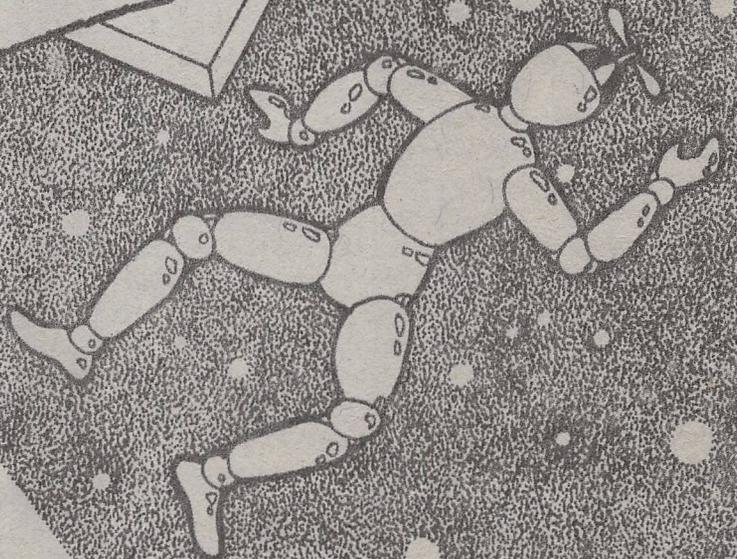


TALES

from the...

WIMPY ZONE



from
the darkest
corners of the
inner mind to the
furthest reaches of
OUTWORLD

You see no Do Not Disturb sign and you unlock this door with the key of implication. Beyond it is another dimension -- a dimension of terminal idle chitchat, a dimension of visibility, a dimension of room parties. You're moving into a land of both image and substance, of quote-teeshirts and schlicks. You just crossed over into the

WIMPY ZONE

It is a Cincinnati Summer, where idiot-box weathermen speak apologetically of "humiture," and it is post-Worldcon. Rapidly graying fan Dave Locke sits in his slightly air-conditioned apartment, watching the smoke from his cigarette disappear as three large fans (none of them big name) whip the slightly cooled air around in an effort to deceive the skin. Something tall and wet with ice-cubes in it lies near at hand. His thoughts are ephectic, grappling with the burning issues of the day (like, is there still a backup bottle of scotch in the closet?). Little does he know that in another moment the telephone will ring, and because the phone is in this apartment he will answer it, and this will be the first movement which serves to propel him into the

WIMPY ZONE

Ring.

A gracious good evening to you.

Hi, Dave. This is Bill.

How the fuck are you?

Just fine, thanks, except that I'm still trying to rest up from LAcon.

David Hulan tells me the clouds parted over Orange County for the first time in about 803 years, and that it was unnecessarily hot and humid for the duration of the con.

I'm not sure I noticed. Remember: I'm used to Cincinnati.

Right. However, he was telling me it served to cancel the two hot tub parties he'd arranged. No one wants to get in a hot tub when they get the impression they're already walking around in a steambath.

Well, I was inside most of the time, except for going to and fro, so I'm not sure I--

Right, right. But, you know, I was rather disappointed. Not just that I couldn't afford to be there, but that it didn't happen. The hot tub parties, I mean. Not having ever been to one I was kind of looking forward to all the convention reports, since I know all the fans who were scheduled for the hot tub parties.

Good, good. But what I--

You know why?

Why what?

Why I was looking forward to at least reading about them?

No, but--

Well, I'll tell you. I wanted to examine, with idiotic care, what it is that one does in a hot tub with guests besides sit in hot water with your bare

faces hanging out. I mean, I pause to wonder what it is one talks about in a hot tub, other than what might usually be talked about anywhere. Surely there is a type of dialog that can be found only in the hot tub, sort of like why "boy I wish I could scratch my balls" is usually encountered only by people who work around spacesuits. Something like, perhaps, "I think I'm cooking," and "don't slide around on that wooden seat if you're not going to wear a suit."

I wouldn't know, but I'm sure you're right. Or, if not right, at least fairly close. However, if you can spare a moment for a digression, I want to tell you the reason I'm calling.

(Music swells in background. Da da da-da, da da da-da, da da da-dummm.)

Oh, yes, of course. Turn that music down a little, though, will you? Thanks. You were saying...?

Well, at LAcon it was suggested that the U.S.A., for Worldcon purposes, be split down the Mississippi and divided into just two zones. Immediately following this, Jack Herman took the podium and, using a copy of the very same upside-down world map which Eric Lindsay sent you and Jackie, and which is hanging on the wall behind you at this very minute, poked his tongue clear through his cheek and suggested the world be divided into two zones based on a dividing line which starts at the Mississippi River. He outsmuffed the smofs, as his proposal has been sent to committee. A Rotation Study Committee, with Jack Herman on it.

I've always thought that Jack Herman should be cast in bronze and put on display somewhere as a Good Example. If fandom had fifteen more Jack Hermans, it still wouldn't have enough.

I'll go along with that, but what I wanted to tell you is what Ben Yalow said.

Ben Yalow. He's a NYok boy, isn't he?

Yes. In response to Craig Miller's motion dividing the U.S.A. into two zones, rather than the present three for site selection purposes, Ben suggested this would solve the problem in any year "when you have a wimpy zone."

A wimpy zone?

A wimpy zone.

All right, well, coming from Ben Yalow I'm sure that has more meaning than it would, say, anonymously.

No doubt, but I thought I'd ask if you didn't think there was a skit for you in that. After all, the deadline approaches.

Well, there's potential in it.

Just imagine: soon there may be a couple of hundred fans -- or maybe about forty -- running around in "Wimpy Zone" teeshirts.

Wouldn't it be simpler to just hire a wimpy Kansas City hitman to track down Ben Yalow and scratch him?

You mean rub him out?

No. Scratch him.

I can see that you're thinking in terms of a skit already. That's great. When can I have it?

Any moment now. But why me? Does geography make me a midwestern fan?

That's a philosophical and emotional question, Dave, and it's yours to ponder. Also, the ramifications are probably too lengthy for imprinting on a teeshirt. Actually, you're an old NYok boy yourself, aren't you?

Upstate. The northwoods.

Perfect. Besides, everyone knows that Dave Locke is 6'3", with muscles out to here, never wears a shirt, and for kicks likes to lurk in dark alleys and mug karate experts.

What?

I said, when can I have it?

You've got it.

.....
...cover by JACKIE CAUSGROVE; words by DAVE LOCKE

DATE: 09/15/84
 TIME: 12:54 PM
 AMOUNT: \$1.75

GREATER CINCINNATI
 INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
 SYSTEM PARKING

...How I Spent My Day:

I don't normally gamble. At least with money. (Things like the way I drive to work in the morning, the fact that I have to entrust a large percentage of my 'lifework' to the Postal System, or quitting a job with sixteen years seniority to move cross-State with Absolutely No Guarantee--these aren't gambles; just the way I do things.) I WILL go it alone on two of a kind, or on a hunch, or simply for the hell of it...but that's why I play Euchre rather than Poker. It's been seven or eight years since

I invested in the State Lottery (I even avoided the mania a month ago when the Lotto reached 25 Million; I would look at the six-numbers-between-one-and-forty in each Sunday's paper and ask myself: "Do any of these numbers ~~have any~~ ~~mean~~ ~~ing~~ have any meaning to me...would I have picked ANY of them...?). The answer was always "No"...even though I did acquire a game card during the Mania. After all, I am human you know; the temptation is always there.

...even so I always return the Publisher's Clearing House sweepstake tickets, so you might say I was gambling the 20¢ postage stamp. Except that it's not really (oh yeah? Since when?) that simple: I actually WON \$10.00 from PCHI. Of course, that was four or five years ago, and the pot has been expended in postage to them since...but you know how it goes: Rationalization is the cheapest form of self-appeasement.

...and so I went to Lacon II. Even though I haven't yet paid off the airfare to Westeroon. 1983. A gamble? ...you'll never know how much of one. But one won: I got to see and spend time with the two I specifically went to see...plus other Good People; I had fun...and returned to find the home front seemingly stable.

Who could ask for anything more...particularly one who now spends life on the approach ramp...?

Before going to San Jose in July, last year, I hadn't flown since my all-expenses-paid-trip-to-fame-and-trauma, in 1978. The trip last year was on Republic--and I haven't had that many ups-and-downs since the last time I reflected on the history of my personal involvements.

This time the trip was on a real airline (TWA)--even though I went about it with my usual degree of logic: I bribed Dave & Jackie into driving me the two hours to Indianapolis...and then return a week later to pick me up. Well, at least it was a hundred miles in the correct direction! (The rationalization was that it saved me \$90.00 off the roundtrip fare from Cincinnati; it seemed like a good idea at the time.)

...and I rediscovered how much I really do enjoy flying (once the act of Getting There and off the ground is accomplished): I find it a continual course in humbleness AND egotism...and I'd like to do it much oftener...

When I read in last Tuesday's Enquirer that

Continental (as a promotion to launch its new service from Cincinnati to Denver) would be "giving away" 100 stand-by tickets at noon on Saturday (via a raffle to be conducted on the top level of the airport's parking structure) there wasn't any serious doubt that I'd be there, even though I just knew I had no chance at all.

It turned out that there were 50 pairs involved rather than 100 chances, and the process was that you had your hand date-stamped (the inevitable comments were inevitable) and received the portion of a baggage claim check that would normally be attached to your luggage ~~baggage if you lost~~, while the like-numbered portion (usually stapled to your ticket folder) was tossed into the drum...

There is a sense of almost inevitable camaraderie to these things, particularly if they are held outside on an early fall day alternately warm and suddenly very cool as the sun passed behind frequent clouds... And the crowd wasn't that big (Perhaps 500) so everyone at least thought they had a chance.

Shortly after noon the drum was spun (more or less; the lid kept popping open) and the first of 50 stubs was drawn. The procedure was that if your part of the claim check matched that drawn, you were to Spin the Wheel (which was divided into segments labelled with perhaps twenty or so of the cities that Continental flies to) and receive two stand-by passes (to be used by 3/1/85) to the destination where the clicker came to rest...

With visions of San Francisco and Conflu dancing in my head...

Three people got New Zealand, and one Australia. There were eight or nine to Honolulu, a like number to LA, and perhaps five each to Phoenix and Denver. About a hundred people (so it seemed) got to go to Houston (Continental's HQ); was the wheel weighted, I wondered? And one spin of the wheel brought up San Francisco...

And after all this, I can sense that you are all waiting with a commendable sense of self-control, yet wanting to ask: "So, how did you do, Bill?"

Two stubs were drawn early on that matched the first four digits of my "number" and were less than ten off (one either way) on the last two.

Time passed and eventually:

"06-05-77."

Shit.

Later: "06-05-71."

That was as close as I came.

Invested: \$1.75 in parking fees, a slightly greater amount for gasoline...and less than two hours of my life. Gained...? Well, at least I took the chance; and I wouldn't always have to wonder..."What if...?"

...and so I drove back to the city, disappointed but satisfied, to keep a belated doctor's appointment--and to launch one of the biggest gambles of my ~~whole~~ life...

One with the odds incredibly against, but...

More about that, perhaps, next time...

Returning home, I discovered I still had the "stubs"... and thought that--since I'm reducing & e-stenciling the bulk of this (in order to conserve space)--I'd run it...and use my tale as a brief lead-in to this issue.

...gambling that I could keep your interest while first-drafting Much Ado About Essentially Little...

So, how am I doing so far...?

Ah, well.

It is now the afternoon of 9/16/84...and it's only been three weeks since I typed up the last page of this supposedly 'bi-monthly/quarterly' fanzine... I have reasons for this madness, but they seem to pale in the light of day... Ah well...or did I already say that?

Jackie Causgrove ran off OW #0, and Jackie and Dave Loske collated a hundred copies of it, so that I take it to LA. A thankless task; but one appreciated.

...and still the response to Outworlds 38 rolls in:

DARROLL PARDOE
I do profoundly disagree with Ian Covell on one point, namely 'social interaction'. Letter and fanzine writing is all very well, but a diet of social contact on that basis alone would be sadly incomplete. Consider an ordinary conversation --two people talking back and forth. They are both there, on the spot. The conversation is interactive: one person's words are immediately taken up and replied to by the other, and the first person then does the same, all in the space of a minute or two. Contact through the mails is much less informal, less spontaneous, and on a far longer time scale, which allows you to be more careful of what you say so that while saying more you may say less as well.

And being in the same room as the other person allows you to observe them as they speak--to hear the nuances of their speech and (most importantly, I think) to watch the expressions that march across their face. Our faces are a very important part of our communication (in witness of which, ponder the horror that greets a facial deformity as compared to a deformity of another part of the body) and to lose sight of another person's face is to lose much subtlety from what they say.

A phone-call is a kind of half-way house; better for inter-person communication than a letter but not so good as being there. You hear the inflections of the voice; you get the instant interaction; but you lose the sight of the face. So though I very much value my contacts through the mails, I regard personal contacts at conventions and otherwise as just as important in keeping in touch with people, and I'd hate to cut myself off from those contacts. 9 | 84

"Communication: the bane of inter-personal contact. The one thing I practice incessantly, but never come close to perfecting. To understand me, at all, you have to understand one basic fact: As long-winded as I am, with this strange blend of obscure references combined with probably too much frankness...I am much more at ease behind the security of a typewriter and the postal "system", than I am in person, or even over that strange hybrid--the telephone--where I can hear you, but not see you. In this form I can think things out in advance; revise them (though I rarely do) if they don't come out the way I want them to. Over the telephone, well, I can cover to a certain degree: blaming obscurities on static on the line, or the traffic outside my window. I can hear the inflections in your voice that I can't catch in print--but I still can't see you, and determine whether the inflections are valid, or not. It is an imperfect media, and by its inconsistencies, much more the frustrating than print, or direct contact."

"...LETTER TO A FRIEND"; Xenolith 7

It's been a long time since I wrote that (8/13/78; part of a lengthy piece composed after a phone call), but I instantly thought of it when I read your note, Darroll.

Obviously I agree with you, to a large extent: after all, I've just returned from my 22nd Anniversary Convention and, if this were to be dated 'September', it would be my 23rd fanzine 'annish'. Yet I am not going to be the one to say that those who restrict their fanac to the printed media are 'lesser' fans...

*After all, even after all this time, I still often think that my life would be a lot simpler if I were ~~at home~~ to likewise restrict my fanac...
...a lot less interesting; but more peaceful!*

AVEDON CAROL
it was nice to find your great big fat

piece of twilltone waiting when I got home: Strangely enough, one of my favorite lines in the whole zine was Ian Covell's--"I agree with Neil Rest: must we keep comparing fanzines?" Even filling out poll ballots and Hugo ballots and things tires me out--there are many things that give me pleasure, and I don't like being placed in the position of having to slight some of them by elevating others over them.

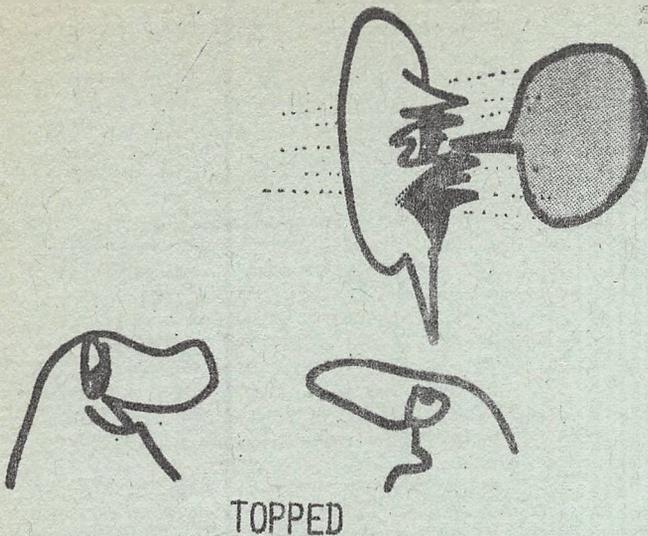
Let me give my little Instant Advice On How To Improve Your Fanzine speech (not that you need it): Do whatever you can to keep costs down. This rule has served me reasonably well, and of course was born of economic necessity (although my finances do seem to be gradually improving since I graduated a year ago). It usually has a lot to do with most people's publishing agenda, both for good and ill. But I found out a long time ago that promising myself that I could mail my zine with a first class stamp--only one of them per copy--made me keep the page-count down, and that made me edit a bit more severely. It also made me stop doing a lot of fussy junk (like justifying margins) that wasted space and didn't look very good, and stopped me from wasting a lot of space doing things I wasn't any good at (like playing Art Director when more text would fill the space as well or better). Now, your economic limits may be greater than my "one first-class stamp per copy" rule, which itself shifts around as the seasons change, but I think a lot of people work too hard and spend more money than they needed to (and consequently can't publish as often as they'd like) and end up with what Ann-Laurie called "Kells Syndrome" (after doing exactly this with Harlot). The return is never as great as the effort you put into it, of course, because the bigger a zine is, the less energy people seem to have for comprehensively locating it (or in some cases, even reading it). This is my fanzine standard: The amount of positive feedback should be equal to the amount of work you put into the zine, or else you're probably working too hard. I always get the feeling Bill Bowers is getting something worthwhile out of the work he puts into his zine (like, it shows--got some great letters here!), and that makes me enjoy it more. You must be doing something right.

Someone should tell Ted White that "woken" is a pretty old word. English is not always spoken (spoked? spake?) the same way in, say, Australia, or England, as it is rendered in, say, Falls Church.

No, no, we don't repress our violence--we express it in vicious ways, but nobody seems to realize. Haven't you ever noticed how nervous it makes you to have someone suddenly start doing housekeeping around you? This is definitely an aggressive act, an act of overt nastiness. Men just don't pick up the fine subtleties of these expressions of hostilities. We've been violently vacuuming for years.

Arthur Thomson, who is one of my favorite people (and has mavericked his way to the top 40 of my heart in record time), knows very well that when I say these nasty things about "men" I am using the general, sociological "men" and not the absolute, Gilder/Freud/Bergmann/Schlafly "men". Arthur is certainly aware after watching me make everyone sick with my boyfriend (stet) in London that some of my best friends are men (why, my brother's a man, and he's just like part of the family).

Which I suppose, brings me unavoidably back to Ian Covell, who seems to make a life's work of both stereotyping feminists (Joy-for-Chrissakes-Hibbert! Do I now have to answer for her for the rest of my life?) and setting up straw-women to knock down (much like, not coincidentally, mama Betty Friedan herself, who has lately been running around babbling some nonsense about how the "second stage" of feminism is this brand new thing women are going to start having to deal with called--are you ready?--men and the family. Gosh, that Betty, she is just so *insightful*. None of the rest of



us even *thought* about mentioning men and the family!).

I wonder whether I should bother anymore with Ian at all. Or maybe I should give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that maybe it's just that no one ever told him the difference between a generalization and an absolute statement before. Here's the only absolute statement you will ever hear me make about men, Ian: Men do not naturally have the physical reproductive potential to conceive and bear children in their own bodies without surgical intervention. (Notice I did not say that women always *do*--it's just that men don't. And even then, those of us who have taken philosophy classes may say, how can we be sure that even *this* is true, for all we really know is what we have seen so far, and it could in fact be the case that some man may in the past have done so, or some man may yet be born who can, and even this can not ever really be proven for sure, f'sure...)

Why, Ian, do you assume that the statement "I like to write" (or paint or do music) necessarily implies it as a hobby? And why do you keep arguing with Joy Hibbert when you pretend to be addressing me? Why did you bother to re-type and discuss a quote from my letter without reading it? I did not say, "Every man I meet will automatically assume that my profession will easily take a back seat to washing his dishes." I never said "absolutely all men will always..." anything. Why do you insist on reading it that way? When a man tells a woman, "I paint" (or write or program computers or work construction or whatever), he *can* assume that she does not think he will give up his painting or whatever when he gets married so he can suddenly become obsessed with his spouse's eating habits and laundry needs. I sincerely doubt that many men have ever gotten married or set up housekeeping of any kind with a woman and suddenly discovered that the wife and all the wife's friends assumed that upon marriage he would drop his career in order to stay home and cook all day. Maybe his wife turned out to expect him to stop doing a non-economically productive "hobby" and get a steady job, but that means she wasn't paying attention and he'll find plenty of sympathy from both women and men for his position. I, on the other hand, can never assume that a man won't expect me to give up a career, no matter how lucrative it may be, so that I can suddenly mire myself in dirty dishes. Most of my female friends have run into the same problems. I am not saying that *all* men do this--as a matter of fact, I've had pretty good luck with men (in fandom) and have only run into a couple of real clinkers. My female friends outside of fandom often express serious envy of my good luck. But I know what they're talking

about. Statistically, the men they are so angry at comprise the majority of the male population. Men--as a general (not absolute) group--expect a woman's needs and career to be secondary in a relationship--secondary to *his* needs and career. To both of them. Men have no intention of giving as good as they get. Statistically, most men really do expect their wives to stop working upon marriage--even men who fully expect to marry college-educated, career-oriented women.

But why should I have to say "most men" when I talk to you, Ian? I assume you are at least bright enough to know we can't make absolute statements when we are talking about these sociological phenomena. I don't want to have to talk to you like you are a slow child who must be constantly reminded that men do not absolutely, innately, wear trousers, and women do not absolutely, innately wear dresses. Neither should I have to tell you that all feminists do not absolutely, innately think exactly like each other or Germaine Geer or Betty Friedan or Joy Hibbert or Joanna Russ or Ali Sheldon or Avedon Carol. I don't even know people who always think like themselves, let alone anyone else. I have days when I lose my faith, and other days when I believe it can all be worked out. No one can think exactly like me because I don't even think exactly like me on some days. Why should I have to tell you this, Ian? Perhaps because you fit into a certain statistical group of males who... but never mind. "I listened," you say, but I rather doubt it. You seem bent on disagreeing, as you do repeatedly, with things which have not even been said. You argue with people who are not here. You have a hidden agenda, you are mad at something someone who isn't me did or said, but I am convenient so you argue with me as if I represented whoever this person is you are mad at, perhaps Joy Hibbert or Germaine Geer or Betty Friedan.

You say, "a complete human is a partnership of a man and a woman." This is silly, and damned heterosexual besides. A partnership of a man and a woman is a partnership of a man and a woman--each of whom is still a separate human being. I will not argue with "I simply believe that our race is two-sexed, and a mixture of the sexes is a racial type," because for the life of me I can't figure out what it means. If you think women are incomplete, better off in some way with men than without them, how do you explain the fact that we live longer without you than with you? Of course, you live longer with us than without us, so perhaps in the case of men you are correct. Ah, but I am being facetious again, which may be going right by you.

You have decided to call yourself a feminist. How impressive it is to see you expending so much energy knocking down straw women in the name of feminism when you could be doing something a little more useful. Go argue with Arthur Clarke and Robert Heinlein instead of Joanna Russ and James Tiptree Jr. Go argue with John Alderson instead of me. There are plenty of men in MCP tee-shirts running around running down feminists. I am not convinced of their pretensions to "egalitarianism" either. "Meet me sunshine!" you say. When I see you writing with such passion (or is that merely venom?) in response to misogyny as you write against feminists, I will be less averse to meeting you. In the meantime, I hope you will keep your distance if you are so bent on hating feminism so much.

(But you, Bill, I like!)

8/19/84

...and I like you, Avedon. I also like Ian (at least from his letters; him, I haven't met). I suspect that at this stage neither is going to "convince" the other of anything, but... I tend to agree with your basic fanzine-publishing standard/rules: but it's certainly more 'goal' than actuality at times. As long as I can have fun doing what I do...I'll do it (reserving the option of bitching about the expense/time expenditures as I go along!). Meanwhile, it's only appropriate +---+

IAN COVELL

Unhappily, my part-time job (in a bookshop) has ended in a bit of acrimony so I had a reaction against fiction in general for a while because of some unguessable reason. The regular letters and fanzines, I am glad to say, have gradually pulled me out of the trough. I may not be reading fiction much, but I no longer spit because I have some to read in future months... (I won't specify more but your publication of my letters netted two very concrete responses from two of your readers: do I sound that plaintive?)

I can see what Don D'Amassa means about an author making his readers react (and thus--hopefully--reveal their inner selves to their outer selves) but I still have the feeling discussion is better than insult. To portray--eternally--a section of humanity as brutish, insular, crude, oppressive, incomplete, cold, and even worse is no basis for discussion. It isn't a true picture, it isn't even life. It's polemic and it's propaganada and I hate the stuff.

(I did have a thought about feminism. There was a generation, perhaps in the mid-to-late sixties?, who withdrew from 'society' (ie, men) and lived in all-female communities while thrashing out the reasons for the feminist movement. Then they came back and preached. The converted are the ones who now argue loudly. But like many converts, they know only the cant, the final agreed solutions, rather than the evolutionary discussion which created the movement. They can't argue because they don't know how, they know only the 'truths' which must be adhered to, any deviation is treated as an attack, any argument is treated the same. Sense?)

Larry Downes is correct; though I wish he'd used the term 'social conditioning' rather than 'Party mentality'. (In fact, why did he use the term?) Such conditioning isn't restricted to New York City (An old saying in our county of Yorkshire is "Everyone's mad save thee and me, and I'm not too sure about thee.")--I've always said English (ie, Western) society was schizoid. At least in the sense that schizoid behaviour usually involves the use of a 'secret language' whereby the sufferer can escape from 'reality' by using it. The secret language is, of course, 'euphemism' that we apply to tabu subjects like sex and death; 'make love' instead of 'fuck', eg. (Finally even the euphemisms sublime, of course, and 'make love' becomes 'sleep with' just as 'die' becomes 'pass over' becomes 'fell asleep'.) Thus, we are encouraged to double-think. We all know what the real words are, but we never use them. Schizoid. Basically immature or sick.

I appreciate Al Curry's explanation about different/conflicting laws in different states. I can't list any offhand but I do recall several UK news reports which made it fairly clear that you were damned if you broke the (English) law but damned if you followed it. The greatest shame of the British legal system is its size; few if any laws are ever repealed. So, like the growing power of the police, laws are added and added and never questioned. (By the way, there is now a law against 'conspiracy'. There wasn't a law against conspiracy until police began to charge people with it when they couldn't think of anything else; finally it was challenged in court--this law was not made by parliament--and the judge upheld it because the police had been using it so long, it was now 'real'.) Since there are so many laws, often stupid (you aren't allowed to fly a kite more than--I think--one hundred feet high) it is easy for authority, read police, to think of some way to prosecute or arrest someone they want to arrest. This means that in some areas of the country (like Manchester, where the Chief Constable is a lay preacher) massive and periodic raids are carried out against sex-shops ('I want them off the streets' admitted the CC) whereas other areas --at least until recently--just didn't bother. However,

this government has demanded that all the laws be applied and where they aren't being applied has made new laws which must be obeyed because they are new.

Do you get the idea I don't like our laws? Damn told.

Speaking of fiction that sells (Curry again), I too would long have said that the trashiest fiction sells best because it's the most generalised (read: stereotyped), ie, there are no individuals in works like Robbins or Sheldon, they are *types*, hence recognisable, hence attractive. But in that case why is it that I, who I consider fairly intelligent, find the modern-day bestsellers like Gene Wolfe and Stephen Donaldson too highbrow in that they utilise language I find almost incomprehensible with background psychological reasons I find incomprehensible too?

Rereading my letter, I was struck by how awkward some of it was. The sentences dangle or flop with too many subjects inside, they are unspecific (the sentences about men replacing books on shelves should have said *the* shelves rather than *their* shelves since there's confusion as to whether this refers to the men (their) or the books (their)). A late sentence '...why should (readers) endure disdain to read it' refers of course not only to the ethics promulgated by an author, but the morals as promulgated by someone like Russ. I'm not sure Russ even wants men to read her books at all.

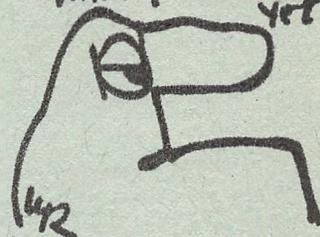
...I've just read six pages of OW38 without stopping, nodding agreeably, grimacing when I disagreed, smiling at the jokes. Damn it, for ten minutes there, I *heard* those pages speaking to me (they spoke in English accents, though--is there something about your typesetter?). I was right, such fanzines with such letters are true correspondence/communication. I am reminded of a large department store in my area which, until recently, sent messages and bills round the place by those vacuum tubes. These rooms where we read and type are in the same huge store, and fanzines are like John (SHOCKWAVE RIDER) Brunner's tapeworm, which goes through the system accumulating information, then displays it on every keyboard for appraisal.

...so that's who ATom is. No other fanzine has ever printed his full name, just the...what, pen-name? ...what is Jerry Kaufman's definition of 'relevance'? (Truly, for a moment or two I thought it was a new word I'd have to know if I wanted to stay in touch.) ...I don't wear t-shirt slogans because phrases like BROADCHEST look like ROA/HES and everyone wonders whether I just missed a C out.

Harry Warner: on two consecutive days, I received *Outworlds* (46 pages), *Holier Than Thou* (100 p) and D West's study of fanzines (178 pages!!). There's bravery in such exercises, dedication, and similar positive vales. .. I love typos. When Harry Warner says Peggy King spent years 'staring on the George Gobel show', my immediate thought was "TV viewers will watch anything, including other people watching." Then reality intruded. Pity. I kept thinking of all sorts of theme songs: Stareway to Heaven; You there, you with the stares in your eyes; but it wasn't to be.

There is a difference between a fan and a *contributing* fan. A contributing fan is one you *hear from*, which means he puts effort into fandom, which is effort and concentration not centred on sf (ie,

GRUMP!
PAGE 7 AND
NO LETTER FROM
HARRY WARNER!
YET.



reading). Also, fandom itself ranges so widely that it--should--introduce(s) fans to other pasttimes and interests. In short, participation in fandom opens the mind of fans and leads apart (not away) from sf. Thus, sidetracked, some--many?--fans move to areas of interest they hadn't considered/known about. Does any of that ring true? For me, fandom made me think of many areas, and read/do a fair deal I wouldn't have done, but it also led me deeper in--a communion of minds that still intrigues/interests me and which keeps me reading...

I thank Harry Warner for isolating that phrase from Mike Resnick's piece. (Having had an opportunity now to read several of MR's recent works, I can say that he doesn't read like Malzberg, but he is interested--sometimes--in the same things, like religion and psychological disturbance.) Now let me say that in my opinion, no literature exhibits a *clearer* example of 'the human heart in conflict with itself' than *fantasy*; never have psyches been clearer or human relationships less cluttered by the machinery either of metal or social conditioning. In fantasy, naked psyches collide. Great stuff.

Brandt followed by D'Ammassa (especially) had me thinking deeply for quite a while. I admire Don a great deal and can't remember a time when he didn't make perfect sense. But I think he's *wrong* about Tiptree. I had to reach into myself to know which of the reasons he gives were mine, and the answer is: most. I consider Tiptree's stories, esp HOUSTON and WOMEN, to be pure didacticism, with no real people in them at all; they are *lessons*, jazzed up with plot tension to pretend to be fiction; they are *demonstrations* of what Tiptree thinks 'men' are like. That there are no recognisable (to me) 'men' in these stories was not too bothersome--other authors do the same--but what was and is annoying is the *praise* heaped on Tiptree (including awards) for what are essentially didactic polemics; it was like praising Von Daniken for his contributions to scientific research. (And, no, I wasn't around in fandom when HOUSTON was published and so didn't see any discussion of the tale at all.)

I agree with you totally about Mike Resnick's THE BRANCH. I just didn't *care* about anyone in it. Essentially, that's why I like or dislike a work by anyone.

I also agree totally with George RR Martin (at least in his letter)--the turn-off in Malzberg (your cyns will find you out) is his contention that the reader is an idiot for reading his work; it's an undercurrent of cruel laughter that cuts more deeply when it takes you two or three books to hear it. There are some genres in which this doesn't matter--the erotica that BNM wrote, for example (SOUTHERN COMFORT and SCREEN come to mind)--but in sf, the reader already *knows* hse is going to be lied to, what's awful is to learn that the author doesn't care enough to lie well, but almost glories in lying to the reader rather than *for* the reader...

Malzberg's disastronauts (my own term) are metaphors, and metaphors do better in fable than in fiction.

What I find amazing is that Martin *disagrees* with BNM's view of life--he admits there's a 'thread of darkness' in his work. More truthfully, I can't think of a single GRRM work that made me feel good about being alive or more specifically human. Where is the joy in *his* work? I've read DYING OF THE LIGHT, FEVRE DREAM and the short stories but I can't recall a single uplifted story. Why are the personae of some writers so joyful in their fan articles and so bitter and disillusioned in their fiction? I agreed with everything GRRM says about BNM, and I really thank him for saying it.

I can't believe how much I've written... 9|2|84

...and I can't believe how much I've 'cut'! Ah, well, it's getting down to compromise time, so most will be pruned...this time. ¶ I dunno--to me it's not a quibble --but still I hesitate to get into it...oh, why not...? Although I know what you're saying, I don't buy that 'make love' is necessarily, has to be, or even should be considered an 'euphemism' for 'fuck'. The two terms/acts can certainly be synonymous...they don't have to be, is what I'm saying. To 'make love' does not necessarily require physical contact, whereas 'fucking' does...even when it's being done 'to you' by something as tenuous as the federal government. ¶ ...but then, 'sleep with'--at least in the fannish lexicon--is definitely an euphemism; and sometimes a convenient one, he added. ¶ Jerry's definition of 'relevanve' is probably suoinct, and would undoubtedly include something about Bowers' predilection towards typoses...

ROGER WADDINGTON

..... Though jobless, I'm not too worried, with Ian Covell, about life in thirty years' time; it's how I'll survive till then, that bothers me. Signing on at the dole office means my contributions are credited, and I should have something like the basic State pension when the time comes to retire, whether I'm in a job or no. Too, I was in my last job long enough to contribute to their scheme, and so guaranteed a part-pension of £700 a year (though how much will that be worth, with ever-rising inflation?). And I've been paying into another pension scheme on my own account; so when the time comes, I should be able to live in luxury. The question is, will I live long enough to benefit from all this?

Must admit, I read Don D'Ammassa's confession of 3000 mysteries with something approaching jealousy; when that's only mysteries, how much else has he got? Tough I might be approaching the same total, if not still living in someone else's house. Managed to smuggle part to other places round the house--the paperbacks I nought with my first pocket money, a collection of Blackwood's Magazine, of National Geographic (the March issue is under lock and key), of Robert Nathan--but if I hadn't made sacrifices in my own living space, I might have had to tunnel through by now, and sleep standing upright. As it is, my shelves are becoming double-parked, and my bed's two inches higher than it should be. Though when I see the prices now reached by some of what I've had to abandon...

Even if my collecting hadn't been curtailed, thanks to these circumstances, it's also been confounded by the arrival on the newsstands of something called The Book & Magazine Collector. Probably part of the same phenomena mentioned by Don; it's half articles and half adverts, and whenever there's an article on some particular topic, say the Ian Fleming books or TV spin-offs you can be sure that the adverts in the next issue will be filled with such titles, and all at ridiculous prices. So now, I leave what little book-hunting I do till somewhere after the 20th of each month; you can be sure that whichever bookshop you're in, you'll be trampled in the rush of people waving their copies of B&MC, and stripping the shelves bare. Once, it was such a gentlemanly pursuit...

Managed to obtain a copy of THE PRINCESS BRIDE, at great expense (well, the 25p now needed for a library request); and with Ian, I can't see what the fuss is all about either. It's maybe another British/American difference, but I saw it as a good story alone, without the editorial asides, and one that I'd have loved to read as a child, even without my father helping. This could lead into a thesis; but trying to keep it short...we're more likely to take our 'romances' seriously; satires of institutions, yes, of governments even; as in ANIMAL FARM and BREWHON; but this is such an insignificant target; (I think the latter might be more

like it). Maybe someone else might help me out! An agreeable time-passer; but the one modern fairy story I still prefer, and played absolutely straight (though also with a few false notes) is still SIR HENRY, by Robert Nathan. Mind you, my favourite sf film (purposely blurring the distinction between science fiction and fantasy) is the Powell & Pressburger 1946 production, STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN, with David Niven, which might help to explain my coolness to THE PRINCESS BRIDE. (And when we've got one of our own, as well...)

Well, what seems to be missing from this issue of *Outworlds*, in two words or less, seems to be 'Dave Locke'; do I get a prize? Mind you, mentioned so many times, you don't really notice that he isn't there. See I've had my moment of glory; though thank goodness I'm not Roger Weddall any more! The time-lag was bad enough, commuting between here and Australia; and you wouldn't believe the expense... 8|27|84

...oh, I certainly would! There was the point in time where I was being mistaken for Wally Franke AND andy offutt. That was manageable, but when Eric Lindsey got into the picture, well... (Fortunately, HE has gone back where he belongs, and is hopefully growing taller--with an assist from gravity--hanging from his feet on the underside of the Earth...)

...and, once again, I think that's it on OW38; with the exception of the following, appropriately transitional, letter from...

DAVE YODER

For some reason or other (I suspect fatigue) I didn't dive right into OW 38 & 39 upon returning from Spacecon. (Facing all that esoterica, much of which is over my head, after getting back from a good but tiring vacation which had been capped off by a con was a bit more than I felt like dealing with at the time.)

Why is it that I find such delight in reading a fanzine I don't quite understand, and which frequently has a large proportion of locs from people I don't (and most likely won't) know--most of whom I've never heard of except in this context--is beyond me. There is probably a connection between this and the reason I spent quite a few hours sitting with Martha Beck, the Stopas, Rusty Hevelin and a few others who, while not quite of that vintage, are better aged than I. Since I cannot experience fandom before I entered it the next best thing seems to be to share the experiences of those who did.

Ian Covell's place in the scheme of things may be a mystery to me but he gives good loc and one I can identify with, in a sense. Locs, when not intended to be something else, can be exceedingly difficult to read, not unlike reading someone else's mail where, while all the references may be clear, the personal format and viewpoint muddy one's own perception of the writer's intent unless you're very familiar with the writer. Therefore a loc may be perfectly clear to the editor and some readers and clear as mud to others (one assumes that any editor not completely desperate won't publish letters he doesn't understand--at least out of self-defence). I had thought this to be a pretty obvious, and possibly sophomoric, observation but Skel's loc in OW39 gave me the impetus to include it here. Anyway--the point is that Ian's came out clear as a well cast bell.

Robert Lichtman's comment on attitudes about children hit home. I've always regarded the little beasts as a supposedly necessary evil, although I don't really have any objections to them as long as they're somewhere else. Your observation 'b', including the parenthetical aside, is one I share but somehow feel I should be ashamed of. I suppose that children are an obligation we have to the future but, God, what a ~~massive~~ responsibility. I take comfort,

in the event of it happening to me, in Ogden Nash's "Some of My Best Friends Are Children" (which to be fully appreciated should be read after his "Poem to a Small Boy Who Is Standing on My Shoes While I Am Wearing Them").

Perhaps, after all, there is an advantage to receiving multiple issues of OW. When I read George R.R. Martin's comments on Mike Resnick's Malzberg *apologia* I found myself in almost total agreement. This was still fresh in my mind when I got to OW39 and Mike's rebuttal, which elicited the response, "You know, he's right." (If Mike ever does corner George on this subject I want to be there to listen, preferably somewhere out of the line of fire.) All of that notwithstanding, I gave up trying to read Malzberg's fiction some time ago, it just can't be done--maybe later, after I grow up.

Skel's letter was one of the more moving things I've read, in or out of a fanzine, for quite a while. I admire your courage in publishing something so personal. Or am I missing the point and is communicating on a highly personal way with your friends what OW is all about. Whatever, I appreciated it immensely. As for your answer, I also admire your evasive way of directly addressing an issue.

At any rate, please keep doing the thing to please yourself. Those of us who love you appreciate it enormously; for some of us it's our only chance for intimate glimpses of a person whose company and friendship we treasure but whom we are able to be with all too seldom. 9|4|84

TERRY MATZ

thanks for the *Outworlds*--I've felt guilty ever since I got it. I HAVE to write to Bill. At least that's what it tells me, sitting there on the coffee table--right in front of the TV, of course. So whenever I'm sneaking a look at the A-Team it's reminding me I should be doing better things. What does it feel like to have that power over people?

I had two reactions to Skel's letter. My first was, that even assuming what he said is true, he doesn't have to read *Outworlds*. He can't expect you to give up a style that seems integral to what you're trying to do or to conform to a style he's most comfortable. He is right in that it all depends who you are trying to communicate with. If it is that clique of friends (or cliques--since I suspect that not all of your friends know each other), then I don't think you have anything to worry about. If you are trying to communicate to others (and I'm not saying you should be--it's what you want--it is YOUR fanzine), then he has a point.

My second feeling, a very emotional feeling, was THAT's the way I've felt many times when I read your writing. I feel like a wallflower at a party, like everyone's having a good time but me. It's not entirely due to references I don't understand. I don't expect you to spell everything out for me. Maybe in some cases your references are too specific. When you give 'clues' like your tale of your askew friend, that puts more emphasis on guessing who the person might be than on any point you're trying to make. Knowing I can never win that game I get tired of playing. I think you have some very important and universal things you want to say but some times the references get in the way. Maybe you give us more than we need to know. I don't want to know her name (well, of course I do, there's a little of the *National Enquirer* in all of us but I'm not sure it would make the story any more meaningful). I want you to get to the meat of the story--how it relates to you--and forget the clues. As a matter of fact, your 'phone call' answering Skel was one of the best things I've read because it was full of emotion--direct emotion, without too much game-playing. I felt a lot of empathy reading it because I know exactly what you went through. Well, at least I

knew how I would have felt and I thought I saw it mirrored in your writing.

Now, I'm not trying to say that you have to have the same feelings as I do. But your reply was clear and direct for the most part without much decoration of unnecessary clues and references.

I would like to be your friend. I know we've been out of touch a long time and I think it takes you a long time to open up to people (or a short intense time). I enjoyed talking to you at Midwestcon but I felt there that you considered me an 'acquaintance' (to use Skel's word). But maybe, if I keep in touch and come to more cons, maybe we can be friends. (And not just so I can understand your references--or get the crib sheet I know you send out to preferred subscribers.)

Re: Dave Locke's column:

Visiting both the Cincinnati bidding party and the Atlanta party, made me realize what a desperate business bidding was. These were not 'parties' by my definition of the word. The bidding reps were standing like bouncers at the door, forcing stickers on anyone wanting to come to the party. Inside they did their best for a hard sell. The parties had everything necessary for a worldcon--except fun. If these parties are a good indication what the worldcons are going to be like I don't want to go. They've forgotten that people come to cons (and parties) to have a good time.

By the way, it's too late. I already know about Larry Propp's ghost. I haven't gotten much sleep lately with Ken moaning things like, "But will you respect me in the morning, Larry?" and, "Larry, you're never satisfied" all night long. 8/13/84

I didn't "answer" Dave Locke's "answer" to me, last time--and I suspect I won't be "answering" the points raised by DaveY (technique borrowed from FLAP, which has a multitude of 'Dave's'), you, and others, this time. This is not to say that the 'subject' of Skel's letter is one I don't want to discuss--it's simply that, at this point in time, I can't say it any more clearly than I did in my "Letter to DaveY"; inadequate though I consider it... I DO appreciate the response, the kind words, and even the criticism--unfounded as it may be! It's been a while, hasn't it? For a long time you wrote, and all I did was send my fanzine...so it's probably my fault. (Of course, you're the one who moved off to the ends-of-the-earth...!) I've been trying to remember when I met you: I remember the '78 PghLange, but I at least knew 'who' you were at Big Mac... Help! This is all very embarrassing... It is probably only natural, but now that you're back to going to cons...I seem to be in a downphase: I've only been to four this year, and the tentative list for the next year doesn't look impressive--Octocon, Corflu, Midwestcon, Spacecon, and Austin. (None of them are definite; Chambanacon and Confusion are possibilities, but certainly not the 'automatics' they've been.) Why? Money, as always...but that's never stopped me if I really wanted to go somewhere. Nothing really that could be considered traumatic 'turned me off' cons; I still enjoy the ones I go to. ...just a matter of priorities, and we all know how they change: I could well end up going to twenty cons next year! Stay in touch, Terry. You are one of those I care for and consider friend; and besides, you're still Hot Stuff!

MIKE GLICKSOHN

Good comments from Skel and I agree with most of what he has to say. However, the one point I disagree with him on more or less invalidates his entire argument: Skel says a faned has an obligation to play fair with his readers and that's something I can't accept as written law. It's nice when a faned doesn't deliberately set up barriers between his writing and his audience but simply because he is the

faned (and hence is contributing all the time, effort and expense to the creation of his fanzine) he can do anything he damn well wants to. If what he does makes it impossible for me to enjoy the end product, then I'll ignore him and (if I'm lucky) he'll go away. If I choose not to ignore him (i.e. you) then it means I'm willing to put up with a certain amount of (here it comes) restricted comprehensibility. The choice belongs to the reader and while it was a damn good thing that Skel went into his own reactions to what you do in such detail I know you well enough to know you'll not do anything differently as a result. And that's the way it should be. Paul isn't going to abandon OW because he doesn't follow a few of your more deliberately esoteric statements (hell, I didn't understand your comment about Mike Resnick until he explained it here in #39) and you're not going to stop being obscure just because it baffles Paul. I doubt if anyone other than Bill Bowers will ever completely understand a typical issue of OW but that, to me, is part of the fun. And with fanzines nowadays, we need all the fun we can find!

"An order of magnitude", old forty-one year old friend, is a factor of ten, so if you fail to approach 100 by several orders of magnitude when counting up your friends then you are claiming to have at the very most one-tenth of a friend! I can think of a few esoteric *Outworlds* references who might be offended by that statement... (But who ever said Fans were Slans?)

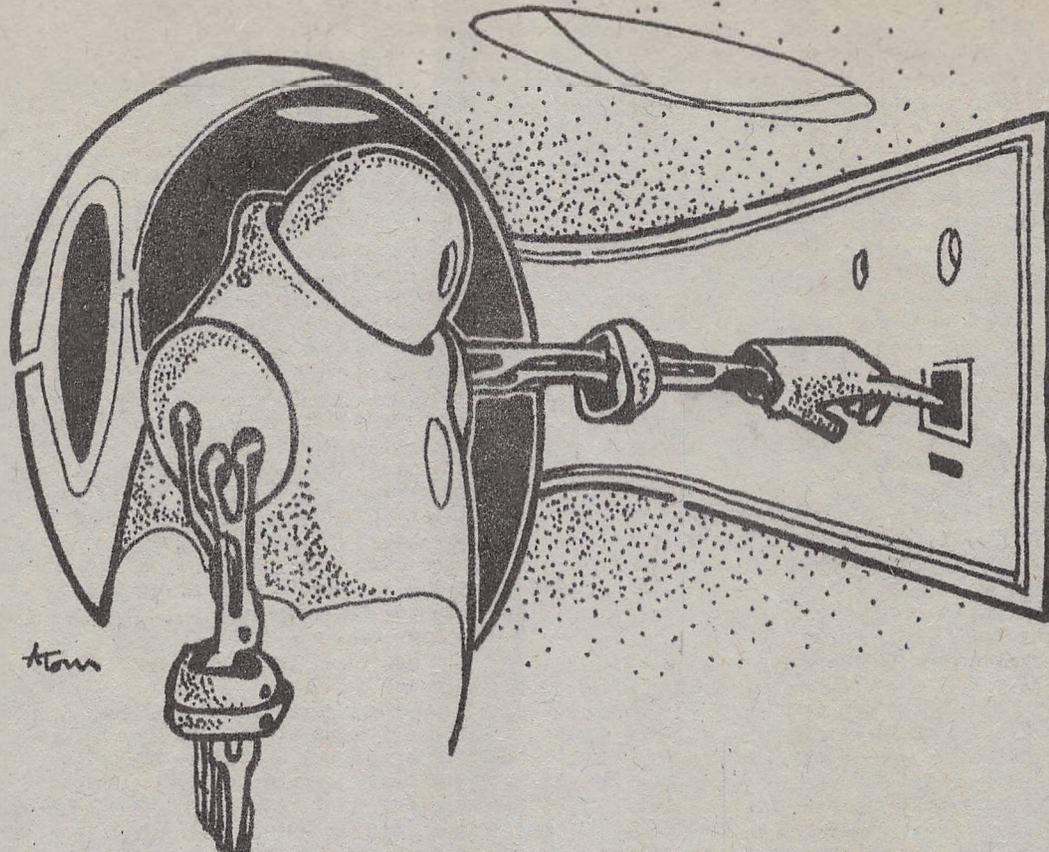
Dave was readable, though slight, Mike was eloquent and persuasive (also educational but at least it was a reference to 1966 so I felt less obtuse in failing to understand it) and your list of movies was awesome. Even with pay-TV I couldn't come within several orders of magnitude of such a series of films... 7/23/84

Do you realize that this is the FIRST time that the issue number of one of my fanzines matched my age? Thanks, Mike, for making me think of such an inane piece of trivia... I owe you one.

AL SIROIS

I read Skel's letter with interest and sympathy. Most people (not to say fans) can relate to the idea of being on the outside looking in. There are in-groups, there are disenfranchised individuals. I'd say that one's sense of self-worth has a lot to do with whether or not one feels upset by being excluded (by whatever means, for whatever reason) from a group. Skel made his position quite clear. Anyone who has read his letters or his zine knows that he's got a good self-image...so he doesn't really take personally your habit of "withholding information". I know that I'm overstating the case here, and I don't want you to think I'm taking you to task in any way. I agree fully that one can do whatever the hell one wants within the pages of one's zine, and fuck 'em if they can't take a joke. I'd say that your audience knows how to take a joke, so not to worry. I guess the bottom line is, do those who don't catch all your allusions keep reading the damn zine? If they read, and/or loc/send submissions, I guess things are not too serious regarding in-jokes or veiled inferences or whatever. 8/13/84

...and so what prompted/inspired YOU to loc/contribute to OW? I've already told you, AL, but for the use of anyone else who might be curious as to the presentation of "Graphic Violence" last time: The 'illo' and the text on the first page were electrostencilled directly from the printout. The illo 'worked'; the text did not. (The remaining 3 pages were "Xeroxed" and then electrostencilled; they came out very well.) Just an experiment...since I suspect I'll be getting more and more computer-generated submissions as time goes on. I But enough of this fanzine graphics shit...



BEARD MUMBLINGS ~ a column ~ Bob Tucker

BE OF STOUT HEART and good cheer Dave Locke, this is not another hospital horror story. Unlike the recent misadventures of a female person we both know and cherish, my trip to the hospital was brief and relatively tranquil. In early September I entered for my second cataract operation and my adventures are barely worth reporting to a readership eager for sordid details. Mind you, there *was* a nurse who wondered why I wanted a shower as soon as I checked in, and there *was* a patient down the hall who insisted on throwing his pajamas into the hall and sleeping nude on the floor of his room, but then all of us are a little strange, aren't we Dave?

My first cataract surgery had been in a Florida hospital eleven years ago (where the air conditioning was always cranked down to about sixty degrees) and I was warned then that cataracts almost always come in pairs, so be prepared. Sure enough, that first doctor was as accurate as a science fiction writer predicting the end of the world in about a billion years; the second cataract eventually reached a point where I was stumbling over fans and bumping into doors even while sober, and I had to stop driving, and the blind eye stared resolutely across the bridge of my nose in a manner that frightened small children and elderly ladies. For the past several months and three or four conventions I've been wearing a black eye patch in public to protect those timid ones, lest they complain to the convention committee and demand a full refund. The fans had great sport with the eye patch. One churl asked if it was my latest affectation, and

another wondered aloud if I was modeling for Hathaway shirts. Eventually someone suggested that I find a mouldy parrot to perch on my shoulder and I was so taken with the idea that thereafter I went about the conventions seeking a mouldy parrot, a pegleg, and a long black beard like Mike Glicksohn wears. I could have won an award in the hall costume contest.

Now then, about the quick shower and the facts of life in Jacksonville. (The nude man comes later.) This town has no public bus service; you either take a cab or you walk. I usually walk. Distances are not great. The grocery is a mile away, the postoffice and the barbershop and the taxi office and my travel agent all are about two and a half miles distant, so walking is no problem. I walk nearly everywhere because I like walking and because I dislike paying the bandits who operate our taxi fleet of three (3) aged vehicles. They don't have meters but instead operate on the zone system. I live on the far west side which is in the \$2.50 zone no matter where you want to go or how short your trip--if I visited a neighbor a couple of blocks away the cost would be \$2.50 if I were foolish enough to ride.

The hospital was only a mile distant and so I walked, toting a small suitcase and whistling a merry tune. It ain't everyday that a person can live long enough to see a doctor's (or a science fiction writer's) prediction come true. It was a hot day and at the end of that mile I was eagerly looking forward to the shower. You may have heard the old joke that when you enter a hospital, you will quickly learn how serious

BUCK COULSON

Thanks for the copy of OW38. I really wasn't expecting a second copy (you want the incomplete one back? That's the way Overhead Door works; replacements are made to the distributor only after the original merchandise is returned. It would be paranoid if it wasn't a necessity.)

On to 39. Definitions of friendship are probably equal in number to the world population. Personally I find Skel's too all-encompassing. I wonder if my tighter definition is shaped by the fact that the fanzine I mostly wrote for was a genzine and possibly 15% of the readership did nothing more than send money, or if my definition of friendship led to my editing that sort of fanzine? Or both? (Or neither, which is most probably correct...) Like Skel, I tend to consider specific individuals when I'm writing something--but I tried to keep in mind that a good share of the readership not only wouldn't understand fannish references, but wouldn't understand a lot of "standard" fannish jargon. There was very little Fanspeak in *Vandro* and there won't be any more when we get another issue out.

On the other hand, I don't worry about whether or not my comments will be understood as I meant them; by now I know that however clearly one writes, there will always be people who misunderstand it. If one of them happens to be someone I particularly admire, I'm sorry for it, but there's no point in worrying about it--either in advance or after the fact. Both you and Skel worry too much.

Resnick is correct--even if he overstates his case--in his comments on competition. Malzberg may be competing only with other literary lights in the minds of critics and academics, but on the stands he's competing with every other science fiction book out there, for the buyer's dollar. (On the other hand, I don't like Malzberg's books and I don't like his personality--as evinced in articles, letters, and assorted written material; I've never spoken to him that I know of--so I tend to sympathise with George.)

7/27/84

It was nice to see you and Juanita when you were down here in Cinsanity for the filk thingie last weekend... (I do think it's a bit pushy of 'those people' trying to pass themselves off as sf fans--even to the extent of having FIAWOL bumper stickers. I tell you Buck, things were a lot simpler in the old days!)

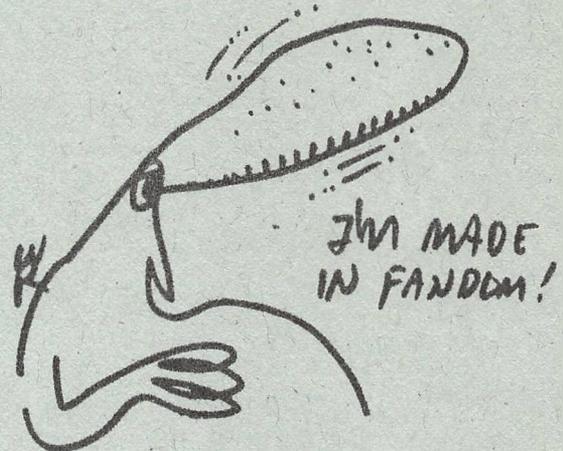
HARRY WARNER, JR.

Skel's complaints coincide to some extent with my reaction to certain things in fanzines published by you and others. But I try to keep a couple of things in mind which cause me to feel that the trouble is my fault to some extent. I don't go out and play with other fans and if I'm determined to sit in the house I should expect to feel excluded from some of the things they write. In addition, my abstinence from conventions has cut me off from the phase of fandom that is constantly taking over a greater and greater percentage of all fanzines' space. I find individuals I've never heard of listed as fan guests of honor at cons; they are obviously convention fans who are well known to anyone who goes to conventions several times a year. I read with disbelief all the fusses and criticisms on how a con is being run or prepared or bid for, and this seems to me like the latest news about weather conditions around Jupiter's Red Spot; undoubtedly important to people involved but awfully abstract-seeming to me.

However, Skel didn't mention one other phase of this question of writing for one's friends in fanzine fandom. It's the problem of having one's writings turn up where they weren't mean to go. Some years ago I was startled to read that a large fanzine collection acquired for the University of Maryland's Baltimore County campus included a good many early issues of *Horizons*, my FAPA publication. It never occurred to

MY DREAM HAS
COME TRUE.

HARRY WARNER
HAS WRITTEN MY
CRUDZINE.



me when I turned out those issues that they would come into mundane hands decades later, to be read by individuals who would have much greater trouble understanding the intent of what I wrote than the problems Skel describes in making his humorous intentions comprehended in fanzine writing. I receive occasionally a letter from someone who couldn't possibly have any contact with anyone in FAPA and nevertheless has read the most recent *Horizons* and has been inspired to comment on it. There has always been some diffusion of fanzines because they went to fans in large cities where many other fans existed or were sold by the owner years later to someone else. But it wasn't as omnipresent in the past as it is today, when almost every fan has other fans living close enough to drop in occasionally and look at the latest fanzines and fanzines are often huckstered at cons. So far I haven't had any catastrophic problems from this trend. But I'm not as comfortable nowadays when I write in FAPA or when I do an article for some fanzine whose audience is theoretically small and confined mostly to one particular segment of fandom.

Incidentally, you did it again. That open letter to Dave caused me to stop reading after a couple of paragraphs and try to figure out which of the several possible Daves you meant it for. When you mentioned Jackie in the fifth paragraph my uncertainty subsided. But it probably gave some of your other readers temporary difficulties like mine. And think of what will happen next century when *The Annotated Bill Bowers* is published in seventeen volumes by the Fanzine Foundation. There will be only three or four lines of your text to the page for several consecutive pages, to allow space for various authorities on fan history to speculate on the identity of these individuals whose last names you failed to include.

I wish the marvels that satellite astronomy is discovering in the universe would include an improvement in the scientific knowhow of Associated Press writers. Within the space of two or three days, I read one dispatch which told of the discovery of a previously unknown galaxy only thirty-seven light years from Earth and then an explanation in another article that

a light year is the distance which light travels in a year at its velocity of 186,000 miles per hour.

It's a long time since I've been abashed by anything than your list of movies seen. I could find only five or six films on it which I've seen, proof that I'm not the movie enthusiast I thought I was. More shamefully, I must confess that I probably wouldn't have seen three of those movies if I didn't have a fondness for their female leads. I watched and videotaped *The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia* because I love to see Kristy McNichol smile. (About a year ago I videotaped *Blinded by the Light* for the same reason, and when I got around to watching it, darned if she didn't wear a frozen frown all the way through, from start to finish.) I feel obliged to watch Bess Armstrong movies because she would have been a Hagerstown native if her father hadn't moved away from this city before reaching puberty, and I surprised myself by enjoying immensely *High Road to China*. Naturally, Julie Andrews' presence caused us both to have Victor/Victoria on our lists, my tiny list and your enormous one. 7/27/84

...my little list got quite a bit of feedback, but mostly verbal: I understand that Leah Zeldes and Dick Smith spent endless hours trying to figure out which were the 'dirty' movies... If you enjoyed "High Road" (which I thought fun, also), you'd probably love the *Real Thing*--the "Kaiders" movies...

RICHARD BRANDT

I assume the Skel loc, in view of its prominence and the fact you saved it an issue, is meant to be the centerpiece here. First off, I should point out that I myself never felt "excluded" by anything in OW. If Bowers wants to discuss a person in intimate terms in print, and wants to leave that person nameless to spare possible "embarrassment" or whatever, fine. If he says "those who need to know already know" then I don't feel he's being elitist and excluding me; I assume he's writing in such a way that his subject is obvious to those who know her intimately, and none of our damn business if I don't.

In addition, the speeches and whatnot you reproduce from cons is something I value, as at least a taste of what I missed by not being there, even if I can't catch all the references.

But Skel does seem to be touching on something. It may or may not be true that today's fan is more of a conventlongoing animal than before, but I notice more and more fanzine pieces that center on, and seem to be aimed at, small cliques of people who meet regularly for cons in the same area, or not even for cons, just meetings or even social gatherings in the same town. These pieces take the attitude that the reader will already know the people referred to. Most egregiously, in a "profile" of a certain fan* in the first issue of *Gallimaufry*, a profile comprising a series of in-jokes that obviously made no sense if you didn't already know the subject (as I didn't). I may be naive, but it seems to me we had less of this happening in fanzines when fans were a group spread across the continent (and elsewhere) who still did the bulk of their relating through the mails.

The problem is, if a fanzine begins restricting itself to the dealings of a small local group related in such a way that they are incomprehensible to outsiders...then that fanzine loses its meaning to anyone but that group. And since they see each other regularly anyway, why continue to publish? To print a particularly good piece of writing? Ah, but why, when you can bring it to the next get-together and pass it around?

No wonder some fans are worried about the future of the fanzine fan. Now, I don't consider OW to be

*Those who need to know his name...

really "guilty" of the "sins" I described above...it's full of juicy, provocative stuff...but, as an example, the other fanzine whose title I mentioned above did leave me feeling like an outsider listening to a tightly-knit circle of friends, because, frankly, they lost me. Too many times they were discussing people and matters they felt were obvious, and I didn't have clue. Listen, I was disappointed.

Don't do it, Bill! Don't let this happen to OW! Turn back before you stray too far from the True... Oh, I think I got carried away there. Disregard.

As for the rest of this issue, what there be of it: Dave Locke's edacious logomania leaves me timorous to respond, so I shan't...I've said my piece on Resnick on Malzberg...and your List leaves me mostly curious about why you've seen some titles more times than others. rec'd: 8/13/84

...well, if you're 'single' and 'seeing' more than one person--at least that's why I ended up seeing Tootsie twice within the space of a week--these things do seem to happen. More often, it's simply a movie I particularly liked; but not always.

It's happened again--truly, this has been a rather expensive year in the Fanac (Printed Subdivision) Biz: toward the bottom of the previous column, when I was switching typeballs, the 'light italic' element (this one; at least this 'style') broke. I can't say that I look forward to such occurrences at anytime, but at two ayeen, on a roll, I found it singularly inappropriate. (I suppose I shouldn't be too upset, since it was one of the original elements, purchased--along with this typer--in the Summer of 1969, but...)

At any rate, while I await a replacement, Jackie & Dave have kindly lent me their version of same, so that I can remain 'in voice'...and tell you that I Also Heard from Leslie David & Brad Foster on OW39, as we move briskly along to the preliminary OW40 response...

RICHARD BRANDT

Ah ha! So I am to appear in OW41 with a loc on a previous issue. That means I should get a copy of #41 whether I respond to #40 or not! So I have cleverly saved myself the trouble of having to write you a loc on #40, which will not be necessary! Ha ha! (Hey, wait a minute...)

This whole subject of locs has to do with Dave Locke and what audience one writes for. Dave didn't bring up the subject of the loc, the humble letter-of-comment. It is a letter, after all, and is presumably a missive directed solely to the editor, offering reactions to his work, and perhaps comments on what the contributors had to say; maybe even some extraneous personal matter. So presumably the only audience is the addressee...yet most correspondents have that gut feeling that they won't stay on the mailing list if they don't serve up comments that are worth printing. So that loc has to appear to be aimed at the editor-as-audience, while being colorful enough to warrant being served up to the readership-at-large...appealing to more than the editor's own (narrow) range of interests, even.

There might be something hypocritical in the whole idea of writing chummy "letters" that are actually little critical articles...except that the idea of a letter as something worthy of seeing print, or at least deserving of some effort, shouldn't be so strange. Letter-writing was more of a habit among the general populace in the old days; correspondence is something of a lost art, outside certain circles of our acquaintance.

Well, let's see: I enjoyed the dialogue with Buck Coulson, who as a fanzine critic was certainly kinder towards my efforts than they deserved. Buck is such an institution in fandom that we often don't realize how little we might really know about the man; other institutions are probably equally deserving of such treatment... (undated; received 9/22/84)

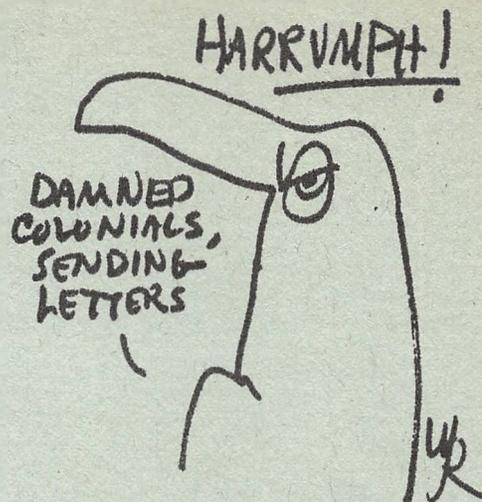
IAN COVELL *Outworlds* 39 arrived the 17th October,
Outworlds 40 came on the 20th October.
 Figure the ways of the postal services...

Your copy of *OW38* was mailed 7/18/84; your copy of 40
 --8/10/84. YOU figure the ways...

I wish I knew why Skel is seemingly so virulent about this matter of 'writing for friends'. Now, I've said in the past that I view fanzines as letters from friends, but I don't view them as exclusive letters--how could I-- but general ones, some of whose comments are relevant to me, some of which are not. I certainly haven't detected the distance that Skel has, but what I seem to detect is that for Skel, one issue of *Outworlds* was the final straw of a heavy load. I think he was wrong--not to write it--but to write it as such length all on one note; there seems no attempt to *define* what he means, much as he skirts the 'problem'. It's a source of sadness to me, not irritation, that I don't know all of the people mentioned in your fanzine --but then English fanzines get just the same reaction --yet that doesn't stop my enjoyment of it; if I watch a film and the first hour is full of references not yet cleared up, I keep watching because they *will* be cleared up (or possibly not). Something else: it seems sad that Skel seems 'only' to write for friends, since that seems a closed system with no input to outsiders--simpler, I would have thought, to just send out a form letter and update his thoughts?

I've now read two recent books by Mike Resnick and have to say, no, I don't like them. There are similarities to Malzberg, and the most obvious is the lone nature of the protagonist, and the sense of failure about life and love *in the main*. I still think that Mike is missing the point about Malzberg--though GPRM said it plainly--BNM is not a 'bad' writer in anything other than two ways: he is impossibly repetitive; and his characters aren't characters at all, they're debating teams. I can't quite work out why Mike thinks the 'bestseller' status of some extremely bad sf books (and some not-quite-so-bad like E E Smith) is competition different *in kind* to competition from medium-selling books. Bookshops don't just stock best-sellers--they know they have to spread their investment --they stock books that *sell* & the fact is that Malzberg was allowed his chance to shine for about five years when just about everyone was producing an original paperback title--and usually several--by Malzberg. They didn't sell because people did not like them; there's no great mystery, BNM's books are depressing and thin, and full of disdain, they're also colourless, characterless and dull if you want life rather than an examination of life. (Come to think of it this isn't a point I've heard mentioned in any debate--damnit, Malzberg's work was everywhere, and it still didn't sell. Silverberg in the same period decided that the non-selling of his own books was enough to leave the field only to return years later when his books started to sell again; now, I don't see how Silverberg's books sell either, because I think they're rubbish, but the point is, he had the chance and it worked, continues to work...)

I can only stare in bewilderment at your list of films you've seen over the last years; I notice the number makes quantum leaps each year, such that once a week in in 1982 becomes at least once a day in 1984, and the sheer range of your viewing is incredible. I think I'd like one day to mention all the films I liked, and why, but will have to content myself saying that I've begun to watch--because of a cheap nearby cinema--a great number of recent films, and going through your list, these are those I adore: *SOMEWHERE IN TIME* (points out of 4: 3½); *SHARKEY'S MACHINE*, 3; *CAT PEOPLE*, 3; *QUEST FOR FIRE*, 3½; *BLADE RUNNER*, 2½; (too nasty to women); *TARZAN THE APEMAN*, 4; *BLUE THUNDER*, 3; *POLTERGEIST*, 3; *THE BEAST MASTER*, 4;



ROMANCING THE STONE, 4; and so on--pleased to say I've seen almost half those you list, and enjoyed a great number of them. I'm sometimes surprised by what you're able to see (my country is coming down hard on erotica; ho ho). I'd guess you had cable...

Ah, *Outworlds* 40, the deliciously blue magazine...

It's a shame I haven't read Buck Coulson's fiction (I tried, but that was mostly in the Laser Books series, and even more mostly when I could afford American books; damn exchange rate; "fair exchange is no robbery", but there is a damn bushwacker out there...) because he seems to be a fairly nice man. I have to say I was puzzled by your final comment about a reference to Piers Anthony; I've reread the interview twice and damned if I can find any such reference. The interview does give hints of why--were I Skel--I would be puzzled; I don't know Jackie Causgrove, I had no idea of the number of feuds that seem to involve Ted White, etc, but it *doesn't matter*. Surely the essence of tension in fiction is what you leave out, and at least for a long while, surely the same must be true about fandom? (If that makes sense; if it doesn't, I didn't say it.)

Mike Glicksohn is wrong about me and he's right; the great majority of sf does relegate sf to the background but I can always dig deep enough to find whatever is there. Truthfully, I prefer fantasy, which is the purer medium for character and relationships. Modern sf is about 'relationships' rather than 'love', reducing even human behaviour to examined-in-passing status. I don't like modern sf. [I also don't like it because of the increasing use of homosexuality as the base of the love interest (disguised as in Sime/Gen, overt in Lynn, Bradley, Russ, etc); I realised yesterday why I dislike it--the writers in question (someone called them 'women writers of California', I wouldn't know) have taken the phrase 'sex war' to heart, they now believe that the sexes are incompatible except for breeding (Joy Hibbert said that; I thought she was atypical) and that true trust, affection, respect and equality is only possible in a homosexual relationship. Balls.] That may seem to diverge from my 'romantic love' but it hasn't; 'love' is being stifled by many things, and I hate it--which is why I also dislike a great deal of modern 'sf'. (The books I enjoy most are overtly about love, but I have enjoyed a great number that use it as background. I am a fan.)

Try saying 'hse' and getting it understood, most people think you're sneezing; I can say it, it just isn't common parlance yet. (Language is an agreed set of conventions.)

Buck Coulson's letter reminds me to ask. I've been discussing John Norman's work with a friend and I really can't explain why his sales haven't started to fall. I mean, the books have become even more similar as the series has progressed, being now almost entirely conversation with a few snippets of action. If the sex

were more explicit I'd call them 'porn' ('porn' is, in my definition, anything that involves violence unduly; Norman has a bad habit of equating lovely sex with stupid violence, ie rape).

Which brings me to Brad Foster. Andy Offutt was kind enough to send me a list of his erotic titles (and the damn thing runs over 100 titles, so I will definitely never see a substantial number, possibly not even a few) and I happen to know two or three sf authors who write erotic series under pseudonyms. What puzzles me, in a way hurts me, is that certain authors write erotica under *pseudonyms* but produce brutally violent books under their own name--the latter is acceptable, it seems, the former not. Gods, but I disagree.

What I understand of Dave Locke's letter makes sense, so I suppose it all does. He covers what I said earlier, obviously, only in a shorter space.

Two small points his letter brings to mind: I've been asked why I dislike crowds but like conventions. The answer is fandom. In fandom, there is only the restriction of your inner self, everyone at that convention is there to talk, discuss, make friends, enjoy themselves; in crowds, there is a multitude of faces and a lack of faces, they are blank, social conditioning decrees thou shalt not speak, thou shalt not attempt communication beyond politeness ('Nice weather we're having') or command ("Let me past"). A convention is the removal of inhibitions from social intercourse.

Second, yes, 'friend' and 'love' as words mean different things to different people. The Null-4 books are about that--at least in chapter headings. The fact is that we aren't all telepaths so working out what people believe is a matter of trial and error, dependent on how they interpret certain words. The worst example I know is the word 'marriage' (at least at this moment) which to a certain type of--usually--feminist mind translates as 'socially sanctioned slavery of womankind' with connotations of power, repression, probable sexual abuse, and control. Understand, this is never made explicit, but when the word appears, these connotations lie beneath the surface as they react. To me, 'marriage' translates as 'mutually agreed companionship founded on trust; love--affection, desire, friendship; and that indefinable something else'. It doesn't include legal or religious teaching; like William Morris and other pagans, marriage should be held under the stars. I've always tried to hammer out definitions when it became clear the argument wasn't about what I thought it was about ('any argument that goes on 'too long' has something more to it than its surface'), but many have taken my enquiries as facetious or negligible. They're neither.

I really haven't done justice to *Outworlds 40*. Beautiful issue, clear as crystal, worth any while. There were sections I know I should have gone on about at greater length, but I figure my last appearance(s) in your mag was enough to make anyone wary, so I've tried to render my comments down--I doubt it's worked.

Recent highlights of my life have been watching *POLICE ACADEMY*, falling in love, and realising why my stories don't sell. (No-one wants them.) 10|22|84

...actually, Ian, the 'blue' to the Piers Anthony 'reference' is contained in your own paragraph on the subject... *THIS IS WHY*

LEE PELTON With your schedule for *Outworlds* firmly in mind, I am aware that this loc is either too late or too early, depending on how frantic or placid you're behaving towards *Outworlds*.

Skel's letter set me wondering. I don't get many of the references you pepper DW with, and I'll bet some of those whom you direct these things at are occasionally confused. This doesn't bother me much. I've met and talked with you, can "see" you talking

the words I read, and pretty much understand the intent, if not the content. I never expect to know you or your history well enough to comprehend all of it, maybe 60% at best is what I can strive for, but I'd never expect or hope you to change your style (what would Ted White say!!!).

I like writing people do about themselves. Fandom is, basically, people. As a fan, I want to know better those that I surround myself with. Self preservation instincts at work, no doubt. You write about yourself, Ian does, George Martin does, Eric Mayer does, and so on and so on. I myself have been doing a semi-autobio in *Private Heat*. If you feel you have been doing "better" at being less obscure, well, probably you are. I love reading Dave Locke's work, but if you altered your style to suit his criticisms, it just wouldn't be the Bill Bowers I've met in person and print. As RD said to Roopsie, "Don't ever change."

I reserve the right to go to the worldcon held in Cincinnati, but hope like hell nobody I know is fool enough to work on it. Would Dave Locke approve if the usual bunch of worldcon major domos came in and ran the higger? What if Ken Keller moves to Cincy to chair it? Come on, let's be controversial! rec'd 11|9|84

I personally think it would be great if Ken moved to Cinsanity...whether he ran "the" worldcon or not. (I think it would be even neater if Terry came along...DAMN THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!) However, I'm not going to be the one to move all those Big MAC program books off his front porch...

WALT WILLIS Thank you very much for DW39 and for DW40 which arrived before I thought it was safe to open my mail again. The Skel correspondence was fascinating, as was Locke's column. In 40 I learned a lot about Buck Coulson I hadn't known and was much impressed, and enlightened by the Sirois article. Liked the readers letters too and your comments.

On overheard conversations--ie mundane inter-linations--British playwright Alan Bennett quotes "The doctor told her that her feet would never be any use to her again--not as feet." I have an uneasy idea I quoted that to someone else; hope it wasn't you. Tho of course it couldn't be if it was someone else. Help.

You got a real good fanzine there.

Terry Carr burns with a hard gem-like flame.

rec'd 11|20|84

I think it's a pretty fair fanzine myself...but then I've also seen Terry Carr thoroughly burnt-out, so what do I know? It's good to hear from you--it's been a bit since my first con back in '62 where, after having acquired some neat stuff via the Axe-auction, I saw you from afar in Chicago. If you ever feel the urge, I'd love to have you contribute to this "real good Fanzine" here...!

MIKE GLICKSOHN Well, I trust you had a great time in LA and that you and ----- were able to find an appropriate cathedral or whatever to maintain tradition.

I admire your frenetic publishing schedule and wonder how long it will be before the effort and expense involved render you a little more cautious once again. As long as you're dashing along hell bent for leather, though, I'll continue to appreciate it and enjoy the results.

Great cover by Foster who really deserves awards in recognition of both his talent and his prolificity. I hope he can maintain his frantic pace long enough to get the egoboo he richly deserves.

Dave's dialog with Ruck was an excellent one but it did make me realize, once again, that I don't have much in common with Ruck and that's undoubtedly one of the reasons we've never been more than casual acquaintances. Not that I'm suggesting that my attitudes are

right and his are wrong, of course: we're both completely right, for ourselves.

I hasten to point out that my loc in #40 was written *before* I spent a sizeable part of the summer sorting and boxing my fanzine collection and therefore I didn't have a run of OW to look at when I suggested an annotated edition. I just made up those two page numbers at random. It doesn't surprise me that I referred to a mysterious woman on a randomly generated page and there actually *was* such a reference (I could and probably should check and see who it was but I'll take your word for her) since this merely reaffirms that just about *every* page of OW has some reference to a mysterious woman from your personal life! I'm a little surprised I missed guessing the illegal act, though: there are certainly enough of them discussed that my odds were pretty high. Oh well, never draw to an inside straight, I guess.

A correct answer is one that fulfills all the requirements of the question, not one that coincides with the answer the questioner had in mind when the question was designed. On that basis there were an enormous number of correct answers to your question about what was missing from OW38. "Dave Locke" may have been a more significant answer but it was no more correct than "purple paper".

On my bookshelves, one of George Martin's books sits between a Jack Vance and a John Brunner. So what is he complaining about? Surely he can't know that another one sits next to FOUNDATION'S EDGE?

I also note that Bill Breiding wrote on 7/3/84 whereas I wrote on 7/2/84 and suggested the correct answer to the question. So in reality, I was the first to answer the contest but of course I'm not young and cute and nubile like Bill so you deprive me of my just rewards and try and turn his young head with blatantly false flattery. And after almost fourteen years of steady and conscientious letterhacking too. It's shameful, that's what it is! Enough to make a guy quit loccing! Yes, indeed, I think that's just what I'll do; until next issue. 9/3/84

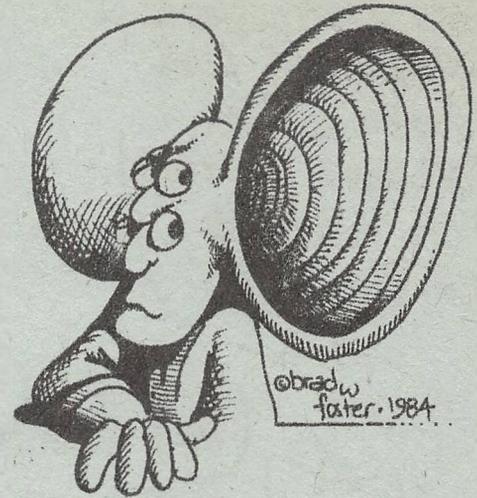
...well, the cathedrals seem to have gone by the way (so much for religion & stained-glass in our time), but we did end up at an incredibly redneck Tex-Mex restaurant in Orange County...no, I guess that was Sunday night, now that I think on it.... ♪ Fortunately ... "she" is out of the country for a couple of years, so I should be "safe" in Austin! ♪ Yes, you are right --Bill Breiding is all of those things, which is why, if I do make Corflu, just three of the reasons I'll be sharing a room with him. (The fourth is that he volunteered.)

BILL BREIDING I have to admit that I still haven't finished *Outworlds 40*, but I promise you I will. I mean, it's pithy, man. You're a thorny old bastard and get more jagged as the years go by.

One thing I wanted to straighten out was a question I asked at Worldcon when you gave me OW40 to carry around to all the parties and you never bothered to answer me, but instead made a joke about Leah not having a job; ok, you have to answer it this time, because that whole night I was spooked while carrying that fanzine around with me. I could have sworn that it was a portrait of Buck Coulson. Now answer my question, is it?

I liked your response to Mike Glicksohn. And was amused and amazed that you accused him of skimming OW and countered that you'd read every word of his fanzines in the last 4½ years. That was a good chuckle. And your Story. By Bill Bowers. Now that is my kind of story.

In some ways I'm learning more about Dave Locke in these DIALOGS than I am of his interviewees. For the life of me, I can't see what Buck sees in filk-singing. I usually turn around and walk the other way



when I see a guitar or hear an off key voice. I'll gladly meet Dave in the bar any day. Now whether we'll have anything to talk about is another matter. Oh. And I've never grown a beard. (So I must not be heavy.)

And what's this? I thought you promised to keep these boring old pros in line, and now even you are talking about Malzberg. Yeesh. I liked the thing about the cycle of discussion. It shows your attention span is getting shorter and shorter. You know what it means when you get shorter don't you?

Well, the news is out. Patty let it out. She and Gary moved back to suburbia in the middle of September. Do you think little Garys will be next? Can you imagine that? The tot's first words will be, "uh...what?"

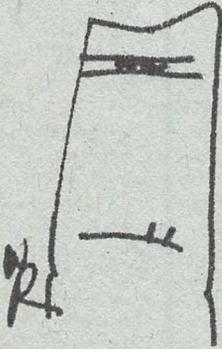
And really, what this badly typed letter is all about is kind of a goshwow thing. Just wanted to say that I really enjoyed spending the time I did with you at the worldcon. Though it may have been occasionally awkward (I mean I'm just not used to ad libbing one line quips), it seemed a natural progression from the Westerncon you attended. And I hope to continue the progression. 9/21/84

...and I. It's been a long time since you left West-by-God...and Autoclaven-with-towel-draped-door-knobs... and All That--but there's certainly no doubt that you are a) younger, b) cuter and, c) certainly more nubile than Glicksohn (even when he is on a diet)! ♪ ...and don't think that your incredibly catty, esoteric, and accurate Glicksohnian reference (in your third-from-last paragraph) escaped me! You, Sir, are cruel. ♪ I don't know from "little Garys", but can't you just imagine a little Patty...? She would be born quoting song lyrics, hide the grass when ~~ILLUMINATI~~ older fans walked into the room...and progress into the atypical S&M tennybopper! It is, almost, to restore a sense of wonder. ♪ And, speaking of Esoteric Blasts From the Past: do you recall, Bill, at worldcon, that (since he now lived in Southern California) you speculated that someone might show up...? Furthermore, do you recall that in your Loc printed in OW38, after referencing APA-50, in a burst of predictive speculation, you inquired: "Whither -----?!"...? Well, Welcome to Outworlds--the fanzine that answers your every question. Eventually.

CHRIS SHERMAN How's the old carcass holding up? (Yes I know it's been nearly 8 years since I last insulted you but I got out my little-used and somewhat yellowed copy of HOW TO ALIENATE ANYBODY by Larry Downes and was able to bone up a bit before writing.) Seriously... How are you? I was reading SFC and came across a mention of *Outworlds*, and was amazed (and delighted) to read that you were still publishing

THIS SERIOCOMIC
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it. SFC is about my only contact with fandom these days (Good old Andy!). Don D'Amassa somehow dug up my address and sent me the most recent issue of *Mythologies*, which prompted a wave of nostalgia (then I turned on the air conditioner and felt much better).

My last contact with APA-50 was about four years ago, I think--I went to Westercon and ran into Bill Breiding and Gil Gafer and a whole bunch of relative strangers who were fascinated by stories of the KC worldcon and of drugs and other forms of twisted reality, then proceeded to write scathing analyses in the following mailing, lots of stuff about how I wasn't really the enigmatic creature they'd expected...So I decided that was enough. Toiled with the idea of going to this year's worldcon, but decided to spend the time in the north woods of Minnesota instead, watching the aurora borealis and communing with the depths of the family lake.

How are you? Wiser, undoubtedly, but other than that? Happy?

I'm not much wiser, but am definitely happy. I'm back in school at Stanford going for a Masters or Phd or something like that, in a program that has the ridiculous title "Interactive Educational Technology", which basically means that I get to play with computers and videodiscs and other toys, and occasionally read some bullshit about how people learn. I do a lot of consulting work for people in silicon valley (From the latin: SILLY, spurious or ornamental, CON, scam or other form of deceit, VALLEY, gulch or other barren wasteland). Mostly writing scripts for interactive videodiscs, or helping produce "educational" software.

Recently published a few textbooks through Wiley & Sons, and have a couple of other books in process which should be published before the turn of the decade. Like every other fan in the history of the world am still attempting to write fiction on occasion. All of this provides endless amusement, with inevitable periodic stress, and it beats the hell out of relentless microscopic soulsearching. They probably wouldn't let me back in APA-50 even if I asked.

I remember when I first started publishing *Antithesis*--I swore that I would always respond to even the most paltry efforts of those faneds who bothered to send me copies of their work. How times change! I wonder how many people cut their emotional teeth on fandom, then gaffate for a while and adapt somewhat to "mundane" interactions, then try to reunite? How does it look from your perspective as a noted and sympathetic Sage? I think I would like to reestablish limited contact with fandom--not so much to fill the social/emotional needs I felt when younger, but to enjoy the creative output of others. Others with whom I used to feel a strong spiritual kinship--but probably not any more.

I would very much like to see the current issue of *Outworlds*, and will shamelessly promise to LOC it even though I won't have a shred of time to do so once school starts. I guess you could consider this a retroactive loc.

Anyway... Glad to hear you're still kicking. 9/8

...if not always kicking, at least the big toe still twitches: certainly when I get envelopes addressed to --'Bill 'Father Confessor' Bowers'! Ah, those were the days when we were all young, foolish, and intense. Well...you guys were--but I was at least two of the three... Happy? Not always...but, yes, a bit wiser, a bit more secure...and certainly a lot more experienced in the things we used to soulsearch, back when you last knew me. Much of that was...err...worked out in the pages of apazines/personalazines published in the gap from when OW 'paused' after Big MAC...until it resumed at the beginning of last year...and in an endless series of "Bill Bowers Speeches". (My god, you've probably never even experienced my public performances: however this gap in your life can be rectified by showing up at Austin, and checking out "Bill Bowers' Second Sequential Post-Iguanacón NASFIC Speech: Still Practicing, After All These Years".) In the meantime, some of the Old Gang is still here: Patty sends esoteric trivia via Bill, Leah keeps me informed on the progress of my adolescence...and Larry "I-used-to-date-Arimou's-neice" Downes even communicates from time to time. Why not join us? Nothing intense, rarely scathing...and never serious. Well, hardly ever. ...and take a break from school and come to Conflu (Napa Valley; Feb.) --hopefully I'll be there...

...and yet another voice from OW's 'past'...

ERIC MAYER It's been a long time since I locced *Outworlds*. I'm afraid you lost me when you first revived the fanzine. We seemed to be on different wavelengths or maybe, as Dave Locke implies, you just weren't explaining your wavelength to me well enough. I'm not a con goer so I have to admit I'm a hard sell when it comes to con reports, stories or speeches. Despite that, *Outworlds* 40 strikes me as being a very fine and interesting issue.

The exchange between Dave and Skel, or rather Dave's end of the exchange, was especially interesting. Dave makes a lot of good points--especially that fanwriting must be interesting but it is not necessary, to be interesting, to be a good writer. I think it is in this way that fanwriting differs considerably from professional writing. The reason, I would say, that a fan can be interesting without being a very good writer is because we have a built in interest in each other's doings and enough knowledge of each other to fill in any blanks a less than perfect writer might leave. Of course, if a writer is interesting in a fanzine context he is a good fanwriter, notwithstanding that his writing skills might not be sufficient in some other context.

Like Skel I've often said I write "for" certain other fans. But what I mean by writing "for" them is not so much shaping my material with them in mind as

wanting them to read what I've written because I respect their opinions, consider them friends, etc. Likewise, when I write "for" fandom, I do not shape my material for fandom. To me, fandom influences and aids writing in that, because of the built in interest factor, it is willing to accept writing about almost anything I care to write about. I think it is our interest in each other that fans share most. Not a common way of thinking, or esoteric knowledge, but a simple, family kind of interest in the doings and ideas of other fans. As a matter of fact I've been doing my best to eliminate fanish references from my recent writing. I've come to the conclusion that most such references constitute cheap humor and are ultimately distracting.

One of the most difficult things in fandom, for me, has been to strike some balance in my involvement. To meet new people, retain old friends, and still, somehow, keep things under control. Lately I haven't succeeded well at this. The circulation of my fanzine has outrun my repro capability as new readers keep coming aboard and few disembark. More seriously, by trying to reach out, to place myself in general fandom, I've managed to get involved with quite a number of people I don't want to get involved with.

We often put up with people simply because they are fans, and we are all in fandom together. I'm not sure anymore of the wisdom of that course. Maybe in our fanac we should be more like Skel with his writing and worry about individuals we like and have something in common with beyond fandom. Why put up with people for a hobby?

There is a basic problem in fanning...is fandom a smorgasbord of interesting people that we can chose from or is it a sort of organization which we are required to accept in its entirety? Obviously, no one can force us to take the latter view, and yet it seems that many fans do. I've read, in my recent correspondence, the most incredible backstabbing among "fan friends"--or perhaps I should say "fan associates". In certain instances, although I refrained, I felt like telling the letter writer, "You're not obligated to associate with so and so if you hate his guts. Why put up with him?"

Yet fans do, seemingly feel obligated.

At any rate, I am opting for the individualized approach and Skel's ideas about distributing his writing only to friends are not, in light of this approach, so farfetched. The trick, as Dave points out, is to insure you don't isolate yourself too much.

Seems like every other fanzine I pick up fans are all agreeing on the awfulness of having kids. Wish I'd read what Bob Lichtman actually said--as it is I don't know exactly what Mike Glickson is responding to when speaking of parents shirking their responsibilities with the excuse that "They're just being kids". As a parent I will say that my own perception of children has changed radically. Without living with children full time it is hard, I know, to realize that they are full fledged human beings, even as you or I, with just as much will, ego, etc as you or I. They aren't machines parents can turn on or off at will, nor would any responsible parent want them to be mindless automations. Just as you or I, children sometimes decide that they don't want to do what's expected of them.

Rarely, even at their worst however, do children carry on as badly as adults often do. If a three year old throws a tantrum in a store over a pack of gum its dreadful, but if Uncle Harry gets dead drunk at a party, knocks over a table and throws up on the rug, that's OK--and if it happens at a convention it's a literary event.

Usually I find that people who complain about parents keeping their kids under control mean that parents ought to prevent kids from annoying people who are annoyed tactically at the sight of kids.

I suppose I've never given much thought to either having or not having kids. It seemed sort of a natural thing to do. Obviously, there are terrific monetary and freedom advantages in not having kids but I doubt if any of the travel I'd have done, or any of the items I'd have been able to buy, by not taking on the burden of children, would've resulted in as important an experience as watching children grow up. If I'd thought to choose I doubt if I'd have chosen to remain ignorant of the basic life-experience involved in child rearing.

It doesn't surprise me that fans, for the most part, are against children. Children certainly do mitigate against fanac and hence against one's being a fan.

...it's good to have you back, Eric--even though you are (naturally) totally W^R^O^N^G in your apologia for children... ¶ Ironically, one of the items uncovered in "the move" was an envelope containing an OW loc dated 2/18/76, from you, along with a story titled "One Man's Fandom" (which doesn't read too bad, after all these years)! ¶ I do hope you stick around...

...and naturally, as soon as I phased out of the Family 'section' and into Eric's loc, a chatty letter arrived from the one, the only, the esoteric Patty Peters. It is True...she & Gary Mattingly are now firmly SGM and their new address is: 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin CA 94024.

ROGER WADDINGTON ...with this present and erratic postal system, a current, up-to-date Loc seems almost out of reach. Been toying with the idea of composing a Loc every six weeks or so; filling it with opinions, current preoccupations, old scores, books worth recommending, hearing some relation to past issues of OW, hopefully; so that at least once every year, it might coincide with a current issue. Though in those terms, it would be just short of a fanzine; and I'd have to send it to everybody.

...having gone to see all those films, however do you find the time to bring out OW so regularly? Have to admit, I found it the most fascinating item in the issue (OW39). Even though most of my knowledge comes from the reviews, had a 99/100 score in working out the actors & actresses for each, filling an empty hour or so; of benefit to that extent, at least. Under these circumstances, my present film-going is rather limited (having to pay for the bus fare to York, as well as the cinema ticket does leave a hole in my unemployment benefit); but having the choice, I think I'd go for the cheap and cheerful films like MAD MAX or EMMANUELLE ON TARBOD ISLAND, rather than those with any sort of message, the prestigious, pretentious ones like THE KING OF COMEDY, or SOPHIE'S CHOICE. I still hold to the old idea that in going to the cinema you're taken away from the problems of the world for two or three hours, not to see them blazoned across the screen in Cinemascope.

On the 'Letter from Skel'.... Well, I'm far enough away, in distance and time, to be more of an acquaintance, rather than a friend; but even though most of the references and asides might escape me, my enjoyment isn't any the less. The one thing that keeps me going through the *New Yorker* (apart from a sub that's paid up to April '86), through all the pages about nuclear war, psychiatric patients and eugenics research, is the hope of finding one of Roger Angell's baseball articles. I know nothing about the sport, can only dimly envisage a baseball diamond, the terms used are like a foreign language; but the enjoyment comes through, the pleasure he, the players and the spectators take in a game of baseball, the whole ambience. (I was saying something about a foreign language?) It's that spirit I find in *Outworlds*, and many another fanzine, that even though I know hardly any of the participants personally, I can

still enjoy what they write, even though intended for a more pertinent, nearer and involved audience.

Must admit, I like to hear 'experts' sounding off; that their theories never quite seem to connect with the facts, is all part of the pleasure. Like the recent expedition to find Noah's Ark, or searching for Ancient Astronauts, or even the Manna Machine that's theorised to have fed the Hebrews during their forty-year sojourn in the wilderness; it's their faith that our ancestors couldn't have survived without some form of present-day technology, that betrays them. And that readers need these modern myths, like some later form of the mediaeval stories and actual relics, like the pieces of the True Cross or the bones of St. Peter which put together could have raised a small forest or another twelve disciples. It seems strange that, in spite of the growth of Science, we still need something to believe in.

Anyway, thanks for the rest of 40, especially the Buck Coulson Interview; can't comment much, being an interested party; but are you sure you're doing right, shattering the image? And if you're out there, 41, you can come in now! 11|23|84

...ah, fooled you! From your preliminary comments, it seems that you got 39 & 40 on roughly the same 'schedule' as Ian. Someday, which will be Real Soon Now... I'll be able to mail overseas copies airmail...

AL CURRY Sorry Lyn and I couldn't make SPACECON6 this time. As always with us, it was a simple matter of finances. France can default on their WWII debts, but my landlord gets nervous if the rent is late. Something about the rising cost of electrolysis on his wife's knuckles and shoulders. As always, Dave's "Dialog With Two Fans" was interesting.

Curiously enough, in spite of reading his fanzine words for years and participating in brief conversations at a few cons, I've never really gotten to know Buck. As a matter of fact, I haven't seen him for a long enough period of time in recent ages to say hello. Of course, since *Gnomenclature* fell asleep a few years back, I can say the same for a lot of people.

While I don't agree with Dave on the subject of con attendance (mine usually being limited only by lack of funds), I do agree with him on the barcon aspects of the argument. MidwestCon offers its own solution, however. As many people know (Dave included), we simply get ourselves a *free* drink from the consite, find ourselves a convenient table in the shade of a handy umbrella, and indulge in absolutely brutal slandercons. Honary chairperson at this last one was Steve Leigh; Doctor Emeritus was Dave Locke; Sergeant-At-Arms was Megan Leigh.

RE: tolerating fans you dislike at cons simply because they are fans at cons.

The problem is non-applicable in my case, as I have been blessed with a well-developed gift for unbelievable rudeness. For instance, the fact that he was near at hand has never stopped me from commenting on my opinion of -----.

RE: Glicksohn's comments.

I refuse to accept the word bizarre as a valid, descriptive term for my personality. To paraphrase one of my heroes, Strother Martin, I'm not bizarre; I'm colorful! * S P I T * BINGO!

On the other hand, Glicksohn, you adorably fuzzy Provy sympathizer, I do appreciate your kind words on the way Lyn and I handle our shared poverty. Could it be possible that necessity is the mother of panache as well as invention? There was a period of time there when the two of us were buying groceries on what we could garner from our twice-weekly visits to the Alpha Plasma Center. Since that time, we have been compiling notes for a (hopefully) humorous volume to be entitled **POVERTY ON A SHOE STRING.**

RE: Brad Foster's comment on porn writing.

Agreed, porn is boring as hell to write, but it was thrill-a-minute excitement when compared to the one (count'em) romance novel I wrote.

RE: Esoterica-cum-Bowers.

Anyone publishing a fanzine on such a personal level, whether it is your *Outworlds* or my *Gnomenclature* or anything between or beyond, is going to have esoteric material that will buzz over the heads of many readers and stick quivering in the wall.

It seems the nature of the beast. There are many references I might pick up in OW that others, who have not been around you, would miss entirely. Then there are other references for which I can have no reaction whatsoever because I have no idea what the hell you're talking about.

These, however, don't bother me in the least. I simply slough them off and read on, looking for fodder more palatable to my own personal experiences.

Well, Al, you're certainly the rudest individual I know! (Though it seems recently that you have to put a bit of effort into it...was it the plasma-loss, or are you simply getting on along with the rest of us?) Perhaps now the Doonesbury is back, and you can 'borrow' characters again, you'll grace these pages with some of your quaint cartoons...?

JACK HERMAN (in transit over Pacific) Buck & Dave's dialogue raises many issues: --like Buck, I like to think of fans as wide spectrum personalities & am alarmed at the Balkanisation of US fandom into cliques & special interests. Fortunately, "my" fandom isn't like that--we do involve ourselves in the range of fanaticism in Australia.

--Meeting all those people I've traded & corresponded with was fascinating (& occasionally disappointing) but I found it equally exciting &, sometimes, more rewarding to meet many fans whom I'd never heard of--especially in non-zine territories like Texas & the (outside Seattle) Northwest. I'm sure many of the people who were fascinating in person might be dead in print.

Buck's list of zines was interesting (and flattering): many appear to be "out-of-print" but all are, as far as I can tell, open-ended in their choice of contents & reasonably eclectic. That's why I like *Yandro*.

I'm not sure I like your self-imposed "niceness" rule--deleting names/substituting pseudonyms when nastiness rears its head. But I can appreciate the problem--it is one I am faced with in writing my DUFF report: do I name names & offend people I found shallow, boring or dull or do I ignore them & write only about those I liked or do I go & pseudonym them?

Your perceptions of Gahan Wilson & Malzberg's impersonation of him is ironic: of all the mental images I built up of fans I had heard from you, you and Brad Foster least fit my picture. 9|24|84

...in what way?, he asked, wondering if he should just wait & read Jack's DUFF report to find out if he has been 'pseudonymed'. (In any event, I'm looking forward to meeting Brad in Austin even more, now...) Ever since the '75 Westcon where Dan Goodman told me I couldn't possibly be "Bill Bowers" because HE was short, dark & scowling...and later at King Kon where we discovered that Linda Michaels was tall & blonde... a certain amount of curiosity surfaces occasionally.

I've Also Heard From: BRUCE D. ARTIURS, EDD VICK, & LESLIE DAVID (who should be back Stateside by now)... and that, for the first time in A Long Time, catches me up on ALL the OW response at hand...

...with the exception of a HARRY WARNER, JR. loc which is being held til. next time--only to avoid invalidating a certain bacover cartoon...

Thanks All...it's been almost real. 112:30am/12/11

countdown to L.A.

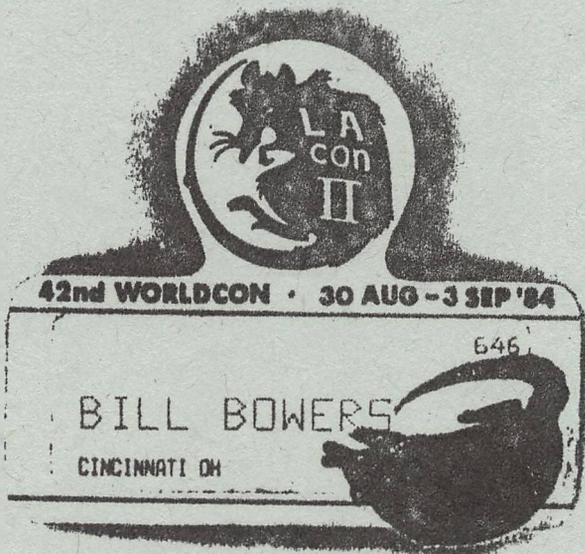
...beginning in May, I started receiving this series of postcards:

- ...from Hawaii;
- ...from Toyko Disneyland;
- ...from West Germany;
- ...from Scotland.

[There was also the one from Westercon.]

And here you thought I was simply making all this up.

- ...of course I am.
- But I did go to LAcon II.

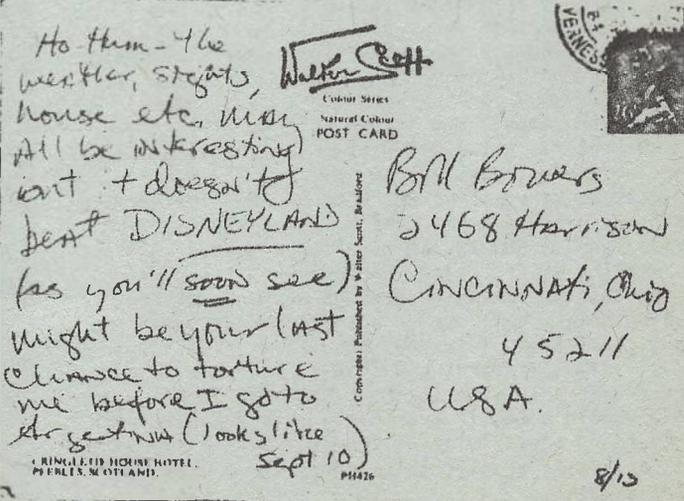
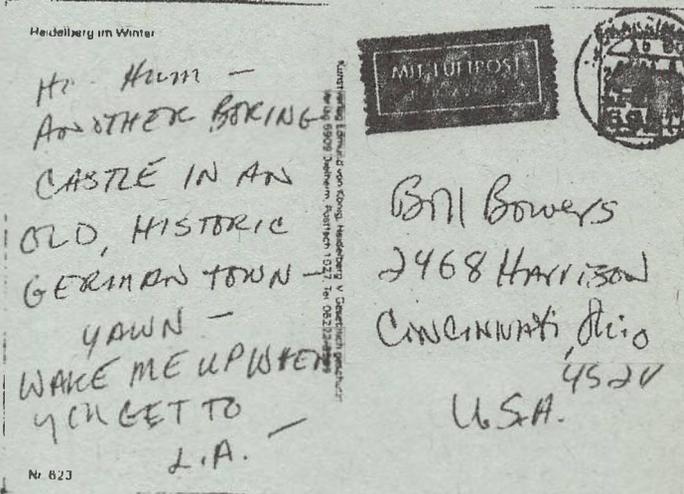
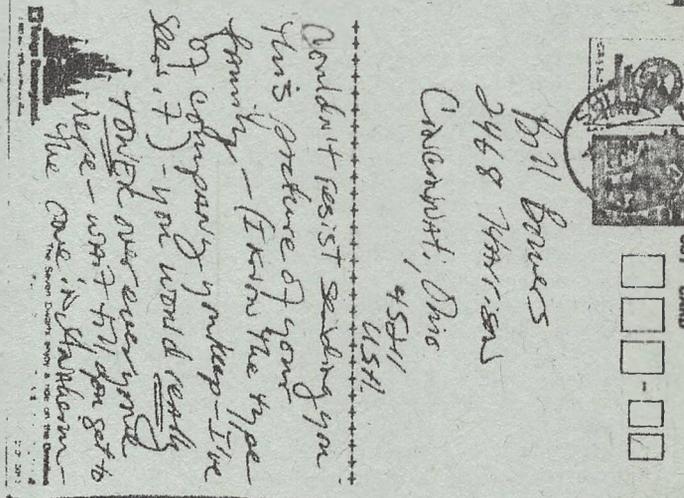
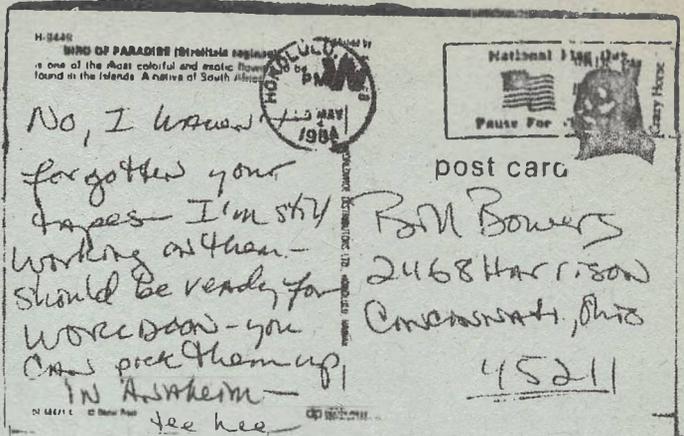


"...is there any use in my continuing to send you my fanzine?" I asked her. "Do you read them at all?" "Of course I do," she said. "If only to see if you mention my name." "Do you want me to mention your name? ...you are, after all, the reason I don't use names any more." "I know. ...sorry about that." Awkward pause. "Well, it wasn't entirely your fault..."

(At least she doesn't send me postcards from strange faraway places!)

Over the course of seven days in L.A., I did not see the cons GoH's once. My "programming" attendance was a round-table discussion where Terry Carr told about the perfect fanzine. I got to see the two I primarily went to see... and a number of other Neat People. I was one of four to purchase FANZINES IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE. I had fun.

...and that's my LAcon II conreport.



and some other stuff:

Credit Where Due, Dept. of: I feel that I should point out that Jackie's cover, and Dave's opening skit...were done in September--long before 'others' got in the act. It's not their fault it's taken so long to get out...

Speaking of which, a certain Mr. Smith II (of Chicago) is issuing a "Resident of The Wimpy Zone" t-shirt (designed by a certain "LA Zeldes" who seems to reside in two states simultaneously). Since the deadline for ordering is past, I won't give details, but if any of you wimps out there are interested in finding out if a) he has an overrun, or b) will be issuing a second 'printing', you can contact Mr. Smith II at, 2007 W. Howard St., Chicago, IL 60202.

(The shirt design is cute...but *our* logo is better.)

Incidentally, we here at Wimpy (But Flexible) Zone Central want you to know that, yes, we are all very much bent out of shape by this illicit powerplay on the part of the bi-costal warmongering smof-elite, and if you guys don't cut it...we'll beat you severely on your briefcase-carrying arm with a rolled-up TAFF-ballot.

...no, that's probably too controversial.

Let's just say that if They don't fess up and admit that this rotational scheme is just a rather poor attempt at fan humor, we'll force them to read and annotate a copy of the Constellation budget...

And if *that* doesn't strike fear into their Yalow-bellied bodies, then we'll have to get nasty.

...and put 'em ALL on the Cincinnati in '88 bidding committee.

Drastic? Yes, but this is Serious Shit.

(But we really don't wish to offend anyone.)

At Chicon IV, I never did make it to the fan room/area. But in Baltimore, I used the fan area as a daytime 'base'. And in LA, I spent a *lot* of time 'way over in a corner of the hotel, around a bend and down a hallway, where the "fan" rooms were located.

I dunno...maybe the Worldcon *is* evolving into a group of related-but-separate "conventions" under one umbrella organization; perhaps that's the only way to deal with the size-factor. To some, the solution is not to go to Worldcons anymore; to me that is not a viable option, but to each his own.

I started out a fanzine fan, and while there may be some discussion as to the clarity of my writing, I seem to have demonstrated some small staying power in that "fandom".

...but a year after first pubbing my ish, I went to my first convention--a Worldcon, and despite this being an off-year (only five; my ghod, what happened?) --in October I went to my 136th convention. And if, today, you were to mention the word "corflu"... a few of my closest friends will think you're talking about one of the strange concoctions served at Worldcon bidding parties...

Two fandoms? At the very least, but I have a foot in both camps...and intend to keep it that way.

But this is not a disertation on the State of ANY Aspect of Fandom; just a lead-in...

Last January, there was a convention in the Bay Area that called itself "CORFLU: The Convention for Fanzine Fans". Unfortunately, it was scheduled the same weekend as Confusion. And it wasn't the *first* con for fanzine fans: those of us who were at the first Autoclave still share a special bond unmatched by any con I know of (except possibly Torcon II).

...still, I heard Good Things about Corflu and so shortly before leaving for L.A., one night while up at Dave & Jackie's (while graciously helping them lower the level on a bottle of 151 rum), I made a suggestion. Dave, at least, recalls thinking it was a Good Idea.

RE THE IDEA

At LAcon, I ran my burst of inspiration past a number of folks, and most of them thought it was a Very Good Idea.

Corflu 2 will be held Feb. 1-4, 1985, at the Napa Valley Holiday Inn. (Info from: CORFLU, POBox 590712, San Francisco, CA 94159-0712). It's too early to make a definite commitment--that's two months away!--but I really do hope to be there. And if I do make it, well, then, *you* had better be there too!

Corflu 3, rumor has it, will be in Falls Church. ...oh, about my "Idea"? Well, of course...

For the Record, I'm "bidding" for Corflu 4, to be held in Cincinnati...1977.

Why?

...because it would be fun.

...because it would give Denise Parsley Leigh a "deadline" for getting the next issue of *Graymalkin* out.

...but primarily so that all you fanzine fans who insist on worshipping at my feet at cons...can do so on *your* credit card for a change!

Remember: CORFLU 4: the convention for wimpy fanzine fans everywhere...

Really.

I have a favor to ask.

Those of you who have visited either this, or my immediate-past abode, will be aware that, other than being an Incredibly Neat Housekeeper, I a) have a VCR and b), I have a few audio cassettes.

Those of you who haven't visited, but who have known me for some time, will be aware that I'm exceedingly modest.

In 1978 (Labor Day weekend, I vaguely recall), I was Harlan Ellison's warm-up act.

At that point in time I, a) did not have a VCR, and b) had an eight-track player/recorder.

(But I was still modestly exceeding...)

The nitty...

I specifically did not give permission for my speech to go in the "official" cassette-package, but I am sure it was recorded.

I'd like to get a copy.

I wrote Tim Kyger. I cornered him at LAcon.

The caftan-clad "speech" in front of a-lot-of-people was video-taped. According to Tim, however, the tapes "disappeared" in the vicinity of the Iggy-treasurer in 1979...

If fans know all, then certainly fans can find all. Beta-format. (preferably B-II.)

It would be appreciated.

We were out to dinner one night at LAcon.

After ordering, and before being served, one of the guys in our party amused himself by running his finger around the rim of the water glass, making it "bing".

He was seated on my left.

She, seated on my right, (perhaps out of nervousness; perhaps out of boredom), attempted to make her water glass do likewise.

With a notable lack of success.

Eventually, I interjected. (Eventually, I always do.)

"...but, you're doing it the same way he is. Clock-wise..."

"So?"

"...he's male."

"...oh!"

Her finger moved counter-clockwise...and at once her water glass sang with crystal clarity.

Everyone laughed, and I felt quite smug...until she kicked me under the table.

...why me?

Ah well, I still won't mention her name.

Even though I now know she still reads my fanzine...

...waiting for me to do so.

...all other, uncredited, material is by
The Editor -- to Whom this Publication
should be Returned...if Undeliverable...

BILL BOWERS
2468 Harrison Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45211 U.S.A.

WIMPY ZONE

A WARNING FROM THE
POSTMASTER GENERAL:
THIS FANZINE CONTAINS
ONE (1) LETTER OF COM-
MENT BY HARRY WARNER



AL ECUO

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1425; 1431; 1433; 1436; 1441; 1442]
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