

XENOLITH [Second Series] Two
...an Eclectic Esoteric Compendium
from:

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Available by Editorial Whim, or:
U.S. \$1.50 each.
Make checks payable to W.L. Bowers

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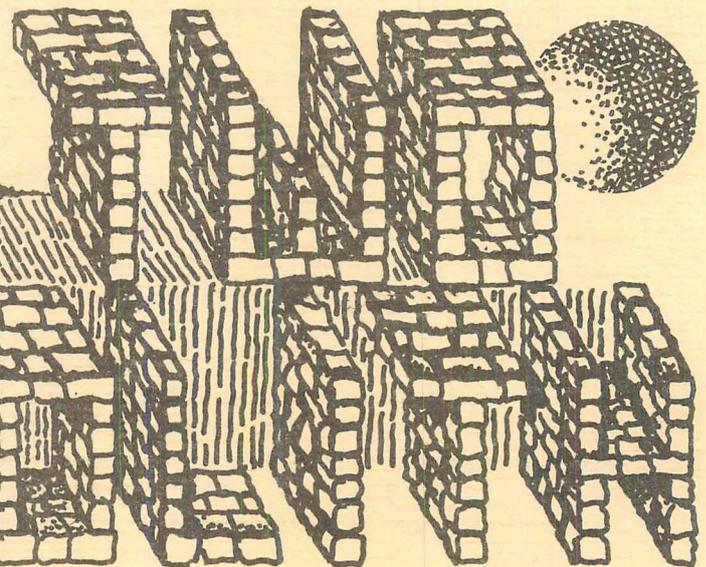
Collating help last time provided
by Marla Gold & Denise Parsley
Leigh (it was, after all, *their*
fault!) and, Steve Leigh & Tanya
Curry (Nice People, but Foolish!).

A number on your mailing label--is
that of your last issue;
an "X" indicates that *this* is it!

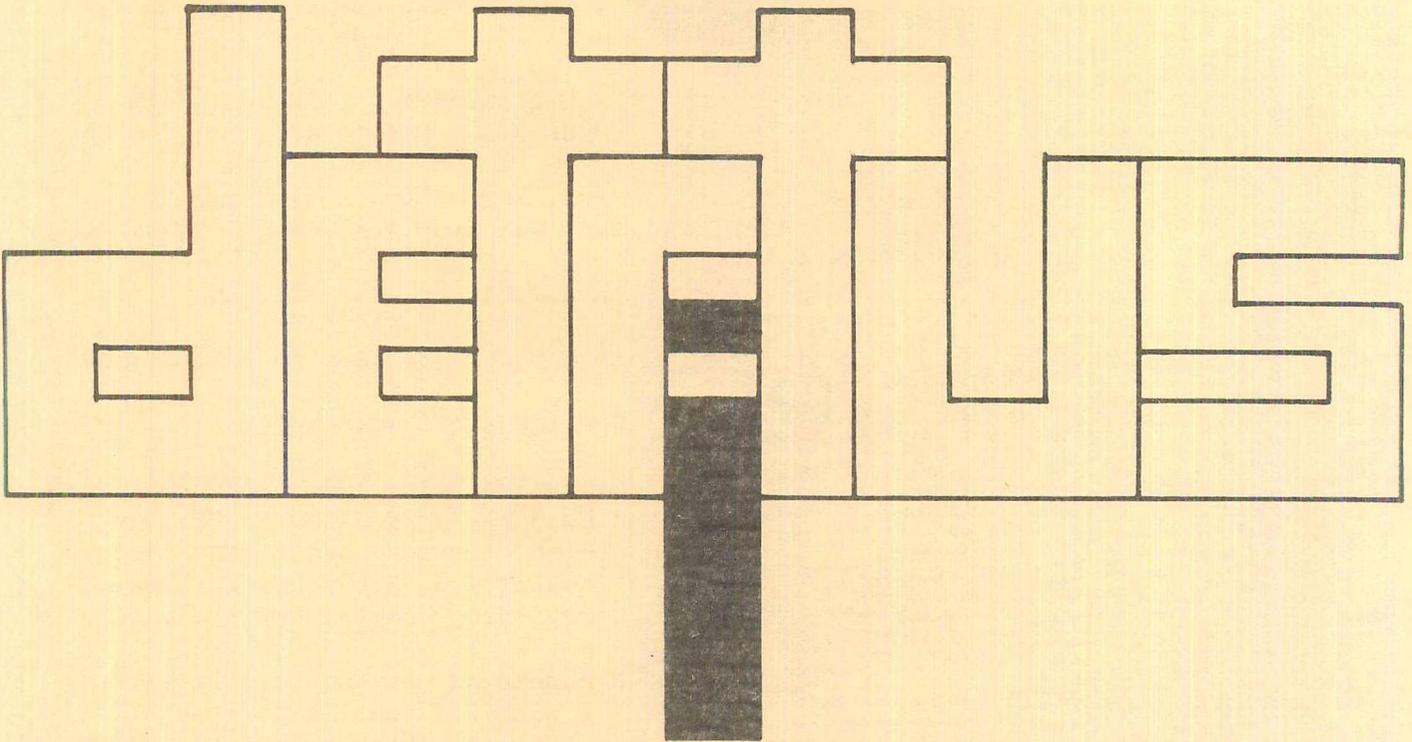
Printing by Tanya Curry/Wing Press
My Publication #105. 36pp. 3/25/79

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DENVERin81/DETROITin82/AUSSEsin83



"On a sudden impulse, I went over to Mrs. Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure and Preposterous Words. "Xenolith" wasn't listed, but "xeno" is a morpheme for alien, and "lith" is a morpheme for stone. Xenolith means... alien stone! Also a neat pun on the word "zine"." ---Luke McGuff; 1/23/79



"Maybe we should put out a fanzine together; after all, we're two of the best known fans of our generation. We could combine all of the features we are individually famous for and produce a sure Hugo-winner. It'd have brilliant reproduction, great layout, fantastic art, incredible graphics, covers by Carter, contributions from all the top pros, controversy, and everything else anyone could want. And we could even combine our titles, taking the first syllable of yours and the last of mine and calling it XEN-IUM!" ---Mike Glicksohn; XENOLITH: Epilogue; page 78

...it wasn't until I was sitting in the Curry's living room, thumbing through the first-collated copy of X:One, that I discovered the awful truth.

"My God," I said to Al, "Do you realize what other fanzine is printed on blue paper, has covers of heavy white pebbled stock...and a title beginning with 'X'?" Al Curry chortled.

I'd never actually seen anyone chortle before.

PAULA SMITH: *Xenolith* looks good, but of course you know that else you wouldn't have printed it. It's been a long time since your last official fanzine, and as you mentioned (over and over) your style has changed. For some reason, it makes me think of Larry Downes' first zine--or rather, what Larry might have wanted his first zine to be. Your interludes connect the features, and the features themselves develop in theme from each other. If one could talk about zines the way critics do poems, I'd say this was a more mature work. Certainly more relaxed, more confident.

I don't know if this letter says anything you don't already realize. You'll never need a psychoanalyst, Bill; you introspect and selfanalyze to a greater extent--and greater purpose--than most anyone in fandom save Cy Chauvin. And this is not a bad thing, it just means that, being at all honest, you can't kid yourself anymore. Which can be occasionally uncomfortable.

Of course, I am only a peripheral viewer, nor have I known you that long, but I see how you have changed in the past two years. You used to be so sad; now, not precisely happy again, but...content. As if you now understand something and are willing to wait until the nightengale sings (as the shogun Tokugawa put it). Ah well. Peace to you and to all of us in our search for the light.

[3/2/79]

...even given my new-found verbosity, I am sometimes speechless: Thank you, Paula...!

MIKE GLICKSOHN You know, this could almost be an issue of *Xenium* I'm thumbing through. It's got the same classy blue paper, the same well-printed covers on pebbled white cover stock, the same attractive design and relaxed and comfortable interior layout and printing. Even the artwork looks like it belongs in *Xenium* for Rotsler's sake! In fact, only those too-short inadequate little unwrinkled staples give this away as a very clever imitation of my favorite current fanzine. Congratulations, old friend! For almost nine years I've been trying to educate you by example and it seems that the lessons have finally sunk in.

I think the key word in the above paragraph is "comfortable": I haven't read the entire issue yet but it fairly exudes the confidence of a man who knows what he wants to do. It looks good; it looks professional; I know what I can look forward to and I know I'm not going to encounter any absolutely crummy art done by a girlfriend's sister or an illo with type all around it or a botched layout or an article that doesn't end where it looks like it ought to end or a piece of writing that shouldn't have been published in the first place. I can be comfortable with *Xenolith* because you are comfortable producing it. I like that feeling and I know I'm going to like the fanzine...even if I've already heard or read half of it somewhere else!

I've nothing to say about your worldcon GoH speech except to reiterate that I was never prouder of you than I was that night at the way you carried the whole thing off. And I bet they couldn't even see you shaking past the first half a dozen rows so a couple of thousand people are probably convinced that Bill Bowers is a self-assured and confident public speaker. I expect you'll be getting all sorts of offers to give speeches as a result of how well you handled Phoenix!

Actually, I find that I do have something to say about your speech after all. And that is to remark that it reads exceptionally well. In fact, I see things there now that I may very well have missed when I was sitting listening to you in that enormous great hall. So publishing the speech was a very valid idea. And if I missed some of your allusions back there in Phoenix I wonder just how much of what you were saying got through to those hundreds of strangers who don't know either you or your history anywhere as well as I do? Undoubtedly they got the general drift--as their reactions indicated--but I

think they must have missed a great deal of the personal material contained here. I wonder if it would ever be possible for worldcon committees to use part of their profits to include a transcript of the GoH speeches along with the final progress report?

For the ept and elegant X One, many thanks . How do unicorns manage to graze ? or are they hand-fed by virgins ? Are there enough virgins ? Mardi Gras appears to be dead for this year though many Krewes are rolling in adjacent parishes. The latest is that Comus and Rex will not roll . The Teamsters seem to be winning the battle . Most cordially Alexander Dnni-phan Wallace .

adu

I think most attendees would enjoy having a more permanent record of the keynote speeches: I certainly got a great deal out of re-reading this address of yours and I know I'd like to have a copy of Harlan's words if that were possible.

Steve's so talented and good-looking that if he weren't equally personable one might almost envy him. Of course, having to put up with Denise means he deserves some breaks...

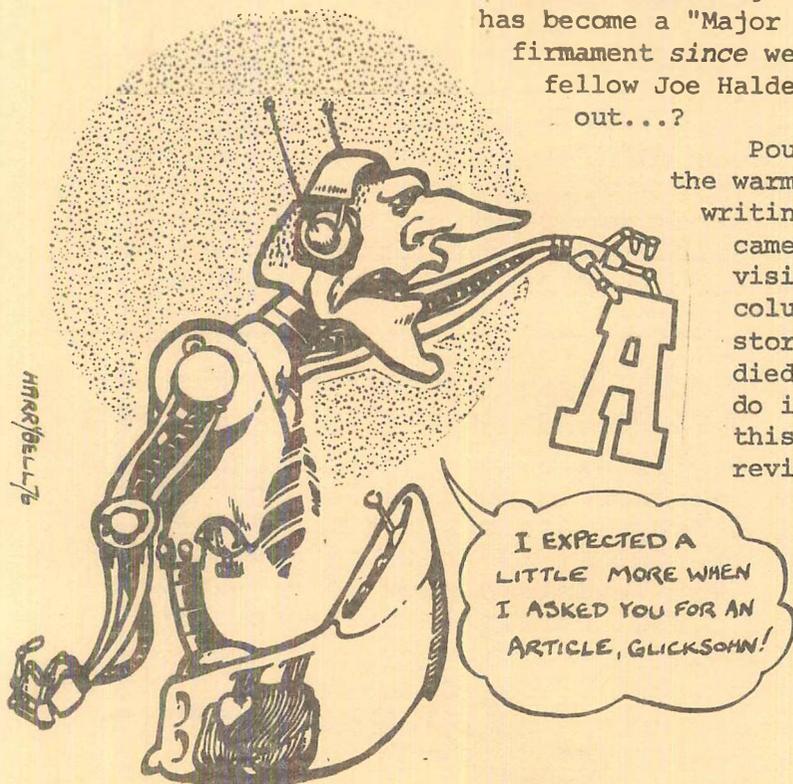
His memories of IGUANACON will undoubtedly resonate with many of us. There is much of myself in Steve; unfortunately there is little of Steve in me but so it goes. I can empathize with his feelings of alienation because I've been to a great many pro parties and I really don't belong. Steve may feel out of place there now but in a little while he'll have found his own niche. He automatically seems to recognize the Good People (like Spider and Jeanne and Jodie) and I strongly suspect they recognize him as being one of them.

One cannot pass by his amazing lesson in pronouncing his surname without making a few admiring comments on the deft way he both indulges in character sketches and comments on the nature of those boorish fans who cannot read his name. Initially he tells those who are having trouble calling him by the right name to hack off their 's's. And if that's too subtle he further suggests that we ought to get the 'l' in their and prune away the 'bor's. He's very clever, isn't he?

There's a lot of well-known truth scattered throughout this fanzine. Steve's comments on the sadness of winding down a good con, for example, will be familiar to anyone who loves or has loved fandom (for the ten percent of the people in it we relate to) as you and I have. And your remarks about your difficulty in relating to Writers whom you didn't first know as friends might almost have been written by myself. In a way, I guess I'm a little luckier than you. If a Writer is also a Fanzine Fan I can sometimes establish what will eventually grow into a reasonably comfortable friendship on the basis of having mutual ground to cover. But I'm almost totally speechless--like you--when encountering someone like Bester or Leiber or Heinlein. Or C.J. Cherryh, for that matter. And I agree with you that if I met George Martin for the first time today I'd never have the nerve to tell him how good I think his writing is. Luckily for both of us George has become a "Major Star" in the science fiction firmament since we first met him. Now who's this fellow Joe Haldeman you mention as having a book out...?

Poul's column certainly is one of the warmest and most human pieces of writing he's sent you since BM first came to OW. I've been trying to envision myself writing a similar column--relating essentially amusing stories about a loved person who'd died--and I'm not at all sure I could do it. I can see why you'd relate to this particular column and if Poul revives it for the new *Xenolith* I hope he writes more of this sort of material and less of his dryer and (to me) less interesting socio-economic and political views.

Something you may not have considered yet is what short form you're going to use for this new fanzine. 'X' is clearly out since everyone



knows which was the first of the modern fanzines to be called 'X' and I'm sure that good as you'll get to be you'll never reach Canadian standards. 'XL' is fairly natural but while you're somewhat on the tall side I don't think anyone has ever thought of either you or your recent fanzines as Extra Large so that's not too appropriate either. But there's always 'XENO' and that's a name one could conjure with! In the first place, which you may or may not remember, XENO was the name of the last tortoise I ever kept. He wasn't, I admit, the same one you once said "It looks like a snake with a hat on" about, but the continuity is there. And then there's the historical significance of the name Xeno. As you undoubtedly know, Xeno was the ancient Greek philosopher who filled his time with contemplating such classic problems as how a hare could ever catch a tortoise with a head start since each time he caught up to where the tortoise had been the tortoise would have moved a bit further ahead, and how an arrow could ever actually move anywhere since it would have to pass through every intermediate point beforehand and hence would always be in transit. Since these paradoxes are at least as useful as the things you normally spend your time worrying about it seems to me that XENO is the *perfect* name for this new fanzine of ~~your~~ yours!

Delighted in the way you placed the Rotsler illo just before the Rotsler article. I'm glad you haven't forgotten the old skills while you've been out learning new ones!

In the epilogue to the fanzine that used to bear the name that this one now claims (huh?) I commented on the fact that you've had more guts than I in certain areas relating to our personal lives. I think the matter of "security" is another one. You gave up your security and the only job you'd known and underwent a move to a new area with practically nothing to go on. As it happens, I expect you'll agree that the reason you were willing to try the move in the first place has little to do with the reasons you feel the move was the right thing to do but that's really not important. I strongly doubt that I'd be able to do what you did. (I'm not talking about moving Stateside since that's impossible at the moment.) I really don't think I'd give up the security and the advantages of the job I currently have. Or at least I know of no current inducement that would make the sacrifices that would entail worthwhile. I guess that's what it all comes down to: if you find something that's important enough to abandon money and fringe benefits and safety, then you do it. So far I haven't run across anyone (and that's often what it comes down to) who'd make such a sacrifice seem reasonable. Still, if I keep my eyes open...

And one gets one's eyes continually opened even by one's friends. I had no idea Rotsler was quite so much a split personality; that list of pseudonyms is impressive indeed. But the part I liked best in the entire article was Bill's list of sources for where he gets his ideas. I burst out laughing for the first time in the issue. (I *did* chuckle over Harry's cartoon about Rotsler noses. Which indicates that Bill Rotsler is clearly the funniest attribute that XENO has going for it.)

PS: I found two typos on page 24. Obviously you've replaced Roger Bryant as your proofreader. (And you can take that anyway you want to!)

Liked the Mohr illo juxtaposed to Bill's article. It's nice to see a thinking faned again.

Your Mass Confusion speech is a sound one too and I hope you never have reason to regret getting involved in the often hectic and frequently painful world of running worldcons. I think you have made several very sound points, prime among them being a return to a degree of mutual respect and co-operation among competing worldcon bids.

The Rodak art is most impressive. In fact, the whole fanzine is very impressive. And I'm sure if you ever get any *new* material I'll find lots of things to reply to in future issues. (My reticence has nothing to do with your loss of the ten pages of loc I sent on a long-forgotten OW, I'm almost perhaps sure.)

[2/6/79]

I hate unfinished pieces of business.

...not that I don't specialize in them; but let's restrict *this* to fanzines!

The *Outworlds* "situation" is still a mess, in many ways. I'm working at it, in between new "trips"--of the body and the mind. Your patience is...appreciated.

One of the most embarrassing hangovers are the two unpublished "letters" issues of OW. I still have the letters & who gets them: they *will* be done!

...as will *Outworlds* 30. All when you least expect them...

Have I ever lied to you?

PHILLIP DAVIS ...it's amazing you've kept subscription lists for all this time.

This issue's strongest point was the quality of the contributors. You must admit that the contents page wasn't the most inspiring: 2 speeches, an interview, 2 con reports and a how-I-write article.

Yet, the quality of the writing was such that I read through the 'zine in one sitting. Though I haven't seen too many examples of the art, con reports are generally dull, chaotic, mishmashes of carefully edited memories. Stephen Leigh's Midwestcon report produced an incredibly sympathetic reaction --I've been there! The anxiety of getting out to meet "SF people", simultaneously high & low expectations, and all the rest of it made for a well done piece. The reader didn't even have to attend Midwestcon 28 to appreciate it.

The post-Iggy speech was surprising to me. My memories of your style are of careful, inward-looking prose, always willing to give the reader more than the benefit of doubt. But this speech was aggressive! It was fun! Who knows, maybe Detroit in '82 is more than a pipe dream (heh).

Though I've never talked to you, or met you (just asked for your autograph at MAC in '76), you've written enough that I feel you're changing your persona rather radically. At 20, I'm no stranger to changing life-stages; I think I can relate. Good luck with *Xenolith*; it seems to be a worthwhile endeavor.

[rec'd 2/23/79]

GENE WOLFE Yes, I remember the interview--all of us sitting around that night in a big room furnished by the hotel while Gardner, with iron-bound determination, sought for some propagandistic purpose in my stories. Damon and Kate, Ben and Barbara Bova, Carol, Joe Green, Joe and Gay Haldeman, Doris Buck, George Alec Effinger, Eva McKenna and her faithful companion Kuma Thompson, and of course Gardner and Sue, and Rosemary and I. Maybe not everyone I've named was actually present, but that's the way I remember it, and my recollection--all our recollections--are now more real than the gathering itself. The Milford Conference of that period (and that was almost the last second of that period) was as unique as a *Mausekönig*. One might love it or detest it, or merely stare at it; but one knew one would never see such a thing again. There will be many more writers' conferences, and perhaps some of them will develop personalities as strongly marked. In time (a time I am not sure I wish to see), science fiction may develop its own Breadloaf. But there will never be another original Milford.

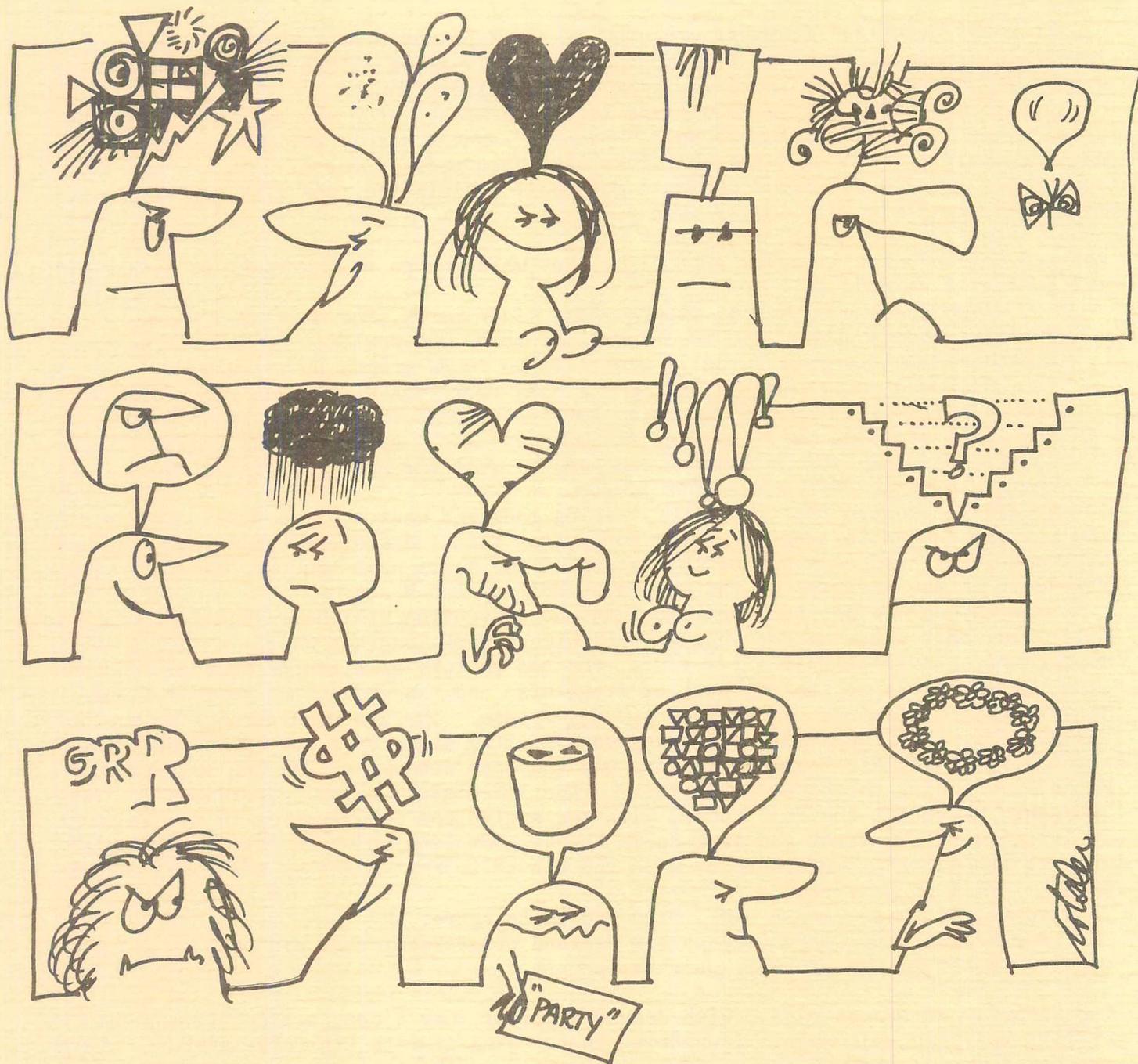
[2/21/79]

...naturally, when I ran that interview, I'd not yet read any of Gene's fiction. So I went to the shelves, found something titled OPERATION ARES...which I enjoyed. But the dedication in that book read: "*To my mother and father, who never read fiction*"--which made me wonder. So I went back and reread Gene's answer to Gardner's fifth question:

"...mystery stories--I read a great many mystery stories because my mother was a mystery story reader and they were around the house."

I'm not a trouble-maker--honest. Just curious.

...and why am I sitting here typing, when *The Wizard of Oz* is being rerun on the tv tonight? Because I live in this state of confusion, you see, and...



I have a public apology to make.

After last year's Marcon, where I wore a caftan for the first time, I quoted Leah as having said: "I like my men in pants."

She denies having used the possessive. My apologies, Leah.

Now then, I'm not sure Leah had anything to do with the choice of this hotel --but I was going to wear a caftan tonight. However, while I may have the courage of my convictions--the body says "Enough is enough...already!"

However, come Marcon, once again...

---prequel to a speech given Friday night, January 19, 1979

...all I can say is that it'll be a warm day in July before another Michigan con.

 ...CONVENTIONING TO THE Nth DEGREE: COLD-FUSION

...after the beautiful maneuver executed at the Wapakoneta exit when we almost immediately ended up back on I-75 North with hardly a jog--Steve insisted on turning around at the next exit, and going back to the Holiday Inn.

I had suggested that a good place to take a break, stop and eat...might be the hotel where Rusty and I plan to hold "Spacecon"--but I wasn't religious about it. But back we went; I had a sandwich that must have been pressed out of a turkey's nether intestines. Marla and Steve couldn't get their anticipated tuna fish sandwiches... even with Miracle Whip. Serves them right.

Getting to ConFusion is never a problem. Not when you go on Thursday, as I have all three times I've made it.

Two years ago, during the Thursday night party, the news of a storm sweeping across Iowa...and the reports of those who wouldn't be able to make it--seemingly everyone I really wanted to be there--began to trickle in.

Sponse and I crashed in Diane's dorm room that night--and when I awoke Friday morning, the world was white--what little of it remained visible thru the slit atop the drift against the window. And I spent the day playing shuttle service for Di between classes, in what the radio persisted on saying was a minus 80°F wind chill factor...

It was after I solved the case of my missing room and went to find Marla and Steve--who had gone ahead to search out the con suite--that I discovered that some wise ass had apparently trapped a bit of that storm of two years past--and had carefully preserved it in the hallways of the Ann Arbor Holiday Inn West.

Now anyone who has gone to more than one convention will have "hotel stories" to tell. But only a few become legend: The Chicago Pick-Congress where, to get to the room numbered sequentially after yours, you had to take an elevator down to the 2nd floor, walk across to another bank of elevators, and thence back up to your floor... The imbecile Legioners who "joined us" for Tricon. The air-conditioning at the old North Plaza, the "real" site of Midwestcons. ...the sight of a row of buttocks (all women, except for Ric Bergman) leaning out the open windows of the CFG suit in the Mulbach, watching the hookers ply their trade immediately below, at BYOBcon 5. The "tornado" Marcon at the Neil House, with the entire con congregating in the basement at least twice. My first and last Kubla Khan...commuting under an Interstate leaves much to be desired. Autoclave 3, with the con suite that might as well been on the moon... Fill in your own.

To all of those, add a new..."You had to be there..."

The Hallways of ConFusion--as the weekend progressed, they did seem to get a bit warmer. But that was probably only the people...

The Saturday afternoon panel, with Jeanne & Spider, Gay & Joe, titled "Living With a Writer" was very enjoyable. I wandered in to catch it with Lin Lutz-Nagey. ...haven't the faintest idea of why she would be interested in the topic.

If I were being particularly (instead of normally) perverse, I might suggest that some convention hold a spin-off panel...say "Living With a Fanzine Editor". I might even be able to suggest some participants. However, in that case, I'm sure you'll understand if I'd limit my participation to a later reading of the transcript...

...now I can't say that ConFusion's have had anywhere near the impact on my emotional relationships that Marcon's have...but they've had their moments. For example, I can point back to ConFusion 12 and say, with some certainty that it was the pivotal event in breaking me out of my post-divorce cocoon--and all that has, and does, entail. The following year, at ConFusion 14...two things: The one episode in which I am thoroughly ashamed of my own behavior; someday I will be able to make a needed apology. And... I encountered for the first time someone who was much later to have a profound effect on my life.

This year? Several things, but the events I'm most interested in still have me thoroughly buffaloed...

[...dedicated to Dave Rowe: I only pick on people I like...or who "get" to me. Hi Dave.]

I did make the speech Friday night. But, despite Ro's brilliant introduction, I was not at all pleased with my "performance". I was nervous--even for me--and a since forgotten comment from Mike in the audience stopped me cold halfway through. Sure, I was a bit too confident after Phoenix; but neither that, nor the fact that a couple of hundred people seen are more intimidating than a couple of thousand not seen...explains why I was that way, this time.

[...but don't breathe that sigh of relief just yet. I haven't given up. I still have things to prove to myself...not to others (at least for now). We will see how the Marcon thingie goes: in some ways, while self-indulgent (but then that goes hand in hand), it is the most important one--to me-- that I've yet written. It is also long and extremely personal. Again, even for me.]

Still, it was fun to embarrass the hell out of Denise and Marla at the end of the ConFusion speech.

Denise flew in Friday night, and Steve went to pick her up at the airport.

The only question seemed to be which one of them had been the highest.

Despite persistent rumours to the contrary, I did spend a fair amount of Saturday at my hucksters table. In between other duties.

A few years ago, at BYOBcon 5, Harlan made a couple of observations that have stuck with me ever since...

One was about how, as one gets older, the "noise level" of the world surrounding you seems to increase.

...but, I'm not introducing Ro this time!

The other thing he pointed out was how we who were raised in the Midwest seem to have this ingrained desire to repay our debts. No matter how long it takes...

I have a few debts to repay here. I'll try to make it short...

I heard about last year.

Any man who calls himself my friend, and makes visual height jokes is beneath my notice.

Furthermore, while I may appear a bit shook on occasions, introducing people whose fanzines start with the letter "X" is hardly one of those occasions.

Any man who thoughtfully provides all of the attendees of a convention with a transcript of my speech--before I make it--well, such a man would also invite Bill Bridget to join us in the bar.

Any man who will miss my birthday party this year simply because he is going to England early¹--deserves to be mooned by Neil Armstrong.

Any man with enough balls to sing "Rule, Britannia" in Hap's Irish Pub --would probably also wear a "dress".

Any man who would not remember spending an evening in a motel room with myself and Denise Parsley Leigh deserves a drink. Of Kool-Aid. Caribbean-style.

Chambanaccon Esoterica 102: No, sleeping with Mike Glicksohn is not like sleeping alone--but wishing you were.

(I know whereof I speak ladies. I was there before most of you here.)

But...any man who, as I was innocently sitting beside a pooside table at Midwestcon last year, would...

Honestly, Mike...at Autoclave One, I didn't put that piece of your birthday cake--strawberry shortcake--in your beard. Barb Nagey did.

All I did was to rub it in. A little.

*Any man who would hold a grudge that long -- is probably a friend of mine.
...or Mike Glicksohn!*

1/9/79

¹This one worked; Mike will be there...



ConFusion has this...ummm..."ritual", you see, that ought to prove extremely interesting in another couple of years. No matter what they tell you, this was the fifth ConFusion; all have had fan guests of honor. Before Scott Imes, in order: Mike Glicksohn, me, Ro Lutz-Nagey, Jackie Causgrove. And *each* year, we all (or at least as many of us who manage to show up) get to introduce our successor, one more time. Fine.

For reasons too small to recount here, I didn't make ConFusion 1978. Therefore, it was with some puzzlement that, in February, 1978, I received a note from

Kitty Lyons, saying: "It was so nice to see you at ConFusion. You're looking taller than usual."

Obviously, Kitty was confused. Or else someone was aspiring to unaccustomed heights.

Later, Reliable Sources filled me in. (Something Tanya's meals have been unable to accomplish.)

...after introducing the absent me, Mike arose again and, in a quavering voice--complete with shaking paper in hand--proceeded to introduce Ro.

While standing on a chair.

...anyone who considers my introduction of Mike Glicksohn this year to be viscious and low is certainly correct. If he can reach for the heights, I certainly can sink to the depths. With a little work.

(I did resist the urge to hide totally behind the podium, letting only my voice come out. It wasn't that fact that we were being video-taped... Well, not entirely...)

This year, the Uncle Albert that masquerades as Larry Tucker had this perfectly awful idea...which I cheerfully encouraged: We would all introduce each other in *reverse* order, then about-face, and re-introduce in the normal ascending (speaking numerically, of course) order. Therefore, after Ro introduced me, and after I did my number on Glicksohn, Mike, being the swing man, introduced me...and I tottered with my scrap of paper to the podium one more time:

At last...someone of stature to introduce.

A man who started a convention so that he could do rope tricks...

A man who married the head of registration for his convention...and then had to leave town because of her.

A man whose rejection slip collection is matched only by my collection of acceptance contracts.

A man of whom Denny Kuchnizh said: "What do you mean, he's ethnic... He doesn't look like Ralph Perk.

"...or Carl Stokes!"

A man whose introduction is a footnote to one written for a human footnote. (And I haven't even gotten my tongue twisted in any "Oral History" jokes!)

A man, if not for all seasons...at least for the dead of winter in Ann Arbor...

...Ro Lutz-Nagey.

1/14/79

There was an open courtyard formed by the wings and hallways of the Holiday Inn. It seemed that, beneath the snow, there was the vague outlines of a pool; and, as one hurried past in the hallways, one could almost imagine the pool filled with sparkling water. (We sci-fi fans have imagination...yes we do!)

At one end of the courtyard, Marla and Sherry constructed a huge snow-beast. I wondered at such foolishness...until I realized that it was probably warmer Out There, than it was In Here.

At the opposite end of the courtyard, someone had erected an anatomically-correct Neanderthalish brute.

It was so anatomically-correct that, by the next morning, it had toppled face-forward to its doom.

(...with some regret, and considerably more self-control than I normally exercise, I resist the urge to print several one-liners. But there *must* be a moral in there...somewhere!)

I said Hello to Paula Smith Friday Evening.

Paula and I *never* say Hello--never see each other...--until we are leaving a convention, on Sunday afternoon.

Therefore, I could not have possibly said Hello to Paula Smith Friday evening.



"The trouble is, as you imply, that what can be said is not all that important, and what is important, especially as it affects relationships, can not be said. Or at best, not said very well, and certainly not to a great number of people."

---Eric Lindsay; *Xenolith: Epilogue*; page 74

...this is my terribly discreet ConFusion "report".
I am learning.

...to a certain extent.

It is two days before Marcon and, if I'm going to do this, I must be done with it before Steve, Denise, and I venture forth...one more time.

My conventions, invariably, are tied together. And, just as ConFusion tied back to Chambanacon...Marcon will have its links with ConFusion. No matter what happens. Each time, it is totally unique and different.

Each time, it is so totally the same.

"Stop the world. I want to get off..."

I care for a relatively small handful of people...and I care for them, very, very much. Most people I encounter do not affect me strongly. Either way.

A very, very few individuals I dislike immensely.

Sunday afternoon at ConFusion was great: insults and innuendos traded with those friends close...and friends becoming close.

...but some friends were missing...for endless hours...behind closed doors: they were attempting to pacify one of the few total losers it has been my misfortune to encounter.

Most of the people I wish to have no dealings with, I can ignore; and it works.

One of the sorriest stains on our fannish heritage was the exclusion act at the first worldcon.

I never thought I'd say it, but there is now one individual that, had I the power, would not be at any convention I attended.

The ironic thing (of course) is that this person has never done anything to me; has never been other than kind to me...

But the things that have been done to my friends...

I don't *like* feeling like this.

But I do.

And, no, I have not yet shed enough inhibitions to go disco dancing.

Better luck next time, Renée.

Going to a convention is usually a time of anticipation. It seems to take forever, but one eventually gets there.

Coming home from a convention, especially a *good* convention, is another trip, entirely.

Three very tired people got into the car Sunday evening. Two of whom were wondering who was going to keep the driver awake.

Steve, Denise, and I...we talked the whole five hours back. ...of many things. And none of us fell asleep.

It was one of the most enjoyable trips I've ever taken.

(And Denise never once suggested that I should move to the back seat...)

Confusions have a lot in common with the "Airport --" movies. Not only because each one is an exercise in survival, either. If the A² group persist in this ridiculous numbering/identifying scheme--as one who has always sequentially and clearly labelled his publications I feel I have room for complaint--I'll simply have to resort to identifying them in my own way...

At Confusion 77 I had reserved a single room. Friday night, there were two people in there.

Saturday night, as near as I can recall, there were on the order of ten people in that room. (Including my Older Brother, who alternated from the floor between the window and one bed...to the floor of the john...) It was, in a word, cozy.

Ric and I stayed over Sunday night that year; again, with several crashers. After going to bed at something like 5 in the ayem, and waking briefly when the Detroit contingent departed about 7...then we were three.

At 8 the first fire alarm went off. We speedily executed the stairway several floors down to the lobby.

Half an hour later, when the alarm clanged again, our descent was less hurried.

After the third go-around, I abandoned all attempts at sleep, and spent a couple of hours talking with Fred Haskell.

If the fire alarms had clammered at Confusion 79, I would not have heeded their call. ...any promise of warmth...

...and when Brian Earl Brown came up to me in the hucksters room and said that I had "unleashed a monster on fandom"--in reference to Denise's publishing activities--I was flattered.

...almost as flattered as I was Monday morning at Iguanacon when, as I was standing in line...waiting to get breakfast in the Adams...Spider Robinson came up and said some very kind things about my "speech" the previous evening.

I'm glad Spider and Jeanne were Confusion's GoHs--they're neat people. (Gee... does this mean that I have to start reading their fiction now...?) ...but I didn't get to hear their speech(es)--because I had worked up enough nerve to ask someone if they'd join me for dinner...and that went so pleasantly that not even one of my speeches could have enticed me away.

Sunday morning, when I wandered into the hotel eatery, I saw Denise sitting at a table with the Robinsons, and Glicksohn. I went over and asked if she'd finally worked up the nerve to ask them for publication rights to their speeches.

She almost cried.

She had been getting ready to...when Mike had beaten her to it.

It's like I told her before the convention about such things: It never hurts to ask. Even when you know the answer will be "No".

...sometimes (just enough to make it all worthwhile)...it isn't.

(But I guess it takes publishing a fanzine starting with the letter "X" to know that.)

...he said, flippantly--being rather glad he'd had the nerve to ask, himself.

...let's face it, if we were all normal, we wouldn't be here today--we wouldn't have travelled in the dead of winter simply to be together. "Normal" people just don't do things like that. --Bowers, GoH Speech, Confusion 76

And that was my Confusion...1979.

3/15/79

...just as any fanzine editor who talks to themselves in their editorial is accused of "imitating" Dick Geis...I have this feeling that (after last issue) anyone attempting a non-linear convention report will be chastized for emulating Steve Leigh.

I refuse to accept the possibility that anyone would be so crass as to suggest that the preceding more adequately fits the description that Phillip Davis applies to non-Steve-Leigh-written con reports.

I can't help it that my *life* is non-linear. If it was, I'd probably be producing *Locus* or *Algol/Whatever* instead of this.

Other than that, altho I don't (yet) match the description on Denise's T-shirt, I am probably the most Leighed-back fanzine editor you'll find nowadaze.

Nor will I apologize for the fact that I've ripped off the prefix of one of Steve's con reports for the title of this "column".

After X:One was printed, and probably in the same time-span as I was reading Gene's novel, I finally went to the dictionary, and looked up the meaning of "detritus". "Hey!" I said, "...that fits."

How To Increase Your Vocabulary: Publish A Fanzine Today!

(Someday, Real Soon Now, I'm going to find out what it takes to be "as unique as a *Mausekönig*". And then I probably will be; I am adaptable, even if not flexible.) ...strangely enough, despite the hard head, *I Am A Rock* never was "my" song.

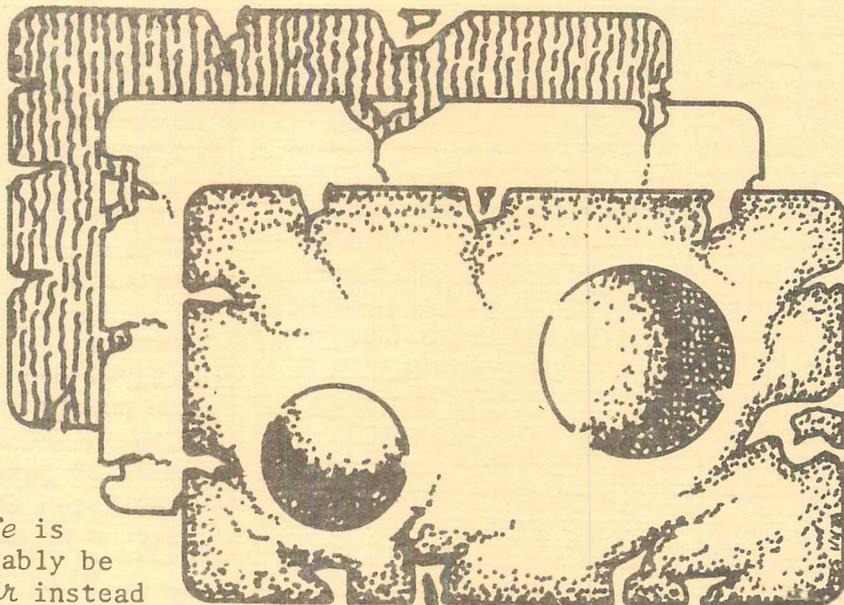
JERRY KAUFMAN We're quite happy to see you publishing again. Even though you never stuck to one idea long enough to influence us to try it, the very fact that you were so careful and made such efforts to acheive...*something*...was an influence in itself. And you generally print good material, so we always have something interesting to read.

Something about your fanzines, some air of importance (or even self-importance) makes them memorable. So far this year we've gotten several dozen titles, but it's hard to remember more than a fistful, of which *Xenolith* is one. It isn't completely for the right reasons, of course: the fact that I am mentioned, gratuitously, helps. Seeing my name up there with Scott Kutina's suggests that I have disappeared as completely from fandom as he. Seeing George Fergus' name just floors me: George is from the Cleveland area/era? I thought he got involved in fandom in Ann Arbor, by being Don D'Ammassa's roommate.

Anyway, neither Suzle nor I have disappeared from fandom. We are mildly occupied with the social whirl of the Pacific Northwest, which is whirling madly: new conventions in Vancouver, Portland and Moscow, Idaho (to stretch a boundary somewhat; oh, and my apologies to the Canadians who object to Vancouver's inclusion in a Yankee geographic designation) as well as the Norwescon, which is shaping up as a Major Convention this year. We are also planning to produce a genzine, the first modest issue of which shall be ready shortly; it is named *Mainstream*. It will include columns from a genzine we used to publish, as well as new contributions and new directions.

Oh, would you like me to comment on your fanzine? Ok.

Stephen Leigh's experiences at his first convention are well-reported. In fact, his article may be the best first-time-at-a-con report I have seen.



ARTHUR D. HLAVATY

Dear Bill:

Welcome back to the big wonderful world of fanzines. Perhaps your experiences will give con committees the idea that making someone Worldcon GOH will keep him/her/it from publishing & for 2 years, which could start a whole new approach to selecting GOHs. (If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve.) I did enjoy XENOLITH, and I've sent you the latest issue of my zine, THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP. I'd like to trade all for all. (I publish every quarter, he pointed out nastily.)

Hail Eris,

Arthur

He captures perfectly the feelings of confusion, loneliness and misplaced expectations so many other people have mentioned but not conveyed as well. Stephen's Iguanacon impressions are interesting and pleasant, but not quite so rivetting; that's the result of not having so sharp a focus to organize his material around.

Gene Wolfe's remarks to Gardner Dozois are the other highlight of this issue, and I'm glad to see them. This is purely selfish on my part. I love Gene's writing (especially *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*) and therefore am ready to listen to or read anything he has to say on books or writing.

On your own material: At the moment I find your Detroit bid the most interesting. I must admit being a little uncomfortable about Rusty as chairman, since I was part of the Suncon committee that had such difficulty working with him, and am really unclear about the problems he and the Iguanacon committee had working together. But I am enthusiastic about the Renaissance Center. It deserves a Worldcon. And I

am willing to suppose that Rusty will work much better with a committee not separated from him by vast physical or mental space, as the other committees were.

Your speech worked better as a speech. Is that a shock? Of course, at Iggy one could see you were nervous, but you were far more in control than you had been the few times I'd seen you talk in public before then. And the speech, spoken, benefited from pauses and verbal emphases that the printed page can't use. You also enriched the speech simply by being you, in front of twenty-five hundred people. Even if you had to read it.

However (have to complain about something, don't I?) (no, I don't have to, but I will, anyway), your material between contributions is a little intrusive to my tastes. Perhaps the thing I dislike about the bridges is your tendency to lionize all these people; and it's difficult to tell if you are lionizing them because they are your friends or because they have had stories published. I realize that you do admire them because they are (every one) Pros, but one starts to feel that you make friends *only* on the basis of publication, or that you only publish material in your zine by established pros. (You do mention several people who are not published writers and yet close friends, but they seem to be wives of pros.)

Now, I know this isn't true, any which way: I know you have close friends who are not writers, and that you will (or did in the dim past) publish material by good writers who are not professional stf writers. But the impressions I record in the above paragraph are ones I get from reading *Xenolith*. Probably no one will mention this feeling except myself, because I'm misreading wildly; in any case, you are too much of an individualist to listen to me. Do what works well and feels right for you, as you always have.

I liked the covers for their mixture of textures. Inside, the Harry Bell "Rotsler Noses" cartoon, the Ken Fletcher "Elephant" cartoon and the several Shull cartoons were my favorites, though all the Rotslers, the Pesch and the sweet little Steffan would be welcome anywhere (how old is that Steffan; he can't have done anything sweet for years!). ((try 1973))[2/27/79]

ALEXIS A. GILLILAND

February 7, 1979

rec'd: 2/12/79

Dear Bill,

You will no doubt be pleased to learn that I am alive and well and living in Arlington at the same old place. The current incarnation of OW, XO, pronounced "zow!" maybe? is squarely in the tradition of the Bowers fanzine, good material, immaculate reproduction (theologically a lot of Bull) and the editors irrepressibly dull personality shining from every page. At Iggycon you looked great in a caftan, perhaps you could edit in one.*

Best wishes,

* A man needs a
little madness.
A. Zorba

Alexis

AVEDON CAROL Of course, I remember your GoH speech--the real one. I also remember you coming up to me earlier in the convention and giving me that suspense-builder about how you was gonna do what ya had to do, and you hoped we didn't boo. Well, we didn't. I thought your speech was adorable. Loved it. Of course, more people left to wash the tears out of their eyes after Harlan's speech, but...

My heart went out to Steve Leigh, in his account of his first con. Wasn't anything like *my* first con, which was a Disclave and I already knew some people. I guess maybe I was pretty lucky that way. And I hadn't been in fandom very long when Disclave came around, and I was introduced to andy offutt for the first time--and he said, "I've heard so much about you!"

It's a real revelation to me that William Rotsler is a part-time armenian (Gregar Bohassian--although that really ought to be spelled Gregor) --no wonder he does all those nose jokes!

I was interested in Gene Wolfe's remarks about reading works by other artists that he would like to have written. Reminded me of a question I've always wanted to ask artists, coming from my own experience, about comparing one's self with other artists--and comparing that with how *other people* compare your work with that of other artists. When I was singing professionally, people would come up to me all of the time and, in what I assume was to them a complimentary fashion, tell me which other singers I reminded them of --and never *once* did anyone ever compare me with anyone who had been a real influence to my style (there were a lot of them--I'm very eclectic.) I wonder if other writers, musicians, painters--artists--have similar experiences? I mean, you really get tired of having people tell you "I can see where you were influenced by Soandso" when you've never even *heard* Soandso; or you perfected that particular style (which you stole from someone else entirely) years before Soandso even started working professionally. And after a while, you begin to feel disappointed that no one has ever said, "You sound like someone who would like Suchandsuch", who is the person you were most influenced by all along. I don't know, maybe writers don't experience this, but it used to drive me bonkers. Then, on the other hand, maybe writers sit around going, "Wow, I'm writing just like Bradbury/Silverberg/Tiptree/Whomever"--and then people come up to them and say, "Gee, you're almost as good as David Gerrold."

For economic reasons, my attitude toward worldcon bids is that if they

(in *Chicago Salmagundi*), and he sent me a copy of a story by him that had a similar theme.

The interview was better than the tennis-match kind SFR seems to run so often. Or maybe it was the difference in production: Instead of big letters, different typesets set off the questioner and the answerer.

I was surprised to see that Gene reads the little magazines. I do too. They are awfully expensive, the *Chicago Review* weighs in at \$2.85 for an issue containing perhaps five stories, and a dozen poems or so. But the stories can be a work of art in and of themselves, as Gene says. I also like the experimentation. Handled well, almost any "style" can be convincing, and clear to a careful reader (without eyestrain, even!)

I'm glad to see that Gene's tetralogy will be coming out. He's been working on it for a long time--since Windycon 3, after which I met him. In fact, I thought it had stalled out, or something.

When I think of his writing, I think of "precise vision".

The degree of precision was something I noticed when I picked up the hc of *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, and noticed that in the first section of the title novella, everything that follows is referred to. But in such a discreet way that it wasn't until the fifth or sixth time I read it that I noticed that. By the by, I think TFHoC would make the perfect speculative film. Notice I didn't say "science fiction movie". They might as well be called "sfx" for special effects. But *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* has nothing that requires any flashing ray-guns, banked turns in vacuums, or any of the trappings of sci-fi movies. And most sf books for that matter.

I liked Haldeman's *Locked-Up-In-A-Spaceship-Without-No-Women-Blues*. It was pretty funny. And Poul Anderson's *Beer Mutterings* was a good way to describe one of those real people so large and lovely, they would destroy any book they were in.

Now, about Stephen Leigh's first con. It took me a long time to remember how I heard about Windycon 3, but it was in *Karass*. Now what's bugging me is how I heard of *Karass*... I just don't remember.

I don't remember what I did, except that I was frightened at how much I felt the need to stay up and talk with anybody about anything. I remember taking myself to task in the notebook for running around, as if I were afraid of being alone. By E/C² ConFusion, I went from Friday morning 11 AM to Sunday morning 5 AM without any sleep or even a qualm. Big cons are really a case of sensory overload--the biggest I've ever been to was Windycon 5, to tell the truth--and quite depressing (the last one was anyway). I had lots of fun at E/C², not the least being that I came across more fanzines there than at all three previous cons combined. I like fanzines, yes I do. Now I have *Xenolith*, *Graymalkin*, *WoFan*, and *Spang Blah*. I'm going to read one each day and send away for dozens more from *WoFan*.

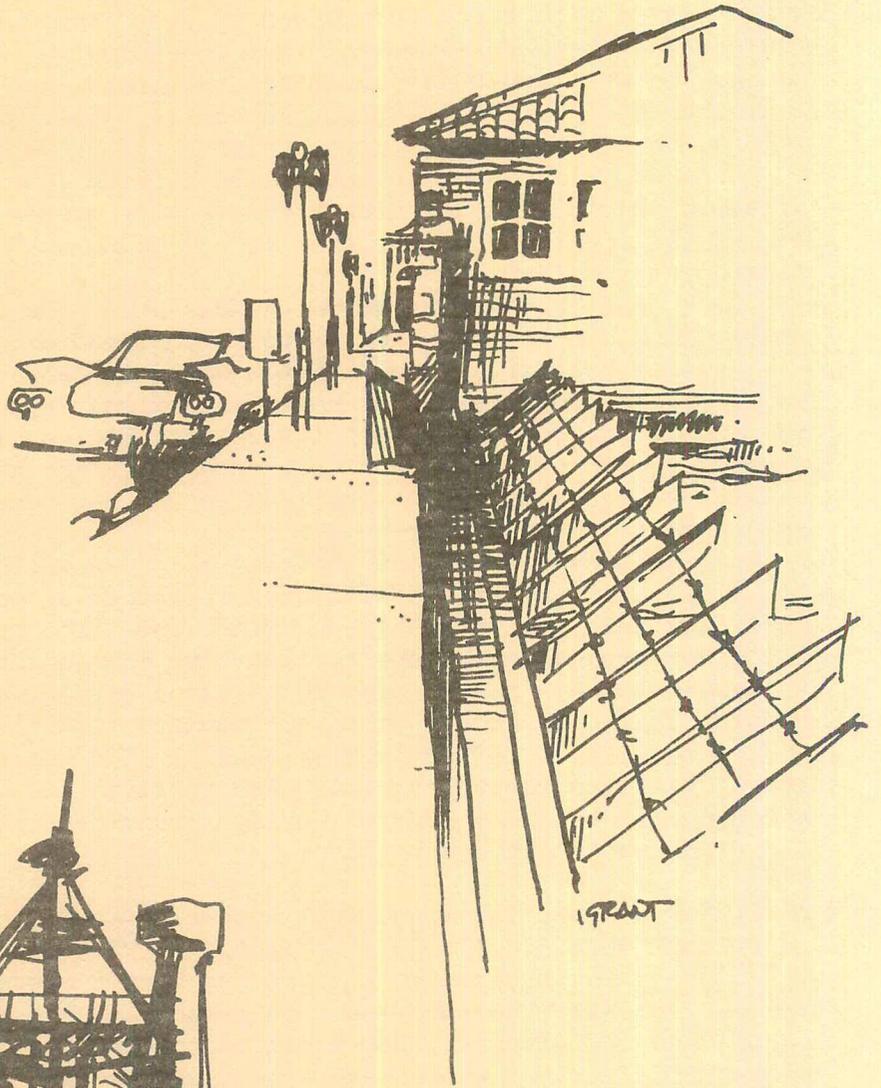
As for the cartoons, if I ever figure out the elephant joke, I might think it's funny. I liked the one on page 15 about the Rotsler noses. I'd hate to be a cartoon by Rotsler with a cold!

I liked the Rotsler article, too, as a matter of fact--he should have printed the addresses of his idea factories!

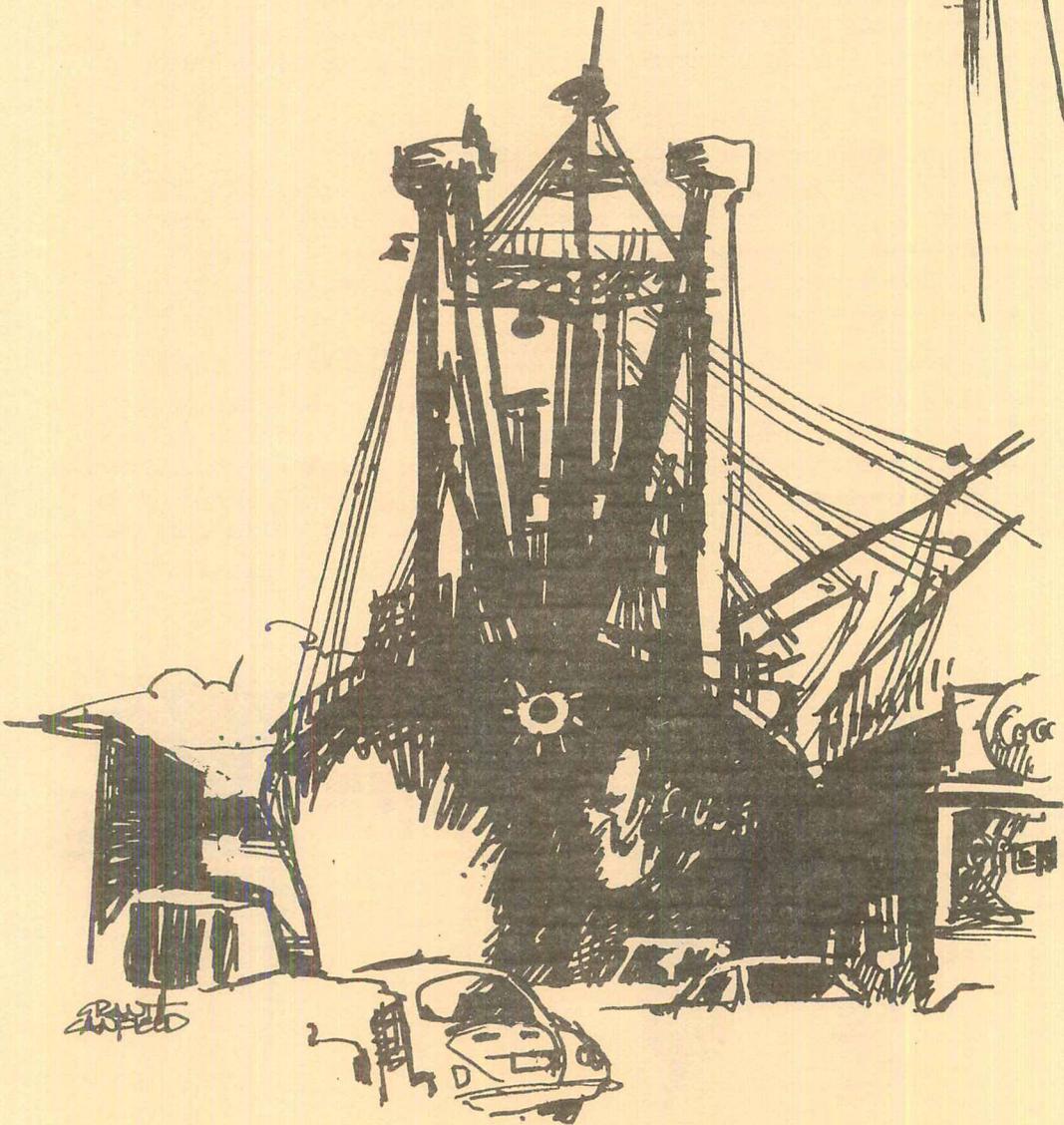
[1/23/79]

...ahem! Luke, the Detroit bid committee does not "have" *Xenolith*. I have *Xenolith*. However, the Detroit bid committee is lucky enough to have me...which is more than merely having a fanzine. ...it amounts to having "The Master". (copyright 1979, by Brian Earl Brown.)

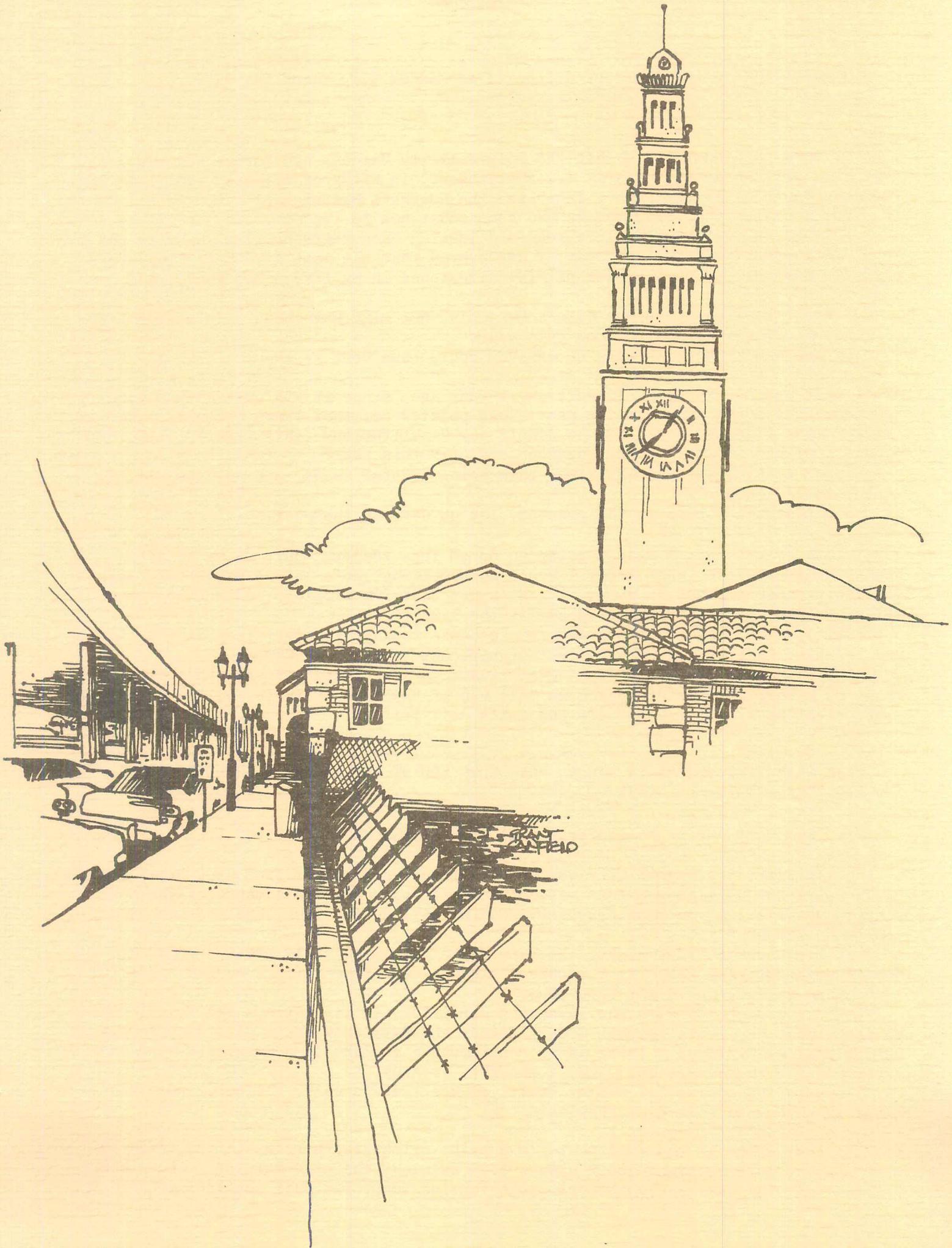
Those with fair memories will recall the days when I did a fanzine review fanzine--*INworlds*. It's a nice way to get a lot of fanzines; --it also is a lot of work. ...as I attempt to catch up on two years of fanzine fandom, I'm rather glad that Brian Earl Brown is doing *The Whole Fanzine Catalog* [40¢, 5/\$2., from 16711 Burt Rd., #207, Detroit, MI 48219]. ...this appreciation has absolutely nothing to do with Brian's "...as close as I've come to seeing the Perfect Fanzine" review of *X:One*. Nothing...



GRANT



GRANT



Notes toward a speech to be delivered at MARCON XIV, March 16, 1979 ...

I have, more than once, said that the only validity Marcons had for me was the fact that they were so damned close. (...a statement, in terms of mileage, equally as true from the South as it was when I inhabited the Northern Wasteland.)

For a while, that flip remark had some substance to it, but...

This is my sixth Marcon in a row--and looking back retrospectively--or is the word "introspectively"?--last year, I discovered that the last five have been, for whatever reasons, among the most pivotal milestones in my life. For good...and for pain.

I don't know about anyone else's Marcon's, but mine have been ... interesting. Almost, I was afraid to come this year.

By the same token, there's no way you could have kept me away.

After last year's "speech"--I can't say a year ago, since it was only eleven months and perhaps a dozen aeons in the past--Ross pointed out that I was becoming a Marcon Friday Night Fixture. At least he didn't say "institution" (this time!) ...and why didn't I plan on doing a post-Iganacon "report" this year?

Sure, I said, without thinking--this being several aeons, and perhaps eleven months in the future.

Now that the future is the present, let us deal in the past.

I said, in print, that I wasn't going to do an Iggy-report. But, as we're all beginning to realize, when I say I won't do something, it's only a matter of time, generally, before I end up doing it. It's not that I'm flexible; only that I'm faithful to a lot of different ideals at the same time.

Still, given the reactions and the response to last year's Friday Nite Billing -- and the fact that it was not the most significant event of *my* Marcon 13...

...well, this isn't the *first* Post-Iganacon Non-Practice Speech--but I can't think of a more appropriate place to tell you of "My Moment" in The Valley of the Sun --or, Eight Days of the Con-Goer--and let's call it:

"THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN MECCA, MAKE SURE YOU'RE FACING THE RIGHT DIRECTION"

(...and that one is so esoteric that even Glicksohn won't "get" it!)

...shortly after the Kansas City worldcon, I received a letter from Greg Brown stating: "we will not be like previous worldcon committees: Well in advance of the convention we will let you know precisely what we will do for you...and what we expect you to do for us."

At 11:30 on Saturday night, the Saturday night immediately preceding my scheduled Monday departure for Phoenix, I received a phone call from Patrick Hayden. But for that phone call, I would not have gone.

My direct contact with the Iganacon committee--in its various manifestations--in the almost two years between Greg's letter and Patrick's phone call was, to put it unemotionally, minimal. There was a considerable failure to communicate--and that hurt, because these were fans and, I thought, friends.

In part, of course, it was my fault: I was told to call, collect, and demand answers. Everyone else did, they said.

But I didn't. I couldn't.

Part of which is the fact that I'm a print-orientated person--things often said over a phone late at night don't always seem as clear the next morning. And since I was dealing with (at the least) erstwhile fanzine fans, I didn't consider my need to

see things set out in black & white an unreasonable request.

My hang-up, undoubtedly.

For a while, in August, the only thing I could visualize was this scenerio of several fans in a very hot room with two phones, complete with call-waiting--playing a brand-new board game called: "Putting On a Worldcon".

Ungracious as I seem--I was to be their "guest" after all (even tho I hadn't been asked; it's true)--I was willing to do just about anything they wanted me to do in return. *All* I wanted to know was what was expected of me before I went.

When I left for Phoenix, the only thing I knew for certain was that I was to make a speech.

When I arrived in Phoenix I was told I really didn't have to make a speech--unless I wanted to.

DAY	DATE	FROM	TO	DEPARTS THESE ARE LOCAL TIMES IN EACH CITY	ARRIVES	CARRIER	*FLIGHT	** MEAL
Mon	Aug. 28	Cincinnati	Dallas	7:20 PM	8:19 PM	American	173 Y	D
Mon	Aug. 28	Dallas	Phoenix	9:00 PM	9:02 PM	American	439 Y	S
Tue	Sept. 5	Phoenix	Cincinnati	1:50 PM	9:59 PM	American	54 Y	L

* CODE TO FLIGHT LETTERS

F-FIRST CLASS Y-ECONOMY CLASS S-STANDARD
FN-DELUXE NIGHT COACH YN-ECONOMY NIGHT COACH

** MEAL CODES

B-BREAKFAST L-LUNCH D-DINNER
S-SNACK SP-SPECIAL MEAL

If you ever get the chance to go to a convention--particularly a worldcon--with virtually all expenses paid--do it. Even if you have to swallow a little bit of your pride to do so.

Eight days of my life, which should have been the high-point of my fannish "career"--and wasn't. Or was it?

Eight minutes...or eight years... Whichever/both/neither... It's over now, and once again I have to stand in lines to register at conventions!

...when I came out of my self-imposed hibernation Wednesday of that week and... accomplished...the block between the Adams and the Hyatt... Well, as I stood in the atrium eyeing the long lines, and tentatively deciding to wait until Sunday or Monday to register--I suddenly found myself virtually lifted aloft, as Ro & Lin each took an arm and marched me to the head of the "A - C" line.

It probably upset some, but I was "privileged", or so they told me, to my continued disbelief.

And so it began.

Science fiction authors aren't the only ones who can predict. In an apazine published fifteen months before Iguanacon, I commented to Greg Brown: "...don't dismiss out of hand the possibility of the biggest worldcon yet."

And it was; so they tell me. ...whether for the reasons I projected to Greg... or simply because, despite other failings, the Phoenix People had supreme good taste in their choice of Guests of Honor!

...the standard lines:

The people I *knew* were there, but never saw.

The people I saw, talked to once, and never saw again.

The people who'd promised to be there, and weren't.

The people I saw once, when otherwise involved, and never saw again.

Eric Lindsay, who claimed he came all the way from Australia to hear my speech... but who was out to dinner when I made it!

A few new persons met; a few friendships intensified.

...feeling vaguely guilty at spending so much time with people who live within ten miles of me. ...yet it was their first worldcon, and they needed me. ...if not as much as I needed them. And so it continued.

One of the few questions that was asked of me, in advance, was this: which of the two main hotels did I want to stay in?

For no particular reason, I said: "The Hyatt."

Fine, they said. No problem.

In the Saturday-nite-before-the-con phone call, Patrick casually mentioned: "Oh, we've decided to put you in the Adams. The Hyatt is tacky."

This despite the fact that friends had reserved rooms in the Hyatt because I would be there. But -- no problem.

When I checked into the suite Wednesday morning, I saw the reason for the change: outside my door was this sign affixed to the hallway wall. ...it wasn't blinking neon, nor did it have a silhouetted trench-coat-of-arms, but it did say, all too prominently: "Hayden Room".

It's really a quite common name in Arizona, he said.

Yes.

Still, Patrick was right: The Hyatt *was* tacky!

The glass elevators were fun, tho--and the atrium made a neat gathering place. (Tho, if you liked that one...just wait until you see the one in the Detroit Plaza Hotel; this has been a blatant plug!)

I spent a lot of time in that atrium.

...when I wasn't in the lobby of the Adams.

'Holding Court', they accused me. But that's simply what *I* do: Pick a spot and camp out. Generally I get to see *most* of the people I want to--at any rate, a lot more than in the old days when I dashed madly from party to party. It's not that I "expect" people to come to me--tho well they should; it's simply the most comfortable way I've found to meet people--new and old.

"But," more than one well-meaning friend would say, "you should go Out There and *project!*"

My answer to that was very simple:

"If they wanted someone who would 'project', they should have gotten Andy Porter in the first place.

"As it is, tho they're probably wondering why, they got me. And I sit in lobbies and hold court."

And so I did.

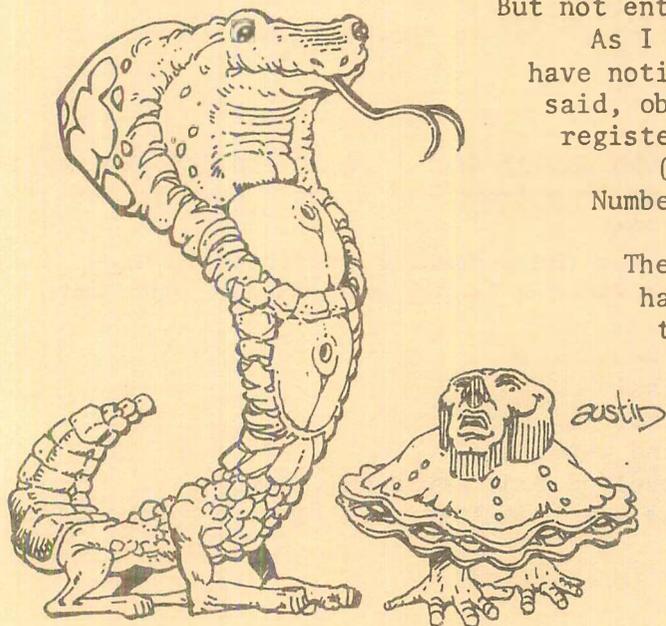
But not entirely:

As I was getting off the elevator, someone must have noticed the number '3' on my name-badge and said, obviously not knowing who I was: "You registered early, right?"

(And the burning question remained: "Who is Number 2 *this week?*")

The heat was real: you could literally wash your hair, step outside, and have it bone-dry by the time you traversed the block to the next hotel.

The town was clean, the streets wide...but it seemed almost desolate, despite the horde of "our" people. In her four days there, Marla counted only four or five signs of non-human life... including one bird, and the cricket hugging the base of the john in the suite.



I'm not sure if she counted the bat circling inside the Hyatt's atrium.

But the nights were fantastic.

I went to Phoenix full of apprehension, and with a chip on my shoulder. I was fully prepared to be thoroughly depressed, or spend the entire eight days trying to become the Eric Lindsay of my generation.

Neither happened. Instead, strangely, I floated--not in a daze (for a change)--but as if I existed something like 5 or 10 seconds out of kilter with everyone else--flashing into synch/reality occasionally, then phasing out again. I have never experienced anything quite like it before--but whatever it was, it worked. Perhaps I have a built-in safety-valve for those times when the sensory influx overloads any capacity for dealing with reality. Or fans.

A rerun: For those of you who missed Friday Nite at ConFusion...or have yet to buy my fanzine!

I was sitting with Patty Peters, watching Phil Paine's 'Neofan's Room', and innocently attempting to read the Pocket Program while idly wondering how many words I could get into a fanzine if I were to stoop to something as ridiculous as reducing typewriter copy, when I noticed that the schedule said that there should be a panel in progress just down the hallway. The title of that panel was: "Introduction to Fandom".

I must have said something to the effect of "...you know, I've never been *properly* introduced to fandom!" ("All I've had is Mike Glicksohn," I would have added. Had I been writing it, and not saying it.)

A former friend of mine happened to overhear this remark...disappeared for a minute, and reappeared with the message that the panel required my presence: They wished to properly introduce me to fandom.

sigh

I was standing in the lobby of the Adams--to prove that I could do it--when I was approached by someone I'd never seen before, who said to me:

"You're Bill Bowers, aren't you? You're not supposed to be here."

While attempting to be articulate, I noticed several things: She was very attractive, she had a red "pro" name-badge, as well as a "press" badge saying "Paris, France". (Sorry, Gene Wolfe.) As if the accent wasn't indication enough.

"Why is that?" I managed.

"I read an interview," she said, "in which *you* said that you would boycott this convention because of the ERA and Harlan."

I want to *read* that interview. I really do!

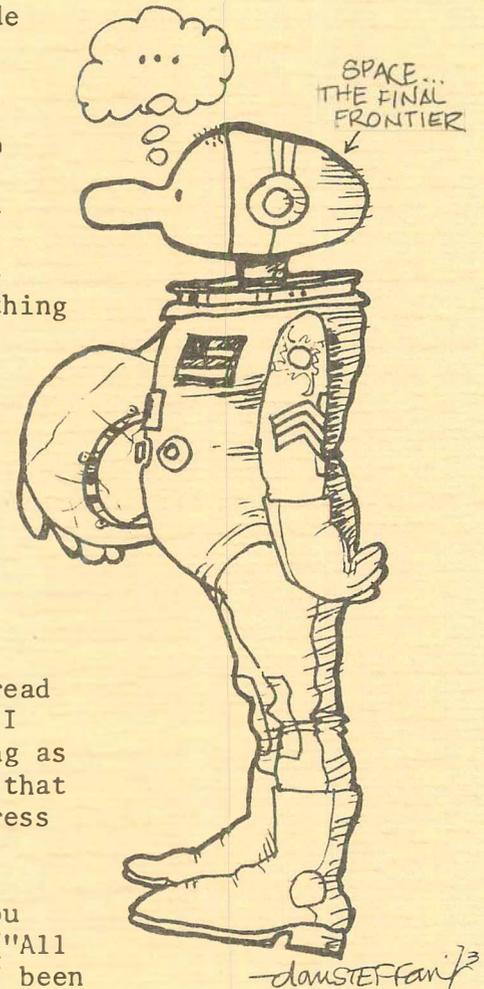
Cy Chauvin wrote my introduction for the program book. It was extremely flattering (unlike the accompanying photograph; I have my theories as to who picked it!), and I appreciated it. Cy is someone I like and honestly admire. But I don't really know Cy Chauvin.

And he really doesn't know me; he said as much in that same introduction.

I don't know... There are things that hurt for a while, but then time does its magic. And then there are the things that hurt...and keep on hurting for a long time.

To the best of my knowledge, while I asked for some favors, I only made one specific request of the Iguanacón people. And that was this:

That my introduction be written by someone I love very much...



...because he probably knows me better than anyone else;
...and because I had the privilege of writing his introduction when *he* was a worldcon fan guest of honor.

Very late in the game, I asked why they hadn't contacted him about doing it. "Oh," I was told, "We decided more than a year ago not to have him do it...because he would merely perpetuate the schticks."

That was their right: I was merely a guest, and had no rights. But they could have told me a little sooner...

And, of course, in some ways they were right...

But then, like it or not, the schticks (mine, his, ours) are to a large degree, a vital part of what enables me to deal with the world, not to mention fandom. And they are an integral part of whatever it was that made me "worthy" of being chosen a fan guest of honor--whether they are "cuts" in fanzine lettercols, or mutual paens of praise at conventions.

I still don't know whose decision it was, or *why* I was quote "asked" unquote to be there, but when they did they should have been prepared to accept the whole package: the performance comes with the performer, at no extra charge.

(And that applies to me, just as much as it applies to Harlan Ellison.)

...and part of the schtick is that, if you know me at all, no matter how superficially, you know without asking, or me telling you--just who it was that *I* wanted to write that introduction.

And if you don't know that, my mentioning a name to you at this stage would not enlighten you.

Dave Rowe says that doing things like that--not naming names--is called "literary masturbation".

Well, perhaps it's only indicitive of my fanzine publishing, and esoteric speechifying, but the one line I remember from *Annie Hall* is this:

"There's nothing wrong with masturbation. It's having sex with someone you love."

Some things hurt, and they keep on hurting--long after any chance of rectifying them.

Sunday was to be *the* day. I was scheduled on a panel at something like eleven in the morning; the banquet was that afternoon--and then, the end of two years of fearful anticipation: Sunday Evening at Iguanacon--Live & Quivering...

I planned on going into that day well-rested.

As usual, things went according to plan.

Flashback: At Big MAC I encountered a very strange person--someone I totally enjoyed being with despite her engaging quality of totally alienating all of my friends within five minutes of their meeting her. We ended up staying up all Saturday night--something I used to do in my younger days--and early Sunday morning, we walked a couple of blocks through a Kansas City thunder shower to look through the stained glass windows of a local church.

Transition: The first half of my stay in Phoenix was rather peaceful. Then, Friday night (I think it was), late, Denise, Marla and I wandered into the Boston party. And I said, "Oh, shit!"

Forward: Saturday night--the night I was going to behave myself and get some rest, remember? Of course, just to maintain the image you understand, I ended up following this strange person around, from party to party, up and down stairwells, trying to lose her (even more) insufferable brother. ...when she wasn't following *me* around, from party to party, etc., trying to *find* herinsufferable brother.

And early Sunday morning we went a block and a half through the Phoenix heat to a church, and looked at the stained glass windows.

The only reason I did this, you understand, was to convince her that, despite my exalted position there (the same position that earned me a Bill Rotsler "Who Am I?" badge), I still remembered the little people.

What I want to know is this: Is there a church with stained glass windows within walking distance of Boston's hotel? I have this appointment for Saturday night, Sunday morning of Labor Day weekend, 1980, you see, and...

(And in this case, the reason I don't mention her name is this: The people I mention invariably become famous... And I'm not quite sure I want the responsibility (I have one already) of releasing a "famous" Paula-Ann Anthony on the world. Besides, the infamous one is so much more fun!)

Banquet tickets are understandable. Even tho it proved somewhat of a hassle to convince people that, no, I'd really rather not sit on the stage/platform during the Ellison Roast ...and required at least three trips into the innermost sanctum before I acquired the physical tickets.

Incidentally, while not knowing how much substance to place on it, I was told that the subject of just *who* was to be my guest at the banquet was a major topic of discussion at one of the midnight staff meetings. And when I finally got the ticket, it had a name crossed out, and simply said "Guest of Bill Bowers". They could have simply asked me, you know...

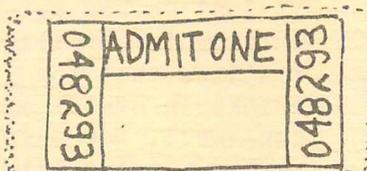
No 0121

Name... Bill Bowers
Address.....
.....
Phone.....

No 0122

Name... ~~Patty Peters~~
Address... Guest of Bill Bowers
.....
Phone.....

The theory of other tickets is understandable, in theory.



...when you have twice as many people as you do available seats. But...

When it came down to the fact that I had something like an hour & a half between the end of the banquet and the scheduled beginning of my speech ... and when I had to spend half of that time making repeated trips into the inner (as opposed to the innermost) sanctum, simply because they couldn't decide *which* committe member's domain I and my guests fell under...

I was less than thrilled.

Furthermore, I really didn't need that kind of hassle after a night with no sleep, an hour before I was to face Harlan and the world. I hate to be bitchy, but of all the failures in communication, that was perhaps the most depressing.

Of course, afterward, when they told me that the hall hadn't nearly been filled...

When Jim Corrick sent me a pre-Iggy note saying that the sequence of speeches was to be this: Harlan for an hour, followed by the Czech with half an hour, followed by me with half an hour... Well...

I can be firm when I have to be.

There was simply no way that I was going to attempt to *follow* that man.

Tim agreed with me. Even tho he's a short person.

At ConFusion, Ro introduced me as having given the best worldcon fan guest of honor speech made by a tall person in a caftan. Which is a little like saying that if I'd been short and macho-ly attired... But I appreciated the comment anyway.

Now then, some of this is going to sound very egotistical. That's because it is. But these are the things I'm particularly proud, and pleased with myself about:

1) I *made* the speech...and was told that it was coherent and understandable. The fire marshall backstage wouldn't let me smoke, which didn't help. (I won't mention Harlan's pipe, if you won't.) However, when I wandered out onto the vast plain of the stage after Buzz's intro, other than a few flashbulbs, I couldn't see a damn thing. Not even the first row; the house lights were down. That helped; it really did!

It wasn't the speech I *wanted* to make; it was dictated by public and non-public events preceding the con, but I was, and am, pleased with it. Overall.

Still...

If whoever's programming NASFIC were to offer me a podium for perhaps half an hour, I might be able to say what I wanted to say in Phoenix. But couldn't.

2) O.k., it wasn't "planned" that way, but I had one person flown in as my "guest" at the convention, took someone else as my guest to the banquet, and had a third as my "guest" at the speeches/awards ceremonies. Now, moralistic bastard (emphasis on both words) that I am, I don't know if it was a worldcon "first" or not that the first two were people I was not sleeping with, but I must admit that in the third case, I slipped up.

Terribly sexist of me, I know.

Still, Mike is so cute, in *his* caftan!

3) I'm glad I wore the caftan. (And, yes, I did hear a few of the whistles!) It took some nerve...not only the wearing of one, but the wearing of this particular one...but, with a little help...

Still, later that night, when several people asked me what the "meaning" of my costume was, well...

4) After the speeches, and after Mike, Marla and I escaped from the hordes descending on the Hugo-winners, Mike bought me a drink in the bar of the Adams. It was my first drink since I'd arrived almost exactly six days earlier.

I had not set out consciously to do that; it just worked out that way. And when, while waiting for my flight out Tuesday afternoon, I realized that the grand total was only four drinks in over a week at a worldcon--*that* worldcon--well, for a lot of personal reasons, I was rather pleased with myself.

Now then, if Glicksohn can go thru a Minicon on Tab, and if I can go thru a worldcon on four drinks, there's still hope that Eric Lindsay can go back to just "sampling".

I hope so. It's hell to have a miniature version of yourself running around the country, setting a bad example!

5) Those who were seated fairly close to Harlan while I made my speech--I couldn't see him, altho I certainly knew he was "out there"--said that he laughed in all the right places. And when it came his turn--well, they tell me that what I had said "got to him". For about the first five minutes, before he went into his schtick.

Maybe so, maybe not. I had no idea at all as to how he would react: I pulled my punches, but I didn't sell out. The way he did react was pleasing and egoboosting--and looking back, I'm not sure why I was totally surprised.

Despite the disagreements, Harlan Ellison is someone I admire and respect tremendously.

And despite the fact that the only time I talked to him was when he stopped me for a moment after I had left the stage and plunged into the darkness of the audience, I'm glad he was there--and received the honor he justly deserved.

...and when, while he was accepting the Hugo for *Jeffty*--as Mike, from beside me in the front row, yelled out: "Go quietly, Harlan. Go quietly..."



Very late Monday night, very early Tuesday morning, in the midst of a dying dead dog party, I observed a woman in the middle of a heated argument with a couple of very drunk fans. When it got viscious, I asked her if she'd like a seat out of the eye of the storm.

Within five minutes, I was arguing vehemently with her.

It was not only her first worldcon; it was her first SF convention. But she knew what it was all about...

Science fiction conventions, obviously, existed to promote the genre... Nonsense, I said, in my normally aggressive way, "I come to be with my friends..."

And, as the hours drifted by, and the argument continued, it always came back to that.



My friends.

I did Phoenix. And, considering my fears and my anticipations...despite my hang-ups and inability to be everything I want to be...I did it well.

And I did it, largely, on my own.

Proving things to the only one who counts. Myself.

But I had help, caring, and support: Marla. Mike. Patty. Steve & Denise.

...and I can't forget the kindness of Jim Corrick. Or Gay Miller...whom I'd never met before backstage pre-"the"-speech, but who held me together long enough to get out there. Or Kathi Schaefer, incredibly busy, but with time for a smile and an encouraging word several times when I needed it most. Or Curt and Mahala Stubbs. Or Renée, sometimes one discovers a friend under the strangest of circumstances. Others!

I don't know the answer to the eternal "Are We Alone?" But I'm not!

Now that I've been to the 'top', where do I go from here?

I can't help flashing back to Saturday afternoon at MAC, when Larry Propp said to me: "Congratulations. Too bad you won't be guest of honor at a 'real' worldcon."

There were moments I agreed with him, but...

I've had my moments of disagreement with the Iguanacon people, my moments of wondering "What the hell am I doing here? / Do they really want me?" I didn't know.

I won't apologize for my bitching and carping on the things that hurt me, and hurt deeply.

I will, and do, apologize, publicly, for my own inability to turn the clock back to early last August, and redo certain things the right way. I bear no recriminations against anyone--my disappointments are my own, and should be kept that way.

Iguanacon, and the Iguanacon committee, have taken a lot of flack. From sources other than me. But I give you this: For one long weekend last year, one very H*O*T long weekend, somewhere between four & five thousand people came together in a celebration. And it worked.

It damn well "worked", and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Tim, Pat, Jim, Gay, Kathi, Patrick, Sharon, Gary, everyone... I'm glad I was there. Thank you.

I once said that if God would have wanted me to make speeches, he/she would not have invented fanzines.

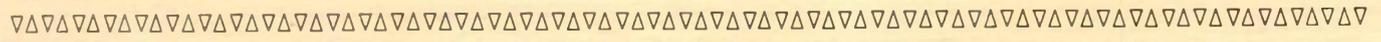
Therefore, this is my "last" speech.

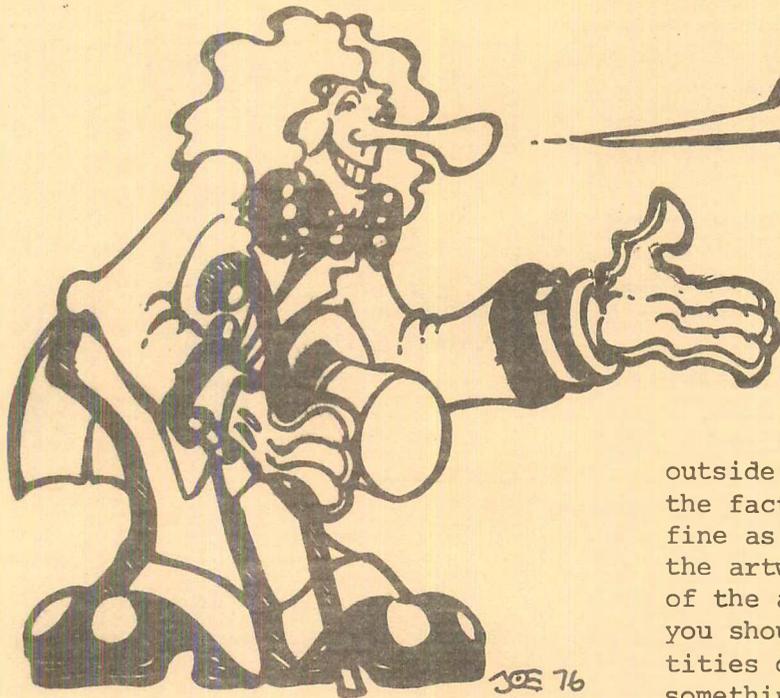
...at least until the next time someone asks me to do one.

You see, it's always best to go out on a schtick.

It's a lot simpler than just saying: I love you...

--- Bill Bowers, 2/25/79





AND NOW...
HERE'S **HARRY!**

HARRY WARNER, JR. I really like this issue better than *Outworlds*, in a way, because it seems more of a unity, thanks to your own material between the outside contributions. When you consider the fact that the reproduction is just as fine as *Outworlds* possessed, the level of the artwork seems unlowered, and several of the articles are particularly good, you should receive overwhelming quantities of egoboo and praise inspired by something more than the bare fact that

you're tackling big fanzines again.

Your worldcon talk must lose something when read in print instead of being heard via voice. But it is a masterpiece of diplomacy, considering all the problems that had preceded it, and I can't believe that even any nervousness that you may have felt during delivery could have damaged greatly its message.

If I needed any proof that I'm a words-oriented person, it came forth when I started to read Stephen Leigh's conreport. I wasn't halfway through the first paragraph when I sense that I'd already read either this very same article or one remarkably similar to it. It would be much better for my public relations to be able to remember faces as well as I can remember fanzine articles or anything else that I've read. And it must be the better part of a year since I originally read Steve's article. The new continuation of it is welcome and equally refreshing for the manner in which a pro admits that he's not the master of every situation in life but is subject to the difficulties which mere fans experience at a con. It would be nice if all the fans and pros would get together and settle on a uniform pronunciation for Leigh, though. I'm sure I'll never remember which like it Lee and which want it Lay, and I'm already confused enough by the fact that my favorite waitress who is named Vickie becomes furious if anyone calls her Victoria while Victoria Vayne will not permit anyone to refer to her as Vickie.

Strangely enough, for a person who isn't the good mixer, extroverted type in personal encounters, I've never felt the awe toward pros which you confess to. I feel this sort of awe when I read the best sort of writing but when I meet its creator I feel relaxed and able to communicate as freely as I would with an untalented person. Maybe my ease in this situation is somehow connected to some of the things Gene Wolfe describes in the interview, about the story being to some extent a separate thing from the author. I know the story comes from the author but I also know that the author won't be that brilliant in conversation as he is in a polished product of the typewriter. So I feel less inferior to him while I'm face to face. [2/10/79]

DON D'AMMASSA I notice that you commented on the innate conservativeness of fans. Well, since I've often been scoffed at for making the same statement, I obviously agree with you. Fans are very conservative, although they often are conservative about liberal ideas. The apparent contradiction is, naturally, the result of slushy definitions of the two major terms.

Let's say then that fans resist change. The angry reaction to Malzberg and Ballard and Bunch are a good example. It was perfectly understandable that many readers failed to enjoy their fiction; it was not as understandable why they considered experimental fiction a personal affront.

Neither are fans as open as we like to think they are. (This has become even worse lately, complicated by the increased factionalism in fandom--Trekkies, Darkover fans, feminists, etc. Please note that the preceding list in no way means to imply that feminists are no more significant nor worthwhile than the others listed.) One reasonably well known fan once had a field day because I admitted that I enjoyed drinking beer and watching football. How Middle Class of me.

But ideas are the most dangerous, and threatening. Go to almost any convention party and suggest that marijuana is a dangerous drug, that abortion is a bad thing, that the US government really isn't all that imperialistic, at least compared to most of the other major world powers, etc. The reaction you get generally isn't an attempt to convince you; it's usually a direct, insulting attack on you personally. (Please note also that I do not necessarily advocate any of the preceding examples.)

Jerry Kaufman, in the last issue of *Raffles*, pointed out that conventions are very conservative (hence monotonous) in themselves. This has often led to satiric comments--the mandatory women in sf panel, the science panel, the film program, the masquerade party--optional, the ranquet, etc. There's little originality in conventions.

For that matter, sf is a very conservative literature, despite its soaring horizons. The vast majority of SF is written to a formula. Until recently, most of the major writers were considered politically conservative as well--Vance, Heinlein, Anderson, Dickson, Pournelle, Niven, etc.

I don't know if all of this is a good thing, a bad thing, or a neutral thing. For me personally, it's disappointing, but I imagine that for the majority of fans, it's rewarding. Otherwise they'd be doing something else, wouldn't they? Or don't they know any other way to do things? [3/18/79]

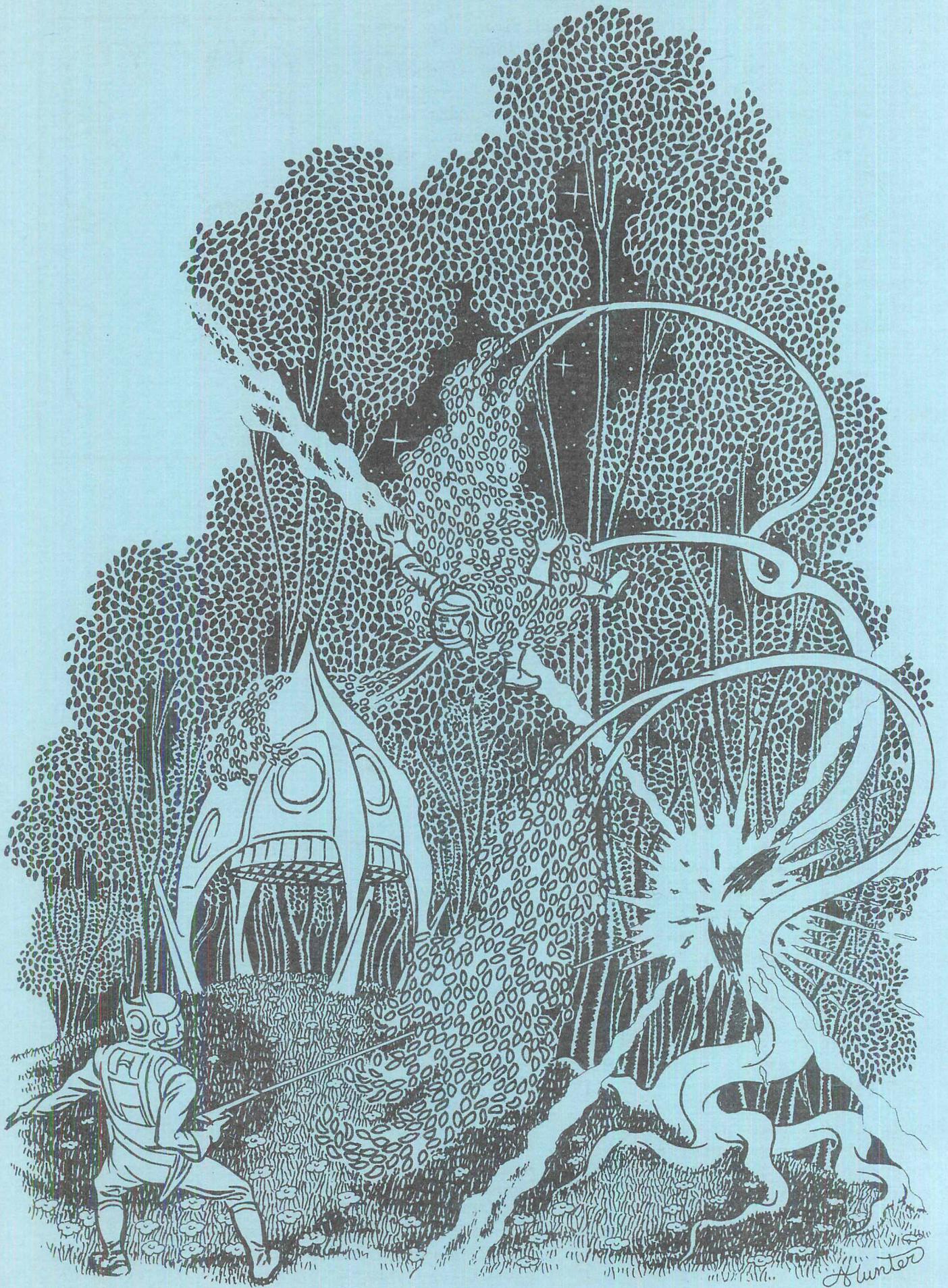
CAROLYN "C.D." DOYLE This is sort of out of the blue wondering... Did you ever wonder what was bigger: Bill Bowers or *Outworlds*? Did it ever feel like a contest? "Which is better known...the fanzine or the fan!" (I heard about *Outworlds* way before Bill Bowers--that's why I wondered.) [1/29/79]

...in some ways, I think I've been through this before! (In Mishap, mainly.) I really believe that a good fanzine editor can create something that is greater than the assumed sum of the individual parts. And I guess that includes the editor, too. Outworlds had a life (and a mind) of its own...but I gave it that life. Xenolith, now, (in case anyone was wondering) is a genzine...and not a personalzine. But I have every intention of dominating it to an extent that there will be no confusion...!

RON SALOMON It was nice to read your Iggy speech. Sometimes I wonder at the use of having a Fan GoH at a worldcon what with all the owl-sounds (who? who???) one hears from the masses of con-goers at such an affair, but I always reconsider for after all maybe they will find out what-all they've been missing.

Do others from Ohio sound like you? I was struck by the similarity in speech pattern to Pat Paulsen; I wonder where he hails from?

Stephen Leigh's *Go On...* was another of those articles where I mutter "How true, how true" while reading it. Unfortunately, I have no Denise ~~and~~ ~~I wasy scteam~~ and I still haven't "broken through" into the non-programming aspect of cons. Quick, the anti-shyness serum, Doctor! I've settled for programming, and looking like I know where I'm going as I wander through the con area, but then not everyone is acclaimed as a WKF 1st time around, and I can still count cons attended on the fingers of one hand. Is there still hope for me? But it would be nice to have one of those airport "Follow Me"



Hunter