

*ASH - WING 16*







# ASH-WING

Gilson

ASH-WING 16

MAY 1975

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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO SUSAN WOOD  
(who is moving to the West Coast, home of great fans)

Another disaster from the Bran & Skolawn Press, a subsidiary of  
The House of ~~III Kebab~~ Denton. Available from Frank Denton,  
14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166, for letters of comm-  
ent, contributions, a show of interest, burnt offerings, tips  
on the races, news of any new bands resembling Steeleye Span,  
and any old Tim Kirk or George Barr illos just laying around.







# TRAVELS WITH NO ONE

michael carlson

#10

DISCON II - WASHINGTON, D.C.

## 1. In The Early Morning Rain

I set the alarm for 4, and like I usually do when I have to get up unusually early, I was up around 3 and slept fitfully for the next hour, trying to avoid the inevitable rude shock of the alarm. I got dressed and threw the necessities into a bag, then woke my brother to drive me into New Haven to catch the Montrealer, a train which makes the Montreal to Washington run every day. It passes through New Haven at 4:45.

Steven let me off at the station at 4:35, and the board showed that The Montrealer was ten minutes late. Steven drove back home and to bed, complaining because it was still raining and this was going to ruin his Labor Day Weekend. By 4:45 The Montrealer was listed as forty minutes late, and it turned out that there was flooding on the tracks somewhere between Burlington and White River Junction.

Before I knew it it was 5:40 and the first local of the day was leaving for Grand Central Station. I'd been talking to the trainman for about ten minutes when it suddenly dawned on us that we knew each other; he was a kid who had been a couple of years behind me in high school. So I told him he'd have some company, and he told me to sit near the front, and I left New Haven for New York City.

## 2. I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

The reason I sat in front was so he could pretend to sell me my ticket without actually taking any money from me. Although it was only \$4.50 or so, every little bit helps. We talked as the train made its countless stops between New Haven and New York, picking up the real die-hard commuters. Trainmen do pretty well. He said his take last year was around \$23,000, which is a lot of train fares. And the work was neither difficult nor demanding, according to him.

I took his address as we split up in Grand Central Station; I haven't seen him since. One of the perils of a traveling job, I suppose.

The subway to Penn Station was easy enough, and uneventful.

In Penn Station I bought a ticket on the regular train to DC, which is slower



than the Metroliner, but cheaper. Then I trotted over to the bookstore and said hi to Dave White, a guy I knew in college, who is a part-timer there, but seems to be working every time I pass through the city. I bought a couple of mysteries, and talked a lady into buying Joe Gores' DEAD SKIP. She was going to Boston, however.

The early train to DC was surprisingly crowded, though not as bad as the last train I'd taken to Philly, when I stood the whole way from New Haven. I found a seat near the rear of the car. Across the aisle was a family of four in the two facing seats. The mother and father got up to go to the restrooms, and a few seconds later a woman sat down in one of the empty seats. The kids told her, and I told her, that the seats were taken; she cussed us out and said she was sitting right where she was. The couple came back and they argued for a minute, then they sat down and the husband took his little daughter on his lap. In a moment the intruding woman was kicking the man and swinging at him, cursing him vilely and screaming about his abusing a blind woman. She was wearing very thick glasses, but apparently could see well enough to land a few good dropkicks to the man's shins. Things quieted down for a moment, until the conductor came back to see what the trouble was, but he obviously wanted no part in any fights and shrugged away. I offered my seat to the man, but he took his family away to the other end of the car and they sat in the aisle.

The first stop was Newark. And, you guessed it, the crazy lady got off there. All that fighting and swearing for ten minutes of ride. What Amtrak could do about that I don't know.

### 3. Headin Down the Eastern Seaboard

The ride from Newark to DC was pretty much uneventful; it's a dull trip no matter how you make it. Only problem was, it was HOT in the car, the air conditioning wasn't working and of course the smokers insisted on smoking anyway, even though it was a non-smoking car. The air within the train had the consistency of a Youngstown smoke-stack. So every twenty minutes or so I would get up and walk through the car to stand on the platform between the cars, which you aren't supposed to do, but it was so hot the conductor never said a word.

While I was out there I saw a large fellow get up in the next car, and he came out on the platform, too. I said to myself "that guy's a fan, I know it", but I didn't bother to say anything to him. Then a pair of girls came out and I had a similar feeling. Again I kept quiet.

The family had moved back into their seats by now, and I alternated reading my new Hardman novel with playing with the kids. We hit Baltimore, and UofB is right across the street from the train station (see Travels #9) and I found myself, inexplicably, feeling nostalgic. And soon we were pulling into DC, where I hadn't been since I was eleven and on vacation with my folks and my little brother vomited off the Washington Monument. It gives you a sort of eerie feeling; if I hadn't been there for an sf convention, I might have been moved.

### 4. Me, I'm Flying In My Taxi

I walked through the station and emerged in the street, where I saw a kid getting into a taxi. Again I felt my fannish antennae quiver, so I slid in behind him and said, "Sheraton-Park?" and he said yes and we were off.

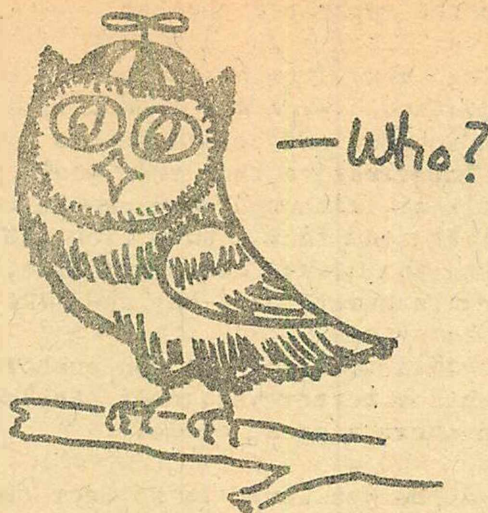
The taxi driver was a large black guy. One of my best friends spent his first year of law school driving a cab around DC, so I have a special feeling for hacks. I talked to the guy a bit, mostly about fuckin Duane Thomas and the fuckin Redskins and the fuckin traffic. Conversation was easy, because he turned around to face me, and



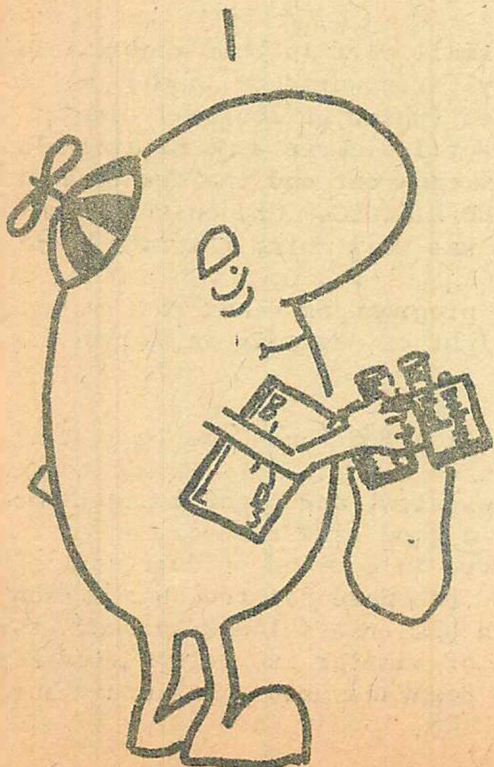
each time he turned around his foot pressed down on the accelerator. We made good time crosstown, and amazingly managed not to kill anyone, which seemed to disappoint the guy. My fellow passenger looked a few shades paler when we stopped. I asked the driver how much and he said a buck sixty. I assumed this meant each and I handed him two, said bye, and went into the lobby. In a minute the kid came running after me and handed me a dollar. The fare was only \$1.60 for both of us so we split it. And I'd met an honest man. It felt good.

### 5. Sittin In the Lobby of the Lido Hotel

The scene inside the hotel surprised me. I figured I was pretty late, and I'd be one of the last people to be arriving. No way. The lobby was jammed, the registration desks were jammed, everything was jammed. I saw the two girls from the train and said hello. After a while I was assigned my room and spent the usual (it turned out) half an hour trying to figure out just where it was. The hotel covered about six miles...I was convinced that if the main convention area was in DC, my room was in Maryland and someone else's was probably in Virginia. I even heard of one fan who got lost in Delaware looking for a soda at 5 a.m., but that's another fable.



Well, I'll be!  
A FIAOWL!



When I found my room I opened the door, looked in, and closed it again, real fast, to check the room number. It was right. I went back in, looking through the huge living room into the large bedroom. "Anyone home?" I yelled. I couldn't have this whole thing to myself for \$19/per. I looked at the card hanging on the door...yup, \$94 a night. So I called the desk and asked what room Michael Carlson was in, figuring the girl at the desk had misread my card and given me the wrong keys. Nope. It was all ok. I didn't ask any more questions. This had happened to Gorra at Boskone, and his room had been the center of much revelry and I'd even crashed there one night, so I chortled and set my bag on one of the beds, and went back to the lobby with glee. Who doesn't talk much but makes a good companion anyway.

Eventually I'd registered and met Bill Wagner, the large guy I'd spotted on the train. And soon a few more familiar faces presented themselves; Mike Blake (who thought I held a grudge) and the D'Ammassas, Sheila and Don. We decided immediately that the apa45 party would be held in my ~~lobby~~ suite. Mike took me down to the huckster room and introduced me to Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell. There are a number of people in fandom I've encountered and immediately sensed some sort of kindred spirit. I usually end up writing articles for their fanzines (right, Frank?). Hank and Lesleigh are two such. Which probably explains why I liked Starling



so much, right off the bat.

Anyway, I began to realize that the same phenomena I'd experienced at Boskone applied now -- no one looked like the mental image I'd construed for them. I would meet someone and be all set to say, hey, wait a minute, that's not what you look like, and then realize that that would probably not be very polite. So I tried to hold myself back, although some people really strained my self-control. I also started to meet the few fans I knew from the Boskone the previous March and from apa45, the D'Ammassas, Dave Stever and Kris, and they started introducing me to more people, Randy Bathurst, Jeff May and Mike Wood immediately.

I was feeling the con euphoria that sets in as soon as you start to see familiar faces, or better yet, meet people you relate to immediately. It felt like we'd all been there a great while.

#### 6. In Heaven There Is No Beer (But My Soul Is Worth More Than A Sixpack)

I was sitting in one of the hallways outside one of the large rooms, eating ice cream with Dave and Kris and a number of other Boston people, and Kris was making a determined effort to purchase my soul, upon which I had placed the prohibitive (I thought) price tag of \$1.75. The devil isn't as easily put off as all that, and she was writing out a contract calling for exclusive use and reaching into her bag for the money when I backed out, deciding to hang on to the unruly thing for a while longer yet.

Anyway, as we sat there, a fellow walked by dressed in a bush hat and carrying a can of beer, and I'd finally seen someone who looked like the mental image of them I'd created in my mind. I was also very thirsty. I yelled "Mike Glicksohn" and he came over, and David introduced us, and as I reached for and took a swallow of his beer, Mike said, "gee, I thought you were a short guy." "I am" was the only reply I could think of, and soon he was gone. I bumped into Mike a number of times during the con, but never got a chance to talk with him for any length of time. I also kept inviting him up to the apa 45 parties (more of them later) but each time I was there he wasn't, and vice versa. Which, as I understand it, was the story of Discon.

#### 7. See Me, Feel Me

You'll notice that the programming plays a very small part in this report. Discon was only my second convention of any sort, and my very first worldcon, and I was so busy getting ~~high~~ ~~at~~ ~~work~~ to meet all the people I wanted (which of course I didn't) that I really didn't have time for a lot of the program. But I did see some of it on Friday, mostly parts of the Harlan Ellison - Isaac Asimov rank out and the due to difficulties beyond our control plagued showing of A BOY AND HIS DOG. The only thing I saw in toto was the very funny 2001, A SPACE OPERA, which was well worth the time spent.

But for the most part the breakup of the evening programming meant that it was time to start looking for the parties, and my first night of partying at Discon was memorable.

#### 8. So If You're Young And If You're Healthy Why Not Get A Boat And Come To Australia...

The Aussiecon suite was just the right size for a party, and I got to meet Mae right off the bat. I also met Connecticut fandom, or a good part thereof, in Al Sir-ois, Tom Walsh, and big #77, Mike Gorra, who had arrived in a cloud of dust that night wearing his high school football jersey because it had his name printed on the back and that way all the neos, pros, and femmes could find him. As I looked around the room I saw Bathurst, and Mike Glyer, and a few others of similar proportions scattered about the room. You know, I said, we've got a lot of Big Fans here. Naw, said Gorra. Tucker's not here, and Willis isn't and ... No, no, Mike, I said patiently. I didn't



say Big Name Fans, I said BIG fans. And it dawned. Sirois, who is of more reasonable size than me or Gorra started looking bored, as we discussed plans for a Big Fan party, only those over 6' and/or 200 pounds could attend.

It was here too that, in a blaze of purple, Susan Wood and Eli Cohen came in, and I met them quickly before leaving for the lobby and the Capra party.

9. Everybody's A Dreamer, And Everybody's A Star

The Capra party was the most interesting of the con for me. Gorra led me down there, and I got in, because I was still a member of Capra at the time. The talk was, of course, about movies, but Gorra insisted I had to meet John Berry, whom he was sure I would like because we both wrote for his zine and about the same things. So I met John, who is an extremely likeable and fascinating guy, and Gorra was right, we did have a lot in common. In a few more minutes I'd met Will Straw, Chris Couch, and Sandra Miesel, and Frank Balazs had walked in, and then Susan, and pretty soon I'd mentioned a terribly boring Knut Hamsun novel called GROWTH OF THE SOIL and Susan screamed and started ranting about the three hundred Canadian novels she'd read, all titled with variations on the word "Grain" and ending with the inevitable farmer making love to the equally inevitable earth.

From there we hit the Sleazycon party, thrown by some guy named Malcolm who made porno movies and was bidding for a Worldcon in Paramus, NJ, which seemed a good enough site. It reminded me of Boskone because the room was filled with a number of Boston and Connecticut people, all looking like they had at the Park Sheraton the previous spring. As I ate scooter pies, while sitting on a table and watching a girl cavort on a bed with Larry Niven, I talked to Jim Allan, whose fine article on Mary Stewart I had been holding for nearly a year. It finally saw print (in Jawbone 10) to extremely favorable response. Around 5:30 I faded and went off to bed.

31 August 1974

10. It's A Good Mornin And I'm Feelin Fine

I woke up at 7:30, showered, and read in bed for a while, before finally heading out for breakfast with Bill Wagner, another BIG fan with a big appetite. There wasn't much in the nearby area, so I settled for ice cream and brought it back to eat with some of that free Torcon coffee. I watched the auction only until a script from A BOY AND HIS DOG went for \$250 and six frames of the outtakes went for \$7, and then split to a rather impromptu panel discussion on fanzines with Jodie Offutt, George Fergus, Sheryl Birkhead up front and many fanzine fans in the audience, including Bowers and Tucker sort of incognito in the back of the room. I caught some of Susan Wood's Women in SF panel, and then went back for the tail end of the fanzine panel, and some "iced" coffee made by melting ice cubes in steaming coffee from a hotel pot.

My good friend Bryan "Snake" Sperry was due to arrive in DC sometime that afternoon, so I went down to the lobby and waited a while. He didn't show up, so I moseyed down to the huckster room to talk with Hank Luttrell and let myself be taken into subbing to Amazing. I whiled the afternoon away in this most pleasant fashion, and then missed Mike Gorra, with whom I'd been planning to go to dinner, and wound up eating Italian (what else?) food with Don and Sheila D'Amassa. On our way back to the hotel





we stopped in a liquor store to buy booze for the apa45 party, each of us springing for a case of Iron City 16 oz. bottles, and me secreting a pint of Jamesons under the case of beer and galavanting merrily away. We lugged the brew back to the hotel, and of course Bryan was waiting for me in the lobby, attracted, no doubt, by the odor of bottled beer. We dumped the two cases into my bathroom, got a few wastebaskets full off ice, and Shiela set up a coffee pot and some brownies she'd made.

I took Bryan back to the same restaurant to eat, then caught some of the costume parade, and then repaired back to my suite to begin the apa45 party.

#### 11. It's My Party And I'll Cry If I Want To

The apa45 party was a dud. I'd spent most of the day cajoling members, ex-members, possible future members, and any other neat looking people to come up, but few of them made it. The only real bright light for me was that after a while another of my best friends, Steven Eliot Berman showed up (he lives in DC) and we started to hit all the parties. And there were parties to be hit. Australia, New York, Columbus, the mysterious R603 Ann Arbor, etc. etc. And it was sometime in the middle of all this plodding around, we looking like the Three Musketeers lost in space, that I again encountered Toomey. Which deserves its own subtitle.

#### 12. Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall, Toomey Has Fallen In Mine

I've got to explain. Ive already said that last year's Boskone was my first con, but since I've never written about what went on there, no one (except maybe Gorra, who was there) could guess what kind of effect seeing Toomey would have on my system, especially seeing him appear, nightmareishly, out of one of the labyrinthian mazes that were disguised as hotel corridors. At Boskone Toomey discovered me and my Irish Whiskey; we got more and had an Irish whiskey party, which included besides a considerable amount of drinking, a reasonable amount of debauchery; and at some point in the evening Toomey had attempted to judo-throw me across a room, as I attempted to extract a Ringnes from the bathroom next to the bedroom in which he...

He was a lot of fun.

And so, with me and my sidekicks beginning to feel the first stirrings of demon ennui, what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a smiling small man with a fistful of beer?

"Toomey! " yelled I, grabbing the beer from his hands. "Where's the party?"

We compared notes, weighed room numbers, took a consensus and headed off in ghod knows what direction, up stairs and down, until we finally got off an elevator and walked into the 6th floor door, which wouldn't open. Stuck between a door that led nowhere and an elevator that had disappeared and, knowing the hotel, might be back along with Halley's Comet in 50 years, we did the only practical thing possible. a. smashed at the door, which failed. b. tried "open sesame" and variations thereof, also a failure c. sat down to finish the beer and wait.

Eventually the elevator made it back and we made it to a party and after a while we drifted off our separate ways, with me making a mental note to remember to bring a bottle of Jameson's with me to this year's Boskone.

#### 13. I'm A Fan, And I Spell F....A....N....Fan...

Berman had to get back to the apartment he was currently moving into, and Bryan felt like sleeping, so I headed to the Kansas City suite to get a drink and finally talk with/listen to Bob Tucker. I'd intended to stay a few minutes, as I was feeling



kind of tired, too, but the next thing I knew it was nearly dawn, and I was a number of drinks brighter and Tucker was still going strong. The man radiates warmth and enjoyment of life and it's easy to see why there are so many Tucker-groupies.

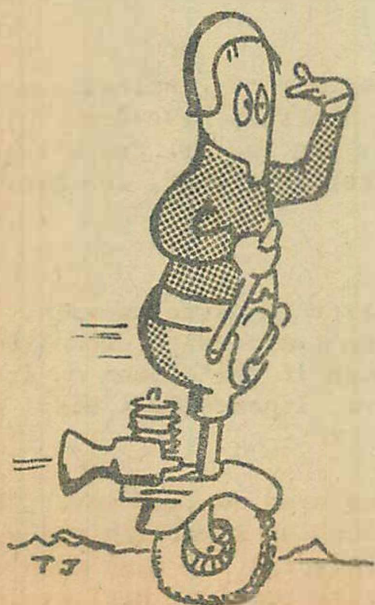
At some point that session wound down, and I wandered through the lobby, where Will Straw was talking to a few people. We were introduced -- rich brown, Brad Barber and Neal Goldfarb, and immediately went looking for a closed Boston party which was indeed that. Either closed or dead. In the elevator and in the halls the conversation slowly worked its way around to things fannish, and when the elevator stopped on my floor there were a dozen or so people laying around the hall, so we joined their party, and then brought them all to my room to finish off the apa45 goodies. No one touched the Iron City, however, though the coffee and brownies disappeared like Mr. Spock being beamed down.

The hall party people ate and ran, leaving the rest of us to talk about the falling off of the trufan. And then I remembered something that had happened earlier in the evening. Bryan and I had just come back from the restaurant, and were walking through the lobby, where the processional for the costume contest was forming. All sorts of things were moving around...people in all sorts of strange get-ups, lots of naked flesh, machines, animals, you know, the usual. When all of a sudden a bus pulled up outside and discharged about 50 Japanese tourists, who unknowingly entered the lobby, and then did a collective double-take the likes of which I'd never seen. In an instant cameras were flashing and heads were spinning in disbelief. Imagine. You're in the US for the first time, in the capital city, in one of the finest hotels in that city, on a Saturday night. And a bunch of green dryads and wood nymphs prance by, followed by a platoon of starship troopers and a lady with one breast hanging out, fondling a snake. What will you say when you show the folks in Tokyo your slides? Who will believe you?

Bryan watched the masquerade for a few minutes, and then as we left said, "Why don't these people stop acting weird and smoke some dope?"

1 September 1974

14. I'm Going To Kansas City, Kansas City Here I Come



I got down to the lobby Sunday morning in time to be told that KC had won the bidding, and to register with the committee. Bry and I ate the buffet in the Pavilion room, and in silent harmony bolted the check. We watched a terrible film of Harlan Ellison lecturing James Gunn's sf class, which probably illustrated every possible film error such a film could be expected to make. And then we listened to two whole panels, a fairly good one on original anthologies with Harlan, Silverberg, Knight, Gerrold and Jack Dann, and a pretty absurd one on SF in Academia with Sue Wood, Gunn, Tom Claerson and others. Gunn and Claerson dominated, and proved that too many professors are used to saying whatever the hell they want and getting away with it. They picked nits and even let out one beauty about comparing the last 15 Pulitzer winners with the last 15 Hugo winners. There was also a prozine panel with the usual complaints about distribution from the bottom of the circulation pile and the cockiness from the top.



### 15. Might Win An Oscar You Can Never Tell

Bryan and I found the D'Ammassas, and Bryan joined the apa45 wait list. We also picked up some guy none of us knew, who walked into Don and Shiela's room and began asking some of the most incredible questions, some personal, some silly, some pretty offensive. I think he thought we were a party and he was warming up for the rest of the evening. We finally sent him to a party in room F615; I hope whoever was in that room was out when he got there.

I went to check out the banquet, listened to Andy Offutt for about twelve seconds, left and ran into Bob Weinberg, who has taken more money off me in the past three years (he's a dealer in pulps and related material) than I care to think about. I bought a copy of his book, FAR BELOW AND OTHER HORRORS, which he autographed for me, and then we had a long talk about the Shadow, and about old movies, and any number of other things.

When I got back to the banquet Offutt had finished and the awards were being handed out. Jeff Smith gave a really good acceptance speech for Tiptree, Harlan got a huge and deserved hand, and Susan ranjumpedbouncedleapedlaughedyelledgleefully all the way up from the far corner of the room to pick up her statue.

When all this was over I again retreated to M789 (my room) and prepared for round 2 of the apa45 party, which was infinitely better than round 1. The Luttrells, John Berry, Dan Steffan, Ted White, and many others more or less wandered in, and eventually most of the Iron City was gone. Someone brought a bottle of some sort of Vodka that was distilled in Baltimore, a city not known for its vodka.

### 16. Oooh Oooh; Love Is Strange

As the party wore down, we adjourned back to the Aussiecon suite, just in time to see the Australian bidding film, a really hilarious piece of cinema. I came across more Irish whiskey, blessedly. I met some people, and we walked down the hall to the New York in 77 party. I got some funny looks, and couldn't figure out why until I remembered that I was wearing a Montreal in/en 77 button. The beer was in the bathroom, and I wound up sitting on the toilet, explaining to a non-fan lady what exactly was going on here, and catching beers out of the bathtub for such notables as Frank Lunney and Per Osterman. I also exchanged a few words in Swedish with Per, always happy to practice the mother tongue.

When we got back to my room a few people were sitting around, including one rather old woman who seemed to be trying a Harold and Maude on a baffled Dave Romm. The lady was decked out in Star Trek buttons and badges, perhaps she was Mr. Spock's grandmother. I never found out what happened to those two after they left, too bad.

### 17. You See Him Here, You Meet Him There

Eventually I went looking for Bryan, hopping from party to party in vain. As I passed the coffee shop I saw one of the two girls from the train, with whom I'd since talked, sitting with Harlan and a bunch of people. I asked if she'd seen my friend and she said no; then, since I was wearing my Indian shirt, I gave her a Hindi good-bye, palms pressed together.

"You ever been in the Army," a voice piped up. I answered no, and why. "You studied Yoga?" Not really, I said, and why. The voice mumbled something and a bunch of people laughed and I'd met Harlan. It was hardly apocalyptic, as some people had suggested it would be. Actually it seemed impossible not to run into Harlan; it was very much his convention. He was everywhere, auctions, panels, films, everywhere. And it was a better con for it, I think, especially considering the size of the con.



If anything were the focal point, it was Harlan.



#### 18. Gonna Show You How To Do The Swim

But I was looking for Bryan, and my search of the parties hadn't ended. I wound up in the Minneapolis suite, where John Brunner and Mike Wood and a couple of others were playing guitars. And in a minute I was out on the balcony with John Berry, Gorra, Frank Balazs, David Emerson and Susan Wood, singing "Here Comes the Sun" and dancing to the music.

The previous night someone had suggested we go skinny dipping in the hotel pool, but a number of the principals backed out. The suggestion came up again: "Gee, that's fannish!" said Gorra. Susan, flush'd with Hugo'd enthusiasm, was game, and in a few

moments we were climbing the fence and shedding our clothes and diving into the beautifully cool water, as the sun rose behind the towers of the hotel, glistening on half a dozen naked fen.

And, before our eyes, as Mike Gorra climbed up the diving board, a fannish legend was born. Gorra perched on the end of the board, bounced a few times like a killer ape stomping on a victim's skull, and then launched himself up in the air and down toward the water. As he fell he curled his body into a ball, which hit the water with the sort of impact Velikovsky must have had in mind.

"Moby Fan," I yelled, my mouth filled with water as I laughed hysterically.

After a while we were kicked out, and went to eat breakfast, but first I had to go find some shoes, as barefoot was a no-no in the coffee shop. John Berry and I had a long talk about travel, and then it was time to meet D'Ammassas, who were giving me a ride home.

#### 19. When You Look Out Your Window, I'll Be Gone

I packed up; said goodbye to a sleeping Bryan, paid my bill, and said a final farewell to John, Mike, Dave, Frank, and Susan, whom I promised to visit if Baldrige Reading ever does a program at the University of Saskatchewan.

I collapsed in Don's Fiat about ten miles out of the city, and slept all the way to Delaware on the shoulder of the D'Ammassa's friend, Nancy. We stopped for something to eat and I indulged in my usual exhaustion meal of coffee and ice cream.

The rest of the trip was uneventful until we got over the George Washington Bridge. About 800 yards over the bridge, we got a flat. We pulled over near the Jerome Ave. exit and changed the tire, then stopped in Connecticut to have the flat fixed. It took a while, but when it was done Don put the flat back on the car. We made it about five miles and it blew again. The spare went on again and soon enough I was home.

#### 20. Operator, Can You Help Me Place This Call

The story should end there, but it doesn't. The next night, caught flush in the



flurry of fannishness, and stuffed with spaghetti and clams, I called long distance to Seattle and talked to ye editor Denton, and agreed to write up this report. Now, five months, two typewriters, and five handwritten pages later, it's nearly done.

## 21. Try To Remember The Kind Of September

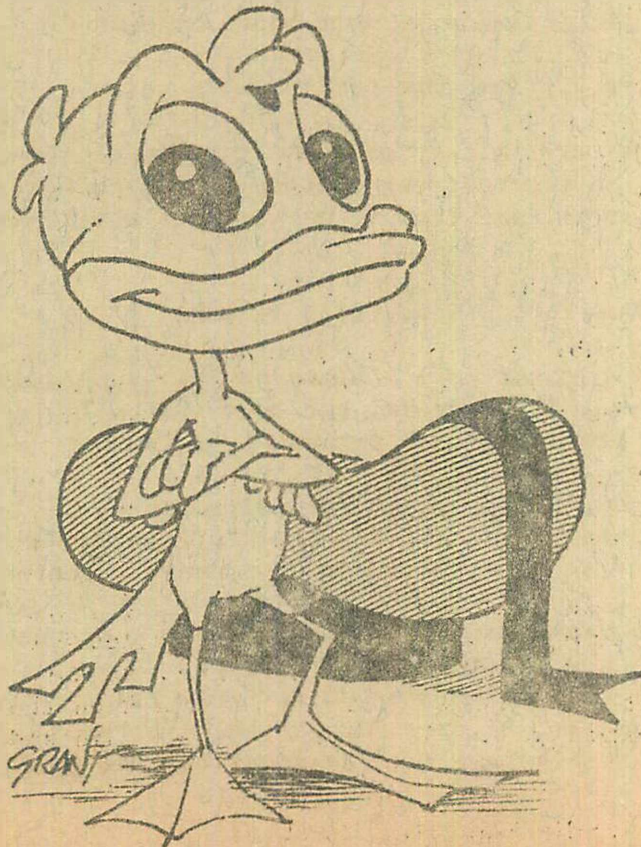
There have been some complaints about the overwhelming size of Discon; over 4500 people registered, something like 3900 attending. Yes, it was huge, but except for the banquet and masquerade, the size wasn't that much of a problem. Actually the real problem was more the size of the hotel necessary to handle all those people. The hotel was confusing.

Finding people wasn't as hard as you'd think; I met a lot of the people I'd wanted to meet, and though I didn't get to talk as much as I'd like with all of them, now that I know them it'll be easier next time. I missed a number of people, Don Thompson, Arnie Katz, Tom Collins come to mind immediately, but again, I'll see them next time.

And really, I don't think that the large size of the con was really a detriment to the fannish fans. We tend to find each other, and those who want that kind of a con find us, too. The parties weren't overcrowded, and if the people were overcrowded, it was with good times.

It was a very good con.

- finis -





## THE REFERENCE LIBRARY MAN

BY ERIC BENTCLIFFE

I rarely read, let alone write, epitaphs or memorial-tributes, but the passing of P. Schuyler Miller (the P. stands for Peter) for some reason urges me to the typewriter. And the only honest reason I can give for this urge is that I mourn his death. I think my usual aversion to 'In Memoria' is because of the eulogies heaped upon those who have left this twisted-coil of time, whether they deserve it or not.

For instance, and relevant I think; upon the death of John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of ASTOUNDING/ANALOG everyone who could possibly think of a reason to do so heaped praise so high that it completely obscured my previous image of the man. I am not inuinating that some tribute to JWCjr wasn't due -- it was, the man had a profound effect on all science fiction over a period of several decades, but the tributes were all too eulogistic for me. None, for example, mentioned John W. Campbell's weakness' - his almost complete lack of a sense of humor, his prediliction for leaping widdershins into metaphysical mumbo-jumbo without first applying his much stressed 'scientific method'. Witness: Dianetics, Scientology, Psionics, and the Dean Drive. I only met John W. Campbell twice, and obviously cannot have known him as well or closely as many of those who have written of him since his death; but I do know that he was human and that he admitted fallibility. I wish those who paid tribute to him had been similarly honest.

And I hope those who will now 'pay tribute' to Sky Miller will mention his influence in and on the magazine of which John W. Campbell was editor, a calming influence often - when the editor was off on one of his wilder tangents, P. Schuyler Miller was there at the other end of ASTOUNDING/ ANALOG quietly and clear-headedly sorting out the Science-Fiction from the fads.

I'm not going to set P. Schuyler Miller on any sort of literary pedestal; I don't think he'd want it even if it was true! I enjoyed the stories he wrote, they were interesting and entertaining, but they were not epoch making, nor did they have any profound influence on the development of S-F. It is as long-term tenant of THE REFERENCE LIBRARY that I mourn his passing. His metier was that of the well-informed, interested, commentator on science-fiction writing, trends and events. At this he excelled - he never found it necessary to attack an author as a person (as less interested reviewers sometimes do, often because they lack the background to appreciate what they are reading/reviewing). When he came to a story that was less than good, he labelled it as such and said why it was so. If he had a fault as a reviewer it was that he was sometimes too kind to lesser writers, but as a writer himself he knew the effort put into any published story and gave it a true value. Leave it for the tyros to pan unmercifully.....

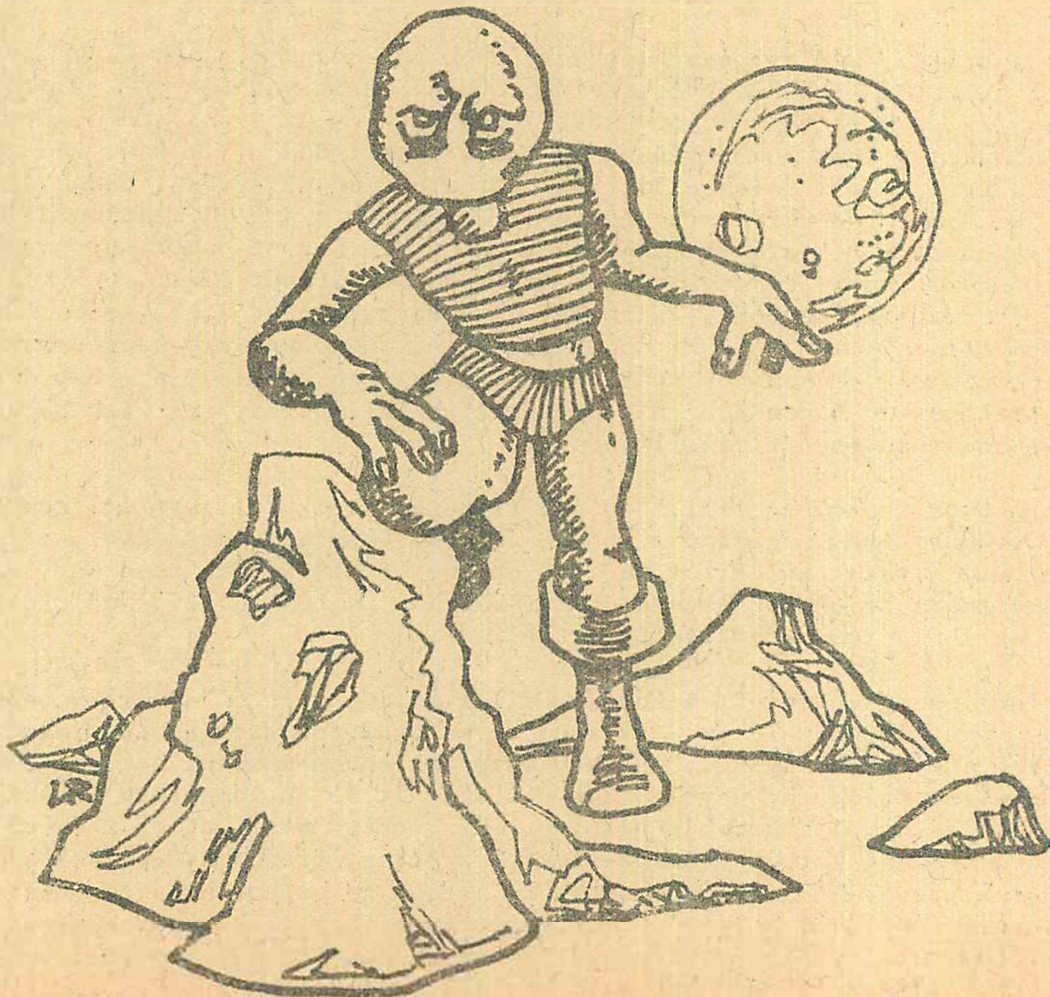


I've been collecting ASF in its several manifestations almost as long as P. Schuyler Miller has been resident in its pages. The first thing I've read in each issue **has** been THE REFERENCE LIBRARY. No doubt there will be those who **didn't** enjoy Sky's type of review and comment, but for me he's been a pretty infallible guide as to what has been worth buying and what hasn't. And, perhaps even more important to me in a reviewer, he has always been content to take the writer's statements as being those they intended - he's never found it necessary to psychoanalyze the plot and propound wild theories on what 'the author really intended to say'. That prerogative belongs to the individual reader, and Sky was content to have it that way, unlike reviewers of lesser knowledge and ability.

I only had the pleasure of meeting him once; at Pittsburgh when I TAFfEd back in '60 and shared a suite with him. Our talk was fitfull in that I would just be going to bed after some wild party and Sky would just be getting up to attend to committee matters. It was a pleasure to meet him, though, and we did have several interesting chats.

I will miss him, and I think the science-fiction field will, too.

February '75





## THE WIND VAMPIRES

ROSS F. BAGBY

Giouffre di Mourle, warlock and refugee, possessor of the magic blade Heartseeker, whose familiar Snargack would also be his killer, rode aimlessly on the horse he had never bothered to name. Snargack sat behind him, in the guise of a crocodile with talons and the head of a jackal, staring hungrily at the master he would devour alive one day.

They had left the plateau where the strange citadel of Hellkeep had stood behind them long ago, never gazing back at the dust which alone showed the hollow victory of Giouffre over the wizard Nimros and that sorcerer's robot ghouls. They now rode in a wild forest whose ancient trees were intertwined, like so many old men leaning on each other for support. The road looked untraveled, its brown dirt showing no hoofprints. The warlock did not care - since he had lost home and coven, he cared about nothing except postponing the day of Snargack's inevitable triumph.

"Master, I sense a danger ahead," announced the demon suddenly. "Old and undead, it rides itself and preys on humans. That is all I can tell without venturing into Reality.

The warlock glanced at his blade. "Heartseeker does not yet glow a warning; you may enter Reality and learn more of this danger. Pay my compliments to the Father of Names and all the Dark Ones."

Snargack shut his eyes and ceased breathing. His shape became hazy and indistinct until only a vague form hidden in mist rode behind the warlock. Giouffre rode on silently, whipping the horse when it tried to rest. He began humming a Sabbat hymn despondently, since it made him recall when he had led a full coven in the worship of El-Zathan-Mulk. The wood grew wilder and the road less manageable, and the horse tried to stop and rest more often. Giouffre's whip began to acquire crimson stains.

Suddenly a chill wind, cold as ice and colder than any would expect even this forest to have, blew across the road. Pulling his cloak tighter, Giouffre felt a sudden shortness of breath attack him and began gasping for air. Then the wind left and his breath returned. He snatched Heartseeker, which was a quite normal seeming knife, and stared at it in puzzlement for a few minutes.

The horse approached a bend in the road, where thickly grown and intertwined trees blocked any view of the rest of the road. Heartseeker began to emit a pulsating aura of blood-red light, and to change in shape and size. A legend blazed in crimson on the blade: I seek the hearts of enemies. It ceased changing form and became a good-sized broadsword.



Then the horse rounded the bend and whinnied in panic at the sight of the figures which stood there, waiting.

They resembled humans in form, but stood at least seven feet high. Their eyes were glassy, their bodies transparent, and their mouths hung open. A freezing cold radiated from them, and all vegetation where they stood was frozen and ice-covered. There were three of them, two males and a female, and they all stood facing Giouffre.

He felt short of breath and began gasping, wheezing, choking for air. He was smothering, and the figures watched expressionless as he turned blue and lay convulsing on the horse.

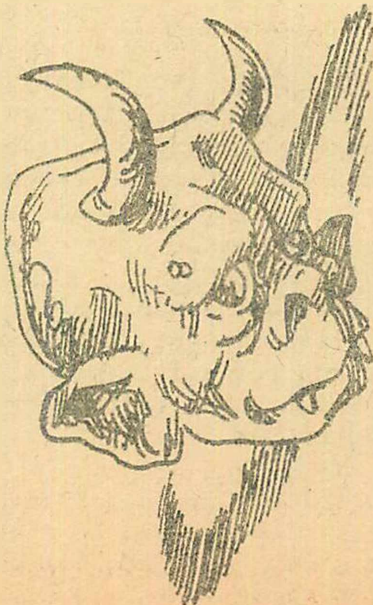
Then he understood. The damned things were stealing his breath, trying to smother him so they could continue existing. Angrily he reeled upright, and swung Heartseeker at the nearest of the figures. It sank in as if slicing gelatin, and the figure collapsed and disappeared. The two remaining figures gazed where the late companion had stood for a second, then at Heartseeker. They began dissolving, and the uncanny wind Giouffre had encountered before began blowing again. Then it ceased and the figures were gone.

Giouffre resheathed Heartseeker, again its ordinary shape and size, and whipped the horse back into motion. He took a few deep breaths to refill his lungs, and glanced at the still amorphous Snargack.

There was a sudden reformation of the mist, which became solid, and Snargack re-opened his eyes and began breathing. "I perceive that you have already encountered the danger, and bested it for a time," observed the familiar.

"True, but I did not learn much save it feeds on breath, it goes as giants, and it is somehow connected with a cold wind. What did you learn in Reality?"

"Many things, some of which I have forgotten, others of which I cannot tell in this shadow-world. Of the danger, I learned it is that cold wind of which you speak, that it cannot be slain by ordinary blade; and that its source is somewhere near." Snargack hesitated, then continued, "Also, I believe your blade calls them."



Giouffre patted Heartseeker's sheath. "If it does, then it calls them to their doom. I slew one of them with it, and the others fled. Often you have called my blade evil and treacherous, saying it called dangers as well as destroyed them. Someday, perhaps, I shall discover why you hate it so. Now, let us hope that there are lodgings on this road as well as wind monsters, or we shall have to camp in these eldritch woods."

The forest began thinning and meadows of stunted, sickly weeds started to appear. A sunless sky, filled with gray, dark clouds appeared through the branches and completed the dreary picture painted by the forest and the meadows. The wind giants were welcome to "live" here, thought Giouffre, and if they'd leave him alone he'd return the favor.



The inn crouched beneath the last trees of the forest, just at the boundary where the forest gave way to an endless plain of the sickly weeds. It looked deserted, but Giouffre found some half-starved horses in the stable when he led his horse there. Snargack selected a pile of straw and curled up in it, snapping at the horses when they neighed. Giouffre went to seek lodging in the inn proper.

He knocked heavily on the door several times, then began to carve it open with Heartseeker. The door opened from inside, its hinges protesting bitterly, and a bearded man whose hair had obviously not been combed or cut for several years glared at Giouffre. "'oo be you?" he demanded gruffly.

"I seek a room for the night," stated Giouffre. The man glanced at him suspiciously so Giouffre flashed a gold piece, produced by a simple incantation which would break down come morning. The man pulled at his beard for a time, then glumly jerked his head in a gesture which meant to follow. Giouffre came inside and the old man - for he was old, and his beard was grey streaked with white - pushed the door shut. He again motioned Giouffre to follow and led the warlock into a lightless room filled with dust and cobwebs. Producing a dusty lantern, the old man proceeded to light it and set it on a table.

"Son! Son!" called the old man, and a younger, beardless version of himself came in, holding a jug and wiping his mouth. At the sight of Giouffre he dropped the jug.

"'ow'd 'e get past them?" he exclaimed.

"'ush up, ye fool!" whispered the old man menacingly.

"I would like something to eat before I retire," announced Giouffre quietly.

"Ye kin 'ave cold meat 'n bread, and maybe some beer if Son ain't drunk it all," answered the old man tersely.

The meat was moldy, the bread was wormy, and the beer watered down. Giouffre ate it all, and demanded more. He finished five courses before he felt sated, and allowed the old man to lead him to a room upstairs filled with dust and cobwebs. He stretched out on the bed, removed Heartseeker from its hiding place in his cloak, and momentarily shifted his consciousness to a higher level.

Snargack, do you know where I am now? he broadcast mentally.

Yes, master. Do you have need of me? replied the demon.

Not as now, Snargack. But keep alert. And with that the warlock went to sleep.

## II

The bed was old and soft and warm. It made you want to sleep forever, never again to return to the cold world of day. Giouffre di Mourle was quite comfortable, and would probably never have woken up if he had not been disturbed by Heartseeker's alterations. That roused him enough to overhear a whispered conversation outside his door.

"Don't like it," someone was grumbling. "Mother set them hunting all right, so 'ow'd 'e get away. 'e may be a magician or a 'ero, for all we know."

"'e ain't nothing but a traveler who managed to slip past yer mother's pets. And 'e 'as a full purse, and 'e's asleep, so let's be on with it," retorted a voice that could only be the old man's.



There is need, Snargack, signalled the warlock, quietly getting out of bed and hefting Heartseeker, now a short-sword. Its murderous motto stood out plainly, and its crimson aura was the only light in the room.

Slowly the door opened quietly - its hinges must be oiled, observed Giouffre - and the old man entered, grasping a sharp carving knife.

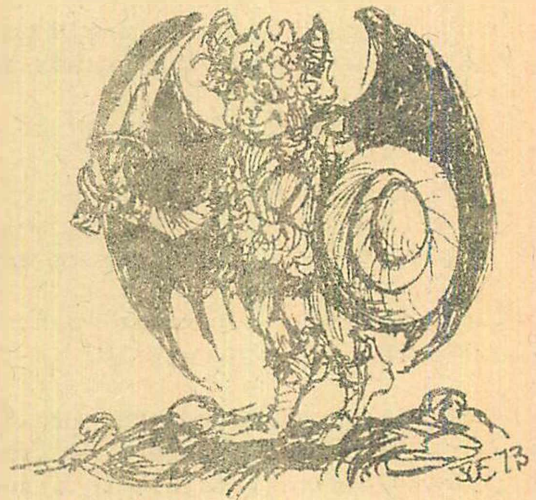
The old man never even got out a scream before Heartseeker had lived up to its name and motto; Giouffre was wiping the blade when he heard the son's unspeakable scream and the killing-cry of Snargack in the hall. He finished wiping his blade in silence and went into the hall.

The son lay mercifully dead, the print of Snargack's talon deep in his throat, with a look on his face that made even the callous warlock shudder. He turned and found himself facing the demon who he knew as Snargack, the leering monster whose claws and mouth were smeared with red. It gave him a look of utter bestiality and malice, and licked its chops with relish, and suddenly grabbed at him.

With bitter loathing, the warlock struck his familiar viciously. Thanking El-Zathan-Mulk he had only looked at the head of the victim, he spat, "Not yet, son of a vulture by a mad dog, if ever!"

Snargack finished cleaning himself with cat-like licks, wincing at the blows Giouffre had dealt him. Then he stood up, looking more blasphemous than ever, and said quietly, "Those two were not alone in their house. Another waits above even now. We must finish what we have begun."

Giouffre glanced at Heartseeker, which still glowed and remained a short-sword; therefore the remaining danger was real, and not a lie of the demon's. He grimaced once more and followed the familiar.



Up a flight of stairs into an attic, where light issuing from under a crack indicated a secret room, went the two. Giouffre brushed Snargack aside, fitted Heartseeker into the crack, and began to apply leverage. There was a snap and the hidden door nearly fell on him, for which he cursed as only the damned can.

Inside the secret room sat an old woman, holding a strangely carved box. She screamed and began shouting, "Bran! Tod! Bran! Tod!"

"Your husband and son have been slain, as they slew so many others. And now you must join them," announced Giouffre, brandishing Heartseeker.

Snargack leapt beside his hated master, and the woman screamed again. "You're the Devil! You're the Devil, come to take me to hell as a witch!"

Giouffre stood still and narrowed his eyes. "You claim to be a servant of El-Zathan-Mulk? Where is your familiar?"

"I know nothing of devils - my mother was a witch who swore to the Devil at birth, and she was hanged before she could teach me more than some simple fortunetelling and spell-casting. She was betrayed by my father, who desired another woman, but she



cursed him from the scaffold so he never took another woman to bed," rambled the woman hysterically.

"My entire coven was betrayed and I saw them all burn at the stake. They cursed but our persecutors were immune to curses because they served The Nameless Ones and possessed the Mystic Sign. I escaped, leaving behind fire and death, to wander until my horrible destiny, which once I mocked, catches me. I do not pity you, witch's-daughter; the damned cannot pity," Giouffre slowly decided.

The old woman looked at him and pitied him, enraging him more. "I see now what you be, witch-man," she gushed sickeningly. "Doomed and damned you are, but also pitiful. For each deed you call evil and boast of truly serves good, and you will die because of that unwanted benevolence. By your damnation you shall bring blessings."

"Did the deaths of your husband and son then be virtuous acts?" retorted Giouffre angrily. "One had his heart ripped out by my sword, and the other was strangled and eaten by this demon, my familiar. Did that constitute a blessing?"

"They were robbers and murderers. When I married Bran and bore him Tod, the road was traveled and the inn always full. Then times grew hard and to live they were forced to steal, even to kill finally. I thought to stop them, so I tried a spell to make murdering and robbing unnecessary on their part. And I got the wind vampires."

"The what!!"

"Wind vampires - they ride the Devil's wind and suck the breath out. They aren't alive and can't die. I keep them in this box," she explained, tapping the carved box on her lap. "I used to let them out during the day, call them back at night, and then let Bran and Tod go out and rob the dead bodies they'd find. Nobody lived if they met the wind vampires."

"I did, witch, and even slew one in the struggle. Now you die - tell El-Zathan-Mulk, Father of Names, your killer was his servant who calls himself Giouffre di Mourle and wields Heartseeker," the warlock announced, and raised his blade, but not before the witch could open the box.

An all-too-familiar wind blew up suddenly, and the room was filled with the mute, giant humanoid figures with the faces of the dead. They gazed at their mistress, who cried, "I curse thee, Giouffre di Mourle! For the love once felt, let these hunt you and slay you, wherever you hide, wherever you flee!" Heartseeker's immediate descent cut short any further rhetoric.

The wind monsters looked at the sword for a moment, and re-dissolved into their eldritch wind. Giouffre felt a momentary shortness of breath that ceased when the demon-wind blew out the window.

He touched the witch's corpse, already cold from the wind. "She lied. All pity is lies, all of it," he muttered, then began shouting, "Lies! All is lies and names - show me a truth to believe in and I will name it! How long, Dark Ones, before Reality turns all to names and falsehoods?"

So he shouted, while Snargack watched him hungrily and flexed his claws.

### III

The madness passed with the grey dawn, as the sun rose only to have its light



hopelessly dispersed by the clouds which hung over that country like a wizard's curse. Giouffre ceased entreating the gods who would not answer and re-sheathed Heartseeker, looked a minute at its last victim, and cuffed Snargack. "Stop gazing at me like that, or I'll send you to your master the easy way," barked the warlock.

The demon looked at him contemptuously. "You will not slay me at present, master," sneering the last word. "That witch's pets hunt you for breath and vengeance; a witch's death curse is not to be lightly reckoned, even if the witch has known nothing of the Mysteries of El-Zathan-Mulk. No, beloved master, you need my aid - unless, of course, you wish me to perform your destiny now. I have tasted man's bowels once this night, and yours would sate my appetite for some time."

"Until some other warlock or witch receives you at Sabbat, or some wizard conjures you! No, slave, not yet; not till all power and strength has left me, will you taste me. And it's morning anyway, so let's get moving."

They made their way silently through the inn, stepping over the remnants of Snargack's last feeding without otherwise bothering about the dead. Giouffre appropriated the more edible items of the larder and a hoard of ill-gotten wealth he stumbled onto. Then they mounted the unnamed horse and rode off, leaving the horses to fend in the stable as they could.

Warlock and familiar rode silently together, never heeding where the horse went, moodily watching each other or the blighted landscape. There was nothing as far as the horizon save blighted, sickly, sun-starved weeds, and a hint of the shadow-filled forest behind them. The sky was grey clouds, always threatening rain but never making good their threat. And through this rode man and devil, loathing but requiring each other, on the black horse without a name.

It was Snargack who sensed the wind first, but it was attacking them before he could shout or warn. Cold beyond measure, it froze all its path and penetrated both Giouffre's cloak and Snargack's scales. Giouffre felt his breath vanishing and seized Heartseeker, which glowed but did not change size - what sword can cut a wind, and where is the wind with a heart to seek? He uttered a spell which would make the most evil of men not initiated into warlocky scream, and Snargack aided by pronouncing the most foul blasphemies known to Hell and Heaven. Obeying, the wind vanished, but the silent, sinister figures of its godless spawn surrounded them.

Heartseeker at once became again the heavy broadsword, and the choking warlock swung and destroyed one of the creatures, but the rest moved away. Snargack leapt, but passed through one of the horror with nothing to show for it but a coat of frost from the vampire's utter coldness. They all stood unmoving, watching with glassy stares as Giouffre turned blue and began to feel his tongue protrude, transparent and huge.

"Snargack! Strangle me!" commanded Giouffre with his last breath before death and Reality would take him. The demon's claws closed on his throat, pressing shut his windpipe. Giouffre shifted levels of consciousness, and examined the air still remaining in his lungs. Sufficient, he decided, and began replicating the atoms by powers of four.

He opened his eyes and glared into Snargack's face. The demon released his throat and he sat up. The wind vampires gazed at him with unchanged expressions, lacking ability to express it if they felt wonder. Giouffre lashed the horse, which plunged into the silent figures, and cut a swath in the group, although those he 'slew' merely collapsed and vanished. His lungs were full again, and he could now thwart the vampires if not defeat them.



Then the vampires faded back to demon-wind again, to return as - something else.

IV

It was an amalgamation of blasphemies that appeared when the hell-wind again died down, and Giouffre at once understood that the wind vampires had elected to combine and face him as one titan monster instead of the legions of horrors he had been battling. The result was bisexual and enormous, towering into the grey sky. Heartseeker pulled upwards, toward the heart it could not reach, and Giouffre felt the demonic suction (now magnified a thousand times) wrenching his breath away. Desperate, he hacked at the things' leg, to have it shrink slightly but not enough. It would diminish for each stroke as if a single vampire had been killed, which was no help to him.

He gazed up at the monster's dead face which had never lived. It stared at nothing, an idiot blasphemy that dared try to destroy him, who worshipped and dealt with greater blaphemies than this as a regular affair. Giouffre clenched his teeth and began hacking away at it, slowly diminishing it to where Heartseeker might sate its desire for blood and meat, might in fact cause the whole super-vampire to collapse and vanish.

The thing leaned over and began groping for him. Giouffre stopped at the implication - the monster was blind! Holding his breath, the warlock redoubled his efforts.

And the horror's hand closed around him!

Cold that froze him to the bone was his first sensation, then a mammoth battle of will to keep from breathing out and letting the thing have him. After all, hadn't he proven that what would kill an ordinary man merely placed him in the trance-like state of undeath, since his irrevocable destiny was to be slain by Snargack, who always revived him? But this, he sensed, was different from his previous 'death' in the ruins of Hellkeep; for the vampire was enemy to life itself, and would not release him if it sensed that he was not truly dead - as Giouffre suspected it could.

Snargack watched anxiously, once trying to free his master from the hand of death. But now Giouffre was struggling for his life, a struggle which must be won in the very presence of an enemy of life and air.

And it was that train of thought which gave him the answer.

Life is its enemy, he argued, so life can destroy it. And he breathed out.

Then he did something no other victim of the wind vampires had ever tried - he forced himself to breathe in. He filled his lungs with the harsh, cold, life-destroying essence of the vampire, though it felt like sandpaper in his throat and lungs. He breathed out again, breathed in again, living off the enemy of life.

To Snargack and the unnamed horse it seemed the titan was racked with pain, for it contorted and tried to unclench its fist. The thing's basic nature was being inverted, and that signifies agony and termination of existence to any being.

And finally it contorted into a position where its breast was in reach of Heartseeker, which had lain in Giouffre's





stiff hand glowing and large all through the struggle. The sword jerked upright and slashed into the monster's breast. There was a screaming as if a wind blew, and a final release of cold that killed the weeds for a hundred yards.

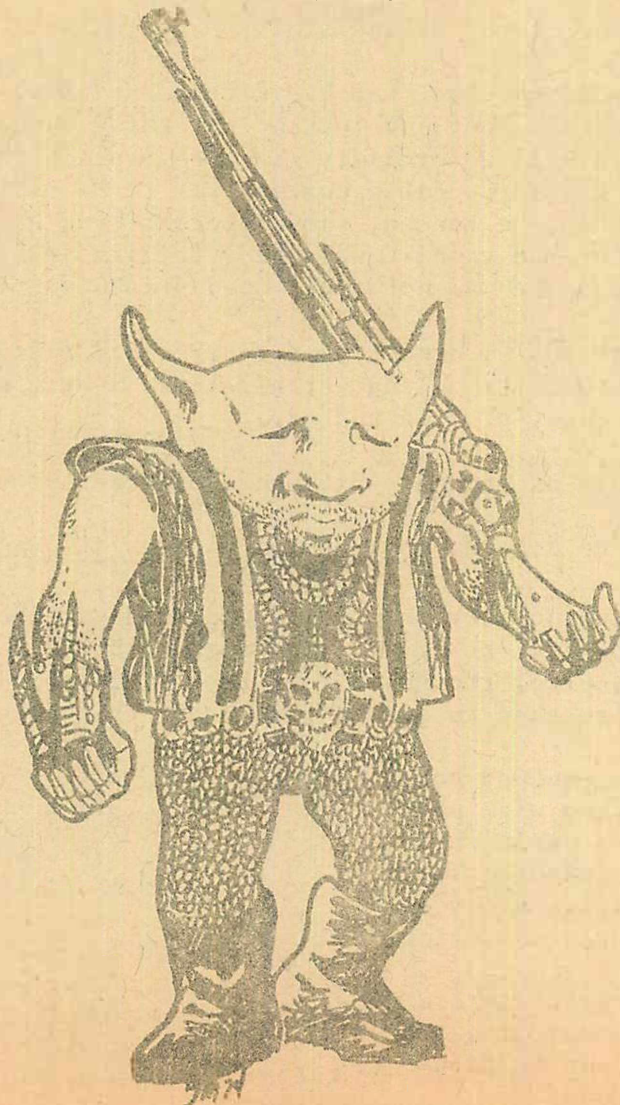
Then there was only Giouffre di Mourle, looking as a man who is beaten, drawing deep breaths to cleanse his lungs of the vampire-air. He clutched the knife-sized Heartseeker, which had ceased glowing, as drowning men clutch pieces of wreckage to keep afloat.

Snargack watched him for a few minutes, then turned its head to the sky. "Look, master - the clouds break. The sun shines in this land as it has not shone for years, I'll wager. See! The weeds are already less pale and the forest's trees less twisted. You have done all this, by slaying the vampires of the wind and thus freeing the land of their presence," noted the devil matter-of-factly.

"Then let us rid this newly cleansed land of our presences, Snargack," ordered Giouffre wearily. "We seem to be bad influences."

The devil did not mock or laugh, but nodded gravely. The warlock remounted his nameless horse, cast one gaze of sorrow at the land he had freed by murder and magic so that others could have it, sighed, and forced his horse forward.

the end







BY  
MUSIC  
POSSESSED  
don  
keller

/ Editor's Note: No. Ash-Wing is not being made into a rock and roll magazine. Don proposed the article a month or so ago and since I have an interest in such things and consider Don knowledgeable, I told him to let her rip. Don's column will be irregular, but I have a hunch a number of readers will find it well worth reading and since everyone is a contemporary music expert, they have my permission to fire at will. Duck, Don!\_/

I sometimes wonder if my heart truly lies with literature or music. Like most fans and other literary people I read a lot, but on the other hand I have records on almost non-stop while I'm home -- and it's never merely for background music. I spend a great deal of money on books, but I've also been carrying a steady two-records-a-week habit for over a year. (A significant percentage of these are cutouts or used, but it still adds up...) I do a fair amount of fan writing and would not mind being a professional writer, but I am a driven musician (guitar, a little mandolin, attempts with dulcimer and fiddle -- anything with strings), and one of my life's ambitions is to play with a rock band.

My friends will tell you that I 'lecture' them a lot, and equally, about books and music. I work out my excess literary energy in the form of book reviews and such, but I have not done much to alleviate my musical energy. Thus the purpose of this column. It will not be very tightly or logically organized, I have a feeling, but will meander from point to point. There are a lot of fascinating aspects of modern rock: live music (albums, concerts, TV), record stores, FM radio, and various technical phenomena of the music itself. I hope to touch on some of them as I go along.

\* \* \* \* \*

Not having seen a great deal of it, I am fascinated by live rock music, particularly on an amateur level: I have cut college classes to watch bands who could only play two songs. The idea of actually seeing this sort of music in action is somewhat akin to reading fanzine fiction: the creative process in the larval stage.

I vividly remember one instance where I got an object lesson in what rock is all about. I was living in Philadelphia at the time, in an area between the main business district and the ghetto. It is honeycombed with tiny alley-streets full of old buildings converted to apartment buildings and small businesses (Pine Street has become Antique Row), and the inhabitants have a stronger sense of community than I was used to in a metropolitan setting. Each street would hold a block party during the summer, with lots of live music, food, and craft booths. It was at the South Street Walk that I was wandering about examining the various stands and stopped to



listen to a country-rock band. They were slick and professional, playing Chuck Berry, the Beach Boys, and Hank Williams with equal precision. The lead guitarist had impressive technique, really had his licks together...but I stood there for ten or fifteen minutes and was not moved by the music. I wasn't fond of their material, but I've listened to stuff I didn't like when the band interested me. They didn't. So I left looking for something more satisfying.

Further down the street, another group was setting up in the back of a pickup truck. When I got there, I discovered that it was three girls. Intrigued at the novelty (I'd never seen an all-girl band before), I waited for them to start playing.

They were awful.

The guitarist stuck to the simplest chords, was very sloppy on bar chords, and took exactly one solo the entire set. The bassist stayed on beat, but she took embarrassingly bad solos and kept stopping to play tambourine, which rather dropped the bottom out of their sound. The drummer kept the beat OK, but she was obviously as much a beginner as the others. The explanation for this was partly that they were playing for political reasons (they were militant feminists and -- judging from their lyrics -- lesbians as well) and probably cared more about the message than the music. Despite all this, I watched their entire set, as well as their second later on.

Lady (as they styled themselves) had a repertoire of about a dozen numbers, mostly easy familiar stuff ("Proud Mary", "White Rabbit", a Beatles song or two), all of which they played badly. I started watching in morbid fascination, but soon discovered that they had two saving graces: vocals and energy. They put everything they had into the songs, and the guitarist and bassist sang their asses off. They got into two songs near the end, "Loneliness" (a Joplinesque thing the bassist did full justice to) and a trade-vocal thing with the tag line "Who is he -- and what is he to you?" which had very simple musical values, working on performance alone. They blew me away. I went home impressed with them, though they couldn't play.

Comparing the two groups, and my reaction to them, it is easy to see that what really matters is emotional content. No music, however brilliantly played, can survive a lack of guts. And the worst-played music, if it has verve, will carry you. That is why country and soul -- my two least favorite types of music, most of both of which is ill-done -- are so popular: they are full of energy and emotion. Progressive music, which is mostly musicianship and intellect, is not very popular at all. It's the old sf "Wave" dichotomy -- which is more important, sense of wonder or style? The answer in both cases, of course, is a fusion, but that's damned hard to achieve.

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I was reading the excellent interview-article on Rick Wakeman, keyboardman extraordinaire formerly of Yes, in "Rolling Stone" (Jan. 30, 1975) when two statements caught my eye. One was that his favorite Yessong is "Heart of the Sunrise" (from FRAGILE). The second was the opinion, shared by Wakeman, that Yes' monumental TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS "made little sense to fans weaned on 'Roundabout'...there weren't enough songs, not enough melodies." This sent me scurrying to my record collection to listen to the pieces again, having been away from them for a while. My surmise was correct: I agreed totally with Wakeman, but thought the second opinion totally wrong.

"Heart of the Sunrise" at 10:34 is the longest middle-length piece Yes has done, and though much of their best work ("Roundabout," "Starship Trooper," and "Siberian Khatru" to name only three) is of that length, it is also the finest. In fact, I regard it as one of the most remarkable pieces of rock music I've ever heard, because it does everything I could ask of a song.

It opens with its keynote, a jackhammer bass/guitar riff that entails some brill-



iant octave playing and ends with a jagged crescendo. For the next several minutes we get a repeated bass riff with sweeps of mellotron over it and a jazzy near-solo on drums underneath. It is the spookiest, spaciest effect I've ever heard, and were I of a more mystical turn of mind I would say it sounds like the universe being born. This astounding sequence is joined by the guitar which coaxes everyone to play the thunderous keynote riff three times in succession, and just when you're sure it's never going to quit, it suddenly does, and there is silence. It is, all told, perhaps my three favorite minutes of music.

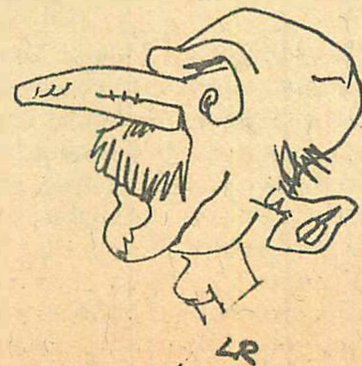
Nothing could top that opening, but the rest is still outstanding. There is a hushed and aching vocal that grows louder and more urgent as the song goes on, and motif after counterpointed motif layered one on another building to a powerful climax, followed by a final vocal and a reprise of the keynote riff which stops dead in the middle at the end. The whole piece is staggering in its complexity and strength, and repays careful listening. Wakeman has excellent taste.

Except as regards TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS, which in its own way is as extraordinary as "Heart of the Sunrise." Upfront I have to say that it is formidable: its scope is bewilderingly huge. It is an 80-minute piece of music divided into four uninterrupted sides based (loosely and not well) on Hindu scriptures. Each side has its own emphasis and set of motifs and sorting them out and fitting them together mentally needs close attention and many listening.

But paradoxically, I think it is their most accessible album, for a good reason: personal experience. I was not a Yes fan until I heard it and afterwards I worked my way back through their oeuvre and discovered the excellence I had not found before. Most of their music has an extraordinarily dense texture -- any particular second there's a lot going on. But TALES, for all of its scope, is much looser in texture and thereby easier to follow. Its complexity is horizontal rather than vertical. I am at a loss to explain its unpopularity, except this: when I put it on and do not pay close attention, its length gets just a bit wearisome -- some things are carried on a bit too long. I got a graphic example of this general reaction when I saw them do TALES (beautifully) in concert; during the pause between parts two and three someone in the balcony hollered "Roundabout!" Many people, it seems, are not willing to sit still for excellent but difficult music; they just want to hear a big hit.

As for the charge of 'no melodies,' it's pure hogwash; the piece is almost nothing but melody after melody, both vocal and instrumental, for eighty minutes. There are easily half a dozen that shut down "Roundabout"'s (for example) cold. I don't think they've ever recorded a prettier album. The emphasis on vocals is much stronger than usual; in most of their songs the instrumental portion is the important thing, and the accompaniment to the vocals is usually weaker musically. On TALES, the vocals are what carries the listener along.

Personally, I would recommend TALES FROM TOPOGRAPHIC OCEANS as a starting point to a serious listener unfamiliar with Yes (though a heavy boogie fan might do better with FRAGILE). It is a first-rate work by a first-rate group (even Time Magazine thought so). I won't go on any more; I could write a book on it, to say nothing of Yes' four other major albums. I have my favorite groups (Wishbone Ash and Argent among others), but the more I listen, the more I have to think that Yes is the best. My friend Jim Taylor will go for





Genesis, Jeff Smith might once have said Emerson, Lake and Palmer, and Jeff Clark has spoken in favor of Procol Harum; but to my ears (despite lyric deficiencies) no one composes music or plays it more expertly than Yes.

\* \* \* \* \*

While I'm at it, I might as well do my Ten Best bit. I think 1973 was a better year, but I didn't consider it even when I discovered some of the best ones this past year. I have also left out a number of imports and cut-rate records, some of them excellent, which I first encountered in 1974. So here, in no particular order:

HEART LIKE A WHEEL / Linda Ronstadt: I've always had a crush on Linda, but I never liked her countryish material much. But "Long Long Time" changed my mind. I nearly bought DON'T CRY NOW when it was big, and got this new one the day after seeing her in concert \*sigh\*. Five great songs and some other good ones sung by that cut-you-in-half voice. Anna McGarrigle's title song is a masterpiece.

BRIDGE OF SIGHS / Robin Trower: No album this year gave me more unmitigated pleasure. There are better guitarists technically, but Trower is the perfect guitarist: he plays exactly what you want to hear. He gets maximum effect out of every distortion-and-feedback-drenched note. Hendrix-influenced, he sounds less like him the more you listen. The title song is lyrically and musically the best, but it's a very even album. If his next one is like this and TWICE REMOVED FROM YESTERDAY, I'll say he's in a 'safe' rut, but since he's been playing with Robert Fripp of King Crimson fame, there's little danger of it.

HAMBURGER CONCERTO / Focus: The Dutch masters of classical rock have their best album yet here; the only dud is an inept attempt to redo "Hocus Pocus." The lovely and beautifully-structured "Birth" is a standout, and Side 2's concerto is a success, particularly Jan Akkerman's extraordinary guitar movement. He is certainly one of the two or three finest guitarists in the world.

FAIRPORT 'LIVE' CONVENTION: Released in America as A MOVEABLE FEAST (in a much drabber package), this is an accurate record of their recent tour; uneven sound, Sandy Denny happily back aboard, brilliant electric fiddling by Dave Swarbrick, and the tightest musicianship I have heard in a very long time. "Sloth" is the standout among the standards by this champion of the British ballad-rock bands.

VOICE / Capability Brown: My copy of this is a 1972 import; I broke my rule because it has just been released in America, and they deserve supporting. A six-man group, they have enough voices and instruments to do any style, from acoustic through double lead guitar to Beach Boy harmonics and semi-progressive concept pieces. Their original material is excellent, but they are particularly adept at covers: their first album, FROM SCRATCH, has a seven-minute version of "Liar" that puts Three Dog Night and the Argent original to shame. Both albums are highly recommended.

COURT AND SPARK / Joni Mitchell: I came to Joni Mitchell late -- until this album I knew her mostly through Judy Collins' excellent covers of her early work; her recent style I found eccentric and opaque. But the bossa-novalike "Trouble Child" caught my ear through frequent radio play, and I soon fell in love with the album. I have my favorites, but every song has brilliant lyrics sung in an unusual but extraordinarily effective fashion to engaging jazzy settings. It's a great album by one of our finest artists.

NEXUS / Argent: It's a long way from the Zombies to "The Coming of Kohoutek" (this album's major piece, which sounds like you'd expect), but Rod Argent has made it. He has always had progressive tendencies, but the rock and roll tendencies of guitarist Russ Ballard (who has unfortunately since left the group) made Argent an even blend until now. The songwriting by both is excellent here: the two lesser cuts



would have shone on another album.

APOSTROPHE / Frank Zappa: And how about the biggest Mother of them all making the Top Ten with this album? It is basically a satire on slow blues: Zappa's guitar playing is hysterical, and the music is often even funnier than the lyrics. The title jam with Jack Bruce is also outstanding. The new ROXY AND ELSEWHERE live album deserves mention here as well, if only for the amazing "Penguin in Bondage."

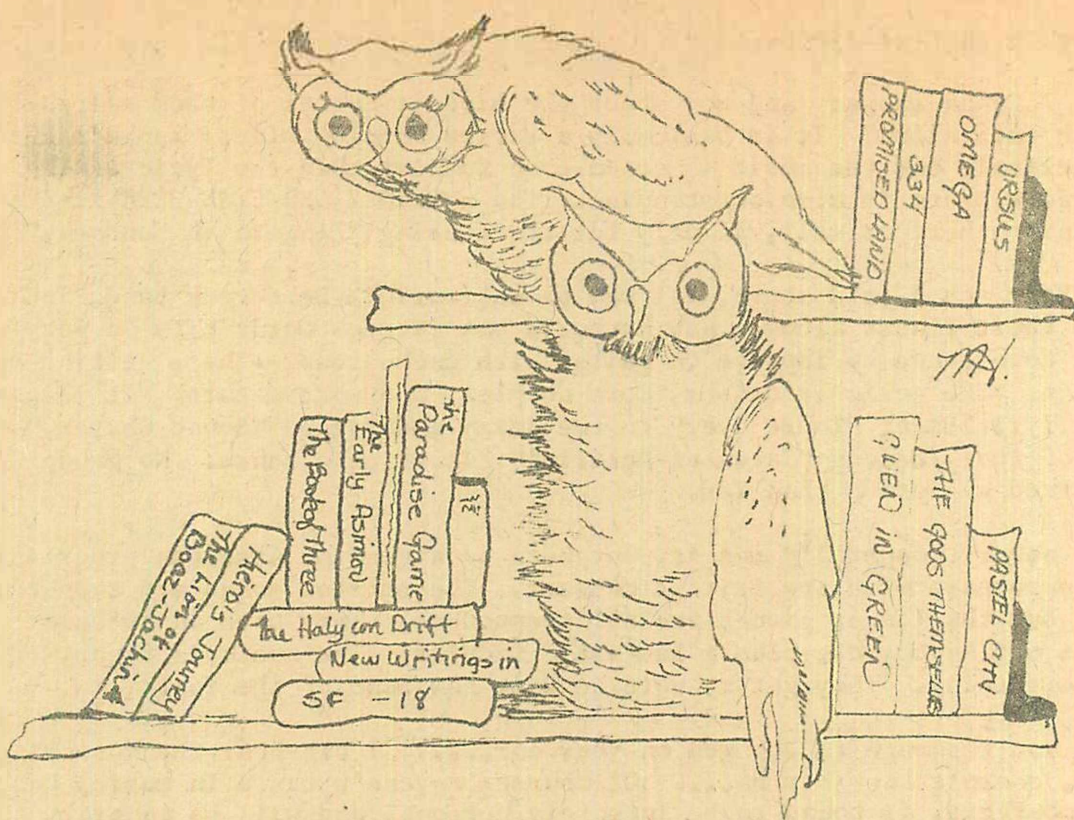
RELAYER / Yes: As I said above, Yes may be the world's best rock band, and this is perhaps their finest album. New keyboard man Patrick Moraz fits in very well, and Steve Howe seems to improve on guitar with each album -- he's getting so good it scares me. The music is denser, more complex, and more mature. It ranges from the lovely lyricism of "To Be Over" to the jazzy and jagged "Sound Chaser," and the lyrics of the sidelong "Gates of Delirium" almost make sense. No group shows a more marked evolution than Yes.

KANSAS: I never thought I'd see it, but here is a genuine American progressive rock band fit to compare with the British masters. The shorter songs are competent to embarrassing, but the longer pieces are all tremendous. They have an awesome array of guitars and keyboards, plus a fantastic fiddler. The music is tight, original, and arresting. They get my vote as Best New Band of the Year.

/ Well, if that isn't enough to set you on your ear..... I can hear the mutterings now. Dumb jerk, doesn't know his hat... Of course, anyone's taste in music, books, poetry, art, hamburgers, is bound to be intensely personal and will be contrary to what thee and me think. I know Don is aware of this and will expect lots of feedback. I'm surprised at a couple of omissions, myself. Well, don't cut Don to ribbons, but argue with him sensibly. It should be fun. \_/







## THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH

### REVIEWS

The Legend of Miaree by Zach Hughes. Ballantine Books, \$1.25

Author Zach Hughes is an excellent storyteller. In The Legend of Miaree he tickles the curiosity and excites the imagination with such an exquisite balance of opposing concepts that you finish the book mentally holding your breath.

Earthmen found the legend in the constellation Cygnus. From it they learned the progress of events when two doomed cultures were forced to meet and mingle as their galaxies collided.

The humanoid Artonuee lived in an ancient and sophisticated deity-oriented matriarchy rich in tradition. They were sentient, highly intelligent and telepathic. The lovely and gentle Miaree was their leader.

Though Miaree and her people know they are faced with the eventual destruction of their home worlds, they discover that another race is already being wiped out because of the cosmic holocaust. The human and very disparate Delanians are given shelter with the Artonuee. Both races combine their best minds in an extreme effort to save themselves.

At first, there is compatibility among the peoples. But initial cooperation and friendliness begin to shatter under the pressures of dying worlds and the need to survive.



This is a tale filled with suspense, action, depth and unusually good imagery. One could only wish that more fiction be written that is so entertaining and thought-provoking as The Legend of Miaree.

-- Reviewed by Dee Doyle --

The Forgotten Beasts of Eld by Patricia A. McKillips. Atheneum, c1974. \$7.25

All the classic elements of fairy tales are combined with a psychological tale of love to produce a fantasy that deserves to rank with Beagle's The Last Unicorn and LeGuin's Wizard of Earthsea. Magical talking animals, a greedy king, a foundling prince, a visionary knight, a dragon, a wicked wizard, a haunted forest -- they're all here.

But though The Forgotten Beasts of Eld has all the elements of a child's fairy tale, it is not a story for children. Beginning with the casual sex of a wizard three generations before the story really begins, and continuing with plot motivations stemming primarily from the lust that the beautiful heroine, Sybel, inspires in practically every man she meets, it ends in heartbreak for practically everyone, and then goes beyond that.

So far in this review I have ignored the beasts of the title. This magical menagerie consists of: 1) The Black Swan of Tirlith, the great-winged, golden-eyed bird that had carried the third daughter of King Merroc on its back away from the stone tower where she was held captive; 2) the red-eyed, white-tusked, Boar Cyryn, who could sing ballads like a harpist, and who knew the answers to all riddles save one; 3) Gyld, the green-winged dragon; 4) the Lyon Gules, who with a pelt the color of a king's treasury had seduced many an imprudent man into unwanted adventure; 5) the huge black Cat Moriah, whose knowledge of spells and secret charms had once been legendary in Eldwold; and 6) the blue-eyed falcon Ter, who had torn to pieces the seven murderers of the wizard Aer. Get to know these animals, and they will claim a place in your imagination beside Beagle's Last Unicorn and Tolkien's Smaug. Very highly recommended.

-- Reviewed by Ken St. Andre --

Space Relations: A Slightly Gothic Interplanetary Tale by Donald Barr. Charterhouse, 1973.

"Medusa loves me, hardening my flesh.  
She salts my dying childhood with her fury."

This is the story of a strong and intelligent man forced into slavery on the planet Kossar which is ruled by a small and extremely perverse clique of landholders. Using the technique of understatement, and a writing style composed of literally dozens of short scenes, Barr produces a psychological adventure novel (oxymoronic as that may sound) of what the institution of slavery does to humanity, the warping and degradation of both masters and servants. This is also a story of male-female love and passion, bordering sometimes on the pornographic, but discretely leaving the delectable details to the imaginations of the readers.

Lady Morgan Sidney is the stereotype of the Amazonian blond hellcat with the morals of an alleycat and the chaste aloofness of Artemis, but a finer stereotype would be hard to find, and the same can be said for the other major characters, with the exception of our hero, John Craig, who is a well-realized human being. (If he seems a trifle super-heroish, he needs to be to make the plot work, and who am I to say that such a superior character could not exist?) And though it is a kind of Deus ex machina device (the implacably alien race fighting Mankind for the stars) providing the stimulus for the uniting of Man to meet the threat of the Common Foe --



incidentally giving Craig the weapon he can use to shatter slavery on Kossar -- you will forgive the banality of the sf framework in enjoyment of the scintillating filigree-work in the prose. Read the book for its masterful use of language, quirky inventiveness in the small details, and buoyant story line. There is also quite a bit of really fine, creative poetry, well worth reading even if the remainder of the book didn't exist, but necessary for understanding the main character.

-- Reviewed by Ken St. Andre --

Iron Cage by Andre Norton. The Viking Press, c1974.

I am constantly amazed as to the complexities of this person's mind. Andre Norton is again exploring the vistas of telepathic contact. She has added a standard conflict concerning man's adaptability concerning alien view points. My amazement stems from the fact that Ms. Norton is able to continually study these various aspects in a standard story from a fresh manner each and every time she sits down to her typewriter.

Consider if you will "The People." Even without the excellent cover by Bruce Waldman, one can see the resemblance between "The People" and the shaggy bears of our North American continent. "The People" are not to be compared with our childish experiences when we met Pooh or any of his other friends. The society, fraternal in its organization, is as complex as the simple life style of wild chimpanzees. Communication difficulties lie within the divergent life styles of caste. These conflicts are based upon ingrained bias concerning the relevancy of human attitudes. The main thrust of this tale is directly related to our dealings with beings dissimilar in physical details. To most people a cat is a cat is a cat. So are dogs, horses and bears for that matter.

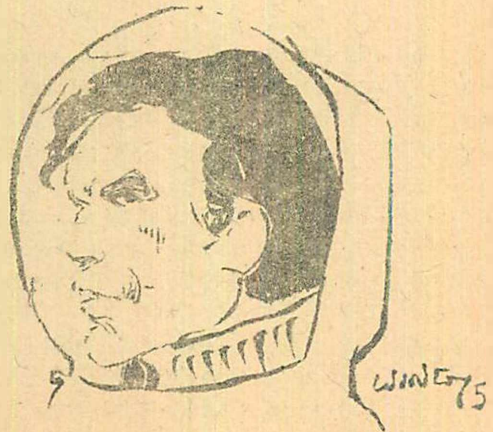
Jony, Maba and Geogee are the material witnesses. In their acceptance of what they are and can be, each must assess the values of continued existence above and far beyond the status quo. I feel here that the story is somewhat awkward. Geogee's move to humanity and its articulated position is not entirely justified. Ms. Norton's reasons for his move and the girl's staying "true" are vague. Jony alone is well thought out and the growing process which Ms. Norton wanted to convey does its shining best in his characterization.

Iron Cage is an entertaining story which explores human and alien value relationships. It is my opinion in any case that Iron Cage should make a person sit up and take stock in his/her attitudes concerning the pet or imaginary beast closest to her/him.

--Reviewed by Daniel A. Darlington --

The House of Zeor by Jacqueline Lichtenberg. Doubleday and Co., 1973

What is human? How do you define humanity in the face of alien relationships? Just suppose you had two radically different beings who hated the sight of the other so much that death seemed the inevitable end or as an alternative a vegetable's existence after meeting. Suppose, further, each needed the other to continue living to a ripe old age. This story line has appeal to all writers,





but the logical outcome has probably eluded even the best of them. Until now the alien has not been alien enough to make a story live and justify payment.

Jacqueline Lichtenberg has been an avid SF'er since the age of ten. She is also the author of three books concerning Trekies. The House of Zeor is her first published novel and there is a major reason for her success in marrying the plot to a publisher. Her story is well written and it has a suspense factor based upon both fear and attraction. This attraction is somewhat akin to the hypnotic attraction a snake has on a mouse, crossed somewhere with that of a lovely young lady on the confirmed bachelor.

Much of the story is concerned with a chase, but the general conflict is revulsion. The main character is truly a stranger in a strange land. He's worth his weight in diamonds on a long term basis. To most of the inhabitants he would have the satisfaction of being an ice cold beer. Further, once the beer is gone the empty would be discarded. Recycling is the impetus for the solution and a new beginning.

There is a message to the story; it is provocative and compassionate. There is horror to behold if the experiment fails and there is a new world, a new way should it succeed. Jacqueline Lichtenberg has not just placed a black and white picture for us to look at, but she has colored her action with the grays which make the story a realistic probability. She would have had my vote for a Hugo.

-- Reviewed by Daniel A. Darlington --

The Indian Giver by Alfred Bester. Serialized in Analog, Nov., 1974 - Jan., 1975.

The publication of Alfred Bester's new novel is almost as significant an event as the appearance of The Gods Themselves after a 15-year absence on the part of Asimov from novel writing.

The inevitable comparisons of The Indian Giver are to two previous Bester novels, The Demolished Man (1953), and The Stars My Destination (1956). Although the former of this pair seems to be better known and more highly regarded, the latter is, to my mind, the better of the two books. The Indian Giver is just as good, for many of the same reasons.

The Stars My Destination did what every good sf story is supposed to: it postulated some innovation and explored its consequences. In this case it was teleportation. That is a very common topic in sf, but Bester handled it better than most. Not content merely to describe the effects of teleportation on murder alibis and population patterns, Bester extrapolated roving criminal gangs always staying on the night side of the planet, and even the equivalent of a present-day driving school. This attention to detail helps to make Bester's future worlds very colorful places. His new novel has just as much of a vivid background.

The basic concept around which The Indian Giver is built is a group of people who are practically immortal because of chemical changes in their bodies caused by very close brushes with death. Bester adds to this framework a worldwide computer and data network which accidentally becomes linked to the brain of one of the immortals. This man, under the influence of the computer, turns renegade, attempting to annihilate the immortals and control the world. This satisfies quite well the basic criterion for a good plot -- engaging characters struggling with significant obstacles to obtain a worthwhile goal.

When I first read The Stars My Destination, I was struck by a characteristic unique to Bester: his handling of language. Bester has a skill with styles that is versatile and vivid. He can switch at a moment's notice from standard conversational English to



news documentary style to colorful dialect. Dialog and narration are interspersed with quotations from various forms of documentation.

Bester's future societies are usually composed of a rich mixture of cultures. He uses existing dialects and makes up new patterns in order to illustrate the pluralistic linguistic heritage of such a society. Characters with different backgrounds speak differently -- this helps to round them out as characters. They all speak vividly and almost incredibly colorful language. To be sure, other authors, notably Tolkien, have used dialects and speech patterns in this way, but none has been so successful at creating new styles.

Bester has done this again in The Indian Giver. He has created a fast-clipped slang that is appropriate to the rapid pace of life in his future society, yet is understandable to the reader. Witness this example:

"Extro. Alert."

"Alert."

"Where is Hillel?"

"Where are you?"

"You know damned well. The capsule blabbed all the way to GM."

"But it cut off. How?"

"We're a thousand feet under solid rock where you can't reach me. Where is Hillel?"

"In GM."

"W?"

"N known."

"The network must deflect him. He's dangerous."

"N possible when my switchboard is cut off."

"You function in nanoseconds. Issue instructions now, while I'm available."

"Issued. He is to be destroyed, like Curzon."

"N, N, N! I did not want Curzon destroyed, only deflected. . . Do not ever dare exceed orders again."

"N? What can you do? I am invulnerable."

The fast-paced adventure, the intriguing concepts and extrapolations, the colorful characters, and the rich backgrounds and styles all contribute to making The Indian Giver an exciting story.

-- Reviewed by Steven Beatty --

/ Look out gang, here comes a batch of titles all at once, because the respondents seemed to indicate that they rather liked the informal run-on style of editorial book reviewing featured in the last issue. /

The Pastel City by M. John Harrison, Avon, 95¢  
The Oak and the Ram by Michael Moorcock. Berkeley Medallion, 75¢

The Not-World by Thomas Burnett Swann. DAW #140, \$1.25

Beyond the Beyond, by Poul Anderson. Signet, \$1.25





The Hounds of Skaith by Leigh Brackett. Ballantine, \$1.25  
The Spell Sword: A Darkover Novel by Marion Zimmer Bradley. DAW #119, 95¢  
The Best of Planet Stories #1, edited by Leigh Brackett. Ballantine, \$1.25  
Voyage to a Forgotten Sun by Donald J. Pfeil. Ballantine, \$1.25  
Two-Eyes by Stuart Gordon. DAW #122, \$1.25  
Ice and Iron by Wilson Tucker. Doubleday & Co. (Science Fiction Book Club)  
Transformation II: Understanding American History Through Science Fiction, edited by Daniel Roselle. Fawcett, \$1.25  
The Liberated Future: Voyages Into Tomorrow, edited by Robert Hoskins. Fawcett, \$1.50  
The Early Asimov, Book Two, by Isaac Asimov. Fawcett, \$1.25

Who is M. John Harrison. I think I've seen the name previously in English anthologies, but I certainly had not read anything by him previously. But, as I've often said before, you can tell a book by its cover. The Pastel City has an intriguing piece of art by Gray Morrow, so I bought it forthwith. A most interesting tale of sword and technology it turned out to be.

The story opens a thousand years after the last of the Afternoon Cultures. The days of technology are long gone, but remnants linger on. There is much wasted, dying land; what little technology there is relies on scavenging the hinterlands for thousand-year old scrap. The story centers in the city-state of Viriconium and the plot involves an attempted usurpation of the throne upon which sits the seventeen-year-old Queen Jane, or Methvet Nian. As the story begins to unfold armies are beginning to amass in the north under the banner of Canna Moidart, the Pretender to the throne. One of the Methven, lords who once defended Jane's father, is told of the danger and attempts to put the remainder of his old cronies together in the Queen's defense. These include tegeus-Cromis, poet; Birkin Grif, fighter extraordinaire; Tomb the Dwarf; and Norvin Trinor. Cromis and Grif head north to do battle. Cromis is warned by a metal bird to beware the geteit Chemosit and head south instead to the tower of Cellur. He continues onward, however, meeting Tomb the Dwarf and eventually joining the queen's troops for a massive battle. Here it is discovered that Norvin Trinor has turned traitor. The queen's army is defeated and the geteit chemosit turn out to be monstrous creatures who eat the brains of the dead. In utter dismay the three turn south in company with the Queen and eventually find the tower of Cellur. Cellur shows them the secret of the geteit and sends them off to find an ancient computer center from which they can control the strange beasts. There Tomb discovers a strange secret; Norvin Trinor is killed and a second chance is given to the kingdom of Viriconium.

This sounds pretty much like standard s&s fare, but the writing is several notches above most s&s. Squibs on the fly leaf and back cover indicate that the likes of Ursula LeGuin, Philip Jose Farmer and Michael Moorcock think the tale is pretty good, too, so I'm in pretty fair company. Harrison writes well, has a magic way with colors and is a good hand at descriptions which make this strange world come alive. If you haven't read any s&s for a while because you think they're lousy, here's an opportunity to try once more. You might be delighted; I was.

The Oak and the Ram is the second book of the second series about Prince Corum, or, as the publisher advertises on the cover, "The Chronicles of Corum #5." Here Moorcock continues the story of Corum after he has arrived in the land of the folk of Cremm Croich and has undertaken to help them in their battle against the Fhoi Myore, the Gods of Limbo, the Cold Folk and the People of the Pines. Once again Corum, the Eternal Champion, is off on his own against the antagonists, although he finds sometimes allegiances along the way. If the reader is already a Moorcock fan of some standing, he knows what is in store for him. Most Moorcock fans tend to stack everything else that Moorcock writes up against the Elric stories. The Corum stories, to my mind, are not quite that good, but they do grow on one, and the writing in this book is quite tight, and filled, as one would expect, with the unusual. If you've sampled Michael or know him as an old friend, then no more should be said. If you're





new to him, best start at the beginning (if you can find it). In this case that means at least one book previous, The Bull and the Spear, or go back further to The Knight of the Swords, and the Queen and the King.

Thomas Burnett Swann is another writer with a very specific following. In the past he has chosen to work within the framework of classical mythology for the most part. Day of the Minotaur, The Weirwoods and The Forest of Forever come to mind along with Wolfwinter. There have been deviations from this pattern, of course, and this new work of his is one such. First, stop to admire the magnificent George Barr cover. If there are people who collect Frazetta covers and Jeff Jones covers and never read what is inside, then there must also be people who buy George Barr covers. There is a very unique

talent, for which fandom should offer up prayers of thanksgiving that he appears on DAW covers occasionally, his in-the-flesh work, so to speak, being too expensive for most of us. Enough about George. Mr. Swann has set The Not-World in a forest just outside Bristol, England during the eighteenth century. His protagonists are an unlikely pair; a sailor currently without a ship who is hired to take an invalid woman from London to Bristol by coach so that she may escape the plague. Passing the forest, the horses shy and run into it where the pair are trapped for the night. A young lad leads them out in the morning, then disappears. A short time later a letter arrives in Bristol asking for help for the young boy, and the pair, Dylan and Deirdre, plus a bounteous Aunt Adeline, return to the forest by balloon. The adventures they have there concern the antagonism of the last vestiges of other worldly beings as they have been squeezed out of an enlightened and heavily inhabited England and have found refuge there. The influence of a witch from Dylan's past adds to the tension. Swann admits basing the story on several real characters from English literary history, but that detracts not one whit from his ability to tell a magnificent story. Not suited for everyone, obviously, but for lovers of fantasy, this is a must.

The more I read of Poul Anderson the more impressed I am. The volume of his work impresses me as does the variety of styles and themes, the ability to juggle plot and to complicate it. There is much of Anderson that puts some people off, but I have become increasingly aware that what some persons demur about entice me more and more. Beyond the Beyond contains six stories published from 1954 to 1967. Died-in-the-wool Anderson fans will have read them in their original magazine appearances. Recall that I only arrived on the sf scene in '68, so these were new to me and I lapped them up. There's a Falkayn story here, "Day of Burning" from Analog in 1967, and my own favorite is the story, "The Sensitive Man" from Fantastic Universe of 1954. The other stories are: "Memory," "Brake," "The Moonrakers" and "Starfog." Good stuff. Buy already.

If it's true that the screen writer's strike a year ago brought Leigh Brackett back to the novel-writing fold, then hooray for the strike. I know that's not nice because that's what screwed Harlan's series, "The Starlost." But Leigh did find



herself with some time on her hands and resurrected Eric John Stark. This second book of the series, The Hounds of Skaith, will keep both her new and old fans quiet for a little while, at least. This is a sequel to/continuation of The Ginger Star that picks up after Stark has rescued his mentor, Ashton, from the citadel in the north of Skaith and now must attempt to make his way back to the city of Irnan in order to get off planet. It is a very involved trip, the Wanderers determined that the party shall not make it, and Stark equally determined that they shall. He has the assistance of several gigantic dogs over whom he has exerted mind control. The adventures are many and have the flourish and flair that Leigh Brackett was known for back in the days of Planet Stories. Out and out adventure, a well-conceived world, plenty of plot and a heroic protagonist supported by a fine cast of supporting roles make for darned good reading. And dig that Steranko cover. Nice!

Marion Zimmer Bradley has a gold mine in the planet Darkover. I'm sure that she didn't conceive of it as such when she started out; she's said as much herself. But she now has a built-in audience who wouldn't dream of missing a story set on the strange planet. I fear that The Spell Sword is one of her weaker Darkover novels. Not that I didn't enjoy it, but it didn't quite grab me the way the other novels in this series have done. Like many of these stories this one is concerned with a non-Darkoveran who somehow has some of the powers. In this case it's Andrew Carr and he has crashed in the hills while on a mapping mission. When he stumbles into one of the noble houses, he soon grasps that something is awry. The sister of his hostess is missing and he realizes that he has been in contact with her telepathically. He seems to be the only one who can reach her and ultimately it is up to him to rescue her from the darkening lands. I'm not quite sure I can give you reasons why I think this one is not quite up to par. But never fear; I'll stand in line and be ready with my coins when the next one rolls off the press. Another very nice George Barr cover on this one.

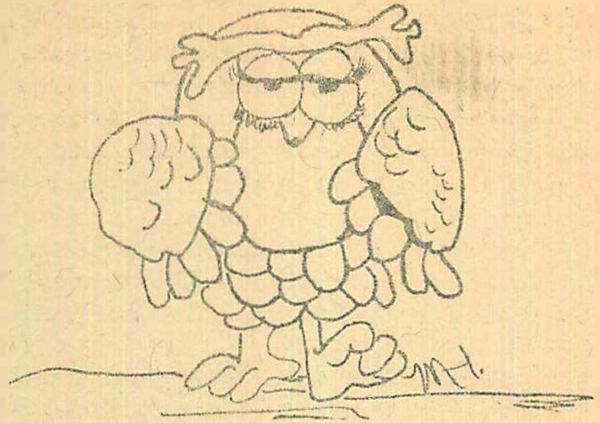
Here we are on page 8 and I think I'd better cut out some of the verbosity and get it on or this rag will run about 50 pages. I picked up The Best of Planet Stories #1 because I thought I might be interested in seeing what they wrote back in the 'good ole days.' I didn't expect to be entertained nearly as much as I was. But, dang, these stories hold up pretty well. There's a fine lead off story by Leigh Brackett that was finished by a much younger Ray Bradbury, "Lorelei of the Red Mist." "Return of a Legend" by Raymond Z. Gallun, "The Diversifal" by Ross Rocklynne and "Duel on Syrtis" by Poul Anderson stand up well against many of the stories appearing in today's magazines. Sure, most of what's here is out and out adventure tale stuff but it's well written and makes good reading.

Don Pfeil has his first novel in Voyage to a Forgotten Sun. Across the top of the cover are the words "A Rousing Space Opera" and I'm afraid that's precisely what it is. Hmmm. Examine that sentence again, Denton. What's the matter with something being what it says it is? A protagonist is taken out of prison to pilot the president of Earth back to that planet, now quite insignificant in the galaxy. It's an old ship, hardly capable of escaping enemy ships far superior. Throw in some crazy associates and a girl who doesn't like him on sight....well, you get the idea. Good for a couple of hours of reading, but not likely to come up for any prizes.

I was impressed by Stuart Gordon's Two-Eyes. Now I've got to hunt down (packed away in a box somewhere) the first book, One-Eye. Two-Eyes is an involved story of the time prior to the coming of the Zuni to redeem science. Now doesn't that sound hokey? But the characterizations are quite good, the world portrayed is a most interesting one and the imagery strikes me a whole lot like the writing of Jack Vance. And since I'm a Vance fan, that seems like a plus. Gordon could become for me one of those finds that not many people read or are aware of, who will hopefully give me more to admire with each new book. I hope this isn't premature judgment, based on only this one book, but I'm willing to hunt for some more of his work.



Can a book in which an encroaching glacier destroys Regina be all bad? All I know is that Susan Wood is very anxious to read this one by Wilson Tucker (Bob to his fannish friends). Ice and Iron is written in alternate chapters exploring a team of scientists near the edge of the glacier which is moving south in a new ice age into central North America and a future in which various groups are roving the same territory after the glacial period is over. A strange time warp is sending bodies between time to add to the scientific team's problems. Why there's hardly time for any sex, not that our protagonist doesn't think about it. But he does not get very far, alas. The SF Book Club edition has a striking dust jacket illustration by Laszlo Kubinyi.



How do we understand American History? Do we understand American History? Daniel Roselle thinks that science fiction will help students to do so, and he's edited Transformation II: Understanding American History Through Science Fiction for just that purpose. I'd be curious to see how many high school history teachers will figure there's time enough to read some sf along with getting through the damn book before June comes, or late May if they're seniors. I don't know. The stories by Bradbury, Clarke, Silverberg, Dickson, Washington Irving and Walter Van Tilburg Clark seem interesting enough, but I wonder if they are the best things that might be used to get a class jumping off into a discussion. I understand that there's a similar volume for world history, and I'd sure like to hear from any history teacher who has used either of the volumes for class work.

The Liberated Future: Voyages Into Tomorrow is a collection of previously published stories brought together by Editor Robert Hoskins. There are some good names here and some fine stories, but the diehard sf fan will have read most of them before. The newcomer to the field will want to pick this up rather than become a collector and pick up all those back issues of *Galaxy*, *Quark*, *Amazing*, *Astounding*, etc. A few titles of quality will give you an idea: Sheckley's "Street of Dream, Feet of Clay," Poul Anderson's "Sam Hall," Dean Koontz' "Soft Come the Dragons," Anne McCaffrey's "A Meeting of Minds." 304 solid pages of good stories.

Last issue I reviewed The Early Asimov, Book I and now here comes ....Book II hot on its heels with fourteen more good stories written and sold between 1941 and 1949. If you bought the first volume, you sure need this one to sit beside it. Of course, the inimitable Asimov introductions and closings are all here and help to place the stories in some context of the Real ??? World. Don't they?

Here's a late entry not listed at the beginning. Phoenix Without Ashes, by Edward Bryant and Harlan Ellison is published by Fawcett Books and sells for 95¢. This is a novel which grew out of Harlan Ellison's television series, "The Starlost," which went sour. We've all heard the story of how it became something less than a glorious replacement for "Star Trek" that we hoped it would be. Nobody tells the story better than Harlan himself in the first 30 pages of this book. He begins with the delight he had in the opportunity to create a new series and moves through the screen writer's strike, the decision to move the production to Canada and the ultimate debacle the show became, so bad that he removed his name from it. Of the original screenplay, Harlan can be justly proud, as it was awarded the Writer's Guild of America award for Most Outstanding Teleplay of the Year.



Harlan himself asked Ed Bryant to turn the teleplay into a novel. Ed is a young Denver pro with a string of very good stories to his credit. He may have been hampered by the limitations of the script; that's hard to tell. The story is a good one, but perhaps it would have been better without those restrictions. The only book I've read with much the same theme is Brian Aldiss' Starship (incidentally just re-issued in paperback), which I remember distantly as a better book. Nonetheless this one is enjoyable, especially in the context of seeing what Harlan had in mind as a starting point for those of us who, perhaps gratefully, have not seen the tv production.

Devon is an outcaste in his Amish-like culture and while hiding in the hills he discovers some terrible inconsistencies in the environment. He's ostracized for loving Rachel, whom the elders say must marry Garth. He insists on being the rebel and discovers that there is room for doubt. More importantly he finds a portal through which he escapes and finds that the Amish culture is only one of a number of closed societies which make up a starship. The ship has been hit, the command area blown open and the crew is dead. Devon realizes that safety lies only in alerting the many societies and getting them to work together to solve the problems inherent in guiding the craft to safety sometime in the future.

The Amish-like society is well portrayed; the motivations are reasonable. Devon is truly an outcaste, and as such, is perhaps the only one capable of seeing the complex problems and ways to a solution. Of course, the story ends at what must be only the beginning. The series, properly done, could have been a great one. At the end of Ed's novel, one can envision all sorts of complications in the future. How many colony clusters make up the star ship is not known, but each one of them must have been good for several, perhaps many, stories. More's the pity and I can sympathize with Harlan's bitterness. Well, at least we've got part of the story, thanks to Ed's fine novel. It makes a good read.

I've never reviewed a game before, so bear with me, gang. This is STELLAR CONQUEST. Metagaming Concepts, P.O. Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761. \$8, but for readers who mention Ash-Wing there's a dollar (\$1) discount.

I've never been a gamesman. So keep that in mind with what follows. I don't play chess or checkers, have never played monopoly. I did have a brief introduction to Diplomacy a few years back, just enough to get my little toe wet, but I withdrew it quickly. So when Howard Thompson of Metagaming Concepts wrote to me to offer me a free game, I tried to be completely honest. I told him essentially what I've told you about my gaming capabilities. He was dumb enough to send it anyway. The game is entitled STELLAR CONQUEST.

I must admit that when I first looked at the rules, I was nonplussed. They go on for some pages and looked pretty complex to my non-gaming mind. I sallied forth, nonetheless, and saw what the general plan of action was, but couldn't see it in perspective of the board or star map on which the game is played. I suspect that's true with most games. Get all of the pieces on the board and begin to play and a lot of things seem to make more sense.

It was Christmas time when I had some guys in for a few days that we finally got down to it. Quite honestly, the credit must go to Clifford Wind, he of the erstwhile column entitled "Letters From A Red Balloon" which sometimes appears herein. Clifford curled up in a corner one day with the rules and the next evening pronounced that he understood and that we could begin a game. If it weren't for him, I doubt that we would have made it.

The board consists of a star map. Up to four players may play. The object is to move out into the stars, colonizing planets, building industrial output, enlarging productive populations, establishing defense systems and weapons systems for use in



conflict with intruding civilizations. The moves are made in years and the game lasts for 40 years or moves. Each 4th year is a building year when populations and industrial outputs are tallied and growth takes place. Since the players move inward from the corners of the board, it is inevitable that conflict must take place. We found, in this first game, that it began to take place about the 16th year, but I suspect that with experience, it might take place sooner. The game's complexity comes with a sort of 4-part move each year; the move consisting of exploration, colonization, industrialization, and defense maneuvers. In addition, a draw of cards when exploring the star cluster gives a variety of planets which may be terran-like or less than terran in ability to support human life and which may be metal-rich or poor, contributing variances in ability to industrialize. The ultimate winner is the one with control of the most planets.

Howard has promised that he will send a sheet of advertizing for the game and you should find it near the back of this issue. Since I am not charging for this advertizing, Howard has offered to knock off \$1 from the price of the game, providing you mention Ash-Wing or my name. I think it's a fine game for those with that particular bent of mind. I enjoyed the game, but would sure find it hard to sit that long very often. A game takes 6-8 hours. But gamers think nothing of this, I am told. Howard and his group are working on a game for two players. As he says in a letter, "I think this one turned out a bit too complicated for an introductory game for sf fans. Our next game will be two player, simpler and with a bit of negotiation, based on a popular sf novel." He hopes to have it out by September, and sometime within a few months he hopes to have a modest zine to cover sf gaming. I'll keep you posted on both developments. Meantime if you enjoy the challenge of a good game, and have a small group of people interested in this sort of activity/insanity, I think you'd enjoy the game. The three of us who tested it, with Clifford's help in interpreting the rules, enjoyed it very much and post-mortemed it to see what kinds of strategy might work. The address once again is Metagaming Concepts, P.O. Box 15346, Austin, TX 78762. Don't forget to mention my name or Ash-Wing to get the game for \$7, a dollar saved. The board itself is plasticized for easy cleaning and the die cut pieces should hold up well over many plays. All you need provide is a pair of dice for some decision-making which occasionally occurs. Happy gaming. And good luck to Howard Thompson and his enterprise.





"What can you tell me, owl?" he called out. "What are these forces playing with me? What's going to be....tomorrow....? - Stuart Gordon - TWO-EYES

## THE FREE COMMOTS

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ASH-WING 16, the fanzine that dares to change horses in mid-stream, is brought to you by Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. A Bran & Skolawn Press Publication, with a press run of 320 copies. January 1, 1975

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Well, it seems that no one believed me when I said that I was going to have to cut back on publishing activities. I've had all kinds of comments from people who have watched me go through all the motions before. They nod their heads knowingly and mutter, "Sure, Frank, sure." and then grin a lot. Well, I suppose that I've brought all that on myself since this wasn't the first time I've made such rash promises. But, by golly, this time I'm sticking to it. Ash-Wing has become too far and few between for my own liking and By Owl Light has also been less frequent than I would like, so combining the two seemed a natural.

Now if I can only determine what it is I'd like to call it, I'd be happier. As I sit here typing this stencil I'm still at a loss. The high number of Ash-Wing (relative to a lot of fanzines which have lived and died) prompts me to continue with that name. It has, what do they say in the advertising business, "customer identification." So perhaps I'll stick with the old name. I suppose if I went back to the earliest issues of Ash-Wing, I'd find that they were pretty rambling and mostly self-written. As the magazine grew a little there became less of the editor and more of the contributors and to rectify the loss of my own identity with the magazine which I was feeling, I started up By Owl Light, completely self-written and being sent to only a part of the mailing list. One had to be a close friend, a publisher of a fanzine, or write and beg for it.

Now I find the need to write other stuff. I don't want to make a big deal out of this but I've got to try to submit some stuff professionally. I have a little over seven years left before I retire from my present profession and one of my intentions for doing so has been to have time to write. So I've begun to pay my dues, so to speak; to collect the rejection slips that every author must inevitably do. That means that I'm trying to discipline myself to write every day. That's what all of the articles say you must do, and who am I to argue. One of the things that becomes quickly apparent is that I can't do all that fanac that I used to do and still find time to write. A little curtailment is called for. So simplifying this magazine and combining the two seemed to be one of the obvious answers. I'm not even going to promise that it's going to stay in its present format, but I'll try it for a while.

I was interested in Don Thompson's Don-O-Saur, as I always am, since Don is a personal friend of mine. But I was especially interested in the recent issue wherein Don explains his need to write and his fling at the pro market. He had recently come to the conclusion that the fannish writing which he does in Donny fulfilled his need quite well. But the very next issue finally got onto paper what he really meant. He seems to be going through the same thing that I am, saying something to the effect, "OK, dummy. You have the tools. Quit screwing around, making excuses, and get to work and write something which someone might enjoy reading."



I don't wish to write science fiction solely, but have some other things on tap as well. Currently I have two sf short stories working, two travel articles (one short and one longish) and the first chapter of a mystery in rough draft. So in one sense I'm sort of spread out and in another I have plenty to work on and keep me busy.

Meanwhile I jot down a few hundred words of this thing and hope it amuses and/or interests you in the shorter format that you had best become accustomed to. I'm sorry if it disappoints some of those who have liked the longer format, the forty and fifty page thickies. But to my own self I must be true. I don't intend to bag it completely as some ex-faneds have done. But I'm certainly cutting it back and hoping that I can emulate some fanzines which I admire greatly; Dynatron, for instance, or Donny or Susan Wood's Amor or Bruce Arthur's Powermad.

Well, enough of this shop talk about fanzines and their production. I hope to continue to find room to publish some other people's stories and columns; there just won't be so much of them all at one time. I have Ross Bagby stories on hand, a column by Dainis Bisenieks, and some other things. Let me know what you think of this new effort. And let me know if you're not interested in the changed format and would just as soon have your name removed from the mailing list. About 30 people got cut off in the last mailing because I hadn't heard boo from them in way too long. Ah, back to the simple life.

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NOVEMBER 20, 1974 - GADS, ANOTHER FANZINE IS BORN

Oh, what joy! I've just finished running off a fanzine. No, not mine. The other day I was sitting in my office, doing nothing in particular other than trying to write a job description for a new staff position, clear my head about the minutes of the Washington Library Automation project and work on the agenda for a media specialist's meeting. The phone rang.

"Hello, Frank. This is Loren." I was tempted to say, "Loren Who?" but I only know one Loren so it had to be he.

"Hey, what's up? I said, trying to sound interested.

"Well, I'm going to do a fanzine and I was wondering if I could get you to run..."

"Oh, my God!" I exclaimed. "You're not. You said you wouldn't ever inflict yourself on fandom again."

"Well, yes, I know I said, but I have this urge..."

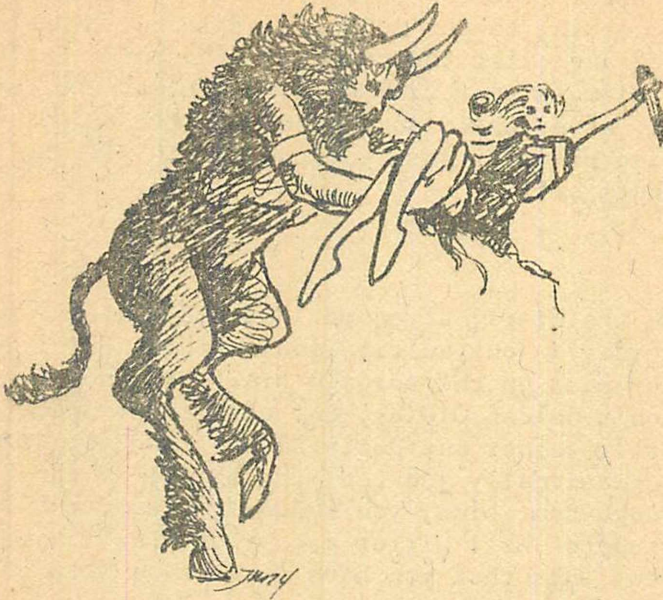
"Yes, I know. It's uncontrollable. The eyeballs spin round in the head like Mr. Toads, the fingertips itch to be soothed by typer keys and the smell of fresh stencils brings about a nostalgia akin to piles of autumn leaves burning in your childhood. Right?"

I could almost see him digging his toe into the carpet, his head hanging to one side in embarrassment.

"Oh, all right," I said. "When you get ready to run it come on over." I'm always a sucker for steady and seemingly uncontrollable sobbing.

Evidently Loren got himself quieted down and somewhat in control. The sobbing, I mean. Not the urge to pub.





So this morning we ran off an 18-page issue of QUOTA, the fanzine that rhymes with MOTA. Loren trundled off with an armload of pages to collate and I closeted myself with a brown bag lunch and sat back to see what Loren hath wrought. Not bad, not bad. I've always liked Loren's writing and he hasn't lost the touch in telling about punning at Evergreen General Hospital and riding the Metro bus and his adventures thereon. Les Sample is there to relate in his own inimitable style why he is an "artificial Seattleite." There's a John Berry reprint from SHAGGY. It's about Walt Willis and has some nice Bjo illos, and there's GardyLoo, a fanzine review column which isn't exactly (a review column, I mean - it is about fanzines). What I really like about Gardy Loo is the name, which Loren tells me is the call one gave when one was about to dump garbage into the street from an

upper floor and one wished to warn passing pedestrians. I think that would be a fine name for a fanzine, but Loren's gone and used it for a column heading. Oh; well. You may never see Loren's fanzine because the mailing is mighty restricted, but nonetheless I'm happy that Loren is back. I missed him.

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#### HOW DO YOU FIND THE AREA OF A TRIANGLE?

There's nothing that breeds interest than just a little information available. For years, nothing. No information, no questions. Now all of a sudden there have been a couple of articles, albeit small ones, and at least one book, possibly two, on the subject of the Bermuda Triangle. And almost daily in the library we get questions about same. It drives you quietly mad for the first few days and then it clicks; you catch on. Everyone involved in reference work goes to work on digging out everything we have and documenting it, so that everyone knows where the available information is. Very strange, this sudden interest in the Triangle.

-----WHOOO!-----

#### EFFACE??

A student assistant of ours was given the ignoble task, while awaiting action at the circulation desk, of erasing a number of pencilled notations from a library book. I happened to come upon him, eraser in one hand, and a great pile of detritus alongside the book on top of the circulation counter. "What in God's name are you doing?" I asked. He looked searchingly at me for a brief moment, and then said seriously, "I'm told that I have perfected a technique unparalleled in the annals of erasure." "My son," I said, "you'll find a glowing career awaiting you when you've achieved your Associate of Arts and Sciences in Effacing."



### WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!!!

Students who swear or use obscene language to a computer at the University of Akron are now required to apologize to it. If they don't, the computer switches itself off and refuses to work with them. The computer has been programmed with "every cuss word they could think of," according to the school's assistant director, Tim Taylor. "If a student gets annoyed and calls the computer a bastard, for instance, the computer replies, 'Let us not discuss your family at this time. We have more important things to do,'" he said. After three such offenses, the computer says, "Now I've had enough. You apologize or we'll just quit working!" If the student doesn't apologize, the computer shuts off.

### A CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EXCURSION

I've just put a new record on the hi-fi; a record I picked up for a measly \$1.99. Aren't those the best kind? Yesterday in our multifarious wanderings, I ran across a small record shop and I can never pass up the bargain bin. You know the one. It has fourteen copies of Wayne Newton's Golden Oldies, one very early Grateful Dead, two copies of Moby Grape, some Porter Wagner and Dolly Parton, and occasionally a Booker T. and the MGs. But very occasionally you feel the thrill of the find at the end of the hunt. After going through four bins, you suddenly discover buried between the Clebanoff Strings and a used copy of Mrs. Miller a copy of "Last Chance Dance" by Cat Mother and the All-Night News Boys that you have never even seen before and didn't know existed.

What, you don't know about Cat Mother and the All-Night News Boys? Why, goodness, where have you been all this time? Cat Mother is one of those small, country oriented (but not quite) rock groups that the canyons of California must hold hundreds of. Currently it's made up of Bob Smith on keyboards and occasionally auto-harp, Charlie Harcourt on guitar, Roy Michaels on guitar and bass, John Chamberlain on acoustic guitar, and Michael Equine on drums. It's one of those groups where everybody plays a lot of instruments and everybody shares vocals. A nice, easy listening record. Once upon a time Cat Mother appeared in Seattle at The Walrus Tavern. I remember that Anna Jo had just finished her last final of the summer quarter that finally got her a degree from the University of Washington after having plugged away at several colleges for nineteen years. I said, "C'mon, we've got to celebrate." So we drove out to the Greenwood District and listened to about four hours of Cat Mother and lapped up several pitchers of beer. For some reason they've been a favorite of mine and not many people know about them. Whenever I mention them I keep getting these blank stares.

Like yesterday, when I bought this record. A salesgirl came over to see if she could help me find anything. "No," I said. "I'm just browsing. But I've found this neat Cat Mother record that I've never even seen before." And I pulled it out from under my arm and showed it to her. She smiled sort of blankly and said, "Oh!" Well, that's OK. I dug it, and I'm listening to it this very moment.

All of which took place on a trip to Tacoma. I've been meaning to get down to my home town for quite a while now to pick up a book from The Fox Book Company. Some of the local collectors put up some money and Phil Garland and Charles Yenter did most of the work on a very small, but nicely done edition of Kai Lung Six, a collection of six stories by Ernest Bramah which appeared in Punch during the years of 1940-41. They only had 250 copies of this edition printed and from what I've heard these are the only Bramah stories which had not previously been collected. The price is a bit steep, \$10, but it really is a nice little book with the original illustrations from Punch. It was edited and contains an introduction by William White, who was a friend of Bramah's. You can order, if the spirit moves you, from The Fox



Book Co., 1140 Broadway, Tacoma, Washington 98402.

I also managed to pick up a bunch of paperbacks from Fox's as well as some from Carl's Book Store. Included was another Edmund Crispin "Gervase Fen" detective story. I discovered Crispin a while back with a novel entitled Buried For Pleasure and I've been carefully inspecting second-hand paperback stores ever since. These were done by Pyramid back around '68 and aren't easily found, at least here in Seattle. The one I found yesterday was Love Lies Bleeding. Fen is an Oxford don and these are most literate for detective fiction. There is always a little something extra moving around in the background that makes them a great deal of fun. Buried had a non-doing pig, a pig that wouldn't put on any weight, no matter how much it was fed. This one looks like it has a homicidal bloodhound.

Later Anna Jo and I went to the old Tacoma City Hall which has been converted into a series of specialty shops; nice and open and airy. Lots of nice things to look at and buy, if one had any money. Specifically we were looking for a print by Niel Dobson, an Olympia artist who does wildlife portraits by the scratchboard technique. We had seen some of his prints a while back and knew that it would make a perfect gift for some friends of ours from Alaska. Now all we have to do is frame it. But that's another story which I may tell you about later in this issue.

This old city hall is where I found the record shop with the Cat Mother record. There I was also able to find the new Paul Erlich book, The End of Affluence. Which may be a very important book and which maybe I'll review when I finish it. It's Erlich's view of what's coming down and how one might prepare for it. It has been reviewed here locally as a "gloom and doom" book, but I think it's worth reading and thinking about. This may be because I seem to have recently developed a very personal pessimistic view of what's happening with the world and the U.S. I find this disturbing in myself because I've always felt that I was optimistic about life. Maybe it's just been an overburgeoning of bad news; famine and starvation, inflation galloping away, the population problem, economy going to hell in a handbasket (no, it's not The Cult; they use a bucket), nonchalance over environmental problems. Aw, c'mon, Denton, snap out of it. Another book which I may review this time is White Goats and Black Bees by Donald Grant, an interesting exploration of one couple's change of life style and getting away from it all.

There were several nice art shops, a book shop called Inkslingers, a rug-hooking shop where they use and sell the magic little machine from Denmark which hooks rugs so easily and quite nicely as well. This shop also had beautiful woolen yarn imported from Norway. There were several colors which would knit into fantastic sweaters. Too bad I don't know how to knit. And had a little bit more time in the day. Don't laugh; my father taught himself to knit in his later days and knit a couple of super sweaters. But I can't write and do fanzines and all this fannish stuff and learn to knit as well. It's enough that I find time to bake occasionally and hook rugs by a different





method with the pre-cut yarn lengths. I also ran into an old friend who was on the faculty of Highline College when I was assistant librarian there. He's now Dean of Instruction at Tacoma Community College and I've long since gone to Seattle. He had a table rented on which were displayed simple wooden toys which he and his daughters have designed and made in their basement wood shop. Some quite nice things, good craftsmanship and he's enjoying doing this as a hobby. I asked him if he had any other outlets. He said that he was probably foremost in wooden toys in Pullman, Washington. Pullman is a small town in eastern Washington where Washington State University is situated. Altogether we had a nice talk and it was good to see him again. It's lots of fun to go through places like this, many of which are springing up in towns small and large all over the United States. I know that Seattle has several different areas where you can spend all day just looking. That's one of the beauties of this sort of thing; you can spend a very enjoyable day and not spend a dime unless you wish to. Sure, if you want to pick up a couple of paperbacks, or some unique cards somewhere along the way, as I did, you spend a couple of bucks. But it's not necessary for your enjoyment. You can feel those \$75 Norwegian sweaters, drool all over the Irish crystal and Belleek China, see the German loden coats that you will never be able to afford, but you can have a fun time and not buy.

Oh, yes. It really is getting to be Christmas time. Santa Claus came riding down the mall of downtown Tacoma in his gold cart, ho-ho-hoed me, and handed me a candy cane. You're all right, Santa.

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NAMELESS ANNIVERSARY (Friday, December 13, 1974)

Yes, what better day to celebrate than on Friday, the 13th. And what a gala occasion it was! Don Glover, the owner of the Horizon Book Store, even swept up the floor nice and clean before everyone arrived. Naw, I'll bet Les Sample did it. Nevertheless, Don says that the year 1974 marked the 25th anniversary of The Nameless, Seattle's own sf club. So he got to work on the phone and tried to contact as many of the old timers as he possibly could to invite them to an anniversary meeting before 1974 slipped completely away from us.

And they did show up, quite a few of them. There was Wally Gonser, who never shows up much any more, but never misses a worldcon. Of course, he was talking about plans to go to Aussiecon next summer. Then Burnett Toskey showed up to talk about Don Wilcox and The Cats of Kadenza. John Walston and his wife, Janet, were there. John, I think, has a complete set of Arkham House books. That's a terrible affliction. As I eavesdropped on the conversation there was a lot of talk about Richard Shaver, Ray Palmer, Leroy Yerxa and some of the other great names from the age of the pulps. These guys really know the old stuff. The next thing I knew I heard Burnett shouting, "Have you got your Sapszine done yet?" and I turned around to find Carol and Wrai Ballard walking in. I haven't seen them in a while. We knew for certain that it was a success when Wally and Pat Weber came in. And, by golly, they didn't disappear in the middle of the evening. I think that they stayed almost as late as I did, which was somewhere after midnight.

Among others who showed up during the evening were Elinor and F.M. Busby and Bill and Bubbles Broxon. One half of each of these couples make up the pro contingent of The Nameless. Bubbles was reticent to talk about a story on which she's working which is set in Clonmacnoise, Ireland. Bill told me about it. I don't blame Bubbles a bit. You don't talk about works in progress without taking something off of the story. Buz was talking about a monstrous novel (size, that is) which he's currently working on and which he says the publisher wishes to see in its complete form before deciding whether it is better as a monster or as several shorter novels.



Let's see, others there were Loren MacGregor, tired out as usual from working ungodly hours and days as a respiratory therapist, but still hyped up about his new fanzine, QUOTA, the first issue of which has been out for several weeks now. He's even got Les Sample and Gene Perkins worked up to the point where they are asking for submissions for a potential fanzine. Gee, at this rate, I won't any longer have the corner on the fanzine market in Seattle. Ah, well, good luck to them; it's fun to see others engaged in the activity.

By the way, here's as good a place as any to put in a plug for Gene's art work. It hasn't been plentiful up to now and he's promised for almost two years to do a cover for Ash-Wing. So it graces the cover of this issue. Just when I was in the throes of trying to determine whether to start over with a new name, Gene shows up with a cover featuring an owl. Well, not exactly; it really features a nubile, young thing on her way downtown for a little Christmas shopping. If you can take your eyes off of her for a moment, you'll notice that there is an owl perched on her arm. Also I've been wondering if that a portrait of me having assumed the fetal position down there in the left. Could be, you know; perhaps it's an indication that I'm too old to take any advantage of the refreshing young girl. At least he could have turned me around so that I could look. Ah, well, symbolism. I understand that Gene has done a series of aardvark cartoons that will be appearing in these other upcoming Seattle zines, and if they are as good as they are described, they'll be funny.

Yes, that's another thing that was talked about at the meeting. Myth and symbolism. Joseph Campbell was in town last week and talked at the university. Unfortunately, I forgot about it, but Bubbles got to the lecture and said that it was superb. That's the kind of thing I kick myself about, and I suppose you do, too, when it happens to you. Why did I have to forget? Campbell is the guy who has the superb four-volume work entitled The Masks of God. Another of his titles is The Flight of the Wild Gander. If you're into myth, you should be into Campbell. Other topics that bounced around the room of which I was aware were physics, mathematics, psychiatric nursing, Velikovsky and Von Daniken (have they really taken the place of Star Trek?) and printing methods.

Why, there was even more discussion of science fiction and fantasy. It seems that there is a strong Jack Vance following in our group and we talked about The Palace of Love, Emphyrio, Love Is Forever, and a new one that everyone is waiting for breathlessly, The Gray Prince. At least that's what we've heard the title is. No one knows for sure whether this is the work that was serialized recently in Amazing as The Domains of Koryphon. The consensus of opinion was that it is not. There was some discussion as to whether Stuart Gordon, the author of One-eye and Two-eyes does or does not write like Vance and could be expected to continue to produce stories with the same sort of strange background and settings and giving the feeling that Vance gives. Of course, was a lot of talk about the upcoming V-Con IV in Vancouver, B.C. in February.

Others present were Paul Stanberry and for once he didn't talk about his enigmatic calendar. Hmmm, do you suppose he's given up? T.J. Stewart, a recent Clarion participant, was there and we talked a bit about writing. Mike Dunn, a newer member of The Nameless Ones, with an insatiable appetite for sf and a remarkable memory for what he's read, got into all kinds of discussions with a variety of people. And presiding over all were Don Glover and Les Sample. Don will be leaving the Horizon Book Store in the hands of Les in just a few days to travel back to Boston for a while. You've probably been noticing ads in The Buyer's Guide and Xenophile recently for things that The Horizon has for sale. I guess this first experiment in selling by mail and advertising is paying off somewhat. Don and Les have also been quietly adding a few copies of new specialty publishers' books, such as Don Grant's Howard things, the Kay Nielsen calendar, Philip Jose Farmer's newest from Aspen, The Peerless





Peer. So things are going pretty well for Don. And Les was excited as hell, as his sister had shipped the first three boxes of his collection from South Carolina with some very good and rare things, including most of his Arkham House books and some early Mirage Press things. He was happy to have them back with him again as for a while he wondered if he would ever see them again for a variety of reasons.

Music is generally a topic amongst a certain group of the Nameless members. Mostly the talk revolved around such groups as Steeleye Span, The Fairport Convention, the Clancy Brothers, Sandy Denny, Fotheringay and a couple of new Irish groups called Horslips and Tir Na Nog. Gene Perkins came up with a new group that I hadn't heard of before, Finnbarr and somebody, whom/which I'll have to search out and give a listen to. I'll bet if you put together the collections of Loren MacGregor, Gene Perkins, Jerry Chilson and myself they'd stretch clear around the block and the music would never end. That might not be a bad idea sometime.

We did miss Jerry Chilson and Sandy. Jerry's gone back to work for Boeing after having been a Burns guard (or was it Pinkerton) during that long hiatus when Big B cut back some 40,000 persons a couple of years ago. Now he has to work some crazy shift and doesn't make it to meetings. Another person who was missed was Clifford R. Wind, itinerant schoolmaster and sometime writer for this zine. Clifford, where are you? And also absent were Lynn and Pris Naron. I understood that Pris had just had an operation and they couldn't attend. Hope to see them soon again.

Well, all in all it was a pretty successful celebration. Lots of people to talk to and lots of things to talk about. A far cry (get it) from the meetings of a few months back which must have set some kind of all time low for good participation and good conversation. Maybe the next 25 years will be equally as fascinating as I understand the first 25 have been. I've only been around for the last six years, so won't vouch for all those stories I've heard about the first 25.

SMOKY THE BEAR? WELL, NOT QUITE.

For the last couple of years I've been looking for a tape recording of an old radio show that I heard as a kid, back around 1938 or so. It was called The Cinnamon Bear and was a Christmas show that played serially daily for about a month before Christmas. I've written for a lot of catalogs and searched through them for any mention of The Cinnamon Bear. No luck. When I was in Portland recently, I heard radio station KEX announce that they would be beginning to play The Cinnamon Bear for the 30th year in a row on November 25th. Gads, I thought, after all this time, it's been this close. So I wrote to the station management asking if they knew where I could get a copy of the show. They were nice enough to reply almost immediately with the name of a old radio buff in Baker, Oregon. I wrote to him and he not only had the show, but claimed that he had the best copy available, as he had been allowed to copy it from the original transcriptions which were housed in the Oregon State Library.



He quoted a price and I wrote out the check. The tape arrived and we had a lot of fun with it over the Christmas season. There are 26 fifteen minute segments, as Bill and Mary search through a fantasy land for the star for the Christmas tree which was supposed to be stored in their attic, and which they cannot find. Many adventures with Paddy, the Cinnamon Bear. Lots of fun.



April 27, 1975

I've given you lots of room in between these paragraphs to laugh. Go ahead, roll on the ground, hee haw and snort. There's been a great deal of water under the bridge since I wrote all that has gone before I got to this stencil. I really did have it in mind that I would keep this thing down to 20 pages or so. Well, it didn't work out, quite obviously. I managed to get 20 pages done, looked at it, and wasn't satisfied. It seemed like 20 pages was hardly enough to turn around in. There were still a lot of book reviews to do if I didn't want them to get so badly out of date that they were really of not much worth. Then Michael Carlson's DisCon report came in and that couldn't wait too long without being badly dated also. So I threw up my hands in despair and pressed on. It should be obvious to both you and me that these small seizures will come upon me every once in a while, and that promises will be made which I will not keep. You understand, I hope, the vagaries of producing a fanzine and will let it go with just a small chuckle. Please, now, no boisterous conduct over in the corner, there. Just sip your beer and keep it to yourself, if you will. I beg of you.

You'll notice also a variety of page colors. I mean, it's basic green, right? I had a few reams left that I got the press run started on; then when I went to get some more, it turned out that what was in stock was produced by a different company and wasn't quite green, but was called antique lime. How's that for class? Ignore it. I feel lucky, indeed, to be able to find any mimeotone, fibretint or fibretone, or whatever else it is that they call the stuff. The two big wholesalers in town are not able to get any of it at all. At least, I managed to get a 10% discount on this stuff. Anyway, some of you will find as many as three kinds of paper in your issue, and no, you do not get a free popsicle if you do find it so.

The Kid has arrived. All of you people will have to treat me with a great deal more respect than in the past. Not just in deference to my age, mind you, but because I can now claim to be a 100%, All-American Grandfather. Godfathers, move over. Yep, some of you will remember that I wrote about the wedding of my daughter last year. Well, after a rather long and rather complicated labor, she managed to bring the little guy squeaking and squalling into this world. An 8 pound, 4 ounce baby boy, who is named Aaron Matthew.

Second son, Sean, budding rockandroll star, was elated because the kid waited long enough to be born on his birthday. Hey, he said, just like in The Lord of the Rings. My nephew and I can celebrate our birthdays together, just like Bilbo and Frodo. Of course, everyone was excited, grandma, the father, uncles and aunts, and not the least, old grandpa here. I was tied up on the evening of the birth, but everyone else was down at the hospital. Along about midnight my two sons and son-in-law came by the house and decided that we should all go out for a wee celebration. Sean's birthday party hadn't amounted to much, although there was a fine meal prepared. Mother had been so antsy all that day that she set the table and then scooted for the hospital. Tim and his girl came by, then Sean arrived and I managed to get the vittles on the table piping hot. But everyone was too excited to do more than gobble and run for the hospital, also, leaving old dad sitting nervously by the telephone. So at



midnight, with all having been accomplished, the four of us set out for the local rock emporium to down a few pitchers and listen to an overloud Shy Anne.

Just a few more items before I give up for this issue. Anna Jo and I are scheduled to head for England again this summer. We'll be leaving on July 13 and returning home on August 17. Some of you will remember that last trip I did a kind of diary which I published after we came home. It was entitled SASSENACH AND GAEL and went to approximately half of my mailing list. It was rather more lengthy than I had thought it might be as I was writing just a couple of short pages each evening during the trip. As a matter of fact, it ran 40 pages plus another 12 as a sort of appendix. I've been asked if I am going to do a trip report again this time. I must admit, blushing, that to be asked was nice. However, I don't want to run 175 copies if I can help it. So what I'm asking you to do sometime between now and September is to drop me a postcard if you are interested in receiving whatever comes out of this trip. Then I can simply run as many copies as seems appropriate for the interest shown. So just drop me a line and I'll start a separate mailing list for those people who want it, and I won't have to sully your mailbox if you're not interested.

I should mention that the Bran & Skolawn Press has a new publication, a bi-weekly thing running to four pages and called THE ROGUE RAVEN. It has taken the place of BY OWL LIGHT and is going to a list of approximately 50 people, my closest fannish friends. If, for some reason known only to yourself, you can't do without a subscription, they are available for the cost of postage. Ten issues for \$1 or ten-10¢ stamps. Back issues 1-6 are available at the same price. It's an extremely personal personal-zine. No, I don't reveal the delights of my sexual fantasies or anything like that, but I natter on about matters in my life, sometimes even touching upon sf. More often than not it has to do with places we've been, pictures we've seen, books I've read, music or records we've heard or acquired. Anything silly that pops into my head. So be ye warned. If you want to sample it send me a dime stamp and I'll ship you a copy for your perusal. The people who are already getting it will continue to do so until they cry stop. I've had some complaints from people who are not getting it and feel that they should be. Gosh, I'm sorry, but if it went to my entire list it would cost me \$65 a month. I hope you can understand that. Just postage. Paper and ink on top of that.

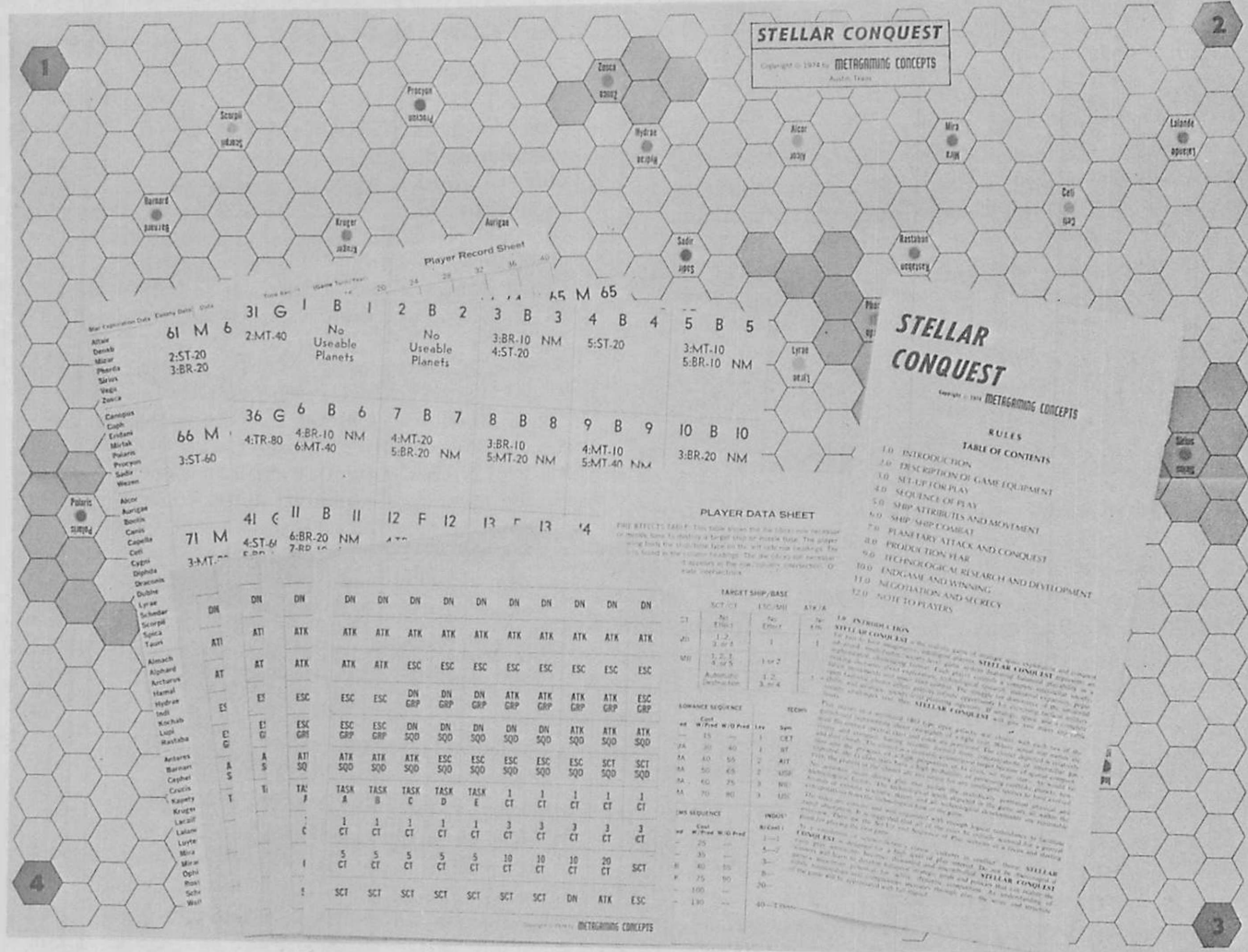
Back at the end of February the Vancouver, B.C. people threw another of their exceptionally fine conventions. Good people there. Bob Silverberg was the Guest of Honor and gave a speech in which he decried what the inflationary trend seemed to be doing to publishers; making them draw in their horns and go with lots of safe reprints and series titles. He said that he was going to bag sf writing for a while, perhaps give a whirl at screenplay writing and hopefully things would get better when the economy did. That put everyone in a down mood for a while, but by and large everybody enjoyed the con very much. There was a good Seattle contingent in attendance and Susan Wood and Eli Cohen and Doug and Sharon Barbour, all especially good friends whom I see all too little. We had great conversations and I only wished that it could have stretched for several more days. Susan will be moving to Vancouver in the summer to begin teaching at the Univ. of British Columbia in the fall so we'll see much more of her.

Gads, 46 pages and no letter col. We'll make up for that next time with an exceptionally long one; don't let it stop you from responding to this.

Bye-o, Frank







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