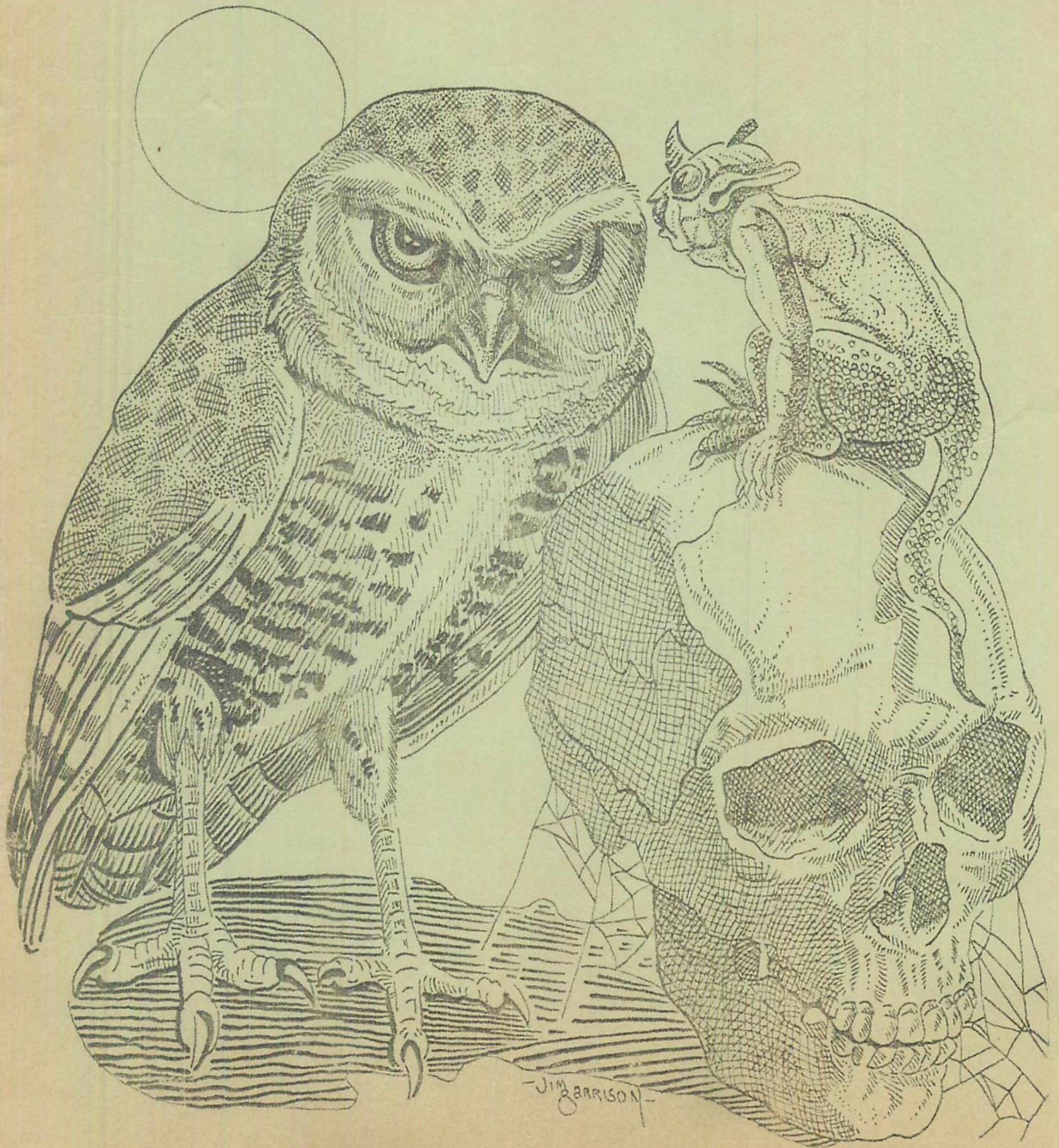
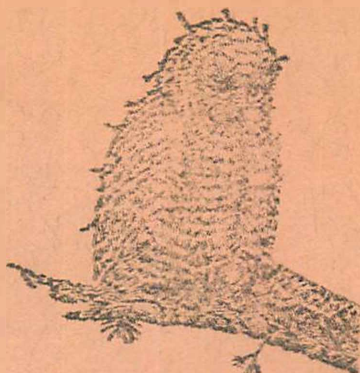


ash-wing 14





ASH-WING 14

MAY 1974

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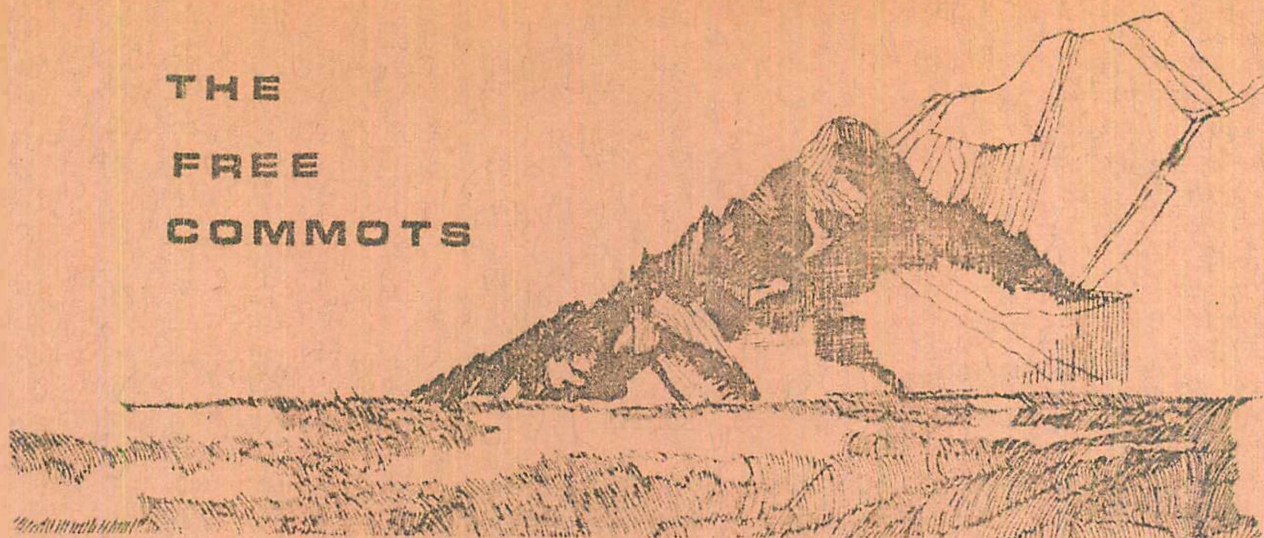
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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO ROSE HOGUE

ASH-WING 14 comes from just down the road a piece, in the Gingerbread House of Frank Denton at 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. It is a publication of the Bran & Skolawn Press, but the press number has long been lost. It is available....and available....and available. It likes to receive (inaudible) locs, (expletive) contributions, (rumble) art work by Rembrandt, Rotsler and Rosemary Wood. Also Ukrainian Easter Eggs. Sample: \$1.00

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THE FREE COMMOTS



Ho, hum. Here comes Denton again with another dreary tale of page count and postal rates and how come this isn't 20 pages like he said it would be. Well, maybe we can skip that part and go on to interesting things like columns by Michael Carlson and Clifford R. Wind and Douglas Barbour.

Well, Old Father Frank (a euphemism relegated to him by one Rose Hogue) has just about had it with such dreary conversation. He doesn't want to talk about it. He couldn't stick to 20 pages simply because he had too much good material and too many nice letters. You won't believe it but the letter column was pruned judiciously and still ended up with all those good pages. For a while there I felt like Donn Brazier. And the latest news about Donn's TITLE, by the way, is that it's alive and well. There were reasonable doubts for a while as to whether Donn would have access to a mimeo any longer. Evidently that problem has been overcome and Title-friends will still be receiving. And if you are considered a Title-friend, consider yourself lucky. Anyway, I was really elated with the reaction to A-W 13 in terms of letters and it's the stuff upon which fanzine editors thrive. Particularly when the bulk of the letters go beyond the "great issue" stage and the correspondents begin to talk to each other. Not for a moment do I wish to slight the fine writers who have contributed columns or stories or articles, but I'm equally proud of the letter column this time.

Anyway, no more talk of what A-W is or isn't, will be or won't be. It will be what it happens to be at the moment, I guess. Obviously, I've lost control of both it and myself. It's a free spirit, wandering the earth, being it's own being, doing its own thing, keeping on truckin' and any of the other contemporary cliches that come to tongue.

BY OWL LIGHT AND WRITER'S BLOCK???

I've been struggling lately with my so-called fannish writing. At one time I was producing quite regularly a small body of personal junk which people found of some interest, I guess. It seemed to have culminated in a big travel edition of By Owl Light toward the end of 1973. Since then I haven't been able to get cranked up. It's been an awful feeling, something akin to a professional writer's block, I would imagine. Yet it really hasn't been that at all, in the purest sense of the word. During the last several months I have been able to crank out three short stories, two mysteries and one science fiction. So it's not that I can't write anything, rather it's that I can't seem to write my old personal rambling style. Frightening. I occasionally get glimpses of things that I ought to be writing about, yet I have this strange attitude in the back of my head that it really isn't that interesting and nobody would care to read it. I have managed to get about seven pages on stencil, much of which

is somewhat dated by now, but I may actually send it out someday. The mailing list will be trimmed considerably, I'm afraid. Somehow it managed to get away from me and got up around 170 copies. It's more likely to survive at about 100 copies, so be ye warned. Meantime I'm going to try to pick up the pen again and see if I ~~can~~ ramble as I did in days of yore.

OH, THE DEMANDS!!

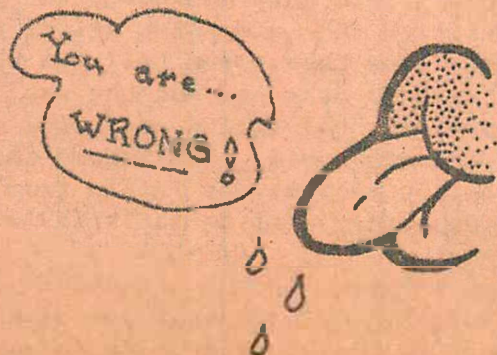
A couple of nice things have happened recently that are a new experience for me. I was contacted first by Don Keller who is involved with The Fantasy Association in a magazine, the name of which escapes me at the moment. Dreadful omission. He knew that I had written previously about having read Watership Down, a book originally published in England, now having been published in this country and already on the best seller list. He also knew that I was recommending the book highly and he gave me the first shot at writing a review. I was delighted to be given the opportunity; little did I know the struggle it would be. I'm used to sitting down and sashing off short reviews. Now I was faced with the prospect of appearing in the fannish press as a knight-errant for a book about rabbits. I was even asked to go on at some length. It was like pulling teeth. I wanted to do a good job and the further I got into it, the less capable I felt. At last, however, I did finish it and sent it off. I haven't heard from Don yet as to how he liked/disliked it. Time will tell.

Then just last week came a letter from John Bangsund. That alone made it a red letter day. One just doesn't receive personal letters from John, no matter how many fanzines one might receive. Not only was he saying kind things about By Owl Light 6, but he was asking me to do a review of Catholics, the Brian Moore novel, which you may have seen as a television special a while back. John was of the opinion that since I am a Catholic that I may have some special and rare insight into what the book has to say about the Church. I have not read the slender tome as yet, but did manage to pick up a paperback copy of it just yesterday. It has been published by Pocket Books at \$1.25, a bit high for a slim 133 pages, but then isn't everything? Moore has taken a brief peek into the near future of the Church and if the television portrayal correlates with the book at all, as I suspect it does, this should be an interesting task to do for John's PHILOSOPHICAL GAS. Anyway, I'm looking forward to it. How gratifying! Maybe Frank Denton will take his place besides the likes of Cy Chauvin as reviewer and critic. Fat chance!

JUST A TRIFLE

There was an insatiable urge the other night to have sherry trifle. Trifle is an English dessert of which we had many samplings of infinite variety during our trip to England last summer. It can be very good or very bad, depending. Sort of like an American hamburger. One wonders sometimes how the hamburger can be so badly mistreated; in essence, it is a simple commodity. And so it is with the English trifle. A simple combination of pound cake, strawberry jam, whipped cream and custard. But it can be painfully bad or extraordinarily good.

Well, I had not attempted to make this particular delight before, so I hauled out several books on the topic of English cooking. There before my very eyes were three recipes as disparate as one might imagine. Which to choose? Indeed, they seemed to share some common lineage, but one called for three whole eggs in the custard, another called for six eggs, yolks only. Finally, after attempting to analyze the recipes with a chemist's eye (which I have



not) I determined to try the one which purports to be the recipe from a fine hotel in London - Rule's. If they don't know how to make it, what chance had the others?

So it was off to the grocery store to pick up the ingredients. A person who plans ahead a little better than I would perhaps have made up a pound cake the day before. On a Sunday night it's a little late to think of that, but pound cake is easily come by, sez he. The bakery rack held no pound cake; frustration. Perhaps the Hostess rack? Amidst the Twinkies and the Banana Flips and the powdered donuts. No such luck. It seemed for the moment that there was not going to be any Trifle that night. Then one last desperate thought came to me. Try the freezer case, dummy. And, lo and behold, Sara Lee came through. A nice pound cake in aluminum pan. Only \$1.07. My gawd, this was going to be an expensive dessert. Whipping cream, a half pint, was easily come by. Since there was no sherry in the cupboard at home, Gallo came through with a Livingstone cream sherry for \$1.29. And the fresh berries, which for some reason looked as though they had been picked at the height of the season rather than early on, big, round, red luscious strawberries, were a mere 39¢.

Feeling much better now with the makings tucked under my arm, I trundled off home. As you'll see from the recipe which follows, there's not an awful lot to putting together the Trifle, except for making the egg custard. Anyone can whip cream, slice up a pound cake and spread some jam. Not much can go wrong, surely? Oh, yeh?

Let me be the first to warn you. Eggs in the top of a double boiler begin to cook rather quickly. I should have known that. But I stuck the double boiler on, filled the bottom part of it with water, threw in the eggs, mixed them up and added the sugar and salt. Then I set about scalding the milk, not a lengthy task, but it took enough time to give the eggs a head start. When I added the scalded milk, the mixture looked nice and smooth, but before I was finished it was more than apparent that the eggs were really cooked and were not going to mix with the milk anymore than forced to. In other words, I did not have a nice creamy smooth custard. I had a mixture which looked like curdled milk. I put it aside and called into the living room to my wife, "Help!"

I must admit that she was kind. She patiently explained that you scalded the milk first, then did the egg mixture, added the milk slowly so that the scalded milk would not cook the eggs, then put the top part of the double boiler into the water and stirred as the mixture thickened. Oh, nice. It takes a little time, but comes along nicely.

Finally I assembled the Trifle, put it into the fridge to cool (it's only the custard part that must cool), then in about 45 minutes finished up with the top layer of whipped cream and garnished with the strawberries. It looked quite good, but the proof is in the eating. Well, I'll be the first to admit that it comes near to the ambrosia of the gods. It's a superb dessert and this recipe is all right. Of course, I want to try the other two recipes also and see which of the three is best. But for the time being, my appetite has been satisfied for a month or so.

When I told Anna Jo that I was going to stick the recipe in for everyone who wanted to try it, she said, "But all of the English fans that get Ash-Wing will probably jump down your throat and tell you that the recipe is not authentic, nor like Grandmother used to make, or not the way they do it in the West or in the Chilterns or up in Cumberland." I smiled and said, "Yes." A frown crossed her brow and then it slowly dawned. I was hoping that indeed they would and I would be receiving in the mail some 20 different recipes for Trifle from various regions of England. Clever, these colonials. Meantime, I'll be satisfied with this one.

But I expect Archie and Beryl Mercer to write and say, "Don't know why anyone would want Trifle when they can have clotted Cornish cream on scones with strawberry jam" and Dave Piper will write to say, "That's not the way mum made it" and Rosemary

Pardoe will send me her recipe, and I may even get a response from Phil Muldowney, if he hasn't gaffiated. Terry Jeeves will make a film about the construction of a fannish trifle and will take 1st prize at Eastercon before sending it on for me to view. And the BLUNT group will feature an illustrated article, with a follow-up interview of various artists and their conceptions of what a Trifle ought to look like. Trifle fandom will take its place along aardvark and wombat fandom in England. Ah, such delusions.

Well, anyway it was great fun, excellent eating, calorie-producing and look what happened. I found something to write about once again, and managed to poke a little fun at British fandom while doing so. Sincerely, I hope they do respond with some recipes. I'm game to try anything once in a while. Who knows, maybe I can put together a Trifle Cookbook and have it accepted by the Cook Book Club. Do you suppose I could get into SFWA using that as a credential?

Well, enough. The recipe I used follows. Try it out. Let me know what you think. A battered copy of Gordon Dickson's Sleepwalker's World to the most original contribution on the subject of Trifle in the next issue. And a copy of Gerard Conway's The Midnight Dancers to the first recipe for Trifle to come in from the U.K.

Sherry Trifle - Rule's

8 oz. poundcake	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sweet sherry
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup strawberry jam	2 cups boiled custard
2 cups whipped cream ($\frac{1}{2}$ pint will do)	1 cup fresh strawberries

Cut pound cake into slices and make a layer of cake in the bottom of a serving dish. Top with strawberry jam and half of the whipped cream. Pour sherry over it. Add a second layer of cake. Pour custard over all. Cool. Top with the remaining whipped cream and garnish with fresh strawberries.

Boiled Custard

3 eggs
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
2 cups milk, scalded
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
salt

In the top part of a double boiler beat eggs until frothy. Stir in sugar and a pinch of salt. Add scalded milk gradually, stirring constantly. Cook over hot (not boiling) water until mixture is smooth and coats the spoon. Stir in vanilla. Makes about 2 cups.

* * *

So much good material this time that I don't have room to ramble on any further. Maybe next time. I still am working on the Keith Roberts conversation, have another fine article from Dainis Bisenieks, and will expect columns from Clifford and Michael. Some pretty good stories are still in the file for later, and by golly, this issue is roughly back on a quarterly basis. I think I'll try it one more time.



YOUR -DOM,-DOM,-DOM

DOUGLAS BARBOUR

SOME THOUGHTS ON SUB-CULTURES, LINGOES, & THE FORMS
OF INNER/OUTER, US/THEM PREJUDICES AFTER V-CON III.

/ Editors note: I met Doug Barbour and his lovely wife, Sharon, at V-Con III held at the end of February in Vancouver, B.C. Doug is a published poet, a contributor to scholarly journals, an instructor in Canadian literature and science fiction, a masterful conversationalist, and a heck of a nice guy. I didn't convince him that he was also a fan. What follows obviously boiled out of his typewriter in reaction to the con and events following the con. His own unique style, which I have left intact, he blames on his poet-self._/

Let it be noted, first, that i enjoyd V-Con III thoroughly, had a good time, met some fine people for the first time, saw some other i had met before, & was perhaps 'connd' as i was not at my first, too large, Torcon II. Still, i wonder about certain aspects of fandom, & how they affect the outsider, or even the person, like me, who is really interested, not just in sf, but also in fandom as a context for communicating my interest in, & thoughts about, sf to others who are, i hope, equally devoted to the literature, as well as the fun.

The panel on sunday morning, on fandom & what it means, was helpful to a degree; but, it was also, despite its best efforts, already speaking to the converted, or those, like me, who were half-in already. Susan Glicksohn mentiond, in fact, that no trufan would be up at such an ungodly hour, unless he or she were on the panel. The fact that the presence of a number of real fans appeard to contradict her statement, fazed her not at all; they were friends, acting above & beyond the call of duty. What price fandom? Anyway, the panel, enjoyable as it was, couldnt help but use 'fanspeak' which isnt as bad as 'newspeak,' but has something of the same effect upon those who arent 'in.' One request, at least, from the audience, was for clarification of some of the terms. Hmmmnn.

The lingo of fandom is peculiar to it, * does, im afraid, to the outsider, have a slight air of pretentiousness about it. Not that it isnt easy to find yourself using it, especially if all around you are doing so. Still, unless you are part of the group, the words come uneasily to your tongue, & to your ears, the phrases are just slightly awkward, or they smack of some secret clubtalk, as we used it when we built our first treehouse, or whatever, and only 'we' could get in, if we remembrd the password.

This is a ghetto language im talking about, & fans have probably heard all too much about the science fiction ghetto to want to hear more; but there is more than just a grain of truth to the charge, as a reading of Peter Nichols' articles on sf in FOUNDATION, or, more pertinently, Donald A. Wollheim's THE UNIVERSE MAKERS, will prove. Wollheim loves fandom, & its sense of ghetto, so much he would save that at the expense of the artistic growth of sf! Now, that's being a trufan! And the lingo, what i was talking about, works, as do all ghetto lingoes, as much to keep them out

as to communicate with each other within. Indeed, one of the panelists, despite his love of sf, & of what fandom could mean to a person, lamented slightly that if too many people joined, it would no longer have the particular kind of exclusivity he also very greatly enjoyed. He was very nice about this, & clearly didn't mean it too much, but the message was nevertheless very clear, in its own oblique manner.

Anyway, as most fans probably know, fandom is not alone in this kind of activity. Indeed, the major sub-cult of the past decade, that associated with rock & drugs, has a super-slang argot, which, it turns out, is based, to a very large degree, on the special language of the gay world (Straight Arrow recently published A GAY LEXICON to give us greater background info on all this). Most of us, not just the younger generation, use some of that jargon in our everyday speech now, & some of it is very good, but some is pretty useless, or rather pretty vague, which may be the reason we like it, but also means that clear communication is cut down, at least on certain levels. You can't write a book in hiptalk, so much of the communicatory power of the lingo depends upon gesture, & books lack that kind of physical gesture; movies don't, & hip movies can be very interesting, as EASY RIDER, for example, showed. Scientology also has its own lingo, though that's a mean, bad, example to choose, & I'm not suggesting any connections beyond the fact of lingoes.

In one of those interesting coincidences that make life fun, we had a chance to observe another ghetto of sorts the evening after the con. My cousin now lives at The Western Front in Vancouver, a huge building owned by an artists co-op (I guess you could put it that way; & he's their lawyer, & has joined them there). The most noted members of the "Front" are likely Dr. Brute, Lady Brute, and Michael Morris, who is widely known for his art & his work with the Canada Council. The whole group is quite a bit larger, & Image Bank also resides there: it is a weird assemblage, to say the least, & also very interesting, very intelligent, in its own special, different, way.

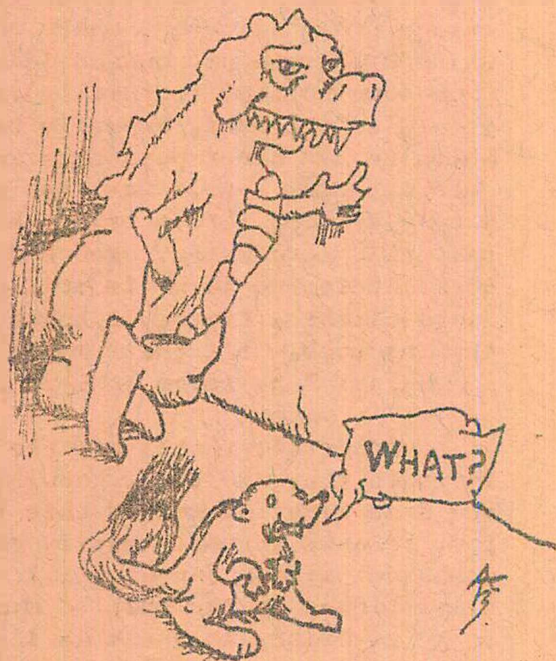
Well, Peter brought the doctor over on Sunday evening to his mother's where we were staying, & that was our first chance to hear their argot. The group had just returned from Hollywood, where they had participated in a show, called the "Decca Dance", which Dr. Brute pronounced 'decadance' & which was to be the beginning of a ten year countdown to 1984 (naturally). He had fallen in love with Hollywood partly because it was so decadent, & partly because everyone there was listening to Motown music, which he had never paid that much attention to. So his conversation was filled with Motown, & how S-M it was, but truly sophisticated in its own fashion, etc. Now, these people are not into a trip, they are, each of them, into "their own movies." I suspect this terminology predated their trip to Hollywood, for the Image Bank has long been interested in movie stills, & a lot of other Hollywood detritus: they are into image-cliches, trying, I think, to manipulate them into archetypes, or just to see them as such. But their major contribution to special lingoes is the use of 'movie' & 'scenario' as terms of very specific yet really rather vague 'pointing.'

Of course, that's not the whole of their lingo, but the rest is merely the way in which they use their knowledge of each other when speaking to outsiders. At dinner the next night we watched this in action, & it was fascinating, but a bit frightening too, because it could easily get nasty, & was directed at us. One of the things such a shared private language allows, is the testing of others. Sharon remarked that she always found it odd that so many other people felt they had somehow earned the right to be superior, to speak as if whomever they were speaking to had to prove him or herself. One way of doing this is to talk about the things you know so well, but which are also more or less private to the group, as if everyone should know exactly what your shorthand expressions mean. Another is just to be nasty, as a new member of the group was to us ("Oh, Pascal, is really into his superstar movie," someone remarked later when he told some poor clod who had wandered into their sacrosanct territory, which admittedly has a "For Members Only" sign over it, to fuck off in rather overwhelming terms). We had been told by my cousin to just walk in & ask for him, if he

wasnt there, they knew we were coming & would make us at home. Well, apparently Pascal had forgotten, because he pointed us to Peter's room, grinned hugely & balefully, & told us if we didnt find him we could just "kiss your asses." Sharon wanted to leave right then, & i didnt blame her, but Peter turned up, the others were all nice, if speaking their way to us, just testing, you know, & all sort of apologized for Pascal's behaviour but were, nevertheless, completely unaffected & didnt seem to think he had acted in any really mean manner. They laughed uproariously when he did the same turn on the poor fellow who wandered in to ask if he could use their TV to watch KUNG FU on, an admittedly foolish request, but not deserving quite the scathing response it got. Pascal could act that way because he was 'at home' with the psychic projection of the group around him. Just as they could 'judge' us for the same reasons, there, there were more of them than us, & in the outside world they carry that group arrogance with them, though not necessarily as openly.

Well. First, i have never come across such behaviour toward non-fans in sf fandom, though it might possibly exist. That is not my point, & if i have a point maybe it's hidden somewhere in what ive already said; but: what price the freedom to speak 'between'. How much would it cost, how hard would it be, in these circles, to pull a Rydra Wong? Not that i could, but that i would like to think it could be done. Not merely because it might involve an avoidance of jargon, a more pure speech, by which i dont mean a speech purified of those elements which signify growth, slang, anglo-saxonisms, etc., but a speech that talks to all camps. Since, for example, strangely enough, fandom & the artists at The Western Front share some interests, in pop culture for instance, even in sf: one of the guys there asked me about the con, & about Herbert, knew his books, agreed that he would likely be, as he was, an optimist in his predictions.

Is the lingo necessary to fandom's survival? Is fandom that easily defined? My suspicion, after talking with & listening to people all weekend, is that it is not at all a monolith, but that lingo does make the outsider suspect that it is. And, it's better, surely, for not being one. Well, i dont know if ive said anything of importance here, but i had all these thoughts sort of circling me after the weekend, & i thought it might be worthwhile raising some of the questions that are at least implied above. Because i still dont know where i stand in all this. A fan-in-the-making? Perhaps. Because i love to talk sf, especially to people who are interested in it. For im serious, i know, & see, i can use the jargon, but i could just as easily have said, for i love the literature, & want to discuss that; & maybe that way i would have said a bit more. I know ive enjoyed many of the fanzines ive seen, & ive contributed already to quite a few of them. I enjoyed V-Con III, & will likely make it next year, not least because i'll need the escape from Edmonton weather by then, just as i did this year. But the talk, much of it was the centre of my enjoyment, & most of that talk did not involve fanspeak. Which may prove something, but i'll not be the one to say what.



LETTERS FROM A RED BALLOON

clifford r. wind

Hello, welcome to my humble apartment. Thought you had the wrong one for a moment, didn't you, seeing the dymolabeled "Hungadunga" on the door? No, it's not my roommate's name, though he put it up. But come in, come in. Let me give you a guided tour.

Okay, I know, I know. That this 'column' should degenerate into a grade school essay, "A Trip Around My Home", is little short of pitiful. But I told everyone last time that I'd run out of material. And I warned Mr. Denton that I might very well be reduced to writing about my apartment. He didn't listen, so..... --

To your immediate right as you enter, a chair. Although it appears to be an antique version of a student writing desk, it is in fact a high school wood shop project. Next to that -- we'll proceed about the apartment widdershins, if that's all right -- a small table. Under it are two record collections; mine, containing mostly Lalo Schiffrin related albums, Walter Carlos, Deo Dato, a few Ventures, and my current pride, an old Helen Kane 78 that set me back five bucks, and my roommate's, containing mostly Tiajuana Brass, movie soundtracks, including The Great Escape with which he delights to rudely awaken me, a couple Glen Campbell which my roommate seldom plays at less than 45 rpm, two Al Jolson, and one Eddie Cantor. On top of the table a pile of unanswered fanzines and other correspondence,

--I've a feeling I'm not going to be able to fill much space with this tour so I'll digress for a moment. Among that correspondence is a form from the DMAA, an add-on application form that allows me to get my name put on third class mailing lists in any of twenty-seven different areas of interest. The DMAA also has a name removal form to get off mailing lists, but if, like me, you cound no day good that doesn't see some mail, junk or not, you'll write immediately to Direct Mail Advertising Association, Inc., 230 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017. After all, "direct mail is the personal medium."--

and a large lamp, whose shade stubbornly remains at not less than 15 degrees from the vertical. Now along the next wall, --hmmmm? The rock with blue gift bow, on the floor. Mine, a birthday gift from a young lady I know. She enclosed it in a three by three by three foot aluminum wrapped box. But as I was saying, the wobbling assemblage of unfinished two by fours, four by fours, and four by sixes that lines the next wall is a series of book shelves,

housing the stereo equipment, tv,

--Now, you know that somehow I'm going to work in mention of Ms. Esther Williams, and this is as good a place as any, while mentioning the tv on which I've seen three of Ms. Williams' great works. "On An Island With You" with, sigh, Ms. Esther Williams, Cyd Charisse, Peter Lawford, Ricardo Montalban, Jimmy Durante, and Xavier Cugat, his orchestra and his chihuahua. "Take Me Out To The Ball Game", with Ms. Esther Williams, sigh, Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Edward Arnold, and Betty Garrett, directed by Busby Berkley himself, but with musical numbers staged by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen. "Fiesta", directed, as was "On An Island With You", by Richard Thorpe, with Ms. Esther Williams, sigh, fighting bulls, Cyd Charisse, Akim Tamiroff, and "introducing" Ricardo Montalban, as the composer of Aaron Copland's Salon Mexico.--

some textbooks, Panshin through Zelazny of my three hundred and some papaerbacks, a couple dozen unread books, including Machiavelli, Ray Cummings, Olaf Stapledon, E.R. Burroughs, and Alvin Toffler. Pardon? The one gallon bottle between the right speaker and the stolen, antique Underwood typer? Yes, that is actually Lavoris. Would you care for some?

Let's move on, into the kitchen. . . Here we are. No, this is it, all of it. It may appear to be just a hallway between the living room and the bedroom, but it's a kitchen all right. With plenty of cupboard space, even if I can't find room for my ten pound bag of rice. The stove, sink, and refrigerator are all combined into a single, handy five foot long unit. And the hallway is almost three feet wide, so there's plenty of room. What more could you ask of a kitchen ?

--After all, it's not the architect's fault that the makers of the stove-sink-refrigerator should have so crimped together the wires to the range elements that they should easily short out the entire unit. As happened, with a rather startling flash and noise, when a young lady friend tried to make spaghetti dinner for me once. We managed without the stove, using instead a rice cooker and a popcorn popper.--

Onward, the bedroom. Along the first wall, Aldiss through Padgett. On the wall, a rectangle of cardboard with a cheerful red chipmunk in a striped jacket saying, "Hey! Don't forget to rotate me!"

Along the next wall, a chest of drawers, with three feet of textbooks atop it, not to mention a much used "150 Ways To Play Solitaire" and all the free recipe booklets I got for only a postcard to the food companies. How else does one discover sunflower seed pie?



Completing this side of the room is my bed, with my name in rhinestones above the head on the third wall. Next to the bed, a bedstand with JFK piggy bank, clock radio, twelve inch stack of fanzines and a half dozen pens, none of which write.

Which brings us to the last room of the apartment. The bathroom.

--What, you say? Am I to spare you no detail? No! I told you I was desperate for something to write about.--

Cupboard, medicine cabinet, heat lamp, toilet, sink, and bathtub/shower, all cleverly, compactly arranged. Now, back to

--Wait, there's got to be more I can say about the bathroom. For all the time spent there, there's too little thought and discussion of bathrooms. Consider how interesting the time spent in bathrooms could be if we would only put our minds to it. Calculating for instance, in my own case, just how many degrees to the left one can lean while sitting on the toilet before the fact that the toilet seat hinge is not bolted to the bowl on the right side allows the seat, and sitter, to tip, and fall. And setting my six foot four frame in the bathtub, designed by a man five foot three who thought he was tall, with knees tucked below my chin and heels pressed tight against buttocks, considering how to bathe with the fewest motions. Or showering, with head bent, as clearance in half this split level ceilinged bathroom is but six inches, wondering why it is not possible to design a shower whose first blast isn't always ice water, and watching, after the water is turned off, water pulse in and out of the showerhead, never quite far enough to drip, like a sow, transparent tongue, but sounding like a chicken heart that ate New York, lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub.--

the livingroom. Along this wall, facing the door and window, my roommate's bed, a single mattress and boxspring on top of two twin mattresses. Yes, with the bolsters it does look somewhat like a rather wide throne. Or if you prefer to sit on the edges of the twin mattresses where they stick out, a rather low sofa.

Along the joining wall, more shelves of unfinished lumber, although these are taller and more or less nailed together. These house my roommate's textbooks, reference books on pharmacy and magic, and Alistair Maclean collection. On the floor, between the shelves and the head of the bed, a phone, phone book, and lamp with no shade. Next a most uncomfortable old chair taken from a lawyer's waiting room. And next to that a very ugly desk with at least three coats of paint visible. Which, ignoring the overflowing waster basket, brings us back to the door.

Any questions?

The photograph above my roommate's bed? Sai Baba, a religious leader of the Far East. Hmm? Yes, we do have a closet, in the bedroom but there's nothing remarkable about it, save perhaps that the sliding, folding door no longer slides, but only hangs askew, halfway into the bedroom.

--Be grateful I let it go at that. I could have gone on, inspired by the contents of that closet to pen such lines as:

Bachelorhood is a coat with eight buttons, two of which are in the right hand pocket.

Bachelorhood is four pair of shoes, and three and a half pairs of shoelaces.

I suppose the next lines would deal with the cliches of unmade beds and unwashed dishes, but the truth is I've never let any dirty dishes go without washing for more

than twelve hours. And while I'm being truthful, I must admit to a lie. Those six dry pens? They're in the upper right hand drawer of the desk, not on my bed stand.--

Helen Kane? You mean you've not heard the name? She was a Broadway and film comedienne in the 20's. It was her singing style, in fact, that was used for the Betty Boop cartoons.

Any more questions? Yes, but you've no more time? Ah, a pity. Well, then. Goodbye, but do come back, won't you?

--Now, see? That wasn't so bad, was it? I mean, I could have spent this space discussing, as indeed Mr. Denton suggested, my personal collection of burn scars. . . .

Maybe next time.--



TRAVELS WITH NO ONE

michael carlson

Installment 4 = Lexington, Virginia

There's a neat sort of continuity here, since the last tale of travel to appear within these pages was Ashland, Virginia. In the meantime I have written about Clinton, New York (and I'm not sure just what happened to that ms. after I mailed it out) and Hightstown, New Jersey (in Busted Flush #6). So, in an almost cyclical fashion we return to Ash-Wing and Virginia at the same time.

Lexington is in the middle of the Shenandoah Valley, which is surely one of the most beautiful areas in the country. The mountains are the familiar, comfortable sort you find in New England, but without the imposing granite faces, and with so much more green and brown it's almost as if someone had transplanted them and painted them over. The Valley itself is lush, rolling, and lovely; only the towns mar its beauty. And mar it they do.

One of the very first things I did was take my car (the company has provided me with wheels since the last time I graced these pages, a 1965 VW bug, no less) up to the hills in Buena Vista (pronounced Boona Vista by the locals) and look back at Lexington (Lex to the locals, as Buena Vista is BV). It was sad, really. Lately I've been blessed with the ability to look out over a valley, or a mountain range, even from the highway, and imagine what it must have looked like before anyone cleared it out. And then to think of what it could have looked like if anyone had done some planning and taken mother nature into consideration.

But the weather was lovely (I went from 20 degrees in New Jersey on Monday to 70 degrees in Virginia on Tuesday, and although it didn't stay at 70 it was generally between 55-65) and I could just sit there, off the side of the road on a mountain, and look past the beer cans and potato chip bags scattered around me, past the towns, and just feel the whole natural world was part of me.

Of course this was on the weekends, after I'd waited for the New York Times to come in (one week watching a man beat me and my fellow instructor to the very last copy) and thus picked up my weekly link with the reality of the BIG WORLD outside. Small schools tend to locate in small towns, which are very often outside small big cities (i.e. Ashland outside Richmond, Hightstown outside Trenton) and thus you are shut off from the real big cities because the local news is considered of sufficient importance to override anything short of the third World War. Lexington is about 50 miles from Roanoke, and the typical 11 o'clock news on television would cover Roanoke school board elections, PTA meetings, retiring firemen, etc. The sports was even worse. Filmed highlights of basketball between Patrick Henry and Natural Bridge. Big league scores meant UVA or Roanoke College or the Virginia Squires. And as far as they were concerned hockey was born and will die with the Roanoke Valley Rebels. More on them later.

I watched a lot of tv here, and Dave, my teaching partner (there were 145 students

so we had over 70 each, a lot of teaching) and I listened to an awful lot of radio. On a good night I could get CBM from Montreal. Almost any night CBF would come in with Canadiens in French; and WBZ was likewise always available with the Celtics and Johnny Most, and the tremendous Jerry Williams talk show. Or we could listen to a number of stations doing hockey games, as far away as Minneapolis. The best of these was the KMOX broadcast of St. Louis Blues with Dan Kelly, a great play-by-play man, and Noel Picard, a great color man because he can hardly speak English.

But this is just what I did to keep busy, and I've got to tell about Lexington, and Washington and Lee.

W&L is considered one of the leading small colleges in the South, and is a more southern-oriented place than Randolph-Macon. Part of this is because western Virginia is really more akin to the Deep South than eastern. There is the same kind of friendliness to strangers, and the same sort of feeling of something threatening lurking just below the surface of those broad grins. The hot slow climates seem to create slow burners.

W&L is an all-male institution, and my students were good examples of the feeling I've just mentioned. They were very friendly and helpful, which is more than my students at a lot of places are. But they were also tremendously concerned with the impression they made, as if they were going to come back some day and sell you insurance. Part of it is a machmo thing...a lot of wrestling and bumping for position before the big charge into dinner. But part of it is just some idea that you must make a good impression. This is great for strangers, like me; but I couldn't help but feel that once you ceased being a stranger all bets were off. I did rack up some points by playing 4-on-4 basketball with two of the brothers of the fraternity house where I ate my dinners and a third guy and taking on all comers all afternoon. Not to mention my own ego, which loves any sign that my body isn't deteriorating.

However screwy W&L is on the machmo scene, its neighbor school, VMI, is worse. VMI, in case you aren't aware, stands for Virginia Military Institute, and it is a state-run military college. Just in case Virginia ever needs their own army again. It is right down the street from W&L, with a campus that looks like a castle from the feudal days. The education could probably best be described as feudal as well. One interesting practice is calling the freshmen "rats". Everybody does it so naturally that I found myself asking the girl (that's right, girl!) who was teaching our program there (Baldrige Reading was infiltrating the Roanoke Valley; she was also doing Southern Seminary and we had a 4th person doing Hollins College and Roanoke College) how many "rats" she was teaching.

I also found myself saluting any "keydets" I passed in the street, in the best tradition of the long-haired commie-symp. They generally travel in small squads, so when they swarm into town on Saturday afternoon it looks as if they were on maneuvers, so many assigned to capture the pharmacy, so many the laundromat, etc.

One of the more interesting practices at W&L involves the dates of VMI keydets. They (the killers-to-be) have to be in bed by midnight, so around 11:30 there is a large parade of them taking their dates back to the Robert E. Lee Hotel, since they can't spend the night at VMI. Around midnight a number of dateless W&L students will head for the lobby of the REL, and see what they can pick up. Since no good young belle likes her evening aborted at eleven-thirty, the pickings are supposedly good.

Besides VMI and W&L, neighboring Buena Vista is the home of Southern Seminary, a real southern finishing school, where majoring in horseback riding is apparently commonplace. The girls are called semis, and if that is intended as a comment on their intelligence then it is certainly well-founded. They seem to exist solely to acquire husbands from either VMI or W&L, or if necessary from UVa, which is a little more

inconvenient. One night I was watching THE WAY WE WERE in one of the Lex theatres and sitting right behind me was a W&L student and his Semi date. At one point in the film the young Streisand calls the young Redford a fascist. "What did she say?" asked the girl. "She called him a fascist," her date answered. "Oh." There was a long pause. "What's a fascist?"

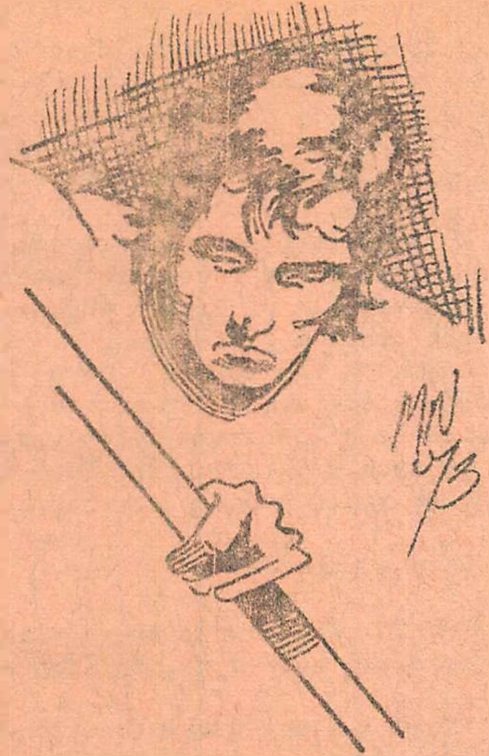
It was some time before I accepted that this really wasn't part of the film.

Despite the presence of all these college students Lexington really isn't a college town, and there is a dearth of activity. And since there are precious few college females in Lex itself, the most common form of recreation is called "going on the road". In my day, when the tradition was fast fading out of New England as all the all-male institutions went coed, it was called "road-tripping". This involves assembling a car load of hornies, tanking them up on beer, and heading for some all-girl college. At its worse the ultimate aim is a mixer or some other sort of roundup where the opposite sexes are herded together like cattle and sheep and expected to pair off.

My first year at Wesleyan the school had been all-male, and the road trip was accepted procedure (the only alternative being the somewhat more demeaning and risky "blind date"). I went on a few, and even had tried one my sophomore year that ended with me chasing my "friends" down Main Street in Poughkeepsie, having seen them purely by chance leaving town in a 58 Nash Rambler with no front doors, without me. So it was mostly a feeling of nostalgia that induced me to accept when one of my students begged me to accompany him down to Randolph-Macon for Women (no relation to the Randolph-Macon I taught at, except that they have the same name) to some sort of party. He had a date already, and promised me a blind date, which was hardly good salesmanship on his part. But as I said, I felt nostalgic. Also horny. I went with him.

This was a Tuesday night, and no one else wanted to go, citing the pressures of the next day's classes as an excuse. I had to teach five, but that hardly mattered. So we got into Paul's car, tanked up with beer (I was sipping the remains of a bottle of tequila, and sucking on lemons, so I couldn't see why he bought so much beer. After all, he was only looking to get drunk, and liquor is far more effective at that than beer. I was also out of Jameson's, having turned many bourbon drinkers onto my last bottle the weekend before.) and tanked up with precious gasoline, and headed for Lynchburg.

Lynchburg, Virginia (which I prefer to refer to as Lunchburg) is about 40 miles southeast of Lex. But the forty miles is over, under, around, and through the mountains, a gear-shifting wrong-lane ride that has its scary moments, especially at night when your driver has a can of beer in one hand and his eyes on the roof of the car when he slugs it down. But we got there in one piece each, and headed for the girls' dorm where our dates lived. The dorm was furnished in early whorehouse. Overstuffed chairs, lots of velvet and satin, lots of red. There was a woman at a switchboard which marked the extent to which male feet could pass. She looked like a madam as she instructed us to wait in the lounge while she informed the young ladies that their gentlemen callers were there. I felt like checking my wallet.



I won't comment on my date except to remark that we got along well. I am (unfortunately) the kind of person who will make up his mind very quickly on another person, which is a lousy way to approach a blind date. My date was from Baltimore, but raised in New York, and didn't resemble the Southern Belle either in attitude or accoutrements, which was a shock, because her friend, Paul's girl, did.

We were informed we were going to a party in one of the cottages. These were a string of what had once been sorority houses and now existed solely for parties and other essentials of higher education. There were two parties, one a fraternity from W&L, the other a frat from UVa. It proved easier to crash the latter, as Paul was too well known at the former. So we messed around at each, drinking, watching people dance (unfortunately again I'm not much of a dancer), and talking, that rare activity that seems to be a lost art in too many places. I was getting along so well with my date that we soon separated from Paul and found ourselves back with the W&L guys, who were trying to roast popcorn (or pop it, or whatever). Questions soon followed.

"You a yahoo?"

"HUH?" I'm always there with a quick retort. All I could think of was Swift. Jan (my date) helped me, telling me that yahoo was the local term for a UVa student.

"No," I assured the questioner, an amply furnished young man who was aggressively pawing an overly painted girl who sat amongst him.

"Where you go to school?"

It would be too hard to explain, so I made one up. "East Stroudsburg State." (There really is such a place).

"What'reya doing here?"

"Came for the waters." With shades of CASABLANCA echoing in my head I didn't give him a chance to miss the retort, and left.

The rest of the party was more of the same, and soon we were back at the girl's dorm, and they were conferring, and Paul informed me he'd just persuaded them to come back to W&L with us. I'd kind of taken it for granted, but I didn't say anything, lest they not take it for quite so much granted. The drive back gave Paul's other hand something to occupy it and I sank deep in the seat and raced Jan to see who could get to sleep first. I was not going to watch the road swerve beneath Paul's steady driving.

We made it back in four separate pieces, and the next morning I was bright and chipper through five classes on two hours of sleep. Then I negotiated the treacherous drive in the Baldrige VW, noticing about halfway there that I had no oil. All told, I think it smart that Wesleyan went coed. I doubt if I could have handled four years of this.

There were other highlights, of course. I watched the Roanoke Valley Rebels play hockey against the Macon Whoopees (yes, Macon Whoopees) and the Rebels scored one goal on a chip shot that went in over the head of the Macon goalie while he stayed in his crouch, never seeing it. I ate a few good restaurant meals. I finally became a Police Story addict (this being tv's finest fare). I rooted Montreal past Detroit with Labatt's beer and pickles as the southerners wondered why the basketball game wasn't on. I saw SILENT RUNNING for the first time, in the middle of a very messy "pledge party". And spent a beautiful day at a farm with a bunch of people that included the weather-girl on the Lynchburg tv station. It's like a stewardess with clouds instead of a plane. And I left a day early and missed "Fancy Dress Weekend", which I later was told I should have stayed to see.

It was a very collegiate experience for me; at times I actually felt like a sane student in the midst of all these twisted ideas. W&L is an extremely conservative place, featuring the nation's largest (on a % basis) Young Republican's Club, a Young Conservative Club, a Young Americans For Freedom, and a large chapter of the John Birch Society. Radicals join the Young Democrats. One night two films were shown for a course in documentary films. One was Renais' NIGHT AND FOG, about the concentration camps. The other was Peter Watkins' WAR GAME, about the effects of a nuclear attack on Britain. They are very powerful, moving, chilling films. I wondered, walking back to my room, if they, if indeed anything, would ever have an effect.

People may act nice, but they're still people. I don't know if anyone ever said it, but I just did. And I'll add, some people are moreso.

You can enjoy something, and still think about it.

In the future: Carlisle, PA and Delaware, OHIO. Watch for them, who knows where?

* * * * *

A SONG OF DARKNESS

O, we are the warriors of Shadow,
And we war with the Lords of the Light
To darken their radiant glory
And shelter mysterious night.

Our war capes are all Cloaks of Darkness.
Our blades do not glitter or shine.
Our dreams are as black as the blackness
That is found in the depths of a mine.

We have no quarrel with star gleams;
The pale moon can cause us no fright,
But fire and the bright glare of mid-day
Have no place in the stillness of night.

Not even the Sun lasts forever.
The torch lights of Mankind shall fade.
The last flare of brilliance will flicker,
And Earth will rest calmly in Shade.

O, we are the warriors of Shadow,
And we war with the Lords of the Light.
Though we flee from the arrows of morning,
In the end we shall conquer with night.

BULLFIGHTS OF HELLKEEP

ross f. bagby

The man and the demon rode aimlessly on a horse neither had ever bothered to name, galloping to no destination. The man was neither tall nor short, handsome nor ugly, and an expression of total resignation dominated his face, giving it a washed-out look. The demon combined the ugliest features, of a dog, an ape, and a weasal; it crouched and shivered behind the man, eyeing him malevolently. Each hated the other and concealed their true names from their companion lest one become the undisputed master.

The man called himself Giouffre di Mourle, and the demon answered to Snargack; their relation was warlock and familiar. They were refugees, fleeing a witch-hunt of the servants of the Nameless Ones that had claimed many a servant of El-Zathan-Mulk, Father of Names and Great One of Darkness, though this was but a minor skirmish in the cosmic war of Evil and Good.

Snargack sighes and looked hungrily at Giouffre. "When, master, will you surrender and allow me to devour you? You know that is your fate - you have read it in the stars, heard it from devils at the Sabbat, and seen it in crystal balls and Tarot cards. So why do you flee when you know your end?" And the familiar licked its chops hungrily.

The warlock planted a lash of his whip on the demon's face, and scowled at its yelp. "Quiet, eater of vultures! I know my destiny as well as you - better, in fact. But you will not feast on me yet." And he again looked resigned.

They had come to a crude stone fence, and Giouffre was debating whether to spur the nag into leaping it or going around when a peasant with a surly expression ran up, brandishing a pitchfork. "Go 'way and stay out, ya gypsy!" snarled the rustic. Then he saw Snargack glowering balefully at him, and the blood went out of his face. "Devi-" he whispered, his breath dying out before he could finish the word.

The farmer then fell on his belly and fawned, whimpering, "Pardon, lord, pardon! I didn't know you served the Lord of the Hellkeep! Please pardon, lord."

Giouffre lashed him impatiently. "Get up, cur, before my horse steps on you. What, by the First Demon, is Hellkeep, and who is its lord? Speak, before I turn this mongrel excuse for a devil on you!"

The farmer stood up quickly and pointed towards a plateau on the horizon. Giouffre squinted and made out the shape of a high tower against the sky. "That's the Hellkeep? What made you think I served its lord?"

"Why, the devil that rides with you, lord," replied the farmer meekly. "The Lord of Hellkeep is a sorcerer, so naturally I thought you served him when I saw what serves you."

"Sorcerers do not command all devils. I do not serve this wizard-lord, and Hellkeep is not my destination," the warlock growled.

"It will be now, master," announced Snargack wearily. "Now you will not rest until you've met and bested this wizard. Pride is your failing."

Giouffre gazed at Hellkeep for a minute and murmured, "No, curiosity." Then he spurred the horse towards the plateau.

The warlock had plenty of time to examine his armament, which consisted of the strange knife he called Heatseeker, that glowed crimson when danger neared and grew to the right size of blade which the danger called for. He had it in the horde of a long dead troll, and had soon discovered its strange nature in a fight. Snargack feared it and called it an evil thing that attracted the very dangers it dealt with, and Giouffre believed it would play some key role in his death, though whether it would aid or oppose Snargack's feast was a mystery his lore could not answer.

Giouffre also watched the Hellkeep as it loomed nearer. He saw that it was not just that heaven-soaring tower but a low windowless building that the tower sprouted from. The plateau seemed to be largely to grow a brown grass which snapped when bent, and not a single insect was seen, heard, or felt. "Snargack, what do you sense?" enquired Giouffre.

The familiar shuddered. "Evil strangely bodied and scornful of life. Things which never lived or died, but move and think. Death comes strangely to Hellkeep. That is all, master, unless you wish me to plumb Reality."

"No, we haven't time for that," stated Giouffre. Suddenly he shouted and seized Heartseeker, which was glowing blood red. On the blade its magic inscription pulsed with sinister intensity; I seek the hearts of enemies.

In Giouffre's hand it became a fair-sized dirk, and the warlock glanced wildly for the danger. His horse neighed with fright and Snargack howled, then a taloned bird swooped by and ripped his cloak. Turning to face the winged nemesis, Giouffre saw it wheel around and dive murderously at him. He raised Heartseeker and shielded his eyes. He heard a screech and felt a blast of heat followed by freezing cold. He looked to find his blade unstained and normal. An examination of his ripped cloak showed some black, flaky substance which fell off when he shook it. The grass withered where it fell.

"A demon vulture with poisoned talons," diagnosed Snargack unhappily. "A guardian. Hellkeep's Lord discourages visitors strongly."

"So I see. I suppose this was the strangely bodied evil that scorned life."

The demon shrugged. "Perhaps, master." And they continued on.

Soon they had arrived at what seemed the only ground level entrance into the Hellkeep. It was an ominous portal of metal, obviously unused since some far time in the past. Giouffre dismounted, seized Snargack by the scruff of the neck and pulled

the devil off, and sent the horse to fend for itself until he summoned it. The warlock boldly approached the entrance and pushed one of the heavy metal doors. It opened with awful groans and creaks to show an unlighted hall. Giouffre called a will-o'-the-wisp from its native swamp and kept it overhead while he and the grumbling Snargack entered the dust-filled halls of Hellkeep.

He saw Heartseeker glow blood-red several times and avoided the dangers, until once it glowed and he turned and saw the danger behind him. The danger was a monster with legs and arms that ended in horrible claws, pointed ears and a green fungus for hair. It had a mouth of fangs and a circular prominence with two gashes for a nose, and scaled plates of natural armor were the thing's skin.

Giouffre pulled out Heartseeker and the knife grew into a full sword. It started a thrust at the monster, hesitated, started again, and stood still while indecisive. The monster began a grating rumble that might've been laughter and began a murderous swing with its left arm.

Heartseeker immediately struck its neck from the side with shattering force. The monster's head snapped off and a shower of sparks burst from the neck. The thing jerked and collapsed.

The warlock replaced his now normal knife and bent to examine the thing. Broken wires dangled from the head, and its neck was a blackened tangle of wires and machinery. A robot, then, and that explained why Heartseeker had hesitated - it sought a heart and couldn't find one.

"Wizard's brood," he decided aloud. "Only a sorcerer mixes magic and machinery like the Lord of Hellkeep must be. Demon sentinels and mechanical monsters don't mix otherwise, praise El-Zathan-Mulk!"

"That marks you a warlock and bootlicker, as well as a trespasser and destroyer of property," commented a dry voice. "I am very fond of my ghouls, and I'll have to summon a new devil-bird."

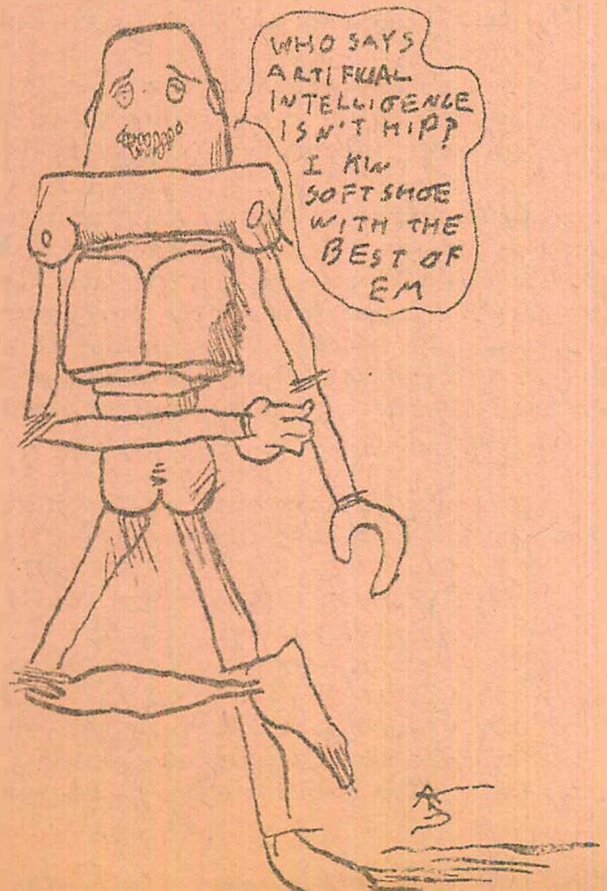
Giouffre looked up to see who spoke and grabbed Heartseeker, which was quite normal in appearance. He cursed it as a traitor and a liar.

"Your blad is wiser than you. Against a single ghoull perhaps, but a full dozen?" noted the Master of Hellkeep.

He stood amidst a group of ghouls, some carrying torches. He himself was wearing a dark cloak with a high collar, the latter feature hiding most of his head except for his face which was old and dominated by cold, blue, shark-like eyes.

II

Giouffre looked around him and saw that, as he expected, the wizard's robot ghouls had surrounded him. Snargack was cursing them as only a demon can curse. He re-sheathed Heartseeker and faced the Lord of Hellkeep.



"I demand a contest by the Law of Duels," Giouffre commanded.

The wizard chuckled unpleasantly. "That law holds only among those too weak to try to command the Evil. I do not worship El-Zathan-Mulk or his demons - I command them. No, warlock, there will be quite a different struggle." The wizard gestured and a ghoul seized Snargack. Four ghouls encircled Giouffre and one snatched Heart-seeker. They then prodded him into motion and the bizarre group followed the wizard through the labyrinthian passages of Hellkeep.

The warlock noticed that the corridors were more used in this section than in that he'd been exploring. Finally they halted in a hall with various symbols of the black arts drawn in the walls and the floor, and the wizard gestured them to a halt. He pointed to a pentagram carved in the floor.

"Put the devil in that - toss him, and make sure that he lands dead center. Then kill him," ordered the wizard.

A ghoul flipped Snargack dead-center. Then a ring of ghouls began to enter the pentagram, walking only on the lines. Once one of the robots fell into a space and was immediately gone without a trace. Ghouls surrounded the trapped Snargack and began to strangle him. There was a flash of searing heat followed by freezing cold and Giouffre's familiar was gone.

"Poor Snargack," sighed the warlock, shaking his head sadly. "He never did fight well in that form. It'll take him at least ten days to achieve resurrection."

"I doubt you'll live ten days, warlock. Since you do not have the courtesy to address me by my title, Lord of Hellkeep, you may tell El-Zathan-Mulk you were executed by Nimros."

"And you may tell the Father of Names you were slain by Giouffre di Mourle. How do you think to execute me, Nimros? Feed me to a demon? Or a stay in your dungeons and torture chamber?"

"Unoriginal, unamusing, and unexciting. No, Giouffre di Mourle, I have a more challenging death planned for you. Are you acquainted with a sport called bullfighting?"

"I have heard of it. A bull is released into a circular space after having a pin jabbed into it; the bullfighter waves a cape to distract it while mounted men drive spears into it. When it has been exhausted it is slain, and then various portions of its anatomy are cut off and awarded as trophies to the bullfighter, who has never really been in danger."

"An unromantic, but essentially accurate, description," Nimros summed up critically. "Hellkeep has its own form of bullfighting, invented by myself, of course. In my form, the man and the bull have an even chance."

"I don't understand. Do you ensorcell the bull so that it can bear arms?"

"Oh, no. Both man and bull are sent unarmed and with a pin in their shoulder into the bull ring. The winner is allowed to fight again. You see, they fight to the death - man and bull, bull and man."

"May you be swallowed by El-Zathan-Mulk."

"In time He will, warlock, in time He will. For now, you must be prepared for the bullfight. An even chance for both contestants." Nimros left chuckling with an

escort of ghouls.

Giouffre was herded down a passage and into a small room which must have once been a larder. He was given a meal which made him gag and which he never wanted to know the source of. He slept on a board that leaned against the wall to form an obtuse triangle, and dreamed of the death which destiny had decreed for him. Snargack munched his bones and licked his blood, and Heartseeker - but even in a dream that uncanny blade's role was unclear. Traitor or avenger? Only the Nameless Ones knew, and They would not speak on such matters.

He was awakened by the prodding of a claw. A few of the wizard's monsters stood around and forced him to leave the cell. He was led through the maze of tunnels until he was pushed into one that ended in some lighted space.

A pin with a bright ribbon was produced and jabbed into his right shoulder. Then the robots made a line from wall to wall and forced him out of the passage into the brightness. Giouffre heard a slam behind him and saw that a gate had been closed. It was then that he understood that he was in the bullring.

III

The bullring was just barely large enough for a man and a bull to maneuver in. It was enclosed yet fully lighted, though he couldn't see any torches or braziers - probably Nimros had mastered the mysteries of the creation and diffusion of light. The roof was extremely low for this type of room; twelve feet from the floor.

Nimros sat on a throne in a balcony six feet above the sand-covered floor, two ghouls beside him. A tin gong stood a little to the left of the wizard's throne, and one of the ghouls held a staff with padding at the end.

"Welcome, warlock, to the bullfight. You will doubtless be pleased to know that it is impossible for magic to work in my bullring, and that the walls are perfectly smooth and without handholds. You meet your opponent on equal terms with an even chance of winning. Remember - the bullfight lasts till one is dead." Nimros turned his head towards the staff-holding ghoul. "Signal for the bullfight to begin."

The ghoul struck the tin gong and Giouffre winced at the resulting sound. He now saw that there were two gates into the bullring, and one of them was rising. When it had opened the bull charged out, mad, bellowing with pain. It ran wildly around the bullring, occasionally butting walls furiously. Giouffre stood absolutely still while the bull dashed about, twice just missing him. Very slowly, he removed the pin stuck in his own shoulder, and when the bull passed near him, he quickly impaled the exposed shoulder. A bellow of pain and rage issued from the bull.

"A strange move, warlock," observed Nimros curiously. "You are a most interesting bullfighter. Observe your opponent's magnificent horns - marvelous for goring."

The bull was now butting one of the wooden gates, and Giouffre slowly stepped back, always watching the bull. Finally he stepped further until his back was to the wall under Nimros' balcony. The wizard could not see him now, and his plan depended on Nimros' curiosity.

The wizard leaned over the balcony's rampart. "Trying to hide, Giouffre di Mourle?" he needled softly, a demonic amusement in his cold blue eyes.

The balcony was six feet above the bullring, the wizard's head nine feet in his present position. Giouffre crouched, summoned the extra strength an emergency brings, and leaped. His hands seized the wizard's head, and the astonished Nimros was jerked into the bullring. He flipped and landed on his back a few feet from Giouffre, sat up



and screamed when he saw the bull.

The bull stopped butting the door and looked in the direction of the scream. The wizard jumped up and began to run. The bull charged and a long, deadly horn tore his side open. Nimros screamed and was dead.

The two ghouls stood indecisively at the balcony's rampart. One finally leaped over and immediately became an immobile piece of dead machinery, which the bull rammed and knocked itself unconscious. The other fled into the passages.

Giouffre made sure the bull was unconscious and the ghoul inactive, then set about escaping the bullring. He decided to force open the bull's door, since there were already ghouls waiting at the door he had used. He inserted his hands in the space between the gate and the floor, and managed to lift it enough to crawl under the door. A narrow passage led to a stable, where several bulls munched hay in their stalls. Some eyed him and struggled against their bonds, bellowing angrily.

"You are not an easy man to slay, warlock," said a familiar voice. "If one bull cannot do the deed, perhaps a stable of them can."

Giouffre turned and faced the figure. "You do not die easily yourself, Nimros. I left you dead and gored in the bullring."

"Did you? How interesting. Now I must see to your execution." Nimros chanted a spell, and the bulls went mad, the ropes burst into flames and fell off, the stalls collapsed into sawdust. Insane bulls charged everything in sight, and one rammed Nimros, who exploded into bits and pieces.

There was no sign of the wizard - the ramins were that of a ghould. Giouffre

examined one of the pieces and found it to be a claw clutching a knife. Then he shouted and pried open the claw - the knife was Heartseeker.

He knew the nature of the new menace now; Nimros had separated a portion of his mind and identity and turned it into the controlling brain of the robot ghouls. And now that Nimros lay dead, that portion was trying to usurp the wizard's shape and powers. It could use ghouls like a man uses fingers, or it could use them as bodies. The 'death' of this ghoul had not slain it, though it was weaker now by one body.

The crazed bulls had largely escaped into the passages by now, so he sheathed Heartseeker and constructed a torch. Then he ventured into the corridors where 'Death comes strangely to Hellkeep' in the words of Snargack. The thought made Giouffre wonder how much time was left until the familiar rose from the dead in a new body to serve him. For now he would have to fend for himself.

A bull's bellow sounded from somewhere ahead. Not wishing to confront a mad animal, the warlock took the side passage that ended in a door. Heartseeker blazed with crimson, but he opened the door anyway.

And entered a hall filled with ghouls.

The door was slammed and he was surrounded. Then each ghoul began to shimmer and the hall was filled with images of Nimros, imperfect images that sometimes showed a claw or an outline. Each Nimros began to chant and motion.

"I wish to speak to Nimros!" shouted the warlock.

"We are all Nimros," chorused the shimmering wizard-shapes.

"I wish to speak with the controlling identity alone. I have information which it may find valuable," yelled Giouffre to the images.

Each image showed identical hesitation, then Giouffre found himself facing a perfect copy of Nimros. The other ghouls were frozen in their positions.

"Before you speak, I warn you that any attempt at violence will mean immediate death," began the ghoul-wizard. "This body is just one of thousands I can use if I need one. Since the other one died, I am Nimros, Lord of the Hellkeep and master of its ghouls. I have all his powers and wisdom, and I will surpass him in necromancy. I will slay you first, then the bulls. Then I shall be ready to enslave and execute all who flout my authority."

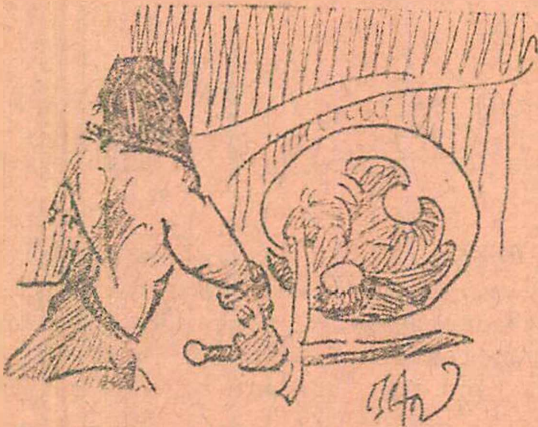
"Slay bulls possessed by devils? Few wizards can do that."

"They are mad, not possessed. You are mistaken about that idea, warlock."

"I am not, and this is my information. Being part of him, you could not see Nimros' ghost or the curse he sent for trying to usurp him in the stable. Before he was devoured by El-Zathan-Mulk, he ordered demands to possess the bulls and destroy you - and myself, if you didn't succeed in that. I saw his ghost and heard his curse; I swear that by El-Zathan-Mulk!"

The usurping wizard-mind eyed him coldly. "Why do you tell me this if it is true? You know I would not spare one who trespasses and destroys my property."

"I know. But perhaps you would quicken the death. Better a ghoul than a devil-ridden bull."



Nimros gestured and spoke some words. Two ghouls moved again and grabbed Giouffre. Nimros pointed towards a pentagram on the floor. "Place him in the center of that. It will prevent witchery on his part while I recite the spell for determining what the last words of a ghost were. I think he lies."

"I have sworn it true by El-Zathan-Mulk," protested Giouffre as he was placed in the pentagram's center. Nimros began chanting and swaying - then the identity dispersed itself among the ghouls, so that a thousand flickering Nimros chanted and swayed. Shadows leaped and danced, screams from no throat were heard, and blistering and chilling cold blew through the hall.

Nimros was entering Reality, where all things may be known if one comes properly.

The wizards raised their arms and suddenly there was only one Nimros. And that one, Giouffre knew, was beholding Reality, where dwelt the Father of Names and the Nameless Ones, sources of Evil and Good. Nimros' expression changed from swaggering pride to horror and he screamed.

And a 'dead' ghoul stood in his place. Having devoured part of Nimros, El-Zathan-Mulk had immediately devoured the other part when it entered Reality. The warlock stepped out of the pentagram easily and stopped at the ghoul that had called itself Nimros, Lord of the Hellkeep.

"One does not swear truthfully by the Source of Lies," whispered Giouffre, shaking his head. Then he left the hall of dead ghouls and returned to the passages of Hellkeep.

It was in a narrow corridor that he met the bull.

IV

It was huge and bulging with muscles. Its coat was black as night and it was mad with a desire to destroy anything that moved. The man wondered if what he had told the other Nimros was true after all - this bull looked possessed. The man dared not move or make a sound.

An idea came after hours of bull and man staring motionless at each other. The man began to move his torch ever so slightly, rhythmically, so that the light changed angles in the bull's eyes. The bull moved slightly but the man continued slowly moving the light - thisway, thatway, rhythmically. The bull started to follow the torch with his head, sideways, following the light. They stood that way for an unknown time.

Then the man whispered a spell, and a will-o'-the-wisp appeared. The man left it to replace the torch until the bull collapsed, and continued wandering through the passages.

Giouffre was hungry - it had been a long time since that dubious meal in the small room, before the bullfight. He was also tired and lost. These drove him on and led him to discover the spiral staircase. It was in a room that had been locked before Heartseeker picked it open, and gazing at it, Giouffre realized that it must lead up to the tower he'd seen on the plateau. Since he rather suspected that Nimros had lived without eating for some time, he half-heartedly started up the stairs.

The spiral staircase seemed to go on endlessly and at least once he collapsed, unconscious. He dreamed of things gone forever that time - his home, his coven, his happiness. All destroyed by the witch-hunters, led by servants of the Nameless Ones. He awakened and did not fall asleep again.

The stairs ended at a trap door which he opened wearily and entered. Giouffre saw a room with bookshelves on every wall, a table holding alchemical apparatus, a stuffed alligator and astrology chart hanging from the ceiling, a floor with mystic symbols drawn or carved on it - a sorcerer's study.

Giouffre looked about him with loathing and wonder. Here Nimros had performed those deeds of wizardry that had created the ghouls, summoned the demon vulture, and other horrors. Those books doubtless contained the methods and mysteries. By reading them, a student of the black art might learn the mysteries of light, of life and death, of the bodily immortality possessed by the worms. And that student could use them.

It was tempting, and none could appose him if he tried. A warlock might accomplish more in certain realms of magic than a wizard, and he could rule as Master of Hellkeep. The peasants would be terrified into service and - why not? - worship; Hellkeep would grow to cover the plateau, its empty halls would be filled with slaves and familiars. He would rebuild the ghouls as mindless robots and they would conquer new lands for his rule and dungeons. There would come a time when Giouffre di Mourle, Lord of the Hellkeep, would avenge himself upon the servants of the Nameless Ones by offering them all to El-Zathan-Mulk and his demons.

Hubris was a danger, but he could rightfully claim to be a demigod. Even El-Zathar Mulk would have to concede that. And then a piece of the ceiling hit him and crumbled to dust.

He looked around. The walls were crumbling and the books had long since become heaps of dust. Giouffre understood and he cursed; Nimros had ensorcelled Hellkeep to dissolve if any dreamed of usurption in his study after his death.

He cursed while the floor gave way under him, while dust covered him and his last words before he was buried under the dust were a curse.

V

Giouffre lay undead in the dust; not dead but not alive, in suspended animation without thought or dreams. He awoke and heard a resuscitation spell being intoned over him. He sat up and saw a jackal-headed crocodile with talons in front of him.

"How long has it been, Snargack?" questioned the warlock.

"Twelve days, master," answered the demon. "Ten I spent in Reality, preparing my resurrection. I rose to find the Hellkeep dust, and learned you lay beneath it all. It took two days to return you to the surface."

"And Heartseeker?" demanded Giouffre suspiciously.

Snargack shuddered. "The evil blade is still on your person. I wish you would destroy it, master. It betrayed you here."

"You will betray me one day, Snargack, so speak not so boldly of Heartseeker." Giouffre stood up and brushed off the dust. Then he summoned his horse, which rode in with great reluctance.

"Probably been living as a plowhorse with a farmer, getting regular meals and good care," speculated Snargack as he mounted behind Giouffre.

"Perhaps," the warlock curtly replied. And he lashed the horse he had never bothered to name to gallop towards nothing in particular.

THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH

offutt - cushing - denton

Future City, edited by Roger Elwood. Trident Press, \$7.95

"They don't write stories about a good future any more." That's what my son, Jeff, said, somewhat wistfully, when we were discussing Future City. I had just finished the book and he was about to start it.

Jeff's right, too. When you think of what writers have to extrapolate from... well, what can you expect? It's not a pretty world, the one we live in. Roger Elwood has put together some good stories about our bad world, though--a lot of good ones.

There are nineteen stories and three poems in the anthology, including novelettes by Bob Silverberg and Thomas N. Scortia, a foreword by Cliff Simak and an afterword by Fred Pohl.

In his foreword, Simak says some thoughtful things about why our cities no longer have a purpose to serve.

The book opens with a poem, "In Praise of New York", by Tom Disch. To be honest, I'm not much of a poet person; therefore, I don't feel qualified to comment on this one, nor the other two: "As A Drop" by D.M. Price and "Abendlandes" by Virginia Kidd. Of the three, I like Disch's best (but I can't say why).

The first three stories are logical extrapolations on everyday situations. Too logical, and all very good.

"The Sightseers" by Ben Bova is about New York. A young boy describes his first trip to the city. A future New York City. It makes sense, too.

Next is a story by a man I'm rather close to, rather often. "Meanwhile, We Eliminate" by Andrew J. Offutt. "Meanwhile" is about a traffic jam, on a freeway, in a city, and a riot. And, like Ben's story, it makes sense.

A man and his secretary stay late to get some work done and there is a power failure in the building. That is the basis for Laurence M. Janifer's "Thine Alabaster Cities Gleam". Scary.

Barry N. Malzberg in "Culture Lock" postulates a homosexual society - and that's about all. It seems more a segment or a piece of something than a story in itself.

Nobody writes whimsy like R.A. Lafferty. Ray's "The World As Will and Wallpaper" is whimsical all right. A young man named William sets out on the adventure of exploring his city, meeting female companionship along the way. It's a delightful

tale, delightfully told, and what happens to William and what William finds...well, it's whimsical, but a strange kind of whimsy.

The imagery in "Violation" by William F. Nolan is superb. It is about a traffic violation - speeding - and the descriptions of the officer and his motorcycle are powerful. The story is short, quick, and to the point.

I really didn't understand "City Lights, City Nights" by K.M. O'Donnell. It has to do with a man making a film of the reenactment of the Kennedy assassination using outcasts, or lumpen, as actors. When I finished it, I had a lot of whys and huhs in my head. So, I didn't like it.

Ah! I enjoyed the next one. "The Undercity" by Dean R. Koontz. Dean tells a delightful tale about a man showing the ropes of the family business to a child. Make that underground, put it in the future, and you've got a fine one.

"Apartment Hunting" by Harvey and Audrey Bilker is one of those stories that make you feel like you're on the top of a hill, starting down, and picking up speed all the way. It has a rush-through feel about it that doesn't stop until the last line - when it stops with a start.

Thomas Scortia has time to develop his characters in "The Weariest River", a novelette. There are some pathetic people in it. One of man's dreams has come true - immortality. But it isn't all that nice a thing, after all, and Scortia's story is a sad one, a good one, and well told.

"Death of A City" by Frank Herbert is about a love affair - between a City Doctor and her city and between the doctor and her mentor. In Herbert's world we are at the point where doctors can prescribe for our cities and cure their ills - or prescribe death.

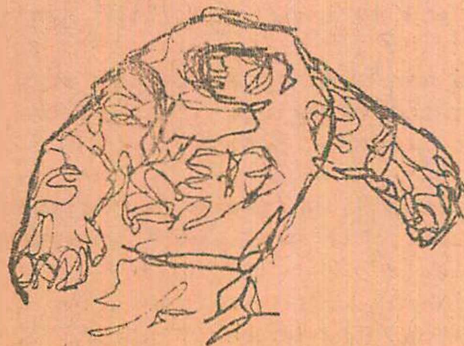
"Assassins of Air" is about New York. A kid caught up in crime in the city, but trying to better himself and get out of it. The "crimes" he commits are of the future, though, and George Zebrowski tells his story well.

With "Getting Across" we start the "Machine" section of the book. Robert Silverberg writes of cities run completely by computers. When the master plan of one of the cities is stolen the protagonist is sent in search of the document. As all Silverberg stories are, this one is well written as it shows the mistrust people have of one another in crowded conditions.

For such a short story, Joe Hensley manages to do some good characterizations in "In The Dark Places". It is about race relations, which don't seem to improve much in the future, but they are different. His blend of the past and future are shivery.

"Chicago" by Thomas F. Monteleone is a robot story. But a different kind of robot story. Chicago is totally self-sufficient, run by robots directed by a master computer. But where are the humans? That's all I ought to say about it, except that it's good.

A writer sets a mean task for himself or herself when trying to get something across with a short-short. Robin Schaeffer didn't quite do it in "Revolution." I had the feeling that either I missed something



or the story should have been longer. On the other hand, Ray Russell in just two short pages did the trick in "The Most Primitive". He made me shudder.

"Hindsight: 480 Seconds" is Harlan Ellison's story about the end of the world. It is beautifully written - poetic, melancholy, sometimes painful. Not like most I've read of Harlan's.

Miriam Allen deFord's "5,000,000 A.D." is set so far in the future that it could as easily be in the past. It would be nice to think that we will come full circle.

To offset Cliff Simak's doubts about cities, Frederick Pohl's Afterword explores the reasons we will always have them. Fred has a "thing" about cities; he tells us about some of them. His reasons for continuation of cities are as believable as Cliff's for their discontinuation. Who knows?

Jeff, who reads one hell of a lot of sf (Jeff is 13 years old), says this is one of the best anthologies he's read. He likes the idea of a theme and I agree with him. It makes for a good book. My favorites: "The Undercity", "Chicago", and "The Most Primitive". Jeff's: "Hindsight: 480 Seconds", "The World As Will and Wallpaper", "The Undercity", and "Assassins of Air". Of course, we're both partial to "Meanwhile, We Eliminate", but that's understandable, since we share the writer's name.

-- Reviewed by Jodie Offutt --

Hrolf Kraki's Saga by Poul Anderson. Ballantine Books. \$1.25 (Adult Fantasy Series)

Although thousands of us read Poul Anderson, it is probably true to say that we do not recognize how good an author he is. Aware of the fact that he is a highly skilled entertainer, we forget that he is an artist. And even the tribute paid by James Blish in the recent special issue of Fantasy and Science Fiction does not do more than mention that he is a master of language, and indeed a poet.

He has been so prolific, of course, that it is difficult at the moment to see his work as a whole; nor is that work all of even quality. When he is at his best, however, he expresses a view of life which has the realism and the courage of the Northern sagas or the best of the Border ballads. He has also, at his best, their vividness of color, their exuberance, and their occasional savagery. I need only mention "The Man Who Came Early," "Goat Song," or "The Queen of Air and Darkness," to make it immediately evident what I mean.

Anderson has made use of myth and legend in his work with brilliant success. He has a thorough knowledge of and love for Northern mythology, which he turned to excellent account in Three Hearts and Three Lions, and in that stunning work, The Broken Sword. In his science fiction, he has also invented peoples and events of his own that have the power and beauty of myth; I think particularly of The Star Fox and Let the Spaceman Beware! And as a translator, he has made good translations of Old Norse poems by Egill Skallagrimsson (The Irreparable Loss of Sons) and Sighvat, court bard to King Olaf the Saint (the Free-Spoken Verses); they will be found in The Conan Grimoire, published by Mirage Press, and should not be missed.

With Hrolf Kraki's Saga, Anderson has given us a superb rendering of one of the great stories of Scandinavian legend. Hrolf Kraki holds the same place in Denmark's legendary history as King Arthur in that of England; the historical facts about him, if he really existed, are beyond recovery, but he is one of the earliest national heroes of Denmark. King Hrolf's legendary court, like King Arthur's, attracted a multitude of heroes whose stories were originally independent.

Anderson began to make a translation of the Icelandic Hrolfs Saga Kraka, but he was not satisfied with it as it stood; many of the episodes were barer in rereading

than they had been in his memory. He has therefore enlarged it with material from Gesta Danorum of Saxo Grammaticus and from the Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson, and occasionally with passages of his own.

Anderson has very ingeniously made the teller of the saga a Danish woman at the court of King Athelstan in England in the tenth century. She naturally refers to the traditions known to the author of Beowulf, and in fact the story of Beowulf is retold in this book. Being a woman, she is not quite so likely to maintain the stripped saga style, and thus she puts a farewell speech into the mouth of Sigrith, mother of Hroar and Helgi, which makes it clear why Sigrith chose to perish in the fire that killed King Frodhi (pp. 42-43). The original saga merely said that Sigrith did not wish to come out; and for the original audience no explanation was needed.

Anderson has also included a magnificent translation of the Song of Grotti (pp. 8-11), which makes a splendid introduction to the tale. He has translated the poem in the strict alliterative metre, and very successfully; his poem has great power and speed. Later, in "The Tale of Skuld," he endeavors to reconstruct the old Bjarkamaal, or tale of Bjarki. Only fragments of this remain, and they are full of elaborate metaphors in the later Icelandic manner. Anderson has taken the prose paraphrase of the old poem which remains in Hrolf Kraki's Saga, and the inflated Latin hexameters of Saxo, and has produced a much more condensed version. It is not quite so successful as the Song of Grotti, but the last cry of Hjalti (pp. 254-255) is very fine indeed, and in the manner of the old Germanic heroic poetry.

Wherever Anderson has added to the tale, he has done so in perfect harmony with his sources. "The Tale of VUgg" is not found in the Icelandic saga; so far as I am aware, Anderson has taken it from Saxo. But Saxo tells that part of the story very lamely; Anderson tells it as one feels it ought to have been told. It is, of course, exactly in this way that the medieval storytellers dealt with their sources. Anderson's style is wholly fitted to the tale, and should remain the best rendering in English for a long time to come.

But the finest thing in the book is the character of Hrolf Kraki himself. He is shown as a king who wishes to bring peace and order to his people, as a preserver of civilization. The portrait is extremely subtle and convincing, and makes a worthy companion to that of Hrothgar in Beowulf, or to the description of Beowulf himself at the end of that poem:

that of all the kings on earth,
of men he was mildest and most beloved,
to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.

(Francis B. Gummere's translation)

-- Reviewed by Charles Cushing --

NOTE: The reader who wants to compare Anderson's version with the saga as it originally stood will find a good translation of Hrolf Kraki's Saga in Eirik the Red and Other Icelandic Sagas, translated by Gwyn Jones and published by Oxford University Press in 1961. For the Gesta Danorum of Saxo Grammaticus, the only English version is the translation of the first nine books by Oliver Elton, published in 1894. Many English translations of Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda exist, but the reader will need one like A.G. Brodeur's, which includes the second part on poetic diction. Brodeur gives a good translation of The Song of Grotti. Another good translation of The Song of Grotti is in Patricia Terry's Poems of the Vikings, published by Bobbs-Merrill.

Orbit 12, edited by Damon Knight. A Berkeley Medallion Book. \$.95

Darrell Schweitzer had a whack at Orbit 11 last time, so I think it's my turn. I do so at the risk of slighting some of the authors as I don't intend to comment on every story in the collection. I also must say in all honesty that this anthology title has provided more satisfaction, issue after issue, than any other anthology I can think of. Terry Carr's World's Best Science Fiction series comes mighty close, but doesn't have the same impact because the stories have appeared before. Damon's Orbit is all original and one would anticipate that would have the same ups and downs as any of the prozines which appear on the stands. And perhaps it does; I told you that I'm partial to it.

There are some exceptionally good people here starting with Ursula LeGuin, Brian W. Aldiss and Kate Wilhelm. I put them first only because they do have established reputations. Then there are some real comers who are continuing to produce more and better work with each story. Here I include Vonda McIntyre, Edward Bryant, Gene Wolfe and Michael Bishop. Finally there are some people who are just beginning to show their talents and ought not to feel slighted if I don't pick apart each story. They include Doris Piserchia (reader her Star Rider), Mel Gilden and Steve Chapman.

I don't want to go into each story as Darrell did last time, but only to touch what one person considers the highlights. Ursula's story about the trees coping with a changing society has already been spoken of in the fannish press and will probably be again, so I'll say no more than that it is a delightful story. Some of her fans will consider it a lightweight story, but it shows evidence of a bit of whimsy on her part. For me the highlight of the book is four interconnected stories by Brian Aldiss. They take place in Malacia, a place that strikes me as very much Italian Renaissance except that there are flashes of the fantastic involved. But the writing is strong and involved and entertaining, and one can only hope that this is not the end of the adventures transpiring in Malacia. Were I to describe the four separate stories in a few words, it would sound most mundane (in the regular sense of the word). A young actor plays the protagonist in each of the stories and provides the continuity, but believe me that each of the stories holds its own special characters and mood.

In the stories of Kate Wilhelm, Ed Bryant and Vonda McIntyre I find a good deal of pathos, even though each is set in an entirely different time and place. Vonda tells me that "The Genius Freaks" was written as a result of her leaving grad school. Ed's "Sharks" is a chilling story and Kate Wilhelm leaves a bitter taste of an over-regimented society where there is hardly any room for the most simple of pleasures in "The Red Canary." Gene Wolfe's "Continuing Westward" - hmmm! How did it get in here? Unless, I'm misreading it, it's a story of two aviators (old word, that) transverseing Turkey during World War I and of an adventure they have. Still I enjoyed it greatly. The weakest of the stories are Doris Piserchia's "Half the Kingdom", Mel Gilden's "What's the Matter with Herbie" (in the "What About Us Grils" vein), Steve Chapman's "Burger Creature" (reading like an exercise out of a Clarion workshop. Ed Brynat gives us a sample of his NW writing in "Pinup". Michael Bishop, who created a stir earlier in the year with "The White Otters" contributes "The Windows in Dante's Hell" which feels undeveloped. Too many things hinted at, and though the complete story is here, it feels unfinished, as though there is lots more to tell about this particular place.

So much for Orbit 12. 240 pages of darned good reading. Perhaps if you get hooked on this series as I have, you see less wrong than usual. I'm looking forward to 13.

Three Trips in Time and Space, edited (I think) by Robert Silverberg. Dell Books, \$.95

Here we have three original novellas of science fiction. The foreword is by Eob Silverberg and in it he poses instantaneous travel and the problems which might derive

therefrom. Then the book is turned over to Larry Niven, John Brunner and Jack Vance. Extrapolation is theirs. In "Flash Crowd" Larry Niven probably does the best job of exploring a large number of problems engendered by instantaneous travel. A newsman witnesses and videotapes a simple shoplifting arrest and as it is flashed almost immediately onto the viewers' sets the incident grows into a riot and the newsman is accused of being responsible for it. The plot is pretty weak, but the newsman's investigation of the "displacement booths" covers many sorts of problems caused by instantaneous travel and some possible solutions.

John Brunner has taken a humorous approach in "You'll Take the High Road" but I'm afraid that the problems he outlines as one man attempts to travel to England via Transmatter, Incorporated are all human and computer errors, rather than errors of the transmission machine itself. The further the story progressed, the more Mr. Brunner seemed to be reaching. I'm afraid I found this the weakest of the three stories.

Jack Vance provides the best of the lot with "Rumfuddle". Gilbert Duray finds the four entrances to his home have been closed and he cannot get back to his family. He seeks help from Alan Robertson, inventor of a system which allows people privacy in their own alternate time and space. Alan's brother, Bob, turns out to be the one responsible as he and his close friends hold their monthly "Rumfuddle", partly a party and partly a way to deal with evil humans from all of history, Stalin, Hitler, Robespierre, etc., by shifting them into alternate tracks and neutralizing their evilness. A fine story, with an intricate plot and Vance's usual inventiveness.

-- Reviewed by Frank Denton --

An Exaltation of Stars, edited by Terry Carr. Simon and Schuster. \$6.95

Terry Carr has asked three superior writers to deal with rational man's reaction to religious experiences and in doing so has created a very fine book. In my mind, you can't ask for better writers than Bob Silverberg, Roger Zelazny and Edgar Pangborn. The work of the latter two has been all too infrequent, and I'll gobble up anything that they write, even with all of the furor over Zelazny's recent productions.

In Silverberg's "The Feast of St. Dionysus" an astronaut has returned from Mars ridden with guilt that his companions have died and he has lived. He finds a strange group of people in the desert and works out his salvation in a strange way.

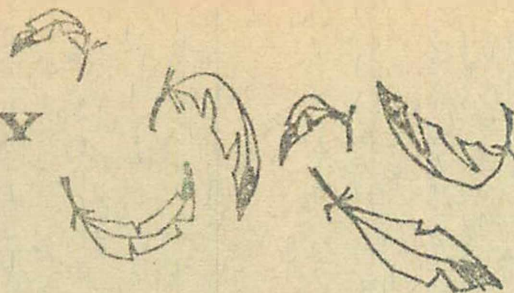
'Kjwalll'kje'k'koothailll'kje'k' has got to be one of the strangest titles for a story in the history of sf. This story has a complex plot, a good pace, some interesting characters, a murder, hidden diamonds, a beautiful, but crippled lady telepath, everything that you could ask for in a well-written story. Think about a dolphin Vatican for a moment.

In "My Brother Leopold" Edgar Pangborn related not only the transcendental experience of a person, but the implications for an Earth just coming out of the Dark Ages following a holocaust. In terms of identification with characters, I think you will find it strongest here of the three stories which make up the book. Pangborn does his usual fine job of writing.

Time and again Terry manages to assemble the very best of today's sf writers. Perhaps next time I'll have space to run down his Universe 4. If this particular series continues, I'll soon put it on the same pedestal as the Orbit series. Meantime, if you've felt that Zelazny and Pangborn (not meaning to slight Silverberg, but he's much more prolific) have been missing entirely too much, spend a few of your hard-earned dollars and buy An Exaltation of Stars.

-- Reviewed by Frank Denton --

THE FEATHERS FLY



/ Ghu knows how long this lettercol is going to be. There was really a fine return on Ash-Wing 13, and if a fanzine is to be judged on the strength of its lettercol, then I'm not in as bad shape as I thought. How to do this and stay within 20-22 pages remains to be seen. /

SALVATORE DiMARIA, 3405 - 21st Ave. S.E., Rio Rancho, NM

I am writing this loc at 5:50 in the morning. Why? Because I can't get to sleep. Why? Because I saw the Exorcist. I am a rather mature 24-year-old adult who takes most things pretty much in stride. However, that movie, - and I am not ashamed to admit this - scared the shit out of me. I tried to rationalize the movie, but that doesn't seem to help much. I suspect only time and a real deep sleep will cushion the shock. UNBELIEVABLE!!

One thing certainly helped, and that was reading Ash-Wing 13. Overall, it's a fine issue. The parts I like best were: The Free Commots, Michael Carlson's story on Southern belles in Virginia, Darrel Schweitzer's story. The artwork was fine as usual, especially Mario Navarro's illos.

Seeing the Exorcist brought home a point I would like to discuss. I have made an observation about people. It's probably common sense to most people who have someone to share things with, but to a bachelor who is at present unattached (and has always been so), it is a sober thought. It is this: without someone to share things, depressive events become worse than they really are and joyous and happy events are not as fully enjoyed as they might otherwise be. I went to see the movie with just one other person, Mike Kring (a burgeoning BNF from out our way). After the film I realized that there should have been more of us in order to cushion the shock and bring myself back to normal. This need to share depressive events with others was again brought out when Mike and I decided to go to a pizza place after the film. We were quickly joined by another guy who had gone to see the movie alone. He sure wanted company!

I have mentioned this need to share mostly because of the movie, but also because of the fact that I could have enjoyed happy events (like cons) if only I had really shared them with someone else. However, that is easier said than done for me. Opening myself to others is quite difficult. Psychologist Sidney Jourard, in his book The Transparent Self, says that this ability is absolutely necessary for health and well-being. From experience (or lack of it) I know he is right. The question is how. I would be interested to hear from other fans who have had the same experience and have overcome it.

We down here in the Great American Desert have discussed this alienation factor among fans. Bob Vardeman has remarked that most fans are either only-childrens or first-borns. Dick Patten has observed that fans seem to fit into two major categories; One can be called "the successful school type" - the one who gets an academic education and goes into a technical field. The other is "the dropout" - the one who has not necessarily dropped out of school, but has not pursued academics or turned out to be scholarly inclined. This type may feel alienated from the rest of society or peer group. I certainly feel that most fans are introverts - except with each other during cons.

D. GARY GRADY, Box 25 AFRTS, FPO, NY 09571 (Currently in Keflavik, Iceland)

Michael Carlsons report from the South strikes me as odd in the extreme. I have lived in the South virtually all of my life, and I have never seen the type of people he describes outside of the movies. Students in makeup at 0800? My God! He has stumbled on a very unreconstructed bunch of Southerners. I hope he does not consider that typical of that hunk of the country.

I suspect that Carlson is something of a racist, judging from his apparent surprise that

people are friendly toward him and motorcyclists aren't shot down a la Easy Rider. He justifies this disparity with his expectations by asserting that "college towns are not always the best indicators of an area's true feelings." Good grief! HIS college town is not typical of anything I have ever seen anywhere on two continents.

Lookee, folks, the Civil War is over. It isn't necessary to treat us as evil furriners any more. Your naive attitudes apply more to New York than to Richmond or Atlanta, Michael. /Aha, the voice of the South speaks up. I knew that there would be an answer to Michael's article/column last time, but I didn't know from which quarter it might come. A-W has any number of readers in the South and I had rather anticipated it would be someone else. More letters later on speak to the point, and while not actually defending the South, seem to indicate that what Michael saw can be seen darn near anywhere in the old US of A./

In reference to Laurine White's observation, it is my experience that going eastward produces a far worse jet lag than going westward. Even though I had about the same amount of sleep both ways, I felt much better after flying from Keflavik to New York last month than I felt after the return trip a week later.

Darrell Schweitzer seems to be cutting brevity per se in fiction in the review of "They Cope" in Orbit 11. Personally, I think brevity is a desirable end in fiction. His own "In The Room That Smelled of Time" could not work as a longer story, certainly not as a novel. Many, if not most, long novels are little substance and much padding. I would rather, usually, read two 40,000 word novels of substance than one 80,000 word mass of Wonda-fill.

ROY TACKETT, 915 Green Valley Road N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87107

Thanx much for kind words about DYNATRON. I am well aware of my zine's shortcomings but the economics of the thing has always been the ruling factor on it. Sure, I hold (most of the time) to a maximum of 20 pages...that's the sort I can send at the lowest postage rate...anything over that would cost me extra. No envelopes, except for overseas issues, because they cost extra and add to the postage. What with the postage rates going up again I imagine I'll stick to 8-page issues and send them first class. It won't be much of a fanzine but at least it will keep me in touch.

I've always been amazed at fanzines such as GRANFALLOON or ALGOL (which is not strictly a fanzine any more). The cost involved is fantastic. Andy Porter told in one issue what it cost him to put that particular issue out. He spent more on that one issue than I've spent on over 13 years of DYNATRON. Nice if you can afford it. I can't. I keep my mailing list rimmed, too. A few years back, while I wasn't watching, the distribution of DYNATRON crept over 200. I shuddered and got out the axe. Current circulation is about 110 and I don't intend to let it get any higher.

Fine illo by Navarro on page 20. Not being art-oriented it takes something special to catch my eye and that one did. Good article on Peake by Dainis Bisenieks (where's he been hiding -- haven't heard from him in ages).

Is Big Brother watching you?

MIKE GLICKSOHN, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario CANADA M6P 2S3

A-W 13 arrived last week (you crazy mimeographing fool you!) and was read with enjoyment in a single sitting (up here in the frozen north we daren't use the toilet too often, so we tend to be in there for some time when we do go.) I applaud, as usual, your neat appearance, excellent printing, and intriguing comments. I also applaud your thoughts on a smaller fanzine. There comes a time when all that work just doesn't set the adrenalin pumping the way it once did, and the pleasure to be gained from mimeoing an entire issue of a fanzine in a single evening is something only the publisher of a meaty genzine can fully savour. (It'll also mean less reading time for me, and while your fanzine is pleasant to read, the saving in time will be appreciated: I can barely read all the zines I get now as it is.)

I enjoyed the article on the Peake books very much. I've just read the first two novels, on the recommendation of several people whose opinions I value that to read the third is to lose a great deal of the affection generated by the first two. I see no suggestion in this article that the third volume is weaker than the first two, although evidently the

entire background of Titus Alone is at odds with that of the first two works. Without the brooding, all-pervading presence of Gormenghast, it's hard to imagine the characters having any reality. Some day I must re-read the first two books, and try the third. But the way things are going, that someday is still considerably in the future.

I enjoyed the column by Cliff Wind, even though he claims not to have enough material to write one. This bits and pieces style is most interesting, the sort of piece that often can generate enormous amounts of reaction. I expect the weekend newspapers should be a fascinating source of titillating bits for those of us who have trouble conceiving of ideas for columns. I'll keep this approach in mind the next time someone asks for an article. For example, yesterday's paper had a little story about a 26 year old man who divorced his 74 year old wife after he discovered she was trying to poison him. That's the stuff of fannish articles, surely?

ROSE M. HOGUE, 16331 Golden Gate Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92649

The cover is most eerie and I like it. One of Jim's scribblings at Tankcon?? /Yes, indeed./ The Rotsler backcover is also interesting but I like your choice of it as a backcover best. Inside artwork is something to rave about also! Grant Canfield as always superb! Mario Navarro quite good too. Haven't been seeing much of his work lately so guess it is something you got a year or so ago...right? /One of them was older, but one was something a lot newer than that. Mario must be busy doing something else. Tell all, Mario./ Tim Denton's contribution ain't all that bad - I've seen worse. Where's your sense of encouragement? Really enjoyed Dan Osterman's "Go West Young Man" but even so for this issue the Navarro on page 20 has my vote for favorite of issue 13!

Got a postcard from Donn Brazier the other day saying TITLE may be no more - he no longer has mimeo access - wondering why?? Guess it got to be work and can't blame Donn at all. With the demise of DORIC may also have gone some of the enthusiasm...or else the Hugo nomination threats he took seriously - who knows? /It would be a shame and very disappointing if Donn were not able to continue TITLE. It's one of the zines which has achieved its own gestalt, something pretty rare in fanzines./

Understand via several souls fannish that Ed Cagle has gone gafia, also and tis sad to see the turnover in fen...but necessary to them to retain their sanity I would suppose. /Another most entertaining zine bites the dust. Come back, Ed. We need KJALHIOQUA./

I too enjoyed Ursus of Ultima Thule and wrote up a fairly good review of same and sent to Bob Barthell for CTHULU CALLS - do you get same? January issue had a letter from Harlan Ellison therein if you didn't get a copy as well as my review of L. Alexander's Chronicles of Prydain - next issue should see my assessment of C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia... For your info and if you record such things Ursus first appeared in IF, August 1971 as "Antent of Ultima Thule" and the latter half in FANTASTIC August and October 1972 as "The Forges of Mainland Are Cold".

Hope V-Con III was fun and you got to talk to Herbert - he would be quite a GoH and hope that it was all fun. Here's hoping we'll get a con report. /Gee, I was hoping I could skip that. Didn't get to talk to Herbert; I don't find him easy to talk to. Did get to talk to Michael Coney, Eileen Kernaghan and George Metzger of "Moondog" fame./

When did you convert to New Wave?? Well, since you have I'm glad that you still exert some tastefulness in your contributions. In "The Room That Smelled of Time" I see many elements of NW-ism, yet with competent writing behind it. I really enjoyed Darrell's words more than some of those in A,DV and DV itself.

"Jewel-Haunted Lands" was very impressive...and here Bill sends me a postcard soliciting my poetry - gads!

Mike Carlson writes a mean assessment of Ashland, Virginia...wonder what he'd think of Huntington Beach. There are several braless gals about but we are lacking in total nudity except for the local Jr. College streak-ins or whatever the heck they are.

A fellow reader of Erewhon - wow, never thought I'd see things quoted from same and was quite delighted with Clifford's doing so and also his column - hope it'll continue and not get the axe. Childbirth, while being immodest to some puritanical lady's way of thinking is an intensely personal thing, too. Perhaps even more so than the sex involved in creating the child. Oh, well.

Been reading. Finished Rendezvous With Rama; good book and worthy of all the follderal!

but I doubt it stands a snowball chance in you-know-where against the Heinlein tour de force which I'm now partaking of - Time Enough For Love is one heck of a thick and meaty book. I enjoyed Rendezvous very much and read it in one sitting. Time is a different tale and I intend to savour it a bit and limited myself to a mere 35 pages this morning. Also have on my ballot Ursus, The Glory Game and The Stalking Trees by Swann.

JOHN P. STRANG, 600 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90802

Schweitzer's story is a wee bit obscure; but I liked it, even if I don't quite understand it.

Is the "wet jewelled forest" in Bill Breiding's poem intended to be Freudian or what? I must have a dirty mind this week, I'm seeing sex-machinery in all things and all literary images.

Dainis Bisenieks' article makes me wish I'd spent more time on the Gormenghast books - although the first one turned me off, because it was obscure, and because I felt that the action was meant to illustrate "hidden truths" - I like such things only when I can guess with some accuracy what the "hidden truths" are.

"Travels With No One" by Michael Carlson is promising. I liked his comments on the Southern belle - although I don't think this sort of girl is confined to the South. Although you can see sloppy girls at Cal State Long Beach (where I'm learning the hierophantic mysteries of being a scholar in the Humanist Tradition -- "At the name of which even buzzards vomit," according to R.A. Lafferty --) you also see the neat, pressed, beautiful, dangly-earringed kind. As Ben Jonson once expressed it, "a sweet disorder in the dress/ kindles a sort of wantonness" or something to that effect. I often wonder if it's the super-neat, not a hair out of place girls who invite rape -- because some of them look more like dolls than people, and maybe the rapist just wants to muss them up a bit because HE CAN'T STAND IT!!!

But enough nutty talk: I guess the Southern Belle idea obsesses me - even the old antebellum (Parabellum?) costume, the huge billowy, long skirts and founces and crinolines (which may, incidentally, stage a comeback at any time) which not only puts a fortress-like barrier in the way of male chauvinists, but also resembles the costumes of the priestesses of the Great Mother on Crete, and the similarly-attired priestesses (and priests) of Ba'al, who aroused the ire of the followers of that male chauvinist, Yahweh. (Paradoxically, the 'male chauvinist' Hebrews frowned on temple prostitution, sacrifice, and other 'privileges' of females in the matriarchal societies surrounding them. If the provisions of the Torah seem repressive and male-chauvinistic to us today, and also because they were used by anti-sex and anti-female propagandists of the past, they look like a veritable female bill of rights compared to the practices of some of the matriarchal hierarchies, where a virgin might be buried alive at the site of some grove dedicated to the Great Mother, or where all females were expected to perform temple-service as religious Fanny Hills - their maidenheads used in common by the tribe in order to make surplus value (\$) for the Great Mother and her clergy. This suggests that the puritan and matriarchal direction which Women's Lib seems to be increasingly taking may in the end work against increasing female freedom.)

NOTE: It was the matriarchal societies which first emphasized the role of the woman as



baby-producer and fertility symbol - the Patriarchal tribes only modified the idea slightly later on. (A woman in the role of Queen-Bee baby making machine is still very much a prisoner of sex - so this Honkey/Anglo/Christian/Chickendung Liberal/Sexist opines.)

Anyway, the symbol of the woman on a pedestal, surrounded by layers and layers of non-utilitarian petticoats and skirt, and weighted down with several pounds of makeup and junk jewelry, is one of my pet obsessions. (Described in that way, she almost sounds like the love-object of the bondage freaks.) The other side of the coin is, however, the going-through-the-door-first bit, the unapproachability, the no-sex-unless-you-buy-me-a-big-dinner (or no-sex-unless-you-sign-the-marriage-contract-and-agree-to-become-my-meal-ticket thing.)

Of course, some of this is reflected in Western novels, too. The costumes are usually similar, although the women sometimes wear trousers. (Since these are an even more impenetrable barrier - unless removed - to f*****g than a huge skirt, one wonders if this is also puritanical and perhaps an inversion of the Ba'al/Mystery Cult priest ((often altered)) in crinoline and skirts?) The roles are not dissimilar, and actually much of the 1870's cowboy culture could be considered a transplant of the plantation to the plains (guess where a large number of the real historical cowboys - both black and white - came from?)

DAVE SELL, 1921 Lakewood Drive, Olympia, WA 98501

Dainis Bisenieks article on Mervyn Peake interested me. I hadn't really paid that much attention to him before. It was a good introduction to his trilogy. If I keep reading articles like that and book reviews of fantasy I'm going to start reading more whether I like it or not. It's a damned conspiracy.

Darrell Schweitzer wrote a really fine story in "In the Room That Smelled of Time. It's at least comparable to much of what's going down in the prozines today. The aspect that got me was that it struck a personal chord in some respects. Between the part where the main character first starts dreaming and when he wakes up. I had those same feelings last summer. I was lying in bed on a hot summer night, and I was thinking of my recent breakup with a girl. I started thinking about some of the things we had done. Suddenly, for some damn reason I couldn't for the life of me remember how she laughed. I know it sounds absurd but a sudden panic engulfed me much as the protagonist in the story, when he saw that the girl didn't have a face. It was eerie reading a feeling that I'd had so long ago.

Michael Carlson's observations are the sort of thing I thrive on. I also like to read them in fanzines. I go to a small college near Olympia and it's fun to compare attitudes and values between Centralia, Washington and Ashland, Virginia. I, along with you, hope he's on hand next issue.

Clifford Wind almost let me down, but in his typical way, pulled out an article from slipping into the doldrums by stating that Dr. Steve Hardy of General Hospital had issued a challenge to all night-time tv actors to an acting duel, no less. One question: who's going to be the judge if he gets any takers? Perhaps Esther *sigh* Williams?

Frank Balazs makes me wonder, especially about his sanity. [Wait until you read Frank's contribution in A-W 15. You will no longer wonder.]

FREFF, 314 West 88th Street, New York, NY 10024

In September I came to New York City to make money. Since then I have found this place, seen many movies, read many books, gotten back into dance and for the first time into yoga, attended the launch of Skylab III, worked a steady job as a phototypesetter for three and a half months, started selling freelance scripts to Gold Key Comics, looked around this city, done some freelance artwork, discovered the 6X0 rapidograph, fallen into a subway ventilation grating and slashed my right thigh in two places down to the muscle, healed, and lots more. Somewhere in there I once more neglected to write up Nathan Beastie Jr. [Freff and Tom Whitmore once did a very fine issue of Nathan Beastie - one issue only. I weep that there have been no more.]

But as for "Dan Freffan" - not Steffan in an adulatory mood, nor collaboration. All me. It started by accident when I shaded the jar a little like Dan's work, got the idea to take it all the way and did so, adding a kind of Steffan creature and imitating his signature.

P.S. If you enjoy YES at all, get their new one, TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS. Fantastic! [I already did. You're right. //Freff later reports that he has done scripts for Dark Shadows, Twilight Zone and StarTrek. Quite odd, in his words.]

RALPH ALFONSO, 5252 Borden, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H4V 2T1

Ash-Wing snuggled its way through my mail slot and onto my bed. Yes, there I was, sick with chicken-pox and a million scabs covering my body. I stood Ash-Wing on its end and screamed, "Amuse me, fanzine, amuse me!!" And as I watched in amazement, it climbed atop a bureau and dove into the air. I couldn't believe it!! It was doing its Esther Williams impersonation!! "Good Lord," I exclaimed, "this can't be happening!" But suddenly there was an ear-shattering "Splash!" and my bed was soaked in liquid.

Ash-Wing lay still on the floor.

Did it really happen or was it just another wet-dream?

JODIE OFFUTT, Funny Farm, Haldeman, KY 40329

The Moody Blues are a fine group of musicians, fine poets, and their album covers are provocative. I love everything about them. At the other end of the scale, I've recently gotten hooked on Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show. After seeing them on 'Midnight Special', I bought one of their albums, "Sloppy Seconds." All the songs on the record were written by Shel Silverstein - and there are some good ones. The most popular is "The Cover of the Rolling Stone" and it is brilliantly amking fun of rock groups.

"Freakers Ball" is another clever one. So many rock musicians seem to take themselves so damned sriously, frowning the whole time they're performing. They seem under such strain. Often the moves and the clothes seem more important than the music. You can hear the Hook people smiling while they're singing - sometimes laughing.

/ I vouch for what Jodie is saying.

Larry Paschelke turned me on

to Dr. Hook and I

rushed out and

bought all

three albums

posthaste.

Good, clean?

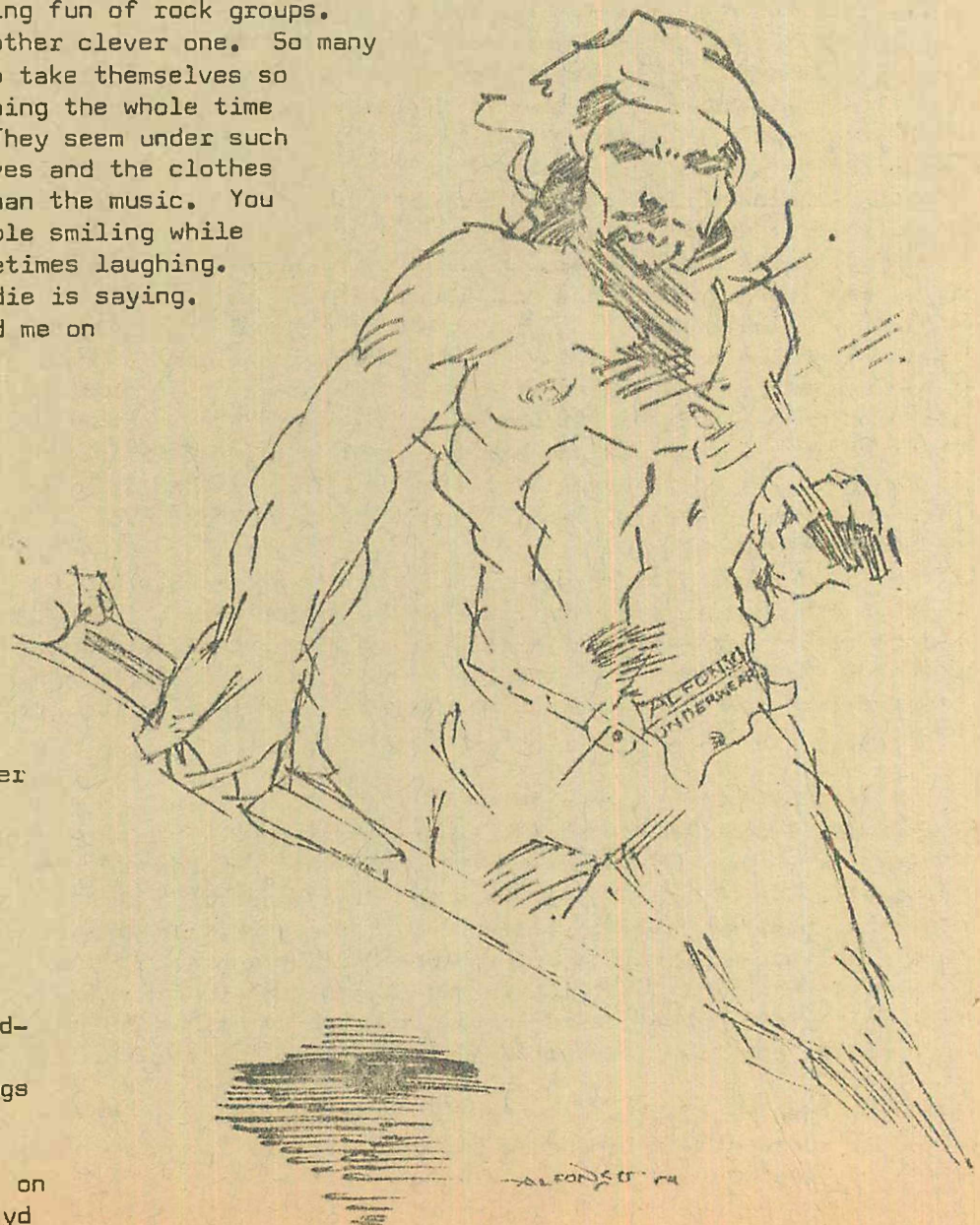
fun./

Canfield's "femlins" on the editorial pages are delightful!

No comment on the fiction, except that Darrell Schweitzer seems to be trying to do what he says in his reviews is hard - surrealistic writing.

Michael Carlson's comments on southern campuses are full of insights and good reading.

Clifford Wind brings all sorts of memories to mind. When I was younger I had crushes on Esther Williams and Cyd Charisse because I'd



have loved to have been able to swim like the one and dance like the other. I envied their long legs. I never learned to dance, but nearly every time I get into water I spend a few minutes fancying myself Esther Williams and do some of her rolling strokes I used to watch from the balcony at the Saturday afternoon matinee. When I decided I wasn't going to grow anymore I transferred my crushes to Debbie Reynolds, Jane Powell, and Marge Champion.

SP4 BRUCE D. ARTHURS, %"&*('*,L)#,(or, if you will 527-98-3103) 57th Trans. Co., Fort Lee, VA 23801

Michael Carlson has an interesting discussion on the Southern Belle and associates. One thing he doesn't mention, though, is that the Southern Belle can be found anywhere. Yep, even in that center of Casual Living, Southern California. They're an American archetype, just like Cowboys, Jocks, Dopers, the Beers, et al.

The fiction by Schweitzer and the Larsons was good, above average for a fanzine. Schweitzer's, of course, reminded me of Disch's "Squirrel Cage", but I still enjoyed it, even if it wasn't all that great (but then, neither was Disch's). The Larson's story I liked better, since they caught the personality of a cat so well; I'm sure any cat (granted the ability to make decisions such as this one did) would have done the same. Otherwise, nothing to say about the stories.

Well, Ozanne does it, so I might as well tell you what I've been reading lately, too: The Devil's Advocate, Morris L. West; The General Danced At Dawn, George MacDonald Fraser (hilarious!); 20/20 Vision, edited by Jerry Pournelle; Spawn of Evil, Paul I. Wellman (brother of Manley Wade); The Sunlight Dialogues, John Gardner; The Architecture of War, Mallory and Ottar (forts, pillboxes, bomb shelters, prefab hutting, etc. Fascinating); Clarion III, ed by Robin Scott Wilson (not as bad as I heard); The Gods Themselves, by whatshisname; GI Rights and Army Justice, Robert S. Rivkin (slightly out of date, but recommended for anyone considering coming into the service; would have been a great help to me if I'd read it earlier); Death of A Citizen, Donald Hamilton.

And I've also read Dr. Syn on the High Seas. Sorry, Frank, but this didn't impress me anywhere nearly as much as it did you, apparently. I thought the characterization was ludicrous, and the writing barely above the worst pulp level. Sorry, but I don't think I'll be looking for the rest of the series. / Aha, gotcha. I never said that I read them. Just that I had been looking for them for a long time and finally had gotten them all. When I do get around to reading them (or one), I may have the same feeling as you did./

Tsk, all you Commandos did was stick a man down a manhole! The gang I ran around with when a young tyke did much better; we buried one of our people alive. There was a shallow depression in the alley behind my house, so we deepened it, put the guy down into it, and covered up everything but his head. Then we put a football helmet over his face, backwards (so he'd have a little air to breathe), and covered him up completely. Just then a truck came driving down the alley, we scattered, and the driver went right over the spot where Mike was buried, all unawares. We dug him up fast, scared out of our lives. He sat up, shook the dirt out of his ears, and said, "What was that loud rumbling noise?" The wheels of the truck had just barely missed going right over him.

ERIC MAYER, RD 1, Falls, PA 18615

Now for the commercial, did you ever listen to The Kinks? I can't recommend them highly enough. Unfortunately they never get any airplay and never appear on TV so the only way to hear them is to buy their albums. And the trouble there is that all their records sound different. The Kinks Greatest Hits provides a fairly good selection of their older, simpler style, and their newer material (up until their last three albums, that is) is represented on The Kink Kronikles. If you ever see one of their albums in the closeout section, buy it. (The price of records being what it is I can hardly urge anyone to buy anything he hasn't heard.) I even received a Kinks fanzine once, a few years before I got into fandom, but after a few months it simply stopped coming. At the time I wondered why - now I know.

Darrell Schweitzer's story reminded a bit too much of a Thomas Disch story I read once. I don't think it's that great of a policy to write about writing. Non-writers probably couldn't care less about would-be writer's obsessions. (I don't mean that as a slam at Darrell. I've read some excellent things by him.) I've read too many sf stories about people sitting around in uninteresting places lately.

Michael Carlson's piece was unpleasant, but the best thing in the issue. The ox mentality isn't limited to the South. It can be found right here in Wilkes-Barre. Until I started getting fanzines I was under the impression that my girlfriend and I were the only people in the world who ever read anything that wasn't a bestseller. Around here English Lit majors use Cliff notes...

KEN BUDKA, 4916 E. 86th St., Garfield Heights, OH 44125

I never have understood genzine editors. How a person can go through so much work getting an issue ready, then printing it, collating it, and mailing it is all beyond me. I'd think that it would be more fun to do a smaller zine, though. It just stands to reason that the less work you do the more fun you have doing it.

The paper shortage hasn't hit Garfield Heights fandom yet. (I'm GHF, by the way.) I bought three cases of twiltone from Mishek's in the past year, and I've still got 22 reams left. And that ought to be enough to last a couple years, at the very least. Mishek's, RR #2, Waseca, MN 56093 sells this paper at \$1.32 a ream, if you buy ten reams or more of the same color. At one time their price was \$1.02, but that's life. Of course, the postage of about \$6 means you'll be paying about \$1.90 a ream. I don't know what you're paying for paper now, but this is about the best deal I've found. /I bought 50 reams last time out, sometime last fall. Got it for \$1.15 a ream, but doubt that I'll get off that easy next time I need paper./

Of all the groups to come out of the British invasion of the 60's, the Hollies are the ones I never much cared for. Even Gerry and the Pacemakers put out a few listenable songs, but the Hollies have never done much for me. From reading about the music you listen to, both here and in SAPS, you seem to be mostly a soft rock fan. You never mentioned The Kinks as being one of your favorites, though. I've been a Kinks fan since 1966, when I saw them on Shindig. They aren't really soft rock, but that certainly doesn't mean that they are hard rock, either. /Lot of Kinks fans out there. I do have a couple of their albums and just listened to them last night. Or did I already say that. I do like some hard rock groups, Mountain, Uriah Heep, Blue Oyster Cult, Montrose. Gads, it's hard to classify groups./

I'm not much of a western fan. I just like western films once in a while. In case you didn't know, there is now an apa for mystery fans. I'm in it, and I think I can say without much doubt that it's going to be a fun apa once it starts gathering momentum. The first mailing was in December and contained 27 pages from 6 members. I know you read a mystery every so often, so I thought you might be interested enough to drop Donna Balopole, 80-27 209th St., Floral Park, NY 11004 a request for info. I've really been reading more and more mysteries lately, and I find them a lot more enjoyable and less demanding than sf. So much sf is just not entertainment these days, it's nice to read books where you know that there is a story to be told. My favorite mystery writers are Dorothy Sayers, Frederic Brown, Michael Innes, Margery Allingham, Rex Stout, and Raymond Chandler, but I still have not been reading them very long, and they're subject to change.

TED PEAK, 1556 Detroit, #1, Denver, CO 80206

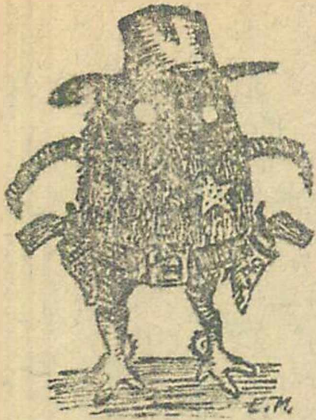
I truly enjoyed "In The Room That Smelled of Time" by Darrell Schweitzer. I felt that it was truly a professional story in quality.

The story, "Cat Got Your Tongue?" by the Larsons, was not quite up to that quality, but good nonetheless. I think some background on Jack would have worked to make it better. I'm not in agreement with villains being only evil. But the language was good and strong.

A comment on one letter. In Japan, as far as I can determine, only one hero ever used two swords effectively. Oh, fiction has a few, but only one was known to have really done so. His name was Miyamoto Musashi. A fascinating legend behind him. I'll have to tell it to you someday, when you have some time. It's rather long.

MARTIN WILLIAMS, 3528 Meridian No., Seattle, WA 98103

One complaint, in your book reviews you have a tendency, not so much to review the book, as to give away the entire plot and storyline for the people who haven't read the book yet. Now, I like to know the general idea of the story, but I don't want to know the ending before I've even started the book. /Gosh, you noticed. Well, I'll try harder./



/ The next four pages may contain beau coup mistakes which have been left uncorrected. Blame it on a weekend at the cabin. Typer and stencils came, but corflu stayed behind. /

SUTTON BREIDING, 2240 Bush St., San Francisco, CA 94115

Ash-Wing Thirteen appeared today, with more than one item to arouse my interest; the first being, much to my delight and surprise, an essay on Mervyn Peake and Gormenghast. Momently I am polishing off volume three, and though it isn't holding my brain in thrall as did one and two, it still is a curious and wonderful book....but O was I sorry to leave the winding ways of the castle! In some ways I must admit, though I don't necessarily like to, that I agree with Lin Carter as regards his remarks on the third volume; still, his stance that it should never have been written, then excusing this on the grounds of Peake's illness, seem a bit ridiculous: Good Olde Lin.

Curiously enough, Peake actually makes mention of "brain disease" in the third tome. To me, despite the hundreds and hundreds of pages, Peake has managed, through some dark genius, to maintain what is veritably pure poetry: everything is ESSENCE; sometimes almost, or literally, incantation. I have been spellbound within this convoluted realm of words for several weeks. I am constantly amazed, thinking about it: how the Hell did he do it??? I'm flabbergasted. The slow movement of characters down endless hallways. Yet still wrappt up in a tangle of action. Emotions drawn tight as the gut in a height of ecstasy. Characters that are caracitures, immense distorted shadows looming on stone steps; peering out of windows.

Speaking of owls, if you've read the trilogy, which you seem to indicate (?), you must have revelled in Sepulchrave's lunacies.....it seems appropos that you might even print those exerpts dealing with the Lord's reveries and dilirious dreams. / As a matter of fact, I am only now reading the works, as a result of Dainis' article. It is one of those works which one reads slowly and savors over a long period of time, at least for this reader. I'm sorry I gave the impression of being one of the Inner Circle. I'm only about 300 pages into the first book, Titus Groan, and it went almost painfully at first. By now the strange assortment of characters have burned themselves into my mind. While I'm still proceeding slowly and cautiously, and wondering when Steerpike will notice me and put me to his nefarious usage, still there is nothing which would make me lay the book down at this point. I highly recommend to those who have looked at the work and discarded it, to try five or ten pages a day for a hundred or two pages and then see if the flavor has not captured you. /

As to Westerns, I'd like to put in a word for Walter Van Tilburg Clark for his tale, The Ox-bow Incident and another short story called "The Indian Well, which has appeared in a Modern Library collection of Western tales. The former, I seem to gather, is fairly famous, a psycho-suspense study of mob justice, replete with a cast of beautifully stereotyped characters. The latter is a lyric evocation of the desert and its swarming lives, with plot being secondary to colour and style.

GARTH DANIELSON, 20-237 Edison Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba CANADA R2G 0L9

I read Peake's books about three or four years ago and I really was impressed by them. I had thought that Tolkien was the best fantasy writer around, but after I had finished The Gormenghast Trilogy I changed my mind. For a while. Now that I look back I see that they are two different types of fantasy.

I do think that Peake is better at descriptive things and though, people will argue with me, if Tolkien had written The Gormenghast Trilogy it probably would have been much shorter. If Bradbury had written it, it would have been 13 short stories (I couldn't resist that; sorry, it's my humorous side.)

When I read the book, I read the Ballantine editions. Which incidentally are not available here in Canada. (As are not the Tolkien Lord of the Rings; LotR is available, but not in the Ballantine editions. There is a one volume edition from Thomas Nelson and Sons (Canada) Ltd. with a lovely cover by Pauline Baynes (front and back). The three volumes are

also available from Methuen in a boxed set. It, too, has a cover by Pauline Baynes, but is nowhere near as nice as the Ballantines. It is complete. The Nelson book lacks the Appendices except for "Part of the Tale of Aragorn."

Anyway, back to Gormenghast. The books are available here from Penguin Books in a nice boxed edition with a nice \$6.00 price.

The Ballantines do have the half-tone illustrations, while the Penguins have only three reproduced on covers. The other illustrations are about the same except that Ballantine uses illustrations to pad out Titus Alone quite a bit.

Two of the cover illustrations on the Penguins are the same as two in the Ballantines. They are Fuschia on Titus Groan and Irma Prunesquallor on Titus Alone. The third is not in the Ballantine, but is in a hardback I've seen while browsing at the library (it was probably the British edition as it has the Anthony Burgess introduction.) It is the study for Steerpike and Barquentine.

This illustration, along with the one of Bellgrove in the Ballantine insert are the best illustrations of the lot.

However, one thing that the Penguin books have going for them is that it is a revised edition. In the Publisher's Note it states that there were omissions and that they were restored. These are principally Chapter 24 (an entire new episode), Chapters 77, 89, and from Chapter 99 to the end, where the originally published text has been considerable built up.

The revising was done by Langdon Jones, who "was working with three different versions. The most important was the first typescript. This was the version that had been first submitted for publication, and on which most of the alterations had been made. The first third consisted of a carbon copy with no markings at all. The second typescript was the version that had been prepared to the editor's directions in his attempt to make the book coherent, for Mervyn Peake was already suffering from his final illness at the time of submission. The first third of this consisted of original sheets taken from the first script, marked by Peake and the editor. The last two thirds (in which the bulk of the modifications had occurred) were re-typed according to the editor's specifications, although there were sporadic corrections by Peake. The other script, to which recourse was made to check illegibilities and for those sections which had disappeared from the typescripts, was the first draft, which had been handwritten in a variety of notebooks." - Langdon Jones writes in the Publishers Note - Titus Alone.

By comparing the two books I figure there to be about 10,000 words more in the revision. To a completist, this is important. Unfortunately, the Penguin Editions are for sale only in England and Canada and not in the U.S. One could get them from some English dealer, though.

MIKE KRING, PSC #1, Box 3147, KAFB EAST, Albuquerque, NM 87115

I fell in awe of Mervyn Peake's mastery of the language when I read the Gormenghast trilogy, and when I saw Dainis Biseniek's article was about Peake, I read it avidly. However, I must admit I was a trifle disappointed, for the article was really nothing more than a rave about the books. Agreed, the books deserve all the praise they receive, but the article seemed to promise more. It was well-written and I did enjoy it immensely, and I guess you either love Peake's work or hate it. (By the way, just how did he die? Cancer? I have yet to find out.) I've heard the hardcover version of the trilogy contains more illustrations than the original Ballantine edition. Is this true? If so, I guess I'll order them. The man was a true genius. / Can anyone give us a rundown on the hardcover editions? I have two of the three volumes in a Weybright & Talley edition. I understand there is another hardcover edition. Can't check Dainis' information at the beginning of his article as I don't have a copy of A-W with me at the moment. /

It's your fmz, Frank, but I guess I'm getting grouchy in my old age. Like Buck Coulson, I feel fiction is either good enough to be sold or it isn't good enough to be printed. / This battle will rage even longer than the New Wave-Old Wave controversy. About an even split between those who like fiction in fmz and those who don't. /

Michael Carlson's little thingie was nice, and being from the South (though a few hard-hearted sould say Texas is neither South, nor West, nor anything; it just is Texas) I could appreciate his viewpoint of the Southern Belle. There's also another type of female in the South: the rough-rider. She spits and chews tobacco, rides horses, thinks beer is the elixir

of life, and loves to arm wrestle. Now that is a strange type to run up against. Hopefully more from Mr. Carlson's pen will be in the next A-W.

Ah, Mr. Wind and his red balloon thingie again. I really enjoy his weird humor and the style (if you can call it that) of writing muchly. But then, I'm prejudiced. I like low-key humor, and I know some people don't. Mr. Wind, you think a life spent totally in suburbia isn't full of fascinating details, you ought to try a dry, dusty little Texas town with a population of 1500. Yes, I said 1500. We had 150 kids in the TOP FOUR GRADES of high school. That's total, by the way. Our class was 35 and was the largest graduating class EVER from our school. Now that's small and uneventful.

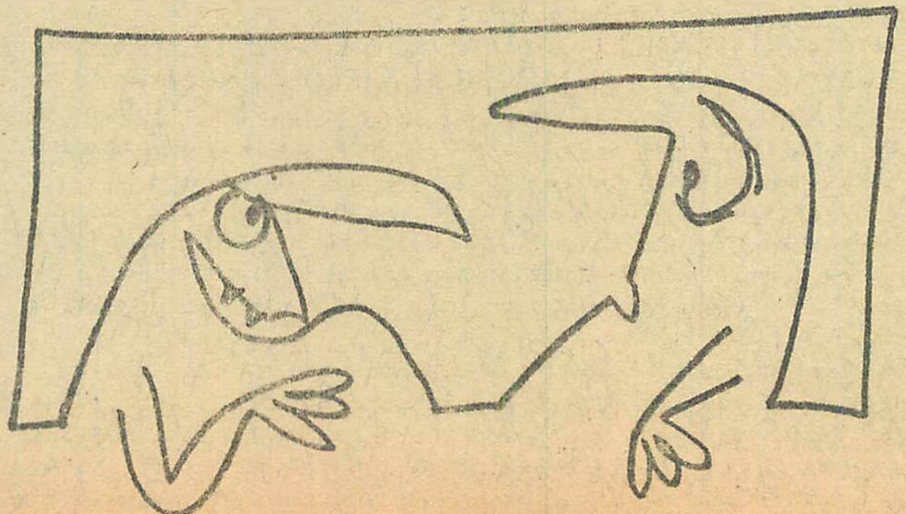
I like the lettercolp but do have a few bones to pick with a few of the writers-in. So, here goes. Mr. Ozanne: WHAT??? You say Out of the Mouth of the Dragon is unreadable garbage???? Are you out of your ever-lovin' mind??? That book has got to be my very favorite since it was printed by Ace, lo, those many years ago. It is one of the few books in the sf genre which portrays the gradual disintegration of a man's mind and ideal with perfect mood and skill. The hero (?) of the book is not a strong man, he is like the rest of the race he lives in: hoping for the end of the world, for it has suffered so many false ends. The tone of the book is permeated with despair and hopelessness, but that is exactly what the author tried to do. War is not kind, nor are the people who go to a holy war all that altruistic and brave. Some are helpless, some go there to die. It doesn't matter, for most of them realize that they will not ever go home again. The characters in the book are all mad, but I think anyone who lived in a world as described by Geston would indeed be mad. But in their madness, they somehow reflect ourselves in their actions. And the final scenes where the protagonist returns to the Burn and confronts all the ghosts of his past is superbly done and powerfully done, also. To call that book garbage is insane! But then, a lot of people didn't like it. If you don't want the book, I'll gladly pay postage for you to ship it here, if you let me know what the hell it is. Sheesh, some people just ain't got no taste!

Me. I'd have to vie for Annette Funicello fandom, for she's the only one who seems to have affected a lot of guys my age. Ah, for the good ol' Mickey Mouse Club. A friend of mine once said, "Who didn't have a crush on her?" I thought about it for a while, but couldn't think of anyone I've asked who hadn't. But that doesn't mean there weren't a few. And now she has five kids? It makes one feel old and decrepit. Frankie Avalon (her suitor in all those *ugh* Beach pictures) has seven or eight kids. Now, that makes one feel very old. And I'm only 21. Egads! Where has the time gone? Soon, I'll be over thirty, and untrustworthy. / That's OK, Mike, you get used to it. /

Y'know, it's difficult to believe Cagle has quit pubbing K. I wonder what went wrong? / You and a good share of the rest of fandom. A very unique fanzine that a lot of people are going to miss badly. Where will wild pickle fandom go now that it has no home? /

BILL BREIDING, 2240 Bush
Street, San Francisco,
CA 94115

Well, I got as far as Mike Carlson's article and just had to stop there and write to you. Ghod, it sure does remind me of the college town I used to live in. Morgantown, West Virginia. State University. I've never been to college, maybe never will. At this point, I'm too young to enter, but Mike's descriptions of Ashland are soooo damned



familiar I didn't want to finish the damned thing, even though I was enjoying every word. Ya see, I've always felt alienated in that place (Morgantown). It seems so unreal. I was raised in Morgantown (damn!! I had my thoughts all wrapped around my little finger, and now I can't even remember what I wanted to say - you see, I think of all these witticisms while I'm reading zines (shades of Balazs) and then never remember them when it comes to writing a loc.) And my fondest memories are based around all the quaint little hoods who think they know where the scene is. And the college students on Fratrat Hill, whistling at all the girls...getting raucous on all nights and roaring drunk, but never learning anything in class. Only one gets drunk and stoned (well, I guess they do both now...) and the other just procrastinates, waiting till the time when they can either drop out, or go on to college and get drunk. Mind you, this is only my observation in the town that I lived in. Generally they're wasting their time. Now perhaps I should be writing this loc to Dick Patten, as I have just received his ZYMURGY, and there are conversations running along the same lines in that zine. Barring all of those who really have a craving to learn and are going to college for something besides Bullshit...I think that I'm learning more outside of both high school and college. I think it's more important to learn about people and the world in which you live, and relating in a way in which you see fit. When one goes through school in pretence of learning, one tends to hem and hah around; witness, a friend of mine. He's been in school for most of his 29 years and he has a mighty hard time relating to people. Now I'm not saying that this is a direct influence from school learning...maybe it's just my friend's personality. I don't really know if all of this is clear; maybe Jodie Offutt says it better for me in the above-mentioned zine (ZYMURGY).

As to Darrell's story I can only say that I've yet to read a story by this fellow that I haven't enjoyed. "The Room..." though, I felt was not one of his better efforts, although definitely above average, by far better than the Laron's story.

Why-in-the-hole did you print that poem of mine? Yeesh! That was totally unexpected. That was a BEEE*YODD*TEEE*FUL illo that you put with it. /'Twas, wasn't it. Been saving that illo of Mario's for a long time, and your poem seemed to be the proper time for it./

I have discovered Clifford Wind. And I have enjoyed him in both A-W and Zymurgy, though I thought he should not have apologized to you. But It All Came Out All Right Anyway. I liked the ending paragraph. He left on a very nice humorous note. ? / Clifford has also appeared at least once in WILD FENNEL. He's currently doing his cadet teaching, and has two high school physics classes. I hope that he has time to continue his fannish writing./

DENIS QUANE, Box CC, East Texas Station, Commerce, TX 75428

You may have noted in NOTES that I'm a believer in smaller, more frequent issues of fanzines. This is from the point of view of putting them out and getting them. While I appreciate the big 50-100 pagers when I get them, they come out much too infrequently to relate to. And as a new fanzine publisher, even twenty pages seems a whole lot to put out at one time. / Denis refers to his own very fine zine, NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT. I recommend it highly; send him a sticky quarter. One of the new bright and shining stars on the horizon of fanzines./

This particular issue of Ash-Wing was very difficult to relate to for even more reasons, since, except for your editorial, the book reviews, and some of the letters, there was nothing much to interest me. No, it wasn't that it had nothing to do with science fiction - it wasn't even the kind of fannish writing I enjoy reading. Well, anyway the parts I did like, I liked very much.

Every time I read a review of Wertham's book, it sounds completely different. Reminds me somehow of the story of the blind men and the elephant. I guess I'll just have to get a copy myself and make up my own mind. But \$10 seems a bit much, and I doubt if I could convince the librarians here that it's a chemistry book.

LAURINE WHITE, 5408 Leader Ave., Sacramento, CA 95841

Most of the art work I didn't care for this issue. The design by Rotsler on the bacover was interesting and I enjoyed the illos by Navarro and Sheryl Birkhead, but the rest is a bit grotesque. Blatant Sexism #1 isn't; perhaps if she stuck out her tongue provocatively.

Good article on Titus Groan. The first two books in the series were good, if not really enjoyable, but removing Gormenghast from the third book really changed the atmosphere and

made it hard to understand.

Darrell Schweitzer's story reminded me of a novel (Eye of the Lens) by a New Wave British author named Jones, about some guy living in a room with giant clockworks which he had to keep repaired. Very dreary.

Bill Breiding's poetry has nice imagery. I like Paula Marmor's better, though. (That's a hint.)

About Clifford Wind's last paragraph: a lot of primitive women don't give birth in a flat position. They do it while squatting. I enjoy your reviews. At least someone else doesn't think Excalibur is great. The first two people I asked really liked it.

I noticed that after a hiatus of six years, the next Ramage book (Governor) is published in the U.S. in hardback. You might be interested in a series which will be in pb starting in May: the Judge Dee books by Robert Van Gulick. Dee is a Chinese magistrate in 8th or 9th Century China. Magistrates in those days were expected to solve crimes.

SHERYL BIRKHEAD, 23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20760

Gee, gosh (blush), thanks for the dedication.

MORE CARLSON! I can't say that the Southern Belles who read the piece are going to be all that smitten with it - but I really enjoyed reading about just south of here. I even, once upon a time, had the R-M catalog and can see what I missed (thank heavens!)

CAT - yeah, hang in there, cat! Knowing of people who are quite willing to take pot-shots at any cats within sight, I'm entirely on the feline's side.

Hmmm, don't recall getting any advice from any of the venerable sources Clifford Wind cites. Missed out on a lot, didn't I? Yeah, I think that'll do for a column - now MAKE him keep it regular!

FRANK BALAZS, 19 High Street, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

I finally read the latest Ash-Wing and I must say that it was a very enjoyable issue indeed. The cover seems quite appropriate for a fanzine that has an article on Mervyn Peake inside. The illo reminds me for some reason of Peake's own descriptions and drawings of his bizarre characters.

I met Mike Carlson at the not-so-recent Boskone. I was continually stumbling across the man in the phone booths on the con floor. Or, I chanced upon walking in on Mike Gorra's afternoon party and, lo and behold!, there was Carlson on the phone once again. Indeed, if he hadn't come up to the group I was talking with and asked for change I might not have met him. Somehow, we even talked a bit, in between his calls, of course. Only kidding, since he'd been travelling around so much he was anxious to see friends and/or scrounge up dates.

In just a few weeks, Croton fandom will be back at the crank producing some sort of fanzine to boggle and oggle the mind of one or two fans, maybe....For the first time in ages, Matt will be in Croton over the summer. At Lunacon he muttered something about bi-weekly publication, and this worries me not a little bit.

BRUCE TOWNLEY, 2323 Sibley St., Alexandria, VA 22311

Just to show that sophmorica survives and thrives in the suburbs, I'll state my musical preferences. OK, Mahavishnu has incredible amounts of transcendental meditation daubed on, but that's not the point! They're five fine musicians, but that's not the point. It's the amazing amounts of energy, the heavy metal that makes em great. Various new wave rock critics (there too) have tried to discount their latest album as the same ol' slop and all that McLaughlin knows how to do is compose superlative riffs but that's what saves him! More of the same of "Sister Andrea" and I'll be happy.

And now for my favorite album. TYRANNY AND MUTATION by the Blue Oyster Cult. Right, THE NEW YORK DOLLS transcends even this in raw power and RAW POWER by the Stooges is the best thing to come out of Detroit since the Air Flo, but these guys ain't got no class. And, of course, class is what sells. From obscure album notes that are probably pro satanic to songs that point out the happy side of Altamont the boys have got it all. And even Buck Dharma Roeser's guitar playing nearly beats out McLaughlin in terms of energy. Neat cover art, too.

Does all this mania justify or even explain the folding of Kwalhioqua, Ron Ziegler, and poor imitations of Dave Hulvey mashed together with R. Meltzer?

JACKIE FRANKE, Box 51-A, RR 2, Beecher, IL 60401

Hmm, just noticed on rereading it...not only do you advertize your sexism with Grant's "Blatant" cartoons, but also with the less-obviously stated shunning of females in the make-up of Tankcon. Now, really, Denton! Bill, Gobe, Mike and yourself are all married... are your wives that totally incompatible? (I actually mean none of that, it was just that the tie-in between material and cartoons was so striking that I had to say something about it....I'm all for separate activities for married couples. Togetherness can be too much at times.) / As a matter of fact, Jackie, those gals are too compatible. We don't dare to let them get together more than once a year at Westercon. Twice a year and we'd be in serious trouble. Anna Jo and I were surprised that we survived five weeks of constant togetherness this last summer in England and Ireland. Now that's a true test of a marriage./

Yet another rave about MileHiCon! You lucky attendees are driving me nuts! I think it's quite cruel of you to keep opening that wound...wish like the dickens that we'd be able to make one of them, but Colorado is simply too far. Darn it. /Exactly what I thought, but the people down there are so neat, that we threw caution and money to the winds and flew down. Now, darned if they haven't invited us back as Goh. Crazy people./

Tim's drawing is good! Why are you pulling that bashful father bit? To be sure, it doesn't look much like a bird to me either, but as an abstract, it's darn well done, and quite fannish. Will we be seeing more of this oligarchical practice in the future? / If I can talk him into it; maybe in another five years./

I've seen advertisements for the "Titus" books for years, and haven't yet made up my mind whether I want to read them or not. Biseniek's brief touching on the trilogy wasn't of much help... I enjoyed reading it, but still stand in awe of the set; which has been so often reported as a mighty rough set of books to plow/wade/trudge through. Have you read them yet? /Currently on p. 344 of Titus Groan, the first volume./

Carlson's article was readable and gave some insights on the behavior of that strange sub-species, Americanus Southernus. Hope he continues to send you reports of his doings.

The Larson's story didn't do much for me. Maybe I've succumbed to that ancient Fannish disease...distaste for fanfiction...Could be.

Ken Ozanne didn't talk about wines with you!?! I'm not a wine freak by any means, but he faunchingly totted up a list of wineries he was planning on visiting for his vacation trip (by now probably over with). I gather from his remarks that Australia has some good wineries, a fact that totally had escaped my attention before. No reason why they should not, I just hadn't had any reason to consider it. / Most people don't have access to same, but occasionally we buy Australian wine in Vancouver, B.C. It has been good./

I'm in the midst of time-binding right now. Tucker shipped a batch of fmz here; everything that had anything in it written by him that he had on hand, and I've been performing the "first reader" function for the reprint zine we have on the drawing boards for the Fund. The pile of fanzines, around 14 inches worth, has all sorts of stuff from the early 50s and 60s in it, GRUE, QUANDARY, ODD, QUIP, a PSYCHOTIC or two...marvy stuff! I feel like weaving myself a cocoon and disappearing for at least a week. / Jackie alludes, of course, to the Tucker Fund, started as a movement to deport Bob Tucker to Australia. Please support the effort; it's most worthy./

DAVE PIPER, 7 Cranley Drive, Ruislip, Middx, England HA4 6BZ

Before I forget...on your Hollies Discography, I've only got one album, EVOLUTION, dated 1967. Contents? All Clarke-Hicks-Nash songs: Then the heartaches begin, Stop right there, Water on the brain, Lullaby to Tim, Have you ever loved somebody, You need love, Rain on the window, Heading for a fall, Ye olde toffee shoppe, When your lights turned on, Leave me, The games we play. S'funny thing about Tony Hicks, y'know. I think he's about 28, which means that when he started, what (?) about 1962/3, he musta been about 16. And yet, to me, he just doesn't look any different now than he did waybackthen. Me? I'm bloody sure I look a lot different. Aged's the word! S'not a bad album...in fact, just now, whilst I had it out, I just played it. But I can't really say it fills me with wonder and all that. Now Stevie (Wonder, that is)...Oh, yeah!! And John B. Sebastian....the greatest singer, songwriter, composer, performer of Modern Times. Actually, Bruce Gillespie visited me a while ago and apparently I'm the only guy apart from the Luttrells (I think it was)

whom he'd met who had all the John B. solo albums. I fear the resta you Just Don't Have No Taste!! On that basis the poor guy must sell about a baker's dozen of each record... s'no wonder he hasn't had one released for a coupla years. Sad that!!

I think Mike Glicksohn's having us all on. He drops a little hint about his (apparently) fabulous grandfather, 'best known gambler in England', 'several times a millionaire' etc. and then pretends he can only remember one incident. Nyah!! He's just waiting for a better offer from Playboy, or Tits'nBums, or one of them there magazines what pay yer actual money! That's what he's hoping for!! We all know Glicksohn!!

Hooray for Jackie Franke. As one of those 'creaking ancients' (Jeezus! D'you know that Bum Lunney was about 16/17 when he started publishing those 100 page monsters?) I know just how she feels. I was, what, about 24 I suppose when I dipped me toe into this murky pond and I've been at it, on and off, more or less, for about 10/11 years....and By Crikey Those Winds Of Mortality ain't 'arf blowing around me bones. / You've got to be 16/17 to have the time and energy to crank out a hundred-pager. /

D'you know....I might have been in 'Dark They Were and Golden-Eyed' that day when you went in. I generally visit there a couple of times a week. Croggling thought that! / Dave refers to a science fiction shop in London which I visited. Next time I'm going to carry a big sign that says, Frank Denton, Boy Science Fiction Fan. /

BEN INDICK, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666

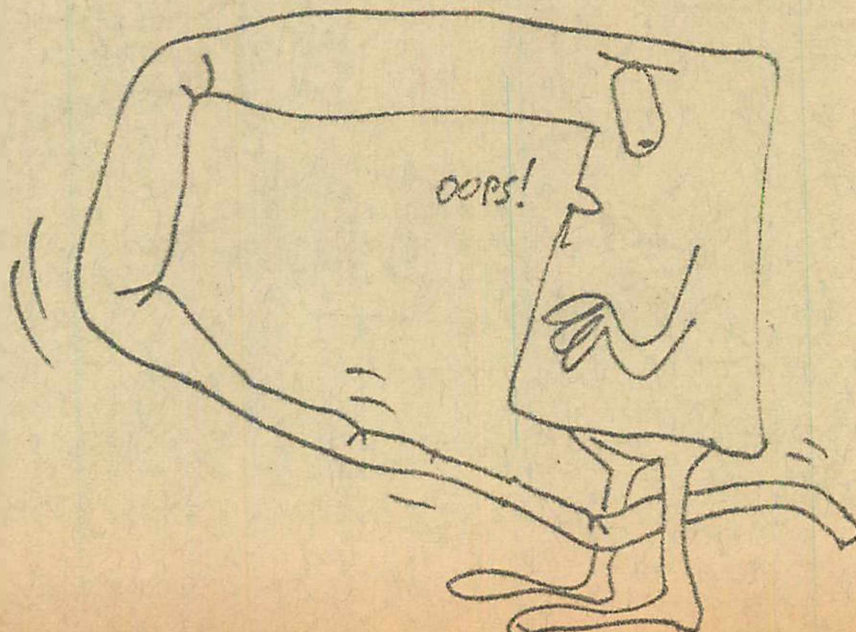
Jim McLeod's nice cover looks something like Leonard Baskin's owls. This is certainly not at all a bad goal. I also liked (but then, when didn't I?) Bill Rotsler's backover. Grant Canfield is sensational. Since I don't get around too much in fan circles, I only just now saw my first work by Grant, in OUTWORLDS, where it was fabulous. The guy can really draw! Gosh, imagine a happy fan field with people like Grant, Sheryl, Tim Kirk, Steve Fabian, etc. etc., and MIKE SCOTT, WHERE ARE YOU, YOU %\$#) '?! GAFIATOR!

I liked Darrell Schweitzer's Joycean story. Most atmospheric, and superbly titled.

"Cat Got Your Tongue?" was amusing, with a fine last line; however, those of us who know Bram Stoker's "The Squaw", about a different vengeful feline, have this problem, that (like his great vampire book) it is the beginning and end of the subject! Nevertheless, a good yarn, nicely told.

* * * * *

Gads, what a meaty lettercol this time. And I'm really running out of room. There are a couple of hold-over letters from Clifford Wind, Nyle Beatty, and some more of Ben Indick for next issue. Just keep those cards and letters coming, folks. They give me a glow-on.





Don
Sternman