

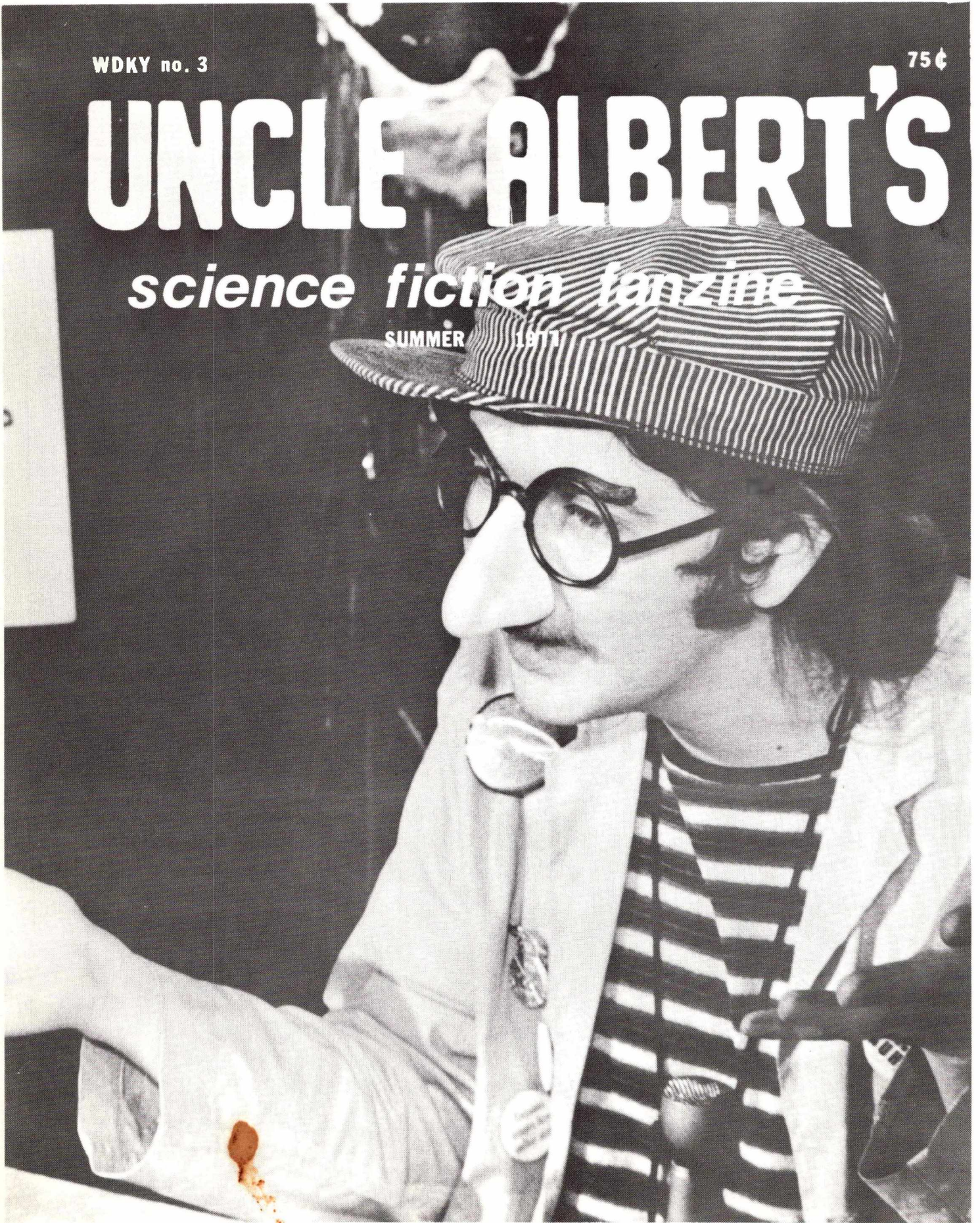
WDKY no. 3

75¢

UNCLE ALBERT'S

science fiction fanzine

SUMMER 1977



UNCLE ALBERT'S SCIENCE FICTION FANZINE, WDKY #3, Vol. II, no. 2

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front and back cover photography by Larry Tucker

UNCLE ALBERT'S SCIENCE FICTION FANZINE is the official zine of the Ann Arbor Stilyagi Air Corps. Address all correspondence to Uncle Albert c/o:

Larry Tucker
 2785 Page
 Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

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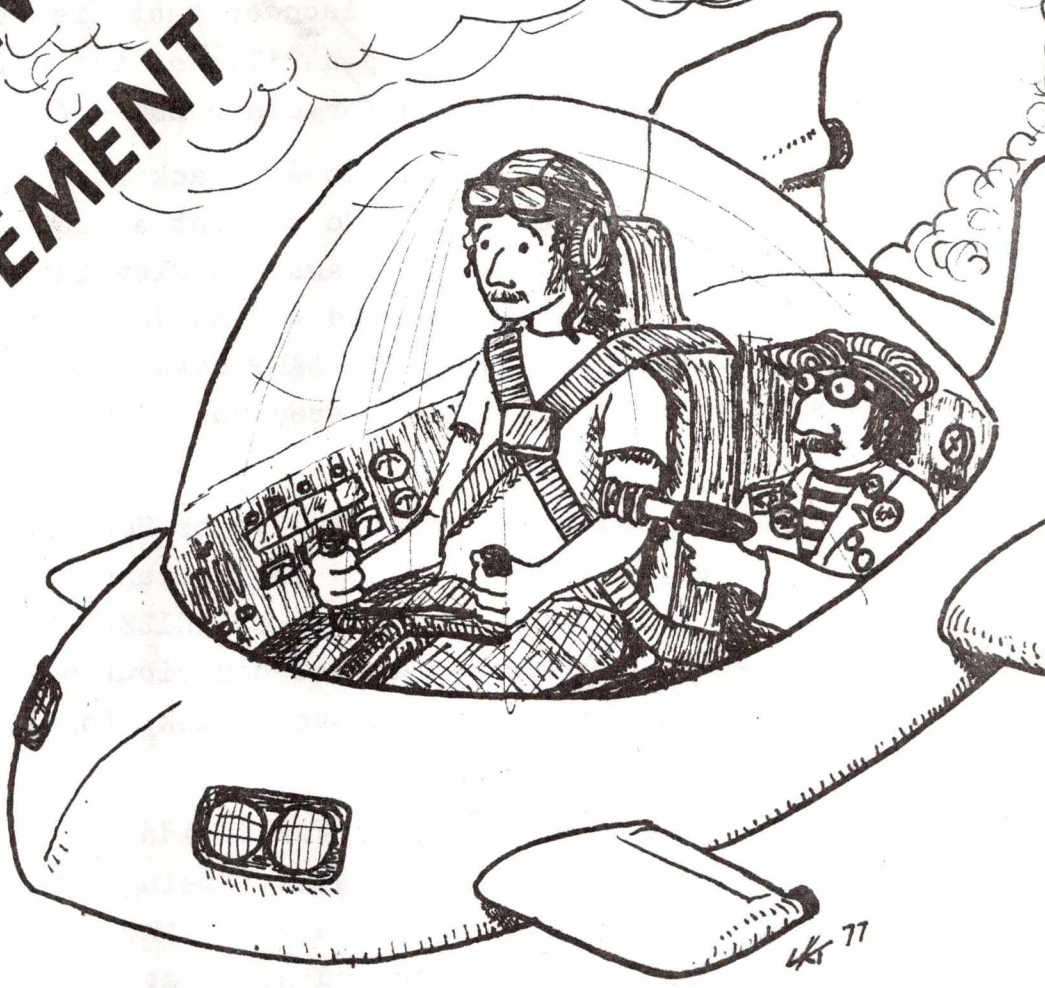
SUB-SPACE SCRAPS and INFORMING SOURCES - A FEVER DREAM are reprinted from CAP'N RO'S WHAZZ-BUNG, with the authors' permission.

NOTE: This zine does not contain a review of STAR WARS. It also does not contain anything by or about Mike Glicksohn.

The brakes of the Stilyagi Air Corps

SKID MARKS IN THE SKY

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT



In WDKY #2 there was a story by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. entitled "Of Roses and Such". It was about a fanzine editor who kept changing the name of his zine. If that's

what you think is going on here, you're wrong. Yes, this is still the official zine of the A² Stilyagi Air Corps, but the name isn't the only thing that's changed. Perhaps I'd better fill you in on the history of Stilyagi's zine.

A few years back, there was a young engineering student living here known affectionately as Cap'n Ro. He was your typical, enthusiastic, starry-eyed neo. Shortly after he discovered fandom, he learned that there were a whole buncha fen living in Ann Arbor. Cap'n Ro decided to gather these fen all together and, having been impressed by a book called The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, figured the name to rally under was the Stilyagi Air Corps. Then, naturally, he decided to put out a fanzine, which he modestly called CAP'N RO'S WHIZ-BANG (He also decided to hold the first A² sf convention, but that's

another story entirely).

For some reason, Ro wasn't on hand when the second ish of Stilyagi's zine went to the printers. When he finally saw the thing, he was surprised to discover that his name was missing from the cover. In its place was an illo of the Stilyagi Air Corps pilot striking a female something-or-other named Again.

By the next ish, Cap'n Ro was back at the controls again, so the name reverted to CRWB. Ro put out a couple more ishes before allowing himself to be lured away to Cleveland to become the assistant editor of a techie zine called AUTOMATION. But the gremlins were still at work. The last WHIZ-BANG cover, created by a semi-literate fan artist named Foglio, appeared under the name CAP'N RO'S WHIZZ-BANG.

Next, another neo, claiming to be Bob Tucker's uncle (or something), stepped in. A limited oneshot appeared called CAP'N RO'S WHAZZ-BUNG (being the past tense of WHIZZ-BANG). Somehow, this Tucker person had managed to get contributions from a number of pro's, including Anderson, Biggle, Bova, Simak, Wolfe, Zelazny and the other Tucker.

After the WHAZZ-BUNG, Tucker decided to start putting out a zine on a (sort of) regular basis. Being a much more modest individual than his predecessor, he asked the Air Corps for suggestions for a title. Drunk, stoned and silly as usual, the group came up with a few absurd titles - BHEER NUTS, THE DAILY FNORD - which Tucker found unusable. He sought professional advice from a WHAZZ-BUNG contributor, Gene Wolfe, and came up with WE DON'T KNOW YET.

So he put out two ishes under that name, which just about brings us up to date.

Now, this could be WDKY #3, but it isn't. Putting out zines and working on the ConFusion con. committee kinda went to the kid's head. Did Tucker gafiate? Hardly.



The poor sucker volunteered to be the chairman for the next ConFusion. Now, a few months after assuming the chairmanship, he has discovered that he just doesn't have the time, or the energy, to keep putting out a fanzine. This is where I come in.

In the first WDKY, Tucker allowed me to make my fanzine debut in a thing called "MidAmeriConvoy". By WDKY #2 I had persuaded him to let me be science editor. Now I'm gonna take it all - the J.A.M. Sessions, Hooded Aardvarks, Flying Squirrels, filksongs, Ted Reynolds' stories, Bathurst illos and everything.

Oh, I'll let Tucker make an occasional contribution. Maybe he'll do an illo or two, whenever I've got a hole in a page that needs filling, and I'll let him keep his video column. But the zine is gonna be mine. Wotta trip!

So, that's how we got to UNCLE ALBERT'S SCIENCE FICTION FANZINE. Next time, maybe I'll tell you how Stilyagi computes the numbers for their cons - if I can figure it out.

- - Uncle Albert

the A^2 Stilyagi Air Corps presents...

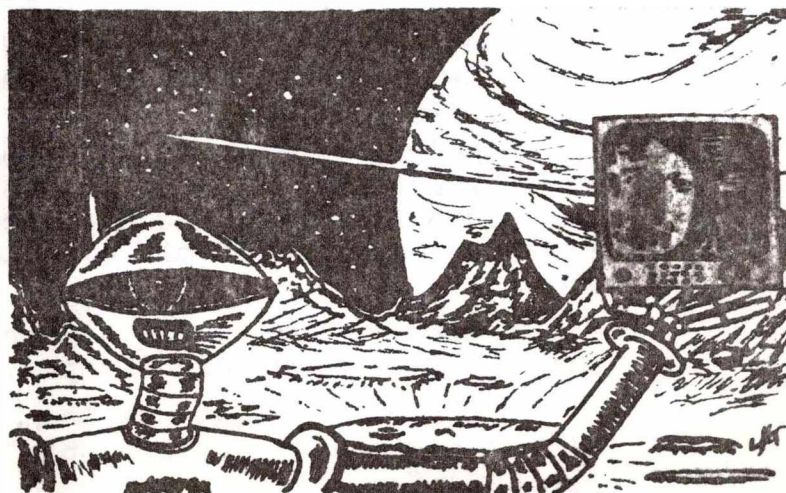
ConFusion II

Jan. 13-15, 1978

featuring:

Toastmaster - Jim Martin
 Sat. night Masquerade Party
 with visual entertainment by
 the ILLUMINATUS laser light show

for info: Dave Innes
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Reception Committee

Grelf followed a cautious few steps behind his escort as that pompous individual cleared a path through the crowd. Grelf glanced from side to side occasionally, as much to study the expectant faces of the onlookers as to avoid being mesmerized by the escort's metronomically swinging tail.

"Way!" the escort trumpeted. "Make way for the Chosen!"

They halted at the door to the temple. The escort wheeled around, deftly whipping his tail against the metal portal as he turned.

"Who seeks entrance?" a voice echoed from within.

"The Chosen, Grelf, has arrived in accordance with the will of the High Keeper."

The massive door parted just enough to allow Grelf to enter. As he cleared the threshold, the door slid shut behind him with a hollow, booming sound. The invisible gatekeeper addressed Grelf in a voice that was now as soft as a falling leaf.

"You are expected. Proceed to the central audience chamber."

Grelf strode dutifully down a short corridor, through an iris-ing entranceway and into the chamber. He stopped at the foot of the high, polished onyx of the dais and waited. Somewhere high overhead, a bright blueish light issued forth from cleverly hidden sources, bathing the stark enclosure in shadowless uniformity.

It was quiet in the audience chamber, in marked contrast to the tumultuous mob through which he had just passed. The only sound that reached his ears was the soft rush of slowly circulating air. Grelf's thoughts were slow and slightly muddled, wrapped in the gossamer confusion induced by the fumes he had been inhaling all morning in his dimly lit workshop. The summons from the High Keeper had been completely unexpected. To a member of the Chosen, the responsible inner circle of the priesthood, it could mean but one thing. A miracle was being planned.

Another miracle? So soon? The last had occurred a mere three days before, when Rark had unveiled his subtly modified harvesting machine.

Grelf's reverie was interrupted by a slight grating noise from behind the dais. A huge slab pivoted slowly inward and the robed figure of the High Keeper glided purposefully into view. Grelf lowered his eyes in mute deference to her authority.

"Are you Grelf, the student and preserver of the ancient graphic arts?" the High Keeper intoned.

"I admit to that humble station, Your Wisdom," the young priest stammered, still respectfully studying the inlaid tiles near his feet.

"Have you been told the reason for this summons?"

"I have been informed that it has to do with the Wandering Star, Most Responsible One," Grelf said. Rumors of the stargazers' remarkable sighting had reached him several meals earlier. A new star had appeared, arrogantly gliding across the fixed field of its more staid brethren. At the time, Grelf had dismissed the reports as inconsequential to his own work. He was still unable to discern what this business had to do with him.

"Behold my visage, Chosen One," the High Keeper commanded.

Grelf allowed his gaze to travel up to the ancient face of the High Keeper. Her deeply lined skin gleamed darkly in the brilliant light, aged to a color nearly as maroon as the whorled hues of the stone platform on which she stood. Her black lips were parted slightly in a gentle expression of bemused indulgence.

"I can see that you are puzzled, Grelf. Due to the uniqueness of the events surrounding this latest miracle, we have had little opportunity to conduct the customary briefings."

"Then there is to be a miracle?" Grelf inquired.

"There is, indeed, and you have been chosen to play a very important part." She paused for emphasis. "You shall be the official scribe."

"Scribe?" he blurted. "I don't understand. My hand is not trained to that discipline. My glyphs are only barely decipherable, even to myself. Besides . . ."

"A moment, Grelf, and enlightenment shall be yours."

Grelf clenched his teeth, forcing himself to be silent.

"I am aware of your talents," she continued. "The record we require is not one of words, but of images. You have been successful in resurrecting the craft of static image retention to a level approximating that achieved by the ancients, have you not?"

"Only monochromatic images, Your Wisdom," Grelf amended humbly.

"That will suffice. This, then, is the manner with which you will chronicle the events of the miracle."

"As you desire," he said. "When is the miracle to occur?"

"We don't know," the High Keeper replied.

Grelf's tongue flicked between his lips in amazement. "How is this possible?"

"I told you this case was unique," the High Keeper reminded him. "It is not a miracle of our own making."

"A real miracle?" he asked in awe.

"Perhaps," the old female responded, "it is the miracle."

7

The medical officer's pale, slender hand imprinted its seven fingers on the identity plate and the door slid open.

"Enter, Three," the captain's voice commanded.

The doctor entered and the door whooshed shut behind him. Immediately he found himself transfixed by the captain's huge, unblinking eyes. Kneeling a perfunctory salute, a mildly acrobatic undertaking in zero gravity, the doctor thrust forward his pointy chin, indicating a desire to speak. The captain, he-who-needed-no-number, granted the request with a twitch of his ears.

"I have come, as directed, to offer my recommendations for the outfitting of the landing party," the doctor said.

"You may do so," the captain replied.

"The reports from numbers Two, Five and Seven, respectively, have supplied me with the following information. The planet is sparsely populated, although there is considerable evidence of ruins from a previous, larger civilization. There are large, uninhabited areas that betray unnaturally high concentrations of radioactive residue, suggesting that the previous civilization was destroyed during a global conflict waged with thermo-nuclear devices. The natives, a sort of reptilian lifeform, though warm blooded, seem to have regressed to a largely agrarian lifestyle, save for the single community with which we have been exchanging amplitude modulated electromagnetic signals."

"What sort of signals?" the captain asked.

"They consist of simple arithmetic functions. The first signals were measured pulses." The doctor rapped lightly on a nearby bulkhead to demonstrate - two taps, pause, two taps, pause, then four. "After we began responding to the signals, the information began to get a little more complex."

"Still intelligible?"

"Evidently. Number Two has been working on the problem with the assistance of the ship's computer. She suggests they may be sending us landing coordinates, relative to point of transmission."

"Surface conditions?" the captain asked.

"Breathable atmosphere with surprisingly low traces of toxic elements. Temperature in vicinity of the native community a few degrees higher than we are accustomed to, but not excessively so. The only serious hazard we should encounter is from their sun. This planet receives a dangerously high intensity of radiation in the visible spectrum. Under no circumstances should we attempt a landing on the sunlit side."

"Other recommendations?"

"Standard exposure suit with full kit, including detachable respirators, in the event that we missed anything in our initial atmospheric readings. The natives have betrayed no hostile intentions as yet, but it would be advisable to arm the landing party, just in case."

"Sonic disruptors?"

"No. If it should come to an armed confrontation, it would be inadvisable to actually kill anything. An optic paralyzer should suffice."

"You're undoubtedly right," the captain agreed. "This is a big event for us - a chance to become heroes. I'd rather we went down in history as the first crew to contact intelligent life in space peacefully, than as the reckless initiators of the first interstellar war."

"Are you sure?" Grelf hissed.

"I have been a faithful messenger," the young initiate responded, averting her eyes.

Grelf cursed himself silently. He had achieved Chosen status only a few seasons earlier. Occasionally he had to remind himself that his words and actions were of greater consequence now, especially to an initiate.

"My irritation is not with your performance," Grelf said in a softer tone. "So, the star is falling tonight, is it?"

"Even now, Revealer. According to the 'gazers it should land nearby, and soon."

This was, indeed, proving to be a most unorthodox miracle. The night landing would complicate things, but Grelf felt he could handle it.

"Inform the others that I will join them presently," he said. "I must retrieve some additional equipment from my workshop."

The initiate scurried off with his message. On the way to his workshop, Grelf allowed himself to contemplate the far-reaching effects this miracle might bring about.

After the Final War had destroyed most of the world, many generations ago, Grelf's ancestors had founded the priesthood. They had raided the remaining libraries and museums and had gathered together all of the old world's science and art they had deemed worthy of preserving. Most of the other survivors of the war had lapsed into a savage, nomadic existence. As the centuries passed, they had eventually settled into small farming communities.

The priesthood had preserved the old knowledge and, whenever they deemed it advisable, had doled out pieces of it, the miracles, to the world's population. They had patiently awaited the day when the race would mature enough to accept all the old teachings, to be used, this time, for peaceful pursuits. This anticipated coming of age, the priesthood believed, would be heralded by the ultimate miracle. Exactly what form this miracle would assume was not known, but they felt they would recognize it when it arrived.

Could this visitation from the stars be the sign the

priesthood had been waiting for? Grelf allowed himself to hope.

One by one, the landing party cautiously clumped down the ship's ramp. They ambled awkwardly around the circle of scorched earth that marked their landing place, getting accustomed to gravity and the feel of alien soil under their feet. The unnatural stillness around the clearing was broken only by the soft scraping and crunching produced by the milling of booted feet and the gentle ticking of cooling metal.

"The air is nice," someone ventured.

"That's because you're breathing it first hand, instead of out of a bottle," came a muted reply.

There was another moment of silence as the explorers gazed around the clearing, looking toward the tops of the strange, towering vegetation and at the unfamiliar constellations beyond.

"It's a lot like home," another voice said at length.

"Don't be deceived." This was the captain's stern voice. "It's night now. A moonless night, at that. If we'd landed when the moons were full, you'd have been willing to swear it was as bright as midday."

"Of course," Three chimed in, "even the reflected light of their sun would be intense. It's remarkable that life could adapt on such an alien world, under such harsh conditions. We couldn't survive more than a few heartbeats past sunrise here, not without being blinded."

"Captain," someone hoarsely croaked. "Something's coming this way."

"Where?" He eyed the surrounding shadows alertly.

"Straight ahead." The crew member pointed. "Life forms. Several. Relatively large, warm blooded."

The captain continued to stare into the darkened forest.

"Natives?" someone asked tensely.

The captain replied without turning. "Could be. I'm sure they were expecting us."

From somewhere not very far away they could hear the cracking and crashing of clumsy movement through the undergrowth.

"Nobody moves," the captain ordered in a harsh whisper. "Keep your hands off your weapons, but know where they are so you can find them in a hurry."

The sounds came nearer.

"Steady now," the captain cautioned.

In another moment, the natives stumbled out of the forest. They halted on the edge of the clearing and stared silently at the explorer crew. The explorers stared back in nervous expectation.

At first glance, the natives seemed to have three legs. On closer inspection, the captain resolved the third leg into a stout tail. The natives' eyes were rather small and set far apart and their mouths appeared very thin lipped and dry. They had leathery hides, colored rather remarkable shades of purple.

Abruptly, one of the natives began a soft chatter, apparently speaking to the dark skinned figure wearing the blue, cobwebby thing, who stood quietly in the center of the delegation. That must be their leader. The captain took a step in their direction. Immediately the talkative native broke off the conversation. The dark skinned leader responded by gliding forward a pace, separating itself from the group.

So far, so good, the captain thought. In another moment we'll probably - what? Hunker down and start drawing in the dirt with sticks, trying to demonstrate our intelligence and good intentions to each other? Who knows? Still, this first meeting seems to be getting off to a good start.

The captain took another cautious step forward and raised an arm, open palm outward, in friendly greeting.

Suddenly, as though the gesture had been a signal, a brilliant beam of light lashed out. The first flash hit the captain squarely in the face, activating the high intensity light detector in his helmet. As his hands reached convulsively for his eyes, an inky sheet of dye shot through the faceplate, blocking the painful ray. His head throbbing with pain, the captain snapped out his own sidearm and began firing wildly. A sharp scream rang out behind him. Someone's flash guard had failed to detonate.

"Back to the ship!" he shouted behind him. "Hurry!"

Searing beams of light energy lanced between the opposing figures in the clearing. As the captain spun around and lumbered blindly in the general direction of the ship, an arm encircled his midsection and an excited voice blared in his ear.

"This way, Captain! I can still see, a little!"

With the aid of the unseen crew member, the captain found the ramp and staggered up it into the security of the ship.

"Landing party all present," someone said. A control was activated and the hatch began to close. The captain lay on the deck, gasping heavily for breath. He heard the excited murmurings of the crew members, punctuated by an agonized whimper from one of the casualties. His vision had returned sufficiently that he could just barely discern the brilliant flashes silhouetting the nearly closed hatch. After what seemed an eternity, the hatch clanged shut and the bolts fell sharply into place.

"Someone call the bridge," he ordered. "Lift off immediately."

"As soon as we get the landing party strapped in."

"Lift off now!" he shouted. "We can take acceleration lying on the deck! Just get us off this damned planet!"

A low grumble started somewhere below them sending an ominous vibration through the deck plates on which he lay. Outside, the natives edged back under the cover of the surrounding trees. The grumble became a roar as tendrils of fire blossomed under the ship, lifting it swiftly toward the stars.

The captain moaned softly as the pressure increased, crushing him cruelly against the unyielding hardness of the deck. A single thought played across his painful awareness.

What went wrong?

"What went wrong?" the High Keeper demanded of no one in particular. Her eyes darted about inquiringly as the delegation stepped back into the clearing. She spotted one of the younger members as he moved from the shadows and approached him, her gauzelike robe billowing behind her like mist on the breeze.

"Grelf. What happened?"

"It doesn't make much sense, Your Wisdom. As near as I can figure it out, I took a few pictures of them, they took a few of us and, bam, they left." He shook his head slowly. "I don't understand it. Could this truly have been the miracle we have awaited?"

The High Keeper gazed toward the heavens.

"This may only have been a prelude," she said. "Perhaps, if they return, their message will be more implicit."

- - Lawrence K. Tucker

SUB-SPACE SCRAPS

A sheaf of messages decoded by the Galax Comm.'s Sol-orbiter Satellite, and emanating from a bar in the North-western quadrant of that sun's third planet - - a thoroughly off-limits sort of rock.

". . . doubtless isolated the source of leaks giving headquarters so much concern - - one member of so-called 'Stilyagi Air Corps', subversive Earthling society, spouting formulae, technology, knowledge not to be known here for millenia. Fortunately, others consider said humans nuts. Have joined society in disguise, causing uncomf_or_t due to confinement of tentacles, et al.

Suggest High Commissioner of Bureau authorize . . ."

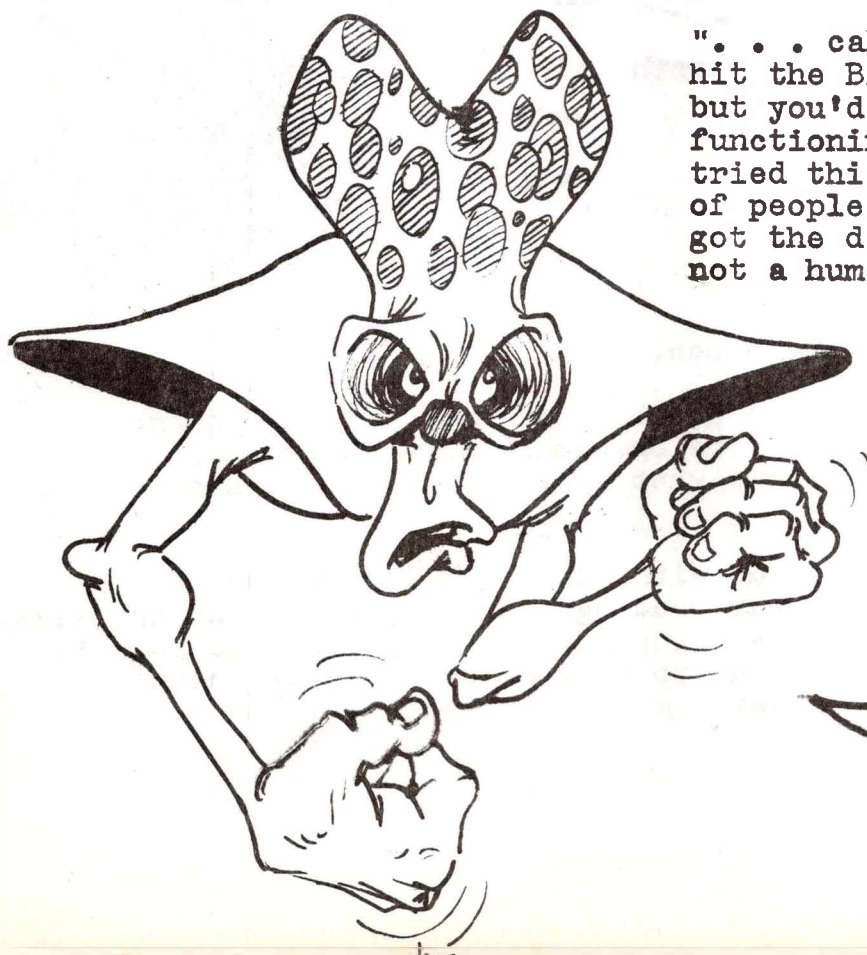
". . . xenological team on Sol Three. Fascinating wild life here. Now ensconced in burrow of local fauna, observing ingestive and mating customs with own olfactoropods. Animals consider us as of them, due to strong hypnotic compulsion. Most entertaining aspect, these creatures consider themselves as of some mental stature; gathering is of ostensible purport to discuss certain subjects of common interest, nature unknown, as in two years have neglected yet to discuss them . . ."

". . . real kicks and living high off the hog (native being, some relation to the dominants). Only place we've found alcohol in quantities sufficient for prober metabolism; are frequenting assembly of dominants mainly for consumption of such. Last week sJrVc forgot in his glee and temporarily resumed amoeboid form . . . but none of true natives in state of sobriety adequate to take note of such . . . Come slum with us. Bring the whole gang . . ."

". . . I'm ready, Gleegee, come and find me! You'll never discover where in the universe I'm hiding before bedtime. . ."

". . . calling Enterprise. We hit the Bicentennial all right but you'd better beam me down a functioning tricorder. I just tried this one out on the gang of people at the next table and got the damndest mishmash. . . not a human reading in the lot."

- - Ted Reynolds



THIS IS
NOT THE
STAR WARS
REVIEW!

VIDICON VIDEO IN FANDOM

Part 2: The Archives

VIDEO AND AUDIO

TAPE LIBRARIES

Why do people go to sf cons? There may be as many different reasons for con attendance as there are people in fandom, but there are some things we all seem to have in common. In general, we want to meet others interested in or involved with our avocation. We also dig meeting the pro's, getting a chance to see and hear, firsthand, what our heroes are really like.

Of course, only a limited number of fen may attend a given con. This is where documentation of conac, visual and/or auditory, comes in. Photographers and audio and video documenters are the eyes and ears for those fen who, for whatever reason, are unable to attend a con.

But why bother with video documentation? Isn't audio enough? To a limited extent, audio may be enough for some purposes, but consider; if audio was enough, what ended the golden era of radio, and why?

Curiosity has a lot to do with it. Most fen have read Pohl, Williamson, Anderson, etc., but reading them only whets our appetite. We yearn to find out what these people are really like, as people. Hearing their voices may help us to form a more complete mental picture. Seeing them can be even more instructive.



It has to do with perception; how our brains deal with information and which senses are most commonly employed in the gathering of this information. Studies have revealed that, in the case of a normal, non-handicapped person, the vast majority of the information relayed to and dealt with by the brain - something like 60 to 80% - is of a visual nature. At best, 30% of the information received and retained is auditory. Information originating in an auditory and visual form is, on the average, more fully assimilated.

Now before anybody starts thinking too hard about what I've just said and what the deeper implications might be, let me put this in the proper perspective. I'm talking about perception in general and people in general. The average person doesn't read anywhere near as much as the average fan. It is for this reason, and others too numerous to single out for discussion here, that I believe video will never entirely supplant the printed word, just as sf flicks have been unable to replace written sf. Imagination is the key.

Some people, fen in particular, like to be able to exercise their brains. We like to use our imaginations, to bring something of ourselves into the sf experience. Visual media leave little to the imagination. We are, therefore, at the mercy of the film or video directors and their interpretations of stories we may already have read. No, we say, that's not what a starship should look like. No, that's not a Martian, it's an actor in a sponge rubber costume.

This is not to say that video can't be used as a story telling medium, any less than film or theater. They are all versatile and unique media and they all have something different to offer to an audience.

But, I was talking about documentation. Video is ideally suited to the task of documentation - much more so than film. With video, there are no hidden costs, like developing. The information is recorded on magnetic tape, similar to that used in audio recording. At the touch of a lever or button you can replay what has been recorded immediately after it has been recorded. If you don't like the tape you can just record over it. Unlike film, videotape is reusable.

Although video can provide the most complete coverage, it does have its limitations. The main drawback is cost. Remember, video is relatively inexpensive; that is, compared to film or broadcast TV. One hour of ½" format videotape retails for about \$40. As I said, there's no extra cost for processing, but we're still talking about more money than the average fan can afford to shell out for a con. This is where two other aspects of archives-type recording come in; videotape libraries and audio recording. First, let's take a look at the latter.

Lloyd Biggle, Jr. has been writing consistently good sf for well over two decades. Among his works are All the Colors of Darkness, The Metallic Muse, The Light That Never Was and a new collection of his short stories, A Galaxy of Strangers. He has been an officer of SFWA, has conducted a writing workshop in the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area and is a very dear friend of the Air Corps, having provided

us with much encouragement, advice and assistance in putting together the Ann Arbor cons. Not content to rest on his laurels (or whatever else it is that so many people seem content to rest on), Lloyd has recently undertaken yet another in a long line of laudable sf endeavors.

Together with Frederik Pohl, Howard DeVore, Tom Clareson and the Eastern Michigan University Science Fiction Society, Lloyd organized the Science Fiction Oral History Committee (SFOHC). The SFOHC was formed to search out and acquire oral records of sf related activities and to make these recordings available to others. The committee was designed to promote interest in recording sf events and in preserving these recordings for future use. The first SFOH Conference, held at ConFusion 14, featured panels and discussions on a number of topics: presentation and discussion of the sf oral history project; a demonstration of oral history, including tapes of Asimov, Bradbury, Herbert, van Vogt and others; a discussion on how to interview an author, and how not to; and a panel on John W. Campbell, Jr. by authors who knew him well and worked with him, including Poul Anderson, Jack Williamson, Gordon Dickson and Lloyd Biggle.

Throughout the weekend, the Science Fiction Oral History Hospitality Room was open to ConFusion members. In the room, members of the Eastern Michigan University SF Society were on hand to play back tapes of speeches by well known sf writers, panel discussions from past cons and sf dramatizations from the great days of radio.

Interest in Lloyd's project has been sufficient that the committee has gone ahead with plans to establish the SF Oral History Association (SFOHA). The SFOHA will attempt to arrange for the recording of important events at all sf cons. It will sponsor special panels and interviews to preserve information of importance to sf history and criticism and will attempt to locate and salvage as much as possible from recordings made in the past. Further, it will attempt to assure that the recordings it sponsors are properly engineered and made with effective equipment.

All of the recordings controlled by the SFOHA will be placed in official depositories at major universities where they will be available to scholars and students. They will also sponsor con projects such as those at ConFusion - the SF Oral History Conference and the SF Oral History Hospitality Room - where fen will have an opportunity to hear speeches, panels and interviews from cons they missed, as well as old-time sf radio programs.

The SFOHA invites the support of all those interested in science fiction. They will attempt to obtain financial support for their projects from other sources, but until they are actually functioning they won't know how much support will be available and from where. This is where you come in.

You can become a charter member of the Science Fiction Oral History Association. A one year membership costs \$3, payable to:

Mary Anne Mueller
 Science Fiction Oral History Association
 117 Goodison
 Eastern Michigan University
 Ypsilanti, Mich. 48197

This is your chance to get in on the ground floor - to offer your support to an organization that can prove to be of inestimable wealth to sf readers for a very long time to come. In return, the SFOHA offers members an opportunity to take part in their organization and activities (they may have to devise a training course for those interested in conducting interviews in SF Oral History); perhaps a newsletter if the membership is large enough to justify it; perhaps special activities planned for members only. Much of this depends on the membership - become a member and vote for the kind of Association you want.

Now let's talk about videotape libraries. Most individuals and groups involved in video production maintain libraries of tapes they have made. Videotape exchange works as follows:

First, find out who is holding and what tapes are available. There is no set formula for this. Mostly, just keep your eyes and ears open. If you run into a video freak at a con, give them your name and address and request a list of their library tapes. If there is something on the list you'd like to see, send them a tape of your own (either blank or with a recording you are exchanging with the library) of a previously specified format ($\frac{1}{2}$ " reel-to-reel, $\frac{1}{2}$ " cassette or $\frac{3}{4}$ " cassette). The tape you request will be dubbed onto the tape you provide. There are certain precautions that must be observed when sending videotape through the mail, since the tape is super sensitive to electromagnetic fields, extremes in temperature, etc. To be sure you're doing it right, it wouldn't hurt to get in touch with your local post office. Whenever possible, however, you should avoid sending videotape through the mail. One way to avoid the endemic screwups and hassles of the U.S. Mail is to send your tapes via United Parcel. Better still, if you've got a friend who will be travelling in the right direction, let your friend serve as a carrier.

So who has a videotape library? I do, for one.

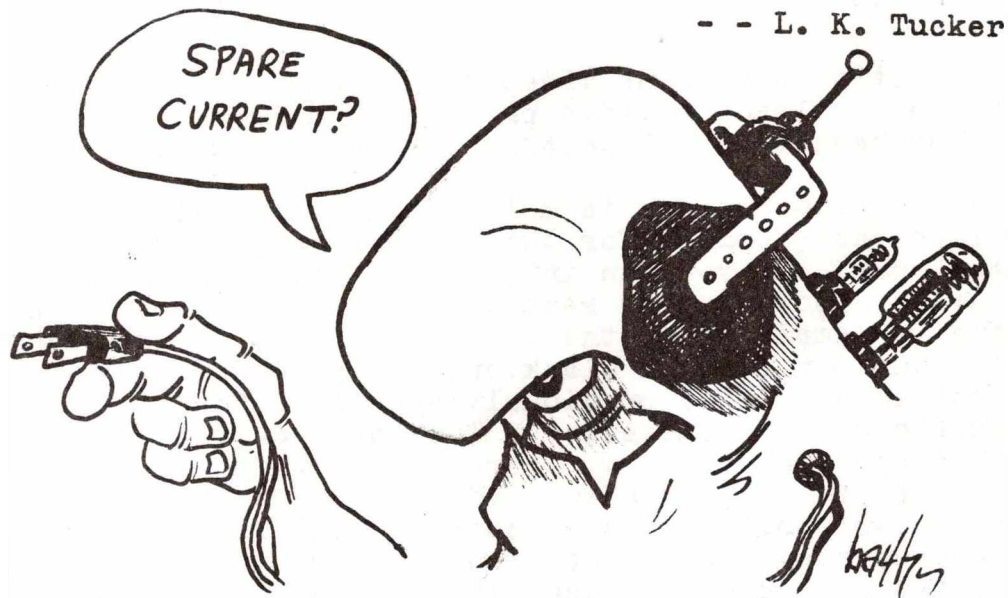
My library consists of a number of experimental tapes (many of an sf nature) and tapes I have recorded at a few cons - Ypsi's Conclave and ConFusion 14. I videotaped the entire program at ConFusion 14, including the aforementioned SF Oral History Conference. And, of course, I also have Uncle Albert's "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Fandom" and the ever popular "Obscure Ethnic Tribes of Man - Lecture #27 (Big Bird Eats Moon)", depicting the primitive and superstitious savages of the elusive Stilyagi tribe in their millenia old rite celebrating the lunar eclipse. For a complete listing of the Spare Chaynge videotape library, write to me at the address listed on the contents page of this zine. Most of my stuff is on $\frac{1}{2}$ " reel-to-reel tape. I can dub onto $\frac{1}{2}$ " or, given sufficient time to arrange for it, $\frac{3}{4}$ " cassette.

I'd like to hear from anyone else who has a videotape library. If you have such a library, please send me a list of your tapes, including description of content, running time and tape format, for inclusion in this column. If your tape exchange policy is different

from the one I've outlined above, be sure to describe exactly how you wish to conduct tape exchange.

I'm only interested in videotape libraries for this column. If you have an audiotape library, don't contact me. Write to the SFOHA instead. They'd love to hear from you.

Next ish I hope to be able to run listings from a tape library or two. Aside from that, anything could happen. Stay tuned . . .



BALLAD OF THE SPACE ODYSSEY

(To the tune of "They built the ship Titanic . . .")

Oh, they built the ship Discovery,
'twas the finest ever flown,
And they thought they had a ship
That could cross the great unknown -
But old Hal a fuse he blew,
Killed off nearly all the crew,
It was sad when old Hal lost what brains he had.

Chorus

It was sad, so sad,
 It was sad, so sad,
 It was sad when old Hal lost what brains he had,
 But psychopath computers don't belong on big space scooters,
 It was sad when old Hal lost what brains he had.

To the early dawn of man,
 Came the beings with a plan,
 To tinker with the apes hypnotically;
 Using telepathic skill,
 They taught our ancestors to kill,
 Evolving to become both you and me.

CHORUS

What started all the fun
 In the year twenty-oh-one
 Was the object found so deep in Lunar stone;
 It beamed signals out through space
 Aimed at some old unknown race,
 And at last men knew that they were not alone.

CHORUS

So the Discovery set out
 To put an end to doubt,
 To try to pass these beings' little test;
 But old Hal he did his best
 To kill the crew, defrost the rest,
 And make the Captain spacewalk under-dressed.

CHORUS

The journey finally done,
 Captain Bowman was the one;
 The first to meet the aliens as friend;
 After a psychedelic trip
 In his little bulbous ship
 He became the first to live through Childhood's End.

CHORUS

INFORMING SOURCES A FEVER DREAM



(being the last continuing adventures of Dimbe, the Flying Squirrel)

((I acknowledge, as inspiration, Dhalgren and The Butterfly Kid. At least.))

That morning, day broke with a sudden crash, which left my ears wringing for hours. Sunlight hurtled over the horizon, rushed the windowsill and invaded the frontiers of my eyes. "Ominous," I decided and rolled over, off the table and onto scattered peanut shells and dried beer stains. I sighed and lay on my back contemplating the pattern of cobwebs and cracks on the ceiling. I decided, vaguely, it must be, must have been, too much Saurian Blue. Or maybe those little brown pills, or was that the day before? At least. Besides, the colors clashed.

I dragged to my feet and scratched my fur in a vain attempt to increase the blood flow, it being somewhat thicker than the proverbial molasses on these solemn grey mournings-after-the-nights-before/after-the-daze-before; like, coagulated, ya know? Carlie claims it's cause I do too much dope, which I maintain is nonsense. After all, I'm still here, ain't I? Well . . .

Stepping over, around and occasionally on a few desultory scattered bodies, I slipped (really) downstairs and wandered through the rest of the nest. Not much of anyone else was awake, it being well before the crack of noon. Hours away. Dingo was still out somewhere, Toro was crashed on a couch and our local menage-a-trois (Tit, Tat and Tot) was/were entangled on the rug in a very unlikely pile with that Jerry Cornelius dude - strange fella, that - all dead asleep.

Wandering on into the hallway, I noticed a dim blue light emanating from Zombie's den. I sashayed over, brushed through a day-glo beaded curtain into a room painted a complete flat black and looked around. Yup, he was here and sorta awake. "Hey, Candyman. What's happening?"

He stirred in his chair and opened one eye to peek out through the maze of frizzed-out hair which erupted from every orifice in the lanky, faded shell he used for a body. "Ba ba ba ba?" He started with an interesting inflection and then got his mouth in gear and gave the ritual response. "It's happening, that's what!" He opened the other eye (different color). "What can I do you for?"

"Know any good cures for a hangover?"

"Glass of milk, lots of B₁₂, a little coke . . . be nice if I had some."

"Well." I hunkered down on his desk and held my toes. "What've ya got for a good head?"

He shrugged. "The usual. A little Cuyahoga Grey, some mushrooms - scored some speed last week, but you know about that."

Sure did. Didn't last too long. "Is that it? You got anything stashed away?"

The ball of crinkly hair tilted to one side and the eyes closed. "Well," he drawled out, "Jo-Dog laid somethin on me a few days ago. He swears by 'em, but he don't know what they are." The eye nearest me opened again and he reached out one skinny arm, dug around in a drawer under my ankle and pulled out his legendary black box. Carefully, he pried it open and took out a half dozen or so little grey-speckled tabs. The eye stared at me curiously and he said, "You feeling adventurous?"

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Well, it turns out we both felt adventurous, or at least a little bored, so we took two each, Zombie rolled a few numbers and we went out for a walk. Stepping out onto the porch, we paused and looked up. The forest of buildings around us was, as usual, shrouded under dingy brown clouds that resembled gravelly sand after a rain. I think. It's been a long time since it rained, I really can't remember. Pretty much, it's been this way since the Six-Hour War in '79 and all the people moved out or died, or whatever. I thought about that. I'd moved up here in, what was it, 80? after the hospitals gave up and cut us all loose. Turkey D, The Cosmic Moose, Big Tuna and I came up together to kinda check out the action, as it were. Boy, it was a mess. Weren't no reason to leave again, though. From what we heard, the whole country was in pretty bad shape, though the cities had got the worst of it. In a moment of rare clarity, I knew why I stayed high so much. Either I didn't remember much of anything or, if I did, I was generally detached enough to handle it. I shivered a little. A lot of it I didn't want to remember.

We headed across the Diag, over towards The Hill, to see who might be home over at Carlie's place. Lit up a joint and sauntered along through the grey day.

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"What'd you say?" slurred someone off to the left.

"Whaz-Bung!" exclaimed Zombie, kinda excited. "Whaz-Bung! Twenty-four bits and over the moon!" I loaned him an elbow in the kidney which caused his mouth to clamp shut and his mismatched eyes glazed over a little more. I tried to say something akin to "Maintain, you turkey," but it came out all garbled.

"Mountin' what?" asked Hammerhead charitably. "Whatinhell'd youall take?"

I pulled my eyes away from the translucent, six-foot-tall blue lobster, stared at him under the strobing fluorescence of the lanterns and tried to speak through a mouth dry as plasterboard. "Lit'l grey pill. See thinks." I grinned inanely and poked my thumb somewhere towards my chest. "Unverbing," I managed to get out and tried to uncross my eyes.

He grinned affably. "What you need," he said, taking the joint from Carlie, "is some New York White." He took a big drag and exhaled. The smoke curled up and flexed into rats and dragons, golden ships and spiderwebs flecked with stars. He nodded ponderously, wagging his big flat ears and handed me the jay. I blinked. Did he have six fingers on that hand or seven? I was trailing so heavy, I couldn't tell. Various obscure corners of my head snickered and cursed and carried on the most amazing conversations. I took a toke and listened to some possibly unreal music from another room. Notes bellied up and out, shimmering like velvet under black light, iridescent lines weaving and warping into multidimensional shapes. I felt pleasantly befuddled. This was pretty good shit. I wondered (somehow) if Jo-Dog had any more? Looking back over my left wing I saw Windy, bless her warm little soul, sidle up to Zombie and start pulling at his belt. Oh well, they'd be occupied for a couple hours at least. I giggled and coughed smoke.



Hammerhead grinned at me ever wider, or so it seemed, and said, "Hey, man, try some more. That oughta do you up good." In a voice like cinnamon and oranges. I took another drag and handed it back to him (six fingers, I guess) as the whole world went transparent and fuzzy. The top of my head lifted off and bounced around the room like a helium balloon. Something seemed to stroke over my shoulder. I couldn't tell if I was imagining it, and frankly couldn't care, so I leaned my head back into Carlie's midriff, looked up past her halter top and into her upside-down face. Her voice filtered down through the haze, slightly out of sync with her mouth, saying something indefatigably elegant, which I can't remember (indefatigably?) which raised my heat and sent zapping pulses up and down my spine and oscillating throughout my limbs. I reached up for her and dissolved into a multispectral cloud of spice and sparkle.

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I remanifested some indefinite but seemingly long time later, from smoke rings in green, violet and orange, couplets and triplets that flipped, flopped, folded and flickered. It was entertaining, at least. I considered the wherewithal it might take to find out where - oh, open yer eyes, turkey, boy are you wasted - come on, one lid at a time, there you go. There was Carlie, sitting on . . . I closed it again, bemused. Same goddam acrobatics over and over again. I was aware of the odor of freshly laundered muslin and the reek of musk. I floated away in a brandy-flavored fog.

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I was without form and void, I was the prime root of minus one, I was the key of F minor, I was content. I floated. I occupied a space that had no space, no stars, no light, no time, only an abstract awareness that if I "let go", I would sever my last and final connection with the world I knew and be off somewhere else entirely. A New World. I drifted, passive and observant. Slowly, a scene developed.

- On a hilltop among green trees, the ground matted thick with leaves and pine needles, the odor of early spring, the smell of thaw in a warm wind. Kneeling, holding someone in "my" arms and watching the city lights; on the hill with the lady fair . . . -

I opened my eyes to pale grey light. "I guess," I thought, "this is what is meant by a cold sweat." I felt like someone had poured icy beer all over me. I sat up, feeling knots in my gut and spasmodic muscles in my back and arms. I knew that hill. The sole element in the vision that rang true. The lady I didn't know, the "I" was not me and the trees . . . hell, I hadn't seen green trees in years.

I was terrified. I had stumbled on to something I hadn't wanted to find, but I was hooked. I had to get there and finish this thing. I reached for my jeans and started to pull them on.

Carlie rolled over. "Where're you going?"

"I," button and zipper, reach for my vest, "remembered something. I mean, I think, from before. Maybe." I choked up and my cheeks got wet. "A hill. I remembered a hill. Gotta find it." Boots on, I grabbed handfuls of chain. Desperation clouded my vision and I stumbled toward the door. "I gotta find it! I wailed. She didn't move or speak as I went. Only watched me, owl-like, predatory and compassionate.

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The walk out of town was lost in a welter of misbegotten images, half born fantasies. I was scared, I was trapped. I didn't want to go on, but going back to the greyness and the dark I wanted even less. As I came closer, the image grew into a vision, entrancing and drawing me on. The green and the cool and the smell of her like clean percale and the sound of her voice, like butterflies and warm bark and the feel of her and pine needles underfoot.

My mind quavered and edged away. Yeah, that was it, the essence of the razor edged jewel I had to find and grasp. I shook so hard I could hardly see.

Then it was in front of me and resonating connotations dripped off my hands and melted and ran together on the crumbly ground. Step, here, here and here, cross over, turn, pausing beside two stumps, feeling, searching - there.

Full blown and complete, it swallowed me whole, staggered me like a blaze of heat. I collided with a toppled trunk and went down in a pile, sobbing and rocking and hugging my knees and remembering it, all of it, in panorama and technicolor. I remembered being here with the Lady Fair and the times we had and the things we'd spoken of and how we'd talked of love.

I remembered the hospital and the visits and the day of the war and all the confusion, the wonder of coming home to this desolation, the hunger at first and the fears. I remembered the day the howlers came and we took 'em out with chains and whips and had laughed savagely under the brazen sky. I'd cried for days afterwards and now I was crying again, thinking of the Lady Fair and all the achin' in my chest, nigh to split me in half, and I was screaming bloody into the scrabbly sky.

Did it matter, man? Does it matter now? Let it go, let it go. All those crowded memories, let 'em go. I am conscious of a loss, of a losing. Let it go, let it go.

Would you believe I had wanted to be a writer? Here, now, alive with this holy terror, I am in need of resolution. What powers can find me, to what meanings and endings may I come? I know, somehow, that I have loved, outside of want or need, even though I am now alone. These thoughts complete, but do not shield. With no choice but to trust, I yield myself to the undeniable.

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The moment passes, leaving me on the hill overlooking this place where I have spent so much of my life. I sigh, understanding a thing implicit in all I know and the knowledge hangs chrysalis around me, caged and caging, with mute laughter.

"Anyone," I say, "who lives in the city," softly now, to the darkening sky, "must be mad."

D. A. Innes

THEIR EXITS AND THEIR ENTRANCES

The man at the typewriter scanned the page he was writing again and shook his head. He was only at the scene in bed, and already it was going badly. Despite his caution, some tinge of humanity had somehow crept into his protagonist. He didn't want to evoke any sympathy whatever. This wasn't that kind of story. He didn't believe in that kind of story. With a sigh, he ripped the sheet from the rollers, crumpled it with a half-dozen others and pegged them in the rough direction of the waste basket. Then, inserting a new sheet, he tried again.

Joe awoke, as always, furious with his world and weary of it. The hateful alarm clock kept jangling in his ears until he precipitated it, with a well aimed kick, across the room to smash into the wall, and succumb to silence. For a long moment Joe tried to regain the dreams of grandeur from which he had been dragged and then, with a groaned curse, he swung his legs from his bed and sat morosely on the edge, surveying his tiny room.

WHERE THE HELL AM I? WHO THE HELL AM I? JOE. JOE WHO? WHAT ELSE? WHAT DO I DO? WHY AM I SO FURIOUS AND WEARY? I KNOW! HE'S WRITING ME INTO A STORY AGAIN, THE SADISTIC BRUTE. DAMN HIM!

Joe rose and crossed the room to the window. Outside, fresh green leaves stretched into an overarching blue sky, strolling students walked shady paths under the warm morning sun. Joe gazed upon this blissful scene . . .

HE MUST HAVE STOPPED WRITING FOR A MINUTE. I'M STUCK HERE AT THE WINDOW. WELL, I DON'T MIND THAT MUCH. IT IS BEAUTIFUL. I GUESS HE'S JUST SMOKING A CIGARETTE, DECIDING WHAT NASTY THING HE'S GOING TO MAKE ME DO OR THINK NEXT. BUT I LIKE TO THINK HE'S STOPPED FOR THE DAY, AND I CAN JUST PEACEFULLY STAND HERE IN THE SUN UNTIL . . .

. . . yet his twisted heart found no pleasure in it. With a muttered oath, he dropped the curtain and shut out the world that tormented him.

DAMN HIM ALL TO HELL! CAN'T LET ME HAVE ANYTHING. EVEN THE ROOM . . . HE'S ONLY WRITTEN IN ONE WALL, THE BED AND ONE WINDOW. CAN'T DO MUCH WITH THIS FORMLESS MESS. OH, WELL, HE'LL WRITE IN SOMETHING FOR ME TO DO SOON, AND I WON'T LIKE IT. I KNOW HIM!

But suddenly Joe's teeth grinned wolfishly. He had remembered. Sally was coming. Sweet, innocent Sally, who was coming to view his Roualt etchings . . . she thought. Well, he knew what she'd find. And he'd make her like it as much as he did. He was an expert at that.

WHY, THE NASTY-MINDED OLD BUGGER! IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD IF HE'D LEAVE MY THOUGHTS OUT OF IT, I'D BE ABLE TO KEEP SOME INTEGRITY THEN. BUT WHEN HE MAKES ME THINK IN HIS NASTY WAY . . . I HOPE SALLY DOES LIKE IT. WE'RE BOTH VICTIMS. WHAT'S HE DOING NOW? HAS HE GIVEN UP ON THE STORY? HOW LONG HAVE I GOT TO STAND HERE, IN AN INCOMPLETE ROOM, WITH A WOLFISH GRIN ON MY FACE?

Abruptly there came a knock on the door of the apartment. Joe stiffened.

ALL RIGHT ALREADY, COME ON. I'M STIFFENED. NOW WHAT? HEY, YOU! DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS. HEY! HEY!!!

The man at the typewriter called out, "All right, I hear you, Myrtle. I'm coming." He left the sheet in the typewriter and went to bed.

. . . DAMN HIM, DAMN, DAMN, DAMN! HE HASN'T THE LEAST CONSIDERATION FOR HIS CHARACTERS. I JUST WISH I HAD HIM IN A STORY! STIFFENED ALL NIGHT IN A FUCKING UNROOM IN A STINKING UNSTORY. IT'S NOT EVEN LIKE I HAD A CHANCE OF EVER BEING PUBLISHED. THE BASTARD CAN'T EVEN WRITE. AND HE HASN'T PROVIDED ME WITH FOOD OR FAGS OR . . . MY GOD, HE DIDN'T EVEN GET ME DRESSED AND THIS SALLY'S ABOUT TO WALK IN. MAN, IF THAT GUY EVER MAKES A SLIP, I'M GOING TO BE ALL OVER HIM. I'M GOING TO KEEP MESSING UP HIS STORIES, DOING EVERYTHING HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO DO. NO WONDER HE CAN'T WRITE, IF HE TREATS ALL HIS CHARACTERS THE WAY HE DOES ME! COME ON, COME ON, LET'S GET ON WITH IT. I'M STIFFENED BEYOND UNSTIFFENING. SALLY'S BEEN WAITING OUT THERE FOR HOURS. LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD. DAMN HIM, WHERE IS . . .

"Come in," he said, and the door opened. The girl who stood there was ravishing. Her eyes were soft and trusting, her mouth seemed an open invitation and her smooth curves pressed to evade her scanty clothing. It was Sally. For an instant she stood there questioningly, then she stepped into the room.

"You came," he breathed huskily, reaching out to place a hand gently on her . . .

YES? YES? HER WHAT!? COME ON, YOU DIRTY OLD MAN, DON'T JUST SIT THERE SMOKING AND CONSIDERING, LET US OFF THE HOOK. ON HER . . . HER . . .

. . . shoulder, drawing her nearer to him. For a brief moment the two melted into one another, then she pushed Joe away.

SAY, I WISH HE'D USE THAT METAPHOR AGAIN. THAT WAS QUITE AN EXPERIENCE!

"No, Joe," she was saying. "We mustn't!"
His face curved into a cynical grimace.

THAT'S OKAY. I CAN LOOK CYNICAL WITHOUT BEING FORCED TO FEEL CYNICAL. BUT WHAT WILL SALLY THINK OF ME? DOES SHE UNDERSTAND THAT I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT I DO, OR EVEN WHAT HE MAKES ME FEEL AND THINK? SHE'S SO SWEET, SO TRUSTING. WHY . . . I LOVE

HER! AND ANY MOMENT THAT BASTARD WILL HAVE ME DOING THINGS TO HER THAT . . . GOD, WHY CAN'T HE DROP DEAD RIGHT NOW AND LEAVE US ALONE? THERE MUST BE SOME WAY . . .

"You don't think much of me, do you?" he said.

"Oh, Joe, it's not that, but . . ."

"I can tell, honey. You don't care much for me." He turned his back on Sally and sat at his desk. He knew how to play on her sympathies, to break down her reserves. A fine show of indifference was needed on this occasion, he felt. His eyes fell upon his typewriter.

GOD IN HEAVEN! THIS MAY BE IT. NOW, IF HE'S JUST DUMB ENOUGH TO . . . NO, HE COULDN'T BE THAT DUMB!

Joe said quietly, "If you don't trust me, Sally, you'd better not stick around. I've got some letters to write." He sensed her uncertainty.

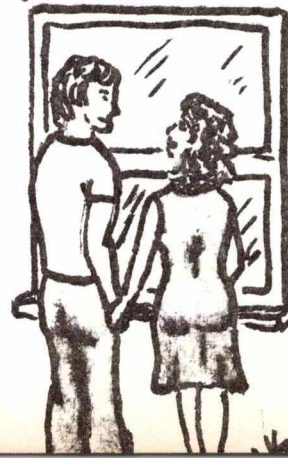
To emphasize his seriousness, and unnerve her further, he began to type busily.

HE DID IT! THE BLAMED FOOL DID IT! IF HE DOESN'T WRITE ANYTHING FOR A MINUTE, I'VE GOT HIM. I'M BUSILY TYPING ALL RIGHT. LA, LA, LA. THERE. KEEP THINKING, YOU MONSTER. FINISH YOUR CIGARETTE, TAKE YOUR TIME. I'VE ALMOST FINISHED TYPING THESE WORDS: "THE MAN WRITING ABOUT JOE CHANGED HIS MIND. HE WROTE, 'JOE AND SALLY, MADLY IN LOVE AND ETERNALLY HAPPY, REMAINED TOGETHER LITERALLY FOREVER AFTER.' HE THEN CLUTCHED HIS HEART AND FELL ACROSS THE TYPEWRITER, STONE DEAD."

The man at the typewriter writing the story about Joe suddenly changed his mind. Leaning forward, he tapped out the words, "Joe and Sally, madly in love and eternally happy, remained together literally forever after." He regarded the words with a puzzled frown. He didn't know why he'd written them; that wasn't his story. He reached to X them out, but suddenly clutched at his chest and collapsed across the typewriter, stone dead.

And Joe and Sally, madly in love and endlessly happy, remained together literally forever after.

- - Ted Reynolds



J.A.M. SESSION

FLOATING WORLDS, Cecilia Holland, Pocket Books, \$1.95
 THERE WILL BE TIME, Poul Anderson, Signet, \$1.25
 SEARCH THE SKY, Pohl & Kornbluth, Bantam, \$1.50
 REEFS OF SPACE, Pohl & Williamson, Ballantine, \$1.25
 THE FLYING SORCERERS, Gerrold & Niven, Ballantine, \$1.75
 SUPERMIND, A. E. Van Vogt, Daw, \$1.25
 QUICKSAND, John Brunner, Daw, \$1.50
 THE HEAVEN MAKERS, Frank Herbert, Ballantine, \$1.50
 ORPHAN STAR, Alan Dean Foster, Ballantine, \$1.50

FLOATING WORLDS is an extraordinary book, all the more extraordinary because it was written by an apparently new writer. It is set in the solar system in the far future. Earth is anarchistic but peaceful; Mars is rich and middle-of-the-road to rightist; and the Moon is under a military dictatorship. Saturn and Uranus are the sites of floating cities inhabited by the Styths, fierce mutant descendants of the original human colonists. The book spans twelve or so years, during which Paula Mendoza becomes ambassador to one segment of the Styths and bears a son to one of the Styth leaders. Political machinations result in eventual war, and Paula's influence grows until she seems as much in control as any individual is--a small amount, given the forces of history, human nature, or whatever you want to call it.

The bare outline above gives little hint of the ways in which this book is extraordinary, and in fact, the first many pages (perhaps even the first two hundred of its five hundred thirty five) only slowly show off the gifts of Cecilia Holland, an extraordinary writer. Her writing style is very close to pure cinematic--recording the acts and words of the characters, and their physical settings, without any direct revelation of what is going on in their minds. Early in the book the style makes the book somewhat difficult to read, and makes it seem slow-paced. But the cumulative effect is powerful. The reader, accustomed to being force-fed with conclusions about what characters think or intend, has to puzzle such things out in this book, but the net effect is powerful because no omniscient author stands between the reader and the characters.

The two main characters--Paula, the earth-born anarchist, and Saba, the Styth--are complex, and about as far from stereotypical as you can imagine.

This is one of those non-wave books, to be enjoyed by lovers of the new or old, if they are willing to invest the effort that the book demands. My condolences if you don't like it.

THERE WILL BE TIME is not the best book that Anderson has written, but it is very good and very enjoyable. It is one of the few recent ventures in time travel, probably because writers usually feel that a new time-travel story needs a new gimmick. Books like this one tend to disprove the myth, for Anderson has taken stock story elements and put them together into a very enjoyable package. The flavor of the story is distinctly old fashioned, reminiscent of Clifford Simak toward the beginning, with a fair amount of adventuresome excitement at the end. Hanging over the book, of course, is the problem of what to do with the time travel paradox. Anderson choose the wise and cowardly way out--a small, obligatory amount of discussion, with the problem ignored thereafter.

Now for some turkeys. SEARCH THE SKY, according to an inside blurb, is "the extraordinary novel of a shocking future." Heavy stuff, eh? In fact it is a mishmash of adventures in unrealistic societies that seem to be unable to decide whether they are suppose to be 1984-style warnings about what could happen to us, or Harry Harrison/Robert Sheckley style put-ons. I vote for the former because they weren't funny, and Harrison and Sheckley are. On the other hand, you could make a pretty good argument against the 1984 hypothesis because the damned things are so silly and unrealistic. The book was written in 1954, and somehow I always feel some pull to forgive bad stuff from the past, but this was probably bad for its time. It is certainly not worth reading today.

THE REEFS OF SPACE is volume one of the Starchild Trilogy, according to its cover. I won't read volumes two and three. There is some good stuff in this book, but it suffers from gosh-wowism and naivete. There are inertialess drives, radioactive reefs in space beyond Pluto, organ banks, a police state on Earth, and the kitchen sink. The handwriting is on the page early in the book when the hero runs into the beautiful daughter of the world dictator. She's good, even though he isn't. Poul Anderson shows that all the old familiar elements can be blended happily. Pohl and Williamson showed that they need not be. Perhaps something could have been saved if the writing were not an awful monotone whose sole function seems to be to push on to the next sentence.

THE FLYING SORCERERS was a book I had heard of before, and my recollection was that the things I had heard were good. Well, there is some good stuff in this book, but it becomes incredibly tedious half way through and never turns upward from there. The plot involves the crash of a human ship on a planet where magic is important. Every event thereafter is subject to magical or scientific explanation, for some good fun, and the story turns to the human's attempt to manipulate the natives into helping him by pretending to go along with their magical view of the world. At this point, the book degenerates

into a sequence of stories of the same continuing format: things start happy, are followed by a disaster, which is cleverly followed by a solution--or is it followed by a clever solution? The book is 316 pages of small print. It would have been a nice, amusing story at one third that length, but a story with no major plot, no characterization, and nothing of real importance to say or portray cannot keep 316 pages inflated.

SUPERMIND comes closer than the three previously discussed books to being good. There is a lot of good adventure, a somewhat original plot and concept concerning intelligence and our fellow inhabitants of the universe, and some adequate prose. So what's wrong with Supermind? It is infected with the signs of a trait that Van Vogt has been accused of by others--throwing in the kitchen sink. The problem is here that the drain must have backed up. At the beginning of the book, vampires from outer space land on earth to drink our blood. Now really. They are advanced enough to have space ships, but they can't synthesize blood. Must be something really special in the blood, right? But then why will human blood satisfy their needs without any indication that there is any connection between their race and ours? Either their requirements are so hard to satisfy that there may be some explanation for their needs, or they are so easy to satisfy that any intelligent race (but no lower animals please) can satisfy it. But it's downright silly to try to have it both ways. And as if the blood weren't enough, the aliens suck life force and store it. Never mind what life force is--no explanation offered. And has Mr. Van Vogt ever considered the years of study that have indicated so strongly that intelligence is not a linear function so that races can't go around bragging about their IQs, as his aliens do? So the irritants keep it from being a good book, but there are things to be said for it.

John Brunner seems to write a lot of good but not great books (Stand on Zanzibar the exception--it was great). QUICKSAND is no exception. It is a thoroughly competent, interesting, and readable work, with an ending that packs more of a punch than the usual Brunner product. Quicksand is one of the English genre, set in the present and without the gadgets of most American science fiction. It involves a psychiatrist and a mysterious patient, in a story that unfolds very slowly. It is the patient's origin that supplies the final, downbeat zinger.

THE HEAVEN MAKERS marks yet another book that Frank Herbert has written that will not grab you like Dune. On the other hand, it's a good book, so I feel sorry for Herbert that he suffers such inevitable comparisons. (This feeling is much the

same as the pity I feel for Robert Redford because he has no privacy.) The Heaven Makers is enough to satisfy all of the paranoia you have ever had about why history goes wrong-- someone is using us to make movies for jaded tastes of ancient aliens. The story that is woven around this chilling thought is a good one, and the dialogue is strongly reminiscent of Dune, with an average of three conversations going on at once: the words, the body English, and the thoughts. The effect is conspiratorial, and appropriate to the fast-paced plot. A good book even if it isn't Dune.

ORPHAN STAR is the very enjoyable sequel to the Tar-Aiym Krang. It chronicles Flinx's attempt to find out who his parents were, and given Son of the Exorcist, etcetera, it should come as no surprise that he discovers who one of his parents was by book's end, but will still need a book or two to search for daddy. Be that as it may, Orphan Star is again not great s-f, but it is good. Its setting is the far future, with no attempts to link its technology with current understandings of science. Thus it is science fantasy more than science fiction, where aliens and galactic villains parade across the pages without any attempt to make them logical, but with good success at making them fun. If you liked The Tar Aiyim Krang you will like this, and if you have not read either, read both.

- - James A. Martin

back cover photo

Chief Gourd devouring Sacred Moon Cat, from
the Spare Chaynge videotape, OBSCURE ETHNIC
TRIBES OF MAN - LECTURE #27 (Big Bird Eats Moon).

