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THE ROAD NOT TAKEN  
 or  
 WHAT'S A LUSTRUM  
 BETWEEN FRIENDS?

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It seems a bit hard to believe that it has really been four and a half years since I last published XENIUM. That is too many! In my first thirty-nine months as a faned, I published thirty-three fanzines totalling about a thousand pages. In the ensuing one hundred and two months I managed another thirty issues with perhaps four hundred pages in all. And in the last thirty months I haven't published a damned thing. *Sic gloria transit faned!* The astute observer might notice a definite change in focus there. Farewell to the mimeograph mania of the halcyon days of 1971; this is 1984 and Big Brother (also known as El Mortgage) is definitely watching ~~you~~ me. And thereby hangs a tale...

Four and a half years is a significant chunk of time. It represents precisely one quarter of my life as a fan. A lot can happen in that much time and, obviously, a lot did happen. (Of course, I spent almost a year of that four and a half putting together and publishing three hundred copies of the one hundred page ENERGUMEN 16, and that probably accounts in large part for my recent inactivity as a fan publisher: sort of a Canadian variation of Nydahl's Syndrome.) When XENIUM 12 was finally finished, the first of five successful and enjoyable MIKECONS was still five months away and was not yet even in the planning stages. And my first date with a young, attractive Toronto fan named Doris Bercarich was still a half a year and one arm-wrestling match in the future, a future that would change significantly because of Phil Wright's weak wrists. When XENIUM 12 was mailed to an expectant fandom (coff, coff) on Tuesday, December 11, 1979 I was still living at 141 High Park and fully expected to continue having the sort of lifestyle I'd been living for the previous five years. The next issue of XENIUM was already taking shape in my mind: it would only be a matter of months before it started to take shape...

But that was a road not taken. Things happened, things changed, and that issue of XENIUM 13 will never be published. And that's a shame because it would have been a fun issue.

For those with long fannish memories, 1979 will stand out as the summer of SEACON, the worldcon in Brighton, England. Naturally, I was there. In fact, I spent five weeks in England, visiting family and friends, keeping copious detailed notes for my eventual trip report, and collecting Something Extras for XENIUM. In the company of Paul and Cas Skelton I talked their local brewery out of two hundred pub-style beer mats. I spent several days walking between key London Underground stations so I could accumulate enough maps of the world's best subway system for XENIUM 13. And a Hampshire brewery famed for producing one of the strongest ales in all England provided me with a couple of hundred unused labels when I explained how they'd be pasted into magazines being mailed all over the world. But the best laid plans of mice and men get oft fucked up. I still have those notes, those beer mats, the underground maps, the ale labels and a large number of banquet tickets from the 37th World Science Fiction convention. But wasn't it Bill Bowers who once said, "You can't go back."? And who am I to argue with the acknowledged master of the Changing Lifestyle? So welcome to XENIUM 13, The Fanzine That Gives You Something Extra Not From England or 1979.

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I lived there for almost eight years, produced twenty five fanzines, reached and passed my peak as a fanzine and convention fan and enjoyed and/or survived numerous upheavals in my personal life which I have no intention of writing about here. And in June of 1980, almost exactly one year before I was to be somewhat unceremoniously turfed out of my comfortable little retreat, I had my first date with Doris.

Precisely ten frequently stormy months later my landlady surprised the hell out of me by telling me she'd sold the house to the man who owned the house next door and the small apartment building next to it. My plans to make 141 High Park as famous a fan-nish address as 423 Summit Avenue were abruptly interrupted. After searching the neighbourhood for alternate accomodation I reluctantly moved into the much more expensive and much less attractive basement apartment of 137 High Park, the house next door. That three minute walk to work had become mighty addictive after eight years.

By that time, Doris was sharing an apartment with Hania Wojtowicz but was already looking to acquire her own place. For almost a year and a half our relationship continued its impersonation of a crazed rollercoaster and in the summer of 1982, Doris, demonstrating a much more sensible attitude towards real estate than I'd ever had (along with wealthier parents), bought herself a condominium. She was twenty two.

Evidently, here were two people with somewhat different views on life. But during the summer and fall of 1982, at the ripe young age of thirty six, I began to smarten up, to change and to re-evaluate some long-term goals. By the end of 1982, much to the delight of most of our friends, Doris and I were developing a better, deeper and stronger relationship. (I may be slow and sometimes stupid but I can be educated.) So as 1983 rolled on we had to make some serious decisions in order to plan for the future.

My personal disinclination to become part of the landed gentry had at least some basis in logic and mathematics. The area I'd lived in for over a decade was a moderately expensive part of the city. Not where the Rich Folks lived, but definitely upper middle class. On a single teacher's salary, there was simply no way I could have afforded a house within walking distance of my school. That was why for over two years I put up with an apartment I never really liked and an avaricious landlord I actively disliked. Doris, though, had A Plan.

As both of us became more confident and secure in the relationship, she suggested we look into buying a house together. By coincidence, Doris had grown up just a couple of blocks from Humberside Collegiate, the school I've taught at for the last twelve years. (Had her parents not moved to the suburbs just before she started highschool, she might have been one of my students! That's a road in the Worlds of If that I'm rather glad was not taken.) So she knew the area, and loved it, and was more than happy to look for a house there. She could sell the condo, she explained, and get a goodly down-payment and with our combined incomes there'd be no trouble getting a mortgage for the rest. And since she worked for a trust company at the time, we'd even get a preferred rate on the mortgage. (I know about things like twiltone, paper strippers and corflu; Doris understands money, electricity and renovating. We make a good team.)

It seemed like a good idea so Doris put the condominium up for sale and we started looking at houses and the summer of 1983 wound inexorably down towards the financial disaster of CONSTELLATION. After seeing a couple of dozen houses in the general area we were interested in, we were shown 508 Windermere. On Wednesday, July 27th, 1983. The next day, our offer of two hundred dollars more than the asking price (it's a long story...) was accepted and we'd taken the first step towards becoming ~~by~~ homeowners.

Things were not exactly rosy though. The condo market was depressed and Doris had









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This summer of 1984 is turning out to be very different indeed. In the first place, I'm actually typing stencils for XENIUM, something I haven't done in five years. In the second place, I spent the July 1st long weekend here in Toronto for the first time in ten years. From 1976 to 1983, eight long years, I celebrated the start of my summer vacation at WILCON, Jon and Joni Stopa's annual invitational con/party at Wilmot Mountain in Wisconsin. This year there was no WILCON so the summer began without the frantic, frenetic weekend-long hypercelebration I'd become used to. The times, indeed, they are a-changin'.

And in the third place, I'm finally starting to sort out my fanzine collection, something I've been promising myself I'd do for the last eighteen years. It is an awesome, delightful, frightening, exhilarating, frustrating, stimulating, time-consuming and completely fascinating summer- (and winter-) long project.

I had my First Contact with fandom eighteen years ago at the worldcon in Cleveland and it was there that I picked up my first fanzines. (Yes, Virginia, there was a time when fandom was small enough that fanzines were given away on worldcon freebie tables. Not very good fanzines, perhaps, but actual fanzines nonetheless; and the first ones are always free, right...) I became hooked: on fandom, on conventions & on fanzines and the entire focus and direction of my life was radically changed.

Over the next eighteen years I obtained, by one means or another, many thousands of additional fanzines and because I've always been an eclectic and unselective packrat, I saved them all. And I mean ALL!! It has been my proud boast that I've never thrown away a fanzine. (I tried it once, and didn't like it... Which happens to be true: I once tossed out a particularly awful copy of OSFAN but felt remorse the next day, retrieved it from the trash and filed it away in a box labelled "CRUDZINES.") So by the summer of 1984 I had some twenty six large boxes filled with every sort of fanzine imaginable, along with hundreds and hundreds of odds and ends of fannish and science-fictional paraphernalia besides.

For several years I've been saying that I really ought to sort out those boxes and figure out just what I had and what was worth keeping. It was always to be done Real Soon Now. The sheer magnitude of the task, though, kept me procrastinating, thereby rendering the labour involved more and more Herculean with each passing summer. Two years ago, however, there was a Significant Change in my lifestyle: I began my more serious relationship with Doris and I stopped going away for large parts of each summer holiday.

The acquisition of The House solidified my long-time nebulous resolve. Over the winter, I bought several hundred dollars worth of bookshelves and finally arranged my science fiction collection alphabetically. (So it took me twenty years; I don't believe in rushing into things...) With that done, the sorting, winnowing and displaying of the fruits of nearly two decades of fanzine collecting took on a far more pressing priority. Finally, at the beginning of July, I brought the first box up from the basement and began to build twenty six piles of alphabetized fanzines. It certainly is an interesting thing...

As of this typing, I'm about half-way through that initial sorting process. And I can no longer say that I've never thrown away something that might marginally be called a fanzine. Although the final selection process won't even begin until all the piles are completed, I've already heartlessly ripped apart and thrown away a (small) number of totally useless one-shots, apazines, coa's and other similar bits of fannish rubbish. I blush to admit that I quite enjoyed doing it! (But don't worry, you're fanzine wasn't among them.)

Over the next couple of weeks, I'll complete the preliminary screening process and then sit back for a leisurely perusal of each stack so as to separate the gold from the dross. With luck, I might get finished by Christmas...

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It is a mildly disconcerting feeling to compress an overview of almost half of your life into a few days. I find myself with all sorts of interesting reactions, foremost among them being a sense of wonder that I could actually have held on to so much junk for so long. In addition to the piles of con announcements, flyers, illegible oneshots and other less-than-memorable items which I've already thrown into the garbage, I've separated out two feet of apazines, newsletters, newszines, personalzines and crudzines from the likes of Bill Bridget, John Thiel and Henry Argasinski which I've offered up to the first fan willing to carry them away. If that turns out to be the local trash collector, so be it.

Then there are all the fanzines whose titles I don't remember which have been sent to me by fans I don't believe I've ever heard of. Instinctively I suspect I won't want to keep them but without a more detailed evaluation I can't tell what gems of purest ray serene might be hidden in them so they're piled up awaiting the completion of this fanzine. They should help keep me amused for much of the winter.

Another shock was in discovering things I had no recollection of having. Somewhere along the line I picked up a new copy of HOWARD THE DUCK #1 which was very thoughtful of me, even if I don't remember doing it. And somewhere else I seemed to have obtained a copy of THE BNF OF IZ which makes it redundant for me to have given Larry Carmody three dollars for his reprint of it when we were at Midwestcon. But so it goes. I even have a fanzine that was originally sent to Walt Willis and how that came about I'll probably never know!

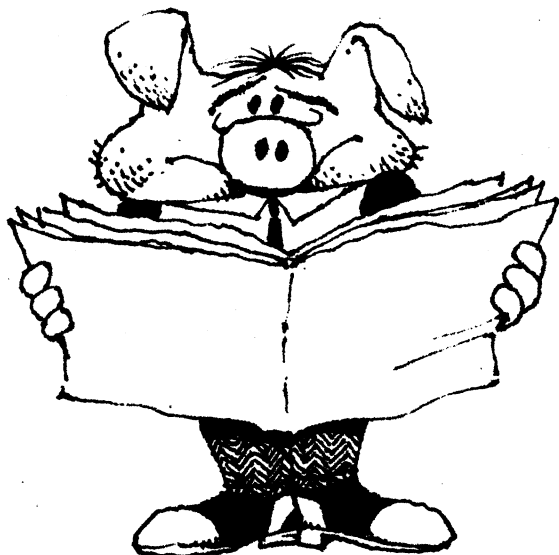
I kept finding myself thinking, "Gee, whatever happened to...David Hulvey, Jerry Lapidus, Mike Gorra, Frank Lunney..." and the list went on and on. But at least I have their fanzines to remember them by and a large fraction of that eighteen year accumulation is automatically on the Must Save list: who could call themselves a fanzine fan and part with copies of HYPHEN, ODD, MOTA, BANSHEE, LIGHTHOUSE, QUIP, EGG or any of several dozen other classic fannish fanzines? Certainly not this fan.

But other publications are a little harder to justify: save BOONFARK, certainly, but BAYTA? Keep TAPPEN, of course, but TAPEWORM? Preserve PONG, naturally, but PSFQ? BOONFARK and TAPPEN and PONG are among the best of the fannish fanzines but BAYTA was Bill Bowers first attempt and TAPEWORM was published by Jay Haldeman and sometimes he used his kid brother Joe and PSFQ used one of the best visual layout tricks I've ever seen in a fanzine so they get kept as well, for subjective reasons if not for any intrinsic worth to future generations of fan historians.

If there was one thing that was more than merely mildly disconcerting in skipping so







THE HANDY-DANDY,  
ORIGINAL, FIVE-MINUTE,  
CASSETTE-DELIVERED,  
ORATORY-FREE, GET-  
OUT-OF-STANDING-UP-  
IN-FRONT-OF-THE-  
AUDIENCE GOH SPEECH

PRESENTED AT INCONVENIENT .5, MARCH 1980 BY STEPHEN LEIGH

*Slow fade-in: Holst's THE PLANETS SUITE, Mars movement -- a temperamental and stubborn beat that swells, holds, and then fades as a quiet monotone voice is heard.*

11:00 AM, May 3, 1197. The knight was as black as coal. The only evidence I could see were a few large footprints. I put in a call to the lab boys and went down the hill to talk to a shepherd.

*(Music swells again, then stops entirely. A loud clanking is heard, as if two dwarves made of china are thrashing at each other.)*

Lieutenant Underfoot of the MiddleEarth PD. Homicide. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

*Shepherd: (His voice is aged and breathy. He wheezes.):* Yeah? What's that you're wearing, sonny?

*Lieutenant:* A three-piece suit of mail, sir. Captain Lutz-Nagey insists on the uniform for all detectives.

*Shepherd:* That a bunch'a dishes hanging on it?

*Lieutenant:* Yes sir. It's plate mail. May I ask how long you've been here, sir?

*Shepherd:* What's it to you?

*Lieutenant:* All I want are the facts, sir; just the facts.

*Shepherd:* You gonna torture me for the information? Y'know, if you torture a baby sheep, that's rack of lamb. *(Long pause)* That's a little shepherd humor, there.

*Lieutenant:* Yes sir. About this morning, sir -- there was a knight murdered near here. Would you know anything about it?

*Shepherd:* You saying I did it?

*Lieutenant:* No sir. It's just a question.

*Shepherd:* I know better than that. You can't pull the wool over my eyes -- that's more shepherd humor.

*Lieutenant:* Yes sir. About the murder, sir... Would you have seen a large,

reptile with wings and flaming breath around here recently?

*Shepherd*: A dragon? Is that what you're looking for?

*Lieutenant*: Yes sir. Why do you think we call this "Dragonnet?"

*(Quick swelling of music -- dum de dum dum)*

*Lieutenant*: That's a little detective humor there.

*Announcer (breaking in quickly)*: We will return to DRAGONNET after these messages.

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The George Harrison Department of My That Sounds Familiar or Everything's Been Done Before:

After listening to a tape of this section, Frank Johnson, local dj, fan, and friend -- and giver of spade flushes to short hairy Canadians -- raised his eyebrows and said: "Y'know, if you ever try to sell that, you'll get sued." After my dumfounded and suspicious "Huh?", Frank told me that Stan Freeberg (or 'Freidberg' or 'Freeberg' or something) had once done a take-off on DRAGNET also called Dragon-net and using a quasi-medieval setting.

Now, accusations of plagiarism, no matter how mildly voiced, send this writer into paroxysms of justification. Truth: I had never heard that particular piece, and have still never heard it, though I've asked Frank to find a recording somewhere in his archives. My exposure to Freeberg (however he spells his name) has been nil. Zilch. I've been waiting to use that parody idea ever since a D&D game long ago -- a character, faced with a fearsome creature, muttered an ominous "Dum de dum dum", as people of his age group are wont to do. Somehow, it clicked in my mind: Dum de dum dum, Dragnet, Dungeons and Dragons = Dragonnet.

Really.

Hey, you can search the house for old Freeberg tapes or albums. Denise can give oral testimony ~~And how she can give oral testimony~~ /// that she saw me typing the script without any aids other than a typewriter and dictionary.

I won't go any further with this, since I've just had a great idea for a novel and I want to write it down before I forget. You see, these people -- a couple aliens and a human -- stumble on this star system that -- rather than planets -- has a big ring around the sun, a huge artificial artifact like a ribbon stuck on end...

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Sleigh, May 23, 1980

*Music fades is -- Gregorian chant -- for the sticklers out there, specifically a twelfth century Kyrie. Music UP, then slight fade for the voice-over, which continues through the entire advertisement.*

Hello. *(The voice is high and quavering, with all the dulcet tones of those nuns who spend inordinate amounts of time putting rosary beads in unlikely places.)* My name is Sister Rose Julie, principal of Our Lady of Whips and Chains. I'm here today to ask your support in a valiant effort, a noble cause. I want you to help give an education, a useful schooling, to boys and girls whose only life has been the streets.

We need your help.

If you could only see these children as I do, you would see their innocent charm.

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You should have heard their gleeful cheers as they whipped the pants off a rival school's ball team -- our team beat the Uptown School of the Vigorous Circular Motion to take the championship. Oh, the fun they had.

You should experience the studious quiet as they ponder the ins and outs of their social studies, the outgoing friendliness with which they greet visitors to the school; yes, these children are the real future of tomorrow. Without your money, they might not make it. Help support us: you'll be helping a child. And you'll feel better for it, believe me. Thank you. God Bless you.

*(Gregorian chant UP, then FADE.)*

*(Music fades in -- a Segovia transcription of Bach. Very nice, and beyond the skills of at least 99% of the filksingers in the world. And, unfortunately, me. Music fades...)*

Ayup. Ah used ta soun' lak that. Now, after attendin' the Famous Filksinger's School, ah ken soun' lak the-us:

*(To the tune of RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD, accompanied by out-of-tune guitar and even better voice):* Spaceships and rocketships go fast  
And if I win a Hugo I'll stick it up my-

*Announcer (breaking in hurriedly):* Yes, you too can forsake serious music for a fun-filled career as a filksinger. *(The Portsmouth Sinfonia fills the background with their poignant rendition of the William Tell Overture.)* Think of it: evenings spent in a hot, smoky room while everyone else is drinking and having fun. The blending of voices almost on pitch, the melodious picking of guitars nearly tuned. After only a few minutes at *(excessive reverb)* THE FAMOUS FILKSINGER'S SCHOOL *(reverb out)* you too will be as good as anyone else.

Join today. The Famous Filksinger's School is a subsidiary of Rod McKuen/Barry Manilow Enterprises, Inc. *(Portsmouth Sinfonia stumbles to climax. FADE.)*

*(Wagnerian Overture UP, then FADE.)*

How many times have you seen it? You know the guy over there hasn't your looks, hasn't your intelligence, hasn't anywhere near the qualities YOU have to offer. Yet there he is; the center of attention, the focus of everyone, and YOU are being ignored in the corner.

*(Quick change to up-tempo Chick Corea --Alfonso's Rhumba from MY SPANISH HEART.)*

Now YOU can have that something that makes the difference, that subtle change that will alter your lifestyle -- if you act now and order THE BIG SHTICK!

THE BIG SHTICK is made from the finest oaken branches, fine-grained and polished to an extraordinary luster. It has worked for thousands, and it can work for YOU just as easily. When you have your own shtick, you no longer have to think -- just sit back and let the shtick do the work. It's EASY, it's FUN, and best of all, IT WORKS! Soon even YOU will begin to wonder which is you and which is the shtick.

THE BIG SHTICK has been tested under all conditions. It is unconditionally guaranteed. We know it will work for YOU. But if you ACT NOW, we will send you ABSOLUTELY FREE this special gift -- ZEN AND THE ART OF POKER PLAYING by M. Glicksohn. We are so certain you will be pleased by both this book and THE BIG SHTICK that we will refund your money if you return the SHTICK within seven days. You may keep the book as our gift to you. SEND TODAY!

*(Music out.)*

We now return you to your regular programming.

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"Being or not being intelligent, talented, witty, knowledgable, sociable or just generally likeable is what determines whether fans are accepted or ignored. Most fans couldn't care less if you fucked goats in your spare time so long as you're good company at a convention."  
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--Don West, EMPTIES 5  
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 "THE USUAL"

GOH SPEECH

WINDYCON 1983

by

*george r.r. martin*


I haven't been a convention Guest of Honor as often as some writers in our field, but I've been there often enough to know one thing for sure -- I like it. It's always nice to be a GoH, for all the obvious reasons; I think it's in the rules somewhere that the GoH gets to have more fun than anybody else, and even when it's bad, it's great. Nonetheless, I have to admit that I'm particularly pleased to be here this weekend, at Windycon, because -- as many of you know -- a lot of my roots are here in Chicago.

It's true. I went to school up at Northwestern and I lived in Chicago itself from 1971 through 1976, in Uptown. I have lots of memories of Uptown. I don't know what the neighborhood is like these days, but ten years ago it was what I liked to call "yeasty." It was as mixed a neighborhood as I've ever seen or heard of; ethnically, racially, economically, chronologically. Topless bars and old folks' homes and condos were within a couple of blocks of each other. Upwardly mobile young singles and leftover hippies and lots of muggers and killers all milled around together, sometimes even in my apartment. A different ethnic group moved in every week.

I have lots of memories of my years in Uptown. I remember this sort of grocery store-cum-deli that I used to stop at on the way home from work. I'd pick up some pastrami, some roast beef, maybe a barbecued chicken. They had racks of barbecued chicken turning in the windows. It was run by these two old Jewish men, and the food was pretty good, and I shopped there regularly. Then one day it changed. I came in and the two old Jewish men were gone, and instead there was a woman in a sari behind the cash register, and a dark, swarthy man behind the deli counter. They still had the chickens turning in the window, though, so I figured what the hell, I went on over, and ordered a pound of roast beef. But the counterman had just started to take out the roast beef when I changed my mind. "No," I said, "I think I'll have some pastrami instead." He looked at me blankly.

"Pastrami," I repeated, and the incomprehension grew in his eyes. He didn't speak English very well, you see. Well, I tried to spy the pastrami behind the glass and point at it, but it wasn't there. "Maybe you don't have it any more," I said. "Pastrami? You know, little bit like corned beef?" But he wasn't getting any of it. I was reduced to making slicing motions and -- in the timeless tradition of American travellers everywhere -- repeating myself more loudly. "Pastrami," I kept saying. "Pastrami, pastrami."

Finally he seemed to get what I was saying, and a big smile broke over his face. "No, no," he said, pointing at his chest. "Pakistani!" That was what life was like in Uptown.

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I didn't mind. It seemed kind of an appropriate place for a struggling young neopro. I had a huge old apartment that had known much better days, but was still great for parties; I shared the place with an endless array of roommates, a half-dozen cats, and several thousand roaches. Every morning I walked to this place called Don's Grill for breakfast. Ah, yes, I remember Don's. It was about the greasiest spoon you could imagine, but still a good place for breakfast. For a buck-thirty-one you got two eggs and bacon and lots of hash browns and all the coffee you could drink and any kind of toast you wanted -- I usually wanted cinnamon raisin toast -- and they'd even throw some onions into the eggs for nothing. The waitresses were named Flo and Vi, I swear to god! It was the only restaurant in the world where I've ever managed to achieve what has been one of my lifelong ambitions: to be able to go in and sit down and tell the waitress, "Give me the usual." My ambitions were modest in those days, but then, so were my means.

Windycons were as much a part of those days as was Don's, though not, thank god, on a daily basis. I haven't managed to make a Windycon since I moved down to the wilds of New Mexico, but in earlier years I was a regular, more or less. I attended the first three, back in the prehistoric days when they actually held the con in Chicago, plus a couple of the later ones out here at Arlington Park. I got my first Hugo at a Windycon, in fact. This may strike you as a trifle odd, the Hugo Awards banquet not being a regular feature of Windycon programming, but it's true. The thing was, that year the worldcon was in Australia. I had barely enough money to buy breakfast every morning at Don's, so I knew there was no way I was gonna swing any Australian coffee shops. So I wasn't there when they announced that I'd won; I was at home in my apartment in Uptown, asleep, in my underwear, and somebody from Western Union phoned at an ungodly hour of the ayem with a telegram from Neil Rest telling me that I won. I said, "Huh, yeah," and went back to sleep, and the next morning I was half convinced it'd all been a dream. But it was real enough, and Ben Bova picked up my Hugo for me. He brought it to Minnesota, where he stopped on the way back from Aus-siecon, and gave it to Gordy Dickson. Gordy kept it for a while and passed it to Joe Haldeman when he came through. Joe didn't have one of his own yet -- this was before he got greedy and won six or nine or however many he has -- so he used mine for all the unspeakable rituals he'd always wanted a Hugo for, and brought it to Windycon, where he gave it to Lynne Aronson, the founder and chairman of this institution, although it was smaller and less insitutional in those days. Lynne presented it to me at the (ahem) banquet. If you could call it that.

Actually, it was an all-you-could-eat breakfast buffet, which meant I had to get up in the morning, on Sunday, after the Saturday night parties. But I was ready to do anything to get that Hugo. I'd been making do with an old chess trophy covered with aluminum foil, but it wasn't the same thing. That breakfast was absolutely interminable. Not only was the food bad, but there wasn't enough of it -- far from being all you could eat, they ran out before everyone had been served. Then we waited and waited before they brought more dead scrambled eggs. But the real swell touch was the tables. Every table had seating for eight, and in the middle of each, as we filed in, was a plate piled high with sweet rolls. Six sweet rolls, to be precise. Wonderful fun. That was a hotel with a sense of humor, that was. I did get a Hugo that morning, finally, and I got a sweet roll too. I don't know which was the grander accomplishment. They were about equally sticky, although the Hugo had more fingerprints on it.

Anyway, that was in my callow youth, when I was only a struggling neopro. Now I'm back, this time as Guest of Honor. I mentioned how much I like being a Guest of Honor, I believe. I'm hopelessly addicted to cons by this point, and being a Guest of Honor means I get to one for free. Besides, things are a lot different when you're a Guest of Honor; there are all kinds of fringe benefits I never dreamed of when I was a struggling young neopro. When I was a struggling young neopro I had to ride the el to get to Windycon; as Guest of Honor, I get to ride Pioneer Airlines.

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As a struggling young neopro, I often had to sleep on people's floors at cons; when you're Guest of Honor, they give you a room. As a struggling young neopro, you have to go to the consuite to get a beer from the bathtub; when you're Guest of Honor, you drink the same beer, but if you're lucky a gopher will get it for you. Sometimes, when you're Guest of Honor, the hucksters will even stock your books. If you're really lucky, sometimes people will even buy some of them.

Of course, there are disadvantages to being Guest of Honor. The biggest one is that they make you give a speech. Sometimes they make you go to a banquet in order to give a speech, although at least you're assured of getting a sweet roll when you're Guest of Honor. Now I haven't been Guest of Honor a whole lot in my career, but I've been there enough that I'm starting to run out of topics. I talked about the state of the field in my first two speeches, and then about editors, and then about reviewers, and then about turtles, which seemed like a logical progression at the time. Anyway, I don't want to repeat myself. So this time I decided I'd talk about fandom. I could talk about how fandom is my family, but you've all heard that and it's boring and besides, I'd be up shit creek if my family found out. They had enough trouble when I had a panel discussion and GoH speeches at my wedding, they'd never go for the people in antlers and beanies.

Well, I tried all these topics on for size, and none of them really fit, but the obvious choice was there all along, pushing its way into my thoughts. This weekend represents a kind of homecoming for me. Until Bayonne, New Jersey becomes a fannish hotbed and establishes its own annual convention, or until my highschool reunion heaves around -- a thought that chills me to my bones -- it's about as significant a homecoming as I'm likely to get. Chicago represents a large chunk of my past, and having been asked back here, it's impossible not to reflect on where I came from and where I am now and how things have changed. On how things have changed for all of us.

I've changed, certainly, since that weekend ten years ago that I spent partying at the Blackstone. In obvious ways -- moved four times, got married and divorced, made some friends and lost touch with others. I learned to cook my own breakfast, and when I'm in the mood, I can now afford restaurants that are a bit classier than Don's Grill -- although I've never found another place where I can just sit down and order my usual. The funny thing is, I find that a little sad.

In one of those little ironies of timing that sometimes seems inevitable, I have a new book coming out next month, a novel called THE ARMAGEDDON RAG that is, in fact, about change and loss and some of the things I'm groping around for up here. I say it all a lot better in the novel, I think. The RAG is about rock 'n roll, and it's about the Sixties, and the Eighties, and the things we've gained and lost along the way. It has elements of a mystery novel, and elements of occult horror, and elements of mainstream too, I guess. It's about the changes we wanted and the changes we got, which weren't the same thing at all. It's a symbol of my own personal changes as well, since it is utterly unlike anything I've done before. I'm pleased with that, incidentally. I think the work has to change, that a writer who repeats himself too often is on the road toward stagnation and self-parody. All writers repeat themselves to a certain extent, of course; themes recur, a distinctive voice develops, characteristic concerns and literary motifs become discernible. But you have to keep trying new things, if you're to be worth reading at all.

That's one of the things that worries me most about today's SF. So many writers seem to have stopped trying new things. I'm not even talking about the wildly experimental, mind you -- for a writer who's done nothing but sword & sorcery, a space opera is a wildly new thing, on a personal level. Too many editors seem intent on keeping us in our pigeonholes -- both SF as a whole, and individual SF writers. I love SF enough to hope rather fervently that this is just a phase we're going through, that the diversity I've always valued in our field will return. And I think it will.

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Those of you who are paying close attention may have noticed contradiction here: here I am, all in favor of change, somewhat wistfully rueing what SF has gone and changed into. I plead guilty to that, to having an ambivalent attitude toward change. But I don't think that's terribly unusual in the world of science fiction. For all of our claims extolling our chosen literature as an antidote to future shock, we're as much in love with our yesterdays as with our tomorrows. The same people who will sit up on panels and talk about how five years from now we'll all be living in bio-engineered houses grown from mushrooms, with nuclear fusion furnaces, and commuting to work via hang gliders -- the same people who will seem eager for all this to come to pass -- will react with horror if someone suggests changing the Hugo rules. The guy who tells you there is going to be an inevitable nuclear holocaust come 1986 is also on a bidding committee for 1987.

Perhaps I ought to decry that, but I can't, and won't. I see too much of it in myself. And it's something I value in SF and the SF people I've come to know and love.

I remember those years in Chicago, a decade ago. I was a great one for throwing parties in those days; my apartment was perfect for it, and I had a streak of sadism that enjoyed making my friends come to Uptown. My parties were very diverse. I'd gone to Northwestern, as I mentioned; I'd been extremely active in college chess there, serving as president of the campus club and captain of our intercollegiate teams. Naturally, I had a lot of old college friends, most of them chessplayers, and they came to my parties. From 1972 through 1974, I was working as a C.O. attached to VISTA and the Cook County Legal Assistance Foundation, so I also knew a lot of radical young lawyers and VISTA volunteers. They came to my parties. And, finally, I had my writer friends, my friends in fandom. They came too. Everyone came crowding in to my big Chicago apartment and a couple of the better parties ran till dawn. But it was like mixing water and oil and mercury. The chessplayers all brought sets and clocks and they sat on the floor of my dining room and played speed chess. The lawyers took over the living room, turned the lights down and the stereo up, danced and smoked pot. The SF people all went off and sat around and talked.

There were friends that I loved and cared about in all three groups. In fact, if you'd cornered me then, back in 1973, and put me on the spot, I probably would have said I was closest to the chess people, the college friends I'd known the longest. And the runners-up would be those lawyers I worked with every day. The SF people . . . well, I was new to SF, and the relationships there were newer, more tentative.

But now a decade has passed. I still write to one or two of my college chessplayer buddies, and I look 'em up if I visit whatever city they might be living in, but that's about it. Most of the Legal Aid folks I've lost touch with entirely. But the SF people are still a big part of my life. Bigger than ever. They write and they phone and they get together at these cons a staggering number of times each year, and the result is a kind of floating permanence. In a world where everything is changing, where people hop from city to city and leave their life behind them when they go, where friendships and love affairs and marriages all seem more transitory every year, the SF subculture has created a kind of island of permanence. Out in the larger world, your buddy or your lover may very well turn into a name on your Xmas card list within five years -- but here, your friends and your enemies are going to be a part of your life forever, whether you want them to or not.





# THE RAPE OF THE DOC

STILL FANDOM'S MOST EXCLUSIVE  
NON-LETTER-COLUMN  
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS



XENIUM has rarely had what one might call a normal lettercolumn. This has been due to a combination of editorial idiosyncrasy, irregularity of publication and the occasionally unusual nature of its content. However, as a formerly-famous letterhack I've always been grateful for comments received and those kind enough to send them have traditionally seen their names writ large here at the back of the issue. Once more the Glicksohn hat is tipped in thanks to the following folks (and the list is itself an interesting comment on what five years can do to fandom):

ROBERT BLOCH, BRIAN EARL BROWN, JAN BROWN, JACKIE CAUSGROVE, RICH COAD, MARY COWAN, GARY DEINDORFER, LEIGH EDMONDS, GARY FARBER, GEORGE FLYNN, GAY HALDEMAN, ROSE HOGUE, TERRY HUGHES, VIC KOSTRIKIN, LAN LASKOWSKI, DENISE LEIGH, ERIC LINDSAY, GARY MATTINGLY, ERIC MAYER, RANDY MOHR, CHRIS PRIEST, RON SALOMON, BOB SHAW, BRUCE TOWNLEY, IRA THORNHILL, BOB TUCKER and HARRY WARNER, JR.

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Another short-lived feature of this long-lived fanzine was a section I (only somewhat facetiously) called the LITTLE KNOWN ENGLISHMAN OF THE ISSUE bit of the lettercolumn. Here I would give massive worldwide exposure to fans whose writing wasn't as well known as it deserved to be (at the time.) Since I hate to see good fanwriting (or the scotch that inspired it) go to waste, let's have a reprise of that section. But first, a brief summary: (You'd be amazed at the number of fans who have trouble remembering the contents of a five-year-old fanzine...even one they published themselves.) XENIUM 12 appeared in December, 1979. The colophon made reference to "the end of the decade", obviously meaning the societal decade of the 70s rather than the strict calendar decade. Among the contents were Spider Robinson's speech on Silly Weapons, a superb Joan Hanke-Woods pulp-cover parody for Startling Smega Stories and a Something Extra consisting of a cancelled check. Now, half a decade later, XENIUM is proud to re-present...

## THE LITTLE BETTER KNOWN ENGLISHMAN OF THE ISSUE - (hyphen: insert where apt)

Cas is next door watching 'Three Coins in The Fountain'. Apparently she has been in love with Louis Jordan since the first half of her brain-transplant operation. Hopefully they'll get to put the new one in Real Soon Now. She just screamed at me to switch out the light in the living room as I left but I pointed out I had to return to get some booze. "Booze?", she asked, but when I pointed out whose fanzine I was

locking she averred as how I had to "keep the intravenous drip going..." Now don't get upset. I stuck up for you. I told her that was no way to speak of Canadians, no matter how small they may be.

Actually, this loc was spurred by a wonderful fannish concept. Only a trufannish mind would fail to boggle when faced with a teacher of mathematics who can't multiply by ten. Of course, tricky Canadians might claim that they *knew* the decade ended on the 31st of December 1980, but with eighteen months betwixt issues they simply had to mail out the 'Happy New Decade' notice early or not at all. Nit-picking hairy Canadians might also point out that as any ten consecutive years theoretically form a decade, this was what he honestly and truly meant, so it didn't really matter. Sober, industrious English fans will, however, refuse to be fooled by such evasions and would gleefully point out your fuck-up were they not aware that this will be the one-hundred-and-sixtyfifth letter you will have received pointing out this fact and by now you will be needing a little sympathy and understanding. "There, there..... there, there."

("There is the gun, there are the barbituates.....there is the gas oven and there the noose to hang yourself. GO TO IT, FAILURE!")

Neither of my two (admittedly very concise) dictionaries carries a definition of "smegma." However, I now know that a "smeech" or a "smitch" is a smell of burning ("Scotty, what's that smeech?" "I'm sorra, Cap'n, but some mysterious force has been readin' the dictionary agin."). Actually, when you consider its pedigree (?) Startling Smegma Stories was rather disappointing, although there were probably just enough homosexual elements to interest what appears to be the bulk of fandom. Don't get me wrong, whilst not a homosexual myself I'm not one of the kind of people who'd rather be dead than gay. No, I certainly don't believe in "effete worse than death."

SOMETHING EXTRA... well, I appear to have a check made out by a gentleman who labours under the handicap of a name like "Milo Shitsole" or somesuch, and who is so embarrassed by his name that he has *your* name printed on the top left corner of his checks. His signature, however, gives him away.

I'm a bit hurt by the check enclosed though. The Churchill Centre isn't very fannish, is it? And twenty-five dollars....well, a paltry sum. I can envision a subtle fannish hierarchy here where good friends get checks for thousands of dollars made out to the Minneapolis in '73 Committee in *their* copies of XENIUM, all very fannish stuff, whilst hangers on like me get checks for paltry sums to Toronto dry-cleaning firms or The Canadian Radish and Parsnip Society...or places of similar fannish worthlessness. You sure know how to hurt a guy. Lucky for me, Jerry Pournelle just sold me this snotgun and phlegmthrower. You'll get yours, Glicksohn... or rather, you'll get *mine* (and mine is very green and very sticky.)

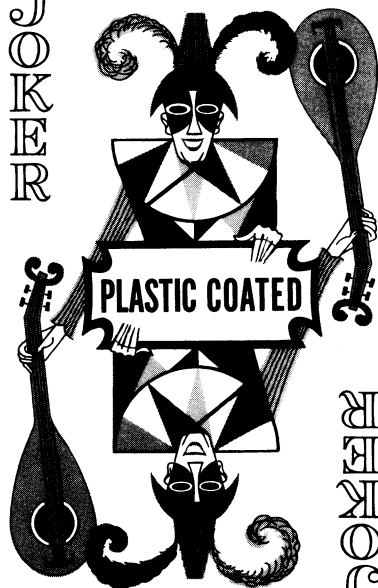
Merry Chrimble

PAUL SKELTON

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Skel was advised, back there in December 1979, that the Churchill Centre was where Tucker & I slept together during SEACON and is hence quintessentially fannish! Keep them cards and letters coming, folks; you too may become little known one day!



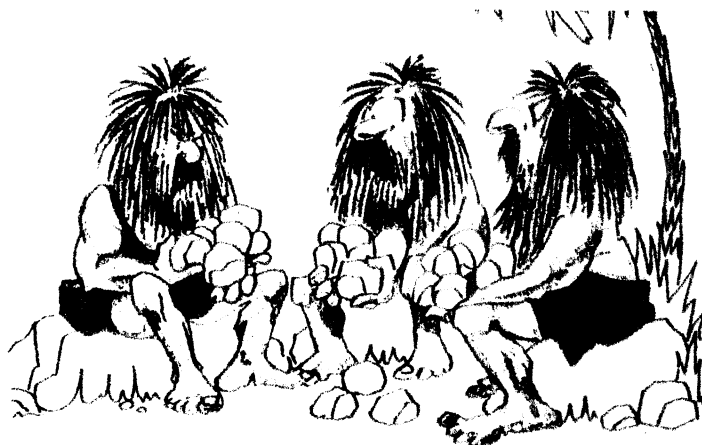
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## SOMETHING EXTRA? HEY, THAT'S WILD!

For the tenth issue in a row, XENIUM lives up to its subtitle and presents you with a small momento of *my* personal life. I haven't been playing poker for as long as I've been publishing XENIUM but in recent years I've definitely spent a hell of a lot more time shuffling cards than slipsheeting pages and, for the most part, poker has been berry, berry good to me. (If fannish posterity takes note of me at all, it may well ~~also~~ remember me as the fan who re-introduced poker as a midwestern conventional activity. And I could live with that.)

A few years ago, I started saving the jokers from every deck of cards I used in a fannish poker game. Well-meaning friends would occasionally offer me particularly unusual jokers they'd run across but I'd politely decline them. The idea behind XENIUM's Something

Extra has always been that each souvenir is something I've been personally involved with. Thus your own personal joker up there (check it out; both sides may be worth looking at) is guaranteed to come from a deck that I used at least once to play poker, against at least one other fan. With this and a Susan B Anthony you can buy your way into a dollar-ante game anywhere in fandom!

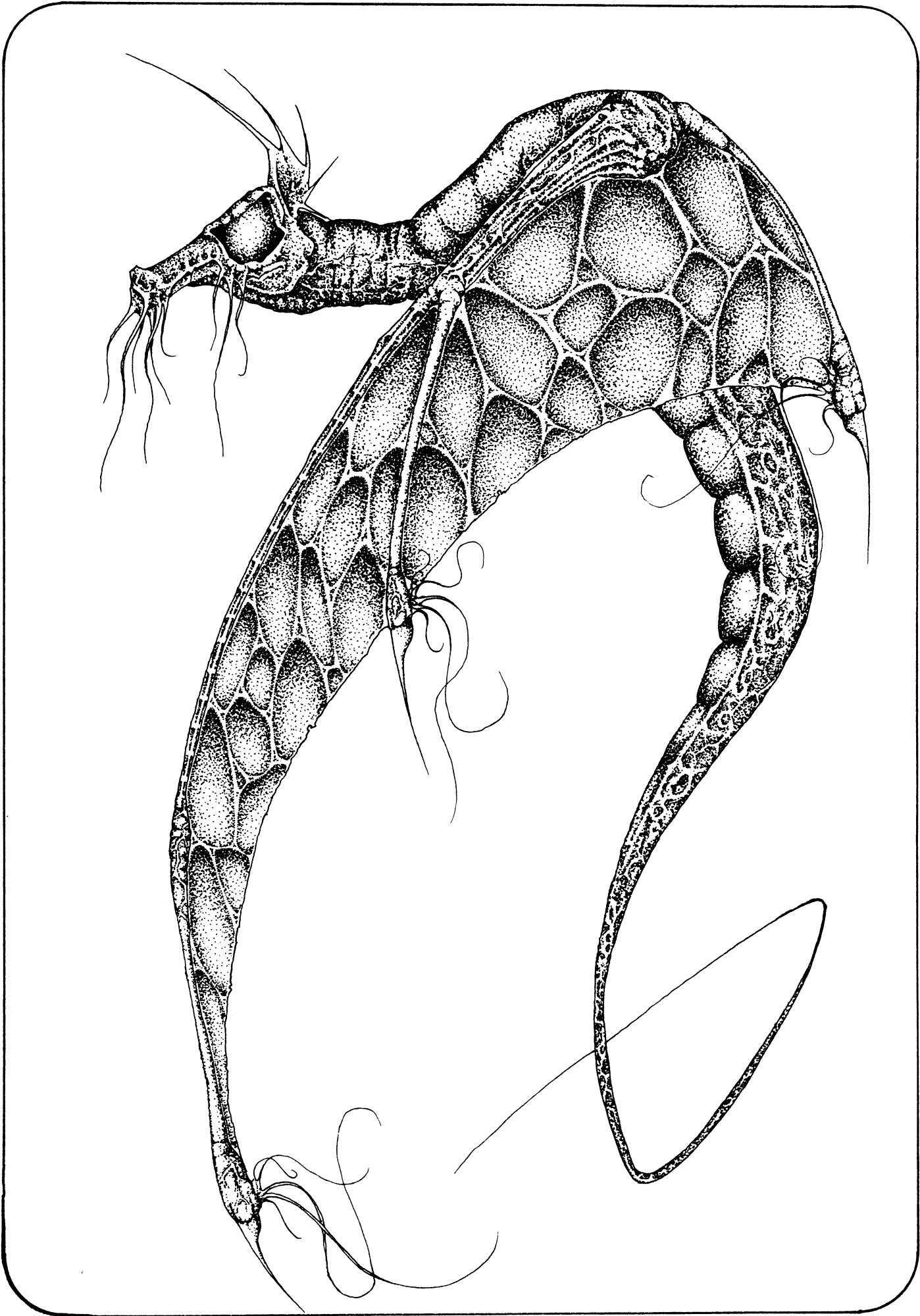


"Hey! These rocks are marked!"

### ART CREDITS:

Terry Austin: 1      Randy Bathurst: 2      Grant Canfield: 12      Derek Carter: 21  
Vic Kostrikin: 7,8      Bill Rotsler: 10,11,15,18,20





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## CANDIDATES' PLATFORMS

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rich brown: rich founded SBOF (Society of Boring Old Farts, a.k.a. Secret Bastards of Fandom), which tells SMOFs what to do and strikes terror in the hearts of fakefans everywhere. He's been publishing/writing for fanzines and attending cons for a quarter of a century, can pick out fans at a distance by their auras and determine by touch if a fanzine mentions him. rich tied with Terry Carr in last year's PONG Poll for best letterhack and will be fan GoH at Norwescon, Seattle's regional, even though he ran off with one of Seattle's brightest new fans, Linda Blanchard, by promising they would publish a frequent fanzine. Mindful that she was voted "best new fan" last year--due in part to the excellence of her fanzine--he promises to bring Linda with him if he wins, provided he can teach her that the Old Ways Are The Best.

Nominators: Gary Farber, Bruce Gillespie, David Grigg, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, & Ted White.

Marty & Robbie Cantor: This American/Canadian team, a truly North American bid, will be able to meet and talk to twice as many fans as any other single entry. We intend to spend all of our waking hours with fans; however, we promise that we will not bring the Australian NATCON back with us when we return home. Between the two of us we can promise to keep both the mimeo ink-stained fanzine fans and the be-costumed media fans happy. (Marty will talk fanzines for hours, Robbie will discuss plots and characters of "Doctor Who" just as long.) If that doesn't keep your con attendees in the blissful peace of sound-asleep boredom, nothing will! Of course, if you want to be awake, we can always change topics. (For instance, Marty can start talking about "Doctor Who"....)

Nominators: Mike Glycer, Larry Niven, Marc Ortlieb, Bruce Pelz, & Roger Weddall.

Mike Glicksohn: Mike Glicksohn has been a fan for 19 years during which time he's been active in sf clubs, conventions, fanzines, and all social aspects of fandom. In 1973 he helped run the worldcon and won half a Hugo for his fanzine Energumen. When discussing DUFF, he harps on the way it fosters international fannish relationships. He has a passionate, but platonic, fondness for wombats, has been known to publicly disagree with Ted White and for 15 years has worn his own Aussie bush hat. He regularly uses "antipodean" in letters without consulting a dictionary and longs to be the first Canadian to win a major fan fund. Having already eaten pie'n'sauce and met John Alderson he is confident nothing can prevent him from being an amiable ambassador of North American fandom at Aussiecon II.

Nominators: Harlan Ellison, John Foyster, Gay Haldeman, Irwin Hirsh, & Joni Stopa.

Joni Stopa: I became active in fandom in 1954. I was too young to know any better. Since that time I've been a fan artist, worked on 9 worldcons, won costume balls, done some fan writing, given parties, joined 2 apas, and produced a genzine with Dave Locke. I'm old enough to know better, but I'm still hooked on fandom. I've met enough DUFF delegates to know that I'd like to meet a lot more Aussies. I'd also like to find out for myself if Terry Frost really talks in rhyming slang.

Nominators: Mike Glicksohn, Rusty Hevelin, Eric Lindsay, Joyce Scrivner, & Jean Weber.

DUFF: The Down Under Fan Fund was created in 1972 to encourage closer ties between fans in Australia and North America. With host countries alternating each year, there have been twelve exchanges of fan representatives since, supported entirely by voluntary contributions from fans all over the world. DUFF representatives visit a major sf convention in the host country and visit with fans they might otherwise never meet in person. DUFFers are treated as special guests, and are always well looked after.

**DONATIONS:** DUFF exists solely on the contributions of fans and always welcomes material for auction, and donations of money. There will be auctions of DUFF material at future conventions. Contributions may be brought to a convention, or sent to the local administrator. Anyone may contribute, even if ineligible to vote, and donations in excess of the voting donation are gratefully accepted. Checks should be made out to Jerry Kaufman (in North America) or Jack Herman (in Australia).

**VOTING:** Any fan active in fandom before January, 1984, may vote. Ballots must be signed and be accompanied by a donation of at least \$2.00. Each person is allowed only one vote. If you think your name may not be known to the administrator, please include the name of a fan or fan group who can vouch for you. We won't count unverifiable votes.

**ALL VOTES MUST REACH AN ADMINISTRATOR BY NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 28, 1985.**

DUFF uses the Australian Preferential system of balloting to guarantee an automatic run-off and a majority win. You rank the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3...). If there is no absolute majority for one candidate after the first count of votes, first place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped and the second place votes on those ballots are assigned to the candidates named. This goes on until one candidate has a majority. It is therefore important to vote for second, third, etc., places, especially if you choose to write in a candidate. (You are not required to fill in more than your name and your first choice.)

**CANDIDATES:** Each candidate has posted a \$10 bond, provided signed nominations, and has promised (barring acts of God) to travel to the 1985 World Science Fiction Convention, Aussiecon II, in Melbourne, Australia, August 22-26. Platforms are reproduced on the reverse side of this form, and the ballot is below.

**ADMINISTRATORS:** Jerry Kaufman, 4326 Winslow Place No., Seattle, WA 98103, USA  
Jack Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldg, Univ. of Sydney, NSW 2006, Aus.

I vote for (list 1,2,3, etc.)

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

rich brown \_\_\_\_\_

NAME & ADDRESS (PLEASE PRINT)

Marty & Robbie Cantor \_\_\_\_\_

Mike Glicksohn \_\_\_\_\_

Joni Stopa \_\_\_\_\_

Hold Over Funds \_\_\_\_\_

If you think you may not be known by the administrators, please give the name of a fan or fan group to whom you are known:

No Preference \_\_\_\_\_

Write In \_\_\_\_\_

Reproduction of this ballot is encouraged; please copy text verbatim.  
Jerry Kaufman, September 16, 1984.

# Xenium 13 TAFF Ballot Colour