it rained, which was quite a welcome break.

The Genres class was fun, in spite of the work. I chose Donald Wollheim's 1989 Annual World's Best Science Fiction as the anthology, and Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card as the novel. The students read three stories from the anthology which we discussed in detail, and had to choose another story on which to write a three-page paper. As we read through Ender's Game, and the reaction seemed universal--they liked the book. For that I was very pleased; I tried to pick something that would attract them and keep them reading, but also one with depth for discussion. And my friend Kathleen Conat has had success in getting her son's friends into reading by suggesting that book. On my third read-through of it, the second in preparation for class discussions, I still found it fascinating, and I marveled at how well Card constructed the story. If I teach Genres again next year, I'll probably use it again. I also supplemented with other topics, like what conventions are like, talks about fandom, the authors we've been reading, and so on. I even talked about the awards, and--like show-and-tell--I had an example of a Hugo to show them.

Of course, I could talk at length on most of these topics without any preparation, but usually it's with other fans who can correct me if I make a mistake, or if I forget a date/name/place, they can usually supply it. With a class of mundanes, I had to have everything at my fingertips. So I prepared by making notes which I usually ignore as I lecture, and it was fun, if wearing.

I also covered some filking, and played tapes for the class. In the mail I got a replacement tape from Buck and Juanita Coulson. I loaned my copy of Through My Eyes by Larry Warner to one of my colleagues and he couldn't find. So I called and left a message on Buck's answering machine the Thursday of the first week of my two week stint as an English teacher, and got the tape on the following Monday. I then mailed him a check.... While grading some quizzes and writing up mid-quarter comments I played the tape; sounds as good as I remember it. Larry wrote a song based on Ender's Game which I wanted to play for the SF class on Thursday, after they read the climax of the book. I also planned to play other filksongs for them. Larry Warner, Kathy Mar, Julia Ecklar, and others.

#### More Life at School

The last weekend in April I was supposed to have gone to Toronto for a wedding reception. On the

Thursday before, I was coughing a lot, and feeling very stressed out. The number of things I had to do before we left on Friday seemed overwhelming, so Maia told me to stay home, relax, get some sleep, and take time catching up. So I did, slept in until 7 on Saturday, 8 on Sunday (of course, I went to bed at 12 and 1 respectively, but sleeping for 7 hours straight is unusual for me). I wrote a few letters (people who have been waiting for a while), and responded to requests for the Lantern. Books had been piling up, waiting for cataloguing, which I mostly took care of; I didn't get to all the collections, anthologies and magazines to cross-index them by title and author, but I made a good dent in the work. And I made preparations to start working on the Asimov issue. I even got into the garden to work a bit, since it was sunny on Sunday afternoon. Although I missed Maia, it was good to be alone and relax.

I got two phone calls from unexpected people. Larry Warner, a filksinger from Mesa, Arizona, called to thank me for the nice review of his tape Through My Eyes in the Lantern which he heard from Joey Shoji (via a call from San Francisco). Larry asked for a copy of the zine; and we talked for something like 45 minutes Friday night. On Sunday, while I was out in the garden, unfortunately, Dr. Jane Robinson called and left a message on the answering machine requesting a copy of the Lantern also. Kathy Mar had called her and read the review I wrote on her tape Whackademia, and she said "it made my week." So I knew that the zines are getting distributed, which had started to worry me since I got a couple of letters from people who said they were looking forward to the next issue.

#### MARCON

Marcon happened on the weekend before Memorial Day weekend, late for the con. If it's that weekend again next year, I will probably not go. I was swamped with things to do in preparation for the end of the school year: final tests, review sheets (which had to be ready for the Friday before Memorial Weekend), and writing up the exams, and the deadline for the apa I have been in the longest (since I got into fandom), MISHAP.

Anyway, some high points include talking not long enough with a lot of people, including Gale Tang, Anne Moore, Anne Schneider, Julie Washington, Lois McMaster Bujold, Marshall Muller and Jean Jambas. In the filking, I heard Tom Smith do some marvelous stuff. Tom gets better and better, and his new song in honor of Jim Hensen called "A Boy and His Frog" is a real tear-jerker. Robin Nakkula showed a lot more confidence in her ability and skills. The programming was multi-track and somewhat adequate; there was no fan programming. The conference center was huge, but the hotel had small

rooms, and seemed to be designed by P.D.Q. Escher.

All in all, it was a break I needed, though when I arrived and found myself surrounded by lots of people, I wanted to turn around and go home. I knew I needed the convention and its insanity, but I felt overwhelmed right away, and wanted to be alone. I broke away from Maia and the small group she was talking to, and wandered about the new hotel and convention center getting my bearings. After an hour or so, I felt better and managed to survive it all.

One who didn't survive was Elizabeth Pearse. She had a heart attack on Saturday evening, was rushed to the hospital and into the operating room, but the damage progressed faster than the doctors could repair it. She died on the operating table.

Elizabeth was very well known about art show directors, and particularly as a fan in the Midwest. She has run many, many art shows, including those at Worldcons. From the Toronto area of Canada, Elizabeth and her "Team A" were efficient organizers of shows and auctions, and recognizable by their purple outfits. She had been in Columbus Ohio to visit her son who lives in nearby Lancaster. Mike and his wife had not been up to see her for Christmas as they normally did, so she decided to attend MARCON and see them. This was a convention she had wanted to attend for a long time, and she DIDN'T have to work on the art show! They had had dinner together that evening, and when Mike and his wife got home, there was a call about the heart attack. They turned around and returned to Columbus immediately.

Maia had talked with her at length Saturday afternoon. She had just become a great-grandmother, her granddaughter having given birth to a little girl a week earlier. Several other people, including members of the Dorsai Irregulars (of which she was one), were at the con and enjoyed her company. I said hello to her, but had not engaged her in conversation. I almost wished I had, but for me that was not necessary, i.e., to have had a final conversation with Elizabeth before her death. Others, who had stunned looks on their faces Sunday morning, were glad to have seen and talked with her one last time.

#### MIKECON

Memorial Weekend we drove to Toronto for the annual Mikecon, Mike Glicksohn's and Mike Harper's annual birthday bash. The weather was very nice all weekend except on Sunday afternoon. While I was grilling the hamburgers, hotdogs and sausages, as I do every year for them, it rained. For about an hour I stood partly in the garage, partly outside, flipping burgers and tubes. By the time I was done, so was the rain, the temperature had fallen a bit, and I was dry (on one side, at least). On Saturday



Maia and I toured some of the exhibits at the Royal Ontario Museum, and walked to Chinatown (Toronto, not Los Angeles) for dinner. Sunday we took a long walk through High Park in the morning, but mostly stayed and Mike's & Mike's for the party. Lots of people showed up and we had a good time. Unfortunately, many of the friends from the Cincinnati area didn't come up; many were too tired, or had families which made it difficult to make a long trip two weekends in a row, after MARCON. The Mikes were a little disappointed, but we all had a good time anyway.

The surprise news was that Mike Harper was getting married, and therefore moving out of the place. The bad news was that Mike Glicksohn had to teach summer classes to make his mortgage payments. He advertised for a roommate, and hoped to find one. Otherwise, in a worst-case scenario, he might have to sell the house (he doesn't!!).

#### RAMBLINGS 35.5: The End of the School Year

Back at school, we had "Review Week" which was the three days after Memorial day. Exams began on Friday, and I hoped that my students were ready. Two of the three Geometry classes were pretty good about asking questions and preparing themselves for the Monday exam. The students in the third class, which was my first-hour class, were subdued and quiet. Most of them did well, so I guess they were ready, but it is somewhat annoying to stand in front of the class and ask for questions, and have none forthcoming. My two algebra classes were concerned about doing well, and so asked lots of questions.

The results, though were both as good as I expected, and a little disappointing, but not surprising. The geometry students did very well. There were some failures, but the ones I expected. A few did better than I had hoped, a few did worse, but the grades turned out quite well. In algebra I had to put a curve on the grades. Everyone worked hard on the exam, but the diversity of the types of

problems was a little more than some of the kids could handle. I'd say that I would have to work on that next year, but I won't be teaching algebra in the fall (just pre-calculus and geometry). Once I worked up the curve, as in the geometry class, people did as I expected with few surprises. And the final grades were pretty much what I had thought they would be.

Of course, I get faculty members hating me around exam time. I was finished correcting and grading my exams Tuesday morning, and turned in final grades by the early afternoon. Some don't understand how I do that, especially since I tend to shy away from multiple choice tests and let the kids do problems where I have to check their work, give partial credit, etc. I've found ways of correcting tests quickly, noting errors and answers resulting from them, then standardizing the points off for them. I also concentrate on "doing the task" and not being distracted. It also helps that I correct one page at a time and can remember the answers after the first few tests.

Anyway, I was done early, and could concentrate on working on the Lantern, the garden, taking care of some car repairs, and sort of relaxing.

After graduation was over (Friday, June 8), I had a few days of meetings to wrap up the year, and then freedom for the summer. Still, looking ahead at all that was happening, it looked hectic. We had 4 weddings to attend (though there were 6 coming up with people we knew), a baby shower, a graduation party, two conventions (one of them INCONJUNCTION, at which I was going to see and share a room with one of my favorite people in the whole world, Lynn Margosian), and our trip to England and the Worldcon. And after having spent over \$300 in repairs on the Alliance, I think things would be financially tight for those summer months. At that time however, we had almost all the money put aside for our trip overseas (shy about \$800), and most everything that we could have paid for in advance settled. So it would be a hectic, but enjoyable summer.

The garden did very well. I was happy that this year I was able to get going on it more than a month earlier than last year. I picked some strawberries, which is surprising. I didn't expect a crop until next year, since I transplanted them last fall. Many plants didn't survive the winter, so I picked up a few new plants, and had some nice berries--not a lot, just a few at a time. Radishes came in early, and I was able to pick pea-pods for stir-frying. I could pull up garlic and onions at any time, but I want the bulbs to get as large as possible so relied on what was left from last year. The other crops looked great. Aside from some trouble with rabbits, everything was doing quite well.

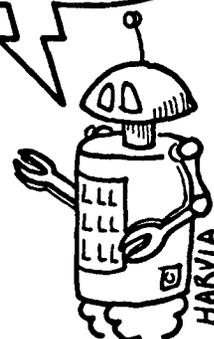
## The Weddings

June 15th was the first of our four weddings. Mary Ellen Wessels is a folksinger who has sung back-up on a lot of tapes. She has a beautiful voice, but it one of the few who can harmonize and blends well with others. So she is one who gets flown out to California a lot to record back-up vocals for other folkers. MEW (as she likes to be called) married Iain Sedgeman in a very non-religious but quite moving ceremony at a hotel in Ann Arbor on Saturday morning. After the ceremony was a brunch, and we had fun talking to a lot of friends. Kathy Mar and her twin children (who were the flower children) and Joey Shoji were in from California. Others came in from Chicago, Wisconsin, Indiana (Barry and Sally Childs-Helton), Ohio, Canada, and from the local area. Many I'd be seeing again at INCON. One of the endearing features of the Brunch was a little scroll at each table place-setting which said that the tapping of glasses would do nothing for them. However, singing a verse of a song that has the word "love" in it would inspire the bride and groom to kiss. Since there were a lot of folkers at the reception, there was lots of singing; the songs were mostly silly and bawdy, with the only serious presentation being a Shakespeare Sonnet recited by Kay Jarrell. It was lots of fun.

Finally, before the concluding traditions (garter & bouquet throwing, and the cutting/feeding of the cake), Iain announced that their last name will be O'Cain: Mary Ellen Wessels O'Cain and Iain Sedgeman O'Cain. And MEW commented on all the wonderful singing, and loud enough for everyone to hear, "Iain, I told you this would be better than hiring musicians to play." After the laughter died down, Tom Smith piped up, "Wait till you see what you get in the mail next week."

In the evening Iain and MEW hosted a folk-con called CONNUBIAL. The music started about 9:30 PM and we left about 2 AM. It was wonderful. With most of the good folkers in the Midwest there, the music sounded great.

I can't offer to love you forever. We automatons are not programmed for that.



But I can give you a 1000-year guarantee on parts and service.

Then on Friday, June 22, was another wedding. My second cousin Dawn got married, and it was a typical family affair (for us). I have three sisters (who are married) and a brother (who is not). Two sisters have children, and one from each pair were in the wedding party as Ring Bearer and Flower Girl. When Nik told his friends that he was going to be a Ring Bearer, one asked, "Does that mean you have to dress up like a bear?" Because of the time of the wedding, Maia and I went separately, she going to the reception directly from work. I almost made it to the church. It rained all day Friday, and the Alliance has had trouble in the rain. This time it stalled several times on my way there, so seeing as I was 25 minutes late for the services, and still have a few miles to go to get to the church, I decided to head for the hall instead. The car made it there, and back home, but did not start the next morning. So I took Maia's car and went in search of a new distributor cap, and after trying several shops finally found one. No trouble after that.

At the reception, things were okay, but too many of our relatives still smoke, and Maia is extra-sensitive to it. She left early (after we ate!), so it was good that we had separate cars. I stayed late, talking to my brother, sisters, parents and in-laws. One of my sister's girlfriends, one who lived behind us at our old house, was there with her husband and we got to talking about schools and education.

Dorothy has two kids in public schools, and she is really concerned about what will happen to them, particularly when her daughter Autumn gets into high school in a couple of years. That she is concerned, and helping her daughter at home with homework and studies indicates that Autumn should do quite well, in spite of what the school is like. I would have like to continue the conversation with Dorothy, but the Bridal dance happened, and even though we talked during it, the DJs kept cranking the music louder and louder during and after the Bridal dance. Soon it became difficult to hear, and my ears started to hurt, so I left.

On the weekend of July 7, we travelled to Chicago for the Wedding of Jo Anselm and Barry Gehm. Since it was a morning ceremony and an afternoon reception, Mike and Alice Bentley had a party at their place in the evening. Maia had a muscle spasm attack and thus stayed in the room after the reception. I called up Jill Smethells, a former student who is going to school at Northwestern University and we got together for dinner and talked for several hours. I finally got to the Bentley's after midnight.

The weekend of July 21 was Starwood, a gathering of Wiccans and Pagans, at which Liz Huffman and Tim Murphy got married. Maia was involved with the wedding which took place in the middle of an outdoor camp setting.

## INCONJUNCTION X

The weekend of June 29, 30, and July 1, was INCONJUNCTION. Maia and I shared a room with Lynn Margosian. As always, I had a wonderful time seeing her, talking and attending panels together. Since I did not visit her over Spring Break because we didn't go to MINICON, we made arrangements for me to visit at the end of July. That was a trip I was looking forward to.

I was on four panels, one of which was a discussion on the Hugo Awards for this year. So I had read all the nominees, and the last novel was Grass by Sheri Tepper. It started out slow, but got very interesting very quickly. It supplanted my first place choice up to that point (The Boat of a Million Years by Poul Anderson). I also found out that I had all the Dramatic Presentation nominees in my video collection except Field of Dreams, which I will correct soon, since Maia enjoyed it when we rented it.

There were two unanimous choices from the panel and audience: Mike Resnick's "For I have Touched the Sky" and Lois McMaster Bujold's "The Mountains of Mourning." (Lois won, and Mike led in the voting all the way until the last round and lost to Silverberg's "Enter a Soldier; Later, Enter Another", my second choice.)

Another panel was the "Dr. Ruth Westheimer's Alien Sex" panel, full of innuendo and lots of good raunchy humor. William Forstchen was on it along with Maia, Mike Kube-McDowell, Arlan Andrews, Judy Eudaly and, of course, Dr. Ruth. I sat at one end of the tables, and just as we got started, I slipped under them, crawled to the other end where Judy was sitting, and emerged there, much to the surprise and "delight" of Judy and the audience. We all had a good time. This was William Forstchen's first time at INCONJUNCTION and on any panel like this, but he did very well (i.e., he was as raunchy as the rest of us).

Afterwards I talked with him about a couple of colleagues at Cranbrook whom he knew. The couple, Bev and Fred Pfister, were teachers at the first school he taught. I caught him up on some news with them, and he gave me messages to relay back.

I did see several other people, including Tim and Anna Zahn, but did not get to talk to them very much. I figured that there was always WINDYCON and CHAMBANACON.

Since MARCON, I had been looking for the book Nightlight by Michael Cadnum. It was recommended by author Ed Bryant, with an additional recommendation from Don C. Thompson. I checked the entire huckster room, but no one had it. Dick Spelman said that he did have a copy, but had sold it already.

## RAMBLINGS 35.8: More Travels

The weekend of July 14 was taken up with a visit

to Nate Bucklin at Clarion in East Lansing, and a garden party at Dan and Kay Jarrell's house.

We took Nate out to lunch, and talked books and stories and fandom for a couple of hours. We didn't stay too long, since we had the garden party to go to, and Nate needed to get to work on more stories.

At the garden party, we both talked ourselves out and ate the wonderful food that Kay Jarrell prepared. It was nice to see friends whom we hadn't seen for a while, especially Dan and Kay.

I spent five days (July 24-29) in West St. Paul with my friend Lynn, during which I had a wonderful time. I took her an autographed copy of The Quiet Pools by Mike Kube-McDowell, for which she was surprised and pleased. We visited Uncle Hugo's and Dreamhaven, had dinner with Mary Kestenbaum and Tim Kirby, I visited the Cray laboratories and had lunch with Tim (Mary was out "with the girls" that Friday, and Lynn was asked to go in to work to "save" portions of a crash project--even though she had taken the day off). We saw Arachnophobia, which seemed to be billed as a comedy but was a mixture of horror and comedy. Lynn doesn't like horror. But the film had some beautiful shots of the Venezuelan terrain. One major error that Lynn pointed out (since she works for the National Fish and Wildlife Service) was that the landsat photo of Venezuela doesn't exist; the satellites are not in a position to take any photos of that region. On Saturday morning we drove up to St. Croix State Park and hiked the trails there. In the early afternoon we found a place at one of the canoe launch-sites to grill chicken for lunch.

After getting home from St. Paul I had three days to take care of the garden and do my apazine for MISHAP, do laundry and prepare for a visit from my parents, take care of banking and prepare for RIVERCON. Everything got done, though I skimped a little in the garden work. It was rapidly being overtaken by weeds, but the vegetables kept coming in. I took care of the produce (mostly freezing the vegetables), tore up the pea plants and replanted for a fall crop (I had already done a fresh planting of broccoli from seed for a fall crop), harvested the rest of the garlic and onions, pickled cucumbers, and cleaned out the strawberry patch.

#### RIVERCON

I spent time writing my speech on Wednesday morning before I left for the con--I did think about the speech while visiting Lynn, and had two possible topics, but didn't decide on which one until Wednesday. I talked about some decisions I made on the way to becoming a fan. I gave it to Tom Sadler to print in his zine The Reluctant Famulus. He is a very nice person, older with four children, and his zine is interesting. Although we trade, I figured I could make him a little happier by giving

him the speech to print.

The drive to Louisville wasn't bad. I got a false start; about 3 miles from home I realized I had forgotten the suit-bag hanging in my closet with the good clothes I was going to wear to the speeches. I just turned around and picked it up. I stopped in Cincinnati to have lunch with Pat and Roger Sims (Roger was fan GoH at NOLACON II). Pat and Roger used to live in Detroit, but both retired and bought a condo in Cincinnati, and invited me to stop by on the way to Louisville. The hour or so visit turned into an almost two-and-a-half hour one. But I had a pleasant time visiting and talking about fandom, books and friends. I got into Louisville about 4:30 and had no trouble checking in. George Alec Effinger who was the toastmaster was already there, and we went to dinner in the hotel coffee shop with a few fans and a couple of committee members.

Friday I relaxed. I took a long walk and a run in the morning, and was on hand to see a lot of the fans arrive. Spelman did have a copy of Cadnum's Nightlight which I had been looking for and picked it up. And I spent time talking on and off with Marie Miesel. I've known her since she was about 11. She grew up in fandom; her parents are fans, and her mother Sandra is a published author and critic. She's now 24, and going to graduate school at the U of South Carolina in Columbia. Marie is majoring in sports medicine, and is a Teaching Assistant in the department. We usually have our long discussions at MIDWESTCON, but neither of us went to that con this year, so we spent some time talking at RIVERCON.

In addition to being on three panels ("Stupid Fan Tricks", "The 10 Worst Ideas in SF" [with Mike Resnick, George Effinger, Lois McMaster Bujold, Leo Frankowski, and Sandra Miesel], and "Fanzines in an Electronic Age"), I attended a couple other panels because they sounded interesting. Resnick (the pro GoH) said he was upset because both George and I had written and prepared speeches, and he hadn't. Still, he didn't do badly, more because he talks about things with authority anyway, and is a good extemporaneous speaker. Mine went off quite well, and I got compliments on it.

While talking with George, I found out that he has written a couple of Sherlock Holmes novels, with plans for a third to complete a trilogy. Unfortunately, the Conan Doyle Estate and Lady Doyle have not given permission for their publication; she has just not responded. I introduced George to Mary Frost-Pierson ("Mary the Mystery Lady", who gave me a print of Data as Holmes as a gift to honor me for being fan GoH), who owns a mystery bookstore in Yellow Springs, Ohio. I made sure he told her the plots; she showed enough interest that I think George will send her copies of the manuscript of the two that he's done.

Basically, the story takes place when Holmes is 19, at Cambridge with Musgrave of "The Musgrave Ritual" as his side kick. At 19, he is not the Sherlock Holmes he is to become, although he thinks he is. Musgrave's sister is kidnapped by Fu Manchu who is also attending Cambridge, and Holmes and Musgrave take off in pursuit to China. In the course of this first novel Fu Manchu introduces Holmes a lot of the techniques and habits he would use later, including cocaine. The novel ends with Holmes and the Musgraves leaving for England.

The second novel picks up where the first left off, but the ship is torpedoed, and the survivors, Holmes and company, are taken on board the Nautilus, and held captive by Captain Nemo II. They visit the island of Dr. Moreau, and the scenes of some Pacific ocean stories and end up in San Francisco. In the third novel, Effinger has Holmes hook up with Custer before ending up in New York and on his way back to England. So in the trilogy Holmes goes around the world.

Everyone who has heard about this is anxious to see these books in print. I hope it happens soon.

On Sunday I also went on the Belle of Louisville riverboat ride. Since it was raining in the morning, many of the people who had intended to go on the riverboat cancelled out. I decided to go anyway, and walked down to the dock (about a 5 minute walk from the hotel) about 30 minutes before the boat cast off. The pavement was drying up then, and by the time we left the dock, the sun had come out and it was very pleasant. The nine of us who went on the riverboat had a good time.

Maia flew in on Friday evening, and left Sunday afternoon. She had a good time too, although she wasn't put on any panels. Steve and Sue Francis, the co-chairs, said they were happy to have her come along. Maia wanted to put a sign on her badge:

"Hanger-On". On Saturday evening, before the speeches, Maia and I went to The Spire, a revolving restaurant at the top of the Hyatt the con was in. It took us almost a half hour to get up there--elevator problems--but the food was excellent. At the speeches, we (the guests) all got RIVERCON t-shirts and a Steve Sherer glass pegasus mounted on wood (with appropriate plaques). And we were all made honorary Kentucky Colonels!

When I got back from RIVERCON, I picked beans and put up 9 one-and-a-half pint containers plus 2 one pint containers. After one more picking, I removed the plants; we wouldn't need the beans while we're gone to Europe. When I picked the broccoli the next day, I ripped up most of those plants too. The main heads had all been picked and all I was getting were side-shoots; they are tasty but take more time to harvest (because they are smaller and there are so many of them). Besides, the plants I had started from seed were growing nicely so I knew that I would have a fall crop of broccoli.

We had been preparing for the England in earnest since February, and we were ready to fly overseas on August 17. We knew we were going to have a wonderful time, see a couple of plays, travel to places we had not seen on our last trip over, and have a lot of fun. I'll pick up there next time.



# Post Scriptings

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Susan Shwartz' article on "My Life with Lawrence of Arabia" is, well, interesting. It made me think about

something.

In the 1930's, Ralph Bagnold started going for drives in the country. As he was a British officer (Royal Corps of Signals) stationed in Egypt, there was more to those drives in the country than might have been at first expected. As a matter of fact, they were drives through the Sahara Desert. Bagnold and his co-drivers developed several techniques and items of equipment to make driving through the extreme desert possible; ways of getting out of sand dunes, means of navigation, items that made driving a motorcar through the extremities of heat and cold more than just a preposterous joke.

As a result of all this work, Bagnold not only became accustomed to driving thousands of miles in the Sahara, but also wrote some scientific papers on the physics of dunes, a topic with which he had become intimately familiar. Then came the Second World War.

As a result of a chance encounter with a one-eyed poetry expert in October of 1939, Bagnold found himself ordered to turn his skills to military use. (The poet-master happened to be General Sir Archibald Wavell, British Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, and a veteran of Allenby's staff from the last war.)

So it was that when the Desert campaigns began in earnest, the British were already possessed of the means to scout around the foe's perpetually-open right flank, Bagnold's Long Range Desert Group. This stirred the imaginations of some people, who perceived unusual opportunities and capabilities in this area and means.

Going back, then, to 1939, we find David Stirling, a bright adventurous young Scots aristocrat engaged in physical training with the intent of being the first man to climb Mount Everest. When war intervened, he joined the Scots Guards (I said he was an aristocrat) and when the chance came he joined Commando Forces (I said he was adventurous). His unit was shipped out to the Middle East, was knocked about in the Crete campaign, and then was scheduled to be disbanded.

Taking thought on the matter (I said he was bright), Stirling noticed a certain misuse of resources. The archetypical commando raid required landing a hundred or more men in order to do the work of ten or so; these few did the actual dirty

[[ Here are letter from you, the readers. They've been edited, but there are still a lot of them to push the page count way up. As always, my comments are in these double square brackets. ]]

Lan[\*]

work while the remainder had to hold the landing site. Or other problems, as with the misconceived Beda Littoria attempt to assassinate Rommel, of which incident more later.

Why not, Stirling reasoned, use parachutes? It would then be possible to drop a raiding party consisting of just the few men actually needed to do whatever needed to be done right where it needed to be done. Afterwards, they could slip out into the desert and be recovered by friendly Senussi Arabs or the Long Range Desert Group.

So Stirling set out to try parachutes. He rather rapidly found out that they had certain problems; when you are 6' 4" and big in proportion the normal parachute is less than adequate. While recovering in the hospital, he took opportunity of the enforced leisure to get everything down on paper. When he was mobile again, he betook himself, his crutches, and his report to GHQ Middle East looking for a friendly desk to drop it on. By sheer good fortune, he found such a desk in front of General Neil Ritchie, the deputy commander-in-chief. Ritchie thought it worth a go, and so was born the famous Special Air Service Regiment.

Oh, and speaking of those Senussi Arabs... As alive to the potentials of hostile action against the Italians as the Turks had been in 1915, the British had set up the Libyan Arab Force. In spite of not having to face any Italian commander as capable as the Duke of Westminster had been against them for the British in 1915, the Senussi Libyan Arab Force did not do altogether well. Except for one of their officers.

Vladimir Peniakoff was what you would call a wanderer. Born in Belgium before the First World War to Russian parents, he was educated at Cambridge, served as a gunner in the French army, and worked as an engineer in Egypt. They finally let him join the British army after the turn of events was such that Belgium had been made an ally of Britain, and he proceeded to go through a mixed lot of assignments, including the King's Dragoon Guards and the Libyan Arab Force. Having observed armored cars and desert riders in action, he came to the conclusion that there was potential in a desert-mobile raiding force.

After negotiations with the much-harassed GHQ Middle East and the well-used Long Range Desert Group, he was allowed to set up such a unit. Englishmen, like most people, cannot be bothered to learn the pronunciation of foreign names, so Peniakoff became known as "Popski" and his unit, perforce, "Popski's Private Army".

The Middle East Commando of some note was not a primary player in this arena. Its main claim to fame was having provided the troopers for the ill-fated attempt to kill Rommel. A group of commandos under the command of Major Geoffrey Keyes, son of the former Director of Combined Operations, World War hero and combined operations planner of Zeebrugge Sir Roger Keyes (who himself did not do well; apparently World War One heroes were not automatic successes in their line of work in World War Two) were taken in H.M. Submarine Torbay to raid a German headquarters in the Libyan village of Beda Littoria and kill Rommel. The raiders managed to kill four German supply clerks for a cost of almost the entire raiding party captured or killed. This raid reportedly caused Rommel some concern and confusion, as not only had he been at the front at the time, but he had never even been to Beda Littoria at all, much less worked out of there. After this, the Middle East Commando was disbanded.

Going on to more successful people, the L.R.D. G., the S.A.S., and P.P.A. (God, I love initials!) took part in bedeviling the Germans throughout the Desert War and into the following campaigns. All which goes to show that there was more than enough local talent on the scene.

Given the precedence of the established local talent in the area, the likeliest assignment for T.E. Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw was therefore a desk in Amman or thereabouts, reassuring the Hashemites that El Aurens was indeed alive and kicking. Or was it?

Going back to the First World War, while Emir Hussein of the Hejaz and company were working their way into history and the flicks, another Arab chieftain held sway over the Nejd, the center of the Arabian Peninsula. Emir Abdulaziz ibn Sa'ud commanded the loyalty of the strict Muslim Wahabis of the Nejd, and perforce the British sent to him one Harold St. John Philby (whose son Kim was to attain fame later). Abdulaziz was not of much use to the greater war effort. Perhaps he was irked at being called by the wrong name; after all, he did not refer to the British monarch as "King Windsor", why should he have to put up with being called "King Ibn Saud"?

Having kept his powder dry, so to speak, Abdulaziz was ready for action afterwards. As Hussein found out, when Abdulaziz proceeded to conquer the Hejaz. Unlike the rulers of the Trucial States of the Arabian Gulf, Hussein was on the outs with Britain. (Over the matter of Palestine, which he saw no need for as a Zionist state.) So it was that Hussein and his oldest son Ali were expelled from their native lands, and King Abdulaziz, a man with no ties to El Aurens-Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw, no bonds of brotherhood in arms, became ruler of the Hejaz, protector of Mecca, and King of Saudi Arabia.



This leaves the Hashemite kingdoms of the north. Now Iraq was a problem, for the late government there had lately been in correspondence with the Germans. Late government, because a substantial invasion force including writer William Slim and military commander John Masters (or was that "military commander William Slim and writer John Masters"? Never mind, it is true either way) landed and installed a government more minded to be in correspondence with the Allies. Given the means of this reversal of loyalties, it would seem that there was in Iraq no reservoir of potential assistance for the Allied war effort to be tapped by the inspirational presence of El Aurens-Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw.

Which leaves TransJordan. Still ruled by El Aurens's companion-in-arms Abdullah, too. Aided by a substantial British military mission led by one John Bagot Glubb, known to his employer as Glubb Pasha. Not much room for El Aurens-Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw there, except perhaps as an adornment, commanding that aforementioned desk in Amman and lending the image of his presence to the image of Hashemite cooperation in the Allied war effort.

Not much of a story in that, eh? But then Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw was so enigmatic and cryptic that almost anything you say about him can be supported. Which does not make it worth the while.

Taras Wolansky's perceptive letter proves that S.M. Stirling's work is of a piece: wherever you may inspect it you will find it to be bad. Yet all the historical research deployed against Stirling's work by Wolansky and others (including myself) is totally irrelevant.

This irrelevancy stems from the nature of the works in question. Although the works are dressed in the trappings of history, with characters bearing the names of historic individuals, settings labeled with the names of real places, and events designated with the same names as the names of his-

torical events, the fundamental settings are different.

Shwartz's story, then, has a different setting from what it seems to have. It is really not about T.E. Chapman-Lawrence-Ross-Shaw, but about Susan Shwartz and her will to believe. It is set not in the Sahara Desert but in the will of Susan Shwartz. Similarly, Stirling's books are not about an implausible expansionistic techno-plantation culture, but about S.M. Stirling and his will to believe; they are set not in a war-ravaged Europe ruled by plantationocrats, but in the will of S.M. Stirling.

It is therefore obvious what the place of critics is in regard to such works. All matters of background, characterization, plot, style, theme, and the like are now irrelevant, as the story is not about any of these. What is relevant is what the story really is about; the writer and her or his will to believe. As the writer is by definition fully capable of realizing her or his (and soon the second pronoun will become needless) will to believe, it will then become the duty of the critic to compliment the writer on this realization. Every work will become a masterpiece, indeed a classic, a triumph of literary achievement.

Of course, who will actually read them?

I generally find myself either agreeing with Mark Leeper's film reviews or, failing that, being able to clearly see where the difference between us lies. Which makes my reaction to his review of The Abyss unusual; I feel he has the right magnitude but the wrong vector in his numeric rating. That is, it should be minus four, not plus four.

There are two main failings, I think, in The Abyss, and both stem from the ready employment of cliché. The main characters are taken from the box of Standard Characters: The tough-guy-with-a-hidden-failing, the ex-wife-with-a-grievance-and-a-broken-heart, the militarist-psychopath, and the band of loyal followers. As for the ending, it comes straight out of Spielberg: the gentle innocent childlike aliens who are going to save us from the original sin of our adult nature. Then too, I wondered why the whole cast failed to twist into knots from the bends or pop like balloons when the gentle innocent childlike aliens brought them straight up to the surface from way way down in, oh, maybe thirty seconds. Magic, perhaps? Or did the explanation end up on the cutting room floor?

Someone ought to tell Mary Lu Lockart that yes indeed, an antivivisectionist child has (by dint of lawsuit) got herself excused from frog dissection. I am waiting, though, for someone to file a lawsuit to get school sports banned because they discriminate against the physically challenged (the current politically correct term for the h\*nd\*c\*pp\*d). However, it should be noted that Mark Twain was banned from the school named for him for good liberal reasons; in Huckleberry Finn, he used

politically incorrect terms for characters who were from socially disadvantaged ethnic groups, namely "African-American James" and "Native American Joseph". (That I stole from "Herblock".)

Robert Sabella's Guest Editorial addresses a serious problem. Yes, sense of wonder-style science fiction is declining, both absolutely and proportionally. Why is this? If I may offer a prelude to a solution: Sabella quotes a definition created by Mark Kelly of "High SF" (in contrast to "High Fantasy", and a most useful term) as "adventures in space, on alien worlds, in the far future and in post-holocaust societies". How can you write this? By combining imagination and extrapolation with a broad base of knowledge.

Two of Kelly's other categories require one of these preconditions. Kelly's category of "Extrapolated futures" requires a base of knowledge, though not always as broad as it should be. And his category of "Alternate realities" requires imagination, though not always much as there should be.

The combination of them is rare, and furthermore is not encouraged by society. John Masters once deplored the fact that in the American writing world, there seemed to be a deep division between the doers and the writers. Of course, this came about because publishers saw his long and relatively successful career with the Indian Army and decided that of course Colonel Blimp (or Lieutenant-Colonel Masters) can't write! (But he could.) This division has persisted and increased. The problem then and thereupon arises from the consideration that imagination and extrapolation from a broad base of knowledge are generally more the properties of doers. The culture does not, generally, encourage doers to try to write, or writers to try to do. While this is not a universal attitude, it has enough influence to make the Robert L. Forwards rare birds indeed. Much better to have academics running the SF show, and eschewing that uncomfortable sense of wonder High SF for comfortable familiar academic territory and modes which academics are comfortable and familiar with such as Extrapolated futures and Alternate realities.

As, for example, the lead article in this Lan's Lantern, which is a speech that states (a more forceful word might be in order here) that now the old set of stereotypical characters has been banned, and replaced by a new set of stereotypical characters. Note that that article was written not by a doer, but by one who was set opposite to them in Masters's schema of the separation of thought and deed.

As for the sad conflict reported on by Tera Mitchell in her "Open Letter to the Filking Community" -- I was afraid of that. When filking was done for love, conflicts hardly mattered. Not that there were none, just that they were generally over easily resolvable matters, and, to be quite honest,

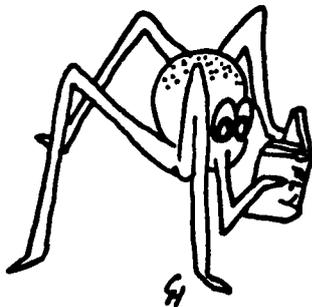
over less than substantial sums of money. But now filking is important. Filkers are seriously into filking, taking voice and instrument instruction, distributing their songs Big Time--and talking Money. Where you have money you will have money problems. When the most complex and expensive item of technical equipment at a filk was Filthy Pierre's mouth keyboard, such conflicts had little or nothing to feed on, and so died aborning. When you talk about equipment worth \$20,000 or \$35,000 or more, you describe a fertile environment for conflicts; one in which they can feed, and flourish, and spread.

This was the way it was in Trufandom in the good old First Fandom days, when fanzine comments provoked massive lawsuits. Since the contestants usually did not possess more than about \$1.62 between them, those historic fabled massive lawsuits tended to become settled out of court rather quickly. Actionable statements have declined, though, as the spread of prosperity has become manifest in the prosperous ones. More or less.

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|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teddy Harvia<br>7209 Deville<br>Ft. Worth, TX 76180 | I must be suffering from pen envy. The pen and ink drawings by artists such as Peggy Ranson, Allen Koszowski, and Colleen Doran amaze me. They are just black on white, I tell myself. Peggy's beautiful mermaids and mermen make me feel as if I could actually touch them. Allen's realistic rendering of hideous aliens emerging from flying saucers and ancient future cities floating beneath alien skies make me believe such things exist somewhere. Colleen's arabesque characters have life-like magic. But I cannot draw like that. I identify with Peggy's drawing of the man at the start of a highway with outstretched arms, awaiting artistic talent to hit me like a comet out of the sky. |
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On the lighter side, perhaps I should just stick to simple line cartoons, punchlines, and funny comments. Diana Stein's batmobile cartoon was a howler. Phil Tortoricci's stuff continues to be better than electric shock treatment. David Haugh's robots are great for a few mechanical laughs. And Cathy Howard's mind rivals Pandora's box for producing strange creatures.

Finally, I didn't know Don Maitz was such a horrible doodler. He's my kind of artist.



|                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------|
| Kevin Langdon<br>PO Box 795<br>Berkeley, CA 94701 |
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I like David Palter's discussion of the use and abuse of labels, which makes clear the distinction between extracting information from the labels which exist out in the world and forcing things into ill-fitting categories.

Judith Merrill's suggestion, mentioned by Palter, that science fiction and fantasy be included in a single genre called "speculative fiction" is sensible and parallels my experience of having been very strongly influenced by what I have labeled, for my own convenience, "visionary literature."

This literature, which opened me to many new ideas and played an important part in the formation of my character, forms the basis for my own personal list of "favorites," which include:

Castaneda, Carlos: the don Juan books.

Clarke, Arthur C: Childhood's End, The City and the Stars, Rendezvous with Rama, and 2001.

Heinlein, Robert A: many books, especially Beyond this Horizon, Space Cadet, and Stranger in a Strange Land.

Lewis, C.S: many books, especially The Great Divorce.

MacDonald, George: The Princess and the Goblin.

Niven, Larry & Jerry Pournelle: Inferno.

Stapledon, Olaf: Last and First Men, Odd John, Starmaker.

Sturgeon, Theodore: The Cosmic Rape, More Than Human.

Van Vogt, A.E: Slan, The World of Null-A.

Waley, Arthur (trans.): Monkey.

I am pleased to see Palter's objection to the very fashionable idea that "wishing makes it so." Taken to extremes, this leads to repugnant views like those I heard some Scientologists expressed a few years ago. They agreed that a small boy who had been run over in a hit-and-run accident "had created that." Bullshit.

I must take exception to Martin Morse Wooster's assertion that "Egypt and Kenya are pretty well-run countries; it should be possible to see them without traveling in a tourist pack." This is probably correct in the case of Egypt; Egyptians were very friendly to foreigners, especially Americans, when I was there in 1973. But Kenya is another story.

A friend of mine was killed by bandits in Kenya in 1980; the information that came my way with this tragic news included that this sort of thing was a common occurrence there. Things have not gotten a whole lot better in the past decade, with the pan-African AIDS epidemic and the social, economic, and ecological collapse that currently threatens all of Black Africa.

Kenya is ruled by a dictator, Daniel arap Moi, who has outlawed all opposition parties and whose

increasingly repressive measures to keep public demands for democracy in check have led to a crisis which, just today [July 10, 1990], led to a travel advisory against travel to Kenya by U.S. citizens by the State Department.

Harry Warner: Give me a break! Reagan a great president? Where have you been living for the last ten years? Your comparison with Richard Nixon is quite beside the point. Nixon, for all his faults, opened up the dialogue with China which set the tone for the current era of reconciliation with the Eastern bloc, proposed a national guaranteed income, and has an I.Q. at least fifty points higher than Reagan's (there was always that worry that Reagan would set off World War III by accident--and now Dan Quayle is one bullet away from the White House!).

S.M. Stirling remarks that "the Saharah is the true transition area between Europoid and Negroid, and always has been." The current limit of the area occupied predominantly by the Black race is the Saharah desert, which is occupied by Arabs, but this was not always the case. The facial features of Old Kingdom Egyptian representations of human beings, such as the Great Sphinx, have a distinctly Negroid cast.

Mark Bernstein  
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Bob Sabella's guest editorial raises an interesting point, and one I've been thinking about for a little while. As you may or may not aware, Stan Schmidt raised almost exactly the same point in an Analog editorial some time back. I do have some ideas as to the possible reason why "High SF" is in shorter supply these days.

First I would submit that, to some extent, it's been nibbled to death. In my days on the Usenet computer network I read denunciations of Larry Niven's work (hell, of Niven himself) as worthless and inept. Because the characterization was weak? Because the plot had holes? No. Because there were errors in the science. If the man who put enormous effort into making Ringworld and the other worlds of Known Space believable is subjected to this sort of venom (and I can't believe none of it ever gets sent to him personally), why should others even try? World-building is a hell of a lot more difficult than it was in Doc Smith's day, simply because we know so much more. Anyone who chooses to write a story big on Sense of Wonder faces the serious possibility of being hit with a major chunk of scorn--not a fun prospect.

Second, I always wonder a bit when faced with statistical evidence (remembrances of Twain, I guess). For how many years has Mark Kelly been doing those surveys for Locus? How have the figures changed over the years? Also, given the explosive growth of the field, has the "High SF" subgenre

shrunk in actual number of stories, or only as a percentage of the field as a whole?

Finally, I'd say that as the readership has diversified, so have the backgrounds of the new writers entering the field. Someone with an English degree, Spider Robinson for example, is far less likely to have the background or inclination to write the stories that a more scientifically inclined person, say Greg Benford, would favor. Personally, I can't help but regard diversity as a Good Thing. I'd say that "High SF" is still being written (I've just started reading Dan Simmons' Hyperion, which seems to fit the label well), so the fans of that particular type still have books and stories to read. Luckily, so do the readers of other kinds of stories. As someone who likes to vary his reading, I love it. (And always have. While "High SF" may have predominated years ago, it never held a monopoly. And the SF world would be a much poorer place without the "extraordinary experience" stories of Theodore Sturgeon.)

Susan Shwartz' essay provided fascinating insight into how one author approaches character creation. I hope you can get more analytical articles like this from other authors.

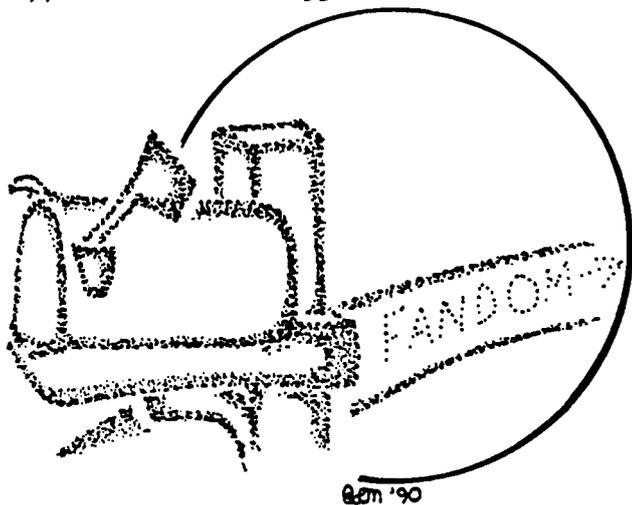
I well remember my outrage when reading about the two court cases cited by M.L. Lockhart. But hasn't at least one of them (Alabama, I think) already been overturned, with appeal on the other pending? Any update would be appreciated.

[[ In a future Lantern will be a series of essays from different people about writing; they all happened to arrive in the past year or so. // I haven't heard anything about the two cases. Maybe one of the other readers have.]]

My immediate reaction to David M. Shea's article is that I haven't seen anything approaching the consensus he perceives as regards future sexuality, and therefore regard his basic point as moot. Further, I think he drastically overstates his case when he tries to expand "sexually free" to include the elimination of incest and pederasty taboos. With the exception of Sturgeon's thoughtful "If All Men Were Brothers, Would You Let One Marry Your Sister?", I can't recall any story ever advocating any such thing. I also regard citing the lack of a normal sexual outlet as an explanation for child abuse as not only idiotic, but offensive.

"Uncle Mark" was well done, and I'm glad you ran it. What else has Paula Robinson published?

[[ Paula has had several stories in Analog: "Can You Spare an Elephant" (June 88), "This Generation" (Feb 89), "Hearts and Dandelions" (Oct 89), and "Ramusack Times Six" (Apr 90).]]



Ray Beam's speech: \*sigh\* I'm not wholly unsympathetic, really I'm not. I recognize that fandom does have a history, and that First Fandom played a role in that history. But is First Fandom owed a chunk of time at each Hugo Ceremony? I'm sorry, no. I'm active in fandom because I enjoy it, because it's fun. In truth, I don't take it all that seriously. As such, I react badly when someone attempts to force feed me a history lesson on the grounds that I "ought to" recognize my debt to those who have gone before. You cannot compel the sort of recognition and respect that Mr. Beam craves. There will always be fen who will give these things willingly and naturally. Attempts to expand that group are generally futile. I was at NOLACON, and at the Hugo ceremony where, as Mr. Beam never quite mentions, First Fandom totally ignored any requests on the part of the committee for time constraints, rambling (I'm sorry, that's the correct term in my mind) for quite a long time, and the committee made no move to cut them off. I imagine my reaction was typical of the majority of attendees--I was bored stiff. What did First Fandom truly accomplish for itself in New Orleans?

Personally, I think that moving the First Fandom awards to a smaller, more serene setting, where a majority of the audience is likely to be interested and sympathetic, is a wonderful idea. How unfortunate that I get the impression Mr. Beam wouldn't agree with me.

I can certainly understand David Palter's concern over the use of Biblical events in SF or fantasy novels. All I can say as regards Many Waters is that Madeleine L'Engle tells such a good story that the differences in our religious viewpoints simply don't matter to me while I'm reading the book. I'm glad my review sparked so many comments (though I hope Mike Glicksohn will forgive my chuckling a little at his description of L'Engle as "obscure")--it's nice to know others are as enthralled with L'Engle's work as I am.

I must, sadly, correct your answer to Ruth Berman. Yes, one of the local cons did invite her as a guest. It fell through, not because she was too

busy, but because she was too expensive. Her agent insisted on a speaker's fee, which put her beyond the range of the con's budget. It's certainly her right to request such a fee, and really not too surprising in light of the fact that, as I said in my article, she's better known outside of fandom than within it, but the fact is that we aren't likely to see her at an SF con.

Finally, a word of reassurance to Joseph T. Major. Yes, I am taking voice lessons, partly for enjoyment, partly to sound better at films, and partly to prepare myself if I ever get around to making a tape. As long as I, and several people I know, are active in filking, however, singers and instrumentalists of all types will continue to be welcome, newcomers will continue to be encouraged, and filking will continue to be, first and foremost, fun. Otherwise, why bother?

|                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brian Youmans<br>27R Albion St. #2<br>Somerville, MA 02143 |
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I'm not usually moved to write letters of comment, but David Palter's list of the classics of fantasy has so moved me. Virtually all of those books are recent ones, and derivative works at that! Mr. Palter is evidently the sort that prefers artificial strawberry flavoring to a real sundae--I guess there's nothing wrong with that, but for those who are left unsatisfied by that, I present:

#### REAL THING FANTASY CLASSICS

1. J.R.R. Tolkien--Lord of the Rings trilogy--I'm not going to argue with this one--Mr. Palter and I agree.
2. Ursula K. LeGuin--Earthsea trilogy--Can't imagine how he missed this one.
3. Mervyn Peake--Gormenghast trilogy--There's this castle, and these characters named Steerpike and Prunesquallor and Swelter... Heavens, I can't describe it, just go read it!
4. E.R. Eddison--The Worm Ouroboros and others. I suspect Tolkien had read Eddison. From the 1920s.
5. C.S. Lewis--Narnia books. Come on, how could you leave these off any list of fantasy classics? If you're an agnostic like me, you'll wince at the seventh book, but you can always reread the other six and ignore some of the symbolism...
6. William Morris--The Wood at the End of the World and others. Morris was a socialist, a designer, and a writer of classic dream-like fantasy. Read the excellent R.A. Lafferty short story, "The World as Will and Wallpaper"--it's about him.
7. Peter Beagle--The Last Unicorn--Even though this is relatively recent, I regard it as the classic unicorn story.

8. James Branch Cabell--Jurgen and others. Witty high fantasy with a light touch. Too witty for his time--Cabell was put on trial for obscenity, although today they are not very racy.
9. Edmund Spenser--The Faerie Queen--Don't be a wimp! Get a version in Spenser's language, with annotations. It's worth it! And not an abridged version either--abridgements are evil!
10. de Camp and Pratt--The Incomplete Enchanter--Finally, a bone for those who like funny fantasy. It's funnier if you've read the source materials--The Faerie Queen, Roland, the Norse myths, etc.

I'm not saying this is my list of "The Classics"--it's just a hasty thing done off the top of my head, and in no way complete.

If you really find it difficult to pick up any book written before 1960, here's a few more recent fantasies that are well worth reading: Ellen Kushner's Swordpoint and Thomas the Rhymer, Terry Bisson's Talking Man, Michael Moorcock's Glorianna (he writes more than just Elric!), Michaela Roessner's Walkabout Woman, Richard Grant's Rumors of Spring, Gene Wolfe's Soldier in the Mist and Soldier of Arete, the Suzette Haden Elgin Ozark books (let's not argue and call them fantasy for now), anything by Tim Powers (another place Mr. Palter and I are in agreement), K.W. Jeter's Infernal Devices, ...

The list could go on, but perhaps I'll leave it there, except for mentioning Fritz Leiber and Jack Vance; both excellent writers that I failed to mention above...

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|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander R. Slate<br>1847 Babcock #406<br>San Antonio, TX 78229 |
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To answer Robert Sabella's "Whatever Happened to Science Fiction": I don't think that it's a matter

of mundania watering down SF, nor is it completely a matter of the popularity of SF that causes certain stories to be published, though that is certainly a part of it. The "sense of wonder"/far future story has declined, I believe, because of the growing "intelligence" of the reader. We demand more realism in our stories these days. Things have to be well thought out; the economy, the modes of transportation, the sociology of the groups in the story, the technology available. In most of the "High SF" stories of the past this really wasn't done well at all, but we love these stories despite their flaws because this is our past, our treasured "childhood memories." But we demand more from the current writers. It is so much easier to do this sort of thing for the present-day setting, or for alternate reality stories where physics and much else can be changed by fiat of the writer. Writers are told, "write what you know," and what we know best is what surrounds us.

Again, back to Robert Sabella, this time for "A

Science Fiction Stew." Remember that the simple addition of ingredients is not how it works. Robert, you seem to be forgetting something called zyzygy, where the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. You mention this briefly at the end of your article, but don't nearly give it as much attention as you should. But as to your individual examples--Dune's mood only 0.5? I disagree; 0.75 at least. And as for writing style, given a 0; for shame. What is wrong with a nice, straightforward writing style that lets you actually follow a story without getting confused? I'll grant that Dune isn't going to be a ten, but it's more than a seven. You also forgot one ingredient in your list: scope. Indeed, now, the Foundation Trilogy is more than The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire. What Asimov does here is concentrate on the whole, rather than the individual, with small side trips to illustrate, as per a history lesson. A very different goal than LeGuin's The Left Hand of Darkness.

Just a general grip concerning book reviews. When is a book review not a book review? When it is merely a capsule summary. Thank heavens, most of the reviews in LL are real reviews, whether I agree with them or not is another matter.

|                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lawrence Watt-Evans<br>5 Solitaire Court<br>Gaithersburg, MD 20878-4119 |
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It's a bit weird to be reading a review of a book I wrote nine years ago. While

it's generally bad policy to argue with reviewers, and it's even worse policy to argue with favorable reviews, there's something in this one that's set me off and prompted this letter. The line that set me off is, "To say that this is a 'market-smart' book is intended as no insult..."

I don't take it as an insult--but it also wasn't anything deliberate on my part, and it's sort of the last straw in a great heap that's accumulated over the years from reviews, comments on the computer networks, and so forth.

I'm not arguing with the review at all, just using it as a starting point for a tirade about something I feel strongly about.

I don't write "market-smart" stuff on purpose. Honest. And I suspect that a lot of "market-smart" authors don't.

A little history of The Cyborg and the Sorcerers is in order here.

Back in 1976 I was a college student (for the second time), and came up against the question of what to do for the summer between sophomore and junior year. I'd previously had such exciting summer jobs as counterman/cook at Arby's and laborer in a ladder factory. I'd also sold a few articles and a short fantasy story, and was vaguely hoping for a writing career. Writing was a lot more fun than riveting together stepladder hinges or assembling sandwiches, so I talked my parents into sup-

porting me that summer while I lived in my fiancée's apartment in Pittsburgh and wrote a novel.

It took me ten weeks, and was entitled Slant, and it was pretty poor. (I have never again written a novel in a mere ten weeks.)

I sent it around to various publishers, and started collecting rejections. After about a half a dozen, I sent it to an agent for comment.

The agent thought it had some good ideas in it, and that I showed promise, but that the story was all wrong for the market. He said it couldn't be salvaged. I put it aside.

Skip ahead to 1981--I've dropped out of college, gotten married, and written two more novels and sold them both to DelRey, the first place I tried.

I haul out Slant and look it over and decide the agent was wrong, it is salvageable. even though it's not anything the market's looking for. I re-write it under the title War Surplus and send it to DelRey. They buy it, retitling it The Cyborg and the Sorcerers, and publish it.

Now, let us consider the "market-smart" aspects mentioned in the review: "the careful combination of straight SF with just the proper edge of fantasy; the apparently insoluble problem, with the correct number of variants and complications; the measured quantity of violence, for which the hero is not (quite) responsible; the calculated touch of whimsy (complete with genre in-joke in the last line."

All of that, except the last line, was in the first draft, which was deemed unpublishable not just because it was crudely written, but because it was all wrong for the market in '76. And I didn't put any of it in there because I was writing for the market, either as it was in '76 or in '82. I put it there because it's what I like. It's what I like to read, so it's what I wrote. In 1976 it wasn't what was wanted; in 1982 it was; and now it's looked at as "market-smart," with a connotation (possibly not deliberate on Mr. Shea's part) of cynical manipulation of the reader and an eye for the dollar over art or craft.

(The last line, by the way, was added in a last-minute rewrite when Judy-Lynn del Rey wanted changes in my original ending. It was quite literally whimsy, in that I threw it in on a whim, and it was not consciously calculated at all. The genre in-joke, however, was deliberate.)

I'll get to my real point in a minute, but let me mention something else that prompted this letter.

On FidoNet last year, at a time when the users thought I'd stopped reading messages in the SF area, there was a discussion of my work, in which someone said she wished I'd stop turning out quick 'n'easy lightweight entertainment and take the time to write the Reas Serious major novel I was obviously capable of.

It was the combination of that and the review that did it. There seems to be this widespread belief that writers actually know what their doing, and cynically write what they think will make them the most money, when they could be writing much better stuff.

And that just isn't true, at least in my case, or in the cases of other writers I've discussed it with.

I'm going to use first person plural here, because I'm not alone or unique, but I'm not necessarily speaking for all writers, since I don't know them all.

We don't do that. We write the best stuff we can. If it comes out lightweight entertainment, or formula hackwork, it's not because that's what we were aiming at, it's because that's what we are capable of.

I've tried writing serious, thought-provoking SF, but it didn't come out that way. An ability to write slick, publishable prose does not imply any deep insight into the human condition, nor any talent for innovation or brilliant plotting or much of anything else. It just means we can put words together in a way people enjoy reading them. When that's all we succeed in doing, it doesn't mean that we're cynically manipulating readers to get their beer money, it just means we don't know how to write great literature.

Don't you think we would if we could?

It's not a matter of how much time goes into it; didn't Heinlein write The Door into Summer in about two weeks? The problem isn't refusing to take the time to do it right, it's not knowing how to do it right.

In my own case, I seem to be cursed with the appearance of unrealized potential--it always looks as if I can do better than I do, when the fact is I don't have the faintest idea how. I'm good at a lot of the superficial elements of novel-writing, but that really, honestly, doesn't mean I know what I'm doing, or that I'm good at the deeper parts. I'm not slacking off when I turn out "good light entertainment," I'm doing the best I can.

People who do cynically try to write market-conscious junk, in my experience, generally flop completely. I suppose exceptions can be found--but they're exceptions. Almost always, if the writer doesn't care, neither will the reader.

So when I see readers or reviewers saying that a book is "market-smart" or that a writer really ought to stop fooling around with light fantasy, or simple entertainment and write the better stuff he's obviously capable of, it annoys me. The Cyborg and the Sorcerers wasn't market-smart, it was market-lucky--and many writers who look like they're capable of bigger and better things aren't.

I'm not saying that readers shouldn't want writers to do better, but they shouldn't take it for

granted that writers can do better. Even when a writer knows more or less what's wrong, that doesn't mean he knows how to fix it, any more than knowing what's wrong with a car or VCR means the owner knows how to fix it. Knowing that the characters are weak, or the car stalls in traffic, or the picture is fuzzy doesn't tell you what to do about it.

And when a book has lots of catchy, trendy elements in it, that doesn't mean it was written to cash in on the current market--chances are it was begun long before those elements were fashionable, and just happened along at the right time.

Pardon the long ramble here; it's just that this attitude among readers is one of my pet peeves. Too often I've seen them say, "Oh, he only wrote that for the money," when I know for a fact that that wasn't what the author was doing. Readers don't know what the author's motivation was, and it seems to me that, in general, when they're most certain of their guesses is when they're farthest from the truth. [\*]

|                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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In LL #30: Trivia-wise, Alan Laska's comment about Paramount fudging an aircraft shot reminds me of a wartime British film--I think it was The Lion Has Wings. Obviously its makers assumed that since an aircraft has wings and an engine or two, any aircraft would do for their film. As a result, we watched a flight of Hurricanes take off, they then became Fairey "Battles", shifted to Vicker's "Wellingtons" and after a brief transmogrification into a lone Spitfire, changed back to Hurricanes for landing.

Reading "Ten Years Ago in SF" made me think of sitting down and producing an article titled "Sixty Years Ago in SF", which is when I started reading the stuff. Ah, golden age of space pirates, time travel, weird machines, superheroes, and no signs of ethnic lead characters (or any heroines), dolphins, ecological causes, sex, swearing, or "experimental writing" ... and Sword and Sorcery hadn't escaped from children's fairy tale books.

The cartoon strip was very well drawn, but I didn't feel the script and dialogue were up to the same standard. On the other hand, I really enjoyed Lamb's "Spare Time" although there were a few "suspend credibility here" spots in it.

"Searching for the Classics of SF" was an interesting exercise, but the snag is that any such list must be heavily affected by personal taste. I suppose the real test of a "classic" is that it is a title which stays in print, year after year. How many on the list have achieved that status? The writer poses an interesting question as to how many of these titles will still be read in 100 years. The long author list of possible titles hints at an

interesting answer--only ten of the titles predate 1950. Whatever happened to Eric Frank Russell, "Doc" Smith, L. Ron Hubbard, and a host of others who were hailed as the cat's whiskers in that era? At such a rate of attrition, the whole list won't last thirty years.

Reviews were, as ever, highly readable and informative, even when I didn't agree with them. Don't change this section one tot or jittle--and likewise for the LOCCOL.

Artwork varied from the exceedingly tatty to the excellent. Diana Stein's cartoon strips were well-drawn, but their punch was delivered with a powder-puff.

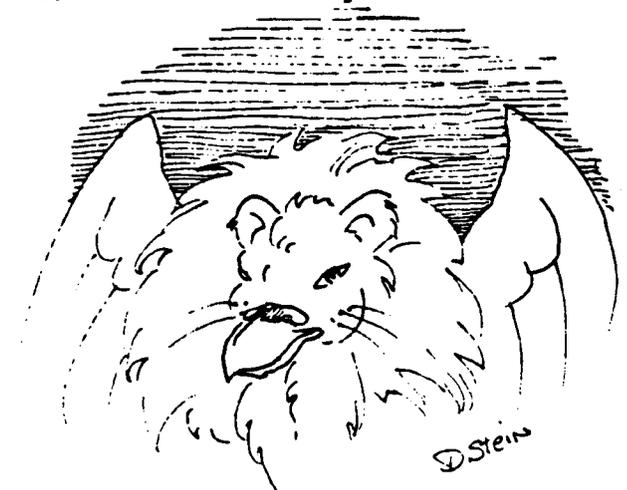
Laura Todd says money spent on space exploration could be better spent elsewhere--so could the money spent on cosmetics by American women, an amount for exceeding the space budget.

On #31: I think, for me, the best item was the on-going interview with Stanley Schmidt--but one question you didn't ask is, "Why does Analog have such dull interior artwork?" At least half of it is merely faces expressing various emotions, and the rest often simple two-figure groups. I could go on about the wishy-washy yarns, but the "artwork" is my main beef.

[I have asked Stan about the art, and he is always looking for new people to do it. Send him a portfolio--you never know what might happen.]

"Cities of Tomorrow" was a good idea, but lost its way and bogged down in a history of Solari's Arcology. I'd expected some discussion of (a) do we need cities? and (b) if so, what form should they take? What can be done for inhabitants, visitors, workers, essential services, etc? I'd venture that cities are anti-social, the bigger they get--the poorer the quality of life for their inhabitants. Since I moved out of a city, my life has undergone all sorts of improvements, and the only minor snag is a loss of one or two specialist stores.

I liked the artwork in the Lantern--my favorite being Ruth Thompson--Ms. Stein does some good illos too.



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In LL#30: David Stein presents an unbiased report on choosing the conventions to go to...I'm not as unbiased, so I can make some comments. I've been to a

few media cons, and had my share of fun, because I knew what to expect that weekend. I know what will happen and what won't. I prefer the general SF con because my interests are diverse, but I do have problems with cons that openly say, "Stay away you (insert name of particular group(s) you don't like, or whose interest you can't understand)." I've tried to make AD ASTRA the general interest con I like, because the interests are varied. Our flyer had no humour on it, or art, but it was visually pleasing, and had some good news on it (our return to a favorite hotel), and it worked. We offered a decent cost for membership, in both Canadian and American currencies. We were in a Howard Johnson, but we've been in a Cara Inn (local chain, now a Days Inn), a Holiday Inn, and at a Regal hotel, the largest in the airport area where we hold the cons. One thing Dave didn't mention, but also important to the future of your con, is finding out how other cons are run in your region, so your con should (not must) parallel the other cons. Attending those other conventions will give you an idea of what people expect, and will add to the chances of your con being added to the regular con circuit.

Kathy Gallagher outlines some typical characters and problems with roommates. Yvonne and I haven't had many roommates, but those in the past have been accommodating at first, and demanding later (I forgot to tell you...I have to be back in Toronto by 4 PM! We're leaving NOW!). A couple of roomies some years ago borrowed both sets of keys from Yvonne and myself so they could do The Wild Thing in our room without us disturbing them. We fixed them by borrowing a third set from the desk. They were too embarrassed to simply ask for a little privacy. We usually give up our room for room parties, but it's ours afterwards for some privacy. That's what our room is for us, an island of quiet and peace in the midst of fannish chaos.

Jet Thomas makes some interesting points...it looks like there will be more specialization in cons as a result of Joe Phan's intolerance towards interests other than his own. Some specialized cons are fine, to allow a full weekend and concentrated dose of what you enjoy when more general interest cons either gloss over or ignore that interest completely. However, I hope those specialized cons don't become the norm. Keeping a degree of generality may be the secret to con survival...costs keep going up, and rather than charging insane amounts even at pre-registration, a wider income base will be needed to spread costs among more people. This may mean a multi-interest, or general con is the way to avoid financial ruin. Fortunately, there's

also more multi-interest fans than single-interest, so the general interest con should survive. Think of it this way: at the general interest con the neofan will gain exposure to your interest(s). He probably wouldn't find out about a specialized con. The general interest con is a look at the menu.

In #32: What Robert Sabella presents is a little disturbing. Back in the 50s and 60s, the known realm of scientific knowledge was much less than it is today, and that would have allowed for more extrapolation, wonder, and flights of imagination. Today, the known realm of science is much larger, and has expanded to such a degree that perhaps there isn't much room for extrapolation, or room for speculation without being told that what you're thinking of isn't science. We've gotten much pickier about what constitutes good science fiction as well, which has increased its quality, but made it harder to write. Maybe we feel we're in the future as outlined in those older novels. As much as I enjoy the novels of today, I still love stories with time travel, aliens, spaceships to unknown areas of space, robots, etc.

I agree with Mary Lu Lockhart in referring to her phrase, "tyranny of the minority". In Canada, there is the desire for all to have what they wish for, and such a desire is admirable, but demands for special treatment by small ethnic or religious groups infringe upon the freedoms of the majority of the population. What is publicized as a basic right by the aggrieved parties is usually perceived as a special privilege by other groups. All these groups say they wish equality with the rest of the public when actually they find themselves with special rights and funded projects. Those groups use what are the greatest weapons in PR today: guilt, shame, per pressure, and greatest of all, the use of the brands "racist" and "prejudiced."

"Uncle Mark" is an interesting story, but like many discussions, stories, TV and radio programmes, magazine articles, etc., on the topic of sexual and child abuses, one question is seldom asked: WHY do men sexually abuse women and children? How do we solve the problems of these men? There are many shelters, refuges, and the like, protecting women from abusive men, but who is looking into why men hurt their loved ones? Are there programmes to help these men? The victims of abuse are not just the abused; the abusers are victims, too. We are treating only one side of the problem. If we can help the abusers, there won't be any abused.

Ray Beam's KUBLA KHAN speech brings up a complaint that many fanzine fans have heard from me. I know many of the names in the list Ray gives us, but not all. I am a serious science fiction fan; how do I find out more about these names? There's got to be sources I can get access to to find out more. I hope there are more sources of fan history available on a regular basis from a fannish or com-

mercial press, rather than those sources that are available in limited-run fanzines or pamphlets. Would First Fandom, or N3F, or some fan organization care to produce a bibliography of fan history publications? I really would like to learn more.

[[ I too would like to learn more about the older fans, particularly those who have received the First Fandom Award, or the Big-Heart Award. I wonder if Ray, or other First Fans, would supply short biographies of these people; I'd be happy to publish them.]]

Joe Patrouch's essay matches up with Robert Sabella's, but I don't think that one can blame television and movies SF for watering down the genre, or killing it off, shoving it into the mainstream fiction category. SF classes have spread the word about the genre, more people have picked up the interest, including a number of creative people who, under the pressure to be creative, have tried to produce science fiction in other forms. I see the amount of SF and fantasy that comes pouring into bookstores through the pages of Locus and SF Chronicle, and I can't beleive the genre is disintegrating. If there is a feeling that the level of quality is going down, it's up to the editors of the major magazine and book publishers to be even tougher on writers, toss the tripe novels and short stories and publish less, but better, SF.

Bravo to David Palter for his comments on Lois McMaster Bujold and Star Trek. For better or worse, Trek did bring a lot of people into fandom, and changed both fandom and the genre...for the better, I feel.

Harry Warner hits the nail on the head, and it's a point I've tried to make for years. Because of the ever-rising cost of a paperback, it's no wonder that people with a new-found interest in SF go to the television first. We have to find that neofan and try to show him the joys we found in reading about robots and time-travel and rockets to Dimension X, instead of the sneers bookfen usually give him. We have to make the literary fandom we enjoy appealing to the new fan; we must welcome him to swell our own numbers. When I first found fandom, I

found more people with open arms than with hostile attitudes, thank Ghod. Can we not give new people the same reception? If indeed our ranks are dwindling, should we not try to bring in more people with the same open arms? Or do we just whine and bitch until we're just a small group of disparate old-pharts, grumping about the good old days?

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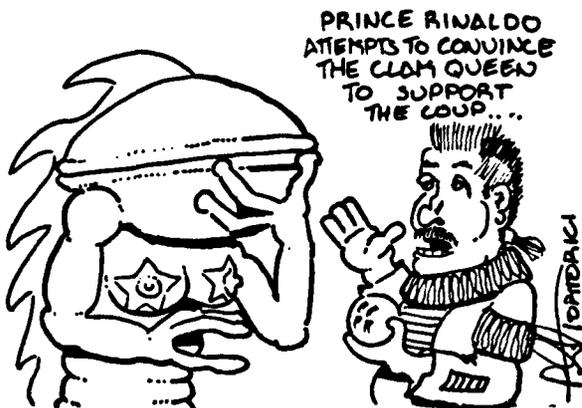
The travel sections of LL were particularly interesting, as I lived in Kenya for most of my teenage years and travelled in the countries 'round about.

Much of it was nostalgic, although from the sound it's more crowded now, the game is scarcer and things have generally gone down hill. (A friend of my family escaped from Amin's Uganda after being stuffed into a car trunk and driven out into the bundu to be shot. He jimied the lock.) Both your correspondents are, I think, a little too respectful of the local nomos in some aspects. Whether people sit on the floor or chairs, whether they use fork or fingers--these are merely customs. Genital mutilation, aka female "circumcision", is not; it's abomination. On the cultural relativism front, my favortie anecdote come from India during the Raj. A delegation of Brahims went to the British governor of the day, to complain that the abolition of suttee (widow burning) was a violation of their religion and customs. The Brit replied:

"The Honourable East India Company and Her Majesty deny to no man the religion of his choice and his ancestral customs. It is your custom to burn widows. It is our custom that when men burn a woman alive, we take those men, tie a rope around their necks, and hang them from a tree. You may follow your customs, and we shall follow ours."

A good deal more of this and the world would be better off. As the descendant of Border reivers (bandits), Celts (headhunters) and Norse (pirates who practiced human sacrifice), I think it accurate to say many "ancestral customs" are better "lost", quaint though they may be for passing tourists.

To continue the pleasant argument with Mr. Wolansky--great fun--the Draka threat does not unite Europe because they carefully refrain from making one. As he points out, they don't operate by internal subversion, unlike Communists; the fear of Communism in pre-WWII Europe was as much a fear of the enemy within as a fear of the USSR, or rather more. Throughout the 20s and 30s, the main areas of military tension are the Draka-Soviet and Draka-Japanese borders. As to Hilter leaving his flanks and rear secure...he launched Barbarossa in our universe with an actively-hostile Britain and an in-



creasingly non-neutral USA at his back, and with an open front in North Africa. He was counting on grabbing off Russia before Roosevelt could get the American public to support war, a very steep risk although not totally nuts, since Barbarossa came within a hair of winning. (A good many Germans wanted to first take another year to finish off the Brits and occupy the Middle East, well within Germany's capacity at that time.) The risk taken in my universe is comparable, I think. As to the actions of the Russians in Marching Through Georgia, let me make my argument a little clearer: Russia was already completely vanquished in 1942, and Germans were in the process of wiping out about 100 million Slavs. Everybody knew this. The choice was between being oppressed and being exterminated; this is why the Russian characters aid the Draka.

On the question of reproduction: yes, many upper classes have had the opportunity of unloading the burden of childcare on servants. Virtually everyone has done so. I think Taras has a romanticized notion of what childcare is like. Certainly there are delightful aspects; most of it is--often literally--shitwork. Dirty, chaotic, never-finished, draining, distracting shitwork. Mr. Wolansky should do a little demographic research; until the upheavals that accompanied the Industrial Revolution, the upper classes in the Western world consistently had larger families than the lower. Much larger. In the areas of the West European family pattern, roughly the lands west and north of a line between Trieste and Leningrad, the very poorest (about 20% of the total) didn't marry and didn't have children. Ordinary people, peasants and so forth, married late (mid to late 20s) and had small families, 3-4 completed pregnancies per family. The wealthy married young and had large numbers of children. This began to break down, starting in the late 17th and early 18th centuries in the most advanced countries, and for the period 1700-1850 marriage and birth rates were higher than they had ever been before or have been since. (This is a generalization but broadly true and represents the current historian's consensus.)

On the question of caste societies, until quite recently this was the predominant form of human organization. Aha, but why has this changed? Well, to a large degree, sheer accident. History is the realm of the contingent, like evolution. (Have you read It's a Wonderful Life, the book about the Burgess Shale fossil deposits?) To name only one incident, if Ogdai Khan hadn't died when he did, the armies of Subotai and Batu would pretty certainly have made it all the way to the Atlantic and Europe would have spent a century or so as a Mongol Khanate--in which case we might all have ended up as Muslims or Cathars. The Industrial Revolution was also a matter of low-probability accidents; if the Stuarts had succeeded in establishing a continental

-style despotism in England, it probably wouldn't have occurred at all, or in totally different form. It's all a matter of picking turning points, and distinguishing them from events which have so much momentum they're irresistible.

For example, the success of containment probably made the eventual collapse of communism certain. If it had failed--if the Soviets had somehow beaten the West to its knees at one time or another--a Stalinist world without an external enemy might well have lasted indefinitely. A nuclear war over Cuba in the early 60s would have produced still another world. Ditto a different outcome for WWII, and that depended on a few near-call decisions by individuals. On the other hand, shooting James Watt back in the 1760s wouldn't have made much difference; by then it was steam-engine time and somebody else would have done pretty much the same work.

Purge your mind of any idea that "historical forces" are moving the world to an inevitable "progressive" development. This is on the level with the tooth fairy.

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A belated comment on LL #31, specifically Mike Resnick's trip diary "Digging the Tombs", Mark Leeper's diary "Travels in Egypt, Kenya, & Tanzania", and Mike Resnick's comments/annotations on Mark's article. I found the individual articles interesting, and the combination even more so, but I thought Mike Resnick's comments said a lot more about Mike's prejudices than they did about travelling.

Mike apparently interpreted any of Mark Leeper's comments about uncomfortable or unpleasant circumstances as meaning that Mark was surprised, or complaining, about those circumstances. Surely one can comment that the truck one rode in was uncomfortable, or the food not to one's liking, as an observation without this necessarily meaning that, had one known in advance, one would have avoided the situation? In some cases, one does know in advance and chooses the situation anyway. Should not one report it? As Mark said in one of his replies, sometimes he chose to do things the uncomfortable or difficult way because he considered it "part of the experience."

I found Mike Resnick's constant harping on "doing your homework" annoying. I've been travelling in various parts of the world (Europe, North Africa, Central America, North America, Australia, New Zealand) for over 30 years, and I rarely "do my homework" beyond the rudimentary necessities (visas and permits, plane tickets, inoculations, and making any bookings that must be made months in advance). This approach is deliberate: I like to just go with the flow, see what happens--and thereby discover and experience lots of nifty stuff that I'd probably totally miss if I'd planned where I was going, staying, doing. Okay, sometimes I exper-

ience some un-nifty stuff that I don't enjoy, but that's part of the game. Someday I should write up some excerpts from my diary from 1967: travelling in a Volkswagen Kombi van through North Africa, listening to the shortwave radio reporting the lead-up to, progress of, and aftermath of the Seven Day War between Israel and Egypt, and deciding (in Libya, where Americans were ordered to leave the country) to go to Tunisia (to catch a car ferry to Italy) rather than turning back to Morocco. The sightseeing part of that trip was entirely impromptu... armed with several guide books, we found the suggestions of people met in campgrounds and youth hostels much more helpful, both in finding stuff to see and do, and in deciding which things not to bother with.

Mind you, I was a lot younger then. But in my travels around Australia I meet all sorts of interesting retired couples, doing much the same thing: get on the road and go, find a sign to somewhere they've never heard of but sounds interesting, or talk to someone at a campground, go to that suggested place, and find it much more to their liking than anything written up in a book or suggested by a travel agent.

|                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|
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I wanted to comment on a couple of things in LL #31. I thought the two articles on Cons ("How to Judge a Con by Its Cover" and "How to Survive a Con Weekend with Roommates") were pretty good. They were clear, and filled with useful information. And I discovered that I am a modified Shadow. These days I go to cons to spend time with the people I room with. The idea of sharing a room with someone I don't want to spend time with seems pretty odd to me. I wonder, however, how useful this information is to your general readership. It is possible that some of your readers have never been to a con. I was involved in fandom, and involved pretty heavily, before I went to one. But I think I am rather unusual in that way.

[[ Some may have found the articles interesting regardless of whether they go to cons. Still, there was other material in the zine that might have appealed to them.]]

I must come to the defense of my favorite city, Rochester, NY. I thought that Jet Thomas' comments about the food there was pretty unfair. In the first place, why would anyone go to a restaurant claiming "home cooking", which usually means middle American food in most places I have lived in, and expect to get ethnic [sic] food. You can get excellent ethnic food in Rochester, if you go to restaurants that specialize in ethnic food. There is a wonderful Hungarian restaurant on the Western side

of town, two exceptional Chinese restaurants where anyone can get a Chinese banquet without dragging their Chinese friends with them. As for regional cooking, which is what I believe Jet was looking for, you aren't going to find that in a restaurant. As in most parts of the country, you find regional cooking in people's homes and at the street fairs. The best place to locate real Western New York specialties is at a Pot Luck Barbeque.

Rochester's specialties include a love of salads and pickles, a white frankfurter called a "white hot," salt potatoes, Buffalo wings and corn. Go to a pot luck supper in Western New York and if you don't find at least a dozen bowls of potato and macaroni salad, no two alike, something is very wrong. You don't go anywhere without your potato salad bowl. Mine usually had shrimp and macaroni salad in it. This counts as regional cooking because the emphasis on multiple salads is so intense. I've never come across anything quite like it for quantity or quality.

The "white hot" is a white frankfurter also called a porker because it is supposed to be made with pork. It doesn't taste like any kind of German white sausage. It tastes like a frankfurter, but better than any frankfurter I've ever tasted. People from Rochester go into shock then they leave home and realize that they can't get white hots anywhere else. Not too different from one New Yorker who was terribly shocked when she realized that there are no Egg Creams in Boston, back in the middle 60s.

Anyone can make salty potatoes. You take 5 pounds of washed, tiny new potatoes (1 to 2 inches in diameter, at most). Put them into a pot of water to cover and add one pound of salt. Boil till tender. Not good for your high blood pressure, but wonderful.

Yes, Buffalo Wings are a form of regional cooking. I know you can get them where you live too, anywhere in the country. They are called Buffalo Wings because they originated in Buffalo. Buffalo and Rochester are about 70 miles apart, and are two of the three cities in Western New York. Not too surprisingly they share some of the same regional cooking. (The third "city" is Batavia, a tiny city, even by New York standards.)

You may think you have eaten corn, but you probably haven't unless you live on a farm. In Western New York, corn that had been off the stalk for more than an hour is considered animal feed. You get very spoiled and discover you can't eat stuff that you can buy in the super market after a few years in Rochester.

You won't find the real localisms of Rochester on your plate, however. The idea that someone went to Rochester and didn't go to World Wide News or the Village Green is enough to make this homesick woman cry. The idea that someone went to Rochester

and didn't attend a street fair is hard to believe, unless they were there in winter. The idea that anyone would go to Rochester in the winter is a bit hard to believe, however.

On to #32.

How to deal with conventions getting larger than the committee can handle and what to do about limiting the size so that the convention can be handled is always an ongoing topic in fandom. I was "away" for ten years and the topic hasn't changed a bit in that time, except for the names of the conventions and the kind of fandom involved.

No convention can be all things to all people. From the sounds of it, now that BOSKONE has moved permanently to Springfield, Boston fandom has hived off two more conventions. It is possible that those two new conventions were long overdue. There are only two conventions, that I am aware of in the Greater New York area, and that seems odd in an area with a population of 32 million. The same area seems to support 8 to 10 quilt shows every summer. (Quilt shows also cover a whole weekend, and the "membership" of the oldest one has to run in the low thousands.)

Personally, I find the elitism of some fans depressing. The fan who is convinced that only literary, hard SF should be catered to at conventions is limiting himself. I've never been interested in comic books, even as a kid, but one of the best panels I ever went to at a convention was a comic book panel where 500 people were having such a wonderful time that I stayed to enjoy it with them. The size of the group was impressive in its own right, although I've seen SF fans show up in equal numbers for Guest of Honor speeches, but the important thing is that they were having fun, and so did I.

I don't wear hall costumes, I don't even wear funny clothes to quilt shows, but the urge to do so is getting pretty strong in both cases. I understand that some hall costumes surprise the non-fans who share a hotel with a convention and that they upset some hotel management people, but most non-fans seem to take most hall costumes in stride. The ones that don't probably complain about everything. I don't think that they are that much of a problem. They certainly aren't any worse than the traditional fannish wardrobe of old t-shirt and dirty jeans. Weapons are another story. In some states, if it looks like a weapon, it is one, and there are laws against wearing them, or carrying them uncovered. There is such a law in New York, for example. Most conventions would be better off barring them except for the masquerade itself.

I would hate to see any section of fandom pushed out of general fandom the way Star Trek fandom was pushed out in the late 60s. Yes, they can create their own conventions, fanzines, fannish clubs, and fannish traditions as Star Trek fandom did. I think general fandom is poorer for the lack of these very

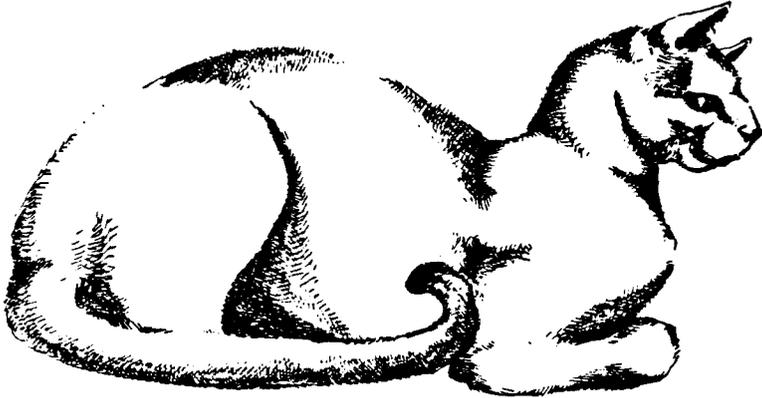
creative fans. It would surprise many of your readers to know just how many professional SF writers came out of the media fan-fiction zines. Most of them tend to take it for granted that everyone already knows where they came from and not make much of a fuss about it. I'm sure your surprise, surprises them.

\$19.00 for a fanzine surprises some of your readers. Too bad. It is a tradition of the media fandoms that the reader supports their habit by paying for the costs of printing the fanzine. The tradition in SF fandom is that the reader supports their habit by becoming part of the writing staff of the fanzine. This can't be done in the media fandoms where the zines are usually produced by a very small circle of fans who write stories (including novel-length stories), do artwork to go with the stories, and edit the zine. I can tell you sight-unseen, without knowing anything about it, that the \$19 zine is probably twice the length of a Lan's Lantern, possibly has even smaller print, has awesome art, an artistic layout and a superior print job. The story or stories are probably well written, on a professional or near professional level, by fans with a reputation for quality, and the artist(s) are well known within their fandom.

I understand that Martin Morse Wooster would rather see media fans developing their own visions. Many of them do after a stint in media fandom. The zines exist for two reasons. There are people who want (need) to write and who have stories to tell. There are people who want (need) to read those stories. Media fandom exists because there are people who want MORE Star Trek, Starsky and Hutch, Beauty and the Beast, etc., etc., and the professional media aren't giving it to them.

Maybe I remember a different "traditional" SF that Robert Sabella. I remember reading story after story in the collections that the libraries bought in the mid-50s that were scientific puzzle stories. The rare "sense of wonder" story set in the far future was just that, rare. Like him I read SF for the wild alien cultures, far away places and fantastic ideas, but I was much more likely to get those in the historical novels I read in that same period. I kept on reading SF anyway. If he wants more non-fantasy "sense of wonder" stories, I suggest he buy what is already out there, tell us how wonderful they are so we will buy them too, and thereby create a larger market for what he likes. I'm sure that the 17% of authors and editors who write and edit what he likes would love his support.

Think you for the Susan Shwartz articles. I always enjoy listening to her talk. I've seen her at a couple of conventions and at a local SF group when I was living in New Jersey. That was my first contact with her and I ran right out and bought her book. I could only find one. All of them are still



LAWRENCE FROM YOUTA

in print, I believe, but they are hard to find except at conventions.

I am also a Lawrence of Arabia buff, but not because of the movie. By the time that came out, I had already caught the bug badly. I wonder if the collection of letters that she mentions is the same one that I read in a volume that had been published in the 40s or 50s. The Rochester library throws nothing out. They must have the biggest basement of any library in the world. You wouldn't believe what comes out of it. Books on book reviewing in the 30s, biographies of T.E. Lawrence that were written in his lifetime and that no one has seen in 50 years, totally forgotten novels that were published in England in the 40s. I got very spoiled when I lived there.

I differ with David Shea's review of The Hunger. The movie is one of the most breathtakingly beautiful films I've ever seen, and it makes the evil beautiful. That is the "problem" in the film. Also, the youthfulness of Ramses in Anne Rice's The Mummy is clearly explained in the book. Might I suggest that he read the books before he reviews them.

I was touched, moved, wowed, and zonkered by Skel's critical piece, I can't say anything more.

Rose Raby  
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Unbridled, IN 47710

I recently stole a copy of your pitifully short zine from a sleeping old lady who reminded me very much of my grandmother, God rest her soul. I read it in a scant three weeks. Come now, you can do better. The General Nuisance Society puts out a fanzine, Itch, which I edit. It is a thousand pages long and contains all the material rejected by every other fanzine editor. This educational and highly informative zine is yours for only a thousand dollars. So don't hesitate! Send for your very own copy of our priceless fanzine! Order today and we'll send you information on how to order items we honestly cannot put a price tag on. Our dogs are trained to attack anyone wearing a uniform. If you buy a dog we suggest you chain it when the police come by. For a modest fee we will send you kudzu. Plant the kudzu in your worst enemy's yard and settle back to enjoy

your sweet revenge. But you must answer promptly to get all these benefits.

[[At present, I cannot put out a thousand-page fanzine; I can't get long enough staples to go through that many pages. So, 172 pages is as large as the zine gets...for now.]]

Joe Napolitano  
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I enjoyed the article by Dave D'Amassa. I remember the same plot and story about how the Leader tried to corrupt the Hulk. The plot obviously suffered from many defects. For example, the story seems to imply that the Leader knows all human knowledge. Yet surprisingly enough the Leader doesn't seem to know much about himself or that there's anything incorrect with his behavior. Or maybe the story was intentionally written that way? Anyway, it was an interesting article.

About big name writers: There's too much attention paid to writers like Asimov and Clarke in the fanzines. Yes, they did a lot in their day. But that was decades ago. What have they done recently that is original or superior? Usually, what they produce is a story that is basically a variation of the same themes they've used before and have been using for thirty or forty years. Another problem seems to revolve around the way they conduct their careers. Most writers, I would assume, need to conduct themselves in a business-like manner in order to save time and to be productive. But these guys have taken it a few steps further. They run it like a corporation where the only thing that matters is the bottom line. Well, I suppose doing it that way has put a lot of money into their pockets and boosted their egos. It's doubtful whether such behavior has helped the reader. But I suppose it's unimportant from the business point of view. Anyway, there is nothing wrong with money-making. Everybody has to earn a living. I also get the feeling that fandom is basically irrelevant to these bigshots. After all, they've got so many fans worldwide why worry about a few fanzine fans?

I was a little surprised to read Harry Warner's letter in which he states that Nixon is or will be regarded as one of the best Presidents of this century. I find that to be a fantastic statement when one considers that Nixon resigned over the Watergate affair. History shows that Nixon participated in an illegal cover-up. The government prosecutors had that evidence on tape. In view of these facts I would think history would judge Nixon as being the worst President in history instead of the best.

Harry Andruschak  
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We have Robert Sabella and his stew. As always, it points out the uselessness of most critic-

ism. Robert dismisses Ringworld with the comment that it is not gripping to the reader. (Or at least to one reader, himself.) So what can I say other than that I found it gripping??

In LL #31, Kathleen Gallagher's article on room-mates left out "The Snorer!", of which I am one of the worst examples in fandom. That is why I had an expensive operation last January. And it failed. It may or may not have done something for my sleep apnea problem, but everyone says I still snore, and very loudly too. I used to be "The Drunk" as well as The Snorer. And to this day I am still miffed that NOBODY in fandom said a thing to me about my being an alcoholic and needing help. I could have fannishly drank myself to death without anyone trying to help. Mind you, I did manage to get into treatment, and now have six (6!) years sobriety. But still....

[[It really has only been a recent country-wide concern about alcoholism, particularly in fandom. People might have noticed your problem, but were reluctant to approach you about it. Fans are much more vocal about such things now, including smoking. But your point is well-taken, SOMEONE should have mentioned it to you.]]

R Laurraine Tutihasi  
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Los Angeles, CA 90016-4910

In the second page of Mike Resnick's trip report in LL #31, he talks about buying

perfume essence and adding alcohol to it. My understanding was that alcohol is added to create eau de toilette, eau de cologne, and eau de parfum. I thought real perfume was made with oils and possibly a touch of alcohol. That's why perfume lasts longer than colognes.

Do I blame Mike Resnick or you for the grammatical gaff on page 9? I quote, "... they'd have done better if they'd have spent a couple hundred dollars on a script and score." (emphasis mine) The subjunctive, not the conditional, should be used there. And whom do I blame for the boo-boo on page 48? Mike Resnick says, "In point of fact, less than 100 whites were killed during the Emergency..."

On page 46, Mark Leeper refers to elephants' poor memories. I thought "elephants never forget."

I resent Mark Leeper's innuendo about Southern Californians (p. 63). I have to admit, however, the customs agents in this country leave a lot to be desired, though the worst one I ran into was Canadian. The agents in Britain are also nice.

On page 91 of your "Conreports and Ramblings 31," you talked about a study involving artificial sweeteners and fruit flies. Do you remember which artificial sweetener was studied?

[[ The grammatical gaffs in Mike Resnick's sections are all his; he sent me camera-ready reports and

comments. // I think Mark was making a comment about the commonly held idea that "elephants never forget;" they probably have as poor a memory as squirrels. // One of my students did the study with fruit flies and three kids of sweeteners: sugar, aspartame (Equal), and nutrasweet (Sweet & Low). Only those fed sugar survived beyond the third generation. ]]

Hal W. Hall  
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Jim Harris notes, "It would be nice to say: 'Well, first you could use the Index to Science Fiction Literature

..." and that "...there isn't a critical body of literature to refer to..." Dang! Here I've been laboring under a delusion these last 20 years!

In fact, there is a tremendous body of historical and critical literature out there--the catch is that few libraries (as Jim notes for Memphis State) have much of it on the shelves.

For Jim's benefit, and the rest of your readers, let me note the major source books for the historical and critical literature:

Hall, Halbert W. Science Fiction an Fantasy Book Review Index. 3 volumes: 1923-1973; 1974-1979; 1980-1984. All from Gale Research, Detroit. All out of print, but many libraries have them. Annual volumes from my home address continue the set. This set of books indexes just over 50,000 book reviews of science fiction, fantasy and related material.

Hall, Halbert W. Science Fiction an Fantasy Book Research Index, 1875-1985. Detroit: Gale Research, 1987. 1460 pages in 2 volumes. This is the real-life equivalent of the "Index to Science Fiction Literature" that Jim wants. This one indexes over 19,000 books, essays, and news reports on SF and fantasy. It is updated by annual volumes, with the latest material appearing in Charles Brown's annual bibliography. The annuals index (counting 1990 material not out yet) another 10,000 items.

The Year's Work in SF and Fantasy (working from memory on that title). Tom Claerson and Marshall Tymn's annual listing of critical literature, appearing variously in Extrapolation, as a pamphlet from Kent State University Press, and in Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts. The important part of this one was the annotations, which have (sadly) been dropped in recent years.

Regarding the "body of literature"; a quick addition of this material shows my own indexing projects have provided access to over 79,000 books, essays, articles, and book reviews. I'd say that is a tolerably large "body of literature." Incidentally,

I will virtually guarantee that number to be only a fraction of the available material.

Jeane Mealy  
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"Uncle Mark" --a story of one woman's attempt to face the effects of child abuse-- was quite startling. It's a very visceral trip. I hope that many readers find the strength to handle such a situation, regardless of how the victim is. (It's worth possible embarrassment.)

"The Horrors of Fandom--File 42: 'Living with an OE.'" Now how are we going to encourage people to get involved with fanzines and apas if you tell them the truth like this? (Ooops!)

Oh yes, I remember The People made-for-TV movie. I'd read Zenna Henderson's books with great pleasure, and awaited the movie with trepidation. I didn't want to see it screwed up. I haven't seen in quite a while, but Shea is right--it was done all right. I'd more strongly recommend that fans read the book than see the movie, but that's because no film can wholly impart the book's moods and feelings. They're gentle, imaginative, warm and both quixotic and fulfilling.

11 pages of fanzine reviews--brave person. Unfortunately, many got short shrift. Nine Innings is NOT just a fanzine about baseball! Andy Hooper keeps my interest by interspersing baseball stuff with personal anecdotes about all kinds of subjects. Thanks for the good words about Rune.

[[ I stand corrected. // You're welcome.]]

Boy, you just never know what to expect at cons. You go looking for a pool, dressed appropriately, and instead win the "Best Legs" award in the costume contest! Or maybe YOU expect such silliness by now. (Not that I'm implying you don't have great legs--I have no idea if you do or not. Excuse me while I extract this pedal extremity from my oral cavity....)

Michael Sinclair  
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Louisville, KY 40204

Reading the various letters I noticed that the continual us against them syndrome seems to be with us still. There are many mansions in our fannish heaven and I don't think ConComs can be too restrictive. After all, who is to judge what is acceptable? I do think that cons have a right to bill themselves as to the type of convention. I can't quite fathom why room parties should be banned. In the various bids I have helped I have never really had a major problem to contend with that I couldn't solve. Mind you, I couldn't arrest every boring fan that came into our Bid Parties. You know it is wrist-gnawing time when a fan talks at length about the width of the birth canal being the great evolutionary leveller. I did-

n't make this up. While on the campaign trail for NOLACON in 86, I was subjected to this sparkling party repartee for the better part of an hour. What's worse, the other fans at our WESTERCON party continued to ask her questions. We finally came up with the excuse that we had to make a supply run and temporarily shut down the party. Still, fans are like a family, and every family has a loose nut or two.

Say DA! to MOSCOW!

Dave Creek  
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Louisville, KY 40206

I must add my voice to Ray Beam's calling for a better forum to present the First Fandom award. For me the SF field is about inclusion, not exclusion. It holds that sentient life is to be respected, no matter its color, species--or age. Without these pioneers, we wouldn't have had the marvelous foundation of SF concepts that younger writers are still building upon!

Let's show that the literature of the future realizes the importance of its own past--let's give First Fandom a home!

Robert Bloch  
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Los Angeles, CA 90046

My excuse this time is the local weather, which over the weekend sent the temperature up to a shattering 101 degrees. And this six full weeks before the start of summer!

While writing is difficult, I could and did read a sizeable portion of the 172 page cornucopia, finding surprises all along the way, as usual. Your list of distinguished contributors and commentators gives testimony to what an outstanding job you've done--and somehow keep on doing. But as your published statistics show, SF/Fantasy-horror, or whatever you may call it, is just too big for its britches--or even a zine like yours!

Pat Sims  
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Cincinnati, OH 45246

I enjoyed Susan Schwartz's "My Life with Lawrence of Arabia" as I just recently finished reading Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Now I have to read A Prince of Disorder.

I also wanted to let you know that we tried your idea of grilling extra hamburgers, freezing them, then microwaving, and you're right. They taste just like freshly grilled burgers!

Lisa Thomas  
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Henderson, KY 42420

Robert Sabella asks for comments on his editorial. I can't remember why I first started reading science fiction, except that I was corrupted by the works of someone called Heinlein. I was a much better reader than average but I was also small for my age and

was thus condemned to the children's section until I was ten.

I suspect that science fiction has not truly been weakened. How much traditional science fiction was really published during the ghetto years? Was it more than today's percentage? I submit that traditional science fiction still attracts those readers with a real sense of wonder. Robert Forward's books certainly fit into category 2. Lois McMaster Bujold seems to be doing quite well with her Vorkosigan books, which can only be classified as traditional space opera. And let us not forget Gordon Dickson, David Drake and Fred Saberhagen.

I found Susan Shwartz's article on strong female characters very interesting. So often strong female characters tend to be grown-up tomboys out to show up the men. Is this because in today's society a successful woman cannot afford a softer side? This is slowly changing. More and more you see men carrying tiny infants in stores, if only because their wives had to work late. But the basic attitudes will change very slowly.

As regards Lockhart's article, most of these fundamentalists come from a very traditional society. Such societies are never given to welcoming new ideas. They don't want their comfortable little world upset by new ways of looking at things.

John Thiel  
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Impressive this issue were Colleen Doran's consistently fine drawings, Wayne Ermatinger's R. R. Phillips-like

cut, the presence of fiction, and Sabella's column. "Future Sex" was a good idea for an article, too--my commendations to Mr. Shea for a breakthrough. I was very pleased, also, to read Ray Beam's speech.

R'ykandar Korra'ti  
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I just want to mention a couple of things. Low Orbit is NOT going semi-prozine. You think I'd

want to do that to myself? I'm barely able to get it out on a regular basis now! If I had to really start paying attention--ag! :-)(Nightmares of middle management dance through my head....) Thanks for the kind comments, though. I wonder where this rumor started? It's been following me around for almost the past year. I am trying to get the silly thing to pay for itself, but that's not the same thing; that's just me being your average poverty-stricken fan.

Something I am trying to publicize a bit: Low Orbit will be running an artist's gallery in an upcoming issue. Anyone interested in submitting artwork should send an original unpublished work along with a short bio which should include previous publications. B&W and greyscale works are eligible; color is not.

Jessica Amanda Salmonson  
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David Shea's Essay shows small awareness of the current state of studies in sexuality, and he appears to be shooting exclusively from the hip. He knocks off a rather peculiar theory that child abusers and other sex offenders "no doubt" stem from "our more open society," wherein each person is "responsible for arranging his or her own sexual outlets," and arranges even such destructive encounters. That most sex offenders are male is not explained by his "doubtless" explanation. That child sexual abuse is particularly common in closed, restrictive, religious communities is not addressed either.

There is no indication that child sexual abuse, or rape of adult women, has increased in incidence, but there is a greater awareness of the problems. About 25% of all girls in the USA are sexually abused by age 17, usually by a male in their immediate family (in a rap-group for which I was co-facilitator, the percentage was higher: 100% had been molested by brothers, uncles, or fathers; but broader studies show "only" one in four). Perhaps 10% of boys experience the same incest, again most commonly from a male family member, but this area is still very taboo and research is restricted. In the long run we may discover that child sexual abuse is not so greatly focused on girls, though it presently appears to be the nature of a sexist society to more greatly endanger its girls.

There is no earlier data for comparisons, so whether child sexual abuse is more or less common today cannot be known for a fact; but it is likely that because awareness is higher, there are now more opportunities for intervention, hence more revealed cases. Whatever it is in our society that makes men especially prone to molesting children and women, it cannot be tied to openness in society. Greater openness actually makes the position of women and children a little stronger.

In some societies, sexuality is very free and easy, and rape does not exist, as among the Kalahari people. In societies that do not have rape, there is also a lack of prostitution. In other societies pederasty was so institutionalized (as among the Athenians and Samurai) that issues of child molestation have to be evaluated quite differently. There is a tendency in the gay male press to romanticize ancient pederstic societies, but I would want more data on the lower classes, and one the conditions and safety of daughters and women, before I made a final judgement; unfortunately the historical documents deal mainly with privileged males, and from their point of view. While they believed the bugged boys benefitted, I personally have my doubts, and their silence as regards their daughters does not reassure me either.

When it comes to sexuality, nothing is quite as certain as Shea's off-hand supposings; but it does seem clear that sexuality is in great part cultural rather than instinctual. In our culture the position of women and children, relative to men, is very precarious. Rape and abuse are but two of the forms of terror a male-dominated society heaps on children and women.

As for whether or not our "natural" state is bisexual, I suspect this is the case, and differing cultures have merely bent this natural state to one side or the other. Current thinking among gay scholars--and I don't necessarily agree, but it is gaining acceptance--is that homosexuality as we know it today has not always existed, and the same-sex relationships of various Caesars, or the Dorians, or whomever, are never exactly analogous to today. Similarly, heterosexuality as we know it today is not typical of human sexuality throughout the ages. The Athenians, notorious for their man-boy love affairs, were generally married and had children, and also patronized heterae for social, learning and sexual endeavors. While the Athenian male's ideal of romantic love was predominantly pederastic and homosexual, he was apt to be only slightly less promiscuous with women.

Arabic women today rarely show jealousy toward other women, but worry a great deal about their husbands' male friendships. The Koran has very little in it that condemns homosexuality, but treats harshly anyone who has a heterosexual affair outside of marriage. Sex is considered necessary to good health, hence the prohibition against unsanctified heterosexual liaisons renders homosexuality medicinally important to good health in good faith. Such realities have shocked up-tight European travelers to the mideast for at least two centuries.

As Bernard Sargent has suggested in his scholarly texts, various forms of deviant behavior were probably known in the ancient world as no different from the variety and forms seen today. It is the central "normal" form of sexuality that keeps shifting! What is "normal" sexuality is a cultural, not a biological, concern. My own feeling is that if biology can still be considered the chief player in sexual orientation, the way sexuality changes from one culture to the next is comprehensible only if we are most of us at heart bisexual animals, and therefore able to conform to whatever society places before us as right and proper. A few will not conform, and these are the ones tagged deviant. Some cultures make their deviants shamans and honor them; others stone or burn them. Our own society schizophrenically honors the deviant population as artists and actors, but despises them as relatives and neighbors.

What we can speculate science-fictionally is that "normal" sexuality will continue in the future to change dramatically; what is "normal" today will

not be normal in the future, as history has shown us to be the case. We can also speculate that a freer culture--one that imposes the fewest restrictions--would have bisexuality as its norm. There is no rational or scientific basis for Shea's sentiment "by a fairly early age most would settle into an overwhelming heterosexual lifestyle" unless we totally discount the historical lessons of Sparta, Athens, and Edo where quite the opposite was true. There is a far greater rational basis for fantasy's and science fiction's recurring assertion that bisexuality is normal and that "deviance" includes radical homosexuality and radical heterosexuality.

|                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
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|----------------------------------------------------------------------|

Catherine and I last Sunday (May 6) saw our first movie in a year in Texas: Mountains of the Moon. It

was excellent; but in two scenes Richard Burton and his fiancée, Isobel Arundel, are shown thrashing around naked on a bed and obviously preparing to Go To It. I don't for a minute believe that Burton and Isobel ever fucked before they were married. While Burton might have jumped at the chance, Isobel was not only a fervently devout Catholic, always hoping to save Burton from the flames of Hell by converting him, but also a Victorian prude, who burned Burton's papers after his death because of their indelicacies.

I suppose the script writer put in those scenes of fornication on the theory that most of today's moviegoers simply wouldn't believe that a loving couple would go for years without a single fuck, merely because the laws, customs, and religious taboos of the time forbade them to. In Judaism and Christianity, fornication and adultery are major sins, for which you can roast. There was also a large element of social conformity; "nice people" just didn't do those things. I don't say that things were either better or worse; but they were different.

Which brings us to Shea on the "perfect, sexually liberated society." Early in this century, some high-minded intellectuals, notably Bertrand Russell and H.G. Wells, proclaimed that if only we had unlimited free fucking on demand for everybody, with whomever they fancied, half the world's ills would be cured and we should all be healthy, wealthy, and wise. Well, since the sexual revolution beginning in the 1950s with the Pill, we seem to have come pretty close to that. But the world's ills flourish as lushly as ever, and we are certainly not all healthy, wealthy, and wise.

The trouble with prophets like Wells and Russell is that they like to elevate their personal preferences into divine or universal laws. Muhammad liked women, but wine made him sick; so he allowed each Muslim four wives and as many concubines as he could corral, but he tabooed wine. With Jesus it

seems to have been the other way around. Wells and Russell were enthusiastic fornicators, so they preached universal fornication.

We are pushed into various lines of conduct by built-in drives evolved during millions of years of theratic (hunting-gathering band) existence, to assure the survival of the band. These drives are not so rigidly compelling as, say, a spider's web-spinning instinct. But they are persuasive, and most find it easier and more comfortable to go along with them. They include drives to seek a mate and to discourage that mate from having sex with others, because the chances are thus increased that the offspring will carry the mate-seeker's genes and therefore the same drives as his. So abolishing marital jealousy is likely to prove as hard as celibate priesthoods find it to suppress normal sexual drives.

The catch--the invisible hook--in these "perfect sexually liberated societies" is that the more fornication, the more adultery (see Kinsey); the more adultery, the more divorce (see Brothers); the more divorce, the more broken families; the more broken families, the more children with "broken-family syndrome" and hence the greater risk of school failure, delinquency, addiction, and crime. When the problem of young criminals becomes grave enough (as many think it already has in the US) the population may conclude that at least some of those Biblical sexual taboos made sense after all, even if you don't believe that a white-bearded Yahveh handed tablets bearing them to Moses on Sinai.

Since I am practically as old as Moses would be had he survived, I can assure you that, less than a century ago, millions of normal people passed their entire lives without committing either fornication or adultery. If they missed some of the fun, they also missed some of the complications that those pastimes entail.

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Irwin Hirsh is quite right about the quality of Serious Science; I bought a copy at CON-

SPIRACY, and it was very funny, although not to the level of the two volumes of BoSh talks which Rob Jackson published in the late 1970s. David Palter somehow assumes that writers become more important as their sales increase; I'd be interested to know why he therefore apparently feels that Piers Anthony and Terry Brooks should have a lock on the Nebula award. Merit does not necessarily depend on the tastes of a majority. Robert Coulson is wrong about Anne McCaffrey; she wasn't "first published" by DelRey, but by Ballantine, DelRey's predecessor. The two publishers are so different that Piers Anthony, in Bio of an Ogre, praises Lester del Rey to the skies, but has many misgivings about the paperback house which bought his first few books, an or-

ganization Anthony only calls "PUBLISHER" to skirt the libel laws but which is almost certainly Ballantine. (And can Coulson name any other Robert Moore Williams story besides "Robot's Return" which will be read in 20 years? I can't imagine future Clarion Graduates arming themselves with copies of The Day They H-Bombed Los Angeles as a sample of fine writing which they can learn from.)

I don't understand why Ray Beam is complaining about NOLACON's treatment of First Fandom. The NOLACON committee allowed First Fandom to give themselves five prizes; with the extensive speeches of the awardwinners, this took nearly 45 minutes. Given that NOLACON opened the doors nearly an hour late, the windy speeches of the First fans did not make them an appealing organization to many people. In my opinion, Worldcon committees should treat First Fandom exactly the same way they treat other non-Hugo prizes; either allow everyone to give their prizes at the Hugo ceremony or ban all the non-Hugos. Given the increasing number of awards, having a separate ceremony for all non-Hugos (including the First Fandom Award) is a good idea.

Evelyn Leeper's review of Peter Israel's I'll Cry When I Kill You was fine, except that the SF author lampooned in the book is not Asimov, but Robert Heinlein. Israel was Heinlein's publisher and editor for four or five books and apparently found Heinlein very irritating; the novel is, apparently, Israel's revenge on this author.

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Concerning Shwartz's reference to Podkayne, let me say that Podkayne of Mars was not an exception to Heinlein's supermen heroes, some of whom had women almost worthy of them. Heinlein thoroughly identified with his superheroes, so they couldn't be women, and when he finally did produce superfemales, they were not, strictly speaking, women.

In Podkayne of Mars, the superperson was her little brother. She was just his older sister.

And I'll put in an encouraging word to Skel. He weeps that, not having gone to college, he doesn't have the English Lit degree he fantasizes other fannish writers possessing. Well, cheer up, pal, I have a Master's degree and I never took college English either.

Neither did my brother.

In 1932 the University of Nebraska thought they would hire me to help their professor teach anthropology. Then they wrote me in a panic because graduation from U. of Nebraska required college English and I'd claim to have graduated from U. of California and my transcript said I had, but didn't mention any English.

I wrote back that U.C. didn't require it from those who passed a qualifying exam in the subject. [My brother and I even then were famous for not

doing what was expected of us.] So since they really didn't have any other prospect for their job, they didn't insist.

I may mention that Berkeley later amended that little oversight. Now if you take the qualifying exam you are ~~allowed to~~ required to take college level English. If you fail, you have to take a qualifying course and then take college English.

I have a grandson who (unlike me) astounds everyone with the virtuosity of his writing and the power of his use of words. He doesn't have an English Lit degree either.

He's 15.

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| James W. Harris<br>PO Box 241564<br>Memphis, TN 38124 | When I first started getting your zine it came out rather frequently. It had a very stable group of people writing for it, and because of its informal nature, it almost felt like an apa. Now, because LL comes out so infrequently, it's lost the sense of groupness it had. Many of the same people are still writing for you, it's just that I don't read their stuff often enough to feel that I'm in touch with them. (Though I don't know these people personally.) |
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Your large issues offer a lot to read, but smaller, more frequent ones, would improve the "feel" of your magazine.

[[ I agree with you that the "feel" has declined, and am hoping to do something about that in the near future. As for smaller issues, that time is coming very soon.]]

Robert Sabella: I tend to think one reason for the steady reduction of traditional SF is because of the space program. SF, especially that written in the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s and early 60s used our planetary system for the settings of many stories. We didn't know much about the planets, and I don't think the writers cared. They needed exotic settings for adventure stories. Because NASA has filled in a lot of details on these locations, it's hard to set stories there. If the writers aren't up on the details their story becomes stupid, rather than exotic.

Back in those early decades, SF was closely related to dreamers who believed in exploring space. Now the link is less definite. SF is a big entertainment industry. Many SF readers are not interested in science or space exploration, but are looking for escapism.

I really miss good extrapolative SF. Even those stories still set in space are usually such distant places as to make them pure fantasy. SF used to claim that it's readers were those people thinking about the future. I'm not so sure about that any more.

Regarding my list: I had also considered re-

stricting it by making the requirements to be on more polls, but I considered sixty-nine a reasonable number. Your list of nine will probably get the fewest arguments. Many on the sixty-nine list will fall out of favor, but then it's more likely to have more of everybody's favorites.

Martin Morse Wooster: I think we will have to wait and see what happens to Doc Smith's books. They are quaint now, but then so are Jules Verne's.

Of course, your objections bring up one of the questions I posed: is a book a classic because of its innate nature, or because people continue to read it? I'm not qualified to answer definitively.

My idea about a youth classics list was suggested because young people like the books for different reasons than those used to select books when they get older. I was thinking young readers see something different in books than what adults do. Maybe Piers Anthony's books will appeal to young people, and he will become a young person's classic writer? Since I see books with adult's eyes, I no longer would be able to say what young people valued.

Harry Warner, Jr.: I agree completely about the corruption of words (although it might be more precise to say words are recycled). "Classic" has been thoroughly corrupted. I would guess most literary people would consider my use of the word in relation to SF as a corruption. The word "Classic" as used with books has really come to mean a marketing category. Visit new and used bookstores and see what they put in their classic section. My personal opinion is: "classics" are books that survive. Intrinsic merit has little to do with it. Homer's stories have survived, Shakespeare's plays have survived, Dickens's novels have survived. There's no measuring stick in this universe that I know of that could apply a qualitative evaluation to them. Just literary guys and gals justifying their feelings.

Maybe there were plenty of writers around who were contemporaries of Homer, and who were better loved and read, but their works didn't survive.

Anthony D. Blokzyl: The "\*" items on the Classics of SF list referred to Nebula and Hugo Winners. There was a legend that went with the list that got lost in publication.

[[ The legend did not appear either on the hard copy or disk that Jim had sent. I'm glad to get this cleared up too. ]]

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| Mike Glicksohn<br>508 Windermere Avenue<br>Toronto, Ontario<br>CANADA M6S 3L6 | On #31: You were probably smart to start the special travel issue with Mike Resnick's piece because it's the best of all the travel writing in the issue. It does tend to make the pieces that follow it look a little poor by compar- |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

ison but had you kept it to the end (as most magazine constructions would indicate is a good idea), I'm not sure everyone would have gotten around to reading it. Mark Leeper's piece is more than overwhelming, after all.

I liked the idea of Mike annotating the Leeper log (and Mark and Evelyn annotating Mike's annotations) but I'm sure there must have been a better way of setting up the layout for all those preliminary explanations. The differences in approach between the way Mike thinks about a trip to Africa and the way Mark thought about it was quite instructive. I'm not sure Mike understands that not everyone has his income and access to special treatment because of who he is so there's a certain arrogance in some of the things he takes the Leepers to task for doing and on several occasions I found myself agreeing with Mark for wanting to do things in less than five star fashion, but the combination of viewpoints is certainly intriguing. (To be honest with you, the main impression I've come away with after all these thousands of words about being a tourist in Africa is that I don't ever want to be a tourist in Africa! It's only natural in describing any travel experience that the negative aspects of the trip are going to take on more apparent importance than the things that made the experience worthwhile but after reading about what happened to the Leepers and the Resnicks I think I'll stick to cheaper and less hassle-filled areas of the globe.)

As to the log itself, I'm a bit ambivalent about it. It would appear that Mark never intended for it to be published and so wrote it in an extremely detailed and quite sloppy manner, intending it for a personal memory guide in later years.

The one personal comment I'd make to Ben is that he shouldn't expect foreigners to react as if they had his view of things. Islamic women aren't likely to see themselves as a liberated North American (male or female) sees them. What appals Ben is likely accepted quietly simply because the women have no other standards to judge things by. I'm sure that sorry state of affairs must be changing but obviously it's not changing as fast as Ben thinks it should.

On #32: Overall it seems to me that the general appearance of your fanzine has improved of late. A far greater percentage of your interior art is of a higher quality nowadays. Ranson, Bruton and Stein are often outstanding and many other pieces are eminently printable.

I toyed with the idea of sending you a 172 word loc in exchange for your 172 page fanzine but I figured that's too esoteric even for me. I did once send a thirteen sentence loc, each sentence of which contained thirteen words, such that the first letters of the sentences spelled out ISSUE THIRTEEN to the 13th issue of a fanzine but the nebbish fan-

ed (whose name shall not be revealed by me) didn't even notice any of it, so I decided to stop being too clever for my own good.

Reading Mary Lu's article about the tribulations of teaching in certain fundamentalist areas of the US made me very glad that I teach (a) in Canada and (b) mathematics. To the best of my knowledge not even the most devout Christians find the quadratic formula a threat to their beliefs so I'm pretty much safe from the sort of interference that occasionally threatens those who teach such dangerous subjects as literature. Occasionally our texts get yanked because they show evidence of racial or gender bias but I'm in favor of that so it's never a problem.

Wendy's essay of the horrors of living with an OE was a delightfully droll piece of writing. It doesn't take science fictional powers of prediction to see that the new professional career she's turned her talents to should quickly take off. I hope it won't completely eliminate her fan-writing, though, or turn her fanwriting focus to more serious constructive topics such as "The Care and Feeding of the Neo Pro" because fanzines in general and LL in particular don't/doesn't get enough of this sort of excellently handled whimsy.

I appreciate having David Shea explain to me that I have limited education and less imagination (I thoroughly enjoyed Nighteyes) but I can't imagine what all those long words mean. He shouldn't use such big words if he isn't going to tell us what they mean. It isn't as if anyone would ever take the time to create a book with word meanings in it so those of us with limited education and less imagination (huh?) could follow what geniuses like David are trying to tell us. At least I can't imagine it...

I loved Skel's article because once again it echoes my own thoughts so amazingly closely. I too read mostly for entertainment and I rarely venture into critical arguments because I feel I lack the necessary background and the type of intellect required for those sorts of discussions. (The one thing I disagree with Paul on is the number of fans with literary as opposed to scientific backgrounds: I'd venture to think a majority of fans still have more formal training in the maths and sciences than in languages and literature. I certainly do.) Despite all that, a very long time ago I did attempt a serious critical essay on a controversial SF novel and it garnered a surprising amount of positive comment. Paul demonstrates that he too has the ability to work in an area that is not traditionally associated with him and not look like a complete wanker. At least, I think he did a creditably job but I have limited education and even less imagination so I may be completely offbase on this.

The movie Alien Nation didn't impress me very much but I've come to really enjoy the television

series. I like the underlying humor behind much of what goes on (it certainly makes the allegory a little easier to follow) and I thought the whole sequence with George giving birth to the alien infant was exceptional.

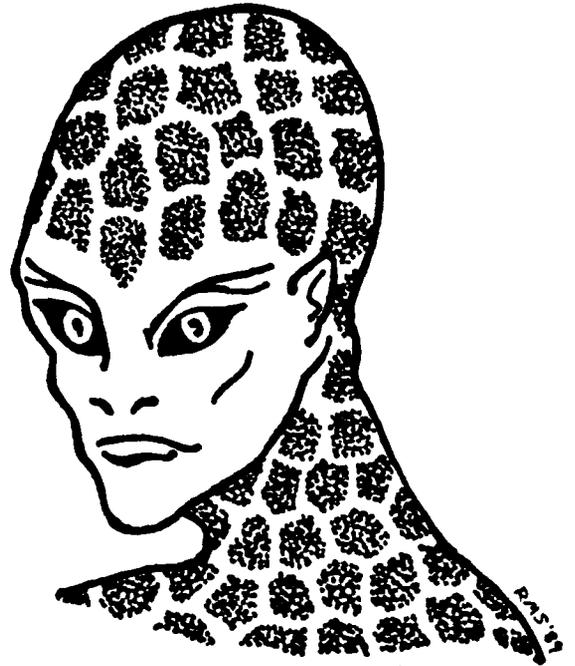
Tera Mitchel's thoughts on the nature of rumors certainly cover a wider spectrum of fannish activity that the filk scene (although that particular area may have suffered more from the very human tendency to believe the absolute worst of people no matter how stupid it may sound than other fannish areas of late) so I'm glad she wrote what she did. If more of us questioned outrageous sounding statements and established that they were indeed outrageous then a lot of tension and animosity might well pass out of the fannish scene.

The one section I always read in LL is your "Ramblings." I don't know how much of it is intended in the way I often intend the personal sections of Xenium, namely as memory stirrers for future versions of myself, but it's always fun to see what you've been up to, to compare what you did at an event we were both at with what I did there and to ponder the differences between how I would have reacted under a given set of circumstances and how you reacted. Consider all the con reports and trip reports and school reports read and enjoyed: your life isn't mine by a parsec or twelve (and I know a few people who are probably extremely happy about that!) but it evidently suits you and I like reading about it.

You mention being willing to set up the dorm schedules because you can select a few weekends for yourself. That reminds me of how I used to volunteer years ago (BC, i.e., Before Computers) to hand timetable the senior students' option selections. It was one of the more time-consuming of the year-end tasks (of which every teacher had to pick one) but it had the added advantage of ensuring that my senior home form for the next year would contain a large number of the prettiest female students in the school. As with you, no one else seemed to understand that perk!

Your final tribute to Bill Temple was moving, beautiful, and so very apt. Thank you.

Terry Jeeves should have invented the supermagnet (or at least patented it so he could reap royalties when someone else did the work) and I should have patented the idea of a magazine about what was going on in soap operas. In 1975, when such things didn't exist, a young lady I was enamoured of refused to leave her access to a TV set until her favorite soap had aired. I jocularly suggested there ought to be a magazine summarizing the soaps so that people wouldn't be tied so tightly into strict TV schedules. Not too long after that the first such publication appeared and I'm sure the publisher has since made millions. Probably more than the inventor of supermagnets. We get too soon old and



too late smart!

While I'd never pay the big bucks they charge for "Tour of the Universe" (in fact, the only time I've ever been on the ride was when it was free at the book launching for Nighteyes--for those of us with limited education and even less imagination, of course) it always amuses me that fans were involved in establishing that particular tourist attraction. Well, fan/pros. They brought Malcolm Edwards and Rob Holdstock over from England to work on the script and continuity for the ride and I still think of both of them as fans, if only because I met them in that particular context before they became pros.

A despite the enormous column of letters remaining I'm now totally burned out on Lancing LL. (Odd: 19 years of teaching and I recently turned down Long Term Disability Insurance because I didn't think I'd ever need it despite the indications that "burnout" would qualify for LTD. And yet a mere three pages into a lot on LL #32 and I find myself wanting to rush screaming into the darkness, preferably in the direction of a bottle of 12 year old single malt.) I still don't know how you do it but I suspect it has a great deal to do with something known as "The Cranbrook Husbands"!

Debra Wright  
PO Box 432  
Chicago, IL 60690

Dear Mr. Beam:

We read your article about the First Fandom Hall of Fame Award in Lan's Lantern #32, and we agree with CHICON V that this is not the way in which First Fandom should be treated.

While we understand that CHICON V will insure that the Hall of Fame Award we presented as part of the 1991 Hugo Ceremonies in Chicago, we did note that in your article you mentioned that First Fan-

dom is considering moving its award from the Worldcon to a regional.

We feel that the award is most properly presented at the Worldcon and would prefer that it stay there. However, in light of the recent news that CONFICTION has denied your request to present the award as part of the 1990 Hugo Ceremonies (this relayed to us by Marie Bartlett-Sloan), we recognize that this move might be necessary, and even beneficial. We would therefore like you to be advised that should First Fandom decide to move the award presentation to a regional, the board of directors of ISFiC, the parent body of WINDYCON, unanimously extends an invitation to First Fandom to consider WINDYCON for the award's new home.

WINDYCON offers a centralized location (Chicago), a large attendance (circa 2000), and already has a number of First Fandom members attending each year. If we worked out such an agreement, the award would be given during the ceremonies that include out Guest of Honor speeches and the presentation of the annual ISFiC Novice Writers Contest awards.

At any point that you wish to explore the possibility of such a move, please feel free to contact us at the above address.

Sincerely,  
Debra Wright  
President, ISFiC, Inc.

[[ By the end of July, CONFICTION had relented and the First Fandom Hall of Fame awards were presented during the Hugo Award ceremonies. The award presentation is secure for 1991, but I have heard nothing about future Worldcons. ]]

Harry Warner, Jr.  
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Hagerstown, MD 21470

Robert Sabella's guest editorial proves it isn't just coincidence that I don't read much science fiction

any more. My experience in starting to read novels and stopping seems to show that the percentage of non-science fiction masking as science fiction is just as high in the longer lengths of fiction as it is in the short stories that were tabulated here. I'm sure I don't know why stories about the present disguised as the near future and "alternate universe" and altered timeline stories have come to dominate the field. But when the eternal verities are known and published at a price everyone can afford, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that the culprit is the need for so much fiction that can be labeled science fiction and the lack of authors with enough imagination and background in science; too many of today's authors are just filling up the otherwise empty spaces in the science fiction section of paperback racks with stories based on a knowledge of current newspapers or a few history books or imitations of popular novels.

David Shea's topic is close to my suspicion that a lot of young people who aren't basically homosexually oriented are into that form of sex because it's currently the "in thing" to do and because it goes against traditional standards. The enormous increase in the percentage of people who are into homosexuality can hardly be blamed on recent nuclear testing or breathing asbestos particles. I think it's considered fashionable and those who have very slight or no basic drive in that direction are not as happy with their sex life as they might otherwise be. I'm quite aware that there have always been individuals with genuine homosexual desires and I'm not talking about them.

"Unlce Mark" is the best reason I've seen in a long time for believing fanzines should approach with great caution any fiction written by pros which they can't get published professionally. If a story didn't sell despite the fact that it has a well-known byline at its top, it's probably quite bad, like this story. Fiction submitted to fanzines by amateurs has a greater chance of being worth reading because the editors may not give it proper respect due to the unknown writer or because it's just plain different.

There's one thing about Robert Sabella's "Science Fiction Stew" that creates difficulties for me. A stew or any other item on a menu more complicated than celery stalks defies the consumer's efforts to figure out what's in it and how it was put together. Maybe the same thing is true of science fiction stories, which we should enjoy or dislike from the unified, overall impression they make on us, instead of attempting to separate their components and assign values to each aspect. Many of the stories I value the highest are lamentably weak in some of the basic factors used in these analyses. Only one character sticks in memory from all the Jules Verne novels, H.G. Wells' science fiction is hardly better in the creation of vivid characters but I don't think this particular circumstance makes them inferior to the episodes in the current Star Trek series whose Wesley has attracted so much attention as a character.

I'm a member of First Fandom but haven't been active in it. I feel its Hall of Fame award should go to a smaller convention, one that attracts the kind of people who have some interest in such an honor: the MIDWESTCON, from all I hear, would be suitable since it makes no effort to lure the media, costume, games and weapons fans, and doesn't have enough of a program to crowd out the Hall of Fame ceremonies in favor of other stuff.

Wendy Council's little narrative touches a sore spot with me. I've done almost everything else in fandom but I've never been the official editor of an apa and sometimes I fear that's how I'll be remembered when I'm gone, the life-long fan who was too lazy to do his share of the work. I've tried to

justify this situation by the fact that there have not been any active fanzine fans living in or near Hagerstown who could step in and take over if I were incapacitated or dropped dead just before a mailing deadline.

David Gorecki woke up long-slumbering memories about 1939. I can recall with total clarity my first glimpses of two of the prozines born that year. I found the first issue of Fantastic Adventures at the newsstand of the Western Maryland Railway's passenger station, and marveled at the resurrection of the large-format prozine which had prevailed when I first discovered Amazing and Wonder six years earlier. I saw Damous Fantastic Mysteries on a shelf in the show window of the Hagerstown News Agency and felt a tingling as if I had stumbled over a loose 110-volt power line at the information on the cover about the stories inside, fabled old science and fantasy fiction I'd heard about over the years and feared I would never be able to read.

I read every one of the reviews and still remember most of the information and opinions in them, months later. It was encouraging to find another Kim Darby admirer in fandom; I've been hoping The People might rerun some day on a channel carried by the local cable, since it was syndicated after its original network showing. You might be wise to run Skel's reviews as a separate article elsewhere in the fanzine; they're so brilliantly written, so humorous and so distinctive that the reviews following them seem more stodgy than they really are for the next twenty pages of so until the memory of Skel's prose grows a bit dim.

The statement that someone has launched a series which will run to more than thirty volumes causes me to believe that someone should set up a financial planning trust arrangement that will enable individual fans to acquire such a series. Even if the author manages to complete three books per year, it will me more than a decade before the last one has been published. By then, the cover price will be at least twice as large as when the first few books in the series appeared, the fan may have become so old that he has retired and is living on a reduced income, and books may be "published" by telephone lines to purchasers' computers. Skilled financial people should be able to figure out a plan which would cover the reader against any eventuality in return for a modest payment which he could make every month or three months, and the arrangement would include some sort of partial refund of the individual changes reading preferences during the incubation period of the series and at the end of ten years will read nothing but the novels of Mrs. Gaskell.

I think it would be quite difficult to write science fiction about Noah and the Deluge in today's world, given the outlook and opinions of the

modern young generation. A contemporary Noah would have too many problems. He would encounter endless difficulties assembling all those animals, birds and reptiles because some of them are protected species which private individuals mustn't own. Homosexuality advocacy groups would tie up Noah in the courts for years over his insistence that there should be a male and a female in each pair of animals. Environmentalists would try to block his sailing on the grounds that the ark's odd dimensions and appearance would frighten whales into altering their migratory patterns and sex lives. Australians would charge that atomics were being used to propel the ark. There would be much union trouble over the nepotism of having his sons in responsible command positions. And the Bible doesn't tell us how Noah solved some of his original problems: for instance, why didn't the ark capsize as soon as the skunks came up on deck and all the other animals rushed to one end of another to get away from them?

Robert Sabella  
2 Natalie Drive  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

In LL #32, I love the cartoons heading both "A Science Fiction Stew" and "Ten Years Ago in SF". Actually, the former is closer to the real me than that debonair guy adorning the "Ten Years Ago."

"Alien Sex" seems less a serious article than the rantings and ravings of somebody who fears a bisexual future. Shea complained that "much of the science fiction community seems to have reached a consensus that the correct, perfect, sexually liberated society would be one in which anyone would make love with anyone." Oh yeah? On what evidence? He discussed six writers who present that premise in a few of their stories. What about the other several hundred members of SFWA? I seriously doubt that the vast majority of science fictional futures portray the "correct, sexually liberated bisexual future" that bothers Shea so much. Most sfnal futures portray sexual attitudes similar to our own, some even slightly more repressed. But because sex is such a minor part of most stories, the cultural similarities do not stand out as much as the few occasions when they are different. I think Shea should do a considerably more extensive survey of recent science fiction before getting himself into such a tizzy.

"The First Fans" was an eye-opening article. I had no idea there was such animosity between First Fandom and the SMOFs. I tend to side with the old-timers in this, but that might be a result of my own increasing age! Would you believe that 1992 will be the 25th anniversary of my first fannish activity (NYCON 3)? It's a frightening thought that I am closer in age to the first fans than I am to some neofans.

"Russia's Grand Master Award" was very interest-

ing, especially for somebody who's always looking for exciting new SF to read. Now I want to run out and buy some of those translated works, particularly Roadside Picnic, the premise of which sounds fascinating. Oh, well, just one more excuse to haunt the used book stores and catalogs. Thanks, Jackson.

"My Life with Lawrence of Arabia" was also fascinating. In this day and age, there seems to be less and less genuine figures of heroic proportions such as T.E. Lawrence, Sir Richard Burton and the two Alberts (Einstein and Schweitzer). Off the top of my head, I can't think of a single current person comparable to any of them. Of course, it might be that I've become jaded myself or that familiarity does indeed breed contempt and it takes time for heroes to be recognized as such. Still, the late twentieth century does not seem to be the breeding ground of genuine heroes.

I haven't yet seen the new version of Lawrence of Arabia. In fact, I only saw the original version when it was released in 1962, and at that time I was too young to think it other than long and boring. I certainly intend to seek out the new version sometime soon.

|                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barbara Delaplace<br>307-8770 Montcalm St.<br>Vancouver, British Columbia<br>CANADA V6P 4R2 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

I spent a few hours at V-CON, the regional con for Vancouver, where the toastmaster was Elizabeth Lynn.

You and Joseph Major mention in #32 that you were not aware of any works published since Dancers of Arun, so I thought I'd send along photocopies of the relevant bio pages in the program. It appears Lynn hasn't been idle. I haven't run across any of the works mentioned, other than the Arun books, but perhaps your other readers have.

And I want to join in the chorus of those who have already said how much they enjoy "ConReports and Ramblings". Could it be I'm simply a snoop underneath my proper, non-nosy exterior, and enjoy peering through the "Ramblings" window at your activities? Whatever I am, please keep writing about them.

[[ Some people read the "Conreports and Ramblings" and think how calm and non-hectic their lives are compared to mine. I enjoy sharing my activities with others on paper, and am glad that there are others who enjoy reading them. Thank you for your comments.

[[ Here is Elizabeth Lynn's bibliography, for interested readers:

A Different Light (1978)

Watchtower (1979)

(Winner of the World Fantasy Award)

Daughters of Arun (1980)

The Sardonyx Net (1981)

Northern Girl (1982)

The Red Hawk (1983)

The Silver Horse (1984)

Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Champion Athlete (1989)

The Woman Who Loved the Moon and Other Stories

The Woman Who Loved the Moon

(comic, about to be reprinted)

Tales from a Vanished Country (1990)

Short fiction published in Anteaus and Omni ]]

|                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ruth Berman<br>2809 Drew Avenue South<br>Minneapolis, MN 55416 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|

The trouble with Mary Lou Lockhart's article on religious attacks on English literature is that it's

sensible--won't do any good. The literature-bashing going on in recent years has gone so far that I wonder if Lockhart's law professor would necessarily even have realized that her note protesting the secular humanism of law texts was a joke--it isn't particularly any more extreme than the Tennessee protests against the evils of The Wizard of Oz.

It's interesting to learn that L. Sprague de Camp was acquainted with Ruth Plumly Thompson and encouraged her in mapping Oz. The Wizard of Oz Club, some years back, published a set of Oz maps (Oz, and Oz & Environs, designed by James Haff and drawn by Dick Martin, whose professional publications included Oz book illustrations) incorporating all the locations from the post-Baum Oz books. The set is still available from the Oz Club (c/o Fred M. Meyer, 220 North 11th Street, Escanaba, MI 49829 --- \$3.00, although I suppose a little extra from non-members would be appreciated). It makes quite a handsome piece of cartography.

I mentioned wishing I could get to hear Madeleine L'Engle--it turned out that I did, recently. The University of Minnesota's Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature once a year imports a major children's book author or illustrator who has contributed to the Collection to be given their Kerlan Award and to give a speech, and she was the 1990 importee. These speakers usually fill up a moderate-size auditorium, but L'Engle is so popular that there were about three times the usual number trying to get in. They set up an extra hundred chairs in the auditorium, a hundred or so more of us went to another room and were able to watch the talk on closed circuit TV, and I think another hundred or so gave up and missed out on the talk. It was an entertaining talk. It overlapped a good deal with an article of hers in the April, 1990, Writer's Magazine, so anyone curious could go look up her comments there. Some of what she said dealt with the censorship of imaginative literature which is a topic of concern in LL #32 (and no doubt of concern to all fans). According to her, the books being censored even include The Secret Garden by Frances Burnett Hodgson--which isn't fantasy, but when the

crippled boy learns to walk, Dickon exclaims, "It's magic," which is offensive to those who believe that magic equals Satanism. Those of us who think that religion is more or less nonsense in the first place are at a disadvantage in fighting this evil, since they want to suppress us anyway, so it's good to see someone religious speaking out on the subject. (Not that the extreme literature-bashers pay much attention to people outside their own individual sects, but it discourages the less extreme and more numerous would-be censors.)

Elizabeth Ann Osborne  
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One thing that bothered me in LL was David Shea's article "Future Sex." What upset me was his statement

that it is people without a sexual outlet who become child abusers and other sex offenders. Sorry, that just isn't true. As a librarian in the department of corrections, I see that many sex offenders were happily married men or had girlfriends. People become sex offenders because they have an orientation toward it, not because other avenues are blocked. Nor are "normal" sexual situations that rare, at least for men. Prostitution, even with the AIDS crisis, is still a major industry. I doubt that very few towns over 5,000 do not have some women being paid for sex.

Actually, there is a difference between child abusers and molesters--molesting is a form of child abuse, but not all abusers are molesters. Many molesters are also involved because of the power relationships as much as sexual ones.

Sorry if that turned your stomach. Writing it was not that pleasant a thing either, but I disliked the idea that people would be more "normal" if they just got more sex.

To answer Martin Morse Wooster, the Fan Q Awards are given each year to fanzine producers (writers, artists, editors, etc.) of media zines. They are awarded at MEDIA WEST CON. Awards are divided by genre (Star Trek, Star Wars, etc) and each group also has a best overall award. Fans can nominate and vote for their favorites by sending in a request with funds (much like the Hugos). I personally happen to like reading and writing Trek stories, and enjoy reading any well-written epic or short story put in front of me. I also enjoy seeing new writers learning their craft and charting their progress. If the world can handle another author penning James Bond stories, or Nicholas Meyer turning out new Holmes stories, I think that the liter-

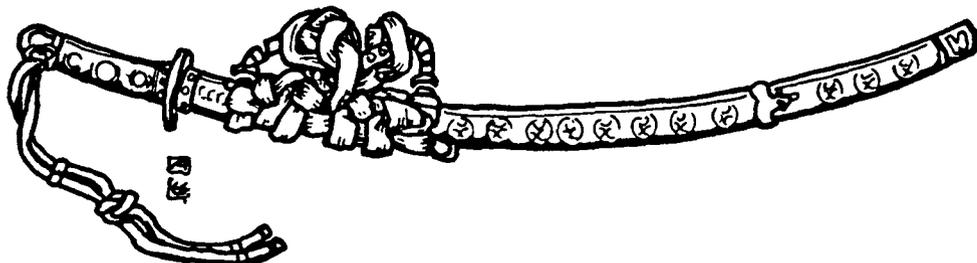
ary world can handle a few new media zines. If Martin doesn't like it, no one is forcing him to read it.

David Palter  
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CANADA M6G 1X1

Re "Whatever Happened to Science Fiction" by Robert Sabella, by sheer coincidence there is a perfect reply to this guest editorial

in the form of Stanley Schmidt's editorial, "The Oldtimer Effect" in the June 1990 issue of Analog. I will add just a few other observations. Robert Sabella believes that the cyberpunk sub-genre, being set in the near future, is less imaginative and produces less sense of wonder than "high SF" set in the far future. My opinion is that cyberpunk has generally been more imaginative than traditional SF. Many a novel is set 5,000 years in the future and yet is culturally indistinguishable from Akron, Ohio, in the year 1955, whereas a cyberpunk novel set 30 years in the future is likely to be utterly strange and alien to our own time, in profound, disturbing, and yet oddly believable ways. Robert Sabella has clearly succumbed to the Oldtimer Effect. Personally, I see nothing wrong with SF today; it is more exciting and imaginative than ever.

"Future Sex" by David Shea is yet another complaint about trends in modern SF, and is also wrong. David Shea has seen a lot of bisexuality showing up in recent SF novels and concludes that a consensus is emerging in the SF field that in the future everybody should and will be bisexual. This is not even remotely what any one of the authors he mentions (Heinlein, Delany, Duane, Bradley, etc) is trying to say. They are merely, and quite reasonably, saying that a variety of sexual preferences should and will be both practiced and socially tolerated in the future. Nobody has ever tried to assert that traditional heterosexuality should or will die out or be supplanted by universal bisexuality. David Shea denies being homophobic, but I must say that he has expressed one of the classic homophobic delusions, the fear that if homosexuality is tolerated, then heterosexuality will cease to be tolerated. The thrust of gay liberation is not to replace heterosexuality with homosexuality or bisexuality, but simply to allow everyone to freely pursue (with due regard for the rights of others not to be pursued) the form of sexual expression of their choice, be it homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual, with nobody being persecuted by reason of



their sexual preference. It is this ideal which the better SF writers are reflecting in their work. There is no conspiracy in SF (or elsewhere) to force anybody into bisexual practices against their will.

How bizarre that Robert Sabella states that Lord of Light is a reworking of Greek Mythology. As you, Ian, must know, this great novel is a reworking of Buddhist and Hindu mythology, having nothing to do with the Greek variety.

I find it fascinating how much I disagree with Mark Leeper's movie reviews, although I retain my respect for him as an intelligent and interesting reviewer.

Since I have been highly critical about certain parts of the Lantern, it is only fair for me also to state what I like about it. It is a wonderfully good issue, containing a tremendous amount of interesting material. The two articles by Susan Schwartz are particularly good and I compliment her for writing them.

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I'm sorry to say I didn't notice Dean Lambe's review of my book, Men Like Rats in LL 30 till Tom Easton pointed it out in his review column in Analog.

I trust it will come as no surprise that I have never read William Tenn's Of Men and Monsters, nor the earlier version, "The Men in the Walls." (And Dean never suggested I had.) I must now seek it out, of course, and it sounds as if I will enjoy it. If I had read it, I probably wouldn't have written my book; I doubt the idea is strong enough to carry two.

My thanks to Dean for his kindness; I consider "Klass act" a high compliment, even if he merely couldn't resist the pun.

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Ray Beam's GoH speech, "The First Fans--And Their Importance to the Genre," was a very thought provoking piece

of writing. I would gladly support a con built around the presentation of the Hall of Fame Award. And, yes, I do recognize all the Hall of Fame recipients listed in the article.

It would be interesting to poll First Fandom members to see what con(s) they would recommend to a "first time" con attendee. Assuming that attendee is a "traditional" SF fan, such as myself. And to give you some idea of what I consider a "traditional" fan to be, I will attempt to elucidate my views on the subjects of fandom and conventions. But first I must qualify my remarks by saying: in 37 years of reading SF (books, prozines, fanzines and "related short subjects") I have never attended a SF convention. I am what you might call an armchair conventioneer!

I am the world's greatest procrastinator--always planning convention trips (sometimes paying admission fees in advance), but never quite making it. But, alas, from what I've been reading and hearing from the "old timers" over the past few years, there is much to be desired in the current state of SF fandom/conventions. Especially since the advent of the dreaded other fandoms: Gamers, Costumers, Trekkies, Beauty and the Beasties, and Dr. Whoers. Not to mention the "fanarchists" that are making their presence felt throughout fandom (BOSKONE, BAYCON, etc.). Regretfully, too many cons try to accommodate all the special interest groups--at the expense of all parties concerned.

Oh well, even though I have never attended a con, I AM A READER--especially "hard" SF, books dealing with fandom and auto/biographies of SF pros and BNFs. Many books are extremely difficult to find (or outrageously priced) nowadays, like Robert Bloch's The Eighth Stage of Fandom: Selections from 25 Years of Fan Writing, without selling off the back 40. Some enterprising fan entrepreneur (fanpreneur?) should pick up the rights to the aforementioned book, as well as Warner's Wealth of Fable (badly in need of an index) and reprint them in reasonably priced hardcover editions.

Another pet peeve: Madison Avenue Finds Its Way To the Small Press. I have a great disdain for the ridiculous mentality that permeates the production and promotion of: FIRST EDITIONS -- LIMITED -NUMBERED -- BOUND IN LEATHER -- DIPPED IN PLATINUM -- and signed by everyone connected with the book: Author, Illustrator, Printer, Type Setter, Wholesaler, Retailer, Paw Prints of the Author's Cat and who ever else may have touched the book along its travels to the customer. The author doesn't have to be alive to have his/her autograph included in their book--just use the signature from a cancelled check, stick the sucker in the book and, presto, we have an autographed limited edition 10 years after the author's death! COLLECTIBLES -- BIG MONEY -- BIG SELL -- BIG RIP-OFF!

I don't have all the answers, but I do enjoy asking the questions. Someday I'll pounce on the convention scene and let all the people, whose toes I've stepped on, take a shot at me. But, until that time, I will continue to throw out my verbiage to all who read fanzines.

One last note: Speaking for myself, COR-FLU sounds like it would be an ideal "first con." I enjoy reading fanzines and have always wanted to take a stab at producing one myself. Oops, Mr. Procrastination again! I wonder if the dreaded other fandoms hang out at COR-FLU?

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Since Mr. Sabella's guest editorial begs for a response, I will make one. He makes a gross error of method in his article

(and just because William F. Buckley does the same thing doesn't make it any more right), namely, he makes a statement and then uses selective, biased evidence to support it. To wit:

Mr Sabella decries the lack of High SF in the modern scene, then uses data to show that only 17% of all genre short fiction published in 1988 was of that type. This appears to be a disaster for the modern lover of High SF--yet the argument is based on three false assumptions.

1) The short story is the only way that Science Fiction can be presented. The data is a survey of short stories and excludes not only movies and TV shows but also novels and novellas. These other categories are as much a part of science fiction as the short story.

2) The short story is the best place to find high SF, or at least is no worse than any other place. Actually, the short story is the worst possible place to look. Stories in wondrous settings need a lot of detail--the wondrous setting must be described so that it is wondrous, and in my experience this takes at least 15,000 words. The upper limit for a short story is 10,000 words. I am not saying that it is impossible to write a wondrous story in less than 10,000 words, but it is hard. Most people who wish to write short stories use the familiar settings we know best--the modern world, a shared universe (fan fiction), or a stereotypical fantasy setting. Therefore, High SF is more likely to be found in novellas, novels and series of books. I think it is no mistake that most of the High SF presented by Mr. Sabella in the first two paragraphs are either novels or novellas.

3) The data shows that there is less High SF being written now than there was in the forties, fifties, and sixties. No data from the forties, fifties, or sixties is shown to support this claim. Mr. Sabella simply assumes that because there is only a small percentage of short High SF being published these days, that there is less than there used to be. However, my subjective impression of short fiction from the forties, fifties and sixties is one of extraordinary experiences and extrapolated futures--not high SF. Without hard data, though, I can't say which of us has the correct impression.

It is true that High SF, even in books and movies, is a little harder to find these days, but not because there is less of it. There is just so much of the other stuff--fantasy and horror have finally "come out of the closet" and media-inspired fiction is very big. Yet the High SF is out there. Just looking at my rather small collection of paperbacks, I can list the following High SF books (all published in the eighties or 1990): Dragon's Egg, Starquake, and Rocheworld, all by Robert Forward, Still River (Hal Clement), Golden Witchbreed (Mary Gentle), The Angel's Luck series (Desperate Measures, Precious Cargo, and Essence of Evil) by

Joe Clifford Faust, Falling Free and the Miles Vorkosigan series (Shards of Honor, The Warrior's Apprentice, Ethan of Athos, Brothers-in-Arms and Borders of Infinity) by Lois McMaster Bujold. Triplet by Timothy Zahn might count, though it is more of a cross-over book.

Therefore, whatever happened to Science Fiction? Nothing much, as far as I can see...[\*]

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In reference to Robert Sabella's article, I see the trend toward cyberpunk as a very significant factor. I am not personally familiar with this subgenre. Is it somehow related to the punk rock movement?

[[ I can see some connections between Punk Rock and cyberpunk, mostly in the dismal view of society and the hopelessness of the future. The "cyber" part of the word refers to cybernetics and cyberspace, direct mind-link to computers and the scenario interface established between the two. Most cyberpunk novels are quite depressing.]]

One trend which was not mentioned in the article is the mixing or combining of features from fantasy and science fiction. One example is Jo Clayton's Skeen books. On one side of the "gate" is a space-going civilization, the other a magical/medieval society complete with shapechangers. It could be argued that C.J. Cherryh's Wayne and Morgaine books are an earlier example since Wayne views Morgaine's weapons and powers as magical and she does not.

Mr. Sabella used the Kelly article on short fiction to substantiate his point. He does not mention any research to address this issue in either novella or novel-length works. I would be interested to see if the percentages in the Kelly article run true.

I also have a slight problem with Mr. Sabella's "Recipe". What exactly is a "sense of wonder"? I know this is a common term used to define SF, but is this self-defining for everyone except me? Is it the same for all? I doubt it.

In my opinion, any stimulus which is pleasantly absorbing to a person and unique could elicit a "sense of wonder". For example, a new plant species or strain to a botanist. Or a virtuoso violin performance to a music buff. Either of these would be mildly boring to me. Could this "sense of wonder" be a kind of beauty?

[[ You've got the idea. Mostly, this "sense of wonder" deals with stimulation from ideas. It can be felt in other areas, but the SF readers used the term first, I think, and refer to it as a classic form of writing in the field.]]

Most of the reviews are of works which I have

not read or seen. However, I cannot agree more with Dale Skran's negative review of Cyborg. I had the dubious pleasure of seeing this film on cable. I know next to nothing about fighting but this movie seemed faked all the way through. The flashbacks were numerous and confusing. The actors mumbled their lines. Overall, one to miss.

I disagree with David Palter on the ease of labelling or sorting material as either science fiction or fantasy. More and more novels have both FTL spaceships and magic. I do like Judith Merrill's solution to the problem very much.

I realize that I am taking this out of context, but in Taras Wolansky's letter he says "...Women who do not rear their children will have fewer children. Women are willing to pay the price of the discomforts and inconveniences of pregnancy and childbirth because it buys them the fun of rearing their child." I absolutely disagree.

As the mother of a very active 18 month old and as a former preschool teacher, I have had some experience in the matter. I do not find child rearing "fun" most of the time and neither do most of the other mothers I have ever known. Stimulating, exhausting, fulfilling, frustrating, are some of the adjectives I have used or have heard used. But mostly as I have seen it, it's hard labor with few immediate compensations and definitely no perks.

Don't get me wrong--I do love my daughter dearly and wouldn't not have her if I could time travel. Challenge of child rearing, yes. But not fun.

|                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Buck Coulson<br>2677W-500N<br>Hartford City,<br>Indiana 47348 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|

Sabella is probably correct, but I didn't start reading science fiction for the exotic worlds. In rural Indiana, Arthur Upfield's mysteries set in Australia were as

exotic as Doc Smith's galaxy, or perhaps more so because it seemed more real. And, of course, increased circulation means reduced horizons; what made anyone think that science fiction would really change the world? The thinking of the majority isn't that susceptible to change. Ed Wood used to demand a wider audience for science fiction, and most of us who listened had this inner feeling that if it came, he wouldn't like it. It did, and he doesn't. The marvelous thing about science fiction is that under all the fluff, the good stories are still there; you just have to look harder for them. (And, admittedly, I spent several hours recently in re-reading the lead stories in Science Fantasy magazine because they were the ultimate in exotic adventure.)

Not all children rebel against parental directives. The smart ones obey while refusing to believe in parental reasons. What one does can be monitored; what one thinks is one's own. I didn't usually argue with teachers, either; it would do no good, and if the rest of the class were stupe

enough to believe what the teacher said, then let them. (This concerns things which the teachers said which I knew were wrong; mostly I had reasonably good teachers and learned from them as long as I thought they knew what they were talking about.) Of course, in my student days there was much less emphasis on the Bible, even while it was more universally believed. The dollar bills said "Redeemable For One Dollar in Silver" instead of "In God We Trust". I feel the change is symptomatic of our increasing indebtedness; in God we trust and in bankruptcy we discover truth. There was no "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Pledge had the rhythm of music, which made it easy to remember. Now it doesn't (And those were the days before drugs, crime, debt, disease and dumping had made so much of our country unlivable; obviously it's the increasing activities of fundamentalists which have ruined the country. Anyone wishing to go back to the 1940s needs to know that.)

Cheer up Skel; I didn't go to university either. Of course, I'm not all that active in fanzine fandom these days, but I have been. On the other hand, I prefer that the Good Guys lose once in a while, to give some suspense to the stories. While Heinlein attracted me to the field, I became a confirmed fan only after reading Philip Wylie's short story "Blunder", in which the hero desperately tries to avert an experiment which will blow up the world--and fails. If the hero always wins why bother to cheer for him?

Two additional titles in the StF murder category are Anthony Boucher's Rocket to the Morgue, in which the murder takes place in a circle of science fiction writers, and Now You See It/Him/Them..., by (ahem!) Robert Coulson and Gene DeWeese. Boucher's novel was, indeed, the first in this tiny field, and had at least two paperback editions. (How about a third, one of these days?)

O approve of recycling, but the Earth Care Paper Co. will have to wait for my business. I'm still working on paper I salvaged from my various places of employment; either from wastebaskets or from larger dumps which were waiting for Maintenance to haul away to the trash burner. I picked up, quite literally, reams of the stuff. Perhaps perfectly good paper is less prominent in waste piles in these years of computer--but I'm doing my review columns on computer paper salvaged from my last employer, and while I'm about out now, it's lasted me for some 80 columns and will do for a few more. (I'd left the job before the column began, so all this paper was accumulated in advance.)

Fully agreed with Joseph Napolitano about athletes. Now and then you find one with an adult attitude. Our TV reported that when Purdue's basketball team returned from winning at the University of Michigan, their center, Steve Scheffler, was asked by a reporter what he thought of the huge

crowd waiting at midnight or thereabouts to greet the team. Reportedly, Scheffler said he thought it was "sort of depressing". "Why?" asked the astonished reporter. I forget the exact response, but it was on the order of "all this fuss over a game." (Scheffler was later voted the Most Valuable Player in the Big Ten, so he wasn't some incidental player; he was the star.)

I find Dozois' editing not top-flight, but superior to that of Shawna McCarthy. Most of Asimov's may be second-rate, but one story in almost every issue will be a competitor for the best of the month. That's why Asimov's wins Hugos; the mediocrities are forgotten, since you can only vote for one per category once the ballots are out. Overall, Analog is the most readable magazine in the field, but it does have trouble getting the top stories because of the insistence of putting some science into them. Modern authors have forgotten how to do that.

"Much of our modern literature protests with an angry and frequently ignorant tongue against a life it fails to understand, and consequently falls into an abusive pattern of crude violence and sheer lewdness that it miserably mistakes for reality." (Basil Rathbone, In and Out of Character) I feel that way sometimes about Jackson's list of "best" young SF writers.

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I disagree wholeheartedly with Robert Sabella. He defines one small segment of SF writing as the Only the True SF, then laments its disappearance, blaming it all on Rampant Mundania. I take it he does not consider any of the ST novels to be SF? The three other categories he mentions have always been a staple of the SF field (in fact, right after reading Divine Invasions it's likely nearly all of Philip K. Dick's work fell into categories 1 and 2, yet is he not an SF writer?). And given the expansion of the titles as a whole in the SF/fantasy field, I don't think it would be hard for Sabella to find the category he prefers. If he is not quite ready for something that outre, then I suggest he concentrate on writers such as Lois McMaster Bujold (the Vorkosigan/quaddie books), the new series started by Moon and MacCaffrey (Sassinak, which has sequelitis written all over it), the military SF of Pournelle, Drake and Morris; most anything by Greg Bear; Kim Stanley Robinson's Memory of Whiteness, Davi Brin's Startide Rising and The Uplift War, any of C.J. Cherryh's SF works, Pamela Sargent's Venus books (if terraforming a whole planet isn't High SF enough for him, I suggest he check his definitions), not to mention tons and tons of post-toasties currently on the market (Moran's Armageddon Blues et al). I suggest he also look into the works of Gregory Benford, though I prefer my SF with hu-

man characters myself. Seriously, there is more of his type of SF to read out there than most people can possibly keep up with. I will be glad to provide lists, if he likes. Pity he wants to limit himself to only one category, mind you, but that's life. And as for trend statistics--how does this compare to past percentages? We have no data here for comparison.

David M. Shea's article on "Future Sex" is interesting, but most writers will continue to experiment with alternative sexual styles, if only for the sheer fun of it all. The glory of SF and fantasy is assuming anything you like without the Thought Police scanning darkly for new prison fodder. One hopes, anyway. (And I loved its juxtaposition with "Scopes II vs Usher II". Prime editing!) One notes the main character, though, in The Forever War, stigmatized for his primarily \*gasp!\* "straight" attitudes. There are fashions in sex as much as there are in any other field. I do agree with Shea's premise that most people are mostly straight, though circumstances can certainly alter the expression of those feelings--but speculations as to the orientation of any future society are just that. What about droid-lovers in Molly Dear or Asimov's Foundation and Robot books? (Resolves the issues of AIDS and other problems right there, when you think about it.) The whole concept of SF and fantasy is to experiment, to try out something new. I find it easier to write about straight sex since that's where my experience is, but if a couple of characters of the same gender decide to fall in love with each other (I usually insist on that, being a sloppy sentimentalist), I don't see myself telling them to leave each other alone. (Thanks to some good friends and some very interesting fanfiction in a couple of mediazines, I am not likely to get to much wrong on this.) I don't think the perception is that a society has to be bisexual, or that everyone ought to be bisexual. Should's and ought's have an uneasy existence in a literature based on the premise "What If".

"Uncle Mark" by Paula Robinson was a terrifying story, but I still liked it. Wow! Perhaps this technique will become possible in the future. 'Course, now if you want to set yourself a rougher row to hoe, try crawling into Uncle Mark's head....

I was glad to see the article about "The First Fans" by Ray Beam, and I'm glad they are being recognized. It's hard to believe the flack people used to go through just for reading SF and fantasy, let alone writing it. It was also interesting to read about the Aelita. I am extremely unfamiliar with most Soviet writers in the field and the information was quite enlightening.

Apparently asking Susan Shwartz to write on Lawrence of Arabia was like asking Gibbon to do a little piece on Rome--but then we all have our massive obsessions, do we not? (I don't want to outgrow any

of mine!) Dear Ms. Shwartz, please do us all a favor and write the definitive biography on him from your point of view. I have also enjoyed reading Seven Pillars of Wisdom (and found parts of it imbued with a delightful sense of humor--I loved what he had to say about camels, which beasts my father is certain are the lowest form of life due to several unpleasant encounters with them in Tunisia ...). I'd love hearing more about his working with Robert Graves on I, Claudius (you can't fool me--I know who Aircraftman Shaw is!).

I heartily disagree with Maureen O'Brien in regard to the Door Into... books. I do agree with her that they shouldn't be in the children's section (they aren't in my library). However, the So You Want to Be a Wizard? books teach a system of ethics very close to the Christian one and I find nothing to object to in them. (I also find her Door Into... books far superior to her Trek books.) Apparently she and I do agree on the Wizard books.

I don't know what Joseph T. Major is reading, but I have yet to run into any science fiction where the people are interchangeable (with the possible exception of some of the hardest tech stuff). I do see discrimination as a problem in this society, and that ought to be combatted. One way to do this is to devise future societies where current discrimination does not exist. (Of course there will be some discrimination, based on different criteria than exist today--the human race is quite flexible in that regard.) But to downgrade these attempts leads me to conclude something about Mr. Major that perhaps he doesn't want me to.

I don't see filking becoming inaccessible to any fan. It may be that beginning fans will have to start at small cons and work up to bigger ones, as costumers seem to do today. However, even the silliest paper-towel tunic could enter the NOLACON II Masque if they liked (I was half of an entry there at about that level of sophistication, so I know!). One may also see different categories of filkers, as there are now different categories of costumers. In the writing field, professional publication of writing does not drown out the fanzine--in fact, the existence of such work provides a standard to aim for, at least in the area of fiction.

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The Artwork in LL #32 is overall more impressive, I think, than in any of your previous efforts--including the cover

by Pavel Gregoric (who knew the guy could draw too? More foreign exchanges, please!), and a couple of unfamiliar but excellent and well-represented artists, Heather Bruton and Colleen Doran. Of course, the copying on my issue wasn't always up to par--to the extent that I had to check the contents sometimes to be absolutely sure a piece was Diana Stein's, since her signature didn't reproduce.

Tom Jackson's article on the Aelita raises some question which it leaves unanswered: If the award is for lifetime achievement, why does each winner have a specific title listed next to his or her name? Why, after listing these works, is Tom likely to tell us nothing about them when discussing their authors? Why, after passing on describing a couple of the lesser-known authors, does Tom list others he considers important, but skip over such well-known and widely-translated authors as I. Efremov and M. Bulgakov?

[[ Maybe I should ask Tom for an expanded article, or start a series of monographs of various Russian SF authors. Hmmm, has possibilities...]]

Mark Leeper might have included a heading in his Metropolis review to indicate he was discussing a new stage production. As it stands, it's a confusing piece until this point is made clear, and at that the fact that the show is a musical isn't revealed until later on. [[My fault. I didn't copy his subheading when I entered the piece.]] He might also have mentioned that Field of Dreams is based on W.P. Kinsella's excellent novel Shoeless Joe, reviewed by Sally Syrjala some issues back. If Mark is unaware of the novel, then his article is a good indicator that one can enjoy the film without having first read the source material, but the film was an interesting study in how much material the writer-director could change or leave out from the novel and still be absolutely faithful to the story.

I read Evelyn Leeper's reviews with great interest--Robert Skimin, he be a good old El Paso boy--and I have to add that in addition to the Benford story in What Might Have Been: Vol. I, the Effinger, Pohl, Robinson and Turtledove stories all appeared elsewhere. All in the same elsewhere, in fact--in ISAFM. Makes the book quite a bargain if you keep up with the magazines, eh?! Interestingly enough, in light of Evelyn's comments, only one of the stories she rated as so-so and one of the below-average ones were nominated for Hugos this year. Niven may have guessed that a story with Heinlein as a character couldn't fail to appeal to fans, but he could hardly have guessed the sentimental weight that would be added to the story due to subsequent circumstances....

Apropos of the above, Asimov's seems to be the outlet of choice for publishing bits and pieces of your forthcoming novel or collection. Parts of James Patrick Kelly's The Glass Cloud and all of Orson Card's Prentice Alvin books appeared there. This year, an excerpt from Effinger's second Marid novel appeared there, and made the Nebula ballot for best Novel! I always find this annoying, since if I'm going to read any of the story I might as well read all of it; if a novel comes out comprised

of substantial portions which I already read under the impression I was reading a complete shorter work, I'm reluctant to pay the full price of the book for the parts I didn't finish. I've wasted my money on a magazine if I know a substantial chunk of its contents will be appearing later in book form, and I'm waiting for the book because the magazine version is incomplete. And I'm reluctant to pay today's paperback prices for a collection like What Might Have Been?, just to catch one short story that's on the Hugo ballot, when most of its contents have already appeared elsewhere.

At our local con in El Paso, we had two new writers--Sage Walker, whose first story appeared in IASFM last year, and Michaelene Pendleton, who has sold one story to IASFM and one vignette to Omni. So much for Dozois ignoring first-time authors. One suspects that Dozois' first concern may not, in fact, be having lots of first-time authors in each issue, but filling each issue with the best stories he can find.

[[ That's right, publishing first-time authors is NOT his concern, which is NOT one of the basic reasons IASFM was founded. Bova, Scithers, and McCarthy all worked to bring new writers into the field. If Walker and Pendleton were participants in Clarion, or another of the writers' workshops where Dozois "teaches", then that explains a lot.]]

Due respect to your comments on Asimov's vs Analog, Lan, but this is after all a matter of taste, and personally I find Analog the most boring of the surviving prozines. Schmidt has done his part to develop new writers, but most are quickly absorbed into the stable, turning out The Standard Analog Story issue after issue. It's the sameness of all those issues of Analog that puts me off...the same names issue after issue (yes, it's even more of an in-group than Asimov's). writing pretty much the same story issues after issue: if the characters don't spend most of their time sitting in a lab or in an office hashing out the glitches in their new nanomachine, they're sitting in an office or bar bitching about the government; sometimes both in the same story. I still read every issue of Analog, which is more than you can say about the competition, and there are usually some stories of interest, but the range is usually between dry, pendantic hard-sci stuff and overblown satire. I just find any other magazine offers more variety.

It's worth noting that every year Analog seems to publish one decent story, which stands so head and shoulders above everything else that ran that the Analog bunch faithfully gets it onto the Hugo ballot. Sometimes it's a real peach like Steven Gould's last year, and sometimes it's merely adequate, like Michael Flynn's "Eifelheim." This year

it's Bujold keeping them from being shut out.

Martin Morse Wooster is right about snoring roommates. I once shared a room in Phoenix with, at one point, seven others, and the racket was nerve-wracking. Then someone swiped the cushions off my sofa. You realized this meant war....

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I feel I must register a complaint about Susan Shwartz's essay on the female hero in LL #32.

Isn't Lan's Lantern long enough already, without publishing material that demands to be read over and over?! Seriously, this essay should be read by every young writer, especially every young woman writer.

Reading Susan's account of the differences between her fantasy ("myths and archetypes...good and evil") and her SF ("high-tech problems...ethical ramifications") made me wish she would cross-pollinate the two. I'd like to see her write SF that feels like fantasy, and fantasy that feels like SF.

Heritage of Flight deserves much more attention than it has so far received. Reading Susan's commentary about it I was fascinated that, among all the historical parallels and analogies she brings up, the one that was most in my mind as I read the book does not appear. The protagonist of Heritage commits genocide against an alien species, to give a home to, among others, "traumatized refugee children", "many of whom are physically or psychologically damaged." Does this begin to sound a little familiar?

Though I'm an athiest, I find myself out of sympathy with M.L. Lockhart's "Scopes II vs. Usher II". For one thing, anti-religious bigotry ("This assumes the parents both read and teach. I have my doubts.") is just about as ugly as religious bigotry. (Fundamentalists read the Bible; which is not a bad piece of literature to learn on.)

Sometimes the fundamentalists are right to consider the public schools' "neutral" teachings as anti-religious in essence. For example, sex education that treats heterosexuality and homosexuality as "alternative life-styles", that is, puts them at the same level, contradicts the tenets of several of the world's major religions.

Many of the problems would go away if we put paid to public education and replace it with some kind of voucher system. [[I don't understand what you are saying here, Taras. --Lan]] (Which will incidentally improve the quality of education!) Not all the problems, though: if the government is providing the vouchers, it's got to define education. (Can you teach biology without teaching evolution? Not very well.)

I'm still chuckling over this in one of the locs: "Usually...someone somewhere will take the opposite viewpoint and argue against my opinions

[critical of Ronald Reagan]. I certainly hope there aren't too many on your mailing list like that." How strange! I actively seek out opposing views; for one thing, you don't learn anything by talking to people who agree with you. Shunning opposing views is like a confession that your views cannot stand up under cross-examination.

On the subject of Stanley Schmidt and Analog: a few years ago at a convention I heard Schmidt make an admission more damaging than any critic's strictures. He speed-reads.

[ [ Yes, Stan speed-reads his manuscripts--or tries to. If the story is interesting enough he drops to a slower speed, and he knows to take it more seriously and under consideration for purchase. Stan makes no secret of this--that is, he has TWO READING SPEEDS which he uses to separate his manuscripts into returns and possible acceptances. ALL other editors use slush-pile readers, usually kids right out of college who begin by looking for stories that will please their English professors, not ones that are good for the magazine. ] ]

Arlan Andrews  
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87192-3627

This LOC is primarily to comment on a LOC by Tom Jackson in LL #32 in which he discusses Stan Schmidt's "list of discoveries." Since my name appeared in that list, I have one or two confessions to make. My first paid SF publication was a poem in IASFM (1/80), my second an unusual adaptation of the Periodic Table of Elements in Omni (6/81). Not until 1982 did Stan start buying my stuff. So you might say, George Scithers and Ben Bova share my glory/blame. (I told this to Stan after your interview with him at INCONJUNCTION in Indianapolis in July 1988, but as he had just bought my last story, "Nuclear Winter", for ASF, I didn't want to press the point...)

Now another point: whether any of us on that list are anyone's choices for "top young writers" is entirely irrelevant. A few of those listed are full-time writers, some doing quite well financially (I would guess, since I don't ask anyone about their finances), but some of us write primarily for ourselves. If Stan or Pat Price or Gardner Dozois or anyone else likes our stuff enough to buy it, fine. Because I'm not a full-time writer (hardly even part-time!) I do not have to write to anyone's tastes. I have found that Stan Schmidt and I agree a goodly fraction of the time, that Pat Price (of Amazing Stories) and I agree somewhat less, and that so far Gardner and I don't mesh at all, though that doesn't prevent my trying IASFM whenever I feel it might be appropriate.

Because I like to think that every editor everywhere will someday be sending checks my way, I

won't comment further. It is a thrill, even yet, to get that letter of acceptance and contract, and still hurts a bit when my babies are rejected. But if I had to write to please only others, then all my stories would remain unpublished. (And that's why I have not agreed to write stories in other peoples' universes. I have more than enough of my own to last at least this one lifetime.)

I would like to thank Tom Jackson for what might be construed as a far-left-handed compliment (and I'm sure Joe Delaney and maybe one or two others on that short list might, too): since my half-century birthday coincides with the 21st anniversary launch of Apollo IX this year (as well as with the 45th anniversary of the minor event at Trinity Site, some 100 miles south of here), I consider it a great honor to be on any list of "...young writers."!\*]

Jeffrey Kasten  
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Albany, NY 12206

I was particularly interested in the Analog/Asimov's debate, since Analog is normally totally ignored in fandom. Despite the fact that it outsells Asimov's, few fans seem to read it, and stories in it are rarely anthologized or nominated for awards. Of course, the fact that Dozois edits the biggest "Best Of" collection in addition to his own magazine had something to do with that (he should have given up the collection when he was appointed editor of Asimov's, but obviously nobody was about to force the issue when it came up). Anyway, Dozois has published 9 Analog stories in his 7 current Best Of's, out of 183 total stories, just under 5% of the total. I wonder if even Tom Jackson thinks Analog is that mediocre (I'm also guessing that the writer he won't name who pubbed one story there is Lew Shiner; "Snowbirds," 11/82).

Although I was aware that Gardner Dozois pubs few new writers, I couldn't believe NONE were new. I went through the 21 Dozois Asimov's I own (20-25% of the total, depending on when he took over from McCarthy) and found 2 new writers: Allen M. Steele (13/88) and Sage Walker (4/89). There's presumably a few I've missed as well, but your overall point is confirmed--most of the Dozois stable were first bought by others.

Since my personal experience with Stan Schmidt is that he replies quickly, buys from newcomers, pays as well as Asimov's, and is personally well-liked, the question becomes: why does Asimov's (& Dozois) seem to get most of the hot new writers? Surely the increased chance at award nominations and getting into the Dozois "Best Of" can't be reasons by themselves. Part of the problem is Schmidt's seeming dislike of Cyberpunk. I have no direct evidence of this except "Cyberserker" by W.T. Quick (2/87), an anti-cyberpunk story if there ever was one. Indirectly, it's obvious that almost

no cyberpunk has appeared in Analog from reading it, even by writers who aren't part of the clique associated with the movement.

The rest of the problem seems to be about what you suggested: Analog is perceived to buy only one kind of fiction, and writers who would be at home there (Varley, Sterling, Kim Stanley Robinson, etc.) submit little or nothing to it. With few of the Campbell and Bova writers still doing short stories, Schmidt is forced to fall back on his slushpile, which has produced few major writers to date. Somehow Analog is not seen as a respectable or sellable market to newcomers. As an aspiring writer (nothing sold yet) I send most of my stuff to Analog first. However, most of my fellow would-be pros whom I keep in touch with will give their stuff away to fanzines before sending it to Analog! They all seem to think they need to have PhD's in Physics before they can sell to (or read) Analog. Schmidt has to do something to correct this, but I'm not sure what.

The Paula Robinson story was a good one, as I'd expect from a pro. I can't believe it got rejected from semi-prozines before you got it, as it would fit perfectly in Pandora.

[[ It wasn't rejected from semi-prozines, "Uncle Mark" was rejected from prozines, because of the controversial nature of the topic. Paula asked if I wanted it, and even before reading it I said yes.]]

Re Sabella's editorial: I suspect part of the reason is that editors are publishing more contemporary stories, which leads writers to think that work perceived as "Space Opera" will be unsellable or perceived as irrelevant. In this sense the near-future emphasis of cyberpunk makes it have a conservative influence on the genre, which I'm sure is the last thing its practitioners would want. A second force is the almost total failure of SF to predict with any accuracy. After so many failures at getting things correct, writers may be starting to give up the effort. Also, the advance of space technology, which took us from Sputnik to the moon in just twelve years, has slowed to a miserable crawl. The planned US space station is no improvement on Skylab and won't be built until near the end of the decade (if ever); the Russian space program is now being subject to the same kind of cuts as ours was in the 70s, with the result that nothing but further low-Earth orbit missions is likely to be carried out by anybody for the next 25 years. This has helped to dampen interest in writing about interstellar travel, which now seems less likely than ever.

William Wilson Goodson, Jr  
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Huntersville, NC 28078

The NASA Alumni League has published an interesting report entitled, ahem, "The Private Sec-

tor Economic and Employment Benefits to the Nation and to Each State of Proposed FY 1990 NASA Procurement Expenditures."

Actually, the report is hard reading but the summary has some interesting figures. If NASA's procurement expenditures are the \$11.3 billion they want, the experts who prepared this report expect the spending to create 237,000 jobs, in private industry, not the government. Such spending will create, directly and indirectly, \$32.2 billion in total industry sales, \$2.4 billion in corporate profits, and \$7.4 billion in Federal, state and local government tax revenues.

This will be spread around. Michigan, not noted as a major aerospace state, will get roughly \$518.9 millions in sales and 4,582 new jobs. Much of this will be indirect.

These figures do not consider the other benefits of the space program, benefits not as likely to develop from heavy military or social spending. What other benefits?

Knowledge, knowledge about the universe and its origins, information about the history of the Solar system, all sorts of contributions to basic scientific knowledge.

Spin-offs, products and processes developed for the space program that have become part of the world economy. Examples include break-throughs in microelectronics, satellite telecommunications systems, satellite telecommunications systems, Computerized Axial Tomography (brain scans), and the cushions for running shoes.

I went to the Earth Day celebration here in Charlotte wearing a NASA cap, hoping to get an argument going with some environmentalists. Instead I was greeted by folks selling NASA-developed house insulation and solar-powered water heaters, not to mention all the orbital photographs in the different displays.

Creation of New Space-Based Industries, private companies offering space-based products such as launch vehicles, remote imaging, and microgravity processing are just coming into existence. If the U.S. does not act now, the commercial opportunities in these fields may be lost to other countries.

Am I leading up to something? Oddly enough I am not rambling meaninglessly. For once.

The National Space Society, especially its arm Spacecause, is trying to organize a letter-writing campaign to Congress to support the President's Lunar/Mars Initiative. It will be going up before the House and Senate Appropriations committee and every letter could make a difference. The part of the budget that goes to NASA and the NSF also includes the veterans program and housing. If this alloca-

tion is too small, it will probably mean cuts in the politically under-represented NASA budget.

Letters about the value of the space program should be sent to your congressmen and to Senator Barbara Mikulski and Congressman Bob Traxler. They are the chairpersons of the committee that directly oversees NASA.

Senators are written to at:

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Congressmen are written to at:

Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

If you are really interested in learning more about Spacecause, write:

Spacecause  
3435 Ocean Park Blvd  
Suite 201-G, Dept. X  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

I also heard from the following people -- at cons, over the phone, quick notes and postcards, letters not published, etc. And I've probably missed a few people too. My apologies. Lan[\*]

David Alway, Clifton Amsbury, Robert Anderson, Arlan Andrews, Doug Andrews, John Annas, Tom & Tara Barber, John Beam, Ray Beam, Martha Beck, Rose Beetem, Ginny Benson, Eric Bentcliffe, Gary Bernstein, Sheryl Birkhead, Donn Brazier, Dr. William C. Bruer, Jack Brooks, Bruce Burdick, TJ & Mitchell Burnside-Clapp, PL Caruthers-Mongomery, Ann Cecil, Cy Chauvin, Barry & Sally Childs-Heltons, Craig Chrisinger, Chris Clayton, Fred Cleaver, Kathleen Conat, Glen Cook, Wendy Council, Bob Cowie, Barbara Delaplace, Scott & Jane Dennis, Bruce Diamond, I.B. Dobson, Alan Dormire, Tom Easton, Julia Ecklar, Jim & June Enlow, Carl C. Fields, Dennis Fischer, Cliff Flynt, Steve & Sue Francis, Don Franson, Gil Gaier, Jo Anselm Gehm, Barbara Geraud, Jane Gilman, Mike Glicksohn, Alan Greenberg, Bob Greene, Art Greenia, Liz Gross, Mick Hamblen, Dr. Halina Harding, James Harris, Terry Harris, Teddy Harvia, Eric Heideman, Rusty Hevelin, Lynn Hickman, Margaret Hilt, Arthur Hlavaty, Doug Houseman, Cathy Howard, Steve Hudson, Tanya Huff, Thea Hutcheson, Ben Indick, Mary Kay Jackson, Tom Jackson, Fred Jakobcic, Frank Johnson, Jordin Kare, Mike Kennedy, R'ykandar Korra'ti, Allen Koszowski, Michael Kube-McDowell, Rich Lamb, Kevin Langdon, Gary Laskowski, George Laskowski Sr, Sophie Laskowski, Roy Lavender, Steve Leigh, Becca Levin, Gregory Lichtfield, Mary Long, Doug Lott, Gary Lovisi, Jeff Lucus, Dick & Nicki Lynch, Carol Lynn, Joseph T. Major, Mary Manchester, Jim & Laurie Mann, Kathy Mar, Jamie McQuinn, Jeanne Mealy, Linda Melnick, Margaret Middleton, Tera Mitchel, Anne Moore, Perry Glenn Moore, Janice Morningstar, Jeff Neeley, Frank Norton, Terry O'Brien, Anna O'Connell, Frank Olynyk, Elizabeth Osborne, Henry Palka, Joan Panichella, Naomi & Randy Pardue, Joe Patrouch, Ross Pavlac, Thomas Poshnik, Sharon Porath, Janey Priour, Mitch & Joann Radelt, Peggy Ranson, Laura Resnick, Mike & Carol Resnick, Ted Rey-

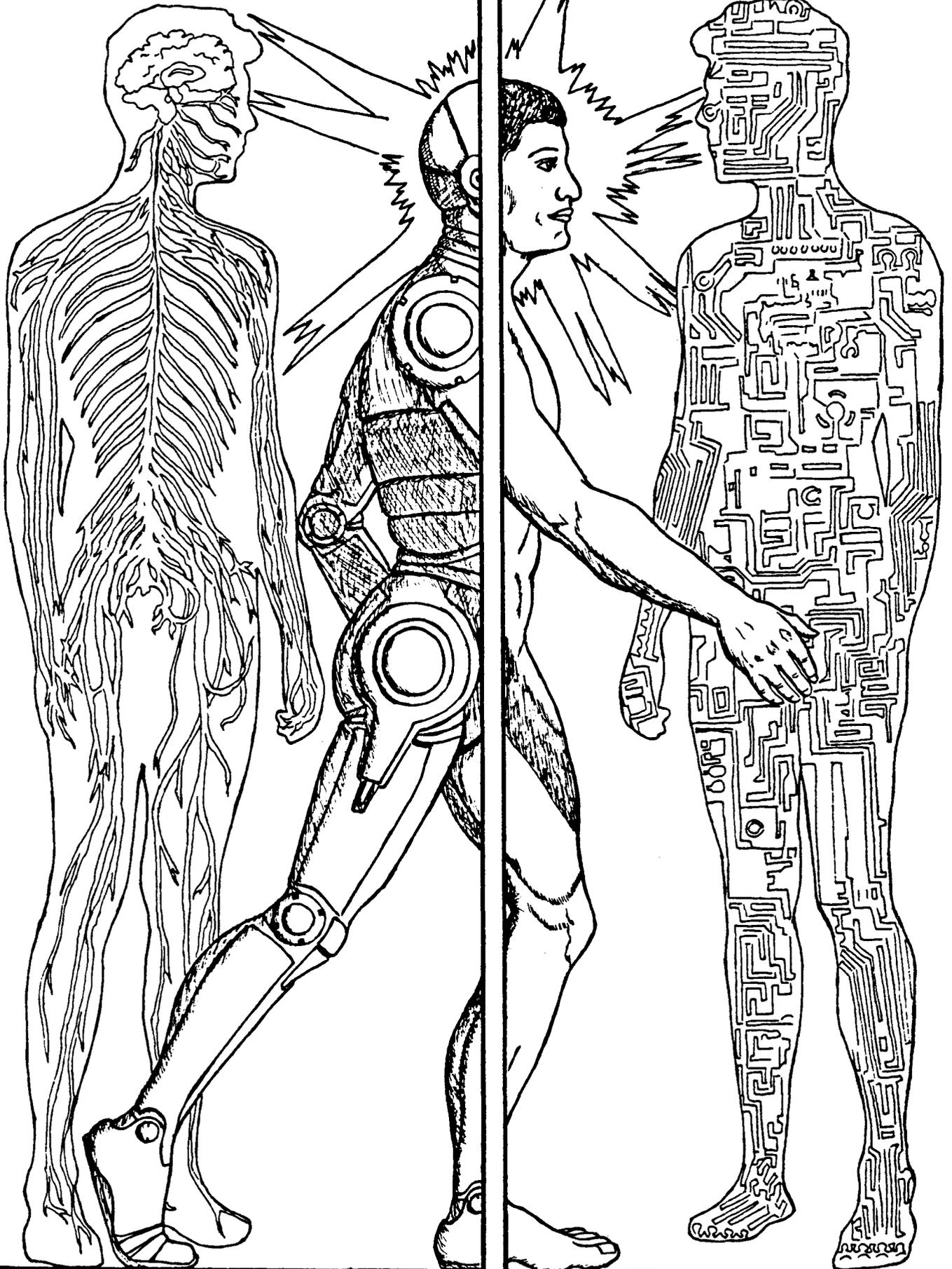
nolds, Ramona P. Richards, Peter Roberts, Dr. Jane Robinson, Paula Robinson, Bob Rodgers, Doug Roemer, Jan & Tim Rotarius, Fred Roth, Tom Sadler, Ben Schilling, David Shea, D.M. Sherwood, Anne Schneider, Bruce Schneier, Sandy Schreiber, Bob Shaw, David Shea, Susan Schwartz, Pat & Roger Sims, Mike & Krista Sinclair, Michael Skeet, Wally Smart, Jill Smethells, Tom Smith, Keith Soltys, Mary Southworth, Dale Speirs, Dick Spelman, Pam Spurlock, David Stein, Diana Stein, John E. Stith, Bill & Brenda Sutton, Chris & Pat Swartout, Gale Tang, Sylvus Tarn, Joan Temple, Charlie Terry, David Thayer, John Thiel, Don C. Thompson, Miranda Thompson, Ruth Thompson, Phil Tortorici, Richard Tuholka, Larry Tucker, R Lorraine Tutihasi, Steve Tymon, Vito Vitauskas, Elisabeth Vonarburg, Harry Warner, Jr., Larry Warner, Julie Washington, Eric & Vickie Webb, Donna Weedman, Henry Welch, Don Wenzel, Brad Westervelt, Denis & Judy Wilemski, Frances Williams, Hania Wojtowicz, Taras Wolansky, Ruth Woodring, Martin Morse Wooster, David & Carol Yoder, Brian Youmans, Elizabeth Young, and Tim & Anna Zahn. [\*]



Here are the addresses of those who contributed to this issue of Lan's Lantern.

|                                                                                                                           |                                                                          |                                                                               |                                                                               |
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| Dan Alldredge<br>501 John St., Suite 551<br>Evansville, IN 47713                                                          | Chuck & Wayne Ermatinger<br>3657 Utah<br>St. Louis, MO 63116             | Mark & Evelyn Leeper<br>80 Lakeridge Dr.<br>Mattawan, NJ 07747                | Diana Stein<br>1325 Key West<br>Troy, MI 48083                                |
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| Gordon R. Dickson<br>Box 1569<br>Twin City Airport<br>Minnesota 55111                                                     | Terry Jeeves<br>56 Red Scar Drive<br>Scarborough<br>ENGLAND YO12 5RQ     | Robert Sabella<br>2 Natalie Drive<br>Budd Lake, NJ 07828                      |                                                                               |
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|                                                                                                                           |                                                                          | Laurel Slate<br>1847 Babcock #406<br>San Antonio, TX 78229                    |                                                                               |





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## 1991 TAFF Ballot

**What is TAFF?** – The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time, TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted on by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$2 or £1. These votes, and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.

**Who may vote?** – Voting in the 1991 race is open to anyone who was active in fandom prior to January 1990, and who contributes at least \$2 or £1 to the Fund. Contributions in excess of the minimum will be gratefully accepted. Voting is by secret ballot: only one vote per person, and you must sign your ballot. "Write-ins" are permitted. You may change your vote at any time prior to the deadline.

**Deadline** – Votes in this race must reach the administrators by 15 May 1991.

**Voting details** – (1) TAFF uses a preferential ballot system which guarantees automatic runoffs until a majority is obtained. You rank the candidate in the exact order of your preference for them. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority, the first-place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots are counted as first-place votes. This process repeats itself until one candidate has a majority. It is therefore *important* to vote for second and third place on your ballot. Also, it is a waste of time to vote for any candidate in more than one place. (2) One other requirement obtains. To win, a candidate must receive at least 20% of the first-ballot first-place votes on both sides of the Atlantic, separately. Any candidate failing to receive this minimum percentage on either side will be dropped, and the second-place votes on their ballots counted as first-place votes in the next ballot count. It is therefore important for candidates and their supporters to canvass fans on both sides of the Atlantic. It should be noted that, while you may send your ballot to either administrator, it will be tabulated with the other votes from the side of the Atlantic on which you reside. Finally, votes from fans not resident in *either* Europe or North America will not be counted towards either 20% minimum (but are almost certain to affect any given race, so don't let this stop you from voting).

**Hold Over Funds** – This choice, similar to "No Award" in Hugo balloting, gives voters the chance to vote for no TAFF trip this year, if the candidates don't appeal to them or if they feel TAFF should slow down its trip frequency. Hold Over Funds may be voted in any position, and is exempt from the 20% requirement; thus, should it ultimately receive a majority of the votes on the final ballot, no TAFF trip will be held this year regardless of how many votes Hold Over Funds received on the first ballot.

**Donations** – TAFF gratefully accepts freely given donations of money and of material for auction; such generosity has sustained the Fund for over 35 years. If you are ineligible to vote, or do not feel qualified to make a choice, why not donate anyway? TAFF is fandom's oldest travel fund, and one of its worthiest causes.

**Candidates** – Each candidate has posted a bond, promising – barring Acts of God – to travel to the 1991 World Science Fiction Convention in Chicago, Illinois (August 29 – September 2, 1991) if elected; and has provided signed nominations and a platform, reproduced overleaf above the ballot.

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Send ballots and contributions to:

*in North America:*

Robert Lichtman  
P. O. Box 30  
Glen Ellen, CA  
95442 USA

*in Europe:*

Christina Lake  
47 Wessex Avenue  
Horfield, Bristol  
BS7 0DE England

*N.B. Make checks payable to relevant individual, NOT TO TAFF.*

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# 1991 TAFF Ballot – Europe to North America

## Abigail Frost

I can boast if you like: Nova Award (Best Fanwriter) 1985, runner-up 1990; founder-member of two major British fan successes: the Mexicons and the newsletter team (retired in glory at ConFiction). I can flash my eclectic connections: co-conspirators include fanwriters, conrunners, publishing grandees, scumbag barflies. Or promise to amaze Chicon with my ability to switch from patrician to fishwife – and back. But TAFF's more than the trip; it must reach out or die. I'd use my administratorship to build awareness among younger and European fans, and prod them into activity to catch the electorate's eye. Fanzine renaissance 1992? You bet.

*Abigail Frost's nominators are: John D. Berry, Gary Farber, Dave Langford, Caroline Mullan, and Ian Sorensen.*

## Bruno Ogorolec

Failing quite miserably to come up with something original for my platform, I must resort to quotes. Three perceptive British ladies (names and addresses withheld) have defined my advantages thus: "Young(ish) European, speaks fluent English, and writes witty fanzine articles which provoke interesting letters." Here's Harry Andruschak: "Of course, I disagree with most of (Bruno's) baloney." Aw, drat! the wrong Harry. I meant Harry Warner: "If the faan awards still existed (Bruno) would deserve one." Yeah, that's more like it. There's a sensible gentleman. And there's the final word from Skel, of course: "We can't all be like Bruno Ogorolec ..."

*Bruno Ogorolec's nominators are: Jenny Glover, Dick Lynch, Mark Manning, Skel, and Walt Willis.*

## Pam Wells

If you've heard of Pam Wells you're probably thinking of NUTZ, possibly STRUMPET, or maybe even SIX SHOOTER or SHALLOW END. You might be thinking of her work on convention committees or pop quizzes, or even her participation in various British APAs. If you knew her well, you might be thinking more about her friendliness and sense of humor, or perhaps her passion for shoes and chocolate. But if you *were* Pam Wells, you'd be thinking how crazy it is to promote yourself in a hundred words, when all you really want to say is: "Take me, America, I'm yours!"

*Pam Wells's nominators are: Harry Bond, Jeanne Gomoll, Chuch Harris, Lucy Huntzinger, and Martin Tudor.*

Please read both sides of this sheet before voting. Send entire sheet as vote.

**Do not detach this portion!**

I vote for (rank 1 - 2 - 3 etc.):

Name and address (legibly, please):

\_\_\_\_\_ **Abigail Frost**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_ **Bruno Ogorolec**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street

\_\_\_\_\_ **Pam Wells**

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Code

\_\_\_\_\_ **Hold Over Funds**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Country Phone Number

Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ as a contribution to TAFF. Please make checks, etc., payable to Robert Lichtman or Christina Lake, not to "TAFF," and payable in the currency of that administrator's home country.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, then in order to qualify please give, in the space below, the name and address of an active fan (not a fan group, a candidate or their nominator) who is known to them and to whom you are known:

Reproduction of this form encouraged. It is the official voting vehicle and must be reproduced verbatim. Anyone so doing should substitute their name here: **George Laskowski Jr.**