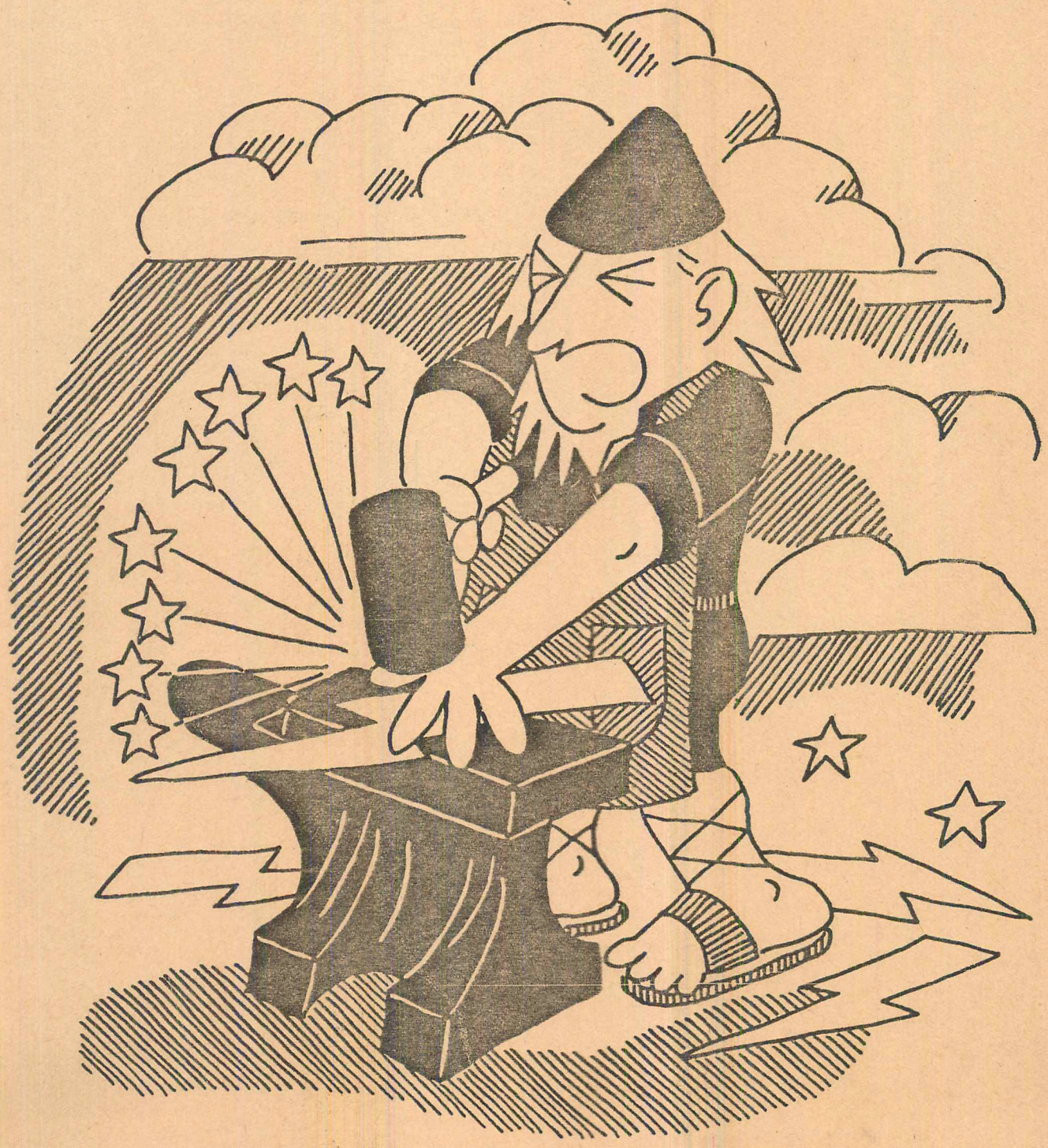


ANVIL

Issue Number 51



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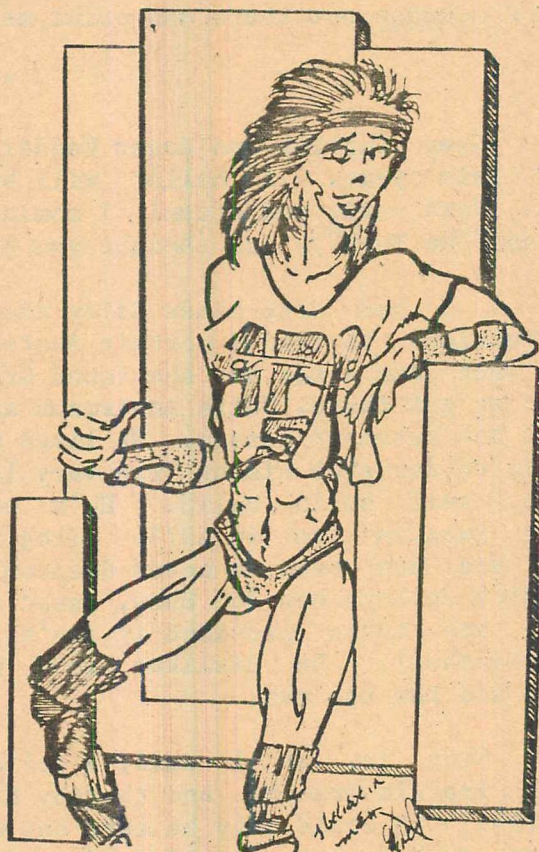
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Art Credits: Cover, Teddy Harvia; Title page logo, Teddy Harvia - illo, Gene Gryniwicz; p. 2, C.P. Langefeld; p. 10, 18, Hank Heath; p. 13, Bjo Trimble; p. 16, 27, 37, Brad W. Foster; p. 22, Martin Stovicek; p. 31, Gene Gryniwicz; p. 36, Craig Hilton.

ANVIL 51, edited and published by Charlotte Proctor
8325 7th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35206 USA

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* CHARLOTTE ' S WEB *
*

My threatened gaffiation didn't take. My list of cons to attend this year continues to grow. To hell with visiting family. Cons are more fun. And publishing is more fun, by a long shot, than being submerged in domesticity. But if some substitute for twill-tone or mimeo-tone, neither of which are manufactured any more, doesn't show up, #52 will probably be the last (legible) zine I publish. I certainly can't afford to have 8000 copies made (32 pages at 250 copies each) by xerox. What A.B.Dick is offering now as mimeo paper is nothing less than bond. It doesn't absorb the ink as well, and when it does, it tends to bleed through. Quality will fall off drastically unless someone out there can point me to a supply of fuzzy paper.

Greg Turkish and Roger Weddell (both friends of mine) are standing for DUFF this year. A ballot will be enclosed if John Berry gets it to me in time. Vote early and often! I nominated Greg (he is known in Australian fandom as "The Turk"), and thought you might like to know a little bit about him.

I had sent Linda Riley ahead to the Baltimore Worldcon in 1983 with instructions to find a certain Australian. Well, she couldn't find the one I had sent her after but she found Greg, and brought him to the Atlanta Suite. When we got there, Julie Ackermann and I put him to work carrying supplies up from the basement garage. We liked Greg so much we brought him home with us! I like to describe him as "the very large policeman from Perth": he's 6'4", 16 stone, real solid build. He's been attending science fiction conventions since Swancon Two in 1975. Greg is a convention fan rather than a fanzine fan, and has been on seven Swancon committees, serving as chair twice. His favorite authors are Bob Shaw, Issac Asimov and Harry Harrison. He likes good food, any music provided it isn't loud (exception: his own bagpipe playing) and football. He dislikes loud music (see above), shithheads, small plane seats and the tax man.

Greg is, as I said, a policeman and is currently stationed with the Perth Traffic Branch. And thereby hangs a tale. When Greg was in Birmingham in 1983, he could only be here one day and one night. We had to try to pack in as much as we could, and we did. I went to work that morning and made arrangements with the City of Birmingham to show my visiting policeman around their operation. While I was doing that, Greg was serenading the rest of the family (and the neighborhood) on his bagpipes, which he just happened to have with him. Valerie taped it for me.

Greg came downtown and had lunch with me in the park. I pointed to City Hall and gave him the name of the man to contact on the 6th floor. Greg went on his tour and met me back at the office when I got off work. A bunch of us met for dinner at a pizza place, and afterward went to Cragfont, the then Party Central of Birmingham fandom. Julie came in from work and started taking off her clothes... hose, shoes, etc. to get more comfortable. Greg dubbed her a "Floozie". There was a lot of drinking going on, but I stuck to Coke for a change.

In the wee hours of the morning, the party wound down and I drove Greg home in my green VW, cutting through the City of Mountain Brook. We were talking and minding our own business when lo and behold, I was blue-lighted, and pulled over to the side of the road. Greg was astonished.

"I've pulled people over, but I've never been blue-lighted myself!"

"Yes, Officer?" I said, rolling down the window. Greg listened intently to see what kind of trouble I was in, one officer on each side of the car, ready... you must imagine the large and possibly threatening silhouette Greg made in the passenger side. The officer wrote me a ticket for no taillights (a fuse fell out or something) while I thanked my lucky stars that I had not been drinking as I did so often at Cragfont. Having ascertained that everything was OK, Greg got out of the car, flashed his badge and introduced himself to the officers. They gave him a guided tour of a City of Mountain Brook Police car, there on the side of the road, in the wee hours of the morning, with the blue lights flashing, and me leaning against my car.

On our way home at last I said to Greg: "I hope you appreciate the lengths to which I will go to entertain visitors!"

ANVIL is full of a wonderful mixture this time... all about Buck Coulson's pets; Marc Ortlieb's long walk home; Roy G. Bivens' zine review column; a combined trip report and con report about a Mafiaette reunion; Pat Gibbs reviews some books that were a pleasant surprise to him in 1989; and some BSFC minutes just so you can stay in touch with the Birmingham crowd.

A lot of people have asked if I had had any feedback from my Eastern European correspondents, and yes, we did. Eva Hauser sent a first-person report on the changes as they took place in her homeland -- Czechoslovakia.

We have our usual letters, but they are severely cropped this time to make room for all the other material.

Enjoy.



 *
 * LONG WALK HOME *
 *

-- Marc Ortlieb

To be walking from Warrigal Road to his home in East Burwood in the early hours of a Saturday morning, to brush through the shoe-saturating dew on poorly maintained pavements in coldest July was not something that Marc Ortlieb really liked to do. To have the icefiend grip his overfull bladder in an ever tightening vise was not particularly pleasant either.

It had been a pleasant night's entertainment at the Melbourne Science Fiction Club's Quiz night. The team he'd been on, with Justin and Jenny Ackroyd, Mark Linneman, Phil Ware and David McDonnell had swept the pool, leading to an overheard "I think those old bastards are cheating" from one of the younger fans present who'd equated the team - Rum Sodomy and the Lash, or RSL for short - with the older generation of Melbourne fandom, being blissfully ignorant of that tradition stretching back via John Bangsund, John Foyster and Merv Binns to the Science Fiction League. After that, he, Justin and Jenny had waiting at the tram stop for hand and foot-freezing hours, watching three trams going the wrong way, before one arrived to take them into the city.

Trams have the uncanny ability to deposit one at one stop exactly a minute too late for their passengers to catch the connecting tram to their final destination. He watched Justin and Jenny disappear into the bowels of Flagstaff Station. It was 11:34 p.m. Marc walked to the terminus for the number 75 tram, just in time to see it disappear along Spencer Street. That wasn't too bad. He knew that there was a midnight tram. He found himself singing "I'm leaving on that midnight tram to Burwood". He thought better of this -- there were still people on the streets and he didn't want to appear that strange. Instead, he did something even stranger. He opened a fanzine that he'd picked up at the quiz.

After a few articles, the tram appeared. It was just as Marc had feared. This was no Number 75 tram - it was a Number 74 tram. The difference between a Number 75 and a Number 74 tram does not, as might be thought, equal one; it equals 2.5. Trams are logarithmic rather than linear. The 75 tram stops about two kilometres from the Ortlieb residence. The 74 tram stops about four and a half kilometres from the Ortlieb residence. Having ascertained that this was indeed the last tram for the night, Marc resigned himself to a long walk and cursed the fact that he hadn't thought to avail himself of the facilities in the railway station.

The tram rattled its song along the lines. It wasn't particularly crowded. Late night trams seldom are. Marc was happy to read through a copy of New Scientist that he'd picked up in the city earlier that evening. Half an hour passed and he found himself deposited just past the corner of Burwood Highway and Warrigal Road. He looked around, in the vain hope that there might be a taxi somewhere, but there wasn't. With his rucksack straps digging furrows into his back, he started to walk.

Burwood Highway is a strange mixture of a road. It winds through the Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne, passing houses, shops, light industry and the occasional school. No pubs though. Burwood Highway cuts through the one part of Melbourne where Prohibition still lingers on. The Number 74 tram stops just opposite a cemetery and the rest of the surrounds seemed about as lively.

The only signs of life were the self-contained little worlds farting their carbon monoxide into his breathing space as they hurtled along their bitumen strip. Within the inhabitants were insulated from the realities of Burwood Highway by glass, steel and the sound walls of their cassette-radios. They may have noted the strange bearded character trudging along on the edge of their perceptions, but those who travel at 80 kph don't have much time for pedestrians.

Three taxis passed him, going in the opposite direction. Normally this would have led to an Ortliebean tirade on the inequities of Murphy's Law but, on this occasion, it didn't. Marc didn't have the money to pay for a taxi. Had three taxis passed him going in the direction for which he couldn't afford to pay, then that would have led to such a tirade. Murphy was obviously comfortably rugged up in bed, unwilling to so much as poke his nose out in order to visit his laws upon the late night traveller.

Marc was coming up to a very important part of his itinerary - the playing fields next to the Burwood Campus of the Victoria College. He recalled a thick border of trees between the cricket pitch and the road and he was very much in need of a tree to stand between him and the laws of indecent exposure. Relief was close at hand. Risking the dew soaked grass that stood between him and his appointed task, he cut across the verge and into the woods. A puff of steam attested the success of his mission and, much lighter of heart, he made his way back to the path, confident that he could complete his journey without any unsightly embarrassment.

A car parked in the drive of the Burwood Campus drew his attention. Murphy may have been snuggled up in bed, but Finagle's minions were out after those who would attempt to exceed the limiting velocity of roads. The boys in blue were setting up a speed trap. Marc smiled at them as he passed, sincerely wishing them luck. Misery loves his company and if he was uncomfortable walking home, then some of those folks basking in the luxury of their heated cars should at least feel the icy grip of the law.

Those whom the gods would destroy they first make smug. Ortlieb had scarcely travelled another half kilometre when a blue panel van pulled up alongside him.

"Excuse me sir," said the young policeman who stepped from the vehicle, "but we would like to ask you a few questions."

"Sure officer. What seems to be the problem?"

"Do you have any reason for being out at this time of night?"

Bugger, thought Ortlieb. My mother warned me about this. I've read so much science fiction that I've been trapped in a Ray Bradbury story. And of all things! A Ray Bradbury story. It's not that I'm that fond of Bradbury.

Why couldn't I be trapped in a Robert Heinlein story, where two gorgeous twins stop me, explaining that they need my help to rescue their brother and/or father Lazarus from the evils of a huge self-indulgent plot and that they'd do just anything if I would help them. spung! Nope. It has to be a Ray Bradbury story.

"I'm just on my way home from a science fiction quiz night. We won," he replied.

"Very nice, sir. Do you have any identification?"

Marc thought of his brother Skye, who was often stopped by the police. Skye was the sort of person who looked suspicious even when he was sleeping. When asked for identification, Skye would produce a baby photo, saying "That's me. If you don't believe me, you can ask my mother." Marc was not quite so cocky.

"Would my drivers' license do?"

"Certainly, sir. And could you explain what you have in your bag?"

"The Crown Jewels," prompted a little voice in Marc's mind. Marc ignored that voice, but succumbed to the Milliganish temptation to list everything, starting with the copy of New Scientist and the fanzine and going through a list including some computer disks, his markbook and a pair of spare underpants.

"Fine, sir. Would you mind if I examined the bag?"

Ortlieb bit his tongue. Any reasonable Heinlein hero would have replied "Yes, I do." He didn't.

"Thank you sir. It's just that there has been a break and enter in the neighborhood and we are on the lookout for someone suspicious," said the young policeman, climbing back into his panel van, next to the attractive young policewoman who'd remained in the van for the duration of the conversation. Perhaps this was a Heinlein story after all, but he wasn't the protagonist.

The car sped off into the night. "Lousy sods," Ortlieb muttered to no one in particular. "They could at least have offered me a lift."

He continued his footsore trek. As he reached the intersection of Station Street and Burwood Highway he saw a tall, thin man with a heavily laden rucksack rushing across to hail a passing taxi. It might have been his imagination, but it almost seemed that the man was casting nervous glances around as he ran.

Ortlieb paid the incident no further attention. He passed the rows of secured little houses until he reached his own. It was 1:45 a.m. He tiptoed past the baby's room to the kitchen, made himself a hot chocolate and then went to bed, hoping that Michael would sleep well. He knew that he would.

 * M A F I A E T T E R E U N I O N *

-- Charlotte Proctor

It was many years ago, back in the high and far-off times when Atlanta in '86 was just a gleam in our eyes, that the Mafiaettes came to be. Perhaps because of our determination and assertiveness, there were those who referred to the Birmingham members of the fledgling bidcom as "The Birmingham Mafia." Far from being offended, we felt it had a certain ring to it.

Penny (Frierson) and I were in charge of bid parties. We recruited Julie (Ackermann) and Linda (Riley) to work the parties. The four of us, with help from our friends, put on those fabulous parties for ConFederation at Chicon and Baltimore and at Southern regionals.

A certain camaraderie arose among us... we declared, with a little prodding from our mentor, Penny, that we were dedicated to the appreciation of :
 (1) good-looking men, (2) fast cars, and (3) fine spirits.

We began to have adventures -- once we kidnapped Fred Harris (a good-looking man) at his first Southern con; we've taken people on road trips (in fast cars); we've repossessed (fast) cars; we've conducted blind taste tests of (fine) spirits and afterward gone on a shoe-buying binge. More recently we invaded en masse the local dirty book stores (see ANVIL 47). Even though Julie had moved far away, she was and is close in spirit.

We decided it was time to go see Julie, and SciCon in Virginia Beach, VA where she was in charge of the con suite seemed the perfect time and place. Penny, Linda and I travelled to Julie-Con (as we affectionately called it) on Friday, November 10, 1989 and this is what we did there.

There were 900+ people at SciCon who didn't know who we were, but the committee did. "Oh, you're Julie's friends? The last friend she brought was weird." Debbie Taylor was the Chairman. The committee wore buttons that read "Debbie Does SciCon". Cathy Doyle, who had contacted me about programming, turned out to be married to Kip Williams who was on my panels. Everyone made us feel right at home. I never thought I would see the day that I would be sponsored by Julie -- quite a change from her early days in fandom. She got a kick out of it.

Not knowing a large number of the attendees, we were delighted to see Ron and Val Lakey-Lindhan, artist guests and friends of ours, there. Julie had prevailed upon her buddy Bill Zielke from Chattanooga to come help her with the con suite -- Bill is nothing if not the definitive con suite host. "Fans are different here on the East Coast," Bill said:

This guy came in, he was about six foot four and looked about 35. I had just drawn a cup of beer and I offered it to him. Well, he looked shocked. "I'm not of age," he said... I can't drink beer. I know the rules!"

"You sure wouldn't hear a Tennessee fan saying that", Bill told me, shaking his head in amazement.

Unlike some cons where the functions are scattered and the fen are, too, SciCon was compact. The art show, dealers' room (at which Teddy Harvia took one look and said "That's not a Huckster Room, that's a garage sale"), green room, consuite, and programming rooms were all on the ground floor. It was mob scene city. The consuite was always packed. You KNEW there were 900 people there. Bill and Julie went to dinner with us, when we could get them out of the consuite.

Penny and I had bought banquet tickets, and we sat with Ron and Val, who didn't know a lot of the people there, either. They introduced us to their friend David Bischoff. The name was familiar and when Val told us David was an author, that explained it. I had seen his name on the bookstore shelves, right next to Michael Bishop. (I have since bought and read Book One of David's Gaming Magi series which I really liked, with its different levels of reality, its interwoven stories, and especially its talking cat. I have found book three, but can't find book two.)

David is a wonderful person. He's friendly, smiling, enthusiastic, and interested in other people. He asked if we went to worldcons and I explained that Penny was responsible for ConFederation. After thank-you gifts were presented to the guests, Penny and I excused ourselves, saying we hated to eat and run but we had a dinner engagement. This line went over so well I used it twice more on the way out.

Julie and Eric took all of us "home folks" to Lynhaven Fish House, a fine seafood restaurant on Chesapeake Bay. I had another salad, and admired the seafood on everyone else's platters. I had brought a script for the panel I was on the next day -- Best of the Year Fanzine article reading. Julie was to read the part of the son to my "mom". We ran through it at the table, getting the timing down, prompting Julie to whine and pout on cue. (She got all the good lines.)

I had made a date to meet David at eight for a Tarot reading, but had grossly underestimated the travel time to and from dinner. It was eight Birmingham time and nine Virginia time when we got back. Penny and I parked ourselves at con registration while Julie and Linda got ready for the dance. Between the elevators and the traffic between consuite and programming, eventually every member of the con would pass by. Sure enough, David found me. "Have you had your cards read before?" I asked.

"Not by anyone who was any good," he replied. I cut my eyes in Penny's direction. Talk about pressure to perform well!

David cut the cards, I dealt, and told him about himself. A reading is private so I won't divulge it here. Suffice to say that David nodded through-out and said "Yes, that's the way I am... yes, you're right." So I guess I did O.K. Others saw what was going on and before I knew it I had a line...

But it was getting late -- time for the dance. Linda was in her dancing clothes and Julie had on a black dress with sparklies and a full swirling skirt.

This was the first time SciCon had had a dance and it was because Julie had pushed for one. The decision was finally made in the manner on committees everywhere -- "O.K., if you want a dance, you're in charge." I missed the first 20 minutes and it's a good thing, I was told. The dance opened, they said, with live Celtic music and a Celtic dance.

Linda was stunned. "This is Julie's dance," she said. "Our Julie. Our Rock 'n Roll Julie. And they are dancing to Celtic music????!!" Fortunately for Linda's sense of what was right and proper for a Julie-dance, the Celts left and the DJ took over. Penny and I arrived soon after, to the shoulder-twitching, hip-twirling, upbeat sound of good ole Rock 'n Roll, with scores of fen dancing their hearts out. I heard my name... "Charlotte, Charlotte, will you dance with me?!" It was David. "Val won't dance. Will you dance with me? I want to dance!" (How could I refuse?)

We found a corner on the carpet and took off our shoes -- David danced circles around me -- literally. It was lots of fun. He named every song, by artist and album. We noticed a dearth of Beatles music, though, and requested some. The slow songs gave us a chance to rest up, and gave me a chance to sneak off to Julie's room to refill my cup with (fine) spirits. I introduced David (a good-looking man) to Linda and Julie, so they, too, could have circles danced around them. The dance, the first but not last at SciCon, was a resounding success.

Sunday morning came all too soon. After six cups of coffee, we all adjourned to the Best of the Year Fanzine Reading Panel which included Kip Williams, Moderator Pat Mueller, Art Hlavaty, Bernadette Bosky, Bud Webster and me. At our Saturday panel on Fanzines of the 90s, we couldn't seem to get away from Form. This time, though, was strictly Content. The audience, again, consisted mostly of the Birmingham Fan Club: Penny, Bill, Julie and Linda. Also present were Teddy Harvia, Bud Webster's friend, and Cathy Doyle. I refused to introduce myself to this audience. They all knew who I was.

Bernadette read an exceptionally well-written piece about TV sitcoms that took naturally to being read aloud. Bud read a charming piece about his childhood memories. When my time came, I moved to the floor and set up two chairs for our "dramatic" reading. I introduced the piece by noting (1) the next generation is growing up in fandom, and (2) that we like to read about ourself. Mark Manning's piece, "Fandom, the Next Generation" (ANVIL 47) covers both. Julie was ten year old "Lee" (you had to imagine the propeller beanie and blaster) to my "Mom" and from the time she bounced on stage announcing "When I grow up, I want to be Marc Ortlieb!", we had 'em in the palm of our hand. I was straight man and Julie got all the laughs:

Me: "... and practice your sercon every day..."

Julie: (pout, wriggle, whine...) "But, Mom..... I hate sercon!!!"

Later on Sunday, Julie took us to Sandbridge Beach where we walked and dodged the waves -- Julie got her feet wet. We picked up rocks, took pictures, and noted the differences to our own Gulf Coast.

Penny passed on the hot tub, preferring to get in smof-time in the consuite. But Julie had brought three swimsuits so Linda and I had no excuse. When five foot two Julie said five foot ten me could wear her suit, I wasn't too sure about that. "I've lost weight, not height." But thanks to Spandex, I made

it, although the french cut legs came up to my waist! Pizza and (cheap) champagne in the room, and girl-talk, finished the day.

We all breakfasted together Monday morning, where Bill regaled us with his bird stories (see elsewhere this issue). Julie went to register for the new term. Everyone was tired, it was time to go home. Julie came back and put all of our stuff in her car.

Julie took us, for our last meal together for awhile, to The Jewish Mother. It was a good choice. We ordered too much food. When I ordered a drink, the waiter asked for my ID. Cute. There were crayons on the table to color the menus, and the walls. We caught Julie up on local news -- what Wade is doing now, and what happened to Bill Brown.

We flew home and the Hispanic-sounding flight attendant talked to us. "Leddies and Gentlemens... in de event of a change in cabin air pressure.... if you are traveling with a child, or with someone who axes like a child...."

We looked at one another, and burst out laughing. Who would be the designated adult?

*
* B I L L A N D T H E B I R D S *
*

-- Bill Zielke

Bill Zielke told me these stories, and they are too good not to pass on. They probably make a better story told, with the accompanying flapping of arms, sound effects and facial expressions, than read unless, as some of Bill's friends have said, one has heard them five or six times already.

In my work (Bill said), I get sent out to inspect steam plants. I was travelling one day with a co-worker, Jim. Jim was driving his white Ford station wagon. We were on the back roads of Tennessee, having finished at Paradise in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, and were on our way to the Gallatin steam plant. Jim is the kind of guy who, when driving on these back roads, if he sees an old couple sitting on the porch of an isolated farmhouse, will honk the horn, and wave to them. They sometimes wave back.

Well, there we were, in the country - this is not a main road. We haven't passed another car in maybe an hour. Up ahead I could see, on the ground to one side of the road, about eight or ten thousand blackbirds -- big ones, purple grackles -- and I mean there were a lot of them.

Just as the car came to the leading edge of the flock, they lifted off -- about six feet up -- and began to cross the road. They were about a foot over the car. Now, I don't know why he did it, but Jim honked the horn. The birds reacted to this stimulus as you might expect.... yes, as one, the whole flock shat upon the car. Large wet spot on the road.

The windshield became opaque. The car was uniformly covered with bird feces, each oval splotch 2 inches x 7/8 of an inch. Jim turned on the windshield wipers -- disaster. He finally had to stop the car and wash the windshield by hand -- twice. I slid down to the floor of the car, still wearing my seat belt, laughing so hard I was holding my sides and gasping for breath, the entire time it took him to clean the car. Did I offer to help? No way. I wasn't the one who honked the horn!

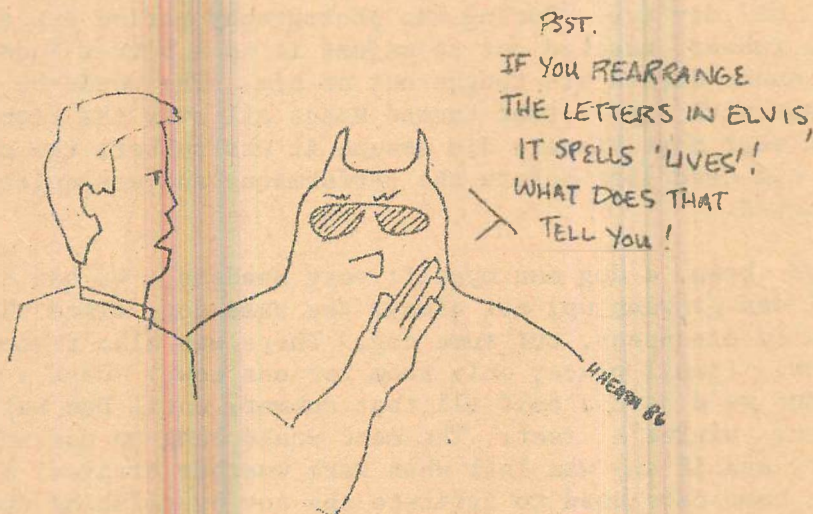
When Jim got back in the car, I got myself under control (sort of) and told him that I was sworn to secrecy, that I would not tell a soul. Until I got out of the car!

Last winter, there was snow on the ground when I had to make one of these trips. I had a heavy duty four wheel drive vehicle, loaded with gear and equipment, and was driving along the freeway at a pretty good clip.

Ahead I saw a flock of birds, starlings I think, in the middle of the Interstate. About twenty feet before I got to them, the lead bird lifted off, to about three feet above the road. He must have been new at the job or else it was time to thin the flock. The lead bird made it, but I must have killed fifty or sixty of those starlings, at least.

There were bird parts all over, bird blood on the front of the vehicle -- I picked feathers and bones and beaks out of the grill for a week. While plowing through this black birdstorm, I saw out of the corner of my eye a bird just before the left window, back-pedaling for all he was worth, beating his wings backward at a furious pace, trying to change direction. The look on his face was sheer terror. He made it, too.

(When Penny heard about Bill and the starlings, she said of the lead bird: "I'll bet he was de-flocked.")



 *
 * THE OLD IRONMASTER HAS PETS *
 *

-- Buck Coulson

The subject matter for this column was inspired by Chambanacon. At various times during the convention I watched, from my post behind our huckster table, Judy Voros' German Shepherd, someone's Irish Wolfhound (Judy was walking it and since I never happened to see its owner, I wondered if she'd stayed home and sent the dog in her place), Robin Nakkula's rats, and several people posing with an 8 or 10 foot python draped over their shoulders. At previous Chambanacons there have been several cats on leashes, one of the smaller varieties of dog (I believe it was a Wire-Haired Chimneybrush), and at one time the Wolfhound owner had two of them. She said her landlord made her get rid of one, and various fans commiserated. Rusty Hevelin wasn't happy to see them in the huckster room, since they weren't buying anything and took up more room than two customers. But they were much better behaved than at least one of the human attendees, and also smelled better. (When one was left under my table, he didn't drive away customers, while the one human did.)

Fans seem attracted to odd pets. The first "Rat Lady" in Midwest fandom was Sally Kobee, now Sally Smith. Neither Sally or Robin bothered with white rats; Sally had ordinary barn rats, and Robin's are vari-colored -- I seem to recall one Spotted Poland-China variety. Sally used to carry her first pet, Melissa, around inside her jump suit, which caused some eyebrowraising when Melissa decided to become active. I had a hard time keeping a straight face at one con when Sally was looking over our books, Melissa was wiggling under the jump suit, and a male customer's eyes were bugging out. Sally's best story she told herself; she was eating in a restaurant and poking bits of lettuce into the top of her jump suit to feed Melissa. A waitress noticed this unusual activity and stared. Sally said, "Living bra."

There was also the time a couple won a Worldcon costume award as druids. Bearskins, or a reasonable facsimile, with a python twined around a staff and a steaming caldron of dry ice. During the photography period one fan, assuming that the snake was rubber, reached out to adjust it to a better location for his purposes, and the snake darted its tongue out at him. The would-be photographer leaped out of range with a yell that turned heads all over the room. The snake had been so quiet that most viewers did assume it was rubber; the owner said it had been given a big feed just before the performance and was quietly asleep -- until it was disturbed.

I've always been a dog man myself; very mundane. We had a dog most of the time when I was growing up; not always the same dog, since they ran loose and would eventually disappear, but some dog. There was also frequently a barn cat, and one cow. (Small place; only room for one cow.) Once a year the cow would be bred, and we'd have a calf all that summer, until Dad butchered it in the fall, for our winter's meat. The meat would hang on our unheated front porch all winter, and if any was left when warm weather arrived, Mom would can it. One of the barn cats used to irritate the cow by climbing up its legs to ride on its back. The cow objected, but never managed to dislodge the cat.

The dogs were always combination pets, watchdogs, and hunting dogs.

Most were mongrels; all but one German Shepherd were useful in scaring up game. The game -- quail, rabbits, pheasants, ducks -- was the rest of our winter's meat. At one time I had two Cocker Spaniels, Bruce and Dixie. (Our son Bruce still tells people he was named after a favorite dog.) I was hunting on the far side of a lake that was close to our house, and a duck flew up from the lake's edge. I downed it and told the dogs to "fetch". The look they gave me was very definite; "You crazy, man? That cold water." I told them they were supposed to be water dogs. They told me that was a damn silly reason for freezing their furry butts off. Eventually I had to go back to the house for the keys to unlock the boat, row the boat across the lake, and pick up the duck myself. The dogs came along, as long as they didn't have to get wet.

When Juanita and I got married, we spent our first years in towns; three towns altogether. No dogs; I was raised to believe that animals belonged outside, and town is no place for an outside dog. Juanita, being a cat person, insisted on having a cat. She never really convinced me that cats belonged in the house; she did convince me that we were going to have them in our house.

Eventually, after Bruce was born, we moved out to a farmhouse; country life is better for the child, and all. (I agree; I grew up in the country and look how I turned out.) Plus, country living allowed us to have a dog -- for Bruce's sake, of course. We were aided by a neighbor's dog, who insisted on having her puppies in our garage. Once the pups were weaned, we returned mother and children to her owners, who weren't noticeably happy about it, and kept one pup. Like the barn cats, the dogs increased, though our top number was 3. Bat-Ears looked vicious enough to frighten salesmen, but was actually a very bring and calm animal. Boondoggle was well named; he was large, furry, and bumbling. One year the pear trees on the place we rented overflowed, and Juanita made pear cake, pear pudding, pear wine, and anything else she could think of to use them up. One afternoon she put a bucket of pear scraps out on the porch for me to dispose of when I got home from work. Looking out a while later, she noticed Boondoggle with his head in the bucket; he'd eaten a half-bucket of pears. Didn't seem to harm him.

Kari was probably the best of the lot; we acquired her or possibly vice versa after we'd lived near Hartford City for several years. Very bright, gentle with humans, she was a coonhound who wandered in one day and nobody claimed. Big dog; not that tall at the shoulder, but very broad. Best weight was 70 pounds; if we fed her too much, she'd get up to 80. A good hunter, she killed raccoons singled-fanged, climbed trees now and then, presumably after raccoons, and while we were renting she protected the barn cats from the landlord's dog, mainly by not allowing the landlord's dog into our yard. When we moved here, she kept the place free of groundhogs, a fact we didn't appreciate until she was gone.

The current dog is Severian, acquired last winter from the local animal shelter. A perfect Labrador Retriever in conformation and color, but too small to be purebred; only 50 pounds. He's doing pretty well on the groundhogs; killed 2 on our property last summer and 3 while I had him on leash. Walking the dog can get very exciting in the country. He tends to roam if not confined, so he's the first dog we've had that is kept chained up. He's a combination pet, watchdog, and medical aid. Walking him 3 to 6 miles a day keeps my blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol right where they're supposed to be. Also, I took my belts in 3 notches last summer. His only problem is his dislike of other male dogs; he's ready to fight any size or any number of them, which can also make walks exciting. So far I've kept it down to no more than a few

snaps and a lot of growling at each confrontation.

Our "inside cats" here are Smoke and Soot, former barn kittens promoted to house cats. The barn cat population varies. They all began from the cat we transported from our former barn, over her violent objections. (But she liked it here once she got used to it.) The high number was 22, about 3 years ago. A plague when through and cut them down to 5, and we've varied around that number since. Up to 7 once, but back to 5 now, I think. They don't get anything beyond a supermarket brand catfood; otherwise they "live as nature intended". I'd planned to reduce the 22 cats with a shotgun, but nature beat me to it. (I did talk about it, and suddenly the dominant tomcat, who had been entirely wild, became the friendliest cat you ever saw; complete change of manner. A word to the wise does help, sometimes.) When I was feeding all 22 of them, John Miesel said it was the first time he'd seen a feline feeding frenzy. I'll be just a happy if he never sees one again, at least at our house.

But we'll undoubtedly continue to have pets.



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 * REBEL WITH A CAUSE -- Eva Hauser *
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Last summer I signed all the petitions applying for freedom, for human rights, for setting free the political prisoners. At first I was glad that I had finally expressed my opinion and my true feelings, but gradually when I saw that nothing had changed, I began to be rather passive and desperate. So I didn't go to the demonstration the 17th of November. The 18th was Saturday and sci-fi fans had a mini-con in Prague. While there I heard of the massacre the day before, but I was used to such massacres - there were three or four in 1989. I was sorry for the students and I expected only new persecutions, new difficulties with police or government officials.

But on Monday I saw real changes. On every corner and subway station there were leaflets with the statements of students, and various institutions that joined their struggle. Students wore tricolors, flowers, candles, little bells. I was absorbed by the atmosphere of hope, cheer, and a strong will to change our deformed, depressed life.

TV and Party newspapers were angrily condemning "emotions" and stated that contrarevolutionary and anticommunist groups were trying to upset and disorganize our republic. It was really frightening! We expected the militia to be called out to "keep order", but they were not. I became more optimistic when several newspapers began to write freely, the truth, without nauseating repetitive phrases.

I began to go every afternoon to Wenceslas Square, with a quarter of a million other people. Saturday and Sunday we went to demonstrations of half a million people! What a wonderful feeling, listening to free speeches of our dissidents, seeing lots of Czech flags (without accompanying red ones), slogan boards saying "Free Elections!", "End of One Party Rule!" We were almost frozen, it was minus 10 degrees C, but we were happy. November 25 was my birthday. The best present I got was the dismissal of General Party Secretary Jakes. We wondered who would be his successor, but soon understood, to our great pleasure and delight, that it didn't matter. It was finished, the "leadership" of one party. All the forbidden topics, all the barriers in our brains, this auto-censorship... finished. Unbelievable.

Once I read in a Russian book a fable about a peasant who saw, for the first time in his life, a phonograph. He could not cope with this thing so far outside of his experience, and he lay down under a tree and neither ate or drank, until he died. That's the way I felt. I couldn't cope with the new situation. I felt like lying down under a tree and dying.

Even young people say "I am so glad I lived to see it!" We had a firm, almost inherited, feeling that the Communists would "lead" us forever. We were frightened by the bloodshed in Romania, but still Christmas was wonderful. There were groups in the streets singing carols and playing. It was never before like that!

When Havel was elected President, our revolution was finished. The students washed down the inscriptions and slogans and each of us was absorbed by the changes in his own field, in his own workplace.

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 * MINUTES SEEM LIKE HOURS *
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-- Linda L. Riley

Charlotte called the meeting to order by yelling louder than anyone else. Linda read the meeting minutes for December. Charlotte passed around the T-shirt designs so those who weren't at the last meeting, and those who were too drunk to remember the last meeting, could see what the now semi-mythical tee-shirts might look like if we went against Tradition and actually have them made.

Charlotte declined to do anything else and called for elections. First we had to decide what officers we needed. We already have an Editor and a Treasurer for Life, and a KeyMaster. It was decided to have a Sgt-at-Arms to throw out unruly people. We have never been able to decide just what unruly behavior encompasses, but it is best to be prepared in case an epidemic of it breaks out in our midst. Jim Phillips was elected to the post by acclamation. We determined that if anyone had experienced unruly behavior on a personal level it must be he -- besides, he wasn't there.

The office of President had to be filled. Every club must have someone they can point to and say it's their fault whether it is or not. Debbie Rowan was nominated by Adrian Washburn, a brave man who can run much faster than she. The nomination was seconded by Elise who didn't know any better. Merlin, an old-timer, moved quickly to close the nominations. Adrian seconded the motion as he edged closer to the door. Debbie was railroaded into office before she realized what was happening.

Charlotte immediately gave Debbie the business.... actually I mean in the form of the Agenda but take it as you will. Little does Debbie realize that I only do agendas as a whim. I am not a secretary. We do not have a secretary. As soon as somebody doesn't show up at a meeting we will have a secretary.

The first item on the agenda was the club huckster table at ConTInuity. Adrian was to report. At this point we noticed that Adrian was no longer with us, having sneaked out before Debbie could get hold of him for nominating her. Robert Cooke said the tables were \$35 and that there were some left. Charlotte will get the table. We decided to charge \$1 for hardback books and \$.50 for paperbacks with all proceeds to the club. I insisted that we decide who was going to man the table, and when, before I let go of the \$35. It's my bureaucratic streak. Gary, who was in agreement, got everybody lined up and assigned on the chalkboard. This was almost too much organization for us to bear, so we shelved our t-shirt report again. This makes five years in a row.

Other old business was the Alternate Worldcon. The Chair recognized Penny Frierson. Penny recognized the Chair. It's good that they recognize each other, it makes for more harmony in the group. Penny wanted to know if the Alternate Worldcon was going to be opposite NASFic or the Real Worldcon. Most of us just looked at each other or the ceiling, not wanting to admit that we had no idea when the NASFic was. Charlotte came to the rescue by saying that our Greg (Turkish) will be in town the week before. We hurriedly decided to give Greg a club t-shirt before Penny could ask any more questions, then threw in a t-shirt for BoSh and one for Roger Weddall, too, just to be safe. It is easy

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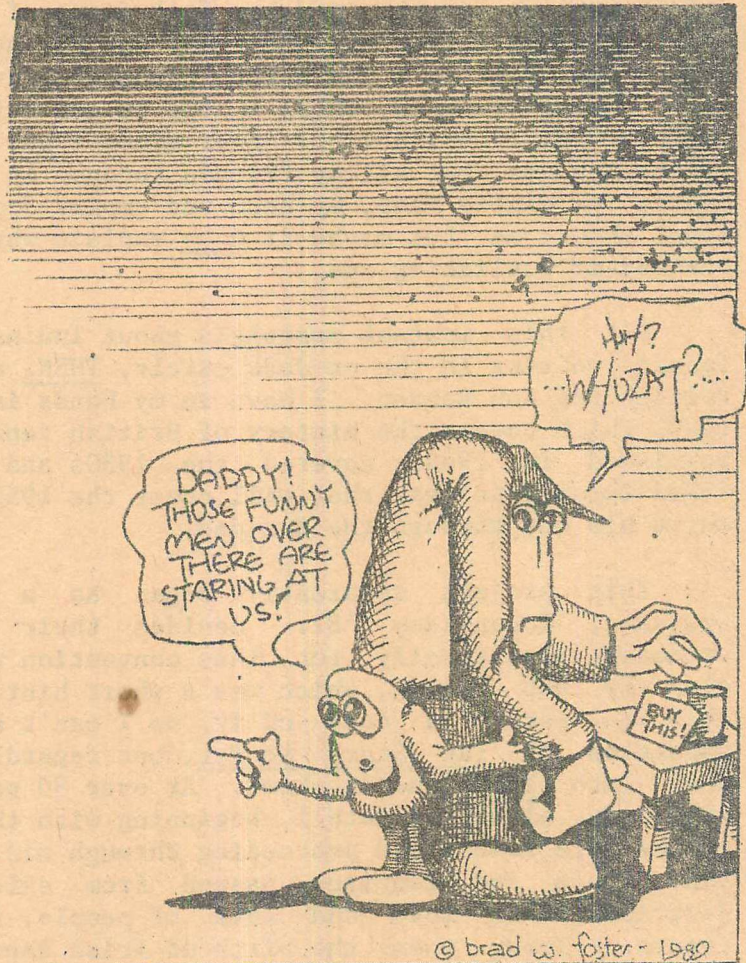
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to give away non-existent T-shirts.

A treasurer's report was requested. I said we started out with \$22.22 left over from 1989 and we now had \$42.22 because I had paid my dues. This caused a small flurry of pocket checking and murmuring about how everyone just happened to have left their money in their other pants, etc. We also had an ANVIL report; Penny reported on SMOFCon and the Atlanta Worldcon bid.

All this business exhausted us so much the meeting was adjourned.

We Also Heard From: Irv Koch; Ken and Denise Hillyard who sent the final issues of the Stone Hill Freedom Press (!); Milt Stevens, who sent a xeroxed Notice of Fafiation; Christmas cards from the Random Guys at Science Fiction Randomly, Colin and Joan Langenfeld, Jeanne Mealey, Ben Schilling, Penny Frierson, Debbie & Gary Rowan, Roger Weddall; and two great letters from Roger, but they were personal and won't be reprinted here; Taras Wolansky; Ricky Shepard; Krsto Mazuranic who sent a bi-lingual pictorial calendar of Zagreb; Harry Andruschak; Lada Peska of Slany, Czechoslovakia, who says that while everything that has happened may not be good, the one good thing is "that Czechoslovak people can freely visit Western countries. I visited Wien this Saturday."; Sheryl Birkhead; Mark Joseph Ross who wants to subscribe; Toni Weisskopf; Brad W. Foster with a couple of new illos; Tony Ubelhor; Teddy Harvia (again); Taral, who is confused, as are we not all?; Bob Shaw, who if he doesn't get his promised article to me RealSoonNow is going to miss the deadline; Lawrence Watt-Evans; Mary Ann Landers; Steve Antczak, who "kidnapped" me at Chattacon (I have pictorial proof), sent his first LoC to ANVIL and the address of the fan news agence in Russia (!); and a belated Valentine from "Roscoe A. Fan".



 * FANZINE REVIEWS *

— by Roy G. Bivens

You know, there's one thing about growing older that's as puzzling as hell to me. My subjective sense of time is starting to get distorted, and each succeeding year seems noticeably shorter than the one before. If I live long enough, the years will eventually seem to have zero length, and then even move into negative durations -- I'll be able to fondly remember the year 2001 five years before it arrives. Anyway, it doesn't seem all that long ago to me, but my good friend Charlotte has just called to inform me (for the second time) that it's been long enough since her last issue of Anvil, and wants to know when the fanzine review column will be ready for her next issue. Her most recent call caught me just as I was making plans to travel to Florida this March for baseball spring training, where I hope to get a few more autographs of major league umpires for my collection. Ever since I was a little kid I've enjoyed watching baseball games, but all my friends thought it was unusual that instead of Mickey Mantle or Willie Mays, my hero was umpire Jocko Conlon. I don't know what that says about me, but maybe it does explain why I'm reviewing fanzines right now, instead of publishing one.

All this instant nostalgia about innings long past brings me to the first fanzine waiting in the on-deck circle, THEN, a fan history work-in-progress from British fan Rob Hansen. I have in my hands issue number two, published in March 1989, which covers the history of British fandom in the 1950s; issue number one, published in 1988, covered the 1930s and 1940s. Presumably, there will be a third issue this year that will cover the 1950s, and maybe more after that as he works his way through the decades.

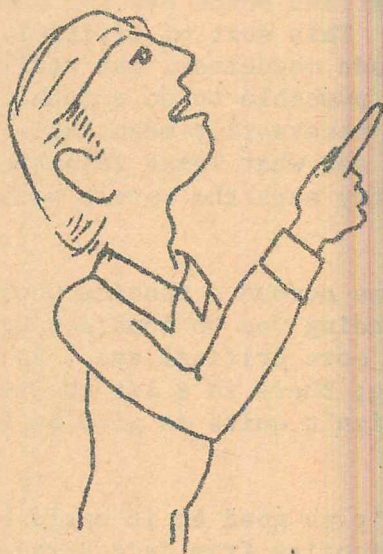
This project apparently began as a sidebar of the most recent British WorldCon, Conspiracy '87. Besides their program book, another publication produced specifically for that convention was a book titled The Story So Far, also by Rob Hansen, which was a short history of Britfandom. I've never been able to obtain a copy of it, so I can't say if THEN is a continuation or an expansion of The Story So Far, but regardless, a lot of research and legwork went into THEN, and it shows. At over 90 pages, THEN covers the decade of the 1950s in plenty of detail, beginning with the entry into fandom of Walt Willis in the late 1940s, and proceeding through mid-1960 when several long-established fan groups and fanzines passed from existence. Along the way, there is description of lots and lots of people, fan organizations, conventions, and events. Among them: the birth of Irish Fandom and Walt Willis's home "Oblique House", a famous fannish gathering place; the International Fantasy Awards, looking like metal rocketships on wooden bases and first presented two years prior to the first Hugos; Willis, Bob Shaw, and The Enchanted Duplicator; the founding of the international fan fund, TAFF, and why only one of the first three delegates actually made the trans-Atlantic trip; Joan Carr, one of fandom's most inspired hoaxes; Arthur Clarke, and Tales from the White Horse / White Hart; the first (1957) British WorldCon. Hansen has gone to great lengths to personally talk to participants of that era, visit locales, and locate newspaper articles and fanzines that described events from that time period. He has undoubtedly saved a lot of fan history that might otherwise have been lost.

So, do I like it? Absolutely. All in all, it's pretty wonderful reading, and I don't think there's anything comparable to it currently being published. Which is not to say that it couldn't have been a better fanzine, though. THEN reminds me a lot of one of those old-time theatrical radio programs; no images of what's unfolding are provided, so you have to visualize them yourself. Here, there are pages upon pages of continuous narrative, without any visual breaks for the reader. I realize that including photographs would have been prohibitively expensive if not technically impossible, since this is a mimeographed fanzine obviously produced on a limited budget. I'm still a little disappointed though, that some of the fanart from the era, caricatures of famous fans, and reproductions of convention badges and the like that Hansen must have uncovered weren't reproduced in the body of the fanzine (a few of them were included as a collage on the front cover). I expect this will be corrected and more after all the research and writing are finally done, since the material presented here seems only too destined to be preserved someday in book form. And I hope it is; a collected and re-edited The Story So Far / THEN will make a good companion volume to All Our Yesterdays and other similar books about fan history. Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to the next installment.

Another fanzine that's worth getting is Pat Mueller's Pirate Jenny, which has just reached it's fourth issue and is thus eligible for a Hugo nomination (as she reminds us in her editorial). While I personally don't think I'd classify it as one of the top five fanzines of the year, this is a competently written and edited fan publication, and I wouldn't be surprised to see it on the short list come July.

Pirate Jenny is yet another example of a desktop-publishing layout fanzine, something that seems to be sweeping fanzine fandom like a storm. In the past, you may recall, I've made the statement that, invariably, the contents of such

fanzines seem only rarely live up to their appearance. This fanzine, however, is one of the exceptions, with pretty good writing throughout. The first article, a humorous yet incisive little piece called "Why Artists Starve" by B. Ware, is an example of how illustration (and to a lesser extent, layout) should be used to enhance the written word; here, the artwork more than just complements the text, it is used to actually tell part of the story so that the narrative can be made much more concise without losing any content. Not very many fanzines seem to use this approach, of having fanart specially commissioned for fanwriting planned for publication; I suppose it must take a lot longer to publish an issue that way, with the built-in delay of sending a copy of the article to your favorite fanartist and then impatiently (I would guess) waiting for fanart to arrive in the mail, but the end result is almost always more pleasing.



" Ah! MEANING! "

4.10.85

Anyway, there are three other articles in this issue of PJ, and they are all equally well-written. Dennis Virzi's "SF According to Me", a parody of Jackie Mason's "The World According to Me", to me reads more like a blend of Andy Rooney and Bob Shaw's "Serious Scientific Speech". I was always about a step-and-a-half behind the narrative, but I suppose that's what's intended. Allen Varney and Pat also each have pleasant, if not really SF-related series of essays reprinted in this issue of PJ. I especially enjoyed Pat's recollection of her past year, of her experiences during and after her pregnancy; in fact, PJ seems as much a personalzine as a general interest fanzine to me because of Pat's talent to write interestingly about herself.

On the other hand, there seems to be a conflict between style and substance on use and ill-use of illustration and layout after you read beyond the first article in the issue. Layout in particular seems heavily overstylized throughout, with liberal use of white space for no good reason other than terminal cuteness, maybe (I offer the first page of Pat's "Tempus Fugit" article as an example). In Allen Varney's "Blown Steam" collection of reprinted essays from a Texas newspaper, accompanying artwork (and I note that there's no listing of artist credits, so I don't know who drew it) is limited to cartoon illustration of the first letter of the first word in each mini-essay; these illos are amusing, but bear no relation whatsoever to what the essay is about (an example: The "Ryder's Clown Audition" essay begins with the letter "H", which is drawn like a football goalpost complete with a referee signalling "touchdown". How this relates to a Clown College I can't imagine). The same criticism applies to Pat's article, which uses random bits of generic clip art that don't seem to have any bearing to her narrative. (And why clip art? Were all the fanartists on strike?)

Also, in Dennis Virzi's article, there are no accompanying illustrations at all except for the photo on the first page of the article. Instead, each page has one of those annoying blurbs or interlinos or whatever the hell they're called, where a sentence or two is taken out of context and boxed off in large print, right there smack in the middle of the page. This sort of artificial attention-getter I tolerate and expect to see in trade magazines, but really shouldn't be needed in a fanzine. Just because it's possible to do something like that with desktop publishing software doesn't necessarily mean that it should be done. Instead, it would have been nice to see what Texas fanartist Teddy Harvia would have done with that space; I'm pretty sure the result would have been memorable, at the very least.

Am I nitpicking? Possibly. But when you come across a fanzine whose editor has one Hugo award under her belt and is reminding you to consider her for another, you tend to use higher standards and a more critical eye. As I said earlier, this is a fanzine that's worth getting; there is a lot to like about it. But I can't help having the feeling that it isn't quite as good as it could be or should be.

Another fanzine that's worth getting, and also isn't as good as it could be is Sweetness & Light, a new Australian fan news/opinionzine from Jack Herman. Normally, I don't review newszines; unless they are more than a little off the beaten path, there's not much really to say about them other than mentioning that they do indeed contain fan news. S&L, however, is not your ordinary newszine, in part because Jack Herman is apparently not someone who keeps his feelings to himself on things he feels strongly about, such as WorldCons. An example of this is his "Worldcon Follies" tirade directed at Noreascon 3 for incompetency in administering the Hugo Award nominations, and at U.S. fans who

criticized the 1987 British Worldcon for slowness in mailing ballots when the 1989 WorldCon (Noreascon 3) apparently did the same thing to its Australian members. Jack's style seems to be that it's not always possible or desirable to keep personal opinion out of straight reportage, and the result is information presented from a slightly different perspective and a fanzine that's never dull to read. Other interesting and out-of-the-ordinary features in S&L that you probably wouldn't expect to see in any plain vanilla newszine are commentary about the history of Australian Fandom (by Leigh Edmonds), and even a Fan Fund trip report (by John Foyster). There are also lengthy and detailed reviews of books, fanzines, and movies that go beyond the minimal blurb reviews you see in all too many fanzines nowadays.

In fact, the opinion and features really more than overshadow the news of the issue, to the point that maybe it's inaccurate to really classify S&L as a newszine, after all. Maybe that's what intriguing me about this fanzine -- there's so little fan news reported that either Jack is dismissing much of what comes to him as unnewsworthy, or else there's just not one hell of a lot going on in the Australian fan community. S&L also apparently covers only Australian fan news; I didn't expect to see reports of North American doings (apparently Jack expects that his readers subscribe to File 770), but I was a little surprised that no mention was made of anything going on in New Zealand, since Australian and New Zealand fandoms have many cross-connections. As for appearance, S&L is reproduced by mimeo; actually, the appearance is pretty good, though that nice crisp Helvetica laser font is pretty well wasted after it's first scanned onto electrostencil and then silkscreened (at times faintly) onto porous mimeo paper. There are also no cartoons or other graphics to break up the text, although a desktop publishing computer program has been used for the fanzine layout. This fanzine feels like it's being done on a tight budget. I only hope that it is still being published, since I haven't seen one since the July 1989 issue.

Anyway, if you're looking to find out what's going on Down Under, S&L is probably the best source of Australian fan news I've come across yet. It's not pretentious, it's definitely not overblown, and it complements other fannish newszines like File 770 pretty well. It's worth subscribing to (assuming it still exists).

This has turned out to be an around-the-world fanzine review column -- first England, then Texas, then Australia. Seems like a good idea to go full circle and wind up back in England again, so I'll close out by telling you about a fanzine that probably does make my "top five of the year" list (along with THEN #2) -- Q #23, from British fan Chuch Harris. If you manage to get hold of a copy of THEN #2, you'll find numerous mention made of Chuch Harris, who came into fandom about the same time as Walt Willis, in the late '40s or early '50s. He and Willis edited Hyphen, which was twice nominated for the fanzine Hugo award in the 1950s, and is still used as a yardstick to compare against newer fanzines. I had never run across a copy of Q before; no real surprise, since the largest copy count for any issue previous to this one was only 25 (according to Chuch). Anyway, this issue (which had a copy count over 200) owes its wider distribution to Chuch's attendance at the 1989 Corflu fanzine fans' convention, and is a trip report of Chuch's visit to America.

Now, I've read plenty of fannish trip reports before, and many of them are not all that interesting; too often the writer gets stuck into a mode where for pages and pages all you get is "Then I visited with so-and-so, and after that I talked to so-and-so..." where name dropping starts getting in the way of what is

new or insightful about the trip. While there are a lot of people gratuitously mentioned for no other seeming reason except for them to see their names in print, this trip report is still pretty memorable, because of the way it looks at life in the States from a point of view of someone who had apparently never visited here before. This is a voyage of discovery and along the way, Chuch shares his surprise about things like: strawberries being served as garnishes rather than only as a dessert; that you can travel on a train for a night and a day, and still be only half way between Minneapolis and Seattle (trains in Britain are much faster than Amtrak); that tumbleweeds exist not only in the movies; that jalapino peppers are hot! The skillful blending of sense-of-wonder into the events of the trip makes for fascinating reading. Even the fanzine itself is well produced, with amusing illos specially drawn by ATom that add to the overall enjoyment.

In short, this is the type of trip report where you can't wait to turn the page to see what happens next. It's an enjoyable look at the American way of life from someone who's a good enough writer to point out the differences in an amusing manner. Fan fund winners who plan on writing trip report should read this first. I don't know if I'll ever see another Q (I was lucky to come across this one); I hope reader response to the issue will convince Chuch to keep this issue's copy count next time he publishes, if for nothing else so we indigent fanzine fans in the States can see what real fanzine writing is.

Well, now that I've circumnavigated the fanzine world I can finally get back to planning my Florida baseball trip. Seven games in seven days -- I can't wait. Huh? What? Lock-out!? What's this about a lock-out?

Issues Reviewed:

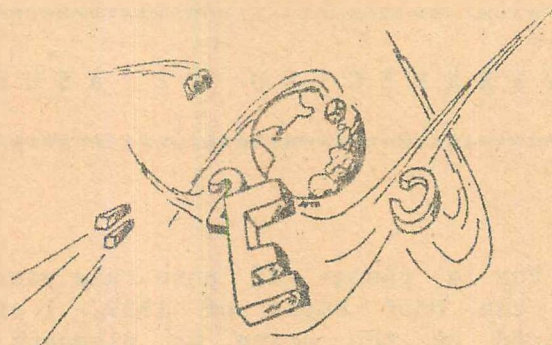
THEN (Issue #2 /March 1989/ reviewed), from Rob Hansen, 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB, England; availability not listed, so write him first to see if any previous issues are left, or to find out when the next installment will be published.

Pirate Jenny (Issue #4 /Winter 1989/ reviewed), from Pat Mueller, 618 Westridge, Duncanville, Texas 75116; available for \$3 per issue or \$10 for 4 issues, arranged trade, accepted contribution, or editorial whim.

Sweetness & Light (Issues #2 & 3 /June & July 1989/ reviewed), from Jack Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, Sydney 2006, Australia; available for \$1 per issue, article, art, letter, trade, old zines, older stamps, and editorial whim.

Q (Issue #23 /November 1989/ reviewed), from Chuch Harris, 32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants NN11 5EB, England; availability not listed, so write him first to see what it will take to get on his mailing list.

((Ed. note: Mr. Bivens isn't always this agreeable, and probably won't be for much longer now that it looks like Baseball Spring Training might be cancelled by a labor dispute. But he should be back to normal again in a few weeks. Unless, that is, somebody sends him another R. Lionel Fanthorpe book to review. And yes, he'll be back again with more fanzine reviews next issue.))



The Last Word:

This issue has been a bitch to put together. I had to totally drop out the report of the latest Mafiaette initiation, a book review and a lot of the letters. But I'm not complaining... too much material is ever so much better than the alternative, and I've got a head start on #52, which will probably come out in October. Are you listening, Buck and Roy and Patrick? That means the deadline is the first of October. Why, who knows, the promised article from BoSh might even show up!

After the Christmas that would not die (I had company off and on for a month), I went to Chattacon. Well, actually a bunch of people from Birmingham did, and about a thousand others, too. It didn't snow, rain, or sleet, and it's a good thing as it was held at the Choo-Choo, which is a multi-building complex. We had to walk what seemed like miles in freezing temperatures from building to building. Programming was in one, con suite in another, parties in still yet a third. The restaurants were in the main building, so one night Pat Gibbs, Penny Frierson, Hank Reinhardt and friend and I walked down the street to a hole-in-the-wall Italian restaurant. The food was good and cheap, and the company was marvelous although I had to break up a fight between Hank and Penny once.

Patrick and I shared a strong sense of de je'vu when we walked into this place. We have a suspicion that we have visited it before when attending one of the Zielke's St. Pat's Day pub crawls. I asked Bill about that later and he said we were right.

In February the third annual ConTInuity was held here in Birmingham. It seemed to be successful. At least, the attendees had a good time and the guests told me they did. I was TM, and it was scary. I was real nervous at opening ceremonies, but the masquerade went swimmingly thanks to all the preparatory work done by Sue Thorne, and closing was wild and crazy and fun. GoHs were Rick McCammon and Jennifer Roberson. Buck and Juanita Coulson were Special Guests, along with Doug Chaffee. I was on two panel discussions with Buck and enjoyed them. I hope they had a good time, too.

I'm going to Magnum Opus Con later this month. I've never been to one, but I said I would help entertain the populace and then my name appeared on the flyers so I have no choice but to go! Then Kubla in May and DSC in June... lots of good fannish stuff to look forward to, and if anything happens there that I can write about, I will....

cp --- 3/6/90

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 * UNEXPECTED PLEASURES *
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-- Patrick J. Gibbs

For a change of pace this year, instead of attempting to pronounce what were the best books of 1989, I offer for your consideration the books that appeared on the scene as pleasant surprises. That excludes all sequels and books that complete a trilogy, dekology or whatever. Also absent from my considerations are the latest bestsellers from such talented and prolific authors as David Brin and Orson Scott Card, who seem to produce perennial "hits". As soon as you see one of theirs on a best seller list, you can put it on your "books to buy" list. You do not need any tip from me.

Having said all that, I will start out with a book by the most prolific writer in science fiction. THE ASIMOV CHRONICLES by Isaac Asimov (Dark Harvest \$21.95) is a treasure. To celebrate his fifty years of writing, Dark Harvest, a small press publisher near Chicago, has put together fifty of his favorite stories with eleven illustrations by Ron Lindahn and Val Lakey Lindahn. For the record, credit for editing is given to Martin H. Greenberg, although the book is sadly lacking any anecdotal material. That must be the price to pay to squeeze a story from each year of Asimov's career. Nobody would normally say that a book 678 pages long was too short, but it is. Asimov's classics are there, such as "Robbie", "Nightfall", and "The Martian Way". No science fiction library should be without it, and who expected it?

Having spent all that time on a retrospective of Asimov's career, I have the temerity to suggest to you FOUNDATION'S FRIENDS, again edited by Martin H. Greenberg (Tor \$19.95). I do not have a great enthusiasm for novels written by journeymen authors "in the universe of Famous Author". FOUNDATION'S FRIENDS is not anything like that. Going down the list of contributors, there are Robert Silverberg, Frederik Pohl, Hal Clement, Harry Harrison, Orson Scott Card, Connie Willis and more. Masters all! They all write stories in Asimov's various universes, especially those of the Foundation and Robot stories. Not necessarily "great" SF, but buy it for just the pure pleasure of good stories in future worlds we have grown to love.

I may sound like I am wallowing in nostalgia, but I was not expecting to see GRUMBLES FROM THE GRAVE by Robert A. Heinlein (Del Rey \$19.95). It is a collection of about thirty years of letters by RAH from 1939. Heinlein was by force of circumstances a private man in his later years. After the publication of STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND, he was a celebrity far beyond "traditional" SF fandom. His appearance at the MidAmeriCon, the 1976 (?) WorldCon, is the last GOH appearance I can recall. So GRUMBLES gives us rare insights into the most productive years of his career. How did he deal with his editors? What did he think of the uproar over STARSHIP TROOPERS and STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND? As the copyrights for his works come up for renewal, new editions are going to appear with more of Heinlein's original text. This book will be part of the consideration of his work as to how much he needed good editors to publish great novels.

Now that we have entered the last decade of the century (according to popular belief, not the year, because there was no year "0"), people are looking forward to the new millennium, 2000. John Kessel has taken the psychology of a new millennium as a point of departure for GOOD NEWS FROM OUTER SPACE (Tor \$18.95). Mr. Kessel is a professor of English literature at North Carolina State University and this is his first solo novel. While satirizing some of the far-out UFO cults and televangelists, he gives a "what if" novel that entertains while it speculates.

R.A. MacAvoy has a well-earned reputation as a great fantasy writer with TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON and A TRIO FOR LUTE, just to name two. THE THIRD EAGLE (Bantam \$4.50) is a book of the far future. MacAvoy is not going confined herself to fantasy. Wanbli is of an aboriginal race on the planet Neunacht and a member of the warrior class, the Wacaan. In performing his duties as a body guard for a member of the human ruling class he comes into a lot of money and decides to try his fortunes off-planet. The Wacaan have some resemblance to the American Indian and many events in the story resonate with some the traditions of the Sioux. Wanbli is a very engaging character and his travels as a martial artist in an interstellar civilization eventually come full circle. Ms. MacAvoy reportedly uses her initials as a homage to Robert A. Heinlein and this book carries on his tradition.

Jack McDevitt's first novel, THE HERCULES TEXT, was a masterful portrayal of scientists at work on humanity's first contact with an alien culture. The wait for A TALENT FOR WAR (Ace \$3.95) has been a long one, but well worth it. Where is the surprise? After the last few years of "military SF", A TALENT FOR WAR is a consummate SF novel about the warrior in society and yet it does not have a single battle scene. The legendary Christopher Sim sacrificed himself, his starship and his men to stave off an alien invasion into human space over 9,000 years in our future. Many years later, Alex Benedict starts researching the factual details of the last battle. When things don't add up, his research leads to the reality not found in any history. I hesitate to give too many details which would spoil the suspense. I can strongly recommend this book. It is far too limiting to pigeonhole it as military SF. A TALENT FOR WAR is more like SF about history.

I am running out of space with one book left. HYPERION by Dan Simmons is just coming out in paperback (Bantam \$4.95). It appeared in hardcover in 1989. It is a surprise in the making because I have just started it. However, in going over the books published in 1989, the notices for HYPERION struck me as the most promising in a less than bountiful year for great novels. HYPERION hearkens back to Canterbury Tales in structure as it relates the stories of seven "pilgrims" on their way to the Time Tombs on the planet Hyperion. Be forewarned, this is the first book of a two book set. THE FALL OF HYPERION is just now appearing in hardcover and trade paperback. From what I have seen so far, it is well written and ambitious. This is what SF is supposed to be about. It reminds me in a way of SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD by Orson Scott Card. There is a lot of time to invest in reading a 482 page book that is only half the story, but I am going for it.

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 * THE ANVIL CHORUS *
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Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M6S 3L6, Canada

As to why I passed through Birmingham for the first time last summer, that's easy: usually I fly to Florida and this would make it difficult (not to mention painful) for me to "drop in" on you. This time I drove and a quick check of the map showed that the route to Florida via Birmingham was only a couple of hours longer than the normal route I'd take. Besides, we'd only met briefly a couple of times before and I wanted the chance to chat with you in a more leisurely setting. Many thanks for the splendid job you did in upholding the reputation of Southern hospitality!

I'm not quite of Buck's generation but I certainly recognize the names Gypsy Rose Lee and Sally Rand. In fact, I also met Sally Rand. It was at the 1976 Worldcon in Kansas City where Heinlein was Guest of Honour. I was one of the Masquerade judges and Sally Rand was another and it was Sally who came up with the rather off-colour title for one of the categories so we could award a prize to an attractive and rather naked lady. And, it seems to me, she did a fan dance at one point in the convention, at the beginning of one of the major events. Of course that was also the Worldcon at which Patia did a strip show during the Masquerade break and horrified a large segment of fandom so it's notorious for several reasons. As we used to say in the Midwest: Ken Keller has a lot to answer for!

I'm in practically complete agreement with Roy's fanzine reviews this issue and it's good to see someone taking a closer in-depth look at current zines. I was also pleased to read that he'll be back next issues since ipso facto this implies the existence of ANVIL 51. And since the next "nice round number" is probably 100 this suggests we'll all be enjoying ANVIL for a good few years to come!

I must thank Taras Wolansky for opening my eyes as to what makes for a good letter of comment. All these years I've thought a loc should be amusing, interesting and/or informative and it turns out that the criterion for loc publication is being "a painstaking writer." Armed with this blinding insight I'll definitely stake more pains in my future letters since the object behind writing a loc to not to provide feedback for the editor but to get published, right?

Teddy Harvia's a better fan than I am. (Hell, most fans are better fans than I am.) I don't mind a little snapping and snarling in the pages of a fanzine every now and then, as long as some control is exercised. Heck, a little "dark sarcasm in the fanzine" has even been known to bring down a few walls and a couple of people I've exchanged barbs with have gone on to become good friends. Ninety five percent sweetness and light and a leavening of acerbity now and then make fandom a fun place to be.

It's a comment on the way language changes that when I read that title about you being the "prima donna" of American fandom I instinctively took it in the pejorative sense. I can't recall the last time I saw it used in it's original context (probably because I can't recall the last time I read anything

to do with opera.) It's a good thing you're more cultured than I am.

Well, I'm delighted you published #50 (although you could always have justified stopping at 49 by claiming it summed you up properly. It is, after all, a perfect square. And I can't believe I typed that to someone who keeps a loaded .357 under her mimeo) and hope to see frequent if sometimes irregular issues from you in the future. ANVIL has a make-up and an air that is unique in today's fandom and fandom would be a lesser place without it.

((Well, Mike, about my interpretation of being called a "prima donna", I am a literal-minded person. I also consider the source, and the fact that the person who said it is kindly disposed towards me taken together with the literal translation of the Italian, I could be nothing but flattered, and embarrassed by the flattery. [I also considered the source of that "perfect square" remark... Only someone as cute as you could get away with that!]) I have gotten into trouble by my own words being interpreted, or misinterpreted in a less than kindly, jocular fashion. In such cases, my best bet is to say nothing else about the matter, as the more one says, the worse it gets!))

Buck Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47347

Some time back I wrote a fan letter to mystery writer Paula Gosling, who does very humorous mysteries with characters that I like. Just got back a return letter and a copy of a science fiction (or fantasy) novel she wrote. British pb, though she says it was published here, but also written under a pseudonym. A rather obvious pseudonym, taken from the lead character of one of her mysteries, though I probably wouldn't have noticed it if I'd seen on the stands. Now that I know who it's by, I'll happily read it. I think that Fritz Leiber was right when he said that outside of science fiction, writers don't get any fan mail. They all seem so delighted when they do get a letter.

((Alright, Buck, what is the pseudonym... and the name of the book?))

Not all Americans drive around in flashy new cars; Ladislav's is newer than ours by 2 years, and I'm sure has less mileage on it. (Well, probably it doesn't have any mileage — kilometerage, anyone?) Juanita and I haven't had a new car since we were married in 1954; we just update our used cars when the old one wears out. (Though I did think it a bit much when a used-car dealer asked us to park around back of his garage so people wouldn't see our old junker in his lot.) And our last "foreign holiday" was in 1979, and paid for by a fan fund; we couldn't have afforded it. Of course, we likely have to go farther than he does to reach a foreign country. (We do admit to having a videotaper, though.)

Teddy Harvia, P. O. Box 905, Euless, TX 76039

Your fan writing-reading was amusing. (See: Mafiaette Reunion\SciCon report.) I myself never wanted to be someone else when I grew up. I never wanted to grow up.

If you can't have art on the cover of your fanzine, art credits are a great substitute. Steve Fox's barbarian girl fillo was a change of pace from his usual style, having a minimum number of lines to evoke an alien environment. Not to mention the minimum amount of skins covering her body!

((Yeah, well, I was gonna have a cover but found that, due to crossed communications, the particular piece I was going to use had been given to another... *sob*... Nothing else on hand spoke to me, saying "Use me, use me!", and not wanting to lean on my local artists for something original, clever and witty right now, I improvised. In order to avoid these same circumstances, I have commissioned the cover art not only for #51, but for #52, and it's only December!))

Dick Lynch, P. O. Box 1270, Germantown, MD 20875 (note new zip code)

I was hoping you wouldn't fold ANVIL, not with the new decade beginning and everything. ANVIL was one of the first fanzines I started receiving regularly, and I'd miss it if it stopped appearing.

I'm sort of startled by Buck Coulson's rhetorical question, "I wonder how many of today's fans have ever heard of either Gypsy [Rose Lee] or Sally [Rand]?" Just the implication that there might be lots of younger people out there who haven't means that I must be getting closer to Old Phart-dom than I thought.

Also, I was amused by the illo of the two arguing rats, right there in the middle of Roy Bivens' somewhat argumentative fanzine review column. Did you plan it that way, or was it one of those fortunate coincidences? ((You're the second person to remark on that illo. Roy noticed it, too. Yeah, I try to match illos with text, but don't always have something so appropriate.))

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740

Roy G. Bivens is very kind and astute and perceptive (i.e. he said something nice about me in his review column). However, the reviews this time make me a bit nervous. I'm always afraid criticism of this sort will prove to be the straw that breaks the fanzine editor's back. Alan White has already decided not to produce any more giant Delineators so it doesn't matter in his case. But suppose the editors of Pulsar! or Fosfax read their reviews on a day when they were already feeling upset over how much they're spending in time and money on their fanzines, and impulsively decided to end publication because a reviewer complained in this manner? There are so few large, high quality fanzines remaining to us nowadays and I feel the individuals who are responsible for their existence need all the tender, loving care they can get, even by those who wouldn't edit a fanzine in just the way they're doing it. Criticism of the policies of the New York Times or National Enquirer isn't apt to cause those publications to go out of existence. It could have that effect on a fanzine when the criticism is based solely on the critic's particular vision of what a fanzine should be like.

((Nah, they're tough. They're Real Men -- they can take it.))



Lloyd Penney, 412-4 Lisa Street, Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6T 4B6

I'm not sure exactly of Brian Earl Brown's point in talking about articles in Torus, but the article on the possibility of censorship in Canada should be of interest to all who value freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The USA does not have the exclusive rights to those phrases, or to those freedoms. Torus 6 contains an article from a Canadian fan who recently returned from living in South Africa for some years. He details the ridiculous levels of censorship there, and who shouldn't be interested in that? This kind of thing could and should also appear in Locus and SF Chronicle because Canadian fans read those publications, too, and censorship anywhere affects the entire field.

Skel, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, U.K.

I've been trying to figure out what happened to my LoC on the previous issue. You don't mention it, so I went to check what date I sent it. It wasn't in my files. That makes two places it ain't, your records and mine... but I can remember it so well. So next I check the limbo files on my disk, and check the limbo files on an old backup disk. Where it also wasn't. The evidence is irrefutable - I didn't write that LoC... but I can remember it so well!!!

I can recall responding to Buck Coulson's piece on writers and fans with the same names by telling you how I once bought a remaindered hardback of an "alternate history" story by Frederick Pohl, only to discover that it was a real history book (and very boring too), but an alternate Fred Pohl. There were other points I remembered too, but by now it was becoming obvious to me what had happened. I'd read and enjoyed the zine, mentally composed the LoC, but allowed myself to be lulled into a false sense of security by your stated intent to fold up your publishing tent and steal away into the night. "Oh, no rush to write that LoC", I thought. "Plenty of time to get around to that. Better LoC this other zine first." And gradually seemingly more urgent fannish obligations piled up and obscured it from the baleful gaze of that portion of my conscience that is supposed to see, if not every sparrow fall, at least every zine sneaked unLoCced into the bookcases.

See what happens when you tell fibs about folding your fnz?

Eva Hauser, Na cihadle 55, 160 00, Praha 6, Czechoslovakia (Jan. 28, 1990)

We are so glad for our revolution. I am sending you one snapshot and my personal account of it, which I wrote for Lada Peska's KONTAKT. (The photo shows lots of warmly dressed people of all ages surrounding a heap of cut flower bouquets, small Czech flags and lighted candles. It is daytime, and there are commercial and/or apartment buildings in the background.)

We have founded a new 'official' SF journal, IKARIE, which will give a good view of world and Czech SF, of authors, books, films, events, etc. I shall also work as one of IKARIE's editors. I am so glad: before the revolution, I could only dream of doing SF professionally!

But: we have problems with paying Western authors in dollars, as our money, Czechoslovak crowns, are not convertible. Some authors are so kind that they let us publish their stories and agree not to get anything for them, but I

think it's not the best solution. Why couldn't they use their crows right here, in our country? In August, there will be a Worldcon in Haag. Possibly the authors or their friends could come to Czechoslovakia before or after the Worldcon and spend the money. Could you please tell Bob Shaw or other authors of this possibility? You wouldn't have to worry about anything, our fans will be pleased, delighted, enthusiastic if they could act as your guides and hosts: for example, me!

Our relatives who visited from the U.S. last summer expected no one to speak English here, but they soon learned that at least taxi-drivers, hotel workers and some shop assistants can speak English. A lot of SF fans have mastered English as they wanted to read some good sci-fi and there weren't enough in translation.

Catherine Mintz, 1810 S. Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103

I was interested in Patrick Gibbs comments on CYTEEN. It is an interesting book, but the characters are not, somehow, appealing. I think part of this may be that the child growing into a young woman who is the central character is too easily drawn into the process of becoming the older woman whose clone she is? Surely a normal teenager would wake up some mornings with the urge to show them all and become her own person. Even if she chose to conceal the impulse to reach the bait of power? And I can't understand why her clever, retiring uncle turns on her so decisively. It seemed whipped up to bring the already long story to some conclusion, instead of flowing naturally from the plot. But I enjoyed it, anyway.

Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107

Fie, Charlotte for telling poor Glicksohn that your .357 was under the seat of the car. Probably turned his beard white and he may never set foot south of the border again. Reminds me of when Ulf Westblom and a couple of other Swedish fen spent a few days with us some years back. They were gathering background material for a western story they were writing (in Swedish yet). Ulf informed me one morning that he had heard gunshots during the night. Of course, I said, this is the Wild West, you know.

"How many of today's fans ever heard of Gypsy or Sally?" Buck Coulson muses. I like to think that I am still one of today's fans, although maybe a bit faded, and I remember Gypsy and Sally. And Tempest and Jenny and a few others. The question is how many of today's fen even know what a burleyque is.

"Oligophrenically" is a good word. Something which might get picked up for fannish usage if enough fen look it up. Wonder how Eva Hauser stumbled across it as it is not a word one would find in your basic English as a second language course.

No, our masquerades are not like Eva Hauser described but "masquerade ball" is another fannish delusion. We do not have masquerade balls. We have only costume shows where a few people come out, one at a time, and parade around in some sort of costume. (Or not, as the case may be. I recall one Westercon where one of the categories was "Most Naked Lady". I doubt that we could get by with something like that these days. The winner carried a vase.) A real

masquerade ball is something entirely different from shows put on at US conventions and it sounds very much like that is what the Czechs had. Maybe one of these days some US concon might try it. It would have to be at one of the smaller conventions, though. It might be interesting to see a couple of hundred fen in costume dancing and mingling.

Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, Northern Ireland BT21 OPD

I enjoyed Eva's reports and agree with you about the congeniality of the Czechs. I was very taken with a newspaper background story about the aftermath of the uprising, in which the reporter mentioned that having ordered a steak in a Prague restaurant, he asked if he could have some seasoning with it. "This month, freedom," said the waiter, "Next month, horseradish."

I must thank Buck Coulson for enriching my store of useless but fascinating information. The fact that Sally Rand is Martha Beck's sister-in-law is the most interesting such item to come to my attention since Teresa Nielsen Hayden pointed out that "episcopal" is an anagram of PepsiCola. More seriously (but not very) it illustrates what Chuck Harris pointed out was part of the fascination of fandom, that it is like a great unfinished jigsaw puzzle; every phrase and every snippet of information being of value in helping to fill in the big picture. Anyway, I have filed away the relationship between Martha Beck and Sally Rand for my proposed fannish version of Trivial Pursuit, which is destined to boldly pursue triviality into regions where mundane mankind has not pursued before.

I was impressed by Roy Bivens' fmz reviews, and noted with awe his suggestion that Harry Warner and I have developed the letter of comment into a new art form. You realize the implications of this. There will be a special Hugo category for LoCsmiths, and at every convention part of the Art Show will be set aside for them, and original letters signed by Harry and Mike Glicksohn and me will change hands for vast sums. I can hardly wait. It will be a great thing for you fmz editors, too, because of course a copy of the fanzine commented on will have to accompany each letter, or signed reproduction thereof, like a frame. This will greatly increase the market value of the fanzine in question. I will let you have my bill for this letter in due course.

I take Jeanne Mealy's point about the smugness of some types of literary allusion. There is however, as we know in fandom, a lot of pleasure to be derived from the recognition of obscure allusions. Wordsworth, who had probably never even heard of Courtney's boat, went so far as to suggest that the nature of aesthetic enjoyment lies in this type of recognition; the recognition, as he put it, of similarity in dissimilarity and of dissimilarity in similarity. (Which might almost be an explanation of the appeal of the pun.) (And of Chuck's fannish jigsaw.) The trick is to present the allusion in a welcoming rather than an excluding manner, a thing which good faneds do with apparent ease.

Alexis A. Gilliland, 4030 Eighth Street South, Arlington, VA 22204

Names. We got a letter from Willis Gilliland, who has tracked down 4357 Gillilands in the US and for a modest sum offered to sell "Miss Alexis Gilliland" the results of his labor of love. No, thanks. Still, the name

does crop up now and then. A physical chemist at MIT, for instance. And on the list of Medal of Honor winners is a Charlie Gilliland (my son's name is Charles) who was wounded in Korea, and volunteered to hold off the enemy with a BAR so his unit could escape.

Gypsy Rose Lee made it into the big time by being what we would not call a stand-up comic whose gimmick was that she took off most of her clothes while doing a first rate comic routine. Probably her act would play real well today, because she understood that it was comedy that was the draw, and not nudity. Then as now, plenty of pretty girls with nice figures showed it all and never got anywhere.

Chuq Von Rospach, 35111-F Newark Blvd. Suite 255, Newark, CA 94560

A couple of comments and clarifications on the discussion of OTHERREALMS. If it makes Roy Bivens feel any better, I was born and raised in the L.A. area and I still go down and visit my parents there (only in the winter, when the smog is at a tolerable level and it isn't broiling hot). So while I'm a Northern type now, my roots are down there, so he's half-right. It could be worse. I can't tell you how many times people have tried to tell me I lived in New Jersey...

To sort of respond for Roy on Jeanne Mealy's comments, I appreciated his comments about what OTHERREALMS really is. It was a valid point and there were a number of conflicting signals in the fanzine itself that Roy brought up. There's a good reason for that, too, since I was at one point seriously considering the question of whether to take OTHERREALMS into the semi-pro world and go play with LOCUS and SF CHRON for a while. This led to a bit of publication schizophrenia as some of the semi-professional precursors started sneaking into the fanzine. I've always tried to run OTHERREALMS as a professional a publication as I could, because I didn't see any reason to compromise what I was trying to do with it 'just' because it was a fanzine.

Around the end of 1988 I came to the very sane decision that trying to take OR semi-pro was a stupid idea in the first place; with the specter of a recession in the SF publishing industry, starting a magazine that would be depending on publisher advertising dollars was suicide. It was both heartening and disturbing to read Andy Porter's editorial a couple of months later about how he woke up one morning and lost much of his advertising: I feel sorry for Andy



(and can sympathize with his position) but I was thrilled to know that I'd saved myself from financial dismemberment. Anyone who wants to know why you don't want to publish a magazine except for fun, catch me at a convention sometime and I'll show you the numbers. They'll boggle your brain.

Anyway, back on subject, Roy's column was the first to mention the ambiguities in my presentation of OR, and it made me go back and re-think how I was doing some things and to rewrite some of the editorial material to better match reality. It was very helpful to me, and it's nice to be able to say "thanks."

Re: Sheila/Sheryl Birkhead. Mark that up as a mistake on my part. Typos in names seem to be the bane of my existence right now. There were, to my dismay, three *more* names typoed in OR #25, including my wife's.

I agree with Roy on both PULSAR! and FOSFax. I *wish* I had the production values of PULSAR! I try to make OR as professional a publication as I can, but PULSAR! has actually made it to a level of professionalism I can appreciate. From the point of view of someone who publishes a similar zine, it's gorgeous.

FOSFax could definitely do with some trimming of the letters; on the other hand, FOSFax *is* the letters, and they'd be walking a fine line between trimming off some of the fat and ripping out the heart. ... they're probably better off not editing and taking the chance of snipping off the wrong parts or accidentally changing the context of a letter. It could be improved, but only at the risk of screwing up and maybe ruining the zine. It's a choice that needs to be thought over.

Ben Schilling, 45605 Fox Lane E, Apt 206, Utica, Michigan 48087-4228

I can see why Mike Glicksohn would be a bit worried about your pistol. Canada has strong gun control laws, especially covering handguns. If you had tried to enter Canada like that, you would probably have been refused entry and almost certainly would have had the pistol confiscated. You can go to jail for possession of a handgun in Canada.

Roy Bivens believes National League baseball to be better than American League baseball? Let me know when the NL goes back to playing on real grass, instead of that plastic stuff that allows a bad hop to become an inside the park "home run". The least that any NL team plays on plastic is 42, while ten of the fourteen AL teams cannot play more than 27. Even the AL plastic teams don't play more than 100 games on that stuff. The average NL team plays over half its games on plastic turf. If he complains about the DH rule, the pitcher is as different from the rest of a baseball team as the goalie is from a hockey team. Someone else serves the goalie's penalties unless he's ejected.

I'd comment on the locs, but you seem to have at least one person on your team who doesn't like that.

((What?? Hey, the team players' opinions are not necessarily those of the captain, er, editor. You can say anything you want to, and I'll edit the letters, O.K.?))

Scott Lee Spence, 422 S. Bernardo Avenue #1, Sunnyvale, CA 94096

You asked where I heard of your zine. Recently I purchased one pound of fanzines from Robert Lichtman. In the stack I received was a copy of ANVIL. I liked it so much that I decided to subscribe. I especially enjoyed Roy's fanzine reviews. I have used it to contact other fanzine publishers and to figure out which zines to avoid. Another aspect I enjoy is finally getting to read something by the legendary and infamous Buck Coulson. But getting to read stories about the Proctor household is about as much fun as reading about the Trimbles. Screwdriver throwing, huh? The poor cop.

Garth Spencer, #3 - 4313 Watson Street, Vancouver, B.C., V5V 3S2, Canada

Don't know why Roy G. Bivens is supposed to come across as a ferocious critic; I've said worse things in quite a neutral mood. Overall, he just sounds like he's saying "Here's the way this, this and this diverge from what I expect of fanzines."

There were a couple of panels at Banffcon that started to close in on just what older fans, or fanzine fans, expect... then backed off. Mike Glicksohn was there. Michael Skeet refused to get specific, I snarled "Oh, come on!!", Glicksohn told me later he really thought I was going to leap up and strangle Skeet. And I was only mildly ticked.

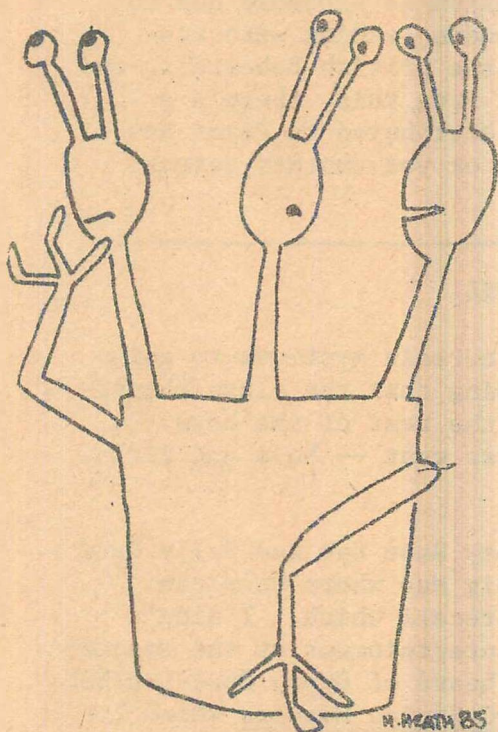
I stumbled on a world of do-it-yourself publishing, humorous articles, personal journalism, and some shared reference; fanzine fandom was pretty nearly what I wanted. But I came upon it fairly late in the game. It's sad, but this is no longer fandom at large, but a ghetto; a fading, and perhaps irrelevant one, to judge from the attitudes of congoers.

Although I don't entirely share Roy's views, I wish I'd had his responses when I was doing more fanpubbing. The most I knew for sure was that my zines were usually acceptable -- or at least inoffensive; I never got a clear guide to others' expectations. And I needed that.

That frustrated need is probably why Glicksohn found me "intense". Do you think I'm intense? Man, I thought I was, like, totally laid-back, y'know. I hardly ever kick over fire hydrants and I've never eaten raw babies where I can be seen. ((Thank goodness.))

Taral. The older I get the more I understand where Taral is coming from. Like Harry Warner, he keeps coming up with references I don't know, and sometimes I should know them. Taral seems to miss the kind of shared world (that) fanzine fandom used to be. But I guess he's got better things to do, now, than to be sardonic about it.

((Fanzine fandom has always been a ghetto. There are some who do it and some who don't. With the advent of convenient copy machines a lot of special interest zines surfaced, and about that time club newsletters began to mail out to the more established, traditional zines. Buck Coulson said he never sent YANDRO to just anybody who asked for it, but kept his mailing list to those whom he knew had an interest in the kind of fandom, and kind of zine that he and Juanita published. I generally send a copy of ANVIL to just about anyone who asks for one but ask them to get back with me if they really want to be on the mailing list. I don't want to exclude new fans in the field just



"ER, MAY I SPEAK

TO YOU ALONE?"

because they are new. On the other hand, I'd bet that there is a certain "set" that gets just about every "traditional" zine published -- the loccers, the fan writers and artists, and faneds of the aforementioned traditional zines. In response to a single issue I receive 40 to 50 zines, and the same number of letters. If I were to thin out the mailing list, delete names I "never" hear from, the number of responses might drop off in the long run. In this issue, Scott Spence tells how he found ANVIL in a pound of zines he bought from Robert Lichtman; Roy Tackett wrote one of his bi-annual letters; Garth Spencer proved he is still in the land of the living; Chuq von Rospach responded to a discussion of his zine, etc. etc. I see people at conventions who tell me they enjoy getting ANVIL and prove it by referring to an item in it. So long as I have some sort of guarantee that the issues I send out are not going directly into the wastebasket, but being read and passed around, I'll keep on mailing them out. I pay 30 cents for each address correction form from the post office which helps me weed out those who have moved and left no forwarding address. Well, gee, I didn't mean for this to turn into an essay, Garth, but I guess you pushed the right button. -- cp))

Harry Bond, 64 Paramount Court, University St., Euston, London WC1E 6JP, UK

(Note New Address) On the subject of duplicated names, yes, the Fake Bob Shaw (Bob P. Shaw) is an obvious one. There was one convention where he was the chairman, and the real BoSh was GOH! Have you heard the saga of the Twin Albacons? Bob (fake) was the chairman of the first, and all did not go well between him and his committee during the event. Afterwards, when plans for the next Albacon were made, the committee unilaterally sacked him; whereupon Bob stated that, far from having been sacked, the committee had resigned from him, and HE, not they, was the upholder of the 'true' Albacon! Bob found another committee from somewhere, and for a while two Albacons furiously warred with each other, advertising themselves as taking place on the same weekend (and maybe the same hotel -- I forget). In the end the Shaw Albacon collapsed, but there was considerable acrimony over the whole affair. It was due to all this that Bob featured in a central role in D. West's huge article PERFORMANCE. Nowadays the fake Shaw seems to have renounced cons for fanzines; he's still somewhat sharp, but is quite a witty and enjoyable writer (to the surprise of many).

Lloyd Penney has got a little confused, I suspect; there are indeed two fen named Peter Roberts, but the British one (editor of EGG and CHECKPOINT) lived

at different times in Bristol, London and various locations in southwest England, around Torquay; never in Birmingham. The confusion is probably due to Peter Weston, whose period of greatest activity in fandom (ending with his chairing the 1979 Worldcon) was contemporaneous with the British Roberts's, and who lived (still does, in fact) in Birmingham. Apart from this, there's a rather dreadful SF novel (title: The Corobite Mines) attributed to Peter Roberts; I'm not sure whether this is the Canadian one, or yet another person involved with SF who happens to share the name.

Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224

Buck Coulson's article was interesting. There was a certain mystique to going to see a stripper that is missing today. It was amusing that the class chap-one decided to sneak off and see Gypsy Rose Lee with the rest of the boys. (Come to think of it, Buck implies that the whole class went -- boys and girls. Was that so?)

In answer to Buck's question, I had heard of both Gypsy Rose Lee and Sally Rand before this. I first heard of Ms. Rand right after Big Mac where Heinlein either stopped by to visit her or she him -- I don't recall which. I didn't even see the stripper Big Mac had for the half time entertainment at the Masquerade. Oh, well. I don't know where or when I first heard of Gypsy Rose Lee but that, too, was a while ago. I've read her book, The G-String Murders which I thought was fairly well done - good writing and a decent mystery. I don't know if she actually wrote it or signed her name to a ghost-written piece but either way, I liked it.

Mark Manning, 1400 East Mercer #19, Seattle, WA 98112

I am a sick man. I am an angry man. Something is wrong with my..... No, scratch that: Been done.

This cold is altering my state of consciousness, big time. I seem to alternate wildly between silliness and pissiness, the way race car speedometers slew from near-stop to flat out screaming journals of speed as the course shifts from hairpin turn to straightaway. LoCcing ANVIL #50, then, is a pitstop on the racetrack of life, dear friends.

It's 7:15 in the evening, and I'd better haul myself off to the store for some spaghetti before it gets too cold out. Damn the weather forecasters who brought this cruddy weather our way.

Don't tell my boss I left the apartment, or that stinking bum might threaten my sick pay for playing hookey tonight. After all, I didn't work for almost 50 days, due to the Boeing Machinists' strike, and to take sick leave so soon is definitely frowned upon. But the way I look at it is, if they're going to force me out on strike where I get a cold, they'll have to pay me back tonight in sick leave.

Anyway, I'll be back from the store soon; don't go away.

Is he gone, Obliterine?

I think so, Hektostylus. And he won't be back for at least 10 minutes.

OH-KAY! Let's see what kind of fun we can have around here; no point being Fandom Elves unless we make life more interesting for fans.

Let's start by making the place look more fannish. A few empty bheer bottles over here...

Right! And some spilled mimeo ink over there. Isn't that a whole lot better?

It sure is. Now let's triple the height of this stack of unLoCced fanzines... teeheehee!

Beautiful work, Obliterine. Wait a minute--look at that bookshelf: It's full of actual--yecch!--science fiction!

How unfannish! We can fix that easy enough: Presto! Chili cookbooks! Abracadabra! Do-it-yourself carpentry manuals! Won't Mark be pleased at how trufannish his books look now?

He sure will, Hektostylus. And--Presto! A stack of jazz records; they'll make this look like Boyd Raeburn's place. Wait! Listen...that might be Mark at the door...

In his lousy mood, he won't even notice the apartment for days. And he'll just finish his LoC, print it out, and never proofread it. So all we have to do is put the screen back to: in sick leave.

Anyway, I'll be back from the store soon; don't go away.

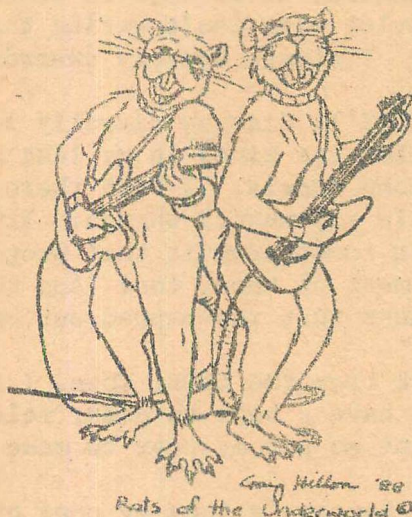
I'm back, and at 35 degrees, it was too damm cold out there. How you folks manage to survive back east is no longer within my powers of comprehension. And I'm even from your part of the country, more or less. On the other hand, don't try to move here for the weather: We've only had one rainless day in the last 70 years. *grumblemumble*

One good thing about fanning back east is that your twiltone looks much better than the western variety. Is your an historic cache, and if not, who supplies you? ((Historic cache.))

Looking even further east, the best new word Eva Hauser came up with, in my opinion, wasn't 'oligophrenically', but 'sci-fists'. How, I wonder, would one pronounce such a term? Not that it makes much difference just now--I couldn't pronounce anything. Sick as a damn lizard.

Czechoslovak fangatherings sound much better than Northwest cons. If anyone starts a Czechoslovakian-US Fan Fund (CUFF), I'll be begging everyone to nominate me. Don't ask me to arrive coiffed in toothpaste, though.

I'm never sure whether I should discuss LoCs. Sometimes I think they're like big noses, not to be commented on publicly. Other times I think they're like



cinnamon cookies, to be enjoyed wherever you happen to be. (Obviously this glass of merlot wine isn't curing the cold. Instead, it's curing my ability to make sense. I plunge bravely onwards, anyway.)

The only LoC I'll discuss directly is Brian Earl Brown's. He can only recognize two models for the zines in my last LoC because those were the only two with real-microcosm models. I wish there was a fanzine by a Black Oakland fan interested in rap music, though. It's certainly be interesting. The gag about Oregon coast foodfandom is that Oregon coast restaurants are notably wretched. I've tried most of them, too! And the bit about the SF/Western fan was just some silliness that tap-tapped out of my keyboard as I wrote.

Turning back from the LoCs, then, I find Patrick Gibbs' reviews of Hugo winning fiction. I have a bone to pick, relating to Cyteen, which novel I bought this year. Let me go get my copy to make my case most precisely...

Good Ghod! Someone's take my copy of Cyteen! In fact, the only things on my shelves are chili cookbooks and carpentry reference guides, hundreds of them, thousands! I'll have to sign off now and call the cops--someone's stolen my science fiction!

