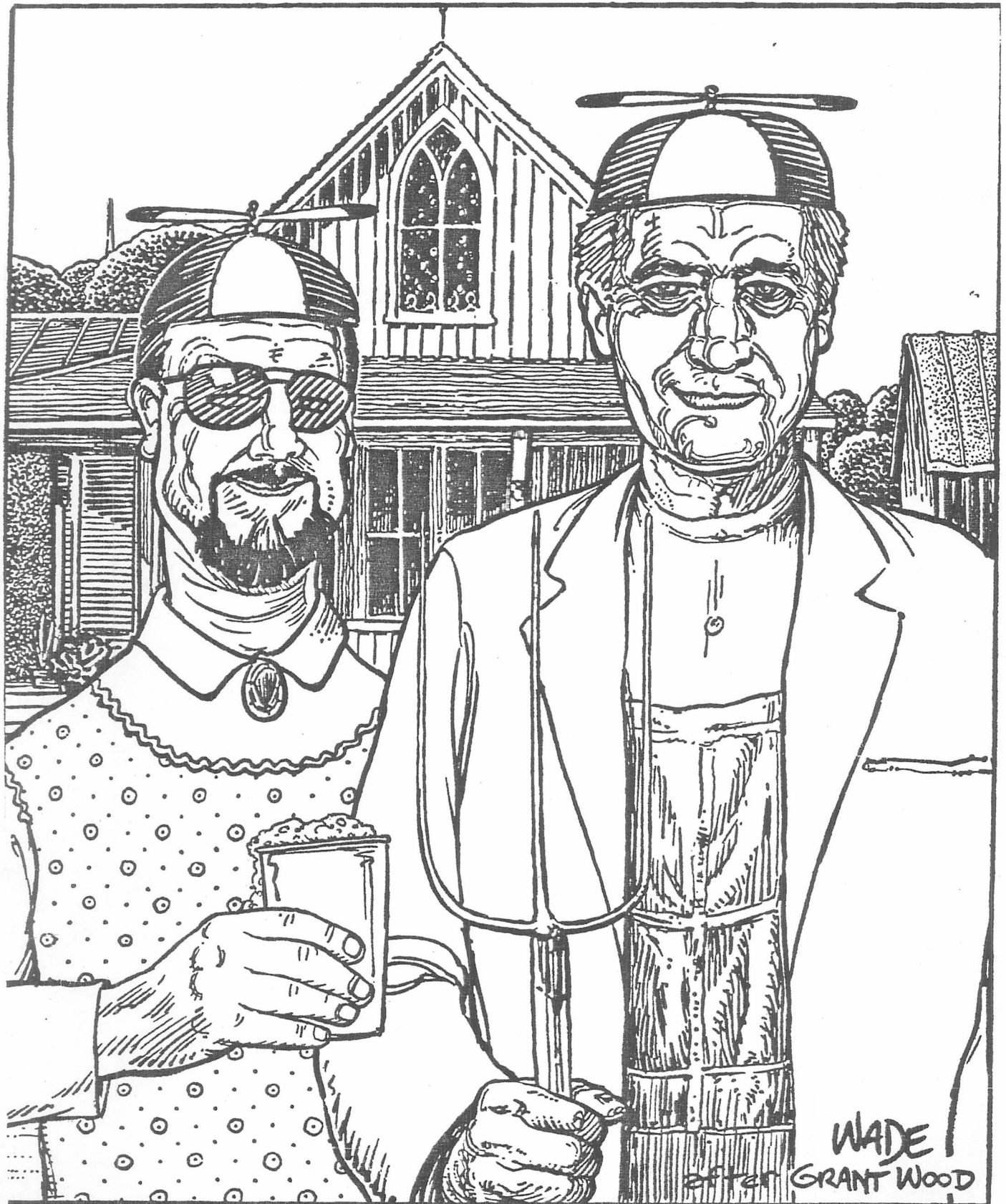


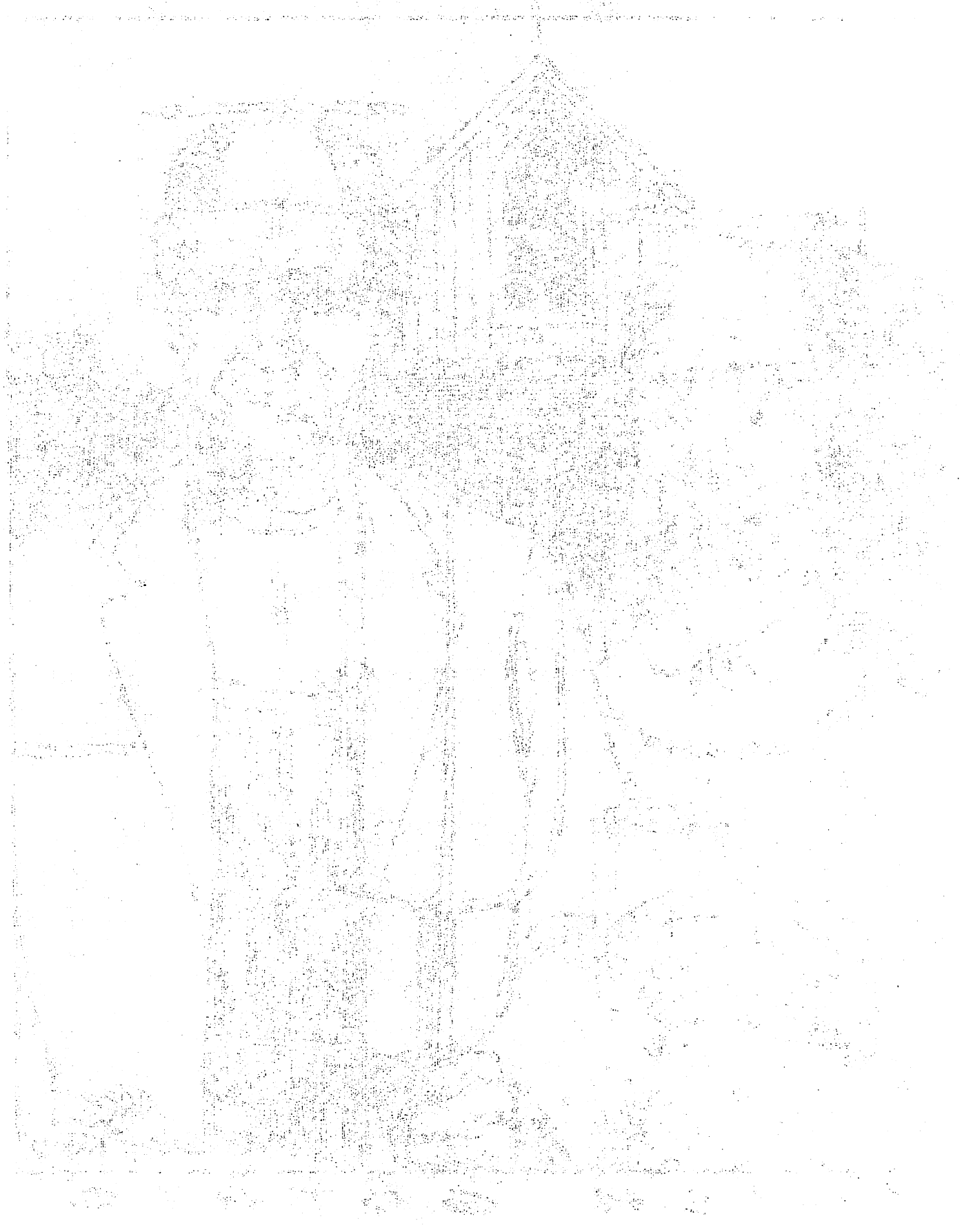
ANVIL 54



WADE
after GRANT WOOD

IRISH GOTHIC

THE JOURNAL OF THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



ANVIL 54

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*Charlotte Proctor & Julie Wall, Editors in Tandem.
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Editorial Offices

8325 7th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35206 USA
(205)836-9505(H) • (205)933-2288(O)
Fax (205)933-2283

Production Offices

2060-B Vestavia Park Ct, Birmingham, AL 35216
USA (205)979-9465(H) • (205)942-3181(O)
Fax (205)941-1048 • Wats (800)733-8216

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The Old Ironmaster Natters on Song and Women

– Buck Coulson

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Charlotte's Web

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE GRUMPY....

Bob Shaw may be the president and founder of the Christmas is a Movable Feast Society, but I am a dues-paying member... Every year it happens again. The Holiday season is almost more fun than I can stand. Too much rich food and strong drink, too many late nights, too many meals to prepare and clean up after, too many obligations, too many chores. (And miles to go before I sleep.) Last year we decided to inflict ourselves on the rest of the family for a change, and ended up chasing around from county to county and state to state, eating too much rich food, staying up too late, rushing home to rest up before going somewhere else. Each place we went, each couple we visited, fed us big meals and we exchanged little gifts. After six or seven of these encounters, spread over a week or ten days, I began to refer to this as "The Christmas that would not die." We thought it the better part of valor to stay at home this year and let everyone come to us.

We got a head start on the season by inviting a few friends over to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. (Actually, Linda said she was going to have the Pearl Harbor Day Party, but her furnace died.) Well, we had built up a certain amount of enthusiasm for this party, so I was not surprised when Julie (who at that time still lived in my blue room) spoke up and said "Oh, then, we'll do it." No sooner were the words out of her mouth than I came down with the flu. Julie took care of the invitations while I shivered in bed. By the afternoon of the evening of the party, I felt better and cleared a swath through the house.

Fresh pineapples on the table and Glen Miller on the tape deck were my contribution to the evening's ambience. (The weather turned cool, and Jerry was heard to say "Ah, there's a little Nip in the air tonight!") Julie wore her Red Cross uniform (vintage 1944, grey wool, like new, purchased at a thrift shop), and I wore Jerry's overalls (with tools), shirt and bandanna. (Guess Who?) Linda came as the same character, dressed in blue denim work pants and shirt, tool belt, and her hair in two braids wound 'round her head. Jerry wore his OD's and carried his WWII Japanese rifle. He was a sniper. Between the pineapples, smoked oysters, music, rum 'n coke (in the old-fashioned 6 oz. bottles), we must have gotten the ambience right because it turned into a real P*A*R*T*Y!

There was an on-going discussion of the Meaning of Life in the parlor, a rerun of the day in question in the

living room, and drunken females holed up in Julie's room. From time to time, they shrieked through the house making forays on the liquor, checking out Jerry's pin-ups, and scattering lingerie in their wake. At midnight I faded out. Penny came in to tell me good night, and that's the last I remember. They tell me the last guests left about 2:30 a.m. It was a good Pearl Harbor Day party — Come to Charlotte's and get Bombed!

A few weeks later (relatively speaking), the day after Christmas arrived. You may have noticed that Christmas fell on a Wednesday in 1991. This is not good. This means going to work on Thursday. I was just not up to it, left work about noon and headed home. I was running into walls I was so tired. And cranky? You bet. The kitchen was full of dirty dishes, the hampers full of damp towels and the living room full of visiting relatives. Jerry met me in the kitchen whereupon I snarled, "Leave me alone. I'm going to bed. I'm cranky-bitchy today."

(Well, he thought that was the funniest thing he had ever heard. For days he was telling people that his wife had a Chinese disease. When they asked what, he slapped his knee and chortled "Crank-ee Bitch-ee!!")

I had just fallen into a deep, dreamless and potentially refreshing slumber when I was awakened and invited to go to a movie. "No!" But so long as they were gone, and I was awake, I did laundry and dishes, and started cleaning up and putting things away, including unclaimed Christmas presents.

When they returned from the movie, I asked if they were going to stay another night, or were they going to go HOME? (They planned to leave after dinner with their friends.) Why, I suggested, don't you PACK before going to dinner? And while you're out, TAKE your cousin home. These gentle hints fell not upon deaf ears, and my beloved daughter and son-in-law departed. I look forward to seeing them again, when it's not Christmas. This no-nonsense approach worked pretty well, except that my oldest son never saw his sister the whole Christmas season, and late-arriving guests had to wait while their gifts were retrieved from the wine rack.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE....

...and a tooth for a tooth.... I won't bore you with the details, but I recently had an abscessed tooth, which did not respond to the root canal or the antibiotics. After a couple of days the endodontist sent me to the oral surgeon for a "procedure." You mean he's going

to lance it, I asked? "We prefer not to use that term", I was told. The Oral Surgeon was an older man, and kindly. He asked if I was in a lot of pain. The answer was yes and no, but I didn't feel up to explaining, so I just said that I had taken two Tylenol #4's the night before. "Good God, Woman!" he shouted, "That's two grains of codeine!" I didn't have the heart to tell him that I'd had two tablets twice the night before.

Then, on June 5, I checked into the Eye Foundation Hospital for a new left lens. I had read up on the procedure. Julie had researched the subject for me and gathered up all sorts of articles from magazines, journals and newspapers. I had gotten literature from several doctors and from the hospital. I was up on the development and surgical removal of cataracts, as well as the permanent lens implant. I was only sorry that the bifocal lens were not yet on the market. I see now I should have researched the recovery process, too.

Intellectually, I was ready. Emotionally, that Friday morning, I wondered what I had done, why I was there, and maybe I'll just go home. I was, in a word, anxious. But it was too late. They put drops in my eye, bandaged both eyes, took me off to surgery, put a drip in my arm and, finally, gave me the don't-care medicine. Out like a light... twilight sleep, they call it.


I woke up in the middle of surgery and listened to the people around me talk: "What are you doing this weekend?"... "Going to the lake... hand me a suture." You would have thought they were doing an everyday job, instead of messing with my eye! But I was calm, I was sedate, I didn't move a muscle. Probably because I was full of tranquilizers. I could see a bright light. A dark ring moved into the light and I thought: that's the lens.

Afterwards, Linda Riley had the unenviable job of taking care of me in my room. The drugs they use now wear off quickly, and I was really awake. I was really anxious, too, after the fact, worried that maybe my eyeball would leak, or that the implant would slip out of alignment. I really thought they should keep me there for a week, looking into my eye every few minutes and reassuring me all was well. When Linda mentioned that I had said the F-word four times, I was ashamed. I had been indulging my fears, and behaving badly. She was kind about it and said the drugs make you paranoid sometimes.

I don't know what all they did to me while I wasn't looking, but the muscles (which I didn't know I had) around my eye protested every time I looked around and the upper lid felt swollen and scratchy (that's the absorbable stitches, they told me.) After a week, this discomfort magically went away. They tell me I'm doing fine. My vision is still fuzzy in that eye, but through a pin-hole it's sharp and clear. The nurse says that's how I'll see when the eye recovers from the trauma.

The bottom line is that no matter how much I complain, it's a darn sight better (so to speak) than being blind. The surgical procedures nowadays are nothing short of miraculous, and what used to be a dangerous operation is now out-patient surgery. Permanent lens implants, and maybe soon bifocal lens implants, are nothing less than science fiction come true. The future is now.

By the way, I have to carry my spare parts list around with me now...

IOLAB INTRAOCULAR LENS	
	MODEL 3266S DIOPTER 19.0
	PC, UV, SOFT "J", ANGLED, 14.0MM
	6.0MM OPTIC, 2 PDM
	CONTROL NO. 102291 3266S 5913
Patient's Name <u>Charlotte Docton</u>	
Date of Implantation <u>6-5-92</u>	
Implanted Eye <input type="checkbox"/> L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> R	
Implant Surgeon's Name <u>J. Zangam M.D.</u> 0011-007-00	

Am I a Cyborg yet?

The Bionic Woman?

The Old Ironmaster Natters on Song and Women

— Buck Coulson

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equality in our microcosm for the first time. But there were women around before then.

At Marcon, I acquired the May 1930 issue of AIR WONDER STORIES, largely because I hadn't owned a copy of that publication previously. Among several quite primitive science fiction stories, there was a full-page ad for a set of science fiction booklets that Hugo Gernsback was selling. There were twelve of these booklets, and among the authors I was a trifle surprised to discover the names of Leslie Stone, Lilith Lorraine, Amelia Reynolds Long, and Pansey E. Black; a third of those early authors were women. (I know, Leslie could be either male or female, but there was a picture of her in the same issue, since one of her stories was included.) Lilith Lorraine was around for quite some time; Juanita and I published some of her poetry in YANDRO in the mid-to-late 1950s.

I've also been re-reading PLANET STORIES recently; I get an urge to go through its stories now and then. For one thing, I like swash-buckling adventure, and for another, PLANET may have published more of the early Ray Bradbury stories than any other single magazine, plus material by Poul Anderson, Theodore Sturgeon and others, including one of my all-time favorites, "Brooklyn Project", by William Tenn. While re-reading, I idly looked through the letter column. In the third issue, Summer 1940, there was a letter from Mrs. Ginger Swick. It was rated the best of the issue, and Ginger received a drawing by Lynch as a prize. (Magazines were free in passing out artwork in the bad old days, since they bought all rights and usually only used the work once.) Interestingly, a drawing by Frank R. Paul was awarded for the second prize letter; the editor evidently rated Lynch's work superior.

Isaac Asimov had several letters in the PLANET column, beginning with the sixth issue, but the prize in that issue went to Lynn Bridges — no way to tell if this was male or female. Miss Katherine Baum appeared in #7, along with Margaret Wells, who took third place in the voting on letters. There's no way of knowing if these women went on to join fan clubs and I don't recall any fanzines by them being mentioned, but a good many of the male

writers did both.

Of course, by the 1950s when I got into fandom, there were quite a few women around, though not nearly half the fan population. Some of them are still around; Juanita Wellons became Juanita Coulson, Beverly Amers became Beverly DeWeese, Mary Southworth managed several last names and is now back to Southworth and running a bookstore in New York state, Lee Tremper Lavell was in fandom for a long time, but has now pretty much dropped out, Beverly Clark (now Boles) has dropped out but we talked to her at some length at Chicon V last year, and I cannot think of the names of the other women in 1950s Indiana fandom, which will probably please Juanita. (All of the women from the 1950s were in Indiana fandom except for Mary Southworth, who was a Michigan fan.)

Actually, male fans should like the present male-female ratio better; there was a lot of competition for attention from the women who were in fandom in the 1950s.



Catching Up

— Patrick J. Gibbs

It was ten years ago last October that I first wrote a book review for *Anvil*. The book was DREAM PARK by Larry Niven and Steve Barnes. There have been breaks in between, like our hiatus since last spring, but I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Charlotte and writing about science fiction. I hope we have plenty of years to go.

Now I'll get on with what I was going to say last Fall about the Hugo winners from the 1991 Worldcon. The Best Short Story was BEARS DISCOVER FIRE by Terry Bisson. You can find it in THE YEAR'S BEST SCIENCE FICTION (Eighth Annual) Ed. by Gardner Dozois (624 pp. St. Martin's \$15.95), which I highly recommend as a perennial "must buy" if you like good short fiction. It is just about time for the 1992 edition to appear and so you are forewarned.

BEARS DISCOVER FIRE is a strange and wonderful story about just what the title says and a few other things like how people deal with old age and death. As a story it does not bear (no pun intended) too much analysis because it is so ephemeral. You have a good feeling after finishing it and an admiration for someone who can create an absurd and fantastic picture which you want to be true. It is a gem of a story.

Best Novelette was THE MANAMOUKI by Mike Resnick, the only publication of which I know was in the July, 1990 IASFM. It continues his saga of Kirinyaga. This is a planet in the far future where Kenya, as it existed before the arrival of the white man, is recreated by a people who are determined to preserve their heritage. Resnick addresses the old issue of nature versus nurture. Are people the way they are because of their heredity or because of how they are raised? Resnick tells a moral fable in most of his stories and novels, as he does here. Science fiction at its best almost always has that element and MANAMOUKI well deserved its best of the year award.

THE HEMINGWAY HOAX by Joe Haldeman won Best Novella and has been published in paperback. I must confess that I do not understand this story about a trio of people in the year 1996 who decide to fabricate a lost Hemingway manuscript and about time travel to the 1920's when the manuscript is lost and about cause and effect. Don't mistake me. It is a thoroughly engaging story which, once you start, you are unlikely to put down. Maybe I am too literal-minded and so I am missing the point. If anyone has figured this one out, write in and let the rest of us know.

Joe Haldeman's writing here is a stylistic tour de force.

It's like seeing Alberto Tomba (the great Olympic slalom skier) come down the course making the race look like a dance. Ninety-nine percent of the skiers in the world would be happy to get down the mountain in one piece. Great art always looks effortless.

THE VOR GAME by Lois McMaster Bujold (345 pp. Baen Books \$4.50) won the Best Novel Hugo. Good science fiction is always fun to read and Bujold's Vorkosigan stories are an awful lot of fun. They remind me of the Flandry of Terra series by Poul Anderson. I think of her hero, Miles Vorkosigan, and his universe as a sort of Flandry of a multi-polar political and interstellar universe.

Miles Vorkosigan is the stunted scion of Lord Aral Vorkosigan, Regent for the Emperor of Barrayar, a planet notable for its military traditions, noble class and political intrigue. This portion of the saga covers the beginning of Miles' military career when he quickly displays a talent for acquiring enemies because of his integrity. Miles turns out to be a much better secret agent than a military man and his career path is fixed. The movie, THE PRINCESS BRIDE, had a similar narrative exuberance on the fantasy side of the house. Add Bujold's talent for characterization to this and it is no wonder that the book won the Hugo.

Now we turn to notable science fiction novels of 1991. I will confess to a prejudice: I love the science fiction of Orson Scott Card. So I was particularly delighted to see the publication of Card's XENOCIDE (394 pp. Tor Books \$21.95). XENOCIDE is the continuation of the story that started with ENDER'S GAME and continued with SPEAKER FOR THE DEAD. Andrew Wiggins is the Speaker for the Dead and the story takes place (in part) on the planet Lusitania, some years after he solved the murder mystery of the earlier novel. I recommend reading the books in their proper order. Although SPEAKER stands on its own, there are aspects of Andrew "Ender" Wiggins' character illuminated by ENDER'S GAME.

XENOCIDE follows two narrative tracks: first, on the world Path, a brilliant girl of Chinese ancestry is coming of age and received into a caste of genetically engineered geniuses. However, with the genius comes the burden of obsessive compulsive disorder, which is carried by all members of the caste. The Starways Congress attempts to use her in its campaign to destroy the planet Lusitania. Meanwhile, Ender goes back to his past in his efforts to save Lusitania from destruction. Obviously, this is a complicated plot to summarize without giving too much away. I was dis-

appointed with the *deus ex machina* type of solution to the survival of Lusitania, but overall the book is quite satisfying. From anyone but Card it would be hugely successful. However I expect more of him after the first two books.

I think Barry Hughart has to be the best kept secret in modern fantasy literature. Sure he won the World Fantasy Award for his first Master Li novel, *BRIDGE OF BIRDS* (Del Rey 1985), but the next book in the series, *THE STORY OF THE STONE* (Doubleday 1988; Bantam 1989) was a worthy follow-up and seemed to go out-of-print remarkably fast. *EIGHT SKILLED GENTLEMEN* (Doubleday 1991; Bantam 1992) continues the exploits of the Chinese equivalent of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in a China that never was (but should have been) about 1500 years ago.

The last of the three books is about the mystery of who is killing scholarly Mandarins in the Forbidden City and whether ancient gods of a dead civilization are loose and planning the destruction of humanity. Master Li is a very old Mandarin himself, the greatest scholar in the land, who admits to "a slight flaw in my character." He is also deadly with the throwing knife. His worthy assistant is Number Ten Ox, a simple peasant with a great heart and a strength befitting his name. If you like high fantasy then get any of the Master Li books you can find.

SOOTHSAYER by Mike Resnick (279 pp. Ace \$4.50) does not appear on the Hugo or Nebula ballots or Locus Magazine's list of recommended reading. I liked it. Penelope Bailey is a little girl with an unusual talent, she can see alternate futures and maneuver her-

self and those around her to the future she desires. This is a new twist on the alternate universe idea that science fiction has adapted from modern physics. The novel is mostly from the point of view of the Mouse, a thief and would-be guardian of Penelope, who has been stealing her way through the Inner Frontier worlds of Resnick's future universe. (See *SANTIAGO*.) *SOOTHSAYER* is about free will, morality, destiny and a lot of other things. Highly recommended.

FULL SPECTRUM 3 ed. by Lou Aronica, Amy Stout & Betsy Mitchell (Doubleday 1991; Bantam 1992) is the latest in a series of short story anthologies. There are not that many original anthologies surviving. This series, along with *UNIVERSE* ed. by Robert Silverberg & Karen Haber (also published by Bantam) are worthy of your time and money. SF is the last bastion for good short fiction and its defense needs devoted readers who keep up with the writers.

The other Best Novel Hugo nominees besides *XENOCIDE* are *BONE DANCE* by Emma Bull (278 pp. Ace \$4.50); *BARRAYAR* by Lois McMaster Bujold (389 pp. Baen \$4.99); *STATIONS OF THE TIDE* by Michael Swanwick (252 pp. Avon \$4.50); and *SUMMER QUEEN* by Joan Vinge (671 pp. Warner \$21.95). When the time comes to review the Hugo winners next Fall I will be writing about one of these four. I do not think that *XENOCIDE* is strong enough to win the Hugo for Mr. Card for a record third time. With nominees like these I would say that 1991 was a pretty good year for SF novels. I just wish we could have a couple of great novels battling it out, which we haven't seen in years. I am out of space, so see you in the Fall.

Fanzine Reviews

— Roy G. Bivens

Boy that was a long nap! It feels like I've been asleep for over a year... My good friend Charlotte just woke me up with a phone call, snapping me back to reality with a reminder that it was time for yet another fanzine review column. I hadn't heard from her in so long, I wasn't entirely sure that it wasn't a dream. While I was asleep, I'd been having this other weird dream that I was out west visiting my uncle Hugo in a small town in the wine country near Glen Ellen, California, when all of a sudden, just like Magic, I fell through a Trapdoor, and wound up in a small town near Washington, D.C., sitting on a branch of a Mimosa tree. Just what in the hell could it all mean?

Anyway, speaking of small towns, I've got to tell you about the small town I live in. It's really small — you can't even find it on the map. It's so small that there isn't even a little league ball park here — the nearest

thing is a sandlot ball field over near the cemetery, aligned so that whenever some kid hits a long home run, he can brag that he "hit one over the Monuments". This town is so small, in fact, there isn't even a Lions Club or an Elks Club. Instead, we've got a Lion Club and an Elk Club. Now that's small!

After all that, I sort of feel obligated to review some small fanzines this time. The first of them is the current issue (number 110) of *Stefantasy*, from William M. Danner. At first glance, there isn't much here to review in the current issue — a short remembrance of a vacation trip, some humorous and nostalgic reprints from various sources, and a few pages of letters. A second look, though, shows me that this is really an unordinary fanzine. For one thing, *Stef* is one of the last fanzines reproduced by letterpress from hand-set type. This provides a different and eye-pleasing

appearance that you just don't find in typewritten fanzines. Color is also used to nice effect on the cover, bringing to life an old ATOM illustration. Inside, Danner's vacation trip remembrance turns out not to be from the 1960s, 1950s, or even the 1940s — it's from the years 1924 and 1925 (at 85 years, he may be the oldest active fan). Reading this essay is like taking a trip through time, back to the era before Gernsback even invented science fiction fandom; it must have been a different world in every way, then, and you get the flavor of it in Danner's writing. *Stefantasy* also provides a link to the past in the letters section, in that there are amusing snippets from many previous-era fans, like Walter Willis, Lee Hoffman, Robert Bloch, Wim Struyck, Alan Dodd, Ethel Lindsay, and Dean Grennell.

On third look, though, *Stefantasy* is still a pretty small fanzine. Danner is an entertaining writer, but there's only about a page-and-a-half of him each issue. The letters seem to dominate the issue and there are lots of names in the lettercol, but the letters have been edited severely, maybe too severely, which makes me wonder how many witticisms of Willis et al. that could have entertained us further have been left on the cutting-room table (actually, many fanzines would probably love to have this kind of problem). Nevertheless, *Stef* is an amusing, comfortable read, even given that you won't probably spend more than ten minutes going cover to cover.

A zine that'll take you at least a little longer to read is Chris Nelson's *Mumblings from Munchkinland*, the most recent issue being billed as "the only West Australian fanzine published in India". Whereas *Stefantasy* seems to be a window to the past, *Mumblings*... is a window onto other cultures. Nelson has been involved for the past few years (from what I surmise) as a Peace Corps volunteer (or whatever the Australian equivalent is) in Pakistan. This issue features a fascinating description of Nelson's travels; from Sri Lanka and a visit to Arthur C. Clarke to Afghanistan just before Kabul fell to the Mujahadeen, and also includes a related short article about science fiction in India. I'm presuming this is pretty much outside most people's range of experience; it was for me, which is one of the things that makes certain publications memorable to me. Added to that, Nelson is a pretty talented writer who takes advantage of the limited space in the issue. The result is a very tight, very good fanzine.

Could it be better yet? Possibly. There's no obvious way to measure the interaction between Nelson and his readers because there's no lettercol (possibly due to lack of space). Also, the travelogue stops halfway through his excursion through India, and will be continued next issue (to my anguish). It would have been nice to read it in one piece. The article about science

fiction in India runs only two pages, which doesn't do more than hone my interest for more. The one piece of sf-related artwork doesn't seem to really relate to anything in particular in the issue. In short, the brevity of this fanzine, which resulted in succinct quality, may also be a weakness in that the material needs more room than it's getting in a 12-page, irregularly-published fanzine.

Lest you start to believe that "small" always equates to "superior", there's Rob Sommers' *Peripheral Visions*, a well-meaning and nicely reproduced, but unfortunately, lackluster fanzine. What made *Stefantasy* and *Mumblings from Munchkinland* such delights to read is the root of the problem in *Peripheral Visions* — the strength of writing (or in this case, the lack of it). An example of this is in Sommers' editorial, "The Quest," which talks about changes in his life that have occurred over the last ten years, covering the period he's been in fandom. After a full page of build-up, describing his ascent through the Heinlein juveniles through good and bad TV science fiction, to his involvement with the Atlanta 1995 worldcon bid, he concludes with: "Changes are scary. But they're going to happen whether you want them or not, so you have to decide if you're going to sit there railing against them or use them and learn from them. I don't always act like it or even believe it all the time, but I do think change can be good for you if you're not afraid to stand up and face it." While I'm not prepared to argue with this assessment, I can say that the point here seems somewhat trivial, almost a truism — "change happens". Seems to me that a promising bit of writing was wasted on a such a tiny payoff.

Another thing I found disappointing about the issue is that there were two very sub-standard pieces of fiction in it. Once again I'll say it, at the risk of people complaining that I'm beating this issue into the ground: the chances of high quality fiction being submitted to a fanzine publisher have just got to be pretty slim; if the fiction were any good, the authors would have sold it to a paying market instead. Why not look instead for the types of non-fiction where paying markets don't exist, and where's there's a much better chance that you'll find good writing? The two stories here were even worse than ones I've come across in other fanzines I've reviewed over the past couple of years — one is about two blue-collar workers who, while demolishing an old warehouse on an Air Force base, break through into an underground chamber that contains *surprise* a UFO. The second story is even more god-awful; as an example, I'll quote the opening sentence: "The hammer sword was spliced to his side; he shambled like a mammoth, with tusky beards, thickened lips, thumper nose and a frown fit enough to irrigate a greater dome even than his head."

I'm not trying to be cruel here, really. In fact, there

were even a few things in this issue that were handled fairly well — there was a two-page fanzine review column that went into at least some detail about several fanzines (rather than just listing them as being received) and the letters column looked to be at least somewhat edited, which puts *PV* one-up on *Fosfax*. I should also point out that previous issues have been more readable than this current issue. It's obvious that Sommers has talent as a fan editor, but that talent is going to go to waste without better contributions to showcase.

Finally, I don't think a review column about small fanzines would be complete without pointing out what's probably the smallest fanzine currently being published. This zine is actually even too small to review, so I'll merely mention that it exists. It's *Postcon Pocketsarcd* from Bruce Pelz, an apparently limited-edition mailing of picture postcards, er, picture postcards from whatever city and convention Bruce happens to be at. Printing is by rubber stamp, and the number of words seems to be limited by the number of letters available in Bruce's rubber stamp lettering kit. There's no indication how to get on the distribution list, but in any event, this fanzine appears to be for completist collectors only.

Issues Reviewed:

- *Stefantasy* (Issue 110 / June 1992 / reviewed) from William M. Danner, R.D. 1, Kennerdell, Pennsylvania 16374; (no availability info listed).
- *Mumblings from Munchkinland* (Issue 7 / no date listed, but Spring 1992 / reviewed) from Chris Nelson, 36 St. Michael Terrace, Mt. Pleasant, WA 6153, Australia. (no availability info listed).
- *Peripheral Visions* (Issue 9 / January 1992 / reviewed) from Rob Sommers, 926-C Waverly Way, Atlanta, Georgia 30307-2551; available for \$2.00, letter of comment, or fanzine trade.
- *Postcon Pocketsarcd* ("Issue" 9 / June 10, 1992 / non-reviewed) from Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher Street, Granada Hills, California 91344.



Bargaining Up the Wrong Tree

— Bob Shaw

I hate having to buy or sell something.

One of the things that get on my nerves after making a purchase, specially when a good sum of money was involved, is the reaction of friends. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to buy an xyz?" they always begin, followed by a) "I could have got you one from work at 70% off," (b) "For the price of a beer I would have sold you the one I got for Christmas — and it's unused, still in the box," or (c) "I dumped a perfectly good one last week."

I've become so neurotic over this that I now find it almost impossible to go shopping for anything that costs more than a few quid. Days and weeks slip by while I go around buttonholing friends and acquaintances telling them I'm about to make a major purchase. Incredibly, the most common response then is, "Go for the top of the range, Bob. Spend the maximum you can afford. Don't mess around with so-called bargains and second-hand rubbish."

Needless to say, I'm also very bad at selling, the main reason being that I just can't bring myself to haggle. I've only met one other man who was more embarrassed when it came to discussing money — and he became my literary agent. We made a great pair for a while. I used to have to telephone publishers and plead on his behalf while he, in a state of funk, waited

at home to hear the outcome!

On very rare occasions I advertise an item for sale and find myself dealing with a real softy, somebody as inept as I am at the whole bargaining process. We correctly classify each other at first glance; he immediately offers the full asking price; I mumble my grateful acceptance; we make the exchange, shake hands and part company at once, both of us trembling and with a light sweat on our brows. Sometimes the entire transaction is over in about sixty seconds.

But, as I said, the customer is usually the opposite of a softy. With my flair for originality, I call this kind of person a sharpie. I can identify a sharpie as soon as I see him coming along the path to my door. He might be aware of my presence behind the living room curtains, but he doesn't show it. As he approaches he studies the whole frontage of the place with a look of purest contempt. I have to suppress an urge to dash out and apologize for the state of the paint-work. Already, before we have even spoken, he has established a buyer's market. The eyes are the surest indicator of a sharpie — they are usually pale grey or pale blue, and they seem to view the universe with an icy-watery disdain.

If what I'm selling happens to be a car it is even easier to spot the sharpie. He is accompanied by a scowling

individual who reveals himself to be a motor mechanic by the way in which, even before the doorbell has sounded, he throws himself savagely at the car and does his best to inflict permanent damage on it. A favorite opening move is to try wrenching the wheels off with the bare hands. I have never figured out why they do that.

Hardly have negotiations begun when, the sharp — having shown complete lack of interest in everything I said — fixes me with those pelagic orbs and makes an offer which is so far below my hopes that I immediately experience a strange psychic malaise, a deadly paralysis of the will. I know at once that I'm doomed. It's "The Cat and the Canary" all over again. This man is a natural financial predator and I am his natural prey, and the most that I can reasonably hope for is that he will proceed to disembowel me quickly and cleanly, without inflicting too much pain.

A lifetime of that kind of thing has reduced me to a commercial jellyfish, but once in a while — to mix a metaphor — I try to show a little backbone and force the worm to turn. Usually it happens in response to the jeering of my family after I have completed one of my "deals". To a man, they expect me to sell things for more than I paid, and to buy things for much less than the vendor paid. For years I have tried to point out the inherent unfairness of this charge, but to no avail. They continue to regard me as an idiot.

Thus it was, many years ago, when it came time for my son to have his first bicycle I decided that — once and for all — I was going to Prove My Mettle. I was going to demonstrate to them all that I was a good provider, that I too could go out into the world and do battle for the sake of my fledglings.

There were two children's bikes advertised that night in the BELFAST TELEGRAPH, both in convenient districts. One was in for nine quid and the other for five. (I told you it was a long time ago.) I memorized the addresses and set out in my car, all the while vowing the mightiest of vows — this time I was not going to be a sucker. The family were going to be proud of me...

Not trusting my ability as a haggler, I decided on a simple strategy. Regardless of how good a bicycle might look, no matter how much of a gift it might seem, I was going to offer £2 less than the asking price. Deciding to start at the lower end of the scale, I went to the first of the paid of addresses. It was in a pleasant well-to-do suburb. Assuming a cobra-like stare, I marched up to the door and rang the bell.

The door was opened by a kindly-looking man who was smoking a pipe and wearing a roomy cardigan and carpet slippers. Behind him in the hall was a gleaming bicycle which looked practically new and which was exactly what I had in mind for my son. He

gave me a tentative smile, and I liked him immediately and instinctively — but, I reminded myself as I entered the orange-lit hall, this was no time for sentiment.

I inspected the bicycle and at once fell in love with it. This machine was a real bargain, better than I could reasonably have expected. The owner was practically giving it away, but — sticking to my new-found principles — I glared at it with every sign of distaste. I rubbed my chin and tried to turn the look of distaste into one of positive loathing.

"I suppose it's passable," I said grudgingly, "but I don't think it's worth more than three quid." Backing up my opinion, I fished three banknotes out of my pocket.

The effect of my words was immediate and dramatic. The man gave a barely audible whimper and stepped back with a stricken, despairing look in his eyes. I gazed at him in some concern, and then recognized that helpless, hopeless expression — it was the one I always wore during an encounter with a sharp. For a moment I was puzzled. After all, a drop of two quid in the price wasn't all that catastrophic. Then a terrible realization came to me — I had mixed up the two addresses. I had just offered £3 for the £9 bike! its owner was an archetypal softy and he thought he was dealing with a sharp.

We stared at each other in mutual dismay. The centrally positioned orange lamp was swinging gently in a draught, highlighting one face and then the other, as if we were in an old movie. Time slowed to a crawl. One by one, the pores of our foreheads exuded beads of sweat. It was one of the worst moments of my life.

"Look," I finally said weakly, full of remorse, "I... perhaps... maybe..." I wanted to apologize, but my flustered and guilt-ridden brain refused to formulate the words.

"Three pounds?" the man said dully, surrendering to his softy's fate. "All right — three pounds will do."

"But... but..." I felt an urge to drive the price up. I almost wanted to go down on my knees and beg his forgiveness, but suddenly he had become quite brusque and forceful. He snatched my money, shoved the bike forwards and bundled me out into the darkness with it. The slamming of the door showed how anxious he was to bring his humiliation to a quick end.

Feeling slightly ill, I took the bike home, and — human nature being what it is — was soon boasting to the family about how I had haggled and driven a hard bargain. To this day, however, I still wish I had offered £7 for the damned machine.

Birmingham Wins DSC Bid

Suwanee, Georgia, May 3, 1992.

The Birmingham, Alabama bid won over the Birmingham, England bid by a margin of 36 votes for the 1994 DeepSouthCon. Hundreds of die-hard science fiction fans congregated in the sleepy southern town of Suwanee, Georgia for the 30th annual DeepSouthCon. Literally scores of these fans turned out at 10 Sunday morning for the Southern Fandom Confederation business meeting. Many of them voted in the hotly contested race to host the 1994 DeepSouthCon.

Other business at the SFC meeting included discussion of the organization's philosophy, and election of officers. P.L. Carruthers-Montgomery declined, for personal reasons, to stand for the office of President again this year. Khen Moore made a speech of thanks, and led a standing ovation in appreciation of P.L.'s past work with the SFC. Sue Francis, Louisville fan of long-standing, was unanimously elected to the Presidency. Sue and her husband Steve Francis are the recipients of this year's Rebel Award in recognition of their many contributions to Southern Fandom. Pat Malloy and J. R. Madden were re-elected to posts of Vice President and Treasurer, respectively. Sue Francis asked for a volunteer to be the Official Recruiter. Julie Wall volunteered to be AN Official Recruiter, but not THE Official Recruiter.

Bid presentations began at 11 a.m.. Vince Docherty, of London, England, predicated his Birmingham, England (BrummyCon) bid upon the fact that Birmingham is in the south of England. Vince promised a hotel with a bar, a committee with experience, free parking for your airplane, and instant mem-

bership in the con upon purchase of drinks for the committee.

Charlotte Proctor of Birmingham, Alabama said it had been 10 or 12 years since the Birmingham Science Fiction Club had hosted a DSC, and it was time. BSFC's philosophy, she emphasized, leans towards traditional fannish values. Yes, she said, we have a hotel. Julie Wall, BSFC President and Bid Chair, said the Parliament House (site of the 1977 DSC in Birmingham) was reserved for the old, traditional DSC weekend — right before Labor Day. Room rates of \$55 are firm for single through quadruple occupancy. Should we win, Julie said, this will be B'hamacon III.

Questions were taken from the floor. Guy Lillian asked Vince if his committee was qualified to host a DeepSouthCon, that is, could they say "ya'll" correctly? After consultation with the opposition, Vince replied: "Yay-us"

SFC Secretary Pat Malloy asked for final statements before the balloting. Both Charlotte and Vince exhorted their constituents to "Vote for Birmingham!"

After the ballots were counted and Birmingham (Alabama) declared the winner, the erstwhile rivals shook hands. This friendly activity was cut short by a deluge of fans throwing money at the victorious committee for convention memberships. Penny Frierson helped take memberships. Debbie and Gary Rowan handed out flyers announcing dates, hotel, and GoH Lois McMaster Bujold. Mike Resnick will be the Toastmaster, and Bob Shaw will be Fan Guest.

Off the Wall

You'll be happy (I hope) to hear that, no, I haven't undergone any operations recently. Never, in fact.

And, I have moved out of Charlotte's blue room, but not out of *Anvil*. This co-ed intends to stay for more than an ish or two — if there are ishes to stay for. Though it has been a while, I (with the help of various readers and fan-eds worldwide) finally convinced Charlotte that we had to publish or perish. I kept telling her that I was going to do it without her and that I would call my editorial column "Julie's Seizure". This was a lie and she knew it. Although you'll notice a sparsity of artwork (hint, hint), we finally amassed enough material to go to, er, word processor. Charlotte got excited and called up the regular contributors and they sent their columns. I was

given the stack of a year's worth of locs to edit.

I also volunteered to do the layout. Production, Charlotte calls it. See, I have this Mac at work, which I love dearly, and all the desktop publishing equipment and software one could hope for. Though doing this sort of thing is part of my job, it's a part that I love and don't get to do enough of, as far as I'm concerned. So, I said I'd stay after hours to work on *Anvil*. I didn't want Charlotte to think I was trying to take over, so I said, "Do you want to meet me at the office on Saturday so we can work on it together?"

She explained, very gently, that she had been doing production on *Anvil* for at least ten years. If a fully laid out 'zine were handed to her for proofing, she would

be thrilled right out of her mind. I suddenly remembered going with Charlotte and a few others over to her old job at the pipe works in Tarrant to layout and copy *Anvils* when I first joined the club, way back in '81. I realized that it must have gotten old for her over the years. And she used to do it the real fannish, hard way with typewriters and stencils. I'm sure it'll lose some of it's enjoyment for me eventually, but at least I'm using Quark Xpress so I can save the basic layout as a template.

Thank Ghu, anyway, that Charlotte is still editing. Blame the layout on me. You may also find our distribution method a bit odd this ish, but all I can say that is we are poor fan-ed's doing the best we can.

BATMAN RETURNS?

You could have fooled me. He was barely in the movie.

Another passion Charlotte and I share, besides *Anvil*, is movies. She is in the enviable position of having a son who is an assistant manager for the dominant movie-house chain here in Birmingham, allowing us to catch the flicks for free. Last year was a banner year as far as I was concerned, producing three of my all-time favorites in *THELMA & LOUISE*, *THE FISHER KING*, and *DEAD AGAIN*. But I wanted to review a more current movie for this issue.

Charlotte didn't want to see *BATMAN RETURNS* particularly, having no fondness for films of its genre. So I went with another friend and her father on Father's Day. The father in question turns out to be a mild narcoleptic and slept through a great deal of the film, but I can't say he missed much.

I really liked the first *BATMAN* movie. Mostly because I thought Michael Keaton did a marvelous job of portraying a somewhat confused and brooding dark knight. Jack Nicholson was also good, though typecast, as the villain you love-to-hate.

At least he was the only villain. In *RETURNS*, there are no less than three major antagonists. First we have Danny DeVito as the vile Penguin. While the makeup was well done, I found him obnoxious and revolting and did not love-to-hate him, just wished he would go away. The motivation behind his character was another boring case of getting back at the parents and their contemporaries for abandoning him as a child. He did have the funniest line in the movie with, "Into the duck!", but I was in a rather bizarre funk over the film by the time it was spoken so perhaps everyone won't find it as hilarious as I did. I also liked the stunt-casting of Paul Ruebens (A.K.A. PeeWee Herman) in a cameo appearance as the Penguin's father.

Another perennial bad guy, Christopher Walken, appears as the least flamboyant villain. He is corrupt Captain of Industry, Max Schreck. Unlike the other

two, he has no costumes or axes to grind against the people of Gotham City. He just has a nefarious scheme, based in pure greed, to drain all the power out of the city so that its citizens can pay him for the privilege of returning it to them.

My favorite baddie, by far, was Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman. She has both a nifty (if ridiculous) costume and an ax-to-grind. She starts the movie as mild-mannered and mousy (?!?-think FRANKIE AND JOHNNY) secretary to Max Schreck, Selina Kyle. Unfortunately, in a bout of incredible efficiency, she stumbles upon Max's evil power plant plan, whereupon he becomes the catalyst (if you will) in her transformation into Catwoman.

I won't explain this transformation, because the movie doesn't, except to say that Max attempts to kill her, but it only makes her mad. In more ways than one. She becomes Catwoman and develops an attitude which manifests itself as a malice against mankind, and, particularly and inexplicably, Batkind. She also gets involved with the Penguin, as an ally against the caped crusader. There are those who will complain that Selina turning into Catwoman is just a tired and potentially dangerous cliché about women being wronged and going crazy, but it worked okay for me. Meanwhile, the workaday persona of Selina, feeling slightly empowered but very confused by her nightly masquerade, is falling for Bruce Wayne - and he for her.

Not that, as I've said, you get to see much of Bruce, or Batman. That is what really bugs me. So much of the film is spent trying to work in all these bad guys and still make sense of the plot that Batman/Bruce barely makes it to the screen at all. When you do see him, the magic of the first movie is there. Most of the really good (but few and far between) moments on-screen are with him and his indubitable butler, Alfred, once again played with scathing wit by Michael Gough.

As a rule, I like director Tim Burton's work and this movie certainly illustrated his somewhat dark and twisted gift for the cinema. I think it painted the picture a little too clearly for me. The Hollywood execs gave him free rein after the huge success of the first film and perhaps that was a little premature. Certainly, the script for this one was overly ambitious and it's no wonder Robin was once again left on the cutting room floor. Maybe, if they allow Burton another go, he will lighten up a bit. And, if the rumors about Robin Williams as the Riddler come to fruition, the third movie may be as good as the first.

I do have to wonder why Batman feels the need to protect the idiotic and boorish people of Gotham, who bring tomatoes and cabbages to throw at political rallies for candidates they took to their bosom only the day before.

The ANVIL Chorus

Buck Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348

...Dislocates knee because cricket jumped off Christmas tree. That's the sort of thing you get on bad situation comedies.... really, now...

...Of course Christmas is a movable feast It's even divisible. We had ours last time on Dec. 21 with son Bruce, his wife Emily and girlfriend Lee; on New Year's Day with the Miesels; and on March 4 with the DeWeeses. Suitable dinner and exchange of presents each time.

I never took the Cuban Missile Crisis very seriously, here in the midwest; never expected it to amount to anything in the end. But one fan of my acquaintance got excited and joined the army. "Then", he told me later, "the crisis was over but the army wouldn't let me go", so he stayed in and for a time was one of the two people hovering over big red buttons somewhere in North Dakota. Now that scared the shit out of me; this fan is the last person in the world one wants to see in charge of the WW III red button. He has this bizarre mind, you see...

Actually, I believe that disliking an author personally is quite a good reason for not reading his — or her — books. After all, if a close friend sells a book, we read it no matter how bad it is, don't we? And tell the friend how much we liked it, even if we didn't. So why shouldn't it work in reverse? The idea that books can be set apart from their authors is a fine theory, but in practice the real world tends to intervene. I have this review column covering science fiction magazines, and recently one mag included a story by an author I dislike personally. Reviewers are supposed to be impartial, so I gritted my teeth and read the thing, said it was a good story. I did not say that I enjoyed reading it, and I'll be happy if I never see another story from that author. If it had been a novel, I certainly wouldn't have read it; I'm supposed to review every magazine in the field, but nobody reviews every novel in the field, and I have no masochistic tendencies.

Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Avenue, Toronto
Ontario M6S 3L6 CANADA

Thanks for another fine issue of ANVIL, which is indeed a pretty good fanzine, all the way from Wade's really fine cover (it's another testament to my appalling memory that I had no recollection of Wade as an artist) to the truly superior quality of the stock used for the back cover. Add in crisp printing, service-

able layouts, interesting reading and some excellent artwork from Taral and #53 might better be described as Charlotte's (and Julie's) pretty damned good fanzine!

As a mild arachnophobe I certainly agreed with Penny's comment concerning the cause of Linda Riley's accident. I couldn't count the number of times I've jumped back in panic only to realize that what I'd seen moving out of the corner of my eye was a dust bunny or a small piece of normal household detritus. When you suffer from irrational fear, though, any moving object can be a cause of alarm and provoke chaotic reactions. Happily I've never done myself any serious injury trying to destroy imaginary arachnids, not like Blue Jay outfielder Gennallen Hill who needed a large number of stitches last year after doing himself a fair amount of damage after a nightmare about being covered with spiders.

I don't particularly like Leland Sapiro (for personal reasons) or his fanzine but *Riverside Quarterly* has been around for a long time (it impressed me greatly in 1966 when it was one of the first fanzines I saw) and has published some truly important material, including the Panshin's critical look at Heinlein. I didn't even know it was still being published so Roy's review was an interesting one for me to read.

Evidently Buck and I have another thing in common: I was once asked to marry two fannish friends, although since I'm not accredited it was in a purely symbolic ceremony. Buck's line "there were huge overhead fans whump-whumping away" immediately created amusing images of what are thought of by the British as "typical American fans" in all their pasty obesity performing highly unseemly acts during the wedding ceremony!

I'll give Taral full credit. He got me to read fiction in a fanzine, something I very rarely do. Of course, he disguised it very deftly as a piece of personal journalism and roped me in immediately as I'm still a fan of the almost defunct pinball machine. I'm left wondering how much, if any, of the piece was based on reality but even if it's entirely made up from whole cloth it was so well done I'm glad Taral fooled me with it.

The inadequacies of the spellcheck are evident in the Resnick retrospective. (I'm assuming you have some sort of spellchecker because it's more polite than saying you're both lousy proofreaders!) "sage" for "saga" and "Charlemange" really leap out from a page of otherwise (sic) valid text. ((I personally challenge you

to find a typo in this one – jw)) As for the article itself I found it a bit lean but I completely agree with Patrick's enthusiasm for Resnick's recent fiction. With the single exception of PARADISE which I thought rather weak and far too evidently allegorical, Mike's fiction has impressed me enormously since he went full time into writing SF.

Boy, the power Harry Warner wields is awesome! Here he casually mentions that the Coulsons ought to publish *Yandro* again and not a couple of weeks ago I received a very unexpected re-issue of that very fanzine. I even locced it just so I'd be able to brag when I'm old and feeble that I once locced the legendary Hugo-winning fanzine *Yandro*. (Buck was so surprised to get a loc on a short last issue he wrote me back but I was so surprised to get a response to a loc on a short last issue that I haven't answered. Yet.)

Hey, if you Yanks want to go around claiming Canadian citizenship as Mark Manning suggests then I think it only fair that you make a modest payment to a real Canadian for that privilege. I am willing to be that real Canadian for any fans planning overseas vacations and wishing to avoid the Ugly American syndrome. No, no, don't thank me, just send money. Keep up the pretty good work, you two... From one cute fan to another (and possibly two others).((See for yourself in Orlando – jw))

Jeff Barnes, Box 1241, Dillingham, Alaska 99576
(Recent COA to 931 Forest Pk Ln, Paducah, KY 42001)

I greatly enjoyed *Anvil* 53. It appears that *Anvil* was a good way to break into the fanzine scene. The articles, art, story, and letters were all good. I've been a fan for 15 years, but I somehow missed out on fanzines. I had breakfast with Charlotte at Chattacon one morning, then went to a panel she was a member of regarding fanzines. I had heard of them, but I didn't really know what they were. I took the plunge and asked Charlotte to start sending me *Anvil*. Good move on my part. Well, now I know what fanzines are, and now I'm kicking myself for having missed out for so long. I like Mr. Bivens' fanzine reviews, but I'd like to know, what are the "essential" zines for a tyro? Also, how would said tyro go about acquiring the aforementioned 'zines? I would appreciate any help y'all could give me (I've been away from the south for a while, but some of the accent still lingers). As a fan, I have not been able to be as active as I like. I can afford to get out of Alaska once, sometimes twice, a year. I attend Chattacon each year (I've been going to that since #3) and if I can afford to get out a second time I go to Worldcon or some other big one. I perceive in fanzines the chance to be a part of active fandom without spending \$1,200 for plane tickets. I'm reaching out

from a fandom wasteland. Only one other person in this town is associated in any way with fandom (of course he's a published author, but one pro and one fan does not a convention make).

Jeanne Mealy, 4157 Lyndale Avenue South,
Minneapolis, MN 55409

I apologize deeply for my abysmal LoC-writing pace. Once again, I'm making a concerted effort to make time amidst the demands of everyday life and fanac to get to the bottom of my "To Be LoCed" pile. Here are THREE issues of *Anvil* to talk about!

Anvil 51: My good intentions had gone as far as addressing and stamping an envelope. Amusing, though painful, cover by Teddy Harvia. Wonder if he ever feels such torture hammering out his art?

Glad to hear you decided in favor of fannish endeavors rather than gafiation. Yes, it gets crazy — ain't it fun?

Great fun reading in "Mafiaette Reunion" (or Julie-Con) and "Bill and the Birds". "The Old Ironmaster Has Pets" had me howling with laughter at the image of Sally feeding her "living bra" in a restaurant (a rat inside her jumpsuit), Congratulations to Buck on maintaining his own health taking care of (then – now?) current-pet Severian.

VERY amusing club minutes by Linda Riley. (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.")

Someone misspelled my name on page 18. Haruummpphhh.

Anvil 52: The cover illo makes me think of a spaceship stuck on the ground, being overgrown with vines. While pretty, this is hardly accurate for *Anvil's* image. Or are you feeling rootbound these days?

Aussie vocabulary IS different from American (which is different from English); luckily, you and Greg were willing to translate for each other to produce some wonderful-sounding food.

Sigh. I STILL haven't seen PUMP UP THE VOLUME. Your review makes me want to rush out and find it, though. (Maybe after I've caught up with LoCs.) We just saw FRIED GREEN TOMATOES (taken from Fannie Flagg's book, FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLESTOP CAFE). It's excellent!!! I can't recommend it highly enough, and hope to hear what you think of it. ((We were very happy with it – another good flick from 1991 – but, as in so many cases, the book is better -jw))

Thanks for sharing memories of DSC — and the one-

and-only Bob Shaw, at the con and roaming around Birmingham. "Saturday morning I spent in a zombie-like trance and remember nothing." GREAT line. Congratulations on receiving the Rebel Award, Charlotte!

Anvil 53. Whoa, an eye-catching cover for an ANVIL pounded out on a hot xerox machine.

My jaw hangs open at how busy you were, the story told appropriately in fast-forward and packed with great lines: "I only knew three people when I got here, but now I know about fifty." "They're all spiders 'til they're dead." "Julie, who was not there, was elected President, but we didn't tell her." (Sounds like many SF club maneuvers!) "Meeting ends in confusion/disorder/chaos" / "Convention ends in blur." I sense a recurring theme. Sorry to hear you lost your assistant editor, glad Julie Wall could help.

Taral was playing too many video games when he wrote "...Now You Don't" — but I like this story. NICE touches at the end when he revealed the street address and town. One, obvious question: Just what does Harry Warner, Jr., think of the story?

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

Another splendid issue of *Anvil*, and it will serve ideally to practice my practically lost art of locwriting. I haven't done much of it for a while because of a variety of problems.

I was happy to find Roy G. Bivens reviewing *Fantasy Commentator*, which is almost never mentioned in fanzines nowadays. However, since he had taken pains to complain with some justification about the difficulty of reading *Riverside Quarterly's* typography, he should have praised *Fantasy Commentator* for its superb reproduction, perhaps the best of all the large fanzines appearing today.

Buck Coulson is wasting his ministerial talents by confining himself to conducting marriage ceremonies. There are lots of other opportunities out there in fandom for him to serve fankind and pick up some spare cash in the process. For instance, large conventions could hire him to perform exorcism rites to rid them of twelve-year-olds who dash through halls and meeting rooms brandishing dangerous weapons. A convention committee that has aroused hostility by its decision to ban alcoholic beverages from the con suite could soothe the offended with one of Buck's sermons on the evils of drink. The counseling abilities of a clergyman are always useful when a union breaks up and the separated pair needs guidance on what to do about their joint APA membership.

Taral Wayne has come up with the most logical explanation I've seen for the problems I've been having. But I suspect that his narrative in this issue will baffle a lot

of readers who didn't happen to see my original article when it appeared in SAPS, then in *Mimosa*.

My most vivid memory of the Cuban missile crisis that Dick Lynch writes about came while I was in a local supermarket. The store carried programming for an area radio station as background music over the public address system. While I was looking for cheap peanut butter, the music suddenly stopped, there was a series of sharp whistling sounds, and an announcer's voice urgently repeating "Bulletin! Bulletin! Bulletin!" I froze at the spot, certain that nuclear weapons had gone into the air. There was a pause, then the announcer continued: "We've received reports of brisk snow flurries just west of Hagerstown."

It's sort of eerie to find Mike Glicksohn saying of Boyd Raeburn "he was a jazz fan" and "was one of the finest fannish writers" and so on. Maybe my own old age has made me unusually tense when tenses are involved, but I'm glad to report that Boyd still qualified to be written about in the present tense. He is active in FAPA and even paid me a visit a couple of years ago.

Sorry, but any fanzines that change to a computerzine will lose me as a reader, loccer and assorted other spare services. The change would vastly increase the difficulty of reading the fanzine, will create an impossible financial burden for anyone who wants to "receive" many fanzines, will seriously lower the quality of artwork, and wouldn't be nearly as logical as a different new medium for fanzines like their distribution in microfiche form.

Anvil seems to be faring very well with its new co-editor, whose name I should probably have included in the salutation up there, but you know how hard it is for old people to adjust to new circumstances. ((It's okay, Harry, I'll just sniffle quietly in my drink -jw)) The art work remains superior. The cover doesn't look exactly like the end of the first act of the Met's telecast of SIEGFRIED a year ago, since the face of the man doesn't resemble that of Siegfried Jerusalem, but it's still very effective. I was also particularly impressed by Brad Fosters's two head and shoulder portraits on page 5, since they're so different from the bulk of his fanzine art.



Rebecca Brayman, 721 Oak Dr., Trussville, AL 35173

You Fink!

Anvil was really great this time. Really, one of the better issues I have seen in the three years I have been reading it. As always, it was good hearing from Bob Shaw, Taral Wayne was very entertaining, and Patrick Gibbs' "Resnick Retrospective" provided a good list for future reading. But you screwed up! How could you forget the most important event of 1991 to date? How many times do you have two of your friends (born on the exact same day) give a Second Annual Thirty-ninth Birthday Party at Continuity? This event will never be repeated (until next year). And for those of you who missed it, it was one hell of a party.

Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghdee, Northern Ireland BT21 OPD, UNITED KINGDOM

My thanks to you for *Anvil* 53, and to Kevin Shaw for airmailing it to me. All of us here in New Zealand, Northern Ireland and Norway feel the same, proud and kinda humble. If we in Norn Iron, as we call it, also receive copies from George Little on the grounds that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom we shall accept them as no more than our due, residents of this part of the emerald isle having jewel nationality. (Treat this pun with the respect due its great age.)

I liked your editorial, as I usually do, and I hope you won't take it amiss (no relation to Kingsley Amiss) if I say that I thought the best thing in it was Penny's comment about the imaginary spider.

I also liked the Seasonal Greetings from BoSh, and I thought the incident recounted by Mrs. Edna Baines was quite plausible to anyone who didn't know Bob. I can see him dispensing of the Rotweiler with his bow and arrow, but if I were Mrs. Baines I would like to see its body safely buried before I ate any of those delicious home-cooked meals.

I thought the Bivens reviews were perceptive and the incidents recounted by Buck Coulson were so interesting one could only wish them to have been described more fully. But my favourite piece in the whole excellent issue was the story by Taral Wayne. An original idea, beautifully realized, it deserves a place in any anthology of this unique genre of ours.

Warner and Glicksohn shone in the letter section, as they usually do, and I'm particularly grateful to them for reassuring me about the contemporary music scene. I was beginning to feel depressed about the fact that rock and roll numbers become now only famous but forgotten before I have even heard of them. Glicksohn and Warner convey some reassurance. I remember "It Ain't No Sin To Take Off Your Skin and Dance Around in Your Bones", quoted by Harry, and I am coming to understand why it is no longer in the

Top Ten. It is simply that the lyrics are too comprehensive for delicate modern sensibilities. Nowadays obscenities have to be grunted or shouted, or drowned out, or otherwise self censored, where in the old days anything went, even lyrics such as the one about self-mutilation and exhibitionism quoted by Harry, which was such a hit by Pink Flayed. Another notable example was the famous rendition of "Kisses on the Bottom" by the Sixty-Niners.

I'm going to sit right down and write myself a letter, And make believe it came from you.....

...Those kisses on the bottom, I'll be glad I got 'em.

Milt Stevens, 7234 Capps Avenue, Reseda, CA 91335

Your recent activities and mine have some resemblances. Things seem to be an utterly hectic series of events punctuated by a few chaotic SF club meetings. Of course, regular LASFS meetings have always been chaotic. I seriously think that one of the reasons for my long tenure in the club (31 years this month) is that I haven't sat through an entire meeting since 1971. In the process of not confronting those things that fan was not meant to know, I do miss a few things. For instance, Harry Andruschak's mention in the letter column that APA L and LASFSPA were on hard times was news to me. Considering that APA L is weekly and LASFSPA used to be a 300 page monthly, I only am surprised that it took them so long to run out of steam.

Between LASFS meetings, I've been heavily involved with the LAPD crime analysis project. Crime analysis is taking on some aspects of a fandom. I suppose that's natural, since crime analysts are less numerous than fans were in 1934, and they like to get together to discuss things you just can't discuss with the general public. So far, crime analysis in California has developed local conventions, state conventions, club politics and even publishing. The publishing usually takes the form of bulletins, and there are regular local meetings where analysts trade bulletins. For LAPD, we had to tell our analysts to stop running cartoons. The bulletins might get subpoenaed sometime, and it might be difficult to explain in court that police humor is even more putrid than fan humor.

Bob Shaw's concocted story of good neighborism reminded me of the time we had to do an audit of parking ticket cancellations and requests for same. Some of the requests were real sense of wonder items. My favorite was the woman who said that she would have moved her car, but the old folks home she lived in had burned down in the interim and she was so upset that she forgot about the parking meter. She deserved the cancellation for creativity if nothing else.

Roy Biven's fanzine reviews are the first mention of *Fantasy Commentator* I've seen outside of FAPA. The fanzine is obviously too big an effort for a circulation

of 65. Since I enjoy reading about the history of science fiction, I also enjoy *Fantasy Commentator*. As a one time English major, I also don't have any problem with the academic approach in *Riverside Quarterly*. I found myself wondering that *Riverside Quarterly* is generally considered to be academic, while *Niekas* doesn't have nearly as much of an academic reputation. I suspect that the use of graphics and white space in *Niekas* makes it look like something other than an academic journal, so people react accordingly.

Taral's piece on being trapped in an arcade game was amusing. There are lots of worse games for that sort of situation. Imagine yourself waking up as a frog with an overwhelming compulsion to cross a busy roadway and a terrible premonition that you were about to be squished.

Catherine Mintz, 1810 South Rittenhouse Square, 1708, Philadelphia, PA 19103-5837.

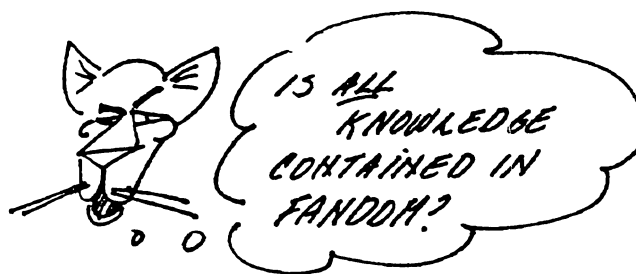
So Richard's moved to California and you have a new "new assistant editor." With the changes in personnel, who can tell the players without a scorecard? But Julie will get experienced fast, and *Anvil 53* was excellent.

Greg Turkish's shopping list interested me enough to haul out the Very Big Dictionary — that's the one so large and heavy that, although it has almost everything, actually taking it out of the bookcase has to be done with care to avoid sprained wrists. It informs me that sultana are raisins made from white seedless grapes: that is, what my supermarket sells as golden raisins. And Sheryl Birkhead is right, where golden raisins are called for, muscats just aren't the same.

Also ground pork sold in bulk is called "sausage" in Philadelphia's Italian Market and I expect that's what Greg was looking for, not the seasoned stuff you slice and fry. Hence the substitution of ground beef. I've never seen ground pork on sale in a regular supermarket, and only occasionally do they have "meatloaf mixture" — theoretically, beef, pork, and veal in equal proportions, but usually just the scraps from preparing the more expensive cuts.

Having gotten into linguistics, I have a question of my own. In the opening of Mervyn Peake's *GORMENGHAST* Trilogy he refers to two characters as appearing no larger than halma pegs. A trip through the VBD told me that Halma is a sort of Greek broad jump with weights in the hands, but gave me no idea how big a halma peg is. I assume it was used to mark the distance leaped. Or maybe the peg is the term for the weight carried in the hands? In the absence of information the imagination runs wild. Anyway I've wondered about this for years, asking one or another stray speaker of British English and gotten only blank incomprehension. No one knew what halma was, for starters. If, as Mark Manning reminds us, "All knowledge is contained in fandom," then maybe somebody

knows the answer to this one?



Donald Franson, 6543 Babcock Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91606

Thank you for *Anvil 53* (and all the others). Why am I writing a letter of comment in October on a fanzine I received in May? Well, I'm just getting around to reading it (I've been busy). The second reasons is that either you have published another issue and not sent it to me, or haven't, and there is still time for a letter. ((Now you know which is the case -jw))

The identity of "Roy G. Bivens" should not be a mystery to the readers of *Anvil*. Some issues back, someone wrote in the letter column protesting against short fanzine reviews and extolling long ones; implying that if he ever wrote any himself, they would be detailed and go into each fanzine deeply. If my collection of fanzines were in order, I might supply the name. The latest reviews of only two zines are quite good, as they are interesting zines. There is room in fanzines for either kind. There is room for reviews of any sort; I think that fanzine editors should recognize each other's existence, as they did in the old days. On my part, I prefer the middle ground; enough review to describe the fanzines and get people to send for them, but not so long that they crowd out others.

I agree with the oft misquoted statement: "All knowledge is contained in fanzines" (not "fandom"). But how to get at it? That is the problem for the computer age. I don't know. If it is easy to just press a button and find the source of this quote (for instance) it might not be as much fun to be a fan.

Tony Ubelhor, P. O. Box 886, Evansville, IN 47706

As I promised at Kubla, I'm sending the enclosed LoC on *Anvil 53*. (I have a hard time writing LoCs. It's not that I don't enjoy the zines I receive; nothing could be farther from the truth. It's just that I can never seem to find the time to sit down and write. When ghod finished with Harry Warner, Jr. and Mike Glicksohn, it must have run out of "essence of letterhack," because it sure didn't have any left over for me!)

Mike Resnick is one of the finest guests any convention could ever hope to have. He's witty, gregarious, well-read, very accessible, and, as you say, one of fandom's greatest raconteurs. We were very fortunate to

have him as our GoH in Evansville a few years back and he made a lasting impression on everyone. And kudos to Patrick J. Gibbs for the "Resnick Retrospective." Very well done. I am curious, though, as to why no mention was made of Resnick's shorter works. Undeniably, he's a wonderful novelist, but I think it's in his short stories and novellas that we best glimpse his true genius.

Doing the Harry Harrison interview at Chattacon was indeed great fun, but getting sloshed with you at the bar afterward was even more so. (I've since sworn off scotch — at least until the next convention.) We made quite a spectacle of ourselves, didn't we? It was a wonderful interview and I was glad you were able to join me for it. It's too bad my tape recorder made it unusable by picking up more of the background bar noises than it did of Mr. Harrison.

Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West
Mid DY8 1LA, UNITED KINGDOM

Nice cover. I liked all your illos for one reason or another, particularly the Wade and the Taral ones. Charlotte's Web made strange reading to me. I almost never see zines (as I deduce) describing local club events/news/chit chat. I live about 12 miles from Birmingham, England, and I don't even know if they have a zine, tho they do, as far as I can tell, have regular group meetings, monthly.

Wonder if Buck is entitled to be called the Reverend Coulson... he did mention something about his wedding thingys, but it was interesting to see more detail. I've sometimes wondered, idly, about applying for some of these ordinations and degree things, just for the hell of it, to see what folks here would make of, say, The Very Reverend K.M.P. Cheslin, MA.BA, etc., ho hum.

Don D'Amassa, 323 Dodge Street, East Providence,
RI 02914

Enjoyed Taral's nostalgic bit about the Derelicts. I had the good fortune to wander around Toronto with that group once many years ago, and it's still one of my fonder fannish memories.

Also enjoyed Patrick Gibbs on Resnick. Watch for THE RED TAPE WAR by Resnick, Jack Chalker, and George Alec Effinger, one of the more genuinely funny SF novels I've read. Resnick continues to improve with almost every book, and some of his shorter fiction ("Bully", the African stories, etc.) are astonishingly good. As someone who remembers him for the GODDESS OF GANYMEDE days, the change is remarkable. I agree with Patrick that SANTIAGO may be his best novel to date, but I suspect it won't hold the title for long.

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

Something looks familiar about the artwork on page

34. I'm going to have to talk to Sheryl Birkhead about plagiarizing without proper credit.

My favorite sexist seafood joke is about the blind man who, walking past the open-air fish market, says, "Good morning, ladies." Does that mean I'm scrod?

I love Taral's insects in the moonlight. I've always admired militaristic mites, working-class weevils, and bugs with breasts.

Nature does abhor a vacuum. The dust in my apartment resists the best efforts of my vacuum to move it.

Eva Hauser, Na cihadle 55, 160 00 Praha 6,
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On May 12, 1991 I attended EUROCON held in Krakow, Poland. I met there Poul Anderson from the USA, who was a GoH. Of course, I asked him about his views on feminism, as I read about his arguing with Joanna Russ. He was very nice and polite and explained me that he was formed in the thirties and forties and he can't change his opinions so easily, and that Joanna Russ is too radical and can't withstand any opinions a bit different from the "only proper" — hers.

The most interesting episode for me was visiting Stanislaw Lem who lives in Krakow. He will be seventy this autumn and is not keen of coming to the cons and meetings, he rather hides himself from the fans. But a colleague of mine, Pavel Weigel, had founded a Society of Friends of S. Lem in Prague. He brought to Lem some snaps, badges of the society, books and magazines to sign etc., so he was allowed to his house, and invited me to accompany him.

Lem has a beautiful luxurious house with a lot of antiquities, an elegant wife and a fat dog. He didn't understand either my English nor my Czech-Polish mixture, and he scarcely understood Pavel, as his hearing is already bad, so I only listened to their (a bit monotonous) conversation. My impression was that Lem hasn't got any new bright ideas; he himself says that he has stopped writing. It's a bit sad but probably each personality has an epoque in which it flourishes, and then fades in the new epoque, if you understand what I'm trying to say.

THE BEST THING IN THIS SPRING is that we have a pink tank on one of the Prague's squares. It's a Soviet tank, a monument which reminded us for 45 years that the Red Army liberated us from the Nazis. Some people wanted to remove it, and some didn't, and finally a student of arts painted it all pink. The officials removed the stain and wanted the guy to pay a lot of money as a punishment, and so four members of our Parliament painted the tank again. This time, the pink paint stayed on the tank, and it's extremely beautiful. Tender, playful. I hope they will remove neither the paint nor the tank.

VISITORS IN PRAGUE. In May there was an invasion of foreign visitors here. You probably know David Brin, who stayed in Prague for 4 days with his wife; maybe it was a part of their honeymoon as they married only one month ago. Brin tried to learn some Czech phrases and some events from our history, and I think he has really an enormous mental energy (all the time produces new ideas, theories, questions, hypotheses...). I made a party in my house which attracted over twenty visitors eager to hear Brin's ideas. His way of thinking and acting seemed to us typically American - we were pleased that he is so American-like: so straightforward, so optimistic - we used to imagine the American people just like that. And so we liked him (and I think that the French people on the last Eurocon in Fayence liked him too, as he fulfilled their expectations about Americans so wonderfully, but I heard that some British people didn't like him much.)

Steve Antczak, 926-C Waverly Way NE, Atlanta, GA 30307 ((Whose letter we received twice -jw))

Finally getting around to a LoC! First off I must say welcome to Julie as co-ed (ahem) of ANVIL. Let's see how long ya last. Hopefully a very long time!

No real comments on the zine, except that the cover was absolutely "striking". Here's another pun I thought of: How many films have I seen lately? Oh, just a Coppola films.

Seriously: Re: Buck Coulson. The distinction between fantasy and science fiction, in regards to the Hugos especially, blurs quite a bit as far as I'm concerned. Obviously something like THE SWORD OF SHANNARA is fantasy, but really so is RINGWORLD, although I suppose one could further complicate (or simplify) things by calling it "science fantasy". Whatever works. If it falls within the wide range of works that can be called Science Fiction & Fantasy, then it should be eligible for the Hugo.

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

Many thanks for another Anvil in the mail. Didn't think the pubbing bug would release its bite on you. The Anvils keep coming, and they all look great. As had been said before, time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once. Perhaps you need to take your life's chronometer into the shop for some service; it's not keeping events far enough apart for you. I get into the same timebinds regularly, and I just say to myself that I'm happier with too much to do than not enough.

Fannish weddings are perhaps the strangest, as Buck Coulson will probably attest to... my wedding to Yvonne, a French-Canadian by descent, was a little different. Our reception was divided into three parts; one English-speaking, one French-speaking, and one

fanslang-speaking, and all groups were looking at the other, wondering "What the hell are they talking about?" There was a partial APA disty there, kid you not, and the most alcoholic rum-mocha cake you've ever sunk fangs into.

I've been trying to get our con committee to invite Mike Resnick up to Toronto for Ad Astra, but I never win the vote. One of Mike's early novels Patrick Gibbs didn't mention is THE BRANCH, a tale of power and wealth in the far future.

Dick Lynch, how far up in New York state did you go to school? Does Ogdensburg sound at all familiar? I wish I'd had more time to meet fans from eastern Europe at ConFiction... so much to plan, and not enough time to see both people and places.

Drip, drip, drip... Mike, I still prefer honest, constructive criticism in fanzines. I just don't like the bitchiness that many reviews contain. I stand by my remarks in A52. Proper criticism is necessary; I just don't believe there's much of it, because of a lack of good temperate fanzine reviewers.

Another baseball fan... Harry, I wonder if you're a supporter of your own local team in the Eastern Baseball League. Every so often, I see baseball scores on the local community channel, and I see Hagerstown with a fairly successful team.

I'd very much like to get Damir Coklin's address in Oz... I'm sure the streak of fanzines and letters would open up with its publication. If any of his scandalous stories include the adventures of Krsto Mazuranic and his pupils (Krsto's a teacher), I'd like to see them. ((2/298 Williams Road, TOORAK, Victoria, 3142, Australia.))

We also Heard From:

Cathy Doyle, Ron Salomon, Bob Shaw, Irv Koch, Mark Manning, Udo Emmerich, Marie Rengstorff Greene, Dal Coger, Scott Lee Spence, Ben Schilling, Taral Wayne, Harry Andruschak, and Brian Earl Brown.



This just in: The Parliament House (alleged site for the 1994 DSC in Birmingham) closed July 8, 1992. The new location for the Con is the Radisson Hotel up the street. Room rates TBA.

