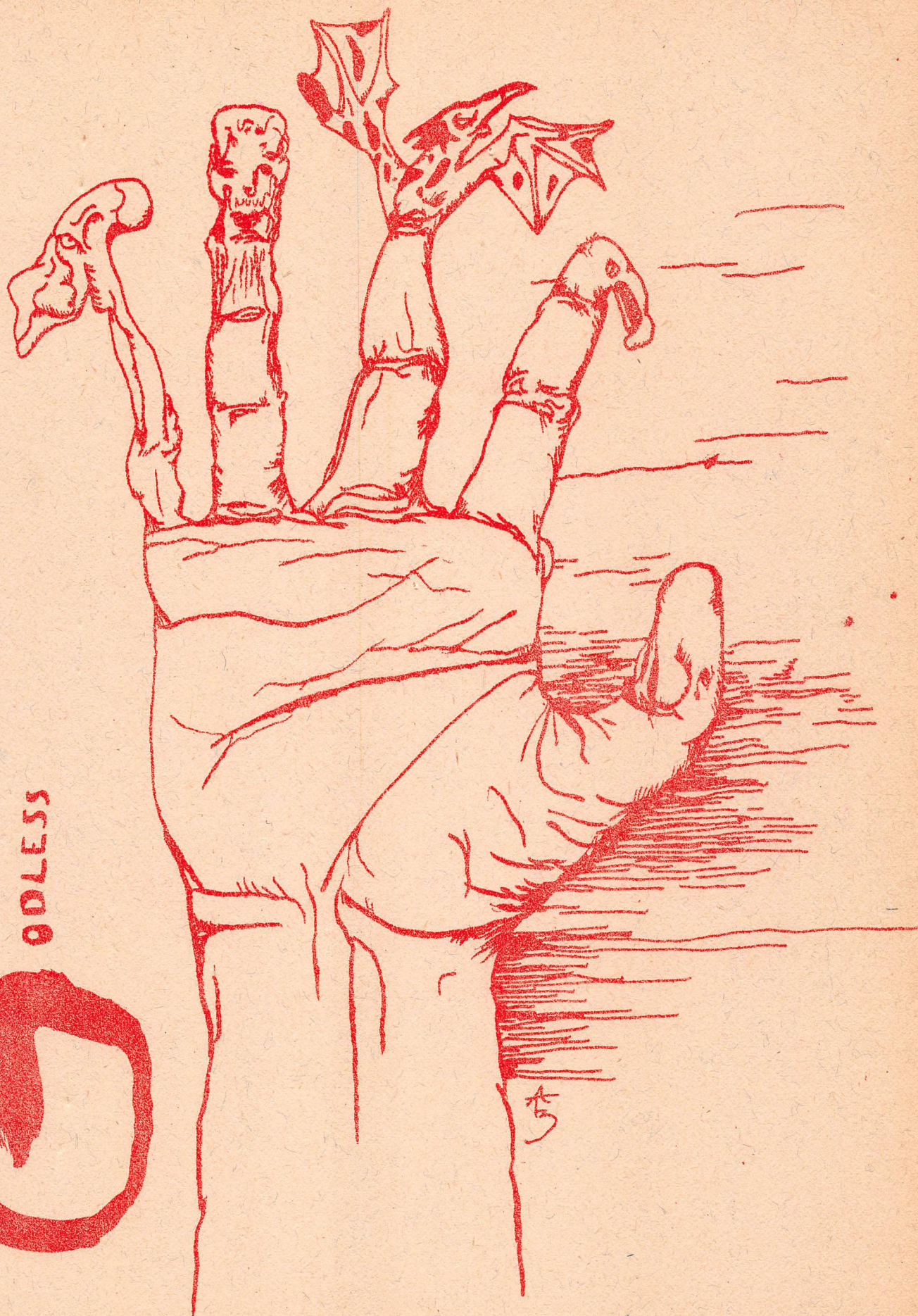


9 ODLESS





GODLESS #9 is the January 1975 issue (Happy New Year, and I hope you had a merry Christmas), and issues forth from:

Bruce D. Arthurs
2401 W. Southern Ave., B-136
Tempe, AZ 85282
USA

The above is a new address, so TAKE NOTICE! Actually, I won't be there until after the 23rd of January, but please send all letters, trades, etc., to the above, not to my old Fort Lee address. GODLESS is available for the above-mentioned locs and trades, and also for 75¢ or 3/\$2.00.

Invaluable collating aid was provided for last issue by Tim C. Marion. Also, this issue marks the last that will be produced on Ned Brooks' never-failing M-4 mimeo, and brings the total page count of the zines that Ned has made possible to 302 pages. I find it impossible to express my gratitude, Ned, and just hope that my own mimeo will be as well-trained as yours.

CONTENTS

The King In Plural editorial by the editor (who else?).....	pg 2
Ring-Around-the-Bowl-World parody by Rich Bartucci.....	pg 5
A Requiem for Lancer article by Don D'Amassa.....	pg 9
The Genuine, Drafted-on-Stencil DISCOM 2 conreport by Bruce D. Arthurs.....	pg 11
How To Lick The Space Monsters and Save the World reprint from the 26 Nov 73 OVERSEAS WEEKLY.....	pg 30
Mindspeak letters.....	pg 35
A QUIP reprint by Arnie Katz (title by BDA).....	pg 50



WHY YOU GOT THIS

- ☐ contributor
- ☒ letter of comment
- ☒ trade
- ☒ you are mentioned
- ☐ review
- ☐ whim
- ☐ you paid money, you fool, you

If the space below has an "X" in it
you must Do Something in order to
receive the next issue.

[]

ARTWORK

Bruce Townley.....	cover, 2, 35
Brad Parks.....	1 (logo), 7 (top), 50
Dave Barnett.....	5, 9
Bruce Arthurs.....	1, 7 (bottom)
Sam Long.....	8
Alexis Gilliland.....	30, 32
Terry Jeeves.....	33, 34, 45
Bill Kunkel.....	39
Cy Chauvin.....	49

-----John Berry for DUFF!-----



I'LL MISS YOU, MICKEY AND MINNIE...BUT NOT MUCH By the time you read this, I should have received my release from the US Army, and be heading back home to Arizona. I am filled with conflicting emotions. On the one hand, I've come up against a lot of bullshit, incompetence, selfishness, and stupidity in the Army, and I've gone thru a few bad moments when I was ready to chuck it all and head for the Canadian border. Boy, have I met some fuggheads in the Army. I lost my temper at one of them a few weeks ago and told him to go to hell. He was a captain. I'm still not sure how I managed to get out of that one with no ill effects.

But overall, I think my three years in the Army have been beneficial. I entered the service as a very insecure and introverted person and I think I'm leaving it much more socially adjusted; I have more confidence in myself and my abilities. I'm still too much the introvert, but nothing like when I went in. Being in the service has forced me to meet people and (time for a cliché) Experience Life.

Not that I don't have my doubts. I'm heading into the civilian job market right in the middle of an escalating recession and rising unemployment. I may regret losing the security of my fairly cushy desk job here, with its free food, free medical care (such as it is, which isn't much), and regular paycheck. But three years is enough; it's time for me to try something else, to see if I'm really as socially adjusted as I think I am, if the "freedom" of civilian life is something I can get used to.

One final word on the subject: I do not recommend military service for everyone, whatever its good points and bad. It is a decision that requires careful thinking and preparation; talk to people who've been in, read the books and articles available, always double-check everything you hear about it, good or bad. And even then, it boils down to two undeterminable factors: your own personality, and Luck. I cannot emphasize clearly enough how much Luck, blind chance, plays a part in what type of life you might have in the Army. (Or Navy, or whatever.) If your luck is good, you might have the time of your life and love every minute of it. If not, you might even be killed (and I don't mean by the "enemy"; there are some bad people in the service.). But enough on that subject.

+ + + + + + +

It'll probably be a while after I get home before I'm settled down enough to get out another issue of GODLESS. Just what I'll be doing is all very uncertain right now. Won't be able to go back to college right away, since I get out of the Army a couple of days too late to make registration for the spring semester. A job depends, of course, on what's available. I've been toying with the idea of using all that free time if I don't find employment

right away to try and do some professional writing. Between my story in FANTASTIC and the Elwood article that'll be in TAC #13, I made \$105 from writing in 1974. I'd like to see if those were just flukes or if I really can write well enough that people are willing to pay for it. Even if I do manage to sell, though, I'd never try and make it a full-time career; the hours and the sweat I expended on the Elwood article made it clear to me that the effort involved isn't something I'd be able to do month after month.

But besides the mundane and monetary obstacles, there's the problem of supply. I'll have to find new sources of paper, stencils, ink, etc., near my new home. Plus there's the fact that the Malacoda Press, the mimeo I bought on leave about a year ago, has yet to be tried out. The machine may turn out to be as much of a demon as its name indicates. Hopefully not. I've learned a little bit about troubleshooting mimeographs, so with luck I'll be able to correct and bad behavior on its part.

And if not, I'll give it such a kick....

+ + + + + + +

I STILL DON'T LIKE THE NAME, TIM! Phoenix fandom will be holding its first convention on March 14-16. I'd like to be able to think that it had something to do with my returning to the Phoenix area, but no such luck; Phandom thought it up all on its own. The name of the con is Leprecon (ghak; why must so many cons use puns as their titles?) and the person to write for information is: Tim Kyger, 702 E. Vista Del Cerro, Tempe, AZ 85281. Guest of Honor is Larry Niven (that almost makes it up for the name of the con) and it'll be held at the Quality Inn. Where in Phoenix is the Quality Inn, you might ask? Don't ask. Tim didn't mention that in the info he sent me. Write him if you want to know. He was supposed to send me some flyers to include with this issue, and hopefully they'll have the address included on them.

Since this will be Phoenix's first con, some people who know the city only by its reputation may have some doubts. I'm the first one to admit the place has its faults. First of all, it's big, and very spread out. It tends to take a long time to get from one point to another. But that's a problem common to most large cities. The bus system sucks to the nth degree, and taxis are expensive. But just how much sightseeing do fans usually do at conventions? I've been to Washington three times for cons, and have yet to rubberneck at all the sights there. I do realize, though, that the lack of dependable transportation would be a problem for anyone coming in by bus or air. So, if Tim hasn't thought of it already, I hereby volunteer my services and my station wagon as a shuttle service to the convention. If you're planning to attend (please do) and flying or bussing in, please drop me a line at the address in the colophon or call (602) 967-3872.

I think it'll be a good convention. A good guest of honor, and the Phoenix area has two active clubs backing the con. There'll be the usual convention activities; panels, films, a banquet, room parties, etc. Now if they'd only change the name....

One final word: the Arizona weather. For those who might be worried about such things as heatstroke, please don't. March is usually a very pleasant month in Phoenix. (June or July, now....) And rattlesnakes are hardly ever seen inside the city limits. Watch out for the crocodiles in the canals, though.

+ + + + + + +

And as long as I've plugged one con, I'll plug another. On July 11-13, the first World Faan Convention will be held at the Hotel Monteleone in New

Orleans, chaired by Don Markstein. Where in New Orleans is the Monteleone, you might ask? Don't ask. I swear, these con chairmen sure are forgetful sometimes; act like every hotel around is an instantly recognizable landmark. For further info, write Markstein at PO Box 53112, New Orleans, LA 70153.

The WFanCon (my own term for it; Markstein may dislike the appellation as much as I do Leprecon) is intended to appeal to the "mainstream" of fandom, and not to the fringe groups, the Trakkies and comix fen, etc. For this reason, Markstein asks that publicity be limited to those fanzines that give out more than half their copies free, in trade, etc., and avoid the high-circulation semi-prozines like ALGOL. Programming is still somewhat up in the air, but it'll be not too sercon, not too fannish, with something for everyone and a good time for all. I'm really enthusiastic about this con, and Markstein tells me that I've got the #1 membership card. Aww...

Registration is \$5. Make checks payable to the official moneychanger, Rick Norwood, at the same PO Box as listed above.

+ + + + + + +
I SWEAR THIS IS THE LAST PLUG There should be a DUFF ballot included with this issue, and I urge you all to vote John Berry for DUFF. I had the chance to meet and talk with him at the last Philcon and found him an interesting and knowledgeable fan, a damn fine candidate for the honor.

He writes swell, too. Which is the crux of my argument. His other opponent in the DUFF race is Rusty Hevelin, well-known huckster, con attendee, and also an interesting and knowledgeable fan. (With all due respect to Jan Howard Finder, I can hardly think of him as a real candidate for DUFF. He may be a great person and a sparkling wit for all I know, but in this case "for all I know" is synonymous with "nothing.") Rusty was at Philcon also, and I talked and listened to both of them. And they're both damn fine candidates. If it weren't for one selfish reason, I'd be hard put to choose between them.

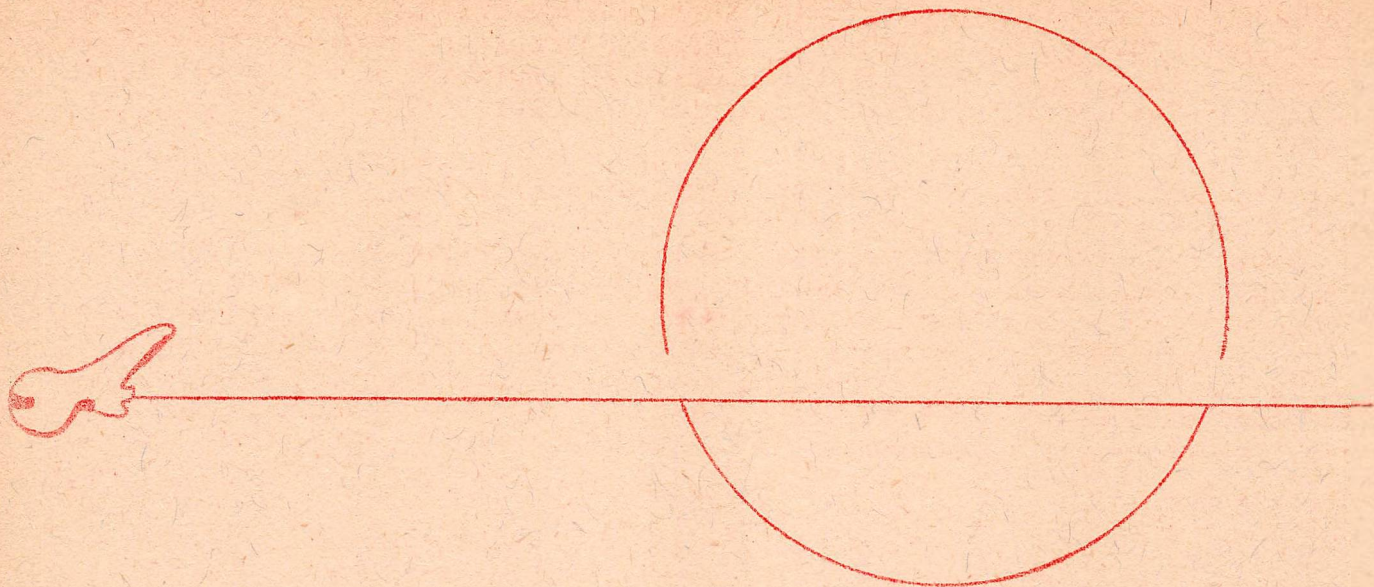
That selfish reason is this: When I asked, Berry said that he will write a trip report if he wins. Rusty Hevelin, asked the same question, said that he might write a trip report. Faced with a choice between the two, I have to side with Berry, who is already well-known in fandom for his travels and hitchhiking tales. That promise of a trip report tips the fulcrum in John Berry's favor for me. I hope it will for you, if you find it as hard to choose otherwise as I did.

+ + + + + + +
This issue is both the largest and the fastest I've put together. Fifty-one pages, less than three months after the previous issue. Of course, this is because of my impending move, and not something I'm going to keep on doing. I think the layout suffers somewhat from this speed, being a bit more hurried and simplified...and I can already see that I managed to paste up Cy Chauvin's illo at an angle. Ouch.

But even taking more time, I don't think you're going to see any more 50 page issues of GODLESS. Fifty pages is just too damn much to tackle at one time. I estimate that this issue will end up using almost an entire case, ten reams, of paper. I'm already shuddering over the thought of collating all those sheets. So issues from hereon will tend to be smaller, except possibly for some special occasion.

This zinc's pentannial issue, the Godlish in June 76, will be one hundred pages long.

- Bruce D. Arthurs, 31Dec74



RING-AROUND-THE-BOWL-WORLD

—BY RICH BARTUCCI

Hymie Yung looked out into the swirling ripples of salmon and fuchsia that quavered across the imperviousness of the ship's port. How had he gotten into this pickle-be-tickled situation?

A snort and a belch of H_2S from behind brought his attention back into the crowded cabin that comprised ninety percent of the viable space aboard The Dyseptic Glutton. Tucked into the central crash web was one of the oddest sapient creatures ever discovered by man, a Michaelson's Mouseketeer.

Hymie recalled the circumstances of man's first meeting with the mouseketeers; a member of the third Martian expedition, Major Michaelson, had come dashing back to the landing site gibbering about seeing something that had looked like Annette Funicello and Donald Duck performing an unnatural act in a pile of linguini al dente. Since that fateful day, those phlegmatic whatchamacallits had impressed their mark firmly upon the commercial life of the human race. With their gypsum-based metabolism, they'd put every wrecking firm on Earth out of business in a fortnight, knocking down and consuming most of the now unused expressways, freeways, and turnpikes that criss-crossed the face of the old planet like the scars of a clumsy appendectomy.

That had been a hundred years ago; more recently, this particular mouseketeer, Flatus, had enticed gullible young Hymie from his cushy job as second assistant fluids sorter in the West Coast Sewage Center to enlist him in this mad expedition. Hymie had been the first member of the crew recruited; his lower lip quivered with remembered terror as he recalled how Flatus had gulled the scruffy purple K'choo, Consorter-With-Fungi, into accompanying him by challenging the fierce little carnivore to a ritual mating contest served by half-a-dozen floozies from Philadelphia.

The results had been terrible to see; Consorter-With-Fungi had, predictably, come down with the most horrendous case of crabs Hymie had ever

seen, and Flatus had withheld relief-giving Crab-Gone from the poor schmuck until the K'choo agreed to come along. Only Flatus, with his peculiar mouseketeer biochemistry, could fart out the soothing ointment in sufficient quantities to hold the vicious little Phthiri in check.

But why had Flatus needed Consorter-With-Fungi? Why, for that matter, had the mouseketeer enlisted the aid of the weird and unco Gruntnikkian, Slunge? What possible use could be found for seventy-five pounds of sentient yogurt?

With each passing moment, Hymie knew, the well-beloved knobs and sluice gates of his fluids-sorting station were falling behind as the ship delved the chaotic color combinations of ultra-space. He sighed and turned his attention back to the port; he could almost imagine that the colors rippling by were the gurgling sludges of his sluice tubes back home on Earth.

Romance! Glory! The words left a hollow ring in his mind. What were they beside the mundane pleasure of doing one's job in the midst of Terra's teeming billions? Without fluid sorters, the vital flow of life-giving sewage might cease, deteriorating into a mad concatenation of clogged pipes and stuffed-up drains. How had he let Flatus drag him away from those vital duties?

He looked back at the mouseketeer. There he sat - or whatever - sucking up a mixture of vaselin and portland cement through a straw, inscrutable and mysterious as ever.

"Ukk-hfmbly," came Flatus' voice, grumbling as he spat the siphon out of his eating-and-reproductive orifice. "Gather round, good crewmates; it has come time to discuss the endpoint of our mission."

Half-heartedly, Hymie joined the others as they crouched, squatted, and sloshed into place around their leader.

Reaching out a psuedopod, Flatus flipped a toggle on the control board. The viewing screen brightened to reveal a picture of a female-dexter Gruntnikkian with her slinches exposed. The mouseketeer looked sternly at the apologetically-bubbling Slunge and twirled a dial until a solar system appeared.

"This, gentlebeings, is the star system G-7743a. Though it appears to be a normal star system, it is not. The entire system - a 'G' star and seven planets - have been fabricated out of a substance resembling the Terran food-compound known as gingerbread." He looked at Hymie in a pointed fashion, focusing all seven eyes and three nostrils on the young fluids-sorter. "Have you any suggestions on how this came about, Mr. Yung?"

"Uh, Hansel and Gretel?" postulated Hymie. "With a Wicked Old Witch in the wings?"

Consorter-With-Fungi snorted angrily and brandished seven-inch-long digging claws in what passed for the mouseketeer's face. "Faough!" he cried, "You disgust me. A true K'choo must only embark on those missions where he may gain Brownie Points through honorable battle or the digging of new Nests for the Mother Hive. How can I do either while in thrall to you? Grangargle!" He swiped at a particularly impertinent crab that had climbed out onto his twitching pink nose.

"Your time will come, Consorter-With-Fungi," replied Flatus darkly. "Your particular expertise will prove valuable, beyond a doubt. Back to the Gingerbread System; Mr. Yung, have you any ideas of how it could have been constructed?"

Hymie shook his head. "I'm a sewage specialist, not a baker. How the hell should I know?"

"Humm," said Flatus. He twiddled a knob briskly and a second picture faded in to replace the star system. It was a large, silvery ovoid.

"This solidosnap was taken by a high powered telescope on the planet of Montezuma's Revenge. It is obviously an artifact, and it measures some five thousand meters in its largest diameter."

The Gruntnikkian burbled a query. Flatus nodded and pointed to the door. The yogurtoid rippled thru the portal, accompanied by the mouseketeer's admonition to "wipe up afterwards; you left silicon on the seat last time!"

Hymie looked puzzledly at Flatus for a moment. "What's the significance of the big bauble, Bubbie?"

"Obviously, you miss the artifact's significance, Mr. Yung." The mouseketeer dialed the picture into a sharper focus. This item is the only object in the entire system of G-7743a that is not constructed of gingerbread - and that's why we're going to investigate it."

* * *

Hymie was terrified; it was the first time he'd ever had to venture outside a ship in a space suit. Only the relief tube had kept him from soaking his socks so far. He gulped as the Milky Way tumbled around him and tried to entice his breakfast into his helmet.

"Kfzzt-granch!" came a furious hissing over his earphones. "You nearly clipped my air tanks! Watch where you're going, you particular nud!"

"Sorry, Consorter," replied Hymie apologetically. "This is all pretty new to me, y'know."

"Ganglegrogle!" growled the K'choo. "Keep it up and nothing else will ever get the chance to be new to you!"

"Enough!" came Flatus' voice in their ears. "Slunge is already on the skin of the object. His tests reveal that the artifact is hollow."

A confirmatory gurgle emanated from the yogurtoid, whose space suit consisted entirely of a helmet and an extra-large Baggy. Already his form was flowing across the smooth surface of the artifact. Hymie, Flatus, and Consorter-With-Fungi followed him down, riding easily on their reaction-sticks to alight beside the lumpy little Gruntnikkian.

"Hey!" Hymie cried, pointing excitedly. "I can make out some kind of writing on this whatchamacallit!"

"Not only that," came Consorter-With-Fungi's voice, "but I have found what must only be the outline of a door!"

"The others gathered around the excited K'choo as Hymie laboriously picked out the seven-meter-high letters on the object's skin.

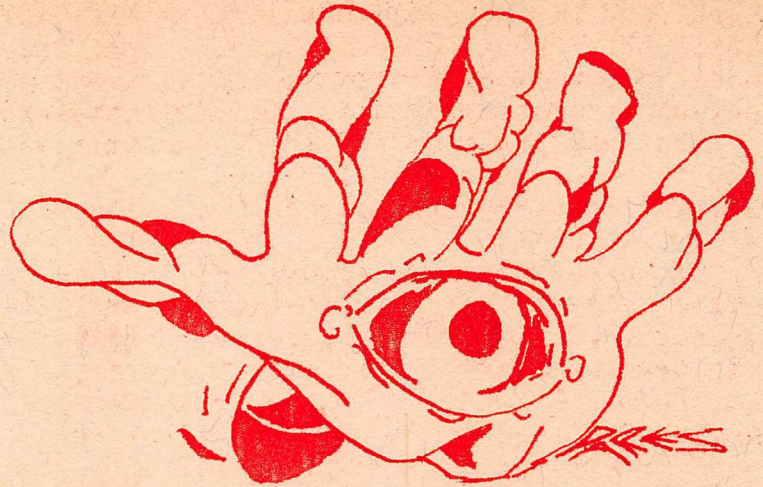
"Do you believe it can be opened?" said Flatus anxiously.

"Graglevargle! I mean, yes, it can be opened," replied the K'choo. "Shall I proceed to try?"

"By all means." The mouseketeer stepped back to let the purple carnivore work.

"Hey, fellas?" called Hymie. "I think I've got something over here..."

"No time, Mr. Yung!" replied Flatus a little testily. "We've bigger game afoot here." The door creaked open, an enormous thing, perhaps twenty by fifty meters in area. "Much bigger game!"



"Uh, I don't think you guys should go inside until you see what I found."

"Zagle-sfortz!" snorted Consorter-With-Fungi. "Overcautious Earthman!" Without hesitation, the K'choo plunged into the inner darkness. Lemming-like, Slunge followed, and Flatus, not to be left out, tagged along.

Watching them disappear into the vast interior, Hymie could only shake his head. "You'll be sor-ree!"

A grumble from the interior grew to become the familiar sound of rushing waters. A plaintive gurgle from the Gruntnikkian and a pissed-off snarl of irritation were the last transmissions Hymie received from his departed crewmates.'

He waited an hour, but -- much as he'd expected -- none of the exploring extraterrestrials reappeared.

* * *

Back aboard The Dyspeptic Glutton, Hymie took one long, last look at the only artifact in the entire Gingerbread System, the artifact that had swallowed up his three travelling companions. Before he set course for home, he read aloud the words he'd deciphered on the object's surface:

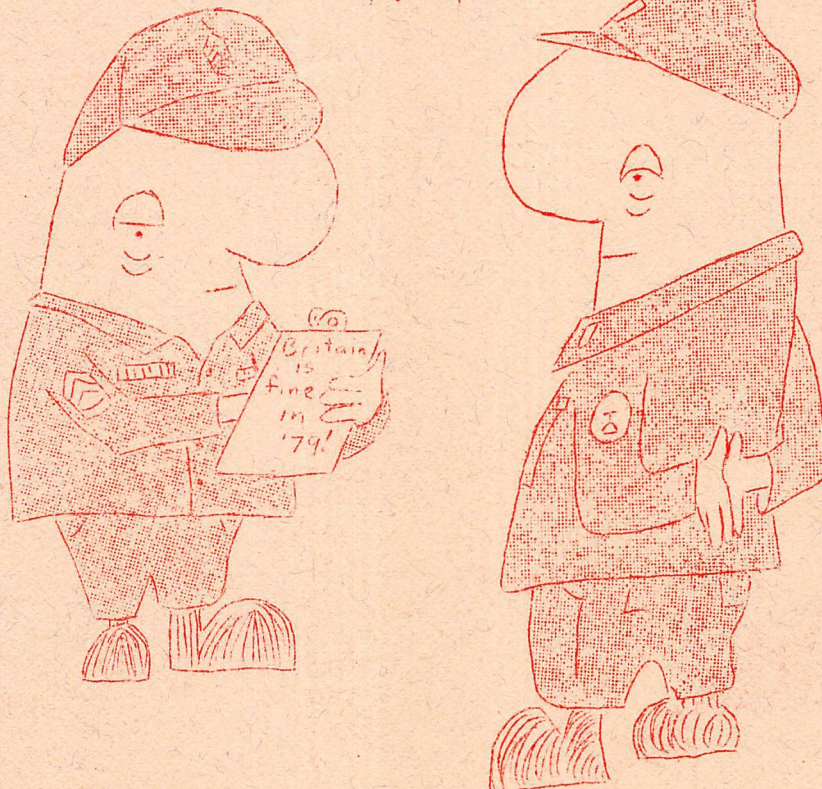
"SANI-DUMP Industrial Rest Rooms; 'Comfort is Our Only Criterion.'"

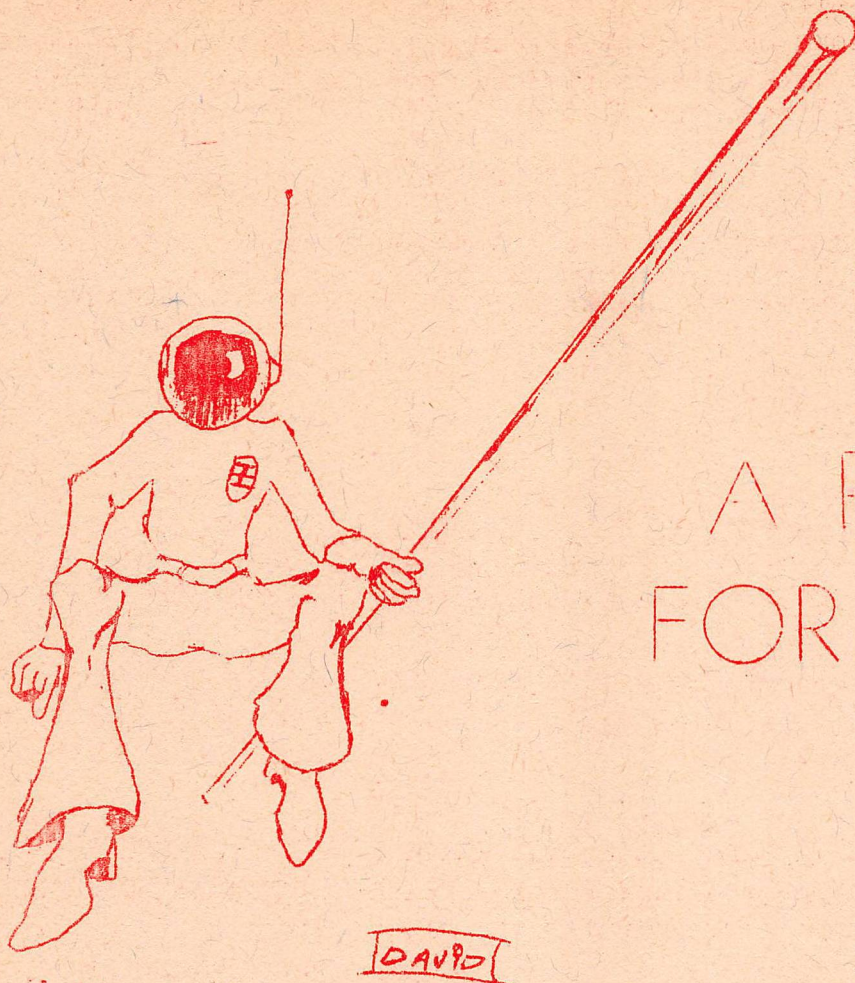
With a philosophical shrug, he triggered the drive and started on the long trip back to Earth.

-- Rich Bartucci

XX

Sir, SP5 Arthurs
is FI-AWOL!





A REQUIEM FOR LANCER

by Don D'Amassa

Lancer Books is, it appears, defunct. Although never really a leader in the field of sf paperbacks, Lancer had a creditable record, and will be missed. According to my records, 183 science fiction, fantasy, and horror titles were published by Lancer before its demise. The statistics involved show a decided trend toward novels and straight fantasy.

There were 119 SF titles, 42 fantasies, and 22 supernatural horror. No other US paperback publisher of comparable size issued such a large proportion of fantasy. Overall, there were 144 novels, 23 short story collections, and 16 anthologies. Of the novels, 76 were original appearances, 42 were reprints of hardcovers, 13 were reprinted from magazines, and 13 more were reprints of paperbacks from other publishers. 107 were by US authors, 35 by British, and 2 by Australians.

Lancer published many volumes in well known series, including Conan, Anderson's Flandry and Polesotechnic League stories, Chandler's Rim Worlds, Creasey's Palfrey, the mind brothers series from Peter Heath, Hamilton's Star Kings, Moorcock's Burroughsian Mars series, William Nolan's first Sam Space novel, Ted White's Max Quest, Williams' Zanthar, David Mason's Kavin, John Jakes' Dark Gate series, Moorcock's Elric and Dorian Hawkmoon, and Lovecraft's Cthulhu stories.

The most notable accomplishment of Lancer Books was their continuing policy of reprinting long unavailable works. Conan is perhaps the best known of these, but it should be remembered that Lancer also was among the first to publish Lovecraft in paperback, and brought back into print many of the early novels of Jack Williamson. Among other outstanding books which appeared in their line were Robots Have No Tails by Henry Kuttner, Cloak of Aesir by John W. Campbell Jr., Iceworld by Hal Clement, The Dying Earth by Jack Vance, A Martian Odyssey by Stanley Weinbaum, An Old Captivity by Nevil Shute, Divide and Rule by L. Sprague de Camp, Well of the Unicorn by Fletcher Pratt, Fury by Henry Kuttner, Slaves of Sleep by L. Ron Hubbard, Dreadful Sanctuary by Eric Frank Russell, and Highways in Hiding by George O. Smith.

There was, unfortunately, at least one aspect of Lancer's operation which was not as admirable. Publishers often retitle books when they reprint those from another publisher. But Lancer often retitled its own books in new editions. Lester Del Rey's Siege Perilous became The Man Without A Planet, Philip Jose Farmer's The Day of Timestop became Time-stop, Damon Knight's anthology First Flight became Now Becomes Tomorrow, Laurence Janifer's You Sane Men became Bloodworld, Arthur C. Clarke's Master of Space became The Space Dreamers, and Moorcock's Blades of Mars, Warrior of Mars, and Barbarians of Mars became Masters of the Pit, Lord of the Spiders, and City of the Deast. I was also dismayed to see that Lancer retitled John Blackburn's fine SF novel, A Scent of New Mown Hay, as The Reluctant Spy, and billed it as a suspense novel.

A judgement as to the quality of Lancer's publications is necessarily subjective, but I'm going to include it anyway. Omitting the anthologies, which include Robert Hoskin's Infinity series of original stories, there were 167 titles, of which I found 75 to be almost unreadable, 75 entertaining, and 17 outstandingly good. Only 3 of these 17 were original Lancer Books: Neal Barrett's Kelvin, Dean Koontz's The Haunted Earth, and William Nolan's Space For Hire. Two were fantasy reprints, The Dying Earth by Jack Vance and Slaves of Sleep by L. Ron Hubbard, and two were horror, The Dunwich Horror and The Color Out of Space, both by Lovecraft. Four had had previous paperback appearances: The Currents of Space and The Naked Sun by Isaac Asimov, Fury by Henry Kuttner, and The Humanoids by Jack Williamson. Four more had had hardcover appearances: Robots Have No Tails by Henry Kuttner, The Cloak of Aesir by John Campbell, Dreadful Sanctuary by Eric Frank Russell, and An Old Captivity by Nevil Shute. Recalled to Life by Robert Silverberg had previously appeared in a pro-zine.

Although there is a rather large proportion of unsatisfying books in the Lancer line - particularly in the area of supernatural horror - this is more than outweighed by the definite contribution Lancer made in the area of reprints. Lancer was also one of the only two major paperback publishers who regularly printed heroic fantasy. Anyway you look at it, Lancer is going to be missed.

((Editor's note: Sharp-eyed observers out there may have noticed that Don's list of the "outstandingly good" Lancer books only adds up to sixteen. So I announce a contest: the first person who writes in and guesses what the seventeenth book should have been will win absolutely nothing - BDA.))

THE GENUINE DRAFTED-ON-STENCIL DISCON 2

by Bruce D. Arthurs

Wednesday, 28 August

I was back home in Tempe, Arizona on leave, with a plane ticket to Washington the next morning for the worldcon. Jim Kennedy came over about 7:00 that night, with some pastel-on-velvet drawings by Skip Olson he'd asked me to enter into the Discon art show. Quite nice they were, too; two facial studies of the Frankenstein monster and Lon Chaney and one of the spaceship from Forbidden Planet traveling thru space.

We wrapped them and taped the art securely in some posterboard I had in my closet. Jim had a night class to attend, so he gave me the info on minimum bid and other necessary items and said goodbye.

I went back to my room and finished packing my bags. I knew that I'd probably pick up quite a bit of stuff at Discon, so I tried to leave a little empty space in the luggage. Since I knew I'd be coming home for good in January, I left behind some of the summer clothing I'd brought back with me; I wouldn't need too many short-sleeved shirts in the Virginia fall or winter.

Thursday, 29 August

After saying goodbye to my parents, I flew out from Sky Harbor International in Phoenix about 7:30 in the morning. I don't like flying, and I tried to pass the time by listening to the stereo program thru my headset. The packaged pap on most of the channels revolted me, so I spent all of my time listening to the classical station. I didn't realize the consequences, because the program included a trumpet concerto which I found engrossing, and since the program was only about an hour long, I got to listen to it four or five times. As it turned out, that damned concerto was mnemonic, and I went thru the entire convention with it running thru the back of my mind. And it's still going, even now.

The flight had an hour-and-a-half layover in St. Louis, where I took the opportunity to try and call Donn Brazier at his museum. Alas, his secretary told me he was at a Rotary meeting until 2:00 and the flight left at 1:45. One of these days, Donn....

Arrived at Washington National and took a cab to the Sheraton-Park. I like Washington cabs; they're cheap. Relatively so, anyway. If you get caught in a traffic jam, you're not charged for sitting and waiting like New York cabs do.

I'd been to the Sheraton-Park before, for the last two Disclaves, so I proceeded directly to the registration desk. The lobby was already getting pretty crowded, even tho' most people wouldn't show up until the next day.

I ran into my first familiar face waiting to get a room. I saw a galf cap and under it, a face with a thin mustache and a sneering leer stamped permanently upon it; none other than Eric Ferguson (the Third), the other

Fort Lee fan. (There is, incidentally, one neo-femmegfan at Fort Lee who I've been trying to ~~bring~~ bring into active fandom.) Eric (the Third) is one of the leading members of Decadence Fandom: if you've ever talked with him, you'll know what I mean.

I finally reached the desk and got out the room confirmation Tony Cvetko had sent me. (I was sharing a room with Tony, Ken Gammage, and a friend of Tony's named Tom Walcher.) Thereby ensued a most incredible scene: The clerk took the reservation into a back room and came back a moment later. "You arrived yesterday?" No, I told her, I'd just arrived a few moments ago. She went into the back room again, and returned. "You were supposed to arrive yesterday." No I wasn't, I told her. If I'd been supposed to arrive yesterday, I would have been there yesterday. She went into the back room again and returned once more. "You did arrive yesterday, right?" I was told. No, I patiently explained, if I'd arrived yesterday I wouldn't be standing there right now trying to get a room key. Once more into the back room. She came out finally with a hurt look on her face and a room key. "You were supposed to have been here yesterday," she pouted. I still don't know what that was all about.

A quick ride up in the elevator (which apparently became exhausted from overuse that weekend; at con-start you could get one in a minute or two while by Sunday night waits of ten or fifteen minutes were common) brought me to the fifth floor and I headed off looking for corridor F, walking past two people heading for the elevator.

One of them turned around and asked, "Say, aren't you Bruce D. Arthurs?" And that's how I met Tony Cvetko and Ken Gammage. (They were able to recognize me by the jacket I was wearing, one I wear at all cons I go to, a denim jacket with GODLESS and POWERHAD embroidered on the sleeves and an Arizona flag embroidered on the shoulder. I took it off by Friday night, though; too many people made it too hot to wear.) They were on their way to get something to eat, so after shaking hands they pointed out what way to go and departed.

I dumped my bags in the room and went down to the Concourse of States to register into the convention. I got into line with only two or three people ahead of me; by the next day the registration lines had thirty or forty people at one time. Registration only took a few moments. My name tag was misspelled, reading "BRUCE D. ARTHUR". It only took a few seconds to correct it with a ballpoint pen, but I wonder why such a simple name as Arthurs is constantly misspelled? At Bubonicon the week before, my nametag had read "BRUCE D. ARTHURS". Other misspellings I've encountered include Aruthers, Artters, Ardors, Darvers, and Bries Atlers! (Yeh, even my first name gets misspelled. I rather like the sound of that "Bries", though; if I ever have any children, I think I'll name one Bries.)

Then some time wandering around the concourse, seeing what names I could spy on nametags. The first one I came across was Milt Stevens, who told me that he wasn't working with the LAPD's computers anymore and was doing all his work in his head now. Another rumor he was spreading around was that Elst Weinstein was moving to Guadalajara in the near future to become an abortionist. I ran into Elst a few moments later and asked him about this. He groaned and said that Milt was spreading that lie all over fandom. He was going to move to Guadalajara, but not to work as an abortionist. He's going to be an artificial inseminator.

In between Milt and Elst, tho', I talked to Meade Frierson (the Third) and gave him a dollar to renew my membership in the Southern Fandom Confederation. I talked with Barry Gold about the rumoured possibility of he and his wife Lee bringing out a new, updated edition of the FANCYCLOPEDIA in a few years. Barry said it was still only a possibility at this time, and they'll need a lot of help to ever get it out. He and Lee have made out a preliminary list of subjects that would be included in a new edition, but it's only a start. While we were talking, he also sold me a copy of

THE INCOMPLEAT CHARLES BURBEE, reprinted from 15-year old stencils!

A little more wandering, and I ran into Elst Weinstein, Mike Glycer, and...Faruk Von Turk. Those of you who don't get Don Markstein's TAND-STIKKERZEITUNG might never have heard of Von Turk, which is, I believe, the only place where his writing has appeared outside of various apas. Let it suffice to say that he writes very strange and very funny stuff. And because he writes so weird (and has got a funny name), a lot of people have assumed he was a hoax created by Markstein. Well, I still can't say positively that Faruk Von Turk exists, but I can say that someone with a very long, elaborately waxed and twisted moustache was there and had Von Turk's name on his tag.

I went with Elst up to his room to fetch the newest APA-H mailing, which has long been delayed because Elst has overextended himself in recent months: besides APA-H, he's been working on his fannish dictionary (which will be about 120 pages, photo-offset), something called DANGEROUS CRUDZINES, plus the usual APA-H mailings, Herbangelist activities, and the additional task of preparing for his move. It's a common fannish trap to fall into; you find yourself doing so many things that you don't get any of them done.

I left after a few minutes because I wanted to take Skip Olson's work down to the art show and get it entered. Down, down into the depths of the earth. (Actually only two flights of escalators.) The exhibition hall used was huge. In fact, there was a sizable portion of it unoccupied, even when everyone had brought in all their stuff. And there was a lot of stuff. On my first go around in the room, I saw great stuff by Sternbach, George Barr, Alicia Austin, David Hardy, Ron Miller, Eddie Jones, Chesley Bonestell, and they were just a small part of all the stuff on exhibit. If I'd had it to spare, I could have easily spent thousands of dollars...and I'm not even a particularly enthusiastic original art collector; mostly I settle for posters or prints and not too many of those.

As I was filling out the forms to register the artwork, a lady came up to the registration table with some of her own stuff to register. I knew I'd seen the face before, drawn on a fanzine, and I sneaked a glance at the nametag to make sure. Yep. "Hello, Jackie," I said. And that's how I met Jackie Franke for the first time. It's something everyone should do at least once in their fanac, because Jackie is one of the most talented, versatile, and nicest people in fandom.

I had to hang Skip's work up and Jackie had to finish registering her stuff, so after a few moments we went different ways. I made my way back up to the concourse again and stopped off to glance over the notices and flyers that had been tacked to the bulletin boards. (Incidentally, there weren't enough bulletin boards for all the stuff being posted. By con's end, the existing boards had been moved out from the wall and stuff posted on the back of them.) It was there I ran into the fourth man in the room, Tom Walcher, and talked for a few moments. ("...for a few moments" seems to be getting monotonous, but I can't think of anything better. Besides, it's true; too many people met with too little time to do it in. But I'm not much of a talker anyway; great listener, though.)

In the main lobby, I ran into Mike Glicksohn, Bill Bowers, Tom Reamy, and Andy Porter talking together, arcs of talent sparking between their heads. Susan Wood came up a few moments later, to show off a new cover for AMOR (by Tim Kirk, if I remember rightly). I found her lovely, vivacious, and outgoing; who cares if she's got small...oh, never mind.

Moshe Feder came up to talk to Porter. "Moshe Feder," I said, "How would you like to join the Committee to Lynch Bob Vardeman?"

You've probably never heard of the Committee to Lynch Bob Vardeman, because it's very new. At the last Bubonicon, very little material had been donated to the auction. So Vardebob had gone home and brought back a batch of old books and magazines, including some fanzines. I and some

others looked thru the old fanzines and made the discovery that quite a few of them had never even been opened! So I made a list of the faneds concerned and came up with the idea for the CTLBV. So far, only one of the faneds I've asked has said he doesn't want to join (read on for that account). We're gonna Get You, Bob. (You are reading this, aren't you?)

"You mean he really didn't even open it?" Moshe asked.

"Yes, and what's worse, it wasn't just PLACEBO, it was QUO-DAVIS."

"MERRRGHHH! My best zine ever, and he didn't even open the envelope."

After I consoled him, Moshe told me about a party to be held in the Bushyager's room later that night. Even though I hadn't been invited myself, Linda had written me to say she hoped we'd see each other at Discon, so between that and Moshe's unofficial invite, I figured it would be okay. I'd never been to a closed-door party before, so I wasn't sure of the etiquette involved. (As it turned out, the door was left about halfway open, anyway.)

There was still a few hours until the party opened, so I went roaming again, running into George Wells and Gary Mattingly. All of our feet were getting tired, and we went into the N3F Hospitality Room to rest for a while. I've never been in the N3F and have no particular inclination to join, but I did appreciate the quiet haven to get away from the crowds that was run by Stan Woolston and others.

I stopped back in the room for a while to dump the flyers, program books, and fanzines I'd gathered. I looked them over for a little while, then took off to the party.

I was one of the first to arrive at the semi-closed door party, but the room soon became filled. People included Steve Stiles, Matt Schneck, Mike Glycer, Elst, Moshe, Lee and Barry Gold, Bill and Joan Bowers, Mike Glicksohn, Tony Cvetko and Ken Gammage, Barry Smotroff, and Linda Lounsbury in a propellor beanie. (I could never wear one of those, I'd feel like a damned fool. And since I'm already a damned fool, why should I advertise the fact. But Linda eyetracked quite nicely in one, indeed.) Oh yeh, the Bushyagers were there too, somewhere. At one point, the partyers looked around and noticed that our hosts had disappeared. Thinking perhaps we'd been given a hint, everyone moved out into the hallway and continued the party there. Linda Bushyager then came back from some errand down the hall and asked, "What are you all doing out in the hall?"

After the party had been going on for a little while, Mae Strelkov arrived, just in from Argentina. Mae was a fascinating, erudite, highly likable person, the type of lady you'd like to have for a mother or grandmother.

In honor of his fine taste for drink, Glicksohn had presented to him by Elst Weinstein the most suitable beverage that LA Fandom could find, a Puerto Rican drink called Malta India. Malta India is a very sweet, highly malt-flavored, non-alcoholic beverage. Glicksohn took one swallow, and slowly made a disgusted face. "Oh, that's terrible," he said. "Anyone else want the rest of this?"

"Lemme try that," I asked. I took a swallow...and it wasn't bad. A bit too sweet, yes, and it would grow cloying if you drank too much, but it was pretty good. I chugged the bottle down to the stares of the multitude. That Glicksohn just doesn't have any taste; can't take it, yessir. I intended to keep the bottle as a souvenir, but the chambermaid apparently tossed it out the next day when the beds were made. Ah well. I'll have to try and find an outlet when I get back home.

The party drifted on. Elst Weinstein told about some of the hoax apas that were or are running around in fandom. An aspiring artist whose name I didn't catch told about the problems he's had trying to get the sf magazines to even look at his stuff. (He had a portfolio with him, and it was good stuff, too.) But with the day's traveling and excitement, by 2 am I was too tired to stay up and stumbled off to bed.

Friday, 30 August

Woke up about ten o'clock and went down to look thru the huckster room. Lots of material for sale, but not much I wanted. The comics and Star Trek material I could skip, and while I like to look at old pulps, I don't buy them because I know that if I do, I'll catch the collecting bug and spend my life savings trying to get a complete set. I did, tho', pick up a 1972 FANTASTIC that I had missed while in basic training, having the last half of a serial I wanted to finish.

I picked up some NZF zines that were being offered free in the concourse and looked thru them over coffee in the Delaware Suite, which was courtesy of last years Torcon committee.

At 12:30 the con officially opened in the Park Ballroom. I'd ran into Mike Shochraker while looking for a seat and talked with him for a while. Then a wailing caterwauling started up, and a bagpiper in kilts marched up the center aisle. He finished playing, and got a round of applause from the audience. Then Jay Maldeman, the Discon chairman, got up to the podium and said, "On that note, we officially open..." Boos and groans from the audience.

There were two keynote speeches on Outer and Inner Space. The first was by a Dr. Freytag from NASA. I found his speech interesting and informative, but I really rather preferred Frederick Pohl on Inner Space and possible solutions to world problems. One of the most unusual he mentioned was developed by a scientist that would solve many problems by growing corn and making grain alcohol, moonshine, out of it. The alcohol would be added to gasoline in about a 20% mix, making the cars run cleaner and smoother and reducing pollution by 20%. The boilers in which the booze is distilled would be heated by burning the leftover cornstalks. The land on which all this corn would be grown would be reclaimed from land that has been overfarmed and depleted in the past. The land would be renovated by fertilizing it with human excrement. The excrement would therefore no longer be thrown into the nearest river, reducing water pollution. The people to farm the corn could be gotten from the ranks of the unemployed and disadvantaged, who would own their own property and means of livelihood; about 1,800,000 farmers would be needed, which would suffice for those unemployed who want to work and would be willing to take up farming. Utterly incredible.

While Pohl was speaking, Harlan Ellison entered the room, taking a seat a few rows back of me. I have no complaint against Harlan, but I was disgruntled by the "Ellison-groupies" who gathered around him, talking and trying to get his attention. They were a distracting influence and made it hard to hear Pohl's speech, and I considered their behavior to be quite rude.

Next on the agenda was a "tennis match" between Ellison and Isaac Asimov. Asimov was at the front podium while Ellison stood on a table in the back of the hall, and for the next hour the two hurled good-natured insults and anecdotes back and forth. It was an amusing battle of wits and I enjoyed it, but I did hear a few people grumbling that this was pretty trivial stuff to have on the program. OK for a party maybe, but for a Worldcon to have two grown men kidding and bantering at each other for a full hour? Personally, I think it's a matter of how much the audience enjoys whatever's going on, and the audience reaction to Asimov/Ellison seemed quite enthusiastic.

After that was scheduled Jay Kay Klein's slide show, "The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody." And it was here that the convention ran into the first of a plague of technical difficulties. Apparently the lens on the slide projector had too short a focal length and the slides wouldn't come into focus, even with the focus control out to full extension. There was a wait of about 45 minutes as the concommittee tried to correct this, moving the slide projector back and forth, trying to find a substi-

tute projector. Finally someone made an arrangement of cardboard boxes in front of the projector; the focusing lens was taken completely off the machine and set on top of the arrangement, which finally brought the photos into focus.

I don't think that the slide show was as good as the earlier version I saw at the 72 Philcon. A goodly portion of it I had already seen at that time, such as the slide of Isaac Asimov going into the door of a ladie's room. Others were new to me, like the one of Mike Glicksohn without his beard (and another of him without his... but this is a family fanzine). But overall, I felt no great enthusiasm or excitement over the presentation.

By the time the slide show was over, the Meet-the-Fros party was being held in the Cotillion Room. I hoped to question a number of pros concerning their opinions on Roger Elwood, to try and get some experienced information from people who've had dealings with Elwood. As it turned out, the party was so crowded, hot, and hectic that I was able to meet only one or two people there, and the subject of Elwood never came up in the few seconds I spoke. I did run into fan Brett Cox there, though, and was able to talk with him for a few moments. After that, I realized I wouldn't be able to do much of anything at all in such an atmosphere and left. (As it turned out, I did talk to a number of pros about Elwood, but I met them in the hallways or at night-time room parties, not at the Meet-the-Fros party.)

The next few hours are a little vague in my memory. I did some wandering around, I know, but nothing stands out. I went back to the room to change my shirt and found a note from Tom Walcher, saying that Eric had called and there was a room-party in L246 at 7:30. That was in about half an hour, so I looked thru all the flyers, fanzines, and other material I had picked up or had thrust upon me for a few minutes, then went looking for L246. The L wing was way off on the other side of the hotel and took some looking for. I finally found L246 and knocked on the door. And knocked. And there wasn't anyone there. I still don't know if Tom put down the wrong room number or was given the wrong time or what.

Anyway, it was getting near the time for the program to start up again. I went to the Sheraton Ballroom and grabbed a seat. There were already a couple of hundred people or so who'd also come early.

At 8:30, the first program item of the night began, "2001: A Space Opera" written by Alexis Gilliland. It was a marvelous parody and well-staged. To represent the apes, the cast (which included such luminaries as Joe Haldeman, Ron Bunde, and Jack Chalker) wore T-shirts with silk-screened bananas on them. For later scenes in the space station or on board the Discovery, the T-shirts could be turned around to reveal shirts & ties or suitably-spaceship-uniform-like designs on the back. The highlight of the performance, tho', was Ray Ridenhour in silver-face as HAL 9000; he gave a really tremendous rendition of "Mad Robots In the Sky" (to the tune of "They Call the Wind Maria"), with dozens of flashbulbs going off on the final word.

I learned later that the opera was originally written in 1971, and I presume it's been performed before. But I'd really like to see it again, and if further performances are as good as the one at DISCON, it should go down in fannish history as a genuine classic, and one of the recurring events of fandom.

Then the Harlan Ellison Show began. The world premiere of "A Boy and His Dog", based on Ellison's story, was scheduled to take place at the convention. Ellison got up on the stage and told the audience about all the work that had gone into the film and how great it was and how it was really the best adaptation of his work he'd ever experienced. Then he told us that the print being shown wasn't the finished product, but a work print, and some of the things we could expect were: poor sound quality,

sound not being in synchronization with the action, scratches and editing marks on the film, that the color hadn't been balanced and some of the night scenes would look like daylight, that in some of the action scenes the stuntmen's rigging could be detected, et cetera, et cetera. By the time he got to the end of the list, the audience was laughing and groaning in anticipation.

The film started in earnest. Two projectors had been brought in, at a \$2,000 expense to the concommittee, in order to show the film without interruptions to change reels. Unfortunately, one of the projectors had a defective sound system, which reduced the dialogue in the film to unintelligible squawls and roarings.

The film was stopped, and it was decided to start over again, using the other projector, with Ellison taking the stage inbetween reels to give information on the making of the film and answer questions from the audience. The film was started from the beginning again.

And just a few minutes into the second reel, the film broke. It was rethreaded...and broke again when it was started. The second projector had broken down and was stripping the sprocket holes from the film. Ellison must have been completely freaked out at the run of bad luck the film was undergoing. Finally, he got up on stage and began to announce the bad news: "People, you don't know how bad I feel about telling you this, but...." But then there was a quick whispered consultation with one of the projector technicians. "HOLD ON! We just got the word that with a little bit of luck, we might be able to get the projector fixed, in about an hour and a half."

With that encouraging news, the schedule was rearranged. Dramatic readings by Ellison and Roger Zelazny were moved up in time, until the hopeful showing of the movie could be resumed. I skipped the readings, however, because the Monty Python film, And Now For Something Completely Different, was being shown in the Park Ballroom next door.

Never having seen anything from Monty Python before, I wondered if the film could live up to what I'd heard about it. It was even better, and I was laughing out loud, an exercise I indulge in so rarely that various abdominal muscles were left sore and exhausted. The dead parrot sequence, the Lumberjack's Song, "How Not To Be Seen", the "Blackmail" TV game show, and others have all left permanent scars upon my mind. I hope I get to see it again sometime.

Which brings up a point. The film wasn't science fiction or fantasy, and I've heard some complaints about non-sf items being included in the program. 1) Most of the "mundane" films, like a couple of swashbucklers Thursday night, were scheduled for late at night, when a lot of the locals would have gone home, and a good deal of the rest would be at room parties or elsewhere. 2) In the case of the Monty Python film, there was alternate sfnal programming going on in the next room. And 3) since I wanted to see the film, where else could I have seen it? I've never seen it on at any theaters near me, and I doubt it'll ever shown up on TV in the near future. Granted, I wasn't too wild about stuff like the Star Trek reruns shown, but since I didn't want to see those, I went and found my entertainment elsewhere. (And since Star Trek is constantly being rerun on TV, their case does seem rather dumb.)

After the film, I went back to the Sheraton ballroom, where Ellison was finishing up his reading. The projector was not fixed, but they hoped to have it working by the next night, and there would be an announcement for sure by 6:00 PM tomorrow.

I went back to the Park Ballroom and watched several Disney cartoons and Bedazzled. Bedazzled was a really enjoyable deal-with-the-devil story, with _____ (damned if I can remember the name) as an entertainingly evil Lucifer.

Some more cartoons came on, followed by The Man Who Could Work Miracles. I'd seen this before, and decided to go to bed, it being about 2 or 3 in the morning by then.

When I got back to the room, though, I stopped to look thru the stuff I'd bought or been given. One of them was the National Lampoon high school yearbook parody, which I'd been looking for for several months; ever since they nearly got sued over that fake Volkswagen ad, almost all the newstands in the Fort Lee area had stopped carrying the NatLamp publications, despite their immense popularity; sounds to me like somebody is putting pressure on the distributors.

I started to glance thru the "yearbook" and once started, there was no turning back. It was hilarious and at the same time incredibly painful, because again and again it brought back horrible memories of my own high school years. "My god, I acted like that," I said many times. I read the thing straight thru.

When I finished it, I found I wasn't sleepy any more. Not a bit, so I went back to the movies to catch the tail end of the show. The last thing showing was The Adventures of Prince Achmed, one of the earliest animated films, based on an Arabian Nights tale. It used silhouette animation, which I'd never seen before. It was nicely done, but I couldn't get involved in the story (silent movies do that to me) and finally I found myself going to sleep. This time I managed to get up to the room and go to bed.

Saturday, 31 August

Waking up around 10:30, I wandered downstairs and found a preliminary business meeting in progress. Not knowing anything about Worldcon business rules, I listened in complete mystification.

However, it ended soon and was taken over by the general auction. Nothing that interested me came up, though it was fascinating to see some of the bidding battles that were waged. A particularly crogging one was when a guidebook to the 1939 World's Fair started out at a few dollars, and got bid up, and up, and up, and finally sold for a rather incredible \$26. Most of the other objects auctioned didn't have such spirited bidding, though quite a few did sell for more.

Then Harlan Ellison came up to the auction block. No, he wasn't being auctioned off, he was auctioning off. Ellison had had second thoughts about some of the dog's dialogue in A Boy and His Dog, worried about it being interpreted as too sexist. So he'd convinced the producer to dub in new dialogue, but the producer had stipulated that Harlan had to come up with the redubbing costs, about \$700, himself. Harlan had managed to have the producer give him a bunch of shooting scripts, publicity books, cutting room film clips, and other material to auction off at the Worldcon.

I've heard that back in the 50's, when Harlan was a Big Name Fan instead of a Big Name Pro, he had a reputation for being one of the best auctioneers in fandom. It showed, as he wheedled and begged and demanded, getting one more bid out of the audience, then another and another. I'd thought about bidding on some of the material, but Harlan proved too good for me and the bids quickly climbed out of my range. When a copy of the final shooting script went for \$200, I figured that it was no using staying and left.

I went down to the Art Show again, to check on Skip Olson's paintings and see if any bids had been made on them. No entries on the bidding sheets, but the "Forbidden Planet" work had a red sticker on it, indicating that it had been selected to be among the works auctioned off the next day. I wandered around the show some more, seeing the additional artists that had come in since the previous day: Tim Kirk, Kelly Freas,

and John Schoenherr among them. I was especially attracted by Schoenherr's work, in particular one of his dry-brush ink drawings for Gordon Dickson's "Enter A Pilgrim" in the August 74 ANALOG. I was impressed enough that I put my name down on the bidding sheet for the \$20 minimum.

Then I made another run through the huckster room, picking up copies of the British paperbacks of Watership Down and Tombs of Atuan from Lois Newman's table. I also bought a copy of Mike Gorra's special Tucker Fund issue of BANSHEE from Lesleigh Luttrell.

I think it was about this time, after leaving the hucksters and back to the main hallway, that I came across Jon Singer sitting amongst a group of people. I asked him how his plans for a reprint edition of Dick Eney's 1959 FANCYCLOPEDIA, originally announced for "hopefully by DISCON", were coming along. He reported that progress was being made, but there was no way he could have gotten it done by DISCON, unfortunately, and with the advantage of hindsight, he saw that people's hopes shouldn't have been raised to expect it so soon. Hopefully, it will be available later this year.

A notice on one of the bulletin boards announced a meeting for fanzine editors in one of the seminar rooms at one o'clock, arranged by Jackie Franke and Jodie Offutt. Numerous people I'd wanted to meet were in attendance: Frank Balazs, Don D'Amassa, Mike Carlson, and others. And among those I already know were Tony and Ken, Tim Marion, Brett Cox, and others. There were enough people there that I can't remember all their names. Jodie Offutt, of course. Jackie Franke overslept and arrived late. Bill Bowers was there, as were Bob Tucker and Sheryl Birkhead. In fact, there were so many faneds there that we took the few people there who weren't and put them up at the front table as a panel.

A number of things were discussed: Why We Do It, How We Do It, etc. I think I was the one who suggested that with so many faneds present, the logical (well...) thing to do was put out a one-shot, but these plans were squelched when Linda Bushyager (I knew there was someone I forgot to mention) revealed that the only available mimeo at the convention was the WORST she had ever come across in her fannish career; her shudders at the mention convinced everyone else.

The subject of letter columns came up, and I mentioned something about the _____/_____ disagreement in POWERHEAD and how I had squelched it by merely stopping all printing of their letters on the subject. Mentioning it was, I think, a mistake on my part, especially with the people concerned right there, and after I had stated that I wouldn't have any more to do with it. Come to think of it, I shouldn't even have mentioned their names a few lines above; I'll conflu them out, and my apologies.

After a while the people began to break up, but quite a few stayed behind and talked about varied subjects for another hour or so. Don D'Amassa invited me and any other interested persons to an APA-45 party in his room after the masquerade that night. Robin Johnson, the Aussiecon chairman, also popped in for a few moments and invited all the faneds to a closed-door Aussiecon party the next night.

(I've decided there are three major classifications of parties: The open party is the type that's either mentioned in the program or has bunches of flyers lying around or taped on all the walls. The semi-closed party is known by word-of-mouth, with various degrees of inevitability, ranging from "bring your friends with you" to "bring so-and-so, if he wants to come". Finally, the hard-core-closed-door party is where it's restricted to a small group of people who know each other well, or, and I saw this happening, tickets are made, which have to be presented upon entering. The Aussiecon party was semi-closed.)

After some more talks on such subjects as the Postal Service and - gasp - science fiction, I wandered back to the official program, where I

caught the tailend of an SF artist's panel.

Roger Zelazny then came on to give his Guest of Honor speech. It was a good idea, I think, to have the GoH speech at some time other than the official banquet; at the Banquet, any speeches tend to be overshadowed by the presentation of the Hugos.

Zelazny's speech was entertaining, telling all about how he became interested in sf when he was young, and how he eventually started to write sf stories and submit them to the prozines, and submit, and submit. He told the audience that he had submitted literally hundreds of stories before he made his first sale. I wonder if that figure was as croggling to all the wanna-be writers in the audience as it was to me. I'd never have had the persistence to keep submitting with that many rejections to my record.

After the speech, I met Mike Gorra out in the hallway, the son of a bitch. Let me explain why I felt impelled to curse. Mike Gorra published a fanzine called BANSHEE, which started out rather poorly but was one of the most rapidly improving zines around. It really impressed me how he improved each issue over the last with great speed and vigor. I was impressed enough that I wrote a contribution for it. Gorra rejected it, and I'm forced to agree with him; that particular piece wasn't too hot. So I sent him some art. He rejected that. Hmm. Oh well.

Finally, though, I sent him a fannish anecdote called "Mike Glicksohn's Beard," based on a meeting with Glicksohn at the 74 Disclave. With all due humility, I thought it was pretty good, and just the sort of thing Gorra wanted for BANSHEE. And...Gorra agreed with me! He said in a letter that the special Tucker issue of BANSHEE would be the last, but he was going to be publishing a less formal zine called RANDOM and would be publishing my piece in its first issue.

Well, when I met Gorra in person, what does he tell me? "I hate to tell you this, but I've decided that since I've got so much other good material to print, I'm not going to be able to use your article after all."

Grrr. That really irked me. I wish he'd decided that earlier, instead of holding the article three or four months. I put on an exasperated smile and said, "You son of a bitch, you did it to me again." No, I'm not going to try and contribute to Gorra again; whatever it is he wants for contributions, I apparently can't supply. Plus the fact that I'm apparently not among the one hundred or so people on his mailing list for RANDOM. At any rate, "Mike Glicksohn's Beard" was subsequently accepted by Linda Bushyager for KARASS.

After leaving Gorra, I noticed that a notice in an elevator had Bob Vardeman's name on it, apparently indicating that he was at the con. I ran into Moshe Feder again in the lobby and suggested that if Bob was here, we could get ourselves some rope and go looking for him. There were even handy lampposts in the main concourse. But when we checked with the hotel desk, we found that Vardeman wasn't registered after all. Whoever put the notice up with Bob's name on it is still unknown.

Mike Glycer, who was also with us, spied Ted White and went over to talk with him, with me and Moshe tagging along. (Or was it Moshe who went to talk with Ted White? In any event, I followed.)

I was standing there listening, when Ted White spied my name-tag and did a take. "Bruce D. Arthurs, I'm glad to meet you," he said, extending his hand. I took it, rather mystified. "What?" I think I said in a questioning tone, "What is this, he says he's glad to meet me?" I think I can safely say that I'm a well-known fan, but I couldn't think of anything I'd done that would have brought my name to Ted White's attention. The puzzlement must have been evident on my face.

"Didn't you get an acceptance letter from me?" he said.

"Letter?"

"Yes, I bought 'The Return of Captain Nucleus' for the January FANTASTIC. You should have gotten a check by now."

My jaw dropped to the floor. "OH MY GOD!" I exclaimed, "You mean I'm a filthy pro?"

To understand what this all means, go back to the letter column for the March 74 FANTASTIC, where you'll find a letter from one Gary Romeo, who said, "If you must have science-fiction, why don't you print some good stories. The ones about how Captain Nucleus beat a half-dozen BEM's for breakfast and saved Neptune and Venus for lunch and dinner. I like that kind of SF."

Well, that heartfelt plea really touched me, so I sat down and wrote a story called "The Return of Captain Nucleus." In one night. The next night I retyped and slightly revised it, and sent the manuscript off to Ted White the day after. Not only is it the very first story I ever submitted to any pro markets, but it got accepted on the very first try! (Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Roger Zelazny.)

But actually, I never expected Ted White to accept the story for publication. It's a pretty good parody, I think, of the Captain Future school of sf, but it ends with a horrible, godawful, in-groupish pun. I really expected to get the manuscript back with vomit stains on the last page where the pun is. I must have caught Ted White on a day when he was in the right mood for a story like that.

There's one thing about selling a story, though...it's addictive. I find myself possessed of an urge now to write and submit more stories, in a more serious vein. I've already got vague ideas for a novel based on some of my apazines (don't ask me to explain it) and for a series of stories about a group of time-travelers.

I did get the acceptance check, for \$40 (not bad for 3600 words, especially when I didn't expect anything but a rejection slip), a couple of days after I got back from the con. Also, when Ted said the story would be in the January FANTASTIC, he was apparently referring to the issue to be published in January, the March issue; I've seen a list of the contents for the January issue and "Captain Nucleus" isn't among them. (Actually, I was so croggled by the news that I'm not really sure what Ted White said, other than that he'd bought it.)

Still utterly croggled, I went to dinner with Glycer, Craig Miller, and Paula-Ann Anthony. (Paula-Ann is one of the more well-known names among Phoenix Fandom, and I suppose I'll see her a lot more often when I get back to Arizona in February. I have it on good authority that I should be having nightmares about that possibility, but I'm not. She's not that weird.) We found a steak place near the hotel called Arbaugh's. I don't ordinarily eat steak, because of the cost, but this was a special occasion, so what the hell?

The steaks were good. The side dishes, however.... With each order was a side dish of coleslaw. The menu said "coleslaw", at least. We just couldn't decide for sure:

"What do you think it is?"

"I'm not sure. Looks a lot like porridge to me."

"Nah. It's wallpaper paste, I'm pretty sure. Tastes like wallpaper paste, anyway."

"What are all those little brown things in it?"

"Cockroach eggs, maybe?"

"I still think it's porridge. Let me spoon mine into your bowl so I can see if there's a clown painted on the bottom."

...and such other high-class, intellectual conversation.

After dinner, the group split up, Glycer and I heading to see the masquerade. I found an empty chair in the balcony that gave me a good view when I stood on it.

The masquerade started, then continued...and continued...and continued. I had been under the impression that the pre-judging session, held earlier, had the purpose of eliminating the less impressive contestants, so that

the full-fledged masquerade wouldn't drag on and on. We live and learn. There were striking and original costumes, but there were too many uninspired and monotonous presentations for the masquerade as a whole to be interesting. Conan. Another Conan. Another Conan. Four or five "Gor" presentations. I consider it a testament to my patience that I stayed til the end. Glycer didn't bother; I looked around about a third of the way thru the masquerade and saw he'd disappeared.

After the masquerade finally finished, I headed up to the 7th floor, where Don D'Amassa was holding a party for APA-45 members and prospective members like myself. One of the people in attendance was Mike Wood. I've heard quite a bit about Mike Wood, like that his personal ramblings and descriptions of his life in his zine COLOG tend to be highly detailed and longlonglong. It had been only the week before, at Bubonicon, that I had actually come across a copy of COLOG; even forewarned, I was crogged at the sight of a sixty+ page personalzine! "The things I've heard about you are right," I told him, "You are a wordy bastard."

Some more talk with Don & his wife Sheila, Frank Balazs, Mike Shoemaker, Bruce Townley, and others. I looked thru an APA-45 mailing Don had brought to the con, decided "What the hell?", and gave him a dollar to put me on the waitlist.

About this time, the premiere/reshowing of A Boy and His Dog was scheduled to start, and I headed downstairs to see if they'd manage it this time. Yes, they did, with the Harlan Ellison Show on whenever they changed reels on the one working projector.

If you haven't read the original story, do so. The movie is remarkably faithful to the printed version, but not quite as effective. There are a number of nitpicks I could make about it, like if the Undertown is supposed to be under the mud-covered ruins of Phoenix, Arizona, where'd all that damned mud come from? But little things like that can be ignored without spoiling the enjoyment of the film.

The one serious fault I saw in the film would have been unavoidable without a drastic rewrite of the plot. The two main characters of the story are Vic and his cynical, worldly-wise, telepathic dog Blood. And the dog walks away with all the scenes he's in. He is the star, not Vic, and the one the viewers will care about. When Vic goes down to the Undertown, leaving Blood topside, the viewers lose interest. They'd rather see more of Blood, because he's a more interesting character. "It must be his charisma," to quote a line from the movie.

When the movie ended, I started to leave the hall, but met up with Mike Glycer and Elst Weinstein. "We're going to ask Harlan to be Guest of Honor at the Ranquet," they told me, "Wanna help us ask?"

Despite my better judgement, I did go along with them. At the back of the hall, we encountered Harlan on the balcony stairway, where he'd been giving his thanks to the projection crew. As he started towards the door, Elst began, "Harlan, we'd like you to be Guest of Ho--"

"No!" and he ran out the door. Oh well. We laughed it off and continued on. I wonder, though, if that's Harlan's standard answer or if he recognized Glycer or Elst and realized what they were up to? At any rate, we were still left without a GOH.

"*ahem*" I said, "Of course, if you're really desperate for some pro to be Guest of Honor, I might remind you that I...*ahem, ahem*...." (As it turned out, there were eventually four GoH's at the Ranquet. But more of that later.)

Then followed a number of hours going around to various room parties with Glycer, Elst, and Paula-Ann Anthony, who'd joined up with us again somewhere. I remember the group, along with Lou Stathis, Bruce Townley, Mike Shoemaker, and a couple of others heading back to Elst's room, where Stathis and Townley collaborated on a mailing cover for APA-H. Since APA-H

is apparently dead or moribund right now, it looks like the cover will never make an appearance now, so I'll give a description. Townley drew one of his inimitable naked women, and Stathis began putting labels on it, with words ending in an "its" sound (make your own guesses, this is a family fanzine), and drawing arrows to the indicated parts. Plus in the background, a batch of other "-its" things were drawn in. Boy, was that cover putrid - just right for an APA-H mailing.

I also got to see the ~~infamous~~ renowned Stathis personality in action. One of the people who'd tagged along was a Trekkie, or UFO nut, or Scientist, or something. One of the fringe fandoms, at any rate, and was really making rather a pest of himself. I didn't catch his name, as he wasn't wearing a nametag. Anyway, Lou looked up from the APA-H cover and saw that the person had disappeared. "Who WAS that dipshit?" he scornfully asked in a loud voice.

As it turned out, that person hadn't left, merely ducked into the bathroom.... But if he'd heard Stathis' remark in there, he was at least polite enough to ignore it when he came out, and left a few minutes later.

The rest of the night is rather an indiscriminate blur of partying. About 5:30 in the morning, the Kansas City suite closed down (I think it was Kansas City), and I decided it had been enough for a night and decided to hit the sack. I led Paula-Ann back to my room, ~~my wild wild wild evil~~ ~~XXXXXX~~, where she used the phone to call her grandmother at the other hotel they were staying at, and departed.

Tom Walcher had still been awake, reading a book in bed. When Paula-Ann had left, my mind still harboring remnants of evil intentions, I said to him, "Don't get any wrong ideas. That was really Harlan Ellison in disguise."

"Oh, I don't believe that for a moment."

"Would you believe Isaac Asimov?"

Sunday, 1 September

Up at 11:30, everyone else had gotten up earlier and departed. I headed down to the art show, after getting dressed, where I ran into Elst and Gly-er again, posting up flyers for the Ranquet at 1:00. Since they still had been unable to come up with a real GOH, it looked like I was going to be the "pro" guest of honor. I got information from them as to where everyone was supposed to meet in the lobby before heading for the MacDonald's and went on my way.

I took a final run thru the Huckster room. I was really rather surprised at how little I bought at Discon. I'd purposely put a couple of hundred extra dollars into my checking account because I'd expected to find a lot of stuff I wanted. Ah well.

At 1:00, people began to gather in the lobby. By now there were two guests of honor, since Hank Davis, with five stories published had shown up. The crowd, about 40 strong, set off along Connecticut Street and turned left at Calvert, heading past the famed Mama Ayesha's, a Syrian restaurant and tavern that inspired a drunken one-shot at the last Disclave. After about a fifteen minute walk, the MacDonald's was finally reached.

After everyone had gotten their order and a seat (not an easy matter, with 40 people arriving all at once), and eaten, the proceedings began. Elst passed around a beer glass from the St. Francis Hotel, site of last year's Westercon, with "STF" etched on the side, asking for contributions to the Harlan Ellison Relief Fund, "so we can get some relief from Harlan Ellison."

Then the four Guests of Honor were introduced. "First, there's Bruce Arthurs, who's a Guest of Honor because he's actually sold a story." A few cheers and light applause. "Then we have Hank Davis, who has actually had stories published." More cheers and applause. "And we picked Bruce Pelz as a GoH because he actually collects the magazines the stories are

published in." Boos and hisses. "And finally, there's Mae Strelkov from Argentina, because she actually reads the stories." A final burst of applause.

The GoH's stood up and made short speeches. I told the audience how I owed it all to Elst Weinstein, since if he hadn't gotten me to join APA-H, I'd never have been of putrid enough mind to write that particular story and submit it to Ted White.

Finally, the various awards were given out. Besides the Hogu awards, which were too numerous to remember, there was one special award given, the Leather Apron Award for "sword & sadism" fiction, which naturally went to John Norman for Hunters of Gor. The award itself consisted of a naked Barbie doll, with whip marks all over her body, chained to a post.

As the Ranquet ended, I fell in with a group consisting of Tony and Ken, and Don Thompson. Don, whose DON-O-SAUR made him one of the fans I most wanted to meet, had arrived late at the Ranquet, and, like most fen, bore no resemblance to the mental picture I'd had of him. Possibly you've heard about how all BNF's are really eight feet tall, with lightning flashing about their brows. Don isn't quite that tall, but he comes a lot closer than most fen. Tall, thin and wiry, with a remarkably expressive set of features. I hope to meet him again someday for a longer time, as the group split up for various reasons when we got back to the hotel.

I wandered back to the main program, to discover a panel on original anthologies going on, with Bob Silverberg, Harlan Ellison, Damon Knight, and one panelist whose name I didn't catch participating. Inevitably, the subject of Roger Elwood came up for discussion, with rather some worry expressed by the panelists. The unidentified panelist (David Gerrold?) related how Elwood had asked him to contribute a story to one of Elwood's anthologies. Apparently the panelist wasn't too wild about this idea, and he stated that to get Elwood "off his back" he had deliberately sent him an old, early-career story that he had despaired of ever selling. Elwood bought it.

There were also expressions of support towards Elwood. One person in the audience, when called upon by Ellison (who was moderating the panel), said "Roger Elwood is the finest thing to happen to sf in a long time." A groan arose from various members of the audience, including me. I also had my hand up, as I would have liked to point out that Elwood was largely abandoning the original anthology market and concentrating his work on novels, but never got called on. Drat and all that.

But as the panel broke up, and people began to exit the hall, the couple that had been sitting next to me leaned over and asked why I had had my hand up for so long. It was Don Wollheim and his wife. I told them what I'd wanted to say, and also took the opportunity to tell Mr. Wollheim about the Leather Apron award. He laughed and said that John Norman would love it. (I might also add, for the benefit of those who have read Sam Moskowitz' The Immortal Storm, that Don Wollheim does not have horns upon his forehead or a forked tail.)

I didn't stick around for the next panel, on sf and academia, but went out to see who I might run into. I wandered back into the buckster room, where off in a corner I discovered an exhibit of computers. One of the machines had been programmed as a paranoid and was equipped with a typewriter keyboard. A number of people were watching as someone typed out a question like "Do you want to die?", trying to get the computer to get violent or something. I thought about taking a whack at it by writing like I was John Norman ("How ya fixed for whips?"), but too many people were ahead of me to bother with the wait.

I went back to the program to see the magazine panel being held. Ted White, Ben Bova, Ed Ferman, and Jim Baen participated, and one of the subjects that again came up was Roger Elwood and whether the huge amounts of short stories he was buying for his anthologies would have repercus-

sions on the magazines, depleting the market, as it were. Once again my hand went up, once again no response. Double drat. I must have a mediocre face or something. Next time I'll go dressed like Dr. John the Night Tripper and shbot off fireworks.

After that panel had ended, I encountered Arnie Katz. Since Arnie had also been one of the faneds whose unopened zines were auctioned off at Bubonicon, I asked him if he wanted to join the Committee to Lynch Bob Vardeman. "Noooo, I don't think so," he replied. Must not believe in capital punishment or something.

I stopped off at the Art Show to check and see what Skip Ohlson's painting had sold for. One of the committee people working with the art show tried to get the information, but the pile of auction slips hadn't been sorted yet and it was a hit-or-miss operation. I left until the next day, when everything was put into order.

Finally, I headed back to the room, where Tony, Ken, and Tom were preparing for the Hugo Banquet. I mentioned to them about the person who'd stood up and said Elwood was the best thing to happen to sf in a long time, and to my surprise, Tom Walcher promptly said, "That was me." This brought forth groans from everyone else in the room, and we spent several moments arguing with him on the subject. When he remained adamant, remarks like "Toss him out the window" began to be bantered about.

After the rest of the people left (the expense of the Banquet is most definitely higher than what I feel I could get out of it), I read part of THE INCOMPLETE BURBEE. But then, I began to feel a thirst for a Pepsi. I knew from experience earlier in the day that the soda machines along the main drags of the hotel were empty, but I reasoned that in such a vast, sprawling hotel, somewhere there had to be a machine with Pepsi left in it.

Innocence dies hard. I started the Great Pepsi Trek on my floor, the 7th, and checked the machine by the elevators. Empty. I took the stairwell and went down, floor by floor, checking each machine along the way. Empty. Empty. Empty. I reached the lobby, and crossed over to the other set of elevators, figuring that there was likely to be another group of machines there. Up the stairwell, floor by floor, until by the time I reached the fifth floor and found no machines, I decided that no there weren't any Pepsi machines by these elevators. All this walking, descending, and climbing had taken a good half-hour, and the exercise had left me thirstier than ever.

I remembered then that around the corner from the hotel were a couple of grocery and liquor stores. Surely one of those had Pepsi amongst their wares? So I went downstairs again and left the hotel, walking the block or two to where the stores were.

I had forgotten that it was Sunday evening. The stores were all closed. I could have gone into one of the restaurants still open, but I just wanted a drink, not a meal, and didn't think bucking the crowds at the restaurant would be worth the effort. So it was back to the hotel again, and by the time I got there, I was starting to regret not trying a restaurant. I was really starting to get thirsty by now.

I was walking back towards the main concourse, along the L wing of the hotel, when, off in the distance, I heard a sound like "KA-CHUNKA-THUMP!" I recognized it immediately as the mating call of the Pepsi machine, one that still had something in it. Tongue panting, I dashed around the corner where the sound had come from...and found myself face to face with a Pepsi machine that had "EMPTY" signs blazing on all the labels except (gag, hack, choke) iced tea. I wasn't that thirsty; stick me in the Sahara for a couple of days and I might be...maybe.

Fortunately, I found a drinking fountain in the Concourse of States. I don't think I came up for air for at least five or six minutes.

The banquet was still going on and it was going to be about another

45 minutes before the speeches started. I looked around the hallways, but didn't see anyone whose name I recognized, so went back to the room and read some more Burbee.

About 15 minutes before the speeches were due to start, I started out for the speeches, but stopped short outside the door of the room. The silence was deafening. There was nothing to be heard, not even the occasional squeak or groan from the flooring, or rumble of the elevator. I suspect that I may have been the only person left on that floor. It was downright eerie going to the elevators with only the sounds of my own footsteps accompanying me. I couldn't help being reminded of The Omega Man. When the elevator reached the lobby, would I find myself faced with a hostile crowd of pale-eyed, night-dwelling madmen?

Instead, it was Mike Shoemaker and Don Ayres that I ran into after getting off the elevator. We went into the Park Ballroom and found seats from which to listen to the speeches. (The Banquet proper was being held in the larger Sheraton Hall, next to the Park Ballroom. When the eating was done, the partitions between the two halls were folded up, enabling the "freeloaders" like us to view the speeches.) We noticed that it was rather hard to see the dias from our position, due to the many people sitting in front of us. Since there were plenty of extra chairs, however, this problem was easily solved by stacking three or four chairs up and perching on the higher level provided.

I am not going to spend too much time on Andy Offutt's toastmaster speech, except to say that I think the people who've expressed their somewhat vicious opinions of it in various fanzines are overreacting. It was not a memorable speech; I can't remember any specific lines Offutt spoke. I do remember that it was rather ingroupish and trivial in content (I suspect the terms are synonymous). But as for the complaint that he went on and on and on, until people were starting to get hungry again, I'm mystified. I only know that while I wasn't particularly attentive to his speech, I didn't notice any particular longevity or get bored. I suspect that being in the Army, I've gotten used to formations and other dull happenings, and I've picked up the knack of thinking on two tracks: one is listening with one ear to what's going on, in case anything that needs to be paid attention happens, while the other is busy entertaining myself. Done silently, this is known as daydreaming; done out loud, it's called talking to yourself.

Or it may have been that most of the audience was anxious to hear the results of the Hugo voting. Lord knows why; I could guess with about 90% accuracy just by looking at the list of nominees. In fact, Don Ayres got slightly croggled when I kept writing down the names of the winners before they were announced. All you had to do to get 100% accuracy in that was listen to the applause as the nominees were read off to the audience.

It's undoubtedly been published in Timbuktu by this time, but for the sake of completeness, a list of the winners follows:

John Campbell Award - Spider Robinson/Lisa Tuttle (tie)

Gandalf Award - J. R. R. Tolkien

Best Fan Artist - Tim Kirk

Best Fan Writer - Susan Wood

Best Dramatic Presentation - Woody Allen's Sleeper (this was the easiest of all to pick by the applause; all the other nominees in this category received boos and hisses from the audience)

Best Pro Artist - Kelly Freas

Best Fanzine - ALGOL/THE ALIEN CRITIC (tie)

Special Award - Chesley Bonestell

Best Editor - Ben Bova

Best Short Story - "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas" by Ursula

K. LeGuin

Best Novелlette - "Deathbird" by Harlan Ellison

Best Novella - "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" by James Tiptree, Jr.

Best Novel - Rendezvous With Rama by Arthur C. Clarke

As the awards finished and the final words were spoken, people began to break up and head off for the various parties. I talked to Don and Mike for a few moments, then headed for the Aussiecon party, which turned out to be one of the most memorable parties I've been to.

One of the first people I met was Shayne McCormack, who was helping tend bar. On her invitation, I tried some of the Australian wines present. I don't know if it was the wine itself or the fact that I hadn't had much to eat that day, but one glass put my head buzzing. Not bad stuff, though.

I'm not too sure how much Shayne had had to drink, herself. All of a sudden, she mentioned to me that she thought I would make a good DUFF candidate. My jaw dropped almost as much as it had upon meeting Ted White. I think my approximate reply was "BULL." I thought for a moment about who would make a good candidate. "How about Jackie Franke, though?" I asked.

Some time passed talking and listening around the room, and trying out an Aussie confection called milk gum, a chewy, cream-flavored something or other that I found as irresistible as Lay's potato chips.

Bob Tucker arrived at the party, and was given a bottle of Jim Beam that had been donated by Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown. A circle quickly gathered, myself amongst them, and the bottle was passed around. Now, I had never drunk any kind of booze, hard liquor, straight from the bottle before, and I was a bit worried that I might choke on the stuff. Luckily, I didn't, tho it did rather burn on the way down, but faded to a rather invigorating glow in a moment or two. As everyone took a swallow, they put their arm in the air and, on Tucker's cue, swooped it down while shouting, "Smooooooooothi!" I smacked my lips and said, "You don't need a plane to fly to Australia on that."

I spied Mike Glicksohn a few moments later and went over to talk to him. I'd heard earlier that he also had just sold a short story to Ted White. I told him about my own sale, and we congratulated each other. "I bet my story's better than your story," I said, somewhat facetiously. I also found out Mike's story was scheduled for the same issue of FANTASTIC as mine.

I left the party for a few moments, to dump some stuff I'd accumulated back in my room. On my way back, I stopped in for a few moments at the "New York in '77" party. The atmosphere didn't seem right, tho, and I went back to the Aussie party.

There, I got into a circle gathered around Tucker, who was telling classic fannish stories, like the true origin of Rosebud. There was also another bottle going around, but not Jim Beam. In fact, I don't know what it was, but I keep thinking of it by the name of "Old Rawhide." Boy, did I ever find out that it wasn't Jim Beam. I raised the bottle, took a swallow, and promptly choked and gagged on the horrible stuff. How terribly unfannish. Now I know why Tucker prefers Jim Beam.

When the Tucker circle eventually started to break up, about one of two in the morning, I moved into the other room, where I got involved in a conversation with Paula-Ann Anthony and Cathy Hill. I don't really know if you could call talking with Paula-Ann a "conversation"; she tends to, ahh, monopolize the great majority of the words spoken. In fact, after one particularly long stretch, she asked me, "Don't you ever say anything?" To which I replied, "Paula-Ann, you say more in an hour than I do in a year."

At this point Roger Zelazny tried to set Paula-Ann on fire. Zelazny

had been sitting next to our group, indulging in talk with some other people, and had tried to light a cigarette. Unfortunately, he had neglected to close the matchbook cover, and the whole book had flared up. When he dropped it in surprise, it fell directly on Paula-Ann's leg, but fortunately bounced off onto the floor before burning her, where it was quickly stamped out. I told Paula-Ann that now she had a neat story to tell other fans, about how Roger Zelazny had tried to inflame her passions.

Along about this time, it was no longer late; it was early, and I was starting to get green flashes around the edges of my vision. I knew from past experience that this meant I wasn't going to be able to stay awake much longer, no matter how hard I tried, so I said my goodbyes and went back to the room for some sleep.

Monday, 2 September

When we were woken up by the hotel switchboard, the other three were a bit miffed. They'd left a wake-up call for 10:30, and when I'd come in a bit later, I'd left another call for 10:15, and they were rather grumpy about losing fifteen minutes of sleep. Sorry about that.

Everyone got their bags and boxes ready and we all trooped down to the lobby. Tony collected the required money from everyone and went to pay the bill, while I stood guard over the assembled luggage. Then, everyone said their goodbyes and so longs and scattered.

I carried my luggage down to the art show, where I gratefully left it at the door under the watchful eyes of the security guard, and went over to take down the remaining works of Skip Olson. I took the art over to the business table, where I did a rough rewrapping job on them, and checked on how the "Forbidden Planet" painting had sold. It had gone to someone named Lowman for \$41. If anyone out there knows who this Lowman fellow is, I'm sure Skip would appreciate knowing where his painting went to.

I also took the opportunity at the table to chat with Bill Evans for a few moments, about the FAPA waitlist. Bill said that the initial \$1 waitlist fee covered all the FANTASY AMATEURS sent out, no matter how long, while I claimed that it was an annual fee. I checked the FAPA constitution when I got back home, and by Ghu, I was right!

Bags under one arm and art under the other, I trudged up to the Park Ballroom to wait for the program to start. I caught the tail end of the business meeting, where the new Worldcon Constitution was being voted on. Mike Shoemaker was in an angry mood and said the new Constitution was really messed up and that he was going to write a long editorial about it for the next OXYTOCIC. I had no reaction, myself, not having read the thing, but since then I've come to the conclusion that parts of it are poorly devised and open to misinterpretation.

A panel on "The Sacred and the Pro Fan" was next, with Mike Glicksohn, Andy Porter, Linda Bushyager, and...anyone else? My memory's fading. The general consensus of the panel regarding fan vs. pro/semi-pro fanzines eventually worked itself out that it was mostly a matter of intent on the part of the faned. Andy Porter said that while he would love to break even or make a profit on ALGOL, he still considered himself a fan and was into fanpublishing for the fun of it; his goals were more ambitious than most fans and he had to charge money or go broke, but it was still something he did for his own enjoyment, not as a career. Mike Glicksohn mentioned the story he'd sold to Ted White, and said that just because he'd sold a pro story, that didn't make him a filthy pro; he still considered himself a true blue fan, especially since the story had first been submitted to a fanzine and been rejected, until Joe Haldeman convinced him to send it to White. (In fact, Bill Bowers told me it had been rejected by a number of fanzines. Tens. Hundreds. Thousands and thousands of....)

Then followed what I call the Rip & Tear Panel, where Harlan Ellison, David Gerrold, Leigh Brackett, and...someone (drat!), discussed the translation of their written works to the movies and tv. Anyone who's read a fair amount of Harlan's non-fiction probably knows his opinion of the people who make movies and tv shows. No wonder he comes across as so belligerent at times. Besides Harlan's numerous horror stories (including the infamous Starlost), David Gerrold discussed his work for the Saturday morning shows, and Leigh Brackett talked about The Long Goodbye.

By the time that panel ended, it was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and I decided it was really time for me to go, in order to get back to Fort Lee in time for getting ready for the field exercises scheduled for the next day.

Catching a cab out front, I proceeded to the Greyhound bus station. I looked in my wallet and found that all I had was a couple of twenties. "I ain't got no change for that," the driver said. "I'm sorry," I said. "If you'll hang on a moment, I can write you a check." "Ahh, the hell with it," the driver said angrily, driving away with a squeal of rubber.

In the terminal I bought my ticket and waited for the bus. As the time approached, people began to line up at the proper gate. Then one of the bus people said we should line up at the next gate. The line clumsily shifted over. Then we were told to go back to the original gate. More shifting. Then, not this gate, that gate. It was a hell of a mob scene, with dozens of people getting madder than hell, the line looking more and more like the contents of a crowded elevator.

Finally, however, we got on the bus and headed out. Peace. For me, the Worldcon was over.

Appreciations, Apologia, and Addendum, 22 Dec 74

In all, it was a marvelous convention, despite its faults. The highlights for me, and the reason I enjoyed it so much, was not because of the program or events, but because of the people I met. There's too many to list, but please be assured I enjoyed meeting all of you.

Even Mike Gorra. I should apologize for being so ill-natured when I mentioned his name. Gorra recently loosed GODLESS and said that somehow he'd inadvertently left my name off the RANDOM mailing list, and sent me some back issues. A damn fine fanzine. So hopefully, even though I still feel a bit miffed about "Mike Glicksohn's Beard", we're still on good terms. I've even pulled all the pins out of my Mike Gorra doll.

Apologies also to Jim Kennedy. I still haven't returned Skip Olson's paintings to him, and by now it's not even worth mailing them; I'll take them back personally when I leave Fort Lee next month. Sorry, Jim. I hope neither you or Skip have been too pissed-off at my delays.

One more thing. On the ninth page of this report, I mentioned the "tickets" to room parties I'd seen. This gives a completely wrong impression, and the word "invitations" should be substituted.

As it turned out, "The Return of Captain Nucleus" did come out, in the February FANTASTIC, and I've already gotten some good egoboo out of it. John Robinson wrote a card and said, "People named Bruce shouldn't write stories about fags. Someone might get the wrong idea."

Glicksohn's story, "Dissenting", was in the same issue. Much as I hate to admit it, it's a lot better written than my own story; I don't understand how so many fanzines could have passed it up, especially since it's "faanish" fiction. (I've heard that one of the people who rejected it was Mike Gorra, so....) On the other hand, my story rated a Joe Staton illo, and a nice one, too!

Not much more to say. This report has been written over a period of months, sometimes a paragraph at a time. If I manage to make it to Aus-siecon (doubtful, right now), I wonder how long that con report will be!

- Bruce D. Arthurs

HOW TO LICK THE SPACE MONSTERS AND SAVE THE WORLD

(Copyright 1973 by The Overseas Weekly. Reprinted from The Overseas Weekly, November 26, 1973.)

As has been noted on the front page, neither the Pentagon nor the State Department has a contingency plan for dealing with aliens from outer space. This is because the Pentagon has concluded there aren't any aliens from outer space. Or if there are, they aren't dangerous.

Both of those conclusions are reassuring -- if they are correct. But are they?

Sen. Barry Goldwater, for example, recently announced he's quite certain that Earth has already been visited by creatures from outer space. Other people have been seeing strange things lately. And an Army Reserve helicopter pilot in Cleveland swears he nearly collided with a spaceship two weeks ago.

So pooh-pooh the issue all you want. We're not taking any chances. We need a plan and we need it now.

What follows is The Overseas Weekly's Six-Point Contingency Plan to help deal with the contingency. View this not as the final solution to a perplexing problem. Rather view it as a departure point, from which a more refined program can be devised by the Department of Defense.

The Weekly's plan is broken down into six main points, listed roughly in the order they must be carried out: Isolate, Evacuate, Communicate, Coordinate, Educate, and Annihilate. There is, of course, some overlap, and some of the steps must be initiated simultaneously so that the entire operation functions as a neatly integrated



whole.

Further explanation of each step follows. Hence forward we shall refer to the Martians, aliens, creatures, robots or what have you, as the "ETL" -- an abbreviated way of referring to whatever form of Extraterrestrial Life we may have encountered.

1. THE ISOLATION PROCESS

As a derivative of the time-honored divide and conquer concept, we suggest the first step to be taken upon encountering the ETL is to isolate it.

Once it lands, we may view it as some strange wild beast -- a possible menace which we don't understand. As with a wild beast, we must cut it off so that we can study its habits without endangering ourselves.

What we have in mind here is an ingenious array of holding and containing devices which at the very least will buy us some time.

First, a net -- a giant chain link restraining device airlifted by helicopter and dropped over the ETL. This would be anchored all around by giant staple-like clamps pounded into the ground.

Second -- a Defensive Ring. The Defensive Ring will encircle the ETL, separating it from us, and will consist of weapons and barriers, both conventional and unconventional. The key to success with the Defensive Ring is anticipating the ETL's Vulnerable Weak Points (VWP), defined as those characteristics which are susceptible adversely to devices and concepts we have at our disposal.

A VWP for a wild beast, for example, might be bullets. In the case of the ETL, however, the VWPs may transcend our conventional weaponry to include such things as colors, noise, water, heat, cold, or music.

The Defensive Ring, then, must be composed of anything which might be a turn-off for the ETL, anything which might have a negative effect on it and thereby keep it in its place.

The basic Defensive Ring will consist of traditional weaponry -- tanks, missiles, and personnel. Positioned among the tanks and missiles will be flamethrowers, high-intensity searchlights, tanker trucks filled with liquid oxygen to squirt at the ETL if necessary, piercing noise-production equipment, and various nerve and germ gases.

Directly in front of the Defensive Ring we recommend a wide moat to form a water barrier. On the ETL side of the moat, the placement of spikes or millions of carpet tacks might make sense.

In addition, unorthodox weapons -- which we ourselves don't view as weapons at all -- might act as a deterrent. Rolling Stones music, for example, might prove highly irritating to the ETL. A thousand placards painted with Day-Glo orange might also prove irritating if flashed simultaneously in the ETL's direction. Similarly, clouds of Joy perfume might have a debilitating influence.

In short, if the ETL is alive it will undoubtedly have VWPs and we must endeavor to find them.

2. EVACUATING THE PREMISES

In the face of possible clear and present danger, immediate attention must be given to the health, morale, and welfare of the populace surrounding the ETL.

If the ETL lands out in the country, the task will be simplified enormously. If, however, as is more likely, it chooses to land near one of our major cities, then we must be prepared to initiate the most massive relocation of people in the history of the world.

Without mincing words, the evacuation process is necessary should it become expedient to drop a nuclear device on the ETL.

We assume that the basic movement of people -- even millions of people

I NEVER MET A
VEGETARIAN I DIDN'T
LIKE.



AK
73

- can be accomplished through the many and varied means of transportation at our disposal. The larger problem is what to do with the people after they have been moved -- in other words, to where do we move them?

We envision a series of Temporary Tent Cities (TTC) located at widely dispersed areas about 200 miles from the ETL. Each TTC would be patterned after the giant tent cities erected during our experience in the Vietnam conflict, and each would be capable of supplying billeting and messing facilities for 10,000 individuals.

For planning purposes, it is impossible to pinpoint precise locations for the TTCs in advance. We can, however, select general areas throughout the United States for the receiving of rapidly deployed people.

We can also pre-determine which stockpiles of supplies can be readily tapped to sustain the TTC's, and this should be accomplished immediately.

3. FRANK COMMUNICATION

Meaningful dialogue with the ETL cannot be underestimated as a viable means of extricating ourselves from a potentially hazardous posture. Through communication -- frank and definitive communication with substances -- it may

be possible to seek out that which we have in common and find a basis for mutual cooperation.

That may not be possible, at least at the commencement of negotiations, is establishing a mode of communication which is understandable to both parties. Yet it is only through such mutually understandable discussion that any real progress -- real and lasting progress -- can be derived.

So, while we must negotiate, and negotiate in a fair and open environment, we must negotiate from a position of strength. That is why in the face of certain calls for dismantling of the Defensive Ring we must remain firm.

Our efforts, of course, will be complicated considerably by the likelihood of the ETL being unfamiliar with our language. It is equally unlikely that we will be able to understand their language if, in fact, the ETL has a sincere desire to communicate.

Yet we must try to understand our adversary, and pursue every possible avenue of communication. Consequently, a Communication Task Force (CTF) must be assembled now to work out communication proposals.

The CTF should be directed to explore not only those existing channels of communication known to us at present, but also those which extend beyond the realm of our experience. These are to include communication by color, by electronics, sound waves, lights, and the movement of physical shapes.

Included in the CTF must be a panel of expert linguists, and military cryptographers to analyze and decipher what may well appear to us as coded messages.

4. PROGRAMMING COORDINATIONAL INFLUENCES

Planning, however careful the formulation, will prove a fruitless enterprise unless the proper coordinating influences are programmed into the system.

All proposed functions of the system must be integrated into the overall schedule so that each part will productively enhance each of the other parts. Through this process, the operation, when viewed en masse, will emerge as a highly efficient machine with an ultimate, and positive conclusion.

The isolation process, for example, must be initiated even as the evacuation process is getting under way. And both the isolation and evacuation phases will, in their implementation, involve the initiation of steps which only at the conclusion of each phase will fuse together to accomplish the desired result.

Coordination, then, is an absolute prerequisite to success of the overall mission.

To insure the smooth enactment of all coordinating factors will be the responsibility of the Coordination Committee Group (CCG). This group will consist of individuals who represent each of the other five planning areas, and who are thoroughly familiar with all proposed functions in their respective areas of expertise.

The CCG will appoint deputies as needed to oversee the implementation of the Contingency Plan. These deputies will insure that activities in any one action group are not working at cross purposes with those of any other action group. They will also insure that the initiation of any particular phase is in accord with the overall time-frame of the operation.

Although the CCG has autonomy in principle, it is recommended that it divide its efforts into three general areas. These are coordination of internal DoD activities, coordination with civilian agencies which have a mission requirement, and coordination with foreign powers in the event that multi-national efforts are required to successfully attain the desired goal.

5. RELEVANT EDUCATION

Any plan which by definition is established to deal with extraterrestrial influences must be fully prepared to contend with public opinion, both as a positive productive force and as an attitudinal phenomenon.

Ignorance on the part of the public will manifest itself in numerous negative projections which could seriously hinder the success of the operation. Fear of the unknown and lack of familiarity with the efforts of the pacifying force could result in either mass panic or lack of support, or both.

To alleviate these potential dangers, the public must be kept abreast of all procedures and information as they become available. The instrument of dissemination of such information will fall under the purview of the Public Educational Agency (PEA).

The PEA will focus its attention on two primary areas: Pre-Initiation Information (PII) and Post-Initiation



Information (PII-2). The first will be concerned with the dissemination of such factual material as is relevant to the course of action to be undertaken in the event the Six Point Contingency Plan must be enacted.

The second will center on new information gleaned from on-the-spot observation as developments occur.

In neither case, however, will information be made available through other than authorized informational channels. This will preclude conflicting and/or misleading reports which might later serve as regressive catalysts toward positive forward motion.

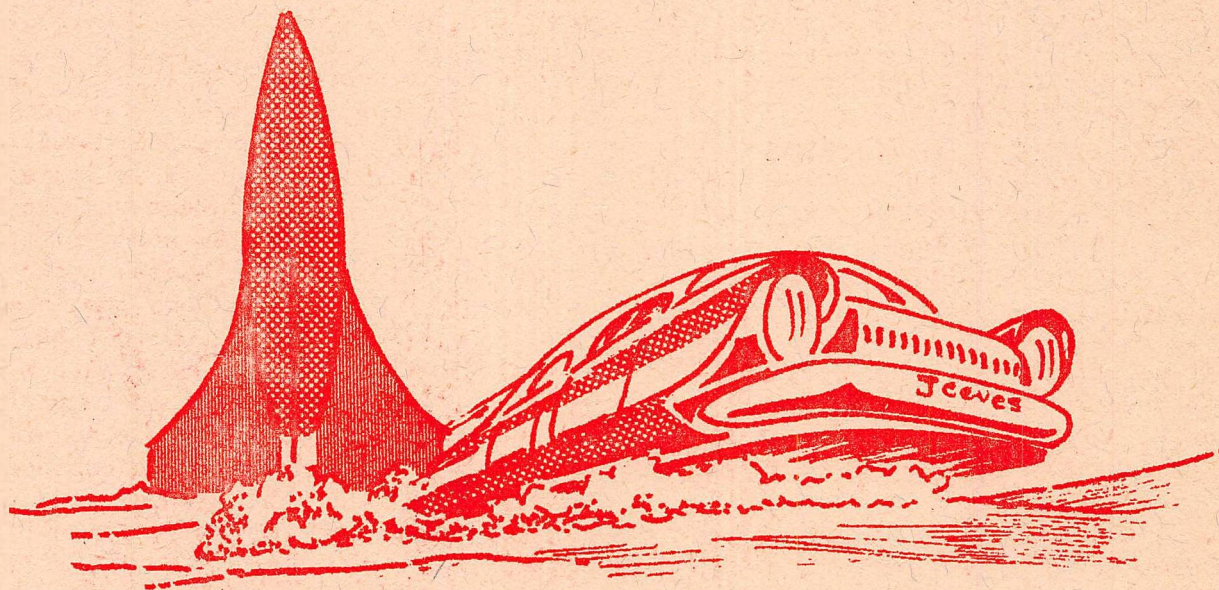
6. ACCELERATING SEVERITY ANNIHILATION

While every possible effort will be made to avoid confrontation between the ETL and the containing forces, we must be fully prepared to defend our boundaries and sovereignty by every means at our disposal.

Should it become necessary to terminate the ETL with extreme prejudice, it must be understood that the termination process is to be carried out with a campaign of accelerating severity. This calls for the employment of conventional weaponry first, in progressively heavier doses, through to nuclear devices should it be deemed appropriate.

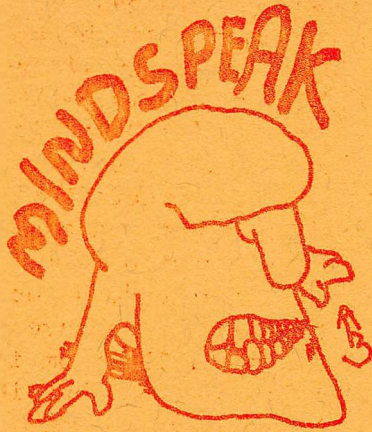
The instigating body in this matter will be the Annihilation Contingency Task Force (ACTF). The ACTF will have under its authority all procedures pertaining to the ultimate destruction of the ETL. These are to include the strategic employment of existing deterrent forces as well as the development of new instruments which can better accomplish the mission.

The ACTF will insure that all its activities are closely coordinated with the CCG, PEA, the CTF and will have within its command Defensive Ring personnel.



THE KING IN PLURAL, part II

I knew there was something I forgot to mention in the regular editorial. The reprint on page 50 is from Arnie Katz' "Katzenjammer", his editorial column in the old QUIP. Quip was a damn good fanzine, and there's the possibility that I might reprint one or two other pieces from it eventually. In the meantime, I hope Arnie doesn't mind my reprinting his piece (with a new title by me); I forgot to write and ask him. Sorry, Arnie. - BDA



F. M. Busby Receiving this 36
2852 14th Ave West page issue, I was
Seattle, WA 98119 curious as to why
I got it. I'm
still not sure but that's okay.

The article on Roger Elwood caught my attention. You're the first person (besides me) to Point With Alarm at the threat posed to *normal* SF writers by these mass-produced schlock-series such as Rhodan and Cap Kennedy. I know of one editor who quit his job because the publisher said, "Get me another Perry Rhodan" whereas the editor wanted to produce good stuff. (Well, Perry Rhodan doesn't have it all his own way. In retaliation, I have a German-translation sale on Cage A Man.)

A little before that part, though, I hit pay dirt. The writer who asked Roger E. about taboos, rec'd no answer, sent the story anyway, eventually, and had it bounced for taboos. If that's not me, who else got burned the same way? If it is me, how in the worlds did you ever hear of the incident? ((In the bar at Bubonicon, Buz. Don't worry about not remembering it; I have a forgettable face.))

In fairness, there's an epilogue. Elwood said somewhere or other that he can't settle beefs no one tells him about, so Speak Up. So I wrote him and detailed the incident. He answered. I wouldn't say we are totally

agreed but (as I've told him in letter) so far as I'm concerned the air has been cleared and I've scrubbed the hard feelings. I no longer have a Policy against sending him stories - however, I'm not all that prolific with short stories (especially not when, as now, I'm 190,000 words deep in a novel that may go 250,000). So when I do get a short going, it first hits markets I've had good results with.

And I play bloody hell Writing To Assignment, it seldom works out - your points on that score are well made. Also, as I've told Elwood, I don't really care to write Establishment stories, religious or otherwise. My stories as a whole, I hope, have no biases - they go where they go, is all. Some pro, some anti, however it falls, so that the story works. I'm afraid that with Mr. Elwood I'd be too subject to temptation, to try to - well, let's say slip one past him, like G.O. Smith and the ball-bearing mousetrap in ASF (late 1940s). And that's no way to write good stuff. I don't like propaganda even when I agree with it.

Then I caught Don D'Amassa's letter. He's right; the \$15 that Doc Lowndes paid me for 3,000 words in 1957 disqualified me for any of the New Writer awards, as the rules are written. Well, maybe that's a face saver - the competition is pretty tough, these days!

Bartucci's parody is good but it poops out a little at the end. If he brings

My own dealings with Elwood have been minimal. One story sent to him, same story quickly rejected with a nice-but-xeroxed rejection. One thing that struck me forcefully was that you gave some helpful biographical info on Elwood. The fact that he's only 5 years older than me (I'm 26, I think) seems odd. I think I thought him about the same age as Sam Moskowitz.

In spite of his apparent shyness around writers and fans, he does have the ability to sell packages and ideas about science fiction, and he is willing to share out things (with Malzberg and Ellison). It seems like this is good because an expanding market is always good for the writers and readers. The writers get more chances to sell more of their work and the readers get a wider choice, although they do have to strain through the dreck. The boom in the 50's produced a lot of crud, but it gave a lot of people a chance to get started. ((But, Seth, that's just it; I'm a reader, not a writer. I can't strain thru all the dreck, because there's too much of it for me to read." Buck Coulson says in his letter further on that now that sf's become successful, fans aren't happy with the situation. And I admit that I'm not. As much as I hope you and Buz and other new writers are successful in your careers, I have to admit that I'm selfish and that I think there's too damned much sf being published these days.))

But, he seems to have made good on his promises to speed up the bookwork. I sent him a story on the 5th of November and he sent me a postcard on the 8th saying that he got my story and would read it within 30 days. Slow editors can be a real pain in the neck and I bet this is at least half of the gripes that people had about him. For example, I sent a novel to Award Books in May. Nothing happened so I called 'em up in September and the editor promised to do something about it right away. Still haven't heard anything about it and that book is sitting on his desk when it could be read by other editors.

By the way, you seem to think that ORBIT is consistently edited. Would you care to share your theory of what Damon buys? Unknown perhaps to fandom, this question is one of the most discussed among us neo-pros (and even non-neo-pros like Terry Carr). Look, I've sold a story to Damon and I don't know his tastes. I'm getting an idea but it's not worked out yet. Damon's taste seems to range all over the spectrum without being definable. I think with about everyone else, you can get a vague idea of what they want, but with Damon you just have to cross your fingers and hope.

Further thoughts on Damon. I've been reading some of his old reviews in FUTURE and thinking about what kinds of things he said in the two Clarions that I've been with him. I think Damon is receptive to any kind of story, but what he picks is something that is new. If Damon reads something that he's never read before (and he's been reading everything in science fiction for 30 years - critically, too, then he snaps it up. If it's just a rewrite of something that's been done a million times before, no matter how skillfully done, he won't like it. I think most other editors will be a little less personal in their tastes, willing to print a story even if it's been done before, if they think that their readers won't mind or notice. There's a tremendous amount of conservatism in science fiction readers - some of them want more of the same all the time.

//5 Nov & 15 Nov 74//

Paul Walker
128 Montgomery St.
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
Your article on Elwood was splendid and I agree with it 99%. What I disagree with is your too negative feeling toward Elwood eclectic editorial standards. True, he seems to have no editorial personality, and his tastes are mediocre, but what has made me absolutely hostile to other original anthologies to the point where I refuse to read them is that the editorial personalities, and ambitions, of the like of Carr, Knight, Silverberg, and Ellison, not to mention David Gerrold are too similar to provide much variety. Consider the literary difference between them and the differences that existed between Boucher,

Cold, and Campbell in the pulps. The latter each constituted a sub-genre of their own and each gave birth to very special talents. Off-hand I can't think of a typical Boucher writer, but both Bester and Scheckley did their best work for GALAXY with Cold's encouragement and inspiration, while the list of Campbell writers is endless.

I think Knight's contribution to the 'new wave' has been underestimated, if not ignored, in fan criticism. I believe he played a more important role in revitalizing the genre in a more literary direction than either Moorcock and Ellison, and he set a standard with ORBIT that the other original anthologies have almost slavishly followed. Knight said he was out to create a 'renaissance' in sf with stories selected for their brilliance in style and originality. In short, his idea of a renaissance was as much ideological in terms of style as Moorcock's was in terms of politics. And it seems to me Carr and Silverberg and Gerrold and Ellison have followed his lead to the detriment of science fiction.

((Pardon an editorial interruption, Paul, while I switch typewriters. The damned 'g' and 'o' on that previous one were driving me crazy; I had to hit the damned keys twenty or thirty times to get a decent cut on the stencil, and it still doesn't look very good.))

I believe the majority of us read sf for pleasure, and I believe the majority of us derive that pleasure from, first, a cracking good story, and secondly, from a cracking good idea. The two are not often found in the same story, but one or the other usually suffices. By extolling literary 'excellence' over both of them, modern sf has achieved nothing, not even literary 'excellence', and sf today is simply not the fun it was.

Despite all of Elwood's eccentricities, I think he is fostering a more relaxed attitude toward the short story that may, hopefully, spread. I know it sounds odd to say, but it 'seriousness' is what is wrong with sf, in that we have become unable to differentiate between 'seriousness' and 'pretentiousness'.

Robert Chilson is a real-life person who lives in rural Missouri. He was a protegee of Campbell's and published some of the best stories that appeared in ANALOG during the latter's last years: "Ecological Niche", "Per Strategem", "The Fifth Ace", etc. He has sold a second novel to Wollheim, a fantasy, and I believe intends to follow up As the Curtain Falls with a sequel or two. He is an old friend of mine.

My opinion of Curtain was not as complimentary as yours, but as I told Robert, I am biased. I much prefer his hard work which I think is the equal of Anderson's and Asimov's, but he has taken a turn for the literary in the past year and is also planning a children's book, has done an OZ book, is writing poetry, and whatnot. Curtain was a satire, or pastiche perhaps, of Lovecraft, UNKNOWN, WEIRD TALES, etc. which Chilson did for a lark, not expecting it to sell, but Wollheim loved it. Incidentally, he recently submitted a novel to Elwood, at Elwood's request, and Elwood bounced it. That makes two strikes against Elwood.

When I spoke to him about Chilson, I also recommended the work of Sterling E. Lanier, who he said was 'very uneven'. Now Lanier's second novel, Hiero's Journey, has been getting unanimous raves from Miller, Sturgeon, del Rey, et. al. I predict both Lanier and Chilson will be among the major sf writers of the next decade. Incredibly, however, Lanier's "Ffellowes" stories have not sold to paperback. I think they are the best series of stories published in the past ten years. //6 Nov 74//

have a bad habit of over-praising or over-damning a book. AtCF was one I overpraised ...a little. Still worth buying and reading, though, and I'm sorry you didn't like it.))

With regard to Roger Elwood, I think you failed to adequately emphasize one point. No matter who it is who dominates the editing of a field, there is bound to be unconscious censorship. At NYcon III, Norman Spinrad made the statement that it was detrimental to the field to have Fred Pohl editing four of the eight sf prozines because too much of the fiction produced was siphoned through him. Pohl persistently failed to grasp Spinrad's point, and said that there was no way he could harm the field because he would buy any good story, therefore he wasn't excluding anything. The fact that there is no objective way to determine what constitutes a "good story" was never raised.

I suspect that the same thing will happen to Elwood as happened to Pohl. Following a brief glut of the market, there will be a substantial reduction, and most of Elwood's influence will dissipate.

For Harry Warner, who complains because no one ever says anything good about John Dickson Carr: I have been reading Carr's mysteries for a lot longer than I have been reading SF, and I still do. No one has ever been as consistent at writing good locked room mysteries (about 80 published). He has even dabbled in fantasy: The Devil in Velvet; Fire, Burn; and others. //12 Nov 74//

Don D'Amassaa
19 Angell Dr.
E. Providence, RI 02914

I retract my statement. I read in your letter column a line from my own letter in which I remark on the similarity of our reading tastes, following which I skim back through GODLESS and discover that you consider As the Curtain Falls a Hugo quality novel. I retract my statement. ((Awww...shucks, Don. I gotta admit, that particular line was a bit too much praise, though AtCF is still a damn good novel. I'll admit it, one of my faults as a book reviewer is that I

Eric Mayer
RD 1, Box 147
Falls, PA 18615

Yours is probably the definitive Elwood article, which is saying quite a lot. It doesn't make for very enjoyable reading. My problem in evaluating Elwood's effect on the sf field is that I find him likable. Oh, he may be something of a religious bigot, but he's so low keyed about it. He seems to lack the inflated ego displayed by so many Big Names in the field and this rather endears him to me. (Though not in any sense he would find objectional in an anthology, I might hasten to add!) I have to ask my-

self, "What if it was Harlan Ellison who controlled half the market? How would I feel about that?" ((If Harlan doesn't stop accepting last-minute submissions to The Last Dangerous Visions, he may end up controlling half the market.)) Elwood is so well intentioned. But I think he's created an unhealthy situation.

He appears to be editing sf in the classic manner - treating it as a commodity. Perhaps that's why I haven't read many of his anthologies. Art can't be produced in assembly line fashion. Stories written only for money read as if they were written only for money. They don't interest me.

The Ted White example is especially appalling. I hope Ted didn't prostitute himself to the point of writing that story to all of Elwood's specifications. ((Since the story was rejected, I doubt it.)) It is one thing for an editor who has worked with a writer to make suggestions, it is another thing for an editor to farm out raw materials for manufacture. With all the work Elwood has cut out for himself, with all the authors he handles, I doubt if he has time to develop a real creative rapour with any of them.

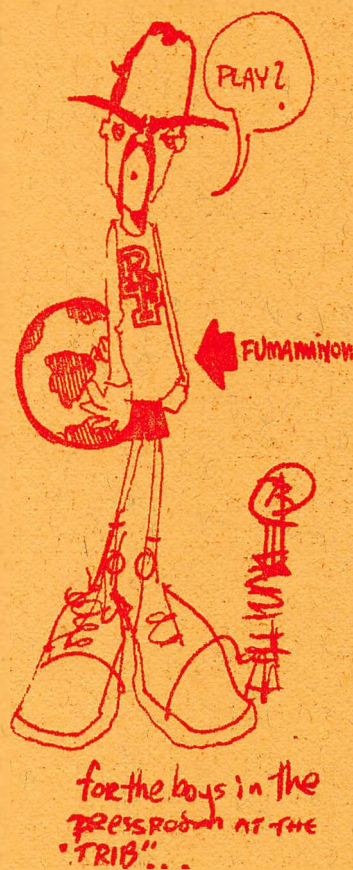
The fact that 95% of Elwood's anthologies are "assigned" is extremely depressing. Obviously the commodity approach is at work here. Big Names sell. Unknowns don't. Do you know of any new writers who were introduced by Elwood? ((That was one of the questions I asked him, and he came up with about half a dozen. I don't have my notes at hand, but if I remember correctly, there was ...Gail Kimberley, Gerald Bauer...and others. I don't think the "Big Names" charge is one you can level against Elwood, though. He does print quite a few stories by little known writers.)) As you might have guessed, I try my hand at fiction from time to time. It's rather disheartening to realize that 50% of the sf market is virtually closed to me since most of that 50% is assigned. Another good question: Do you know of any authors who refuse to deal with Elwood in this manner? ((See Al Sirois' letter below.))

Of course, it could be worse. Elwood does

seem to be open-minded about style. He has, it seems, expanded the sf market - though Big Name authors have filled most of the new outlets simply by writing more fiction of lesser quality. (At least that's my impression.)

But unfortunately, art isn't a product. I hate to be redundant, but that's my major gripe. That's what bothers me about Elwood and the whole structure of sf publishing. Elwood isn't doing anything new, he's just doing more of it.

I think he's open-minded though. He might change some of his policies. This might all be for the best in the long run. I hope.
//4 Dec 74//



Al Sirois
533 Chapel St.
1st Floor East
New Haven, CT 06511

The first thing
that happened after
I got the issue was
that the bacover
fell off. A true
fanzine, GODLESS. I bet you get a few
mentions of my amazine lack of taste in

the fourth vignette of "Variations On A Theme", but let's face it, taste is, after all, purely subjective. ((Just one comment like that, Al, and that person changed his mind after thinking about it for a moment or two.))

I found your article to be perhaps the best discussion of Elwood and Elwood-based phenonema that I have read. I've been following the debate in the SFWA Forum, and I met Roger at the SFWA first annual Eastern Regional Business Meeting at the Bilker's place in Jersey this summer. I took an instant personal dislike to him, but I've commented on this at length elsewhere and don't really intend to repeat myself here. ((For anyone interested, see Denis Quane's NOTES FROM THE CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT #9)) At first, as I began the article, I was thinking "Oh shit, not another Elwood interview," but when I was done with the thing I felt that the space wasn't wasted. In fact, I would recommend the article to all sfwa members as must-reading. Too often sfwa gets hung up in precise language and all that, which may be fine for the Big Names if they wish to know exactly where they stand on a given subject, but for the part-time writers like you and I, "Roger Elwood: A Personal Reaction" is more valuable. I personally deplore Elwood's practice of ordering stories from writers, stories which are tailor-made, and I have no intention of submitting to whatever market he may control. I hadn't met him for ten minutes when he was trying to solicit a novel from me. Can you imagine? He didn't know what I'd written, had never read any of it, etc etc, yet he wanted me to do a novel for him. Sorry, Roger, this is one new writer who don't wanna write formula bullshit. What he wanted was: "straight sf adventure, male protagonist, no sex or profanity." I repeat: BULLSHIT. But from now on, if anyone wants to know my views on Elwood, I shall refer them to your article. A damn fine piece of work, damn fine. ((Aw, shucks. I've gotten so much egoboo out of that article it's almost embarrassing.))

Funny - I read a review of Chilson's As the Curtain Falls by Don D'Amassa in DIE-HARD #5 and Don wasn't too taken with the book. Now I read yours and you liked it. But the funny part is that I'm inclined to give the book a chance, on the basis of

the fact that I liked your review more than Don's. Maybe Don has a better overview of the field than you do, but your review was more entertaining. That's the problem with good reviews ("good" describing the review itself, quality-wise, not the book reviewed); they can definitely influence the reader. Now, on the basis of your review, I might check out the book. On the basis of Don's, I said "OK, here's another bomb to stay away from - I'll go re-read 334 instead." For me, getting As the Curtain Falls is no big deal - I work in a bookstore and run the sf section (yeah, the job has advantages) and all I have to do is stick the book in my pocket, take it home and read it, and return it if I don't care for it. The average reader, tho', might buy the book and get cornholed. Oh well, that's the chance you take. Taste is purely subjective, as I mentioned above.

All this discussion of awards, recently, in lotsa fanzines, has made me feel rather guilty...as a sfwa member I'm supposed to read all this stuff and vote on it, but for some reason my mind doesn't want to do it. It all seems very trivial and "of-the-moment" to me. Awards should be given for a year's fiction after five years have passed. The best stories and books are the ones which people remember. What was "in" one year may be "out" two years later, but the truly literate non-contemporary story will go on forever. ((My ghod, I think you may have something there, Al! I'm gonna give it a try: OK, everybody, think back to the stuff that was published in 1970. I'll be lenient and let you look over your old back issues of prozines and old books, to refresh your memory. Now then, send me a list of what you consider to be the best novels and stories published in 1970. I'm serious about this; I'd like to see if five years hindsight will give different results than those stories that were given awards back then. And don't forget to send the lists to my new address in Arizona!)) //10 Dec 74//

Harry Warner, Jr.	I haven't read e-
423 Summit Avenue	nough Elwood anthol-
Hagerstown, MD 21740	ogies to form a

sound opinion on his quality as an anthologist. But nothing in your description of him sounds worse than the prejudices and preferences of various other people who have dominated science fiction publishing at one time or another. I'd take Elwood any time over Ray Palmer, for instance, who both thru his own publications and thru the influence created by their success was a deciding factor in the prozine market thruout the 1940's, even after he'd left Ziff-Davis. The most important thing about Elwood seems to me to be this breakthrough with Harlequin. For better or worse, it could create an enormous growth in the number of people who regularly read science fiction. That line of books seems to have a very faithful following. I go to a lot of garage sales, and at some of them I've seen nothing but Harlequins in stacks of paperbacks for sale. Even at newsstands where many lines of paperbacks are on sale I've seen many patrons ignore everything but the rows of Harlequin books. Elwood's religious and moral ideas fit that line very well; I think Harlequins make a strong appeal to the classes who want absolutely clean books which won't offend religious beliefs.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness about a wife for me. Somehow, I doubt if a woman would be findable today who would be willing to make this greatest of all sacrifices. My attic alone would be sufficient grounds for divorce and under Maryland's laws, she would get half of all my HYPHENS, QUANDRYs, and INNUENDOs. You wouldn't want to inflict misery on first her, then me, would you?

GODLESS arrived Nov 4 if you are still keeping track. My experience has been that third class fanzines usually arrive in batches, four or five in one day and then perhaps only one or two for the next several days. So apparently part of the delay in third class mail in Hagerstown, at least, results from the local post office allowing third class matter to accumulate a while, then cleaning up everything on hand a couple of times a week. //13 Nov 74//

read a lot of Elwood's anthologies, I've sold him a book (in collaboration with Gene DeWeese), I'm in fairly close contact with his former agent Sandra Meisel, and I've politely turned down his suggestion that I co-edit a fanzine with him. ((WHAT!? Ahh, Buck...that...that was a joke you just made, right? A joke, right? Ha ha, ho ho, and all that? Please tell me it was a joke, Buck...pretty please with sugar....)) Whether or not Elwood is a good editor depends largely on what one thinks a good editor should do. He is not a creative editor; he does not, as John Campbell often did, work with a writer to improve both the product and the writer. He couldn't be if he wanted to; the sheer quantity of his material would defeat him. Personally, I'm not positive that just working with writers is a good quality for an editor, anyway. With Campbell, it was an asset, but Campbell was a rarity. I'm personally acquainted with at least some of Jakobsen's ideas of "improvements" on GALAXY stories, and I'd much rather work with an editor who didn't suggest any revisions at all. Elwood hasn't equalled the work of Campbell, Tony Boucher, or Ted Carnell, but then nobody else has, either.

Saying that one got a good review from PUBLISHERS WEEKLY or VIRGINIA KIRKUS has no bearing at all on the quality of the book in question, even if it has a lot to do with the sales. (On the other hand, bad reviews in fanzines aren't always very pertinent, either; it depends on the fanzine and the reviewer.) Basically, though, countering complaints by showing KIRKUS reviews shows an ignorance of the field.

Quantity versus quality is basically correct, but there are such wide variations in working speed that your comment that Joe Haldeman spent three months on an anthology doesn't necessarily mean the results will be superior to Elwood's - maybe Elwood is a lot faster worker. Writers vary incredibly in the amount of time it takes them to write a book - and the slow workers are not necessarily the best - presumably anthologists do too. (And if Elwood spent more time per book he would probably - but not necessarily - produce a better one.)

Buck Coulson
Route 3
Hartford City, IN 47348

Okay, I'll comment on your Elwood article. I've

There is another aspect to this that you didn't touch on. Elwood is geared to the telephone; he wants personal contact, verbal assurance, etc. (One is reminded of Hollywood's version of the film industry, with agents and producers making deals right and left via telephone.) Most writers I know aren't used to this, don't like it, and expect contracts with provisions carefully spelled out in advance, even if the initial deal is via personal contact. (Elwood didn't get Juanita's contract to her until after his deadline for writing the novel had expired. Since she has a tough agent, he also didn't get his novel until Juanita got the assured advance, but some authors will go ahead on the verbal assurance and then hitch if the final outcome isn't as expected.) This isn't helped by the fact that Elwood doesn't have all that good a memory for what he's already said over the phone. The apparent "overload" may be more bad memory than too much work.

Setting time and length limitations naturally reduce creativity, but all editors do it. Some just do it more than others. In the old pulps, it was commonplace, and it hasn't died out by a long shot.

Again, all editors have prejudices. Elwood's may be more important to science fiction today, but so what? You can't eradicate them, I don't think you can get the government to break him up as a monopoly, so you're going to have to live with them, the same way you had to live with Campbell's and Knight's and H.L. Gold's. (They do contradict his earlier reply on acceptability; see what I mean about a bad memory?) I don't like his taboos, and I approve of publicizing them as informative of science-fiction content, but in all there has been far too much furor raised over them. As for well-developed female characters; the major character in the book Gene and I sold him is the heroine, not the hero. (I won't say how well-developed she is - it's space-opera, after all - but she's the strongest character.) Very few stories accepted by any editor have well-developed female characters, because most sf writers are men who know little or nothing about women.

((I'll buy that, Buck, except that I have-

n't seen any well-developed female characters even in the stories written by female authors that have sold to Elwood. ## I should also mention that when I talked with Roger at the Philcon, he said that I had misquoted him concerning the Women's Liberation remark. I did not misquote him; I did, however, quote him out of context. Elwood said at the Philcon that he was in favor of Women's Liberation, but that he objected to the presence of a Lesbian element in the movement. That was not the impression I gained during the original interview, but I'm willing to give Elwood the benefit of the doubt.))

The idea that Harlequin's unique distribution system could hurt other publishers seems idiotic on the face of it. If they're distributed where other sf books are not, then they're going to pick up readers who don't normally buy sf. It is, in fact, the best thing about Harlequin. They'd hurt other companies a lot more if they fought them directly for newstand space. Whoever "expressed worry" should worry less so he'd have more time for thinking.

My conclusion: Elwood is a very good editor for mass-produced science fiction which will appeal to a basically mundane audience. He's not a very good editor for science fiction fans. Our critical standards in the field are quite a bit higher than the audience he's selling to. For years, fans called for a mass acceptance of science fiction - now that it's here, they don't like it. Tough. I don't like it either, but it's inevitable. As is the next "bust", which will come in a few years after the academics discover a new fad. //16 Dec 74//

Mike Glicksohn	For some reason
141 High Park Ave.	I always seem
Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3	to approach the
CANADA	locking of GOD-
	LESS after an
afternoon of drinking. I'm not sure if	
you're responsible for driving me to	
drink, but if you are, I'd like to thank	
you for the ride. Right now I'm enter-	
taining a delicious martini (man's best	
friend, to hell with cats, dogs, taran-	

tulas and chipmonks). They make excellent guests: good listeners, never interrupt, never loud or boorish, always in the best of taste. ((Not if it's Old Rawhide.)) They also make the company of crudzines easier to bear, but are not needed where GODLESS is concerned, since it's an enjoyable and interesting fanzine, if a little faint in places. I wish you'd used a little more ink in this issue, but other than that, it's quite nice-looking.

Mainstay of the issue, of course, is your perceptive, in-depth look at the phenomenon of Roger Elwood. I get the feeling that I'm trapped on a treadmill writing reactions to interviews with/articles on Elwood, since this is one of several to appear recently, but something as important to the field as the influence of Elwood is worthy of considerable investigation. I have to admit that I have no first hand experience with Elwood's editorial abilities. I've never read any of the numerous anthologies he has produced. I've read an awful lot of fannish reaction to them, though, and you seem to summarize the general feelings I've met extremely well.

The concerns you voice over the possible influence that Elwood's "taboos" may be having on the field as a whole are concerns that have been aired for some time now. The most common answer I've seen, and one that has a large amount of truth behind it, is that Elwood's markets are mostly new markets. For writers who do not wish to confirm to the Elwood formula (which appears at its weakest in your descriptions here) there are the same number of markets that existed before Elwood came on the scene.

The counter-argument, of course, is the one you have mentioned here. The people who are utilizing the new markets may not have the same overall quality of the better practitioners in the field. And even if the better known sf writers make use of the new markets Elwood has provided, the restrictions clamped upon them in terms of theme, length, and treatment may result in less than their best work. The general consensus seems to be that Elwood has diluted the overall standard of published sf by limiting

the creativity of the writers working for him.

Your opinion of Elwood as an essentially characterless individual seems to be the impression I've gathered about him from his own comments in fanzines and from opinions other fans have expressed about him and about his anthologies. Bland, inoffensive, with strong prejudices but little in the way of editorial discrimination in matters of actual writing ability. Good-intentioned though he may be, it seems a shame that he's achieved the power that he has.

I've had my say about astrology, so let me just quote you a short song by Flanders and Swann on the subject: "Jupiter's moved through Orion, and come into contact with Mars./ Saturn is wheeling through infinite space to its preordained place in the stars./ And I gaze at the planets in wonder/ At the trouble and time they expend./ All to warn me to be careful/ In dealings involving a friend!"

I fully agree with Bruce Townley that I'm a neater guy. I'm just not willing to say who I'm neater than. But I'm sure that somewhere in this world there's an arthritic, crippled paraplegic who isn't as neat as I am. Why, to dig out this copy of GODLESS I only had to fight off two dozen roaches, a giant spider whose eyes gleamed with frightening intelligence, an odd slime mold or two, and a couple of giggling, drooling mongoloid idiots who used to publish fanzines but gave it up. For me that pretty neat...Oh, you mean Bruce didn't mean that sort of neat...I didn't understand, I guess...but I'm sure I'm a neater guy than Linda. What really upsets me, though, is that there was a time when Bruce didn't think about me at all. Womb or no womb, that's no excuse. I'm surprised I existed. In fact, maybe I didn't until Bruce thought of me. I've only been in fandom for eight years, and before that all I can remember is this gray void and a sense of floating....

I'm going to have to watch myself very carefully if I'm developing traits that Jackie Franke finds appealing. That's appalling! And she agrees with me in the very next paragraph! Good heavens, is nothing stable in fandom anymore?

The true test of greatness is not getting a chipmunk to eat out of your hand, but getting Dave Locke to do so. With that behind you, the stars are a simple step indeed. I refuse to get embroiled in a listing of the defects of cats, either specifically with reference to the cat I used to have, or in general terms, because I only have five sheets of paper left and I hate doing a half-hearted job. Besides, everyone knows these essential facts of nature, so repeating them might amuse us all, but edify none of us. A cat by any other name is just as ridiculous. Right, Jackie? ((A cat by any other name is a feline. ## Anyone who has a snake for a pet should think twice about applying the word "ridiculous" to anything))

You're absolutely right about NERF, Bruce. I made all my mistakes in my secondary publication, OUTWORLDS, under the name of Bowers. I'm still doing it, as a matter of fact. When I get it right, I'll start another fanzine.... //17 Nov 74//

Gary Farber Nice cover for GODLESS
1047 East 10 St. #8. Simple, clear, and
Brooklyn, NY 11230. effective. New price to
 be expected, I suppose,

tho if I was just about to buy some new fanzines, a 75¢ price would put me off, unless it was highly recommended to me or some other reason. But then, other zines are going up, also. Fandom, and publishing especially, is going to get more and more expensive, along with everything else. It will probably lower the rate of new fans joining the illustrious ranks.

I find it interesting that you found no consensus of opinion about Elwood among fans. While I haven't taken a survey, I would say that most fans that I've talked to about Elwood express worry and concern of some sort about Elwood, and that many are plainly uneasy about the situation, uncomfortable with Elwood's stance and "power" combined. Elwood, disclaimers to the side, has "power" in that he now controls what goes into, whatever the exact number, at least those 48 novels a year that the public will read. He determines what the public will read of those 48 plus, regardless of the percentage. Perhaps more important, he determines

which writers he will buy from for his novels and 80 odd anthologies. This is his power. I don't think he has had much influence on the field yet, at least not in the sense of affecting what other editors are doing. If he sells big, other editors may adopt nurse-book format or his wide-appeal approach to anthologies, or whatever Elwood's other methods are. I'm not saying this is bad. Merely that this is influence.

The main sign on Elwood's fortunes are to look to his success in sales. Is he selling or isn't he? That will determine if Roger Elwood will become a "problem" or not. If he fails, then he's not a problem. If he succeeds, then we can worry or rejoice. ((I've noticed that the response to my article has been more negative towards Elwood than the responses I got by asking people in person. If I thought about it hard enough, I could probably come up with a witty saying about the difference between slander and libel.))

Richard Bartucci's story was the best story of his that I've seen yet, and I hope you do indeed continue the series. I hope that you realize that this series is based on real-life experiences of Rich's.

So you're finally making the great break from the loving hand of the Army? What will you do now? I hope you have something discussing your plans, outlooks, goals, etc. Have you thought of staying East? ((Staying East? Since I'm typing this up at 1 A.M. on Christmas Day, there's only one appropriate reply to that: BAH, HUMBUG!)) //11 Nov 74//

Brett Cox Working under the
Box 542 assumption that all
Tabor City, NC 28463 of your information
 is correct, I'd agree with you about your reservations about Elwood's prejudices. The religious aspect particularly disturbs me, since I'm none too crazy about organized religion. The taboos on sex and suchlike are also deplorable. But somehow, in the anthologies I've read, none of these have been too evident. In And Now Walk Gently Through the Fire, which had religion as

a central theme, I can't recall any stories that were overly propagandistic in favor of Christianity, except for one story, "...And the Power..." by Rachel Cosgrove Paynes where a group of scientists convince a backwoods faith healer that his powers don't come from God, and when he finally believes this, his healing powers stop, condemning to death one of the scientists who had depended on his powers to save her. There was even one story, "The Gift of Nothing" by Joan C. Holly, where a decidedly critical picture was drawn of Christian missionaries trying to convert aliens and destroying their culture as a result. Strangely enough, the pro-Christian story is pretty good, while the anti-Christian story is godawful in the extreme. ((I didn't like either of the stories.)) As for taboos on sex and language. I frankly haven't noticed many (although you had a good point when you stated that when the stories do have explicit sex, etc., they show it in a very negative light.

I don't think that authors will start tailoring their stories to Elwood's arbitrary standards. Some might, but they'll be hacks whose work isn't any good to begin with. As long as there are other, more open markets around, nobody is going to pre-censor their own writing, either consciously or unconsciously.

Probably the biggest threat from a glut of second-rate anthologies that are published and reviewed by people unfamiliar with the field as a whole is that these people will think that this is the best the field can offer and come away with an unjustified negative view of the sf field.

I personally don't believe in astrology, but I've developed a very tolerant attitude towards it because my mother is very seriously into it, and since I have plenty of things to argue with her about anyway, I don't say anything about astrology. I wouldn't be interested in a full delineation, since I can get plenty of that kind of thing done around here anytime. I had my horoscope done once by a for-real professional-type astrologer, and it was pretty accurate, although the bulk of it won't be proved or disproved until I become a technical adult. //26 Oct 74//



Dave Romm To be a christian and actively let those beliefs influence the selection of material is a form of censorship. I am Jewish and am proud of it. I think christianity (note non caps) is one of the most illogical and destructive religions around. I am on a campaign to eliminate it, slowly and non destructively. At present, I am not capitalizing christianity and such and at most opportunities I try to point out all its various discrepancies and logical faults of the religion. While I don't like anti-christian stories more than I like other stories, to virtually eliminate an entire classification of salable material is tantamount to a violation of the first amendment. What saves a lawsuit is that an editor's job is clearly and legally one of a subjective nature. My father is editor of a newspaper and while you can criticize the content of a story or an editorial, there is almost no legal way to criticize the selection of articles or editorials. This gives Elwood quite a lot of power. One can only hope he uses it wisely.

Because of schoolwork and fanac I no longer

read as much as I used to. Consequently, what I do read is usually stuff recommended to me by various Albany fan. Almost nothing is recommended from an Elwood anthology.

While Astrology's advocates do not claim it is "a holdover from the Wisdom of the Ancients", it is clearly the case. Astrological charts use the Earth as the center of the universe and have not changed their star charts to allow for the shifts produced by 2 thousand years. New constellations have appeared in the Zodiac and none are the 2,000 years in length that advocates adhere to. While I am not thrilled by the word "pseudoscience" either, Jeff did not prove Astrology to be anything else; he merely says he doesn't like the word. All astrologers are not insane, but it is difficult to see why any intelligent person would hold to such an obviously impractical form of thought. Like christianity.

"The Phosphor-Bronze Cockroach" is one of the better pieces of fanfic around. While I don't think Nixon really paid attention to your postcard, it does make an interesting idea. Now if you could get Bartucci to write about that.... ((Thy, Dave, you didn't actually believe I sent any such postcard, did you? No, to tell the truth, that part of it was just a deliberate and bald-faced lie, and I suppose I'll burn in hell forever for doing such a thing.))

///? Nov 74//

Sam Long Can Elwood do it?,
Box 4946 seems to be the
Patrick AFB, FL 32925 question. Can he
 turn out an anthol-
ogy a fortnight? And if he does, will they
be worth reading? And will so many anthol-
ogies be good for the genre? Ya gotta ad-
mit, the guy must be a bang-up salesman,
to sell his talents thus to publishers, and
to writers (by means of generous terms). I
hope he succeeds, and doesn't burn himself
out meanwhile. But the mind boggles anyhow!

As you point out, such quantity means a decrease in the average quality. Perhaps someone can go back thru the books in a few years and publish a collection of The Best From Roger Elwood's Anthologies, which would certainly be worth reading....

I think you make too big a fuss over his religion. I'm not a Christian either, but I can't say I'm very anti-Christian. I find Christianity sometimes silly, but not, on the whole, malignant; and it does preserve some Ancient Truths. Therefore, I'm kind of neutral towards it, tho I distrust your more fundamentalistic evangelistical types as too narrow and dogmatic.

His religious beliefs influence the stories he anthologizes. So what? That's his privilege as editor: to choose what he wants. It's only in this section of your essay that I think you got away from the subject and started preaching yourself; but only for a little while, and you quickly got back on the track, pointing out that since Elwood controls so much of the market, his choices have a narrowing effect on the genre. But you seem to View With Alarm where one need not, really. His effect will not be permanent, and there are still, yet, even, also other editors in the field.

I got a whole bunch of chuckles out of "The Phosphor-Bronze Cockroach" - as good a take-off as I've seen in quite some time, and filled with Subtle Puns and such like. Bartucci should be congratulated and encouraged to write more. I hate to say this, but you spoiled the effect with your note at the end of the story. You'd have done better to let the reader get the point wit out help - or at least put your note somewhere else in the zine. For my own part, I can't really hate Nixon. I can dislike him, I can oppose his policies, I can fear for the Constitution, but I can't bring myself to hate the man; and now in his exile I can almost pity him like Gandalf did Saruman - or, to make a more reasonable analogy, like the hobbits did Saruman. Watergate and Nixon are Not Funny, really, and I notice that most of the jokes associated with them are rather heavy-handed and uncharitable. Satirical jokes should have bite, it's true, but the Nixon jokes that got told at Discon had not just teeth but malice; and really good satire is not malicious. ((But, Sam, when people tell malicious jokes about Nixon, they're not joking!))

Tony Cvetko thinks he has problems as an apprentice-astronomer. I'm a weather forecaster, and you ought to hear some of

the questions I get asked. We weathermen catch it both ways: if we forecast fine and it lousy, we get blamed. If we forecast lousy and it's lousy, we get blamed. If we forecast fine and it's fine, do we get any credit? Not a bit! Taken for granted, that's what we are. //9 Nov 74//

D. Gary Grady Well, I intended my 3309 Spruill Ave, #5 "Fighting Words" to Charleston, SC 29405 provoke a response, and by ghu, it did. "Prejudice," "knows less than nothing..." Sounds like I made somebody mad. First of all, Jeff, let's not kill each other. I'll respect your prejudices if you respect mine. Phew! I had no intention of slandering any adherent of the subject; some of my very best friends - and I mean this - are devoted followers of the stars. I did intend to be provoking, but not insulting. If Jeff was insulted, I really regret it. But at worst, we're even. "Purely emotional and prejudiced" indeed. Doesn't he know we Sagittarians are skeptical?

I am surprised by his accusations that I am totally ignorant of the subject. I would think that a careful reading of my remarks would make it clear that this is not the case. Jeff goes to great lengths to explain things I already knew. I readily grant, however, that I am not an expert. Nor have I had a natal horoscope done by a "real" astrologer. If Jeff wants to do one for me (to show how inherently prejudiced I am, perhaps) the date is: 1950 December 12 1655 at 77° 54'40" West 34°15' North.

Part of the problem is that I am attacking an entire subject area and Jeff is defending one phase of it. When I refer to the fact that astrology is a money-making pseudoscience (which is one reason it is so popular), Jeff counters that lots of astrologers don't make money. Frankly, I see nothing inherently wrong with making money, if the means is legitimate. (I was mainly thinking about the Dell pbs when I said that, anyway.) Jeff's insistence that sun sign astrology is not "real" astrology ignores the fact that it is the most visible and popular branch. It was a part of what I was attacking.

Indeed, it amazes me that he believes two or more astrologers interpreting the same chart would arrive at identical conclusions. There are so many ways a conventional chart can be considered, what with trines and the like contradicting major characteristics of the ascendant, etc., that huge variations in interpretation are obviously possible.

No consider that the charts themselves may differ widely among astrological systems. For example, in working with an unoccupied Aquarius (this being the age of), does Jeff make the planetary association of Uranus or Saturn? The latter is more traditional, but I've run across both.

And suppose he gives his natal data to an Indian astrologer? The results are even wilder. The Indian astrologer adds two more planets! They are the points at which the lunar orbit intersects the ecliptic plane. And the Chinese....

Actually, it would take volumes to deal with the subject in detail, and I'm sure you don't want GODLESS turned into an astrological journal. I note with amusement that Jeff has committed a few obvious non sequiturs, though, and I'll mention them quickly.

I asked, in my article, why date of birth would be more important than date of conception (as Louis XIV's astrologers preferred). Jeff replies by saying, in essence, that the date of birth is important in astrology because the date of birth is important in astrology, and if I weren't so pig-headed I could see this.

He blasts me for producing no proof. I have no idea what he has in mind as proof, but he follows this sentence with another which, by ghu, he backs up with not a shred of evidence. (See line 28, page 18 of GODLESS 8.) It's nice of him to do this. I hate to resurrect cliches about pots and kettles....

I'll have to do an article some time on the REAL scientific method, of which the "scientific method" one learns about in high school is only a small part.

I thought your Elwood article was fantas-

tic. It was really the epitome of serious fanzine writing. I am at a loss for words, since I don't say nice things that often. I really mean that. The only thing I can add is to point out that in a recent NOTES, Elwood says he objects to people using the phrase, "Oh, Jesus," because you wouldn't want someone to call your mother a whore. Yep, he said that. So I propose that the new fannish expletive should be, "Oh, Elwood's mother!" Anyway, I agree. The man is way too powerful, no matter how sterilizing his intentions. //29 Nov 74//

Gary A. Arthurs I think the real
815 N. Hayden Rd., D-15 reason Elwood is
Scottsdale, AZ 85257 such an influence
 is simply because
his stuff sells well. I have no connections in SF book circulation but in the related field of comix, the magazines that organized fandom likes best are often the worst sellers. Sales is the only thing that determines whether a comic lives or not. Unfortunately the average comic buyer is only twelve years old. I'm sure the same type of thing occurs in your field. ((I believe the average sf reader is fifteen or sixteen years old...with a twelve year old mind.))

The fact that Elwood will not publish any story which goes against his religious convictions is very disturbing. I read and often enjoy stories whose religious and/or moral overtones I don't agree with.

Much of religious persecution can be written off as persecution of those that are different overall and not just different in their religion. I do feel many of the movements make pests of themselves, especially Jesus Freaks and Jehovah's Witnesses. About 3 years ago a Witness came to my door and tried to sell me a copy of WATCHTOWER for a dime. After telling her for 5 minutes that I wasn't interested she cut it to a nickel. I then explained that I worked 55 hours a week, went to school, and didn't have time to read it anyway. She then said, "Well, you should read this article then, 'Don't Be A Slave To Your Job.'" I then told her to get the hell away from my door and slammed it in her face. I still have trouble with Jesus Freaks, especially at school, but I have since discovered

that my St. Christopher's has the same affect on a Jehovah's Witness that a cross has on a vampire.

"The Phosphor-Bronze Cockroach" is the type of short story I keep hoping will show up in the Perry Rhodan series. ((My brother collects all the Perry Rhodan books. Black sheep of the family, you know.)) How about an Ebony Scarlet short? ((Someday when I'm drunk I'll tell everybody about my days in comix fandom and who Ebony Scarlet was. Someday when I'm blind, falling-down drunk.))
//14 Nov 74//

Bill Patterson For my taste, Elwood is
4326 N. 14th St. a little cut-and-dried
Phoenix, AZ 85014 as an editor. But one
 thing is certain: he's
not a good anthologist. Now there's more to editing an anthology than selecting good stories of appropriate length - and that additional something can be summed up in one word as "balance," a quality that all of Elwood's anthologies seem to lack. There's more to balance than putting your strongest stories at the end, too - problems of transition, keeping the gimmicks and treatments dissimilar, keeping farces and lightweight material away from the more serious work (so that the lighter material doesn't suffer by comparison), keeping the general texture of the work smooth and homogenous...a lot of work and a passel of problems each anthologist solves in his own way. The great anthologists - Judith Merrill and Robert Silverberg, for example - seem to have an intuitive grasp of these principles. The near-greats such as Conklin and Ellison and Asimov have to work at it, devising their own techniques. But Elwood seems to show no grasp of the fundamentals - which is why his anthologies turn out mediocre, even though he's gotten some fine stuff to publish.

About Elwood's editorial standards - those are standards? Somewhat distasteful to me. Pro-Christian (a bad start anyhow), pro-moral (in both senses), anti-sex (except as he approves it). Blyecch. Further, this dithering on "what-I-will-and-won't-accept" strikes me as the worst kind of fence-sitting, and something that sf

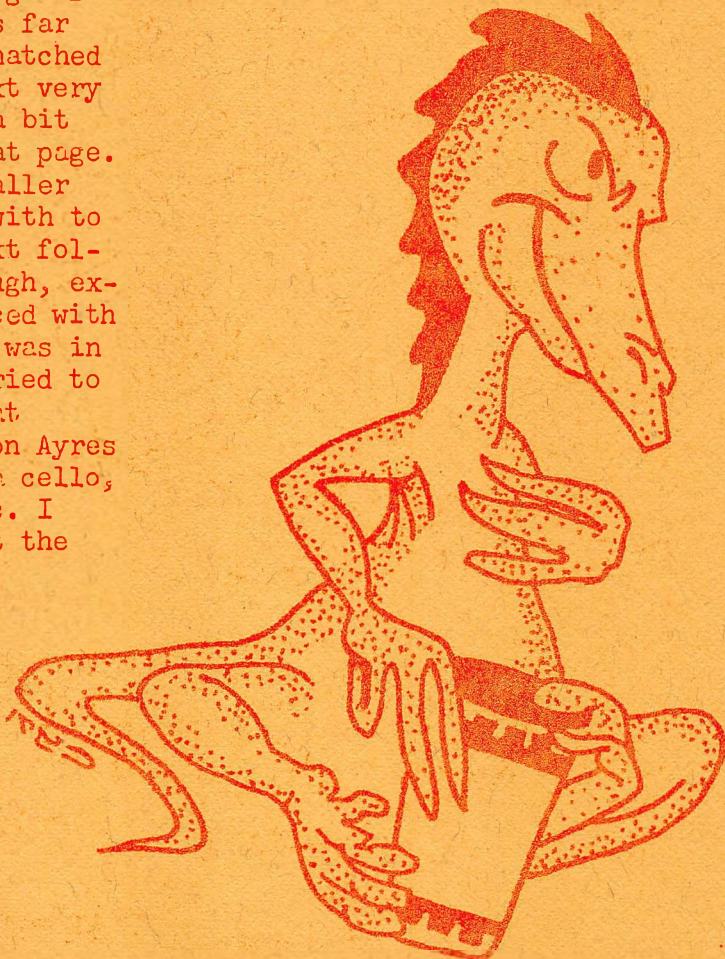
can't stand from someone who controls so much of the market.

One comment: a practiced professional writer will have a good idea roughly how long a treatment will run as he begins to plot it out. I can do that already, although I'm neither practiced nor professional. Practically any short story under 5000 words (arbitrary) can be easily and vastly improved by expansion - not in terms of padding, adding useless scenes and dialogue or narrative, but by interweaving the color and sensual appeal most of lacks. Of course one runs into problems when his story depends on fast pacing....

Birkhead, Mike Bracken, Donn Brazier, John Brunner ("Keep up the good work, keep down the bad faith."), Linda Bushyage, John Carl, Cy Chauvin, Tony Cvetko, Mike Gorra, Ben Indick, Tim Kyger, Brad Parks, Ronald Salomon, Steven Sawicki, Mike Shoemaker, David Singer, Dave Szurek, Bruce Townley, and Elsie Wollheim. And whomever I forgot to mention.

I was pleased with your layout, for the most part. Collophon layout was very eye-pleasing in terms of your arrangements of masses of text, etc. But the name logo was ghastly, old bean. You make extremely good use of the alphabet stencils - much better than I ever had patience for, and the editorial page was neat and eye-catching - particularly with your neatly done graph, although the Rotsler was too heavy for the type on the page. Compliments again on page 5 - the lead page of the Elwood article - the Jeeves was far too heavy, but the irregular crosshatched area set off your block-mass of text very well. Your text would have looked a bit better had it been justified on that page. You might have used some of the smaller drawings you overloaded the local with to break up the pages and pages of text following. Rest of the issue good enough, except the local does seem overbalanced with art. ((*sigh* Bill, all that art was in the lettercolumn for a reason. I tried to illustrate the letters with art that showed some facet of the writer: Don Ayres with a snake, Mike Shoemaker with a cello, Harry Warner with a blank mind, etc. I hate to think what you'll say about the unillustrated Discon report in this issue.)) (Although for an illustrated rendition of the Old Rawhide episode, see the cover of TUCKER BAG #5.)) //7 Nov 74//

MAFF: Dave Barnett, Steve Beatty, Ruth Berman, Sheryl



hy Terry Carr Moved to California -- Arnie Katz (from QUIP #4, Summer 1966)

Andy Porter called me a couple of weeks ago, and the subject of the then recent Comicon came up. Andy told me about all the famous fans I had missed by not showing up at the gathering. Among those whom I missed were Pat and Dick Lupoff, Bob Stewart, and Carol and Terry Carr.

"I sure am sorry I decided not to go," I said.

"Carol Carr confused me with Terry," the erstwhile phonephane told me. "You see, Terry and I were wearing the same color and style of clothes. We have the same color hair, and, from the back, you can't tell that I don't have a beard."

"Why, that's fantastic," I said so he would know I was listening. He then proceeded to tell me, with considerable relish, how Carol had come up behind him, handed him her compact for safekeeping, and whirled away. I could almost read Andy's mind at that point. I had visions of Andy gradually slipping into Terry's identity, reaping the numerous advantages thereof. "You know, I just realized that I've only met Terry once, at a FISTFA meeting."

"I see him all the time!" Andy was plainly incredulous. "Why, Terry's office is just across the street from the one I'm calling from!"

"That's wonderful, Andy."

"Yes, and if I had a rifle, I could kill Terry Carr." There was a pause as he mulled over his new idea.

"Yes, that's true," I filled in.

"And I could probably get Don Wollheim, too, I bet." We said our goodbyes and hung up. I've been thinking about that conversation off and on ever since, and I've come to the conclusion that you'd better watch yourself, Terry Carr.

